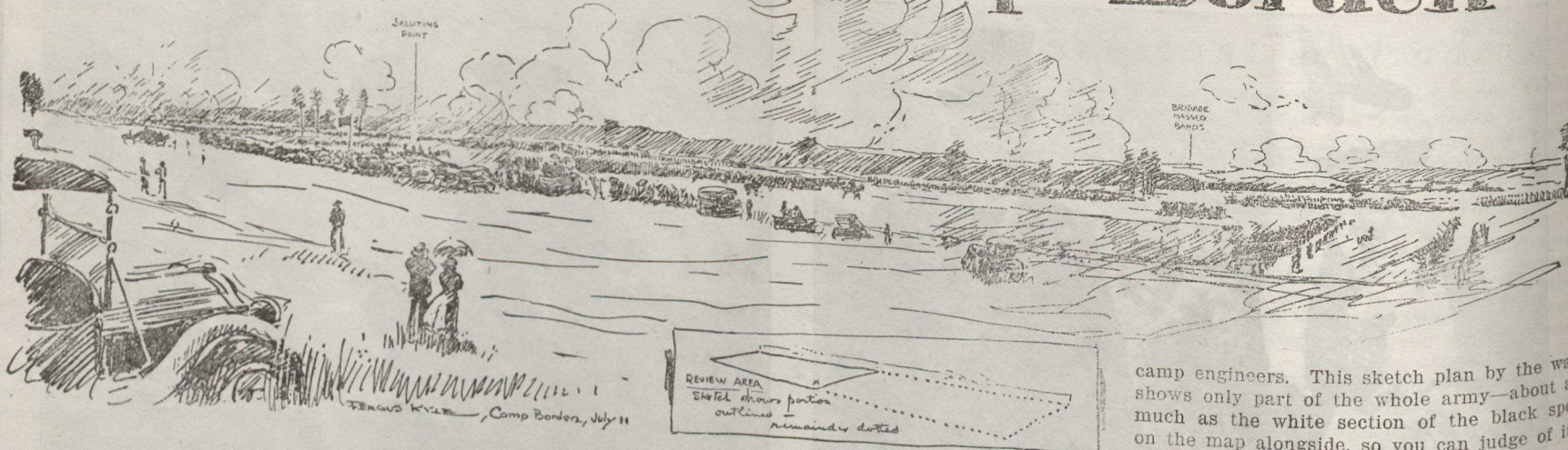


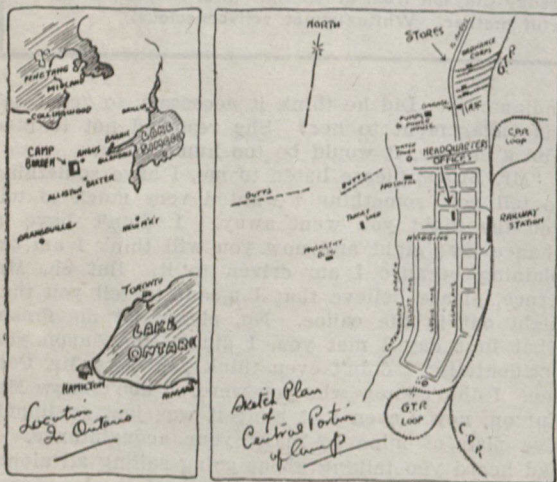
A Look At Camp Borden



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CAMP BORDEN is—a species of concrete psychology specially suitable to 93 in the shade with a strong wind blowing. In the arguments of people who have been there, those who have not been yet, and those who never will go if they can help it, Camp Borden is now as famous as Torres Vedras and the cave of Adullam used to be in political speeches. Anybody in Ontario is qualified to talk about it. The farther away a man is from seeing it the more cocksure he becomes in his condemnation or his compliments, somewhat according to what he thinks he knows about politics and what he doesn't know about soldiering.

To get a parallel to this popularly interesting soldiers' retreat "far from the madding crowd" in the region of Lake Simcoe is not quite possible. No other camp in Canada is like it. In size and significance Valcartier is the nearest. But for most of the broad outlines as well as the minute details of camp



life, Valcartier is as much like Camp Borden as a fine oil painting is like a crude sketch. The sketch may be worth potentially more than the painting; but as yet it is the baldest kind of sketch, which must wait for time and labour and war psychology to determine what it is worth as a military work of art. Niagara and Barriefield and Camp Carling and Petawawa are all essentially different. Most of these had something to do with history. They grew out of an old historic fort or a militia parade ground. Borden grew out of none of these—out of nothing except a concrete intention and psychology.

To understand Camp Borden one must keep away from it. To get a bundle of impressions, that may mislead, may in no sense convince, but are sure to be more or less interesting, one must go and have a look at it. Which is what a Canadian Courier representative did, arriving on the scene just when the big camp was beginning to recover from what happened to it on the evening of Monday, July 10th.

Question: What and where is this famous Camp Borden? Answer: Camp Borden is a topic of varied and at times violent conversation; it is grain of sand in the public eye. It is noted for its length and breadth—six and three-quarter miles from north to south; four and one-quarter, east to west—and for its depth (one soldier told me it was up to his neck).

It is in very truth a sandy plateau, mixed with ashes from forgotten forest fires that wiped out the pines that made this country, and known as the Pine

Plains of Angus. The village of Angus, now about two and one-half miles from military headquarters, was itself "headquarters" when the business of the district was lumbering instead of soldiering. That business ceased thirty years ago, but it was thirty or forty years earlier that the tallest, best looking pines kept falling one by one to the orders of the O. C.—axe gangs. The sun looks down hard upon the plains all day long (incidentally cooking to a cinder any mean-intentioned germs); but in the evening when the brilliant tints are fading over the hills to the far side of the camp you can get from the few remaining clumps of evergreens a scented suggestion of the woods. Three months ago nothing but silence filled the space. Just now it is the bang and blare of the battalion band doing its evening repertory, with a bar or two of Home Sweet Home sneaked in. Fifty men marching in fours raise a little cloud of dust that hovers about them like a gang of kids following a circus; a soldier waiting to cross the road, a man of the compact, hard-polished type, who has seen some years of service and has been in camps where rain and mud were prevalent, answered my grin with a smiling "They don't like it much; they'll soon get over it, though—a cool day now and a little rain will show 'em what they got here. Wait till they get to work and begin to see how much quicker the drill and shooting come to them where there is room and proper arrangement——" he thought they would soon be enthusiastic about the big breezy camp. A large motor truck came thumping and swaying along, packed to overflowing with straw hats, three men sprawled out over the load, spreading their wings to keep the hats aboard and bouncing and grinning. One grouch the less for some battalion on the morrow.

The sound of the planing mill and carpenter shops working overtime turning out tables, benches and ablution outfits to connect up with the second great water tower; the sight of that 22 foot concrete roadway coming steadily along every day; the gangs going to work at night with their flare lamps; the teams and trucks loading up with material from cars shunted in as fast as they can be unloaded—all this will get to them; each man will feel himself a part of that big job.

Camp Borden is fifty miles from Toronto as the crow flies. By the railways it is sixty or seventy miles, and the time of flight varies from two hours to three hours. When you land at the "Union" station, which is 570 feet long, and look up Hodgins Street you think you're at the World's Fair. Your gaze is held by a strip of woods stretching across the picture three-quarters of a mile away. This is the ravine bordering Catawampus Creek. Between it and the railway lie the brigade areas over a mile to the left and half a mile to the right; containing 6,000 tents. Half a mile farther to the right are the store-houses of the ordnance corps, where the straw hats come from, and the Army Service Corps, where the beef and bread are passed along from the cars—40,000 lbs. of each per day. One siding, not shown on the sketch plan, runs up the side of Hodgins Avenue, which carries in the supplies for the contractors and

camp engineers. This sketch plan by the way shows only part of the whole army—about as much as the white section of the black spot on the map alongside, so you can judge of its extent.

If you could slide Camp Borden over Toronto, turn its east side to lie along the waterfront, and carefully lower it about 450 feet, you would have the City Hall tower poking up through the floor of the headquarters office, and the camp railway station would be on King Street near York. One side of the camp would be at High Park, the other beyond the Don. The area for tents and stores would run from Bathurst Street to Parliament, and going from headquarters to the end of the rifle butts would be a trip from the City Hall to the new North Toronto station; continuing to the far side of the camp would land you at Eglinton Avenue. If, perchance, you have no acquaintance with these localities in Hometown you may at least know how far it is from the Exhibition Grounds to King and Yonge—after the show. The big review took place south of the rifle butts; a native son of Pine Plains says there is another flat area farther south which is an even better marching ground than this. There are 10 miles of sewer pipe in the camp running to septic tanks, 15 miles of water mains. That round-bottomed, cone-topped cylindrical tank 100 feet in the air on stilts holds 100,000 gallons, and a second one is on the way. There are eight gushers or artesian wells supplying over a million and a half gallons of water per day. It is good enough water, very good indeed. There are 500 showers, 250 ablution tables, affording basins for 2,500 men at one time; the waterworks system is as complete as any city's; the railway station's outfit of conveniences for the public is practically the same as that of any metropolitan station.

Among the buildings of size on the grounds are: Headquarters office, 182 ft. by 36 ft., with large waiting hall and registry offices, and about 24 separate offices; post office, 61 ft. by 33 ft., accommodating post office, two telegraph offices and telephone offices; pay office, 51 by 38; bank, 44 by 38; guard house, 90 by 20, 24 cells; garage for Army Service motors, 160 by 60; pump house, 47 by 45, with transformer station, 20 feet square; Y. M. C. A. buildings, 5,000 feet floor area; musketry building, 60 by 30; headquarters officers' mess, 144 by 40, with dining-room, 100 by 40; hospital, 137 by 43, with complete operating and other departments; dental clinic building, 152 by 25, 24 chairs; three bungalows, 47 by 39. There are about 6 miles of railway sidings and an unloading platform 2,600 feet long. There are about 10 miles of wiring for electric light. The streets are mostly 150 feet wide and the lighting is better than in most towns.

And who laid all this out and will see it through? Col. Robert S. Low, contractor—he and Col. Deroch and Major Barry, of the Engineers. They blew in on the 10th of May with 60 carloads of stuff and 370 men, and it wasn't long till the construction foremen had many more going hammer and tongs until the number reached 1,500. They cleared 5,000 acres



One recreation feature at the Camp is a species of Blind Man's Buff, but played with the aid of ropes strung out from a peg. It is exciting.