

## THE RECENT CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S BODY GUARD, OF TORONTO.

The reconnaissance of the above mentioned regiment of cavalry is particularly deserving of mention on account of the practical work performed by them in lieu of the usual drill in camps of instruction.

Lieut.-Colonel George T. Denison, the commanding officer, having applied to and received the permission and approval of Major-General Herbert, C.B., to take his men out on a reconnaissance, ordered the regiment to assemble on Thursday, the 23rd June, at the Old Fort Barracks, Toronto, consisting of two squadrons of about 160 strong, under the following officers:

Com-mandant Lieut.-Colonel George T. Denison.

Major—Lieut.-Colonel Fred. C. Denison, C.M.G.

Adjutant—Captain Wm. H. Merritt.

Quarter-Master—John Sloan.

Surgeon—Frederick L. Grasset.

Veterinary Surgeon—F. A. Campbell, V.S.

Officers commanding troops:—

“A” Troop—Captain C. A. K. Denison.

“B” Troop—Lieut.-Colonel Orlando Dunn.

“C” Troop—Captain F. A. Fleming.

“D” Troop—Captain J. R. Button.

In addition to the staff and regimental officers, Lieutenant Wm. Forester, of the Canadian Dragoons, Quebec, was attached for instructional purposes, and, as expected, rendered such service as to merit the praise of the commanding officer, proving himself an energetic and capable officer.

The plan mapped out by Colonel Denison, and which was carried out to the letter, consisted of making a reconnaissance from Toronto to Hamilton, along the lake front and return by a more northerly route.

Mobilization having been completed by the afternoon of the day of the assembly of the regiment, they were marched off accompanied by their band and regimental waggons, each man carrying his haversack (containing one day's rations), cloak, and cape placed in front of the saddle, the tents, ammunition, etc., being carried, as is usual, by the regimental waggons, each troop having its own.

After covering a distance of some seven miles, and reaching the village of Mimico, a halt was made for the night. As expected for a first night, a considerable amount of confusion existed, and some little time was taken in pitching tents, picketing horses, etc. When the camp was in proper order, Lieut.-Colonel Denison issued regimental orders to the effect that reveille would sound at 4.30 the following morning, and the squadrons must be prepared to move at 7 o'clock. At the appointed hour on Friday morning the parade took place, and the regiment was moved off and employed as an advance guard, being divided into columns to move along three parallel roads. Connections were made by the advance scouts of the various columns at all cross roads, until Oakville, a town of some 1800 inhabitants, was reached, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, when an encampment was made for the night.

The arrival of the regiment created considerable excitement, as it was no doubt the first cavalry visit the town had received in many years. In the evening the band gave a selection of music, which was fully appreciated by the residents.

On Saturday morning, at about the same hour as the preceding day, the regiment paraded and were inspected by the commanding officer, after which they proceeded to the Oakville Common, and were put through the usual field manoeuvres.

A start was then made under similar conditions as the preceding day; the objective point being the city of Hamilton, a distance of sometimes over 20 miles by the roads which were taken; it was reached at about 5.30 that afternoon.

The men were much browned by their three days exposure to the sun and dusty from their long ride, and although not at the time eligible for a dress parade, nevertheless presented a very serviceable appearance.

Before going into camp, Lieut.-Colonel Denison put the corps through regimental movements on the Hamilton Common, after which they went into camp on the Lansdowne Park, kindly placed at their disposal by Mr. Jas. Webster, a gentleman thoroughly in sympathy with militia matters. The situation is on the Burlington Bay and is a beautiful spot.

During the evening the officers of the 13th Battalion entertained those of the visiting corps in their mess room, Drill

Hall, in connection with which it may be stated that their quarters would be difficult to surpass. The non-commissioned officers extended similar courtesies to their comrades.

On Sunday morning the regiment was formed up for church parade at 9.30, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Dunn, and marched to church. The streets were lined with spectators although the weather was somewhat unfavourable. The afternoon, however, proved fine, and the camping ground was visited by thousands of citizens.

Monday was utilized for the purpose of troop drill, mounted and dismounted, under the command of their respective officers.

The regiment was notified that the return would be by another route, more northerly than the one taken during the advance on Hamilton, and that they would act as a rear guard of a retreating army, A., C. and D. Troops forming the rear guard, with B. Troop as the pursuing force.

During the retreat, when suitable places for defensive purposes was reached by the rear guard, a troop or detachment would dismount, open fire on the enemy, checking their advance and enabling the remainder of their force to continue the retreat. At about six miles from Hamilton a splendid defensive position was found, which could not be surpassed from a natural standpoint, and here it was decided to make a stand and engage the enemy. Lieut.-Colonel Dunn, commanding the pursuing force, finding it was impossible to dislodge the enemy without sustaining a great loss, decided if possible to cut off their retreat, and with that object in view moved his force on the gallop by a lateral road to the village of Waterdown, arriving there just in advance of the retreating force, cutting off their retreat and making prisoners of the force. This move on the part of Lieut.-Colonel Dunn showed good judgment on his part and quick action, necessary qualifications for a cavalry officer, but not always to be found.

Lieut.-Colonel Denison reached Waterdown in advance of either force, and upon their arrival formed the regiment up in close columns of squadrons and addressed the officers and men, pointing out in detail the objects of these manoeuvres, the defects and improvements which could have been made by both sides.

Camp was formed at a point about twenty miles from Hamilton, and on Wednesday the regiment moved on to Lambton, arriving in the afternoon. This being their last night in camp, and in order to show the progress made by all hands, it may be stated that every tent was pitched within half an hour, as well as the horses securely picketed and the fires lighted.

This speaks well for the new departure in the way of practical work in lieu of ordinary camp duties and parade movements. It teaches officers and men self reliance and the important duties which would devolve upon them in actual service, such as were performed to a certain extent during the Fenian Raid of 1866, when the same officer commanded the Regiment, a man whose energy, soldierly qualities, determination and pluck are so well known as to require no further comment here.

Toronto was reached the following morning and after an inspection by Lieut.-Colonel Otter, D.A.G. of the District, the regiment was dismissed.

It may be added that each morning previous to the moving off of the corps, detachments were sent out in advance to prepare the camping places, during which time the officers and non-commissioned officers were instructed in and completed rough sketches of the country moved over, giving in detail all roads and principal features of the country which might be of use in an actual campaign. This was in charge of Lieutenant Wm. Forester of the Canadian Dragoons, Quebec and it is safe to say that he being an excellent soldier, the work was well done.

Lieut.-Colonel Denison is deserving of much praise for taking the initiative and carrying to a successful issue the work performed during this outing, and it is to be hoped that further opportunities may be given him to repeat the reconnaissance or something similar, and that other cavalry corps may see their way to following the good example recently given.

This report might have contained a great deal more information, but the object is not to go into details of the actual work performed but merely to give in general terms an idea sufficient to interest and point out to the Cavalry and the Militia Force the objects of this reconnaissance.