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MCGILL'S WAR RECORD

In order to familiarize the friends of McGill with the work done by the University in the various Arts and Sciences, the Publicity Committce of the McGill Centennial Endowment Campaign has prepared a series of small booklets each of which deals with a particular branch requiring special and immediate assistance. These will be mailed to a selected list of 10,000 names, previous to the actual Campaign for subscriptions, which starts November 15th, for a total objective of \$5,000,000. Readers of this booklet can help the cause by sending names of those who might be induced to subscribe but who are not receiving this series of pamphlets. Send such names to

Booklet Editor,
McGill Centennial Endowment,
St. Lawrence Hall,
Montreal, Que., Canada.

McGILL AND THE WAR

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Registrar of the University



SINCE the foundation of the University, nearly a century ago, there have been sent out over 8,000 graduates from its different faculties and departments. These have been scattered throughout the length and breadth of Canada, and of other countries as well. Indeed, McGill graduates are to be found in practically every part of the known world. It has been their proud privilege to help their fellows and their country in times of peace. What should be expected of them in times of war? Does a quickened recognition of duty and a station above the level in the ordinary affairs of life mean that the same quality would be shown and the same position attained when the trumpet calls to arms? It would be contrary to even the most modest expectation and a most unfortunate condition of things if it were not so. As a matter of fact no class in the community responded in larger numbers or with greater readiness during the four terrible years of the Great War than did those who had had the benefit of a University education, and none played a nobler part.

What the Graduates Did

The record of McGill graduates and other past students in this respect is one of which all friends of the University can be justly proud. In attempting to estimate the aid given to the cause for which the Allied Nations fought it is necessary to remember that practically all who graduated prior to the year 1892 were over military age when the war broke out. The only ones we should take into account, therefore, are men who obtained their degrees after that date—about 3,000 in all. When we consider that probably 20 per cent. of these were physically unfit, that a large number of them were living in foreign countries, and that a great many more had contracted ties which could not be broken without serious consequences, it is a matter for surprise that of this number fully 1,500, or 50 per cent., enlisted for service across the sea. How many more were engaged in essential home duty (medical men especially), it is impossible to say, but it is certain that they comprised a very large proportion of the remainder. In so far as graduates in Canada and other parts of the Empire were concerned, the best information obtainable would lead us to conclude that very few of those who were eligible failed to respond, and that of these perhaps 99% would have done so but for special reasons.

The Undergraduate Record

The story of the undergraduate body is equally honourable. Thanks to the wisdom and inspiring energy of Sir William Peterson, an Officers' Training Corps was established under Major McKergow, three years before the war broke out. It was uphill work to put life into it, but Sir William persisted.

Still the organization threatened to prove a failure, or at best to drag out a struggling existence. But the thunderbolt of August, 1914, soon galvanised the sickly corps into intense vitality. The students joined practically *en masse* and before the session was more than a few weeks old a full battalion was enthusiastically drilling on the University campus under Major Sir Auckland Geddes, Professor of Anatomy, who was afterwards destined, as a member of the British Cabinet, to perform such notable service for the Allied cause. The usefulness of the old organization was at once apparent, for there was ready at hand a body of men with sufficient knowledge of military drill to act at the outset as non-commissioned officers, some of them indeed as officers of higher rank. The majority of the principal officers were, however, McGill graduates, who, during the two months preceding the opening of the session, had been taking an intensive course of training, with a view to qualifying for this very purpose and ultimately for service abroad. These were all, or nearly all, members of the Graduates' Society, a body which from the very first took the most active interest in the prosecution of the war and which to this end adopted the McGill battalion as their especial charge. On the departure of Major Geddes early in the session for service in Britain, the training was taken over by Major A. A. Magee, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Robert Starke, a Governor of the University, and it was not long before the battalion became noted for its breadth of military knowledge and its general efficiency.

The unit was at first rated as a provisional regiment, but it was soon given the status, notwithstanding its size, of a regular contingent of the C.O.T.C. From the ranks of this contingent there flowed, during the whole period of the war, a constant stream of

officers and men to the fighting forces of the Empire. The following figures will show how full and strong this stream was. During the first three years of the war there were enrolled at one time or another in the several faculties and departments of the University about 1,900 male students of eighteen years of age and over. Of these quite 20 per cent. were foreign born. This would leave a little over 1,500 of a real recruiting constituency. It is hard to say how many of these were physically unfit for regular service, but judging by the records of the medical examiners, at least 20 per cent., leaving a possible total of 1,200. Of this number over 800 actually did enlist. The great majority of the remaining 400 were enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine with a view to rendering service along professional lines when they were pronounced qualified.

That such a creditable showing was made was due in the first place to the quality of the young men who usually attend a university, secondly to the atmosphere of the place itself, and thirdly, and mainly, to the sense of duty and responsibility developed by the higher education. Had every other body of men in the country sent 70 per cent. of its available number there would have been no need of the Military Service Act, except on the eminently correct score of national preservation and justice.

Record of Enlistments, Deaths, Honours, Etc.

The following table gives in summary form particulars regarding enlistments, honours, etc., as they

appear on the Honour Roll of the University at this date:—

V.C.—F. A. C. Scrimger, B.A. (1901), M.D. (1905); Fred Fisher, Sci. (1916).

	Enlisted	Wounded	Killed, or Died of Wounds, or from other causes	Awarded M.M. or D.C.M.	Awarded D.S.C. or D.F.C.	Awarded M.C.	Awarded D.S.O.	Awarded C.M.G., C.B. or C.B.E.	Other Honours Awarded
Graduates...	1524	282	181	22	4	103	44	23	24
Under-graduates.....	814	183	116	29	9	59	9	..	23
Past students	296	79	57	12	..	22	5	..	8
	2634	544	354	63	13	184	58	23	55
Less number included in more than one list...	105	22	13	3	..	4	2	2	3
Total.....	2529	522	341	60	13	180	56	21	52

Total number of Honours, 382.

Ninety members of the staff enlisted, but as the greater number of them were graduates of the University, they have been included in the total shown above.

It has been exceedingly difficult to make this record complete, especially with regard to the graduates and other past students, and the killed. Fresh information is still being received, often accidentally and from the most unexpected quarters. The Registrar of the University will be exceedingly grateful for any particulars which graduates can give in this connection and especially with regard to those who have been killed. In the course of the coming year

the list will be published. By that time it is hoped that every name will be known. The roll, when complete, will probably show that no fewer than 3,000 McGill men did their duty in upholding the cause of freedom and right. Noble fellows all! The memory of their brave and unselfish deeds can never die. Fain would their Alma Mater raise a monument to perpetuate their fame and more especially to preserve for future generations the story of those who gave their lives. But for this she is dependent on others. She has, unfortunately, no funds for such a purpose. The hope is fondly cherished that some day a memorial hall or other imposing form of remembrance will stand on the University grounds. Every other university in Canada will have its memorial. McGill, with its splendid record, cannot afford to be a conspicuous exception. Many buildings belonging to privately endowed universities, like McGill, are of a memorial character, some erected by the parents of a deceased son and some by graduates or other groups. No such building stands on the McGill campus. Here is a notable opportunity for some individual, or set of individuals, to set a worthy example. Who will be the first? Whilst the campaign for funds soon to be undertaken will be more particularly for general endowment purposes, subscriptions for special objects, such as a memorial Convocation Hall, will also be gladly welcomed.

The Universities Companies

In the first year of the existence of the McGill Regiment (the first year of the war) the organization of a full McGill battalion for active service was at one time put forth as a serious proposition, but wiser counsels prevailed. Had the attempt been made to

carry this suggestion into effect it is altogether likely that it would have proved a failure, as probably the majority of our students thought (and rightly so) that they could render better service in some other capacity, Applied Science students, for instance, as artillerymen or engineers, medical students as members of a medical corps, and among all classes not a few as officers in the infantry itself. Although the idea of a full battalion was abandoned, however, it was thought possible and, indeed, advisable, that companies should be raised from time to time as reinforcements for some particular unit. One such was raised before the end of the session 1914-15 and left for overseas in the early summer under the command of Captain Gregor Barclay, a graduate of the University in Arts and Law. In looking about for a battalion to which to attach themselves, it is not surprising that those in authority should have fixed their choice on the one which was at that time the most widely (and probably the most favourably) known in the Canadian forces, the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, and so it came about that these celebrated companies became associated with a celebrated regiment, and during the first days of its hardest fighting formed its chief (perhaps its only) source of supply for its frequently depleted ranks. These companies also gave many officers to their own battalion and to other units, as might naturally have been expected. Five companies were sent over in rapid succession and three or four drafts of fifties from a sixth, which never reached its full strength, as voluntary enlistment had by that time practically ceased and more particularly as the recruiting fields for the class of men wanted for such units had been completely drained. What stands to the credit of McGill in this connection is not so much that she contributed a certain number of men, but

rather that they were organized under her direction, that the commanding officers were generally McGill graduates, (such for instance as Messrs. George Macdonald, Percival Molson, Stuart McDougall, William Stewart, O. S. Tyndale and A. J. Kelly), that she took a special interest in their welfare, that her campus was their parade ground and that two of her buildings were given up for their use as barracks. Moreover, they were adopted in a general way (the first two especially), in so far as financing them was concerned, by the Graduates' Society of the University, through the Officers' Training Corps.

The McGill Siege Batteries

Although the Universities Companies did not bear the name of McGill there were two important fighting units that were permitted to do so—the siege batteries, commanded by Major W. D. Tait, Assistant Professor of Psychology, and Sir Stopford Lauder Brunton, a graduate of the University, respectively. They were known as the 7th and 10th Canadian Siege Batteries and were much more of a McGill character than even the first Universities Company. The officers of both batteries were all McGill men, among the number being Professor Cyrus Macmillan, Professor of English, and about half of the non-coms. and gunners were as well.

The 148th Battalion

Mention should also be made here of another unit, the 148th Battalion, which, though not organized under McGill authority, was nevertheless very closely associated with it, owing to the fact that the Commanding Officer was Col. A. A. Magee, the energetic and most efficient Major of the University Training Corps. Moreover, not a few of its officers, including Professor

A. S. Eve as Major, were McGill men, and a considerable number of the same class were also to be found in its ranks. This battalion always drilled on the University campus, was affiliated with the McGill C.O.T.C. by resolution of Corporation on December 8th, 1915, and its colours were formally deposited in the McGill Library on the 8th of December, 1917. It was generally known as one of the best-drilled and smartest regiments that ever left our Canadian shores.

The Tank Battalion

While speaking of the fighting units it should also be mentioned that McGill contributed her quota (26 officers and 186 men) to the Tank Battalion which the Government authorized in the spring of 1918, to be furnished by the universities of Canada.

The McGill General Hospital

Perhaps the best known war organization, however, bearing the University's name, was a non-combatant one, but none the less necessary and useful, the McGill General Hospital. This was distinctively McGillian, as all its officers were members of the staff or graduates of the Faculty of Medicine and all the men of other ranks were drawn from the student body. The nurses were graduates of either the Royal Victoria or the Montreal General Hospital, which are so closely connected with the Faculty. The Hospital was first intended to be on the lines of communication and to be of medium capacity, viz., 520 beds. Before leaving Canada, however, the capacity was doubled. It was afterwards increased to 2,100 beds with a corresponding increase in the personnel, which at first consisted

of 21 officers under the command of Col. H. S. Birkett, Dean of the Faculty, with Col. J. M. Elder second in command, 42 nurses and 144 of all other ranks, a total of 207. This number was increased to 318 when the original capacity was doubled. The Hospital unit sailed from Canada on May 6th, 1915, and entered on its proper work in France on the eighteenth of the following month. It was first established, as intended, on the lines of communication, but owing to unfavourable conditions, which need not be detailed here, it was soon moved to Boulogne, where it remained during the remainder of the war.

General University Aid

The sum total of the University's war work is not stated, however, when we tell of the enlistment of her sons and of the organizations created to encourage the enlistment of others. In many other ways have the authorities exerted themselves to attain the end in view. Members of the staff lost no opportunity to proclaim the justice of our cause and did much by their attitude generally to create the loyal and service-compelling atmosphere which characterized the place, and helped also in no small degree to influence in the same direction the community itself. Moreover, the University buildings, grounds and laboratories were freely given up for the purposes of the war—meetings, lectures, barracks, research, store-rooms and, more recently, the re-education of returned soldiers. As already stated, two of our buildings were converted into barracks for the accommodation of the several Universities Companies and of the two Siege Batteries which bore her name and these, as well as several outside battalions, were trained (in so far as they could be

trained here) on the University campus. In this connection it may be mentioned that the activities of the McGill C.O.T.C. did not end with the College year, for during part of the summer of 1915, and again in 1916 a most popular and at the same time useful, course of intensive training was given on the grounds under the direction of this organization and in this way many were fitted to take the position of non-commissioned and (with a little extra instruction) of commissioned officers in regular battalions. But the most useful purpose served by this organization was the imbuing of its members with the spirit of service and, as a consequence, hundreds of them went to the front even as privates—perhaps the most honourable rank of all.

Conclusion

Such, in general, is the story of the part which McGill and McGill men played in the Great War. Much was expected of her in this, as in other respects, and she nobly rose to the occasion. Has she not proved her worth on every count? Is she not deserving of the strongest support of every patriotic citizen? To her appeal for financial assistance in order that she may hold her place and continue to grow, as becomes a living institution, who can turn an indifferent ear?

McGill Centennial Endowment



1. Date of Campaign, 15th to 20th November, 1920.

2. Objective, \$5,000,000.00.

3. Organization.—

Visitor—His Excellency the Duke of Devonshire, K.G., G.C.M.G.,
G.C.V.O., P.C.

Principal—Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., LL.D.

(a) Citizens Committee:

Honorary Chairman—R. B. Angus.

Honorary Vice-Chairmen—Sir Montagu Allan, Kt.; J. W. McConnell.

(b) Campaign Executive:

Honorary Chairman—Sir Vincent Meredith, Bart.

Chairman—E. W. Beatty, K.C.

Vice-Chairman—Sir Charles Gordon, G.B.E.; W. M. Birks.

Honorary Treasurer—John W. Ross.

Secretary—A. P. S. Glassco, B.Sc.

Members of Board of Governors.

(c) Special Names Committee:

Honorary Chairman—E. W. Beatty, K.C.

Chairman—P. P. Cowans.

(d) Campaign Finance Committee:

Hon. Chairman—Charles J. Fleet, B.A., B.C.L., K.C.

Chairman—H. R. Drummond.

Secretary—D. A. Budge.

Treasurer—A. D. Anderson.

(e) Publicity Committee:

Chairman—Rt. Hon. Lord Atholstan, LL.D.

Vice-Chairmen—J. M. Gibbon; J. A. Nicholson, M.A., LL.D.

(f) Committee on Objects of Campaign:

Chairman—A. J. Brown, K.C.

(g) Committee on Team Organization:

Chairman—C. E. Neill.

(h) Graduates Committee:

Honorary Chairman—Dean F. D. Adams, Ph.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.

Honorary Vice-Chairman—Lt.-Col. Herbert Molson, M.C.

Chairman—Graham Drinkwater, B.Sc.

Vice-Chairmen—Representatives from Arts, Law, Science, Medical
Dentistry, Macdonald College, Royal Victoria College, Graduate
Society, Undergraduates.

Secretaries—J. W. Jenkins, B.A.; E. B. Tilt, B.Sc.

