



First summer camp, 1906

The 15th Light Horse pose during their first summer camp, held on the estate of Lieutenant-Colonel James Walker east of Calgary. All three squadrons appear to be present and although the unit is only a year old, it could already muster a respectable strength. GLENBOW MUSEUM, NA-33-35

beverage were “handed out to any thirsty individual who held up his hand in the crowd.”⁴

Now that Edmonton was the capital (still the provisional capital according to Calgarians), it seemed only fitting that it too should have a military unit of its own. The human materiel was certainly available as it had been the custom in the first few years of the new century for young men interested in horses and marksmanship to hold riding and shooting competitions in the Edmonton area. William Griesbach, last seen in 1901 when he was spending a year’s accumulated pay on young actresses and other such foolishness, was practising law in the capital and had become active in local politics. Griesbach remembered that, during the period immediately following the South African War, he “had forwarded, as either chairman or secretary of committees, a number of petitions urging the extension of the militia system to Edmonton and district, at the same time including a list of names of those willing to serve.”⁵ On 1 December 1905, Ottawa finally paid heed and the Department of Militia authorized the raising of three new squadrons of mounted rifles in the central part of Alberta: A Squadron in Edmonton, B Squadron in neighbouring Strathcona and C Squadron at Fort Saskatchewan. As part of this organizational initiative, I Squadron of the CMR at Medicine Hat was redesignated D Squadron. Major S.C. Paton commanded A Squadron and Major F.C. Jamieson, an Edmonton lawyer, took command of B Squadron. Griesbach was invited to take a commission as a lieutenant in A Squadron, an appointment that almost ran afoul of politics because, at this time, the Canadian militia was a highly politicized organization and party connections influenced the choice of officers. Despite the fact that he was well qualified, Griesbach was a Conservative

and, since the Liberals held power in Ottawa, many Edmonton Liberals were annoyed by his appointment and asked that, if his commission could not be withdrawn, at least “steps should be taken by the Government to see that” he was “not be allowed to become too prominent.”⁶ Since Griesbach would end his military career as a major-general, this is comment sufficient on the inanity of basing officer selection on political grounds.

By May 1906 the three new squadrons had received their uniforms, weapons and equipment and in June held their first annual camp at a location on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River west of Edmonton. Part of this site was currently being leased by the Edmonton Golf Club which patriotically and “cheerfully” granted permission for the Canadian Mounted Rifles to manoeuvre on their land, only stipulating that the troops “avoid the putting greens.”⁷ Almost from the start, the three new squadrons were very active which is an indication of the amount of local interest. A and B Squadrons performed ceremonial drill in front of the crowds attending the Industrial Exhibition in Edmonton in July 1906 and they carried out their first field day on the Thanksgiving weekend. Farther south, the 15th Light Horse went to camp at the military range abutting the Walker estate where they were joined by the Alberta Rangers, a unit created by the redesignation in April of the Light Horse squadron at Fort Macleod.

The year 1907 was an important one in the history of the Alberta militia. In April Military District 13 was created with headquarters at Calgary meaning that no longer would Alberta units have to communicate with far-off Winnipeg but would have the advantage of having a regular headquarters staff close at hand. The first District Officer Commanding was Lieutenant-

“OUR TRAINING IS FOR WAR”



GLENBOW MUSEUM, NA-3063-2



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The 15th Light Horse, 1905-1914

The new regiment quickly established itself and, in their stetsons and red serge jackets with yellow facings, as seen on this unidentified Light Horse corporal at upper right, became a common sight in Alberta. In 1906 it was inspected by Field-Marshal Lord Aylmer, the Chief of the Imperial General staff (right), an event important enough to be recorded by the *Calgary Herald*. From the left are Lieutenant-Colonel James Walker, Aylmer and Lieutenant-Colonel T.B. Evans, commanding Military District 13. Its band, seen above, became very popular in Alberta and made a European tour in 1907. Below, the men of a squadron pose for their portrait at Victoria Park in Calgary. The two officers wearing white hat bands in the first row and the two men in slouch hats in the last row are most likely from the 23rd Alberta Rangers.



SALH ARCHIVES



GLENBOW MUSEUM, NA-2883-46