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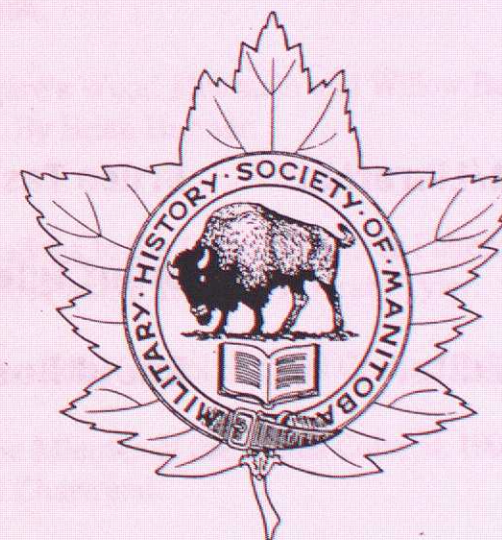
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Military History Society of Manitoba

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INTRODUCTION.

The Military History Society of Manitoba is a non-profit corporation started in 1987 by four colleagues interested in the material culture, and social history of military units with a Manitoba connection, or interest.

The objectives of the Society are to collate information on military material culture and history in general, and to acquire new knowledge through research and study, with special emphasis on Manitoba units and their activities wherever these may have taken them. To this end the Society maintains a library, an archive, photo files and a very limited collection of artifacts. The archive now includes nominal rolls of all CEF units, copies of which can be purchased from the Society for a modest fee to cover the cost of xeroxing.

For the past six years a major project of the Society has been historical and archaeological research at **Camp Hughes**, under the aegis of the Provincial Archaeologist. The surveys and data produced about this World War I training camp formed the basis of the application for designation of this area as a historic site. This resulted in official Provincial designation of the site. Two hundred people attended the unveiling of the Provincial historic plaque on Sept 19th 1993. Further investigation and research took place in 1994 and continues in 1995.

It is also the Society's aim to promote the study of military history and share its resources with non-members. Members give public lectures, answer enquiries and hope eventually to provide some public displays. The Society now has 46 members and we welcome new members who share our interests.

The Society launched a new programme in 1994, **The MHSM Reprint Series**, to reprint hard-to-find pamphlets and small publications of military interest. Details of the first two titles can be found in this issue of the Journal.

This **Journal** is another facet of the Society's commitment to sharing its resources and its members' enthusiasm for the serious study of military material culture and history. It is aimed at curators, collectors, re-enactors and interpreters of military history. Free issues of the Journal are donated to selected libraries and military museums. We welcome contributions to the 1996 Journal from members and non-members alike. Please contact the Editor, David Ross, 215 Nassau St North, Winnipeg, Man. R3L 2H6. 204 452 7117. (Deadline for contributions May 1st 1996).

In the 1996 issue of the Journal it is hoped to include a section titled, "Letters from the Front". Do you have any letters from family or friends who served in WWI, WWII, Korea or earlier conflicts which describe conditions at the front, details of the fighting or have comments on the conduct of operations? If so, we would be very interested in borrowing them (or copies) for this feature.

David Ross, Editor.

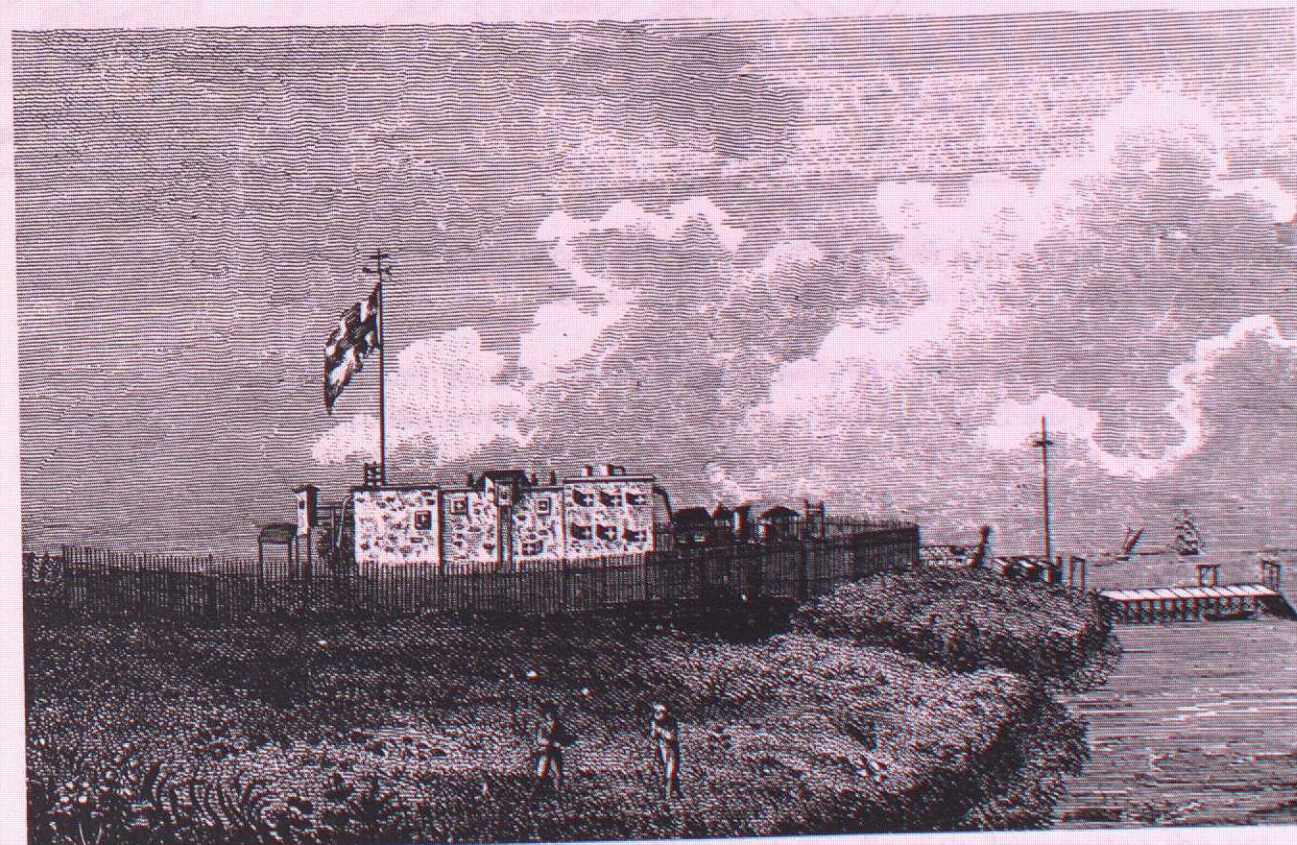
The Attack on Fort Prince of Wales and York Factory by the French, under the Comte de Lapérouse, 1782

by Shirlee Anne Smith

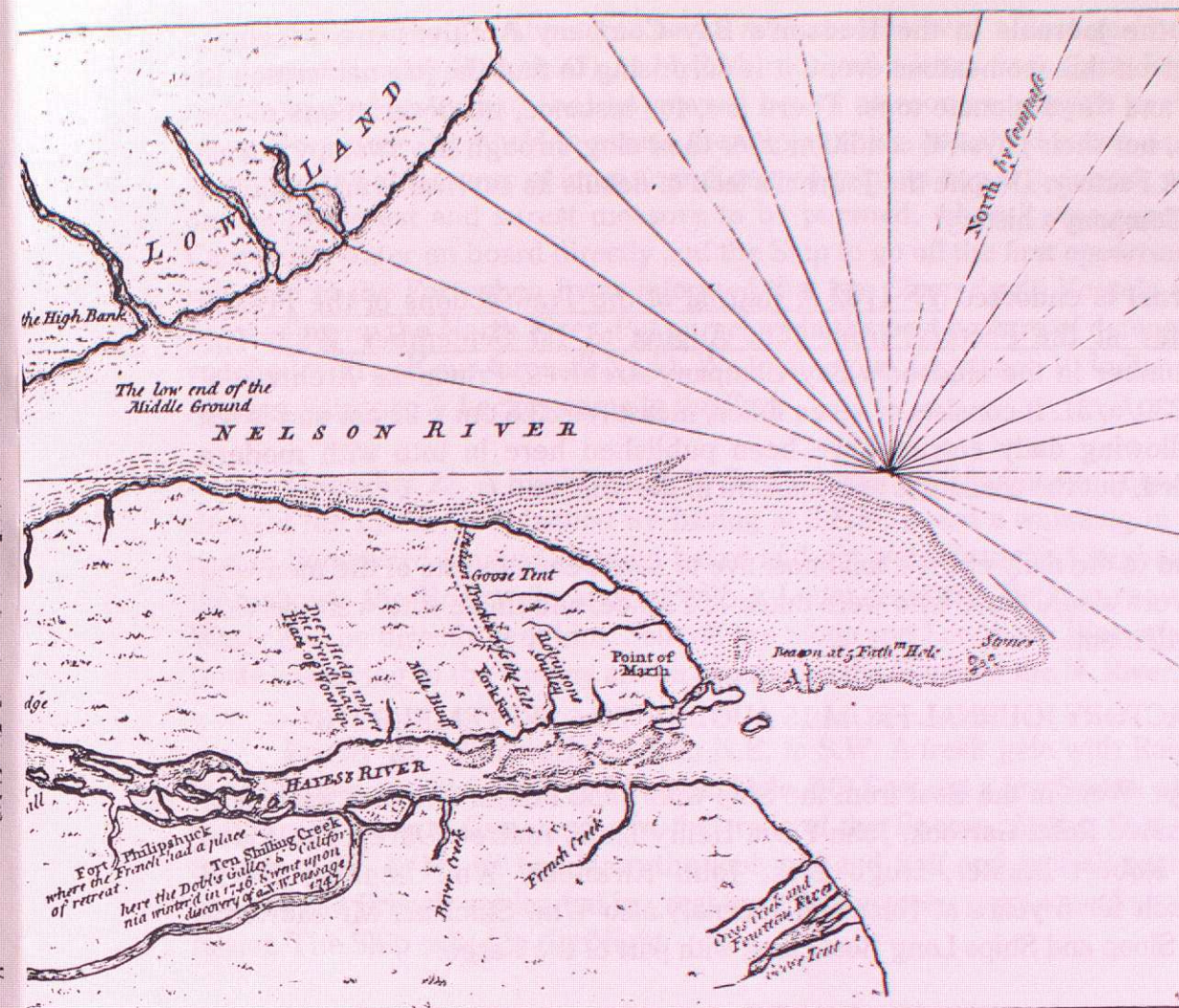
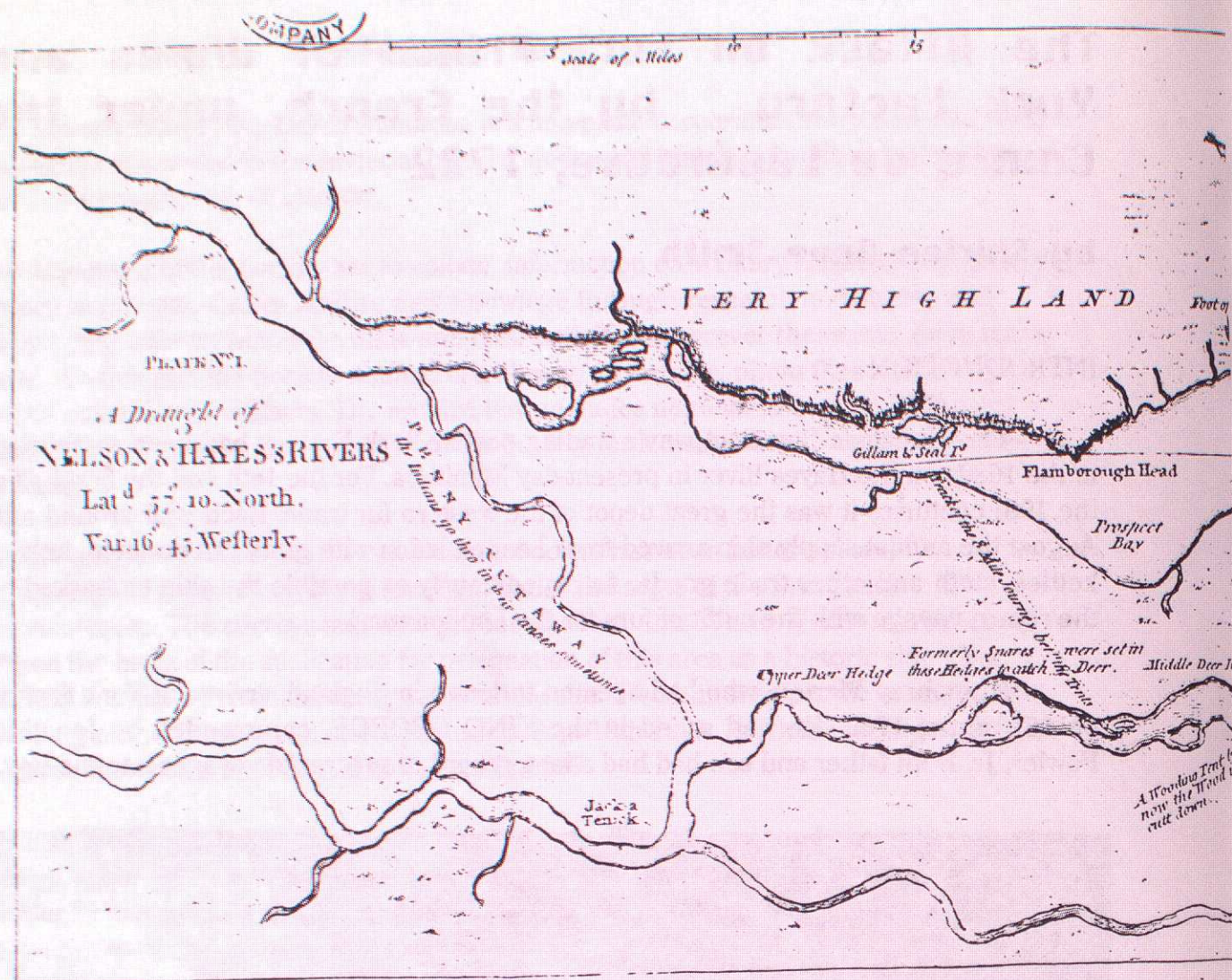
INTRODUCTION

The Hudson's Bay Company's trading post at York Factory had been established in the 1680s on the Hayes River in present-day Manitoba. For the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries it was the great depot of the western fur trade. Each year around mid-August the annual supply ship arrived from London laden with guns, ammunition, knives, kettles, cloth and other trade goods. As expeditiously as possible the ship embarked on the return voyage with the outfit of furs for the London market.

Humphrey Marten, who had been on furlough in England, arrived at York Factory on 15 August 1782. He had sailed in the **KING GEORGE**, commanded by Jonathan Fowler, Jr. Both father and son had had a long record of successful voyages into the Bay.



An engraving of York Factory after a drawing of Samuel Hearne's. It agrees almost perfectly with Phillip Turnor's plan of 1778. Courtesy: Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.



The plan of Joseph Robson's chart in the 1740's showing the locations of places around York Factory mentioned in the text.

Courtesy: Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

Following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, when the French returned the forts on Hudson Bay to the English, life along the Bay had been peaceful. From his early journal entries it is evident that Marten expected no change. The French, however, being sympathetic towards the American Revolution were hoping to capture the English forts on Hudson Bay. Under the command of Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de Lapérouse, three ships, the 74-gun SCEPTRE and two 36-gun frigates, the ASTRÉE and ENGAGEANTE arrived off the mouth of the Churchill River on 8 August 1782. Fort Prince of Wales, under the command of the famous Samuel Hearne "was blown up", and the men taken prisoners. The French then sailed to York Factory. The ships were short of food and the prisoners were given two ounces of beef or pork per day, maggoty biscuits, bad brandy, and at night the rats were so numerous that they were "running over our bodies." (1)

On 22 August Lapérouse landed his men and guns on the shore of the North River, as the Nelson was locally called, and travelled the approximate eight miles overland to York Factory. In the meantime, Marten was busy trying to get the KING GEORGE ready for sailing while also doing what he could to defend York Factory. At this time the fort

was described as "made of wood, and was defended by a battery of 22-pounders. The four bastions of the fort were simply storehouses in which were kept their skins and bales of coloured cloth and a great many muskets." (2)

According to the Journal the KING GEORGE sailed on the 23rd, but the ship's log states that she sailed at 9:00 p.m. on the following day. (3)

Marten surrendered the fort to Lapérouse on 24 August. The French then took on board provisions for the voyage to France while leaving supplies for the Indians who would expect to be outfitted for the winter hunt. On 1 September the buildings were burned and the Company men taken prisoner.

The late Dr Richard Glover has written that the English "committed the not uncommon error of over-estimating the numbers of their opponents." (4) Lapérouse stated that he landed 250 men. In the Journal 700 men is noted, and the log of the KING GEORGE recorded 500. (5) Jonathan Fowler, Jr. probably received this information from one of the men of the Severn sloop. There is no doubt that 700 is an excessive estimate.

Overall, the journals in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives are succinct. Nevertheless, given this momentous event, it is surprising to find the journal written in such a laconic and dispassionate tone. There are, for instance, no descriptions of the French soldiers, nor their physical condition after their slog through the swampy terrain overland to York Factory. Despite the Journal's lack of details its survival is an important addition to the Company's history.

The Journal is endorsed YF 1782 A Journal of the Transactions of the French during their stay at the Factory, from 15th August to 1st September 1782. The classification number in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, is B.239/a/81. It consists of seven folios, measures 33.5 cm x 21 cm and is not signed. The following daily entries have been published here in toto with modern punctuation added, but the spelling is as it appears in the original.

At the end of the daily entries, folio nos. five to seven contain lists of the men who boarded the Severn sloop, those who were taken to France, and those who were serving at the inland settlements.

YORK FACTORY JOURNAL FROM 15 AUGUST TO 1 SEPTEMBER 1782

Thursday. Went in the Boat from the Ship with Capt. Fowler and took charge of the Fort. Entertained Robt. Garrock, John Fleet, Henry Liutil, Andrew Davey, Jas. Fleet, Wm. Fleet, (6) Robert Inkster, Hugh Lisk, John Kirkness, Wm. Lenney, David Groundwater each for 5 years at [blank in Journal] also Wm. Sinclear, Mr Marten's Servant. Severn Sloop and Ships Long Boat came with part of the Cargo.

Friday 16. Wind variable, a Fog about Noon the rest of this Day fine weather. Busy in unloading the Cargo. Sent a Packet (7) to Churchill. Some Indians came with a few Geese & Ducks. Also a few Fish. Sent fresh provisions & greens on board the Ship.

Saturday 17. Wind Variable from S.E. to E. The Weather part clear, part cloudy & part foggy. Received 22 deer from the English and a few small Birds & 3 geese from the Indians. The Surgeon (8) visited 10 sick Indians, some in a fair way some dubious. The men employed in stowing away the outbound Cargo & other necessary Jobs.

Sunday 18. Wind southerly, very fine weather. Men salting Venison. Mr Tunstal and several petty officers and Sailers came on shore. Entertain'd them as well as we could afford.

Monday 19. Wind Variable from N.W. to S.W. , at times small drops of Rain. The Weather warm. The men variously employed. Mr Tunstal went on board. Surgeon visited the sick, found a Boy had died since he was there last. The rest as before.

Tuesday 20. Wind Variable from N.W. to S.W. The Weather cold with rain at times. In the afternoon a Boat came express from the Ship to acquaint the Captain that three large Ships were then in the offing on which the Captain went on board to prepare the Ship for fighting. Loaded all our guns to make what defence we can.

Wednesday 21. About 1/2 past 5 A.M. we observed a Boat go from the Ship and cut down the outer Beacon. (9) At 11 P.M. received a letter from Capt. Fowler informing me he wanted water and [be] homeward bound as soon as possible as the ships in the offing were large. He hop'd to escape them by running into shoal water. As I found by this letter that the ships were of force & an Enemy I went on board to consult with the Captain on the properest and surest measure to be pursued, when it was agreed to send the Cargo and Water on board directly and the Ship to go off the first opportunity. At 5 P.M. I returned to the Fort when I was informed that two Sloop rigg'd Vessels & 7 Boats were proceeding up the North River. Put ourselves in the best posture of defence we could and watched with half our force all Night. We took to our Assistance 10 Indians. About 7 P.M. Messrs. Falconer & Lockey came to the Fort.

Thursday 22. A hard Gale at N. Sent a Letter by 2 Indians to acquaint Captain we thought the Enemy was landed we having at 2 P.M. heard a whistling in the woods. Put part of homeward bound Cargo on board and got water into the Longboat. At 9 A.M. or thereabouts the Boatswain arrived with a Letter from the Captain requesting that the Water &c. be directly sent him. Sent off the Sloop and Longboat. Was informed that nine Boats belonging to the Enemy are on ground on the Sands in the N. River.

Friday 23. Wind variable from N.E. to S.W. A fresh gale with Rain at times. The Ship, Shallop and Sloop still in 5 Fathom Hole. (10) Sent out a few Scouts who informed me they heard several Guns and saw the trails of the Enemy. At the Fort we saw a large Smoak to W. & N. All hands on the look out and half and half all night. We are now assured the French are landed in great force having seen great smoaks at the back of the Island. The Ship sailed in the Night.

Saturday 24. Wind variable from S.E. to S. with rain at times. At 11 this morning observed the French Troops in motion. Soon after about 3 or 400 of the Regiments of Armignac, Auxerxois & Enie [Genie, i.e. gunners] with Artillery & Seamen in all about 700 men came to the Fort and demanded Entrance. Before this I had hailed them and told them to halt. At first they took no notice but on my acquainting them that if they did not halt I should be obliged to fire at them they halted. I demanded a parley which was granted. They deliver'd a Letter signed La Perouse & Rostaing (11) offering us our lives & private property but threatning the outmost fury should we resist. On which I deliver'd terms of Capitulation which being in the main agreed to. Upon Honor I deliver'd up the Fort. They informed me Churchill was taken and blown up.

Sunday 25. A hard gale at N.W. with rain. The French Officers distributing various things to the soldiers. Some plunder last night. The officers behaved very politely. The ships in the offing are the SCEPTRE of 74 & 2 forty gun Frigates. (12)

Monday 26. A hard gale at the N.W. with rain. The French Commander gave orders for 19 English to go on Board the Sloop but would not permit anyone to take a Chest. He order'd also several of the French to go on board in doing which a Boat overset and 15 men were drowned. We had informed the French that the weather was too bad to proceed in sending the Troops on board but they were determined. On this accident, however, a stop was put to any further embarkation. Preparations are now [in the] making to blow up the Magazine & burn the Fort.



Left: Drummer of the Régiment d'Auxerrois 1782, blue coat with black facings, Royal livery lace. Right: Officer, Régiment Armagnac, 1782, white coat with light blue facings. Reconstructions by Gerry Embleton, courtesy of René Chartrand.

Tuesday 27. Wind in the morning N.W. The rest of the Day E. Light breeze clear fine Weather. The French brought several Boats around the Island from N. River. The Severn Sloop & one of their large boarding Boats went off with about 100 French & 10 English. The French Commander order'd a kind of Tent to be erected at the sloops creek to put provisions and stores in for the distressed Indians to prevent them from starving should they come to this place, and he very politely told me I was welcome to anything in the Fort that would be of service to me or my officers. I return'd thanks for his kind offer and assured him that should I live to see England I would publish the kind & Noble behaviour that had been shown to me & my officers from him & his officers. Mr Wm. Lockey, Mitchell Omen, James Omen & Wm. Luitet drove in the Shallop on the Eastern shore 4 days since & I fear are lost. 3 more large boats came round the point of marsh & took in a large No. of Casks and Troops & went for the Ships. An Express arrived from the Ships to inform Mr. de Langlois, commander of the ASSTREA[sic], that the Frigate had lost 3 anchors in the last Gale. On which he immediately went on board and the Second

in Command in the SCEPTRE came on shore. Mons. Lecertain, Capt'n of [word illegible] busy in destroying the Battery Cannon & Wm. Guthrie, Jas. Clouston, Geo. Gun, John Taylor, Robt. Inkster, Hugh Lisk, John Driver, Robt. Garrock, Henry Tomison & John Kirkness were sent on board.

Wednesday 28. Persons sent on board: Andrew Hervey, David Knarton, George Groat, John Flatt, Wm. Flatt, Andrew Davey. Persons assisting in the Craft Mr. John Turner, Thos. Phillips, Wm. Appleby, John Corston, Peter Folster, Henry Garrock, Jas. Grimberton, Robt. Tennant, Thos. Keslews, Wm. Carr, Nich. Spence.

Persons at Severn House(13): James Wooldridge, Gilbert Duncan, Edward Tommison, Robert Wilson, Thos. Catley & James Carmitchell [Carmichael].

[There are no entries for 29,30,31 August.]

Sunday Sept. 1. This day the Factory was burnt & all the remaining of the Company's Servants & the French Troops embarked in the Severn Sloop for the French Fleet.

EPILOGUE

The Hudson's Bay Company men piloted Lapérouse out of the Bay. On 10 September, Marten and Hearne, along with 31 other servants, boarded the Severn sloop and giving the French "three cheers" left for Great Britain.(14) After "an agreeable passage" they arrived at Stromness, Orkney Islands, on 15 October. The KING GEORGE had arrived the day before. The sloop left Stromness on 24 October, but her arrival date in London is not known.(15) A number of servants were taken by Lapérouse to Dinan, France.(16)



1992, a cannon at Fort Prince of Wales being restored by John Watt Parks Canada Conservation staff, on site. The near side trunnion is clearly missing. Smashing off the trunnions was a common way of disabling cannon (they could no longer be mounted on their carriages). An example of the damage done by the French in 1782. Parks Canada Conservation Service photo.

What the Committee(17) in London thought of the French exploits has not been traced in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. It seems, however, that they were not disheartened because as early as 28 November 1782, they were making plans for the renewal of the fur trade at both Churchill and York Factory.(18)

The following year Hearne and Marten returned to their respective forts with "temporary houses"(19) on board the ships to live in until the forts could be rebuilt.

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 peace returned to the Bay.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Shirlee Anne Smith wishes to express her thanks to Judith Hudson Beattie, Keeper of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, for permission to publish this journal, and for her assistance in verifying certain statements.

ENDNOTES.

1. Andrew Graham, *Observations on Hudson's Bay*, HBC/PAM E.2/12, pp. 629-630, microfilm reel no. 4M3.
2. Richard Glover, "La Perouse on Hudson Bay", *The Beaver*, March 1951, p.46.
3. HBCA/PAM C.1/386, fo.28, microfilm reel no, 2M36.
4. Richard Glover, *op. cit.*, p.43.
5. E.E.Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870*, Hudson's Bay Record Society, Vol. XXII, p.86; HBCA/PAM C.1/386, fo.54.
6. The surnames are usually spelt Loutit and Flett.
7. The mail packet.
8. Alfred Robinson, HBCA/PAM B.239/a/81, fo.5.
9. Presumably this beacon is the one shown on the map close to Five Fathom Hole. There was also a beacon on the point of marsh, between the Nelson and Hayes Rivers, to help guide the ships. Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers*, William Briggs, Toronto, 1913, pp. 95, 101.
10. Owing to the shallowness of the Hayes River the ocean-going vessels had to anchor at Five-Fathom Hole, about seven miles from York Factory. From there cargo was ferried to the Fort by smaller craft. *Ibid.* p.94.
11. According to Richard Glover, *op. cit.* p.45 Rostaing was a major in the Armagnac Regiment.
12. E.E.Rich and Andrew Glover, *op. cit.* p.84 and p. 626 state that the frigates were 36 guns.
13. Severn post was established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1759 at the mouth of the Severn River in present-day Ontario. HBCA/PAM Post Histories.
14. Andrew Graham, *op. cit.* p.634.
15. HBCA/PAM C. /1/386, fos. 54-54d.
16. HBCA/PAM A.1/142, p.52, microfilm reel no.17.
17. *The Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company.*
18. HBCA/PAM A.5/2, fo.80, microfilm reel no.27.
19. HBCA/PAM A.6/13, fos. 75d, 78, microfilm reel no.38.

The Halifax Explosion: A Moment in Time.

By J. David Wawryk.

In 1905 Great Britain recalled her regular troops and the Naval Squadron from North America, and closed Admiralty House. The Dominion of Canada alone was now responsible for Halifax. The Haligonians soon adjusted. The "Babysitter" returned to her homeland and life continued and even prospered without Mother Britain.

Naval resources were being explored, business began to grow and the population was now over forty thousand and increasing. Its busy harbour was soon to become a focal point of Canadian history. Since the War of 1812, the docks had become an important centre of trade with the rest of the world, and the future growth of the city was imminent. Banks, newspapers, small businesses, ship-building and exporting flourished. By 1911 the population had increased by 7,000. Halifax was a bustling crowded city.

In 1912 vessels were quickly dispatched to aid other ships in the search for survivors of the Titanic. Unfortunately, only bodies were brought back to be buried in nameless graves in Fairview Cemetary. Five years later, Fairview would become the final resting place for victims of another tragedy.

When the Great War started in August of 1914, Halifax, with its natural harbour became a haven, a safe resting place for the warships. The Narrows leading to Bedford Basin required harbour pilots to safely and properly navigate through the narrow passage. Once anchored in Bedford Basin, whole fleets could be fuelled, and loaded with cargo and supplies. The entrance to the harbour was protected by steel submarine nets during the night. The booms held by steel buoys blocked the entrance, and prevented enemy submarines from sneaking within torpedo range. The ships and cargo were safe and secure in their berths. Our soldiers fighting overseas would get their valuable ammunition, lumber from the West Coast and grain from the Praire Provinces. Barges and freighters, their holds near bursting, then crossed the ocean. Meanwhile Britain had few destroyers and though eventually ships would travel in convoys, hundreds did not survive the voyage and German submarines. Halifax became the embarkation centre for our soldiers bound overseas. Trains arrived daily with troops and supplies.

H.M.C.S. NIOBE, a Canadian cruiser recently purchased from Great Britain, was tied up as a training and depot ship. On her deck were wooden structures which provided accomodations for officers, naval control and intelligence. With the growing military population, barracks, blockhouses and trenches were hastily constructed. Defending the city were the Halifax Militia Battalion, the 63rd Halifax Rifles and the 66th Princess Louise Fusiliers. Various Militia units known as the composite battalion were stationed in Wellington Barracks with a view of the harbour and docks. Many of the garrison transports were drawn by horses travelling the narrow streets.

German prisoners of war were detained in the city, a wire fence seperated the billets of the Hun prisoners from the locals. Tension mounted and people were anxiously

waiting for the Zeppelins and German invaders. For some troops Halifax was a home, a prison for others and "the hole" for the depressed. Boredom often set in and led to excessive partying and the usual drinking. Soon they would be on their way to the trenches in France and Belgium.

Thursday December 6th 1917 was a bright clear day, a little haze lingered in the air, the morning was crisp and cold; the ground was clear of snow, another lazy morning for some of the residents. Children were being prepared for school; factory workers and business men lingered on their way to work. Walking along the harbour one could watch and maybe daydream. Activity was high, and with 80 to 100 ships in the harbour, it was an interesting spot to stop and gaze for a few minutes. Across the narrows, Dartmouth residents were also awakening. The people across the six mile long channel were also preparing for a normal day.

On that morning, Captain Haakon From, commanding the IMO became upset over the delay in sailing. Departing Bedford Basin, the Norwegian Captain could well have been on the open sea and on his way to New York had his shipment of coal been loaded on time. En route from Rotterdam, Holland with a crew of 39, he was to load supplies for the Belgian Relief Commission.

About the same time, Captain Aime Le Medec on the MONT BLANC lifted anchor and was entering the Narrows guided by harbour pilot Francis Mackey. His entrance delayed by the submarine booms, the French ship finally received clearance. Arriving the previous evening from New York, the manifest showing a full cargo of bulk explosives destined for Bordeaux and the war effort.

Extreme care and caution had been used to ready the ship for its sensitive cargo. Shipwrights using wooden planks and copper nails constructed wooden linings in the ship's five holds, thus eliminating static electricity, and the possibility of sparks from a sudden blow, or shock from a hammer. Two days earlier, the stevedores wearing linen cloth over their boots loaded the explosives into the four main holds. On board, matches were not allowed, but chewing tobacco was accepted. Liquor was also forbidden.

The holds contained 2,300 tonnes of wet and dry picric acid (lyddite, the chief explosive of World War I), 2,000 tonnes of T.N.T. (Trinitrotoluene) and 61 tonnes of gun cotton. The load secured and gently insulated with tarred cloth, the hold covers were carefully closed and hermetically sealed. Last minute instructions from the Government of France required additional cargo to be loaded. The odour of the drums revealed, Benzol, a new super gasoline. Thirty five tonnes were quickly loaded in barrels stacked four high, held in place by retaining boards and tied with rope. These drums were placed on the fore and after decks. The scene was now set for the greatest man-made explosion in the world.

William Hayes, a Halifax harbour pilot, was assigned to assist From in navigating the narrow channel. Perhaps aware of From's silence, Hayes ordered more speed for the IMO and carefully manoeuvred her between other vessels in the Basin before entering the narrows.

At this point, he realized that the wake from a passing ship was causing him to drift towards the Dartmouth shore. At one point he stopped the engine and reversed it. This manoeuvre caused the IMO to turn slightly and it drifted even further. By this time the MONT BLANC was closing in on her. A few minutes later the bow of the IMO struck the plating of the MONT BLANC with great violence, leaving a gaping hole 10 feet deep. The ships separated at once after the collision. The resulting damage ripped open No.1 hold spilling Benzol and picric acid; ignition was instantaneous from the grinding, sparking steel.

In no time black smoke and light blue flames were shooting upwards. Captain Le Medec immediately shouted, "Look to your boats". Two boats loaded with crew headed for the Dartmouth shore. Trying to warn (amidst the confusion) the people on shore, they ran into the woods to take cover. The damaged ship was now floating towards Pier No.6 on the Halifax side.

On that morning, Thursday December 6, 1917 at 8.45 a.m. onlookers gathered, unaware of the catastrophe about to happen. The alarms were sounded on shore and fire engines raced to the shore. Captain Horatio Brannan aboard the ocean-going tug STELLA MARIA sped towards the MONT BLANC. In vain, his crew with a single hose attempted to stop the roaring flames. Brannan ordered his men to get a cable and tow the burning ship away from the Pier. Captain T.K. Triggs of the HIGHFLYER and six crew in a tugboat boarded the STELLA MARIA and offered Brannan their services when the tremendous explosion occurred. One of seven, Able Seaman William Becher, survived the explosion and was later rescued on the Dartmouth side.

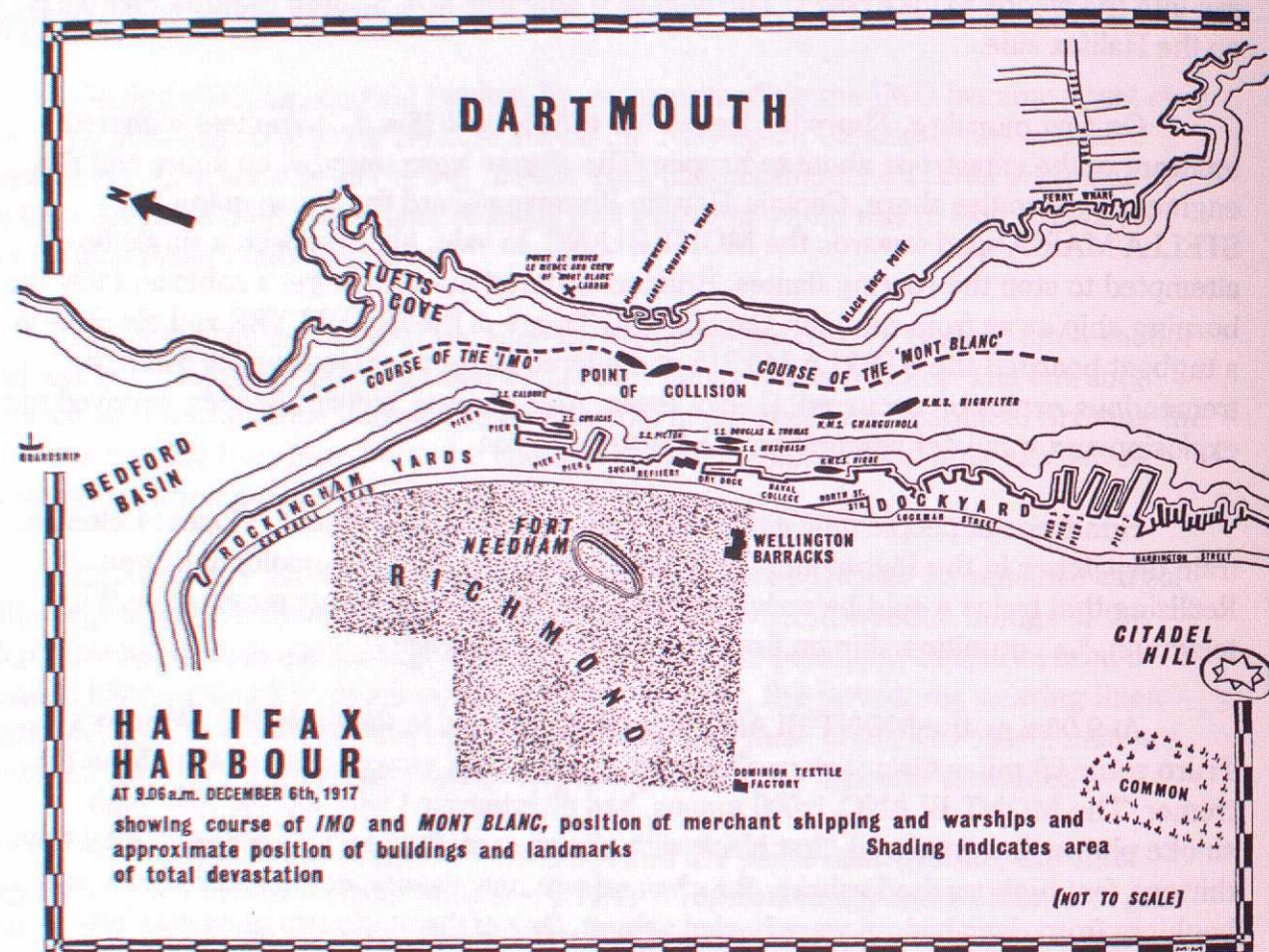
Hundreds of people now gathered on shore watching the show. Vincent Coleman, train dispatcher in the Richmond Train Station also observed the unfolding drama. Realizing that trains would be arriving shortly, he tapped out his last message on the telegraph, "..... munition ship on fire in the harbour - goodbye !"

At 9.06 a.m. the MONT BLANC literally vapourized in the explosion. Windows in Truro some 60 miles distant were shattered, church bells swayed and boomed from the tremor. The MONT BLANC, 3,000 tonnes, had disintegrated with a three mile high smoke plume that appeared, first black with oil and soot, then turning white. A tidal wave thirteen feet high washed ashore, the channel was now twenty feet deeper. Rocks and boulders from river bottom were hurled ashore. One of the ship's two guns was later found in Albro Lake in Dartmouth, three and a half miles away, the other six miles. The anchor shank weighing 1140 pounds was now two miles from the catastrophe. Shock waves were felt in Sydney, more than 270 miles to the north-east.

The STELLA MARIA, nearly swamped by the blast, was flung ashore near Pier 6, 19 crew reported killed. H.M.S. HIGHFLYER, anchored 300 yards away from the area of the collision, was now across the channel on the Dartmouth shore, her captain and many of the crew killed. The IMO, riddled with holes from the blast, was also driven towards the Dartmouth shore. Captain From, pilot William Hayes and five crew members were killed.

The crew of the MONT BLANC lost only one seaman that terrible day. A peice of shrapnel between his shoulder blades, he died from loss of blood. The woods had protected the crew from harm. There were no heros on board the MONT BLANC.

As the acrid smoke cleared, the devastation of Halifax became visible. In an instant 325 acres of the city had been decimated, levelled by the explosion, revealing horrendous scenes. Rubble and debris were everywhere, wooden buildings faltered, brick and concrete crumbled and fell in the violence of the explosion. The water front disappeared, exposing a wasteland. Richmond Station (65 employees dead) and the train yards were completely obliterated, leaving only a few uplifted, twisted railway ties as a marker. Street after street, churches, shops and factories were gone.



In Dartmouth the devastation and damage was not as extensive. Houses were blown down or partially wrecked with very little loss of life. The number killed was low, 25 residents. Hundreds were cut or blinded by flying particles of glass.

The Halifax Relief Commission estimated that 25,000 people required shelter after the disaster, 750 houses were totally destroyed with another 750 requiring extensive repair. Additional homes needing some sort of repair numbered 9,000.

At this point, some miraculous events are worth mentioning. A seven year old child on shore was hurled into the angry, turbulent air, carried upward in the twisting,

churning plume. Falling back near the water's edge, she lay unconscious. An arm and a leg were broken, and although bruised and cut, she survived; confused and dazed, but alive.

Some crew members aboard the rescue ships were instantly killed, but many survived the blast as they were violently tossed into the water. Pilot Mackey was thrust into the air by the blast and fell on shore amongst some tree roots.

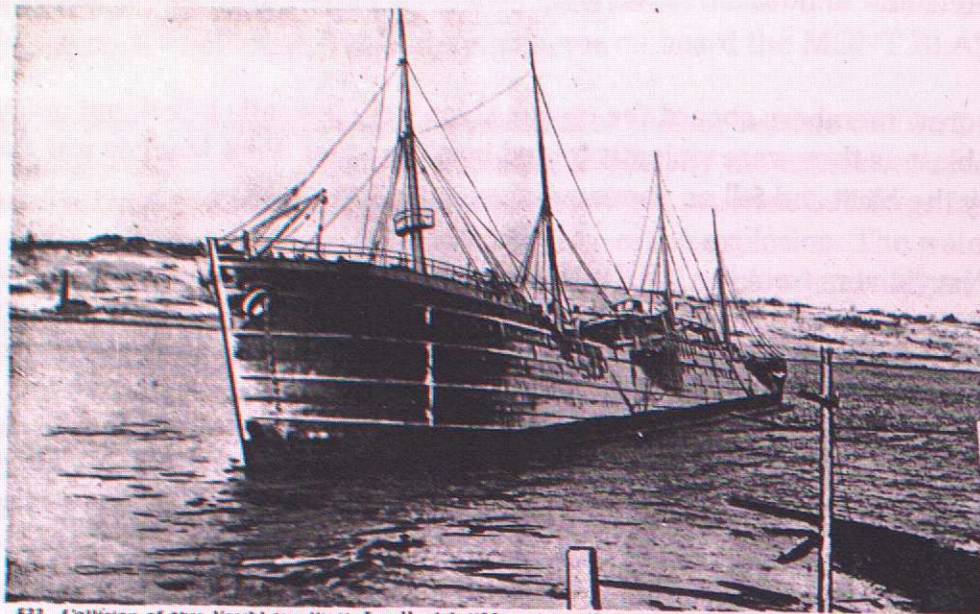
Two Navy divers from the NIOBE were engrossed in their repairs to the concrete foundations below the water in the harbour. Six sailors on shore were manually operating the pumps supplying them with valuable air. The pumps were housed in a wood and corrugated iron shelter. Unaware of the chaos further up the harbour, they were oblivious to the drama unfolding in the narrows. Two of the sailors were killed instantly. Chief Master-At-Arms John Grammon, R.C.N. in charge and Able Seaman Walter Critch, R.N.R. were washed twenty feet along the wharf. Shaken and bruised they got to their feet. Realizing that two sailors were missing and the third beyond help, Grammon ran for the lifelines shouting for Critch to pump air to the divers. The collapsed roof of the shed had fallen on the pump, but he could see it was undamaged. Using his shoulders and back he managed to free the pump wheel from the rubble. Once again the pistons sucked precious air. Critch alone was doing the work that required four men only a few moments ago. Somehow they had survived the falling debris and the tidal wave. Grammon would later find that his two children never survived the disaster. The two divers protected by the depth of water survived, but were somewhat shaken.

Charles Mayers, Third Officer on the MIDDLEHAM CASTLE was snatched in the air and realized that he was in the middle of flying wreckage. Half a mile from his ship, dazed and naked he lived to tell his story. The air with its powerful forces saved a few people while devastating everything in its path. The air flow was directed erratically by ascending the banks of the narrows.

Rescue work began immediately, emergency meetings were organized and the available troops assembled. Relief trains were loaded with the sick and transported to waiting hospitals in Truro. The Militia completed a tent city and many victims were sheltered for the night.

On Friday December 7 a winter blizzard added to the misery. The stoic Haligonians accepted their fate and continued to rebuild their shattered lives. Unfortunately, 1963 lives had been lost in that single moment, 9,000 hurt and approximately 199 blinded. In the years to follow, the death toll would increase from explosion related illness and injury.

When calm returned, many men were rewarded for their heroism. The Albert Medal in gold was presented to Lieutenant Commander T.K. Triggs, R.N., HMS HIGHFLYER, the Albert Medal to Acting Bo'sun Charles Matisson, R.C.N. who commanded the steam pinnacle from the NIOBE, and Stoker Petty Officer Edward S. Beard, R.C.N.V.R. one of the crew also aboard. The Albert Medal was also presented to the only survivor of the HIGHFLYER's whaler, Able Seaman William Becker, R.N. (died in 1970). Also, Leading Seaman Thomas Neil Davis R.N. and Able Seaman Robert Stone



533 Collision of this Vessel the "S.S. Imo" with "Mont Blanc" Caused Great Halifax Disaster. —Copyright Underwood & Underwood, N.Y.

A contemporary postcard view of the S.S. IMO after the explosion

R.N. for aiding and for their part in extinguishing the fire aboard the tug MUSQUASH. Davis was later reinvested in 1972 with the George Cross by Queen Elizabeth. Receiving the O.B.E. was Chief Master-at-Arms John T. Grammon, and the Meritorious Service Medal was given to Able Seaman Walter J. Critch.

On the other hand the courts decided that the MONT BLANC was solely to blame for the accident, and eventually charges against Captain Le Medic and Pilot Mackey were dismissed because there was insufficient evidence to prove "gross negligence imputing criminal culpability". After weeks of inquiries and court cases, the case never made it to trial.

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One Man's Life: Charles Constantine.

by John R. Thyen.

Charles Constantine was born in Yorkshire, England on Nov. 12th 1849 and came to Canada as a child in 1854, receiving his education in Lennoxville, Québec, 75 miles east of Montréal.

In 1866 at the age of 17 he took part in the Fenian Raids as a member of the Bishop's College Rifle Co. (53rd Batt.) and again in 1870 with the Sherbrooke Battalion of Infantry (53rd Batt.) with headquarters in Sherbrooke, Québec.

As a Colour Sergeant he came west in 1870 with the Québec Rifles, with the Red River Expedition under Col. Garnet Wolseley, remaining in Manitoba after his discharge to join the newly formed Provisional Battalion at Fort Garry.

He later joined the Manitoba Provincial Police, becoming Chief in 1880, and held this post until 1885 when he joined the 92nd. Battalion, W.L.I. to participate in the Riel Rebellion.

During the Rebellion he served under Lieut. Col. Osborne Smith of the 92nd. Batt. as his Adjutant with the rank of Captain, taking part in the engagement at Frenchman's Butte under General Strange's Column. He later took part in the search for Chief Big Bear, scouring the country towards Loon Lake using pack horses instead of wagons in June of 1885.

When the Rebellion was over, Constantine joined the N.W.M.P. on Oct. 20th 1886 as an Inspector in the Force.

In the following years Inspector Constantine was stationed at various locations in the West, including Calgary, Moosomin and Brandon amongst others until 1894 when he went to the Yukon.

This was the first contact made by the N.W.M.P. when Inspector Constantine was sent to investigate the situation, and in 1895 returned with 20 men to set up Fort Constantine, which was named after him on the Yukon River near Dawson City.

With the start of the Klondike Gold Rush in 1896 the N.W.M.P. carried out nearly all the administrative functions of the government, acting as customs collectors, land agents, magistrates, police, jailers and mail carriers.

The local headquarters of the Force was transferred in 1897 to Dawson City, which was the major center of population adjacent to the goldfields, and in September of that year Constantine was appointed to the rank of Superintendent. He remained in the Yukon until 1898 when he was replaced by Supt. Sam Steele and returned to the Prairies in June.

In 1903 the N.W.M.P. pushed into the Western Arctic by way of the Mackenzie River system. Constantine would lead this party from Fort Saskatchewan to Fort McPherson, leaving Sergt. Fitzgerald and four constables to carry on from there.

By 1910, he was in command of "A" Division in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan.

Superintendent Constantine, whose strength of character, sound judgement and physical strength had caused him to be chosen for much of the Force's pioneering, died in San Francisco on May 12th 1912, where he had gone to recuperate from his strenuous northern work. He was 62 years old and had been in the N.W.M.P. and R.N.W.M.P. for 26 years. He is buried in St. John's Cemetery, Winnipeg along with his wife and three children.



Inspector Charles Constantine (seated in front in civilian clothes) with brother officers of the N.W.M.P. ca. 1888 in Regina. L to R: (2) Insp. W.H. Rutledge, (3) Insp. Thomas Wattam, (4) Supt. John Cotton, (5) Charles Constantine, (6) Insp. D.H. MacPherson, (7) Supt. Jarvis. Glenbow Museum photo NA-354-6.

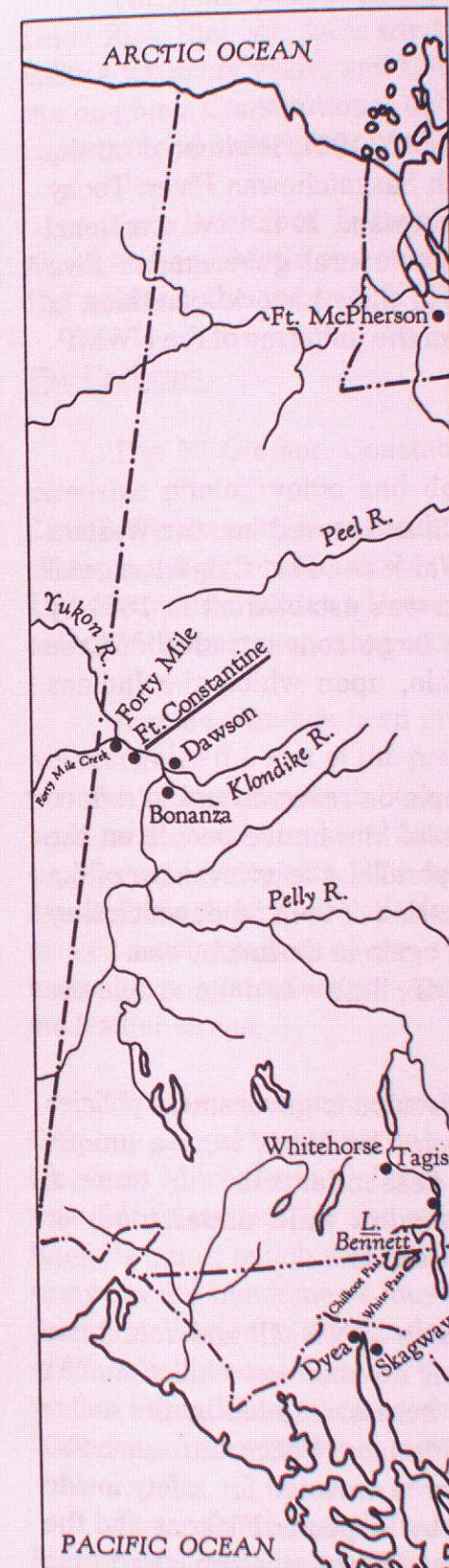
Constantine had married Henrietta Armstrong in Winnipeg, daughter of Sheriff E.A. Armstrong, who had also come west with Col. Wolseley in 1870, had three sons, Heber who died at one month in 1881, Henry who died at 14 years in 1889 and Charles who was to live until he was 63 years old, dying in 1953. Henrietta herself passed away on Feb 17th 1934 in Kingston at the age of 77 years, leaving her one son and his wife and three grand daughters, Evelin, Anne and Drone in Ottawa.

Her one son who survived, born in 1884 was to receive his early education in Moosomin, entering the Royal Military College in 1902, graduating in 1905 and serving as a Captain and Lieut. Col. in the R.C.H.A., receiving the D.S.O. and bar and four mentions in despatches during the First World War.

He went on to become a professor of Artillery at R.M.C. after the War and retired as a Major General in 1943 after 30 years in the army, being the commanding officer of M.D.3 in Kingston and M.D.2 in Toronto during the Second World War, passing away in 1953.

Charles Constantine himself was to be the only man to receive the Canada General Service Medal with three bars, "Fenian Raids 1866 and '70" and "Red River '70" as well as the N.W. Rebellion Medal with "Saskatchewan" bar.

Map showing the area of Charles Constantine's travels in the Klondike and Western Arctic.



A re-enactment by Parks Canada: The North West Mounted Police Detachment at Fort Battleford 1992.

By David Ross.

Origin of the Detachment

Fort Battleford, a post of the Mounted Police from 1876-1924, is situated on the south bank of the Battle River at its junction with the North Saskatchewan River. Today it is a two hour drive from Saskatoon in central Saskatchewan. It is now a national historic site operated by Parks Canada, an agency of the federal government. Five original buildings have survived and have been restored to their historic condition in 1885. In 1992 the guides were equipped with reproductions of the uniforms of the NWMP of the period.

Historical Background.

The North West Mounted Police were formed in 1873, and moved into the Western Plains in 1874, building major posts at Fort Macleod, Fort Walsh and Fort Calgary, as well as establishing other minor detachments. Fort Battleford was established in 1876 by Superintendent James Walker, in order to supervise the large concentration of Cree Indians in the area. This was at a time when the buffalo, upon which the Indians depended for food and clothing, was close to extinction.

The government's policy was to settle the native people on reserves and introduce them to agriculture. This had very limited success. By 1885 the native people on the Plains were discontented, and far worse, very hungry. In parallel, the grievances of the Metis people were exacerbated by the fear that the dispossession of their land, which they had suffered in Manitoba in 1870, was about to be repeated again in Saskatchewan. Despite warnings of possible trouble to Ottawa by the NWMP, little was done to allievate the problems.

Early in 1885, Louis Riel, the leader of the Metis resistance to government policies in 1870, returned to Canada, at the invitation of his people. The Metis were a unique people of mixed French-Canadian and Indian blood, descendants of fur traders, voyageurs and trappers. Their culture and aspirations were little understood, or appreciated by the dominant English population of eastern Canada.

The first confrontation occurred at Duck Lake, a force of NWMP and volunteers were fired upon, and were forced to retreat after 12 of their number were killed and 11 wounded. The police posts at Fort Pitt and Fort Battleford were blockaded by the native people. Fort Battleford contained a detachment of some 20 Mounted Police, and some 500 inhabitants of the town of Battleford and the surrounding area crowded for safety inside the stockade to live in tents. They were joined on April 21st by Inspector Dickens and the Mounted Police detachment driven from Fort Pitt. The siege of Fort Battleford lasted from early April until it was lifted after three weeks by a column led by Colonel William Otter, part of the North West Field Force, commanded by Major General Frederick Middleton

CB which had been hastily raised in eastern Canada, and despatched to supress the uprising.

The final battle at Batoche resulted in the defeat of the Metis and the capture of Louis Riel. Riel was later tried as a rebel and hanged. This act embittered Canadian politics for many years, and the echos of this bitterness can still be faintly heard during the on-going Constitutional debate. But today Louis Riel is generally honoured as an important and influential member of the Canadian pantheon.

Fort Battleford is being restored by Parks Canada in consultation with the Aboriginal and Metis communities to portray the situation during the summer of 1885. The guides at the site wear NWMP uniforms and civilian costume of that period.

The Uniforms .

The NCO's and Constables' uniforms were reproduced after research into the extensive photographic and documentary records, and artifacts available in various Canadian museums, in particular in the collections of the RCMP Museum in Regina. The photographs were used mainly to determine how the uniforms were worn in the 1880's. The documents, such as Dress Regulations, to decide what items made up the various orders of dress and on what occasions they would be worn.

Anyone who has been involved with the procuring of uniforms for a re-enactment will recognize the rest of the process. Actual surviving uniforms were borrowed and used to make patterns for the tailors, hat makers, leather workers, bootmakers, sword cutlers, braid weavers etc employed to make the uniforms. Most items were the product of several suppliers and workers. The tunics for example, used materials from three different manufacturers, for the cloth, for the buttons and for the yellow worsted braid. The long necked cavalry pattern spurs, seemingly so simple, took one firm to cast them, another to make the rowels, a third to smooth the castings and nickel plate them and a fourth to add the leather straps.

Tunics are comparatively plentiful in museums. But some other items are rare. Only one pair of breeches, one cartridge belt and one haversack were to be found, in the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. They are scarce probably because such things were wearable in civilian life and were worn out in later use. The only information about the Bugler's music pouch was the photograph 8, which indicated that it was similar to British Army cavalry bandsmen's music pouches, an example of which was located in the Parks Canada collection in the Citadel in Halifax. The pill box caps were a simple matter, a firm in Montreal, who still makes them for the students at the Royal Military College, had no trouble in producing them, right down to the netted caps on the top, crocheted by one of those ledgendary "little old ladies" who had long retired from the firm.

Data about the shirts worn by the NWMP at this date is extremely scanty. Reproductions are required for Fatigue Order, worn for certain off-parade demonstrations. No examples had survived, but a watercolour by Surgeon R.B. Nevitt, "Spilling the whiskey", in the Glenbow Museum painted in 1874 showed constables in shirtsleeves pouring out cans of bootleg whiskey into the river. These shirts were a light



6



5



7



8

5. Staff Sergeant William Parker NWMP in full dress uniform c.1896. This pattern was introduced in 1882 and remained in use until the dress reforms of 1900-04. He is wearing the North West Canada Medal with bar "Saskatchewan" for service during the Riel Resistance of 1885, and carries the 1822 cavaley pattern sword with black leather scabbard with steel mounts. (compare with photo 1). Glenbow photo NA2235-2 .

6. Constable Butters c.1890 (compare with photo 2) Apart from the change in 1882 from yellow cord to scarlet cloth shoulder straps the full dress of Constables varied very little from 1876 until 1900. He holds the Winchester Model 1876 carbine, .45/75 calibre with an 8-round magazine. Note the wooden forestock. RCMP Museum photo

7. NWMP Constable at Regina in 1893 wearing the "scarlet serge" as the undress tunic was called (compare with photo 3) This photo was used as a model for the present day wearing of the pillbox cap, the lanyard, belt and holster, as well as evidence for the shape of the boots. Glenbow photo NA2883-41.

8. NWMP mounted bugler at Regina c.1890. This photo provided much of the evidence for the reproduction of the bugler's uniform shown in photo 4. RCMP Museum photo 71.97.2.



1

Guides at Fort Battleford National Historic Site wearing reproduction NWMP uniforms of 1885. The men have been posed to match the historic photos (5 - 8), which form part of the documentation for the re-creation of the uniforms. Parks Canada photos by Menno Fieguth,

1. "Staff Sergeant" Glen Ebert. He carries the 1853 pattern light cavalry sword. Still worn in 1885 by some NCO's, it had been officially replaced in 1882 by the 1822 pattern in a leather scabbard with steel furnishings

2. "Corporal " Neil Maher in review order (compare with photo 6). His white cross belt supports a linen haversack. The light tan lanyard is attached to his revolver butt.



4



2

3. "Constable" Dan Soiseth in drill order standing outside the stockage surrounding the Fort (compare with photo 7), holding his Enfield Mark II, .476 calibre revolver (in use 1882-1905). His arm badge is that of a Rough Rider, the men who broke and trained horses. Note the long necked cavalry spurs. 4. "Constable" Trent Lafrenir, Detachment Bugler in mounted review order (compare with photo 8). Buglers and bandsmen wore crimson horsehair plumes on their helmets. The white haversack strap is crossed by the belt of his leather music pouch. He wears an NCO's pattern sword belt, slings and sword, in place of the cartridge belt and holster of other constables.

Tunics: Scarlet cloth from Abimilech Hainsworth Ltd, Sunfield Mills, Box 21, Stanningley, Pudsey, West Yorkshire, U.K. LS28 7XH. Yellow cord braid from Wydean Weaving Co. Bridge House Mill, Wayworth, Yorks, U.K. BD22 8PA. Buttons (large and small sizes) from William Sculley Ltd, 2090 Moreau St, Montreal, Que. Canada H1W 2M3. Also, Pillbox caps.

Gauntlets: White leather, from Raber Glove Mfg. Co. 560 McDermott St, Winnipeg, Man. Canada.

Belts & holsters: A good tack shop or harness maker should be able to copy these from the colour plates. Also the NCO's pouch belt and binocular case.

Breeches: A tailor should be able to copy these, use a dark blue, near black, light weight wool serge. Yellow seam braid from Wydean.

Haversacks: Not an off the shelf item anywhere, but simple to copy. Use a cotton or linen fabric. Brass buckle, eyelets and small NWMP button

Lanyards: Easy to make from 1/4" cord. Dye tan with coffee. A dog leash clip fastens it to the pistol.

Boots: Can be had from N.J.'s Leather Boutier, 611 Yonge St, Toronto, Ont. Canada, M4Y 1Z5. Or very similar items are often seen in today's shoe stores. Note that they are low cut, well below the knee. They are not the same cut as present day riding boots.

Spurs: Not available off the shelf and very expensive to reproduce. Suggest searching militaria dealers for them. Ask for British cavalry long neck pattern as worn in the 1870's.

Pistols: Present legislation in Canada precludes the use of real guns, and may soon also forbid the use of non-firing replicas. Guides at Fort Battleford are strictly forbidden to draw their replica pistols, since guns may alarm visitors. Other countries may have similar restrictions, best to check with local police. The holster can be filled out with a wooden shape with a butt ring to clip on the lanyard.

The author would be happy to supply further details, write care of the Society.

Select bibliography

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HILDEBRANDT, Walter, Fort Battleford: A Cultural History Parks Canada, Microfiche Series, MRS 376, 2 vols. 1988. Available on inter-library loan.

ROSS, David, Uniforms of the North West Mounted Police 1873-1885 Parks Canada, Winnipeg, 1987. Available on inter-library loan

ROSS, David, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police 1873-1987. Osprey Publishing, London, 1988 (MAA 197). Available from any good militaria book store or from RCMP Museum. About Can.\$14.

blue-grey with no collar, just a self-coloured neckband, they were copied in a wool flannel.

The whole process of outfitting the Detachment with these uniforms in a wide range of sizes to fit the seasonally changing staff took a little over two years, and proved to be one of the most interesting and satisfying tasks of the writer's career.

Appendix I

There is one NWMP reenactment group in Canada and several groups put on one two day events, usually on special anniversaries. Also there are individuals in the United States, Germany and France who have equipped themselves with NWMP uniforms. In case there is further interest the following is a list of sources of materials:

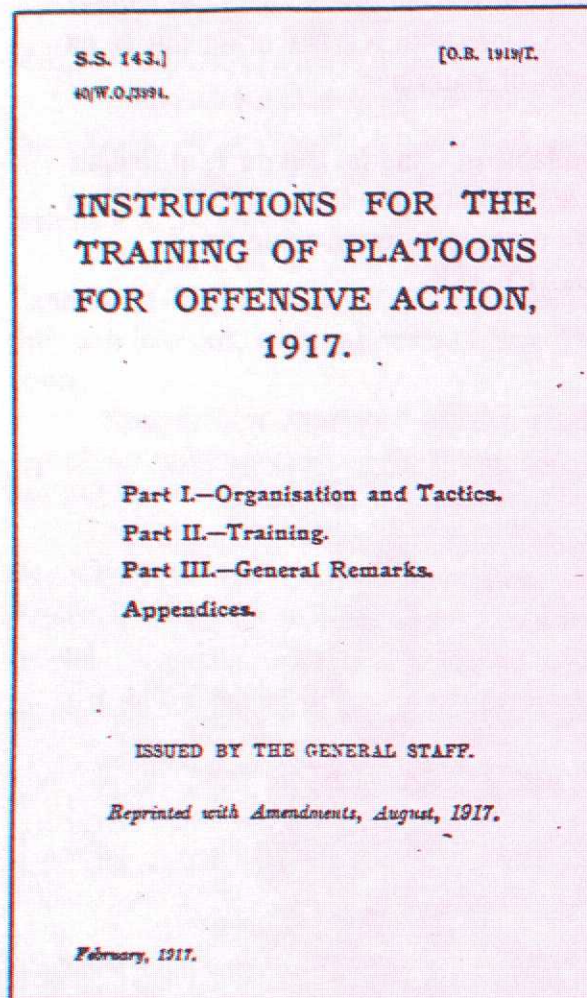
Helmets: Once plentiful, these are no longer available in Canada. But current British re-enactors of the Zulu War wear them. Try Firmin & Sons Ltd, 100 Crawford St. London U.K., W1H 1AN. Or enquire for a source through the correspondence columns of "Military Illustrated", 43 Museum St, London, WC1A 1LY, U.K.



Photos of Fort Battleford guides 1992 showing, left, belt buckle & how lanyard is attached to pistol and right details of the bugler's music pouch.

The MHSM Military Reprint Series

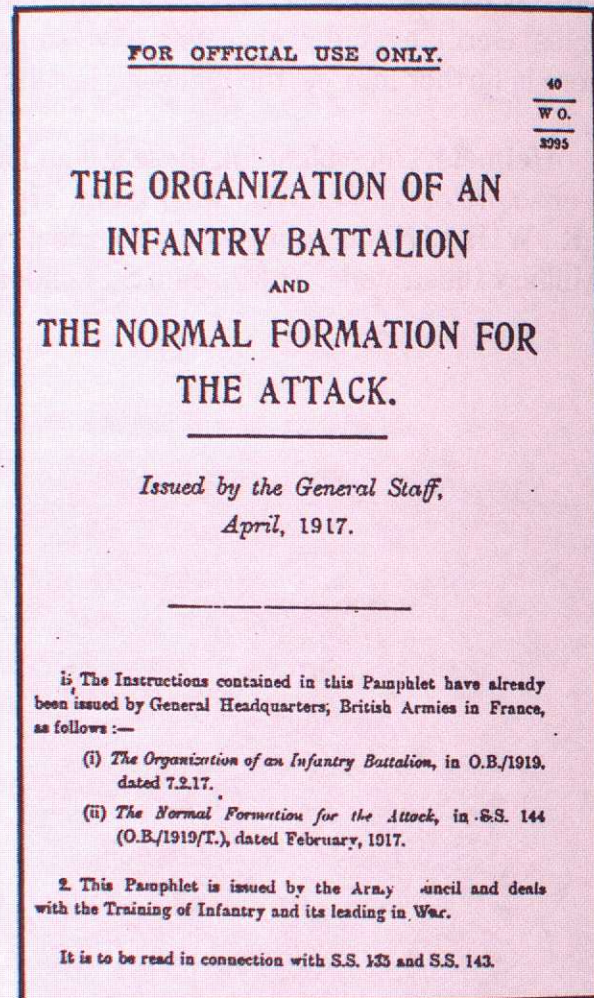
The Military History Society of Manitoba has started to reprint hard to find pamphlets on military subjects. The first two, shown below, are World War I training instructions used by the Canadian Corps.



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MHSM Reprint No.2

Paper cover, 15 pp,
ISBN 0-9698735-1-4, \$5.95

A Trench Raid - Narrative of Events, February 19th 1918.

By Bruce Tascona.

By the end of 1915, the Canadians had initiated the trench raid. No battle honours would ever be accorded to a unit for undertaking a trench raid. Hundreds of raids were conducted by the Canadian Corps between 1915 and 1918; some were just two-man operations and others were of battalion size. Many of these raids had met with overwhelming success while others were serious, bloody failures. The object of most of these raids was to gather information on what the "Hun" was up to in his trenches. They also served to maintain morale when the battle front was quiet; they enabled the raiders to gain mastery of no-man's land and keep the enemy awake at night. They forced the enemy to rush his troops forward for the impending attack, thus enabling the Canadian artillery to shell the positions of the huddled Germans waiting to counterattack.

The raids were conducted by volunteers as a rule. Lightly equipped, the soldiers would sneak forward laden with Mills bombs, revolvers, knives and clubs. Surprise was their most useful weapon combined with an artillery barrage.

The following document is a narrative of events written immediately after the raid and attached to the 27th City of Winnipeg Battalion CEF War Diary. Public Archives of Canada, RG9 IIIID1, Volume 4693, Folder 54, File 21.

NOTES ON RAID: 27th Canadian Infantry Battalion. 19th Feb 1918.

The 27th Canadian Battalion made an extremely successful raid on the 19th February, 1918, on the enemy trench (METAL TRENCH) at N.33 on the LENS FRONT (AVION SECTOR). Six prisoners of the 23rd R.I.R., 12th Reserve Division, were brought in. The Battalion suffered no serious casualties.

Preliminary reconnaissances were made on the night of the 14th February by Lieut. Dixon, Scout Sergt. P. Binks and Scout Cpl. McInnes for the purpose of finding out the weak spots in the enemy line, and to locate definitely a hostile post in MERICOURT Trench, which was known to be isolated. After several attempts this post was located, but it was decided that for raiding purposes the approaches were too well covered by machine gun fire. A small isolated listening post opposite the Battalion centre was next tried, but this was also discarded, there being too much wire. It was finally decided to raid his front by stealth at a point where it appeared to be strongest, and where he would be least likely to expect it. This was the point where his trench came round from behind a slag heap and after following its contour for a little, turned sharply back, forming a "V". This "V" was the point selected for attack. Overlooked as it was from the slag heap, which was held and defended by the enemy, failure would have meant the total destruction of the party. However, the risk was taken, and preparations made with extreme care. At the

suggestion of Brigade a secondary and supporting raiding party was to attack simultaneously to the right.

On the 15th Feb. wire cutting was begun in earnest, not only at the selected points, but at points along the whole sector, so that the enemy might be kept guessing. From that date until the 19th the gaps cut by the Artillery and Trench Mortars were kept open by machine gun fire. For three days preceding the attack the men concerned were trained at FOSSE 6 on tape lines specially laid out to represent the hostile trenches.

With regard to the enemy defences at this point, it had been observed that he had a machine gun mounted on the slag heap but too far back to be able to fire at the raiders as they approached the "V" under the brow of the slag heap. Advantage was taken of this fact, which must have been overlooked by the enemy, secure in his belief in the natural strength of the position at this point. He also had another machine gun mounted at the end of a little spur running out from his trench (METAL) into No Man's Land, behind his wire, further to the right.

At about 1.30 a.m. on the 19th the left party was in position in METAL sap - an old, disused and broken trench, mostly under our control, running from our front line across No Man's Land under the brow of the slag heap to the apex of the "V". The party was under the command of Lieut. R.O. Wheatley and consisted of 15 Other Ranks - scouts and snipers - including Sergt. Binks, who had been active in the preliminary reconnaissance, and Sergt. R.M. White. At two minutes before zero hour (2 a.m.) they proceeded about 30 yards down METAL sap. The barrage, which was preceded by five shots from our heavy howitzers scattered along the enemy front line, opened at 2 a.m. and played for one minute on the wire, during which time the party, under cover of the barrage approached to within 20 yards of the wire. On the barrage lifting from the enemy wire to his trench they passed through the wire which had been cut by Trench Mortars, and waited for the barrage to lift from the trench. In two minutes it did so; whereupon those at the head of the party, lead by Lieut. Wheatley jumped into METAL Trench at the "V", Lieut. Wheatley landing on top of two Huns who were there, acting apparently as a Listening Post. A free fight ensued, during which the whole party entered the "V". The two Huns were secured and sent back to the rear. The party then split in two, according to prearranged plan. Sergt. White with six men, proceeded down the left arm of the "V" towards the rear of the slag heap, and there found three Huns lying on their faces, with their rifles and fixed bayonets beside them. As these men refused to move, being either paralysed with fright or stunned by the barrage, half a dozen revolver shots were fired into the ground beside them, and at one of them. This one was killed, another wounded and the third uninjured. Two of the party were left to look after them, and the remainder proceeded down the trench until they reached the edge of our box barrage which had been dropped at this point. Here they could see about 50 or 60 of the enemy bombing ineffectively in their direction through the barrage, and here they stayed waiting for the recall signal, their duty being now to act as a protective flank.

The other half of the party, with Lieut. Wheatley and Sergt. Binks, proceeded down the right arm of the "V" and down METAL trench in search of the machine gun in the spur. On their way they encountered a dug-out. This appeared to be occupied, but as no one came out when called several bombs were flung down and the entrance destroyed. Lieut. Wheatley and Sergt. Binks then proceeded to bomb their way up the

trench until they came to the spur. Lieut. Wheatley continued along the trench, but Sergt. Binks went up the spur to investigate, and found one man there whom he shot with his revolver. Further up the spur he saw another man, apparently, carrying away the machine gun, and threw two bombs at him. The Hun retaliated in the same way. Sergt. Binks replied with his revolver, emptying it. His bombs were also finished and as the enemy was still bombing strongly, he backed up down the spur to its junction with METAL Trench. Prior to his excursion up the spur Sergt. Binks had discovered in a recess in the trench a half circle traverse for a heavy machine gun. This he destroyed with one of the enemy's bombs.

On regaining METAL Trench he found Lieut. Wheatley, who had also returned on account of heavy bombing. Pte. H. Gill now joined them and the three commenced bombing up METAL Trench again to the right. The rest of the party caught them up and helped with the bombing until they reached a badly damaged part of the trench where it entered a sunken road. Rifle grenades or bombs now began to come over in showers from the rear - probably from the railway embankment paralleling the trench, and both Lieut. Wheatley and Sergt. Binks received slight wounds. Finding it impossible to go on any further on account of the opposition ahead in the trench and the grenades from the rear Lieut. Wheatley gave the recall signal - a series of shrill blasts on his whistle - and the party went back to the "V". When they got there they found that the enemy had appeared on the top of the slag heap, but instead of dropping bombs, they were using their revolvers. Possibly they were too rattled to know exactly what was going on. Anyway, their fire was returned and two of them were seen to fall from the slag heap. Sergt. Binks, scaling half way up the almost perpendicular slope, accounted for one, and Pte. Martin for the other. Two more slightly wounded Huns were found in the trench, having dropped in some mysterious way from the slag heap. Both of these, refusing to move along, were afterwards shot. The recall whistle was again blown and the party withdrew along METAL sap to their own trenches.

Sergt. White's party, who had not heard the recall whistle on account of the barrage, returned to the "V" a short time afterwards and met two Germans coming down METAL Trench. Ptes. McPhee and Sneddon, who were in advance, captured these two and brought them in up the sap. The remainder rejoined Sneddon at the "V", but our barrage now began to come back on to the trench and the party hurriedly returned home along METAL sap, the "raid over" signal going up at 2.22 a.m.

With regard to the other party which raided METAL Trench at the same time further to the right; this consisted of 20 Other Ranks, under the command of Lieut. Tyrrell. They left their trench at zero hour (2 a.m.) and proceeded overland towards a gap in the enemy wire, but missed it, and when our barrage lifted they were forced to climb through the wire. They found the enemy waiting for them on the parapet with fixed bayonets, and as Lieut. Tyrrell and Sergt. Scott, the leaders, struggled through the wire into the trench they were attacked by four of them. One came in contact with Lieut. Tyrrell who seized the bayonet in his hand; at the same time the Hun pulled the trigger, the explosion badly damaged one of Lieut. Tyrrell's fingers. Immediately afterwards Sergt. Scott dropped the Hun with his revolver. Most of the party succeeded in getting through the wire and into the trench, but the enemy was alert and well supplied with

bombs; so that after killing two or three Huns they withdrew, and the "Raid Over" signal went up at 2.16 a.m.

Misled by demonstrations by our artillery and Trench Mortars to the right and to the left, the enemy dropped his barrage in the wrong place, namely in the direction of the Green Crassier. This accounted very largely for the absence of casualties in both raiding parties.

Lieut. Wheatley received the Military Cross for his handling of the operation, and Sergt. Binks, who played a prominent part both in the preliminary work and the raid itself, received a bar to his Military Medal, earned at PASSCHENDAELE. This N.C.O. was born at Peshawar, India, and served in the Indian Army. At the outbreak of war he was fighting in Mexico with "Madero's Legion". He and Cpl. McInnes, who - with Lieut. Dixon - carried out the preliminary reconnaissances, were the oldest Battalion Scouts, having served continuously with the 27th Battalion since St. Eloi in April, 1916. That they had little to learn in connection with reconnaissance work is shown by the fact that while reconnoitring the enemy listening post at the "V" prior to the raid, they were able to approach close enough to hear the enemy talking and stamping their feet - thus definitely locating the post.

Cpl. Briscoe who was with Sergt. White's party, also received a bar to his Military Medal; Pte. Gill was awarded the Military Medal; while, in Lieut. Tyrrell's party, Sergt. Scott and Cpl. Lawson were both similarly decorated. Everybody who took part in the operation was granted fourteen days special "Blighty" leave.

Jean-Louis Légaré's Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch Métis Scouts of 1885.

by Brian Hubner.

Jean-Louis Légaré is best known as the French-Canadian trader who escorted Sitting Bull (Ta-tanka I-yotank) and about 200 of his Dakota followers from their exile in Canada to surrender at Fort Buford (North Dakota) in the summer of 1881, or as the founder of the town of Willow Bunch, Saskatchewan. But during the spring of 1885 he also raised and led one of the most unique military formations to participate in the North-West Rebellion of 1885. (1)



Jean-Louis Légaré. Saskatchewan Archives Board photo. R-A47.

The departure of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) Commissioner A.G. Irvine for Prince Albert in March 1885, in response to the outbreak of hostilities between the Canadian government and the Métis followers of Louis Riel, left Superintendent R. Burton Deane alone in command in Regina. Deane, with only thirty-two NCO's and Constables and a couple of horses, cast off by the Department of Indian Affairs, was suddenly responsible for patrolling an extremely porous frontier with the U.S., in addition to safeguarding military stores and isolated stations on the southern Prairies. (2)

He wisely discounted the fanciful rumours, including those which indicated an army of three hundred men from Chicago, bound together by oath, were determined to assist the Métis by capturing Moose Jaw. However, it was more realistic to suppose that small groups of American Métis might raid across the border, or attempt to join those already congregated at Batoche. There was also a desire by the NWMP to monitor the activities of the Indians living on the southern reserves.

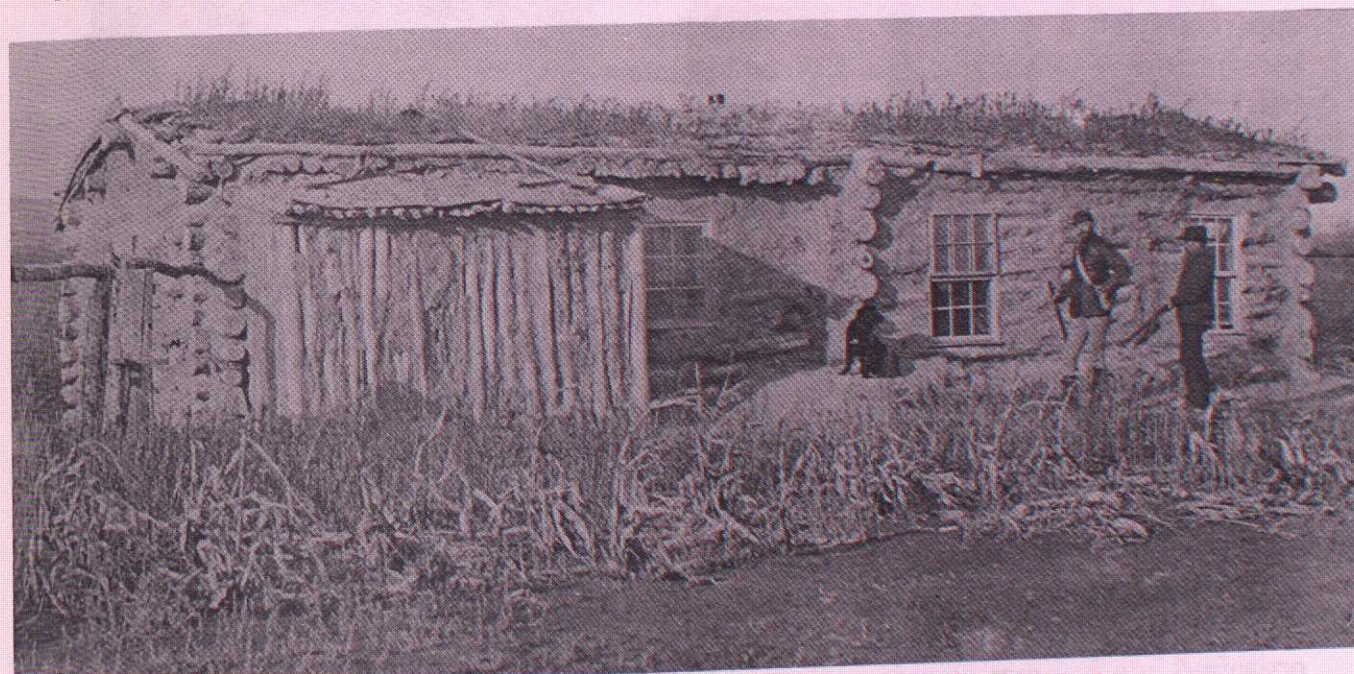


Superintendent Richard Burton Deane NWMP, 1898. Deane served in the Royal Marines 1866-1882, his medal with bar for "Coomassie" is for service on the Gold Coast during the Ashantee War 1873-74. He joined the NWMP in 1883. Glenbow Museum photo NA-3668-27.

Deane obtained authorization to recruit "special constables", but he found that the local White settlers would not readily accept the pay and conditions he was able to offer. So, as they had done before, the NWMP turned to Native people for assistance in a time of crisis. With the help of La Quesne (or LeCain), an ex-policeman and interpreter, whom Deane had made a temporary constable, attempts were made to recruit some of the few Dakota left in Canada, then camped in the vicinity of Moose Jaw. Although the men were eager to join, the police were unable to provide them with mounts, and according to Deane: "It appeared that their ponies had been acquired by the work of the women,

whose property they consequently were, and the women objected to the men embarking on an undertaking which might expose them and their families to the vengeance of the other Indian tribes." (3) Only five Dakota signed on, but Deane, ".....was more than satisfied with the work they did, and with the veracity of their reports" concerning Indian camps in the area. (4)

It was at this point that Jean-Louis Légaré appeared in the vicinity of the Dirt Hills with sixty carts, driven by Métis men, laden with furs and dried meat and headed for Moose Jaw. Rumours were that the group was attempting to join Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, and they were told by police scouts to turn back or face arrest. (5) However, before being forced to choose between these unpalatable alternatives the six foot four, black bearded trader was able to communicate with Edgar Dewdney, via telegraph and convince the Lieutenant-Governor "..... that a large number of half-breeds in his [Légaré's] neighbourhood were in a starving condition, and that they wished to remain where they were so as not to be implicated in any way with the rebellion, and that they would be glad of any employment which would keep the wolf from the door." (6) They were to be employed as scouts, and were unique in the sense that although the Mounted Police and the Canadian government employed other Métis scouts during the conflict, Légaré's appear to be the only ones organized as an independent body and led by a leader from their own community. *



NWMP post and telegraph office, Wood Mountain, North West Territories. Glenbow Museum photo NA-354-9

No one should be surprised that Légaré would be the man to make such an offer. Since 1881 he had been negotiating with both the Canadian and American governments in an effort to be justly compensated for the expenses he had incurred while guiding the Dakota out of Canada, and had not yet received much satisfaction. Part of Légaré's

* The only other North-West Rebellion unit the author knows of, which was similar to "Légaré's Scouts" was the body of St Albert Métis raised by another French-Canadian, J. Aldéric Ouimet, a Canadian army officer. It too was met with some mistrust. See Beal and MacLeod, *Prairie Fire* 1984, pp. 281-282

strategy seems to have been to ingratiate himself with those in power in Ottawa by emphasizing his influence over the Aboriginal people of the Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch area as he did on 16 August, 1882, in a letter to the Minister of the Interior, when he promised to "..... exercise a pacifying influence over the savages (sic) of that place, as he had done and endeavoured to do heretofore." (7) The crisis of 1885 gave Légaré an opportunity to literally put his money where his mouth was.

In early April, following Ottawa's approval of the arrangement (8), Légaré returned to Willow Bunch, and aided by Father St-Germain, the local Roman Catholic priest, he began recruiting scouts. The Métis were offered \$1.00 a day (Légaré received \$3.00 a day), and many of the young were responsive, but some of the elders of the community, like Ambrose Ouellette, did not wish to bear arms against kith and kin at Batoche. (9) But the combined efforts of Légaré, the clergy and government promises of money for seed grain were enough to convince many Métis men to join in the following weeks.

Légaré's actions were not entirely motivated by selfishness, one of the conditions of raising the "Scouts" was that the trader mount, feed and equip them himself, while they were to only provide their own rifles, which were reported to be Winchesters. (10). He apparently felt a great deal of responsibility to provide for the struggling Métis communities of Willow Bunch and Wood Mountain who, with the buffalo now gone, had been eking out a living collecting the bones of the animals they once hunted, levelling the streets of Regina or being employed freighting goods to the railway for Légaré and other traders.

Deane had no intention of leaving Légaré and his "Scouts" entirely to themselves, and on April 16th he ordered Inspector A.R. Macdonell, then at Medicine Hat, to Willow Bunch with four men and ten horses, "to take command", something which it appears that Legaré had not been previously informed about. (11) Macdonell arrived there on April 23rd, joining a few police already at the NWMP post at Wood Mountain, his old command. Two days later Légaré was proudly able to report that he had twenty eight scouts but he was displeased about the arrival of the police, emphasizing that the Métis preferred to be under his command as had been agreed. (12)

Regardless, the "Scouts", who eventually numbered about forty two, were organized into four-man squads, each of which carried a tent and at times may have been accompanied by a Mountie or two. Their dress and weapons would probably have been indistinguishable from the men under Dumont at Batoche or the other individual Métis scouts employed by the NWMP. Their specific task was to patrol, "..... on Principle trails from Missouri - Buford trail - Popular River trail - Wolf Point trail - Fort Bellknap & Fort Assiniboine trails." (13) Thus their area of responsibility stretched over a vast territory - from Old Wives Lake in the northwest to the Cypress Hills in the southwest, where Mounted Police officers and their Métis scouts, based in Maple Creek took over, to Moose Mountain in the south east, where the White volunteers of the "Moose Mountain Scouts" and the "Yorkton Militia" were stationed. (14) South of the line American troops operating out of Fort Buford patrolled to prevent American Métis from reaching Riel. Other Métis from Willow Bunch and Wood Mountain freighted supplies between NWMP outposts in the south. (15)

Légaré and Macdonell did not see eye to eye from the start. The trader complained that the police were ignorant of the trails and interfered with his command, while Macdonell wrote to Deane that Légaré was not filing his reports, he was "slow" and had no energy and his men were not totally reliable and required police to patrol with them. (16) Perhaps, mainly because of the concern over "reliability" Superintendent Deane proceeded to create another scouting body, about the same size as Légaré's, but entirely distinct organizationally, and of significantly different composition. (17) It appears that the police, and White volunteers, designated "special constables," formed the majority of its members, although some trustworthy Métis were later included. On May 13th, Deane sent fifteen more NWMP Constables to Maple Creek, headquarters of "A" Division, and on the 16th twenty more mounted men to Wood Mountain. Deane's plan was that the new volunteers and police would "..... form an inner line of outposts to act on any information that might be received by the line of half-breed scouts." (18)



A.R. Macdonell c.1890, in the full dress uniform of a Superintendent, N.W.M.P., the rank to which he was promoted in September 1885. Glenbow photo NA-1171-2

This particular arrangement did not last long. By mid-May the back of the Rebellion had been broken by the fall of Batoche, and at month's end "Légaré's Scouts" were disbanded after an existence of barely a month and a half. For the police the deal had served them well as it ".... fulfilled the double purpose of finding work for 'idle hands to do,' and having the country thoroughly watched." (19) It is improbable that the "Scouts" actually fired shots in anger. Some writers have maintained that the men spent much of their time hunting, smoking, well paid and with little to do. (20) Some "Scouts," as has been mentioned, joined the men of the "inner line" as the NWMP shifted their focus from defeating the Métis to Riel's trial and the fear of his escape. (21)

These scouts continued to patrol, under Macdonell, until November. (22) Riel was executed on November 16th, but there may have been at least one attempt to release him which touched on the "Scouts". In the years after 1885, Pascal Bonneau, a French-Canadian who had ranched near

Willow Bunch, was fond of telling his daughter Albina, and his amateur historian son-in-law Zachery Hamilton that he had been approached by none other than Edgar Dewdney to arrange Riel's escape, apparently so the government could evade the political storm his execution would trigger in Québec. Bonneau said he was instructed to set up relays of horses every sixteen miles to the U.S. border, and had actually begun to buy horses and

recruit men when the plot fell through. One of the Métis involved had inadvertently told Charles Nolin, the Crown's chief witness against Riel, who went straight to the authorities. If Bonneau was telling the truth he appears to have counted on a lot of help from the until then "loyal" Métis of Willow Bunch, some of whom still patrolled the border with the police. But, whether he was truthful or not, the loyalty of these Métis was never seriously put to the test. (23)



There is no known photograph of "Légaré's Scouts" but they certainly would have resembled this group of NWMP and Métis scouts who operated to the west of them. Old Timer's Museum, Maple Creek, Sask. photo.

Scouting for the police benefited the Métis communities of Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch in several ways beyond the wages the men received from the government. (24) Dewdney also made good his April promise and delivered to the two communities one hundred and fifty bushels of wheat seed, paid for from his "North West Funds" (25), and in the following years several efforts were made to obtain further compensation for those who had enrolled in the "Scouts." In 1896, Légaré attempted to obtain from the Department of the Interior a grant of land "script" for forty-two veterans (besides himself), as had been granted to the regular veterans of the North-West Field Force. This attempt seems to have failed (see the following appendix). In 1932, long after Légaré's death, a grant in lieu of "script" was given to sixteen of the surviving scouts, as had been offered to the members of the North-West Mounted Police who had served in 1885. (26) Over a decade later, Johnny Chartrand, who as a young man had played a crucial role in the surrender of Sitting Bull, applied for a war veteran's pension, and largely because of the efforts of Zachery Hamilton, the same who had listened to the stories of Pascal Bonneau, he and two other survivors, Narcisse Lecerte and Theophile McGillis received them in 1945. (27)

Légaré's own efforts at obtaining reward for his raising the "Scouts" were not as successful. He always maintained that he deserved a township for his part in the Dakota

return to the U.S., and on November 7th 1885, he wrote to Thomas White, Minister of the Interior, stating on his behalf "..... j'ai puis tenir en paix 80 Métis chez moi." But his pleas were in vain and subsequent attempts were no more successful. (28) Légaré later held minor government positions in Willow Bunch, such as local justice of the peace, and election enumerator.

The history of "Légaré's Scouts" typifies the situation that the Métis of southern Saskatchewan, and in a more general way Métis communities outside the "South Branch," found themselves in when trouble erupted in 1885. Although many, especially the old, had much sympathy with their kinsmen to the north, if not with their specific grievances, isolated and south of the C.P.R. they were in no position to assist them. Légaré, as the leader of the community, attempted to personally benefit from the situation, while at the same time doing his best to represent the interests of the community as a whole, as he saw them. Dewdney and the NWMP were responsible to a different constituency, the Dominion government, and it can only be said that they handled the situation well, turning a potential crisis into a footnote to the Rebellion. The people of Willow Bunch and Wood Mountain, like those at Batoche, did what they felt they had to do in order to survive. In this case that meant carrying arms, if not actually firing them, not for Riel, but in the service of those who opposed his course.

APPENDIX: Nominal Roll of "Légaré's Scouts".

<u>Date engaged</u>	<u>Name.</u>	<u>Residence (1896)</u>
April 12	Jean-Louis Légaré	Willow Bunch
April 15	Ber(ard) Hamelin	"
April 15	(Fra)ncois Boxer	Turtle (Moun)tain, Dak.
April 1(6)	Pierre Brièr(e)	W(illow) (Bun)ch
April 20	W. John McGillis	"
April 20	Louis Laroque	Qu'Appelle Valle absant
April 20	John[n]y Chartrand	Willow Bunch
April 20	Zacharie Chartrand	"
April 20	Alphonce Langer	"
April 20	Francois Lafournaise	"
April 20	Napoleon Lafournaise	"
April 20	Anto(ine) Gosselin	"
April 20	Hylaire (-)inville	(Glassgo) Montana
April 20	Louis Hamelin	"
April 20	Joseph Hamelin	Battle(fo)rd
April 20	(J)os(eph) Allary	T(ur)tl(e) (Mou)ntain, Dak.
April 20	Alexander Houle	"
April 20	(Jéome) Champagne	"
April 20	A(lexan)dre Goss(e)lin Sr.	Will(ow) Bunch
April 21	William Houle	Long Lake N.W.T.
April 22	William (Ba)rstow	(Willow) Bu(n)ch
May 1	Narcisse Lacerte Jr.	"
May 9	André Gaudry	"
May 9	Jonas Hamelin Jr.	G(la)ssgo Mont.
May 9	Napoleon McGillis	(Wi)llow Bunch
May 9	Jean Baptiste Lafournaise	Glassgo Monta(na)

May 10	Baptiste Adams	Cypress [Hills]
May 10	Jerimi Adams	Poplar Creek Montana
May 10	Jonas Hamelin Jr.	Gla(ssgo) Montana
May 10	Louis Descoteau	Turtle (Mo)untain
May 10	Joseph Lapointe	Willow (Bu)nch
May 10	André Garj(i)epy	Fort Q(u)'appelle
May 15	Joseph Ouellette	Poplar (Creek) Mont.
May 15	(- - -) Bottineau	Willow Bunch
May 15	(- - -) Al(la)ry	(- - - - -)ain
May 15	(Jo)eph(h) Short	(Tu)tle Mo(un)tain
May 15	Joseph Gosselin	Willow Bunch
May 15	Francois Bottineau	"
May 15	Alexandre Gosselin Jr.	"
-----	Théophile McGillis	"

This list of "Scouts" who served until May 31st 1885, was apparently compiled by Légaré in 1896. Two other veterans, D(esau)tels and Lellé(- -)uillard, were also mentioned, although Y.Z. Desautels, was under NWMP command, not with the "Scouts" under Légaré. Subtracting him would make a total of forty-two men including Légaré himself. Various sources mention from thirty to sixty "Scouts" but the latter may also include the "inner line" of NWMP and volunteers who patrolled until November. Johnny Chartrand, listed here, is known to have been one of that group. Légaré and Macdonell are listed as "in (cha)rg(e)," and Dean (Supt. R.B. Deane ?) and Gagnon [Insp. Sévère Gagnon ?] as "captains." (29)

ENDNOTES.

1. This article grew out of the author's research for a biography of "Jean Louis Légaré," co-authored with Diane Payment of Parks Canada, to be published in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume XIV.
2. R.B. Deane's view of these events is contained in his book, Mounted Police Life in Canada. A record of Thirty-one Years Service. Toronto: Coles Publishing Co., 1973 (orig. published in 1916 by Cassell and Company Ltd, London), pp. 20-21; and in his "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police Force 1885, Appendix D, Report of Superintendent Deane, North-West Mounted Police, Headquarters, Regina, 31st December, 1885 to Lieut. Col. A.G. Irvine, Commissioner N.W.M.P., Regina" in Parliament of Canada, Sessional Papers, Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co., 1886, pp. 62-65.
3. Deane's "Report" of 1885, cited above, p.63.
4. Ibid.
5. John Peter Turner, The North-West Mounted Police 1873-1893. Volume II, Ottawa: King's Printer, 1950, pp. 144-145.
6. Deane. Mounted Police Life in Canada, pp. 21-22.
7. National Archives of Canada, R.G. 15, Vol. 281, Series D-II-1, file 4985, "Department of Indian Affairs. File 33187, "Covering Petitions of Jean Louis Legare. He Claims to Have Induced Sitting Bull and his Band To Surrender To The U.S. Authorities," pp. 118-1904, letter of Légaré to T. White, Minister of the Interior; 16 Aug., 1882.
8. The "Scouts" were not on the roster of the North-West Field Force, as they were not the responsibility of the Department of Militia and Defence, but, like the Police, fell under the Department of the Interior. However, Dewdney informed the Minister of Militia, A. Caron, of their creation on April 14th, refer to D. Morton and R. Roy eds., Telegrams of the North-West Campaign 1885, Toronto: The Champlain Society, p. 178.
9. It has been widely reported that the elder Ambroise Ouellette said he would kill the first man who joined up, and in defiance Abraham Beauchamp said Ouellette would have to kill him first, see Turner, Volume II, pp. 145-146.

10. The government considered Légaré to be the undisputed leader of the community, see National Archives of Canada R.G. 18, Vol. 2190, Series BC, "Commissioner's Office Letterbooks, Regina - 2 Jan. 1885 - Sept. 1885," letter of Deane to F. White, 8 April 1885. Deane wrote: "Mr Légaré having as much influence, in his neighbourhood as Riel has over his following," pp. 388-390. For the equipping of the "Scouts" see Prudent Lapointe, "Mémoires de Prudent Lapointe, le 12 janvier 1920," n.d.
11. Deane's "Report" of 1885, p. 63; see also Morton and Roy, Telegrammes, p. 178.
12. National Archives of Canada, M.G. 27, Series I-C-4, "Dewdney Papers, Northwest Rebellion, 1883-1884 (sic), letter of Légaré to Dewdney, 25 April 1885, pp. 989-990.
13. Ibid. For the organization of the "Scouts" see Jean-Guy Quenneville, "Indiens, Métis et Cowboys: la saga de Jean-Louis Légaré," Centre D'Etudes franco-canadiennes de l'Ouest, 1983, pp. 20-21.
14. C.A. Boulton, Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions, Grip Printing and Publishing, 1886, p. 530.
15. Turner, Volume II, p. 149; and Deane's "Report" of 1885.
16. National Archives of Canada, R.G. 18, Vol. 2190, Series BC, "Commissioner's Office Letterbooks, Regina - 2 Jan 1885- 8 Sept. 1885, letter of Deane to F. White, Comptroller of the NWMP, 15 May 1885, pp. 530-533. Deane referred to Macdonnell's report on the activities of Légaré and the "Scouts."
17. R.G. 18, Vol. 2190, letter of Deane to F. White, 21 July 1885, pp. 745-77.
18. Deane, "Report" of 1885, pp.64-65; and R.G.18, Vol .2190, letter of Deane to F.White, 8 April 1885, p.392.
19. Deane, "Report" of 1885, p.63.
20. This was the view of Richard Lapointe, La Saskatchewan de A à Z, Regina: La Société historique de la Saskatchewan, 1987, p.330. He appears to have based his account on P.Lapointe, "Memoire de Prudent Lapointe".
21. Deane, "Report" of 1885, p. 64-65. On July 8th, one NCO with fifteen men and 16 horses reinforced Macdonnell at Wood Mountain.
22. National Archives of Canada, R.G. 18, Vol. 2191, Series BC, "Commissioner's Office Letterbooks, Regina - 10 Sept 1885 - 10 Feb 1886," letter of Deane to F. White, 21 July, 1885. Deane describes Macdonnell's ongoing patrols.
23. B. Beal and R.C. Macleod, Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion, Edmonton: Hurtig Pub., 1984, p. 304. See also "Jean-Louis Légaré aux Concessionnaires/Jean Louis Légaré to the Homesteaders" in Chronique/Chronicle, Willow Bunch, Sask.: Le Musée de Willow Bunch/Willow Bunch Museum, 1972, pp. 11-12.
24. National Archives of Canada, R.G.18, Vol. 2191, Series BC, "Commissioner's Office Letterbooks, Regina, 10 Sept 1885 - 10 Feb 1886," letter of Deane to F. White, 3 October 1885, pp. 337. Deane declared that Légaré had paid off the "Scouts".
25. National Archives of Canada, R.G. 15, Vol. 15, Series D-II-1, File 111072, "Lt. Gov. , NWT reg. seed grain for half-breeds at Wood Mountain, 1886," letter of Dewdney to F.White, 26 March 1886.
26. Saskatchewan Archives Board, #R-SHS11, Johnny Chartrand, "Correspondence avec le gouvernement américain pour une pension, janvier-aout 1945 (en anglais), 1944-45," letter of J. Smart, Controller, Department of Mines and Resources to Z.M. Hamilton, 16 March 1945.
27. Ibid - clipping from the Regina Leader Post, 4 April 1945.
28. National Archives of Canada, R.G. 15, Vol. 281, D-II-1, File 49185, "Department of Indian Affairs. File 33187 Covering Petitions of Jean Louis Legare. He Claims to Have Induced Sitting Bull And His Band To Surrender To The U.S. Authorities, 1881-1904., letter of Jean-Louis Légaré to T. White, 7 Nov 1885.
29. This nominal roll was largely based on - Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-115 IV 15a, "Haultain & Robson IV.15 NWMP Scouts.

NOTES:Modifications to the Canadian Oliver Dismounted Equipment Pattern 1916,
By Grant Tyler.

Over the past several years I have encountered numerous examples of converted 1916 pattern Oliver haversacks, and to a lesser degree, waistbelts.

The haversack conversion entailed removal of the two web straps and buckles from the rear. They were replaced by a cotton webbing two piece sling which fastened with a brass buckle of the 1908 Webbing type. The examples of the "sling" haversack, which were examined, exhibit evidence of the pre-existence of the two web straps. This indicates conversion of the existing pattern, rather than development of a new pattern.



Oliver Dismounted Equipment pattern 1916. Top: belts before and after conversion. Below: Haversacks: left & centre: front & rear, original configuration with two web straps; right: converted haversack with sling. (Author's photo)

One can surmise the intended purpose of the converted haversack. When Canadian troops proceeded to England, great quantities of the 1916 Oliver haversacks went with them. Prior to proceeding to France, the Oliver equipment was exchanged for 1908 pattern web equipment (1). The Oliver infantry haversack, readily available due to the exchange, would be an adequate replacement for that presently in use by Cavalry and other mounted troops: the 1908 web equipment haversack, suspended from a single brace. An example of the converted Oliver haversack which was examined, carried markings of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps. Certain M.G. Troops used mounted

equipment. This would tend to support the idea that the converted Oliver haversack may have been intended as a replacement for at least some of the 1908 pattern haversacks then in use by mounted troops.

The second item of converted 1916 pattern Oliver equipment, the waistbelt, almost escaped notice. The conversion is simple. The two rear slides and their D's are removed, and the front D's are cut from their chapes. The chapes are trimmed so as to be level with the upper and lower edges of the belt.

Initially, I believed these belts to be no more than mutilated examples. However, many have surfaced, and recently discovered photographs show dismounted troops wearing the converted belts. It would seem that the converted belt was intended only for walking out purposes. Photographic evidence tends to support this. To date, only full length studio photos have been encountered. They show belts being worn without any other equipment.

Field use by mounted troops is unlikely since the 1903 pattern cartridge carriers will not slide on to the belt.

(1). The 4th Canadian Division used 1916 Oliver Equipment in France for a very short period.

National Archives of Canada: Records of Royal Hospital Chelsea Soldiers' Documents.

Selections of these documents are held by the N.A.C. on microfilm, ref. MG13, W.O. 97. These can be borrowed on inter-library loan. Whilst only the records of soldiers discharged to pension exist, (not those who died when serving or who took early discharge), the interest of these records for details of Other Ranks' careers to collectors and researchers is considerable. Men are listed alphabetically by regiment. The following is a partial listing of the regiments who served in Canada, or are Canadian in origin covered in the N.A.C.'s holdings:

1760-1854.

104th Foot (New Brunswick Regt.)

Colonial Veterans

de Meuron Regt.

R. Canadian Rifles

4th and 10th Veteran Bns.

Royal Nfld. Companies

de Watteville Regt.

1855-1872.

34th, 43rd, 60th, 70th, 78th, 79th, 89th Regiments of Foot.

100th Foot (P. of Wales Royal Canadian)

Royal Canadian Rifles

A full listing complete with microfilm reel numbers can be had from the N.A.C., British Archives, Manuscript Division.

From the "Minutes of the Militia Council", 1906 - 1913. By René Chartrand.

These printed volumes were for very limited circulation and were marked "Secret". Few copies seemed to have survived. The following extracts are from a copy in the library of D.Hist at DND. Here are some of the decisions of the Militia Council relating to changes in dress. It should be noted that the date of the decision does not necessarily coincide with the date of implementation. Further extracts will appear in the 1996 Journal.

90th Regiment "Winnipeg Rifles":

10th May 1907, 7-92-14. Clothing.

759. The Quartermaster General reported, with reference to an application from the Officer Commanding the 90th Regiment "Winnipeg Rifles" for an issue of clothing to his command, that the regiment did not obtain an issue of tunics to which it was entitled in July 1905, the issue being applied for, as the regiment had just received an issue of serge clothing, and it was expected that another issue of serge clothing in lieu of the tunics could be drawn at a later date.

760. The Quartermaster General said that the Officer Commanding the District had recommended that this be now done, and that he concurred with the recommendation.

761. **Decision:** It was decided that as the cloth tunics to which the 90th Regiment "Winnipeg Rifles" was entitled in July 1905, were not issued, the Regiment might now be considered as entitled to the issue of the serge uniforms for which the Officer Commanding the District had requisitioned.
Q.M.G. to take action.

26th November 1912, 7-92-22. Collar badges.

557. The Quartermaster General submitted the question of changing the motto on the collar badge of the 90th Regiment "Winnipeg Rifles" from "*hostium nominati*" to "*hosti acie nominati*".

558. The Quartermaster General said that the motto authorized was ungrammatical and almost meaningless, and the proposed change would not involve any expense to the public.

This was approved.

The Q.M.G. to take action.

4th November 1913, 7-92-14. Compensation in lieu of helmets.

305. The Quartermaster General submitted a recommendation of the Officer Commanding Military District No.10 that the 90th Regiment "Winnipeg Rifles" be granted compensation in lieu of helmets to enable it to provide busbies of a pattern worn by Rifle Regiments of the British Service. There are no funds available at the present time.

306. **Decision:** It was decided to authorize compensation in lieu of helmets, to be paid next year, provision to be made in the estimates accordingly.

The Q.M.G. and the A. & P.M.G. to take action.

100th Regiment 'Winnipeg Grenadiers'.

4th November 1913, 7-105-2. Headress in winter

318. The Quartermaster General submitted a recommendation from the Officer Commanding Military District No.10 that officers of the 100th Regiment 'Winnipeg Grenadiers' be permitted to wear a winter cap of persian lamb with a bag of athol grey with gold braid and a badge, grenade, worked in gold to be worn on the bag.

319. The Quartermaster General said that he did not recommend the bag proposed, but as blue was the facings allocated to the Infantry throughout the Service, a blue bag with red light should be authorized and the badge worn on the front of the cap instead of the bag.

320. **Decision:** The recommendation of the District Officer Commanding was approved.
Q.M.G. to take action.

Equipment.

June 3rd 1913, 130-23-2, Web Equipment - Distribution of.

272. The Quartermaster General, in submitting the question of the distribution of the 1913 (new pattern) Web Equipment for dismounted units, said that 7,000 sets of the 1908 pattern were now in use, a little more than one third being on issue to the Permanent Force, and the remainder to corps of the Non-Permanent Militia, a list of which he submitted.

273. The Quartermaster General said that 5,000 of the 1913 pattern were now due from the contractors, and inquired whether the Permanent Force should be issued with this pattern in exchange for the old, and the latter returned into store and issued to non-permanent units; also, whether non-permanent regiments having the 1908 pattern on charge should be similarly treated.

274. **Decision:** It was decided to issue the new equipment in the manner indicated in the Quartermaster General's report.
Q.M.G. to take action.

Badges.

26th June 1906, 42-1-12. Rifle Shooting - Badge for the encouragement of.

1099. A design of badge for the best shots, being a maple leaf of navy blue cloth, crossed Ross and Lee-Enfield rifles worked in gold thread, above the crossed rifles a target of white silk with gold cord bearing the words 'best shot' worked in gold thread: in the centre of the target a bull's eye of blue, the outline of which is defined by a light gold thread; across the face of the bull's eye the figures '1906' worked in gold thread; the target surmounted by a Tudor Crown in gold and embroidery, was approved.
D.M. to take action.

(NOTE: These extracts quoted would hardly seem to warrant "Secret" designation, but other items in the minutes dealt with the conduct and capabilities of officers being considered for promotion, sometimes in scathing terms, hence the need for "Secret" classification. R.C.)

BOOKS BY MEMBERS.

TASCONA, Bruce. From the Forks to Flanders Field; The Story of the 27th City of Winnipeg Battalion 1914-1919. Bruce Tascona, 22 Iroquois Bay, Winnipeg, Man. Canada, R2J 2E2. 1995. ISBN 0-9699391-0-8. 127pp.

B/W photos, maps and complete 1915 Nominal Roll. Can.\$ 28.95 plus postage, Canada \$3.50, US & Overseas \$6.50 from publisher. This CEF Battalion was formed from Manitoba Militia regiments and the 98th Kenora L.I. and arrived in France in September 1915. It took part in most of the major battles of the War. Mr Tascona's book gives a detailed account of the many actions in which the Battalion was involved, lists all casualties, honours and awards (including VC's to Lieut. R.G. Coombe and Pte. J.P. Robertson), Other Ranks passed through, and Commanding Officers as well as a facsimile of the 1915 Nominal Roll. Detailed and comprehensive this is a model history of a distinguished and very active CEF Battalion.

Little Black Devils: This regimental history of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, was published some years ago and was thought to be out of print. But a few long hidden, brand new copies have surfaced and are available at Can\$30.00 from The RWR Kit Shop, Minto Armoury, 960 St Mathews Ave, Winnipeg, Man. R3G 0J7. Tel. 204 786 4357.

BOOKS OF INTEREST.

GRAVES, Donald E. (Ed.) Soldiers of 1814: American Enlisted Men's Memoirs of the Niagara Campaign. Old Fort Niagara Association Inc, Box 169, Youngstown, NY. USA. 14174-0169, 1995. 80 pp. with line illustrations by George Balbar and maps. ISBN 0-941967-16-6. US\$6.50. plus \$1.75 postage in Canada & US, elsewhere \$4.00. Mr Graves has written an explanatory introduction to these memoirs of three enlisted men, and provided extensive footnotes. Private Amasiah Ford, 22nd Regiment of Infantry, Private Alexander McMullen, Fenton's Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers and 14 year old Drummer Jarvis Hanks, 11th Infantry Regiment were present at many of the actions of the Niagara campaign, including Lundy's Lane, Chippewa and Fort Erie. Their descriptions of the fighting, military life and comments on the conduct of the war present a perspective very different from that of the many prolific writers of the officer class. The maps are good, but the book is not well served by the illustrations which are more in keeping with a novel than this excellent historical publication. The Association is to be congratulated on publishing this most interesting book at such a reasonable price. (Hopefully, in his next book Mr Graves will revert to the traditional bare headed author's photograph !)

MAGAZINES.

These three magazines have all been in publication for several years but are not widely advertised.

REGIMENTS: The Military Heritage Collection. Available through Smith's Bookstores and militaria stores, Can\$6.95. 6 issues per year. Each issue deals with a regiment of the British Army, including to date; The Life Guards, The Staffordshire Regiment, and the King's Own Royal Border Regiment. The present day regiment is well covered with many new coloured photographs and the past history is illustrated with b/w photos, contemporary pictures and paintings of uniforms by Bob Marrion. Strongly recommended to those interested in British uniforms. A high quality production, strong on uniforms, and with an informative text.

ESPRIT DE CORPS. Canadian Military then and now. Available monthly from newstands (Can\$3.50) or by subscription (Can\$29.95 per year) from 1066 Somerset St. West, Ottawa, Ont. Canada, K1Y 4T3, telephone. 1-800-361-2791. This magazine was prominently in the news recently over its revelations about the Somalia affair, and its opposition to the disbandment of the Airborne Regiment. It sees itself as a concerned and constructive critic of the current leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces, and to some extent as a voice for the Other Ranks. However, most of each issue is devoted to articles on Canadians in action and peace keeping from WWI to the present. There is an ongoing series on Canadian VC's. An interesting and well produced magazine.

MILITARIA MAGAZINE. Published by Collectors Press Ltd. 12 Rickett St, London SW6 1RU, England. Monthly, Can\$6.95 at Smiths Bookstores (and others?). Concentrates on WWI and WWII uniforms, badges and equipment. Several major articles in each issue illustrated with photos of carefully chosen present day male models dressed in actual uniforms, giving a very informative image of the uniforms. Recent issues include New Zealand infantry 1916-18, US black enlisted men WWI and Polish Highland Rifle Regiments 1919-1940. Well produced, many good colour photos.