

## The History of the Twenty-fifth Regiment

**T**HE HISTORY of the 25th Regiment is reminiscent of the fact that the present time is not the first but the third occasion on which its members, enthused by the spirit of loyalty and patriotism, have freely volunteered to spend themselves and, if necessary, shed their life-blood for "Empire, King and Country."

In the dark days of the Fenian Raid, on Africa's red stained veldt, and again, in the training camps at home and in Britain's seagirt isle, Elgin's sons have answered the call. "Come and help us," with the ready cry. "Here Am I. Send me!"

Established as a unit of the Canadian militia, September 14, 1866, for nearly 50 years the Twenty-Fifth has held its place as one of the most tarry organization-enthusiastic militiamen in the Dominion, difficulties and misadventure have at times almost overwhelmed but the patriotism and good sense of officers and men have restored the regiment to its wonted efficiency and enthusiasm.

No sketch of the regiment's history would, however, be complete without a brief reference to the old St. Thomas Rifle Company, which, organized in 1857, became No. 1 Company when the formation of the regiment was authorized in 1866.

The first officers of the Rifle Company were Captain James Stanton, for many years County Crown Attorney; Lieutenant W. Ross; Ensign D. K. McKenzie and Sergeant Benjamin Drake. Mr. McKenzie, who joined as a private and later rose to be Ensign, in 1862 succeeded Captain Stanton in the command and held the commission until 1866. During his command Captain McKenzie was assisted by a gentleman named McCall, who retired in 1865. Nell Caswell, afterwards Lieut.-Col. Caswell, succeeded to the lieutenancy of the company in 1865 and James Lindsay became ensign.

In March, 1866, and prior to its organization as a regiment, the Rifle Company received orders to go into active service because the Fenians in the United States were threatening an invasion of Canada. Captain D. K. McKenzie, then in command, lost no time in getting his company together, the roll call showing a muster of 44.

The company immediately proceeded to London where it remained in camp for four weeks, doing three drills a day. On June 1, 1866, the day before the battle of Ridgeway, the company was ordered to Port Stanley to repel a threatened

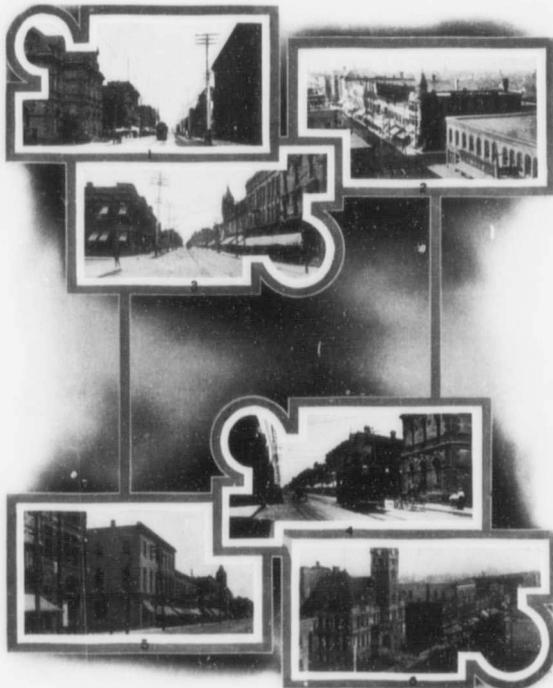
invasion expected there that night. The Vienna Company, under its captain, the late D. Tweedale, was also at Port Stanley, along with the Port Stanley Marines, under the command of the late Major Ellison.

Some of the men were on picket duty on the piers during the night and the remainder slept under arms ready at a moment's notice to respond to any alarm. The St. Thomas company only remained at Port one night, returning to London on June 2, by special train. At London they were immediately ordered to proceed to Sarnia, where they arrived at midnight the following Saturday.

The company was stationed at Sarnia about four weeks and after eight weeks' active service, without having seen an

enemy or fired a shot in battle, they were ordered home. During the period of active service Captain McKenzie was assisted by Ensign J. Lindsay, Sergeant D. Ferguson and Corporal Lindsay, later Lieutenant-Colonel of the 25th Regiment.

On September 14, 1866, the 25th Regiment, Elgin Infantry, was organized under the authority of a general order, its first commanding officer being Lieut.-Col. McBeth, with a resident of Port Elgin as senior major. The battalion, originally a



1—Looking East from Post Office.  
3—West from Railway Street.  
5—East from Journal Building

2—West from Journal Building.  
4—West from Post Office.  
6—East from City Hall