

MONS

WALLONIA - BELGIUM

MONS 14-18

THE FIRST & THE LAST

BATTLEFIELDS GUIDE

Arthur F. Carter,
22 August 1914 in Mons





THE FIRST

*John Parr,
the first Commonwealth
soldier killed in the First
World War.*

VISITMONS

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EDITORIAL

Dear Sir / Madam,

Situated at a geographical crossroads in Europe, the city of Mons has played host to numerous major historical events. In particular, our city was an important leg of the journey made by thousands of soldiers during the First World War.

It was on our territory that British and German troops fought for the first time during the Battle of Mons on 23 August 1914. Canadian soldiers also liberated the city of Mons on 11 November 1918.

Since then, John Parr and George Ellison, the first and last British soldiers to fall in the First World War, have laid to rest in St Symphorien Military Cemetery, as has George Price, the last Commonwealth soldier killed in the Great War.

The city of Mons keeps alive the memory of the conflict's many victims through commemorative ceremonies. It also invites you to discover the Mons Memorial Museum, whose collections invite reflection and offer a new insight into the relationship between civilians and soldiers.

From legend to fact, Mons takes you on an authentic memorial journey strongly focused on symbolism. With the "Battlefields Guide" you're holding, immerse yourself in history, where the horror of war gives way to the importance of remembrance.

Enjoy reading.

Christophe MAZZA
President of the Mons Region Tourist Office

Nicolas MARTIN
Mayor of Mons

GOING TO MONS



By car
Paris-Brussels motorway, exit 24 Mons.

Brussels: 69 km/47 miles
Cambrai: 76 km/72 miles
Comines/Warneton (Plugstreet): 114 km/71 miles
Liege: 131 km/81 miles
Ypres/Ieper: 116 km/72 miles
Zonnebeke (Passchendaele): 135 km/84 miles

Paris: 248 km/154 miles
Lille: 78 km/48.50 miles
Amiens: 165 km/102.50 miles
Dunkirk: 160 km/99.50 miles
Calais: 187 km/116 miles
Bastogne: 168 km/104 miles



By train
International rail links

Direct TGV links from many French cities (Lyon, Marseille, etc.) to Brussels. From Aachen/Cologne, Amsterdam, Paris and Luxembourg via Brussels or Lille and from London with the Eurostar.

National rail links
From Brussels international airport, the airport of Charleroi (Brussels South) and many places in Belgium.



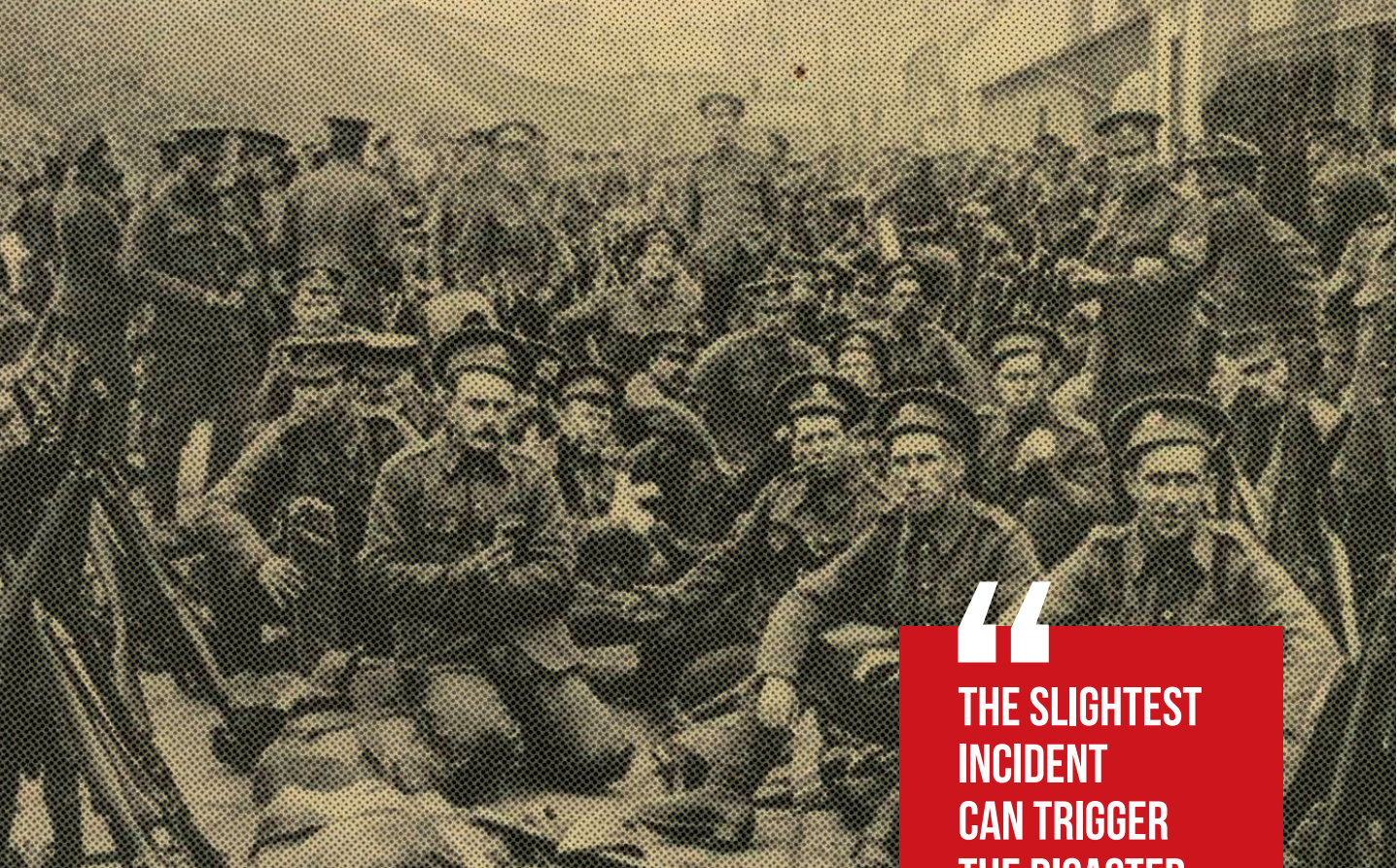
By plane
Brussels South Charleroi Airport is located 40 minutes from the centre of Mons and serves some 100 international destinations. More information:
www.brussels-charleroi-airport.com

Brussels Airport, is 60 minutes from Mons and is accessible by direct train.
More information: www.brusselsairport.be



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Old Contemptibles
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“
THE SLIGHTEST
INCIDENT
CAN TRIGGER
THE DISASTER

THE BATTLE OF 23 AUGUST 1914

THE ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT

Since 1904, date of the first clashes between the two major European blocks, Europe is in turmoil. On the one side, the Triple Alliance (Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary), and on the other side the Triple Entente (France, Great Britain and Russia).

The slightest incident can trigger the disaster. The inevitable occurs on 28 June 1914. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand (nephew and heir of the Emperor of Austria) and his wife are murdered in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia. The attack is carried out by Bosnian Serbs of the terrorist organisation “Black Hand”.

Austria takes advantage of the pretext thus on hand, and, after an ultimatum rejected by Belgrade, declares war on Serbia on 28 July 1914. The inexorable cycle starts. Nothing can stop it.

Russia goes into action, Germany does the same, followed by France.

Then events start happening very quickly: on 1 August Germany declares war on Russia, on 2 August it demands free passage of its troops from Belgium, on 3 August it declares war on France and on 4 August it violates the Belgian neutrality. Great-Britain, at first in expectation, cannot remain insensitive to the crime and in turn declares war on Germany. It must keep its word and cannot consider the recognition of Belgian neutrality as “a scrap of paper”.

A great disappointment, however, awaits Germany: Italy considers that the German aggression releases it from its allied obligations and proclaims its neutrality.

On 4 August 1914, the huge German war machine enters Belgium.

THE BATTLE OF MONS

The British have not had time to sufficiently strengthen the sector, but it actually was not their intention. The chosen position was only a temporary stop before the great momentum for the planned offensive. Unfortunately, the sudden unexpected retreat of the French Fifth Army forced Marshal FRENCH to remain on its bases, while promising to hold out for 24 hours. He thus allowed to break the German advance and the French troops to slightly loosen the enemy's grip and to have a little break. However, for the defence, the field was poorly chosen and inappropriate, despite the long straight of the Mons to Condé canal which at the time could still constitute a major obstacle to an attacker. A bad choice, because of too many bridges and locks to defend, which are of course the crossing points of the opponent; a bad choice, because the firing ranges are too reduced both for the infantry and the artillery; a bad choice, because the villages both on the canal's banks and behind it are full of small streets and alleys where it is very difficult to manoeuvre. Poorly chosen field because the landscape is cluttered with slag heaps



Maréchal FRENCH

expeditionary force had landed in French ports (the neutral and allied press had widely covered this), but they were unable to locate it.

The most widely accepted version was that it had to

The so-called “Battle of Mons” is due to a set of circumstances that were absolutely foreign to the wishes of the opponents. Neither of them wanted or should have met in that place because it is the worst battlefield that can possibly be imagined.

that are perhaps good observation posts, but they dominate each other; poorly chosen finally, because the salient is almost impossible to defend because of its configuration, too many troops must be confined in an area exposed on all sides.

It has to be repeated that FRENCH and his generals did not choose their defence area, external factors and circumstances have made the choice for them and imposed this position.

On the German side, the situation is even clearer. Both the Head Command and the army corps or army commanders were unaware of the presence of the British in Belgium. They themselves knew that an

go to Antwerp or the Belgian coast to support the ports and the Belgian army in a bad position. It was not until 22 August that the veil of ignorance was broken, which was the eve of battle. This was due, on the one hand, to the fall of the British aircraft at Marcq, and on the other hand, the charge of Casteau. For the Germans it was a complete and unexpected surprise. It was then too late to change the marching order of the troops. The fog partially rose, because now the Germans knew the near presence of the opponents, but they were unable to determine their numbers and therefore their power. The same uncertainty prevailed elsewhere in the British camp, because although FRENCH and his staff perfectly



Lieutenant Maurice James DEASE, VC



Private Sidney GODLEY, VC

knew the German progress angle, they didn't know how numerous the troops they would face were. The information provided by the French underestimated by far the number of divisions or opposing army corps.

But in truth, the fact that the British expeditionary force was saved from encirclement and from annihilation was due to mistakes made by Von KLUCK and Von BÜLOW. Von KLUCK should have marched towards Amiens before turning to Paris, that's what the orders had planned, but being very independent and in his haste to reach the prestigious and coveted capital first and fastest, he stuck to his own guns and was too sure of succeeding. Von BÜLOW, for his part, has delayed his crossing of the Sambre river by a day to regroup his army. Without this untimely stop, it could have trapped FRENCH and his troops and it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to get out.

Finally, another element has also worked in favour of the BEF, that is the hasty retreat of LANREZAC, which forced him to stop his advance. Without this retreat, the BEF was rushing headlong into the German mass, with the disastrous consequences that could ensue.

This battle was therefore imposed on the opponents on a battleground they had not chosen and at a time they had not chosen. The two British corps had a too broad sector to defend, but fortunately, the German corps did not start the assault at the same time, but as they arrived on the battlefield. Yet it was a fatal mistake, because although some regiments were in contact from 08.00 am, the last did not enter the

BEF soldiers on Mons Grand-Place on 23rd August 1914
A Company of 4/Royal Fusiliers

stage until late afternoon, and even the fourth German reserve corps only appeared on the battlefield the next day.

Imagine the losses that the British could have suffered if the German mass had attacked with the same momentum at the same time. The attack would have been formidable, irresistible, overwhelming, and despite all their bravery, the British would not have been able to resist long without risking a large-scale disaster. The imbalance of weapons and men was too large, too uneven, too obvious. But it's easy to rewrite history after the fact...

Finally, we must pay tribute to the bravery, the tenacity, the spirit of sacrifice and the temerity of the fighters on both sides. No one faltered, no one gave in, no one backed off, despite the losses, despite the hail of bullets, despite discouragement. Both the Germans and the British rivalised in audacity, dedication, camaraderie and willpower. This is evidenced by the number of those killed and injured.

British soldiers did not understand why they had to withdraw, to back off from an opponent they dominated. Nowhere, except in the salient, was the front penetrated. Nowhere, the Germans had the upper hand on them. They were undefeated, but yet the orders were formal, they had to leave and abandon the field they defended at such a heavy price. Some regiments even had not fired a single shot. Misunderstanding all round, but orders are orders...

On the evening of 24 August, a page of history was written in Mons. Each claimed the glory, each claimed victory, each wanted to wear the name on his coat of arms. For Mons and the Mons population, for the Borinage and the North of France, on this mournful day when the guns fall silent, when the battle moves away, the curfew is imposed by the victors. Hope was switched off at the same time as the lights. Both will have to wait four long years to be reborn.



The BEF disembarks on the Continent

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THE LEGEND OF THE ANGELS OF MONS

On the evening of 23 August, the situation of the 8th brigade (the 4th Middlesex, 2nd Royal Scots, the 2nd Royal Irish and 1st Gordon Highlanders) is very serious. The Germans have overwhelmed Mons by the East, occupying the town and threatening the back of the British retreat line. Similarly, to the right, the British must face the 75th Regiment of Bremen that holds Spiennes. Encirclement threatens and retreat seems compromised.

It is at this time, around midnight, that angels descended from the sky, in the shape of archers who stopped the Germans, protected the British and enabled them to retreat safely in total darkness, thus saving the brigade from annihilation.

The legend of the Angels of Mons – Painting by Marcel Gillis



GOOD TO KNOW

- The Battle of Mons on 23 August 1914 is the location of the first encounter between the British (British expeditionary force: BEF) and the Germans.
- The retreat of the BEF that takes the British to Le Cateau (France) and that will end at Zonnebeke begins in Mons as a consequence of the battle of 23 August 1914.
- The legend of the Angels of Mons, a story propagated by British soldiers engaged during the battle of Mons and recounting the presence of protective angels that enabled them to retreat. This legend resonates particularly to English ears.
- The two first Victoria Cross (Lieutenant Maurice DEASE & Private Sidney GODLEY) awarded during the First World War were for acts of bravery performed on Mons soil.
- The first (Private John PARR) and the last (Private George ELLISON) Englishmen killed during the Great War were killed in Mons.
- The last soldier killed during this conflict was on Mons soil (The Canadian George PRICE).

Centennial tree, Place du Parc, 2014

As part of the commemoration of the Battle of Mons centenary on 23 August 2014, the City of Mons planted a tree symbolising hope and life in memory of every civilian and soldier who lost their life in this battle. This tree echoes the Sydney oak tree that was planted in 1935 by the squires of Mons from New South Wales in Australia.

St Symphorien military cemetery

St Symphorien cemetery has been awarded two stars in the Michelin guide and has become a must-see, as has the Mons Memorial Museum, which has been awarded one star.



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THE HUNDRED DAYS OFFENSIVE (1918)

After the failure of the German 1918 spring offensive (operation Michael, operation George and operation Blücher), the Allied army, placed under the command of General Ferdinand Foch, launched the counter-attack on 8 August. This period which ends on 11 November 1918 was named the "Hundred Days Offensive".

Weapons and techniques are now combined in a new tactic: the infantry sections advance behind the rolling blockades of the artillery, preceded by tanks and armoured vehicles. Aircraft destroy targets on the ground and identify enemy positions or the progress of the troops.

General Ludendorff (general-in-chief of the German army) has called the day of 8 August the "dark day of the German army" because he came to understand that Germany could no longer win the war. The third battle of Picardy takes place from 8 August to 8 September 1918; the goal is to reduce the salient of Montdidier by two French-British armies and clear the Paris-Amiens way. The city is in Canadian hands on 11 August. After this battle, the Canadian corps became an integral part of the British first army. The Canadian corps distinguishes itself during the battles of the Scarpe (from 26 to 30 August) and the Drocourt-Quéant line (2-3 September).

Then follows the assault against the "Hindenburg line" behind which the German troops retreated. It starts on 2 September and ends on 11 October 1918. It is a series of battles such as those of Savy Dallon (10 September), Havrincourt (12 September), Vauxaillon (14 September) and Epehy (18 September), followed by combats on the canal du Nord (from 27 September to 1 October).

On 27 September the attack on the strongest position of this line starts. General Currie has developed a bold and remarkable plan that allows the Canadian corps to go through the Canal du Nord in full and to open a breach in the three German defence lines.

Heavy fighting ensues until the capture of Cambrai (from 27 September to 11 October) and on 11 October, the Canadian corps has reached the canal of the Sensée. Missions still continue by the taking of the Mont Houy (29 October), the Liberation of Valenciennes (1 and 2 November) before reaching Mons, the day of the signature of the Armistice.

This offensive, however, has a price: 45,000 losses (dead, wounded and missing) among the Canadians.

**“THIS OFFENSIVE,
HOWEVER, HAS A PRICE:
45,000 LOSSES AMONG
THE CANADIANS**



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THE LIBERATION OF MONS (NOVEMBER 11, 1918)

On 9 November, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry reaches the suburbs of Jemappes, which represents an advance of about 8 kilometers. While at the end of the day, troops of the 2nd Canadian division reach a line which, from the village of Bougnies, turns to the Northwest up to the limit of the 3rd division sector on the road to Frameries Mons.

Mons! A symbol for the British where they encountered the German opponent for the first time in August 1914. Sir Henry HORNE, commanding the first British army and superior of Currie, demands that the city be taken again and liberated before the end of the war. An order is an order and Currie must obey. There are rumours that the war is actually coming to an end, that the armistice will be signed. But there have already been so many similar rumours. And then the Canadians are at the gates of Mons. Currie then thinks about taking the city through an encircling manoeuvre. He orders the 2nd Division (Major-General H.E. Burstall) to encircle Mons from the South and seize the high lands in the East, while the 3rd Division (Major-General F.O.W. Loomis) has to capture the suburbs of Nimy and then infiltrate into the heart of the city of Mons.

The main centres of German resistance were located in Bois-la-Haut and Hyon and machine guns were installed on the outskirts of the city.

On 10 November, during the night, the 19th battalion occupies Hyon, but German resistance holds out until 3.15 am at Bois-la-haut.

The honour of entering the city comes to the 7th Brigade (Brig.-Gen. J.A. Clark). It is approximately 11 pm, when platoons of the 42nd battalion enter Mons and begin to liberate the East of the city, while a company of the 42nd and a company of the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) enter the city from the North. Finally, a third infiltration is accomplished by a company of the RCR at the Northwest end of Mons. More to the North, the Battalion had cleaned Ghlin, crossed the canal and seized Nimy and Petit-Nimy.

On 11 November from 5 am the first officers of the Canadian corps signed the Gold Book of the city, including Lieutenant W.M. King of the Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieutenant L.H. Biggar of the 42nd battalion and Major C.G. Blackstock of the 3rd Division.

At the dawn of 11 November, the troops of the two battalions of the 7th Brigade had liberated Mons. At 6.30 am, a telegram was received at the headquarters of General CURRIE, indicating that the hostilities would cease at 11 am. The pursuit of German troops still continued however, winning a line of 8 kilometres north-east of the city. In the sector of the 3rd Division, the 5th Royal Irish Lancers reached Saint-Denis and to the right, the infantry of the 2nd Division entered Havré and cleared the bois du Rapois.

Around 7.00 am, the pipers of the 42nd Battalion Royal Highlanders of Canada entered the city to the sound of music.

The overall losses of the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions for 10 and 11 November amounted to 18 officers and 262 men killed, wounded or missing.

ARTHUR W. CURRIE

Born on 5 December 1875 in Napperton (Ontario - Canada)

He studied at the Strathroy District Collegiate Institute. He moved to British Columbia in 1894. For 5 years, he was a teacher in public schools in Sidney and Victoria. In 1897, he changed his name Curry to Currie.

On 6 May 1897, he joined the Canadian militia as a part-time gunner in the 5th field artillery Regiment (British Columbia). He took his role in the militia very seriously. He earned the rank of corporal in 1900. When offered an officer's certification, he refused and changed profession. He then started a career in finance. After several years, he became provincial director of the national life insurance company.

He was promoted captain in 1902 in the militia, then major in 1906. He became Lieutenant-Colonel in September 1909 and commanded the 5th Regiment. When the war was declared, Currie became Commander of the 2nd Infantry Brigade (which was part of the 1st Infantry Division). On 29 September 1914, he was promoted Brigadier general. The 1st Division spent the winter of 1914-1915 training in England. It was sent to France in February 1915. After a further period of training, it was sent to the Ypres salient on 17 April 1915. Five days later, the Germans used gas for the first time. Currie proved his value as an officer. Having properly assessed the tactical situation, he then put a flexible and aggressive defence in place which avoided the German breakthrough. After several days of fierce fighting, the Allies re-established a stable defence.

In September 1915, Currie was elevated to the rank of major general and assumed command of the 1st Canadian Division. As part of the attack planned in the spring of 1917 around Arras, the Canadian troops were in charge of seizing Vimy Ridge. Currie was learning about all the previous important battles: Ypres - Verdun - Pozières, etc. He concluded meticulous staff work was required, a major in depth artillery preparation as support and a high training level for the troops. The attack began on 9 April 1917, at 5.30 am. The Ridge fell entirely in the hands of Canadians on 12 April, at the high price of 12,004 casualties, including 3,978 fatalities.

On 9 June 1917, Currie was appointed temporary lieutenant-general and was given the command of the Canadian corps. The High Command ordered Currie to capture the city of Lens, an important railway junction. After thorough review, Currie proposed to capture Hill 70, instead of the city, by a series of well-prepared and abrupt attacks, instead of a mass frontal offensive. He imposed prior reconnaissance, the construction of roads and assembled artillery and heavy machine guns in high quantity. The assault started on 15 August 1917 and Hill 70 was taken in 20 minutes. Lens could no longer serve as a rail hub.

The 3rd battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) suffered several failures. Haig launched the Canada corps. On 11 November 1917, the battle ended and Passchendaele was conquered, but the breakthrough did not take place.

In the spring of 1918, the Germans launched a series of offensives that were halted. In August 1918, Canadian troops were sent to the South of Amiens. Currie took the trouble to camouflage the movement and sent radio units and 2 battalions to Ypres as a diversion. On 2 September, the Canadian troops attacked the Hindenburg line and three weeks later it was finally penetrated. The Germans then began their retreat. Currie conquered Cambrai on 11 October 1918 and continued to progress. On 10 November, Currie decided to attack Mons, despite the imminent announcement of the armistice. The city was liberated on 11 November in the morning.

On 23 August 1919, Currie became inspector general of the Canadian militia and in May 1920 rector of McGill University until his death on 30 November 1933, in response to a second CVA/stroke.

CANADIAN CANON QF 18PDR CONSERVED IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE CITY OF MONS

THE GUN

The QF 18pdr gun has the number 3106. Its original trailer has the number C.42073.

It carries a commemorative plaque with the following mention: "To the city of Mons / The last that fired on the enemy / On 11 November 1918 / Day on which the city was delivered from the German oppression / are donated by the Canadian corps". The city of Mons, as well as the Canadian archives, conserves official documents and photographs taken during the ceremony of the bequest of the gun.

ITS HISTORY

The gun was used by the 39th battery, 10th Canadian campaign artillery brigade. Its officer-commander was Major R.T. Young.

Section commander: Lieutenant H.L. Shepard

Personnel of the piece:

- Corporal F.F. Sergeant J. Slater (313969)
- Gunner R. Jones (301870)
- Gunner S.M. Duffy (338142)
- Gunner S. C. Short (1250199)
- Gunner N. C. Keir (1201080)

The battery fired its last salvos in the nights of 10 and 11 November against the machine gun positions located along the canal, on the north-east limits of Mons. In the first hours of the morning, on 11 November, it crossed the Grand'Place of Mons and entered action in the plain of Nimy. That battery was the first to cross Mons before the "cease fire".

The city of Mons conserves two Canadian guns that served during the Great War. They were bequeathed by the Canadian expedition corps, on behalf of Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie, on 15 August 1919. These particularly symbolic pieces of artillery are the last that were fired during the conflict. The last gun shots in the Great War were fired in the Mons region when the Canadian troops liberated the city on 11 November 1918, after 100 days of combat. One of the two guns, a QF 4.5-inch howitzer is exhibited in the permanent circuit of the Mons Memorial Museum since it has opened its doors to the public in April 2015. The other, an Ordnance QF 18pdr is carefully conserved in the municipal collections under the inventory number MHM 1557. In the context of the 1918 commemorations, this unique piece returned to Canada to be displayed to the public in the buildings of the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, emphasizing the strong historic links between Belgium and Canada. The loan covers a renewable 5-year period.

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Bequest of the gun to the Mons authorities, August 1919.
(Copy conserved in the collections of the city of Mons)

MONS, THE FIRST & THE LAST

1914 - THE BEGINNING



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4 AUGUST

Germany violates Belgian neutrality
Great Britain enters the war

7 AUGUST

German troops take the city of Liège

3 AUGUST

Germany declares war on France

1 AUGUST

Germany declares war on Russia

7 > 12 AUGUST

First British Expeditionary Forces (BEF) embark

15 AUGUST

Surrender of the last fort in Liège (Flémalle Fort)

28 JUNE

Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria

28 JULY

Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia

16 AUGUST

British Expeditionary Force (BEF) lands in France (Le Havre, Rouen and Boulogne) and gathers at Amiens

17 AUGUST

Death of General Grierson, Commander of the II Corps

20 AUGUST

German troops invade Brussels
BEF reaches Maubeuge, France

21 AUGUST

BEF crosses border into Belgium
First British casualty of the First World War, Private John Parr (4th Middlesex)

23 AUGUST

Battle of Mons

- German offensive to cross the Mons Canal (at Condé) and the Central Canal (at Nimy and Obourg)
- The Battle of the Mons Salient:** German troops invade from two directions, through Obourg on one side (taking the station, the cemetery, the Bascule and the Chaussée de Beaumont) and Nimy on the other (human shield, the town centre and Chaussée de Maubeuge)
- Apparition of the Angels of Mons to accompany the British troops in their retreat
- At 22.00 hours British troops (BEF) regroup at Nouvelles before retreating toward Le Cateau

22 AUGUST

The BEF takes up position near Mons

(on Mons-Condé Canal between Condé s/Escaut and Binche)

First exchange of fire between a British cavalry unit (4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards) and German Hussars at Casteau

Skirmishes between Germans and the 19th Hussars at Hautrage and Germans and the 2nd Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys) at Péronnes
Cavalry Division moves toward Dour



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1918 - THE END

9 NOV.

Minimal gains

8 NOV.

Dour is liberated

10 NOV.

Encirclement of Mons

11 NOV.

Mons is free!

03.00 am: last British casualty of the First World War, George Ellison
10.58 am: last casualty of the First World War, George Price
11 am: cease-fire



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7 NOV.

Liberation of Élouges, Quiévrain, Hensies, Petit-Hornu and Bois-de-Boussu

6 NOV.

Capture of Marchipont and Baisieux

5 NOV.

Crossing of the river Honnelle

1^{ER} > 2 NOV.

Taking of Valenciennes

8 OCT.

Breakthrough of the Hindenburg line

27 SEPT. > 1 OCT.

Battle of the canal du Nord

18 SEPT.

Taking of Epehy

8 > 10 OCT.

Battle of Cambrai

29 OCT.

Taking of the Mont Houy



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2 > 3 SEPT.

Capture of the Drocourt-Quéant line

29 AUGUST

Taking of Bapaume Drocourt-Quéant

26 > 30 AUGUST

Battle of the Scarpe

21 > 22 AUGUST

Fall of Albert

17 > 29 AUGUST

2nd battle of Noyon

24 AUGUST

Battles of Frameries, Saint-Ghislain, Wasmes and Audregnies between BEF troops and the German First Army

Retreat in the direction of Le Cateau via the Mormal Forest



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1918

8 > 11 AUGUST

Battle of Amiens



LEGEND

Start	
THE GRAND-PLACE OF MONS	20
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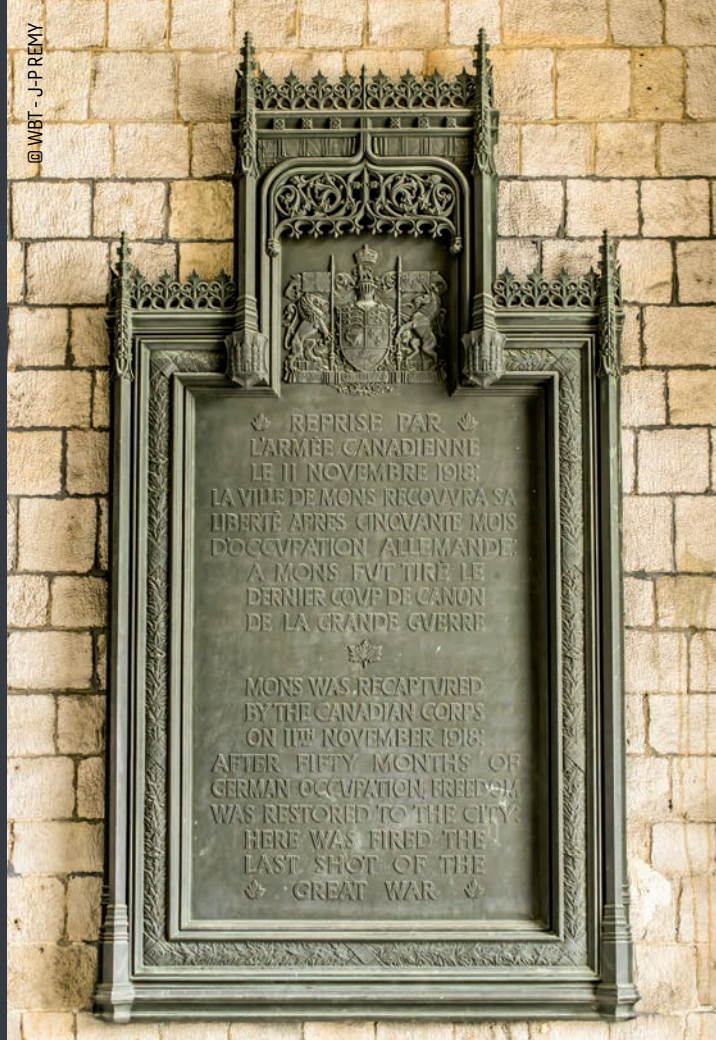
START THE GRAND- PLACE OF MONS

50.454594,3.951834

In the porch of the town hall, you will find two bronze plaques.

One is dedicated to the 5th Royal Irish Lancers who took part in the two battles of Mons in 1914 and in 1918 (during the fighting for Liberation). The other plaque is dedicated to the 3rd Canadian Division that took part in the fighting of November, 1918.

From the main square in Mons, follow the directions to Nimy, take the Chaussée de Bruxelles (N6) to the Avenue de la Joyeuse Entree. Turn left onto Nimy's main square and park. On foot, go onto the viaduct and stand in the centre of the bridge. You will have a view of the entire area. On the left, you will see the railway bridge. To the right, the canal turns.



POINT 1 THE ROAD BRIDGE

50.477585,3.952658

You are on the left side of the salient formed by the bend in the canal.

It was defended by the 4th battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. As part of the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Division of the II Army Corps, they defended all the positions between the road bridge at Nimy (Point 1) and Mons station, including four bridges:

- the road-bridge from the park gate
- the drawbridge at lock No 6
- the railway bridge on the Paris-Brussels line
- the road-bridge on the Chaussée de Bruxelles

The British had entrenched themselves behind the defences consisting of barricades of sandbags and of the most diverse materials. They had been alerted to the advance of the German forces, by telephone, from the halt at Nimy-Maisieres, allowing them to

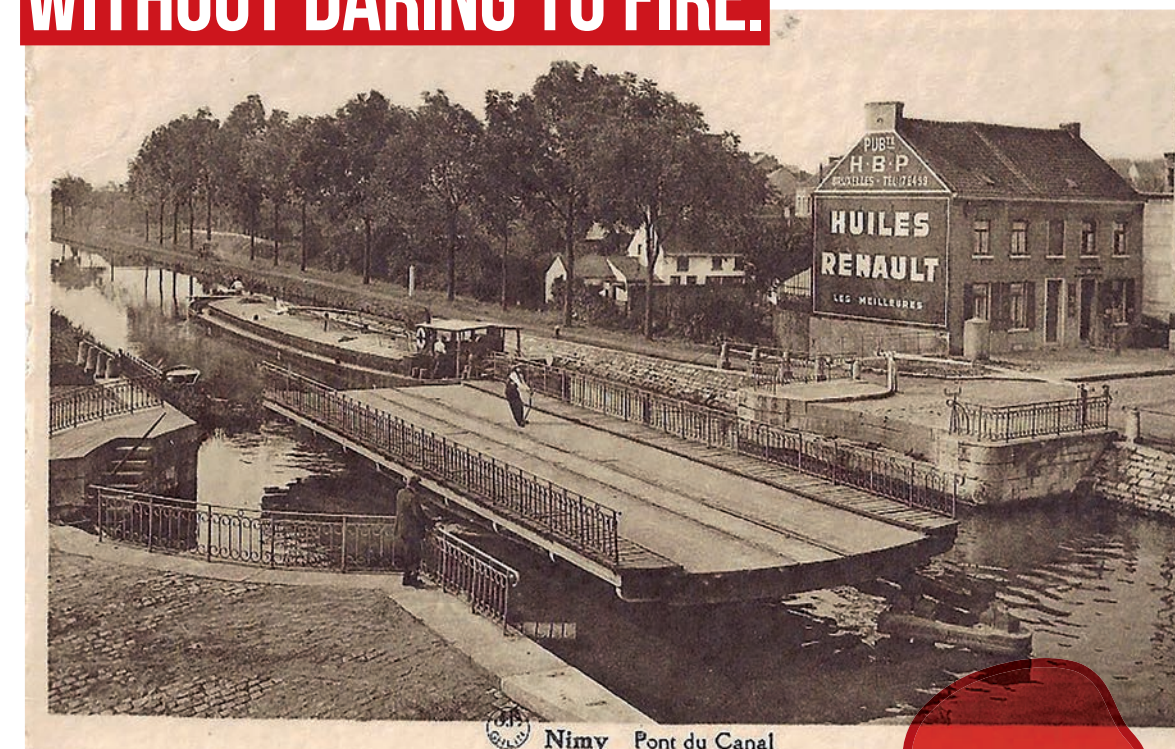
get into position for action (the halt at Nimy-Maisieres still exists, and can be found on the other side of the canal after the railway bridge).

The road bridge and the railway bridge were defended by a company commanded by Captain ASHBURNER and by two machine-guns under the orders of Lieutenant Maurice Dease. The drawbridge and the road-bridge at the park gate were defended by Captain Byng's company, supported by the 107th battery of the Royal Field Artillery.

On 23rd August, starting at 08.30 am, the 84th Infantry Regiment of Schleswig-Holstein approached the bridges, following an artillery bombardment. That was the beginning of a battle that was to last until 2 pm.

The initial German attacks were repelled, but at 11 am the Germans attacked in force. The British replied with rapid and accurate fire.

**FACED WITH THE SPECTACLE OF THE
GERMANS ADVANCING BEHIND A GROUP
OF HOSTAGES, THEY WITHDREW
WITHOUT DARING TO FIRE.**



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British soldiers of the Regular Army were capable of firing, on average, 15 rounds a minute and certain crack shots could even achieve 20 rounds, this being known as "the mad minute".

The Germans suffered very heavy losses and called in their artillery. The British then began to feel the effects of the attack; their losses increased. Second-Lieutenant MEAD, sent in with some men to reinforce the position, was immediately wounded in the head, and after having it dressed, went straight back to his post only to be killed almost at once. Captain ASHBURNER was himself wounded, and so was Captain FORSTER on his right.





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POINT 2 THE RAIL BRIDGE

50.475318,3.945437

At the rail bridge (follow directions below), Lieutenant Maurice James Dease was the only one left from his machine-gun section, and had to man the weapon himself. He was wounded five times and was finally evacuated to the ambulance, where he died. Private Sydney Frank Godley went forward voluntarily, took the gun and, remaining alone, ensured that his comrades could withdraw. Having been wounded, he destroyed the weapon and threw it in the canal. He was then captured.

In recognition of their valour, Dease and Godley were awarded the Victoria Cross, the first two of the war. Godley died shortly after the Second World War. Maurice Dease, killed at the age of 24, and Lieutenant Mead lie in the military cemetery at Saint-Symphorien.

At the swivel bridge, the battle was just equally bloody, and it took the heroic action of the German soldier Niemeyer to open the way for his comrades by jumping into the water under British fire and activating the bridge's mechanism. In doing so, Niemeyer was killed.

At 1.10 pm, the first order to withdraw was given to the entire battalion; the order was only carried out at 1.40 pm, because the Germans had forced their way through the Wartons and were advancing toward the place called "La Bascule". This meant that the 4th Royal Fusiliers faced being surrounded.

The British retreated towards Mons, along the Chaussée de Bruxelles, and up the rue de Nimy to the Mons town square (Grand-Place); (the reverse of the itinerary that brought you here). As they fell back, they took advantage of telegraph poles and recessed doorways to fire back.

A small group of some 20 men dug in at the end of the rue de Nimy and awaited the Germans. But faced with the spectacle of the Germans advancing behind a group of hostages, they withdrew without daring to fire.

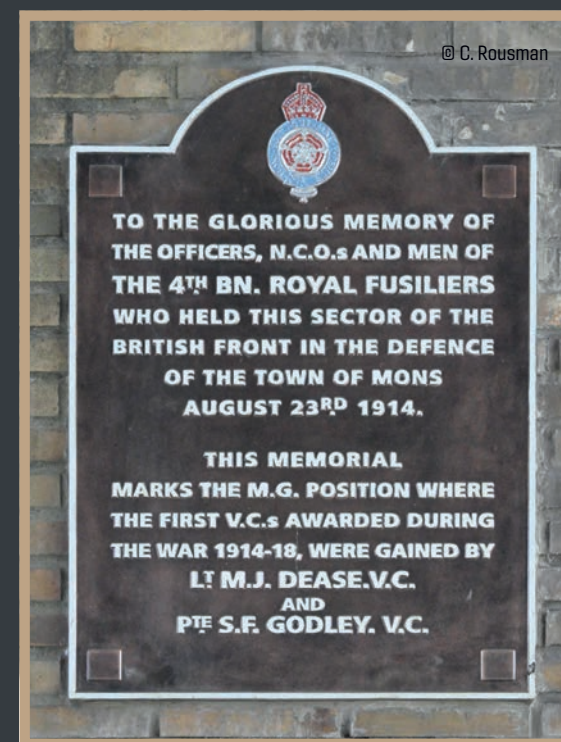


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**FOLLOWING THE
BRITISH RETREAT, THE
GERMANS CROSSED
THE CANAL AND SET
FIRE TO 108 HOUSES
IN NIMY...**

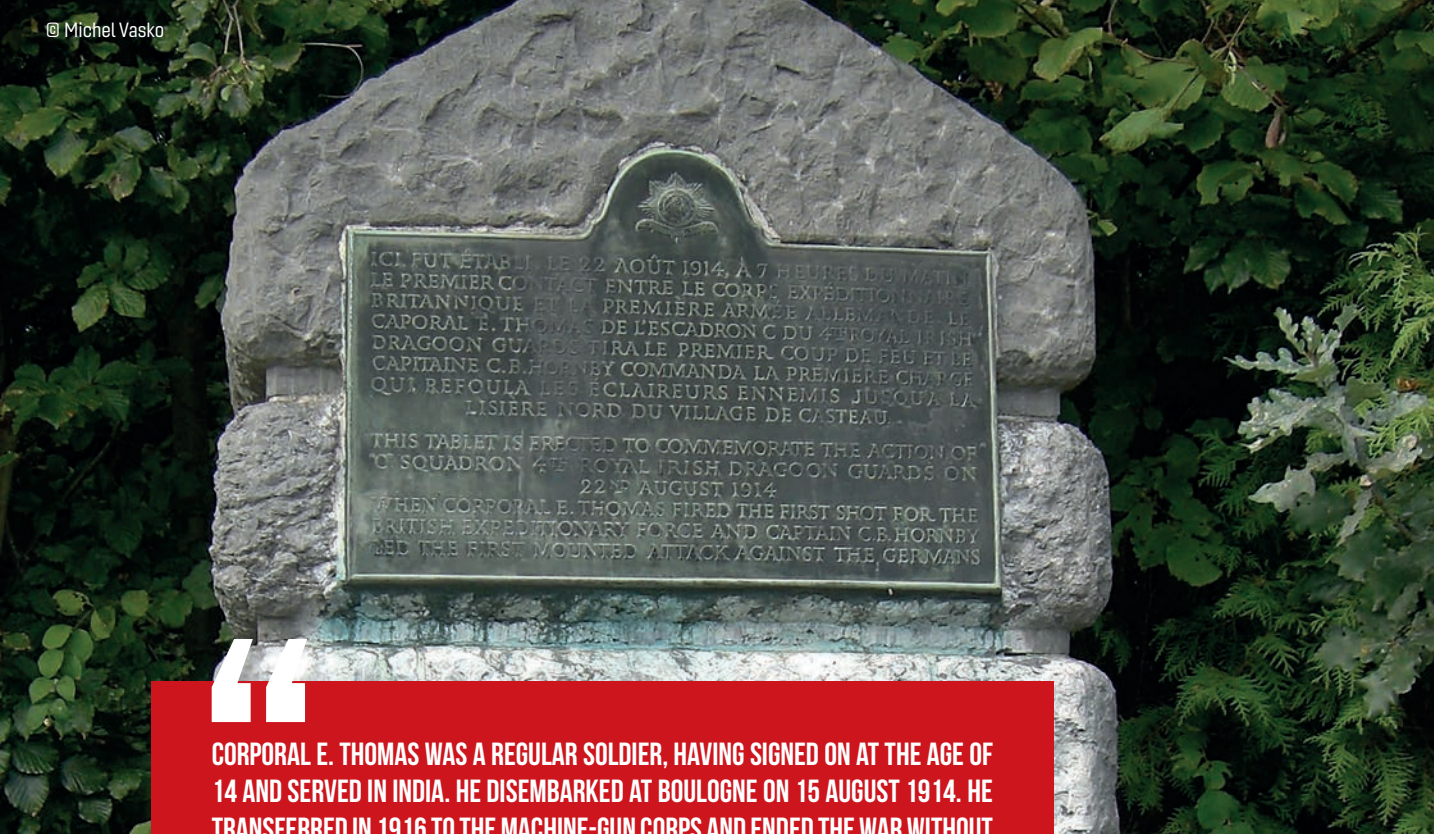
According to the official report, the 4th Royal Fusiliers lost seven officers and 105 other men (killed, wounded and missing). The majority of the wounded had to be left in enemy hands so as not to delay the retreat.

Following the British retreat, the Germans crossed the canal, set fire to 108 houses along the Chaussée de Bruxelles, and massacred 22 civilians. They took hostages from the village and pushed them out in front of them, using them as a human shield as they marched up the Chaussée de Bruxelles and the rue de Nimy. When they got to the Mons Grand-Place, they added the mayor, Jean Lescarts, to the group of hostages and the advance continued along the high street. Arriving at Trou Oudart, they came under fire from elements of the 1st Lincolnshire. In the panic and the gunfire that ensued, four hostages were killed on the spot and two others were wounded and died later.



© C. Rousman

From the former Town Hall, follow the road that leads to the canal, go along the towpath to the railway bridge (Point 2). Beneath its arch there is a commemorative plaque.



CORPORAL E. THOMAS WAS A REGULAR SOLDIER, HAVING SIGNED ON AT THE AGE OF 14 AND SERVED IN INDIA. HE DISEMBARKED AT BOULOGNE ON 15 AUGUST 1914. HE TRANSFERRED IN 1916 TO THE MACHINE-GUN CORPS AND ENDED THE WAR WITHOUT BEING WOUNDED BUT SUFFERING FROM THE EFFECTS OF GAS. HE GOT THE MILITARY MEDAL FOR HIS BRAVERY AND WAS DEMOBILISED IN 1923, BECOMING A COMMISSIONAIRE AT A CINEMA IN BRIGHTON, HIS BIRTHPLACE, AND DIED ON 10 FEBRUARY 1939.

POINT 3

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES IN CASTEAU

50.505177,3.99797

Head back to Nimy's main square, get into your car and take the Chaussée de Bruxelles (N6) north. You will pass the SHAPE headquarters on your left and a short time later arrive in Casteau. On the verge, on the left-hand side as you travel north, you will find a monument inscribed as follows:

"It was here, on 22 August 1914, at seven o'clock in the morning that the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and Germany's First Army made their first contact. Corporal E. Thomas of C Squadron of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards fired the first shot, and Captain C.D. Hornby led the first charge that drove the enemy scouts back to the northern edge of Casteau".

The monument is not actually on the spot where that first, famous shot was fired but at the starting point for the charge.

Opposite this monument, on the house on the other side of the road, you can see the commemorative plaque where the Canadian troops were at the time of the armistice on 11 November 1918. This is also the place where the First World War both began and ended for Commonwealth troops.

Major-General Allenby's cavalry division, with strength of five brigades (or 15 regiments) had gone into Belgium on 21 August 1914. Its mission was to make contact with the French army for one thing, and for another, to assess the strength of the enemy by identifying the units committed.

It was not possible, during the day on the 21st, to



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make contact with the enemy, close as they were. Major Tom BRIDGES who commanded C Squadron of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards (2 Brigade under Brigadier DE LISLE) decided to make a reconnaissance along the Mons-Brussels road and got into position at dawn on the 22nd on the high ground of Brisee de Saint Denis.

Towards 7 o'clock, at the boundary between Maisieres and Casteau, an advanced guard of four enemy cavalymen (from the 2nd Cuirassiers) emerged from Casteau. They were immediately spotted by the British, hidden in the undergrowth. After stopping, the enemy half-turned and was straightaway pursued by the 1st Platoon commanded by Captain HORNBY, followed by the 4th Platoon whose men included THOMAS.

The men of the 4th Platoon dismounted near the mansion of Ghislain. The Germans opened fire. THOMAS was the first to draw, aim and fire, and a German rider fell. Whether he had wounded him or not, he never found out. What is certain is that the British had not fired a shot on the Continent since Waterloo, so that it was THOMAS who had the honour of firing the very first British round of the Great War.

HORNBY pursued the enemy as far as Soignies where they were overtaken, causing a skirmish.

In the meantime, the Germans had received reinforcements, notably a company of cyclists. At the spot called Reine de Hongrie (Queen of Hungary) where the chase ended, the Germans had a few dead while the British came back proudly bringing five prisoners at no loss to themselves.

The division of cavalry drew back during the night, in the area of Quiévrain in order to strengthen the left flank of the army.

Corporal E. THOMAS was a regular soldier, having signed on at the age of 14 and served in India. He disembarked at Boulogne on 15 August 1914. He transferred in 1916 to the Machine-Gun Corps and ended the war without being wounded but suffering from the effects of gas. He got the Military Medal for his bravery and was demobilised in 1923, becoming a commissionaire at a cinema in Brighton, his birthplace, and died on 10 February 1939.

Return to your car and drive back the same way. At the large crossroads, look for the signpost to Obourg, via the Brisee road, turn to the right at the rue du Camp that you are to follow as far as the rue des Ecosais (Scots Road), then turn left into the rue des Anglais (English Road) and you reach Obourg's main square. There, turn to the right, go past the bridge that spans the canal; at the bottom, turn left and you are at Obourg's station.

POINT 4

OBOURG STATION

50.470111, 4.011015

We find ourselves in the sector defended by the 4th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment.

On 21 August, this battalion had sent a patrol of cyclists towards Casteau-Maisieres, and it fell upon a German patrol. Following an exchange of fire, Private J. PARR (serial number L/14.196) was killed. He was the first.

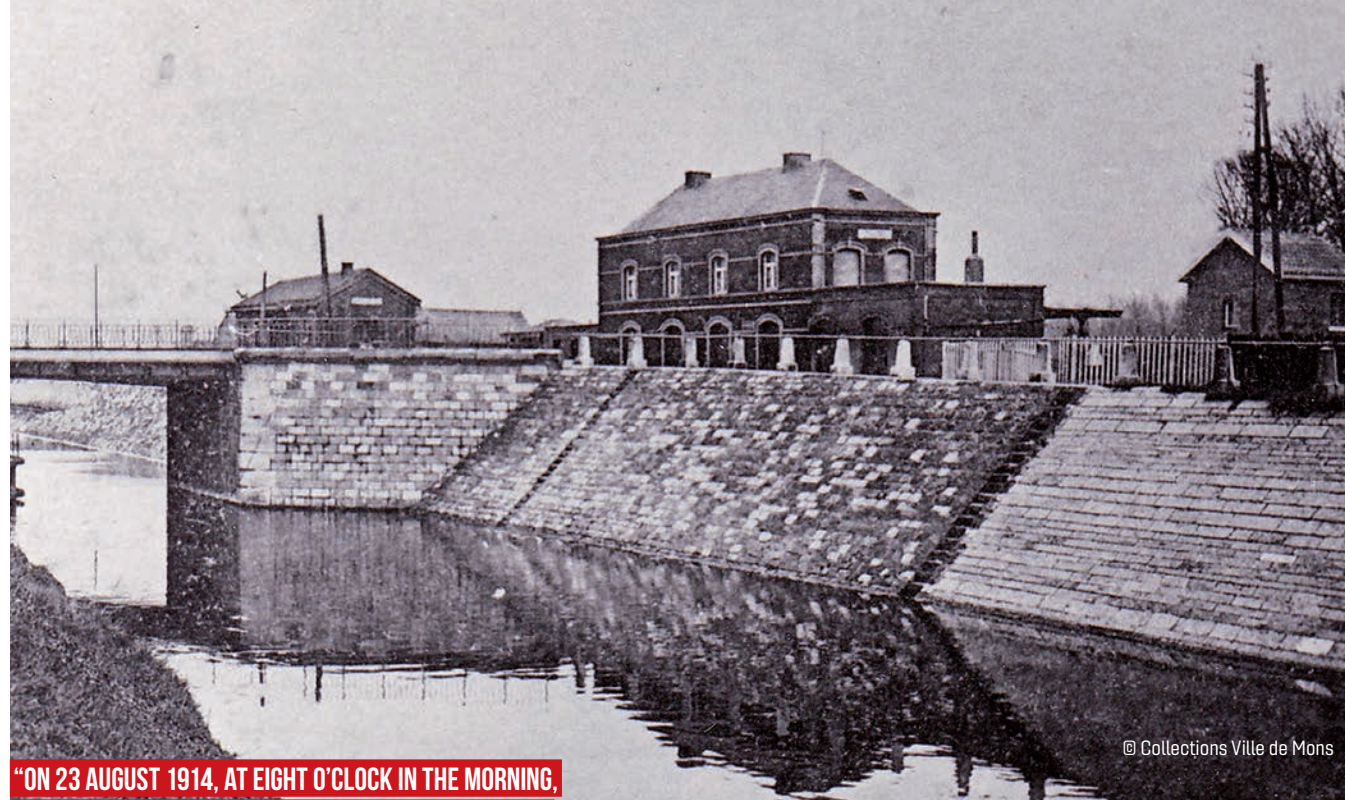
On 23 August 1914, beginning at eight in the morning, shots were exchanged on both sides of the canal. The Germans were about to launch an attack. The fight started to the west of the station and spread to the canal bridge, held by D Company (under the command of Captain GLASS who was wounded during the assault).

At the station, B Company had been put under Lieutenant WILMOT-ALISTON who gained the unhappy privilege of becoming the first prisoner from the entire British Army. The soldiers had been camouflaged under the platform of the annex, well concealed under sacks of cement. Thanks to this protection, they cut down any enemy that tried to approach. The German soldiers were from the 31st Infantry Regiment.

It was a hard-fought battle all along the canal held by the 4th Middlesex and, thanks to the accuracy and rapidity of their fire, the British inflicted heavy losses on the 85th and 86th Regiments of the Germans. Towards midday, the English began to be overwhelmed by numbers and had to give ground, their losses being heavy. The battalion sent an urgent message to Colonel COX (commanding the 2nd Royal Irish), requesting assistance and adding that they were forced to fall back to the edge of the cemetery.

Two companies of the 2nd Royal Irish were sent in rescue towards the cemetery where the head of 1 Company, Captain MELLOR, was immediately killed by an exploding shell.

At the station in Obourg, a heroic British soldier, whose name is unknown, sacrificed himself to allow his comrades to retreat. Alone among the dead and dying, perched on the station's roof, he resisted the Germans.



"ON 23 AUGUST 1914, AT EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING, NEAR THIS SPOT, THE 4TH BATTALION OF THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT FIRED THE FIRST SHOTS IN THE BATTLE OF MONS. ON THE ROOF OF THIS STATION, A BRITISH SOLDIER, WHO HAS NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED, REMAINED ALONE, LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE TO SAFEGUARD THE RETREAT OF HIS COMRADES".

These managed to wound him at last and forced their way through and their first concern was to finish off this anonymous warrior.

There is a plaque on the wall of the station, bearing this inscription: "On 23 August 1914, at eight o'clock in the morning, near this spot, the 4th battalion of the Middlesex Regiment fired the first shots in the Battle of Mons. On the roof of this station, a British soldier, who has not been identified, remained alone, laying down his life to safeguard the retreat of his comrades".

The fighting shifted towards the cemetery and the asylum.

Follow the Beauval road, turn right and take the old Binche road; turn left at the chemin de l'Oasis and then turn left again to find yourself in the Chemin du Chêne aux Haies (it means the road of oaks with hedges). On the right is the wall of the cemetery, while to the left are the buildings of the psychiatric hospital.

The cemetery at Mons includes a military section where the British and German soldiers, killed during the two conflicts lie at rest. A cenotaph rises above the graves all around. There are 390 British interred there.

POINT 5

MONS COMMUNAL CEMETERY

50.460919, 3.975846

The 4th Middlesex retired in good order, both from Obourg station and from the Wartons lock (which is to the left of the station in the extension of the Wartons way). They took up position all along the wall that lines the road, being joined by two companies of the 2nd Royal Irish around 12.40 am.

A and C Companies as well as two platoons of B Company of the 2nd Royal Irish took up their position, under the command of Major SAINT LEGER in a racecourse to the north-west of the cemetery (it no longer exists today, but was located in what is now the street named after the 4th Middlesex) and towards the right under the cover of a sunken road. D Company under Captain ELLIOT was to the north of the road with, on its right, the last platoon of B Company. Finally, two sections of B Company, led by Lieutenant FERGUSON, in a field to the west of the cemetery covered the road's exit between the asylum and the cemetery.

The remainder of the 2nd Royal Irish took up position at Faubourg Barthélemy as far as the intersection of

the Mons-Binche and Mons-Givry roads (the place called "La Bascule") in order to cover the Gordon Highlanders.

The companies of the 4th Middlesex prepared for battle to the right of the dispositions of the 2nd Royal Irish, from the end of the Chemin du Chêne aux Haies as far as the Binche highway (slightly above the crossing), thus forming the arc of a circle.

The German artillery heavily bombarded the sector, especially with incendiary shells. The buildings of the asylum started to burn and the 600 inmates, terrified, fled into the open. Several were killed anyway.

The companies of the 2nd Royal Irish had to scatter under the heavy fire from howitzers and machine-guns. The troops' movement must have been seen by a spotter aircraft that overflew the sector and informed the artillery.

Major SAINT LEGER was forced to move his troops to new positions, since the bombardment was too intense and his men's field of fire was very much reduced. The British losses were becoming heavy, especially in officers.

The situation was becoming desperate, for the enemy was attacking on both flanks and the German artillery had complete ascendancy.

Major HULL and Major SAINT LEGER therefore decided to withdraw to a more favourable position. Gathering all the men that they could, HULL and SAINT LEGER retreated, covered by Major PANTERDOWNES and Lieutenant PHILIPPs who was wounded.

Go down Chemin du Chêne aux Haies, turn left and follow the Roelux highway; then turn right and take the Mourdreux road so that you arrive at that "Bascule" cross-roads.

Many Commonwealth soldiers lie in the municipal cemetery of Mons



POINT 6 THE MONUMENT OF THE ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT

50.452422,3.97979

The British soldiers got into position at the crossroads as far as the Barthelemy suburb. The ground provided good shelter from rifle fire, but was swept by howitzers and machine-guns.

A section of artillery, placed to the left of the battalion, tried valiantly to counter the fire of the German artillery, but drew such a deluge of shells that it was forced to withdraw.

Here too, then, the position was becoming untenable. The battalion regrouped and started to retreat. The 2nd Royal Irish went down the rue Léon Save, apart from B Company which withdrew through a wood behind the hospital.

The 4th Middlesex then retired in turn. The losses of the 4th Middlesex reached 15 officers and 467 other ranks.

Following the British retreat to the cemetery, the Germans reconstituted their front, with a redeployment from the approach to Mons as far as the Bascule. They wanted to seize the crossroads and so cut the retreat of the British forces. They poured across fields and followed the Chemin des Mourdreux.

Sergeant FITZPATRICK, who was Regimental Quarter-Master Sergeant, had been ordered by Lieutenant R.E.G. PHILIPPS, around 12:30 hours to stay put and await orders. At that time, the regiment was at the Segard public-house (now a banking complex) where he had just been served with a beer. FITZPATRICK began to prepare to eat with his men. When he saw that his battalion was in trouble and that some men were starting to retreat, he got together 40 men, a mixture of cooks, batmen, storemen, drivers, etc. and manned the trenches on the other side of the crossroads. He impressed upon his men not to open fire until the enemy were less than 200 yards away.

When the elements of the 85th Infantry Regiment (on the right) and the 31st Infantry Regiment (on the left) appeared, they were received with sustained fire.

After two conventional mass attacks, the Germans changed their tactics. They attacked in penny-packets in loose order.

At about 3 pm, Major SIMPSON (of the 2nd Gordon Highlanders) whose defences were to the right, arrived at the Bascule. He was astonished to find so few men at such an important point. He came back shortly with a dozen men. Sadly, Major SIMPSON was wounded, but was able to leave the scene on his horse.

During a lull, FITZPATRICK, accompanied by volunteers, fetched an abandoned and damaged machine-gun together with some boxes of ammunition. Sergeant REDMONT managed to repair the weapon, something that considerably assisted their defence. There were already 11 dead among the Irish and three among the Gordons.



**NIGHT FELL AT LAST.
THE LOSSES WERE 15 DEAD
AND FOUR GRAVELY WOUNDED.**

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18 Pounder Field Gun

The Germans bombarded the sector and the shells reached the houses. Some civilians who had taken shelter in the cellars were killed.

The Germans tried one more charge, but REDMONT's machine-gun made ominous gaps in their ranks. The fighting moved towards the positions of the Gordon Highlanders and the Royal Scots. FITZPATRICK and the others who survived were able to get some rest.

Night fell at last. The losses were 15 dead and four gravely wounded.

A memorial in the form of a Celtic cross was put up at this crossroads in 1923, being inaugurated on 11 November by Lord FRENCH, the Earl of Ypres, to commemorate the participation of the Irish unit and its glorious defence of this place.

Opposite this memorial, on the other side of the highway, was unveiled on 23 August 1986 a monument dedicated to the two battles of Mons. Initially in the castle park, not far from the belfry, this monument was put up in 1952, being inaugurated by Field-Marshal Lord Alexander of Tunis. It bears the following inscription:

"Here the forces of the British Empire fought their first and last battle in the 14-18 war. On 23rd and 24th August 1914, the British Expeditionary Force commanded by Sir John FRENCH with supreme courage held the advance of overwhelmingly superior German Forces. On Armistice Day 1918, after 60 hours of heavy fighting, Canadian divisions entered Mons. British and Canadian Regiments have erected this tablet to the Glory of God and to commemorate these events".

From the Bascule crossroads, go down in the direction of Mons, and almost 100 yards to the left, you will find the Gendebien Castle.



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POINT 7 THE GENDEBIEN CASTLE

50.452668,3.972756

The Gendebien Castle was still alight, having been hit in the afternoon by incendiary shells.

Extending along the main road, to the north-east of the park, it served as a relief hospital and had been placed under the command of Major LONG, medical officer of the 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers. The windows were hung with the Red Cross flag, while a similar flag had been hoisted above the roof.

During the fire, all the wounded were evacuated. Unfortunately, two men perished in the ruins: Major J.S. MAIDLOW (49th Battery, Royal Field Artillery) and a non-identified private.

The sector had become quiet again. Fires began to be lit in the German camp.

Among the hospital's wounded were Lieutenant PHILIPPS who was unconscious, so that he could no longer give orders to FITZPATRICK.

FITZPATRICK thus decided to withdraw and rejoin the battalion. Having buried their dead, his group destroyed the machine-gun as well as weapons that

could not be carried.

At midnight, they set out. In silence and darkness, the 18 survivors, each carrying two rifles, crossed gardens, yards and fields and reached the slopes of Bois-la-Haut. They crossed the Trouille and took two hours of sleep. They rejoined the rest of the battalion during the afternoon of the 24th.

FITZPATRICK was awarded the DCM for his action and died on 25 March 1965.

Regain your car, follow the Beaumont highway, turn right at the Chemin d'Adresse, park your car for the road is difficult and go on foot to Bois-là-Haut.

Note that the present Gendebien Castle is now where the general who is commander-in-chief of troops in NATO (SHAPE) resides.

The Gendebien Castle



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POINT 8 BOIS-LÀ-HAUT

50.440466,3.983141

The 40th Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery, being No 6, No 23 and No 29 batteries, took up position on the high ground in a field looking onto the Beaumont highway. The horses were sheltered in a wood.

During the daytime on 23 August, this gunnery brigade had no interference at all from the Germans' infantry, but was subjected to a bombardment from their guns that caused three fatalities.

The British artillery was in a commanding position that covered the entire battlefield and its guns scythed through the ranks of the German attackers.

At 5.15 pm, the gunners received the order to withdraw, doing so at 5.30 pm, escorted by the 12th Platoon of the Gordon Highlanders and under the fire of German guns that fired from Hyon.

The convoy turned into the sunken road that was very narrow, extremely steep and bounded by high banks. Under the German fire, several horses were killed or injured. The men of the 1st Gordon Highlanders were even forced to charge with bayonets a German road-block put across the road leading to Hyon.

On the way down, an ammunition wagon overturned, killing two drivers as well as the horses. The way was blocked. Besides the line of retreat seemed to be cut, because the Germans had dug in at Hyon.

Major INGHAM, commanding No 23 Battery, made a reconnaissance while the work of clearing the obstacle began. The position was put into one of defence.

At last, the body of the wagon was lifted to the bank of the road, the gun brought down by hand and dragged towards the highway.

Thanks to strenuous work by the gunners, the transport was unblocked, uncoupled by hand and reformed at the foot of the hill. The surviving horses were redistributed among the teams on the Chemin de Bethléem.

The convoy caught up with the rest of the retreating troops at 23:30 hours and fell back towards Nouvelles.

Go back along Bethlehem Street, and find the Beaumont highway, returning to the Bascule. We now take the Binche road and pass the positions held by the 1st Gordon Highlanders and extended by the 2nd Royal Scots.

Appearance of La "Bascule" from the Chaussée de Beaumont.



POINT 9

THE MONUMENT OF "LA BASCULE"

50.451001,3.988023

The 1st Gordon Highlanders had been in their trenches from eight o'clock in the morning. Their positions started at "La Bascule", running the length of the Mons-Binche and Mons-Givry roads as well as the side of Panisel hill that faced the road.

In their continuation of the Gordons' line, the 2nd Royal Scots moved into the trenches that the soldiers had dug under the bushes all along the Beaumont road on the other side of the Malplaquet crossroads.

Since the Royal Scots were spread thinly, a company of the South Staffordshires arrived around 2.30 pm to fill a gap in the middle of the positions. At 4 pm, they were further reinforced by two companies of the Royal Irish Rifles.

At 2.30 pm, the attack began, but it was just probing so far as the Germans were concerned – a simple contact with the enemy.

The battalion was first hit only around 4 pm by a violent artillery bombardment that progressively ranged across the whole line of defence. It was only with darkness that this bombardment ceased.

The fighting between the infantry was, compared to that in other sectors, nothing more than skirmishes.

It was basically around a café called the Creamery that the fighting was violent. At this spot behind a hedge, the Gordons had sited a machine-gun that caused the attackers heavy losses.

Fighting stopped around 8 pm, the quiet being interrupted only by some sporadic shots.

When darkness fell, the Irish Guards arrived to reinforce the positions and got into positions under cover from the Mons-Givry road. They disengaged around 9 pm.

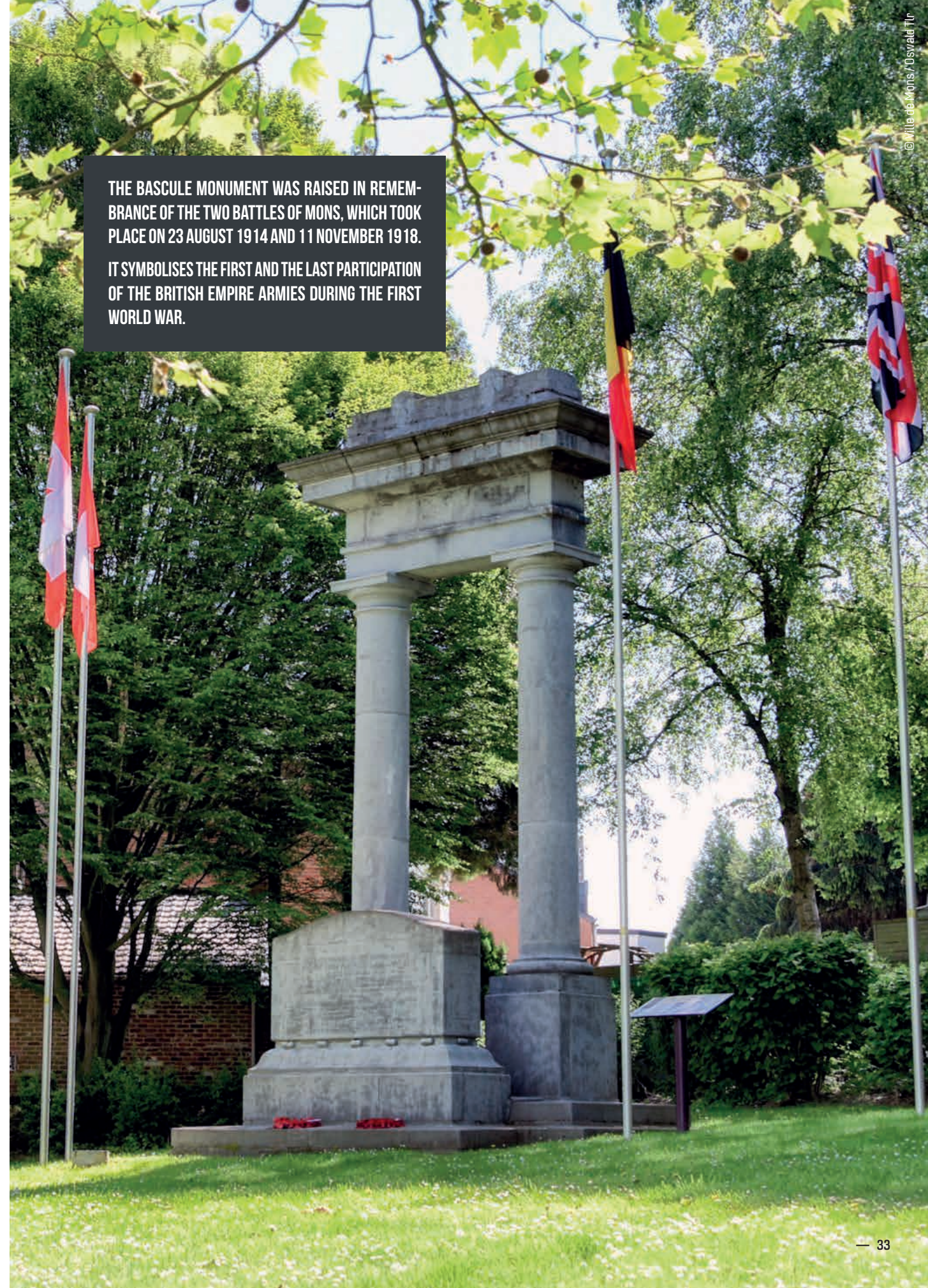
At 9.10 pm, the 2nd Royal Scots received a message from HQ, ordering the companies to be ready to withdraw at 10.30 pm. C Company of the Royal Irish Rifles, interpolated in the positions of the 2nd Royal Scots, was ordered to place itself under the authority of the battalion.

At 10.30 pm, the companies, starting from the right, disengaged in good order and formed into columns.

The withdrawal was completed without incident.

THE BASCULE MONUMENT WAS RAISED IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE TWO BATTLES OF MONS, WHICH TOOK PLACE ON 23 AUGUST 1914 AND 11 NOVEMBER 1918.

IT SYMBOLISES THE FIRST AND THE LAST PARTICIPATION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE ARMIES DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR.





SEARCH FOR PRIVATE CARTER

ARTHUR FREDERICK CARTER OR THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING A LIFE TO A FACE

August 1914. In the hours that followed the shock of the invasion of the country, thousands of young men from England landed on the continent to defend Belgium and its people. Some are professional soldiers, other fresh recruits indignant at the invasion of the territory by the German troops and with the idea that their own country is threatened. Among them, a young twenty-year old man... his name is Arthur Frederick Carter.

On 22 August 1914, in the afternoon, on the eve of the terrible Battle of Mons, this young innocent soldier is broadly smiling for a Mons photographer at a place called "La Bascule", without knowing that a few hours later, the blood and tears will fall on his own in the first big confrontation between British and German troops. He is far from imagining that the war will last four years and that it will make millions of victims, both civilian and military.

From him, we only know his rank and surname: "Private Carter".

One hundred years later, this wonderful photo of the young man remains, but his story, which is part of history, remained unknown. Through collaboration in the context of the show "Who do you think you are?" Live from Birmingham, three Belgians wonder. They are the Belgian-English genealogist Marie CAPPART, Philippe MAREE of the Belgian Tourist Office in London and Michel VASKO, Deputy Director of the Tourist Office of Mons: "What happened to him?"



The descendants of the Private Carter at the monument of "La Bascule" on 23 August 2018 during the remembrance ceremony in Mons.

www.histoires-de-familles.org

Did he survive the Battle of Mons? The war? Supported by dozens of others, the three "friends of Carter" begin a long and exciting investigation looking for information about his life, his service during the war. The soldier Carter had to be found!

Marie CAPPART says: "Thousands of young men enrolled for freedom in the war years and among them, a countless number of men with the surname "Carter", there were a lot of them on the front, even in the early days of the conflict. It took many months to go through the list of potential candidates and to extract the most likely: Arthur Frederick Carter file number L13834. Enrolled in the 3rd Regiment of Middlesex, he served for the entirety of the conflict. This bravery earned him honours including the famous Mons Star, a decoration, honouring the soldiers who had been under fire between 5 August and 30 November 1914. Information snippets overlap, one by one. Patiently the puzzle of history comes to life before our eyes. We learn from the archives of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission that he presumably was not KIA, "Killed in action", and that in itself is a big relief. But how can we find out more? His service record has disappeared in the archives fire during the Second World War.

In August 2015, I discovered a document of discharge on a genealogical website of the Army dated from spring 1919 with the number of the corresponding regiment. This is it! He's our man, and he survived!

Despite the late hour, I cannot help but contact my fellow researchers. We are very happy, knowing that

our friend Carter escaped the horrors of the conflict! Given his young age and his tenacity, we can't help but think that he could have been involved in the second war, that maybe he got married, had children, is still living today? Excited by the idea, we get to work again, determined to pay tribute to him.

Sometime later, we receive confirmation that Arthur Frederick did fight in the 39-45 war, that he married and had children. We examine the possible certificates, places and dates, by combining these data with directories, social networks. Finally, we localise the great-grandchildren of Arthur Frederick Carter! The victory of life against death, democracy against barbarism and self-sacrifice as a fabulous legacy."

In locating descendants of Arthur Frederick, we forward all the connections which link the city of Mons and its region to the thousands of families who have also sent a son, a father, a brother to the front. And we pay tribute to them, as we also do in 2018 for the commemoration of the Armistice by specifying that our duty of remembrance does not stop when the bands stop playing.

Against barbarism, the memory of these soldiers needs to be saluted forever more, their story told to the young generations so that in 2118, young people will still lay down "poppies" in memory of the friends of Arthur Frederick Carter who did not, unlike him, have a chance to survive and of transmitting life.



© visitMons / Grégory Mathelot

“

PROBABLY ONE OF
THE MOST MAGNIFICENT
CEMETERIES IN BELGIUM

POINT 10

SAINT-SYMPHORIEN MILITARY CEMETERY

50.434985,4.00948

This cemetery, probably one of the most magnificent in Belgium, is in a most quiet spot, very rural. Surrounded by fields and trees, it has a peacefulness that sometimes makes one feel anguished. There are two areas: one with the German graves, the other with the British ones.

This is administered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission that maintains it in an admirable manner.

It is a very poignant place from which one comes away with a lot of emotion. The majority of soldiers killed during the Battle of Mons take their final rest there. The largest number of graves are those of the 4th Middlesex.

It is a very poignant place from which one comes away with a lot of emotion

THE FIRST

JOHN H. PARR

John Henry Parr was born in Church End (Barnet) on 19 July 1897, the son of Edward and Alice Parr.

He died in Obourg on 21 August 1914 (at age 17) and is recognised as the first soldier of the Commonwealth to be killed by the enemy during the First World War.

His father worked as a milkman. He was the youngest of eleven children of whom many died before their fourth birthday. On leaving school, he took a job as a butcher's boy, then as a golf caddie at the North Middlesex Golf Club. John Parr joined the 4th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment in 1912, aged only 15, but claiming to be more than 18 years old, the minimum age to enrol.

As a soldier, Parr was a reconnaissance cyclist, with the mission to search for intelligence on the enemy and then to report to the Commander. At the beginning of the First World War, in August 1914, his battalion was sent from Southampton to Boulogne-sur-Mer, France. While the German army was invading Belgium, the 4th Middlesex arrived in Taisnières on 15 August and left it on 21 August at 10.00 am.



© Jean-Paul Remy

DEATH OF JOHN PARR

On 21 August, Parr and another cyclist scout were sent to the northeast of Mons, to Obourg, a village near the French-Belgian border, with mission to locate the enemy. It was likely that they encountered a cavalry patrol of the first German army, Parr remained in position to contain the enemy while his companion returned to report. It is then that he was killed by a gunshot. Parr is buried in the German-British Saint-Symphorien military cemetery, Southeast of Mons.

THE LAST

GEORGE E. ELLISON

Born in Leeds on 10 August 1878.

Early on, he joined the army as a “regular”, but he left in 1912 when he married Hannah Maria BURGAN and became a miner. From their union was born a son James Cornelius ELLISON, born on 16 November 1913.

He was recalled during the mobilisation and joined the 5th Royal Irish Lancers Regiment with number L/12643. His regiment was part of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade commanded by General Gough.

With his regiment, he participated in all of the conflict and all types of battles: the war of movement, the mud of the trenches, gas attacks and the appearance of the tanks. He first saw action at Mons in August 1914, followed by the retreat with the battles of Cateau and the Marne. At this time, the 3rd, 4th and 5th Cavalry Brigades were going to form the 2nd Cavalry Division, under the command of General Gough.

Then the fighting continuously followed: capture of the monastery on the Mount of the Cats in October 1914, the first battle of Ypres. During the year 1915, Ypres and Loos. In 1917, from April until 20 May taking of the Gillemont farm (near Vendhuile), afterwards in November the fights of the wood of Bourlon (where the regiment won its first Victoria Cross: Private George William CLARE) and finally, the seizure of Cambrai. In 1918, it is Saint Quentin, then the canal du Nord and the breakthrough of the Hindenburg line, followed by the 100 days until Mons.

C Squadron commanded by Captain Batten Pool (including Ellison) was placed under the command of the 6th Canadian Brigade.

On 11 November 1918, at 3.00 am, it travelled to Hyon where it divided. Two platoons under the orders of Lieutenant Biggs passed through a place called “Malplaquet” heading for the Havré forest where machine gun fire awaited them. Another patrol was sent to the north end of the wood in order to try to reach the canal. This patrol spotted German cyclists and after venturing into the woods, was greeted with machine gun fire. Lt. Biggs then tried to capture the machine gun, but failed. It was 9:30 am, the patrol left the wood to give way to the infantry. At that moment a shot was fired. Ellison was hit, and fell from his horse. He was killed on the spot! He who miraculously escaped the slightest injury throughout the war...

He is buried in the Saint-Symphorien military cemetery.

GEORGE L. PRICE

He was born on 15 December 1892 in Falmouth, Kings County in Nova Scotia.

As a young man he settled in Moose Jaw and worked as a farmhand. On 15 October 1917, drafted, he joined the 210th Infantry Battalion (Frontiersmen) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, in Moose Jaw, under number 256265. He completed his basic training with the 1st Saskatchewan Depot Battalion in Regina, on 4 December 1917.

From Regina, he travelled to St. John's where he embarked on the H.M.S. “Soctian”, on 21 January 1918 and arrived at Liverpool, on 6 February 1918, where he joined the 15th Canadian Reserve battalion at Bramshott. He was then enrolled in the 28th Canadian Infantry Battalion (Saskatchewan North West Regiment). He crossed from Southampton - Boulogne. He arrived at Etaples on 2 May 1918 and rejoined his unit on 1 June 1918, where he served in company A. The 28th battalion was part of the 6th brigade of the 2nd Canadian division.

From 15 to 17 August, he was stationed at Damery and then fought at Villers-Bretonneux. On 26 August, his brigade assisted in the capture of Monchy-le-Preux and Wancourt.

On 28 August, it was the capture of a significant part of the German defence of the Fresnes-Rouvroy sector.

On 2 and 3 September, the Drocourt-Quéant line was reached.

He was gassed on 8 September 1918 in the North canal area and sent to the 1st Canadian Casualty Collection



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Station to be treated there and then sent to the 26th General Hospital in Etaple.

He returned to his unit on 26 September 1918. From 27 September to 1 October, he participated in the battle of the canal du Nord (Saint-les-Marquion - Moeuvres sector) with the capture of the villages of Marquion and Bourlon.

On 8 and 9 October Cambrai was taken. Then, it was the pursuit: Denain, battle of Valenciennes-with the capture of Mont Houy on 1 and 2 November.

From 5 to 7 November, it was the passage of the grande Honnelle (Quiévrain - Crespin in Belgium).

On the evening of 10 November, the 28th battalion was ordered to move forward from Frameries, cross the ranks of the 29th battalion and continue towards Havré, in order to secure the bridges of the canal of the Centre.

On 11 November, the battalion started at 4:00 am, crossed Hyon and headed for the wood of Havré, pushing back weak German resistance and reaching their position along the canal opposite Ville-sur-Haine at 9 am. At that time the Battalion received a message announcing that all hostilities would cease at 11am.

Price and a friend, Arthur Goodworthy, decided on their own initiative to go on a patrol with 5 men to search houses on the other side of the canal. They were beginning to examine those houses one by one and see German soldiers with machine guns along a wall overlooking the canal. Exchange of fire and retreat of the Germans.

At 10:57am, Price was fatally shot by a sniper as he was leaving a house. He was pulled inside and taken care of by a young Belgian girl, but he died at 10:58 am, two minutes before the ceasefire!

One of the teachers of Ville-sur-Haine collected a fabric flower that he was carrying in one of his pockets. This velvet maple flower, stained with blood, was placed under glass with these words:

“On this November 11, 1918, at the ultimate moment when peace was signed, you fell for us, the last victim of a sad conflict. Thank you, George Price! A drop of your blood was spilled on this simple flower that you were hiding on your chest”.

He was initially buried in Havré's old municipal cemetery, and then his body was transferred to Saint-Symphorien military cemetery. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal posthumously.



The George Price monument in Ville-sur-Haine at its inauguration on 10 November 2018

POINT 11 GEORGE PRICE MEMORIAL AT VILLE-SUR-HAINE

The original plaque dedicated to the memory of private George Lawrence Price was inaugurated on 11 November 1968 by Colonel McIntyre (who commanded the 28th Canadian Infantry Battalion) in the presence of many surviving members of “A” Company. It was placed on the facade of the house he was coming out of when he was fatally shot. The building was demolished in the 1980s to allow the canal to be widened and the plaque was affixed to a memorial located almost in front of the place where he was shot. The bridge located behind the monument was named after Price in 1991, by a plebiscite.

A much larger new memorial was unveiled on 10 November 2018 by Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada. The project was initiated in May 2014 by the municipal council of Le Roeulx, local historians and Canadian soldiers based at SHAPE, and received the support of the Ambassador of Canada and the Minister of Canadian Veterans.

It is located near a nursery school, George Price primary school and the footbridge over the canal.



MMM IN NUMBERS

- A 3.000 m² museum space
- A 1.200 m² permanent exposition hall
- A 350 m² temporary exposition hall
- 2 mediation rooms for school groups
- 1 projection room
- 1 conference room
- 1 cafeteria
- 1 shop

POINT 12

MONS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

50.450060, 3.956793

Place for reflection, space for questioning, museum — the Mons Memorial Museum can define itself by so many names. This museum space aspires to be, above all, a meeting place in the heart of a region steeped in memory and marked by two world wars that marked the twentieth-century society. The Mons Memorial Museum invites visitors of all ages to reflect on the multiple and complex realities of wartime events. Accounts of the lives of men and women who witnessed the conflict immerse visitors in the daily experiences of soldiers and civilians in periods of peace, war, and occupation.

Chosen from among the 5000 items that constitute the military history collections of the City of Mons, the objects presented inspire deep reflection on the relations between the civilian and military populations. This reflection takes form in a journey from the Middle Ages through the Ancien Regime up until the two world wars.

A large segment of the Mons Memorial Museum's permanent collection is dedicated to World War I: 40%

of the museum concerns this first conflict in which Mons played a central role, both as a combat zone and occupied territory. In addition to being a theatre of the first confrontation between the British and German armies at the Battle of Mons on 23 August 1914, Mons was also the place where the Allied armies rested on 11 November 1918, after their victorious offensive. The people of Mons would be subjected to four years of occupation before liberation finally arrived. Restrictions of all types, constant checks, and humiliation would become the daily lot of the civilians who, for the most part, strove to live as normally as possible. The fate of soldiers, confined to the wet and muddy trenches of the Western Front, is also largely evoked in the exhibit. Their war logs and letters to their loved ones speak of their links to the families they left behind, their reactions when thrown into confrontation with newly invented weapons, and their trouble looking death in the face. For the visitor, these previously unseen, first-hand accounts link historic events and imbue them with palpable emotion.

THE CANADIANS IN MONS IN 1918: COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

PLAQUE OF THE 3RD CANADIAN DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, 34 PLACE DU PARC, 2018

This plaque was unveiled on 11 November 2018 on the initiative of and by the Black Watch (Royal Highlander Regiment) of Canada based in Montreal, which perpetuates the memory of the 42nd Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces, and by Colonel O'Connor. This was in the presence of a delegation from the regiment and the granddaughter of Major General Frederick Loomis.

The Major was the highly esteemed chief of operations of the Black Watch of Montreal and was in charge of the 3rd Canadian Division during the Pursuit to Mons in 1918 from 13 September 1918 to demobilisation.

This house was used as the headquarters of the 3rd Canadian Division after the city was liberated on 11 November 1918.

THE PLAQUE OF THE ARGYLL AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS OF CANADA (PRINCESS LOUISE'S): HYON CHURCH, 2018

The plaque on the church in Hyon was unveiled by Canada's Minister of Veterans Affairs, Seamus O'Regan, on 9 November 2018 with all children of the village's free and municipal schools. It was at the initiative of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada Regiment and its foundation based in Hamilton, Ontario, which wished to commemorate the presence of an old plaque that had disappeared.

The regiment, which perpetuates the history of the 19th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, ended its participation in the First World War by liberating the village of Hyon. Their goal is to dedicate this plaque to all members of the regiment who fell in the final fighting between 10 and 11 November 1918. The battalion included 16 dead and 36 wounded. The regiment has maintained a special link with the village of Hyon through the years.



Plaque from the 3rd Canadian Division Headquarters during its unveiling on the occasion of the 2018 commemorations

TORMENTED CIVILIANS

Despite being a military affair, this war did not spare civilian society. Many monuments and plaques remind passersby of the fate of civilians during the Great War.

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE AT THE PLACE DES MARTYRS

Between the months of August and October 1914, 6000 civilians in Belgium and northern France were killed by the German army. While the Germans considered these actions as legitimate retaliation, they were deemed “German atrocities” by the Belgian, French, and British people and governments. This violent outburst is partly due to the Germans’ belief in a massive presence of irregular soldiers within the civilian populations. This fear of having to fight an urban guerilla force without any recognizable uniform was a legacy of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

On 23 August 1914, the villages around Mons became a slaughter ground for their civilian populations. Exhausted by forced marches, shocked by the resistance mounted by Liège forts, and nervous at the idea of not being able to follow the Schlieffen Plan’s invasion strategy, German soldiers seized the opportunity to avenge their losses in the Battle of Mons. British and sometimes “friendly” fire provoked bloody retaliation. 22 civilians were killed in Nimy. Quaregnon (66 civilians killed), Ville-Pommeroeul (14), Flénu (12), and Jemappes (11) were not spared either. In addition to these killings, the German troops set fire to dozens of houses. After the war and a number of investigations, one thing became certain: there was no organized civil resistance during the first two months of the conflict.

The commemorative plaque in the Place des Martyrs, like the name of the square itself, refers to the atrocities that took place in Nimy on August 23, 1914. Two corps of the British army were positioned along the Mons-Condé canal in this town. Three corps of the German army came to meet them.

The British Expeditionary Corps responded with fierce resistance, but its position became untenable.

The German bombarding intensified. The command came for retreat at 10:30 a.m., and around 1:00 p.m. the British folded back toward Mons. The soldiers of the German army crossed the canal in pursuit. Arriving in the center of the village, the German troops wreaked terror, burning 108 houses and massacring civilians. The soldiers then took residents as hostages and pushed them in front of their lines as a human shield. The few British soldiers who had remained behind to meet the enemy vanguards gave up the combat. The Germans continued all the way to the Mons Grand-Place. There, the Mayor Jean Lescarts was put at the front of the hostages. The column of civilians crossed the city and arrived at the square that would soon earn its name of “Place des Martyrs”. Here the group found themselves caught in the fire from the 1st Lincolnshire Battalion. The hostages attempted to flee and take shelter, the German soldiers fired on them in turn, and the square dissolved into a chaotic mess of panic and confusion. Four people were killed on the spot, and two others succumbed to their wounds. In total, 22 inhabitants of Nimy perished on 23 and 24 August 1914.

MONUMENT TO THE DEAD OF THE PLACE DU PARC

Throughout the war, the City of Mons was occupied by German troops. While civilians lost their lives in the fighting during invasion or liberation or in deportation, soldiers from Mons died on the front. They distinguished themselves in a number of battles on the Western Front from the time of their mobilization on 31 July 1914.

Inaugurated on 28 May 1922, during Allied patriotic celebrations, the monument of the Place du Parc is the creation of sculptor Léon Gobert and architect Edmond Bertiaux. On the day of its inauguration, a procession of wounded war veterans, deportees, schoolchildren, and people from all segments of society streamed toward the Place du Parc where



we now find ourselves.

Military music and patriotic song followed the participants along their entire course as the peal of bells from the belfry’s carillon and every church filled the air. In front of the monument, the Mayor Jean Lescarts began to speak. His speech conjured the memory of the 133 soldiers and 30 civilian victims from Mons who died for their nation and whose names were engraved in this stone. These men and women, however, only represent part of the military and civilian victims in the Mons region. The 2,30 m. bronze figure symbolizes victory and glory. After World War II, the names of the victims of this conflict were added to the monument as well.

THE CHARLES SIMONET MONUMENT AT THE PLACE CHARLES SIMONET

From the outbreak of the war, men and women risked their lives by enlisting in resistance, information, or evasion networks. Such was the case for Charles Simonet. Born in Mons on 4 September 1872, he began working for the British information services in October 1914. His mission consisted of collecting information and transferring it to an agent who would then pass it on across the border. Simonet was betrayed; on 20 June 1915, he was arrested by the German police. At the same time, Joseph Delsaut, Jules and Arthur Legay were imprisoned for collaborating in the same service. Sentenced to death on 2 November 1915, along with Delsaut and Jules Legay, Simonet was executed on 6 November 1915, at the Tir National of Brussels. While Delsaut’s family reclaimed his body in November 1915, those of Legay and Simonet were

repatriated after the war.

On 25 May 1919, their bodies were exhumed from the grounds of the Tir National. Simonet was still tied up. The two coffins travelled back to Mons by railway and a ceremony was organized at the arrival. In 1921, the square where Charles Simonet lived at the time of his arrest was given his name. On 6 May 1922, he was decorated with the posthumous title of the Croix de chevalier de l’Ordre de Léopold. On 26 August 1923, his remains were again transferred, this time to a mausoleum within the communal cemetery. The monument, a creation of Léon Parys and Gustave Jacobs, was inaugurated on 10 July 1927, in the presence of Queen Elizabeth. It depicts a feminine figure raising its right arm, symbolizing Charles Simonet’s freely given sacrifice.

THE PLAQUE GIVEN BY THE CITY OF DOUAI TO THE CITY OF MONS IN THE TOWN HALL’S ENTRYWAY

From 2 to 4 September 1918, during the retreat of the German army after its defeat in the 2nd Battle of the Marne, the people of Douai were forced to evacuate their town. The German troops worried that the French civilians would be used against them by the British. The people of Douai walked 20 km per day until they reached Mons, where they were housed in requisitioned homes and buildings. By 9 October 1918, nearly 5000 refugees from northern France would be relocated to Mons. After the War, the City of Douai took it upon itself to recognize the City of Mons. It gave it a plaque to offer thanks for the warm welcome given to the displaced people of Douai.

THE LOSSES ON AUGUST 1914

The cost of the two days of fighting has never been established precisely, certainly not by the British and even less so by the Germans. Quite the contrary, the latter always refrained from publishing official figures, both during the war and afterwards.

Obviously, it is perfectly all right, during a war, to give as little indication as possible to the enemy about one's losses, and it is always the normal thing to exaggerate the losses of the others and to play down one's own. There is exultation and then disinformation too so as to sap the morale of one's opponent. It is logical and perfectly understandable. On the British side, the most realistic figure for losses and the most likely, is in the region of 4,200.

Among the units most sorely tried were the Cheshires who lost 800 – the unit was annihilated – and the Norfolks who were minus 250 men as well as the 119th Battery: 30.

LOSSES ON 23 AUGUST

1,600 men, of whom 40 were in 1 Corps, all the others belonging to 2 Corps, with more than half in the two battalions of 8 Brigade that underwent repeated assaults in the salient: the Royal Irish (300 men) and the 4th Middlesex (15 officers and 353 men); as for the 4th Royal Fusiliers, they lost 250 men.

LOSSES ON 24 AUGUST

The losses reported for this day are even higher than those of the previous one.

The total reached 2,590 men, being broken down into:

Cavalry	250
1 st Corps	100
2 nd Corps	-
3 rd Division	550
5 th Division	1.650
19 th Brigade	40

Reading these figures, it is possible to ascertain that it was 2 Corps that suffered most during the two days of battle. And that is quite understandable, as it suffered the first of the Germans' repeated, frenzied attacks from the start to the finish whereas 1 Corps was attacked only at the start of the afternoon, on top of which, it was also the one to screen the retreat of the mass of the BEF and take the brunt.

For the British, these first two days of war were frightful and heavily impressed on memories as such. Of course, compared to the fighting that unfolded on the Somme, at Ypres and in Flanders, these losses were relatively light. Yet at the beginning of that August, at the start of the war, the contemporary reports were all written with the same black ink: heavy losses ... hellfire ... bloody combats ... The regiment has ceased to exist ... They were all the same. And these rumours exceedingly disturbed the High Command by whom Lord KITCHENER had been urged to take all means to save the British bloodshed.

Certainly, some losses had been expected, but this experience was cruel and uncovered the horrible face of this modern war where the artillery ruled supreme and the foot-sloggers became canon-fodder.

It was a long way from the war, one of light-hearted fun, that had excited so many passions.

This lesson was to serve FRENCH well during the weeks that were to come, when he was loath to commit his troops to action that he considered risky. Moreover, his Gallic allies would have to do a lot of convincing for him to take part in the Battle of the Marne.

On the German side, the losses are yet more difficult to establish with certainty. What is sure, without fear of contradiction, is that they were higher than those of the British. This is due, above all, to the fact that attacks were made in close ranks under the unceasing, accurate fire of their opponents. The Germans did not publish the figures and statistics during these combats and the weeks that followed for fear of undermining the morale of their troops and the civil population. They even tried to hide their casualties from the Belgians. This explains why eyewitnesses stated, and it was confirmed in certain German accounts, that during the evening of 23 August the bodies of many dead were taken to the rear in covered wagons. The German losses can reasonably be estimated at 7,500 men!

On their side too, there was the same pessimism dominating the reports and accounts: Hecatombs ... enormous losses ... bloody battlefield ... hostile and murderous fire ... Thus, the 12th Brandenburg Grenadiers (5th Division) declared that they had lost 25 officers and more than 500 men. Worse, the 75th Bremen Regiment (17th Division) lost five officers and 376 men in one attack!

The toll of those two days of fighting was heavy. Yet some correction must be made in reckoning the figures. In reality, when one speaks of losses among the British, the figure includes not only killed, wounded and missing but also prisoners. With the Germans, though, the number of their captured was minimal. The surrounded British took few prisoners; for one thing, being on the defensive, they did not have the opportunity to do so. The few Germans that they did capture were left behind to look after their wounded.



@ Ville de Mons / Oswald Th...

ORDER OF THE BRITISH FORCES DURING THE “BATTLE OF MONS”

1st DIVISION

(Major-General S. LOMAX)

1st BRIGADE

- 1st Coldstream Guards
- 1st Scots Guards
- 1st Royal Highlanders
- 2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers

2nd BRIGADE

- 2nd Royal Sussex
- 1st North Lancashire
- 1st Northamptonshire
- 2nd King's Royal Rifle corps

3rd BRIGADE

- 1st Queen's Royal West Surrey
- 1st South Wales Borderers
- 1st Gloucestershire
- 2nd Welsh.

MOUNTED TROOPS

- Escadron C du 15th Hussars
- 1st Cyclist Company

ARTILLERY

- field-guns : Groups 25 (n^{os} 113, 114, 115) ; 26 (n^{os} 116, 117, 118) ; 39 (n^{os} 46.51.54).
- howitzers : Group 43 (n^{os} 30.40.57)
- heavy : 26th Battery ROYAL GAR-RISON ARTILLERY

ROYAL ENGINEERS

- 23rd & 26th Field Company – 1st signal Company

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

- 1st, 2nd et 3rd Field Ambulances.

2nd DIVISION

(Major-General C. MONRO)

4th BRIGADE

- 2nd Grenadier Guards
- 2nd Coldstream Guards
- 3rd Coldstream Guards
- 1st Irish Guards.

5th BRIGADE

- 2nd Worcester
- 2nd Oxford and Buckingham Light

Infantry

- 2nd Highland Light Infantry
- 2nd Connaught Rangers

6th BRIGADE

- 1st Liverpool (th King's regiment)
- 2nd South Staffordshire
- 1st Royal Berkshire
- 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps.

MOUNTED TROOPS

- B Squadron of the 15th Hussars –
- 2nd Cyclist Company

ARTILLERIE

- field guns: Groups 34 (n^{os} 25.50.70) ;
- 36 (n^{os} 15.48.71) & 41 (n^{os} 5.16.17)
- howitzers: Group 44 (n^{os} 47.56.60)
- heavy: 35th Battery

ROYAL ENGINEERS

- 5th & 11th Field Company
- 2nd Signal Company

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

- 4th, 5th & 6th Field Ambulance

3rd DIVISION

(Major-General H. HAMILTON)

7th BRIGADE

- 3rd Worcestershire
- 2nd South Lancashire
- 1st Wiltshire
- 2nd Royal Irish Rifles

8th BRIGADE

- 2nd Royal Scots
- 2nd Royal Irish
- 4th Middlesex
- 1st Gordon Highlanders.

9th BRIGADE

- 1st Northumberland Fusiliers
- 4th Royal Fusiliers
- 1st Lincolnshire
- 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers

MOUNTED TROOPS

- A Squadron of the 15th Hussars –
- 3rd Cyclist Company

ARTILLERY

- field guns : Groups 23 (n^{os} 107.108.109) ; 40 (n^{os} 6.23.49) & 42 (n^{os} 29.41.45).
- howitzers: Groups 30 (n^{os} 128.129.130).
- heavy: 48th Battery

ROYAL ENGINEERS

- 56th & 57th Field Companies –
- 3rd Signal Company

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

- 7th, 8th et 9th Field ambulance

5th DIVISION

(Major-General SIR C. FERGUSSON)

13th BRIGADE:

- 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers
- 2nd Duke of Wellington's West Riding
- 1st Royal West Kent
- 2nd King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry

14th BRIGADE

- 2^e Suffolk
- 1^{er} East Surrey
- 1^{er} Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry
- 2^e Manchester.

15th BRIGADE:

- 1st Norfolk
- 1st Bedfordshire
- 1st Cheshire
- 1st Dorsetshire.

MOUNTED TROOPS

- A squadron of the 19th Hussars –
- 5th Cyclist Company

ARTILLERY

- field guns: brigade 15 (n^{os} 11.52.80) ; 27 (n^{os} 119.120.121) & 28 (n^{os} 122.123.124)
- howitzers : Group 8 (n^{os} 37.61 et 65)
- heavy: 108th Battery

Royal ENGINEERS: 17th & 59th Field Company

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

- 13th, 14th et 15th Field ambulance

19th BRIGADE (Brigadier L.G. DRUMMOND)

- 2nd Royal Welsh Fusiliers
- 1st Scottish Rifles
- 1st Middlesex
- 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders + la 19^e Field ambulance

CAVALRY DIVISION

(Major-General Edmund ALLENBY)

1st BRIGADE:

- 2nd Dragoon Guards
- 5th Dragoon Guards
- 11th Hussards

2nd BRIGADE:

- 4th Dragoon Guards
 - 9th Lancers
 - 18th Hussars
- (Queen Mary's Own)

3rd BRIGADE:

- 4th Hussars
- 5th Lancers
- 16th Lancers

4th BRIGADE:

- Household cavalry
- 6th Dragoon Guards
- 3rd Hussars

5th BRIGADE:

- 12th Lancers
- 20th Hussars
- 2nd Dragoons (Scots Grey)

HORSE ARTILLERY

- Batteries D.E.J.I.L.

ROYAL ENGINEERS:

- 1st Field squadron.

ROYAL FLYING CORPS

- (Brigadier général sir David HENDERSON)

SQUADRONS

- n^{os} 2.3.4 et 5.



ORDER OF THE CANADIAN FORCES DURING THE LIBERATION OF MONS IN NOVEMBER 1918

THE CANADIAN CORPS COMMANDER: LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR ARTHUR W. CURRIE

2nd Division Major General Sir H. E. Burstall

4th brigade :
Brigadier general G.E. McCuaig
Frameries, Hyon, Spiennes
Mont Panisel, Bois là-Haut

18th infantry battalion
19th infantry battalion
20th infantry battalion
21st infantry battalion

5th brigade:
Brigadier general T.L. Tremblay
Reserve division

22^e infantry battalion (French Canadian)
24th infantry battalion
25th infantry battalion
26th infantry battalion

6th brigade :
Brigadier general A. Ross
Saint Symphorien, Havré
Boussoit, Maurage

27th infantry battalion
28th infantry battalion
29th infantry battalion
31th infantry battalion

Divisional artillery: brigadier general H.A. Panet

3rd division major général F.O.W; Loomis

7th brigade :
Brigadier general J.A. Clark
Jemappes, Ghlin, Mons
Nimy

Royal canadian Regiment
Princess Patricia’s Canadian Lightn Infantry
42nd Royal Highlanders of canada (Black Watch)
49th infantry battalion

8th brigade:
Brigadier général D.C. Draper
En réserve de division

1st Mounted Rifles
2nd Mounted Rifles
4th Mounted Rifles
5th Mounted Rifles

9th brigade :
brigadier général D.M. Ormond
Casteau, Saint Denis, Obourg

43rd infantry battalion
52nd infantry battalion
58th infantry battalion
116th infantry battalion

Divisional artillery: brigadier general J.S. Stewart
Cavalry attached to the Canadian corps: 5th Royal Irish Lancers

These two divisions depended on the British First army commanded by General Henry Horne.

THE MAIN MILITARY CEMETERIES

Angre
50.37072, 3.69877
Rue d’Angre
7380 Angre (Honnelles)

Angreau
50.350958, 3.692692
Rue du Quesnoy, 35
7387 Honnelles

Audregnies
50.38067, 3.71411
Rue de la Ville, 2-78
7382 Audregnies (Quiévrain)

Asquillies
50.40144, 3.95406
Rue du Charbonnage, 2
7040 Asquillies

Blaugies
50.373469, 3.804145
Dans la rue à l’angle du 30
Rue de la frontière
7370 Blaugies (Dour)

Bougnies
50.390504, 3.944329
Rue d’Asquillies
7040 Bougnies

Boussu-Bois
50.415497, 3.78395
À l’angle du 234 Rue de Dour
7300 Boussu

Boussu
50.430883, 3.791803
Rue Delmée et Renard
7300 Boussu

Cipty
50.41386, 3.94283
Rue Brunehaut, 235
7024 Cipty

Cuesmes
50.43421, 3.92122
Face au numéro 97
Rue de Frameries
7033 Cuesmes

Dour
50.389361, 3.769715
Avenue Victor Regnart, 2
7370 Dour

Élouges
50.40394, 3.75083
Rue du commerce
(derrière l’église)
7370 Elouges (Dour)

Erquennes
50.360277, 3.794183
Rue Derrière l’Eglise
(croisement rue Longue)
7387 Erquennes

Flénu
50.43952, 3.88540
Rue de Quaregnon
(Proche du N° 36)
7012 Flénu

Frameries
50.41278, 3.90675
Rue Donaire
7080 Frameries

Ghlin
50.477617, 3.898057
A côté du numéro 29
Rue de Tournai
7011 Ghlin

Givry
50.38112, 4.02879
À côté du numéro 8 Rue
Harmenpont
7041 Givry

Harveng
50.394846, 3.987439
Place d’Harveng
7022 Harveng (Mons)

Hautrage
50.47267, 3.78352
178-200 Grand route de
Mons (cimetière militaire)
1-15 Rue de Villerot
7334 Hautrage

Havay
50.366167, 3.979903
Croisement rue du dépôt,
Rue des villers et rue
Bonnet - 7041 Havay

Herchies
Route de Lens
7050 Herchies (Jurbise)

Jemappes
50.44466, 3.89464
Allée du Cimetière
7012 Jemappes

Mons
50.460919, 3.975846
Chemin du Chêne aux Haies
7000 Mons

Masnuy-Saint-Pierre
50.538834, 3.95536
Rue Lieutenant de Saint-
Martin, 2-6
7050 Masnuy-Saint-Pierre

Montignies-sur-Roc
50.37081, 3.73181
Bas des Rocs / Rue de
l’Eglise - 7387 Montignies-
sur-Roc

Nouvelles
50.41468, 3.96613
2-8 Rue Briffaut
7022 Nouvelles

Quiévrain
50.402771, 3.6873513
Place du Centenaire
7382 Quiévrain

Quévy-le-Petit
50.366612, 3.939123
Rue Saint-Eloi
7040 Quévy-le-Petit

Roisin
50.325543, 3.708948
Rue du Point du Jour
7387 Roisin (Honnelles)

Saint-Symphorien
50.434985, 4.00948
Avenue de la Shangri
7032 Saint-Symphorien

Spiennes
50.424937, 3.981583
Rue du Petit Spiennes
7032 Spiennes

Villerot
50.484757, 3.799524
Rue des Croix, 12-18
7384 Villerot
(Saint-Ghislain)

Warquignies
50.39968, 3.82535
Le sentier de Lamina
7340 Colfontaine

Wihéries
50.38653, 3.74136
Route de Quiévrain, 1-7
7370 Wihéries (Dour)

THE MAIN COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS IN THE MONS REGION

1914–1918 FIRST WORLD WAR

23 AUGUST

The city of Mons organises celebrations which take place every year on 23 August, the date of the Battle of Mons. Veterans no longer attend but representatives of the Belgian patriotic movements, many foreign delegations and SHAPE join Mons. Various symbolic places are visited such as the site of the Bascule monument and the military cemetery of St-Symphorien. At the end of the route, an official reception is organised at the Mons Memorial Museum where speeches are given. These commemorations bring together more and more people every year.

11 NOVEMBER

A day of national remembrance, 11 November symbolises the end of the war since the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918. Every year, Mons organises commemorations to remember the victims of the First World War.



1940–1945 SECOND WORLD WAR

TANKS IN MONS

On 2 September 1944, at the edge of Spiennes wood, a column of US armoured vehicles took the roads to freedom, barrel against barrel! On the same day, Mons was liberated by the Third US Armoured Division ("Spearhead"), under the command of Brigadier General Maurice Rose. The Stuart "Fish n' Chips", the first tank to enter town, became the symbol of the liberation of Mons! Every year, from the end of August to early September, the town welcomes Tanks in Mons, a commemorative event to be enjoyed with the family.

LIBERATION BALL

Surrounded by lamps and music, immerse yourself in the American ambiance of an authentic 1944 liberation ball! Held at the end of August in front of the Mons Memorial Museum, the Liberation Ball is an opportunity to have fun and experience a quirky evening that will take you back in time!

Browse www.visitMons.co.uk for further information.



@visitmons Patrick Tombette

MONS
14-18

THE LAST

*George Price,
the last Commonwealth soldier
killed in the First World War.*



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