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“Poot a little swank in ut : ye can afford tae do ut!” --Mac

BUT HE IS UTTERLY WITHOUT SWANK HIMSELF, IS OUR “BARB WIRE McLAREN”, WHO WAS “PRETTY BUSY” AT YPRES, “WORKED OVERTIME” AT ST. ELOI, WENT “BLIGHTY” — AND FINALLY CAME TO ST. JOHNS, WHERE HIS “N.C.O.’s-Fall-Oot!-Shun!-Laft-Tur-r-r-n!-Quick-March!-Par-r-r-r-r-ade,- R-r-r-r-right-Tur-r-r-r-n!-Quick-March!”—HAS ENDEARED HIM TO AT LEAST ALL THE “RESPONSIBLE SAPPERS AND DRIVERS” AT THE E. T. D.

James Stewart McLaren got his first press notice in the “Dundee Advertiser” as far back as 1881, being announced as “a son” in the birth column of that journal, which is know to most of us canny chieils as the Forfarshire Bible. McLaren evidently could not live down this publicity and having resolved to let Winston Churchill—an import of his native town—have the run of the city, left for Canada in 1905. Previous to his going, however, he had served seven years as a volunteer in the Black Watch, rising to the rank of Sergeant-Instructor.

He adopted Montreal as his dwelling place and still having a longing for soldiering in his spare time, joined the 4th Field Coy. of Engineers there, as a sapper, in 1907.

He was still with that unit when war broke out in 1914, having in the meantime again achieved his old rank of Sergeant-Instructor.

He volunteered for overseas service in November 1914, but was not fortunate enough to get away with the first division. McLaren made no mistake in getting away with the Second Division, however, and proceeded to England as Sergeant

with the newly formed 5th Field Coy., Canadian Engineers, arriving in England in May 1915.

September of the same year saw him in France, and right in the thick of the heavy fighting then going on.

Like most of our gallant lads who have returned to us, McLaren says very little of his experience “over there”. He was “pretty busy” round Ypres, and “worked overtime” at St. Eloi, and was finally blown up by a German mine being sprung right under a trench he was protecting with barbed wire.

We strongly suspect that our Sergeant-Major could say much more on the subject of his experiences in France, but with that brief summary of his we will have to be content. Previous to his being knocked out, however, he justly earned a reputation second to none in the division as the Expert Wire Man. Without him no wiring party was complete and this particular branch of an Engineer’s work was with him a speciality,—so much so that he was known throughout the land as “Barb-Wire McLaren”.

He was invalided to England in March, 1916, suffering from severe shock. After four months of the

very best treatment medical skill could offer he was sent up to the Canadian Casualty Assembly Centre and from there posted to the Engineer Training Depot, Shorncliffe, as Instructor.

The effects of his experience in France were responsible for his being categorised C3 while at Shorncliffe, and, becoming unfit for

Canada, he was admitted to the General Hospital, Montreal,—being a patient there when his leave and an extension expired.

On his return to reasonably good health, the ever considerate Powers that Be transferred him once more, this time as Instructor to our Depot.

He had hardly settled down to the daily task of teaching the young idea when he was again moved, this time to “D” Company as Sergeant-Major.

At the time of writing he is still there and, soldier like, adapting himself successfully to his new duties.

His position and standing among us is thoroughly well deserved, and McLaren is very popular indeed with both officer and man.

Although he would be the last to admit it, he has come through some tough experiences and it is a constant source of surprise to us that he so unfailingly preserves that cheerfulness of manner and that highly commendable quality of being able to see the brighter side of things.

In these days when our paper is struggling to keep the red ink out of its ledger, we would dearly love to have his recipe for the draught which is so productive of such optimism—but again our C.S.M. declines!

Sergeant Major McLaren, although in far from the best of health, continues his daily round in a truly worthy manner, and the example he sets us in his con-



JAMES STEWART McLAREN, C.S.M.
(Photo by Pinsonnault.)

any further active participation in the war, was sent down to Crowborough as Company Sergeant Major of the Casualty Coy. there.

Old injuries again proved troublesome and McLaren was granted eight weeks’ furlough to visit Canada, in the hope that a change might improve his health.

Such, however, was not the case, as, not long after his return to

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