

A Marchpast of the Canadian Army Past and Present

G.W. Hughes, CD, *A Marchpast of the Canadian Army Past and Present*, 3 Vols, 1692 pages, \$350.00.

At one time, virtually every community in Canada was home to a platoon, company, headquarters or an entire battalion or regiment. Units like the 10th Brant Dragoons, the Prince Albert and Battleford Volunteers, Les Chasseur Canadiens, or the 76th Colchester and Hants Rifles are but a few. Some earned many battle honours overseas, while others never ventured farther than summer camp at Camp Hughes or Petawawa. To many people, a commission in a proud militia regiment was an important achievement. These soldiers provided the basis for army expansion in wartime. Politicians also called upon some regiments to act as an emergency force to maintain order during civil disturbances.

Most of these regiments have disappeared. Force reductions, reduced enrolment, amalgamation, disbandment or deletion have taken their toll. As each unit disappeared, so did a part of our history. Often they left little or no record. Indeed, many books covering the history of Canadian army units trace only the lineage of those regiments and corps that exist today.

The twenty year effort of one military historian has changed all this. The three volume *A Marchpast of the Canadian Army Past and Present* contains the

history of every Canadian regiment and much, much more. Wray Hughes served as a signaller with the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion in the Second World War. He landed in Normandy on 6 June 1944 and later crossed the Rhine in 1945. Following the war, he served in Korea, the Congo, West Germany and Canada. More recently, he was intimately involved in the planning and initial construction of Calgary's Museum of the Regiments. Military history has always been his love and his encyclopedic memory astonishes everyone he meets. Hughes made use of Army General Orders, Militia Orders, regimental histories, documents and interviews in compiling the extensive information for this book.

Volume 1 covers the corps, such as the Corps of Military Staff Clerks, and cavalry regiments; Volume 2 describes the lineage of over 200 infantry regiments; Volume 3 provides an order of battle of the Canadian army corps, divisions, brigades and reserve battalions in the First and Second World wars. Each regimental entry provides a synopsis of the origin, home station, march, colours, perpetuation, alliances, amalgamations, battle honours and fate of a particular unit. Throughout are excellent images of the various helmet and cap insignia worn and facsimiles of the unit colours. Particularly striking and well produced are the multi-coloured formation patches of the Canadian divisions, which have never been published in colour. A synopsis on each formation is also provided.

Easy reference is assisted by a detailed index, reflecting the theme of each volume. The only flaws are the occasional typo-

graphical error, some unusual syntax, and the lack of a detailed bibliography. Despite these minor complaints, *A Marchpast of the Canadian Army Past and Present* is the only reference work which can be consulted exclusively to learn about every regiment in the Canadian army. Not only should military historians be pleased with this achievement, but every Canadian as well, since a long and proud part of our history has finally been preserved.

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