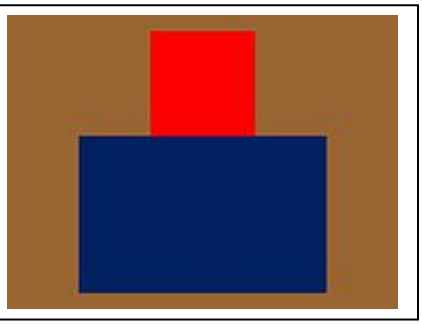
Private John Gardiner Spracklin (*Spracklen* in the Canadian Archives) Number 715704 of the 26th Battalion (*New Brunswick*), Canadian Expeditionary Force, is buried in the Tranchée de Mecknes Military Cemetery, Aix-Noulette: Grave reference L.7..



(Right: *The image of the shoulder-patch of the 26th Battalion (New Brunswick) is from the Wikipedia Web-site.*)

(continued)

His occupation at the time of his enlistment recorded as that of a *miner*, John Gardiner Spracklin has left little information *a propos* his early years in the Dominion of Newfoundland before his emigration at a very young age to Cape Breton in the Canadian Province of Canada.

The 1911 Census records that his parents and he – at or just before the age of three – arrived in Cape Breton in the year 1900. By 1911 – there appears to be no record of it in the 1901 Census - the family was to be resident in the company town of Dominion Number 6, in close proximity to the larger centre of Glace Bay where the father likely worked as a miner and where by that time three more children had been born – to which number Mary was to be added in 1918.

It was to be some five years subsequent to the 1911 Census that further documentation of John Gardiner Spracklin was recorded and which has since become available.

His first pay records show that it was on January 8 of 1916 that the Canadian Army* first began to remunerate Private Spracklin for his services to the 106th Overseas Battalion (*Nova Scotia Rifles*), by which unit he had been *taken on strength* on the same date. He was also attested on that same date, his oath witnessed by a local justice of the peace.**

This term was apparently not to come into official use until 1940.

****According to his attestation papers, John Spracklin had served for two months in the 94th Regiment (Argyll Highlanders), a Cape Breton unit of the Canadian Militia. No further details of this service appear among his papers.***

These first formalities which had taken place in the nearby industrial city of Sydney were then followed two days later, on January 10, by a medical examination, a procedure which found John Spracklin to be…*fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.* During that two-day interim, January 8-10, he had been despatched south to the town of Truro where the 106th Battalion had its headquarters.

It was to be only two days after that medical examination of January 10 that all the formalities of Private Spracklin's enlistment were brought to a conclusion on January 12 of that 1916 by the commanding officer of the 106th Battalion, Major – not long afterwards to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel – Robert Innes, when he declared – on paper – that…*John Spracklen…having been finally approved and inspected by me this day…I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.*

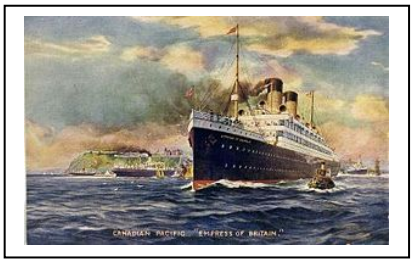
According to an account written by one of the 106th Battalion's recruits, Private Spracklin and the other personnel who had enlisted in Cape Breton at or about this time, having been ordered to Truro for the express purpose of, ostensibly, undertaking training, were boarded upon their arrival in either local hotels or in the Y.M.C.A..

There was, however, – this from the same source – to be very *little* training undertaken: at Truro there had apparently originally been no barracks, no firing range and no parade ground, and it would appear that shovelling snow and marching had comprised much of the exercise for the 106th Battalion's Truro detachment during the first sixth months of the unit's existence.

Apparently Private Spracklin, however, was not to spend *all* his time in Truro shovelling and marching as he was to be charged on two occasions with having been…*absent without leave*. The second offence had been for a period of about two days and was to cost him a forfeiture of four days' pay. The length of the first period of absence is not among his records, but given that ten days' pay was the sentence imposed, the duration of this illicit liberty had likely been longer than only two days.

While apparently a number of his fellow recruits were to suffer from influenza, bronchitis and pneumonia during the winter and the spring of that year, Private Spracklin seems to have successfully avoided these afflictions until June 20 when he in his turn was hospitalized with influenza. He was discharged back *to duty* with his unit on June 24, four days after his admission.

Three weeks again after this medical episode, Private Spracklin and his 106th Battalion embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Empress of Britain* in the harbour at Halifax. The date was July 15 of 1916.



The unit was not to travel alone during its trans-Atlantic crossing; also taking passage on the vessel were the 93rd and 105th Battalions of Canadian Infantry, the 1st Draft of the 63rd Regiment (*Halifax Rifles*), and the 8th Draft of 'C' Battery of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery.

(Above right: *The image of the Empress of Britain is from the Wikipedia website*.)

The *Empress* sailed later in the day on the same July 15, and docked some ten days later again in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on July 25, 1916. From there Private Spracklin's unit was transported by train to the large Canadian military complex of *Shorncliffe* which had by that time been established on the Dover Straits in close proximity to the town and harbour of Folkestone in the county of Kent.

Some nine weeks following, his unit still at *Shorncliffe*, training there in the subsidiary *Lower Dibgate Camp*, the 106th Battalion would likely have been beginning to anticipate its cross-Channel transfer to *active service* on the Western Front. But this was not to be*.

(Right above: *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)

Before the end of the Great War, Canada was to have despatched overseas just over 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 aspirations 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 designated as Canadian Reserve Battalions.

By October of 1916 of the *Great War*, the Canadian Corps had been involved in the *First Battle of the Somme* for almost two months during which time it had suffered horrific losses. It was to fill the depleted ranks of those battered units that much of the personnel of the Canadian units which had remained in England was now to be deployed.

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

It would appear that Private Spracklin was to be among the first to be transferred to another battalion; and while later postings from the 106th Battalion would be to the new Canadian Reserve Battalions, that of Private Spracklin in late September was to be to a unit already in service on the *Western Front*.

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

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

On the night of September 26-27 of 1916, Private Spracklin departed *Shorncliffe* for the Continent. In all likelihood he passed through the Harbour of Folkestone on the English side to disembark in France in the port of Boulogne on the opposite side of the Dover Straits. From there he would have been transported by train to the Canadian Base Depot at *Rouelles Camp*, in close proximity to the French industrial city of Le Havre situated on the estuary of the River Seine.

He was one of ninety-nine arrivals from England at that time, the latter date having been the same day on which he was then *taken on strength* by the 26th Battalion (*New Brunswick*).

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

Eight-hundred sixty-five men are subsequently recorded as having been despatched from the Base Depot on October 8 to report to various units. Private Spracklin was one of them, on his way to join the 26th Battalion.

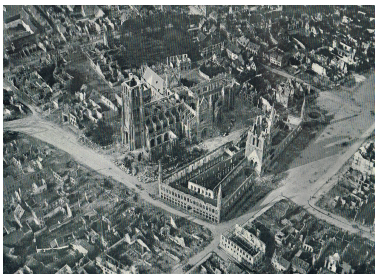
(continued)

His own papers record the date of his re-enforcement draft joining the 26th Battalion as having been October 13: that notwithstanding, the 26th Battalion War Diary cites October 9 as the day on which the detachment of ninety-nine *other ranks* from the 106th Battalion reported *to duty* in the area of Berteaucourt-les-Dames where Private Spracklin's new unit, the 26th Battalion, had been in training for a week.

*** * * * ***

The 26th Infantry Battalion (*New Brunswick*) was an element of the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade, itself a component of the 2nd Canadian Division, and it had been serving in the *Kingdom of Belgium* since mid-September of 1915. After having landed in - and having been transported through – northern France, the Division had immediately been posted to Belgium, to a sector in-between the by-then battered city of Ypres and the Franco-Belgian frontier.

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



The 26th Battalion was to spend the subsequent several months of the autumn of 1915 and the winter of 1915-1916 in the same area. During none of the winters of the *Great War* was there to be much concerted infantry action of any consequence on the *Western Front* and this one was to prove to be no exception. This period of relative calm had, however, allowed the unit personnel to adapt to the conditions – to the rigours, the routines and the perils – of life in and out of 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: *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*)

(continued)

Then, after that *quiet* winter, from March 27 up until and including April 17, 1916 – these the *official* dates - the 26th Battalion had been involved in the *Action of the St. Eloi Craters*. The craters had been formed when, on that March 27, the British had detonated a series of mines - underground galleries filled with explosives – under the enemy lines. The eruptions were to be immediately followed with an assault on the German positions by British infantry units.

(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*)

The Canadians were ostensibly to take over from the British in order to occupy the *presumed* newly-won territory; however, the damage done to the terrain by the explosions, the putrid weather which had turned the newly-created craters into ponds and the earth into a quagmire, plus a resolute German defence, were to greet the newcomers who had taken over from the by-then exhausted British on or about April 4-5-6.

This had been the first major encounter with the enemy that the 2nd Canadian Division was to experience and it had likely come as a shock to the new-comers. After some three weeks of fighting, at times up to the waist in mud and water, at first the British – and then the Canadians who had relieved them – had been held in check by the German defenders and had incurred a heavy casualty list.

It appears from the Battalion War Diary, however, that the 26th Battalion itself had been only very *peripherally* involved. During the period of the Canadian action, the unit had been… *standing by*, had been… *in camp*, or, for five days in a row…*Battalion in trenches, Large working parties working on trenches. Weather fine.* Apart from the casualties incurred due to his artillery, the New Brunswick Battalion appears – according to the unit's War Diary - to have had no contact with the enemy.

Then, some six weeks following, from June 2 to 13 had been fought the battle for *Mount Sorrel* and for the areas of *Sanctuary Wood, Railway Dugouts, Maple Copse,* the village of *Hooge* and of *Hill 60* between the German Army and the Canadian Corps.

The Canadians had, it would seem, been preparing an attack of their own on the enemy positions dominating the Canadian trenches when the Germans had delivered an offensive which was to overrun the forward areas and, in fact, to rupture the Canadian lines, an opportunity which, fortunately, they had never exploited.

(Right: *Remnants of Canadian trenches dating from 1915-1916 at Sanctuary Wood* – photograph from 2010)

The British Commander of the Canadian Corps, Sir Julian Byng, had reacted – perhaps a little too impulsively - by organizing an impromptu counter-attack on the following day, an assault intended, at a minimum, to recapture the lost ground of June 2.

Badly organized and supported, this operation was to prove a horrendous experience: many of the intended attacks were never to go in – those that had done so, had gone in piecemeal and the assaulting troops had been cut to shreds - the enemy had remained where he had been, in the captured positions, and the Canadians had been left to count an extremely heavy casualty list.

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

Then for ten more days there had been some desperate fighting, at first involving mainly units of the newly-arrived Canadian 3rd Division*, but soon the critical situation had drawn in troops from other Canadian formations.

Officially coming into service at midnight of December 31, 1915 and January 1 of 1916, the 3rd Canadian Division had trained for a period in tandem with the 1st Canadian Division in the Ploegsteert Sector before, in March and April of 1916, having become responsible for a south-eastern area of the Ypres Salient.

The 26th Battalion had been engaged in relieving other units during the course of the encounter and it had been heavily shelled on occasion. However, it had not been in the forward area during much of the infantry activity and had been withdrawn altogether by the day of the final Canadian counter-attack.

By the time that the 26th Battalion was to move up to the front once more, on June 14, the fighting at *Mount Sorrel* and its vicinity would be all but over. During the preceding night of June 12-13 the Canadians had once again attacked and, thanks to better organization and a well-conceived artillery barrage, had taken back almost all of the lost ground. Both sides had now found themselves back much where they had been just eleven days earlier – but the cemeteries had by then become a little bigger and more numerous.

(Right above: *Maple Copse, the scene of heavy fighting in June of 1916, and its cemetery wherein lie numerous Canadians* – photograph from 2014)

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

Thus, after having played its role at *Mount Sorrel*, the 26th Battalion had been relieved and had withdrawn to *Camp "D"* on June 20.

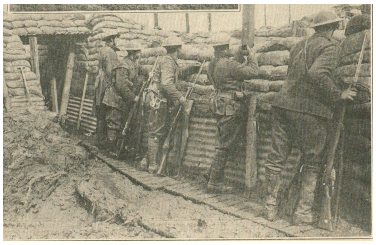
(continued)

(Preceding page: *Hill 60 as it remains a century after the events of 1916 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. Much of any resemblance to a hill was apparently removed during the first week of 1917 when the British detonated a mine underneath its summit.* – photograph from 2014)

The second half of that following month of July was spent at first in *Alberta Camp* and then further back again, at Brigade Reserve in the *Vierstraat Sector*. To compensate for this likely monotonously-calm period, the 26th Battalion was then posted back into the forward trenches for twenty-two of the first twenty-four days of August.

Having retired again to *Alberta Camp* near Reninghelst on August 25, the 26th Battalion was thereupon to prepare for its departure from Belgium. The Regimental War Diarist has noted in his entry of that day: *All ranks in the best of spirits anticipating the move and eager to effect all details in the number of days training, SOMME OPERATIONS.*

The training area for the 26th Battalion was to be at Tilques, back over the border in northern France and in the vicinity of the larger centre of St-Omer. It would require three successive days of marching for the unit to reach its billets at Éperlecques by August 28 before then having commenced training on the morrow. One of the first items on the agenda of December 29 had been the replacement of the Canadian-made *Ross Rifle* by its British counterpart, the short *Lee-Enfield Mark III*.



(Right: *Canadian troops likely in trenches built for training purposes – they are too prim and proper to be the real thing when compared to the photograph on a preceding page – and here equipped with Short Lee-Enfield Mark III rifles*, during the late summer or early autumn of 1916* – from *The War Illustrated*)

The Canadian-produced Ross rifle was an excellently-manufactured weapon; its accuracy and range were superior to that of many of its rivals, but on the battlefield it had not proved its worth. In the dirty conditions and when the necessity arose for its repeated use - and using mass-produced ammunition which at times was less than perfect - it jammed, leaving its user defenceless at a critical moment.

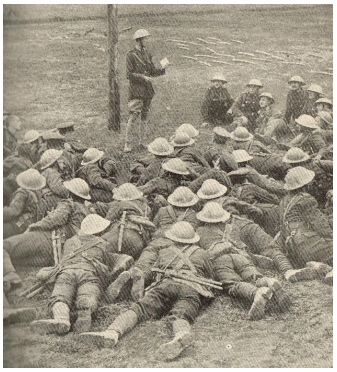
A week later the 26th Battalion had marched to the railway-station at not-distant Arques to entrain for the journey south to Conteville. Having arrived there, a day spent resting in billets had been followed by five more on foot *not* resting, a march which had terminated on September 11 at the large *Brickfields* (*la Briqueterie*) *Camp*, established in close proximity to the provincial town of Albert.

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

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

On the first day of *First Somme*, all but two small units of the attacking divisions had been from the British Isles, the 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.

As the Battle had progressed, troops from the Empire (*Commonwealth*) were to be 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 and about 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: *An image purporting to be that of a Canadian officer giving instructions to those under his command prior to the attack at Flers-Courcelette, in September 1916* – from *The War Illustrated*)

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

The 26th Battalion had arrived in the area four days prior to the attack at Flers-Courcelette – other units had reported there on only the day before – thus those interim days were to be spent in preparation for the attack of September 15. The 26th Battalion had been in reserve at the outset and, as such, had not moved forward until five o'clock in the afternoon, twelve hours after the initial assault, at which time it had re-enforced the efforts of the 22nd and 24th Battalions.

On the following day, the 26th Battalion, according to its War Diary, had been ordered moved to the relative safety of a succession of shell holes, apparently having stayed there all day and… *where the most intense shelling was endured by the battalion throughout this entire day.*

(Right: *Wounded troops being evacuated in hand-carts from the forward area during the First Battle of the Somme* – from *Le Miroir* or *Illustration*)

(continued)

On September 17 the unit was to be moved once more and had taken up positions in a sunken road, to once again remain there all day. The only exception would be 'B' Company which was to assist in an attack delivered by the 24th Battalion The attack in question… *met with considerable opposition and rifle and machine gun fire was very heavy.*

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

On September 28 the 26th Battalion had been ordered forward once again, on this occasion to play a role in *the Battle of Thiepval Ridge*, more specifically on the right flank, in the area of *Regina Trench*. The operation would prove to be a further failure for the price of one-hundred seventy-seven more casualties.

(Right below: *Regina Trench Cemetery – Regina Trench was adjacent to Kenora Trench, another daunting German strong-point – and some of the ground on which the Canadians fought during that autumn of 1916* – photograph from 2014)

Only days later, on October 3, the unit was to be beginning to withdraw from the *First Battle of the Somme.*

The Battalion had then retired towards the westward before it was to turn northwards to pass behind, to the west of, the battered city of Arras. It had of course been during this period, while the unit had been engaged in training in the vicinity of of Berteaucourt, that Private Walsh's draft of ninety-nine re-enforcements had arrived to bolster the numbers of the depleted 26th Battalion on October 9.

* * * * *

Having then subsequently marched for the following five days, the unit passed into the new area of what was to become more and more a Canadian responsibility, the sectors north of Arras as far as the town of Béthune, and had reached the area of Barlin, its destination.

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

By the evening of October 15 the 26th Battalion had completed its relief of a British unit in the *Angres II Sector*, in the area of the city of Lens, and was occupying positions in the front lines. On the next day, the 16th, the Battalion War Diarist entered simply: *Battalion in trenches Conditions quiet, weather wet.*

(Preceding page: *This is what was to become of Lens before the Great War ended* – from a vintage post-card)

Those afore-mentioned conditions were not to remain quiet for very long: on the morrow the enemy would explode a mine opposite a trench held by 'D' Company of the Battalion. The remainder of the day was to be spent repairing damage and consolidating the defences. There were no casualties reported on that day but the incident may have reminded some of the troops – perhaps particularly any newcomers - that things could still be bad, even *away* from *the Somme.*

The next months in those new sectors must have started to seem rather monotonous for a great deal of the time – although monotony was maybe welcome after what many of the troops had just experienced – with perhaps a few instances of terror thrown in every now and then.

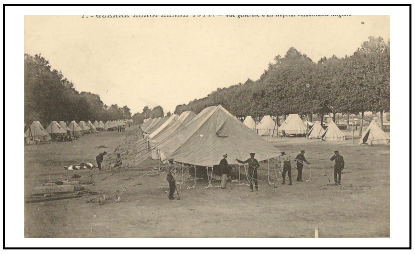
For the most part the 26th Battalion was in that same *Angres II Sector*, in theory spending one week in the front line, a second week in the support lines, and a third week in reserve – although, of course, it never worked out exactly that way. And sometimes there was even a bath and a bed.

However, it was during this period while in the *Angres II Sector* that Private Spracklin contrived on October 29, 1916, to shoot himself in the foot – classified as *Accident self-inflicted.* At the ensuing Court Martial the Third Witness, Number 455452, Private J.E. Doucette, submitted the following testimony:

***I was sitting on my bunk at 4.30 p.m. on the 29th inst. When I saw Pte. Spracken (sic) go to a corner, pick up a rifle, remove the breech cover, and started to clean his rifle. I then went to bed and was just falling asleep when the report of a rifle wakened me up. I heard Pte. Spracken cry "I'm shot". I saw the wound, it was a slight wound, between the second and third toes*.**

Evacuated from the forward area where his Battalion was serving at the time, Private Spracklin was at first evacuated to the Divisional Rest Station, a facility which was the responsibility of the 4th Canadian Field Ambulance. Later that day he was forwarded to the 5th Canadian Field Ambulance, established at that period at Fosse 10, to be one of about sixty patients to receive treatment there on that day.

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



Later on that same date, he was sent onwards to the 32nd Casualty Clearing Station Special Hospital at Busnes, to the north-west of Béthune. There, although the wound was reportedly a minor one, he was apparently to remain for twenty-nine days before being discharged.

(continued)

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

But it would appear that at the same time, he had been placed in confinement until November 30 when he was to be facing a court martial.

Excerpt from the 26th Battalion War Diary entry for November 30, 1916: *Tried and convicted by Field General Court Martial for When on Active Service, neglect to the Prejudice of Good Order & Military Discipline (Negligently wounding himself in the left foot* and sentenced to 49 days F.P. No. 1).*

Sentence confirmed by DA & QMG 1st Army Gen. PCF Hobbs 19/11/16

***Field Punishment Number 1* was not the only penalty for his actions that Private Spracklin was to incur; he was to forfeit all his pay – a single dollar per day – plus the ten cents per diem field allowance for the seventeen days that he had officially spent awaiting trial and also for the forty-nine days of his sentence. Thus sixty-six days was multiplied by one dollar ten cents for a total penalty of seventy-two dollars and sixty cents.**

This was a common enough occurrence in all of the armies of the Great War. While at times it was a bona fide accident, there were occasions on which it was self-inflicted as a means to be invalided out of the war – understandable perhaps, although obviously a practice frowned upon by the authorities.

A unit in reserve could count on everything from a variety of inspections – weapons, uniforms, medical - from those higher up the military ladder – and every now and then from a leading politician or a member of a royal family – to being seconded into working-parties and perhaps into the battalion's football team.

(Right above: *A carrying-party loading up – one of the duties of troops when not serving in the front lines: The head-strap was an idea adapted from the aboriginal peoples of North America.* – from *Le Miroir*)

While in support there were more working-parties, route marches, training on new equipment, inspections from lesser lights on that military ladder, more inspections for trench-foot and other medical problems, and the manual transport of ammunition and the like from the rear to the front.

Most casualties, relatively few in number, were now to be due to the ever-present enemy artillery fire, but snipers were also a constant danger. Disease and living conditions as might be expected – particularly the ubiquitous lice and mites, prime source of scabies – were to take an additional toll. But perhaps surprisingly, it appears to have been dental work that kept the medical services mostly occupied at this time.

(continued)

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

By January 11 of the New Year, 1917, the 26th Battalion had been serving in the forward area of the *Angres II Sector* for a number of days.

The following is an excerpt from the 26th Battalion War diary for that day: *Battalion in trenches. Weather mucky with soft snow. Quiet in morning (Comparatively so). Heavy artillery work during afternoon. Brisk retaliation by enemy during hours 9 to 11.30 p.m…*

The son of Henry (*known as Harry*) Spracklin, latterly miner, and Elizabeth Spracklin* (née *Gardiner*) of Clarke's Beach, Newfoundland, before Argyll Street, Glace Bay, Cape Breton, he was also brother to Elsie, Richard-Samuel, Hattie and – although he was never to know her – also to Mary.

To whom, as of July 1, 1916, he had allotted a monthly twenty dollars from his pay, and also to whom, in a Will penned on July 8, 1916, he had bequeathed his everything.

(Right: *The photograph of Private John Gardiner Spracklin (misspelled as Spranklin in this source) of the 15th Platoon, 106th Battalion (Nova Scotia Rifles) is from the www.angelfire web-site - A short history and photographic record of the 106th Overseas Battalion, C.E.F., Nova Scotia Rifles*.)

Private Spracklin was reported as having been *killed in action* on January 11, 1917, while serving in the trenches, by enemy trench-mortar fire.

John Gardiner Spracklin had enlisted at the *apparent* age of eighteen years and three months: date of birth at Clarke's Beach, Newfoundland, October 13, 1997 (from attestation papers); *Ancestry.ca* and its copy of the 1911 Census cite May of 1899.

Private John Gardiner Spracklin 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.* Last updated – January 23, 2023.