

Canada Responded Eagerly To First Great War Challenge

By BEN WARD
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 Fifty years ago this summer Canada went to war with singing in the streets.
 A nation of barely more than 7,000,000, insignificant as a military power, plunged into the First World War in 1914 on an upsurge of patriotism and enthusiasm that was almost carnal.

Within hours, thousands of men were clamoring to be recruited. There was betting that the war wouldn't last until the end of the year. Fear was expressed publicly that Canadians wouldn't have a chance to get into the fighting.
 Only a handful guessed at the horrors that lay ahead.

Formal word of war arrived at 8:55 p.m. EST on the warm Tuesday evening of Aug. 4 when a cable from the British government was delivered to the Duke of Connaught, then Governor-General, in session with Prime Minister Robert Borden and his cabinet.

CANADA CHERISHED
 It reported tersely that Britain—and its Empire—had declared war on the Kaiser's Germany.

As the news spread across the land, parades and demonstrations erupted in cities, towns and villages.

Crowds jammed downtown Montreal along La Marsaille and Rue Britannia. In Toronto, 2,000 volunteers marched along Yonge Street behind a file-and-drum band. The Governor-General's Foot Guards paraded 300 strong in Ottawa led by three bands and cheered by 15,000 onlookers.

Nobody questioned the fact that Canada was at war.
 Four years earlier Sir Wilfrid Laurier, then prime minister, had stated it plainly in the House of Commons.

"When Britain is at war, Canada is at war. There is no distinction."

Borden, then opposition leader, had warmly supported that stand.

But 1914 was a situation never to be repeated. The British or Westminster 17 years later gave Canada her own voice in the world and the right to decide for herself whether and when to go to war.

In 1939, Canada's Parliament voted to enter the Second World War a week after Britain's decision.

GRIMLY DETERMINED
 Late on the night of Aug. 4, 1914, reports of the patriotic displays poured into Ottawa from every corner of the nation.

The Governor-General called London:
 "Great exhibition of patriotism here. When inevitable fact transpires that considerable period of training will be necessary before Canadian troops will be fit for European war this ardor is bound to be dampened somewhat. In order to minimize this, I would suggest that any proposal from you should be accompanied by the assurance that Canadian troops will go to the front as soon as they have reached a sufficient standard of training."

The duke was right. Within 48 hours the initial reaction was over, but it was replaced by a grim determination that Canada would play its full role in the struggle.

There had been some preparation, but not much. The actual outbreak of war jolted most Canadians, who had been watching the storm clouds gather over Europe for so long that it no longer seemed important.

Only 10 days before, not one major newspaper in the country had carried a front page story about the mounting crisis. Most of them played up the famous Paris trial of Henrietta Callahan who had shot to death the editor of *Pictorial* for accusations of treason against her husband, an ex-premier of France. It was a real sizer.

ARMY ILL-PREPARED
 Borden wrote in his memoirs 20 years later: "Although the events I had just prepared for us for this result, it came at the last as a shock. None of us at that time anticipated the terrible duration of the war agony."

Compared to the great powers, Canada had a small, obsolete military force. The authorized permanent army was 3,110 men and 684 horses, mainly engaged in garrison duty and the training of the militia, which had an authorized force of 74,000 men and 16,000 horses. Neither was up to strength.

There were 200 artillery pieces, almost no transport, two coast-off British cruisers used as training ships and no air force. It was a military collection, and why not? Canada's main international event of 1914 was the celebration of 100 years of peace with the United States.

The first actions of the Canadian cabinet were to call Parliament into session for Aug. 18 and offer Britain a gift of 90,000,000 pounds of flour, an offer quickly accepted.

Parliament voted \$50,000,000 for war costs and approved the initial plan to send a 20,000-man army force to France.

BUTLY VALCARTIER
 There wasn't even a hint that the war was eventually to cost Canada 50 times that amount of money and put 600,000 men and women into uniform. Nor that 90,000 would cross the Atlantic, one in three to be wounded and one in seven to die.

The war's first real impact on the country was the departure of thousands of British, French

and Belgian reservists. Almost everyone had a neighbor who left to answer the mobilization call from his European homeland.
 Others left on their own to enlist in Britain, too impatient to wait for the training of the Canadian force. Before the first snows of 1914 John Mack of Brownsburg, Que., had lost two sons in France. O. A. Critchley, an Alberta rancher, was in the front lines with his three pole playing boys.

On Aug. 6 the call went out from Ottawa for recruits to gather at Valcartier, a new training camp hacked out of the bush 16 miles northwest of Quebec City. Within a month 100 special trains had poured 32,655 volunteers into the camp.

Creation of Valcartier almost overnight was a spectacular triumph engineered by Sir Sam Hughes, the minister of militia in Borden's cabinet and one of the most erratic and controversial figures of the war.

CONTROVERSIAL RIFLE
 The rifle was rigorous and intense, consisting mainly of rifle and machine-gun practice.

"I want, first of all, men who can pick the enemy every time," Sir Sam told the troops in one of his many speeches, often delivered from horseback as he rode proudly about the campsite. He boasted that the men at Valcartier had been "trained to handle a rifle as no men had ever handled before."

The rifle involved was the Ross, a story in itself. It was produced in Canada by the Scottish industrialist Sir Charles Ross under a contract signed by the Laurier government. Eventually the army was to have 342,000 of them.

Despite its political ancestry, Sir Sam put up an almost pathological defence of the Ross rifle when it came under severe criticism a year later. It was an efficient target weapon. Jammed under heavy use, Canadian troops in battle began throwing it away to pick up the hardy Lee-Enfields from fallen British soldiers. Yet it wasn't discarded until mid-1916.

During the Valcartier training period the original target of 20,000 men for the first overseas contingent was boosted to 25,000 and—almost at the last minute—to 30,000.

ARRIVED OCT. 3
 After a nightmarish loading operation, the flotilla of 30 transports carrying 30,821 men, their horses and equipment sailed from Gaspe Harbor Oct. 2. It arrived safely at Plymouth after a smooth 12-day crossing, guarded by a Royal Navy battle fleet.

It wasn't the first Canadian unit to reach England, however. That distinction went to the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, a regiment formed by veterans of the South African war who came from all corners of Canada. The Patricia's were organized under the initiative of Capt. A. Hamilton Gault of Montreal, himself a South African veteran who put up \$100,000 of the cost, and were named for the governor-general's daughter.

The Patricia's reached England in late September and went into the front line the night of Jan. 6-7, 1915. This unit was almost wiped out in a German attack in 1916.

Arrival of the male Canadian body, however, touched off a celebration in Plymouth with cheers, kisses, cigarettes and drinks. It was the first major contingent to reach Britain from her overseas Dominions and Winston Churchill, then first lord of the admiralty, called Ottawa:

"Canada sends her aid at a timely moment."

CAMPED IN MUD
 The cheerful arrival did nothing to prepare the Canadians for the shock ahead. They were taken by train to a camp on Salisbury Plain, there to spend 16 winter weeks in mud, rain, cold, lice. It rained 99 of the next 123 days, soaking the light tents and everything in them. Mud seeped through blankets and kilts.

Adding to the discomfort was Sir Sam's edict against wet canteens. It was rescinded only after heavy pressure from Gen. E. A. H. Alderson, commander of the 1st Canadian Division, and despite protests from temperance organizations back home.

A mistaken sense of relief swept the ranks when the orders came to move out for France. The division disembarked at St. Nazaire Feb. 12 and late on the afternoon of March 3 took over 4,000 yards of front between Bois-Grenier and Arrambures, in northern France near the Belgian border.

The Canadians had one quiet week to adapt themselves to the routine of trench warfare. Then all hell broke loose. The war had waited for them after all, and it was far from over.

RODY IDENTIFIED
 OTTAWA (CP)—The body of a woman discovered in the Ottawa River Monday was identified Tuesday as Pauline LeGault, 36, of Ottawa. Police said she had been undergoing treatment at a hospital.

ENVOY APPOINTED
 OTTAWA (CP)—Traugott Johannes Endemann, 50, has been appointed South African ambassador to Canada, the South African embassy announced Tuesday. He succeeds Willem Dierckx van Schalkwyk, who is taking up his appointment as ambassador to France in early November.

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