



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIMENT (DCO)

CHURCH PARADE COMMEMORATES DUKES' BLOODING

The First Time -- GAS!

VETERAN OF OLD 7TH TELLS OF ST. JULIEN

By Major Douglas Harker, Historian of the Regiment

On April 22, 1915, a new, hitherto unused and horrible weapon of war was launched against Canadian troops -- poison gas. This is the story of one isolated company that held a key point on that day against heavy odds. Luckily they were expert shots and were able to subject the enemy to continual and accurate rifle fire. Luckily they were brave men, and very durable as this story will show.

### Doings of the Dukes

#### MAY 5 PARADE MARKS ST. JULIEN

There was a weekend conference of B.C.'s militia public relations officers recently and during a smoke-break bull session, a Regular Army man said that one thing that kept a soldier active and keen was the tradition of the unit. "I wonder how many young members know anything about their regimental history?" he asked.

The B.C. Regiment has an ancient, honorable and colorful history behind it -- three wars, artillery, rifle, infantry and armoured affiliation. Thanks to those printed short histories, everyone who joins should know the background.

The annual Church Parade each year points up the battle of St. Julien when the Dukes, as components of the 7th Bn, B.C. Regiment, ran into overwhelming odds and gas. They were blooded in that battle, returned, some of them, to fight on to victory just as the Dukes, as the 28th Armoured, tasted defeat and victory 29 years later.

To bring back that era of the 7th Bn, with their Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles component, and the name B.C. Regiment, Major Harker, ex-officer, continuing booster, member of the CO's committee and historian, interviewed a one-time L/Cpl who is too modest to allow his name to be printed.

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We heard it from a section commander, a L/Cpl with No. 1 Coy, 7th Battalion, (B.C. Regiment) CEF. He was an outstanding shot and more than once had won the silver dessert spoon, the "century" prize which went to any BCR scoring 100 out of 105.

The battalion which had recently changed over to the four-company formation and was using the recently adopted and not too dependable Ross rifle, was part of the Brigade reserve at Ypres, a spot soon to be famous in history.

The afternoon of the 22nd, shelling increased. The Germans had brought in their big howitzers. Apparently a severe attack had opened on the French front. There was a wall of smoke. French gunners appeared riding bareback; a horse ambulance bumped its way over a plowed field; a crowd of Zouaves followed. The French were withdrawing in a hurry.

On the way to the front our men heard from walking wounded that they had been surprised by Germans in French uniforms. The enemy, too, was using a light Maxim machine gun carried by extending the legs; and it looked like a stretcher even at a short distance.

They crossed the fields in extended order and before daylight were in shallow trenches on the forward slope of the Gravenstafel Ridge, to the left of St. Julien. Men who have been in battle know

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