

Private Horatio Baldwin (Number 1054601) of the 14th Battalion (*Royal Montreal Regiment*), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on the stone of the Menin Gate, Ypres (today *Ieper*): Panel reference 24-26-28-30.

(Right: *The image of the shoulder patch of the 14th Battalion (Royal Montreal Regiment) is from the Wikipedia Website.*

His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of an elevator man, Horatio Baldwin appears to have left no record of his immigration from the Dominion of Newfoundland to the Canadian province of Québec, except that by the time of enlistment he was documented as a working resident of Montreal - his address 233, Drolet Street.

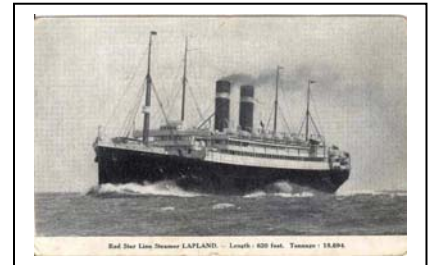
The date of that enlistment *for the duration of the war*, November 6 of 1916, was also the day on which he presented himself for medical examination and attestation. The venue for all three exercises was Montreal – which is also where it appears that he underwent a second medical screening, for no documented reason, on December 5.

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His first pay records which confirm his enlistment on November 11, also show that Private Baldwin was taken on strength by the 244th Battalion (*Kitchener's* Own*) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on that same day.

**Kitchener had been the Minister for War for Britain – and for the Empire - until June of 1916 when he had been drowned on his way to Russia. The town of Kitchener, Ontario, which was named thus during the time of the Great War, had previously been called Berlin.*

It was some four-and-a-half months later that Private Baldwin was on his way for *overseas service* to the United Kingdom. Having embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Lapland* in Halifax on March 25, 1917, he landed in Liverpool on April 7.



He had not been travelling alone on board *Lapland*. Apart from Private Baldwin's own 244th, taking passage had also been the 149th and the 186th Battalions of Canadian Infantry.

(Right above: *The photograph of the SS Lapland is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries website.*)

From Liverpool, Private Baldwin's contingent was sped southwards by train to the military camp at Shoreham in the county of Hampshire. On that same April 7, once at Shoreham, he was transferred from the 244th Battalion of Infantry to the 22nd Canadian (*Reserve*) Battalion. Only seventeen days later, on April 24, Private Baldwin was once more transferred, on this occasion to the 23rd Reserve Battalion.

It was the practice to encourage the writing of a will by soldiers leaving on *overseas service* or *active service*, even though many of the less well-off soldiers had precious little to bequeath. Like many of his comrades-in-arms, Private Baldwin had done so, *he* on March 13, 1917, while still in Canada. A copy shows that he had decided to leave his everything to his father, Edward.

It was also the practice to encourage the allotment of a certain daily, weekly or monthly amount from a soldier's pay to a beneficiary of his choice. As of April 1, 1917, Private Baldwin, by this time in England, had elected to allocate a monthly fifteen dollars to his mother, Alice.

He remained at Shoreham for altogether just over six weeks before being posted to the Continent. On May 22 he was nominally *taken on strength* by the 14th Battalion (*Royal Montreal Regiment*) which was at the time already serving in France. Likely having sailed from England on that same day from Southampton to the French port-city of Le Havre, Private Baldwin was forwarded from there to one of the four Canadian Infantry Base Depots which had been established only a week or so previously at Étapes*.



There he reported *to duty* on May 24.

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

**Until May of 1917 only a single Canadian General Base Depot had been in existence, in the proximity of Le Havre.*

Private Baldwin apparently remained at the Base Depot for just over two weeks before being despatched on June 9 to the 1st Entrenching Battalion* where he was reported as having been *taken on strength* on the 12th of that same month. It was to be a further twelve days yet again before he was to report to duty to the 14th Battalion, at the time billeted near to the community of Mont St-Éloi**.



**Not to be confused with St. Eloy (St-Éloi) in southern Belgium where Canadian forces also served (see below), Mont St-Éloi is to be found to the north-west of the city of Arras in northern France and was, at the time, well behind the lines.*



(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*)

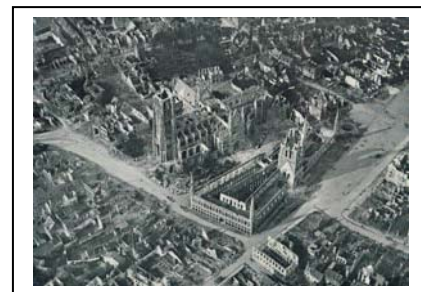
***It having been found that it was more efficient to have specialized formations – of strong physique and experienced in such work in civilian life – rather than regular battalions for the task of digging trenches and the like, the entrenching battalions came into being. Held behind the line to be ready for duty wherever and whenever necessary, they were often used as a unit to which re-enforcements could be attached temporarily until the moment was right for these drafts to report to the units to which they had been despatched.*



(Right above: *Canadian sappers building a road – work also done by entrenching battalions - somewhere... ‘in liberated territory’ – from Le Miroir or Illustration*)

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The 14th Battalion (*Royal Montreal Regiment*) had by that time been serving on the Continent since February of 1915 as an element of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade, itself a component of the (1st) Canadian Division*. It had at first served in northern France in the Fleurbaix Sector just south of Armentières, before moving to the *Ypres Salient* in April of that same 1915.



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****Before the advent of the 2nd Canadian Division it was simply designated as the Canadian Division.***

(Preceding page: An aerial photograph, taken in July of 1915 – just after the battle - showing the shell of the medieval city of Ypres, an image entitled Ypres-la-Morte (Ypres the Dead) – By the end of the conflict there was little left standing. – from Illustration)

Only a bare two months after its arrival on the Continent, the Canadian Division had distinguished itself during the *Second Battle of Ypres* in the spring of 1915.

(Right: The Memorial to the 1st Canadian Division just to the south of the village of Langemark stands where the Canadians withstood the German attack at Ypres (today leper) in April of 1915. – photograph from 2010)



On April 22 of that year, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the Germans had released chlorine gas in front of French colonial troops at the northern end of the *Ypres Salient*. The gas had reportedly caused some six-thousand casualties in a very short space of time and provoked a rout of the stricken defenders.

The Canadians, in the line just to the right, not affected to the same degree, were ordered to fill the void left by the retreating French troops and to forestall a German break-through.

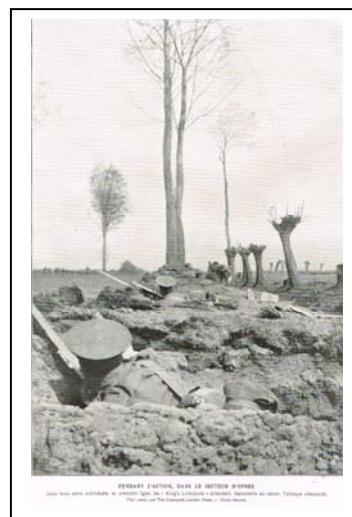


(Right: Entitled: Bombardement d'Ypres, le 5 juillet 1915 – from Illustration)

For its part, the 14th Battalion had been called into action on April 22, the first day of the German attack, and had taken up defensive positions to the north-east of the city at *Wieltje.**

****Up until this date the Battalion War Diary had been a neat, detailed, type-written journal; as of April 22 it is a hastily-scribbled effort scratched in pencil, promising that the details will be appended at a later date. But, if nothing else, it shows the desperate situation of the next few days.***

Companies of the 14th Battalion then had made a stand with the 13th Battalion at *St-Julien* for the next two days before being obliged to retire by the force of the German artillery activity. On several more occasions on the following days the Battalion – and the Canadian and British forces in general – were to retire to a series of reserve trenches.

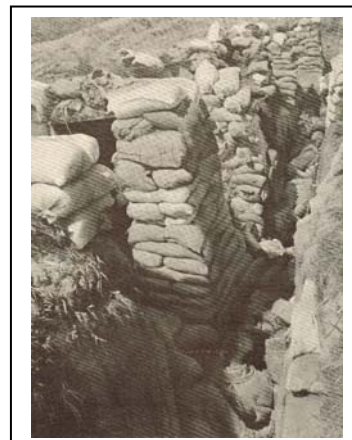


(Right above: Troops, in this case the Liverpool Regiment, in trenches in the Ypres Salient. These are still the early days of the year as witnessed by the lack of steel helmets which came into use only in the spring and summer of 1916. – from Illustration)

However, as history has recorded, the front was eventually consolidated and the 14th Battalion was able to retire on the night of May 4-5 – a second document in the same source has 3-4. Only two weeks later it was to be in action once again.

Towards the middle of May the British had responded to a French demand for support during their operations in the Artois region, and the Canadians, hastily re-enforced, were ordered over the Franco-Belgian border to the area of Festubert and, in June, to Givenchy-les-la-Bassée.

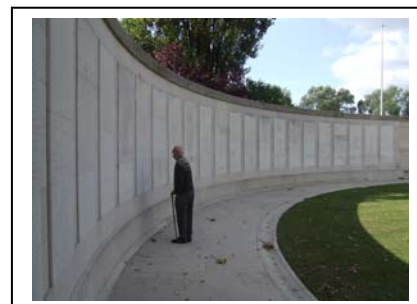
(Right: German trenches nick-named the Labyrinth captured by the French at their Pyrrhic victory at Notre-Dame de Lorette – Over one-hundred thousand French troops became casualties during this campaign in the Artois. – from Illustration)



At Festubert the British gains were to be negligible, an advance of some three kilometres, and in the ten days that the action lasted, the British High Command had managed to shatter what remained of its small, professional Army. There was also a lot of good will lost with the Indian and Canadian troops who also incurred heavy casualties* – the Canadians particularly so after their losses during the recent 2nd Battle of Ypres.

**The Meerut Division losses totalled twenty-five hundred and the Canadian Division some twenty-two hundred. Those of the 14th Brigade had been reasonably light, however, sixty-seven all told.*

(Right: A one-time officer in the Indian Army pays his respects to the fallen at the Indian Memorial at Neuve-Chapelle. – photograph from 2010(?))



After Festubert some of the Canadians moved north once more, into positions in the Ploegsteert Sector on the Belgian side of the frontier. There they remained until September and October of the following year when once again their services were required in France.

The 14th Battalion, however, was posted in June to the area of Givenchy-les-la-Bassée*, a small village not far distant south of Festubert. Ordered into the forward trenches on two occasions during that month to support British efforts – and with the same results from repeating the same mistakes - by July 1 the unit was back north in billets in the area of the Franco-Belgian border with the Canadian 1st Division in the Ploegsteert Sector.



**Since the place is oft-times referred to simply as Givenchy it is worthwhile knowing that there are two other Givenchy 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.*

(Preceding page: *Some of the farmland in the area of Messines, northern Ploegsteert Sector, a mine crater from the time of the 1917 British offensive in the foreground – photograph from 2014*)

The 14th Battalion, and the 1st Canadian Division then remained in the border area – testing the new *gas helmets* was to be one of its duties while there – until the following year.

(Right: *Scottish troops wearing the new ‘gas helmets’ – from Le Miroir*)



During the period of 1915-1916 now to be spent in Belgium, there were only two occasions on which units of the Canadian Divisions were to be required to fight concerted infantry actions, both of which occurred in the spring of 1916 – the first being the action at the *Mont St-Éloi Craters* and the second, the confrontation at *Mount Sorrel** – otherwise there were to pass some fourteen months of the routines and rigours of trench warfare**.

**In only the second of these engagements was the 14th Battalion to any extent engaged.*

***During the Great War, British and Empire (later Commonwealth) battalions had their time more or less 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.*

Of course, things were never as neat and tidy as set out in the preceding format and troops could find themselves in a 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, by that time equipped with steel helmets and Lee-Enfield rifles – from Illustration*)



The *Battle of St. Eloi Craters* – the action to involve troops of the 2nd Canadian Division - officially took place from March 27 until April 17 of that spring of 1916. St. Eloi was a small village some five kilometres to the south of the Belgian city of Ypres and it was here that the British had excavated a series of galleries under the German lines. These tunnels were then filled with explosives which were detonated on that March 27.

After an initial success the attack had soon bogged down and by April 4 the Canadians were replacing the exhausted British troops. They had no more success than their British comrades-in-arms, and by the 17th, when the battle was called off, the Germans were back where they had been some three weeks previously and the Canadians had taken some fifteen-hundred casualties.

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(Right below: *Advancing in the aftermath of the exploding of a mine – from Illustration*)

From June 2 to 14 was fought the battle for *Mount Sorrel* and for the area of *Sanctuary Wood, Maple Copse* and *Hill 60* between the German Army and the Canadian Corps*. The Canadians had been preparing an attack of their own on the enemy positions which dominated the Canadian trenches when the Germans delivered an offensive, overrunning the forward areas and, in fact, rupturing the Canadian lines, an opportunity which fortunately they never exploited.



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

**It was an area of the Ypres Salient which had recently become the responsibility of the newly-arrived 3rd Canadian Division that the Germans attacked. However, the situation soon became serious enough for units of the other Canadian divisions to become involved.*



(Right below: *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*)

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



On the day of the German attack, June 2, the 14th Battalion had been in Divisional Reserve. However it was soon called forward to the area of Zillebeke to where, during the night of June 2-3 it advanced in individual companies and details. Advancing on the following day the unit incurred very heavy casualties – three-hundred seventy-nine all ranks.

On June 4 the 14th Battalion was relieved and retired, leaving behind two officers and fifty *other ranks* – all volunteers – to bury the dead.

The 14th Battalion War Diarist also recorded the following: *A large reinforcement of 150 men arrived on June 6th, and these were largely drawn upon to make up working parties of 150 sent out the following day. The part of the parties was to assist-in consolidation after the assault then pending. Before the assault took place the Regiment received a further 300 reinforcements and was again called upon to furnish large parties for difficult and dangerous jobs...*

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(Right: *Maple Copse, the scene of heavy fighting in June of 1916, and its cemetery wherein lie numerous Canadians – photograph from 2014*)



On the evening and night of June 12, Canadian attackers moved into their assembly positions and went over the top hours later, before dawn of the 13th. The 14th Battalion was not a part of the attacking force but it was to accompany it during the assault.

Its tasks were to be many and varied: carrying small arms ammunition and bombs; stretcher-bearing and evacuation of wounded to dressing-station; supplying rations and water; wiring and carrying wire; and providing entrenching material – all of this to be accomplished while under fire.

Their casualties are recorded in the Battalion War Diary: nineteen *killed in action*; twenty-two *wounded*; twenty-eight *missing in action*.

(Right: *A century later, reminders of a violent past close to the site of Hill 60 to the south-east of Ypres, an area today protected by the Belgian Government against everything except the whims of nature – photograph from 2014*)



Thereupon the drudgery of trench warfare once again became the soldier's everyday lot – then again, after *Mount Sorrel* it was likely a welcome respite.

For the 14th Battalion it remained thus until August 11 when it marched directly from the lines to the area of Steenvoorde, a commune in northern France some twenty kilometres slightly to the south-west of Ypres. On the following morning the entire 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade – in a column almost ten kilometres long – marched towards the training area of the British 2nd Army.

It was there on the morning of August 13 and remained there for two weeks. Then on August 27 it marched to the large centre of St-Omer from where it entrained to Conteville. Having then arrived there at eleven-twenty in the evening, there remained only a tree-and-a-half hour march to its billets. The four-hour route marches of the previous weeks had not been for nothing.



The Battalion was on its way to *the Somme*.

(Right above: *The once-impressive railway station at St-Omer, today in sore need of revitalization, through which the 14th Battalion, Canadian Infantry, passed on August 27, 1916 – photograph from 2016*)

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

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

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), the Australians and New Zealanders (July 23) before the Canadians entered the fray on August 30 to become part of a third general offensive.

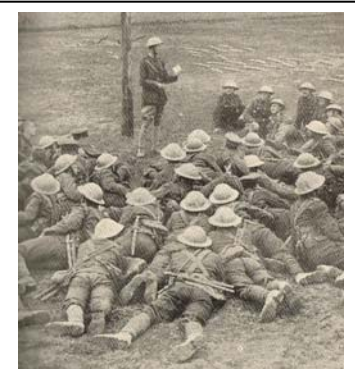
Their first major collective contribution was to be in the area of two villages, Flers and Courcellette.

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



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

It was five days after leaving St-Omer, on September 1, that the *14th Battalion* marched – as it had done for the last four of those five days - into the large British military camp at the Brickfields (*la Briqueterie*) in close proximity to the provincial town of Albert – and also within range of the German artillery. Bivouacking there for a single night, on the morrow the unit marched once more, to billets in Albert itself.



The following afternoon, September 3, saw the *14th battalion* move into reserve positions at la Boisselle and on the following day again, into the front-line trenches of *the Somme*.

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

Ordered to relieve troops of other units in the proximity of Mouquet Farm on September 6 and to physically improve the positions then occupied, this was undertaken with a greater or lesser degree of success. The relievers incurred heavy hostile shell-fire and infantry attacks, suffering considerable losses before being relieved in turn on September 7.



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The casualty count – all ranks - for the two days amounted to: forty-five *killed in action*; one-hundred twenty-one *wounded in action*; and thirty-three *missing in action*.

(Right: *Wounded troops being evacuated in hand-carts from the forward area during the 1st Battle of the Somme – from Le Miroir or Illustration*)



It was not to be until October 6 that the Battalion was once more even in Brigade Support, this followed by Close Support, although even while in these fairly safe positions casualties were inevitable.

And thus the 14th Battalion's role in the 1st *Battle of the Somme* drew to a close. On October 10 the unit was back at Brickfields and in bivouacs; October 14 and 15 were spent in supplying working-parties in Brigade Support for one last time; then on the morrow, October 16, the Battalion began to march to westward, away from the noise of the guns.

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



At first to the west, then north by a semi-circular route, the Battalion marched to the west of the city of Arras and beyond. At five twenty-five in the evening of October 27 it arrived at its destination, Brigade Reserve in the area of Berthonal, to the north-west of Arras. It had been on the march for nine of the previous eleven days.

Among one of the first Canadian units to serve at *the Somme*, the 14th Battalion had also been one of the first to retire from it. The sectors to which the Canadian Corps was now posted was an area which ran roughly down the Western Front from Béthune in the north to Arras in the south. In-between these two poles was the large mining centre of Lens and myriad smaller communities, their existence before the Great War also mainly dependent on the coal seams underground.

It was to be December of that 1916 before the final Canadian units retiring from *the Somme* made their way, as always mostly on foot, to the area which was by that time becoming more and more a Canadian responsibility.

In the trenches the 14th Battalion had once more settled into the rigours and the routines – and tedium - of trench warfare – perhaps, however, a welcome change for those who had experienced *the Somme*; infantry action for the most part was on a local scale – patrolling and raids – with occasionally the latter being delivered at battalion strength. Casualties for the most part were due to enemy artillery with snipers also taking their toll.



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(Preceding page: *A detachment of Canadian troops going forward during the winter of 1916-1917 – from Illustration*)

During the winter months of 1917 the War Diaries report an increase in the time spent by the Canadian units in reserve positions, be they Corps, Divisional or Brigade. In reserve there were the usual attractions of lectures, musketry, physical training, church parades, inspections – by politicians and officers of rank - training, courses, working-parties and carrying-parties. But there were also sports to be played and even the occasional concert to enjoy.



(Right above: *A carrying-party loading up – one of the duties of troops when not serving in the front lines: The head-strap was an idea adapted from the aboriginal peoples of North America. – from Le Miroir*)

Towards the end of March, however, there was more than the usual training and there was more construction under way; and officers and NCOs were being withdrawn to attend special lectures. Something was apparently in the offing.

For the 14th Battalion, intensive training had begun for individual detachments: rifle-grenade and bombing sections; machine-gun and Lewis-gun sections; intelligence and signals personnel; and for others drill, musketry and bayonet practice.

On April 6 the 14th Battalion moved into front-line trenches in the Thelus Sector and remained there.

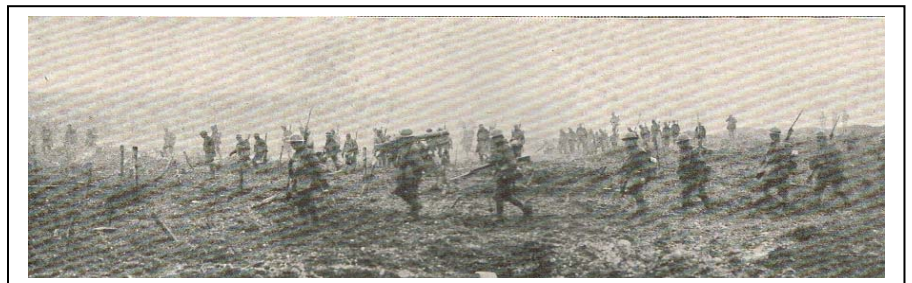
On April 9 the British Army launched an offensive in the area to the north of the Somme battlefields; this was the so-called *Battle of Arras* intended to support a French effort elsewhere. In terms of the daily count of casualties, some four thousand per day, it was to be the most expensive operation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



The British effort proved an overall disappointment: the French offensive was a disaster.

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

(Right: *Canadian troops of the 4th or 3^d Division, equipped 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*)



On that April 9, in driving snow, the four Canadian Divisions*, for the first time acting as a single, autonomous entity, stormed the slope of *Vimy Ridge*, by the end of the next day having cleared it almost entirely of its German occupants.

**This was the first occasion on which the Canadian Divisions were to act in concert as a Canadian Army Corps rather than been individually attached to a British force. In fact, British forces were now placed under its command.*

Several kilometres of tunnel had been hewn out of the chalk under the approaches to the front lines of Vimy Ridge, underground accesses which afforded physical safety and also the element of surprise during the hours – and in some cases, days – leading up to the attack. But whether the 14th Battalion was to avail of their protection is not clear.

Excerpt from Battalion War Diary Appendix for April 9: *At Zero Hour, 5.30 a.m., the assault on my Battalion Sub Sector was made with No 3 Company on the right flank, furnishing the two leading waves, No 1 Company 3^d wave and “Mopping Up” Parties, No 4 Company on the left flank and No 2 Company in similar position to No 1 Company on the right. Simultaneously the 15th battalion on my right and 16th Battalion on left flank, advanced.*

(Right: *One of the few remaining galleries – Grange Tunnel - still open to the public at Vimy one hundred years later – photograph from 2008(?)*)

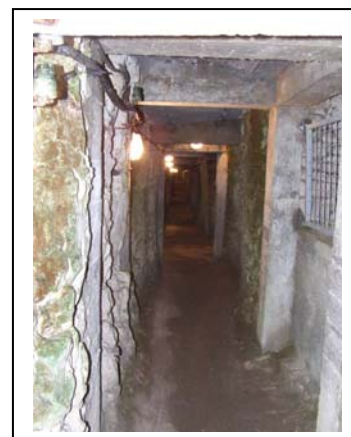
The Battalion had been handed the responsibility of prising three objective from the grasp of the enemy: the first, *Eizeker(?) Trench*, had been strongly defended by the Germans but was finally cleared; the *Black Line* had been taken with less trouble than expected; and the *Red Line* had been captured by ten past seven in the morning, apparently thanks to a well-delivered artillery bombardment of the position.

Thus the 14th Battalion had been able to retire to a less-exposed position behind the ridge at 9. 40... *in accordance with orders.*

The 14th Battalion had gone to the attack numbering seven-hundred one *all ranks* in the field at *Zero Hour* on that April 9, 1917; at the end of the day its total casualty count had been two-hundred eighty-eight – some forty per cent of its strength.

(Right below: *Canadians under shell-fire occupy the third line of trenches on Vimy Ridge: the fighting of the next few days was fought under the same conditions. – from Illustration*)

The Germans, having lost *Vimy Ridge* and the advantages of the high ground, retreated some three kilometres in front of the Canadians whose further offensives were less successful than that of Easter Monday; while some progress at times was made – at Arleux-en-Gohelle, for example - German counter-attacks often re-claimed ground from the British and Canadian troops – as at Fresnoy in early May.



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The Battalion War Diary for June 23, 1917, perhaps the day of Private Baldwin's arrival at Mont St-Éloi, reads as follows: *Fair and warm. The Battalion is in Huts in Divisional Reserve. Training was carried out as follows,- Physical Training, Bayonet fighting, Gas Helmet Inspection, Arm drill, Lecture on Care of Arms, and whatever subject the Platoon Commander wishes. Company drill and Company in attack. Reinforcements 29 O.R*. Casualties, Nil.*

Private Baldwin had reported *to duty*.

**While his own records cite June 24 as the date of his joining the 14th Battalion, the War Diary does not record any arrivals on that day. There is however, the possibility that Private Baldwin was one of the draft of a single officer and forty other ranks which reported to duty on the morrow, April 25.*

After the official conclusion of the *Battle of Arras*, on or about May 15, some of the Canadians were posted not far to the north, to the mining area of the city of Lens and other communities. Others remained *in situ*, among them the 14th Battalion.

The 14th Battalion remained in Divisional Reserve for the following eight days, then marched to Thelus Cave, on the southerly flank of Vimy Ridge, by then in Canadian hands. There the unit relieved the 3rd Canadian Battalion and was to act as Brigade Support, supplying work parties for construction of dug-outs and for carrying materials as far as the front line.



(Right above: *Canadian troops advancing to the front lines loaded with equipment for upcoming operations – from Le Miroir*)

Private Baldwin remained in Brigade Support with the 14th Battalion until July 4 when it moved forward to relieve companies of the 16th and 15th Battalions in the front lines.

The period from then until July 12 comprised little concerted infantry activity: there was the usual patrolling at night, the occasional local raid – by both sides – and wiring parties working in No-Man's-Land. And of course there was the ever-constant artillery duel, the cause of a number of casualties. On the 12th the 14th Battalion was in turn relieved, withdrawing to Fraser Camp and returning to Divisional Reserve.

The 14th Battalion remained in Divisional Reserve for some three weeks – much of the time in training and becoming familiar with varied new equipment - although it was obliged to change camps – on foot – on two occasions.



On the afternoon of August 3 it transferred to Brigade Reserve and moved south to the mining community of Mazingarbe, arriving there later in the day.

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(Preceding page: *Canadian soldiers perusing the upcoming program at a make-shift theatre in a camp somewhere behind the lines – 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 – and also his reserves - from that area, it had also ordered operations to take place at the sector of the front running north-south from Béthune to Lens.



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

One of the primary objectives was to be *Hill 70* in the outskirts of the mining centre of Lens.

(Right above: *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*)



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

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. Yet it was high enough to be 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 the city of Lens itself.



(Right above: *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*)

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

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

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



The 14th Battalion was relieved on the night of August 19-20 by the 5th Battalion of the Canadian Mounted Rifles – *dís*-mounted since 1915 – and moved back into Brigade Reserve at Les Brébis. Days later, it moved further back again.

During the entire episode the unit had incurred a total of one-hundred fifty-one casualties – perhaps fewer than in other battalions because of it being held in reserve on August 15 itself.

(Right above: *Canadians soldiers in the captured rear area of Hill 70 during the days after the battle – from Le Miroir*)



A note to be found in the War Diary Appendix Number 7, concerning the action at Hill 70 and the Battalion's losses there, is of interest: *A most regrettable feature of the operations is the fact that the majority of the bodies, including that of one Officer, could not be discovered, notwithstanding the fact that the Battlefield was rigorously searched for same. It is presumed that they were either destroyed by shells, after they had fallen, or were covered over with earth and debris.*

The Lens-Béthune campaign having been ordered drawn to a close at the end of August*, it was to be only some six weeks afterwards that the Canadians were ordered to join the ongoing battle in Belgium, to the north-east of Ypres. Officially designated the *Third Battle of Ypres*, the campaign came to be known to history as *Passchendaele*, taking that name from a small village on a ridge that was one of the British Army's objectives.

**The Canadians apparently expected, and had planned, further action in the area but the British were running out of reinforcements and the ongoing Battle of Passchendaele was not proceeding according to expectations. The Canadians were to be asked to provide the necessary man-power.*

(Right: *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*)



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

From the time that the Canadians entered the fray, it was they who shouldered a great deal of the burden. For the week of October 26 until November 3 it was the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions which 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 true with the 2nd Division finally entering the remnants of Passchendaele itself.



(continued)

For Private Baldwin's unit, the fighting at *Passchendaele* was not to come about until the end of October. In fact, from the end of August until October 19, the 14th Battalion spent its time in one reserve area or another. And when it was ordered to be transferred, entailing some four days of marching, it was to the area of Staple close to the Belgian frontier where, from the 23rd to the 30th of the month, it was yet again placed in reserve.

(Right below: *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*)

On October 31, the Battalion was ordered into Belgium: *The Battalion left Staple at 6.30 a.m. Strength- all ranks- 747. They entrained at EBBLINGHEM at 7.45 a.m. arriving at YPRES at 11.45 a.m. and marched by Platoons, 50 yards interval to ST. JEAN and WIELTJE... and occupied old trenches in that vicinity.*

A raiding Squadron of hostile aeroplanes dropped 15 bombs near the Battalion close to Wieltje. 3 O.O. (sic, likely 3 O.R.) of this Battalion were slightly wounded... (Excerpt from the 14th Battalion War Diary) Apparently they were bombed again during the night.

(Right: *The remnants of the railway station just outside the ramparts of Ypres where the Battalion detrained – the image is from 1919 – from a vintage post-card*)

By November 2 the unit was in the front line and remained either there or in close proximity until the 10th. Spasmodic infantry action took place but it was the enemy artillery – which by this time was using gas shells - that was by far the greatest cause of the Battalion's losses during that period.

The War Diarist kept count: one-hundred fifty-two all told.

(Right: *During a lull in the battle, Canadian soldiers using a shell-hole as a wash-basin to perform their ablutions during Passchendaele – from Le Miroir*)

In contrast to much of the narrative written about those days, the War Diary entry for November 5 makes sparse reading: *On November 5th, 1917, the day passed fairly quietly and at night No. 3 Company came out of the support position and joined the Battalion.* Nonetheless, it was on November 5 that Private Baldwin was one of those to be reported as a casualty of the day.

The son of Edward Baldwin, fisherman, and Alice Baldwin – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of eighty cents from his pay, and to whom on August 10 of 1916 he had willed his all - of Pouch Cove, he was also brother to Uriah*, to James, to William, to David, to George and Mary-Louisa, to John, to Fanny-Amelia, to Selina and to Edward.



Private Baldwin was reported as *missing in action* on November 5 of 1917; some eight months later, on July 13, 1918, he was officially *presumed dead*.

(Right: *The sacrifice of Privates Uriah and Horatio Baldwin is honoured on the central stele of the War Memorial in the community of Pouch Cove. – photograph from 2010*)

**Private Uriah Baldwin (Regimental Number 1846) was reported as having been killed in action on October 9, 1917, while serving with 'B' Company of the Newfoundland Regiment in the fighting at the Broembek, Belgium, during the battle of Third Ypres: Passchendaele.*

He has no known last resting-place and as such is commemorated in the Newfoundland Memorial park at Beaumont-Hamel on the bronze beneath the Caribou.

Horatio Baldwin had enlisted at the *apparent* age of twenty-one years and two months: date of birth at Pouch Cove, Newfoundland, August 18, 1895.

Private Horatio Baldwin was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

