

NO. 4 SIEGE BATTERY NOW IN FINE SHAPE

A SPLENDID FORCE OF MEN READY FOR EMPIRE'S FIGHT

Something About the Officers and "Rankers"
Making Up One of the Finest Units Ever Mobilized in Canada—Call to Arms Attracted Men of All Classes—Month's Work Has Done Wonders For Them.

"Come where the bugles of England play,
Over the hills and far away."
The shrill of the bugles and the rattling cadence of the drums crashed in martial cadence against the walls of the long ugly looking buildings and caught in the eddying breezes of Fundy rolled upward and outward—up to caress the folds of the rippling flags, dirty, torn, bearing signs of long use, but making a brave showing, outward to carry the message of war to the clean-winged schooners moving lazily down the bay.

Following the sound to its source one saw a half dozen youths lustily blowing in unison, a couple of "kettle" drummers rattling their sticks with purposeful zeal, and a wonderful artist, erect, sturdy, glowing face he put every ounce of muscle into his task of pounding the smooth surface of an old bass drum. Behind this group in a line of men, arms and limbs swaying to the march came a gathering of young men clad in nondescript garb, but eager, pulsing with life and vigor, as they bent their energies to the drill.

Round and round they marched, keeping step not with the almost involuntarily precision of veterans, but with the studied care that marked the recruit. Right-left, right-left, right-left, looking straight ahead with each man's eyes focused on a spot in the nape of the neck of the man ahead, paying strict attention to business, serious young Canadian soldiers in the making. What mattered it that the business-like khaki was relieved here and there with a flaming collar or a redolent of the gym or football field? What mattered it that some of the lads were still in "muffs," and had not yet achieved the peculiar smartness one associates with the army? The color of the coat was a minor consideration, khaki would come in time; the precision of step and unmistakable carriage would be drilled into them as the days went on; the great overpowering fact was that here, the young men of all walks of life, taken from the college, the factory, the counter and the farm, imbued with zeal to "do their bit," and med as an inconspicuous mass into that greatest of all levelling machines, the King's Service.

The scene was Partridge Island, the line one fine afternoon about a month ago, the occasion the regular marching drill of the men of No. 4 Siege Battery of Artillery of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Another Picture

Again the shrill of bugle, the rattle of kettle drum and the boom of the bass, but this time the scene was changed, in appearance the men were different, the surroundings totally different. It was Sunday morning. The streets were almost silent in their Sabbath calm and the men, just disembarking from the puffing little tug marched off to attend divine service. Gone were the college sweaters, absent the "muffs," the serviceable mustard colored khaki alone clothed the men. No longer was it necessary for each man to watch the neck of the man ahead of him while placing his feet with labored precision. Marching was second nature now, the grilling on the improvised parade ground on Partridge Island had had its effect, and compared with the recruits I saw on the island that afternoon in mid-October these men had the appearance of seasoned veterans.

For No. 4 Siege Battery has rounded into shape and is now chafing at the military rule which keeps it confined to Canada when it longs to be under way to complete training in England and then to the battle lines to add another to the many Canadian units playing the game for Empire.

And as the Battery marched past that Sunday morning in perfect

alignment, every man fit and smart, it looked good enough to fight for a cause even as glorious as that in which the best men of the Empire are straining. But much has yet to be done. While the men have shown a remarkable aptitude for their work and have developed into splendid shape they must yet receive that finishing necessary before they can be brigaded with the regulars; for them remains the routine of English camp life, the additional grilling under the English drill sergeants and instructors the most exacting task masters in the world, but masters whose pupils are well qualified to disconcert and defeat the flower of Prussian militarism.

Prompt Response

When the authority was given to recruit the Siege Battery the response was prompt and gratifying. Young men answered the appeal with that splendid agreement that they were called to do men's work beside which no other work mattered. The men of the Siege Battery joined the colors because they felt it was their duty to do so and the result is that the Battery will probably average higher than any unit yet mobilized in St. John, if not in the whole of Canada.

Certain it is that the Siege Battery contains more than the usual proportion of highly trained men, specialists in their commercial vocations, keen brainy fellows, who may under any circumstances be depended upon to think and do just what the occasion demands—truly a force of which any officer might well be proud. And if the officers of No. 4 are proud of their men, the men in turn hold affection and respect for their officers, affection for the genial temperament and kindly disposition which has made leaders and led the best of their comrades, and the knowledge that when Major Barker or any of his subordinates order a certain movement they can if need be tell why and how. With such officers mistakes are never made, discipline comes naturally, there is no confusion, no cause for complaint. The work is well done because it is done scientifically, the men are well trained because their teachers know how to train and the unit is wonderfully efficient. Such a force may be depended upon to do with credit the work before it and to win the commendation of those British officers with whom efficiency has long represented the goal most to be desired.

Major L. W. Barker.

No. 4 Overseas Siege Battery of the Canadian Expeditionary Force has a complement of six officers and 212 non-commissioned officers and men. The officer commanding is Major W. Barker, who was for two years a member of the 3rd R. C. A., six years of the period as commander of No. 3 Battery. He has been recognized all over Canada as an excellent artillery man, eminently fair in his treatment of his men, but a strict disciplinarian and "a glutton for work." An illustration of Major Barker's technical qualifications may be gleaned from the fact that when a Canadian artillery unit was sent to England several years ago he was chosen to command the heavy section as the most efficient officer in that branch of the service in Canada. Owing to business reasons he was forced to decline. When the command of the Overseas Battery was tendered to him he was in business in Montreal, but immediately surrendered an important position and reported for duty in this city about a month ago. Since that time he has been in command of the splendid force on Partridge Island, and it is largely due to him that the unit has rounded into such good shape that if ordered to go overseas now they are fit for the work. Since his retirement from the active

strength of the 3rd R. C. A., Major Barker has been on the Corps Reserve.

The Other Officers.

Captain Roy A. Ring, of West St. John, is second in command. Captain Ring was for five years an efficient member of the 3rd R. C. A., and has done good work in his new position. Lieutenant W. Gordon Kerr is the senior lieutenant. He was two and one-half years an officer in the artillery in this city, resigning his commission some time ago when he went to the Canadian West. He returned to this city soon after the outbreak of war and at once reported for duty with his old battery. He was then appointed to the composite battery doing guard duty on Partridge Island where he served with success up to the formation of the Siege Battery.

Lieutenant J. A. Bruce, who reported for duty this week from Halifax, was where he had been attached to the unit of the 3rd Canadian Garrison Artillery, took two courses at the Quebec school where he passed with distinction in all subjects.

Lieutenant G. Barton Welmore is also a graduate of Quebec, where he took three courses. Since May 11th of this year he has been on duty on the island, and was appointed to the Siege Battery on its formation.

Lieutenant J. H. A. Fairweather was appointed to the force about a month ago. He is a well known member of the New Brunswick Bar, and has many friends in this province.

A Splendid Unit.

It has already been said that the men of the Overseas Battery are of a class with the officers. The truth of this statement may be supported by the fact that serving in the ranks as gunners are eight men who now hold or have held commissions in the Canadian militia. Unable to secure appointments with their rank they cheerfully enlisted as gunners and will go to the front in that capacity. Colours and medals, and the knowledge that they have contributed to the make-up of one of the best units in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, have exchanged the college and gown for the field and the gun. The battery also numbers in its ranks four certificated civil engineers, nine commercial travellers who resigned good positions to "do their bit," eight former bank clerks, and a very large number of mechanics and tradesmen, particularly well qualified for the duties they will be called upon to perform.

Altogether the personnel of the 4th Canadian Siege Battery will compare favourably with that of any similar unit in Canada, and it is the confident expectation that when they are called upon to play their part on the Empire battle lines they will uphold the best traditions of the other splendid units from Canada which have preceded them.

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THE MEN WHO REFUSE TO BE TURNED DOWN

**Rejected, but determined
to get to front, they never
lose hope.**

By W. Douglas Newton
Author of "Wax" in the North Atlantic,
"The Undying Story."

Our voluntary system may have its flaws—systems, indeed, are built that way—but also it has its advantages. There are probably a number that will occur to most of us, but I want to point to one only. That is the advantage of our system to the rejected man. Whatever else you dub it in your anger or your love, it must be agreed that our system is a blessed system to the man who won't take "No." That is probably why we are fond of it, for a "No" is a hard saying to our race, and there are numberless men in the British Isles who refuse to be turned away from service. To these men, an arbitrary system would be a tyranny. They are the men who wanted and want to serve, in spite of systems. The mere fact that they have been rejected as ineligible does not intimidate them. It spurs them to fresh effort.

The obstinacy of the rejected is one of the heroic and magnificent truths of this war. I think it has been a little overlooked, but we have a right to overlook it. It is quite as indigenous to our race as any other of those terrible qualities that we find on examination of certain kinds of newspapers, we possess. And while the man who won't take "No" is more actual than the "slacker," his peculiar and virtuous stubbornness is ever so much more British.

The man who won't take "No" is a fellow who knows, in spite of all things and all rejections, that he is a creature specially created for the army, and for fighting Germans. He has made up his mind that this special reason of creation must be fulfilled, and massed battalions of recruiting officers are not going to hold him back. His determination is enormous, his persistence awesome, and he has a faith in his purpose that can perform miracles.

The One-Armed Man

At least, some of the things men of this stamp have done appear to be nothing less than miraculous. One could think that a one-armed man, however determined, was beyond human hope as far as the army went; yet I happen to know of such a fellow who thought not. He had set his heart on the army, he had set his soul on killing at least one enemy. He approached the recruiting booths. At the recruiting booths they were astonished, and where they did not laugh they were kind but firm. Inviting him to join the army, they were told of his tribe. His case was fundamentally impossible, and yet—

And yet the last I heard of him, he was in a well-known regiment with full kit and status, and his officers, finding it a lawyer's own job to procure his discharge. For he knew this, as most of this stubborn guild know it. Once a man is in the army (no matter how hard it is to get in), it is the most difficult act on earth to get him out of it again. How in heaven's name he managed to get through, nobody knows, but he was through, and on the way to fighting, and that was all that counted to him. The case sounds almost impossible. It would be impossible, only it is true.

The one-armed man is an extreme example, most of these triumphs of the men who won't take "No" are not. Most are but examples of inspired and mule-like grit in the face of minor physical defects. I know of one obstinate young man who visited eight recruiting centres before he was accepted. Weak sight was his obstacle, and at first the edict of rejection seemed infallible. But the ninth doctor passed him. He passed him cleanly and without hesitation. Yet the young man's eyes had not changed. Marvels had not been performed on his myopic fault. How, then, his success? Well, the young man was the son of a doctor. When repulses became wearying, he remembered that the sons of doctors have opportunities not always vouchsafed to other young men. He made use of them. He obtained his father's optical test and he studied it. The ninth recruiting passed, not a

pair of sound eyes, but a young man with a good memory.

The Never-Say-Dies
Neither rebuffs nor their repetition can blunt the determination of this guild of the never-say-dies. They go from recruiting office to recruiting office buoyed up by the feeling that somewhere in this wide Britain there is at least one attesting officer who will let them in. Only in one case do I know of a member of the guild who allowed melancholia to play over his soul at rejection—it was for no more than a moment. And he had an explanation. "That's the seventeenth, you know," he said, and his accent seemed to suggest that he was beginning to suspect that, after all, there be something in this rejection business. But his face cleared. "But I'm going to try the—Rifles now. Fellow in there (the recruiting office) told me about them. The Rifles are short of men, and when that happens the doctor unbends. How do I get to their headquarters?"

Indeed, this feeling that somewhere there is a charmed door through which they will pass, has become an aspiration with these men as settled and they go to expense and trouble and even pain to attain their ends. How many men have had themselves operated on at their own expense, have had feet set right, varicose veins removed, small defects rectified, teeth extracted and false sets put in, so that they could satisfy the army doctor and pass? The number, if known, would prove to be surprisingly great. The papers had the other day the story of a young man who submitted to two operations in order to enlist, and many of us know of cases where men have submitted to at least one for the same purpose.

They are wonderful fellows these men who won't take "No." They might reasonably and comfortably take the easier way. They have tried and they have failed; they have done their best to serve and it is not their fault that they have not succeeded. They

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