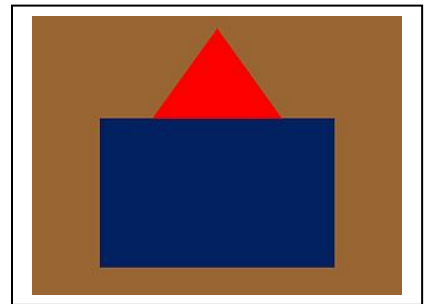




F. P. WALSH

Private Frank Patrick Walsh, Number 877659 of the 25th Battalion (*Nova Scotia Rifles*), 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 25th Battalion (Nova Scotia Rifles) shoulder flash is from the Wikipedia Web-site.*)



(continued)

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of an *iron-worker*, Frank Patrick Walsh may have been the young man whose name appears on the passenger list of the SS *Kyle* for the November 20, 1915, crossing from Port aux Basques in the Dominion of Newfoundland to North Sydney, Cape Breton, in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia. This *F. Walsh* was on his way to the industrial city of Sydney, there to seek employment as a labourer.

However, that *he* was indeed the young man whose military biography this is, needs to be confirmed.

Frank Patrick Walsh appears to have left behind him no history of his early life in the community of Riverhead, Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, and no more than the above speculative evidence of his movement away from home. All that may be said with any certainty is that by the third month of the year 1916, he was residing at 435, Prince Street, Sydney – and working there - for that is when and where he enlisted.

His first pay records and a medical report indicate that it was on March 15 of that year, while in Sydney, that the Canadian Army* began to remunerate the by-then Private Walsh for his services. The unit by which he was *taken on strength* on that same day was the 185th Overseas Battalion (*Cape Breton Highlanders*) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

**Even though it was frequently employed beforehand, the term 'Canadian Army' came into official use only in 1940.*

On the following day, on March 16, and still in Sydney, Private Walsh subsequently underwent a medical examination – a procedure which found him...*fit for the Canadian*

Over-Seas Expeditionary Force. He also attested on that same day, his oath witnessed by a local justice of the peace.

However, it was then to be almost a further seven weeks, not until April 26, before the formalities of his enlistment were officially concluded: it was on that date that the commanding officer of the 185th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Parker-Day declared – on paper – that...*877659, Pte. Frank P. Walsh...having been finally approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.*

By this time, Private Walsh had likely already spent the intervening weeks since his attestation on March 16 undergoing some basic training in the town of Broughton*, only some twenty kilometres distant to the south of the industrial city of Sydney. It may well also have been at Broughton that the ritual of the above paragraph with the Commanding Officer of the Battalion was to take place.

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

(continued)

Private Walsh's posting to the camp at Broughton was not to last any longer than just over two months. By that time, the authorities had decided to create a *Nova Scotia Highland Brigade*, this to comprise the 185th, the 85th, the 193rd and the 219th Battalions of Canadian Infantry. On May 23 of 1915 these four formations were assembled to train together at *Camp Aldershot*, Nova Scotia, where the *Brigade* was then to spend the entire summer before receiving its colours on September 28, two weeks before its eventual departure for *overseas service*.

Apart from the late spring and the summer having been a time of training, the period spent at *Camp Aldershot* had also been the occasion for Private Walsh to pen a Will on August 24, a document in which he was to bequeath his everything to his mother Ellen – he uses the name *Nellie*. It was also to his mother that, as of the first day of October, 1916, and just prior to his crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, Private Walsh allocated a monthly twenty dollars from his pay.

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

(Right below: *HMT Olympic on the right lies at anchor along with HM Hospital Ship Aquitania, centre, at Mudros Bay in the autumn of 1915.* – from a photograph from the *Imperial War Museum, London*)

On October 13th - at about eleven o'clock in the morning - it was the turn of the half-battalion of the 166th – five-hundred three *all ranks* - the final unit, to march up the gangways



before *Olympic* cast her lines and sailed towards the open sea. For the trans-Atlantic passage she was carrying some six-thousand military personnel.

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

The 185th Battalion (*Cape Breton Highlanders*) is documented as then having provided re-enforcements for Canadian forces on the Continent. This role was to last for some sixteen months, until February of 1918, when the remaining personnel of the unit was absorbed into the Canadian 17th (*Reserve*) Battalion.

The Cape Breton Battalion's organizers had originally anticipated that it would be sent – in the company of the other three units of the *Nova Scotia Highland Brigade* – into *active service* on the Continent, but this was not to be*.

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

However, as it transpired, only some fifty of these formations were ever to be sent across the English Channel to the Western Front. By far the majority would remain 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 the time of Private Walsh's arrival in England, the Canadian Corps had been involved in the *First Battle of the Somme* for two months during which time it had suffered terrible losses. It was to fill the depleted ranks of those battered units that three-quarters of the newly-arrived *Nova Scotia Highland Brigade* were to be deployed.



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

Apparently October 13, the first day on board *Olympic*, had been also the first day of a promotion to the rank of lance corporal, a status that Lance Corporal Walsh held for less than eight weeks, until December 5 when he reverted to *the ranks*. Whether this was his own choice or because the unit to which he was now to be transferred already had a full establishment of lance corporals is not clear: but there is no suggestion that this demotion was due to anything other than that.

The new unit was the 73rd Canadian Infantry Battalion, already serving on the Continent in the 12th Brigade of the 4th Canadian Division. It would appear, however, that Private Walsh was only ever to join it on paper.

Having crossed the English Channel to France on the night of December 5-6, 1916, Private Walsh was one of just one-hundred forty-seven re-enforcements to arrive at *Rouelles Camp* from England on that second date. Established in the vicinity of the French industrial port-city of Le Havre on the estuary of the River Seine, it was through the Base Depot that all detachments and drafts of troops now passed, to be organized before being forwarded to their new units in the forward areas.

Private Walsh now fell sick. Diagnosed as having a slight inflammation of the connective tissues in proximity to his armpit, he was admitted into the Number 2 General Hospital at Le Havre from the Base Depot on December 10. After nine days of successful treatment he was discharged back to the Base Depot – where he was categorized as *Class A* (fit for duty) – to await his posting.

He was still there two months later when he experienced much the same problem, except that on this occasion it was in the right side of the neck and manifested by an abscess. Admitted into the 7th Canadian Stationary Hospital at nearby Harfleur on February 17, he was discharged six days later, on February 23, back to the Depot, once again...*fit for duty*...and once again awaiting despatch to an infantry battalion.

But, also once again, Private Walsh was to find himself elsewhere than where he surely had anticipated.

It is true that on February 24, having just arrived at the Base Depot from hospital, he was transferred to the 25th Canadian Infantry Battalion (*Nova Scotia Rifles*), but that was once again only on paper and he was to remain at the Depot for the following nine days. On March 5 he was then despatched to the 2nd Entrenching Battalion*, arriving to report to duty with that unit on the same day – or on March 6, according to the 2nd Entrenching Battalion's War Diary, when a draft of one-hundred fifty-two *other ranks* was recorded as having arrived from the Base Depot.

**These units, as the name suggests, were employed in defence construction and other related tasks. They comprised men who not only had at least a fundamental knowledge and experience of such work but who also had the physique to perform it. However they also came to serve as re-enforcement pools where men awaiting the opportune moment to join their appointed unit might be gainfully employed for a short period of time.*



(Right above: *Unspecified Canadian troops engaged in road construction, this also being a task to which entrenching battalions were assigned – from Le Miroir or Illustration*)

Private Walsh was now to spend two weeks in service with the 2nd Entrenching Battalion which was engaged at the time in carpentry work and street-cleaning in the vicinity of the community of Coupigny. He even contrived to court trouble in the form of...3 days *FP* (*Field Punishment*) No. 1 10/3/17 for while on *AS* (active service) *Absent from 7.0 am Parade 9-3-17*.

On March 18 a single officer and fifty *other ranks* were sent to join the 25th Battalion, Private Walsh one of that number, the unit at that day having been withdrawn from Brigade Support to serve in Divisional Reserve at the Bois des Alleux.

Private Walsh had finally arrived on *active service*.

* * * * *

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

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



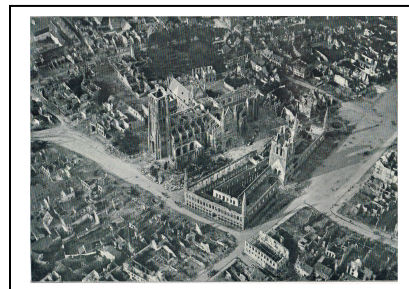
(Preceding page: *A view of the coastal town of Folkestone almost a century later as seen from the white cliffs of nearby Dover – photograph from 2009*)

Only days after having passed through the port of Folkestone and its French counterpart, Boulogne, on September 22 the 25th Battalion was to take over trenches from the 2nd Battalion of *The King's Own* in the *Kingdom of Belgium*. These had been in the areas forward from the communities of Loche and Kemmel, in that small part of the country which had not by then been occupied by the Germans, and to the south of the already-battered medieval city of Ypres.

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



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

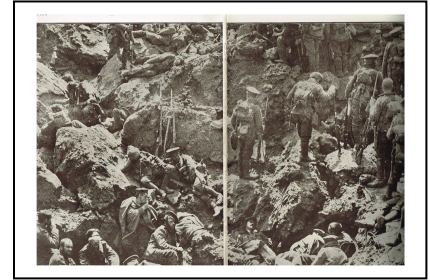


The 25th Battalion was to remain in these sectors until August of the following year, 1916.

In early April of 1916, the 2nd Canadian Division was to undergo its baptism of fire in a major action. It had been at a place named St-Éloi where, at the end of March, on the 27th, the British had detonated a series of mines beneath the German lines and had followed up

with an infantry attack. The newly-arrived Canadian formation had been ordered to follow up the presumed British success, to hold and consolidate the newly-won territory.

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



(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*)

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

The next large-scale infantry confrontation to be contested between the Canadian forces and the German Army came about in the south-eastern area of the *Ypres Salient* where the 3rd Canadian Division had been posted.

The situation, however, had rapidly deteriorated to become serious enough so that units other than those of the 3rd Division were soon ordered into the fray.

On June 2 the Germans had attacked the only high ground in the *Ypres Salient* remaining under British control. This had been just to the south-east of the city of Ypres itself, the area including the village of *Hooge*, *Sanctuary Wood*, *Hill 60*, *Maple Copse*, *Railway Dugouts* and also the promontory which since that time has lent its name – in English, at least - to the action, *Mount Sorrel*.



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

The enemy, preceded by an intense barrage, had overrun the forward Canadian positions and for a while had breached the Canadian lines. However, the Germans had been unable to exploit their success and the Canadians were to re-organize their defences. But the hurriedly-contrived counter-strike of the following day, June 3, delivered piece-meal and poorly coordinated, was to prove a costly experience for the Canadians.



(Right above: *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*)



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

The infantry confrontation had continued until June 13, the final action having been a well-supported attack in the first hours of that morning. The Germans had retreated and by the end of the affair, both sides – apart from a small German gain at *Hooge* – were back much where they had started: it was *status quo* but that the cemeteries were more numerous and that much more full.



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

It had been the Canadian 3rd Division which had been the main recipient of the enemy's full offensive thrust, but the 25th Battalion of the 2nd Canadian Division had apparently to played a role sufficiently important to warrant the name *Mount Sorrel* becoming the first battle-honour won by the unit during the *Great War*.



(Right above: *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. In the first week of June, 1917, a British mine detonated under its summit was to remove much of any similarity to a hill. – photograph from 2014*)

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

Some two weeks later, on the 27th, the unit had been withdrawn into northern France to the vicinity of Steenvoorde and to the village of Moulle.

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



(Right above: *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 following 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 would jam, leaving its user defenceless at a critical moment.

By the summer of 1916 the Canadian units were exchanging it for the more reliable British Short Lee-Enfield Mark III, a rifle that was to ultimately serve around the globe until well after the Second World War.

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

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

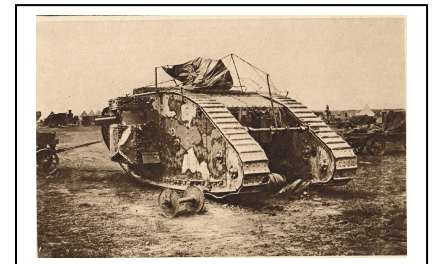
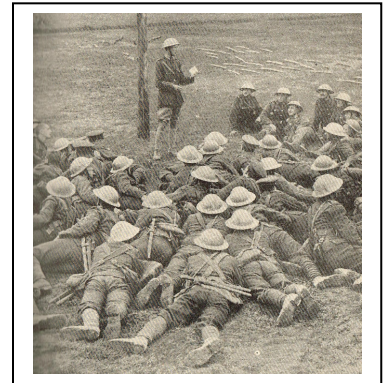
(Preceding page: ***The Canadian Memorial which stands to the side of the Albert-Bapaume Road near the village of Courcellette – photograph from 2015***)

As the battle had progressed, other 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 had entered the fray on August 30 to become part of a third general offensive. Their first major collective contribution was to be in the area of the two villages of Flers and Courcellette.

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

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

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



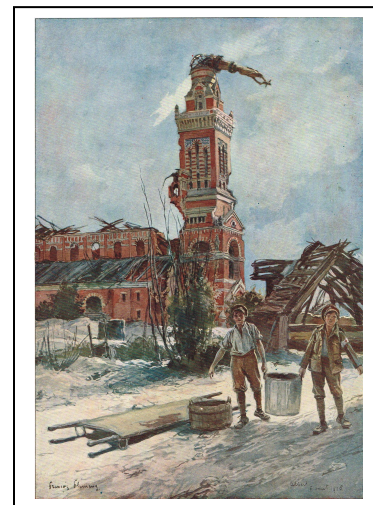
(Right above: *Seen from the north, the village of Courcellette just over a century after the events of the First Battle of the Somme – photograph from 2017*)

**Some of the first tanks ever to be used in battle had apparently been a positive element during the fighting of the day on the Canadians' Front.*

(Right above: *One of the tanks employed during the First Battle of the Somme, here withdrawn from the field and standing in one of the parks where these machines were overhauled and maintained – from Le Miroir*)

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

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



(continued)

Of the six-hundred ninety personnel who had gone over the top on the day of the assault, the 25th Battalion War Diarist was to record thirty-six killed in action, one-hundred ninety-one wounded and seventy-seven as missing in action*.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

(continued)

There was to be little if any concerted infantry activity apart from the constant patrolling and the occasional raids by both sides.

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



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

***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 their support positions somewhere on the Somme during the autumn of the year 1916 - By that time they had been equipped with steel helmets and the less visible, British-made, Lee-Enfield rifles – from Illustration*)

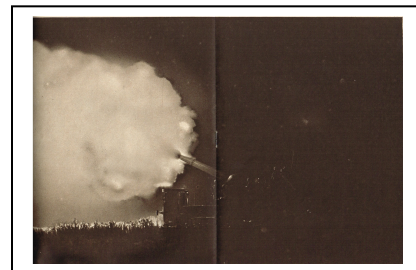
Towards the end of the month of March, on the 23rd, the 25th Battalion had been ordered withdrawn well to the rear, to Maisnil-Bouche, where it was to undergo intensive training which was to be the eventual lot of most, if not all, of the battalions of the Canadian Corps before the upcoming British offensive: learning the topography of the ground to be attacked; the use of the enemy's weapons which, when captured, were to be turned against him; the by-passing and thus isolation of strong-points instead of the costly assault; the coaching of each and every soldier as to his role on the day; the increased employment of aircraft in directing the advance; the concept of a machine-gun barrage; and the exchange of information between the infantry and artillery so as to co-ordinate efforts...

...and at *Vimy Ridge*, the use of tunnels and underground approaches to mask from the enemy the presence of troops and also to ensure the same troops' security.

During the final five days, April 2-7, the unit had been sent to become familiar with ground that had been re-arranged so as to resemble the terrain to be attacked: then, in only two days' time, all that training was now to become the real thing.

(continued)

As the days had passed the artillery barrage had grown progressively heavier; on April 6, Good Friday, the War Diarist of another battalion had described it as...*drums*. By this time, of course, the Germans would have become aware that something was in the offing and their guns in their turn had thrown retaliatory fire onto the Canadian positions - and their aircraft had been extremely busy.



(Right above: *A heavy British artillery piece continues its deadly work during a night before the attack on Vimy Ridge. – from Illustration*)

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

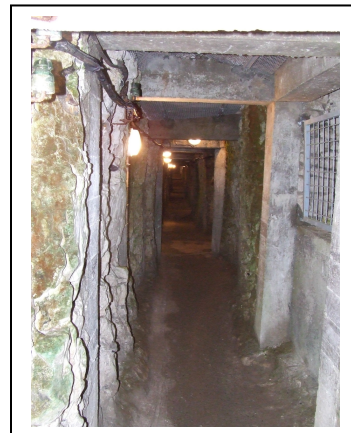
On April 9, Easter Monday, in that spring of 1917, the British Army had launched an offensive in the area to the north of *the Somme* battlefields; this was to be the so-called *Battle of Arras* intended to support a French effort elsewhere. In terms of the count of casualties, some four thousand per day, it would be the most expensive operation of the entire *Great War* for the British, one of the very few positive episodes having been the assault by the Canadian Corps of *Vimy Ridge* on the opening day of the advance.



The British campaign would prove an overall disappointment, but that French offensive of *le Chemin des Dames* was to be yet a further disaster.

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

**It must be said that a great deal of the artillery used in the assault on Vimy Ridge was British and that a British Division – only a single Brigade employed on April 9 – also participated. Almost fifty per cent of the personnel who had been employed for that day were British, not to mention those whose contribution – such as those who dug the tunnels - allowed for it to happen.*



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

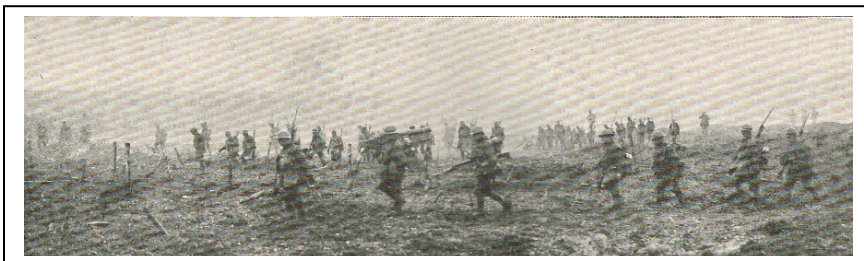
On that April 9, in driving snow, the four Canadian Divisions, for the first time acting as a single, autonomous entity, had stormed the slope of *Vimy Ridge*, by the end of the next day having cleared it almost entirely of its German occupants.

(continued)

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

The 25th Battalion's objectives were apparently soon to be captured and much of the remainder of the day had been spent in consolidating these newly-won positions.

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



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

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



at Fresnoy-en-Gohelle in early May.

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

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



But by this time, However, Private Walsh had played his role to its conclusion.

The son of Frank J. Walsh, fisherman, and of Ellen Walsh (née *Fleming*, deceased June 4, 1920) – the couple married on May 24, 1882 - he apparently had only a single sibling, his brother Thomas, some nine years his senior.

Private Walsh was reported as having been *killed in action* on April 9, 1917, the first day of the *Battle of Arras*, during the fighting near the village of Thélus.

(continued)

Francis Patrick Walsh had enlisted at the *apparent* age of twenty-one years: date of birth at Riverhead, Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, (from attestation papers) January 28, 1895; however, the original Newfoundland Birth Register cites January 13 of the same year.

Private Francis Patrick Walsh 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.

