



Corporal Hayward Kipping (Number 415356) of the 3rd Battalion, Canadian Pioneers, Canadian Expeditionary Force, is buried in Menin Road South Military Cemetery: Grave reference I.N.8.

(Right: *The image of the 3rd Battalion, Canadian Pioneers, Cap Badge is from the British and Commonwealth Military Badge Forum web-site.*)

(continued)



His occupation prior to military service recorded as being that of a *miner*, Hayward Kipping departed the Dominion of Newfoundland at the age of twelve years, in 1907. Having worked for years in the once-prosperous mining community of Tilt Cove, circumstances became such that his parents, miner Thomas Kipping and his wife Jessie, were obliged to make a living elsewhere.

On November 2 of 1907, they and eight of their children – young Hayward one of them – took ship on board the SS *Bruce* in Port aux Basques and crossed the Cabot Strait to the Cape Breton port of North Sydney. From there the family made its way to New Aberdeen, a suburb of the mining community of Glace Bay where Thomas was thereupon employed.

Hayward eventually became a miner himself and he was still at work in either Glace Bay or in the nearby industrial city of Sydney in August of 1915, for that was where and when he enlisted.

It was on August 11 that Hayward Kipping underwent a medical examination, recorded as having taken place in Sydney, a procedure which found him...*fit for the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force*. His first pay records then confirm that it was also on that August 11 that the Canadian Army first began to remunerate him for his services to the 40th Battalion (*Nova Scotia*) by which unit he had been *taken on strength*.

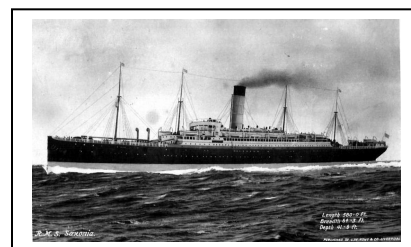
Two days later, on August 13, Private Kipping was attested, and three days later again, on August 16, the Officer Commanding the 40th Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel A.G. Vincent, concluded the enlistment formalities when he declared – on paper – that...*Hayward Kipping...having finally been approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation**.

**The 40th 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 Kipping travelled there, to Québec, during that three-day interim of August 13 to 16.*

(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 40th Battalion had already sailed before the parent unit itself crossed the Atlantic, but these were seemingly used upon arrival in England as re-enforcements for other units already serving on the Continent. It was on October 18, 1915, that Private Kipping and the main body of the Battalion took ship in the port of Québec – in the company of the 41st 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 date, to dock in the English south-coast naval port of Plymouth-Devonport ten days later, on October 28. Private Kipping's 40th Battalion was then transported by train 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 40th 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 40th Battalion, originally destined to be a unit of 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade of the soon-to-be 3rd Canadian Division, apparently soon afterwards would become re-designated 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 was certainly as early as February 1 of 1916, the date on which by-then Lance Corporal Kipping received a second promotion. The first from private soldier had come about on New Year's Day of 1916. Now, this further one recorded as having taken place at *East Sandling*, he was elevated to the rank of (acting) corporal.

****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.



(Preceding page: *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 Camp was a subsidiary of the large Canadian military complex of *Shorncliffe* which had seen the arrival and departure through its gates of the 2nd Canadian Division on its way to the Continent in September of 1915. It was then also to witness the transfer of units of the 3rd Canadian Division during the autumn of 1915 and the winter which followed – as shall be seen - as they left England through the nearby harbour and town of nearby Folkestone, to disembark some two hours later in Boulogne on the French coast opposite.

Corporal Kipping was *struck off strength* by the 40th Battalion on February 16, and was destined soon to follow in the footsteps of those other 3rd Canadian Division units, as he was thereupon *taken on strength* by the newly-designated 3rd Battalion, Canadian Pioneers (see below).

The unit, at the time stationed at adjacent *West Sandling Camp* only a little further down the coast, was at the time already preparing for its transfer to the Continent in less than a month's time.

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



* * * * *

The 3rd Battalion, Canadian Pioneers, had begun its military existence as an infantry unit, the 48th Battalion (*British Columbia*), and it had been under this designation that it had travelled, at first from Victoria where it had been mobilized, to Montreal, from where it had taken ship for the United Kingdom on July 1, 1915.

Once having arrived in the English south-coast port of Plymouth, the 48th Battalion was transported to *West Sandling Camp* where it began a six-month period of further training. It had then been in January of the New Year, 1916, that the military authorities had changed not only the unit's designation but also its *raison d'être*.

Thus the 48th Canadian Infantry Battalion became the 3rd Canadian Pioneer Battalion, attached, as the number suggests, to the newly-formed 3rd Canadian Division.

The 3rd Canadian Division officially came into being at mid-night of December 31, 1915, and January 1 of 1916. Unlike the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions and, later, the 4th Canadian Division, the 3rd Division was not formed in the United Kingdom but, in an almost *ad hoc* fashion, of units already serving on the Continent at the time, and of others which were to arrive from England as late as February and March of 1916 – witness the 3rd Canadian Pioneer Battalion.

* * * * *

It was on March 9 of 1916 that the...*Main Body of the Battalion marched out of W. Sandling at 10 a.m. Embarked at Folkestone at 1 p.m. in two boats (500 and 400). Arrived at Boulogne at 5 p.m. Marched to St. Martin's Camp.* (Excerpt from 3rd Canadian Pioneer Battalion War Diary entry for March 9, 1916)

Corporal Kipping was now on *active service*.

Since the first Canadian presence on the *Western Front* in February of 1915, by far the greater part of the intervening thirteen months had been served by the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions in the *Kingdom of Belgium*, in the south-western corner of the country – the only part not occupied by the Germans – and in the vicinity of the medieval city of Ypres. The 3rd Canadian Division was to follow this example and by March 12 the newly-arrived Pioneer Battalion was resting in billets in the area of Godewaersvelde on the Franco-Belgian frontier.

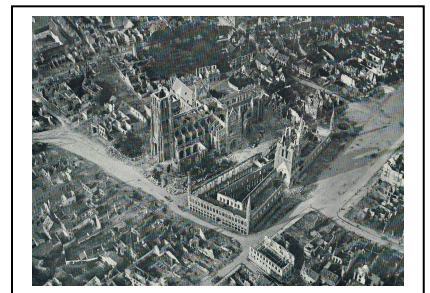
Up until this time, while awaiting the apparition of its final units – apart from the 3rd Division artillery which would arrive later again* – the 3rd Canadian Division had been marking-time in the rear areas of the Ploegsteert Sector, more or less in tandem with the 1st Canadian Division. Now it was about to take responsibility for a sector of its own.

**Up until July of that year, artillery support for the 3rd Canadian Division was to be provided by the Royal Artillery.*

The *Ypres Salient* was a semi-circular bulge of the front lines on the eastern side of the city of Ypres. This bulge had been held at various times, against any German encroachment, by French, British and Canadian forces and there had already by this time been two so-named *Battles of Ypres*, in the second of which the (1st) Canadian Division had distinguished itself.

(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*)

It was a sector of the south-east corner of *the Salient* that the 3rd Canadian Division was now to occupy and to make its own. Some of its first units were already on the move by the time Corporal Kipping arrived in the frontier area and, on March 22, the 3rd Canadian Pioneer Battalion was to follow suit, marching from Godewaersvelde to as far as the rear area of Ypres, some personnel advancing into the city of Ypres later on that same night.



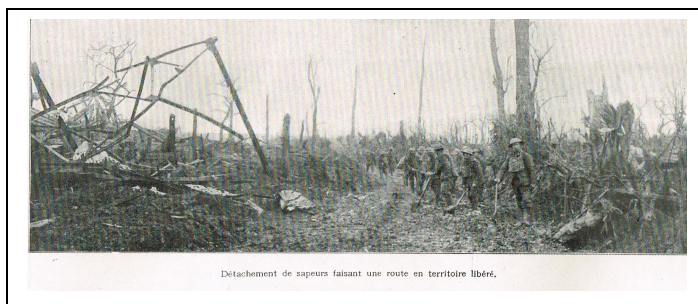
The Battalion was set to work immediately, in heightening parapets around the Pioneer camp and in multiple trench construction*.

(continued)

****Although Pioneer troops underwent basic infantry training, their principal work was construction of the most basic kind – trenches, dug-outs, roads, sewage and water lines, the burial of cable, artillery positions, ammunition dumps, light railways and trench-tramways, and myriad other necessities made so by the nature of the static warfare of the Great War.***

(Right below: Canadian sappers at work road-building in ‘recently liberated territory’ – from Illustration)

Much of the 3rd Pioneer Battalion work in the early days at Ypres was to be undertaken in the city of Ypres and in the south-eastern areas towards Zillebeke and the 3rd Canadian Division-held forward area. Those working on these projects were to be billeted in the remnants of the city itself: in the ramparts, a monastery, a hospital, schools and in available cellars.



(Right below: Taken just after the conflict, the Ypres Fire Brigade Training School with, in the left foreground, the remains of a cellar – from a vintage post-card)

The month of April was to continue in the same vein, the *Programme of Work* allotted to the Number 4 Company on the tenth day of the month allowing a good idea of what was expected of Corporal Kipping’s unit. It reads as follows: 1) Dug-outs in ZILLEBEKE BUND 2) Survey of trenches in rear of R3 Line inclusive 3) Survey of existing light train-line 4) Construction of Machine-Gun emplacements under the LILLE ROAD under instructions of the Officer Commanding 6th Field Coy., Canadian Engineers



5) Connect up to the SANCTUARY WOOD – ZILLEBEKE light train-line with the train line which runs to ZILLEBEKE BUND from the GORDON HOUSE – KRUISSTRAAT line 6) RS4 7) The APPENDIX GAP*

****The author must admit ignorance about Numbers 6 and 7, although 6 is likely to have been either a trench or strong-point.***



(Right above: Troops of a Canadian Pioneer Battalion undertaking the construction of a light-railway system – from Le Miroir)

(Right: Remnants of Canadian trenches which date from 1915-1916 at the above-mentioned Sanctuary Wood – photograph from 2010)



It is also to be remembered, of course, that this work was for the most part done within range of the German artillery and also, at time, within that of his mortar-men, machine-gunners and riflemen. Total casualties for the month of April, 1916, three *killed in action* and twenty-four *wounded* – at this time mostly due to shell-fire.

The work continued in the forward areas, in Ypres itself and also in the rear area in the vicinity of Camp 'H' where the 3rd Canadian Pioneer Battalion was based. And in May the casualty rate picked up although, of course, it was never to be comparable to the numbers incurred by the infantry.

On May 16, the Battalion War Diary entry of the day was sparse: *1 other rank killed. 1 other rank wounded.*

Casualty Report: *Killed in Action – South east of Ypres supplying working parties to the area*

The son of Thomas Henry Kipping*, miner (deceased in an accident October, 1919) – to whom as of October 1, 1915, he had allocated a monthly fifteen dollars from his pay – and of Jessie Kipping (née *Pilgrim*, deceased April, 1914, of tuberculosis), of Tilt Cove, Newfoundland, and later of Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, he was also brother to at least Susie, Hilda-Blanche, John, Kenneth-Raymond, Jacob, Arthur-Cecil, Harvey, Francis and Milton – to whom he had willed his all*.

**Thomas Kipping re-married in May of 1915, to Eva Eveleigh, widow.*

***One source makes mention of a total of thirteen children.*

Corporal Kipping was reported as having been *killed in action* while serving in the *Ypres Salient* on May 16, 1916.

Hayward Kipping had enlisted at the apparent age of twenty years and three months: date of birth at Tilt Cove, Newfoundland, May 27, 1895 (from attestation papers and from ancestry.ca).

Corporal Hayward Kipping 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. Last updated – January 25, 2023.