

Excerpt from Alfred Herbert John Andrews' 1914 Diary:

We attended a further drill at 9 AM on Sunday and were ordered to report back at 6 PM to leave for Valcartier. I spent the day (Aug 30) visiting my friends saying goodbye. We had a rather heart breaking farewell at home but Mother and Father bore up well. We all felt that I wouldn't come back and I gave away a lot of my things. when I fell in at 6 PM I had on my oldest clothes and only took a gold wrist watch, given me by Uncle Fletcher, a Gillette safety razor, given me by the office and a change of sox and shirts. I drew my pay (\$150.00) and had it changed into English gold and American gold. I put this in a belt round my waist.

At 6 PM we fell in on the Mulvey School grounds, watched by hundreds of friends and curious spectators. We certainly presented a bizarre appearance. Most of the men wore civies of varying vintage. The officers had everything from kilts to white helmets. After a lot of delay we marched down Portage Avenue and Main Street to the Union Depot. It seemed as if all my friends were on hand and as I was in the first file of fours they all spotted me. We marched down the street with out chest out in what we believed the true military manner. Looked at from this distance (9 years after) all we can say is, "We knew not what we did". It was at once glorious and pathetic. Once on the train the next job was to find bunk mates. We rode in colonist cars and had blankets issued out to soften the boards. Theo. Gunn and I occupied the lower and Art McConnahgy and a chap named Heatherington shared the top bunk.

Breakfast (at 5 AM) consisted of ham, eggs, porridge and coffee. We did not take very kindly to the porridge as it had been burnt.

How good that same porridge would have tasted 2 years afterwards! We all felt a bit stiff after sleeping on the slats but on arriving at Fort William we were marched to Port Arthur where we again boarded the train. I got my first taste of fatigue when I was detailed to carry dishes. Supper was late and the boys got very noisy.

Gunn and I drew guard on Sept 1. Our duty was to keep the men off the steps. We did a cold 2 hour shift from 5.30 to 7.30 but a good breakfast fixed us up. At Cartier we got off and took a short hike over very rough ground. It broke the monotony of the day very nicely. When we got to North Bay we were given quite reception. The girls gave us candy and sandwiches. A lot of the boys got addresses of girls to whom they promised to write.

Next morning we had two incidents to break the monotony. First McConnahgy and Heatherington got into an argument which ended in a fight and next we lost half of our train owing to a coupling breaking.

We arrived at Montreal at 4.30PM on Sept 2 and were marched by back street through rain to another station where we again entrained. We arrived at Valcartier camp at 8.30 AM on the 3rd.

The station was three miles from the camp and we started out with our kit bags on our shoulder. On arrival we found a canvas city about 2 miles square. After a wait we were finally allotted tents into which we crowded 14 to a tent. It was perhaps as well that we were packed close because the nights were very cold. Reveille was at 5.30 and we started our infantry drill at once. The Duke of Connaught was expected to inspect the camp on Sept 8 and our time was

spent cleaning up the lines . Only those who had uniforms were allowed to attend the inspection. The rest of us didn't worry at it rained very hard all day. I was put on the job of moving latrines and tents. This was caused by the rain flooding out our former location.

The followed two days of rain with the result that everything was soaking wet. Clothing was gradually issued, boots and puttees first and later overcoats. We found great difficulty in learning to put our puttees on properly.

On September 9th I passed the doctor and was inoculated. I passed the eye sight test by memorizing the card and the doctor by hiding the support I was wearing. I felt a little sick after inoculation but they took us direct to the butts where we shivered in the wind.

About this time we were given numbers. Mine was 14502.

We were taken to the butts again the next two days. My arm was sore and swollen but we were told that the only way to get the arm better was to carry on. The weather turned hot and I think that went a long way towards fixing us all up. My shooting was very poor but thanks to the fact that we marked each others cards, we all got a pass.

Being cavalry unit we did not relish the infantry drill we were getting and when we were ordered on Sept 12 to fall in with blankets, we were sure we were going to get our horses. Instead of that we were sent to picket 541 horses at the Remount Depot.

Some brilliant genius conceived the idea of having a fire drill. We were instructed that when the alarm went we were to get our rifles and fall in at once. We had 3 alarms on the night of Sept 13. The parades presented some very funny sights. Two of our men were having a shower bath when the alarm sounded. They fell in with their rifles but without the proverbial fig leaf.

Then followed a succession of drills, fatigues, guards until Sept 19 when I was inoculated again. It was a warm day so I didn't feel it so much at the time, but next day I had a high fever. I was called for parade but was too sick to get up. The Corporal told me to consider myself under arrest for refusing to parade. The next day I paraded sick and was given "relieved duty" for a day thereby missing a horse picket.

On the night of Sept 23 there was much excitement. Rumors of a possible move had been in the air for days. A kit inspection was called and our extra blankets taken away. We were off surely now! But it proved a false alarm.

Sept 24 was our official day for joining the overseas forces for on that date we signed our attestation papers. We were ordered to stand by for a march but it rained and we didn't leave. Next day our rifles were called in and biscuits were issued instead of bread. This surely meant a move but we still remained. Finally after many rumors and much uncertainty we left camp at noon on Sept 27 by train. everyone was in high spirits. We would be out of the mud at any rate.