



As part of the 4th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Division, the 19th Battalion went from the mud and misery of Salisbury Plain, England, to the mud and blood of Flanders. The Battalion saw its first action at St Eloi in April 1916 and went on to distinguish itself in battle on the Somme, at Courcellette, Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, Passchendaele, Drocourt-Quéant, and the pursuit to Mons, among other battles.

In December 1918, its pipe Band played a victorious Canadian Corps across the Rhine and into Germany.

The 19th Battalion is perpetuated today with the
Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders of Canada
(Princess Louise's)
Hamilton, Ontario



‘To you, from failing hands we throw the torch;
Be yours to hold it high’



A Personal Tribute 90th Anniversary Dedication of the Vimy Memorial 9th April 2007



Sgt. Ernest M. Leonard, 135769
19th Battalion (Central Ontario)
Canadian Expeditionary Force

prepared for some very special Canadian students

by

(Capt) Gregory Ernest Benton
Royal Regiment of Canada
1964-66, 1987-92



Ernie Leonard (1890-1958), my maternal grandfather, an Englishman from Plymouth Devon, was typical of the soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force where more than half were men from the British Isles. An iron fitter by trade, he was also an accomplished footballer, who played on the 1909 championship team

of Torquay United and, in 1912, went to Toronto, Canada, where he played with the Devonian Football Club.

Grandad volunteered to serve in July, 1915 and went to France with the 19th (Central Ontario) Battalion, 2nd Division, CEF. He fought on the Somme and at Vimy Ridge and was twice-wounded. Whilst recovering from his wounds at the military hospital in Bexhill-on-sea, Sussex, he met the lovely Rose West whom he married in 1920. They settled in Toronto where they had four children and ten grandchildren. Grandad worked for many years at the Sunnybrook Veterans Hospital and was a talented oil painter; especially of the Canadian landscape, as well as of ships and the sea. He was a wonderful storyteller and grandfather whose good fun but also example, especially of ‘duty’ ‘loyalty’ and sense of decency, shall ever remain with me.

One can only imagine how deeply the war in the trenches affected him and his comrades.

He died far too early at the age of 68 in 1958.

How proud he would be of you as you honour his comrades at Vimy and remember their sacrifice. I know that he would salute you as well as those of our soldiers today who are serving their sovereign and country for the same civilization of freedom and peace for which he fought.



FOR KING & EMPIRE

The Dominion of Canada at the time of the Great War was quite different from the Canada of today.

The British Empire, of which Canada was a part, included one-quarter of the world’s population. All Canadians (until 1977) were also British Subjects and the flag that flew over our buildings and in our schools was the Royal Union Flag, commonly called the ‘Union Jack’ (from when it is hoisted on a jackstaff). It consists of the red cross of St. George of England, the white cross of St. David of Wales, the white cross of St. Andrew of Scotland and the red cross of St. Patrick of Ireland. Each colony or Dominion also flew what are called ‘Ensigns’ that distinguished them within the Empire and Commonwealth. In Canada, we also flew what is called the ‘Red Ensign’ which was the flag of the Merchant Navy but having the Canadian coat of arms in the fly.

By British custom, there was no ‘national flag’ either of Britain or of Canada at the time. Canada’s first ‘national’ flag is the Maple Leaf flag that was raised in 1965. At the same time, the Royal Union Flag, was retained as an official flag of Canada to be flown on special days and at times in recognition of Canada’s continued loyalty to the Crown and of our historic links with Britain and the Commonwealth. The soldiers of Canada that we remember at Vimy Ridge and indeed all the Canadian sailors, soldiers and airmen in all the wars since Confederation in 1867, in the South African War, 1899-1902, the Second World War, 1939-45, Korea 1950-1953 and until 1965, served, fought and died under the Union flag and the Red Ensign just as they serve under the Maple Leaf flag today.

These symbols are a part of our country’s proud history and legacy.



A card for Ernie, sent to France from his sister.



Sgt. E.M. Leonard, 19th Battalion CEF



The British War Medal
1914-1918

The Victory Medal
1914-1919



‘FOR SERVICE AT THE FRONT’

A lapel pin inscribed on the back with the soldier's serial number and a warning that a penalty of \$500.00 would be applied to anyone who misused it.

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

1. What is your name? Leonard, Ernest
 2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born? Plymouth, Devon, Eng.
 3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? Mrs. Lydia Leonard (Mother)
 4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? 24 Dunbar Rd. Powell, Plymouth
 5. What is the date of your birth? 16 Dec. 1890
 6. What is your Trade or Calling? Iron fitter
 7. Are you married? No
 8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? Yes
 9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? No
 10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? No
(If so, state particulars of former Service)
 11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? Yes
 12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? Yes
Ernest Leonard (Signature of Man).
W. E. Coggins (Signature of Witness).

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Ernest Leonard, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, next to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.
Ernest Leonard (Signature of Recruit).
W. E. Coggins (Signature of Witness).
 Date 27 July 1915.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Ernest Leonard, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.
Ernest Leonard (Signature of Recruit).
W. E. Coggins (Signature of Witness).
 Date 27 July 1915.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.
 The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.
 I have taken care that he understood each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered or replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at Toronto this 27 day of July 1915.
W. H. Worledge (Signature of Justice).
 I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.
J. M. Hind (Approving Officer).
 Certified true copy.
 Captain,
 for Officer i/c Records, C.E.F.



Ernie Leonard & his comrades, somewhere in France



Grandad Leonard carried this photo of his mother and father during the war. On the back he wrote: 'this photograph has been through...four engagements of trench warfare'.

Ernest Leonard volunteers. Note the oath and pledge of commitment that each man promised to give.

