

## WARDSVILLE VOLUNTEER INFANTRY COMPANY

FORMED AS # 6 COMPANY ON JANUARY 6, 1863

BEFORE GETTING INTO MY TOPIC: THE WARDSVILLE VOLUNTEER INFANTRY COMPANY, THIS EVENING, I WANT TO GIVE SOME BACKGROUND ON MILITARY SERVICE IN CANADA AND THE FENIAN BROTHERHOOD THAT WILL FRAME MY REMARKS.

IN THE VERY LATE 1700s AND INTO THE EARLY 1800s MILITARY SERVICE WAS MANDATORY FOR MEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 16 AND 60. THE MILITIA ACT OF 1793 WAS THE GOVERNING DOCUMENT FOR THIS MANDATORY SERVICE.

EXCEPT FOR THE WAR OF 1812-14 AND THE REBELLION OF 1837, SETTLERS OF SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO WERE MORE OCCUPIED WITH CLEARING AND ESTABLISHING THEIR LAND, THAN PAYING SERIOUS ATTENTION TO THEIR MILITIA DUTIES. AFTER ALL, BRITISH TROOPS WERE STATIONED IN CANADA AND COULD DEAL WITH MILITARY CONCERNS. BUT BY THE EARLY 1850s THESE BRITISH SOLDIERS WERE BEING RECALLED FROM CANADA TO FIGHT IN EASTERN EUROPE AND INDIA, LEAVING THE LOCAL POPULATION TO RELY ON THEIR MILITIA.

A NEW MILITIA ACT CAME INTO EFFECT IN 1855 THAT ALLOWED MEN TO VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE RATHER THAN THE PREVIOUS ACT WHICH REQUIRED COMPULSORY SERVICE. IN THE WAKE OF THIS NEW ACT, CANADA'S SEDENTARY ARMY (INACTIVE) WAS CHANGED INTO AN ACTIVE VOLUNTEER MILITIA FORCE.

MOST OF US KNOW THAT PRIOR TO CANADIAN CONFEDERATION IN 1867, THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO WAS CALLED CANADA WEST AND WAS UNDER BRITISH GOVERNANCE. DURING THE MID YEARS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR (1861-1865) THERE WERE FEARS THAT A VICTORIOUS FEDERAL VICTORY MIGHT SET THEIR SIGHTS ON THE CANADA'S, WEST AND EAST FOR CONQUEST. TO GUARD AGAINST SUCH AN EVENTUALITY, THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES WENT ABOUT FORMING VOLUNTEER MILITIA COMPANIES IN HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITIES ACROSS C. W.

A SECOND CONSIDERATION IN FORMING THE MILITIA UNITS IN ALL THESE COMMUNITIES WAS TO PROTECT BRITISH TERRITORY FROM A SECRET SOCIETY OF IRISH PATRIOTS WHO HAD EMIGRATED FROM IRELAND TO THE UNITED STATES, WITH THE INTENT OF ENDING BRITISH RULE BY TAKING CANADA BY FORCE AND EXCHANGING IT WITH BRITAIN FOR IRISH INDEPENDENCE. THIS SECRET REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION WAS FOUNDED ON ST PATRICK'S DAY IN 1858, BY ONE JAMES STEPHENS IN DUBLIN, IRELAND. THE LEADER OF THE MOVEMENT'S AMERICAN BRANCH, JOHN O'MAHONY, GAVE THE SECRET SOCIETY THE NAME BY WHICH IT BECAME GENERALLY KNOWN: THE FENIAN BROTHERHOOD. THE NAME FENIAN, COMES FROM THE IRISH GAELIC TERM FIANNA - A BAND OF MYTHOLOGICAL ANCIENT IRISH WARRIORS. ("FIANN NA H-EIRENN," FIANNA EIRIONN), .

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by Ken Willis*

THE SOCIETY SUFFERED A BLOW IN EARLY 1865, WHEN BRITAIN CRUSHED THE IRELAND-BASED INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, SCATTERING ITS LEADERS. THIS SITUATION LEFT MANY IRISH VETERANS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR WITH CONSIDERABLE BAD FEELINGS TOWARD BRITAIN, AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE FENIAN MOVEMENT IN THE STATES QUICKLY GREW TO ABOUT 10,000 MEN.

THESE MEN, WHO STILL WANTED AN INDEPENDENT IRELAND, WERE SPLIT OVER THE BEST STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVES. ONE BRANCH, LED BY O'MAHONY, BELIEVED THAT IRISH AMERICAN REPUBLICANS SHOULD SEND MEN, MONEY AND MATERIALS ACROSS THE OCEAN TO SUPPORT A REVOLUTION IN IRELAND. ANOTHER WING, LED BY WILLIAM ROBERTS, ADVOCATED THE STRIKING OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE THROUGH CANADA. ROBERTS AND HIS SUPPORTERS WON THE ARGUMENT BY POINTING OUT VERY LOGICALLY, THAT WHEREAS IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO SEND THOUSANDS OF IRISH CIVIL WAR VETERANS AND SUPPLIES INTO IRELAND, IT WOULD BE RELATIVELY EASY TO INVADE CANADA. THE THINKING WAS: WAR IN CANADA WOULD RESULT IN FREEDOM FOR IRELAND.

ON JANUARY 6, 1863 MEN FROM WARDSVILLE AND AREA WERE RAISED UP AS INDEPENDENT COMPANY NUMBER 6 WITHIN THE 26<sup>TH</sup> MIDDLESEX BATTALION HEADQUARTERED IN LONDON. OTHER INDEPENDENT COMPANIES IN MIDDLESEX WERE LOCATED IN ORDER OF FORMATION: LOBO # 2 CO. (AT KOMOKA) 17 JULY 1861, -- THAMESFORD # 4 CO. 11 SEPTEMBER 1862, -- LUCAN # 5 CO. 19 DECEMBER 1862, -- DELAWARE # 1 CO. ON 30 JANUARY 1863, -- HARRIETSVILLE # 3 CO. ON 06 FEBRUARY 1863 -- AND FINALLY STRATHROY AS # 7 CO. ON 08 JUNE 1866. IT WASN'T UNTIL SEPTEMBER 14, 1866 THAT ALL THESE UNITS WERE FORMED IN ACTIVE MILITIA WITH HQ IN LONDON BY THE REGIMENTATION OF INDEPENDENT COMPANIES INTO THE 26<sup>TH</sup> MIDDLESEX BATTALION OF INFANTRY.

THE WARDSVILLE COMPANY WAS COMMANDED, AT ITS FORMATION, BY JAMES T. WARD, WHO SERVED WITH THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT. JOHN WILSON AND CHARLES ANTHONY O'MALLEY SERVED AS ENSIGNS. (SEE PAGE 3)

THE COMPANY AT FORMATION DID NOT HAVE A DRILL SHED OR ARMOURY, THAT CAME LATER. O'MALLEY OWNED A FARM JUST SOUTH OF WARDSVILLE WITH A NATURAL RISE OF LAND FROM THE THAMES RIVER, WHERE RANK AND FILE WERE ABLE TO HONE THEIR RIFLE SKILLS BY SHOOTING AT TARGETS PLACED IN FRONT OF THE EARTHEN BACKDROP.

SOME FORM OF RIFLE AND FOOT DRILL WOULD HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT OVER THE COURSE OF THESE EARLY MONTHS AS WELL.

ON SEPTEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>, 1863 THE WARDSVILLE VOLUNTEERS, JOINED UP WITH OTHER TROOPS FORMING THE VOLUNTEER CORPS, IN BRANTFORD FOR A REVIEW BEFORE MAJOR-GENERAL NAPIER, C. B.

THESE OTHER INFANTRY COMPANIES OF VOLUNTEERS CAME FROM ACROSS SOUTHERN (ONTARIO). LONDON. ST. JOHN'S, WINDSOR, DRUMBO, SEAFORTH, CLIFTON, INGERSOLL, THAMESFORD, CHATHAM, HARRIETSVILLE AND STRATFORD.

RIFLE COMPANIES FROM LONDON, KOMOKA, ST. THOMAS, DELAWARE, WOODSTOCK, BEACHVILLE, BRANTFORD, PARIS, YORK, CALEDONIA, GALT, DUNDAS, WATERFORD, ELORA, OAKVILLE, GUELPH, CAYUGA, STRATFORD AND GODERICH WERE ALSO IN ATTENDANCE.

CAVALRY UNITS FROM LONDON, ST. THOMAS AND BURFORD ROUNDED OUT THE TROOPS THAT DAY TO A TOTAL OF 98 OFFICERS AND 2,019 MEN OF ALL ARMS. THESE FORMED INTO THREE BATTALIONS, PLACED UNDER THE COMMANDS OF CAPTAIN LORD EDWARD CLINTON, P.C.O. RIFLE BRIGADE AND BRIGADE MAJORS LIGHT AND VILLIERS IN BRIGADE FORMATION. THE LOCAL PAPERS STATED THAT 15,000 SPECTATORS WITNESSED THE DISPLAY AND CONGRATULATED THE DIFFERENT RAILWAY AUTHORITIES, WHO CONVEYED BOTH VOLUNTEERS AND OTHERS TO AND FRO, AT GREATLY REDUCED RATES. THE PEOPLE OF BRANTFORD DINED THE VOLUNTEERS WHO HAD ASSEMBLED IN THEIR EXHIBITION BUILDING.

MANY OTHER VOLUNTEER COMPANIES CONGREGATED IN TORONTO ON OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup> TO BE REVIEWED. THESE CAME FROM COBURG, YORK, MARKHAM, ST. CATHERINES, BELLEVILLE, ASHBURNHAM, PETERBOROUGH, CAMPBELLVILLE, MILBROOK, PORTHOPE, ALBION, LLOYDTOWN, KING, AURORA, BARRIE, BRAMPTON, ALTON, BRADFORD, OSHAWA, WHITBY, PRINCE ALBERT, OWEN SOUND, MORRISTON, ORANGEVILLE, GEORGETOWN AND DUNDAS.

THE TOTAL CORPS OF VOLUNTEERS, AS TO NUMBERS, FOR 1863 WERE REPORTED AS – IN UPPER CANADA (CANADA WEST) - 14, 780 -- IN LOWER CANADA (CANADA EAST) QUEBEC 10, 230. (MILITIA REPORT 1863)

UP TO NOVEMBER OF 1862, THE PROVISIONS OF THE VOLUNTEER MILITIA LAW RELATING TO THE PROMOTION OF OFFICERS WITHIN INFANTRY COMPANIES WAS AS FOLLOWS: THE OFFICERS HAD TO QUALIFY FOR A CERTIFICATE OF INSTRUCTION. NO FIXED PERIOD OF ATTENDANCE AT A SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION WAS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO ENABLE CANDIDATES TO QUALIFY FOR EITHER A FIRST OR SECOND CLASS CERTIFICATE. WHAT WAS INSISTED UPON WAS A KNOWLEDGE, HOWEVER ACQUIRED, OF THE DRILL AND ECONOMY OF A “COMPANY” FOR A “SECOND CLASS, – OF THAT OF A “BATTALION” FOR A “FIRST CLASS” CERTIFICATE.

IF CANDIDATES HAD ACQUIRED, BEFORE THEY CAME TO THE SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION, A KNOWLEDGE OF COMPANY'S DRILL, THEY WERE ABLE AFTER A VERY SHORT TIME TO THEIR ENTRANCE AT THE SCHOOL, TO BE ENTITLED TO A SECOND CLASS CERTIFICATE. THIS BROUGHT THEM THE ATTENDANT GRATUITY OF FIFTY DOLLARS AND THEN ALLOWED THEM TO DEVOTE MORE TIME AT THE SCHOOL TO THE ACQUISITION OF THE KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A FIRST CLASS CERTIFICATE AND ANOTHER FIFTY DOLLARS. THIS CERTIFICATE BROUGHT THE ELIGIBILITY TO THE RANK OF FIELD OFFICER IN THE "SERVICE" MILITIA.

A PERIOD OF THREE MONTHS WAS FIXED AS THE LIMIT BEYOND WHICH NO CANDIDATE WAS ALLOWED TO REMAIN AT THE SCHOOL. THIS LENGTH OF TIME WAS THOUGHT TO BE SUFFICIENT, IN THE OPINION OF COMPETENT AUTHORITIES, TO ENABLE A PERSON OF AVERAGE ABILITY TO ACQUIRE THE AMOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE DEMANDED.

THE THREE OFFICERS OVER THE WARDSVILLE COMPANY MAY HAVE COME UNDER THESE OLDER MILITIA PROVISIONS AS ONLY ONE MONTH WAS TO LAPSE BEFORE THE FORMATION OF COMPANY # 6.

AFTER NOVEMBER OF 1862 A NEW GENERAL ORDER WAS ISSUED CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION OF OFFICERS OF VOLUNTEERS.

1. IN FUTURE NO PERSON SHALL BE APPOINTED OR PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF FIELD OFFICER OF VOLUNTEERS UNTIL HE SHALL HAVE SATISFIED THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS, OF HIS COMPETENCE TO COMMAND A BATTALION, AT BATTALION DRILL IN THE FIELD AND SHALL HAVE OBTAINED FROM SUCH BOARD OF EXAMINERS A CERTIFICATE TO THAT EFFECT.

2. NO PERSON SHALL BE APPOINTED OR PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF CAPTAIN, LIEUTENANT, OR ENSIGN OF VOLUNTEERS, UNTIL HE SHALL HAVE SATISFIED THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS THAT HE IS ABLE TO COMMAND A COMPANY, AT BATTALION DRILL AND TO DRILL A COMPANY AT COMPANY'S DRILL AND SHALL HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS A CERTIFICATE TO THAT EFFECT.

IN THE EARLY FALL OF 1865, ENSIGN O'MALLEY ATTENDED THE SCHOOL OF MILITARY INSTRUCTION IN TORONTO AND RECEIVED HIS FIRST CLASS CERTIFICATE. THIS RESULTED IN HIS PROMOTION TO CAPTAIN ON NOVEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>, OF THE SAME YEAR.

I'M NOT SURE HOW MANY MEN FORMED THIS COMPANY TO BEGIN WITH AND THE STRENGTH OF A COMPANY COULD VARY. (50 TO 75)

A CAPTAIN'S RANK WOULD HAVE BEEN REQUIRED FOR THAT NUMBER BUT THE WARDSVILLE COMPANY, AT FORMATION, ONLY HAD A LIEUTENANT IN COMMAND – SO THE COMPANY NUMBER MUST HAVE BEEN MUCH SMALLER THAN 50 OR WARD WASN'T CERTIFIED FOR A CAPTAINS RANK.

IN EARLY 1866, WITH TENSIONS VERY HIGH AND FENIAN ATTACKS ANTICIPATED, THE WARDSVILLE COMPANY, WITH CAPTAIN O'MALLEY IN COMMAND, WAS DISPATCHED ON MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>, TO THE SARNIA AREA ALONG THE ST. CLAIR RIVER AND "WENT UNDER CANVASS" IN FULL READINESS TO MEET THE ENEMY.

\*\*\* SEE PAGE 13 BELOW.

A FEW IN THE COMPANY AT THAT TIME WERE: CAPTAIN O'MALLEY, ENSIGN JOHN WILSON, SERGEANTS CAMPBELL AND ROBERT MORRISON, CORPORALS ROBERT MCLEAN AND J. T. WARD. THERE WERE AROUND 14 PRIVATES. (IDON'T KNOW HOW WARD ENDED UP AS A CORPORAL HAVING STARTED OUT AS A LIEUTENANT). SOME OF THE PRIVATES WERE: HENRY BLAIN, THOMAS HAROLD AND DAVID M. KIMINGO.

THE FENIANS' FIRST INVASION ATTEMPT, IN APRIL (1866), DIDN'T COME ALONG THIS BORDER AREA BUT ON CAMPOBELLO ISLAND IN NEW BRUNSWICK. THE ATTACK WAS LED BY JOHN O'MAHONY, WHO HAD DECIDED HE BETTER BEAT ROBERTS TO THE PUNCH AND NOT LOSE ANYMORE SUPPORT FROM THE BROTHERHOOD.

THE PLANNED ATTACK WAS A COMPLETE DISASTER. THE ATTACK FROM EASTPORT IN MAINE WAS A POORLY KEPT SECRET. THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES INTERCEPTED THEIR WEAPONS THE WEAPONS SENT FOR THE ATTACK, ROYAL NAVY WARSHIPS WERE READY FOR THEM AND THE NEW BRUNSWICK MILITIA WERE IN POSITION TO REPEL THEM. THE INVASION NEVER HAPPENED.

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THE THREAT OF INVASION WAS OVER AND SOMEWHAT RELAXED THEIR GUARD. BUT CONTRARY TO ALL BRITISH AND COLONIAL EXPECTATIONS, THE EASTPORT DEBACLE GAVE THE ROBERTS LED FENIANS A NEW SENSE OF URGENCY; THEY FELT THAT THEY HAD TO ACT QUICKLY BEFORE ANY REMAINING SUPPORT SLIPPED AWAY. ROBERTS WAS WARNED BY GENERAL THOMAS SWEENEY, COMMANDER OF THE FENIAN ARMY, THAT THE MEN WERE NOT PREPARED AND WOULD LIKELY FACE DEFEAT IF THEY ATTACKED AGAIN. HE WAS OVER RULED AND ON THE NIGHT OF MAY 31 - JUNE 1, 1866, ABOUT 1000 MEN UNDER THE COMMAND OF JOHN O'NEILL (A FORMER U.S. CALVARY OFFICER) CROSSED THE NIAGARA RIVER INTO CANADA FROM BUFFALO, N. Y. AS AN INVASION FORCE. THE FENIANS QUICKLY CAPTURED THE UNDEFENDED TOWN OF FORT ERIE AND ITS RAILWAY AND TELEGRAPH TERMINALS. THEY ARRESTED THE TOWN COUNCIL, CUSTOMS AND BORDER OFFICIALS BEFORE CUTTING OUTGOING TELEGRAPH LINES SO HELP COULD NOT BE SUMMONED.

BUT THE ALARM HAD ALREADY BEEN SOUNDED AND THOUSANDS OF MILITIA VOLUNTEERS ALONG WITH SEVERAL BRITISH INFANTRY UNITS RESPONDED TO THE CALL AND BEGAN MOVING TOWARDS FORT ERIE .

ON JUNE 2 , THE 600 OR SO FENIANS ENGAGED AND DEFEATED THE CANADIAN MILITIAMEN AT THE BATTLE OF RIDGEWAY LOSING 14 MEN KILLED. FEARING MORE CANADIAN MILITIAMEN WERE ABOUT TO ARRIVE AND KNOWING THEY DIDN'T HAVE REINFORCEMENTS TO CALL IN, THE FENIANS WITHDREW BACK TO FORT ERIE, WHERE THEY Routed A SMALL MILITIA FORCE THAT HAD ASSEMBLED THERE TO DEFEND THE TOWN. AFTER THIS ACTION AN ESTIMATED 5,000 FURTHER MILITIA MEMBERS ARRIVED IN FORT ERIE AND THE FENIANS RETREATED BACK ACROSS THE RIVER INTO NEW YORK STATE. THERE THEY SURRENDERED TO A U. S. NAVAL PARTY NEAR BUFFALO. THIS ENDED THE FENIAN INCURSIONS ALONG THE NIAGARA PENINSULA. NINE CANADIANS WERE KILLED AND THREE DOZEN WOUNDED AT RIDGEWAY.

AN ATTACK BY THE FENIANS A WEEK LATER AT PIGEON HILL IN CANADA EAST (QUEBEC) WAS BEATEN BACK AT THE U. S. BORDER. THE FENIANS REGROUPED IN THE UNITED STATES AND BEGAN RAISING FUNDS FOR ANOTHER INVASION ATTEMPT SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE.

WITH INVASION PLANS ON HOLD BY THE FENIANS, THE WARDSVILLE COMPANY WAS RELEASED FROM THEIR POSITIONS ON JUNE 21, 1866 AND ALL RANKS RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES IN WARDSVILLE AND AREA WITHOUT FIRING A SHOT IN ANGER OR LOSING ANYONE TO INJURY OR DEATH.

LATER, IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR 1866, O'MALLEY AND HIS COMPANY, WERE SENT TO A MILITARY TRAINING CAMP IN THOROLD, ONTARIO, FOR SEVERAL WEEKS OF INSTRUCTION. O'MALLEY, ALTHOUGH APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A LITTLE OUTSPOKEN WHEN THINGS DIDN'T LINE UP WITH HIS WAY OF THINKING, AS HE MADE THE COMMENT THAT THIS CAMP WAS NOT VERY WELL MANAGED. ON COMPLETION OF THIS TRAINING WARDSVILLE #6 COMPANY BECAME #7 COMPANY WITHIN THE 26<sup>TH</sup> MIDDLESEX BATTALION. (THIS HAD BEEN THE NUMBER FOR THE STRATHROY COMPANY FORMED ON JUNE 8, 1866).

IN DECEMBER OF 1867, CAPTAIN O'MALLEY ANSWERED A HEADQUARTERS QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING THE STATE OF HIS COMPANY. HE GAVE THE STRENGTH AS 3 OFFICERS, 1 STAFF SERGEANT, 4 SERGEANTS, 1 BUGLER AND 37 RANK AND FILE. OUT OF THIS COMPANY, ONLY JAMES O'NEILL, THE QUARTERMASTER SERGEANT HAD REGULAR SERVICE TIME WITH THE BRITISH ARMY.

ON THE 29<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY 1868, A TRACT OF LAND AND PREMISES SITUATE AND BEING IN THE VILLAGE OF WARDSVILLE, CONTAINING BY MEASUREMENT ONE HALF OF AN ACRE COMPOSED OF SUB LOT NUMBER NINE FRONTING ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF MAIN STREET OR LONGWOODS ROAD (BETWEEN ONTARIO AND KENNEDY STREETS) WAS CONVEYED TO THE CROWN BY JOHN HUGH MUNROE FOR THE INTENDED PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING A DRILL SHED TO BE USED BY THE MILITIA. (A FULL COPY OF INSTRUMENT #6, VILLAGE OF WARDSVILLE IS ATTACHED). THIS AFOREMENTIONED DRILL SHED, (HALL) 40 X 80 FEET WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ERECTED ON THE LOT. THE SHED ALSO HOUSED THE COMPANY ARMOURY. FOR SEVERAL YEARS AFTER ITS ERECTION, THE SHED WAS ALSO USED TO DISPLAY EXHIBITS AND HOLD EVENTS RELATED TO THE MOSA AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FALL FAIR.

IN MAY OF 1870 JOHN O'NEILL WAS READY TO TRY ANOTHER INVASION INTO CANADA BUT FOUND THE FENIAN NUMBERS FAR FEWER THAT HE HAD HOPED FOR. THE FORCES FOR THE NEW DOMINION OF CANADA WERE NOW PREPARED FOR ACTION.

AT THE SAME TIME U. S. AUTHORITIES BEGAN ARRESTING FENIANS (INCLUDING O'NEILL) FOR VIOLATING THE NEW NEUTRALITY PROCLAMATION ISSUED BY PRESIDENT U. S. GRANT. AN ATTACK FROM VERMONT WAS QUICKLY AND EASILY REPELLED AT ECCLES HILL, QUEBEC ON MAY 25<sup>TH</sup> AS WAS A RAID FROM NEW YORK STATE THE NEXT DAY.

THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT THE WARDSVILLE COMPANY WAS EVER DEPLOYED AGAINST THESE RENEWED THREATS.

JOHN O'NEILL, A MAN NOT EASILY DISCOURAGED, WHEN RELEASED FROM CUSTODY, ATTEMPTED YET ANOTHER RAID, THIS ONE IN OCTOBER OF 1871. HE HAD HOPES OF RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM LOUIS RIEL AND THE METIS IN A RAID INTO EMERSON MANITOBA (THE FORMER NORTHWEST TERRITORIES UNTIL JULY 15, 1870). HE ONLY HAD 35 TO 40 MEN WITH HIM AND MANAGED BUT TO TAKE OVER A CUSTOMS OFFICE BEFORE RIEL, INSTEAD OF SUPPORTING O'NEILL, RAISED VOLUNTEERS AND DROVE THE FENIANS BACK TO THE U. S. BORDER WHERE THEY WERE ARRESTED BY AMERICAN AUTHORITIES.

THE SHED WAS STILL AT THIS LOCATION IN MARCH OF 1890 AS EVIDENCED BY A LETTER TO THE EDITOR IN THE GLENCOE TRANSCRIPT OF 19 MARCH 1890 – I NOTICE IN ONE OF YOUR ISSUES THAT STRENUOUS EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE BY THE CITIZENS OF GLENCOE TO INFLUENCE THE MINISTER OF MILITIA TO REMOVE

THE OLD DRILL SHED FROM WARDSVILLE ON THE PLEA OF CONVENIENCE AND ECONOMY TO ITS MARTIAL ELEMENT. SUBTERFUGE UNDERLIES THE EXCUSE, I THINK, BECAUSE FOR SOME TIME PAST THE AMALGAMATION OF AGRICULTURAL SHOWS HAS BEEN STRONGLY ADVOCATED AND WHAT MORE NATURAL THAN THAT OUR SHED, IF SECURED, WOULD SERVE THE DOUBLE PURPOSE OF ARMOURY AND "CRYSTAL PALACE."

GLENCOE SECURED OUR SHOW AND NOW WANTS OUR OLD BUILDING TO SHOW IT IN AND PLEADS THE MILITARY EXCUSE, FORSOOTH, TO GET IT, AT THE SAME TIME IGNORING THE CLAIMS OF INDIVIDUALS HERE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO ITS ERECTION, FOR NONE OF THEM HAVE BEEN APPROACHED CONCERNING IT, I UNDERSTAND. THIS BUILDING HAS STOOD FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS AND YET, WITH THE RAVAGES OF TIME AND USE, IT IS AMPLY SUFFICIENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS OF A PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO DWELL LOVINGLY AND LONG ON THE THEME OF THEIR ENTERPRISE AND PROGRESS.

CAPTAIN O'MALLEY WAS MADE ADJUTANT (ASSISTANT TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER) OF THE 26<sup>TH</sup> MIDDLESEX BATTALION OF INFANTRY ON SEPTEMBER 4, 1874 AND SERVED AS SUCH UNTIL MAY 21, 1875. AT THAT TIME HE WAS PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL AND TRANSFERRED TO THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ELGIN BATTALION OF INFANTRY. ON MAY 3, 1889, HE RETIRED FROM THE MILITIA, RETAINING HIS RANK.

A WARDSVILLE NEWS ITEM, IN THE GLENCOE TRANSCRIPT, ON NOVEMBER 13, 1884, STATED THAT COLONEL O'MALLEY HAD BEEN RE-INSTATED TO HIS COMMAND OF THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ELGIN BATTALION, AFTER A SUSPENSION OF OVER 18 MONTHS. (DID HE AGAIN STATE HIS OPINION ON A MILITARY MATTER THAT BROUGHT HIM INTO CONFLICT WITH HIS SUPERIORS ?)

IN JANUARY OF 1899 THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT FINALLY, AFTER YEARS OF PRESSURE BY MILITIA MEMBERS, AUTHORIZED THE ISSUING OF THE CANADA GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL TO SOLDIERS OF THE BRITISH ARMY AND TO THOSE OF THE CANADIAN MILITIA, WHO WERE EMPLOYED ON ACTIVE SERVICE DURING THE FENIAN RAIDS OF 1866 AND 1870, AS WELL AS THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION OF 1870. IN EARLY FEBRUARY 1900, VETERANS OF THE 26<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION WERE NOTIFIED THAT THEY COULD OBTAIN MEDALS FOR SERVICE, IN CONNECTION WITH THE FENIAN RAID, AT THE COUNTY BUILDINGS IN LONDON AND FOR THIS PURPOSE ABOUT 50 OF THEM GATHERED THERE. THEY WERE MET BY LIEUT. COL. McEWEN, SURGEON MAJOR ROOME AND CANON DAUN, HONOURARY CHAPLAIN OF THE BATTALION.

MANY OF THE MEN, OF COURSE WITH THE PASSING OF ALL THE YEARS, HAD DIED PRIOR TO ISSUING OF THIS MEDAL.



MR. W. PATTERSON, MR. GEORGE WILSON AND MR. ALFRED SMART OF GLENCOE, WERE AMONG THOSE TO RECEIVE A MEDAL. (THE CANADIAN GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL 1866 - 1870) I HAVE ONE OF THESE MEDALS - IT HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO THOMAS HAROLD OF WARDSVILLE FOR HIS SERVICE IN 1866. HAROLD WAS 31 YEARS OF AGE IN 1866 AND WAS A SHOEMAKER BY TRADE. HE DIED ON 15 NOVEMBER 1910. ARTHUR HAROLD, GRANDSON OF THOMAS WAS IN POSSESSION OF THIS MEDAL AND LEFT TO THE VILLAGE OF WARDSVILLE WHO IN TURN ENTRUSTED IT TO ME AS WARDSVILLE HISTORIAN. IT IS ON DISPLAY AT THE WARDSVILLE HISTORICAL MUSEUM.

GEORGE WILSON WAS LIVING IN WARDSVILLE AT THE TIME OF HIS SERVICE AND ACCORDING TO THE 1871 WARDSVILLE CENSUS WOULD HAVE BEEN 26 YEARS OF AGE IN 1866. GEORGE WAS CLERK/TREASURER OF WARDSVILLE FROM 1867 TO 1877, AND ASSISTANT TEACHER AT THE WARDSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL. HE RESIGNED BOTH OF THESE POSITIONS IN EARLY 1877 AND MOVED TO GLENCOE.. HE WAS THE SON OF ISABELLA (BAIN) AND ANDREW WILSON, A LONG TIME CLERK OF MOSA TOWNSHIP AND CLERK OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION COURT.

ROBERT MORRISON (THE SECOND) WAS BORN INTO A LARGE FAMILY IN SCOTLAND IN 1829 AND CAME TO CANADA IN 1843 SETTLING FIRST AT WELLAND, CANADA WEST. THERE A RELATIVE CONVINCED THEM TO MOVE FURTHER WEST TO ALDBOROUGH TOWNSHIP SOUTH OF WARDSVILLE. ROBERT, WHO FOUND AFTER A SHORT TIME NOT TO BE FARMER MATERIAL STARTED DOING CARPENTRY WORK AND BARN FRAMING. AT BOTH OF THESE TRADES HE EXCELLED. HE LATER BECAME INVOLVED IN MOVING BUILDINGS, A SKILL ALSO POSSESSED BY HIS GRANDSON RUSSELL MORRISON.

TRADITION HAS IT THAT ROBERT BUILT THE WARDSVILLE SCHOOL OF 1860 AND COMPLETED THE CARPENTRY WORK ON THE 1878 SCHOOL AFTER FIRE DESTROYED THE WORK HE HAD DONE ON THE FIRST SCHOOL.

MORRISON WAS 37 IN 1866 AND AS ALREADY NOTED SERVED AS A SERGEANT IN THE WARDSVILLE MILITIA COMPANY. HE DIED IN FEBRUARY OF 1900 JUST DAYS AFTER RECEIVING HIS MEDAL.

(NOTE: ROBERT WAS THE G-G-GRANDFATHER OF WARDSVILLE RESIDENT AND PAST REEVE, JACK MORRISON AND LONDON HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR GUY ST DENIS.)

ROBERT McLEAN - BORN IN SCOTLAND ON FEBRUARY 19, 1838 TO GENE (NEE GILCHRIST) AND JOHN McLEAN. EMIGRATED TO CANADA IN 1863. FARMED IN ALDBOROUGH TOWNSHIP ACROSS THE THAMES RIVER FROM WARDSVILLE. IN DECEMBER OF 1900 HE SOLD THE FARM AND MOVED INTO WARDSVILLE. (N-E CORNER OF AMY AND HAGERTY). HE DIED ON FEBRUARY 8, 1915 AND IS BURIED IN OAKLAND CEMETERY.

HIS OBITUARY NOTICE STATED THAT HE SPENT TWO YEARS ACTIVE SERVICE IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR AND THEN SOME TIME IN THE WARDSVILLE NUMBER 6 COMPANY, IN WHICH HE WAS A SERGEANT, SPENDING 4 MONTHS AT SARNIA IN 1866 UNDER THE COMMAND OF COL. O'MALLEY. THERE IS NO MENTION OF HIS RECEIVING A MEDAL FOR HIS SERVICE, BUT THE NOTICE CLAIMED THAT THE DOMINION GOVERNMENT GAVE HIM A GRANT OF LAND AND A CHEQUE.

JAMES T. WARD - BORN IN 1831, A GRANDSON OF GEORGE AND MARGARET WARD THE FOUNDERS OF WARDSVILLE. 1<sup>ST</sup> COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE COMPANY WITH THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT. LATER ON IN SEPTEMBER 1866 HE IS LISTED AS A CORPORAL. LIVED 2<sup>ND</sup> RANGE MOSA N-E OF WARDSVILLE HE DIED ON NOVEMBER 11, 1906 AND BURIED IN WARDSVILLE CEMETERY

CHARLES ANTHONY O'MALLEY - WAS BORN ON DECEMBER 17, 1840, THE SON OF HONORA AND C. A. O'MALLEY. HE WAS A SUCCESSFUL FARMER, STOCK BREEDER, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST, MILITIA OFFICER AND IN LATER YEARS A MEMBER OF THE PROVINCIAL POLICE FORCE IN FORT ERIE. FROM 1893 - 1900 ? BY MARCH 12, 1901 HE GAVE A TORONTO ADDRESS TO WHICH HIS MEDAL COULD BE SENT.

CHARLES MOVED BACK TO WARDSVILLE SOMETIME AFTER RETIREMENT, AND WITH HIS WIFE LIVED WITH HIS SON PETER ON HIS FARM IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF THE VILLAGE. HE DIED THERE ON MARCH 20, 1921 AND IS BURIED IN O'MALLEY CEMETERY DIRECTLY WEST OF THE OLD O'MALLEY FARM.

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY, 10 OR 12 YEARS OLD, I LIVED ABOUT A QUARTER OF A MILE FROM THE FARM OF THE THEN LATE PETER O'MALLEY AND DID CHORES FOR PETER'S WIDOW MARGARET. I REMEMBER MILITARY ARTICLES ( GUNS, UNIFORMS, ETC.) IN AN UPSTAIRS BEDROOM IN HER HOUSE AND HER TELLING ME THAT THEY HAD BELONGED TO HER FATHER-IN-LAW, THE COLONEL. THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE MID 1950s. I HAD NO IDEA AT THE TIME EVEN WHAT A COLONEL WAS OR WHAT WAR HE HAD BEEN IN. I SUPPOSE, WHEN MRS. O'MALLEY DIED IN 1961, HER DAUGHTER MINA KING, WAS LEFT TO DISPOSE OF THESE BELONGINGS.

OTHER MEMBERS OF # 6 COMPANY - DANIEL JOHNSON, NEIL JOHNSON, JOHN McCRACKEN, HUGH McCONNELL, WILLIAM BULL, JAMES FITZPATRICK, ED JOHNS, WILLIAM PATTERSON, WILLIAM TOLMAN, R. SUMERVILLE, J. GORDON, FRED PARR, NEIL McEACHREN, DAVID KIMINGO, HENRY BLAIN

FROM THE GLENCOE TRANSCRIPT OF FEB. 1, 1900 - MEDALS ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE CANADIAN VOLUNTEERS WHO WENT OUT TO DEFEND THEIR COUNTRY AT THE TIME OF THE FENIAN RAID OF 1866. AMONG THOSE THAT WILL RECEIVE MEDALS WE NOTICE THE NAMES OF W. MIMNA, THOS. HAROLD, D. JOHNSON, R. MORRISON, R. McLEAN, A. PURCELL, OF WARDSVILLE; J. BENT OF SHETLAND; H. GOLDING, E. JOHNS, W. CHAPMAN, J. FERGUSON, D. KELLY, J. LIDSTER, M. McMASTER, C. McRITCHIE OF BOTHWELL; H. BLAIN, AARON WARD, T. JOHNSON OF NEWBURY; W. PATTERSON , GEORGE WILSON, GLENCOE.

I DO NOT KNOW AT THIS TIME WHEN THIS COMPANY WAS DISBANDED BUT BY 1890 IT WOULD APPEAR THERE WAS NO MILITARY REQUIREMENT FOR THE DRILL HALL. MORE RESEARCH WILL BE REQUIRED TO FIND THIS OUT.

\*\*\* REPORT BY LIEUT.- COLONEL J. B. TAYLOR, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL MILITIA THAT WAS INCLUDED IN THE "REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE MILITIA OF THE PROVINCE OF CANADA" PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY COMMAND OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

LONDON, 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 1866

SIR, - I HAVE THE HONOUR TO FORWARD THIS SHORT REPORT OF THE VOLUNTEER FORCE CALLED OUT LATELY ON SERVICE IN MY DISTRICT.

AT ELEVEN P.M., ON THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, I RECEIVED YOUR TELEGRAM ORDERING ME TO CALL OUT 1,200 MEN FROM MY DISTRICT, TO BE READY WITHIN 24 HOURS.

I IMMEDIATELY CALLED OUT BY TELEGRAPH (WHERE POSSIBLE) 27 COMPANIES, ORDERING THEM TO MUSTER IN THEIR FULL STRENGTH AT THEIR NEAREST RAILWAY STATIONS. SEVEN OF THESE, VIZ.: GUELPH, NEW HAMBURG, TWO COMPANIES OF STRATFORD, TWO COMPANIES OF GODERICH AND LUCAN, WERE ON THE GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY BETWEEN GUELPH AND THE WEST.

THIRTEEN WERE ON THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY BETWEEN PARIS AND WINDSOR, VIZ.: PRINCETON, INGERSOLL, NORTH OXFORD, DELAWARE, WARDSVILLE, TWO COMPANIES OF CHATHAM AND FIVE CITY OF LONDON COMPANIES AND THE FIELD BATTERY ARTILLERY OF LONDON. TWO COMPANIES WERE ON THE LINE OF THE LONDON AND PORT STANLEY RAILWAY, VIZ.: ST. THOMAS AND PORT STANLEY. THE FIVE REMAINING COMPANIES WERE AT A DISTANCE OF FROM FIVE TO EIGHTEEN MILES FROM A RAILWAY, VIZ.: EMBRO, THAMESFORD, ST. JOHNS, HARRIETTSVILLE AND DRUMBO.

OF THESE COMPANIES 15 WERE REPORTED READY MUSTERED AT THEIR NEAREST RAILWAY STATIONS, AT NOON, ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup>, AND THE REMAINING EXCEPT ONE COMPANY WERE READY AT SEVEN, P.M., THE SAME EVENING, THERE BEING AT THAT HOUR MUSTERED IN LONDON THE FIVE CITY COMPANIES AND FIELD BATTERY AND FIVE COMPANIES FROM THE VICINITY, BEING A FORCE OF 585 MEN, THE REMAINING COMPANIES, 660 STRONG, WERE BILLETED AT THEIR NEAREST RAILWAY STATIONS THAT NIGHT, MAKING A TOTAL OF 1,245 MEN READY AT THEIR NEAREST RAILWAY STATIONS BY EIGHT P.M., ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH.

ON THE 9<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH I HAD: 14 COMPANIES IN LONDON, 5 IN WOODSTOCK, 2 IN CHATHAM, 6 IN STRATFORD, WHICH WERE ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> AUGMENTED BY CALLING OUT THE LOCAL WINDSOR, SANDWICH, SARNIA AND SEAFORTH CORPS.

ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH THESE WERE REMOVED TO FORM THE TWO FRONTIER SERVICE BATTALIONS AT WINDSOR AND SARNIA, WITH TEMPORARY RESERVES AT LONDON, AND DETACHMENTS AT STRATFORD, PARIS, ST. MARY'S AND CHATHAM.

THESE COMPANIES WERE CONSTANTLY AUGMENTED BY MEN FROM THEIR HEADQUARTERS WHO WERE UNABLE TO TURN OUT AT THE FIRST CALL, SO THAT I FOUND ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH I HAD A FORCE OF 1501; - THEY WERE ON THE 27<sup>TH</sup> REDUCED TO 1200, MY QUOTA.

REGARDING THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE MEN IN BILLETTS, WHEN SO MANY YOUNG MEN WERE CALLED FROM THEIR COUNTRY HOMES FOR THE FIRST TIME TO WITHSTAND TEMPTATIONS OF CITY LIFE, I AM HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO REPORT THAT THEIR CONDUCT HAS BEEN EXCELLENT AND PLACES THE STANDARD OF THE FORCE IN THAT RESPECT IN A VERY FAVOURABLE POSITION.

THE COMPANIES' ARMS, ACCOUTREMENTS AND CLOTHING WERE ALL IN A FIT STATE FOR SERVICE, (EXCEPT THE CLOTHING OF ONE COMPANY); BUT THE WANT OF KNAPSACKS WAS MUCH FELT, SINCE THE MEN COULD NOT CARRY BOXES WITH THEM AND THEY HAD NO WAY OF PROVIDING THEMSELVES WITH A CHANGE OF UNDERCLOTHING.

THE SYSTEM OF BILLETING MEN PROVED EFFICACIOUS FOR THE EMERGENCY, BUT FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME IT IS HIGHLY OBJECTIONABLE, BOTH FOR HEALTH AND DISCIPLINE.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE 51 COMPANIES IN MY DISTRICT, THERE IS ONLY ONE BATTALION, THAT OF THE COUNTY OXFORD, AND I NOTICED THE GREAT ADVANTAGE OF HAVING THESE COMPANIES IN BATTALION BY THE EASE WITH WHICH THEY WERE CALLED OUT AND QUICKNESS WITH WHICH THEY MUSTERED. I BELIEVE THE EXTENSION OF THE BATTALION SYSTEM TO THE WHOLE FORCE AS NOW PROPOSED, WILL BE OF GREAT ADVANTAGE.

I WOULD BEG TO EXPRESS MY SENSE OF THE VERY VALUABLE ASSISTANCE WHICH COLONEL HAWLEY, 60<sup>TH</sup> RIFLES, THE COMMANDANT AT THIS STATION, HAS ALWAYS RENDERED TO ME, NOT ONLY BY DETAILING OFFICERS AND SERGEANTS TO ASSIST IN DRILLING THE VOLUNTEERS, BUT ALSO BY GIVING ME THE AID OF HIS EXPERIENCED COUNSEL, AND BY THE MARKED INTEREST WHICH HE HAS EVINced IN THE EFFICIENCY OF THE FORCE CALLED OUT.

I WOULD ALSO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE ALACRITY AND ZEAL DISPLAYED BY THE VOLUNTEERS IN AT ONCE REPLYING TO THE CALL FOR DUTY, AND WOULD PARTICULARLY MENTION THE NAMES OF LANCE-SERGEANT ROBERT ATKINSON, OF THE CHATHAM COMPANY AND PRIVATES W. WALLS AND MCKENZIE OF THE WINDSOR COMPANY, WHO GAVE UP SITUATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CAME TO JOIN THEIR COMPANIES ON SERVICE. I MUST ADD THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH I AM UNDER TO THE MANAGERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE GRAND TRUNK, GREAT WESTERN AND LONDON AND PORT STANLEY RAILWAYS, WHO DID EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO AID THE RAPID TRANSPORT OF THE VOLUNTEERS AND WITH SUCH CARE THAT I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THE ABSENCE OF ANY ACCIDENTS.

I HAVE THE HONOUR TO BE, SIR,  
YOUR MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,  
JOHN B. TAYLOR,

LT.-COL. DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL MILITIA

THE FOREGOING WAS PRESENTED AT THE JANUARY 15, 2020 MEETING OF THE GLENCOE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY SOCIETY DIRECTOR AND WARDSVILLE HISTORIAN KEN WILLIS.