



Private Stephen Crocker Morris, Number 33416 of the 3rd Field Ambulance, Canadian Army Medical Corps, is buried in Poperinghe New Military Cemetery: Grave reference II.C.5.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *commercial salesman*, Stephen Crocker Morris has left little behind him a propos his movement away from the Dominion of Newfoundland, or of his activities upon his arrival in Canada. All of which we may be certain is that he was in the military complex of Camp Valcartier, Québec, on the third day of September, 1914.

(continued)

Valcartier on that September 3 is where and when a captain of the Army Medical Corps pronounced him to be... *fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force*. Two days earlier, on the first day of the month, he had enlisted and been taken on strength by the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance* – his first pay-records confirm this, but do not note where the enlistment took place, although it was also likely at Valcartier.

**This medical unit, having been mobilized at Winnipeg, had arrived at Valcartier already as an entity from western Canada on September 1. At the outset designated simply as the Number 3 Field Ambulance, it was later to add 'Canadian' to its title.*

It was not until some three weeks later that Private Morris attested, on September 24. On the morrow, the 25th, the formalities of this procedure were all brought to an *official* conclusion when the officer commanding the 3rd CFA, Lieutenant-Colonel Walter L. Watt, declared – on paper – that *...Stephen Crocker Morris...having been final approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.*

(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 – 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 passenger-liner on which the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance took ship was His Majesty's Transport *Tunisian**, a requisitioned vessel of the *Allan Line*. The date of the unit's embarkation in the port at Quebec City was likely the same as noted above, September 25, this being the day on which the 3rd Battalion of Canadian Infantry and the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade Headquarters personnel boarded her, for a total of one-thousand four-hundred twelve travelling military personnel.

**While the ship *Cassandra* is recorded in his personal files, this vessel was to transport the 2nd Canadian Field Ambulance, a unit to which Private Morris is not reported as having ever been attached. *Tunisian* is the ship noted in the unit's War Diary.*

In the personal diary of a 3rd CFA private, *Tunisian* is then recorded on September 29 as having *...having moved down to Rimouski by easy stages...until by October 3 she had rendezvoused at the Gaspé with the other vessels and the five naval escorts of the convoy which was to carry the Canadian Expeditionary Force overseas.*



In the meantime the 3rd CFA was undertaking the necessary vaccinations and other medical services on board ship.

(Right above: *The image of a pre-War *Tunisian* is from the bing.com/images web-site.)*

(continued)

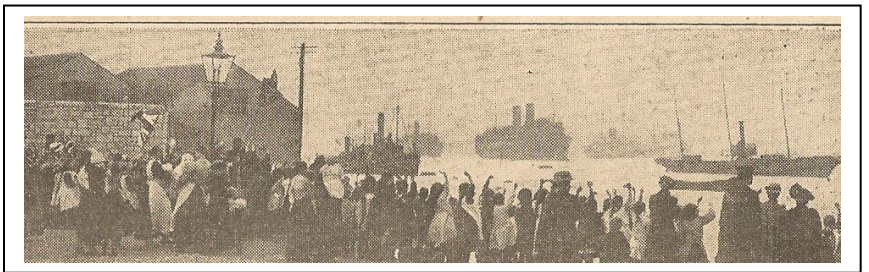
From the Gaspé the thirty-one transports and their naval escorts sailed on October 3 of that 1914. On October 5, as the formation passed along the south coast of Newfoundland, the small Bowring Brothers' steamer *Florizel* sailed to meet and join it. She was carrying the *First Five-Hundred* of the Newfoundland Regiment to war.

Following a smooth – from all points of view – crossing of the Atlantic, the convoy entered the English south-coast naval harbour of Plymouth-Devonport during the afternoon of October 14*. Many of the arriving units, however, were obliged to remain on ship for days before their debarkation could be effected.

**The original destination had been the much larger port-city of Southampton, but a submarine scare had forced a change in plans.*

It was to be October 19 before the turn of the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance came about: 7.30 p.m. Plymouth. Disembarked from S.S. *Tunisian*. Orders received to march to North Road Station to entrain at 9.40 for Lavington. Sufficient transport provided to carry small amount of Technical equipment which we had with us... (Excerpt from the No. 3 Field Ambulance War Diary)

Lavington Station was reached hours later at two o'clock in the morning from where the unit was then to march a distance of seven miles (some eleven kilometres) to the camp at West Down North, a collection of tents with a single blanket per man.



During those hectic first days, the entire *Canadian Expeditionary Force* was transported to this area, Salisbury Plain, the site of a large British Army military complex.

(Right above: *Some of the ships of the convoy which had carried the Canadian Expeditionary Force to England, at anchor in Plymouth Hoe on October 14, 1914 – from The War Illustrated*)

Days later, on October 25, Private Morris' unit was ordered to an adjacent site, *Pond Farm Camp*, there to establish a Clearing Hospital. Transport was scarce, a single waggon, and much of the equipment – all of the bedding – was carried there manually by the 3rd Field Ambulance personnel. Nevertheless, by the 27th, everything had been transferred and the new medical facility was made available to the nearby units.

The British Army regulations of the day were such that troops were to undergo some fourteen weeks of training after the time of enlistment; at that point they were to be considered as fit for *active service*. Thus the newly-arrived Canadians of the infantry battalions were to spend the remainder of October and up until the first week of February of 1915 in becoming proper *Soldiers of the King* – even if they were *colonials*.

(continued)

The King in question arrived to inspect his Canadian soldiers on the Salisbury Plain on the first of two occasions on November 4 – for a change it was a fine day.

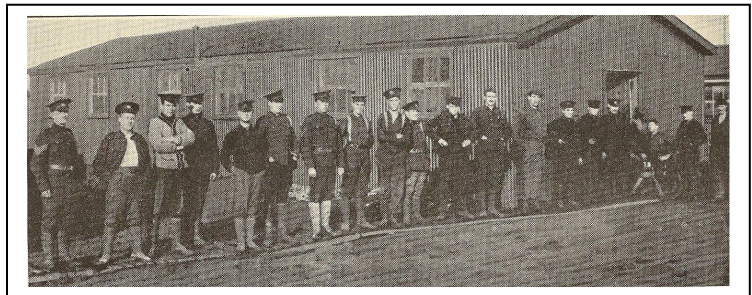
(Right: *George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India* – photograph from *Bain News Services* via *Wikipedia*)



Those of the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance, however, while necessarily undertaking certain training exercises common to all units, physical exercises and route marches for example, were also engaged in those perhaps more pertinent to the medical services: opening and dismantling aid posts and dressing stations; transporting wounded – the stretcher-bearers running obstacle courses while carrying ‘wounded’ are two of those that come to mind.

The months of that late autumn and of the following winter were to be just as hectic in other ways: There were to be visits from politicians and generals – and one even from the King and Queen, with the requisite preparations for such an occasion. More supplies and more horses arrived...as did the rains followed by snow, by which time some of the drill which had been absent during those first days and weeks had found its way into the busy schedule of Private Morris’ unit.

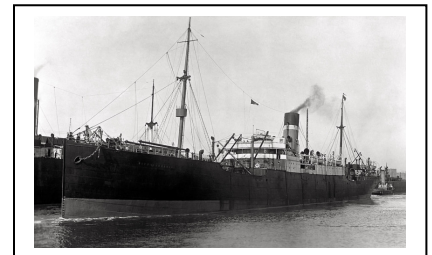
On February 4, 1915, the Canadian Division marched to a review area where it was inspected for a second time by His Majesty King George V, now accompanied by the War Minister, Lord Kitchener*.



**For whom the Canadian city of Kitchener, Ontario, was named in 1916 – it had been called Berlin until then.*

(Right above: *Canadian troops during the autumn of 1914 at Bulford Camp, Wiltshire, adjacent to the 1st Canadian General Hospital Headquarters* – from *The War Illustrated*)

By the time of that final royal review, the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance was stationed at Tidworth. On February 8, the two-hundred forty-two officers and men of the unit, with all its equipment, marched before taking a train to the port of Avonmouth, Bristol, on England’s west coast. There at three o’clock on the morning of the next day, the Field Ambulance boarded H.M. Transport *City of Benares* which was to carry it to the French port of St-Nazaire.



The 3rd CFA War Diarist reported that *...nothing of interest transpired during the voyage.*

(Preceding page: *The photograph of the ship City of Benares is from the Shipspotting.com web-site.*)

The unit landed at St-Nazaire on the coast of Brittany early in the morning of February 12 and its personnel was thereupon engaged for most of the remainder of the day in unloading the vessel as the local dockers and stevedores were on strike. Having then spent the night quartered in the nearby fish market, the 3rd CFA was eventually marched to the railway station on the next afternoon, February 13, there to board a train which pulled out at twenty-eight minutes past three.

Travelling by train from St-Nazaire to Hazebrouck is a journey of some seven-hundred kilometres. The train carrying the 3rd CFA arrived at its destination some forty-six hours later, at fifteen minutes past one o'clock in the afternoon of February 15, having speeded along at an average of some fifteen kilometres per hour. From Hazebrouck the unit marched off to Cæstre seven kilometres away, where the unit was to be stationed. Both the personnel and the horses were likely thankful to be off the train.

From the time of its arrival in mid-February until mid-April, the Canadian Division* was stationed in the *Fleurbaix Sector* to the south of the northern French town of Armentières. This was also just southward of the Franco-Belgian frontier which the formation would cross two months hence.

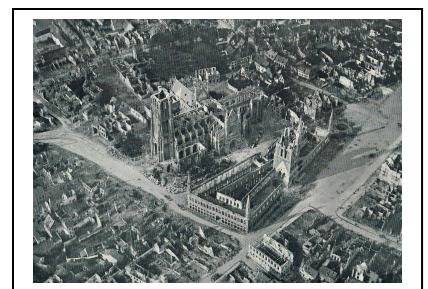
**It was to be designated as simply the Canadian Division until, with the arrival of the 2nd Canadian Division on the Continent in September of that same year, it became – logically – the 1st Canadian Division.*

During those early days of the Canadian involvement in the area of Armentières, there were relatively few wounded to be dealt with, by far the greater number of admissions being sick – four-hundred fifty-three, of which fifty-one infectious cases, during the month of March as compared to seventy-two wounded, most of those from sniper-fire. This was to change all too soon.

Private Morris' unit began its move toward the *Ypres Salient* on April 7, progressing in a semi-circular itinerary so as to approach the city of Ypres from the westward. By April 18, the unit had reached the area of Vlamertingue, a village on its western fringes, there taking over a school-house for use as a hospital before then, three days later, establishing an advanced dressing station to the north-east of Ypres.

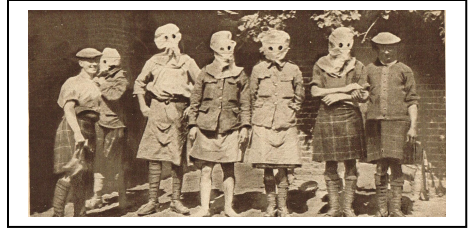
The date was April 21, 1915; on the morrow, April 22, the Germans struck.

**Most of the units of the Canadian Division, as it was with the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance, had arrived in the Ypres Salient only days before the attack; in fact, others were still on the move to their new posting at the time.*



(Right above: *An aerial photograph, taken in July of 1915 – just after the battle of 2nd Ypres - which shows the shell of the medieval city, an image entitled Ypres-la-Morte (Ypres the Dead) – By the end of the conflict there was little left standing. – from Illustration)*

The *2nd Battle of Ypres* saw the first use of chlorine gas by the Germans during the *Great War*. Later to become an everyday event, and with the introduction of protective measures such as advanced gas-masks, the chlorine was to prove no more dangerous than the rest of the military arsenals of the warring nations.



But on this first occasion, to inexperienced troops without the means to combat it, the yellow-green cloud of chlorine proved overwhelming.

(Right above: *The very first protection against gas was to urinate on a handkerchief which was then held over the nose and mouth. However, all the armies were soon producing gas-masks, some of the first of which are seen here being tested by Scottish troops.* – from either *Illustration* or *Le Miroir*)

The cloud had been noticed at five o'clock in the afternoon of April 22. In the sector subjected to the most concentrated use of the gas, the French Colonial troops to the Canadian left wavered then broke, leaving the left flank of the Canadians uncovered, particularly that of the 13th Battalion which was obliged to call forward Number 3 Company, at the time in reserve. Then a retreat, not always very cohesive, by the entire unit became necessary.



(Right above: *Entitled: Bombardement d'Ypres, le 5 juillet 1915* – from *Illustration*)

By the 23rd the situation had become relatively stable – at least temporarily - and the positions in the vicinity of Sint-Juliaan held until the morning of the 24th when a further retirement became necessary. At times there had been breaches in the defensive lines but, fortunately, either the Germans were unaware of how close they were to a breakthrough, or else they did not have the means of exploiting the situation. And then the Canadians closed the gaps.

That first day of *Second Ypres* was to be a difficult one for the personnel of the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance; it was the first day on which many, if not all, were to experience a battle of any sort. The following description is that of the Headquarters Company, behind the lines at Vlamertingue: *About 7 p.m., large numbers of French troops...passed rapidly through...going West, as a result of the enemy breaking through French lines, after their use of asphyxiating gas.*

Turcos and Algerians began to pour in suffering from asphyxiation by poisonous gases – none of them wounded. Symptoms – Conjunctivitis...irritating cough – Vomiting in some cases – staggering gait – weakness and semi-stupor. The odour was very strong on their clothes and resembled...bromine. The odour had a similar effect on the Orderlies and Medical Officers who came in contact with it. In some of the patients the prostration was very marked, and one died. Patients presented an earthy ash colour in appearance. All had tachycardia. ...an officer stated it was due to the pumping of some fluid through pipes.*

*This fluid was lighted, and dense clouds of fumes created, which the gentle breeze blew over the trenches**.*

**An increase in the heart rate above normal.*

***In fact, chlorine gas cylinders were simply opened, the contents drifting with the wind.*

About 11 p.m. the wounded began to straggle in – the clothing of many reeking with the same odour. A message was received from...our Advanced Dressing Station...that it had been had been found necessary to move...and that there were many wounded in the Field, and that stretcher bearers would be necessary all night (Excerpt from 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance entry for April 22).

By the next day the War Diarist was reporting... *Wounded from now on pouring in.*

Of course, by now, with all available resources having been despatched to the forward area, the medical personnel were sharing the dangers of the battlefield with the fighting troops and casualties were being incurred by them as well. Motor and horse-drawn vehicles were being put out of action or even totally lost, and first-aid posts and other facilities were often being obliged to move – usually in a rearward direction.

Over the next number of days the numbers of wounded swelled, augmented by the necessity to evacuate the injured from the forward areas as the Salient perimeter continued to shrink due to enemy pressure. As they reached the main facilities of the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance those capable of being moved were taken further back again.

The entry of April 27 of Private Morris' unit's War Diary reports a still-critical situation: *Cases came in all day. At 4.30 p.m. shrapnel burst over the village followed by 5.4 high explosive shells. Wounded carried out into fields and personnel not actually needed also sent. Shells came very near – a despatch rider being seriously injured a few yards away. Two wounded were killed next door at No. 1 Canadian Field Ambulance. Houses on main street were badly shattered. One whole family killed. In evening all Ambulances sent to St. Jean* and brought in wounded...*

**St-Jean (Sint-Jan), just to the north-east of Ypres*

Thus it continued. By the end of the month the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance was to report having treated a total of five-thousand five-hundred forty-nine all ranks, by far the majority of them during the final nine days of the month. It also reported having retired to the west of Ypres, away from the forward area, on April 29.



(Right above: The Memorial to the 1st Canadian Division – the Brooding Soldier – stands just to the south of the village of Langemark (then Langemarck) at the Vancouver Crossroads where the Canadians withstood the German attack – abetted by gas – at Ypres (today Ieper) in April of 1915. – photograph from 2010)

(continued)

The crisis having by then abated, in mid-May the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance, would spend some days in the vicinity of the northern French town of Bailleul before moving further down the line to the south, towards Béthune and the areas of Festubert and Givenchy. The French were about to undertake a major offensive just further south again and had asked for British support.

There at Festubert a series of attacks and counter-attacks were to take place during which the British High Command managed to gain some three kilometres of ground but also contrived to destroy, by using the unimaginative tactic of the frontal assault, what was left after Second Ypres of the British pre-War professional Army.

The Canadian Division was also to contribute to the campaign but – not possessing the same numbers of troops – was not to participate to the same extent as the British. It had nonetheless suffered heavily.

(Right: A one-time officer who served in the Indian Army during the Second World War, pays his respects to those who fell, at the Indian Memorial at Neuve-Chapelle. – photograph from 2010(?))



The role of the Canadians was to supplement British attacks on German-held positions, at which time they were then to consolidate and to defend those same positions. This was to be the Canadian Division's first *offensive* campaign of the Great War and it was to prove a costly failure* – as were the assaults undertaken by the British and Indian troops (see below).



**Little or no artillery support, orders countermanded, little co-ordination between units, maps printed upside-down, unidentified German strong-points, attacks over open ground, late arrivals of re-enforcements, un-cut wire: to all this was to be added a resolute German defence which had somewhat optimistically been predicted to be ready to crumble.*

Many of the Canadian units were subsequently relieved during the fourth week of the month and thereupon withdrew from the forward area to await further orders. During that entire month of May, 1915, the 3rd Canadian Field Hospital, according to the records, treated eleven-hundred nine sick and wounded Canadian, Imperial (*British*) and German servicemen.

The Canadian Division and Indian troops - the 7th (*Meerut*) Division* also having been ordered to serve at Festubert - had fared no better than the British during the affair, each contingent incurring over two-thousand casualties** before the offensive drew to a close. Apparently the official history of the Canadian Expeditionary Force was later to describe the confrontation at Festubert as *the most unsatisfactory engagement* involving Canadians of the entire war.

(continued)

**The Indian troops also served – and lost heavily – in other battles in this area in 1915 before being transferred to the Middle East.*

***Officially the number was 2468.*

(Preceding page: Number 63525, Private J.S. Kennedy, a Newfoundlander in Canadian uniform, lies in Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, at Festubert. – photograph from 2015)

The French effort – using the same futile and usually suicidal tactics - was likewise a failure but on an even larger scale; their campaign was to cost them just over one hundred-thousand *killed, wounded and missing*.

On May 31 the Canadians were ordered to begin a shift to the right of Festubert, to Givenchy-les-la-Bassée*, a small village not far distant to the south. June 15 was now to be the date of a further attack on the German forces opposite.

However, despite the forethought and provisions made to avoid the mistakes made weeks before at Festubert, this less ambitious offensive by British and Canadian forces was also a total failure and Canadian casualties were to be numbered in the hundreds.

The 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance was once again busy, seven-hundred seventy-nine sick and wounded being admitted during that month.

And also by that time, as of the first day of that month of June, 1915, Private Morris was receiving an extra fifty cents per day for his work as a Motor Cyclist Orderly.

**Since the place is oft-times referred to simply as Givenchy it is perhaps worthwhile knowing that there are two other Givenchys in the region: Givenchy-le-Noble, to the west of Arras, and Givenchy-en-Gohelle, a village which lies in the shadow of a crest of land which dominates the Douai Plain: Vimy Ridge.*

The 1st Canadian Division was thereupon withdrawn from the area of Festubert-Givenchy. From there it was to move back into Belgium, to the *Ploegsteert Sector*, just across the frontier. As for the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance, its main facility and Headquarters were established in the northern French town of Bailleul, to the west of the forward area now to be the responsibility of the 1st Canadian Division.

Having reached the area of Ploegsteert on July 5, there the Canadian Division remained. In the next months it came to be well-acquainted with the Franco-Belgian area between Armentières in the east – any further east would have been in German-occupied territory – Bailleul in the west, and Messines in the north; given the route marches enumerated in the War Diary and the itineraries used, it would have been surprising had it been otherwise.



(Right above: Some of the farmland in the area of Messines, a mine crater from the time of the 1917 British offensive in the foreground – photograph from 2014)

(continued)

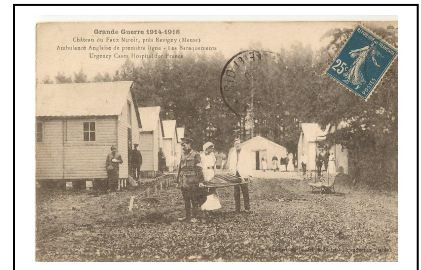
It was to be a further eleven months before the 1st Canadian Division would be involved in another major altercation. Of course, local confrontations – brought about by raids and patrols - were fought from time to time, and artillery duels and the ever-increasing menace of snipers ensured a constant flow of casualties.

(Right: A block-house of Great War vintage today still stands in a farmer's field at Messines. – photograph from 2015)



However, by far the greater number of admissions into Private Morris' 3rd CFA was due to sickness, plus a goodly number of cases treated for dental problems - more treatment was meted out during most months of the period up until the end of May, 1916, for dental work than for all other causes put together.

As for Private Morris himself, the only report of him during this period appears to be one that documents him having been granting an eight-day leave, plus travel time, from November 16 until November 25. His papers, unfortunately, do not inform us as to where he chose to spend this time.



Until March 30 of 1916, the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance was based, as previously seen, in the area of Bailleul but also for a while at not-too-distant Neuve-Église. As well there were advanced dressing stations and aid posts manned by personnel of the Ambulance established elsewhere in the sector. However, exactly to which unit Private Morris was posted at the time appears not to be documented.

(Right above: a British field ambulance, of a more permanent nature than some – from a vintage post-card)

On that March 30, the 3rd CFA, in tandem with the Canadian 1st Division, began its transfer towards Ypres. The Division had been ordered into the sector of the Ypres Salient directly south of the city*.



(Right above: The northern French town of Bailleul, rebuilt after the Great War, as it was almost a century after the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance was posted there in 1915 – photograph from 2010)

**In September of 1915 the Canadian 2nd Division had arrived on the Continent and had taken a place in the line just north of the Ploegsteert Sector and the 1st Canadian Division. Then at mid-night of December 31, 1915, and January 1 of 1916, the 3rd Canadian Division had officially come into being. These new troops had then been posted to the area where was the Canadian 1st Division, there to train and to experience the rigours, routines and perils of life in the trenches*.*

(continued)

****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 nearest the forward area, the latter 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 position 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 March, 1916, the Canadian 3rd Division had been given the responsibility of the south-eastern sector of the *Ypres Salient*. Thus by the end of April, a month later, the three Divisions of the Canadian Corps were standing shoulder to shoulder to shoulder in the south-eastern and southern sectors of the *Salient* and in the area of the front leading immediately south of Ypres towards the Franco-Belgian frontier.

And apart from the *Action of the St-Éloi Craters* in late March and early April – an engagement which was to involve only troops of the Canadian 2nd Division – there was little action to report on any part of the Canadian front until June 2 on which date the Germans once again attacked Canadian positions.

It was in the area of the village of *Hooge*, and of other places – those known to history by their English names – such as *Hill 60*, *Sanctuary Wood*, *Railway Dugouts*, *Maple Copse* and *Mount Sorrel* – which lent its name to the battle – that on the second day of June the Germans were to attack the sector of the *Ypres Salient* which had by that time become the responsibility of the Canadian 3rd Division.



(Right above: 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)

But the situation had deteriorated so rapidly and to such a degree that units from the adjacent 1st Canadian Division – and even from the 2nd Canadian Division serving farther afield – had been called for support.

(Right: Vestiges of Canadian trenches of 1915-1916 – some restored – at Sanctuary Wood – photograph from 2010)



After eleven days of sometimes horrific fighting, the opposing forces were to end up in much the same positions from which they had started. Little had changed, except that the cemeteries on both sides were now more numerous – and the already-existing ones more full.



(Right: *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*)

After the action at *Mount Sorrel*, the situation in the *Ypres Salient* had become relatively stable, and even quiet, for the Canadian units posted there; it was to remain thus until the Corps had been completely withdrawn by early October some four months later.

In the meantime, during this time of crisis, the 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance, even though it was a unit of the 1st Canadian Division, had been involved from the very outset. Personnel and equipment had been despatched on June 2 ...to the *MILL Dressing Station, as auxiliary to No 1 Can. Field Ambulance. Several hundred wounded required clearing from the Aid Posts, and the party was engaged in this work for the remainder of the night, and also the following night, when a similar number of Ambulances and personnel were required...* (Excerpt from 3rd Canadian Field Ambulance War Diary entry for June 2-3, 1916)

The work with the wounded and dying – some of them personnel from the 3rd CFA itself – had continued during and after the battle. During the month of June, for the first time in many months, the number of admissions of wounded was far greater than those requiring dental work.



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

By July 1, the Ambulance was in rest billets in the area of the Belgian town of Poperinghe and the unit's War Diarist had very little to report apart from the arrival and departure of various personnel.

Except on July 29 when the entry for the day reads as follows: *Pte. Morris, the Motor Cyclist Orderly was accidentally killed by a light engine whilst proceeding over a Railway Crossing, POPERINGHE-RENINGHELST Road.*

From the enquiry into the accident comes the following evidence: *Court of enquiry – Proceedings of Court of Enquiry received, stating that no blame can be attached to Cpl Bacon or Sgt Edwards, the engineer of the Locomotive and the pointman on duty, respectively for the death of Pte. Morris and that had he obeyed the signal given by the pointman, the accident would have been averted.*

(continued)

No 109216 Cpl. S Bacon, Railway Operating Division, Royal Engineers, states:- I left Ouderdom at 11.35 am with a light engine for Reninghelst. I had been running with steam off since ascending the final hill from Ouderdom. About ¾ of a mile from Reninghelst level crossing, I had to slow down for a Canadian soldier walking on the line who took no notice of my whistle. After he got out of the way, I let the engine approach the crossing still running without steam. About a quarter of a mile from the crossing I gave a long whistle to the Policeman on duty there, so as to get a signal from him. He gave me an ‘alright’ signal as I could plainly see it as he was standing on my side of the line. After getting the ‘alright’ signal I acknowledged it by a short whistle. The first I knew of the accident was from the shunter who was riding on the foot-plate on the fireman’s side of the engine. He said to me “We have got him” I asked him what was wrong. He said “We have run into a motorist.” I stopped the engine immediately. If I had got a danger signal from anybody about the crossing I could have stopped easily before reaching crossing, as the engine was running below regulation speed, in fact, so slow that I was about to put steam on to carry her over the points for Reninghelst Supply Siding. The accident occurred at 11.50 am. The guard was sitting on the back of the tender.

Sam Bacon

The son of Joseph Morris, general dealer, and of Christiana Morris (née Crocker) – the couple had married on January 7, 1879, at St. Mary’s Church in St. John’s - of Trinity, Newfoundland, he was also brother to Orlando-James, to Effie-Marie and to Frederick-John.

(Right: The sacrifice of Private Morris is honoured on the War Memorial in Trinity. – photo from 2011)

Private Morris was reported as having been *accidentally killed* on July 29, 1916.



Stephen Crocker Morris had enlisted at the age of thirty years and six months: date of birth in Trinity, Newfoundland, March 9, 1883.

Private Stephen Crocker Morris was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) 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 24, 2023.