

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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1919

Wed, Jan 1, 1919 NEDERBRAKEL, BELGIUM

Renaix 1.1.19 Battalion moves from NEDERBRAKEL to RENAIX

Thu, Jan 2, 191 RENAIX, , BELGIUM

CELLES 2.1.1919 Battalion moves to CELLES

Fri, Jan 3, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 3.1.19 Battalion moves to ST LEGER - billets

Sat, Jan 4, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 4.1.19 Rain. New Year's greetings were received from H.R.H. Princess Patricia and the Corps Commander and a telegram was despatched to H.R.H. The Princess conveying the greet-congratulations of the Battalion on her betrothal, 2 O.R. join and 3 O.R. struck off strength.

Sun, Jan 5, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 5.1.19 Rain. Parades. LIEUT B.K. SNIDER [1624] struck off strength 3/1/19

Mon, Jan 6, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 6.1.19 Rain. Company Parades. 3 O.R. struck off strength

Tue, Jan 7, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 7.1.19 Rain. Capt. J.N. EDGAR M.C. [507] awarded Bar to Military Cross and 792 C.S.M. SPURGEON C. awarded D.C.M. by NEW YEAR'S Honours Gazette

Wed, Jan 8 to Fri, Jan 17, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 8.1.19 to 17.1.19 During this period the Battalion remained in Billets at St LEGER carrying out daily parades & route marches. On JAN. 9 a message was received from H.R.H. Princess PATRICIA as follows "Greatly touched at your kind congratulations. Please convey my warmest thanks to all. 6 O.R. struck off and 3 O.R. taken on strength during this time.

Sat, Jan 18 to Mon, Jan 27, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 18.1.19 TO 27.1.19 Battalion still in billets. Sergt. Instructor MAYCOCK attached for the purpose of giving special instruction in [inserted: P.T.] ~~drill to Officers and other R-N.C.O.s~~ and to Companies and Sergeant Major PRATLEY to hold special classes in drill for Officers and N.C.O.s The Belgian CROIX DE GUERRE awarded to 1119 Cpl. DESFORGES [DES FORGES A.] and to 487451 Cpl. BRASNETT T.R.

Note in right hand margin Sergt Maycock attached as P.T. Instructor
CSM Pratley ,, ,, Drill ,,

18 O.R. struck off & 4 taken on strength.

Tue, Jan 28, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 28.1.19 MERITORIOUS Service Medal awarded to

596 C.Q.M.S. MEACHAM A.G.

475851 Pte. FRANCIS A.M.

1594 Pte. JOY C. in NEW YEAR'S HONOURS Gazette.

A Battalion Parade was held to-day at which the Regimental Colour which was presented by H.R.H. Princess PATRICIA on the formation of the Battalion in 1914 was consecrated. Major The Rev. T. McCarthy regimental chaplain performed the ceremony which attended by the General Officers Commanding the Division (3rd) [*Major-General F.O. Loomis*] and Brigade (7th) [*Brigadier-General J.A. Clark*]

LIEUT A.N.B. MORTIMER M.C. [51259] carried the Colour. 11 O.R. struck off strength

Wed, Jan 29 to Fri, Jan 31, 1919 ST LEGER, BELGIUM

ST LEGER 29.1.19 to 31.1.19 Snow which fell on the 26th continued on the ground until the end of the month. The usual parades were carried out according to syllabus. 21 O.R. struck off strength to England on 29th and during this period stores were turned in and preparations made for the Battalion to move to LE HAVRE preparatory to demobilization.

[Note transcriber: during January 1919 the Commanding Officer of the P.P.C.L.I. was Lieutenant-Colonel A. Hamilton Gault.]

EPILOGUE

The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry's War Diary which began on 4 November 1914 in Winchester, England ended on 31 January 1919 in St Leger, Belgium. On 1st of February, 1919, the Regiment marched to Baiseux and entrained for Le Havre, France. Late on February 7th, they boarded the troopship Dieppe and sailed through the night to Weymouth, England. From there, they entrained to Bramshott Camp where they began preparations for demobilization. On the 21st of February 1919, there was a final inspection of the Regiment by the Colonel-in-Chief, H.R.H. Princess-Patricia of Connaught. After this final inspection, she presented and placed upon her Regiment's Colour, the Wreath of Honour, commemorating the officers and men who had served so faithfully during the Great War.

*“To the P.P.C.L.I. from the Colonel-in-Chief,
PATRICIA, in recognition of their heroic
Services in the Great War, 1914-1918.”*



Source: Welcome to 2 PPCLI

The Great War was over and so was another aspect of the Regiment's history. On 27 February, the Regimental officers and selected N.C.O.'s attended the wedding of the Colonel-in-Chief to Commander A. Ramsay, D.S.O., Royal Navy in Westminster Abbey, London. Princess Patricia relinquished her title and became Lady Ramsey. During the wedding the PPCLI provided a Guard of Honour for His Majesty, King George V.

On the 8th of March 1919, the Regiment entrained from Bramshott to Liverpool where they boarded the S.S. Carmania. They landed in Halifax on 17 March. Declining invitations to march through New York City and Montreal, the Patricia's boarded a train for Ottawa. They arrived on the morning of 19 March 1919 and marched into Confederation Square where the City of Ottawa and the Governor General of Canada welcomed them home. They were led by a detachment of their own Veteran's Association. This is the same Square where the National War Memorial was constructed in 1936 and is now under the steely gaze of a statue of the Regiment's Founder, A. Hamilton Gault.



From Confederation Square, the Regiment marched to Lansdowne Park, the birth place of the Regiment on 11 August 1914. Of the Originals, who had left the same Park, there were reportedly 38 still serving with the Regiment. Of the 1,100 officers and men who were deemed "The Originals", 837 were casualties. Of the 5086 who served, 4,076 were casualties. Sixty-three officers and 1,237 men were killed, died of wounds/ disease, or were missing in action. More than half, six hundred and fifty-three had no known grave following the Great War.

The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry were demobilized 20 March 1919, but unlike the majority of units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, it did not leave the Order of Battle. It was one of three units selected to form the Canadian Permanent Force Infantry. The other two units were the Royal Canadian Regiment and the French-Canadian 22nd Regiment (22eR). A. Hamilton Gault retained command until 20 January 1920 when he became the Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel of the Regiment. From then, until the present day, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry have done their duty for Canada – and done it well, always leading. Nothing else would have been acceptable to Hamilton Gault or Francis Farquhar.

Stephen K. Newman (former P.P.C.L.I. Regimental Adjutant)