



Private Joshua Howe Blunden (Number 1009699) of the 4th Battalion, the Canadian Machine-Gun Corps, is buried in Quarry Wood Cemetery, Sains-les-Marquion: Grave reference III B 12.

His occupations prior to military service variously recorded as both those of cook and clerk, Joshua Howe Blunden is *possibly* the young man who took ship from his native Newfoundland on June 9 of 1914. If it were he – and this is *far* from confirmed - then he sailed on that date from Port aux Basques to North Sydney, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, on board the vessel *Lintrose*, before making his way westward to Saskatchewan where he enlisted some twenty-one months later.



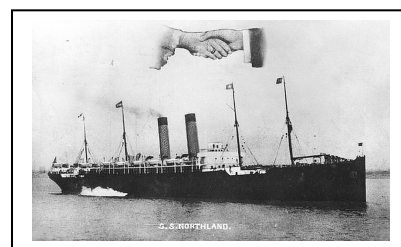
(Previous page: *The image of the badge of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps is from the canadiansoldiers.com Web-site.*)

That enlistment and also his attestation took place in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, on March 28 of 1916, on the same day that he underwent his medical examination. He was then immediately and officially *taken on strength* by the 229th (South Saskatchewan) Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Ten weeks later, on May 8, Private Blunden was admitted into hospital at Camp Hughes, Manitoba, where his Battalion had been in training, complaining of a sore neck. Released three days following, on the 11th, he was apparently re-admitted three days later again, on this occasion for treatment to abscesses on his back.

Private Blunden was discharged back to his unit on June 20.

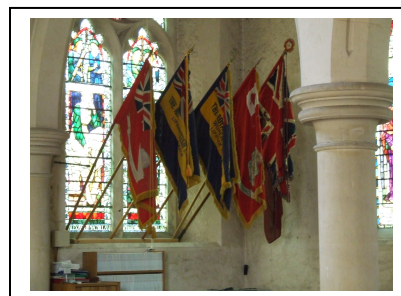
The 229th Battalion was not to depart for overseas service from Canada until some thirteen months after Private Blunden's enlistment. After a cross-Canada journey by train to the east coast, the unit embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Northland* (formerly *Zeeland*) in Halifax harbour on April 17 of 1917, the vessel sailing on the following day. *Northland* docked in the English west-coast port of Liverpool eleven days later, on April 29.



Private Blunden and the 229th Battalion were not to take passage alone. On board *Northland* were also several other military units: Part 1 of the 232nd Battalion; part of the 210th Battalion; and the Nova Scotia Company of the 256th Battalion, all three being contingents of Canadian Infantry.

(Right above: *The image of HMT Northland is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries Web-site.*)

Upon the arrival of the 229th Battalion in the United Kingdom, it was immediately entrained and transported to the Canadian military establishment at Bramshott and Liphook in the county of Hampshire, southern England. There the 229th was absorbed into the 19th (Saskatchewan) Reserve Battalion on April 30. Six months afterwards - while still at Bramshott - the 19th was in its turn absorbed into the 15th (Saskatchewan) Reserve Battalion.

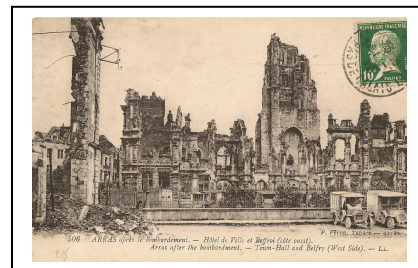


(Right above: *Royal Canadian Legion flags amongst others adorn the interior of St. Mary's Church in the English village of Bramshott. – photograph from 2016*)

Where Private Blunden's draft from the 15th Reserve Battalion took ship for the Continent on November 8, 1917, seems to be undocumented among his papers – although it was likely to have been at Southampton - but by the following day he was reported as having reported to the 4th Canadian Infantry Base Depot at Étapes, one of a contingent of five-hundred forty-five arrivals to be *taken on strength* on that November 9.

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Four days later again, on November 13, Private Blunden was recorded as being *on strength* at the Canadian Corps Reinforcement Camp in the vicinity of the coastal town of Étaples. From there he was despatched on the 17th, one of a draft of two officers and two-hundred ninety-three *other ranks* sent to serve with the 46th (*South Saskatchewan*) Battalion *in the field*. He is then recorded as having reported *to duty* in the northern French community of Bruay – to the north-west of the cities of Arras and Lens - on November 23.



(Right above: *The remnants of the City Hall and its clock-tower in Arras soon after the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

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The 46th (*South Saskatchewan*) Battalion was a unit of the 10th Canadian Infantry Battalion, itself a component of the 4th Canadian Division. The Battalion had disembarked in Le Havre, France on August 11 of 1916; three days later it had crossed the Franco-Belgian border and on that day and the next, had despatched its first detachments into the reserve and front-line trenches.

By eight o'clock in the evening of August 17 it could already count seven wounded and its first fatality: *No. 437026. Pte. Harrison, W. "D" Co., shot through head by rifle bullet while on listening-post* (Battalion War Diary).

For the following thirty-four days the Battalion had remained in the vicinity of the Vierstraat – about half-way between the remnants of the city of Ypres and the border of Belgium and France. As the days passed, its personnel were assuredly and rapidly becoming acquainted with the routines and rigours of life in the trenches*.

**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, a hundred metres or so behind the front; the unit was then withdrawn into reserve – either Brigade, Divisional or Corps Reserve, the former nearest the forward area, the latter furthest away.*



Of course, things were never as neat and tidy as set out in the preceding format and troops could find themselves in a certain position at times for weeks on end.

(Right above: *A photograph of Canadian troops in support positions somewhere on the Somme in the autumn of 1916, only months earlier having been equipped with those steel helmets and, less visible, British-made Short Lee-Enfield Mark III Rifles – from Illustration*)

(continued)

All that was to change on September 21 when the unit undertook a ten-hour march south into France to Hazebrouck. On the 22nd it was more of the same as the already-tired troops spent a further nine hours on foot to arrive in the larger centre of St-Omer. The end of a perfect transfer came on the next day again: a seven-and-a-half hour march to its training area with few or no billets awaiting them at the end of the day.

A reprieve, however, was forthcoming on the 24th... *This day has been passed in getting the Battalion into new billets Otherwise this day has been passed in resting and cleaning up.* (46th Battalion War Diary)

The drills and the exercises began on the following morning at six o'clock. A week was spent in this manner, but perhaps the monotony was interrupted on the day that the unit practised... *attack formations with aeroplane co-operations.*

October 3 saw what must have been another long march as the Battalion returned to the railway station at St-Omer. There it boarded a train which, at three-thirty in the afternoon, began to take the unit southwards to the area of *the Somme*. It apparently needed just under twelve hours to cover the eighty or so kilometres to the town of Doullens, and a further three to effect de-training.



(Right above: *The venerable – but nowadays much-dilapidated - railway station at St-Omer was likely a considerably busier place during the time of the Great War and the passage of the 46th Battalion.* – photograph from 2015)

At six in the morning the unit began a final five-kilometre march to its billets – but at least the personnel was secure in the knowledge that the remainder of the day was to be devoted to rest.



(Right: *The small town of Doullens at or about the time of the Great War* – from a vintage post-card)

Three days of the following four were at least partially spent on foot as the 46th Battalion marched toward the sound of the guns. Its final destination was the large British military camp at Brickfields (*la Briqueterie*), in very close proximity to the provincial town of Albert which the unit reached at eleven forty-five on the morning of October 8.

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

On that first day all but two small units of the attacking divisions had been from the British Isles, the 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.

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(Right below: *The Canadian Memorial which stands to the side of the Albert-Bapaume Road near the village of Courcellette – 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 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 Courcellette on September 15.

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

Three days after its arrival on October 8 at the Brickfields the 46th Battalion moved up to the forward area and on the following day again set about sending a large working-party up to the front line itself. In the meantime a... *reconnaissance of the enemy trenches and REGINA TRENCH was carried out this morning (October 13) by O.C. in preparation for a possible attack on those trenches (Battalion War Diary).*

However, the attack was not to materialize and the unit was then pulled back into Brigade Reserve on October 16, having incurred some thirty-eight casualties during that first tour, of which three had been fatal*.

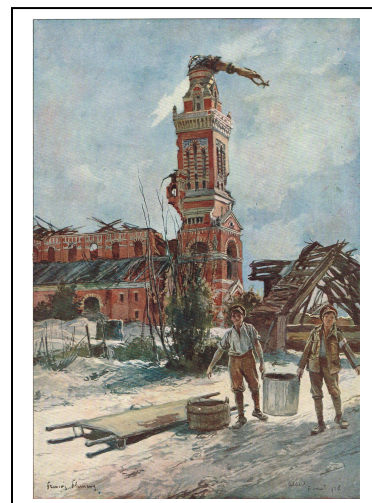
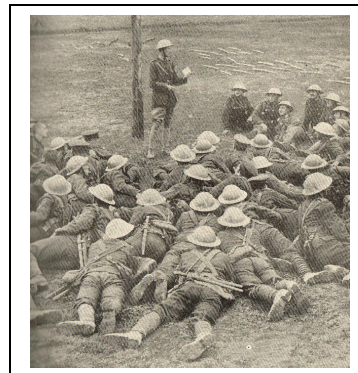
**Whether others subsequently had died of wounds is obviously not recorded in the entries of the day.*

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

Those in charge of operations had not forgotten *Regina Trench*; the 46th Battalion was to be involved in an attack on the night of November 10-11, but already during the period preceding this date the unit had been back and forth to the front line on several occasions. On October 25 it had co-operated in an unsuccessful minor operation with the 44th Battalion which had cost fifty-two casualties. More were still to come.

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

(continued)



Regina Trench, a German strong-point in the enemy defensive system, had by that November been attacked several times, in October even being temporarily captured. However, counter-attacks on that occasion had re-taken the position and it was still in enemy hands in the early part of November.

Just before midnight on the evening of November 10, the 46th and 47th Battalions advanced over No-Man's-Land and into the German trench system. For once the enemy appears to have been taken by surprise and by four o'clock in the morning the captured positions were being consolidated by the attackers. Even then it was not to be given up without a fight and it would be later in the day of November 11 before the situation was reported as stabilized.

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

According to the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade War Diary entry of November 11... *The operation was most successful and our objective was fully gained & maintained without undue losses.*

In the case of the 46th Battalion, the *undue losses* amounted to a total of eighty-one of which (by November 12) eight had been reported as *killed in action or died of wounds.*

Having retired on that November 12, the unit was then ordered back to the forward area on the 18th and to prepare to make an attack on a German strong-point. The venture failed completely – the War Diarist blames a lack of preparation – and a further thirty losses ensued.

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



It was not until November 26, some two weeks after the *official* conclusion of 1st Somme – although it is doubtful that anyone in the trenches on either side noticed *that* – that the 46th Battalion began its trek away, westward, from the area.

There now followed an eight-day march which, after its westward overture, turned to the north. Passing to the western side of the city of Arras and then beyond, the Battalion was to halt in the vicinity of the coal-mining commune of Bruay, twenty kilometres to the north-west of the larger mining centre and city of Lens. There, in the rear area, the unit was to spend two weeks to re-enforce, to re-organize and to re-commence training.

The winter months of 1917 were spent by the Battalion in the sectors just north-west and south-west of Lens where the personnel were now to settle back into the daily grind of trench warfare. For the most part casualties were few and due for the most part to the enemy's artillery and to his snipers.

(Right below: *Canadian troops making their way to the front during the winter of 1916-1917 – from Illustration*)

There was the habitual patrolling but little concerted infantry action, although it appears that the 46th Battalion undertook several raids – the High Command thought they kept the troops on their toes and that they were good for morale and the *offensive spirit* but, apparently, the lowly soldier loathed them.



Some of these undertakings proved costly, such as the raid of February 13 for which the casualty toll was over forty, and the one of five days later for which the casualty count was yet a further fifteen.

Thus continued the 46th Battalion's war until towards the end of the month of March. On the 20th of that month the Battalion was withdrawn for a week of special training before being returned to the front. On April 2 it moved into Coupigny Huts for more of the same training, for lectures and drills - all lessons that had to be instilled before the upcoming British offensive to become known as the *1st Battle of Arras*.

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.

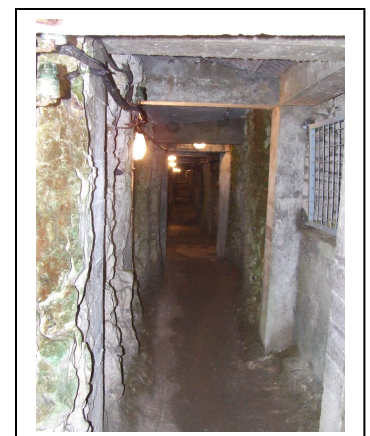


While the British campaign proved to be an overall disappointment, the French offensive was a disaster.

(Above right: *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, separate entity, stormed the slope of Vimy Ridge, by the end of the next day having cleared it almost entirely of its German occupants.

The 46th Battalion had not been one of the units selected to attack in the first waves: it had been designated as a support formation. Whereas the main attack commenced at twenty minutes past five in the morning it was not to be until two o'clock on that afternoon that the unit moved forward... *"A" and "B" Companies in old Front Line... "C" and "D" Companies in BLUE BULL and VINCENT TUNNELS.*



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

In accordance with instructions... “A” and “B” Companies advanced without a barrage, taking up a position as shown on Map... Little resistance was met with, and casualties were not numerous... Positions were consolidated for defence. (Excerpt from Battalion War Diary entry for April 9, 1917)

On April 10, the advance continued but at a much slower rhythm. As the German positions were reached and captured, the attackers had followed their orders to stop in order to consolidate them in anticipation of German counter-attacks.

(Right: *Canadian troops of either the 4th or 3rd Division, and 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 – official Canadian photograph from Illustration*)



Having lost the *Ridge* and the attendant advantages of the high ground, the Germans 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. And whether success or failure, it *all* came at a price.

After the official conclusion of the *Battle of Arras*, on or about May 15, some of the Canadian units were posted not so far to the north, to the mining area of the city of Lens and other communities. Others remained *in situ*. During a part of the month of May and then again at the beginning of June, the 46th Battalion was once more undergoing training, at Canada Camp, Chateau de la Haie.

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 this 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.

(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*)

(continued)

July was to be quiet, the entire month spent withdrawn behind the forward area. This apparently carried over into August until August 15 when *Hill 70*, just to the north of Lens, became the primary objective of a Canadian attack. However, this action had been made the responsibility of the Canadian 1st and 2nd Divisions and life for the 46th Battalion* - in the 4th Division - continued in its routine manner.

**In fact, the Battalion had been standing by, ready if necessary, to support the attack, but its services were not called upon.*

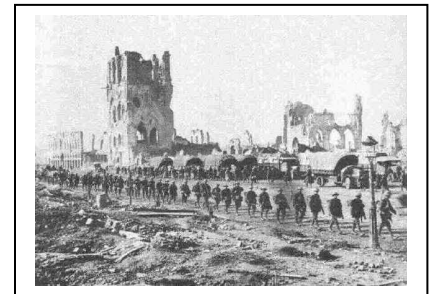
After that early summer of relatively little infantry activity, this attack on August 15 in the area of *Hill 70* and the city of Lens had been intended to be the precursor of weeks of an entire campaign. However, the British offensive further north was proceeding less well than intended and the Canadians were to be needed there.



Thus offensive activities in the Lens Sector were suspended in early September and the Canadians began training for service once more in Belgium.

(Right above: *Canadian troops in the area of Lens at some time during the summer of 1917 – from Le Miroir*)

It was not, however, until the final weeks of October, 1917, that the Canadians became embroiled in the British offensive to the north-east of Ypres. Officially named 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.



(Right above: *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*)

From the time that the Canadians entered the fray, it was they who shouldered a great deal of the burden. From the week of October 26 until November 3 it was the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions who spearheaded the assault, with the 1st and 2nd Divisions in reserve. From November 5 until the official end of the affair the reverse was true with the 2nd Division finally entering the remnants of *Passchendaele* itself.



(Right above: *an unidentified – perhaps unidentifiable – part of the Passchendaele battlefield in the autumn of 1917 – from Illustration*)

At five-forty on the morning of October 26, the 46th Battalion went *over the top*. The Battalion War Diary reports that by seven-thirty, some two hours later, it had reached and taken its objectives, and was busy consolidating.

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The Diary also reports very heavy casualties, seventy-five percent of which it attributes, unfortunately, to the supporting Canadian artillery: apparently there was no enemy barrage recorded at the time of the attack.

(Right: A Canadian 220 mm gun under camouflage somewhere on the Continent – from *Le Miroir*)

The unit had retired from *Passchendaele*, commencing on November 16, seven days previous to the arrival of Private Blunden's draft at Bruay on November 23, which was where the parent unit had been billeted in houses just the day before.



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From November 22 until December 29, the Battalion and Private Blunden remained in reserve, kept busy particularly performing training exercises. From Bruay it was ordered in mid-December to *Alberta Camp* at Guoy-Servins adjacent to Souchez, but the daily routine remained much the same... except for the election.

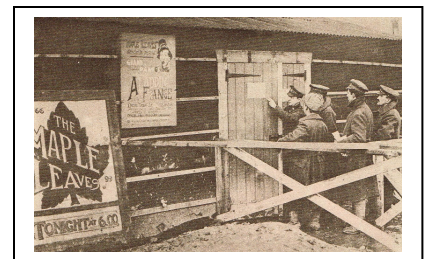


(Right: *The village of Souchez, adjacent to Neuville St-Vaast, already looked this way in September of 1915 – from Le Miroir*)

Although the officer responsible for the Battalion War Diary appears to have neglected to enter it in his journal, the month of December offered something a little different to all the Canadian formations which were serving overseas at the time: the Canadian General Election. Polls for the Army were open from December 4 until 17, and participation, in at least some units, was in the ninety per cent range*.

**Apparently, at the same time, the troops were given the opportunity to subscribe to Canada's Victory War Loan. Thus the soldier fighting the war was also encouraged to help pay for it as well.*

(Right: *Canadian soldiers perusing the upcoming program at a make-shift theatre in a camp somewhere behind the lines – from Le Miroir*)



(Right below: *Canadian troops advancing to the front lines loaded with equipment for upcoming operations: the use of the head-bands for carrying supplies was, for a while, uniquely Canadian. – from Le Miroir*)

The days were occupied – depending on the whereabouts of the unit – by such distractions as work parties, German artillery and gas bombardments, patrols and wiring parties, sports, parades, lectures, the occasional concert, carrying ammunition and supplies to the front, with – particularly while in reserve – not infrequent visits from senior officers.



Perhaps not many people realize how close the Germans came to victory in the spring of 1918. Having transferred the divisions no longer necessary on the Eastern Front because of the Russian withdrawal from the War, the enemy launched a massive attack, Operation 'Michael' on March 21. The main blow fell at *the Somme* in the area of, and also just to the south of, the battlefields of 1916, and it fell for the most part on the British and Commonwealth troops there.



(Above right: *While the Germans did not attack Lens in the spring of 1918, they bombarded it heavily during 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 Miroir*)

The German advance continued for a month, petering out just in front of the city of Amiens. The ultimate failure of the offensive was a result of a combination of factors: British and Commonwealth resistance, fatigue, logistical problems and French co-operation with the British were the most significant.

The War Diary suggests, however, that the 46th Battalion and Private Blunden were not directly involved in the heaviest, if any at all, of the fighting. Posted just to the north-west of the city of Arras, the majority of the casualties incurred by the unit were still due to enemy artillery activity rather than to infantry action.

On May 1, his papers record that Private Blunden was transferred to the 4th Battalion of the newly-formed Canadian Machine Gun Corps and that he was *taken on strength* by that unit on the following day, the 2nd.

By 1917, each of the four Canadian Divisions of the Continent had four machine-gun companies at its disposal – a total of sixteen in all. During that year it was decided that these units should be consolidated into four machine-gun battalions, the whole to operate under the administrative umbrella of a to-be-created Canadian Machine Gun Corps. Each Division was to have a machine-gun battalion attached to it.

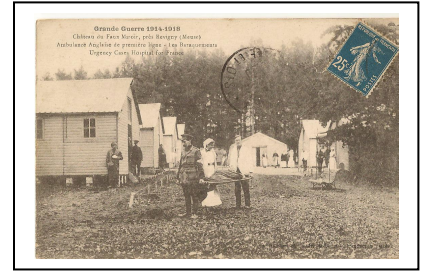


(Right above: *Canadian troops with their Vickers .303 Machine-Guns during the Battle of Arras in the spring of 1917. – from Illustration*)

As the 4th Canadian Machine Gun Battalion was attached to the 4th Canadian Division, of which the 46th (*South Saskatchewan*) Battalion was already a component, Private Blunden remained very much in the area in which he had already been serving. And until August 8 – if the 4th M-G Battalion War Diary* is to be believed - the routine of life in the forward area and in reserve remained very much what he had known before his transfer.

**One interesting entry is that of the amount of ammunition expended by a machine-gun battalion on a regular basis: one night's 'harassing fire' accounted for nineteen-thousand rounds.*

It was during this interim period that Private Blunden, on June 27, was evacuated to the 36th Canadian Field Ambulance at Fresnicourt, from Marles-les-Mines where his unit had been withdrawn into reserve. His complaint was diagnosed at the time as the all-encompassing PUO (*Pain – or Pyrexia (Fever) of Unknown Origin*) but it is also recorded that the 3rd CFA performed, amongst other procedures, a certain amount of dental work. Private Blunden was discharged *to duty* on July 2.



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

August 8 of 1918 was the opening day of the Allied offensive*, the greater part British and Commonwealth, which was to result in the Armistice of November 11. On the Allied side this succession of battles became known as *the Hundred Days – Les Cent Jours*: as far as Ludendorff, the German Commander was concerned, August 8 was *the Black Day of the German Army*.

**This particular phase to become known as the Third Battle of the Somme.*

To play its role in this operation, the 4th Machine Gun Battalion had been transferred during the early days of August to the area south-east of Amiens, facing the region that the German offensive had overrun four months before. In fact, during a period of about two weeks before the opening of the battle, the *entire* Canadian Corps – four Divisions - had been transferred from the sectors north of Arras to that same area.

(Right: *The gothic cathedral in the city of Amiens which the leading German troops had been able see on the western skyline in the spring of 1918 – photograph from 2007(?)*)



Much of the transfer had been accomplished by marching during the night and in a semi-circular manner behind and then south of the city of Amiens. The Germans were apparently taken completely by surprise.

Within two days of the attack the Canadians*, once more fighting as a single entity, had advanced some twenty-two kilometres and, although the amount of territory won dwindled from this point onwards, the results, perhaps particularly in the number of prisoners taken, marked the point in the *Great War* after which the German High Command no longer believed in the possibility of victory.



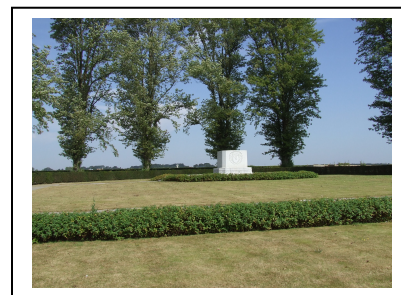
(Right above: *Prisoners of the Canadians, some of whom are carrying a wounded officer on a stretcher – from Le Miroir*)

(continued)

****Although, not only the Canadians were involved. British troops fought as well, as did the Australians, the French and the newly-arrived Americans; and when the Canadians retired, more French troops took their place.***

On August 16 the Canadians began to be transferred back to the Arras Front which they had quit only some three weeks prior. On this occasion as well, the movement was to be kept as much a secret as it had been before; when the 4th CMG Battalion began its transfer on August 22 it was just after seven o'clock in the evening and it travelled without pause for the following seven hours. By the following afternoon the unit was in Tilloy-lès-Hermaville, to the north-west of Arras.

Maréchal Foch, the Supreme Allied Commander, had decided that the enemy should be given no respite. On September 2, the British and Canadians attacked the Drocourt-Quéant line along the axis of the Arras-Cambrai Road and by the evening of the 3rd had reached the Canal du Nord*. Nevertheless, Canadian casualties were high: the Corps had incurred some five-thousand six-hundred casualties in three days.



****This was not the first attack in the area; that had taken place as early as August 26.***

(Previous page: *The Canadian Memorial commemorating the break-through of the German Drocourt-Quéant positions on September 2, 1918, and which stands to the side of the main Arras-Cambrai Road in the vicinity of the village of Dury – photograph from 2016*)

(Right: *Douglas Haig, C.-in-C. of British and Commonwealth forces on the Western Front inspects Canadian troops after their successful operation of September 2 against the German Drocourt-Quéant Line – from Le Miroir*)



By mid-September the unit was planning its role in the upcoming attack the Canal du Nord and on Bourslon Wood, just to the south of the main Arras-Cambrai Road, and almost on the outskirts of the city of Cambrai itself. On September 25 the 4th Machine Gun Battalion moved forward to the area of Inchy-en-Artois to support the operation.



On September 27, the Canal du Nord was crossed and, later in the day, Bourslon Wood was taken by the Canadian 10th, 11th, and 12th Infantry Brigades supported by the machine guns of the 4th CMG Battalion. On the next day the advance continued to the Douai-Cambrai Road.



(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*)

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

**Two days later, on September 29, the British – the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, by that time a Battalion of the 9th (Scottish) Infantry Division - the French and the Belgians struck at Ypres.*



(Right: *The Memorial to the Canadian Corps and to the sacrifices undergone in the capture of Broulon Wood – photograph from 2015*)

This soldier was struck by enemy shrapnel during military operations at Inchy-en-Artois and died instantaneously. (Casualty Report) No further details appear to be recorded.



(Right: *Two captured German field-guns, the one in the foreground taken at Broulon Wood in September of 1918 – photograph taken on the Plaines d'Abraham, Québec, 1916*)

The son of William Blunden, fisherman, and Rebecca Jane Blunden (née *Ginn*) – to whom he had allotted a daily fifteen dollars from his pay and to whom he had willed his all - of Indian Islands, Fogo District, Newfoundland, and by 1922 of 71, Hester Street, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia – his own place of residence at the time of enlistment, Mossbank, Saskatchewan - he was also brother to at least Bertha, to John, to Harry and to Thomas-William*.

Private Blunden was reported as having been *killed in action* on September 27 (corrected from September 29) during the attack on Broulon Wood.

**Thomas William Blunden (Number 478808) of the Royal Canadian Regiment was reported as having been killed in action on December 9, 1916. He is buried in Écoivres Military Cemetery, Mont St-Éloi. (See right and elsewhere in these documents.)*

Joshua Howe Blunden had enlisted at the age of twenty-three years: date of birth, August 9, 1892.

Private Joshua Howe Blunden 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 27, 2023.

