

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

THE CANADIAN GRENADIER GUARDS

OVERSEAS BATTALION

"EIGHTY SEVENTH"

COLONEL F.S. MEIGHEN, O.C.

KEN ANNETT

THE CANADIAN GRENADIER GUARDS -OVERSEAS BATTALION

"EIGHTY SEVENTH"

---

Many Gaspesians are no doubt familiar with the excellent, illustrated booklet, "VALOUR REMEMBERED - Canada and the First World War", published in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Armistice of the First World War under the authority of the then Minister of Veterans Affairs, the late Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald. In his Introduction the Minister wrote, in part:

"...The twin pylons of Canada's majestic, sorrowful Vimy Memorial have been likened to " a gate leading to a better world". It is my firm conviction that we Canadians will continue to play an important role in the advancement of the great causes of mankind: peace, disarmament, human rights and, ultimately, social justice - those same virtues Canadians fought and died for, on foreign soil, sixty years ago..."

In many Gaspesian communities monuments or cairns stand in commemoration of those who served and died in World War I. Organizations such as the Canadian Legion are devoted to the remembrance of those who fell and to the service of those veterans who survived. GASPE OF YESTERDAY has recently been reminded of one important chapter of Gaspesian service in the First World War through access to a remarkable volume, " A PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD AND SOUVENIR OF THE CANADIAN GRENADIER GUARDS, OVERSEAS BATTALION, "EIGHTY SEVENTH", COL. F.S.MEIGHEN, O.C." This publication which includes the photographs of all officers and men of the "EIGHTY SEVENTH" serves to recall more than forty sons of Gaspeia who served in the ranks of that famous battalion.

This volume, the property of the late Private W.D. Frank, No. 177878, Fourteen Platoon of the "EIGHTY SEVENTH", was made available to GASPE OF YESTERDAY by his daughter, Mrs. Ellen Frank Armatage of Melbourne Ridge, Qué.

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Grenadier Guards, Overseas Battalion, whose official number among the infantry units of Canada's Overseas Force is Eighty-seven, was organized to represent in concrete form on active service, the traditions and the spirit of the senior Militia Regiment of Canada and the oldest volunteer Regiment in the British Empire, the First Regiment, Canadian Grenadier Guards.

From the hour the news reached Montreal that a state of war existed between Great Britain and Germany, the First Regiment had bent all its efforts to the discharge of the new and heavy responsibilities which had so suddenly been thrust on it in common with all units of the Active Militia. It had given freely of its officers and men; it had taken its full share of the onerous duties of patrolling and protecting the great rail and water routes which center at Montreal; it had maintained its own strength by training officers and men to replace and to follow those who had gone on active service. The organization of the Overseas Battalion, the Canadian Grenadier Guards, was the logical culmination of these earlier activities.

The First Regiment, Canadian Grenadier Guards, traces its history through the First Regiment, Prince of Wales Fusiliers, to the First Prince of Wales Regiment, a rifle regiment, and to the Sixth Battalion Fusiliers. Through the first of these it derives its title as the oldest volunteer Regiment in the British Empire, the Prince of Wales Regiment having been organized as a battalion in 1859. Both the First Regiment and the Sixth Fusiliers were on active service during the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870, and the First Regiment was next for duty in Montreal at the time of the Northwest Rebellion in 1885, being encamped under arms for a month ready to go to the front. When the first South African contingent was formed, the First Regiment contributed its full quota of officers and men.



In 1898, the First Battalion, Prince of Wales Regiment, and the Sixth Battalion Fusiliers were amalgamated into one regiment of the Active Militia as the First Battalion Prince of Wales Fusiliers. In 1911, Major General Carson, then a Lieutenant-Colonel, was approached by the Militia authorities and asked if he would undertake the reorganization of the First Regiment. This he agreed to do on condition that he was given a free hand in the selection of his officers; that the Regiment should be renamed and made a Regiment of Foot Guards while still preserving its identity as the first Regiment of the Active Militia of Canada; and that it should be provided with an armoury of its own. The first two officers whom General Carson asked to co-operate with him in building up a new and stronger battalion on the historic foundations of the old First Regiment were Col. F.S. Meighen and Lieut.-Col. W.O.H. Dodds, both of whom had been for years actively associated with militia work. The reorganization was officially promulgated in Militia Orders of January, 1912. In April, 1914, the Regiment took possession of its new and beautiful armoury on Esplanade Avenue facing Mount Royal Park.

The outbreak of hostilities in August, 1914, found the Regiment prepared and ready to turn its hand from the parades and drills of peace to the grim realities of war. The night that the news of the declaration of war reached Montreal, the Guards were at drill in their armoury and a detachment of officers and men marched direct from their parade to active guard duty on the canals and water front. Within a week, recruiting had begun for the "Royal Montreal Regiment", the Fourteenth Overseas Battalion, with Colonel Meighen in command and eleven other officers and 357 non-commissioned officers and men from the First Regiment in the ranks. Major Dodds helped to recruit the Regiment and then went forward with the Field Artillery. The fighting around Festubert and St. Julien, in which the Royal Montreal Regiment played so gloriously a part, took heavy toll of the officers and men.

Scarcely had the Fourteenth Battalion sailed before the call came for more officers and men to join the Twenty-third Battalion, under Lieut.-Col. F.W. Fisher; to this unit the Guards supplied two Captains, four Lieutenants, and 269 non-commissioned officers and men. In May 1915, the Sixtieth Battalion was authorized and raised, the Guards furnishing its allotted quota of six officers and 225 men. The First

Regiment has had representation as well among the officers and men of the Twenty-fourth and Seventy-third Infantry Battalions, and the various other units raised in Montreal for overseas service.

The organization of a "special" overseas battalion, from and by the First Regiment was frequently and earnestly discussed during the months following the departure of the Royal Montreal Regiment. During this time, the Home Regiment was giving its full share of officers and men to the various units raised for overseas service; it was, nevertheless, the strong desire of both officers and men to furnish another overseas battalion to be known as the Canadian Grenadier Guards and which should be representative of the First Regiment, as the senior battalion of the Canadian Militia.

This hope took definite form on the return of Colonel Meighen to Montreal in June, 1915 and when, early in September, he was able to announce that the Militia Department had authorized him to raise another overseas battalion to be known as the Canadian Grenadier Guards, the response was immediate and enthusiastic.

A class for the preliminary training of non-commissioned officers was opened on September 20th at the Armoury of the First Regiment, which was the headquarters of the Overseas Battalion until the unit moved to its winter quarters. Active recruiting began on October 23rd and in seven weeks the Battalion was raised and ready for its winter training in barracks at St. Johns.

Something over fifty per cent of the men of the Regiment were recruited in Montreal, but every Province of Canada had its representation in the Battalion. Some two hundred recruits were from the Eastern Townships; a considerable number came from the Ottawa Valley; Dundas County furnished its contingent, while groups from Cobalt, Haileybury, the "Porcupine Country", Gaspé, and even far-off Alberta, made the Battalion a thoroughly representative "Canadian" unit.

ROLL CALL OF GASPESIANS - "EIGHTY SEVENTH"

REGIMENTAL NUMBER	RANK AND NAME	GIVEN ADDRESS	PLATOON NUMBER
177559	Private B.W. Bertram	Gaspé	15
177266	Private C. Boulet	Gaspé	15
177265	Private C.G. Boulet	Gaspé	15
177263	Private T.A. Bourgaise	Gaspé	15
177584	Private A. Brien	Gaspé	15
177454	Private J. Broadbray	Gaspé	15
177262	Private F. Cass	Gaspé	15
177267	Private A. Coffin	Gaspé	15
177268	Private M. Coffin	Gaspé	15
177269	Private H. Coffin	Gaspé	15
178242	Private G.L. Coffin	Gaspé	15
178243	Private L.K. Coffin	Gaspé	15
177273	Private J. Dunn	Gaspé	15
177806	Private J.P. Fernie	Gaspé	15
177259	Private R.S. Fitzpatrick	Gaspé	15
177453	Private B. Guignon	Gaspé	15
178176	Private G.A. Garrett	Gaspé	15
177260	Private E.J. Langlois	Gaspé	15
177639	Private A.J. LeLacheur	Gaspé	15
177647	Private A.W. LeLacheur	Gaspé	15
177261	Private E.J. Lindsay	Gaspé	15
177558	Private J.H. LeSueur	Gaspé	15
177258	Private J. Lundstrom	Gaspé	15
177939	Private L. St.J. LeSeeleur	Gaspé	15
177450	Private A.R. Minchinton	Grand Greve	15
177820	Private G.M. Moran	Gaspé	15
177637	Private J. Noseworthy	Gaspé	15
177185	Private J.H. Palmer	Gaspé	15
177186	Private W.J. Palmer	Gaspé	15
177188	Private P.H. Patterson	Gaspé	15



REGIMENTAL NUMBER	RANK AND NAME	GIVEN ADDRESS	PLATOON NUMBER
177967	Private C.G. Patterson	Peninsula	15
177556	Private C.H. Phillips	Peninsula	15
177638	Private R.H. Simpson	Rosebridge	15
177270	Private E. Sinnett	Gaspé	15
177452	Private R.D. West	Grand Greve	15
178175	Private D. Cunning	Gaspé	16
177807	Private W.V. Kenney	Gaspé Harbour	16
178174	Private D.G. Miller	Gaspé	13
177456	Private M. Blue	Grand Metis	11
178065	Private C.E. Skene	Shigawake	7
178066	Private A. Allen	Shigawake	7
177143	Private E.F. Clarke	Gaspé	7

When the Soldiers' War Memorial Monument in Memory of the Men of Gaspé was unveiled on July 7th., 1921 by Major-General Sir David Watson, K.C.B., C.M.G., Legion of Honour, fully a third of the names inscribed as having laid down their lives in the Great War were members of the "EIGHTY SEVENTH". On that solemn occasion the Order of Service was prefaced by the lines of the poet, Rupert Brooke:

"Blow out, you bugles, over the rich dead;  
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,  
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.  
These laid the world away; poured out the red  
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be  
Of work and joy, and that unhopéd serene,  
That men call age; and those who would have been,  
Their sons, they gave, their immortality."

It was particularly fitting that the Service was conducted by the Rev. J.W. Wayman, M.A., Rector of St. Paul's Church, Gaspé who, during the War, was Chaplain attached to the Canadian Grenadier Guards in the Fourth Canadian Division. Of Rev. Wayman, the Senior Chaplain of the Division, the Rev. A.M. Gordon would later write in

Letter to the Editor of the MONTREAL STAR

The Star has just brought me the news of the death of my friend, Archdeacon J. Wayman of Gaspé, P.Q. I first met and knew him during the first war when he was chaplain attached to the Grenadier Guards in the Fourth Canadian Division, and was senior chaplain of the Division. Everyone who knew him was impressed by his fine Christian character.... Bishop Williams of Quebec once told me that Wayman had only one fault - he was too modest; he could not be induced to accept a bigger charge. The Bishop was right. Wayman was quick to recognize everyone's merit except his own. He would not allow himself to be widely known but the whole church will be the poorer for his death. I speak as a Presbyterian, as a former colleague in the army, and as a personal friend."

The Christian devotion of Rev. Wayman to the Parish of Gaspé was doubtless deepened by his experience on the grim battlefields of France where he had buried sons of Gaspé and had consoled the veteran survivors of the Grenadier Guards and their families back in Canada. Only those who experienced the horrors of that Great War could know the profound impact it had on all touched by it. When peace finally returned and the veterans of the Grenadier Guards and others who served in the land, sea and air forces of Canada were welcomed home, Rev. Wayman was content to remain among and serve his Gaspé Parish for the rest of his life.

ADDENDUM

The "RECORD AND SOUVENIR OF THE CANADIAN GUARDS, OVERSEAS BATTALION, EIGHTY SEVENTH" is a volume that elicits reflection and respect. Its fifty-five pages of photographs and text on the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the "EIGHTY SEVENTH" evoke more deeply than any monument or cairn those men of Gaspesia who rallied freely to the call of King and Country. In their time and generation they were true, instinctively, to the finest tradition of our land. For this they set a pattern for their Gaspesian descendants.