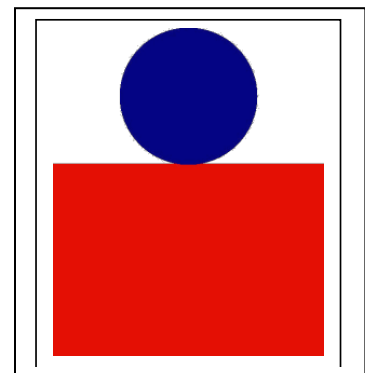




**Lance Corporal Robert Payne, Number 46180 of the 13th Battalion (*Royal Highlanders of Canada*), Canadian Expeditionary Force, is buried in Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (*Transport Farm*): Grave reference III.D.9..**

**(Right: *The image of the shoulder-patch of the 13<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada) is from the Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group web-site.*)**

**(continued)**



His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a moulder, Robert Payne appears to have left no available information behind him of his movements from the Dominion of Newfoundland to the Canadian province of Québec. All that may be said with any certainty is that he was present at the military complex of *Camp Valcartier* at the end of August of 1914, for that was where and when he enlisted.

Three dates figure in the history of Robert Payne's enlistment: August 29 was that of his medical examination at *Valcartier*, an examination which pronounced him as...*fit for the Canadian Over Seas Expeditionary Force*.

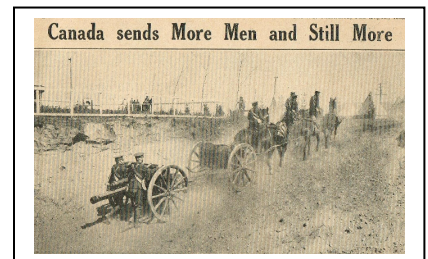
Then the first pay-records available to us show that it was on September 22 of that 1914 that the Canadian Army first began to remunerate Private Robert Payne, Number 46180, for his services - in fact, his papers report that, during this time, ten cents was deducted from his pay for the services of a barber.

This is then contradicted by several other records which document him as not having enlisted until September 28. This is surely incorrect: apparently his enlistment date has been assumed to be the day on which he attested, not true since he was being paid for six days before his attestation.

It is true, however, that it was September 28 on which the *formalities* to the enlistment process were brought to a conclusion by the Commanding Officer of the 17<sup>th</sup> Overseas Battalion (*Nova Scotia Highlanders*), Lieutenant Struan Gordon Robertson, when he declared – on paper – that...*Robert Payne...having been finally approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation*.

He was thereupon *taken on strength* by Lieutenant Colonel Robertson's 17<sup>th</sup> Overseas Battalion (*Nova Scotia Highlanders*).

(Right: *Canadian artillery being put through its paces at the Camp at Valcartier. In 1914, the main Army Camp in Canada was at Petawawa. However, its location in Ontario – but also at some distance from the Great Lakes – made it impractical for the despatch of troops overseas. Valcartier was apparently built within weeks after the Declaration of War. – photograph (from a later date in the War) from *The War Illustrated*)*



Things then moved quickly. A brief two days later, on September 30, Private Payne and his 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion were ordered to board ship in the port of Québec. On the same day at Québec they were joined on the vessel by the (1<sup>st</sup>) Divisional Cyclist Company for the slow downstream journey to the area of *la Gaspé*.

At *la Gaspé* their ship, the *Canadian Pacific Steamship Line* vessel *SS Ruthenia*, was to congregate with the thirty other troop carriers and seven escorts of the Royal Navy which, on October 3, were to begin the trans-Atlantic crossing in convoy to the United Kingdom\*.



(continued)

(Preceding page: *The image of a pre-War 'Lake Champlain', before she became 'Ruthenia', is from the [bing.com/images](http://bing.com/images) web-site.*)

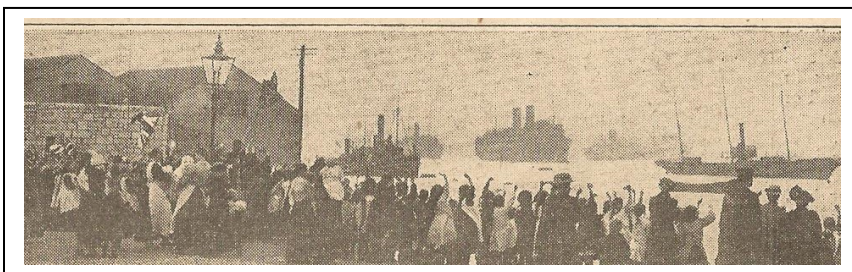
*\*On August 4, while travelling along the south coast of Newfoundland, the convoy was joined by the Bowring Brothers' ship Florizel which was carrying the First Five Hundred of the Newfoundland Regiment to England.*

Following a smooth – from all points of view – crossing of the Atlantic, the convoy entered the English south-coast naval harbour of Plymouth-Devonport during the afternoon of October 14\*. Many of the arriving units, however, were obliged to remain on ship for days before their disembarkation could be effected.

*\*The original destination had been the much larger port-city of Southampton, but a submarine scare had forced a change in plans.*

Such was the case of the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion which apparently was not to come ashore until seven o'clock in the evening of Wednesday, October 21, and then only to march to North Road Station to board trains for the journey to the *Salisbury Plain*. This was accomplished by fifteen minutes past ten that evening. It was to be a long night.

The station at Patney was reached five hours later, from where the unit was then expected to march for almost four hours to reach *Pond Farm Camp*, a subsidiary encampment of the British military complex there on the *Salisbury Plain*.



Within days the entire *Canadian Expeditionary Force* was to be transported to this area where – with a few exceptions - it would remain for the following sixteen weeks.

(Right above: *Some of the ships of the convoy which had carried the Canadian Expeditionary Force to England, at anchor in Plymouth Hoe on October 14, 1914 – from *The War Illustrated**)

By the morrow of its arrival at *Pond Farm Camp* a daily routine had been established, a routine that was to be followed until the time of the unit's departure for France, although, for the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion, with at least a change of venue on November 21: on that date the unit moved to *Bustard Camp* which had just been vacated by the PPCLI\* which had left to serve with a British Brigade on the Continent.

*\*The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry was named for the youngest daughter of the Duke of Connaught, Queen Victoria's youngest son and Governor General of Canada during the early years of the Great War.*

It should be remembered that British Army regulations of the day – to which the Canadians adhered - were such that troops were to undergo some fourteen weeks of training after the time of enlistment; at that point they were to be considered as fit for *active service*.

Since a great number of the Canadian new-comers had received little appropriate training, if any – as was the case with Private Payne - the just-arrived infantry battalions were to spend the remainder of October and up until the first week of February, 1915, in becoming proper *Soldiers of the King* – even if they were *colonials*.

The months of that late autumn and of the following winter were to be just as hectic in other ways: There were to be visits from politicians and generals – and even one from the King and Queen, with the requisite preparations for such an occasion.

By the end of January a decision had been made by the upper echelons by which Private Payne's 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion, rather than proceeding to *active service* with the Canadian Division on the Continent, was to remain in the United Kingdom as part of a reserve and training force, to be initially stationed at nearby Tidworth.

By the end of that same January, Private Payne had also been making himself known to the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion authorities. The records show that on January 27 he was awarded...*42 days detention by CM (court Martial) for refusing to obey an order at Tidworth*. Whether it was for this reason, or whether it had already been decided that Private Payne was to remain in some capacity in the United Kingdom is not known, but this incident likely ensured that he did.

Two days before his Court Martial, Private Payne had been transferred to the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, this unit also having been chosen to remain in England to act as a training unit and as a re-enforcement pool. On the sixth day of April, having by then served his detention, he was transferred again, to the Canadian Infantry Base Depot, by that time established at the evolving Canadian military complex of *Shornecliffe*, where he likely learned of his imminent transfer to service on the Continent.



(Right above: *Little remains of Shornecliffe Military Camp today apart from a barracks occupied by Gurkha troops. The Military Cemetery almost alone serves as a reminder of the events of a century ago. – photograph from 2016*)

The units of the Canadian Division had travelled across the Atlantic to be stationed at the Army establishment on the Salisbury Plain in the county of Wiltshire. Once the Division had departed to the Continent in February of 1915, Canadian operations in the United Kingdom had been transferred to the county of Kent to the eastward, and more precisely, to the area on the Dover Straits in the vicinity of the town and harbour of Folkestone.

There had already been a small British camp there, but the site was transferred to the Canadian Military in the spring of 1915. It subsequently evolved into a large complex where it was soon to accommodate the arriving forces of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division before that formation's despatch to service on the *Western Front* in September of the same 1915. It was therefore logical that the training centres *also* be stationed at *Shornecliffe*.

(continued)

Thus it was that, in early April, Private Payne found himself posted there.



It, the posting, was not to last long: three weeks less a day if the records are correct. On April 26 Private Payne took ship, travelling from nearby Folkestone to the French port of Boulogne on the coast almost opposite and only some two hours' sailing-time distant. There he was attached – at least on paper - to the 14<sup>th</sup> Canadian Overseas Battalion (*Royal Montreal Regiment*).

(Right above: *A view of the coastal town of Folkestone almost a century later as seen from the white cliffs of nearby Dover – photograph from 2009*)

(Right below: *The French port of Boulogne at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)



Whether Private Payne ever reported to duty in the field with the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion is not clear. This was the time during which the Canadian Division was fighting the *Second Battle of Ypres* (see below) and Private Payne was to remain on the nominal roll of the unit for a mere eleven days. The 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion was heavily involved in this confrontation and it was not until the night of March 4-5 that it withdrew from the area of the battle\*.

Two days later again, on May 7, Private Payne was further transferred, on this last occasion to the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion (*Royal Highlanders of Canada*).

*\*It goes without saying that during this hectic period, the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diarist makes no mention of re-enforcements arriving. It was apparently not until May 7 – the day of Private Payne's transfer to the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion - that a large re-enforcement draft of two-hundred seventy-five men was recorded as having reported to duty.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion (*Royal Highlanders of Canada*) was an element of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, itself a component of the (1<sup>st</sup>) Canadian Division\*. In mid-October of 1914 the Division had been the first force to arrive in the United Kingdom from Canada and then – as seen in a previous paragraph - had been the first Canadian formation to set foot on French soil, which it had done in February of 1915.

*\*Until the time that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division was formed – and still at times afterwards as well - it was referred to as simply the Canadian Division.*

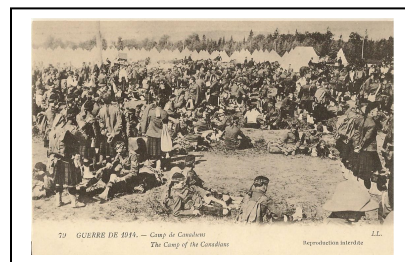
(Right: *The personnel of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion wore a Black Watch tartan kilt, one version of which is shown here. – from the [canadiansoldiers.com](http://canadiansoldiers.com) web-site*)



(continued)

**(Right below: *The caption reads merely ‘Camp of Canadians’ but it is from the early days of the Great War, thus likely in either northern France or in Belgium. The troops are from a Canadian-Scottish unit. – from a vintage post-card*)**

**For the first weeks of its service on the Continent, the Canadian Division was to be posted to the *Fleurbaix Sector* in northern France and just south of the border town of Armentières. There, for the first two months of the Canadian presence on the *Western Front*, the situation had been relatively quiet, and the personnel of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had begun to fit into the rigours, the routines – and some of the perils - of life in the trenches\*.**



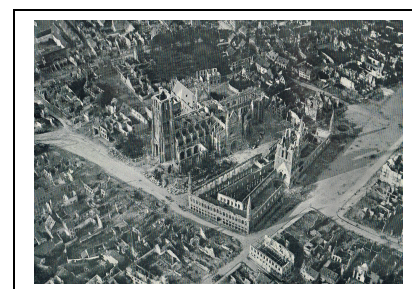
***\*During the Great War, British and Empire (later Commonwealth) battalions had their time more or less equally divided into three postings: in theory a week was to be spent in the front lines, at times little more than a few metres separating them from the enemy forward positions; a second week was then served in support positions, 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: *A photograph of Canadian troops in support positions somewhere on the Somme in the autumn of 1916, only months earlier having been equipped with those steel helmets and, less visible, British Short Lee-Enfield Mark III Rifles – from Illustration*)**



**In mid-April the Division, having moved north into the *Kingdom of Belgium*, had eventually taken up positions in the *Ypres Salient*, an area which would prove to be one of the most lethal theatres of the *Great War*. And whereas the first weeks of the Canadian presence on the Continent had been relatively quiet, the dam was about to burst - although it was to be gas rather than water which, for a few days, would threaten to sweep all before it.**



**The date was April 22, 1915.**

**(Right above: *An aerial photograph, taken in July of 1915 – just after the battle of 2<sup>nd</sup> 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*)**

**(continued)**

The *Second Battle of Ypres* was to see the first use of chlorine gas by the Germans – by anyone - during the *Great War*. Later to become an everyday event, and with the introduction of protective measures such as advanced gas-masks, the gas was to prove no more dangerous than the rest of the military arsenals of the warring nations. But on this first occasion, to inexperienced troops without the means to combat it, the yellow-green cloud of chlorine had proved overwhelming.

(Right: *The very first protection against gas was to urinate on a handkerchief which was then held over the nose and mouth. However, all the armies were soon producing gas-masks, some of the first of which are seen here being tested by Scottish troops. – from either Illustration or Le Miroir*)



The cloud had first been noticed at five o'clock in the afternoon of April 22. In the sector subjected to the most concentrated use of the gas, the French Colonial troops to the Canadian left at first had wavered, then had broken, leaving the left flank of the Canadians uncovered, particularly that of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion which had been obliged to call forward Number 3 Company, at the time in reserve. Then a retreat by the unit, not always very cohesive, had become necessary.

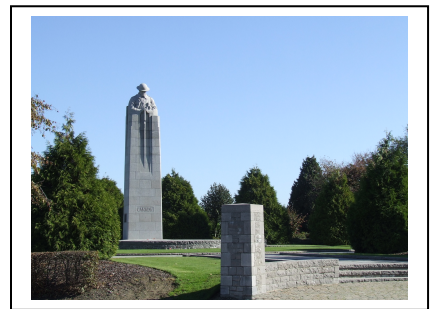


(Right above: *Entitled: Bombardement d'Ypres, le 5 juillet 1915 – from Illustration*)

By the 23<sup>rd</sup> the situation had become relatively stable – at least temporarily - and the positions in the vicinity of Sint-Juliaan were to hold until the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> when a further retirement was to become necessary. At times there were to be breaches in the defensive lines but, fortunately, either the Germans had been unaware of how close they were to a breakthrough, or else they had not had the means to exploit the situation.

And then the Canadian Division had closed the gaps.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been relieved on April 25 and had withdrawn to some former French reserve trenches. Called forward again on the 28<sup>th</sup>, it had remained in the area of the front until May 1 when it was to be withdrawn into divisional reserve in the area of Vlamertinghe, to the west of Ypres. On May 3 the unit had been ordered to retire into northern France, to the area of Bailleul, there to re-enforce and to re-organize.



(Right above: *The Memorial to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division – the Brooding Soldier – stands just to the south of the village of Langemark (at the time Langemarck) at the Vancouver Crossroads where the Canadians withstood the German attack – abetted by gas – at Ypres (today Ieper) in April of 1915. – photograph from 2010*)

(continued)

The information to be gleaned from the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary during the period of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ypres is at times understandably sparse. The number of casualties incurred was apparently not noted – neither does it seem to appear in the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade War Diary – but it was to be on April 28 that a re-enforcement draft of two-hundred seventy-six *other ranks* had reported *to duty* to the unit.

However, it was reportedly not until May 7 that Private Payne joined the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion – his arrival, *if* on that day, unreported by the War Diarist. The unit at the time – the Diary is imprecise – had marched from the village of Vlamertinghe just to the west of Ypres to the northern French town of Bailleul which is therefore likely the place at which Private Payne had reported *to duty*.

\* \* \* \* \*

On May 13 the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion began to move from the area of Bailleul in northern France - where since May 5 it had spent several days reorganizing and refitting - down the front to the south and into the areas of Festubert and Givenchy. The French Army was about to undertake a major offensive a few kilometres further to the south again and had asked for British support.

There at Festubert a series of attacks and counter-attacks were to take place during which the British High Command was to manage to gain some three kilometres of ground but also would contrive to destroy, by using the unimaginative tactic of the frontal assault, what was left by then of the British pre-War professional Army. The Canadian Division was also to contribute to the campaign but – not fielding the same numbers of troops – was not to participate to the same extent. It nonetheless would be dealt with harshly.

The role of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been to relieve the 16<sup>th</sup> Canadian Battalion after its attack planned for May 20 on a German-held position, and had then further been to consolidate and to defend that same position. Despite heavy losses the 16<sup>th</sup> had captured its objective, positions which then the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had occupied. On the following day, May 21, the men were to fight and repel a strong German counter-attack before then having been relieved on the following day again.

The Canadian Division and Indian troops, the 7<sup>th</sup> (*Meerut*) Division\* also having been ordered to serve at Festubert, were to fare hardly better than the British. Each contingent – a Division - would incur over two-thousand casualties before the offensive had drawn to a close.



The French effort – having used the same primitive tactics - was likewise to be a failure, but it was to be on an even larger scale: it would cost them just over one hundred-thousand *killed, wounded and missing*.

*\*The Indian troops also served – and lost heavily – in other battles in this area in 1915 before being transferred to the Middle East.*

(continued)

(Preceding page: *A one-time officer who served in the Indian Army during the Second World War, pays his respects at the Indian Memorial at Neuve-Chapelle to those who fell. – photograph from 2010(?)*)

On May 22 the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had marched away from Festubert to billets in or near to the community of Essars. The reprieve was to last for two weeks, until June 5, when it had been ordered further south to Givenchy-les-la-Bassée\*, a small village not far distant south of Festubert.

Ordered into the forward trenches on two occasions during that month to support British efforts – and having incurred many of its casualties, although fewer, because of the same sort of mistakes as at Festubert – by June 24 the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been retired from the area. At about the same time, over a number of days, so it had been with the entire Canadian Division.

*\*Since the place is oft-times referred to simply as Givenchy it is worthwhile knowing that there are two other Givenchys in the region: Givenchy-le-Noble, to the west of Arras, and Givenchy-en-Gohelle, a village which lies in the shadow of a crest of land which dominates the Douai Plain: Vimy Ridge.*

As a part of that withdrawal from Givenchy, the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion was to march to billets at Essars, at La Becque and then at Steenwerck, all three of these communities in the vicinity of Bailleul. From there it was to move eastwards and into Belgium, to the *Ploegsteert Sector*, just across the frontier.



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

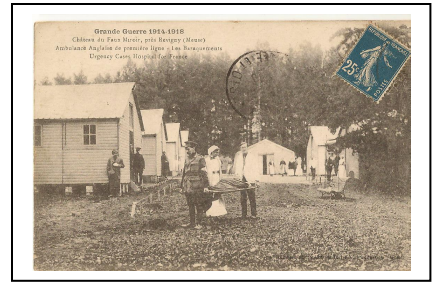
Having reached the area of the town of Ploegsteert on July 5, there the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had remained – as had indeed the entire Canadian Division. In the months to follow it was to come to be well-acquainted with the Franco-Belgian area between Armentières in the east – any further east would have been in German-occupied territory – Bailleul in the west, and Messines in the north; given the route marches enumerated in the War Diary and the itineraries used, it would have been surprising had it been otherwise.

It was to be another eleven months before the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion would be involved in any further major altercation. Of course, local confrontations – brought about by raids and patrols - were to be fought from time to time, and artillery duels and the ever-increasing menace of snipers would ensure a constant flow of casualties.

In September of 1915 it had been the turn of the Canadian 2<sup>nd</sup> Division to land on the Continent and to also be posted to the *Kingdom of Belgium*. It was to be stationed in the sector adjacent and to the north of the one held by the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion and the other units of the now-designated 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division.

(continued)

Four months into the posting of his Battalion to the Ploegsteert Sector, Private Payne fell ill and on November 8 was sent for treatment to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance, established at the time in the area of Bailleul. He was transferred on the next day to the nearby 1<sup>st</sup> CFA for further medical care for what by then had been diagnosed as a case of influenza – something not to be ignored in those days before the advent of anti-biotics.



Four days later, on November 13, he was released from there and returned *to duty* with his Battalion on the same day.

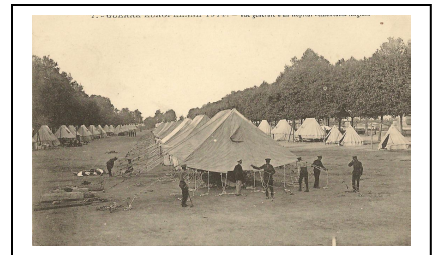
(Right above: *A British field ambulance, of a more permanent nature than some – from a vintage post-card*)

Some four weeks later there was to be a bit of time for recreation as Private Payne was granted a (long) nine-day period of leave, from December 11 until December 21 – since there is no mention of him being penalized perhaps the extra day was allowed for travel. But as to where he was to spend these days there is no mention among his files.

He returned to a Battalion not preparing itself for Christmas festivities but to one readying itself for a tour in the trenches, a spell which began at six o'clock on Christmas Eve. It was still there, in the area of Messines, on December 28, a day on which the War Diarist reported that...*the sniping was slightly more active than on the previous day, and German artillery was active.*

*No 46108 L/cpl R. Payne, - contusion left chest, shrapnel right arm – sent to No 2 Field Ambulance*

From that Number 2 Canadian Field Ambulance based at Dranoutre he was thereupon almost immediately forwarded to the Number 8 Casualty Clearing Station at Bailleul where he was to remain for two days. Likely on the night of December 29-30 Private Payne was placed on board the 18<sup>th</sup> Ambulance Train and transported to the 23<sup>rd</sup> General Hospital in the coastal town of Étaples, there to remain until the end of the month of January.



(Right above: *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*)

In the meantime, on January 1 of the New Year, 1916, he received a promotion, to the rank of lance corporal – with the accompanying five cents per diem pay increase. Thus it was Lance Corporal Payne who was discharged from hospital on January 31 and ordered to report to Base Details, also at Étaples. From there he was despatched to his unit on February 16, to re-join the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion two days later.

It was back to work immediately for Lance Corporal Payne as he was to be sent almost straight away to undertake a Gas Course. Having been ordered there on February 20, he was back with his unit on February 26.

One month later, at the end of March, the entire 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division was transferred from the sector to the south and adjacent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division, to the sector immediately to the *north* and *also* adjacent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division. Only weeks prior to that, the newly-arrived 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division\* had done likewise, shifting from the border area near the Ploegsteert Sector which it had shared with the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division, to pass into its new area of responsibility, the south-east area of the *Ypres Salient*.

As of April 1, the three Canadian Divisions were now serving side by side by side.

*\*This formation came into being at mid-night of December 31, 1915, and January 1, 1916. As it was still awaiting the arrival of its final infantry battalions and since it was to have no artillery until later that year, it was posted to the area of the Ploegsteert Sector in tandem with the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division, there to become acquainted with the business of life in – and out of – the trenches of the Great War.*

At and about this end of March and beginning of April, 1916, while the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divisions were on the move and/ or becoming acquainted with their new and relatively calm surroundings, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division was undergoing its first *trial by fire*\*.

*\*The Action at the St. Eloi Craters officially took place from March 27 until April 17 of that spring of 1916. St-Éloi was a small village some five kilometres to the south of the Belgian city of Ypres and it was here that the British had excavated a number of galleries under the German lines, there to place explosives which they detonated on that March 27. This was followed immediately by an infantry assault.*



(Right above: *A purported attack in the aftermath of the exploding of a mine under enemy lines – perhaps at St-Éloi – from Illustration*)

*After a brief initial success the attack had soon bogged down and by April 4 the Canadians were replacing the exhausted British troops. They were to have no more success than had had the British, and by the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month, when the battle was called off, both sides were back where they had been some three weeks previously – and the Canadians had incurred some fifteen-hundred casualties.*

*However, as previously noted, this confrontation had been a 2<sup>nd</sup> Division affair and the personnel of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion during that period would likely have been disturbed by only the noise of the German artillery.*

Meanwhile, on March 30, after days of marching with the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division, and following a semi-circular itinerary behind the area where the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division was engaged at St-Éloi, the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had moved into the forward area just south of Ypres and at the eastern limits of its new sector for a four-day tour, near to a place known as *Railway Dugouts*, to relieve the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers.

Excerpts from the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Royal Canadian Highlanders) War Diary entry for April 1, 1916: *About 3.15 p.m. trench-mortar battery fired six rounds on enemy's covered way right side of railway cutting. These evidently annoyed the enemy, as he retaliated with vigour, with rifle grenades and sausages till about 4.15 p.m..*

*...Throughout the day enemy's artillery were fairly active, shelling various parts of our line. Enemy were using guns of all calibres except very heavy guns, but did little damage by their shelling. Some casualties were caused however, by rifle grenades and trench mortars.*

*No. 46180 L/ Cpl R. Payne – Killed by rifle grenade in No. 38 control trench, Buried at Railway Dug-outs, cross erected\*.*

*\*The official casualty report cites that he was killed in action in...Trenches at Hill 60.*

*(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 and Maple Copse: It is kept in a preserved state – subject to the whims of Mother Nature – by the Belgian Government. – photograph from 2014)*



*\*The 'events of 1916', known to Canadian History as the Battle of Mount Sorrel, occurred at the beginning of June of that year. '1917' refers to the detonation of a mine on the first day of the Battle of the Messines Ridge, which reduced what remained of Hill 60 after 'Mount Sorrel', to the more or less flattened area which it is today.*

The son of G. (George?) W. Payne and Edith Payne of Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, who also had addresses in New Albany, Annapolis, Nova Scotia and Palaska, Florida, United States of America, he may also have been brother to James Payne - whom he named as his next-of-kin and whose address was the one in Nova Scotia - and of Gladys (later married Langille).

Private Robert Payne was reported as having been *killed in action* on April 1, 1916.

Robert Payne had enlisted at the apparent age of twenty-three years and one month: date of birth at Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, July 23, 1893 (from attestation papers only).

Lance Corporal Robert Payne 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.

