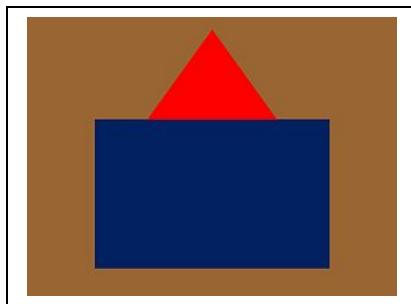




Private Frederick Mansfield (Number 877622) of the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion (*Nova Scotia Rifles*), Canadian Expeditionary Corps, is buried in Étaples Military Cemetery: Grave reference XXII.Q.2..

(Right: *The image of the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Nova Scotia Rifles) shoulder flash is from the Wikipedia Web-site.*)

(continued)



His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *labourer*, it may be the Frederick Mansfield was the young man to be found on the passenger list of July 14 of 1914, of the steamship *Bruce*. The vessel crossed on that day from Port aux Basques in the Dominion of Newfoundland to the port of North Sydney, Cape Breton, in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, with a twenty year-old Frederick Mansfield on board on his way to the industrial city of Sydney, there to find manual work.

His first pay records indicate that it was on March 11 of 1916 that the Canadian Army began to remunerate Private Mansfield for his services and that on that date he was taken on strength by the 185 Battalion (*Cape Breton Highlanders*) and attached to 'D' Company.

Only three days afterwards, on March 14, he presented himself in Sydney, where he was residing on Hanggard Street – possibly it no longer exists - in the district of Whitney Pier, for a medical examination which pronounced him as...*fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force*. Private Mansfield apparently was illiterate – not an unusual occurrence in those days – as the Justice of the Peace who attested him on that same day wrote in the margin of the official document: *Having be (sic) read and explained (sic) to said Fred Mansfield and said Fred Mansfield declared that he understood nature of declaration and oath.*

After his enlistment and attestation it is likely that Private Mansfield was ordered to report to *duty* for training to the not-distant town of Broughton to the south of Sydney which had recently been transformed into a military camp\*.

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

April 26, 1916, was then to be the moment on which the formalities of his enlistment were officially brought to a conclusion at Broughton. On that date the commanding officer of the 185<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Parker-Day, declared – on paper – that...*877622 Pte Fred Mansfield...having been finally approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.*

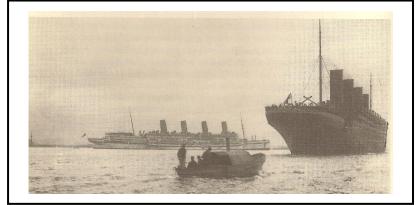
His posting to Broughton was to last altogether not much longer than ten weeks. By that time, the authorities had decided to create a *Nova Scotia Highland Brigade* to comprise the 185<sup>th</sup>, the 85<sup>th</sup>, the 193<sup>rd</sup> and the 219<sup>th</sup> Battalions. On May 23 of 1915 these four formations were assembled to train together at *Camp Aldershot* in Kings County, Nova Scotia, where the *Brigade* then spent all that summer before receiving its colours on September 28, two weeks before its departure for overseas service.

At seven o'clock in the evening of October 11, 1916, the one-thousand thirty-eight officers and *other ranks* of the 185<sup>th</sup> Overseas Battalion embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Olympic* in the harbour at Halifax. Earlier that day the 85<sup>th</sup> and the 188<sup>th</sup> Battalions had gone on board, to be followed on the morrow by the 219<sup>th</sup> and the 193<sup>rd</sup>.

(continued)

(Right below: *Sister-ship to Britannic – that vessel to be sunk by a mine in the eastern Mediterranean a month later, in November of 1916 – and also to the ill-fated Titanic, HMT Olympic on the right lies at anchor in the company of HM Hospital Ship Aquitania, centre, at Mudros Bay, Island of Lemnos, in the autumn of 1915.* – from a photograph from the Imperial War Museum, London)

On October 13<sup>th</sup> - at about eleven o'clock in the morning - it was the turn of the half-battalion of the 166<sup>th</sup> – five-hundred three all ranks - the final unit, to march up the gangways before *Olympic* cast her lines and sailed towards the open sea. For the trans-Atlantic passage she was carrying some six-thousand military personnel.



The vessel arrived in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on October 18, some five days later, and the troops disembarked on the following day again. The 185<sup>th</sup> Battalion was thereupon transported south-eastwards to *Witley Camp* in the English county of Surrey.

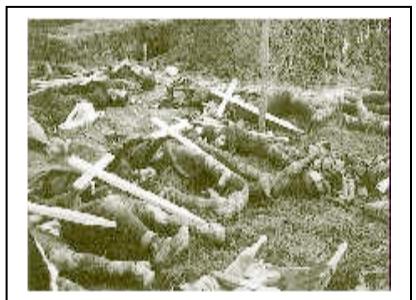
The 185<sup>th</sup> Battalion (*Cape Breton Highlanders*) is documented as then having provided reinforcements for Canadian forces already on the Continent. This role was to last until February of 1918, sixteen months later, when the remainder of the unit was absorbed into the newly-organized Canadian 17<sup>th</sup> (Reserve) Battalion.

The Battalion's organizers had originally anticipated that the *Cape Breton Highlanders* would be sent – with the other three units of the *Nova Scotia Highland Brigade* – into active service on the Continent, but this was not to be\*. Only the 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion would eventually proceed to active service on the Continent.

*\*Before the end of the Great War, Canada was to have despatched overseas two-hundred fifty battalions – although it is true that a number of these units, particularly as the conflict progressed, were below full strength. At the outset, these Overseas Battalions all had presumptions of seeing active service in a theatre of war.*

*However, as it transpired, only some fifty of these formations were ever to be sent across the English Channel to the Western Front. By far the majority remained in the United Kingdom to be used as re-enforcement pools and they were gradually absorbed, particularly after January of 1917, by units that had by then been specifically designated as Canadian Reserve Battalions.*

By the time of Private Mansfield's arrival in England, the Canadian Corps had been involved in the *First Battle of the Somme* for two months during which time it had suffered horrific losses. It was to fill the depleted ranks of those battered units that three-quarters of newly-arrived *Nova Scotia Highland Brigade* were to be deployed.



(Right: *Dead of the Somme awaiting burial – an unidentified photograph*)

(continued)

This distribution of re-enforcements was, however, to take some time, even though a number had already crossed the English Channel by the end of the year, 1916. In the case of Private Mansfield, the spring of the following year, 1917, had already arrived before he was ordered to proceed to the Continent.

It was on May 25 that he was *struck off strength* by the 185<sup>th</sup> Battalion to be *taken on strength* on the following day by his new unit, the 25<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion (Nova Scotia Rifles).

At that same time, Private Mansfield was to travel to France - likely travelling on the night of May 27-28 via the English south-coast port of Southampton and the French industrial city of Le Havre on the estuary of the River Seine. He is documented as having reported on that May 28 to a Canadian Infantry Base Depot - surely the 2<sup>nd</sup> as his unit was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division - in the vicinity of the coastal town of Étaples\*.



There he was to remain for the next eighteen days.

\*However, the date of arrival of nine-hundred fifty-four re-enforcements from England, according to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Base Depot War Diary, was May 29. There were none recorded for the previous day.

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

When exactly Private Mansfield was despatched to join the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion is not documented on his active service files – at that time several hundred men were being despatched for days on end. However, his documents do record that he reported to duty with his new unit on June 16, 1917. On the other hand, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diarist cites the arrival of a draft of one-hundred forty-seven re-enforcements as having occurred instead on June 15, the day before, at a time when the unit was serving in the rear area, in the vicinity of the community of Gouy-Servins.

\* \* \* \* \*

The 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Nova Scotia Rifles) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force had already been serving in France and Belgium for some twenty-one months by the time of Private Mansfield's appearance, since mid-September of the year 1915. The Battalion was a component of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, itself an element of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division, and it had been in service on the Continent continuously since its arrival there.

Only days after having passed through the port of Folkestone and its French counterpart, Boulogne, on September 22, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion was taking over trenches from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of *The King's Own* in the *Kingdom of Belgium*.

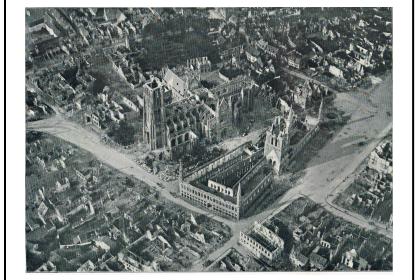


(continued)

(Preceding page: *While the caption reads that these troops moving towards the forward area are 'English', this could be any unit in British uniform – including Empire (Commonwealth) units. This is early in the war as there is no sign of a steel helmet.* – from a vintage post-card)

This was in the areas forward from the communities of Loker and Kemmel, in that small part of the country which had not by then been occupied by the Germans, and to the south and south-west of the already-battered medieval city of Ypres.

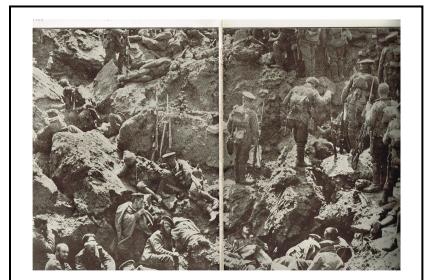
(Right: *A Belgian aerial photograph showing the devastation of Ypres as early as 1915 – the city is described as 'morte' (dead) – from Illustration*)



The 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion was to remain in these sectors until August of the following year, 1916.

In early April of 1916, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division had undergone its baptism of fire in a major infantry action. It was at a place named St-Éloi where, at the end of March, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, the British had detonated a series of mines beneath the German lines and then had followed up with an infantry attack. The newly-arrived Canadian formation had been ordered to follow up on the presumed British success, to hold and consolidate the newly-won territory.

However, the damage done to the terrain by the explosions, the putrid weather which had turned the just-created craters into ponds and the earth into a quagmire, plus a resolute German defence, greeted the newcomers who took over from the by-then exhausted British on April 5-6. Two weeks later the Germans had won back the lost territory and had inflicted severe losses on the Canadians.



Towards the end of that confrontation, on April 13-14, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion had relieved another Canadian unit in craters and in new trenches, and subsequently had incurred a total of some eighty-five casualties, a greater toll than the unit had known on any single occasion up until that date.

(Right above: *The occupation of a crater in the aftermath of the exploding of a mine under enemy lines – perhaps in the St-Éloi Sector – from Illustration*)

Six weeks later, in early June, the Battalion had then been involved in the fighting in the area the village of Hooge, of Mount Sorrel, Sanctuary Wood, Hill 60, Railway Dugouts and Maple Copse, in the so-called Ypres Salient and just to the south-east of the city of Ypres.

(Right: *The Canadian memorial which stands atop Mount Sorrel just to the south-west of the city of Ypres (today Ieper) whose spires and towers may be perceived in the distance – photograph from 1914*)



The Canadian 3<sup>rd</sup> Division had been the main recipient of the enemy's offensive thrust but the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division had played a role sufficiently important for the name *Mount Sorrel* to become the first battle-honour won by the Nova Scotia unit during the Great War.

(Right: *Hill 60 as it remains a century after the events of 1916 and 1917 in the area of Mount Sorrel, the village of Hooge, Sanctuary Wood, Railway Dugouts and Maple Copse: It is kept in a preserved state – subject to the whims of Mother Nature – by the Belgian Government.* – photograph from 2014)

(Right below: *Maple Copse Cemetery, adjacent to Hill 60, in which lie many Canadians killed during the days of the confrontation at Mount Sorrel* – photograph from 2014)

(Right bottom: *Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm) today contains twenty-four hundred fifty-nine burials and commemorations.* – photograph from 2014)

From the middle of June up until August of 1916, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been in reserve well to the rear, so well to the rear, in fact, that it had been deemed safe enough for His Majesty the King and his son the Prince of Wales to pay a visit on August 14.

Some two weeks later, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, the unit was withdrawn into northern France to the vicinity of Steenvoorde and to the village of Moulle.

The following week at Moulle had been spent in becoming familiar with the British Lee-Enfield Mark III rifle which was replacing the Canadian-made Ross rifle, and also in training for a Canadian role in the British summer campaign of that 1916, an offensive which up until then had not been proceeding exactly according to plan.

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

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

(continued)



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 Courcelette.



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

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

Meanwhile, on the evening of September 10, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion had arrived at the large military camp which had been established at the *Brickfields* (*La Briqueterie*) in close proximity to the provincial town of Albert.

On September 14 the Battalion had been ordered forward into dug-outs in assembly areas. On the next morning again, September 15, the Canadians were to be going to the attack.

(Right: *Canadian soldiers working, carrying water in the centre of Albert, the town's already-damaged basilica prominent in the background – from Illustration*)

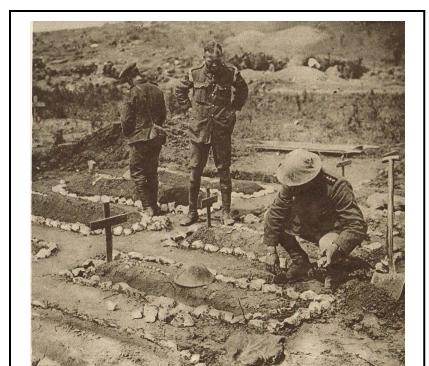
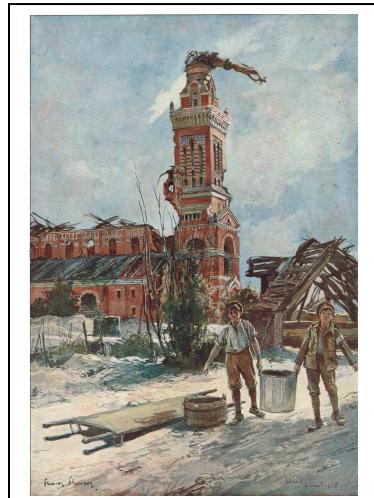
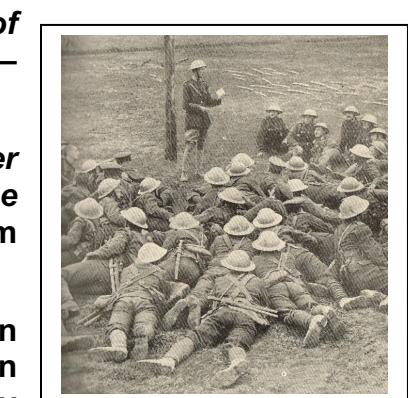
Excerpt from the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary entry for September 15, 1916: *5<sup>th</sup> Brigade attacked and captured the Town of Courcelette... the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion moved forward as though on General Inspection the young soldiers behaving like veterans, going through very heavy artillery barrage without a quiver...*

Of the six-hundred ninety personnel which went over the top on the day of the assault, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diarist was to record thirty-six dead, one-hundred ninety-one wounded and seventy-seven as *missing in action*\*.

*\*It seems that some of the missing may have soon returned to duty since a later War Diary entry records two-hundred fifty-eight casualties all told.*

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

(continued)



On October 1 the Battalion – its operational strength by then apparently reduced to two-hundred (sic) all ranks and twelve machine-guns – received orders to attack and capture “at all costs” enemy entrenched known as KENORA and REGINA... “B”, “C” and “D” Companies... were to proceed over KENORA up to REGINA, which they did, but by the time they had got to the wire the casualties had been so heavy that only one officer was left... and about thirty men...

The attack was a failure and the survivors had been obliged to fall back to *Kenora Trench*. Total casualties during the action had been a further one-hundred twelve.

(Right: *Ninety-eight years later on, the land on which the action was fought, as seen from Regina Trench Cemetery – photograph from 2014*)



(Right below: *Wounded at the Somme being transported in hand-carts from the forward area for further medical attention – from Le Miroir*)

On the night of October 1-2 the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion had retired from the battle - and from the area of - *the Somme* and made its way westwards and then northwards. It had subsequently passed to the west of the battered city of Arras and beyond, to the region of the mining centre of Lens. There the unit was to remain for the following six months, in the area and in the trenches of places such as Bully-Grenay, Angres and Bruay.



(Right: *The remnants of the Grande Place (Grand'Place) in Arras which had already been steadily bombarded for two years by the end of the year 1916 – from Illustration*)



That winter of 1916-1917 was to be one of relative calm, allowing the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion – and many others - to return to the everyday rigours and routines of trench warfare\*; after *the Somme* it had perhaps been a welcome respite.

There was to be little if any concerted infantry activity apart from the constant patrolling and the occasional raids by both sides but a constant flow of casualties would be ensured due mostly to the enemy’s guns and to his snipers.

The medical facilities during this period were kept much more busy by cases of sickness and particularly dental problems than by the numbers of wounded in need of treatment.

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



(continued)

*\*During the Great War, British and Empire (later Commonwealth) battalions had their time more or less equally divided into three postings: in theory a week was to be spent in the front lines, at times little more than a few metres separating them from the enemy forward positions; a second week was then served in support positions, perhaps a hundred metres or so behind the front; the unit was then withdrawn into reserve – either Brigade, Divisional or Corps Reserve, the former nearest to the forward area, the latter the furthest away.*



*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 the year 1916, by that time equipped with steel helmets and the less visible, British-made Lee-Enfield rifles – from Illustration)*

Towards the end of the month of March, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been withdrawn well to the rear, to Maisnil-Bouche, there to undergo intensive training. The exercises were to last until, and also to include, April 7, only two days following which that training was to become the real thing. On the final five days, April 2-7, the unit had been sent to become familiar with ground that had been re-arranged so as to resemble the terrain which was to be attacked.

*On April 8... Battalion less 1 platoon per company moved from MAISNIL BOUCHE to concentration area at BOIS DES ALLEUX. In the evening the Battalion moved up to its position...via cross country route... (25<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary). It apparently was not to pass via those well-documented tunnels, kilometres of which had been excavated for reasons of both surprise and safety.*

On April 9 in that spring of 1917, the British Army had 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 count of casualties, some four thousand per day, it was to be the most expensive operation of the Great War for the British, one of the few positive episodes having been the Canadian assault of *Vimy Ridge* on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday.



While the British campaign had proved an overall disappointment, the French offensive of *le Chemin des Dames* was to be yet a further disaster.

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

*(continued)*

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

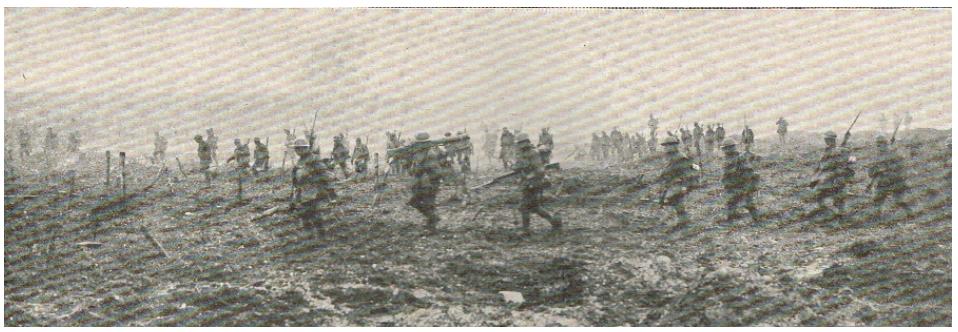
The Canadian 2<sup>nd</sup> Division had not been responsible for the taking of *Vimy Ridge* itself, but for the clearing of the community of Thélus, further down the southern slope and therefore on the right-hand side of the attack.

The Battalion's objectives were apparently soon to be captured and much of the remainder of the day had been spent in consolidating these newly-won positions.

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



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



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



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

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



(continued)

There had been, on those first days of April 9 and 10, the opportunity to advance through the shattered enemy defences – the highly-touted, and highly unlikely, *breakthrough* – but such a follow-up of the previous day's success had proved to be logically impossible, the weather having prevented any swift movement of guns and material.

Thus the Germans had been gifted the time to close the breach and the conflict once more had reverted to one of inertia.

Nor was the remainder of the relatively short, five-week long, *Battle of Arras* to be fought in the manner of the first two days and, by the end of those five weeks, little else had changed and the Germans had recovered from the initial Canadian success. At the time that the *Battle of Arras* had officially drawn to its conclusion, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been in reserve, resting and training – if that is not a contradiction – in the vicinity of the community of Gouy-Servins, to the west of the city of Lens.

And it was to be a month later, on June 15-16, while the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been serving in the area of Gouy-Servins, that the re-enforcement draft of Private Mansfield from Étaples would report to duty.

(Right: A Canadian carrying-party loading up before moving up to the forward area, one of the many duties of troops when in support or reserve: the head-bands - called 'tumps' - was an idea which had been adopted from the North American aboriginal peoples – from *Le Miroir*)



It was then to be a further seventeen or so days before the newcomers were to experience the realities of the forward area and front line.

\* \* \* \* \*

Excerpts from 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion War diaries of July 2 and 3, 1917: *Battalion at BOUVIGNY HUTS. Preparations to relieve 46<sup>th</sup> British Division, 138<sup>th</sup>. and 137<sup>th</sup>. British Brigades, 1/5 Battalion Leicesters and 1/4 Battalion Leicesters. Casualties, 1 Other Rank killed, 9 Other Ranks wounded.*

*Relief completed about 2 a.m. – Apparently no further casualties were to be documented for the remainder of the day. Thus began Private Mansfield's first visit to the sharp end of the stick.*

The British High Command had by that time had long before 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 ordered other operations to take place as well in the sectors of the front running north-south down from Béthune to Lens.



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

(Preceding page: *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*)

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

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

Those expecting *Hill 70* to be a precipitous and ominous elevation are to be surprised. It is hardly prominent in a countryside that is already flat, the highest points being the summits of slag heaps which date from the mining era of yesteryear. Yet *Hill 70* was high enough to be considered - by the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Corps, Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie – to be the key feature in the area, its capture more important than the city of Lens itself.

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

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

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

(Right above: *Canadian troops in the vicinity of Hill 70 a short time after its capture by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Divisions – from Le Miroir*)

Of course, the Germans were not the only ones to incur casualties: by the time that the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion retired on August 17, the unit had recorded some one-hundred fifty killed, wounded and missing in action, of which an estimated fifty-three of the deaths had apparently been incurred on the first day of the operation, August 15.

(Right above: *The spoils of war: Canadian officers and men on some of the terrain on which they had recently fought – and had captured – from Le Miroir*)

(continued)

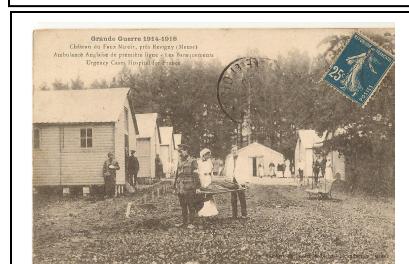


(Right: A Canadian 220 mm siege gun, here under camouflage nets in the Lens Sector, being prepared for action – from *Le Miroir*)

The following is an excerpt from the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary entry for August 16, 1917: *Some shelling... Preparation to take over balance of BLUE LINE on 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade Front. Enemy counter attack on 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion front at dusk caused this to be postponed. Heavy shelling from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.... Total estimated casualties 3 officers and 100 O.R.*

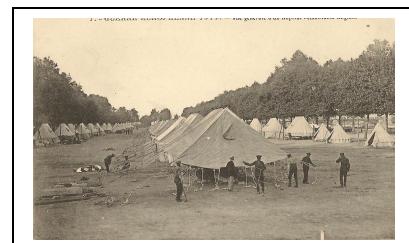


It was on that August 16 that Private Mansfield was wounded, a gun-shot injury to the left arm which had also fractured it. It may well have occurred during that evening's heavy bombardment as it was not until the following day, August 17, that he was admitted into the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance established at the time at Fosse 10. He was just one of a total of two-hundred to be evacuated to there on that day.



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

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



Only hours later, after triage, he was one of one-hundred fifty-eight cases to be forwarded for further treatment to a casualty clearing station: in the case of Private Mansfield it was to the 6<sup>th</sup> CCS at Bruay that he was sent. There he was to remain for five days.

The reason for his subsequent transfer to the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital at Étaples is not to be found among his documents. It may have been overcrowding at the CCS; it may have been that the medical care now deemed necessary, amputation of his arm, was thought to be better undertaken at Étaples; or it may have been that his condition was beginning to deteriorate – perhaps due to infection. But transferred he was, on August 22.

When exactly the amputation took place does not appear among his papers, so whether it was the trauma of the procedure or another cause that proved fatal is not known to us. On August 25 Private Mansfield was considered by the medical staff to be...dangerously ill. On the following day he died.

The son of William J. Mansfield, former fisherman (deceased on February 10, 1912), and of Mary Mansfield (deceased on February 10, 1910)\* of Kitchuses (also found as *Kitchens*), Newfoundland, he was also brother to Margaret (*Maggie*) Jane – to whom on August 24 of 1916 he had willed his all and also to whom, as of October 1, 1916, he had allocated a monthly ten dollars from his pay.

(continued)

Private Mansfield may well have had other siblings as his sister Maggie is named as...*Guardian of Sisters*...on a request form for a War Gratuity. (The request was refused.)

***\*Both parents died of tuberculosis and although the year differs, both died on February 10.***

Private Mansfield was reported by the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital to have *died of wounds* on August 26, 1917.

Frederick Mansfield had enlisted at the apparent age of twenty-one years: date of birth (from attestation papers) at Kitchuses (*Kitchens*), Newfoundland, December 19, 1991. However, the date from original documents, via Ancestry.ca, his birth-date is recorded as having been December 5, 1894.

Private Frederick Mansfield 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](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – January 25, 2023.

