



PTF. JAMES LOBBAN, B.A.
5th Canadian Mounted Rifles

Private James Alexander Lobban

The Second Battle of Ypres : Bishop's Alumnus in Flanders Fields

A letter from Private J. A. Lobban, excerpted in the *Mitre*, Easter 1916:

"I am very much pleased to learn that those who are physically fit have attached themselves to the 22nd Battery in Sherbrooke. At last, I think, we have enough men recruited, and we may be proud that Canada has done her share in sending men and in giving money.

A week ago, last Sunday, Canon Scott celebrated the Holy Communion where we were then billeted. It was a most impressive service and, as we knelt in a bed of straw, before the little altar in the barn, the sound of the big guns could be heard plainly. Many officers and men communicated. Canon Scott is just as jovial as ever, but has aged considerably. Canon Almond is to visit us on Sunday. He is chaplain of our corps. Last Wednesday afternoon our Major and a Lance-Corporal were confirmed by the Bishop of Khartoum. Quite an event at the front—and by an Egyptian Bishop! We have been in the trenches three times since coming over, but there is very little doing.

All the boys are well and happy. It is wonderful how every one is in good spirits, despite the inclement weather, etc. We have had two or three games of Rugby ... since coming over."

James A. Lobban



Trenches in Ypres today. Sanctuary wood museum, Hill 62

War and Literature

While many soldiers sent letters from the Front, such as the one we retrieved from Lobban, others wrote poems. Poems were less likely to be censored before being sent to the soldiers' family and friends. It was a liberating way to express one's feelings and experiences during the war.

This poem, entitled « In Flanders Fields », was written during the Second Battle of Ypres.

This poem commemorates the fallen soldiers and the poppies represent them. Hence, why a lot of them were planted at the Menin Gate Memorial.

« In Flanders Fields » by John McCrae

Composed at the battlefield on May 3, 1915 during the second battle of Ypres, Belgium

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead: Short days ago,
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved: and now we lie
In Flanders fields!
Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you, from failing hands, we throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields



Biography

James Alexander Lobban was born September 26th, 1888.

He was admitted to Bishop's University in 1913, and received his B.A. in 1915.

Lobban was very active on campus He was involved in the *Mitre*, as well as religious and athletic activities. Here are some of the positions he occupied on campus:

- Assistant Business Manager for the *Mitre*
- Senior Man of the Second Year Arts and Vice President of the Bishop's University Student's Association
- Director of the Brotherhood of St. Andrews
- Secretary for the Bishop's University Athletic Association
- Director and Captain of the Football Team and Vice-President of the Hockey club.

He left for the Front in 1915, as a Private for the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles Regiment.

Unfortunately, he was Killed in Action on June 2nd, 1916.

He is buried in Ypres, Belgium at the Menin Gate Memorial.

From The *Mitre* (1916):

"The news of the fall in battle of Pte. Jas. A. Lobban, of the 5th Mounted Rifles, will be received with widespread sorrow. 'Jimmy' graduated in Arts in 1915, and during his final year acted as Senior Man of the Arts Faculty. He took an important part in all the College activities, and to his zeal and industry we owe a great deal. He successfully captained the Football Team in the fall of 1914, and during his term as Business Manager of the *Mitre*, thanks to his energy, a heavy debt was paid off, and the magazine put on a firmer financial standing. The *Mitre* and his old fellow-students unite in sending most sincere and heartfelt sympathy to his parents and friends."



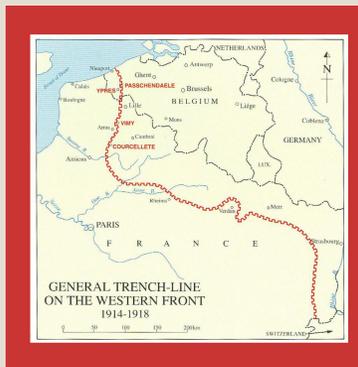
Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium

The Second Battle of Ypres

- The second battle of Ypres took place between April 22nd and May 25th, 1915.
- The British Empire (Canada, India and Great Britain) fought alongside France and Belgium, against the German Empire.
- The battle consisted of 4 different offensives:
- Battle of Gravenstafel Ridge (22–23 April)
- Battle of St. Julien (24 April – 5 May)
- Battle of Frezenberg (8–13 May)
- Battle of Bellewaarde (24–25 May)

The Second Battle of Ypres is mainly known because of how deadly it was: during this battle, the German forces used chlorine gas for the first time, taking its enemies by surprise.

The Allies were not prepared for such an attack, hence the high casualty numbers. Moreover, the Germans didn't master the technology perfectly, and some of their own soldiers suffered the consequences of using this weapon.



Casualties

Allies	Axis
French: 2,000–3,000 to 21,973 British: 59,275	34,933–35,000 +



Soldiers wounded after a gas attack



HANNA MOKRANI
LEAH DIVINAGRACIA

Supervised by Dr. Claire Grogan, English Department

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"Lobban, James Alexander." Lobban, James Alexander - Bishop's Remembers, www.buremembers.ubishops.ca/the-records/world-war-1/lobban-james-alexander.html.
The *Mitre*, Volume XXIV No. 1, Michaelmas, 1916
John McCrae, *In Flanders Fields and Other Poems*, Arcturus Publishing (2008), 1915
Edmonds, J. E.; Wynne, G. C. (1955) [1927]. *Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1915: Winter 1915: Battle of Neuve Chapelle: Battles of Ypres. History of the Great War Based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence.* [Imperial War Museum and Battery Press ed.]. London: Macmillan
Pictures :
Picture of Memorial by G. French, http://www.remembrancetravel.org.uk/w1-tours
Picture of Trenches - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hill_62_Museum-Trenches_Ypres-Belgium.jpg