

## The Western University Battalion

THE idea of forming a battalion for Overseas Service from among the students of the four Western Universities, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, together with their friends, was first suggested by the University of Manitoba. It was for this purpose that Captain Norman R. Wilson, Officer Commanding the University Officers' Training Corps at Winnipeg, visited Saskatoon, Edmonton and Vancouver last December.

The first meeting called for the purpose of considering participation by this University in the formation of such a unit, was held during the Christmas holidays, and on that account was poorly attended. At a second meeting, held early in January, it was decided to raise and maintain one company in the Western University Battalion. It was left to the Faculty to decide on delegates to attend a meeting to be held in Edmonton the following week, and to report what the U. B. C. had decided to do. Dr. Wesbrook, Prof. Robinson and Mr. Mulhern were chosen.

Immediately after this meeting, President McLean of the University of Manitoba, President Murray of the University of Saskatchewan, President Wesbrook of the University of British Columbia, and President Trory of the University of Alberta, waited upon Major-General the Hon. Sir Sam Hughes, Canadian Minister of Militia, and the battalion was given official recognition as the 196th, the members of the unit being given permission to wear the distinctive uniform of breeches and leggings.

Major McKay, now in France with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, has been appointed Officer Commanding the battalion, and recruiting will commence as soon as the company commanders have been chosen. The battalion will train at the Canadian Concentration Camp at Sewell, Manitoba.

N. V. H.

## C. O. T. C.

IT was destined that our University should come into existence at a time when our great Empire is involved in a struggle for the maintenance of modern civilization. It was therefore fitting that the University should take a material part in the Empire's battles for human liberty. The University of British Columbia possesses a Canadian Officers' Training Corps, of which the University has every reason to be proud. The officers' training corps occupies a very important part of the curriculum of the University, and since it is most loyally supported by the members of the student body who compose it, it is not too much to say that it is the foremost of student activities at the present time. In addition to volunteer members of the student body, our C. O. T. C. is composed of members of the Faculty and as many of the alumni as desire to enter.

Many students and one member of the Faculty have already enlisted for active service and there are many more students who expect to go in the near future. When we consider the number of students who will be enlisted, together with those who have already done so, we will have no difficulty in observing that our University will be placed on an equal footing with any other in the British Empire when one considers the ratio of volunteers to the number of available students.

While the war has hastened the formation of our officers' training corps, it is not too much to say that it would have been formed even had the war not occurred, since military training is becoming a part of the curricula of most universities.

Although the foundation of our C. O. T. C. was laid during the régime of the McGill University College, the present state of efficiency is in a great measure due to Captains Wesbrook and Jordan. They have secured for us as military instructors a number of well known local officers, among whom Captain Elliot, Sergt.-Major Coffin and Sergts. Ewart and Murray deserve mention. Captain Elliot merits special mention because, in addition to spending much time at drill, he gives lectures on military tactics to the members of the corps. Captain Wesbrook as O. C. has been untiring in his efforts and has secured the recognition of our officers' training corps by the



Dominion Government. An important result of Captain Wesbrook's arrangements with the Minister of Militia is that when the members of our C. O. T. C. have passed the required military examinations they will be eligible for commissions in the Canadian army.

In the course of the year military drill and instruction on military tactics, both theoretical and practical, were the characteristic features of military training.

On several occasions our C. O. T. C. has been inspected by Major Seely Smith, General Staff Officer of the Military District to which we belong.

Mr. J. T. Smeeton, a former student of U. B. C., who had seen service in the Imperial army, made an admirable drill instructor during the first half of the college year. Mr. Smeeton is now a lieutenant in the 131st Battalion at present in barracks at New Westminster. Lieut. Lett, another member of our corps, and former President of the Alma Mater, is also stationed at New Westminster with the 121st Battalion. Besides these students, Messrs. Dixon, Lambert and Sexsmith have been recommended for commissions in the Imperial army, and expect to leave for England very shortly.

It may be added that there are two military units in U. B. C. The senior unit is the Officers' Training Corps, the members of which are required to take a two years' course, and at the end of this time they will write for their lieutenantcies. This part of the military life of the university is entirely voluntary and four hours' drilling and a one hour's lecture constitute the weekly instruction. The junior unit is composed of the remaining men of the university and drills two hours a week. Each male student of the university is required to drill at least two hours a week for two years.

By reason of the military activities of the University at home, and its accomplishments in the service of His Majesty the King, abroad, it cannot be doubted that our university is proving itself worthy of its great name.

E. J. S., Arts '18.

### A Letter from G. M. Scott

I AM writing this letter perched on a beam in a ruined barn while on scout duty. If Fritz turns a machine gun on me as he has done on a couple of occasions, my one idea will be a hasty descent. I am not allowed to tell very much about scouting, but since I wrote, Bill, my scouting partner (we always go in pairs) had the ill-luck to connect with a whiz-bang, and he got perforated in 14 places. He was crawling along and was fortunate in getting only the little chunks, so he'll be all right in about six weeks. His hat had 16 furrows plowed across the top, so it is a good job his head was no higher. His substitute had a rifle grenade drop on him and also retired. At present I am working with an Englishman. He is a very nice chap, although he looks on me as a kind of hoodoo.

I was transferred some time ago from the Company Scouts to the special Battalion Scouts, and a couple of weeks ago was shifted again to the Brigade Scouts. There are eight of these—two from each battalion.

Yesterday we effected a great capture. You will probably have read of it in the papers. My partner and I had been trying for some days to capture a stray hen that lived on an old farm, and yesterday we led it into an ambush and made a combined assault. Result—chicken in the mulligan. Say! was that bird tough? It had been dodging foraging parties since the beginning of the war. However, we could identify the distinct flavor of chicken.

All our work is done at night and the noise out in "No Man's Land" when both lines are blazing away at one another over you is deafening. One night we ran into a German patrol. We heard someone "Hist!" to his comrade, and then a head was slowly poked above the grass. Neither of us waited to talk or argue, as a scrap in "No Man's Land" means that both parties get shot up from the trenches. Therefore both Fritz and we "beat it" hurriedly back to safety.

I haven't heard from the McGill bunch since we came over here. I hope they've all been as lucky as I have. I have been feeling fine and fit ever since joining, although generally wet to the hide since getting into the trenches.

I have got to get out of here now, as I want to get some place where I can make a dixie of tea, and cook the egg that the hen laid before her demise. Anyway, it is getting too warm here as Fritz is banging away at a battery close at hand, and he might hit me by mistake.

GORDON SCOTT.