A Short History
of the
BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIMENT

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A Short History of the

BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIMENT

(13th Armoured Regiment, Duke of Connaught's Own, Royal Canadian Armoured Corps)

The "DUKES"

2nd EDITION, 1953

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BATTLE HONOURS

"South Africa, 1899-1900", *"Ypres, 1915, '17"*, "Gravenstafel", "St. Julien", *"Festubert, 1915"*, "Mount Sorrel", *"Somme, 1916"*, "Thiepval", "Ancre Heights", "Arras, 1917, '18", *"Vimy, 1917"*, "Arleux", "Hill 70", *"Passchendaele"*, *"Amiens"*, "Scarpe, 1918", *"Drocourt-Queant"*, *"Hindenburg Line"*, *"Canal du Nord"*, "Pursuit to Mons", *"France and Flanders, 1915-18"*. (Battle Honours *italicized* are those carried on the colours).

A Short History of the British Columbia Regiment

Your Regiment has a long and famous tradition. That tradition is now yours. Safeguard it well. In three wars our volunteers fought and died in the cause of justice and freedom.

In the South African War (1899-1902) at Paardeberg, men of this Regiment founded its battle tradition. The plaque which you see on the far wall as you enter the Drill Hall commemorates their sacrifice.

In the First World War (1914-1918) at Ypres, at Vimy, at Passchendaele, our men stood fast.

In the Second World War (1939-1945) the fighting tradition continued; at Falaise, the Scheldt, Esschen and Emmerich the "Dukes" played a noble part.

As artillerymen, riflemen, infantrymen and tank men, and under several names, the Regiment has built a proud name which is now your inheritance.

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Early History

In 1883 a volunteer militia corps was formed and named the British Columbia Provincial Regiment of Garrison Artillery. It comprised the former No. 1 Company of Rifles organized in Victoria, February 1874; Seymour Battery of Garrison Artillery, organized in New Westminster, July 1874; Victoria Battery of Garrison Artillery, organized July 1878—the latter expanded to two batteries. Its weapons were two field guns, one of which stands to this day on the concrete outside our Drill Hall. Major C. T. Dupont (1883), Lt.-Col. R. Wolfenden (1885), and Lt.-Col. E. G. Prior (1886-1896), Premier and Lieutenant-Governor of B. C., were its first Commanding Officers.

Ten years later, in 1893, Capt. (later Lt.-Col.) T. O. Townley, later to become Mayor, was given authority to raise a company of artillery in Vancouver itself, which though only seven years old was becoming a city of some importance. No. 5 Company British Columbia Battalion of Garrison Artillery, it was called, and it paraded in the old Imperial Opera House on West Pender Street. These were Vancouver's first militiamen. Before long they had won the Governor-General's cup for the best company of Artillery in Canada and this cup is in our Officers' Mess today.

In 1899, the 2nd Battalion, 5th British Columbia Regiment, Canadian Artillery (as then known) was converted to a rifle regiment. Thus began our affiliation with the Rifle Brigade which includes among the battle honours of its distinguished history Corunna, Waterloo and Inkerman. This association culminated in a formal alliance in 1912. Canada's Governor-General, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, visited the Regiment and became its Colonel-in-Chief and the unit's title was changed to the 6th Regiment, The Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles.

We still respect the traditions of Colonel Coote Manningham, who organized and commanded the Experimental Corps of Riflemen "to be composed of expert shots, highly trained and resourceful, able to travel light and quickly, who shall seize and hold tactical points in advance of the slower-moving infantry."

In 1899, volunteers from the "Dukes" won the Regiment's first Battle Honour, "South Africa, 1899-1900".

After the South African War, the Regiment settled down to its task of producing good soldiers and supplied British Columbia's first instructors in the new machine gun. For field training they now used the new "khaki" in addition to their green rifle uniforms.

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"Riflemen second to none" became their aim and their achievement. In 1904, Rfn. S. G. Perry won the King's Prize at Bisley. In 1908 and again in 1913 Major W. F. R. Hart-McHarg won the Governor-General's Medal at Ottawa. At Camp Perry, Ohio, in 1913 he won the Palma Trophy emblematic of the world's long range championship and brought home the Cup presented by the Kaiser for this event.

First World War

Then came 1914 and the achievement of a brilliant combat record. The Regiment contributed the largest detachment in the foundation of the 7th Battalion, C.E.F., and in February, 1915, entered the trenches in France. A second battalion was also raised and was known as the 62nd Battalion, C.E.F.

The 7th's first major action was at Ypres, 1915, and they covered themselves with glory, although the casualties were very heavy. Lt.-Col. Hart-McHarg was fatally wounded in this action. The annual Church Parade of the Dukes is always held on the nearest Sunday to the date of the anniversary of the Second Battle of Ypres.

Other major battles were the Somme, Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, and Passchendaele.

On August 8-9, 1918, a historical day was marked up on the regimental calendar. On that day the 7th

led a brilliant attack on their sector of the Front at Amiens in this last great push and assisted the Canadian Corps to gain 14 miles in one of the fiercest actions in the war. The Battle of Amiens marked the beginning of the Hundred Days which shattered the German Army.

When the end came, the Regiment had gained twenty separate Battle Honours. Some of the better known of these are Ypres, Festubert, Somme, Passchendaele, Amiens, Hindenburg Line and Canal du Nord. Their officers and men had won 3 VC's, 1 CB, 4 CMG's, 1 CBE, 4 OBE's, 14 DSO's (including 4 bars), 51 MC's (including 6 bars), 51 DCM's, and 192 MM's (including 11 bars). But glory seldom comes without sacrifice and the 7th suffered terrible losses—1,440 dead, 3,294 wounded, and so for a second time within the first half of the century, men of the Regiment had crossed a continent and an ocean to contribute to the successful defence of the British Commonwealth.

On reorganization after the first World War the Regiment became infantry and was known as 1st Battalion (7th Battalion C.E.F.) 1st B. C. Regiment, DCO. In May, 1924, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Regiment became The Vancouver Regiment and The Westminster Regiment, respectively.

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In January, 1930, the Regiment reverted to Rifles and again changed its title, becoming The British Columbia Regiment DCOR. Rifles have no colours and so our colours, which were those of the 7th Battalion C.E.F., were laid up in Christ Church Cathedral. Trooping was discontinued and rifle drill again adopted. Again the Regiment went into its between-war job of training and building the young men of Vancouver into a fighting Regiment. Among its Commanding Officers during this period were two Major-Generals of the Second World War: Major-General W. W. Foster, C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.; and Major-General H. F. G. Letson, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., E.D.

Second World War

On 26th August, 1939, the Dukes were mobilized for the Second World War and were guarding vulnerable points in and around Vancouver some two weeks before Canada was officially at war. Many months of guard duties and unit training followed. They were sent Overseas early in 1942, and by this time no one would recognize them as the old jackets-of-green Rifle Regiment. In keeping with changing conditions of warfare they had the honour of being selected to become an Armoured Regiment, and it was as the 28th Canadian Armoured Regiment (BCR) that they landed in England. After a lengthy

training period they saw action in Normandy in July, 1944.

On August 8-9 they had a very bitter baptism of fire in their assault on Hill 195, under Lt.-Col. Don Worthington, twenty-six years to the day since the 7th Battalion's famous advance through Amiens.

German anti-tank 88's caught the tankmen as they pressed on to their objective, and knocked out 17 tanks. Col. Worthington attacked, but heavy enemy counter-attacks decimated his squadrons, destroying 44 tanks and inflicting 133 casualties, including the C.O., who was fatally wounded.

A week later the 28th attacked again and this time they swept through. Following the break-through, as part of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division, they cut through the Germans to the Seine, pursued them across the Somme, and into Belgium.

In October, 1944, they moved on to participate in the operations which cleared the Scheldt Estuary and opened the port of Antwerp. On November 6th, in another historic encounter, a Duke tank troop was responsible for sinking four enemy vessels in Zijpe harbour in the Low Countries' inundated areas. A ship's bell today rests in our Officers' Mess to commemorate the action.

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In April, 1945, the Dukes crossed the Rhine and sped into the German town of Neuenhaus so quickly they caught the Germans before they could escape. For a few days they administered the town.

Their last action of the war began on April 17th, 1945, when they crossed the Kusten Canal and by May 5th, VE-Day, they had driven the Germans back beyond Bad Zwischenahn.

On February 1st, 1946, the Dukes came back to Vancouver and in drizzling rain marched through cheering streets to the 46-year-old armoury.

Their officers and men had won 2 DSO's, 1 MBE, 5 MC's, 3 DCM's, 10 MM's, 1 BEM, 21 Mentions-in-Despatches, and 10 Foreign orders and medals. 114 of the Regiment had been killed, 225 wounded in action. (These figures do not include decorations granted to or casualties occuring among those originally associated with the Regiment but not serving with it at the time.)

In April, 1946, the Department of National Defence decided that the Regiment should continue its tank role; in 1949 it was re-designated The British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) (13th Armoured Regiment).

Those who are privileged to wear its badges and to serve with it, whether in peace or in war, have a record and a tradition which must not be lightly regarded.

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIMENT
(DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN)
(13TH ARMOURED REGIMENT)

HONORARY COLONELS

Field Marshall H.R.H. Arthur W.P.A., Duke of Connaught and Strathern, K.G., K.T., K.P., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., V.D., T.D., Personal A.D.C. to the King....3 May 1900
(Appointment changed to Colonel-in-Chief on 22 Sep. 1923.)

Honorary Colonel Hon. Clarence Wallace, C.B.E., LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.....31 Mar. 1948

HONORARY LIEUTENANT-COLONELS

Hon. Lt.-Col. A. D. McRea.....11 Sep. 1912
Hon. Lt.-Col. W. C. Nichol.....15 Sep. 1920
Hon. Lt.-Col. W. H. Malkin .....24 Mar. 1930
Hon. Lt.-Col. C. Wallace .....14 Nov. 1946
Maj.-Gen. H. F. G. Letson, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., E.D.....25 May 1949

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COMMANDING OFFICERS OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIMENT (DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN) AND UNITS WHICH IT PERPETUATES

1883	Maj. C. T. Dupont	1930	Lt.-Col. G. H. Whyte, M.C., V.D.
1886	Lt.-Col. R. Wolfenden	1934	Lt.-Col. R. H. Rook, M.C.
1888	Lt.-Col. E. G. Prior	1938	Lt.-Col. H. E. Molson, E.D.
1896	Lt.-Col. T. W. Townley	1939	Lt.-Col. G. Carmichael, M.C., E.D.
1897	Lt.-Col. C. A. Worsnop	1940	Lt.-Col. G. H. Whyte, M.C., V.D.
1903	Lt.-Col. J. C. Whyte	1940	Lt.-Col. J. S. McGlashan, M.C., D.C.M.
1907	Lt.-Col. F. W. Boultbee	1945	Lt.-Col. R. D. Williams, M.B.E.
1910	Lt.-Col. J. D. Stuart	1946	Lt.-Col. J. W. Toogood
1913	Lt.-Col. H. D. Hulme, V.D.	1950	Lt.-Col. T. B. Nash, D.S.O.
1920	Lt.-Col. J. McL. MacMillan		
1922	Lt.-Col. W. W. Foster, D.S.O.		
1927	Lt.-Col. H. F. G. Letson, M.C...		

1951 Lt.-Col. A.J.F. Johnson, M.B.E.

1955 Lt.-Col. A.F. Lungley, C.D.

7th BATTALION, C.E.F.

1914 ..... Lt.-Col. W. F. R. Hart-McHarg
1915 ..... Lt.-Col. V. W. Odlum, D.S.O.
1916 ..... Lt.-Col. S. D. Gardner, M.C.
1916 ..... Lt.-Col. W. F. Gilson, D.S.O.

62nd BATTALIAN, C.E.F.

Lt.-Col. J. H. D. Hulme, V.D.

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIMENT
(Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles)

ACTIVE COMPONENT

1939 ..... Lt.-Col. H. E. Molson, E.D.
1939 ..... Lt.-Col. G. Carmichael, M.C., E.D.

28th CANADIAN ARMOURED REGIMENT
(B.C.R.) (C.A.C.)

1942 ..... Lt.-Col. C. E. Bailey, D.S.O., M.C.
1943 ..... Lt.-Col. D. G. Worthington
1944 ..... Lt.-Col. G. E. Parish
1944 ..... Lt.-Col. A. G. Chubb, D.S.O.
1945 ..... Lt.-Col. J. W. Toogood

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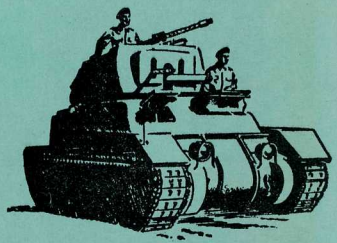

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