

INTRODUCTION

AFTER the declaration of war, on August 4th, 1914, the first thing the officers of the different militia battalions thought of was whether their services would be needed. Many of us at once sent telegrams to the Minister of Militia at Ottawa offering our services. On the 8th of August, word was received from Ottawa that all militia battalions were to at once be brought to full strength. Colonel McSpadden, of the 11th Irish Fusiliers of Canada, together with his energetic second in command, Major Crehan, immediately opened a recruiting office, and before many days had the battalion at full strength. Soon it was announced that a Canadian contingent was to be formed, and every battalion in British Columbia hastily trained their different units ready, so that when the order came for them to be sent away, they would be prepared to leave.

As for myself, being anxious to leave with the first contingent, I arranged my business, and at once went into the recruiting office and helped to bring our battalion up to strength. On August 17th, however, I suddenly received orders to leave immediately with a detachment of men, numbering about 300, for Prince Rupert, where, the report stated, many Germans and Austrians working along the lines of the Grand Trunk Pacific, were endeavoring to blow up the bridges. It was also reported at the time that the two German cruisers, the "Leipzig" and the "Dresden" were in northern waters and that we should see a little excitement. Of course, I was very much disappointed at having to go to Prince Rupert, as it was not my idea to waste any time in Canada when more excitement could be had by going direct to France.

On arrival at Prince Rupert with the detachment, I immediately telegraphed to the brigade headquarters, Vancouver, requesting that I be returned in order to go with the first party. By this time we had heard that the Canadian contingent was to be formed at Valcartier, Quebec, and would be made up of units from every militia battalion in Canada. On August 20th, a wire came from brigade headquarters asking for the return of myself and another officer, and on arriving at Vancouver, we found that the advance units were leaving the next day for the East. The unit from our battalion was made up of 350 men and seven officers. On arriving at Valcartier, several units from British Columbia were joined together and made up into the 7th Canadian Battalion, now known on the western front as the "Fighting Seventh."

We remained at Valcartier one month, and during this time we trained every day and were thoroughly equipped by the time we were to embark on September 27th, 1914.

The ships left the Bay on the morning of the 2nd of October, in three lines and steamed into the Atlantic, where we were met by H. M. ships "Eclipse," "Diana," "Glory," "Talbot" and "Charybdis." These acted as a convoy to our thirty-three transports, the largest fleet of liners to cross the Atlantic at one time, and having on board 33,000 Canadian troops. The voyage over took sixteen days, and was a most interesting trip.