

# THE FAMOUS 26TH NEW BRUNSWICK BATTALION

## THE FIGHTING TWENTY-SIXTH IS PRIDE OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Brief History of Unit That Performed Wonders—Organized November 3, 1914, With Lieut.-Col. J. L. McAvity as Commanding Officer—Went Overseas June 13, 1915—One of Best Infantry Units in the Great War.

The Steamer Olympic will dock at Halifax this morning at seven o'clock, and among the thousands of troops on board is the New Brunswick Fighting Twenty-Sixth Battalion, and the Divisional Ammunition Column, two units that the citizens of St. John are anxiously waiting to welcome home after the many years of war.

The New Brunswick men will partake of their noonday meal on board the ship and will disembark in the afternoon. Special trains will carry the brave boys from Halifax tonight and they will arrive here tomorrow morning and receive the royal welcome which they rightly deserve.

### ORIGINAL OFFICERS RETURNING.

The original officers of the 26th Battalion, who are returning with the unit are: LIEUT. COL. W. R. BROWN, D. S. O., St. John. Went over as major and is returning as commanding officer of the battalion. MAJOR A. H. (SANDY) MCMILLAN, D. S. O., St. John. Went over as captain in charge of a platoon and is returning as second in command. MAJOR JAMES S. PRINGLE, M. C., Fredericton. Has been acting continuously since the organization of the battalion as its quartermaster.

Original members of the Battalion, who have been wounded and transferred to reserve depots or other units and who were in England at the time of the sailing of the 26th have been given the privilege of returning home with their original battalion. It is not thought that there will be more than a score of the original members of the battalion in the ranks returning on the Olympic.

MAJOR HAROLD G. WOOD, M.C., AND BAR, BELGIAN CROIX DE GUERRE, St. John, was expected to return with the 26th, but has been detailed as officer commanding the 13th reserve battalion. OFFICERS OF THE BATTALION WHO HAVE RETURNED AT VARIOUS TIMES: Present Rank. Original Rank. Lieut. Col. James McAvity, Long Service Medal. Lieut. Colonel. Lieut. Col. C. G. Porter, D. S. O., Bear River. Lieutenant. Major Douglas D. McArthur, St. John. Major. Major F. F. May, St. John. Captain. Major George C. Keefe, St. John. Lieutenant. Major Charles D. Knowlton, St. John. Lieutenant. Major Gordon M. Johnson, St. John. Lieutenant. Major Percy D. McAvity, St. John. Lieutenant. Major J. Arthur Legere, Richibucto. Lieutenant. Major Charles F. Leonard, D. S. O., Moncton. Lieutenant. Major Charles E. Fairweather, D. S. O., Sussex. Captain. Major E. B. Hooper, St. John. Lieutenant. Capt. John E. March. Sergeant. Lieut. A. G. Guen, M. C., Yonkers, N. Y. Sergeant. Lieut. W. A. Reid, Albert. Corporal. Capt. William Pitt, St. John. Sergeant. Capt. E. A. Sturdee, St. John. Lieutenant. Lieut. P. J. Veniot, Bathurst. Private. Lieut. Ray Haley, Richibucto. Lance Corporal. Major Charles Dunfield, St. John. Major. Major A. D. Carter, (Nick), D. S. O., and bar, D. F. C., Belgian Croix de Guerre, commander of one of the two squadrons of the Canadian Royal Air Forces, Point De Bute, went over as lieutenant in 26th. Major Guy Kinnear, enlisted with the original battalion, invalided before the sailing; sailed with the 115th and rejoined the 26th in France.

## AMONG THOSE WHO WILL NEVER RETURN

LIEUT. COL. A. E. G. MCKENZIE, D. S. O., officer commanding, Newcastle, went over as major, killed at Arras, August 28, 1918. MAJOR W. H. BELVEA, Newcastle, killed March, 1916. CAPT. BASSEL WINTER, M. C., St. John, killed at Lens. LIEUT. H. FERGUSON, Campbellton, killed by sniper. LIEUT. C. M. LAWSON, St. John, first officer killed.

OFFICERS OF THE ORIGINAL BATTALION: LIEUT. COL. JAMES L. MCAVITY, St. John. Majors. Major R. M. Arnold, Sussex. Major W. H. Belyea, Newcastle. Major Walter R. Brown, St. John. Major Charles I. Dunfield, St. John. Major Douglas D. McArthur, St. John. Major A. E. G. McKenzie, Newcastle. Major L. R. Murray, Sussex. Major James Pringle, Fredericton. Captains. Captain William C. Birrell, Edinburg. Captain Arthur O. Dawson, Toronto. Captain F. H. Elliott, St. John. Captain H. F. R. Griffith, Winchester, England. Capt. (Rev.) E. B. Hooper, St. John. Captain George Keefe, St. John. Capt. Fred F. May, St. John. Capt. John A. McKenzie, St. John. Capt. Alexander McMillan, St. John. Lieutenants. Lieut. A. D. Carter, Point De Bute. Lieut. Charles E. Fairweather, Sussex. Lieut. E. W. Ferguson, Campbellton. Lieut. Gordon M. Johnson, St. John. Lieut. Charles D. Knowlton, St. John. Lieut. Charles M. Lawson, St. John. Lieut. Walter C. Lawson, St. John. Lieut. J. A. Legere, Richibucto. Lieut. C. F. Leonard, Moncton. Lieut. F. E. Lookhart, Pettitcodiac. Lieut. George K. McBeth, Toronto. Lieut. John E. March, St. John. Lieut. P. D. McAvity, St. John. Lieut. W. T. McParlane, St. Stephen. Lieut. W. B. Mitter, Halifax. Lieut. R. W. Morrison, Sussex. Lieut. G. A. Mowatt, Campbellton. Lieut. P. S. Nesbit, Edinburgh. Lieut. C. G. Porter, Montreal. Lieut. P. C. Sherrin, Crapaud. Lieut. E. A. Sturdee, Quispamsis.



Lieut. Col. W. H. Brown, D. S. O. Lieut. F. B. Winter, St. John. Lieut. H. G. Wood, St. John. Quartermaster Sergeant George E. Power, Moncton. Regimental Sergt-Major William Pitt, St. John. Company Quartermaster Sergt. E. W. Elliott, St. John. Company Quartermaster Sergt. William Mason, Surrey, Eng. Company Quartermaster Sergt. L. J. Richards, Norwich, Conn. Company Quartermaster Sergt. F. Rickwood, St. John. Company Sergt. Major Wm. H. Buddell, London, Eng. Company Sergt. Major John J. Hanlon, Haverhill, Mass. Orderly Room Sergeant B. A. Coppitt, Forest Glen. Sergt. Major G. P. Ambrose, London, Eng. Sergt. Major Roy Edward, Halifax.



This is a close view of a portion of the steamer Caledonia as she appeared at her dock in St. John harbor just previous to her departure for the old country with the 26th on Sunday, June 13, 1915.



Lieut. Col. James L. McAvity

The First Contingent. When war was declared by Great Britain on Germany, August 4, 1914, Lieut. Colonel James L. McAvity was officer commanding the 62nd regiment, and was one of the first to offer his services to the Canadian Government as part of the second contingent was to sail, and in the shortest possible time Lieut. Colonel McAvity had his men chosen and the officers and men left St. John just three weeks after the outbreak of war. The officers were Captain H. E. C. Sturdee, Captain C. J. Morgan and Lieut. E. H. Welch.

Second Call For Men. On October 15, 1914, there was a call from Premier Borden for two battalions from the Maritime Provinces which meant eventually the 26th Nova Scotians, and the 26th New Brunswickers. Notification was received by Lieut. Col. McAvity on October 26th, that he was authorized to organize and command an overseas battalion, and on November 2, he submitted a tentative list of officers. The following day the battalion was given the name "26th New Brunswick" and although it is now known as the "26th Canadians," it is more familiar as the "Fighting 26th," and its fame is spread the world over, for a braver and better lot of officers and men never went into battle than our own New Brunswick Unit.

The Mobilization. The officers reported at the army on November 5, and twenty men signed the roll. Just three days later one hundred men were in barracks. In two weeks the battalion was half filled. Recruiting parties went out and by November 27th eight hundred men were on the roll. On the following day another hundred men were added making the strength nine hundred. This was on Friday and a record enlistment of one hundred and thirty men for the week-end brought the battalion up to complete strength. The day following this the battalion was placed on a war basis with the adoption of the double company system. There was a feeling among officers

er, and the soldiers were all on board. The decks were swarming with the pride of New Brunswick, while many of the soldiers were in the rigging, crowded on the tops of the life boats, while many who were below had their heads stuck through the port holes. Every bit of space on the wharves along the harbor front past which the big ship was to sail was crowded with a dense throng of humanity. While the harbor was filled with motor boats and tugs. Promptly at eleven o'clock that morning the order was given to cast off the mooring lines and in a very few minutes the tugs began to strain on the hawsers and the good ship Caledonia slowly swung away from the pier. The people cheered, and the whistles of the steam craft in the harbor screeched. It was a great uproar and the send-off was one that will never be forgotten by those who were present on that occasion. Finally when the big steamship was swung round with her bows heading out of the harbor, she was dropped by the tugs and started on her ocean voyage under her own steam.

Ammunition Column on Board. In addition to Lieut. Col. McAvity and his gallant band of 1,250 officers and men, there was also the Divisional Ammunition Column, commanded by Lieut. Col. W. H. Harrison. Thus the ship had on board a total of something over 1,800 officers and men. A government steamer acted as escort to the Caledonia and with many steam and motor craft followed the big ship down the harbor as far as Partridge Island. The Caledonia called at Halifax and was soon pointing her bows across the Atlantic. The voyage across was a pleasant one as it is stated that there were only about two days when the weather was anything like rough. She travelled on the southern lane, and when the Strait of St. Lawrence was reached it was most comfortably warm. The trip over the ocean was enjoyed to its fullest.

Arrived in England. On the morning of June 24th the Caledonia arrived at Devonport, the soldiers disembarked, and took the train for Westonbanger station in the County of Kent, and then marched about three miles to the Camp at East Sandling, near Hythe, where the 26th was quartered while in England. Here the Battalion began its practical work and was given long route marches in heavy marching order and soon made ready to go to the front.

Praised by the King. While this New Brunswick Battalion were training in England the highest praise was given them by a number of military officials of high rank. In fact, the 26th marched past His Majesty the King, he asked Major General Turner: "What Regiment is that," and when told it was the "26th from New Brunswick," His Majesty said "A remarkably fine regiment." In addition to this most gratifying remark from the King, Lord Kitchener remarked to Major General Turner, that the Second Canadian Division was one of the very finest he had ever reviewed. Camp was broken on September 13th, and the 26th Battalion crossed in a channel boat from Folkestone to Boulogne on September 14th. They entrained for Pont-aux-Briques, and from thence to Wisnes, and from this place they marched to Rensselaer, and then to Ballulieu which was just five miles back of the firing line.

Into the Trenches. This division was allotted a portion of the Ypres salient and the 26th was stationed at Kemmel-Vierstraat near Poperinghe. There was some further training and then the 26th was ready to go into battle. Major Brown, now Lieut. Col. Brown, D.S.O., and officer commanding the Regiment, with "A" Company, went into the trenches with a portion of the 22nd French Canadians and six days later, September 27th, 1915, the whole Battalion reviewed the 22nd and received its first baptism of fire. Moses Ollant, a Prince Edward Island soldier, was the first casualty in the Battalion. He was struck by a German bullet and died almost instantly. (Continued on page 3)

Their Last Home Parade. On that Saturday evening the Battalion swung out of the Army on their last parade for many of them in the Old Loyalist City of St. John. From the Armory, through Carmarthen, St. James, Charlotte, King, Prince William, down Dale streets to the old McLeod wharf, both

How They trained. But the Famous 26th remained in St. John all winter and the manner in which they trained was a source of pride. In addition to the regular hard drilling while in barracks the route marches were frequent and lengthy. Ten and twelve miles a day was beginning to look easy for these hardy New Brunswickers. They would leave in the morning and when that gallant band would return to the city in the late afternoon, swinging up King street and along Charlotte to the sound of their drum and the band, every man was in step, and the boys marched along as if they had only started out on parade. Citizens of St. John who daily viewed these hardy sons in khaki will never forget the gallant band. They were a happy yet determined lot of soldiers who fully realized what they had enlisted in the Canadian Army for and were only anxious to get away and get into the thick of the fighting. Under the watchful eye of Major-General Lesard the men carried out battalion drill and field work, and with the long route marches they were kept in the very best of condition, and by early spring of 1915 the "Fighting 26th" was pronounced fit for going overseas.

Glad News Received. Finally early in June, 1915, the word was received that the 26th Battalion as part of the second contingent was to sail, and a draft of picked men from the 55th which was then being formed was attached to the 26th. Then came the Saturday of June 12th, 1915, when the Battalion was to leave the armory for the steamship which was to carry them to England. All that morning and afternoon the old Barrack Green and the armory was thronged with relatives and friends of the young soldiers.

The Battalion Sails. Sunday morning June 13th, 1915, brought the very best of weather



The above picture shows the steamer Caledonia as she was being swung in the harbor just before she left here with the members of the 26th New Brunswick Battalion and Ammunition Column, June 13, 1915.

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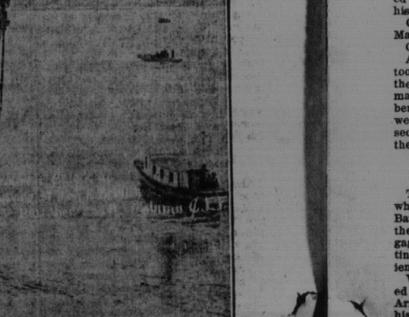
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