

# **WITH THE GALLANT SOLDIERS IN THE CITY OF KINGSTON**

## **Brief Sketch of The Composition of The 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Its Organization, Its Officers And Its Equipment—Other Interesting Military Facts**

In the organization of the second expeditionary force for overseas service from Canada, the Third Military Division was allotted one battalion, and it was decided by the Militia council that this battalion should be mobilized in the city of Kingston. Lieut-Col. Hughes, OC of the 14<sup>th</sup> PWOR of this city, was selected to command the battalion and on the second day of November the work of mobilization was inaugurated. Within forty-eight hours after the date set for mobilization, the whole of the battalion was in the city of Kingston, with a place prepared for every man and quarters of the most comfortable character in complete readiness for the reception of the men who came from all over the division in response to the call for volunteers.

All the preliminary arrangements for the accommodation of the battalion were in the capable hands of Col Hemming, the popular and efficient officer commanding the third district, aided by his staff and Lt-Col Hughes, who left nothing undone that would contribute to the comfort and safety of the men who were to be trained in the city of Kingston for overseas service.

Every detachment that arrived in the city for the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion gave evidence that the men had been most carefully selected in the various recruiting centers and every officer had sent his best to serve under Colonel Hughes. So carefully have the men been selected that their appearance in parade on the streets has caused everybody to express admiration for their physical appearance, and it is the opinion of all that they are really a "hand-picked" battalion.

### **Lieut-Col Hughes**

Lt-Col St. Pierre Hughes is a brother of the Minister of Militia, and has worn the uniform of a soldier for nearly forty years, serving in the 45<sup>th</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup>, 79<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> regiments. Col Hughes organized the St Andrew's Cadets, and drilled the corps for over two years. He served with the 90<sup>th</sup> Regiment in the Northwest Rebellion in 1885 for which he wears the medal and clasp. He was present at the battles of Fish Creek, Batoche, relief to Prince Albert and Battleford and was a member of the expedition sent after the famous Indian

chief, Big Bear. He has been one of the best rifle shots in Canada for the past 25 years. Col Hughes was selected with Geo H Bradbury, MP for Selkirk, to cut the cable at Batoche and both men succeeded in their hazardous task.

When the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment was changed from six to eight companies, the two extra companies were organized and drilled by Col Hughes, and the two new companies were turned over complete in men and qualified officers to the regiment. The colonel has been active all his life in athletics, playing for thirteen years on championship lacrosse, and he was a member of the famous Cornwall team during the time that it held the undefeated championship for nine consecutive years. He accompanied the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment to the Tercentenary at Quebec, and three years ago played a very prominent and creditable part in the tactical contest held in this district, being the commanding officer of the right half of the forces engaged in the scheme. For twenty years he was on the staff of the Portsmouth Penitentiary and now holds the responsible position of Inspector of Penitentiaries. Mrs. Hughes is as much a soldier as her devoted husband, having given willingly her husband and her son to the causes of Empire in its present great crisis. Lt-Col Hughes is tall and well put together physically and it is no wonder that a man of his qualities held the mile championship for Canada against all comers for a number of years. He is pleasant and affable in manner, cheerful in disposition, firm in his convictions, quick in apprehension, with a wonderful capacity for organization, and a perfect mastery of the most minute military detail. He is easily approached in his office by every man from senior Major to the latest private that has joined the ranks of his battalion.

### **The Various Officers**

Major Bennett, senior Major of the battalion, has worn a soldier's uniform for 35 years, serving eight years in Africa as an officer of the South African Constabulary, and one and a half years active service during the South African war. Major McLean the junior Major has been in the Canadian militia for over 20 years and has earned his long service decoration. He served in the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, and was senior Major of the GGFG. Captain Hemming, Adjutant of the battalion is a son of Col Hemming, OC of the 3<sup>rd</sup> district. In 1896 he joined the 36<sup>th</sup> regiment as a subaltern, and in 1908 was transferred the RCR at Halifax. The adjutant stands well over six feet, is an excellent officer, and has a remarkably pleasing manner. Lieut McCulla, quartermaster of the battalion has been 23 years in the service, was a member of the Yukon expedition and served with the artillery in South Africa. All the company officers, including transport, signaling, and Maxim gun section are among the best that could be found in Canada. The chaplain is Rev Captain Kidd of Napanee, an Anglican clergyman who is exceedingly popular with young men of all classes. The surgeon of the battalion is Lt-Col Duff, known to everybody as a most kindly and capable medical officer. Col Duff saw service with the 4<sup>th</sup> Hussars for many years, served in South Africa and gives up his position as ADMS for this district so as to be able to serve under Col Hughes overseas. The non-coms of the battalion contain among their number a great many men who have seen service from the Egyptian campaign of 1882 to South Africa.

## **Working the Officers**

In addition to the regular duties which every officer has to perform, classes meet in the armouries for five nights in each week from 8 to 9:30 o'clock. Every afternoon at 5 o'clock there is a special lecture which every officer must attend, so that from reveille to lights out there is not an idle moment for the battalion's officers. In all the hard work of the officers, the commanding officer does not spare himself, and under his keen supervision it is impossible for any officer to escape his share of the hard work even if he felt disposed to do so.

## **Location of Half Sections**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion is divided into two half sections, right and left. The right half is under Major Bennett and the left half under Major McLean. The right half section is located in the Dormitories at Artillery Park, and the left half in the Dormitories at the Cereal Works. The bedding of the soldiers in each of these places is clean and comfortable. The buildings are well heated and lighted, and the strictest sanitary regulations prevail in each place. Lavatories, tub and shower baths have also been provided, and these equal anything that could be found in the best military barracks in any country. The kitchens are models of cleanliness, the utensils are clean, and the cooks on duty are compelled to preserve cleanliness in person and cooking. In each half section a fire guard of nine men with one sergeant and one bugler are on duty all the time and a system of electric alarms and fire-fighting apparatus has been installed in each Dormitory. All the garbage is kept in closed receptacles and is removed twice daily. Reading, writing and recreation rooms have been provided for both half sections, and plenty of good literature is furnished, together with the local and outside daily papers.

## **Feeding the Soldiers**

There is no stint in quantity, nor is there any question about the quality of food furnished the soldiers of the 21<sup>st</sup> battalion. Three substantial meals, well served, are furnished the men each day. Breakfast is served at 7:30 am and consists of bacon, beef, potatoes, bread and butter, and coffee. Dinner is served at 12:30 and the men have roast beef with brown gravy, boiled potatoes, mashed turnips, two slices of bread, one pint of tea, with soup three times a week. On Sunday the dinner menu contains either rice or English plum pudding. Fruit, marmalade, beans and cabbage are frequently placed on the tables. Tea is served at 5:30, with bread and butter, cheese, stewed apples or prunes, marmalade and tea. Sometimes hash is furnished for tea. There is one cook to each company with one assistant cook, two fatigue men, one sergeants' cook, one officers' cook and one assistant. The cooking is under the charge of Sergt. Stinson, master cook, who has had long years of experience as a caterer, and served in the South African campaign. Eleven hundred pounds of beef, fifteen hundred pounds of bread, one thousand pounds of potatoes, besides other things, are needed for the feeding of the men of the 21<sup>st</sup> battalion alone, each

day. Totalled up, it means that nearly two tons of food is served and consumed each day by the 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Working the Soldiers**

The first parade of the men is at 6:30 am, when they are given physical exercise before breakfast for one hour. The second parade is at 8:30 and lasts until 12 o'clock. At 2:15 pm the commanding officer's parade takes place, and lasts until nearly 5 o'clock. Nearly every day on this parade the men are taken for a long route march, which they very much enjoy. There is no place for a drone in this battalion. The men realize that they are mobilized for serious business and they go about their duties seriously and energetically. In addition to all drills the men have to take their share regularly of all fatigue duties, guard and sentry mounting.

### **Health and Morals of Men**

The men are health and very few report for sick parades. The hard work and solid diet seems to agree with the men, so that even minor sickness is almost unknown. The behavior of the men is excellent, and since the battalion mobilized here on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, not a man has been in police court, and very few have been paraded before the commanding officer. The military YMCA look after the interests of the men and all the churches in the city take a profound interest in the moral and spiritual needs of all the soldiers. Church parade is held every Sunday afternoon at the Armouries, and all denominations are recognized in the conduct of these services. Lectures are delivered to the men by local clergymen and others, and everything is done to keep the men free from temptations of an injurious character.

### **Music for the Battalion**

The St. Andrew's Society of Ottawa have undertaken to furnish the battalion with a fine pipe and drum band. This band will be twenty strong when completed and will go to the front as stretcher-bearers. The band is under the leadership of Pipe Major MacDonald. The pipers are all typical Scots and look well in their highland costume of kilt and Glengarry.

The battalion has a mechanical transport section, signaling section and Maxim gun section, together with the required number of water carriers and sanitary section. It is recruited to strength, equipped for service in the most perfect manner, and drilled like a regiment of old soldiers who have been on the field for many years.