

Historical Records of the Canadian Militia.

II. THE BRITISH COLUMBIA BRIGADE OF GARRISON ARTILLERY.



LIEUT.-COL. E. G. PRIOR, M.P.,
Commanding British Columbia Brigade G.A., 1892.

THIS corps was established by general order dated 7th May, 1886, and was formed out of the B. C. Provisional Regiment of Garrison Artillery, then commanded by Major Richard Wolfenden, consisting of four batteries, commanded respectively by Captains W. N. Bole, A. W. Jones, J. W. Nicholles, and E. G. Prior; the Provisional Regiment having been organized by G. O. of 12th Oct., 1883, out of the Victoria Battery of Garrison Artillery, (Capt. C. H. Dupont, commanding), the Seymour Battery of G. A. (Capt. W. W. Bole), and the No. 1 Company of Victoria Rifles (Capt. R. Wolfenden commanding).

The first Officers of the Brigade were :—

Lieut.-Col. Wolfenden, Commanding.

Major—E. G. Prior.

Captains—W. N. Boyle, A. W. Jones, J. Nicholles, W. B. Smithfield.

Lieutenants—C. M. McNaughton, A. G. Gamble, W. J. Quinlan, F. W. Robson.

2nd Lieutenants—L. G. Dumbleton, T. Mowat.

Paymaster—Capt. Walter Shears.

Quartermaster—Capt. William Henry Dorman.

Surgeon—Joseph Beauchamp Matthews, M.R.C.S., Eng.

Acting Adjutant—Capt. N. P. Snowden.

The previous services of these officers are as follows :—

Lieut.-Col. Wolfenden, (formerly of the Royal Engineers), first joined the Canadian Militia as Ensign of No. 1 Company of Victoria Rifles in 1874, on the organization of the active militia of B. C., having previously served as an officer in the Volunteer Rifles since their formation in 1864, and continued in the service until his retirement in 1888 with rank of Lieut.-Col.

Major E. G. Prior joined the Provisional Regiment of G. A. on the 14th Dec. 1883, as Captain, having previously joined the Nanaimo Rifles as Lieutenant in 1874. Was gazetted Major of B.C.G.A. in 1886, and took command of Brigade on retirement of Lieut.-Col. Wolfenden 6th July

1888. Volunteered and accompanied C. Battery R.C.A., in the Skeena River Expedition in 1888.

Captain A. W. Jones joined the Victoria Battery as 2nd Lieutenant on the 17th Oct., 1878. Was gazetted Captain of No. 2 Battery, B.C.G.A., on formation of Brigade in Oct. 1883. Was appointed District Paymaster for Militia Division No. 11 on the 16th Sept. 1887, and still holds that position.

Quartermaster Dorman served as Lieutenant in No. 1 Company Victoria Rifles, from 2nd May 1879 to 12th Oct. 1883, was then gazetted to command of No. 4 Battery, B.C. G.A., which he held till 14th December 1883, when he was appointed to his present position of Q.M.

Paymaster Walter Shears joined the Victoria Battery as a gunner under Capt. Dupont in 1880. Was promoted through the several ranks as Corporal, Sergeant, Sergeant-Major, and appointed provisionally as 2nd Lieutenant. On formation of Provisional Regiment was commissioned as Paymaster, and is still serving.

Surgeon J. B. Matthews joined the Victoria Battery on 5th Dec. 1879, and served continuously through all the changes until his death, which took place at the beginning of this year.

The following is a list of Commanding Officers since the formation of the Brigade :—

Major C. T. Dupont commanded Provisional Regiment of G.A. from 12th Oct. 1883 to 26th Nov. 1885.

Major R. Wolfenden commanded Provisional Regiment of G.A. from 27th Nov. 1885 till formation of Brigade.

Lieut. Col. R. Wolfenden commanded Brigade from formation in May 1886 to July 1888.

Lieut.-Col. Prior, A.D.C., M.P., from 6th July 1888 to present time.

There are four Batteries in the Brigade. On two occasions the corps drilled in camp, remainder of the time at headquarters.

Nos. 2, 3 and 4 Batteries are stationed at Victoria, B.C., and No. 1 Battery at New Westminster, B.C.

The Head Dress of the corps is the white helmet.

The B.C.B.G.A. have supplied guards of honor on the occasions when their Excellencies Lord Dufferin, Marquis of Lorne, and Lord Lansdowne visited British Columbia. Also, at the opening and closing of the Provincial Legislature until "C" Battery, R.C.A., was stationed here.

The Regiment was twice called out in aid of the civil authorities, once in 1876 and once in 1890. On neither occasion was there any need for more than the moral effect of their presence.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE.

In last issue we noted the appointment of Major-General Sir George White, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.I.E., as Commander-in-Chief in India, in succession to Lord Roberts. India's new Commander-in-Chief was with the famous general whom he succeeds in the advance on Cabul and in the achievements of Candahar. His name sparkles in the dispatches of that time. He won the Victoria Cross by a specially gallant action at the battle of Charasiab in October 1879. It was necessary to take a hill fort from which artillery and rifle fire had alike failed to dislodge the enemy. He led an attack upon it in person. His men were much exhausted by climbing from ledge to ledge, when they were suddenly confronted by a strongly posted body of the enemy, outnumbering them by eight to one. Without awaiting for his fatigued men to rally, Major White, as he then was, advanced by himself and shot the leader of the enemy. Intimidated by this bold action, the remainder of his opponents fled, and Major White soon reported to his general the capture of twelve guns. His bravery was conspicuous also at the final charge on Candahar. He served in the Nile campaign of 1884-85, and his distinguished services in the Burmese expedition of 1885-87 were specially acknowledged by the Government, and led to his promotion to the rank of Major-General and K.C.B.