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Missing the Boat? Colonel A. F. Duguid and the
Canadian Official History of World War I

by

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the writing of, and controversies surrounding, the unfinished Canadian official history of the First World War and the role played by the official historian, Colonel A.F. Duguid. Through an analysis of Duguid in his roles as an administrator and a historian it takes issue with the prevailing view that Duguid was unqualified for the job and was hopelessly overburdened with extra work. Instead it suggests that Duguid was a competent historian and that the failure to complete the series was the result of several factors: government neglect, and military indifference, plus Duguid's nationalist beliefs, particular methodology, and his inability to effectively manage and prioritize the duties of the Historical Section.

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Table of Abbreviations

CFA	Canadian Field Artillery
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CO	Commanding Officer
CWNS	Canadian War Narrative Section
CWRO	Canadian War Records Office
DAQMG	Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster General
DCGS	Deputy Chief of the General Staff
DBF	Duguid Biographical File
DHH	Directorate of History and Heritage
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GSO 1	General Staff Officer, First Grade
GSO 2	General Staff Officer, Second Grade
HQ	Headquarters
NAC	National Archives of Canada
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
UTA	University of Toronto Archives
VCGS	Vice Chief of the General Staff

Introduction

It seems to me that, without recriminations, the production of the History of the First World War has “missed the boat”...¹

-Major General C.C. Mann (VCGS)

In 1938, Colonel Archer Fortescue Duguid published the first and only volume of his Canadian Official History of the First World War. It was eagerly anticipated as the Historical Section had been directed to compile such a history in 1921, and many veterans as well as the public, were puzzled by the delay in publication. Despite delays, however, reviewers were generally satisfied with the results. Writing in the *Legionary*, W.W. Murray, declared it a “masterly work of great care and precision”, while W.B. Kerr believed it would be “at the base of all future accounts and studies of the Canadian operations with which it deals”. C.P. Stacey wrote that it was “astonishingly complete” and would later refer to it as “one of the soundest pieces of historical work ever produced in Canada”.² It was hoped that the positive response would hasten completion of the remaining seven volumes; but nine years later and with seemingly little progress made, the project was canceled.

Although the initial reaction was favourable, it would not prove to be lasting. Today, Duguid’s history is often overlooked for Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson’s *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919* (1962), a one volume history of the entire war. Stacey, who would assume Duguid’s position as Director of the Historical Section in 1945, recanted his positive review, stating that he had been extravagant in his praise. Duguid’s contribution even fails to merit a reference in the bibliographic essays of two recent works

of Canadian military history by Marc Milner and Robert Bothwell or in an announcement from the Directorate of History. As Jonathan F. Vance notes, Duguid's history seems to have been relegated to reference libraries where it is consulted rather than read, if taken off the shelf at all. Those that do would no doubt greet with surprise Sir Andrew Macphail's assessment that the work is exciting and entertaining throughout.³

The end result of having 'missed the boat', as General Mann put it, and the adoption of Nicholson's *CEF* as the authoritative text on the war, has been the consignment of Duguid and his work to the background of Canadian military history. Thus, it is hardly surprising that few attempts have been made to fully explain why the project was abandoned. Nicholson, while acknowledging the value of Duguid's work, gives no explanation, simply stating that it was canceled after the Second World War. Reviewing Nicholson's volume, Cyril Falls went so far as to claim that the reasons why it was canceled were "fairly well known and need not be discussed". Historians seem to have taken this to heart and frequently note the unfinished account, but offer no rationalization.⁴ Those that do comment on Duguid routinely dispense with his tenure as head of the Historical Section (1921-1945) in a few words, usually limited to the lack of production, and then quickly move on to the more successful career of Stacey. For example, in *The Writing of Canadian History*, Carl Berger sums up Duguid's work in a single sentence – albeit a lengthy one – while describing Stacey's methods and accomplishments in some detail.⁵

What little commentary there is has been brief, and focuses primarily on two main points. First, that the Historical Section was given more duties that it could practically

carry out. In addition to compiling the official history, the Section was charged with the collection and classification of military documents, publishing historical material relating to the military history of Canada, assisting the British official historian, the Imperial War Graves Commission and private historians.⁶ Secondly, that production was hampered by the lack of professional historians; the Section's staff being composed of a mixture of civilian employees and serving army personnel, most of which had no specialized historical training. Indeed, the presence of professional historians is widely viewed as instrumental in the later success of Canadian official history. In the words of one former head of the Directorate of History, it has "made the difference between the quality and quantity of official history after the First and Second World Wars".⁷

Related to the latter point is the extent to which Duguid is personally to blame for the failure of the project. Here, A.M.J. Hyatt has argued that Duguid and his staff "struggled conscientiously with an enormous task for which they had little training and could rarely devote their full time", implying that Duguid was overwhelmed by a situation beyond his abilities or control. On the other hand, in his memoirs, Stacey contends that Duguid was directly responsible as he displayed little interest in the project, and makes it clear that he was unqualified as an historian, official or otherwise. Privately, Stacey was even harsher in his criticism, maintaining that Duguid's failure was not only unforgivable, but had proven to be "a millstone around my neck for years". Conversely, a recent examination concludes that while poor staff choices were made, the real culprit was the '*malaise militaire*' that gripped Canada immediately after the end of the Great War.⁸

While Duguid's role has been the subject of limited debate, there is general agreement on the two main points and they have endured with little variation since the history's cancellation in 1947. Yet these conclusions, however persuasive, lack depth and the questions as to why Duguid and his staff only produced one volume of the projected eight, and why it took until 1938, have yet to be satisfactorily answered. The claim that the Historical Section was overburdened certainly provides a compelling reason for its failure to complete the official history, but to date no one has thought to provide a detailed examination of exactly *what* the activities of the Section were, especially between 1921-1932, the year in which Duguid said he began writing. The near unanimous belief that Duguid was unqualified for the job has also prevented any evaluation of his methods or of him as an historian.

This work seeks to present a more complete, and more complex, view of the problems of the Historical Section, the history's cancellation, and Duguid, by emphasizing two interrelated themes. The first concerns the administration or management of the Historical Section and its relation to the production of the official history. Hyatt, Vance and others are correct in pointing out that the Historical Section was given too many duties, but as the Section's director, how Duguid managed or prioritized these tasks is perhaps the more important issue. Was the official history given precedence or was it one of a number of tasks, all of which were deemed equally important in Duguid's view? Furthermore, if the Historical Section was poorly managed, does some of the responsibility for its failure then belong to the army and the government as the architects of its overall structure, and slow reaction to any obvious problems?

The second theme addresses the so far neglected matter of Duguid as an historian. In this respect Duguid's role in shaping the official history has been ignored, a curious oversight as one considers that the attitudes and prejudices of the British and Australian official historians have proven to be contentious issues and grist for many a mill. What then were Duguid's methods, and was he incapable of doing the job, or was he a competent, if slightly unorthodox, historian? What function or purpose did he hope the official history would provide? Was his account coloured by preconceived notions of the unique nature of Canadian soldiers and the Canadian war experience? Much has been made of the various official and unofficial attempts to influence the British and Australian official histories and it is therefore also relevant to ask how Duguid dealt with attempts to influence his work.

The story of the Historical Section and its difficulties is told in three chapters that generally follow a chronological framework. Chapter One begins in 1915 and examines the early forerunners of the Section, the difficulties encountered by Canadian historical recorders, and carries through to the publication of the first, and only, volume in 1938. It stresses that all the organizations created to document the war effort suffered from structural problems and managerial errors. These were issues that a major reorganization in 1921 failed to correct, and which continued to affect the Historical Section into the 1920s and 1930s. Duguid's own management and departmental indifference further exacerbated the problems of this flawed organizational system.

Chapter Two interrupts the chronological flow with an analysis of Duguid's methods and how the official history was actually written, including the objections raised to

his treatment of the Second Battle of Ypres. Duguid had specific views about history and what the purpose of an official history should be, as well as strong beliefs about the qualities exhibited by Canadian soldiers. This helped shape not only how the official history was written but exerted a strong influence on matters of interpretation and emphasis. This chapter also discusses the disputes that occurred over Second Ypres, and of necessity briefly explores the battle itself in order to illustrate Duguid's attempts to arrive at an acceptable version of events that would both satisfy his critics and his own beliefs.

Chapter Three picks up the story in 1939 and traces the Historical Section's activities through the Second World War, its postwar reorganization and, finally, its cancellation in 1947. It argues that many of the problems outlined in the previous sections persisted during the war, resulting in an interruption in work that did not properly resume until late 1945. Examining the postwar period, this chapter reveals that there was a fundamental difference between the expectations of the government, general staff, and those of Duguid regarding the future and relevance of the official history. This in turn contributed to the belief that the project had 'missed the boat' and helped facilitate its dissolution in the postwar period of retrenchment. Finally, the conclusion will sum up, offer some general conclusions, and end with a comparison of Duguid to other First World War official historians to place the Canadian experience in context.

Notes

¹ Major-General C.C. Mann (VCGS) to Lieut.-General Charles Foulkes (CGS), 16 September 1946, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, Biog D, Directorate of History and Heritage, National Defence Headquarters (DHH). Subsequently cited as Duguid Biographical File (DBF).

² W.W. Murray, "Canada's Official War History: A Monumental Work," *Legionary*, Vol. XIII, No.12 (July 1938), p.6; W.B. Kerr, (Book Review), *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XX, No.1 (March 1939), p.65; C.P. Stacey, "Canada's Last War – And the Next," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No.3 (April 1939), p.248; idem, "The Nature of an Official History," *The Canadian Historical Association Report*, (1946), p.75; See also Stacey's private notes praising Duguid's research in, "Personal Log," (Notebook: Notes on WWI; CPS Personal Log, 1940; Private Notes), B90-0020/12, C.P. Stacey Papers, University of Toronto Archives (UTA). After its publication the Department of National Defence issued a pamphlet containing excerpts of positive reviews, possibly in an attempt to boost sales, see "Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919," (Book Reviews on Colonel Duguid's history of the Great War), 000.2 (D31), DHH.

³ G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962); C.P. Stacey, *A Date with History: Memoirs of a Canadian Historian* (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1983), p.67; idem, (Book Review), *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LXX, No.3 (September 1989), p.411. The two bibliographic essays appear in Marc Milner (ed), *Canadian Military History: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), p.395; and Robert Bothwell's, "Foreign Relations and Defence Policy," in *Canadian History: A Reader's Guide Volume 2 "Confederation to the Present*, ed by Doug Owram (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p.60; Carl A. Christie, "News from the Directorate of History," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 1, No.1 (Autumn 1992), p.99; Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), p.172; Sir Andrew Macphail to Duguid, 17 September 1936, Vol. 13, (File 13-1), Sir Andrew Macphail Papers, MG 30 D150, National Archives of Canada (NAC).

Duguid's obscurity in current literature even extends to the *Dictionary of Canadian Military History*. It lists the date of his death as 1962, even though Duguid published a history of the Canadian Grenadier Guards in 1965 and his obituary appears in the Canadian Historical Association's *Historical Papers* (1976). See David J. Bercuson and J.L. Granatstein (eds), *Dictionary of Canadian Military History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.70; Colonel A.F. Duguid, *History of the Canadian Grenadier Guards, 1760-1964* (Montreal: Gazette Printing Company, 1965); G.W.L. Nicholson, "Archer Fortescue Duguid 1887-1976," in *The Canadian Historical Association: Historical Papers* (1976), pp.268-271. For additional obituaries see Duguid A.F., Obituaries, Box 2, Folder F, Unnumbered File, DBF. Although very likely a typographical error, the fact that it has yet to be corrected is an indicator of Duguid's position in Canadian military history. A similar problem appears in Dennis Winter's *Haig's Command: A Reassessment* (London: Penguin Books, 1992 © 1991), which misidentifies the Canadian official historian as 'Charles' Duguid (p.318).

⁴ Nicholson, *CEF*, pp.xi-xiii; Cyril Falls, (Book Review), *International Journal*, Vol. XVIII, No.2 (Spring 1963), p.229. Some recent examples include Bill Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare: Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of

Toronto Press, 1992), p.245; Tim Cook, "Creating the Faith: The Canadian Gas Services in the First World War," *Journal of Military History*, Vol. 62 (October 1998), p.759, note 10; and Syd Wise, "The Black Day of the German Army: Australians and Canadians at Amiens, August 1918," in *1918: Defining Victory*, ed. by Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (Canberra: Army History Unit, Department of Defence, 1999), p.16.

⁵ Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900*. 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986 © 1976), pp.169-172. A similar approach is followed in W.A.B. Douglas, "Filling Gaps in the Military Past: Recent Developments in Canadian Official History," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 19, No.3 (Fall 1984); and Syd Wise, "Canadian Military History: A Comparative Report," *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Vol. 7, No.3 (1985).

⁶ This is also the argument put forth by Duguid in the preface to the official history, see *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919, General Series: Vol. 1: Chronicle: August 1914-September, 1915* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938), pp.viii-xiv. Hereafter, Duguid, *Official History*.

⁷ A.M.J. Hyatt, "Official History in Canada," in *Official Histories: Essays and Bibliographies from around the World*, ed by Robin Higham (Manhattan: Kansas State University Press, 1970), p.89; Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.169; Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, p. 172; Wise, "Canadian Military History," p.4; Richard A. Preston, "Canadian Military History: A Reinterpretation Challenge of the Eighties," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. XIX, No.1 (1989), p.95; Douglas, "Filling Gaps in the Military Past," p.113.

⁸ Hyatt, *ibid*, p.90; Stacey, *A Date with History*; Stacey to Dhist, 30 July 1962, Vol. 1, (CEF Correspondence), G.W.L. Nicholson Papers, MG 31 G19, NAC; A recent MA thesis expresses a like view, dismissing Duguid as "apathetic", see Thomas P. Leppard, "Richard Turner and the Battle of St. Eloi" (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Calgary, 1994), p.14; Shane B. Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire: The Canadian Corps in the Last 100 Days of the Great War* (Westport: Praeger, 1997), p.135.

Chapter One

The Troubled Emergence of the Historical Section, 1915-1938

Few historians would dispute the claim that the Canadian military was ill prepared for the First World War. Numerous accounts detail the inadequate training, poor equipment, political intrigue and general bureaucratic bungling that make up much of the early history of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF).¹ However, there is a general consensus that after learning hard battlefield lessons, and through extensive administrative reforms, the CEF went on to become one of the best formations on the Western Front. What is not often realized is that Canada was equally unprepared to document the exploits of its army and those assigned the task of recording the CEF's achievements did so with little guidance or support. For example, it is not generally known that in 1914 the army did not possess a Historical Section or even any pre-existing plans for the compilation and care of the records for soldiers on active service.² Forced to improvise, no less than three separate organizations were created and became involved in historical documentation – with varying degrees of efficiency and accuracy.

In fact, the early difficulties encountered by historical recorders were never fully overcome and, in some cases, continued to worsen. The purpose of this chapter, then, is not an examination of the writing of the official history, that being the focus of chapter two. Rather, it is an exploration into the backgrounds of those organizations in which an official account of the war was attempted or undertaken. A process, which will, hopefully,

demonstrate that structural or organizational problems and managerial errors, had as much to do with the failure of the official history process as the perceived incompetence or apathy of those involved.

The first and most prolific of the early organizations created was the Canadian War Records Office (CWRO), the brainchild of Sir Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook). Unable to find or create for himself a place in Britain's war effort, Aitken turned to Canada and through his friendship with Militia Minister Sam Hughes was able to secure appointments as the 'Canadian Eye Witness' and 'General Representative for Canada at the Front' in January and September 1915. One of the tasks assigned Aitken was the "work connected with records generally appertaining to the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Forces and particularly the reporting of all casualties therein". Vague instructions at best and ones that would have usurped the Chief Paymaster's authority over personnel records had an agreement not been reached that limited Aitken's work to historical records.³ Aitken immediately began assembling CEF records and by January 1916 had accumulated so much material that he requested \$25,000 from the Canadian government to aid in organizing the growing collection. It was granted, and in March the CWRO was officially established with over sixty writers, researchers and other staff, and later came to include the London staff of the Dominion archives.⁴

Until its dissolution the CWRO initiated and managed an impressive number of projects. It's Historical Section maintained copies of the War Diaries for every unit in France, kept a list of all honours and awards, assembled a collection of regimental badges,

and acted as custodian for the growing number of CEF records. The General Publicity Branch published a host of books and pamphlets including unit histories, historical summaries, and the *Canadian Daily Record*, a news digest of which 22,000 were distributed daily throughout the CEF. It also produced a large number of films and sponsored art and photographic exhibitions, the proceeds of which were used to establish the Canadian War Memorials Fund.⁵

But the CWRO is chiefly remembered for its three volume *Canada in Flanders: The Official Story of the Canadian Expeditionary Force* (1916-1918).⁶ Although popular – the first volume sold over 40,000 copies – they were dramatic accounts that contained numerous inaccuracies and British officials objected to glorification of Canadian efforts at the expense of Allied troops. Aitken admitted that the contemporary nature of his work made certain errors of fact unavoidable, but maintained that any “loss in accuracy” would be compensated for by a “gain in vividness”. Unconvinced, Sir Arthur Currie claimed that the series had “no value whatever as an historical document” and strongly objected to Aitken’s use of the word ‘official’ in the title. Duguid was also skeptical and recommended that Aitken’s work should not be accepted at face value but checked for accuracy.⁷

While the CWRO was collecting records of Canadian forces overseas, it was realized that no such provision had been made for similar work within Canada. In order to rectify the situation the government appointed Brigadier-General Ernest A. Cruikshank to the task in January 1917. Near retirement, Cruikshank had spent the war in command of Military District No. 13 and his sole qualification for the job appears to be that he was an

amateur military historian who had published several documentary histories of the War of 1812.⁸ Much like Aitken, the terms of his appointment were quite general; “to complete the history of the present war so far as... [it] relates to the work undertaken and carried out in Canada”. As such, Cruikshank's account was expected to include the recruiting, organization and transportation of the Canadian contingents, the work of official and semi-official bodies such as the War Purchasing Commission, and the activities of the numerous national charitable organizations. It also stipulated that Cruikshank and the CWRO should, if necessary cooperate and coordinate their efforts, but seemed to indicate that there should be separate histories for overseas forces and those activities within Canada.⁹ Shortly thereafter Cruikshank recommended the formation of a permanent Army Historical Section and in November 1918 he was named the first Director of the Historical Section of the General Staff.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the CEF was itself taking action to ensure that the Corps achievements would not be forgotten and in late 1918 an agreement between Currie and the Overseas Ministry established the third historical organization of the war, the Canadian War Narrative Section (CWNS). Unlike the CWRO or Cruikshank's Historical Section, the CWNS had a narrowly defined task; under the command of Brigadier-General Raymond Brutinel (GOC Canadian Machine Gun Corps) it was to write a detailed narrative of the Corps during the Hundred Days of 1918.¹¹ The intent seems to have been a specialized study that would be of use to the army, not the public or general reader. The army would no doubt have benefited from an examination of this type, but the decision to concentrate solely on the Hundred Days meant that any CWNS history would be incomplete.

Despite the obvious redundancy of three organizations for what was essentially one project, it seemed that the history of Canada's war effort was well in hand, but this was not the case. While the CWRO published a great deal of material, much of it was of questionable value as journalistic flair was often placed ahead of historical accuracy. Aitken even confessed that the second volume of *Canada in Flanders* was written to encourage recruiting, with accuracy presumably taking a back seat. A December 1918 report similarly stated that many of the CWRO's publications were issued "primarily for propaganda purposes". Furthermore, the majority of the material collected by the CWRO's Historical Section – including over four hundred cases of documents and five thousand parcels sent in by various units – had yet to be sorted and classified. Finally, the CWRO's dissolution and the staff's demobilization ensured that those most familiar with the records would no longer be connected with them.¹²

Like the CWRO, much of Cruikshank's work was also unsuitable for use in an official history. Cruikshank believed that before the history of the present war could be written it was necessary to have an account of Canada's military development up to 1914. It seems little objection to this was raised and in 1919 the first volume of his *History of the Organization, Development and Services of the Military and Naval Services of Canada from the Peace of Paris in 1763 to the Present Time. With Illustrated Documents* appeared. Five volumes in the series would eventually be completed – of which three were published – each consisting of a short narrative with several hundred pages of randomly selected supporting documents. This was also the format followed in Cruikshank's *Canadian War Records: A Narrative of the Formation and Operations of the First Canadian Division, to*

the End of the Second Battle of Ypres, May 4, 1915 (1921), which met with universal disapproval and although printed, was never published. Soon after, Cruikshank was retired and, according to C.P. Stacey, spent the remainder of his working life composing historical inscriptions of questionable accuracy for the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.¹³

The CWNS also experienced problems in the immediate postwar period that made any progress on their history difficult. Upon arriving in Ottawa the bulk of the CWNS staff discovered that officials there knew nothing of the organization and no arrangements for the Section's establishment had been made. A further blow was the reversion to Canadian rates of pay – significantly less than overseas rates – for those staff members not demobilized; causing several to request their discharge on the grounds of financial hardship. The Section also experienced several command changes in its short history; Major W.B. Wedd, who, for personal reasons, was demobilized in October 1919, replaced Brig-General Brutinel, and command of the Section fell to Major A.F. Duguid. Despite these obstacles the CWNS still managed to collect and organize a great deal of material, but neither the narrative of the CEF during the Hundred Days nor a proposed work on the Canadian Machine Gun Corps were ever completed.¹⁴

Due to these problems, work on any sort of official history had completely broken down by 1920. Of the three organizations created for the task, one had been disbanded and the other two had clearly lost their direction and seemed incapable of producing anything suitable. At this point, it was decided to undertake a wholesale reorganization of the official history process in order to provide a clearer mandate and expedite production.

While this reorganization eliminated many of the previous problems, it created a host of new ones, which, when coupled with departmental indifference, were to have a lasting impact on the Historical Section.

The initial reorganization plan called for the merger of the Army Historical Section and the CWNS, with Cruikshank remaining as Director and Duguid as Deputy Director. Cruikshank was to continue work on his aforementioned series on prewar military development and expand it to include the Great War. Under his supervision, Duguid was to commence writing an account of Canadian Forces outside Canada during the war. Although the order-in-council was referred to the Minister of Militia (Hugh Guthrie), the previously noted dissatisfaction with Cruikshank's efforts and his subsequent retirement necessitated a number of changes; which were made and approved in P.C. 1652 on 27 May 1921.¹⁵

Under the new arrangement the CWNS was still merged with the Historical Section, the difference being that Duguid was promoted to Colonel and made Director. And virtually the entire staff was replaced with men who had been staff officers in Divisional or Corps headquarters during the war. The proposed duties for the Section were also laid out and differed only slightly from the previous plan. The various tasks assigned the Section have been noted in a number of sources, but the exact terms of reference have never been published or examined in detail and as they offer insights into the Section's later difficulties it is worthwhile reproducing them in order to better explain their significance. They were as follows:

- (a) The collection, classification, co-ordination, preservation and safe custody of all war diaries, reports, official and other correspondence, maps, plans and other documents or material containing information and data relating to the participation of Canada and the Canadian Military Forces in the Great War.
- (b) The compilation and publication of a complete official history of the Recruiting, Organization, Mobilization, Equipment and Services of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Canada from the 4th August, 1914, to the completion of demobilization and the further records as defined in the aforesaid Order in Council of 17th January 1917 (P.C. 19).
- (c) The compilation and publication of a complete official historical account of the services of the Military Forces of Canada in the Great War out of Canada. This History will be supplemented by more detailed histories of the work of certain technical branches of the service.
- (d) The preparation and publication of Historical monographs, as required, on special military subjects connected with the History of Canada.
- (e) The compilation of such military historical information and data relating to Canada as may be required from time to time by the Historical Section (Military Branch) of the Committee of Imperial Defence.
- (f) The preparation of location ledgers for Canadian military units serving in the Field during the late War and the supply of necessary data to the Imperial War Graves Commission and the Honours and Awards Branch of the Record Office.
- (g) The supply of information from the records in its custody to properly accredited historical investigators and the facilitation of their research.¹⁶

Little fault can be found with regard to the first task as any such records would be necessary for an official history, but several problems are immediately apparent in the others. First, the previous decision to divide the history into separate series for activities

within and outside of Canada was not reversed. This was an obvious organizational error, as it would mean, for example, that the story of the First Contingent's experiences at Valcartier and Salisbury Plain – although interconnected – would be contained not only in separate volumes, but separate series with no guarantee of simultaneous publication. The mistake would eventually be corrected but its inclusion in the initial terms of reference is a telling reminder of the inexperience of the government and the Historical Section in planning the Official History.¹⁷ Second, the remaining tasks – such as the preparation of monographs - were only vaguely defined, and the scope and duration of assistance to the British Historical Section and private historians was open to interpretation. Third, and most importantly, there was no firm prioritization of the Section's duties. Under the order-in-council the preparation of location ledgers was potentially equal in importance to completing the official history. Indeed, Duguid would later claim that the Section was given a dual purpose, firstly the official history and secondly the supply of "authentic information concerning the military history of Canada".¹⁸ A final oversight was the failure to establish target dates for the publication of volumes or the history as a whole. Such a plan – however tentative – would have given the official history precedence and provided much needed guidance to the Historical Section.

Another issue not discussed was the permanent establishment of the Section and the status of its civilian employees. When asked by the Civil Service Commission if the civilian employees of the Section were to be permanent or temporary, the CGS (Major-General J.H. MacBrien) replied that while the Section's work was temporary the personnel should be given permanent status until the completion of their work. To this, the Minister

(Hugh Guthrie) responded that only temporary status could be granted, as the Historical Section was to continue for only two years at most. Duguid then argued that the staff should be made permanent as they had “unique and valuable services”, and even suggested that not doing so constituted a breach of faith as the positions were originally intended to be permanent and the staff had accepted them on that understanding. The government countered by pointing out that since expenditure on the Historical Section was chargeable to demobilization, it was of a temporary nature and thus had no need of a permanent staff. Although Duguid and others continued to raise the issue their requests were either ignored or turned down outright. Similarly, in August 1924 Edward Mortimer MacDonald, then Minister of National Defence, did not approve a recommendation by his deputy minister to place the staff of a permanent basis. Not until 1940 were the civilian employees – some of whom had been ‘temporary’ for over 17 years – finally granted permanent status. It is of interest to note that Duguid rarely pushed for additional staff, maintaining that staff increases would actually decrease efficiency, as any new personnel would require substantial training.¹⁹

Much of the reluctance to place the Section and its employees on a permanent footing can be traced to the general unwillingness of postwar governments to allocate funds for defence. Another factor was the discord within the newly created Department of National Defence. Intended to increase inter-service cooperation and reduce administration costs in a period of retrenchment, the department came into being on 1 January 1923. Initially endorsed by all three-service chiefs, problems arose as the CGS, Major-General J.H. MacBrien, sought to subordinate the interests of the air force and the navy to those of

the army in order to maintain the army's place as the predominant service. MacBrien also felt that the new departmental chief of staff (himself) should have authority over all services and be solely responsible for communication with the minister. Commodore Walter Hose, Director of the Naval Service, strongly objected to this and lobbied to have the navy placed on an equal footing with the army. He found a ready ally in the deputy minister of National Defence, G.J. Desbarats, who, taking advantage of defence minister George Graham's apathy, frustrated Macbrien's efforts to assert his authority as chief of staff and began to coordinate policy from his own office.²⁰

Relations between the three quickly deteriorated, so much so that Hose and MacBrien would scarcely speak to one another. MacBrien became so distracted by the quarrel that he began to neglect his duties to the point that he even refused to assign priority to two competing defence plans; war with the United States or planning for an overseas expeditionary force. As the feud continued so did the turmoil within the department, and it only ceased with MacBrien's resignation in June 1927.²¹ This episode was particularly damaging to the Historical Section as it occurred at a time when it needed guidance on what direction its efforts should be focused. Indeed, successive ministers did not provide this guidance, and MacBrien, preoccupied with departmental in-fighting and plagued with financial difficulties, could offer assistance only infrequently.

MacBrien's resignation in 1927 returned a semblance of order to the Department and with it a renewed interest in the Historical Section, particularly its activities and why comparatively little had been published. In order to answer these questions the new CGS (Major-General H.C. Thacker) had Duguid prepare a memorandum to outline the Section's

work. Together, this memo and another report submitted later, reveal that the Historical Section was not neglecting its duties, it was in fact, overwhelmed by them. Since its reorganization the Section had sorted and indexed 135 tons of records from overseas units and formations in Canada, with 10.5 tons still remaining to be examined. It should be noted that throughout the 1920s and 30s the Section continued to receive shipments of documents from various departments, individuals and Military Districts – all requiring sorting and classifying. In addition it had indexed over 7000 photographs, answered approximately 8000 enquiries, composed inscriptions for memorials, and provided information and assistance to the Imperial War Graves Commission. The Section had also prepared monographs on various aspects of Canadian military history, researched battle honours, designed and saw to completion the Memorial Chamber in the Peace Tower, and had devoted considerable time to assisting regimental historians and the British Official Historian. In all, the Section had compiled 6,432 pages of material, 150 maps, 4,288 charts and 12,000 cards.²²

These tasks Duguid claimed, had retarded progress on the official history and he recommended that the Section's work be cut back to expedite publication. He wished to discontinue the practice of compiling monographs, refuse most requests for information unless otherwise directed and stop proofreading regimental histories. If his suggestions were approved, Duguid confidently predicted publication of the first volume by 1 January 1929, with further volumes appearing at the rate of one per year. His proposed reductions would have significantly reduced the Section's workload, but there were still a number of tasks Duguid was unwilling to abandon. These included assisting the British Official

Historian, the Imperial War Graves Commission, and aiding communities in the erection of war memorials.²³

What Duguid's reports fail to mention is that the Section itself had a hand in delaying the official history by broadly interpreting the terms of its reorganization. Under Cruikshank information was supplied to enquiries "whenever practical", but after Duguid became Director, virtually all requests for information were extensively researched and answered.²⁴ Many were legitimate inquiries regarding pensions, claims for extra pay, or graves registration, but many more bordered on the obscure or bizarre. A small sampling includes research on the service of Danes in the CEF in response to a letter from Shanghai, a "perfectly legitimate question" according to Duguid. Then there was an unsuccessful attempt to trace the identity of a fallen Canadian officer for a German officer so that he might convey his condolences to the man's family. The strangest request, however, was probably an inquiry by a man desiring to know what happened at "5am, zero hour, on 20th August 1916", as part of his attempt to prove that Canada was of the tribe of Benjamin. At times the Section was even asked to undertake genealogical research or provide information on land grants and titles - services which the Section was certainly not intended to provide.²⁵ But occasionally, Duguid would decline to answer questions stating that he and his staff were simply too busy preparing the official history.²⁶

Related to these inquiries was the preparation of monographs on various aspects of Canadian military history for official and other purposes. For the Great War this included supplying local and national war memorial committees with lists of battles and suggested inscriptions, composing outline histories of CEF units, and specialized studies such as a

summary of Alberta's contribution to the war effort for the Edmonton Board of Trade. Material for lectures was also compiled for the Royal Military College and Canadian officers attending British staff colleges. Early Canadian history was not neglected and monographs were prepared on the militia of New France, the Siege of Quebec (1775-1776), and the first Siege of Louisbourg (1775), the American War of Independence, the War of 1812, and the development of the Canadian militia. In addition, the Section was called upon to provide information for Members of Parliament, the press, and for specific events such as the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation.²⁷

Researching battle honours for Canadian units and work on the Memorial Chamber also proved laborious. A scheme for awarding honours was devised by Duguid in 1923 and came to include not only the Great War but the Boer War, the campaigns in Northwest Canada (1885), and the Fenian Raids. The time devoted to the subject varied, but at one point virtually the entire staff was working on it, and not until 1932 could it be claimed that this project was complete.²⁸ Likewise, work on the Memorial Chamber began in 1926 and continued even after it was opened in 1928. What is significant about this work is that Duguid was initially to write only a series of inscriptions for the project but later submitted a plan for the entire design that was approved and which replaced the original. Duguid's plan involved a complex arrangement of inscriptions, symbols, devices and figures from the CEF and earlier Canadian history to provide a memorial of national sacrifice. This was obviously a very personal project for Duguid and he spent a great deal of time designing and supervising the implementation of the over 800 separate carvings. Duguid is also

credited with the idea for the Book of Remembrance, and assisted in its planning and implementation – a task that was not completed until 1942.²⁹

But perhaps the most time consuming task undertaken was assistance to regimental historians and the British Official Historian. It was the policy of the Department to furnish all possible assistance to accredited regimental historians in order to halt the “spread of erroneous and deceptive statements”. The Historical Section, therefore, not only helped with research but read and checked the works before publication. By 1929 the Section had checked and commented on eight completed manuscripts and was assisting in the production of a number of others, including one detailing regimental mascots and other animals in the CEF. This type of detailed research and editing was a task that even Duguid admitted could not be completed quickly. Similarly, considerable time was devoted to supplying the British official historian with information on Canadian operations, commenting on draft chapters, and generally arguing over his interpretations. Duguid also circulated the British chapters to surviving CEF officers and forwarded their comments. The time spent on these activities was justified by claiming that regimental histories were valuable supplements to the future official history and that researching them provided a greater understanding of various operations. On several occasions he also stated that due to Canadian comments the British official historian was forced to rewrite portions of his work.³⁰ However, his frequent assertions of this situation give the impression that he was attempting to justify any delays and impress his superiors with his ability to affect changes to the British account. At the same time, the knowledge gained in assisting regimental historians was not proportional to the time devoted to researching and checking their work,

since many of them were never intended as 'history', but rather as tributes to the heroism of the units' members.³¹

Allowing researchers free access to the Section's holdings might have alleviated some of its problems but the fragility of many of the records forced it to restrict access.³² In line with the department's policy on 'deceptive statements' this was also used as a means to control what was released and who it was released to. While only accredited regimental historians were allowed access to the Section's records, information was provided to other researchers, but not to those suspected of holding views contrary to what was acceptable. This was the case with W.B. Kerr, a University of Buffalo history professor and former CEF gunner. In 1929 he published a memoir of his experiences, using material prepared for him by the Historical Section, that was critical if not scornful of CEF officers. Based upon this and Duguid's claim that he had misused information provided to him, Kerr's subsequent requests for information were summarily denied. This policy was not always popular and among its critics was the prominent veteran author Will Bird. In the preface to his *The Communication Trench* (1933), Bird remarked that the war records were "more closely guarded than the gold of the mint, and it is far easier to obtain a few bars of the latter than to gain access to records which should be available to any Canadian...".³³

Duguid's explanations for the delay convinced Thacker and he recommended that the Section's activities should be reduced and completion of the official history made its primary objective. Defence Minister, J.L. Ralston, however, was not so optimistic and decided to appoint a committee to investigate the "use and administration of the Historical Section."³⁴ The committee was to consider if the history should be written at all, and if so,

whether it should be written while participants were still living or left for a later date. It was also asked to determine if any such work would be best continued under the Historical Section or transferred to the Dominion Archives. Duguid seems to have suspected that the history's feasibility was in question and in his report to Thacker he stressed that the complete picture of Canada's war effort could only be told with the aid of participants. He also warned that:

...the writing of history fifty years after the event presents an entirely different problem; surmise then takes the place of knowledge, and imagination must do duty for experience; the actors are dead, the wisdom they acquired so hardly lies buried with them in the grave forever.³⁵

Ralston's decision was probably influenced by the furor that had erupted following the release of the Section's only major publication; Sir Andrew Macphail's *The Medical Services* (1925) – the first of a planned series of volumes on the CEF's ancillary services.³⁶ Although he had been asked by MacBrien to exclude needless criticism of individuals, Macphail's work was extremely critical. Arguing that the medical services touched upon every aspect of the CEF, he wrote that it was "impossible for me to avoid consideration of the management of the war as a whole...". Armed with this self-appointed mandate, Macphail freely condemned Valcartier as a mistake, chronicled the miseries of Salisbury Plain and noted the poor quality of Canadian equipment. But Macphail's strongest criticisms were saved for the war's administration and Sir Sam Hughes, a man whose career he thought was "a warning to democracy" and "an abomination to all men lest they attempt things beyond their reach".³⁷

Hughes was only recently deceased and Macphail's views proved so unpopular that reviewers were as harsh to his work as he had been to Hughes. E.S. Ryerson complained

that too much space had been devoted to political controversies and not enough to the activities of the services in the field. He also felt that some of Macphail's statements about Hughes bordered on "cheap journalism" and suggested that an editorial board of medical experts to oversee the work would have been advisable. The *Toronto Star* was equally critical, claiming that "the official historian has not shown that impartiality which enables the reader to form a truly unbiased opinion". W.B. Kerr's review was kinder but noted that not every policy condemned by Macphail deserved censure. Not all the reviews were negative though; since the *Legionary* praised Macphail's candor and suggested that his blunt criticism of the war's "higher-ups" had made the government wary of publishing further volumes of official history.³⁸ This may well have been correct, but given the adverse reaction to Macphail's work, Ralston can hardly be blamed for not wanting an entire series of official publications similar in tone.

While the parameters of the committee had been established quickly, settling the make-up of the committee proved more difficult. It was hoped that Sir Arthur Currie would act as chairman but citing ill health he declined and Henry Marshall Tory, President of the National Research Council was suggested instead. This was deemed acceptable but meant that the committee could not be held before the fall of 1928 as Tory had a number of previous commitments. Other potential members considered were J.F.B Livesay and George Hambleton, both of the Canadian Press, Sir Andrew Macphail, K.M. Perry, J.M. Macdonnell and C.J. Macmillan, the latter three being former senior officers in the CEF now in civilian life. After some months the composition of the committee was finalized and included Tory, Thacker, Adam Shortt, Chairman of the Historical Documents

Publication Board, Norman Rogers, former secretary to Prime Minister Mackenzie King and later minister of National Defence (1939-1940), and Lieut.-Colonel Wilfred Bovey, Director of Extra-Mural Relations for McGill University and formerly the commander of the Canadian Section at GHQ. One of the concerns of the government was not to include members who would have to incur travel expenses, so that the only out-of-town member included was Bovey. Strangely, and in what seems a conflict of interest, one of Duguid's assistants, Captain Frank Cummins, acted as the committee's secretary.³⁹

The committee finally convened for three days in late December 1928 and issued its report – of slightly more than two pages – early in the New Year.⁴⁰ Duguid's reaction to the committee's recommendations must have been guarded as it represented somewhat of a mixed bag for the Historical Section. To his certain relief the committee felt that the official history should be written and that it should be completed sooner rather than later in order to make full use of the research already completed and the knowledge of those participants still living. The committee further recommended that the Section be transferred from the department of National Defence and made a separate branch of the Dominion Archives. This was a decision that was probably not welcome as Duguid had argued earlier that National Defence was the "logical custodian" for all war records. In a move that would have pleased E.S. Ryerson, they also advised that an advisory board consisting of a chairman, the CGS, a historian, an economist, and one other member be appointed to oversee production of the history. The board was to advise the historian on any and all matters when required, assist in obtaining evidence and review all material before publication. The board was also to have the right to have opinions differing from

that of the historian recorded in appendices; otherwise the historian was to have complete editorial discretion.⁴¹ The latter point was obviously aimed at preventing controversies such as the one caused by Macphail's work, although had this policy been in place when it was published, an entire volume of appendices would likely have been needed to assuage its critics.

What must have caused Duguid some distress was the committee's view that the official history not be a straightforward military narrative. While recognizing the value of such a study, it was the members' opinion that any official history should be:

...a history of the national effort of Canada in the face of a great emergency which demanded the mobilization and organization of the entire resources of our people...the proposed history should present a clear-cut picture of the progressive efforts of the Canadian people during a critical and formative period in our development as a nation. It should deal not only with the facts of war, but with the influence of the war upon our social, economic and political institutions.⁴²

The strictly military aspects of the war, they felt, could be dealt with in several subsidiary volumes but should still emphasize the war as a national struggle. Exactly what form the general history would take – one volume or a series of volumes, for example – the committee did not say. It was decided that responsibility was to be left for the person appointed by the government to actually write the history. This was not to be Duguid but an historian to be named later; Duguid's services would be retained but only for the preparation of material to be used in the history. Much like P.C. 1652, no mention of a timetable for history's completion was included, but as Bovey later explained to the new CGS (Major-General A.G.L. McNaughton), the committee thought it would take seven or eight years.⁴³

Fortunately for Duguid – as the role of the Historical Section and indeed his career appeared to be in jeopardy – none of the recommendations were ever implemented. For this, Duguid had McNaughton to thank since shortly after becoming CGS he had questioned some of the committee’s findings. In principle, McNaughton agreed with the majority of the committee’s ideas and applauded the notion of a history celebrating the Canadian war effort. But McNaughton wished to invert the committee’s suggestion that the national effort be emphasized above the purely military actions of the CEF. The CEF, he argued, was where “the [national] effort was made manifest” and upon it “was riveted...the attention of the Canadian people”. McNaughton further expressed concern that if social, political and economic factors were allowed to dominate the official history, the military might lose the benefits of the research already completed. Like Thacker, he also enthusiastically endorsed Duguid as the “man best qualified” to write the official history. McNaughton’s praise may have been influenced by the fact that he and Duguid had served together and he (and no doubt others) must have been uneasy at the prospect of an interpretation of the CEF from someone other than a serving officer. Although several documents were drafted authorizing the changes put forth, McNaughton’s intervention, financial restraints, and general indifference, ensured that the proposed reorganization never went beyond the planning stages.⁴⁴

In the absence of any firm direction, very little changed and the Historical Section continued to operate much as it had always done. Duguid even reversed his previous recommendation that the Section’s work be reduced and for the next three years it continued to answer enquiries, write monographs and aid regimental historians.⁴⁵

However, a response to a routine question in the House of Commons in May 1932 about the Historical Section's progress was to dramatically alter its priorities. Defence Minister Donald M. Sutherland not only announced that a history was to be written, but that Duguid would write it, and expressed hope that the first volume would be ready by the next year. Judging from Sutherland's remarks it seems this was not meant as an official appointment, as Duguid later claimed, but as a general statement of intent. Indeed, one would expect an official appointment to be made through an order-in-council or similar document, and not as a brief declaration in the House of Commons. McNaughton and Duguid, on the other hand, regarded it as exactly that and with uncharacteristic swiftness took appropriate action. A month old request by Duguid to reduce the Section's workload was immediately accepted, and he began writing shortly thereafter.⁴⁶

Ironically, this development coincided with growing public dissatisfaction over the lack of an official account. Among the most vocal critics were the veterans themselves who were alarmed that an official history might not appear within their lifetimes. The Canadian Legion passed a resolution, that was passed on to the Prime Minister, calling for immediate action so that veterans could "ensure that such a history...shall be a true record of the sacrifice, the suffering, and the achievements of our soldiers, sailors and airmen...". Will Bird expressed a similar fear that many veterans would be dead "before these publications promised for fifteen years are given to the public". Some even questioned the ability of the Historical Section to complete the job; one veteran commented that if left to the General Staff of Britain or Canada "it will be 1999 before they are finished". Legion

president, J.S. Roper, went even further, suggesting that the government appoint a veteran to the task.⁴⁷

Veterans were not the only ones to lament the absence of an official history. The historians, William Wood and W.B. Kerr, urged the government to follow through with the history's completion; Wood even suggested a one-volume history for "every intelligent Canadian" in addition to the planned multi-volume series. The lack of a Canadian account was also noted in the press and articles echoing the veterans' call for immediate action became more frequent. The government could offer no explanations, and before his announcement Sutherland admitted that he did not know why the history had not been published or even how many volumes it was to comprise. Senators were equally puzzled and could not see any "sound reason" for delay and were unhappy with the government's answers. One even proposed that the history should be decided in an open competition with the winner's work declared 'official'.⁴⁸

Despite fears to the contrary, work had been progressing on the official history. One section had been circulated for comments, and the preliminary drafts of another were nearing completion by early 1933. Claiming that approximately one quarter of the first four volumes had already been written, Duguid predicted publication of the first in the 1933-34 fiscal year, and reiterated his belief that further volumes could be completed at the rate of one per year. This timetable was later amended to June or December 1936 – depending if the volume was to end in May or September 1915. The latter, was chosen and publication was again pushed forward to May 1937, a date that was not met but one that Duguid

thought had been “almost correct”. A final printing delay in May 1938 meant that the work could not be issued until June; some 17 years after it had first been authorized.⁴⁹

Many of the post 1932 publication delays were a continuation of the problems of the 1920s; namely Duguid’s unwillingness to significantly decrease the Section’s workload and abandon its extraneous activities. Efforts were made to reduce the amount of time spent answering enquiries, but this and the preparation of monographs were never wholly eliminated. Aid to regimental historians and the provision of triplicate war diaries to perpetuating militia units was not discontinued despite Duguid’s admission that it delayed the history by an “unpredictable extent”. If anything, this self-appointed duty actually increased during the 1930s, and by 1938 over fifty such historians had been assisted in some manner. The British official history was still being written and the practice of supplying information and commenting on draft chapters was also continued. In all fairness, it is difficult see how Duguid could have refused to cooperate with the British official historian or simply disregarded enquiries from bodies such as the Board of Pension Commissioners and the Commission for the Investigation of Illegal Warfare Claims.⁵⁰

Duguid’s interest in outside projects had not diminished and he undertook several, including the Great War Motion Picture Committee. Formed in February 1933 after the discovery of thousands of feet of film shot by CWRO camera operators that had been presumed lost, the Committee was to edit the footage and produce a Canadian film of the war. The film, titled *Lest We Forget*, was delayed for almost a year until March 1935 as the Committee – including Duguid and another member of the Historical Section – debated every aspect of the film’s content.⁵¹ Duguid also prepared an article on Vimy to be

included in the Vimy Pilgrimage guidebook and wrote several more articles on other aspects of the war. Throughout this period, work on the Book of Remembrance was continued, and for it the Historical Section conducted research to determine the number and services of all Canadians who served in the war.⁵²

Some delays, however, cannot be attributed to Duguid and his staff. For example, the original maps for the operations at Festubert and Givenchy were found to be so inaccurate that they had to be redrawn from later surveys and contemporary aerial photographs. Then, the unexpected donation of original field messages of the 2nd Infantry Brigade for Second Ypres in late 1937 compelled Duguid to revise the already completed chapters. Similar additions were made when a number of German accounts were suddenly made available. Although promised, the Naval Service failed to write an account of the navy's activities during the war and thus it fell to the Historical Section to provide one. There was the previously mentioned printing delay, and production of the volume's maps was also held up for some time. Finally, due to the death of the translator, work on the French version was suspended in 1937 and was not resumed until 1940.⁵³

Given the importance attached to the official history, the obvious question is why Duguid allowed himself and his staff to become so distracted by what should have been secondary tasks? Disinterest and incompetence are clearly not sufficient explanations considering their dedication towards the tasks undertaken and the amount of material produced. It can be argued, as Duguid later did, that until his appointment as official historian in 1932 he was simply fulfilling the many terms of P.C. 1652.⁵⁴ Yet, this does not

explain why some of the duties were expanded upon or why Duguid became involvement in outside projects such as the Memorial Chamber and the Book of Remembrance. Moreover, the order-in-council plainly states that one of the Section's duties was the preparation and publication of an official history. The evidence indicates that Duguid viewed himself and the Historical Section as not only the chroniclers of the Great War but also the custodians of its memory; hence the policy limiting access to the records to all but accredited regimental historians.⁵⁵ Therefore it was perfectly reasonable – if not imperative – to spend time providing accurate information to numerous enquiries, checking regimental histories, editing war diaries for perpetuating units, and preparing detailed comments for the British Official Historian regarding Canadian operations. It was this same feeling of responsibility or duty that prompted involvement in the Memorial Chamber, local and national war memorials, the Currie libel trial in 1928, and a host of other activities. It seems that Duguid also enjoyed the notion of the Historical Section as a “universal encyclopedia” of Canadian history.⁵⁶

Although the analogy can be carried too far, the plight of the Historical Section in the 1920s and 30s paralleled that of the army itself as both were in need of guidance that was not forthcoming.⁵⁷ The Historical Section's 1921 reorganization – intended to correct problems found in previous ad hoc arrangements – provided little direction due to its vague terms of reference and numerous supplementary duties. This problem was compounded by the general staff's preoccupation with their own political battles and successive ministers who did not know what the Section was doing and had little inclination to find out. For his part, Duguid interpreted many of his responsibilities in the broadest manner possible and, at

times, went out of his way to take on extra work. It would seem, therefore, that the Historical Section's problems were less the result of incompetence or indifference than they were of mismanagement at all levels.

It should also be remembered that no matter how quickly government, veterans and the public wished the history to be finished, it was not a project that could be completed quickly. Thousands of documents had to be examined and their relevance determined, a task made more difficult by the unorganized nature of the material and the frequent receipt of new information. Research was further complicated by the need to consult records relating to British and Allied units not in the possession of the Historical Section. Interviewing surviving CEF officers, supplying them with draft chapters, and incorporating their comments, also proved time consuming, particularly as not all communicated their comments as quickly as Duguid might have wished.⁵⁸ Inevitably, there were also disagreements over interpretation and emphasis that required additional time to settle, which, together with Duguid's approach to the writing process, form the basis for the following chapter.

Chapter One Notes

¹ Perhaps the best summary of the Corps' early difficulties is Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House, 1993), Chs.1-5.

² Duguid, *Official History*, p.156.

³ Duguid, *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919, General Series. Vol. 1: Chronology, Appendices and Maps* (Ottawa: King's Printer), No. 229 (Notes on Officers Holding Special Appointments), pp.161-162, [Subsequently cited as Duguid, *Appendices*]; Hyatt, "Official History in Canada," p.88.

⁴ Ibid; Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.164; Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1996), p.31.

⁵ Ibid, p.32; Hyatt, "Official History in Canada," p.88; Vance, *Death So Noble*, pp.164-165, 169; J. Castell Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs (1918)* (Toronto: The Canadian Annual Review Limited, 1919), pp.356-357; "Canadian War Records," in *Report of the Ministry, Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1918* (London, 1918), pp.453-460; Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie, *Lord Beaverbrook: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p.127; Alan R. Young, "We throw the torch: Canadian Memorials of the Great War and the Mythology of Heroic Sacrifice," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 24, No.4 (Winter 1989-90), p. 10. For a detailed account of the Canadian War Memorials Fund see, Maria Tippet, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

⁶ Aitken wrote the first two volumes, while Charles G.D. Roberts, later a respected Canadian poet, completed the third.

⁷ Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship*, p.32; Chisholm and Davie, *Lord Beaverbrook*, p.129; Hyatt, "Official History in Canada," p.88; Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.165; "The Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919: Guide to Material Compiled and Sources Available," 15 March 1947, p.3, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG 30 D252, NAC.

⁸ P.C. 19, 17 January 1917, RG 24, vol. 1732, NAC; Syd Wise, "Canadian Military History," p.4.

⁹ P.C. 19, 17 January 1917, RG 24, vol. 1732, NAC.

¹⁰ Hyatt, "Official History in Canada," p.89; P.C. 2814, 15 November 1918; due to a misunderstanding the Section was initially not under the direction of the General Staff, but the Adjutant-General, see Cruikshank to Minister of Militia and Defence (S.C. Mewburn), 28 October 1918; (DHS 1-4-B), RG 24, vol. 1732, NAC.

¹¹ Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire*, p.134; Brigadier-General Raymond Brutinel to Minister of Militia, 16 July 1919, RG 24, (DHS 1-4, vol. 8), vol. 1732, NAC.

¹² Young, "We throw the torch," p. 10; Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.165; Tippet, *Art at the Service of War*, p.20; Lieutenant N.R. Wright to Lieut-Colonel Parkinson, no date but late 1918 or early 1919, (DHS 1-4-C), RG 24, vol. 1732; Duguid to DCGS, (draft memo, not sent), no date but February 1947, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG 30 D252. A number of the CWRO's staff were later offered employment with Cruikshank's Historical Section, see Cruikshank to Lieutenant N.R. Wright, 14 August 1919, (DHS 1-4-C), RG 24, vol. 1732; NAC.

¹³ Hyatt, "Official History in Canada," p.89; Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.65.

¹⁴ Major W.B. Forster to Brig.-General Brutinel, 30 June 1919; Sergeant James Duff to Brutinel, 31 July 1919; Sergeant H.W. Cooper to Brutinel, 2 August 1919; Major W.B. Wedd to Cruikshank, 18 October 1919; RG 9, III, D2, (RB-7), vol. 4031, NAC; Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire*, pp.134-135.

¹⁵ P.C. 488, 16 February 1921, RG 24, (DHS 1-4-C), vol. 1732, NAC. This order in council was itself an expansion on a draft submission to the Militia Council by the CGS (Major-General J.H. MacBrien), see "Draft Submission to Militia Council," 15 November 1920.; P.C. 1652, 27 May 1921, Box 1, Folder A, File 3, DBF.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ The separate series format was never officially amended but the evidence clearly shows that Duguid and his staff quickly decided on nine general volumes (later eight) with several supplementary volumes on specific services. By the time the parameters of the first volume were formally decided in 1937 there was no question that it would cover the CEF at home and abroad. See Duguid to CGS (Major-General E.C. Ashton), 30 March 1937, (DHS 10-10, vol. II): "Memorandum On The Official History 15 December 1937," 17 December 1937, p.5, (DHS 10-10, vol. 3); RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC

¹⁸ "Memorandum on the Historical Section," 5 January 1928, p.1, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732, NAC.

¹⁹ W. Foran, (Secretary, Civil Service Commission) to Major-General Eugene Fiset (Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence), 8 July 1920; Hugh Guthrie (Minister of Militia) to Sir James Lougheed (Acting Minister, Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment), 12 May 1921; Fiset to Major-General J.H. MacBrien (CGS), 20 July 1921, (MacBrien's reply on same); H.W. Brown (Assistant Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence) to Mr. Simmins, 12 August 1921, (Comments by Hugh Guthrie, on same); Duguid to MacBrien, 26 August 1921; "Notes and Recommendations Regarding the Permanency of the Historical Section, General Staff," 20 February 1923, p.6; (DHS 1-4-B), RG 24, vol. 1732; "Precis of Situation Regarding Civilian Personnel," 14 October 1929, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732; Duguid to CGS, 1 March 1940, (DHS 1-4, vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 1732; "Memorandum," 30 December 1935, (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755; Duguid to CGS (Major-General E.C. Ashton), 30 September 1937, (DHS 1-4-B), RG 24, vol. 1732; NAC.

²⁰ Norman Hillmer and William McAndrew, "The Cunning of Restraint: General J.H. MacBrien and the Problems of Peacetime Soldiering," *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No.4 (Spring 1979), pp.41-43; Stephen J. Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp.149, 153-155.

²¹ Hillmer and McAndrew, "The Cunning of Restraint," p.43.; Harris, *Canadian Brass*, p.155.

²² "Memorandum on the Historical Section," 5 January 1928, pp.1-4 (HQS 5393), RG 24 vol. 2732, NAC; "The Historical Section (General Staff): Work Carried out under P.C. 1652 of 27th May 1921 up to 20th April 1929," 24 April 1929, pp.1,5, Box 1, Folder A, File 11, DBF.

²³ "Memorandum on the Historical Section," 5 January 1928, p.3, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732, NAC.

²⁴ *Report of the Department of Militia and Defence Canada, 1920*, (Ottawa, 1920), p.8, 1921, p.17. For the change in policy after the reorganization see the annual reports for 1922, p.24, 1923, p.35, and especially 1924, p.44. [hereafter *Annual Reports*]

²⁵ *Annual Reports, 1924*, p.44, 1925, p.46, 1939, p.68; Brig.-General Frank Meighen to Duguid, 15 October 1929 and Duguid's reply 29 October 1929; Duguid to George H. Gilles, 10 August 1927 and Gilles' reply 11 August 1927; (DHS 3-1, vol. 1), vol. 1734; "The Historical Section (General Staff)," 20 June 1942, pp.4-5, (GAQ 4-15J), vol. 1813; RG 24, NAC. Further enquires and the Section's responses can be found in the aforementioned vol. 1734 file as well as, (DHS 3-1, vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 1740, NAC; and "Memorandum written in reply to detailed inquiry," Box 2, Folder D, File 65, DBF.

²⁶ See Duguid to Arthur Yonker, 20 February 1922, (DHS 3-1, vol. 1), vol. 1734; Duguid to Brig.-General R.O. Alexander, 21 December 1935; and Duguid to J. Lack, 19 June 1937, (DHS 10-23, vol. 2), vol. 1759; RG 24, NAC.

²⁷ *Annual Reports, 1923*, p.33, 1924, p.42, 1925, pp.44-45, 1927, p.37, 1928, p.39, 1929, p.37; "The Historical Section (General Staff)," 20 June 1942, p.3, (GAQ 4-15J), RG 24, vol. 1813. A list of monographs for use in the *Official History* can be found in "Official History Monographs," no date, (File 7), RG 24, vol. 6998; NAC.

²⁸ *Annual Reports, 1923*, p.32, 1924, p.42, 1928, p.38, 1932, p.39; Duguid, *Official History*, pp.x-xi.

²⁹ *Annual Reports, 1926*, pp.46-47, 1929, p.38; Young, "We throw the torch," pp.13-14, and footnote 53, pp. 25-26. The inscriptions that Duguid wrote for the Chamber are reproduced in *The Canadian Forces In The Great War: The Record of Five Years of Active Service* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1947), and a key to the carvings is in "Explanation of the Historical Carvings in the Memorial Chamber," (File 52), RG 24, vol. 1884, NAC.

³⁰ "Memorandum on the Historical Section," 5 January 1928, pp.3-5, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732; Duguid to Lieut. -Colonel K.R. Marshall, 7 January 1928, (DHS 9-1), RG 24, vol. 1754; NAC; *Annual Reports, 1925*, p.45; Sir Andrew MacPhail, *Official History of the*

Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919: The Medical Services (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1925), pp. v-vi [Duguid's Preface], hereafter, Macphail, *Medical Services*. Duguid's claims that Canadian comments significantly altered the British official history can be found in, *Annual Reports, 1927*, p.38, 1939, p.68; "British and Canadian Official Histories of the Great War, 1914-1919," 6 April 1932, p.1, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732; "Memorandum on the Official History," 15 December 1937, p.6 (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755; Duguid to Brig.-General Victor Odlum, 4 October 1938, Vol. 3, (Colonel A.F. Duguid), Victor Odlum Papers, MG 30 E300; "The Historical Section (General Staff), 20 June 1942, p.2, (GAQ 4-15J), RG 24, vol. 1813; NAC.

³¹ Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.173.

³² This policy was adopted very early on and was reaffirmed later, see Cruikshank to General Staff, 16 April 1920, (DHS 1-4-C), RG 24, vol. 1732; and Duguid to CGS (McNaughton), 4 May 1935, (DHS 9-1), RG 24, vol. 1754; NAC.

³³ The correspondence between Kerr, the Historical Section, and the CGS, is in (DHS 3-2), RG 24, vol. 1732, NAC. Kerr was allowed supervised access to the Historical Section's library in 1933 to research an article on Canadian war literature, and Duguid's negative attitude was only reinforced by the published results. In his article, Kerr voiced concern that little in the way of official history had appeared and although he blamed the government and a cavalier Canadian attitude towards history for delays, Duguid was obviously not pleased. He must have been particularly sensitive to the remark that the regimental histories, which he and his staff had checked, were "not history but annals". See "Historical Literature on Canada's Participation in the Great War," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XIV, No.3 (December 1933), pp.427-428; and (Book Review), *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XIII, No.2 (June 1932), in which Kerr notes the delays "in issuance of the official histories," (p.216). Will Bird. *The Communication Trench* (Amherst, N.S.: privately published, 1933), preface.

³⁴ Thacker (CGS) to deputy minister (Desbarats), 17 January 1928; Desbarats to Thacker, 30 January 1928; (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732, NAC.

³⁵ Desbarats to minister (Ralston), 3 March 1928; "Memorandum on the Historical Section," 5 January 1928, p.7; (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732, NAC.

³⁶ Although official, Macphail's work was not the first to deal with the medical services. A government sponsored but privately written account had been published a year earlier, see A.E. Snell. *The C.A.M.C with the Canadian Corps during the Last Hundred Days of the Great War* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1924).

³⁷ Sir Andrew Macphail to Major-General J.H. MacBrien, (draft letter), 20 January 1923, Vol. 3, (File 3-26), Sir Andrew Macphail Papers, MG 30 D150, NAC; Macphail, *Medical Services*, pp.24, 27-35, 201, see also Chs. XIII, XV, XVI.

³⁸ E.S. Ryerson, (Book Review), *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. VI, No.2 (1925), pp.260-262; *Toronto Star* quoted in Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 21 July 1940, p.2231; W.B. Kerr, "Historical Literature on Canada's Participation in the Great War," p.425; See also Hector Charlesworth, "Literature, History, Art, Music and Drama," in *The Canadian Annual Review*, (Toronto: The Canadian Review Company, 1926), p.539; "Sir Andrew Macphail: His Monumental Work," *The Legionary*, Vol. XIV, No.3 (October 1938), pp.7-8. One consequence of the uproar was the indefinite suspension of any work on a proposed history of the engineering services that was to have been written by Sir Andrew's brother, see Hyatt, "Official History in Canada," p.89.

³⁹ Desbarats to Thacker, 30 January and 20 July 1928; Thacker to Desbarats, 9 February, 19 June 1928 and 17 January 1929; Ralston to Desbarats, 24 February and 26 June 1928.; (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732, NAC; Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.167.

⁴⁰ In his otherwise excellent work, Shane Schreiber mistakenly identifies an early draft of the committee's 1929 report found in the Currie papers as Currie's own recommendations for the CWNS written in late 1918. Bovey likely gave the draft to Currie for comment in late December 1928 but Currie seems to have made few changes or suggestions as it contains only minor differences in wording and organization from the version submitted. See Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire*, p.134, and footnote 10, p.136; "Recommendations from the Advisory Board on the Preparation of the Official History," (no date, but late December 1928), Vol. 41, (File 186), Sir Arthur Currie Papers, MG 30 E100, NAC; and Report of the Special Advisory Committee, 2 January 1929, Box 1, Folder A, File 9, DBF. It should be noted that although a factual error it does little to detract from Schreiber's argument that the Canadian army "inhibited its intellectual growth" (p.135) by not studying the operations of the last Hundred Days.

⁴¹ Report of the Special Advisory Committee; "Notes and Recommendations Regarding the Permanency of the Historical Section, General Staff," 20 February 1923, p.5, (DHS 1-4-B), RG 24, vol. 1732, NAC.

⁴² Report of the Special Advisory Committee.

⁴³ Ibid; Lieut.-Colonel Wilfred Bovey to Major-General A.G.L. McNaughton, 24 January 1929, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732, NAC.

⁴⁴ McNaughton to minister (Ralston), 22 January 1929, Box 1 Folder A, File 10, DBF; Hyatt, "Official History in Canada," p.90; McNaughton to deputy minister (Desbarats), (draft memo), no date but early to mid 1929; "Report, Minister of National Defence to the Governor General in Council re establishment of the Historical Board," no date but early to mid 1929; Box 1, Folder A, Files, 19 and 23, DBF.

⁴⁵ Desbarats (prepared by Duguid) to J.C.G. Herwig (Service Bureau, Canadian Legion), 28 October 1929, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732, NAC; *Annual Reports, 1930-1932*, pp.39-41.

⁴⁶ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 16 May 1932, p.2982.; "Memorandum," 30 December 1935, (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC.; Duguid, *Official History*, p.viii.; McNaughton to Currie, 17 May 1932, Vol. 11, (File 33), MG 30 E100, Sir Arthur Currie Papers; McNaughton to Duguid, 18 May 1932, (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC.

⁴⁷ "The Canadian Legion, Third Dominion Convention Proceedings, November 25-28, 1929," p.129, Vol. 75, (Dominion Convention [3rd], Proceedings), MG 28 I298, Royal Canadian Legion Records; L.R. LaFleche (Dominion President, Canadian Legion) to Prime Minister (Mackenzie King), 17 March 1930, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732; NAC; Bird, *The Communication Trench*, preface; *The Legionary*, Vol. VI, No.9 (February 1932), p.16. See also, Macphail to Currie, 24 March 1933, and Currie's response written the same day, Vol. 11 (File 33), MG 30 E100, Sir Arthur Currie Papers, NAC.

⁴⁸ William Wood, "Behind the Scenes of Canadian War History," *Argosy*, Vol. 4, No.1, (June 1926), p.45; Kerr, "Historical Literature," pp.427-428; *Ottawa Journal*, 13 February 1932 and 23 June 1933, p.6; *Vancouver Sun*, 17 May 1932, p.4; *Montreal Star and Toronto Globe in Legionary*, Vol. VI, No.10, (March 1932), p.17; Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 9 July 1931, p.3561, 27 April 1932, p.2418; Canada, Senate, *Debates*, 22 March 1932, p.134.

⁴⁹ "British and Canadian Official Histories of the Great War, 1914-1918," 6 April 1932, p.2, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732; "Work of the Historical Section, June 1932 – January 1933," 6 February 1933, p.1; "Memorandum," 30 December 1935; "Report on the Progress of the Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War. Vol. I," 4 December 1936; Major Frank Cummins (for Duguid) to CGS (Ashton), 4 May 1938; (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC.; When notified of the history's impending release the *Ottawa Citizen's* reaction was to wonder why it had taken so long to appear and sarcastically hope that the authors did not expect immediate reviews, *Ottawa Citizen in Legionary*, Vol. XIII, No.6 (December 1937), p.41.

⁵⁰ Duguid to McNaughton, 18 May 1932; "Memorandum on the Official History 15th December 1937," 17 December 1937, p.1; (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC; Duguid, *Official History*, p.ix; *Annual Reports, 1933*, pp.39-41, 1935, p.65, 1936, p.58, 1937, p.65, 1938, p.62.

⁵¹ Vance, *Death So Noble*, pp.169-170; *Annual Reports, 1932*, p.41, 1935, p.65.

⁵² Duguid: "Canadians in Battle, 1915-1918," *Canadian Historical Association Report, 1935* (May 1935); "The Significance of Vimy," *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, Vol. XII,

No.4 (July 1935); "Canada on Vimy Ridge," in *The Canada Year Book 1936* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1936). See also, "The Tricolour in Canada," *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, Vol. X, No.2 (January 1933); *Annual Reports, 1932*, p.40, *1935*, p.65, *1936*, p.57.

⁵³ Duguid, *Official History*, p.xiii; Duguid to CGS (Ashton), 10 July 1937; "Extract from Report dated 13th December 1937 for Minister's Memorandum Book," p.2; "Memorandum on the Official History 15th December 1937," 17 December 1937, p.3; (DHS 10-10, vol.3), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC; *Annual Reports, 1938*, p.62, *1940*, p.55.

⁵⁴ "British and Canadian Official Histories of the Great War, 1914-1919." 6 April 1932, p.2, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732; "Memorandum," 30 December 1935, (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755; NAC; Duguid, *Official History*, p.viii. When attempting to save the project from cancellation in 1947, Duguid charged that his appointment had been delayed because certain cabinet members had decreed in 1929 that an official account should not be written for at least twenty years, see Duguid to DCGS (Brigadier-General W.J. Megill), 18 February 1947, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

⁵⁵ A similar point is made by A.M.J. Hyatt who writes that "...it is clear that the author [Duguid] was convinced that he was recording the events of a 'war to end all wars' in which Canadians played an important part, and, thus, every detail to him was worthy of mention". See "Official History in Canada," p.90.

⁵⁶ "Memorandum on the Historical Section," 5 January 1928, pp.6-7 (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732, NAC; *Annual Reports, 1923*, pp.32-33, *1933*, p.41, *1935*, p.65; Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.185; "The Historical Section (General Staff), 20 June 1942, p.4, (GAQ 4-15J), RG 24, vol. 1813, NAC.

⁵⁷ Harris, *Canadian Brass*, p.162.

⁵⁸ For example, when Duguid submitted the first five chapters (covering September 1914 – April 1915) for approval in late 1936, thirteen of the sixty-five people asked to review them had not yet responded, Duguid to CGS (Ashton), 11 December 1936, (DHS 10-10, vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC.

Chapter Two

Colonel A. Fortescue Duguid and the Making of the Canadian Official History

Several years after completing the British Official History the man who had overseen the project, Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds, wrote that his whole career had been "...preparation for that one thing".¹ This may have been true of Edmonds who had some experience in writing military history prior to becoming an official historian, but it was not true of Colonel A. Fortescue Duguid. Indeed, little in his background indicates that he was destined for a career in history. To subsequent observers this lack of historical training is one of the primary reasons why the Canadian official history was never completed.

Certain historians, notably C.P. Stacey, have even alleged that Duguid was negligent in his duties. Heraldry, according to Stacey, "meant much more to him than history did". As evidence Stacey records in his memoirs that upon arriving at the Historical Section in 1940 he was amazed to discover that Duguid had dedicated much of his time – and the services of his cartographer – to designing the George Cross, a decoration recently approved for gallantry. Apparently his design was unsolicited and was politely rejected by the British government. These heraldic activities and the absence of professional historians would prompt Stacey to later describe Duguid's efforts as an "expensive fiasco".²

However, this emphasis on Duguid's lack of qualifications, lack of production and alleged apathy has served to relegate his work to the background. In addition to volume

one of the official history, Duguid wrote a number of articles on various subjects and his personal papers and the records of the Historical Section contain unpublished material relating to the official history and Canadian military history in general. To date there has been little attempt to utilize this material to evaluate Duguid as an *historian*.³ The most that is said of his work, and that usually limited to the official history, is that it is idiosyncratic, dull, and makes little attempt to provide an overview or properly assess the battle of Second Ypres.⁴

Essentially, this chapter will argue that Duguid was neither unqualified nor indifferent to his appointed task. After a brief biographical sketch, what Duguid hoped to accomplish and his methodology will be examined. It should become apparent that Duguid was a competent historian, fully capable of writing the history of the Great War. An examination of Duguid's difficulties with Edmonds and Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Turner will follow and provide insights into the actual process of writing, as well as how Duguid dealt with attempts to influence his account, and the chapter will offer further reasons for the delay in publication.

Archer Fortescue Duguid (Scotty or Forty to his friends) was born at Boutrie House, Aberdeenshire, Scotland on 31 August 1887 to Peter and Isobel Barclay Duguid. He attended Aberdeen Grammar School and in 1901 entered Fettes College in Edinburgh. Several years later physicians determined his health required a drier climate and in 1906 he traveled to Canada in order to attend McGill University and study civil engineering.⁵

Intent on pursuing a military career he successfully passed the British army entrance examinations and was given a temporary commission in the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery for the purpose of qualifying for a commission in the Imperial Army. Upon graduation in 1912 his military ambitions were set aside in favour of employment with Grand Trunk Pacific and the Montreal Tunnel and Terminal Company, where he assisted in driving the C.N.R. tunnel through the mountains at Montreal. Only in June 1914 did he resume his military service by accepting a commission in the 39th Outremont Field Battery.⁶

It is likely that Duguid's career would have been uneventful were it not for the outbreak of war in 1914. Like so many others he promptly enlisted and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the 29th Battery, 6th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery (CFA). Shortly thereafter he joined the staff of the 2nd Brigade CFA and traveled with them to England in October and landed in France with I Canadian Division in February 1915. The next few months saw him participate in the battles of Second Ypres, Festubert and Givenchy with the 8th Battery CFA. By August 1915 he was "played out", as he would later relate to a friend, and was invalided sick to England. After a short stay in hospital he rejoined the CEF, was promoted to Captain and posted to the 23rd Howitzer Battery, 2 Canadian Division, and served with this unit through the battles of St. Eloi, Mount Sorrel, and the Somme.⁷

Eighteen days before the battle of Vimy Ridge he was again promoted and assigned to 2 Canadian Divisional Artillery as Brigade Major. In June 1917 he was wounded but remained on duty and was present for operations at Hill 70 and Passchendaele. He was

posted to the headquarters of 3 Canadian Division as GSO 2 in April 1918 and served in that capacity until the armistice. During the war he was twice mentioned in dispatches and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in June 1918.⁸

In June 1919 he was assigned to Canadian Corps Headquarters in England for medical reasons and began duty with the CWNS. Here began his formal introduction to history and he likely gained valuable experience in assisting General Sir Arthur Currie draft his report which appeared in the *Report of the Ministry, Overseas Military Forces of Canada*.⁹ Later that same year he returned to Canada and under the terms of Privy Council order 1736 was retained for the special purpose of completing an historical account of the CEF. Duguid's principal task with the CWNS was to research and write an account of Canadian operations at Amiens; he was also to be responsible for the proofreading and arrangement of maps and photographs for the finished history.¹⁰

With the merger of the CWNS and the Historical Section in 1921 he was promoted Colonel and made director, a position he held until the end of the Second World War. He retired from the army two years later, received an OBE in 1948 and remained active, publishing a history of the Canadian Grenadier Guards in 1965 and serving on the Board of Directors for the Royal Canadian Geographical Society until 1971. Colonel Duguid died on 4 January 1976 in Kingston, Ontario and was survived by his wife, four remaining children, eighteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was eighty-eight.¹¹

In the preface to the official history, Duguid stated that he hoped it would provide a “memorial for participants, a source for historians, a manual for soldiers, and a guide for

the future".¹² It was not an accident that providing a memorial was foremost on his list of objectives as during the twenties and thirties Canadians were busily engaged in transforming the experience of war into an acceptable memory of the war. Instead of the horrors of war, this emerging myth stressed the justness of overthrowing Prussian militarism, the heroic self-sacrifice of soldiers, and affirmed the war as Canada's coming of age.¹³ As an 'old original' of the CEF, Duguid had a personal interest in commemorating the fallen and ensuring that their deeds would not be forgotten. As he explained to the Canadian Historical Association in 1935:

Not the least of the functions of history is the preservation of the tradition of self-sacrifice, and the transmission to posterity of that precious heritage so dearly bought in battle overseas during the most momentous years in Canadian history.

As such, he attempted to write history that he hoped would be understood, "...100, 200, 1000 years hence".¹⁴

Duguid was also the proponent of a much older ideal, the militia myth. This is an ill-defined principle which holds that Canadian volunteers or citizen soldiers were "rugged individuals imbued with the free spirit of the pioneer and frontier life...". Thus, when adequately trained and equipped they were inherently superior to any regular formation and their freedom from preconceived notions allowed them to improvise and innovate.¹⁵ In an early manuscript he emphasized this view claiming that natural laws of selection had created a distinctly Canadian character: strong, independent and fearless. These qualities served to make Canadians superior soldiers that dominated No Man's Land and proved that "...civilian soldiers when discreetly disciplined, carefully trained, vigorously led...could compete with and vanquish the product of a Military Autocracy".¹⁶

The triumph of the citizen soldier is a consistent theme in a number of articles written in the 1930s as Duguid stressed the volunteerism of Canadian soldiers. When discussing the fighting at Second Ypres, he frequently made references to their civilian backgrounds: one was a stockbroker, and others included a university undergraduate, a professor, civil engineer, farmer, rancher, barber, and federal Member of Parliament. This is continued in the official history, and Duguid even claims that more experienced soldiers – recognizing their plight – would have retreated at Second Ypres instead of fighting on, thus implying that amateurism and courage were of greater importance than tactical judgement. In these representations technology is noticeably absent, as success is seen as the product of careful, sensible planning and the courage and resolution of Canadian soldiers. Setbacks are downplayed or used to elaborate the valour of individuals; for example, the death an artillery subaltern at Mount Sorrel in 1916 who refused to abandon his guns qualifies as a noble and glorious sacrifice. Second Ypres is described as an instance “in which courage and tenacity triumphed over metal and gas,” and the ordeal of Passchendaele held up as an example of Canadian perseverance.¹⁷

But Duguid was unable to explain Canadian successes strictly in terms of individual or national character. Take for example, his earliest piece entitled “The Canadian as a Soldier”. While overtly nationalistic, it also contains a number of insights into the strengths of the Canadian Corps. In direct contradiction to his statements on amateurism, he admits that discipline, training and sound organization were keys to victory. He also acknowledged that the homogeneity of the Corps was a factor in contrast to the British army divisions which were the basic tactical unit, and were rotated from Corps to Corps.

As no integrated training system existed in the British army at this time, the result was a mixture of doctrines as divisions moved about. By remaining intact the Canadians were able to develop an intimacy between staffs and units that enabled them to innovate more freely and with greater success.¹⁸ In stressing the non-military background of Canadian soldiers, he revealed that most were not rugged woodsmen and farmers but employed in industry or as labourers and that most were British born.¹⁹ These points are not greatly elaborated upon, as Duguid preferred to focus on uniquely Canadian traits, although they hint at a deeper understanding of the war.

Similar statements can be found in Duguid's discussions of the importance of Vimy Ridge. This was a battle he deemed the greatest British victory since Waterloo; and only achieved by innovative planning and the heroism of Canadian troops. Yet, he also noted that it was not the hardest fought battle, nor did the anticipated strategic breakthrough occur. Ultimately, its lasting impact, Duguid claimed, lay not in the immediate results but in its status as an exclusively Canadian battle, which served to consolidate the Canadian Corps into "the most powerful self-contained striking force on any battlefield".²⁰

That Duguid held such views is hardly remarkable, as these ideas had become prevalent by the mid-1930s. But his part in perpetuating the myth of the war should not be overemphasized as it is clear that he wished to record the truth and hoped that lessons would be learned from his account. However, like his Australian counterpart, C.E.W. Bean, he saw no contradiction between historical accuracy and nationalist commemoration. Duguid even hoped that the qualities exhibited by Canadian soldiers would translate into a unity of purpose for the entire country.²¹ This attitude did result in the overlooking or

reinterpreting of some evidence – particularly the actions of certain individuals – but to dismiss the entirety of his work on such grounds is to ignore his real qualities as an historian.

In order to achieve his stated aims, Duguid realized that he had to tell the complete story. In doing so he tended to approach history in scientific terms and felt that the:

Object is to find out exactly what happened: conclusions cannot be drawn until all information has been arranged in such a form that it can be grasped readily and the relative importance of events weighed. Otherwise conclusions will be faulty and probably entirely wrong.²²

He felt that previous historians had been hampered by a lack of reliable information and so engaged in excessive speculation. Such supposition could be avoided, he thought, due to the sheer volume and accuracy of documentary evidence available for the Great War. He did recognize that gaps would necessarily exist where documents were incomplete or missing, but remained confident that even new evidence would not drastically affect the broad outline originally constructed.²³

Given the mass of documents, research was primarily a process of refinement and according to Duguid:

With so many variables...any precise system of integration is impossible; the significance of each action can be gauged only by consideration of the events leading up to it and by its bearing on subsequent events. In the final analysis achievement must be measured by results, but within certain limits it is possible to commute the variables with some degree of accuracy, provided a chart or map has been compiled to fix all known constants as to time, place, and action. Only after these limits have been established can a proper conception be achieved of the degree permissible variation in evidence as to any particular situation.²⁴

In accordance with this strategy Duguid sought to establish the exact times orders and messages were sent and received when analyzing actions. This therefore created control points situating where the orders were sent from, when they were sent and received, and by whom. From these points he then attempted to discern what was done, how it was done and why. Analyzing the latter three points was problematic as numerous variables entered the picture, but Duguid was certain the control points of time and space already in place could evaluate the importance of additional information. It was hoped that this methodology would result in a clear account in which actions and individuals would speak for themselves without additional comment from the historian.²⁵

One such variable was evidence provided by the actual participants, both oral and written. Duguid believed this was a vital component of his account and he devoted considerable time to corresponding with and interviewing surviving CEF officers. Many also lent him their diaries and personal papers and permitted copies to be made of relevant information. In requesting information he was often quick to add that he realized the sensitive nature of the material and would treat it with the utmost discretion. Duguid further assured Sir Richard Turner that the personal relations between officers would not be discussed in the official history. Some respondents, however, had no wish to participate in what they viewed as useless controversies.²⁶

He did recognize that every action invariably produced numerous, often contradictory viewpoints, and that it was necessary to check them against the documentary record. Therefore, he tended to treat information gathered in this manner critically; one might even say too critically, as he did not consider personal testimony as accurate or as

important as original orders or messages. This was because it generally “lacked the brilliance or historical value of an impartial field message smeared with the mud of a F.L.T.”. He also rated the recollections of senior commanders and their staffs higher than those of front-line soldiers, as they alone knew the dispositions and interactions of units. This is a valid approach, but one is left with the strong impression that Duguid – a former staff officer – was in part responding to postwar claims of incompetence in the higher direction of the war.²⁷

Once sufficient data had been collected, Duguid and his staff compiled a log of events to establish the chronological limits of chapters and volumes. This log chiefly served to document the actions of the CEF but it also contained information regarding administrative and political developments in Britain and Canada. Once complete it was used to arrange paragraphs and chapters in order, and act as a reference guide for additional sources. A syllabus of chapters containing a detailed outline for each paragraph and chapter were arranged and then drafts prepared, circulated for comment and changes incorporated. Although the number of revisions obviously differed, individual chapters normally went through at least six drafts and by 1935 the Ross Rifle monograph was on its seventh edition.²⁸

Duguid’s approach to history had many advantages – first and foremost it yielded a wealth of information. One of the strengths of the *Official History* is its encyclopedic nature in which every aspect of Canada and the CEF between August 1914 and September 1915 is covered in some fashion. This painstaking fact checking had another benefit as it allowed him to uncover and correct attempts, deliberate or otherwise, to omit or alter

evidence. For example, he discovered the war diary of the 85th Infantry Brigade contradicted some of Brigadier-General G.S. Tuxford's statements as to the time of his visit to the 3/Royal Fusiliers on 24 April 1915 and the nature of his comments. In the transcribed notes of an interview with Lieut.-General Sir Richard Turner, Duguid noted and later added Turner's unwillingness to withdraw the charge that 1 Canadian Division had neglected the 3rd Infantry Brigade during Second Ypres.²⁹

Although thorough and accurate, this process was not one that could be completed quickly. Moreover, while Duguid's attention to detail is admirable, it appears that he developed a 'forest for the trees' mentality at times, and the value of some of the minutia contained in volume one and prepared for future volumes, is questionable. Is it truly necessary to know that the average price of horses in the First Contingent was \$172.45 and the colours permitted were: bay, brown, black, chestnut and blue or red roan? Equally suspect is the inclusion of the mayor of Plymouth's letter of welcome to the arriving Canadians in October 1914, and the knowledge that at one point the CEF required 150,000 sets of razors (with cases) and 300,000 hand towels.³⁰

However the difficulty in compiling an official history lies not so much in research but in presentation, as 'truth' is often a matter of perspective and opinion. So while Duguid was able to determine 'what actually happened' in many cases, what could be published was another matter. His stated desire to memorialize the achievements of Canadian soldiers, but also to tell the complete story, were further complications as they frequently worked at cross purposes, particularly in his treatment of the Second Battle of Ypres.

The first controversy over Second Ypres erupted in 1924 – well before Duguid began writing his own account – when the British official historian sent the first draft of his chapters covering the battle to Duguid for his comments. This incident has been covered in some detail but it is useful to recount some of the debate's more contentious issue to evaluate Duguid as an historian.³¹

In his initial drafts Edmonds focused on the actions of then Brigadier-General Arthur Currie and the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade. Edmonds alleged that Currie had three times ordered a withdrawal on 24-25 April 1915; none of which were carried out. Edmonds also criticized Currie for leaving his Brigade on the morning of 24 April and insinuated that his subsequent visit to Major-General T.D'O Snow's (GOC 27 Division) headquarters was to obtain advice and information and not reinforcements. Finally, he claimed that Currie and 1 Canadian Division were out of touch with their commands during the battle and only the intervention of Snow stabilized the situation.³²

Naturally Duguid, Currie and other Canadian officers disagreed with these claims and lobbied to have what they viewed as Edmonds' anti-Canadian bias amended. Edmonds produced a second draft which was also deemed unsatisfactory and a third draft was requested in July 1926 from the Secretary of the Imperial Defence Committee with a warning that "unfortunate consequences will ensue if this publication can be laid open to any charges of partiality and unfairness". By then the efforts of Duguid and others had elevated the debate to a political level as the Secretary for Dominion Affairs, L.S. Amery, and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff became involved. The issue was only resolved

by a visit to London by Duguid, which outwardly smoothed over any differences and Edmonds' volume went to press shorn of much of its criticism. Apparently still upset, Edmonds later wrote a scathing report to the branch of the Committee of Imperial Defence that controlled the British Official History, detailing his grievances.³³

Edmonds charged Duguid with concealing evidence unfavourable to the Canadians, notably the war diaries for I Canadian Division and the 2nd and 3rd Brigades. Instead of providing the diaries, Duguid had submitted typewritten narratives, which upon examination did not match with other available sources. Edmonds further maintained that he and Duguid had verbally agreed in 1924 not to publish official material without joint consultation. Duguid apparently violated this agreement by publishing an account of Second Ypres in the most recent edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica Supplement*. The most damaging accusation, however, is Edmonds' allegation that Duguid told him it was Canadian policy not to produce any volumes of their history until they had forced their version onto the British.³⁴

What truth, if any, is there to these accusations? With regard to the war diaries, Edmonds was correct in suspecting a cover-up, but was mistaken in assuming Duguid instigated it. Duguid did send prepared narratives in lieu of the war diaries and claimed that they and Lieut.-General Sir Edwin Alderson's war diary (GOC I Canadian Division) were complete and accurate. This was a point even Alderson contradicted as he wrote to Edmonds that:

I am not surprised that you found the account and maps inaccurate. It was written soon after by one of my Canadian staff. I did not want to hurt his feeling. I sent it in much as he wrote it. They were very sensitive and I often had to do that.

A somewhat chastened Duguid replied that he never intended the reports to be a replacement for the diaries and hoped that they could be used as a framework.³⁵ But the real reason why Duguid did not turn over the diaries was that he did not have them.

The original, duplicate and triplicate copies were not in the possession of the Historical Section although it was assumed that they had been compiled. In an attempt to locate them Duguid drafted a letter and had the CGS (Macbrien) circulate it to every officer who had been on the divisional staff at the time. The letter explained that without the diaries it would be difficult, but not impossible, to accurately reconstruct the battle. It also warned that the assumption that they had been destroyed reflected badly on the division and would lead to sinister interpretations by historians.³⁶

In a flurry of correspondence a number of officers admitted that a diary did exist and expressed surprise at its disappearance or maintained that one was never kept. It is possible that the confused events of the time prevented a proper diary from being compiled but the available evidence suggests otherwise. Duguid then forwarded excerpts of the correspondence to Edmonds but omitted any references pointing to the deliberate removal of the diaries, and added that:

The absence of the usual war diaries from Canadian records may be worthy of special comment, but the unusual amount of detail supplied by the original documents and the large number of independent reports which are complementary and not contradictory is even more noteworthy.³⁷

Of course, Edmonds disagreed, and this could have only added to his suspicions.

Oddly, the diaries would not have been very damaging to Currie's reputation, although they would have been to Sir Richard Turner's. Turner (GOC 3rd Brigade) had

withdrawn his forces and two British battalions to the GHQ line on 24 April, which created a large gap to the left of Currie's Brigade.³⁸ Many of Currie's subsequent actions were attempts to plug this gap and were not the behaviour of a confused Brigadier, as Snow and Edmonds contented. Currie did make several errors during this period but there were extenuating circumstances, and the 2nd Brigade's eventual withdrawal was the result of the crisis and not the cause. According to J.S. Sutherland Brown (DAQMG, 1 Canadian Division) the diaries were destroyed to cover this up, and not to conceal Currie's actions.³⁹

Edmonds chose not to focus on Turner as he had a personal relationship with Snow and obviously believed his account. It is also possible that he wished to direct attention away from Currie and the Canadian Corp's later success – inflated according to Edmonds – by revealing their difficulties early in the war. For his part, once aware of the attempts to cover-up Turner's actions, Duguid was understandably reluctant to reveal this information to Edmonds.⁴⁰ In the end, Duguid participated in, but did not instigate or expose the Turner cover-up in order to minimize Edmonds' criticism of Canadian conduct.

What of Edmonds' other accusation that there was a Canadian plan to force their interpretations onto the British before publishing their own? There is some evidence for this position as in one letter Duguid explained that his own production had been hampered by efforts to make the British history accurate. In addition, when advocating a reduction in the Section's duties, one of the activities he advised against curtailing was the provision and checking of information for Edmonds:

The closest watch has had to be kept on the work of the Historical Section (Military Branch of the Committee of Imperial Defence) in so far as it relates to Canada. Experience has shown that work under this head must be continued at any cost.⁴¹

Yet, it is unlikely that the plan envisioned by Edmonds was ever seriously contemplated, despite differences over Second Ypres. Edmonds was notoriously biased against Dominion official historians and expected the worst from them. If there was such a policy, then it must be judged a failure as Edmonds made few significant changes to later drafts involving Canadians; nor did Duguid request that he do so. The principal complaint in later years was not that Edmonds was grossly misinterpreting facts, but that he often failed to acknowledge the importance or impact of Canadian operations. For example, Duguid objected that the British chapters on Vimy implied that German errors and not careful planning led to the capture of the ridge. General A.G.L. McNaughton found the drafts of Passchendaele equally unsatisfactory as he felt they failed to emphasize the achievements of the CEF in overcoming the obstacles of the campaign.⁴² Finally, if it was indeed Duguid's plan to have the last word, then why did he wait eleven years to publish his rejoinder?

At first glance, Duguid emerges from this episode as a patriotic self-censor, and a clumsy one at that, as Edmonds took him to task on several points. While mistaken in assuming a Canadian plot to influence his work, Edmonds was correct in suspecting Duguid of concealing evidence, but not in the manner he presumed. In fairness to Duguid, he was in a difficult position after discovering the fate of the war diaries. Had he revealed the cover-up it is doubtful Edmonds would have altered his views towards Currie; and if he did it would only have been at the expense of Turner. It is more likely that Edmonds' belief that 1 Canadian Division had acted poorly in the battle would have been reinforced, thereby achieving exactly the opposite of what Duguid was trying to accomplish. Thus,

Duguid withheld sensitive evidence as he distrusted Edmonds' willingness to handle it with the proper restraint. This is understandable, but also demonstrates that Duguid's aim of celebrating the Canadian soldier was not always compatible with telling the whole truth. But it should be remembered that this was a British-Canadian dispute and it remains to be seen if Duguid was able to reconcile these ideals in his own analysis.

At this point then, it would seem necessary to examine the process of writing the Canadian version of Second Ypres. As will become apparent, the ten chapters specifically dealing with the battle were the subject of considerable controversy and went through a number of revisions over several years. Ironically, Duguid was accused of failing to recognize the extraordinary efforts of certain units, the same bias he had charged Edmonds with. In a further twist, these allegations were made by the individuals whose actions Duguid had deliberately concealed from Edmonds, Richard Turner and his then Brigade Major, Major-General Garnet Hughes (son of the infamous Minister of Militia, Sir Sam Hughes).

Their basic complaint was not that Duguid had excluded anything but that his account did not do full justice to the actions of the 3rd Brigade during the battle – and one assumes, their own conduct. Turner was particularly concerned that insufficient attention had been devoted to what he termed “the most critical time of the battle”, 22-23 April.⁴³ Duguid attempted to appease the two generals but became increasingly frustrated as the protests of Turner and Hughes continued and were eventually elevated to a political level as both appealed to the Chief of the General Staff and the Prime Minister.

Curiously, the problems did not begin with the circulation of the first set of draft chapters distributed in December 1933.⁴⁴ In fact, after an interview with Duguid to discuss the matter, in which he suggested several changes, Turner declared himself satisfied. The revised chapters were then forwarded to Hughes in early 1934, who was likewise interviewed by Duguid. Despite this opportunity to discuss his objections with Duguid, Hughes was still disappointed in their content and communicated his displeasure to Turner, and later to Duguid stating:

There is no desire on my part to detract from the glory of the other brigades or units. We were all doing our best and I believe that the general opinion up to the present has been that we were doing pretty well. But I know that the units of the 3rd Bde. and the others under General Turner's command did the greater part of the fighting at this battle as far as Canadian troops are concerned whereas in my opinion the draft chapters of the history do not adequately convey such an impression.

Two days later he wrote that he intended to do everything necessary in order to effect changes.⁴⁵

The exact nature of what Hughes wrote to Turner is not known but it succeeded in shifting Turner's opinion. Thus, several months later, and after receiving the revised editions of all ten chapters, Turner raised similar objections. Like Hughes, he thought that the 3rd Brigade was underrepresented, and went into detail as to why it deserved additional praise. Turner felt that the critical point in the battle was 22-23 April, and the role of his Brigade in stemming the initial German advance. He also believed that the counterattack on Kitchener's Wood by the 10th and 16th battalions was worthy of special mention. Turner also suggested that Duguid should not spoil his account by including the "sordid history" of

the Ross Rifle! Turner closed by stating he would not pursue the matter further, but in fact both he and Hughes later wrote the Prime Minister, R.B. Bennett.⁴⁶

Turner was correct in asserting that 22 April was a dangerous time and that elements of the 3rd Brigade had performed well in the early portions of the battle. The 13th Battalion, which unexpectedly found its left flank exposed, quickly extended it, rallied a number of disorganized French troops and managed to mount a defence that did slow the German advance. While noteworthy, Brigade HQ did not direct these actions and Turner and his staff appeared to have little knowledge of what was happening in the forward areas. For instance, shortly after the attack began they issued a series of erroneous messages to the 2nd Brigade and Divisional HQ reporting that their left – the 13th Battalion – was retiring, first to St. Julien and then back to the GHQ line. Several hours passed before it was realized this was not the case and the correct situation relayed to Alderson.⁴⁷ This would not prove to be the last time when Turner and his staff were unaware of the location or condition of their troops.

It is also difficult to agree with Turner's claim that the "midnight attack by the 10th and 16th battalions was a carefully considered counter stroke delivered with all the punch the two battalions could put in it".⁴⁸ An examination of the attack indicates it was not 'carefully considered' but was launched in response to a French request for cooperation with a counterattack of their own, which never materialized. Moreover, when ordering the attack, I Canadian Division had not specified which battalions were to participate; though Divisional HQ meant the 14th and the 16th Battalions. Turner, therefore, decided to employ the 16th and the 10th Battalions, the latter having been dispatched earlier by Currie with

instructions to assist Turner. There was also considerable confusion as to when the attack would commence and for a time it appeared that only the 10th Battalion would attack as the 16th was late in assembling. Finally, the only instructions issued were to clear Kitchener's Wood; no further objectives were indicated and no details for consolidation provided.⁴⁹

The truth of the matter is that while 22-23 April was indeed a tense period, perhaps the most critical period – from a Canadian perspective – was 24 April.⁵⁰ Again, Turner and Hughes were unsure of what was occurring and in the early morning of the 24th reported that the 2nd Brigade's line had been broken. In reality, it was their own line that had been breached, which when realized, prompted a series of hurried and impractical orders.

Turner immediately ordered a counterattack by the 13th Battalion, which was already heavily engaged. This order was only rescinded after Lieut.-Colonel F.O.W. Loomis (CO 13th Battalion) traveled to Brigade HQ and personally explained the situation to Turner. Orders were also dispatched to the 15th Battalion, instructing it to hold the line and vigorously counterattack if driven back. The message also stated that under no circumstances were they to withdraw to the GHQ line. Unfortunately, this order was never received as the 15th Battalion was in the process of being driven from its positions and was retiring in disorder. Belatedly realizing the gravity of the situation, two messages were wired to Divisional HQ by Turner's staff advising them of circumstances, the second message asking, "Is there any prospect of help?" Several hours later, believing the 2nd Battalion was about to be flanked, Turner ordered its withdrawal but later canceled this when informed that it was holding firm.⁵¹

Thus far, the 3rd Brigade staff had mishandled their command but had yet to commit any serious blunders – something that would soon change. Around midday on 24 April, Turner was ordered by 1 Canadian Division not to attempt counterattacks but to use two British battalions en route to “strengthen your line and hold on”. Instead of maintaining his position, Turner issued orders to all units presently under the command of the 3rd Brigade – elements of eight separate battalions – to retire to the GHQ line.⁵² As noted earlier, this created a substantial gap between the 3rd and 2nd Brigades and was the cause of many of Currie’s later difficulties.

Snow, at this point alarmed at the deteriorating situation, ordered Turner, shortly after 2pm to immediately attack and to “Act with vigour”. Turner ignored this order but did locate one of the British battalions Snow had dispatched to him and ordered it also to fall back to the GHQ line. Not until 8.45pm and 9.35pm did Turner report to 1 Canadian Division and Snow that he was occupying the GHQ line and was not in possession of St. Julien. Snow relayed this information to V Corps, which promptly berated Alderson for allowing the withdrawal. Alderson, who had little idea of the location of 3rd Brigade, dispatched his senior GSO 2, Lieutenant-Colonel G.C.W. Gordon Hall, to determine what was happening and reestablish control. On the way to the front he encountered Turner, who was traveling to Divisional HQ in order to learn whose orders had precedence: Alderson’s or Snow’s! Disaster was fortunately averted as Currie’s 2nd Brigade extended its flank, while several British battalions arrived in support.⁵³

Why Turner pulled back to the GHQ line has never been adequately explained. Poor battlefield communications aside, it is hard to believe that Turner simply

misinterpreted the order. The directive to 'strengthen your line' was quite clear and any misunderstanding should have been cleared up in a telephone conversation with 1 Canadian Division's GSO 1, Colonel C.F. Romer, shortly after receiving the order.⁵⁴ A possible explanation for Turner's actions can be found in Gordon Hall's bitter postwar remarks:

...Turner began to sit on his reserves instead of using them to reinforce his forward position as directed by Div. HQ. This policy he pursued to the end and nothing Div. HQ or other commanders could order, or suggest, or implore made him alter this policy, with of course *disastrous* consequences to all concerned and to none more than to his own troops...It [the GHQ line] had a magnetic attraction for Turner in spite of the fact that it faced the wrong way and could be enfiladed.⁵⁵

Turner had clearly reacted badly and was not in contact or control of his Brigade for much of the time. It appears that despite his earlier personal bravery during the Boer War, and recorded acts of indifference to enemy fire during Second Ypres, Turner - at least temporarily - panicked and deliberately chose to disobey orders and withdraw to the GHQ line. This conclusion is supported by Gordon Hall's comments and by Lieut.-Colonel David Watson (CO 2nd Battalion), who stated that the withdrawal was unnecessary and was the cause of many casualties. J.S. Sutherland Brown went so far as to state that Turner was not a "strong character" and that the 3rd Brigade had been badly handled. In light of this information, it is therefore difficult to accept the claims of Turner and Hughes, or even Nicholson's statement that the battle was a triumph for the Canadian soldier and his brigade commanders.⁵⁶

Duguid was well aware of the mistakes of Turner and Hughes and that they were exaggerating their part in the opening stages of the battle. Up to this point, however, their disagreements had been confined to letters between the Historical Section and the two

generals. But obviously alarmed that Turner and Hughes had communicated their displeasure to the government, and that the CGS (McNaughton) seemed to be hinting that extensive changes might be necessary, Duguid drafted a remarkable memo in December 1934 to clarify his position. It began by protesting official attempts to influence his work, explaining that:

It does not seem quite right that the historian should be at the mercy of anyone who happens to be CGS – he can only comply or quit, and you know well enough that I have no intention of quitting, during your tenure at least.

He then tersely added that if the memo were to be shown to Turner and Hughes they would be well advised to end their protests.⁵⁷ Moving on, Duguid noted that many of the participants had since died, and it was their memory and not just his version of events that he was defending. Duguid further explained that Turner and Hughes had lost sight of the bigger picture and warned that emphasizing one unit could only be accomplished at the expense of others. Admitting that obvious errors must be corrected, Duguid maintained that “tinkering with a delicate instrument without full understanding of the design can have but one result”. Making reference to the 1929 committee’s report, he noted that they had advised that footnotes or appendices should be inserted to detail differences of opinion, but what the historian had written should not be altered.⁵⁸

Duguid also rejected the claims of Turner and Hughes that he had ignored the 3rd Brigade. Instead he differentiated between the actions of the battalions under Turner’s command and the conduct of the Brigade staff. Extensively detailing the errors committed in order to demonstrate his fairness, Duguid wrote that:

While the popular appeal as well as the psychological aspect of the narrative might be enhanced by the development of these episodes I did not consider it

desirable – particularly because Turner was awarded the C.B. for his actions in the battle – to stress, in an Official History, any of the points mentioned.

Duguid further explained that these actions were well known and would come to light eventually and thus it was imperative that they be included. He went on to request that in order to establish responsibility for any changes, those to be made regardless of evidence should be done in red ink and initialed. On the other hand, those changes left to the discretion of the historian should be marked in pencil.⁵⁹

It is unclear if this memo was ever sent to Turner or Hughes, but it seemed to have the desired effect and the bickering ended. In April 1936, however, the controversy resurfaced when Turner visited the Historical Section and again reiterated his concerns about the treatment of the 3rd Brigade. To this Duguid replied that certain changes had been made, specifically that statements praising the Canadian effort by Marshal Ferdinand Foch and others had been added.⁶⁰

Duguid's frustration at this point is evident as he felt he had done all that he could to appease the two generals. Turner had been interviewed four times, Hughes for some twenty-two hours, and both had received each revision, although Hughes did not comment or return the last drafts sent to him. Indeed, Duguid must have been somewhat annoyed that Turner and Hughes were persisting in their complaints as he had downplayed certain incidents but "General Turner does not realize or appreciate this, and I could hardly tell him". Finally, in order to hasten publication he raised the issue of departmental responsibility and suggested that a decision be reached as to who would ultimately be responsible for the history, the government or the historian. This roused the government into action and it was soon decided to print a disclaimer stating that the government had

given the historian full access to official material but was in no way responsible for the views expressed. It would appear that this route was chosen as the only alternative solution – to convene a committee of former officers to review and settle any disputes – was thought to be too lengthy and too expensive.⁶¹

It would seem that Duguid reacted to the Turner-Hughes controversy as he did to Edmonds' criticism; by concealing unpleasant evidence. In fact, Duguid admits to exactly that, stating that out of consideration for Turner the whole truth had not been told.⁶² As he explained, it was his policy to divert the attention of the reader to either the "higher command, or to the brilliant fighting of the troops, or to a flank" when dealing with Turner's mistakes.⁶³ Turner's decision to withdraw to the GHQ line is a good example of this technique. Here, Duguid deftly shifts the emphasis from the consequences of a chaotic retreat to those units unable to withdraw. The defenders of Oblong Farm are singled out as only succumbing to superior numbers, not superior soldiers, while those Canadians outflanked near Kitchener's Wood are depicted as unwilling to retreat even if able to. The hopelessness of the situation is downplayed as Duguid focuses on the strength of their position and determination to fight:

They had two machine guns mounted in the farm buildings east of the wood; there was no lack of targets and they were killing Germans by independent rifle fire. They had come from Canada to do this and so they maintained the unequal fight...⁶⁴

This effectively directs attention away from Turner and buttresses Duguid's claims that Canadians were fearless combatants. That many of these troops were ultimately killed or captured is conspicuously absent from the narrative.

Another tactic employed by Duguid was to relegate potentially embarrassing information to the appendices, possibly assuming that few would go to the trouble of reading them. Such is the case with Turner's actions during the counterattack by the British 10th Infantry Brigade on 25 April. The 3rd Brigade was ordered to advance from the GHQ line and entrench once the attacking troops had passed through them. The advance did take place but the position was not consolidated and the Brigade moved back to the GHQ line. Duguid accounts for this by explaining that it was dependent on the success of the attack, which failed because of repeated postponements.⁶⁵

The order to advance beyond the GHQ line is included in the text but subsequent orders only in the *Appendices*. They reveal that the 3rd Brigade and its accompanying forces – the 2nd and 3rd battalions – fell back to the GHQ line after the failure of the attack. Meanwhile, other forces, including the 2nd Brigade and a number of British units were not retreating but entrenching, thereby plugging the last gap between the GHQ line and St. Julien and forming a line on which the devastated 10th Brigade could reform. Turner's retreat is noted two pages later but is subordinated to a number of other movements and made to appear as part of the general regrouping and not as a case of Turner once again disobeying orders.⁶⁶

Second Ypres was not the only occasion in which Turner performed badly, as slightly less than a year later he would again commit numerous errors in the battle for the St. Eloi craters. On this occasion, Turner's 2nd Division was charged with relieving an exhausted British division and consolidating six large craters created after a number of mines had been exploded under the German line. In the face of determined German

counterattacks, Turner and his staff experienced the same confusion that marked his command at Second Ypres. A crucial error was the misinterpretation of aerial photographs, which led Turner and his divisional staff to mistakenly believe that Canadian troops were in positions that were actually in German hands. After days of bitter fighting, the Canadians were finally forced to admit that they had lost the craters and had suffered over 1300 casualties.⁶⁷

Unlike Second Ypres – which could be explained as a desperate defence against a horrific new weapon and thus a moral if not a tactical victory – St. Eloi was a clear defeat. As such it raised a number of questions regarding command that were unlike those of Second Ypres. Duguid had planned to devote two chapters in his second volume to the battle, but did not fully complete the chapters or publish the volume. The appraisal of the operation was finished and it is of interest to see how Duguid approached Turner's command in view of his previous difficulties with him and how he dealt with Turner's defeat.

Duguid's first draft was surprisingly candid and even incredulous that such a situation could arise:

In the face of the evidence which was before participants at the time, it is remarkable that such confusion could arise and persisted as to the location, identity and possession of the four large craters.⁶⁸

In line with his own experience he went on to suggest that evidence indicating the Canadians had been driven from the craters was ignored and blames the defeat on the:

Reluctance on the part of the 2nd Canadian Division – individually and collectively – to admit even to themselves that the Craters entrusted to their charge had been lost must surely have coloured the vision and distorted the judgement of the commanders and staffs who, looking at the photograph of

the 8th, and the maps based upon it, and the terrain itself, so grossly misread the evidence. Such an attitude of mind evidently impelled them to disbelieve, discount, or discard everything pessimistic and seize upon anything favourable in reports from the front line.⁶⁹

A more succinct and persuasive analysis is difficult to find even in modern works.⁷⁰

Perhaps hoping to avoid another confrontation with Turner and likely to bolster his own nationalist ideals, Duguid later radically altered this evaluation. In the appraisal that appears in the chapter syllabus for volume two, Duguid left out any references to internal factors such as command decisions and focused exclusively on external problems. The operation is depicted as ill conceived from the start – conveniently providing an excuse for defeat. The superiority of the Canadian soldier was hampered as the troops were exhausted before the battle began and because the British had failed to properly entrench the newly won positions. Bad weather, poor communications, and superior German heavy artillery are also singled out. Only in the last paragraph does Duguid hint that there were deeper problems, writing that:

The appointment of an exact relative value to each of these factors [conception, weather, communications, etc] is arbitrary; but in the final analysis, all excuses are met by the fact that two German battalions well covered by artillery, retook and held the craters.⁷¹

Reworking evidence to conceal the worst errors of individuals was not limited to Turner or even the official history. Duguid altered a passage in Ralph Hodder Williams' regimental history of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry to avoid criticism of an officer with an otherwise fine war record. Only in extreme cases, such as the behaviour of Colonel John Currie (CO 15th Battalion at Second Ypres) – who abandoned his battalion and was later found in Boulogne – was evidence simply omitted. Even those against whom

Duguid harboured an obvious bias, namely Sam Hughes, he did not openly criticize, evidently satisfied that the facts would speak for themselves.⁷²

A similar approach was adopted when dealing with the CEF as a collective body. Here evidence contrary to Duguid's belief in the uniqueness of Canadian soldiers was either downplayed or reinterpreted. Determined to be authoritative in his treatment of discipline, he was no doubt hesitant to disclose the whole truth. The relatively minor infractions of drunkenness, disorderly conduct and absence without leave are the only offences admitted to and cases of insubordination are declared rare. Absence without leave was even an acceptable transgression as Duguid considered it quite understandable that soldiers would overstay their leave in the bright lights of London. Disturbances in Canada are explained as the work of newly recruited soldiers who had not yet been exposed to discipline and become 'true' soldiers. The role of alcohol is noted but Duguid maintains it was the poor quality – not quantity – of illicit liquor that induced unsoldierly acts. Furthermore, Duguid implies that soldiers, even when intoxicated, were good-natured and relatively harmless. In this context, Duguid repeats the testimony of a Police Constable attempting to apprehend a soldier:

One of them had a jar tied around his neck – a three or four gallon jar – and one of the Police got hold of it and took it away from him and he said "For God's Sake let me go, I'm the wet canteen".⁷³

Drunkenness and overstaying a pass were comparatively easy matters to justify but Canadians as prisoners of war, and self-inflicted wounds, were not. These were delicate issues as the notion of Canadian soldiers surrendering or deliberately injuring themselves did not accord with Duguid's ideas of Canadians as fearless, determined combatants.

Consequently, the number of Canadians taken prisoner at Second Ypres is not included in the official history. Duguid lists the 15th Battalion's casualties as 647, of which 249 were killed, but the fate of the remainder is not mentioned. Similarly, the final tabulation of casualties for the entire division notes the number of sick evacuated but not the number of prisoners. The only reference to be found is one line in an excerpt from the German Official History in the appendices volume. Canadians are only depicted as being captured if surprised, wounded or overcome by weight of numbers; never do they willingly surrender. At times, by emphasizing the calibre of the resistance, Duguid was even able to use incidents of capture to demonstrate the very qualities he wished to celebrate.⁷⁴

A slightly different approach was used regarding self-inflicted wounds. Duguid freely gives the statistics and even notes that there were more injuries in 1 Canadian Division than in any other in Second Army for March 1916. The damaging impact of this information is quickly negated as Duguid explains that investigation often determined the cause of many of the injuries to be accidental: carelessness in cleaning weapons, or tampering with fuses and detonators taken as trophies. Those soldiers who did intentionally injure themselves are dismissed as "scheming malingerer[s]," and thus excluded from the bulk of the CEF who stoically endured hardship.⁷⁵

In light of these revelations it is apparent that Duguid's lack of historical training was not as great a hindrance as Stacey and others have often assumed. While Duguid's methodology was idiosyncratic, he was aware of the problems involved with interpreting evidence, though few modern historians would agree with his views on the infallibility of

documents. Duguid is guilty of generalizing the experiences of soldiers to fit his own nationalist ideals, which led him to either alter evidence or place it in the appendices to hide discreditable events. Similarly, objections raised by individuals, plus his own personal loyalty towards senior officers, resulted in the concealment of Currie's and Turner's worst errors.

It is wrong, however, to simply dismiss Duguid's work as parochial and assume that he covered up every unpleasant aspect of the war. To his credit he refused to exclude the story of the Ross rifle as Turner suggested. Some battlefield praise was added in response to criticism, but his discussion of the rifle's history and deficiencies is quite frank and remains the best treatment of the subject. He included the high rate of venereal disease among Canadian troops and the problems encountered in supplying reinforcements to existing units. The early mismanagement of the war is mentioned and Duguid even suggests that the demands and consequences of modern war were not fully comprehended in 1915.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, Duguid's inclusion of a mass of detail, his dry prose, and his tendency to limit the text to a straightforward and uncritical narrative, has obscured many of his relevant points.⁷⁷

What then, of Stacey's other accusation, that heraldry and not history was Duguid's true passion? Duguid did have a lifelong interest in heraldry and was a founder and life member of the Heraldry Society of Canada and wrote a number of pieces on the subject. He also designed a flag that saw limited use in the Second World War and which was briefly considered a possible choice for the national flag.⁷⁸ Related to heraldry was his interest and involvement in the design of the Memorial Chamber in the Parliament

buildings and the Book of Remembrance. The latter two activities required a good deal of research and work and did prevent Duguid from devoting his full time to the official history. But this was simply one of a number of delays and should not be seen as the determining factor.

By today's measure, few of Duguid's objectives were fulfilled. First and foremost, his failure to complete the official history has been interpreted as a lack of commitment or even incompetence. Then, his nationalist ideals and desire to commemorate the actions of the CEF, likely seem dated to most readers. That Canada was so unprepared for war in 1939 and that the army committed many of the same errors, indicates that few if any lessons were learned from his account. Subsequent research has also challenged many of Duguid's facts and interpretations. Still, Duguid's contemporaries, who felt that volume one accomplished all of his stated goals, did not share these conclusions; Stacey even declared it a "tract for the times".⁷⁹ In evaluating Duguid it is also useful to remember that he was not an academic historian or a veteran turned author like Will Bird, but an official historian with all the advantages and constraints of that position. Duguid's peers recognized and largely accepted this, one even noting that "at this date it is not possible or perhaps desirable, for the official historian to tell everything".⁸⁰

Chapter Two Notes

¹ Quoted in David French, "Official but not History? Sir James Edmonds and the Official History of the Great War," *RUSI*, Vol. 131, No.1 (March 1986), p.58.

² "Date with History Drafts," (Date with History – TS (1) pp.1-133, Ch.1-6), p.108, B90-0020/58, C.P. Stacey Papers, University of Toronto Archives (UTA); Stacey, *A Date with*

History, p.63; Stacey to CGS, 21 November 1955, (Official History II, 1950-59), B91-0013/001, Stacey Papers, UTA. See also Syd Wise, "Canadian Military History, p.4.

³ One exception is Jonathan F. Vance who uses an unpublished Duguid manuscript in his work *Death So Noble*, pp.141, 159. See also two articles by T.H.E. Travers discussing the difficulties between Duguid and Edmonds, "Allies in Conflict: The British and Canadian Official Historians and the Real Story of Second Ypres (1915)," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 24, (1989) and "Currie and 1st Canadian Division at Second Ypres, April 1915: Controversy, Criticism, and Official History," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 5, No.2 (Autumn 1996). Several other works, including, George Cassar's *Beyond Courage: The Canadians at the Second Battle of Ypres* (Oberon Press, 1985), and Desmond Morton's *Silent Battle: Canadian Prisoners of War in Germany 1914-1919* (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited, 1992), make use of the Historical Section's records and Duguid's correspondence, but offer little analysis of Duguid or his methods.

⁴ C.P. Stacey, (Book Review), *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LXX, No.3 (September 1989), p.411; O.A. Cooke, "Canada's Historiography and the First World War," in *Neue Forschungen zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed by Jürgen Rohwer (Koblenz: Bernard and Graefe Verlag, 1985), p.231; Richard A. Preston, "Canadian Military History: A Reinterpretation Challenge of the Eighties?," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. XIX, No.1 (1989), p.97.

⁵ G.W.L. Nicholson, "Archer Fortescue Duguid 1887-1976," in *The Canadian Historical Association: Historical Papers (1976)*, p.269; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 15 January 1929, (GAQ 4-15J), RG 24, vol. 1813, NAC.

⁶ *Ibid.* "Personnel History Form," Box 1, Folder C, Vol. 3, DBF.

⁷ "Statement of Service in the Canadian Army – Col. Archer Fortescue Duguid, DSO, OBE, CD," Personnel Record Unit (PRU), RG 24, NAC; Duguid to Thomas J. Faught, 13 December 1945, Box 1, Folder C, Vol. 3, DBF, DHH; Douglas Mackay, "Canada's Official War History," *Macleans Magazine* (15 February 1926), p.15.

⁸ *Ibid.*; "Medical History of an Invalid," PRU, RG 24, NAC.

⁹ General Sir Arthur Currie, "Canadian Corps Operations Synopsis: Interim Report," *Report of the Ministry, Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1918* (London, 1918), pp.99-192.

¹⁰ Duguid to Faught, 13 December 1945, DBF; "Statement of Service," PRU, RG 24; P.C. 1736, 22 August 1919, RG 24, vol. 1732; Brutinel to Major W.B. Forster, 25 August 1919, (RB-7), RG 9, III, D2, vol. 4031; NAC.

¹¹ "Statement of Service," PRU, RG 24, NAC; "Obituary of A.F. Duguid," *Ottawa Citizen*, 5 January 1976, Box 2, Folder F, Unnumbered File, DBF; Nicholson, "Archer Fortescue Duguid 1887-1976," p.271.

¹² Duguid, *Official History*, p.v.

¹³ For more detailed studies of Canada's myth of the war see, Vance, *Death So Noble*; and Young, "We Throw the Torch".

¹⁴ Duguid, "Canadians in Battle, 1915-1918," p.50; Duguid to Ralph W. Hodder Williams (draft letter), no date but late 1938 or early 1939, (Chapter V, Vol. II), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC.

¹⁵ Alan R. Young, "The Great War and National Mythology," *Acadiensis*, Vol. XXIII, No.2 (Spring 1994), p.155; Harris, *Canadian Brass*, p.86.

¹⁶ Duguid, "The Canadian as a Soldier," typed manuscript, 14 July 1920, pp.6-7, (Vol.2, File 6), A.F. Duguid Papers, MG 30, E12, NAC.

¹⁷ Duguid: "Canadians in Battle," 1915-1918," pp.38, 40, 42-47; "Significance of Vimy," pp.399, 401-402; "Canada on Vimy Ridge," pp.54-55, 58, 60; *Official History*, pp.vii-viii, 407, 421-422.

¹⁸ Duguid, "The Canadian as a Soldier," pp.13, 17, 26, 41; Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds, *Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1916, to July 1. The Somme*. (London: Macmillan, 1932), I, pt. I, p.186 (Subsequently cited as Edmonds, *Military Operations*); Denis Winter, *Haig's Command*, pp.146-147. Another advantage enjoyed by the CEF was that it was, in effect, a national army under BEF control. Consequently the CEF enjoyed more autonomy in its administration and training than was normally the case with British units. See Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire*, p.19; and Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack, 1916-1918* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996 © 1994), p.81

¹⁹ Duguid: "Canadians in Battle, 1915-1918," pp.41-42; "Significance of Vimy," p.400; "Canada on Vimy Ridge," pp.54-55; See also *Appendices*, no.86 (Statistical Information Pertaining to First Contingent), p.58. By November 1918 only 22.4% of Canadian troops were hunters, farmers, fishermen or lumbermen, while 36.4% classified themselves as industrial workers. Throughout the war the majority of Canadian soldiers were British born and only the Military Service Act allowed Canadian born to become a slim majority, 52.1%, by November 1918, Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, p.278.

²⁰ Duguid: "Canadians in Battle, 1915-1918," pp.41-42; "Significance of Vimy," p.400; "Canada on Vimy Ridge," p.59.

²¹ Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.172; Duguid, *Official History*, pp.vii-viii, ix; Duguid to C.P. Stacey, 23 May 1939, (DHS 3-1, Vol. 2) RG 24, vol. 1740, NAC; Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.147; Duguid, "The Canadian as a Soldier," pp.41-42.

²² Handwritten notes, no date, (Introduction...Contents, Vol. II), RG 24, vol. 6990, NAC.

²³ Ibid; Duguid, *Official History*, p.viii.

²⁴ Duguid, "Canadians in Battle, 1915-1918," p.48.

²⁵ Ibid, pp.49-50. Duguid was no doubt greatly influenced by Sir Andrew Macphail who held similar views, see Macphail, *Medical History*, pp.8, 188.

²⁶ "Memorandum on the Historical Section," 5 January 1928, pp.6-7, (HQS 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732; Duguid to Lieutenant-General Sir E.A.H. Alderson, 15 May 1926, (DHS 10-10, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 1755; Duguid to Colonel P.J. Daly, 14 August 1929; Duguid to Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Turner, 13 August 1930; (DHS 3-17, Vol. 4), RG 24, vol. 1739; NAC; Duguid to Turner, 4 August 1923, Box 1, Folder C, Vol. 1, DBF; Brig.-General G.S. Tuxford to Duguid 19 July 1926, (HQC, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 2680, NAC.

²⁷ Duguid, "Canadians in Battle, 1915-1918," p.49; Duguid to Edmonds (draft letter), no date but late November or early December 1936, Box 2, Folder E, File 76, DBF; Duguid to Ralph Hodder Williams (draft letter), no date but late 1938 or early 1939, (Chapter V, Vol. II), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC. Even in his earliest manuscript he defends the conduct of officers, noting their high casualty rates. In other works he is extremely critical of those claiming shoddy staff work; comparing the Canadian Corps to a business, he asks "Which of you...has ever heard of a successful company which had an inefficient executive. And the measure of the success in France is the measure of the efficiency of the Canadian staff". He also warned against misleading statements by those who never bore the responsibility for the lives of soldiers. Duguid: "The Canadian as a Soldier," pp.13-14; "The Significance of Vimy," p.401; 'Canadians in Battle, 1915-1918,' p.49.

²⁸ "Log of Events, Sept 1915 – Aug 1916," RG 24, vol. 6991; Duguid to Military Secretary, 1 June 1934; "Rough Draft Covering Main Items of Work During Calendar Year 1935," 6 December 1935; (DHS 10-10, Vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC. "Syllabus of Chapters – Vol. II," 21 January 1947, Box 1, Folder B, File 28, DBF.

²⁹ Duguid to Tuxford, 5 July 1926, (DHS 10-10, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC. The reasons and outcome of Tuxford's visit are in Duguid, *Official History*, pp.333-334. 'Relations Between General Turner and General Alderson: Notes of a Conversation between General Turner and D.H.S.," 14 March 1934, p.5, Box 2, Folder C, File 75, DBF.

Alderson had offered to supply a copy of Turner's letter of apology in 1926 but Duguid had already obtained it through other means, Duguid to Alderson, 7 April 1926, (DHS 10-10, Vol. 1), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC.

³⁰ Duguid: *Official History*, pp.86-87, 188; *Appendices*, no. 184 (Letter from Mayor of Plymouth to General Officer Commanding South-Western Coast Defences), pp.134-135; "Appendix no. 55," (Chapter III, Vol. II), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC. Curiously, interest in the price of horses remains, see Nicholson, *CEF*, p.26; Daniel Dancocks, *Welcome to Flanders Fields: The First Canadian Battle of the Great War: Ypres, 1915* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989 © 1988), p.65; and Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, p.19.

³¹ Travers, "Allies in Conflict," and "Currie and 1st Division,". Detailed accounts of the battle can be found in Duguid, *Official History*, Chs. VI-XV; Nicholson, *CEF*, Ch. III; Edmonds, *Military Operations, 1915, I*; Dancocks, *Welcome to Flanders Fields*; James L. McWilliams and R. James Steel, *Gas! The Battle for Ypres, 1915* (St. Catherines, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing Ltd, 1985; and Cassar, *Beyond Courage*. For a German perspective see Ulrich Trumpener, "The Road to Ypres: The Beginnings of Gas Warfare in World War I," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol.6 (1971).

³² Travers, "Allies in Conflict," pp.301-325.

³³ Brig.-General A.G.L. McNaughton (DCGS) to Secretary of Imperial Defence Committee, 16 July 1926; Upon returning to Scotland after his consultation with Edmonds, Duguid cabled a message to Canada which read "Gas alert off, warn all hands to stand down," indicating that a compromise had been reached, Duguid to MacBrien, 16 September 1926; (HQC 4950, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 2680, NAC. Edmonds report is reproduced in full by Travers in, "Currie and 1st Canadian Division," pp.10-13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Travers, "Allies in Conflict," pp.303-304, Alderson quoted on p.304.

³⁶ All the letters were identical except those sent to Brig.-General C.H. Mitchell (Lieut.-Colonel, 3rd Brigade, CFA, in April 1915) and Lieut.-Colonel H.J. Lamb (Staff Officer, 1 Canadian Division) as they were involved in the writing of the divisional report. Duguid to DCGS, 14 December 1925, (HQC 4950, Vol. 1), RG 24, vol. 2680, NAC. Copies of the letters are contained in the same file.

³⁷ Travers, "Allies in Conflict," pp.321-323; "Currie and 1st Division," p.14; Quote taken from Duguid to Major-General Sir C.F. Romer and Duguid to Alderson, 15 May 1926, (DHS 10-10, Vol. 20, RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC.

³⁸ The GHQ line was a prepared position one to three miles back from the main front consisting of redoubts protected by a belt of wire, but little work had been done in the northernmost section. Its effectiveness was all but negated by collapse of the French 45th Algerian Division to the Canadian left on 22 April, which meant the line – running north to south – was facing away from the German assault and could be enfiladed. See Duguid, *Official History*, pp.209-210; and Cassar, *Beyond Courage*, pp.52-53.

³⁹ Lieut.-Colonel G.C.W. Gordon Hall to Duguid, 28 May 1926, (DHS 10-10, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 1755; J.S. Sutherland Brown to MacBrien, 25 November 1925, (HQC 4950, Vol. 1), RG 24, vol. 2680; NAC. Ironically, one of the officers suspected of destroying the diaries, Lieut.-Colonel H.J. Lamb, had been praised by Max Aitken for the “extreme care and detailed accuracy with which he has compiled the maps and diaries of the 1st Canadian Division.” Aitken, *Canada in Flanders: The Official Story of the Canadian Expeditionary Force* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), I, p.16.

⁴⁰ Travers, “Allies in Conflict,” pp.313-314.

⁴¹ Duguid to Gordon Hall, 8 June 1916, (HQC 4950, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 2680; “Memorandum on the Historical Section,” 5 January 1928, p.3, (HQC 5393), RG 24, vol. 2732; NAC.

⁴² For Edmonds bias see Travers, “Allies in Conflict,” pp.308, 318, and the same author’s “From Surafend to Gough: Charles Bean, James Edmonds and the making of the Australian Official History,” *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Vol. 7 (October 1995), pp.15, 22-23. A comparison of the draft and published chapters dealing with St. Eloi and Hill 70 reveal only minor changes, “Draft Chapters – St. Eloi,” (Draft: British Official History), RG 24, vol. 1896; “Draft Chapter – Hill 70,” (File 6), RG 24, vol. 6998; Edmonds, *Military Operations*, 1916, I, pt. 1, pp.185-193, 1917, II, pp.219-230. Complaints of the lack of recognition for Hill 70 can be found in the notes by William Davidson preceding the draft of Hill 70. Duguid and McNaughton’s objections to Vimy and Passchendaele are in Duguid to Edmonds (draft), no date, (Draft: British Official History), RG 24, vol. 1897; Duguid to Edmonds (draft) 20 November 1945, (File 5), RG 24, vol. 6998; and McNaughton to Duguid, 6 May 1946, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG 30 D252; NAC. Similarly, Duguid’s only criticism in an otherwise glowing review of Edmonds first volume on 1916 is that the contribution of Canadian munitions firms is ignored, “The British Official History: A Review, and a Summary of the First Six Months of Sir Douglas Haig’s Command,” *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, Vol. IX, No.4 (July 1932), pp.514-515. Occasionally, little objection was raised as with the chapters on Mount Sorrel and Hooge, which were thought to be a “fair and reasonably full account,” Duguid to Currie, 17 September 1929, (Vol. 8), Sir Arthur Currie Papers, MG 30 E100, NAC.

⁴³ "Points Raised by Lieut.-General Sir R.E.W. Turner V.C. and Major-General Garnet B. Hughes on chapters dealing with the Battle of Ypres, 1915," p.1, (HQC 4950, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 2680, NAC. This was not the first time Turner had noted the special contribution of the 3rd Brigade. In an earlier letter concerning Festubert he made much the same argument, Turner to Duguid, 1 June 1923, Box 1, Folder C, Vol. 1, DBF.

⁴⁴ Most official histories have several authors, although only one name appears on the cover. The Canadian Official History was no exception and many members of the Historical Section contributed to the final product. But it appears that Duguid was to be principal author for the operational sections as he personally wrote the ten chapters on Second Ypres and was scheduled to write the chapters for St. Eloi, Mount Sorrel and Hooze for Vol. II. See Major J.F. Cummins (for Duguid) to Brigadier-General Victor W. Odlum, 1 October 1934, (Colonel A.F. Duguid), Victor W. Odlum Papers, MG 30 E300, NAC; and "Syllabus of Chapters – Vol. II," 21 January 1947, Box 1, Folder B, File 28, DBF.

⁴⁵ "Points raised by Lieut.-General Turner," p.3; Hughes to Duguid, 31 March 1934, (HQ 683-1-30-50), RG 24, vol. 1503, NAC.

⁴⁶ "Points raised by Lieut.-General Turner, p.1.

⁴⁷ A good account of the 13th Battalion's efforts can be found in Dancocks, *Welcome to Flanders Fields*, pp.166-167. Turner's messages are recorded in Duguid, *Official History*, p.263; and *Appendices*, nos. 347 (3rd Brigade to 1 Canadian Division, 6.25pm, 22 April), p.239; 351 (3rd Brigade to 1 Canadian Division, 6.45pm, 22 April), p.240; 370 (3rd Brigade to 1 Canadian Division, 8.25pm, 22 April), p.242.

⁴⁸ "Points raised by Lieut.-General Turner," p.1.

⁴⁹ Duguid, *Official History*, pp.247-249, 252; Nicholson, *CEF*, p.66.

⁵⁰ Slightly over 3000 of the almost 6000 casualties suffered by the Division were incurred on 24 April. It should also be noted that the losses were equally shared between the three brigades, Bill Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare*, p.35; Duguid, *Official History*, p.421.

⁵¹ Duguid: *Official History*, pp.300-302, 309-310; *Appendices*, nos. 538 (3rd Brigade to Lt.-Col. F.O.W. Loomis, 7.05am, 24 April), p.269; 543 (3rd Brigade to 15th Battalion, 7.15am, 24 April), p.270; 545 (3rd Brigade to 1 Canadian Division, 7.50am, 24 April), p.271.

⁵² *Ibid*, p.311; *Ibid*, nos. 580 (1 Canadian Division to 3rd Brigade, 1pm, 24 April), p.278; 586 (3rd Brigade to 5th Durhams, 4th Yorks, 2nd, 3rd, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th Battalions, 1.40pm 24 April), p.279.

⁵³ Ibid, pp.313-316, 334-335; Ibid, nos. 600 (27 Division to 3rd Brigade, 2.15pm, 24 April), p.281; 630 (3rd Brigade to 1 Canadian Division, 8.45pm, 24 April, received 11.10pm), p.287; 631 (3rd Brigade to 27 Division, 9.35pm, 24 April), p.287; 634 (V Corps to 1 Canadian Division, 11.35pm, 24 April), p.288; 637 (1 Canadian Division to 3rd Brigade, 11.50pm, 24 April), p.288.

⁵⁴ Duguid writes that earlier references to the GHQ line and preexisting defence plans convinced Turner that it was the position referred to. Dancocks and Nicholson both agree with this interpretation and add poor battlefield communications. In his work, John Swettenham notes Turner's actions but does not fully develop the point, while D.J. Goodspeed's coverage of the withdrawal makes no mention of Turner. Only George Cassar accuses Turner of deliberately disobeying orders. See Duguid, *Official History*, p.311; Dancocks, *Welcome to Flanders Fields*, pp.255-266, 335; Nicholson, *CEF*, pp.75-76; John Swettenham, *To Seize the Victory: The Canadian Corps in World War I* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1965), p.82; D.J. Goodspeed, *The Road Past Vimy: The Canadian Corps 1914-1918* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), p.33; Cassar, *Beyond Courage*, p.128.

⁵⁵ Gordon Hall to Duguid, 16 January 1935, (HQ 683-1-30-50), RG 24, vol. 1503, NAC, [original emphasis].

⁵⁶ Turner's actions in South Africa – which earned him a Victoria Cross – are summarized in Thomas P. Leppard, "The Dashing Subaltern: Sir Richard Turner in Retrospect," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 6, No.2 (Autumn 1997), pp.22-23; Dancocks, *Welcome to Flanders Fields*, pp.165, 256; Nicholson, *CEF*, p.91. Sutherland Brown also made the same accusation against Alderson and concluded that had the Division been a British formation, one or both of them would have lost their commands. Sutherland Brown to MacBrien, 25 November 1925, (HQC 4950, Vol. 1), RG 24, vol. 2680, NAC.

⁵⁷ Duguid to CGS (draft memo), 12 December 1934, Box 2, Folder E, File 73, DBF.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.2. By 1934 Generals Alderson, M.S. Mercer (GOC 1st Brigade), Currie, Watson, E.W.B. Morrison (Lieut.-Colonel in April 1915), J.H. Mitchell (Lieut.-Colonel, 2nd Brigade, CFA, HQ), and L.J. Lipsett (CO 8th Battalion) were all deceased.

⁵⁹ Ibid, pp.3-7. Also included were three pages of positive comments by those who had read the drafts, including Turner and Duguid's brother.

⁶⁰ Duguid to CGS (Ashton), 23 April 1936, (HQC 4950, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 2680, NAC.

⁶¹ Ibid; "Points Raised by Lieut.-General Turner," p.4; Ashton to Minster (Ian A. Mackenzie), 25 June 1936, (DHS 10-10, Vol. 3), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC.

⁶² Duguid to Ashton, 23 April 1936, (HQC 4950, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 2680, NAC.

⁶³ Duguid to CGS (draft memo), 12 December 1934, p.6, Box 2, Folder E, File 73, DBF.

⁶⁴ Duguid, *Official History*, pp.312-313.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.339, 342-346.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.346-348; *Appendices*, nos. 650 (3rd Brigade to 1 Canadian Division, 7.55am, 25 April, but not received until 4pm), p.290; 654 (10th Brigade to 1 Canadian Division, 9.15am, 25 April), p.291; 656 (1 Canadian Division to 10th Brigade, 9.45am, 25 April), p.291; 668 (3rd Brigade to 1 Canadian Division, 1.50pm, 25 April, but not received until 4pm), p.293.

⁶⁷ Detailed discussions of the battle can be found in Edmonds, *Military Operations*, 1916, I, pt.1, pp.185-193; Nicholson, *CEF*, pp.136-145; and Tim Cook, "The Blind Leading the Blind: The Battle of the St. Eloi Craters," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 5, No.3 (Autumn 1996). Turner's part is ably covered in Thomas P. Leppard, "Richard Turner and the Battle of St. Eloi", and in his previously mentioned article, "The Dashing Subaltern," which is based upon the latter work.

In an interesting aside, Duguid – a gunner in the 23rd Howitzer Battery at the time – wrote to Lieut.-Colonel D.E. Macintyre (an intelligence officer, 6th Brigade) in 1928 that he had observed German troops in craters 4 and 5 on 6 April, which he had correctly identified with a sextant. He goes on to claim that his report and another message by Macintyre were both ignored as Divisional HQ preferred the more optimistic reports of the infantry in the line. See Duguid to Lieut.-Colonel D.E. Macintyre, 18 and 28 June, Box 1, Folder C, Vol. 1, DBF. Although not mentioning Duguid by name, his message is recorded in "Report of Operations, 2 Canadian Division, 3-16 April 1916," Appendix 1, p.3 in R.E.W. Turner's "Report on 2nd Canadian Division's Operations at St. Eloi. April 3rd to April 16th,"; and the divisional war diary contains several similar reports; RG 9, III, D3, vol. 4843, NAC. I am grateful to David Campbell for bringing this reference to my attention.

⁶⁸ "St. Eloi Craters – Appraisal," handwritten draft, no date, (Chapter XI, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Nicholson's account is noncommittal on who is to blame for the failure, as is Swettenham and Goodspeed. See Nicholson, *CEF*, pp.142, 145; Swettenham, *To Seize the Victory*, p.103; Goodspeed, pp.57-58. The only exceptions are the recent studies by Leppard and Cook which both conclude that Turner was largely at fault.

⁷¹ "Syllabus of Chapters – Vol. II," 21 January 1947, p.62, Box 1, Folder B, File 28, DBF.

⁷² Duguid to Ralph Hodder Williams, 2 March 1924, (DHS 10-8), RG 24, vol. 1754, NAC. Not all regimental historians appreciated changes to their work. Major-General Sir A.C. Macdonell (Batty Mac) was outraged that one of Duguid's assistants, Major J.F. Cummins, had replaced some of his original text with material prepared by the Historical Section. See Macdonell to Brigadier-General W.A. Griesbach, 23 November 1931, File 33 (D), W.A. Griesbach Papers, MG 30 E15, NAC; and Macdonell to Duguid, 10 February 1932, Box 2, Folder F, File 85, DBF.

Colonel Currie has the dubious distinction of being the only senior Canadian officer to be removed from command after Second Ypres. In the *Appendices*, Duguid does record that Currie visited 2nd Brigade's HQ near Fortuin on 24 April and vaguely hints that it was unusual, no. 589 (Notes and References), p.279. Currie's removal is also noted in the list of commands and staffs for the 1st Division, no. 842 (Commands and Staffs 1st Canadian Division), p.429. Duguid's dislike of Hughes is in Duguid to Ralph W. Hodder Williams (draft letter), no date but late 1938 or early 1939, (Chapter V, Vol. II), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC; and examples of Hughes' antics are well documented in the *Official History*.

⁷³ Duguid to JAG, 25 March 1936, (DHS 10-10B), RG 24, vol. 1735, NAC; Duguid, *Official History*, pp.125, 138-139; "Draft Chapter – Chapter VII," no date but approved by Duguid 7 March 1946, (Chapter VII, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC.

⁷⁴ Duguid, *Official History*, pp.301, 306-307, 312, 421; *Appendices*, no. 706 (The German Official History), p.321. Some 1410 Canadians were taken prisoner at Second Ypres, and Desmond Morton astutely points out that with the exception of Hong Kong (December 1941) and Dieppe (August 1942), more Canadians surrendered on 24 April 1915 than in any other battle in the twentieth century, see *Silent Battle*, pp.28, 31.

⁷⁵ "Draft Chapter – Chapter VII," no date, (Chapter VII, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC. Macphail goes into greater detail as to how troops injured themselves, but claims that at Second Ypres it was observed among "coloured troops" and does not mention Canadians. Similarly, while admitting that some cases of venereal disease were self-inflicted and that cases, overall, were higher in overseas troops than in British units he states that "negro troops had a rate seven times as high as the whites...". He also implies that soldiers were not necessarily to blame for the affliction since the women involved were "seducer[s]," Macphail, *Medical Services*, pp.278-279, 288-89, 292-293.

⁷⁶ Duguid to Turner, 6 June 1933, (DHS 10-10A), RG 24, vol. 1755, NAC; Duguid, *Official History*, pp.141, 144, 194, 294, 299, 309, 448, 499, 522-524, 540-541, 546-547; *Appendices*, no.111 (The Ross Rifle), p.75. For the unprepared and disorganized nature of the early war effort see, *Appendices*, no.8 (The Growth and Control of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada), p.4, and "Draft Chapters II and IV," (Chapters II, IV), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC.

⁷⁷ Indeed, Duguid once wrote that many of his criticisms would be too devastating to print. Duguid to Ralph W. Hodder Williams, (draft letter), no date but late 1938 or early 1939, (Chapter V, Vol. II), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC.

⁷⁸ Nicholson, "Archer Fortescue Duguid, 1887-1976," p.271. Duguid's works on heraldry include, 'Symbolism In the Army, The Military Use of Symbols With Particular Reference to Their Origins and Significance,'; "The Sign of Mars, Box 2, Folder D, Files 58 and 61, DBF, DHH; and "The Tricolour in Canada". His flag proposal was submitted in 1924 but was not approved until 1939, Alistair B. Fraser, "A Canadian Flag for Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 25. No.4 (Winter 1990-91), pp.73-74. See also Duguid, "The Flag of the Active Service Force," *The McGill News*, Vol. XXI, No.3 (Spring 1940). Duguid was enough of an acknowledged expert that he was even called to testify before the parliamentary committee on a national flag for Canada in 1945, see "Obituaries," Box 2, Folder F, Unnumbered File, DBF.

⁷⁹ For example, Stephen Harris has demonstrated that Duguid was wrong in claiming that almost all the officers in the 1st and 2nd Divisions had substantial military training. The now famous Kitchener-Hughes dispute in late 1914 has also been proven to be nothing more than a myth, see Harris, *Canadian Brass*, pp.99-100; Duguid, *Official History*, pp.126-127; Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, p.25; C.P. Stacey, "Canada's Last War – And the Next." *The University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol.8, No.3 (April 1939), p.247.

⁸⁰ W.B. Kerr, (Book Review), *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XX, No.1 (March 1939), p.63.

Chapter Three

The Decline and Fall of the Historical Section

The publication of volume one seemed to herald a new beginning for the Historical Section. Impressed by its favourable reception Defence Minister Ian Mackenzie declared that the remaining volumes would not take as long to complete as the first. Duguid was himself optimistic and expressed confidence that the high standard could be maintained. The Historical Section's 1939 annual report was similarly positive, stating that much of the material for the second volume had been compiled and that the work was progressing and, in some cases, was well advanced.¹ No prospective date for its publication was mentioned, but it is fair to assume that most thought it would be sooner rather than later. It must have then been a surprise for the new CGS (Major-General T.V. Anderson) to receive a memorandum from Duguid in early September 1939, asking him to consider suspending work on the history.²

Duguid made the recommendation – six days before Canada formally entered the Second World War – because three of his staff had already been mobilized and the Historical Section was short an assistant Director. In accordance with his own views on the Section's mandate he also fully expected to become absorbed in duties relating to the upcoming conflict. Anderson rejected Duguid's request and instead urged him to speed up production "as much as possible," but Duguid's initial assessment proved accurate. The demands of the Second World War inevitably limited the time that could be devoted to the history of the first, despite the more than doubling of the Historical Section's staff by

1944.³ In many ways this was simply a continuation of the problems of the 1920s and 30's as official policy and Duguid's own priorities prevented any meaningful work on the history.

Such continuity would suggest that the project's cancellation in 1947 was the only logical conclusion to a disorganized effort that truly had 'missed the boat'. There is some truth to this interpretation but it is misleading to classify the Second World War as merely another interruption to the writing process. Doing so ignores not only the Section's wartime activities and their impact on the rate of production, but also more importantly, the postwar debate on the Historical Section's future and relevance. A debate that would ultimately be decided for reasons other than history.

Despite Anderson's wish that delays be avoided, work on the history was immediately interrupted. The Historical Section's 1940 annual report reveals that apart from some work on the battles of St. Eloi and Mount Sorrel, very little had been accomplished since the previous year except for the completion of some appendices. At this point the bulk of the Historical Section's time seems to have been taken up responding to requests for information and supplying documentation on aspects of the First World War deemed relevant to the current war effort. Among the subjects researched were censorship, treatment of enemy aliens, the transportation of the First Contingent (CEF), and the formation and cost of the Overseas Ministry.⁴ This information undoubtedly eased planning in some areas but Duguid's claims that the lessons learned from these accounts – and volume one – proved invaluable and saved millions of dollars, are certainly

exaggerated and should be seen in the context of his attempts to save the official history from cancellation.⁵

There were, of course, a number of other duties the Historical Section was charged with, many of which Duguid became directly involved in. He submitted recommendations detailing the proper procedure for the preparation and custody of war diaries – along with a design for a war diary jacket - and gave a series of lectures on the subject to officers of the Overseas Record Office. Duguid also consulted with the Air and Naval services on how to maintain their records and offered advice on the production of historical material. His heraldic knowledge led, in addition to the Book of Remembrance Committee, to an appointment as the chairman of a departmental committee on war service badges. This type of work increased and by October 1945 Duguid was, or had been, involved with numerous committees on matters ranging from the selection of war artists to demobilization.⁶

These tasks were in addition to the numerous duties the Historical Section had been carrying out since 1921. Along with the work connected to the Second World War the Section continued to answer enquiries and assist regimental historians as needed. Research into the Great War was not totally abandoned as monographs and notes were prepared, but the material encompassed all aspects of the war and little of it was for immediate use in the official history. New files were continually being received – almost 40,000 in 1940 alone – which required sorting and classifying and Duguid continued to correspond with Edmonds and comment on drafts of the British Official History. Then there were the miscellaneous daily activities of the Historical Section to attend to, including a move to a new building in

1940 that disrupted regular work for some time.⁷ The cumulative effect of all this was such that when asked in July 1943 what progress had been made on the official history, Duguid responded that:

90% of the time of one officer and 50% of the time of two other ranks is devoted to work on the last war. Three officers who, it was intended, should be employed at least 70% on work connected with Vol. 2 are at present employed 90% on current war material.⁸

How much of the move away from completing the official history can be attributed to official policy is difficult to determine but the notes arranged for the 1945 annual report do show a number of departmental projects.⁹ Duguid's culpability should not be overlooked as he did little to protest the mobilization of staff members, nor did he object to the shift in the Historical Section's priorities. The potential impact of any protest is debatable and it is quite possible it would have been ignored or that the necessary initiative to enact changes would have been lacking. But Duguid's strong belief that the Section's duties were "by no means confined to Official History" ensured that no serious objections were ever raised. Indeed, Duguid's own priorities seem to have shifted away from the official history as demonstrated by his plans to design the George Cross (see chapter two), the blueprints for a gun platform stabilizer he submitted to the General Staff in 1943, and his volunteering for duty in the Pacific.¹⁰ Those inquiring as to why no further volumes had appeared were simply told that all work had been suspended upon the outbreak of war and Duguid responded to one query that he saw "no possibility of renewing my peacetime work until Hitler and his Axis partners have been disposed of".¹¹

Another distraction was the activities of C.P. Stacey and other historical recorders overseas. Stacey had joined the Historical Section in 1940 and went on to head the

Historical Section at Canadian Military Headquarters in London, although he was technically still responsible to Duguid. In practice, however, he reported to the chiefs of the overseas army and his initial instructions – drafted by the CGS (Lieutenant-General H.D.G. Crerar) and Duguid - were largely ignored as Stacey found it easier to work by “rule of thumb”. Under his able direction the Section soon expanded and by war’s end comprised a substantial staff in London, a historical officer and war artist for each Canadian Division as well as representatives at Corps and Army Headquarters. This was a vast improvement over the system in place during the Great War and the result was a wide and organized body of records.¹²

The relationship between Duguid and Stacey, though, was not always amicable, despite Stacey’s claim that they never had a real altercation. Most of the disagreements were relatively minor such as Duguid’s complaints about the quality of the paintings produced by the war artists. These could be ignored or easily resolved but more serious was Duguid’s objection to the circulation of war diary extracts and memoranda. Stacey had initiated this project in late 1943 in order to provide officers with examples of tactical experience they might not otherwise have access to. An added benefit was increased contact between the operational branches and historical personnel. Duguid disapproved of the practice and worried that sensitive information was being broadcast too widely. The unedited extracts, he insisted, gave “false impressions” as they lacked proper context and might even disparage certain units. He also felt that the selection and editing process was “...beyond the competence of an academic historian” who was unfamiliar with army policies and procedure.¹³

Duguid personally conveyed his thoughts to Stacey when he traveled to London for a “liaison visit” in February 1944. Stacey records that Duguid also indicated his desire to revive the link between the two Historical Sections and emphasized that control of the Canadian Army – and presumably Stacey’s establishment – was centred in Ottawa. Duguid further suggested two projects of his own: a series of operational reports by field commanders and a number of pamphlets containing edited first-hand accounts. Stacey’s immediate superior, Brigadier-General M.H.S. Penhale, was unimpressed by Duguid’s performance and assured Stacey that little would change. In the end very little did, Duguid’s first project was accepted but Crerar (then GOC 1 Canadian Army) refused to participate in the second and Stacey’s war diary extracts continued to circulate. The only real benefit of the visit was that it apparently smoothed relations between the two and Stacey wrote his wife that he and Duguid parted on good terms and thought the visit had been useful.¹⁴

Stacey attributes Duguid’s initial resentment to his belief that Duguid (and other older officers) were unhappy at being displaced by a younger generation.¹⁵ There is likely some justification to this and Duguid does seem to have had a bias against academic historians. But despite Stacey’s claims to the contrary, the resentment appears to have run both ways. He complained to his wife that during Duguid’s visit he “got more done in his absence than in his presence”, and was evidently disinclined to listen to someone whose abilities he had come to doubt. Stacey’s opinion of Duguid actually worsened as time passed and Duguid’s depiction in Stacey’s memoir, *A Date with History* (1982), is hardly complimentary, and the early drafts even less so.¹⁶ Whatever personal problems existed

between the two, it proved yet another distraction for Duguid and his almost four month absence from Ottawa did little to advance his own work.

The work of the Historical Section had indeed contributed to the war effort but only at the cost of placing the official history on indefinite hold. The end of the Second World War then, found it in much the same position as it had been in 1939. Some prefatory work had been done but volume two was still some time away from being completed.

Meanwhile the absence of a Canadian history had not gone unnoticed, especially as the Australian Official History was completed and reviewers questioned why Canada did not possess a similar account. The matter was further mentioned in the press and even brought up in Parliament.¹⁷ A decision was also needed as to the nature and scope of any official history of the Second World War. This was a task that had been given little thought and one that the existing establishment was clearly not equipped to handle.

The need to address these points led to the Section's second major reorganization in October 1945, one that appeared to provide an ideal solution. It was largely based on Stacey's recommendations and the remaining details were worked out between Stacey, Duguid and the CGS (Lieutenant-General Charles Foulkes) during a meeting on 5 October 1945. Stacey's plans for an official history – more of which will be said later – were accepted and he was named official historian for the 1939-1945 war. In what proved to be a changing of the guard of sorts, Stacey was also appointed the Historical Section's director, Duguid's position for the previous twenty-four years. Duguid was made historian for 1914-1919 – later amended to CEF historian - and given a separate directorate with no

responsibilities other than finishing his series. There was a sense of urgency in Duguid's case as Foulkes stressed that Duguid was then fifty-eight and only had about two more years to serve before retirement. Duguid was, Foulkes said, "the only officer capable of completing the task and...*it must be completed* before his retirement".¹⁸

The clear winner in this reorientation was Stacey, and while Duguid's position was obviously a demotion, it was not entirely negative. After the necessary administrative details of the transfer had been worked out he would have additional time to write and once relieved of the day to day duties of the Historical Section, the number of potential distractions would significantly decrease. Duguid's subsequent involvement in outside projects was indeed reduced, and by mid 1946 the only one remaining was the Book of Remembrance Committee, which had not met in months. The new directorate did continue to assist regimental historians and answer enquiries, but the number of each had dropped off considerably and did not require the time it previously had. The only other distraction was checking drafts of the British official history – itself nearing completion. With interruptions at a minimum, Duguid reported that the staff was working well and that he expected to complete volume two in the 1946 fiscal year.¹⁹

However, the key point of the reorganization was not the creation of a separate establishment for Duguid, but the imposition of a two-year deadline for the history's completion. Strangely, the feasibility of completing the remaining seven volumes in two years, when it had taken 17 years to publish the first, appears not to have been seriously considered. It seems to have been chosen because it coincided with Duguid's impending retirement – seen as an absolute - and Foulkes' belief that Duguid was the only person

capable of seeing the project through, thus his insistence that it be completed prior to Duguid's retirement. Duguid, on the other hand, did not think it could be concluded in two years, regarded the deadline as a target date, and was developing plans for the history's continuation beyond his own departure.²⁰

He first broached the idea of continuing the history in a memorandum to Foulkes in early 1946. In it, Duguid tacitly accepted the two-year deadline but estimated that only the operational account of the CEF could be completed in the time allotted. The political and administrative aspects, he said, as well as the secondary campaigns such as Siberia and Palestine, still required further work. He then recommended that two additional officers be appointed to the Section as understudies for himself and his assistant director (Lieutenant-Colonel W. Boss), who was also scheduled to retire in two years. Such appointments should be immediate, he felt, as the officers would require some time to familiarize themselves with the source material and only after doing so could they be qualified to carry on the work. Duguid also refused to commit to a firm timetable, arguing that numerous imponderables made firm publication dates impossible to determine. Hoping to head off complaints that the endeavor was dragging on, an appendix was included stating the average time taken to produce the Australian official history and the British military and air series. Which, according to his calculations was 2.9 years per volume.²¹ This was apparently meant to reassure his superiors and argue that the remainder of the history could ultimately be completed in below average time. Alternatively, it could also place Duguid's completion date in the mid to late 1960s!

The notion that the history would carry on after Duguid's retirement may have been unsupported, but in the absence of instructions to the contrary it defined the Historical Section's immediate priorities. Thus, Stacey's charge that Duguid had only one chapter ready for printing when the history was canceled, while essentially correct, is incomplete as it overlooks what Duguid was trying to accomplish.²² His primary concern was not writing volume two but preparing the layout of chapters and maps for future volumes to guide his successor. The maps, Duguid explained, were critical and had to be finished before the operational account could be written and he spent considerable time assisting and supervising the Section's cartographers. Even without any supporting text, Duguid was confident that properly compiled maps would "clearly illustrate the plan, set out the dispositions, and follow the development and details of the action accurately and to finality". Writing was equally varied as Duguid and the other narrators often worked several volumes ahead. For example, in February 1946, Duguid was working on the log of events and maps for volume three, in April he was writing portions of the St. Eloi account (volume two), and by June had moved on to the Somme (volume three). The German version of Passchendaele (volume five) occupied most of September and in November work had again shifted back to volume three.²³ A concentrated effort to complete the second volume was made only after the cancellation of the history had been finalized in early 1947.

To this point, Duguid and the General Staff had been operating under two very distinct assumptions. Duguid, that the official history would be continued, and the General Staff that he would be finished in two years. One can then imagine the sense of confusion

that must have followed the news in July 1946 that Duguid expected to finish only the maps and operational narrative by January 1948 and that the time to complete the series was approximately six and half years. When pressed for clarification, Duguid quickly apologized if he had implied that all eight volumes would be ready by 1947 and pointed to the tentative nature of his previous estimates. Forced to concede that the two year deadline was impossible to meet, Duguid added a statement that was part justification and part prediction:

Reckoning from my appointment as D.H.S. [Director, Historical Section] in May 1921, and allowing for suspension during war 1939-1945 and for 50% extraneous employment 1921-1932, average rate of 2.9 years per vol. gives probable completion date 1956. Reckoning from 16 May 1932 when I was named to write the official history 1914-1919 and making no allowance for suspension 1939-1945, average rate of 2.9 years per vol. gives probable completion date 1955...[which] might be advanced to Jan. 1953.²⁴

This bizarre answer was hardly the response that the General Staff was looking for and Duguid knew it. Moreover, the premise upon which it rested – an average production rate of 2.9 years for the Australian and British official histories – was suspect. Edmonds' final volume had not yet appeared in 1946, so Duguid's assertion that it had taken him twenty-six years to complete the series was a guess and the Australian official historian, C.E.W. Bean, claimed it had taken him three to four years to complete each volume, not 2.9.²⁵ Duguid's own rate of production did not even meet this standard as it had taken slightly more than six years to publish his first volume. Quite deliberately, Duguid had also only predicted the amount of time necessary to write all the volumes. Missing from his calculations was an estimate of the time needed to circulate draft chapters and consider comments from CEF officers, from Edmonds and possibly from Bean, for the later

volumes. Even minor revisions would take time and one or more disputes similar to that which had occurred over Second Ypres would almost certainly result in prolonged delays.²⁶

Although Duguid had been less than candid at times, his efforts fall short of outright deception. He was, however, attempting to quietly alter policy by submitting his own proposals in the hopes that they would eventually be accepted. Why the General Staff did not clarify their position or even seem to notice what Duguid was doing was partly due to the fact that Duguid's establishment was now but a subsection of a larger organization, one traditionally regarded with some ambivalence. Then there were the greater and more immediate problems associated with demobilizing and repatriating the overseas army. Postwar policy also held little interest for the minister (D.C. Abbott), who was content to leave it his successor, Brooke Claxton.²⁷ Repatriation was not fully completed until late 1946, but by April the situation had eased enough to allow the General Staff to concentrate on other matters, including official histories. Accordingly, Foulkes directed his vice chief (Major-General C.C. Mann), to investigate the plans for both the First and Second World War histories, the results of which were anything but encouraging.

Mann recommended that Duguid's Section cease operations by the end of the year, be disbanded as of 1 January 1947 and its records deposited in the archives. At a time when "we are making every effort to apply our manpower and finances to the best advantage," Mann balked at the total projected cost of the official history – over half million dollars. This was a figure that could easily rise as he noted that even if Duguid finished his operational narrative by 1948, it would still be five years, possibly more, before

the series was finally completed. In other words, the end no longer justified the means, and Mann explained that he could not:

...see what advantage there can possibly be to this Department or to the country as a whole by allowing this matter to drag on even until January 1948. It seems to me, that without recriminations, the production of the History of the First World War has "missed the boat" completely and I am of the opinion that it would be a wiser and bolder course to take the bull by the horns now.²⁸

Foulkes agreed and a submission was drafted and presented to the newly appointed Claxton, calling for the abandonment of the project. It essentially reiterated Mann's report and admitted that while the savings in manpower were not substantial – a mere eighteen officers and men – it was the proper allocation of military resources that was the issue. Poor sales of Duguid and Macphail's works were cited as evidence of little public interest in any such history and provided another compelling reason for cancellation. Foulkes even questioned the value of an operational narrative of the war, again arguing that it was not a prudent expenditure. He felt that advances in warfare had "render[ed] any such study of that campaign of very doubtful value at all". To Foulkes the Great War was, in effect, old news and any necessary lessons, he thought, could be gleaned from existing works, even if none had a Canadian perspective.²⁹

That financial considerations figured highly in Mann and Foulkes decision is not surprising given the political climate of the time. Both were evidently hoping that canceling the official history would demonstrate the department's fiscal responsibility and possibly even mitigate upcoming budget cuts. For while Abbot had eschewed formulating a clear defence policy it was obvious that the military would soon face massive reductions in personnel and funding. Prime Minister Mackenzie King had stated as much when he

declared that the government needed to get back to the “old Liberal principles of economy, reduction of taxation, anti-militarism, etc”. The anticipated cuts began in early January 1947 when Abbott – now finance minister – proposed a lean federal budget that required significant decreases in defence spending. Meeting the cuts, Claxton informed the service chiefs, meant further decreasing the size of armed forces, limiting recruitment, disposing of surplus equipment, cutting back on reserve training and the postponement or cancellation of projects deemed non-essential.³⁰

Official histories were thought to be such projects and it was therefore decided to cancel both army histories and Stacey was informed of the decision on 16 January 1947 and Duguid the next day. The CEF history was to be discontinued at the end of March while Stacey was given a year to complete a popular account of the 1939-1945 war effort. After which the Historical Section would be relegated to writing “instructional studies for use at schools and staff courses”. Urged by Foulkes to present his case, Stacey argued that the decision was a breach of faith since two previous ministers (McNaughton and Abbott) had approved his plan. If not for a timely meeting between Lester Pearson (then Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs) and George Brown of the University of Toronto, Stacey’s protests would have probably been to no avail. Convinced that the decision was unsound, Brown had persuaded Pearson, who in turn convinced Claxton, that it should be reconsidered. It was, and Stacey’s history survived but the commitment to cancel the CEF history remained.³¹

Also eliminated were the burgeoning historical programs of the other services. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) had established a Historical Section in Ottawa and

another overseas to collect records in 1940. Staffed with professional historians it published two volumes of a popular operational narrative, *The RCAF Overseas*, during the war and sponsored or wrote a number of smaller works on air history. These were never intended as substitutes for an official account and in 1946 the Air Historian, Wing Commander Fred H. Hitchins, proposed an ambitious nine volume series covering not only the Second World War but the RCAF's early history as well. Never strongly supported by air staff it was duly cancelled and the section reduced to one officer and a secretary, enough to publish a third volume of *The RCAF Overseas*, and a chronology entitled *The RCAF Logbook*, in 1949 and little else.³²

Like the RCAF, the navy lacked a historical section when war erupted and not until 1941 was Gilbert Tucker (a specialist in nineteenth-century Canadian commercial history) appointed as historian and only in early 1943 was a historical officer sent overseas. Not set up as a separate program and often given non-historical duties, the navy's program never duplicated the army and air force's success at historical recording. Despite Tucker's boast that a Canadian destroyer had been the first warship to go into action with an historian aboard, he had received little support from the naval staff, was ill suited for the task and at one point even recommended that the Section be disbanded. Still, he managed to produce two volumes detailing Canada's early naval history and shore activities during the war, but apparently refused to write an operational volume without access to German records. The cutbacks made this impossible and Joseph Schull, a wartime public relations officer, was recruited to write a popular account and his *The Far Distant Ships*, appeared alongside Tucker's volumes in 1952.³³

The decision to abandon the CEF history was probably not a complete surprise to Duguid, given the political situation, his imminent retirement and the fact that none of his earlier recommendations had been acted on. He may even have suspected something was about to be announced after receiving official notification of his retirement in early January 1947.³⁴ Nonetheless he resolved to protest the decision and did so, declaring that it was the result of “misleading implications” and “questionable conclusions”. Specifically he argued that since writing had not begun until 1932 and allowing for interruptions, the total writing time to date was only eight and a half years and not the 35 years commonly believed. The overall cost was not extravagant and compared favorably to the British official histories. The true value of the history, he contended, was not in the sales figures quoted by Mann (themselves inaccurate) but as a reference work for the military, government officials and the public. Duguid further challenged the notion that production had stalled, claiming that volume two was nearly finished, the prospects of meeting the target completion date were good and that “Lack of gas is the *only* reason or excuse that can justly be given for stopping now”.³⁵

Undeterred, the government issued a press release in early February explaining its decision to cut short the official histories. Yet some interest remained in publishing Duguid’s second volume if it could be completed quickly and Duguid was asked just how close he was to finishing it, and what was the staff required to see the volume to the printer.³⁶ To this question, Duguid gave two very different responses. To the DCGS (Brigadier-General W. J. Megill) he wrote that of the eighteen projected chapters, ten – four operational and six general – would probably be ready by 15 March, the time at which he

and Boss were scheduled to proceed on retirement leave. The remaining general chapters, Duguid guessed, could be completed by mid-May but, amazingly, he still refused to give a definitive completion date and would only say that the volume would likely be finished by the end of September 1947, and probably earlier. Some staff members, however, would have to be retained until December for proofreading and to prepare the index. In sharp contrast, Duguid suggested to Stacey that by working nights it might be possible to complete the volume by 31 March but not by his demobilization date.³⁷

In his memo to Megill, Duguid also included a passionate defence of the history's worth, realizing that it was perhaps his final opportunity to do so. Imploring him to rethink the decision, he asked if the CEF history was "of any less value and interest than imaginative presentations of Marathon, Hastings or Waterloo, written hundreds of years after the event?" Using the recent release of a new edition of Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as an example of the enduring popularity of history, Duguid rhetorically wondered if it was "of greater interest to Canadians to-day than is the history of Canada 1914-1919?" Canadians should not be denied the "story of these momentous years," he declared, and would acutely feel the lack of an official account in later years, especially when the official American account finally appeared. To avoid the "international ignominy of abandoning a successful project," Duguid reached into the past and proposed implementing the 1929 Committee's recommendation that the establishment become part of the Public Archives, thereby relieving National Defence of the responsibility and expense for the project.³⁸

Needless to say, Duguid's pleas had little effect and he was informed on 21 February that any intention of publishing volume two would have to be dropped, which meant the end of the official history itself.³⁹ Closely following this news was a discouraging letter from Lieut.-Colonel Wilfred Bovey, one of the 1929 Committee members. Duguid had written him several days earlier to inform him of the government's decision and asking him to intervene if he felt the Committee's findings were still relevant. Though sympathetic to Duguid's plight, Bovey replied that in his judgement the conditions that had prompted the Committee – ignorance of the war effort – no longer existed and that it was a “dead issue”. Similar to Foulkes, he also discouraged a purely operational study on the grounds that it would only be of use to senior officers who had other reference sources available. He did favour a work on military policy encompassing both world wars but did not think it should be a government publication and suggested the Canadian Legion as a possible sponsor.⁴⁰

More than anything else, this candid response from an old friend was what finally convinced Duguid to cease his protests and accept the history's cancellation. Thanking Bovey for his honesty he credited him with preventing the “supremely foolish step of [my] interviewing the Prime Minister, as I would have done but for your matter of fact and timely letter”. But it was with a sense of bitter resignation and disbelief that he concluded the rationale behind the decision was that Canadians no longer desired a history of the war. “It is clear to me now,” he remarked, “that for a quarter of a century I have been misled by my own fantastic illusions as to the need for an authentic presentation of the history of Canada 1914-1919”. Resolving to accept the government's decision, Duguid planned to

spend his remaining time cataloguing and indexing the Section's material for the benefit of future historians, adding that:

It seems rather a pity that I...the only one who was actively engaged in all the battles...the only one, who, in the cause of Canadian history has interviewed Borden and Byng, and Currie, and Turner and Macdonell and hundreds of others, am to go to my grave with six volumes in my head. Of course the historian of the future will readily set down *what* happened in broad terms at least, but he will never know *why*. And the Canadian soldier, or youth, who can read of Marathon and Cannae, of Malplaquet and Waterloo, will know all about Greeks and Persians and Romans and Carthaginians and the British Army; he will get along very well without knowledge of how his own forbears fought at Vimy and Passchendaele, at Amiens and Arras and at the D.Q. Switch – his examiners will be equally ignorant.⁴¹

Duguid went on to describe his career as an exercise in “ploughing the sand,” himself as “completely disillusioned” and in need of “a rest and a change from the acrid atmosphere of battle in which I have spent too many years”. That his account tended towards the melodramatic is perhaps to be expected given his obvious disappointment and anger. A brief and unfinished passage comparing his own work with Herodotus, Locke and Gibbon should therefore be seen in this context. As should his statements about building a boat and the number of uncaught fish in the Gatineau lakes. However exaggerated this display might seem, it does provide a sense of the extreme personal loss that Duguid felt. This was especially the case in light of his belief that the war was a national struggle, the accurate recording of which constituted “a duty to the dead and to generations yet unborn”.⁴²

By all accounts Duguid adjusted well to retirement and as noted earlier (chapter two) kept busy, but obviously bothered by a sense of unfinished business, contemplated resurrecting the project in 1949. The decision to do so was largely inspired by the newly

established Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. Formed in April 1949 and chaired by Vincent Massey (formerly Canadian High Commissioner to Britain) the commission's mandate was to examine and evaluate the cultural resources of Canada. This was accomplished by a combination of specialized studies, numerous public hearings held throughout the country and the submission of briefs by various national organizations and individuals. By the time its report was presented in June 1951, the commission had received over four hundred such briefs and heard from some 1200 witnesses.⁴³

Duguid began a brief but there is no evidence to suggest it was ever completed or that he appeared before the commission. The partially completed draft is largely a repetition of his letter to Bovey and contains many of the same justifications for the lack of production. That he was not appointed official historian until 1932, was burdened with numerous supplementary duties, that work had to be suspended during the Second World War and was only resumed at its conclusion. One statement that is clearly wrong is his contention that the 1929 Committee advised that no history should be written for at least twenty years. The Committee had, in fact, recommended exactly the opposite, something of which Duguid was unquestionably aware. Yet, what is most striking is the draft's overall tone, a strange mixture of praise and reproach. There are quotations from several glowing reviews of volume one, including one allegedly by Edmonds congratulating Duguid for having done "a better job than Bean or I". This was followed by criticism of two unnamed officers (Turner and Hughes) for delaying the first volume's publication, the General Staff and Claxton for canceling the history, and Bovey for not acting to prevent its

cancellation. Dismayed at the lack of support Duguid, almost plaintively, writes “There must be something quite wrong about all this...Must we conclude that this history is nobody’s business?” Finally, the letter ends on a dour and pensive note as Duguid comments on the near impossibility of government or private assistance and reluctantly concludes that it might be best to give up the idea entirely.⁴⁴

Exactly why he never finished the draft is uncertain, though Duguid did mention that he was reluctant to come out of retirement, and this, coupled with the low probability of reviving the history, may have persuaded him to abandon the effort. A tentative budget included in the letter also indicates that Duguid may have misunderstood the commission’s aim, then realizing his mistake, opted not to proceed. If this was the case he was not alone, as a Massey biographer notes that a number of people were initially confused about the commission’s purpose, resulting in submissions that were outside or on the fringe of its terms of reference. The commission was primarily an investigation into Canadian culture and thus could only make recommendations about funding and did not have a mandate to authorize spending for specific projects.⁴⁵

For a time it seemed that Duguid’s pessimism was well founded and that an official account would never be realized. However, in July 1955, Claxton’s successor, Ralph Campney, himself a First World War veteran, inquired as to the possibility of producing a history of the war. Stacey felt it a worthwhile endeavor and suggested a one volume work along the lines of his *The Canadian Army 1939-1945* (1948), a non-technical survey, heavily biased towards operations but including political and administrative matters.⁴⁶ Given cabinet approval in 1956 the project was entrusted to Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson

with work expected to begin at the end of the year and publication targeted for 1959. This proved to be overly optimistic and his *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* was not published until 1962. This was slightly behind schedule but far sooner than the fifty or one hundred years that Duguid had predicted it would take Canadians to become historically minded enough to once again express an interest in the CEF.⁴⁷

If footnotes are a judge then the early portions of Nicholson's volume owe a considerable debt to Duguid's work, particularly the chapter on Second Ypres, which relies heavily on his appendices volume. References are fewer in the later sections and while Duguid's work obviously influenced Nicholson, his overall impact beyond the early chapters is difficult to judge. For he had no direct connection to the work and while offering several minor suggestions, missed an opportunity to extensively comment on the manuscript when he failed to submit his observations before it went to the printer.⁴⁸ Yet although Duguid had no formal association to the project, the amount that Duguid contributed to the volume became the focus of a minor controversy. At issue was just how much public recognition Duguid deserved for his efforts.

It was generally accepted that Duguid would receive some sort of acknowledgement but opinions differed as to what form it should take. The Historical Section's director, Colonel G.M.C. Sprung, favored a statement indicating the continuity between the two works and his initial foreword was a brief history and tribute to Duguid's work, emphasizing the usefulness of his material. One of Nicholson's assistants, Captain F.R. McGuire, disagreed and pointed out that the need to fit into one volume what Duguid expected to cover in eight meant that much of his work had to be condensed to the point

that it was often necessary to go back to the records and start fresh. In McGuire's estimation the preexisting material had made the job only 10% easier at best. Stacey expressed a similar view, criticized Duguid for wasting time and public money, felt his efforts came close to being a national scandal, and thought more should be said about Nicholson and his staff.⁴⁹ A compromise was eventually reached and a more reserved foreword was written, while Duguid received his due in Nicholson's preface, albeit amidst numerous other acknowledgements.⁵⁰

For Nicholson, the official history process, despite some delays, had a satisfying conclusion. but for Duguid the unfortunate reality was that once cancellation had been decided upon, the likelihood of the decision being reversed was extremely small. Intervention from a figure like George Brown was doubtful because unlike Stacey, Duguid had no strong connections to the academic community. He had few remaining allies within the department since the removal of McNaughton as minister in August 1945 and the gradual replacement of older personnel with those from the overseas army, such as Mann, Foulkes and Megill. This included Claxton, who may not have been the hatchet man that Stacey and others imagined, but it is safe to say that he did not mourn the loss of one or more of the official histories. Stacey even alleges that Claxton told him at least twice that interest in military history would disappear after 1948 and is reported to have said of the CEF history, "Nobody wants it".⁵¹ Inconceivable as this may be, it was, as demonstrated, an attitude shared by the army staff, including Megill, whose opinion is best summed up by his own remarks:

In our experience the people of Canada have not purchased the history of World War I and I am convinced that unless the history of World War II, from the army point of view is produced within five years at the very most, they will not buy that either. In fact they might not buy it if produced tomorrow.⁵²

That Canadians had enthusiastically purchased Aitken's history and other accounts of the war, and had displayed a similar interest in the Second World War, seems to have been forgotten or conveniently overlooked.

Duguid's chances were further limited by the manner in which he presented his case. Appeals to nationalism and the need to preserve and pass on the memory and lessons of the war were arguments unlikely to persuade a government eager to fund social programs and slash defence spending. The same can be said for the military, preoccupied as it was with budget cuts, generally disinterested in official history of any type and struggling to define its postwar role. Nor were Duguid's optimistic timetable and his rather abstract calculations on the average production rates of British and Australian official histories upon which it was based liable to convince anyone. Even the uninformed could easily tell its basis was questionable and constructed to put the best face forward. Sharp observers could even point out that Duguid's earlier predictions had all been unreliable; nothing had come of his confident forecasts in 1929, again in 1933-34, 1936, 1937 and 1946. References to other "outstanding historical works of enduring national importance" that the Historical Section had contributed to were equally futile.⁵³ To most the measure of success was not battle honours research, proofreading regimental histories or the Memorial Chamber, but a finished official history. In the end, any arguments put forth by Duguid

could be countered with the simple fact that since 1921 he and his staff had completed only one volume.

But was this reason enough to cancel the official history? Was it a misguided political decision or in Clausewitzian terms had the culminating point been reached with future efforts increasingly unlikely to succeed? Duguid was working steadily - albeit somewhat incoherently – and contrary to Stacey’s later allegation, seemed capable of further effort.⁵⁴ Yet, putting aside the long-term implications for the moment, it is difficult to disagree with the decision as the situation stood in 1947. Foulkes’ two-year deadline was impossible to meet and only a Herculean effort could have completed the series by 1953. For it meant publishing the second volume in 1947 and one per year after that and assumed no distractions or problems. No doubt the rushed manner in which they were prepared would have affected the quality of the volumes, which to his credit, Duguid was reluctant to allow.⁵⁵ Thus, in the absence of any willingness to modify the deadline or the terms of Duguid’s retirement⁵⁶, the decision seems correct and indeed the only one available, even if its justification was primarily financial.

Chapter Three Notes

¹ Vance, *Death So Noble*, p.169; Duguid to Brig.-General Victor Odlum, 4 October 1938, Vol. 3. (Colonel A.F. Duguid), Victor Odlum Papers, MG 30 E300; Duguid to Ralph W. Hodder Williams (draft letter), no date but late 1938 or early 1939, (Chapter V, Vol. 2), RG 24, vol. 6992; NAC; *Annual Reports, 1939*, p.67.

² “Question of Suspending Work on the History,” no date but containing excerpts from Duguid to CGS (Anderson), 4 September 1939 and Anderson’s reply, 15 September 1939, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

³ *Ibid*: “Strength of Historical Section (GS),” Box 1, Folder A, File 15, DBF.

⁴ *Annual Reports, 1940*, p.57.

⁵ "The Historical Section (General Staff)," 20 June 1942, p.3, (GAQ 4-15J), RG 24, vol. 1813, NAC; Duguid to CGS (Lieut.-General Charles G. Foulkes), 15 January 1946, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF; Duguid to DCGS(A), (draft memo, not sent), no date but probably late January 1947, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG 30 D252, NAC.

⁶ *Annual Reports, 1940*, pp.57-58; "The Historical Section (General Staff)," 20 June 1942, p.3, (GAQ 4-15J), RG 24, vol. 1813, NAC; Duguid and C.P. Stacey to Foulkes, 22 October 1945, Box 1, Folder A, File 17, DBF.

⁷ "Notes For Annual Report HS Calendar Year 1945," (Reference Sources for CEF Historian); "Extracts From DHS Annual Reports," (Codes); RG 24, vol. 7000a, NAC; *Annual Reports, 1940*, pp.55-56; Cummins to Duguid, 16 April 1940, Box 1, Folder C, Vol. 2, DBF.

⁸ "Percentage of work on Great War 1914-1919," no date but containing excerpts from DCGS(C) to Duguid, 9 July 1943, Duguid's reply 12 July 1943 and DCGS(C) to CGS (Lieutenant-General K. Stuart), 19 July 1943, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

⁹ "Notes For Annual Report HS Calendar Year 1945," (Reference Sources for CEF Historian), RG 24, vol. 7000a, NAC.

¹⁰ "The Historical Section (General Staff), 20 June 1942, p.3, (GAQ 4-15J), RG 24, vol. 1813, NAC. The blueprints and correspondence for Duguid's gun platform stabilizer, which was adapted from a lectern he had devised to support the Book of Remembrance, can be found in Box 1, Folder C, Vol. 2, DBF. A list of personnel volunteering for active duty, including Duguid, is in the same file.

¹¹ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 18 June 1942, p.3432; Duguid to Major-General W.W.P. Gibsons, 24 September 1942, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

¹² Stacey: *A Date with History*, pp.63, 79-80; "The Historical Programme of the Canadian Army Overseas," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XXVI, No.3 (September 1945), pp.229-238. See also "Historical Section, General Staff, Organization and Functions, February 1947," 12 February 1947, (Official History, General 1945-1949), B91-0013/001, Stacey Papers, UTA.

¹³ Stacey: *A Date with History*, pp.66, 109, 127; "The Historical Programme of the Canadian Army Overseas," p.237; Duguid to DCGS(C), (draft letter), no date but late 1943 or early 1944, Box 1, Folder A, File 24, DBF.

¹⁴ Stacey, *A Date with History*, pp.127-129, 133-134. Stacey recorded Duguid's remarks in a private memorandum on 8 and 9 February 1944, the bulk of which are reproduced in his

memoir (p.128). The full memo is in (Memoranda on the visit of Colonel A.F. Duguid...), B90-0020/021; Stacey to Doris Stacey, 12 March 1944, (File 6), B93-0021/001; Stacey Papers, UTA.

¹⁵ Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.128.

¹⁶ Stacey to Doris Stacey, 20 February 1944, (File 6), B93-0021/001; The unpublished remarks are in (Date with History, early draft, Ch.9), p. 16; and (Date with History, TS, Ch.7-12), pp.195-196, 258-259; B90-0020/058. It is interesting to note that one of the few members of the Historical Section praised by Stacey, Lieutenant-Colonel J.F. Cummins, also had a falling out with Duguid, see Cummins to Stacey, 1 November 1942, 22 March 1943 and 14 May 1944, (Dhist Correspondence – J.F. Cummins), B90-0020/021; Stacey Papers, UTA; Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.66.

¹⁷ *Ottawa Journal*, 24 October 1942, p.21 and 23 May 1944, p.2; Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 18 June 1942, p. 3432, 27 March 1944, p.1854, and 20 April 1944, p.2179.

¹⁸ Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.172; Foulkes to Minister (D.C. Abbott), 5 October 1945, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

¹⁹ Duguid to Foulkes, 15 January 1946, p.1, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF; "Annual Report, CEF Historian," 31 May 1946, (CEF 1-11), RG 24, vol. 1876, NAC.

²⁰ Duguid to DCGS(A), 3 July 1946, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

²¹ Duguid to Foulkes, 15 January 1946, p.1-2, Appendix C, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

²² Stacey to Dhist, 30 July 1962, Vol. 1, (CEF Correspondence), G.W.L. Nicholson Papers, MG 31 G19, NAC; See also, Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.194.

²³ Duguid to DCGS(A), 3 July 1946, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF; "Progress Reports – Scheme of Work," various dates, (CEF 1-6), RG 24, vol. 1876, NAC.

²⁴ Duguid to DCGS(A), 18 July 1946, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

²⁵ Duguid to DCGS(A), 15 January 1946, Appendix C, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF; Dudley McCarthy, *Gallipoli to the Somme: The Story of C.E.W. Bean* (London: Leo Cooper, 1983), p.381. It could be argued that the British history had taken over thirty years as Sir John Fortescue – a distant relative of Duguid's - had begun an account in 1915, with Edmonds taking over in late 1919, see French, "Official but not History," p.58.

²⁶ For example, Turner likely would have objected to any suggestion that St. Eloi was a Canadian failure as in correspondence with Duguid he blamed the fiasco on poor staff work by 2nd Army and on a lack of support from Alderson. Turner further viewed any attempt to

place blame on himself or his subordinates as “unforgiveable”, Turner to Duguid, no date but likely 23 August 1929, ((DHS 3-17, Vol. 4), RG 24, vol. 1739, NAC.

²⁷ Demobilization is covered in Stacey, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, Volume 3: The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe 1944-1945* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1960), pp. 615-619; For Abbot see, James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada, Vol. III, Peacemaking and Deterrence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p.19.

²⁸ Major-General C.C. Mann (VCGS) to Foulkes, 16 September 1946, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

²⁹ Foulkes to minister (Brooke Claxton), 21 December 1946, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

³⁰ Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada, Vol. III, p.92*; David Bercuson, *True Patriot: The Life of Brooke Claxton, 1898-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 166-167.

³¹ Entries for 16 and 17 January 1947, (1947 Daily Journal), B90-0020/018, Stacey Papers, UTA; “Memorandum of interview between Brigadier Megill D.C.G.S. (A) and Colonel Duguid, CEF Historian on 17 Jan 47,” Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF; Stacey, *A Date with History*, pp. 194-196. Foulkes’ support had an underlying motive as Stacey suspected he “got considerable quiet pleasure out of my accusing Claxton of a breach of faith. He obviously reported the remark, for shortly the Vice Chief, Church Mann, was heard saying, “Once more unto the breach of faith, dear friends, once more” (p.195).

³² Douglas, “Filling Gaps in the Military Past,” p.114; Syd Wise, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Volume 1* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. x-xi; Kenneth B. Conn, “The Royal Canadian Air Force Historical Section,” *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XXVI, No.3 (September 1945), pp.246-247.

³³ Hyatt, “Official History in Canada,” p.87; Douglas, “Filling Gaps in the Military Past,” pp.113-114; *idem*, “Naval History: The State of the Art,” in *Military History and the Military Profession*, ed. by David A. Charters, Marc Milner and J. Brent Wilson (Westport: Praeger, 1992), pp.78-79; Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.196; Gilbert Tucker, “The Royal Canadian Naval Historical Section,” *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3 (September 1945), p. 243.

³⁴ Duguid to Megill, 13 January 1947, Box 1, Folder C, Vol. 3, DBF.

³⁵ Duguid to Megill (DCGS), 20 January 1947. Duguid’s staff had provided the incorrect sales figures quoted by Mann in his report and only later was the error identified and corrected. As of June 1945, total sales for the official history were 854 with some 1200 free copies distributed. Macphail’s volume had a slightly worse record with 750 copies

sold. See "Official History Sales," 23 January 1939 and 20 January 1946; "Official History War 1914-1919, Statement of Estimated Cost," 12 July 1946; Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

³⁶ Entry for 7 February 1947, (1947 Daily Journal), B90-0020/018, Stacey Papers, UTA; Megill (DCGS) to Duguid, 13 February 1947, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

³⁷ Duguid to Megill, 18 February 1947, pp.1-2 [This is the first of two memos sent to Megill on this date. The second was a short addendum to the first and is the document cited in Chapter One, note 53]; Duguid to Stacey, 18 February 1947; Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

³⁸ Duguid to Megill, 18 February 1947, pp.2-3, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

³⁹ VCGS to Duguid, 21 February 1947, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG 30 D252, NAC; Entry for 21 February 1947, (1947 Daily Journal), B90-0020/018, Stacey Papers, UTA. A prepared statement explaining the decision was read at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association and later reproduced in the *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XXVIII, No.2 (June 1947), pp.239-240.

⁴⁰ Duguid to Bovey, 18 February 1947, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF; Bovey to Duguid, 25 February 1947, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG 30 D252, NAC.

⁴¹ Duguid to Bovey (draft letter), no date but late February or early March 1947, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG 30 D252, NAC.

Among the material set aside for future reference was that relating to the proposed accounts of the CEF's supporting services. In addition to the medical volume, the intention was to publish individual studies of the nursing services, machine guns, chaplains, veterinary services, pay services, railway troops, forestry corps, army service corps and ordnance corps. The first five were evidently in manuscript form but Duguid recommended against publication or completion of the series. See "Official History War 1914-1919, Statement of Estimated Cost," 12 July 1946; and "Explanatory notes on itemized column headings in chart 'Statement of progress on Volume and Projects Undertaken for Official History of the C.E.F. 1914-1919' as of 10 July 1946"; Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

⁴² Ibid (Duguid to Bovey).

⁴³ Vincent Massey, *What's past is Prologue* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963), pp.450-451; Claude Bissell, *The Imperial Canadian: Vincent Massey in Office* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p.211.

⁴⁴ Duguid to Vincent Massey (draft letter), no date but mid to late 1949, Box 1, Folder A, File 21, DBF.

⁴⁵ Ibid; Bissell, *The Imperial Canadian*, pp.211-212.

⁴⁶ Stacey, "Life and Hard Times," pp.40-41; Stacey to CGS (Lieutenant-General H.D. Graham), 21 November 1955, (Official History II, 1950-59), B91-0013/001. Stacey Papers, UTA. See also the memo's early drafts in the same file.

⁴⁷ Ibid; "Record of Cabinet Decision: Meeting of 21 June 1956," (Official History II, 1950-59), B91-0013/001, Stacey Papers, UTA. Nicholson had joined the Historical Section during the Second World War and had authored the *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War*, Volume 2: *The Canadians in Italy, 1943-1945*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1956; Duguid to Bovey (draft letter), no date but late February or early March 1947, Vol. 22 (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG 30 D252, NAC.

⁴⁸ Colonel G.M.C. Sprung (Director, Historical Section) to Nicholson, 26 April and 8 May 1962; Nicholson to Sprung, 30 April and 10 May 1962; Sprung to Duguid, 16 May 1962; Vol. 1 (CEF Correspondence), G.W.L. Nicholson Papers, MG 31 G19, NAC.

⁴⁹ Sprung to Nicholson, 22 November 1961; Captain F.R. McGuire to Nicholson, 30 July 1962; Stacey to Dhist, 30 July 1962; Vol. 1, (CEF Correspondence), G.W.L. Nicholson Papers, MG 31 G19, NAC. Sprung's draft foreword is also contained in this file.

⁵⁰ Nicholson, *CEF*, pp.xi-xiii.

⁵¹ For Claxton's battle to save the defence budget see Bercuson, *True Patriot*, Ch.9. His views towards history are in Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.197; and Duguid to Vincent Massey (draft letter), no date but mid to late 1949, Box 1, Folder A, File 22, DBF.

⁵² Megill quoted in Douglas, "Filling Gaps in the Military Past," pp.114-115.

⁵³ Duguid to Megill, 18 February 1947, p. 3, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

⁵⁴ Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.172.

⁵⁵ Duguid to Megill, 20 February 1947, p.1, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

⁵⁶ Strangely, neither Duguid nor anyone else suggested that the history be continued on a part-time basis with a reduced staff, similar to the manner in which the Second World War medical history and Stacey's final volume were written, see Stacey, *A Date with History*, pp. 203, 215. It may not have proved feasible, but would have been a more persuasive approach than Duguid's recycled Public Archives proposal.

Conclusion

Official historians, Sir Herbert Butterfield remarked, “get the reward that is certainly due to them”. What Butterfield meant was that those historians with access to the “charmed circle”, as he deemed it, of government officials, institutions and restricted documents, who fail to resist the “soft charms...and subtle comfortable chains” of their position, deserve the historical censure they so often receive.¹ Written over fifty years ago, Butterfield’s observations about the pitfalls of official history still resonate, but does Duguid deserve the disdain and ignominy that most historians seem to feel for him and his efforts? In light of what has been demonstrated in the previous chapters, it is now possible to answer not only this question, to also offer some general conclusions as to why the official history was not completed, and provide a final evaluation of Duguid as an historian. In this respect, a brief comparison of Duguid to other First World War historians will also be offered, in order to determine what was uniquely Canadian and where the Canadian experience fits in relation to other nations.

Turning first to the question of why the official history was not completed, it seems clear that Duguid’s pursuit of perfectionism slowed not only research but also the writing process. This was because one of Duguid’s personal quirks was an almost Napoleonic obsession with detail and with it an inability to delegate responsibility and limit his involvement in peripheral duties. Indeed, Duguid once admitted that ‘getting it right’ had become something of an obsession and the records indicate that no detail was too small for consideration. In addition to his concern with the average price of horses he once apparently even chastised an artist for incorrectly depicting the screw-heads on a Bren

gun!² While accuracy is a laudable goal, there is a difference between scholarly exactitude and a descent into petty detail that invariably acts to discourage reading and hinder the understanding of those who do manage to wade through the detail. A distinction that Duguid – fervently believing in the value of every aspect of the CEF – never seems to have fully comprehended. This same attention to detail, and nationalist beliefs, also made it difficult for Duguid to concentrate solely on one task as he felt his personal supervision or intervention was necessary to ensure the correctness of things ranging from the information supplied to enquiries, regimental histories, and the maps for the official history.³ In turn, this led to his involvement in outside projects such as the Memorial Chamber, which, even though unasked, he presented a detailed plan for.

From a structural point of view the Historical Section – indeed all the historical organizations created – had a number of organizational flaws that made any concentrated effort at production difficult. Aitken, for example, was given only vague instructions as to what his duties were and while the CWRO was a government sponsored agency, it operated with little government direction or restriction. As a result, it proved to be a fine vehicle for contemporary accounts and a necessary depository for CEF records, but was less successful in organizing its material for future use. That Aitken was more interested in journalism than history and began to pursue his own political ambitions by mid-1915 was also a factor. The CWNS had a clearer mandate and was certainly more adept at arranging its material, yet after experiencing personnel problems and several changes in leadership, appears to have lost its way, prompting a merger with the Historical Section. A merger that streamlined operations somewhat, but one that was fundamentally flawed since it failed to

set clear guidelines and gave the Section a number of miscellaneous and wide-ranging duties unconnected to the official history.

Some of the responsibility for this must lie with successive governments for the general indifference displayed towards the Historical Section and indeed any sort of official history. Although supportive in principle, a series of ministers who were uninterested in their portfolio and turmoil within the department meant that a coherent policy was, in Stacey's words, "somewhat slow in crystallizing".⁴ This is, in fact, a rather generous assessment as the government's actions suggest that there was never a clear policy of any kind. One need only look to the personnel problems experienced by the Section and the haphazard manner in which Duguid was appointed official historian as evidence. Even when the government did take notice, it was almost always reactive, as in the case of the 1929 Committee, which was in part prompted by the negative response to Macphail's volume.

The army must also assume a portion of the blame as the General Staff was in a position to provide the necessary guidance and leadership that was lacking and act as an advocate for the Historical Section. However, the MacBrien-Hose dispute paralyzed the department for a number of years and ensured that there was little cooperation or dialogue between the General Staff and the minister's office. Subsequent chiefs of the general staff were too preoccupied with political battles and sorting out the higher organization of the department to offer any effective assistance. The lone exception was McNaughton, who intervened on Duguid's behalf to quash the 1929 Committee's recommendations, but who

did not aggressively pursue alternative reforms and apparently even stressed to Duguid that the quality of the work was a higher priority than the rate of production.⁵

The post 1945 era proved to be no less disappointing. Faced with demobilizing the army and anxious to cut defence spending the government, particularly Claxton, did not see the need for an official account of the Second World War, much less the more distant 1914-1918 conflict. Surprisingly, the General Staff, who proved only too eager to cancel all historical programs in the name of the fiscal responsibility, shared this attitude. Perhaps as W.A.B. Douglas has suggested, the Canadian military had less experience in using history for its own institutional purposes as had other nations, and thus felt it could forego the effort – and the expense. It could also be that Foulkes, Mann and others believed that there was little to learn from the Canadian military experience that British or American interpretations could not offer, particularly since any future Canadian military action would almost certainly be under the overall direction of its more powerful allies.⁶ Whatever the reasoning, there does seem to have been, as Stacey appropriately put, an “almost total absence of any knowledge of, or clear thinking about, the problem of official histories”, from either the government or the military during Duguid’s time as Director of the Historical Section.⁷

Another element generally overlooked is that the completion of an official history is a long process involving the careful examination of a mass of documentary evidence and personal testimony. Even when efficiently organized it often takes years before a volume is ready for publication, for example, Stacey’s first volume took almost five years to write and its actual publication was delayed for over two years. Similarly, work on the first

volume of the RCAF's official history began in 1967, but was not completed and finally published until 1980.⁸ In Duguid's case, the lack of any organized prefatory work meant that the bulk of the records inherited from the CWRO, CWNS, and other departments, had to first be catalogued before any real use could be made of them. Unfortunately, this task was not pursued with the urgency it should have been, and appears to have been lumped in with the other tasks – real and imagined – of the Historical Section.

The failure to complete the series then cannot be attributed to any one factor and was really a collective failure of Duguid, the government, and the army. However, failure was not inevitable and it must be concluded that the primary reason for the lack of progress was Duguid's management. A vague mandate and official indifference may have made the job more difficult and perhaps added to the time needed, but these were ultimately obstacles that could have been overcome by a focused effort from Duguid and his staff. The Section's extraneous duties could have been scaled back or abandoned completely and Duguid could have put forth his own suggestions more forcefully. Put simply, passion and a desire to commemorate the CEF were not enough, equally important was a clear understanding of the task at hand and the necessary focus to see it through. Duguid possessed the passion but lacked the single-minded focus – and perhaps the confidence, if his reaction to criticism is any judge – to complete the official history.

In view of this determination, how then should Duguid be judged as an historian? First and foremost, Duguid's outlook was shaped by his adherence to what has been referred to as the 'Canadian myth of the war'. Among other things, this mythology included a kind of Social Darwinism emphasizing that the typical Canadian soldier was of a

breed apart from other combatants, a volunteer toughened by the pioneer life with which even the most urban Canadian was somehow familiar. Canadians were, in Duguid's eyes, "physically strong to endure, mentally alert and independent, spiritually fearless and confident in God's mercy as men are who daily come into contact with the forces of nature".⁹ The war was also seen as a "national force"¹⁰, an experience that had transformed Canada from colony to nation and the spirit of which, if continued, had the potential to unite all citizens in common cause and validate Sir Wilfred Laurier's confident prediction that the twentieth century would indeed belong to Canada. A passionate believer in this ideal, Duguid could state with complete sincerity that Canadian troops had established a heritage of "endurance, self-sacrifice and loyalty", that the war was "Canada's only national epic", and even muse about the "60,000 dead who bought the Statute of Westminster".¹¹

It is important to note that Duguid was not alone in this view and he was merely articulating what many Canadians already believed to be true. As an official historian, however, Duguid was in a unique position with access to records and information denied the ordinary citizen or historian and thus had the knowledge and the opportunity to set matters straight. Instead of doing so, more often than not Duguid chose to highlight examples of heroism and valour and omit or rework events and evidence that did not accord with his nationalist ideals in order to make it appear less damaging. This also led Duguid to vigorously defend Canadian actions to Edmonds and even to conceal the probable fate of 1 Canadian Divisions' missing war diary from him. Likewise, these ideals – along with some additional prodding – were the impetus behind the alteration of passages in the

official history that were critical of certain individuals, notably Sir Richard Turner and Garnet Hughes. This was a practice that would have unquestionably been continued since Duguid would have presented later Canadian operations in the most favourable light and downplayed embarrassing events, such as the demobilization riots of 1918, perhaps explaining them as the work of a disreputable minority or as actions mitigated by legitimate grievances.¹²

Furthermore, Duguid's research methods, intended to provide a body of records so comprehensive that writing the official history would simply be a matter of arranging and editing the material prepared, were seriously flawed. For one cannot help but think that the time spent compiling monographs and other accounts for use in the official history would have been better spent *writing* the official history. On some level Duguid's behaviour could, in part, have been prompted by his relative inexperience as an historian. This was something that obviously bothered him, since as late as 1938 he admitted to needing "a technical advisor in matters of pure history".¹³ Rough go-arounds with Edmonds and Turner may have also dampened Duguid's enthusiasm, causing him to retreat into excessive fact checking and extracurricular ventures in order to surreptitiously avoid the task – even while still dedicated to the project. If this was indeed the case, it proved to be a tragic miscalculation as the importance of these endeavors was short-lived and today they are all but forgotten. It is then somewhat ironic and unfortunate to note that in his many efforts to preserve the memory of the CEF's accomplishments, Duguid ultimately failed to complete the one task that would have had the lasting impact he hoped for.

Still, Duguid was a better historian than Stacey and others have made him out to be. In fact, it would not be unfair to accuse most historians of assuming Duguid was a poor historian simply because of the unfinished nature of the official history. A closer examination reveals that much of what Duguid wrote is still relevant and the official history arguably remains the single best source for the early history of the CEF. Any final judgment, however, would be incomplete without a brief comparison to other official historians of World War One in order to place Duguid in a proper context. Edmonds and Bean are the obvious choices; Edmonds because the CEF had been under the overall command of the British army and because the British account seemed to be the yardstick by which Duguid measured his own work. Bean, since he and Duguid both disagreed with Edmonds on various issues, appear to have held similar views on the qualities exhibited by dominion troops, and were essentially writing national histories.

It is interesting to first note that of these three official historians, none was actually a historian by training. Like Duguid, Edmonds was a civil engineer, although he had previously co-authored a history of the U.S. Civil War, and Bean was a journalist by training. Edmonds insisted that he was not a historian, but rather “a GSO writing a military account of a modern campaign with the assistance of friends”, and Bean seems to have viewed himself as more of a storyteller. Working with a staff that never exceeded a dozen officers, Edmonds personally authored eleven of the fourteen volumes of the British official history – the first appearing in 1922 and the last in 1947 – concerning the Western Front and was responsible for the histories dealing with Gallipoli, Italy and the other theatres in which the British army was engaged. With an equally small staff, Bean wrote six of the

twelve Australian volumes, published between 1921 and 1942, edited the others, produced a number of articles, an annotated volume of photographs and a one volume history of the Australian war effort. Each also kept up a voluminous correspondence, oversaw the completion of unit or regimental histories and were involved in outside projects.¹⁴

Therefore, those explanations that emphasize Duguid's lack of training and small staff are incomplete at best.

One common problem was the difficulty each had documenting the actions and attitudes of individuals, as politics and personal loyalty often restricted what could be told. Duguid confided to Ralph Hodder Williams that this aspect caused him the most concern, and noted that he could not go as far in his treatment of Sam Hughes as had others. On the other hand, his admiration of Currie would have prevented any meaningful evaluation and Duguid would have most certainly avoided mentioning Currie's financial difficulties or the ensuing cover-up, of which he was aware.¹⁵ Edmonds once told Basil Liddell Hart that he could only write about Douglas Haig "with my tongue in my cheek", even though he believed him to be "above averagely stupid". Often praised for his honesty, Bean was not prepared to be overly judgmental of the Australian commanders he admired, particularly General Sir Brudenell White, who he referred to as the "greatest man I have ever known". Even Stacey admitted that for personal reasons he avoided discussing the circumstances behind McNaughton's removal as army chief until after his death.¹⁶

There were, however, differences with regard to the overall vision or purpose of an official history. Edmonds wrote that he wanted his series to interest the general reader as

well as the military professional, but seems to have ignored the former in favour of the latter. Moreover, as another official historian explained:

Edmonds belongs to the school of thought that an official history should never express a point of view, but should merely state cold facts and leave the reader to form his own conclusions. He also objects to any colour in the work, or any attempt at descriptive writing...

This is not to suggest that Edmonds did not have his own opinions, which he certainly did, but that his views were not typically represented in the official history. Though Edmonds did occasionally leave enough hints to allow careful readers or those 'in the know' to detect problems or errors. Believing he had "the views of my comrades to consider", Edmonds preferred to only mention awkward or controversial matters in footnotes and appendices, omitted material when requested and, at times, deliberately altered the record. For example, he completely rewrote the Passchendaele volume to present a more favourable assessment of Haig and GHQ, much to the disgust of its original author, G.C. Wynne, who insisted that his name be removed from the title page.¹⁷

As shown earlier (chapter two), Duguid generally followed an approach similar to Edmonds and was not above softening or even deleting unpleasant facts. Duguid did believe that his account differed from Edmonds because it was aimed at a wider audience, focused more on the front line, and addressed the citizen soldier rather than the professional.¹⁸ Here, Duguid resembled Bean more than Edmonds since Bean had similar ideas about the effects of the war on national consciousness and the need for commemoration. One subtle difference was emphasis; Bean seems to have focused more on national significance and assumed this would also serve the cause of commemoration. Duguid preferred the opposite approach, with the memorial to the CEF providing the

model for national development. The two also differed on the value of personal accounts, which Bean found remarkably accurate and consistent, and Duguid mistrusted. In terms of method, Bean was equally concerned with detail to the point that one observer commented that he actually counted the bullets, and Bean included the names of some 8000 individual soldiers in his work.¹⁹

But what is most striking about Bean and Duguid is how both - and by all accounts independently - constructed ideals of Australian and Canadian soldiers as bold, resourceful and representing an improved Anglo-Saxon race. They then set about reconciling this view with the available evidence and in remarkably similar ways.²⁰ For instance, Bean describes the Australian soldier as indifferent to enemy fire stating that "having resolved that any shellfire must be faced, he went through it characteristically erect, with careless easy gait", while Duguid asserts that death held "no terrors" for Canadians and shelling left them "undisturbed". They also displayed an unpleasant tendency to inflate the reputations of Australian and Canadian soldiers at the expense of British troops. A typical statement from Bean was that man for man, the Australian was superior, which compares with Duguid's judgement that British troops lacked initiative. Another technique employed was to explain actions contradicting this view as the work of new recruits not yet accustomed to the rigors of warfare or as behaviour unrepresentative of the whole. In this manner Bean and Duguid were able to effectively deal with the issue of self-inflicted wounds, disturbances in Canada, and Australian mutinies in 1918, without compromising or drastically altering their nationalist ideals.²¹ Of course, this approach led to numerous generalizations and their preference for explaining actions in terms of national character

resulted in a somewhat uneven level of critical inquiry in both histories. Yet, despite softening aspects of his account and his reputation as the creator of the 'Anzac myth', Bean displayed a commendable adherence to the basic truth, insisting on an uncensored history and refusing to omit discreditable events like the Surafend incident.²²

Not surprisingly, Bean, Duguid and Edmonds faced many of the same problems in writing their respective histories. Where they differed was in terms of style and method, with Bean moving away from the classic battle piece employed by Edmonds, to include the experiences of frontline soldiers. Duguid seems to have wavered somewhere in between these two approaches, occasionally venturing below the company level and mentioning individual soldiers, but essentially providing a top-down narrative. In terms of historical accuracy, all three softened or excluded some evidence and were not as honest as they might have been. However, Bean's account is clearly the more truthful and Edmonds the least, with Duguid's somewhere in the middle.

The most significant differences between the three were not ideological but organizational. Bean and Edmonds' tasks were made much easier by more thought out, efficient organizations and supportive governments. During his time as a war correspondent, Bean had ample time to contemplate the shape and scope of any future history and was appointed official historian quite early (1919), as was Edmonds. Australian records were also considerably more organized thanks to some effective prefatory work involving over 500 soldiers commissioned to assist in the task while awaiting demobilization. Bean was even allowed to choose his own staff, in contrast to Duguid who was simply assigned one. Neither organization was overly burdened with

extraneous duties and a board of management for the British historical section meant that there was never the same lack of communication that occurred in Canada. This was something of a double-edged sword since the War or Foreign Offices could, and did, push for changes in some volumes. Conversely, the Australian government allowed Bean almost complete editorial freedom and he later wrote that in nineteen years there had only been one disagreement over publication. Bean was also well served by the Australian War Memorial, which stepped in during the Depression to make up funding deficiencies. Finally, both sections had personnel to specifically deal with enquiries and other day to day matters, thus reducing the distractions for Bean and Edmonds.²³

A recent analysis of the CEF in the latter stages of the war concludes “neither before nor since have Canadians played such an effective, crucial and decisive role in land warfare”.²⁴ Given this, and the popular sentiment that the war proved to be Canada’s ‘coming of age’, that Duguid was unable to finish his official history must surely rank as one of the most unfortunate episodes in Canadian military history. All the more telling when one considers that far from being the final authority that Gilbert Tucker imagined, official histories are often the first word and have tended to heavily influence the direction of subsequent debate.²⁵ One could even argue that the lack of an official account – Nicholson notwithstanding – is why Canadian historians, until very recently, have focused on a rather narrow selection of topics: the heroism of Second Ypres, the glory of Vimy, and the genius of Currie.²⁶ For this state of affairs, Duguid is largely responsible, and in a very real sense he did ‘miss the boat’, although critics would still do well to remember

Stacey's observation that "the task of an official historian is difficult at best, and in Canada perhaps especially so".²⁷

Notes

¹ Herbert Butterfield, "Official History: Its Pitfalls and its Criteria," *Studies*, Vol. 38 (1948-49), pp.130, 136.

² Duguid to Ralph Hodder Williams, 3 March 1924, (DHS 10-8), RG 24, vol. 1754, NAC; Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.106.

³ For Duguid's supervision of the Section's cartographers see Duguid to DCGS (A), 3 July 1946, Box 1, Folder A, File 2, DBF.

⁴ "Historical Section, General Staff, Organization and Functions, February 1947", 12 February 1947, p.1. (Official History, General 1945-1949), B91-0013/001, Stacey Papers, UTA.

⁵ Duguid to Vincent Massey, (draft letter), no date but mid to late 1949, Box 1, Folder A, File 21, DBF.

⁶ Douglas was referring specifically to the attitude of the post Second World War Canadian navy and its historical program, but the evidence suggests certain parallels with the other services, see Douglas, "Naval History: The State of the Art," p.78. For example, Stacey mentions that Claxton felt that since the RCAF had been under British command, it was up to them to tell the story. Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.196. A good example of the institutional use of history can be found in the Royal Navy; near the end of the First World War, Admiral K.B. Dewar urged the formation of an historical section in order to counter any claims made against the navy's performance during the war. Ronald H. Spector, "An Improbable Success Story: Official Military Histories in the Twentieth Century," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 12, No.1 (Winter 1990), p.28.

⁷ Stacey, "The Life and Hard Times of an Official Historian," p.44.

⁸ Stacey, *A Date with History*, pp.218, 223; Douglas, "Filling Gaps in the Military Past," p.118.

⁹ Duguid, "The Canadian as a Soldier," typed manuscript, 14 July 1920, p.6, Vol. 2 (File 6), A.F. Duguid Papers, MG30 E12, NAC.

¹⁰ A term borrowed from Jonathan Vance, *Death so Noble*, p.227.

¹¹ Duguid, "Canada on Vimy Ridge," p.60; Duguid to Bovey, (draft letter), no date but late February or early March 1947, Vol. 22, (Canadian Forces, Colonel Duguid, Historical Section), Alan B. Beddoe Papers, MG30 D252, NAC; Duguid to Vincent Massey, (draft letter), no date but mid to late 1949, Box 1, Folder A, File 21, DBF.

¹² The riots are well covered in Desmond Morton, "Kicking and Complaining: Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-1919," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 61, No.3 (September 1980).

¹³ Duguid to Ralph Hodder Williams, (draft letter), no date but late 1938 or early 1939, (Chapter V, Vol. II), RG 24, vol. 6992, NAC.

¹⁴ French, "Official but not History," pp.58-59; Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp.142-143; McCarthy, *Gallipoli to the Somme*, pp.383-384.

¹⁵ Duguid to Ralph Hodder Williams, (draft letter), no date but late 1938 or early 1939, (Chapter V, Vol. II), RG 24, vol. 6992; Duguid to Lieut.-Colonel Hugh M. Urquhart (Currie biographer), 19 January 1937, Vol. 2, (File 2), Hugh M. Urquhart Papers, MG 30 E75; NAC. The full story of Currie's indiscretion is to be found in R. Craig Brown and Desmond Morton, "The Embarrassing Apotheosis of a 'Great Canadian': Sir Arthur Currie's Personal Crisis in 1917," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LX, No.1 (1979).

¹⁶ French, "Official but not History," p.59; Travers, "From Surafend to Gough," pp.15-16; E.M. Andrews, "Bean and Bullecourt: Weaknesses and Strengths of the Official History of Australia in the First World War," *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, No. 72 (Canberra 1990), p. 46; Stacey, *A Date with History*, p.233.

¹⁷ Edmonds, *Military Operations, 1914*, I, pt.1, p.vii; Quotation in Travers, "From Surafend to Gough," pp.15-16; Brian Bond, *Liddell Hart: A Study of his Military Thought* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1977), p.82; Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, The Western Front, and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987), pp.xvii, 24, 203-204, 214.

¹⁸ Duguid to Odlum, 4 October 1938, Vol. 3, (Colonel A.F. Duguid), V.W. Odlum Papers, MG30 E300, NAC.

¹⁹ C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume I, The Story of Anzac: From the Outbreak of War to the end of the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson Ltd., 1934 © 1921), pp.xlv, xlvi; Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp.144, 147; Andrews, "Bean and Bullecourt," p. 44; Bean, "The Writing of the Australian Official History of the Great War – Sources, Methods and Some Conclusions," *Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings*, Vol. 22, Part 2 (1938), p.109.

²⁰ Bean's work appeared years before Duguid's and he almost certainly gave it more than a casual glance, but there is no evidence to support a claim that Duguid simply grafted Bean's approach to Canadian examples.

²¹ Alistair Thomson, "Steadfast Until Death? C.E.W. Bean and the Representation of Australian Military Manhood," *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 23, No.93 (October 1989), pp.466-467, 471, 473-474; Duguid, "The Canadian as a Soldier," pp.9, 16-17.

²² Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 144-145; Travers, "From Surafend to Gough," pp.17, 23.

²³ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p.142; McCarthy, *Gallipoli to the Somme*, p.381; Bean, "The Writing of the Australian Official History of the Great War," pp.87, 97; French, "Official but not History," p.58; "Memorandum of Information Supplied by Mr. T.H.E. Heyes, Chief Librarian, Australian War Memorial, Regarding the Custody of Australian War Records, Trophies, Etc., and the Production of Australian Histories of the Great War," pp.3, 5-7; "Memorandum of Information Supplied by Mr. T.H.E. Heyes, Chief Librarian, Australian War Memorial, Regarding the Historical Section, London," pp.1-2; 27 January 1928, (HQC 54-21-1-212), RG 24, vol. 448, NAC.

²⁴ Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire*, p.142.

²⁵ Tucker, "The Royal Canadian Naval Historical Section," p.245; Robin Higham, "Introduction," in *Official Histories: Essays and Bibliographies from around the World*, ed. by Robin Higham (Manhattan: Kansas State University Press, 1970), p.3; Travers, *The Killing Ground*, pp.203, 217.

²⁶ The bibliography lists a number of the works covering Second Ypres, and a similar if not greater number exists for Vimy, while Currie is the subject of no less than three biographies. Until a relatively short time ago, most other aspects of the CEF received comparatively little attention and in the words of one, "Canada's WW I historians have studied too little, leaving too many important persons and events...ignored, overlooked, or mishandled, Leppard, "Richard Turner and the Battle of St. Eloi," p.18.

²⁷ Stacey, "Canada's Last War," p.247.

Appendix

The Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919¹

SCHEME OF GENERAL VOLUMES

Vol. 1

Ypres 1915

Aug 1914 – Sept 1915

Outbreak of War

Raising of the First Contingent, Valcartier

Salisbury plain; France

YPRES, 1915

FESTUBERT

GIVENCHY

Vol. 2

The Salient, 1915-1916

September 1915 – August 1916

Holding the Line

Arrival of the 2nd Canadian Div. And formation of a Corps

3rd Canadian Div – Cdn.Cav.Bde.mounted

ST. ELOI

MOUNT SORREL

Forestry

C.O.R.C.C

Vol. 3

The Somme 1916

Aug 1916 – Jan 1917

The Somme

Arrival of the 4th Canadian Division

Battles of the SOMME

Overseas Ministry Formed

Munitions

Vol. 4

Vimy 1917

Jan 1917 – Oct 1917

Trench Warfare

5th Canadian Division

VIMY

HILL 70

First C.R.T.

Vol. 5

Passchendaele 1917

Oct 1917 – March 1918

PASSCHENDAELE and its lessons

Reorganization

Recruiting

Tunneling

Canadians in Air Services

M.S.A.

Vol. 6

Amiens 1918

March 1918 – Aug 1918

The German March Offensive and Battle of AMIENS

Reorganization of Engineers and M.G.

R.R. Troops

Vol. 7

Arras – Mons, 1918

Aug 1918 – Nov 1918

ARRAS – CAMBRAI – VALENCIENNES – MONS

Vol. 8

Nov 1918 – 1920

The Rhine – return to Canada

Siberia – Murmansk – Archangel – Palestine – Dunsterforce

Reorganization

¹ Duguid to CGS, (Foulkes), 15 January 1946, Appendix A, Box 1, Folder A, File 2

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Vol. 4809 Canadian War Narrative Section Administrative Records

Vol. 4843 War Diary, 2nd Canadian Division – General Staff. 1 April 1916 – 30 April 1916

Record Group (RG) 24 – Records of the Department of National Defence

Vol. 448 Headquarters Central Registry: Records consulted in this large grouping
Vol. 1503 include correspondence regarding Second Ypres, information on the British
Vol. 2680 and Australian Historical Sections, and the 1929 Committee on the official
Vol. 2732 history.

Vol. 1732 Registry Files (Vols. 1732-1765): The files examined under this grouping
Vol. 1734 contain material on the Historical Section's establishment, permanency and
Vol. 1735 research. It also includes inquiries to the Section and some correspondence
Vol. 1739 with officers about the official history.
Vol. 1740
Vol. 1754
Vol. 1755
Vol. 1759

Vol. 1813 GAQ Files (Vols. 1810-1850): Files relating to the preparation of the
official history.

Vol. 1876 CEF Historian's Files (Vols. 1876-1882, 6998-7000a): Files created after
Vol. 6990 the creation of a separate Directorate for the completion of the official
Vol. 6991 history of the First World War in October 1945. They contain chapter
Vol. 6992 outlines, monographs and other records to be used in the completion of
Vol. 6998 the series.
Vol. 7000a

- Vol. 1884 Subject Files (Vols. 1883-1901): Files primarily dealing with the First
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