

# CANADA MUSTERING HER NEW ARMY



Canadians having tea in the front line. February, 1918 Source: Canada. Dept. of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada/

## LOCAL MEN ANSWER THE CALL

A steady stream of men, called up under the selective draft, poured into the Port Arthur armories this morning at the hour of ten o'clock, ready to sign up and receive their papers. Once signed up, they were none of them permitted to leave the armories, but were passed on at once to the drill sergeants and a start was made with their military duties. As early as eleven o'clock this morning, nearly fifty men were on the floor of the armories, being drilled by several sergeants in different squads. Below the main floor, the cooks were busy preparing the midday meal. The diet sheet for the day was seen, and the meals are of a very high standard. In the quartermaster's stores sergeants were busy checking up supplies, ready to issue uniforms to the recruits. Officers state today that the men were coming up in satisfactory numbers. Any that did not report, out of those called up for service today, would be treated as absent without leave. The men of the selective draft at the head of the lakes appear of exceptionally fine physique. Some "Class B" or "Class C" men can be used to advantage at the armories as stenographers or office assistants. All "A" men are required for drill.

Under the Military Service Act, men began reporting for active duty throughout the month of January. On January 3, 1918 the first half of the 300 men from Thunder Bay and surrounding area were called to duty. The men from this half of the selective draft began reporting for service at the Port Arthur Armouries, with Major H.A. Ruttan in charge. Training immediately followed for the new soldiers. The second half of the selective draft was called up shortly after in January and continued right through the month.

Local police also continued arresting men who had not registered under the Military Service Act for service or for exemption. Late in the month of January, Captain Douglas Kerr of Fort William was appointed to organize a special police unit to locate and arrest delinquent, unregistered men.

Also of note during January 1918 was the recruitment for other military units in the Twin Cities. While recruitment continued for the Royal Flying Corps, Sgt. M.W. Johnson traveled to the Lakehead from Winnipeg to seek recruits for the Inland Waterways and Docks, Royal Engineers. Captain Gape also arrived at the Port Arthur Armouries looking for applicants for Home Service in Canada. To join Home Service, men would need to be categorized lower than Class "A" with returning soldiers given preference.