

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF  
THE MILITIA FOR 1872.

(Continued from Page 338.)

*Cavalry.*—Detachment of 8th Regiment of Cavalry—Lieutenant Fowler.

*Field Artillery.*—1 six pounder field battery—Lieut. Donnell.

*Infantry.*—67th Battalion, "Carleton Light Infantry"—Lieutenant Colonel Upton, 1st Battalion, "Lieut. Colonel Marsh.

Numerically small as this brigade necessarily was, all the routine of the soldier's duty was carried on in accordance with the full and clear instructions conveyed in the General Orders with the best results.

The site selected for the camp was all that could be desired—about a mile from Woodstock, on a table land called the "Pleasure Grounds," beautifully situated in a commanding position, high above the level of the St. John River, which passes through the midst of that fine agricultural county (Carleton) and within an easy march of an excellent rifle range, on the banks of the Medocnuakeag River. Woodstock being the head quarters of the 71st Battalion, that corps being the first on the ground, and did for others that which had been done for it at previous camps, viz., pitched tents and made preparations for the arrival of distant corps.

The "Pleasure Ground" Association guaranteed a plentiful supply of pure spring water for the troops; and this agreement was faithfully carried out, and it will be remembered that the season was unusually dry and the heat oppressive.

One could not help observing, not only at this camp, but subsequently at battalion camps, how speedily and systematically "our people" settled down to "camp life" and to "camp fare." Work is done cheerfully and zealously, not as mere work, but as duty combined with pleasure. This may in a great measure be attributed (1) to the improved scale of rations, the increased allowance of tea, and the issue of cheese and barley—there were no complaints as to quantity and quality of rations at any camp in my district—and (2) to better cooking than heretofore.

It soon became known from experience—better known too, than can be learned from any code of "regulations"—that the regularity of the men's messing is of primary importance, and calls for unremitting attention of officers commanding corps as well as company officers.

In each company the man best fitted for the post is appointed cook, the men's meals are thereby properly provided, and the full benefit of the means afforded for varying the diet is secured.

I cannot do better than quote from the report of the medical officer of the first day in camp—Surgeon Gregory, 71st Battalion—"The cooks seemed to be well up in their duties, and great satisfaction was expressed by the men, both as to quantity and quality of rations." He adds—"It gives me great pleasure to testify to the general feeling of contentment among the men, owing in a great measure to the improvement of rations and to the cookery. The latter is more worthy of remark, as it being the first day of camp, the cooks could scarcely be expected to be as efficient as they will become after a little practice.

A canteen for the supply of such extra provisions or articles as might be required was established; but no spirituous liquors

were allowed in camp, in accordance with instructions.

There being many recruits in the ranks it was deemed advisable to devote a few days to company and battalion drill before commencing brigade drill and field manoeuvres, but as soon as possible (on the 7th July) in compliance with orders, the brigade was marched from camp in column of route with a view to defend Woodstock from attack from an imaginary enemy, advancing from Houlton by the Medocnuakeag River route. On reaching the open, hilly, undulating country, the advanced guard became a line of skirmishers, and it was reinforced, and the reserve deployed, all taking advantage of the nature of the ground to obtain cover. The detachment of cavalry sent forward to reconnoitre, brought intelligence of the whereabouts of the enemy, and fire was soon opened by our skirmishers, hitherto concealed, and a rapid advance was made by the reserve to gain the crest of a neighbouring hill commanding the position of the enemy. This effected, such an accurate fire was opened by the brigade that the enemy was compelled to retreat, but not without an attempt to turn our flank. However a corresponding change of front on our part secured our holding the strong position of the enemy, and completed the route of the enemy.

It was subsequently ascertained that we had confronted but a portion of the enemy's force, while the rest was advancing upon the north side of Woodstock, hitherto unprotected. The cavalry therefore, was at once sent in that direction for intelligence, and the brigade followed as quickly as possible.

A somewhat similar advance was made against the enemy's position on the north side as that adverted to on the west, and suffice it to state, the attack on Woodstock was successfully defeated.

Subsequently, on the 11th July, during my absence at Apohaqui, at the inspection of the 8th Regiment of Cavalry, the Acting Brigadier, Lieut. Colonel Inches, exercised the troops at brigade drill and field manoeuvres in the country already described.

On another occasion—on the 14th July—having sent out two companies on outpost duty on the heights commanding the camp, and these having reported indications of an enemy advancing from the frontier, in the direction of McKenzie's Corners, the brigade was quickly under arms; skirmishers with their supports thrown out, and directed to act in concert with the outposts. The reserve followed, all advancing rapidly but steadily to gain the heights; and this effected, a still further advance was made in order, by sudden rushes over every open space, to check the progress of the enemy at as early a stage of their advance as possible.

The ground here was rough and broken but soon became interspersed with greenwood troops, and subsequently it was thickly wooded, and some difficulty was at first experienced in keeping the necessary communication by connecting links between "skirmishing" "supports" and "reserve"—in fact the difficulty, not easily overcome with older soldiers, of keeping one's men well in hand in a wood. However, on the skirmishers opening fire, all speedily regained their places, and the advance was steady and the fire of the skirmishers effective, the enemy retiring disputing every inch of ground.

So effective was the work of "our people," that an attempted change of flank on the part of the enemy proved an

abortive effort, and the troops returned to camp.

Several other interesting and instructive "field days" was executed, in all which the force was taught valuable lessons in taking every advantage which the features of the ground afforded, in supplying the knowledge of drill to "field manoeuvres" and in firing coolly and with correct aim.

I may add the officers commanding corps were desirous that the suggestion contained in my last report should be carried out at this camp, viz. forming two divisions, one side to act on the offensive, the other on the defensive—troops moving off from camp for a march of two or three days—corps to bivouac. However, there were so many recruits in the ranks it was not advisable to adopt this plan at this camp; but I consider it may be carried out with advantage at future camps.

On Saturday afternoon, bathing parade was held—the march to and from the river being in itself a useful drill—and the bath was fully appreciated by all the ranks.

On Sundays, the troops assembled on the grounds in front of the camp for Divine service. On the 8th of July, the Rev. T. Neals officiated; and on the 14th, no clergyman being available, the Deputy Adjutant General read the service, assisted by Major Raymond, 67th Battalion.

While in my Brigade Orders, at the breaking up of this camp (hereto appended), I took occasion to express my satisfaction with the manner in which all duties had been performed, I consider this Report would by no means be complete were I to omit mentioning the special services of the detachment of cavalry, under command of Lieut. Fowler.

Despite the great distance of the camp from that at Apohaqui, at which the 8th Regiment of Cavalry was then performing its annual drill, Lieut. Colonel Saunders, ever ready to carry out that which has for its object the good of the service, cheerfully sent this detachment to Woodstock with the view to the three arms being represented; and while this fine regiment won high encomiums for ease with which last year it performed lengthened marches and its general efficiency, referred to by the Adjutant General and other experienced officers at both sides of the Atlantic, I am proud to state that the detachment were no unworthy representatives of the corps.

The practical way in which every member of the detachment discharged the important duties required of them, shows that Canadians can speedily pick up a knowledge of military duty that requires months of careful training in other countries.

The better to carry out the Adjutant General's instructions, the camp, being in a frontier country, and considered as if in the vicinity of an enemy, I directed the officer commanding the detachment to patrol on the roads leading to the frontier, in direction of Houlton, and to gain information, and report on the following subjects:

(1.) As to villages—how situated—the population, (2.) Roads—their general width—from where to where and the distances (3.) Rivers—their general direction, width, depth, &c., (4.) Farm houses—if well supplied with forage and provisions; and he was obliged to convey in his report some ideas respecting the country.

As no general rules can be laid down as to the mode of conducting these patrols, this was left to the discretion and intelligence of the officer in command.

Lieutenant Fowler was required to