

2013

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### Recommended Citation

Richard Holt "British Blood Calls British Blood The British-Canadian Recruiting Mission of 1917-1918." Canadian Military History 22, 1 (2013)

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**BRITISH BLOOD  
CALLS BRITISH BLOOD!**

**SONS OF  
BRITAIN *and* CANADA  
RESIDENT IN THE UNITED STATES  
JOIN YOUR  
ARMY HERE  
ENLIST NOW!**



# British Blood Calls British Blood

## The British-Canadian Recruiting Mission of 1917-1918

Richard Holt

During the First World War, a total of 593,079 men enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), an astonishing number for a small nation with only 1,526,133 men of military age.<sup>1</sup> Not all of these recruits lived in Canada; more than 57,000 were American residents. While many of these men made their own way to Canada to join the CEF, more than 33,000 were enlisted in the United States by the British-Canadian Recruiting Mission (BCRM). The contribution to the manpower pool by the BCRM was significant: more than 18 percent of all those who joined the CEF between June 1917 and September 1918 were recruited in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Despite this success, the BCRM has been largely ignored by most historians. The official history, written by G.W.L. Nicholson, for example, does not mention the mission, even in passing. This article will examine the origin, organization and operation of what was an unparalleled example of international cooperation.

The BCRM was not the first attempt to recruit men from the United States. In 1915, the eccentric minister of militia and defence, Sam Hughes, authorized the creation of the 97th Battalion in Toronto. Four additional battalions (211th, 212th, 213th and 237th) followed in 1916. Known collectively as the "American Legion," these five units were intended to attract American-

**Abstract: This article explores the organization and activities of the British-Canadian Recruiting Mission which recruited more than 33,000 British subjects living in the United States for the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1917-1918. Recruiting operations and cooperation with the United States Army are discussed and statistical summaries are presented showing the recruits' origins, the corps they were assigned to and the effect on the reinforcement flow to select Canadian battalions in France. The article concludes that the Mission may have recruited a large number of men, but in the event was a failure because the vast majority of British subjects living in the United States ignored the call to arms.**

born recruits living in Canada.<sup>3</sup> In the event, the legion proved to be an ongoing diplomatic embarrassment in part because of surreptitious attempts to recruit south of the border and in part because of the name. None of these units were overly successful and in practice enlisted men regardless of where they had been born. The 212th and 237th, both unable to attract recruits, were disbanded while the remaining three battalions were under-strength when they sailed to England. Their failure was largely attributable to American and Canadian legislation and regulations. Under American law, citizens who joined the CEF were deemed to have expatriated themselves or, in other words,

forfeited their citizenship.<sup>4</sup> Foreign armies, including the CEF, were forbidden by US law to recruit within the United States or to enter the United States with the intention of enticing men to leave in order to enlist elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> Both provisions were reinforced in August 1914 by President Wilson's proclamation emphasizing American neutrality.<sup>6</sup> In Canada, CEF regulations and the *Militia Act* specified that recruits had to be British subjects thus excluding American citizens, although the *British Army Act*, provided that one soldier in 50 could be an alien.<sup>7</sup>

The BCRM originated in February 1917 when Britain was facing a shortage of military manpower. The problem was serious and Army Council went so far as to advise Cabinet at the beginning of February that in the event of heavy fighting on the Western Front, it would be impossible to maintain the existing strength of the British army in the field.<sup>8</sup> Not unnaturally, Britain looked for alternative sources of manpower, particularly the large number of British immigrants living in the United States. However, no effort could be made to recruit these men as America was a neutral country. But, the German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare and the release of the Zimmerman telegram in February raised the possibility that America would join the war on the side of the allies. A



**A marching contingent from the 48th Highlanders of Canada is greeted by large crowds in a US city, probably Chicago, circa 1917.**

British officer, Brigadier-General W.A. White, and seven other officers were sent to join the British War Mission in the United States, an organization that coordinated the purchase of munitions, weapons and equipment, to prepare for the possibility of recruiting in the United States should the opportunity arise.<sup>9</sup>

American neutrality ended on 6 April 1917 when the United States declared war on the German Empire. The mood of the country was distinctly pro-Allied and after the British ambassador in Washington cleared the way, White lost no time in soliciting congressmen for permission to enlist recruits from the 700,000 British subjects in the US who were neither American citizens nor declarants.<sup>10</sup> The results were almost immediate and on 7 May 1917 Congress amended the *U.S. Penal*

*Code* to allow Allied nations to enlist residents who were not American citizens or declarants and had been born in the Allied nation concerned.<sup>11</sup> The amendment, which allowed foreign armies to enter the United States and actively seek recruits, was a remarkable act of generosity and cooperation even though the potential recruits were not eligible to serve in the American Expeditionary Force (AEF).<sup>12</sup>

By 6 June 1917, the British Recruiting Mission, later renamed the British-Canadian Recruiting Mission (BCRM), started operations in New York.<sup>13</sup> Developing the infrastructure and assembling staff took time and in the interim US Army recruiting offices assisted the BCRM by receiving applicants, conducting medical exams, providing subsistence and forwarding men to the nearest CEF depot in Canada or, in the case of

Britons, Jews and Australians, to the Imperial Recruit Depot at Windsor, Nova Scotia.<sup>14</sup>

From a modest start, the BCRM expanded steadily. The headquarters was located in New York City and for organizational purposes the country was divided into three divisions: the Eastern Division based in New York City, the Western Division in Chicago and the Pacific Division in San Francisco. By November 1917, 27 recruiting depots had been established as well as mobile detachments that visited urban centres in the Western and Pacific Division. Canadians were part of every division, but the Western Division was staffed entirely by Canadians and commanded by a militia officer, Lieutenant-Colonel J.S. Dennis, a veteran of the Riel Rebellion and civil engineer with the Department of Natural Resources who later served in Russia as a staff



officer with the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force.<sup>15</sup> In New England, the commanding officer of the 236th MacLean Highlanders not only recruited for his own battalion but also the BCRM in June-July 1917.

The BCRM received help from a variety of other sources. British consuls were instructed to assist the mission and 72 recruiting committees were formed by prominent Britons and Canadians living in the United States.<sup>16</sup> Canadian bands and marching contingents from the 5th Royal Highlanders of Montreal, the 48th Highlanders of Toronto and the 236th Battalion, MacLean Highlanders, of Fredericton toured Boston, New York and Chicago in 1917 to whip up local enthusiasm while the following year a patriotic

Broadway musical was produced.<sup>17</sup> Written by Ian Hay, author of the best-selling *First Hundred Thousand*, with lyrics by a Canadian musician, Lieutenant Gitz Rice, *Getting Together* opened in New York and then toured Albany, Syracuse, Philadelphia and Boston.<sup>18</sup>

Border crossing problems were non-existent. In June 1917, the superintendent of immigration noted that "for months past our inspectors have, all along the Boundary, admitted such men as applied for entry to enlist and were believed to be suitable."<sup>19</sup>

Special efforts were made to recruit French Canadians and in June 1917 Major J.J.O.L. Daly-Gingras, who had previously served with the 22nd Battalion in France and Flanders,

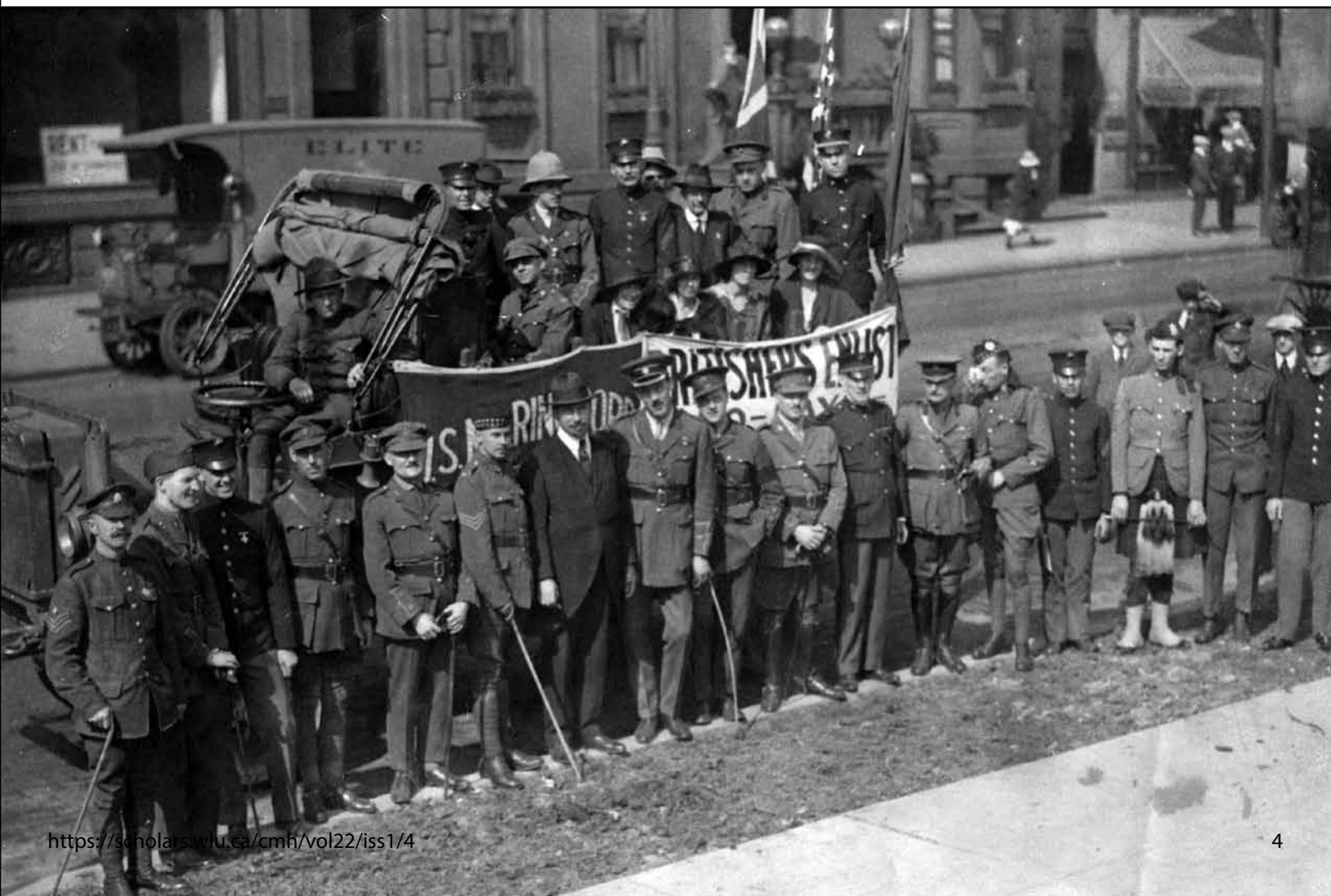
was posted to the BCRM in the hopes of enlisting a sizable number of French-Canadian immigrants in the New England states. The results were disappointing and in August 1917, a Catholic priest, Captain F.C.D. Doyon, the former padre of the 22nd Battalion, reported that many had already joined the AEF as translators and the remainder anticipated being drafted in the near future. In summary, said Father Doyon, a concerted effort to recruit these men would be a waste of time.<sup>20</sup>

BCRM recruiting in the United States encountered some obstacles. Most US Army recruiting stations cooperated with the BCRM, but a few were reluctant to provide assistance or tried to entice BCRM recruits into the American Army.<sup>21</sup>

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**A British-Canadian recruiting mission in the US joins forces with the US Marine Corps. The signs on the side of the truck read, "US Marine Corps" (left) and "Britishers Enlist" (right).**

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# BRITISH SUBJECTS

IT IS YOUR DUTY

TO

# ENLIST

IN THE

# BRITISH OR CANADIAN ARMY

Men are eligible for enlistment between the ages of 18 and 45 and in certain cases up to the age of fifty.

Enlistment will be for the duration of the war and for six months after the termination of hostilities, unless sooner legally discharged.

Free transportation to the United States will be furnished on discharge to those desiring it.

All arms of the service are open for enlistment and choice of Regiment as far as practicable will be permitted.

Pay and Separation Allowances at British or Canadian rates commence from date of enlistment.

FOR PARTICULARS APPLY TO

NEAREST UNITED STATES ARMY RECRUITING STATION OR NEAREST BRITISH CONSULATE

or

HEADQUARTERS BRITISH RECRUITING MISSION

280 BROADWAY (Corner of City Hall Square) NEW YORK

Canadian War Museum 19730004-070

Local draft boards were also loath to lose potential recruits for the AEF and in Boston, an Irish declarant who tried to join the CEF was instructed to remain in the United States or be charged with desertion from the AEF.<sup>22</sup> In Buffalo, a BCRM recruit from the engineer depot at Brockville was jailed for draft evasion when he returned home on leave in uniform.<sup>23</sup> But others were more cooperative and in Chicago, Judge Stelk ordered non-US citizens held in the Cook County Jail to be taken to the BCRM recruiting office for attestation and transport to Canada.<sup>24</sup>

BCRM recruits were documented and examined in the United States and then forwarded to a Canadian depot for attestation. But the men were not subject to military law until they were attested and there were no legal means of preventing them from deserting. In March 1918, about five percent of all BCRM recruits



Map drawn by Mike Bechthold ©2013

vanished before they arrived at a depot in Canada while in August 1918 Military District 2 in Toronto reported that more than nine percent had disappeared while in transit.<sup>25</sup> Militia Headquarters responded by directing in April 1918 that men would be attested by BCRM recruiting detachments.<sup>26</sup> Since only one of the three BCRM divisions was controlled by Canadians, it is unlikely that the revised procedure had much effect.

Judging by attestation papers, BCRM medical examinations were carried out by Canadian Army Medical Corps or Royal Army Medical Corps doctors or, on occasion, by civilian physicians. The number of applicants who were medically unfit is unknown although returns from New York City for July 1917 show that 32.8 percent were rejected.<sup>27</sup> Those who had been passed as fit were reassessed by medical boards on arrival in Canada. Results probably varied by district, but in Military District 2, for example, four percent of all arrivals were turned down by medical boards.<sup>28</sup> In all, it is estimated that about 63 percent of all BCRM applicants were fit for some form of military service, a rate roughly comparable to the results of Canadian medical boards that assessed men eligible for conscription under the *Military Service Act*.<sup>29</sup>

The 1917 amendment to the *U.S. Penal Code* stated clearly that the BCRM could only recruit British subjects who were non-declarants. Initially the BCRM adhered to the law, but this soon changed. In September 1917 Militia Headquarters notified BCRM that men who were not British subjects were welcome in the CEF providing they had been born in allied or neutral countries and could speak either French or English.<sup>30</sup> Four months later, Ottawa decided to accept Syrians and Armenians from the Ottoman Empire, presumably because both were Christian minority groups with no love for their Turkish

masters.<sup>31</sup> A handful of men from other enemy countries (Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary) were also accepted. Russian and Austro-Hungarian Poles were not welcomed, at least in the Western Division. "These men [Polish applicants] are attracted, no doubt, by Canadian pay," wrote Major-General Willoughby Gwatkin, the chief of the general staff to the Western Division in January 1918, adding "I do not think we ought to divert them from the Polish army to the CEF."<sup>32</sup> Men born in the United States were enlisted although most were either too old or too young for the AEF or had parents who were British subjects. Those who were identified on arrival in Canada as bona-fide American citizens were discharged.<sup>33</sup>

There were few Asians; the CEF was not willing to accept Japanese or Chinese recruits enlisted by the BCRM.<sup>34</sup> However, the ban on Asian recruits was not absolute. At least two American-born Nisei were accepted, one from Korea (a Japanese possession), eight from Japan proper and one from British India.<sup>35</sup> Blacks were also accepted and at least 49 from the British West Indies are known to have enlisted. (See Table 1).

army. Perhaps the higher pay for Canadian soldiers influenced their decision. The average age of the sample in Table 1 was 28.7 years as opposed to the CEF average of 26.3 years. About 75.6 percent of the BCRM recruits were bachelors while 79.6 percent of all CEF recruits were unmarried. More than a third of the CEF claimed former service of one kind or another compared to only 16.5 percent of those in Table 1.<sup>37</sup> The proportion of British ex-regular soldiers, however, was somewhat higher: 4.4 percent as opposed to the CEF with 3.1 percent. About 6.4 percent of the BCRM recruits claimed former service in the American forces.

The majority of BCRM recruits were mature men with no former service and their reasons for volunteering are not obvious. Some may have felt the call to duty: men such as 45-year-old William Perkins from Westford, Massachusetts. Born in New Brunswick, Perkins attested in Montreal in February 1918 together with his son who also lived in Westford and had been born in New Brunswick. Both returned to Westford after the war.<sup>38</sup> John Walker of Bridgeport, Connecticut may have been similarly motivated.

**Table 1: Sample of BCRM Enlistments<sup>36</sup>**

Location of Birth	Recruits	Proportion (%)	CEF Overall (%)
British Isles	3,194	49.5	36.8
Canada	2,384	36.9	51.4
British Possessions	177	2.7	1.5
<b>Total of British subjects by birth</b>	<b>5,755</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>89.8</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>
Allied Nations	269	4.1	
Neutral Nations	145	2.2	
Enemy Nations	48	0.7	
<b>Total of Allied, Neutral and Enemy</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,459</b>		

Note: A total of 77 men born at sea, in non-existent countries (Armenia and Poland), American dependencies (Puerto Rico and Philippines), in Egypt or in Dutch or Danish colonies have been excluded from Table 1.

The proportion of recruits born in the British Isles is surprising; these men should have joined the British

A former member of the British Special Reserve, he was rejected by the BCRM in New York City



because of eyesight. Evidently a determined man, he reapplied and attested in Montreal 29 January 1918. In Toronto, US-born Theodore Engman, a musician or carpenter (he claimed both occupations at various times), from Minneapolis was a naturalized Canadian and joined the Canadian Railway Troops in May 1918.<sup>39</sup> Like the Perkins, he returned to the US after the war and died at Hennepin, Minnesota in November 1958. Others appear to have enlisted for personal reasons. Shosho Rehana, for example, an Assyrian Christian from Mesopotamia (now Iraq) living in Flint, was attested in London in January 1918. Demobilized in 1919, he returned to Flint where he worked for the Ford Motor Car Company. Many years later, his son claimed he had enlisted on the off-chance he would serve in the Middle East, closer to his family and friends. The son may have been correct; Rehana left Flint in the 1920s, returned to Iraq and worked as a mechanic at a Royal Air Force base.<sup>40</sup>

The proliferation of the BCRM recruiting detachments meant that men were enlisted in every state as well as the District of Columbia, Hawaii and the Philippine Islands. Not all states were equally represented and a sample of 6,468 recruits shows that 37 states provided fewer than a hundred men each. More than half came from Massachusetts, New York, Illinois and California. The most productive region was the eastern seaboard which provided 2,692 men

or 41.6 percent.<sup>41</sup> (See Table 2).

The BCRM also sought recruits in Canada to support the Jewish Legion created in September 1917 at the behest of the Jewish community in Britain. The original intention was to raise five battalions of Royal Fusiliers (38th, 39th, 40th and 41st with the 42nd as a regimental depot) from British Jews.<sup>42</sup> However, it soon became evident that the pool of recruits in Britain was too small to sustain the legion, and the War Office decided to recruit in both Canada and the United States.<sup>43</sup>

Responsibility for recruiting for the Jewish Legion in Canada was assigned to BCRM headquarters in New York City, an unusual arrangement approved by Militia Headquarters in March 1918. To assist recruiting, the BCRM organized Jewish Recruiting Committees in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg.<sup>44</sup> Each committee was to "enquire into the antecedents and bona fides of the applicants and furnish each applicant with a Certificate to the effect that he is not within a class called out for service



under the Military Service Act of Canada, and that he is in all respects a suitable recruit for enlistment in the British Army."<sup>45</sup> There was some ambivalence about ethnicity and religion and the BCRM instructed local committees that Russian, Polish, and Rumanian Jews were acceptable, but those from Armenia and Syria "ought to be classed as enemy aliens."<sup>46</sup> Recruits attracted by the Committees were processed by CEF recruiting centres and then transported by the Department of Militia and Defence to the Imperial Recruit Depot at Windsor, Nova Scotia.<sup>47</sup>

However, there was no rush to the colours, perhaps because Jews who were British subjects were eligible for conscription under the MSA while many had already joined the CEF.<sup>48</sup> Canadian Jewry was also divided and

**Table 2: Sample of Residence Claimed by BCRM Recruits**

Residence Claimed	BCRM Division	Recruits	Proportion of Sample (Table 1) (%)
Massachusetts	Eastern	966	14.9
New York	Eastern	945	14.6
Illinois	Western	817	12.6
California	Pacific	661	10.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,389</b>	<b>52.4</b>

Note: A total of 69 men in the sample were transients, did not provide an address or provided addresses outside of the United States: Canada (two), Mexico (two) and Cuba (one). Only the most productive states are shown.



Zionist support for the legion may have inhibited recruiting, particularly in the Orthodox community. In Winnipeg, Rabbi Herbert J. Samuel of the Shaarey Zedek synagogue not only recruited on behalf of the legion, but announced he would volunteer as well.<sup>49</sup> However, in a confidential letter to Prime Minister Borden, he opposed the legion unless Jews born in enemy countries were included as well.<sup>50</sup> By mid-July 1918 it was apparent that recruits were few and far between and the Jewish Recruiting Committees were disbanded.<sup>51</sup> The number of men enlisted in Canada is uncertain and official figures were never compiled, although Vladimir Jabotinsky, a former officer of the Jewish legion, estimated that about 300 Canadians were recruited, a figure confirmed by another veteran, Hyman Sokolov of Winnipeg.<sup>52</sup>

Not all military districts in Canada benefited equally from the BCRM. Military District 2 in Toronto received the majority with more than 12,600 recruits enlisted by 7 September 1918, more than a third of all those recruited by the BCRM.<sup>53</sup> The reasons seem fairly obvious. The Western Division HQ was located in Chicago which had direct rail connections to Toronto and the division covered a huge area, from Pennsylvania to the Rocky Mountains. A detailed breakdown of the allocation to each district has not been found, but partial returns illustrate the disparity (See Table 3).

The issue of which corps the recruits were assigned to caused some difficulties. Initially, BCRM recruiters promised applicants they could choose any branch of the CEF they wished and, not surprisingly, most opted to avoid the infantry. It must have come as a shock, therefore, that on arrival in Canada, most were assigned to the infantry. Not all accepted their assignment and in Military District 2 about two percent of all BCRM recruits refused to be attested and were returned to the US.<sup>55</sup>

District	Area	Recruits	Proportion (%)
Military District 1	South-Western Ontario	35	3.9
Military District 2	Central Ontario	464	52.3
Military District 3	Eastern Ontario	5	0.6
Military District 4	Western Québec	69	7.8
Military District 5	Eastern Québec	0	n/a
Military District 6	Nova Scotia	46	5.2
Military District 10	Manitoba and Saskatchewan	120	13.5
Military District 11	British Columbia	108	12.2
Military District 13	Alberta	0	n/a
New Brunswick		41	4.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>888</b>	

Note: New Brunswick was later designated Military District 7.

**Table 4: Corps Allocation as of 18 August 1918<sup>58</sup>**

Corps	Total	Proportion (%)
Infantry	5,306	42.1
Artillery	332	2.6
Cavalry	290	2.3
Engineers	2,071	16.4
Service Corps	215	1.7
Medical Corps	233	1.8
Railway Troops	2,616	20.7
Dental Corps	6	0.05
Officer Training	26	0.2
Garrison duty in Canada	1,475	11.7
Base Hospital	48	0.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,618</b>	

About 63.4 percent of all BCRM recruits who arrived in Toronto up to 18 August 1918 were fit for combatant service.<sup>56</sup> The rest were assigned to duties commensurate with their medical category.<sup>57</sup> (See Table 4).

By October 1918, the BCRM had provided more than 33,000 men for the CEF, a very substantial contribution to the national manpower pool. But how many served in France, especially with the infantry where the need for reinforcements was the greatest? Almost half of all BCRM recruits were enlisted after March 1918.<sup>59</sup> Judging by those who served in the 20th Battalion, it took 28 weeks, or seven months, for the average BCRM recruit to reach the front lines after being attested in Toronto.<sup>60</sup> Assuming that all BCRM recruits took

seven months to reach France, it is probable that about 17,000 men were taken on strength before the Armistice of whom about 42.1 percent, or 7,100, were infantrymen, a total that would be consistent with Table 4. Had the war continued into 1919, as was universally anticipated until well into the summer of 1918, there is no doubt that the BCRM contingent would have made a much more substantial contribution. (Table 5).

The BCRM was useful but relied on voluntarism and was therefore limited in its effectiveness since non-declarant British subjects living in the United States who refused to volunteer for the CEF, AEF or British Expeditionary Force (BEF) could not be compelled to serve. Conversely, American citizens

**Table 5: BCRM Reinforcements – Select Battalions<sup>61</sup>**

Unit	Mar-May 1918	Jun-Aug 1918	Sep-Nov 1918	Total	Home Depot
2nd CMR	21	28	99	148	Toronto
4th CMR	1	18	75	94	Toronto
4th Battalion	14	24	118	156	Toronto
16th Battalion	1*	5	26	32	Winnipeg and Victoria
18th Battalion	9	30	8	47	London
20th Battalion	89	50	121	260	Toronto
72nd Battalion	26	51	79	156	Vancouver
85th Battalion	0	4	3	7	Halifax
PPCLI	28	10	0	38	Ottawa
<b>Totals</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>938</b>	

\* Other than Private Fraser who was posted to the 16th Battalion on 16 February 1918, all BCRM reinforcements arrived between March and November 1918.

living in Britain or Canada could not be drafted by the BEF or CEF. To resolve this problem, Britain and the United States concluded a reciprocal convention that gave men a choice between returning home where they could be conscripted or remaining in their country of residence subject

to local draft laws. The preliminary agreement was signed on 19 February 1918, but the American Senate insisted on amendments and it was not until 30 July 1918 that the reciprocal convention came into effect.<sup>62</sup> With the introduction of conscription for those living abroad, there was no

need to recruit volunteers in the United States and on 12 October 1918, the BCRM closed its doors.<sup>63</sup>

The terms of the convention concerning Canada were simple and straight-forward. All American citizens domiciled in Canada and all Canadian citizens living in the United States between the ages of 20 and 44 were liable to be conscripted in their country of residence unless they returned home.<sup>64</sup> Both Americans and Canadians had a 60-day grace period in which to make a decision. For those who wished to return home, both the Canadian and American governments agreed to facilitate repatriation but the men were required to pay their own way.

Whether or not the reciprocal convention had any effect on the manpower pool is impossible to determine although it appears that the CEF had the short end of the stick. In the United States, the Provost Marshal General estimated that about

**Officers of the Maclean Highlanders pose for a photo with the chief of clan, General Hugh Fitzroy Maclean (seated centre). In New England, the commanding officer of the 236th MacLean Highlanders not only recruited for his own battalion but also the BCRM in June-July 1917.**



20,000 potential CEF recruits living in the United States chose to serve with the AEF rather than return home. In Canada, 18,372 Americans registered with consular officials after 30 July 1918 and were thus exempted from the MSA. No record appears to exist of the number of Americans in Canada who were drafted into the CEF nor is there any record of the number of Canadians who trekked north under the terms of the convention.<sup>65</sup>

During its 17 months of operation, the BCRM succeeded in finding 47,188 recruits – an average of 2,776 men every month. From a Canadian perspective, the results were gratifying with more than 33,000 recruits. From a British perspective, the results were less than satisfactory with only 7,210 men joining the British or Australian armies. Admittedly there were also 6,643 black and Jewish recruits, but the meager results hardly justified the time, effort and expense of running a large and elaborate recruiting structure in a foreign country.<sup>66</sup> Not surprisingly, there was no equivalent to the BCRM in the Second World War.<sup>67</sup> Still, the BCRM was significant. Not only did the CEF acquire a large number of men at a time when volunteers were few and far between, but the operation was an early example of the Allied cooperation that was so important in the Second World War.

### Notes

1. G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), p.546; Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. *Canada Year Book* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1919), p.99
2. In an effort to determine the proportion of American residents who enlisted in the CEF, attestation papers were examined for all recruits who joined one of six major depots from 1915 to 31 May 1917. A total of 9,161 of these attestation papers included the recruit's address. The British-Canadian Recruiting Mission started operations in June 1917 and the attestation papers of men who joined after May 1917 have not been included. Depots chosen for this sample recruited from a broad area and operated for at least 18 months thus eliminating local recruiting trends. The depots concerned were the Canadian Army Medical Corps depots in Winnipeg, (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North-West Ontario), Victoria (British Columbia and the Yukon Territories), the Canadian Army Service Corps Depot in Toronto (Ontario and Québec), C Battery Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (Ontario and Québec), the Canadian Engineer depot at St. John's, Québec (Ontario, Québec and the Maritimes) and the Canadian Mounted Rifles Depot in Hamilton (Ontario and western Québec). A total of 502 men or 5.5 percent were American residents. With 406,147 recruits signing up by 31 May 1917, it is estimated at least 22,338 were American residents; W.G. Lyddon, *British War Missions to the United States 1914-1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p.203 noted that the BCRM enlisted 47,188 men, 33,335 of whom joined the CEF and 6,643 Jews, colored men and other nationalities, some of whom are known to have joined the CEF. Lyddon's figures were confirmed by the British Ambassador to Washington in a statement on 18 November 1918, Directorate of History and Heritage, National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa [DHH] 74/672 (Edwin Pye Fonds) box 1 folder 2. The grand total of American residents who enlisted was probably in excess of 57,000.
3. For an overview of the American Legion battalions, see Ronald G. Haycock, "The American Legion in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1917: A Study in Failure," *Military Affairs* 43, no.3 (October 1979); Eric Smylie, *Americans Who Would Not Wait: The American Legion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force* (Ph.D thesis, University of North Texas, 2002).
4. *Statutes at Large of the United States of America: Volume XXXIV, Part 1* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907), p.1228, *An Act In reference to the expatriation of citizens and their protection abroad* approved 2 March 1907. Section 2 provided that "Any American citizen shall be deemed to have to have expatriated himself...when he has taken an oath of allegiance to any foreign state."
5. *Statutes at Large of the United States of America: Volume XXXV, Part 1* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), p.1088, *An Act to codify, revise and amend the penal laws of the United States* approved 4 March 1909, Section 10. Most historians such as Eric Smylie, *Americans Who Would Not Wait*, p.51 claim that the *Foreign Enlistment Act (1818)* prevented foreign countries from recruiting in the US. However, the original legislation was first passed in 1794 and subsequently amended in 1818 and 1874 before being incorporated in *An Act to codify, revise and amend the penal laws of the United States* in 1909.
6. James D. Richardson, ed., *Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol.18 (Washington: Bureau of National Literature, nd), pp.7969-7973, "Neutrality Proclamations by the President of the United States."
7. Great Britain, War Office, *Manual of Military Law* (London: HMSO, 1914) with a reprint of the *Army Act*, p.471 quotes Article 95(1) concerning the enlistment of aliens,
8. F.W. Perry, *The Commonwealth Armies: Manpower and Organization in Two World Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp.24-25.
9. Lyddon. *British War Missions to the United States 1914-1918*, pp.197-198.
10. A declarant was one who had formally declared his intention to apply for US citizenship. Lyddon. *British War Missions to the United States*. pp.197-198. Lyddon claimed that White and seven other officers were sent to Canada in February 1917 and then to the United States to prepare for the possibility of recruiting in the America should the opportunity arise. United States, Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970: Part I* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1975), p.116 Series C 181-194 shows a total of 6,780,214 foreign-born males of whom 3,038,303 or 44.8 percent were naturalized, 571,521 or 8.4 percent were declarants, 2,390,426 or 35.3 percent who were landed immigrants only and 779,964 or 11.5 percent who were of unknown citizenship; p.118 Series C 228-295 shows the place of birth of all immigrants of both genders. A total of 1,402,927 were British subjects by birth. Assuming that half were male and using Series C 181-194 as a guide, it is estimated that 701,464 men of all ages were neither US citizens nor declarants. The figure is slightly understated since Series C 228-295 did not list persons born in New Zealand, British African possessions, British Arabia, Straits Settlement (Malaya), Hong Kong or British possessions elsewhere.
11. United States, Congress, *U.S. Congressional Serial Set Number 7252* vol. 1, House Report no. 14 by the Committee on the Judiciary (Bill H.R. 2893) 16 April 1917, Senate Report no. 21 by the Committee on the Judiciary (Bill S. 1802) 18 April 1917; *Statutes at Large of the United States of America: Vol XL..* pp.39-40, *An Act to amend section ten of chapter two of the Criminal Code* approved 7 May 1917. The act exempted the Allies from earlier legislation forbidding recruiting in the United States. The amendments were approved by the House of Representatives on 16 April and by the Senate on 18 April 1917.
12. *Statutes at Large of the United States of America Vol XL*, pp.76-83, *An Act to authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment of the United States*. The act was approved by the President on 18 May 1917. Section 2 provided that, "Such draft as herein provided shall be based upon liability to military service of all male citizens,



- or male persons not alien enemies who have declared their intention to become citizens, between the ages of twenty-one and thirty years.”
13. Lyddon, *British War Missions to the United States*, p.198 noted that White arrived in New York at the end of May 1917; *New York Times*, 4 June 1917, p.6 reported that the Mission would begin recruiting on Wednesday, 6 June 1917; Library and Archives Canada [LAC] RG 24, vol.4510 file 17-1-49, AG circular letter 10 September 1917 announcing the change in nomenclature
  14. LAC MG 27 II D9 (Albert Edward Kemp Fonds), vol.76 file 127, A/AG to Minister of Militia and Defence 7 September 1917 suggested the mission be renamed; LAC RG 24, vol.4510 file 17-1-49, AG Circular Letter 10 September 1917 notifying all districts of the change; LAC RG 24, vol.289 file 13-123-5, US Army General Recruiting Service Circular Letters 1917 Number 69 of 31 May 1917 advised all recruiting stations of the procedures for handling BCRM recruits; Lyddon, *British War Missions to the United States*, p.198; *New York Times*, 31 May 1917, p.5 with a brief outline; *Boston Daily Globe*, 4 June 1917, p.1 quoting Brigadier-General White and adding that BEF recruits would be forwarded to New York while CEF recruits would be sent to Canada; LAC RG 24, vol.23187 file “Imperial Depot Windsor Nova Scotia MD 6,” Part II Orders from 2 February 1918 to 25 April 1918 record recruits for the BEF, Jewish Legion (part of the BEF) and the Australian Imperial Force.
  15. LAC MG 27 II D9 (Albert Edward Kemp Fonds), vol.76 file 127, undated memorandum *circa* September 1917 Appendix 1; LAC RG 24, vol.4615 file IG 1 pt.3, *European War: Memorandum No. 4 respecting Work of the Department of Militia and Defence from January 1, 1917 to December 31, 1917* dated 6 February 1918.
  16. LAC RG 24, vol.289 file 13-123-5, HQ British Recruiting Mission to Militia HQ 29 June 1917, memorandum to Minister 20 June 1917; LAC MG 27 II D9 (Albert Edward Kemp Fonds), vol.76, file 127, undated summary of BCRM *circa* September 1917
  17. *New York Times*, 11 July 1917, 12 July 1917, 22 July 1917.
  18. *New York Times*, 12 March 1918.
  19. LAC RG 24, vol.289 file 13-123-5, Superintendent of Immigration to Major-General Mewburn, 14 June 1917.
  20. *New York Times*, 19 June 1917, p.2 reported the arrival of Major Daly-Gingras and the purpose of his attachment to HQ BCRM; LAC MG 27 II D9 (Albert Edward Kemp Fonds), vol.76, file 127, OC Boston Depot to GOC BCRM 29 August 1917 with details of Father Doyon’s efforts in the New England states to recruit French-Canadians.
  21. LAC RG 24, vol.289 file 13-123-5, A/AG to Minister of Militia and Defence, 23 July 1917.
  22. The National Archives, United Kingdom [TNA] FO 115/2440, HQ BCRM to British Ambassador Washington 31 May 1918, Local Draft Board for Division 12 (Boston) to BCRM Boston 20 May 1918 claimed that the man in question had been drunk when he enlisted, Eastern Division BCRM to HQ BCRM 28 May 1918 noted that the recruit had been advised by the draft board to desert the CEF and his wife had brought in his uniform.
  23. TNA FO 115/2440, BCRM Buffalo to Eastern Division BCRM 29 May 1918.
  24. Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.165.
  25. DHH 74/672 (Edwin Pye Fonds), box 1, folder 2, file British-Canadian Recruiting Mission, “Synopsis of Recruits from the British-Canadian Recruiting Mission in the United States forwarded to Canada for the Canadian Expeditionary Force,” 12 March 1918. HQ BCRM in New York reported that 16,959 recruits had been forwarded by 2 March 1918 but districts reported that only 16,043 men had actually arrived; LAC RG 24, vol.4313 file 341-59-R pt. 4, OC Toronto Mobilization Centre to District Record Officer 5 September 1918 noted that 13,627 BCRM recruits had been forwarded between 16 June 1917 and 10 August 1918, but only 12,510 had arrived in Toronto.
  26. LAC RG 9 II B3, vol.77, CEF Routine Order Number 475 of 23 April 1918. The change meant that those who failed to report in Canada were deserters and could be prosecuted. Judging by the desertion rate of men sent to Military District 2 commented on above, it seems the order had little effect.
  27. LAC MG 27 II D9 (Albert Edward Kemp Fonds), vol.76, file 127, Statements of Recruits in New York City for week ending 14 July 1917, 21 July 1917 and 28 July 1917. In all, 963 men were examined of whom 316 or 32.8 percent were rejected.
  28. LAC RG 24, vol.4313 file 341-1-59R pts.1 and 2, weekly statements of BCRM recruits in MD 2, 1 July 1917 to 7 September 1918. In all, medical boards reassessed 11,636 recruits and found 498 or 4 percent unfit for military service.
  29. Lieutenant-Colonel H.A.C. Machin, *Report of the Director of the Military Service Branch to the Honourable the Minister of Justice on the Operation of the Military Service Act, 1917* (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1919), p.78. A total of 60.3 percent of those examined were fit for some form of service overseas.
  30. DHH 74/672 (Edwin Pye Fonds), box 4, folder 14, file “Recruiting,” Militia HQ to BCRM HQ 17 September 1917.
  31. At least 15 Muslims from Albania, the Middle East and Malaya are known to have joined the CEF: nine volunteers and six conscripts. None were recruited by the BCRM. LAC RG 24, vol.4336 File 34-3-24, Militia HQ to HQ MD 2 10 December 1917 noting that permission had been given to the Western Division to recruit Syrians; LAC RG 9 III A1, vol.92, file 10-12-31, OMFC Intelligence Department to Deputy Minister OMFC 15 January 1918 noting the arrival of Armenians at Bramshott who had been promised they would be given the opportunity to fight the Turks.
  32. LAC RG 24, vol.6553 file HQ-808-1, CGS to AG 25 January 1918, HQ Western Division to Militia HQ 22 January 1918 offering to enlist about a hundred Poles in south Chicago, AG to HQ Western Division 26 January 1918 saying “Enlistment Poles CEF not approved.”
  33. LAC RG 24, vol.4313 file 341-59-R pt. 4, 1st Depot Battalion 1st Central Ontario Regiment to HQ Military District 2 6 September 1918 reporting that 54 men had been discharged as American citizens.
  34. LAC RG 24, vol.1256 file 593-1-94, Militia HQ to BCRM HQ 4 April 1918 concerning Japanese applicants; LAC RG 24, vol.4375 file 34-7-61 pt. 1, HQ MD 2 to K.A. Wee of Leonia, New Jersey 27 April 1917 noting that Chinese could not enlist in the CEF.
  35. LAC RG 150 acc 1992-93/166 box 2969 personnel file 2137823 Silas Ezra from India; box 1708 personnel file 3032176 Lee Young Chung from Korea; boxes 8652 and 7237 for two Nisei soldiers: John Sasaki from Hawaii and Thomas Nash from New York City; Records of Japanese-born recruits are in Box 5004 (2007157 Frank Kasino), box 7228 (2768007 Samey Nagano), box 7303 (2139993 Charles Nezu), box 7339 (3236549 Masahito Nishioka), box 7440 (2007981 Hatustaro Okita), box 8084 (2557529 Joseph S. Ramsay), box 9494 (Sunny Tanaka) and box 9804 (2768270 Takeji Tsuge)
  36. Based on a sample of 6,530 BCRM attestation papers found on the data base, “Soldiers of the First World War,” <[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca)>; DHH 74/672 (Edwin Pye Fonds), box 5, folder 20, “Statistics,” AG to CGS 9 December 1927 commenting on the birthplace of CEF recruits, “The above figures are official.”
  37. Desmond Morton, *When Your Number’s Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada Ltd., 1993), pp.278-279 for CEF statistics.
  38. LAC RG 150 acc 1992-93/166 box 7734 personnel files 3081793 Edward Addren Perkins and 3081792 William Henry Perkins.
  39. *Ibid.*, box 2917, personnel file 3039305 Theodore Leander Engman.
  40. *Ibid.*, box 8151 personnel file 2356093 Shosho Rehana; *The Magazine of Habbaniya Union School & Community Association* 3, no.1 (Spring-Summer 2004) Avraham Soshou Rehana to editor. The magazine is available at <[www.zindamagazine.com/HUSCA/HUSCA\\_2004\\_1.pdf](http://www.zindamagazine.com/HUSCA/HUSCA_2004_1.pdf)>.
  41. Connecticut (240), Maine (70), New Hampshire (92), Washington DC (5), Delaware (4), Maryland (16), Massachusetts (966), New Jersey (153), New York (945), Rhode Island (194) and Virginia (7).

42. Martin Watts, *The Jewish Legion and the First World War* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.115-117. Watts cites ACI 1415 of 12 September 1917 as the War Office authority for the Legion. I am grateful to Mr. Harold Pollins, former reader at Ruskin College for drawing my attention to this book; E.A. James, *British Regiments 1914-1918* (London: Samson Books, 1978), p.50.
43. Watts, *The Jewish Legion and the First World War*, p.148. Watts notes that Jews who were American citizens could not be recruited; Elias Gilner, *War and Hope: A History of the Jewish Legion* (New York: Herzl Press, 1969), pp.184-185.
44. LAC RG 24, vol.4490 file 48-21-3, DAG Organization to GOC MD 4 5 March 1918, DAG Militia HQ to GOC MD 4 1 May 1918. This is the only known instance where the BCRM coordinated recruiting activities in Canada.
45. *Ibid.*, DAG Militia HQ to GOC MD 4 1 May 1918.
46. *Ibid.*, BCRM to GOC MD 4 10 May 1918.
47. *Ibid.*, AG to GOC MD 4 23 April 1918.
48. Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, p.279 notes that 2,712 Jews served with the CEF. However this does not include converts influenced by the Reverend Henry Singer of the Toronto Jewish Mission.
49. Arthur A. Chiel, *The Jews in Manitoba: A Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p.161.
50. Zachariah Kay, "A Note on Canada and the Formation of the Jewish Legion," *Jewish Social Studies* 29, no.3 (July 1967), pp.174-176.
51. LAC RG 24, vol.4490 file 48-21-3, BCRM to AG 16 July 1918
52. Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion* (New York: Bernard Ackerman Incorporated, 1945), p.164; Gilner, *War and Hope*, p.186; Hyman Sokolov, "The Jewish Legion for Palestine," contained in *Jewish Life and Times; A Collection of Essays* (Winnipeg: Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, January 1983), p.56. Sokolov served with the 39th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, but gave no source for his estimate.
53. LAC RG 24, vol.4313 file 341-1-59R pts. 1 and 2, weekly statements of BCRM recruits in MD 2, 1 July 1917 to 7 September 1918; Lyddon, *British War Missions to the United States 1914-1918*, p.203 notes that 33,335 men were recruited for the CEF.
54. LAC MG 27 II D9 (Albert Edward Kemp Fonds), vol.76, file 127; BCRM returns for the weeks ending 28 July 1917 and 4 August 1917.
55. LAC RG 24, vol.4312 file 34-1-59R pt. 1, OC Toronto Mobilization Centre to AAG & QMG MD 2 27 August 1917; LAC RG 24, vol.4313 file 341-1-59R pts 1 and 2, weekly statements of BCRM recruits in MD 2 1 July 1917 to 7 September 1918. A total of 256 men or 2.1 percent of all BCRM recruits refused to be attested.
56. *Ibid.*, pts. 2, summary of BCRM recruits 18 August 1918.
57. LAC RG 9 II B3 vol. 77, CEF Routine Orders, Number 189 of 11 February 1918.
58. LAC RG 24, vol.4313 file 34-1-59R pt. 2, summary of BCRM recruits 18 August 1918.
59. DHH 74/672 (Edwin Pye Fonds), box 1, folder 2, file: "British-Canadian Recruiting Mission, "Synopsis of Recruits from the British-Canadian Recruiting Mission in the United States forwarded to Canada for the Canadian Expeditionary Force," 12 March 1918.
60. Taken from the nominal roll in Major D.J. Corrigan, *The History of the Twentieth Canadian Battalion (Central Ontario Regiment), Canadian Expeditionary Force, in the Great War 1914-1918* (Toronto: Stone & Cox Limited, 1935).
61. Taken from nominal rolls in Lieutenant-Colonel G. Chalmers Johnston, *The 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles (British Columbia Horse) in France and Flanders* (Vernon: Vernon News Printing & Publishing Company, c.1931); Captain S.G. Bennett, *The 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles 1914-1919* (Toronto: Murray Printing Company Limited, 1926); Captain W.L. Gibson, *Records of the Fourth Canadian Infantry Battalion in the Great War 1914-1918* (Toronto: The MacLean Publishing Company Limited, 1924); Lieutenant-Colonel H.M. Urquhart, *The History of the 16th Battalion (The Canadian Scottish) in the Great War 1914-1919* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1932); Corrigan, *The History of the Twentieth Canadian Battalion*; Bernard McEvoy and A.H. Finlay, *History of the 72nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada* (Vancouver: Cowan & Brookhouse, 1920); Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Hayes, *The Eighty-fifth in France and Flanders* (Halifax: Royal Print & Litho Limited, 1920); Ralph Hodder-Williams, *Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 1914-1919: Vol II* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1923), Richard Holt, *Fighting 18th: Vol. II* (undergraduate thesis, University of Western Ontario, 2001). Names in the nominal rolls were matched with online attestation forms at [www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet) to identify BCRM reinforcements. Men were accepted as BCRM reinforcements if the attestation form was marked "BM," "RM" or "BCRM" or the individual was medically examined in the United States.
62. Christian L. Wiktor, ed., *Unperfected Treaties of the United States of America: 1776-1976*, vol.4 (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications Inc., 1979), pp.379 and 383 note that the initial conventions concerning the United States, Canada and Great Britain were signed 19 February 1918 and p.383; *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States and Other Powers, 1910-1923: Vol III* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923), pp.2650-2654 contains the text of the reciprocal convention between the United States and Great Britain
- while pp.2654-2657 contains the text of the reciprocal convention between the United States and Great Britain on behalf of Canada.
63. *New York Times*, 20 September 1918, p.12 quoting an announcement by Brigadier-General White.
64. The term "Canadian" was defined as one who had been born or naturalized in Canada or who had been resident in Canada prior to emigrating to the United States. Canadians living in Britain and Britons living in Canada were already liable to conscription in the country of residence.
65. Major-General E.H. Crowder, *Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System to December 20, 1918* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), pp.36-37. Based on registration cards forwarded to Washington by local draft boards, the Provost Marshal General estimated that about 20,000 men eligible for the CEF joined the AEF; *Report on the Operation of the Military Service Act 1917*, p.6.
66. Lyddon, *British War Missions to the United States*. p.203.
67. "The Clayton Knight Committee recruited aircrew in the United States for the RCAF from 1939 to February 1942. However, the Committee was made up of civilians, had no public recruiting offices and operated at arms-length from the RCAF. The Committee had the tacit approval of President Roosevelt but, Congress was not involved and the neutrality laws were not amended. Recruits sent to Ottawa for processing were ostensibly applicants for jobs as civilian instructors for the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, thus circumventing US law. The scheme ended once America entered the war. For further information, see: Rachel Lea Heide, "Allies in Complicity: The United States, Canada, and the Clayton Knight Committee's Clandestine Recruiting of Americans for the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1940-1942" in *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 15, no.1 (2004), pp.207-230 and F.J. Hatch, *Aerodrome of Democracy: Canada and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Directorate of History, 1983) pp.86-93.

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