

# ROYAL DRAGOONS HOME MEN WARMLY GREETED

## Colors of Canadian Royal Dragoons Return Once More Victoriously to Toronto.

With heads bared and with hearty cheers the Stanley Barrack depot of the Royal Canadian Dragoons greeted their comrades who brought home to Toronto on Saturday night the colors of the regiment which have braved three campaigns. The unit which returned consisted of 370 men and fifteen officers, but they were greeted by an equal number of men of the regiment who have returned as casualties, as well as by the depot unit of the corps at the barracks.

Remarkable for the number of war medal ribbons which the men have earned in other wars, the contingent which returned on Saturday was one of the finest bodies of men to come home from the war—rather above the average height of the infantry units. The colors were not unfurled, but were carried by a gigantic sergeant-major, C. S. M. Korchan, while two equally imposing sergeants, Henry and Sharpe, marched with drawn swords as escort.

### Scene At Station.

Mayor Church, General Gunn, and a number of officers of the regiment were at the station when the train arrived and greeted Lt.-Col. F. Codville, M.C., the officer commanding. There was little delay at the station and the men left their kits in the discharge depot tents and formed up for the march by the Lake Shore road to **Stanley Barracks**. The line of March was imposing when it left the discharge depot enclosure, but it did not remain so long. Mothers and sweethearts who saw their men after years of separation were not to be kept back and joined the march and more than one old lady with her son's arm around her marched proudly with the corps to the barracks.

Soldiers carried their infant children, too, and wives hung round their husbands necks and the march perceptibly slowed down so that the band marched well away from the regiment and had to be halted until the happy throng caught up.

At Stanley Barrack the scene was short, but impressive. The returning warriors marched past their comrades drawn up in front of the officers' mess. Here they were cheered and cheered back and the parade dismissed, while the colors disappeared into the building. On one of the lawns of the barracks a garden party was held and here comrades who had not met since they fought on the bloodstained fields of France greeted each other and the whole scene presented a picture of bliss unalloyed.

### Officers In Party.

With Colonel Codville were Major D. Bowie, D.S.O., Major R. Nordheimer, Major F. Sawers, M.C., Major T. Moss, M.C., Captain A. E. Cochrane, Captain D. A. Grant, Captain W. J. Whitehead, and Lieutenants Johnston, Bray, J. L. Smeaton, V. LaRose, T. Atkins, Warren, and Drury.

Pte. E. A. King, of the corps, was one of the many men wearing the Military Medal. He earned the distinction during the retreat in 1918. "Just for staying with it; that was all, as far as I know," he explained.

An unusual ribbon is that worn by R. Blanc. It is the medal for duty of the French Foreign Legion, which he won for fighting in Africa before the present war. He has added to that ribbon now the Mons Star.

### Business Calls Trooper.

Pte. Waddington, of Brantford, would be a soldier yet if he could, but business calls. "My old father is over seventy and he has kept my grocery business going for me," he explained. "I have just got to go." The men who returned were offered their choice of a discharge right away or two weeks' leave to think it over because the R. C. D. is a permanent corps and men desiring to follow a military career have the right to remain in it on a peace footing.

Pte. E. A. Reeve, of 14 Lippincott street, has been in the war since August, 1914. "I have nine years' service with the regiment," he explained, "but I am going to be a civilian now. I have had enough."

Sergeant F. L. Walker explained about the trouble reported to have taken place in Bramshott camp in which, however, the R.C.D. was not mixed up. "There was some labor trouble; the dock laborers were on strike and we could not get ships to take us home and some of the men got very sore. It was a most orderly row, though," he added, "and no one was hurt seriously. There was very little to it altogether."

### Fifteen Originals.

There were but fifteen in the party which returned who were original members of the R.C.D. when the war broke out and who left with the first contingent for the front, and of these only the non-commissioned officers declared that they would stay in the army now that peace has arrived. A curious fact, however, was that a number of men who stated at the station that they intended to leave the army, changed their minds after walking under the banner at the gate of the barrack square, which declared: "None have done better," and decided they would take a fortnight's leave to think the matter over.

One of the most interested of the officers who welcomed home the regiment was Lieut. E. Price, D.S.O., M.C., with Bar, who is still suffering much from the effects of his wound which he received in a very gallant raid, and he was immediately surrounded by his comrades from the front and learned at first hand the latest news of the regiment.

Expecting that Lieut. Beck, a nephew of Sir Adam Beck, would return with the regiment, Lady Beck and her daughter, Miss Marion Beck, were at the station, but were told that Lieut. Beck had left the train at Kingston.

### History of the Dragoons.

The Royal Canadian Dragoons came into existence as a unit of Canada's permanent fighting force in 1883. At that time it was organized as a cavalry school, when fighting from horseback was in vogue. Since that time it has been a big factor as a regular fighting unit, both as a military training school and as an aid in the enforcing of law and order. When the rebellion broke out among the Northwest Indians in 1885, the regiment was dispatched to the scene and did rapid and effective work in quelling the redskin uprising.

It was during the Boer War, how-

ever, that the R. C. D.'s won their universal reputation. The entire regiment left for South Africa in 1900, under the command of Col. F. L. Lessard, now Inspector-General of all fighting forces for Eastern Canada. It comprised 605 men, 28 officers, and took along 614 horses. On the 21st of May the same year they arrived in Cape Town, and from then until peace was declared were in the thick of every large battle or skirmish of any importance. On two or three occasions the ranks were badly depleted, but after it was all over they returned to their native land with flags flying, and were wildly greeted by an admiring populace. The first commander of this regiment was Col. J. F. Turnbull, and his successor was Inspector-General Lessard. Since then many men famous in military circles have taken a commanding position in it, among whom are Major-General James Elmsley, O. C. of the Siberian Expeditionary Force; Col. Van Straubenzie, Col. F. S. Morrison and Col. Charles Nelles.

#### **Went Away First.**

When the Great War broke out in all its fury, the Dragoons were among the first to leave from Canada to aid in upholding the glorious name of Britain. On August 14th, 1914, the regiment sailed from its native shore, under the command of Col. Charles Nelles, who is now in charge of the Canadian Reserve Force in Britain, and bears the distinction of the C.M.G. The unit at that time was made up of 600 men, and carried on board ship identically the same number of horses as in the Boer War campaign.

During four years of war, the regiment have added to their fame, and served through practically every big encounter, either as a cavalry or infantry unit. At the second battle of Amiens they alone saved the day. It was in March, last year, and at the time of the big German advance. The R.C.D.'s pushed their way through a small forest called Rifle Woods, and held up the line until reinforcements could arrive. They retired, and once more it was broken through. Another attack was made by them, and they

drove the Huns back to their original positions. In all they served in the thick of twenty engagements, among which are, Festubert, Messines, Givenchy, both battles of the Somme, and both at Cambrai. At St. Quentin, and during the retreat from Mons, they fought on horse-back. After Col. Nelles' promotion, the reins of command were transferred to Col. Van Straubanzie, who was killed in action in October, 1918.

### A Fighting Family.

Col. Straubenzie was a member of one of the oldest fighting families in the British Empire, his father being a colonel, and many relatives high up in military circles. He was awarded the D.S.O. After his death, the second in command, Col. Walker Bell, was placed in charge, and is bringing the regiment home.

The regiment has a big record of decorations. It has been awarded two Commander of the Bath decorations, four Commander of St. Michael and St. George, ten D.S.O.'s, and numerous other war honors.

The 2nd Garrison band and band of the 109th Battalion will dispense martial music for the reception.