

REMINISCENCES

OF THE

"FENIAN RAID"

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PART I.

Through the years of 1864 and 1865 and early months of 1866 Canadian Towns bordering upon the United States were in great alarm and constant anxiety through rumours of invasion by the Fenian Brotherhood, to whom flocked numberless hardy veterans of the Civil War fresh from battle fields of the South, eager to fight, no matter where or when, while Canadian newspapers were full of disquieting rumours as to vast accumulations of military stores and of threatened invasion.

On December 20th, 1864, thirty companies of Canadian Volunteers were called out by the Militia Department for Frontier Service in three Battalions of ten companies each, Headquarters to be respectively at Windsor, Niagara and La Prairie, the companies to be sixty-five strong exclusive of officers.

The Barrie Rifles, officered by Captain McKenzie, Lieutenant O'Brien, and Ensign Ormsby were fortunate, and received orders to proceed with the Collingwood Rifles on the 28th December to Niagara, and report to the Officer Commanding. And now a word as to the Barrie Rifles, and to go back a little.

In 1855 the Canadian Militia in the Province of Ontario consisted of a few scattered and independent Rifle companies, of these "The Barrie Rifles" was the first gazetted on 27th December, 1855, W. S. Durie, Captain. The first and third Rifle Companies of Toronto, were next gazetted on 20th March, 1856. In 1860 at Toronto a Battalion was formed consisting of six companies, called the second Battalion Volunteer Rifles of Canada, to which the Barrie and Whitby companies were invited to belong, Toronto being able to furnish only four companies, the Barrie company being No. 1, and their Captain W. S. Durie, becoming Lieutenant-Colonel of the Regiment. In 1863 the second Battalion of Volunteer Rifles, became the now famous "Queen's Own Rifles," composed entirely of