

THE BATTLE OF HALIFAX.

Deceiving the Defence by a Feint the Enemy Capture the Harbour.

A Great Day for the Blue Jackets—But Little Glory for the West Riding Men or Militia, and much Disgust Among Citizens.

(Halifax Mail, 11th October.)

"The great demonstration" took place yesterday. The warships, and the Imperial and Canadian troops were engaged. There was a public holiday and thousands of people turned out to see the great mimic battle.

But as far as the general public was concerned the whole thing was the most genuine sham fight ever witnessed in these parts. They spent the whole day, saw nothing or next to nothing and went home thoroughly disgusted.

This was largely the fault of the general public. They had formed great expectations. The general notion was that the fleet would take up a position in the centre of the harbour, blaze away at and be blazed away from the forts on either side; that there would be a grand display of torpedo experiments, and wind up with a general review and grand march past.

But real warfare is not conducted that way, and the military and naval authorities wanted an idea of what could be done in case of real hostilities.

It is said that Admiral Lyons was not at first favourable to taking part in the affair, and when urged, consented; and subsequently remarked to one of his staff: "I'll give them enough of it." He kept his promise.

The attack was carried out under command of Capt. Jackson, of H.M.S. Comus; the defence was conducted by Col. Hill, R.A. General Ross and Admiral Lyons were intensely interested spectators.

Thousands of people crowded Citadel hill, the Park, the decks of the St. Pierre, the Dartmouth, and wherever a favourable view could be obtained. Hundreds of funny incidents occurred, but we have not space to record them. It was a cold day for a great many people, and a weary day for the 66th and 63rd. They were held in reserve and occupied a back road in the back woods. Below we give reports of the battle, as seen from various points of view.

The net result was that a landing was made at Herring Cove, and an advance made upon York Redoubt, which was repulsed. But this was only a feint, which drew the whole reserve force five or six miles out in the woods. Then another clever feint caused the defence to concentrate a large body of troops for the defence of Fort Clarence, and when the bulk of the defending army was thus distributed so many miles apart, the enemy attacked McNab's Island in force, captured it, and held a position in the heart of Halifax harbour—hitherto considered impregnable.

The "general idea" and orders issued from the brigade office were:

MANŒUVRES, 10th Oct., 1888.

War having been declared, the officer commanding at Halifax receives information that some of the enemy's cruisers have arrived off the coast with the intention of landing a force of sailors and marines with some field guns to make a raid on Halifax from the land side on the west, or else to seize Dartmouth or some of the outlying forts, such as York Redoubt, Ives Point battery, etc., etc.

INSTRUCTIONS.

For the purposes of the manœuvres the points at which the enemy may land will be limited on the S.W. by Herring Cove and on the E. by Cow Bay.

All bridges on the road leading from Herring Cove and York Redoubt as well as those leading from Cow Bay or Dartmouth to be considered prepared for instant demolition.

The passage between Lawlor's Island and the mainland to be considered absolutely barred.

The passage of the narrows between Lawlor's and McNab's islands and between the north point of the former and the opposite shoulder of the latter, to be so obstructed as to cause a delay of half an hour at each place to boats attempting to pass through.

The entrances to Cow Bay and Herring Cove to be considered similarly obstructed and to entail a like delay.

Water transport proceeding from one point to another between 10.30 a.m. and the conclusion of the manœuvres not to be allowed to cross the mine fields.

No hostilities to be carried on after 4 p.m.

The cruisers will remain outside of a line drawn from Chebucto Head to Devil's Island till 10.30 a.m.

By order,

J. GOLDIE, Colonel, Chief Staff Officer.

The following alterations are ordered in the instructions accompanying the general idea for the manœuvres on the 10th inst.

The supposed obstruction which barred the Eastern Passage between Lawlor's Island and the mainland absolutely, are now to be supposed to be boat mines, which will cause a delay of half an hour.

In addition to the above another line of boat mines is to be supposed to exist between McNab's Island and the mainland (at a point in the Eastern Passage, which will be marked by a red flag) which will cause a similar delay.

In the event of the state of the weather being such as to prevent the original scheme being carried out, the following instructions will be observed:

York Redoubt and outer mine-field to be considered non-existent.

A line drawn between Ives' Point and Point Pleasant to absolutely bar the fleet.

All heavy guns in forts to be considered non-existent.

The landing party from the ships is not to attack York Redoubt in any way.

Information will be telegraphed from the ships to York Redoubt by 8 a.m., if the original scheme cannot be carried out. In such case hostilities will not commence till 11.30 a.m. By order,

J. GOLDIE, Col., C.S.O.

THE MILITIA'S PART.

Militia Brigade Office, Oct. 8, 1888.—In my interview with the general officer commanding H. M. forces in B. N. A. he expressed a desire that the militia force in Halifax should act in conjunction with H. M. troops at the forthcoming manœuvres. The D.A.G. therefore trusts that the force will turn out as strong as possible, and of all things, to be punctual at the various rendezvous mentioned in the following orders:

The 63rd battalion Halifax rifles will parade at the drill shed, for inspection (annual) by the deputy adjutant-general, at quarter to eight on Wednesday next, 10th inst., in drill order, great coats rolled. If there is sufficient time the battalion will be mustered; if not, a muster parade will be ordered at an early date.

This battalion to be formed up at the Queen's wharf at 8.30 a.m., on the morning of the 10th inst., and there await orders (30 rounds of ammunition per man).

The commanding officers of the Halifax Brigade G. A. and the 66th Battalion having expressed themselves as desirous of turning out with their battalions in conjunction with H. M. regular forces, the following will be the disposition of these battalions.

66th Battalion.—Two companies to parade at the lumber yard to embark in the steamer Lily at 8 a.m. for York Redoubt.

Three companies to be at the N. W. Arm Battery as a reserve at 8.30 a.m. to await orders.

Halifax Battalion G. A.—One battery (estimated strength 50 officers, n.c.o.'s and men) to proceed by road to Fort Clarence to form escort for 28-pounder guns, to be at Fort Clarence at 8.30 a.m.

One battery (estimated strength 50 officers, n.c.o.'s and men), to be at lumber yard for embarkation in transports that will be provided at 8 a.m., to proceed to York Redoubt and form escort for 20-pounder guns.

Half battery (estimated strength 25 officers, n.c.o.'s and men) to parade at R. A. park at 9 a.m. and accompany as escort 20-pounder guns to junction of Herring Cove and Williams' lake roads.

Half battery (estimated strength 25 officers, n.c.o.'s and men), to parade at 8 a.m. at lumber yard and proceed in transport that will be provided for it to MacNab's island.

Officers commanding all the foregoing detachments to be directed on arrival at their posts to report themselves to the senior officer present. Thirty rounds blank ammunition to be taken for each rifle and carbine.

Dress, drill order with haversacks and water bottles.

The men should breakfast before starting and take a cooked meal in their haversacks.

On the termination of the manœuvres those troops who have proceeded to York Redoubt and MacNab's Island by water transport will return by the same means and in the same order as they went. Troops that marched to their positions on the Dartmouth side will march back.

After the troops have arrived at their positions they will receive all orders from Col. Hill, R.A., nominated by the G. O. C. to command the defending force.