



**Private William Kennedy, Number 414746, of the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Nova Scotia), Canadian Expeditionary Force, is buried in Bordon Military Cemetery in the English county of Hampshire: Grave reference Wes.C.12..**

**(Right: *The image of the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Nova Scotia) cap badge is from the eMedals.com web-site.*)**

**(continued)**





His occupation prior to enlistment recorded as that of a *miner* of coal, William Kennedy has left behind him varied details of members of his family and of himself after his emigration from the Dominion of Newfoundland to Cape Breton in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia. These are to be found below, at the conclusion of this dossier.

His first pay records and a medical report show that it was on July 15 of 1915 in the industrial city of Sydney, Cape Breton, that the Canadian Army began to recompense Private Kennedy for his services to the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion (*Nova Scotia*) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force by which unit he was *taken on strength* on that same date.

Six days later, on July 21, by which time Private Kennedy was stationed at *Camp Aldershot* in King's County, he underwent a medical examination which found him...*fit for the Canadian Over Seas Expeditionary Force*. This was followed three days later again, on July 24, by his attestation.

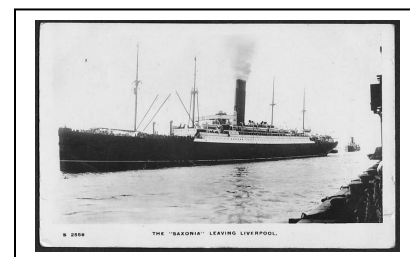
The formalities of Private Kennedy's enlistment were to be brought to a conclusion on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the month. It was Major A.G. Vincent – soon to be Lieutenant Colonel A.G.Vincent – the commanding officer of the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion who, on that date, declared, on paper, that...*William Kennedy...having been finally approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.*

While this final inspection likely took place at Camp Aldershot where the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion had mobilized in May of that 1915, the unit since June 21 had been re-located for training to Valcartier in the province of Québec. While the date appears not to have been documented, this is surely where Private Kennedy was posted after his attestation for training and to await his transfer overseas.



(Right above: *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 – and away 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*)

The transfer commenced on October 18 of that 1915 when the 40<sup>th</sup> and the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalions of Canadian Infantry boarded His Majesty's Transport *Saxonia* in the port at Quebec City. The vessel sailed for the United Kingdom later on that same day.



(Right: *The photograph of 'the Saxonia leaving Liverpool' is from the Old Ship Photo Galleries web-site.*)

Ten days following, on October 28, *Saxonia* docked in the English south-coast naval facilities of Plymouth-Devonport. From there the eleven-hundred forty-three personnel of the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion were transported by train to the newly-forming Canadian military complex in the vicinity of the villages of Liphook and Bramshott – to which camp the latter community was to lend its name – in the county of Hampshire. In fact, Private Kennedy's 40<sup>th</sup> was apparently the first Canadian battalion to be posted there.

Alas – it was to be only four days subsequent to his arrival at *Camp Bramshott* that Private Kennedy was admitted into Frensham Hill Military Hospital at nearby Farnham. His admittance report of that day reads as follows: *...admitted on Mon 1<sup>st</sup> of November with jaundice of 6 weeks duration... Had complained of indigestion and abdominal discomfort for about 6 months. No history of jaundice or colic previously...*



(Right above: *The harbour of Plymouth-Devonport as it was almost a century after the Great War: it is 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)



The report of November 6 offered more symptoms but no diagnosis: *...detected...distended gall bladder...has lost flesh slightly during last few weeks...exploration advised...*

November 9: *...advised postponing operation for the present...*

November 10: *...urged exploration without delay...patient agreed...*

November 13: *...During operation growth found in head of pancreas...* The operation had been performed during the morning. Some hours later...*at 8.30 PM patient died...*

*Cause of death: Obstructive jaundice due to malignant disease (carcinoma) of pancreas... Operation: Collapse...Death...*

The son of William Kennedy, fisherman, deceased January 26, 1905, and of Elizabeth Kennedy (née *Milley*, deceased January 16, 1905) of Blackhead then of Western Bay, Conception Bay North, Newfoundland, he was likely brother to Delilah, Edward, James, John-Francis\*, Margaret-Jane, Obadiah, Robert, Solomon, William-Douglas (died at age of two years) and of a later William-Douglas, their births all to be found registered in Blackhead Parish Records.

William Kennedy (later *Private William Kennedy*) appears to be the William George Kennedy\*, the youngest of all born of parents William and Eliza Kennedy, date of birth at Western Bay, July 13, 1980. No parish records available – neither those of Blackhead nor of Western Bay - contain any other like birth.

*\*This appears to be the only time that the name George is found in any relevant source, and while highly likely that this is the William Kennedy in question, it still requires some confirmation.*

As stated earlier, William Kennedy's history is a convoluted one as may be appreciated upon reading the following:

***Private Kennedy named his brother John, address Dominion 6, Cape Breton – found today as Bridgeport in most sources – as his next-of-kin. The 1901 Census records William – having emigrated in that same year - as boarding with John at Dominion 6. Unfortunately, his birthdate in Newfoundland was recorded at the time as November 26, 1879 – although such discrepancies are not an unusual occurrence.***

***The 1911 Census offers little to clarify the situation: A William Kennedy, having arrived from Newfoundland in 1901-1902, now lives as the head of family in Dominion 6 – as does John but now with a young family and no boarders. William now lives with his wife Jane – also from Newfoundland in 1902 – and with two sons, William aged four years and John A. aged two years. However, both boys are recorded in the Census as sons of William, head of household, and of an Edith Charp. There appears to be no available marriage document for William and Jane.***

***On a War Gratuity form the sum of twenty-four dollars was allotted to William's brother and next-of-kin John of House Number 42, Dominion 6, acting as... 'Guardian for orphan child John Absalom Kennedy'.***

**Private Kennedy was reported by the *Camp Bramshott* authorities as having died in hospital on November 13 of 1915.**

**William Kennedy had enlisted at the *apparent* age of thirty-one years: date of birth in Western Bay, Conception Bay, Newfoundland, September 22, 1884 (from his attestation papers) – but see above.**

**Private William Kennedy was entitled to the British War Medal for his overseas service. (He was eligible for it once he left Canada.)**



**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.**