

**Private William James Golden (Number 414443) of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, Canadian Expeditionary Force, having no known last resting-place, is commemorated in the stone of the Canadian National Memorial which stands on *Vimy Ridge*.**

**(Right: *The image of a cap badge of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, is from the Wikipedia Web-site.*)**

**(continued)**



His occupations prior to military service recorded as those of both *labourer* and *miner*, William James Golden may well have been the young man found on the passenger list of the SS *Bruce* on her crossing of September 12, 1912, from Port aux Basques in the Dominion of Newfoundland to North Sydney, Cape Breton, in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia. His destination documented as Sydney, he was likely travelling there to seek employment.

His first pay records show that it was on August 3, 1915, in the industrial city of Sydney, that the Canadian Army first remunerated Private Golden for his services to the Canadian Army, a date of enlistment confirmed by a first medical report. It was also then that he was *taken on strength* by the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion (*Nova Scotia*).

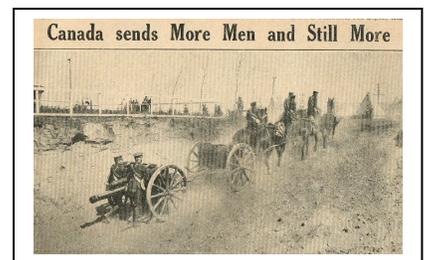
Four days afterwards, on August 7 and while still in Sydney, he underwent that aforementioned medical examination - which found him...*fit for the Canadian Over Seas Expeditionary Force* - and was also attested by an official of the local magistrature.

Finally, five days later again, on August 12, the Officer Commanding the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel A.G. Vincent, concluded the enlistment formalities when he declared – on paper – that...*William James Golden...having finally been approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation\**.

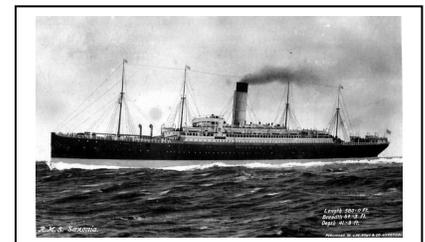
*\*The 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been mobilized on May 11 of 1915 at Camp Aldershot in Nova Scotia and had undergone its early training there but it had then been relocated to Camp Valcartier in Québec on June 21. Thus it may well be that Private Golden travelled there, to Québec, during that five-day interim of August 7 to 12.*

Despite having declared on his attestation papers of August 7 not to be married, it appears that this was not true. Records show that on July 6 of 1915, Private Golden was joined in matrimony to seventeen year-old Miss Florence (known as *Flossie*) Joyce of (perhaps Freshwater) Carbonear, Newfoundland. The couple were wedded in the community of Sydney Mines by the local Church of England minister.

(Right: *Canadian artillery being put through its paces at the Camp at Valcartier. In 1914, the main Army Camp in Canada was at Petawawa. However, its location in Ontario – but also at some distance from the Great Lakes – made it impractical for the despatch of troops overseas. Valcartier was apparently built within weeks after the Declaration of War. – photograph (from a later date in the War) from *The War Illustrated**)



Two drafts from the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion had already sailed before the parent unit itself crossed the Atlantic, seemingly to be employed upon arrival in England as re-enforcements for other units already serving on the Continent. It was on October 18, 1915, that Private Golden and the main body of the Battalion took ship in the port of Québec – in the company of the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion of Canadian Infantry – embarking onto His Majesty's Transport *Saxonia\**.



***\*For some six months during the early days of the Great War, the vessel had served to accommodate German prisoners of war. In March of 1915 she then had reverted to service as a troop transport.***

**(Preceding page: *The image of the Royal Mail Ship Saxonia is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)**

The vessel sailed on the same October 18, then to dock in the English south-coast naval port of Plymouth-Devonport ten days later, on October 28. Private Golden's 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion was subsequently transported by train the relatively short distance to the fledgling Canadian military camp then being established in the vicinity of the villages of Liphook and Bramshott – to which latter community the camp owed its name - in the southern English county of Hampshire.



The 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion was apparently the first Canadian unit to be stationed there.

**(Right above: *The harbour of Plymouth-Devonport as it was almost a century after the Great War – a lot less busy nowadays - photograph from 2013*)**

**(Right: *Royal Canadian Legion flags amongst others adorn the interior of St. Mary's Church in the English village of Bramshott. – photograph from 2016*)**



But for exactly how long the unit *remained* posted at *Camp Bramshott* is not clear: the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion, originally destined to be a unit of 9<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade of the soon-to-be 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division, apparently soon afterwards would become re-designated as a reserve battalion\* and was then to be transferred to the Kentish coast, to *East Sandling Camp*. When exactly this transfer came about is not clear, but it may well have been as early as February of 1916, as some individual medical reports, including some of Private Golden himself, suggest.

But there are others that show that he was still stationed at *Camp Bramshott* until almost the end of January of the New Year, 1917.

***\*Before the end of the Great War, Canada was to have despatched overseas two-hundred fifty battalions – although it is true that a number of these units, particularly as the conflict progressed, were below full strength. At the outset, these Overseas Battalions all had aspirations of seeing active service in a theatre of war.***

***However, as it transpired, only some fifty of these formations were ever to be sent across the English Channel to the Western Front. By far the majority remained in the United Kingdom to be used as re-enforcement pools and they were gradually absorbed, particularly after January of 1917, by units that had by then been designated as Canadian Reserve Battalions.***

In the meantime, a disciplinary incident occurred which may have had a bearing on his later hospitalization: Private Golden, on December 7, 1916, was charged with having been AWL (*Absent Without Leave*), a misdemeanor for which, having been found guilty, he was to forfeit two days' pay.

Two weeks and a day later, on December 22, he was admitted into Connaught Military Hospital at the nearby British Army complex at Aldershot. There he was diagnosed as having contracted a venereal problem. At the time it may have appeared to be a mild case as Private Golden was discharged from medical care just five days afterwards.

But he was back there again, for the same complaint, on January 8 and, on this occasion remained in hospital receiving treatment for fourteen days before his release on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of that month.

Logically it was during the subsequent short period of thirteen days that the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion was transferred to *Shorncliffe* as Private Golden was once again in need of medical attention and admitted into the *Moore Barracks* Military Hospital which served *Shorncliffe*, on February 4.

At this point the records become unclear but it would appear that Private Golden was discharged from *Moore Barracks* Hospital on February 5 to return on several occasions as an out-patient... either that or he remained at *Moore Barracks* until that February 18 after which he then became an out-patient.

In either case, he was not to be definitively declared cured until after a final visit to the hospital on April 23 of 1916.

And apparently April 23, according to his personal dossier, was also to be the day on which he was transferred to *active service* on the other side of the English Channel (see further below).

Private Golden was also to suffer financially for his medical misfortune. His pay records suggest that some twenty dollars was deducted from his pay to partially allay the costs of his hospitalization\*.

*\*The Army did not look kindly on soldiers who contracted venereal disease; even though it was not always adhered to - less and less so as the war progressed - there was in place a policy to penalize men who found themselves so diagnosed – as much as half their pay plus the ten-cents per day field allowance was often forfeited.*

*Officers were usually treated more kindly and often the diagnosis was documented as NYD (Not Yet Determined) or even PUO (Pain – or Pyrexia (fever) – of Unknown Origin), thus allowing those afflicted to avoid any penalty – or stigma.*

*(Right: Little remains of Shorncliffe Military Camp today apart from a barracks occupied by Gurkha troops. The Military Cemetery almost alone serves as a reminder of the events of a century ago. – photograph from 2016)*



**East Sandling** was a subsidiary of the large Canadian military complex of **Shorncliffe** which had seen the arrival and departure through its gates of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division when it left for the Continent in September of 1915. It had also witnessed the transfer of units of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division during the autumn of 1915 and the winter which followed, as they *also* left England through the nearby harbour and town of nearby Folkestone, to disembark some two hours later in Boulogne on the French coast opposite.

Private Golden, *struck off strength* by the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion and transferred on paper to the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Canadian Mounted Rifles, was now to follow in the footsteps of those other units, sailing for France during the night of April 23-24, 1916. On that latter date he reported to the Canadian Base Depot established by that time in the vicinity of the French industrial city of Le Havre, situated on the estuary of the River Seine...and he also became *Trooper Golden*<sup>8\*</sup>.



*\*Even though no longer Mounted, the CMR retained the designation of Trooper.*

(Right above: *A view of the coastal town of Folkestone almost a century later as seen from the top of the white cliffs of nearby Dover – photograph from 2009*)

(Right below: *An image of the French port of Boulogne at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

It was to be three weeks less a day, the date May 13, 1916, before Trooper Golden was despatched from the Base Depot to join his new unit. He did so as one of a re-enforcement draft of thirty-nine *other ranks* recorded in the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR War Diary as having reported *to duty* on April 14 to *Camp “F”* in the rear area adjacent to the *Ypres Salient*, Belgium.



\* \* \* \* \*

The 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Canadian Mounted Rifles, originally recruited in the area of the Eastern Townships of Québec, was a component of the 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade\*, itself an element of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division had begun to form in France in December of 1915 – officially coming into being at mid-night of December 31, 1915, and January 1, 1916.



By that time, the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR had been on the Continent for some two months, since October 24, 1915.

(Right above: *Some of the farmland in the area of Messines - near to where the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR was to first serve - a mine crater from the time of the 1917 British offensive in the foreground – photograph from 2014*)

(continued)

***\*All of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade's four infantry battalions, as of January 1, 1916, were dis-mounted Canadian Mounted Rifles, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions. Prior to that, the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment, CMR, had been a unit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mounted Rifle Brigade and the troopers had, as the name implies, horses.***

***In order for the unit to become an infantry battalion, not only were the Regiment's horses sent elsewhere – often to officers serving behind the lines – but the Regiment, not being of regular infantry battalion strength, had to absorb personnel from other Mounted Regiments, units which, while not immediately disbanded, were thereafter no longer active. Thus on January 1, 1916, the CMR Regiments became CMR Battalions.***

**From that end of October, 1915, until almost a year later in 1916 (see below), the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR was to be stationed in Belgium; at first it had served at the southern end of the front there, just before the trenches crossed over the frontier into France – Messines and Kortepyp, right on the border, in the forward area and Meteren to the rear are three place-names which often appear in the Battalion War Diary.**

**It was those first three months of 1916 which afforded to the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR Battalion personnel the occasion to learn much about the rigours, the routines and the perils of life in – and out of – the trenches\*.**

***\*During the Great War, British and Empire (later Commonwealth) battalions had their time more or less equally divided into three postings: in theory a week was to be spent in the front lines, at times little more than a few metres separating them from the enemy forward positions; a second week was then served in support positions, perhaps a hundred metres or so behind the front; the unit was then withdrawn into reserve – either Brigade, Divisional or Corps Reserve, the former being the nearest to the forward area, the latter the furthest away.***



***Of course, things were never as neat and tidy as set out in the preceding format and troops could find themselves in a certain posting at times for weeks on end.***

***(Right above: A photograph of Canadian troops in support positions somewhere on the Somme in the autumn of 1916, only months earlier having been equipped with those steel helmets and, less visible, British Short Lee-Enfield Mark III Rifles – from Illustration)***

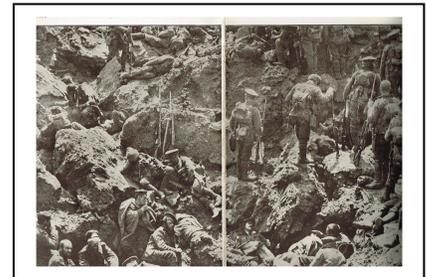
**In the latter half of March the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division had been transferred to the vicinity of Maple Copse in the Ypres Salient, in a sector just south-east of venerable city of Ypres (today Ieper. As for the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, CMR, it marched through Ypres to its positions on March 24.**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division's area of responsibility in the Ypres Salient was the sector surrounding Maple Copse; it comprised such places as the village of Hooge, and those positions that now went by English names such as Sanctuary Wood, Hill 60, Railway Dugouts and Mount Sorrel, a promontory which was to lend its name to the upcoming confrontation.**

But first, in April, it had been the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division, in a sector to the south of Ypres and towards the Franco-Belgian frontier, which was to receive the attention of the German Army for a few days. For *those* troops, this period was not to be as tranquil as that being experienced during the same time by the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion CMR and the other units of the Canadian 3<sup>rd</sup> Division.

The *Action at the St. Eloi Craters* officially took place from March 27 until April 17 of that spring of 1916. St-Éloi was a small village some five kilometres to the south of the Belgian city of Ypres and it was here that the British had excavated a series of galleries under the German lines, there to place quantities of explosives which they detonated on that March 27 and then followed up with an infantry assault.

After a brief initial success the attack had soon bogged down and by April 4 the Canadians were replacing the by-then exhausted British troops. They were to have no more success than had the British, and by the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month, when the battle was called off, both sides were back where they had been some three weeks previously – and the Canadians had incurred some fifteen-hundred casualties.



(Right above: *A purported attack in the aftermath of the exploding of a mine under enemy lines – from Illustration*)

However, as previously noted, this confrontation was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Division affair and Trooper Golden and the other personnel of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion CMR during that period would likely have been disturbed by only the noise of the German artillery some kilometres away.

However, it was to be only some seven weeks after the action at St-Éloi that the relative calm of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division's trenches in the south-east Sector of the *Ypres Salient* was to be shattered by the German attack at *Mount Sorrel*.

By the time of the arrival of his draft's arrival at Camp "F" on May 14, 1916, the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion CMR had already concluded its first three tours in the forward area of *the Salient* and, as has been seen, had retired to the rear area not far-distant from the community of Zillebeke. Only forty-eight hours later again, the unit was to commence its *fourth* tour – and Private Golden's *first*.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was from June 2 to 13-14 that the confrontation at *Mount Sorrel* - and in the area of *Sanctuary Wood, Maple Copse, Hooge, Railway Dugouts* and *Hill 60* - between the German Army and the Canadian Corps was to be played out.

The Canadians had apparently been preparing an attack of their own on the enemy positions which dominated the Canadian trenches when the Germans delivered an offensive, overrunning the forward areas and, in fact, rupturing the Canadian lines, an opportunity which fortunately they never chose to – or *could* - exploit.

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**(Right below: *Remnants of Canadian trenches dating from 1915-1916 at Sanctuary Wood – photograph from 2010*)**

The Commander of the Canadian Corps, Sir Julian Byng, reacted by organizing a counter-attack on the following day, an assault intended to, at a minimum, recapture the lost ground. However, badly organized, the operation was a horrendous failure, many of the intended attacks never went in – those that did went in piecemeal and the assaulting troops were cut to pieces - the enemy remained where he was and the Canadians were left to count an extremely heavy casualty list.



**(Right: *The Canadian memorial which stands atop Mount Sorrel just to the south-west of the city of Ypres (today Ieper) whose spires and towers may be perceived in the distance – photograph from 1914*)**

On that June 2, the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR was serving in Brigade Support at *Maple Copse*, having been posted there since the night of May 31-June 1.



The following are excerpts taken from the War Diary of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, entry of June 2, 1916: *A red letter day in the history of the Battalion, ever to be remembered by those who lived through it. In the early morning, enemy sprung a mine in part of line held by 4<sup>th</sup> CMR Battalion and began a bombardment of the Brigade area... and all the ground in MAPLE COPSE and vicinity. The men were kept under cover as much as possible...*



*...Several attempts were made to get in touch with the front line but without success. Runners sent out by us... were killed or returned wounded, with news that the communications trenches had been blown in, and that it was impossible to get through enemy barrage fire...*

**(Right above: *Maple Copse Cemetery, adjacent to Hill 60, in which lie many Canadians killed during the days of the confrontation at Mount Sorrel – photograph from 2014*)**

A new defensive front line was organized later that day, to be consolidated as much as possible before being used as a jumping-off position for the counter-attack which began at ten minutes past seven on the following morning, June 3.

It is not clear exactly what role the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR played: it held *Maple Copse* all day during a bombardment so intense that apparently no-one could ascertain exactly what was happening elsewhere; attempts were also made to communicate with the survivors of the 4<sup>th</sup> CMR Battalion which had been holding the front-line at the time of the attack but which had been isolated ever since that time.



(Preceding page: *Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm) today contains twenty-four hundred fifty-nine burials and commemorations.* – photograph from 2014)

Later that evening, when the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR was relieved and ordered to retire, it was found to have incurred a total of three-hundred ninety-three casualties. The 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian infantry Brigade during those same two days, June 2 and 3, had incurred a total of one-thousand nine-hundred fifty – an almost fifty per cent casualty rate.

(Right: *Hill 60 as it remains a century after the events of 1916 and 1917 in the area of Mount Sorrel, the village of Hooge, Sanctuary Wood and Maple Copse: It is kept in a preserved state – subject to the whims of Mother Nature – by the Belgian Government.* – photograph from 2014)

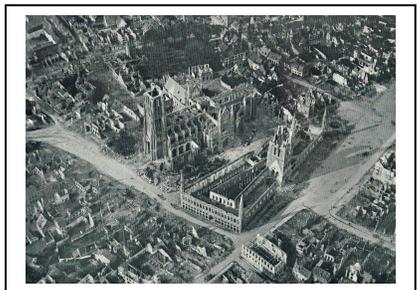


So severe had the losses been that the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade – and thus the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR Battalion – was to play no further role in the action at *Mount Sorrel*.

From June 5 when the unit had been withdrawn, until July 16, the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR Battalion stayed in the area of Steenvoorde, a French community well to the west of Ypres and *the Salient*, there to re-enforce and also to re-organize. It was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> of that July, having at first travelled by train before marching through the south-eastern outskirts of Ypres itself, that it once more took its place in the forward area close to Zillebeke, just down the line to the west of the area of *Maple Copse*.

There for four days, with little or no infantry action reported, the unit still incurred ten *killed*, twelve *wounded* and eight *shell-shocked*. Thus the routine of trench warfare recommenced with the Battalion closer to Ypres itself during this cycle than it had been previously.

(Right below: *An aerial photograph, taken in July of 1915, which shows the shell of the medieval city of Ypres, an image entitled Ypres-la-Morte (Ypres the Dead) – By the end of the conflict there was little left standing.* – from *Illustration*)



On August 22 the War Diarist noticed – and noted – an influx of British and Irish troops in the sector, units which had been transferred from a place called *the Somme*. These troops were soon relieving the Canadians who were being withdrawn from Belgium. On August 23 it was to be the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR and, as if to mark a special occasion... *Baths at POPERINGHE allotted to Battalion from 7.30 am until 12 noon, accommodation 150 per hour.*

The 5<sup>th</sup> CMR Battalion then withdrew once again to the area of North Steenvoorde in north-western France where it was to remain until September 7. The area had been transformed into a training-zone for what was optimistically termed by its planners as *open warfare*; myriad drills were there performed, from the section and platoon level up to - and including - that of both battalion and brigade.

On that September 7 the thirty-seven officers and eight-hundred ninety *other ranks* of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, were taken by bus to board a train at Bavinghove Station for the journey south.

(Right below: *A number of the public London busses were requisitioned as troop transport during the Great War. Here one is being used by some lucky troops while others, to the right, are obliged to continue on foot. – from Illustration*)

The train pulled out of Bavinghove Station at nine minutes to ten on that evening and pulled *into* the station at Candas at eight o'clock the next morning. After breakfast in a field there then began a march which was to last some five days and which would end on September 12 in Brigade Reserve at La Boisselle\*, the remnants of a village just to the east of the provincial town and centre of Albert.



*\*Today the village of La Boisselle is known for the huge crater which remains there a century after the detonation of the largest of the nineteen mines exploded just prior to the attack of July 1. At the time it had perhaps been history's largest man-made explosion. The crater, now more than a hundred years old, is still impressive, even today.*

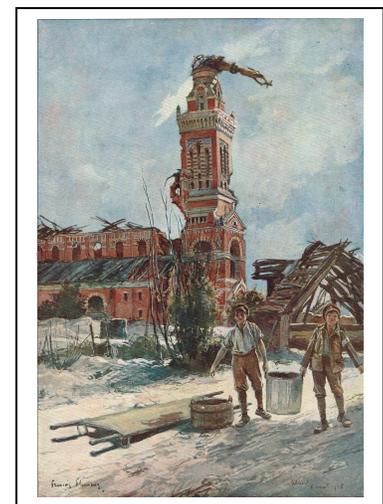


(Right: *The aforementioned Lochnagar Crater caused by the mine – apparently the largest man-made explosion in history up until that date – detonated at La Boisselle – photograph from 2011(?)*)

By that September of 1916, the *First Battle of the Somme* had been ongoing for two months. It had begun with the disastrous attack of July 1, the assault having cost the British Army fifty-seven thousand casualties – in the short space of only four hours - of which some nineteen-thousand dead.

(Right: *Canadian soldiers at work carrying water in the centre of Albert, the already-damaged basilica in the background – from Illustration*)

On that first day of *First Somme*, all but two small units of the attacking divisions had been troops from the British Isles, those exceptions being the two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles serving in the Lincolnshire Regiment, and the eight-hundred personnel of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment which was to lose so heavily on July 1, 1916, at a place called Beaumont-Hamel.

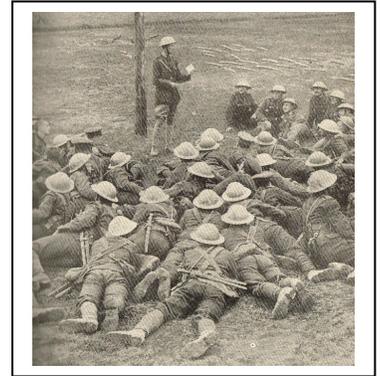


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As the battle had progressed, other troops, from the Empire (*Commonwealth*), were brought in; at first it had been the South African Brigade (July 15), then the Australians and New Zealanders (July 23) before the Canadians had entered the fray on August 30 to become part of a third general offensive.

Their first major collective contribution was to be in the area of the two villages of Flers and Courcellette.

(Right: *An image purporting to be that of a Canadian officer giving instructions to those under his command prior to the attack at Flers-Courcellette (see below), September 1916. – from The War Illustrated*)



It was early on the morning of September 14 that the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion CMR finished relieving the 4<sup>th</sup> CMR whose place it then took in the lines and from where it was to advance on the next morning.

(Right: *The Canadian Memorial which stands to the side of the Albert-Bapaume Road near the village of Courcellette – photograph from 2015*)



The Battalion had been... *ordered to attack and consolidate, with two companies, the German trenches...and to bomb down...the trenches and establish blocks. These trenches to be held by Infantry Posts as they were cleared by the bombers...* (Excerpt from the 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade War Diary).

During the time of the relief and also for the remainder of that September 14, the Germans reacted violently to the intense movement and to the obvious offensive preparations ongoing on the Canadian side of *No-Man's-Land*. Trooper Golden's unit was to incur a number of casualties during the day.

*By 4.00 a.m. all assaulting troops were in positions, and all details in regard to the attack completed...6.20 a.m.. As soon as the barrage lifted the 5<sup>th</sup> CMR BATTALION attacked in two waves and two full Sections of Battalion bombers...*

(Right: *The village of Courcellette seen from the north just over a century after the events of the First Battle of the Somme – photograph from 2017*)



*Objective was reached with few casualties. The trenches were found to have been well manned. Twenty prisoners and three machine guns were taken, about 250 Germans were bayoneted and a large number retreated overland to FABECK GRABEN and were caught by our Machine gun fire (8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade War Diary)...*

(continued)

This somewhat positive appraisal of events by the War Diarist notwithstanding, the *few casualties* that the Battalion had incurred totalled two-hundred seventy-seven *killed, wounded and missing* during the day. The 5<sup>th</sup> CMR Battalion thereupon remained in its newly-won positions until the following evening when it had been relieved under cover of darkness and was able to retire to the large military camp at the *Brickfields (La Briqueterie)* in the outskirts of Albert.



(Right above: *Wounded at the Somme being transported in hand-carts from the forward area for further medical attention – from Le Miroir*)

From then until the end of the month, the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, CMR, was kept in reserve, largely in the area of Bouzincourt. Nevertheless, while out of range of most German ordnance, there was little rest and the personnel was kept busy, much of the time in road construction; even while the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Divisions were once more on the offensive and the 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade was in reserve, the Battalion's services were not called upon.

It was finally on September 27 that the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion CMR was ordered up to the forward area once more, whereupon it moved on its way to relieve the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion CMR in the front line on September 30.

Further orders were awaiting the unit: *Tomorrow afternoon at about 3 pm we are to attack, capture and consolidate a line of German trench known as REGINA TRENCH. As the front of our objective is well wired the artillery have been heavily engaged today endeavouring to cut the wire. Patrols are to be pushed out as far as possible after dark and report on the cutting. All ranks keyed up and in fine spirits, very eager to attack (5<sup>th</sup> CMR Battalion War Diary – excerpt from entry of September 30).*

On October 1 the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion CMR attacked as planned and initially achieved some success, certain German positions being overrun and captured. However, much of the wire that the artillery had been engaged in destroying the day before still remained uncut; *this* and several enemy counter-attacks put increasing pressure on those in the captured German positions.



(Right above: *Regina Trench Cemetery and some of the area surrounding it which was finally wrested from the Germans by Canadian troops in November of 1916 – photograph from 2014*)

Much of the newly-won terrain was re-taken by the enemy, the Canadian survivors obliged to retreat to their former positions; *Regina Trench* itself was to remain – apart from a few hours later during that month, on October 27 – in German hands until November 11.



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(Preceding page: *Burying Canadian dead on the Somme, likely at a casualty clearing station or a field ambulance – from Illustration or Le Miroir*)

At about ten o'clock on that evening of October 1, the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, CMR, was relieved by the Royal Canadian Regiment and it fell back to Albert where it was then billeted. The efforts of the day had cost another two-hundred twenty-four casualties.

Whereas the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion CMR War Diarist had devoted fifteen full pages of his journal to the events of the day before, the entry for October 2, 1916, is more brief: *Battalion moved back to ALBERT*. Nor were any further casualties remarked upon for that day, something that the author of the Diary appears to have been meticulous about in all other instances.

One might surmise that in fact, Trooper Golden was among those who fell on October 1, although this remains unconfirmed.

The son of Archibald Golden, fisherman, and of Henrietta Golden (née *Burgess*) – to whom he had willed his all on March 15, 1916 - of Whiteway (formerly *Witless Bay*), Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, he was also brother to Julia-Ann, to Sarah-Louise and to George Edward.

As seen further above, Private Golden was married to Florence Joyce to whom, as of November 1, 1916, he had allotted a monthly fifteen dollars from his pay. However, there is no mention of her among any subsequent papers, not even in his Will.

Private Golden was reported as *missing in action* on October 2, 1916. It was some nine months later, on July 7 of 1917, that the following became official: *Previously reported missing now for official purposes presumed to have died – on or since 2-10-16*.

William James Golden had enlisted at the *apparent* age of twenty-one years and eleven months: date of birth at Whiteway, Newfoundland, September 18, 1894 (from attestation papers). However, local parish records show him born on September 18, 1892, and baptized on October 1, also of 1892.

Private William James Golden was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to [criceadam@yahoo.ca](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – January 25, 2023.

