



Assault on Batoche, 12 May 1885. A dramatic artist's portrayal of the last attack. Losing patience with Middleton's cautious tactics, the Canadian militia unit commanders launched an assault, took the village and broke the spirit of the Métis forces. (*Canadian Illustrated War News*)

Ernest Chambers, who witnessed the attack, later wrote that the Royal Grenadiers "had the heaviest part of the rebel defences to advance against and the heaviest and most prolonged fire to sustain before reaching them." This statement is borne out by the fact that the men in the pits in front of the Grenadiers waited at their posts "until the bayonets were amongst them."⁶¹

By mid-afternoon, it was all over and Batoche was in Canadian hands – but the victory had not come without cost. Lieutenant William Fitch of No. 3 Company had been killed and nine other Royals wounded. Surgeon Ryerson later wrote that

We in the camp were quite taken by surprise when we heard the cheering, we knew something was up. I sent one of my stretchers out with the regiment, but when the men disappeared in the bluff I immediately ordered out the other, and went up with it at the double. My ambulance has pulled out fifteen so far many of them under fire. They have not been backward with the rifle either when their other duties permitted. The officers all expressed satisfaction with their services and with the field hospital.

As regards the killed, we [the Royal Grenadiers] have had two. Private [Thomas] Moor was shot in the head by a round ball, which crushed his skull, glanced off through another man's arm and slightly wounded a third. My men brought

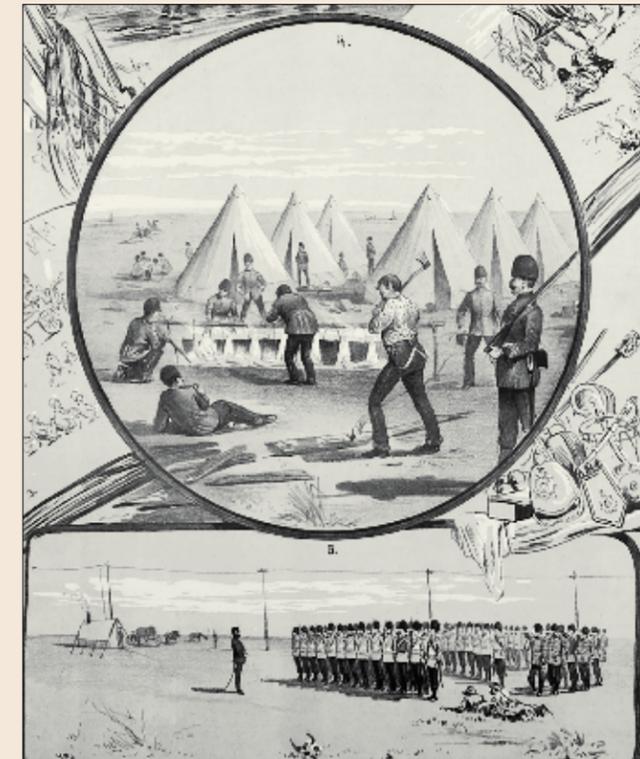
him out under heavy fire. The Gatling covered our retreat. The balls were fairly squirted in volleys. He was living but unconscious and died in about four hours. He was a nice boy and greatly liked by his comrades. Poor [Lieutenant William] Fitch was shot right through the heart and died without uttering a word. He is very much missed for he was greatly beloved as a generous, unselfish, good-hearted fellow.⁶²

Colour-Sergeant Frederick Curzon, who functioned as the Royals' war artist, also distinguished himself during this action. Curzon had attended an ambulance class given by Surgeon Ryerson the previous winter, and the knowledge he had gained "enabled him to save the life of man who was shot in the main artery of the arm and was fast bleeding to death."⁶³ Curzon performed this feat under fire and many thought that he should be recommended for a Victoria Cross but that was never done.⁶⁴

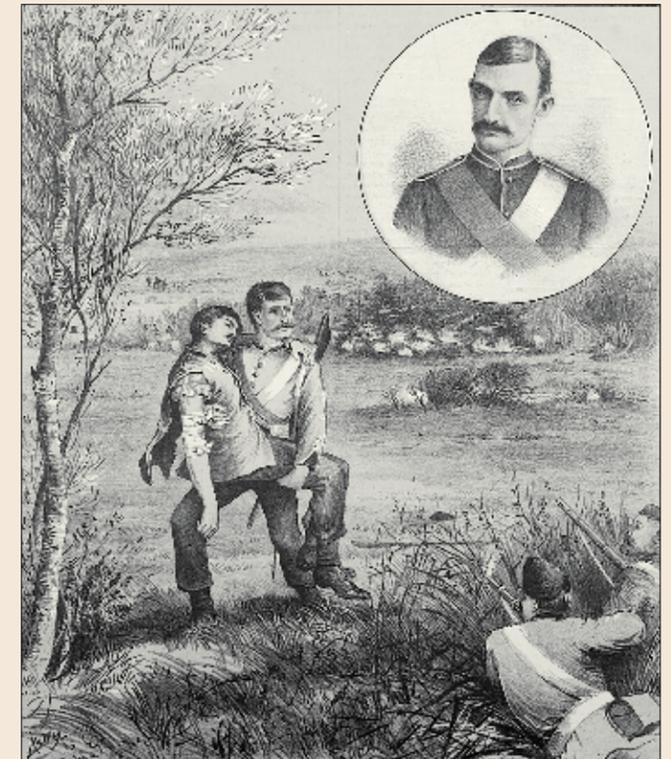
The four-day action had cost Middleton 8 dead and 48 wounded while the opponent's loss was estimated to be 51 killed and 173 wounded. After the victory at Batoche, there only remained to mop up the remnants of the rebellion. Riel surrendered on 14 May and was later tried, convicted and executed for treason, although many thought that this was an injustice as the man appeared to be mentally unstable. Gabriel Dumont fled to the United States and ended up touring in Buffalo Bill's Wild

THE ROYALS ON CAMPAIGN IN 1885

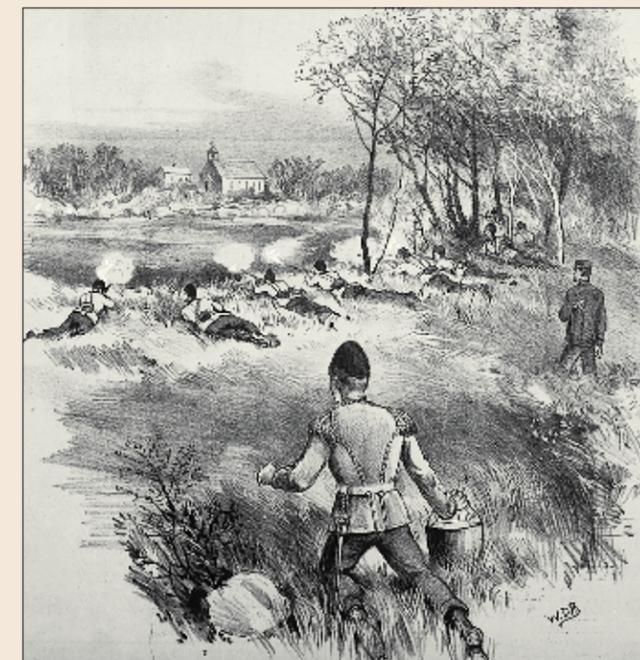
Many of the campaign scenes that appeared in *Canadian Illustrated War News* were the work of the Royals' war artist, Colour Sergeant F. W. Curzon, including two below.



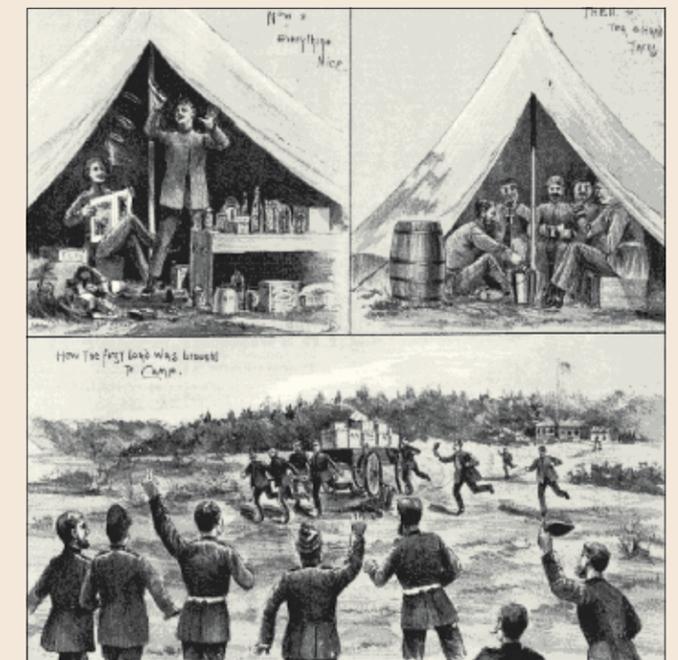
Camp life. Curzon illustrates various elements of camp life: cooking, splitting firewood and drill.



Curzon rescues a comrade. Under fire at Batoche, Colour Sergeant F. W. Curzon carried a wounded comrade back to the medical aid post.



Dinner under fire at Batoche. A musician (identified by the "wings" on his tunic) brings forward a meal to the troops on the firing line. Note the officer in blue, standing to the rear of his men.



The arrival of presents. The people of Toronto sent a large shipment of presents to their units in the field. The Royals were the last to get theirs and Curzon illustrated the happy scene when the gifts finally arrived.