

“HOME DEFENCE” IS NO MORE



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It was a confusing month for the 96th Lake Superior Regiment, Home Defence Force in May 1917. Just two months previous, the unit was cleared to begin recruitment for the Home Defence Force in Military District No.10. After enlisting near 30 men for the unit, orders were received that no more recruits would be accepted and recruitment discontinued for the Home Defence Force. While this was taking place, the Canadian Government stated that a type of selective conscription would take place to raise 50,000 to 100,000 soldiers. Lieut. Col. J.A. Little and other officers of the 96th Regiment would begin to undertake the task of interviewing over 2000 men from the Thunder Bay District and surrounding area who signed national service cards at the beginning of 1917. The goal behind each interview was to inquire about each man's willingness to serve.

Recruitment for other Canadian military units in the Lakehead also continued in May 1917. While recruitment for the Army Service Corps, the 230th Forestry Battalion and the Royal Engineers Inland Water Transport section progressed, two other military organizations began recruiting in Fort William and Port Arthur. Recruiters for a construction battalion came to the Lakehead seeking 50 men and enlistment began for the Divisional Signalling Corps under Lieut. Bennett.