

Lieut.-Col. FRANCIS DOUGLAS FARQUHAR, D.S.O.,  
(Coldstream Guards)

First Commanding Officer,

PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY.

A MEMORIAL.

Colonel Farquhar was born on 17th Sept. 1874, son of Sir Henry T. Farquhar, Bart. (The Baronetcy was created in 1796). He joined the Coldstream Guards on 29th April, 1896, and became Lieut. 24 Jan. 1898. He served in the South African war 1899-1900, was mentioned in despatches, received the Queen's Medal with 5 clasps, and was awarded the D.S.O. 27th Sept. 1901. He served with the Chinese Royal Infantry 1901-02, the Somaliland Field Force 1903-04 and on the General Staff, War Office, 1908-13. In 1905 he married Lady <sup>EVELYN</sup> ~~Frances~~ Healy-Hutchinson sister of the 6th Earl of Donoughmore. He was appointed Military Secretary to the Governor-General of Canada, HRH the Duke of Connaught and was promoted Lieut-Col. on Oct. 6th 1913, a position he occupied at the outbreak of war in Aug. 1914. On Aug. 12th 1914, Col. Farquhar was appointed to command PPCLI, and commanded during mobilization, training, and in the operations in France, January-March 1915, and was twice mentioned in despatches. He died of wounds on March 20th, 1915. (while leaving St. Eloi for Dickbusch)

(From 'Who was Who, 1941' and O'Moore Creagh's VC's and DSO's)

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(PHOTO)

Farquhar & Buller

photo of Barclay

Return this M. S. S. to R. S. Barclay

It was no light task that faced Francis Farquhar, Hamilton Gault his second-in-command, and Herbert Buller his Adjutant, in those hot August days at Lansdowne Park in Ottawa. Over a thousand men from every corner of Canada and every walk of life had joined the <sup>newly-formed</sup> Regiment. All but a scant fifty had seen military service, and 456 of them wore the ribbons of many campaigns, but by the time the Regiment disembarked at Plymouth on Oct. 14, 1914, the old loyalties had been submerged, and now there was but one loyalty - to a fair and talented Princess named Patricia; and one determination - to follow the precepts laid down by Francis Farquhar and earn his commendation. In three short months he had taken the flaming spirit of Hamilton Gault, the colder courage <sup>training</sup> ~~and talents~~ of Buller, and the talents and vices of a thousand officers and men into his slim hands and molded them to a new purpose and in a new image, and had laid, surely and solidly, the foundations of a great Regiment.

In late December, the Patricia's were in ~~Far~~ France, and on January 6th, 1915, the men were in the trenches. None of us who came later can visualize those early trenches in and around Ypres. Shallow ditches filled with mud and water, parapets which in many places would not stop a bullet, no communication trenches, and often isolated from the trenches on either side. And over all, the stench of rotting flesh from bodies of former occupants disentered time ~~after~~ after time by the never ceasing enemy shell fire. That these early Patricia's stood up to these appalling conditions and the constant probing of the enemy, speaks well for their <sup>GLORIOUS</sup> ~~flaming~~ courage, training and endurance; and through it all they had the ~~flaming~~ example of their Commanding Officer, and they could not let Francis Farquhar down.

One of the men who lived through <sup>the</sup> ~~that~~ dreary hell of that winter, wrote much later: "And each night, at each fresh alarm, that gallant gentleman came among his men to inspire them with the freshness of his own courage. His ever ready smile bespoke the tender heart which thrived despite a lifetime of soldier training. It was at the worst moments that he came, to stand with his men, radiating such a store of cheer and badinage as to uplift the dullest of them and feed anew the fighting fire of each. And so he stayed until tidings came of worse <sup>^</sup> ~~that~~ this befalling down the line. It was then that the quality of the perfect officer welled up in the great heart of the <sup>a</sup> man: 'Good night, my children'.  
<sup>h</sup> He faded off amidst the graves and mist. And not once but many times men swore mightily and registered this oath: That Francis Farquhar could have his heart's blood."

But Farquhar was more than a leader and molder of men. He was as well a brilliant professional soldier. In those early days the Regimental Commander had more scope than those who followed. He sighted many of his own trenches, made his own dispositions, and in many ways was his own master. It was Francis Farquhar who planned and executed the first "Reconnaissance in Force" - the trench raid which was adopted by the whole British Army and polished and sharpened and made more effective by the Canadians. The 'raid' may not have altered the over-all strategy of the war, but there is no doubt that it harassed the enemy and it certainly raised the morale of our own fighting men. And in another field he broke new ground. Departing from precedent, he recommended men from the ranks for commissions in their own unit, and five were so promoted before his death. This practice was followed by his successors, and before the end of the war, 335 men were

commissioned, 104 of whom served in the Regiment.

For the man who disdained enemy bullets and shell fire, and spent so much time in the open between his headquarters and the trenches - and between isolated trenches too - there could be but one end. And the end came all too soon. On the night of March 19th, after the Regiment had been relieved, he was hit by a chance bullet while showing the Commanding Officer of the relieving Battalion over the new line of defence which he, Farquhar, had planned. His wound was mortal, and he died in the dressing station before morning. The following letter, written by one of his junior officers, eloquently voices the thoughts of all who knew him:

France, March 22nd, 1915.

Dear Lady Evelyn:

Last night we paid our last respects to the Colonel. It was the first beautiful evening we have had. The lovely sunset still slightly tinged the sky. A new moon and the stars were quiet and clear overhead. A warm stillness and peacefulness seemed with us as we stood by the grave. Yet just beyond there was the constant crackle of rifles, now and then the whine of a bullet or the loud explosion of a bomb. Peace upon one side, war upon the other. It all seemed a token of the termination of a soldier's life, and the beginning of the peacefulness of death, we stood at the meeting place of the two.

Have we the right to grieve for the dead, who have lived and died as the Colonel? We can only be sorry for ourselves and each other. His face showed no sign of suffering or regret. He died while sleeping. There is not a man in the Regiment who does not feel a great and personal loss. No other man in so short a time could have won so much respect and affection. As a Canadian

I feel a national debt of gratitude to him. An Imperial officer who could have commanded the highest position in the English army, he accepted the task of creating, as well as commanding, a new and untried Canadian Regiment. He knew well how to combine the discipline and dignity of the regular British army with the easy independence and democracy of a volunteer colonial regiment. At all times he exercised a tact and kindness which removed difficulties or overcame them. He, more than any other, has given us a reputation and a standard which we must strive to maintain. He himself is with us no longer, but his influence and his memory will endure with the life of the Regiment.

After the short, simple service that evening, General Fortescue addressed us. He said that the loss was not only our's but the Division's, and that of the whole army. As well, he personally, he said, had never met a finer soldier, nor a nobler man. He tried to say more but could not. Some of the men, too, broke down.

I was with the Colonel for some time at Headquarters. not long before he was wounded. We were in the low cellar of a ruined farmhouse immediately behind the firing trenches. We chatted and <sup>he</sup>discussed the trenches in his cool, <sup>u</sup>humorous way. We separated, and I did not see him again. I can hardly yet realize the extent of my own personal loss. I had real affection for the Colonel in a way I have felt for very few men. He was always so friendly, so encouraging. I was anxious to do well in order to please him. In the firing line, his coolness and courage had a great effect on me. I hardly felt any nervousness if I were with him, and I had entire confidence in his judgment. He has helped me and given me chances in every way. It was he who wrote General

Snow and commended me after our attack. I owe him a great deal, and if I too must die, I cannot have a higher ideal than to die as he did.

In your great grief, these things must comfort you.

Yours very sincerely,

Talbot M. Papineau."

But Francis Farquhar did not die and will not die as long as Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry is in being. Today his great spirit hovers over the Hamilton Gault Barracks in Edmonton, Fort Macleod in Germany and the highways and byways of the world wherever the men who wear the Regimental badges may be found. His precepts and example, which he so firmly rooted in his contemporaries and those who have followed after, have coloured and enriched the lives of the thousands who, through the last fifty years, have served in the Regiment and now live their humdrum civilian lives.

"Blow out, you bugles, over the rich dead!

There's none of these so lonely and poor of old  
But, dying, has made us rarer <sup>f</sup> gifts than gold."

R.G.B.