

Four Canadian Labour Battalions were created for work in rear areas were organized in England in December 1916 and January 1917 using men not fit for service in the trenches (B. Category). The intention was to have one battalion attached to each Canadian division in France but, in fact, all were employed in railway construction under the Director of Labour (British). In November 1917 two of the battalions finally went to the Canadian Corps and the other two became battalions of Canadian Railway troops.

In November 1917, the 2nd and 3rd Labour Battalions were re-designated as the 12th and 11th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops, respectively. In March 1918, the 1st and 4th Labour Battalions were re-designated as the 1st and 2nd Canadian Infantry Works Battalions, respectively.

1st Canadian Labour Battalion

Organized at Shoreham in December 1916 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. C. Machin.

Arrived in France 11 January 1917.

Strength: 13 officers, 1010 other ranks.

Worked mainly on broad gauge railways, roads, light railways, water services, trench cables and salvage.

Re-designated as 1st Canadian Infantry Works Battalion on 28 March 1918.

The 1st Canadian Infantry Works Battalion formed the 1st and 3rd Canadian Infantry Works Companies in September 1918.

2nd Canadian Labour Battalion

Organized at Seaford in January 1917 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Garner.

Arrived in France 10 February 1917.

Worked mainly on broad gauge railways.

Re-designated as 12th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops on 21 November 1917.

See also 12th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops

3rd Canadian Labour Battalion

Organized at Bramshott in January 1917 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel W. A. Munro.

Majority of officers and other ranks from Manitoba.

Arrived in France 10-11 February 1917.

Re-designated as 11th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops on 29 November 1917.

See also 11th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops

4th Canadian Labour Battalion

Hat Badge:

http://www.britishbadgeforum.com/canadian_expeditionary_force/cef_labour_battalion.htm

Shoulder Title:

<http://www.labourcorps.co.uk/Images/4th%20CL.jpg>

Organized at Seaford in January 1917 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. H. Mckinery.

Most of personnel from reserve battalions in England.

Arrived in France 15 March 1917.

Strength: 12 officers, 976 other ranks.

Re-designated as 2nd Canadian Infantry Works Battalion on 28 March 1918.

The 2nd Canadian Infantry Works Battalion formed the 2nd and 4th Canadian Infantry Works Companies in September 1918.

See also 2nd Canadian Infantry Works Companies

War Diaries - Labour Battalions (War Diaries are located in “new” unit)

1st Canadian Labour Battalion which became the 1st Infantry Works Battalion

<http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca...e.html&r=1&f=G>

2nd Canadian Labour Battalion which became the 12th Battalion, Canadian Railway Troops

<http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/ne...html&r=15&f=G>

3rd Canadian Labour Battalion which became the 11th Battalion, Canadian Railway Troops
<http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/ne....html&r=14&f=G>

4th Canadian Labour Battalion which became the 2nd Infantry Works Battalion
<http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca...e.html&r=2&f=G>

Reference:

Library and Archives Canada
www.collectionscanada.gc.ca

Military Labour During The First World War
<http://www.labourcorps.co.uk/Index.html>