

Correspondance de guerre d'Émile Martin (1914-1916)

On September 15, 1916, the 22nd Battalion took part in its first large-scale offensive at the corps level in Flers-Courcelette. Lieutenant-Colonel Tremblay was aware of the importance of this operation and, at the end of the orders, added: "This is our first major attack. It must be a success for the honour of all Canadians which we represent in France." In spite of suffering many casualties, the attack was a military success. Several newspapers from around the world paid tribute to the valour of French Canada after the capture of the village of Courcelette.

Outline of the Exhibit

The exhibit documents the experiences of Emile Martin, a soldier in the 22nd Battalion, through his continuous correspondence with his family which illustrates both his love of them and the generosity of his pen. The material is presented chronologically.

Making of this collection

The author acquired a family archive, comprising a set of 53 mailings, one printed document, and four handwritten documents. Twenty six of the most significant items were selected to relate the participation of Émile Martin in the war effort. Although some documents are not in pristine condition, this exceptional selection provides a first-hand account of the legendary Battalion's journey during the early years of its existence.

Items Displayed

The richness of this presentation lies in the quality of the whole. Viewed individually the components of this exhibit contribute little to the story of the 22nd Battalion but when viewed collectively they present a valuable account of its early years. One soldier cannot win a war. It is the actions of whole battalions which win wars. And, just as some individuals in an army perform exceptional feats, some of the elements exhibited are of exceptional importance.

1. Pages 2, 3 and 4: Previously, only 10 copies were known of the circular mark of the Saint-Jean Military Post Office. This archive adds 15 previously unknown copies. Two registered letters, two envelopes and two "patriotic" postcards are to be found in this presentation.
2. Page 6: Envelope frank at the triple letter rate with a combination of several special features: ink filaments on two stamps from a booklet and a handwritten entry "War-Tax" on one of them. All posted on the third day of the new war tax rate.
3. Page 15: A letter with the inscription "KILLED IN ACTION" is not exceptional, but in the context of a continuous correspondence, it is a plus that cannot be ignored.

References:

- Military Archives, Government of Canada Veterans affairs Canada
- <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/fra/recherche-forme>
- <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/497541?Emile%20Martin>
- Canadian Military Postal Marking 1881-1995 volume 1, W.J. Bailey & E.R. Toop, 1996, Canada
- Canada's 1891 Census <https://www.ancestry.ca/>
- Côte-des-Neiges Cemetery <http://www.notredamedesneigescemetery.ca/>
- Wikipédia https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_22e_R%C3%A9giment

Acknowledgments to the following people for their assistance in editorial research and editorial work
Jean-Guy Dalpé, Hugo Deshayé, Luke de Stéphano, Michel Taillon, Dudley Nash, Kathy Hartley; Reference Librarian, Harry Sutherland Philatelic Library, Toronto, Canada, Corporal Érick Jacques; Archives of the Royal 22^e Régiment, Québec.