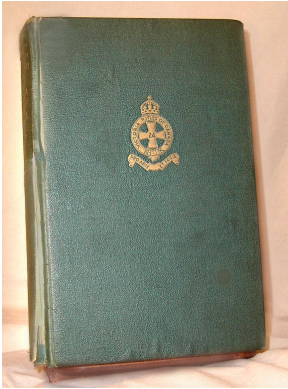


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ABOUT THIS CD:

The Book:

A well written and detailed history of this Montreal based military unit from its beginnings as a volunteer unit during the 1812 invasions, through its recognition as a militia through the Fenian raids (and a number of civil disorders) to its conversion to a full time component of the C.E.F., including its contribution of a core of trained officers and men in the formation of the 14th Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment.

While these initial passages give the history as an outline, the tone of the writing changes to provide a far more intimate account of the Battalions activities from the time of its embarkation for Europe as a part of the 2nd contingent of the C.E.F. in September of 1914. The account continues in detail throughout all the movements and actions it took part in, becoming something of a day-by-day diary of the activity of the battalion.

In addition to personal anecdotes the author also paints a clear picture of the strategic part played by the battalion through such well know actions as; the Somme, the battle of Arras, Vimy Ridge, Ypres, Passchendaele, Amiens and Cambrai. As might be expected the book concludes with an account of the Battalion's victorious parade through London before an equally victorious return to Montreal for demobilization.

Throughout, the account is well illustrated with photographs, sketches and situation maps. An additional map of the Battle of Arras in June 1916 and June 1917 was slipped into the book by one of the previous owners so we have included it on the CD. The book's appendices contain an Honour Roll as well as lists of earned honours, commissions and the Battalion's battle statistics.

The particular copy of the book used to make this CD has been loaned to us by Chris White, a long time friend of Archive CD Books Canada who, together with his colleague Marc Leroux, operate the Canadian Great War Project web site at:

www.canadiangreatwarproject.com/

We encourage you to visit their site and to consider helping them out with their labor of love, to ensure that those who gave at least a part, if not all, of their lives in this great conflict, are remembered.

This book has passed through a number of hands on its way to us and contains certain inscriptions and inclusions, some relevant to the book's contents and some just mementoes. In cases like this we generally edit these additions out of the reproduction but in this case we have included some of them where they are directly relevant, and where we feel the originators would have wanted them to be preserved.

The Author:

This book was compiled and edited by R. C. Fetherstonhaugh (1892 - 1949). Anyone familiar with the literature recording the military histories of Canada during the Great War will recognize his name. While we do not know very much about the author as a person we do know that he was a member of a family well recognized for successful professionalism and for military service. Robert Collier was unable to enter the military himself (for medical reasons we believe) and appears to have compensated for this by undertaking the recounting of several Montreal based battalion and regimental histories as well as a number of other military related accounts. He has a nice clear writing style which makes reading his books a pleasure.

THE 24th BATTALION, C.E.F., VICTORIA RIFLES OF CANADA 1914-1919

EDITED AND COMPILED
BY
R. C. FETHERSTONHAUGH



GAZETTE PRINTING COMPANY
MONTREAL
1930



MOUNT SORREL

SOMME, 1916-1918

FLERS · COURCELETTE · THIEPVAL · ANCRE HEIGHTS

ARRAS, 1917-1918

VIMY, 1917

ARLEUX · SCARPE, 1917 · 1918

HILL 70

YPRES, 1917

PASSCHENDAELE

AMIENS

HINDENBURG LINE

CANAL DU NORD

CAMBRAI, 1918

PURSUIT TO MONS

FRANCE AND FLANDERS, 1915-1918

PREFACE

IN the preparation of this history of the 24th Battalion, C.E.F., Victoria Rifles of Canada, the Regimental History Committee, under the chairmanship of Lieut.-Col. C. F. Ritchie, D.S.O., M.C., and with Major P. L. Hall, D.S.O., M.C., as Honorary Secretary, provided assistance of great value. The Committee, including at one time or another approximately thirty of the Battalion's former officers and other ranks, devoted many evenings to reviewing the manuscript and to supplying details of events not to be found in the Battalion's official War Diary, which was used as a base for the entire narrative.

The thanks of the Committee are here extended to those officers and other ranks, and to the next of kin of a number of the fallen, who generously placed in the author's hands private diaries, letters, and other documents, or, possessing no data of this nature, furnished the verbal reports which bridged many gaps in the story as presented in documents of an official character.

A special debt is also acknowledged to the Historical Section of the General Staff, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, and to the Records Section of the Department. These Sections, under Col. A. Fortescue Duguid, D.S.O., and Major Clyde R. Scott respectively, assisted with unfailing courtesy, the Historical Section checking the manuscript, verifying the facts, and pointing out where errors had occurred; and the Records Section supplying the extensive data from which the appendices of the book were compiled.

For arduous work in the preparation and production of sketches and maps on the part of Capt. F. W. Stenson and Lieuts. G. S. Bushe and H. M. Patterson the Committee also desires to record its deep appreciation.

R. C. F.

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER 11, 1930.

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CHAPTER I

TRADITION AND TRAINING

I

Nearly seventy years ago, at a time when the outbreak of war between the Federal Government of the United States of America and the seceding states of the South had aroused a martial spirit throughout the whole of North America, the young men of the Beaver Lacrosse Club of Montreal discussed seriously the suggestion that they should band themselves together to form a military organization capable of taking part in any operations which might involve the forces of Her Majesty the Queen in Canada. Lacrosse at this time was, in fact, as well as in name, Canada's national sport, and the Beaver Lacrosse Club included in its membership the sons of many of Montreal's most prominent mercantile and professional families. Meeting on September 20, 1861, the members of the Club formed the "Victoria Rifles Company" and appointed W. Osborne Smith, Esq., their captain.

A few weeks later, on December 13th, the number of authorized recruits was increased to 300, and the Company, now formed into a battalion of six companies, was re-named "The Victoria Volunteer Rifles." This was at the time when relations between Great Britain and the United States were strained as a result of the action of the United States in seizing from the British vessel *Trent*, on the high seas, the Confederate diplomatic representatives, Mason and Slidell. No one could foresee the result of this seizure, but it was clear that hostilities might ensue; accordingly, the Victoria Volunteer Rifles paraded on three afternoons and three evenings each week and drilled faithfully on the Champ de Mars, or, when bitter weather made this impossible, in the shelter of Bon-



OFFICERS WHO CROSSED TO FRANCE WITH THE BATTALION, SEPTEMBER 15, 1915.

*Front row—left to right: Lieut. P. L. Hall, Lieut. A. L. Walker, Lieut. C. S. B. White, Lieut. D. H. Beckett, Lieut. W. D. Chambers.
2nd row: Lieut. H. D. Kingstone, Capt. R. K. Robertson, Capt. D. H. Sutherland, Major C. B. Parr, Major R. O. Alexander, Major C. H. Hill, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Gunn, Capt. C. F. Ritchie, Major E. O. McMurtry, Major J. A. Ross, Capt. F. T. Bown, Capt. B. H. T. MacKenzie. 3rd row: Hon. Capt. H. D. Campbell, Lieut. D. C. Skinner, Capt. J. S. Jenkins, Lieut. H. A. Murray, Lieut. W. R. Hastings, Lieut. H. C. Kennedy, Hon. Capt. C. G. Armour, Lieut. Murdoch Laing, Lieut. I. R. R. MacNaughton, Lieut. A. L. S. Mills, Lieut. V. E. Duclos, Lieut. J. C. Heaton, Lieut. C. G. Greenshields, Lieut. A. G. Woolsey, Lieut. H. G. Davidson. Top row: Capt. G. F. Furlong, Lieut. G. R. Robertson.*

On taking over Brigade Support positions from the 22nd Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Alexander established Battalion Headquarters in a cellar of the smashed and devastated town and saw to the accommodating of his companies in other cellars nearby. Shelling in this area was frequent, both with high explosive and gas, and casualties could not be avoided, one of the first occurring when Lieut. John ("Jock") Donald, an original member of the Battalion who had received a commission after fine service in the ranks, was struck in the abdomen by a fragment of shell and wounded so severely that he died a few hours later.

Meanwhile, shelling drenched the area at intervals with concentrations of poison gas, and high explosive threatened the cellar billets of the men repeatedly. Despite the difficulties, parties arrived regularly with rations and supplies from the rear and a special party carried to the front line 600 rounds of Stokes mortar ammunition. Casualties were not severe, but a half dozen other ranks were wounded and approximately an equal number affected by enemy gas, the wounded including Sergt. Cecil Thorpe, an original member of the Battalion, who was struck in the chest while making his way along the main street of Liévin.

On July 4th, Lieut.-Col. Alexander transferred Battalion Headquarters to a cellar less dangerously situated, the wisdom of the move appearing that night, when the old cellar was badly battered by German shells. Again on July 5th and 6th, the enemy bombarded heavily, blowing the Battalion cook-house to bits and killing or wounding a number of other ranks, among the former being Sergt. William Cottingham, of "A" Coy.

At 9.30 p.m. on July 6th, as the Battalion was about to move from Liévin to relieve the 25th Battalion in the Right Sub-Section of the Lens front line, intense fire held "B" Coy. underground for more than an hour. Shelling harassed the whole relief and Lieut. S. A. Rolland suffered sharply from poison gas when a shell burst amid the men of his platoon. Lieut. Rolland, who had joined the 24th Battalion from the 244th Battalion, Kitchener's Own, was experiencing his first tour in the forward area and was unwilling to admit that he would require medical atten-

Battalion with regard to the details of the work they would be called upon to accomplish in the attack on Hill 70. Summarized, Major Ritchie's orders were as follows:

(1) *Information*—

With a view to forcing the enemy to evacuate Lens, the Canadian Corps will attack and capture Hill 70, on a date and at an hour to be announced later.

(2) *Attacking Troops*—

The attack will be carried out by the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions; the 1st Division on the left and the 2nd Division on the right.

(3) *2nd Division's Attack*—

The 2nd Canadian Division will attack with two brigades in line; the 4th Brigade on the right and the 5th Brigade (with 1 battalion of the 6th Brigade attached) on the left.

(4) *Boundaries*—

[Map locations given]

(5) *5th Canadian Infantry Brigade's Objectives:*

(a) *First Objective*—The Blue Line (Catapult Trench), which will be captured by the 25th Battalion on the right and the 22nd Battalion on the left.

(b) *Final Objective*—The Green Line (Junction of Commotion and Carfax Trenches, thence along Commotion Trench to the junction with Nun's Alley, thence north up Nun's Alley and Norman Trench to the junction of Norman and Negro Trenches). This final objective will be captured by the 24th and 26th Battalions, with the 24th Battalion on the right and the 26th Battalion on the left.

(6) *Plan of Attack*—

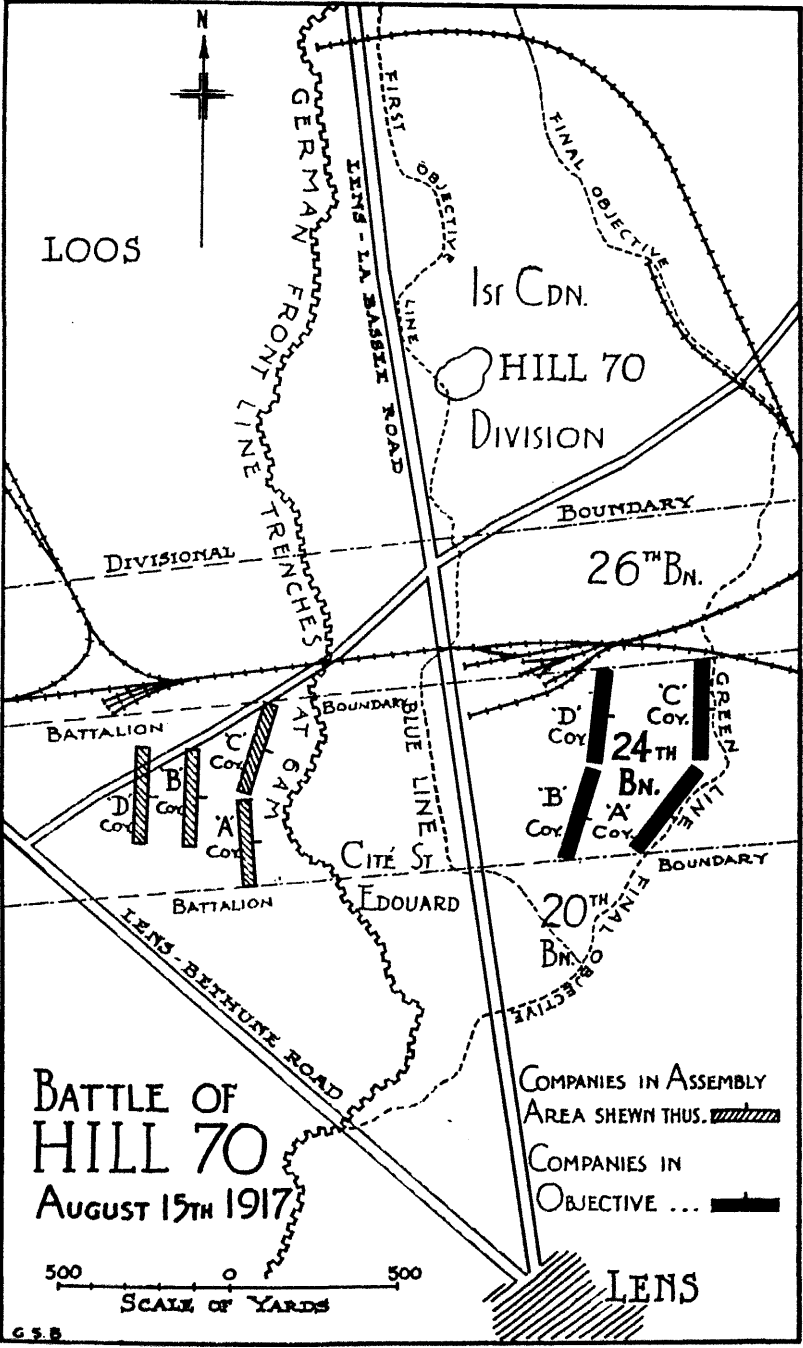
At zero, the 25th and 22nd Battalions will attack the Blue Line. Simultaneously, the 24th and 26th Battalions will move forward and reassemble on the east side of the German Front Line. The advance will then continue at zero plus 30 minutes. After the 1st Objective (Blue Line) has been captured by the

less than 20 remained. It might seem that 1 officer and 20 men would prove helpless in the face of a strong enemy position with ample machine-gun defences, but Major Amphlett and his party, with assistance from "C" Coy., fought a way into the German trench, killed or captured the majority of the garrison, and, before reinforcements could be sent to them, successfully defended the position they had seized against two bombing attacks by enemy survivors.

Meanwhile, on the left, despite the death in action of Lieut. J. H. Laird, who was first wounded and, when struck for the second time, killed by shell fire, "C" Coy. advanced in the face of similar opposition. On reaching the objective, Lieut. F. H. Morgan found himself in command of the company with approximately 30 men to support him. He drove into the Green Line with this party, assisted Major Amphlett on the right, and bombed and bayoneted the enemy garrison into submission, establishing firm contact with "A" Coy. and with the 26th Canadian Battalion on the left. "A" Coy., soon thereafter, established connection with the 20th Canadian Battalion on the right.

While the first waves of the Battalion's attack were driving forward to the final Green Objective, the mopping-up platoons and supporting units had continued their operations in the rear. At 6.41 a.m., Major P. L. Hall despatched Private Grant with a message to Lieut.-Col. Ritchie stating that he had found a dugout in Cité St. Laurent suitable for Battalion Headquarters and was employing 4 prisoners to remove enemy dead and wounded. He explained that his two runners had been killed, or wounded, but that Private Grant knew his situation and would be able to guide the Headquarters Staff forward.

Nine minutes after this message had been despatched, Private Sandford reached Advanced Headquarters and, on behalf of Major Lamb, reported that "B" Coy. had completed the mopping-up of its area and that No. 8 Platoon was engaged in consolidation. Less than half an hour later, "A" Coy. reported the capture of its final objective; and Lieut. Morgan reported that "C" Coy. also had seized and was holding the Green Line. These reports were satisfactory up to a point, but knowledge



APPENDIX A

24th Battalion, Victoria Rifles of Canada

HONOUR ROLL

KILLED IN ACTION OR DIED OF WOUNDS

OFFICERS

- | | |
|--|---|
| Buchanan, Lieut. Reginald H. B. | Kavanagh, Lieut. Joseph John, M.C. |
| Campbell, Hon. Capt. Harry Davies
(Quartermaster) | Laing, Lieut. Murdoch |
| Cowan, Lieut. Stewart | Laird, Lieut. John Hewitt |
| Davis, Lieut. Harry A. (while serving
with the Canadian Machine Gun
Corps) | LeMesurier, Lieut. George Stuart |
| Donald, Lieut. John | Murray, Capt. Harcourt Amory |
| Drummond, Lieut. Kevin Stewart,
M.C. | MacArthur, Lieut. James McPherson |
| Durman, Lieut. Arthur, M.C. | MacNaughton, Lieut. Ian Robert R. |
| Duthie, Lieut. Wilfred Alexander (while
seconded to the Canadian Machine
Gun Corps) | McGiffin, Lieut. George Allan |
| Fair, Lieut. Robert McCamus (while
seconded to the 5th Canadian Trench
Mortar Battery) | McLean, Lieut. Robert John (accident-
ally) |
| Fairweather, Capt. Frank Russell
(while serving with the 26th Cana-
dian Battalion) | McMurtry, Major Eric Ogilvie (while
on command Royal Flying Corps) |
| Green, Capt. Carleton Carroll (while
serving with the 13th Battalion,
Royal Highlanders of Canada) | Parr, Major Clayton Bowers |
| Haddock, Lieut. Geoffrey | Platt, Lieut. Edward Cuthbert |
| Hallam, Lieut. Frank Harold | Power, Lieut. Edward Victor |
| Hastings, Capt. William Roy (while
serving with the 18th Battalion
Canadian Scottish) | Riley, Lieut. Charles Edward |
| Hawkins, Lieut. Kenneth Belmont | Ritchie, Lieut. Hubert Sydney |
| Hingston, Lieut. Reginald Basil | Ross, Major John Alexander, D.S.O. |
| Johnson, Lieut. Hugh Stanley | Scott, Lieut. Howard Elliot (while
serving as Brigade Grenade Officer) |
| | Scougall, Lieut. Walter Mowbray |
| | Shipway, Lieut. John Cecil |
| | Smith, Lieut. Cecil Parker |
| | Smyth, Lieut. George Crawford |
| | Tucker, Lieut. Percival George, M.C. |
| | Walker, Major Arthur Leslie (while
serving as Brigade Major, 5th C.I.B.) |
| | Walker, Capt. Philip Ilderton, M.C. |
| | Weaver, Lieut. Ralph Lincoln |
| | Wilkins, Lieut. John Fox |



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