

**WITH OUR BOYS  
AT STRICKEN HALIFAX**

It is quite unnecessary, at this late date, to make any detailed reference to the calamity which, a little more than three weeks ago, overtook the city of Halifax.

At 9 a.m., December 6th, Halifax was a thriving city of 60,000 souls. Extensive rail and docking facilities, thoroughly modern in arrangement and in equipment, constituted a vital link between the greatest of the Overseas Dominions and Great Britain.

And then the blow fell.

Half an hour later the northern portion of the city and a large part of the magnificent water front was a mass of blazing ruins among which lay the charred and mangled bodies of more than twelve hundred men, women and children.

A man on foot brought the first news to Rockingham, 4 miles distant from Halifax. This took some time, yet, before 10 o'clock, the town of Amherst, 140 miles distant, was organizing their first relief train. At 11 o'clock the Amherst fire brigade was ready to entrain, together with every doctor but one and every single nurse in the town. Such promptness and such efficiency were but typical of many similar instances in the Maritime Provinces.

When the blast came many hundreds of buildings in the northern section of Halifax were

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utterly destroyed, while scores of thousands of windows and doors throughout nearly the whole city were shattered. The disastrous effect of the zero weather which followed almost immediately may be readily imagined. Pipes of all kinds burst, thus adding greatly to the material damage and distress.

Under existing conditions glaziers, carpenters and pipe fitters were urgently required and within a few hours of the disaster, one hundred and forty-five N.C.O.'s and men from the Engineers Training Depot at St. Johns were on their way eastward.

These men reached Halifax at an early hour Sunday morning, after two nights of discomfort on the train. On their arrival they were at once marched through the city to the South Barracks where they beguiled away the very few minutes required for the disposal of a small cheese sandwich. Half an hour later they were "on the job" among the wreckage of the city.

At the time of the explosion Lieut. A. G. Stewart, late O.C. "B" Co., E.T.D., with a Railroad Construction Draft, was in Halifax awaiting orders to embark. It is said that he and his men were among the first to bring organized assistance to the wounded and the dying in those terrible hours immediately following the explosion.

But with their smooth working organization and skilled personnel, the draft from the Engineers Training Depot nobly seconded their efforts. Shortly after their arrival, fifty men were assigned to the work of restoring Rockhead Military Hospital. This building is situated near the shores of Bedford Basin at the northern end of the city, and as the men "carry on" they look out over one of the finest harbors in the world.

Here they see the constant coming and going of many of those vessels which form the vital lines of communication on which the success of the Allies so largely depends. Lt. G. Stairs, late O.C. "D" Co., E.T.D., is in charge at Rockhead, with Lance Corporals Beasley and Law as N.C.O.'s.

The remainder of the draft from the St. Johns Depot is quartered at the old South Barracks and their efforts are principally directed toward the reconstruction of the Armories, Wellington Barracks and the buildings at Pier No. 2. Lt. W. B. Young is in charge of this work, which is ably carried out under the immediate supervision of a number of bright young N.C.O.'s.

In considering the manner in

which reconstruction work is now being done at Halifax there appears to be a strong argument for conscription. Men of the Canadian Engineers,—not a few of whom drew \$5.00 per day prior to their enlistment—are working side by side with civilians equally fit for military service. The Engineers are paid \$1.10 per DAY; the civilians 40c to 60c per HOUR.

In other words, a premium is placed on remaining in civilian clothes!

Recently the men with the letters C.E. on their shoulders were given an opportunity to vote on the question of conscription, and, although it is naturally impossible to surmise how their ballots were marked, one is inclined to suspect that they voted "RIGHT".

—E.

**P U S H**

'Twas Christmas eve and an overdue and overloaded driver slid and crawled laboriously across No Man's Land. Somewhere from out the silence of a winter's night a bell pealed out the midnight hour.

"Alas," he sobbed, "to think that I am but two days from out of Bordeaux and tis me for the clink again." Tears sprung to his eyes as he reviewed the prospect of singing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" in durance vile.

Almost could he hear the song echoing through those clammy walls. He would ask for bread—they would give him a stone. For mince pie would he have a crust barely buttered.

Tremblingly he approached the gate. One last lurch and he was there, rapping faintly for admittance. "Shentry, oh Shentry lets get by just this time." No answer. "Oh Shentry" again he called, a plaintive note creeping in, and a cunning light in his bleary eye. "Shentry—would you like a shnort—good rye—shentry lemme—in—old—boy."

Like a thunderclap boomed out the voice of our guardian of the portals. "Dammit man, can't you read."

'Twas then he read the magic words on our main gate. With a glad cry he sprang forward, pushing so forcibly that he fell for the fourth time. A noise as of breaking glass, a long pause, then an ever lessening sound of shuffling feet across the parade ground. Mechanically the sentry came up to the slope and resumed his vigil.

C. A. D.

**MISCALLED.**

"Any complaints, corporal?" asked the colonel, making, one morning, a

personal inspection. "Yes, sir. Taste that, sir," said the corporal. "Why," the colonel said, "that's the best soup I ever tasted." "Yes, sir," said the corporal, "and the cook wants to call it coffee."

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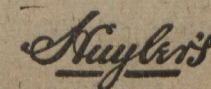
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