



Private Reginald Clarence Parmiter, Number 716178 of the 87th Battalion (*Canadian Grenadier Guards*), Canadian Expeditionary Force, is buried in Cantimpre Canadian Cemetery, Sully: Grave reference B.35.

(Right: *The image of the Canadian Grenadier Guards cap badge is from the Regimental Rogue web-site.*)

(continued)



His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *chauffeur*, Reginald Clarence Parmiter appears to have left little or no history behind him of his early life on the South Side of the harbour in the capital city, St. John's, or of his movement from the Dominion of Newfoundland to the Canadian province of Nova Scotia*. All that may be said with any certainty is that he was in the Cape Breton industrial city of Sydney during the early part of March, 1916, his place of residence then recorded as being 300, Charlotte Street.

**Except that it may not have been before the end of 1914 as he claimed having had two months service in the Newfoundland Regiment (unconfirmed), the unit formed after the Declaration of War – and after five years in the Church Lads Brigade.*

Sydney was where he enlisted on March 3, before attestation three days later on March 6, his oath witnessed by a local Justice of the Peace. It was also on March 3 that he was *taken on strength* by the 185th Battalion (Cape Breton Highlanders)*. The formalities of his enlistment, however, were brought to a conclusion only when the commanding officer of the unit, Lieutenant-Colonel Frank Parker Day, declared – on paper – that...*877102, Pte Reginald C. Parmiter, having been finally approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation**.*

**It is his first medical report which documents him as having been taken on strength by the 185th Battalion on the very day of his enlistment, March 3.*

***Curiously, this came about on April 25 – only two days before his discharge (see below).*

At this point, Private Parmiter would likely have been ordered to present himself for several weeks of training in the town of Broughton*, only some twenty kilometres distant and to the south of Sydney.

**Broughton had been a 'company town', developed towards the end on the nineteenth century by the Cape Breton Coal, Iron & Railway Company. Apparently too much money had been spent as the company went bankrupt in 1907 and the town was soon abandoned. At the outset of the Great War it was taken over by the Canadian Army and, more particularly, by the 185th Battalion (Cape Breton Highlanders).*

However, this period of training at Broughton was to last, at the most, twenty-five days:

(Extract from a Casualty Form – Active Service dated at Broughton on 14-5-16) Confined in Civil Jail at Sydney from 31/3/16 to 27/4/ for an offence for which he was convicted by civil Ch. (Chambers?) on the latter date – Forfeits 28 days pay

(Extract from Discharge Certificate dated at the Department of Militia & Defence JUL 21 1916) This is to certify that No. 877103 (sic) Private Reginald Parmiter enlisted in 185th Battalion, Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force, on the 3^d of March 1916, and accompanied said unit to Sydney NS and was discharged from the service at Sydney NS on the 27th of April 1916 in consequence of conviction by civil authority.*

In his files there appears to be no mention of what the offence might have been.

**His number elsewhere is cited as 877102.*

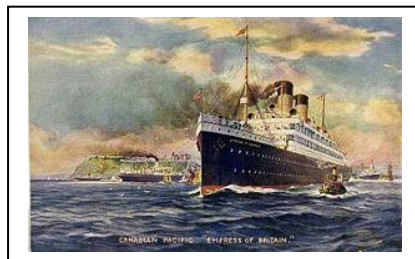
Discharged he may have been, but four days later he had re-attested, and had undergone a second medical examination – which once again found him... *fit for the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force*. The date on this occasion was May 1, 1916, and the place was Truro, Nova Scotia.

However, this second medical report has recorded him as having been *taken on strength* by the 106th Battalion (*Nova Scotia Rifles*) on the day of his re-enlistment: April 27, 1916 – which was, as seen above, the date of his discharge from the 185th Battalion.

During this period in Truro, Private Parmiter was to spend time in the local General Hospital in order to receive treatment for diphtheria. Apparently this was a fairly mild case as he spent only three days, from May 27 to 30, in care.

On this second occasion of enlistment, Private Parmiter was again obliged to await the approval of his new unit's commanding officer, in this case for almost nine weeks. Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Innes of the 106th Battalion was not to append his signature to his declaration of satisfaction until June 28.

It was to be in mid-July that the 106th Battalion took ship in the harbour at Halifax onto His Majesty's Transport *Empress of Britain*, requisitioned from the *Canadian Pacific Steamship Company*. Private Parmiter's unit was not to travel alone: taking passage on board the *Empress* were also the 5th Draft of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, the 105th Battalion of Canadian Infantry, the 63rd Regiment (*Halifax Rifles*), and the 8th Draft of 'C' Battery of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery.



(Right above: *The image of the Empress of Britain is from the Wikipedia web-site.*)

The 106th Battalion disembarked in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on July 25, some ten days after having sailed from Halifax, whereupon Private Parmiter and his comrades-in-arms were transported by train south-east across the country. The unit's destination was to be the large Canadian military complex of *Shorncliffe* on the Kentish coast just south down the Dover Straits from the harbour and town of Folkestone.



(Right above: *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*)

Lower Dibgate was the name of the subsidiary camp to which the Battalion had been assigned for its supplementary training. On October 5, some ten weeks following, most of its personnel was bureaucratically and physically absorbed by the 40th Battalion, since its arrival in England now being employed as a re-enforcement pool*. To that end Private Parmiter's unit was transferred to other subsidiary quarters, to *Cæsar's Camp* – reputedly situated on the locale where Julius himself had first landed in Britain almost two thousand years before.

*****Before the end of the Great War, Canada was to have despatched overseas just over 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 presumptions 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.

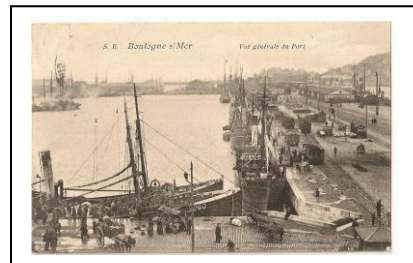


This was the fate which was to befall both of Private Parmiter's Battalions, the 106th and the 40th.

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

The 40th Battalion had already been in England for just under a year; there it had remained even though originally designated for *active service* (see above). However, some of its personnel, including Private Parmiter and others from the 106th Battalion, were soon to be despatched to the Continent and, to that end, were transferred on paper – on November 14, 1916 - to the 87th Battalion (*Canadian Grenadier Guards*) already by that time in France and serving at *the Somme*.



On the morrow, this detachment took ship and crossed from Folkestone to Boulogne.

From Boulogne this draft from the 40th Battalion was taken south by train to the Canadian General Base Depot of *Rouelles Camp* by then established in close proximity to the French industrial port-city of Le Havre, *it* situated on the estuary of the River Seine. Private Parmiter was thereupon *taken on strength* at the Base Depot on November 15, to remain there for the next twenty-five days.

(Right below: The French port-city of Le Havre at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)

One of the primary purposes of the Base Depot was to receive all the incoming Canadian troops from the United Kingdom and to organize and equip them. This having been done, the Depot then arranged for their despatch to their new units at a time and a place that was convenient to the units in question. In the case of Private Parmiter this despatch was not to come about until December 10.



At the time, the parent unit of the 87th Battalion (*Canadian Grenadier Guards*) had only just retired – nine days prior - from the *First Battle of the Somme*. As with the majority of the units engaged during this offensive, the unit had incurred heavy casualties: its immediate incoming re-enforcements after withdrawal were to number four-hundred fifty-two – almost fifty percent of establishment battalion strength.

Of the above number, two-hundred twenty-one *other ranks* – among them Private Parmiter – plus a single officer, were soldiers of the draft which reported *to duty* with the Battalion at the site of its billets in the area of Fréwillers on December 13, 1916.

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The 87th Battalion (*Canadian Grenadier Guards*) was an element of the 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, itself a component of the 4th Canadian Division, the last such Canadian formation to be despatched to *active service* on the Western Front during the Great War*.

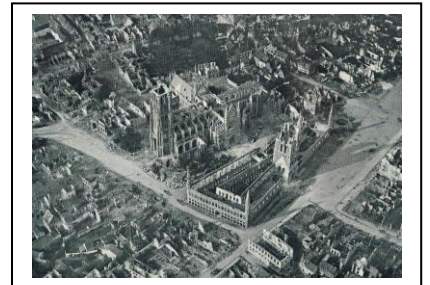
**There was also a Canadian 5th Division but, having been formed, it remained in the United Kingdom for the duration of the Great War, for training and re-enforcement purposes.*

(Right: *Reninghelst Military Cemetery, one of the few reminders of the Great War in the village where the 4th Canadian Division had its Headquarters towards the end of August, 1916 – photograph from 1916*)



The 87th Battalion had arrived in France some four months before had Private Parmiter, on September 12 of 1916, landing in the French port-city of Le Havre. Three days later it had been on its way north, to the area of the Franco-Belgian frontier and then beyond, there to serve six weeks in a sector to the south-west of what were by then becoming the vestiges of the medieval city of Ypres (today *Ieper*).

(Right: *An aerial photograph, from July of 1915 – just after the battle of 2nd Ypres - showing 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*)



On October 3, 1916, having been withdrawn from Belgium only days before to undergo training in north-western France, the 87th Battalion had been ordered by the British High Command to move south, to the area of *the Somme*, where the wretched British summer offensive had by now become a campaign of the autumn as well.

Having travelled from the north at first by train and then on foot, the unit was to arrive in the vicinity of the provincial town of Albert a week later. There the Battalion had bivouacked, at *Brickfields Camp*.

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Meanwhile, by late August and early September of 1916, when Canadian troops had first made their appearance in that particular theatre of the War, the *First Battle of the Somme* had already been ongoing for two months. It had begun with the disastrous attack of July 1, an assault which was to 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 working in Albert, the already-damaged basilica in the background – from Illustration*)

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

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

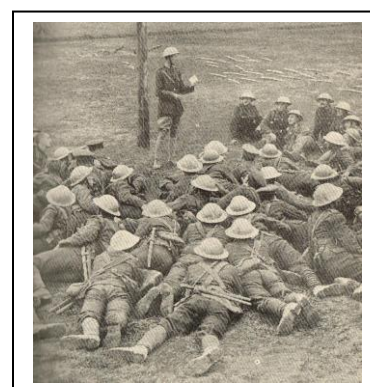
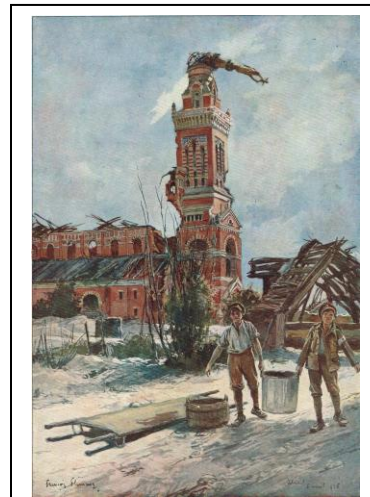
As the battle had progressed, other troops, from the Empire (*Commonwealth*), were brought in; at first it had been the South African Brigade (July 15), then the Australians and New Zealanders (July 23) before the Canadians entered the fray on and about August 30 to become part of a third general offensive.

Their first major collective contribution was to be in the area of the two villages of Flers and Courcelette, a confrontation which would occur some seven weeks before the arrival of the 87th Battalion on the scene.

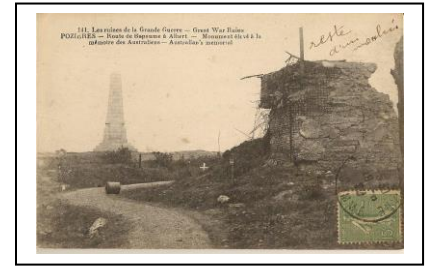
(Right: *An image purporting to be that of a Canadian officer giving instructions to those under his command prior to the attack at Flers-Courcelette, September 1916. – from The War Illustrated*)

The 87th Battalion had been in the forward trenches since October 17, but it was not until six minutes past mid-day on October 21 that the unit eventually put it its attack and captured the *Regina Trench* strong-point, an objective which had previously proved to be impregnable.

This success was unfortunately to be short-lived and *Regina Trench* was subsequently ceded back to the Germans following a counter-attack. The Battalion had then retired but was to remain in the area of Pozières until October 30 when it had moved into billets, further to the rear, in the town of Albert itself.



In November the unit had moved back into the area of *Regina Trench* on two further occasions: the first was to pass with little incident; however, during the second tour, the Battalion had been part of a further attack on November 18. *Regina Trench* having by then been definitively captured, the objective on this date had been to occupy a number of adjacent German positions.



The operation had been only partially successful and the unit had incurred a total of another two-hundred thirty-two *killed, wounded and missing in action*.

(Right above and right: *Some of the remnants of the village of Pozieres as it was after the Great War, in 1919 – and as it is a century later. The Australian War Memorial may be seen in both images. – colour photograph from 2016*)



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



Relieved on the day following the attack, on November 22 the 87th Battalion had begun to march away from *the Somme*. By December 4 the unit had marched in a semi-circle – to the west and then to the north - to Fréwillers, some twenty-five kilometres north-west of the city of Arras.

As seen further above, it had been at this place and during the 87th Battalion's posting to Fréwillers at this time that Private Parmiter and his re-enforcement draft was to report *to duty*.

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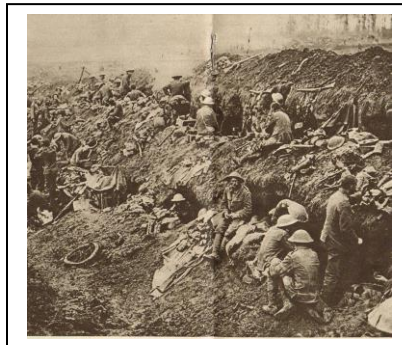
The winter of 1916-1917 was one of the every-day grind of life in and out of the trenches*. There was to be little if any concerted infantry activity apart from the constant patrolling and the occasional raids by both sides**. This latter activity was encouraged by the High Command who felt it to be a morale booster which also kept the troops in the right offensive frame of mind: the troops who were ordered to carry them out in general apparently loathed these operations.

**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 to the forward area, the latter the furthest away.*

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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: 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 fact, there was apparently so little of anything of military interest that the officer acting as War Diarist for the month of January, 1917, saw fit to make entries – altogether comprising less than a single page – for only sixteen days.*

Private Parmiter, however, was to be somewhat busier than the Battalion War Diarist. On January 17 he was ordered to take part in a Stokes Gun course, this weapon being a large-calibre mortar capable of being fired from the confines of a trench. After three weeks of training, on February 2, he returned *to duty* with his unit.

One month later, he was sent on a second such exercise, to work with other such weaponry falling into the general category of *trench mortar*. This course was to be of a shorter duration and he would be back with the 87th Battalion, on March 18, after only a dozen days.

(Right: This assembly of French trench mortars of Great War vintage, used to stand thus at the entrance to the Army Museum at les Invalides, Paris. – photograph from 2015)



On March 26 the 87th Battalion was relieved from its then-current tour in the front-line positions to be withdrawn to a rest area at area of *Le Chateau de la Haie*. From the next day until April 2 the unit was to undergo extensive training for the upcoming British offensive, so whether there was much *rest* enjoyed is to be speculated – but then again, no-one was being shot at.

(Right below: A detachment of Canadian troops going forward during the winter of 1916-1917 – from Illustration)

On April 3, the 87th Battalion had been ordered to move to the forward area.

On April 4, 5 and 6 it had supplied working parties and dug trenches.

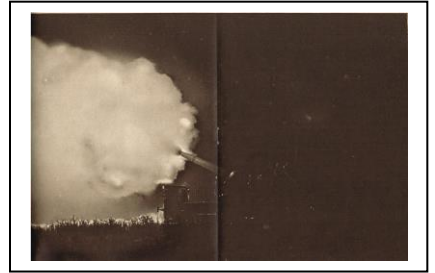
On April 7, the final elements of the Battalion had moved forward to the front area.



As those final days before the offensive had passed, the artillery barrage had been growing progressively heavier; on April 6, Good Friday, the War Diarist of another battalion was to describe it as...*drums**.

By this time, of course, the Germans had *also* been well aware that...*something was in the offing*...and their guns in their turn had by then been throwing retaliatory fire onto the Canadian positions - and their aircraft had been very busy.

(Right above: *A heavy British artillery piece spews its venom into the middle of the night during the course of the preparatory bombardment before the First Battle of Arras. – from Illustration*)



**It should be said that a great deal of the artillery used in the assault on Vimy Ridge was British and that a British Division also participated. Almost fifty per cent of the personnel who had been employed for that day were British, not to mention those whose contribution – such as those who dug the tunnels - allowed for it to happen.*

By ten o'clock on the evening of April 8, the 87th Battalion had reported itself to be in its battle positions.

On April 9 of 1917 the British Army launched an offensive in the area to the north of *the Somme* battlefields; this was to be the so-called *Battle of Arras*, intended to support a French effort elsewhere. In terms of the count of casualties, some four thousand per day, it was to be the most expensive operation of the War for the British, one of the very few positive episodes to be the Canadian assault of *Vimy Ridge* on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday.

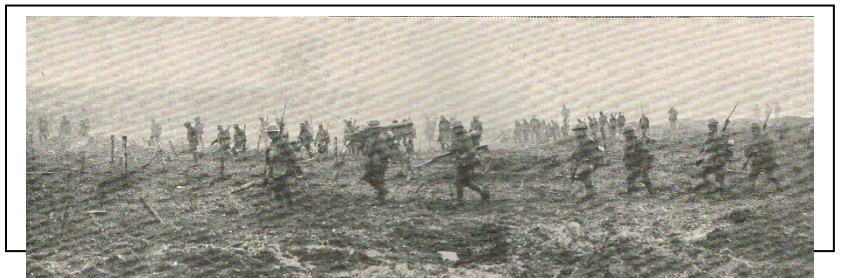


While the British campaign proved to be an overall disappointment, that French offensive at *Le Chemin des Dames* was to be yet a further disaster.

(Right above: *The Canadian National Memorial which, since 1936, stands on Vimy Ridge – photograph from 2010*)

On that April 9, in driving snow, the four Canadian Divisions, for the first time acting as a single, autonomous entity – there was even a British brigade operating under 2nd Canadian Division command - stormed the slope of *Vimy Ridge*, by the end of the next day having cleared it almost entirely of its German occupants.

(Right: *Canadian troops of the 4th or 3rd Division, burdened with all the paraphernalia of war, on the advance across No-Man's-Land during the attack at Vimy Ridge on either April 9 or 10 of 1917 - from Illustration*)



Excerpt from the 87th Battalion War Diary of April 9, 1917: *Easter Monday, zero hour 5.30 A.M. The Battalion, 520 strong all ranks, went “over the top” supported by a strong artillery barrage.*

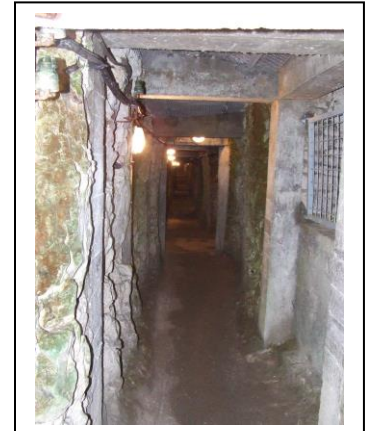
Excerpts from 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade War Diary entry for April 9, 1917:

12.25 p.m. - 87th Battalion report that a party of 75th Battalion who were out in front of BASSO (Trench) were counter attacked by the enemy, and believe that some of our men were taken prisoners.

12.55 p.m. – The 87th Battalion advise that they are sending out a Lewis Gun Officer, with 4 guns, and 20 men to clean up the situation around the Old German Front Line & proceed on to BASSO after this is accomplished.

2.00 p.m. – O.C., 87th Battalion reports one Machine Gun of the 11th Machine Gun Coy. operating sixty yards left of crater where LIEUT. Hannaford and his party are established.

(Right: *Grange Tunnel - one of the few remaining galleries still open to the public at Vimy one hundred years later on: They were hewn out of the limestone to ensure secrecy and, at the same time, the security of the attacking troops – photograph from 2008(?)*)



The Battalion assault had enjoyed only mixed results at first, even some of the successful attackers having been forced to retire when their flanks had become vulnerably exposed. Eventually, however, the advance continued, one of the last actions of the day going in at a quarter to seven in the evening to clear two more trenches of the enemy.

By the late evening of April 10 the Canadian Corps had cleared the area of *Vimy Ridge* of the few remaining pockets of resistance and had begun to consolidate the area in anticipation of the expected German counter-attacks – which, in fact, were never to amount to very much.

(Right: *German prisoners being escorted to the rear by Canadian troops during the attack on Vimy Ridge – from Illustration*)



There had, on that second day, been the opportunity to advance through the shattered enemy defences – the highly-touted breakthrough – but such a follow-up on the previous day's success had proved logistically impossible, thanks mostly to the inclement weather and an order...to consolidate. And in fact, the Germans were to retreat to prepared positions in what had been their third defensive line before April 9. There they had once again become their resolute selves.

The remainder of the relatively short, five-week long, *Battle of Arras* was not to be fought in the manner of the first two days and by the end of that period – the affair officially terminated on May 15 - little else had changed and the Germans had recovered from the initial Canadian success.

Private Parmiter's 87th Battalion, now posted into the *Lens Sector*, had then again reverted to that routine of life in the trenches.

In the meantime, however, Private Parmiter had been getting himself into trouble. Unfortunately, this would be a pattern – to be interspersed with medical problems - which was to become more and more frequent as time passed.

On May 7, while his unit was training in the area of Château de la Haie, he absented himself from parade, whereupon the Battalion authorities awarded him three days of *Field Punishment Number 1*.

Nineteen days later it was to be a health complication which beset Private Parmiter when he incurred a case of trench fever. He was evacuated from his posting in the forward area to the Number 8 Stationary Hospital in the vicinity of the coastal resort area of Wimereux on May 26 and received attention there for two days.



(Right above: *Before the Great War when it became the site of a major medical complex, the northern French community of Wimereux had been a fashionable seaside holiday resort.* – from a vintage post-card)

On May 28 Private Parmiter was forwarded to the Number 1 Convalescent Depot for a further six days before being discharged *to duty* on June 3. This duty, however, was not to be with his 87th Battalion in the field, but was served at the 4th Canadian Infantry Base Depot at Étaples where he was posted until the time was appropriate for him to re-join his unit in the forward area.

The first week or so of that earlier month of June would indeed *not* have been propitious for his return to his battalion: the seven days from the 5th until, and including, the 12th were to be particularly active with a succession of eight raids undertaken by the 87th Battalion in the area in front of and overlooked by *Vimy Ridge*.



The attack of June 8 was a major affair involving three units – the 75th, the 87th and the 102nd Battalions – in the area of La Coulotte, and was preceded by a heavy Canadian artillery barrage. The German response – delivered in a like manner - caused a total of some two-hundred casualties among the troops of the three attacking battalions.

(Right above: *Canadian troops operating in the forward area during the spring or summer of 1917* – from *Illustration*)

The proceedings of those two days, June 8 and 9, had cost the 87th Battalion a total of one-hundred thirty-nine casualties.

(Right: *Canadian troops advancing under fire across No-Man's Land in the summer of 1917* – from *Le Miroir*)



On June 9, for his comrades-in-arms at the front a relatively quiet day mostly occupied by stretcher-bearer parties of both sides bringing in wounded and punctuated only by artillery duels, Private Parmiter had been busy falling afoul of the authorities at the 4th CIBD: he had gone *Absent Without Leave* from morning until evening.

On the following day he was sentenced to fourteen days of *Field Punishment Number 2*, and to that end, on the next day again, June 11, he was taken to serve his two-week term in the *Base Depot Field Punishment Compound*.*

**The severity of the punishment was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that at the time he was on 'active service'.*

Some three weeks were to pass Private Parmiter was then afflicted with a case of NYD – *Not Yet Determined* – often a euphemism for a medical condition with some stigma attached such as a venereal complaint or, during the *Great War*, shell-shock. In this case, however, Private Parmiter, upon admission into the 7th Canadian General Hospital at Étaples on July 18, was diagnosed as suffering from a mild case of myalgia for which he remained undergoing treatment until August 1 when he was transferred to the nearby Number 6 Convalescent Depot.

Two days afterwards, on August 3, Private Parmiter was released *to duty and taken on strength* once more by the 4th Canadian Infantry Base Depot. It appears that he remained there at the disposal of the commanding officer until the month of October when he was again sentenced to a period of *Field Punishment Number 1*:

3.10.17 – Sentenced to 21 days F.P. No 1 for When on Active Service Conduct to the prejudice of good order and Military Discipline, in that he was found on enclosed premises after lights out. (From Casualty Form – Active Service)

On October 4, he was again taken to the *Base Depot Field Punishment Compound*.

The misdemeanours were now to come thick and fast: Only a week after being released, on November 3, he was again sentenced to *F.P. No. 1*, on this further occasion for one more being *Absent Without Leave* for a period of one hour and twenty minutes during the evening of November 1. He began his seven-day sentence on the same day.

On the day of his release, according to his pay records, he was once more *Absent Without Leave* and in... *unlawful possession of a motor-car...* for two hours. Any further details appear to be absent except that two weeks of the now-familiar *F.P. No 2* were assigned, a sentence which he began to serve the next day.

Hardly out of custody after his adventure with the car, Private Parmiter declined... *to comply with an order...* an offence for which fourteen days of *F.P. No. 2* was deemed appropriate. Dated: November 27, 1917.

Private Parmiter likely spent Christmas Day of 1917 at the 4th Canadian Infantry Base Depot: but he was to spend Boxing Day once again confined to the *Base Depot Punishment Compound*, having been condemned to twenty-eight days *F.P. No 2* for... *i) Out of Bounds ii) Creating a disturbance after lights out*

Likely back at the 4th CIBD in February, Private Parmiter appears to have made little effort to change his ways. On or about February 21 of 1918, he was sentenced to twenty-eight days of *F.P. No 1... For absenting himself without leave from 8.30 am 2/2/18 until apprehended in Paris about 5 pm 14/2/18 (about 13 days) Forfeits 13 days pay.*

He was thereupon sent to the *Canadian Corps Reinforcement Camp* at Calonne-Ricouart under escort as a prisoner on February 26.

It was surely in Paris that Private Parmiter caught a venereal disease as on March 5 he was admitted into the 12th and subsequently forwarded to the 1st Canadian Field Ambulance at Braquemonty for medical attention to the complaint before being discharged back *to duty* a week later.

On this occasion it appears that he was – finally - despatched to re-join his unit, the 87th Battalion, the date documented in his papers as March 13.

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By that time it had been some ten months since Private Parmiter had last served with his Battalion. During that time the 87th Battalion (*Canadian Grenadier Guards*) had fought in one of the most horrendous campaigns of the *Great War* as well as in divers minor actions, having spent all of that period in the forward and rear areas of the *Western Front*.

In contrast to June of 1917, much of the month following had been spent by the unit in reserve, once again in the area of *Le Chateau de la Haie*. Parades, lectures, drills, inspections, visits from Brigade and Divisional Commanders - as well as from the High Command - sports and working parties were all the order of the day. The Battalion had even lined the sides of the road on one particular date when His Majesty King George V was passing by.



(Right above: *A photograph of a Canadian working-party carrying supplies of all kinds to the troops in forward positions: The use of the head-straps – known as ‘Tumps’ – was an idea borrowed from Canada’s indigenous peoples. – from Le Miroir*)

The British High Command had by this time decided to undertake a summer offensive in the *Ypres Salient*, Belgium. Thus, in order to divert German attention – as well as his reserve troops - from that area, it had also ordered operations to simultaneously take place at the sector of the front running north-south from Béthune down to Lens.

The Canadians were to be a major contributor to this effort.

(Right: *An example of the conditions under which the troops were ordered to fight in the area of Lens during the summer of 1917 – from Le Miroir*)



(continued)

(Right: *This was to be typical of the northern French mining-centre and city of Lens by the end of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)



Those expecting *Hill 70* to be a precipitous and ominous elevation are to be surprised. It is hardly prominent in a countryside that is already flat, the highest points being the summits of slag heaps which date from the mining era of yesteryear.

(Right: *Canadian troops inspecting the spoils of war, likely in No-Man's Land, during the summer of 1917 – from Le Miroir*)



Yet it had been high enough to have been considered - by the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Corps, Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie – to be the key feature in the area, its capture more important than that of the city of Lens itself.

Objectives of the attack had been limited and had for the most part been achieved by the end of that August 15. Due to the dominance of *Hill 70* over the entire area, it had been expected that the Germans would endeavour to retrieve it and so it was to prove; on the 16th several strong counter-attacks would be launched against the Canadian positions, positions that by this time had been transformed into defensive strong-points.

(Right: *This gentle slope rising to the left is, in fact, Hill 70. A monument to the 15th Battalion of the Canadian Infantry stands nearby in tribute. – photograph from 1914*)



These defences had held and the Canadian artillery, which had been employing newly-developed tactical procedures, had inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. *Hill 70* was to remain in Canadian hands*.

(Right below: *A heavy Canadian 220 mm siege gun, here under camouflage nets in the Lens Sector, being prepared for action by personnel of the Canadian Garrison Artillery – from Le Miroir*)



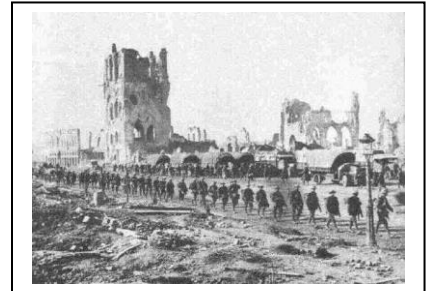
The assault on *Hill 70* had been made by formations of the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions. The 87th Battalion, being of the 4th Canadian Division, was not a part of this operation, but the unit had been active in the outskirts of Lens during that same period, particularly in the area of the Lens-Liévin Road where it today still crosses the Béthune to Lens railway line, and in the western outskirts of the city of Lens itself.

This Canadian-led offensive campaign had been scheduled to continue into September and even longer, but the ongoing British summer offensive in Belgium had been proceeding less well than expected and the High Command was to soon be looking for reinforcements to make good the heavy losses.

Troops of the Australian Imperial Force, the recently-formed New Zealand Division, and then the Canadian Corps were thereupon ordered to prepare to move north; thus the Canadians were obliged to abandon their plans.

(Right below: *Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration*)

In the middle of October the Canadians had been ordered north into Belgium and to the *Ypres Salient*. Officially designated the *Third Battle of Ypres*, the campaign – ongoing since the end of that July – has come to be known to history as *Passchendaele*, having adopted that name from a small village on a ridge that was – at least *ostensibly* - one of the British Army's objectives.



(Right: *Somewhere, perhaps anywhere or everywhere, on the battlefield of Passchendaele during the autumn of 1917 – from Illustration*)

From the time that the Canadians had entered the fray, it was to be they who had shouldered a great deal of the burden. For the week of October 26 until November 3 it would be the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions which had spearheaded the assault, with the 1st and 2nd Divisions in reserve.



From November 5 until the official end of the affair – November 10 - the reverse was to be true with troops of the 2nd Division having finally entered the remnants of the village of Passchendaele itself.

(Right above: *The monument to the sacrifice of the Canadians which stands in the outskirts of the re-constructed village of Passchendaele (today Passendale) – photograph from 2010*)



(Right: *Just a few hundred metres to the south-west of Passchendaele – and looking in the opposite direction from the site of the above monument – this area, according to the 87th Battalion War Diary, is where the unit was in trenches on October 30 of 1917. – photograph from 2010*)



Meanwhile, October 11 had been the first day of the transfer of the 87th Battalion which was to bring it, after a year's absence, and for a second occasion, to the *Ypres Salient*, Belgium.

By the 22nd of that month the unit had arrived in *Toronto Camp* established in the area of Brandhoek, a village six kilometres to the west of Ypres itself and half way along the road from there to the larger town of Poperinghe.

(continued)

On the 27th, thirty-two officers and six-hundred eighteen *other ranks* of the Battalion had moved to the vicinity of Potijze, north-east of Ypres, to be quartered in shelters and dugouts. There, for a further six days, they had mostly been engaged in providing work parties and, at least on one day, had sent one-hundred men to carry some of the many wounded to the rear.



(Right: *Canadian troops performing their ablutions in the water collecting in a shell hole at some time during the last month of Passchendaele – from Le Miroir*)

Having returned back to Brandhoek on November 2, the unit had entrained on the following day again for Cæstre, in northern France. After further days of training and inspections, the Battalion would find itself back in *Toronto Camp*, Brandhoek, on November 10. From there it had been ordered to Ypres, from Ypres to Potijze, from Potijze to *Abraham Heights*, and from there to *Crest Farm* on the outskirts of the no-longer existent community of Passchendaele itself, all in the space of two days: there at *Crest Farm* the 87th Battalion had relieved companies of three other Canadian battalions.

According to the Battalion War Diary entry for November 16... *The total casualties for the tour were 4 Officers and 172 O.R. which is exceedingly heavy for four days in holding the line, and shows the intenseness of the situation in the vicinity of Passchendaele.* It had been an almost-ceaseless enemy artillery bombardment which had inflicted the vast majority of these losses on the unit.

On the next day, November 17, the 87th Battalion was relieved and began to retire to France – on foot and by motor transport. Six days later again, on the 23rd, after a march of some twenty-eight kilometres from Cantrainne, it had been billeted in the proximity of La Thieuloye, to the north-west of Arras and far from the forward area. By December 21, however, the Battalion was once more at the front, now in the *Chaudière Sector* - and Christmas Day of 1917 turned out to be just another day in the trenches*.

**On December 3 and 4 the personnel of the Battalion were encouraged to exercise their right to vote in the Canadian National Election ongoing at the time. Also offered was the opportunity to invest in War Bonds, thus allowing those fighting in the conflict the opportunity to pay for it as well.*



(Right: *The Canadian National Monument on Vimy Ridge as seen looking southwards from the Chaudière Sector, German occupied territory on April 9, 1917 – photograph from 1914*)

In contrast to Christmas Day spent in the forward area, New Year's Eve had been celebrated by everyone taking the train to Neuville St-Vaast for a bath!

Much of January, most of February and the first two weeks of March, 1918, were for the most part a quiet time, not only for the 87th Battalion but indeed for most of the Canadian 11th Infantry Brigade. On March 12 the unit was preparing to leave *Alberta Camp* to go back to the front lines. They were to once again be posted to the *Lens Sector*.

According to his personal dossier, it was on the following day, March 13, Private Parmiter re-joined his Battalion; if so, it was likely in the transport lines or the details area.

It was to take but a month for Private Parmiter to find himself in trouble once more. In the meantime there were the Germans to worry about.

* * * * *

Perhaps not many people realize how close the Germans would come to victory in the spring period of 1918. Having transferred the Divisions no longer necessary on the Eastern Front because of the Russian withdrawal from the Great War, they had delivered a massive attack, Operation '*Michael*', launched on March 21. The main blow had fallen at *the Somme* in the area of, and also just to the south of, the battlefields of 1916, and it had descended for the most part on the British troops of the Fifth Army stationed there, particularly where they were serving adjacent to French forces.

(Right: *While the Germans did not attack Lens – some sources claim this to be neighbouring Liévin – in the spring of 1918, they bombarded it heavily at the time of their offensive in order to keep the British uncertain about their intentions and to oblige them to retain troops in the area. – from Le Miroir*)



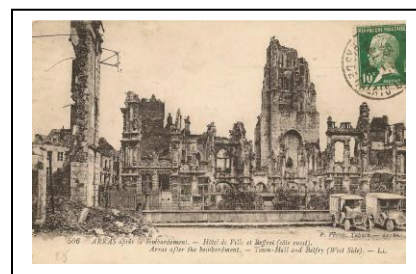
The German advance had continued for some two weeks, having petered out just in front of the city of Amiens. The ultimate failure of the offensive was to be a result of a combination of factors: British and Commonwealth resistance, fatigue, logistical problems and French co-operation with the British would be the most significant.

**A second but lesser such offensive, 'Georgette', fell in northern France and in Belgium on April 9, in the area where the Royal Newfoundland Regiment was serving with the British 29th Division. It also was successful for a while, but petered out at the end of the month.*

(Right: *British troops on the retreat in Flanders in April of 1918 – from Illustration*)

It would appear that the 87th Battalion was to remain *in situ* in the *Lens Sector* until the end of the month of March when it had been transferred some kilometres south to the Arras Sector. It had then been despatched back and forth, as had many other units in the area to the north of the city itself. But the Battalion was not to be posted to *the Somme* to staunch the German onslaught of that spring; the unit would remain in the region to the north and north-west of Arras.

(Right: *The venerable City Hall of Arras and its bell-tower looked like this by the spring of 1918 after nearly four years of bombardment by German artillery. – from a vintage post-card*)



(continued)

**The area just to the south and west of Arras was at the northern extreme of the German offensive. Unsure as to what the enemy's intentions were, the High Command moved Canadian Division units into the area to forestall any attack, if and when it occurred, to protect the avenue to the Channel ports and also the coal-fields in the area of Béthune.*

In the event, the offensive in that direction was stopped cold by the British Third Army before it reached Arras, but during the period of the crisis the Germans had stayed active enough to keep the British and Canadians wondering.

As for the situation to the north, it apparently was never deemed serious enough to warrant any Canadian movement in that direction.*

**And the Germans were also busy elsewhere on the Western Front; the offensives launched against British and Commonwealth forces were not the only battles to be fought. During this period Ludendorff, up until late spring, also attacked the French.*

By April 15 the 87th Battalion was on the western side of Vimy Ridge, behind the lines in the area of Neuville St-Vaast, all four of its companies having been found accommodation in the so-named Cellar Camp.

* * * * *

Excerpts from: Report on Accidental or Self-Inflicted Injuries – 15.4.1918

Number, Name, Rank and Unit of injured man – 716178, Pte. Parmiter, R.C. 87th Battn Can Inf, Can Grenadier Guards

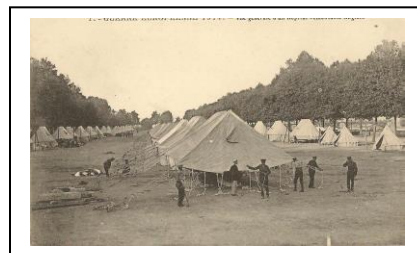
Bullet wound, left foot

While arranging breach cover on his rifle, the rifle went off, the bullet entering his left foot

To blame – to be tried by Field General Court Martial

Injured (negligently self-inflicted)

Private Parmiter was admitted into the Number 12 Canadian Field Ambulance at Aux Rietz – also known as *La Targette* - before being sent to the 7th Casualty Clearing Station – at either Tinques or Ligny St-Flochel - there receiving treatment for four days until April 20. On the evening of that day he was transferred on the Number 33 Ambulance Train to the 4th General Hospital established in the vicinity of the communities of Dannes and Camiers.



(Right above: A British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and when the necessity arose – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War. Other such medical establishments were of a much more permanent nature. - from a vintage post-card)

(continued)

It was apparently to be another two months before his release from there whereupon he was sent as a prisoner under escort to the now-combined Canadian Infantry Base Depot at Étaples. Having arrived and been taken on strength there at the Base Depot on June 24, he was despatched to re-join his unit four days afterwards, on June 28.

* * * * *

On the day of his return *to duty*, Private Parmiter's unit was in the rear area in the vicinity of the community of Valhuon; *Training carried on under Coy arrangements.* (Excerpt from 87th Battalion War Diary)

A further month was to pass before the 87th Battalion was then ordered forward from the relative security of Valhuon to the area close to Roclincourt, perhaps half-way between the village of Vimy and the city of Arras. It began its tour there on July 10 and was relieved – back into *support?* – a week later.

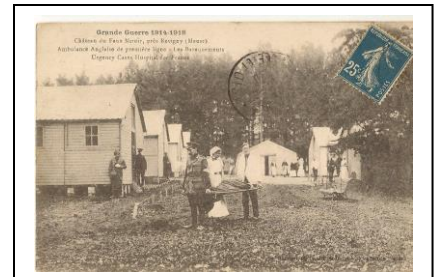
Five days later again it returned to the front near Roclincourt - on this occasion to take part in two raids to inflict casualties and to obtain information – until it in turn was relieved on the final day of the month. Casualties incurred by the Battalion during that month of July were light by the norms of the day.

(Right: Arras Road Cemetery, Roclincourt, in which lie a number of Canadian dead and at least one Newfoundlander – photograph from 2014(?))



* * * * *

By the end of July, Private Parmiter was once again in need of medical care. On the 24th of that month he would be admitted into the 12th Canadian Field Ambulance at Auchel, the problem a general myalgia. Six days later he was to be re-visiting the 7th Casualty Station at Ligny St-Flochel where to add to his myalgia, he was now deemed to be suffering from a...*general debility*.



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

His treatment having concluded, he was then discharged once more to the Canadian Infantry Base Depot at Étaples – and apparently once more *under escort* – where he arrived on September 13.

Still recorded in his personal files as...*a prisoner*, Private Parmiter was *struck off strength* by the CIBD on September 24 of 1918 and was despatched to report back to his unit.

* * * * *

(continued)

At the end of July the 87th Battalion had still been in the area of Roclincourt. However, that relatively quiet period of the preceding months was to change during the month of August. Under the new Allied Generalissimo, Foch, an immense combined offensive was being prepared to push the Germans back whence they had come some four months previously – and beyond*.



(Right: *Le Maréchal Ferdinand Jean-Marie Foch, this photograph from 1921, became Generalissimo of the Allied Armies on March 26, 1918. – photograph from the Wikipedia web-site*)

**Nobody knew it at the time of course and perhaps, after four years of static warfare, no one dared to think it, but this campaign - to become known as the Hundred Days – was to end with the Armistice of November 11 of 1918. (Although by that time there would be several such agreements as the Central Powers one by one were to leave the field.)*

In the previous April the German spring offensive had almost reached the gates of Amiens in the south and had advanced towards the Channel ports in the north before being stopped. That area in front of Amiens was to be the jumping-off point for the Allied attack of August 8*, thus the early days of August would see a great transfer of Canadian troops from the area north-west of Arras to the new theatre of battle some ninety kilometres to the south. The move was to be rapid – and to be cloaked in secrecy.



(Right: *The great gothic cathedral in the city of Amiens which the leading German troops had been able to see on the western skyline in the spring of 1918 – The edifice houses a flag and other commemorations of the sacrifice of the Dominion of Newfoundland – photograph from 2007(?)*)

**It was to be the end of September before the Allied counter-attack would commence in the north on the front in Flanders where the Royal Newfoundland Regiment was serving.*



The 87th Battalion left its quarters in the proximity of Écoivres and Mont St-Éloi on the evening of August 3 and had been bussed some one-hundred twenty kilometres before it had dismounted at four-thirty on the following morning in, or close to, the community of Oisemont – still at a distance of forty-seven kilometres from Amiens.



(Right above and right: *The village of St-Éloi at an early period of the Great War and a century later - The ruins of the Abbey St-Éloi – destroyed in 1783 – are visible in both images. – from Le Miroir and (colour) from 2016*)

(continued)

The Battalion was then to be billeted in or in the vicinity of the villages of Heucourt and Prouzel on successive days having marched by night. Then, on August 6...*The Brigade Group began its move to concentration area BOIS DE BOVES. At five o'clock on the afternoon of the next day again the Brigade began a further, final movement into the BOIS DE GENTELLES.*

Excerpt from the 87th Battalion War Diary entry of August 8, 1917: *Notification received that zero hour was to be 4.20 A.M. and at 5.30 A.M. the Battalion started to move. It moved around the south end of the GENTELLES WOOD and then south and parallel to the ROYE Road, crossing the RIVER LUCE and taking up a position along Old German trench system... From here it could be seen that our attack was progressing favourably and many prisoners were being sent back. The Battalion moved again at 9.20 A.M...*



(Right above: *The remnants of the community of Roye, this picture taken in 1917, even before the events of 1918 – from a vintage post-card*)

The attack of August 8 was for the most part to be a great success – the Canadians having advanced in places an unheard-of eleven kilometres. It had continued in places overnight and, in general, had recommenced early in the morning of the morrow. On the 10th, the 87th and 54th Battalions were operating in support of the 10th and 12th Canadian Infantry Brigades as the attack had continued, the other two battalions of the 11th Brigade having withdrawn temporarily.



(Right above: *The caption records this as being a photograph of German prisoners taken by the Canadians, some of them carrying a wounded officer – Allied or German officer is not documented. Also to be noted is one of the newer tanks. – from Le Miroir*)

On the evening of the 11th, the unit had made its way to the village of Rosières and, after a halt of several days, by August 19 would be reported as having advanced as far as the community of Hattencourt. There it had been involved in an action which had had as its objective to advance the line some five-hundred yards... *Line was secured without difficulty on left but strong resistance was met with on the right in vicinity of FRESHCOPSE where heavy bomb fighting took place... Our casualties reported to be light.* (Battalion War Diary)

In his entry of the following day, August 20, the War Diarist has written...*Our artillery continue to be very active carrying out harassing fire and destructive shoots. Special attention is paid to the bridges across the SOMME.* The attacks had been continuing and, as the objective of the current offensive had been to advance to the River Somme, it would appear that this goal had been about to be realized.

On that same August 20, the 87th Battalion had retired into reserve.

(Right: *Canadian soldiers consolidate their newly-won positions while others cross a river on an improvised bridge.* – from *Le Miroir*)



On the night of August 24-25 the remainder of the 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade had been withdrawn into reserve, to be replaced in the line by elements of the French 34th and 35th Divisions. The Canadians were now to leave the *Amiens Front* as they had come: quickly and discretely.

Only days hence they would be fighting another battle to the east of Arras, the area that they had left just over three weeks previously.

(Right: *French dead in the communal cemetery at Caix, just to the west of Rosières, the French having begun to relieve Canadian troops towards the end of the second week of the battle: Caix also hosts a British Commonwealth cemetery as well as a German burial ground.* – photograph from 2017)



As for the 87th Battalion, during the evening of August 27 it was to board a train at Longeau Station and at sixteen minutes past eleven of that same evening, had begun the railway journey from there to Acq from where the personnel had then taken busses to Berneville. Two days later again, the unit had been organizing in the area of Neuville-Vitasse to the south of Arras.

The early days of September were to be a busy time for the 87th Battalion. On August 26 the Canadian Corps had joined with British forces in opening a new front along the axis of the Arras-Cambrai road. This campaign was to be undertaken in several stages and was designed to drive the enemy out of the prepared defensive system known – in English – as the *Hindenburg Line* and back across the *Canal du Nord**.

**The advance in front of Amiens was also to continue and at the end of September a further offensive was to erupt further north in Belgium.*

The 87th Battalion was not to become a part of this general advance until September 2 (see below) by which time some Canadian and British units had already been engaged for a week.

The following is from Appendices to be found in the 87th Battalion War Diary for the month of September, 1918:

Operational Order No. 138

a) The Canadian Corps will attack DROCOURT-QUEANT LINE and enemy positions in rear, on a date and at a time to be notified later*.

****The date was to be September 2.***

On that September 2...*On reaching the crest of the ridge just east of the sunken road, the leading Coys came under heavy Machine Gun and shell fire, frontally and on both flanks... At 1.30 P.M. the C.O. advised Brigade that we could not hope to get further without artillery and tank support and shortly after the G.O.C. stated that we could hold on to what we had and await orders...*

(Right: *After the successful operation of breaking the Hindenberg Line at Drocourt-Quéant, Canadian troops are here being inspected by the Commander-in-Chief of the British and Commonwealth Forces in Europe, Douglas Haig. – from Le Miroir*)

The Battalion was to advance until the evening of September 4 when it had been relieved, then eventually having retired to the area of Neuville-Vitasse. The unit, indeed the entire Canadian Corps, had incurred heavy casualties* and by this time re-organization, re-equipment and re-enforcement had been priorities. Elsewhere the advance had continued.

**For example, of the three-hundred thirty-seven dead interred in Dury Mill British Cemetery, only nine did not serve in a Canadian unit, and all but eighteen were to die on September 2 of 1918.*

(Right: *Dury Mill British Cemetery is to be found in fields just off the northern side of the Arras-Cambrai route nationale, not far to the east of Monchy-le-Preux. – photograph from 2016*)

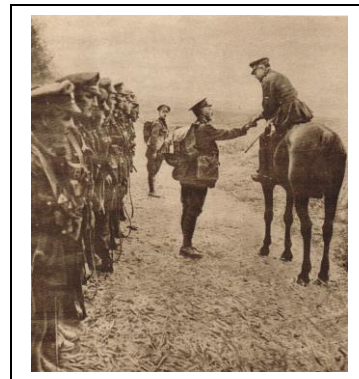
(Right below: *The Canadian Memorial to those who fought at the Drocourt-Quéant Line in early September of 1918: It stands to the side of the main Arras-Cambrai road in the vicinity of the village of Dury and of Mount Dury. – photograph from 2016*)

For the next three weeks the 87th Battalion was to remain in quarters in the rear area of Neuville-Vitasse, girding itself for the next confrontation. The opening offensives had been in general very successful – nevertheless very costly – and in places the advance had brought Canadian and British troops as far east as the west bank of the *Canal du Nord*.

However, it had proved to be logistically impossible for supplies, re-enforcements and artillery to follow up on this perhaps unexpected success. Probing patrols and minor operations had subsequently been mounted to keep the Germans off balance and to prevent any organized defence system to develop, but until September 27, any further large-scale attack was not to be undertaken on the Arras-Cambrai front.

However, when the day was to arrive, Private Parmiter – having reportedly re-joined his unit at Neuville-Vitasse on September 24 - and his 87th Battalion would be in the thick of it.

* * * * *



It was to be on September 24 that the 87th Battalion came into receipt of orders to move forward to the area of Bullecourt on the night of September 25-26. Having done so, *Operational Order 140* was then received on September 26, the overall instructions of which were: *The 11th C.I.B. are attacking with objective, south end of BOURLON village and BOURLON WOOD.*

The 102nd on the right and the 87th on the left will attack with objectives west end of BOURLON WOOD; i.e. GREEN Objective...

...When barrage has lifted off BOURLON Wood...Coys will push forward patrols to ascertain if wood is held in strength. If fighting is necessary to clear it, patrols will withdraw and report accordingly...

...Zero hour will be advised later.

But of course, first of all the *Canal du Nord* had to be crossed.

(Right above: *German prisoners evacuating wounded out of the area of the unfinished part of the Canal du Nord which the Canadians crossed on September 27, thus opening the road to Cambrai – from Le Miroir*)

(Excerpts from the 87th Battalion War Diary entry for September 27, 1918) *At 5.20 A.M. the hour fixed for zero the attack began. The enemy replied to our barrage with a heavy counter-barrage and several casualties were suffered in the assembly position. At 5.30 A.M. the Companies advanced. The CANAL DU NORD was crossed without difficulty but casualties were suffered by the Companies in moving forward...*

(Right: *The same area of the Canal du Nord as it is almost a century after the Canadian operation to cross it – photograph from 2015*)

(Right below: *Two German field-guns of Great War vintage stand on the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City, the one in the foreground captured during the fighting at Bourslon Wood – photograph from 2016*)

...at 8.20 A.M. they crossed the RED LINE and advanced to the attack...against the SUNKEN ROAD leading south from BOURLON which they took without difficulty...and cleared the southern corner of the village to the GREEN LINE... At 1.20 P.M. it was reported...that the Battalion was re-organized and ready to go on...

(Page following: *Some of the logistical problems encountered by the advancing Canadians as they crossed the Canal du Nord(?) in late September of 1918 – from Le Miroir*)

(continued)



From that point the progress of the battle slowed as further objectives were exhibiting an enemy more resilient than had been the case earlier in the day. At eleven o'clock that evening the 87th Battalion had to be content with consolidating a railway line* which for a while earlier in the day had promised to fall easily into its hands.



**The line from Cambrai to Douai*

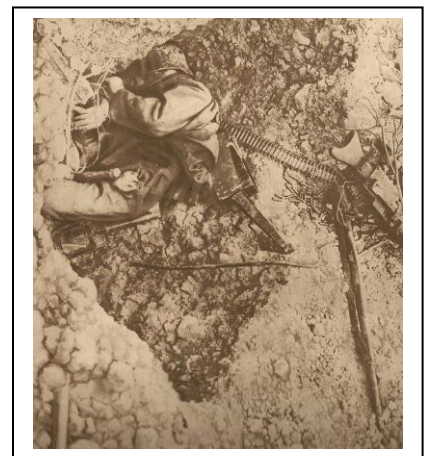
On September 28 the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade passed through the 11th Brigade to carry the fight forward. The 11th Brigade – and thus Private Parmiter's 87th Battalion – remained much *in situ* during that day. However...*At 10.25 P.M. a warning order was received. The 11th Brigade was to move forward in support of the 12th Brigade.* (From 87th Battalion War Diary entry of September 28, 1918)

That move began at thirty minutes past seven on the following morning, that of September 29, when the 87th Battalion advanced to its assembly position. However...*the attack of the 12th Brigade was not going as well as expected; the 11th Brigade spent the day in the same location.* (From 87th Battalion War Diary entry of September 29, 1918)

Later that evening further orders were issued: *The 11th Brigade was to attack from the Railway south of BLECOURT and CUVILLERS, the 75th Battn. to the first objective. The 87th Battn. was to follow the 54th Battn. and swing to the right seizing the Village and Bridgehead of ESWARS*... The strength of the Battalion for this attack was 21 Officers 456 O.R.* (From 87th Battalion War Diary entry of September 29, 1918)

**Eswars is to the north-east of Cambrai and some twelve kilometres from where the Canal du Nord had been crossed only three days previously.*

An Officer from the 12th Brigade guided the Battn. up and the start was made at 3.40 A.M. Notwithstanding the darkness of the night, the assembly position was reached without difficulty at 5.15 A.M... The Battn. moved forward to the attack at 6.05 A.M. No reports were received as to the progress made by the leading Battalions... Heavy shelling was encountered when the CAMBRIA (sic) - DOUAI ROAD was reached... There was heavy shelling and heavy machine gun fire...and the situation was very obscure... (From 87th Battalion War Diary entry of September 30, 1918)



(Right: A German machine-gunner who also gave his all – from *Illustration*)

...At 12.55 P.M...reported that the Battn. had been very badly cut up... The Battn. was withdrawn for reorganization, the 54th Battn. taking over the line. At 4.30 P.M. orders were sent...to reorganize the remainder of the Battn. as one Company...its strength consisted of 4 Officers and 124 O.R. (From 87th Battalion War Diary entry of September 30, 1918)

(continued)

The son of William Parmiter, carpenter, and of Sarah Parmiter - to whom, as of October 1, 1916, he had allocated a monthly seventeen dollars from his pay and also to whom, in either June or July of 1917, he had willed his everything – of 365, South Side Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, he was also brother to at least William.

Private Parmiter was reported as having been *killed in action* during fighting to the north of Cambrai on September 30, 1918.



(Right above: *The photograph of Private Parmiter is from the web-site: Angelfire – A short History and Photographic Record of 106th Overseas Battalion C.E.F. Nova Scotia Rifles*)

Reginald Clarence Parmiter had enlisted at the apparent age of twenty-one years and twenty months. Two different years of birth have been recorded, both on his attestation papers: March 5, 1895 and March 5, 1896.

Private Reginald Clarence Parmiter 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 23, 2023.