



## Camp Valcartier, the 1<sup>st</sup> Contingent , and the 78<sup>th</sup> Pictou Highlanders

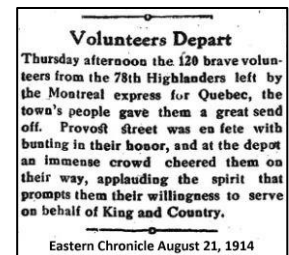


Camp Valcartier 1914

As Canada organized militia units for overseas it was necessary to create a marshalling and training area for the Canadian Expeditionary Force 1<sup>st</sup> Contingent (later known as the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division). Minister of Militia Sam Hughes previously acquired land in Valcartier north-west of Quebec City and in less than

a month after the Empire declared war the area was transformed to house thousands of men arriving by train as well as 5000 horses. It was here that a large number of local militias, such as the 78<sup>th</sup> Pictou County Highlanders, were merged into the familiar overseas battalions of the war. By September 8<sup>th</sup> 1914 32,665 men had assembled and were attested (personal details were recorded and the person signed agreeing to serve overseas). At Valcartier they undertook target practice as well as training in other techniques. It would not be inaccurate to say training was “basic” at best and the uniforms and equipment inadequate for what was to come. By September 23 the new battalions embarked on ships in Quebec and by October 1<sup>st</sup> 33 transports were heading into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence to meet their 6 British naval escorts off Gaspé. The Newfoundland Regiment, aboard a sealing ship, joined the convoy as it passed the Avalon Peninsula.

In northern Nova Scotia it was 120 men from the 78<sup>th</sup> Pictou Highlanders, as well as individual volunteers, who answered the call for the 1<sup>st</sup> Contingent. While named the “Pictou” Highlanders the militia unit was comprised of men throughout the neighbouring counties. On Thursday August 20, 1914 the 78<sup>th</sup> marched through Westville and Stellarton to the train station in New Glasgow. To cheering crowds the train left for Valcartier commanded by Colonel D.D. Cameron and Major Struan G. Robertson. The Nova Scotia volunteers were to form a 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion thereby ensuring their provincial identity. Despite being assured by the government this would be the case it became clear once overseas there would only be 16 infantry battalions. The 17<sup>th</sup> was broken up in England to supply men to the other battalions. The matter became public and formed a significant scandal in Nova Scotia and Ottawa. It would not be until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Contingent that Nova Scotia would have a battalion of its own.



To learn more about Valcartier or the 78<sup>th</sup> Pictou Highlanders we recommend the following materials. They can be borrowed through any of our branch libraries or online at [www.parl.ns.ca](http://www.parl.ns.ca).

- *Pictonians in Arms: A Military History of Pictou County, Nova Scotia* by James M. Cameron. New Glasgow: Published by author, 1969.
- *Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War: Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1918* by G.W.L. Nicholson. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962. Online only at <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/his/oh-ho/index-eng.asp>
- *Official History of Canadians in the Great War 1914-1918* by A. Fortescue Duguid. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938. 2 Volumes. Online only at <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/his/oh-ho/index-eng.asp>

ATTESTATION PAPER.

No. 28512

CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

Folio. 327

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

- (ANSWERS)
1. What is your name?..... James Chisholm Fraser
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born?..... Heatherton, Antigonish Co. Nova Scotia
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin?..... Thomas J. Fraser
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin?..... Heatherton, Antigonish Co. Nova Scotia
5. What is the date of your birth?..... Oct 29<sup>th</sup> 1879
6. What is your Trade or Calling?..... Telegrapher
7. Are you married?..... No
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated?..... Yes
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia?..... No
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force?..... Yes 1897-1898 1899-1900 1901-1902 1903-1904 1905-1906 1907-1908 1909-1910 1911-1912 1913-1914
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement?..... Yes
12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE?..... Yes

James C. Fraser (Signature of Man).

James C. Fraser (Signature of Witness).

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, James C. Fraser, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

Date, Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 1914. James C. Fraser (Signature of Recruit)

James C. Fraser (Signature of Witness)

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, James C. Fraser, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Date, Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 1914. James C. Fraser (Signature of Recruit)

James C. Fraser (Signature of Witness)

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at Valcartier Que this 17<sup>th</sup> day of September 1914.

James C. Fraser (Signature of Justice)

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.

James C. Fraser (Approving Officer)

13 as  
14 921  
72 Seaforth Regt

Description of James C. Fraser on Enlistment.

Apparent Age 22 years 11 months.  
(To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)

Distinctive marks, and marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease.

(Should the Medical Officer be of opinion that the recruit has served before, he will, unless the man acknowledges to any previous service, attach a slip to that effect, for the information of the Approving Officer.)

Scar on right & left hips

Height 5 ft 9 ins.

Chest measurement { Girth when fully expanded 35 ins.  
Range of expansion 2 ins.

Complexion Dark

Eyes Brown

Hair Black

Religious denominations { Church of England  
Presbyterian  
Wesleyan  
Baptist or Congregationalist  
Other Protestants (Denomination to be stated.)  
Roman Catholic X  
Jewish

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him\* fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.

Date Sept 7 1914.

Place Valcartier

\*Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

NOTE.—Should the Medical Officer consider the Recruit unfit, he will fill in the foregoing Certificate only in the case of those who have been attested, and will briefly state below the cause of unfitness:—

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT.

James C. Fraser having been finally approved and inspected by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular having been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.

Date 23 Sept 1914.

R. H. Markham (Signature of Officer)

Capt.