

PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY



(Thierens Family Archives)

WAR DIARIES 1914 -1919

Transcribed by Michael Thierens, 1914, 1915 and part of 1916 proofread and commented on by Donna Walker & Ross Toms. The complete War Diary was proofread by Stephen K. Newman, who also made valuable suggestions regarding lay-out and provided much additional information on individual soldiers and diligently researched and pin pointed the locations of the Regiment.

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Introduction

The P.P.C.L.I. was an unique regiment in that it was raised and financed by business man A. Hamilton Gault in August 1914 and saw action in France under British command from January 1915 onwards. It was the first Canadian regiment in the field, even though initially only 10 % of the men was Canadian born.

More than 5.000 men served with the regiment in France and Flanders, 1300 never returned to Canada.

In November 1915 the P.P.C.L.I., together with the Royal Canadian Regiment and the 42nd and 49th Canadian Infantry Battalions, became part of the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division.

This War Diary has been transcribed in order that military and family historians and future generations can study the history of the regiment. To preserve the historical significance of these documents, typographical errors in the original documents have been maintained.

Square brackets [] surround information using *italics* added by the transcriber where it was felt that clarification was required, or where names and/or service numbers were misspelled. Question marks ? were used where the characters/words could not be discerned. Where possible, the formats of the appendices have been kept as close to the original as possible.

Special thanks go to Stephen K. Newman (former P.P.C.L.I. Regimental Adjutant) for proofreading the whole War Diary and checking and adding the names of the places where the P.P.C.L.I. was based throughout the war. Also, for correcting mistakes made by the diarists in the spelling of individual names and service numbers plus for adding a lot of service numbers which weren't mentioned in the text.

Many abbreviations are used in the War Diaries. Quite a few have been typed out in full between brackets and using *italics*. Not all though. The reader can look up any abbreviation used in this transcription at the CEF Study Group [Acronyms & Abbreviations](#).

The original documents were downloaded from the web site of the [Library and Archives Canada](#).

Canada: Stephen K. Newman
Holland: Michael Thierens

1914

Wed, Nov 4, 1914 BUSTARD CAMP, SALISBURY PLAIN, ENGLAND

BUSTARD CAMP SALISBURY PLAIN. 4.11.14. Inspection of Battalion with rest of Canadian Contingent by H M The KING accompanied by H.M. The Queen, Lord ROBERTS, Lord KITCHENER.

Thu, Nov 5 to

Fri Nov 13, 1914 BUSTARD CAMP, SALISBURY PLAIN, ENGLAND

5.11.14 to 13.11.14. Bn at Field Training, musketry, digging trenches, route-marching etc.

Sat, Nov 14, 1914 BUSTARD CAMP, SALISBURY PLAIN, ENGLAND

14.11.14. Orders received for Bn to move to WINCHESTER

Sun, Nov 15, 1914 BUSTARD CAMP, SALISBURY PLAIN, ENGLAND

15.11.14. Advanced party under Lieutenants [*F.*] FITZGERALD and [*M.S.*] DE BAY moved to WINCHESTER.

Mon, Nov 16, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 16.11.14. Bn moved to WINCHESTER in 3 trains and camped at MORN HILL.

Fri, Nov 20, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 20.11.14. Bn joined 80th Bde Expeditionary Force: other Bns 2nd Bn Shropshire L.I. 3rd & 4th Bns K.R.R.C. & 4TH Bn R.B. under Brig. Gen. Hon. C.G. FORTESCUE. C.B. C.M.G. D.S.O.

Wed, Nov 18, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 18.11.14. Orders to hold Bn in readiness to entrain at 2 hours notice.

Sun, Nov 22, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 22.11.14. Emergency duty ready to entrain at 4 ½ hrs notice from 6 pm until 6 pm 23.11.14.

N.B. Essential that preserved rations, biscuit etc should be issued to Battalions on mobilisation & held by them ready for a move: none could be issued at WINCHESTER so it was necessary to purchase in order to have one days rations in case of a move.

Wed, Nov 25, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

25.11.14. Battalion inspected by Major Gen D'O SNOW. Commdg 27th Divn. accompanied by Brig Gen HON. C.G. FORTESCUE Commdg 80th Brigade.
Bn on Emergency Duty ready to move at 8½ hours notice.

Sat, Nov 28, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

28.11.14. Bn on Emergency Duty ready to move at 8 ½ hours notice until 6 pm 29th.

Sun, Nov 29, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

29.11.14. Bn commenced Musketry Course. Selected practices Table B.

Tue, Dec 1, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 1.12.14. Bn on Emergency duty from 6 p.m. until 2.12.14

Fri, Dec 4, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 4.12.14. Bn took part in Brigade Route march. Very wet.

Bn on Emergency duty till 6 p.m. 5.12.14

One or two Coys at musketry daily firing a Course with LEE ENFIELD Rifles issued to the Bn in place of the ROSS RIFLE

Mon, Dec 7, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 7.12.14. Bn on Emergency Duty till 6 pm 8.12.14.

Tue, Dec 8, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 8.12.14. 80th Infy Bde route march via HOSPITAL – CHURCH – TELEGRAPH HILL – LANE END DOWN – X roads ½ mi. N. of WHITE FLOOD Fm – MORESTEAD – BAREND – CAMP.

Thu, Dec 10, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 10.11.14. Battalion was practised in loading Baggage Wagons.

Tue, Dec 15, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 15.12.14. Divisional Route March. ITCHEN STOKE – ITCHEN ABBAS – WINCHESTER.

Owing to both men and wagons being short of establishment, there were many wide gaps.

Wed, Dec 16, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 16.12.14. Eightieth Brigade affiliated to following units:

1st Brigade R.F.A.

1st Wessex Co. R.E.

83rd Field Ambulance.

27th Division accompanied by H.M. The King, accompanied by Lord Kitchener on FAWLEY DOWN. Weather fine.

His Majesty walked down the line and the Division subsequently defiled past him in Column of route.

Sun, Dec 20, 1914 MORN HILL CAMP, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND

WINCHESTER 21.12.14. '80' Brigade left Winchester for Southampton by road. The Battalion which was the third battalion on the line of march, followed the SHROPSHIRE L.I. & left the starting point at the Camp Gate at 10.19, reaching SOUTHAMPTON DOCKS at 4.40 p.m. (1 hour late, due to checking caused by indifferent transport in front of us).

Battalion embarked from Berth 46 on CARDIGANSHIRE, which already contained the 99th Battery R.F.A. (Major ANDERSON). Embarkation took about 1 ¾ hours and ship left at 7 p.m. Weather fine.

Appendix I (Marching out State)

Mon, Dec 21, 1914 CROSSING ENGLISH CHANNEL

S.S. CARDIGANSHIRE, 21.XII.14. en route from Southampton to HAVRE. Arrived off HAVRE 5 a.m. Came into dock 1.25 p.m. Commenced disembarkation 2 p.m.

Battalion marched off 3 p.m. to No 2 camp, where it arrived at 5.30 p.m.

Transport arrived at 8.15 p.m. Showery weather.

Tue, Dec 22, 1914 HAVRE, FRANCE

22.XII.14 HAVRE Battalion Route March from 10.30 a.m. to 12.45 p.m. Completed equipment from Ordnance Ration parties left camp at 4.40 p.m. Remainder of Battalion at 5.40 p.m. Reached point 3, GARE DES MARCHANDISES at 7 p.m. Men in tearing spirits. The whole Battalion had to entrain in one train of 48 trucks. Officers 1, Men 24, Horses 10, VEHICLES 13. Very tight fit, some of the men being unable to sit down. Fatigue parties worked very well. Battalion left at schedule time 11.19 p.m. Showery.
Appendix II. Orders for railway journey.

Wed., Dec 23, 1914 TROOP TRAIN HAVRE TO ST OMER, FRANCE

23.XII.14 On train en route to St. OMER. Reached ABBEVILLE 12.30 p.m. Journey would have been much easier if we had been informed where halts were to be made and for how long.

Reached St OMER 8.50 p.m. Received orders to proceed to ARQUES and to detrain there. Reached ARQUES at 9.40 p.m. Detrainment completed by 12.30 a.m. (24th)

The tracks for the vehicles were very bad & greatly retarded both the entrainment and detrainment of the Battalion.

Thu, Dec 24, 1914 ARQUES, FRANCE

24.XII.14 BLARINGHEM. The Guide provided by the R.T.O. confessed after he had gone some miles that he had never been to BLARINGHEM. In consequence it took until 3 a.m. to cover the 7 miles to that village. On arrival at Brigade Headquarters was informed that we were to billet along a stretch of 2 miles, down the road we had come along. The transport pulled off into nearest field & the troops were gradually billeted the last being got in about 6 a.m. Very trying night after trying day.

Fine, cold.

Fri, Dec 25, 1914 BLARINGHEM, FRANCE

25.XII.14 BLARINGHEM. Spent morning overhauling packing of transport. Unluckily Christmas comforts not available. Very fine in morning, then misty, cold, frost.

Tue, Dec 29, to Thu, Dec 31, 1914 BLARINGHEM, FRANCE

29.12.14 to 31.12.14 BLARINGHEM. Bn employed with remainder of 80th Brigade in entrenching a fire position with support position 200 yds in rear extending from MT CROQUET ¾ MILE N.E. of BLARINGHEM through LA BELLE HOTESSE to STEENBECQUE. Weather wet.

Grounds waterlogged & draining of trenches very difficult.

Tue, Dec 29, 1914 BLARINGHEM, FRANCE

29.12.14 Major [A.H.] Gault, Capt. [C.F.] SMITH & 2 N.C.O.s. went up to trenches of 3rd Division at KEMMEL. 24 hours in trenches to learn method of reliefs & gain experience: valuable hints and information gained.

[Note transcriber: during November & December 1914 the Commanding Officer of the P.P.C.L.I. was Lieutenant-Colonel F.D. Farquhar, D.S.O.]

Appendix I

Copy

Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry
Marching Out StateWinchester
20-12-14

Officers-----	27
Other Ranks-----	956
Vehicles-----	25
Horses-----	82
Motor bicycles-----	2
Bicycles-----	10

Lt. Colonel
Commanding P.P.C.L.I.

Appendix II

Copy

O.C. – P.P.C.L.I.

1. Please note that the Battalion
Under your command will entrain
As detailed in para. 4 below

4. Place of entrainment-Gare des Marchandises
Time 7 p.m.
Date – 22nd December, 1914.

Issued at Havre,
21-12-14.

(Sd.) T.C. Browne,
Major,

D.A.Q.M.S.-Havre Base.

Copy

Princess Patricia's Canadian
Light Infantry

<u>Place</u>	<u>Time due in</u>	<u>Time due out</u>
Havre	23-12-14	23 - 19
Rouen	3.01	4.25
Sergueux	6.48	6.53
Abbeville	12.52	

Havre
22-12-1914

(Signed) C. E. Birmen
Capt.
D. A. D. R. T.
