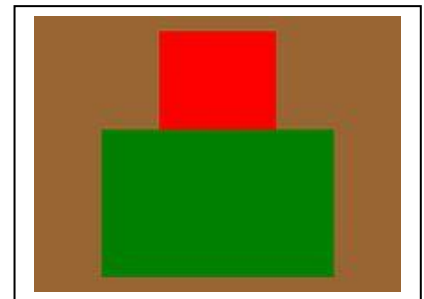


Private Frederick Augustine Rose (Number 1007041) of the 102nd Battalion (Central Ontario), Canadian Expeditionary Force, having no known last resting-place, is commemorated in the stone of the Canadian National Memorial which stands on Vimy Ridge.

(Right: The image of the shoulder-patch of the 102nd Battalion (Central Ontario Regiment) is from the Wikipedia web-site*.)



(continued)

****By April 5, 1918, when Private Rose joined the 102nd Battalion in the field, the unit had changed its designation – as of August of 1917 - from (Northern British Columbia) to (Central Ontario).***

His occupation prior to the *Great War* recorded as that of a *butcher*, Frederick Augustine Rose has left little information behind him a propos his movement from the Dominion of Newfoundland to the Canadian province of Ontario. His migration almost certainly took place during the period from December of 1915 to December of the following year since in St. John's, on November 27 of 1915, he had taken the hand of a Miss Ellen Breen.

Some twelve months later he had made the journey to the community of Iroquois Falls*, well to the north in Ontario, for that is where, in early December of 1916, Frederick Augustine Rose enlisted.

It was on the sixth day of that month that he presented him for medical examination, a procedure which pronounced him as...*fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force*. He was then attested on that same day and the proceedings of his enlistment brought to an official close when Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Earchman, the Commanding Officer of the 228th Battalion (*Northern Fusiliers*) – into which unit he was thereupon *taken on strength* – declared on paper that...*Frederick Rose...having been finally approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation*.

Where exactly it was that Private Rose and his fellow recruits were to train appears difficult to ascertain. The 228th Battalion was based in North Bay, Ontario, so it may be that some of it was undertaken there*, not that much training was to be done after the time of Private Rose's enlistment as, only some ten weeks later, the unit was to take passage to the United Kingdom from Halifax on February 16 of 1917 on board *Missanabie*.

****Although further sources suggests that it was Toronto.***

However, Private Rose was not to embark with his comrades-in-arms. By February 1 he was stationed at...*Base. Toronto...having been diagnosed as afflicted with debility*. He was discharged to duty on March 24 but not to his former unit; according to his medical records, he was transferred on the same date to the 208th Battalion (*Canadian Irish*)*.

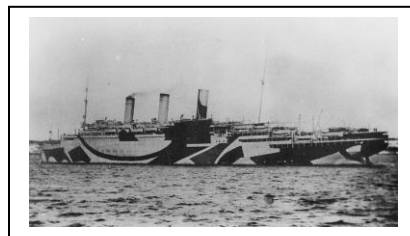
Some two months following, on April 26, he was to board a train in Toronto and travel as far as Truro, Nova Scotia, there to rest for the best part of two days before completing the journey to the east-coast port and city Halifax on May 3. There the 208th Overseas Battalion took ship onto His Majesty's Transport *Justicia* on the same May 3, 1917.

Private Rose's Battalion was not the only unit to embark: also on board *Justicia* for passage to the United Kingdom were the 182nd, 190th, 223rd and 245th Battalions of Canadian Infantry and detachments of the 141st, 216th and 230th Battalions; there was as well the 25th Draft of Canadian Engineers. The vessel was surely carrying close to, if not over, her intended capacity of four-thousand troops.

(continued)

(Right below: *The photograph of HMT Justicia in her war-time dazzle camouflage, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries. She was later torpedoed and sunk in July of 1918.*)

Justicia sailed on the same May 3 and, after an eleven-day Atlantic crossing, docked in the English west-coast port-city of Liverpool on May 14. From dockside the 208th was transported by train to Westenhanger, in the area of the Canadian military complex of *Shorncliffe* in the English county of Kent. From there, upon its arrival on that May 14, the battalion personnel apparently marched overnight before undergoing several days of quarantine at *Otterpool Camp*.



It then was ordered transferred at the end of the month to another Canadian encampment.

This next area had been established at Witley, on the border of the counties of Surrey and Hampshire where the unit's twenty-seven officers and six-hundred fifty other ranks arrived on May 27*.

***Apparently, troops arriving from Canada were – in theory – to be submitted to a period of twenty-eight days quarantine in case of infectious disease. However, it seems that this regulation was somewhat flexible, and whether or not the 208th Battalion on this occasion made up those sixteen missing days once it had arrived at Witley, appears not to be documented.**

(Right: *Little remains of Shorncliffe 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*)



(Right below: *St. Anne's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Belfast: The 208th Battalion recruited many men of Irish extraction, particularly from Ulster – a part of which today forms Northern Ireland. Thus in July 16 of 1917 the Battalion Colours were taken to Belfast by five officers and forty other ranks, and deposited in St. Anne's Cathedral. – photograph from 2014(?)*)



On November 9 there was a further reprieve for some of the Battalion personnel from the routine of daily training; three officers accompanied by fifty *other ranks* were despatched to London to represent the Canadian Expeditionary Forces in England at the annual Lord Mayor's show.

The Battalion War Diary offers no further details and it is not known whether Private Rose was one of the *other ranks* involved on either of those occasions.

The 208th Battalion – temporarily attached to the 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade of the 5th Canadian Division* - continued to train at *Witley Camp* until early in 1918. By that time it had been decided to disband the unit and to despatch its personnel as re-enforcements to other battalions.

This transfer eventually came about on January 11 of 1918, with 'A' and 'B' Companies being ordered to the 8th Canadian (Reserve) Battalion which was stationed at the time at *Shorncliffe* where the unit had previously spent less than two weeks. 'C' and 'D' Companies went elsewhere.

**Four Canadian Divisions eventually served on the Western Front. The 5th Division, stationed in the United Kingdom, was employed to re-enforce these formations.*

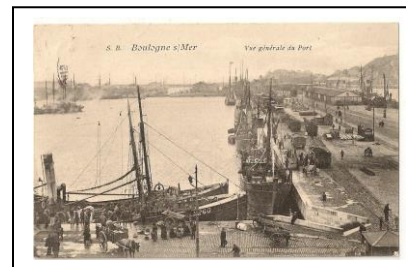
Shorncliffe, as has already been seen, was a large Canadian military complex which had been established in Kent, on the Dover Straits in the vicinity of the town and harbour of Folkestone. Through Folkestone it was that the majority of the troops arriving at *Shorncliffe* eventually passed on the way to the Continent - and on to the *Western Front*. It was to be five weeks plus a day following his arrival at *Shorncliffe* that Private Rose was to do likewise.

On February 16 of 1918, he was recorded as having been *struck off strength* from the 8th Canadian (Reserve) Battalion and transferred to the 102nd Battalion (*Central Ontario*) already serving on the Continent. He travelled with a draft across the English Channel on that same day, likely via that nearby town of Folkestone and then its French counterpart, Boulogne, on the French coast almost opposite.



(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*)

From Boulogne Private Rose's detachment was transported to the 4th Canadian Infantry Base Depot in the coastal town of Étaples on that same February 16. There he reported *to duty*, one of three-hundred thirty-five arrivals to the Depot to do so on that day. Three days following, on the 19th, he was one of a detachment of three-hundred eighty-six *other ranks* to be despatched to the Canadian Corps Reinforcement Camp, also in proximity to Étaples.



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

Private Rose was now to spend ten days at the CCRC before being ordered on March 29 to leave to join his new unit. According to his own personal files, Private Rose arrived to report to the 102nd Battalion on April 5 of that 1918, although the Battalion War Diarist makes no mention of the event.

The unit just having moved forward the day before into the *Oppy Sector*, at a dozen or so kilometres to the north-east of the city of Arras, it may well be that the officer-scribe was not aware of any arrivals which, habitually, would have reported to the rear area.



(continued)

(Preceding page: *The city of Arras was to endure four years of shelling during the Great War; the Grand'Place (Grande Place) looked like this by March, 1917, and more destruction was to follow (see further below).* – from *Le Miroir*)

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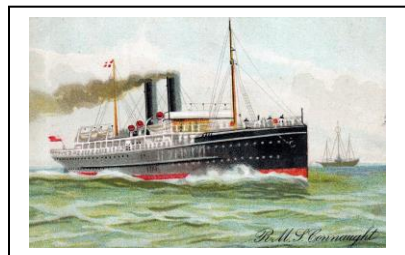
The 102nd Battalion (*Central Ontario*) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force was a component of the 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, itself an element of the 4th Canadian Division.

This Division, the last of the four to arrive to serve on the Continent, had landed in France in August of 1916 - the 102nd Battalion itself having disembarked at Le Havre on August 12 - to be immediately ordered into the *Kingdom of Belgium*, to that part of the forward area southward of Ypres and in the direction of where the Front traversed the Franco-Belgian frontier.



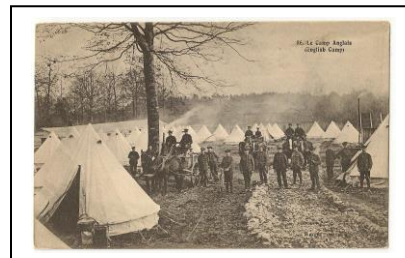
(Right above: *The French port-city of Le Havre at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

(Right: *The image of the Royal Mail Ship Connaught, on which the 102nd Battalion traversed the English Channel en route to active service, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. Connaught, only months later, while returning from Le Havre to Southampton on March 3, 1917, was torpedoed and sunk.*)



By August 15, 1916, the unit had, for the first time, taken its place in the forward area of the front in Belgium, near to the once-village of St-Éloi. By the 21st of the month the Battalion had already incurred its first thirty-one casualties, of which six had been fatalities.

The 102nd Battalion was to remain in the St-Éloi sub-Sector until October 17 when it had withdrawn to a *tented camp*. Then it and the entire Canadian 4th Division, following in the stead of the Canadian 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions, had received orders to prepare to migrate southwards into France. There it was to play a role in the ongoing British offensive of that summer and autumn of 1916, at *the Somme*.



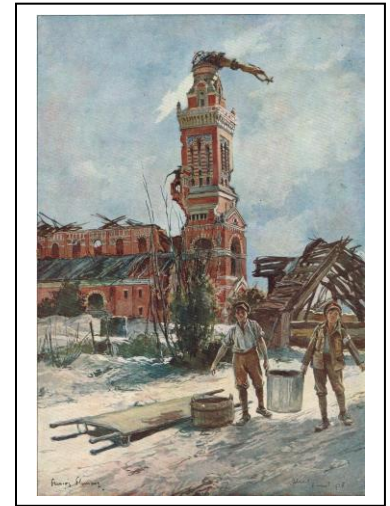
(Right above: *A typical British Army Camp during a winter period somewhere in France – from a vintage post-card*)

From that *tented camp* it was to be on foot - a three-day march via Hazebrouck and Arques - that the 102nd Battalion had undertaken the transfer to the vicinity of the northern French community of Tournehem-sur-la-Hem. There for the next eleven days the unit was to undergo intensive training and a great deal of marching, the War Diarist commenting... *the men getting into good shape*.

(continued)

The Battalion had subsequently entrained on October 3 for the provincial town of Doullens, some one-hundred twenty kilometres to the south, in the French *Département de la Somme*. There it had arrived at five o'clock on the following morning, still with a march of several kilometres to go before its billets in Gezaincourt. A further week travelling on foot was to see it arrive at *Tara Hill Camp*, on October 11, in the vicinity of the provincial town of Albert and well within range of the German artillery.

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



By that October of 1916, the *First Battle of the Somme* had already been ongoing for three months. It had begun with the disastrous attack of July 1, an assault costing 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 having been the two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles serving in the Lincolnshire Regiment, and the eight-hundred personnel of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment which was to lose so heavily on that July 1 at a place called Beaumont-Hamel.

However, 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 were to enter the fray on August 30 to become part of a third general offensive. Their first major collective contribution was to be in the area of the two villages of Flers and Courcellette, on September 15, almost a full month before the arrival of the 102nd Battalion to the area.



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

After its arrival on October 11, and during those first days of service at *the Somme*, the 102nd Battalion had remained at *Tara Hill Camp* where... *Organization work and preparations for attack were carried on in accordance with Bde. O.O. 15* (Brigade Operational Order 15) (From Battalion War Diary).

After a week, on October 18, the unit had been sent into the forward trenches; then, perhaps a little curiously, three of the four Companies had been withdrawn on the morning of the 20th, to return later that day. The fourth Company, upon the return of the others, had withdrawn in its turn. On the next day, October 21, 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies were to attack the German positions of the *Regina Trench* system.

(continued)

Excerpt from Battalion War Diary entry October 21, 1916: At 12.06 pm "C" and "B" Companies forming the first wave and "D" Company the third & fourth, the Battalion took Regina Trench, with practically no opposition. A number of prisoners, both wounded and unwounded, were captured. Our casualties in attack numbered about 20 killed and 70 wounded... The three Companies consolidated their position and put out advanced posts, being heavily shelled during the night...



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

Regina Trench would be re-captured by a German counter-attack on this occasion, and it was not to be until November 10-11 later that year that the position was definitively taken and held by Canadian troops. In fact, this aforementioned operation was to be the next offensive infantry action in which the 102nd Battalion was to be involved - at a cost of ten killed in action, thirty-eight reported as wounded, and eight missing in action.

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

The assault, a night attack, had taken place over two days, November 10 and 11; on the evening of the latter date the unit had been relieved and had retired to billets in Albert. There the 102nd Battalion was to remain for the best part of a week before having been ordered once more to the forward area.

It was not called upon to serve in any further major infantry action, although oft-times the enemy guns and snipers were to cause further losses. The Battalion personnel also served as stretcher bearers – a not infrequent duty - on the occasions of attacks on enemy trenches by adjacent units, during which time, of course, the bearers ran the same dangers as did the attackers – and at times for longer periods.



(Right: A stretcher-bearer sets about his work, here likely in the aftermath of an infantry action – from Illustration)



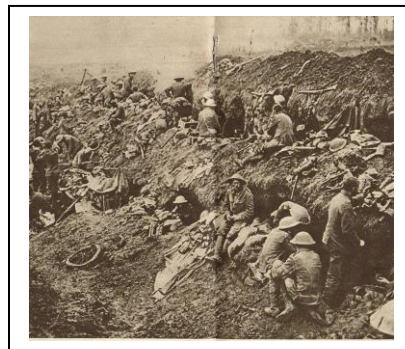
While the *First Battle of the Somme* officially came to a close on November 13-15 with the capture of the village of Beaumont – one of two communities which at the time comprised the Commune of Beaumont-Hamel – by the 51st Highland Division, the 102nd Battalion remained in the trenches until November 23. The fighting, of course, had never stopped, but there was to be no further infantry activity apart from the occasional raid and the ever-present patrolling by both sides.

(continued)

Having withdrawn from the front on that November 23, the 102nd Battalion had returned to billets in Albert and then, on the 26th, had marched westward, leaving behind it the theatre of *First Somme*. It had then swung to the north and, having passed to the west of Arras, continued beyond until it arrived at La Comté, some thirty kilometres to the north-west of that last-named city. There... *Good billets were provided against a prolonged stay here.*

The prolonged stay in La Comté was to last for sixteen days. The unit's sojourn *in the area*, however, was to be of a longer duration, a period which allowed Battalion personnel to adapt once more to the rigours and routines – as well as the perils - of daily life in the trenches*, of which the unit had enjoyed only a small taste of in Belgium in the months of August and September of the previous summer and autumn.

**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 1916, only months earlier having been equipped with those steel helmets and the less-visible British-made Lee-Enfield rifles – from Illustration)

The winter of 1916-1917, as with all the winters of the Great War, had then been a static affair; infantry action had once more been reduced to patrolling and to raids. Some of the latter, much encouraged by the High Command, were to be local affairs while others would be more complex and sometimes much more costly undertakings.

This entire period, of course, had proved relatively placid compared to what had gone on before, during the summer and autumn of 1916. While a continuous stream of casualties had still been incurred, mostly due to the enemy's guns and to his snipers, for the most part the field ambulances and the casualty clearing stations were to be kept busy by sickness and, perhaps surprisingly, even more so by dental work.



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

(continued)

The 102nd Battalion had found itself stationed in the areas between the cities of Lens and Arras and, during the month of January, was to spend time in a sector facing a long slope, from the summit of which the occupier could overlook and dominate the *Douai Plain*.

At the time the occupier had been the German Army: the crest of that long slope was *Vimy Ridge*.

(Right: *The Douai Plain as seen from the north-eastern balustrade of the Canadian National Memorial on Vimy Ridge – photograph from 2014*)

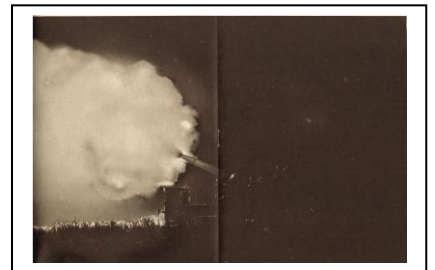


For the 102nd Battalion, this long winter of little activity had terminated on March 26 when it had marched from the forward area to *St. Lawrence Camp* at Chateau de la Haie. There the Battalion War Diarist apparently had found the... *Mud very bad and huts crowded, making very uncomfortable quarters.*

The unit having rested and then having cleaned up its temporary lodgings on March 27, the War Diarist on the following day had then recorded... *Preparation for forthcoming offensive begun; general scheme of operations outlined to officers and N.C.O's. The men were set to work on building and completing huts.*

By April 1 every individual soldier of the unit who was to be involved in the upcoming operation had been given a good idea of what was to be in the offing for him: *Ground was mapped out for attack and the Companies practised going over in waves, wearing the full equipment which they would be carrying on the day itself.* The training had continued on the following days despite the heavy snow which was falling.

By the night of April 8-9 the 102nd Battalion had moved into position while Battalion Headquarters had moved forward into the protection of *Cavalier Tunnel* to where... *in due course each Company reported that position had been taken and that everything was in readiness for zero hour.*



(Right: *A heavy British artillery piece spews its venom into the night sky in the days before the Battle of Arras. – from Illustration*)

On April 9 of that 1917 the British Army had launched an offensive in the area to the north of *the Somme* battlefields; this was to be 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 operations of the War for the British. One of the few positive episodes was to have been the Canadian assault of *Vimy Ridge* on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday.



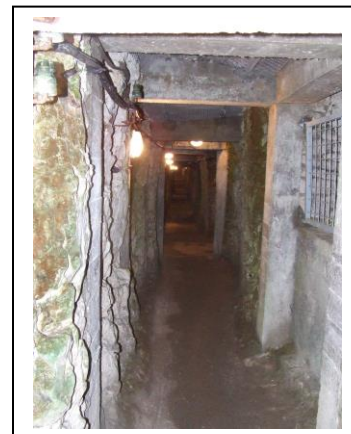
While the British campaign had proved an overall disappointment, the French offensive was to be yet a further disaster.

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

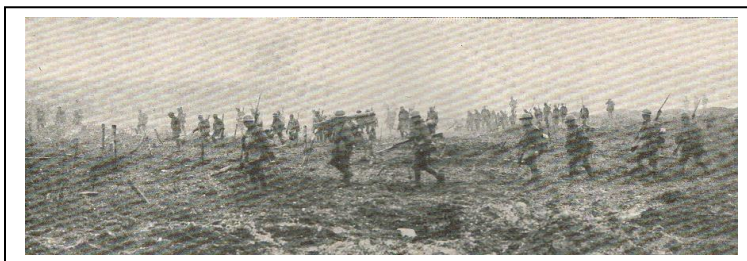
(Right: *One of the few remaining galleries – Grange Tunnel – which is still open to the public at Vimy one hundred years later – photograph from 2008(?)*)

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

(Right below: *Canadian troops of either the 4th or 3^d Division, equipped with all the paraphernalia of war, on the advance across No-Man's-Land during the attack at Vimy Ridge on either April 9 or 10 of 1917 – official Canadian photograph from Illustration*)



Excerpts from Battalion War Diary entry for April 9, 1917: 5.30 a.m. **ZERO HOUR. Barrage opened. Within 5 minutes eye-witnesses from O.P.s* in CAVALIER reported that our men went over as one man and that their formation was perfect.**



5.45 a.m. ...Lt. H.G. Dimsdale...wounded in hand and leg...called in at Hdqrs. on his way to the Dressing Station, he reported that the waves had passed through the wire without difficulty and had gained the enemy front trench.

6.00 a.m. Lt. H.M. Bennett...walking wounded...a prisoner with him...reported that the 2nd line of trenches had been success fully stormed.

7.40 a.m. Lieut. J. Robbins, another walking wounded, arrived with the news that the third line of enemy trenches had been won. By this time therefore, the 102nd Bn had gained its three objectives and it remained only for the positions to be consolidated**.



***Observation Posts**

****The War Diary, apart from the successes, also reports set-backs during the day – and the inevitable casualties. However, by the evening most of the obstacles had been overcome.**

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

By the evening of April 10, Vimy Ridge had been cleared of the enemy. Unfortunately, however, the remainder of the relatively short, five-week long, *Battle of Arras* was not to be fought in the manner of the first two days.

Fearful of German counter-attacks, the High Command did not – and up to a point, in all fairness, mostly due to the foul weather, *could* not – exploit the momentary disarray in the German ranks. Orders had thus been given to hold the positions taken and to consolidate. By the end of those five weeks little else had changed and the Germans had recovered from the initial Canadian success.

The casualty count – all ranks - of the 102nd Battalion, up until and including April 24, had been as follows: *Killed in action or died of wounds*, one-hundred twenty-five; *wounded in action*, one-hundred eighty-nine; *missing in action*, twenty-seven.

The late spring and summer was to be spent by the Canadians in much the same areas that they had occupied after the return from *First Somme*, that is to say the sectors from the area of Arras in the south, to Béthune in the north. The 102nd Battalion War Diarist appears to report a more active period for the 102nd Battalion than for certain other units, particularly in mounting raids against the enemy.



(Right above: *A Canadian carrying-party – some of the work done by troops when in support and reserve – on the Lens front during the summer of 1917: The use of the head-bands – tumps – was an idea adapted and adopted from the North American aboriginal peoples – from Le Miroir*)

The British High Command had by this time decided to undertake a summer offensive in the *Ypres Salient*, Belgium. Thus, in order to divert German attention – and his reserves - from this area, it had ordered that operations also take place in the sectors of the front running north-south from Béthune to Lens.



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

(Right above: *An example of the conditions under which the troops were ordered to fight in the area of Lens during the summer of 1917 – from Le Miroir*)

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.

(continued)

Yet it was high enough to be considered - by the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Corps, Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie – as the key feature in the area, its capture more important than the city of Lens itself.

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

Objectives were to be limited and had for the most part been achieved by the end of August 15, the first day of the operation. 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 16th 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, which had been by then employing newly-developed procedures, was to inflict heavy losses on the enemy. *Hill 70* had remained in Canadian hands.



(Right: *A 220 mm. Canadian artillery piece, under camouflage on the Lens Front in the summer of 1917, being readied for use – from Le Miroir*)

The attack of August 15 had, however, been the responsibility of the Canadian 1st and 2nd Divisions, and thus the 102nd Battalion – being of the 4th Division – had had little role to play*. That is not to say that it had not been active in the area during that month of August: in the first part of the month while in the forward area it had played a role in a major raid and a number of offensive patrols.



**That is what the Battalion War Diary appears to record; yet 'Hill 70' is recorded as one of the unit's battle honours.*

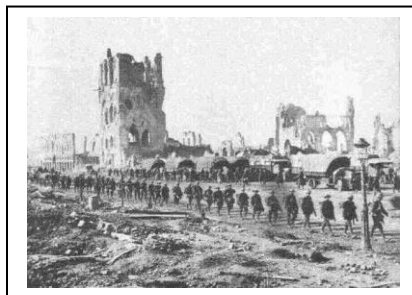
(Right above: *Canadian troops in the vicinity of Hill 70 a short time after its capture by the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions – from Le Miroir*)

This attack on August 15 in the area of *Hill 70* and the city of Lens had apparently been intended to be the precursor of weeks of an entire campaign spear-headed by the Canadians. However, the British offensive further to the north was by that time proceeding less well than intended and the Canadians were to be needed there. Activities in the *Lens Sector* had been suspended in early September whereupon, for a short period, the 102nd Battalion was to revert once more to the drudgery of trench warfare.

(continued)

It would not be until the final weeks of October that the Canadians had become embroiled in the offensive to the north-east of Ypres. Officially named the *Third Battle of Ypres*, the campaign has come to be known to history as *Passchendaele*, taking that name from a small village on a ridge that had been designated – *ostensibly* – as one of the British Army's objectives.

(Right: *Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration*)



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

From the time that the Canadians entered the fray, it was they who had shouldered a great deal of the burden. From the week of October 26 until November 3 it was to be the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions which would spearhead the assault, with the 1st and 2nd Divisions in reserve.

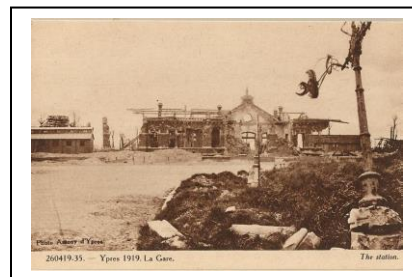


From November 5 until the official end of the affair the reverse was to be true with troops of the 2nd Canadian Division having finally entered the remnants of the village of Passchendaele itself.

As for the 102nd Battalion, during the first days of October it had trained in the vicinity of the coal-mining commune of Divion, some twenty kilometres north-west of the larger centre of Lens. On October 11 the unit had boarded buses to travel north. At Ste-Marie Cappel, just short of the Franco-Belgian border, it was to halt for ten days before resuming, again by bus, the journey to Ypres.



From there it had proceeded on foot to the remnants of the community of Potijze, just to the north-east. After a year's absence, the unit was now once again in Belgium, on this occasion to relieve the by-then battered Australians on October 22.



(Right above: *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*)

(Right above: *The railway station at Ypres (leper) in 1919, the year after the conclusion of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

(continued)

In the eighteen days which had followed – in the period up until November 10 - the 102nd Battalion was to move to the west back to the community of Brandhoek on three occasions, then to the reserve positions at Potijze also on three occasions. It had advanced to the mud of the front area once - *the walk was composed of two lines of bath mats laid over the mud which was deep enough to engulf a man up to the arm-pits* - and had also withdrawn into France once, only to return six days later, on November 9... *detraining at Ypres the Battalion marched to Potijze which they reached at dusk to find a muddy field and a pile of tents provided for accommodation. Conditions were unnecessarily as full of discomfort as possible.*

On November 12 the 102nd Battalion had moved forward into support; on the following day it had advanced into the front line where it would remain but not to be ordered to attack - thus the majority of the casualties that the unit had incurred had been due to enemy artillery. Then finally, on November 18 it had retired for a final time, from Belgium.

(Right: *Canadian troops, performing their ablutions in the water collecting in a shell hole, at some time during the last month of Passchendaele – from Le Miroir*)



The Battalion War Diarist at this point claims that the 102nd Battalion (*Central Ontario*) was the last Canadian Battalion to withdraw from the *3rd Battle of Ypres: Passchendaele.*

(Right below: *The Canadian Memorial standing on Passchendaele Ridge, at the south-western outskirts of the re-constructed village – photograph from 2015*)

By November 23, the unit had been back in the area of Divion in northern France whence it had departed some six weeks previously, having marched two-thirds of the way there. The unit was to remain in the vicinity of Divion until December 18, during which time probably the most notable event was to have been the Canadian federal elections for which the vote had begun, for military personnel, as early as December 1.



Both Christmas and New Year's Day of 1918 having been spent in the lines in the area of Méricourt, life once more had apparently already by those dates reverted to that of the everyday drudgery of existence in the trenches.

On January 10 the unit withdrew to *Hill's Camp* close to Neuville St.-Vaast, adjacent to *Vimy Ridge*, where there apparently was a hall sufficiently large so as to host cinema and vaudeville shows – the pleasure afforded by these events undoubtedly balanced by the frequent working-parties and carrying-parties required by the camp authorities.



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

(continued)

Ten days later, on January 20, the Battalion was back in the trenches before, by the end of the month, having retired to *Vancouver Camp* at Chateau de la Haie. By now it was winter once more and the cadence of the conflict had once more slowed, many of the Canadian units now withdrawn from the forward areas for prolonged periods.

This was to be the experience of the 102nd Battalion.

Apparently it had not been until March 12 that the Battalion personnel had once again begun to experience the harsh realities of war in the forward area. Until then, although having changed venue on three more occasions, during one of which it had been required to be continually *standing by* on twelve-hour's notice, the unit had continued to be posted well behind the lines. On occasion the most important subject in the Battalion War Diary entry was to be the day's football match.

Even on March 21 there had been little of urgency in the day's activities although, on the 23rd, all leave to England was to be cancelled due to the anticipation of a German attack in the sector.

The Germans themselves on the following day had added to the tense atmosphere by unleashing three artillery barrages of the type that might precede an infantry sortie, but apparently nothing further had transpired in the area.

But it had elsewhere.

Perhaps not many people realize how close the Germans were to come to victory in the spring of 1918. Having transferred the divisions no longer necessary on the Eastern Front because of the Russian withdrawal from the conflict, the Germans had launched a massive attack, *Operation Michael*, on that March 21.



The main blow had fallen at *the Somme* in the area of, and also just to the south of, the old battlefields of 1916, and it had devolved for the most part on the British and Commonwealth troops there.

(Right above: *While the Germans did not attack Lens in the spring of 1918, they bombarded it heavily during the time of their offensive in order to keep the British uncertain about their intentions and thus to oblige them to retain troops in the area. – from Le Miroir*)

After the attack on the first day of that spring of 1918, the German advance was to continue for a month before having petered out just in front of the city of Amiens. The ultimate failure of the offensive had been a result of a combination of factors: British and Commonwealth resistance, fatigue, logistical problems and French co-operation with the British having been the most significant.

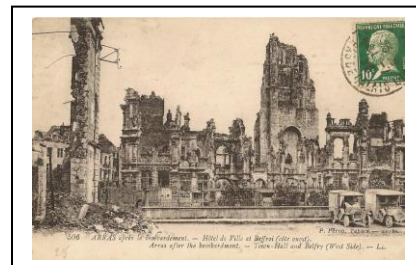


(continued)

***A second but lesser such offensive, ‘Georgette’, fell in northern France and in Belgium on April 9, in the area where the Royal Newfoundland Regiment was serving with the British 29th Division. It also was initially successful, but had been spent by the end of the month.**

(Preceding page: *British troops on the retreat in dis-array in Flanders in April of 1918 – from Illustration*)

Its War Diary suggests, however, that the 102nd Battalion had not been directly involved in any infantry action. At the end of March, while stationed in Brigade Reserve at Écurie just to the north of Arras, it had been ordered that... *the men would be prepared to move off at 15 mins. notice with water-bottles filled.* But the threat had faded and apparently the unit’s services were never to be required.



(Right above: *The City Hall of Arras and its bell-tower looked like this by the spring of 1918 after nearly four years of bombardment by German artillery. – from a vintage post-card*)

The Battalion was to remain in approximately the same area to the north of Arras during the remainder of the crisis. During that period there had been one major false alarm and also a number of local raids undertaken by both sides, but then nothing further of a critical nature had been reported.

Thus, on April 23, the 102nd Battalion was to return to *Cellar Camp* in the area of Neuville St-Vaast where it had then remained until the 29th of the month. Then, a week later of course, on April 5, Private Rose and his accompanying draft had reported *to duty*.

* * * * *

When it was that Private Rose first became acquainted with life in the forward trenches is not documented among his papers. However, a raid by four officers and one-hundred thirty-two other ranks of ‘B’ Company supplemented by personnel of other companies had been successfully carried out in the early morning of the same April 10. There had been a total of thirteen *wounded* casualties as a result of the action, one of whom was also a Newfoundlander: not Private Rose but Lieutenant Hedley John Goodyear, later also to be...*killed in action*.

By the end of the month of April, a relative calm was beginning to descend on both fronts as the German threats faded; the offensives had won a great deal of ground for the enemy, but nothing of any great military significance on either of the two fronts: no ports, no railway centres, no major communities, no rivers, no other defensible geography...and the French and British Armies were still united. The calm itself was hardly surprising: both sides were exhausted and needed time to once more re-organize and – less and less feasible in these later years of the war – to re-enforce.

The Allies, nevertheless, from this point of view were a lot better off than their German adversaries – they had two empires to draw from and the Americans were belatedly arriving on the scene.

(continued)

An overall Commander-in-Chief had been appointed, Foch, and he was setting about organizing a counter-offensive. Thus the front was to remain quiet – until the second week in August.

(Right below: *Le Maréchal Ferdinand Jean-Marie Foch, this photograph from 1921, became Generalissimo of the Allied Armies on March 26, 1918. – photograph from the Wikipedia web-site*)

On a more personal level, during this period Private Rose had managed in a minor way to fall from grace in his relationship with the Battalion authorities. His record reads: *Forfeits 1 days pay 10/6/18 for losing by neglect gov't property.* There is no mention as to what that particular piece of government property might have been, and one is left to ponder what it was that was worth the single dollar and ten cents which was his daily remuneration from the Canadian Army.



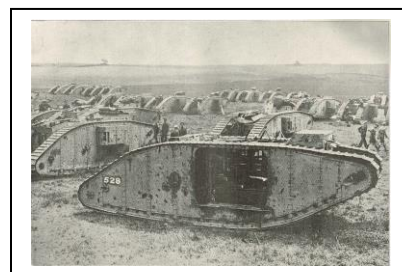
On July 31, Private Rose and the 102nd Battalion were withdrawn from the forward area to Écoivres to organize and to prepare for a move, although at the time the destination was to be kept shrouded in secrecy.

At six o'clock in the evening of August 3, the entire 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade boarded buses which were to take it at first to the west and then to the south. At five-thirty on the next morning, the 102nd Battalion was deposited by the side of the road with a further eight-kilometre march ahead of it before breakfast and sleep.

Night marches now lay ahead of the unit – some apparently as long as forty kilometres and often without anything to eat during the entire night. These were to take them to the west and then south of Amiens in a semi-circular fashion to end up at Bois de Boves (*Boves Wood*), at a distance of perhaps eight kilometres to the south-east of that city. The unit arrived there at four-thirty in the morning of August 7.

(Right below: *In 1917 the British formed the Tank Corps, a force which became ever stronger in 1918 as evidenced by this photograph of a tank park, once again 'somewhere in France', where it was to play a critical role during the last months of the Great War. – from Illustration*)

While Private Rose likely slept on that August 7, the officers and NCOs of the Battalion were attending meetings at which the details of the imminent offensive, for which the entire Canadian Corps had travelled to this place, were explained so that, by the next morning, each individual soldier would be familiar with the role that he had to play.



For indeed, the attack was to go in on the morrow morn. That night the 102nd Battalion marched once again, on this occasion to its assembly points behind *le Bois de Gentelles*.

The Battalion War Diarist takes up the story of August 8, 1918:

(continued)

12.20 a.m. We reached our First Assembly Point behind GENTELLES WOOD, where we found the other Brigade Units assembling. Here we remained for five hours...

The Canadian Corps was on the verge of the biggest operation in which it had yet been engaged and figured as a part of the most spectacular Counter-offensive yet launched against the Hun...

4.20 a.m. Barrage opened and the 3rd Division on our Front moved forward to the attack. There was a white mist hanging low.

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



5.20 a.m. We moved forward...the mist quickly disappearing...through fields of ripened corn, past batteries of every calibre, through orchards and along the AMIENS-ROYE RD. where we soon saw the first fruits of the attack in the shape of numerous bodies of Heine prisoners and our own walking wounded.

9.30 a.m. Reached our next Assembly Point in C.6.a. Here we received unexpected orders to make a long halt.

12.10 p.m. Moved forward to the attack...

After the capture of our first objective...Headquarters moved up to a German encampment... Here we found all sorts of supplies – beer, food, including cake, footwear. Close by was a German Field Ambulance full of their wounded. There was some bombardment of Headquarters, but for the most part the night passed quietly enough...

(Right below: A group of German prisoners, some serving here as stretcher-bearers, being taken to the rear after their capture by Canadian troops: A tank may be seen in the background. – from Le Miroir)

The pursuit – for that was what it was to be, at least at the outset – continued during the days that followed, the Battalions of the 11th Brigade passing through each other in a rotating system. It was a type of warfare that had not been seen for four years, not since the summer of 1914, and an unheard-of advance of twenty kilometres of ground had been covered and taken in that first week.



On August 20 the unit began a final tour in the front line, a tour which was to end four days later when the final units of the Canadian Corps were to start their movement back to the Arras sector*.

***The withdrawal to the Arras sector was to be undertaken in the same manner and by many of the same itineraries as the transfer to Amiens of three weeks before. Speed and secrecy were again priorities. French units now took over from the Canadian troops on the Amiens Front.**

(Excerpt from the 102nd Battalion War Diary entry for August 24, 1918) *We were relieved at night by the 1st Bn. R.I. (French). This was the first occasion on which the battalion had handed over direct to a French unit, and the differences in battalion organization were very obvious... Just after relief the French battalion was bombed and sustained casualties.*



(Right: *French dead in the communal cemetery at Caix, just to the west of Rosières: Caix also hosts a British Commonwealth cemetery as well as a German burial ground. – photograph from 2017*)

The 4th was the last of the Canadian Divisions to retire from the Amiens Front*. By the time that the personnel of the 102nd Battalion boarded a train during the night of August 27-28, the troops of the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions had already been fighting for almost forty-eight hours on the new front to the east of Arras, the area they had left for Amiens only some three weeks before.

**The British and the Anzacs (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps), now joined by French troops, were to remain in situ and were to continue the advance towards St-Quentin. This offensive, as it was to be with the others, was to end only on the morning of November 11 when the final Armistice of the Great War came into force.*



(Right above: *British troops on the advance in September in the area of the St-Quentin Canal – from Le Miroir*)

At two o'clock in the afternoon of August 28 the Battalion de-trained at Acq, back in the area of Arras. There was now a short march to Écoivres before a bus-ride transported the unit as far as Berneville which it had left on August 3. Private Rose at al. were to pass that night in the camp that they had occupied on that prior visit.



(Right above and right: *By this time of the war, Écoivres was the site of a large and ever-growing military cemetery, having been inaugurated by the French even before the British took over that part of the Front in 1916. Today it is the last resting-place for just over twenty-five hundred dead: British and Commonwealth, French and also four German. – from a vintage post-card and from 2017*)



On the following day at noon the 102nd Battalion began to march eastward towards the forward area, to Neuville-Vitasse south-east of Arras, where the unit thereupon occupied... *filthy and neglected*...trenches which had once been a part of the British front-line positions.

(continued)

Later that evening...*The Second-in-Command attended a C.O.'s Conference...And came back with the news that we should move up in support next evening and take an active part in big operation on the following day* (Excerpt from 102nd Battalion War Diary entry for August 29, 1918).

As it transpired, the attack by the 102nd Battalion was to be postponed for three days although the Battalion War Diary provides its reader with no reasons for the decision taken. In the mean-time the soldiers of the 102nd Battalion sat in their...*filthy and neglected...trenches* to await developments and orders.

At half-past eight on the evening of September 1...*The Battalion fell in...and we marched off to our first Assembly Point in VIS-EN-ARTOIS. It was a bright star-light night, the roads were thronged with traffic, and enemy aeroplanes were active. En route we passed two blazing ammunition lorries which had been bombed and these delayed us some little time as explosions were frequent.* (From 102nd Battalion War Diary entry for September 1, 1918).

On August 26, some five days prior to this movement, the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions, newly-returned from the Amiens Front, and in conjunction with British forces, had launched the four-day *Battle of the Scarpe*. The operation was to follow along the axis of the main Arras-Cambrai road with the objective of advancing sufficiently to allow for an almost-immediate second attack, this on the Drocourt-Quéant section of the German defensive positions of the Hindenburg Line*.



**Some sources apparently combine the two operations, designating the ensemble as the Battle of the Scarpe.*

(Right above: *Some of the ground on which fighting took place at the end of August and beginning of September of 1918: The Arras to Cambrai road – looking in the direction of Cambrai – may be perceived just left of centre on the horizon. – photograph from 2015*)



(Right above: *In one of the many villages liberated from the Germans, Canadian and enemy wounded await evacuation to the rear. – from Le Miroir*)

On the first day alone of this first in a series of confrontations, despite a resolute German defence in places – particularly on the part of the enemy machine-gunners – the Allied forces, as at Amiens, had advanced in excess of expectations and, by the cessation of the offensive on August 29-30, had reached the area of Vis-en-Artois, some eight kilometres distant from the jumping-off positions of the 26th.



(Right above: *Vis-en-Artois British Cemetery: It holds 2,369 soldiers of the Great War – originally mostly from 1918 - of whom only 885 identified. – photograph from 2010*)

(continued)

It was into this newly-won area that the 102nd Battalion advanced late in the evening of September 1. It arrived at its assembly point at one hour after mid-night.

The 102nd Battalion War Diary entry for that September 2, 1918, here takes over the story: *5.00 a.m....Our barrage opened and the First Canadian Division “went over”. An hour later we left our position and moved forward. Within half-an-hour we passed into a zone of continuous barrage fire. The terrain here is undulating and the descending slopes were pitilessly swept by both shell and machine-gun fire... It was about noon when the Battalion reached DROCOURT TRENCH which had been the Jumping-off place for the 87th Battalion who were due to pass through the 12th Bde (Brigade) just East of this line...*

The night was spent in DROCOURT TRENCH and vicinity...

On the morrow, September 3, Private Rose’s Battalion moved forward early, not long after that mid-night of September 2-3, to undertake an ordered attack, an order which was subsequently cancelled.

Then some little time later, at three o’clock that morning, the unit moved forward in order to relieve the 72nd Canadian Infantry Battalion. That operation, having been rendered difficult by a lack of guides, had been achieved by half-past seven that morning when... *We continued the advance, feeling for the enemy who had already retired. Our route lay due East along the North side of the ARRAS-CAMBRAI ROAD, along which were dotted the frequent bodies of dead mules & horses, whilst in the middle of the road lay the wreckage of more than one armed motor-car...*

(Right above: *A German machine-gunner who also gave his all – from Illustration*)

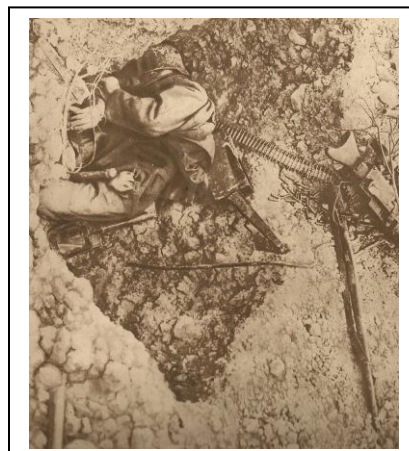
Casualty report: *“Killed in Action” During an attack West of the CANAL DU NORD, near MARQUION, he was struck in the throat by a machine gun bullet and instantly killed.*

(Right above: *German prisoners evacuating wounded out of the area of the unfinished part of the Canal du Nord which the Canadians crossed on September 27, thus opening the road to Cambrai – from Le Miroir*)

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

The son of William Frances Rose, farmer, and of Mary Anne Rose (née Quigley) of Cove Road, St. John’s, Newfoundland, he was also brother to at least William-Leo, to Michael-Joseph and to Elizabeth-Mary.

(continued)



To his wife Ellen (see further above), on April 7, 1917, he had willed his everything and had also, as of May 1, 1917, allocated a monthly fifteen dollars from his pay. By 1920, her address had become Logy Bay Road in St. John's.

Private Rose was reported as having been *killed in action* on September 3 of 1918, during the fighting at the *Drocourt-Quéant Line*.

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



Frederick Augustine Rose had enlisted at the apparent age of nineteen years: date of birth in St. John's Newfoundland, May 16, 1897 (from attestation papers, family sources, and from Roman Catholic Parish Records)*.

**Those looking for Frederick Augustine Rose's birth date in the City of St. John's Records – or on Ancestry.ca, will find that his birth-date has been recorded as April 3, 1897. If the searchers look further they will find that the date of birth for a Margaret Anne Hart is recorded in these sources as May 16, 1897. The two names are consequent in the Roman Catholic Parish Records and one has been confused with the other, presumably at the time of being copied.*

Private Frederick Augustine Rose was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

The author is grateful to Ms. Debbie Cook for the information that she kindly provided for this military biography.



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 25, 2023.

