Corporal Frank Claude Taylor

Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry

Enlistment: 2 March 1916 - Enlisting Unit: 11th Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry - No. 1847

Severely Wounded at Passchendaele - Account of the Battle

Joined the Regiment in the field 9th June 1916 as part of reinforcements for the P.P.C.L.I. Frank joined the 11th Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. The PPCLI was part of the 7th Canadian Brigade, which in turn was part of the 3rd Canadian Division.

Wounded 30th October 1917. Struck off strength 17th November 1917.

Healed wounds on leaving: Shrapnel wound left shoulder and abdominal graze.
3 various wounds to upper arm

Brigades of the 3rd Division

• **7th Brigade** consisted of the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry (the only unit with active field experience), the Royal Canadian Regiment (Canada's only permanent force battalion newly arrived in France after garrison duty in Bermuda), the 42nd Battalion (Montreal – Royal Highlanders of Canada) and the 49th Battalion (Edmonton Regiment). And the 7th Trench Mortar Battery.

• **8th Brigade** was made up of the Canadian Mounted Rifle Battalion's 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Battalions.

• **9th Brigade**, which joined the Division in February 1916, comprised the 43rd (Winnipeg), 52nd (Port Arthur), 58th (Niagara area) and the 60th (Montreal) Battalions.

The Wounded Frank

30.10.1917 Wounded at Passchendaele on 30th October 1917 and taken from the field of battle to a Casualty Clearing Station from which the 11th Canadian Field Ambulance operated.

2.11.1917 2nd November transferred to No. 26 General Field Hospital Etaples.

17.11.1917 From France on the Hospital Ship Ville De Liege on 17th Nov. 1917

17.11.1917 Arrived at St. Anselm's Walmer VAD Hospital on 17th November and discharged from there on 4th December 1917 (17days)

4.12.1917 Military Hospital (1day) - maybe Shorncliffe.

6.12 1917 Canadian Convalescent Hospital Monks Horton Kent (20days)

26.12.1917 Discharged by hospital and reported to 3rd C.C. depot Seaford

The Standard Route from the Battlefield

RAP **Regimental Aid Post**: The first object is to remove soldiers out of the fire zone as rapidly as possible. Here first-aid is rendered.

ADS **Advanced dressing Station**: This will be run by a Field Ambulance Division situated within the fire zone at some roadside point where ambulances (usually horse ambulances) can be brought.

MDS **Main Dressing Station**: The next stage of the journey towards the base is, in general, performed in motor ambulances and cases are conveyed to the M.D.S. of a Field Ambulance. Here they undergo classification. The gravest cases are operated on immediately, and are kept at the M.D.S. until they are fit to be transferred to the Casualty Clearing Station.

CCS **Casualty Clearing Station**: The CCS is the next relay point. This is usually situated in the vicinity of a railhead. Its first function is to accommodate the wounded for a few hours until, after their wounds have been cared for and suitably dressed, they can be placed in an ambulance train and sent to the base

General Field Hospital: Frank was taken to No. 26 General Hospital at Etaples, which consisted of 35 wards, accommodation for doctors, nurses and other staff, two operating theatres and an x-ray department.

Hospital Ship: Frank was evacuated back to England on *Ville de Liège* – converted from a channel ferry into hospital transport.

Blighty Hospital: Frank first went to St Anselm's in Walmer Kent. A VAD Hospital with about 100 beds. This hospital used two houses belonging to Mr Justice & Lady Sargant – St Anselm's and General's Meadow.

October 1917 and before

The Patricia's were fresh after a two-week rest and and reorganistation period in the Arras area. From the Vimy Ridge Sector in France the Regiment moved north to join General Plummer's second Army. They stopped near the Belgian border at Le Peuplier, where they spent another week of intensive training. With trying conditions reported in the Passchendaele area emphasis was placed on map reading, message writing and patrolling. They also honed musketry and bayonet fighting skills. While the training was rigorous, it was limited to four hours a day. The remainder of the time was spent planning, playing sports or being entertained with field concerts. On the 22nd October the 7th Brigade paraded for inspection by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught. The stage was set for the Patricia's to enter one of the most horrific and exhausting battles of the Great War.

The 3rd battle of Ypres, commonly known as Passchendaele, spans 31st July 1917 to 12th November 1917. The preliminary to the battle was a bombardment of 4.3 million shells on the German positions from 17th July to 30th July. Thereafter, on average, the guns fired two million shells a week for the whole of the campaign. Little wonder then that some ninety years later the farmers are still producing what is known as the *metal harvest*.

The drainage system in the delicate Flanders plain was destroyed and the high water table brought to the surface. The autumn rains came early and stayed. The *beeks* no longer had banks to contain them and the small valleys became impassable swamps. The attacking forces bogged down in an ever increasing quagmire.

The engineers were kept busy trying to construct corduroy roads across the sea of slime. They set up a saw mill in a forest near the operational area and cut their own planks. The physical effort to construct these routes was enormous. As an example three engineer companies, a pioneer battalion and 450 men from the uncommitted infantry battalions progressed 375 yards a day until they came into enemy view. Thereafter progress dropped to fifty yards a day under heavy shelling and constant repair.

The Canadian Corps took command of the Passchendaele Sector on 18th October 1917, with the New Zealand and 3rd Australian Divisions temporarily under command. This was to be the start of another brave and heroic fight by the Canadians who by the 6th November would substantially achieve the main battle objectives and establish their newly won positions – having repelled counter attacks.

23rd October 1917

The Regiment moved to Ypres on October 23rd by rail and road transport. The whole of the 7th Brigade was under orders to billet in the St. Jean area, east of the City – but it happened that there was only accommodation for three battalions, and the Patricia's found quarters, with some difficulty, in the cellars (and even in the cells) of the city goal of Ypres itself. At this time the Patricia's were the Brigade Reserve and they provided work parties carrying forward artillery ammunition.

The bombing of infantry from aeroplanes – an art in its infancy a year before was now practised scientifically – was added to the danger of gunfire. The Patricia's were bombed in broad daylight by squadrons of planes in groups of eleven or more.

The German artillery was particularly vociferous, forcing the transport section to seek quieter and safer billets behind the town.

The road between Wieltje and Gravenstafel was blown-up in eight places on a single day. And whilst the Patricia's were in Ypres the shelling and bombing was particularly severe. The Germans turned their heavy guns upon the City, and many high-velocity shells fell about the Regiment's quarters.

The Patricia's were perhaps unlucky in not having found accommodation in the St. Jean area, but were most fortunate in their billets and in escaping with but three men wounded under the violent aircraft and artillery bombardment.

Ypres certainly was not a safe place – but the Patricia's were thankful for jail!

The attack started on 26th October at 0545 hours, and fierce fighting ensued. The 3rd Canadian Division facing Bellevue Spur had a difficult challenge, with the 8th on the left and the 9th on the right, the Brigades were tasked with breaking the Flanders Line defences on the Spur. The 7th Brigade, including the Patricia's where held in reserve. The commander of the 3rd Canadian Division, General Louis Lipsett, called it the strongest position he had ever seen – and he had been fighting in all of the Canadian operations since 1915!

The Canadian Corps gained a toehold on Bellevue Spur in the 3rd Division area and a less constructive frontage was gained by the 4th Division.

28th October 1917

Snipe Hall was a pill-box that had defeated all attempts to reach the Meetcheele Crossroads and the capture of this important objective was to be assigned to the PPCLI when they were to attack on the 30th October.

But first the 7th Brigade had to reach the trenches ready for their attack. It was a difficult and dangerous route.

The Pat's left Ypres at 3 pm and moved up towards Gravenstafel behind the 49th Battalion, with whom they were to assault the battle objective on the 30th. The roads were impassable and the two battalions went forward in single file along a duckboard track, traversing a sea of liquid mud. As they passed Wieltje both units ran into heavy German Artillery fire, and the 49th began to lose men. To leave the wounded to move for themselves in the slime would have condemned them to death. Yet every minute of delay meant more casualties as the Patricia's, who had started 100 yards to the rear, were soon on top of the 49th and in the danger zone.

With the finest spirit of inter-regimental chivalry the Commanding Officer of the 49th Battalion gave orders that every wounded man of his unit was at once to be lifted off the duckboards and supported in the mud by two of his comrades until the Patricia's were safely past. Thanks to the promptness of the Edmonton Regiment in carrying out this order and the speed of PPCLI company officers in getting their men forward, twenty at a time by short rushes, the losses of the Patricia's were minimal and the relief was accomplished by 1.30 am. on the 29th.

The 49th Battalion were in the trenches to the north (left) of the Gravenstafel-Mosselmarkt road. For the relief operation No. 4 Company P.P.C.L.I. were attached to the 49th. They continued forward to relieve the 116th Battalion on the right side of the road in Dad's Trench.

The remaining Patricia's hunkered down on Abraham Heights, relieving the remnants of the 43rd, 52nd and 58th Battalions. Battalion Headquarters was set up at Otto Farm.

The condition of the ground over which the Patricia's were to attack on the 30th October was now visible to everyone.

"The condition of the ground beggars description. Just one mass of shell-holes, all full of water. The strongest and youngest men cannot navigate without falling down. The people we relieve tell me in the attack a great many of their men drowned in shell holes for want of strength to pull themselves out when dog-tired" (A. Adamson – letter 23rd October 1917)

29th October 1917

The Patricia's were in action right away as they had decided to deal with *Snipe Hall* before the attack on the 30th October; so No 4 Company set about an advance from Laamkeek taking the road to Snipe Hall. The objective being to straighten out the jump-off line before the Patricia's moved up for the main assault on the Meetcheele Ridge feature.

Scouts cleared enemy patrols in front of *Dad Trench* and a bold reconnaissance was made of the pill-box that was *Snipe Hall* – which was almost at right-angles to Dad's Trench and protected by wet ground. Captain Macpherson laid a careful plan and led his Company to a brilliant success against the objective. By doing so they removed the deadly position from its enfilading flank against the planned attack. The Brigade now had a straight and continuous jumping-off line

The heavily defended position at Duck Lodge was captured in during the initial attack on the 30th October.

The artillery on both sides was very active throughout the 29th; the Germans fired a great number of gas shells and persistently bombarded the Bellvue Spur and the ground to the west of it. Colonel Adamson moved his headquarters into Waterloo Farm pillbox, shared with the 49th Battalion Headquarters

30th October 1917

It is Tuesday October 30th 1917 and it will have been a restless night for Frank Taylor. The Pat's were going over the top at 5.50am. He had taken up his position at about 1.30 am of 29th – after a dangerous march – and he had been told at 3pm on the 29th that 5.50 am was to be zero hour on the 30th.

But if that wasn't enough, at 4.50 am on the 30th the troops were withdrawn by 100 yards as it was decided that they were uncomfortably close to the artillery attack to be unleashed at 5.50 am. But such movement wasn't as simple as it sounds and in some places the retreat was achieved barely 10 minutes before zero hour.

It was a grey and chill dawn with a westerly wind, and there was a drizzle of rain in the air – which later turned to driving rain. Not that the rain would make much difference, the ground was already marsh-like and treacherous. It was to snow before the battle was out

The briefing had been thorough and each man was aware of the objectives. The conditions were atrocious and the attack by the front line troops was to be under the cover of a rolling barrage of field guns. Responsibility had been handed to the NCO's who would be in the maelstrom of the attack with their sections – as it was realised it would be impossible to run the battle even from the most forward HQ dugout. The Regimental Pipers were not to play the men into battle, as in Vimy – it being deemed that the conditions under foot would make it impossible for the band to walk and play bagpipes. This was considered to be a dispiriting business.

The two attacking battalions of the Patricia's were to fight straight up the hill, astride the road. The 49th Battalion was north of the road leading to the spur. The Patricia's were south and inclusive of the road. The two other battalions were in reserve. I believe Frank was in the reserve battalions. Their objectives were the defended positions at Duck Lodge, Meetcheele and Graf Farm. On the right flank of the brigade was the 4th Division objective, Crest Farm. On the left flank the Imperial 63rd (189th brigade) was to force its way to Vapour Farm, and from there form a protective left flank for the 3rd Division.

Late on the evening of the 29th the Regiment filed forward from Abraham Heights to the jumping-off area. No. 2 Company was forward right, with No.4 Company in support. No.3 Company was left front, supported by No.1 Company. C Company of the Royal Canadian Regiment provided two platoons to the Patricia's and 49th battalion acted as reserve.

Waiting for the barrage to begin Major Papineau (OC No 3 Company) looked up at the Meetcheele Ridge and said to Major Hugh Niven – ***"You know Hughie, this is suicide"***

(the battle plan is complicated due to last minute changes and I need to double-check in which Company Frank was serving. Also, I need to ensure that all I have written is consistent and double-checked. So the research is still very much a work-in-progress)

Extra kit and rations had been dished out and Frank would have been carrying:

One day's fresh rations and a water bottle
Two days iron rations (sealed tin box containing concentrated food)
A tin of solidified alcohol (smokeless fuel for cooking)
Extra small-arms ammunition (an additional 170 rounds)
Two rifle grenades
A muzzle protector for the rifle
A shovel (GS Bulldog type)
Gas mask
Three sandbags
A flare to signal positions to spotter aircraft plotting the battles position and directing guns.
A printed 1/10,000 message-map for every officer and NCO

The men had been given permission to take off their greatcoats, in spite of the weather. Over the top (in this case the starting point for *over the top* was white line of tape) the troops went, under cover of a 420 gun barrage of two brigades of the third Canadian Division sat astride the Bellevue Spur. The plan was to advance under the barrage at the rate of 100 metres per eight minutes, and the barrage guns would be moved in range every eight minutes to follow this plan.

7 Brigade attacked with the PPCLI and the 49th Battalion. The Patricia's attacked on a two-company frontage of about 500 yards. British guns played for eight minutes on the cross-roads and then began to lift at the rate of fifty yards every four minutes. A speed of 750 yards an hour must surely be the slowest on record for a charge in all the history of war. Yet it was considered about right for the heavy going over the ground that beggared description.

Three minutes after zero hour the enemy's protective barrage came down with full force upon the advancing companies, and within half an hour shells of all calibres were falling in the Canadian support lines.

From Goudberg to Graf Wood the 7th Brigade threw in two battalions whose inner flanks met at the road which ran over the spur. The Patricia's had the shortest advance of all – 2,000 yards at most; but they were attacking the key position. By the time the Patricia's had advanced 100 yards all of the survivors were in the front line. It is possible that Frank was wounded in those first 100 yards.

The shelling stopped for a while, save for smoke shells that hindered the advance. Every foot of ground had to be gained by the laborious method of pinning down the enemy in front while small parties worked round the flanks and took each individual German post in the rear. Bombs were used by the attackers to clear the ground. There was little bayoneting by either side but German snipers accounted for a lot of death and injury.

Germans ultimately had to yield to Canadians who pushed ahead, threw themselves down close to pill-boxes and machine gun nests, and covered the advance of the troops.

Finally the Battalion was able to advance on its objective in line, but within the hour of the attack of the 600 Patricia's who went *over the top* over half where dead or wounded – they were eventually to lose about 350 men to strength.

The Patricia's suffered heavy losses – it was amongst their officers that early losses were most severe – but the casualties amongst NCO's were almost as severe. On reaching their final place and digging-in the Patricia's were reinforced from Dad Trench with two platoons of the Royal Canadian Regiment (and later two further platoons), from fear of a counter-attack – the RCR having already sent two platoons to reinforce the 49th Battalion.

Eventually, on the highest ground, 7 Brigade came close to reaching its objective, eventually digging in along a line from Vapour Farm to Meetcheele Crossroads. PPCLI took Meetcheele Crossroads and dug in. The 49th took Furst Farm. To the left of the 3rd Canadian Division was

a fighting troop of Royal Navy Infantry who had been brought in to reinforce the Western Front. The Royal Naval Infantry captured Varlet Farm.

The final disposition at 3 pm was about 100 men in front of a pill-box under the charge of three corporals and one lance-corporal; and with two Lewis guns – supported on the right by a party of the RCR. On the left there was a party of about 75 Patricia's rifles commanding a ridge and the valley below and joining up with the 49th Battalion. The troops further consolidated their position along the Meetcheele Road from Graf Farm to Furst Farm and the 7th Brigade was instructed to take further pill-boxes and dug-outs in front. By 8 pm Colonel Agar Adamson estimated the strength of his rifles to be 180 men. At 9.30 pm another company from RCR was sent forward from Dad trench to dig-in in close support of the Patricia's. Major Sullivan had been sent up with them to take command of the whole line – with a subaltern for each of the right and left sectors. However, very soon Major Sullivan fell mortally wounded, a Lieutenant was sent back in a state of exhaustion, and other officers were almost collapsing under the strain. So the responsibility of the NCO's became greater than ever.

It was stated that in no engagement of the Regiment was the condition of the wounded more distressing than on the nights of the 30th and 31st of October 1917.

(I assume that Frank went *over the top* as an infantry man with a rifle, but I shall go through his pocket books to see if there is a clue as to whether he was trained on a machine gun or any other specialised weapon)

Just after 3 pm a message was sent from the pill-box asking for stretcher bearers as they could work safely in daylight as they would be protected by the Ridge. Arrangements were made for extra troops to clear the battlefield of the many wounded, but heavy shelling continued all along the line of the Gravenstafel Ridge, and few of these parties succeeded in making their way up before the next day. At midnight it was reported that about 15 stretcher cases had been taken to the relative safety of the pill-box.

Did Frank, who was with the PPCLI fighting with the 7th Brigade, reach the Meetcheele crossroads? We don't know – but probably not. We do know that he was severely wounded on the 30th – more than half of his compatriots were killed and wounded on that day – and two VC's were won by Princess Pat's men. (Lt. Hugh McKenzie and Sgt George Mullin). We do know eventually he was under the care of the 11th Field Ambulance.

But what happened when he was wounded. We don't know but he would have been on his own. The field of battle was under German long range guns, machine gun fire and bombing from aircraft (hand dropped bombs). The fighting was bitter and deadly. His compatriots couldn't help him and it is unlikely that stretcher bearers were active until darkness fell. Although early in the day there had been an urgent call for stretcher bearers. By 3 pm the Germans were already collecting their wounded under the cover of a white flag.

Shrapnel comes in two types. That from shrapnel shells which are shells tightly packed with ball-bearings and designed to explode above the head of troops and cause devastating injuries. Others are reds-hot fragments of metal from the case of exploding shells.

Troops would often long for a Blighty wound – but a gunshot wound – not shrapnel. Shrapnel was hot, and would rip the body open. The pain was great and often the soldier had to try and stem his own bleeding. The soldier was dirty and lice ridden and often in contaminated earth. One thing would be for medics to try and stop infection – mostly with doses of iodine. Not very effective and many soldiers died of infected wounds, that today would not have caused a problem.

31st October 1917

Records for the 30th and 31st October have been compiled by Regimental historians after the event from various sources as the formal records of the Patricia's for the 30th and 31st October were lost in the fog of war – and probably were not fully written-up due to the death of so many officers.

The Patricia's were to be relieved on the evening of the 31st October and began withdrawing at 7 pm, this lasting until midnight – directed throughout by lamp signals. By the early hours of November 1st the shattered Regiment was clear and on its way from Fleet Cottages to Gravenstafel Ridge. The men already dropping with fatigue passed through heavy gas shelling and had to wear masks nearly all the way to Pommern Castle – which they reached at about 3 am. General Dyer came to Pommern Castle to thank the Regiment personally and said: ***"The Princess Patricia's earned for themselves on that 30th October deathless glory. Fierce in attack, wise in disposition, the work of the whole battalion on that day was of a calibre that would be hard to excel. Their casualties were very heavy, but all ranks lived up to the high traditions of the Regiment."***

On their way from Pommern Castle the Patricia's were held up all day by heavy artillery fire near the Wieltje Crossroads. At night they were able to reach St. Jean, where they bivouacked, and the next day moved by train to Abeele, whence they marched into rest at Scots Camp near Watou.

Today

The horror of Passhcendaele is firmly planted in the annals of warfare. Frank fought bravely in this campaign (and at Vimy Ridge) but like so many of his generation spoke little about it when he arrived home in Suffolk.

Today Meetcheele Ridge and the Bellevue Spur are cultivated farmland. The green valley of the Ravebeek with its farms is serene rather than the malevolent swamp exceeding its banks and churned by shell-fire. The pillboxes that spewed death against determined, foundering, cursing and dying men have long since gone. Passchedendaele and Ypres are rebuilt. Frank would not recognise Ypres because, although it has been rebuilt in every detail as it once was, when Frank arrive the town had been flattened to rubble with only the outline of the Cloth House discernible.

The *Silent Cities* of the large Commonwealth War Graves remind us of the story that should not be forgotten.

Field Diaries: further messages recording the bravery of the PPCLI

From H.R.H. PRINCESS PATRICIA "Just heard of the magnificent work done by the battalion on October 30th. Heartily congratulate all ranks; deeply grieved for all the losses sustained and for Major Papineau's death"

From MAJOR A.H. GAULT "The greatest regret of my life is that Army orders prevented my being with you. God bless you all. "

From MAJOR GENERAL L.J. LIPSETT C.M.G. commanding 3rd Canadian Division to Brig General H.M. DYER D.S.O. G.O.C. 7th C.I.B. "Dear General Dyer I have not been able to see your battalion commanders to express to them my appreciation of what they and their battalions have done. I congratulate you and all the brigade most heartily. The battalions have done magnificently. The P.P.C.L.I. have many fine actions to their credit during the war – but I am sure none can be finer than their advance of the 30th."

From FIELD MARSHALL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG, commander in Chief to G.O.C. 2nd Army "The successes gained by your troops yesterday under such conditions are deserving of the highest praise. While all the troops did well and contributed materially to the results achieved **– the performance of the 3rd CANADIAN DIVISION in particular was remarkably fine. The ground gained is of high importance and I congratulate you and all under you on the results of the great efforts made." (Frank was with the 3rd Canadian Division)**

From The PRINCESS PATRICIA "I have the greatest pride in my regiment and while deploring your great losses I feel that the spirit and endeavour of the regiment which I love so well may always be depended on to uphold the highest ideals of the empire"

From LADY EVELYN FARQUHAR "Will you convey to all ranks of the Regiment my deepest admiration for their gallantry and grit. While I deplore the heavy losses I know that it can always be depended on to be a credit to the service"

Major Chandler: Officer commanding 43rd Battalion: "Dear Colonel Adamson. Your very kind appreciation of the work done by my lads on bearer parties for your Regiment is more than ample praise for the small service they rendered. I have read your letter to them and they desire to say that they did no more than their duty to their comrades who were carrying on the fight; being just out of the fighting themselves and knowing the conditions they could do no less than their best. It may be your turn on some future occasion to help us out. The Cameronians will always welcome any opportunity of doing anything they can for a Regiment for which they have so much admiration as they have for the P.P.C.L.I. and though we never had the chance, I still look forward to the day when we may take the *Patricia's* to their objective. May I offer my congratulations on the splendid performance of your Regiment. I am sorry your casualties are so heavy - but you always rise again like a phoenix, stronger than ever – so that the P.P.C.L.I. even if badly cut up will still remain the same old fighting chaps."

What happened to Frank when wounded in Battle?

The detail of what happened to Frank we shall never know.

We do know he is recorded as being in the care of 11th Field Ambulance on 30th October at a Casualty Clearing Station – but when he fell and how he got there we don't know. But we can perhaps surmise that Frank fell early in battle as he is under care much earlier than many others in his Regiment.

We do know that on the 31st October the 43rd and 123rd (Pioneer) Battalions were coming up to clear the battlefield and move stretcher cases back for medical care. This task began in earnest soon after daybreak, and both the 43rd and 123rd Battalions were recorded as giving splendid service the whole day and had almost all the wounded away by 5 pm. Even under a flag of truce the evacuation of the wounded was a most difficult and trying affair, for the mud on the field of battle, and the dreadful state of the Waterloo-Bellevue Road, doubled and trebled the work of the stretcher bearers and the miseries of the walking wounded.

We do know that the action of the Regiment's own medical squad and stretcher-bearers received special notice in the reports of the action. Particular mention was made of Private J.G. Spurling "who hurried about the battlefield irrespective of artillery and machine-gun barrages, and remained on duty for 48 hours without rest or sleep" and of Lance Corporal (acting Sergeant) R. Wood who showed "magnificent courage in caring for the wounded night and day for three days" though his dressing-station was under constant shelling and the numbers to be cared for increased every hour. The Regiment's Chaplain "twice carried the wounded on his back across the battlefield. His gallant behaviour under shell-fire was most inspiring." Major Niven, as well as constantly going to the front line to reorganise the front line, personally carried out wounded men and superintended the whole work of getting them, back.

We do know that Frank is recorded on the 2nd November as being transferred to No. 26 General Field Hospital Etaples. However, it was not until the 17th November 1917 that Frank was taken from France on the Hospital Ship Ville De Liege back to Blighty.

If a man could not be patched-up and sent back to the lines the general rule was to move him out to England within 3 days – so that beds were not blocked.

Again one can only conjecture as to why Frank was so long in hospital. Was it because he was too badly wounded to be moved before he was operated on? Was it because there was a lack of transport to move Frank back to England? We will never know.

To give some idea of the trip back to a casualty clearing station I have included below an interview with Wallace Carroll.

Interview with Wallace Carroll - stretcher bearer in 15th Battalion

This interview might give some idea what it was like for the wounded Frank getting back to some aid.

For the Third Battalion, yes.

See they sent them in as a full Battalion but they had to have stretcher bearers cause casualties were very heavy up there. So I don't know how that worked out but our company got detailed as stretcher bearers, and we had one stretcher to four men. And we went on up they kicked off early in the morning and oh about eight o'clock we were sent in to pick up the wounded.

Well the Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion he wouldn't allow us to go on any further. It's no use he said, you'd never get them, and he said, you'll never be able to get them out. The mud and the water up there was terrific but by the time we got as far as we did we were all soakin' wet. The shell holes were so close together and everyone was full of water see, that was low land country up there and the canals and the dikes you know up there had all been cut you see. And the water overflowed into the low country and consequently every shell-hole up there were some shell holes up there you could get out and paddle around in a canoe in them, and they were quite big. You could drown up there quite easy if you happen to fall in them at night time. And this Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion wouldn't allow us to go on up not till after dark.

So we went up after dark and when we went up we got up to the front line and we got - they had quite a few wounded up around in there. But the four of us brought out one wounded man and we had an awful job getting him out. You see everything was pitch black and there was still lots of Jerries around in those shell holes and that, you see, that had been missed and they were taking potshots at you from the shell holes.

Q. Well how long would it take you to bring a man out from this front line? This was a terrible terrible long hard difficult trip: four men on a stretcher, how long would it take you to bring a man out?

A. You could only go about twenty feet and you had to put the stretcher down and take a rest. You see the mud was knee deep up at Ypres: first one guy would slip into a shell-hole and somebody else would go, it's a wonder the man ever stayed on the stretcher. Of course he hung-on - on both sides of the stretcher - he was wounded in the leg, but that man really stuck it. I don't know who he was or what his name was; I might have known at the time. He had a hard job hanging on to the stretcher because there was one or the other of us slipping into a shell hole, and it took us - I don't know now what time it was - but we got him out by daylight.

By the time we got down to the dressing station on the plank road there it was daylight and we started up about eight o'clock at night. It took so, so long to get up in there and the tapes, the Third Battalion tapes you see.

Q. To show where they were?

A. Yes, but the tapes had been blown away, when you come to the end of the tape well you had to go and find the other end. Somebody had to get out and scout around and find out where the other end of it was. It took us a long time to get up there but we got there. As I say we got this one man and we brought him out. But there was lots of other men brought out too you know.

Q. Oh yes.

A. Buts that's just what the four of us did, and we were all night getting that one man out, and I'm telling you we were all in.

Well the fellow had about, he had seven francs and he wanted us to have it between the four of us. He says you can buy something or other, he says if its only chocolate bars, so we told him to keep the seven francs you see, you can buy chocolate bars when you get in the hospital. You'll need a little money when you're in the hospital, because I told him I just come back from the hospital a little while ago.

I says if you're in the hospital and got no money I says it's not so nice either, and they won't pay you, you know, while you're in the hospital.

Did Frank get his soup?

Written by Sgt. E. D. G. Aylen, PPCLI, originally published in "What the 'Boys' Did Over there / By 'Themselves'", a compilation of first person accounts (1919).

To give a further idea of the conditions Frank will have endured I have included an extract from the above book – taken from the Canadian Archives (the archives area veritable source of on-line information).

Corporal Coate was there to greet us, and it was not long before I was signed up. After all sorts of questions I was given a small slip of paper with my number on it (No. 475337) and a hat badge with "Universities Overseas Company", and on my shoulders were letters that read P.P.C.L.I. ("Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry"). I had heard all about the famous "Pats" and was of course glad that I was to be one of them.

It was September 28th, 1915, that I was sworn in as a soldier and I felt fine. We trained in Canada, at McGill University, for two months and had it not been for the war I would have been well on my way as a student of that university. We had guard work to do, physical training and route marching; then word was passed around that we were to go overseas and we were all delighted, as none of us wanted to be "Home Guards."

On November the 15th, we left Montreal by train, amid the cheering crowds of our friends, sweethearts and mothers. Two days after we arrived at Halifax, where we embarked at 5 P.M. on the S. S. Lapland. The people in Halifax were there to mail letters or postal cards for us, which we threw from the steamer. At 7 P.M. we set out on our long voyage, and, as the boat steamed out, the band on the deck played

"When the Roll is Called Up Yonder I'll be There," but the funny part was, that every member of the band was about sixty years old, and we knew he "wouldn't be there."

We had eight good days going over and all enjoyed it, except a few who treated the fish in the ocean.

The latter part of November we arrived in England at Plymouth, and, in the rain, embarked on a train to our training camp at St. Martin's Plain near Shorncliffe. As you know, we trained there, but that will not interest you as much as our time in France, so I will skip that to the day we sailed for France.

At 4 A.M. we all fell in and the roll call was taken. We marched to the train, after having our pay book made up to date. We never forgot the pay book or the dinner call. A thing that all the boys noticed was that we were to cross the channel from Southampton on the S. S. Duke of Connaught, a fitting place for "Princess Pats." Other boys said that was luck. It was for some of us. We arrived at Havre, France, and in the rain marched seven miles to a camp called the Central Training Camp, where we spent a few days receiving instructions in modern warfare.

After the few days in camp we marched seven miles back again to Havre, and proceeded by train by Poperinghe in those beautiful Pullman cars, marked 40 men - 8 horses. We arrived at Poperinghe at 5 P.M., after spending all night, and part of the next day, in the cars. As we came nearer to our station we could hear the shells bursting and the booming of the guns. One could see nothing but heads stuck out of the car windows just as far as craning necks could stretch. Arriving at Poperinghe we met a lieutenant who asked the sergeant:

"Are you for the 'Pats'?" the sergeant replying, "Yes, sir." In a very English way the lieutenant said:

"Oh, very well, follow me. I know where the 'Pats' are, as I was sent for you."

Well, we followed him. He took us four miles the wrong way and back again--then we had an extra two miles to the "Pats" quarters. He knew where the "Pats" were all right!!

Now we are with the regiment and I was put in No. 3 company under Major Charlie Stewart, who was one good fellow. The regiment was out for rest, but we worked every night going up the line to do work in the trenches, and help the engineers.

Now to tell of one or two little experiences in the front line, say about the time of the "Third Battle of Ypres." The regiment held the line at Hooge and we were all University men, as the old regiment was practically all wiped out, except a handful. Our major was well liked, and a word from him was well obeyed.

A few days before the big show I was sent out on a scouting party of twelve, with Lieutenant Fife in charge. We succeeded in getting over to the German wire, and I don't know whether the Germans got wise to our coming, through the sneezing of one of the party, or whether the clipping of the wire was heard. But we were greeted with, first a rifle shot from a sniper, then a bomb, then a dozen, but only two of the boys were killed.

We moved further up the line and a little closer to "Fritzie's" line. There we remained quiet for a few seconds. I, being near Lieutenant Fife, was asked by him to follow, which I did. He went up to a part of the Hun's line that was built of old sand bags, where we could look right up the German line, as the star-shell burst and lit up the place.

As everything was quiet, the boys were anxious to start something, so a few bombs were hurled in, but in return we had the same amount, and had to return to our own lines minus two of the boys.

It was on a working party that some fun occurred, as it always does in the trenches. We were moving from the road, to proceed up the "China wall," in the Ypres salient, which led to the trenches, running through the shattered village of Hooge, when the sergeant-major said to me:

"Aylen, special duty, step out."

I thought, "I wonder what is coming now."

After he had the number of men he wanted, and all the other boys were up the line, he called me and pointing to twelve large thermos soup tanks, said:

"See those, Aylen?"

I said, "Yes, sir."

"Well," he said, "take them up the line."

I looked at him and then at the tanks and said: "Shall I take them all up at once, or one at a time?"

He gave me one look and said, "Don't get funny, this is a soft job for you."

I said, "But I can't carry those up."

He said, "You must."

Now the soup tanks were about four feet high and about a foot in diameter.

I said again, "Sir, I can't carry that up."

He, a little angry, said, "You must."

I said, "I can't carry it – it is bigger than I am."

Then he said, "Well, a man is to help you."

So he sent a man, whose name was Cleary, an Irishman, about six feet two inches tall, and as I was only five feet five inches, it was going to be rather awkward for us both, as you have to put a long pole through the loops on each side of the tank, and put the pole on your shoulders. The tank hangs in the centre. Clearly being taller than I, and the trench mats very slippery we had "one helluva of a time." I was getting the worst of it. We slipped and stumbled and spoke about a hundred different kind of "swear words.

" Now the "China wall" ends about half way up, and we then stepped down into the trench. Just about twenty feet away from the end of the "China wall" there was a large shell-hole and our trench mats, which are made of wood, went across one side of the shell-hole. When the shell-hole is full of muddy water the trench mats float. This night Cleary and I happened to pass it when it was full. It was very dark and I did not notice that the mat was loose, as I was leading, so upon putting my foot on the mat, down it went. The hole was about eight feet deep, and I felt it going from under me and pulled on the pole. Soup tank, pole, and

Clearly and all followed me into that shell-hole. When we came up covered with that lovely, slimy mud, you couldn't tell which was the soup tank. Then I remembered what the sergeant-major had said, "This is a soft job for you,"--and, believe me, it was.

There is one thing I would like to say and that is the boys of the Princess Pats had wonderful courage, and always a good word for each other. I can picture plainly our trip over the top at Hooge, when I went over with the second wave. I could see the boys on our left going through a swamp up to their waists in filth; ploughing through, their rifles up over their heads, so they would not get blocked with dirt, and when a man met a bullet with "his number," he would fall backward or forward and disappear under this water and mud; just like quicksand.

It was after a terrific bombardment of our lines. I was detailed to fill sand bags in a shell-hole beside a communication trench, just back of the front lines. I was with five other chums, when a shell dropped on the far corner of the shell-hole, which I was facing, and the shrapnel penetrated my left shoulder, mouth, right eye and a small piece of my left leg. My chum, Nelson, was badly wounded in the back, and I believe the other four boys were buried. I never heard if they got them out, as I was unconscious, but when I was struck I can remember, first seeing a green light, felt a burning in my eye, and a blow on my shoulder as if struck with a sledge-hammer. I felt myself slide down in the mud and I knew nothing until I awoke in the major's dugout. I was told what had happened to the other boys.

I was then taken to the dressing station and in two days arrived at No. 3 Canadian General Hospital at Boulogne. I was blind in both eyes for a month, had two operations in France, and was then sent to England to the 4th London General Hospital, Denmark Hill. After spending a few months there I was sent to the C.C.A.C. (Canadian Casualty Assembly Centre), better known as "Charlie Chaplin's". This was at Folkestone. After having two "boards" they found me unfit for further service in England or France, so I was billed for Canada. Arriving in Canada on the S. S. Empress of Britain, at Quebec, I was sent to the convalescent home (Belmont Park) at Montreal, and after treatment was honourably discharged as physically unfit.

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Vimy Ridge

One day I shall look closely at the action Frank encountered at Vimy Ridge. I shall also look to see if the path's of the brothers Frank Claude Taylor and William Johnson Northover Taylor M.C. crossed in battle.

When Frank arrived in France, after his basic training in England, the following was reported in respect of the new intake.

At Steenvorde the Regiment rested for two or three days and began to refit in earnest. Drafts of 500 men arrived from England by 10th June 1916 and a party of 20 officers joined, or rejoined, a few days later – and the Patricia's were back up to full strength. The new intake were given time to train and assimilate into the Regiment. During the week ending 18th June the days were taken up with training and in the late afternoon games and sports - every day. The PPCLI Comedy Company gave in the Town Hall at Steenvoorde the first of many entertainments – skits, choruses, plays – many of them almost daringly personal – were hugely appreciated.

At the end of this it was declared –"the drafts who joined at Steenvoorde were of the best type" The Patricia's were fit again for the line within two weeks – and this included Frank who was with the draft of 500 men.

The Princess Patricia's relieved the front line on the 26/27th June and at dawn on the first day back in the frontline the new recruits had their baptism – coming under severe bombardment during an unsuccessful attack by the Germans on Sanctuary Wood. Frank had a good taste of the warfare that was to come during his time of service.

Below is an extract of an historical comment on the Princess Patricia's at Vimy Ridge.

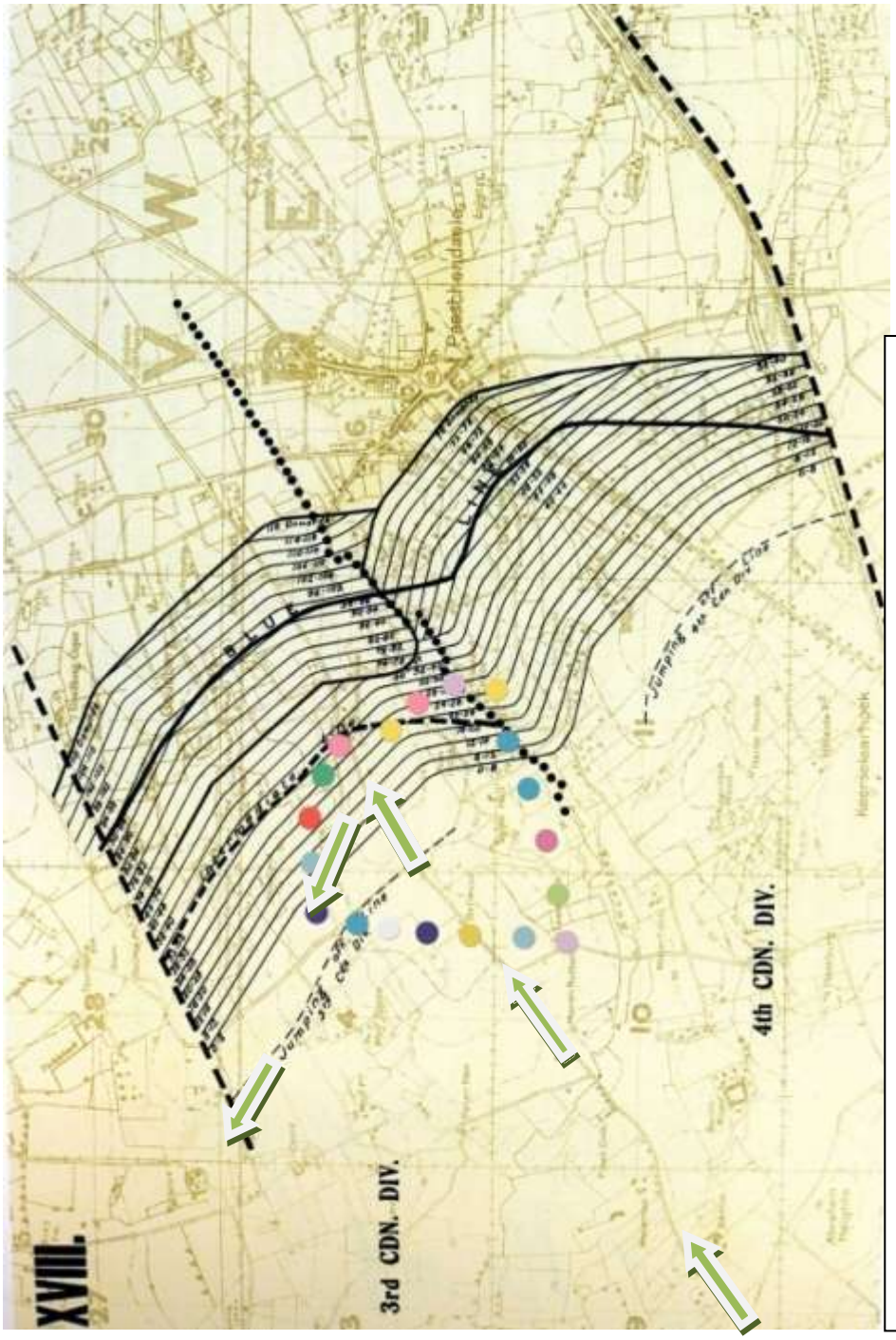
"*For two years, the Germans had been preparing for the deep fortifications along the Vimy Ridge, a natural defensive position that rose to 500 feet and stretched for five miles north of the French City of Arras. They thought it was impregnable. At dawn on Easter Monday, April 9th 1917, four Canadian divisions went 'over the top' and stormed the ridge. Having proved themselves exceptional fighters on The Somme, they had now been tasked with one of the most dangerous offensives of the war.*

VIMY RIDGE was no ordinary battle. Indeed it was the most rehearsed battle in military history, meticulously planned by two quite exceptional Allied commanders, Lt. General Julian Byng and General Arthur Currie.

For once, every soldier knew the plan and had his own map of the battleground. Every soldier had rehearsed 'The Vimy Glide', advancing at just the right speed to keep behind the rolling barrage. New tactics were evolved for the battle which has since become part of standard military planning. "

October 2008

The map below shows the area of Battle in October 1917 and the route taken by Shirley and David Brown to follow Frank's footsteps and to take lunch at Varlet Farm.



The ring of coloured dots represents roughly the area of battle for Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. My eyesight on the computer screen does not allow me to trace as accurately as I would like.

The 3rd Division was to advance with battalions of the 9th Brigade and 8th Brigade (with the 9th having one battalion of 7th Brigade in reserve in Canada Trench) astride the Gravenstafel to Passchendaele Road to a line with Goudberg on the left and Graf Wood on the right. The 7th Brigade's Patricia's ended-up in battle on the road and to it's right and were to take the defended positions of Duck Lodge, Meetcheele and Graf Farm – the key positions. The Patricia's attacked on a two-company front (No.2 & No.3) of 500 yards - with Nos 1 and 4 in support – but soon they were all in the front line. The Patricia's finally dug-in on a line from shell-holes in front of Vapour Farm to Meetcheele Crossroads.

Shirley and David were taken on the road from Gravenstafel (past Bellevue) to Meetcheele Crossroads (more-or-less through the middle of the battlefield), turning left past Furst Farm on to Varlet Farm for lunch.

A collection brought up by the plough in Varlet Farm in 2008, some 90 years later! – the scrap is collected by the authorities about every six months. Even now farmers are occasionally killed by the buried artillery.

The remarkable Charlotte who started her collection of artefacts only in recent years, when she and her husband Dirk realised they needed to supplement their farm income with bed and breakfast.

Group lunch at Varlet Farm. Charlotte & Dirk Cardoen – Descamps later put on a wonderful spread.

The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Memorial and 50th anniversary plaque built beside a Canadian maple tree on Princess Patricia Street near the village of Westhoek.

Shirley and David Brown on the Canadian Memorial at Hill 62, near Sanctuary Wood; with the spires of Ypres in the background - an area where Frank will have fought soon after joining his Regiment.

On the next page is a Maple Leaf picked up from that Memorial.

Doreen Patricia Holland with Frank's last uniform

Frank's medals, cap badge, a part of the shrapnel that wounded him and a pocket watch hit by shrapnel.

What was a Battalion?

The battalion was the basic tactical unit of the infantry of the British army in the Great War of 1914-1918. At full establishment, it consisted of **1,007** men, of whom 30 were officers. It comprised a Battalion Headquarters and four Companies.

Battalion Headquarters

The Battalion was usually commanded by an officer with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. A Major was Second-in-Command. Battalion HQ also had three other officers : a Captain or Lieutenant filled the role of Adjutant (in charge of Battalion administration); similarly a Captain or Lieutenant was the Quartermaster (responsible for stores and transport); an officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps was also attached.

Battalion HQ also included the Regimental Sergeant-Major (RSM, the most senior Non-Commissioned Officer) plus a number of specialist roles filled by NCO's with the rank of Sergeant : Quartermaster, Drummer, Cook, Pioneer, Shoemaker, Transport, Signaller, Armourer (often attached from the Army Ordnance Corps), and Orderly Room Clerk.

A Corporal and 4 privates of the Royal Army Medical Corps were attached for water duties; a Corporal and 15 Privates were employed as Signallers; 10 Privates were employed as Pioneers (on construction, repair and general engineering duties); 11 Privates acted as Drivers for the horse-drawn transport; 16 acted as Stretcher-bearers (these often being the musicians of the Battalion Band); 6 Privates acted as Officers batmen (personal servants), and 2 as Orderlies for the Medical Officer.

Companies

Usually lettered A to D - or in the case of the Guards Regiments numbered 1 through 4 - each of the 4 Companies numbered 227 heads at full establishment. Each was commanded by a Major or Captain, with a Captain as Second-in-Command. Company HQ included a Company Sergeant-Major (CSM), a Company Quartermaster Sergeant (CQMS), 2 Privates acting as Batmen, and 3 as Drivers. The body of the Company was divided into 4 Platoons, each of which was commanded by a subaltern (a Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant). In total, the 4 Platoons consisted of 8 Sergeants, 10 Corporals, 4 Drummers, 4 Batmen and 188 Privates. Each Platoon was subdivided into 4 Sections, each of 12 men under an NCO. If asked, after his name, rank and number, a man might refer to himself as being in Number 3 Section, 2 Platoon, B Company, the Xth Umpshire regiment.

Also in the battalion

Each battalion had, in 1914, a Machine-gun Section consisting of a Lieutenant, a Sergeant, a Corporal, 2 Drivers, a Batmen and 12 Privates trained in the maintenance, transport, loading and firing of the Vickers heavy machine gun. These men made up two six-man gun teams.

Also on the strength were 8 Lance-Sergeants and 49 Lance-Corporals (these being included in the figures already given above).

Each battalion had a detachment at its Base Depot, which did not take the field when the battalion was on active service. The Base Detachment consisted - in theory - of a subaltern, 2 Sergeants and 91 Privates to form a first reinforcement (to make good battalion casualties or other losses); 4 Storemen, the Band Sergeant and the Sergeant Master Tailor.

When the battalion went on active service, it left behind the Bandmaster and the Sergeant-Instructor of Musketry for service with the Reserve Battalion.

Equipment

Battalion Transport consisted of 13 riding , and 43 draught and pack horses. The provided the power for drawing the six ammunition carts, two water carts, three General Service Wagons (for tools and machine guns), and the MO's Maltese Cart. The Signallers had 9 bicycles. (Note: the Divisional Train also provided four more two-horsed GS Wagons for each Battalion.

All ranks carried a rifle - which for the regular battalions (and after the early days when all sorts of older equipment was supplied to the Territorial and Service Battalions, all of these were eventually similarly equipped) was the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE). The only exceptions were officers, Pipers, Drummers, Buglers and the five man in each Battalion who carried range-finding instruments. All those carrying a rifle, except the RSM and other Staff-Sergeants, were also armed with the sword-bayonet.

Other Battalion equipment, over and above that carried by the man, included 120 shovels, 73 pickaxes, 20 felling axes, 8 hand axes, 46 billhooks, 20 reaping hooks, a hand saw, 32 folding saws and 8 crowbars. There was also a plethora of minor stores and spares.

The Battalion also carried a certain amount of ammunition, although this was backed up by the echelons of Transport at Brigade, Divisional and Lines of Communication levels. When added together, the supply per rifle came to 550 rounds per man. The Battalion Transport carried 32 boxes of 1,000 rounds, and each man could carry up to 120 rounds. The machine guns were each supplied with a total of 41,500 rounds of which 3,500 was carried with the gun, and 8,000 in regimental reserve.

Changes during the war

By February 1915, the allocation of machine-guns to each Battalion had been doubled to 4. This, plus other minor adjustments, changed the full establishment of the Battalion to 1,021 men of all ranks. Pioneer Battalions, which were introduced, had 1,034.

In action, Battalion machine-gun sections were increasingly collected into a Brigade group of 16 guns, under a Brigade Machine-gun Officer. This arrangement was made permanent in January 1916 : a month later, the gunners were formally transferred from their Regiment into the newly-formed Machine Gun Corps. When they lost control of the Vickers guns in this move, the infantry Battalions received 4 Lewis light machine guns. By the opening of the 1916 Somme offensive this had been increased to 16 guns per Battalion, and early in 1918 this was increased again to 36 guns. The firepower of the Battalion was thus considerably increased throughout the war.

Battle experience also led to orders to ensure that Battalions would leave behind a number of men when going into action, to form a nucleus for rebuilding, in the event of heavy casualties being suffered. A total of 108 all ranks, consisting of a mix of instructors, trained signallers and other specialists, were to be left out.

The number of men acting as stretcher-bearers was increased from 16 to 32.

Battle reality

Especially as the war progressed, it was rare indeed for a Battalion to be at full establishment. It was not unknown at times for Battalions with a nominal strength of over a 1000 men to go into fighting with perhaps only 200.

Equipment was lost and damaged, and not always replaced quickly or fully. Lucky was the Battalion with a wise Quartermaster, who knew his way around the Lines of Communication, Brigade and even Engineers dumps. Certain types of heavy equipment were eventually left in trenches and other positions, being handed over to the relieving unit in exchange for a chit describing the 'trench stores' they had received. Battalion subalterns and CQMS's faced the brunt of continual Brigade and Divisional Staff questions about equipment state and availability. A typical battalion spent perhaps only 5-10 days in a year in intensive action; they would also spend 60-100 days in front-line trench activities without being in action, with the rest of the time being in reserve or at rest, both of which entailed continual effort on fatigues or training. The usual British idiosyncrasies Battalions of the Scots Guards and the other Highland Regiments were also allowed a Sergeant-Piper, and 5 Pipers. Neither the Scottish Lowland or Irish Regiments were allowed this extra strength, although they did have Pipers from within the basic headcount shown above. This was also true of the Tyneside Scottish and Tyneside Irish (Service) Battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers and even the London Scottish Territorials.

Army Structure

Battalion: infantry Regiments were composed of battalions, active service units consisting of about 1000 men under the command of a Lieutenant-Colonel. It was often the case that a soldier's first loyalty was to his battalion; when conditions allowed great efforts were made to ensure a sense of tradition and 'esprit de corps'. During the First World War regiments raised large numbers of battalions.

Brigade: four infantry battalions would be grouped together to form an infantry brigade – under the command of a Brigadier-General. In 1918 brigades were reduced to three battalions.

Division: three infantry brigades would be grouped together to form a division – under the command of a Major-General. The division was likely to have been the largest formation that a soldier would have identified with; they had distinctive insignia and familiar nicknames; some divisional commanders became well known to their men. The division was a self-contained fighting force possessing, in addition to its 12 infantry battalions and Pioneer Battalion, its own supporting specialists, Engineers, Artillery, Transport and Medical units. Its total complement was over 19,000 men.

Corps: divisions (any number from two to six) would be grouped to serve under corps – a directing administrative formation responsible for the effective deployment of its divisions in the field. An army corps was commanded by a Lieutenant-General. A corps would be provided with supporting troops – often known as 'Lines of Communication' or 'Corps Troops'.

Army: corps would be grouped to serve under an army – another higher-level administrative formation responsible for the effective fulfilment of the overall strategic aims of the Commander-in-Chief. An army, commanded by a General, was provided with specialist supporting troops – often known as 'Lines of Communication' or 'Army Troops'.

Commander-in-Chief: Armies came under the control and command of the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) at General Headquarters (GHQ). Field-Marshal Sir John French (1852-1925) commanded the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) on the outbreak of war in August 1914. During his period of command the British Army fought the vital defensive battles of 'First Ypres' (autumn 1914) and 'Second Ypres' (spring 1915). Heavily criticised for his handling of the Battle of Loos (September-October 1915) French was replaced as Commander-in-Chief by General Sir Douglas Haig on 19 December 1915. Haig (1861-1928) was subsequently responsible for all British Army operations in France and Belgium until the Armistice (11 November 1918). Convinced of the absolute necessity of defeating the German Army on the Western Front (the principal theatre of military operations) Haig's name is for ever associated with the costly offensives on the Somme in 1916 and the constituent battles of 'Third Ypres' (popularly known as the Passchendaele Offensive) during the second half of 1917. Less well known is his direct involvement in the series of tumultuous Allied victories in the late summer and autumn of 1918. Following the war Haig commanded the Home Forces in the UK (1919-1921). He had been made a Field Marshal on 3 January 1917. (*SOURCE: Commonwealth War Graves Commission.)*