



Guide to Sources Relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force

Labour Battalions



Labour Battalions

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Labour Battalions

Introduction

Four Canadian Labour Battalions for work in rear areas were organized in England in December 1916 and January 1917 using men not fit for service in the trenches (B. Category). The intention was to have one battalion attached to each Canadian division in France but, in fact, all were employed in railway construction under the Director of Labour (British). In November 1917 two of the battalions finally went to the Canadian Corps and the other two became battalions of Canadian Railway troops.

In November 1917, the 2nd and 3rd Labour Battalions were redesignated as the 12th and 11th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops, respectively. In March 1918, the 1st and 4th Labour Battalions were redesignated as the 1st and 2nd Canadian Infantry Works Battalions, respectively.

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1st Canadian Labour Battalion

Background Information

Organized at Shoreham in December 1916 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. C. Machin.

Arrived in France 11 January 1917.

Strength: 13 officers, 1010 other ranks.

Worked mainly on broad gauge railways, roads, light railways, water services, trench cables and salvage.

Redesignated as 1st Canadian Infantry Works Battalion on 28 March 1918.

The 1st Canadian Infantry Works Battalion formed the 1st and 3rd Canadian Infantry Works Companies in September 1918.

Sources

In this section, the text in bold is the main topic and the indented part is the archival reference. Use the archival reference to order the document.

War diary, 11 Jan. 1917 - 13 Sept. 1918

RG 9 III-D-3, vol. 5008, folder 708

Correspondence re. badges

RG 9 III-D-3, vol. 4709, folder 92, file 16

Historical record

RG 9 III-D-3, vol. 4709, folder 93, file 15

Establishment

RG 9 III-B-1, vol. 420, file E-111-1

Cdn Records Office file

RG 9 III-B-1, vol. 1087, file L-19-4

Daily Orders

RG 150, vol. 181 = 1916/12/19 – 1918/03/31

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2nd Canadian Labour Battalion

Background Information

Organized at Seaford in January 1917 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Garner.

Arrived in France 10 February 1917.

Worked mainly on broad gauge railways.

Redesignated as 12th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops on 21 November 1917.

See also 12th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops

Sources

In this section, the text in bold is the main topic and the indented part is the archival reference. Use the archival reference to order the document.

War diary, 8 Feb. - 21 Nov. 1917

RG 9 III-D-3, vol. 5014, folder 743

Correspondence re. badges

RG 9 III-D-1, vol. 4709, folder 92, file 17

Establishment

RG 9 III-B-1, vol. 421, file E-135-1

Battalion orders, pt 1, 4 Jan - 27 Nov. 1917

RG 9 III-C-7, vol. 4493, folder 2, file 1

Historical Record

RG 9 III-D-1, vol. 4712, folder 100, file 16

Progress reports

RG 9 III-B-1, vol. 2922, file P-272-33

Canadian Records Office file

RG 9 III-B-1, vol. 1087, file L-44-4

Daily Orders

RG 150, vol. 181 = 1916/12/20 – 1917/11/25

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3rd Canadian Labour Battalion

Background Information

Organized at Bramshott in January 1917 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel W. A. Munro.

Majority of officers and other ranks from Manitoba.

Arrived in France 10-11 February 1917.

Redesignated as 11th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops on 29 November 1917.

See also 11th Battalion Canadian Railway Troops

Sources

In this section, the text in bold is the main topic and the indented part is the archival reference. Use the archival reference to order the document.

War diary, 8 Feb. - 29Nov. 1917

RG 9 III-D-3, vol. 5014, folder 742

Correspondence re. badges; strength on proceeding to France

RG 9 III-D-1, vol. 4709, folder 92, file 18

Nominal roll

RG 9 III-C-7, vol. 4493, file 9

Historical Record

RG 9 III-D-1, vol. 4712, folder 100, file 15

Progress reports

RG 9 III-B-1, vol. 2922, file P-273-33

Canadian Records Office file

RG 9 III-B-1, vol. 1087, file L-43-4

Daily Orders

RG 150, vol. 182 = 1917/01/29 – 1917/11/25

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4th Canadian Labour Battalion

Background Information

Organized at Seaford in January 1917 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. H. Mckinery.

Most of personnel from reserve battalions in England.

Arrived in France 15 March 1917.

Strength: 12 officers, 976 other ranks.

Redesignated as 2nd Canadian Infantry Works Battalion on 28 March 1918.

The 2nd Canadian Infantry Works Battalion formed the 2nd and 4th Canadian Infantry Works Companies in September 1918.

See also 2nd and 4th Canadian Infantry Works Companies.

Sources

In this section, the text in bold is the main topic and the indented part is the archival reference. Use the archival reference to order the document.

War diary, 26 Jan. 1917 - Sept. 1918

RG 9 III-D-4, vol. 5088, folder 708

Correspondence re. badges

RG 9 III-D-1, vol. 4709, folder 92, file 20

Operations. Mount Sorrel, March - June 1917

RG 9 III-D-1, vol. 4709, folder 92, file 22

Historical record

RG 9 III-D-1, vol. 4709, folder 93, file 16

Daily orders, Pts. I and II, 21 Feb. - 31 Aug. 1917

RG 9 III-C-6, vol. 4450, folder 3, file 3

Daily orders, Pts. I and II, 1 Sept. 1917 - 31 March 1918

RG 9 III-C-6, vol. 4450, folder 4, file 1

Notification of casualties to next of kin, 9 Sept. - 13 Oct. 1917

RG 9 III-C-6, vol. 4449, folder 1, file 1

Congratulatory message from Commander in chief, June 1917

RG 9 III-C-6, vol. 4449, folder 1, file 2

Historical record

RG 9 III-C-6, vol. 4449, folder 1, file 3

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Nominal roll, March 1917

RG 9 III-C-6, vol. 4449, folder 1, file 4

Routine orders, Assistant Director of Light Railways, Second Army, 25 July 1917

RG 9 III-C-6, vol. 4449, folder 1, file 5

Stores, 3 - 5 Oct. 1917

RG 9 III-C-6, vol. 4449, folder 1, file 6

Daily Orders

RG 150, vol. 182 = 1917/02/14 – 1917/12/31

RG 150, vol. 199 = 1918/01/07 – 1918/03/25