

## A Short History of The Duke of Connaught's Own

**T**HE 6th Regiment "The Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles," the Parent Corps of the 158th Overseas Battalion, The Duke of Connaught's Own, can claim direct descent from the first local military corps established in British Columbia in Crown Colony days.

The first Corps of Militia raised on the Mainland of British Columbia was the Seymour Artillery. The exact date is in doubt, as owing to the fire at New Westminster in 1898 all records were lost, and the early history of the Corps is a matter of memory. The Seymour Artillery, which was formed about 1859 at New Westminster as a Half Battery of Field Artillery, was armed with two 24-pounder Bronze Howitzers, which are now adorning the grounds of Queen's Park. The Corps was named after the Governor of the Colony, and among its officers were members of the Governor's staff and the late Sir Henry Crease.

From 1859-60 to 1878 the history of the Corps is lost. In 1878 a Crimean veteran, Capt. George Pittendrigh, then late of the Buffs, took command, with Lieut. Norman Bole as his subaltern. During Capt. Pittendrigh's tenure of command the old Seymour Artillery became No. 1 Battery of the newly formed British Columbia Brigade of Garrison Artillery, No. 2 Battery being in Victoria. In 1884, on Capt. Pittendrigh's retirement, Capt. W. Norman Bole assumed command, which he held until his elevation to the Bench in 1889, when the command devolved upon Capt. Charles McNaughton.

The Battery was always maintained in a high state of efficiency, and was complimented on several occasions by inspecting officers, notably by His Excellency the Marquis of Lorne and General Laurie. The uniform was the same as worn by the Royal Artillery, including the Busby as headdress.

In 1894 the British Columbia Brigade of Garrison Artillery was composed as follows: Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Companies were in Victoria, No. 4 Company at New Westminster, and authority was given to raise a Company in Vancouver to be known as No. 5. Major T. O. Townley, who, when he resided in New Westminster, had commanded No. 4 Company, was placed in Command. The other officers were Lieutenants C. A. Worsnop, Lacey R. Johnson, F. W. Boulthbee, and C. Gardiner Johnson. Lieut.-Col. E. G. Prior, of Victoria, was in command of the Brigade. On January 17th, 1894, in the old theatre on Pender Street, near Abbott, the oath of allegiance was administered to the men who had signed the roll, uniforms were issued and drill commenced the following day.

The first official inspection took place in the old Drill Hall on June 9th, 1894, the inspecting officer being Lieut.-Col. J. Peters, D. A. G. of the District, and in November No. 5 Company furnished a Guard of Honor to the Governor-General, Lord Stanley.

On May 24th of the following year, No. 5 Company took part in the Queen's Birthday celebrations in Victoria, and were complimented by Rear-Admiral Stephenson, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces. Lieut.-Col. Peters inspected the Company on October 19th, 1895, and in the same month a gun-shed was erected opposite the Drill Hall for gun drill. Authority was also received for the organization of another Company to be known as No. 6. Up to December, 1895, the weapon with which No. 5 was armed was the short Snider, but during that month these were called in and Martini-Henrys issued.

Early in January, 1896, the Artillery School commenced in Vancouver, a three months' course under the O. C. Royal Marine Artillery, Esquimalt. This was followed in the summer by another school at Esquimalt known as the "A" grade course, which enabled officers to qualify for promotion. The name of the regiment was changed to the 5th Canadian Artillery, and was formed into two battalions. The Victoria Companies were made the 1st Battalion, and the Mainland Companies the 2nd Battalion. Lieut.-Col. T. O. Townley was placed in command of the latter. The other Vancouver officers were: Majors, C. A. Worsnop and Lacey R. Johnson; Adjutant, Lieut. C. C. Bennett; Surgeon-Major, A. M. Robertson; Quartermaster, Hon. Capt. J. F. Garden; Captains, F. W. Boulthbee and C. Gardiner Johnson; Lieutenants, J. Reynolds Tite, J. Duff Stuart, H. C. Akroyd, Forin and Burnett.

In February, 1897, Major C. A. Worsnop assumed command of the Battalion during Lieut.-Col. Townley's absence on leave, and Capt. C. C. Bennett took over No. 4 Company of New Westminster, being gazetted Major in March. Lieut.-Col. Peters, D. O. C., inspected the Companies in May, and in the same month the Vancouver Companies furnished a Guard of Honor to the Marquis Ito, who was en route to the Queen's Jubilee celebration as Envoy Extraordinary from Japan.

In June the 2nd Battalion proceeded to Victoria and took part in the Jubilee celebrations on Macaulay Plains with the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Esquimalt Garrison and the 1st Battalion 5th Regiment C. A., the largest number of troops ever brigaded in British Columbia.

On June 5th, 1897, Lieut.-Col. Prior was gazetted to be in command of the 5th Regiment, both battalions, and on the 19th of the same month Lieut.-Col. Townley was transferred to the Reserve of Officers with the rank of Major, and Major C. A. Worsnop gazetted Lieut.-Col. in command of the 2nd Battalion. In October Major Bennett took command of No. 6 Company in Vancouver, Lieut. DeWolf Smith taking No. 4 Company in New Westminster, and Lieut. J. Reynolds Tite was appointed Adjutant.

In the spring of 1898 an Artillery School was held in New Westminster, which was attended by all the New

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