

# The Trip Across

By Sergt. G. W. ROSS

**B** LINDING sheets of cold rain, good people lining the sidewalks, cheers and handclapping, the Maclean Highlanders leaving for overseas from a city that had been good to them. It was a day of mingled joy and sadness. Everybody was glad that the long months of recruiting and training were over and that at last we were on our way. Then there was the accompanying shade of regret at leaving behind the homeland and the loved ones. As the long brown line splashed its way through the Metropolis of Canada, here and there a girl darted out and a Maclean marched on with a keep-sake or a parcel of comforts. At the entrance to the wharf-sheds a mother stood trying bravely to smile, but with tears gaining the victory as she said "Good-bye."

The embarkation took but a few minutes, then with a last blast of the whistle, H.M.T. pulled out into the stream and the Kilties began their three weeks voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. An interesting three days ensued. Too little has been written about the natural beauties of the entrance to the St. Lawrence river. The Gaspé shore with its wonderful islands; the Laurentian mountains silver-topped by an early snowstorm the night before, the Islands of the Gulf, all proved a panorama of beauty, and the boys of the 236th made the most of their opportunity.

Then a long week in the Basin at Halifax. A week of cold greydays and of confinement aboard ship, life boat practice and boat drill and a general making up of sleep lost through the attractions of Montreal. The only break in the monotony was a review on the Common, by Major General Benson, G.O.C., M.D. No. 6, and we were glad of the opportunity to stretch our legs and to review the historic old city. It was a last view too, for it will be a greatly altered Halifax to such of us that will be permitted to return apres la guerre—a city to-day shattered and torn.

Overcast skies, a raw cold wind astern did their best to add gloom to the day of our real departure for overseas, but their efforts were futile. As H.M.T. swung into her place in the long line and steamed down the harbour, the Macleans exchanged cheers with the Sammies on the sister ships of the convoy and with the British and Canadian tars on the warships in the roadstead. The pipe band, under Pipe Major "Sandy" Stewart cheerily screeched a shrill farewell. The shoreline faded away into the horizon. We thought we had said our last farewell



Dr. A. W. THORNTON.

One of the most ardent friends of the Kilties and of every member thereof. Before the Unit was organized he was a personal friend of the O.C. and of Major C. G. Geggie, with whom he had "Hesperian" experiences. He volunteered to assist in recruiting, and was with the Battalion during its famous fifteen days' campaign in New Brunswick, beginning with September 25th, 1916, speaking during that period in every County of the Province. He is an able, forcible and eloquent speaker, as well as a deep thinker, and though his life has been taken up particularly with professional work, he is looked upon throughout Canada as one of the keenest men in the political and economical life of the country. His three brothers, their sons and his own son are in khaki, and it is only his age that prevents him from being in khaki also. He spoke at our first meeting in Fredericton, N.B., and was also the last to address the Battalion in Montreal before we left Canada. Good-bye, Dr. Thornton! We count you as "one of us."

to Canada but just before nightfall a trim little coast patrol boat of the destroyer type appeared out of the evening mists, vomiting great clouds of inky smoke. She passed along the line of the convoy dipping her flag and fell in beside H.M.T. and from her bridge an officer enquired through a megaphone if we had any messages for St. John, then her crew lined up on the foredeck and volleyed out three cheers for the Kilties. We responded with a will, and so we said Good-bye to Canada.

The following day the sea roughened a bit, bringing distress to those of us who were poor sailors. A wait of several hours for two members of the convoy gave the old Atlantic a chance to toss the fleet around and our transport wallowed in the trough of the sea with the others. The distinguished invalids row assumed proportions. The change of time caught several sergeants unawares and they slept in their staterooms late enough to miss breakfast. The third day out was calm and passed without incident except for the firing of a few practice shots by the gunner. Advantage was taken of the weather to institute athletic contests, boxing, wrestling etc., which was continued throughout the voyage when weather permitted. Captain J. Douglas Black, Lieutenant Charles E. Blair and Captain "Billy" Godfrey were responsible for some splendid sport which was enjoyed by all aboard. Concerts were frequently given and on Sundays both church services and "sing-songs," the last under the capable leadership of Major C. R. Mersereau, were also held. A Y.M.C.A. was duly opened and thanks to our good friends in Montreal, Quebec and Halifax, an ample supply of stationery, magazines and books were to be had. Colonel Perrault, President of the Imperial Tobacco Co. of Montreal, very generously sent to Colonel Percy A. Guthrie 15,000 cigarettes for the use of the boys on the voyage. Needless to say the "smokes" were greatly appreciated.

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