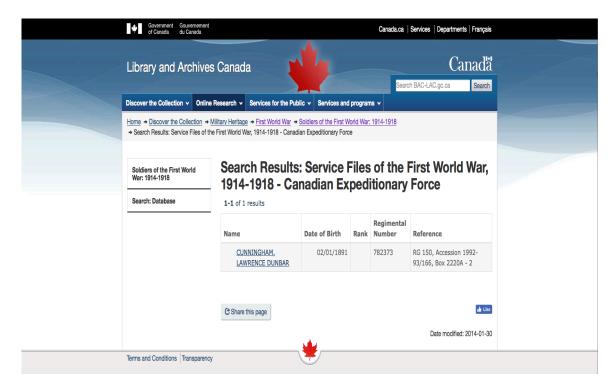
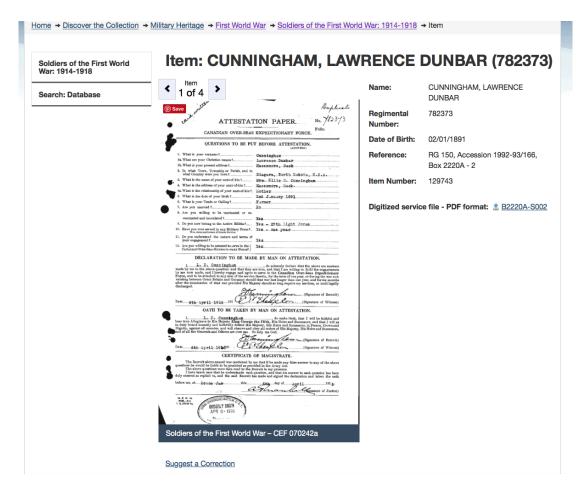
# Notes on researching the Military Service history of Regimental number 782373 Private Laurence Laurence Dunbar Cunningham

In late December 2014 to early January 2015 we were preparing for Griff's memorial service and going through documents, photos and other records to select items to display. Among these records was an envelop with two hardened cardboard like objects that perplexed most of the family. As an Army Officer, I recognised these immediately as military dog-tags. The details on the dog tags were for Griff's father, Laurence Cunningham. I was aware that Griff's father had served in the Canadian Army during the Great War, but I did not know much beyond that. There had been dinner table discussions about Laurence being a pacifist and seeking a role as a stretcher-bearer or medical orderly during the war. The dog-tags provided a key clue to investigate Laurence's war history further – they detailed his regimental number which was 782373.

With Laurence's regimental number, I looked into accessing his service record through the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) online. The LAC is accessed through the URL <a href="www.bac-lac.gc.ca">www.bac-lac.gc.ca</a>. Through the archives you can search a database called Soldiers of the First World War: 1914-1918 (URL: <a href="http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/canadian-expeditionary-force.aspx">http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/canadian-expeditionary-force.aspx</a>.). Entering in names and regimental number leads to the following page:



By clicking on his name this is expanded to show a scan of Laurence's Attestation Paper. This provides some details on his date of enlistment, statement of an oath to serve King George V, a basic medical assessment, religion, next of kin, etc. See the screen shot below.



This is as far as I got in January 2015. There is a 'Digitalised service file – PDF format' link. I clicked on the link but it never seemed to load properly –it would start loading and then stop with no indication of progress. It appeared time out or freeze. I abandoned trying to load the file and added the link to my bookmarks.

Approximately 18 months later, in September 2016, I was up late one night and decided to see what bookmarks I had on my phone. I rediscovered the link to Laurence's service file. I tried the PDF link again, but had the same experience with the apparent loading error. I put the phone down and went to bed. The key to access was patience. When I woke in the morning I discovered that the file had downloaded to reveal a PDF service file of 84 pages.

The file identifies that Laurence served in France and Flanders with the 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. It includes a substantial amount of detail on his medical history; particularly treatment following wounds received on 2 Sep 1918. His wounds led to his evacuation from France to the UK and eventually back to Canada to be discharged on 5 April 1919 as *medically unfit*. 60 years to the day before Sarah was born.

There were two aspects of his service I was particularly looking for; his role and medal entitlements. On page 45 of his service record (in red text) it identifies that Laurence was 'awarded for bravery in the field MM'. This is the Military Medal. The medal is awarded to Warrant Officers, non-commissioned officers

and men for individual or associated acts of bravery on the recommendation of a Commander-in-Chief in the field. This is a substantial award and should be recognised within the family.



Other details of decorations are detailed on the Medal Card in Laurence's file (page 25 of 84) shown below.

NBM:
Number 782373 Rank / 1919
Surname CUNNINGHAM
I have the
Christian Name Car On America of War 11 mgs
Units 46 Bn Com Va Theatre of War 77 mace
Date of Service 23-3-1
Remarks Sankation
Latest Address Hazenmone Jask
DAGURO.
Roll No. 10 1044 1933
200m6-21.M.

As you can tell there is no indication that this document has any link to his medal entitlements. It took some more research to understand that this document was his medal card – the awards he was entitled to indicated by the 'B' and 'V' with a red check mark through them in the top right hand corner of the document. See

the following URL for advice on reading medal cards: <a href="http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/read-medal-card.aspx">http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/read-medal-card.aspx</a>.

The markings on his Medal Record establish that he was entitled to be issued and wear the following medals, in addition to the Military Medal:

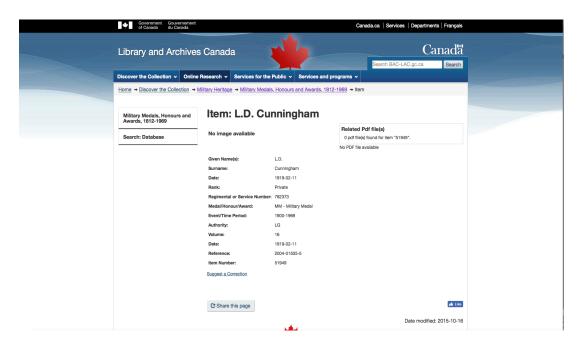
- British War Medal: The British War Medal was awarded to all ranks of Canadian overseas military forces who came from Canada between 05 August 1914 and 11 November 1918, or who had served in a theatre of war.
- Victory Medal. The Victory Medal was awarded to all ranks of the fighting forces, to civilians under contract, and others employed with military hospitals who actually served on the establishment of a unit in a theatre of war between 05 August 1914 and 11 November 1918 (inclusive). This medal was never issued alone and was always issued with the British War Medal. Note the bronze multi leaf emblem on the ribbon was only issued to those who were Mentioned in Dispatches (MID). I do not believe Laurence was MID.



I am unaware if Laurence's medals are still in the family, but if they are they should have his regimental number initials and surname engraved on the bottom edge of each medal. If the medals are not in the family I will investigate getting a set of replicas mounted. The medals should be mounted as a group in the following order:



Following the discovery of Laurence being awarded the Military Medal, I went in search of some form of citation that would have detailed the basis for the award. I returned to the LAC website to search for more details. Interestingly, when I searched under his first and last name I did not get a hit. When I added his regimental number I got a result – it turns out that that the details are referenced in the database under his initials 'L.D.' only (I have send a Correction suggestion to LAC to include his first and middle names). The search provided the following data:



This record provides some further clues to look for a citation. The next step was to search the *London Gazette*. All details of the approval of these sort of honours and awards would have been registered in the London Gazette at the time. The LAC record (above) provided some key clues of the date of the award (1919-02-11 and the Authority (LG). Searching on the London Gazette website was not so simple and required a range of searches and progressively narrowing down to the issue of the London Gazette that Laurence's award of the Military Medal was gazetted. In the end the LAC reference was a bit of a bum-steer. I found the record in the Edinburgh Gazette of 11 February 1919 on page 888. Information on the Gazette's website (https://www.thegazette.co.uk) notes that the Gazette is the UK's official public record. It is comprised of three publications: The London Gazette (published every weekday), The Belfast Gazette (published on Fridays) and The Edinburgh Gazette (published on Tuesdays and Fridays). There are a lot of Military Medals gazetted in this edition, but the wording in the gazette (with the specific extract of Laurence's details from the gazette) as follows:

His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Military Medal for Bravery in the Field to the undermentioned Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men:-

```
888 SUPPLEMENT TO THE EDINBURGH GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 13, 1919.
```

782373 Pte. Cunningham, L. D., 46th Bn., 675796 Pte. Dewey, C. G., 2nd Bn., E. Saskatchewan R. Ontario R.

Unfortunately, the Gazette provided no citation, further detail or basis for the award. Based on the date of the award, I assumed that its award may be from the action in which Laurence was wounded by a machine gun bullet to his right hand – so what action was his unit involved in on 2 September 1918? The focus of the search led to more research about his unit – 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion CEF.

# A quick orientation with the 46th Infantry battalion (from Wikipedia)

The 46th Battalion (South Saskatchewan), CEF, was an Infantry Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the Great War. The 46th Battalion was authorized on 7 November 1914 and embarked for Britain on 23 October 1915. On 11 August 1916 it disembarked in France, where it fought with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division in France and Flanders until the end of the war. The battalion was disbanded on 30 August 1920.

The unit has come to be known as "The Suicide Battalion". The 46th Battalion lost 1,433 killed and 3,484 wounded – a casualty rate of 91.5 percent in 27 months.

The 46th Battalion recruited throughout Saskatchewan and was mobilized at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

The 46th Battalion had two Officers Commanding:

- Lt.-Col. H. Snell, 22 October 1915 29 August 1916
- Lt.-Col. H.J. Dawson, CMG, DSO, 29 August 1916-Demobilization

One member of the 46th Battalion was awarded the Victoria Cross. Sergeant Hugh Cairns (VC) was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at Valenciennes on 1 November 1918.

The 46th Battalion was awarded the following battle honours:

- Battle of the Somme
- Battle of Ancre Heights
- · Battle of Ancre
- Battle of Arras (1917)
- Battle of Arras (1918)
- Battle of Vimy Ridge
- Battle of Hill 70
- Battle of Ypres (1917)
- Battle of Passchendaele
- Battle of Amiens (1918)
- Battle of the Scarpe
- Battle of Dracourt-Quéant
- Hindenburg Line
- Battle of Canal du Nord
- Pursuit to the Selle
- Western Front

The 46th Battalion (South Saskatchewan), CEF, is perpetuated by The Saskatchewan Dragoons.

A few more internet searches focusing on the 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion CEF led me to a message board (URL: http://1914-

1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?/topic/41943-46th-canadian-infantry-battalion-record/). This provided a link to the official war diary of the 46th Infantry Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force (found here:

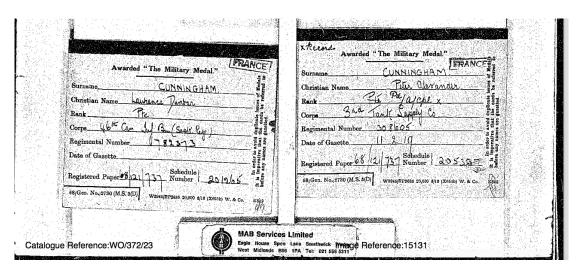
http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/netacgi/nph-

brs?s1=46th&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-

52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HIT OFF&d=FIND&p=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.collectionscanada.ca%2Farchivia net%2F02015202\_e.html&r=0&f=S). As you can see from the Battle honours in the Wikipedia summary, the unit was very busy and involved in some of the most recognised engagements on the Western Front.

This is a fabulous find and it provides a lot of information on the day-to-day activities of the Officers and Men of the 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. Matching Laurence's service record with the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion's war diary you will be able to trace his steps through France between 1916 and 1918. It is a bit cumbersome as they are essentially photo scans of the diary and you have to open each page as an individual file. As they are effectively photos, you cannot complete a word or name search. Nonetheless, it will be fascinating to see what his unit was up to throughout the war during Laurence's time with the Battalion. His service record

details when he was absent on leave (two weeks in early 1918) or for other reasons (eg he had some dental work in 1917). More on this resource later. I also found reference to his Military Medal award through the UK National Archives website. I had to pay a small fee (£3.45) to get access. Unfortunately it provided no additional information on the reason for the award but it is another missing piece of Laurence's service record and further evidence of his award. A copy of the Military Medal Card is shown below:



# **Battle of Dracourt-Quéant**

Laurence's wound date led to more research on the Battle of Dracourt-Quéant. The Battle of Dracourt-Quéant was an action that occurred over 2-4 September 1918. I have included (as an attachment) an extract from the September 1918 46th Infantry Battalion War diaries (Appendix 20 to the Diary) detailing the Acting Officer Commanding's report of the 46th Infantry Battalion's actions between 2 to 4 September 1918. On this day during this battle, seven Canadians were awarded the Victoria Cross including a stretcher-bearer completing similar tasks to Laurence if that was indeed his role within the Battalion. Over 5,000 Canadian casualties occurred on 2 September alone during this battle. Essentially, this was an Allied counter attack against the German 1918 offensive that had been halted just a week or so before in August 1918.

As indicated, the Battle of Dracourt-Quéant was the action in which Laurence was wounded in action, based on the records in his service file. This eventually led to his discharge as being medically unfit. A number of the documents in his service file detail that Laurence was wounded on 2 September 1918 by a GSW (Gun Shot Wound) to his right hand (see x-ray of Laurence's hand, page 73 of 84); see below:



Laurence was shipped back to the UK on 5 September 1918, to the Mile End Military hospital on Bancroft Road, London for 17 days from 6 to 23 September 1918. He was then transferred to the Granville Canadian Specialist Hospital located at Buxton, Derbyshire for 40 days (to 1 November 1918) where he appears to have undergone a number of surgeries on his hand that was infected. The War ended whilst he was in the No. 5 Canadian General Hospital in Liverpool (1 to 26 November 1918) before being repatriated to Canada on the Ship 'ARAGUAYA' arriving on 7 December 1918.

On the Canadian Veterans Affairs website, there are some audio recordings of a soldier who was wounded on the same day as Laurence reflecting on the day of the battle and his return to Moosejaw, Saskatchewan. There are a number of video clips with audio detailing the experiences of this WWI soldier during the battle and his eventual repatriation to Canada. I imagine this would provide a great insight for the family to get a sense of what Laurence would have experienced. The following link will take you to one of the clips on the website, but you can review the others form there:

URL: http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/video-gallery/video/5721

Incidentally, I sent two correction suggestions to the Library and Archives Canada on 13 Sep 16:

Ηi

My wife is the Granddaughter of Laurence Cunningham and I had accessed his record of service to understand more about his service history. I note on the database his rank is not listed - it is Pte. Also, he was awarded the Military Medal so his name should include the post-nominals MM - the record of his award of the Military Medal is detailed on page 45 of his service record and also in the 'Edinburgh Gazette of Tuesday 11 February 1919 0n page 888 (first name on the page). I am not sure if you include this sort of information in the database section, but I note other entries include rank at least. I have been searching for a citation for the award of the MM (hence seeking out the London/Edinburgh Gazette entry and a review of the 46th Infantry Battalion war diaries - but no luck yet. Would appreciate any advice on finding additional details on his service history. His file consists predominately of his medial history following wounds sustained on 2 Sep 18 and eventual honourable discharge in 1919. Regards

Justin Tate Lieutenant Colonel Royal Australian Engineers

The second correction relates to his first and middle names not being detailed on the Medal database (as indicated earlier in this document).

I hope you enjoy discovering these artefacts and resources for yourself. For me it was important so I can eventually share it with Jacob as he gets older. When he starts to learn about WWI and WWII, I can instil a greater understanding of the potential impacts of war and improve his own knowledge about his own family's involvement in these wars and other conflicts – leading to his mother and father meeting in Sudan in 2006.

Regards

Justin Tate 13 September 2016

## Post script on 22 Nov 16:

**Spelling of Laurence's name**. Originally I had spelled Laurence as 'Lawrence'. A forgivable error I am sure. It should be noted (as you may have picked up in the Canadian Archive images) that in many of the official records his name is spelled with a 'w'. Perhaps he got the 'Elis Island' treatment from his Army recruiters. It would have been virtually impossible to turn back those wheels of bureaucracy!

**Battalion assignment.** Margaret asked about Laurence's Battalion number. On enlistment it appears as though Laurence was allocated to the 128<sup>th</sup> Battalion established in Moose Jaw , Saskatchewan. The 128th Infantry Battalion sailed

from Canada on August 15th, 1916 and would have arrived in England about 10 days later.

The 128th was absorbed into the 15th and 19th Reserve Battalions, who in turn supplied Saskatchewan affiliated combat battalions including the 5th, 28th, x 1st Mounted Rifles in France and in your Father's case the 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalion. It was a common practice within Commonwealth forces to try and keep regionally recruited men in similar/same geographic based units. This makes some sense considering some of the cultural aspects of the time and it potentially provided a form of welfare support for the families of deceased or wounded soldiers. However, it also led to widespread devastation of the young male populations of local communities.

**Accoutrements**. I have provided images of the two Battalion cap badges Laurence would most likely have worn on his service cap. He would have also worn collar badges on his uniform



*Top left to right*: Cap badge of the 128<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalion, CEF and 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, CEF.

*Below left to right*: Collar badge for 128<sup>th</sup> Bn and Laurence with 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion cap and collar badges from the *Letters* website.



**Victoria Crosses**. Margaret asked a question regarding Victoria Crosses awarded at the Battle of Dracourt-Quéant. As I mentioned earlier, seven Canadians were awarded the VC based on their actions at this battle – the same battle in which Laurence was wounded. VCs were awarded to: Bellenden Hutcheson, Arthur George Knight, William Henry Metcalf, Claude Nunney, Cyrus Wesley Peck, Walter Leigh Rayfield and John Francis Young.

I have included the citations below. The citations provide an indication of combat on the day Laurence was wounded . Two of particular note are Captain Hutcheson and Private Young who were a Medical Officer and Stretcher-bearer respectively. Noting Laurence was a stretcher bearer, and the circumstances of his wounds detailed in the *Letters* website

(<a href="http://www.lettersfromthegreatwar.com/epilogue/">http://www.lettersfromthegreatwar.com/epilogue/</a>), the citations of these two soldiers demonstrate the bravery and chaos that occurred that are particularly applicable to Laurence on 2 Sep 18, a few miles outside of Arras in France. I have been pretty lazy and just pulled the citations of these VC recipients from Wikipedia, but they al reference the London Gazette for the citations. There is plenty of more information on the background, action and future of these gentlemen – noting two of the awards were posthumous (Knight and Nunney).

**46<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalion VC Recipient**. Even closer to home was Sergeant Hugh Cairns VC DCM, (4 December 1896[1] – 2 November 1918) of the 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalion who was awarded a VC posthumously for action on 2 Nov 18. The citation reads:

For most conspicuous bravery before Valenciennes on 1st November, 1918, when a machine gun opened on his platoon. Without a moment's hesitation Serjt. Cairns seized a Lewis gun and single-handed, in the face of direct fire, rushed the post, killed the crew of five, and captured the gun. Later, when the line was held up by machine-gun fire, he again rushed forward, killing 12 enemy and capturing 18 and two guns.

Subsequently, when the advance was held up by machine guns and field guns, although wounded, he led a small party to outflank them, killing many, forcing about 50 to surrender, and capturing all the guns. After consolidation he went with a battle patrol to exploit Marly and forced 60 enemy to surrender. Whilst disarming this party he was severely wounded. Nevertheless, he opened fire and inflicted heavy losses. Finally he was rushed by about 20 enemy and collapsed from weakness and loss of blood. Throughout the operation he showed the highest degree of valour, and his leadership greatly contributed to the success of the attack. He died on the 2nd November from wounds.

**Capt. Bellenden Seymour Hutcheson**, VC Can. A. Med. Corps, attending 75th Bn., 1st Central Ontario R.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on September 2nd, when under most intense shell, machine-gun and rifle fire, he went through the Queant-Drocourt Support Line with the battalion. Without hesitation and with utter disregard of personal safety he remained on the field until every wounded man had been attended to. He dressed the wounds of a seriously wounded officer under terrific machine-gun and shell fire, and, with the assistance of prisoners and of his own men, succeeded in evacuating him to safety, despite the

fact that the bearer party suffered heavy casualties.

Immediately afterwards he rushed forward, in full view of the enemy, under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire, to tend a wounded sergeant, and, having placed him in a shell-hole, dressed his wounds. Captain Hutcheson performed many similar gallant acts, and, by his coolness and devotion to duty, many lives were saved.

### Private. John Francis Young, VC 87th Bn., Quebec R.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in attack at Dury-Arras sector on the 2nd September, 1918, when acting as a stretcher-bearer attached to "D" Company of the 87th Bn., Quebec Regiment.

This company in the advance over the ridge suffered heavy casualties from shell and machine-gun fire.

Pte. Young, in spite of the complete absence of cover, without the least hesitation went out, and in the open fire-swept ground dressed the wounded. Having exhausted his stock of dressings, on more than one occasion he returned, under intense fire, to his company headquarters for a further supply. This work he continued for over an hour, displaying throughout the most absolute fearlessness.

To his courageous conduct must be ascribed the saving of the lives of many of his comrades.

Later, when the fire had somewhat slackened, he organised and led stretcher parties to bring in the wounded whom he had dressed.

All through the operations of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th September Pte. Young continued to show the greatest valour and devotion to duty.

#### Sergeant Arthur George Knight, VC

On 2 September 1918 at Villers-les-Cagnicourt, France, when a bombing section which he was leading was held up, Sergeant Knight went forward alone, bayoneting several machine-gunners and trench mortar crews, and forcing the rest to retire. Then bringing forward a Lewis gun he directed his fire on the retreating enemy; his platoon went in pursuit and the sergeant, seeing about 30 of the enemy going into a tunnel leading off the trench, again went forward alone, killing an officer and two NCOs and taking 20 prisoners. After this, again single-handed, he routed another hostile party. Later he was fatally wounded.

# L./Cpl. William Henry Metcalf, VC M.M., Manitoba R.

For most conspicuous bravery, initiative and devotion to duty in attack, when, the right flank of the battalion being held up, he realised the situation and rushed forward under intense machine-gun fire to a passing Tank on the left. With his signal flag he walked in front of the Tank, directing it along the trench in a perfect hail of bullets and bombs. The machine-gun strong points were overcome, very heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, and a very critical situation was relieved.

Later, although wounded, he continued to advance until ordered to get into a shell hole and have his wounds dressed.

His valour throughout was of the highest standard.

# CPL Claude Joseph Patrick Nunney VC, DCM, MM (24 December 1892 – 18 September 1918)

For most conspicuous bravery during the operations against the Drocourt-Quéant Line on Sept. 1st and 2nd, 1918.

On Sept. 1st, when his battalion was in the vicinity of Vis-en-Artois, preparatory to the advance, the enemy laid down a heavy barrage and counter-attacked. Pte. Nunney, who was at this time at company headquarters, immediately on his own initiative proceeded through the barrage to the company outpost lines, going from post to post and encouraging the men by his own fearless example. The enemy were repulsed and a critical situation was saved.

During the attack on Sept. 2nd, his dash continually placed him in advance of his companions, and his fearless example undoubtedly helped greatly to carry the company forward to its objectives. When his battalion which was preparing to advance, was heavily counter-attacked by the enemy, Private Nunney on his own initiative, went forward through the barrage to the company out-post lines, going from post to post and encouraging the men by his own fearless example.

# Lt.-Col. Cyrus Wesley Peck, VC D.S.O., Manitoba R.

For most conspicuous bravery and skillful leading when in attack under intense fire.

His command quickly captured the first objective, but progress to the further objective was held up by enemy machine-gun fire on his right flank.

The situation being critical in the extreme, Colonel Peck pushed forward and made a personal reconnaissance under heavy machine-gun and sniping fire, across a stretch of ground which was heavily swept by fire.

Having reconnoitred the position he returned, reorganised his battalion, and, acting upon the knowledge personally gained; pushed them forward and arranged to protect his flanks. He then went out under the most intense artillery and machine-gun fire, intercepted the Tanks, gave them the necessary directions, pointing out where they were to make for, and thus pave the way for a Canadian Infantry battalion to push forward. To this battalion he subsequently gave requisite support.

His magnificent display of courage and fine qualities of leadership enabled the advance to be continued, although always under heavy artillery and machinegun fire, and contributed largely to the success of the brigade attack.

### Private Walter Leigh Rayfield, VC

From 2–4 September 1918 during the operations east of Arras, France, Private Rayfield, ahead of his company, rushed a trench occupied by a large party of the enemy, bayoneting two and taking 10 prisoners. Later, after engaging with great skill an enemy sniper, he rushed the section of the trench from which the sniper had been operating and so demoralised the enemy that 30 others surrendered to him. Subsequently, regardless of personal safety, he left cover under heavy machine-gun fire and carried in a badly wounded comrade.

APPENDIX NO ....

appendict 20. 46TH BATTALION SASKATCHEWAN REGIMENT.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS September 2nd-4th 1918 inclusive.

Ref. Sheet 51.8. 1/40,000,

PRILIPINARY ASSEPHLY. August 31st.

On August 51st conferences were held at 10th C.I.E. Headquarters with G.O.C. and Battalion Commanders and the intended operations of the Brigade discussed and tasks given to the Battalions. After a conference in the late evening of that day a meeting of Company Commanders was held, details of the operation some into and tasks of the Companies allotted.

Sept. 1st.

Commanding Officer and reconnaissance party proceeded to forward area, reconnoitred place of assembly, gained particulars from troops holding and Commanding Officer returned in the afternoon to Unit, which had moved up to MANCOURT vicinity. There Brigade orders were received, a meeting of Officers held and the whole operation discussed. N.C.O's and men went minutely into maps and photos and thoroughly familiarised themselves with their tasks and area of operafamiliarised themselves with their tasks and area of operations. The Battalion marched to their place of assembly North of SERIFE COPSE via ARRAS - CAMERAI ROAD and after a difficult and arduous journey, caused by enemy shelling, burning motor wagons and exploding shells in them, arrived in its position of assembly at 1.10 a.m. Brigade were advised of completion of assembly. BATTALION HEADQUARTERS and REGIMENTAL AID FOST established in Sunken Road at N.23.c.15.15. This place was heavily shelled and several casualties occurred in Headquarters Sections. After assembly Company Companders visited Commanding Officer and casualties occurred in Headquarters Sections. After assembly Company Commanders visited Commanding Officer and barrage map was gone into.

Sept. 2nd ADVANCE and ATTACK.

The task set the Battalion was to follow the 47th and 50th Battalions, leapfrog them on the DRCCOURT - UTBANT LINE and capture the Village of DURY. Frontage 1000 yards and depth of penetration to RED LINE 1300 yards.

METHOD OF ATTACK.

It was decided to carry out the task by attacking on a 2-company frontage in four waves, each Company on a 2-platoon frontage, distance between waves 75 yards, "O" Company, Capt. Blair, on Right, "D" Company, Capt. Shaw, on Left, supported by "A" Company, Capt. Brown and "B" Company, Capt. Bateman, respectively. respectively.

TASKS.

First wave to go right to objective. Second wave to mop up Eastern side of DURY. Third wave to advance to Vestern side of DURY and mop up the area and consolidate in DROCOURT-WUEART SUFFORT LINE. Fourth wave to advance and mop up DURY WOOD and QUARRIES and consolidate the DURY-QUEANT SUPPORT LINE.

JUMPOFF. ADVANCE.

ZERO 5 a.m. The Battalion, with waves closed up, mobehind the barrage. The Battalion moved North of STRIFF COPSE to avoid enemy shelling; then swung out, aligning itself on Brigade frontage. Formation was checked up from time to time, and though shelled few casualties occurred up to the Battalion reaching the DECCURT-QUEANT SUPPORT LINE.

OTION OF COMPANY.

One Platoon of "C" Company, Lieut. Blodgett, with another in support, worked round the left of the DURY WOOD through the Village of DURY and consolidated on the final objective. The other 2 platoons of this Company in extended order moved forward on the right of DURY WOOD and on reaching the DECOURT-QUEANT SUPPORT LINE were held up by machine gun and rifle fire from the Sunker Road between the Crucifix F.22.c.20.10 and Chapel P.21.d.70.40. The Battalion on the right were also held up at this zim point. At this point

ACTION OF RIGHT COMPANY (cont'd)

Capt. Brown, Commanding the Right Support Company, appreciated the situation and sent to obtain the assistance of a tank to deal with this enemy opposition. S.O.S. rocket was also sent up by Capt. Blair to signify "held up". The tank brook down just West of the DROCOURT-QUEANT SUFFORT LINE and so was unable to render any assistance. Thereupon Capt. Brown, acting with prompt decision, ordered 2 sections of his company to proceed through the Village and outflank the enemy opposition. These Sections were led by Sergeant Parker, who successfully outflanked from the rear, whilst Capt. Brown, leading the remainder of his Company, 2 Platoons, forward, took the enemy from the front and as a result the whole South-Western defences of the Village fell. About 120 prisoners and 2 heavy machine mans and 7 light machine guns were captured by this Company. Sergeant Parker also dealt with enemy machine gun at MOULIN DAMIERS with rifle grenades and silenced this opposition and as a result "C" Company and the Battalion on right felt the result and moved forward, "C" Company taking up their position on the RED LINE and digging in. Capt. Brown reported objective gained 7.45 a.m.

ACTION OF LEFT COMPANY. The Company crossed the DECOURT-QUEART LINE in good organised shape and in the QUARRIES Lieut. Rising (subsequently killed) and Lieut. Philpott captured the Area Commandant, his Assistant, and about 100 prisoners, who surrendered freely. During the mopping up of the QUARRIES our barrage fell heavily on DURY and advantage was taken then to re-organize. The DROCOURT-QUEART SUPPORT LINE was reached with little opposition and Lieut. Rising was detailed to take 1 Flatcon through the Village and establish himself on the objective. At the same time 2 sections of another platoon proceeded through the Woods at P.22.a. and established a position on the high ground beyond, connecting up with Lieut. Rising. The remaining two sections of the last mentioned Platoon, together with No. 13 Platoon, remained in the Support Line and No. 16 Platoon went out by Sections to connect with Lieut. Rising.

At 7.30 a.m. Lieut. Rising reported to Capt. Shaw that he had established himself on the objective and had connected up with "C" Company on his right. Capt. Shaw then reconnoitred the line and found his Company connected un the right with "C" Company and the Left Flank held by Units of the London Rifle Brigade, and thereafter fired 3 white lights in succession to signify that the objective had been reached. This was done at 7.50 a.m. Capt. Shaw reports that the enemy in front seemed to be greatly disorganized and parties were hurrying away and Lewis Gun and rifle fire was kept up by the Company in the line with great success, many casualties being inflicted. It is estimated that over 300 prisoners were sent back from the Left Company Sectors.

POSITION AT 7.50 a.m.

The Battalion had made its objective and were consolidating upon the RED LINE.

Right Company Situation at 8.15 am At 8.15 a.m. the Left Flank of the 85th Battalion withdrew on a frontage from our Right Flank to MOULIN DAMIERS for a considerable distance. This action left our Right Flank in the air and the Right Company Commander withdrew his Right Fosts to the Sunken Road between the Crucifix and the forward edge of the Village, where good cover and a field of fire were available. Later a Company of the 87th Battalion came up and took up positions a long the Sunken Road and pushed out posts, thus protecting our Right Flank. At 8.45 a.m. a party of the 44th Battalion moved forward from the Sunken Road in an casterly direction but were held up by machine gun fire from enemy protected posts in P.22.d. and 20.b. Their line was there held up and fell back to the line occupied by the 87th Battalion and then finally to the Sunken Road on our front. This party, which consisted of a Company Sergeant Major, 2 Sergeants and 86 other ranks, placed themselves under the

command of Capt. Blair until they had instructions from their Battalion. The situation there, remained the same till 12 noon, the Support Company being in the DROCOURT-QUEANT SUPPORT LINE.

BATTALION HEAD-QUARTERS. At 7.30 a.m. Battalion Headquarters moved forward to the DROCOURT-QUEANT LINE and were established at P.21.c.40.90. On arrival thre I found that the 47th and 50th Battalions had made their objectives and was informed by an Officer of the 47th Battalion who came back that the Battalion had captured LURY. I sent a message to Brigade and to the 44th Battalion advising timed 8.20 a.m. I proceeded to the left and found 2nd Essex in the DROCOURT-QUEANT SUPPORT LINE and an Officer informed me that there was a Company of this Battalion North of the Village. Lieut. Scott was detailed to report as to connection with Flanks and Lieut. Crowe went forward to report on situation in Front Line. The DROCOURT-QUEANT LINE, QUEANT SUPPORT LINE and posts in front of the Village were being subjected to heavy machine gun fire and to artillery fire. To deal with machine gun fire a request was sent to endeavour might be made to smother machine gun fire. Communication forward was also difficult and dangerous owing to machine gun fire and sniping. At 11.30 a.m. Captains Brown and Bateman came to Battalion Headquarters and advised that the Support Line was very shallow and was being subjected to heavy machine gun fire. I asked them to hold on taking as much cover as possible until the situation was relieved by the push forward of the leap-frogging Battalions but to make the best dispositions possible to avoid casualties.

From reports received from Capt. Blair and Capt. Shaw the situation at 12 noon was that the Fosts East of the Village had suffered many casualties owing to artillery fire, machine gun fire and sniping, that a Post covering Road approach to the Village had been wiped out and that the enemy were developing a strong counter-attack on the Village. 12.35 p.m. I rescived a message from Capt. Shaw that the Units on his Left Flank had withdrawn, that the Flank of his Company was threatened and that the Company had received very heavy casualties, that there was no contact with Company on Right and that he had been forced back to the QUEANT SUPP ORT LINE. On receipt of this message I went forward, meeting on the way Col. Page, 50th Battalion, who had come up, and advised him of the situation, also advising Brigads, and informed both that I was going to re-establish the Line. An order was sent to all Companies advising them of the situation and that the Village must be held at all costs. On proceeding forward to the QUEANT SUPPORT LINE I met Capt. Brown and Capt. Shaw. Capt. Brown was ordered to sent one Platoon forward to fill up the gap between the 2 Front Companies and establish connection with Right Forward Company and Capt. Shaw was ordered to reestablish his Line by a counter-attack. I also ordered Capt. establish his Line by a counter-attack. I also ordered Capt. Bateman to take up a Left defensive Flank position with one Platoon. Arrangements were thereupon made and the counterattack was brilliantly done by flanking the enemy with Lewis gun fire and cleaning him out of the position by a bayonet charge made by 1 Platoon under Lieut. Goulden over a distance of 300 yards. The line was re-established at 2.10 p.m. and a report to that effect sent to Brigade at once, and Colonels Page and Keegan advised. In this counter-attack the enemy were utterlyrrouted and took to flight. 1 Officer, 8 unwounded and 20 wounded were captured, as also 2 machine guns and a large number of casualties inflicted on the enemy in and a large number of casualties inflicted on the enemy in front of our positions. His stretcher bearers were observed busy collecting their wounded and taking them to the rear for about 2 hours. The line was now firmly established on the left and no trouble was experienced from the Left Flank. 2 Platoons of the 2nd Cemeron Highlanders were placed on the Left of our position and secured our Flank.

On the Right the line on the East of the Village had been swept by Machine gun fire and many casualties inflicted. About noon Capt. Blair was informed that post in Sunken Road before referred to had been wiped out and that the Left Companies Posts had been withdrawn and that the enemy were penetrating into the Village. Capt. Blair rightly decided that the Village must be held at all costs and the enemy prevented from getting into same in strength. About this time the Platoen from the Support Company arrived and filled up the break in the line and Capt. Blair had this Platoen posted and a Post established to cover the Sunken Road at P.22.d.20.55. He than had a Platoen of the 44th who had attached themselves to him enter the Village and clean up those of the enemy who had entered into same, which was done in a very gallant and satisfactory mannor. The Commanding Officer saw Capt. Blair and approved of what had been done and advised him as to the counter-attack to be made by "D" Company for the purpose of re-establishing the vosts, which was completed as above related.

About 2.10 p.m. the situation therefore was that the whols line had been re-established, the enemy who had entered the Village K cleared out and the defence made secure.

In the afternoon it was reported by Capt. Show that he was in touch with the 44th Battalion on his Left. Thereafter there was a great moderation in artillery and machine gun fire and the situation remained more or less normal. Groups of the enemy were reported filtering in front of the Left Company about 7.30 p.m. and Brigade and artillery notified to deal with same.

Colonel Devies, 44th Battalion, called at Battalion Head-quarters and delivered 0.0.154, the order for the attack meet morning. Zero Hour, 5 a.m. Company Commanders were immediately sent for and the operation and details of seme discussed and instructions given. It was arranged with Colonel Davies that his party who were with our Right Company should move over to his Battalion Frontage, Left of Brigade Front, and that "A" Company would outh out Posts in the early morning to cover the assembly of assault Companies, "A" Right Company, "B" Left Company, supported by "C" and "D" Companies respectively, "G" Company forming up on the Right after the assault Companies had passed through them. Instructions were also given to "A" Company to deal with any Machine Gun Posts that might be in the vicinity of the Sunken Road which would trouble the assembly.

Sept.

Battalion Battle Headquarters moved to QUEANT SUPPORT LINE at F.21.d.50,45.

4.45

Assembly reported complete by all Companies. Lieut. Growe (Scout Officer) went forward to ascertain that the assembly was complete and informed the Commanding Officer at Zero hour that the assembly had been completed and the lith Frigade on the Right informed him that the operation was postponed. At the same time a message came through from Battalion Headquarters that the operation had been postponed for 24 hours and I went forward and saw to the withdrawal of the assembled Battalion, directing them to take up their positions as before the assembly. The Battalion were back in their positions at 6.20 s.m. and Brigade advised. In view of the fact that no opposition had greeted the assembly opposite the Battalion I went forward to the Front Line Companies and instructed them to send out Patrols and endeavour to get in touch with the enemy and report. This action was subsequently ordered by message from Brigade, B.M.435. I thereafter went round all Companies, advised thom as to the situation and the possibility of a move forward and directed that all should be prepared to move forward when orders received, Subsequently I advised the G.O.C. as to what I had done and received instructions to conform w ith the move of the 11th Brigade on the Right and the 44th Battalion on the Left, and that the Battalion was not to be responsible for the Village of SAUDEMONT. At 11.15 a.m. the Battalion moved forward on their objective, the GREEN LINE, in

in artillery formation, preceded by myself, Lieut. Scott and Scouts. The advance was made on a 500 yards frontage and under very heavy enomy shelling, causing quite a number of casualties. In moving forward touch was established with the 44th Battalion on the Left and also with the 87th Battalion on the Right. The Battalion was led on to their position in the GREEN LINE and dug in. At 12.10 pm. the Battalion were in position in the GREEN LINE. Battalion Head-quarters was temporarily established in QUARRY at Q.13.c.20.85 and Brigade informed that the Battalion were on their objective. Stop were immediately taken to distribute the Battalion in depth for defensive purposes and a meeting of Company Commanders was held there and instructions given. The area occupied by the Battalion was vory heavily shelled and also the vicinity of Headquarters and about 5.20 p.m. a shell burst at the door of the temporary Headquarters and caused casualties, Capt. Bateman being killed, Magor J.A.Hopo, M.C., wounded, myself slightly wounded, and 1 other rank, 10th T.M.B., killed.

The Battalion was distributed in depth, "C" and "D" Companies in the Front Line with Outpost Line in front, "A" Company in support and "B" Company in reserve. A recommaissance was made to obtain accommodation for Battalion Headquarters which were latterly established at \$20.8.40.45, at 9 p.m., and next morning "B" Company of hished at 6.20.a.40.45, at 9 p.m., and more murrers in ECOURT-ST-which Lieut. Hewitt took command, moved into quarters in ECOURT-ST-which Lieut. Hewitt took command, moved into quarters in ECOURT-ST-which Lieut. Hewitt took command, moved into quarters in ECOURT-ST-which Lieut. QUENTIN. Battle patrols were sent forward in the afternoon by and "D" Companies to reconnoitre the area forward to the Canal, including Bridge-heads if possible.

I went over the Front Line about 8.15 p.m. and found all in order, thereafter proceeding via the Support Company to the newly established Battelion Headquarters.

45 civilians were found in the Village of ECOURT-ST-QUENTIN without gas masks and the town was heavily shelled with gas shells. Brigade were advised at 7.40 p.m. and during the course of next morning the civilians were removed under arrangements made by French Mission.

On advice from the Brigade the 44th Battalion took over a portion of our established Front Line as far as Q.14.c.80.75 and the relief was completed during the evening by 10 p.m.

Jept. In the early morning of the 4th inst, a telephone message was 4th. received from Brigade that the Battalion and push a forward patrols towards Bridges in Q.23.a. and towards PALLUEL in Q.10.d. to ascertain if same were held and to be prepared to support the patrols for a general advance. I immedia tely sent for the Officer Communding "A" Companyaand instructed him to have a patrol ready to proceed on orders. Owing to interruption of telephone communication 0.D.146 containing instructions was received at 8.30 a.m., along with message O.D. 148 ordering the crossings to be secured during the day or under cover of darkness at night as a first step. A patrol under Liout. Coates was ordered to recommoitre the approaches to FALLUEL and the Bridges and if not occupied to seize same and hold, and if opposition met with to keep enemy under observation, make a general recommaissance of the whole situation and report. A patrol was sent from "A" Company under Lieut. Philpott accompanied by Lieut. Growe (Scout Officer) with similar instructions with regard to the Bridges in Q.23.a. These steps were taken as a preliminary to working out a scheme of attack on these Bridges and establishing Bridge-heads during the evening. In the forence Major Perry (Brigade Major) visited Battalion Head-quarters and I informed him of the steps which had been taken and that the patrols sent out were for the purpose of recommaissance and if no opposition met with to establish Bridge-heads. This action, he informed me, was exactly what was intended by the G.O.C. and this was subsequently confirmed by a telephone conversation I had with Ceneral Hayter. Heads. Philpott's patrol returned in the aftermoon and I communicated with the G.O.C. giving him the contents of the patrol Bridges and if not occupied to seize same and hold, and if opposition communicated with the G.O.C. giving him the contents of the patrol report, which was subsequently forwarded to Erigade. A copy of Lieut. Con te's report was also forwarded.

During the day the area occupied by the Battalion was poriodically shelled, also the Village of ECOURT ST.

Orders having been received for the reliof of the Battalion this night the necessary arrangements were taken for same, guides being sent to Brigade Headquarters and Officers from the relieving Battalion visiting." Pattalion Headquarters in the afternoon and being shown over the line and dispositions. The relieving Battalion (116th Garadian Infantry) relieved our two Front Line, Companies and Reserve Company and also I Company of the 44th Battalion on our loft and the relief proceeded without incident and was complete by 11.50 p.m. Brigade being duly informed of the completion.

The Battalion proceeded by Companies to billetting area near VIS-en-ARFOIS where they were served with a hot meal and rested evernight.

JENERAL.

The artillory barrage was excellent and accurate. Some cmoke shells fell short,

Modical arrangements for clearing were excellent and the work was expeditiously done.

Communication was at all times difficult owing to shell fire breaking the wire but every effort was made to maintain communication. Forward of the Battalion communication was dangerous owing to heavy Machine Gun fire and sniping.

Losses during the operation were -

	Officers.	0.R.
Killed	2	48
Died of wounds	-	
Wounded.	7	238
Wounded at duty	1	
Missing	-	24
	1.0	310

Rogarding the missing, none are believed to be prisoners. They are accounted for by men being killed and wounded during the advance. Further particulars regarding them should be to hand in the course of the next few days, so soon as the Field Ambulance and Burial Party returns are to hand.

At least 400 prisoners were captured and sent back, including Area Commandant, his assistant and Medical Staff.

Material captured consisted of 1 Field Gun (77 cm )
15 Machine Guns, 1 small anti-tank gun and a large quantity
of documents, which were immediately forwarded to Brigade
on capture.

The casualties inflicted on the enemy in the attack and also in our counter-attack in the afternoon were heavy

unt.

The operation entrusted to the Battalion was by no means an easy one, as it involved the capture and clearing of the WOODS, QUARRIES and VILIAGE of DURY and the cleaning up of a highly defended position of Hachine Gun defences. The success of the attack was attained through the artillery barrage and the thorough co-operation of Companies, Flatoons and sections and the magnific ent spirit shown by Company Officients; and all ranks during the attack. The work done by Capt. BROWN'S Company in clearing up the Southern defences of the village was brilliant, as also the attack by Capt. SHAW'S Company in the afternoon. When senior N.C.Os were knocked out juniors immediately jumped into their places and acted with great courage and tactical skill.

I wish to acknowledge particularly the valuable services of the following Officers and other ranks.

```
Major J. A. HOPE, M.C.
Gapt. R. W. GYLES, M.C. (who came up after Major

R. BROWN
J. T. SHAW
H. J. ELAIR
R.J.G.BATEMAN (Killed in Action.
W. C. MORGAN, G.A.M.C.
F. H. BGUK, Jhaplain.
Lieut. J. T. PHILPOTT, D.C.M.
W. G. COATES
O. W. GOULDEN
R. M. CROWE
H. W.O.RISING (Killed in Action.)
J. M. ELODGETT.
```

```
Sgt . PARKER I
               H. C.
                                 Pte. FIDLER
                  C.
W.J.
J.B.?(M.M.
                                      LEWIS E.M.C.
MAGUIRE R. M.M.
MOCRE R.D.
       MALGOLM
       ADACESON
                                      PHILLIPS
                     and Bar)
                                                 R.E.
       JERSEN
                                      REEDMAN,
L/Cpl. AMBLEY
                  D.H.
                                      SARGBANT
                                                 G
       GRANGER
                  W.C.
                                 11
                                      SMITH
                                                 A.A.
       KENTNER
       JOHNSTON G.
                                      TIGHE
                         M.M.
                                      TIMBERLAKE M.
Pte.
       AYRES,
       CALMAN
                  V.
       CAMPBELL R.E.
```

(Signed ) J. S. RANKIN, Major, a/Commanding Officer, 45th Battalion.
Saskatchewan Regiment.