



Serjeant (also Sergeant) Gordon Valentine Boone (Number 42082) of the 4th Battery, 1st Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Canadian Expeditionary Force, is buried in Hagle Dump Cemetery: grave reference, III. D. 6.

(Right: *The image of a Canadian Field Artillery cap badge is from the e-bay web-site.*)

(continued)



His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of an electrical engineer, it is *possible* that Gordon Valentine Boone was the young G.V. Boone*, who travelled from the Dominion of Newfoundland to the Dominion of Canada, on board the SS *Bruce* from Port aux Basques to North Sydney, on September 18 of 1909 – and perhaps again in September of the following year – en route to Sackville, New Brunswick**.

**Not G.U. Boone as recorded by Library and Archives Canada*

***He undoubtedly was at some time a student of Bishop Feild College in St. John's, Newfoundland, as his name appears upon the institution's Roll of Honour.*

It was on September 22 of 1914 – the first day for which the Canadian Army remunerated him for his services - that Gordon Boone enlisted and on September 24 that he attested at the Mobilisation Camp recently established at Valcartier, Québec. According to his medical file he had already been examined, also at Valcartier, on September 3.

He was immediately officially attached* to the 7th Battery of the 3rd Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery**.

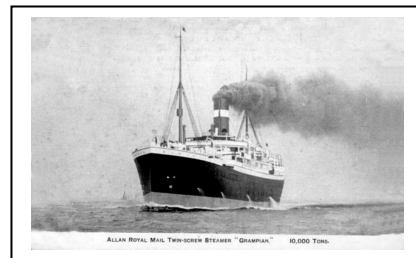
**It would seem that he was also immediately appointed to the rank of bombardier – the equivalent of a lance corporal – as his pay from September 22, 1914, included the five-cent rate paid to an NCO of that rank.*

***This is according to his files. However, it would seem from a number of reputable sources that the 7th Battery was part of the 2nd Brigade, NOT the 3rd Brigade. The following text – up until December of 1914 when he was to be transferred - follows the fortunes of the 3rd Brigade which, except in detail, were the same as those of the 2nd Brigade.*

(Right: *The Canadian Army Camp at Valcartier. In 1914, the main Army Camp in Canada had been at Petawawa. However, its location in Ontario – and away from the Great Lakes – made it impractical for the despatch of troops overseas. Valcartier was apparently built within weeks after the Declaration of War. – the photograph from *The War Illustrated* taken during a later year of the War)*



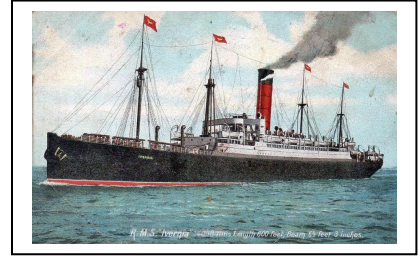
On the day that Gordon Boone enlisted, September 22, the majority of the personnel and equipment of the 3rd Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, had already embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Grampian** in Québec. The vessel sailed on the 28th to anchor in the St. Lawrence Estuary off Gaspé on October 1. Two days later, the convoy carrying the elements of what was to become the Canadian Division – later Canadian 1st Division - set off for the trans-Atlantic crossing**.



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

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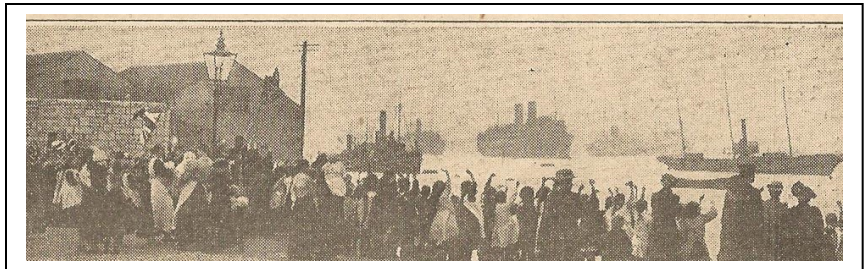
***While part of the 7th Battery sailed on Grampian, the second part – and personnel of the 2nd Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery - took ship on RMS Ivernia, the image (right) also from the Old Ship Picture Galleries Web-site.**



****Off the south coast of Newfoundland the convoy was joined by the comparatively minuscule SS Florizel transporting the First Five Hundred of the Newfoundland Regiment to the United Kingdom.**

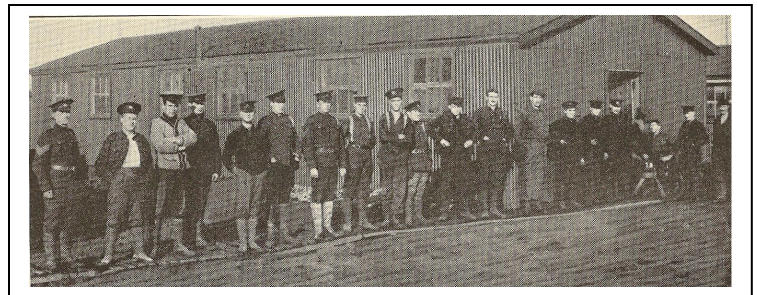
Upon arrival in the English south-coast naval base and port of Plymouth-Devonport on October 15, the 3rd Brigade remained on board ship for five days, during which time an average of one horse per day died. On the 20th, having final disembarked, the unit travelled by train to the town of Amesbury. Apparently during the journey one *other rank* was injured by a horse falling on him, and a second *other rank* by walking out of the train, believing himself to be still on board ship.

(Right above: The thirty-two ship convoy carrying the units of the Canadian Division, Canadian Expeditionary Force lying at anchor in Plymouth Hoe on October 14, 1914 – from *The War Illustrated*)



The Artillery then marched from Amesbury to West Down, North Camp, on the Salisbury Plain, the large military establishment in southern England – most of it under canvas.

The remainder of October and the month of November, according to the Brigade War Diary, were spent in training, parading - and in deploring the incessant rain - until it became snow.



(Right: Canadian troops in the autumn of 1914 at Bulford Camp, Wiltshire – from *The War Illustrated*)

(Right: A British eighteen-pounder artillery piece, the mainstay of the British and Empire (Commonwealth) artillery forces during the Great War, here seen at the Imperial War Museum, London – photograph from 2011(?))



The highlight of that month of November, 1914, for many was undoubtedly the visit by H.M. King George V of the *House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha**: the nadir for one young volunteer soldier, also bearing a Germanic-sounding name, was undoubtedly that of being sent back to Canada as... *an undesirable alien*.

**The Royal Family changed its name to 'Windsor' in 1917.*

By the time of either of these events, Bombardier Boone had received a second promotion - with a further five-cents per day raise in pay - to the rank of corporal, on November 1. One month later, on December 1(?), he was transferred to the 4th Battery of the 1st Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery – also at West Down, North Camp - before receiving a second promotion, to the rank of serjeant – at least on paper – on the 18th of the same month*.

On the day previous, the 17th, Corporal Boone had been treated for a cut on his face at the 1st Canadian Field Ambulance established at the time at Bustard Camp on Salisbury Plain, and where at the time – according to its War Diary – it was... *Cleaning dirty linen of Princess Pat Battalion.*

**Any raise in pay, however – according to his pay sheet – apparently came into effect only on New Year's Day, 1915. It appears to have been a further twenty-five cents daily.*

At some time in January of 1915 – the 1st Brigade War Diary for that month is unavailable to confirm the date – Sergeant Boone and his unit were ordered transferred to the area of the town of Devizes in the county of Wiltshire.

Then on February 4 the Canadian Division marched to a review area from its respective camps where it was inspected by His Majesty, King George V and the War Minister, Lord Kitchener*. The next few days were spent in final preparation for departure and on February 7, the 1st Canadian Artillery Brigade began to entrain train – a process which was to take six hours – for the journey to the west-coast port of Avonmouth.

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

It was, in fact, February 8 before the train pulled out and it was later that day that the unit embarked, the ship sailing that same night. Not only the 1st Canadian Artillery Brigade but the entire Canadian Division was on its way to the Continent.

The first elements of the Canadian Division – this including Serjeant's unit - disembarked in the French port of St-Nazaire on February 11 after a stormy three-day crossing. The 4th Battery left by train at one o'clock in the afternoon of the following day for the area of the Franco-Belgian frontier, finally moving into billets in the vicinity of Meteren on the 14th.

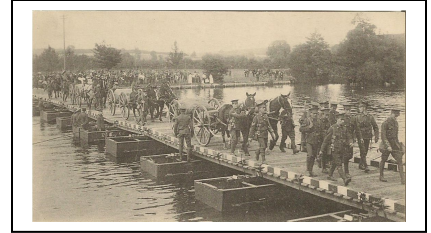
Until the end of that month the unit was to remain in the area of Meteren, Nieppe and Armentières, at times co-operating with - and gleaning experience from - the Royal Field Artillery Brigades already serving in the *Ypres Salient*.

(Right: *The northern French town of Armentières amid the morning mist, ninety-nine years after Sergeant Boone was to serve in its proximity – photograph from 2014*)



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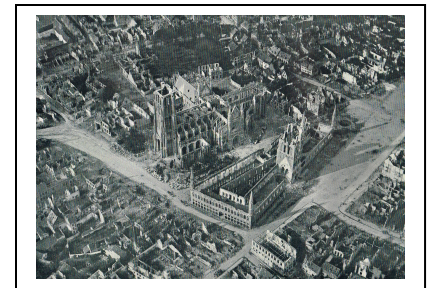
On March 1, the unit was ordered to move just to the southwest of Armentières, to the small village of Fleurbaix, where the Brigade was to act in support of the infantry in the trenches. The entire month was spent in these positions during which time the Brigade personnel exchanged fire with their counterparts on the other side of the line – and tried to be wary of the quite active German snipers.



(Right above: *Troops – said to be British, but the Canadians wore British Uniforms – on the march in the north of France during the early period of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

April 1st meant a move to the rear from the forward positions, at first back to the adjacent commune of Sailly, before a further withdrawal to Oudezeele to the west. Eleven days were to be spent in Oudezeele, from April 7 to 18 inclusive, days comprising inspections, lectures, drills, marches, exercise rides and the cleaning of both equipment and horses.

On that latter date the 1st Artillery Brigade moved forward again, into the Kingdom of Belgium as far as the town of Poperinghe, before subsequently being ordered into the *Ypres Salient*. The unit was still reconnoitring the area of St-Julien and on April 21 the guns were still being brought forward.



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

On April 22, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the Germans released chlorine gas in front of French colonial troops at the northern end of the *Ypres Salient*. The gas reportedly caused six-thousand casualties in a very short space of time and provoked a rout of the stricken defenders. The Canadians, in the line just to the right, not affected to the same degree, were to endeavour to fill the void left by the retreating French troops and to forestall a German break-through.



Thus at three o'clock in the morning of April 23, the 4th Battery found itself some three kilometres to the north of Ypres and along the Yser Canal, there to support a projected counter-attack by Canadian – subsequently replaced by French - troops, the Canadian infantry being needed elsewhere. By midnight of the 26th, the French counter-attack had still yet to materialize, but would do so on the following day.



(Second above: *the Yser Canal (looking northwards) some three kilometres to the north of the city of Ypres (today Ieper) – photograph from 2013*)

(Previous page: *The Memorial to the Canadian Division just to the south of the village of Langemark stands where the Canadians withstood the German attack at Ypres (today Ieper) in April of 1915. – photograph from 2010*)

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



The Brigade War Diary for April 27 reads as follows: *Very heavy fire commenced at 6 am on our part and French made a determined attack but had to retire owing to Germans using gas shells. Our casualties to date are 3 dead and 39 wounded.*

The son of Samuel John Boone, storekeeper, deceased 1908 (possibly March 10, but certainly before April 21), and Marion W. (*Winter?*) Boone (likely née *Saunders*, deceased September 20, 1912) of 40, Queen's road, St. John's, Newfoundland – birthplace of Gordon - he was also the brother of Maria-Maud (married to *Mathieson*) and to Alexander J.S. Boone, of Millertown, Newfoundland, at the time of enlistment and later of *Dominion Iron & Steel*, Sydney, Nova Scotia.

Sergeant (*Serjeant*) Boone was reported as having *killed in action* on April 27, 1915, and also as having been buried at Brielen on that same day. His remains were later exhumed and transferred to where they lie today.

Gordon Valentine Boone had enlisted at the age of twenty-nine years: date of birth in St. John's, Newfoundland, February 14, 1885.

Serjeant Gordon Valentine Boone was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal) (right).



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.