

Chronological History of the Battalion

By the ORDERLY ROOM SERGEANT

(October 19th, 1917, to March 14th, 1918)

OCTOBER, 1917.

- 19th. Final Medical Board assembled, percentage of rejections very small, about 7 per cent.
- 21st. No Church Parades—Bn. C.B.'d. in order to facilitate issuing of overseas equipment. Completed 3 p.m., when entire Bn., 1,150 in all, paraded principal thoroughfares of Montreal.
- 23rd. Muster Parade, under supervision of Headquarters', M.D. 4, held in Craig Street Armoury.
- 24th. Battalion paraded Fletcher's Field for rehearsal for final inspection and to have pictures taken.
- 25th. Inspection on Fletcher's Field by Major General Wilson, G.O.C. M.D. 4.
- 26th. Parade, Inspection and Presentation of Colours to Battalion by Brig. Gen. H. H. Maclean, G.O.C., M.D. No. 7. Motion pictures of our last review in Montreal taken.
- 27th. Casualties struck off strength and preparations for embarkation commenced. Date of departure announced.
- 30th. Reveille, 5 o'clock a.m. Equipment and baggage packed and Battalion ready to move off at 9 a.m. Marched to Docks in heavy downpour of rain and pulled out of dock at 2 p.m.
- 31st. Sailing conditions ideal; getting down to ship routine, assigned places in lifeboats and commenced boat drills.

NOVEMBER.

- 2nd. Arrived Halifax 12 noon and proceeded to Bedford Basin (Sgt. Lennard, of "Breath O' the Heather" Staff, taken ashore, suffering from pneumonia. Died ten days later).
- 6th. Moved up into dock and Battalion disembarked for route march and inspection by Major General Benson, G.O.C. M.D. 6.
- 7th. Another route march in afternoon and very enjoyable concert arranged by ladies of Halifax, given in Freight Sheds. Captain F. Eason promoted to Major, and in Command of "C" Company, and Captain E. A. Sturdee appointed Adjutant.
- 9th. All ships of convoy assembled and sailed at 2 p.m. in following order:—Grampian, Kroonland, Mongolia, Arousa, Canada, Missanabie, Lapland and Calgarian as escort. Canada disappears under horizon, 4.35 p.m. Time put forward 25 minutes at midnight.
- 10th. Hove to for two hours, awaiting arrival two additional ships, Andania (now sunk) and Ortega. Mal-de-mer claims first victims. Run 202 miles. Time forward 30 minutes.
- 11th. First "Boat Edition" of "Breath O' the Heather" published. Run, 274 miles. Time forward 30 minutes.
- 12th. Sports on board. Run 286 miles. Time forward 25 minutes.
- 15th. "Danger Zone" entered.
- 17th. Escort arrived, nine T.B.D.'s.

- 18th. First sight of land, North Coast of Scotland.
- 19th. In the Mersey at 5.30 a.m. Docked Liverpool, 11 o'clock. Disembarked in 22 minutes, a record. Entrained in two special trains, arrived Seaford, 8.45 p.m. and marched to Segregation area.
- 22nd. Medical Inspection commenced.
- 27th. Medical Inspection completed.
- 30th. Released from quarantine and Battalion away on landing leave, six days to England, eight to Scotland.

DECEMBER.

- 9th. All back from leave and settled down to real training.
- 12th. Visited by Lieutenant-General Turner, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.
- 15th. Ten Officers and 35 other ranks commence course at Canadian Trench Warfare School at Bexhill.
- 25th. Christmas Celebration, Church Parades of all denominations. Special menu for all meals. Each hut visited by the Colonel and Staff.

JANUARY.

- 5th. Advance party left for Witley, and battalion warned to proceed on following Thursday.
- 7th. Move to Witley cancelled by Adjutant General.
- 8th. First casualties, nine other ranks struck off for return to Canada.
- 13th. Area visited by Sir Edward Kemp, Minister of Militia.
- 18th. Battalion inspected by General Edgerton.
- 20th. Route march to Eastbourne, 18 miles in all.
- 23rd. Inspection by Lieutenant-General Turner.
- 25th. Burns Night. General Hodgins, formerly Adjutant General of Canada, guest at dinner in Officers' Mess. 1,086 fruit cakes arrived from ladies of Fredericton for the Battalion.
- 26th. Inspection by General Hodgins.

FEBRUARY.

- 1st. Draft of 250 ordered to be transferred to Canadian Machine Depot.
- 5th. Transfer of draft of 250 to Canadian Machine Gun Depot postponed.
- 7th. First death in England, fourth in the Battalion. Private Leeman died in 14th Canadian General Hospital, Eastbourne.
- 9th. Draft to Canadian Machine Gun Depot cancelled.
- 11th. Pte. Leeman buried in North Camp Cemetery with full military honours. 34 Musketry Instructors arrive for Instructional purposes. Musketry training being pushed vigorously.
- 23rd. Definite word received that Battalion is to be broken up. Warned to have 250 other ranks ready to proceed overseas in two weeks.
- 27th. Last Route March as a Battalion.

MARCH.

- 1st. Lieutenants Ryder, Scovil and MacKinnon transferred to Royal Flying Corps. Warned to have two additional drafts of 100 each ready to proceed overseas on 7th instant.
- 4th. Inspection by Colonel Sir Fitzroy Donald Maclean, Bart., K.C.B., Chief of Clan Maclean, and party.
- 5th. Call for men for new Railway Construction Corps, 65 responded.
- 6th. Final inspection of drafts by Colonel S. D. Gardner, M.C., G.O.C. Canadian Troops, Seaford Area.
- 7th. Colonel Guthrie presented with Loving Cup by "D" Company and Pipe Band, and attache case by Officers. Last address by the Colonel to the Battalion as a whole. Colonel Guthrie, three officers and three other ranks proceed to France with drafts on conducting duty. Drafts departed at 12 midnight, entrained 1 a.m.
- 12th. Received orders to move to Bramshott.
- 13th. Balance of the Macleans, 486 all ranks, depart from Seaford 1.40 by special train, arriving Bramshott 5 p.m. Two Officers and 50 other ranks left in Seaford as rear party. Colonel Guthrie back from France.
- 14th. Taken on strength 20th Canadian Reserve Battalion Royal Highlanders of Canada and formed into "D" Company of that unit.

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FAREWELL TO THE MAJOR.

"B" Company's farewell demonstrations to Major D. A. Laurie was an event that will leave a vivid impression on the mind of every man that witnessed it. It was not merely a "He is a good fellow. Let's give him three cheers and send him along" sort of an affair. It was something deeper and stronger. It was an expression of personal affection, for the men of "B" swore by the Major. They bore him on their shoulders about the lines and the cheering was of the variety heard at political conventions, a continuous rumble lasting minutes. Bagpipes added to the din and Macleans from the other three companies joined with "B" in their good-bye.

Major Laurie went back to Canada because a medical board decided that the several pieces of shrapnel which he still carries in his body as a memento of his first visit to France unfit him for a second try at the Hun.