

HISTORY

LHC
356.
100971
Hun
V

OF THE

12th REGIMENT, YORK RANGERS

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE DIFFERENT
RAISINGS OF MILITIA

IN THE

COUNTY OF YORK, ONTARIO

BY

CAPT. A. T. HUNTER

G COMPANY, 12th REGIMENT, YORK RANGERS

TORONTO: (
MURRAY PRINTING COMPANY, LIMITED, 9 JORDAN STREET

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
CONCERNING A DECEPTION PRACTISED BY THE PEOPLE OF UPPER CANADA a TO JULY, 1812 —Apparent incapacity for Defence—Efforts of General Simcoi—Militia Acts and their Impotency—Lukewarm House of Assembly—Lack of Military Preparation—Small Regular Force—Flank Companies of Militia—Difficulties in Defending Province—Despondency of Sir George Prevost—Confidence of Americans—Unexpected Result—Opinion of Wellington—Defeat of four American Armies .	9
CHAPTER II	
THE RAISING OF THE YoRKs —Larger Boundaries of the Original County—Varied Population within Present County Limits—Village of York—United Empire Loyalists—French Emigres—German Settlement-Quakers—American Settlers—Joseph Willcocks—The Flank Companies of York Militia-2nd Regiment Recruited at Burlington—First and Third Regiments—Colonel Cruikshank's Opinion as to Origin of the 12th Regiment—Officers in York Regiments—Graham—Chewitt—Allan—The "Fighting Judges"—McLean—Robinson. —	13
CHAPTER III	
HOW THE YORK MILITIA WENT WITH BROCK TO DETROIT AND HOW PETER ROBINSON'S RIFLE COMPANY KEPT TRYST —Parade of Militia on Garrison Common—General Hull's Proclamation—Brock's Proclamation—The Mackinac Expedition—Hull's Invasion—How Brock Crossed to Niagara and Back—Brock Calls for Volunteers at York—Officers Selected—Route from Burlington—Visit to Six Nations—Reasons for Water Route—Diary of Voyage—Arrival at Fort Malden—Orders Issued by Brock en route—Brock's Boat runs Aground—Character of Brock and his Volunteers—Results of the Expedition—Arrival of Peter Robinson—Acts as Escort to Brock—Narrow Escape at Buffalo—Arrival at Fort Erie	17
CHAPTER IV	
PUSH ON THE YORK VOLUNTEERS —The Frontier Defended by Brock—Critical State of Affairs—Brock's Disposition of Troops—Van Rensselaer's Plan—Attack on Queenston—Cameron Starts for Queenston—Brock Gallops to the Scene of Action—Attempt of Brock to Recover the Heights—"Push on the York Volunteers"—Death of Macdonell—Pickets join Sheaffe's Column—Sheaffe's Dispatch—Effect of Brock's Death —	23
CHAPTER V	
HOW GENERAL SHEAFFE PUT THE QUIETUS ON THE YoRKs — Indefensible Condition of York—Description of the Village and its "Fortifications"—Chauncey Sails—Sheaffe's Duty—Conduct of Defence—Explosion of Magazine and Death of General Pike—Militia Ordered to Treat for Terms—American Sharpness—Names Added after Capitulation Signed—Plucky Interference of Dr. Strachan—Futility of Resistance.	27
CHAPTER VI	
THE INGREDIENTS OF SEDITION — Formation of Patrician Class—Land Grabbing—Clergy Reserves—Agitations—Gourlay, Collins and William Lyon Mackenzie—Political Methods of the Day—Family Compact—Attitude of Militia—Higher Officers of the Militia—Mackenzie's Black List—Weakness of the System. .	31
CHAPTER VII	
THE FOUR THOUSAND MUSKETS AT THE CITY HALL — TWO Distinct Periods in Mackenzie Rebellion—What Mackenzie's Revolt Depended on—The Four Thousand Stand of Arms—Character of Sir Francis Head—The Mackenzie Movement takes a Military Direction—Head sends the Regulars to Quebec—Mackenzie's first plan to get the Muskets—The Restlessness of Colonel Fitzgibbon—His Snubs and his Precautions—Mackenzie's Second Plan—Date fixed for December 7th, 1837—Rolph Changes the Date—Outbreak of Rebellion—Jarvis' Picket—Head Dresses Himself—Arrival of McNab from Hamilton—Defeat of Rebels—Where were the Colonels?—Description of the Militia in 1837. —	33

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER VIII	
THE WAR OF THE PATRIOTS ALIAS FILIBUSTERS —Mackenzie takes Post on Navy Island—Borrows from United States Arsenals—Van Rensselaer—Steamer <i>Caroline</i> —Cut out by Captain Drew—International Episode—Secret Society Generals—Effect on Upper Canada—Immense Growth of Militia—Scarcity of Arms—Queen's Rangers—Samuel Peters Jarvis.	39
CHAPTER IX	
ANOTHER QUARTER CENTURY OF RusT—Decay of Militia Organization—Description of a Muster in 1845—And of a Later MustZT at Toronto—Effect of Crimean War—New Militia Law of 1855—Slow Growth of Active Militia—Effect of <i>Trent</i> Affair—Gazetting the York Companies—Their Strength.	41
CHAPTER X	
THE WELDING OF THE BATTALIONS —Origin of Fenian Raids—Causes why Canada was Invaded—Sporadic Preparation for Defence—Alarm of 31st May, 1866—Response of the Militia—Departure of Companies to Niagara District—Strategy of the Authorities—Ridgeway and the Abuse of Booker—Outpost Duties of the Companies—Deficiencies of Militia System—Standing Camp at Thorold—Welding the 12th York Battalion—Impression Created by the Battalion.	45
CHAPTER XI	
THE CONTINUITY OF YORK BATTALIONS —Originally a Nine Company Battalion—Jarvis the First Commanding Officer—His Services—The Word "Rangers"—The Regimental Motto, <i>Geier et Audax</i> —Ancestry of Armstrong of the Lloydtown Company—Pearson of the Aurora Company—The Selbys of the Sharon Company—Crosby of the Unionville Company—Cawthra the Paymaster.	50
CHAPTER XII	
KEEPING THEIR ARMOUR BRIGHT —Twenty Years of Routine—The Red River Expedition—The 12th Actually Gets an Officer Selected—The Value of an Organized Militia—Character of the Drill—Commanding Officers of the 12th.	54
CHAPTER XIII	
STEPPING OUT IN 1885 —Suddenness of the Riel Outbreak—Four Companies of the 12th Called Out—The Regimental Order Calling out the Companies—The Summons by Bugle—York-Simcoe Battalion Hurried to the Front—The Gaps—Tales of Hardships—The Actual Hardships—Treading on the Heels of the 65th—The Last Gap—Appearance of the York-Simcoes at Winnipeg—En route to Fort Qu'Appelle—Enforced Stay at Fort Qu'Appelle—Occupations There—Night Attacks—By Forced March to Humboldt—The Astringent Qualities of Colonel O'Brien—Appearance of the Battalion at Humboldt—The Meanderings of Sergeant Brown—His Portrait of Riel—The York-Simcoes Become "Foot Cavalry"—The Return and Receptions.	57
CHAPTER XIV	
ANNALS OF THE 12TH SINCE 1885 —Periodical Trainings—Great Changes in Militia Organization—No Effect on the Infantry—The South African War—Lloyd's Tender of Service—The Delicious Answer of the Authorities—Imperialism—Representatives of the 12th at the War—His Majesty's First Visit—A "Skeleton" Camp—His Majesty's Second Visit—Migrations of the Companies—Our Splendid Armouries?—The 12th as it Now is.	69
<hr style="width: 10%; margin: 20px auto;"/>	
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A —Officers of the 12th, Militia List, July, 1912.	75
APPENDIX B —Record of Officers' Services	77
APPENDIX C —Letter of Colonel Cruikshank	83
APPENDIX D —Memo by Dr. Doughty	84
APPENDIX E —Rifle Shooting Record of the 12th	85
APPENDIX F —Roll of York-Simcoe Battalion	89

PREFACE



WE have tried in this volume to link up some of the honorable achievements of militia men of York County for a century back and show what the response has been when the bugle sounded or the alarm bell rang. We think we can discern in the men of this county a continuity of character; of deceptive equanimity in time of peace, of alacrity in time of war, of unchangeable faith in the Empire at all times.

We need not pretend that the officers and men of 1912 in the 12th Regiment are the precise lineal descendants of the officers and men of the York Regiments of 1812, any more than the Welsh Fusiliers need show they answer to the same names at roll-call as when they advanced with drums beating at the Battle of Minden. The continuity of a regiment is not at any time very tangible or definite. It is not a genealogy written by a lawyer to secure an estate. It is rather the spirit to undertake similar toils and endure similar dangers in consideration of being allowed to keep the old glory and the old heroes in dutiful remembrance and to emulate them if occasion arise.

It is time the histories of all our county regiments were written. Despite a number of charming books in which fragments of our Upper Canadian history have been transcribed by men of scholarly style and antiquarian attainments, the real history of nearly every county is being irremediably lost. This is particularly true, of the military history of our counties, which when studied repays the student by glimpses of heroic action and then baffles him with records broken and defaced by callous neglect.

Most of our old county histories and atlases were written on a subscription plan which was unavoidable in a country where the arts of literature and publishing were struggling and precarious vocations. Under such a plan the man who could pay for his biography became a personage, while the man who could not was allowed to seek an ignoble grave. This bore hard upon the military veteran who is seldom the most prosperous or provident of men.

We are therefore much indebted to the subscribers and advertisers whose liberality has enabled this sketch to be produced.

A. T. HUNTER.



Photo by Kennedy

*Lieut.-Col. J. A. W. ALLAN,
Commanding 12th Regt. York Rangers*

CHAPTER I

CONCERNING A DECEPTION PRACTISED BY THE PEOPLE OF
UPPER CANADA. PRIOR. TO JULY, 1812



PROBABLY no nation ever showed fewer external signs of either the desire or the capacity for martial activity than did the people of Upper Canada prior to the war-storm of 1812. It is true that the first Lieutenant-Governor, General Simcoe, never ceased to brood over the difficulties and dangers that threatened (and still threaten) the defence of this Province in case war should actually break out. Indeed amidst his colonizing activities as ruler of Western Canada he was still what he was in the war of the American Revolution, the ardent but sagaciously observant leader of the Queen's Rangers; thinking rather of where his magazines might be safe than of where the greatest commerce could be developed; and tracing his great roads, Dundas and Yonge Streets, with an eye less to the laborious procession of market wagons than of a rapid concentration of troops on interior lines. From mere military necessity the first provincial capital, Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake), had to be abandoned as the political and commercial metropolis. The selection of Toronto (then York) was not by design of Simcoe, who meant London to be his fortifiable camp or by design of Simcoe's superior, the Governor of Canada, who for equally good military reasons favoured Kingston as his arsenal. But this deadlock of strategic intelligence between these worthy soldiers secured by a sort of compromise the selection of the then by no means salubrious, easily defensible or commercially promising harbour on the north shore of Ontario, where in our time is reared a city which like Babylon of old says, "I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow." The wisdom of both the Lieutenant-Governor and the Governor was justified of its children, when in 1813, York, indefensible, once the command of the Lake is lost, fell after enveloping defenders and assailants in the ruins of its fortifications. Then as now Toronto was a good nurse of men and an improvident custodian of material. But the temper of the English speaking race, especially on this continent is rather to endure than to avert disasters that elementary military sagacity can readily foresee.

Nor were Provincial Parliaments negligent in their provision,—by word of statute,—for making the able-bodied colonist contribute for at least one day in the year his person equipped as the words ran, "with a good and sufficient musket, fusil, rifle or gun." These Militia Acts of the Legislature beginning with the session of 1793 were sufficiently numerous and contradictory to require to be consolidated in 1808 according to a process of annual emendation and periodical codification, which has gone on continuously until our own day. For the outcome of attempts to create a national army on paper, when the bulk of our citizens mean

to sacrifice neither their own time nor their own money in organizing a force in reality, is that we adopt the eternal subterfuge of varying the phraseology of our militia acts and regulations, making new subdivisions of what does not exist and by multiplying officers of high rank persuade ourselves that we have soldiers to command.

However, the Parliaments of Upper Canada and in their turn those of the Province and the Dominion of Canada have fortunately never surrendered their original power of enrolling the entire able bodied population in the defence of their country. But the original system of mustering the enrolled on one day in the year has now for many years perished under the assaults of that enemy before whom the most mail-clad chivalry is powerless,—namely, the ridicule that grows out of absurdity.

In the early years of the last century, however, and for that matter down to the time of men now living the captain still solemnly mustered his enrolled neighbours and they as regularly failed to turn up for that period of one absurd day, which had no instructional value to the forces and no pay value to the recruits. Year by year the Legislature with verbal relentlessness amended the statute to make more effective the fines of the absentees. But Capt. Armstrong, the village butcher, forebore to press the case of non-attendance against the son of Farmer Brown of the side line. And if he did press it nevertheless for some unaccountable reason the harness-maker and the flour-and-feed merchant, who as Justices of the Peace had been forced to inflict the fine took no steps to collect it.

Nor could the House of Assembly in 1812 composed as it was of men extremely sensitive to those popular feelings of self-government which had been unpleasantly ruffled by that intermittent Governor, Sir Francis Gore,¹ he considered symptomatic of any great desire to lift the drawbridges of peace and strengthen the hands of military authority. While making a reluctant war grant of £5,000 they refused to suspend Habeas Corpus or pass an alien law; and until the end of their session when they passed a sufficiently high and patriotic resolution they acted with a meticulous caution that could not have offended the least belligerent or most pro-American voter in Upper Canada.

Seeking reasons for this delicacy of the politicians we find that the original loyalist settlers of the province were now apparently outnumbered by American and other foreign accretions to the population. It is, therefore, not surprising that even astute thinkers should believe the people of Upper Canada a race of men possessed equally by a rage for making money and a contempt for old-fashioned loyalty and the use of arms. It did not occur to observers in Old Upper Canada in 1812, as perhaps it does not occur to observers in Saskatchewan in 1912, that the placid sentiment of the settler, who has left his own country to improve his lot, is as potmetal to steel to that in tense but undemonstrative loyalty which with some men has all the force of a religion.

Nor had the professional soldiers done or been allowed to do anything to make defensible this great territory. Fort George at Niagara and Fort Malden at Amherstburg were dismantled and in a state of ruin. Despite the continuous

1. He slipped out just before the war and slipped back just after.

threat of war a mere peace establishment of troops less than sixteen hundred in all—barely sufficient for parade purposes and to act as caretakers of stores—were grudgingly maintained throughout the province.' To supplement this pigmy force the more enthusiastic of, the militia in each of the paper regiments were encouraged to drill six times a month, forming what were then known as "Flank Companies." These Flank Companies, with their captain, two subalterns, two sergeants, one drummer and thirty-five rank and file bear a fine ancestral resemblance to the average militia company that in our own time can be seen on a June day training at Niagara-on-the-Lake. They were provided with arms and accoutrements and promised clothes and rations. Prior to the war some seven hundred of them were embodied.²

With such an ostensible force to make good a territory difficult in its internal communications and so large that its southerly frontier alone from Amherstburg to the Lower Province presents a line double the length of the frontier between France and Germany with Belgium thrown in, it is not surprising that military experts should have considered a successful defence impossible. Accordingly historians may well deal with all leniency with that somewhat inadequate hero, Sir George Prevost, the Governor-General, whose most sanguine hope of any good to come out of Upper Canada was that by making a flank movement in his favour the forces in the Upper Province might enable him to save Quebec.

The American Government apparently was as much convinced as the Governor of Canada of the ease with which this province could be added to the domains of the United States. The Secretary of War declared, "We can take the Canadas without soldiers, we have only to send officers into the province and the people disaffected towards their own government will rally round our own standard."³

Henry Clay, then a rising orator and fast becoming a political pet of the American nation said: "We have the Canadas as much under our command as Great Britain has the ocean."⁴

Such then in the beginning of 181 was the apparently hopeless position of this as a British province: large in territory, any part of which could easily be invaded and small in populations and that population seemingly lukewarm and undecided.

In the event, the people of Upper Canada sprang to their weapons with a furious alacrity that staggered the calculations of both politicians and generals, and extorted the admiration of the most hardened professional soldiers. The Iron Duke himself speaking of their achievements as late as 1840 said that it had been "demonstrated that these provinces (with but little assistance from the mother

1. 200 Royal Veterans, 36 Royal Artillery, 900 41st Regiment, 400 Newfoundland Regiment, 50 Provincial Seamen; according to a letter by John Galt, to the Treasury, published in *Canadian Archives*, 1897, p. 49.

2. "General Brock," by Lady Edgar, p. 181.

3. Among the prophets, without honour in their own country, was Mr. Sheffey, of Virginia, who frankly told his fellow countrymen: "Upper Canada is inhabited by emigrants from the United States. They will not come back to you; they will not without reason desert the government to whom they have gone for protection. No sir, you must conquer it by force, not by sowing the seeds of sedition and treason among the people." These words may be heartily commended to students of the "American Invasion" of our North West provinces.

4. We trust the ocean will never be as unruly in our day to Great Britain as the Canadas proved in 1812 to the United States.

5. Calculated at 77,000: See Castell Hopkins' *Canada an Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 1, p. 175.

country in regular troops) are capable of defending themselves against all the efforts of their powerful neighbours."

What martial force was latent in the militia of Upper Canada can best be estimated by their having in conjunction with the sturdy little bands of regulars, either destroyed or defeated during the first campaign four well appointed and supremely confident American armies,—Hull's at Detroit, Van Rensselaer's at Queenston, Smyth's at Fort Erie and Winchester's at Frenchtown. Whence we may infer that while strategists may with some show of certainty weigh the chances of a clash between the trained forces of two countries, it is another matter when a whole people stand up and number themselves and commit the issue to the God of Battles.

1. This was one of the last great efforts of Wellington in the House of Lords. He was always extremely solicitous for the defence of Upper Canada: "If you lose that, you lose all your colonies in that country; and if you lose them, you may as well lose London."

CHAPTER II

THE RAISING OF THE YORKS



THE modern County of York does not by any means comprise the territory which in 1812 and for many years later was designated "York." Stretching westward from the eastern boundaries of what is now Ontario County as far as the Reserve on the Grand River was a thinly settled district, bearing the name of York, and since divided into a number of prosperous counties any one of which has now far more of population than the York of 1812.

Dealing alone with the modern county limits, its population comprised such a variety of diverse settlements that it would have been a wise prophet who could have foretold what action would be theirs in the event of a war with the United States. The Village of York' (formerly and later again Toronto) with its few hundred inhabitants was of course staunch for the Empire.

And there was a good sprinkling throughout the settled parts of the County of the descendants of those United Empire Loyalists, who had received grants of lands in Upper Canada as a recompense for their sacrifices in the war of the American Revolution .² Of what these would do on a call to arms there could be no doubt.

But there were other settlers whose interest in maintaining the British Empire was not quite so obvious. The Oak Ridges had been settled by French Emigres—nobles, "whose roots were in France,"—and who like the famous Count de Puisaye preferred to hover over the wars of the French Revolution like stormy petrels rather than plow their future as plain colonists in York County.

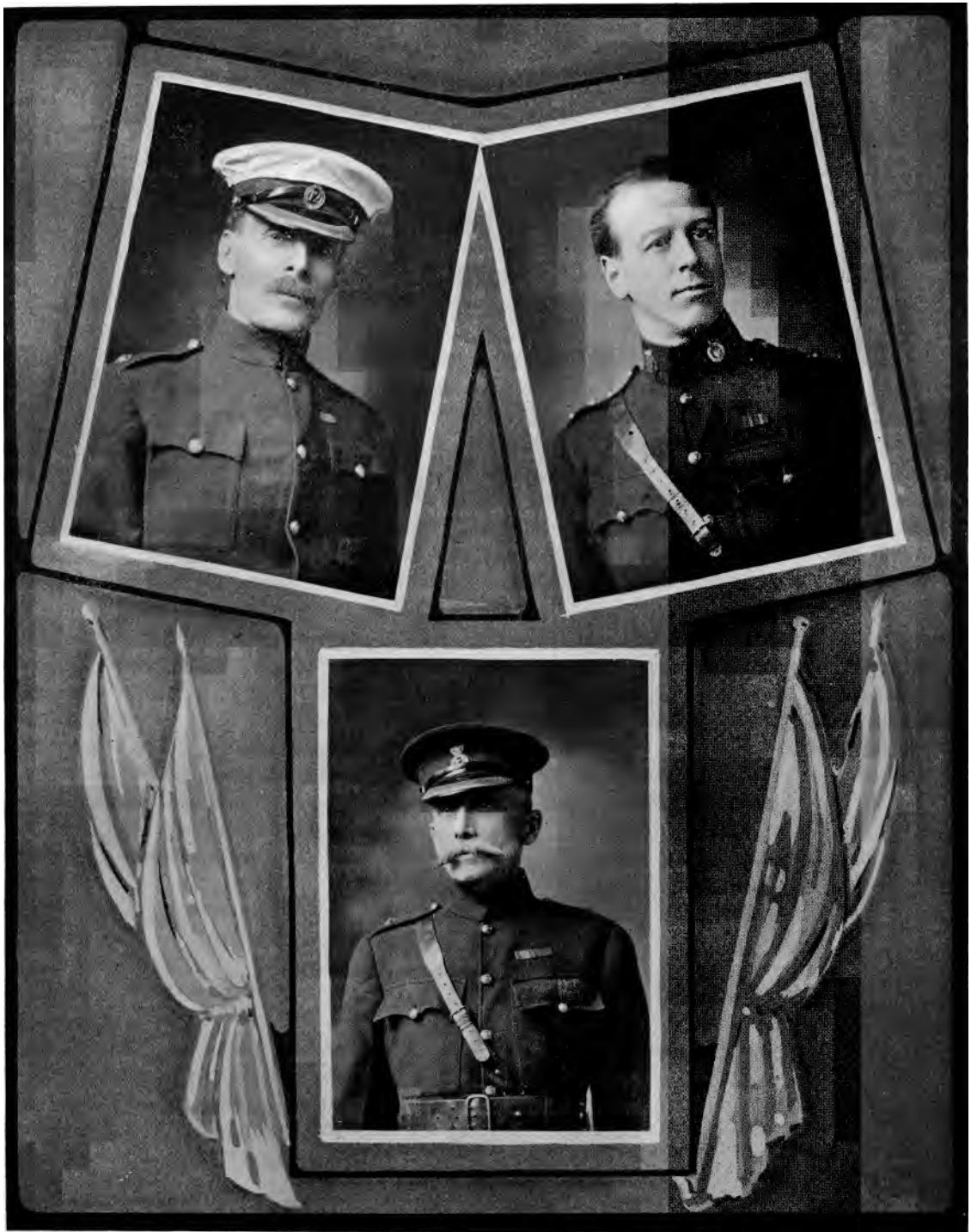
The neighbourhood of Markham, formerly known as the " German Mills," was settled by matter-of-fact. Germans, whose location there was a feat of pure business reason and not a matter of sentiment. There were Quakers too, of undoubted loyalty, but for conscience sake averse to taking up the sword.³

Moreover, there were a considerable number of Americans who had been allured to this region by the fertile beauty of its rich rolling lands. These and their descendants and sundry othep,, who imbibed from them republican sentiments, were a source of anxiety and in'SOMEinstances of danger to the defenders of Canada. The most notable instance of thiS'was Ex-sheriff Joseph Willcocks, who having lost his shrievalty on political grounds, started a newspaper in 1807; was elected,

1. Described a couple of years later by Dr. Dunlop as "a dirty stragglng village with about sixty houses."

2. Among these grantees was no less a personage than General Benedict Arnold, known in American popular histories as "The Traitor"; but recognized now by philosophic historians as something of a military genius. He had a farm on Yonge Street in the vicinity of Richmond Hill

3. A descendant of one of these, sitting in the County Council, has assisted to discontinue the annual grant of the Council to the York Rangers Rifle Match.



Photos by Kennedy

Major A. G. NICOL

Capt. F. H. DUNHAM
Adjutant

Major A. CURRAN

expelled and re-elected as a member of parliament with advanced republican views; and led His Majesty's more or less loyal opposition to the then-powers-that-be. On the outbreak of the war, he at first loyally bore arms on the Canadian side. But later he deserted with some few other militia whom he could influence and became a terror to the harassed farmers of the Niagara District until his fitful light was extinguished in honourable battle at the leaguer of Fort Erie.'

Notwithstanding the difficulties that must be supposed to have attended the raising of active militia in this vicinity or perhaps on account of those difficulties no sooner was the call made than the flank companies were ready to take the field.

There were in 1812 three regiments of York Militia,' of which the Second regiment was recruited in the vicinity of Burlington. So that when we read of the achievements of Capt. Chishohn's or Capt. Applegarth's flank company at Queenston or Lundy's Lane, we know we are reading that which might and should be a source of pride to the citizens of Hamilton City or Wentworth County.

The Third Regiment was recruited in the vicinity of York and its flank companies are known to history as Cameron and Heward's Companies. The First Regiment was recruited from further up the county and was composed of North and South Divisions.³ More interesting to the historian is that it included a rifle company under Capt. Peter Robinson, a troop of cavalry under Capt. John Button, and a flank company under Capt. Thomas Selby. It is more particularly this regiment which included Selby's and _Robinson's Companies that in the opinion of that most painstaking and accurate of Canadian historians, Col. Cruikshank,⁴ is now represented by the present 12th Regiment of York Rangers.

It may not be amiss to say a few words anent the personality of those officers of these two regiments, the 1st and 3rd Yorks, whom the war brought out from the ordinary dull unthanked routine of militia work into the danger zone of active service. We find that the regiments were apt to interchange officers and were as closely connected as the different battalions of one regiment.

William Graham, Commandant of the First Regiment, had been a captain in the Duke of Cumberland's Provincial Regiment and a captain of York Militia as far back as 1798.

William Chewitt, lieutenant-colonel of the 3rd, had served in the British Militia during the siege of Quebec in 1775-76. He was fated in 1813 through no fault of his own to put his signature to a document evidencing a less successful defence of York. He was afterwards colonel of the 1st York, resigning in 1818. In his civil capacity he was Deputy Surveyor General and prominent in all social and charitable movements in Toronto.

William Allan, whose descendant, Senator Allan, has presented to Toronto the beautiful horticultural park that bears his name, was a military enthusiast;

1. "Toronto of Old": Scadding, p. 272.

2. The earliest militia regiment established at York bears date 1798. See the list of officers printed in "Landmarks of Toronto," Vol. 2, p. 686, and comprising such well known Toronto names as Small, Jarvis, Chewitt, Allan, Denison and Cameron.

3. See officers of British Forces in Canada during War 1812-15: L. Homfray Irving.

4. See Letter printed in Appendix.

Lieutenant in the militia regiment that was started in York in 1798, he joined the 3rd York Regiment on its organization and started a flank company in the village. At the date when Brock called the flank companies to service he was major and appears to have had the duty of collecting the Yorks at the Head of the Lake. After the battle of Queens ton Heights he had the responsible duty of commanding the escort to the prisoners on their way to Quebec. In April, 1813, he shared with Col. Chewitt, the unpleasant task of arranging terms for the surrender of York.

THE FIGHTING JUDGES

Historians of the War of 1812 have said that practically the whole male population of the province was drawn into the vortex of the war. This is true of the lawyers of that day, who showed themselves as able to make bold charges in the field as ever they were reputed to do in their offices. So that in the post bellum days there sat seven war judges on the bench of Upper Canada and of these seven, two had been officers in the Yorks.

Archibald McLean, afterwards Chief Justice, fought with the Yorks at Detroit and Queenston, and with the Incorporated Militia at Lundy's Lane. Being wounded at Queenston and taken prisoner at Lundy's Lane he had more war experience to cogitate than usually falls to the lot of a chief justice.

John Beverley Robinson, afterwards Chief Justice of Upper Canada, served with distinction at Detroit, left Toronto a law student to take part at Queenston and returned to find himself acting Attorney General. He left his impress on the public life and laws of this province. Among his sons, John Beverley was Lieutenant Governor, Christopher was a lawyer of international celebrity and Major-General. C. W. Robinson is a soldier and an historian, who if he has succeeded in making his readers understand the value of the command of Lake Ontario will have surpassed in service to this country his distinguished father.

CHAPTER III

How THE YORK MILITIA WENT WITH BROCK TO DETROIT, AND HOW PETER
ROBINSON S RIFLE COMPANY KEPT TRYST



ONE day in the later part of July, 1811, General Brock called out the York Militia on Garrison Common. The days previous to this parade had been filled with anxious preparation by the flank companies, who were anticipating the event and by extraordinary exertions on the part of the General himself.. The American General Hull had proceeded to take possession of Western Canada in a Proclamation to the Inhabitants, in which he threatened to emancipate them from tyranny and oppression and restore them to the dignified station of freemen. This had been answered by a counter Proclamation from Brock (prepared by the facile pen of Mr. Justice Powell), and by a small expedition sent under Capt. Roberts to capture Mackinac.

The proclamations on either side were barren of result, but the Mackinac expedition proving a complete success the weight of argument remained with the British.

On July 12th, simultaneously with his proclamation, Hull commanding a formidable army described by himself as "a force which will look down all opposition," crossed over to Sandwich, where he planted the American standard. His subsequent performance was characterized by feebleness in action and even against the scanty forces that could be collected to delay him, his looking down of opposition did not take him beyond the little river Canard, where a handful of troops, militia and Indians damped his military aggressiveness.

News of this invasion having reached Toronto, General Brock with a party of soldiers *rowed across the Lake to Niagara'* to put the frontier there in such a state of defence as means permitted; and immediately *rowed* back in the same boat and called out the militia.

The proposal that the General had to make must have seemed not much more seductive than the privilege of the three hundred Lacedemonians to occupy Thermopylae. He declared his intention to take an expedition from what is now Port Dover² and proceed thence by boats to Amherstburg. But owing to the limited transportation at his command he could only take one hundred volunteers from York, the same number from the head of the Lake (now Hamilton) and an equal number from Port Dover. He called for volunteers; many more men volunteered than could be taken and all the officers. From that hour Brock was

1. A matter of thirty-three miles to the river mouth.

2. Long Point was the rendezvous where they finally got together.

not and Britain never need be in doubt as to what response will be given by the Canadian militia.

Capt. Heward, of the 3rd Yorks, was selected to command the one hundred men of York, and under him were detailed for duty Lieut. John Beverley Robinson, of his own flank company; Lieut. Jarvie,¹ of Cameron's Company, and Lieut. Richardson, of Selby's flank company of the 1st Yorks.'

Captain Peter Robinson, also of the 1st Yorks, was by a special act of grace permitted to take his company of riflemen³ overland to the scene of action,—it being hardly suspected that he could ever succeed in arriving before the matter would be decided.

The little force left York on August 6th for Burlington Bay⁴ and picking up the other Yorks from that region marched overland to the rendezvous. On the way thither Brock dropped a word in the ear of the Six Nation Chiefs. And this by the way is one answer to the critics of Brock's aggressive strategy. For both Americans and British were much solicitous about those formidable skirmishers, the Indians; each side trying to persuade the astute chiefs that it possessed an overwhelming superiority. The chiefs on the other hand, mindful of the teachings of recent history, before committing their warriors to an unqualified support of England, required to be shown that the British officers were in earnest and meant to defend Upper Canada tooth and nail. The march past of Brock with his scarlet coated militias was to the practical Indian several hundred eloquent and convincing orations to stand by his ally the King.

To us familiar with the ease in which now a trip can be made in a few hours from Toronto to Detroit it seems strange that so energetic a general should commit his force to a water trip of two hundred miles on a huge and treacherous lake rather than continue his march westward until he reached the River. Nor does the wonder diminish when we find that the lake boats collected for his expedition were not such luxurious craft as we entrust ourselves to at this day when tempting the waters of the Great Lakes, but the open boats or batteaux of that day propelled by the steady sweep of the long two-handed oar.

But when we read of what toils befell overland passengers, in the many days it took them to win from the Detroit to the Grand through a forest land, where the streams had no bridges⁶ and the roads no existence, we can well understand why Brock took the dangerous water route and with what sardonic kindness he permitted Peter Robinson's company to go by land.

1. Not to be confused with Jarvis. The irrepressible Samuel Peters Jarvis then an ensign in Reward's Company had succeeded in being attached to the 41st Regiment, and duly appeared at Detroit and several other battlefields.

2. See order quoted in Scadding at p. 79.

3. The distinction between Infantry and Rifles in those days was an actual one—the infantry being armed with muskets, and not rifles. Nowadays this distinction is a quaint survival of military etiquette of great importance and interest to solemn and punctilious asses.

4. Showing the confidence Brock had in his one hundred York volunteers he allowed them three days to visit their relatives and make preparations for campaign: Auchinleck, p. 36.

5. Seemingly the flank companies got their caps and blankets at York and their regimental coats at Burlington. Of muskets Brock himself said he had not one more than sufficient to arm the active militia. Boots for the militia and tents Brock could not provide by prayer or purchase until at any rate he took over the stores at Detroit.

6. It was an ingenious device the early pioneer had for an amphibious wagon; a water tight body into which, when he came to an unfordable stream, he lifted the wheels and poled across with the horses swimming behind.

The toils of this argonautic expedition,—consisting of some forty men of the 41st Regiment and two hundred and sixty militia,—cannot be better expressed than in the diary of William McCay,ⁱ who was a volunteer in Captain Hatt's company, which had proceeded from the camp of Queenston to join Brock's little army. Hatt's contingent had a merry wagon ride from Queenston to Fort Erie, and from there had rowed to the mouth of the Grand River. We take up McCay's narrative from this point until he reached Fort Malden.

"August 7th, 1812.—We slept under the trees on the bank of the river, arose early and set off. We did not land until we came to Patterson's Creek, about forty miles from the Grand River. Here we were informed that the volunteers from York, some of the 41st Regiment and some militia lay that were to go with us.

"August 8th, 1812.—Slept on shore in the best manner we could. Two of our company deserted this morning, James Bycraft and Harvey Thorne. We did not leave this place until 12 o'clock, when we set off and came to Long Point in the evening, drew our boats across and put up for the night.

"August 9th, 1812.—Arose early this morning and about sunrise were joined by General Brock and six boat loads with troops from Patterson's Creek. We all set off together, having a fair wind till about 1 o'clock, and then rowed till night, when we landed at Kettle Creek, about six miles below Port Talbot.

"August 10th, 1812.—Wet and cold last night; some of us lay in boats and some on the sand. We set off early, but the wind blew so hard we were obliged to put into Port Talbot. We covered our baggage from the rain, which still continued, and most of us set out to get something to eat, being tired of bread and pork. Five of us found our way to a place, where we got a very good breakfast, bought some butter and sugar and returned. Lay here all day, the wind being high.

"August-11th, 1812.—Set off early with a fair wind, but it soon blew so hard we had to land on the beach and draw up our boats, having come twelve or fifteen



Photo by Kennedy

*The Remains of Old Fort Malden
The "Tree to the left is said to be the finest Linden
in America.*

1. Published in *The Toronto Globe*, April 15th, 1911.

m les. Some of us built camps and covered them with bark to shelter us from the rain, which poured down incessantly, but I was obliged to go on guard, wet as I was. Some of our men discovered horse tracks a few miles above us, which we supposed were American horsemen, for we were informed they came within a few miles of Port Talbot.

"August 12th, 1812.—We set off before daylight and came on until breakfast time, when we stopped at Points—where we found plenty of sand cherries. They are just getting ripe and very good. We continued our journey all night, which was very fatiguing, being so crowded in the boats we could not lie down.

"August 13th, 1812.—We came to a settlement this morning, the first since we left Port Talbot. The inhabitants informed us the Americans had all retired to their own side of the river, also that there was a skirmish between our troops and them on their own side, that is, the American side of the river. We made no stop, only to boil our pork, but kept on until 2 o'clock, when we lay on the beach until morning. Some of the boats with the General went on.

"August 14th, 1812.—We landed at Fort Maiden about 8 o'clock, very tired with rowing, and our faces burned with the sun until the skin came off. Malden is about two miles from the lake, up the river, in which there are several small islands. The banks are low and well cultivated near the river, but a wilderness back from it. Our company was marched to the storehouse, where we took out our baggage and dried it and cleaned our guns; were paraded at 11 o'clock and all our arms and ammunition that were damaged were replaced. We then rambled about the town until evening, when all the troops that were in Amherstburg were paraded on the commons. They were calculated at eight or nine hundred men."

Two orders of General Brock² are of interest to students of what is now appropriately called amphibious warfare and show that the General meant to be in the forefront of the flotilla³ and that he had his anxieties.

Headquarters, Banks of Lake Erie,

15 Miles S.W. of Port Talbot,

August 11th, 1812, 6 o'clock, p.m.

General Orders :

The troops will hold themselves in readiness, and will embark in the boats at twelve o'clock this night precisely.

It is Major General Brock's positive order that none of the boats go ahead of that in which is the Head Quarters, where a light will be carried during the night.

The officers commanding the different boats will immediately inspect the arms and ammunition of the men, and see that they are constantly kept in a state for immediate service, as the troops are now to pass through a part of the country, which is known to have been visited by the enemy's patrols.

1. Probably Point Pelée.

2. Published in Richardson, p. 48.

3. He had learned his ideas of military prudence by serving under Nelson at Copenhagen.

A captain, with a subaltern and thirty men, will mount as picquet upon the landing of the boats and a sentry will be furnished from each boat, who must be regularly relieved to take charge of the boats and baggage, etc.

A patrol from the picquet will be sent out on landing to the distance of a mile from the encampment.

By order of the Major General.

J. B. GLEGG, Capt. A.D.C.

J. MACDONELL, P.A.D.C.

Point Aux Pins,

Lake Erie, August 12th, 1812.

General Orders:

It is Major General Brock's intention should the wind continue fair, to proceed during the night. Officers commanding boats will therefore pay attention to the order of sailing as directed yesterday. The greatest care and attention will be requested to prevent the boats from scattering or falling behind.

A great part of the bank of the lake, which the boats will this day pass, is much more dangerous and difficult of access than any we have passed. The boats therefore will not land, excepting in the most extreme necessity, and then great care must be taken to choose the best places for landing.

The troops being now in the neighbourhood of the enemy, every precaution must be taken to guard against surprise.

By order of the Major General,

J. B. GLEGG, A.D.C.

That Brock knew what to do when a marine emergency arose is proved by the fact that when his own boat ran hard aground, like the standard bearer of Caesar's Tenth Legion, he set the example by leaping into the water.' From which we can understand the meaning of Lieut. Robinson (afterwards exalted to the rank of Chief Justice), when as late as 1840 he expressed a vivid remembrance of his general in the words: "It would have required much more courage to refuse to follow General Brock than to go with him wherever he would lead."

Referring to his comrades in this campaign the same brilliant soldier-judge has written:—" This body of men consisted of farmers, mechanics and gentlemen, who before that time had not been accustomed to any exposure unusual with persons of the same description in other countries. They marched on foot and travelled in boats and vessels, nearly six hundred miles in going and returning, in the hottest part of the year, sleeping occasionally on the ground and frequently drenched with rain, but not a man was left behind in consequence." Perhaps

1. Lady Edgar, p. 231.

HISTORY OF THE 12TH REGIMENT, YORK RANGERS

their best eulogy is in Brock's own words: "Their conduct throughout excited my admiration. ."

The other events of this wonderful campaign, the going up to Sandwich, the crossing of the Detroit with Brock standing in the bow of the foremost boat, and the stupendous surrender of Hull's army to a little force of whom the Americans complained "four hundred were Canadian militia disguised in red coats,'—are not these related in the chronicles.

What much searching of history will further reveal is that the indefatigable Peter Robinson and his Rifle Company of the 1st Yorks, having reached Sandwich in time to share in all these glorious operations, was given the honour of going aboard as body-guard to Brock himself on a very small trading schooner; which after nearly running aground at Buffalo was eventually towed into harbour at Fort Erie.

1. No bad guess: the red coats were actually the cast-off clothing of the 41st Regiment: Lady Edgar, p. 256.

CHAPTER IV

PUSH ON THE YORK VOLUNTEERS



THIS is not the attempt to re-tell the battle of Queenston Heights, which has often been written with enthusiasm, yea and even with eloquence and occasionally with accuracy. It is merely to tell why as his last order Brock saw fit to push on the York Volunteers.

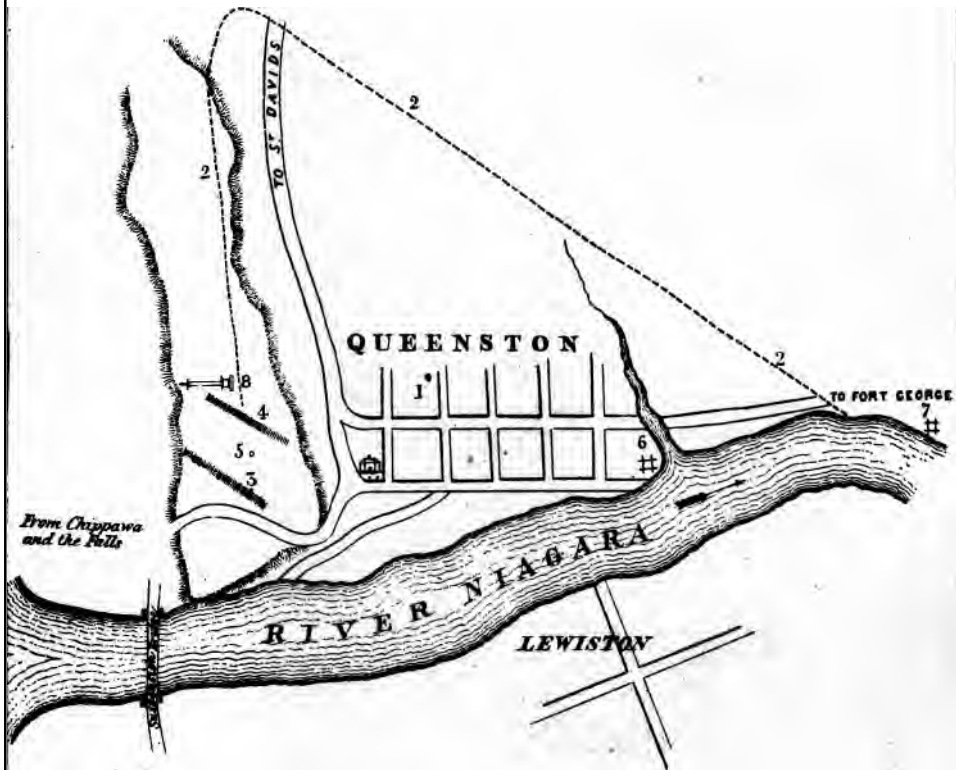
Well on the morning of October 13th, 1812, a miniature British army was defending a frontier of some thirty-six miles from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake, its commander, General Isaac Brock, being obliged by his instructions from Sir George Prevost to adopt purely *defensive* measures. In a letter of September 18th, Brock had written his brother Savery : "You will hear of some decided action in the course of a fortnight or in all probability we shall return to a state of tranquility. *I say decisive because if I should be beaten the province is inevitably gone; and should I be victorious, I do not imagine the gentry from the other side will care to return to the charge.*"

He lay in some force at Fort George, which he had equipped to silence the American Fort Niagara, expecting that the movement of invasion would be around his left flank, while Fort Niagara would effect a diversion with its guns.

The seven miles of river from Fort George to Queenston he had picketed with what history has dignified as batteries. Thus at the Heights about half-way down the hill was the Redan Battery (armed with an eighteen pounder) with Capt. Williams' flank company of the Green Tigers (the 49th Regiment). In the village of Queenston was the other flank company under Major Dennis, along with Chisholm and Hatt's Militia Companies and a brass six pounder and two three pounders handled by a small detachment of artillery. Of the Yorks, Reward's Company, under Lieut. Robinson and Cameron's Company were stationed at Brown's Point two miles below Queenston. At night Robinson acted as an extra guard to the Battery at Vrooman's Point nearer Queenston and returned in the morning to the command of his senior, Capt. Cameron, at Brown's Point.

General Van Rensselaer did not attack Fort George, probably for the reason that he felt he was expected there. But, merely demonstrating in that quarter, he secretly concentrated at Fort Gray opposite Queenston and proceeded to drive a wedge through the centre of the thinly held line of British. His boats were received on the Canadian shore with a vigour that surprised them; some being sunk and those who landed getting it hot and dry from musket and bayonet; the survivors being sent under escort to Fort George. The guns in Fort Gray and the Redan on Queenston kept up a furious cannonade that sent the news down the River to Cameron and Brock.

Min DV TR BATTU OF VIJEEMTA.



// Spot where Brock fell
 ad by whir the reinkrrements from,
 2 Fort Georgethe gained the Ifezghts it the/
 afternoon'
 3., Amercarthne as drawn up in afternoon.
 4. _British/ line do. do

5 Sited' first monament
 6" Old JOH-
 7. Vivmonts _Battery
 el" Brocks monument

Reproduced from an old account of the Battle

Capt. Cameron was not a professional soldier and was not instructed for this emergency. But with a correct instinct he decided to march to the sound of the guns and put his two companies of York Volunteers upon the road towards Queenston. On their way a single horseman overtook and passed them at a gallop, waving his hand to them and urging them as Robinson writes : " to follow with expedition." This was Isaac Brock on his way to his last battle. Soon after, that darling of Canadian soldiery, Col. Macdonell galloped by, also to meet his fate; and with him rode Capt. Glegg, Brock's other aide-de-camp

It is a matter of history, fittingly commemorated by the tall monument that towers above the heights he strove to regain,' that Brock met his end as he had won his victories by attempting the desperate to ward off the seemingly inevitable. Nor was the attempt in vain; for the fury of the contest and the boat loads of wounded returning to the American shore had that moral effect on the adversary, which decided the victory of the afternoon. ²

Twice Brock strove to gain the heights with every soldier he could spare from Queenston and twice he failed. But the words, "Push on the York Volunteers," ³ whether spoken by him just before or after he was struck were not heroics nor melodrama but a plain military order to throw into the issue his one available reserve, namely, the two companies under Capt. Cameron which following the trail of their general were panting up the road to Queenston.

Col. Macdonell rode to his death on the left flank of the York- Volunteers and when he fell mortally wounded Capt. Cameron carried him off amid a shower of musketry. The shattered remains of these much tried pickets were rallied about a mile below the heights and marching through the fields back of Queenston joined themselves to the centre of Sheaffe's advancing column. Nor did the gruelling punishment of the morning prevent their earning their place in that famous dispatch of General Sheaffe, in which he says:

"Lieut-Cols. Butler and Clark of the militia; and Capts. Hatt, Durand, Rowe, Applegarth, James Crooks, Cooper, Robert Hamilton, McEwen, *Duncan Cameron*, and Lieuts. Richardsons ⁴ and Thomas Butler, commanding flank companies of the Lincoln and York militia *led their men into action with great spirit.*" ⁵

The great spirit with which that day they led on their men and General Sheaffe led his, was that of Isaac Brock. We shall see that this spirit evaporated from some of the generals if not from their juniors, and that soldiers who under Brock's influence were intrepid, like Sheaffe and Proctor, became soon afterwards vacillating, disheartened and timorous.

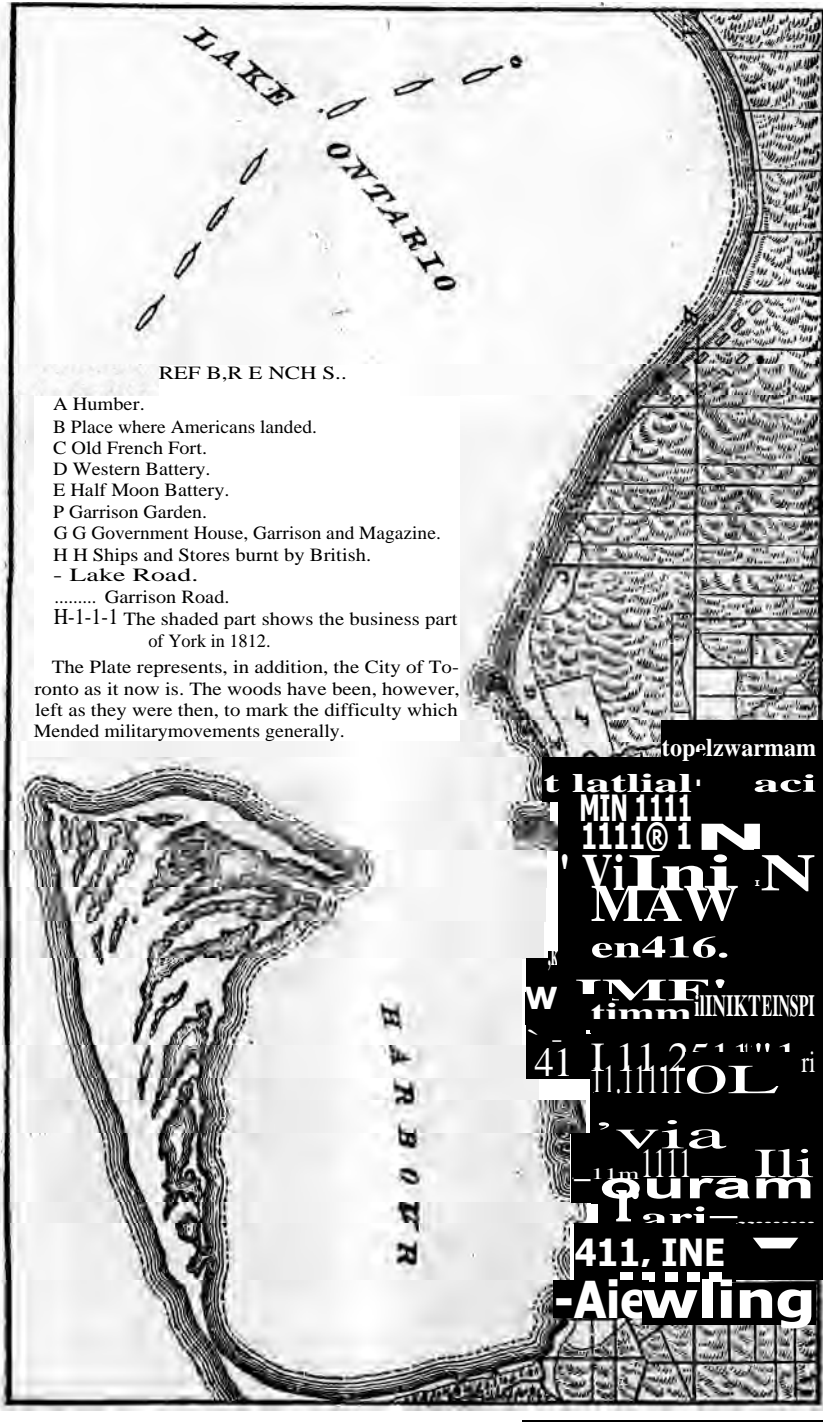
1. The Redan had been depleted of all but eight gunners in order to reinforce Queenston. Captain Wool, of the United States Army having taken his boats farther up the River, found a narrow unguarded path to the heights; which had the ultimate victory rested with the Americans would now be as famous as the celebrated path from Wolfe's Cove. This latter path must have been an achievement for Wolfe to find as no two citizens of Quebec ever show it to visitors in the same place.

2. The reinforcements that Van Rensselaer was ready to throw over to secure his partial victory developed "constitutional" doubts about leaving American soil and remained there.

3. Some authorities insert the words, "brave." Not necessary to any that rowed in the same boat with Brock.

4. This was of course Selby's Company. Both Capts. Heward and Selby came over to the Niagara frontier with Cameron, but appear to have been absent on leave the day when the blow was struck. This is not surprising as there had been a long tedious wait previous to the attack. Peter Robinson's company was in garrison at Mackinac.

5. Printed in "Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier," Part IV, p. 72.



- REF B, R E N C H S..
- A Humber.
 - B Place where Americans landed.
 - C Old French Fort.
 - D Western Battery.
 - E Half Moon Battery.
 - P Garrison Garden.
 - G G Government House, Garrison and Magazine.
 - H H Ships and Stores burnt by British.
 - Lake Road.
 - Garrison Road.
 - H-1-1-1 The shaded part shows the business part of York in 1812.

The Plate represents, in addition, the City of Toronto as it now is. The woods have been, however, left as they were then, to mark the difficulty which Mended military movements generally.



From an Old Plan of Toronto
 The References are as of 1846. Note the Island was at that date a Peninsula

CHAPTER V

HOW GENERAL SHEAFFE PUT THE QUIETUS ON THE YORKS



HE trouble was that under the circumstances York was indefensible and that General Sheaffe allowed the militia and some regulars to be involved in a defense, which was meaningless. For it is meaningless to defend a place that, after taking, the enemy could not hold if it would and would not if it could.

A good description of what York was and how it was fortified is to be found in Coffin's "Chronicle of the War."

"In April 1813, the town was a scattered collection of low-roofed villas, embowered in apple orchards. An old French Fort or earthwork constructed to resist the Indians, stood on the shore of the lake about a mile from the inhabited part of the Bay. Two embrasured field works, dignified by the name of batteries, covered the entry to the harbour. These works were armed with three old French twenty-four pound guns, captured in 1760; the trunions had been knocked off at the time, but, for the nonce, they had been exhumed from the sand and clamped down upon pine logs, extemporised as carriages. The town was entirely open in the rear and on the flanks."

Well on the 25th of April, 1813, Commodore Chauncey, having for the time the command of the lake, sailed from Sackett's Harbour for York with a fleet of some fifteen sail, having on board Generals Dearborn and Pike and a force variously estimated by historians at from sixteen hundred to five thousand troops.'

Videttes had been long before posted in constant watch on Scarborough Heights with orders to fire alarm guns and on sight of a hostile fleet to ride into town. The alarm came late on the evening of April 26th.

Now according to Coffin, who was a relative of Sir Roger Sheaffe, "Sheaffe's first duty as a soldier and as a general looking to the defence of his military command was to abandon a place never intended to have been defended and to preserve his force for the protection of the country. The capture of this detachment at this time would have been an irretrievable loss and in its effects, fatal to the province."

It was this duty of abandonment, which Sir Roger Sheaffe performed in a fashion that endangered his regulars, disqualified the militia for the rest of the campaign, caused the burning of the parliament buildings and ruined Sheaffe's own reputation as a soldier. Unless he purposed to match brown-bess muskets against the guns of a fleet'—he must have known he could not prevent a landing

1. p. 98.

2. Historians vary like real estate experts on an arbitration. Perhaps a fair estimate would be two thousand five hundred, including the crews. See Auchinleck, p. 151.

3. Capt. McNeil and two companies of the 8th were practically wiped out by the broadsides from the fleet.

and the capture of the ridiculous fortifications. But as it was he frittered away what fighting chance there was by allowing his force to be engaged and beaten in detail. First, Major Givens with about forty Indians and a few inhabitants of the town not enrolled for military duty, then about sixty Glengarry Fencibles, then some two hundred and twenty militia, and fifty of the Newfoundland Regiment, then two companies of the 8th Regiment (about two hundred strong)—these in succession were dribbled in to withstand a landing force upwards of one thousand strong. Meanwhile General Shaw,¹ with forty men and a six pounder held the line of Dundas Street and never got into action.

The blowing up of a magazine² killed General Pike and some two hundred Americans along with some of the defenders. Having set fire to a ship that was on the stocks, General Sheaffe retreated with the remains of his force to Kingston.

The bitter part of it was that having been permitted by Sheaffe to throw themselves into the contest with enthusiasm,³ the militia were allowed to save their homes by surrendering the town to an enemy exasperated by their stiff resistance and by the death of Pike and the destruction of stores. As Sheaffe puts it, "Lieut.-Col. Chewett and Major Allan of the militia were instructed to treat with the American commanders for terms." The negotiations were conducted largely by John Strachan (sometime Bishop of Toronto) assisted by Lieut. John Beverley Robinson, acting Attorney-General.

A curious statement appears in Auchinleck's "History of the War,"⁴ as follows: "The defence of the town being no longer practicable, a surrender necessarily followed by which it was stipulated that the militia and others attached to the British military and naval service *who had been captured* should be paroled; that private property of every kind should be respected and that all public stores should be given up to the captors. We have italicised the words, '*who had been captured*,' as the Americans got possession of the militia rolls and included amongst the list of prisoners on parole many who had never laid down their arms and whom it was never contemplated to include in the list."

This statement is borne out by the fact that the list printed in the histories⁵ includes at least one name that does not appear in the original orderly room copy of the terms of capitulation.⁶ And this name is that of our famous fighting lieutenant of Selby's Company, Reuben Richardson lately hero of Detroit and Queenston Heights, and now in cold blood surrendered by insertion.

Of the cavalier way in which General Dearborn treated his conquest and his prisoners, and how Dr. Strachan bullied the Americans into observing the terms of capitulation (after they had burned the public buildings) we need say no more than that the reverend doctor and future prelate for clear headed intrepidity carries off the chief honours on the British side.

1. Ancestor of Lt.-Col. Geo. A. Shaw, sometime O.C. 10th Royals.

2. The explosion just at this moment is now generally believed to have been accidental; but was a matter of bitter controversy at the time.

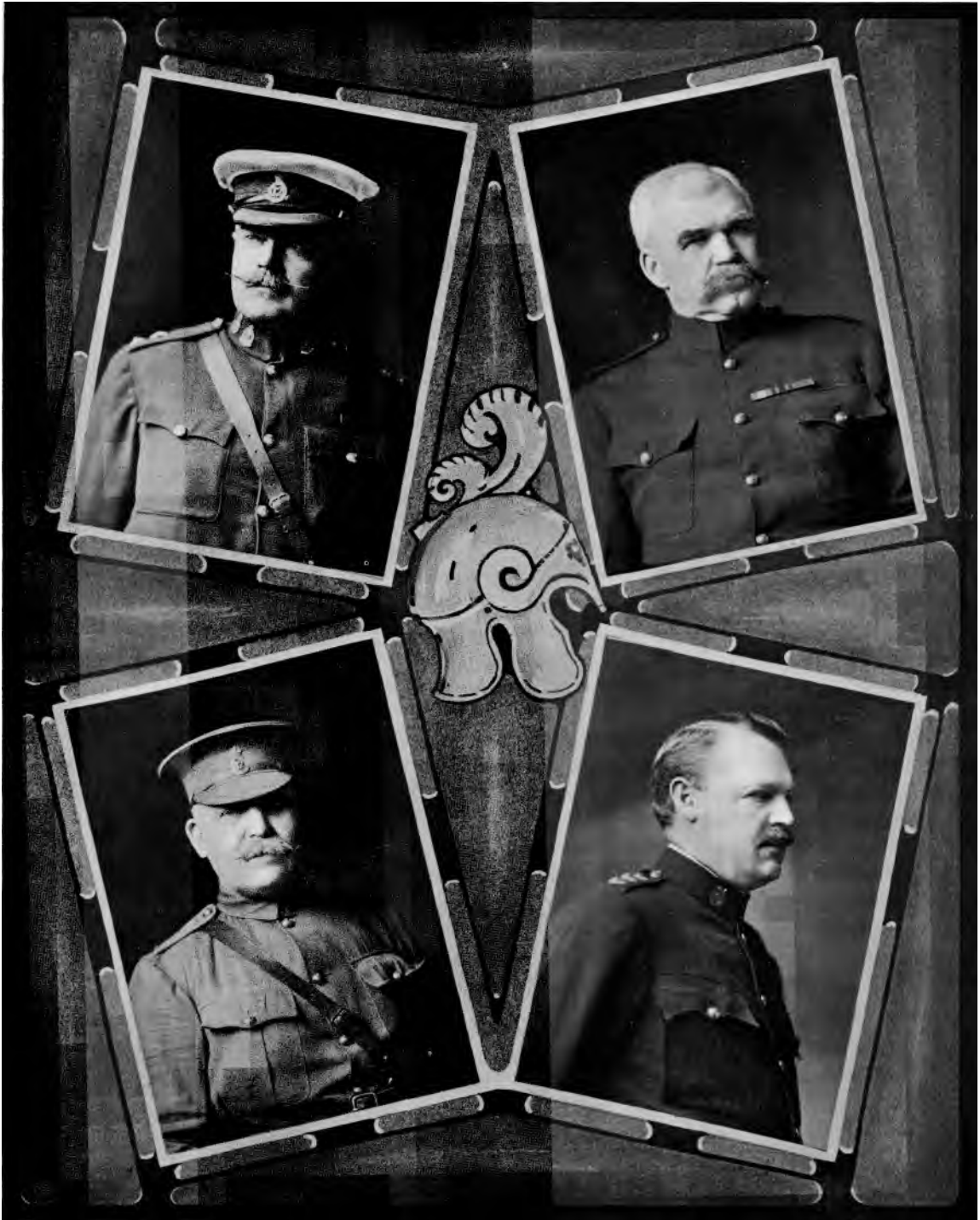
3. Among the killed was Maclean, Clerk of the House of Assembly.

4. p. 153.

5. e.g. in Auchinleck himself at p. 154.

6. Printed in fac simile in Robertson's "Landmarks of Toronto," Vol. 2, p. 808.

Decidedly it would have been better if General Sheaffe had on sight of the American fleet burned his stores, carried off all his troops, including the York Volunteers, and left Dr. Strachan to surrender the town without a futile contest. But being a personally brave and mentally inconclusive man, Sheaffe could on this occasion neither fight nor refrain from fighting but salved his conscience with a resistance the utility of which does not appear. For the enemy having won a complete victory and captured York on April 27th, 1813, evacuated York on May 2nd, 1813, which in legal parlance constitutes—Four clear days.



Photos by Kennedy

Surgeon Lieut.-Col. R. M. HILLARY

*Major A. ELLIOTT,
Musketry Instructor.*

*Hon. Major A. GILLIES
Quartermaster*

*Hon. Major J. E. KNOX
Paymaster*

CHAPTER VI

THE INGREDIENTS OF SEDITION

FOLLOWING the War of 1812-14 a political process was resumed and accelerated, which had started under the regime of Hon. Peter Russell, President and Administrator of the Province after the withdrawal of Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe. This consisted in the formation of a patrician class, composed of officials, a number of whom together with their relatives, became large land-holders and proceeded to engross the government places and emoluments of the province. This was not unaccompanied by some corruption and peculation in office and by abuses inherent to an aristocratic system, such as the reservation of one seventh of all public lands to form the foundation for a state church. One very irritating grievance that bore heavily on the actual settler, was that a large percentage of the land being thus held by the church or by land-grabbers and unoccupied by bona fide residents and no work being done on the contiguous allowances for roads, the public highways were in a deplorable condition.

The natural result of these actual grievances and of this exclusiveness of political patronage was a series of agitations bitterly conducted and ferociously resisted. A succession of agitators, Gourlay, Collins and finally William Lyon Mackenzie kept the public mind in a turmoil by writings and public meetings. What in the journalism of those days was apparently regarded by its authors as calm and legitimate criticism would now be reckoned as gross personal insult. One response of the office-holding class to these attacks was by the sweeping use of the machinery of the courts in prosecutions for seditious libel. And whether it was an attorney-general or chief justice thundering in the court or merely a Scotch reformer and a North of Ireland upholder of the administration arguing with stakes that ought to have been left in place to keep the wood from falling off the sleigh—the proceedings were wholehearted and free from any pretence of toleration and self-restraint. The Tories-in-office had a number of hard names, which they freely applied to their enemies the Radical agitators. But the agitators cleverly responded with one fixed term of opprobrium and summed up all their charges of nepotism and tyranny in the words, "Family Compact."

Now the militia of Canada, embracing all the able-bodied male population, was of course neither all for nor all against the Family Compact. But it happened that certain able and courageous men, whom we have had occasion to mention in previous chapters were recognized members of the ruling caste. Thus Dr. Strachan and John Beverley Robinson were felt by both parties to be the dominant brains of the compact; while there were many ardent spirits among those who had seen service in 1812, who were heartily in accord with upholding aristocratic

traditions, and who powerfully detested any democratic innovations. Thus when on June 8th, 1826, a mob of young gentlemen of official extraction threw William Lyon Mackenzie's type into the Bay,—and thereby unintentionally prolonged his political career,—it was deposed to that two citizens mentioned in previous chapters as Major and Captain, but now became Colonel Allan and Colonel Reward stood complacently watching that unconventional method of answering an editor.

In fact it appears to have been the policy of the Family Compact both to secure the veteran officers of 1812 by public offices and to keep the higher ranks in the militia for members of its circle. Thus in a pleasantly personal *black list* published by Mackenzie in June, 1828, just on the eve of a general election, with the title :-

"No. 6. Places of Profit, Honour and Emolument held by some of the members of the present or last House of Assembly or by candidates for the Legislature," we find items like these:—

"John B. Robinson, Attorney-General; *Colonel of Militia*; King's College Counsellor; Welland Canal Director; Hospital Trustee; Allegiance Commissioner, School Trustee."

"D. Cameron, J.P.; *Major of Militia*."

"Arch. McLean, Clerk of the Peace; Registrar of Stormont and Dundas; Member Board of Education; J.P.; *Colonel of Militia*."

The total list comprises Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels, 19; Majors, 9; Captains, 8; and *one* Lieutenant. Whence we may infer that up to 1828, at any rate, the Family Compact had with premeditated design set its strong fingers on the whole militia organization.

One thing, however, had not been foreseen, namely, that a paper organization without weapons or training, is not suited for emergency work. Veterans who still felt within their veins the hot blood of Queenston or Lundy's Lane, did not perhaps realize that during a quarter of a century of peace there had rusted out both the muskets of 1812 and the skill to use them. And so fell out that curious episode of 1837.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOUR THOUSAND MUSKETS AT THE CITY HALL



HE troubles known to history as the Mackenzie Rebellion are really divisible into two distinct periods. First, the rebellion itself before it became an international affair; and secondly, the War of Filibusters that began with the burning of the *Caroline* on December 29th, 1837.

The success or failure of Mackenzie's attempt to overthrow the government of Sir Francis Head did not depend on any preponderance of loyalty or disaffection, but on something very material and confined in a very small space—namely on the four thousand stand of arms lying in their unbroken packages at the City Hall in Toronto. Let us see why.

Of all the governors who by the blunder of a statesman (or the mistake of a messenger) have vexed Britain's over-seas dominions, Sir Francis Bond Head was by the quality and exercise of his undoubted talents the best fitted to lose a British Colony.

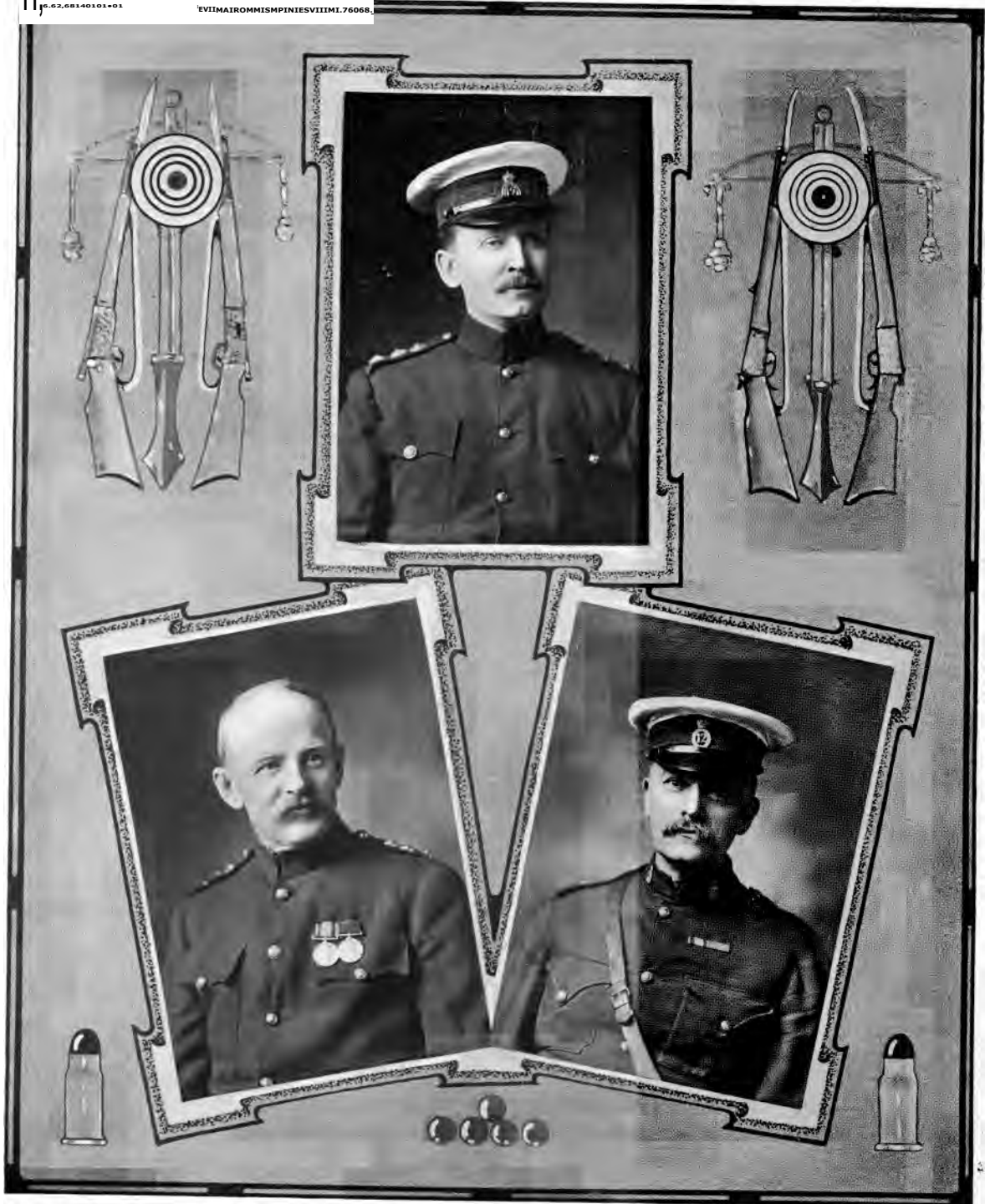
While exasperating the Reformers to the verge of rebellion, he was scarcely less irritating to the upholders of the Family Compact, who found him resentful of their advice and determined to pull the roof down over his own and their heads. The reform agitation had up till August 15th, 1837, been a spirited, but not overtly unlawful propaganda by public meetings and white-hot publications. About this date some fifty Orangemen with clubs adjourned one of Mackenzie's meetings. The answer to this line of argument took the form of an escort of one hundred horsemen, who accompanied the agitator to his Vaughan meeting.

The project launched by Mackenzie in July "for uniting, organizing and registering the Reformers of Upper Canada as a political union," began as he foresaw to take a military direction. The various branches or societies, which he had instituted, began to take an unwonted interest in rifle matches and turkey shoots and to collect pike-heads, doubtless for their symbolic value.

These matters were duly reported to Sir Francis Head, who secure in his sense of popularity,² not only refused to take any precautions to meet an outbreak, but in spite of the most alarming information sent every regular soldier out of the province to help against Papineau in Quebec. The garrison having disappeared, the insurgents had two chances to get the four thousand muskets upon whose possession depended the fate of an appeal to arms. Mackenzie, while disclaiming

1. It was more than suspected that the appointment of Sir Francis Head was due to a mistake in addressing or delivering the papers to the wrong Head.

2. He had beaten the Reformers in 1836 on one of those "Old Flag" campaigns, which are one of the outstanding phenomena of Upper Canadian politics, occurring as they do every eighteen or twenty years. If there is any credit in inventing such a political device, then credit must be given to Sir Francis Head.



Photos by Kennedy

*Capt. W. H. TAYLOR,
Commanding B Company*

*Capt. W. B. HAMILTON,
Commanding A Company*

*Capt. W. G. FOWLER,
Commanding C Company*

any military capacity knew the general scarcity of fire arms,' and proceeded in his characteristic way to improve his first chance of getting that superiority of fire which determines battles. His plan was "that we should instantly send for Dutcher's foundry-men and Armstrong's axe-makers, all of whom could have been depended on, and with them go promptly to the Government House, seize Sir Francis, carry him to the City Hall, a fortress in itself, seize the arms and ammunition there and the artillery, etc., in the old garrison; rouse our innumerable friends in town and country, proclaim a provisional government," etc., etc.

Viewing the matter in the light of what actually did happen, one is struck by the entire feasibility of the plan and by the utter imbecility displayed by Mackenzie in his method of execution. For instead of going himself with a few tried friends, and collecting Dutcher's and Armstrong's men, he propounded his manoeuvre to a meeting of fourteen or fifteen of the most fluent and sub-heroic orators in his party; with the result that they talked it out until it joined the innumerable list of great deeds that might have been done.

Inevitably some one told Sir Francis Head and consistently with his character he would neither do anything himself, nor permit anyone else to do anything for the defence of his person, capital or province. ²

About this time there was in Toronto a certain veteran soldier of 1812, Col. Fitzgibbon, who was making an unqualified nuisance of himself to the powers-that-be. He made repeated alarmist representations to Head and his Council of an impending rebellion and was loftily snubbed by the Governor, the Judges and the Attorney-General. Indeed the only man of official standing in Toronto that gave heed to his utterances appears to have been Hon. Wm. Allan, whom we have mentioned in his militia capacity in previous chapters. Despite his chilling lack of encouragement, Fitzgibbon got up a list of one hundred and twenty-six men (out of the twelve thousand inhabitants of the city) upon whose loyalty he could depend. Taking this list to Sir Francis he informed him that *with or without his permission* he intended to keep these men on duty so that on the ringing of the college bell they should assemble at the City Hall. When the matter was presented to him in this manner Sir Francis gave a grumbling assent. As a matter of history this little contingent was all that stood between Head and the successful issue of Mackenzie's second plan for the capture of the four thousand muskets.

This plan was one of those intricate combinations which can only succeed in the entire absence of any military precaution or capacity on the part of those who are to be overthrown. Mackenzie schemed to concentrate his followers from Dan to Beersheba at a point in York County, and march thence upon the city before the Government could collect its friends. The date fixed was Thursday, 7th December, 1837, and Montgomery's Tavern on Yonge Street was the rendezvous.

1. "Of the fifteen hundred men whose names had been returned on the insurrection rolls, only a very small proportion—perhaps not over one in five—had firearms of any description.—Lindsay's "Life of Mackenzie," Vol. II, p. 52.

2. In the *Emigrant* (published in 1846) Sir Francis gave as his reason for not doing anything, that he did not want to harass the militia by calling them out; sending them back, calling them out again, sending them back again and so on: "The militia of Canada are men, whose time cannot with impunity be trifled with." The sentiment is worth preserving, even if it cost Sir Francis nine years to think it out.

Two unforeseen circumstances broke up the combination. The first was that Dr. Rolph, a brilliant orator and bad conspirator, got alarmed at the state of unrest in Toronto, and thinking the plan had been discovered changed the date to the 4th December. This had the result that only a portion of the would-be-rebels got notice in time to join Mackenzie. The others either went out later with Dr. Duncombe in the west, and being practically unarmed, dispersed without battle; or hastening to the scene of trouble and hearing of the fiasco at Montgomery's Tavern became forthwith Her Majesty's most loyal militia.

The other circumstance was that the irrepressible Fitzgibbon despite the most explicit order of Sir Francis Head posted a forbidden and unthanked picket on Yonge Street.'

On Monday, the 4th December, 1837, the Rebellion actually broke out and on Tuesday night the rebels, having been amused for several hours by flags of truce, moved down Yonge Street to take the city. Their advance guard struck the picket commanded by Sheriff W. B. Jarvis. The picket fired and ran in. The rebels also ran,—some eight hundred of them,—and retired to Montgomery's Tavern. To put it mildly the city was alarmed; even Sir Francis Head dressed himself and added to the confusion at the City Hall by issuing absurd orders. The arrival of Allan McNab from Hamilton with sixty men of Gore saved the situation by distracting the attention of Sir Francis from the confusion he was maintaining. The subsequent events—the advance of the now numerous volunteers with their muskets and cannon against the rebels of whom but two hundred had fire arms; the foregone conclusion at Montgomery's Tavern,—these are now ancient history.

Now where among all this confusion was the militia of whom as we have seen there were among the notables of the province such numerous colonels, lieutenant-colonels, majors and captains (not to mention one lieutenant). It seems, indeed, that these great men were not without the spirits of soldiers even if the bodies were invisible. For an eye-witness of the scene at the Market Place in Toronto on the morning of the 5th December, after the college bell had rung during the night, writes :—" I found a large number of persons serving out arms to others as fast as they possibly could. Among others, we saw the Lieutenant-Governor in his every-day suit with one double barrellled gun in his hand, another leaning against his breast and a brace of pistols in his leathern belt. Also Chief Justice Robinson, Judges Macaulay, Jones and McLean, the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General with their muskets, cartridges, boxes and bayonets, all standing in ranks as private soldiers under the command of Col. Fitzgibbon."

A spirited description of the militia man of 1837 is to be found in Lindsay's " Life of Mackenzie":

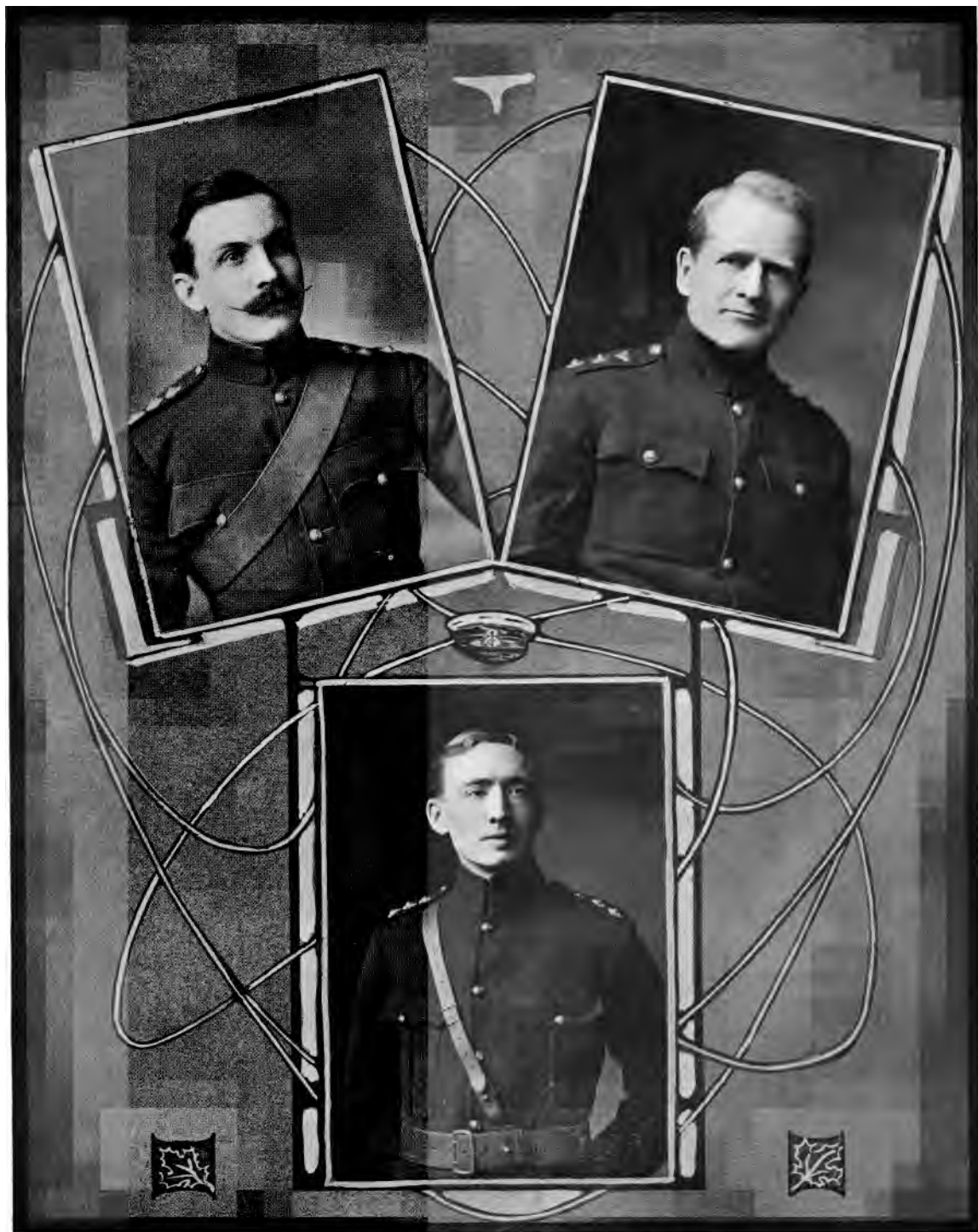
"The militia who went to the succor of the Government was not generally a more warlike body of men than the insurgents under Lount. ² These were drawn

1. Looking at the events of those days through the mellowing atmosphere of history we can easily forgive the Family Compact and the Governor for their last-ditch opposition to "Responsible Government." But when we consider the pig-headed obtuseness of the man and his subsequent insincerity towards Fitzgibbon, not even the lapse of centuries will sooth the desire to personally kick Sir Francis Bond Head, Bart.

2. Lount was Mackenzie's best lieutenant. He, being a blacksmith, made the pike heads. He was hanged for his share in the rebellion.

from the same class—the agriculturists—and were similarly armed and equipped. A description of a party—as given to me by an eye-witness—who came down from the North, would answer, with a very slight variation, for the militia of any other part of the province. A number of persons collected at Bradford, on the Monday or Tuesday, not one-third of whom had arms of any kind; and many of those who were armed had nothing better than pitchforks, rusty swords, dilapidated guns, and newly manufactured pikes, with an occasional bayonet on the end of a pole. These persons, without the least authority of law, set about a disarming process; depriving every one who refused to join them, or whom they chose to suspect of disloyalty, of his arms. Powder was taken from stores, wherever found, without the least ceremony, and without payment. On Thursday, a final march from Bradford for Toronto was commenced; the number of men being nearly five hundred, including one hundred and fifty Indians, with painted faces and savage looks. At Holland Landing some pikes; which probably belonged to Lount, were secured. In their triumphant march, these grotesque-looking militiamen made a prisoner of every man who did not give such an account of himself as they deemed satisfactory. Each prisoner, as he was taken, was tied to a rope; and when Toronto was reached a string of fifty prisoners all fastened together were marched in. Fearing an ambush, these recruits did not venture to march through the Oak Ridges in the night; and a smoke being seen led to the conclusion that Toronto was in flames. McLeod's tavern, beyond the Ridges, was taken possession of, as well as several other houses in the vicinity. In a neighbouring store, all kinds of provisions and clothing that could be obtained were unceremoniously seized. At the tavern there was a regular scramble for food; and cake-baking and bacon-frying were going on upon a wholesale scale. Next morning, several who had no arms, and others who were frightened, returned to their homes. Each man wore a pink ribbon on his arm to distinguish him from the rebels. Many joined from compulsion; and a larger number, including some who had been at Montgomery's, suddenly turned loyalists when they found the fortunes of the insurrection had become desperate. When they marched into Toronto, they were about as motley a collection as it would be possible to conceive.

"Such was the Canadian militia in 1837, at a time when Sir Francis Bond Head had sent all the regular troops out of the province."



Photos by Kennedy

*Capt. B. H. BROWN,
Commanding F Company*

*Capt. S. E. CURRAN,
Commanding H Company*

*Capt. A. T. HUNTER,
Commanding G Company*

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAR OF THE PATRIOTS ALIAS FILIBUSTERS



HE bickering on Yonge Street having turned against him, and himself having escaped after a series of adventures worthy of a Stuart prince, and Dr. Duncombe's insurrection having faded out, William Lyon Mackenzie took post on Navy Island in the Niagara River to prepare an invasion of Upper Canada by patriotic Canadians. This movement he confidently expected would be seconded by the mass of the population; and judging by the lists in his hands his confidence was based on good reason. Arms both small and large they had no difficulty in procuring by robbing the arsenals of the United States, which were being guarded with studious connivance.

Up to the end of December, 1837, Mackenzie had rallied to him about two hundred restless spirits most of whom were British subjects, but with an American "General"—one Van Rensselaer—who like many gallant soldiers of all ages exchanged intellect for intoxication and brains for brandy. This army was demonstrating feebly against the Canadian shore, where a loyalist camp under Col. Cameron and then under Allan Macnab was with gradually increasing forces eagerly awaiting a landing. On December 29th, provisions and military stores were being sent over from the American side to Navy Island by the steamer *Caroline*, which thus steamed into troubled waters to her own magnificent destruction.

Col. Macnab being a choleric man, not much versed in the niceties of international relations, permitted Capt. Drew of the Royal Navy to cut out the *Caroline*. Which, calling for volunteers or rather saying that "he wanted a few fellows with cutlasses who would follow him to the devil," Capt. Drew, R.N., proceeded to do. The, to him, trifling details that he took the steamer not at Navy Island, but at Schlosser on the American side and that he left behind the body of Amos Durfee with the head blown off, produced an international episode of volcanic proportions.

Mackenzie and his insurrection of British subjects were both immediately superseded by a filibuster movement, commanded by new and unheard-of generals, whose conflicting commissions proceeded out of the lodges of secret societies.¹ Invasions were planned to make descent upon various vulnerable places in Upper Canada. Some of the "generals" like Generals Sutherland and Theller, having conquered the country by proclamations, actually came and were duly sentenced when captured.² Others like Handy, of Illinois, merely organized pompous conf u-

1. Hunters' Lodges they were called.

2. Also they broke jail and escaped.

HISTORY OF THE 12TH REGIMENT, YORK RANGERS

sion. Still others like General Bierce, and Admiral Bill Johnson, stood back in safety after sending brave men to their death. ¹

The Americanizing of the war produced a sudden and decisive effect on the people of Upper Canada. So long as it was merely a case of William Lyon Mackenzie there was a good deal of something less loyal to the administration than indifference. Many a veteran of 181² and his sons would gladly have struck a pike through the Family Compact if they could have avoided tearing the old flag. But the events that began when the *Caroline*, splendidly blazing, went over the Horse Shoe Fall, closed up the ranks of Canadians and the people seemed to rise as one man.

From a return of commissions issued from March, 1838, to March, 1839, we find the officers of two East York and two West York Regiments, and no less than nine North York Regiments. Among these officers we are struck by a persistence of names that occur in the rolls of 1812. Duncan Cameron was colonel of the 1st North York; and Heward, Cawthra, Richardson, Playter, Denison, Shaw, Selby, Jarvis, are among the commissioned in these suddenly organized invasion-expectant legions. ³

A return of the 4th North Yorks, commanded by Col. C. C. Small, of Toronto, and mustering at Richmond Hill, on June 4th, 1838,⁴ shows how plentiful and willing men were and how woefully lacking were arms. Of a total of 725 men, 701 were present, and only 5 absent without leave. Of arms and accoutrements, the regiment possessed thirty-one English muskets and five hundred rounds of ammunition.

The same return of commissions in March, 1839, gives also the lists of officers of the forces called out on the first outbreak of the Rebellion of 1837. Among these were the Queen's Own, whose name still sounds familiar in Toronto, and the Queen's Rangers, a portion of whose designation has been continued in the present regiment of York Rangers. The Lieut.-Col. and organizer of the Queen's Rangers was Samuel Peters Jarvis, who named it after Simcoe's famous corps in which his father, "the Secretary," had held a commission. No native Canadian ever saw more of fighting in his own land than did Col. Jarvis; and when we consider that he was at Detroit, Queenston Heights, Stoney Creek and Lundy's Lane; that he fought a duel according to the code in Toronto,⁵ that he commanded the right wing at Montgomery's Tavern and was present to admire the pyre-like glory of the *Caroline* as she took the plunge, we feel that he had an unerring instinct for war, and while by profession a lawyer was by preference a soldier and a good one.

1. They induced Van Shultz to attempt to take Prescott. He was forced to surrender at the "Windmill" and executed.

2. Matthews, one of the executed rebels, fought valiantly against the invaders in 1812.

3. One of these old time names of 1812-37 has gone astray and therefore appropriately joined the Corps of Guides in the person of Lieut.-Col. Van Nostrand.

4. "Landmarks of Toronto," 5th Series, p. 11.

5. In the vicinity of what is now Grosvenor Street.

CHAPTER IX

ANOTHER QUARTER CENTURY OF RUST



HE "Patriot" demonstrations of 1838 having subsided, interest in the militia rapidly evaporated and what little skill as men-at-arms the citizens had acquired was soon forgotten. The annual musters of the forces more and more took that burlesque character which is fatal to discipline. For a good soldier has even more need to subdue his sense of humor in time of peace than he has in time of war to control his sense of fear.

The rigorous drill and fine old military decorum of these annual musters (when attended at all) may be gathered from the description by an astonished participant in one, which was held in 1845.¹

"At that date, and for some years before, there had been an annual muster on old King George's birthday, of the young men of our rural parts not yet enrolled for military purposes. I was then resident in the county of Haldimand, Niagara district, and received a notification that I must proceed to the village of Dunnville and attend the annual muster on the 4th of June. I proceeded there in due course, reported at a named tavern, and `fell in' with some thirty other young fellows in front of it. The specified hour having arrived, we lined up in fair order, and our names were called with military vigor. Then came a veteran carrying a tin pail with something in it, and its bearer stopped in front of every man in turn. A tin dipper descended into the pail and ascended to the welcoming hand of each visitor as he was reached. A gurgle and a smack of the lips, and another nail had been driven into the system of the soldier. Capt. Farr, commanding, then appeared in front of the contingent specially under his orders, and called us back to the 'Attention' which we had bestowed elsewhere. We were `two deep,' if not a little more, and received the order to 'wheel' to the `left.' Explanation was necessary before we could take up the unexpected movement, but after its repetition we were almost equal to the performance of the double shuffle dignified by the name of a `quick march.' Then we reached a turn to our left. Dispirited by the response to the previous command to 'wheel,' the gallant captain—called 'Cap,' for short, by his corps.—politely informed his command that it was useless to tell them what the drill book said, but they must 'haw' or `gee' as they were directed, so first we 'geed,' and then we 'hawed,' and got there just the same.

"There were several squads on the vacant lot to which we had been marched, mostly big lads and young men, who were lying on the ground good-naturedly awaiting orders. One special squad, in uniforms, and really looking soldier-like,

1. See "Sixty Years in Upper Canada," by Charles Clarke, late Clerk of the Legislature. Col. Clarke was C.O. of the 30th for more than twenty years. Being accustomed to strict drill and discipline in an academy in England, the shock of this first militia experience in Canada nearly shattered his reason.



Photos by Kennedy

*Lieut. H. BRANN,
D Company*

*Lieut. J. L. WILLIAMSON,
A Company*

*Lieut. RAYMOND WALKER,
C Company*

Lieut. WM. BAILLIE

*Lieut. J. H. PROCTOR,
B Company*

were drilling with a combination of snap and vigor. Their backs were turned towards us, but on their countermarching we discovered— that our models were all negroes, a company raised during the recent Rebellion and said to have been very efficient in making corduroy roads. They received special notice from the colonel, who wore regimentals, too, and sat his steed—a mare as if not afraid of it. In passing up and down the line now formed he gave us ample opportunity, not only to admire his horsemanship, but to form an opinion of the good points of a lively colt running at the heels of its mother. After his little speech of commendation and recommendation, reports were made by the company officers, and we involuntarily broke into groups. Then the fun commenced. Wrestling, jumping, 'stumping for a horse race,' and so forth, soon broke up all semblance of order, and one irreverent and evidently licensed good fellow tiptoed to the rear of the 'Cap,' and suddenly snatched and drew from its scabbard the slightly rusted sword which had been carried through a rebellion now apparently forgotten. A loud haw-haw from the boys, and the advice from one of them to our commanding officer to put up his 'old cheese-knife,' and we marched back to the tavern to receive another drink, after which the military heroes were dismissed, and more fun and frolic followed."

It is not to be supposed, however, as the years went by that all annual musters of the militia were as successful even in the picnic sense, as the one just described. Lieut.-Col. Geo. A. Shaw, ex-commanding officer of the 10th has a curious recollection of one attended by him as a newly gazetted ensign. It was in Toronto itself, where surely, if anywhere, the flame is never allowed to die on the altar of Mars. Arriving with the zeal that becomes a young officer at the appointed hour and the appointed place he could not find any militia. He found, however, a negro asleep under a tree. Summoning his best military crispness of manner he tapped the Sambo with his boot and said, "My man, where are the militia?"

"Fse de militia, sah."

"You're the militia! What do you mean?"

"Sure, I'se de militia and de oder militia is up de tree."

Looking up the tree Shaw discovered the other militia in the form of a youth picking nuts. Presently the captain came in his full uniform of a captain of the Sedentary Militia of Canada, and the parade was complete.

Things drifted along, nevertheless, becoming of course worse rather than better as the weapons became older and rustier and the memory of any active service became dimmer. The Crimean War, however, awakened the attention of England to many things in connection with her army, the blaze of whose valor only served to light up the hideous weakness of its organization. Among other things the British authorities, while rummaging in 1854 for effective troops, recollected that some thirty-three hundred regulars were defending Canada, and that the Canadians, outside of a few voluntary companies (who drilled without pay and bought their own uniforms), were not interfering with the duties of these regulars. Accordingly England, with the same sad-eyed persistence with which of late years she has reminded Canada of her naval obligations, kept bringing the matter of defence to the attention of the Canadian authorities.

The result was a new militia law in 1855, which made provision for active militia corps which were to provide their own uniforms and clothing and up to the number of 5,000 to receive a very limited number of days pay per annum. Additional corps were also authorized who were to drill without pay. These two classes kept up the active militia spirit under difficulties; and owing to the indifference of the public appeared rather to be on the decrease than on the increase. For while in 1856 they numbered 4,999 and rose in 1857 to 5,288, yet in 1858 they sank to 4,895.¹

However, on November 8th, 1861, the U.S. Steamship *San Jacinto* fired a shot across, the bow of the British mail steamer *Trent*, and took from her two Southern gentlemen, Mason and Slidell. It required some diplomacy to set this matter right, and in the meantime so sensitive is the Canadian pulse in Imperial matters that our active militia had risen to 12,000 by the end of 1861, and by 1863 to 25,000.

During this period of growth we find certain companies gazetted which form a link between the present regiment of York Rangers and its predecessors in the York Militia of older days.

Thus on September 4th, 1862, was gazetted, the Scarborough Rifle Company,

Capt. W. H. Norris, Lieut. J. R. Taber, Ensign Geo. Rush.

On December 11th, in the same year, the Aurora Infantry Company,

Capt. Seth Ashton, Lieut. W. B. Hutchison, Ensign C. Good.

On December 19th, The Lloydtown Infantry Company,

Capt. Ed. Bull, Lieut. Geo. Ramsay, Ensign Robert Hunter.

And on January 23rd, 1863, The King Infantry Company,

Capt. Geo. Lee Garden, Lieut. Isaac Dennis, Ensign Chas. Norman.

These companies, quite independent of one another, were part of the 5th Military District (comprising Ontario, York, Peel and Simcoe), and appear from a publication called "The Active or Volunteer Militia Force List of Canada," to have owed some sort of disciplinary obedience to one J. Stoughton Dennis, the Brigade-Major.

With some changes in personnel, for four years they continued their vigil,² turning (as the sentries used to turn) always outwards in one direction; and that direction the South. For from the South the enemy was to come.

1. "The Militia System of Canada," by Colonel Walker Powell in Castell Hopkin's Encyclopaedia.

2. From an account, "Landmarks of Toronto," 5th series, p. 506 of a military review held by Gen. Lindsay in Toronto, on 8th October, 1863, and attended by the rural volunteer companies we get an accurate idea of the mustering strength of these companies. Note these items:

From King, one company of infantry, Capt. Garden, one officer and forty men.

From Aurora, one company of infantry, Capt. Peel, three officers and thirty men.

From Lloydtown, one company of infantry, Capt. Armstrong and twenty-five men.

From Scarboro, one company of rifles, Capt. Norris, four officers and forty-five men. From which it will be seen that the Flank Company of 1812, the Volunteer Company of the Sixties, and the "Rural" Militia Company of our own day are about the same thing.

CHAPTER X

THE WELDING OF THE BATTALIONS



HE troubles known as the Fenian Raids, divested of their feeble pretense of freeing Ireland, originated in the disbanding of the enormous armies of the Civil War. For just as the unlucky contestants in any series of sports will clamor for a "Consolation Race," so after any period of warfare there are ambitious and unsatisfied soldiers to whom peace appears in the garb of a robber of their opportunities for achieving fortune and fame. Louis Napoleon, having withdrawn from Mexico, there was only Canada to turn to. Accordingly, Canada was in for it.

Two causes contributed towards the prosperous organization of a series of raids into Canada. One was the immemorial dishonesty of American governments in the matter of filibustering movements; which before the authorities suppressed them must have been attempted, have failed and palpably be incapable of future success. The other cause was that treacherous torpidity in military matters which with the Canadian precedes a sudden and venomous activity, a torpidity which induced the incursions of 1812, 1838 and 1866.

However obliviously dense the American Government could be towards the organizing, enrolling and drilling of masses of armed Fenians in their cities the Canadian authorities were not able to achieve such heights of philosophy. Repeated alarms were met with sporadic preparations to receive with the appropriate salute of ball cartridge an enemy who might land at any time or place. Thus for four weary months from December 30th, 1864, two service companies of the Queen's Own patrolled the Niagara Frontier.'

Again in November, 1865, the city regiments picketed the drill shed in Toronto, and companies were sent to Sarnia where ultimately a provisional battalion was formed.

In March, 1866, the militia were called out and among those who left for the front to be stationed at Port Colborne, were six companies from the 5th Military District, of which two companies were the Aurora Infantry Company and the Scarboro Rifles.

Finally it became evident a few days previously to May 31st, that some movement was in progress in the American towns and cities along the Niagara frontier, and by the night of the 31st it was manifest that a mobilization was in progress for an immediate descent on the Canadian shore. The actual landing took place at 3.30 the following day, but late in the night of the 31st the call to

1. Other units of militia were also kept drilling about the same time, e.g. we find a note in the Militia List of 1865 that our Scarboro company drilled at Niagara with the Second or Central Administrative Battalion. The ostensible reason for keeping up this "Watch on the Rhine" was to prevent raids into the United States. If that was the real reason, it was a case of wasted courtesy.



Photos by Kennedy

Lieut. F. G. L. DARLINGTON,
H Company

Lieut. A. G. A. FLETCHER,
E Company

Lieut. F. M. BROWN,
F Company

Lieut. B. J. DAYTON,
Sig. Officer

Lieut. W. G. PINK,
F Company

arms was telegraphed from Ottawa, and within an hour the sound of bugles and alarm bells was heard echoing and ringing in nearly every town and village in the country.'

The response of the militia to the bugles and the orders calling them out was, as always is the case with the Canadian militia, instantaneous. The impression one gets from reading of how few hours were required to get the men together is that they were already straining at the leash. The news of their required mobilization arriving in the evening, the Queen's Own were at their armoury at 4.30 in the morning and embarked at 7 a.m. for Port Dalhousie. As fast as transportation was provided the other forces were carried to the scene of hostilities. The Northern Railway arrived at Toronto at 10.40 a.m. on June 2nd, bearing among others the Aurora Infantry Company, the King Infantry Company, under Capt. Garden and the Scarboro Rifles, and by the afternoon train came the Lloydtown Company along with the Collingwood Rifles.'

When we, at this distance of time, contemplate the strategy of General Napier, who commanded in Canada West and of Col. Peacocke, who was entrusted with the command of the troops in the Niagara Peninsula, we feel that it is a tribute to the inherent loyalty of the Canadians that they did not for all time lose faith in the soundness of British generalship. With the vaguest possible information as to the movements of the Fenians after their landing at Fort Erie, it did not occur to General Napier to mobilize any mounted troops until June end, after the despatch of the Queen's Own and other foot soldiers to Port Colborne and St. Catharines. It is safe to say that if either Col.

Peacocke or Lieut.-Col. Booker had with him on June 1st even a troop of cavalry and it had displayed some of the energy shown two days later by Geo. T. Denison,³ with his troop of Governor-General's Body Guard, the column under Booker would not have received the snubbing it got at Ridgeway and the Fenians would not have escaped from pursuit. To add to the difficulties of Peacocke the authorities had posted the Queen's Own, the 13th and the



*Bugle and Flag
Presented by their Fellow Townsmen to the Aurora
Infantry Company, on their return from the
Niagara Frontier, June 1866*

1. "Troublous Times in Canada," by Capt. John A. Macdonald, p. 33.

2. *Leader*, June 2nd, 1866.

3. Now Col. Denison, the well known police magistrate of Toronto and an author of international celebrity.

York and Caledonia Companies under Booker at Port Colborne, which is a villainous distance from St. Catherines, whence Peacocke set out and also from Chippewa to which he pushed on. If it was the strategical intention to unite these columns, the utility of so widely separating them the day before is one of those mysteries that make the art of war so profound a study. At any rate Peacocke attempted to effect a junction with Booker at Stevensville. Whatever chance this most delicate of all operations,—the junction of widely separated columns within striking distance of the enemy,—might have had was destroyed by the slowness of Peacocke's own march and the erratic conduct of Capt. Akers (Peacocke's officer sent to advise Booker), and Lieut.-Col. Stoughton Dennis, who carried off some of the troops from Port Colborne to conduct an attack on the Fenians at Fort Erie. This attack on Fort Erie which was to cover these officers with glory earned them a smart beating and is just another illustration of that greatest of all nuisances among military officers, the half-baked tactician who, regardless of his superior's plans, attempts to carry off the "kudos" for himself.

The combat at Ridgeway has often been described. The man most vociferously abused at the time, Lieut.-Col. Booker, appears in reality both before and after the one mistake he made to have acted with good military sense and courageous coolness. In this mistake of forming a hollow square on the alarm of "cavalry" he was simply the victim of a formation in the drill book. And be it noted that the formation was until a year ago still there, lying ambushed in the sections relating to Savage Warfare; waiting for the day when some too literal minded British officer should form a hollow square in close formation against the wrong savages.

Ridgeway over and the Fenians having escaped, the various companies and battalions performed outpost duties at different places¹ for a period of about three weeks when they were relieved of duty and thanked in a general order of June 23rd, by the Commander-in-chief, who took occasion also to advise them to continue their drill and discipline as the danger of invasion was not past.

Among the numerous deficiencies of our militia system² the authorities proceeded to remedy two pressing defects. One was that the liability to be called out repeatedly on alarms was beginning to harass the militia. For the post-prandial patriot who waves the old flag in an ecstasy of Britannic zeal and then permanently fills his employee's position when he has gone to the front was more in evidence in 1866 than he would venture to be in these days.

The other defect was the lack of cohesion among the numerous independent companies whose officers and men had no conception of carrying out anything like a combined movement.

Both these defects could be met by forming a standing camp where the companies could be welded into battalions and at which by taking a week's tour of

1. The Aurora Company, for instance, was part of a provisional battalion stationed at Clifton and Suspension Bridge under Col. R. B. Denison.

2. For instance Booker's column lacked cavalry, artillery, cooking appliances, transport wagons, medical necessities, and was scantily furnished with food and ammunition. Of late years the Militia Department has given great attention to the formation and equipment of all the auxiliary corps necessary to move and care for an army in the field. Sometimes we think it has forgotten that there is such a thing as infantry.

HISTORY OF THE 12TH REGIMENT, YORK RANGERS

duty in rotation each group of militia would get some military experience without being unsettled in their civil employments.

The ground selected for this camp was on the high level overlooking St. Catherines, the Great Western Railway and the Welland Canal to the westward of Thorold village. The first volunteer troops posted were the 10th from Toronto and the 7th from London. With them were a portion of the 16th Regulars and of the Royal Artillery, also Major Denison and his troop of cavalry. They assembled on the 18th of August, and on the 26th the 10th and 7th were relieved by the Q.O.R. the 13th and the Vnd Oxford Rifles.

The turn of the companies in which we are more particularly interested came in the middle of September. That they made a good impression on their way to the mill we learn by the following extract from a Toronto daily:

" Military : Five companies of infantry arrived in town by special train on the Northern Railway on Saturday, as follows: Bradford, Lieut. Wilson commanding; Aurora, Major Peel; Newmarket, Capt. Boulton; King, Capt. Garden and Lloydtown, Capt. Armstrong. The Scarboro Rifles under Capt. Taylor, got on the Grand Trunk train at Scarboro Station, and arrived about an hour earlier. They departed together with Brigade Major Dennis on the steamer *City of Toronto*, at noon for the camp at Thorold to relieve the volunteers now serving there. A more soldierly looking set of men could not well be got together. Col. Durie, Brigade Major Denison, Col. R. S. "Denison and several other principal officers together with a large number of citizens were on the wharf to witness their departure."

In the same issue of the paper appears this item:

"12th York Battalion Infantry: Headquarters at Aurora. ³ To be Lieut.-Colonel—Capt. W. D. Jarvis from the 2nd Battalion Queen's Own Rifles, Toronto."

The tour of duty being completed the battalion was relieved by the Brant and Haldimand Battalions and returned to Toronto under its first commanding officer whose pride was no doubt greatly enhanced by subsequently receiving the following letter:

" Sir. I have the honour to request you will make known to the officers and men of the Nth (York) Battalion my extreme gratification at the fine and soldier like appearance and demeanour of the Battalion on Monday Vnd instant, of which I shall have the pleasure of making a special report to H. E. the Commander-in-Chief.

"The proficiency of this young Battalion in Drill and the steadiness of the men is very creditable to you as commanding officer."

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

J. S. MACDONALD, Col. A.A.G.

LT.-COL. JARVIS, Commanding 12th York, Newmarket.

1. Geo. A. Shaw, afterwards Lieut.-Col. of the 10th, was attached to the Lloydtown Company during this camp to give instruction.

2. *The Daily Leader*, September 17th, 1866.

3. The regiment appears in the list of 1867, with its headquarters at Newmarket, and in 1873, again at Aurora. The date of gazetting the battalion and its Lieut.-Col. is 14th September, 1866.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONTINUITY OF YORK BATTALIONS



HIS new-old York Battalion as it settled down in the Militia List of 1867, was a nine company aggregation with the following officers:—

12th York Battalion of Infantry, Headquarters, Newmarket;
Lieut.-Col. W. D. Jarvis.

No. 1 Company Scarborough:

Capt. Taber, Lieut. Stobo, Ensign John Huxtable.

No. 2 Company Aurora:

Capt. Nathl. Pearson.

No. 3 Company Lloydtown:¹

Capt. Armstrong, Lieut. W. T. Armstrong, Ensign John Thompson.

No. 4 Company, King:

Capt. Garden, Lieut. Norman, Ensign L. N. Crosby.

No. 5 Company, Newmarket:

Capt. A. Boulton, Lieut. Chas. McFayden.

No. 6 Company, Keswick:

Capt. Alfred Wyndham, Lieut. Wm. Boucher, Ensign J. R. Stevenson.

No. 7 Company, Markham:

Capt. Thos. A. Milne, Lieut. Jas. Robinson, Ensign Saml. Carney.

No. 8 Company, Sharon:

Capt. Wm. Selby, Lieut. John W. Selby, Ensign Jas. Wayling.

No. 9 Company, Unionville:

Capt. Hugh P. Crosby, Lieut. Salem Eckhart, Ensign Wm. Esken,

Paymaster Joseph Cawthra.

Adjutant A. J. L. Peebles.

Quarter Master Wm. Trent.

Surgeon Jas. Bovell, M.D.

The persistence of certain names in the above list gives one the impression that our military authorities sought to weave into the newly assembled battalion all the old traditional threads of military service that led back to the days of '37 and 1812.

1. The Lloydtown Company as such disappeared by a roundabout process of amalgamation with the Aurora Company, the headquarters being moved to Aurora and Nathaniel Pearson being made captain, vice Armstrong, who retired with honorary rank of major. The Bradford Company which was with the 12th at Thorold is now E Company of the 36th Peel Regiment.

HISTORY OF THE TENTH REGIMENT, YORK RANGERS

Thus the name of Jarvis,' was reminiscent of every ancient fight in which any soldiers from York had ever participated. Accordingly it was appropriate that in selecting a first commanding officer the authorities should pitch upon the son of the Sheriff William Botsford Jarvis, against whose picket on Yonge Street, as we have seen, the flood tide of the Mackenzie Rebellion broke and receded.

Independently of his paternity and of his cousinship to Col. Samuel Peters Jarvis, William D. Jarvis, first lieutenant-colonel of the 12th, had earned his appointment by previous service. In December of 1864, he volunteered and was given a commission to complete the establishment of Capt. Gilmor's Company which was one of the two service companies of the Queen's Own, that were sent during that month to patrol the Niagara Frontier, ostensibly to prevent raids



Photo by Kennedy *Practice in Measuring and Judging Distance
On Niagara Common*

into the United States by Southern sympathizers. These service companies put in four dreary months at Niagara and in April, 1865, returned home.

Jarvis' next service was in November, 1865, when an alarm of intended Fenian attacks caused the authorities to place a picket of thirty men under his command to protect the Drill Shed in Toronto.

1. The prevalence of the Jarvis family when any form of strife was being conducted is one of the bewildering features of Upper Canadian History. The following genealogical tree may assist the student:

CAPT. SAML. JARVIS, 1698-1779

SAML., 1720-1793

STEPHEN, 1729-1820

WILLIAM (The "Secretary"), 1756-1817

STEPHEN, 1756-1840

COL. SAMUEL PETERS JARVIS, 1792-1857

WM. BOTSFORD (the first Sheriff)

WM. D. P. JARVIS, 1821-1860

WILLIAM D. JARVIS, 1834—Lieut.-Col of
12th York Rangers

AEMILIUS JARVIS (the Commodore)