

FOR VALOUR
COLONEL GRAHAM THOMSON LYALL, VC



Lieutenant Colonel William A. Smy, OMM, CD, UE

with

Alexander F. D. Ferguson

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PREFACE

This study is an attempt to document the life of Graham Thomson Lyall, in particular his deeds in combat that resulted in the award of Victoria Cross.

My interest in Lyall stems from the fact that in 1914 he joined the 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, a predecessor of The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, the militia regiment I joined as a Private soldier in 1957 and eventually commanded 1979-1983. Every recruit training course in the Canadian Militia contains lectures on Regimental history, and I recall that some fifty two years ago my Platoon Commander taking his platoon into the Officers' Mess of the Regiment to view memorabilia collected over its long history. As he went from one wall to another discussing the history of various weapons, colours, flags, photographs and Regimental silver, he made a passing comment that a member of the Regiment had been awarded the Victoria Cross during World War I. But I do not recall him mentioning a name.

At the time that "tidbit" of information meant little to me and was quickly pushed into my subconscious. Years went by, and when I did become curious, I believed the man he had mentioned had been Lance Corporal Fred Fisher, VC, a St Catharines native who had been killed in action at St. Julien in April 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres. But my research quickly put that assumption to rest. Although Fisher had been born in St Catharines, his family had moved away when he was quite young. His only militia service had been in 1914 when he had joined the Black Watch in Montreal at the outbreak of the war. He went overseas with the 13th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, and was serving in that unit when he was killed in action.

So who was this mysterious man who had served in the old 19th and had won the Victoria Cross?

None of the secondary sources contained sufficient information to identify him. The Regiment perpetuates three CEF battalions but there was no record of any member of those battalions being awarded the Victoria Cross. Additionally there were records that over 2,500 men of the old militia regiments that predated my Regiment had enlisted directly into the CEF at the beginning of the war so it was almost an impossible task to come up with his name. Then, in 1995, by sheer accident, while doing some research on the Welland Canal Force, I stumbled on an article in a December 1918 issue of the Niagara Falls Review that announced that Graham Thomson Lyall who had been a "local man" had been awarded the Victoria Cross. My search took on a new life.

When I started work on the manuscript, I thought it would be a relatively easy task since there just had to be a great wealth of information about a VC winner. How naïve I was. But the story has slowly come together over the last ten years.

Lyall belonged to six military units: the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment, a militia unit in St Catharines, Ontario; the 81st Battalion, CEF, which he joined in St Catharines; the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, CEF, and subsequently the 102nd Battalion (Central Ontario Regiment), CEF; the Royal Engineers which he joined on returning to the United Kingdom after World War I, and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps at the outbreak of World War II. In the past, his name has been associated with The North British Columbia Regiment, the post-war militia regiment that perpetuated the 102nd Battalion. Lyall, though, emphatically stated he really belonged to the 19th Regiment and in turn the 81st Battalion.

The background discussions on the Canadian Corps and its various battles in the First World War and the British Army in North Africa in the Second World War are necessary in order to follow Lyall’s military career, but certainly are not definitive studies of the campaigns or battles themselves. To do so would entail writing a history of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the early period of the British Army in North Africa.

I take sole responsibility for any error of fact or confusing presentation of the events.

William Arthur Smy
Lieutenant Colonel (retired)
Commanding The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, 1979-1983
Fort Erie, Ontario
2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This biographical study would have not been possible without the assistance of Sandy Ferguson, Graham Lyall's nephew. After some six or seven years of research, I had little beyond Lyall's Canadian Army records, war diaries, some newspaper articles and a number of secondary sources (many of which contained errors). I had failed to locate any family member, or any material dealing with Lyall's post World War 1 activities. Then out of the blue, I was informed that Lyall's medals had been placed on long-term loan with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' Museum in Arborsfield, England. The Museum placed me in contact with the donor, Mr. Alexander F. D. Ferguson (Sandy Ferguson), and the project took on a new life.

I found that Sandy, the only nephew of Lyall, was also working on a study of Lyall, and we quickly recognized that although we wanted to tell the same story, we were approaching it from different perspectives and our end results would have different target audiences. I wished to approach the study from a military perspective, concentrating on his Canadian experience, while Sandy wanted to appeal to the family. We agreed to share our research, and thus our biographical studies have a number of identical narratives. I believe that the two studies complement, rather than diminish the story.

Sandy Ferguson was born and brought up in his grandfather's house, next door to his uncle. As a young teenager during the Second World War he served as a messenger in the Home Guard and eventually was commissioned in the Territorial Army, retiring in 1958 with the rank of Captain. In civilian life he worked in support of the British nuclear deterrent program, conducting research into explosives and propellants. He later worked in the paper industry and for a while was employed by the Polaroid Corporation in the United States. He retired as Chief Executive Officer of a wallpaper company.

Sandy has provided virtually all the information relating to Lyall's personal life. Without him a significant portion of this story would not have been told. Sandy's book, *"Interesting Times: A Biography of Colonel G. T. Lyall, VC"* was privately published in 2004. He generously listed me as a co-author, but in fact he did most of the work.

I extend my sincerest appreciation to all those who helped in the writing of this biography. Without their assistance much of this work would have been impossible. Here in Canada, I especially thank Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey R. Cairns, CD, and Major Brian D. Doucet, CD, for their assistance and encouragement. Major Alan D. Woolley, CD, UE, has been of tremendous assistance in solving my computer illiteracy problems and keeping my work in focus. Captain Floyd Low, CD, a staff officer at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa responded to my many enquiries for information from the library holdings in NDHQ. In the United Kingdom, Mr. Fred Stringer of Nelson was particularly helpful with details of the town of Nelson, the location of war diaries of the units in which Lyall served in the North African theatre of war and frequently provided comment on my various drafts. Dr. Chris Ward of Wreham, England, helped significantly with the Lyall family tree.

A NOTE ON CONVENTIONS, USAGE AND ABBREVIATIONS

Many of the abbreviations, acronyms, and the form of date and time conform to current Canadian Army usage.

I have used the military, or 24-hour clock, throughout to be consistent with time quoted in various documents. Dates are given in Canadian military style:- day, month, year (6 May 1915).

When the word “battalion” is used to identify a specific unit, it is spelled with a capital “B”; when it is used to refer to generic units the “b” is in lower case. No quotation marks are placed around the alphabetic designation of infantry companies. Consistent with British practice, Corps are numbered in Roman numerals, while Divisions are numbered in Arabic numerals.

It has been the practice to place periods between the letters V and C, but that is not common usage in the army today. Quite often in Army Lists, VC will appear in gothic letters before the name of the recipient.

AA	Anti Aircraft	LofC	Lines of Communication
Adj't	Adjutant	Lt	Lieutenant
Bde	Brigade	Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel
Bn	Battalion	Maj	Major
BOR	Battalion Orderly Room	MC	Military Cross
BOW	Base Ordnance Workshop	MEF	Middle East Force
Capt	Captain	MO	Medical Officer
Cdn	Canadian	NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force	OC	Officer Commanding
		OME	Ordnance Mechanical Engineer
CMR	Canadian Mounted Rifles	Op O	Operation Order
CO	Commanding Officer	POL	Petrol. Oil, Lubricants
COR	Central Ontario Regiment	QM	Quartermaster
Coy	Company	R	Regiment
CVO	Commander Royal Victorian Order	Regt	Regiment
		RAOC	Royal Army Ordnance Corps
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross	RE	Royal Engineers
Divl	Divisional	RMS	Royal Mail Ship
DSO	Distinguished Service Order	RN	Royal Navy
		Sergt	Sergeant
FSD	Field Supply Depot	Sgt	Sergeant
GC	George Cross	SOS	Struck Off Strength
HQ	Headquarters	St Kitts	St Catharines
Hrs	Hours	TA	Territorial Army
Inf	Infantry	TO	Transport Officer
Km	Kilometre	TOS	Taken On Strength
Lieut	Lieutenant	Tpts	Transports
LOB	Left out of Battle	UK	United Kingdom
		VAD	Volunteer Aid Detachment
		VC	Victoria Cross
		YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

FOR VALOUR

COLONEL GRAHAM THOMSON LYALL, VC

Early Life

Graham Thomson Lyall was born to Robert Henry Lyall and Agnes Lisette Wells on 8 March 1892 in Chorlton, north of Manchester, England. He was the second child of the marriage: a sister, Dorothy Margaret, had been born in Chorlton two years earlier.¹

Lyall's paternal grandfather, Robert Lyall, had been a bookseller in Edinburgh married to Sarah McLaggan Thomson. Their son, Robert Henry (Graham's father), was born in Edinburgh on 21 July 1862, the younger of two brothers and two sisters. He graduated from Glasgow University in 1884 with a Master of Arts degree and was then ordained in the Church of Scotland.²

On 24 December 1889, Robert married Agnes Lisette Wells in the United Presbyterian Church in Bearsden, near Glasgow. Agnes had been born in Blackburn, Lancashire, about 1864, the daughter of John Wells and Margaret Graham. Her father was a retired travelling draper.

Marriage records indicate that Robert was an English Presbyterian Minister living in Manchester and that his father was dead but his mother was still living. Agnes's father was alive, but her mother was dead.³

Graham Thomson Lyall was christened with the surnames of his grandmothers, and notwithstanding his English birth and life-long English accent, Lyall considered himself a Scot.⁴

A year after Graham's birth, Robert Lyall converted to the Church of England and was ordained in the church. He first served as Curate at Smallbridge in Lancashire, and a year later, he took the position of Curate of St. John's Church at Farnworth, north of Manchester. Both Lyall and his sister attended the Church of England Primary School in the town.

In 1900, when Graham Lyall was eight years old, his father moved the family to Nelson, about 25 miles north west of Manchester, and took up the duties of second vicar of St Mary's Church. There, young Lyall was educated at Nelson Municipal Secondary School (now Walton High School) and it is probable that Dorothy attended the same school as her brother. The family then moved to Darwen, another community north of Manchester, where the Reverend Lyall became vicar of St. John's Church in 1913.⁵

Lyall was a keen sportsman and a very good long-distance swimmer. He was an avid tennis player, rower, boater, canoeist, cricketer, marksman, and hockey player. He enjoyed motoring, golfing and billiards. In later years he expressed some pride in that at

the age of fourteen, as one of five competitors, he had swum the Firth of Clyde from Dunoon to the Cloch Lighthouse, some two and a half miles.⁶



Fred Stringer

St Mary's Church, Nelson. At the time Robert Lyall served as second vicar here, the church did not have a bell tower.

Nelson Municipal Secondary School, and for a time Walton High School. Lyall, and probably his sister, Dorothy, attended this school. It is now used as government offices.



Fred Stringer



Sandy Ferguson

Cloch Lighthouse looking across the Firth of Clyde towards Dunoon, Scotland, in the distance. Lyall swam this water in competition when he was fourteen.

What has emerged of his teen years is that Lyall completed Nelson Secondary School in 1907, in his 15th year. He then enrolled in a technical college that the School Board of Portsmouth had established in 1888 with a "dockyard bias" to prepare young men to enter His Majesty's Dockyard as apprentices. By the turn of the century, this college had evolved into The Municipal College of Portsmouth that had both day and evening students graduating in Arts, Science and Engineering. Although there was an affiliation with the Royal Navy and many graduates entered the Dockyard, the students were not

enrolled in the navy, although they were members of a sea cadet corps sponsored by the Navy League.⁷

Lyall graduated from the college in July 1911 with a City & Guilds Certificate, but he then failed the Royal Navy medical. The Victoria Cross and George and Cross Association records note that he “was forced to leave the navy due to a hearing problem caused by deafness”, as does the report by *The Nelson Leader*. After the war, *The Colne and Nelson Times* stated that he “suffers from deafness in the left ear contracted by long distance swimming. He trained as a naval engineer, but on account of his deafness he left the service.” However, neither his Canadian nor his British army documents record any deafness at this early period. Sandy Ferguson, Lyall’s nephew, recalled that Lyall often spoke about swimming the Firth of Clyde, but at no time was there any mention of deafness.⁸

Little is known about Dorothy Lyall during this period as she was always overshadowed by her father and later by her brother. She was certainly a daughter of the vicarage and has been described as being “not unattractive, but nor was she pretty and certainly she was not lively”.⁹

Canada

Lyall arrived in Canada on *RMS Teutonic* on 9 June 1912. He passed through Customs and Immigration at Quebec City, and the records note that he was planning to travel by the Grand Trunk Railway to Brantford, Ontario, where he planned to take up employment as an Engineer. He had with him \$25 cash. In all likelihood he planned to stay with someone he knew there until he found a job.¹⁰



Post Card

RMS Teutonic

The June 1912 crossing must have been exciting as RMS Titanic had struck an iceberg and sank about two months earlier

He found employment with Canadian Steels Foundries in Welland, Ontario, about 60 miles east of Brantford. The Foundries had been built in 1906 and it produced steel pipe up to 12 inches in diameter. Although it had grown to employ 1,000, “with the onset of the First World War and the resulting loss of export trade, the plant was forced to close”.¹¹



Welland Public Library

Canadian Steel Foundries, Welland, Ontario

Perhaps due to the closure or down-sizing of Canadian Steels Foundries, Lyall took a position as a mechanical engineer with the Canadian Niagara Power Company in Niagara Falls, Ontario. This hydroelectric company had its 94,700-kilowatt generating station at the lip of the falls, and at that time it was one of the most modern of generating stations in the world. While working with that company, he boarded for a while with the Reverend W. De la Rosa, the rector of Holy Trinity Anglican Church in the village of Chippawa, Ontario. The rectory where Lyall boarded was located on Bridgewater Street, less than two miles from the Falls and within easy walking or cycling distance to work. He later moved to 154 Main Street in Niagara Falls, again within walking distance of work.¹²



Sandy Ferguson

This photograph was taken in a photographer's studio in Niagara Falls, Ontario, sometime between Lyall's arrival in Canada in 1912 and his joining the Canadian Army in 1914. He would have about 20 years old at the time.



Niagara Falls Public Library

A panoramic view of the Upper Rapids and the Falls (left), and the Canadian Niagara Power Company Powerhouse. The view is looking south.



Niagara Falls Public Library

The powerhouse of the Canadian Niagara Power Company above the lip of the Falls just prior to Lyall being employed there. The view is looking north. In the far distance is the Upper Bridge to the United States, and the smoke stack is in Niagara Falls, NY.



Canadian Niagara Power Company

A modern-day view of the powerhouse, looking south.



Holy Trinity Church

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Chippawa, Ontario. For a period of time while working for Canadian Niagara Power, Lyall boarded with the rector of this church. If the angle of the previous photograph was less steep, the spire of this church would be visible on the horizon.

Lyall was very active in the Anglican Church and was “identified with the men’s organization of Holy Trinity in Welland, Holy Trinity in Chippawa, and later in St Catharines “was well known in St Barnabas Church having been a member of the choir there”. He was also a member of the Enniskillen Loyal Orange Lodge in St Catharines.¹³

Various reports describe Lyall as “of genial disposition and polished manners”, “immensely popular among his friends”, “a personality of the most inspiring character”, and “a quiet, unassuming man, but had a deep and steadfast devotion to the Empire, and believed it was not only a duty but a privilege to fight on her behalf”.¹⁴

After the war he described his time there as very happy:¹⁵

“Welland, a city for which I shall always have a very warm place in my heart and for all its people because, after all, it is the people who make a place it is. If it hadn’t been for my very valuable friends and associations in Welland, I don’t know where I should have been and at first I was quite lonely and after coming from an excellent home and professional career, I probably felt it more.”¹⁶

The 19th “Lincoln” Regiment, 1914-1915

On 6 August 1914, two days after war had been declared, the Governor General called out units of the militia and placed them on Active Duty. All of the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment of St Catharines and the 44th “Lincoln and Welland” Regiment of Niagara Falls were called out and detailed to provide the core of the Welland Canal Force, the mission of which was to guard the canal. The 19th did duty from Lake Ontario (Port Dalhousie) to Lock 18 (Niagara Escarpment), supplied a guard at Queenston and Brock’s monument, and had 5 officers and 226 men at Niagara Falls, while the 44th did duty from Lock 19 to Lake Erie, with detachments in Fort Erie and Chippawa. Small

detachments were established at all bridges and locks, and to prevent saboteurs scuttling a ship in the canal, all ships entering the canal were boarded and searched. The mission slowly expanded and eventually the Force was responsible for vital point security at hydroelectric plants, ferries and international bridges across the Niagara River, railway marshalling yards, and munitions plants in the Niagara Peninsula.

Lyall resigned his employment at Canadian Niagara Power and on 23 October 1914 joined the 19th Regiment at Lake Street Armoury in St. Catharines. At that time, the 19th was a “city regiment” with its headquarters and all eight of its rifle companies located in St. Catharines.¹⁷

It is not clear why Lyall would travel some twelve miles to St Catharines to join the militia when he could have joined the 44th Regiment in Niagara Falls. It may have been that he had been rejected by the Medical Officer of the 44th due to hearing problems mentioned in many secondary sources.¹⁸

Seven days after his enlistment with the 19th Regiment, Lyall was placed on Active Duty with the Welland Canal Force, as a Private, drawing \$1.00 a day in pay, and 10¢ a day in Field Allowance. He was first posted to Number 1 Detachment, commanded by Captain William A. Stevens, which was then stationed at Port Dalhousie. The Company was 120 all ranks strong: 2 Captains, 10 Sergeants, 10 Corporals, and 98 Privates.¹⁹

Almost immediately, Lyall must have been assigned clerical duties, for his initials, in his handwriting, appear on pay registers for September of the 19th Regiment. Apparently, he was checking and validating the entries.²⁰

Tentage and equipment was slow in arriving, and for the first while the men slept in blankets on the canal bank. Although the Commanding Officer indicated that there was a house in the village which could be rented, the men were still under canvas as late as December 1914.

In the excitement of war, rumours spread quickly, and in retrospect some are unbelievable. For example, soldiers of the 19th Regiment reported that over the period of four nights in the first week of September 1914, strange airships had been seen flying over the city, and that one of the aircraft had dropped a “rocket large enough to wreck a house had it hit it”.²¹

The soldiers quickly made known their presence and authority along the canal. *The St Catharines Standard* reported an incident in Port Dalhousie:

“Port is now under martial law in earnest. A squad of soldiers took an unruly canal helper to the miserable little stone coop and thrust him in to sober up. Another citizen who felt he had a perfect right to cross Lock Street in spite of the guard felt the unpleasant graze of an unsheathed bayonet upon his arm.”²²

The canal guard made the newspapers in Niagara Falls, NY, but not in a way that the officers would want:

**“Soldier Tanked Up
American Magistrate Had Mercy
On Canadian for Once**

Niagara Falls, NY, Sept. 23. – The first Canadian soldier to be arraigned here since the calling out of the Dominion militia is James McCormack of the St Catharines Nineteenth Regiment of foot. McCormack was charged with intoxication, on the police docket. In his eyes there was no disputing his being filled with a weariness that follows a good time off duty. He looked as sorry as he dare when able to lift his head long enough to answer to his name. There was no mistake. McCormack was suffering and he acknowledged it.

“You were drunk, weren’t you?” quizzed the court superfluously.

“I was, sir. I sure was.”

“You were guarding the Welland Canal, eh?”

“I was.”

“Suppose a couple of Germans came along with men like you on guard, they’d take the canal away with them. What then?”

“O, judge, the way I feel this morning, I don’t care if the canal stays or not.”

“Are you going over to fight?”

“I dunno, mabbe we might have to go yet. I don’t feel well, judge.”

“You look and probably feel as if you had been in a big battle already, and got the worst of it.”

“Right again judge. You’re always right.”

“Suppose the King was to see you now, eh?”

“I’d keep out of his way. It’s the Commanding Officer that’ll get me.”

Judge Piper suspended sentence and warned the soldier that the next defender that came here convicted of intoxication will be fined.”²³

In May 1915, Lyall was posted to the Niagara Falls detachment of the Force under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William Thompson where he later stated that he had done “duty at practically all of the posts on that part of the frontier”. What “duty” he did is a bit of a mystery, for Thompson was the Medical Officer of the Force. Lyall was promoted to Corporal on 23 June 1915 and his pay jumped by 10¢ a day; however a later annotation on his pay documents stated, “This man’s NCO promotion to the rank of Corporal was provisional.” That comment would suggest that he had been promoted on merit and had not taken formal promotion training.²⁴

When the 19th had arrived at Niagara Falls, it took over a second storey room in the Michigan Central Railway Station, but within a week plans were made to construct a temporary barracks, about 16 feet by 20 feet, at the foot of the Lower Arch Bridge. In the event, however, the soldiers were moved to sleeping cars in the Grand Trunk Railway yards and a detachment was quartered in tents at the Refectory in Queen Victoria Park, just a few feet from the falls and a short distance for Lyall’s old place of employment. Eventually a tented camp was erected at the Lower Arch Bridge.²⁵

Service in the Welland Canal Force was not the best duty. An inspection report noted:

“...nearly all of them [the men] were in a bad condition as to clothes...Some of the men’s clothes are positively indecent, and the footwear supplied to the men...is in very bad condition also, some of the shoes are without soles and as a consequence a large number of men have been taken sick...”²⁶

The duty became monotonous and the soldiers quickly became disenchanted and whenever the opportunity occurred they applied for transfer to the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). One man recalled:

“Yet, no feeling of regret wells up within me when I think about the three or four weeks I spent with the 19th Regiment in January 1916. Rather, I prefer not to dwell at all upon this brief period of my life. One of my most disagreeable memories is that of doing a stretch of two hours on guard duty at one of the manholes near Table Rock. The early morning was bitterly cold and an east wind carried the frozen spray in gusty sheets from the Horseshoe Falls and deposited over a wide area centring on Table Rock, including myself, so that when I completed my turn of two hours, I was sheathed in a thick coating of ice so that I could hardly march back to the Refectory and a well deserved rest.

This happened to me several times and, after a month of it, I decided that I had had enough. I also felt vaguely cheated because, although I carried a rifle, I had no ammunition for it nor did I ever carry any during my brief service with the 19th Regiment.”²⁷

This man, like many others, went on to join the CEF. The comment regarding the men not being issued ammunition is not borne out by events. Soldiers of the Force fired on Americans in the Niagara River in December 1914 and killed one man and wounded another; a sentry returned fire when fired upon at Crystal Beach in September 1915; and another sentry fired in the air at Port Dalhousie in June 1916 to summon the guard to deal with suspicious activity at the Lock.²⁸

During this year with the 19th Regiment, Lyall made as many as 14 applications for acceptance for overseas service. At long last, on 14 September 1915, he was considered “fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force”, 5 feet 10 inches tall, with hazel eyes, auburn hair and a freckled complexion. The medical record makes no mention of a hearing defect. The same day, the Commanding Officer of the 19th Regiment ordered Lyall to be reduced in rank to Private soldier, and to be Struck Off Strength of the Welland Canal Force on 22 September 1915. He remained on strength of the 19th Regiment until he was taken on strength of the 81st Battalion, CEF, six days later.²⁹



Lance Corporal G. T. Lyall in the uniform of the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment. The photograph was probably taken in Niagara Falls sometime in 1915. Sergeant unknown.



Cliff Baker

A guard of the 19th Regiment at Post No 1, Port Dalhousie, turned out for inspection, winter 1914/1915



Cliff Baker

Bridge Guard, 19th “Lincoln” Regiment at Post Number 1, Port Dalhousie, winter 1914/1915



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

This photograph of men of the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment was posed in 1915 in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The men were doing vital point duty on the Welland Canal Force.



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

The camp of the bridge guard at the edge of the gorge at the Lower Arch Bridge in Niagara Falls. The large building in the left rear is the YMCA where the men showered and had access to reading rooms, games rooms and other facilities.



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

Sports, and sports competitions, broke the monotony of the vital point duty. The 19th often played competitions with the 44th Regiment. This is the 19th's football team.



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

Part of the 19th's detachment at the Lower Arch Bridge in Niagara Falls. The locomotive and train on the bridge are crossing into the United States. Note the regimental sweat shirt.



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

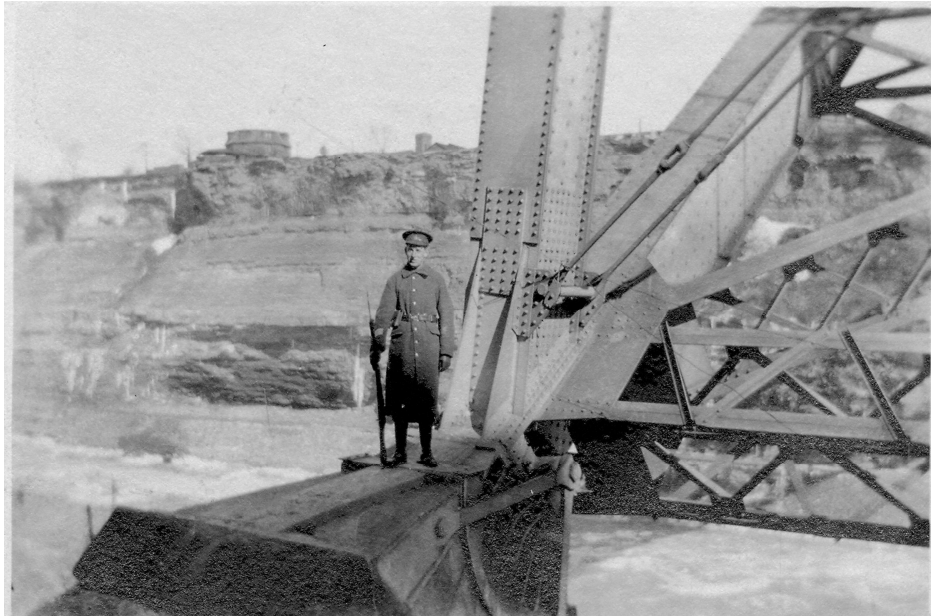
Changing sentries at the Lower Arch Bridge. The large building in the rear is the YMCA.



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

**The Lower Arch Bridge,
1915**

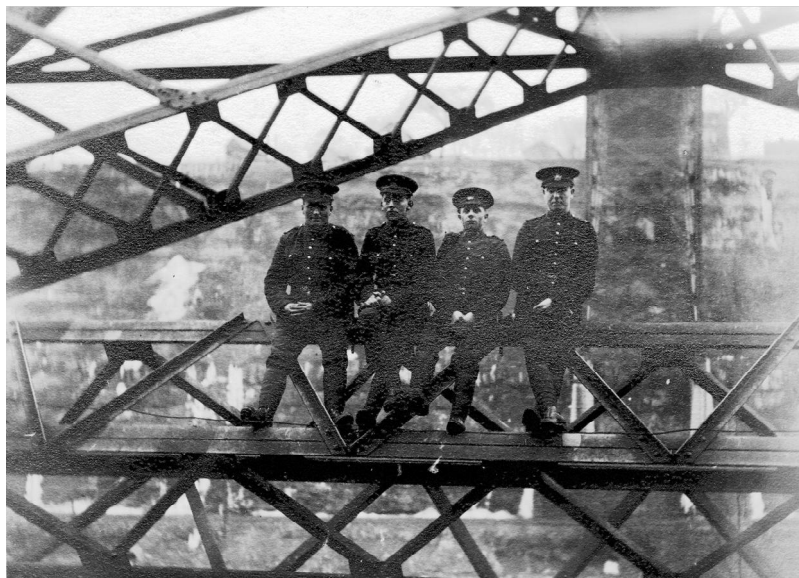
Although the 19th Regiment did duty at other vital points, a large detachment was posted at the Lower Arch Bridge in Niagara Falls. The bridge is still used some 100 years after its construction.



**The Lower
Arch
Bridge**

**The
Niagara
Gorge is in
the
background
with the
opposite
shore being
in Niagara
Falls, NY.**

The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

**A group of four un-named men of the 19th Regiment sitting in the super-structure
of the Lower Arch Bridge, Niagara Falls.**

The man on the right bears a strong resemblance to Lyall.

The 81st Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force

The 81st Battalion had been authorized on 1 September 1915. Lieutenant Colonel Berkeley Henry Belson, an officer of the 19th "Lincoln" Regiment who had joined the CEF as a Captain in 1914, commanded the Battalion, which recruited in the area of Toronto and district, although a large number of the Battalion's recruits, perhaps a majority, came from Niagara. When the 81st was authorized, it seemed natural the Battalion would be stationed at Niagara, but that camp was so crowded the battalion went into the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto, which had been enlarged to accommodate some 10,000 men. There, the men received normal military indoctrination, drill, instruction in Administration, duties of sentries by day and night, operations by night, defence and rear-guards, field works, patrolling, map reading, and military law. Regular route marching "gave the men a good hardening."³⁰

While still at the St Catharines Recruiting Depot at Lake Street Armoury, Lyall was appointed an Acting Corporal on 1 October 1915. His quick promotion undoubtedly was a result of his conduct over the year in which he had served in the 19th Regiment. He did not physically join the 81st in Toronto until the middle of the month when he arrived there with a draft of men from St Catharines.³¹

No sooner had Lyall arrived in Toronto, than it was announced that the Battalion would assemble in Niagara Camp "to shake them up and harden them for a couple of weeks".³²

The move to Niagara Camp in mid-October must have been somewhat of a mystery to the men, for Niagara was still a summer camp. The day after that announcement, however, the military staff announced that on 25 October the whole of the assembled troops at Niagara (some 10,000 men) would begin a long "big trek" to winter quarters at the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto. The march would begin "when details consisting of cyclists, engineers, army service and medical units will set out. Infantry battalions will follow at intervals of a day. There will be no marching on Sunday". The units were expected to depart Niagara about mid-day and arrive in St Catharines in the late afternoon. The march would be the "largest trek since the 189 mile trek from Swift Current to Battleford in 1885".³³

To provide an emergency method of moving individuals or groups of men, the route paralleled the electric rail line between Beamsville, Hamilton, and Oakville. Overnight camps were established at St Catharines, Grimsby, Hamilton, Bronte Creek, and Port Credit. The men dressed in marching order, and carried their entire personal kit. During the march, the battalions operated against an enemy force and underwent tactical training.³⁴

TRIPPLICATE

ATTESTATION PAPER
81st Battalion, C. E. F.
CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

No. 154524
Folio. Lieut.

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.
(ANSWERS.)

1. What is your name? Graham Thomson Lyall
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born? Manchester, England
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? Rev. R. St. Lyall (father)
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? Derbyshire, England
5. What is the date of your birth? Mar 8th 1895
6. What is your Trade or Calling? Mechanical Engineer
7. Are you married? no
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? no
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? yes
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? yes
If so, state particulars of former Service. 21st Regt. 1 year
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? yes
12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? yes

Graham Thomson Lyall (Signature of Man).
E. M. Wylie (Signature of Witness).

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

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

Graham Thomson Lyall (Signature of Recruit)
Date Sept 24th 1915 E. M. Wylie (Signature of Witness)

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, G. T. Lyall, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Graham Thomson Lyall (Signature of Recruit)
Date Sept 24th 1915 E. M. Wylie (Signature of Witness)

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at St Catharines, this 24th day of September, 1915.

W. H. Wylie, JP (Signature of Justice)

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.

W. H. Wylie (Approving Officer)
Captain

M. P. W. 25.
200 M.-4-15.
H. Q. 1172-20-841.

19 Lincoln

Attestation Paper

This is the front of Lyall's attestation (or enlistment) paper.

Of note is that his second given name is spelled incorrectly.

At some time after his commissioning, someone has stroked through his regimental number as Officers were not assigned regimental numbers.

At this point in the war, only Commanding Officers and Justices of the Peace could witness an oath. Captain Wylie signs as a Justice of the Peace.

E. M. Wylie was his daughter and was employed as a civilian clerk in the recruiting office.

Description of Graham Thomson Lyall on Enlistment

<p>Apparent Age.....years.....months. (To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)</p> <p>Height.....<u>5 ft. 10</u> ins.</p> <p>Chest measure..... (Girth when fully expanded.....<u>37</u> ins. Range of expansion.....<u>3</u> ins.)</p> <p>Complexion.....<u>Fairly dark</u></p> <p>Eyes.....<u>Blue</u></p> <p>Hair.....<u>Dark brown</u></p> <p>Religious denomination..... (Church of England.....<u>Yes</u> Presbyterian..... Wesleyan..... Baptist or Congregationalist..... Other Protestants..... (Denomination to be stated.) Roman Catholic..... Jewish.....)</p>	<p>Distinctive marks, and marks indicating physical peculiarities or previous disease.</p> <p>(Should the Medical Officer be of opinion that the recruit has served before, he will, unless the man acknowledges to any previous service, attach a slip to that effect, for the information of the Approving Officer.)</p>
--	--

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him* Fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.

Date.....14th Sept......1915

Place.....Northamers Out......D. C. M. G. Lyall Medical Officer.

*Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

NOTE.—Should the Medical Officer consider the Recruit unfit, he will fill in the foregoing Certificate only in the case of those who have been attested, and will briefly state below the cause of unfitness:—

.....

.....

.....

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT.

Graham Thomson Lyall.....having been finally approved and inspected by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular having been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.

Alfred C. M. G. Lyall (Signature of Officer)

Date.....DEC 1.....1915.....81st Battalion, C. E. F.

Attestation Paper
(Back)

Note there is no
indication of a
hearing problem.

In St Catharines, the battalions in turn moved into a tented encampment on the grounds of the armoury on Lake Street. There were already some tents there being used by the Welland Canal Force, but other “regulation bell tents” were put up, in the end totalling about 160, most of which were erected just west of the armoury proper, and the others on the front lawn. “Space [was] reserved for the field kitchens and transport wagons west of the armoury where have been erected sheds with sanitary equipment the equal of which will not be available at all other temporary camps en route.”³⁵



The
Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

Tents in front of Lake Street Armoury in preparation for "The Great Trek", October 1916

The armoury was used as a kitchen and large dining hall, and a civilian catering staff was hired to provide meals for both the resident staff and the transient battalions. A signal corps officer set up equipment in the armoury to provide the St Catharines link in the line of communications to report the progress of the move.

The citizens of St Catharines took up the challenge of having a military force of about 1,000 men in their community on a daily basis. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) arranged a nightly concert, and for 5¢ provided laundry services. The St Catharines Standard set up a co-ordination desk to process offers by residents to host soldiers to dinner and a bath in their residences.

At Niagara, there were bonfires and banquets the night before the first battalion departed and the men were in great spirits. The camp staff and officers came under criticism, however, as much of the wood for the fires was construction lumber newly purchased for the camp.³⁶

Enthusiasm aside, however, there were problems. Lake Street Armoury could not support the hygienic requirements of such large numbers, so by the time the last battalion passed through St Catharines, the men were bathing in Lake Ontario at the end of Lake Street. Signalling was “lamentably weak”; it took 6 hours to transmit a message over 12 miles, with the conclusion that “heliographs are futile”. It took 16 trucks to move the blankets for a battalion, but there was only one truck available in St Catharines. That meant 16 round trips to the railway station, with the result that men did not get to bed on time.³⁷ One shining success was that of the medical services, both on the march and at the various overnight camps.

The 81st Battalion left Niagara Camp mid-day on 2 November and a letter to the editor of the St Catharines Standard that day suggested that the 81st receive a special welcome when it arrived in the city that day. In the event, in the late afternoon, when the Battalion reached the railway bridge on Queenston Street, factory whistles sounded and a special fire bell rang to announce its arrival. Dinner invitations exceeded the number of men wishing to visit a home in the city. Undoubtedly, Lyall received and accepted an invitation from friends he had made while on duty with the 19th, and most likely they would have been members of St Barnabas Church where he had been a member of the church choir.³⁸

The Battalion left St Catharines the next morning, and in a sham battle west of Jordan later that day it drove off the “enemy”. St Catharines residents were justly proud of the performance of the Battalion as it was the first unit to win that “victory”. Previously, officers of a battalion being tested had been surrounded and captured.³⁹

At Grimsby, the men were fed from the unit’s mobile kitchens and slept on the beach.

The 81st marched the last 12 miles from Port Credit to Toronto on 9 November “without any appearance of fatigue” and after a short rest, took part in an 11 mile parade through the streets of the city which was then followed by an inspection by Sir Sam Hughes, the Minister of Militia and Defence:

“...although the men must have badly needed a rest, they were the jolliest of all. When the parade halted they held an impromptu concert between Bay and Yonge streets, singing the favourite camp ditties. The following went to the tune of ‘My Bonnie’

‘They say we get milk in our coffee;
They say we get cream in our tea.
They say we get milk in our cocoa;
But it looks more like whitewash to me’

The crowd gave them a great cheer...”⁴⁰

Interestingly, this ditty was almost the same as two sung at Niagara Camp which voiced discontent with conditions under which the men soldiered.⁴¹



Jon Jouppien Collection

“The Great Trek”, October 1916 – Niagara to Toronto

This photograph of the 81st Battalion was taken on Pelham Road, just west of St Catharines. The men are wearing straw “fatigue” hats, which they called the “Cow’s Breakfast”.

Family and friends slowly recognized that the Battalion would soon depart for the United Kingdom. Many men were hosted to special activities by organizations to which they had belonged, while most churches recorded their names for posterity. On 15 December 1915, St Barnabas Church in St Catharines published a Roll of Honour that listed Lyall among others. The preamble to the Roll read:

“The following members of St Barnabas Church, having voluntarily left home and friends to serve their King and Country in the great European War, are justly entitled to have their names placed upon the Honour Roll of this Parish.”⁴²

Sir Sam Hughes was not a prohibitionist but rather a strong advocate of drinking alcohol in moderation. He made a speech in the camp at the Exhibition Grounds in November in which he identified excessive drinking as the enemy of the soldier, and that one reason the British Army had fought so well in Belgium was that it “was the most temperate organization in the world.” Whether this speech had any influence on the 81st Battalion is not known, but on 21 December 1915, the St Catharines Standard reported:

“There is joy among the boys of the 81st Battalion, commanded by Lt.-Col. Belson of St Catharines. The Battalion has won the fatted 860-pound heifer presented by H. F. Kennedy, live stock commissioner at West Toronto, for the least number of drunks among the Battalions from Nov. 10 to Dec. 20. Mr Kennedy originally donated the heifer for the best trained battalion, but this was considered an unfair comparison. Outside the headquarters, the troops did not

know that the heifer had been presented for sobriety. Gen. Logie instructed Capt. W. A. Morris, the provost marshal, to keep a count of drunkenness between Nov 10 and Dec 20 and compile the averages. The 81st had the best record and for their sobriety the boys will have a big feast of beef.”⁴³

Cook-Sergeant John Campbell proudly posed for a newspaper photograph with his kitchen staff and two quarters of the heifer prepared for Christmas dinner.⁴⁴

The largest parade in Toronto of men destined for overseas duty took place on 1 March 1916. Twenty-one battalions of infantry, three artillery batteries, men from various schools of instruction and other minor units, some 700 officers and 18,000 men marched past Sir Sam Hughes. “Prominent in the parade and outstanding for marks of efficiency was the 81st Battalion.”⁴⁵

By April 1916, the Battalion comprised four infantry companies, three manned by men from the Toronto area, and the third by men from St Catharines and district. The Queen’s Own Rifles contributed one company, the 10th Royal Grenadiers another and the 109th and 36th Regiments a third. By far the largest was C Company which had a strength of over 250 men recruited in Niagara.⁴⁶



Library and Archives Canada

Field kitchen of the 81st Battalion deployed during training in Toronto

Rumours of the Battalion’s departure circulated early in April, and some thought it might be sent to Egypt, while others believed that the “81st’s European tour is now thought to have its ticket marked ‘Berlin, the limit’”. In any event, the men were restless and eager to get under way.⁴⁷



Library
and Archives Canada

**A Section Attack.
The 81st Battalion undergoing Platoon training in Toronto, 1916**

Lyall was on parade in Toronto on 22 April 1916 when the 81st was presented with a stand of Regimental Colours on the "parade ground south of the armouries". In recognition that many men in the Battalion came from Niagara, the Mayor of St Catharines was a principal speaker at the ceremony.⁴⁸

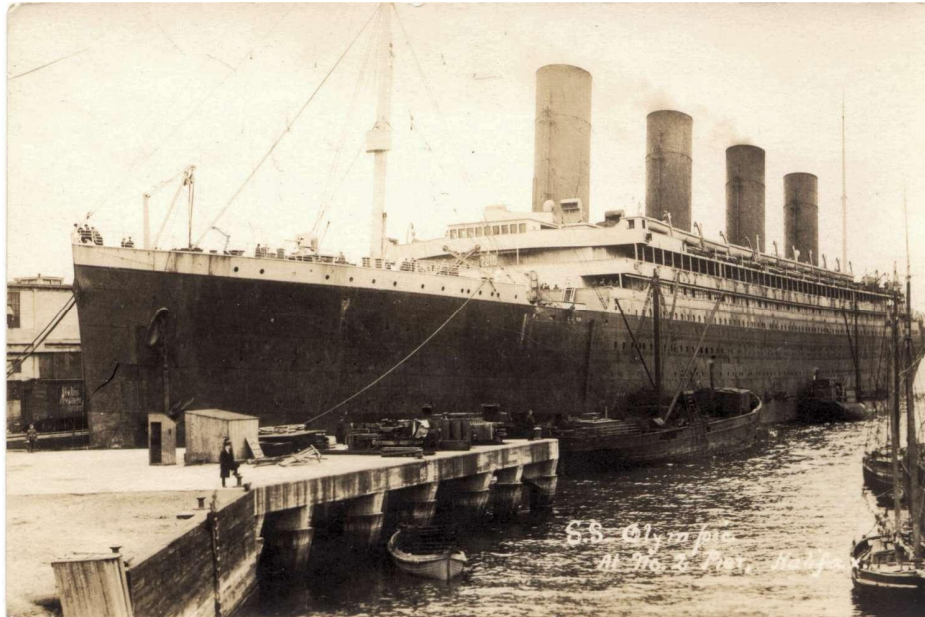
The "Kitty's Own" (a nickname for the 81st which referred to the large component from St Catharines) entrained at the Exhibition Grounds for Halifax in the evening of 25 April 1916:

"In boarding the train the soldiers marched two deep out of the front door of the poultry building and then around the front and side of it to the tracks, passing through a dense crowd of citizens who shouted words of encouragement and good cheer to the bronzed and seasoned men in khaki.

Lieutenant Colonel H. B. Belson, the 81st's commandant, who was wounded at Langemarck and St Julien one year ago, was one of those leaving on the second train. He stood on the steps of one of the rear coaches and was the last member of the Battalion to wave to the crowd that had gathered at the track-side."⁴⁹

The 81st embarked on *RMS Olympic* at Halifax on 28 April 1916. *Olympic* had been launched in 1910, the first of three sister ships, the other two being *Titanic* and "*Britannic*". After the sinking of *Titanic*, *Olympic* was described as being the "largest vessel in the world". She displaced 45,324 tons and was 9 decks high. Each one-way crossing required 5,100 tons of coal and 2,500 gallons of fresh water. As the crossing was made independently and not in convoy, she was armed with two 4.7" guns forward and a

3" gun on the stern. She had begun her crossings as a troopship in March 1916 and on each trip from Halifax to Liverpool carried over 6,000 men: 500 officers in First Class, 716 NCOs and 1033 men in births and 3,765 in hammocks. Of the men in hammocks, 898 were accommodated in the First Class Dining Salon. The regularity of her crossings earned her a number of nicknames: "*Old Reliable*" and "*Ocean Greyhound*" amongst them.⁵⁰



Library and Archives Canada

RMS Olympic at dockside in Halifax. Later in the war she would be painted in a camouflage pattern called "dazzle".

The voyage appears to have been uneventful. Previously, the ship had been transporting troops to the Mediterranean, and undoubtedly the routine established there was carried out on the Halifax-Liverpool runs. An hour after embarkation, the ship's captain held an "Officer Commanding Troops" briefing in the smoking room, and thereafter officers' conferences were held each evening at 2100 hrs. Discipline during the voyage was very strict. Life jackets were worn at all times, and used as a pillow at night. There was no smoking on any of the outside decks. Physical training on deck took up most of the men's day, apart from meals. At 1000 hrs there was an inspection of quarters, and at 1500 there was a practice emergency alarm when troops had to quickly fall-in at their alarm stations. The upper decks were cleared at 2100 hrs and the day ended for the men at lights out at 2200 hrs.⁵¹

The Battalion disembarked at Liverpool, England, on 6 May 1916 and travelled by rail to the West Sandling Training Area in Kent, England, which it reached the next day. This training area stretched along the English Channel on a plateau overlooking the sea. To the east was the seaside resort of Folkestone and to the west the village of Hythe, famous for its school of musketry and extensive ranges. The camps of Shornecliffe, Otterpool,

East Sandling, and Westenhangar were a short distance inland. . On a clear day the French coast was visible, and if the weather was just right at night one could hear the guns on the front in Belgium.

It is not unreasonable to assume that Lyall's parents found time to visit him during this period.

It was policy that no man could proceed to France if he had not satisfactorily completed his musketry course, so musketry was the primary subject in the training syllabus of the 81st during this period. The ranges at Hythe could not accommodate the increased demand this policy dictated, so many battalions were sent to Lydd, several miles down the coast where the troops bivouacked while completing the required course of shooting.⁵²

By 1916, the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom had adopted a system of reinforcement similar to that of the British Territorial Army so that on arrival at in England the 81st became a "depot" battalion. As such it retained its identity and formed part of a Training Division, but it was not destined to go over to France as a unit; rather its men would eventually be dispersed to other units in the Canadian Corps and the United Kingdom and the Battalion would cease to exist.

Early in June the 81st began supplying drafts of men to the Canadian Corps in France, and Lyall was among the first of the reinforcements from the Battalion who went to the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles on 7 June 1916. It was the general consensus that it would be unfair and create dissension among those who had served in the front lines to suddenly be superseded in rank by officers and men who had not seen combat so Canadian Army policy was that officers being posted to battalions in France would have to revert to the rank of Lieutenant, while enlisted men would have to revert to the rank of Private. Accordingly, Lyall was a Private soldier when he was posted to 4 CMR.⁵³

4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, Canadian Expeditionary Force

In November 1914, the Canadian government had approved the formation of thirteen new regiments of Canadian Mounted Rifles, of about 500 men each, and when the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles was authorized, the 11th Royal Irish Fusiliers of British Columbia began providing it with recruits. When the 3rd Canadian Division was formed in December 1915, six regiments of Mounted Rifles were reorganized as four infantry battalions numbered 1, 2, 4, and 5, and assigned to the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade.⁵⁴

The 3rd Division entered the line in France in January 1916, and on 2 June 4 CMR came under heavy artillery fire in front of Armagh Wood, south-east of Ypres, Belgium, where it lost 89% of its strength in one day; and on a Muster Parade the next day only "73 from the front line answered their names."⁵⁵

The survivors went into billets in the village of Steenvoorde west of Ypres, and replacements began arriving even before all the dead were buried. A reinforcement draft of 498 men arrived from the 33rd, 81st and 83rd Battalions on 9 June. The draft from the

81st totalled 187 men and included Lyall. The Battalion's Medical Officer had been one of the casualties, so the reinforcements in Lyall's draft were examined the next day by the MO of 2 CMR. In an amazing feat, he examined all 498 men in one day! Lyall was promoted to Acting Corporal four days after his arrival which on the surface seems to have been a contravention of Army policy, but that promotion was undoubtedly a result of the shortage of leaders in the Battalion and Lyall's previous record. Another draft of 163 men from the 81st arrived on 29 June.⁵⁶

The British had learned that inexperienced troops would suffer unnecessary casualties if they were pushed into the forward lines without some indoctrination, so from the very first days of the war British policy was not to commit units new to France directly into the line. Since so many men in 4 CMR were now new to France, it was treated as a new unit and consequently spent the rest of June and most of July resting and reorganizing. The men received lectures on trench duty, duties of sentries by day and night, listening post duties, setting out wire entanglements, field engineering, habits of the enemy, on-site taking over trench stores, periscopes, sniper scopes, grenades, Very lights, small arms ammunition, petrol tins for drinking water, and revetting materials. They practised musketry, bomb throwing, trench digging and scouting. At night, the Battalion supplied work parties for 7 Brigade. The new drafts were sent into the line with 5 CMR for short periods of time.⁵⁷

Battalions were normally rotated in sequence: front lines, Divisional Reserve, Brigade Reserve, and back to the front line. While in reserve, the men bathed or showered, washed clothing, attended Church Parades, attended to administrative duties, and underwent training and preparatory instruction for up-coming operations. Of course, there were endless company and battalion parades with the attending drill. There was physical training, but it seems that route marching, starting as early as 0500 hrs, was a favourite "toughening" activity. The opportunity to get out of camp might have played a role in its popularity.

During the night of 17 June advance parties from the Brigade went forward and were followed by their battalions the next day. 4 CMR relieved the 49th Battalion near Zillebeke Bund and for the next few days the Battalion had a relatively quiet time. On the evening of the 26th, the it was attached to 7 Canadian Brigade for two days of instruction on routine in the trenches. Each man was in full marching order in Great Coats, with 120 rounds of ammunition, two gas helmets and one steel helmet, full water bottles and 24 hours worth of rations. It is interesting to note that air defence procedures were that "upon hearing a short blast of the whistle to denote the approach of aeroplanes everyone must stand absolutely still until the whistle is blown twice, that the aeroplane has passed over".⁵⁸

And the men worked. The War Diary is filled with references:

"26/6/16 Working parties were detailed for tonight as follows: - 150 men to work in Warrington Ave under Lt Layton; 100 men working deepening Byland Ave under Mr Girrow and Mr Howner; 50 men as a carrying party under Capt Franks,

and 150 men under Capt LaPierre working between China Wall and Dormy House.

27/6/16 The following working parties were supplied tonight:- 96 men to work in Living Trench "C" under Mr Tidy; 72 men in Living Trench "D" under Mr Hart; 75 men in Living Trench "E" under Mr Allen; 98 men on work on China Wall under Mr Gamble; 40 men as carrying party to Ealvert under Mr Pierce; 17 burying cable under Sergt Harris."⁵⁹

In addition to vigorous training and seemingly unending work, there were activities to provide relaxation and a semblance of normality. On 1 July, Dominion Day, the Brigade held a sports day organized by the YMCA. Some Non-Commissioned Officers attended a course in gymnastic instruction for physical training. During this period Lyall attended the Corps Gas School at Steenvoorde where he attained a grade of 1st Class.⁶⁰

The Battalion moved into Brigade reserve near Ypres on 14 July 1916, and provided work parties of 400 to 600 men at night. Then, on 23 July it relieved 5 CMR in the line at Sanctuary Wood where it had suffered such severe casualties the previous month. It remained in the line until relieved on the 27th. This tour was uneventful, other than enemy shelling and sniper fire.⁶¹

For the first two weeks in August the Battalion remained in reserve and continued an active training programme. It then moved into the front line where it was subjected to continuous enemy artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire.

WAR DIARY *4th Canadian Battalion* Army Form C. 2118.
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
(Erase heading not required.) *for the month of July 1916*

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.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendix
	26		Enemy was very quiet all day but snipers were very active. Lieut A.H. Bostock was hit by sniper bullet and killed at 1.15 pm. About 5 A.M. four salvoes were put into our front line from the direction of Hill 60. During the day the enemy's artillery was not very active. From 10.30 pm to 11.15 pm 12 rifle grenades were put into Dawson Lane. Great work of sand bags was observed in a shell hole opposite 51 making a suitable point for advanced bombing or machine gun. Some new wire was put up by the enemy in front of 47 in front of his old wire. Enemy's wire in front of Mount Sorel was examined and had evidently been recently strengthened.	
	27		Enemy was very quiet all day. In the early evening, artillery fire was directed on communication trench opposite Valley Cottages and also several rounds on the trench entrance to Maple Cape. The battalion was	<i>Thompson</i> <i>Adams</i>

T. 124. W. 769-776. 50000. 4/15. Sig. J. C. & S.

War Diary, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, 26/27 July 1916

The Somme, 1916

Late in August the Brigade Commander ordered preparations for a move that would eventually take the Brigade south of Amiens and then back north to Albert to the Somme River. Although he believed the training that they had been conducting on set-piece attacks had been adequate, he also issued a special order for training in which stated special attention was to be paid to semi-open fighting:

- attacks on the second objective, 200 to 300 yards off, creeping forward under an artillery barrage to within 50 to 100 yards, assault on the objective, pushing forward covering parties, digging in, consolidation, co-operation with troops on the flank;
- failure of the assault, bringing up supporting troops, re-enforcing front lines that had suffered heavy losses;
- relief of troops;
- wood fighting, by day and night;
- “battle patrols”;
- practise casualties amongst officers and NCOs;
- practise being held up at certain points in the attack; methods of communicating with the artillery with the view of having those points “done in”, and reorganization of the attack against those points;
- practise by officers and NCOs in reporting; and
- practise extending a success to a flank.⁶²

The move began on the morning of 7 September, and on the morning of the 11th the Battalion arrived at an assembly area on the northern verges of Albert just north of the River Somme. The men had arrived in time to take part in the great battle of the Somme that had been on going since the first week of July.⁶³

The Allied commanders had had no geographical objectives when they conceived the Somme strategy. Rather, the offensive was designed to aid other armies and inflict heavy German casualties. If anything, the offensive would inflict casualties: by mid July the British Empire had lost 200,000 men; the French, 70,000; the Germans, 200,000.⁶⁴

8 Brigade relieved the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade in the Pozières area on 11 and 12 September. 4 CMR held the right forward sector of the Brigade area with its headquarters in Pozières. The Battalion was relieved by 5 CMR during the night of 13/14 September and went into Brigade support at the Chalk Pits.⁶⁵



Imperial War Museum

Canadian Troops on the Somme, 1916

On 15 September the Canadian Corps launched a major attack in the area of Courcelette. Rumours of the employment of tanks, a new weapon of war, had filtered through to the front line, but their whereabouts and appearance were obscure:

“These lumbering caterpillars made their début before the masses of troops on this eventful morning. The previous night some of the Battalion saw them crawling into position. They were spinning out white direction tapes under the command of an officer who walked ahead semaphoring with his arms to the operator inside...Great things were expected.”⁶⁶

In addition to the introduction of the tank, this battle introduced the concept of attacking in a series of limited bounds to a series of successive objectives, although some of the bounds were excessively long, 1,900 yards in some cases.⁶⁷

The Canadian Corps attacked with the 3rd Division on the left and the 2nd Division on the right. The regimental historian noted that the attack had been preceded by a heavy bombardment for several days.



The Imperial War Museum

The Somme, 1916

The 3rd Division's attack was led by 1 and 5 CMR of 8 Brigade, which captured Mouquet Farm. 4 CMR had not expected to take part in the operation as it had just been relieved the night before. The Operation Order stated:

“The 4 C.M.R. Battalion in support will be prepared to move up companies when ordered to occupy the positions vacated by the companies of the 5th C.M.R. Battalion who have gone forward, and will also be prepared to dig the communication trench mentioned in para 4 in the event of the troops of the 5th C.M.R. Battalion not being available.”⁶⁸

But the battalion suddenly received orders to assemble two companies in forward trenches in preparation for an attack. This was the first major combat for 4 CMR since the reinforcements had arrived in June.

B and C Companies left the Chalk Pits at 1545 hrs. After moving forward through a heavy enemy artillery barrage, B Company reached its “jumping off” trench at 1815 hrs. C Company, following in the rear was caught in another barrage as they deployed and had two platoons practically wiped out. As any attempt to advance further would have entailed even more casualties, Lieutenant Hamilton, the Officer Commanding the company, withdrew his men under cover.

B Company attacked at 1830 hrs in two waves in conjunction with troops of 7 Brigade. The first wave was directed at the original objective of C Company, about 275 yards in front of the start line, and the second advanced with its left centred on its objective of the Fabeck Graben, 100 yards further on. Both the enemy's front and support trenches were captured and bombing parties were pushed down Fabeck Graben and established a block.

As soon as it was dark, the remains of C Company pushed forward to reinforce B Company. The two companies then consolidated on the objective.⁶⁹

The Brigade was relieved during the night of 16/17 September, and reported that “a conservative estimate of the number of casualties inflicted on the Germans” was 900 killed, 3 officers and 74 men taken prisoner, and 5 machine guns taken. Of the enemy killed, 150 were victims of 4 CMR. The Brigade casualties totalled 860: 175 killed, 624 wounded, and 61 missing. 4 CMR suffered 34 killed and 144 wounded.⁷⁰

“The Battalion had reason to be proud of its part in this historic battle for Courcelette. It was due to their coolness and steadiness that they were able to march for two hours through heavy fire to their assembly point and be in position in less than four hours after receiving orders. They accomplished in soldierly fashion their difficult task as pivot troops for the larger flanking movement. Even after their objective had been reached they carried on the work of consolidating under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire and were not checked by the trench-mortar bombardment which assailed them...and when relief came Colonel Gordon was able to hand over a finished system of defensible trenches.”⁷¹

On 17 September 1916, a nose cap of a shell struck Lyall in the left ankle. He was treated at No 18 General Hospital the same day, and entered No 6 Convalescent Hospital at Étaples for one day on the 20th. The pain and swelling from this wound (at times entered in his medical records as a sprained ankle) would be with him for the rest of his life.⁷²

The Battalion went into billets until 30 September when it relieved 2 CMR in the line. On 1 October it took part in an assault on Thiepval Ridge. A German trench, nicknamed Regina Trench by the Canadians, was located on the reverse slope and was identified as a key to the ridge. 4 CMR was to establish a block in Regina Trench and prevent German reinforcement from the west.

In drizzling rain, the Battalion launched its assault at 0315 hrs out of a trench system nicknamed Hessian Trench. The preparatory artillery barrage had failed to destroy the German defences, and the Battalion immediately came under heavy machine-gun fire from the moment the men clambered over the parapet. Within yards, A Company was practically wiped out; D Company reached the objective and actually gained a foothold in the trench and held it “until the last man of them was killed.”⁷³

The War Diary of 8 Brigade noted:

“The Right of the 4th C.M.R. Battalion attack with the exception of 1 platoon which was hung up by wire is reported to have reached its objective. It was heavily counter-attacked from the direction of the Sunken Road... and was apparently over-powered. Of this company, only 3 men returned to our trenches.

The Left of the 4th C.M.R. Battalion attack, moving down the communication trench deployed on the German side of the wire...and attacked the enemy's trench...They were met by heavy machine gun fire from the north-east and north-west and failed to reach their objective.

A platoon directed against the German trench west of 48 was also wiped out.

A bombing party, however, effected an entry into the German trench at point 48 and worked eastwards for about 20 yards. From there they were eventually forced to retire.”⁷⁴

On the right of the Brigade, 5 CMR reached Regina Trench, but it too was driven out by the enemy. 5 Brigade on the right of the 8th also failed to capture and hold the objective; it had gone into the line with 1717 men, and came out with 773. A week later the 7th and 9th Brigades met a similar fate.⁷⁵

On 10 October 1916, Lyall was appointed an Acting Sergeant, and confirmed in the rank of Sergeant the same day. The appointment and promotion on the same day is unusual, but undoubtedly it was due to Lyall’s conduct during the assault on Regina and Hessian Trenches nine days earlier. In a letter written by Lyall in 1919, Lyall credited his conduct during this period as a factor in the decision to commission him.⁷⁶

An undated medical record in Lyall’s personnel file states he suffered “defective hearing L ear attributed to Gunfire September 1916.” This entry seems at odds with secondary sources that his deafness in his left ear was a result of long distance swimming in his youth.⁷⁷

4 CMR was withdrawn from the line and went back to Albert to recoup, although it did work in the support trenches. The Battalion’s area of operations was along the Pozières-Grandcourt Road until 14 October 1916, rotating into the line five times. Over all, the offensive during the period was a failure. The Battalion had entered the Battle of the Somme twelve hundred strong; over one thousand men were killed, wounded or missing. On the 14th, it was withdrawn from the sector and began a long move to Vimy.⁷⁸

Arras, 1916

The move of 4 CMR in October 1916 was a small part of the move of the Canadian Corps to Artois to take over from IV British Corps and assume responsibility of a ten-mile sector that extended from Arras to Lens. The Corps defensive position traversed a shallow valley dominated on the east by Vimy Ridge. Vimy Ridge was tactically one of the most important features on the entire Western Front and “along the whole of the German line it would have been difficult to find terrain better suited to defence”. The whole of the area was covered with mine-craters, deep belts of wire and deep dugouts, some of which were capable of holding entire battalions of infantry. The Germans had constructed their defences in three main lines, linked with a maze of trenches and covered by intricate machine-gun positions. The whole of the western slope was exposed to artillery observation.⁷⁹

Most of the winter was spent in limited hostilities. The regimental historian of 4 CMR noted, “the front was peaceful after the Somme, it was difficult to realize that the enemy was close at hand”. The Battalion rotated in and out of the line and while in the rest areas underwent rigorous training in preparation for the spring offensive.⁸⁰

On 13 March 1917, Sergeant Lyall was “transferred to England with a view to being granted a commission” and posted to the Regimental Depot, at Shornecliffe. This posting would mean that Lyall would miss the capture of Vimy Ridge, one of the greatest battles in Canadian military history. He was appointed a Temporary Lieutenant on 28 April and posted to the 8th Reserve Battalion. From there he was sent on a short course at the Canadian Officers' Training School at Bexhill-on-Sea, England. While on that course he qualified 1st Class at the School of Musketry at Shornecliffe, England.⁸¹

At about this time, or earlier, Lyall met Elizabeth Moffat Frew, a nurse from Airdrie, Scotland, a small town just a few miles east of Glasgow. Exactly when is not known, but it is known that he visited Elsie, as she was known, in Airdrie on 17 July 1917.⁸²



Elizabeth Moffat Frew

Known affectionately as “Elsie”, she appears in her VAD uniform in 1916.

Sandy Ferguson

Still in England, Lyall was admitted to the Westcliffe Eye and Ear Hospital at Folkestone on 10 September, and underwent a tonsillectomy and adenoid operation. The condition was attributed to “exposure and infection”. He sat a medical board on the 18th and was given a Category A rating, “Fit for General Service”.⁸³

There are discrepancies between Lyall’s Canadian Army personnel records and those of the British Army regarding his rank and employment during this period. While his CEF records state he was in England and a Lieutenant on strength of the 8th Reserve Battalion, the British records state he was acting as a Corps Liaison Officer at Lens from April to July. It may well be that after the Musketry Course he performed that duty, but it is odd that his Canadian personnel records do not reflect the assignment.⁸⁴

On enlistment in the British Territorial Army after the war, Lyall stated that he had held the appointment of company sergeant major during this period. That appointment must have been a “local” arrangement, because there is no notation to that effect in the CEF records. But it would not have been an unusual situation wherein a Sergeant would have preformed those duties.

Lyall was Struck Off Strength of the 8th Reserve Battalion, as a Lieutenant, on 24 September 1917 and was posted to the 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, CEF, which he joined in the field on 2 October. He was to serve with this Battalion until the end of the war.⁸⁵

102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, CEF

The 102nd (North British Columbians) Overseas Battalion had been raised at Comox, BC, on Vancouver Island on 3 November 1915. Just five months after recruiting began in Comox, the Battalion crossed to France as part of 11 Brigade, 4th Canadian Division. The other three battalions in the Brigade were the 54th (Central Ontario) Battalion, the 75th (Mississauga) Battalion, and the 87th (Canadian Grenadier Guards) Battalion. In addition, the Brigade had the 11th Trench Mortar Battery attached.⁸⁶

Lyall was one of seven reinforcement officers to join the Battalion which was then in billets at Gouy Servins and preparing for the next offensive. He was posted to B Company commanded by Major Franklin Jude Gary. There were over 70 men in the Battalion who had connections to Niagara, but other than one sergeant, it is unlikely that Lyall knew any of them. Sergeant Thomas J. Holden had been the Bandmaster in the 19th Regiment, Lyall's old militia regiment in 1914/1915, and if Lyall did not personally know him, he undoubtedly knew his old Bandmaster on sight. On Lyall's joining, the 102nd Battalion strength was 29 Officers and 875 Other Ranks.⁸⁷

His 49-man platoon was organized as follows:⁸⁸

- Platoon Commander
- Platoon Sergeant
- Rifle Section
 - 1 NCO and 11 Other Ranks
- Rifle Grenade Section
 - 1 NCO and 8 Other Ranks
 - 2 Bayonet men
- Lewis Gun Section
 - 1 NCO and 6 Other Ranks
 - 2 Snipers or Scouts
 - 2 Runners
- Bombing Section
 - 1 NCO and 8 Other Ranks
 - 2 Bayonet Men
- Cook
- Sanitary Man

The Battalion had rotated in and out of the line along the Lens Road for much of August and September and had conducted a series of operations that had little strategic operational importance.⁸⁹

In late September the Brigade prepared to relieve the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade in the line. It had already issued an Operation Order, but out of the blue orders were received that the Canadian Corps was to relieve the II Anzac Corps in the area of Ypres, and that as part of that relief the 4th Canadian Division would relieve the 3rd Australian Division. On 4 October, the day after his joining, the Battalion began a move to Ypres and the “blood-stained ridge of Passchendaele”.⁹⁰

Ypres, 1917

The Third Battle of Ypres in 1917 had been designed to extend the Ypres salient farther east. Although the battle had begun in July, the Canadian Corps had only entered the battle on 18 October in time to fight the Battle of Passchendaele. Passchendaele was a small village, which had already been the scene of heavy fighting, and the ground was badly torn by shellfire and water or deep mud covered the battleground. The regimental historian wrote:

“It is impossible to give any adequate idea of the scenery on the way to summit of Passchendaele Ridge. There is just a brown landscape, an interminable acreage of mud and shell-holes⁹¹ billowing up in a gradual ascent, with depressions rather than valleys, between each billow, until a flat and desolate top is reached, on which no semblance of any human habitation remains...the ascent is made by means of an elaborate system of bath-mats which spread like threads in every direction, whilst here and there on the hillside is seen a battery, ostrich-like, unable to see the enemy but hoping that a scant shelter of brushwood is shielding it from the eyes of the prying aeroplanes.”

General Currie insisted that he ought not launch his divisions into the attack until as much artillery as possible had been brought into play. The earliest that could be done would be 26 October, so the Canadian Corps had two weeks for preparation before launching its attacks. His plan was to take the Passchendaele Ridge in three bounds, Red, Blue and Green, each of about 500 yards, with two divisions forward. For the capture of the first two bounds, (Red and Blue) he deployed the 3rd Division on the right and the 2nd Division on the left. For the assault on the Green line the 1st and 2nd Divisions would lead the assault. It was planned to pause three days between the first and second bounds, and four to five days between the second and third bounds.⁹²

The 102nd Battalion began its involvement in Passchendaele on 22 October when it and the 75th Battalion went into bivouac in the village of Potijze about a mile and a half north-east of Ypres on the Ypres-Frezenberg Road. The War Diary noted that Potijze was “a sea of mud and water”.⁹³

A Canadian soldier in another unit described the early hours of that morning:

“Up at 2.30. Drizzle of rain. Fritz overhead. Dressed and ate in darkness in shell-hole and lost tea. Hundreds of guns all around us flashing and banging away. Impressive sight. Guns being hurried up. Exciting scenes as mules and horses flounder in mud. Wrecked tanks and pillboxes all round. Worked on road,

sandbags and carrying planks. Shells dropping quite close. Up to our knees in mud. Shell on the road, three killed, five injured. Horrible sights.”⁹⁴

The Battalion was out of the line, but it was immediately tasked to supply working parties. The very day of its arrival it suffered one killed and six wounded in this work. The enemy artillery was described as “active all the time with occasional barrages”.⁹⁵

On 26 October the Canadian Corps launched its first bound against the ridge and overall achieved all of its objectives. By midnight on the 27th, it had gained sufficient footing to launch its second bound three days later. The Corps had five days free of rain to prepare for the third bound with the 1st Canadian Division attacking from the south-east and the 2nd Canadian Division from the south. The 3rd and 4th Divisions were held in the rear. The artillery barrage was good and the German lines were overrun by the first waves of Canadians.

Throughout this third bound, the 4th Division was held in reserve, and the 102nd did not take part in the forward edge of battle. Instead, it began a seemingly endless rotation in and out of the line for short tours that involved no offensive operations; but they entailed much hard work in burying cable, digging trenches and putting the line in better shape. The War Diary noted, “Feature of the 5-day tour was the incessant call for men for working parties, all available being taken.”⁹⁶ The men had been forced to:

“lie down for long hours in ill-protected positions under incessant bombardments. We had just done the little that we had been set to do, but had suffered casualties out of all proportion to our task...which make the memory of Passchendaele a nightmare in the minds of all those who had a share in a particularly odious experience.”⁹⁷

On 30 October the Battalion moved forward along a track known as Oxford Road, on a “duckwalk” that was described as “two lines of mats laid over the mud which was deep enough to engulf a man up to the arm-pits”. The next day, the Battalion relieved the 85th Battalion, with C and D Companies forward, A Company in local support and B Company in local Reserve. Although the Battalion only spent two days in the line before being relieved, it suffered five killed, 25 wounded and evacuated, and 11 wounded but remaining at duty.⁹⁸



Imperial War Museum

Canadian troops going “Over the top”

The last tour in support of the 87th Battalion began on 12 November 1917, and it relieved the 87th Battalion on 16 November, with Lyall’s company flanked on the left by C Company and on the right by A Company. On the 18th, the Suffolk Regiment of the British Army relieved the Battalion, and the War Diary noted, “The 102nd Bn. had the honour of being the last Canadian unit to leave Passchendaele”.⁹⁹

The Third Ypres campaign had run its course and the Battle of Passchendaele came to a close. Since the end of July, the armies of the British Empire had lost 250,000 men, killed, wounded, or missing “for a gain of less than seven kilometres”. The Canadian Corps had captured Passchendaele Ridge, but at a terrible cost, 11,000 wounded, 5,000 dead. Even though the 102nd Battalion had not taken part in offensive operations during the battle, it had suffered 20 killed and 50 wounded.¹⁰⁰ The Canadian Corps began leaving the Ypres salient on 14 November, and four days later General Currie handed over responsibility for the sector to a British general. However, on that very day Lyall was wounded in the right knee and badly gassed. He was admitted to a field ambulance and returned to duty the next day. His medical records annotate his name with the words “remaining at duty”.¹⁰¹

The Battalion went into rest camps at Divion. The War Diary described its stay:

“Dec 1. For the next seventeen days the battalion remained at rest in Divion. As stated before, Divion is a coal-mining town about 2 miles from Bruay, and it is well-peopled with prosperous miners who do not regard the billeted soldiery as their sole means of support. Billets in Divion are good and it is easy to arrange messes by companies. The place is lighted by electricity, There is ample

accommodation for a battalion at full strength, with an open space centrally situated large enough for a battalion “fall-in”; close by is a field large enough for ceremonial parades and battalion drill. The general routine observed throughout the 17 days of this month spent in Divion was:- CO’s Inspection at 9 a.m. followed by drill till noon. Afternoons were devoted to recreation, inter-Company football or baseball being the usual attractions, varied by occasional games with the 54th Bn. who were in our neighbourhood. The few special events which varied this routine are noted below against the dates on which they occurred. Almost without exception the weather was fine with sharp frosts towards the end of our stay.”¹⁰²

Platoon commanders were presented with a tactical scenario and then had to devise a plan and lead their platoon through the exercise. It is not recorded who led the platoon from the 102nd but it was unlikely to have been Lyall, a recent reinforcement. The scores were not impressive and the Battalion placed third out of four, losing to the 75th Battalion:

	Possible Score	Battalion Score
Dress and Equipment	30	14
Approach – assembly and observation	60	35
Instructions given – methods used	15	15
Tactical Plan – explanation and orders	45	20
Surprise – effect of first fire	45	30
Advantage taken of surprise	45	--
Fire Control – platoon commander	30	20
Lewis Gun – tactical tasks	45	45
Lewis Gun targets – advantage taken	30	30
Fire Orders – Lewis Gun Section Commander	15	15
Section Commanders – control and fire orders	45	25
Use of Cover	45	30
Covering fire	75	35
Position of Platoon and Section Commanders	15	15
Rapid Loading and firing	30	20
Totals	570	349

As would be expected, a number of officers and men were granted leave during this rest period. Lyall, though, was one officer who was detailed for duty, acting in place of his Company Commander, Major Frank Gary, who wrote Elsie Frew’s sister, Isabel, on 9 December 1917:

“I got back just in time to save my job, as Graham was holding it down too well. You see, I told him to carry on as I was doing, but what did he go and do, but do things as they should be done.”¹⁰³

It is not known when or how Gary became acquainted with the Frew family, but undoubtedly it was through Lyall's engagement to Elsie Frew. The correspondence with Isabel (Cissy) Frew indicates a romantic attachment.

War or no war, Canadians value their voting rights, and from 3 to 17 December 1917, soldiers in 11 Brigade voted in accordance with the Military Voter's Act, 1917. The process must have been cumbersome, for only 752 men of the 102nd Battalion had cast their vote by the 10th of the month.¹⁰⁴

All men passed through a Battalion musketry course and there were the usual route marches. A Divisional skill-at-arms was held in December 1917, and on 15 December a competition was held to select the platoon that would represent the Brigade. No winner was declared due to a number of disqualifications, so the competition was held the next day.

The platoon had lost its way and men crowded. Surprise was good, but no advantage was made to exploit it. Initial fire was considered too long of a duration. Bounds were made without covering fire and the advance was too slow, so that the objective was not reached.¹⁰⁵

It was expected that the Battalion would be in the trenches on Christmas Day, so the Companies held Christmas dinner at the Hotel Moderne, Bruay, on 14 and 15 December.

On 18 December, the Battalion began to move to Mericourt, which it reached in the afternoon of the 20th. A and B Companies were deployed forward, left and right respectively, and C and D Companies in support. To the right was a battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment of the British Army. The mud was two feet deep in places, and it snowed periodically. The battalion was in the line for two ten-day tours.¹⁰⁶

Major Gary again wrote Isabel Frew just before Christmas:

"Graham just gave me the shortbread and candy.

I am sitting in front of the fire (one candle) puffing on my pipe and in the smoke I can see Meadowside and its girls. Not a bad view considering I am damn near frozen. The men have just been wakened for hot soup so I had some too.

Of the belongings I left with you, I only need the shaving brush. I have taken to wearing 3 pairs of socks, 4 shirts and a trench coat at night, so I have no need of pyjamas.

Remember, I let Graham take his pick after I had taken mine."¹⁰⁷

The New Year found the Battalion in Brigade support and the weather extremely cold. Lyall took his leave during this period and returned to the United Kingdom where he was expected to visit Elsie Frew in Airdrie.¹⁰⁸

There was little activity in the Battalion, other than occasional shelling. The Germans shelled an area to the left of the Brigade with gas, which resulted in increased alertness. The Battalion was relieved during a heavy snowstorm on 9 January, and moved into a rest camp at Neuville St. Vaast noted for a cinema which provided nightly entertainment. By mid-month Lyall had returned to the Battalion which moved to another camp at Chateau de la Haie and then on to Lievin. It went into the line near Fosse St. Louis from the 20th to 25th of the month.¹⁰⁹

In the last week of January 1918, Major Gary, in writing to Isabel Frew, indicated that Lyall was preparing to return to Scotland on leave, but on 2 February, Lyall was posted to the 1st Army Musketry course and on return it was expected that he would assume the duties of Battalion Signals Officer rather than return to a rifle company. In the event, though, he was admitted to No 39 Stationary Hospital in France on the 24th. Since January, he had “been suffering from periodical attacks of severe gastric pains with vomiting” and Bronchitis caused by mustard gas. He had vomited or coughed bright red blood. In addition to his gastric problems he complained of swelling and pain in his legs and was suffering from dermatitis caused by the gas.¹¹⁰

He was transferred to No 8 Red Cross Hospital at Boulogne on the 4th of the next month; from Boulogne to the 1st Western General Hospital in Liverpool; and then to Yorkhill War Hospital in Glasgow on 4 April 1918. At Yorkhill he was placed on a test diet that seemed to resolve his problems.

Drumpellier hospital, which occupied a large mansion in Coatbridge about 12 miles from Yorkhill, took about 25 patients at a time from Glasgow to give them a period in the clean air of the country. Elsie Frew was a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse at Drumpellier, and it is safe to speculate that Lyall was able to spend some time there.¹¹¹

On 29 April 1918, he was transferred to the Canadian Convalescent Hospital at Bath and then to the Military Isolation Hospital at Aldershot. All this while, he was held on strength of the 8th Reserve Battalion, Central Ontario Reserve Depot.¹¹²

During August, while Lyall was hospitalized at Aldershot. *The Colne and Nelson Times* reported that, unaware that his mother was seriously ill, he had returned to Darwen on leave only to find that she had passed away. “This was a major blow, as he seemed closer to his mother than his father.” Lyall was granted compassionate leave and travelled to Darwen for her funeral. His sister, Dorothy, took over house-keeping duties for their father.¹¹³

Lyall was discharged from hospital on 21 August 1918. In all, he had spent six months in hospital. He had missed the Amiens offensive, but had arrived back with his Battalion in time for the Arras campaign.

Arras, 1918

In a continuation of the Amiens offensive, the British 1st Army, with the Canadian Corps on its right, drove south-east of Arras along the River Scarpe. The general objective was to break through part of a German defensive trench system and mutually supporting strong points stretching from south of Lens to north of Rheims known as the Hindenburg Line. The immediate objective was to pierce part of the line in the area of Drocourt-Quéant, and reach Cambrai, France.

The 1st and 4th Canadian Divisions did not arrive in the Arras sector until 25 and 28 August respectively, and for the next two days the 4th Division, which contained Lyall's Battalion, served as a follow-on division. During the night of 30 August the Division went into the line near Eterpigny, between the 1st Canadian and 4th British Divisions, and during the next day took over half the British Division's frontage. The plan for the next phase of piercing the Drocourt-Quéant line was to break the German line on the Arras-Cambrai Road.

The mission allocated to 11 Brigade was to pass through 12 Brigade north of the Arras-Cambrai Road after 12 Brigade had captured the Drocourt-Quéant Line and if possible to cross the Canal du Nord and capture ground east of the canal. The 102nd Battalion was tasked to follow the 87th Battalion, leap-frogging through them after they had captured Ecourt St Quentin, push on across the canal and capture the village of Oisy Le Verger.¹¹⁴

Lyall probably rejoined the 102nd Battalion on 23 August 1918 in the area of Berneville, east of Arras, on the Arras-Cambrai Road. In all likelihood he was assigned to "C" Company that was then commanded by Captain Thomas R. Griffith, MC. The men had been informed that they would be taking part "in big operations, which were planned for the immediate future...which would be the breaking of the famous Hindenburg Line".¹¹⁵

According to plan, 11 Brigade moved into its assembly area in the neighbourhood of Vis-en-Artois, completing its assembly at 0130 hrs on 2 September. The 102nd Battalion occupied an area near Triangle Wood, just west of Michael's Road. It had been subjected to heavy bombing by aircraft as it moved to the Assembly Area. The advance was to be made without artillery barrage or tanks as the "guns would be shot out at the Red Line (12 Brigade objective) and the tanks were reserved for mopping up the Quéant-Drocourt Line. The Brigade did have, however, one battery of guns for use as forward guns." It also had a battery of machine guns, two 3" Stokes and one 6" Newton mortars. to provide close fire support.¹¹⁶

The Battalion moved out of the Assembly Area at 0500 hrs, Zero Hour, with C Company leading, followed by D, and B, with A Company in Battalion reserve.

"The barrage was extraordinarily intense, and one hour after its commencement, we moved forward, maintaining a distance of 1,000 yards from the 87th Bn. Within half-an-hour we passed into a zone of continuous barrage fire put over by the Hun to catch the supporting units. The terrain in this district is undulating, and the descending slopes were pitilessly swept by a hail of shell and machine-gun fire causing comparatively heavy casualties...It was a long tramp under

such conditions to Drocourt Trench, which had been the jumping-off place for the 87th, and where we were due to remain until such time as we were to go forward to take our share in the active work ahead, the companies taking shelter in Dury Road.”¹¹⁷



Library and Archives Canada

Canadian troops moving across open ground east of Arras, September 1918



Library and Archives Canada

Canadian troops advancing along a road east of Arras, September 1918

The Battalion scouts were sent forward to ascertain the movement of the 87th Battalion, and when they reported back that the 87th had moved forward in their attack:

“The 102nd Battalion then moved forward to the low ground east of the road, C Company keeping in touch with the 87th Bn. From this point we came under heavy machine-gun fire. C Company moved forward to the crest of the hill, where the Scout Officer and four Scouts went over the crest to see how the 87th were progressing. They were gone some considerable time when the Company Commander decided to move his company forward. On reaching the crest of the hill they came under very heavy machine-gun fire and it was found that the Battalion Scout Officer and four Battalion Scouts were casualties. The Company Cmdr was hit just about this time and the Company losing their commander went forward to the attack and ended up in the Front Line with the 75th and 87th Bns. The situation then being realised, that the forward battalions in the Brigade were having heavy fighting, our other three companies were halted in order to take up defensive positions in the Drocourt-Quéant Line, and as soon as the situation warranted our C Company was withdrawn to Brigade Support.”¹¹⁸

In his after-action report, the Brigade Commander noted that, “It was evident that the enemy had appreciated the tactical value of Dury Hill and had recognized how easily troops pouring over it could be shot down.” In all likelihood Lyall played a significant leadership role in the push forward of C Company after Captain Griffith was wounded.¹¹⁹

At 0330 hrs the next morning, with C Company in Brigade reserve, the Battalion moved forward into the front lines and relieved the 72nd Battalion and D Company pushed up on to the bank of the Canal du Nord. By nightfall, C Company had moved into battalion support, and A moved into reserve. The Battalion was established along the Arras-Cambrai Road.

Major Frank Gary, who had struck up a romantic relationship with Isabel Frew, was wounded during this action and died of his wounds on 2 September. He was buried in the British Cemetery at Ligny-St. Flochel, Pas de Calais, France.¹²⁰

The Battalion was relieved during the night of 4 September and went into a rest area near Neuville Vitasse south of the Arras-Cambrai Road and east of Arras. During the Battle of Arras, the Battalion had suffered 43 killed or died of wounds, and 154 wounded; the Canadian Corps had suffered 11,000 casualties.

The Hindenburg Line and Broulon Wood, 1918

The Canadians had already penetrated part of the Hindenburg Line during the Battle of Arras, and now the plan was to continue the thrust for Cambrai, the strategic centre of the German logistical system in Flanders. In the first week of September 1918, Marshall Foch outlined his future plans for the Allied campaign on the Western Front. Three British armies, the First, Third, and Fourth were either facing the Canal du Nord or approaching the Hindenburg Line for a resumed offensive. To avoid the risk of the enemy massing all his reserves against them, Foch determined on a general offensive all

along the front, which would consist of four great blows to be delivered: first by the three British armies against Cambrai and St Quentin; second by the French centre beyond Aisner; third, by US forces in army strength against the St Mihiel Salient, later combining with the French in a drive towards Mezieres; and finally by the British and Belgian forces towards Ghent and Bruges.

The final objective was Cambrai, and the success of the attack depended on breaking through the Drocourt-Quéant end of the Hindenburg Line.

Sir Arthur Currie, the Commander of the Canadian Corps, was ordered to capture the Canal du Nord line, the first move against Cambrai. Construction of the canal had been halted on the outbreak of war and was now part of the German fortified trench systems and mutually supporting strong points. During a personal reconnaissance Currie noted the formidable nature of the barrier. The canal itself was about a hundred feet wide, but the marshes on both sides of it had been extensively flooded to widen the obstacle. Its defences consisted of machine-gun posts close to the canal and, about a mile back, a trench system called the Marquion Line. Currie knew from air photographs that old excavations might well hide more machine-guns. A frontal attack, he concluded, would be unsound because of the nature of the obstacle: the flooded ground, and the successive defences from which any push to the east would be the more violently enfiladed the deeper it went. To the south, on the other hand, a 4,000-yard stretch of an unfinished section of the canal was dry. To cover this section the enemy had built further defences and these were densely wired and covered with numerous machine-guns. The Canadian planners, however, believed infantry with ladders could get down one side of the dry canal bed and up the other.

On 18 September, Currie submitted his plan. He proposed to breach the German defences by taking advantage of the dry portion of the canal. Through this one-and-a-half-mile gap, the Corps would then pass 50,000 men, guns, tanks and transport and after reaching the far bank fan out in a 10,000-yard arc to the north and east. The whole area of operations was dominated by Bournon Wood, a stand of prime oak trees on a long high hill that stretched parallel to the canal. Currie concluded that the capture of this high ground at Bournon Wood was the key to the eventual capture of Cambrai, and assigned the task to the 4th Canadian Division, which was to cross the canal and push forward to envelop the Wood in the north and south and link at the far end.

The Allies had attempted to break the Hindenburg Line twice before. The line had been pierced, but with limited success. Expectations this time were high. Of the Canadians, a British Intelligence officer exclaimed, "If mortals can turn the trick, those men will."¹²¹

Throughout the days leading up to the general attack planned by the Allied commanders, the Germans continuously shelled the Canadian lines with mustard gas. In response, the Canadian artillery fired over 17,000 gas shells into the German positions in and around Bournon Wood.

The War Diary of the 4th Canadian Division noted, “Unlike the two previous shows in which the 4th Canadian Division participated, preparations for the operation were commenced some days in advance.”¹²²

The general plan was to breach the Canal du Nord and take the Marquion Line. The plan then called for 11 Brigade on the right and 12 Brigade on the left to pass through 10 Brigade taking Bourslon Wood and Village.

The operation presented many difficulties; the first serious obstacle was the Canal du Nord and great difficulty was contemplated in effecting a crossing. Next, 300 yards east of the canal a trench line had been partially dug by the enemy and was protected by wire. Immediately to the rear, and defending Bourslon Wood and Bourslon Village was the Marquion Line, deeply dug and strongly wired. The heights on which the wood was located provided excellent observation.

The Commanding Officers reconnoitred the ground on the 19th, and developed their battalion plans for the operation.

Even as this planning was continuing, the Corps began moving towards its Staging Areas. With some difficulty in locating its Staging Area, the 102nd arrived near Bullecourt on 25 September in cold but clear weather. It then lay quiet there for the rest of the day.



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Canadian Engineers preparing bridging for the Canal du Nord Crossing



Canal du Nord After the Crossing by Canadian Troops

After dark on the evening of the next day, the Division moved into Assembly Areas to the west of the canal. The night was exceedingly dark and a steady rain fell until nearly dawn. There was no shelter and the men were forced to huddle in the damp and cold. The exposed troops worried Currie:

“The assembly of our attacking troops in an extremely congested area known by the enemy to be the only one available was very dangerous... A concentrated bombardment of this area, particularly if gas was employed, was a dreaded possibility.”¹²³

The War Diary of 11 Brigade noted:

“Owing to the general timetable, the problem of assembly was a difficult one. Between the 11th and 10th Brigade Assembly areas lay the field and heavy gun zones, in which so many guns were concentrated as to make dangerous infantry movement on a large scale in the dark, while the batteries were in action. At the same time it was evident that if the infantry remained behind the guns until after daylight, it would be impossible for them to reach the leap-frog line in time to follow the barrage. The difficulty was solved by moving the two leading battalions (the 87th and 102nd), two hour prior to zero, before the artillery opened fire, through the guns and assemble them close behind the 10th Brigade, which crowded forward in its own area to make this possible.”¹²⁴

The 102nd began its move to the support trenches at 2230 hrs. The regimental historian wrote:

“It was not a happy move; the trenches were almost impassable owing to the slippery mud and darkness, and what rest we obtained was more than counterbalanced by the fatigue sustained in reaching the dug-outs.”¹²⁵

At 0230 hrs on 27 September the Battalion moved forward into trenches near Inchy-en-Artois, where they waited for the assault to begin. 10 Brigade had the task of breaching the Canal du Nord and to take enemy trenches a few hundred yards to the east. 11 Brigade, in reserve, would then pass through 10 Brigade and capture Bourlon Wood, the southern part of Bourlon Village, and, if possible, the Yellow Line beyond.¹²⁶

For the operation, 11 Brigade comprised:

- 54th, 75th, 87th and 102nd Battalions;
- No 2 Company, 4th Canadian Machine Gun Battalion, less one battery;
- Detachment of 6” Newton, 4th Canadian Divisional Artillery (3 guns);
- 11th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery; and
- 11th Canadian Field Ambulance.

In support of the Brigade, the 4th Battalion of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps, assigned No 2 Company, less H Battery, equipped with Vickers Machine Guns.¹²⁷

Three tanks had been allocated to the Brigade, but the officer commanding them did not consider himself able to carry out the tasks set by the Brigadier. He stated the condition of his men “was not good” and complained that his tanks were old and could get no further than the near edge of Bourlon Wood, and even then they would have to return to the canal to be refuelled. Brigadier Victor W. Odum wrote:

“I informed him that, as it was apparent he would not be of any assistance to the Brigade, I had no further time to waste with him.”¹²⁸

The mission given to the 102nd Battalion was:

- to keep pace with the attack of the Imperial battalions south of the Bapume-Cambrai Road and protect their left flank from trouble from Bourlon Wood; and
- in case the Imperials were held up, to refuse his right flank, form a defensive flank facing south-east and work his left forward through Bourlon Wood.¹²⁹

11 Brigade was organized with 102nd Battalion leading, followed by the 87th, 54th and 75th Battalions. The Battalion kept in close touch with 10 Brigade as the Division moved forward. The Order of March was: A, B, C, and D Companies followed by Battalion Headquarters.¹³⁰

The attack began at 0520 hrs on the 27th. Earlier in the night the sky had been clouded, but towards morning it had cleared. The pre-assault artillery barrage was intense. "All you could see for miles and miles along the front was the flashing of guns, and Fritz's line was a mass of smoke and bursting shells." Intermixed with high-explosive rounds, "an additional 7,600 lethal and lachrymatory shells" were fired by the Canadian artillery to smother the German defences. Within minutes, 80 per cent of the estimated 230 German guns in the vicinity of Bourlon Wood were out of action. Canadian machine-gun companies fired an astounding 320,000 rounds of ammunition. An estimated 1,000 aircraft dropped 700 tons of bombs and fired 26,000 rounds from their machine-guns.¹³¹

The 1st Canadian Division on the left and 4th on the right carried out the initial crossing of the canal against a surprised German defence. One historian stated that the Canadians "went at it with a zip."¹³²

The German countered with an attempt to break up the attack by shelling with gas and forcing the advancing Canadians to wear their gas respirators. But the Canal du Nord was not the obstacle expected. The Germans had not constructed any wire or obstacles in the canal bed, and even with the steep walls, the troops climbed out with relative ease. One soldier recalled:

"The banks of this unfinished part of the Canal were something like twenty feet high, I should think, and we were supposed to have scaling ladders brought up to us the night before. You can imagine my feelings when they didn't arrive. But somehow, we climbed on each other's shoulders and got up."¹³³

Another wrote:

"There was nothing to it. We didn't need these ladders. The Germans must've been stupid that they didn't fill that Canal full of obstacles. Not a thing in it where we were".¹³⁴

10 Brigade made good initial progress and by 0630 hrs had pushed across the canal to form a bridgehead. An hour later, the 87th and 102nd Battalions reached the canal, suffering few casualties. 11 and 12 Brigades then passed through the 10th, and took the divisional point in the attack against Bourlon Wood. 12 Brigade veered left to take Pilgrim's Rest, a key hill north of the Wood, while 11 Brigade swept forward to encircle Bourlon Wood. The first objective of 11 Brigade was the GREEN Line, running west of the Wood.

The 102nd was organized in a "two-up" stance, with A and B Companies forward, and C and D Companies in reserve. Three of the companies were commanded by Lieutenants, the third by a Captain, an indication of the heavy casualties previously suffered by the Battalion. Lyall commanded a platoon in C Company under Lieutenant V. Z. Manning.

By 0830, the Brigade Observation Post reported that the 102nd Battalion had completed its pass-through of 10 Brigade and "was going forward in good order". The Battalion

reported that it had captured the Green Line an hour later, and shortly after noon it was reported to be well beyond the Green Line.¹³⁵

However, the flanking British 52nd Division on the right of the 4th Canadian Division could not keep up, with the result that the Canadians in 11 Brigade were subjected to heavy enfilade fire as they approached the Wood and were temporarily checked. Heavy machine-gun fire forced the leading companies of the 102nd Battalion to go to ground and dig in along the Bapaume-Cambrai Road, facing east and south.

During this difficulty, the machine guns of No 2 Company Battery, 4 Canadian Machine Gun Battalion, engaged enemy targets to the south and were able to take up positions along the southern edge of the Wood.¹³⁶

A soldier who had enlisted in the 176th “Niagara Rangers” Battalion, CEF, (that had been raised in Niagara) and was then serving in C Company of the 102nd Battalion, wrote:

“Mr Lyall was in command of a company made up of mostly St Catharines boys and was especially the good old “Niagara Rangers” represented by John Hart of Port Dalhousie, and good old Bill Bradshaw of the “Rangers” and Roy Boyle (killed) and many others from St Kitts.”¹³⁷

As the Battalion moved forward, the leading company was held up by machine-gun fire from a sunken road. Lyall took his platoon and flanked the enemy machine-gun post and captured it, taking thirteen prisoners, a field gun and four machine-gun. He then reorganized his platoon, which had suffered a number of casualties, and continued the advance. In a few minutes, his platoon again came under heavy machine-gun fire. So under strength was the company that Lyall had to gather up men from another company in order to assault the enemy post; he did so without hesitation and killed the officer in charge and captured another forty-five Germans and five machine-guns. Pressing forward, his platoon took its final objective, and in the process captured another forty-seven Germans.



Sandy Ferguson

Bourlon Wood from the west



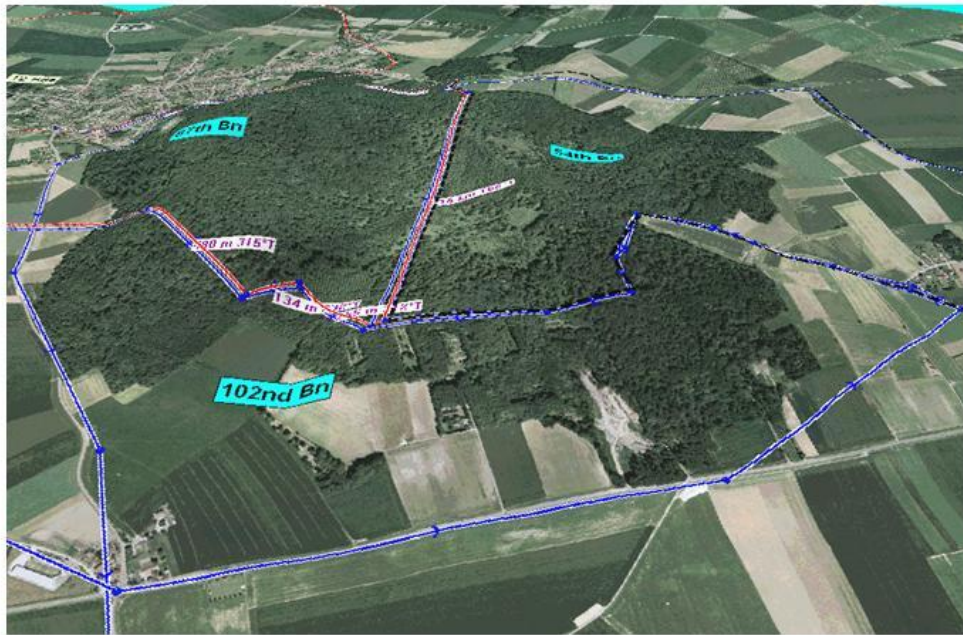
Sandy Ferguson

Another modern view of Bourlon Wood



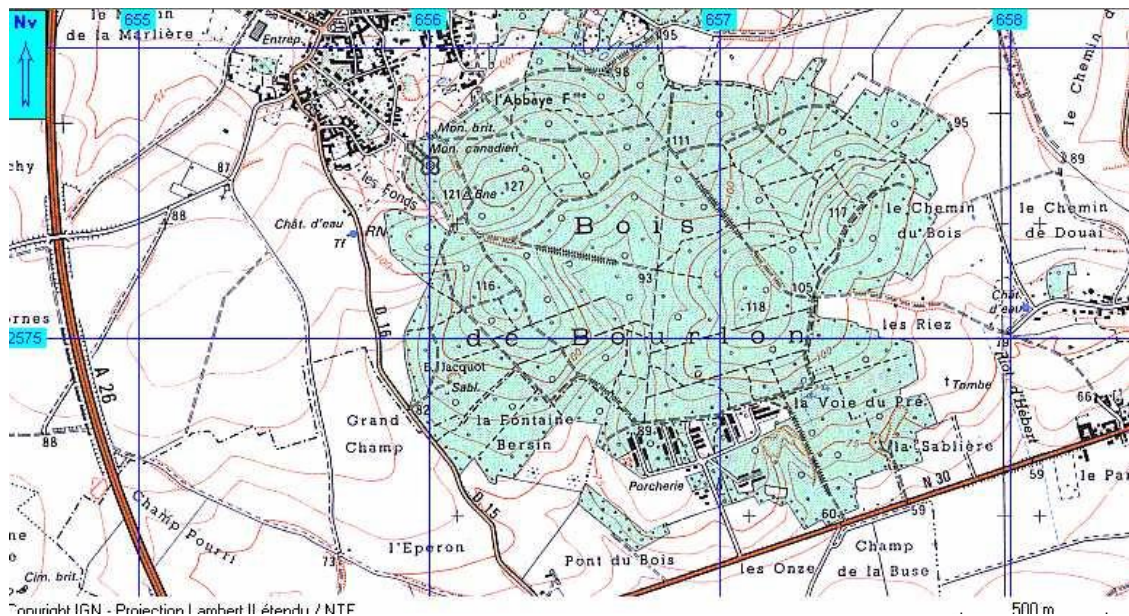
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102nd Battalion War Diary Map for Bourlon Wood showing operational boundaries and objectives for 27 September 1918.



Floyd
Low

Battalion boundaries marked on an aerial view of Bourlon Wood



A modern-day topographical map of Bourlon Wood

The 102nd Battalion had been forced to swing south a thousand yards outside the Canadian Corps boundary, taking a strongly fortified factory on the Bapaume-Cambrai Road. The Brigade had reached their second objective, with the 87th Battalion on the left, the 54th in the centre and the 102nd on the right. The 75th Battalion had been in reserve, but the pressure was so great the 75th was brought forward, and headquarters of both the 75th and 102nd Battalions merged at one location. A direct hit on the headquarters shortly after noon killed the Commanding Officer of the 102nd and caused so many casualties that the command of the two battalions devolved upon Lieutenant Colonel Thomson, an officer of the Canadian Engineers. He detached two companies of the 75th to the north to support the 54th Battalion in its attempts to capture Bourslon Village, and sent the remainder of the 75th to the assistance of the 102nd Battalion as it worked its way around the south of the wood. During the afternoon and evening of the 27th, the 102nd beat back successive German counter-attacks from the south-east.¹³⁸

Lyall's platoon was now on the exposed right flank of the Battalion; in fact it was on the right of the whole of the Canadian Corps. To protect the flank until the British units on the right of Lyall came forward, he had his platoon dig in and consolidate on the objective; there he tended the wounded.¹³⁹

All this was all accomplished while wearing gas respirators. The Divisional Gas Officer noted that the infantry reached "their objectives in more or less exhausted condition". One officer said that notwithstanding the danger of being gassed, he "took the damned thing off" in order to see.¹⁴⁰

The treatment and handling of the wounded was primitive to say the least. 11 Field Ambulance that had followed closely behind the advancing battalions supported the Brigade. Bearer relay parties would carry the wounded to a relay post and then back to a collecting point. From there, the wounded were carried by hand or conveyed on ambulances to the Canal du Nord and thence to the rear. By 1000 hrs, 11 Field Ambulance had established a collecting post east of the canal, and part of Lyall's responsibility was to ensure that men from his platoon assisted in the movement of the wounded to the rear to the bearer relay posts in an orderly and safe manner.¹⁴¹

A heavy artillery barrage to help the British move forward on the right began about 1600 hrs, but the Imperials were unable to force their way through the German defences.

While Lyall's Battalion dug in and established a defensive flank facing south and east along the Cambrai-Bapaume Road, the 87th and 75th Battalions fought their way into Bourslon and captured the village. The 54th and 75th Battalions then encircled the wood on the north effectively capturing it by about 1300 hrs. Whatever the natural condition of the Wood before the Canadian attack, it was now "seven hundred acres of oak trees, shattered, sombre and accursed."¹⁴²

The war diary of the 188th Regiment, the German garrison of Bourslon, contains the comment, "on this day we buried all hopes for victory."¹⁴³

Throughout the afternoon and early evening the 102nd pushed patrols forward into Bourlon Wood to make contact with the 54th Battalion which had entered the Wood from the north. At the same time, the Battalion had to maintain contact with the British Imperials on their right. While the fighting continued, the Divisional Commander began issuing orders by which units of the 3rd Division would pass through 11 Brigade the next morning.¹⁴⁴

Sir Arthur Currie later recalled:

“That was the day we took Bourlon Wood. The Boche made up his mind that we were not going to have that front. Bourlon Wood is the key to the whole country.”¹⁴⁵

At this point the momentum of the Divisional advance bogged down. The Division was exhausted and could do no more that day. It had advanced more than 6,000 yards, captured both Bourlon Village, and the essential high ground of Bourlon Wood. It had taken 4,000 prisoners and 102 German field guns.¹⁴⁶

The Brigade adjusted the deployment of its battalions in the late hours of the 27th September in order to provide secure jumping-off points for the 3rd Division, and in the early hours of the 28th, the 102nd Battalion was placed under command of that Division and was to remain responsible for the southern flank until the Division had completed its pass-through. It remained under command of the 3rd Division until early afternoon when it joined the remainder of the Brigade north-west of Bourlon Wood.

The Battalion had suffered: sixty-one had been killed or died of wounds, and 158 had been wounded. Three men were missing in action. It had captured 257 prisoners, and taken 15 pieces of artillery and 18 machine-guns.

Notwithstanding the success in capturing Bourlon Wood, the fighting had been so intense and vicious that this was the only sector of the Canadian Corps where the day's final objectives were not met.



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A soldier of the 102nd Battalion eating berries after the battle.



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A contemporary view of vehicles on a road just after the capture in 1918.



Two Views of the Devastation Inflicted by the Artillery Barrage

The enemy rushed in reinforcements until his strength in front of the Canadian Corps grew to ten divisions. During hard fighting on 28th and 29th the Canadians gained little ground, and suffered 2,089 casualties.

On the 30th of September, a Canadian general attack in the area of Tilloy-Blécourt broke down under murderous machine-gun fire. The 75th Battalion went into action with 467 men; 78 walked back. Brigadier Odlum, the commander of 11 Brigade wrote:

“From the start the operation did not go well. It was based on false assumptions, namely that the enemy was beaten and would withdraw, and that a smoke screen would be ample protection for the left of the attack against the fire that would naturally be expected from Blécourt Valley and the high ground south of Abancourt. As for the smoke screen, the less said the better. It was a total failure.”¹⁴⁷

Blécourt, 1 October 1918

General Currie decided to renew the attack the next day with all four of his divisions in the line, but over the next three days the attack failed. One officer recalled, “I never saw so many machine-guns in any place in my life.” The only success was that of 11 Brigade on the 1st of October. Led by the 102nd Battalion, it reached the Cuvillers-Ramillies Road by mid-morning. During the action on the 1st, Lyall was in command of a very weak C Company, which numbered about 50 men. By skilful tactical handling of the company, he was able to capture eighty Germans and another seventeen machine-guns.

The regimental historian wrote:

“...but by 10.00 A.M. the men had stormed the Hun position and had settled down to withstand fierce counter-attacks which were already being massed against them and were pouring over from the direction of Bantigny over the ridge to the north; moreover, Blécourt had not yet been cleared of enemy machine-guns who were considerably hampering our movements...but the fortunes of the day were in hazard, and D Company was brought up to form a flank facing Blécourt, when the company Lewis gunners did wonderful execution on the enemy massing round that village... it was decided to build up a strong defence along the positions which had been won, so that a well-consolidated line could be handed over to the 5th Brigade. This was done, and on the evening of the 1st we were relieved by the 28th Bn, and made our way back to the Transport Lines on the outskirts of Bourlon Village.”¹⁴⁸

The 87th Battalion passed through the 102nd in company strength in an attempt to exploit the 102nd's success, but that attempt was also thwarted by heavy machine-gun fire. The 87th withdrew into the 102nd and both units dug in to consolidate the Brigade's success.

Currie broke off the action. He had decided that his troops were so exhausted they could achieve little more. In five days his men had broken the German line, captured 205 guns and more than 7,000 prisoners. But Cambrai remained just out of reach.

In all, on that day the Battalion captured 443 prisoners and 32 machine-guns while suffering 177 casualties of its own.¹⁴⁹



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Troops resting while on the advance to Cambrai

The great number of guns and machine-guns which the Battalion had captured between 27 September and 1 October is indicative of the awesome German defences which the men of the Battalion faced during the breach of the Hindenburg Line.

This was the last major battle, and one of the most complex, fought by the Canadians in World War I. Over 45,000 Canadians had poured through the German lines and the fighting cost Canada more than 18,000 killed, wounded and missing. Currie attributed the success to the “iron discipline” of his Canadians and their expertise in the ‘tactical employment’ of all their weapons and resources. Historians add that the victory was also “due in great measure to careful planning and leadership”. Currie wrote, “...the effects of the battle...were far reaching and made possible the subsequent advances of October and November”.¹⁵⁰

The Battalion went into rest near the ruined village of Quéant and spent six days in comparative ease. It then moved into a brigade rest area and began seven days of ordinary training. Rumours of a Peace circulated widely. On the 14th, it began a move by train and arrived at a small village of Palluel where the men were billeted in houses in the village. C Company was now under the command of Lieutenant Lyall, as Lieutenant V. Z. Manning had been wounded at Blécourt. It was quartered in Hamel, a small near-by village. The Germans shelled both villages with gas frequently, and the men were compelled to wear their gas masks practically every night.¹⁵¹

The Prince of Wales and the Divisional Commander visited the headquarters of 11 Brigade at the Chateau Ecourt St. Quentin on 17 October. Years later, when meeting

Lyall, the Prince noted having met him, but recalled that it had taken place in Valenciennes. However, the Prince also had visited the Brigade at Aulnoy on 1 November, so it is difficult to be certain when the meeting took place.¹⁵²

News of a general enemy retreat was passed to the Battalion on 17 October 1918, and the next day the Brigade joined in the pursuit. On the 19th, B and C companies overran German positions at Abscon, and liberated 3,300 civilians. On the 22nd the Battalion moved forward to Merin where it went into billets for six days. Although the move had been without opposition, the Battalion was shelled frequently while in Merin.

The Prince of Wales attended a “great religious ceremony” in Denain on 27 October 1918, and early the next morning, the Battalion marched into the town:

“Our entry was in the nature of a triumphal procession; it was very dark, but on every doorstep stood men, women and children holding up lighted candles and cheering themselves hoarse.”¹⁵³

On the 31 October the Battalion moved forward to the verges of Valenciennes, and on 3 November 1918 was able to enter the city and go into billets for two nights. On the 6th it was in action at Quiévrechain and encountered stiff resistance:

“C Company, on the right, was suffering from the failure of the Imperials on their right to keep up. The flank was exposed to a withering machine-gun fire, but by using one platoon as a defensive flank, the company pushed on over the crest of the hill and gained the eastern bank of the Grande Honnelle...this manoeuvre resulted in the complete capture of Baisieux and the total confusion of the enemy, who seemed to be wholly unprepared for such a rapid denouement...after throwing out a screen of outposts C Company was ordered to stand firm and consolidate...”¹⁵⁴

This was the last action of the Battalion. The regimental historian boasted: “We had come from further west and gone further east than any other unit in the ‘Fighting Fourth’” Division.¹⁵⁵



Imperial War Museum

First troops into Valenciennes

The Victoria Cross

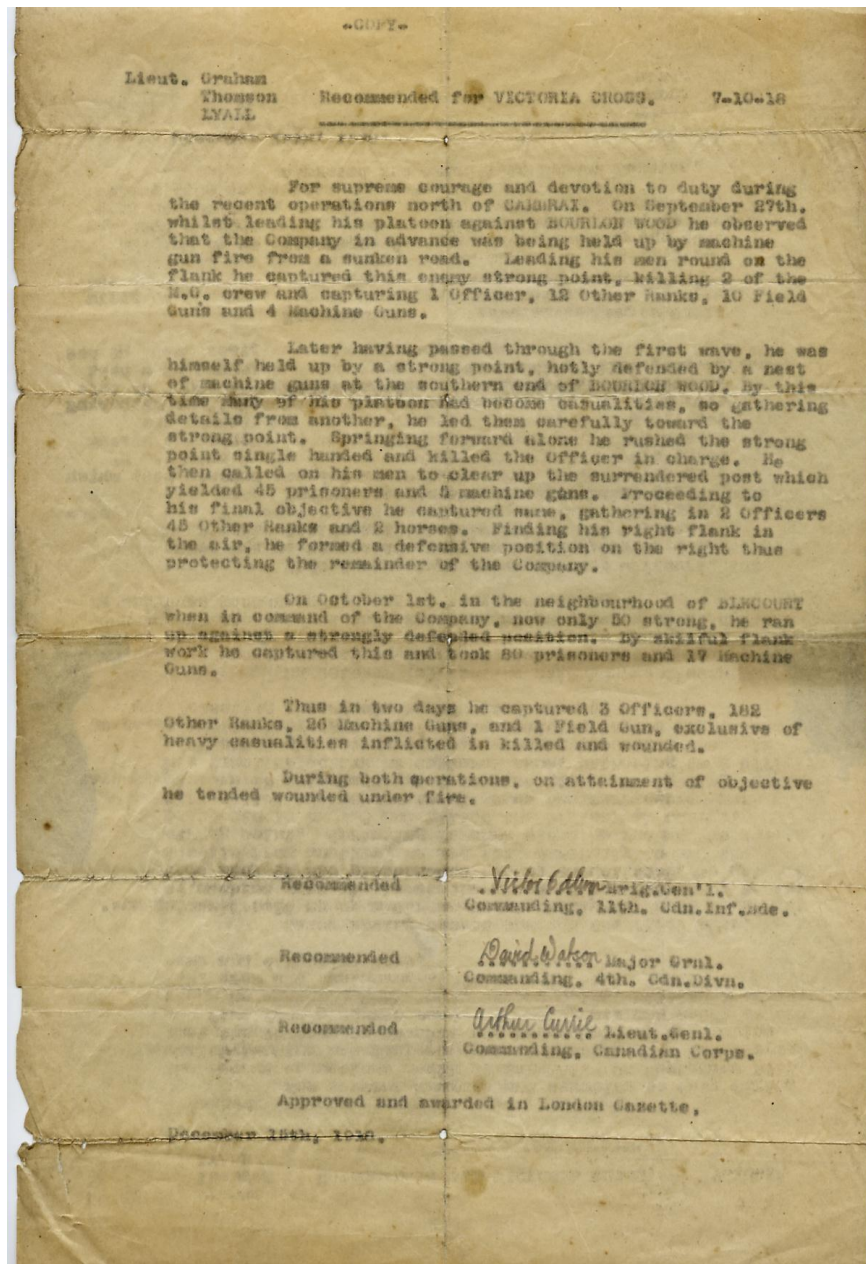
On 7 October 1918, Brigadier General Victor W Odlum recommended that Lyall be awarded the Victoria Cross. It was signed off by Major General David Watson, Commander 4th Canadian Division, and Lieutenant General Arthur Currie, Commander, the Canadian Corps. The wording of the recommendation formed the basis of the final citation for the award.¹⁵⁶

The Canadian Press reported Lyall's intrepid conduct at Bourlon Wood and Blécourt on 28 October 1918. He was not identified by name, but rather as "a lieutenant of a British Columbia battalion". The award of the Victoria Cross to Lyall was "gazetted" in *The London Gazette* and is surprisingly similar to the newspaper correspondent's description. So much so, that the correspondent must have copied his account from official documents, in all likelihood, Odlum's recommendation.

Two days before the announcement of the award in *The London Gazette*, General Odlum circulated a memorandum to all units of his Brigade, which was to be posted and read to the men:

"It is with great pleasure that I have learned of the recent award of 3 Victoria Crosses to this Brigade. An NCO of the 87th Battn, the Medical Officer of the 75th Battn, and a Company Officer of the 102nd Battalion have been decorated with the highest award for bravery which it in the power of the Empire to bestow.

I warmly congratulate the individuals concerned, the Units to which they belong, and the Brigade as a whole on the recognition which has been given the work of the individuals and of the Brigade.



Sandy Ferguson

For two reasons, this must be a copy of the original recommendation. First, the statement regarding the date of the gazetting of the award in the London Gazette would not have appeared on the original; and second, the signatures bear no resemblance to those of the individuals' signatures in various war diaries. Note the mention of 10 field guns in the first paragraph which supports Lyall's claim in his letter to the Commanding Officer of the 19th Regiment.

Others have been recommended for the Victoria Cross and some have deserved it just as much as the three who have now been decorated. In many cases, through the reticence of those concerned or of their friends, the full stories have never been told, and so official action has been made impossible. In other instances the value of gallant actions is lost in the inadequate method of reporting. And as a result there are many men who have earned decorations but who remain unknown.

This situation has always existed and always will exist. It cannot be remedied as long as there continues to be striking differences of character amongst the officers and men concerned – for it is by the front line officers and men that the deeds are done and witnessed, and it is with them the stories must originate.

Under these circumstances we can only look on those who win honours as representative of all in the Brigade who deserve them. And so we congratulate them in a double sense – on their own gallantry and valour, of which we know so much, and on the equal gallantry and valour of a host of their comrades, a part of who so well worn glory they are carrying.

In this double sense, I do congratulate them, and I have been asked by the Divisional Commander to add his congratulations to my own. The Brigade has every reason to be proud of its new VCs.¹⁵⁷

The other two VC winners mentioned in the circular were Private John Francis Young of the 87th Battalion, CEF, and Captain Bellenden Seymour Hutcheson, Medical Officer of the 75th Battalion. Both won their VCs on 2 September. Young was a stretcher bearer who had gone forward to dress the wounded in open ground swept by machine gun and rifle fire. Hutcheson also tended wounded under terrific machine gun and shell fire.

In addition, two other Canadians won the Victoria Cross at Bourslon Wood: Lieutenant Samuel Lewis Honey of the 78th Canadian Infantry Battalion, and Lieutenant George Kerr of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Battalion.¹⁵⁸

The announcement of Lyall's award was carried in *The London Gazette* on 13 December 1918:

“War Office
14 December 1918

The King has been pleased to approve the award of the Victoria Cross to the following Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men: -

Lieutenant Graham Thomson Lyall, 102nd Bn, 2nd Central Ontario R.

For most conspicuous and skilful leading during the operations north of Cambrai.

On September 27th, 1918, whilst leading his platoon against Bourslon Wood, he rendered invaluable support to the leading company, which was held up by a

For Valour: Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

strong point, which he captured by a flank movement, together with thirteen prisoners and one field gun and four machine-guns.

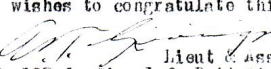
Later, his platoon, now much weakened by casualties, was held up by machine guns at the southern end of Bourlon Wood. Collecting any men available, he led them towards the strong point, and, springing forward alone rushed the position single-handed and killed the officer in charge, subsequently capturing at this point forty-five prisoners and five machine-guns. Having made good his final objective, with a further capture of forty-seven prisoners, he consolidated his position and thus protected the remainder of the company.

On October 1st, in the neighbourhood of Blécourt, when in command of a weak company, by skilful dispositions, he captured a strongly defended position, which yielded eighty prisoners and seventeen machine-guns.

During two days of operations Lieutenant Lyall captured in all three officers, 182 other ranks, twenty-six machine-guns, and one field gun, exclusive of heavy casualties inflicted. He showed throughout the utmost valour and high powers of command."¹⁵⁹

One significant difference in the official citation was the omission of Odlum's observation in his recommendation that "During both operations, on attainment of the objective, he tended wounded under fire." Commanding troops in action and at the same time tending wounded would have taxed the abilities of most men.¹⁶⁰

The award was posted in Daily Orders of the 102nd Battalion on 21 December.¹⁶¹

D A I L Y O R D E R S No. 321 Effective 21.12.18	
By. Lieut-Col. F. Lister, DSO, M.C. Commandg. 102nd. Cdn. Inf. Battalion.	
<u>1. DETAIL.</u>	Battalion Orderly Sergeant..102595 Sgt. Evanson, S. Next for Duty.....907131 Sgt. Warner, T.J. "C" Company Duty Company "D" Coy. next for Duty.
<u>2. ROUTINE.</u>	As previously Ordered.
<u>3. PARADES.</u>	09.00 to 11.30 hours. 09.00 to 09.30 hours. "A" and "B" Companies under Instr. Sgt. Major. "C" and "D" and Hqts. under own arrange- ments. 09.30 to 10.30 hours. Cleaning up. 10.30 to 11.30 hours. Company Commanders and O.C. Details Inspection - Dress - Skeleton Equipment with haversack on side, and rifles.
<u>4. PUNISHMENTS.</u>	"C" Coy. 226377 Pte. Brockwell, T. For "Absent without leave from 19.30 hours 10.12.18 until 11.00 hours 11.12.18 - Forfeits 10 days pay and 1 days pay under R.W. - 19.12.18
<u>b. HONOURS & AWARDS.</u>	Lieut. G.T. Lyall - AWARDED THE "VICTORIA CROSS" The Commanding Officer wishes to congratulate this Officer on his award.  Lieut. G.T. Lyall for O.C. 102nd. Cdn. Inf. Battalion.
Issued 20.12.19	

Sandy Ferguson

102nd Battalion Daily Order No 321, 21 December 1918

For Valour: Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

Appendix A Honours & Records.

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
(When dealing not required.)

Army Form C.2118.

Instructions regarding War Diary and Intelligence Summary are contained in F.S. Regs. Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. This page will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Honours and references to Appendix
			<i>Victoria Cross. Lieut. G.T. Lyall.</i>	<i>Military Medal.</i> 68 Can. Div. <i>Acting</i> A. 62. 3444. 9/12/18
			<i>Bar to M.C. Lieut. R.D. Lyall.</i>	225350. <i>Pls. Gilbert, L.A.</i>
			<i>Military Cross. Lieut. W.M. Stanley.</i>	219791. " <i>Carmody, E.M.</i>
			<i>Lieut. J.M. Ogilvie.</i>	225348. " <i>Olsen, Pella, W.A.</i>
			<i>L.C.M. 1003044. Sgt. McIntyre, E.R.</i>	1003740. " <i>Kennedy, D.</i>
			<i>225291. Pls. Van Zile, F.D.</i>	225268. " <i>Gimot, F.</i>
				135977. <i>Sgt. Best, S.</i>
				850578. <i>Sgt. Gardiner, H.</i>
				705648. <i>Pls. Clouse, W.</i>
				225739. <i>Sgt. Radcliffe, H.M.</i>
				705899. <i>Pls. Wolverson, S.G.</i>
				225424. " <i>Hamburg, A.</i>
				102714. <i>Cpl. Watts, A.</i>
				7058909. <i>Pls. Barlow, J.W.</i>
				225064. " <i>Simmons, C.</i>
				340723. " <i>Oldham, W.H.</i>

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War Diary, 102nd Battalion, December 1918

This Appendix to the December War Diary lists the Honours and Awards announced in Orders for that month.

The Canadian Reaction

Four days after the "gazetting", *The Niagara Falls Review* carried a simple announcement without details. Within days, Welland, St Catharines, and Niagara Falls were all claiming Lyall as a "home-town boy". The rivalry was emphatically stated in *The Welland Tribune*:

"St Catharines newspapers are making stupendous efforts to appropriate Lieut Graham Thomson Lyall, VC, declaring him to be the first St Catharines man to win the coveted Victoria Cross.

Lt. Lyall was in St Catharines only during a short period of training, having gone from Welland to that city to enlist. During his residence here he was confirmed in Holy Trinity Church by the Rev. Mr Thompson, the present pastor, and for a number of years was engaged in the Canadian Steel Foundries here.

St. Kitts has made a proud record in the Great War to be sure; but Welland also can take pride in her achievements; and moreover can claim Lieut. Lyall as her own representative on Canada's Honour roll of fifty-five Victoria Cross winners. St Catharines simply can't have him, try her darndest."¹⁶²

Lyall received a telegram from St Catharines a few days after the news of the award was made public in Canada.

"The following CABLEGRAM received at 1:30 PM "Via Commercial Cable"

From St Catharines, Ontario. No of Words 35

To: Lieut Graham Lyall, 102 Battn, France. Army Post Office, London.

City Council, Board of Trade and Great War Veterans Association join together in extending to you their heartfelt congratulations.

L Cunningham, Secy Great War Veterans”¹⁶³

The Canadian Press report in October had called Lyall a “lieutenant of a British Columbia battalion”, but Lyall wrote to the Commanding Officer of the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment, disputing that description:

“I am not a B. C. Lieut., but from St Catharines. I came over with the 81st Battalion as a private, after having been on the frontier with the 19th Regiment...in fact I was the first ranker from the 81st Battalion to receive a commission in the field.”¹⁶⁴

Lyall also disputed the press report where it claimed he had captured “one field gun”. In his letter, Lyall claimed “but instead of one gun it should have read ten guns”. In fact, Lyall’s claim appears to be correct, for the recommendation signed by the Brigade Commander, the Divisional Commander and the Corps Commander states he had captured “10 Field Guns and 4 Machine Guns” although in a subsequent paragraph, the recommendation reads “1 Field Gun.”¹⁶⁵

Lyall’s letter, together with one from his Commanding Officer advised that a captured 77mm German field gun was to be sent to St Catharines. Lyall stated that it was one of the ten he had captured at Bourlon Wood. Lyall wrote:

“I have great pleasure in sending this gun to my initial regiment, where I first learnt the rudiments of soldiering, under Major G. Bradley, and the regiment for whom I always have a large space in my heart, and for which I hold great esteem.”¹⁶⁶

But his Commanding Officer stated that the gun which was being sent was “actually captured on the 6th November 1918”, and was “one of the spoils taken by this Battalion during its recent advance east of the city of Valenciennes”, and gave its serial number as 5190. While a number of guns captured by the Battalion were sent to Canada, that gun, however, never left Europe and was melted down.¹⁶⁷

A confusing Canadian Press report, dated 17 December 1918, supposedly quoted *The London Gazette*, has the dates and some of the details different than that in the official gazetting:

“On July 20th last, while leading a platoon against Bourlon Wood he rendered invaluable support...On August 1st, in the neighbourhood of Belecourt...”¹⁶⁸

These dates are obviously incorrect as the assault against Bourlon Wood did not begin until 27 September. But the CP dispatch is in quotes, and reads as if it was copied directly

For Valour: Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

from the London Gazette. In addition, the total number of prisoners is given as 192, but this can be attributed to a typographical error.



Written
on the
reverse

Sandy Ferguson

This photograph was taken in early October and sent to Elsie. When the announcement of the award of Lyall's VC was made, she must have made it available to the Press for it appears in the early Canadian newspapers carrying accounts of the award.

Demobilization, Investiture and Marriage

Although an armistice had been signed, the war was not over and it would be months before the Canadian Corps returned to Canada. At first, it was planned that all four divisions of the Canadian Corps would march into Germany as part of the occupying army, but in the event only the 1st and 2nd Divisions took part in the move. The 3rd and 4th Divisions remained in Belgium attached to the British IV Corps. In the meantime, debate took place over the method by which the Canadians would be returned home; some advocated the “first over, first back” approach, while General Currie articulated the logic for returning formed units. While the debate continued, the soldiers of the 4th Division were fed a diet of long route marches about the Belgium countryside.¹⁶⁹

In December 1918, Lyall was commanding C Company, 102nd Battalion, CEF, in Belgium. In that capacity he wrote a letter of condolence to a Miss Lightwood who had enquired about the death of Lance Corporal Thomas Shapton of Niagara Falls. He also wrote early that month from Mons, Belgium, to the Commanding Officer of the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment and stated that he had arranged for the shipment of a German 77mm gun, one of the ten that he had captured, to St Catharines.¹⁷⁰



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An unknown Major of the 102nd Battalion and Lyall in Belgium sometime after the Armistice.

On 21 January 1919, *The People's Press* carried “the first picture of Lieut Graham Thomson Lyall, the Wellander who was recently awarded the Victoria Cross”.

Welland's claim to Lyall seems to be supported by a letter, which Lyall wrote to the Editor of *The Welland Tribune* in March 1919, where he stated:

“Of course, Welland being the county town, they have a more justifiable claim to me than St Catharines...I had some of the closest friends in Welland, who seemed only too pleased to do anything for me and I always look back with infinite pleasure upon the very happy days I spent in Welland.”¹⁷¹

A decision was made in January 1919 to return the Canadian Corps to Canada via England, and in that month it began its move out of France. Lyall, like his cohorts, was required to complete fourteen documents involving 363 questions and eight signatures. One result of this demobilizing process was a liberal leave policy due to a “desire on the part of the soldiers – a large percentage of whom being British born – to see their relative before returning [to Canada]”. Lyall was one British born who took advantage of the policy. He was granted 14 days leave to the UK on 24 December 1918 that was extended to 31 January 1919. Undoubtedly he went to visit his father and sister in Darwen, and Elizabeth Frew in Airdrie.¹⁷²

In February, while still in the United Kingdom, Lyall was admitted to hospital suffering from “Catarrh” and “Bronchitis”, and was declared “Invalided Sick”. He was again admitted to a military hospital in Liverpool in mid-March. It was reported in Niagara that Lyall was in Petrograd Hotel Hospital in London, under treatment for trench mouth, but that he was expected to return to St Catharines around 1 May 1919, and that on his return he would be the guest of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs John S. Campbell. Campbell, a judge, was a former Commanding Officer of the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment.¹⁷³

King George V decorated Lyall at an investiture at Buckingham Palace on 15 March 1919, even though Lyall was still carried on the roll as a patient in Petrograd Hospital.¹⁷⁴

A photograph after the ceremony, taken outside Buckingham Palace, shows a group of seven people, identified as “English relatives”. Other than Lyall, only four are easily identified: Lyall's father, the Reverend Robert Henry Lyall, Elizabeth Moffat Frew his fiancée, Dorothy Lyall his sister, and Alexander Frew, his future father-in-law.¹⁷⁵

The Canadian Daily Record, a Canadian military overseas publication, carried a front-page photograph of Lyall on 10 April 1919. It, too, had been taken outside Buckingham Palace, and the headline read, “VC Who Captured 185 Hun”.¹⁷⁶



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Lieutenant Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

**Outside Buckingham Palace, 15 March 1919.
Lyall wears only the ribbon of the Victoria Cross as the War Medal and Victory
Medal had yet to be approved.**



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The family group outside of Buckingham Palace, 15 March 1919

Left to right,

Front:- Elsie Frew, Graham Lyall

Back:- Robert Henry Lyall, Dorothy Lyall, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Alexander Frew. Lyall's mother had died by this time.

In late March *The Welland Tribune* carried a letter from Lyall to the newspaper which stated:

"I might tell you that I intend to marry a Scotch lady to whom I have been engaged about twenty months about Easter, after which I will spend my honeymoon in the beautiful Niagara Peninsula, when I shall be able to once more to renew my acquaintances with my Welland friends, to whom I ask you to convey my very best respects. Here's wishing you all the very best in 'double' 19."¹⁷⁷

It was during this period that Howard Somerville painted the official portrait of Lyall. It is now in the possession of the Canadian War Museum.¹⁷⁸



Canadian War Museum

Lieutenant Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

Howard Somerville painted this official portrait of Lyall in London in 1919. It is now part of the Beaverbrook Collection of War Art in the Canadian War Museum.

His medical officer noted “severe ulcers, stomatitis, marked gingivitis and extreme degree of pyorrhoea...” The medical report indicated that he had contracted the disease during the Arras campaign, but had not had it treated. He sat a Medical Board on 12 April and was deemed to be a Category A discharge, fit for General Service.

On 24 April 1919, just over a month after his investiture, and twelve days after his release from hospital, Lyall and Elizabeth (Elsie) Moffat Scotland Frew married at the High United Free Church (Church of Scotland) in Airdrie. She was the daughter of Alexander Frew, JP, the Provost of Airdrie, and Elizabeth Moffat Scotland. She went by the name Elsie and had that name recorded on her marriage certificate, rather than Elizabeth.¹⁷⁹

The Welland Tribune carried an account of the marriage in May. The bridesmaids were Elizabeth’s sisters, Isobel, Mary and Margaret, and Lyall’s sister, Dorothy. As would be expected, the grooms were military: Lieutenant George H. Ellis of the Canadian Siege Artillery and Lieutenant G. Bruce Scotland of the Royal Engineers. Ellis was American-born, who had originally enlisted in 1915 in the 54th Battalion, CEF, and later transferred to the 102nd Battalion. Scotland was a cousin of the bride.

The officiating clergymen were: the Reverend George David Frew (Doctor David Frew), an uncle of the bride and a future moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; John Cook, the minister of the church; and Robert Henry Lyall.

The wedding reception was held in the Town Hall of Airdrie where the staff of Alexander Frew and Company gave them solid silver hairbrushes. The town of Darwen presented a French clock and a pair of matching vases, but these gifts were a commemoration of Lyall’s Victoria Cross.¹⁸⁰



Sandy Ferguson

Marriage

**The Bridal group, 24 April
1919.**

Leaving Church

The Bride and Groom leave the High Church after their marriage. This photograph appeared in the Welland Tribune with an account of their wedding.



Sandy Ferguson



Sandy Ferguson

On Honeymoon

There is no record of where the couple spent their Honeymoon.

Darwen's Gift

The Town of Darwen presented Lyall with this clock and matching vases in recognition of his being awarded the Victoria Cross



Sandy Ferguson

The marriage brought a dramatic change to Lyall's life. For reasons, which are not known, Lyall's father had become estranged from both his close relatives and those of his deceased wife. For all intents, the family had become a unit of three: father, son and daughter. The Frews on the other hand were numerous. Elsie Frew was the eldest of four daughters, and had numerous first cousins, many of whom lived within a ten mile radius of her home in Airdrie.

The 102nd Battalion began moving to England on 29 April 1919, and an advance party of two officers and 25 other ranks left in order to take part in the Victory Parade held in London on 3 May. It is safe to assume that Lyall and Elsie were spectators to the parade. The main body of the Battalion arrived on the 4th, and after being processed by the Demobilization Centre, most of the men were given leave. Many spent a few precious days with their relatives in Britain. Again, it is safe to assume that Lyall paid a visit to the Battalion as it prepared to return to Canada.

Lyall never transferred back to the 102nd Battalion after his discharge from hospital. In all likelihood he had informed the appropriate authorities that he intended to settle in Scotland, for he was Taken on Strength of the 2nd Central Ontario Reserve Depot at Whitley and held on its strength until 5 August 1919 when he was released from the Canadian Army and "retired in the British Isles."¹⁸¹

Lyall's medal card held by the British National Archives noted that the British War Medal and Victory Medal would "be issued by Canada". The last date on the card is 13 March 1922 which must have been the date of entry noting Lyall held the rank of Captain in the Royal Engineers.¹⁸²

Of note is the fact that of the men of the 81st Battalion who embarked with Lyall on the *Olympic* in 1916, 49 earned gallantry awards during the war: 7 Military Crosses, 2 Distinguished Conduct Medals, 1 Meritorious Service Medal, 35 Military Medals, 2 Mentioned in Dispatches, and 2 French Croix de Guerres.

On his release from the Canadian Army, Lyall gave his UK address as Turncroft, Darwen. This was his father's residence at the time, for Robert and Dorothy Lyall were living at 8 Turncroft Lane, Darwen.¹⁸³

In the meantime the 102nd Battalion embarked on the "*Mauretania*" in Liverpool on 31 May and arrived in Halifax at 1030 hrs on 6 June. An hour after the disembarkment was completed it entrained and arrived in Toronto on the 8th where a large part of the unit was demobilized. The Westerners, 125 in number were sent to Niagara Falls for an excursion before leaving by train for Vancouver. A tremendous crowd met the remnants of the Battalion at the Vancouver rail terminal, and the following day a few men who lived on Vancouver Island left for Victoria. The Battalion's service had come to an end. Its colours were laid up in Christ Church, Vancouver, at a ceremony on 22 September 1919.¹⁸⁴

Scotland

Elsie's father, Alexander Frew, was a "very big frog in a rather small pool". He was a very successful businessman. Beginning as a building contractor, he had diversified into brick making, and then into coal mining. His first brickworks were located in Drumbathie, a small village west of Airdrie. He had held the position of Provost of Airdrie (the Scottish equivalent of mayor) for nine years, and was involved in all the major activities in the town. "If he wasn't on a committee – it didn't count".¹⁸⁵

Alexander Frew had no male heir, so it was natural that he would regard his new son-in-law as the obvious successor to his business interests. Accordingly, Lyall and his wife took up residence at Forrest Park, in Airdrie. This was a modest two-storey house situated next door to Meadowside, the Frew home, which was an impressive house set in a large garden surrounded by four acres of fields.



Alexander Frew's Family

Alexander Frew and Elizabeth Scotland with their daughters Elsie, Isobel, Mary and Margaret on holiday in 1915



Meadowside

The Frew family home in Airdrie, Scotland.

Sandy Ferguson

Forrest Park

The Lyall home was just across the lane from Meadowside. Lyall is shown here on the front step.



Sandy Ferguson

Airdrie had started out as a typical market town and then had developed into a textile manufacturing centre. It was a relatively busy crossroad community, as the main road from Edinburgh to Glasgow was intersected by the road running from Carlisle to Stirling in the Highlands.

Lyall became the manager of Drumbathie Brickworks (Alexander Frew & Company) which was one of the enterprises owned by his father-in-law. The works were just a short walk from his new home. He listed his business qualifications as “Brick Manufacturer, Mechanical and Electrical Engineer in 1920.”¹⁸⁶



Sandy Ferguson

Uncle and Nephew

Four-year old Sandy Ferguson with his Uncle Graham in 1932

The Frew family had a summerhouse, Craig en Rhua, in Millport on the Island of Great Cumbrae, in the Firth of Clyde, just opposite Largs, a popular seaside town in Ayrshire, on the west coast of Scotland. Millport was a lovely small resort village. It had a large sandy beach, and family groups would spend the day building sand castles and swimming. Visiting concert parties would perform in the local hall. During the summer months Lyall would commute daily during the week from Glasgow, and spend the weekends on the island. One of his favourite past-times, and probably the major physical exercise he was capable of doing as a consequence of his war injuries, was a long three mile walk around the island. He indulged in this exercise so often it was notable to a family member some 62 years after Lyall's death.¹⁸⁷

“It was a good time but very claustrophobic. He worked for his father in law, lived next door to him, and certainly attended the same social gatherings. He was surrounded by in-laws...”¹⁸⁸

There is no doubt that Graham and Elsie's greatest disappointment was that they had no children.

The 1920 Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

To honour the surviving recipients of the Victoria Cross of all conflicts, King George V decided to hold a garden party at Buckingham Palace in June 1920. It was to be an informal setting for recipients to bring some of their close relatives.

The date chosen for the gathering was 26 June, the same date chosen by Queen Victoria for the first investiture and the planners had little time. The invitations went out on 7 June:

“The King giving afternoon party to all recipients Victoria Cross accompanied by two relations on 26th. Wire immediately if will attend and names and relationships of those coming. Travelling warrants will be provided.”¹⁸⁹

Lyall accepted the invitation, but there is no surviving record of the two relatives who accompanied him, but undoubtedly Elsie was one of them. The other may have been his father.

In all probability the Lyalls travelled to London on an overnight train from Scotland and arrived on the morning of the 26th. The official day began at 1230 hrs with a lunch served in a large marquee in the barracks square at Wellington Barracks.

At about 1430 hrs the VC recipients were assembled by service and regiments into nine groups and about a half hour later set off down Birdcage Walk for the Palace. Lyall marched as Number 36 in Group Number 9. The 42 men in this group came from a variety of units and services: a few British Infantry regiments, the Royal Army Medical Corps, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Army Chaplains Department, the Indian Army, the Royal Army Service Corps, the Australian Army, and the Canadian Army. Only one other Canadian, Captain George Burdon McKean, VC, MC, MM, was on parade, and he marched as Number 37 in this group. The haste in which the event was organized prevented recipients living overseas from attending.¹⁹⁰

The procession was headed by the Band of the Welsh Guards and a naval contingent, with a number of motor cars in the rear carrying those who, through age, infirmity, or injury, were unable to march. One VC recipient noted:

“Thousands of people were cheering us; but I could not help noticing g that some people were crying. We were happy and laughing, and I suspect they were reminded of bereavements. One lady gave me a bouquet of flowers, “Good old Devon”, she said, “I come from Crediton.”¹⁹¹

The Evening Standard reported:

“Suddenly the sound of the band became clearer. When the heads of the marchers appeared handkerchiefs flickered among the crowd. The cheering became a great roar. Men waved their hats and women blew kisses. On they came. They marched so proudly and so splendidly that the crowd fairly rose at them.”¹⁹²

As the parade made its way to the Palace, the relatives and guests took a different route to the Palace and after passing through the Grand Hall, the Marble Hall and the Bow Room, they assembled on the lawn of the West Terrace.

When the parade arrived on the West Terrace, it re-organized into seven groups based on the date of *The London Gazette* notification of the award, and not the date of the deed. Within the group, the men were again arranged by date of the notification of their award which would be the order of their introduction to the King and Queen. The groupings were:

- A The Indian Mutiny, 1857 to April 1899 (36 recipients)
- B 1900 – 1905 (39 recipients)
- C 1914 – 1915 (56 recipients)
- D 1916 (37 recipients)
- E 1917 (56 recipients)
- F January – November 1918 (52 recipients)
- G December 1918 – January 1919 (34 recipients)

The King then inspected the parade at the conclusion of which he joined Queen Mary at the foot of the steps descending from the Palace. There was a heavy shower of rain just before the presentations but the King and Queen refused to take cover which historians mark as noteworthy. When the presentations took place, the Royal couple greeted each of the 320 VC holders individually. At the head of those presented to the King and Queen was General Sir Dighton Probyn, who had won his Victoria Cross 62 years previously during the Battle of Agra.¹⁹³

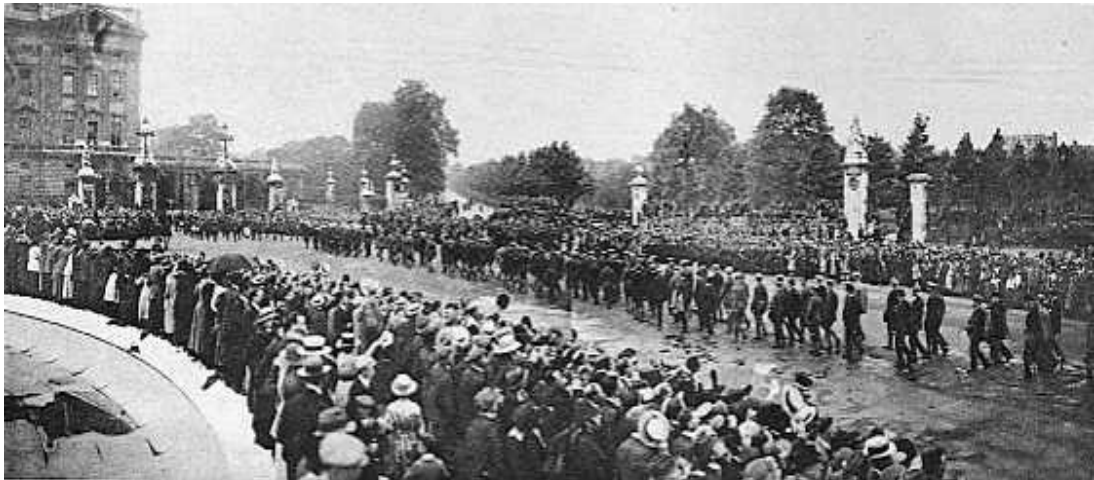
Lyall was third in line of the last group, the 279th man to be presented to the Royal couple.¹⁹⁴

After the presentations the recipients joined their guests and the garden party began. *The Times* reported:

“After the presentations had all been made, refreshments were served, and many of the guests formed small parties on the lawn. Later, the members of the Royal Party moved about among them, with a lack of formality which surprised some of the visitors, and some of the younger VCs were busily engaged collecting autographs of their seniors, to be kept in memory of a wonderful afternoon.”¹⁹⁵

For those who wished to attend, there was a special production of *Johnny Jones, a Robey Salad* at the Alhambra Theatre.

The King noted: “Such a gathering of brave men was never before seen in England.”¹⁹⁶



The
Royal Collection

The 1920 Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

The VCs were grouped by Service and Regiment with the Royal Navy recipients leading. The one mile march from Wellington Barracks to the Palace took 30 minutes and not one man fell out.

While 10 men marched to the Palace, their guests assembled in the garden of the Palace.



The Royal Collection

The 1920 Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

The King and Queen greet Private John. Doogan, VC, [1881, Laing's Neck, South Africa] at the foot of the steps of the West Terrace. Other members of the Royal Family and senior members of the military and government (including the Secretary of State for War, Winston Churchill) stood on the terrace.

Scotland Again

Lyall was commissioned a Captain in the British Territorial Army on 16 July 1920 and posted to the 1st Lowland Field Company of the 52nd Lowland Division Engineers (T) at Coatdyke, a small village between Coatbridge and Airdrie.

It's interesting to note that although his army records give his commissioning as a Captain on 16 July 1920, the invitation to the garden party give that as his rank on 7 June 1920.

With his wife dead, Lyall's father, Robert, transferred to the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway in November 1920 where he was given the responsibility of St. Andrew's Church, Gartcosh, about 3 to 5 miles north-west of Coatbridge and Airdrie. A large number of English steelworkers had moved to the steel works in the village near the end of the 19th Century leading to an Anglican church being built in 1897. In 1910 supervision of this mission was taken over by the Rector in the neighbouring town of Bailleston, but it became independent with the appointment of Robert Lyall. In addition to returning to his birthplace, he probably wished to live nearer his son. Years later, it was recalled that his pride in the military accomplishments of Graham Lyall were evident in that he always referred to his son as "The Captain".¹⁹⁷

Dorothy Lyall followed her father to Scotland and bought a new bungalow in Fairlie, a small town on the sea coast south of Glasgow.

Elsie, Lyall and Alexander Frew travelled to France in 1922 and undoubtedly visited Bourslon Wood, as there are family photographs taken at the Australian war memorial at Mont St Quentin, about 30 miles south of Bourslon Wood.¹⁹⁸

It must have been a surprise to many when, on 30 August 1922, Robert Lyall married Jessie Macdonald in Darwen – she being 27 and he 60. On September 1923, Jessie gave birth to a son who was christened Donald Bourslon Lyall. The boy's older brother was then 31 years old.

Lyall took a keen interest in the local ex-Servicemen's clubs and branches of the British Legion, and in June 1923, while serving as President of the local Legion, he and three other VC recipients were present when the Airdrie War Memorial was unveiled.¹⁹⁹

Alexander Frew travelled to Canada in the summer of 1927 on a pit prop buying trip. He took along his daughter Mary as a reward for her graduating in medicine. They visited Niagara Falls and stayed at the Clifton Hotel, just a few hundred yards from the Canadian Niagara Power powerhouse where Lyall had worked in 1914.

They were entertained at lunch in St Catharines by John P. Porter, a general contractor doing work on the extension of the Welland Canal, at Porter's "country mansion", and it is safe to assume he visited Lake Street Armoury and met a number of officers of the

newly reorganized Lincoln Regiment. The Armoury was just a short walk from Porter's home.

Disaster struck on 19 August, when Frew died in Montreal from cancer. Mary would have been 27 years old, but it must have been a terrible emotional experience being so far from home, family, and friends.²⁰⁰

On Frew's death, his business ventures collapsed. He had had a "lot of balls in the air and he was a good juggler" but he had not fully groomed Lyall to succeed him. Liquidation was the result and Lyall was unemployed. With no buyers for Meadowside, Isobel and Mary with their husbands moved into the large house, dividing it between the two families – no physical divisions were made, so that the family living in the top half had to walk through the hall of the family living on the main floor. Frew's widow, Elizabeth, moved to Forrest Park with the Lyalls.²⁰¹

Elsie's sister, Isobel, whom everyone called "Cissie", had married Ian R. Ferguson, and their only child, Alexander Frew Dair Ferguson, whom everyone calls "Sandy", was born on 4 August 1928. Since Meadowside was just a few yards away, through the garden gate, in time Sandy became a surrogate son to Lyall. Over the next ten years the boy would be with Lyall on summer holiday, at army summer camps, at Lyall's departure for North Africa, and even a visit to Buckingham Palace.²⁰²

Lyall had to turn his hand to a number of jobs to keep going, and his service record describes a number of them: consultant engineer, consultant designer (concrete), civil engineer, agent – coal mines.²⁰³

The 1929 Victoria Cross Dinner

The Prince of Wales presided over a Victoria Cross Dinner in the Royal Gallery at the House of Lords on 9 November 1929. In a letter to Lieutenant Colonel W. J. Gander, VD, the Commanding Officer of the 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, Lyall wrote that he had attended the dinner and:

"Saturday night was a wonderful event and will be handed down to posterity as a great national occasion and ceremony, and yet there was a welcome lack of ceremonial or stiffness.

On arrival at the Houses of Parliament the crowds had to be controlled by Cavalry, Mounted Police and Foot Police plus British Legion Stewards...we next went into the Peers Gallery and were issued with a menu card...I sat on the Throne, Woolsack and all the Scottish Peers' seats.

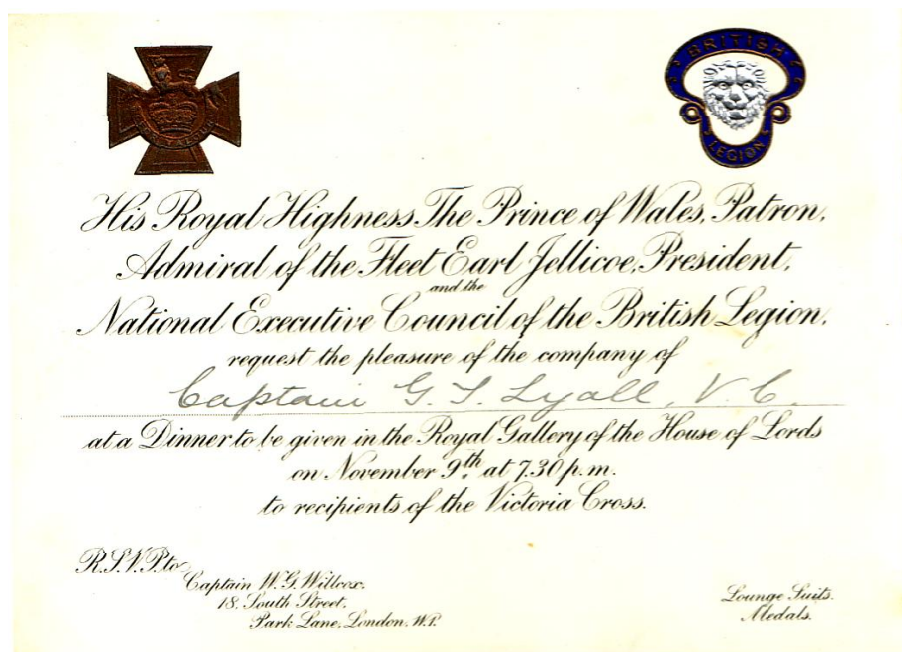
At 8 p.m. a big burly sergeant major looking individual in evening dress complete with red tunic announced that His Royal Highness was waiting to receive us, and so we moved off in single file to be announced by Robin Red Breast. I shook hands with the Prince, telling him how delighted I was and privileged to dine with him again, and he said, "Let me see, Lyall, the last time we met was 10 years ago,

wasn't it, and 11 years since we dined together at Valenciennes in Belgium. I hope you will enjoy yourself tonight"...

The dinner was brought to a close by the Prince signing a few autograph albums and I received same on the front of my menu card. Then there was a scramble for souvenirs – the table decorations...all I could get were a few poppies...On leaving the Prince presented us each with a copy of the new Legion Book...

On Monday we reported to Wellington Barracks where...and myself were photographed separately...After a bit of arranging, falling in, etc, the Guards massed bands led the procession of VC's, Life Guards, Guards regiments, Artillery, ex-servicemen and nurses in this order into Bird Cage Walk, thence to the Cenotaph...

In the evening we duly arrived at the Albert Hall for the Remembrance Festival...we had portrayed a Field of Remembrance exhibit taking the form of the late Colonel McCrae's "In Flanders Fields" followed by a shower of poppies, one for every British life lost in the war, which made one's blood run cold at the memory of the loss of our brave heroes and comrades who laid down their lives that we might live..."²⁰⁴



Sandy Ferguson

The Dinner Invitation to the 1929 VC Reunion
1929 marked the 10th anniversary of the end of the Great War.

There were 321 Victoria Cross recipients at the dinner on Saturday; their seats had been allocated by the drawing of numbers, and the Prince of Wales, as chairman of the dinner, had on his right a sergeant of the Rifle Brigade. Twelve tables were set up as wings to the head table, and Lyall was allocated seat 265. At that table there were 27

other men, ranging in rank from Rear Admiral to Private soldier, and a representative of the Central News agency.²⁰⁵

During the dinner, Lord Jellicoe, president of the British Legion, read an appeal to the public signed by a number of VC recipients to make a great effort on the 11th anniversary of the Armistice to give increased support to the Earl Haig Fund to help ex-service men who were in need. This, it was suggested, should take the form of buying Flanders' Poppies. That tradition has now spread around the world.²⁰⁶

The King sent a note to the Prince of Wales, which was read to the gathering:

“It is in truth a remarkable gathering over which you are privileged to preside, for it consists of men of all ages from different parts of the Empire, who by deeds of valour have won the most coveted honour to which my subjects can gain.”²⁰⁷

The King's message was loudly cheered, and more than once speakers were interrupted by the thumping of table tops and applause.

From the news accounts it would appear that although the dinner was formal and had serious moments, the men were in good cheer. Not waiting for the toast to the King to be completed, they jumped up, broke out in cheers, and immediately began singing the national anthem.

Twenty-eight Canadian VCs attended the dinner; five of them sat at the head table with the Prince of Wales. Lieutenant Colonel William A Bishop, VC, DSO, MC, DFC and Lieutenant Colonel George Pearkes, VC, DSO, MC, both responded to the toast proposed to “The Guests” by the Prince of Wales.²⁰⁸

Lyall's military rank in the seating arrangement was given as Captain, but no regimental affiliation was noted. In the letter to Lieutenant Colonel Gander of the 19th Regiment in Canada, written a week after the dinner, Lyall signed as a Major in the Royal Engineers.²⁰⁹

On Sunday evening, the VC recipients were treated to a Special Performance of “Journey's End”, a play in three parts by R. C. Sherriff, at the Prince of Wales' Theatre in their honour. The play was set in a dugout in the British trenches before St. Quentin in March 1918.²¹⁰

X



Sandy Ferguson

The 1929 VC Reunion Dinner

This photograph shows part of the Royal Gallery in the House of Lords where the dinner was held. The Prince of Wales stands at the far wall (beneath the “x”). Lyall is seated on the far side of the second table back, facing the camera with his head turned slightly to his right, to the right of the man standing.

Amongst the family memorabilia are the dinner menu, photographs, and the Legion book presented by the Prince of Wales.²¹¹



Probably taken at the Noveber 1929 parade

Sandy Ferguson

The photograph is titled “VCs of the Royal Engineers” and was probably taken at some point during the 1929 Reunion.

Left to right: Major Arnold J. Waters, VC, DSO, MC [1918; Ors, France]; Sapper Adam Archibald, VC [1918; Ors, France]; Major General Clifford Coffin, VC, CB, DSO; [1917; Westhoek, Belgium] Captain Graham T. Lyall, VC [1918; Bourlon Wood, France]; Wing Commander Frank H. Kirby, VC, CBE, DCM; [1900; Delagoa Bay Railway, South Africa] Colonel James M. Colvin, VC [1897; Mohmand Valley, India].

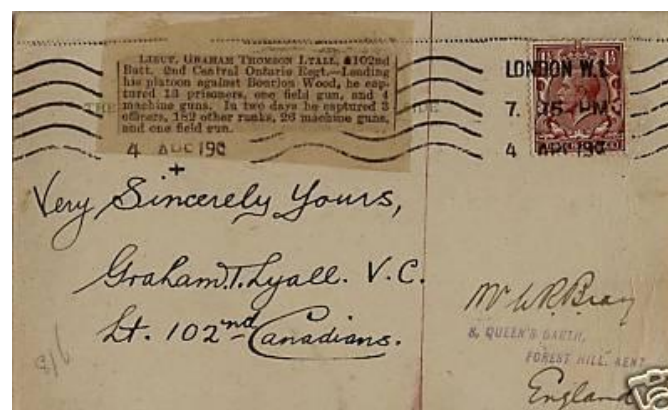
Domestic Life 1929-1939

In November 1929, Lyall wrote that he hoped “ere long to be fortunate enough to pay a visit to dear old St. Kitts, in fact I am seriously thinking of returning to Canada as things in Scotland are hopeless.” Nothing seems to have come of this idea. In fact, his family situation would argue against a visit: his father was in poor health and he effectively had become the head of the family with responsibility for his wife, mother-in-law, sister, and brother in addition to his ill father.²¹²

The family struggled on. His mother-in-law, Elizabeth Frew suffered a stroke in 1931 which confined her to a wheelchair until her death the following year. His father’s second marriage broke up about the same time. Lyall, himself, was diagnosed with angina in 1933, a year after transferring to the Territorial Army Reserve of Officers on 8 March 1932.²¹³

His fortunes changed dramatically in 1933. With the backing of an Edinburgh venture capitalist, Lyall started Aerocrete (Scotland) Limited in Airdrie. The company made an early form of breezeblocks. Air and concrete were mixed in moulds of various designs instead of solid concrete slabs. As with any new product line, there were problems, and one competitor commented, “Their products never seemed to achieve their potential”. Compared with today’s products, the aggregate was very much coarser and as a result although the results were light in weight, they were not strong enough. Lyall became Managing Director of Aerocrete, and as a professional engineer, he joined the British Institute of Engineers.²¹⁴

King George V and Queen Mary visited Airdrie on 5 May 1935 as part of their Silver Jubilee visit to Scotland, and chatted with Lyall who was in charge of 120 ex-Servicemen who had formed a guard of honour outside the town hall. “Their Majesties’ attention had been attracted by Captain Lyall’s Victoria Cross.” No record exists to indicate whether the King recalled the presentation of the VC to Lyall, but undoubtedly he did.²¹⁵



In all probability, Lyall sent this postcard in response to a request for an autograph.

The Vimy Pilgrimage, 1936

On 16 and 17 July 1936, five large ocean liners departed Montreal, carrying some 6,000 pilgrims to the unveiling of Canada's memorial on Vimy Ridge. Although the unveiling was to be the focus of the pilgrimage, the veterans, their families and guests attended ceremonies in Lille, Mons, Valenciennes, Arras, and Ypres.

Approximately 100,000 people gathered at the Vimy Memorial on 26 July, "as many persons present [that day] as there had been on April 9th, 1917." The Memorial is a magnificent standing high on ridge on ground which was deeded to the Government of Canada. It took 14 years to build using 8,000 tons of stone from Yugoslavia.²¹⁶

King Edward VIII had chosen the unveiling to make his first appearance on the international stage since the death of his father, King George. And when he unveiled the memorial he did so as King of Canada.

"In the course of the ceremony he elevated what had hitherto been regarded as a pleasing patriotic song to the status of a National Anthem. The King stood bare-headed and at attention during the rendering of 'O Canada.'"²¹⁷

Amongst the 1,365 Canadian veterans from the United Kingdom attending the ceremony were Graham and Elsie Lyall. Lyall was most likely part of the Guard of Honour commanded by Major Milton F. Gregg, VC, MC. It is unlikely, though, that Lyall took part in the other ceremonies, for he must have been extremely busy with arrangements that the British Legion was making for ceremonies in London three days later.²¹⁸



Library and Archives Canada

The King at the unveiling of the Vimy Memorial

The principal features of the ceremonies in London were: a reception by Stanley Baldwin, the British Prime Minister, in Westminster Hall; a service at the Cenotaph; and a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. The overall responsibility of the events that day fell to Colonel C. E. Heath, CVO, DSO, of the British Legion. Lyall commanded the

Canadians who were resident in Europe on their march from Westminster Hall to the Cenotaph and during the ceremonies there.²¹⁹

Captain William Waldie Murray, MC, one of the organizers of the pilgrimage, described the gathering of the veterans:

“Before 10 o’clock in the morning Whitehall had become Canadian territory. Down this storied thoroughfare from Trafalgar Square flocked thousands of Canadians, distinguished by their khaki and blue berets. Loud speakers at the intersections warned them that in London one must expect traffic from their right, and not, as at home, from the left. But although the streets were busy, no mishap occurred.”²²⁰

In a feature article the next day, *The Daily Telegraph* carried Prime Minister Baldwin’s address to the pilgrims in full and a detailed description of the march to the Cenotaph:

“The solemnity and momentous stillness of Armistice Day hung over Whitehall yesterday when, at noon, the 6,000 Vimy Ridge pilgrims from Canada held their memorial parade at the Cenotaph. With 2,000 Canadian ex-Service men now living in [Britain], the pilgrims had marched to the Cenotaph from Westminster Hall, where they had been welcomed by Mr Baldwin.

From 9 o’clock onwards, the Canadian ex-Servicemen, in khaki berets with the maple leaf on one side, and relations wearing blue berets, had streamed towards Westminster from all directions.

At the entrance to Westminster Hall, six men of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with their broad-brimmed hats, scarlet tunics, yellow-striped trousers and heavy spurred boots, made a vivid splash of colour among the blue-coated London policemen.

When the pilgrims left Westminster Hall and began forming up for the march to the Cenotaph, Whitehall, Parliament Street and Parliament Square had been closed to all traffic. Many thousands of Londoners had taken up positions to welcome their Canadian cousins and join in the Cenotaph ceremony. They were standing 10 deep on both sides of the road for some hundreds of yards.

The long procession then began, headed by the Welsh Guards band, playing “Land of Hope and Glory”. Immediately afterwards came the Colour bearers in two lines. They halted opposite the Cenotaph and took up a position facing it on both sides. Cheer after cheer from the watching Londoners greeted each successive company of Canadians as they marched into their positions around the Cenotaph. The warmest welcome of all was given when the Canadian Pipers came swinging along with skirling bagpipes.”²²¹

The service was relatively short, typical of Legion Remembrance ceremonies.

The organization of this parade must have been monumental, and its success is particularly noteworthy as there had been no rehearsal by the participants. Fifty of the

Canadian pilgrims went on to Westminster Abbey after the ceremony at the Cenotaph to place a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The Garden Party at Buckingham Palace began punctually at 1600 hrs in a complete absence of formality. The majority of the women wore overcoats over tweeds and the men were lightly dressed, many of them wearing blue jackets and white flannel trousers. Only a few men wore morning dress. Just as the King arrived, it began to rain, but by all accounts it deterred no one. The King circulated throughout, and photographs of veterans shoulder to shoulder surrounding their Sovereign attest to the feelings of that day.²²²

On the night before the Garden Party, the Lyalls were staying in a small hotel in London together with Elsie's sister, Isobel Ferguson, and Isobel's eight-year old son, Sandy. Sandy recalls:

"We all had dinner that night, and my mother kept telling my aunt and uncle how lucky they were going to the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. After all this talk, suddenly my uncle said, 'Why don't the four of us go on my invitation?' The next day at 3.30 in the afternoon the four of us turned up dressed very smartly. As we approached the footman checking the invitations, Uncle Graham pushed me in first, followed by my mother. He came next and handed over the invitation. The footman then said to Aunt Elsie, 'Excuse me Madam, where is your invitation?' Aunt Elsie just said, 'My husband's given it to you.' And we were in.

My memory of it is somewhat hazy. I do not remember it raining, but to youngsters it never seemed to rain. The flowers were lovely and when no one was looking, I took one and pressed it as a souvenir. What I do remember are the two young princesses, Elizabeth and Margaret, appearing at one of the upstairs windows and being cheered by all the guests, and my feelings 'they are too young to join the Garden Party'.

We left the Palace by the front entrance, and when we were walking across the forecourt, my Uncle suddenly said, 'Quick, look!' We looked round and there was the King who had changed out of his morning dress and now was in a lounge suit, running down the steps at the side entrance to the palace and into a waiting Rolls Royce. As it drove past us we could see sitting in the back – Mrs. Simpson."²²³

The pilgrimage moved on to Scotland where a ceremony was held at Dryburgh Abbey at the Tomb of Field Marshall Douglas Haig. It then proceeded back to France where ceremonies were held in Paris and Dieppe, but there is no surviving record of Lyall participating in the events in Scotland or the ceremonies in France.

Lyall's father, died on 19 August 1938, and was interred in Largs Cemetery, Ayrshire, Scotland. On retirement his father had moved to Dorothy Lyall's bungalow in Fairlie with his son, Donald. Graham Lyall then took on the responsibility of looking after his younger brother, Donald, who, after all, was young enough to have passed as a son.²²⁴

Lyall may have returned to Canada sometime in the 1930s, for the 1939 issue of *Who's Who* noted that he had attended the University of Toronto. None of the issues from 1920 to 1938 make mention of that fact. As information for the entries was supplied by the individual concerned, it is safe to assume that he was at the University sometime in 1937 or 1938 although the University has no record of his attendance there.²²⁵

World War II

When war seemed inevitable, Lyall transferred from the Reserve of Officers to raise and take command the 3rd Anti-Air Craft Divisional Ordnance Company, Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC), a Territorial unit. With his record of health problems it is almost unbelievable that he was accepted for Active Service. He was promoted Major on 26 April 1939, the same day of his transfer, and his officer classification was given as "O. M. E 2nd Class", that is, Ordnance Mechanical Engineer, with a 2nd Class proficiency. The Company became one of the most efficient in the Scottish Command, and one of his men wrote, "his work here in getting our Company fit for war was a masterpiece and the work of a genius".²²⁶

The RAOC Gazette carried a report in October on the progress of the raising and training of the Company:

"Since April we have, with whirlwind rapidity, touched on every aspect of Army procedure open to a Territorial Unit, including normal peace-time training, Annual Camp and War service.

Before proceeding to our period of embodiment, the Company received intensive training in elementary drill, and many of the members spent six evenings a week at the Drill Hall at Headquarters, the initial drilling having taken place on a car park behind one of the local picture-houses, which, at the outset, served as the recruiting office for the Unit.

We received a real baptism into life under canvas on 2nd July when, beginning our period of embodiment, we entered on a fortnight of solid – and I mean solid – rainfall. The boys all revelled in it, however, and took up their training at the Ordnance Depot with a spirit that enabled them to benefit to the full from the instruction they received from the staff at the Depot."²²⁷

The Company then went to camp at Leuchars Road, St Andrews, Scotland, where Lyall was Camp Commandant. The Division hosted a Sports and Gala Day where Lord Lamington, President of the Lanarkshire Territorial Association was the principal guest. The day started with a luncheon hosted by the Officers, with similar affairs in the Sergeants' and Men's Messes, and a band concert. The sports day began in mid-afternoon, and included the normal competitions: 100 yard runs, long jumps, high jump, races by the officers, NCOs, and bandsmen, football, tugs-of-war, and special competitions for visitors, mothers, wives and sweethearts. Elsie Lyall presented the trophies.²²⁸

Sandy Ferguson, then 10 years old, recalls:

“I remember being appointed ‘Camp Mascot’ with a tent to myself and not just one, but two batmen – one I remembered was called Llewellyn. They brought me tea in the morning and hot shaving water – as I was 10 at the time this was not terribly useful, but at least I had hot water to wash with. My most vivid memory was that the soldiers going into to the town were forbidden to wear uniform because the public were so antiwar, they didn’t want any trouble.”²²⁹



Sandy Ferguson

Sandy Ferguson

**Camp mascot with his two
“batmen”.**



Sandy Ferguson

Camp at St Andrews, July/August 1939



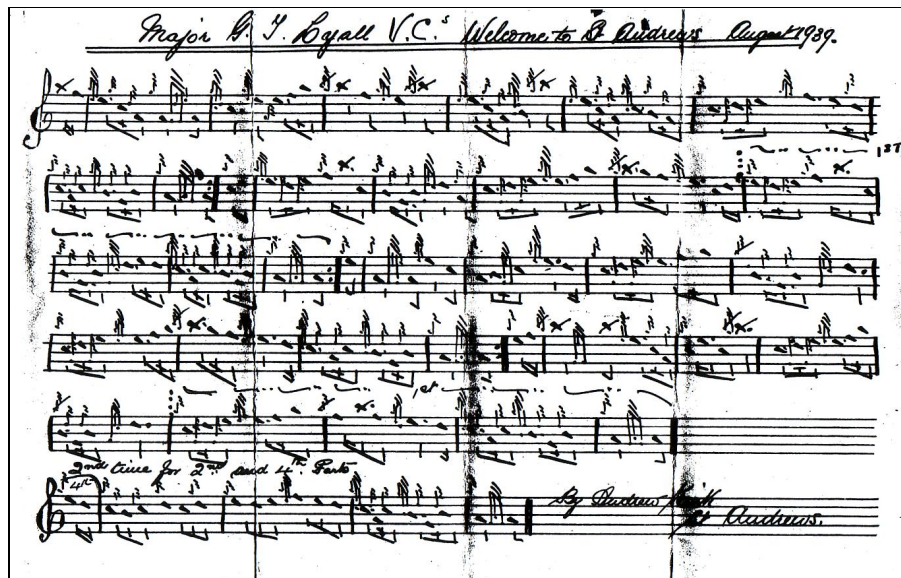
Sandy Ferguson

Major Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

This photograph was taken shortly after he was promoted Major in April 1939 and appointed Officer Commanding of the 3rd Anti-Aircraft Divisional Ordnance Company. He wears the rank badges of Major, and cap and collar badges of the RAOC.

Pipe Major Andrew Kirk of the 3rd AA Divisional RAOC (TA) Pipe Band composed a special musical welcome for Sir John and Lady Gilmore. He titled the tune “Major G. T. Lyall, VC. Welcome to St Andrews”. In December, Kirk wrote Lyall and stated that he had:

“much pleasure in sending you a copy of your tune as promised, and which I am very proud to have your consent to the title of the tune. I am quite sure you will like it, and if you get your Drum Major to prepare a drum score for it, I may say it will make a good marching tune.”²³⁰



Sandy Ferguson

Pipe Major Andrew Kirk's march, "Major G. T. Lyall's Welcome to St Andrew's"

The Company was inspected by senior officers and received high marks. *The RAOC Gazette* attributed much of credit for this to "the ceaseless and untiring efforts of Major G. T. Lyall".²³¹

The 3rd Anti-Aircraft Divisional Ordnance Company was mobilized on 3 September 1939, ten days after the Company returned home from the St Andrew's camp. The Company went into barracks "somewhere in Lanarkshire" and in addition to its wartime duties undertook an active social programme for the men in their off-duty hours. The men attended concerts and dances organized by local churches, the Red Cross, and Unionist Societies. They formed a band, and an entertainment committee distributed darts and boards, bagatelle tables, draughts and dominoes to the barrack rooms. Elsie Lyall undertook "canvassing diligently during the past few weeks to gather together a small mountain of books" for a Company library. At a Christmas party in 1939, Lyall dressed as Santa Claus and was an "impressive and sufficiently awe-inspiring figure for the children, while the section band did its best with a few selections from its repertoire".²³²

The 3rd Anti-Aircraft Divisional Ordnance Company was mobilized on 3 September 1939.

The Company boasted that it was the only serving Territorial Unit to number among its ranks two recipients of the Victoria Cross -- Lyall and Staff Sergeant Walter Potter Ritchie. Ritchie had won his VC on 1 July 1916, when, as a Drummer in the 2nd Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders, he stood on the parapet of an enemy trench and, under heavy machine gun fire and grenade attacks, he repeatedly sounded "Charge", thereby

rallying many men of various units who, having lost their leaders were wavering and beginning to retire. Later in the day he carried messages over fire-swept ground.²³³

On 14 February the Company participated in a “grand concert” held in the Town Hall at Coatbridge at which Sir Harry Lauder, who lived in Hamilton, about 6 to 10 miles away, was the star artist. Lauder was one of the few Scottish comedians to become a household name throughout the English speaking world. In the First World War he had devoted his whole time to entertaining the troops and although his only son was killed in action, he kept on with his work. In recognition of his war effort he was knighted in 1919 – a unique honour for a music hall performer. Retired and 69 years old, he answered the bugle call in 1939. Sandy Ferguson recalls the concert:

“I went to this concert. Harry Lauder’s act consisted of telling a few funny stories (I can still recall two of them) finishing with a selection of his best known songs: “When the war is over...”; “It’s nice to get up in the morning”. The concert finished with the whole hall singing “Keep right on...” In a way the war seemed unreal and miles away. My uncle at the end gave a vote of thanks to all the artists.”²³⁴



**Sir Harry Lauder and other members of the cast who gave a concert in aid of welfare funds for the RAOC.
Graham is at the back with the Provost of Coatbridge**

Sandy Ferguson

Lyall was promoted Lieutenant Colonel on 10 May 1940 and posted to an Army Ordnance Workshop depot at Hilsea, a few miles north of Portsmouth, England. His professional qualifications at that time were listed as Ordnance Mechanical Engineer 1st

Class, and a month later the *RAOC Gazette* reported on his departure from the 3rd AA Divisional Company:

“When news was received that our C. O. was to leave to take up new duties, one and all were stunned to the point of unbelief. To say that Major (now Lieut.-Colonel) G. T. L[yall], VC, looked after our welfare and interests with father-like devotion is painting the picture with far too few colours.

With memories of his kindness, and of the help given us, a very quiet yet appreciative company gathered in No. 2 Barrack Room to have a farewell supper. The C.O. made a very touching speech which was replied to by Captain D. B. F[orrest]. Captain M. A. G. B[arry]’s sentiments were endorsed by all...Following this was the send-off and, I may add, very few of us said goodbye with dry eyes. The Colonel, too, must have had a lump in his throat. The platform was thronged with soldiers and civilians, and the Unit Pipe Band in full regalia rendered some famous Scottish tunes. We are delighted with his promotion to Lieut.-Colonel and wish him all the best.”²³⁵

As tokens of appreciation, the officers presented Lyall with a gold cigarette case, and the sergeants gave him a matching Dunhill lighter. The case is still with the family, but the lighter was given to a friend of the family.²³⁶



RAOC Officers Mess 1939

It is not known when Lyall was warned that he was being posted overseas, but in July he was given 14 days embarkation leave.²³⁷

Sandy Ferguson

In August 1940 the British began a major reinforcement of the forces in the Middle East, from the United Kingdom, India, Australia and New Zealand. Lyall was part of the first

group of some 76,000 men to sail from the United Kingdom on 5 August 1940. The ships from the United Kingdom were part of what eventually became known as the “W. S.” convoys, for which a number of large liners were used. These reinforcements were sent around the Cape of Good Hope to the Gulf of Suez, rather than risk them in the Mediterranean Sea. But as it was necessary to keep the fastest ships on the Atlantic portion of the route, where the submarine menace was greatest, it was necessary to disembark large numbers of men at Cape Town and Durban for onward passage in slower ships. Lyall, though, did not embark on one of the faster liners, but on the *SS PB Niblic Force*, a small freighter.²³⁸

Sandy Ferguson recalls:

“My aunt Elsie had never learnt to drive, so my mother drove us to the docks in Glasgow in my uncle’s pride and joy. It was a Ford V8 convertible, with a bench seat holding three, and two “dickey” seats in the luggage compartment in the rear – that is where I sat. We arrived at this rather disappointingly, small ship. After we had been shown round it didn’t seem much better. To a twelve year old, all the officers seemed rather old – they were in the main veterans from WWI (one even had only one arm) who had volunteered to go overseas. My uncle, somehow, got a picture of all the officers aboard and sent it home. All were very smart in their pith helmets and desert uniforms. There did not appear to be any other ranks aboard and the main purpose of the ship was to carry freight. My current researches have shown that these officers were the advance party, and the troops were to arrive separately and much later.

This was the last time I saw my uncle. But when he stopped at Cape Town he wrote to me enclosing a number of postage stamps he had got for my collection.”²³⁹

The convoy was expected at Suez about 24 September 1940, and although it had escaped the dangerous Mediterranean, the Red Sea was not entirely safe for there was the threat of attack by Italian air and naval units operating out of Italian bases in the Horn of Africa. On arrival at Suez, the troops and equipment were moved by rail and road to Cairo.²⁴⁰

The letter containing the postage stamps was postmarked in Cape Town on 26 August 1940.²⁴¹

At that time, the British Army in North Africa was known as the Western Desert Force and was deployed along the African Mediterranean coast as far west as the Cyrenaican frontier. The supply of the army hinged on the operation of a rail line from the Nile Delta to an advanced base at Mersa Matruh, 180 miles west of Alexandria, and by the summer of 1940 the British, with difficulty, were able to support operations from the railhead to the Cyrenaican frontier, some 140 miles as the crow flies.²⁴²



**The officers aboard the Niblic Force en route to the Middle East.
Note they all appear to be WW1 veterans**

Sandy Ferguson

Just as the convoy carrying Lyall was arriving in the Suez, Italian forces invaded Egypt. The general strategy of the enemy was to attack in a pincer movement from Libya in the west and East Africa from the south. The enemy's objective was the capture of the Suez Canal, thus severing the supply lines between Britain and the Middle East, India, Australia, and New Zealand. He first attacked across the Libyan/Egyptian border in the second week of September. If his forces had been well trained and equipped he could have easily reached the Canal because the British were greatly under strength, poorly equipped and widely dispersed in Cyprus, Palestine, Egypt, Sudan, and Kenya. The British, however, went on the offensive, and by mid December had completely routed the Italians. Then, in January 1941, British forces from Kenya invaded East Africa.

The Italian Army in the field in Libya surrendered on 7 February, and that in East Africa followed suit in mid March.

It is not known where or in what unit Lyall served after his arrival in September 1940, but in all likelihood he was posted to Headquarters, Middle East Force, the operational area of which stretched from Palestine and Mesopotamia in the east to Libya in the west. During this period he was admitted to No. 15 General Scottish Hospital in Cairo on 25 February 1941.²⁴³

On 4 June 1941 he was taken on strength of No 2 Base Ordnance Workshop, Middle East Force. This was a support unit that had been mobilized in November 1940 at

Hilsea, England. It had arrived in Egypt during March 1941, and another four workshop companies followed-on in June/July.²⁴⁴

2 BOW was one of a group of installations built in the Tel-el-Kebir area on the Nile River about 65 miles north-north-east of Cairo and 40 miles south of Port Said. The Workshop eventually occupied 46 workshops with a total covered accommodation amounting to one and a quarter million square feet, with good roads and railway sidings. Power was supplied by a central power station. No 2 BOW was commanded by Colonel Charles F. D. Suggate and reported to Headquarters, British Troops Egypt (HQ BTE), an administrative headquarters for base units and units not currently assigned to combat formations (those resting, re-equipping, etc).

When Lyall arrived the Workshop was undergoing a major expansion, with the connection of workshops to the main power grid, replacement of floors, roofs and walls in existing buildings, and the glazing of windows. By October 1941 there were showers, cinemas, roads, railway lines. It had expanded to become the biggest garrison in the Middle East, approximately 20 miles long and 10 miles in breadth and in the process it had swallowed up two villages.

Nevertheless, it served its purpose.”²⁴⁵

A soldier in the Royal Army Medical Corps wrote:

“The Sweetwater Canal which ran from Ismailia through Tel-el-Kebir to Zagazig was used by the Egyptians for drinking water, washing clothes, irrigation and toilet purposes. Sweetwater was a misnomer if ever there was one. I think it was so called to differentiate it from the salty water of the Suez Canal and Bitter lakes. It was said if one fell into the Sweetwater or indeed any Egyptian waterway one would require numerous injections to save one’s life. The Sweetwater Canal was used for transporting goods including building stone, grain, etc., using the Egyptian boats known as feluccas.”²⁴⁶

The water system drew some of its water from wells, but most of it came from the Nile via an artificial ditch:

“... known with unconscious humour as the Sweet Water Canal. The charming picture of a pellucid stream, which its name evoked, was somewhat marred by the dead camels and other foreign bodies which it carried towards Ismailia.”



REME Museum of Technology, Arborsfield, England



REME Museum of Technology, Arborsfield, England

No 2 Base Ordnance Workshop, Middle East Force, Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt

Eventually, by the end of the war, the Workshop was the largest Base Workshop in the world with a strength that included 70 officers, 3,200 other ranks, 8,000 civilians and 1,500 prisoners of war, with a nationality mix of Palestinians, Anglo-Indians, Singhalee, Maltese and Basutos, in addition to British soldiers and civilians. Most of the work involved the repair and overhaul of various wheeled and tracked vehicles and a successful “line system” was employed to repair common vehicle types, including

American tanks. In addition to repair, the technicians at the Workshop modified vehicles to adapt them to desert warfare. These modifications included additional stowage compartments for water, blankets, and items of personal equipment, fuel tanks that could be jettisoned, sand shields to minimize the effect of sand and dust, and air cleaners specifically designed for the desert environment. The Workshop also repaired and modified artillery guns, small arms, radio sets, and instruments.²⁴⁷

Lyall was one of eighteen Ordnance officers on strength of 2 BOW: 1 Colonel, two Lieutenant Colonels, 4 Majors, 2 Captains, 7 Lieutenants, and two 2nd Lieutenants. Two medical officers were attached to the unit. By September the officer strength had grown to 25, with two attached officers.²⁴⁸

He again suffered illness to the extent that he was admitted to hospital twice that summer. He entered hospital in Cairo on 7 July and was still a patient there on 26 July. The second admission occurred on 15 August, but there is no record of the length of stay. However, on 14 September, Lyall wrote to his nephew, Sandy Ferguson, "I have been in Palestine for a holiday after being in hospital. It is a much nicer place than Egypt."²⁴⁹

After a substantial re-enforcement and re-equipping of British forces in North Africa during the summer of 1941, the Eighth Army was formed on 27 September 1941, and placed under the command of Lieutenant General Sir Allan Cunningham with headquarters at Baggush and a rear HQ at El Daba on the Mediterranean Coast. It consisted of two Corps in the Western Desert and the garrison in Tobruk. In the north, along the coast, XIII Corps consisted of the New Zealand Division, the 4th Indian Division, and the 1st Armoured Brigade; in the south, XXX Corps comprised the 7th Armoured Division, the 1st South Africa Division, the 4th Armoured Brigade Group, and the 22nd Guards Brigade. The Tobruk garrison consisted of the 70th Division, the 3rd Polish Brigade Group, and the 32nd Armoured Brigade.²⁵⁰

Cunningham knew through intelligence gathered by "Ultra" of German intentions to mount an offensive. He determined it was to his advantage to strike first. His intention was to destroy the Axis armoured forces as well as raising the siege of Tobruk. The British named their offensive Operation Crusader.

In Operation Crusader, XXX Corps was to cross the frontier at Fort Maddalena, 45 miles inland, after a carefully concealed approach march, and then drive north-westwards to Gabr Saleh, with armoured-car patrols fanning out to the Trigh Capuzzo. The enemy was expected to show his hand at once and Cunningham would then decide whether XXX Corps should head towards Bardia or Tobruk. If the latter, then it might be necessary to leave a portion of the armour to protect XIII Corps. The sortie from Tobruk was then to begin, but not until the enemy armour was defeated or rendered incapable of interfering.

In this phase, XIII Corps was merely to prevent enemy mobile forces from passing through the frontier fortress line to threaten the Lines of Communication of Eighth Army.²⁵¹

Cunningham knew that Operation Battleaxe, in the Western Desert the previous June, had failed, in part, because it had not had adequate supply services to support an ambitious tactical plan. Therefore a great deal of attention was paid to ensuring that as far as practical major supply and administrative formations known as Lines of Communication (LoC) would be as far forward as possible.

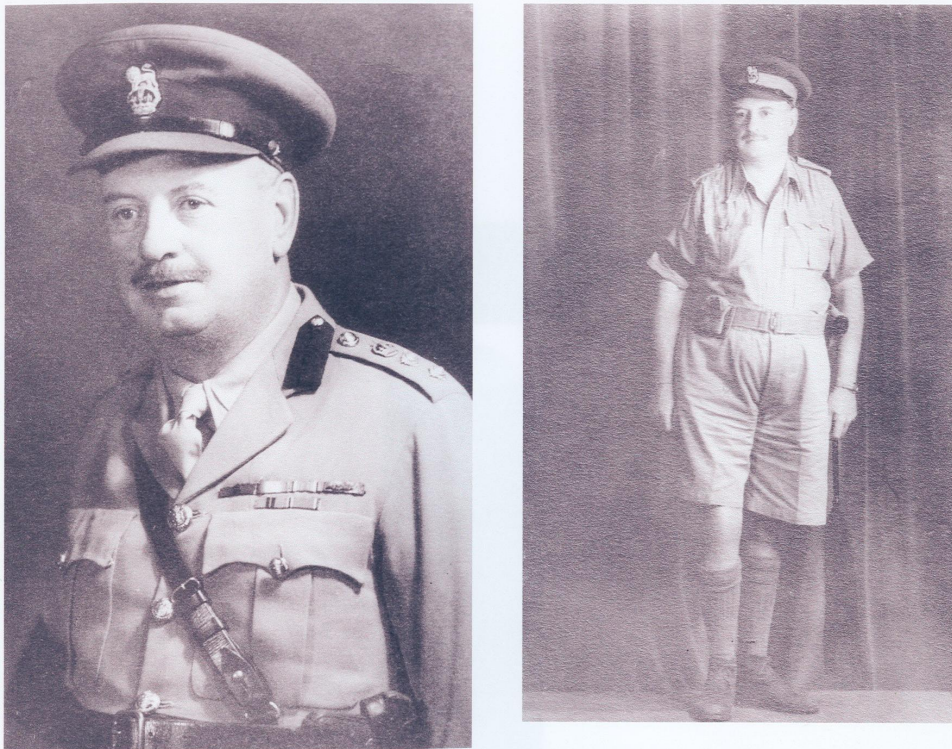
Lines of Communications units were support organizations, and reported to a higher level of Lines of Communications command, which in turn reported to an Army Headquarters. For the most part they were fixed geographically and did not move about. Their roles varied, but they are generally considered as base formations and not fighting commands. Typical in their order of battle would be: construction units, ordnance, ammunition, supply and vehicle depots, industrial gas units, hospitals, casualty clearance units, ambulance trains, dental units, hygiene units, provost companies, prisoner of war camps, entertainment units, laundries, bakeries, pay accounts offices, postal units, graves locations units, records offices, and salvage sections. In some cases, there would be defence units such as anti-aircraft batteries. The composition would depend on the mission of the unit: for example, entertainment units probably would not be found in LoC units in direct support of operations, while ammunition dumps would.²⁵²

Lyall was promoted Colonel and appointed Commanding Officer of the 87th Lines of Communication Sub Area (LoC) on 15 October 1941. The unit, which was then located at Almaza, just east of Cairo, had been created on 1 October and was in support of XIII Corps. Notwithstanding the entry in his personnel records reflecting the appointment and promotion, the War Diary indicates that he assumed command in rank on 14 October.

Lyall was now 49 years old; he had been wounded twice in the previous war, gassed, treated for trench mouth, was partially deaf, had had angina in 1933, and had been admitted to hospital three times in 1941. In retrospect, it seems incredulous that he would be appointed Commanding Officer of a key support unit in a forward area of operations on the eve of a major campaign.

Looking forward to Christmas, Lyall sent a hand-drawn Christmas card to his nephew, Sandy Ferguson. Dated "Commander, 87th LoC Sub Area, 1-11-41" the illustration showed Santa, wearing a helmet and riding a camel bearing a large "V" and the words, from "Uncle Graham."²⁵³

On 5 November HQ MEF issued orders for Lyall to lead an advance party of 5 officers and 10 other ranks to Mersa Matruh, a seaport on the Mediterranean coast near the Libyan boarder. They were to travel in a Humber four-seater car, a 3-ton Ford lorry, and one motor cycle. Lyall met with the Deputy Quarter Master General at Eighth Army HQ at 1700 hrs on 7 November, after which the party immediately set off, making good time from Cairo along the coastal road passing through Amiriya (west of Alexandria) and El Daba, arriving at Transit Camp No 5 at Mersa Matruh at 2000 hrs.²⁵⁴



Photographs taken in Egypt on his promotion to Colonel

Sandy Ferguson



Official
History of New Zealand on the Second World War

The Western Desert, 1941

This map depicts the general area in which Operation Crusader would take place. Both the rail line and water pipeline had reached Misheifa by the time the 87th Lines of Communication set up camp at Bir Thalata.

Two days later the advance party moved south to Sidi Abdel Salam where the Commander of 86th Lines of Communication briefed Lyall on his responsibilities in the administration of the Misheifa Railhead. New Zealand railway construction troops had begun work on pushing the railhead west from Mersa Matruh in June and "the new line reached Misheifa, 93 miles from Matruh and about 30 miles south of Sidi Barrani, a small seaport and Bedouin trading centre on the Mediterranean coast, on 8 November" astounding some military planners.²⁵⁵

Lyll established his headquarters in a tented camp at Bir Thalata, a short distance away. Undoubtedly, there would have been defensive works in this camp, such as trenches and dug-outs.

The next day Lyll and his staff were taken on a reconnaissance of the railhead area, the various supply dumps, labour and transport camps and prisoner of war cages.²⁵⁶

The Western Desert is not the rolling sand dunes that most people imagine, but rather a rocky plateau covered with dirty sand, stones and small rocks, largely devoid of water and civilization. It is, of course, very hot. In the summer (May-October) the daytime temperatures range from 20-60°C and it is often 40°C in the shade. The highest temperatures are reached in the late afternoon. At night the temperature plummets. The extreme heat of the day and intense cold of the night made life uncomfortable for the troops. The shortage of water increased their discomfort. It is, of course, possible to get used to the heat after a while and most men did. Newly arrived troops generally spent time acclimatizing in the delta area before moving into the desert.

Sandstorms were a particular problem for the troops. These could happen at any time, but were at their worst in May and June. Sand got into absolutely everything and what's more further irritated any wounds a man might have, particularly desert sores. According to Stuart Hamilton in his book *Armoured Odyssey*, being caught in a sandstorm was like "being in a hot pea soup fog. You just could not see your hand in front of your face and the cursed sand got into every single orifice in the body. It got into the eyes, the nose, mouth, ears, anus. It got into the engine, it got into the guns, it got into the wireless set, it really was incredible."²⁵⁷

It rarely rains in the desert, but when it does the rains are extremely heavy. This was of course problematic but also provided a brief respite from the heat and opportunity for the troops to wash themselves and their clothes in the rain.

Being so far from civilization caused problems in itself. There was nowhere for the men to go to relax once their duties had been completed. In the desert there were no bars, no entertainment and no women. When the troops weren't fighting, life could be immensely boring. Only those who were able to get back to Cairo were able to get respite from the monotony of desert life.



Misheifa

Rations for the Eighth Army generally consisted of biscuits, bully beef, Machonachies M & V (meat and vegetable stew in a tin), canned milk (carnation) and plenty of tea. Other common 'delights' included tinned fish, tinned cheese, tinned bacon, jam, P, B & L (peas, beans and lentils) and the occasional tin of fruit (usually peaches from Australia or South Africa). The severe lack of fruit and vegetables was a problem and contributed to a number of health problems including desert sores. Vitamin tablets were issued to try and make up for the lack of fresh food.

Being so far away from civilization there was little opportunity to supplement the rations. Occasionally soldiers would barter with the Arabs who came into the desert specifically to trade with the troops. They might swap a shirt for some eggs. However, the soldiers would often find that they been swindled and had, for example, bought an egg that had had its contents blown out.

Instead troops tried to be more inventive with the ingredients they did have. The biscuits were generally tough and unappetizing. They could be improved greatly by being crushed up, soaked in milk, heated and made into a kind of porridge dubbed 'biscuit burgoo.' Sometimes a bit of jam would be added; though one desert veteran likened the melon and lemon jam they got from Palestine to Polycell. Bully beef, a plentiful but much maligned

food, could be sliced and eaten with the biscuits as a sandwich, fried, or made into a stew with oxo cubes and an onion, if you could get one.

Although there were many grumbles about the food, the men of the 8th Army were generally better off than the Germans or the Italians, who largely survived on 'Alimento Militaire', tinned sausage, which was generally viewed as the worst diet in the desert. Fruit and vegetables were virtually non-existent. The Germans and Italians were extremely grateful for any food they could loot from the Allies, particularly tins of fruit and even bully beef. Both sides would happily loot from each other. Although looting in the towns was frowned upon, in the desert it was seen as a perfectly acceptable way of acquiring goods that were otherwise unobtainable.

Troops on the move often cooked food and brewed tea on a makeshift stove dubbed the 'Benghazi Burner.' This was basically half a tin filled with sand soaked in petrol and set alight.

In the hot, dry desert, natural water supplies were practically non-existent. Water had to be transported in. Memories of exactly how much water each man received vary. The official ration was a gallon of water per man per day, though men rarely received that much. The Allied water containers were flimsy and rather leaky. The Germans, on the other hand, used a metal container with a cap and strong handles known as the Jerry can. These were a prized item and were looted from the Germans whenever possible.

Half of each man's water ration went for cooking and topping up the radiators of vehicles. Men had to ration what was left for drinking, washing and shaving. They became experts at shaving and washing from a mug of water. One can imagine that they didn't smell very pleasant, but then everyone smelt the same. A method of filtering water was devised so that water could be reused. This was generally a tin filled with sand, topped with another sand filled tin with holes in the bottom, through which the water was filtered.

Water was an extremely precious commodity. One veteran described how he walked two miles back to a former gun site to retrieve a bottle containing a couple of mouthfuls of water that he had accidentally left behind.

There was rarely water for washing clothes. Petrol, however, was generally plentiful and proved to be a good substitute. Clothes were washed in petrol and left out to dry in the sun, petrol evaporated quickly and left no smell.

Dress was a lot more casual in the desert than in other theatres of war. Most men wore ammunition boots, khaki drill shorts and a shirt, though the shirt was often dispensed with due to the heat. The sun helmets, or topees, the men were issued with were discarded almost straight away. Officers could often be distinguished by the soft suede desert boots many obtained from Cairo or the coloured silk scarf worn around the neck, useful for absorbing sweat and keeping out sand.

Although clothing was minimal during the day, the desert nights were cold enough to warrant wearing a sweater and often a greatcoat.

Most men had to live with the absolute minimum of equipment. This was particularly true for the infantry, whose 'battle pack' consisted of little more than iron rations, a sweater, a scarf, a field dressing, ammunition and an entrenching tool.

Fatigue was also a problem and had a negative impact on a soldier's well being. The working day in the desert was long, often starting at first light and ending well after dark.

Life in desert, then, proved to be quite a challenge for the average soldier. The extremes of heat and cold, sandstorms, lack of water, boring food rations, health problems and flies, all conspired to make life rather uncomfortable. However, the climate could be tolerated once one got used to it, the food rations may have been boring but at least they didn't go hungry, ailments such as diarrhoea and desert sores were a nuisance but generally not life threatening. If you managed to keep healthy, life wasn't quite as bad as one might think.²⁵⁸

New Zealanders referred to Misheifa as,

“the hell hole of the desert...a wretched base...a rocky, barren plateau, too arid for even the tough camel-thorn bush. Sand sneaked by the spoonful into food and tea, piled up against dusty bivvies, buried possessions left outside for a day or two, and plagued mechanics working behind a meagre awning for a wind-break. Marquees or even bits and pieces of building material were unobtainable. Entertainment or sport was nil.”²⁵⁹

Certainly, a difficult environment for a healthy soldier, and it must have been much more difficult for soldiers who had health problems similar to those of Lyall.

Lyll visited HQ XIII Corps on 11 November where he telephoned HQ Eighth Army and received approval to move the main body of the 87th Lines of Communication Sub Area forward to El Daba. He also received permission for the layout of the railhead. The design had been developed in September and was a novel layout in “a large circular or balloon-type” plan to deceive enemy intelligence. It was deemed easier to defend and more difficult to be put out of action. When complete it would handle six trains daily – one passenger, three supply, one water and one ambulance. During this call, Lyll also gained approval to take under command two Labour Companies to operate the railhead, a military police detachment to police the railhead, a reserve motor transport company, and various signal and transport officers. On the 13th, he and the Commander of the 86th LofC Sub Area visited the railhead to select sites for a Field Bakery, the reserve motor transport company, the railhead supply dumps, and a Field Maintenance Centre Camp (FMCC). The traffic patterns were developed and perimeters established for dumps with ammunition and fuel supplies.²⁶⁰

The new railhead had almost nine miles of sidings and it was estimated that the saving in lorries reached 4,000 to 5,000 and the railway cut the task of maintaining large forces moving supplies forward. Eventually a dummy depot was established further west. Work

began on the construction of a transit camp for built for personnel Left Out of Battle (LOB).²⁶¹

“In one way, however, the railway robbed Peter to pay Paul, since the locomotives needed more water than the whole desert army would drink, and demanded a huge increase in the supply. In fifty-six days seven pumping stations and ten large reservoirs were built and 145 miles of water pipeline laid – a vast programme completed in the nick of time to meet the needs of CRUSADER. By 13 November water was reaching the railhead in adequate volume, much of it piped 270 miles from Alexandria.”²⁶²

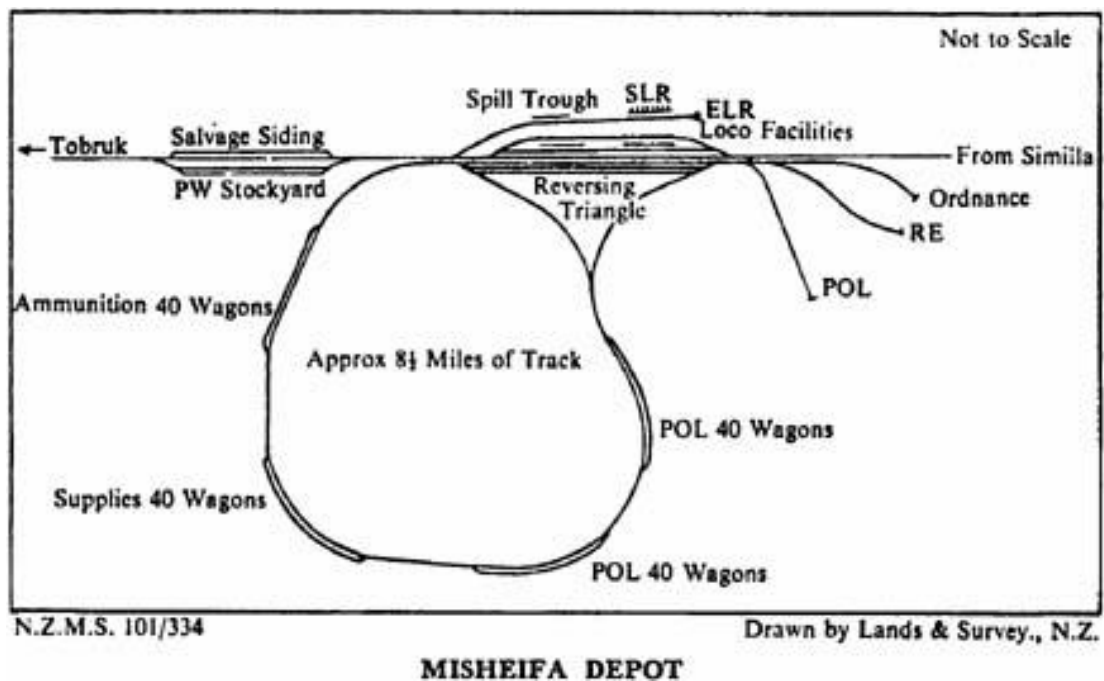
The Royal Air Force photographed the dummy “railhead” to ensure that that the camouflage and “dummy fuel and ration depots, accommodation and slit trenches for straw soldiers, goods trains of timber and black cloth with furnace glow effects, wooden Bofors guns, cloth lorries and an erection whose sole claim to be a water tank was that it looked like one” were effective.²⁶³

Amongst all this, the New Zealand Division of XIII Corps, in more than 3,000 vehicles, began its move forward from the coast near Baggush.

The Division went into an assembly area just west of Misheifa during the day on 15 November and spent the night in bivouac with two brigades forward, and one in reserve. A Divisional Administrative Group contained all Service Corps units except troop-carrying vehicles, Divisional Workshops and an Ordnance Field Park, Salvage and Mobile Surgical units, and all non-essential brigade vehicles set down on Lyall’s doorstep. But this huge mass of men, vehicles, equipment and supplies moved on the next morning.²⁶⁴

The presence, no matter how briefly, of such a large combat formation in Lyall’s area of responsibility must have placed an enormous strain on him.

Supply trains began arriving at the railhead on 16 November (the first containing water containers for the 7th Armoured Division, followed by a petrol train and then a water train). At this point, the rail line was just a single track and the supply trains were pulled by steam locomotives.



Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War

Ambulance Train, North Africa, 1941

Typical of steam
locomotives and cars
used on the line to
Misheifa.



Australian War Museum



At work on the new line

Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War

Construction of the Rail Line

New Zealand Engineers laying track near Matruh in the Western Desert

Senior staff from HQ Eighth Army and XIII Corps met with the Commander 86th LofC and Lyall on 17 November where decisions were made to sub-divide the 86th sub-area. A north-south line was drawn through Bir Thalatha (near Misheifa) and the area forward (or west) was designated the “Advanced 86th LofC Sub Area” with the Commander 86th LofC in command. Lyall was to command the area to the rear (or east) of this line, and his command was to be known as “Rear 86th Sub Area”. His responsibilities would include the administration the railhead and all installations as far back as Rear Battle HQ. The senior staff were advised of the requirements for communications, extra labour and transport to expedite unloading at the railhead. In addition, authority was given to call forward the main body of the 87th LofC which was being held at El Daba.²⁶⁵

Later in the day, General Cunningham, Commander Eighth Army, visited the railhead and met with Lyall.

Lyall faced a number of difficulties. Although the New Zealand engineers had been able to push the railhead forward in record time, the unloading of the arriving trains was delayed every day because of a shortage of labour, even though there were continuing reinforcements arriving daily. A shortage of trucks also added to the problem. These problems resulted in working long days and “troops rations and petrol in F. S. D. 29 exhausted owing to failure to replenish.”

Operation Crusader began with the 4th Indian Division of XIII Corps on the coastal plain assaulting the enemy positions north of Sidi Omar, and the 7th British Armoured Division of XXX Corps hooking around the German south flank (in much the same way as they had done during Battleaxe). On the 20th (Cambrai Day), the British attacked at Sidi Rezegh and by the evening of the day the great tank battle of Sidi Rezegh had begun. On the 21st the battle around the Sidi Rezegh airfield grew more ferocious. The fight for the airfield would decide the battle as whoever held the ridge dominated the plain before

Tobruk On the 21st, while British and German armoured units were fighting in the desert, the British garrison in Tobruk broke out and attacked the German rear.

At 2030 hrs on the 21st an accident took place at the railhead. A locomotive struck a lorry resulting in the death of three men and injuring eighteen. Lyall personally took Major Leonard Stott, the unit medical officer, to the scene. On the return trip, their car broke down, the temperature plummeted and they ended up walking some 20 miles in the dark to the 87th's locality. Stott later wrote that, "During the night the Colonel subjected himself to considerable physical exertion and on return to camp asked for his knee and feet, which had become blistered, to be dressed." The next day, his tent accidentally caught fire and "was completely gutted and practically everything (cherished belongings, clothing, etc) were destroyed." Stott noted that Lyall was again "subjected to considerable physical exertion." Undoubtedly, there must have been some strain on his heart.²⁶⁶



New Zealand troops watch 2-pdr anti-tank guns in action against German tanks.

destroy the last remaining units of XXX Corps and then push into Egypt and cut the supply lines in the rear of XIII Corps. On the morning of 24 November he launched this offensive which caused great consternation in rear elements of XIII Corps. As these moves developed, Lyall was not well, complaining of "tightness in the chest" and went to his bed at 1345 hrs. While he was being examined by Major Stott, he attributed the condition to having been gassed in the previous war. A short time later he complained of severe pain in his arm. Stott administered morphine and ordered that Lyall not be disturbed for six hours.²⁶⁷

News of the German advance arrived at 1945 hrs and was quite brief:

"Signal received by telephone as follows:--

From 276 Bty to All Subscribers.

Information received 30 German Tanks observed 480346 coming south"

British intelligence believed that the railhead in the area of the 87th LofC was an objective of the Germans and a Brigadier arrived from Eighth Army headquarters to co-

ordinate the defence of the railhead. All units were ordered to “stand to” at 0430 the next morning. In the event, however, the 87th LofC was ordered to organize three mobile patrols to do a sweep forward (westward) of its position. While this was being done, at 0030 hrs all troops under command were ordered to “stand to”.²⁶⁸

Major Stott visited Lyall in his tent twenty minutes later to check on Lyall’s condition. During the examination, Lyall instructed Stott “to tell every one ‘to carry on’ as already arranged.”²⁶⁹

The threat to the area around Misheifa was so serious that at 0315 hrs Eighth Army HQ ordered all units of the 87th LofC to move into a defensive area surrounding the railhead taking with them all documents. Lyall had recovered sufficiently to take command of the move into the railhead perimeter which took place at 0430 hrs 25 November and was completed by 0515 hrs. Stott later reported that by mid-day Lyall appeared in almost normal health.²⁷⁰

By 1100 hrs on the 25th, it was realized that the German thrust into the rear of the British lines had diminished to the point that units could return to their previous dispositions and the 87th was ordered back to their camp, and to take responsibility for its own security. That afternoon, Lyall received orders to hand over the 87th LofC area of responsibility to the 86th LofC and the handover process began almost immediately. Lyall went to Eighth Army Headquarters for further orders.²⁷¹

Notwithstanding the imperative to capture as much equipment, fuel, water and food in order to maintain their momentum and success, the Germans and Italians had not discovered two British supply dumps that had all the fuel and food they needed for their push into Egypt. Of course, this was unknown to the British.

As Operation Crusader stumbled, General Sir Claude Auchinleck, the British commander-in-chief, removed Cunningham and took personal command of the Eighth Army. He soon restored the situation and halted the German advances at the Halfaya Pass and Bardia. In the meantime, the British forces left in the German rear to the south-east of Tobruk were able to reorganize and seize, once more, the Sidi Rezegh area. On the 26 November they linked up with the Tobruk garrison and compelled Rommel to abandon his push to the east. Now known as the “Rommel Raid”, the German units were less than a full day’s advance away from the railhead at Misheifa before it turned back.

Both Lyall and Stott visited Headquarters on 26 November where Lyall received orders to prepare to move the 87th LofC to Mersa Matruh into Army reserve. The move was to take place in three phases, with the advance party departing on 28 November, the main party on the 29th, followed by the rear party on the 30th. On the return trip they were “narrowly missed by a bomb which fell about 50 yards from Lyall’s car.”²⁷²

On the following day, Rommel was faced with the necessity of withdrawing. The Afrika Korps had not received a single new tank since the start of the battle, and by then had only sixty machines that were in a mechanically parlous state. The British, on the other

hand, were steadily being reinforced, not only with new and repaired tanks, but also with fresh troops. The situation around the 87th LofC stabilized.

Lyall seemed in good health on the 27th. He dined in the Mess and Captain W. H. Coventry, the Camp Commandant, later wrote that he was with Lyall until about 2300 hrs and that Lyall “was then perfectly fit and his bright jovial and cheerful self.” Lyall gave orders to be called the next morning, and then went to bed.²⁷³

Lyall was found dead in his bed early the next morning. An autopsy determined that he had died of heart failure, and Stott reported “that death had been instantaneous and had taken place while the Colonel was comfortably wrapped during sleep”.²⁷⁴

A week later, the news came to Airdrie. Sandy Ferguson recalls:

“Most Saturday nights during the war, my aunt joined my father, mother and myself in playing solo whist. On Saturday night 6th December 1941 we were in the midst of our game and the doorbell went. I went to the door and there was a telegram boy with a telegram for my aunt. The normal procedure when you got telegrams in those days was that the boy waited in case there was a reply. In this particular case he started going back to his bicycle and I said, ‘Don’t you want to wait for a reply?’ He said, ‘There won’t be one’ and this was a notification to my aunt of my uncle’s death.”²⁷⁵

The telegram read:

“OHMS: By hand delivery.

Mrs E. M Lyall. Forest Park, Airdrie, Lanarkshire.

Deeply regret to inform you of report received from the Middle East that Colonel G. T. Lyall, VC, Royal Army Ordnance Corps died on the 28th November. Letter follows. The Army Council desire to offer you their sincere sympathy.

Under Secretary of State for War”

Major R. G. Jenkins and Captain W. S. Coventry, both members of Lyall’s unit, wrote Elsie Lyall within a week of Lyall’s death and described details of his burial in “the Military Cemetery, Piccadilly Circus”. The “Circus” was a railway complex 12 miles east of Misheifa. Captain Coventry apologized that the unit had only been able to send a small party to the funeral due to the unit’s movement away from the area, but he noted that a small wooden cross had been placed on the grave, with the inscription “In memory of Col. G. T. Lyall, VC, Commander 87 LofC Sub-Area” and marked with the insignia of the Masonic Order. Trees and shrubs, which Lyall had obtained for the Officers’ Mess, were planted on the grave.²⁷⁶

Captain Sandy Jarvie, the page boy at Lyall’s wedding, was serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps with the Eighth Army. He wrote Elsie, “Graham died doing his duty, but really he was unfit and as a result of a series of slight illnesses his heart gave out.”²⁷⁷

At the end of the war in North Africa, all the graves in six military cemeteries surrounding Sidi Barrani were moved to the Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery which now contains 2,046 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, of which 238 are unidentified. The cemetery is on the main coast road about 138 miles west of Mersa Matruh, to the east of Halfaya Sollum, and approximately 6 miles from the Egypt/Libya border. It is near the Halfaya Pass, the scene of the heavy fighting in 1941 and 1942. Lyall's remains were moved there on 14 April 1944, and Elsie received notice of the relocation in July.²⁷⁸

**Lyall's Temporary Grave
Piccadilly Circus Cemetery**

**The grave marker had the insignia of
the Masonic Order. The trees had
originally been obtained by Lyall for
the Officers' Mess.**



Sandy Ferguson



George Forty, 7th Armoured Division (Ian Allan Publishing)

Piccadilly Circus

Lyall was buried in a temporary cemetery a short distance from this marker.



Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Lyall's Grave Marker In Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery

Row B, Plot 19, Grave 2

Another view of the grave stone



Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery



Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The engraving of the Victoria Cross as used on grave stones erected by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Niagara Falls Evening Review reported Lyall's death on 11 December 1941, noting only that he was "well known here".²⁷⁹

At 11:30 AM on Sunday, 14 December 1941, the Reverend William H. Hay conducted a memorial service in the High Church in Airdrie. Hay was a resolute pacifist who had managed to virtually empty the church during the period of the war. The memorial service was conducted without any reference to Lyall's army career and "the whole affair was completely unreal."²⁸⁰

Subsequently, a memorial to those members of the church who had been killed or had died during the war was erected in the church. At the conclusion of the dedication service, a Bible was to have been presented to Elsie, but she determined that this had too

much of a prize giving about it and refused to go up. Sandy Ferguson, her nephew took the bible for her.²⁸¹

Lieutenant Colonel John L. Simpson, a cousin of Elsie, wrote an obituary:

“Colonel G. T. Lyall, VC, who on the 28th November 1941, laid down his life in the Middle East, had a military record of which he, and all who knew and loved him, might well feel exceedingly proud.

He was in Canada when the last war broke out and at once enlisted in the Dominion forces. By April 1917, he had seen arduous service in France and Flanders, and had been commissioned on the field for conspicuous bravery in action.

On the 27th September 1918, by skilful leading of his platoon he captured at Bourlon Wood a strong point, which was holding up the leading company of his Battalion. Later the same day, collecting such men as remained, he led them towards a machine gun post, and springing forward alone, rushed the position single handed, killing the officer in command of it, and taking away many prisoners. On first October 1918, when in command of a much-weakened company he again by skilful leadership captured a strongly held position.

Altogether during two days of operations he captured one hundred and eighty five prisoners, besides machine guns and a field gun. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for “supreme courage and devotion to duty”. Laconically, the official recommendation for the award adds that he tended wounded under fire.

This bare recital of his deeds shows him as a superb leader of men. He was also a man of great social charm, who made immediate and lasting friendships wherever he went, whether in the company of the highest or the humblest.

He was at all times ready with advice and help to those who needed it, for his own rich experience gave him a keen insight into the lives of others. There was no problem one could not discuss with him, no undertaking upon which he could not offer counsel and encouragement.

If success is to be measured in terms of happiness given and enjoyed, he was indeed a successful man. Those who were privileged to count themselves of his family circle knew of his serenely happy home life, his unhesitating generosity, and his boundless loyalty.

Whatever he did, he did with his whole heart and soul. In 1938, seeing the growing danger abroad and the continuing unpreparedness at home, he came forward to raise and command a Territorial unit, and spared neither time nor energy until he had brought it to a very high standard of efficiency.

He was never of robust health after being exposed to a gas attack in the last war, and he might well, as his friends thought, have been spared further foreign service. Yet, when during the dark days of the Battle of France, the opportunity

came to him to take command of a unit under orders for the Middle East, we all knew that he would not hesitate.

When we said goodbye to him, there was no thought in our minds that he would not return. He was so magnificently alive, he bore such a charmed life in the last war, that even now it is difficult to think that he is no longer with us.

But he has gone to take an honoured place among those who have deserved well of their country and their fellow man. We shall not forget that brave and true spirit, and all who knew him will be grateful for his memory and example.”²⁸²

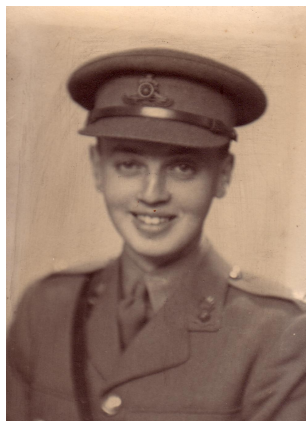
Scotland



Sandy Ferguson

Elsie Lyall

Elsie stayed on at Forrest Park and although desperately lonely she never complained and continued to participate in the life of the town. In November 1945 she was identified as the “legal beneficiary for the grant of medals” for Lyall’s Second World War service, but from the records it would appear that the medals were not issued to her until October 1948. In 1956 she attended a special lunch and service to celebrate the centenary of the establishment of the Victoria Cross and sat next to Leonard Cheshire who was the airman best known for the establishment of convalescent homes for ex-servicemen. She died of a massive heart attack in 1960 at the age of 66 and was buried in the family lair in the New Monklands Cemetery. Lyall is commemorated on the stone over the lair.²⁸³



Donald Bourlon Lyall

Young enough to be a son, Lyall’s brother was killed in a military training accident in 1943.

Sandy Ferguson



Sandy Ferguson

Grave in Largs Cemetery

Donald Bourlon Lyall must have had difficult childhood. His father was quite elderly when he was born and his parents separated when he was quite young. His mother maintained little contact with him and he was left to be brought up by his father and sister. He was sent off with a scholarship to Moffat Preparatory School in Scotland (a boarding school) and on to Fettes College (Edinburgh) at thirteen. He left at age 19 and was commissioned in the Royal Artillery. On 2 November 1943, Donald was trapped and drowned when a semi-armoured vehicle in which he was travelling overturned while fording a river in the firing range of Barnard Castle. He was interred with his father in the cemetery at Largs, Scotland. Present at the military funeral were his mother, sister, Aunt Isobel and cousin Sandy Ferguson. This was the last contact the family had with Jessie McDonald. It is believed she died in June 1962, 66 years of age.

Dorothy Lyall continued her very lonely and solitary existence in Fairlie. She had never married. The death of her brother was a devastating blow, and although Elsie kept in touch with her on a regular basis, it was not a real substitute. On Elsie's death, the family maintained contact with Dorothy, and when it was finally obvious that she could no longer care for herself she was admitted into the Church of Scotland Residential Home in Largs. She died in 1976 at the age of 86, and is buried with her father and brother in the cemetery at Largs.

Memorials

There are memorials to Lyall. Of course, there is the tombstone over his grave in North Africa. Additionally, his name is engraved on the Frew family lair in Airdrie. He is one of the men commemorated in a display at his old secondary school in Nelson. His name appears on the Honour Roll of both St Barnabas Church in St Catharines and in the Airdrie High Church where there is a plaque on the communion table.



Fred Stringer

Nelson Secondary School Memorial Service, November 2004

**Students gather at unveiling ceremony
to honour students of the school who
lost their lives in the armed forces.
Lyall's name is one of those honoured.**

For Valour: Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

The most significant memorial in Canada is a provincial historical plaque at Lake Street Armoury in St Catharines. On 5 June 2005, Her Royal Highness Sophie, Countess of Wessex and Colonel in Chief of The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, and Colonel the Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman of The Ontario Heritage Foundation, unveiled the plaque.



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

Plaque Unveiling

The Lincoln and Welland Regiment and the Ontario Heritage Foundation unveiled a plaque honoring Lyall. The event took place during ceremonies marking the first visit of HRH Sophie, Countess of Wessex, as Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment, 5 June 2005. The plaque is located on the grounds of Lake Street Armoury, St Catharines, the armoury in which Lyall joined the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment in 1914, and subsequently the 81st Battalion, CEF.

Left to right: Sandy Ferguson, Lyall’s nephew; Colonel Lincoln Alexander, chairman of the Ontario Heritage Foundation; the Countess of Wessex; Lieutenant Colonel Roy SJ Dwyer, Commanding Officer of The Lincoln and Welland Regiment.



The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum

The plaque at Lake Street Armoury, St Catharines, adjacent to the World War II Regimental Memorial, a Stuart tank used by the 1st Battalion, The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, as a reconnaissance vehicle.

The plaque was sponsored by the Ontario Heritage Foundation, The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Foundation and The Lincoln and Welland Regiment. It reads:

Graham Thomson Lyall emigrated from Britain in 1911, eventually settling in Niagara Falls where he worked for the Canadian Niagara Power Company. In 1914, at the start of the First World War, Lyall enlisted in the 19th “Lincoln” Regiment at St Catharines. Later, he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force and fought at the Somme in 1916, Arras and Ypres in 1917, and Amiens in 1918. On September 27 and October 1, 1918, Lyall led his platoon against the enemy at Bourslon Wood and Blécourt, displaying exceptional valour and leadership, inflicting heavy casualties, and capturing 182 prisoners, 26 machine guns, and one field gun. “For most Conspicuous and skilful leading during the operations north of Cambrai”, King George V invested Lyall with the Victoria Cross, the British Empire’s highest decoration for valour.”²⁸⁴

In his comments, Colonel Alexander noted that the Provincial Plaque Program was designed to commemorate and celebrate Ontario’s past, and that to date some twenty plaques honour Victoria Cross recipients:

For Valour: Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

“Colonel Lyall served his country and Commonwealth with courage and distinction. It is fitting that here in this wonderful park, in the company of The Lincoln and Welland Veterans’ Association, the cadet corps, the men and women of the Regiment and Regimental Foundation and so many friends, we unveil this plaque honouring this heroic Canadian”²⁸⁵

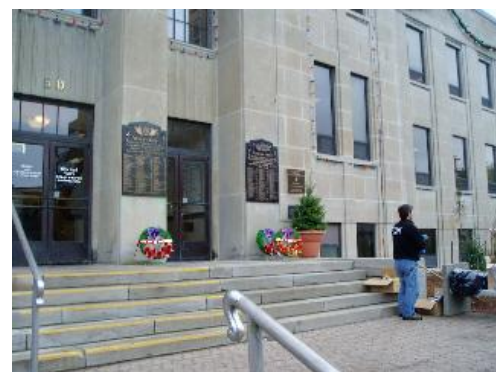
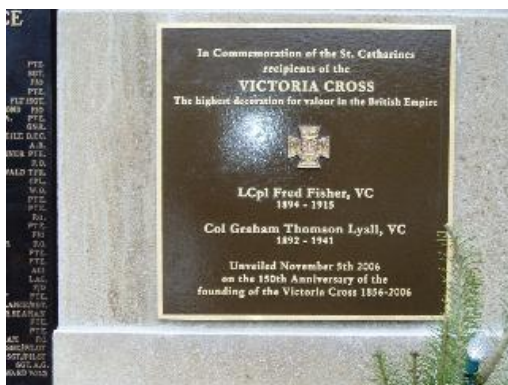
In attendance at the ceremony were Sandy Ferguson, Lyall’s nephew from England, and James Peat, a distant cousin of both Elsie Lyall and Sandy, who now lived in Toronto. Sandy recalled:

“I had been invited and had a memorable visit. It included a formal Regimental Dinner where I met the Countess, a number of the Officers, past and present, with their wives. I also met a smallish, rather unassuming gentleman who turned out to be a high ranking officer in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police – the Mounties – not at all like those one sees on the screen. I had a wonderful visit. And I felt more at home than I ever felt in the USA.”²⁸⁶

At the time of the unveiling, it was assumed that Lyall had arrived in Canada in 1911. Subsequent research has located his immigration records that identify the date as 9 June 1912.

In November 2006, the St Catharines Historical Museum had a special display and ceremonies during Remembrance Week to mark the 150th anniversary of the creation of the Victoria Cross.

Central to the events was a display of the Victoria Crosses of Lyall and Lance Corporal Fred Fisher, both of whom had connections to the city. Subsequently the City of St Catharines placed a commemorative plaque at the front doors of City Hall and named streets after both men.



St Catharines Historical Museum

Memorial Plaque, City Hall, St Catharines, Ontario

At the end of the First World War, there was an overwhelming desire by the Army to ensure that the deeds of the Expeditionary Force would not be forgotten. It was determined that one way to do that was to have regiments in a newly re-organized militia

perpetuate CEF battalions and part of that perpetuation would include passing on the Battle Honours. The 1st Battalion, The North British Columbia Regiment was identified as the perpetuating militia for the 102nd Battalion, CEF. A number of re-organizations of the militia have taken place over the years, so that now the perpetuating militia regiment is The British Columbia Regiment.

The BCR have created a small park next to its armoury in Vancouver, and on 11 November 2007 dedicated five benches in the park to its VC winner, one of which commemorates Lyall.



David Sproule

Sandy and Elizabeth Ferguson sit on the Lyall Memorial Bench at Beatty Street Armoury in Vancouver. Ted and David Hawthorne of the BCR Association stand in the rear.

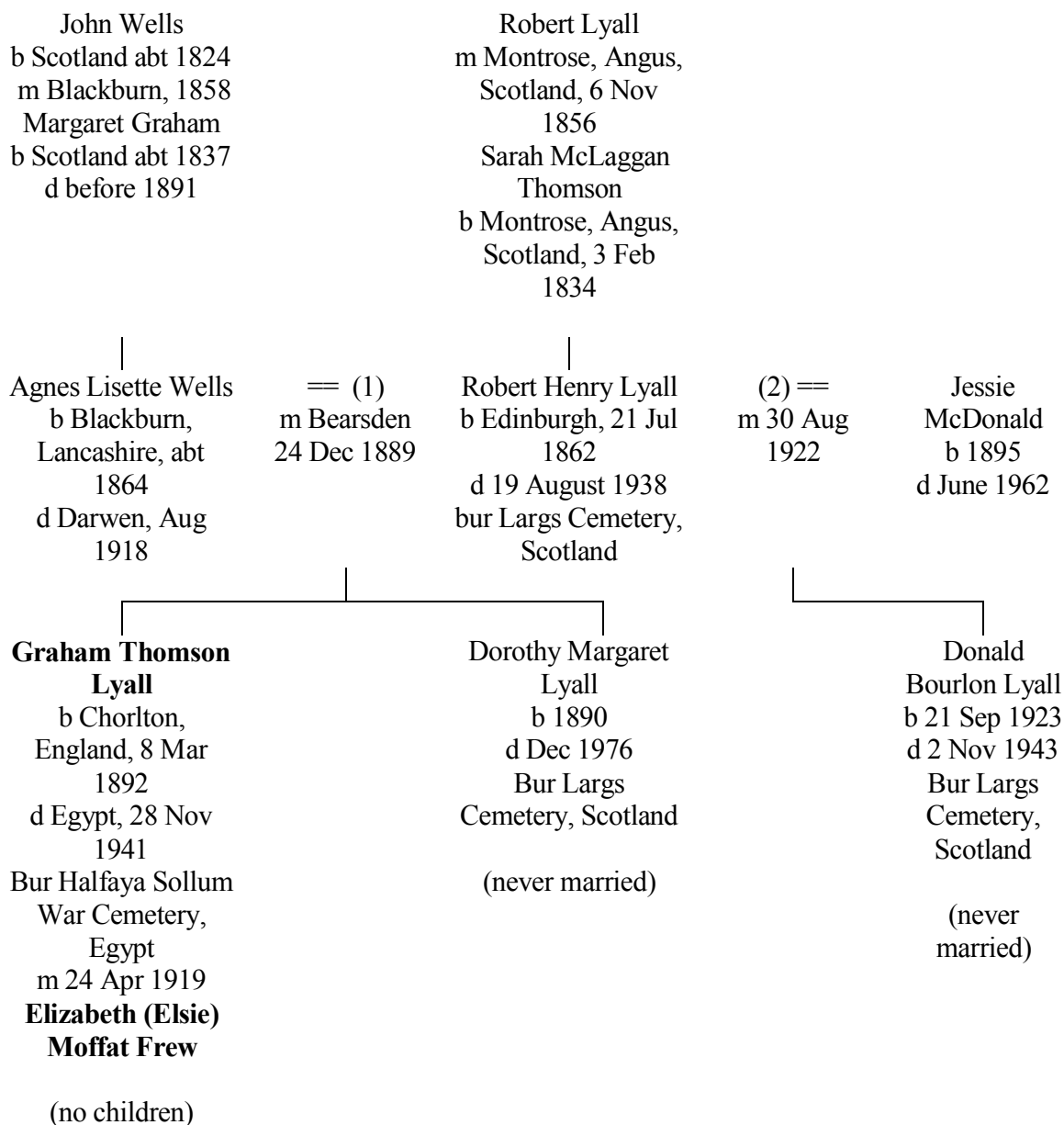
On 6 September 2008, The British Columbia Regiment also placed a memorial plaque at Boursillon to mark Lyall's accomplishments.

Ninety years have passed since Graham Lyall won his Victoria Cross. Many of the details of his life have dimmed in the passage of time, but hopefully the deeds he performed in those closing days of the Great War will never be forgotten.

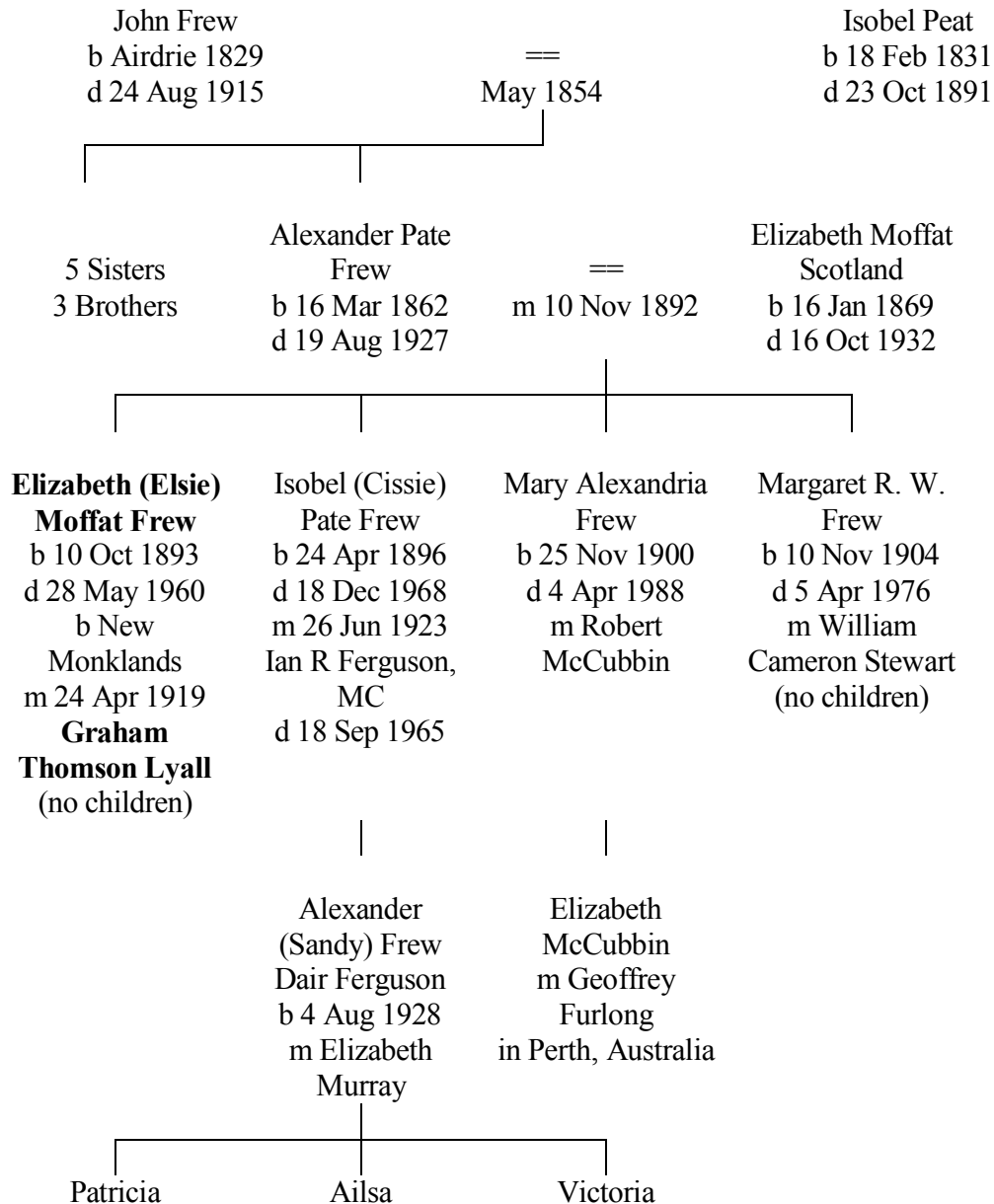
Appendix 1

FAMILY STRUCTURE²⁸⁷

THE LYALL FAMILY 1824-1976



THE FREW FAMILY 1829-2004



CHRONOLOGY

8 Mar 1892	Born, Chorlton, England. He noted in later years that he was Scottish, not English.
1894	Father moved the family to Farnworth.
1900	Father moved the family to Nelson.
1907	Completed Secondary School in Nelson.
1911	Graduated from Portsmouth Municipal College.
1911	Emigrated to Canada and took employment with Canadian Steel Foundries in Welland, Ontario, and later with the Canadian Niagara Power Company, Niagara Falls, Ontario.
16 Aug 1914	Resigned from Canadian Niagara Power Company.
23 Oct 1914	Enlisted 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, St Catharines, Ontario.
14 Sep 1915	Took medical examination for CEF.
22 Sep 1915	Transferred to 81st Battalion, CEF.
24 Sep 1915	Took Oath of Allegiance.
28 Apr 1916	Embarked and sailed for England aboard RMS Olympic.
6 May 1916	Arrived England.
5 Jun 1916	Transferred to 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, CEF, in Belgium.
11 Jun 1916	Promoted Acting Corporal.
15 Sep 1916	Wounded in action during the Battle of the Somme.
10 Oct 1916	Promoted Sergeant.
14 Oct 1916	4 CMR moved to Vimy Ridge area.

For Valour: Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

24 Apr 1917	Sent to Officers' Training School, Bexhill-on- Sea, England.
28 Apr 1917	Promoted Temporary Lieutenant.
5 May 1917	Commission Lieutenant. Posted to the 102nd Battalion, CEF.
18 Nov 1917	Wounded in action.
24 Feb 1918	Admitted to hospital.
24 May 1918	Discharged from hospital. TOS 8th Reserve Battalion.
23 Aug 1918	TOS 102nd Battalion.
27 Sep 1918	Won the Victoria Cross at Bourlon Wood, France.
1 Oct 1918	Battle for Blécourt, France.
14 Dec 1918	Award of Victoria Cross gazetted.
15 Mar 1919	Presented the Victoria Cross by King George V.
24 Apr 1919	Married Elizabeth Moffat Frew.
26 Jun 1920	Attended VC reunion in London, England.
16 Jul 1929	Joined the Territorial Army
29 Nov 1929	Attended VC dinner in London, England.
8 Mar 1932	Transferred to the Territorial Army Reserve of Officers.
26 Jul 1936	Attended the unveiling of the Vimy Memorial
29 Jul 1936	Commanded the contingent of Canadians resident in Britain at the Vimy Pilgrimage Ceremonies in London, England
26 Apr 1939	Raised and commanded the 3rd AA Division Workshop Company, RAOC (Territorial Army).
3 Sep 1939	Mobilized.

For Valour: Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

10 May 1940	Promoted Lieutenant Colonel and posted to an Army Ordnance Workshop at Hilsea.
5 Aug 1940	Embarked for North Africa.
Sep 1940	Arrived Egypt, North Africa.
4 Jun 1941	Posted to No 2 Base Ordnance Workshop, Egypt.
15 Oct 1941	Promoted Colonel. Assumed command of 87 Lines of Communication Sub Area.
28 Nov 1941	Died, North Africa, 49 years of age.

Appendix 3

THE VICTORIA CROSS

The Victoria Cross was created by Queen Victoria in 1856 to recognize exceptional valour by officers and men in the presence of the enemy and is the premier award in British honours. Neither rank, nor long service, nor wounds nor any other circumstance or condition, save the merit of conspicuous bravery is considered in order to establish a claim to the honour.

The medal itself belies its significance. Plain in design, and cast in metal of no value, the medal is recognized throughout the world.

TERMS

“For most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-imminent act of valour or self sacrifice or devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy”.²⁸⁸



By the end of World War 1, the Victoria Cross had been awarded 1,155 times, over half of them (632 including two bars) were awarded in that war, and over 30% of these were awarded posthumously.

When Queen Victoria created the Victoria Cross, she intended it “to be highly prized and eagerly sought after by the Officers and Men of Our Naval and Military Services.” Her intentions have been fulfilled. King George V referred to it as “the greatest of all Military Distinctions”.²⁸⁹

The following is from P. E. Abbott and J. M. A Tamplin. *British Gallantry Awards*, London 197:--

The Medal

Ever since its institution the Cross has been supplied by the well-known London jewellers, Messrs. Hancocks and Co., now of Burlington Gardens London W1. The Cross and suspender are first cast in gunmetal and then chased and finished by hand. From 1914 to 1950 a die-cast suspender was used. The metal is taken from guns captured from the Russians in the Crimean War although during and after the First World War it is fairly certain that metal from captured Chinese guns was used for a short period. The components of the decoration are then treated chemically to obtain the uniform dark brown finish which is darker on some issues than on others. The Cross is 1.375 inches wide and, together with the suspender bar and link, weighs about 0.87 ounces troy, although chasing and finishing may cause slight variation in these figures. The design of the Cross is attributed to H.H. Armstead who, at the time of its inception was working for Hancocks, the design then being approved by the Queen.

The Ribbon

Crimson (described as *red* in the Warrants), 1.5 inches wide. Originally the ribbon was dark blue or the Royal Navy and crimson for the Army. Shortly before the Royal Air Force was formed on 1st April 1918 the King approved the recommendation that what had been the Army ribbon should be adopted by all recipients. When the ribbon is worn alone a miniature of the Cross is pinned on it, a bar being indicated by a second miniature worn beside the first (when first approved in 1916, a single miniature indicated the award of a bar; from 1917 this was changed to the current configuration).

Suspension

The medal is suspended by a straight bar, slotted for the ribbon, with a V-lug below, made in one piece. The front of the bar is ornamented with laurels (the die-cast bars having the leaves set more closely together), and the reverse engraved with details of the recipient. The Cross and suspender bar are joined by a small link which passes through the lugs of both components. On earlier issues the link is completely circular and the inside bottom of the V-lug slightly recessed to accommodate it. Later the link was made oval and the lug not recessed.

Obverse

In reality the Cross is not a Maltese Cross, as it is described in the Royal Warrants, but is closer to a cross patté.

Reverse

The date (or dates) of the act of gallantry is engraved in the centre circle.

Bars

This is based on the suspender bar but without the V-lug, ribbon and frame above. The reverse is engraved with details of the recipient and the date or dates of the act.

Naming

Details of the recipient are engraved in capital letters on the reverse of the suspender bar, and the date or dates of the act of gallantry in the centre circle of the reverse of the Cross. The style of engraving varies although, generally speaking, the use of serifs seems to have been discontinued during the South African War (Boer) War. However, King Edward VII having approved posthumous issues, some comparatively modern Crosses exist which were awarded for services performed many years before. Sometimes the inscription is of the same colour as the decoration itself. The latter practice seems to have been more general before the Boer War although thereafter no particular pattern is apparent.

The details on the suspender bar include the rank, name and regiment, or other description of the recipient. Abbreviations are used, according to the length of the inscription, and during the First World War the practice of adding the regimental or equivalent number in the case of recipients below commissioned rank was introduced. Occasionally the recipient's full (or abbreviated) first names appear. The First World War and later inscriptions tend to be fuller than those appearing previously. The details on the reverse of the Cross give the date or dates of the act concerned, the month usually being abbreviated.

Re-issues

Occasionally a recipient has been issued with a replacement which, in itself, cannot readily be detected, although suspicion may be aroused if the accompanying medals are themselves replacement issues. Hancocks are able to say if a replacement has been issued.

Copies and Fakes

Various types of copy exist, some cast examples being very well made indeed. However, due to the cooling of the metal in the mould, they are slightly smaller than the genuine

Crosses and not of the correct weight. Nevertheless, Hancocks do not consider the weight of great importance as the thickness of the decoration can vary, especially with early issues. Some copies are struck from dies which, together with some of those cast, are poorly finished and of too light a colour. On one type of copy the sides of the suspender bar are not straight but have a curved excrescence either side of the ribbon slot, while another type has V-shaped niches at either end of the ribbon slot. Some years ago a particularly well-made copy appeared on the market; in this, however, the inner diameter of the centre circle of the reverse is 14mm which is too wide and hence relatively easily recognizable. Some copies have been faked by the addition of details of actual recipients although usually the engraving is of poor quality. Hancocks can almost invariably state whether a Cross is genuine or not.

LYALL'S MEDALS

In 2002, on the 61st anniversary of Graham Lyall's death, Alexander (Sandy) Ferguson, his only nephew, placed his Victoria Cross and other medals on long-term loan (25 years) with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Corps Museum of Technology in Arboresfield, England. Sandy had chosen this museum after his offer in 1986 to loan the medals to the Canadian War Museum was rejected. He decided that although the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers had not been formed until after Lyall's death, in fact Lyall would have transferred to that Corps due to his professional qualifications. The medal group is now on display in the museum.

The letter from the Canadian War Museum which rejected the offer of a long-term loan stated that funding restrictions "has meant a status quo and even cutting back in programs and exhibitions" and that the Museum did not have "the funds or exhibition space to add another VC to our exhibits" In addition, Museum policy was not to accept artefacts on indefinite loan.²⁹⁰

In proper sequence, the medals are:

- the Victoria Cross;
- the 1914-1918 British War Medal;
- the 1914-1918 Victory Medal;
- the 1939-1945 Star;
- the Africa Star;
- the 1939-1945 Victory Medal;
- the 1911 King George V Coronation Medal; and
- the 1937 King George VI Coronation Medal.



Sandy Ferguson

There are two points of curiosity regarding the medal group.

The most obvious is that at the time of the donation they were arranged on the medal bar in reverse order: that is, the Victoria Cross is on the right of the group as viewed, whereas protocol dictates it should be on the left, followed by the First and then the Second World War medals, and then commemorative medals.

Elsie Lyall wore the medals in the reverse manner in 1956 at a function celebrating the centenary of the establishment of the Victoria Cross which included the next-of-kin of Victoria Cross winners. The staff of the REME museum believe that at that time it was the custom of widows to do so. Certainly, there is a photograph in existence of a woman selling poppies during World War II who wears a medal group on her right breast, with the medals, which includes a VC, arranged in reverse order.

The King George V Coronation Medal is somewhat of a mystery. In 1911 Lyall would have been only been eighteen years old; he was of no significant social standing; he had not performed any outstanding meritorious service; nor had he any military service. The photograph of him in the uniform of the 19th Regiment taken in 1914 has no ribbon bar on his uniform, nor is there a ribbon bar on his uniform in the photograph taken after the investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace in 1919. There is no entry on either his Canadian or British military records which indicate the award of the Coronation Medal.

One expert has suggested that perhaps Lyall had been awarded the 1935 King George V Jubilee Medal, and that it had been lost and mistakenly replaced. However, the medal list for the Jubilee Medal does not contain Lyall's name. It was not until the coronation of King George VI that recipients of the Victoria Cross automatically were awarded commemorative medals.

Further research has noted that while at the Portsmouth Technical School, Lyall would have been a member of the school's sea cadet corps. Undoubtedly, a senior at 18 years of age, he took part in the Spithead Naval Review held to celebrate the Coronation of George V and "it is likely that the cadets would participate as a Guard of Honour." The Coronation Medal was awarded to participants of the Review, which would explain the medal. In all likelihood Lyall had no access to the medal ribbon, so it did not turn up on his uniform in the photographs and oil painting.

Included in the donation was a commemorative medal struck to mark the unveiling of the Vimy Ridge Memorial. All Canadian Pilgrims who attended the ceremony were given the medal. A second medal is Belgian, the King Albert Medal, and also appears to be a commemorative medal.

To mark the 150th anniversary of the creation of the Victoria Cross, the St Catharines Historical Museum arranged a display of the medal groups of Lyall and Lance Corporal Fred Fisher, VC, during Remembrance Week of 2006.. Both men had connections to St Catharines.

Appendix 5

**BADGES WHICH GRAHAM LYALL WORE DURING HIS
MILITARY SERVICE
1914-1941**



The 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, Canadian Militia

Lyall joined the 19th at Lake Street Armoury, St Catharines, Ontario, on 24 October 1914.



The 81st Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force

Lyall transferred to the 81st at Lake Street Armoury on 28 September 1915, although the Battalion was then located at the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto, Ontario



The 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, Canadian Expeditionary Force

Lyall was amongst the 1st draft of men who went to 4 CMR in France as re-enforcements on 7 June 1916.



The 102nd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force

On commissioning, Lyall was posted to this Battalion on 24 September 1917, and was serving in it when he won the Victoria Cross in 1918.



The Royal Engineers, British Army

Lyall enlisted in a Territorial Army unit of the Royal Engineers on 16 July 1920.



The Royal Army Ordnance Corps, British Army

On 26 April 1939, Lyall was transferred from a Reserve List of Officers to a Territorial unit of the RAOC.

Appendix 6

**MARRIAGE AS REPORTED IN THE AIRDRIE AND COATBRIDGE
ADVERTISER²⁹¹**

V. C.'s WEDDING IN AIRDRIE

LIEUT LYALL, VC & MISS FREW

INTERESTING FUNCTION IN HIGH U. F. CHURCH

The outstanding social event of the season in Airdrie has been the marriage of Lt. Graham Lyall, VC, Canadians, to Miss Elsie Frew, eldest daughter of Provost Frew, JP, & Mrs. Frew, Meadowside House. The marriage took place on Thursday in the High United Free Church which was beautifully adorned with flowers and pot plants by Messers Gilbert & Richmond, Carlisle Road. The building was crowded not only by the numerous guests but by a large number of eager onlookers.

THE BRIDE

The full name of the contracting parties is Miss Elizabeth Moffat Frew (Elsie) eldest daughter of Provost & Mrs Frew, Airdrie, and Lt. Graham Thomson Lyall, VC, only son of the Rev. R. H. Lyall, MA, of St John's Church, Darwen, Lancashire.

The bride, as our readers are aware, has with her mother been a most indefatigable war worker during the last four and a half years covering the period of her father's provostship of the burgh, and has won the goodwill and esteem, not only of the whole community, but of the many hundreds of sailors and soldiers who, on nearly every front were recipients of cheering parcels despatched through Miss Frew, secretary of the local executive of the work parties in town and parish.

HOW THE VC WAS WON

[There follows an extract from *The London Gazette*]

The bridesmaids were Miss Isobel Frew, sister of the bride, Miss Dorothy M. Lyall, sister of the bridegroom, and Misses Mary and Margaret Frew, sisters of the bride.

The bridegroom was attended by best men Lt George H. Ellis, Canadian Siege Artillery, and by Lt G. Bruce Scotland, R. E., cousin of the bride.

The officiating clergymen were the Rev David Frew, DD, of Urr Parish Church, Dalbeattie, uncle of the bride, assisted by the Rev R. H. Lyall, MA, St John's Darwen, father of the bridegroom, and the Rev John Cook, BD, the bride's minister.

The service, which was fully choral, was under the charge of Mr C. Midgely, ARCO, organist of Flowerhill, who presided at the organ.

The bride was given away by her father, Provost Frew, JP.

THE DRESSES

The bride going to church wore a white silk braided gabardine cloak. Her bridal dress was of satin grenadine with draped skirt with pearl embroidery, and yoke and sleeves in silver lace, veiled with ninon. She wore a veil of old lace (lent by her mother), a circlet of orange blossom and white leather, and her train, carried by her cousin, Master Sandy Jarvie, was of silver brocaded tissues, veiled with ninon, and bearing traces of white heather on either corner. She wore a string of pearls with platinum and diamond clasp, the gift of the bridegroom. The bride's bouquet was white carnations and Madonna lilies tied with white tulle and silver.

Miss Isobel and Miss Margaret Frew were in shell pink charmeuse, veiled with georgette, with sleeveless coatees of brocaded georgette, and they wore quaint little bonnets of georgette to match silver slippers. The other bridesmaids, Miss Lyall and Miss Mary Frew, wore replicas of the above in lilac tulle, and they wore little gold wristlet watches with moiré straps, the gift of the bridegroom.

Master Jarvie, the train bearer, looked charming in a white satin suit with a three-cornered hat to match, and tiepin with heart of pearls, the gift of the bride.

The bride's mother was gracefully attired in black chiffon velvet, with a panel train hanging from the shoulders, and had a large crimson rose at her waist. She wore a hat of gold tissue, with a black net veil and sables, and carried a bouquet of crimson roses.

The bride's travelling costume was of putty-coloured gabardine with beautiful embroidery on coat, with a hat of Joifre charmeuse, trimmed with jet bangles, and shoes and stockings to match, and white fox fur.

THE CEREMONY

The church, as stated, was crowded with guests and spectators, while outside in North Bridge Street and at the Old Cross, immense crowds of people watched the arrival and departure of the bridal party and the guests. The bride entered the church leaning on the arm of her father, and, followed by the other members of the bridal party, walked up the north aisle to the choir seat. Rev Dr Frew gave out the Hymn: "The voice that breathed over Eden", which having been sung, he read the usual scripture relating to marriage. Prayer followed by the Rev Mr. Lyall and the Hymn was sung "O Perfect Love All Human Though Transcending". Rev Dr Frew then addressed the contracting parties, and having received their responses "I Will" to the usual questions, placed the ring on the bride's finger, declared them man and wife. The choir and congregation then sang "The Lord Bless Thee and Keep Thee" and prayer was engaged in by the Rev Mr Cook. There followed the singing of the Paraphrase "O God of Bethel" and the benediction was pronounced by Dr Frew. "God Save the King" was then sung. The newly-married pair thereon retired to the vestry where they signed the register. Re-entering the church, they passed down the south aisle to the limousine motor in waiting in North Bridge Street.

MILITARY COMPLIMENT

After the ceremony, the bride and groom on going out of the church passed under an archway of crossed swords formed by a guard of honour consisting of fellow officers and other military friends of the VC bridegroom. The happy couple drove off for their honeymoon amid showers of confetti and the hearty good wishes of their many assembled friends.

THE PRESENTS

Were both numerous and costly, and many of them are specially interesting and rare. One particularly noteworthy was a very handsome and polished French bronze clock, with side ornaments, each under glass shades, the gift of the townspeople of Darwen, and presented on their behalf by the mayor, Alderman Worth. Valuable gifts were also presented by Provost Frew's colleagues on the Town Council and another notable gift was a case of solid silver brushes by the manager and office staff of Alexander Frew & Co.

Appendix 7

THE BOURLON MEMORIAL

Following the Great War, each of the Allied Countries created projects to commemorate their losses. These war memorials were constructed throughout the 1920s and 30s. The Canadian Government held a competition for the memorial designs and two unique memorials were created: the Vimy Memorial and the Brooding Soldier of the St Julien Memorial. The remaining memorials were based on the same basic design of a granite block in the centre of a circular patch of grass. This was the design used at Bourslon Wood.

The village of Bourslon lies midway between the Canal du Nord and the western outskirts of Cambrai, Bourslon Wood covers a prominent height overlooking the village from the south. At the top of the hill, on ground donated to Canada by the Comte de Franqueville, the Canadian Memorial is reached by a series of steep stone steps rising between a double row of ancient lime trees, which were nursed back to health after being shattered by shell fire in 1918 fighting. It is in the form of a standard Canadian Memorial: an inscribed stone block. From the upper terrace surrounding the great commemorative block of granite there is a commanding view westward across the Canal du Nord and the plain beyond.

The deeds of the Canadians in their drive to final victory during the last days of the war are carved in the memorial stone:

**THE CANADIAN CORPS ON THE 27TH SEP. 1918 FORCED
THE CANAL DU NORD AND CAPTURED THIS HILL.
THEY TOOK CAMBRAI, DEMAIN, VALENCIENNES, & MONS; THEN MARCHED
TO THE RHINE WITH THE VICTORIOUS ALLIES**



Sandy Ferguson

Sandy Ferguson at the Bourslon Memorial in November 2003

Appendix 8

LYALL'S LETTER DESCRIBING THE 1929 VICTORIA CROSS DINNER²⁹²

Officer Commanding
19th Lincolns
St Catharines
Ontario, Canada

Dear Sir,

Saturday night was a wonderful event and will be handed down to posterity as a great national occasion and ceremony and yet there was a welcome lack of ceremonial or stiffness.

On arrival at the Houses of Parliament the crowds had to be controlled by Cavalry, Mounted Police and Foot Police plus British Legion Stewards. After eventually crawling inside, lucky if all one's buttons and clothing was intact, we were met at the House of Lords by Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey - the Prince's Equerry. We next went into the Peers' Gallery and were issued with a menu card which was magnificently done up and a treasure for all time. I shall let you see it when I come back. I sat on the Throne, Woolsack and all the Scottish Peers' seats.

At 8 p.m. a big burly sergeant-major looking individual in evening dress complete with red tunic, announced that his Royal Highness The Prince of Wales was waiting to receive us, so we moved off in single file to be announced by Robin Red Breast. I shook hands with the Prince telling him how delighted I was and privileged to dine with him again and he said "Let me see Lyall, the last time we met was 10 years ago, wasn't it, and 11 years since we dined together at Valenciennes in Belgium", "I hope you will enjoy yourself tonight". I assured him I would, and then passed into the Royal Gallery. Before passing on and whilst waiting for the others to come in, I observed all therein and probably you will be interested to hear about this wonderful Banqueting Hall. Along the back wall is a magnificent oil painting of Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo. All around the walls are oil paintings of past monarchs with the present King and Queen at the extreme end between which is a great archway under which was a huge Victoria Cross made of poppies & leaves by the Disabled ex-Servicemen.

'My Lords & Gentlemen': Our M.C. again appeared and announced "*His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, Your Chairman*", who came in amidst a loud outburst of cheering to the strains of "God Bless The Prince of Wales". After Grace was said we started to dine. Half way through the dinner the Prince proposed the Toast to His Majesty and at the same time read out a reply from him in answer to one we had sent him earlier in the day. A little later Jellicoe proposed the Toast of H.M. The Queen, The Prince of Wales, and all members of the Royal Family, where upon I can't understand how the roof remained on because we did our damndest to lift it and I am sure the Prince was deeply moved.

Then Jellicoe read an appeal by the British Legion which with our consent was to be signed by each V.C. present taking the form of an urgent appeal for funds to help all ex-servicemen, widows and orphans in distress, and for employers to find employment for 800,000 men who fought for the security of our homes and are still without a job. This was received naturally, unanimously.

Then came the Toast of the Evening by H.R.H. - "*Our Guests*". It was most inspiring, occasionally with a touch of humour, and by far the best speech he has ever delivered. It seems a tragedy that such an eloquent speech by Britain's Greatest Ambassador she has ever possessed was not broadcast all over the Empire - it was indeed worthy of such. He delivered it extemporaneous, cool, slow, deliberate and in a clear English accent, typical of the King's English. The reception of his speech was cheered and cheered for at least ten minutes ending in "God Bless the Prince of Wales" and "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

The replies by: Commander Auten for the Navy was short and to the point.

Sergeant Spackman for the Army in a clear, cockney accent, related to the 400,000 idle ex-servicemen and 'what were we going to do about it' and pointing out that the small amount of money required to keep these men from starvation was infinitesimal compared with the daily cost of the War.

Colonel Bishop, the Canadian airman ace, for the Air Force who in a neatly composed speech outlined the evolution of the junior Arm of the Services.

Colonel Pearkes from Canada replying on behalf of the Overseas Guests in a concise extemporaneous review expressed the privilege and thanks for the reception of the Toast. The dinner was brought to a close by the Prince signing a few autograph albums and I received same on the front of my menu card.

On leaving, the Prince presented us each with a copy of the new Legion Book and we tried to get away from the House of Lords quietly, but to our amazement the crowds outside were nearly as large as when we arrived. However, after a struggle we got through - it reminded one of going over the top at zero hour.

On Monday, 11th November, we reported at the Wellington Barracks where R.E. V.C.'s consisting of General Aylmer, General Kirby, Colonel Colvin, Major Waters, Captain Knox, and myself were photographed separately. After a bit of arranging, falling in etc., the Guards massed Bands led the procession of V.C.'s, Life Guards, Guards Regiments, Artillery, ex-Servicemen, and Nurses, in this order, out into Bird Cage Walk, thence The Mall, Admiralty Arch, down Whitehall to the Cenotaph. Our V.C.'s column leading, was given a terrific reception as only London crowds can - we halted right in front of the Cenotaph facing towards Westminster. Subsequently, Ministers of State, Consuls and Ambassadors took up their position facing the War Office each laying a wreath on the side of the memorial. Next came the Queen and Home Secretary along with Princess Mary and the Duchess of York who went up to a

balcony looking right down on the cenotaph. Next the Bishop of London, satellites and choir. Now the Prince of Wales with a wreath from The King and Queen and Royal Family followed by the Dukes of York and Gloucester and Prince Arthur of Connaught, several Admirals, Field Marshalls, Generals, Sir Hugh Trenchard and Lord Byng. Immediately a gun boomed forth and Big Ben commenced to chime whereupon everyone came to the General Salute and stood at attention with heads bare whilst Big Ben struck eleven, ringing out in the cold still air like death. At the end of two minutes the Buglers played the Last Post which was magnificent, just like a single bugle call - a short service and Reveille followed by the National Anthem. Our column again received the honour to lead, and after we had placed a huge Victoria Cross next to the King's wreath on the Cenotaph we marched back to The Mall and barracks. Here Lord Jellicoe took the salute and we dismissed. I must say it was a great honour for us to participate in such a glorious and dignified impressive ceremony. We also had a detachment at Westminster Abbey where another duplicate wreath was placed on the Grave of the Unknown Warrior.

In the evening we arrived at the Albert Hall for the Remembrance Festival and when we marched into this huge arena what a welcome we received. This affair was a magnificently staged pageant representing Britannia and all outposts of our Empire - every branch of the Services being represented. After the musical programme, the interval arrived and H.R.H. The Prince, Patron of the Legion, entered with Jellicoe. Really, I never saw or heard the like of the welcome given him and it was fifteen minutes before the poor lad could start his speech. He delivered his address eloquently to the delight of all and then walked along the passage and centre of the ground floor up an avenue between the VCs and believe me we didn't forget to let him hear us even above the cheers of the thousands of others assembled. He eventually arrived in the Royal Box behind us and after community singing, rendering all the old war time songs, we had portrayed before us a 'Field of Remembrance' exhibition taking the form of the late Colonel McCrae's *"In Flanders Fields"*. This was followed by a shower of poppies, one for every British life lost in the war which made one's blood run cold at the memory of the loss of our brave heroes and comrades who laid down their lives that we might live. After the National Anthem we dispersed to our respective hotels, some embarking on the midnight train for home.

Oh! What a weekend, one which will be handed down to posterity as an eminently historical chapter of ceremonies made possible at the thought of our beloved Prince.

Yours very sincerely
Graham Lyall
Major, Royal Engineers
London, England – 15th November 1929

Appendix 9

THE ORDER OF BATTLE FOR OF THE CANADIAN CORPS, 1916-1918 ²⁹³

3RD CANADIAN DIVISION JUNE– NOVEMBER 1916

7th Infantry Brigade

The Royal Canadian Regiment

The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry

42nd Battalion (Black Watch) Montreal

8th Infantry Brigade

1st Canadian Mounted Rifles (Saskatchewan)

2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles (British Columbia)

4th Canadian Mounted Rifles (Central Ontario)**

5th Canadian Mounted Rifles (Quebec)

9th Infantry Brigade

43rd Battalion (Cameron Highlanders) (Manitoba)

52nd Battalion (Northern Ontario)

58th Battalion (Central Ontario)

60th Battalion (Victoria Rifles) (Montreal)

4TH CANADIAN DIVISION, NOVEMBER 1916-JUNE 1919

10th Infantry Brigade

44th Battalion (Manitoba)

46th Battalion (Saskatchewan)

47th Battalion (British Columbia)

50th Battalion (Alberta)

11th Infantry Brigade

54th Battalion (British Columbia)

75th Battalion (Mississauga Horse) (Toronto)

87th Battalion (Grenadier Guards) (Montreal)

102nd Battalion (North British Columbia, later Central Ontario)**

12th Infantry Brigade

38th Battalion (Eastern Ontario)

72nd Battalion (Seaforth Highlanders) (British Columbia)

78th Battalion (Winnipeg Grenadiers) (Manitoba)

85th Battalion (Nova Scotia Highlanders)

**** Units in which Graham Thomson Lyall served in France, 1916-1918**

Appendix 10

**102ND BATTALION OPERATION ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS
RELATING TO THE CAPTURE OF BOURLON WOOD²⁹⁴**

SECRET

**102ND CDN. INF. BN.
INSTRUCTION NO. 1**

Map Ref 57a.N.E. 1/20,000

1. INFORMATION.

(a) The task of the Canadian Corps is to form a defensive flank to the troops operating further south. This will necessitate the capture of BOURLON WOOD and the high ground to the north of it.

(b) The 1st Cdn. Div. will be on the left of the Canadian Corps front and the 4th Cdn. Div. on the right. The 52nd Div. will operate on our immediate right and will be responsible for the capture of the HINDENBURG SUPPORT LINES – ANNEUX and GRAINCOURT. The 63rd (Naval) Div. is to leapfrog and capture ONTAINE NOTRE DAME and CANTAING.

(c) The 1st Cdn. Div. will attack on a frontage of 1100 yards immediately on our left. The tasks of the 1st and 3rd Cdn. Inf. Bdes are to capture the villages of SAINS LES MARQUION and MARQUION, the CANAL DU NORD Line and the MARQUION Line. The 2nd Cdn. Inf. Bde. Will push through and capture the BLUE Line. They will immediately consolidate in depth, and be prepared for counter attacks.

(d) The boundaries and objectives of the 4th Cdn. Inf. Div. are as shown on the maps already issued.

(i). The 10th Cdn. Inf. Bde. will capture the 1st objective – the front trenches of the MARQUION Line in g.10 b. and j. – E.11.c, and E.17 a. and c. The RED dotted line shown on the map is the 45 minute barrage line. The 11th Cdn. Inf. Bde. on the right and the 12th Cdn. Inf. Bde. on the left will leap-frog the 10th Cdn. Inf. Bde. at the RED line and capture the 2nd (Green) and 3rd (BLUE) objectives.

(ii). A pause of 45 minutes will be made on the RED objective.

(iii). A short pause will be made on the GREEN line.

(iv). Although the 4th Cdn. Inf. Div. forms a flank of the XVII Corps, the advance of the troops on our right must be regulated by the progress made in the capture of BOURLON WOOD. In the same way the 1st Cdn. Division's advance is regulated by our progress.

(v). The 4th Canadian Division must, therefore, press on in the capture of their objectives, irrespective of the progress of the troops on either side.

(vi). The 12th Cdn Inf. Bde's task includes the remaining trenches of the MARQUION Line within their own boundary, the QUARRY at E.5.d.1.1, the three sunken roads leading into BOURLON, the trench system around BOURLON and the village of BOURLON itself. After the capture of the GREEN objective the 12th Cdn. Inf. Bde. will press forward towards PILGRIM'S REST, the capture of which is essential to the success of the operations.

(vii). The 11th Cdn. Inf. Bde. will leap-frog the 10th Cdn. Inf. Bde. on the right portion of the RED Line. Its task includes the remaining trenches in the MARQUION Line and the sunken roads within its Brigade boundaries, the GREEN Line and the BLUE Line.

(viii). The 102nd Cdn. Inf. Bn. will capture the GREEN Line. The 54th Cdn. Inf. Bn. will capture the BLUE Line, working along the southern edge of BOURLON WOOD. As soon as the situation regarding gas permits, the 75th Cdn. Inf. Bn. will mop up BOURLON WOOD. This Wood is at present being extensively gassed. The 87th Cdn. Inf. Bn will be held in Reserve and be prepared to exploit success.

(ix). The 11th and 12th Cdn. Inf. Bdes., once the BLUE Objective has been gained will at once dig themselves in and prepare the position for defence.

It is important for the success of the operations further south that BOURLON WOOD and PILGRIM'S REST HILL be held at all costs.

The positions gained must be prepared for defence in great depth. One Machine Gun Coy. allotted to each Brigade will be utilized for this purpose. The positions should be capable of repulsing an attack from any direction.

The 4th Cdn. Inf. Divl. Artillery will take special steps to have the different Zones allotted to Artillery Brigades so that immediately BLUE Objective is gained an S.O.S. can be laid at once if called for.

2. OPERATION.

(a). The 102nd Cdn. Inf. Bn. will attack and capture the GREEN Line in accordance with map already issued, with A Coy. on the right, B. Coy on the left,

going right through to the GREEN Line. They will advance to the attack in two lines, two platoons forward, followed by two platoons until reaching the sunken road running through E.12.c., E.18.a and c., E.24.a. They will then each advance with three platoons in line and one platoon in support and capture the sunken road immediately west of BOURLON WOOD, which is the GREEN Line.

(b). C Coy. will be in close support to A. and B. Coy., and will advance at a distance of 200 yards with two platoons in line of sections in file, forward, followed by two platoons in similar formation at irregular intervals. They will advance to the sunken road running through E.12.c., E.18.a and c., E.24.a. and will be prepared to assist either A. or B. Coys, if the situation warrants.

(c) D Coy. will be held in Reserve with Battalion H.Q. It will advance by platoons in file – two platoons forward followed by two platoons at irregular intervals. Immediately on reaching their objectives Coys. Must consolidate, taking up defensive positions in depth. A Coy. will cover the 54th Bn in every way when passing through.

3. COMMUNICATION

(a). The importance and absolute necessity of prompt and frequent reports is again emphasised. Locations of Bn. H.Qs. will be notified later, but will always be denoted by the Bn. flag. R.A.P will be at Battalion H.Q. Prisoners will be used in carrying back wounded.

(b). The following signals will be used:--

(i) Three White Very Lights – We are here.

(ii) Three Red Very Lights or Rifle Grenade Rocket – S.O.S or Held up here.
Help me. RED – RED -- RED

(iii) Three Green Very Lights or Rifle Grenade Rocket – Stop your fire.
GREEN – GREEN – GREEN

Where forward troops see enemy lights which might confuse the Artillery they should endeavour as far as possible to correct the situation by firing the correct lights.

(c). Forward troops will light ground flares when called for by Contact Aeroplanes. This is important.

4. ARTILLERY

(a). The 10th Bde advance will take place under cover of a slow rolling barrage. The barrage will play for 45 minutes on the dotted RED Line shown on the map, and from thence at the rate of 100 yards in 4 minutes to the BLUE Objective, with the exception of a short pause on the GREEN Line.

(b). Allotment of guns – 1 gun to 17 yards frontage up to the RED Line. It then gradually diminishes to 1 gun to 28 yards on reaching the GREEN Line, and remains so up to BLUE Line. The allotment does not fall below 1 gun in 28 yards.

(c). There will be no barrage through BOURLON WOOD. On reaching the GREEN Line the barrage will only be laid so as to include the southern and southern edges of the Wood and join up again on the eastern edge of the Wood.

(d). Heavy artillery will engage selected targets. QUARRY WOOD and high ground in vicinity of E.17 will be especially cared for by the Heavies.

(e). One Battery will be detailed to the 11th Brigade and one to the 12th Brigade as forward guns.

(f). There will be a percentage of smoke shells fired with the barrage to screen observation from the high ground in E.17.b and d. and also from QUARRY WOOD so that it is essential to pick out prominent features on the map in order that direction may be maintained throughout.

(g). All officers must carry compasses.

5. MACHINE GUNS

One company of the 4th Cdn. Machine Gun Bn. will be attached to the 11th Bde., and one motor Machine Gun Bde. will be attached to 4th Division.

WW Dunlop
Captain and Adjutant
For O.C. 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion
Issued 20.9.18
2.30 pm

Copy No.	1	to CO
“	2	Adjt
“	3	OC A Coy
“	4	OC B Coy
“	5	OC C Coy
“	6	OC D Coy
“	7	OC HQ
“	8	Signals

SECRET

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION NO. 1

Issued in connection with BOURLON WOOD Operation

Ref. Map. 51-B and 57-B. 1/40,000

1. **ACCOMMODATION.** The only accommodation in the Staging Area consists of a few dugouts and rough trench shelters. Tarpaulins will, therefore, be carried.
2. **TRANSPORTATION.** A lorry will report to Battalion this PM to transport tarpaulins and any other material detailed by the Q.M.
Two baggage wagons will report at 3.00 pm today.
The Transport Officer will detail an N.C.O. to meet the Brigade Transport Officer at road junction D.1.e.9.6 at 7.30 pm. This N.C.O. will guide our Transport on arrival to the new lines.
3. **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TRENCH MUNITIONS.** Special Equipment, trench munitions and dry rations will be drawn on the 26th inst. And issued to companies and details concerned.
4. **SUPPLIES.** Supply railhead will be at GROISILLES.
Refuelling point on and after the 26th inst. will be situated at U.19.a.7.7. Q.M. will detail a guide to be at refilling point each morning by 7.00 AM.
Rations will be delivered daily to the "B" Echelon of the First Line Transport.
Solidified alcohol and rum will be issued daily, commencing "Y" day, for the following day's consumption.
5. **PACKS.** All packs, including greatcoats, Officers' kits and other surplus baggage, will be conveyed to the Staging Area and stored there on the 26th inst. under Brigade arrangements.
6. **WATER.** Water carts may be filled at the following points. All drinking water must be chlorinated.

QUEANT	D.8.a.2.8.
BULLECOURT	U.22.b.0.6
RIENCOURT	U.24.a.3.0
Between QUEANT and PRONVILLE	D.9.a.1.9

Horse watering points have also been established at the following points:

Sheet 51-B	
U.24.a.0.5	100 ft. H.T.
U.22.b.0.6	300 ft H.T.
Sheet 57-C	
D.1.d.7.5	60 ft H.T.

D.8.a.2.9 90 ft H.T.

7. **ORDNANCE.** Location CROISILLES (.24.d.8.7). Advance Ordnance pump will be maintained with Brigade Refilling Point. Blankets, on the scale of one per man, will be available for issue immediately after operations.
8. **GAS SCHOOL.** Location QUEANT at D.2.c.5.0.
9. **REINFORCEMENTS.** O.C. Training Company will detail a guide to report to Forward Canadian Staging Camp at WANCOURT at 8.00 am daily to guide in possible reinforcements.

WW Dunlop
Captain
Adjutant
For O.C. 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion
Issued 20.9.18

Ref. Sheet 51.b
SECRET
OPERATION ORDER NO 137
COPY NO 10

1. The 11th Cdn. Inf. Bde Group will move independently to the BULLECOURT Staging Area on the night of September 25th/26th.
2. The 102nd Battalion, with transport, will be located in Square U.30.
3. The Battalion will assemble, ready to move off at 6.00 pm, the head of the column in sunken road near B Coy's kitchen. Order of march: Band, A Coy, B Coy, C Coy, D Coy, HQ, Training Company. Dress: Full marching order.

Company Lewis Gun limbers and kitchens will follow their respective companies, remainder of the transport in rear of the Battalion.

4. A distance of 10 yards will be maintained between companies and between the rear company and the transports. Each company will maintain connecting files to keep in touch with the company in front.
5. OCs Coys, HQ, Training Company and Base will detail one Other Rank each to report to the Scout Officer at Battalion Orderly Room at 1.00 pm to act as Advance Party. They will ascertain their respective company areas, locate a suitable place for kitchen and lead their companies on arrival.

6. Officers' and Sergeants' Mess material, BOR material will be piled at D Coy's kitchen by 5.00 pm.

7. All other material, including Officers' kits, will be piled at D Coy's kitchen by 3.00 pm.

8. All tarpaulins will be rolled as tightly as possible and piled at A Coy's kitchen by 1.00 pm for transport to new location, by lorry. They will be handed over to Lieut. B. Davidson who will re-issue them in the new area. The following tarpaulins are on charge:

A Coy	11	D Coy	11
B Coy	11	HQ	12
C Coy	11	Tpts	4

9. The Scout Officer will arrange to have Scouts stationed at each turning. These Scouts will direct column and remain at their posts until the whole Battalion has passed.

10. All water tins will be turned in before 2.00 pm to the Water Detail for loading on the Water Carts.

11. While in the Staging Area, the utmost precaution is to be taken by all ranks to keep troops from observation. All daylight movement is to be reduced to a minimum.

WW Dunlop

Captain

Adjutant

For OC 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion

Issued 25.9.18

11.00 pm

Copy No. 1	OC	Copy No. 7	Offr i/c HQ
" 2	Adjutant	" 8	QM
" 3	OC A Coy	" 9	TO
" 4	OC B Coy	" 10	War Diary
" 5	OC C Coy	" 11	Fyle
" 6	OC D Coy	" 12	Spare

SECRET

INSTRUCTION NO. 2.

1. The 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade will capture the GREEN Line with the 87th Battalion on the left and 102nd Battalion on the right. The 54th Battalion will pass through the 87th Battalion, capture the BLUE Line and join up with 102nd Battalion on south of BOURLON WOOD. Tasks are allotted in map already issued.

2. The 102nd Battalion will capture their portion of the GREEN Line with two companies – A Coy. on the right and B Coy. on the left. The barrage will halt for fifty minutes in front of GREEN Line, when C Company will pass through A Coy., and D Coy. will pass through B on the left.
3. The 47th King's Liverpool Regt. will be on the right of C Coy and the 87th Battalion on the left of D Coy. It is essential that a close touch be kept by C Coy. with unit on their right.
4. A and B Companies will capture GREEN Line in formation as already ordered. C and D Companies will advance to the attack each with two platoons forward, followed by one platoon in support and one platoon in reserve.
5. Assembly positions are as shown on map.
6. In moving to jumping-off positions companies will arrange advance with two platoons in file forward, followed by two platoons in similar formation at irregular intervals.
7. Proposed Battalion H.Q. are as marked on map.
8. The Scout Officer with six Battalion scouts will keep in touch with the 47th Battalion of the 10th Bde. and keep Battalion HQ informed as to their progress.
9. Barrage map has already been issued.
10. Battalion snipers will go forward with A and B Companies, then continue with C and D Coys. They will work independently.
11. One Stokes gun each will accompany A and C Companies.
12. Eight Vickers machine guns are attached to the Battalion. They will be used as the situation requires.
13. Prompt and frequent reports must be sent Battalion HQ.
14. After capturing objectives, companies will immediately advise Battalion HQ number of men available for further exploitation.
15. Contact planes fly at following hours:-

ZERO plus 4-1/2 to ZERO plus 5 hours
ZERO plus 6-1/4 to ZERO plus 7 hours
ZERO plus 8-1/2 to ZERO plus 9 hours

And every three hours for half-an-hour thereafter.

WW Dunlop
Captain & Adjutant
For O.C. 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion
Issued 5.00 pm
26.9.18

Copy No 1	O.C.	Copy No 7	H.Q.
“ 2	Adjutant	“ 8	T.O.
“ 3	A Coy.	“ 9	Q.M.
“ 4	B Coy .	“ 10	War Diary
“ 5	C Coy.	“ 11	Fyle
“ 6	D Coy.	“ 12	Spare

SECRET
OPERATION ORDER NO 138

1. The Battalion will assemble with head of the column at Bn HQ ready to move off at 10.30 pm:-

Order of March: A, B, C, D Coys, HQ.
Dress: Battle Order

2. Lewis guns and all battle equipment and ammunition is to be carried by men.
3. Balance of the day's rations, 24 hours rations, and a supplementary ordinary iron rations, and filled water bottles.
4. Scout Officer will arrange to guide the Battalion to Assembly positions as shown on the map already issued.
5. The Battalion will move forward in platoons in fours with a distance of 20 yards between platoons – connecting files will be maintained between platoons.

For Valour: Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

WW Dunlop
Capt & Adj
For O.C. 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion
Issued 5.30 pm
26.9.18

Copy No 1	CO	Copy No 5	D Coy	Copy No 9	Adj
“ 2	A Coy	“ 6	HQ	“ 10	War
D					
“ 3	B Coy	“ 7	TO	“ 11	Fyle
“ 4	C Coy	“ 8	QM	“ 12	
Spare					

**102ND CANADIAN INFANTRY BATTALION
NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS FROM 27TH SEPTEMBER
TO 2ND OCTOBER 1918²⁹⁵**

Ref: Sheet 57C-N.E.
 51B-S.E.
 51A-S

FIRST PHASE

The general scheme of operations was for the Canadian Corps, with 1st and 4th Divisions, to cross the CANAL DU NORD and, taking BOURLON VILLAGE and WOOD, to work up towards the north of CAMBRAI.

The 4th Division was assigned the task of capturing BOURLON VILLAGE and WOOD, the 10th Brigade taking the CANAL DU NORD line, and the 11th Brigade on the right, and the 12th Brigade on the left, going through the 10th Brigade and taking up to the East of BOURLON VILLAGE and WOOD.

The 11th Brigade was given the task of taking BOURLON WOOD. The Brigade moved to a concentration area around BULLECOURT on the night of 25th/26th September, and on the night of the 26th/27th September moved to the assembly area just West of INCHY-en-ARTOIS.

At Zero hour, 5.20 a. m. on the 27th September, the Brigade started to move forward, the 102nd Battalion leading, followed by the 87th, 54th, and 75th Battalions.

The scheme of the Brigade attack was to take the GREEN line running West of BOURLON WOOD with the 102nd on the right and the 87th on the left, and for the 54th Bn to work round the North end of the WOOD and take the BLUE line, the 75th Bn remaining in Reserve, -- the 102nd Bn pushing along the southern edge of the WOOD to link up with the 54th Bn.

The 102nd Bn kept in close touch with the 10th Brigade, and on the RED objective being captured --- "A" Coy, being on the right and "B" Coy on the left --- jumped off from the RED line and captured the GREEN line. The companies detailed to go forward to the BLUE line commenced to advance but found the Imperials on the right were not up. In spite of this, and in spite of very heavy machine gun fire and direct artillery fire from the right flank, those companies pushed forward their advance and came within about 100 yards of their objective. About this time the CO established his HQ at E.17.c.0.5. Shortly after this a shell landed right at Headquarters and killed the Signal Officer, wounding the CO, Adjutant and several others. The Commanding Officer --- Lieut.-Col Thompson, D.S.O., of the 75th Bn --- was then detailed to take command

of the 102nd and 75th Bns, and he immediately moved two companies of the 75th up into the positions around the 102nd Headquarters.

Endeavours were made to get the Imperials to advance on the right and a “shoot” was put on the right about 4.00 p.m. The Imperials endeavoured to advance but were still held back. Orders were then given to the two leading companies of the 102nd to push forward to their objective and to form a defensive flank to the South. This was done and word was received that the companies had reached their objective and had formed this defensive flank.

Orders were received from Brigade to co-operate with the 54th Bn in taking FONTAINE. “D” Coy was ordered to attack. The company on advancing was met with a very heavy Boche counter-attack which they successfully defeated but were not able to advance any further.

During the night 27th/28th orders were received from Brigade that the 3rd Canadian Division would attack through this Brigade at daybreak on the 28th, and, on this being done, BOURLON WOOD was to be thoroughly mopped up. Accordingly, the CO put in a company of the 75th to complete the mopping up of BOURLON WOOD.

About noon orders were received from Brigade that the Brigade would concentrate about the Quarry in E.5.d.1.1, and that Major J. B. Bailey of the 54th Battn was to take command of the 102nd Bn leaving Lieut-Col Thompson in command of the 75th Bn. The Battn accordingly moved over to the area allotted, the cookers were ordered up and the men made comfortable for the night.

CASUALTIES	Killed		Wounded	
	Officers	Other Ranks	Officers	Other Ranks
	5	44	8	151
At Duty				3
Missing				3
Prisoners.....	257			
Guns.....	15			
Machine Guns.....	18			

SECOND PHASE

During the night of 28th/29th September orders were received that the attack was to continue that day, as regards the 4th Division, by the 12th Brigade, and that the 11th Brigade were to move forward in support, ready to go through the 12th Brigade if their attack was successful. The order of movement was to be --- 54th, 75th, 102nd and 87th Bns, and the Brigade was to move forward at daybreak into positions around the FARNE DES

LILLES and wait there until the attack in front was favourable to proceed. This movement accordingly took place.

The 12th Brigade in their attack met considerable opposition and had great difficulty in pushing forward, and as afternoon came on it was seen that the 11th Brigade would not be wanted that day. Consequently cookers were ordered up and the men made themselves comfortable for the night.

About 11 p. m. a conference took place at Brigade HQ and orders were given by the Brigadier for the 11th Brigade to attack the following day, the attack to be made against the Hun positions South of SANCOURT, BLECOURT, and BANTIGNY and to swing to the right to the bridgehead at ESWARS. The move to assembly positions took place about 4.00 a. m. on the 30th. The night was very dark and the going slow.

The order of attack was 75th Battalion – then the 54th and 87th Battalions were to leapfrog through the 75th and 54th taking the ground between CUVILLERS and BANTIGNY and the 87th Battalion to swing to the right and take ESWARS, the 102nd Bn to protect the flanks in S.4.c. and d. and S.10.c. and d. Zero hour was 6.00 a. m.

The Battalion reached their assembly positions in good shape, although they suffered a few casualties from shell fire on the way up. At 6.30 a. m. the Battalion started to move forward, touch being maintained with the 87th Battalion in front. The hostile barrage was very heavy and caused numerous casualties. Companies continued to advance and crossed the CAMBRAI-DOUAI road in good order. The leading companies got to the railway embankment and the rear companies to the trench just East of the road. At this time the CO moved his HQ forward to the East of the CAMBRAI-DOUAI road. On arriving there he found that the attack in front was held up and no progress was being made.

Acting in conjunction with the CO of the 87th Bn he went back to Brigade and personally informed the Brigadier of the situation and there received instructions from the Brigadier to pull back the 102nd Bn just West of the CAMBRAI-DOUAI road and there take up a defensive position as Reserve battalion. He accordingly went back and had this carried out, the Battalion taking up a defensive position about 500 yards west of the road, the men digging themselves in.

At this time it was definitely ascertained that the Boche was attacking in strength and that the task for that day was not to reach our final objective but to stay this attack in force.

After personal reconnaissance, the Brigadier gave orders for the attack to be renewed on the morning of the 1st October, and the following tasks were allotted. The 102nd Bn to attack and take the BLUE and RED line, the 87th to leap-frog through – the 54th and 75th to be in Reserve. The companies moved to their jumping-off positions East of the railway cutting about 4.00 a.m. Dispositions were completed and the Battalion jumped off at Zero (5.00 a. m.) – “A” Coy on the right and “C” Coy on the left being

responsible for the BLUE line, "B" Coy to go through them and attack the RED line with "D" Coy on Reserve.

At about 6.30 a. m. word was received that the BLUE line had been captured and a large number of prisoners commenced to come back. The BLUE line was held on force by the BOCHE with a considerable number of machine guns but by skilful manoeuvring "A" and "C" companies captured this line.

"B" Company jumped off from the BLUE line, having suffered many casualties on the way up, and succeeded in reaching their objective the RED line, word being received at 10.00 a. m. that they were in position.

Heavy opposition was then encountered and the Boche began pouring in reinforcements, the first of which was four waves coming from the direction of BANTIGNY over the ridge to the North. The CO in order to keep touch with the situation in front moved his HQ forward to the railway cutting and sent out patrols to the flanks to get information. It was found that BLECOURT had not been cleared of Boche machine guns at any time. This greatly interfered with this Battalions operations.

The enemy continued to put in reinforcements in the low ground about BANTIGNY and considerable work was enabled to put in against these and against machine guns around BLECOURT by two forward guns of the 4th C.D.A and also the 4th C.D.A. 6" Tre4nch Mortars.

A number of batteries belonging to the 1st and 2nd Divisions were brought into action on information that we gave them.

The situation on both flanks fluctuated considerably and owing to this it was decided to put in "D" Coy, the Reserve Company, to form a flank facing BLECOURT. This Company took up a defensive position and made great use of their Lewis guns, causing a large number of casualties to the enemy around BLECOURT.

From information received, it was found that the flank on the right of this Brigade had fallen back and the position then was that this Brigade held the BLUE line with posts out on the RED line, and it was decided to consolidate the line then held and that the trenches in S.16. central should be used as a point on which to create a line to both flanks which were then indefinite. A Platoon of the 54th Battalion was accordingly sent up to these trenches to reinforce the 75th Bn filled the gap, to the right, joining up with the 87th at S.17. central And Major Pearce of the Machine Gun Company with his own guns and those attached to him completed the defence from these trenches, behind the BLUE line, to the Reserve Company of the 102nd Battn, facing BLECOURT, thus giving a solid front for the night.

Although the situation on the flanks of this Brigade was at all times doubtful, leaving the Brigade unprotected and causing many casualties, it was realised that the ground taken by this Brigade must be held at all costs. This was done and the line

established was handed over to the relieving units of the 2nd Division in the early hours of the morning of the 2nd, who thus took over a well established line as follows:--

S.8.d.2.0 to S.9.d.5.5 to S.16.a.3.9 to S.16.central
With platoon posts at S.10.c.6.6, S.11.b.8.0 and S.17.a.9.5

CASUALTIES	Killed		Wounded	
	Officers	Other Ranks	Officers	Other Ranks
		12	7	117
At Duty			1	3
Missing				11

Prisoners 443
Guns 1
Machine Guns 32

RESUME FOR BOTH PHASES OF THE OPERATION

CASUALTIES

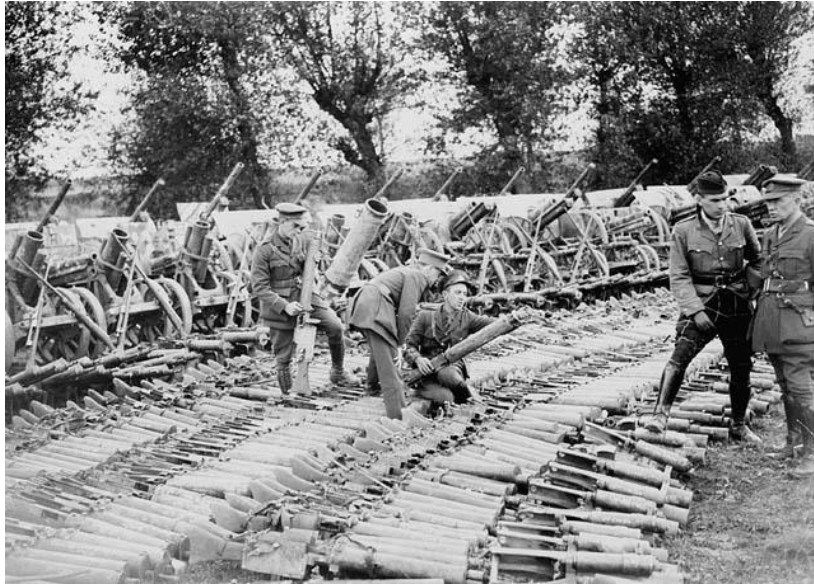
	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Other Ranks</u>
Number of killed	5	56
Number of wounded	16	274
Number of missing		14
	<hr/> 21	<hr/> 344

CAPTURES

Number of prisoners 700
Number of guns 16
Number of machine guns 50

(sgd) J. B. Baily
Major
A/CO 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion

6.X.18



Library and Archives Canada

**German guns captured east of Arras during the advance on Cambrai,
September/October, 1918**

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ British Ministry of Defence, P 48647 Graham Thomson Lyall. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. Many sources, including his CEF attestation papers, mistakenly state that Lyall was born in Manchester, England.
- ² Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ³ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ⁴ British Ministry of Defence, P 48647 Graham Thomson Lyall. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. Sandy Ferguson noted that even his “spell in Canada could not be detected from his voice.”
- ⁵ British Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall James W. Bancroft. *Devotion to Duty: Tributes to a Region's VCs* (Manchester, 1990), pp 88-90. Sir Garrett O'Moore Creagh and Edith M. Humphries, *The Victoria Cross and Distinguished Service Order, 1854-1923: A Complete Record* (London, 1923), Vol 1, p 309. A. E. Coombs. *History of the Niagara Peninsula* (Montreal, 1950). Ferguson Correspondence, 4 July and 9 November 2003. The Blackburn District Library Correspondence, January 2001. The VC and GC Association Correspondence, 20 September 2000. The Peoples Press, 21 January 1919. The Niagara Falls Review, 11 December 1941.
- ⁶ Bancroft, James W. *Devotion to Duty: Tributes to a Region's VCs* (Manchester, 1990), p 88. Nelson Leader, 20 December 1918. *Who's Who* (London, 1927). Ferguson Correspondence, 7 July 2003. Dunoon Herald and Cowal Advertiser, 7 September 1906. The race was conducted on 7 September 1906, and was sponsored by the Dunoon Argyll Amateur Swimming Club.
- ⁷ There is some confusion in both primary and secondary sources that document this period of his life. With regard to Lyall's education, Creagh states simply that he completed Secondary School, “later qualifying as a Mechanical Engineer” and the 1927 issue of *Who's Who* only indicates that he qualified as a Mechanical Engineer. The records held by the VC and GC Association state that he “Qualified as a Mechanical Engineer and joined the Royal Navy”. The Nelson Leader's report in 1918 of his winning the Victoria Cross states that he “was trained as a naval engineer.” Lyall's file in the British National Army Museum indicates he was educated at a Naval Engineering College. However, Lyall's Canadian Expeditionary Force personnel file carries no reference to service in the navy, and his British Army records only note he attended a “Technical College – Mechanical Engineering, Portsmouth”, with no indication that the college was associated with the Royal Navy. Portsmouth and Education, pp 90-95.
- ⁸ Library and Archives Canada. RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. Creagh, Vol 1, p 309. Colne and Nelson Times, 13 December 1919. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. The VC and GC Association Correspondence, 20 September 2000. The People's Press (21 January 1919) also reported that he had trained as a naval engineer, but that “he left the service and in 1912 came to Canada as an electrical engineer.” The Peoples Press, 21 January 1919. Nelson Leader, 20 December 1918. Ferguson Correspondence January and 9 November 2003. Lyall's nephew, Sandy Ferguson, could not recall any mention of Lyall's service in the navy, or any interest in ships.
- ⁹ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ¹⁰ Library and Archives Canada. RG 76, Passenger Lists, 1865-1935. RMS Teutonic.
- ¹¹ William Lewis. *Aqueduct, Merrittsville and Welland: A History of the City of Welland* (Welland, 2003). Vol 3, pp 26-28. The plant re-opened during the war and in addition to steel pipe it assembled and finished 6 inch shells. Over the years, the company evolved into the present-day Page Hersey.
- ¹² The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum. *Enlistment Record Book*. Niagara Falls, Ontario, *City Directory for 1913 and 1914* (Lockport, NY, 1914). *Hundredth Anniversary of Trinity Church, Chippawa: A Story of the Centennial Ceremonies and the History of the Church the Past Century, 1820-1920* (np, nd). *Who's Who* (London, 1927). People's Press, 21 January 1919. Niagara Falls Review, 18 December 1918. St Catharines Standard, 18 December 1918. De la Rosa was Rector of Holy Trinity Church, 1911-1916. Bridgewater Street in 1914 was what is now Portage Road from Niagara Falls to the bridge in Chippawa over the Welland River.
- ¹³ Welland Tribune, 19 December 1918. St Catharines Standard, 18 December 1918.
- ¹⁴ St Catharines Standard, 18 December 1918. Welland Tribune, 19 December 1918.

- ¹⁵ British Ministry of Defence, P48647, Graham Thomson Lyall. *Who's Who* (London, 1927). Nelson Leader, 20 December 1918. Colne and Nelson Times, 12 December 1918. People's Press, 21 January 1919.
- ¹⁶ The Peoples Press, 21 January 1919. The Welland Tribune, 20 March 1919. Iain Stewart Correspondence, 15 August 2000. Jeff Newman, Reference Librarian, Robarts Library, University of Toronto, Correspondence, 13 September 2000.
- ¹⁷ R. L. Rogers, *The History of The Lincoln and Welland Regiment* (Ottawa, 1954), pp 35-36.
- ¹⁸ Correspondence, G. T. Lyall/CO 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, 15 November 1929. The Peoples Press, 21 January 1919.
- ¹⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series II-F-9, Vol 214, Pay List of the Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men of the 19th "Lincoln" Regiment at a Detached Post at Niagara Falls, Welland Canal Protective Force, 1914-1915, folio 3629.
- ²⁰ Library and Archives Canada. RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series II-F-9, Volume 214, folio 2918, September 1914.
- ²¹ St Catharines Standard, 9 September 1914.
- ²² St Catharines Standard, 11 August 1914.
- ²³ St Catharines Standard, 23 September 1914.
- ²⁴ Library and Archives Canada. RG 9, Series II-F-9, Vol 214, folio 3629; Vol 215, Part II Daily Orders, 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, Welland Canal Force, No 72, 17 September 1915 and No 76, 28 September 1915. Welland Tribune, 20 March 1919.
- ²⁵ Niagara Falls Evening Review, 11 February 1915; 18 February 1915; 6 March 1915. The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum, Harold Jolliffe Manuscript draft notes.
- ²⁶ Rogers, p 78.
- ²⁷ The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum, Harold Jolliffe Manuscript draft notes.
- ²⁸ Welland Telegraph, 1 January 1915; 14 September 1915. St Catharines Standard, 10 September 1915. The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum, Orderly Officers' Report, 1 June 1916.
- ²⁹ Bancroft, p 88; Correspondence, the VC and GC Association. Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) 158524 Box 5803, Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall, and RG 9, Series II-F-9, Vol 215, Part II Daily Orders, 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, Welland Canal Force, No 72, 17 September 1915 and No 76, 28 September 1915; RG 9, Series II-F-9, Box 215, 19th Regiment Pay List of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men, September 1915. Welland Tribune, 20 March 1919. Correspondence, The VC and GC Association, 20 September 2000. Colne and Nelson Times, 13 December 1918. He was assigned the regimental number 158524.
- ³⁰ Duguid, pp 54-55. *Canada and The Great War*, Vol 2, p 253.
- ³¹ Library and Archives Canada. RG 150 (1992-93/166) 158524 Box 5803, Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ³² St Catharines Standard, 12 October 1915.
- ³³ St Catharines Standard, 16 October 1915.
- ³⁴ St Catharines Standard, 16 October 1915. The Globe, 25 October 1915.
- ³⁵ St Catharines Standard, 16 October 1915.
- ³⁶ St Catharines Standard, 27 October 1915.
- ³⁷ St Catharines Standard, 28 October 1915.
- ³⁸ St Catharines Standard, 30 October 1915; 2 November 1915.
- ³⁹ St Catharines Standard, 4 November 1915.
- ⁴⁰ St Catharines Standard, 10 November 1915.
- ⁴¹ St Catharines Standard, 15 September 1915.
- ⁴² St Catharines Standard, 17 December 1915.
- ⁴³ Barbara M. Wilson, *Ontario in the First World War* (Toronto, 1977), p xl. St Catharines Standard, 21 December 1915. Interestingly, the 98th Battalion, the next battalion to be raised in Niagara, gained notoriety for being the CEF battalion which drank the most beer while in camp at Otterpool, Kent, England.
- ⁴⁴ St Catharines Standard, 2 January 1916.
- ⁴⁵ St Catharines Standard, 1 March 1916.
- ⁴⁶ St Catharines Standard, 10 April 1916.
- ⁴⁷ St Catharines Standard, 10 April 1916.

- ⁴⁸ The Regimental Colours of the 81st Battalion are now laid up in St George's Anglican Church, St Catharines, Ontario.
- ⁴⁹ St Catharines Standard, 25 May 1916.
- ⁵⁰ David R. Gray, "Carrying Canadian Troops: The Story of RMS Olympic as a First World War Troopship." *Canadian Military History*, 11(Number 1, Winter 2002), pp 55-57.
- ⁵¹ Mark Chirnside, *The Olympic Class: Olympic, Titanic and Britannic* (Tempus Publishing, 2004). Malaspina University College, *The Canadian Letters and Images Project* (The Herbert Hill White Collection).
- ⁵² Charles A. H. Raymond, "Formation of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions." In *Canada and the Great War* (Toronto, 1919), Vol 3, pp 196-209.
- ⁵³ Rogers, p 58. G. W. L. Nicholson, *The Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919: The Official History of The Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa, 1962), pp 134-135; 222-223. Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) 158524 Box 5803, Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ⁵⁴ Stewart Gordon Bennett, *The 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, 1914-1919* (Toronto, 1929). Desmond Morton and J. L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and The Great War, 1914-1919* (Toronto, 1989), p 29. Nicholson, p 134. William Avery Bishop, who would later join the RFC and win the VC, obtained his first commission in 4 CMR. Private Thomas William Holmes won the VC while serving in 4 CMR in 1917.
- ⁵⁵ D. J. Goodspeed, *The Road Past Vimy: The Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto, 1968), p 60. Nicholson, p 132. Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4947, War Diary, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, 4 June 1916.
- ⁵⁶ Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) 158524 Box 5803, Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall; RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4947, War Diary, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, 9 and 10 June 1916. Bennett, pp 21-22, p 259. In all, some 436 men from the 81st Battalion would serve in 4 CMR during the war. A total of 875 men of the 81st were dispersed to units of the Canadian Corps in France in June 1916, with the remainder of the Battalion being sent to other units in the UK. St Catharines Standard, 18 December 1918.
- ⁵⁷ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D3, Vol 4894, War Diary of the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade; RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4947, War Diary, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, 1-8 July 1916, and Operation Order No 17, 25 June 1916.
- ⁵⁸ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4947, War Diary, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, Operation Order No 17, 25 June 1916.
- ⁵⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4947, War Diary, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, June 1916.
- ⁶⁰ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D3, Vol 4894, War Diary of the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade; Series III-D-3, Vol 4947, War Diary, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, 1 July 1916. British Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ⁶¹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4947, War Diary, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, 23-27 July 1916.
- ⁶² British Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall. Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D3, Vol 4894, War Diary of the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade. Bennett, pp 23-31.
- ⁶³ Bennett, pp 23-31.
- ⁶⁴ Nicholson, p 163.
- ⁶⁵ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D3, Vol 4894, War Diary of the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade.
- ⁶⁶ Bennett, p 31.
- ⁶⁷ Nicholson, pp 150-151
- ⁶⁸ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D3, Vol 4894, War Diary of the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade.
- ⁶⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D3, Vol 4894, War Diary of the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade.
- ⁷⁰ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D3, Vol 4894, War Diary of the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade.
- ⁷¹ Bennett, p 35.

- ⁷² Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) 158524 Box 5803, Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. The British Ministry of Defence personnel file for Lyall gives the date of his wounding as 16 September 1916, near Pozieres.
- ⁷³ Bennett, p 39.
- ⁷⁴ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4894, War Diary of the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade.
- ⁷⁵ Nicholson, p 183.
- ⁷⁶ Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) 158524 Box 5803, Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall. Lyall's British Army records state that he was promoted Sergeant on 7 August, Company Sergeant Major on 15 September, and 1st Lieutenant on 16 September 1916. These dates, however, were probably provided to the recruiter from memory with no documentation to support them, and although not officially promoted to Sergeant Major, he probably performed those duties. The date for his promotion to Lieutenant is obviously an inadvertent error. *St Catharines Standard*, 10 January 1919.
- ⁷⁷ Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. The *People's Press*, 21 January 1919 stated he suffered deafness in his left ear due to infection caused by his long distance swimming as a youth.
- ⁷⁸ Rogers, pp 60-62. Bennett, p 42.
- ⁷⁹ Nicholson, pages 244 and 246. Bennett, pp 46-47.
- ⁸⁰ Nicholson, p 233. Bennett, p 45.
- ⁸¹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. Lyall's British Army records state he attained a grade of "Distinguished" on the Musketry Course. Enlisted men who were considered veterans, were appointed Temporary Lieutenants, undoubtedly recognizing that some of them would not complete the commissioning process successfully.
- ⁸² Ferguson Correspondence, September 2006.
- ⁸³ Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ⁸⁴ Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ⁸⁵ Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall; RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Battalion, CEF, 2 October 1917.
- ⁸⁶ National Archives of Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Battalion, 2 October 1917.
- ⁸⁷ National Archives of Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Battalion, 2 October 1917. RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4904, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 4 October 1917. RG 9, Series II-B-3, Vol 80, Embarkation Roll, 176th Battalion. L. McLeod Gould. *From B. C. to Baisieux: Being the Narrative History of the 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion* (Victoria, 1919). On 20 August 1917 the Battalion ceased to be a British Columbia unit, and was posted as a battalion of the 2nd Central Ontario Regiment.
- ⁸⁸ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4904, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 4 October 1917.
- ⁸⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vo 4903, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 29 September 1917.
- ⁹⁰ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4904, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 4 October 1917; RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 4 October 1917. Gould, p 67.
- ⁹¹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vo 4903, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 22 October 1917. Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vo 4903, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade,
- ⁹² Daniel G. Dancocks, *Legacy of Valour: The Canadians at Passchendaele* (Edmonton, 1986), p 115.
- ⁹³ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 22 October 1917.
- ⁹⁴ Lyn MacDonald, *They Called it Passchendaele: The Story of the Third Battle of Ypres and of the Men Who Fought In It* (London, 1978), p 217. Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vo 4903, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 22 October 1917.

- ⁹⁵ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 23 October 1917.
- ⁹⁶ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 27 October 1917. Dancocks, pp 135-136.
- ⁹⁷ Gould, p 73.
- ⁹⁸ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 1 November 1917.
- ⁹⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 18 November 1917.
- ¹⁰⁰ Christie, Norm. *For King & Empire: The Canadians at Passchendaele, October to November 1917* (Nepean, 1996), pages 2, 15.
- ¹⁰¹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. NAC RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4904, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, November 1917, Appendix 26. Later medical records state he had suffered mustard gas exposure. The British Ministry of Defence personnel file notes the shrapnel wound in the right knee, but makes no mention of being gassed.
- ¹⁰² Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 1 December 1917.
- ¹⁰³ Correspondence, Major Franklin Gary/Isabel Frew, 9 December 1917.
- ¹⁰⁴ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4904, War Diary, 102nd Battalion, 3-10 December 1917.
- ¹⁰⁵ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4904, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 15 December 1917; RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 3 December 1917.
- ¹⁰⁶ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 18 December 1917.
- ¹⁰⁷ Correspondence, Major Franklin Gary/Isabel Frew, 21 December 1917.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ferguson Correspondence, September 2006.
- ¹⁰⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, 1 - 25 January 1918.
- ¹¹⁰ Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. Ferguson Correspondence, September 2006. Correspondence Major Franklin Gary/Isabel Frew, 24 January 1918.
- ¹¹¹ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. In 1909 the British War Office formed the Organization of Voluntary Aid. Under this scheme, the British Red Cross was given the role of providing supplementary aid to the Territorial Forces and Medical Service in the event of war. County branches were known as Voluntary Aid Detachments, and the members came to be known simply as VADs. They were trained in First Aid and Nursing and performed these duties in Military Hospitals, auxiliary hospitals and convalescent homes. In addition some VADs performed clerical and kitchen duties. Some VADs qualified for the British War Medal. There was also a Men's VAD. Elsie's mother, Elizabeth Moffat Frew, was very active in both the Red Cross Society and The Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association which did voluntary social work throughout the war. It was probably through the involvement of her mother, that Elsie became a VAD nurse (Airdrie – A Historical Sketch).
- ¹¹² Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. The British Ministry of Defence personnel file notes that his wound was "poisoning (mustard) – stomach /3/18".
- ¹¹³ Colne and Nelson Times, 13 December 1918. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ¹¹⁴ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, Narrative of Operations, 2-5 September 1918.
- ¹¹⁵ Gould, p 103.
- ¹¹⁶ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4905, Narrative of Operations, 2-5 September 1918.
- ¹¹⁷ Gould, pp 104-105.

- ¹¹⁸ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, Narrative of Operations, 2-5 September 1918.
- ¹¹⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, Vol 4905, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Narrative of Operations, 2-5 September 1918.
- ¹²⁰ Canada. Department of Veterans Affairs, Canadian Virtual War Memorial, Franklin Jude Gary, MC.
- ¹²¹ *Canada and The Great War*, Vol 5, p 173.
- ¹²² Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, War Diary, 4th Canadian Division, Narrative – The Battle for Bourlon. Gould, p 107. One of the German soldiers to suffer from the effects of the mustard gas used during this operation was Corporal Adolph Hitler.
- ¹²³ Bill Freeman and Richard Nielsen, *Far From Home: Canadians in the First World War* (Toronto, 1999), p 206. W. Murray, *The History of the 2nd Canadian Battalion (Eastern Ontario Regiment), Canadian Expeditionary Force in The Great War, 1914-1919* (Ottawa, 1947), p 298. J. F. B. Livesay, *Canada's Hundred Days* (Toronto, 1919), p 231.
- ¹²⁴ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4906, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Narrative of Operations, 27 September to 2 October 1918.
- ¹²⁵ Gould, pp 107-108.
- ¹²⁶ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4906, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Narrative of Operations, 27 September to 2 October 1918.
- ¹²⁷ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4861, War Diary, 4th Canadian Division, Narrative of Operations of 4 Canadian Machine Gun Battalion, 27 September to 2nd October 1918.
- ¹²⁸ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4906, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Narrative of Operations, 27 September to 2 October 1918.
- ¹²⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4906, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Narrative of Operations, 27 September to 2 October 1918.
- ¹³⁰ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Battalion, CEF.
- ¹³¹ Tim Cook, *No Place to Run: The Canadian Corps and Gas Warfare in the First World War* (Vancouver, 1999), p 204. Daniel G. Dancocks, *Spearhead to Victory: Canada and The Great War* (Edmonton, 1987), pages 136 and 139. Lachrymator (tearing gas) caused temporary blindness and greatly inflamed the nose and throat of the victim.
- ¹³² Livesay, p 220.
- ¹³³ Freeman, p 207.
- ¹³⁴ Freeman, p 207.
- ¹³⁵ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4906, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Narrative of Operations, 27 September to 2 October 1918.
- ¹³⁶ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4861, War Diary, 4th Canadian Division, Narrative of Operations, 4 Canadian Machine Gun Battalion, 27 September to 2 October 1918.
- ¹³⁷ St Catharines Standard, 15 February 1919; Rogers, p 309, states that the 102nd had one man from the 98th Battalion in the battle, but this figure is suspect, as he does not record any men from the 81st. At least one (Lyall) was from the 81st, and the reference to the “Niagara Rangers” is to the 176th Battalion, which had been raised in Niagara.
- ¹³⁸ Livesay, pp 222-224.
- ¹³⁹ St Catharines Standard, 28 October 1918. Cook, pp 202-203.
- ¹⁴⁰ Cook, p 204.
- ¹⁴¹ A. E. Snell, *The Canadian Army Medical Corps with the Canadian Corps During the Last Hundred Days of The Great War* (Ottawa, 1924), pp 166-167.
- ¹⁴² Dancocks, p 140.
- ¹⁴³ Nicholson, p 446.
- ¹⁴⁴ Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4906, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Narrative of Operations, 27 September to 2 October 1918.
- ¹⁴⁵ Sir Arthur Currie, “The Last Hundred Days of the War” in *The Empire Club of Canada Speeches 1919* (Toronto, 1920).
- ¹⁴⁶ George G. Naismith, *Canada's Sons in the World War* (Toronto, 1919), Vol 2, p 150.

¹⁴⁷ Dancocks, p 163.

¹⁴⁸ Gould, p 111.

¹⁴⁹ Morton and Granatstein, p 228.

¹⁵⁰ Norm Christie, *For King and Empire: The Canadians at Cambrai, September-October, 1918* (Nepean, 1997), p 1. John Swettenham, *To Seize the Victory: The Canadian Corps in World War 1* (Toronto, 1965). Naismith, Vol 2, p 192.

¹⁵¹ Gould, pp 113-114. Lyall's CEF records show no promotion for Lyall while he commanded the company, although his British Army records state he was promoted Acting Major on 29 September 1918.

¹⁵² Library and Archives Canada, RG 9, Series III-D-3, War Diary, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 17 October 1918.

¹⁵³ Gould, p 117.

¹⁵⁴ Gould, pp 119-120

¹⁵⁵ Gould, p 120. The reference to the "Fighting Fourth" is to the 4th Canadian Division.

¹⁵⁶ Ferguson Correspondence. Recommendation for the Victoria Cross, Lieut. Graham Thomson Lyall, 7 October 1918.

¹⁵⁷ Ferguson Correspondence, Circular signed by Brigadier General Victor W Odlum, Commander, 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 20 December 1918.

¹⁵⁸ Blatherwick, pp 57-58. Honey had connections to Niagara; his father was a Methodist minister who traveled the Louth-Grantham circuit and lived in St Catharines throughout the war. A brother, Private G. B. Honey, went overseas with the 98th Battalion. Finding that his company was suffering casualties from enfilade machine-gun fire from the approaches to Bourlon Village, Honey single-handedly rushed the gun, captured it and took ten prisoners. That night he led a party and captured three more guns. Honey was mortally wounded two days later as he led his company against a strong enemy position. Like so many other Cross winners he never lived to wear the medal. Honey held the VC, the Distinguished Conduct Medal that he had won at Vimy Ridge on 9 April 1917, the Military Medal, which he had won on 10 January 1917, the War Medal and the Victory Medal. His medals are in the Canadian War Museum. Lieutenant George Kerr, while in command of a support company handled it with great skill and outflanked machine-guns which were holding up the advance. A short time later, far in advance of his company, he rushed a strong point single-handedly and captured four machine guns and thirty-one prisoners. He died in 1929. Kerr held the VC, the Military Cross and bar (August and September 1918), the Military Medal (June 1916), the War Medal and the Victory Medal. His medals are in the Canadian War Museum. Nine other gallantry awards were made to the 102nd Battalion: Seven officers received the Military Cross, a Sergeant was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and another Sergeant received the French Military Medal.

¹⁵⁹ Second Supplement to the London Gazette, 13 December 1918, p 3. Blatherwick, p 56. The Times, 16 December 1918. Thirty-two men were listed as having been awarded the VC in that supplement to the Gazette.

¹⁶⁰ Ferguson Correspondence, Recommendation for the Victoria Cross, Lieut. Graham Thomson Lyall, 7 October 1918.

¹⁶¹ Ferguson Correspondence, 102nd Battalion Daily Orders, 20 December 1918.

¹⁶² London Gazette, 14 December 1919. Niagara Falls Review, 18 December 1919. Welland Tribune, 19 December 1918.

¹⁶³ Ferguson Correspondence. Cablegram, nd, 1918.

¹⁶⁴ Niagara Falls Review, 18 December 1918 and 21 December 1918. St Catharines Standard, 10 January 1919.

¹⁶⁵ Ferguson Correspondence, Recommendation for Victoria Cross, 7 October 1918.

¹⁶⁶ St Catharines Standard, 10 January 1919.

¹⁶⁷ Library and Archives Canada, RG 37, Public Archives and National Library, Record of War Trophies, Series D, Vol 387.

¹⁶⁸ St Catharines Standard, 18 December 1918.

¹⁶⁹ Dancocks, p 215.

¹⁷⁰ Niagara Falls Review, 31 January 1919. Thomas William Shapton had first joined the 2nd Dragoons and went overseas with the 176th Battalion. He subsequently transferred to the 102nd Battalion, and

- was killed in action 6 November 1918. His next of kin was listed as Mrs E. Shapton, 212 John Street, Niagara Falls. St Catharines Standard, 10 January 1919. Gould, p 217.
- ¹⁷¹ The Peoples Press, 21 January 1919. The Welland Tribune, 20 March 1919.
- ¹⁷² Dancocks, p 227. Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ¹⁷³ St Catharines Standard, 8 March 1919. People's Press, 11 March 1919. Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ¹⁷⁴ Bancroft, p 88. Correspondence, The VC and GC Association, 20 Sep 2000. Library and Archives Canada, RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ¹⁷⁵ Library and Archives Canada, PA-006708.
- ¹⁷⁶ The Canadian Daily Record, 10 April 1919.
- ¹⁷⁷ Welland Tribune, 20 March 1919. Lyall's regimental number in the 19th Regiment was 1919 – 'double' 19. It is unlikely that Lyall referred to his fiancée as "Scotch"; in all likelihood, it was an error in the transcription by the newspaper.
- ¹⁷⁸ British Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall. Canadian War Museum, Catalogue Number 8805. Somerville also painted the portrait of Lieutenant Thomas Dinsen, VC, of the Royal Highland Regiment of Canada.
- ¹⁷⁹ Ferguson Correspondence, 4 July 2003. *Who's Who* (London, 1927).
- ¹⁸⁰ Welland Tribune, 22 May 1919 This report is a copy of that which appeared in the Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser, 26 April 1919). St Catharines Standard, 29 April 1919, 28 May 1919. Correspondence, The VC and GC Association, 20 Sep 2000. In Scotland, a Provost was a mayor. Burglars stole the clock and vases from the home of Sandy Ferguson in the 1980s. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. Extract of an Entry in a Register of Marriage, Parish of Monkland, County of Lanark, 6 July 1922.
- ¹⁸¹ Library and Archives Canada. RG 150 (1992-93/166) Box 5803 Sequence 8, Graham Thomson Lyall. A Record of Service states he was discharged 1 August 1919.
- ¹⁸² National Archives of England and Wales, WO 372/12, First World War Medal Card, 158524, Lyall, G. T.
- ¹⁸³ Gould, p 141. Lancashire Records Office.
- ¹⁸⁴ Gould, pp 128-129.
- ¹⁸⁵ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ¹⁸⁶ The British Ministry of Defence, 48467 Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ¹⁸⁷ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ¹⁸⁸ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ¹⁸⁹ Hunt, Derek, and John Mulholland. *A Party Fit for Heroes* (Uckfield, 2007), p 7.
- ¹⁹⁰ Hunt, p 88.
- ¹⁹¹ Hunt, p 24.
- ¹⁹² Hunt, p 31.
- ¹⁹³ The London Times, 27 June 1920.
- ¹⁹⁴ Hunt, p 93.
- ¹⁹⁵ Hunt, p 57.
- ¹⁹⁶ Hunt, p 77.
- ¹⁹⁷ Ferguson Correspondence, 6 June 2003, 9 November 2003. Archibald M. Laing Correspondence, 28 March 2003.
- ¹⁹⁸ Ferguson Correspondence, 1 May 2003.
- ¹⁹⁹ The Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser, 18 December 1941. William Marshall Correspondence, 1 August 2001. The other three VC winners were Major General H. L. Reed, VC, Captain Finaly, VC and Sergeant Carmichael, VC.
- ²⁰⁰ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁰¹ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁰² Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁰³ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁰⁴ Correspondence, The VC and GC Association, 20 Sep 2000. The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum, Correspondence, G. T. Lyall/Commanding Officer, 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, 15

- November 1929. Lieutenant Colonel Gander was Lyall's company commander in the Welland Canal Force in 1915.
- ²⁰⁵ Dinner Programme. The VC Dinner at the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords, Saturday, November 9th 1929, at 7:30 PM. It is unlikely that there has ever been a gathering of so many VC winners in history.
- ²⁰⁶ The London Times, 11 November 1929.
- ²⁰⁷ The London Times, 11 November 1929.
- ²⁰⁸ Lyall may have personally known Bishop as both men had served in 4 CMR. The Canadian VC winners attending the dinner were: Colonel W. G. Barker, Corporal C. F. Barron, Captain E. D. Bellew, Private A. P. Breeton, Lieutenant T. Dinesen, Corporal H. J. Good, Lieutenant M. F. Gregg, Captain F. M. W. Harvey, Private T. W. Holmes, Captain B. S. Hutcheson, Lieutenant Colonel W. H. C. Kennedy, Lieutenant G. F. Kerr, Private C. J. Kincross, Lieutenant G. T. Lyall, Major T. W. McDonnell, Lieutenant R. L. Merrifield, Lieutenant W. H. Metcalf, Captain C. N. Mitchell, Captain G. H. Mullin, Private M. J. O'Rourke, Lieutenant G. R. Pearkes, Lieutenant Colonel C. W. Peck, Lieutenant R. L. Rayfield, Private T. Ricketts, Lieutenant C. S. Rutherford, Captain R. Shankland, Sergeant R. L. Zengel.
- ²⁰⁹ The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum. Correspondence, G. T. Lyall/Commanding Officer, 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, 15 November 1929. Lyall was then serving in the Royal Engineers, Territorial Army.
- ²¹⁰ Souvenir Programme, Prince of Wales' Theatre, Coventry Street, London, Sunday, November 10th, 1929, at 8:30 PM.
- ²¹¹ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²¹² The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum. Correspondence, G. T. Lyall/Commanding Officer, 19th "Lincoln" Regiment, 15 November 1929.
- ²¹³ Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²¹⁴ The British National Army Museum files. The Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser, 18 December 1941. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. The company did not survive World War II.
- ²¹⁵ The Scotsman, 5 May 1935.
- ²¹⁶ W. W. Murray. *The Epic of Vimy* (Ottawa, 1937), p 63.
- ²¹⁷ Murray, p 62.
- ²¹⁸ Ferguson Correspondence, 4 July 2003. Murray, p 11.
- ²¹⁹ Ferguson Correspondence, 4 July 2003.
- ²²⁰ Murray, p 118.
- ²²¹ The Daily Telegraph, 30 July 1936.
- ²²² An analogy could be drawn to the visit of George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Canada in 1939 where they mingled with veterans in Montreal.
- ²²³ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. Sandy Ferguson noted, "It is ironic that this formality was mirrored when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Canada after World War II. To the horror of the security services, the two of them went on their first 'walkabout' amongst the Canadian veterans. When someone remonstrated to the Queen, she just said, 'If I'm not safe with them, where will I ever be safe' and a precedent was started.
- ²²⁴ David MacColl, North Ayrshire Cemeteries Services, 10 April 2003. Tombstone, Largs. Buried in the same plot are Donald Bourslon Lyall, 6 November 1943, and Dorothy Margaret Lyall, 6 December 1976. The Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser, 18 December 1941.
- ²²⁵ Who's Who (London, 1927).
- ²²⁶ Royal Army Ordnance Corps Gazette, May 1939, p 175. Correspondence, Cyril Jones, 22 Aug 2001. British Ministry of Defence, P 48467, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ²²⁷ Royal Army Ordnance Corps Gazette, October 1939, p 394.
- ²²⁸ Ferguson Correspondence, Sports and Gala Day Program. Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser, July 1939. Royal Army Ordnance Corps Gazette, October 1939, p 394.
- ²²⁹ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²³⁰ Ferguson Correspondence, Andrew Kirk to Major G. T. Lyall, 20 December 1939.
- ²³¹ Royal Army Ordnance Corps Gazette, October 1939, p 394; November 1939, p 426; January 1940, p 34.
- ²³² Royal Army Ordnance Corps Gazette, October 1939, p 394; November 1939, p 426; January 1940, p 34; March 1949, p 105.

- ²³³ Royal Army Ordnance Corps Gazette, October 1939, p 394.
- ²³⁴ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²³⁵ British Ministry of Defence, P 48467, Graham Thomson Lyall. Royal Army Ordnance Corps Gazette, June 1940, p 211. It was common at this time for publications like the Gazette to censor the surnames of officers and men.
- ²³⁶ Ferguson Correspondence, 4 July and 9 November 2003.
- ²³⁷ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²³⁸ Ian Stanley Ord Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East* (London, 1954), Vol 1, p 192, pp 244-246. British Ministry of Defence, P 48467, Graham Thomson Lyall. Ferguson Correspondence, 1 May 2003.
- ²³⁹ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁴⁰ Playfair, Vol 1, pp 251-252.
- ²⁴¹ Ferguson Correspondence, Letter from Lyall to Sandy Ferguson, 26 August 1940.
- ²⁴² Playfair. The 7th Armoured Division had been formed in February 1940, when the Mobile Division was reorganized. It took into use the famous Jerbora Division Sign, and from its design, the famous nick-name "Desert Rats".
- ²⁴³ British Ministry of Defence, P 48467, Graham Thomson Lyall.
- ²⁴⁴ British Ministry of Defence, P 48467, Graham Thomson Lyall. Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169 Vol 2302, War Diary, 2 Base Ordnance Workshop, June 1941. He was admitted to hospital on 25 February 1941, 7 July 1941 and 25 August 1941. REME Museum of Technology, research note. Tel-el-Kebir was the site of a major battle in General Wolseley's conquest of Egypt in 1882. Ferguson Correspondence, 4 July 2003.
- ²⁴⁵ REME Museum of Technology, research note.
- ²⁴⁶ Paul Morrell, *At War with the Royal Army Medical Corps, 1941-1944* (2003).
- ²⁴⁷ Ferguson Correspondence, REME Museum of Technology research note. Public Record Office, WO 201, Vol 2271. Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 2302, War Diary, 2 Base Ordnance Workshop, June 1941.
- ²⁴⁸ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 2302, War Diary, 2 Base Ordnance Workshop, July to September 1941.
- ²⁴⁹ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 2302, War Diary, 2 Base Ordnance Workshop, July 1941. British Ministry of Defence, P 48467, Graham Thomson Lyall. Personal communication with Sandy Ferguson. The letter was written on "airgraph" paper.
- ²⁵⁰ Ronald Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander* (London, 1968), pp 58-59. *The Marshall Cavendish Illustrated Encyclopedia of World War II* (London, 1972), Vol 6, pp 710-712. El is a northwest Semitic word and name translated into English as either 'god' or 'God' or left untranslated as El, depending on the context
- ²⁵¹ W. E. Murphy, ed., *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45: The Relief of Tobruk* (Wellington, 1961), pp 46-47.
- ²⁵² British Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall. Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, 2302, War Diary, 2 Base Ordnance Workshop, July and October 1941. Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, October 1941. The Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser, 18 December 1941. David A. Ryan Correspondence, 9 April 2003.
- ²⁵³ Personal correspondence with Sandy Ferguson, August 2006.
- ²⁵⁴ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1337, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941.
- ²⁵⁵ Murphy, p 18.
- ²⁵⁶ J. F. Cody, *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45: New Zealand Engineers, Middle East* (Wellington, 1961), pp 173-176. Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁵⁷ Stuart Hamilton. *Armoured Odyssey: 8th Royal Tank Regiment in the Western Desert, 1941-42; Palestine. Syria, Egypt, 1943-44; Italy, 1944-45.* (London, 1995).
- ²⁵⁸ Jo Lancaster, Acquisitions Officer, Imperial War Museum. *El Alamein, German Memorial: Conditions for Soldiers in the Western Desert* (London, 2002).

- ²⁵⁹ Jim Henderson. *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War: 4th and 6th Reserve Mechanical Transport Companies, 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force* (Wellington, 1954), pp 157-158.
- ²⁶⁰ Cody, pp 173-176.
- ²⁶¹ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941. W. E. Murphy, ed., p 18. Cody, pp 175-176.
- ²⁶² Murphy, p 18. J. F. Cody, p 205.
- ²⁶³ Cody, p 176.
- ²⁶⁴ Murphy, p 72.
- ²⁶⁵ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941.
- ²⁶⁶ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941. Ministry of Defence, Report of Major Leonard Stott, RAMC, 1 January 1942. Ferguson Correspondence, Captain W. H. Coventry to Elizabeth Lyall, December 1941. Ferguson Correspondence, 4 July 2003.
- ²⁶⁷ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941.
- ²⁶⁸ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941.
- ²⁶⁹ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941.
- ²⁷⁰ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941.
- ²⁷¹ Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941.
- ²⁷² Great Britain, The National Library, WO 169, Vol 1377, War Diary, 87 Line of Communication Sub Area, November 1941. Ministry of Defence, Report of Major Leonard Stott, RAMC, 1 January 1942.
- ²⁷³ Ministry of Defence, P 48647, Graham Thomson Lyall. Ferguson Correspondence, Captain WS Coventry to Elizabeth Lyall, December 1941.
- ²⁷⁴ Ministry of Defence, Report of Major Leonard Stott, RAMC, 1 January 1942.
- ²⁷⁵ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁷⁶ Ferguson Correspondence, Letters of Major R. G. Jenkins and Captain W. S. Coventry, both dated December 1941 to Elizabeth Lyall. Commonwealth War Graves Commission Correspondence, 28 May 2003. Lyall was buried in Row C, Grave 7. Cody, p 172.
- ²⁷⁷ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. Jarvie was later captured in Greece, and killed when American bombers accidentally bombed the Prisoner of War camp where he was being held.
- ²⁷⁸ Commonwealth War Graves Commission Correspondence, 25 Aug 2000 and 28 May 2003. Lyall is buried in Row B, Plot 19, Grave 2. Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁷⁹ The Niagara Falls Review, 11 December 1941. Correspondence, William Marshall, 1 August 2001.
- ²⁸⁰ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁸¹ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁸² Ferguson Correspondence, Obituary by Lieutenant Colonel John S. Simpson. Simpson belonged to MI6 during the war. Speaking fluent German he was dropped into Germany.
- ²⁸³ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003.
- ²⁸⁴ Ontario Heritage Foundation, Plaque Ceremony Program, 2005.
- ²⁸⁵ Ontario Heritage Foundation, Speaking Notes – Lincoln Alexander, 5 June 2005.
- ²⁸⁶ Smy, W. A., and A. D. F. Ferguson. *Interesting Times: A Biography of Colonel G. T. Lyall, VC* (Milnthorpe, 2008), p 64.
- ²⁸⁷ Ferguson Correspondence, 9 November 2003. Peat Correspondence, 20 August 2004. Ward Correspondence, October 2008. 1891 and 1901 Census of Scotland.
- ²⁸⁸ Canada. Department of Veterans Affairs, October 2000.
- ²⁸⁹ Correspondence, Anne Stewart, Curator, Black Watch Regimental Museum, 29 Jan 2001.
- ²⁹⁰ Canada. National Museums of Canada, Files 47 & 28, 16 September 1986.
- ²⁹¹ The Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser, Saturday, 26 April 1919, p 4

²⁹² The Lincoln and Welland Regiment Museum, Lyall Correspondence, 15 November 1929.

²⁹³ Christie, Norm, *For King & Empire: The Canadians on the Somme, September-November 1916* (Nepean, 1996), *For King & Empire: The Canadians at Passchendaele, October to November 1917* (Nepean, 1996), and *For King & Empire: The Canadians at Arras, August-September, 1918* (Nepean, 1997).

²⁹⁴ Library and Archives Canada. RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Battalion, CEF.

²⁹⁵ Library and Archives Canada. RG 9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Vol 4945, War Diary, 102nd Battalion, CEF.
