

Annual Report on the State of the Militia for 1874.

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APPENDIX NO. 1.

MILITARY DISTRICT, NO. 5.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MONTREAL.

18th December, 1874.

SIR,—I have the honor to report that all the corps in the District not precluded from drilling by the General Order of June 2nd, 1874, have, with the exception of the companies named below, performed the annual drill for 1874-75, as follows:—

1st BRIGADE DIVISION.

The St. Andrew's Troop of Cavalry, and 11th Battalion "Argenteuil Rangers," drilled in camp at St. Andrew's under the command of Lieut. Col. Bacon, Brigade Major. These corps went into camp on the 29th June, and drilled for 12 days. The camp was pitched on a suitable piece of ground on Mr. Simpson's farm, where a good supply of water was available; good order and discipline was maintained during the camp. The corps mustered: Cavalry, 3 officers, 40 non-commissioned officers and men and 43 horses; 11th Battalion, 17 officers and 198 non-commissioned officers and men. Officers and men presented a fine soldierly appearance at inspection. The cavalry were well mounted; they drilled as a squadron, and went through the movements and sword exercise in a creditable manner. The Infantry showed good proficiency in drill; the parade, field movements and skirmishing were well done. The rations were of good quality, and gave satisfaction. 20 rounds per man were fired at target practice.

The City Corps in Montreal drilled at their own headquarters, and mustered stronger than they did during the previous year; a healthy spirit exists this year in the Montreal force—the corps are all full, and two additional companies each are offered to be raised for the 1st Battalion (or Prince of Wales' Rifles) and 6th Battalion (Hochelaga Light Infantry). The corps belonging to Military District No. 5, viz.: Troop of Cavalry, Brigade Garrison Artillery, No. 1 Company Engineers, 1st Battalion Prince of Wales' Rifles, 3rd Battalion Victoria Rifles and 6th Battalion Hochelaga Light Infantry, paraded under the command of Lieut. Col. Bacon in the afternoon on the 14th November, for the inspection of the Major General commanding the Militia. They turned out strong considering the busy season, and looked well and soldier like, the General was pleased to compliment them upon their appearance. The bands of the Garrison Artillery, 1st, 3rd and 6th Battalions were present, and added to the effect of the parade. These bands are all in an efficient state.

The Field Battery of Artillery did not parade, owing to the illness of the officer commanding, and one of the subalterns; this cause has also prevented the battery from performing field drill in all its details.

The strength of the City Corps at annual drill is as follows:

	Officers.	N.C. and Men.	Horses.
Cavalry.....	2	28	80
Field Battery.....	2	72
Brigade Garrison Artillery.....	15	102	4
No. 1 Company Engineers.....	2	40
1st Bat., Prince of Wales' Rifles.....	18	214	5
1st Bat., Victoria Volunteer Rifles	13	193	4
6th Bat., Hochelaga Light Infantry	13	175	3
Total.....	68	934	40

Independent Companies.

The Aylwin Infantry Company drilled at its own head quarters, and also the Wakefield Infantry Company; they were both inspected by Lieut. Col. Bacon on the 21st and 28th September respectively, and reported efficient. Their strength was:

Aylwin Company, 2 officers and 46 men.
Wakefield Company, 2 officers and 34 men.

2ND BRIGADE DIVISION.

A brigade camp of all the corps in the 2nd Brigade Division (with the exception of the St. John's Battery of Garrison Artillery) was formed at Laprairie on the 14th September. The camp was under the command of the Deputy Adjutant General of the District. The tents was pitched on the rising ground above the barracks. The staff officers were efficient in the discharge of their duties. The thanks of the commanding officer are given to Major Hon. M. Aylmer, Brigade Major; Lieut. Col. McLeod Moore, Camp Quarter Master; Captain Smith, Supply Officer; Major Maclaren, Orderly Officers; and Captain Atkinson, Instructor of Musketry, for their valuable services in carrying on the duties. The Officers commanding corps gave their willing aid in maintaining order and discipline through the camp. The liberal scale of rations allowing by the department was found ample for the sustenance of the men. The quality of the rations furnished was good. The corps made good progress in drill; special attention was given to the instruction of the infantry in skirmishing, advance and rear guards, and guard mounting. The target practice was efficiently carried through under the superintendence of the instructor; ten rounds per man was fired. The three troops of cavalry were under the command of Lieut. Col. Lovelace, and were well mounted. The good progress made by these troops, as shown at the field day, held on the last day of the camp, proved that the officers and men had profited largely by the instruction given by their commander. The Sherbrooke Field Battery, under the command of Major Amyrauld, marched into camp in full strength, with their complete camp equipage, a distance of fifty six miles, over rough roads. The officers and men of the battery were unceasing in their attention to drill and duty. The gun practice was very good, particularly at the long range; the battery was inspected by Lieut. Col. Strange, R.A., Inspector of Artillery, who expressed himself well pleased with the efficient state of the corps.

On the day before breaking camp a field day was held. The brigade movements were well done; the skirmishing and firing showed that the officers and men understood the object of that important part of drill. The want of good buglers was greatly felt on this occasion; this want is felt throughout the District.

The weather for part of the time was wet and cold. The end of September is too late in the season for holding camps,—besides, it interferes with the harvest.

The following is the strength of the corps in camp:

	Officers.	N.O. and Men.	Horses.
Huntington Troop of Cavalry.....	3	25	38
Missisquoi do.....	3	25	38
Brome do.....	3	25	38
Sherbrooke Field Battery.....	5	90	56
21st Battalion.....	4	40
50th do.....	10	122	4
51st do.....	20	272	5
52nd do.....	21	213	4
60th do.....	18	222	4
79th do.....	26	248	5
Total.....	125	1,318	192

The only corps in the Division that drilled at its head quarters was the St. John's Battery of Garrison Artillery. This battery is in a good state of efficiency; it was inspected by Lieut. Col. Strange, who will no doubt report as to its state. 3 officers and 40 non-commissioned officers and men performed the annual drill. A course of target practice was gone through with; 30 rounds per man were fired.

3RD BRIGADE DIVISION.

The annual drill of corps in this Brigade was performed in three camps, in October, at the following places:—Melbourn, Cookshire and Stanstead. The camp at Melbourn was composed of three companies of the 54th Battalion, under the command of Lt. Col. Lord Aylmer, numbering 12 officers and 106 non-commissioned officers and men. The camp was in good order, the men looked well, and at inspection showed good progress in drill. Target practice was carried on; 15 rounds per man were fired. This battalion is famed as a good shooting corps. The waist belts of two of the companies are old—some of them unfit for service. Two companies of the battalion were not allowed by the General Order of June 2nd to drill this year, and one company failed to muster for drill.

The Camp at Cookshire was composed of nine companies of the 58th Battalion, and one company of the 53rd Battalion, mustering in all 30 officers and 406 non-commissioned officers and men, under the command of Lieut. Col. Cook of the 58th. The camp was held in a fine field on the farm of the officer commanding the camp; a clear brook running through the farm supplied the camp with good water. The camp presented a good appearance—everything in order about it—the companies were full and composed of active able bodied men, mostly farmers. At inspection battalion drill was fairly performed, but skirmishing had not been practiced; this most necessary part of drill seems to be lost sight of by many of the corps, owing, no doubt, to a lack of knowledge of the practice and principles of the drill on the part of the officers. Target practice was carried out; 10 rounds per man were fired.

The camp at Stanstead was formed of cavalry, four troops, viz., the Cookshire, Sherbrooke, Stanstead and Compton Troops. They work together as a provisional regiment, under the command of Major Taylor, who commanded the camp. Lieut. Col. Lovelace was drill instructor. The strength of the camp 11 officers, 155 non-commissioned officers and men, and 166 horses. The members of these troops are all able, active and intelligent men. They were well mounted; some of the horses were very fine. The corps made a fine appearance at inspection—troop and squadron movements and sword exercise were performed very creditably. The men went through a course of target practice, of 10 rounds per man. The swords and belts of the Sherbrooke Troop are old and unfit for service; I beg to recommend that they be exchanged for new ones. The weather was cold and wet during the camp, and the horses suffered from exposure at night; the season was too late for camping—October weather cannot be depended on.

It would be well if all the troops in the District were formed into a regiment, to be known as the "5th District Regiment of Cavalry." The regiment could easily assemble in camp at some central place for the annual drill. Such a camp would give the officers and men a more thorough and extended knowledge of cavalry drill and duties than when working in small bodies.

Recapitulation of strength of corps at annual drill by Brigades:—