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- General

8 Aug 90

HISTORY OF WORK POINT BARRACKS AND FORT MACAULAY

Overlooking West Bay on Victoria Harbour in Esquimalt, B.C., is Work Point Barracks, the home of Canada's most westerly army garrison. Built in 1888 for "C" Battery it is garrisoned today by the Third Battalion, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

The history of Work Point as a military camp and garrison dates back to 1878 some seven years after British Columbia joined the Confederation of Canada and ten years before the construction of Work Point Barracks began.

Long before Confederation, when Vancouver Island was a Crown Colony, Work Point had been named for the Honourable John Work by officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, and adopted by Captain Henry Kellett of the HMS HERALD on the first survey of Victoria Harbour in 1846. John Work was an early pioneer and Chief Factor with the Hudson's Bay Company before he retired to Victoria in 1841. In 1853 he was made a Member of the Legislative Council of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island. He died in December, 1861, at the age of 70.

After the Russo-Turkish War, Great Britain and Russia remained on uneasy terms as a result of British policy during the hostilities. The threat of open conflict was feared both in London and Ottawa. In February, 1878, the presence of a Russian squadron of eleven ships in the San Fransisco harbour did little to dispel this fear. To the people of British Columbia the defencelessness of their position was uncomfortably realized. Major-General E. Selby-Smyth, Commander of Militia at that time, urged the handing-over of a number of 7 inch guns to the Militia from the Royal Navy base in Esquimalt. These guns, which were being returned to England, could be used for shore batteries as a show of force against any Russian threat, he contended.

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Finally on May 11, 1878, Lieutenant-Colonel D.C.T. Irwin, Inspector of Artillery, was ordered to supervise the construction of coastal batteries in the Victoria-Esquamalt area. One battery of three 7-inch, 6 1/2 ton, rifled muzzle-loading guns was established at Macaulay Point. Two other batteries were authorized for Finlayson Point and Brothers Island. Manned by volunteers - - mostly retired Royal Marines, who were familiar with the naval pieces - - the Macaulay battery was authorized and named the Victoria Battery of Garrison Artillery. The Militia General Order (No. 17), dated July 19, 1878, and published in the Canada Gazette on July 20, 1878 reads as follows: "The formation of a Battery of Garrison Artillery at Victoria is hereby authorized to be designated the Victoria Battery of Garrison Artillery." Thus, this terse military order heralded the birth of the Esquamalt Army Garrison.

It is interesting to note that the first public mention of the battery's activity was recorded in the Victoria Colonist on the morning of July 27, 1878, which is quoted in part: "Yesterday at 5 p.m. the first gun was fired from the battery. On Monday a salute of 13 guns will be fired by the Victoria Garrison Artillery."

By 1883 the Macaulay Point defences became a battery of the B.C. Provisional Regiment of Garrison Artillery; forerunner to the present day 5th (BC) Independent Medium Artillery Battery, Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery. It was not until 1887, however, that Work Point was officially chosen as the site for military barracks. While on a tour of inspection in British Columbia, the Minister of Militia, Sir A.P.C. Caron, made the selection for construction of a permanent military base. The close proximity of Work Point to the Macaulay defences recommended this choice.

Commanded by Major James Peters, "C" Battery of the Royal Canadian Artillery, consisting of 100 NCOs and gunners, arrived from Quebec on November 11, 1887. Their arrival marked the first time a unit of regular troops had crossed the continent over the recently constructed Canadian Pacific Railway Line. The battery was temporarily quartered in an old agriculture building near Beacon Hill in Victoria, where it remained until construction at Work Point was completed.

As part of the "recreational training program" of that era, officers, non-commissioned officers and gunners of the battery were put to the tedious task of clearing the primeval forest at Work Point before any buildings could be erected. By the spring of 1888 construction had started.

The Colonist in June 1888 had this to say about the project; "Work at the barracks is proceeding with commendable rapidity. The three buildings (one is Bldg 1004) are all closed in, and the roofs shingled. Between the double weather-boarding, felt paper has been introduced, so as to add to the warmth of the rooms. The buildings rest on stone foundations." By 1891 the camp was completed with "C" Battery RCA being its first inhabitants. They remained until the autumn of 1893 when they returned east. During the six-year period many members of the garrison left the army and embarked upon civilian careers throughout the Province. The battery strength had fallen to fifty-three all ranks.

On March 30, 1894, a detachment of Royal Marine Artillery, with a complement of three officers and seventy-five other ranks, arrived from England, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel G.A.L. Rawthorne. They were destined to serve six years at the Work Point garrison. In May of the same year, twenty sappers from the 18th (Fortress) Company, Royal Engineers, arrived from Halifax. Their job was to demolish old earth and wood batteries and to lay out and direct the building of new concrete and earth forts.

The Royal Marine Artillery ended their stay in September, 1899, and were replaced by another British artillery unit, the 19th Company (Western Division) Royal Garrison Artillery. In the following June, the 48th Company (Submarine Miners) Royal Engineers, arrived from England along with half of the 44th (Fortress) Company, Royal Engineers. After a short two-year tour of duty, the 19th Company, Royal Garrison Artillery, sailed for Hong Kong. The 21st Company, Royal Garrison Artillery, reached Esquimalt from Bermuda to assume the garrison duties; this company later became known as the 83rd Company. In December 1903, they too sailed for Hong Kong and were replaced by the 58th Company (RGA) from Halifax.

During the early years, Work Point was garrisoned mostly by British due, in part, to the poor discipline and training of the Canadian volunteers. Desertions were frequent, caused primarily by low pay. Civilians, including

Chinese coolies and Indians, were receiving higher remuneration and the lure of civilian wages was too much for many of the gunners. It was also during this period that the Dominion and Imperial Governments found trouble agreeing on the feasibility and cost-sharing of the Esquimalt defences. Canada wanted Britain to bear the cost of maintaining the British troops, while Britain felt that part of the upkeep should be borne by Canada.

After a great deal of correspondence between Ottawa and London, Canada finally agreed on July 1, 1905, to take over all the west coast defences, thereby relieving the Imperial units of their Canadian commitment.

In 1906, 350 officers and men of the Imperial garrison departed for England. Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, accompanied by small detachments of Royal Army Service Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps, Army Ordnance and Army Pay Corps, bade farewell to Victoria. To replace the departing British soldiers came a Garrison Company of Royal Canadian Artillery, a Fortress Company of Royal Canadian Engineers and the Royal School of Instruction. These troops represented the first Canadian regular forces in the garrison since "C" Battery, RCA, departed in 1893.

The next few years saw virtually no change in the complement of troops at the garrison. In 1911 the Headquarters of Military District No. 11 was established at Work Point; it wasn't until the outbreak of World War I in 1914 that the number of soldiers increased to any extent.

Canada's declaration of war with Germany resulted in the mobilization of many militia units across the nation. Among these was Victoria's 5th (BC) Regiment of Garrison Artillery. This regiment, however, did not proceed overseas as a unit. Instead it moved into Work Point Barracks, manned the Macaulay defences and other local forts and trained numerous drafts for reinforcements overseas. The 5th continued in this role in 1919 when it once again returned to militia status.

Following World War I, Canada typically maintained only a very small permanent force. This force included the Royal Canadian Dragoons, the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), The Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, Coastal batteries of Royal Canadian Artillery at Halifax and Victoria,

Royal Canadian Engineers, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and three infantry regiments; The Royal Canadian Regiment, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the Royal 22^e Régiment. Small detachments of services were also included as part of the permanent army. None of these units numbered anything close to a war or even peacetime establishment strength.

In November, 1920, the arrival of "B" Company of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, under the command of Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel F.H.M. Codville, MC, marked the first occasion an infantry unit was to garrison Work Point. Organized in 1914 by the late Brigadier A. Hamilton Gault and named for Princess Patricia, daughter of the Duke of Connaught, Governor General of Canada, this young Canadian regiment was the first Canadian unit into action and distinguished itself repeatedly throughout the First World War. B Company was destined to spend the next nineteen years at the garrison. The citizens of Victoria adopted the company as their own and many soldiers, who later retired from the Army, became permanent residents of the Capital city.

Between the wars was a lean period for all military forces in Canada and the Esquimalt Garrison was no exception. Training was conducted with makeshift equipment and officers were hard-pressed to produce good career soldiers. Nonetheless the parade ground performance of these troops left little to be desired and on a number of occasions the PPCLI company was called upon to supply Guards of Honour for visiting dignitaries.

By 1939 war clouds had once again darkened the European scene when Nazi Germany began its quest for world domination. World War II resulted and the PPCLI was immediately mobilized for overseas service. Shortly after mobilization, the PPCLI detachment at Work Point was increased to two companies, plus supporting elements. On November 14, 1939, they departed from Victoria to join the remainder of the Battalion at Winnipeg.

During the period between the wars, elements of both the Royal Canadian Artillery and the Royal Canadian Engineers were part of the Esquimalt Garrison.

Work Point and Fort Macaulay, from 1939 to 1945, were garrisoned by anti-aircraft batteries and served also as a training centre for overseas troops of Military District No. 11. Victoria's Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's)

trained here for a short period, but in October, 1940, this unit was despatched to Eastern Canada for overseas embarkation.

Military District No. 11 maintained its Headquarters at the Barracks until 1942 when, after more than 30 years, it was moved to Vancouver. For a short period Work Point was also the Headquarters of the 6th Canadian Infantry Division which had been earmarked for service in the Pacific. The surrender of Japanese forces in 1945 precluded the use of Canadian troops in this campaign. Subsequently, the 6th Division was disbanded. Major-General G.R. Parkes, VC, commanded all forces on the West Coast.

After the Second World War, the garrison was once again manned by men of the Royal Canadian Artillery and Royal Canadian Engineers. The Royal Canadian School of Artillery (Coastal and Anti-Aircraft) formed part of the garrison from 1946 to 1953. It was during this period, in 1949, that the artillery defences at Macaulay Point were removed, leaving only the existing gun emplacements as a reminder of local military history. In 1953 the School of Artillery left Work Point for Camp Shilo, Manitoba.

Until 1955 three batteries of heavy anti-aircraft artillery were part of the garrison. They were the 119 Battery, 127 Battery and 129 Battery. Only the 119th was stationed at Work Point, while the other two maintained Albert Head, Mary Hill and Gordon Head camps. The 119th and 127th Batteries departed in 1955 and the remaining 129 Battery was re-organized as the 4th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, RCA, and stationed at Work Point. It was also during this year the 3rd Field Squadron, RCE, arrived from Germany, after completing a two-year tour of duty with Canada's NATO Force. Although the military camps at Albert Head, Mary Hill and Gordon Head were occupied by troops at this time, they were nevertheless considered part of the Esquimalt Garrison. From 1955 to 1957, Canada's oldest infantry unit, the 2nd Battalion, Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, was stationed at Gordon Head.

The year 1957 saw a major change take place within the garrison establishment. The 4th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, RCA, left to take up residence in the artillery camp at Picton, Ontario; the 3rd Field Squadron, RCE, went to Camp Chilliwack, B.C., and the 2nd Battalion, Queen's Own Rifles of Canada left for Germany. The 1st Canadian Artillery Maintenance Unit, which had also been part of the garrison,

was disbanded on the departure of the 4th Light AA Battery. Gordon Head Camp was closed and is now the campus for the University of Victoria, while Mary Hill and Albert Head Camps were vacated and used for training when required.

The exodus of the Artillery and Engineers signalled the end of a garrison that had been built primarily for coastal defence. In November, 1957, after completing a NATO tour of duty in Europe, the 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel T. deFaye, MBE, CD, arrived to take over the complete garrison duties at Work Point. This return to Work Point by the PPCLI was likened to a homecoming by some of the older members of the regiment. Many of the retired veterans in Victoria, who had begun their military careers with the pre-war "B" Company contingent, welcomed the Battalion with open arms. The garrison in 1962 was the 1st Battalion PPCLI, but the Canadian Army commitment to NATO would mean another change of troops in the near future.

Over the years the face of Work Point Barracks has changed considerably. Many old buildings have been raised to make room for new modern barracks blocks. A fine Mens' Mess Hall and up-to-date kitchen, has been erected, and the parade square no longer abounds with egg-sized stones and gravel. The former playing field, which saw many a cricket match, is now a smooth asphalt square and is the locale for battalion parades, drill instruction and ceremonial occasions. In 1988 a fine Lecture Training Building was added and new single quarters were completed in 1990.

The garrison has not lost touch with its rich military past. Some old buildings remain and are maintained in sound condition. Still standing and now used as the Work Point Museum, is the first building ever constructed at the Barracks; the MORO Building (Bldg 1004) was one of three barrack huts built in 1888 by the Royal Engineers to house "C" Battery, RCA. The fine wooden structured Officers' Mess (circa 1888/89) was also one of the first buildings erected at Work Point and is still in use and has changed little over the past 100 years. A brick barrack block of the 1900 era is currently being used for company stores. The bricks for this old building and others were made in England and shipped around Cape Horn to reach the Esquimalt garrison.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

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|---------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 2 QOR of C | Oct 53 - Aug 56 | LtCol WHV Mathews, MC, CD |
| 2 QOR of C | Sep 56 - Aug 59 | LtCol RF MacKay, MC, CD |
| 1 PPCLI | May 55 - Jan 59 | LtCol T DeFay, MBE |
| 1 PPCLI | Jan 59 - Apr 61 | LtCol JC Allan, DSO, MBe, CD |
| 1 PPCLI | Apr 61 - Aug 62 | LtCol RF Brice, MBE, CD |
| 1 PPCLI | Aug 62 - Jul 65 | LtCol GG Brown, CD |
| 1 QOR of C | Aug 61 - Jun 65 | LtCol HCF Elliot, CD |
| 1 QOR of C | Jun 65 - Jan 67 | LtCol CL Kirby, CD |
| 1 QOR of C | Jan 67 - Mar 69 | LtCol HC Pitts, MC, CD |
| 1 QOR/3 PPCLI | Apr 69 - Jul 78 | LCol TMC Marsaw, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Jul 71 - Jul 73 | LCol PA Roy, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Jul 73 - Jul 75 | LCol RL Cowling, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Jul 75 - Jul 77 | LCol HG Leitch, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Jul 77 - Jul 79 | LCol K Courbold, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Jul 79 - Jul 81 | LCol CR Wellwood, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Jul 81 - Jul 83 | LCol WB Vernon, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Jul 83 - Jul 85 | LCol MH McMurry, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Jul 85 - Apr 88 | LCol MBE Anderson, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Apr 88 - Aug 90 | LCol HF Elliott, CD |
| 3 PPCLI | Aug 90 - | LCol PG Kenward, CD |

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Work Point Barracks
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December 1962

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