



Fort Fraser Despatches, November 2018

LEST WE FORGET

11 November 1918

the Armistice of Compiègne began at 11 a.m.

“The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month”

The Armistice was agreed 6 hours earlier at 5 a.m. It was signed in General Ferdinand Foch’s railway car in the Forest of Compiègne, about 37 miles north of Paris and ended the horror that was WWI.

The last Canadian soldier to die - at 10:58 am - just two minutes before the armistice, was Private George Lawrence Price, shot and killed by a sniper while part of a force advancing into the town of Ville-sur-Haine to the north of Mons.

On 11 November, Remembrance Day, Canadians will assemble once again at cenotaphs across the country to remember the millions who have died and the millions more that served and came home; and to show respect and admiration for the thousands of men and women serving today, whatever their country.





The Aftermath:

The armistice of November 11, 1918, brought relief to the whole world. The horrible struggle with its death, destruction and misery was at last halted. It had truly been a world war. Sixty-five million men from 30 nations were involved in it; at least ten million men were killed; twenty-nine million more were wounded, captured or missing; and the financial cost was measured in hundreds of billions of dollars. Never before had there been such a conflict.

The Great War was also a landmark in Canadian national development. In 1914, Canada entered the war as a colony; a mere extension of Britain overseas; in 1918 she was forging visibly ahead to nationhood. Canada began the war with one division of citizen soldiers under the command of a British general, and ended with a superb fighting force under the command of one of her own sons.

For a nation of eight million people Canada's war effort was remarkable. Over 650,000 Canadian men and women served in uniform during the First World War, with more than 66,000 giving their lives and over 172,000 more being wounded. Nearly one of every ten Canadians who fought in the war did not return.

It was this Canadian war record that won for Canada a separate signature on the Peace Treaty signifying that national status had been achieved.

Nationhood was purchased for Canada by the gallant men who stood fast at Ypres, stormed Regina Trench, climbed the heights of Vimy Ridge, captured Passchendaele, and entered Mons on November 11, 1918.



Quebec, November 1759:

The capture of Quebec in 1759 had converted that town from a French colonial capital to an isolated British enclave deep in the heart of New France, and left Canada itself divided into French and British zones.

The French retreat from Quebec halted at the mouth of the Jacques Cartier River. Fort Jacques Cartier, erected on the western bank, and screened by advanced posts at Pointe aux Trembles and Saint Augustin, became the French headquarters for operations on the new Anglo-French frontier during the winter of 1759-1760. From the Jacques Cartier River eastward, the St. Lawrence valley was within the reach of the British garrison of Quebec. A series of expeditions in the fall of 1759 reduced the parishes in the vicinity of Quebec to nominal submission, producing a British zone guarded by outposts at Ancienne Lorette and Sainte-Foy, which blocked the roads leading to Quebec. Nonetheless, the British had firm control only over the town of Quebec, and even within the walls remained on their guard against a generally hostile, if submissive, population.

Outside Quebec, they travelled safely only in armed parties among a population that remained generally loyal to France. Cut off from assistance from Britain or British North America until the spring, the British garrison could not afford to wait passively within Quebec and ignore French movements and intentions. If they were to survive the winter, the British needed supplies of fresh provisions and firewood, commodities that could be obtained only from the countryside. Moreover, the French forces were under the command of the capable and aggressive Levis, who could be expected to attempt to recover Quebec. To procure supplies, outposts had to be established and patrols sent out into the parishes of the government of Quebec. Resisting a major attack demanded the concentration of Murray's force. Both to maintain access to local resources and to resist a major expedition, intelligence of French movements and intentions was necessary. Should the British fail to obtain this information, the French would be able to strike with impunity, decimate British outposts, prevent the British from securing provisions and firewood, and finally assemble an army that could attack Quebec without warning.

Some information regarding French capabilities and intentions was acquired from French deserters and prisoners. But Murray considered these sources of intelligence to be inadequate, and sought a means of "opening and keeping up an intercourse with their [French] head quarters." This could only be accomplished through espionage.

To secure this information, Murray needed individuals possessed of legitimate reasons for travelling, and thus able to move freely and inconspicuously in the occupied parishes of the government of Quebec and the French zone. Elsewhere in North America, this would have been very difficult. The frontier between the French at Jacques Cartier and the British at Quebec, however, was more permeable than the wilderness separating New France and New England. Here, war was conducted in a settled agricultural region where a semblance of normal life continued under British military occupation. Indeed, following the capitulation of Quebec, a flourishing commerce had developed between the French and British zones. By 25 November, Murray was angrily aware "that the [British] merchants, ever greedy of gain, to purchase furs had transmitted a good deal of cash to Montreal." In January 1760, a French officer noted that "We hear from [Fort] Jacques Cartier that a means has been found to obtain many things from Quebec." As a result of this trade, according to one of Levis' aides de camp, during the winter of 1759-1760 "there was established an intercourse between the English at Quebec and the French at James [Jacques] Cartier, as if it had been in time of peace." Some of these travellers were undoubtedly



legitimate merchants, quietly going about their business. But the ease with which merchants could travel across the Anglo-French frontier and within the British zone made them the potential spies that Murray required. Some of these merchants were drawn by the British into espionage and treason. They were recruited by two captains of the 15th (Amherst's) Regiment to whom Murray had entrusted the responsibility for "the management of the spies."

In the last weeks of September 1759, the British, obliged to purchase locally to supplement their own resources, had quickly established contact with the local merchant community. Within a week of the capitulation of Quebec, Canadians, who found British hard currency more attractive than discounted French bills of exchange, were supplying the British with fresh vegetables. "Everyone in Quebec," wrote Francois Bigot, the Intendant of New France, "thinks of restoring his fortunes and little of the interests of the king and the colony."



Not to be missed:



- Remembrance Day: 11 November, 2018
- Feast of Saint Andrew Dinner: 24 November, 2018
- Robbie Burns Dinner: 26 January, 2019
- Whisky Tasting : 01 March, 2019
- Annual General Meeting: 16 March, 2019
- Ste Foy Dinner: 20 April, 2019

Be kind to one another....

.....make the world a better place

