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D Battery, Royal Canadian Field Artillery, in the South African
War, 1900.

Edward Benoit
Dept. of History
McGill University, Montreal
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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
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of Master of Arts

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Abstract

Canadian military historians have overlooked the role of the Canadian artillery in the South African War of 1899-1902. This thesis is an attempt to fill that gap in the historiography. Based largely on primary sources such as newspaper reports, military records, and personal diaries and letters, the thesis examines the contributions and experiences of the battery, Royal Canadian Field Artillery, in the South African War. It asserts that the battery played a variety of roles, ranging from the monotonous line of communication duty to intense combat actions, and that the soldiers reacted to this varied experience in different ways.

Résumé

Les ouvrages écrits sur l'histoire de l'armée canadienne ont négligé de mentionner le rôle de l'artillerie canadienne durant la guerre d'Afrique du Sud de 1899 à 1902. Cette thèse essaie de pallier à l'oubli des historiens. Grâce à des documents comprenant articles de journaux, dossiers militaires, lettres et journaux intimes, nous examinons la participation et les expériences de la Batterie D, Artillerie de campagne royale canadienne durant la guerre d'Afrique du Sud. La présente thèse soutient que la batterie joua différents rôles, depuis la monotone des patrouilles de surveillance des lignes de communication jusqu'à l'intensité des combats, et que les soldats réagirent différemment selon diverses circonstances.

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Introduction

It is almost one hundred years since the outbreak of the South African War of 1899-1902. Over seven thousand Canadians from across the country volunteered to serve in that conflict. As Canada's first overseas military campaign, the war occupied a central place in Canadian life up to 1914. The war, as one historian has noted, affected politics, trade, transportation, industry, fashion, literature and music.¹ Several books, personal memoirs and journal and magazine articles were written about Canada's role in the imperial conflict. Not Surprisingly, these writings included two history books that outlined Canada's participation: T.G. Marquis's Canada's Sons on Kopje and Veldt (1900) and W. Sanford Evans's The Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism (1901).

Despite the initial interest that surrounded the war, Canadian historians have largely overlooked their country's military participation in South Africa. In his 1937 "Survey of the Literature on Canada's Participation in the South African War", W.B. Kerr acknowledged that "there is no official history and no satisfactory general account for the public".² There are several reasons for this neglect. First, during the interwar period Canadian historians turned their attention away from the imperial connection and imperial affairs and focused on the "North Americanness" of Canada.³ Second, liberal nationalist historians, who were interested in charting Canada's evolution from colony to nation, interpreted the Boer War as a setback for Canadian autonomy and unity. They saw it as a shameful, divisive event forced on Canada by imperial conspirators.⁴ Such a perspective was not likely to inspire an interest in Canada's military contribution to the war. Third, Canadian historians began to emphasize economic interpretations of history and downplayed the importance of military events.⁵ Moreover, the moral revulsion against the carnage of the First World War produced a spirit of anti militarism that decreased the popularity of military history in general.⁶

The 1945-75 period brought little improvement for those

interested in Canada's military contribution to the Boer war. In the late 1940s and 1950s Canadian historians emphasized political history, especially political biography.⁷ In the 1960s and 1970s they shifted their focus to social history and concentrated on such issues as regionalism, class, gender and ethnicity. Although military history became more popular in the post 1945 period, thanks largely to the Historical Section - later Directorate of History - at the Department of National Defence, no Canadian military historian focused on the South African War. Desmond Morton's biography of General Sir William Otter (1974) provided a partial remedy to the scarcity of literature on the subject. As Commanding Officer of the first Canadian contingent in South Africa, Otter's biography offered valuable insight into Canada's military experience.⁸ As late as 1977, however, J.L. Granatstein and P. Stevens reiterated that "there is no modern military history of the Boer War and the Canadian role in it".⁹

Only in the last twenty years have Canadian historians started to address this gap in the historiography. Carman Miller's research, beginning with his 1975 socio-economic analysis of the Boer war contingents and culminating in his 1993 book Painting the Map Red, has assimilated a massive amount of documentation and has inspired others, including myself, to pursue this subject.¹⁰ Miller's work, while very thorough, has by no means exhausted the subject of Canadian military participation in South Africa. Rather, it offers an excellent starting point for further investigation, debate and even more detailed analysis.

One of the casualties of the prolonged lack of interest in Canada's South African War experience has been the Royal Canadian Artillery. Most of the early writing and later research that has been done focuses on the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry and the various Canadian mounted units.¹¹ In 1996, the 125th anniversary year of the R.C.A., there is still no detailed study dedicated exclusively to the participation of Canada's gunners in the Boer War. This is all the more surprising since

the artillery was widely considered at the time to be the best trained and most efficient arm of the Canadian military.

The purpose of this thesis is to describe and assess the contributions and experiences of D Battery, Royal Canadian Field Artillery, in the South African War. It will examine why the gunners volunteered, how they lived and fought, how they got along with each other and with their imperial counterparts, what they achieved and whether or not their experiences lived up to their expectations. It shall be argued that while they shared similar experiences, the gunners, like all individuals, reacted to these experiences in idiosyncratic ways. The thesis will concentrate on D Battery for a few reasons. First, constraints of space make it necessary to limit the examination to one of the three Canadian artillery units. Second, the availability of source materials makes D Battery the most logical choice. Third, the battery is in some ways representative of the larger Canadian artillery experience in the Boer War. For example, it, like the Canadian brigade division of field artillery, spent most of its time split apart and attached to British formations. It also experienced a broad range of activity, from the monotonous line of communication duty to intense combat actions. A study of D Battery can therefore provide insight into the various roles of the Canadian artillery in South Africa in general.

Although the thesis will make use of both the traditional and most recent secondary literature, it is based largely on primary sources. These include newspaper reports, official unit diaries and reports, personal memoirs, and private diaries and letters. The thesis will attempt to demonstrate that while all of these sources are valuable tools for reconstructing the soldiers' experiences and attitudes, some of them are more useful than others. In fact, it is possible to suggest an informal hierarchy of primary sources. The most basic source, the newspaper correspondents' reports, provide valuable information about troop movements and activities, weather conditions and the local surroundings. The correspondents'

reports, however, have some limitations. They can only really tell us about what the journalists saw and thought. The information in the reports was limited by the location and movement of the reporters. The fact that the correspondents went home after the fall of Pretoria in June 1900, before D Battery had seen any combat action, clearly illustrates this problem. Their reports were also written for a particular audience and with the intention of selling newspapers. Some correspondents had a tendency therefore to exaggerate, and in a few cases fabricate, news stories.¹² The journalists' reports cannot give a completely accurate indication of the soldiers' thoughts and feelings either. Even if they had bothered to ask the soldiers how they felt, there is evidence to suggest that some soldiers would not have shared their true feelings for fear of reprimand.¹³

Written by the officers on the spot, the official unit diaries and reports are a more reliable source of information for troop movements and activities. These reports, however, vary widely in quality and detail. Some are very extensive; others give very little information. It must be remembered that these reports were also written for a particular audience - the military authorities in Ottawa. It is not unreasonable to assume that they might limit any mention of embarrassing information such as discipline problems or poor military performance. The official diaries and reports also give little insight into the thoughts and feelings of ordinary soldiers.

The most accurate information about the gunners' experiences is to be found in their own writings. Personal memoirs, while valuable for their individual perspective, often suffer from inaccuracies due to the passage of time. The best primary sources are the soldiers' personal letters and diaries. Written on the spot and usually intended for their loved ones, the letters and diaries provide the most honest and reliable source of information about troop movements, activities, thoughts and attitudes. Even these sources have some limitations, however. Some of the letters were published in

local newspapers back home and were either edited for content, or, in the case of those intended for publication, avoided expressing strongly negative feelings. Nevertheless, the soldiers' letters, some of which contained explicit "not for publication" sections, and their private diaries are the best sources available to the historian interested in an accurate reconstruction of the past. This is not to say that the other materials should be completely overlooked, but simply that they should be weighed carefully beside the soldiers' own words.

The first chapter of the thesis will outline the background of the conflict in South Africa, describe the organization of the Canadian military in 1899, and examine the Canadian government's efforts to include the artillery in its military contribution. The second chapter will examine the recruitment, organization and dispatch of D Battery. Chapters three and four will follow the battery through the war. The final chapter will provide an assessment of its experiences, contributions and achievements.

1. Carman Miller, "Research Resources on Canada and the South African War" in Archivaria (Summer, 1988) p.116.
- 2.W.B. Kerr, "A Survey of the Literature on Canada's Participation in the South African War" in Canadian Historical Review (December, 1937) p.245.
- 3.Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900 2nd ed. Toronto, 1986. especially Chp. 6.
- 4.Carman Miller, Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War Montreal, 1993. p.xii.
- 5.Berger, p.169.
- 6.Ibid ; George F. Stanley and Charles P. Stacey were exceptions to this trend against military history.
- 7.Ibid, p.260.
- 8.Desmond Morton, The Canadian General: Sir William Otter Toronto, 1974.

- 9.J.L. Granatstein and P. Stevens eds., Canada Since 1867: A Bibliographic Guide (Toronto, 1977) p.45.
10. See Carman Miller, "A Preliminary Analysis of the Socio-Economic Composition of Canada's South African War Contingents" in Social History (November, 1975) pp.219-237.; Miller, Painting The Map Red ; Miller, "Chums In Arms": Comradeship Among Canada's South African War Soldiers" in Social History (November, 1985) pp.359-373. Miller, "The Unhappy Warriors: Conflict and Nationality Among Canadian Troops During the South African War" in Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History (January, 1995) pp.75-105. Recent work also includes Brian A. Reid, Our Little Army in the Field St. Catharines, 1996.
11. T.G. Marquis, Canada's Sons on Kopje and Veldt Toronto, 1900 and W. Sanford Evans, Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism Toronto, 1901 focus largely on the first contingent and the mounted units.; Hart-McHarg, From Quebec to Pretoria Montreal, 1902 is a personal memoir written by a member of the 2nd (Special Service) Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry. Desmond Morton, The Canadian General also focuses on Otter's battalion. Hugh Robertson, "The Royal Canadian Dragoons and the Anglo-Boer War, 1900" Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1982 examines one of the Canadian Mounted units.
12. See Miller, Painting the Map Red, p.xiii.
13. See, for example, letter in Ottawa Daily Free Press, 14 December 1900 p.8.

Chapter One

The Background

The South African War of 1899-1902 marked the culmination of decades of conflict and tension between Great Britain and the Dutch Afrikaners known as "Boers". The Dutch, led by the Dutch East India Company, settled at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. The settlement grew steadily, supplemented by Dutch, German and a small number of French Huguenot immigrants in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and numbered 15,000 inhabitants by 1795. The frontiers of the white settlement expanded quite rapidly and by the late eighteenth century extended approximately 650 kilometers northeast of Cape Town.¹

The British, determined to protect the sea passage to the East and to prevent Napoleonic France from seizing a foothold on the African sub-continent, sent a naval and military force to capture the Cape in September 1795. The British held the strategically located colony until the Treaty of Amiens (1802) transferred the Cape to the Batavian Republic - the Dutch government organized by the French after the conquest of the Netherlands. This arrangement did not last very long. In 1806, following the resumption of hostilities with France, the British sent another force to seize the Cape from Napoleon's allies. The British held the colony until the end of the war and secured permanent title to it as part of the 1815 peace settlement.

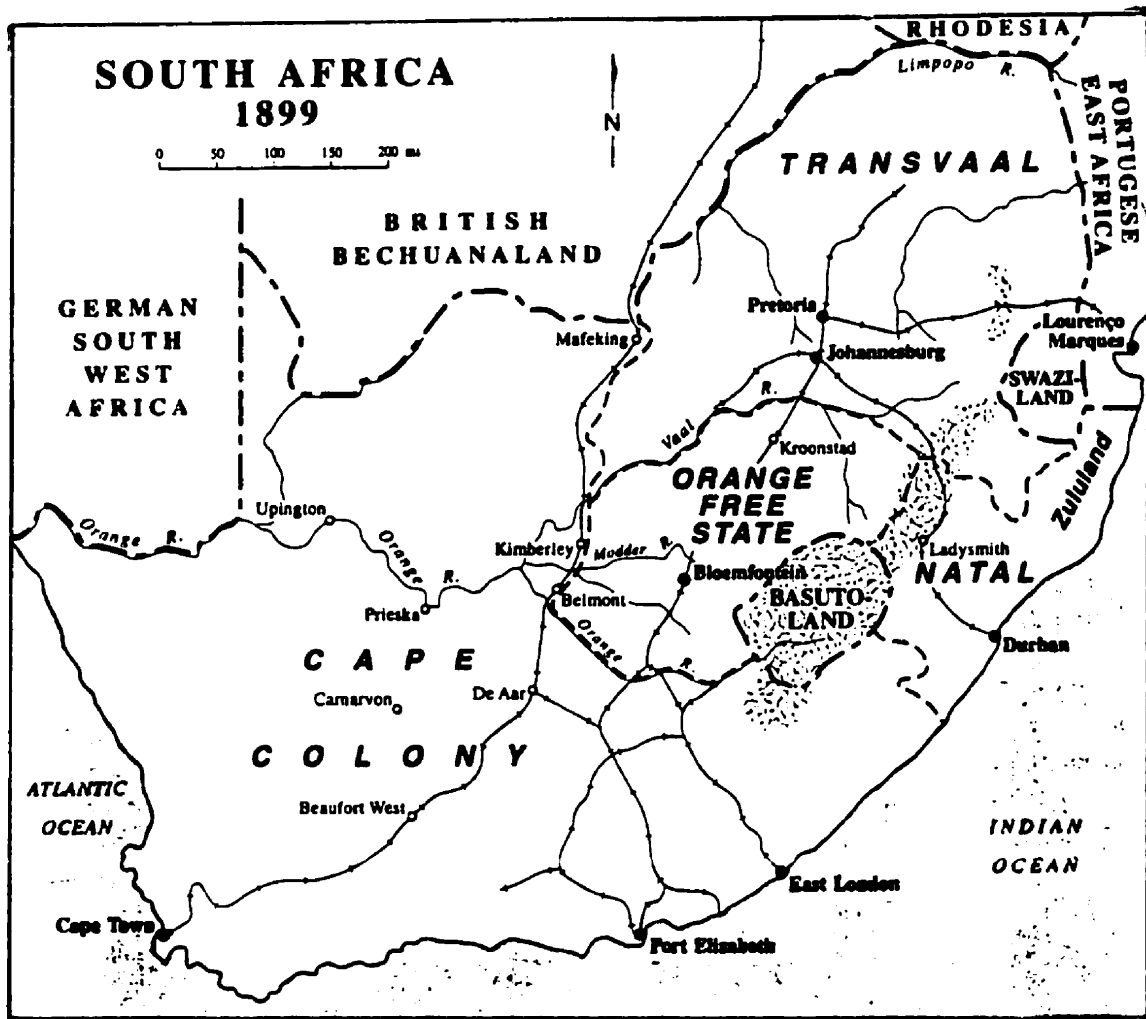
During these years the British introduced certain reforms in the colony. Although these reforms were quite mild, they upset the Afrikaners and exacerbated British-Boer relations. British efforts to enforce the minimal legal rights of servants, for example, led to the Slachter's Nek Rebellion in 1815, in which forty-seven Boer rebels were arrested and five rebel leaders were hanged.¹ The arrival of 5000 British settlers in 1820 further complicated British-Boer relations. Unlike earlier immigrants, the British settlers were not assimilated into the Afrikaner community. In fact they campaigned for British liberties and institutions, and within a few years they had secured the freedom of the press and English rules of legal

procedure and evidence, including the jury system. English was made the official language of the courts and British teachers were imported to teach English in the schools. These developments affected social and economic relations in the colony and caused some friction between the Afrikaner population and the British settlers.

Although the Boers were disturbed by these measures, it was the British Emancipation Act of 1834 that angered them more than anything else. Many Boers were unwilling to accept such liberal and enlightened notions of equality. Perceiving the abolition of slavery as a threat to their way of life, over 5000 Boers packed up their belongings and treked into the interior to escape "British interference". Between 1835 and 1843 a total of over 12,000 Afrikaners left the Cape Colony.' These "Voortrekkers" went to three different areas. One group went north to the veldt land between the Orange and Vaal Rivers. A second group moved south of the Tugela River in Natal, where they had several bloody clashes with the natives. When the British annexed Natal in 1843, however, these Boers joined some other trekkers and settled in the region north of the Vaal River.

The British had treaty agreements with some of the native groups north of the Orange River. The arrival of the Boers in this area resulted in conflicts with the native groups. To pacify the region, General Sir Harry Smith, Governor of Cape Colony and British High Commissioner in South Africa, annexed the territory between the Orange and Vaal Rivers as the Orange River Sovereignty in 1848. The Boers, led by A.W. Pretorius, took up arms and tried to prevent the annexation, but were defeated by British troops at Boomplatz in August 1848.'

During the mid-nineteenth century the political climate in Britain underwent some important changes. The push for free trade, lower taxes and less government spending led the British government to decrease its imperial commitments and expenditures. Accordingly, in 1852 the British government recognized the independence of the Boers north of the Vaal River. The Sand River Convention gave the Transvaalers the



Source: Brian Reid, Our Little Army in the Field, p.8.

right to manage their own affairs. In 1854 the Bloemfontein Convention granted independence to the Orange Free State, the territory between the Orange and Vaal Rivers. Since the British controlled the coastal regions of South Africa (Cape Colony and Natal) and since the Boer republics were militarily weaker than and economically dependent upon the British territories, the British government could make these changes without jeopardizing the vital sea route to the East.

After a brief period of adjustment, the Orange Free State, under the capable leadership of Johannes H. Brand, emerged as a stable political entity. The Transvaal was not so fortunate. Economically backward, deep in debt, and lacking the political leadership of her sister republic, the Transvaal fell into a chaotic condition. When in 1876 the Transvaalers were militarily defeated by a force of natives and were left vulnerable to a large scale Zulu attack, the Boers had to seek British assistance. With a renewed interest in imperial affairs, the British annexed the republic in April 1877. Many of the Transvaal Boers resented the annexation, but at the time they had little choice.

The annexation did not last long. Following the Zulu War of 1879-80, which revealed the weakness of British arms and eliminated the Zulu threat, the Boers seized the opportunity to reclaim their independence. Paul Kruger, Piet Joubert and M.W. Pretorius led a Boer rebellion in 1880-81. This first Anglo-Boer War lasted only a few months and ended with the stunning British defeat at Majuba Hill. In August 1881 the Gladstone ministry signed the Pretoria Convention. It granted the Transvaal "complete self government subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty". Although Britain maintained control over the Transvaal's foreign relations, the right to veto legislation affecting natives and the right to move troops through the Transvaal, the convention represented a clear setback for British imperial aims and a defeat for British arms. In 1884, one year after Paul Kruger was elected President of the Transvaal, the London Convention underlined the British defeat.

It made no mention of suzerainty - though the British later claimed it still applied -and removed both the right to veto legislation affecting the natives and the right to march troops through the Transvaal.' Resentful of their military defeat and the subsequent concessions made to the South African Republic, as the Transvaal was now known, many Britons remained eager for an opportunity to equal the score.

These early British-Boer conflicts established a tradition of animosity and distrust between the two sides which shaped their relations up to 1899. The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 revolutionized the South African economy and exacerbated these relations. The gold rush brought a large influx of mostly British immigrants to the Transvaal. The arrival of the "Uitlanders", as they were called, changed the composition of the population and increased social and economic tensions in the republic. The Uitlanders accumulated many grievances. In order to prevent them from exerting any political clout, the Kruger government passed prohibitive franchise laws which denied them the right to vote for fourteen years. Upset by this measure, the Uitlanders formed political associations such as the National Union to voice their protest. This caused further tension between the Boer government and the British settlers.

More importantly, however, the rapid economic development of the Transvaal brought geo-political and strategic destabilization to the region. The Rand goldfields greatly enhanced the power of the Transvaal and seemed to some apprehensive Britons to threaten British supremacy in South Africa. British supremacy was deemed important for two reasons. First, to promote a South African federation under British auspices. The rapidly developing wealth and power of the Transvaal made it both desirable and necessary, the British believed, to include it in these plans. Such a federation was seen as an essential step towards a more closely united empire. By the 1890s an increasing number of British statesmen believed that imperial unity was the key to Britain's future power.

Second, the British wished to preserve imperial security. Despite the construction of the Suez canal, many British leaders still pointed to South Africa as the cornerstone of the empire and the essential sea route to the East. British supremacy in South Africa was necessary to guarantee this sea route.'

The rapidly increasing wealth and power of the Transvaal jeopardized both of these objectives. The gold rush eliminated the Transvaal's dependence on the British colonies and the Kruger regime had no desire to move closer to them. In fact the British feared that he would try to maximize the Transvaal's power, dominate the British territories, and form a Transvaal led South African federation outside of the empire.' Such an independent South African Union would not only foil attempts to create a loyal British South African federation but would also compromise the security of the sea route to the East. Kruger's attempts to expand the Transvaal and secure an independent railline to the Portuguese coast, his efforts to cut off trade with the British colonies in the 1895 "Drifts" crisis, and his armament programme confirmed British fears. A militarily and economically strong and hostile Transvaal posed a challenge to British supremacy and imperial security. Kruger's attempts to receive European recognition and support, Germany and Holland's open sympathy with the Transvaal, European imperial activities in the vicinity and mounting foreign investment in the Transvaal underlined this concern and raised the threat of a Great Power rivalry in the region.'

Cecil Rhodes, the Prime Minister of Cape Colony, was very concerned with the direction of events in South Africa. He dreamed of a loyal Cape-dominated British South African federation, which included the Transvaal, and of a Cape to Cairo Railway. In 1888, in an attempt to encircle the Transvaal with British territory and counterbalance the wealth of the Rand, Rhodes secured a charter for the British South Africa Company to develop the territory north of the Limpopo River. By 1895, however, the policy of encirclement had been defeated by the construction of the Delagoa Bay rail line to the Portuguese port

of Lourenco Marques and the Rhodesian territory had failed to yield a "second Rand". Convinced that the Transvaal government was an obstacle to his designs and a threat to British supremacy in South Africa, Rhodes moved to overthrow the Kruger regime.

Rhodes, with the knowledge of Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary,¹⁰ aimed to exploit Uitlander discontent for his own purposes. His plans called for a Uitlander insurrection to be supported by a military force, led by his friend Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, which would enter the Transvaal from a recently acquired neighbouring strip of territory. Once the uprising had been started, the British High Commissioner would rush to Pretoria to restore order and annex the territory for the empire.¹¹ In the end the Jameson Raid was an unmitigated disaster. Although the Uitlander uprising had been called off, Rhodes and Jameson, hoping to spark the insurrection, went ahead with their plan. A few days after Jameson and 600 men- less than half the number he had wanted- crossed into Transvaal territory on 29 December 1895, they were easily rounded up by the Boer authorities.

The Jameson Raid fiasco weakened the British position in South Africa and increased the possibility of a second Anglo-Boer war. Afrikaner opinion throughout South Africa rallied to Kruger. Rhodes had to resign the premiership of Cape Colony. With any spirit of English-Dutch co-operation destroyed, W.P. Schreiner and the Afrikaner Bond took office at Cape Town. In the Orange Free State Steyn's pro-Kruger party came to power and signed a military alliance with the Transvaal. The Transvaal demanded the end of imperial controls over its foreign policy, dramatically increased its armament programme, and stepped up its search for international allies and diplomatic recognition. Kruger aimed for complete independence.¹² With his anglophobia apparently substantiated, Kruger easily defeated the moderate Boers in the 1898 elections. Britain's European rivals also sided with Kruger. The German Kaiser's telegram congratulating Kruger upon his success in defeating the Jameson raid and preserving the Transvaal's independence "without calling on the

aid of friendly powers" was only the clearest expression of European support for the South African Republic.¹¹ The Germans and French, for example, continued to seek concessions in the region and joined the Boers in an attempt to keep the Delagoa Bay railine and its port outside of British control.¹²

Aware of their weakened position, the British government sought a policy to preserve their supremacy on the African sub continent. Their immediate response was to send a naval squadron to South Africa and a stiff diplomatic message to Germany protesting the Kaiser's telegram. The British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, and his cabinet decided to enforce strictly their convention agreements with the Transvaal, including the suzerainty clause.¹³ More importantly, however, Joseph Chamberlain and the Colonial Office adopted the issue of Uitlander grievances.¹⁴ This issue, Chamberlain believed, had many advantages. First, it allowed the British to blame the recent troubles in the Transvaal on Kruger's own policies. Second, the emphasis on Uitlander grievances would give the British government ample opportunity to intervene and assert its position in South Africa, clearly indicating that the British had no intention of abandoning their paramountcy. The issue also gave the British a chance to secure much needed allies- the Uitlanders. Finally, the Uitlanders grievances provided an excellent issue for Chamberlain's publicity campaign. Such an issue had the potential to gain support from both British imperialists and liberals alike.¹⁵

The first opportunity to use the Uitlander grievances issue to assert Britain's supremacy in South Africa arose in April 1897, when Kruger's government passed an Aliens Expulsion law and an Immigration law aimed against the Uitlanders in the Transvaal. Arguing that the legislation violated the 1884 London Convention, Lord Salisbury's cabinet intervened to force its repeal. The British government sent a stiffly worded message, a naval squadron and military reinforcements to South Africa. In May Kruger's government withdrew the offending legislation.¹⁶ This incident is significant for a few reasons. First, it

demonstrates that Lord Salisbury and the cabinet, not only Joseph Chamberlain, believed in the need to protect British supremacy in South Africa and were willing to confront the Boers to do so. The episode persuaded the British, as did the 1895 Drifts crisis, that Kruger's government would back down if faced with the threat of force. Conversely, it irritated the Boers and increased their distrust of Great Britain.

Sir Alfred Milner, appointed Governor of Cape Colony and British High Commissioner in South Africa in May 1897, also used the Uitlander grievances to advance British interests. By early 1898 Milner, a staunch imperialist, believed that if British supremacy were to be preserved against the growing power and intransigence of Kruger's regime, intervention would be necessary to force reforms upon the Transvaal.¹¹ Responding to the increasing Uitlander discontent, Milner focused upon the franchise issue. The enfranchisement of the Uitlanders, he believed, was the only way short of war to preserve Britain's paramount position. If they could gain the vote, Milner reasoned, they could tip the political balance of power in the Transvaal, elect a pro-British government and promote closer ties with the British territories, leading to an eventual confederation within the empire.¹² In short, the Uitlander franchise would bring about a peaceful internal takeover and pull the Transvaal into the Imperial sphere.¹³ Milner worked throughout late 1898 and 1899 to build support for the franchise issue. If the British government failed to press this issue, he warned, British South African loyalty would evaporate.¹⁴

Although the British government had not previously pressed the franchise issue, it was a powerful political weapon, and by 1899 the government was open to Milner's arguments. The British government firmly believed in maintaining British supremacy in South Africa. All of their diplomatic initiatives and manoeuvres had failed to draw the Transvaal into the imperial sphere. By early 1899 Lord Salisbury, Chamberlain and the cabinet were convinced that the Uitlander grievances were genuine, and that "the franchise promised the best means by which the various

aspirations of the Uitlanders might be satisfied, the possibilities of the Transvaal improved, and British paramountcy and control could be reasserted over a Transvaal increasingly set on a course of complete, republican independence".¹ The franchise was a means to a larger end. It formed the "stalking horse", as Chamberlain has written, "behind which the deep-down thing of British supremacy was advanced".² The Uitlander Petition to the Queen, drafted by the South African League, an Uitlander political association, containing over 21,000 signatures, and Milner's "bald's dispatch" gave the cabinet the material they needed to act.

In May 1899 Salisbury's government decided to intervene in the Transvaal to force Kruger to grant the franchise. At this point neither Chamberlain nor Milner, Salisbury nor the cabinet, expected a war.³ They believed that the Boers would back down as they had in the past. The British government welcomed President Steyn's proposal for a conference between Kruger and Milner at Bloemfontein as an opportunity to press their point. When the meeting failed to satisfy Milner's demands, he broke it off on 7 June 1899. Chamberlain and the government were upset with the High Commissioner but they could not recall him nor retreat without the appearance of weakness. Their experience had taught them to be firm with Kruger. They had to maintain a strong position and assert their supremacy. Lord Salisbury's comment that "the real point to be made to South Africa is that we got the Dutch are Boss" clearly illustrates the British government's attitude.⁴

Although both sides considered military preparations at this point, neither Chamberlain nor the cabinet expected a war. They believed that Kruger would capitulate. In July and August the Transvaal made some conditional franchise offers. Despite Chamberlain's initial enthusiasm with these offers, the Boer conditions, which included a renunciation of British suzerainty and a promise not to interfere with the Transvaal in the future, were deemed unacceptable by the British government.⁵ The Boers withdrew their offers in early September.

In September the British decided to increase the pressure. They dispatched 10,000 troops to South Africa and prepared an ultimatum. The latter was never sent, for this time the Boers did not back down. Convinced that the British were intent on conquering the Transvaal, and hoping to seize the initiative while it had the military advantage, Kruger's government delivered its own ultimatum on 9 October 1899. It demanded that the British remove all their troops from the Republic's borders and recall those on their way to South Africa within two days." The British rejected the Ultimatum. On 11 October 1899 the South African War began.

II

Canadian military organization has undergone several changes since 1867. In 1899 the Department of Militia and Defence in Ottawa was the political and administrative head of the Canadian army. The Department, led by the Minister of Militia and Defence, Dr. Frederick Borden, was divided into a military and a civil branch. The military branch, which was led by the General Officer Commanding, Major General E.T.H. Hutton, and included a small headquarters staff, was responsible for purely military matters such as planning and training. The civil branch, led by the Deputy Minister, Lieutenant-Colonel L.J. Pineault, had a wide range of responsibilities, including military contracts and accounts, the procurement of war materiel and the management of military lands and buildings. Under this centralized Militia Department the country was divided into twelve military districts, each led by a Deputy Adjutant General."

The Canadian army consisted of a Permanent Force and part time Volunteer Militia units of infantry, cavalry and artillery. In 1899 the Permanent Force units had a combined total of about 900 men." Its infantry arm, the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry, was stationed at Toronto, London, St. John and Fredericton. The Royal Canadian Dragoons, the Permanent Force cavalry unit, was based at Winnipeg and Toronto. The Royal Canadian Artillery consisted of "A" and "B" Field Batteries and

two companies of garrison artillery. "A" Battery was stationed at Kingston. "B" Battery and the garrison artillery were based at Quebec." On the eve of the South African War the Volunteer Militia had an authorized establishment of 2996 officers and 34,309 non commissioned officers (NCOs) and men. The effective strength of the militia, however, fell short of these numbers and many militiamen were under trained."

The artillery was the best trained and most efficient branch of the Canadian military. There are several reasons for the high quality of the Canadian artillery. The most important factor was the existence of the Permanent Force batteries. Created in 1871 to replace the British garrisons at Kingston and Quebec, "A" and "B" Batteries established a tradition of military proficiency and professionalism that was unmatched in Canada. The batteries were led by experienced and qualified officers. Although they were originally manned by militia gunners on short service call out, after 1873 they were staffed with Permanent Force gunners. In 1883 the two batteries were united in one regiment to ensure efficient administration and uniform standards. In 1887 a third battery- "C" Battery- was added to the regiment. Although it was initially based in Victoria, in 1893 the battery was reorganized into two companies of garrison artillery and transferred to Quebec.

The Permanent Force batteries and garrison companies had a dual purpose. First, they were the nucleus of Canada's professional army. They provided Canadian gunners with the opportunity to train on a full time basis and achieve a level of expertise. By the late 1890s the Royal Canadian Artillery had adopted the most modern and scientific training methods. The Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry and the Royal Canadian Dragoons, which were only formed in 1893, had a more limited role." The government, under pressure from the militia lobby, discouraged these units from training as a professional standing army and restricted them to instructing the militia infantry and cavalry units.

The Permanent Force artillery units also acted as schools

of instruction for the seventeen militia field batteries and seven part time garrison artillery units." The Permanent Force provided courses of instruction for militia officers and NCOs, carried out thorough inspections of the militia units, and supervised some of their training. These activities fostered a high level of efficiency in the militia batteries. Although the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry and the Royal Canadian Dragoons were supposed to perform the same role for their branches of the service, they faced much greater resentment and opposition than the artillery did. The military authorities at the time and Canadian historians agree that the infantry and cavalry schools were, therefore, not as effective as the schools of gunnery." The infantry and cavalry militia units suffered as a result.

The Dominion Artillery Association also contributed to the high quality of the Canadian artillery. Created in 1876 to encourage "the development of gunnery skill and the dissemination of artillery knowledge throughout the Dominion of Canada", the association played an important role in artillery training. Its membership was open to individuals and military units. By 1880 the Association had thirty-six individual members. "A" and "B" Batteries, the Royal Military College, twelve militia field batteries and twenty-two garrison artillery companies were affiliates of the Association. Its position was strengthened in 1883 by adding a number of influential *ex-officio* members to its governing council, including the Minister of Militia and Defence, the Deputy Minister, the General Officer Commanding the Canadian Militia and the Adjutant General. With links to such important people, the Association became a powerful lobbyist for the artillery. By 1892, the government had increased its annual grant to the Association from \$900 to \$5000."

The Association organized, established the rules, and awarded the prizes for the various annual artillery competitions. The events were very demanding and required thorough practical and theoretical preparation. By 1897 the

Association's prizes included eleven trophies and several cash awards." These incentives encouraged the gunners and promoted a high level of training. The Association also organized exchange competitions with the National Artillery Association in Great Britain. In the 1880s and 1890s Canadian gunners travelled to Britain to compete against some of the best British artillery units at Shoeburyness. On one occasion the British gunners came to Canada for competitions at Toronto and Quebec. These competitive events motivated the Canadian gunners to train seriously and provided them with the opportunity to exchange information and learn from their British counterparts. The fact that the Canadian gunners won some of the individual events illustrates their efficiency and competence."

In the 1890s the artillery benefitted from the government's increased interest in military affairs. In 1895, for example, the government created a new artillery training camp at Deseronto, Ontario. Spurred on by the Venezuela crisis of 1895-96, the government also raised its military expenditures and purchased new equipment. In 1896-97 they replaced the old 9 pounder muzzle loading guns with more modern 12 pounder breechloading, 6 hundred weight (cwt.) weapons. The 12 pounder, the weapon used by the Royal Horse Artillery, had many advantages over its predecessor and greatly enhanced the gunners' capabilities. Its higher muzzle velocity- 510 metres per second compared with 420 for the 9 pounder- gave the 12 pounder a range of 4550 metres, a kilometre more than the older weapons." Its lighter and stronger steel carriage gave it greater mobility than the cast iron muzzle loader. The new gun replaced the old shaft draught system with the better and lighter pole draught. This was an improvement because it eliminated the need to use an especially rugged and heavy horse as a "shaft" horse."

The 12 pounder also fired better shells. Its forged steel shrapnel shells had a larger bullet capacity than the 9 pounder cast iron rounds. The new shells were equipped with the No.56 combination fuse, which could be set to detonate on impact or at

a preset time. This gave the gunners greater flexibility to respond to a variety of tactical situations. The 12 pounder shells used smokeless cordite as a propellant. This innovation introduced certain tactical advantages by eliminating the large plumes of black gunpowder smoke that traditionally revealed a gun's position. The new shells were also equipped with a more efficient burster mechanism. This device, located in the head of the shell instead of the base, improved fire effect by producing a broad "cone of dispersion" of shrapnel."

III

Given the high quality of the artillery, it is not surprising that the Canadian authorities made a determined effort to include it in the military force that they sent to South Africa. The Governor General of Canada, Lord Minto, the General Officer Commanding, Major-General E.T.H. Hutton, the Minister of Militia and Defence, Dr. Frederick Borden, and other cabinet ministers realized that the artillery was the best trained and most efficient arm of the Canadian military. They wanted to show off the gunners and their new equipment, both of which, they felt, would bring credit to the Canadian military and its leadership.

Following the collapse of the Bloemfontein conference, the British government made some limited military preparations in South Africa and contemplated the dispatch of troops to pressure Kruger's government to back down." Joseph Chamberlain sought to give these preparations an imperial dimension. On 3 July he wrote Lord Minto a private letter explaining the troubled situation in South Africa and how a "really spontaneous" offer of colonial military assistance would demonstrate the "solidarity of the Empire" and help secure a pacific settlement." The Colonial Secretary asked Minto for the attitude of the Canadian government. Minto raised the issue with the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in a series of interviews during July 1899. Laurier politely expressed his confidence in the righteousness of the Uitlanders' cause, but rejected Chamberlain's request for military assistance."

Although Lord Minto accepted Laurier's response, he informed Major-General Hutton of the request and asked him "privately the minimum force which Canada might reasonably contribute towards military operations in South Africa" in the event of a war." Hutton believed that if troops were to be sent, Canada should send its best soldiers." This meant that at least some artillery representation had to be included. His plan, drafted with the assistance of his chief staff officer, Colonel Hubert Foster, suggested a balanced force of one field battery, one infantry battalion and one cavalry squadron- a total force of 1209 men, 314 horses and six field guns, at a total cost of \$300,000. Minto and Hutton informed Chamberlain and Sir Garnet Wolseley, the Commander in Chief of the British army, of the "probable" composition of a Canadian contingent should Laurier change his mind."

Public pressure for Canadian military participation in South Africa increased in August and September 1899, but the government made no further plans." Parliament had been prorogued for the summer and Laurier quietly tried to dampen the growing war spirit. The issue was forced to the forefront in early October, when Chamberlain sent a circular telegram to the self governing colonies. It outlined terms upon which offers of troops would be accepted:

Firstly, units should consist of about 125 men; secondly, may be infantry, mounted infantry, or cavalry; in view of numbers already available infantry most, cavalry least serviceable; thirdly all should be armed with .303 rifles or carbines, which can be supplied by Imperial government if necessary; fourthly all must provide own equipment, and mounted troops own horses; fifthly, not more than one captain and three subalterns each unit. Whole force may be commanded by officer not higher than major. In considering numbers which can be employed, secretary of state for war guided by nature of offers, by desire that each colony should be represented, and limits necessary if force is to be fully utilized by available staff as integral portion of Imperial forces; would gladly accept four units. Conditions as follows: troops to be disembarked at port of landing South Africa fully equipped at cost of colonial government or volunteers. From date of disembarkation Imperial government will provide pay at

Imperial rates, supplies and ammunition, and will defray expenses of transport back to Canada, and pay wound pensions and compassionate allowances at Imperial rates. Troops to embark not later than 31 October, proceeding direct to Cape Town for orders."

On the same day General Hutton's plan was published in the Canadian Military Gazette. The appearance of these communications provoked discussion about Canadian military participation in South Africa. Despite these communications, Laurier was still confident that he could avoid offering a contingent. He believed that the South African crisis would dissipate. On 7 October Laurier left Ottawa for four days to fulfil an engagement in Chicago.

He returned to Canada on 11 October 1899. The outbreak of war on the same day caught the Prime Minister by surprise. Aware that he could no longer dodge the issue of participation, Laurier called a Cabinet meeting for 12 October. There were three positions within the cabinet. The "anti-war" faction, led by Israel Tarte and Richard Scott, opposed any Canadian contribution to the British war effort. The "pro-war" faction, led by the Minister of Militia, Frederick Borden, and the Postmaster General, William Mullock, favoured a Canadian contingent as outlined in Hutton's plan. The "moderate" group, which included W.S Fielding, the Minister of Finance, suggested a limited Canadian contribution as outlined in Chamberlain's 3 October telegram." This would give Canadian volunteers a chance to participate and would limit the expense for the Canadian government.

Laurier sought a compromise. After a divisive two day cabinet meeting, the government decided to recruit, equip, and transport "a certain number of volunteers by units of 125 men, with a few officers", the total not to exceed 1000 , "to serve in the British army now operating in South Africa"." Besides an increase in numbers, the government's plan adhered very closely to Chamberlain's 3 October telegram. The force was limited to infantry companies of 125 men. No place was made for artillery units.

Many of the military authorities were unsatisfied with this limited contribution. They were particularly upset by the lack of artillery representation. For example, on 12 October Lord Minto advised Laurier that

if you decide to offer troops, it would probably be more in accordance with public sentiment here to offer contingent of all arms rather than to accept at once the proposal of 125 under a Major, which would cut out the best officers in Canada, *and which makes no mention of the acceptance of artillery which is a particularly efficient arm here.*"

General Hutton, Frederick Borden, William Mullock and other cabinet ministers shared Minto's determination to overturn Chamberlain's guidelines. They especially wanted to include the well trained gunners and their new weapons in the force. With Laurier's permission, Lord Minto sent a message to the Colonial office on the evening of 13 October. The "organization of your telegram of 3 October caused disappointment", he wrote, "as it cuts out the best officers *and Artillery the most efficient arm here*". Minto informed the Colonial Office that "organization as a small brigade of all arms most popular here. Following has been thoroughly considered, one battery, one regiment of infantry...one hundred mounted rifles...This represents the views of Hutton".

Chamberlain was thrilled with the proposal. It was much more than he had asked for. Perceiving the political advantages of the offer, the Colonial Secretary told Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary for War, that he would not accept the War Office's refusal." On 16 October Chamberlain sent Minto his approval of the brigade force." Since Laurier was temporarily absent from Ottawa, Minto discussed the issue with Borden and Richard Scott. Acknowledging the abilities of the Canadian gunners, they told Minto that they saw "no reason why some artillery, at any rate, should not be sent". Israel Tarte and the Quebec caucus, however, opposed any changes to the composition of the force. Their opposition convinced Laurier to decide against a brigade of all arms.

Some changes were eventually made to the organization of

the first contingent. Without Tarte's knowledge, for example, the eight infantry companies were formed into one regiment, with Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Otter as the Commanding Officer. This change decreased the chance that the company units would be split apart and attached to different British formations. In fact the first contingent, known as the Second (Special Service) Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry, served together for the duration of the conflict."

Canadian artillery officers and men were dissappointed by the lack of an artillery contingent. Hutton and the Department of Militia and Defence remained determined to include the artillery in their military contribution. Professor Miller has argued that the military authorities constructed the first contingent in such a way as to enable them to reconstitute it as a balanced force of all arms." He suggests, for example, that the fact that "this "infantry" contingent contained 173 NCOs and men drawn from the Canadian artillery, a number equivalent to the one field battery suggested by Hutton" is evidence that the Canadian military authorities hoped to convert it to a brigade of all arms." This is questionable. For example, 113 of the 173 artillery NCOs and men in the first contingent were from garrison artillery regiments. They had little or no training as field artillery. If the government planned to reconstitute the contingent as a brigade of all arms, including a battery of field artillery, they would have included many more trained field artillerymen."

Furthermore, forty-nine of the artillery gunners were from one garrison artillery unit, the 5th Regiment of Garrison Artillery from British Columbia. It is unlikely that they were included with the intention of forming the nucleus of a field battery in a reconstituted contingent. It is more likely that this one regiment held so many positions in "A" Company because of the relative shortage of trained military personnel in British Columbia. The political authorities wanted to ensure regional representation in the contingent. As there were fewer trained military personnel and fewer military units to choose

from in B.C. than elsewhere in the country, the gunners filled a disproportionate number of positions."

This is not to say, however, that Hutton and the military authorities had given up on the idea of sending the artillery to South Africa. The fact that they sent Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Drury, the man Hutton had in mind to command his artillery battery, as a supplementary officer to South Africa with the first contingent can be interpreted as an indication that Hutton and the Militia Department intended to add an artillery force in the near future. This was in fact what Hutton hoped to do. On 1 November 1899, only two days after the first contingent sailed from Quebec, the Canadian government offered to raise a second contingent. General Hutton was determined to include the artillery in a second contingent. Unfortunately for the G.O.C. and the anxious Canadian artillerymen, the British government declined the offer for more troops."

On 16 December 1899, following the British military defeats at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso, the British government changed its mind and accepted the Canadian offer of troops. "Willing to entertain favourably further offer from colonies", Chamberlain wrote. "Should such offers be made they will probably give preference to mounted troops. It is indispensable that men should be trained and good shots and should bring their own horses"." Chamberlain's telegram made it clear that the British wanted mobile, mounted troops. Lord Minto agreed with this position. Although he did not reject the possibility of sending some artillery, he now believed that the bulk of the contingent should be mounted "Rough Riders" from the North West.

General Hutton and the Militia Department were not convinced. They were determined to send a significant artillery contribution. Despite their differences, Hutton and Borden agreed that the artillery was the best arm of the Canadian military. They wanted to showcase the gunners and their new weapons, both of which, they believed, would reflect favourably on the Canadian military authorities." Lord Minto appealed to the War Office to support his position. The Imperial authorities

accordingly wired that "the volunteers must be good shots and competent riders but need not be members of any drilled force". Hutton and the Militia Department ignored this hint."

On 21 December the Canadian government announced that it would send a brigade division of three field artillery batteries, three squadrons of mounted rifles and a company of scouts, a total of 1230 all ranks, eighteen guns and 1124 horses." Aware that Chamberlain knew of his preference, Minto asked the Colonial Secretary whether he approved of this composition." Although Chamberlain initially suggested the "substitution of more mounted troops of the same class as the Northwestern Mounted Troops for part of contingent of artillery proposed", he quickly realized the political advantages of meeting the Canadian government's desires. On 24 December 1899 the Colonial Secretary, therefore, wired Lord Minto that "after due consideration Her Majesty's Government will be glad if your Ministers will send Batteries as they proposed"." Lord Minto dropped the issue and the Canadian government busied itself with organizing a second contingent."

1. For early history of South Africa see T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History 4th ed., Toronto, 1991.; Oxford History of South Africa vol.I eds., Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson New York, 1969. For brief background up to the war see Iain R. Smith, Origins of the South African War, 1899-1902 London, 1996. chp.I.; Carman Miller, Painting the Map Red pp.10-15.; Byron Farwell, The Great Anglo Boer War Toronto, 1976 pp.3-45. Leo Amery, Times History of the War in South Africa vol.I London, 1900.
2. Numbers cited in Farwell, p.6.
3. Number cited in Encyclopedia Britannica, "South Africa" vol.27 Chicago, 1992. p. 648.; Leonard Thompson, "Co-operation and Conflict on the High Veld" Chp. IX in the Oxford History of South Africa claims that "by 1845 perhaps 14,000 Voortrekkers - men, women and children - had crossed the Orange River" p.406.
4. Amery, p.41. ; Davenport, p.73.

5. See G.H. LeMay, British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907 London, Oxford University Press 1965, p.1.; Farwell, p.19-20. The Pretoria and London Conventions are included in British Documents on Foreign Affairs Series G Part I Africa, 1848-1914 vol.V Relations with South African Republic (1876-1895) eds., Kenneth Bourne and D.C.Watt, 1995. pp.324, 368.
6. See Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians New York, 1961. pp.53-76 ; 202-253 ; 410-461.
7. See Ibid ; LeMay, British Supremacy ; J.S. Marais, The Fall of Kruger's Republic London, 1961. ; Iain R. Smith, The Origins of the South African War, 1899-1902, especially chp.6 ; Smith, "The Origins of the South African War (1899-1902): A Reappraisal" in South African Historical Journal vol.22, 1990, p.57. Andrew Porter, The Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895-1899 New York, 1980 ; Carman Miller, Painting the Map Red pp.12-13.
8. See Ibid
9. See Robinson and Gallagher, pp.210-253, 410-434 ; Andrew Porter, "British Imperial Policy and South Africa, 1895-1899" in The South African War ed., Peter Warwick. London, 1980 pp.40-42.; Iain R. Smith, Origins p.61.
10. Many historians have overstated Chamberlain's role in the Jameson Raid. For some sober second thoughts on this issue see Andrew Porter, Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895-99. pp.70-85.
11. Porter, "Imperial Policy", p.41.
12. Ibid, p.44-50 ; Porter, Origins, chps 4-7; Robinson and Gallagher, pp.430-461; Smith, Origins esp. chps.3 and 4.
13. Smith, Origins p.106.
14. Robinson and Gallagher, p.440 ; Porter, Origins pp. 95, 99 137, 152.
15. Porter, Origins pp.87-88, 99.
16. Ibid, p.88 ; Smith, Origins, p.97-100. ; Porter, "Imperial Policy", p.44.
17. Porter, "Imperial Policy", p.45.
18. Ibid, p.49; Robinson and Gallagher, p.441-443.; Porter, Origins p.121-132.; Smith, Origins, p.132-138.
19. Porter, "Imperial Policy", p.50.

20. Smith, Origins, p.415 ; Smith, "Origins" in SAHJ, p.57.
21. Ibid
22. Porter, "Imperial Policy", p.51, 53.
23. Smith, Origins p.419 ; "Origins", p.46.
24. Ibid
25. Ibid, p.414 ; 40.
26. Cited in Porter, "Imperial Policy", p.55.
27. Smith, Origins p.353.
28. Ultimatum cited in Ibid p.380.
29. For a description of Canadian military command and organization see George Stanley, Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People 3rd ed. Toronto, 1974 pp. 259-294.; also Stephen J. Harris, Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army Toronto, 1988 Chps.1-4. Desmond Morton, Ministers and Generals: Politics and the Canadian Militia Toronto, 1970.
30. See "Return of Permanent Corps of Active Militia" Appendix F to the "Report of the Major General Commanding the Militia" in Sessional Papers No.19, 1900 p.49.
31. See Stanley, p.266.; Morton, p.105.; G.W.L. Nicholson, The Gunners of Canada: The History of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery vol I. Toronto, 1967. p.139. ; Hugh Robertson, "The Royal Canadian Dragoons and the Anglo-Boer War, 1900" Unpublished MA thesis, University of Ottawa, 1982. p.7-8.
32. Figures cited in Robertson, p.8. He received this information from B. Grenhous of the Directorate of History, Department of National Defence. "The Return Showing the Number of Officers, Men and Horses Trained During the Year 1899" Appendix B to the Report of the Major General in Sessional Papers No.19, 1900 p.39 states that 2897 officers and 31,395 NCOs and men formed the authorized establishment on 31 December 1899. Of these numbers 709 officers received either less than twelve days training or no training at all. 4283 NCOs and men also received either less than twelve days training or none at all.
33. The infantry and cavalry schools of instruction were created in 1883. In 1893 they were formed into regiments.
34. In 1899 the militia field batteries were:

-1st Quebec Field Battery	-4th Hamilton Field Battery
-2nd Ottawa Field Battery	-5th Kingston Field Battery
-3rd Montreal Field Battery	-6th London Field Battery

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| -7th St Catherines Field Battery | -13th Winnipeg Field Battery |
| -8th Ganonoque Field Battery | -14th Cobourg Field Battery |
| -9th Toronto Field Battery | -15th Shefford Field Battery |
| -10th Woodstock Field Battery | -16th Guelph Field Battery |
| -11th Guelph Field Battery | -17th Sydney Field Battery |
| -12th Newcastle Field Battery | |

There were six garrison artillery regiments and a Cobourg company. Each regiment consisted of several companies. They were located at Halifax, Montreal, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, and Quebec City. Source: Nicholson, Gunners of Canada pp.131, 133, 165. ; "Return of Garrison Regiments and Companies, Canadian Artillery" in Sessional Papers No.19, 1900 p.43.

35.Stanley, p.242, 267; Harris, p.18, 32 33; Morton, p.106.

36.Cited in Nicholson, p.114.

37.For discussion of artillery association see Ibid, p.134-138.

38.Ibid.

39.Ibid.

40.Ibid, p.132-134.; See also Leslie Barnes, Canada's Guns:An Illustrated History of Artillery Ottawa, 1979.pp.62-63. Malcolm Ross, "Types of Artillery" in Canadian Magazine vol. 14 No.5 March, 1900 pp.411-416 states that the muzzle velocity of the 12 pounder was over 2000 feet per second; Darrell Hall, "Guns in South Africa" in Military History Journal (June, December 1971 and June 1972) reviews all the British and Boer artillery weapons used in the war.

41.Charles E. Long, "Forty years in the Canadian Artillery" in Canadian Defence Quarterly vol.6 p.232. Colonel H.A. Bethell, Modern Artillery in the Field Toronto, 1911. p.99-100 elaborates on the advantages of the pole draught system. Edward Spiers, The Late Victorian Army Manchester, 1992 pp.242-243 elaborates on the advantages of the breechloading guns.

42.See Barnes, Nicholson, Long, Hall and the Handbook for the 12 Pounder B.L. of 6 cwt. Marks I-IV and IVa London, 1905.

43.Leo Amery, The Times History of the War in South Africa vol.II pp.98-101; Porter, Origins, p.220; Smith, origins, pp.337-342.

44.Cited in Miller, Painting the Map Red, p.31.

45.Ibid, p.32

46.Ibid, p.33

- 47.Harris, p.34.
- 48.Miller, p.33.
- 49.See Miller, chp.3; For a discussion of Canadian imperialism at this time see Carl Berger, The Sense of Power Toronto, 1970; and Robert Page, "The Boer War and Canadian Imperialism", Canadian Historical Association Booklet, Ottawa 1987.
- 50.Chamberlain to Minto, 3 October 1899 in "Correspondence Relating to the Dispatch of Colonial Military Contingents to South Africa", Sessional Papers No.20 1900, pp.16-17.
- 51.For events leading up to the decision to participate see Miller, p.38-48. ; C.P. Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict vol.I Toronto, 1984. pp.57-74.
- 52."Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council, Approved by his Excellency the Governor General in Council on October 14 1899" in Sessional Papers No.49. 1900 p.1-2.; Miller, p.48.; Stacey, 64-65.
- 53.Minto to Laurier 12 October 1899 cited in Stacey, p.60.
- 54.Minto to Chamberlain, 13 October 1899 cited in Stacey, p.66.
- 55.Miller, Painting the Map Red p.49.
- 56.See Stacey, p.66.
- 57.Minto to Laurier, 16 October 1899; Scott to Laurier, 16 October 1899 cited in Stacey, p.67.
- 58.W. Sanford Evans, The Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism: A Study and a Story Toronto, 1901 pp.73-74.
- 59.Miller, p.50-51.
- 60.Ibid
- 61.See Brian A. Reid, Our Little Army in the Field St. Catharines, 1996. p.24. Figures cited from Canadians In Khaki: Nominal Rolls of the Officers, Non Commissioned Officers and Men of the Canadian Contingents Toronto, 1900 pp.23-53.
- 62.Figures cited from Canadians in Khaki, pp.23-53. Military District Number 11 (B.C) called out an authorized establishment of 37 officers and 825 men for training in 1899. Of these, eight officers received no training and eighty-four NCOs and men received either less than twelve days training or none at all. Of the seven hundred odd troops trained in B.C. during 1899, upto 100 were from the 5th Garrison Artillery Regiment. The fact that so many B.C. gunners were chosen is proof of their thorough knowledge of basic military drill, one of the recruitment criteria, and further evidence of the

relative quality of artillery troops. In a military district as large as Montreal (344 officers and 4205 NCOs and men) or Toronto (549 officers and 5736 NCOs and men) with many more military units to choose from, however, artillery gunners are much less prevalent in the ranks of the first contingent. See "Return Showing the Numbers of Officers, Men and Horses Trained During the Year 1899" Appendix B to the Report Of the Major General in Sessional Papers No.19 1900, pp.38-39.

63. See Chamberlain to Minto in "Correspondence Relating to Colonial Military Contingents" in Sessional Papers No.20, 1900 p.35.
64. Chamberlain to Minto 16 December 1899 in Ibid p.46
65. See Miller, Painting the Map Red p.156.
66. Ibid ; Chamberlain to Minto, 19 December 1899 in "Correspondence Relating to the Dispatch of Colonial Military Contingents" Sessional Papers No.20 1900 p.46.
67. Miller, p.156 ; Reid, p.32.
68. Minto to Chamberlain 21 December 1899 in "Correspondence" Sessional Papers No.20 1900 p.47.
69. Minto to Chamberlain , 21 December 1899; Chamberlain to Minto, 24 December 1899 in Ibid p.47-48.
70. An important change was made in the composition of the second contingent. The unit of scouts was replaced by a fourth squadron of mounted rifles. The final composition of the second contingent included two battalions of mounted rifles, each consisting of two squadrons, designated as 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles and 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles. In August 1900 the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles changed its name to the Royal Canadian Dragoons and the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles became the 1st CMR. The second contingent also included the brigade division (or field regiment) of three field artillery batteries.

Chapter Two

Mobilization: From Ontario to Cape Colony

The brigade division of field artillery consisted of a brigade division staff and three batteries. The staff was responsible for the direction and administration of the unit. It included the Commanding Officer, Adjutant, Medical Officer, Veterinary Officer, Brigade Division Sergeant Major, and support personnel such as drivers, clerks and batmen, a total of seventeen men of all ranks and sixteen horses.¹

The Commanding-Officer was Lieutenant Colonel Charles William Drury, who had accompanied the First Contingent to South Africa as a "supernumerary" officer, ready to assume command of an artillery force should the Militia Department succeed in its efforts to include artillery in its military contribution. Drury was a good choice for the position. He had a long and distinguished career in the Canadian artillery. Born in St. John, New Brunswick in 1856, he had joined the New Brunswick Garrison Artillery in January 1874. Three years later, at the age of twenty-one, he was appointed Lieutenant in "A" Battery at Kingston. Promoted to Captain in 1881, Drury led a section of "A" Battery during the Northwest Rebellion in 1885. There he saw action at Fish Creek and Batoche and was recognized for his competent leadership. In 1893 Lieutenant-Colonel Drury was appointed to command "A" Battery and the Royal School of Artillery. That summer he went to Britain to study the most modern and scientific artillery training methods. His return is said to have "marked the birth of modern field artillery in Canada", for he lost no time in implementing the new training practices, including the use of moving range targets. In 1895 Drury became the commandant of the new artillery camp at Deseronto. In short, Drury helped make the artillery the best trained and most efficient arm of the Canadian military.²

In addition to the staff, the brigade division included 522 men of all ranks, 411 horses, eighteen 12 pounder breechloading guns, and thirty-six wagons. These numbers were divided into three batteries of five officers, 169 NCOs and men,

137 horses, six field guns and twelve wagons each. The Battery Officer Commanding was a Major. His second in command was a Captain. Each battery was organized into three sections, led by Lieutenants or "subalterns". Sections consisted of between fifty-five and fifty-nine NCOs and men, two guns, approximately forty-five horses and four wagons. The sections could be split into two subdivisions or "gun teams".'

The batteries were designated "C", "D", and "E" Batteries, and were recruited in several communities possessing field artillery units and were concentrated at three major centres. "C" Battery was recruited in Kingston, Ganonoque, Winnipeg, Hamilton, St. Catharines, and Toronto and was concentrated at Kingston, home of "A" Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery. "D" Battery was raised in Guelph, London, Ottawa, and Port Hope and was concentrated in the nation's capital. "E" Battery drew its recruits from Quebec, Montreal, Granby, Woodstock, Newcastle, and Sydney and was concentrated at Quebec, home of "B" Battery and the two companies of Permanent Force Garrison Artillery.'

II

The enrolment of "D" Battery resembled that of the other artillery units. The recruitment process was directed by the Battery Officer Commanding, Major W.G. Hurdman, and the District Officer Commanding, Lieutenant-Colonel Cotton, assisted by the Commanding Officers of the 2nd "Ottawa", 6th "London", 14th "Durham", and 11th and 16th "Guelph" Field Batteries, which were detailed to furnish a quota of men for D Battery, and by Lieutenants John McCrae, E.W.B. Morrison, and T.W. Van Tuyl, the subaltern officers appointed to command each section.'

To be eligible for service in the battery, recruits had to have "performed at least one annual training as a field artilleryman in the active militia or have served in the Royal Canadian Artillery". Some exceptions were made, especially in the case of drivers. Non-commissioned officers had to possess certification from a Royal School of Artillery. NCOs and men of the active militia were enroled as gunners and were promoted provisionally to the various grades by the section commanders,

subject to the final approval of the Battery Officer Commanding. The military authorities planned to fill one section of each battery with Permanent Force officers, NCOs, and men. The other two sections were to be composed of militia gunners. The authorities made a concerted effort to ensure that men enrolled at the same depot from the same unit were kept together.'

Recruits were subject to medical examinations performed by Permanent Force medical officers or doctors selected by the District Officer Commanding. The doctors were instructed to be "careful and rigid" in their examinations. They were referred to the guidelines in paragraphs 496 to 527 of the Regulations for Army Medical Services, 1897.' Doctors were instructed to test a recruit's intelligence, vision, hearing, and speech. They had to measure and weigh the men, examine every important organ, check for varicose veins, defects to the feet, venereal disease and any body deformity, and indicate whether a recruit's stated age agreed with his appearance. Any serious defects were supposed to be grounds for rejection.'

Gunners had to stand at least 1.68 metres tall with a chest measurement of eighty-six centimetres. Drivers had to measure no less than 1.6 metres with an eighty-four centimetre chest. Major Hurdman complained that several perfectly qualified recruits were rejected by the doctors for being a centimetre too short. Hurdman argued that with gunners "it was not altogether the height that counted: it was more the strength and sturdiness of the man".¹⁰ Some medical examiners appear to have been less thorough in their inspections. For when Surgeon-Major Worthington examined the troops two days after the battery left Halifax harbour, he found eight cases of gonorrhoea and one of syphilis!¹¹

Recruits were supposed to be between twenty-two and forty years of age, but it does not appear that the enrolment officers verified the men's birth certificates. Walter Bapty, who was only fifteen years old in January 1900, recalled his experience:

Hearing the following day that an applicant had not proved fit, someone suggested I should volunteer... Here was I, big and raw boned, about 6' and in weight

160 lbs and my age - someone said it was 22 and that seemed all right. I reported to Col. McCrae's Insurance Office where were 3 or 4 officers in uniform. One was Col. McCrae and a clean youngish looking Lieutenant I was later to learn was John McCrae. In Col. McCrae's office I was sworn in... twice. Once into a Field Battery - the 11th or 16th does it matter which? And then into a special contingent for overseas service."

The large number of D Battery recruits listed as twenty-two years old, the minimum age requirement, suggests that Bapty was not the only one to falsify his age. Forty-seven NCOs and men, or 27.5% of the unit's rank and file, claimed to be twenty-two years old compared to only thirteen men, or 7.6% of the unit, listed as twenty-three years of age."

The men enlisted for six months with the liability of extension to one year. The government provided free clothing and equipment for the duration of their service. Gunners earned seventy-five cents a day. The Canadian government paid this sum up to the date of disembarkation in South Africa. After this point the Imperial government paid the men at Imperial rates and the Canadian government supplied the difference between the Imperial pay and the higher Canadian wages."

III

The Militia Department authorities and battery officials worked at a frantic pace to purchase, organize and issue the necessary equipment. The Minister of Militia, F.W.Borden; his deputy minister, L.F. Pineault; the Militia Department Purchasing Officer, Captain A. Benoit; and the Chief Superintendent of Stores, Lieutenant-Colonel MacDonald, worked long hours, including the New Year's holiday, to equip the second contingent for its mission." A portion of the battery's equipment was sent to the concentration centre and the remainder went directly to Halifax, the port of embarkation. Two different uniforms were issued to the artillerymen, one of blue serge cloth cut in the traditional artillery style with a pillbox cap, and the other a khaki uniform of a special pattern." The Department forwarded to the concentration centre the blue serge uniforms and all the articles of "necessaries" for the men,

including boots, belts, braces, flannel shirts, socks, woollen tuques, greatcoats, waterproof coats, bootlaces, insoles, boot shining kits, shaving kits, towels, soap, several brushes and sponges, and mess utensils." With so much work to be done, some shortcomings were bound to occur. For example, despite the Department's careful instructions on measuring recruits for uniforms," Walter Bapty recalled that his dark blue uniform was "tight across the chest" and his "hands and arms protruded about six inches too much".

The Department packed and shipped most of the remaining stores directly to Halifax, including the khaki uniforms, camp equipment, picketing gear, horse shoes, blankets and saddlery." On 2 January 1900 alone the Department "forwarded to Halifax 125 bell tents, 2500 blankets, 300 sets of saddlery, besides headropes and numerous other articles". To supervise the organization and embarkation of the equipment and troops in Halifax, Lieutenant-Colonel Burney and Captain Paul Wetherbe, the Chief Engineer at Militia Headquarters, proceeded to the port city on 29 December 1899."

The Militia Department lacked sufficient equipment in stock to meet the needs of the Second Contingent. It had to purchase a substantial portion of the equipment from private contractors. For example, to fill a shortage of transport wagons, the Department ordered fourteen vehicles from the Ottawa Car Company. The contract was a rush order and the company plant operated at full capacity to meet the demand. The wagons, three of which were used as hospital vans and the rest for transport purposes, were fitted with strong springs, rings and ropes to carry heavy loads. The vehicles were constructed, stocked with extra wheels and parts, and painted in time to proceed to Halifax with D Battery."

At the concentration centre battery officials also worked long hours to secure the necessary equipment. D Battery took control of the six 12 pounder guns of the 2nd "Ottawa" Field Battery and requisitioned the long list of supplies required to clean, maintain, and operate the guns in the field from the 2nd

"Ottawa" and 3rd "Montreal" Batteries and the Militia Department stores." Before the battery started drilling with the guns, orders were given to have all the weapons painted the same colour as the khaki uniforms." The battery was issued 500 rounds of ammunition per gun. The rounds were forwarded to Halifax and loaded aboard the transport vessel."

The battery also had to purchase several horses. The Permanent Force and militia batteries could only provide some of the twenty-nine riding horses and 108 draught horses required. The battery authorities therefore purchased horses at the local enrolment centres. The battery officers encouraged men applying for positions as drivers in the unit to supply their own horses for the work. Of course the military paid the drivers for the animals. Each day local farmers arrived at the enrolment centres to sell horses. According to reports, it took only a glance to see that many of the animals were of no use." The military was very selective in its choice of horses. It wanted animals that could stand the long sea voyage and perform heavy work under wartime conditions. Riding horses had to measure at least fifteen hands and draught horses at least 15.3 hands. If the horse passed the thorough veterinary exam, a board of officers assessed its value and paid the owner." The London detachment contributed thirteen horses, the Guelph contingent raised twenty, and the Port Hope men brought twenty-one animals for the battery. All the animals were described as first class and attracted much attention."

By the first week of January 1900 the enrolment centres had filled their quotas of men for D Battery. Once the detachments were organized, they moved to the concentration centre at Ottawa. The scene was similar at all of the enrolment centres. Communities adopted the war effort as their own. They organized parades to mark the departure of the troops, where community representatives presented the gunners with money and gifts. The London men each received ten dollars and "a very neat notebook and pencil"." At Guelph the single men received five dollars each, the married men ten dollars, and Lieutenant McCrae

received twenty dollars and a "first class field glass".¹¹ The Port Hope men also received some money.¹² Many local inhabitants contributed funds to supply the men with gifts and comforts, and even purchased life insurance policies for "their boys".¹³

The presentation of gifts was accompanied by speeches from prominent citizens, local politicians, militia officers, and clergymen, praising the volunteers for their courage and loyalty and wishing them "God speed" on their voyage. The detachments were then marched through the streets of their respective towns to the local train station. Since most communities declared a public holiday to mark the departure of the troops, the men were cheered by hundreds if not thousands of flagwaving spectators. Led by bands playing such tunes as "Rule Britannia" and "Soldiers of the Queen" and accompanied by militia units, cadet corps, and militia veterans, these parades invariably witnessed public outbursts of patriotic enthusiasm and Victorian sentimentalism.

IV

With the arrival of the Port Hope men in Ottawa on the evening of 5 January 1900, D Battery stood as a complete military unit. The final composition of the battery differed somewhat from the original plan. "A" Battery was unable to provide a complete section so the militia units at the other enrolment centres made up the deficiency. "A" Battery contributed one officer and twenty-seven former and current NCOs and men. Guelph provided an officer and fifty-three NCOs and men. Ottawa raised the largest proportion of the battery, contributing two officers and fifty-four enlisted men. London contributed an officer and eighteen men and Port Hope raised seventeen recruits for the battery.¹⁴ The battery officials did their best to keep the various detachments in tact. For example, the Ottawa detachment formed the left section of D battery. The Guelph men formed the right section. The London and Port Hope men were added to the Permanent Force gunners to form the centre section.¹⁵

Major W.G. Hurdman of the 2nd "Ottawa" Field Battery

commanded D Battery. Born in Ottawa in November 1858, Hurdman was educated at the local schools. His military career started in 1874 when, at the age of sixteen, he enlisted as a private in the Governor General's Foot Guards. Six months later Hurdman left Ottawa for a time and severed his relation with that regiment. In 1888 he applied for a commission as Second Lieutenant in the 2nd Field Battery. After serving for several years and passing a course at the Royal Military College, Hurdman assumed command of the battery in 1896. Under his command the Ottawa Field Battery became the most efficient militia artillery unit in the country, scoring top marks in the annual competitions." Employed in the lumber business, Hurdman also served as a public school trustee and was instrumental in the formation of the public school cadets."

Hurdman's second in command was Captain David Isaac Eaton, a Permanent Force artillery officer in "A" Battery. Eaton was born in Truro, Nova Scotia in 1869. He was educated at Truro Academy and the Royal Military College. In 1889-90, at the age of twenty-one, he worked as Chief Engineer on the Newfoundland Railway. Eaton joined the Ottawa Field battery as a Second Lieutenant in 1894. Two years later he was appointed Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry at Fredericton. During his stay there he served as Aide de Camp to the Lieutenant Governor. In November 1898 he transferred to the artillery as Adjutant of "A" Battery in Kingston."

D Battery's three section commanders were all intelligent, capable militia officers. Twenty-eight year old Lieutenant Thomas W. Van Tuyl commanded the centre section. Van Tuyl was an honour graduate and medallist of the Royal Military College. He also held a BSc from the Massachusetts School of Technology. After he earned a First Class Grade "A" certificate from the Royal School of Cavalry at Quebec, Van Tuyl joined the 1st "London" Hussars. At the time of his appointment to D Battery he was a Captain in the 6th "London" Field Battery. Van Tuyl, like many other enthusiastic artillerymen, accepted a reduction in rank to serve in South Africa."

Lieutenant John McCrae commanded the right section. Born in Guelph on 30 November 1872, McCrae began his education at the Guelph Collegiate Institute. In 1888 McCrae entered the University of Toronto, the first student of the Guelph Collegiate Institute to earn a scholarship to that institution. After graduating with honours in English and Natural Science in 1894, McCrae spent the next four years studying Medicine and serving as a Fellow in Biology. McCrae was a dedicated medical student and won the gold medal in his graduating class. Once he completed his studies, McCrae worked briefly as a resident at the Toronto General Hospital. In 1899 he served as an intern at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore before accepting a position as Fellow of Pathology at McGill University.

McCrae was interested in the military from a very young age. His father, Lieutenant-Colonel David McCrae, was an officer in the militia artillery, and as a boy John often accompanied him to camp. At age fourteen McCrae joined the Highland Cadet Corps and was awarded the gold medal for the best drilled cadet in the province. One year later he became a bugler in his father's battery. In 1890 he joined the 16th Field battery as a Gunner. In 1891 he was appointed Quartermaster Sergeant. After he received a First Class grade "A" certificate from the Royal School of Artillery at Kingston, McCrae was promoted to Second Lieutenant in 1893 and Lieutenant in 1896. During his stay at the University of Toronto McCrae was also associated with the Queen's Own Rifles, rising to the rank of Company Commander in K (Varsity) Company. McCrae received a leave of absence from McGill University to join D Battery."

Lieutenant Edward Whipple Bancroft Morrison led the left section of the Battery. Born in London, Ontario in July 1867, Morrison attended public schools and Tasse College. In 1884 Morrison joined the Hamilton Spectator as a reporter. By 1898 he had risen to the position of Managing Editor. In July 1898 Morrison moved to Ottawa to become the Editor in Chief of the Ottawa Citizen. Morrison started his military career as an officer in the 4th "Hamilton" Field Battery. He passed his

certification course at the Royal Military College with an overall average of 87.23%, including perfect scores in ammunition, materiel, and harness, the second highest standing ever achieved by an artilleryman. When he moved to Ottawa in 1898 he transferred to the 2nd Field Battery and shared the credit for that unit's high standing."

Who were the NCOs and men of D Battery? and why did they volunteer to serve in South Africa? These two questions are related, for as Dr. Miller has argued "socio-economic circumstances partially explain men's behaviour".¹ An analysis of who the men were can help explain why they volunteered to fight in the war. It is important to note that human beings are very rarely motivated by any one single consideration. The D Battery men were no exception. They were motivated by subtle and complex combinations of social, economic, ideological, and personal factors.

Without adopting a rigid economic determinism, it is possible to argue that a man's occupation and income were considerations in his decision to volunteer for overseas service. An occupational analysis of D Battery reveals that an overwhelming majority of the volunteers were from low paying, boring jobs. Forty-four men, or 25.7% of the battery rank and file, were employed in the white collar sector, thirty-three of whom were either students or clerical workers. Seventy-one men, or 41.5% of the unit, were employed in skilled or unskilled blue collar jobs, the largest single group being general labourers. Twenty-five men, or 14.6% of the unit, were from the service sector, including eleven active, full time soldiers. The remaining twenty-eight men, or 16.4% of the battery, worked in the primary sector, twenty-four of whom were employed in agriculture.²

Employed in these low paying jobs, many of the men volunteered for material benefits. At first glance such an economic motive is not very apparent. For example, volunteer Gunners earned only seventy-five cents a day compared to \$1.25 a day for general labourers, \$2.00 a day for civilian

blacksmiths, \$1.67 a day for painters, \$1.25-\$2.00 a day for carpenters, \$1.35 a day for firemen, and \$1.84-\$3.07 per day for third class clerks." As Dr. Miller has pointed out, however, "the military provided board and lodging which usually cost between \$3.00 and \$4.50 a week in the leading Canadian cities"." With minimal expenses on campaign, volunteers could save a significant portion of their pay and in many cases improve their economic circumstances. It should also be remembered that D Battery was recruited in late December and early January. The provision of board and lodging at this time of year was a particularly important consideration for seasonal workers who were unemployed during the winter months.

Moreover, the volunteers received more than a modest income, board, and lodging. Many municipalities presented cash grants and gifts to the men. In addition to these grants, the Ottawa City Council gave twenty-five dollars to each of the Ottawa men. Individual volunteers also received benefits from friends, employers, and neighbours. For example, Gunner Edward Bott, a conductor on an Ottawa rail line, received fifty dollars from his fellow employees." Gunner G.H. Farquharson's neighbours presented him with fifty dollars." Ottawa East granted Gunner Alexander McCuaig fifty dollars in gold pieces." Gunner Lambkin and Driver Bradley both received silver wristwatches."

Some employers supplemented these gifts by granting employees a leave of absence and holding their jobs for them until they returned. For example, the Ottawa Public School Board gave Major Hurdman a temporary leave of absence to serve in South Africa." In some cases employers went even further and pledged to keep the volunteers on the payroll or to support their families while the men were in South Africa. The Ottawa Public School Board granted John Quinney, a drill instructor, a leave of absence and promised to pay his full salary to his wife until he returned." Local communities and social organizations such as the Soldiers' Wives League joined in this effort and provided for soldiers' families while the men were away. The

town of Hintonburg, for example, granted twenty-five dollars to the wives of Corporals L. Beaven and J. Curzon." In short, overseas service offered the men a form of employment, a chance to earn and even accumulate some money and to provide for their families.

Some of the recruits enlisted with longer term goals. Frustrated with their economic condition in Canada, they hoped to build a better future in South Africa when the fighting was finished. D Battery Gunner C.E. Mills revealed that "most of our fellows are going to remain [in South Africa] after the war is over. The prospects of a rush up country has some alluring sides to it, for wages will be good for awhile".

In many cases boredom and the pull of adventure motivated men to volunteer. This partly explains the high proportion of students and white collar clerical workers in all of the Canadian contingents." These two groups accounted for thirty-three D Battery volunteers or 19.3% of the unit. Taken on their own, white collar clerical workers accounted for 15.8% of the battery, a significant figure since the same group accounted for only 2.9% of the total Canadian male workforce." Walter Bapty, a student at the Ontario Agricultural College, expressed this thirst for adventure when he recalled that during the enrolment process "we cared not what we signed as we were all afraid it [the war] would be over before we arrived".

The desire for action was not limited to students and clerical workers. The overwhelming majority of the battery (94.7%) had some previous military experience. The men were eager to put their training to use. Many of them had tried to enlist in the First Contingent and were determined not to miss this chance. Lieutenant McCrae's sentiment that, "I shall not pray for peace in our time. One campaign might cure me, but nothing else ever will", was likely shared by many of the men." Lieutenant Morrison confirmed this attitude when he noted that "there is a selfish dread lest Little Bobs [General Lord Roberts] should inflict a solar plexus blow on the Boers and that the sailing of the Canadians should be cancelled". In

short, many of the men volunteered because they wanted a good fight. Needless to say, this enthusiastic pursuit of action and adventure was often based on romanticized notions of warfare.

The volunteers were not motivated solely by selfish material considerations or the restless pursuit of adventure. Although some of the batterymen evidently believed that the British would win the war before the Canadian gunners arrived in South Africa, by the time that the Second Contingent was recruited there were far fewer illusions about the conflict. The devastating defeats of "Black Week" revealed the grim and serious nature of the war. At this point a British defeat seemed quite conceivable to many people. Many of the men who volunteered at this moment of adversity did so out of Imperial patriotism or a sense of duty to the Empire, its ideals, and institutions. D battery volunteers were no exception. As John Quinney, an Ottawa drill instructor and volunteer Gunner, explained: "In the course of my duties with the boys I have tried to instil in them patriotism and reverence of the old flag that protected them, and which is now in danger. To show them that I practice what I preach I am now volunteering for service in South Africa".

The assertion that volunteers were motivated by a sense of Imperial patriotism is supported by the high proportion of British born volunteers in the unit. Linked to the mother country by personal, social, and cultural bonds, British born recruits rallied to the Imperial cause. They accounted for 25.1% of the battery, a significant proportion since British born immigrants made up less than 11% of Ontario's population."

Imperial patriotism was not limited to British born volunteers, for 70.7% of this "adversity unit" was Canadian born. William A. Hare, a Canadian born member of D Battery, credited his decision to go to South Africa to his Aylmer public school principal, Mr. Burdick. According to Hare, Mr. Burdick instilled in his students a strong sense of duty to the Empire. "When England again calls for volunteers", Hare wrote, "I'm sure Aylmer will be represented among the men fighting for the Great

British Empire. I may state that Mr. Burdick's training is so complete that I would not be the last to start on another campaign in any part of the Empire".¹¹ This sense of duty to the Empire was repeated by other members of the battery:

We are not in this for the fun of it, but certainly we are satisfied of the justice of the war, and Canada's share in it, and we recognize the responsibility that rests on us when we offer ourselves for service. We may take our lives in our hands but I am sure that none of us are going for any other reason than to do what we can to uphold the Empire.

Although this claim was an exaggeration, it is clear that Imperial patriotism was one factor that motivated many men to enlist.

Cultural factors such as language and religion also shaped enlistment patterns. Only three French Canadians served in D Battery. While this low number was partly due to the fact that the battery was recruited entirely from Ontario based military units, where there were far fewer francophones than anglophones, the testimony of one of the francophones in the unit that "all of his friends "cut" him when they learned he was going to the Transvaal"¹² suggests that there were factors other than demographics at work. The fact is that most French Canadians were either hostile or indifferent to the Imperial cause in South Africa.

Although it accounted for only 16.86% of Ontario's population, the Anglican church contributed 39.2% of the battery volunteers, nearly twice as many as the next highest denomination, the Methodist church, which, despite being the largest denomination in Ontario at 30.53% of the population, contributed only 21.6% of the gunners.¹³ Moreover, even if all the British born Anglicans are eliminated from the sample, Anglicans still form the largest religious group in D Battery with 25.7%, a figure significantly higher than their provincial average. The reason is not difficult to explain. As Dr. Miller has argued, "during the war the Anglican church probably proved a more "patriotic" forum than the other denominations".¹⁴ Connected to England through the church hierarchy and symbolism,

supplied by clergymen recruited in England and by recently arrived English immigrants, the Anglican church had a "more marked Anglophilic flavour conducive to military recruitment".¹⁰ By contrast, the Roman Catholic church, composed largely of French Canadians and Irish immigrants, both of whom were much less enthusiastic about the "Imperial mission", contributed a disproportionately low number of volunteers. Although the Catholics accounted for 17.88% of the provincial population, they supplied only 9.9% of D Battery recruits.¹¹

Subtle social and family influences also led the men to volunteer. Recruited in specific geographic areas, the men were connected by family, personal, and social relations. For example, William A. Hare enlisted with his father, William R. Hare.¹² An examination of the battery nominal index indicates that there were up to ten sets of brothers in the unit.¹³ Two of these brothers, Thomas and Edward Bramah, joined to avenge the death of a family member in the war.¹⁴ Classmates often encouraged each other to sign up. Walter Bapty recalled that one of his classmates at the Ontario Agricultural College, upon proving unfit for service, suggested that Bapty volunteer to take his place.¹⁵ The O.A.C. contributed at least eight members, all of whom remained close throughout their time in South Africa. Other volunteers worked together in civilian life. For example, Hal Walters and Jack Gillespie were both Ottawa firemen. Three of the Port Hope recruits worked for the Post Office Department. The proximity of their regimental numbers (two of the post office men received the exact same number!) indicates that they enlisted together, perhaps one evening after work.¹⁶ Some of the gunners were also members of the same fraternal organizations. For example, at least a dozen of the Ottawa men were Masons.¹⁷

The militia artillery batteries were the greatest source of recruits. All nineteen of the London men were members of the 6th Field Battery; thirty-nine of the Guelph men were from either the 11th or 16th Battery; six of the Port Hope men were from the 14th "Durham" Field Battery and twenty-eight of the Ottawa men

came from the 2nd Field Battery. Having spent many hours training and socializing together, the men in each of these units knew each other very well. Enlistment at the militia batteries was an issue of pride, honour, and rivalry.

Other social pressures led the men to volunteer. According to John Ewan, the Toronto Globe correspondent who accompanied D Battery to South Africa, two or three of the men in the unit offered their services to atone for past transgressions and to "regain the world's good regard".¹¹

V

During their stay in Ottawa the gunners were housed in makeshift barracks at the Ottawa Exhibition grounds. Four or five men were assigned to each stall in the renovated cattle shed. They slept on straw beds with three blankets per man.¹² The addition of three woodburning stoves kept the quarters reasonably warm. The ticket offices served as guard rooms and the main "Aberdeen" building acted as a drill hall. The battery officers stayed in the residence of Mr. Dawson, the superintendent of the Exhibition grounds. Mr. Dawson also arranged meals for the men. The standard fare was stew and tea.¹³

The men spent ten busy days in Ottawa. The Exhibition grounds camp buzzed with activity. Quartermaster Sergeant Slade issued the numerous articles of kit to the men, and the Farrier Sergeant and Shoeing Smiths shod, numbered, and branded all 137 of the battery horses. The men prepared and packed their equipment for the voyage, cared for the horses, and practised their gun drill.

At first some of the men, especially those hired for their abilities as drivers or blacksmiths, had very little knowledge of artillery drill. Seeing these men stumble through their first drill practice, one reporter noted that "it must be said that some of the men look as if they did not know what to do when the orders were given".¹⁴ This observation is confirmed by Walter Bapty's recollection of the first drill practice: the order was given for Fours Right. "What did that mean? I could form fours,

but this was artillery drill...the boys beside me pushed me into place". After five hours of drill practice per day under the strict supervision of Sergeant Major McCIntyre, the less experienced artillerymen became quite efficient at drill. By the time that the battery was inspected by Major General Hutton on 10 January and marched through the streets of Ottawa on 11 and 13 January there were far fewer flaws to be seen.

Although most of the men were excited and enthusiastic about their training, there were some rumblings of discontent among the troops, especially in the Ottawa section. The Ottawa men complained that they did not receive enough consideration for appointments as NCOs. They were particularly upset that a Sergeant from one of the other detachments was placed in charge of one of the Ottawa subdivisions. The Ottawa men insisted that there were several qualified personnel in their own section who could fill these positions." Lieutenant Morrison's men also complained that they did not receive enough leave. They wanted a chance to say good bye to their friends and families. The Ottawa men argued that since the other detachments had already left their home towns, those sections should do some extra work around the camp to permit the local men to see their loved ones." Finally, the Ottawa men were upset about being moved to new quarters. On 9 January the Ottawa section was transferred out of the cosy cattle shed to another building. The new quarters were so cold that the men had to sleep in their greatcoats and boots. According to one gunner, "a fellow had to wake up every few minutes to break the ice off of his whiskers".

Notwithstanding these complaints, the battery's training and preparation advanced smoothly. By 15 January the unit had organized and packed all of its equipment and was ready to move to Halifax. The men rose early that morning, groomed the horses, ate breakfast, and formed up in front of the barracks for their last roll call in Ottawa. Shortly before 08:00 the battery men marched out the Elgin Street gate and led their horses to the Elgin Street train depot, where the men loaded the animals

thirteen and nine balance horse cars. Sixteen horses were placed on board and each animal had its own stall and was covered with a black blanket. The man was stationed in each car to care for the animals.¹⁷

When the last horse was placed on board, the battery moved to the Central train depot. The departure celebrations demonstrated the strong public support for the war effort. Accompanied by the Governor General's Foot Guards Band and Light Bands, the 43rd Battalion Band, Lieutenant Colonel Cotton, the veterans of 1866-70, the Boys Brigade and nine companies of public school cadets, the battery slowly made its way through an enthusiastic crowd of cheering, flagwaving spectators. An estimated 25,000-30,000 people lined the parade route to the train depot. People stood on the sidewalks, hung out of windows, climbed in trees and on telegraph poles to catch a glimpse of the departing soldiers.¹⁸ As the bands played "Rule Britannia", "The Maple Leaf Forever", and "Soldiers of the Queen", the crowd became even more enthusiastic in its applause.

At the corner of Sparks and Elgin Streets the mob was almost impassable. The soldiers were slapped on the back, presented with outstretched hands, cigars, and "a couple of lemon-flasks containing a brown liquid".¹⁹ The enthusiasm continued at the depot where the surging crowd, restrained by rope barriers and baton swinging policemen, greeted the troops with loud applause, songs, Union Jacks and Red Ensigns. As the train pulled out of the station, the bands played "Auld Lang Syne" and the emotional crowd shouted its farewell to the men. The soldiers were impressed with the size of the send off and the intensity of the public enthusiasm in Ottawa.²⁰

The Canadian Atlantic Railways train consisted of fifteen cars. In addition to the nine horse cars, which were attached to the train at the Central depot, and a freight van, the train included a Pullman "Montmorency" car for the officers, three Pullman sleeper cars for the NCOs and men, and a dining car.²¹ The men lived in relative comfort. The sleeping cars were

equipped with mattresses, blankets, oil lamps, and fresh drinking water. The dining car was designed to accommodate thirty-two people at once. Each group had approximately half an hour to eat. The meals were better than those at the Exhibition grounds. Breakfast included ham, eggs, porridge and tea; lunch consisted of English beef broth, roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, and mashed potatoes; supper brought Irish stew, baked beans, and boiled potatoes. Only one man complained about the food and his comments were received disfavouredly by the other soldiers." The men had few duties aboard the train. Although they took turns working six hour shifts in the horse cars, the men spent most of their time playing cards, singing, and writing letters."

Despite the Montreal Star's claim that "there was a big crowd at the [St. Henri] station to witness the arrival of the men", Lieutenant Morrison made it clear that "since crossing into this province [Quebec] there has been nothing in the shape of an ovation or send off to the troops by the people in towns passed". A change took place when the train entered New Brunswick. At nearly every station, whether the train stopped or not, enthusiastic crowds cheered the battery." At Bathurst the county warden, Mr. Charles Brison, and several councillors boarded the officers' car and presented Major Hurdman with a silk flag." At Newcastle several officers of the 12th Field Battery visited the train and hundreds of people, at least half the population, Morrison estimated, came out to see the troops. Eager to acquire souvenirs, some young ladies agreed to exchange kisses for the soldiers fashionable brass buttons. Needless to say, the soldiers were happy to engage in such a trade." At Moncton about 1000 people met the train and gave the gunners a warm welcome. These demonstrations did not go unnoticed. As one soldier recorded, "the enthusiasm in this province had a very cheering effect" on the men."

VI

When D Battery arrived in Halifax on 17 January, the unit was met at the train station by Lieutenant-Colonel Irving, the

District Officer Commanding in Nova Scotia; Lieutenant-Colonel Burney, the Embarkation Officer; several militia officers, and a large crowd of civilians. Once the artillerymen had disembarked the horses and marched them to the stables at the Halifax Exhibition grounds, the men moved to their quarters at the recently constructed armoury. Although the men slept on the floor, most of them found the Halifax armoury, which was twice the size of the Ottawa drill hall, to be large, spacious and comfortable. The men dined at the Exhibition grounds and some of them felt that it "a trifle inconvenient" to have to march the mile to and from the grounds at each meal time."

The scene in Halifax was one of continuous activity. With only three days before the scheduled departure of D and E Batteries, much work had to be done. The military authorities issued the gunners the last articles of equipment, including their khaki uniforms. Private contractors scrambled to transform the Allan Line Steamship Laurentian into a troop transport vessel complete with sleeping accommodations, stable facilities, and a huge storage freezer. The gunners hustled back and forth between the armoury, the Exhibition grounds, and the dockyard. They packed their khaki uniforms and the rest of their gear for the long voyage, tended to the horses, and helped load supplies aboard the ship. The latter chore was particularly demanding. Under the direction of Colonel Stone, who replaced Lieutenant-Colonel Burney as Embarkation Officer, the batterymen assisted the dock stevedores to load the guns, wagons, limbers, ammunition, and a long list of other military supplies. In addition to the artillery stores, the gunners helped load over 100 tons of ice into the giant freezer as well as 193,000 pounds of pressed hay, 69,000 pounds of oats, and 66,000 pounds of bran to feed the horses on the nine thousand kilometre journey. The men loaded their horses on 19 January."

Halifax provided a warm reception for the troops. Urged on by the Conservative Halifax Herald, Haligonians were determined to demonstrate their support for the soldiers. Before D Battery arrived in the Nova Scotian capital, Mayor Hamilton started a

fail to provide for the entertainment of the men. The New Bank of Halifax, the Bank of Nova Scotia, and the Union Bank of Halifax were among the first to make generous contributions. The money raised went to various events held in honour of the volunteers.²

On 18 January the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the WCA, and the Evangelical Alliance held a supper and a mass meeting at the Brunswick Street Methodist Church for the Canadian soldiers. Many of the men found time in their busy schedules to attend the event. The meeting demonstrates the strong links between religious and reform movements and imperialism in late nineteenth century Canada. For example, after the supper, representatives from the various churches, the WCTU, and the YMCA addressed the troops. They complimented the men on their courage and patriotism. Asserting that the war "was a just war in the interests of the better civilization of the world" and that "such conflicts were necessary and would reflect gloriously on those who were engaged in the cause of right", the speakers urged the men to remember "that great soldier of right who waged an eternal war on all that was unholy and wrong...that they were soldiers of Christ as well as soldiers of the Queen and the best soldier was the soldier of the cross - the Lord God of Hosts". The meeting closed with a hearty rendition of "God Save the Queen".³

On 19 January the city held a large concert at the armoury in honour of the volunteers. The main hall was lavishly decorated with 1000 flags, 2300 metres of bunting, an eight metre high portrait of Queen Victoria, and a massive Union Jack composed of hundreds of red, white, and blue incandescent lights. An estimated 5000 people crammed into the armoury to witness the evening's program of music, song, and oration. All three levels of government and the military establishment were represented at the event. Mayor Hamilton, Lieutenant Governor Sir Malachy Daly, Frederick Borden, Minister of Finance W.S. Fielding, and General Lord William Seymour, Commander of Imperial Forces at Halifax, delivered rousing patriotic

speeches. The Halifax Garrison's Leinster Regimental Band and various soloists provided the music, which consisted of such patriotic and sentimental tunes as "The Girl I Left Behind Me" and "Soldiers of the Queen". Although many of the troops were busy preparing for the embarkation and could not attend the concert, the event was pronounced a huge success."

In general the D Batterymen were appreciative of the reception they received in Halifax. Lieutenant Morrison noted that "the Halifax people have been exceedingly kind and unremitting in their efforts to amuse and entertain the officers and men"." Driver W.A. Hare confirmed this feeling when he recorded that "Halifax appears to be giving [the] lads a good time"."

There were some incidents of civilian-military relations, however, that were less than cordial. For example, some of the gunners believed that the Halifax cab drivers and merchants overcharged the soldiers. To teach an allegedly extortionate cabby a lesson, three gunners seized his wagon and charged it through town like a gun team going into action. When the hijackers took a sharp turn, the cabby was thrown from the vehicle and had to pursue the soldiers on foot."

These incidents were rare, however, and did not discourage influential Haligonians from planning an enthusiastic send off. It was no coincidence that on 20 January, the day D and E Batteries were scheduled to sail, the Halifax Herald reprinted the story of the overwhelming send off in Ottawa five days earlier. Determined not to be outdone by any other city, the Herald urged Haligonians to turn out and demonstrate their support for the departing gunners. Their efforts were not in vain, for nearly 30,000 people braved the rainy, slushy January weather to cheer the volunteers.

After General Hutton's inspection and several farewell speeches, the men of D and E Batteries, accompanied by four military bands and an escort of Mounted Rifles, marched out of the armoury, down North Park Street and towards the dockyard. The public demonstration rivalled the enthusiastic scenes that

had taken place in Ottawa. Halifax took on a carnivalesque atmosphere as people crowded the parade route, leaned from windows and stood on rooftops to shout their farewells to the "soldier boys"; flags and decorations adorned the buildings; and the sounds of music and cheering voices echoed through the city's historic streets. Once they reached the dockyard, the men formed up and boarded the Laurentian one section at a time."¹²

The embarkation was not without some controversy. To control the crowd and facilitate the embarkation of the troops, the Imperial authorities closed the dockyard to the general public and issued a specific number of admission tickets. Although the city officials were upset by this policy, it was a wise decision given the very large crowd and the recent zealous public demonstrations. The tickets granted admission only after the troops were aboard the Laurentian. This was not good enough for many of the more enthusiastic spectators. When the troops reached the dockyard, the ticket holders demanded to be admitted immediately. When the dockyard guards refused to admit anyone until the troops were aboard the ship, the crowd took matters into its own hands. Drunk with patriotic frenzy, the mob rushed the gate, tore it off its hinges, and attempted to force its way into the dockyard. People were knocked down and trampled in the mad push to get a closer look at the soldiers. Severely outnumbered, the police could not restore order until they were reinforced by two companies of regular soldiers."¹³

VII

Once the troops had embarked, the Laurentian slowly pulled away from the dock and disappeared into a thick Atlantic fog. The ship was soon surrounded by several smaller craft carrying cheering well wishers and signalling their farewells with whistle blows, cannon salutes, and fireworks. The poor visibility and stormy weather, however, convinced the Laurentian's Captain Nunnan to anchor in the harbour for the night."¹⁴

In addition to the brigade division staff and D and E Batteries, a total of 339 artillery officers and men and 239

horses, the Laurentian carried fourteen "attached" officers, nurses and men; twelve Canadian Mounted Rifles; and twenty-four additional horses. As the senior officer on board, Major Hurdman served as brigade division C.O. for the voyage.¹⁴

The officers, sergeants, and nurses were housed in the ship's first class cabins. The rooms were clean, tastefully decorated, and though not extremely large, were far from overcrowded. The large salon that served as an officers mess was arranged with flowers and presented a home like appearance.¹⁵ At least one officer noted that his "cabin was a very good one".¹⁶

On the other hand, the men "were stowed away like sardines".¹⁷ Their quarters were located between decks toward the stern of the vessel, D Battery on the port side and E Battery on the starboard side of the ship. Each man was assigned a place with a hammock and two grey blankets. The men ate their meals on tables arranged below their hammocks. As the hammocks were hung close together and the men had large amounts of kit, the quarters were cramped. The men recorded different reactions to their accommodations. For example, although W.A. Hare found the quarters "comfortable", others noted that the quarters were overcrowded and difficult to keep clean.¹⁸ When the Laurentian reached warmer weather, the quarters became increasingly uncomfortable and most men slept on deck.

The horses occupied several decks in the front of the ship. The Laurentian was outfitted with 300 horse stalls. To prevent the horses from being thrown during the voyage, each stall provided just enough room for the horse to stand up. While most of the stalls were 1.8 metres long and sixty-six centimetres wide, the ship included fifteen stalls that measured 1.95 metres in length and seventy-one centimetres in width to house the larger animals. Since the horses had no room to lie down, each stall was supplied with a horse sling - a piece of canvas draped underneath the horse to support it should its legs give out. The floors of the stalls were covered with matting and straw. The horses' tails were wrapped in canvas to prevent the animals from

rubbing off all the hair during the voyage."¹¹

At 08:30 on 21 January the Laurentian steamed out of Halifax harbour and began its long voyage to South Africa. The ship encountered very rough weather and within hours seasickness had incapacitated most of the men.¹² Weak, shaken, and unable to move without vomiting, many of the men collapsed where they stood. Others retreated to their hammocks and wondered why they had ever volunteered for such a vile experience. As the rolling and pitching of the ship increased, the gunners' quarters echoed with the sounds of retching and emitted a foul and disgusting stench which compounded the men's discomfort. The seasickness did not spare Chaplain Cox, the Anglican clergyman on board, and the Sunday church service had to be cancelled.¹³

The horses suffered tremendously. Unaccustomed to sea travel, the nervous animals were battered in their narrow stalls. During the rolling, many of the canvas slings tore and gave way at the stitching. Despite the narrow construction of the stalls, some of the horses were thrown, one animal was even flipped onto its back.¹⁴ To add to the horses' discomfort, the ship's scuppers became clogged and large amounts of water backwashed through the stables.¹⁵ Those officers and NCOs who remained healthy enough tried to raise some men to clean the scuppers and tend to the horses, but most of the gunners were oblivious to the situation. A handful of men, including Sergeant Henderson, Gunners Cameron, Pryke, Smith, and Driver Williams responded to the call and worked long hours cleaning the drainage vents and caring for the exhausted animals.¹⁶

Although the storm abated over the next forty-eight hours, the Laurentian continued to roll violently, provoking Lieutenant McCrae to exclaim that "there is a very general disgust at the use of such a transport as the Laurentian. I cannot conceive of a worse boat to roll in any sea at all...it ought never to be a troopship for horses".¹⁷

By 24 January the Laurentian had entered calmer waters and was running more steadily. The men had recovered from their seasickness, and a regular daily routine began to emerge aboard

the vessel. The men started each day at 06:00 with a saltwater bath on deck followed by some physical exercise and a short religious service.

One of the more trying activities in the daily routine was stable duty. The horses were fed four times a day: at 06:30 each animal received a quart of oats and bran; at 11:30 it received the same ration plus four pounds of hay; at 16:30 the horse received another quart of oats and bran; and five hours later the animal was treated to eight pounds of hay.¹¹⁷ During the voyage some of the officers and drivers supplemented their horse's diet with carrots and apples. In addition to feeding and watering the horses, the men had to wash and groom the animals; rub down their legs; clean the stalls, put down fresh straw, and dispose of the manure overboard; tend to sick animals; raise fallen horses; and remove and dispose of any carcasses from the stables.¹¹⁸

This trying work was made even more difficult by the misplacement of many of the stable stores and the poor design of the stalls. The men had loaded great quantities of stable stores aboard the ship, but in the hurried embarkation nobody had recorded where the equipment was placed.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, the rows of horse stalls were constructed too close together and did not provide enough room for the men to do their work.¹²⁰ As the Laurentian approached the tropics, the heat and stench in the poorly ventilated lower stables became unbearable. With the temperature below decks hovering around 130 degrees Fahrenheit (52 degrees Celsius), the perspiration soaked men had to strip down to their underclothes, work in short shifts, and climb above decks for frequent doses of fresh air.¹²¹ Despite the gunners' efforts, the long voyage was too much for many of the horses. By the time the Laurentian arrived in South Africa, twenty-six of the horses had been hoisted overboard.¹²²

Drills, fatigues, and lectures occupied the rest of the work day. Two of the 12 pounders were brought up on deck and the men practised standing gun drill for several hours twice a day.¹²³ The men also practised squad drill and fire drills. In

between drill practices the men cleaned the decks, oiled the horse harness, and prepared their other equipment for active service. The officers and NCOs lectured on ammunition, materiel, gunnery, and signalling.

In the evening guards and pickets were mounted around the ship. The duties of this "troop deck watch" were to "keep the decks clean and report anyone acting untidily on deck".¹²⁴ The appointment of pickets and guards also instilled a sense of military discipline and procedure. After lights out at 22:15 the pickets remained on duty as sentries. The officers treated this duty very seriously. The sentries were armed with carbines, as they would be in the field, and anyone who did not perform his duty satisfactorily was punished. For example, on 2 February a regimental court martial sentenced Gunner T.P. O'Connor to a day in prison for sleeping at his sentry post.¹²⁵

The D Battery men reacted to their daily routine in different ways. Despite John Ewan's 30 January statement that "there has been virtually no growling on the vessel", some of the men became increasingly frustrated with their tedious, dirty chores.¹²⁶ Although Gunners Jack Gillespie and Phil Kerr wrote public letters to the Ottawa Free Press claiming that they did not think that the boys had any reason to "grumble" or "kick"¹²⁷, other gunners wrote letters to family members expressing their boredom and frustration with the monotonous routine. As early as 25 January one D Battery member acknowledged that "the routine is going to get very monotonous before we are through with it. Every day is getting to be like every other day".¹²⁸ Shortly after arriving in South Africa, Trumpeter Barker admitted that "it [the voyage] was monotonous and our arrival on land was a welcome relief...we have had just as much drill as we can stand".¹²⁹ In fact, the D Battery men complained enough to provoke Major Hurdman to give a lecture on discipline. On 12 February Hurdman called the men together and reminded them that no one had been forced to volunteer, there were plenty of men at home who would have been happy to take their places, and, having come, each man must do his duty.

According to McCrae the address had some effect.¹¹¹

Similarly, the men had different attitudes towards the quality of their rations. The officers had little room to complain. In addition to their three meals a day in the officers' mess, they were served tea on deck by the nurses at 17:00.¹¹¹ The officers enjoyed a variety of delicacies, including caviare, baked haddock, roast turkey and ham, and plum pudding with brandy sauce.¹¹²

The men did not enjoy the same quality or variety of food as the officers. Despite Ewan's assertion that "the utmost satisfaction is expressed by the men at their fare"¹¹³, there was no single, monolithic attitude towards the rations. Many men believed that their meals consisted of good, wholesome food. For example, Gunner Jack Gervan told his family that the men received "first class rations...dinner: meat, potatoes, bread, butter and tea".¹¹⁴ Other men were less impressed with the food. One D Battery man noted that "the meals we get are not the best but still we manage to rough it out".¹¹⁵ Gunner James Cormack was more explicit: "I wish you could see our breakfast", he wrote to a friend,

raw potatoes dipped in hot salt water; heavy, very heavy bread, several pounds to the ounce; hot water, coloured with I do not know what, called tea. For dinner, soup like the tea, some kind of meat and more heavy bread. For tea, hard tack, black molasses and more tea.¹¹⁶

There were also some problems with the distribution of the food. The men ate at tables in their sleeping area. There was a table orderly for every twelve men, who was responsible for getting the rations at the cook's galley and delivering the food to his tablemates.¹¹⁷ Although Ewan failed to mention it, some of the men supplemented their table's spread by "swiping the rations of other men".¹¹⁸ One gunner was quite explicit about this practice: "anything good that is around", he wrote, "I am after it for our table. A few nights ago Wm. Smith, A. McCuaig, and I, about midnight when on watch...ran across a roast beef, a chicken and two tins of sardines. We used them".¹¹⁹ To end this pilfering, Major Hurdman appointed the experienced and well

respected "Gat" Howard as acting Quartermaster for the remainder of the voyage."¹⁰

The men purchased additional food and comforts at the ship's canteen. Although many of the men were happy with the canteen service, some complained that it was too expensive. Despite Ewan's assertion that the men could purchase articles at cost, one D Battery member informed his father that

we [the gunners] spent all our pay buying grub out of the canteen and officers' pantry and I can tell you it cost us considerable. We had to pay two shillings for a pie and then "it wasn't like dear old mother's either". A shilling for a sandwich and six pence for a bottle of pop. So you can see that would amount up for 29 days."¹¹

Furthermore, some of the men complained that food and comforts that had been donated to the troops were sold in the canteen instead of being distributed free to the men."¹²

The prohibition of alcohol on board was a further source of irritation to the men, not simply, as John Ewan suggested, because the men were accustomed to having a glass of beer at meal time, but also because the "dry" policy was not applied equally. The ship's staff, described by McCrae as a "complete set of drunks", had clear access to alcohol and one or two of the stewards were "constantly loaded".¹³ The men undoubtedly felt that the dry policy should apply equally to everyone on board and that if the ship's staff was permitted to drink, the troops should also be allowed to have some alcohol. The men's complaints had some effect, for on 27 January W.A Hare recorded that beer was served at dinner!"¹⁴

Sundays were relatively quiet aboard the ship. Chaplain Cox led a voluntary communion service at 08:30, church parade at 10:30, and a voluntary evening service at 18:15. A box covered by a Union Jack served as his altar. The services consisted of a short sermon and several hymns, including "Nearer My God to Thee", "Onward Christian Soldiers", and "God Save the Queen". Although Roman Catholics were exempt from the church parade, all of the services were well attended. Some of the Presbyterians felt that the formal Church of England service sounded

"popish".¹⁴ The men spent Sunday afternoons reading, writing, and relaxing.

Leisure activities were not restricted to Sunday afternoons. For example, some evenings after supper the men who were not on duty organized concerts and sing-songs on deck. The officers also organized two sports days for the men, including such events as a tug of war, an obstacle race, boxing, and wrestling.¹⁵ When the ship crossed the equator some of the men organized a comical initiation ceremony. One of them dressed up as Neptune and, assisted by the others, held a mock court. Those gunners who had never crossed the equator before were called to the court, which consisted of a barber stool and the canvas bathtub on deck, and were given the option of paying a toll or being initiated. The men who refused to pay the toll were lathered with a nauseous soft soap mixture and dunked into the canvas bathtub. The event raised nearly forty-five dollars for the Sailors' Orphan and Widow Fund and was taken good naturedly by most of the men.¹⁶ These activities interrupted the monotony of shipboard service, fostered an esprit de corps, and relieved some stress.

The long voyage gave the D Batterymen time to become better acquainted with each other. The men who knew each other before the war tended to stick together, but, as Walter Bapty recalled, "they were not exclusive and made other good friends".¹⁷ Lieutenant McCrae noted that even though he had been much prejudiced against "Gat" Howard, "a regular old American blowhard", he found Howard to be an "interesting", "entertaining", and "kind hearted" man.¹⁸ McCrae added that Reverend Cox "is a capital little fellow... Dr Ryerson, whom I never loved, is affable enough...the four nurses are all quite well liked and the Surgeon Major is a first rate chap".¹⁹

Despite T.G. Marquis's assertion that the men "were like one great family"²⁰ some personal tensions, rivalries, and animosities arose during the trip. For example, among the officers, Lieutenant McCrae recorded that Veterinary Major Massie "is very unpopular. He resents anything from us, and we

think he does not do very much himself. He doesn't spend much time with the horses. I knew he was not very popular at A [Battery], but I can see some grounds for it now".¹¹ McCrae added that "Dr. Vaux is very argumentative and I am doubtful of [Lieutenant] Van Tuyl as a very good man: he is greatly inclined to argument, which is not a good thing in a soldier. Also I think a little touchy in the disposition".¹²

Relations between the enlisted men were not perfect either. In fact, the men stole more than each other's rations. For example, Gunner Eliot, one of the Guelph men, was caught with stolen goods.¹³ "To see that the men don't swipe too much from each other", McCrae wrote, the officers instituted periodic kit inspections. The section commanders inspected every man's kit and each article had to be shown with its number on it.¹⁴ The pilfering was an irritant and produced an element of distrust among the troops.

There is also some evidence of class tension between the men. "I am just sitting here looking at some men who used to draw big salaries sweeping the floor", sneered Jack Gervan. "It is fun to watch some of them, they are not used to it, they get tired quick, one of them just said to me: "You must have a working father, as work don't seem to bother you". I said, "Yes, and a good mother too".¹⁵ In short, although the batterymen became better acquainted and many of them became good friends, it is far too simplistic to portray the troops as "one great family" of brothers-in-arms. As in most group relations, the D Battery officers and men had personal differences, tensions and rivalries.

VIII

At 22:55 on 16 February, twenty-seven days after leaving Halifax, the Laurentian pulled into Cape Town harbour. The men spent the night preparing for disembarkation. The next day the ship docked and was greeted by Lieutenant-Colonel Drury and Captain Panet, second in command of "C" Battery, both of whom were disappointed to find only two batteries on board.¹⁶ On 17 and 18 February the men unloaded all of their kit, stores, guns,

wagons and horses and prepared to move to Green Point Camp for the next stage of their mission.

1. "Supplementary Report: Organization, Equipment, Dispatch and Service of the Canadian Contingents during the War in South Africa, 1899-1900" in Sessional Papers vol.XII No. 35a, 1901 p.75.

2.C.E. Long, "Major-General Charles William Drury", Canadian Defence Quarterly vol.V, pp.39-40.; Henry James Morgan ed., Canadian Men and Women of the Time. 2nd ed. Toronto, 1912. p.347.; Carman Miller, Painting the Map Red Montreal, 1993 p.160. Nicholson, Gunners of Canada vol.I Toronto, 1967. p.134.

Drury's Adjutant was Captain Herbert Cyril Thacker. Born in India in 1870, Thacker was the son of Major-General Thacker, a British officer in the Indian Army. After moving to Canada, Thacker was educated at Upper Canada College and the Royal military College. Upon his graduation in 1891 he joined the 19th Regiment. Two years later he transferred into the Royal Canadian Artillery.

Surgeon Major Arthur Norreys Worthington served as the Brigade Division Medical Officer. Worthington was born and raised in Sherbrooke, Quebec. He attended Bishop's University and received his medical degree with first class honours from McGill University in 1886. Worthington had a long military career, including service with the field hospital during the Northwest Rebellion. Veterinary-Major Massie of the Royal Canadian Artillery was the Brigade Division Veterinary Officer and Warrant Officer Long served as the Brigade Division Sergeant Major. See Canadians in Khaki pp.78-79.; Morgan, p.1092, 1187. ; Worthington Family Papers Accession no. 479, Osler Library McGill University.

3. "Copies of Orders in Council, General Orders, Appointments to Office and Militia Orders Affecting the Contingents, in Connection with the Despatch of the Colonial Military Force to South Africa" in Sessional Papers No.49 1900.pp.9, 80. See the flow chart in Appendix. The Battery wagons included six ammunition wagons, one stores wagon, one forge wagon and four prairie wagons. Each section had two ammunition wagons to supply its guns and two of the other wagons.

4. See Sessional Paper No.35a p.76.

5. See Sessional Paper No.49 p.46.

6. Ibid

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.
9. Miller, p.56.
10. Toronto Globe 30 December 1899, p.24. ; Ottawa Free Press 29 December 1899, p.7.
11. Royal Canadian Artillery Staff Diary, 23 January 1900 in South African War Records in RG9 II A3 vol.33.
12. Walter Bapty, Memoirs Toronto, 1958. p.15.
13. Statistics compiled from Data Entry Sheets in the Fonds Carman Miller MG 31 G 32 at the National Archives. See Stats tables in Appendix. While en route to South Africa, Gunner Barber wrote his father a letter explaining that "several of the men are underage. There are three or four in our battery alone that are only 16 and there are a number of others between 16 and 21 of which you know I am one, but we are far enough out [to seal now and don't care who knows". S. Barber to Father, 26 January 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger at McCrae House Museum. My thanks to Bev Dietrich of Guelph Museums for providing me with this valuable source of information.
14. Sessional Papers No.49 1900 p.52. ; Miller, p.155.; Bapty, p.16.
15. Toronto Globe, 2 January 1900 p.9; Miller, p.57, 157-159.
16. Colonel MacDonald, "Report of Chief Superintendent of Stores" in Sessional Paper No. 35a 1901, p.15.
17. Sessional Papers No.49 1900, p.58-59, 65-66; Ottawa Free Press, 30 December 1899, p.1.
18. Sessional Papers No.49 1900, pp.50-51.
19. Walter Bapty, Memoirs p.15.
20. Sessional Papers No.49 1900 p.65.
21. Toronto Globe 2 January 1900 p.9.
22. Sessional Papers No.49, p.55.
23. Ottawa Evening Citizen 9 January 1900 p.3. ; Ottawa Evening Journal 6 January 1900 p.3 ; 8 January 1900, p.6.
24. Major Hurdman, "Appendix E2" in Sessional Papers No.35a 1901 p.138; E.W.B. Morrison, With the Guns Hamilton, 1901. p.17.
25. Ottawa Free Press 30 December 1899 p.1 ; Ottawa Evening Journal 5 January 1900 p.7.
26. Toronto Globe, 1 January 1900 ; Sessional Papers No.49 p.65.

27. Toronto Globe 6 January 1900 p.22 ; Ottawa Evening Journal 5 January 1900 p.3.
28. Sessional Paper No.49 p.46-47. ; According to the Halifax Herald, 18 January 1900 p.6 the military paid an average price of 130 dollars for the artillery horses.
29. Toronto Globe 6 January 1900 p.2 ; 9 January 1900 p.4 ; Bapty, p.16 describes the horses as "big Canadian farm horses, mares and geldings".
30. London Advertiser 5 January 1900 p.2 ; Canadian Magazine March 1900 p.433.
31. Toronto Globe 5 January 1900 p.5.
32. Ibid. 9 January 1900 p.4.
33. For example Guelph residents contributed to a Red Cross Fund. The Port Hope men were insured for \$750 for the duration of their service.
34. Although W.H Barker was a member of the 2nd "Ottawa" Field Battery, I have included him in the "A" Battery group because he enlisted at Kingston, where he was taking a course. See South African War Record, Nominal Rolls "D" Battery R.C.A 1899-1900 in RG II A3 vol.30 pp. 551-557.; Ottawa Free Press 11 January 1900 p.2. ; Canadians in Khaki p.78-88.
35. Some of the Permanent Force NCOs were attached to the other sections.
36. See Sessional Paper No.49 p.2 for the ranking of all seventeen militia field batteries.
37. See Morgan, p.562. ; Ottawa Free Press 15 January 1900 p.5.
38. Morgan, p.362. ; Ottawa Free Press 15 January 1900 p. 5.
39. Ottawa Free Press 15 January 1900 p.5.
40. See Ibid. ; John Prescott, In Flanders Fields: The Story of John McCrae Erin, 1985 p. 9-42. ; Toronto Globe 29 December 1899 p. 2. ; Morgan, p.755. ; Bev Dietrich, "Colonel John McCrae" in Canadian Military History Autumn, 1996. pp.37-43. ; Newspaper clipping in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.d. n.p.
41. G.W.L. Nicholson, The Gunners of Canada vol.I Toronto, 1967. p.121. ; Ottawa Free Press 15 January 1900 p. 5. ; Morgan, p.827 ; The highest score ever achieved by an artilleryman on the training course at the Royal Military college was Major Hurdman's 87.75%.

42. Carman Miller, "A Preliminary Analysis of the Socio-Economic Composition of Canada's South African War Contingents" in Social History (November, 1975) vol.VIII p.219.
43. Statistics compiled from the data entry sheets in the Fonds Carman Miller MG 31 G 32 at the National Archives. See statistical tables in appendix.
44. Miller, "A Preliminary Analysis", p.234-35. The stats for third class clerks based on the cited salary of \$480 - \$800 a year.
45. Ibid.
46. Ottawa Evening Journal 6 January 1900 p.3.
47. Ottawa Free Press 24 February 1900 p.9.
48. Ibid. 15 January 1900 p.7.
49. Ibid. 13 January 1900 p.7.
50. Ibid. 5 January 1900 p.8.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid 11 January 1900 p.2.
53. C.E. Mills letter published in London Advertiser 19 April 1900 p.9.
54. See Miller, "A Preliminary Analysis" pp.233-234.
55. Ibid, p.229.
56. Bapty, p.15.
57. McCrae to Mother cited in Bev Dietrich, "Colonel John McCrae" Canadian Military History Autumn, 1996. p.39.
58. Morrison, With the Guns p.21.
59. Ottawa Free Press 5 January 1900 p.8.
60. Data Entry Sheets in Fonds Carman Miller MG 31 G 32 ; Population statistics taken from the 1901 Census, vol. I. pp.144-145, 417. Ontario population was 2,182,947. 239,873 were British born immigrants.
61. Hare Notebook n.p. n.d. in William A. Hare Papers MG 29 E 25 File No.2 at the National Archives.
62. Cited in Halifax Herald 18 January 1900 p.6.
63. Statistics compiled from Data Entry Sheets and 1901 Census.

64. Miller, "A. and L. and J. Anderson" p.115.
65. Ibid.
66. Data Entry Sheets and 1901 Census, p. 144-45.
67. Ottawa Evening Journal 5 January 1900 p.7.
68. Canadians on Khaki p.37-38; Miller, p.100.
69. Montreal Star 22 January 1900 p.6.
70. Bapty, p.15.
71. Halifax Herald 18 January 1900 p.18 ; Canadians on Khaki, p.37, 38.
72. Morrison, With the Guns p. 38-39.
73. Toronto Globe 17 February 1900 p.7.
74. Toronto Globe 30 December 1899 p.24 ; Ottawa Free Press 29 December 1899 p.7 ; 4 January 1900 p.3 ; Bapty, p.16.
75. Ibid. ; Ottawa Evening Journal 5 January 1900 p.4.
76. Ottawa Evening Journal 5 January 1900 p.7.
77. Bapty, p.15.
78. Ottawa Evening Journal 10 January 1900 p.7. ; Ottawa Free Press 11 January 1900 p.2.
79. Ibid.
80. Ottawa Evening Journal 12 January 1900 p.7.
81. Ottawa Evening Journal 15 January 1900 p.3; Ottawa Free Press 15 January 1900 p.7; Ottawa Citizen 15 January 1900 p.1, 3; Toronto Globe 16 January 1900 p.4.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ottawa Citizen 15 January 1900 p.1; Bapty, p.17; Morrison, p.18; Hare Diary, 15 January 1900.
85. Morrison, p.18-19. ; Ottawa Citizen 15 January 1900 p. 3.
86. Halifax Herald 20 January 1900 p.7.
87. Ottawa Evening Journal 19 January 1900 p.7.; Bapty, p.16.
88. Montreal Star 16 January 1900 p.12.

89. Morrison, p.18.
90. Halifax Herald 20 January 1900 p.7.
91. Morrison, p.19. ; Ottawa Evening Journal 19 January 1900 p.7.
92. Ibid.
93. Morrison, p.19.
94. Halifax Herald 18 January 1900 p.6, 10. ; Ottawa Evening Journal 20 January 1900 p.6 , 22 January 1900 p.3. ; Ottawa Citizen 17 January 1900 p. 1. ; Bapty, p.18.; Sessional Papers, No.35a, p.138.
95. See Morrison, p.19-20. ; Halifax Herald 18 January 1900 p.10, 19 January 1900 p.10. ; Ottawa Evening Journal 20 January 1900 p.6. ; W.A. Hare Diary 19 January 1900 in W.A. Hare Papers.
96. Halifax Herald 12 January 1900 p.1.
97. Halifax Herald 19 January 1900 p.6.; Ottawa Evening Journal 22 January 1900 p.3. ; Toronto Globe 19 January 1900 p. 8.
98. Halifax Herald 20 January 1900 p.1 ; Ottawa Evening Journal 22 January 1900 p.3. ; Morrison, p.22.
99. Morrison, p.21.
100. W.A. Hare Diary 18 January 1900.
101. Morrison, p.22-23. There is no record of whether the gunners were punished for the incident.
102. For discussion of the embarkation and send off from Halifax see Halifax Herald 20 January 1900 p.1., 22 January 1900 p.7-8.; Ottawa Evening Journal 20 January 1900 p.7., 22 January 1900 p.3,6.; Ottawa Citizen 20 January 1900 p.1.; Montreal Star 20 January 1900 p.16.; Canadian Magazine March 1900 pp.453-463.; John McCrae, Diary of Trip to South Africa 20 January 1900 in John McCrae Collection, Archival Collections, University of Guelph Library. My thanks to Miss Darlene Wiltsie of the Archival Collections at the University of Guelph Library for providing me with this source of information.
103. See Halifax Herald 18 January 1900 p.6-7, 22 January 1900 pp.7-8. ; Canadian Magazine (March, 1900) p.462.
104. Halifax Herald 22 January 1900 pp.7-8. ; Morrison, p.24. ; John Quinney letter dated 26 January 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 16 February 1900 p.1. ; Gillespie letter dated 30 January 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 17 February 1900 p.7.

105. The fourteen attached officers, nurses, and men included the Red Cross Representative, Surgeon Lieutenant-Colonel G.S. Ryerson; the Anglican Chaplain, Reverend W.J. Cox; An extra Medical Officer, Lieutenant F.L. Vaux; the four nurses, Miss Hurcomb, Miss Horne, Miss MacDonald, and Miss Richardson; An officer attached for duty with a machine gun section, Lieutenant A.L. "Gat" Howard; An officer of the Postal Corps, W.R. Eccelstone, and four men of the Postal Corps, Rowan Johnston, Kenneth Murray, Thomas Bedell, and Joseph Lallier; and one man from the Imperial Yeomanry, Private Wainwright.
106. Montreal Star 22 January 1900 p.6 ; Toronto Globe 22 January 1900 p. 7.
107. McCrae to Mother, 25 January 1900 in McCrae Papers MG 30 D209 at the National Archives.
108. Toronto Globe 22 January 1900 p.7.
109. W.A. Hare diary, 25 January 1900. ; Bapty, p.18. ; W.H. Barker to Father 30 January 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 19 February 1900 p.7. ; Sergeant Ross to Major Davidson 28 January 1900 in newspaper clipping n.p. n.d. in McCrae Boer War Ledger.
110. Ottawa Evening Journal 22 January 1900 p.3, 6.
111. Lieutenant McCrae recorded that "up to 4/5 of all troops were ill". McCrae Diary of Voyage to South Africa 21 January 1900. James Cormack wrote that "nearly all the soldiers on board with the exception of a dozen or so" were struck with seasickness. James Cormack to Major William Russell, 28 January 1900 in newspaper clipping n.p n.d. in McCrae Boer War Ledger.
112. Bapty, p.19. ; R.C.A. Staff Diary 21 January 1900. ; McCrae diary 21 January 1900.
113. R.C.A. Staff Diary 21 January 1900. ; Morrison, p.27
114. Marquis, p.344. ; Morrison, p.27
115. Morrison, p.27.
116. McCrae diary 23 January 1900. ; McCrae to Mother 25 January 1900.
117. R.C.A. Staff Diary 24 January 1900.
118. Miller, p.169.
119. McCrae diary 23 January 1900.
120. Ibid, 24 January 1900. ; Major Hurdman, "Appendix E2" in Sessional Paper No.35a 1901, p.138.

121. McCrae diary, 4 February 1900. ; Morrison, p.34-35.
122. Hurdman, Sessional Papers No.35a 1901 p.138.
123. Ibid.; Quinney letter dated 26 January 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 16 February 1900 p.1.
124. Quinney letter dated 26 January 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 16 February 1900 p.1.
125. R.C.A. Staff Diary 2 February 1900. ; McCrae Diary 2 February 1900.
126. John Ewan Report dated 30 January 1900 in Toronto Globe 19 February 1900 p.8.
127. Jack Gillespie to Ottawa Free Press dated 30 January 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 17 February 1900 p.7.; Phil Kerr letter dated 28 January 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 19 February 1900 p.7.
128. McCrae to Mother 25 January 1900.
129. Trumpeter W.H. Barker to Father 28 February 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 9 April 1900 p.7.
130. McCrae Diary 12 February 1900. ; John Ewan Report 13 February 1900 in Toronto Globe 22 March 1900 p.9.
131. McCrae to Mother 25 January 1900.
132. John Ewan Report 29 January 1900 in Toronto Globe 17 February 1900 p.1.
133. Ibid.
134. Jack Gervan to Mother, 29 January 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 17 February 1900 p.7.
135. W.H. Barker to Father 30 January 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 19 February 1900 p.7.
136. J. Cormack to Mr Wm. Russell, 28 January 1900 in newspaper clipping n.p. n.d. in McCrae Boer War Ledger.
137. John Ewan Report, 13 February 1900 in Toronto Globe 22 March, 1900 p.9.
138. McCrae Diary 26 January 1900.
139. Jack Gervan to Mother 29 January 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 17 February 1900 p. 7. , 8 February 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 20 March 1900 p.8.

140. McCrae Diary 26 January 1900. ; R.C.A. Staff Diary 26 January 1900.
141. Ewan Report 30 January 1900 in Toronto Globe 19 February 1900 p.8.; W.H. Barker to Father 28 February 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 9 April 1900 p.7.
142. See Corporal Belford letter in Ottawa Evening Journal 16 February 1900 p.1.
143. McCrae Diary 24 January 1900.
144. W.A. Hare Diary 27 January 1900.
145. Bapty. p.19. See also McCrae Diary and R.C.A. Staff Diary.
146. R.C.A. Staff Diary 9 February 1900.
147. Morrison, p.35-36; Quinney letter dated 7 February 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 27 March 1900 p.3. ; McCrae Diary 6 February 1900.
148. Bapty, p.20.
149. McCrae Diary 24 January 1900. ; McCrae to Mother, 25 January 1900. ; McCrae to Geils, 30 January 1900.
150. See Ibid. Dr G.S. Ryerson was the Red Cross Representative. For the list of attached officers and nurses see endnote no.105.
151. Marquis, p.344.
152. McCrae to Mother, 25 January 1900.
153. McCrae to Geils 30 January 1900.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid.; Frederick Fletcher letter in Halifax Herald 26 March 1900 p.5.
156. Gervan to Mother 29 January 1900 in Ottawa Free Press 17 February 1900 p.7.
157. See Drury Report Sessional Papers No.35a 1901, p.116.

Chapter Three

Chasing Shadows and Train-spotting

D Battery marched into Green Point Camp at 17:30 on 18 February 1900. The camp, located three kilometres outside of Cape Town between Table Mountain and the coast, was one of the main military depots for the Imperial forces pouring into South Africa and served as a temporary home for troops from around the world: Australians, New Zealanders, Indians, Britons and Canadians. Despite its fertile sounding name, the camp was situated on a dry, desolate, sandy plain. As one D Battery member noted, "nothing was green here except us".¹ The hot weather, strong winds and frequent dust storms made conditions uncomfortable and led some of the men to purchase goggles to protect their eyes during the sand blizzards.¹

The battery spent two weeks at Green Point, where it passed most of its time preparing for active service. The first step was to replace the dead and weak horses. Lieutenant-Colonel Drury submitted a request to the Imperial Remount Department for seventeen riding and forty-nine draught horses. On 21 February Drury received twenty-nine horses, all of which were given to E Battery. Due to the shortage of artillery remounts D and E Batteries had to use smaller Argentine ponies and mules to bring their units up to strength.¹

Meanwhile the Brigade Division Quartermaster sorted, organized and distributed the vast amounts of equipment. Lieutenant-Colonel Drury secured a spare room in the main barracks to house all the cases, packages and surplus stores. Once the gear had been issued and several shortages had been discovered, including haversacks, water bottles, mess tins, axes and wirecutters, Drury applied to the Army Ordnance Department to fill the deficiencies. Although the A.O.D. provided some of the articles as early as 22 February, the Army stores could not meet all of the gunners' needs. Frustrated, Drury noted that "it is next to impossible to get anything from stores here".¹

On 20 February D and E Batteries marched in a ceremonial parade through Cape Town. D Battery led the procession, which

included Australians, Indian troops and City Imperial Volunteers. The scene was reminiscent of the gunners' departure from Canada. Enthusiastic spectators crowded the streets and pelted the soldiers with candies, flowers and flags.' Following the parade the battery participated in a naval and military tournament at the Cape Town Athletic Grounds. The D Battery tug of war team had a good showing and finished in second place, losing in the final to a strong team from the H.M.S. Doris. Gunner Williams of D Battery won the half mile full marching order race.'

Lieutenant-Colonel Drury soon made his men realize that they were in South Africa for more than fun and games. He implemented a rigorous training routine to prepare the troops for active service. Between 21 February and 3 March the men had marching order parades every day at 06:30 and 16:00. In addition to these parades and their regular camp duties, the gunners practised long hours of standing gun drill, and the drivers improved their skills and trained their horses at driving drill.' On 1 March Drury led the brigade division on a route march. The men were ordered to pack their entire camp for the exercise. The brigade division returned to the camp site an hour later and the tired men repitched their tents.' The gunners also underwent several inspections by their section commanders, battery commander and Lieutenant-Colonel Drury himself. "You have no idea of the work", Lieutenant McCrae wrote. "It makes long hours and I never knew a softer bed than the ground is these nights".'

Although the drill practices provided the men and horses with valuable training experience, the gunners became bored with drill and were eager to move to the front.

II

What was the military situation when the Canadian gunners arrived in South Africa? In short, the war started very poorly for the British. Outnumbered by a more mobile opponent, the Imperial forces were initially driven onto the defensive and then suffered terrible losses trying to expel the Boers from

British territory. It was not until mid February 1900 that British fortunes improved.

At the outbreak of the war the British Army numbered 320,000 men, including available reservists. Of these, only 20,000 men were stationed in South Africa, 12,000 in Natal under Generals White and Symons and the remainder in Cape Colony. In mid-October, following the declaration of war, the British government dispatched an Army Corps of 47,000 men and appointed General Sir Redvers Buller as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa.¹⁰

The Boer republics had a much different military tradition than Great Britain. The Boers placed much less emphasis on well drilled regular soldiers. Besides the 1400 South African Republic Police, or "ZARPs", and the 600 well equipped, professionally trained Staats Artillerie in the Transvaal and the 400 Staats Artillerie in the Orange Free State, the Boer forces consisted of citizen soldiers.¹¹ In each republic an elected Commandant General, assisted by several Assistant Commandants General, managed military affairs. At the local level each district elected a Commandant and provided a unit known as a "commando". The commandos, which were subdivided into two to four "field cornetcies", ranged in size from 300 to 3000 men.¹² All white male citizens of the republics between the ages of sixteen and sixty years, who could provide no lawful excuse for their exemption, were liable for military service.¹³ Skilled marksmen and riders, knowledgeable of the local terrain, and armed with .276 Mausers, the finest infantry arm available, the 35,000 Boers who took the field in October 1899 were a formidable opponent for the Imperial forces.¹⁴

Taking advantage of their temporary numerical superiority, the Boers went on the offensive in the early weeks of the war and attacked on three fronts. On the western front Boer commandos crossed into northern Cape Colony and surrounded the British garrisons at Mafeking and Kimberley. To the East the Boer forces invaded Natal and pushed the British back to Ladysmith, the principal British garrison in South Africa.

Finally, the Boers struck southwards across the Orange River into the Cape midlands and pushed towards Stormberg and Naauwpoort. With the exception of the battles at Talana Hill and Elaandsgate in Natal, the Boers met very little resistance. Despite their success, the Boers failed to capitalize on their advantage. Had the Boer forces pushed straight to Cape Town and Durban instead of besieging the British garrisons at Kimberley, Mafeking and Ladysmith, they might have been able to achieve a quick negotiated peace.

General Buller arrived at Cape Town on 31 October 1899. Although the original War Office strategy called for Buller to push north along the Central Railway towards the Boer capitals, given the circumstances, Buller decided to split the Army Corps and fight on all three fronts. He sent Lieutenant-General Lord Metheun to the western front. Metheun's force was to advance along the Western Railway, relieve Kimberley and clear the northern districts of the Orange Free State. Buller dispatched Generals French and Gatacre to the Cape midlands to halt the Boer invasion of Cape Colony. French was sent to the Colesberg district, and Gatacre was appointed to the Stormberg area to protect the rail line to East London. Buller accepted responsibility for clearing Natal and relieving Ladysmith.¹⁵

Buller's tripartite strategy met disaster on all three fronts and ended in the series of defeats collectively known as "Black Week". In the Cape midlands General French was able to hold the Colesberg district. He did not conduct any large-scale offensive operations and avoided heavy losses. General Gatacre was not so fortunate. Determined to stem the tide of invasion, Gatacre launched a counter attack against the Boers at Stormberg Junction. The 10 December attack dissolved in confusion, and 600 British soldiers were captured.¹⁶

On the western front General Metheun's force suffered even greater losses. After pushing the Boers back from Belmont on 23 November and Graspan two days later, Metheun advanced straight along the Western Railway against strong Boer positions. On 28 November Metheun's force encountered a well entrenched Boer

position on the Modder River and suffered 500 casualties. On 11 December Metheun ordered his troops into a similar head on action at Magersfontein and lost another 968 men.¹⁷

On 15 December General Buller launched his disastrous attack against Colenso. Buller's plan, which called for a frontal assault over exposed terrain in broad daylight against a well entrenched enemy position, was a disaster waiting to happen. The result was 145 officers and men killed, 754 wounded and 220 missing or captured.¹⁸

In the aftermath of his overwhelming defeat, Buller advised General White to surrender Ladysmith. News of this advice and the cumulative impact of the successive military defeats led the British government to replace General Buller as Commander in Chief in South Africa with General Lord Roberts. Lord Kitchener was named as Roberts's Chief of Staff. Roberts, who arrived in South Africa on 10 January, developed a new strategy. Although Roberts left General Buller to continue his efforts in Natal, the new commander, discarding the idea of fighting on several fronts, decided to concentrate his forces, move up the Western Railway to relieve Kimberley, then launch a massive eastward flank march against the Free state capital of Bloemfontein, from where he would advance north to the Transvaal capital of Pretoria, and finally secure the Delagoa Bay Railway, the Boers only line of communication with the outside world.¹⁹

Roberts's plan was well defined, comprehensive and daring. It had the advantage of surprise for, based on their experience, none of the Boer commanders expected the British to leave the railway and launch a massive cross country march against Bloemfontein. If Roberts's plan was successful, he would capture all the major lines of communication, both Boer capitals, and would compel the Boers to withdraw from the periphery and defend their own territory, thereby relieving the pressure on the British colonies.

By the end of February the strategy had been quite successful. Instead of marching stubbornly against the Boer strong points along the Western Railway, Roberts's unleashed

General French's Cavalry division in a wide eastward arc from Ramdam through Klip Drift to Dronfeld, penetrating far behind the Boer lines at Magersfontein and dissolving the siege of Kimberley on 15 February. Roberts then turned the bulk of his force east and headed for Bloemfontein. On 27 February, the anniversary of the British defeat at Majuba in 1881, the Imperial troops captured General Cronje and 4000 Boers at Paardeberg. The next day General Buller finally relieved the besieged garrison at Ladysmith.¹¹

There were some vulnerabilities in Roberts's plan. The most obvious weak point was the Western Railway, Roberts's one and only line of communication. If the Boers cut this line, Roberts's force would be isolated in the Orange Free State, unable to bring up supplies or reinforcements. The rapid spread of Boer operations in the northwestern districts of Cape Colony threatened to sever Roberts's vital line and cut off his force. By the beginning of March there were over 2000 Boers and Cape rebels operating in the region west of the rail line.¹²

To clear the area of Boer activity, Roberts ordered General Settle, the British commander at Orange River Station, and a force of 1600 men to march west. General Settle divided his force into three columns. The southern column, 450 men under Colonel Sir Charles Parsons, was to march from Victoria West to Carnarvon and Kenhardt. The centre column, 550 men led by Colonel Adye, was instructed to move from Britstown against the rebel base at Houwater. General Settle led the northern column of 600 men west from Orange River Station "to clear the river banks, hold the drifts and cut off Liebenberg", one of the Boer leaders. All three columns were to converge and encircle the Boers.¹³

III

D Battery was assigned to Colonel Parsons's column for this operation. At noon on Sunday 4 March orders arrived at Green Point Camp for four guns of the Canadian artillery to entrain for the front. As Lieutenant-Colonel Drury was not in camp, Major Hurdman, the next senior Canadian artillery officer,

detailed the right and centre sections of his battery for the mission." The excited gunners immediately packed their equipment and prepared to move out. Although they were upset about being left behind, Lieutenant Morrison's men, after taking the precaution of posting guards on their tents and harness to prevent their colleagues from filling any deficiencies by illegal requisition, fell in and helped the other sections to pack their gear." Within an hour the two sections were ready to march to the train station, where they loaded their seventy-seven horses into nine horse cars and strapped their four guns, four ammunition wagons and three transport wagons onto six flat cars."

With Major Hurdman, Lieutenant McCrae and Lieutenant Van Tuyl comfortably housed in a first class car and the men stuffed into third class compartments, eight men in each, the train pulled out of Cape Town at 16:45 and slowly made its way north along the single track through the dry, dusty countryside." The transportation service was very well organized and earned the praise of the Canadian officers. The train stopped at certain stations en route to feed and water the men and horses. At the stations Commissariat Sergeants provided each eight man compartment with a kilogram tin of "Bully Beef", sixteen hard tack biscuits and a pot of tea."

At 02:20 on 6 March D Battery's train pulled into Victoria Road, a small town of four or five buildings located 672 kilometres northeast of Cape Town. The men disembarked their guns at 05:30 and set up camp close to the railway. As there were reports of Boer activity in the vicinity, the unit prepared for potential enemy contact. At night armed sentries were posted with orders to shoot, and the limber ammunition was fuzed." On 7 March the two Canadian artillery sections and a squadron of New Zealand Mounted Rifles marched fifteen kilometres to Victoria West, where they received a warm greeting from the British population. Approximately twenty British families served the troops tea, coffee and cake in the town square."

There was some uneasiness in Victoria West. Although the

Toronto Globe's John Ewan and the Montreal Star's H.S. White filed reports from Victoria West, neither correspondent reported the Canadian soldiers' apprehensions. Shortly after the Canadian gunners arrived in Victoria West, Major Asten, the commanding officer during Colonel Parsons's absence, ordered the two artillery sections to set up camp in the town square. As Victoria West was a very small town closely surrounded by high hills, the exposed town square was a terrible choice of position for a camp. Given that the Boers were reported to be within thirty kilometres of Victoria West, the Canadian troops had some serious misgivings about the position. "I have never spent a more uncomfortable night than the first one we encamped on the square with hills 300 feet high not 200 yards away", wrote Lieutenant McCrae.

The place seems to all the juniors a regular death trap but unfortunately we have no say...we were shut in with no chance to move if it were necessary and no protection but a few carbines and revolvers...I was genuinely afraid of the place...we were at the mercy of a dozen rifles properly placed."

McCrae's fears were placated when Colonel Parsons arrived in Victoria West on 8 March and, furious with what he found, immediately ordered the camp to move out of the town. The Canadian gunners were happy to comply."

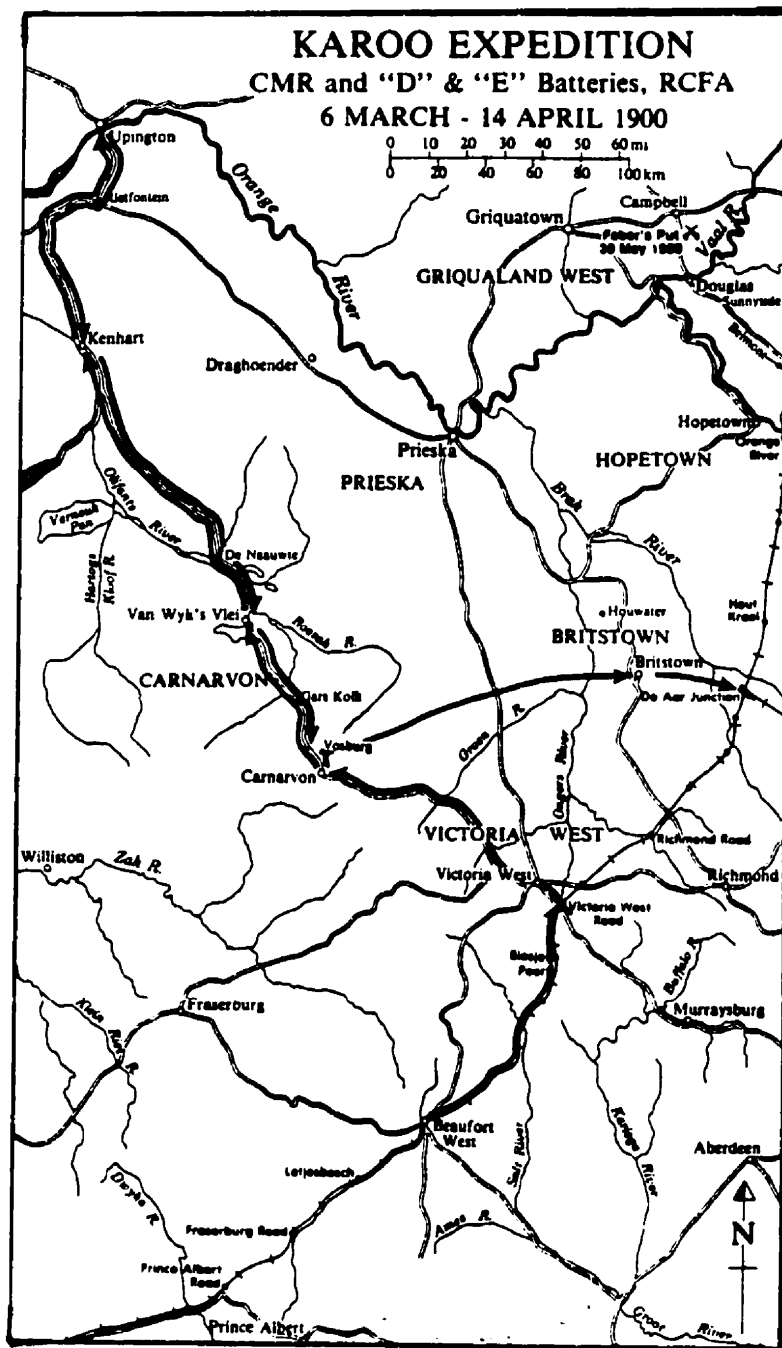
Meanwhile the left section of D Battery did not have to wait long to rejoin the unit. On 6 March Colonel Adye's column was checked by Liebenberg's force near Houwater and suffered twenty-one casualties. Alarmed by this setback, Lord Roberts sent Lord Kitchener to De Aar to take command of the operation and called up strong reinforcements. On 7 March Morrison's men received orders to entrain for Victoria Road. They were followed on 8 March by the Canadian Mounted Rifles, who had arrived at Cape Town aboard the Pomeranian on 27 February. Two days later, as Morrison's men entered Victoria West, E Battery, Lieutenant-Colonel Drury and the Brigade Division Staff boarded the train for Victoria Road. The final composition of the Carnarvon Field Force, as Parsons's column was known, included a squadron of New Zealand Mounted Rifles, a squadron of West Australian Mounted

Infantry, two squadrons of Imperial Yeomanry, two squadrons of Canadian Mounted Rifles and two batteries of Canadian artillery, a total of approximately 1200 troops."

On 13 March the mounted D Battery and the Canadian Mounted Rifles headed for Carnarvon, a small town 120 kilometres northwest of Victoria West. The Battery travelled in "column of route", a marching formation of single carriages placed one behind the other. Each 12 pounder gun, attached to a limber and pulled by a team of six horses, marched 3.67 metres ahead of its ammunition team, which consisted of six horses, a limber and an ammunition wagon. The entire battery of six guns and six ammunition wagons had a "depth" of 207 metres."

The men travelled in the following positions: The Sub-Division Sergeants, or Numbers One, rode beside the lead driver of their gun team. Two gunners rode on each gun limber and two gunners sat on the wheel-tree seats on each gun carriage. The 3d-Division Corporals, known as "Coverers", rode next to the lead drivers of the ammunition wagons, followed by four other gunners on each ammunition wagon. The artillery officers had their own horses. The section lieutenants rode one horse's length on the inner flank of the centre of their respective sections. Captain Eden rode behind the battery, and Major Buchanan rode three horses' lengths on the inner flank of the centre of the battery." The Canadian Mounted Rifles acted as escorts and deployed to the front and flanks of the column. The numerous heavy transport and supply wagons, drawn by teams of sixteen oxen or a dozen mules led by native African drivers, brought up the rear. The entire force stretched nearly five kilometres and travelled about as many kilometres per hour."

The four day trek to Carnarvon, across the hot, arid, dusty and thinly populated Karoo desert, was an uncomfortable introduction to South African warfare. The first afternoon was "intensely hot", and the slow moving column marched directly into a strong sandstorm. "You could not see a hundred yards to the front or to the rear", wrote Lieutenant Morrison. "The long line seemed to wind out of the kharki mist behind and disappear



Source: Carman Miller, Painting the Map Red, p.176.

Note: Although Miller's map indicates that the force advanced to Uptington, it actually halted at Kenhardt.

into the dust ahead". When the men halted at 18:00 to form their first bivouac on the march, they tried to plant picket pegs to mount their horse lines. Since the Karoo soil was so sandy, the picket pegs did not hold, and the horses quickly pulled loose and became entangled in the ropes."

The second day of the march was also very hot and dusty. The men rose early and were on the road by 07:30. At about 10:00 the column encountered a swarm of South African locusts. Some of the insects were as large as a man's finger. The Canadian gunners were amazed with the large clouds of African grasshoppers that "covered several square miles, and were so thick that they looked like a rusty fog." The men bivouacked at 16:00, ate the usual meal of "Bully Beef", hardtack biscuits and coffee, and had a short sleep. Having learned their lesson the previous evening, the men adopted a new bivouac method. Instead of erecting horse lines, the troops "laagered" their guns and wagons, tied the horses to the gun wheels, and slept in the middle of the makeshift enclosure." The gunners did not pitch any tents on the march. They simply wrapped themselves in their blankets and slept on the sand.

To avoid the oppressive afternoon heat, the men continued their trek that night. After a brief two hour sleep, the men awoke, hooked up their guns, and moved out by 20:15. The moonlit nights were much more comfortable than the days and the column made good progress, travelling twenty-six kilometres in six hours. Still unaccustomed to the rigours of active service, the men found the long hours very difficult. Several of the gunners and drivers fell asleep on the march, some even tumbled from their positions and were nearly run over by the guns. The column halted at 02:15 and bivouacked at Pompionspoort."

To give the men and horses some rest, reveille was sounded at a relatively late 09:00 the next morning, and the men were ordered to perform only the absolutely necessary camp chores, such as feeding the horses. The men hooked up their guns at 15:00 and continued the march through more hilly country, arriving at Beyersfontein, a small village of two houses, a post

office and a fenced in graveyard, at 18:00." The officers intended to continue the march after supper, but intelligence reports about the situation at Carnarvon convinced them to bivouac for the night and maintain close contact with E Battery, the Brigade Division Staff and the West Australians, who were one camp behind D Battery's column."

On 16 March the men awoke in the pre-dawn darkness and were on the road by 06:00. By this point the column's water supply became an increasingly important issue. The very little water that existed in the Karoo desert was not suitable for drinking or bathing. "At present four or five men are not very well", wrote Major Hurdman. "They are not careful about the water they drink". Other than boiling the filthy water from the stagnant mud filled puddles and pools (and the men did not always have time or the fuel to boil the water), there was very little that the thirsty soldiers could do to purify their drinking water. Writing to his mother in Guelph, Gunner Cormack explained that the men "often had to drink stuff much worse than the water that would run down Wyndham Street after a heavy rain".

The situation for bathing was not much better. When the column halted on the evening of 16 March, the men, who had not been out of their clothes for several days, went for a swim in the nearby pond. "It was a regular mud hole", wrote an exasperated Lieutenant McCrae, "a puddle that would compare with any stagnant puddle you ever saw; all a dark, dark brown- as you pick it up in your palm you can actually see it as a solution of sand. We haven't seen clear water since we came".

The column entered Carnarvon at 10:45 on a blazing hot St. Patrick's day. Lieutenant Morrison described Carnarvon as an "oriental looking town planted down in the middle of the Karoo" with "a few small shade trees, two quite handsome churches", several "low flat roofed stucco structures painted white" and some "raw red shacks of unburned brick plastered with mud". Although the rebels had been in Carnarvon, had constructed trenches and breastworks with sandbags, and had reportedly given the inhabitants twenty-four hours to leave, when the field force

entered the town, the rebels had retreated and were no where to be seen." The column marched through Carnarvon, unhooked their guns and set up camp on the outskirts of the town. E Battery, the R.C.A. Staff and the West Australians made an extra push and arrived in Carnarvon that night.

Although the townspeople prepared tea and jam sandwiches for the soldiers, John Ewan's remark that "the reception afforded the troops at Carnarvon was of the heartiest description"" was an exaggeration. Despite T.G. Marquis's assertion that "the British flag was much in evidence", the scarcity of Union Jacks was only the clearest indication that most of the inhabitants were either neutral or quietly sympathetic to the Boer cause." The Chief of Police, "the last loyal official in the town", told the Canadian officers that "the whole town was rotten with sedition". According to the Chief, there were only thirty-six loyal men in the town of 1500 people." Walter Bapty noted that the reception at Carnarvon was even smaller than the reception at Victoria West, which had been hosted by only twenty families."

The men were extremely disappointed at the lack of action. They had expected the rebels to make a stand and fight. "The boys are anxious to get into an engagement", wrote one gunner, "and are tired of waiting around and have no fighting. There is a piece in the Cape Times where it says that if we do not soon have a fight that we will start a little war of our own!" "Worst of all", added Lieutenant McCrae, "our chances of a fight get dimmer and more distant. We don't want to go back to Canada without a scrap".

Arriving with the R.C.A. Staff, Surgeon-Major Worthington immediately busied himself with the treatment of the sick and exhausted men. The four day journey had taken its toll on the men and several soldiers suffered from sunstroke, heat exhaustion or dysentery. Worthington commandeered an unused building and rigged up a makeshift hospital for the more serious cases. The column had to leave ten sick Canadians at Carnarvon."

On Sunday 18 March the Canadian troops attended a mandatory church parade. Reverend Cox led the communion service, using a washstand covered by a cloth for his altar. The men were not happy with the decision to hold a church parade in the sweltering heat. In fact, it was so hot that one D Battery man dropped with a "touch of sun". Lieutenant Morrison asserted that the men could use a day of rest:

No matter how tired the men are or how badly they want a rest there are always some of the numerous chaplains around to wheel them up on a Sunday morning for church parade. You might have thought that after being on route march for a week, the men would have been allowed to sleep in the first day they have camped. But no...the consolations of religion are all right, but a little common sense is not a bad thing in its way. If the church parades were held in the cool of the evening it would not be so bad, but from 10 to 11am is about the warmest time of the day before the afternoon breeze comes up."

In the afternoon, as the men caught up on their sleep, wrote letters home, or organized their kit, the camp was hit with a strong sand storm. The sand blew all afternoon and covered everything. "At mess", Lieutenant Morrison noted, "you could hear your spoon rasping on the sand in the plate. The jam had a film of dust over it and the coffee was nearly full of sand bars". "If you could see Eaton, Morrison and me", Lieutenant McCrae elaborated,

sitting in a tent, closed up; holding down the curtain to keep it from blowing away, and the tent shaking like a ship's sail- and the dust inside so thick that you can see only dimly across the tent- this is not exaggerated in the slightest- everything covered with a layer of light yellowish-red dust- you have some sort of an idea of a sand storm."

In short, the Canadian gunners were not impressed with the South African environment. "Truly speaking", Lieutenant McCrae continued, "of our 80 mile march just finished, I have never dreamed of a more forsaken desert country". Gunner Edgar Sparrow was even more blunt: "I have travelled quite a little", he wrote, "and would not give an Ontario backyard for a thousand acres here".

While the Canadian gunners sought shelter from the sun and

sand, Colonel Parsons planned the next stage of the operation. The town of Kenhardt, 125 kilometres to the northwest, was the objective. To increase the column's mobility, Parsons divided his force into two bodies. A flying column, consisting of Lieutenant McCrae's right section of "D" Battery, a squadron of Canadian Mounted Rifles, a squadron of New Zealand Mounted Rifles and two transport wagons, was ordered to push ahead to Kenhardt to surprise the rebels and join up with Kitchener and Adye's column. The rest of the troops, D and E Batteries, the R.C.A. Staff, a squadron of Canadian Mounted Rifles, the Imperial Yeomanry and the West Australians, were to follow, with fifty-seven transport wagons, under Lieutenant-Colonel Drury's command."

IV

The flying column left Carnarvon at 17:45 on 19 March. Travelling at night, the force covered eighty-five kilometres in thirty-eight hours and reached Van Wyk's Vlei, a village described by Lieutenant McCrae as a "very desolate hole" of "a dozen mud huts and a store scattered over the plain", at 08:00 on 21 March." Under the direction of Major Craddock of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, the men spent the day setting up camp and tending to the horses. Since the rebels had already attacked and ransacked Van Wyk's Vlei, the village was quite deserted. The officers received permission from a fleeing resident to use his vacated house as an officers' mess. Although the owner had emptied the house, it contained an old piano, which the officers used to provide some evening entertainment."

After spending a quiet day in camp to rest the men and horses, on 23 March the troops awoke at 04:00, struck their tents, and continued their advance to Kenhardt. The column halted that afternoon in De Naauwte, "a miserable one house village on top of a slight rise", thirty-two kilometres northwest of Van Wyk's Vlei. At 19:00 Colonel Parsons, his staff and another troop of Canadian Mounted Rifles joined the flying column in De Naauwte." Shortly after the flying column arrived in the village, it started to rain heavily. The torrential

downpour continued for three days and transformed the sunbaked desert floor into a sea of mud. The rain, reportedly the heaviest the region had seen in ten years, inundated the Oliphant's River, submerged the roads under several centimetres, and in some places nearly a metre, of water and delayed the column's advance for four days."

The men had very little shelter from the storm. Assigned to tents that offered little protection from the mounting flood waters, the troops became thoroughly soaked. The officers spent the first night in the abandoned house. Colonel Parsons took the bedroom and the other officers bunked on the floor. Although the house was much drier than the men's tents, it was infested with "vermin" and the officers "got well bitten." On 24 March Colonel Parsons's staff claimed the house for itself and Lieutenant McCrae joined his men in the waterlogged camp."

The heavy rains severed the column's lines of communication and supply causing shortages of forage and rations. The horses were placed on a reduced diet of wheat and chaff. The men ran short of "Bully Beef" and hardtack biscuits, but supplemented their rations by "commandeering" ten sheep from a nearby flock."

V

The main body of the column was a little more fortunate. It left Carnarvon at 05:30 on 21 March. Despite the slow pace of the transport wagons, Drury's force made good time and arrived in Van Wyk's Vlei at 08:00 on 23 March, only two hours after the flying column had pulled out. Fortunately for the troops, when the downpour commenced in the mid afternoon, there were plenty of buildings to provide shelter. The officers moved into a small abandoned cottage and occupied the cells in the village jail. The men sought cover in the nearby houses, many of which had been vacated." Lieutenant Morrison secured permission for his section to move into the largest house in the village. The gunners bunked in the dining room, kitchen, carriage house and lumber garret." The other troops huddled into the small mud houses, cramming up to thirty-five men in each 3.6 by 4.5 metre

room." Although these accommodations were not luxurious, Lieutenant Morrison was correct to point out that the men "were in great luck to have been caught by the storm where there were houses, because the ground was so soft, so liquid, in fact, that tents would not stand for a moment and the men would have been exposed to the weather without even a dry place to lie down." The gunners in the advance column knew this all too well.

The main body was not completely sheltered from the elements, for the men had to perform their camp duties. The weather conditions made the men's work more trying and uncomfortable. For example, the horses had no shelter and stood in half a metre of mud and water. When the men awoke at 04:00 to feed the animals, the soldiers had to wade through this knee deep mire to reach the horse lines. To keep their footwear and clothing dry, most men removed their boots and socks, rolled their pants above their knees, and worked in their bare feet. The outpost sentries and patrols followed their example. To escape the mud and water, the guards assigned to watch the guns and wagons climbed on top of the equipment, but were nevertheless thoroughly soaked by the downpour."

Drury intended to continue the trek at 06:00 on 24 March, but, as was the case with the flying column, the heavy rain transformed the roads into swamps and delayed the advance for several days. Instead, the men spent the rainy day moving the guns, wagons and horses to a drier location, "or rather", as Lieutenant Morrison conceded, "a spot where the mud had not been churned up so much." To keep the horses relatively dry and comfortable, the mudcaked men dug drainage trenches around the new horse lines.

While the men slogged through their camp chores, Surgeon Major Worthington established a temporary hospital ward in the village court house. Several men required medical attention. Although most of them suffered from dysentery, Gunner Hopkins required treatment for a gunshot wound that he sustained while cleaning Captain Eaton's revolver. The bullet passed through Hopkins's knee and left an ugly wound, but he recovered

alright."

Although the storm severed the column's lines of communication and produced some food shortages, on 25 March Lieutenant Morrison's men acquired some chickens, sheep and cocoa and prepared a sumptuous dinner for their section. The meal was a refreshing change from the staple diet of hard tack and Bully Beef. After the "feast", the men spent a pleasant hour together singing songs, smoking tobacco and speculating about their chances for combat." The next morning the rain finally stopped, but the roads were so waterlogged that Drury decided to wait until the next afternoon to continue the advance. Meanwhile the men moved the horses to a gravel ridge a few hundred metres outside the camp to allow the animals to dry off."

VI

On 27 March the flying column pulled out of De Naauwte and took seven hours to cross the swollen Oliphant's River, which was 450 metres wide and over a metre deep. As the water was too deep for the transport mules, Major Craddock ordered Lieutenant McCrae to hook the larger artillery horses to the two heavy wagons. Nevertheless, the New Zealanders baggage wagon, which carried the column's water tank with two tons of water and other equipment, sank into the soft riverbed and became mired to the top of the wheels. Taking charge of the situation, Lieutenant McCrae jumped into the water, ordered the men to hook another six horses to the transport team, and helped to push the wagon free. Following their officer's example, the gunners stripped off their boots, socks and pants and assisted the African drivers to push the wagons across the river. McCrae climbed on his horse and led the men across the river with each gun and wagon."

This exhausting work was made more difficult by the slippery surface of the riverbed. While pushing the wagons, many of the men lost their footing and dunked themselves into the river. On the second trip back across the river Lieutenant McCrae's horse, "Old Jack", stumbled and pinned McCrae under water. Although the water at this point was less than a metre

deep, McCrae could not escape from beneath his mount and was in danger of drowning. Two CMR men rushed to McCrae's assistance, while a third man held Jack's head above the water until the animal could regain its footing. McCrae's willingness to roll up his sleeves and "get into the game" earned the admiration and respect of his men."

From 28 March to 31 March the column continued the advance to Kenhardt. Frustrated with their lack of combat, irritated by their wet clothes, uncomfortable campsites, reduced rations, lack of clean drinking water and deteriorating horses, and enraged by the discovery that the rebels had poisoned the wells and evicted loyalist families, including women and children, from their homes, the Canadian gunners were determined to punish the Boers. "It makes one's blood boil to get at the authors of the trouble", wrote one soldier."

Previous historians have overlooked the destructive nature of the Karoo campaign. As the rebels withdrew and eluded the flying column, the Canadians adopted alternative tactics. In fact, the march to Kenhardt is an early example of the anti-guerilla tactics introduced by Lords Roberts and Kitchener in the later phases of the war. "On this march we passed a number of Boer houses, most of the inhabitants having fled and the men off fighting", explained Gunner Cormack:

We at once went to work and took possession of everything we could lay our hands on. After taking all we could get in the way of wheat, straw, oats- not to forget chickens, and some times there were lots of them- we would smash down their houses and in some cases burn them to the ground."

Lieutenant McCrae confirmed these activities when he noted that on 30 March his men "burnt a house with rebel property"." These operations provided the flying column with much needed supplies, struck at the rebels' means of subsistence and provided an outlet for the gunners' pent up frustrations.

At 17:00 on 31 March the flying column entered Kenhardt, described by McCrae as "a miserable spot" with one store, "the usual brown houses, dust and no good water supply"." The town was largely deserted and there was no welcoming committee. At

07:00 the next morning the column marched to the residency and formed up in hollow square for a victory parade. The men presented arms as the Union Jack was raised and the buglers played a flourish. The parade closed with a rendition of "God Save the Queen" and three cheers for Queen Victoria and the British Empire."

Some trouble in Kenhardt sparked serious tensions between the Canadian troops and the British Staff officers. Since no newspaper correspondents accompanied the flying column, no reports of this trouble appeared in the press. Nor did Lieutenant McCrae inform his military superiors in Ottawa, perhaps because he felt that the incidents were too controversial or that the troubles did not reflect favourably on either his men or his leadership. Canadian scholars have therefore overlooked the trouble in Kenhardt. The soldiers' private letters and personal diaries, however, provide some interesting insight into the controversy.

The first incident involved looting and the consumption of liquor. Aware that their men might seek to blow off some steam, Lieutenant McCrae and Captain A.C. MacDonell of the Canadian Mounted Rifles asked the British Staff within thirty minutes of arriving in Kenhardt to post a guard on the hotel. The Staff rejected the request. On 2 April some of the Canadians broke into the abandoned hotel and discovered a large cache of alcohol. "In one room was all kinds of booze", wrote one soldier.

Whisky, beer, wine, brandy and Cape smoke- which is fire water- which soon found a place in many of our stomachs, subsequently affecting our heads. We had a good time."

Four Canadian soldiers were caught in the hotel. Gunner Cornett of D Battery was charged with looting, Gunner Sutton and two CMR men were arrested for being drunk and insubordinate." The British Staff reacted very severely and confined all the Canadian troops to camp. Colonel Parsons threatened to send the Canadians back to Cape Town in disgrace."

Lieutenant McCrae had a mixed reaction to this incident. On

one hand, he blamed the Staff for refusing his request to put a guard on the hotel." On the other hand, he took swift steps to punish the wrongdoers. McCrae felt that this was necessary to prevent a repetition of these events and to preserve Canada's reputation. As he explained,

I judge it necessary to bring the men up for example's sake...it is not nice to send men up for court martial but it has to be done and I will not relax for a single instant. We are not paying the price of Hurdman- eternal threats...I am letting the men understand as far as I can that we need a heavy sentence now to serve Canada's reputation...I think if we have bad apples among us and do our best and hand them up for severe punishment, that it is not fair to stigmatize the whole force."

On 5 April the court martial found Gunner Cornett not guilty, but sentenced Gunner Sutton and the two CMR men to eighty-four days imprisonment and hard labour."

In the meantime, however, the tensions between the Canadian troops and the British Staff became much worse. This incident concerned the water supply. When the flying column arrived in Kenhardt, the British Staff commandeered all the clean water tanks in the village for itself. While the Staff officers bathed and washed their clothes in clean water, the Canadian officers and men had nothing to drink except the muddy river water in the watercarts. As the Canadians did not have the proper facilities or utensils to boil their water in sufficient quantities, many of the men had to drink the dirty water and consequently became ill. As if this was not bad enough, on 3 April the British Staff Surgeon rode into the Canadian camp and scolded the Canadian soldiers for drinking the dirty water, referring to the gunners as "damn fools". Even Lieutenant McCrae, who had been quite co-operative with the British Staff on the looting incident, was outraged by this episode and was very critical of the British officers." McCrae was so upset with the Staff's actions that he expressed some understanding with the Canadian soldiers who had looted the liquor in the hotel, for there was nothing else to drink!"

The troubles in Kenhardt raise the larger issue of Canadian

attitudes toward their imperial counterparts. The D Battery men held mixed views of the imperial soldiers. Although some gunners spoke fondly of "Tommy Atkins", the regular British infantryman, other Canadian gunners criticized the British, especially the English officers and men, and expressed a preference for colonial troops. There were a few reasons for this attitude.

First, many of the Canadian gunners were not impressed with British military ability. In fact, some D Battery men criticized the British military performance and asserted that colonial troops were militarily superior to English soldiers. For example, on the Kananaskis campaign Lieutenant McGrae noted that the "Imperial Yeomanry we have here I don't think much of...they are rotten. They can't ride, and many of the officers can't drill; they are a woody looking lot, the New Zealand Mounted Infantry are much better".¹ Gunner Barber added that "the Imperial Yeomanry cannot stand the hardships of war like our men".² Canadian criticism was not limited to the poorly trained volunteers in the Imperial Yeomanry. For example, one Canadian officer referred to the British militia troops as "sloppy little boys who don't drill smartly at all".³ The Canadians also blamed unimaginative British officers for high casualty rates.

Second, the Canadian gunners were aware of national differences between the Britons and "colonials", and many of the Canadians felt that they had more in common with their fellow colonials than with the British soldiers. For example, speaking of the Cape Garrison Artillery, Lieutenant Morrison noted that

the officers are a very fine lot, and the "colonials" are great friends. There is more in common between the colonials (so called) than with the British, and the South Africa men are all keen for imperial federation and a voice in the imperial parliament. They have the same complaint as Canadians, that imperial authorities through lack of knowledge, have sacrificed the interests of their country in international matters, such as boundary questions. They are intensely loyal with a loyalty that is broader than that of the average Britisher.⁴

This sense of colonial comradeship and common experience extended

to the New Zealanders and Australians.

Thirdly, social tensions troubled relations between Canadian and British troops. The Canadians possessed different social assumptions than their English counterparts. As Dr. Miller has argued, social relations were much less formal in Canada than in Britain.¹¹ Unaccustomed to the rigid British social hierarchy, some Canadian enlisted men criticized what they saw as the "arrogance" and "condescension" of the British officers. These Canadians admired officers who adopted a more "egalitarian" style of leadership and who did not hesitate to work side-by-side with the men. For example, a number of D Battery men expressed pride and respect for Lieutenant McTear's leadership at the Elephant's River. "It was a grand sight to see our leader Lieutenant McTear standing in the water up to his waist", wrote the gunner admiringly. "He did not need to ask his men to follow his example, nor did he, but they soon fell in and all worked".¹² In short, some Canadian gunners resented the "paternal" style of the British officers and preferred officers who led by example.

The Canadian officers also complained of the condescending and arrogant attitude of their British counterparts. Throughout the war Canadian journals indignantly reported that British officers treated colonial officers as inferiors and malcontents. "In fact", Dr. Miller points out, "relations between regimental and colonial officers became so tense that Lord Roberts was obliged to issue a confidential memorandum regretting the 'unfriendly spirit of regimental officers to members of H.M. colonial forces'".¹³ The exclusivity of Parsons's staff officers, as demonstrated by their eviction of the colonial officers from the only house in De Naauwte during the rainstorm and by their selfish abuse of the clean water supply in Senhardt, certainly did not endear them to the Canadian officers and men.

Furthermore, the Canadian officers and men resented the preference shown to the middle and upper class Imperial Yeomanry

and City Imperial Volunteers."¹¹ "It makes me feel like swearing", snapped Lieutenant McCrae. "They get on so well chiefly, I think, because so many of the officers are men of influence. They allow the gentlemen who are enlisted in the ranks to have 1st class carriages and to order their meals ahead at the restaurants- an utter mistake I am sure".¹² Criticizing the demonstration of favouritism, Gunner Lett exclaimed that "something was wrong or we would have fared as well as the Imperial Yeomanry".¹³ Similarly, the Canadian gunners denounced the British practice of counting only the number of officers lost in battle. To the Canadian gunners, such petty social and class distinctions seemed "peculiar" and inhumane.¹⁴

McCrae's section remained in Kenhardt until 8 April, when it started its long return march to Victoria Road Station, which was reached on 17 April.¹⁵

VII

Meanwhile on 27 March Drury's force had advanced to the Oliphant's River, but could not get the heavy transports across the swollen waterway. The column camped beside the river for three days and waited for the water level to drop. The men spent the days quietly in camp and passed the evenings with fire side sing-songs.¹⁶ Since the roads remained impassable for the transport wagons and since the column ran short of supplies, on 30 March Drury led the force back to Van Wyk's Vlei, where he hoped to meet any supplies that had been sent from the rail line.¹⁷

Unfortunately for the men and horses there were very few supplies at Van Wyk's Vlei. The village stores were sold out of everything except writing ink and clothes pins, and, like the military, the stores could not secure additional supplies due to the poor roads. The horses and men remained on reduced rations and grew weaker. The starving horses were given a handful of wheat and chaff per day. Despite one Gunner's reassurance to his concerned parents that "we are getting fat on hard tack, canned beef and coffee", the reduced rations, which consisted of half a hard tack and coffee in the morning and the same at night,

took their toll on the men.¹¹¹ "You know that I used to weigh 190 [lbs]", wrote one gunner, "well if I was to jump on a scale now I might go a hundred. All jokes aside I am as thin as if I had been wrestling with typhoid fever".¹¹¹

Tempers grew short as the reduced rations and poor water supply sent up to fifty men to hospital.¹¹² The men supplemented their meagre diets with boiled wheat cakes made from the same wheat that was fed to the horses. While some of the men really enjoyed this "treat", others were not impressed. "We called them [the cakes] knockouts", noted one driver, "for I am sure you could kill a man with one of them".¹¹³

On 1 April D Battery suffered its first fatality of the war. While the men were watering the horses at a nearby dam, Driver Robert Bradley and his horse fell into some deep water. Bradley was thrown from the horse and, unable to swim, he called for help. Hal Walters, an Ottawa fireman, immediately jumped to Bradley's assistance, but before Walters could pull his friend to safety, Bradley slipped through his grasp and sank. As the men on shore pulled the horse to safety, a dozen others dove into the water to search for Bradley. At last a West Australian, Thomas Firne, found Bradley fifteen feet below the surface and pulled him ashore. The doctors were able to resuscitate the Canadian driver, but he never fully recovered from the ordeal. He died of respiratory complications the same night.¹¹⁴

Bradley, a twenty-seven year old married Ottawa factory worker, and father of two children, was buried the next day. The battery officers selected a grave site on the side of a stony kopje. The men cleared a pathway to the grave, lining each side with stones, and constructed a stone kraal around the site. One of the stone cutters in the battery carved a headstone, while some other men constructed a coffin. The entire column turned out for the funeral service, which was led by Reverend Cox. As the coffin was carried to its final resting place, the trumpeters sounded the salute, the escort presented arms, and the officers and men snapped to attention and saluted their fallen comrade. After the service, three volleys were fired over

the grave and the trumpeters sounded the "Last Post".¹¹⁵

Since Kenhardt had been captured without resistance and the rebels had dispersed, on 4 April Drury's column started its three day return march to Carnarvon. The force moved at a slow pace. To conserve the emaciated horses' strength, the men dismounted and walked the exhausted animals. Despite the exertions of the African drivers, the transports became mired at the soft muddy stream crossings. In some cases the gunners had to fall back and assist the native drivers to pull the wagons free. The soldiers attached dragropes to the transports and tugged, while the drivers cracked their whips and shouted encouragement to the mule and oxen teams.

The 118 native African drivers and labourers in Drury's force performed very important, though unglamorous, work. Previous historians have overlooked the Canadian soldiers' attitudes toward the African population. Although the Canadian officers resented the snobbish, condescending and arrogant attitudes of their British counterparts, the Canadian officers accepted the racist racial and social hierarchy that they found in South Africa. For example, one Canadian officer spoke of a chain of command descending "from C[ommanding] O[fficer]s down to nigger drivers"¹¹⁶, clearly implying that the black African drivers were ranked lower than the white Canadian gunners and drivers, and that the native drivers were ranked lower simply because they were black Africans. In practice this meant that the African men were subjected to different treatment than the white soldiers. For example, although the lash was outlawed in the army, Lieutenant-Colonel Drury applied this brutal form of punishment to African drivers and labourers.¹¹⁷ Confirming the racist notions behind this double standard, Lieutenant Morrison claimed that the lash "is the only punishment the thievish Kaffir understands".¹¹⁸

Although some of the enlisted men also acknowledged and accepted the racist social hierarchy, others were more inclined to see the native Africans as fellow men. For example, some of the Canadian enlisted men expressed shock and horror at the

sight of African workers being lashed on the back with a sjambok.¹¹⁹ Moreover, many of the enlisted men freely associated with the native population. For example, John Quinney, the Ottawa drill instructor, found that the African children reminded him of his pupils in Canada. Quinney took time out of his schedule to teach some of the African children a few drill lessons. Although Quinney could not speak their language, nor they his, Quinney used sign language. He noted that the children "were very bright" and made good progress.¹²⁰

At 10:30 on 6 April Drury's column pulled into Carnarvon. The men revelled in the relative luxury of the place. Despite the high prices, the gunners immediately purchased food in the town stores. That night several D Battery men got drunk on Cape Brandy and caused a disturbance in the town. The next morning the townspeople inspected the troops to identify the guilty parties.¹²¹ Although the men expected to secure a good supply of forage for the horses at Carnarvon, they received only half rations of straw and oats.¹²²

On 8 April Drury's force continued its march to De Aar via Vosburg and Britstown. While the terrain was more fertile on this last leg of the march, the horses continued to suffer from a shortage of food. By the time that the column reached its camp outside of De Aar on 13 April, seven D Battery horses had died and the rest were very weak. The gunners spent Good Friday preparing for their march into De Aar. They bathed in the Brak River, polished the guns, and cleaned and repacked all of their equipment to demonstrate to their British counterparts that "though they had been in the Karoo for six weeks it could not take the gloss off them".¹²³ Unfortunately for the gunners a heavy rainstorm that night spoiled their plans. The drenched and mudspattered troops tramped into De Aar at 08:00 on 14 April.

VIII

The six week Karoo campaign was D Battery's first operation of the war. It was a demoralizing introduction to active service. The gunners marched up to 800 kilometres through some of the most inhospitable terrain in South Africa. The hard work,

extreme weather conditions, shortage of food and lack of clean drinking water caused sickness and depleted the ranks. The scarcity of forage took its toll on the horses. D Battery lost a total of twelve horses on the expedition. To many of the men, it seemed like a wasted effort for they never even saw the enemy. Although the gunners expressed frustration and disappointment at their lack of combat action, the battery gained valuable campaign experience and contributed to the pacification of the region west of Lord Roberts's vital rail line.

IX

Although the D Battery officers and men expected to be reunited, brigaded with the other Canadians, and sent to Bloemfontein to participate in Lord Roberts's advance against Pretoria, the Imperial authorities had different plans. D Battery was split apart and placed on line of communication duty for over two months. The left and centre sections stayed at De Aar until 29 April, when Van Tuyl's centre section of fifty-one NCOs and men, thirty-three horses, two guns, two ammunition wagons and two transport wagons moved 110 kilometres north to Fort Munster, where they were assigned to protect a bridge across the Orange River. Lieutenant Morrison's section remained in De Aar and McCrae's right section stayed at Victoria Road, both ordered to guard the Western Railway line.¹¹⁴

The sections spent the first days in garrison repairing and replacing their worn out equipment. The exhausted horses were put on full rations, and the shoeing smiths reshod the animals. D Battery received six new remounts and fifteen transport mules at De Aar. The men were issued new uniforms to replace their dirty, tattered, buttonless rags. The gunners washed their camp equipment, and cleaned and oiled their guns.¹¹⁵ Once the sections had settled into their respective stations, a similar daily routine emerged at each base. Reveille was sounded at 06:00 followed by stable duty and breakfast. The men spent the days doing fatigues, all sorts of drill and guard duty.¹¹⁶

De Aar, described by Morrison as a wire fenced street, with

a straggling line of cottages, two depleted general stores, a hospital with 350 sick and wounded, and a fat little cemetery, all situated on a muddy plain intersected by "a stream little better than an open sewer", was very unhealthy and had "been condemned by the Medical Board".¹²⁷ Each morning at 08:30 another line of khaki clad patients was paraded to the hospital. The D Battery men were not immune to the unsanitary conditions and "over one third of them were in the hospital all the time", most with dysentery, rheumatism or enteric fever.¹²⁸ Cramped into the dirty, overcrowded, fly infested, poorly administered hospital, the patients died at a rate of twelve to fourteen a week.¹²⁹ The situation became so bad that the camp authorities prohibited the funeral parties from firing the usual volley over the grave, as the frequent announcement of another death demoralized the patients in hospital.¹³⁰

While Fort Munster was relatively healthy, the conditions at Victoria Road Station were little better than De Aar. On 28 May Lieutenant McCrae noted that eleven of his forty-four men reported on sick parade.¹³¹ "The hospital, which is two old rooms adjoining an old freight shed, is a very unseemly place", Gunner Cormack explained. "I was in it for five days but I was driven out by vermin".¹³²

Although some men preferred the sedentary line of communication duty to the hardships of active service, most of the gunners became frustrated with their tedious duties and unhealthy working conditions.¹³³ Despite the officers' attempts to alleviate the monotonous daily routine and lift morale with sporting activities, dances, springbok hunting excursions and sham battles, the irritated soldiers longed to move to the front. Referring to a proposal for a large scale "gymkhana" at De Aar, Surgeon-Major Worthington explained

that the idea don't [sic] commend itself to Canadian artillerymen, who have come 7000 miles by sea, and marched 500 more across the blooming Karoo to be finally detailed for communication work. What they want is "a little bit off the top", a chance to be in there with their gallant comrades of the First Contingent, ere their pelts are tacked to the barn

door of obliquity in this enteric incubator- De Aar. ...No!...[this] gymkhana may be the most comprehensive, elevated and meritorious triumph of heartfelt and gladsome relaxation, of fun, frolic and refining past time in all the annals of rational relaxation, but the R.C.A. want something that does not savour so much of the vaudeville or cakewalk.¹¹⁴

In other words, many of the men were tired of the mock battles, drills and exercises, and yearned for an opportunity to see combat.

The mounting frustration eroded discipline. Increasingly disillusioned, the men drank, fought and became insubordinate. To check the proliferating drunkenness among the Canadian gunners, on 10 May the military authorities at Victoria Road declared the canteen out of bounds for McCrae's section and thereafter issued passes for the purchase of beer and stout.¹¹⁵ Four D Battery men were court martialled for fighting, disobedience and insubordinate language, and at least four others received summary punishments of 168 hours imprisonment and hard labour from the section commanders.¹¹⁶

The Canadian gunners also developed a reputation for looting. According to Walter Bapty, this reputation was not misplaced. While at Victoria Road, Bapty and some of his "chums" formed a "group of scroungers known as Sculley's Scouts". The group was dedicated to looting extra food supplies. Its favourite target was railway trucks. "The usual freight car had sides 2 to 3 feet high and over all was drawn a tarpaulin", Bapty recalled. "It was a simple matter to loosen the tarp and crawl underneath. If we found a box of jam we felt well rewarded".¹¹⁷

This reputation haunted the Canadians and sparked tensions between Lieutenant McCrae and Colonel Adair, the British commander at Victoria Road. On the night of 14 June a civil police officer reported that he had witnessed four Canadians pillage a supply wagon. Aware of the Canadians' reputation, Colonel Adair, without collecting any further evidence or statements, immediately ordered McCrae's section to move two and a half kilometres outside the town, and confined the gunners to

the new camp. Two nights later it rained heavily and the Canadian troops got well soaked. "Col[onell] Adair did not at all act squarely on the matter", McCrae complained. "To get all this without any defence from us, or anybody else, looks to me like a high handed proceeding...I shall be glad to get out of Colonel Adair's district".¹¹ Anxious to move to the front, Lieutenant McCrae and the rest of D Battery did not have to wait much longer.

1. Walter Bapty, Memoirs Toronto, 1958. p.20.
2. E.W.B. Morrison, With the Guns Hamilton, 1901. p.48. ; John Quinney letter dated 25 February 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 27 March 1900 p.3.
3. Carman Miller, Painting the Map Red Montreal, 1993. pp.171-172.; Royal Canadian Artillery Staff Diary 21 February 1900 in RG 9 II A3 vol.33.; Lieutenant McCrae to Mother 25 February 1900 in McCrae Papers MG 30 D 209. "E" Battery needed the remounts because it had left forty-five of its horses in Halifax. See Sessional Papers No.35a 1901 p.78.
4. R.C.A. Staff Diary 22, 28 February 1900; D Battery Diary 19 February 1900 in RG 9 II A3.
5. John Quinney letter dated 25 February 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 27 March 1900 p.3.; R.C.A. Staff Diary 20 February 1900.
6. Ibid.
7. McCrae to Mother 25 February 1900; Sessional Papers No.35a 1901 p.139.
8. R.C.A. Staff Diary 1 March ; Morrison, p.58.
9. McCrae to Mother 25 February 1900.
10. L.S. Amery, Times History of the War in South Africa vol.II London, 1902 pp.98-117.; Howard Bailes, "Military Aspects of the War" in The South African War, 1899-1902 ed. Peter Warwick London, 1980. p.67, 72.
11. Bailes, p.69. The Boer artillery were armed with the most modern European weapons, including the 75mm Creusot Quick Firer, the 75mm Krupp, the 120mm Krupp Breechloading Howitzer, the 155mm Creusot Breechloader also known as the "Long Tom" and the 37mm Maxim Automatic Machine Gun or "Pom-Pom".

12. Bailes, pp.69-70.; Brian Reid, Our Little Army in the Field St. Catharines, 1996 p.13. Amery, vol.II pp.48-97., vol.IV pp.513-514.
13. Fransjohan Pretorius, "Life on Commando" in The South African War ed. Peter Warwick, London 1980 p.103.
14. Numbers cited in Bailes, p.102. The Boers had approximately 55,000 men available for military service, but only a portion of these were called out in October 1899. Bailes notes that recent research indicates that between 32,000 and 35,000 were mobilized in October, while other historians put the figure at 38,000. Brian Reid writes that "in all the Boer forces probably numbered between 40,000 and 45,000 at the start of the war on 11 October 1899. p.13.
15. See Amery vol.II, pp.265-298; Bailes, pp.74-76.
16. Amery vol.II, pp.362-382; Bailes, p.77.
17. Bailes, p.79-81.
18. Amery vol.II p.456.
19. Amery vol.III pp. 331-378; Bailes, p.85, 90.
20. Bailes, p.90-93.
21. Amery vol.III, pp.493-494, 570-571; vol IV, pp.2-6.
22. Ibid.
23. Major Hurdman letter published in Ottawa Evening Journal 7 April 1900, p.1; McCrae to Mother 3 March 1900.
24. Morrison, p.60.
25. McCrae to Mother 3 March 1900.
26. Ibid.; Miller, p.172.; Sessional Papers No.35a 1901, p.139. Captain Eaton missed the train, but joined the battery farther north.
27. Morrison, p.60.; McCrae to Mother 3 March; Bapty, p.22.
28. John McCrae Diary 6 March 1900 in McCrae Papers MG 30 D 209. A limber was a small detachable wagon hooked to the front of the gun carriage. It carried some of the gun's ammunition.
29. K. Lett to family, letter dated 12 March 1900 in newspaper clipping n.p. n.d. [probably the Guelph Mercury]; Edgar Sparrow to family, letter dated 20 March 1900 in newspaper clipping n.p. n.d. in McCrae Boer War Ledger.; Sessional Papers No.35a 1901 p.139.

30. McCrae to Mother, n.d. addressed from Victoria West in McCrae Papers; McCrae Diary 7 March 1900.
31. McCrae to Mother, n.d.; McCrae Diary 8 March 1900.
32. Sessional Papers No.35a 1901, pp.139-140.
33. "Depth" is defined as the space occupied by a body of troops from front to rear. Field Artillery Drill, 1896 London, HMSO 1896. pp. 152-153, 188-190. My thanks to J.A. Eskritt, Curator of the Royal Canadian Artillery Museum at Canadian Forces Base Shilo, for this valuable source of information.
34. Ibid.
35. Morrison, p.70.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.; McCrae to Mother 18 March 1900.
38. Morrison, pp.71-72; McCrae Diary 14 March 1900.
39. McCrae to Geills 15 March 1900; McCrae to Mother 18 March 1900.
40. Morrison, p.72.
41. McCrae Diary 15 March 1900.
42. Morrison, p.73; R.C.A. Staff Diary 15 March 1900.
43. Hurdman letter 15 March 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 16 April 1900 p.3.
44. J. Cormack to Mother 5 May 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.
45. McCrae Diary 16 March 1900; McCrae to Mother 18 March 1900.
46. Morrison, p.74.
47. Edgar Sparrow to Father and Mother 20 March 1900; S. Barber to Father, 29 March 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.; W.A. Hare Diary 18 March 1900; W.A. Hare Notebook n.p. n.d.
48. John Ewan report dated 19 March 1900 in Toronto Globe 19 April 1900, p.1.
49. Morrison, p.74; Marquis, p.352.
50. Morrison, p.74.; McCrae to Mother 18 March 1900.
51. Bapty, Memoirs, p.24.
52. S. Barber to Father 29 March 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger.

53. McCrae to Mother 18 March 1900.
54. Ewan report dated 21 March in Toronto Globe 19 April 1900, p.1.; Marquis, p.353.
55. Morrison, p.75.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p.76.
58. McCrae to Mother 18 March 1900.
59. Ibid.
60. Sparrow to Mother and Father 20 March 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger. n.p. n.d.
61. The Sessional Papers No.35a 1901 p.139 incorrectly states that the West Australian Mounted Infantry was in the flying column. McCrae Diary 19 March 1900; McCrae to Walter 22 March 1900; McCrae to Mother 24 March 1900; R.C.A. Staff Diary 4 April 1900; Morrison, p.90 make it clear that the West Australians were in the main body, not the flying column.
62. McCrae Diary 19-22 March 1900; McCrae to Walter 22 March 1900.
63. Ibid.
64. McCrae Diary 23 March 1900; McCrae to Mother 24 March 1900.
65. McCrae to Mother 24 March 1900.
66. McCrae Diary 23 March 1900.
67. Ibid.; McCrae to Mother 24 March 1900.
68. McCrae Diary 24 March 1900; McCrae to Mother 24 March 1900.
69. Morrison, p.81.; H.S. White report dated 25 March in Montreal Star 8 May 1900, p.6; R.C.A. Staff Diary 23 March 1900.
70. Morrison, p.81-82.
71. Driver Tapp Diary 23 March 1900 published in Halifax Herald 9 June 1900 p.16.
72. Morrison, p.84.
73. Quinney letter dated 25 March published in Ottawa Evening Journal 7 May 1900 p.7; Tapp letter dated 4 April 1900 in Halifax Herald 9 June 1900 p.16.; H.S. White report dated 25 March 1900 in Montreal Star 8 May 1900, p.6.; R.C.A. Staff Diary 23 March 1900.

- 74.Morrison, p.83.
- 75.Quinney letter dated 25 March in Ottawa Evening Journal 7 May 1900 p.7.
- 76.Ibid.; Phil Kerr letter dated 26 March in Ottawa Free Press 8 May 1900 p.7.
- 77.Morrison, p.85.
- 78.McCrae Diary 27 March 1900.
- 79.Ibid.; Gunner Bargett to Father 5 April 1900; J. Cormack to Mother 5 May 1900; Harry Howe to Father 23 April 1900 in McCrae Boer war Ledger n.p. n.d.
- 80.Quinney letter dated 25 March in Ottawa Evening Journal 7 May 1900 p.7.
- 81.J. Cormack to Mother 5 May 1900.
- 82.McCrae Diary 30 March 1900.
- 83.Ibid., 31 March 1900.
- 84.Ibid.; McCrae to Mother 1 April 1900.
- 85.W. McDonald to W Seelos 31 March 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.
- 86.McCrae to Father 4 April 1900.
- 87.McCrae Diary 2 and 3 April 1900.
- 88.Ibid.
- 89.McCrae to Father n.d. [3 April?]; McCrae to Father 4 April 1900.
- 90.McCrae Diary 10 April 1900.
- 91.McCrae Diary 3 April 1900.
- 92.Ibid.
- 93.Bapty, p.21.
- 94.McCrae to Mother n.d.; McCrae to Father 20 May 1900.
- 95.S.Barber to Folks 16 April 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.
- 96.McCrae to Father 20 May 1900.
- 97.See Morrison, p.124-125, 269.

- 98.Morrison, p.60-61.
- 99.See Carman Miller, "The Unhappy Warriors:Conflict and Nationality among Canadian Troops during the South African War" in Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History (January, 1995) vol.23 esp. pp. 97-100.
- 100.J. Cormack to Mother, 5 May 1900.
- 101.Miller, "Unhappy Warriors",p.99.
- 102.Ibid.
- 103.Richard Price, An Imperial War and the British Working Class London, 1972. pp.200, 254-258 states that roughly half the Imperial Yeomanry and more than half the C.I.V. were middle or upper class man. See also Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War London, 1979 pp.252-253.
- 104.McCrae to Geills 4 May 1900.
- 105.Kenyon Lett to Family 15 April 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.
- 106.Morrison, p.109.; Miller, "Unhappy Warriors", p.98.
- 107.Sessional Papers No.35a 1901 p.139.
- 108.H.S. White report dated 4 April 1900 in Montreal Star 9 May 1900; John Ewan report dated 3 April in Toronto Globe 14 May 1900 p.5; R.C.A. Staff Diary 27-30 March 1900; W.A. Hare Dairy 27-30 March 1900.
- 109.Morrison, p.88.; Sessional Papers, p.140; R.C.A. Staff Diary 30 March 1900. Drury also believed that Van Wyk's Vlei had a better water supply than the Oliphant's River.
- 110.Kenyon Lett to Parents 29 March 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger.
- 111.Harry Denyes to Miss J. McDonald 4 April 1900 in Ibid.
- 112.Miller, p.177.
- 113.John Quinney letter dated 2 April 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 21 May 1900 p.7.; Driver Tapp Diary 30 March 1900 in Halifax Herald 9 June 1900, p.16. See also W.A. Hare Diary 2 April 1900.
- 114.Morrison, p.89-91.; Sessional Papers, p.140.
- 115.Morrison, p.91-92.; H.S. White report dated 4 April 1900 in Montreal Star 9 May 1900 p.7; W.A Hare Diary 2 April 1900.
- 116.McCrae to Mother 19 April 1900.

117. Morrison, p.93.
118. Ibid.
119. See Miller, Painting the Map Red, p.177; W.A. Griesbach, I Remember Toronto, 1946 p.252; For relations between imperial troops and African population see also William Nasson, "Tommy Atkins in South Africa" in The South African War, ed. Peter Warwick, London 1982 pp.130-133; Peter Warwick, Black People and the South African War Cambridge 1983 esp. pp. 137-141. For other "D" Battery attitudes toward the African population see C. King to Mr. Bannatyne letter in London Advertiser 26 June 1900, p.2; Morrison, p.122-123. To be fair, my comments about the Canadians' racial attitudes are based on a very small sample of sources. A more detailed study of the subject may arrive at different conclusions.
120. John Quinney letter 2 April 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 21 May 1900, p.7.
121. W.A. Hare Diary 7 April 1900 notes that "1/2 the men were drunk on Cape Brandy".
122. Morrison, p.101.
123. See Ibid, p.102.; Miller, p.178.
124. Sessional Papers No.35a 1901, p.140; Centre Section, "D" Battery Diary 29 April 1900 in RG 9 II A3 vol.33.
125. See Sessional Papers, p.140; R.C.A. Staff Diary 14-16 April 1900; McCrae to Mother 11 May 1900; McCrae letter dated 4 June 1900; McCrae Diary 17-18 April; Morrison, pp.107-114.
126. See Ibid; W.A Hare Diary 14 April-18 June 1900; McCrae Diary 17 April-19 June 1900; "D" Battery Diaries in RG9 II A3 vol.33.; Miller, p.198-199.
127. Morrison, p.108; Major Hurdman to Militia Department Headquarters, Ottawa 11 June 1900 in "D" Battery Diary in RG 9 II A3. vol.33.
128. Morrison, p.106-107, 117.
129. For critique of the hospital at De Aar see Morrison, p.115; McCrae to Father 20 May 1900. See also John Quinney letters dated 29 April, 14 May, 21 May in Ottawa Evening Journal 28 May 1900, p.8.; 11 June 1900 p.4; 19 June 1900 p.6.
130. Morrison, p.116; Quinney letter 14 May 1900 in Ottawa Evening Journal 11 June 1900 p.4.
131. McCrae to Mother 28 May 1900; For activities of Centre Section at Orange River see T.W. Van Tuyl to Father 28 June 1900 in newspaper clipping n.p. n.d. in McCrae Boer War Ledger; K Lett

to Parents 7 May 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.; "D" Battery Diary, Centre Section in RG9 II A3 vol.33.

132.Cormack to Mother, 5 May 1900.

133.Phil Kerr letter dated 10 May in Ottawa Free Press 19 June 1900 p.2; Edgar Sparrow to Father 27 April 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger; Jack Donaghy to Mother 4 May 1900 in London Advertiser 5 June 1900 p.5.; John Quinney letters dated 29 April, 14 May, 21 May in Ottawa Evening Journal 28 May 1900 p.8; 11 June 1900 p.4.; 19 June 1900 p.6; Morrison, p.106-138.; McCrae letters to Family from 14 April to 18 June 1900.

134.Surgeon-Major Worthington to Family 30 April 1900 in Worthington Family Papers, Osler Library Archives McGill University.

135.Right Section "D" Battery Diary 10 May 1900.

136.Gunner Berube received twenty-eight days for disobedience of orders. Gunner Denmark received 168 hours for refusing to ~~obey~~ an order. Gunner James got twenty-eight days for disobedience and insubordinate language. A fourth D Battery man received ten days confined to barracks for fighting. Four other D Battery men, including Gunners Howe and Thomas, received one week hard labour for various infractions. See D Battery Diary 28, 31 May 1900; McCrae to Mother 28 May, McCrae to Mother 11 June 1900; Morrison, p.118.

137.Bapty, p.26.

138.McCrae to Mother 18 June 1900.

Chapter Four

The Move to the Front

By the middle of June 1900 Lord Roberts's army had captured Pretoria and was preparing to pursue Kruger's government and Commandant-General Louis Botha's forces east along the Delagoa Bay Rail line. Although Roberts had carved a path through the Orange Free State (annexed and renamed the Orange River Colony) and the Transvaal, he had not defeated the Boer forces. In fact the Orange Free State Commandant-General, Christiaan DeWet, led a spirited Boer revival. To neutralize this threat, Roberts delayed his advance eastward and turned his attention to the northeastern Free State. Roberts sent General Hunter and several columns to sweep the area and drive DeWet's commandos into a net.¹

D Battery played a role in this operation. Since the Canadian newspaper correspondents left South Africa after the fall of Pretoria, there was very little mention in the Canadian press of D Battery's role in this or any other mission. The battery's official records and the soldiers' personal writings, however, provide significant insight into the gunners' experiences during the remainder of their stay in South Africa. On 19 June the unit received orders to proceed to Bloemfontein. By 23 June the three sections were reunited in the former Free State capital. The reunion was short-lived. On 25 June Lieutenant Morrison's left section was dispatched to Edenburg, a small town seventy kilometres south of Bloemfontein. There the Ottawa section joined four British infantry companies and a regiment of mounted infantry. Their mission was to prevent DeWet's forces from crossing the railway should the clever Boer general slip through Hunter's net.¹

Morrison's section pulled into Edenburg train station at 02:00 on 26 June. At daybreak the men unloaded their gear and pitched camp close to the railway. At 13:00 General Knox, the British commander at Edenburg, inspected the section. After the inspection, Knox directed Morrison to take up a position on top of a high kopje a kilometre outside of the town. There the

Canadians constructed three two gun earthworks with magazines and marked off ranges up to 3500 metres in all directions.'

The men enjoyed their new post. The Canadian gunners enjoyed a good rapport with General Knox. Live fire shell practices and patrols kept the men busy enough to avoid boredom. The reported proximity of the enemy, substantiated by the capture of two Boer troopers, raised the gunners' hopes of action. The weather, with the exception of two rainy days, was ideal for camping: cool, clear evenings and warm, sunny days. There were no flies. The horses received unlimited supplies of forage and were in their best shape since landing in South Africa. The men received a plentiful supply of rations, including "jam three times a week, fresh meat, potatoes, soft bread, tea, rum and chocolate". Most importantly, all of the men were healthy.

Despite these ideal conditions, there was some discontent in the section concerning the issue of equipment. According to one gunner, the men were told that they should submit their names if they wanted new sweaters or boots. Since many of the men had worn holes in their sweaters, they welcomed the opportunity to get new ones. When the men received the new sweaters, however, they were charged five shillings. As most of the men required their money for other purposes, the gunners refused the pullovers. "I have made it my business to enquire of men in other regiments about this", reported John Quinney, "and they one and all say that any articles they get on active service do not have to be paid for by them, so there is something wrong somewhere. It is too bad as the boys need the sweaters".

Similarly, when the men submitted their names for new boots, Lieutenant Morrison intervened and ordered that only those men with completely worn out boots were to get new ones. Although the "other sections got boots all around, that is any man who asked for them", only nine or ten of Morrison's men were given new boots. Many of the men had spent their own money to buy boots in De Aar after the Karoo campaign. Since these boots,

purchased at the gunners' expense, were not in tatters, Morrison claimed that the men had no right to army issued footwear. "I suppose that as soon as [my boots] are [completely worn out] I can buy another pair", sneered one gunner.

There are others like me too. We naturally feel sore to think that our section commander went out of his way to prevent us from getting the boots. The boots were worth half a dozen pairs of ours; they were handsewed and nailed, just the kind needed for this country.'

The rest of the D Batterymen shared mixed feelings at their new post. On 26 June they moved to a camp six kilometres outside of Bloemfontein. On one hand, the men were close enough to Bloemfontein to get fresh remounts, replenish kit deficiencies, visit their friends in the hospitals, collect their mail, and attend the theatre. On the other hand, Bloemfontein and its environs were very unhealthy. The hospitals were packed with patients suffering from enteric fever, and funerals were frequent. While some of the men were happy enough to escape from their line of communication duty on the Western Railway, others became increasingly frustrated with the boring camp routine and poor health conditions at their new post. "We are worse fed than pigs...the boys are getting tired of it", complained one gunner.' "The soldier's game is not what it is cracked up to be", added Gunner Bargett'. On 6 July the right and centre sections moved to Sannah's Post, forty kilometres east of Bloemfontein.

II

With DeWet's forces surrounded and retreating into the Brandwater Basin, Lord Roberts turned his attention back to the Transvaal and the Delagoa Bay rail line. Roberts's objectives were to force the submission of Kruger's government at Machadodorp, defeat Botha's commandos east of Pretoria, and capture the Boers' last line of communication with the outside world. In preparation for the eastward advance, Lord Roberts accumulated a large number of reinforcements and supplies at Pretoria.'

On 10 July D Battery received orders to move to Pretoria.

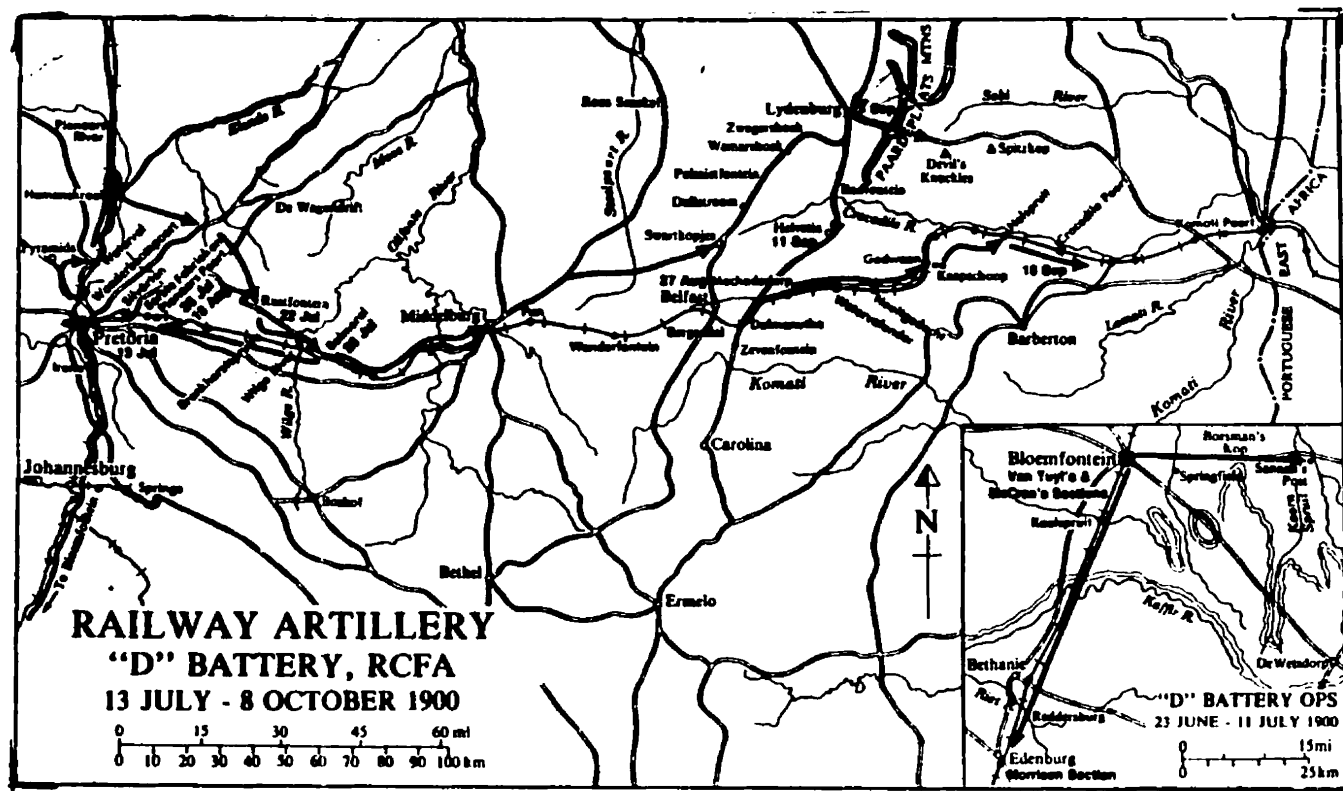
The next day the reunited battery loaded its equipment aboard flatcars and pulled out of Bloemfontein at 18:40. On 13 July, after a two day train ride across the war torn countryside, D Battery pulled into the former Transvaal capital. That evening the unit marched out to Fort Wonderboom, six kilometres north of the city.¹⁰

To realize his objectives, Lord Roberts proposed a three prong advance. General Ian Hamilton was appointed to lead the left wing of the advance. His division was to clear the area north of the Delagoa Bay Railway. General French led the right wing. His column was to advance south of the rail line. Lord Roberts commanded the central column, which was to advance along the railway. Roberts's strategy called for Generals Hamilton and French to push ahead, cut off the Boers' line of retreat at Middleburg, and then drive Botha's men into Roberts's force.¹¹

On 14 July D Battery was attached to General Hamilton's Division. At 07:00 on 16 July Hamilton's force, which also included Brigadier General Cunningham's infantry brigade, Colonel Hickman's mounted infantry brigade, the Elswick Battery, a section of "pom-poms", two five-inch guns, two six inch howitzers and several kilometres of transports, rumbled out of Fort Wonderboom and headed north.¹² D Battery served in the advance guard. To reduce the length of the large force, the gunners marched in "battery column", a marching formation with a broader front and shallower depth than "column of route".¹³ Although the gunners expected to come under fire from the nearby kopjes, the division advanced to Waterval Station, a recently abandoned Boer prison camp, without resistance. That night the Boer long range guns lobbed a few shells into Hamilton's bivouac.

At 07:00 the next morning, with Lieutenant McCrae's right section attached to the rearguard, the serpentine column slowly unwound its way out of camp and continued its advance. Six kilometres outside of Hamanskraal a Boer force hidden in a wooded area ambushed the column's scouts and sent them reeling in full retreat. The centre and left sections of D battery,

Source: Carman Miller, Painting the Map Red, p.214.



which had paused to water their horses, found themselves "on the ragged edge of the front"¹⁴. Hurrying back to their guns, the men were ordered into action at 1800 metres. Since the column's mounted troops had quickly regrouped and charged into the thicket in pursuit of the fleeing snipers, the artillery did not fire for fear of hitting its own troops. One scout and two horses were killed and another scout was wounded in the ambush.¹⁵ That night the division bivouacked at Hamanskraal, where one of the sentries was killed and stripped naked.¹⁶

On 18 July the division moved to Walman's Drift Mission Station, where it came in touch with Brigadier General Mahon's troops. For the next three days Hamilton's force, which had been misled by its guides, turned southeast and marched back towards the rail line. The Boer patrols remained within striking distance and sniped at the column along the way.

On 21 July D Battery had its "baptism of fire". Before dawn the Boers moved some of their six-inch guns onto a kopje overlooking Hamilton's camp at DeWegen Drift. At 07:30, about twenty minutes after Hamilton's column had started to move out, the Boers opened fire on the transport wagons. Although the first shell overshot its mark, the second one crashed into a supply wagon, killing two native drivers and six mules. Lieutenant Van Tuyl's centre section, which had been assigned to the rear guard for the day, immediately advanced into position, wheeled its guns onto target and opened fire. They were followed by two guns from the Elswick Battery and a section of "pom-poms". Together they quickly silenced the Boer guns.¹⁷

Later, about six kilometres outside of DeWegen Drift, the Boers opened fire on the advance guard and main body of the column. The Boers first shell exploded 135 metres short of D Battery. Major Hurdman immediately ordered his right and left sections into action. The guns wheeled out of their column formation and advanced in line, that is side by side, to their firing position. Although the Field Artillery Drill manual calls for the men to maintain precise intervals of nineteen yards (17 metres) between each gun in the firing line, the Canadians

adapted their tactics and positions to the terrain. Major Hurdman stationed his guns behind a patch of dried cornstalks for cover."

Before the gunners could unhook the guns, a second Boer shell burst less than 100 metres behind the battery. The Boers had the battery bracketed! Major Hurdman ordered Captain Eaton to lead two of the four ammunition wagons, the gun limbers and horses 275 metres to the rear of the battery. Although the drill manual suggests that the Captain remain in the rear to supervise the limbers and wagons, the Canadians preferred to have Captain Eaton in the firing line to help co-ordinate the action. Accordingly, Captain Eaton quickly returned to the front."

Meanwhile the two remaining ammunition wagons took up their positions ten metres behind the guns. The gunners proceeded steadily with their fire discipline routine, anxiously listening for the next Boer shell. "You feel that there is suppressed energy in every muscle of your body", recorded one gunner. "When the shells come you think that you are the only person on the field and that the shells are coming directly for your stomach"." "Every second seemed a minute", added Lieutenant Morrison." Finally the third shell came. The men heard the "boom" of the Boer gun and then "an eerie whistle like the wind in the chimney of a haunted house"". The shell screeched over the Canadian guns and exploded near the retiring limbers.

Since Canadian military historians have focused their attention on the infantry, there has been very little written about Canadian artillery tactics. The artillery required much more team work than the infantry. There were ten men in each Canadian gun team. The senior NCO, or Number One, supervised the team. Numbers Two, Three, Four and Five rode with the gun. Once the gun reached its position in the firing line, Numbers Two and Three unhooked it, ordered the limber to "drive on", and swung the gun trail into place. As soon as the gun was unlimbered, the Number One laid the gun for direction and pointed out the target to Number Four. Number Two "took the lanyard out of the tube pocket and held it with the hook in his left hand and the

extractor in his right". Number Three opened the breech and supplied himself with a round of ammunition from the portable magazine. Number Four set the gun sights and laid the gun at the correct angle of elevation. Number Five moved back to the ammunition wagon. He filled the portable magazines and "removed the beackets of the safety pins over the nuts of the fuzes".¹¹

The second senior NCO, or "Coverer", and Numbers Six, Seven, Eight and Nine rode with the ammunition wagon. Once the ammunition wagon was in place ten metres behind the firing line, Numbers Eight and Nine unhooked the ammunition horses and limbers and brought them back to the wagon line in the rear. The Coverer also returned to the rear line. Numbers Six and Seven assisted Number Five and carried the portable magazines to their section's guns. They placed the ammunition near Number Three, but clear of the gun's recoil.¹²

To load the gun, Number Three set the fuze and placed the shell in the bore. Number One gently "rammed the shell home". As soon as the shell was rammed home, Number Three placed the propellant charge cartridge in the chamber, closed the breech and held up the cam lever, while Number Two inserted the tube.¹³

At the order from the section commander to fire, Numbers One, Three and Four stepped clear of the recoil. Number Two hooked the lanyard to the tube, stepped outside the right wheel and stood or knelt facing the gun with the lanyard in his right hand. As soon as the Number One gave the order to "Fire!", Number Two fired the gun by tugging the lanyard smartly. Since the Canadian 12 pounders were not equipped with an effective recoil absorption mechanism, the gun team had to reposition the gun and repeat the entire procedure for each shot.¹⁴

The first rounds fired by the battery were to determine the range of the target. For this purpose the gunners used percussion fuze, which exploded on impact. The location of the explosion indicated whether the gunners needed a shorter or a longer range. Once the range was found, the gunners switched to time fuze to detonate their rounds in the air above the target.¹⁵ According to Lieutenant Morrison, D Battery "got the

range at 4000 yards (3650 metres) and then proceeded to sprinkle twelve pounder shrapnel" over the well concealed enemy position." The Canadians were soon joined by a section from the Elswick Battery, a section of pom-poms and two five-inch guns.

The Boers shifted their fire from D Battery to the pom-poms to the rearguard, which had come into range, and back to D Battery. The Staats Artillerie placed between twenty and twenty-five shells into D Battery. Most of the rounds landed near the rear wagon line. Fortunately for the Canadians many of the Boer shells failed to explode." After D Battery had fired sixty-eight rounds, General Hamilton ordered the unit to continue the trek with the advance guard and leave the flank fight to the main body of the column." The column bivouacked at Onverwacht at 14:00.

It had been a busy day for D Battery. The Canadian gunners had fired a total of ninety-six shells in the two actions. Despite the heavy fighting, other than the two native drivers killed at DeWegen Drift, D Battery had suffered no casualties. Major Hurdman was very pleased with his troops: "I cannot speak too highly of the officers and men under my command", Hurdman wrote in his report to Ottawa, "they did their work excellently under very trying circumstances...I have seen them a great deal more excited during the shell practice at Deseronto"."

Not everyone was so pleased. Some of the centre section men were upset with Lieutenant Van Tuyl's lack of leadership in the second action. During the artillery duel Van Tuyl, undoubtedly thinking that his section, which was attached to the rearguard, was safely out of range, left his men alone for ninety minutes while he went to watch the British guns in action. During his absence the section came under fire from the Boers' long range guns. The men were not happy about being abandoned by their officer at such a time. "I did not like this one bit, nor did any of us, and the section boss was getting some choice names if he had been here to hear them", commented one member of the centre section.

We should have been taken out of range of the Boer

guns or else advanced a few thousand yards and brought into action. Anything would have been better than staying there listening to the shells screaming around us and dropping amongst us. One shell came within two feet of blowing the limber all to pieces. There were a few close calls, but we managed to come out alright, owing to the poor shells the Boers had...only about four or five burst."

Lieutenant Van Tuyl's decision to halt his section in the open and leave his men without an officer during the heat of battle was certainly ill advised. In general, however, the battery performed well for its first time in action.

At 08:00 on 22 July Hamilton's Division marched out of Onverwacht. The division was joined by Colonel Pilcher's Mounted Infantry and "M" Battery Royal Horse Artillery, who took over as the column's advance guard. The Boers shelled the column, but D Battery, which was now attached to the main body, did not see any action. Hamilton's force camped that night at Rustfontein. The division spent the next day in camp. During the afternoon the Boers shelled Hamilton's position. McCrae's right section was dispatched to deal with the enemy. Taking up a position on a kopje three kilometres outside of camp, McCrae's gunners engaged the Boers at 3500 metres and quickly silenced the enemy's guns. McCrae's section held the position until dark, when it returned to Rustfontein." The next day Hamilton's force joined Roberts's column at Bronkhorst Spruit.

On 25 July Hamilton's force headed for Balmoral, a small rail station on the way to Middleburg. The division left camp at 06:30 on a very cold, windy winter day. At 15:00, with the force a few kilometres outside of Balmoral, it started to rain heavily. When the drenched men arrived at their destination an hour later, they set up horse lines and anxiously awaited the transport wagons, which carried their blankets, rations and, in some cases, greatcoats." Just before sunset word arrived that the supply wagons were blocked at a spruit and could not get through. Tired, hungry, soaking wet and shivering cold, the men sought shelter under the guns and ammunition wagons.

With mud four to five inches deep and the ground covered by puddles, it was impossible to get dry. While some of the

officers made their way to a nearby house commandeered by the Connaught Rangers, many of the men paced back and forth to keep warm. The harsh weather took its toll on the division. An officer from the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, nine men from the various units, and 250 horses, mules and oxen died from cold and exposure during the night. The wagons pulled into camp at 08:00 the next morning, and the men had a much appreciated breakfast of hardtack and bully beef."

III

By the end of July General DeWet, ex-President Steyn and a force of 2600 Boers had somehow escaped from the Brandwater Basin, slipped through Hunter's net, and headed for the Transvaal. When General French's column reached Middleburg on 26 July, Lord Roberts, realizing that the capture of DeWet was as necessary for a speedy termination of the war as the defeat of Botha, decided to halt his eastern advance, consolidate his position and focus on the "first DeWet hunt".

D Battery was split up and placed along the Delagoa Bay rail line, where it spent the next month on line of communication duty. Morrison's and McCrae's sections went to Pienaars Poort, thirty kilometres east of Pretoria. Lieutenant Van Tuyl's centre section went to Ereeste Fabriken, about eight kilometres closer to the former Transvaal capital. On 15 August Major Hurdman and Lieutenant Morrison's left section moved to Wilge River Station, about fifty kilometres east of Pienaars Poort."

IV

At the end of August, following the unsuccessful DeWet hunt, Lord Roberts resumed his advance through the northeastern Transvaal. After the capture of Balmoral and Middleburg, Botha had relocated his headquarters to Belfast. Botha's force of approximately 5000 men held an eighty kilometre north-south line that intersected the Delagoa Bay Railway and blocked the British advance eastward. To clear the Boer commandos from this mountainous terrain, Roberts launched another three prong attack. Generals French and Pole-Carew advanced on the left

flank and cleared the territory north of Belfast. General Buller's force, which had marched from Natal, continued its northward trek and attacked Bergendal from the south. Roberts's central column advanced along the railway to Belfast."

D Battery was attached to Roberts's column for this operation. On 26 August Hurdman's three sections entrained for Belfast. The right section was the first to arrive. McCrae's men pulled up to Belfast in the morning of 27 August, the final day of the four day battle, and immediately took up an entrenched position, where they were joined by the other two sections in the afternoon. Although the battery came under fire from the Boers' long range artillery, the battle ended before Hurdman's gunners could be brought into action."

When the morning fog cleared on 28 August, Roberts discovered that Botha's force had withdrawn from Belfast. To cripple the enemy, Roberts divided his force and struck at three points. He sent General French's column to capture the Boer supply depot at Barberton, south of the rail line. He ordered General Pole-Carew to push east along the railway. Finally, Roberts sent Generals Buller and Ian Hamilton to capture the Boer base at Lydenburg, eighty kilometres north of the rail line."

The right and centre sections of D Battery were assigned to General Hamilton's column for the Lydenburg campaign. It was their most intense action of the war. On 3 September, two days after General Buller's force had headed north along the Badfontein road, General Hamilton's force rumbled out of Belfast and pushed north along the Dullstroom road. For the next three days Hamilton's force struggled over the mountainous terrain. At some places D Battery had to attach ten horses to each gun to get them up the steep hills. When that was not enough, the gunners employed dragropes to help pull their weapons. Although the column came under heavy artillery and rifle fire from strong enemy positions, D battery and the rest of Hamilton's gunners pushed the Boers steadily back towards Lydenburg.

On 6 September, as the column advanced to within 1500

metres of Lydenburg, the Boer artillery on the Paardeplaats heights northeast of the town pounded Hamilton's force. Severely outranged and unable to respond, Hamilton's troops had to pull back. The next day Hamilton's men, led by D Battery, "A" Battery Royal Horse Artillery, and the 18th and 19th Hussars, occupied Lydenburg. D Battery fought against a party of Boer snipers north of the town until 13:00, when the Canadian gunners were relieved by Buller's advance guard. Shortly after Hurdman's men returned to camp, the Staats Artillerie gunners on the Paardeplaats ridge opened fire with five long range guns and shelled the camp until dark. The Boer guns dropped eighteen shells into D Battery's lines. Miraculously, Hurdman's men escaped without any casualties."

To seize the Paardeplaats heights, Buller and Hamilton launched a combined attack. The two columns set out at 07:30 on 8 September under the cover of a thick morning fog. The artillery halted behind a low ridge while the infantry advanced against the position. As soon as the fog lifted, the Boer guns opened fire. Having moved into range the British long range guns responded with lyditte shells. At 10:30, shortly after the Boers started to withdraw their big guns, D Battery and the British artillery were ordered forward. When they were about half way up the main ridge, the Boer pom-poms targeted them. The Canadian and British gunners quickly silenced the Boer guns and then advanced another 300 metres onto a broad level platform, where they went into action against the crest of the hill. Subjected to this intense and accurate bombardment, the Boers began to retreat. Their withdrawal was covered by a thick mist. By the time the British infantry had secured the position, Botha's men were no where in sight."

On 9 September Lord Roberts recalled General Hamilton's Division to the rail line. The right and centre sections of D Battery spent the rest of their time in South Africa on detachment along the Delagoa Bay Railway. On 16 September Hurdman's two sections reached Godwaan Station, where McCrae's right section remained on garrison duty. The next day Hurdman

and Van Tuyl's centre section moved to Kaapschoop, where they joined a section of the Elswick Battery, 125 Royal Scots and some mounted infantry before proceeding across country to Nelspruit Station. On 19 September Van Tuyl's centre section moved to Crocodile Poort, at that time the eastern end of Roberts's rail line. A month later Van Tuyl's men moved back to Godwaan Station, where they remained until they left South Africa. Meanwhile on 21 September McCrae's right section moved from Godwaan to Machadodorp. Although neither of the sections saw much action after the Lydenburg campaign, McCrae's men participated in three minor expeditions which alleviated some of the monotony of line of communication duty."

None of these stations was healthy. Enteric fever and dysentery depleted the ranks. Horse sickness took its toll on the battery's animals. Camped in makeshift corrugated tin huts and blanket shelters, the men had to cope with poisonous snakes, crocodiles and vermin." Predictably the unhealthy conditions and tedious routine eroded discipline. For example, to relieve some boredom and secure some extra money, a few of the men in the right section decided to "hold up a storekeeper in wild west fashion". Bursting into the store brandishing firearms, the shouting Canadians demanded the clerk's money. When the clerk refused to co-operate the would-be robbers beat a hasty retreat."

V

Lieutenant Morrison's left section, which was assigned to garrison Belfast on 3 September and did not participate in the Lydenburg campaign, also had to cope with its share of illness and boredom. By the third week of September over 25 per cent of Morrison's men were in hospital." Under the command of camp commandant Lieutenant-Colonel Godfray, the gunners were placed in defensive positions and did not venture from camp. Lieutenant Morrison used the spare time to secure some extra horses and drill his men as a section of horse artillery."

At the beginning of October Lieutenant-Colonel Lessard, the commanding officer of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, who were also

stationed at Belfast, took over temporary command of the camp. More offensively minded than Godfray, Lessard organized two all-Canadian reconnaissance patrols, one to the Steelpoort valley northwest of Belfast and the other to scout the region southwest of the town. Morrison's section participated in both of these operations and saw some action."

Despite these sorties, some of Morrison's men grew restless. Discipline waned. On 17 October Sergeant Belford was demoted to Corporal for disobeying orders. Two weeks later Sergeant Stinson, Corporal Belford, and Gunners Alexander and Crowe were court martialled for "breaking into and stealing stores". Stinson and Belford were demoted to Gunners and sentenced to eighty-four days imprisonment with hard labour. Gunner Crowe was also given eighty-four days imprisonment with hard labour, and Gunner Alexander received forty-two days."

The Boer commandos remained very active north and south of the rail line. At the end of October General Horace Smith Dorrien was appointed to command at Belfast. He had orders from Lord Kitchener to go on the offensive against the Boers." The next two weeks proved to be the most active period of the war for Morrison's men.

Smith Dorrien wasted little time in executing his orders. On 1 November he called his officers together and outlined a plan of attack. The British General proposed to launch a force of 1200 men against the Boer laager at Witkloof, thirty kilometres south of Belfast. He planned to divide his force into two columns. The first, under his command, was to advance southeast via Bergendal. The second column, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Spens, was to proceed southwest. The two wings were to join up at Van Wyk's Vlei the next morning and launch a combined attack against the Boer position."

Morrison's section joined Lieutenant-Colonel Spens's column for this mission. Shortly after it marched out of Belfast at 18:00, Spens's force encountered heavy rain and sleet, strong winds and piercingly cold temperatures. Visibility was so poor that the scouts used pieces of phosphorus to mark the trail for

the column." The muddy, waterlogged ground made the march difficult for the men and horses. Two drivers in Morrison's section were injured when their horses stumbled and fell on them. Spens's column halted about midnight and spent several miserable hours exposed to the cold and rain.

D Battery and the Royal Canadian Dragoons formed the advance guard when the dishevelled column resumed its march in the morning. They came under fire from Boer snipers, but pushed ahead to the next ridge. From there they could see groups of Boers on a hill three kilometres away. The Dragoons skirmished forward to engage the enemy, but came under heavy fire and had to withdraw. The Boers charged out of their positions and chased after the retreating Canadians. Lieutenant-Colonel Lessard sent for Morrison's guns, but the British Chief of Artillery ordered the Ottawa gunners to a ridge 600 yards to the rear. As soon as Morrison's men reached this position, they opened fire on the advancing Boers. According to Lieutenant Turner of the Dragoons, the first shot landed directly on target. The gunners fired eight or nine more rounds and dispersed the enemy's counterattack. Morrison's men then shifted their fire and cleared a Boer position "in a gulch at the end of the plain", nearly four kilometres away."

By this point both wings of Smith-Dorrien's advance had reached Van Wyk's Vlei. The force's transport wagons, which had left Belfast after the other columns, appeared to the north of the rendez-vous point. Perceiving the poor condition of his men, however, Smith-Dorrien ordered the force back to Belfast. Spens's column formed the advance guard of the retreat. The Boers pursued the rearguard and engaged the column all the way back to the base. The heavy rains and winds had also resumed and made the march back to Belfast thoroughly miserable. The drenched, shivering and exhausted troops reached Belfast at 15:00 on 2 November."

Although Morrison's section performed very well, the Witkloof operation was a dismal failure. The force marched over fifty kilometres in twenty-one hours through terrible weather,

suffered several casualties and achieved nothing." By the end of the day the Boers had recaptured all of their positions and were encouraged by their victory.

Undeterred by this check, General Smith-Dorrien was anxious to try again. At 03:30 on 6 November he led another 1200 man force out of Belfast. This time the force moved as one column. Smith-Dorrien's objectives were to destroy the farms that the Boers were using as outposts and to clear the Witkloof, Liliefontein and Carolina laagers." The Royal Canadian Dragoons and Morrison's section were assigned to the advance guard. At 07:40 the Boers' advance lines engaged the column near Eerstelingfontein. For the next several hours the advance guard steadily pushed the Boers south from ridge to ridge. Morrison's gunners were splendid, firing accurately at ranges of over four kilometres. General Smith-Dorrien personally complimented the men on their performance."

Meanwhile the Boers' delaying tactics had permitted reinforcements from the Carolina commando to entrench themselves along a steep rocky ridge that stretched from Witkloof to Liliefontein. As Smith-Dorrien's column approached this nearly impregnable position, the Boer riflemen unleashed a heavy fire. Swinging their guns into action, the Canadian gunners' first few shells overshot the target, but Lieutenant Morrison's men soon found the range at 1550 metres. With bullets whizzing around their position, the gunners steadily continued their work. Driver W.R. Hare was hit and suffered a severe shoulder wound. The Canadians were soon joined by a section of the 84th Battery and a five-inch "COW" gun. The Shropshire infantry and a troop of Dragoons were ordered forward to clear the position, but, pinned by the heavy Mauser fire, they could not reach the ridge."

At 14:00 Smith-Dorrien sent Lessard and a force composed of Morrison's section, two pom-poms, two companies of Suffolks infantry and some Dragoons to launch a turning movement on the Boer left flank. After a fierce two hour exchange, the Boers, sensing the threat to their line of retreat, pulled out and

headed south. Smith-Dorrien's column camped near Lilliefontein."

That evening both sides considered their next moves. Convinced that Smith-Dorrien intended to advance on Carolina, the Boers, led by General J.C. Fourie and Commandant H. Prinsloo of the Carolina Commando and General H. Grobler of the Ermelo Commando, called up reinforcements and prepared to launch a counterattack on the British position in the morning." Smith-Dorrien, however, realizing the risk of attacking a large Boer force in such rugged terrain, decided to return to Belfast."

Smith-Dorrien knew that the Boers would pursue his slow moving column. To get a headstart, his eight kilometre long force began to move out at 07:00 the next morning. Morrison's section and the Royal Canadian Dragoons formed the rearguard. To cover the long column, Lieutenant-Colonel Lessard divided his ninety troopers into six groups of approximately fifteen men each. He spread these six groups 450 metres apart in a two and a half kilometre long semicircle across the rear of the retreating force. To gain the maximum range, Morrison's guns and Sergeant Holland's Colt gun were stationed in a forward position in the centre of the rearguard line at the peak of the semicircle. Smith-Dorrien assigned three companies of Shropshire infantry to serve as support for Lessard's rearguard.

To protect the column, the rearguard had to hold its position until the advance guard, main body, transport wagons and infantry supports reached the next ridge, three and a half kilometres away." The infantry would then cover the artillery guns as they retreated one at a time. Once both guns had reached the ridge, the Dragoons would mount their horses and race back to join them. The column was to repeat this procedure from ridge to ridge all the way back to Belfast. Separated from the rest of the column by up to three kilometres at a time, the guns and mounted troops were tempting targets for the enemy."

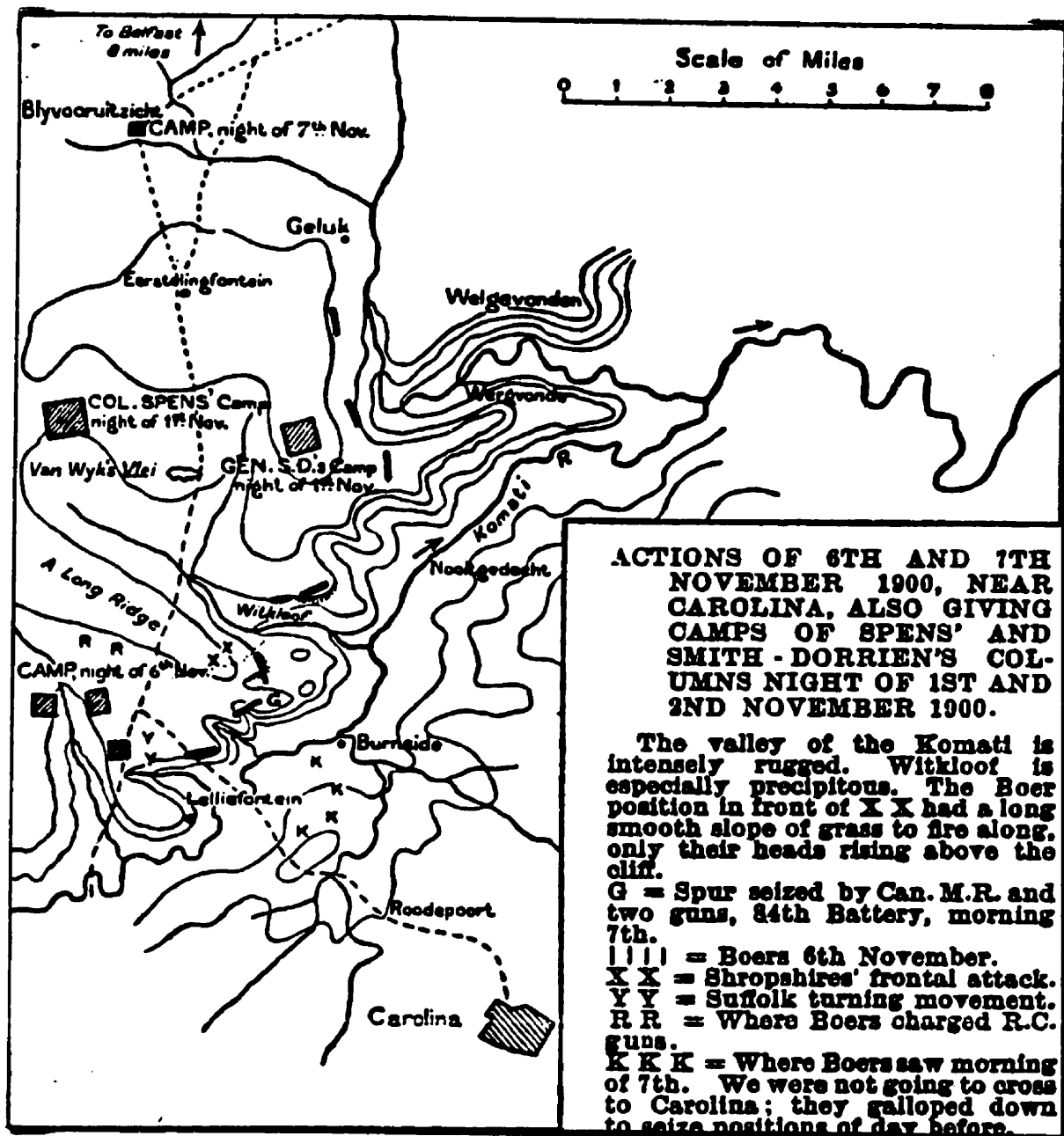
At about 08:00, when General Fourie discovered that Smith-Dorrien was retreating, the Boer leader ordered 200 of his men to seize the high ground that they had held the previous day." From that position they could fire on Smith-Dorrien's column and

inflict serious damage. Morrison's men saw Fourie's troops heading for the position and fired a few rounds at them, but the Boers were out of range." Aware of Fourie's intentions, Smith-Dorrien ordered his mobile reserve, consisting of thirty-five Canadian Mounted Rifles and two guns from the 84th Battery, to seize the position." Racing to the ridge, Smith-Dorrien's men reached the position first and secured it against the Boer advance. Smith-Dorrien also sent word ahead to Lieutenant-Colonel Spens in the advance guard to seize the high ground at Van Wyk's Vlei and secure the column's right flank."

The Boers turned their attention to the rearguard. Although the bulk of the Boer forces were still several kilometres away, the Boers steadily crept toward Lessard's position. Some Boers from the Ermelo Commando pushed west to try to outflank the rearguard. Morrison brought his guns into action, but could not stem the Boer advance. Anticipating some heavy fighting ahead, Morrison transferred as much ammunition as possible from the ammunition wagons to the gun limbers and sent the cumbersome wagons ahead to join the transport column. Increasingly concerned about the situation, Lessard sent for reinforcements and withdrew the guns a short distance."

About 11:00, as the slow moving transports and infantry supports still lumbered their way to the next ridge, the Canadian Mounted Rifles and 84th Battery guns evacuated their hard won position to cover the right flank of the retreating main body. Their withdrawal relieved the pressure on Fourie and Prinsloo's troops, who immediately pressed their general advance against the rear guard."

Hearing that Lieutenant Cockburn's eastern wing of the rearguard was being hard pressed, Lessard ordered Morrison to take one of his guns and reinforce the beleaguered Dragoon position. Leaving Corporal Kerr in charge of the Number Six gun, Morrison took the Number Five gun and raced over two kilometres, "some of it up grade", to join Cockburn's force. As soon as the gunners arrived they opened fire on the waves of Boer horsemen, but the determined attackers simply dismounted and advanced from



Source: Smith-Dorrien, Memories of Forty-Eight Years Service, p.255.

cover to cover.

Before Morrison's men had fired a dozen rounds, Lessard arrived and ordered Morrison to retreat. The Ermelo Boers, reinforced by some men from the Middleburg Commando, were pressing the western flank of the rearguard and threatened to cut off Lessard's position. The Number Six gun had already pulled out. Morrison's men immediately limbered up and started the long haul to the next ridge. Lessard took a handful of men and returned to defend the opposite flank. To delay the Boers and allow Morrison's gun to escape, Lieutenant Cockburn's men held their position and continued to fire. The Dragoons were soon overrun and taken prisoner.¹⁰

The Boers quickly renewed their pursuit of Morrison's gun. About half way to the ridge the artillery horses tired and slowed to a walk. With the charging Boers closing to within a kilometre, the Canadians halted, unlimbered the gun and brought it into action. They fired two shrapnel shells, but could not stop the surging Boer tide. Having given the horses a brief rest, the men rehooked the gun and continued the drive up the steep slope toward the ridge. To assist the exhausted horses, the men struggled alongside the animals and pulled on the traces. As Morrison's men climbed the last 1500 metres to the ridge, the Boers dismounted to take better aim. One of Morrison's horses was hit, but did not go down.¹¹

Desperate to save his men and the gun, Morrison sent a messenger to Lessard to request reinforcements. As the Canadians came within sight of the ridge, Morrison was horrified to see the infantry supports retiring. Fortunately Morrison's messenger met Lieutenant Turner, who rallied about a dozen Dragoons and stationed them in some low ground between the Boers and the gunners.¹² With Morrison's section moving ever closer to the ridge, General Fourie and Commandant Prinsloo launched a last push to capture Sergeant Holland's Colt gun and the prized 12 pounder before they reached the security of the highground. Determined to capture the guns, the force of 100 Boers failed to spot Turner's men until it was too late. In the clash that

ensued both Fourie and Prinsloo were shot and killed."

Although most of Turner's men were captured, their ambush allowed Morrison's men to reach the ridge, where Morrison rode up to the retreating infantry and asked the officer to provide some cover fire until the gunners could get the gun into action. The infantry ignored the request and kept marching. Fortunately the Canadian Mounted Rifles arrived in time to scatter the rest of the Boers." General Smith-Dorrien then dispatched the Canadian guns to repulse a flank attack, but by this time the battle was virtually over. The rearguard entered the camp at Blyvooritsicht at 17:00. The force returned to Belfast the next day.

Smith-Dorrien's two day expedition was a qualified success. Although his force suffered a total of nine killed, thirty-one wounded and sixteen captured, all of whom were well treated by the Boers and released on the night of 7 November, Smith-Dorrien's column burned thirteen farms, captured one prisoner, fourteen cattle, 350 sheep and nineteen horses, and killed two of the Boer leaders. The destruction of property combined with the deaths of Fourie and Prinsloo demoralized the Carolina Commando and temporarily reduced the number of attacks on the southern flank of the railway."

D Battery played an essential role in this operation. The section fired 240 shells during the two day mission." On the first day Morrison's guns formed part of the advance guard that pushed the Boers steadily back and finally forced the Boers to evacuate their strong position on the Witkloof heights. On the second day the D Battery guns joined the Royal Canadian Dragoons in the rearguard and, though severely outnumbered, shielded the retreating column from a determined Boer counterattack."

Much has been written about the rearguard action at Liliefontein. There is no doubt that the Canadian troops fought bravely. The three Victoria Crosses, one Distinguished Service Order, and one Distinguished Conduct Medal earned by Canadian soldiers in this battle attest to that fact." Still, the question remains as to who was responsible for the near

disaster. Many Canadian troops at the time, and Canadian historians since, blamed the British infantry." While the Shropshires certainly failed to provide adequate support to the rearguard, some other observers have argued that the Canadian officers share the blame for the close call. For example, writing fifty years after the battle, H.W. Davy, a gunner in Morrison's section, noted that "a lack of co-ordination of the rearguard command was responsible for the near disaster".

More recently Brian Reid has raised similar questions about the Canadian leadership of the action. Reid notes that Lessard's "galloping about the battlefield coupled with his shouts to Morrison leave the impression...that he did not have a grip on the battle". Reid also suggests that Lessard may have stationed his guns too far forward, and criticizes him for weakening the centre of his position to reinforce the flanks.

It is hard to see what else Lessard could have done. His "galloping about" allowed him to keep a general view of the engagement, encourage his men and reposition his troops to meet changing circumstances. As to the distribution of his force, Lessard's formation conformed to the artillery tactics of the time, which stated that "the *first* consideration in selecting a position for the [rearguard] artillery is that it shall be able to open fire on the enemy at long range and thus compel his [forces] to assume attack formation at the greatest possible distance". Lessard stationed the guns in a forward position to delay the Boer advance and purchase time for the retreating column. When the Boers began to get too close, Lessard withdrew the guns a short distance to remove them from danger. Furthermore, Lessard had little choice but to weaken his centre to reinforce his flanks. The Boers threatened to outflank his position and roll up his entire force. The fact is that Lessard did the best job he could with the men and equipment at his disposal. His force was simply too weak to cover a two and a half kilometre wide front against a mobile, numerically superior enemy.

While Reid's criticism of Colonel Evans for withdrawing the

Canadian Mounted Rifles from the Witkloof ridge, thus permitting the Boers to press their attack against the rearguard, is more justified, the bulk of the blame for the Canadians' close call must be attributed to General Smith-Dorrien. He should never have had such an unwieldy transport column in the force. Moreover, since he knew that a strong Boer force would pursue the column, he should have assigned a much stronger rearguard. The Canadians were outnumbered, overextended and vulnerable. Finally, Smith-Dorrien should have made sure that the infantry supports understood fully their role in the rearguard withdrawal.

Smith-Dorrien turned his attention north of Belfast. On 13 November he led a large force, which included Morrison's section, to clear the farms and villages used by the Boer guerillas in the Steelpoort Valley. For the next four days the force fought the Boer guerillas wherever it found them, rounded up sheep and cattle, and destroyed farm houses and villages. The column burnt a path six miles wide and completely destroyed the village of Witpoort and the town of Dullstroom."

While the Canadian gunners did not participate directly in the looting and farm burning, they had mixed opinions about these activities. Some of the men were appalled by the "scorched earth" policy. They sympathized with the individual Boer women and children and did not want to see "another trip of the sort"." Others approved of the policy. If the Boers persisted in using farms and villages as military barracks, ammunition depots and laagers to launch attacks on the railway and ambush British patrols, many of the gunners argued, then those farms and villages were fair military targets. The fact that many of the burning houses exploded revealing large caches of ammunition vindicated these gunners' accusations and prompted some to assert that the Boers "had nobody to blame but themselves" for the large scale destruction."

The column returned to Belfast on 17 November. The next day the D Batterymen prepared to entrain for Pretoria and return home. By 23 November D Battery's three sections were reunited in

Pretoria, where they were brigaded with "C battery. Since Lieutenant-Colonel Drury had already moved to Cape Town, Major Hurdman assumed command of the brigade division. In Pretoria D Battery turned over its sixty-eight remaining Canadian horses to the Imperial authorities at an average valuation of £21 per animal, and sold four of its light wagons for £10 each."

On 3 December the two batteries marched to Elandsfontein and entrained for Cape Town. On 9 December the gunners were detrained at Worcester, where they were joined by E Battery. It was the first time that all three batteries had been together. The brigade division remained in Worcester for two days to monitor a Cape Afrikaner convention. On 11 December the batteries boarded the train for Cape Town, where they arrived that night. The next day the men loaded their equipment aboard the Roslyn Castle and spent a riotous evening in the city." On 13 December D Battery and the rest of the Second Contingent sailed for Canada.

On 8 January, after an uneventful twenty-six day voyage, the Roslyn Castle pulled into Halifax harbour. That night the men were paid the difference between the British army wages and the higher Canadian rates. On 9 January, after a warm reception in Halifax, the gunners boarded two special trains and headed back to Ontario. As the trains pulled out of the station, D Battery, Royal Canadian Field Artillery, passed into history.

1. See Amery, vol. IV. pp. 237-300; Bailes, p. 95.; Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War London, 1979. p. 439. Hunter's columns included General Rundle's Division, MacDonald's Highland Brigade, Clement's 12th Brigade, Paget's 20th Infantry Brigade, Hamilton's 21st Brigade, Broadwood's 2nd Cavalry Brigade and Ridley's Mounted Infantry.

2. Morrison, p. 139, 142.

3. Ibid, pp. 139-151.

4. Ibid, p. 150.

5. John Quinney letter dated 30 June in Ottawa Evening Journal 31 July 1900 p. 3.

6. Ibid.
7. Harry Howe letter to his wife 22 June 1900 in newspaper clipping in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.
8. J. Bargett to Father 1 July 1900 in Ibid.
9. See Amery vol.IV, pp.380-413.
10. D Battery Diary 10-13 July 1900 in RG 9 II A3 vol.33.
11. See Amery vol.IV p. 401.; Miller, p.211.
12. Amery, vol.IV. p.394. McCrae estimated that the force numbered 6650 men including the transport drivers. McCrae Diary 17 July 1900.
13. See Field Artillery Drill, 1896 pp.183, 189; K. Lett letter dated 8 August 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger; McCrae report dated 5 August 1900 in Toronto Globe 22 September 1900 pp.5-6.
14. Morrison, p.161.
15. D Battery Diary 17 July 1900.
16. Morrison, p.161.
17. Miller, p.212 ; D Battery Diary, Major Hurdman letter to Ottawa 21 July 1900; McCrae report in Globe 22 September 1900, p.5; Morrison, p.155-156. K. Lett letter 8 August in McCrae Boer War Ledger.
18. Field Artillery Drill 1896, pp.150, 154, 188; D Battery Diary Major Hurdman letter 21 July 1900.
19. Field Artillery Drill 1896, pp.169-170, 218; McCrae report in Globe 22 September 1900, p.5-6.
20. W.A. Hare Notebook n.p. n.d. in W.A. Hare Papers MG 29 E 25.
21. Morrison, p.156.
22. Ibid.
23. See Field Artillery Drill, 1896, pp.168-170, 216-218; Handbook for the 12 pr. B.L. 6 cwt. Gun (Marks I-IV and IVa) and Carriages Marks I* I** and II (Horse Artillery) London, HMSO 1905, pp.49-50. Erskine Childers, In the Ranks of the CIV, London 1901 pp.74-75.
24. Ibid.; Bapty, p.22.; It goes without saying that the Coverer and Numbers Six, Seven, Eight and Nine of the reserve ammunition wagons, that is the two wagons which retired 275 metres to the rear, were stationed in the rear wagon line. In the event of casualties or the need to resupply the gun, they would replace

the ammunition wagon men at the front.

25.Ibid.

26.Ibid.

27.Malcolm Ross, "Types of Artillery" in Canadian Magazine March 1900, p.416.

28.Morrison, p.157.

29.Ibid.; McCrae report in Globe 22 September 1900 p.5.

30.Ibid., pp.157-158.

31.D Battery Diary Hurdman letter 21 July 1900.

32.K.Lett letter 8 August 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.

33.McCrae Diary 23 July 1900; McCrae report to Globe 22 September 1900 p.5.; Sessional Papers, p.141; Morrison, p.162.

34.Although Morrison claimed that the men had greatcoats, blankets and waterproof sheets, Major Hurdman, Lieutenant McCrae, W.A. Hare and John Quinney make it clear that the men did not have these articles. See Morrison, p.163; D Battery Diary 25 July 1900; Sessional Papers, p.142.; McCrae report to Globe 22 September 1900, p.5-6. W.A. Hare Notebook n.p. n.d.; John Quinney letter dated 30 July in Ottawa Evening Journal 4 September 1900 p.8.

35.Miller, p.213; Morrison, p.163-164; Sessional Papers, p.142.

36.See Amery vol.IV pp.314-323, 414-421.

37.Sessional Papers, p.142; D Battery Diary 26 July-25 August 1900; Miller, p.213.

38.Amery, vol.IV, pp.434-460; Miller, p.215; Morrison, p.188; Sessional Papers, p.142.

39.See D Battery Diary 27 August 1900; Sessional Papers, p.142; McCrae Diary 27 August; Morrison, p.188-197; Miller, p.215.

40.Amery, vol.IV, p.460.

41.For details of D Battery in the Lydenburg campaign see D Battery Diary 3 September-9 September 1900; McCrae diary 3 September-9 September 1900; McCrae report "The Advance on Lydenburg" dated 15 September in Toronto Globe 27 October 1900 p.6. Sessional Papers, p.143.

42.Ibid; Miller, p.217.

43. Miller, pp.217-218; Sessional Papers, p.143-144; D Battery Diary 9 September-11 November 1900; McCrae Diary 9 September-30 October 1900.
44. See McCrae to Mother 12 August, 30 September 1900; Morrison, p.181; D Battery Diary 20, 21 September, 28 October 1900.
45. See Bapty, Memoirs p.28.
46. Morrison, p.215.
47. Sessional Papers, p.144.
48. See Morrison, pp.225-237.
49. D Battery Diary 17, 31 October 1900.
50. Smith-Dorrien, Memories of Forty-Eight Years' Service London, 1925. p.251.
51. Smith-Dorrien, pp.252-253; Miler, pp.263-265; Morrison, pp.249-252; Hugh Robertson, "The Royal Canadian Dragoons in the Anglo-Boer War, 1900" Unpublished MA thesis, 1982. pp. 179-180.
52. Morrison, p.250.
53. Ibid pp. 250-252; Sessional Papers, p.144.
54. Ibid.; Smith-Dorrien, pp.253-254; Robertson, pp.180-181; Miller, p.265.
55. Brian Reid, Our Little Army in the Field St. Catherines, 1996 p.128 states that the total casualties numbered one killed and fifteen wounded.
56. Smith-Dorrien mentions only the Witkloof and Liliefontein laagers. Professor Miller adds Carolina.
57. Smith-Dorrien, pp. 255-256; Morrison, p.260.
58. Smith-Dorrien, p.256; Morrison, p.261-262; Miller, p.268; Reid, p.130. The five-inch guns were called "COW" guns because they were manufactured by the Coventry Ordnance Works. The fact that they were pulled by oxen reinforced this nickname. See Robertson, p.183.
59. Ibid.
60. For an excellent description of the organization of the Carolina Commando and the Boers' strategy see Robertson, p.186.
61. Smith-Dorrien, p.257.

62. Although Reid claims the ridge was three miles (4.8km) away, Morrison states that it was 2 miles (3.2km). I have rounded off this figure to get 3.5km.
63. Morrison, pp. 264-265; Robertson, pp.189-190; Miller, pp.270-271.
64. There were 300 men present from the Carolina Commando, but 100 of them were with Commandant Prinsloo at the time. Robertson, pp.186-187; Reid, p.132.
65. Morrison, p.265.
66. There were 60 CMR men in the column, but some of them were on patrol at the time. Miller, p.270; Reid, p.132.
67. Smith-Dorrien, p.257.
68. Morrison, p.265-266.
69. Ibid ; D Battery Diary left section 7 November ; Robertson, p.190.
70. Morrison, pp.267-268.; Robertson, p.192.; Miller, p.271.
71. Morrison, p.269.
72. Sessional Papers, p.146; Miller, p.274.
73. Miller, p.274.
74. Morrison, pp.269-270.
75. Reid, p.135; Robertson, p.200.
76. Sessional Papers, p.146.
77. There were 300 men present from the Carolina Commando. With the reinforcements from the Ermelo and Middleburg Commandos, the Boer force likely numbered close to 500 men. The Canadian rearguard had 90 Dragoons, the Colt gun detachment and Morrison's section of D Battery. Since part of the artillery section moved ahead with the ammunition wagons, the total force in the rearguard probably numbered between 120 and 130 men.
78. Sergeant Holland and Lieutenants Turner and Cockburn won the Victoria Cross. Lieutenant Morrison received the Distinguished Service Order, and Private Knisley received the Distinguished Conduct Medal.
79. See for example, Morrison, pp.269-270; Robertson, p.194; Miller, pp.273, 276.

- 80.H.W. Davy, "Account of the Second Battle at Liliefontein" n.p.
n.d. in W.A. Hare Papers MG 29 E 25.
- 81.Brian Reid, Our Little Army in the Field, p.136.
- 82.Ibid.
- 83.Field Artillery Drill, 1896, p.176.
- 84.Miller, p.278.
- 85.Morrison, p.278.
- 86.Ibid. p. 275; See also W.A. Hare Notebook n.p. n.d.
- 87.Sessional Papers, pp.147-148.
- 88.Miller, pp.282-283.

Conclusion

D Battery had a varied experience in South Africa. More often than not the battery was split into its component sections and attached to different British formations. The sections spent most of the war chasing elusive Cape Colony rebels and performing the tedious line of communication duty. Deployed in unhealthy areas with little clean water, D Battery's main adversary was disease. Three of the battery's four deaths were due to enteric fever, and fifteen other D Battery members were discharged as "Sick". On the other hand, though the battery sustained only one man wounded in battle, the unit's sections participated in some of the most intense combat actions of the war, including the Lydenburg campaign and General Smith-Dorrien's operations in the eastern Transvaal. The gunners lived up to their reputation as Canada's best trained and most efficient soldiers. D Battery performed remarkably well in all of its thirty-one engagements and earned the praise of the Imperial authorities.'

The D Battery gunners reacted to this varied experience in different ways. Bored with the often monotonous routine and frustrated with the shortage of rations, poor water supply and the dirty, lousy, unhealthy living conditions, many of the men were disappointed with the reality of their South African experience. Far from the cheering crowds, patriotic parades, stirring speeches and heroic, romanticized notions of warfare, many of the gunners found that the "soldiers' game was not what it was cracked up to be".' Such men grew increasingly anxious to return to Canada.

This sense of frustration eroded morale and discipline and led to tensions between the battery's officers and some of the men. In addition to the men who were punished for various breeches of discipline, some of the gunners complained about the way the rank and file were treated. Although the newspaper correspondents and official unit reports made no mention of these complaints, on 14 December the Ottawa Free Press published a scathing letter from an anonymous member of D Battery. The

disgruntled gunner claimed that although "most of the boys have written home at various times and said we were being used very well and had plenty to eat and the officers and men were pulling well together", this "was done more to save the feelings of those at home or out of fear if they wrote anything else there would be trouble". The gunner then proceeded to criticize the unit's officers and NCOs for neglecting the men.'

Not everyone was so disappointed. In fact, many of the D Battery men enjoyed their experience in South Africa. For example, proud of the contribution that he and his men had made and of the recognition they received, Lieutenant Morrison noted that he "had a nice time at the war".' Morrison was not alone. Encouraged by their low casualty rate, burgeoning military reputation and steady income, at least twenty-five D Battery men enjoyed their South African experience enough to re-enlist in other Canadian units for a second tour of duty. Walter Bapty recalled that he was so enthusiastic he "could hardly wait to join" Gat Howard's Canadian Scouts.'

D Battery's commendable military performance fostered a sense of pride and confidence in Canadian military ability. The D Battery gunners felt that they compared very favourably with the British regulars. Coupled with the unit's occasionally unpleasant relations with British officers and troops, this emerging confidence led some of the gunners to assert that "in the next war the Canadian troops should be formed in one division".' Several D Battery veterans went on to serve in the Canadian Corps during the Great war, including W.G. Hurdman, D.I.V. Eaton, E.W.B. Morrison, and John McCrae.'

The Canadian government shared the gunners spirit of national confidence and self assertion. Canadian participation in the South African War led to an increased interest in military affairs. To achieve a larger degree of military autonomy from Great Britain and to expand and modernize the Canadian forces, the Canadian government, led by the Minister of Militia, Frederick Borden, embarked on a program of military reform.' D Battery's experience suggested a few reforms for the

artillery.

First, D Battery's operations in the Karoo desert and the eastern Transvaal revealed a need for mobile artillery. To meet this necessity, the Canadian government converted the Permanent Force field batteries into a regiment of Royal Canadian Horse Artillery.' Second, D Battery's performance in South Africa demonstrated the ability of part-time militia gunners. To increase the pool of these citizen-soldiers, the government created seven new militia field artillery batteries. To improve the administration of the militia units and facilitate large scale training manoeuvres, the government grouped the twenty-four militia field artillery batteries into ten brigades.¹⁰ Acting upon one of the recommendations in Lieutenant-Colonel Drury's South African report, the government assigned an ammunition column to each of the brigades.¹¹

Next, D Battery's South African experience demonstrated the inadequacy of the 12 pounder weapons. For example, the Canadian guns were severely outranged by the Boer artillery in the Lydenburg campaign. The Canadian weapons also suffered from excessive recoil. Since the 12 pounders were not equipped with an efficient recoil device, the gunners had to reposition and re-lay the guns after each shot, a procedure that decreased the weapons' already obsolescent rate of fire.¹² The D Battery gunners also learned that the 12 pounders provided little protection from enemy rifle fire.

To rectify these shortcomings, the government purchased brand new 13 and 18 pounder quick-firing guns, the former for the horse artillery and the latter for the field batteries. The new weapons fired heavier shells and had an initial range of 5650 metres, more than a kilometre longer than the 12 pounders.¹³ Since the new weapons were equipped with a very effective recoil absorption system and fired "fixed ammunition", that is rounds in which the shell and propellant charge cartridge were loaded as one unit, the quick-firing guns had a rate of fire of twenty to thirty rounds per minute, about three times the rate of the 12 pounders.¹⁴ The new weapons were also

equipped with a gun shield to protect the gunners in action.

To provide the artillery with a training ground large enough to fire at long ranges and perform exercises under tactical conditions, the Canadian government created Camp Petawawa in 1905. Situated on the Ottawa River, near Pembroke, the new 29,000 hectare camp became the central training depot for the Canadian artillery.¹⁵ These reforms, based largely on lessons learned from D Battery's South African experience, helped prepare the Canadian artillery for the next war.

1. Lieutenant-Colonel Drury and Major Hurdman list thirty-two engagements in their reports, but they include the battle of Belfast, where D Battery did not actively participate in the action. See Sessional Papers 1901 No.35a pp.117, 148.
2. T. Bargett to Father 1 July 1900 in McCrae Boer War Ledger n.p. n.d.
3. Ottawa Free Press 14 December 1900 p.8. Although the letter appears to have been written in August, the editor of the paper explains that it was "delayed". Perhaps the disgruntled gunner waited until he was sure that the unit was going home before he sent the letter to Canada. It is also possible that letter was delayed by the slow postal system.
4. Morrison, p.307.
5. Bapty, Memoirs, p.29.; Carman Miller's Data Entry Sheets indicate that sixteen members from D Battery re-enlisted after they had returned to Canada. John Quinney adds that nine or ten D Battery men enlisted in Howard's Scouts in South Africa. Since I do not have the names of all twenty-five or twenty-six men that re-enlisted, my statistical table includes only the names that I can confirm. These include the sixteen men who re-enlisted in Canada and J. Kenealy, Walter Bapty, E. Lane and C. Mole, whom I can confirm joined the Canadian Scouts. Bapty, p.29; John Quinney letter dated 29 November in Ottawa Evening Journal 2 January 1901, p.6.
6. Morrison, p.290.
7. The South African War was a training ground for a generation of Canadian military leaders. Many of the officers who served in South Africa went on to hold important positions in the Canadian military right through the Great War. D Battery's officer's were no exception. W.G. Hurdman Commanded the 8th Canadian Field Artillery Brigade from 1902-1909. In 1909 he was placed on the Reserve Officers list and became an inspector of carriages and military stores for the Militia

Department. During the Great War Lieutenant-Colonel Hurdman commanded the 3rd Canadian Divisional Artillery Ammunition Column.

D.I.V. Eaton was appointed Major and Second in Command of the 3rd Regiment Canadian Mounted Rifles in 1902. Following the South African War, Eaton became the first colonial officer to be admitted to the Camberley Staff College, from which he graduated in 1905. Upon his graduation, Eaton was appointed Assistant Director of Operations and Staff Duties in Ottawa. Three years later he became Director of Training. In 1911 Lieutenant-Colonel Eaton was appointed Commanding Officer of "B" Battery, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, which he led into the Great War. During the war Eaton advanced to lead the 8th Canadian Field Artillery Brigade.

E.W.B. Morrison was promoted to Captain in 1901. Four years later he was promoted to Major and became the Commanding Officer of the 23rd Field Battery. In 1909 Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison assumed command of the 8th Field Artillery Brigade. Four years later he became Director of Artillery. At the outbreak of the Great War Morrison was given command of the 1st Brigade Canadian Field Artillery. In 1915 he assumed command of the 2nd Canadian Divisional Artillery. Promoted to the rank of Major-General, Morrison became General Officer Commanding Royal Artillery, Canadian Corps, the highest artillery rank in the Canadian Corps, in December 1916.

John McCrae was promoted to Captain in the 16th Field Battery in 1901. The following year he became Major and Commanding Officer of the unit. McCrae resigned from the military in 1904, but returned with the rank of Major as Brigade-Surgeon and Second in Command of the 1st Canadian Field Artillery Brigade in 1914. In 1915 McCrae left the artillery to join the Canadian Army Medical Corps. He was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel in charge No.3 Canadian General Hospital. On 26 January 1918, less than three years after he penned his immortal poem, "In Flanders Fields", John McCrae died in France. See Henry James Morgan, The Canadian Men and Women of the Time 2nd ed. Toronto, 1912 pp.362, 562, 755, 827.; Prescott, In Flanders Fields, pp.42, 74, 76, 101, 128.

8. See Carman Miller, "Sir Frederick Borden and Military Reform, 1896-1911" in Canadian Historical Review September, 1969. pp.265-284.; Stephen Harris, Canadian Brass p.219.

9. Nicholson, Gunners of Canada vol.I Toronto, 1967. pp.164-165.

10. Ibid, pp.162-164.

11. Ibid ; Sessional Papers No.35a 1901 p.116.

12. Ibid, p.165.; Sessional Papers, p.117.

13. By the end of the Great War the effective range of the 18 pounders had been increased to over 8000 metres. See Barnes, Canada's Guns, p.70.

14. See Ibid.; Edward Spiers, The Late Victorian Army Manchester, 1992, p.321. Although Spiers claims that the old weapons had a rate of fire of four to five rounds per minute, Major Hall "Guns in South Africa" in Military History Journal December, 1971, p.8. states that the 12 pounders could fire seven to eight rounds per minute.

15. See Nicholson, pp.169-174.

Name	Birthplace	Age	Occupation	Religion	Married?	Depot	Experience	Discharge
B.S.M McClntyre	Ontario	32	Soldier	Anglican	Married	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Q.S.M. Slade	Nfld.	34	Soldier	Methodist	widowed	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Sgt. Henderson	Ontario	26	Soldier	Methodist	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Sgt. Somers	Ireland	28	Businessman	R.C.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Sgt. Lett	Ontario	22	Student	Anglican	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Sgt. Barnhill	Ontario	27	Policeman	Methodist	Single	London	6th F.B.	Sick
Sgt. Stinson	Ontario	28	Farmer	Methodist	Married	Kingston	A Battery	Demoted
Sgt. Wood	Ontario	37	Soldier	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Corp. Kennealy	Ireland	29	Labourer	R.C.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	re-enlist
Corp. Berube**	Quebec	28	Agent	R.C.	Married	Ottawa	A Battery	Sick
Corp. Curzon	Ontario	27	Painter	Methodist	Married	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Corp. Ross	France	25	Student	Anglican	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Corp. Colter	Ontario	30	Dentist	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Bomb. Smith, W.	Ontario	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Bomb. Wagar	Ontario	22	Soldier	Methodist	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Bomb. Brown, G.	Ontario	24	Printer	Anglican	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Bomb. Beaven, S.	Quebec	32	Millhand	Presb.	Married	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Bomb. Maltreys	N/A	22	N/A	Methodist	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A

Tptr. Barker	Ontario	16	Clerk	Anglican	Single	Kingston	2nd F.B.	N/A
Gunners/Drivers								
Abbs, F.	Ontario	22	Miller	Other	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	Sick
Alexander, F.	Ontario	24	Bricklayer	Methodist	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Anderson, J.	Quebec	25	Bank Clerk	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	6th F.B.	N/A
Ballatine, J.	Ontario	24	Merchant	Methodist	Single	Guelph	20th Rifle	N/A
Bancroft, G.	Ontario	22	Farmer	Anglican	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Barber, S.	Ontario	22	Cabinetmaker	Anglican	Single	Guelph	30th Rifle	Sick
Bargette, T.	Ontario	28	Cook	Anglican	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Barrett, G.	Ontario	22	Painter	Methodist	Single	London	6th F.B.	Sick
Bapty, W.	Ontario	15	Farmer/ OAC	Presb.	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	re-enlist
Belford, J.	Ontario	22	Bookkeeper	Baptist	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Beaven, N.	Ontario	29	Bricklayer	Presb.	Married	Ottawa	Militia	N/A
Bennett, T.	Ontario	37	Repairman	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	G.G.F.G.	N/A
Bolton, D.	Ontario	22	Printer	R.C.	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Bott, E.	Ontario	30	Conductor	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Boyle, R.	Ontario	23	Bookkeeper	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	14th F.B.	N/A
Bradley, R.	Ontario	27	Factoryhand	Anglican	Married	Ottawa	Militia	Died
Bradley, S.	Ontario	24	Blacksmith	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	None	N/A

Bramah, E.	B.C.	23	Soldier	R.C.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Bramah, T.	B.C.	21	Soldier	R.C.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	in S.A.
Brown, J.	Ontario	30	Journalist	Methodist	Single	London	6th F.B.	re-enlist
Burnham, S.	Ontario	22	Clerk	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	14th F.B.	N/A
Cameron, H.	Ontario	39	Gentleman	Baptist	Single	Ottawa	G.G.F.G.	N/A
Campbell, J.	Ontario	22	Clerk	Presb.	Single	Guelph	30th Rifle	N/A
Cornett, H.	Ontario	29	Blacksmith	Methodist	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Cartledge, W.	Ireland	37	Merchant	Anglican	Married	Guelph	11th F.B.	Sick
Cause, H.	Ontario	29	Farmer	Methodist	Single	London	6Th F.B.	N/A
Chisolm, D.	Nova Scotia	22	Miller	R.C.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	in S.A.
Clarke, S.	Ontario	22	Conductor	Methodist	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	re-enlist
Crowe, A.	Ontario	21	Electrician	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	re-enlist
Coogan, R.	Ontario	32	Blacksmith	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	Sick
Cormack, J.	U.S.	39	Traveller	Presb.	widowed	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Daley, M.	Ontario	24	Labourer	R.C.	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Davey, H.W.	Ontario	22	Clerk	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Davey, F.	England	26	Teacher	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	None	N/A
Darlington, G.	Ontario	24	Artisan	Methodist	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Davidson, T.	Quebec	36	Wheelwright	Presb.	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A

Decasse, G.**	Quebec	29	Labourer	R.C.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Denmark, J.	Ontario	28	Clerk	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	re-enlist
Denyes, H.	Ontario	22	Cabinetmaker	Methodist	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Dickson, W.	England	23	Labourer	Anglican	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Donaghy, J.	Ontario	22	Cabinetmaker	Baptist	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Elliot, L.	Ontario	25	Photographer	Methodist	Single	Guelph	20th Rifle	re-enlist
Evatt, E.	Ontario	39	Gentleman	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	Militia	Died
Farquharson, C.	N/A	N/A	Gardner	N/A	N/A	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Fennell, C.	Ontario	22	Machinist	Methodist	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	Sick
Flannigan, A.	Ontario	24	Mechanic	Presb.	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Forrest, A.	England	24	Grocer	Anglican	Single	Kingston	A Battery	re-enlist
Gamble, R.	Ontario	25	Plumber	Presb.	Single	Port Hope	None	N/A
Garnett, C.	Ontario	22	Farmer	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Gavan, W.	Ontario	25	Farmer	Presb.	Single	Guelph	29th Rifle	re-enlist
Gervan, J.	Ontario	22	Collector	Congreg.	Single	Ottawa	Militia	Sick
Gillespie, J.	Ontario	24	Fireman	Presb.	Single	Ottawa	Militia	N/A
Glenn, W.	Scotland	22	Farmer	Presb.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Glenister, J.	England	22	Blacksmith	Presb.	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Gokey, F.	Ontario	25	Veterinarian	Anglican	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A

Gould, W.	Ontario	27	Druggist	Presb.	Single	Guelph	20th Rifle	N/A
Graham, G.	England	35	Soldier	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	Militia	Sick
Greene, E.	England	30	Farmer	Anglican	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Griffin, T.	Ontario	32	Blacksmith	R.C.	Single	Ottawa	None	N/A
Hall, V.	Ontario	22	Clerk	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	46th Rifle	N/A
Hare, W.A.	Ontario	22	Machinist	Methodist	Single	Ottawa	None	re-enlist
Hare, W.R.	Ontario	38	Policeman	Methodist	Married	Ottawa	Militia	Wounded
Henry, B.	Ontario	22	Farmer	Presb.	Single	Ottawa	Militia	N/A
Hinch, J.	England	23	Blacksmith	Methodist	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Hodson, G.	England	24	Bank Clerk	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	re-enlist
Hopkins, W.	England	24	Soldier	Anglican	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Howard, G.V.	Quebec	23	Bank Clerk	Methodist	Single	Guelph	None	N/A
Howe, H.	Ontario	32	Carpenter	Presb.	Married	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Hugall, P.	England	25	Soldier	Presb.	Single	Transfer SA	1st Cont.	N/A
Hume, A.	Ontario	25	Packer	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Hutchinson, E.	England	23	Sailor	Anglican	Single	Kingston	A Battery	Sick
Iglesden, E.	England	27	Labourer	Anglican	Married	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Irish, V.	Ontario	25	Farmer	Presb.	Single	Port Hope	Cobourg Co	re-enlist
Jackson, J.	Ontario	25	Blacksmith	Anglican	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A

James, J.	England	29	Labourer	Methodist	Married	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Keeler, H.	Ontario	23	Moulder	Methodist	Single	Port Hope	14th F.B.	N/A
Kerr, P.	Ontario	29	Plumber	Congr.	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	re-enlist
Kerr, T.	Ontario	30	Farmer	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	None	N/A
Kidd, C.	Ontario	22	Farmer	Methodist	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
King, C.	Ontario	28	Farmer	Baptist	Single	Guelph	30th Rifle	Sick
Kitcheman, H.	England	30	Messenger	Anglican	Married	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Lacoste, J. **	Ontario	26	Cook	R.C.	Married	Ottawa	Militia	N/A
Lafloor, S.	Ontario	24	Farmer	Presb.	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Lambkin, W.	Ontario	28	Clerk	Anglican	widowed	Ottawa	B Battery	N/A
Lane, E.	Wales	22	Merchant	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	re-enlist
Lawes, G.	England	24	N/A	Anglican	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Leach, W.	Ontario	26	Clerk	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	46th Rifle	N/A
Lee, F.	Ontario	22	Bank Clerk	Anglican	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Lefroy, C.	England	24	Miner	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Leroy, L.	Quebec	25	Printer	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	None	N/A
Lyon, A.	Ontario	22	Machinist	Methodist	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
MacDonald, D.	Nova Scotia	28	Saddler	Presb.	Single	Ottawa	56th Rifle	N/A
McDonald, J.	Scotland	29	labourer	Presb.	Single	Guelph	28th Rifle	N/A

McCuaig, A.	Ontario	26	Repairman	Presb.	Single	Ottawa	P.L.D.G.	Sick
McGibbon, D.	U.S.	40	Shoeingsmith	Presb.	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
McKenzie, H.	Ontario	23	Bank Clerk	Presb.	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Mason, F.	Ontario	34	Carpenter	Presb.	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Miller, A.	U.S.	22	Cabinetmaker	Presb.	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Mills, C.E.	Ontario	30	Farmer	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	re-enlist
Mintram, A.	England	19	Soldier	Presb.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Mole, C.	Keewatin	22	Farmer	Baptist	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	re-enlist
Moore, W.	Ontario	34	Tailor	Methodist	Single	Guelph	20th Rifle	Died
Nicholson, H.	England	23	Labourer	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
O'Connor, T.P.	Ontario	23	Lineman	R.C.	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Ough, C.R.	Ontario	28	Farmer	Methodist	Single	Port Hope	14th F.B.	N/A
Outram, F.H.	England	24	Factoryhand	Methodist	Single	Port Hope	46th Rifle	N/A
Pape, J.J.	Ontario	22	Clerk	R.C.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Parker, G.	England	22	Farmer	Baptist	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Partridge, W.	Ontario	27	Labourer	Other	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Philp, J.	Ontario	25	Teamster	Baptist	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Picot, E.	England	22	Cabinetmaker	Methodist	Single	Ottawa	Ch.Is.F.B.	Died
Pryke, G.	Ontario	22	Printer	Methodist	Single	Ottawa	4th F.B.	N/A

Quinney, J.	England	30	Saddler	Methodist	Married	Ottawa	43rd Rifle	N/A
Quirenbach, H.	Ontario	22	Messenger	Presb.	Single	Guelph	11th F.B.	N/A
Randall, J.	Wales	30	Farmer	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Ray, I.	Ontario	31	Cheesemaker	Lutheran	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Read, H.	Ontario	31	Clerk	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	46th Rifle	N/A
Richmond, A.	Scotland	22	Student	Baptist	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Robinson, A.	England	34	Packer	Anglican	Married	Ottawa	Militia	N/A
Russell, D.	England	22	Student	Presb.	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Russell, J.	Scotland	22	Student	Methodist	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Sargent, A.	Scotland	20	Farmer	Presb.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Sandercok, T.	Ontario	23	Farmer	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	Militia	N/A
Scollie, F.	Ontario	30	Farmer	Anglican	Married	Port Hope	14th F.B.	N/A
Shepherd, G.	Scotland	24	Journalist	Presb.	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Shore, E.	Ireland	23	Factoryhand	Methodist	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Skirving, V.	England	22	Telegraph Op	Anglican	Single	London	6th F.B.	Sick
Smith, W.	Ireland	25	Labourer	R.C.	Married	Kingston	A Battery	re-enlist
Somers, J.	Ontario	24	Labourer	R.C.	Single	Kingston	A Battery	N/A
Sparrow, J.	Ontario	24	Teacher	Baptist	Single	Guelph	16th F.B.	N/A
Street, J.	England	29	Labourer	Anglican	Married	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A

Street, C.	Ontario	25	Plumber	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Stephenson, B.	Ontario	25	Carpenter	Anglican	Single	Guelp	11th F.B.	re-enlist
Sullivan, W.H.	Ontario	22	Farmer	Methodist	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	in S.A.
Sutherland, W.	Ontario	22	Blacksmith	Baptist	Single	London	6th F.B.	N/A
Sutton, E.	Ontario	23	Labourer	N/A	Single	Guelp	30th Rifle	re-enlist
Symmes, H.	Ontario	26	Engineer	Anglican	Single	Guelp	Militia	in S.A.
Taylor, T.	Ontario	39	Farmer	Anglican	Single	Port Hope	14th F.B.	N/A
Taylor, W.	England	31	Labourer	Anglican	Single	Guelp	11th F.B.	N/A
Thomas, H.	Wales	38	marblepolish	Anglican	Married	Guelp	16th F.B.	N/A
Thorne, W.	Ontario	26	Lumberjack	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	ex P.F.	N/A
Tucker, W.	Quebec	21	Wireworker	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	4th F.B.	re-enlist
Tunstead, R.	Ireland	24	Labourer	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	Sick
Wallace, J.	Ontario	22	Artisan	R.C.	Single	Guelp	30th Rifle	N/A
Walters, H.	Ontario	28	Fireman	Anglican	Married	Ottawa	Militia	N/A
Welsh, W.	Ontario	26	Factoryhand	Methodist	Single	Port Hope	None	N/A
Wideman, M.	Ontario	22	Carpenter	Methodist	Single	Guelp	30th Rifle	N/A
Williams, F.	Ontario	22	Painter	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	2nd F.B.	N/A
Williams, M.S.	Wales	22	Student	Baptist	Single	Guelp	16th F.B.	N/A
Whitton, D.	Ontario	26	Doctor	Presb.	Single	Ottawa	G.G.F.G.	N/A

Woolsey, E.	Quebec	25	Stenographer	R.C.	Single	Ottawa	43rd Rifle	N/A
Wright, H.	Quebec	22	Clerk	Anglican	Single	Ottawa	None	N/A

** Denotes French Canadian Members of the Battery.

Table I Discipline

Unit	Total =	Canadian Born	British Born	Others	N.A.
D Battery	171 WCs and men	121 70.7	41 25.1	5 2.9	1

Table II Religion

Unit	Total	R.C.	Meth.	Pres.	Ang.	Bapt.	oth.	N.A.
D Battery	171 men	17 9.9	37 21.6	31 18.1	67 39.2	11 6.4	5 2.9	1

Table III Occupation

Unit	Total	White Collar	Blue Collar	Service	Primary	N.A.
D Battery	171 men	44 25.7	71 41.5	25 14.6	28 16.4	1

Table IIIa Distribution of White Collar Jobs

Unit	Professional	Proprietorial	Clerical	Total
D Battery	11 (6.43%)	6 (3.51%)	27 (15.8%)	44 men

Professional:

Student (6)
Teacher (2)
Doctor (1)
Engineer (1)
Dentist (1)

Proprietorial:

Merchant (2)
Gentleman (2)
Business Manager (1)

Clerical:

Clerk (11)
Traveller (1)
Bookkeeper (2)
Messenger (2)
Bank Clerk (3)
Druggist (1)
Tailor (1)
Bill Collector (1)
Agent (1)
Stenographer (1)
Store Clerk (1)

Table IIId Distribution of Fine & Major Jobs

Unit	Skilled	Un-Semi-Skilled	Total
D Battery	40 men or 22.6	22 men or 12.9	71 men

Skilled:

Artisan (2)
 Printer (4)
 Copper Wireworker (1)
 Miller (2)
 Saddler (2)
 Electrician (1)
 Plumber (2)
 Brickmaker Layer (2)
 Mechanist (2)
 Shoosmith (1)
 Painter (3)
 Photographer (1)
 Glassworker Moulder (1)
 Cheesemaker (1)
 Blacksmith Tinsmith (3)
 Carpenter Cabinetmaker (9)
 Marble & Fisher (1)
 Mechanic (1)
 Wheelwright Repairman (1)

Unskilled:

Factory Worker (4)
 Labourer (13)
 Millhand (1)
 Packer (2)

Table IIId Distribution of Service Sector Jobs

Unit	Protect	Transport Comm	Personal	Misc.	Total
D Battery	15 (8.8)	4 (2.3)	3 (1.8)	2 (1.2)	24 men

Protective:

Soldier (11)
 Policeman (2)
 Fireman (2)

Transport Communication:

Conductor (2)
 Lineman (1)
 Telegraph (1)

Personal:

Cook (2)

Miscellaneous:

Reporter (2)
 Veterinarian (1)

Table IIId Distribution of Primary Sector Jobs

Unit	Agriculture	Mining	Fishing	Lumber	Total
D Battery	24 (14.0)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)	2 (1.2)	28 men

Agriculture:

Farmers
 Farm labourers (24)

Mining:

Miners (1)

Fishing:

Sailor/Mariner (1)

Lumber:

Lumberjack (1)
 Teamster (1)

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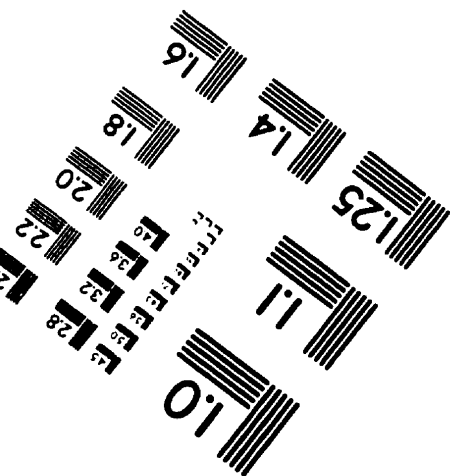
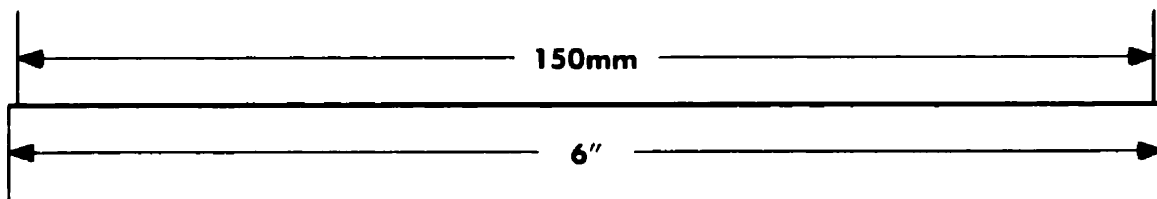
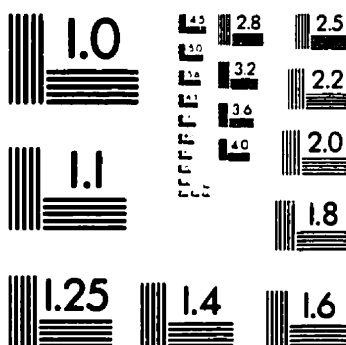
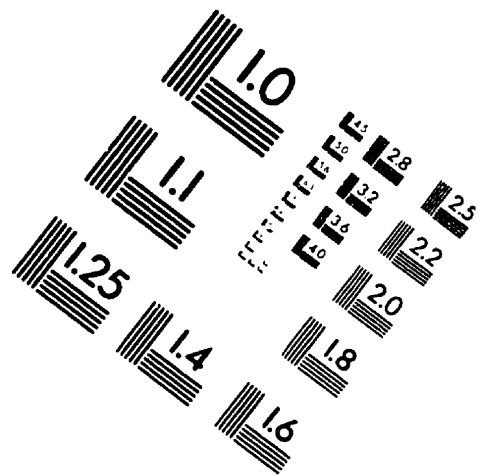
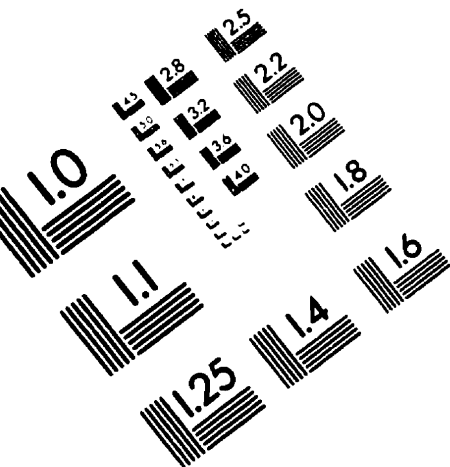
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