A QUIET COURAGE

The Creaghan Family of Newcastle, New Brunswick in the First World War and Beyond

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In memory of my grandfather Dewey

“The man who really endured the War at its worst was everlastingly differentiated from everyone but his fellow soldiers”.

Siegfried Sassoon, “Memoirs of an Infantry Officer” (1930)

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I. Introduction

This is the story, the history, of four out of nine children of the Creaghan family of Newcastle, New Brunswick who served in the First World War of 1914 to 1918 and beyond. Those four children were Neen, Bun, Dewey, and Bill. Sisters Mollie and Clare supported them in England. Dewey also served in the Second World War.

The patriarch of the Creaghan family in Canada was John Daniel ("J.D.") Creaghan (1851-1938) (my great-grandfather). His roots were in County Galway (Mountbellew). In 1873, at age 22, he emigrated from Ireland (after a period of dry-goods 'apprenticeship' in Glasgow). In 1875, he co-founded a successful dry goods business in Newcastle, a small town at the mouth of the Miramichi River in New Brunswick. It became J.D. Creaghan Company Ltd., with stores in Newcastle, Chatham, Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and Bathurst.

The matriarch of the Creaghan family was Ellen Gertrude ("Nell") Adams (1856-1935) (my great-grandmother).

Born in nearby Douglastown, Ellen was one of ten children of Samuel (1816-1871) and Mary Anne (1818-1873) ("Mame") (née Daley) Adams (my great-great grandparents). Samuel emigrated from Cork, Ireland to Douglastown in 1835. Mame, with her parents, emigrated from rural Cork to Chatham in 1832. Samuel was a tailor while Mame managed their farm in Douglastown.

Notwithstanding their humble background, Samuel and Mame placed a premium on their children's education. The Adams were prominent in Douglastown and, subsequently, with Ellen's brothers, in New York City (department stores), Leadville, Colorado (silver mines) and Bathurst (lumber and pulp mills).

J.D. and Ellen married in 1882. They lived in Newcastle. Ellen was a stalwart support for J.D, a beloved pillar of Miramichi society and of some financial means in her own right as an Adams. Regarding the latter point, for example, Ellen held dividend-paying shares of a Leadville silver mining company established by her brothers. Since Ellen died three years prior to J.D., it is assumed presently that most or all of her assets passed to J.D. upon her death.

For a fine account of the said two generations of the Adams family, as well as of J.D., see Thomas W. Creaghan, "Talented Miramichiers in the Gilded Age" (Friesen Press, 2015). I am grateful to Tom for much of the information above in this section. Tom was a grandson of J.D. and Ellen and one of Don's sons.

The present account is focussed, not on J.D. and Ellen (or the other Adams), but on the <u>next</u> generation of the Creaghan family in the First World War and beyond.

J.D. and Ellen Creaghan Family
Left to right: Clare, Jack, Don, Bun, Neen, Bill (on J.D.'s lap), Dewey, Nan (standing next to Ellen), and Mollie

J.D. and Ellen had nine children. The children and their spouses were (in order of seniority):

Mary Gertrude ("Mollie") (1884-1944) / Douglas King Hazen (1885- 1974)
Mary Francis Clare (1885-1929) / John William McManus (1878-1945)
Aileen ("Neen") (1887-1977)
Donald Sutherland ("Don") (1888-1968) / Marie ("Rita") Buckley (1892-1971)
Thomas Cyril ("Bun") (1890-1967) / Yvonne Buckley (1895-1961)
John Adams ("Jack") (1891-1972) / Alice ("Allie") Marven (1896-1987)
Gerald Francis ("Dewey" or "Dew") (1893-1968) / Mary Anne ("Nan") MacKenzie (1900- 1985)
Annie Adams ("Nan") (1894-1957)
William Vincent ("Bill") (1896-1973) / Gretchen Smith (1901-1998)

"Apparently the Creaghan family was quite 'well off' by local standards and I am sure Dad grew up in a busy, comfortable and happy circumstance. They lived in a fine house [on Prince William Street] in the Town and had access to a fun cottage at Burnt Church in the summer": memoir of Bill by son Paul.

In the summer of 2021, a memorial was placed in the Burnt Church Union Cemetery in memory of J.D., Ellen and the nine children and their spouses. The grandchildren of J.D. and Ellen (in seniority, Mary Hersey, Frank Creaghan, Paul Creaghan, and Michael Creaghan) were behind

this fine gesture. (Mary, Frank and Michael are the children of Dewey and Nan, while Bill is the son of Paul and Gretchen.)

The origin of the Creaghan connection to Burnt Church is described as follows by Tom Creaghan (in private notes):

> "[J.D. was] vice-president of Miramichi Steam Navigation Co., which carried freight and passengers up and down the river. As a result, he purchased land at Burnt Church a couple of hundred yards east of [the] Loggie general store. J.D. had an old building that survived the Great Miramichi Fire of 1825 hauled across the frozen Miramichi Bay by a team of horses to the Creaghan cottage site. As the family increased in size, the cottage and principal residence were from time to time enlarged. In the late 1920s, there was a fenced-in tennis court in front of the cottage and, in the kitchen, a well with a cranked windlass to raise and lower containers."

It is interesting that J.D. co-founded the Newcastle business in 1875, fifty years after the huge Miramichi Fire of 1825 that occurred during the timber boom. With the benefit of the impressive history by Alan MacEachern, "The Miramichi Fire" (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), it may be more precise to say that the old building was hauled down the frozen Miramichi River and Bay (from the affected populated area of the fire). As indicated by MacEachern (at p. 103): "This tally [of 160 deaths from the fire] places the great majority of deaths in and just to the north of Newcastle, with a smattering of deaths in communities to the west, southwest and south [of Newcastle]." Also (at p. 137): "The Bartibog area was said to be the eastern limit of the fire's greatest destruction."

The main original and official sources of information for this account are (1) the Canadian Expeditionary Forces (CEF) Personnel Records for Neen, Bun, Dewey, and Bill, (2) the War Diaries of each of the relevant units of the CEF in which they served, (3) the Canadian Official Guides pertaining to those units, (4) the British National Archives Records for Bun, Dewey and Bill, and (5) the London Gazette official notices for Bun, Dewey and Bill. The first three of those sources (and many others) are available on the excellent Library and Archives Canada website and at Ottawa. The National Archives Records are available online and at Kew. The London Gazette is available online.

This story could not have been told without those meticulous and astonishing records, each having a different recording function.

I have attempted to place those raw personal records within the overall context of the First World War. In this regard, "The First World War" (Vintage, 1998), written beautifully and insightfully by the British military historian, John Keegan, has been invaluable. References below to

"Keegan" are references to this book. From a focussed, Canadian perspective, "Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919, Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War" (Government of Canada, 1962), by G.W.L. Nicholson, is also impressive and invaluable (and available online).

It has been a bit like solving puzzles (which Creaghans are fond of). While nothing is given to you, it all eventually comes together. The following are brief examples of those puzzles for each of our four main protagonists:

(1) Neen's CEF Personnel Records record simply that she was posted to the No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital in November 1917 through May 1918. The War Diary for the No. 3 reveals, in striking fashion, that this was in fact a dangerous posting in Douellens, France, close to the Western Front. It culminated in the deaths of 33 people, including three Nursing Sisters, during a German aeroplane bombing of the hospital on the night of May 29-30, 1918. History shows that the context of the bombing was the major (increasingly last-ditch) Aisne Offensive of the Germans. Unfortunately, it is not entirely clear from the raw documents whether Neen was present during the bombing and subsequent funeral.

(2) Bun's CEF Personnel Records record simply that he was posted to the 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion in France for over four months in 1916 (before his Royal Flying Corps service). The amazing War Diary for the 2nd (including, very fortunately, numerous references to Bun himself) and history show that Bun worked directly at the Front, rebuilding trenches, etc., in the dreadful Battle of St. Eloi Craters. As stated in the War Diary, "It would be difficult to find more trying conditions, under constant shell, bomb, and rifle fire."

(3) Dewey's British National Archives Records indicate simply that he was appointed at "Cranwell" in August 1916. It turns out that "Cranwell" meant Royal Naval Air Service Training Establishment Cranwell, located inland 125 miles north of London. In February 1917, Dewey dislocated his shoulder "as a result of crashing in a flying machine". In his corresponding "Certificate of Hurts and Wounds" (held by Dewey's son, Michael), it is indicated that Dewey 'belonged' to a ship, HMS *Daedalus*. Extensive digging reveals that HMS *Daedalus* was actually a floating mid-19th century hulk many miles away at, coincidentally, Chatham on the mouth of the River Medway emptying into the North Sea. How could Dewey be based at inland Cranwell and yet 'belong' to a floating hulk many miles away at the mouth of the Medway river? The answer is that, for historical legal disciplinary reasons, all British naval personnel were required to be held on the books of a ship.

(4) Youngest Bill enlisted and trained with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) in Canada. Why was he not enlisted and trained in Britain, as were his older brothers Bun and Dewey? The answer is that, from July 1917, the RFC, under the aegis of its proud new Canadian branch (RFCC), enlisted and trained many of its aviators directly in Canada. (Canada itself did not have a flying corps in the War.) Since Bill trained in Canada for the RFC,

and as the uncertain events unfolded (eventually with the Armistice on November 11, 1918), he was fortunately not called upon to go to England and enter the theatre of war.

In this history, I address our four protagonists in order of seniority: Neen, Bun, Dewey, and Bill. Nevertheless, the order of enlistment was different: Dewey (March 1915), Bun (June 1915), Neen (April 1916), and Bill (April 1917).

The latter were no doubt influenced by the former. Bun, Dewey and Bill followed a similar path in that each served first in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (each in a different role) and then in the British air force (each in a different role). In the perilous infancy of not only flying, but also of doing so in the War, there appears to have been some brotherly 'understanding' to use the CEF as an arduous stepping stone to the British air force. As Paul mentions in his memoir of Bill, upon university graduation, "I'm sure he was very anxious to join his brothers and sisters in the war effort."

The enlistment dates confirm that each of our protagonists enlisted voluntarily. They could not have been conscripted. Conscription only became law in Canada with the divisive passage of the Military Service Act on August 29, 1917 and conscription call-ups only commenced in January 1918: the canadianencyclopedia.ca.

Neen, Bun, Dewey, and Bill served loyally in the War for "King and Country". The family had apparently long left behind the Catholic/Protestant "Troubles" of Ireland. For example, the following article appeared in The Daily Telegraph and The Sun of Saint John on August 10, 1918:

"J.D. CREAGHAN'S SON [BUN] IS PROMOTED TO SQUADRON COMMAND

Three Sons and Two Daughters [actually one daughter] of Newcastle Merchant All Serving King and Country Overseas.

That one of his sons [Bun] in the Royal Air Force, at present on the western front has been promoted to a squadron commander, was the information given to a Telegraph reporter yesterday by J.D. Creaghan of Newcastle (N.B.), who is at the Royal Hotel.

Mr. Creaghan, who has good reason to be proud of the splendid response of the young men and women of his immediate family, was rather reticent to talk of his sons and their work in the great struggle in Europe. One of his sons in the Royal Air Force [actually Dewey in the Royal Naval Air Service] had a very narrow escape some months ago [in February 1917] when the machine in which he was flying fell into the sea, and the other

> [Bun] was most seriously wounded shortly afterwards [in November 1917]. Both have recovered from the effects of their wounds and injuries and are again on active service [Dewey actually left the RNAS in August 1917]. Another son is also at the front [actually Bill was training with the Royal Air Force in Canada], making stalwart lads representing this Newcastle patriot [J.D.] on the firing line. In addition to the boys, he has two daughters who are Red Cross nurses [actually, only Neen enlisted as a Nursing Sister] now overseas making a total of five [four] who are contributing each day to the success of Allied arms overseas.
>
> The news that one of his sons has been promoted to a squadron commander will be learned with much pleasure and pride by the many friends of the family in the province."

Neen would have greeted George V when, at a dangerous time, he graciously visited the No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital in Douellens, near the front, in March 1918.

It should not be overlooked that this patriotism of the Creaghan family, and many other Catholic families, shone through centuries of difficult sectarian times. Indeed, the immediate times included the Easter Uprising of April 1916, obviously in the midst of the War, which was followed a few years later by the Irish War of Independence and the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.

The patriotism was rekindled publicly again when eldest son Don (as Mayor of Newcastle) and his daughter Nonie greeted King George VI and the Queen Mother during the Royal Tour of 1939.

Many years later, the Queen Mother greeted me on the Royal Albert Hall stage when I was conferred the M.Sc. (Econ.) degree from the University of London (the London School of Economics and Political Science) in 1975. My parents, Mary and Peter, were in attendance and I had my golf trousers on, as we were about to embark on a golf trip in southern England and Wales.

The inaccurately-named "Spanish" Flu raged from 1918 to 1920. An estimated 50 million persons died thereof, including 50,000 Canadians. In 2022, we can relate to that.

Neen, Bun, Dewey, and Bill fortunately survived the War and Flu. Nevertheless, one can imagine the many effects thereof on them, their parents, their other siblings, their spouses, and others. The War and Flu were massive turning points in history. In any event, as Mary says, "they all made a good life after".

In the classic, “The Great War and Modern Memory” (Oxford University Press, 1975), Paul Fussell chronicles “the British experience on the Western Front from 1914 to 1918 and some of the literary means by which it has been remembered, conventionalized, and mythologised.” One of his important themes is that, as stated by the noted soldier and author, Siegfried Sassoon, in “Memoirs of an Infantry Officer” (1930), “The man who really endured the War at its worst was everlastingly differentiated from everyone but his fellow soldiers”. Similarly, there “seemed in those days to be an unbridgeable gulf between those who had been actively involved in the war and those who had not”: John Morris, “Hired to Kill” (1960). Morris was a soldier and one of the intrepid War-damaged members of Mallory’s 1922 Everest expedition. There was “the impossible chasm between those who had been to war and those who remained at home”, as phrased by Wade Davis in the epic “Into the Silence; The Great War, Mallory, and the Conquest of Everest” (Vintage, 2011) (at p. 89), which captures beautifully the atmosphere of the times.

This common differentiation, gulf or chasm affected, in many different ways, family and other relationships upon return from war, including no doubt those of the Creaghans of Newcastle.

Nevertheless, the Creaghan clan has been close. As one example, three of the protagonists, Neen, Bun and Dewey, lived nearby for many years in Westmount. Mary Hersey, Dewey’s daughter and my mother, recalls many convivial family gatherings, although Dewey’s children were known to have the most robust appetites (including sweet tooth). To this day, it is special that many Creaghans gather at their cottages in Burnt Church on the sparkling Miramichi Bay, downstream from “home”, Newcastle. As mentioned above, the Burnt Church connection emanates from J.D. and Ellen.

In any event, relatives at home during the First World War were most anxious to know about the well-being of their loved ones serving in the War. Some, such as Clare and Mollie, made the dangerous journey across the Atlantic in order to find out and provide support.

Another “unbridgeable gap” explored by Fussell was that between staff and line officers, i.e. “between ‘the scarlet Majors at the base’ and the ‘glum heroes’ of the line sacrificed to their inept commands. … The line officers’ deficiency of scarlet marked them as a sort of high proletariat carrying always the visible stigma of deprivation” (at p. 90). Also, officers in general were distinct from other ranks “not merely by separate quarters and messes and different uniforms and weapons but by different accents and dictions and syntaxes and allusions” (at p. 89). Neen, Bun, Dewey, and Bill were line officers.

Fussell observes that “what makes experience in the Great War unique and gives it a special freight of irony is the ridiculous proximity of the trenches to home. Just seventy miles from ‘this stinking world of sticky trickling earth’ was the rich plush of London theatre seats” (at p. 69). This ridiculous proximity did not exist so much for Neen, Bun and Dewey since real home was

Newcastle. Of course, the “proximity” was more “ridiculous” for those serving in the rear or forward area of the theatre of war itself.

Fussell comments on the general literariness of the soldiers, of all ranks and educations, in that pre-radio time:

> “By 1914, it was possible for soldiers to be not merely literate but vigorously literary. … There was “an atmosphere of public respect for literature unique in modern times. … While waiting in the saucer-shaped valley for their moment [quite an understatement] at the Somme, [Private] John Ball and some friends found a ‘sequestered place’ on a ‘grassy slope’ to sit and talk of ‘ordinary things’. Ordinary things included ‘if you’d ever read the books of Mr. Wells’ and ‘the poetry of Rupert Brooke’ … Ball and his friends have no feeling that literature is not very near the centre of normal experience, no sense that it belongs to intellectuals or aesthetes or teachers or critics” (at pp. 170-1).

The Creaghan and Adams families placed a premium on education: see, for example, Tom’s book (at pp. 20, 112 and 201). Also, according to Tom (in private notes), “J.D. Creaghan always maintained a large library and provided ample opportunity for the education of his nine children.” J.D. augmented his library with the purchase at auction of the library of Henry Cunard of Chatham. (Henry was the brother of the renowned shipowner and merchant, Samuel, of Halifax and London. The *Lusitania* was a Cunard ocean liner: see part VII below.)

J.D. bequeathed his library to Bill, who in turn passed it on to son, Paul. Paul informed me that he donated most of the library to St. Thomas University.

Thank you to my mother, Mary Hersey, for providing a large and invaluable amount of historical family information and context over the years.

I have benefited greatly over the years from discussing Dewey (and other family members) with his son, Michael Creaghan. Among many things, Michael has written a wonderful “Family History” on Dewey and Nan. It contains much invaluable oral history, not least of which being Dewey’s impressive Second World War contribution, that would otherwise have been lost in time. Michael possesses Dewey’s “Certificate of Hurts and Wounds” from the First World War, a photograph of Dewey in RNAS uniform, Dewey’s passport during the Second World War, and other items. While Dewey did not speak about the First and Second World Wars with Mary, Frank or likely Ellen, he fortunately opened up to youngest Michael.

Thank you to Frank Creaghan for providing a photograph of Dewey in early (CORCC) uniform and numerous helpful materials (including a copy of J.D.'s will) (many of which originated from Tom Creaghan).

Thank you to Paul Creaghan for providing his memoir of Bill, the photograph of Bill in uniform and helpful comments.

Thank you to my sister, Martha Hersey-Ewing, for providing a photograph of Dewey in RNAS uniform. She possesses Dewey's later-in-life original, whimsically-illustrated children's book, "The Story of Mr. Adolphus Toad".

Thank you to Sandra Bunting, granddaughter of Don and resident of Burnt Church, for bringing to my attention, for example, Serge Comini, "Abbaye Notre-Dame de Beaupré-sur-la-Lys, des Hommes sur les terres … et les Chemins des Dames, 1914-1918" (2018), which assisted in the understanding of Bun's service in the Royal Flying Corps.

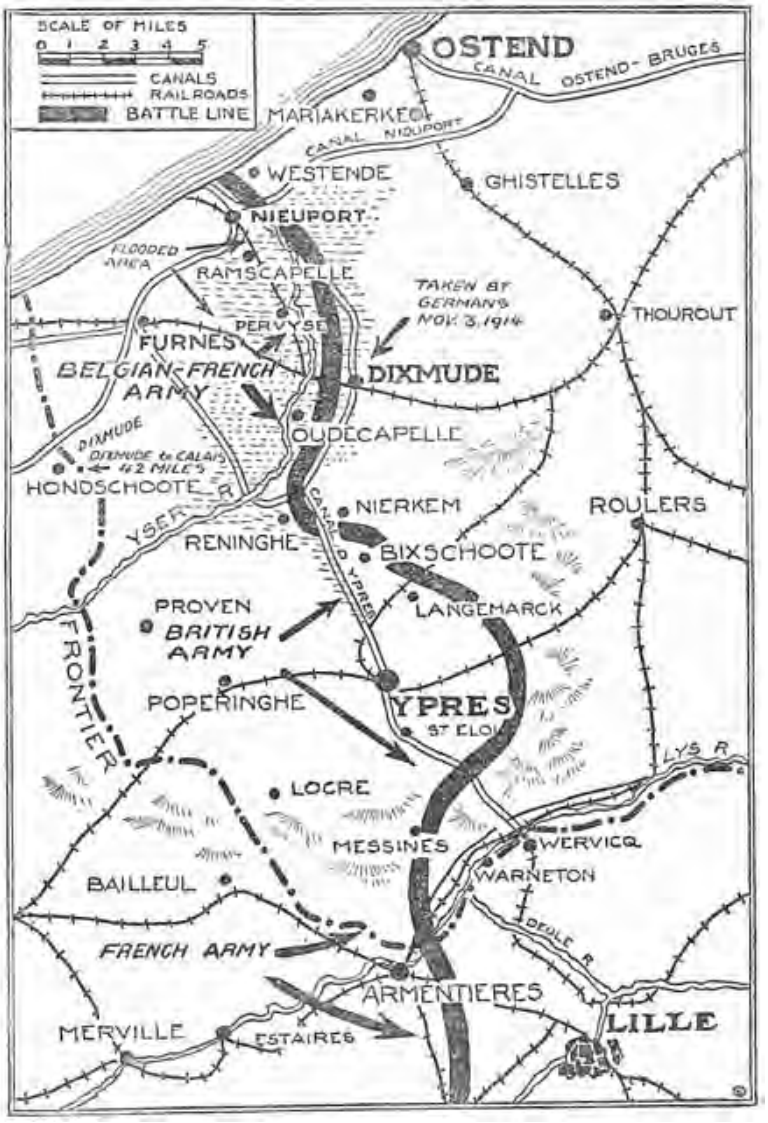
Thank you to Malcolm McConnell, grandson of Mollie, for providing comments on Mollie and others.

Thank you to Barbara McIntosh (née Anderson), our neighbour in Burnt Church and life-long Miramichier, for bringing "Newcastle girl going to France" and other newspaper articles to my attention.

Thank you to my son, David, always a great inspiration.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to my partner, Kathleen Gould Lundy, a university professor and prolific author in the field of education, for providing innumerable suggestions and comments, for her enthusiasm and for her ability to listen.

Historical Map of Western Front during First World War
Encyclopedia Britannica



Flemish Front, 1914
Dewey was in Nieuport – Dixmude Area in 1915
Bun was at Battle of St. Eloi Craters, South of Ypres, in 1916

II. **Some Acronyms**

For ease of reference, the following are the main acronyms that are used in this history. There are numerous other acronyms that are defined in relevant context below. The thorough "Military Abbreviations used in Service Files", available on the Library and Archives Canada website, is invaluable.

BEF	British Expeditionary Force
CAMC	Canadian Army Medical Corps (that Neen was in)
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force (earlier called Canadian Over-seas Expeditionary Force) – force of more than 600,000 men established by Government of Canada for service overseas
CORCC	Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps (that Dewey was in)
RAF	Royal Air Force (British) - RFC and RNAS merged to form RAF on April 1, 1918 (Bun and Bill were in RAF)
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force (Canadian) – from Second World War (in which Dewey served from 1941)
RFC	Royal Flying Corps (British) – part of British Army; merged with RNAS on April 1, 1918 to form RAF (Bun and Bill were in RFC)
RFCC	Royal Flying Corps Canada (British) – branch of RFC that came to Canada to enlist and train (Bill was so enlisted and trained)
RNAS	Royal Naval Air Service (British) – part of British Navy; merged with RFC on April 1, 1918 to form RAF (Dewey was in RNAS)
SOS	Struck off Strength – when a soldier ceases to be a member of a unit because of transfer, injury or death (fortunately, our protagonists always chose the first method)
TOS	Taken on Strength – entry of a soldier to a unit

III. **Eileen ("Neen") Creaghan**

Neen never married. One possible explanation was the shortage of men, for obvious reasons, with the War and Flu. She has no direct descendant to otherwise tell her story. Her story is, of course, much better than those of the numerous others who perished, single and childless, in the War and Flu. History has been affected greatly by the absences.

1. <u>"Newcastle girl going to France"</u>

A newspaper article of that title, from March 1916, appeared in "From the Archives of the Miramichi Leader". I quote it in full, not least because it shows the wonderful social context:

> "Miss Eileen Creaghan has been accepted as a Red Cross Nurse for Front.
>
> Miss Eileen Creaghan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Creaghan, left Thursday night on the Maritime for Montreal where she will sail for England en route to France, having been accepted as a Red Cross nurse with the British forces. Miss Creaghan is the third member of the family to serve the Empire, two brothers Lieut. T. Cyril Creaghan, of 2nd Pioneer Battalion and Lieut. Gerald Creaghan of the Royal Aerial Service [actually, Royal Naval Air Service], are both with the expeditionary forces, as well as a brother-in-law, Capt. D. King Hazen, also with the Canadian forces.
>
> On Wednesday afternoon the Red Cross Society met at the home of Mrs. T.W. Crocker, Pleasant Street, to say farewell to Miss Creaghan and wish her God speed in the noble work she is to take up in France. Miss Creaghan was presented with an address and parting gift by the president, Mrs. Josephine Sargeant, on behalf of the society.
>
> She was also presented with a fountain pen by the surgical committee, Mrs. Osborne Nicholson, the convener, making the presentation.
>
> Afterwards tea was served to those present and a very enjoyable afternoon was spent. Mrs. Sargeant and Mrs. Bate presided at the tea table, and was assisted in serving by Misses Florence Ferguson, Louise Manny [of later renown as a N.B. folklorist and historian], Cannie Armstrong, Edith Burchill and Jean Robinson.
>
> Miss Creaghan's future will be watched with much interest by her many warm friends in Newcastle who extended to her the best of good wishes in her work and pray that when the war ceases, she will return safely, with her brothers, to her old home on the Miramichi.
>
> Following is the address:
>
> > 'Newcastle, New Brunswick,

March 29, 1916.

To our dear Friend and Co-worker:

After having been associated with us in Red Cross work for the past eighteen months you have had the ambition of your life gratified, - you have been accepted by the Canadian government as a Red Cross nurse for service at the front.

You are leaving home and friends tomorrow and on this the eve of your departure, we have assembled to wish you God speed and to ask you to accept as a slight token of our esteem this gift of gold, and with it to obtain something which may be serviceable and at the same time a memento of old associations.

Your work at the front will call for the womanly qualities of sympathy and patience with which you are so richly endowed and then, when added to your skill as a nursing sister will enable you to well fulfill your duties as a Red Cross Nurse.

Farewell dear sister, and may the good hand of our God and Father be with you at all times and in all places and may He bring you safely home again.

Signed on behalf of the Newcastle, N.B., branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society.

Josephine Sargeant,
President.'"

2. Enlistment

Neen enlisted as a Nursing Sister in the Canadian Army Medical Corps (CAMC) of the Canadian Over-seas Expeditionary Force (CEF) on April 1, 1916. Her form of Attestation Paper was an Officers' Declaration Paper: she was an officer. She was "Appointed to Commissioned Rank", as stated in her ultimate Certificate of Service, dated May 18, 1920.

Also, as stated in her Certificate of Service, Neen's rank was Nursing Sister with the CAMC throughout the War, while working in different hospitals in England and France (discussed below).

Neen's place of enlistment was Montreal. She provided her address as 537 Dorchester Street, Montreal, while the above newspaper article indicates that she travelled from Newcastle to Montreal on March 30, shortly before enlistment.

Neen indicated on her Officers' Declaration Paper that she was a Trained Nurse. Since she was born on June 22, 1887 (in Newcastle), she was a mature and experienced 28-year old on

enlistment. She had graduated and was working as a Red Cross Nurse with the Newcastle branch.

Neen politely chose “Father” or “Mr. Creaghan” as her next-of-kin.

In so enlisting, Neen followed in the footsteps of her younger brothers, Bun and Dewey, who had enlisted in the CEF in June and March, respectively, of the previous year, 1915.

According to two separate forms in her CEF Personnel Records, Neen “Embarked on SS *Baltic* 20/5/16 for A.M.C. Reinforcement CEF” and “Left Can. 20/5/16”. (There seems to be a minor puzzle because it is stated, in The Commercial newspaper of Chatham on April 4, 1916, that “Aileen sailed from Montreal, last Friday [i.e. on March 31, 1916], for the UK”, i.e. weeks earlier than indicated in the official record.)

Neen was Taken On Strength (TOS) on May 30, 1916 upon arrival in England.

3. Medical Context

a. Nursing Sisters

“The incredible contribution of Canadian nursing sisters in the First World War can be best appreciated by examining their experiences during their service. Women left their families and homes to answer the call to duty and serve their country. Many worked in substandard conditions, with poor sanitation and limited supplies of water. They cared for soldiers with horrendous wounds caused by new advancements in weaponry. Canadian nurses adapted to a situation that was completely unlike their lives in Canada, and for which their work in Canadian hospitals could not possibly have prepared them. By drawing on their strengths and knowledge, they comforted and mended the soldiers in their care. Their dedication to their work, their country and, most importantly, to their patients, serves to measure their contribution to the Canadian war effort”: Library and Archives Canada website.

“In France, … the nurses had to deal not only with an exhausting workload, but often under extremely primitive working conditions and desperate climatic extremes. This was the pre-antibiotics age and … the ranks of the injured were swelled by infection and outbreaks of diseases such as meningitis. In spite of these challenges, the Canadian Nursing Sisters were able to provide comfort to the sick and injured.

By the end of the First World War, approximately 45 Nursing Sisters had given their lives, dying from enemy attacks including the bombing of a hospital [where Neen worked (!): see “No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital: Douellens” below] and the sinking of a hospital ship, or from disease. The beautiful Nursing Sisters’ memorial in the Hall of Honour in the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa is a loving tribute to their service, sacrifice

and heroism": "Canada's Nursing Sisters", Remembrance Series, Veterans Affairs Canada website.

To reiterate, the Douellens hospital that was bombed, with the loss of three Nursing Sisters, was where Neen served. Neen also became seriously ill. See below.

b. <u>Canadian Army Medical Corps</u>

"Included are field ambulance units, casualty clearing stations, general hospitals, stationary hospitals, special hospitals, convalescent hospitals, sanitary sections, mobile laboratories and hospital ships.

Field ambulance units removed casualties from dressing stations and regimental aid posts to casualty clearing stations where urgent surgery was performed. Patients then proceeded to general to stationary hospitals and thence to a special hospital or a convalescent hospital.

Sanitary sections supervised the sanitation of camps, billets etc. and inspected the water supplies in their allotted areas": "Canadian Army Medical Corps", Guide to Sources Relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force ("CAMC Guide"), Library and Archives Canada website.

"In many ways, the First World War was a time of great change and innovation in the field of military medical services. At first, medical units were set up in hospitals. However, the eventual establishment of Casualty Clearing Stations provided faster and more effective treatment to the injured at the front line.

The Casualty Clearing Station was an advance unit, situated close to the front line, where ambulances could deliver the wounded to be assessed, treated or evacuated to one of the many hospitals. The early stage assessment and treatment available at these units proved very effective in the efficient handling of large groups of battle injuries that occurred at the front. At the same time, however, the proximity to the fighting exposed the Nursing Sisters to the horrors and dangers particular to the front. The advance areas were often under attack from air raids and shell fire, frequently placing the lives of the sisters in danger. As well, the Casualty Clearing Stations were often plagued with the same aggravations of front line life; many nurses reported that rats and fleas were constant plagues": "Canada's Nursing Sisters", supra.

c. <u>General and Stationary Hospitals</u>

"The Base Hospital was part of the casualty evacuation chain, further back from the front line than the Casualty Clearing Stations. … In the theatre of war in France and Flanders, the British [and Canadian] hospitals were generally located near the coast. They

needed to be close to a railway line, in order for casualties to arrive (although some also came by canal barge); they also needed to be near a port where men could be evacuated for longer-term treatment in Britain.

There were two types of Base Hospital, known as Stationary and General Hospitals. They were large facilities, often centred on some pre-war buildings such as seaside hotels. The hospitals grew hugely in number and scale throughout the war. Most of the hospitals moved very rarely until the larger movements of the armies in 1918. Some hospitals moved into the Rhine bridgehead in Germany and many were operating in France well into 1919. Most hospitals were assisted by voluntary organisations, most notably the British Red Cross": "British Base Hospitals", The Long, Long Trail website.

There were also, of course, military, general and other hospitals and facilities in England and Canada.

Neen served in general and stationary hospitals in England and France and, quite possibly, while serving at the stationary hospital in Douellens that was bombed, worked 'as needed' in nearby casualty clearing stations. See below.

(My paternal grandfather, Eric, served with the No. 3 Canadian General Hospital (McGill) (of John McCrae fame) in Boulogne, for almost a year after enlistment at age 18 in March 1915, prior to joining the Canadian Field Artillery in time for Vimy Ridge and Fresnoy.)

Fussell (at p. 107) sums much up by referring to the unfortunately common situation of a wounded soldier going "through the usual sequence of dressing stations and hospitals all the way to London."

4. Moore Barracks Military Hospital: Shorncliffe

Neen was posted to the Moore Barracks Military Hospital in Shorncliffe from June 17, 1916 to, it appears, September 24, 1917. Shorncliffe Army Camp was next to Folkestone on the English Channel. Among other things, it was a major staging post for troops going to the Western Front. Moore Barracks, in Shorncliffe, was converted into the hospital during the War: CAMC Official Guide (at p. 103).

This period of about 15 months encompassed major battles (see below).

Neen would have tended to the casualties who made it back, through the CAMC system in France, to Moore Barracks.

Neen's Personnel Records do not (and are not intended to) address her actual nursing duties. We may imagine.

> "NS Aileen Creaghan, of Newcastle, sent a cable to the Anderson family of Burnt Church, from the Moore Barracks Hospital in England, stating that L/Sgt Murray Anderson of 5CMR [Canadian Mounted Rifles] was in her ward and recovering nicely from his wounds".

See Gary Silliker, "A Deadly Drive, The Miramichi Experience During the Great War" (Friesen Press, 2014) (at pp. 72-3). Silliker provides an informal account of the large number (especially relative to population) of Miramichiers, including Creaghans, who served in the War.

See also The Commercial newspaper of Chatham, dated August 1, 1916.

Murray was the father of our great friend, Patricia ("Pat") Anderson, of Burnt Church. Malcolm McConnell, Mollie's grandson, informed me that Murray said that "the sight of Neen flowing into the ward with her red nurse's cape blew him away. She was a great tonic for him."

The Creaghans and Andersons remain close in Burnt Church and elsewhere (including twice in marriage).

The following notice appeared in "The Union Advocate", Newcastle on August 2, 1916:

> "Miss Eileen Creaghan at Shorncliffe: A letter from Shorncliffe Camp, England, dated July 12th, says that, among the nursing sisters there, was Miss Eileen Creaghan of Newcastle."

Neen was granted leave from January 12, 1917 to January 25, 1917.

While serving at Moore Barracks, Neen herself became quite ill. She was hospitalized at West Cliff Eye & Ear Hospital in Folkestone for a month (March 16, 1917 to April 18, 1917). The cause of her illness was stated simply as "Exposure infection" "from military service", i.e. from her nursing duties.

The diagnosis was acute sinusitis or "Empyema lt. antrum". That was not good. "Empyema is a collection of pus in the cavity between the lung and the membrane that surrounds it (pleural space)": John Hopkins website. Antrum is a "nearly closed cavity or chamber" (rxlist.com), being, in Neen's case, the left lung.

The medical treatment of empyema practised by Neen as a nurse, and used on Neen as a patient due to "exposure infection", and related aspects, are described as follows:

> "Six percent of the 11 million war wounds suffered during World War 1involved the chest. In contrast to the overall mortality of 8%, chest wounds inflicted death in more than half of the cases, second only to that of the frequency for abdominal wounds (68%). … Among those who arrived at a hospital with surgeons possessing expertise in chest

> wounds, mortality varied between 10% and 12%. … The main causes of death were bleeding and empyema. … Shrapnel and other artillery pieces were more dangerous than penetrating small bullets. … The majority of procedures were performed under local anesthesia. … The standard procedure of empyema treatment consisted of resection of ribs, and loose tamponade of the hole stuffed with gauze, which was soaked with sublimate of mercury or iodine. Morphine and local cooling with ice completed the treatment. The overall hospital mortality was about 10%. Between 15% and 20% of posttraumatic empyema patients needed operations (aggressive rib resection and debridement), with a mortality between 20% and 50%. Irrigation using hydrogen peroxide or sodium hypochlorite … was also applied. Thoracoplasty and drainage of empyema by rib resections were standard methods. … [According to] Lundy, the Senior Anesthetist at the Mayo Clinic, 'Out of the last war [the First World War] came chest surgery'."

See Molnar et al., "Changing Dogmas: History of Development in Treatment Modalities of Traumatic Pneumothorax, Hemothorax, and Posttraumatic Empyema Thoracis", 2004 Society of Thoracic Surgeons, available online.

Neen was granted leave by the Medical Board for two months (April 16, 1917 to May 16, 1917).

5. Context of War: Neen's Period at Shorncliffe

The battles discussed below occurred during Neen's Moore Barracks period. They provided a morbid supply of casualties to attend to. Continuing care was, of course, also provided to the casualties of prior battles, as well as accidents, illness, etc.

a. Battle of the Somme

> "For most of the summer of 1916, the Canadian Corps had been manning a section of the Western Front in Belgium [just south of where Dewey was a sapper]. In late August, [1916,] however, they began to shift to the Somme front near the French village of Courcelette. The Canadians immediately encountered some stiff action there and suffered some 2,600 casualties before the major new offensive they had been tasked with had even gotten underway.
>
> On September 15, our soldiers took part in a large-scale attack that was launched at dawn and pushed forward on a 2,000-metre wide front. Making use of a newly developed tactic called the creeping barrage, the Canadians advanced behind a carefully aimed wave of Allied artillery fire that moved ahead on a set schedule. This heavy bombardment forced the enemy defenders to stay under cover for protection and prevented them from cutting down the advancing troops with their rifle and machine gun fire. For this tactic to work, though, the soldiers had to stay perilously close to the heavy shellfire and many were wounded by the Allies' own artillery explosions.

> The Courcelette battlefield also saw another Allied innovation—the first use of the tank in warfare. They were primitive, few in number and mechanically unreliable, but the tanks' shock value alone was enough to throw the enemy into confusion. The attack went well and by 8:00 a.m., the shattered German defensive position known as the Sugar Factory was taken. The Canadians then pushed ahead to Courcelette itself which was captured later that day. The Germans did not relent, however, and launched numerous counter-attacks which our soldiers repulsed as they consolidated their newly won positions. As was often the pattern during attacks on the Western Front, however, the enemy soon brought up major reinforcements, the defences solidified and any further gains became incredibly hard. …
>
> The scale of the fighting and the shocking toll it took still makes the Battle of the Somme synonymous with the horrors of the First World War for many people. The losses were truly appalling—the Allies suffered more than 650,000 casualties, including some 200,000 who had lost their lives. The Germans, who had also suffered greatly in the fighting, dubbed the Battle of the Somme "das Blutbad" (the blood bath).
>
> Sadly, Canadian losses would contribute to this grim toll. More than 24,000 of our soldiers were killed, wounded or went missing on the Somme. The fallen from this battle were among the more than 66,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders who lost their lives in the First World War": Veterans Affairs Canada website.

According to Keegan (at p. 299):

> "To the British, [the Somme] was and would remain their greatest military tragedy of the twentieth century, indeed of their national military history. … The Somme marked the end of an age of vital optimism in British life that has never recovered."

b. <u>Battle of Vimy Ridge</u>

The Battle of Vimy Ridge requires no elaboration. It occurred on April 9 to 14, 1917, during Neen's period of hospitalisation for empyema. She would have dealt with the aftermath of the Battle.

Bun likely flew reconnaissance at the Battles of Vimy Ridge and Fresnoy: see "15th Squadron" below.

My paternal grandfather, Eric Hersey, was a line officer with the Canadian Field Artillery at the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Days after that Battle, he was gassed (phosgene) on top of the strategic Ridge (on observation duty) in the Battle of Fresnoy in the Douai Plain below. According to Eric's Personnel Records: "Gassed at Vimy Ridge on May 3rd, 1917. Was [partly buried and] unconscious for some time and recovered consciousness in Hospital at Bruay." Eric spent the rest of the War in the CAMC system. Did he cross paths with Neen?

Kathy Gould Lundy and I visited Vimy Ridge and Arras in May 2018. The Canadian National Vimy Memorial, by the brilliant Walter Allward, on top of the Ridge (where Eric was gassed) is stunning, with the brooding draped woman, "Canada Bereft", overlooking the Douai Plain.

"Canada Bereft", Canadian National Vimy Memorial

Photograph by Author, May 2018

c. Battle of Hill 70

This seminal Canadian battle, on August 10 to 25, 1917, was a diversionary tactic to relieve the heavy fighting further north at Passchendaele. Hill 70 is beside the coal town of Lens, a few kilometres north of Vimy Ridge.

The "Canadian Corps won an impressive victory" at Hill 70, but at great cost:

> "The fighting at Hill 70 was remarkably brutal to even the most battle-hardened of soldiers. Poison gas was widely used, often forcing the men to gasp for air inside their restrictive respirators as they struggled to see the advancing enemy through their fogged-up goggles. Many of our soldiers had to engage in desperate hand-to-hand combat against the tenacious German attackers who managed to reach the Canadian defensive lines": Veterans Affairs Canada website.

(Hill 70, the early ski hill in St. Sauveur north of Montreal, was named after the Battle of Hill 70. The monument (provided, I believe, by the McGill Redbirds) in the middle of the ski hill was inappropriately used as a ski jump.)

d. Trench and Other Life

Of course, medical issues in the First World War did not 'just' arise from fighting. They also arose from day-to-day trench life, accidents and otherwise.

> "Life for soldiers in the trenches was miserable. They were often muddy and cold and had to live in the midst of pests like rats, lice and fleas. In this form of warfare, soldiers faced the enemy across a narrow strip of land between the opposing trenches. This was a harsh 'No Man's Land' of mud, barbed wire and shell craters, swept by enemy machine gun fire, and menaced by artillery and snipers": Veterans Affairs Canada website."

6. No. 2 Canadian General Hospital: Le Tréport

Neen served in No. 2 Canadian General Hospital from September 24, 1917 to November 12, 1917, a period of 49 days. The hospital was on the English Channel (La Manche) in Le Tréport, France. It was her first service in France. That relatively brief period overlapped the last half of the time frame of the Battle of Passchendaele from July 31, 1917 to November 10, 1917. She left No. 2 two days after the end of that battle. Neen's raison d'être in Le Tréport may well have been Passchendaele.

7. Context of War: Neen's Period at Le Tréport

The seminal battle fought by the Canadians, British, Australians, and New Zealanders during Neen's No. 2 service was the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele.

> "Ypres was a very difficult place to fight. It was a region largely made up of flat, low ground that was kept dry only with the help of an intricate series of dikes and ditches. Three years of heavy fighting there, however, had entirely destroyed these drainage systems. The ground, churned up by millions of artillery shells, turned to sticky mud when wet. In 1917, the autumn rains came early and turned the battlefield into a sea of muck, the likes of which still make the name Passchendaele synonymous with the horrific fighting conditions many people picture when thinking of the First World War.

…

> Canadian Corps commander Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie inspected the terrain and was shocked at the conditions he saw. He tried to avoid having his men fight there but was overruled by his superiors. As at Vimy, the four divisions of the Canadian Corps would see action. However, the ubiquitous mud, flat terrain, and relative lack of preparation time and artillery support would make Passchendaele a far different battlefield than the one the Canadians had encountered at Vimy Ridge".
>
> In "heavy fighting", the Canadians eventually succeeded in capturing "the ruined village of Passchendaele itself".

See Veterans Affairs Canada website.

Yet, the "point of Passchendaele … defies explanation": Keegan (at p. 368).

One individual who perished, on October 18, 1917, in the Battle of Passchendaele was Kathy Gould Lundy's great-uncle, Alfred Enderby. He was a Gunner with the Canadian Field Artillery. He was 27 years old and single. He left no issue. In May 2018, Kathy and I visited his grave in Divisional Cemetery, Dickebusch Road, a small rural cemetery near Ypres. The cemetery was immaculate, as are all of the thousands of cemeteries maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Alf did not get as far as Le Tréport to see Neen.

Divisional Cemetery, Dickebusch Road, near Ypres
Photograph by Author, May 2018

8. No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital: Douellens

Chapel Part of No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital, Douellens (Pre-bombing)
Painting by Gerald Moira
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum

Neen went from the frying pan of No. 2 Canadian General Hospital to the fire of No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital. She served in No. 3 from November 13, 1917 to May 29 or June 2, 1918, a period of 197 or 200 days. The latter date is important, as we will see. The hospital was located in an old citadel in Doullens, France, close to the Front and dangerous.

The following entries from the War Diary for No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital, during the period that Neen was there, are revealing, including of the tragic air raid on the night of May 29/30, 1918:

> 24-11-17
> "Admissions 41 Discharges 1. Majority of cases in hospital are diseases of nervous origin."
>
> [Throughout the Diary, there are daily tallies of Admissions to, and Discharges from, the stationary hospital, like a running balance of casualties coming from casualty clearing stations and going to general hospitals, apart from the deaths and recoveries.]

3-12-17
“Admissions 122 Discharges 58. Voting for the Canadian Elections for 1917 commenced. All ranks of unit are required to parade and either vote or state that they do not wish to.”

24-12-17
“Admissions 50 Discharges 132. … It has been very cold for the past three weeks and a lot of snow has fallen, making transportation difficult.”

25-12-17
“Admissions 36 Discharges 7. [‘Business’ did not stop on Christmas Day.] Special Christmas Services were held in the Chapel.”

25-1-18
“Admissions 28 Discharges 57. Quite a few Germans from the POW co’s have been admitted this month.”

9-2-18
“Admissions 46 Discharges 7. … Aeroplane alerts are received nearly every night now. Precautions have been taken to see that no lights are showing.” [Foreshadowing of things to come.]

21-3-18
“Admissions 276 Discharges 28.”

[This day was the beginning of the major German offensive in the Somme area, not far from the hospital. This Somme Offensive (March 21 to April 4) was the first of the five last major German offensives of the War. Hence, this was the first of the days of significantly increased casualties recorded in the War Diary. See the Context below.]

22-3-18
“Admissions 537 Discharges 542. The two Surgical Teams who proceeded to 29 CCC [Casualty Clearing Station] have returned this date. Quite a few wounded have come in the past two days.”

[This and other entries illustrate that medical personnel from stationary hospitals temporarily operated at casualty clearing stations and vice versa, as circumstances required. It is likely that Neen participated, although there is no explicit record thereof.]

23-3-18

“Admissions 1064 Discharges 226. Two surgical Teams and 14 Nursing Sisters have arrived from No. 3 CCS for temporary duty … to take care of the present inrush of wounded patients.”

24-3-18
“Admissions 649 Discharges 955.”

25-3-18
“Admissions 673 Discharges 1172. … The number of wounded cases coming in daily continues high.”

26-3-18
“Admissions 1622 Discharges 1411. … This has been the heaviest day so far and has kept everyone busy from morning till night.”

[On March 26, in the midst of the Somme Offensive, ‘at Douellens, near Amiens, directly in the line of the German axis of advance, an extempore Anglo-French conference was convened, chaired by the French President, Poincaré, and including Clemençeau, the Prime Minister, and Lord Milner, the British War Minister, as well as Pétain, Haig and Foch, the French Chief of Staff’: Keegan (at p. 402).]

27-3-18
“Admissions 1932 Discharges 1975.”

28-3-18
“Admissions 2333 Discharges 2109. The number of wounded coming in continues to be very heavy.”

29-3-18
“Admissions 2228 Discharges 2433. … His Majesty, the King paid the hospital an unexpected visit today and was pleased with the manner in which the wounded are being cared for.”

[The King was George V who, throughout the War, ‘took great effort to personally support the troops, visiting the front and military hospitals [like No. 3] many times’: biography.com.

George V may have been at the Douellens conference on March 26 and, thus, paid his visit to No. 3 on March 29. It was not a safe place to be, during the Somme Offensive.]

6-4-18

“Admissions 1805 Discharges1281. The tunnels have all been cleaned and prepared for the patients in case of an air raid. Electric lights have been installed.” [That was prescient. It would have reduced the future casualties.]

22-4-18
[Although not mentioned in the War Diary, Neen’s Personnel Records indicate that she was admitted to No. 2 Canadian Stationary Hospital and, then, “Nursing Sisters’ Home”, both in Abbeville, on this day. The medical issue was “Boils R. arm”, likely again from “Exposure infection”. For some reason, Neen was treated in a stationary hospital other than her own.]

6-5-18
“Admissions 192 Discharges 333. Enemy aeroplanes have been over very frequently at nights lately.”

8-5-18
“Admissions 208 Discharges 330. … Work is proceeding in the opening, cleaning and ventilation of the tunnels so that all may be available in case of air raids.” [No doubt useful upon the imminent bombing.]

13-5-18
“Admissions 343 Discharges 674. … There were a large number of Gas cases admitted yesterday … Most of these cases seemed to be suffering from tear gas.”

15-5-18
“Admissions 218 Discharges 269. … There were only 16 Shell Gas cases admitted today.”

[Although not mentioned in the War Diary, Neen’s Personnel Records indicate that she was on leave (clearly well-deserved) from that day, May 15, to May 29. Unfortunately, it is not presently known where Neen was during her leave.]

17-5-18
“Admissions 270 Discharges188. … 28 Shell Gas cases admitted. The number of shell gas cases being admitted during the past week or two is considerable.”

22-5-18
“Admissions 270 Discharges 333. … Beginning today all ranks are wearing their gas masks one hour each day in order to get accustomed to wearing them while working. 128 shell gas cases admitted.”

28-5-18
“Admissions 229 Discharges 376. … 51 Shell gas cases admitted.

29-5-18
"Admissions 176 Discharges 192."
[Neen's leave ended on this day. It was a critical day because, on the night of May 29/30, the hospital was bombed. Where was Neen on May 29? See below.]

30-5-18
[**The bombing of the hospital, with the loss of 33 lives including three Nursing Sisters, on the night of May 29/30 is recorded in full and extraordinary detail in the Diary for May 30. See the accompanying photographs.**]

31-5-18
[The funeral is recorded in the diary for May 31. See the photographs.]

Confidential.

Original.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

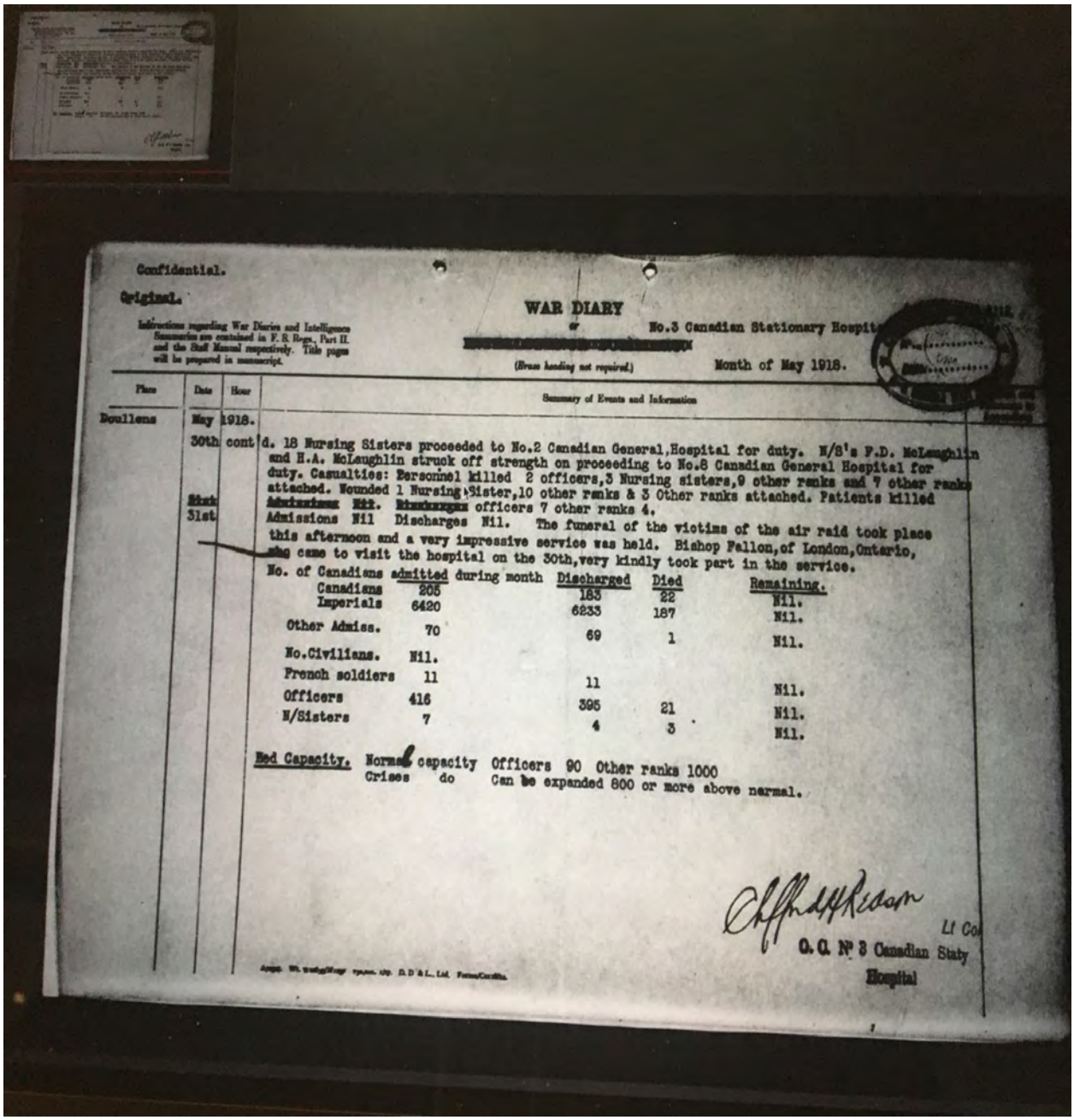
WAR DIARY

or No.3 Canadian Stationary Hospital.

[redacted] Month of May 1918.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Doullens.	May 1918.		
	28th		Admissions 229 Discharges 376 N/S M. Fowlie struck off strength on proceeding to England for duty. N/S M.E.Gray taken on strength. 51 Shell gas cases admitted.
	29th		Admissions 176 Discharges 192 N/S's H.A. McLaughlin and F.D. McLaughlin from hospital.
	30th		Admissions Nil. Discharges 333. On the night of 29-30 of May hostile aeroplanes were heard in the area. The night was clear and the moon shining. About 12.25 an hostile aeroplane passed over the hospital,dropped a flare,and immediately a bomb was dropped which struck the main building over the sergeants quarters,Ward S.6(officers ward) operating theatre and X-Ray room which collapsed immediately. Almost instantly a fire broke out and the whole group of buildings in the upper area were threatened. The alarm was given at once and every effort made to save the patients and combat the fire. The Nursing Sisters and orderlies worked splendidly and with with the assistance of other members of the unit rapidly removed all patients to places of safety. There were no other casualties other than those killed by the bombs. During the work of rescue and while other members of the unit were combating the fire,the aeroplane returned and dropped more bombs,fortunately without doing any damage. At this time the flames were mounting sky high and the whole upper area was clearly illuminated and the buildings sharply delineated. The red crosses on the buildings being very visible so that there was no excuse for his not knowing that it was a hospital. The sergeants were in their quarters and the entire number were casualties. Ward S.6 (the officers ward) was fortunately only partially filled with patients but unfortunately all those in their ward were killed by the bomb,including the Nursing Sister who was on duty. Immediately below this were the X-Ray room and the operating theatre. Three surgical teams were on duty that night but two had completed their operation and had gone for their midnight meal. The other team (Capt. E.E.Meek,C.A.M.C. and Lieut. A.P.H. Sage,M.O.R.C. U.S.A.)were finishing their operation and they,their patient,Sisters A McPherson and E.L. Pringle,the orderlies and stretcher bearers,were all victims of the bomb. During the work of rescue and in the endeavor to save the buildings from fire,we received splendid assistance from three companies of French soldiers and from the English soldiers quartered in Doullens. With their timely aid we were able to save the west-wing of the main buildings. The night was clear and bright. There should have been no difficulty in the airmen recognising it as a hospital. The plane is stated to have been at a height of about 6000 feet. The hospital is well marked with red crosses which airmen say are quite visible from the air. There is no doubt that the occupants of the aeroplane knew it was a hospital for when they came back and dropped bombs a second time,the flames clearly illuminated the red crosses on the buildings. The hospital,being in the Citadel,is surrounded on three sides by fields and on the fourth by a French hospital. There were no camps of troops or dumps of any description in the vicinity of the hospital.



Confidential.

Original.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

WAR DIARY

or No.3 Canadian Stationary Hospit

(Erase heading not required.) Month of May 1918.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Doullens	May 1918.		
	30th	cont	d. 18 Nursing Sisters proceeded to No.2 Canadian General,Hospital for duty. N/S's F.D. McLaughlin and H.A. McLaughlin struck off strength on proceeding to No.8 Canadian General Hospital for duty. Casualties: Personnel killed 2 officers,3 Nursing sisters,9 other ranks and 7 other ranks attached. Wounded 1 Nursing Sister,10 other ranks & 3 Other ranks attached. Patients killed officers 7 other ranks 4.
	31st		Admissions Nil Discharges Nil. The funeral of the victims of the air raid took place this afternoon and a very impressive service was held. Bishop Fallon,of London,Ontario, who came to visit the hospital on the 30th,very kindly took part in the service.

No. of Canadians admitted during month

		Discharged	Died	Remaining.
Canadians	205	183	22	Nil.
Imperials	6420	6233	187	Nil.
Other Admiss.	70	69	1	Nil.
No.Civilians.	Nil.			
French soldiers	11	11		Nil.
Officers	416	395	21	Nil.
N/Sisters	7	4	3	Nil.

Bed Capacity. Normal capacity Officers 90 Other ranks 1000
Crises do Can be expanded 800 or more above normal.

Lt Co
O.C. No 3 Canadian Stat
Hospital

1-6-18

“Admissions 312 Discharges 6. Hospital reopened after being closed 24 hours for the funeral of the personnel killed in the air raid. A new operating room is being fitted up.”

2-6-18
“Admissions 245 Discharges 335. **N/S A. Creaghan, CAMC, struck off strength.”**

[This appears to be the only specific reference to Neen in the No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital War Diary (as opposed to, of course, her Personnel Records).

The bombing of the hospital, funeral, etc. occurred during the nearby Aisne Offensive of the Germans on May 27 to June 4. See Context below.]

Remains of Citadel, in which No. 3 Operated, after Bombing on Night of May 29/30, 19

Funeral on June 1, 1918 of Victims of Air Raid on No. 3
Was Neen there?

Was Neen at No. 3 in Douellens on the night of the bombing, May29/30, and on the following day of the funeral, May 31? It is not entirely clear.

On the one hand, the No. 3 War Diary specifically states that Nursing Sister A. Creaghan was struck off strength No. 3 on June 2, after the air raid and funeral.

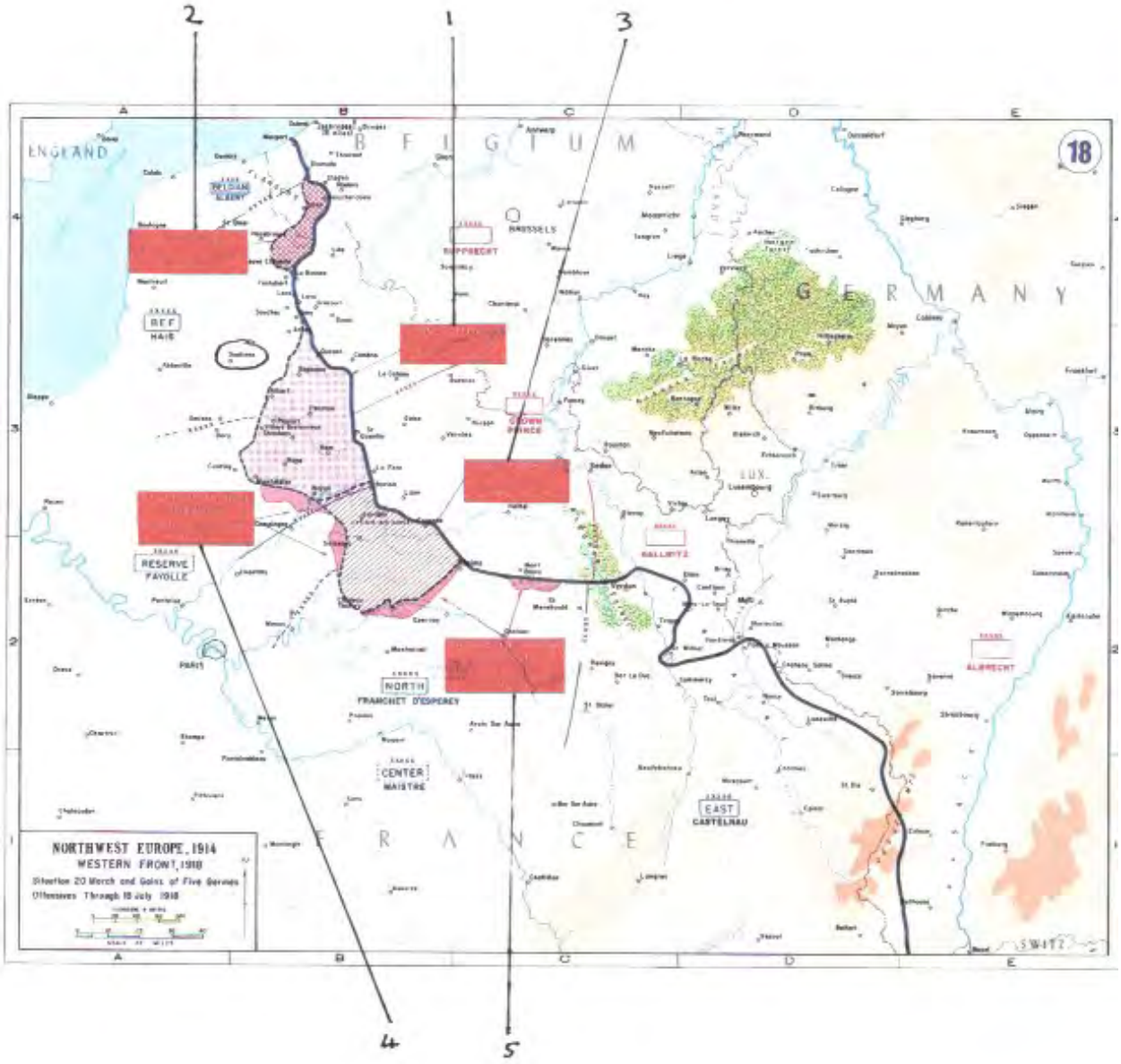
On the other hand, Neen's CEF Personnel Records indicate that her leave ended on May 29. The Records also indicate that she was posted to CAMC Depot, in Shorncliffe, from No. 3 on May 29 and, further, that she was taken on strength No. 12 Canadian General Hospital, in Bramshott (see below), on posting from CAMC Depot on May 30. Were these administrative postings in the midst of the terrible air raid, while Neen was nevertheless at No. 3 until being struck off strength on June 2, or was she in Shorncliffe and Bramshott?

In all, Neen spent a total of 246 or 250 days, September 24, 1917 to May 29 or June 2, 1918, in France during the First World War.

There are numerous other official sources in the CAMC Guide regarding No.2 Canadian General Hospital and No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital.

9. Context of War: Neen's Period at Douellens and Bramshott

The Eastern Front collapsed on March 3, 1918 with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Bolshevik Russia and the Central Powers, including Germany. That was to Germany's advantage by thereby being able to focus exclusively on the Western Front. Nevertheless, the Germans were running low on men and, in later March through July 1918, launched a series of all-out (increasingly 'last-ditch') and eventually unsuccessful offensives. While the British, Canadians, French, and others were also running low on men, "they could look to the gathering millions of Americans to make good their inability to replace losses": Keegan (at p. 393). "The Germans had realised that their only remaining chance of victory was to defeat the Allies before the United States could fully deploy its resources. The German Army had gained a temporary advantage in numbers as nearly 50 divisions had been freed by the Russian withdrawal from the war with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk": "German Spring Offensive", wikipedia.



Final (1918) German Offensives on Western Front
History Department of U.S. Military Academy, West Point
Douellens (Location of No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital) Circled
Wording (lost in scan) in Red Rectangles:

1. Somme Offensive (First German Drive) 21 March - 4 April
2. Lys Offensive (Second German Drive) 9 – 29 April
3. Aisne Offensive (Third German Drive) 27 May – 4 June
4. Noyon – Montdidier Offensive (Fourth German Offensive) 8 – 12 June

5. Champagne – Marne Offensive (Fifth German Offensive) 15 -17 July

The first 1918 German offensive, the Somme Offensive (distinct from the 1916 Battle of the Somme, in the same area), codenamed Operation Michael, took place on March 21 to April 5. A seen above, the offensive substantially increased the work load at nearby No. 3 where Neen served. On the morning that the offensive commenced, the mist was "thickened by the use of gas, chlorine and phosgene, and lachrymatory shell. The gas was lethal, the lachrymatory an irritant designed to make the British infantry remove their respirators": Keegan (at pp. 397-8). It is interesting that the "Somme may not have won the war for the British in 1916 but the obstacle zone it left helped to ensure that in 1918 they did not lose it": Keegan (at p. 404).

The second German offensive was the Lys Offensive in the Ypres area on April 9 to 29.

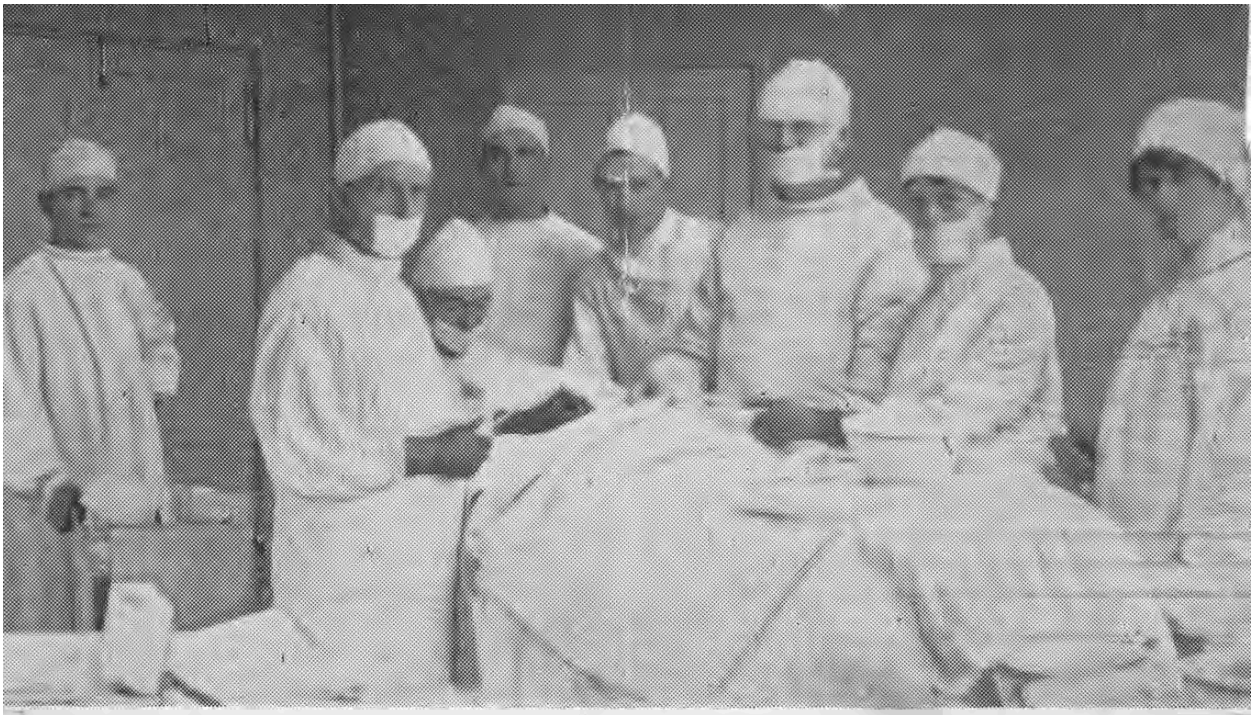
The third German offensive, the Aisne Offensive, took place on May 27 to June 3. That included the night of May 29/30 when the nearby No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital in Douellens was bombed. Neen was struck off strength No. 3 on June 2. The focus of the offensive for the Germans was to recapture the Chemin des Dames Ridge and threaten Paris, all of which was basically a diversionary tactic to force the Allies from battle-worn Flanders to the capital area. The offensive was an aspired "axis of advance down the valley of the Oise, [with] the temptation of Paris, only seventy miles distant. [The Germans] brought [Paris] directly under attack by the deployment of a long-range gun, known to the Allies as 'Big Bertha', which dropped shells into the city, psychologically if not objectively to considerable effect, from a range of seventy-five miles": Keegan (at p. 406). Nevertheless, the Germans were defeated. Among other things, "The German inability to sustain pressure was … hampered by the first outbreak of the so-called 'Spanish' influenza": Keegan (at p. 408).

There were two further German offensives after Neen had departed France (Noyon-Montdidier on June 8 to 12 and Champagne-Marne on July 15 to 17).

After the Germans' failed 1918 offensives, the British and French launched, and won, their major offensive at Amiens. "The blow was struck on August 9, with the Canadian and the Australian Corps providing the infantry support for the tank assault. Haig had now come to depend increasingly on these two Dominion formations": Keegan (at p. 410). "Meanwhile the ever-stronger American army was taking an increasingly important part in operations": Keegan (at p. 411). By the end of August, the Allies had advanced significantly. The Germans were then thinking armistice.

Cessation of hostilities occurred with the Armistice that was signed on November 11, 1918.

10. No. 12 Canadian General Hospital: Bramshott



OPERATING ROOM STAFF, NO. 12, CANADIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL, BRAMSHOTT

Neen served with No. 12 Canadian General Hospital from May 30 or June 2, 1918 to June 13, 1919, a period of 380 or 382 days.

The hospital was part of Bramshott Miltary Camp in Hampshire, about 80 kilometres southwest of London. It was a temporary camp set up by the Canadians in the First and Second World Wars. The hospital cared "for those soldiers who were sick, succumbing to changes in climate and exposure to different viruses and bacteria. The war wounded also were brought here to be tended. Sadly, many of the soldiers having survived the war fell victim to the Spanish flu pandemic that unleashed itself in 1918. The church yard at Bramshott became the final resting place of many of these casualties": Hampshire History website. There remains an affinity for Canadians at Bramshott.

While hostilities ceased with the Armistice on November 11, 1918, nursing duties obviously did not also cease.

Thus, Neen spent 165 of the 380 days at the Bramshott hospital during wartime and the remaining 215 days of the 380 days (and more: see below) performing nursing duties, all in a difficult wait to go home.

There are numerous official sources regarding the No.12 Canadian General Hospital in the CAMC Guide.

11. Demobilisation

After the Armistice on November 11, demobilisation was “an enormous logistical challenge”. For “soldiers [and nurses] overseas, the months of waiting [for return to Canada] were long, frustrating and difficult to understand.” See Canadian War Museum website.

From No. 12 in Bramshott, Neen was posted to No. 15 Canadian General Hospital (near Taplow, just west of London) on June 14, 1919.

In less than a month, on July 3, 1919, Neen was “SOS on transfer to Canada”, due to “Cessation of Hostilities”. Also, on that day, she “Sailed to Canada Emp. of Brit.”

Neen was “TOS CEF in Canada On General Demobilisation” on July 3, 1919.

In Moncton, she was “SOS CEF in Canada On General Demobilisation” on July 8, 1919. Her proposed residence was Newcastle.

Neen endured a total of 239 days (including the 215 days in Bramshott) in further nursing and demobilisation.

Neen was in the CEF from April 1, 1916 to July 8, 1919, a long and harrowing period of 3 years and 3 months.

On May 18, 1920, Neen was granted a Canadian Expeditionary Force “Certificate of Service, Issued to Officers and Nursing Sisters” for her service in Canada, England and France with the CAMC.

See Dianna Graves, “In the Company of Sisters, Canada’s Women in the War Zone, 1914-1919”, (2021).

Locations of Neen's Hospitals in England and France
Locations of Bun's RFC Squadrons and Reconnaissance in France

12. <u>Some Reminiscences of Neen and Nan</u>

I take this opportunity to record a few reminiscences of Neen and her younger sister, Nan, by their niece and my mother, Mary.

Neen and Nan were 37 and 30, respectively, years older than Mary. Mary was born in 1924, five years after Neen's return from the War.

Mary does not recall Neen (or her father, Dewey) talking about the War (which was not uncommon).

Neen was lively and had a lot of character. Nan was quieter.

Neen always dressed well, with pearls (including when swimming), likely under the auspices of J.D. Creaghan Co. Limited.

Both were unmarried, possibly due to a shortage of men with the War and Flu. They lived together for years.

Neen and Nan's elder sister, Clare, died in childbirth in 1929 (at age 44). Neen and Nan (for some reason, not Clare's husband, John McManus) brought up the child, their nephew, John McManus.

In the summers, as young girls, Mary and sister Ellen were put on the Ocean Limited train alone by their parents to travel to Newcastle, where they were picked up at the station by Neen and Nan. Neen and Nan looked after the girls, both at the lovely home of J.D. and Ellen in Newcastle and in Burnt Church.

Mary recalls that Neen visited Montreal on occasion on her way back to Newcastle after trips to New York (presumably visiting Adams relatives).

At some point (perhaps after J.D.'s death in 1938), Neen and Nan moved to Montreal. They had a house on Argyle Avenue in Westmount, near Renfrew Avenue where Dewey, (the other) Nan and their children (Ellen, Mary, Frank, and Michael) lived and near where Bun, Yvonne and their children (David and Ann) lived.

Mary recalls there being many enjoyable family dinners and get-togethers with Neen, Nan and Bun and his family.

IV. Thomas Cyril ("Bun") Creaghan

1. Personnel Records

According to Bun's CEF Certificate of Service, he was appointed to commissioned rank, Lieutenant, in the 55th Battalion on March 26, 1915 (which was prior to his actual enlistment: see below). He was also stated to be Lieutenant in the 23rd Regiment (presumably related to the 55th Battalion).

According to his CEF Attestation Paper, he enlisted in the CEF on June 3, 1915. He was 25 years old. His next-of-kin was his mother, Mrs. Ellen Creaghan, of Newcastle. His medical examination was in Sussex. His address is not provided. Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Kirkpatrick, OC [Officer Commanding] 55th Battalion signed the Attestation Paper in Sussex.

Bun's "Trade or Calling" was "Engineer". This is clarified in his British National Archives Records (see below) where his "Occupation in Civil Life" was "McGill University, 1907-1912, and Hudson's Bay Terminus Construction (address: Hudson's Bay), 1913-1914".

According to his Certificate of Service, Bun served with the CEF in Canada, England and France with the 55th Battalion, 2nd Pioneer Battalion, General List, and Western Ontario Regimental Depot.

He was struck off the strength of the CEF on April 14, 1919 on general demobilisation.

Thus, Bun was with the CEF from March 26, 1915 to April 14, 1919, a lengthy period of over 4 years. For almost 2 years of that period, from March 23, 1917 to February 9, 1919, Bun was seconded to and, as indicated in his CEF Certificate of Service, "Served with the R.F.C. and R.A.F."

Distinct from Dewey and Bill, who each left the CEF to join the RNAS and RFC/RFA respectively, Bun was seconded to the RFC/RFA while legally remaining in the CEF. Consistently, Neen and Bun demobilised from the CEF while Dewey and Bill demobilised from the RAF. See "Context of RNAS, RFC and RAF" in part V.

Bun's Certificate of Service also indicates that he was wounded on November 20, 1917, which was during his service with the RFC and RAF.

2. CEF Service

From March 26, 1915 to July 23, 1916, Bun served with the 55th Battalion, 2nd Pioneer Battalion, General List, and Western Ontario Regimental Depot.

a. 55th Canadian Infantry Battalion

In a document (stamped “Temporary”) of King George of fine calligraphy, Bun was constituted and appointed a Lieutenant (or such higher rank as he may be promoted) in the “Land Forces”, specifically the “55th Canadian Infantry Battalion”. That was effective October 30, 1915, although signed retroactively on March 16, 1918. The effective date coincides with embarkation of the 55th Battalion from Quebec:

> “Organized in May 1915 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel J. R. Kirkpatrick …
>
> Mobilized at Sussex, New-Brunswick. Recruited in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.
>
> Drafts of 250 and 100 sent to England in June 1915. Embarked from Quebec 30 October 1915 aboard CORSICAN. Disembarked England 8 November 1915. Strength: 42 officers, 1099 other ranks…
>
> Absorbed by 40th Battalion, 6 July 1916. Disbanded 4 June 1917 by Privy Council Orders 1366 and 1863 of 21 May and 6 July 1917. Perpetuated by The New Brunswick Rangers.”

See “Infantry, Guide to Sources Relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force”, Library and Archives Canada website. The Infantry Guide provides numerous invaluable official sources.

The 55th Battalion “provided reinforcements for the Canadian Corps in the field”: “55th Battalion (New Brunswick & Prince Edward Island), CEF”, Wikipedia.

Bun was with the 55th for about a year (from March 26, 1915 to March 8, 1916). 7 months of that was in Canada, while 5 months of that was, solely it appears, in England. There does not appear to be a War Diary for the 55th, perhaps because it “provided reinforcements for the Canadian Corps in the field”. It appears that Bun first went to the theatre of war, France, with the 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion.

b. 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion

On March 9, 1916, after the initial one-year period with the 55th, Bun was transferred to the 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion. On that day, Bun went to France and his adventure really began. The 2nd had arrived in France on the previous day. It was part of the 2nd Canadian Division of the CEF.

Pioneer battalions:

> "Worked in conjunction with the Engineers, 'and continually in the Forward Area: the work in the back area being left to Labour units and Entrenching battalions. The work is varied but consists of consolidating positions captured by the infantry, tunnelling, mining, wiring, railroad work, deep dugout work and laying out, building and keeping trenches in repair.' (RG 9, III, vol. 4454, folder 6, file 11)".

See "Pioneer Battalions, Guide to Sources Relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force", Library and Archives Canada website (emphasis added).

It was dangerous work at the front (i.e. in the "Forward area").

While Bun was a professional engineer, he served with the 2nd not the Engineers. The 2nd worked with the Engineers.

Following are some details on the 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion in the Pioneer Battalions Guide:

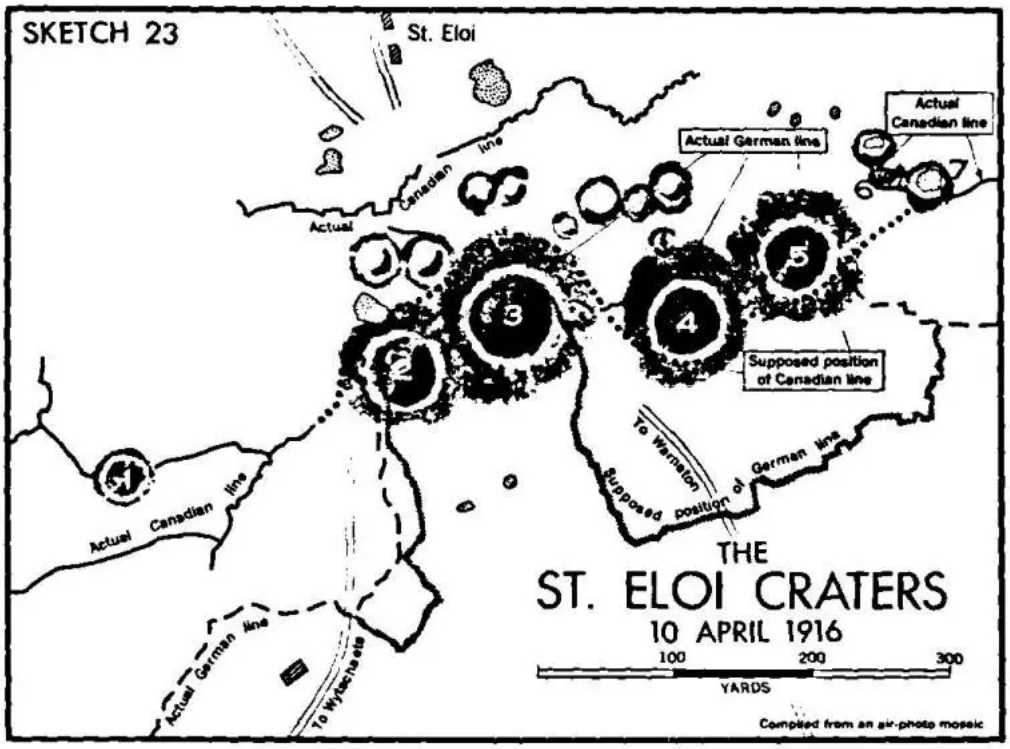
> "Organized in August 1915 …
>
> Mobilized at Guelph and St. Thomas. Recruited in Eastern Canada among miners, lumbermen, railwaymen, mechanics, engineers, surveyors and carpenters.
>
> Left Halifax 6 December 1915 aboard ORDUNA. Arrived in England 14 December 1915. Strength: 28 officers, 1040 other ranks.
>
> Arrived in France 8 March 1916. Reinforced by 4th Canadian Reserve Battalion. Absorbed into 4th, 5th and 6th Battalions, Canadians Engineers in May 1918. Disbanded by General Order 149 of 15 September 1920."

The Guide provides numerous invaluable official sources on the 2nd.

Bun served with the 2nd from March 9, 1916 to July 20, 1916, a relatively short period of over four months. As we will see, it was a very eventful period.

i. Battle of St. Eloi Craters

The 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion, with Bun as Lieutenant, was directly involved in the dreadful Battle of St. Eloi Craters. It was fought from March 27 to April 16, 1916. St. Eloi is near Ypres in Belgium. The Battle occurred within the longer time frame of the Franco-German Battle of Verdun much further south on the Western Front.



From G.W.L Nicholson, "Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War" (1962)

A Crater at St. Eloi (from Nicholson)

The Battle of St. Eloi Craters is described as follows in the Canadian Encyclopedia (online):

> "The attack over the soggy terrain of Belgium was the first major engagement for the 2nd Canadian Division … [The 1st Canadian Division had fought at the Second Battle of Ypres.] It was a disaster for Canada and its Allies.
>
> Mine Warfare
>
> By late 1915, armies on both sides of the First World War were using extensive mining as a part of trench warfare. Sappers dug tunnels across the battlefield to plant explosives under enemy positions and would then retreat and blow them up. The fields near the Belgian village of St. Eloi, located five kilometres south of Ypres, were pockmarked with craters from repeated underground explosions.
>
> In the spring of 1916, the Canadian Corps' 2nd Division was sent to fight Germans on the front line at St. Eloi. The Canadians were rushed to the battlefield, leaving no time to prepare for the attack. The plan was for the seasoned British troops to strike and then for the Canadians to take over and hold the line.
>
> The fighting started at 4:15 a.m. on 27 March with heavy gun fire. Six British mines were set off one after the other, shaking the earth 'like the sudden outburst of a volcano' and filling the sky with yellow smoke and debris, according to the Canadian Expeditionary Force's war record. The explosion was heard in England. German trenches collapsed.
>
> Fighting from Craters
>
> The mines created huge craters in no man's land. The British soldiers rose from their positions in the cold mud and attacked, quickly capturing three craters and the third German line. For several days, British soldiers fought hand-to-hand with Germans, advancing until 3 April.
>
> The British soldiers grew confused as to where they were as the mines had reshaped the landscape. Four mines blew up so close to each other that the craters formed an impassable lake that was 15 m deep and 55 m across. …
>
> British troops fought from inside the craters, crouching in mud or standing in waist-deep water, unable to sit. High winds, sleet and mud created nightmarish conditions. Hundreds of men were killed on either side in a week of chaotic shooting and shelling. The exhausted British were relieved by the Canadians at 3 a.m. on 4 April.
>
> Canadians Enter Fray
>
> The excited Canadians [of the 2nd Division] were eager for their first taste of battle. Arriving at St. Eloi, however, they found a shortage of steel helmets, machine guns and defensive positions. They had only a vague idea where they were and where the Germans were. The 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion improved the defences and attempted to drain

the trenches of water [emphasis added]. At the same time the entire front line came under constant bombardment on 4 and 5 April, and hundreds more men were killed.

Canadian Private Donald Fraser, a 34-year-old bank clerk from Calgary, described the scene: ‘When day broke, the sights that met our gaze were so horrible and ghastly that they beggar description. Heads, arms and legs were protruding from the mud at every yard and dear knows how many bodies the earth swallowed. Thirty corpses were at least showing in the crater and beneath its clayey waters other victims must be lying killed and drowned. A young, tall, slim English lieutenant lay stretched in death with a pleasant, peaceful look on his boyish face. Some mother’s son, gone to glory.’

‘Walking on Dead’

Frank Maheux, another Canadian, wrote to his wife that ‘we were walking on dead soldiers’ as they tried to advance. Wounded and traumatized men streamed back to the medical officers. Some had been fighting standing in cold water and mud for 48 straight hours, and officers had been awake for 100 hours.

At 3:30 a.m. on 6 April, two German battalions attacked down the ruins of the main road. The confused Canadian troops often lost communication with each other and were quickly pushed back. As the sun rose over the muddy wasteland, the Germans had recaptured all of the ground taken from them at the start of the battle.

The Canadians fought back with bombs but could not advance in the heavy rain. Troops attempting to recapture two craters got stuck in the mud and were shot dead before they could throw their grenades. A group of Canadians recaptured Craters 6 and 7, but thought they were in Craters 4 and 5. In the confusion they were cut off and left open to the German onslaught.

Canadians Driven Back

As night fell on 8 April, the Canadians again attacked but were stopped by German rifles and machine guns. Incessant rain made porridge of the battlefield. Germans attacked the next day but were likewise repelled. The Canadian leadership had little idea which craters they held and which were held by Germans. The leadership did not know what was happening at the front, as disoriented Canadians pinned down by artillery shells could not relay messages. Even the pigeons used to carry messages were dead.

Both sides shot at each other in the miserable conditions of the craters for another two weeks. More than 1,370 Canadians were killed or wounded, along with about 480 Germans. Aerial photography on 16 April finally showed the Canadians that they were in a terrible position, and the divisional headquarters ordered the battle stopped.

Still, the German attack continued with tear gas; the exhausted Canadians fought off the enemy again on 17 April. A German night raid through pounding rain drove the

Canadians back further. Mud stopped Canadians guns from firing. Half of the remaining men in the craters surrendered to the Germans, and half crawled away.

The Battle of St. Eloi Craters ended with the Germans in control of the battlefield, as they had been at its start."

The role of the 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion is also described as follows in G.W.L Nicholson, "Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War" (1962) (at p. 141):

> "During the first two nights [April 4th/5th] the 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion, under engineer direction and assisted by large parties drawn from the 4th and 5th Brigades, toiled vigorously to improve the defences. Firing positions in the captured German trenches which formed the front line were reversed, pumping slightly reduced the water level, British wounded were evacuated and the bodies of British and German dead were removed. A support trench running eastward was started south of the line of the craters."

ii. War Diary References to Bun

It is fortunate that, although War Diaries do not generally refer to individuals, the 2nd's War Diary contains numerous references to Bun (Lieutenant Creaghan). The following are the references. Bun was with "A" Coy. (Company) of the Battalion. The bold-face entries are for the time frame (March 27 to April 16) of the Battle, with the Canadian infantry relieving the British infantry on April 4.

[27-3-16
[Battalion] Took part in operations in connection with the action at ST. ELOI.

1-4-16
"A" Coy. night work on 3 platoons under Lieuts. Petrie, Tracy and Creaghan Working on "F" Support trenches.

8-4-16
"A" Coy. furnished 2 parties to the 4th Field Co. C.E. one of 78 men under Lt. Creaghan, one of 78 men under Lt. Parker. They did no work but stood by all night in the G.H.Q. Line.

10-4-16
Officer Commanding: It would be difficult to find more trying conditions, under constant shell, bomb, and rifle fire.

13-4-16

104 all ranks including 27 men of the Machine Gun Section under Lt. Creighan [sic] worked as follows:

19 men repairing communication trench West of Crater No. 1.
20 men building fire trench inside crater #1.
10 men deepening a sap from crater #1 to bombing post.
25 men on dugouts and latrines.

15-4-16
The night of April 15th/16th "A" Coy. was split up into 2 parties, each under an Officer, consisting of – 1st party 72 all ranks under Lt. Creighan [sic] … The first party worked on the P.12 trench building parades, parapets, and traverses and cleaning out trench. About 100 yards of trench was improved. This party returned to camp at 2:30 a.m. These trenches are all breast works and do not stand up well against shell fire.

23-4-16
On the night of the 23rd/24th two platoons of 'A" Coy. under Lieut. Creaghan worked with the 4th Bde. In the front line reclaiming trench on both sides of point 15. In addition to this a simple fire trench was constructed with earth parapet and parades three feet thick on top.

24-4-16
On the night of the 24th/25th two Coys. "A" and "D" worked with the 4th Bde. in the front line. "A" Coy. which was divided into two parties one under Lieut. Tracy and the other under Lieut. Creaghan worked from about trench 13 to the junction of 14.

2-5-16
The 2nd party from "A" Coy. under Lieut. Creaghan worked reclaiming and draining trenches 14 and 15 front line.

4-5-16
The other party from "A" Coy. under Lieut. Creaghan proceeded to trenches 14 and 15 where they worked improving and cleaning out trench. A great deal of difficulty is experienced in cleaning out these trenches by the amount of corrugated iron, old bathmatts, wire etc., which is embedded in the soft earth.

10-5-16
Two parties from "A" and two from "D" Coy's worked with 4th Bde. in front and support lines. Lieut. Creaghan in charge of the first party from "A" Coy. reports that there is an isolated bay at the extreme Right of trench 16 which could be strengthened and used as a bombing post to control the reported German bombing post between point 15-16 and No. 3 Crater. A bomb was thrown at this party but caused no casualties.

12-5-16
Four parties … worked with the 4th Bde. in the front line. Lieut. Creaghan in charge of No. 3 party states that a party of 12 men and three bombers from the garrison of trench 16 came in from No Man's Land and reported that they had encountered a large party of Huns approaching our trench along the C.T. to No. 3 Crater. Our work stopped, our working party was ordered to Stand To, and as a consequence a great deal of work was not done. Shortly afterwards it was noticed that the enemy had a party working on their wire with a number of men on the parapet of No. 3 Crater. About 12 midnight the garrison and our working party opened fire on the party, with rifle and hand grenades. The enemy disappeared.

[18-5-16
Battalion Orders
Lieut. Creaghan listed second in seniority.]

The entries speak for themselves. The Battle of St. Eloi Craters was another tragic and fruitless battle in the Belgian theatre of war.

c. **Aviation Training**

On July 21, 1916, Bun was transferred to Shorncliffe and posted to the General List.

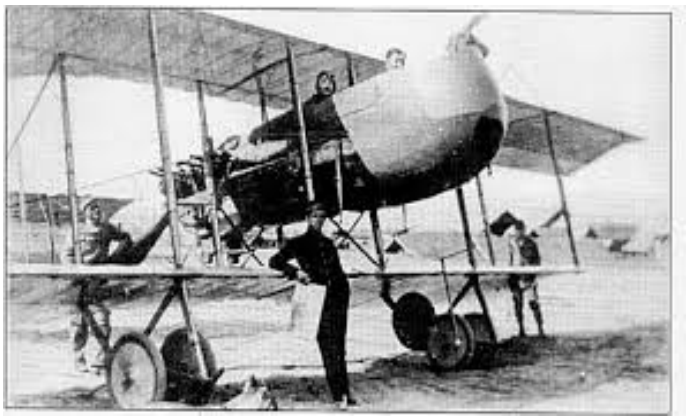
Also, on July 21, Bun was "On Command to RFC".

Eight months later, on March 23, 1917, after aviation training, Bun was seconded to the RFC.

During that eight-month period, on August 4, 1916, the following notice appeared in "The North Shore Leader", Newcastle:

> "LIEUT. CREAGHAN WELL: Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Creaghan had a cablegram from their son, Lieut. T. Cyril Creaghan Monday, stating he was enjoying a two weeks' leave of absence with his sister, Mrs. D. King Hazen at Shorncliffe, England."

Also, in October 1916, Bun obtained his flying certificate: "No. 3880 – Lieutenant Thomas Cyril Creaghan, 2nd Canadian Pioneers – Maurice Farman Biplane, Military School, Shoreham – 25th October, 1916". See Comini (below). Shoreham Camp (1914-1918) was at Shoreham-by-Sea about 90 miles west of Shorncliffe on the English Channel. It had a strategic railhead, seaport and airport: shorehambysea website.



Maurice Farman Biplane Used by Bun to Obtain Flying Certificate

3. RFC / RAF Service

Bun's service in the RFC/RAF is recorded in his CEF Personnel Records and in his British National Archives (NA) Records. NA Records are available online and at Kew. The NA Records refer to official notices in The London Gazette.

In Bun's NA Records, his pre-war occupation was stated as "Civil Engineer" with McGill University and Hudson's Bay Terminus Construction. Unlike Dewey, Bun had already graduated from McGill and was a practicing engineer.

In the first sheet of Bun's NA Records (pre-wounding: see below), the "Name of Person to be Informed of Casualties" was "Mrs. D.K. Hazen [Mollie], Sister, Address c/o Bank of Montreal, 9 Waterloo Place, London". Also, in the second sheet of Bun's NA Records (post-wounding), the person to be informed of casualties was his father, J.D.

In his CEF Personnel Records, from September 19, 1918 (post-wounding), "in addition to next-of-kin [mother Ellen]", "M.C. Hagen" [*sic* Hazen] [sister Molly] 2, Aberdeen Terrace, Grayshott, Hants" was to be notified "should Lieut. Thomas C. Creaghan – R.A.F. at any time become a casualty": CEF Personnel Records.

On March 23, 1917, Bun was "To be Flying Officer, Military Wing, Royal Flying Corps" and was "Seconded for duty with RFC": CEF Personnel Records. Correspondingly, the following two notices appear in The London Gazette and are referred to in his NA Records:

> "Royal Flying Corps
> Mil. Wing – The undermentioned appts. are made: -
> Flying Officers –
> 23 Mar. 1917
> Lt. T.C. Creaghan, Canadian Gen. List".

> "West. Ontario Regt.
> The undermentioned temp. Lts. are secd. [seconded]for duty with the R.F.C.: -
> T.C. Creaghan 23 March 1917".

Thus, Lt. T.C. Creaghan, of the CEF General List, was appointed Flying Officer of, and was seconded to, the RFC on March 23.

(While the key effective date in those London Gazette notices was March 23, 1917, the first notice was published retroactively on April 13, 1917, when Bun was on the CEF General List (see above), while the second notice was published later on November 6, 1917, when Bun was with the Western Ontario Regimental Depot (see below). That explains the different references in the two Gazette notices to "Canadian Gen. List" and "West. Ontario Regt".)

a. 15th Squadron

On March 28, 1917, just before the Battle of Vimy Ridge on April 9 to 14, Bun was "TOS [taken on strength] on arrival in France & posted to 15th Sqd [Squadron] RFC": CEF Personnel Records.

> "No 15 Squadron was formed at South Farnborough on 1 March 1915 … The unit moved to France in December. The squadron operated as a reconnaissance unit for most of its time on the Western Front but [post-Bun] it was pressed into service to undertake ground attack missions in 1918": Royal Air Force Museum website.

It is likely that Bun likely flew reconnaissance during the epic Canadian victory at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Furthermore, on May 7, 1917, Bun "was on a patrol mission for the Artillery with 2nd Lieutenant S.E. Toomer on board the B.E.2e no. A2866. The aircraft returned to a take-off hangar in a forward landing field. Creaghan and Toomer were safe and sound": Comini, infra (my translation from French). The N.A. Records confirm that Bun flew the B.E.2: see below.

Bun's said "patrol mission for the Artillery" was during the Battle of Fresnoy (May 3 to 8), less than a month after the epic Canadian victory at the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Fresnoy is in the Douai Plain below the Ridge. Bun and Eric (my paternal grandfather, gassed on top of Vimy Ridge) were on the same team, at the same time and in the same place. See "Battle of Vimy Ridge" in part III.

Also, to arrive "safe and sound" in a B.E.2 was an achievement in itself. The B.E.2, of which the B.E.2e flown by Bun was the last version, was "a British single-engine tractor two-seat biplane designed and developed at the Royal Aircraft Factory." No. A2866 was the serial number.

The contemporaneous operation of the aircraft is described as follows:

> "By the spring of 1917, however, conditions on the Western Front had changed again; the German fighter squadrons having been re-equipped with better fighters, especially the Albatros D.III. It had been planned that by this time B.E.2s in front-line service would have been replaced by newer aircraft, such as the Royal Aircraft Factory R.E.8 [later flown by Bun: see below] … but delivery of these types was initially slower than hoped. This situation culminated in what became known as 'Bloody April' [1917, just before Bun's patrol mission], with the RFC losing 60 B.E.2s during that month.
>
> [Also, on] 19 May 1917, six pilots, newly arrived in France and still to be allocated to a squadron, were each given a new B.E.2e to ferry between RFC depots at St. Omer and Candas. One crashed in transit, three crashed on landing and one went missing (the pilot was killed). …
>
> Fortunately, by this time, the B.E.2e was already being rapidly replaced on the Western Front by later types, but this was from several points of view more than a year too late."

See "Royal Aircraft Factory B.E.2", Wikipedia.

Royal Aircraft Factory B.E. 2 - Flown by Bun on May 17, 1917 Patrol Mission

On May 21, 1917, presumably as a CEF administrative matter since Bun remained seconded to the RFC, Bun was posted to the Western Ontario Regimental Depot from the General List: CEF Personnel Records. Also, the NA Archives make clear that Bun was substantively considered to be from the 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion.

Bun was granted leave of absence from June 23, 1917 to July 16, 1917: CEF Personnel Records.

b. 16th Squadron

On August 13, 1917, he was posted to the 16th Squadron: see Comini, infra.

> "No 16 Squadron was formed on 10 February 1915 at St Omer in France ... The Squadron's main role in World War One was photographic and tactical reconnaissance plus artillery spotting": Royal Air Force Museum website.

The said 15th and 16th Squadrons were based on the grounds of the 13th century Abbaye Notre-Dame de Beaupré-sur-le-Lys in La Gorgue. La Gorgue was close to the Western Front and is about 33 kilometres from Vimy.

Bun and other airmen and soldiers are celebrated in Serge Comini, "Abbaye Notre-Dame de Beaupré-sur-la-Lys, des Hommes sur les terres … et les Chemins des Dames, 1914-1918" (2018).

See also "La Gorgue", Wikipedia.

On November 20, 1917, Bun was entered on the casualty sheet for "G.S.W. [gun shot wound] L. leg": CEF Personnel Records. The NA Records also refer to Bun being "Wounded" on that day. According to Comini, he was wounded while piloting a R.E.8 on an offensive patrol.

Royal Aircraft Factory R.E.8 - Flown by Bun when Wounded on November 20, 1917

> "The Royal Aircraft Factory R.E.8 was a British two-seat biplane reconnaissance and bomber aircraft of the First World War designed and produced at the Royal Aircraft Factory. …
>
> Intended as a replacement for the vulnerable B.E.2, the R.E.8 was widely regarded as more difficult to fly and gained a reputation in the Royal Flying Corps for being 'unsafe' that was never entirely dispelled. Although eventually it gave reasonably satisfactory service, it was never an outstanding combat aircraft. Nonetheless, it remained the standard British reconnaissance and artillery observation aircraft from mid-1917 to the end of the war."

See "Royal Aircraft Factory R.E.8", wikipedia.

Bun was admitted to No. 21 Casualty Clearing Station on November 20, the No. 2 Red Cross Hospital in Rouen on November 21, and the 1st London General Hospital on November 28.

His admission to the London hospital was for "B.W. [bullet wound] Leg Sev. [Severe]".

Bun was discharged from the London hospital on December 19. Accordingly, he spent a month in hospital (and, as mentioned below, his hospitalisations in October of the following year, 1918, appear to have been related to his November 20, 1917 wounding).

Bun was declared fit on January 25, 1918 “after 1 mth’s high flying at home [England]”

The period that Bun was actively with the 16th Squadron (pre-November 21, 1917) included the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) and the Battle of Cambrai. It is presently not known where Bun was wounded, but November 20 was during the latter battle.

Bun’s November 20, 1917 wounding seems to have been an understandable turning point in his RFC/RAF service and, indeed, his War service.

c. 109th and 99th Squadrons

He was posted to “109 Sqdr.” on January 30, 1918: NA Archives. The 109th was basically a training squadron:

> “No 109 Squadron was formed at Lake Down in May 1917 as a day bomber unit. It spent some time training and disbanded in July 1918 before becoming operational”: Royal Air Force Museum website.

Since, on April 1, 1918, the RFC and RNAS merged to form the RFA, Bun then automatically served with the RFA.

Also, on April 1, 1918, Bun was appointed Lieut. “Aero and Seap. [Seaplane]” in the RAF: NA Records.

On May 1, 1918, Bun was appointed temporary Captain, Aero & Seaplane in the RA: The London Gazette (referred to in the NA Records):

> “The undermentioned Lts. to be temp. Capts. whilst empld. as Capts. (A. & S.): -
> T.C. Creaghan”.

Also, on May 1, 1918, Bun was transferred from 109 Sqdr. to “S.W. Area for disposal”: NA Records.

Bun was posted to the 99th Squadron on September 2, 1918: Comini supra.

> “No 99 Squadron formed at Yatesbury on 15 August 1917 as a day bomber unit. It moved to France in April 1918 where it joined the Independent Force. It made bombing attacks on German industrial targets until the end of the war”: Royal Air Force Museum website.

The Commercial newspaper of Chatham, on September 24, 1918, indicates that Bun was admitted to hospital on September 8 with a fractured shoulder, his apparent second injury of the War. The NA Records do indicate that Bun was hospitalized in France on September 12 and then

on September 28 (in Rouen). The NA Records proceed to indicate that Bun was invalided from "99 Sqdn." to "England" on October 1, 1918. There are two subsequent references to hospitalisations in England, first at the Prince of Wales Hospital on October 4, 1918 and then at a hospital in Swanage on October 24, 1918. No reference is made in the NA Records of the nature of the malady. While Bun's CEF Certificate of Service refers to his wounding on November 20, 1917, it does not refer to his apparent subsequent injury on September 8, 1918.

It is not presently known what exactly Bun did in the 109th and 99th squadrons.

The First World War ended with the armistice on November 11, 1918.

On February 9, 1919, Bun "Ceases Seconded for duty RAF" "on posting to 4th Res Bn": CEF Personnel Records. Correspondingly, as indicated in The London Gazette (referred to in the NA Archives):

> "Western Ontario Regt.
> Temp. Lt. T.C. Creaghan ceases to be secd. for duty with the RAF. 9th Feb. 1919"

Also, as indicated in The London Gazette (referred to in the NA Archives):

> "The undersigned relinquish their commns. on ceasing to be empld.: -
> Lt. (acting Capt.) T.C. Creaghan (Lt., W. Ont. R.)
> 10th Feb. 1919"

The NA Records refer to "Machines flown" by Bun "Since entry into RFC". These include the "BE2– RE8", each discussed above in the context of Bun's May 17, 1917 patrol mission and his November 20, 1917 wounding. There is also the "M.F.H.F.", which may stand for a Maurice Farman HF model, a French reconnaissance machine. (Bun used a Maurice Farman Biplane to obtain his flying certificate.)

The NA Records indicate that Bun had "about 300 hours. Corps Pilot".

The following stamp is made in Bun's NA Records:

> "SERVICE CONSIDERED FOR THE GRANT OF WAR MEDALS"

There is no indication in the CEF Personnel Records or NA Records that Bun received a war medal. Unlike Dewey, he could not receive a Star Medal because he was not in the theatre of war in 1914-5.

4. **<u>Demobilisation</u>**

On his medical examination on March 4, 1919, in the course of leaving the CEF, it is indicated that Bun had a 4” scar on his left thigh and a 2.5” scar on his left calf. He “complains of slight numbness in left thigh” but, nevertheless, there was “No evidence of any disability at present. Can walk five miles without difficulty.” In the scheme of the War, it could have been much worse.

On March 21, 1919, Bun was “attached” to C.C.C. Kinmel Park, shortly prior to embarkation for Canada.

Kinmel Park, in northern Wales, was used as a camp for Canadian troops anxiously awaiting return home from the War. The conditions were not good. On March 4, 1919, about 1,000 of the troops rioted. In response, five Canadians were killed and many court-martialled. Yet the riot did at least speed up returns to Canada. Bun arrived at Kinmel Park a few weeks after the riot and was only there for eight days. See the Canadian Great War Project website

On March 29, 1919, Bun embarked for Canada, arriving in Halifax on April 5, 1919.

About five months after the end of the War, on April 14, 1919, Bun was struck off strength by reason of General Demobilisation: Certificate of Service.

Bun was “Discharged as Capt.”: CEF Personnel Records.

V. **Gerald Francis ("Dewey" or "Dew") Creaghan**

In the First World War, Dewey served sequentially as a sapper in the Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps of the CEF and as a pilot in the Royal Naval Air Service. He served subsequently in the Second World War.

1. Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps ("CORCC")

a. Canadian Railway Troops

The CORCC was part of the Canadian Railway Troops, which are summarized as follows:

> "Canadian railway units played a major role in the construction and maintenance of railways of all gauges, including light railways, for the five British Army areas in France and Belgium": "Official Guide to the Canadian Railway Troops", Library and Archives Canada website.

The role of railways general in the First World War is summarized as follows:

> "Vast railway lines transported war material to the front from ports along the Atlantic coast. Forestry, labour, and railway formations, as well as Chinese labour units, built rail lines and roads behind the lines. From the railheads, light rail and trucks transported the supplies to within the sound of the guns at the front. Here, all armies relied on horses and mules to carry the supplies close to the trenches, where they were finally brought in to the front lines by the 'mules of the army,' the infantry": Canadian War Museum website.

b. CORCC – Official Guide

The following "Background information" on the CORCC itself is provided in the "Official Guide to the Canadian Railway Troops":

> "Organized in the spring of 1915 as a result of a request by the British Government for Canada to supply a railway construction unit for service in France.
> Authorized by Privy Council Order 482 of 5 March 1915.
> Commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel C. W. P. Ramsey, a construction engineer on eastern line of the Canadian Pacific Railway.
> Mobilized at Saint John.
> Recruited by Canadian Pacific Railway throughout Canada.
> Left Saint John 14 June 1915 aboard HERSCHEL.
> Arrived in France 25 August 1915.
> Initially attached to 2nd and 6th Divisions of the Belgian Army.

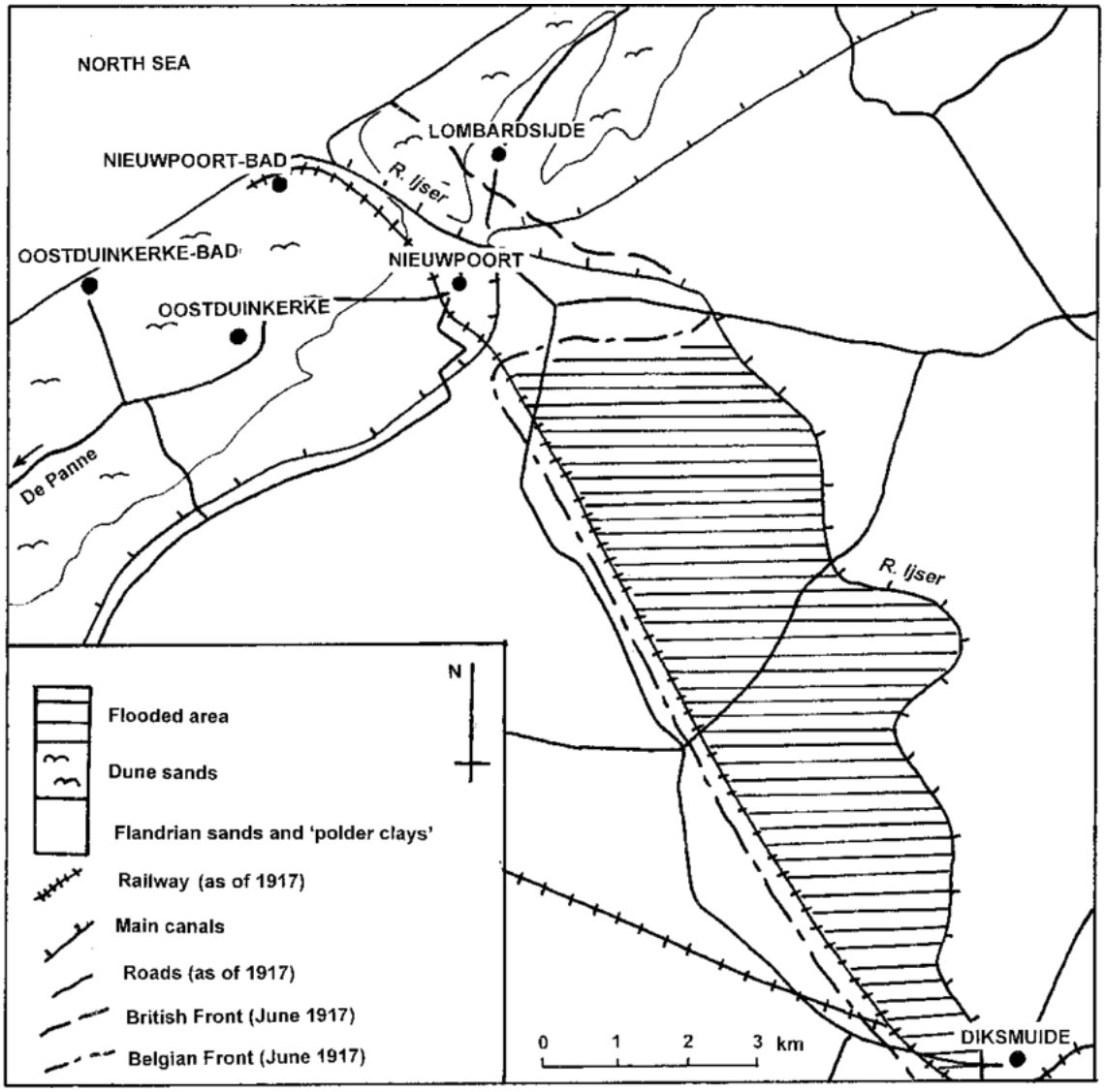
Returned to England 5 October 1915 for transfer to Salonika but orders rescinded on collapse of Serbia.
Returned to France 2 November 1915.
Attached to Royal Engineers.
Absorbed with Canadian Railway Troops, 23 April 1918".

The Official Guide refers to numerous official sources, including the important War Diary (see below). Another source, for example, is the "Nominal roll on leaving Canada, 1915", which includes Dewey.

c. **CORCC – Official History of Canadian Army**

An insightful account of the CORCC is provided in G.W.L Nicholson, "Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War" (1962) (at pp. 486-7) as follows:

> "On 2 February [1915] the Canadian Government replied [to the British Army Council] that it could provide at its own expense a corps of 500 or more railwaymen for construction work; officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway were cooperating in the organization of the unit. Mobilization of the Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps – two companies and a regimental headquarters – began at Saint John, N.B., recruiting being completed by 15 May. The men were all experienced construction workers employed by the C.P.R., and each had to pass a test as to his technical ability. [As a McGill student, it is not clear how Dewey qualified, but he did: see below.] By 15 May recruiting was completed … The unit sailed for England on 14 June and arrived on the 25th. Exactly two months later it landed in France.
>
> Between the last week of August and the beginning of October 1915 the Corps worked with the Belgian forces, laying light track for 60-centimetre tramways. It also worked on siege-gun and machine-gun emplacements for the Royal Marines. There was a sudden break in this employment when on 5 October the Canadian unit was withdrawn to England for transfer to Salonika. That move, however, did not materialize. Returning to France [now without Dewey: see below] on 2 November, the Canadians were assigned to the British Second Army Lines of Communication for work in the Reninghelst area south of Poperinghe [near Ypres] …"



Nieuport – Dixmude Area of Flanders where CORCC Operated in 1915

d. CORCC - War Diary

A main source for the Official Guide and Official History is the CORCC War Diary for August 25, 1915 to September 30, 1915. It addresses the 42-day period that the CORCC, including Dewey, was in the theatre of war (August 25, 1915 to October 5, 1915). (There was no CORCC

War Diary before August 25, evidently because the CORCC was not yet in the theatre of war.) The War Diary is on the Library and Archives Canada website.

It is indicated in the War Diary that, on August 26, upon transit to Calais and thence to Belgium, the CORCC "was duly attached to 2nd and 6th Divisions of the Belgian Army."

On August 27, the CORCC was "Looking over work to be done with Belgian Officers. C.O. [Commanding Officer] inspected trenches in evening."

The first two days of physical work are described as follows:

> October 30: "Cloudy. Commenced laying track … in front line trenches about 1.5 miles S. [south] of Dixmude. No. 2 Coy [Company] moved into Fortem. Worked unloading material and constructing Material Yard."
>
> October 31: "Showery. Making m.g. [machine gun] emplacements (concrete), laying track and building Observation Tower."

Each day from September 1 to September 22, apart from changing weather, refers to "Laying track, building m.g. emplacements, buildings, etc.". There are also references to "worked on gun platform … and shelters for R.M.A. [Royal Marine Artillery] Nieuport"; "Gun platform completed"; and "Laid underground telephone cable for R.M.A.".

Also, apart from changing weather, each day from September 23 to September 30 refers to 'Laying Track, building m.g. emplacements, mixing concrete between Alveringem and front line, laying cable and building shelters at Nieuport". There are also references to "firing platform for … Gun, NIEUPORT" and "C.O. [Commanding Officer] left for LONDON under orders".

Nieuport, Dixmude, Fortem, and Alveringem, mentioned in the War Diary, were in the Belgian Army area in the far northwest corner of Belgian Flanders, that remained unoccupied by the Germans: see "Relevant Context of First World War" below.

The War Diary resumed on October 31, 1915, which was shortly before the CORCC, now without Dewey, returned to France on November 2, 1915. (There was no Diary for October 1 to October 30 as the unit was in England.)

It is indicated in the post-Dewey CORCC War Diary, from October 31, 1915 through 1917, that the CORCC was engaged in the labour of railway construction, etc., largely in the same Belgian Army area of Flanders as before with Dewey.

The CORCC operated in the "back area", as distinct from the obviously more dangerous "forward area" (i.e. at the front). In Dewey's period with the unit, no enemy bombs were dropped although, in the longer post-Dewey period, a few enemy bombs were dropped without

casualty. From 1915, the Belgian Army area of Flanders, at the far north of the Western Front, was removed from the bloodbaths in Ypres, Loos, St. Eloi Craters, and so on down the Front.

CORCC, 1915 - Example of Railway-Mounted Field Artillery – C.P.R. Photograph

e. <u>CEF Personnel Records</u>

Dewey's CEF Personnel Records may be divided functionally into two periods.

The first period was from enlistment on March 23, 1915 to return, from Belgium and France, to England on October 5, 1915. Within that period of 197 days, he was in the Franco/Belgian theatre of war for 42 days as a sapper with the CORCC.

The second period was from October 6, 1915 to July 23, 1916. In that period of 289 days, Dewey was an aviation trainee with a view to joining the Royal Naval Air Service.

Dewey's total CORCC period was, therefore, 1 year 122 days.

Dewey in CORCC Uniform
1915
Aged 21

i. Sapper

Dewey's CEF Personnel Records correspond with the above "Background information" in the "Official Guide to the Canadian Railway Troops" for the period up to and including the return of the CORCC to England on October 5, 1915.

According to his Attestation Paper, Dewey enlisted with the CEF in Montreal on March 23, 1915. He was born in Newcastle, N.B. on October 14, 1893 and 21 years old upon enlistment.

Dewey was a science student at McGill University (although his year of university is not indicated). It is significant that Dewey did not return to university after the chasm of the War and Flu: see below.

Dewey was in an Active Militia, the McGill Regiment, at the time of enlistment.

Mrs. J.D. Creaghan was recorded as his next-of-kin. He did not assign his pay.

Dewey started as a sapper ('engineer') with the CORCC. He was a private with regimental number 574. His "Qualification" was "Laborer": Casualty Form – Active Service (which, fortunately, had no entries).

Dewey embarked with the CORCC from Saint John on S.S. Herschell (sp.) on June 14, 1915. He was in Longmoor Camp (a British military camp in Hampshire), until he embarked with the CORCC from Southampton to France on August 25, 1915. He returned to England from Belgium (through France) on October 15, 1915.

As mentioned above, the CORCC was recruited, of experienced C.P.R. construction workers, by the C.P.R. throughout Canada. While Dewey did not quite fit in that regard, the CORCC had a strong New Brunswick connection (including its command by a construction engineer on the eastern line and its mobilisation at Saint John). The C.P.R. also had its head office in Montreal, where Dewey enlisted and studied.

In the accompanying photograph of Dewey (which does not have any description), the two maple leaf collar badges indicate that Dewey was still serving with the CORCC: see, for example, "Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps", canadiansoldiers.com. (Also, no collar badges appear to have been worn in the Royal Naval Air Service, as indicated in Dewey's RNAS photograph.)

It is interesting that the C.P.R. connection resurfaces, for example, in the Great Depression (the so-called 'Dirty 30s') when Dewey worked on major C.P.R. projects across Canada. (See Michael's "Family History").

According to a Medal Card for Dewey that is in the (British) National Archives records, Dewey received a Star Medal for service in the "THEATRE OF WAR" of France during the "CAMPAIGN: - 1914-15". The "QUALIFYING DATE" for the medal was 25-8-15, which was the exact day that the CORCC, with Dewey, arrived in France. Reference is also made in the Medal Card to Dewey being a sapper in "Can. Rly. Cons. Imp. Army" and a "Sub. Lt." in the "R.N.A.S.", but the medal explicitly relates to the first day of the CORCC in France (in transit to Belgium). Dewey's son, Michael, possesses the medal.

Since Neen, Bun and Bill were not in the theatre of war in 1914-15, none of them could have received the Star Medal.

ii. Aviation Trainee

After arriving in England from Belgium (through France) with the CORCC on October 5, 1915, Dewey was garrisoned at Longmoor Camp until November 28, 1915.

On November 2, 1915, when the CORCC, without Dewey, returned to France and Belgium, Dewey nevertheless remained posted with the CORCC, albeit with the evident plan of becoming a pilot.

From November 28, 1915 to July 23, 1916, Dewey was, with a number of extensions, on furlough until he was discharged from the CEF in order to join the RNAS. The furlough was at, coincidentally, Newcastle-on-Tyne, save for some days at the end in Shorncliffe and London.

The first official inkling of aviation training was on April 28, 1916 when he was granted two weeks of furlough "for purpose of attending aviation class" in Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Dewey was issued an "Aviator's Certificate", dated May 11, 1916 (which Michael has).

On July 15, 1916, from R.E. [Royal Engineers] Barracks, Shorncliffe, Dewey declared that "I desire to secure my discharge in England and hereby waive all claim on the Government for transportation to Canada." The reason is that he was about to join the RNAS.

On July 17, 1916, prior to imminent CEF discharge, Dewey was taken on strength the Canadian Engineers Training Depot from the CORCC.

On July 21, 1916, Dewey was "'On Command' London Aerodrome".

On July 23, 1916, at Shorncliffe, Dewey was discharged from the CEF "in consequence of having been appointed to a temporary Lieutenancy in the Royal Naval Air Service". His "Military character" was "good". He declared that "I do of my own free will request to be discharged from His Majesty's Service." He was then 22 years old.

Similarly, on July 23, 1916, the following three entries are made regarding Dewey:

> "Having been appointed to a Commission in the R.N.A.S. is struck off the strength".
>
> "S.O.S. [Struck off Strength] app. to Commission in Imperial Army".
>
> "Discharged from C.E.F. having been apptd to temporary Lieutenancy in R.N.A.S."

Thus, on July 23, 1916, Dewey was promoted from private in the CEF to lieutenant in the RNAS.

On August 7, 1916, at Crystal Palace SE (London), Dewey acknowledged receipt of his CEF Discharge and Character Certificates.

Dewey's aviation trainee period, while with the CEF, was essentially 289 days (October 6, 1915 to July 23, 1916).

In the "Statement of service" part of the Proceedings on Discharge, it is indicated that Dewey had "Service towards engagement to 23/7/16 (the date to which record of service is completed)" of 1 year 77 days. For some reason, that period of "Service towards engagement" is 45 days less than Dewey's total CORCC period of 1 year 122 days (mentioned above).

f. Relevant Context of First World War

As indicated above, the CORCC, with Dewey, was attached to the 2nd and 6th Divisions of the Belgian Army for the 42-day period of August 25, 1915 to October 5, 1915.

In August 1914, a year earlier, the Germans had brutally steamrolled over neutral Belgium. It was termed the "rape of Belgium", in no small part by the militarily purposeless cultural desecration of the small university town of Louvain, known as the "Oxford of Belgium".

Belgium thereby became occupied by the Germans, with the exception of Belgian Flanders, centred on Ypres, in the northwest corner of the country. Thus, about 5% of Belgium was unoccupied by the Germans.

Keegan describes Flanders, before its major war devastation, as follows:

> "There is one of the dreariest landscapes in Western Europe, a sodden plain of wide, unfenced fields, pasture and plough intermixed, overlying a water table that floods on excavation more than a few spadefuls deep. There are patches of woodland scattered between the villages and isolated farmsteads and a few points of high ground that loom in the distance behind the ancient walled city of Ypres. The pervading impression,

> however, is of long unimpeded fields of view, too mournful to be called vistas, interrupted only by the occasional church steeple and leading in all directions to distant, hazy horizons which promise nothing but the region's copious and frequent rainfall" (at p. 129).

To that dreary landscape were added the dreadful Battles of Ypres (1914, 1915 and 1917 (Passchendaele)), St. Eloi Craters and so on. Imagine the worst of the worst Great War fighting. Many Canadians perished in Flanders.

When Germany invaded neutral Belgium in August 1914, the Belgian Army was small, old-fashioned, inexperienced, and underequipped. Yet it fought valiantly.

After the August 1914 invasion, the remnants of the Belgian Army were relegated to the farthest northwest corner of Flanders (i.e. to the farthest northwest corner of, in turn, the unoccupied northwest corner of Belgium).

That farthest northwest corner includes the main towns of Nieuport and Dixmude, as well as Fortem and Alveringem, all referred to in the CORCC War Diary. The centre of Flanders, Ypres, was <u>not</u> in this area of the Belgian Army. Rather, Nieuport and Dixmude are, respectively, 41 and 26 kilometres north of Ypres. Fortem and Alveringem are about 11 kilometres west of Dixmude.

Keegan discusses the Belgian Army, after its unsuccessful defense of Belgium and relegation to the corner of the dreary Flemish landscape and prior to the First Battle of Ypres in 1914 (i.e. pre-CORCC arrival), as follows:

> "To the BEF'S north [i.e. essentially north of Ypres] the remnants of the Belgian Army, which had managed to escape from Antwerp, had made their way along the coast to Nieuport, the town at the mouth of the Yser river that there flows into the sea … On the Yser, a narrow but embanked river that forms a major military obstacle in the waterlogged coastal zone, the Belgians quickly erected barricades and laid plans to inundate the surrounding countryside if the river line were breached. Though they had arrived from Antwerp a broken army, their recovery was quick and their resistance on the Yser was to win the admiration of their Allies and the respect of the Germans. Their six divisions had been reduced in strength to 60,000 men, but they succeeded in garrisoning ten miles of utterly flat and featureless terrain and in holding most of their positions until, after the loss of another 20,000 men, King Albert [of Belgium] decided, on 27 October, to open the sluices at the mouth of the Yser and let in the sea and flood the area. The resulting inundation created an impassable zone ten miles long between Nieuport and Dixmude" (at pp.129-130).

Belgian Army Area of Flanders Post-Flooding
Where CORCC Operated in 1915

That Nieuport/Dixmude area of the Belgian Army was exactly where the CORCC operated. This "impassable zone" of ten miles, starting at Nieuport on the North Sea, was then spared the carnage of Ypres and so on down the Western Front.

The offensives of 1914 gave way to the exhaustion of all in the winter of 1914-1915. One of the major 1914 battles was the First Battle of Ypres in October/November. Largely fought by the BEF, it only ended "when both sides accepted the onset of winter and their own exhaustion" (Keegan, at p. 131). It secured the major Ypres salient for the Allies. The soul of the BEF was the "working class, long-service regulars, shilling-a-day men of no birth and scant education" (Keegan, at p. 133). Their "Cockney matter-of-factness … epitomises the spirit of the old [BEF], whose soldiers died in their thousands at Ypres not because of an ideal of self-sacrifice but because it was expected of them and, in any case, there was no alternative" (Keegan, at p. 134).

From the winter of 1914-1915 to the spring of 1918, the Western Front was basically and infamously bogged down in trench warfare. "In essence, … the new frontier was a ditch, dug deep enough to shelter a man, narrow enough to present a difficult target to plunging artillery fire

and kinked at intervals into ‘traverses,’ to diffuse blast, splinters or shrapnel and prevent attackers who entered a trench from commanding more than a short stretch with rifle fire”: Keegan (at pp. 175-6).

Thus:

> “[The] Western Front stood the same, month after month, for almost every yard of its length, running in a reversed S shape for 475 miles from the North Sea to the Swiss border. It began at Nieuport in Belgium, where the sluggish Yser discharges seaward between high concrete embankments thirty yards apart. The eastern bank was held by the Germans, the western – since Joffre [of France] could not bring himself to entrust this critical hinge to the Belgians, even as defenders of their own territory – to the French. Below Nieuport’s complex of locks, and behind its high ramparts of holiday hotels that front the coastal dunes, in 1914 quickly gapped and broken by artillery exchanges, the front followed the line of the Yser southward through a perfectly flat landscape of beetfields and irrigation channels, above which the roads [and presumably railways] run on causeways, as far as Dixmude … After November 1914, much of this territory was under water, the inundations forming a barrier impassable to the German naval troops who held the breastworked trenches on the eastern side” (at p. 183).

The Front proceeded down that “reversed S shape” with all of the Western battles of the War, including the Somme, Vimy, Passchendaele, and Verdun. (Recall that there was also an Eastern Front.)

At the beginning of that long period of entrenchment, the CEF was the “first of the imperial divisions to reach the Western Front”: Keegan (at p.198). In the Second Battle of Ypres, in April 1915, the Canadians and British (Dorsets) were the victims of the first material use of poison gas (in this case, chlorine) in the War. While “the scene must have been as near to hell as this earth can show”, the Canadians and Dorsets held the line: Keegan (at pp. 198-9).

The CORCC, including Dewey, was in Belgium from August 25, 1915 to October 5, 1915. That was four months <u>after</u> the Second Battle of Ypres.

The CORCC period in Belgium largely coincides with the devastating defeat of the British at the Battle of Loos from September 25, 1915 to October 13, 1915. Loos is in France, next to Lille, approximately 33 and 72 kilometres south of Ypres and Dixmude, respectively. (Lille is now easily accessible as the only Eurostar train stop between London and either Brussels or Paris.)

Keegan describes the Battle of Loos, the largest British offensive yet in the War, as follows:

> “The effectiveness of the Germans’ preparations was proved all too painfully on 25 September 1915, at Loos, the site of the BEF’s offensive in Artois … [The British attack was] preceded by a discharge of chlorine gas [their first use thereof]. [The] gas hung

> about in no man's land or even drifted back into the British trenches, hindering rather than helping the advance. In any case the six British divisions engaged … were quickly stopped by machine guns. … They were ordered to resume the advance next morning, which they spent marshalling for attack. In early afternoon they moved forward in ten columns 'each [of] about a thousand men, all advancing as if carrying out a parade-ground drill.' The German defenders were astounded by the sight of an 'entire front covered with the enemy's infantry.' They stood up on the parapet of the trench, and fired triumphantly into the mass of men advancing across the grassland. … 'Never had machine guns had such straightforward work to do … with barrels becoming hot and swimming in oil, they traversed to and fro along the enemy's ranks; … The effect was devastating. The enemy could be seen falling literally in hundreds, but they continued their march in good order and without interruption' until they reached the unbroken wire of the Germans' second position: 'Confronted by this impenetrable obstacle the survivors turned and began to retire.'
>
> The survivors were a bare majority of those who had come forward. … Their German enemies, nauseated by the spectacle of the 'corpse field at Loos', held their fire as the British turned in retreat, 'so great was the feeling of compassion and mercy after such a victory.' A German victory Loos was; though the British persisted with attacks for another three weeks, they gained nothing but a narrow salient two miles deep, in which 16,000 British soldiers had lost their lives and nearly 25,000 had been wounded.
>
> Yet Loos, in strategic terms, was pointless" (at pp. 201-2).

It is interesting that the quotations in the preceding passage are from a German source.

(John Kipling, Rudyard's only son, perished at Loos and Rudyard "would never again write fiction, or any work of the imagination": Davis (at p. 89).)

The CEF played but a "minor" role at the Battle of Loos: G.W.L Nicholson, "Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War" (1962) (at p. 115).

I am not aware of any material role played by the Belgian Army at Loos.

The Canadians, including Dewey, in nearby Flanders at the time would have been well aware of the Battle of Loos. There was a "ridiculous proximity". They would also have been well aware of the preceding First and Second Battles of Ypres.

Over the Top – Battle of Loos, 1915

2. Royal Naval Air Service

a. Context of RNAS, RFC and RAF

Winston Churchill was the First Lord of the Admiralty from 1911 to 1915. He was ahead of his time with his fascination with the potential of the 'flying machine' as a new weapon. He learned how to fly and made numerous intrepid forays in the primitive crafts, much to the disapproval (to put it mildly) of his wife, Clementine. See William Manchester, "The Last Lion, Winston Spencer Churchill" Vol. 2 (1983) (at p. 444).

A few quotes from Manchester for flavour:

> "As early as February 25, 1909 [i.e. only 5 years before Churchill founded the RNAS and 7 years before Dewey joined it], …, Churchill had told the cabinet that aviation would be 'most important' in the future and suggested that 'we should place ourselves in communication with Mr. [Orville] Wright and avail ourselves of his knowledge'" (at p. 444).

> "To Clementine's surprise, he decided to fly himself. He regarded his first ride, in 1912, as a matter of duty. Discovering that he enjoyed it, he made repeated ascents. The craft were primitive, the techniques slapdash. On one bumpy ride, in the teeth of a gale, nearly three hours were required to cover the sixteen miles from Gravesend to Grain, and 'after landing Churchill safely,' the pilot reported, 'my seaplane took off again, landing trolley and all over the sea wall, as it was being brought up the slipway, and was more or less wrecked.' The hazards whetted Winston's appetite" (at p. 445-5).

> "Winston instantly replied [to Clementine in 1914, before the War]: 'My darling one, I will not fly any more until at any rate you have recovered from your kitten.' He had been callous, but he recognized a cry of despair when he heard it. Mulling it over, he realized that her anxiety had been fully justified. Prewar aviation was, in fact, a risky business, even for skillful airmen … 'But I must admit that the numerous fatalities of this year wd justify you in complaining if I continued to share the risks – as I am proud to do – of these good fellows … Though I had no need & perhaps no right to do it – it was an important part of my life … & I am sure my nerve, my spirits & my virtue were all improved by it. But at your expense my poor pussy cat! I am so sorry'" (at pp. 448-9).

(I remember my grandmother and Dewey's wife, Nan, expressing a negative view of Churchill. Perhaps it was because of the Dardanelles/Gallipoli tragedy that led to Churchill's dismissal from the Admiralty in 1915, a year before Dewey joined the RNAS.)

On April 13, 1912, King George V signed a royal warrant establishing the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). It consisted of a naval wing, a military wing, a central flying school, and an aircraft factory, all under the British Army.

However, the Admiralty, under Churchill, of course wanted control of naval aviation. Thus, Churchill founded the Royal Naval Flying Corps in 1913, which was renamed the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) on July 1, 1914. "The naval wing of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) [under the Army] was moved out of the RFC and brought under Admiralty control": "RNAS Officers", National Archives website.

Subsequently, "on 1 April 1918 [i.e. after Dewey's service in, and before the end of, the War], the RNAS merged with the Royal Flying Corps to form the Royal Air Force [RAF]". (It has been named the RAF ever since.) Thus, for most of the War (to April 1, 1918), the RNAS was under the Navy while the RFC was under the Army. Of course, Bun and Bill were with the RFC and then RAF while Dewey was with the RNAS.

The main roles of the RNAS were "fleet reconnaissance, patrolling coasts for enemy ships and submarines, and attacking enemy coastal territory. The RNAS systematically searched 4,000 square miles (10,000 km^2) of the Channel, the North Sea and the vicinity of the Strait of Gibraltar for U-boats. In 1917 alone, they sighted 175 U-boats and attacked 107. Because of the technology of the time, the attacks were not very successful in terms of

submarines sunk, but the sightings greatly assisted the Navy's surface fleets in combatting the enemy submarines": "Royal Naval Air Service", wikipedia.

4,000 square miles is a large area. (In comparison, the 1825 Miramichi Fire is estimated to have consumed a maximum 6,000 square miles: see MacEachern.

The main roles of the RFC were photo-reconnaissance, artillery observation, aerial bombardment, ground attack support, wireless telegraphy, covert observations, and home defence: "Royal Flying Corps", wikipedia.

According to Keegan:

> "Aeronautical technology, during the First World War, permitted very rapid swings in superiority between one side and another" (at p. 360).
>
> "The war in the air, which in 1918 would take a dramatic leap forward into the fields of ground attack and long-range strategic bombing, remained during 1917 largely stuck at the level of artillery observation, 'balloon busting' and dogfighting to gain or retain air superiority" (at p. 359).
>
> "Air operations were, however, marginal to the issue of defeat or victory even in 1918, when investment in air forces had begun to figure significantly among the allocation of national military resources" (at p. 406).

To be a pilot in the War, since "Canada had no active air service of her own", a Canadian had to join the relevant British service: G.W.L Nicholson, "Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War" (1962) (at p. 504). Indeed, prior to the establishment in July 1917 of the RFCC (whereby the British recruited and trained directly in Canada, including Bill), the "only route for aspiring airmen [including Bun and Dewey] to join the British air service was to enlist in the regular Canadian forces and try to transfer once they arrived overseas, or to travel to England to apply directly": "Royal Flying Corps", The Canadian Encyclopedia website.

According to S.F. Wise in "Canadian Airmen and the First World War, The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force" (1980) (at. 123) (on cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca website):

> "Canadian naval airmen fought a war that, on the whole, was far less intense than the air war over the land battlefronts. The enemy was less frequently encountered, casualties were lower, the chances of survival were better, although even routine patrolling was punctuated with moments of violent action: the sighting of a U-boat, the chase of a zeppelin, sudden and fierce encounters with German seaplanes. Moreover, the RNAS had fighter and bomber formations in Flanders in which many Canadians were concentrated and their war experience was much closer to that of the RFC":

Again, Dewey was a pilot in the RNAS while Bun and Bill were pilots in the RFC/RAF.

b. **National Archives Records**

While NA Records are not as detailed as CEF Personnel Records, they are poignant.

Dewey served in the RNAS from July 23, 1916 to August 14, 1917.

RNAS Sopwith 1 ½ Strutter Two-Seat General Purpose Biplanes – 1916
Imperial War Museum

RNAS Sopwith
Imperial War Museum

RNAS Felixstowe F.2A during Anti-Submarine Patrol
Imperial War Museum

Locations of RNAS Service by Dewey

i. RNAS

Dewey entered the "Air Service" (RNAS) on July 23, 1916. He was appointed a "Temporary" "Flt Sub-Lieut" (Flight Sub-Lieutenant). He was first posted at "C. Palace" (Crystal Palace in London).

Dewey's address in the NA Records is provided as follows:

> "31-10-16 Address
> c/o Miss C. Creaghan
> Wampachs Hotel Ltd
> Folkestone"

That must be his second eldest sister, Clare. The hotel itself has quite a history and no longer exists.

ii. RNAS Training Establishment Cranwell

On August 12, 1916, Dewey was appointed at "Cranwell", as was simply stated in the NA Records.

Cranwell is a village in Lincolnshire about 125 miles north of London and inland about 42 miles from the North Sea. See map.

> "In December 1915, Commodore Godfrey Payne was sent to Cranwell to start a naval flying training school … . The Royal Naval Air Service Training Establishment Cranwell opened on 1 April 1916 at Cranwell under Paine's leadership. …
>
> As the naval personnel were held on the books of HMS *Daedalus*, a hulk that was moored on the River Medway, this gave rise to a misconception that Cranwell was first established as HMS *Daedalus*": "Royal Air Force College Cranwell", wikipedia.
>
> HMS *Daedalus* on the River Medway was probably moored at or near the historic dockyard in, coincidentally for Dewey, Chatham. Chatham is close to the mouth of that river that empties into the North Sea. It is approximately 31 miles southeast of London.
>
> Thus, while the training establishment was at Cranwell, the personnel were booked on a floating hulk at or near Chatham many miles away. The reason was disciplinary:
>
> "Under section 87 of the Naval Disciplines Act 1866, the provisions of the act only applied to officers and men of the Royal Navy borne on the books of a warship. When shore establishments [such as the RNAS Training Establishment Cranwell] began to become more common, it was necessary to allocate the title of the establishment to an actual vessel [such as HMS *Daedalus* on the River Medway] which became the *nominal*

> *depot ship* for the men allocated to the establishment and thus ensured they were subject to the provisions of the Act": "Stone Frigate", wikipedia.

From the late 1700s, there were at least eight ships and stone (land) frigates named HMS *Daedalus*. One of them was "an iron screw floating battery launched in 1856 as HMS *Thunderbolt*. Converted to a floating pierhead in 1873, she bore the name HMS *Daedalus* between 1916 and 1919 whilst serving as the nominal depot ship of the [RNAS]. Personnel of [RNAS] Training Establishment, Cranwell were held against HMS *Daedalus*": "HMS Daedalus", wikipedia.

(Unrelated to Dewey, another of the at least eight ships and stone frigates named HMS *Daedalus* is discussed below under RNAS Calshot.)

Thus, while RNAS Training Establishment Cranwell was physically located in Cranwell, 125 miles north of London, for historic legal reasons the personnel were held on the books of HMS *Daedalus*, a floating hulk on the River Medway, some distance away as the crow (or seaplane) flies. While the HMS *Daedalus* was a ship not a stone frigate, it was not much of a ship as it was converted old hulk of an iron screw floating battery moored on the River Medway.

According to the NA Records, Dewey was hospitalized at Chatham Hospital, from September 10, 1916 to October 31, 1916 and from November 14, 1916 to an unspecified date, for an infection.

The likely most significant event of the War for Dewey occurred on February 28, 1917, when he crashed in a flying machine. Dewey's corresponding "Certificate of Hurts and Wounds", which Michael fortunately has in his possession, provides the following interesting information:

> "Gerald Francis Creaghan PFSLt [P? Flight Sub-Lieutenant] belonging to His Majesty's ship *Daedalus* being then actually upon His Majesty's Service in flying was injured on 28th February 1917 by having his left shoulder dislocated (subcoracoid) as a result of crashing in a flying machine. …"

The Certificate is dated the same day as the accident and signed by a "Rank Fleet Surgeon."

The Certificate confirms that Dewey was flying in the line of duty ("being then actually upon His Majesty's Service in flying"), although it does not specify exactly what that Service was.

The Certificate also confirms Dewey's legal connection (his "belonging") to HMS *Daedalus*.

Dewey mentioned to Michael many years later that the crash occurred because "the flying machine iced up over the Irish Sea" (perhaps "North Sea", due to the proximity of Cranwell).

The NA Records for the day simply state: “Pilot sustained dislocated left shoulder”. The injury could obviously have been much worse.

The Chatham newspapers (The Commercial on March 17 and The World on March 24) indicate that Dewey fell out of the cockpit of his plane and dislocated his shoulder. That seems to be an understatement for “crashing in a flying machine”, as stated in the Certificate of Hurts and Wounds, over the sea.

There is no mention in the NA Records (as distinct from the Certificate) of Dewey receiving medical attention for the injury until, on March 15, 1917, he was “Admitted Chatham Hos. Old injury to shoulder” and, on April 9, 1917, he was “Discharged fit”. That hospital is, coincidentally, in Chatham on the River Medway where the HMS *Daedalus* was moored.

The NA Records for Cranwell indicate that Dewey did very well. On May 1, 1917, he was stated to be “V.G. Pilot. Very painstaking good officer. Recommended for Seaplane Pilot.”

(Today, RAF Cranwell remains the home of the Royal Air Force College. I do not know if they still book the personnel to HMS *Daedalus*!)

RNAS Cranwell – May 2, 1916

HMS *Thunderbolt* – 1856 Floating Battery
Converted in 1873 to Floating Pierhead
Became HMS *Daedalus* – 1916-9 Nominal Depot Ship for RNAS Cranwell
National Maritime Museum

iii. RNAS Killingholme

Those complimentary words forecast Dewey's appointment, a few days later, on May 5, 1917, at "Killingholme".

RNAS Killingholme was "one of the main seaplane bases in the UK": "North Killingholme Haven", wikipedia. It was on the Humber estuary, north of Lincoln and Cranwell. See the map.

> "Although RNAS Killingholme was principally a large operational seaplane station with patrol duties to protect local oil installations, nearby ports and repel Zeppelin attacks, it also served as a seaplane pilot training centre … [It] was not ideally placed as a seaplane station due to the strong tide in the Humber estuary and the high tidal range which made for difficult slipway work. [There] were 900 servicemen and occasionally in excess of 100 aircraft at station, making Killingholme one of the leading seaplane bases": RNAS Killingholme website.

Dewey's role at RNAS Killingholme is not known. Perhaps it was a mixture of seaplane training and patrol duties. He was there for less than a month.

iv. RNAS Calshot

On May 26, 1917, Dewey was appointed at “Calshot”.

RNAS Calshot was an “air station for seaplanes and flying boats, mainly operating as an experimental and training station [including for observer kite balloons and airships], but also providing anti-submarine and convoy protection patrols. It was located at the end of Calshot Spit in Southampton Water, … with the landing area sheltered by the mainland, to the west, north and east, and the Isle of Wight a few miles away to the south on the other side of the Solent”: “RNAS Calshot”, wikipedia.

Dewey’s role at RNAS Calshot is not known. Perhaps it was mainly providing anti-submarine and convoy protection patrols on the English Channel.

While at Calshot, “Submission put forward [by Dewey] for termination of appointment”. The “Resignation” was “accepted” on August 14, 1917. No reason is given for seeking or accepting the resignation. There was apparently no formal demobilisation and it was time to go home.

Dewey was at Calshot for about three months.

(As an extension of training at RNAS Calshot, naval aviation began at nearby RNAS Lee-on-Solent, a shore airfield, on July 30, 1917 (when Dewey was in the process of resigning at RNAS Calshot). RNAS Lee-on-Solent, a stone frigate, was also known as HMS *Daedalus*. That was a different HMS *Daedalus* from the one that was the legal depot hulk for the RNAS Training Establishment Cranwell, where Dewey had his flying accident on February 28, 1917.)

v. Home to Newcastle

Dewey’s “Passage to Newcastle, Brunswick [sic] per ‘Grampian’ leaving Liverpool” was on August 31, 1917. Fortunately, that was a short demobilisation period, directly from the RNAS.

vi. Family Dynamics

All of our four protagonists served bravely in the Great War in their own ways and at different times and places. Nevertheless, Neen and Bun’s services seem to have been more robust than Dewey’s.

In Neen’s case, she served in France during the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917 and the German Somme and Aisne Offensives in 1918. In Bun’s case, he served at the front at the Battle of St. Eloi Craters in 1916 and flew reconnaissance and offensive patrol in France in 1917 at the time of the Battles of Vimy Ridge and Fresnoy, the Third Battle of Ypres and the Battle of Cambrai. As events transpired, Dewey served in the rear areas of Belgium (Nieuport) and England.

Dewey and Bun enlisted about the same time (March 23, 1915 and June 3, 1915, respectively) while Neen enlisted about a year later (April 1, 1916). Neen was discharged on July 18, 1919, while Bun was discharged on April 14, 1919 (both after Armistice on November 11, 1918.) Therefore, Dewey was discharged, and back home, significantly (less than two years) before Neen and Bun.

The preceding facts may have contributed to family dynamics.

In any event, Dewey certainly made up for any perceived First World War shortcoming with his additional exemplary Second World War service, as discussed in the following section.

3. **Second World War**

It is impressive that Dewey not only served in the First World War, but also in the Second World War (1939-1945). Indeed, his Second World War contribution appears to have significantly exceeded his First World War one.

In 1941 (for example), Dewey was 48 years old.

The only official evidence, of which I am presently aware, that Dewey served in the Second World War is one word, "R.C.A.F.", in the last page of, ironically, his CEF (First World War) Personnel Records. That page was a notice by the Department of Veterans Affairs, dated April 23, 1968, of Dewey's death on March 7, 1968. (The notice was made after receipt of information from the Superintendent of Veterans Insurance, Ottawa on April 1, 1968.)

Brief references are made in the said notice to Dewey's "service number 574" in "WWI" and to "Navy", "Army" and "R.C.A.F.".

Of course, "Navy" makes sense because the RNAS was part of the Admiralty and "Army" makes sense because the CORCC was part of the CEF. What is interesting is the reference to "R.C.A.F.". As distinct from the RNAS, RFC and RAF, the RCAF (Royal Canadian Air Force) did not exist in the First World War. (Canada did not have its own air corps in the First World War.) Therefore, it appears that the reference to "R.C.A.F." (in 1968) is a reference to Dewey's Second World War service. Tucked in the First World War records, maintained by Library and Archives Canada, is a 1968 reference to Second World War (RCAF) service of Dewey.

For privacy reasons, Second (unlike First) World War personnel records are not readily available publicly. Nevertheless, in December 2021, in my capacity as Dewey's grandson, I requested Dewey's Second World War Personnel Records from Library and Archives Canada. I received the following response in February 2022:

> "Please be advised that we have carefully searched our records and were unsuccessful in identifying any records regarding to your request.

> Please also be advised that Ferry command records are not under the custody of Library and Archives Canada. You may wish to direct another inquiry to the following address concerning his ferry command records:
>
> > Director History and Heritage
> > National Defence Headquarters
> > Ottawa, Ontario
> > K1A 0K2".

The mysterious sole official entry of "R.C.A.F" is solved in Michael's invaluable "Family History". Therein, Michael records conversations with his father on his participation in the Second World War (among many things). Dewey, as a civilian, was given the "military rank of RCAF Group Captain (colonel)". The oral history and the official "R.C.A.F." reference corroborate each other.

Dewey's earliest (in 1940) contribution to the War effort appears to have been, as recorded by Michael, Dewey's involvement in the construction of the vault in the Montreal Sun Life building. He "said these vaults were deep underground where they encountered a river that had to be diverted." While the name of the construction company Dewey worked with on the vault is unspecified, the work appears to have been an extension of his involvements in large construction projects through the financially-difficult thirties.

Context is provided in Jeffrey Norman, "The Path of the Sun, An Informal History of Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada" (1996):

> "In the summer of 1940, the German army was poised on the coast of Europe, preparing to invade Great Britain. The invasion never got beyond the Channel Islands, but as a precaution the British government decided it would be wise to safeguard its treasure by sending it to Canada. The Canadian government agreed to house the gold bullion in Ottawa, but another home was needed for $5 billion [valued in 1940] of foreign securities [US and Canadian stocks and bonds] belonging to individuals and corporations and held in custody by the Bank of England, mostly to be sold to carry on the war effort [and reimbursed to the beneficial owners after the War]. The British government approached Sun Life President A.B. Wood, who agreed to safeguard what would be called the United Kingdom Security Deposit in the head office building.
>
> Throughout the summer, British warships crossed the U-boat and mine-infested waters of the north Atlantic with hidden cargoes of bonds and stocks. Unloaded in Halifax, the shipments were transported under cover of night by train to Montreal and then by truck to the Sun Life building, where a huge third-basement vault had been secretly constructed [including by Dewey] for the purpose.

> From this vault, guarded by Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers, for the next five years the Bank of England conducted one of the most extraordinary bond and stock operations in history."

Michael and I corresponded with the Sun Life archivist on the matter and there is no record of Dewey's name. That is not surprisingly due to the secrecy of the project and to Dewey presumably being an employee of, or contractor with, the construction company.

As indicated, the gold went to Ottawa and the securities went to Sun Life's vault; however, the safekeeping of the Crown jewels remains a mystery. The archivist referred us to Alfred Draper, "Operation Fish, The Race to Save Europe's Wealth, 1939-45 (1979). (Incidentally, I spent most of my career, 27 years, with Sun Life as a tax and corporate lawyer.)

From some point in 1941, Dewey's Second World War contribution, then as a civilian RCAF Group Captain (Colonel), became more significant. Michael records the following:

> "Dewey, during the early years of the war [but after 1940], was in Dorval, Quebec, then Rouses Point NY (Nov. 23, 1941 to Feb. 15, 1942) and St. Hubert Quebec. Rouses Point is right at the Quebec border and was a transfer point for thousands of planes and other ordnance under the 'lend-lease program'. This was a very secret operation as America was not yet in the war. This was the staging place where the Ferry Command flew all planes overseas."

As context:

> "The Lend-Lease Act stated that the U.S. government could lend or lease (rather than sell) war supplies to any nation deemed 'vital to the defense of the United States.' Under this policy, the United States was able to supply military aid to its foreign allies during World War II while still remaining officially neutral in the conflict. Most importantly, passage of the Lend-Lease Act enabled a struggling Great Britain to continue fighting against Germany virtually on its own until the United States entered World War II late in 1941": "Lend-Lease Act", history.com.

Obviously, the Lend-Lease Act was not itself secret.

> "RAF [not RCAF] Ferry Command was the secretive [British] Royal Air Force command formed on 20 July 1941 to ferry urgently needed aircraft from their place of manufacture in the United States and Canada, to the frontline operational units in Britain, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East during the Second World War": wikipedia.

Michael continues as follows in the oral history:

"Dewey was a pilot in the first war and crashed in a flying machine in February 1917 because the flying machine iced up over the Irish [or North] Sea. Dewey related later that, early in the second war, they did not know how to deice a plane. Therefore, it would be impossible to fly all these planes over the frigid North Atlantic. Near St. Hubert was a CIL munitions factory. In the manufacture of explosives, ethylene glycol (EG) was used to stabilize explosives. Dewey found that this EG worked wonderfully in deicing planes. Of the 10,000 planes flown overseas only 300 were lost. The planes were flown from all over Canada to Gander and Goose Bay where they were fueled, deiced and flown overseas. Dewey was building [involved in the construction of] airports, hangars and runways in Gander, Goose Bay, Shearwater NS, Bermuda, Bahamas, British West Indies (Sept. 14, 1945), Egypt (Feb. 13, 1945), Iraq (Feb. 13, 1945). These dates are from Dewey's passport. [May 8, 1945 was VE Day, the last day of the Second World War in Europe.] Other places he may have worked were all in the British Commonwealth and were listed in his passport, but the dates of returning from these countries were not entered. During the war, Dewey had a civilian rank of Colonel [emphasis added] and received no salary. He just signed for everything. C.D. Howe had hundreds of people working for the war effort and paid them $1 a year. It was an honour which no one abused."

C.D. Howe was the powerful Minister of Munitions and Supply (and nicknamed the Minister of Everything). He was a sort of Canadian Lord Beaverbrook (Max Aitken), although Max himself was also a Canadian, from Newcastle, N.B. (albeit born in 1879 in Maple, Ontario, one of ten children, with his parents thereby outdoing J.D. and Ellen by one). Max was only several years older than our protagonists.

It is interesting that Dewey was a "Dollar-a-Year Man, a term used during WWII to describe those business executives who were brought to Ottawa to work in government, largely in the Department of Munitions and Supply and in the Wartime Prices and Trade Board. Their salaries were paid by their companies, while Ottawa provided living expenses": thecanadianencyclopedia.ca. (Under common law, some consideration, even $1 or the proverbial peppercorn, is required for a binding contract.)

Dewey and his family struggled financially in the twenties and thirties. It does not appear that, during the Second World War, when Dewey was a Dollar-a-Year Man, he fitted the exact mold of a "business executive" with his salary paid by a company. How could the family live on a dollar a year from the government? The answer seems to be that Dewey came into money, for the first time, following the death of J.D. in 1938 and the subsequent distribution of his estate (that also enabled the purchase of 19 Renfrew Avenue, Westmount in 1941). (See "Some Thoughts on Dewey and Nan" below.) He was apparently thereby financially enabled to contribute significantly as a Dollar-a-Year Man. It is not known presently whether or not Dewey also worked otherwise in 1941-1945.

Michael elaborates further in his Family History as follows:

“Clandestine – It is hard to think of Dewey as being involved with anything top secret or highly classified. [Many war things are.] He was and what is coming in the next segment is just that. Dewey was a Canadian and a former British Naval Officer and pilot [in the First World War]. His work [after the said War] required him to be away from home much of the time working all across Canada. He was very knowledgeable in structural engineering of large buildings and very familiar with airports, hangars and runways. He was a gentle soft-spoken man and certainly not one to bring attention upon himself. Wherever he was or whatever he did would not be noticed. What better person to be given highly-classified responsibilities?

He said that, during the 2nd World War, he was given as a civilian a military rank of RCAF Group Captain (colonel) [emphasis added] so as to cut through the bureaucracy and red tape. C.D. Howe hired many civilians with no pay. They were a dollar a year men. Dewey said he just signed for whatever he needed.

He was issued a Canadian passport in Moncton, NB in September 1941 [presumably, when he was financially sound after J.D.s death]. In itself, this does not mean much except that the passport worked in reverse stating where he could travel. It listed 31 countries. It also contained a number of visas which had been removed or lost. (Indentations by paper clips.) The passport was renewed two or more times. He was in Rouses Point, NY on Nov. 23, 1941 where he was fingerprinted and given a non-resident border crossing identification card. He was in Bermuda on Oct. 12, 1943 and there is an exit permit No. 5913 issued Oct. 25, 1943 Nassau, Bahamas. It appears he travelled to Egypt and Iraq Feb. 13, 1945. There is another stamp by Defence Security Officer Canada Feb. 27, 1945. (This would correspond to the return to Canada from Egypt and Iraq.)

Why all the high security at Rouses Point, NY? Before the Americans entered the war they were providing military support to the British via Canada. This was done in secret. Included in this were planes which were not flown across the US/Canada border but dragged across by truck and even horses. Rouses Point is on the NY/Quebec border on the railway line from New York to Montreal and passing through the air base at St. Hubert. This was where the Ferry Command began. FDR was anxious to enter the war but he could not get around the US neutrality laws. He kept a blind eye as war materials entered Canada. Many Americans anxious to get into the war volunteered to fly these aircraft overseas. Canadians were initially flying as pilots overseas. Later they became the majority of the Ferry Command pilots. Dewey said that many of these planes were flown by women bush pilots. He said instrumentation did not work so far north and [so] the pilot had to ‘fly by the seat of their pants’. These women did not fly overseas but rather flew the planes from Emerson, Manitoba, St. Hubert and other Canadian border crossings to Goose Bay and Gander. There the planes were flown by the Ferry

> Command male pilots to Prestwick, Scotland. Dewey was very involved in this process throughout the war.
>
> Later on, when the US entered the war, they flew from the East Coast to Bermuda and then on to Europe and North Africa. Again, Dewey was in Bermuda in 1943. He often commented that the American success in the Pacific war was due to the American Corps of Engineers who put in the runways as each island was captured by the Marines to keep the supply chain rolling. Cairo became a hub ferrying aircraft to that theatre of war. Dewey was there in early 1945."

Clearly, Dewey's service in early aviation in the RNAS and in subsequent construction work stood him in good stead to make his significant Second World War contribution. He was humble and quiet about it, but fortunately told his youngest son.

4. **<u>Some Thoughts on Dewey and Nan</u>**

According to Michael in his "Family History", "Nan was working in the railway station restaurant in Newcastle when she met [Dewey]. It must have been love at first sight for shortly after they eloped and went to Montreal where they married on August 20, 1920." That was three years after Dewey returned from the Great War.

Also, according to Michael, "It must have been a bit of a shock to Dewey's parents and family. … Dewey's mother [Ellen] thought Nan's father was Dr. MacKenzie and was shocked to find that Nan came from a very ordinary if not poor family. She apparently did not accept or like Nan. The feeling was mutual as Nan did not like her mother-in-law."

It is likely significant that, after the War, Dewey did not return to McGill or otherwise attend a post-secondary institution. In comparison, on enlistment, elder sister Neen was already a practicing nurse and elder brother Bun was already a practicing professional engineer. Thus, Dewey never obtained his 'piece of paper', as Mary calls it. It likely affected his career, including through the difficult years of the Great Depression (1929-1939).

In the twenties and thirties, as Michael records, "It was a difficult life as Dewey took work where it could be found." Likewise, Mary says that, "although Dad enjoyed the work, he was away a lot." The family moved around and made the necessary adjustments. They obtained some permanency by renting the house on Melrose Avenue in NDG in the early to middle thirties. During the Depression, Mary recalls hungry men coming to the back door and being fed by her mother.

Dewey worked as a “field engineer” on large construction projects across Canada, including (east to west) Halifax (hotel), Dolbeau (paper mill), Montreal (Dominion Square Building; Sun Life Building), Toronto (Maple Leaf Gardens), Banff (Banff Springs Hotel), Field (railway terminal), and Vancouver (ferry wharf). It is interesting that some of those jobs were for CPR of CORCC note.

There are memories attached to those places. Daughters Ellen and Mary were boarded at a convent in Halifax. Mary has not eaten porridge since. Frank was born in Dolbeau (in the Saguenay area). Mary recounts wonderful trips that she and Ellen took out west by train to visit Dewey, including in Banff (where, in August 1939, she and Ellen attended and received certificates from the Summer School of Fine Arts, University of Alberta, now known as the Banff School of Fine Arts) and Trail (where she was inspired by seeing, from the first of two requisite engines, the famous spiral tunnels, the most difficult segment of C.P.R. track).

Under his will, J.D. left the shares of J.D. Creaghan Company Ltd., in differing numbers thereof, to six of his children. Completely apart from those shares, J.D. left a significant amount of real estate, blue chip stocks and bonds and other property (including his emblematic library mentioned in the Introduction) to his children. Also, since J.D.’s wife Ellen (an Adams) died three years before him, it is assumed presently that most or all of her assets had passed to J.D. on her death (see the Introduction).

Correspondingly, Mary observes that things became significantly better financially for Dewey and his family following the passing of J.D. in 1938. It enabled Dewey to purchase the house at 19 Renfrew Avenue, Westmount in 1941 and, in the same year, to become a Dollar-a-Year Man in the Second World War. It also subsequently assisted Dewey to acquire the family cottage in Burnt Church (so important to Creaghan ties past, present and future) and to become a successful and prudent stock investor. J.D. and Dewey live on in a wonderful way.

The truncation of Dewey’s education by the War and Flu likely contributed significantly to Dewey and Nan ensuring that their four children obtained university educations. As Mary recalls, Dewey and Nan were instrumental, first, that their eldest child and daughter, Ellen, attended university, still then somewhat unusual for a woman. Then Mary attended McGill. Then, of course, as expected, Frank and Michael attended university! That was a fine accomplishment of Dewey and Nan.

Dewey and Nan not only promoted university education, they also inculcated literariness and artistry in the children. Thus, my mother always loved books and was a gifted painter. Dewey and Nan came from the literary generation of the First World War, mentioned by Fussell.

As Mary puts it, “Dad was an awful smoker. He always had a cigarette in his hand. Mom smoked a lot too, but not like Dad.” I would not be surprised if Dewey picked up his smoking habit in the First World War. Dewey was a slight man, not helped by the smoking. He basically died of emphysema. My grandmother, in later life, was able to just stop smoking ‘cold turkey’. She was always a wonderful grandmother to Martha and me,

In comparison, while not against it (fortunately, for the occasional relative and friend), Dewey did not drink alcohol.

Dewey never mentioned the First or Second World War to Mary or Frank (or likely Ellen). Fortunately, he did speak about it with youngest Michael.

How did Gerald get his nickname, Dewey or Dew? We do not know. Also, was Dew short for Dewey or was Dewey an elaboration of Dew?

One possibility is from the U.S. colloquial meaning of a “Dewey” as an officer in the navy. That stems from George Dewey, the U.S. naval commander who defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in the Spanish-American War of 1898. George Dewey died in January 1917, when our Dewey was an officer in the RNAS, part of the British Navy. See vocabulary.com.

Another colloquial meaning of a “Dewey” is a librarian, after Melvil Dewey of Dewey decimal fame. Our Dewey was not such a Dewey but, coincidentally, his eldest daughter, Ellen, was.

Yet another “Dewey” could be named after John Dewey, “one of America’s most preeminent philosophers and educational theorists.” After the First World War, “he applied his … progressive education ideas to the advancement of world peace”, promoting internationalism and countering “the philistine notion of patriotism and nationalism … which had been a basic cause of war.” See “John Dewey and Peace Education” on columbia.edu. Our Dewey was a peaceful and gentle man, not at all a warrior, although he was not an educator by profession, unlike his youngest child, Michael.

My sister, Martha, and I knew our grandfather, Dewey (“Grampoo”), and grandmother, Nan (“Dan”), well. We lived in Montreal (Westmount and Pointe Claire) and enjoyed frequent family gatherings. Nan often looked after Martha and me when our parents were away on trips to Europe, etc. She was a fantastic cook. I was 16 years old when Dewey passed away in 1968.

I distinctly remember Dewey as a kind and gentle man. He always had a twinkle in his eye and used quaint Irish expressions (probably picked up from J.D.) like ‘boys-oh-boys’, ‘dandy’, ‘gay’, and ‘grand’.

While he worked in the construction field, Dewey was fundamentally imaginative, creative, mindful, and indeed fanciful. Good examples of this were his whimsically-illustrated children’s stories, in particular, “The Story of Mr. Adolphus Toad”. While he worked through the established New York City literary agency of McIntosh and Otis (based on correspondence in Martha’s possession), the book was unfortunately not published. Dewey gave a finely-bound original of the book “To Dear Martha, Love Grand Father” on January 30, 1968. It turns out that that was shortly before he passed away on March 7. (I remember that my parents were skiing in Sun Valley, Idaho at the time and returned home immediately.)

One can read and indeed hear Dewey in the following letters that he wrote to me on January 12, 1966 from Barbados (Rostrevor Apartments, St. Lawrence Gap):

> “Dear Stephen
>
> It was nice to get your letter and to hear the good news that you were successful in the ski qualifying races. You must have practised real hard.
>
> We have a wonderful dinner here, now and then, flying fish. The … cook prepares them this way:-
>
> After cleaning them she puts the flying fish in a large bowl containing a heavy solution of salted water. Then she makes a batter of finely ground bread crumbs and onions mixed with two raw eggs. I don’t know how she gets the bread crumbs and onions so fine. It is like corn meal in texture. She takes one fish at a time and mixes in the batter and then into the frying pan, which contains about ½ inch of boiling bacon fat to cook.
>
> My I wish you and Martha were here to enjoy them. They are delicious sprinkled with a liberal helping of lime.
>
> This last week we have two regular visitors every evening, a black cat and an old labrador dog. They seem to know when Sally is off for the evening.
>
> First to arrive around 8:30 PM is the black cat. She has blue eyes and is really beautiful and she certainly knows it. She comes in and jumps on my knee and is there for the evening, now and then glancing up at me in rather an unappreciated manner. A little later the old labrador dog arrived. I did not know if I was dreaming or not. He stood in the door looking so old and sad, his face all wrinkly white and I said ‘come in’. Like a very old man, he walked slowly over to me, and sat down looking at me for a while, then with considerable effort gave me his paw to shake. I scratched behind his ears, and in a few

minutes like a dead weight he let himself down on the floor to sleep. Now and then he opened his eyes and glanced up at the cat and he seemed to say ‘If I was only a few years younger, I would run you out of here before you could count two’.

With Love
Grandfather

PS

Probably Sally’s night life may seem exaggerated, if you did not know about the hotels here. They all have open patios and the few doors about are always open. There are shrubs and palm trees all about, so literally you are right out in the open, so Sally has no doors to bother about, and if she does encounter an unfriendly guest she quietly hides under a palm tree until the coast is clear again. However this seldom occurs, as she has perfect party manners and generally she is a welcome guest.

How does she know where the floor show is? Dogs have a very acute hearing, and when the music starts, she is on her way for another gay night.

Grandfather”

Perhaps Dewey picked up his fondness for Barbados from his Second World War travels.

VI. William Vincent ("Bill") Creaghan

1. Introduction

Bill was a brave young man of 20 when he enlisted in the First World War on April 16, 1917. At that time, the War had been bogged down in years of terrible trench warfare. There was no end in sight. It “seemed to everyone that the war might go on forever”: Davis (at p. 6). The Canadians had just won the epic bloody victory at Vimy Ridge on April 9 to 14 and were about to engage in the following Battle of Fresnoy, in the Douai Plain below the Ridge, on May 3 to 8. (My paternal grandfather fought at Vimy Ridge with the Canadian artillery and was gassed on top of the Ridge, as an observation officer, in the Battle of Fresnoy.)

Bill followed in the footsteps of his elder brothers, Bun and Dewey, by beginning with the CEF and ending with the RFC/RAF. As events transpired, Bill was training, and himself instructing, with the RFC/RAF in Canada when the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. Thus, fortunately, he did not go to England or enter the theatre of war.

In the memoir of his father, Paul recounts that Bill “was close to his brother Gerald (‘Dewey’) who was the one closest to his age. … But it was Nan and Neen whom he spoke of, and with, most often and it was clear they had formed a close bond as Dad grew in childhood. I’m sure they had a good deal of involvement with his care as a baby.”

2. CEF Service

4th Overseas Siege Battery
Partridge Island, Saint John
Bill was in 9th Overseas Siege Battery

Bill enlisted in the No. 9 Overseas Siege Battery, which was part of the Canadian Field Artillery, at Partridge Island in Saint John on April 16, 1917. He was from Newcastle and his next-of-kin was J.D.

With the 9th, he started with the rank of Private and ended with the rank of Bombardier.

The 9th was a "battery of the 3rd Regiment, Canadian Garrison Artillery stationed at West Saint John, New Brunswick": "Artillery; Guide to Services Relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force" (Library and Archives Canada website).

Siege batteries, using howitzers, "were most often employed in destroying or neutralizing enemy artillery, as well as putting destructive fire down on strongpoints, dumps, stores, roads and railways behind the enemy lines": "The Long, Long Trail" website.

The War Diary of the 9th Overseas Siege Battery (on the Library and Archives Canada website) provides detailed, day-to-day training, mainly at Partridge Island. For example, there are entries for "6" How. [howitzer] Drill", "Signallers' Class", "Work on new gun positions", etc.

Paul recounts that "All I remember [Bill] saying about his time on Partridge Island was that it turned him against eating liver for the rest of his life."

"To re-enlist in Royal Flying Corps", Bill was discharged from the CEF on January 23, 1918. His "Conduct and character while on the service" was "Very Good". The place of discharge was West Saint John. He had been with the No. 9 for about 9 months.

See Bill's CEF Personnel Records on the Library and Archives Canada website.

3. RFC/RAF Service

a. Royal Flying Corps Canada Context

While Canada itself had no flying corps in the Great War, Canadians (like Bun and Dewey) were, pre-July 1917, recruited and trained in Britain for service in the theatre of war with the RNAS, RFC and RAF. From July 1917, the RFC/RAF came to Canada to recruit and train. This British program was called the Royal Flying Corps Canada (RFCC). Thus:

> "The Royal Flying Corps came to Canada to recruit and train airmen for combat during the First World War. By the end of the 22-month [as it turned out, with the Armistice] endeavour, 16,663 cadets, mechanics and support personnel had been recruited and 3,135 pilots graduated (2,539 had gone overseas), along with 137 observers (85 sent overseas). During the First World War, some 20,000 Canadians served in the Imperial Flying Services (Royal Flying Corps, Royal Naval Air Service and Royal Air Force). Approximately 1,500 lost their lives."
>
> "The Royal Flying Corps Canada (RFCC) was established … to recruit and train Canadians for service in the RFC during the First World War. Previously, Canadians [like Bun] who wanted to join the RFC generally transferred from the Army or obtained a basic flying certificate from a private company and then travelled to Great Britain in hopes of being selected.
>
> Although the program was run by military staff from Great Britain, by the time the Armistice was declared on November 11, 1918, an estimated 70 per cent of the instructors and a large percentage of the non-flying staff were Canadians. The program also employed the Canadian-built JN-4 aircraft, built by Canadian Aeroplanes Limited."
>
> "Grouped together into 42 Wing (Borden), 43 Wing (Deseronto) and 44 Wing (North Toronto), the training organization was centred in southern Ontario for logistical and administrative reasons.
>
> 42 Wing's Borden airfield was purpose built on a site owned by the Canadian government that already had some infrastructure available as troops of the Canadian Expeditionary Force had camped there in 1916. 43 Wing was divided between new airfields built at Camp Rathbun and Camp Mohawk. 44 Wing's airfields were built at Armour Heights and Leaside; the existing Long Branch air field had been used by the

> privately-owned Curtiss Aviation School. As well as these locations, by the end of the war there were facilities at Hamilton, Toronto (including the University of Toronto) and Beamsville. …
>
> When the First World War came to a close on November 11, 1918, so did the raison d'être of the RFCC. Within days the discharge of staff and cadets had begun, and facilities were either disposed of or, as at Borden, placed on caretaker status".

The previous quotes are from the RCAF (History and heritage) website. See also the impressive S.F. Wise, "Canadian Airmen and the First World War: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Volume 1", available on the Government of Canada / Chief Military Personnel website.

b. <u>Bill's RFC/RAF Service</u>

Pioneers of Winter Flying in Canada
Royal Flying Corps Canada

If the RFCC had not been established in July 1917, Bill would likely have undertaken his aviation training in England, like his brothers, not in Canada. Bill's recruitment and training by the RFCC meshes with the above context. His RFC service is described succinctly in his British National Archives Records: see reference AIR 76/112/82, available online and at Kew.

Bill served with the said 44th Wing, from May 11, 1918 to September 2, 1918, and the said 43rd Wing, from September 3, 1918 to September 17, 1918, among other postings: NA Records. 44th Wing, in North Toronto, experimented with winter flying.

On October 10, 1918, Bill was one of a number of Cadets who were “granted temp. commns. as 2nd Lieutenants”: The London Gazette, dated November 22, 1918, referred to in the NA Records. He was thus made a Flying Officer.

According to Paul, “[Bill] would tell me about the flying machines he flew and taught others to fly, and no question he developed a love for aviation.”

On November 12, 1918, the day after the signing of the Armistice, Bill was “granted leave from 15-11-18”: NA Records. He presumably went home to Newcastle before, as recounted by Paul, taking a job with J.D. Creaghan Co. Ltd. in Moncton in 1919.

On February 1, 1919, “2nd Lt. Wm. V. Creaghan” was one of a number of 2nd Lieutenants who were “transferred to the unempld list”: The London Gazette, dated September 30, 1919, referred to in the NA Records. He demobilised on that day.

The total period of Bill’s military service, with both the CEF and the RFC/RAF, was almost 22 months (April 16, 1917 to February 1, 1919).

VII. Other Siblings

1. All Other Siblings

There are no CEF Personnel Records or National Archives Records for Mollie, Clare, Don, Jack, or Nan. Accordingly, it does not appear that they served in the First World War. They would have experienced the effects of the War and the Flu.

Nevertheless, the two eldest sisters, Mollie and Clare, travelled to, and lived in, England during the War in order to support, and ascertain the well-being of, Neen, Bun and Dewey and, in Mollie's case, to be closer to her husband, D. King Hazen, who also served in the War (see below).

Passenger travel was dangerous in the First World War, as Clare found out (see below). The seminal example was the sinking of the *Lusitania*, a British (Cunard) ocean liner, by German U-boats on May 7, 1915. It was travelling from New York to Liverpool. 1,198 people perished. The United States refrained from entering the War then, although sinking of an American ship would have prompted a different reaction. Hence, I suspect that Mollie and Clare travelled to England from an American port on an American ship. (As indicated in letters to her husband, my paternal great-grandmother did just that in 1916, when she went to visit her two sons in the War. She travelled from New York to Liverpool on an American ship. She talks of the "danger zone". The risk was reduced but far from eliminated.)

2. Mollie

Bun's NA Records (pre-wounding) indicate that the "Name of Person to be Informed of Casualties" was "Mrs. D.K. Hazen [Mollie], Sister, Address c/o Bank of Montreal, 9 Waterloo Place, London".

Those Records also indicate that, from September 19, 1918 (post-wounding), "M.C. Hagen" [sic Hazen] [sister Mollie] 2, Aberdeen Terrace, Grayshott, Hants" was to be notified in the event that Bun became a casualty.

There was a Newcastle newspaper notice, on August 4, 1916, mentioning that Bun was "enjoying a two weeks' leave of absence" with Mollie in Shorncliffe.

Mollie was married to Douglas King Hazen who also served in the First World War with distinction. In King's CEF Declaration Form, "Mollie C. Hazen" is recorded as his next-of-kin, with her address being 41 Bouverie Road, Folkestone (beside Shorncliffe). For assigned pay purposes, her address was c/o Bank of Montreal, 9 Waterloo Place, London (also used by Bun). There is also a reference to Mollie staying at Wampuch's Hotel, Folkestone, as well as at the Hampshire address provided by Bun.

Mollie's and King's grandson, Malcolm McConnell, informed me that Mollie and King had two children, Rosemary ("Rose") and John, who were born in England during their war period. Malcolm's mother, Priscilla, who was born in 1915 before King's enlistment, remained in the care of her grandmother, Ellen, in Newcastle.

Mollie, Clare and Frances Hazen (Mollie's sister-in-law) volunteered to work in the tearoom for the troops in Folkestone, next to Shorncliffe Army Camp: Silliker (at pp. 53, 74-5) (source not provided).

It is beyond the scope of this account to address King's First World War service, apart from a few brief words based upon his CEF Personnel Records. He enlisted at the mature age of 30 on April 26, 1916. He served with the Canadian Field Artillery and in various Headquarters roles, including "Served in FRANCE whilst seconded to Headquarters 3rd Army". Interestingly, he was also "Seconded to the War Office for duty with the Syren Party N.R.E.F. [North Russia Expeditionary Force]" from 17-9-18 to 27-8-19. The Syren Party, which was deployed to the Murmansk area in northern Russia, was part of the Allied intervention (unfortunately unsuccessful) in the Russian Civil War on behalf of the Whites against the Reds (Bolsheviks). King attained the rank of Major and demobilised on October 28, 1919.

Malcolm informed me that King's brother, James Murray Hazen, is buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery in Belgium. That is near Poperinge and Ypres.

Malcolm is one of the Creaghan descendants married to an Anderson descendant, Dawn Wilson.

3. Clare

Before embarking for England, Clare was a teacher and the principal of Millerton School: Obituary in The Union Advocate, dated January 16, 1929.

> "Clare Creaghan sailed for England on the 10th of October [1916] intending to volunteer her services for the war effort. The local newspapers stated that her intent was to travel to the UK 'where she expects to be taken on staff of a field hospital for service at the front'. [It turned out that she did not enlist.] Clare sailed on the RMS *Alaunia* and was aboard that ship when it struck a sea-mine off the south coast of England on October 19. The ship sank and two crew members were lost; thankfully, all other crew members and passengers were safely taken off": Silliker (at p. 87) (source not provided). See The Commercial of Chatham, dated October 10, 1916 and October 24, 1916.

Dewey's NA Records indicate that, from October 31, 1916, after Clare arrived in England, his address was "c/o Miss C. Creaghan" at Wampach's Hotel in Folkestone.

Looking at the date of October 31, 1916 alone:

(1) Neen was then posted to Moore Barracks Military Hospital, which was part of Shorncliffe;
(2) Bun had been transferred by the CEF to Shorncliffe on July 21 and had just, on October 25, obtained his flying certificate, 90 miles along the English Channel, at Shoreham Camp; and
(3) Dewey was attached to RNAS Training Establishment Cranwell and, on that day, was leaving the Chatham Hospital (40 miles north of Folkestone).

According to her obituary, Clare returned home after the Armistice.