A detailed historical map of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, showing the Canadian Corps' advance from April 9 to 12, 1917. The map features various military units, including the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Canadian Divisions, and the 17th Canadian Corps. It also shows the German line, the Canadian line, and the British line. The map is color-coded to show the progress of the battle, with red lines indicating the Canadian advance and blue lines indicating the German positions. The title "The Story of Brian Allan Cassidy" is prominently displayed in the center, with the dates "1895-1917" below it.

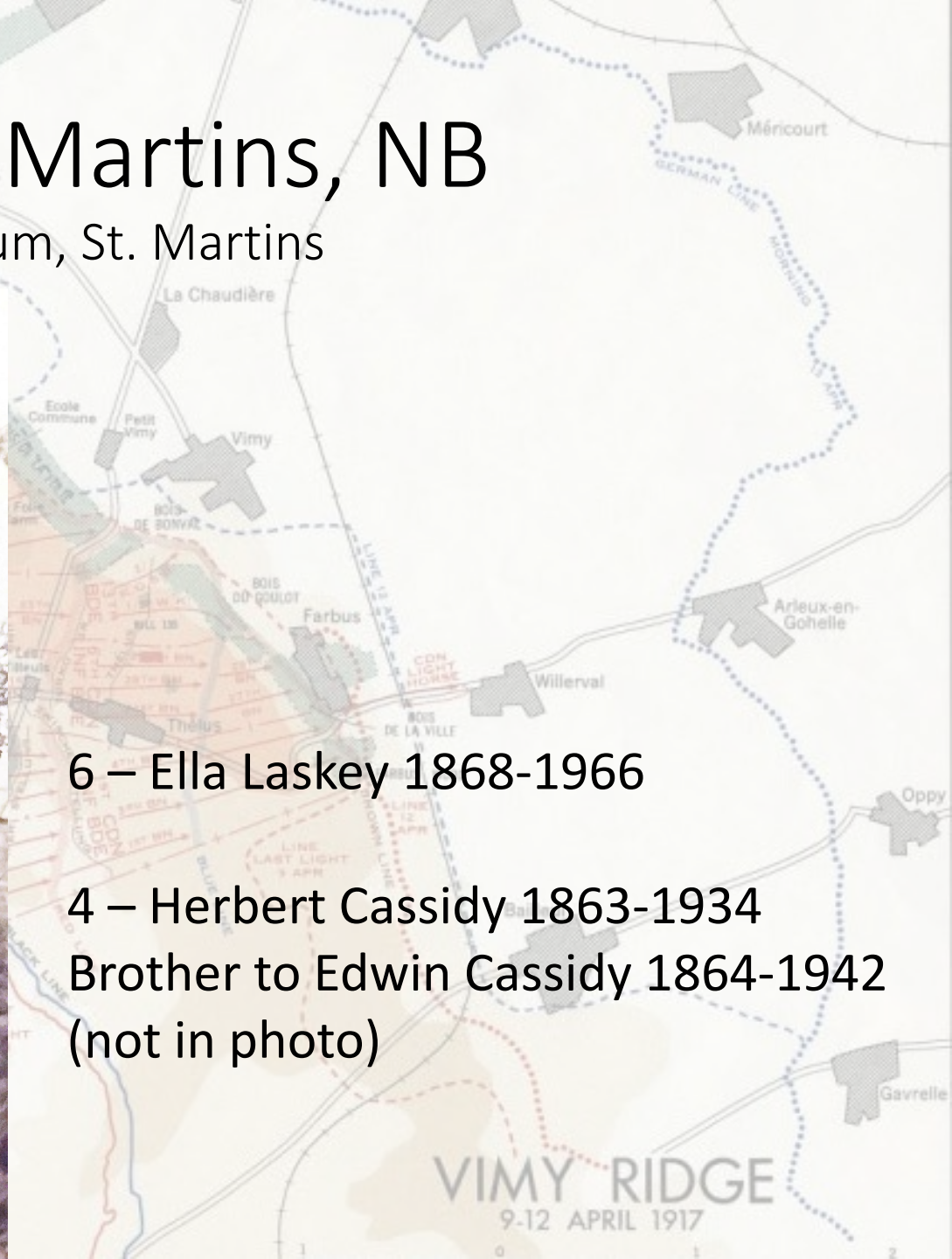
The Story of Brian Allan Cassidy 1895-1917

Our WWI Brick Wall
Battle of Vimy Ridge or the Battle of Arras

Story based on research by
Brian Cassidy and Paul Cassidy
2023

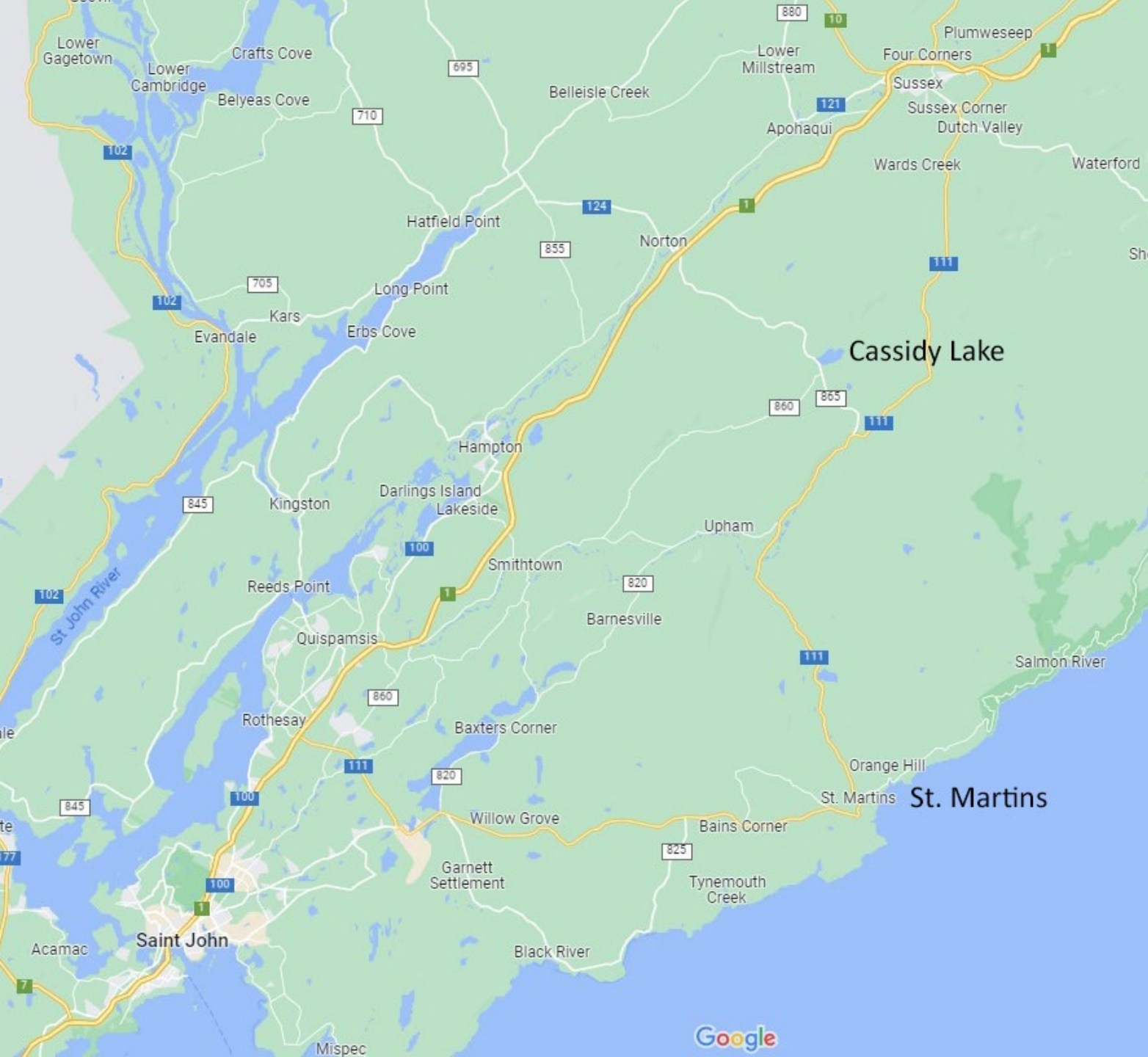
Cassidy Home in St. Martins, NB

Photo Courtesy Quaco Museum, St. Martins



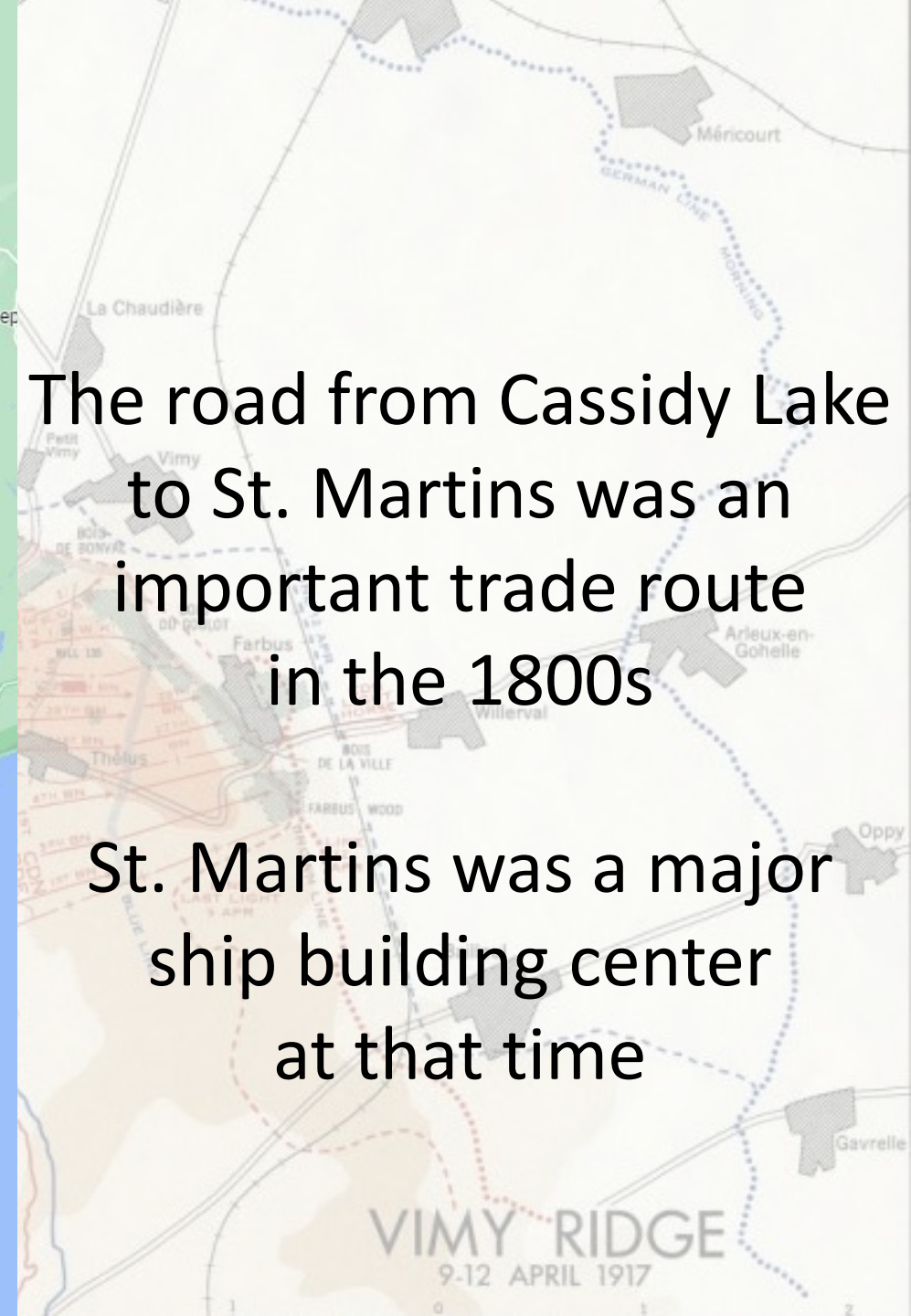
6 – Ella Laskey 1868-1966

4 – Herbert Cassidy 1863-1934
Brother to Edwin Cassidy 1864-1942
(not in photo)



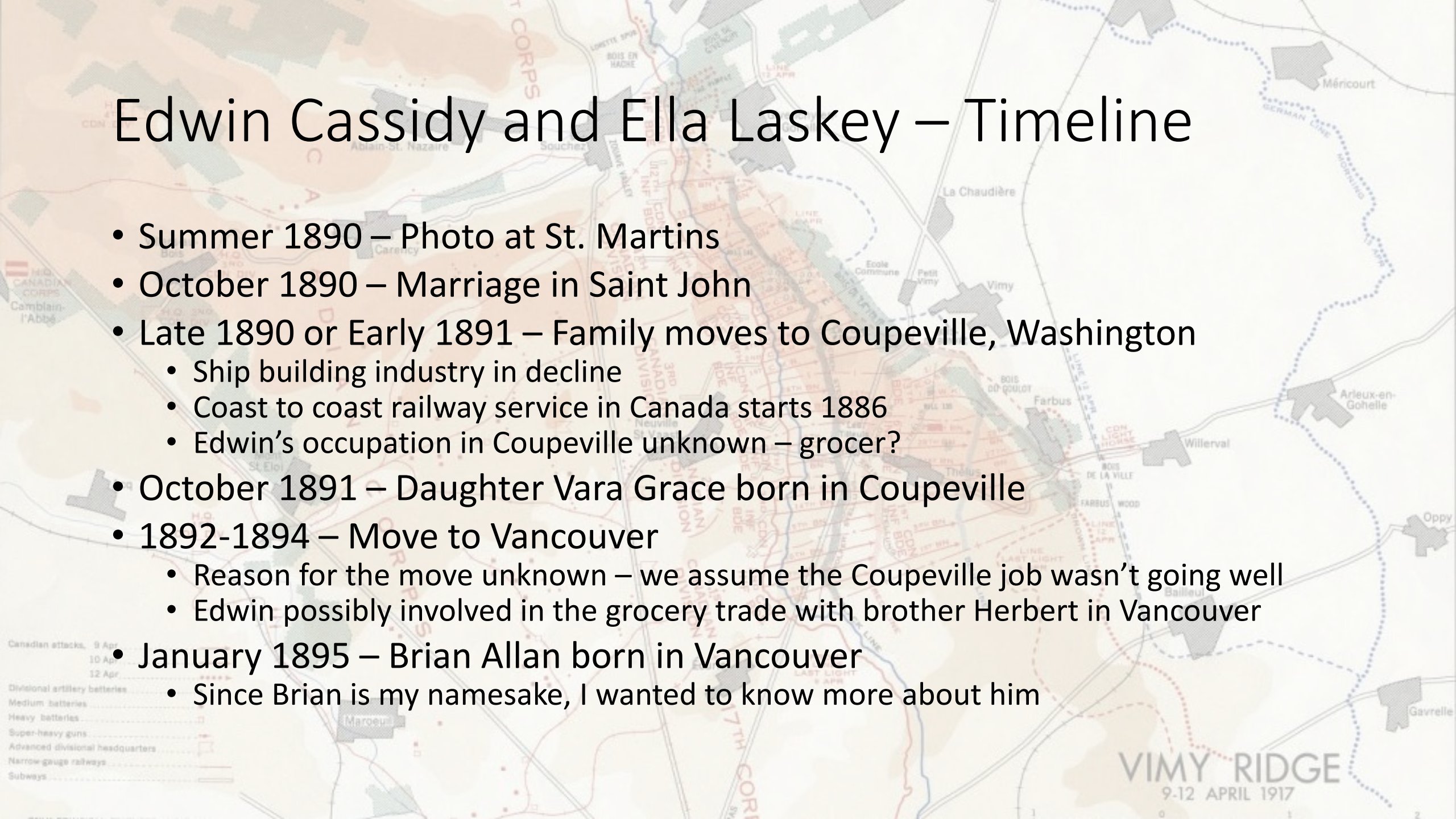
The road from Cassidy Lake to St. Martins was an important trade route in the 1800s

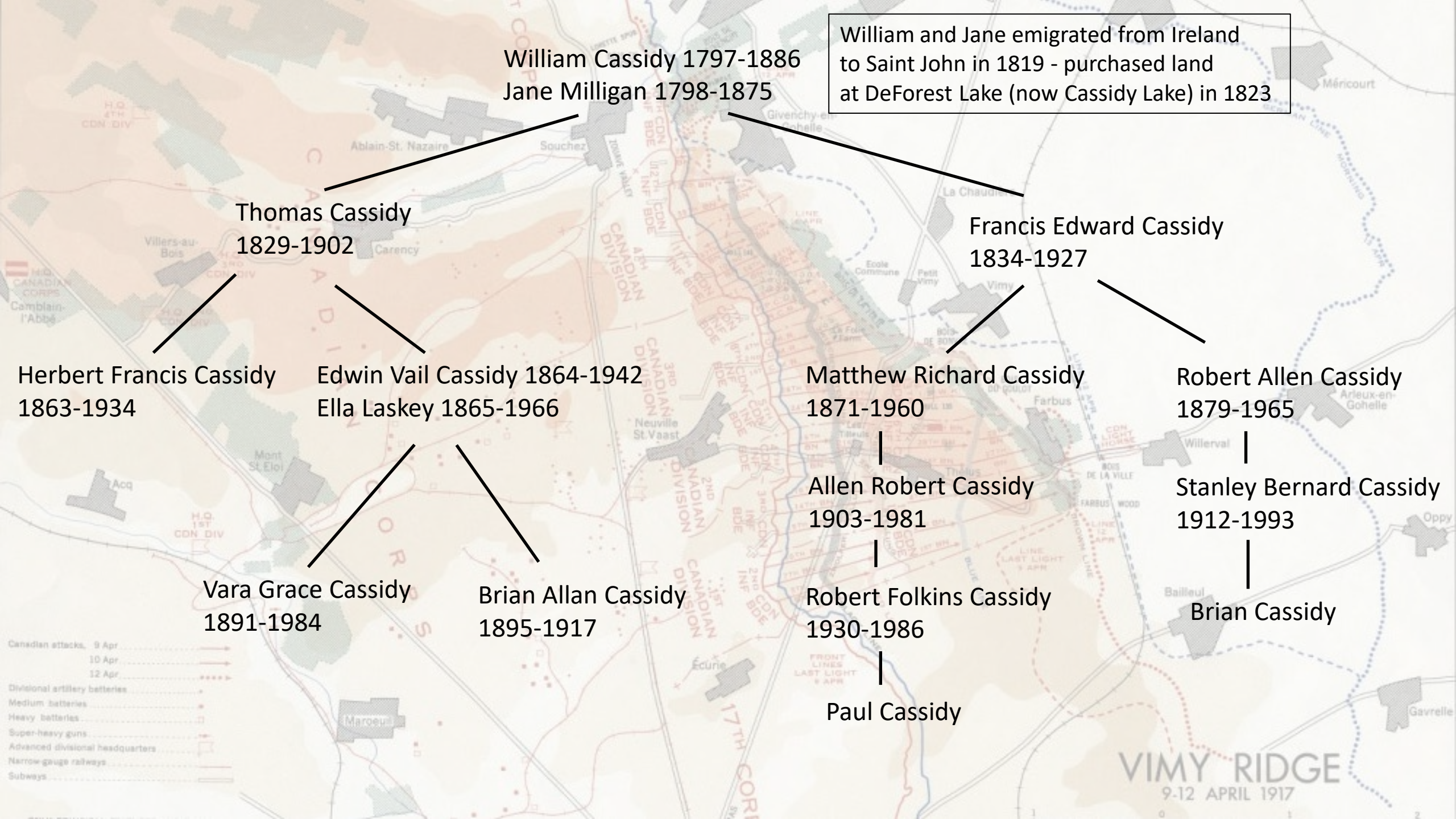
St. Martins was a major ship building center at that time



Edwin Cassidy and Ella Laskey – Timeline

- Summer 1890 – Photo at St. Martins
- October 1890 – Marriage in Saint John
- Late 1890 or Early 1891 – Family moves to Coupeville, Washington
 - Ship building industry in decline
 - Coast to coast railway service in Canada starts 1886
 - Edwin's occupation in Coupeville unknown – grocer?
- October 1891 – Daughter Vara Grace born in Coupeville
- 1892-1894 – Move to Vancouver
 - Reason for the move unknown – we assume the Coupeville job wasn't going well
 - Edwin possibly involved in the grocery trade with brother Herbert in Vancouver
- January 1895 – Brian Allan born in Vancouver
 - Since Brian is my namesake, I wanted to know more about him





William and Jane emigrated from Ireland to Saint John in 1819 - purchased land at DeForest Lake (now Cassidy Lake) in 1823

William Cassidy 1797-1886
Jane Milligan 1798-1875

Thomas Cassidy
1829-1902

Francis Edward Cassidy
1834-1927

Herbert Francis Cassidy
1863-1934

Edwin Vail Cassidy 1864-1942
Ella Laskey 1865-1966

Matthew Richard Cassidy
1871-1960

Robert Allen Cassidy
1879-1965

Vara Grace Cassidy
1891-1984

Brian Allan Cassidy
1895-1917

Allen Robert Cassidy
1903-1981

Stanley Bernard Cassidy
1912-1993

Robert Folkins Cassidy
1930-1986

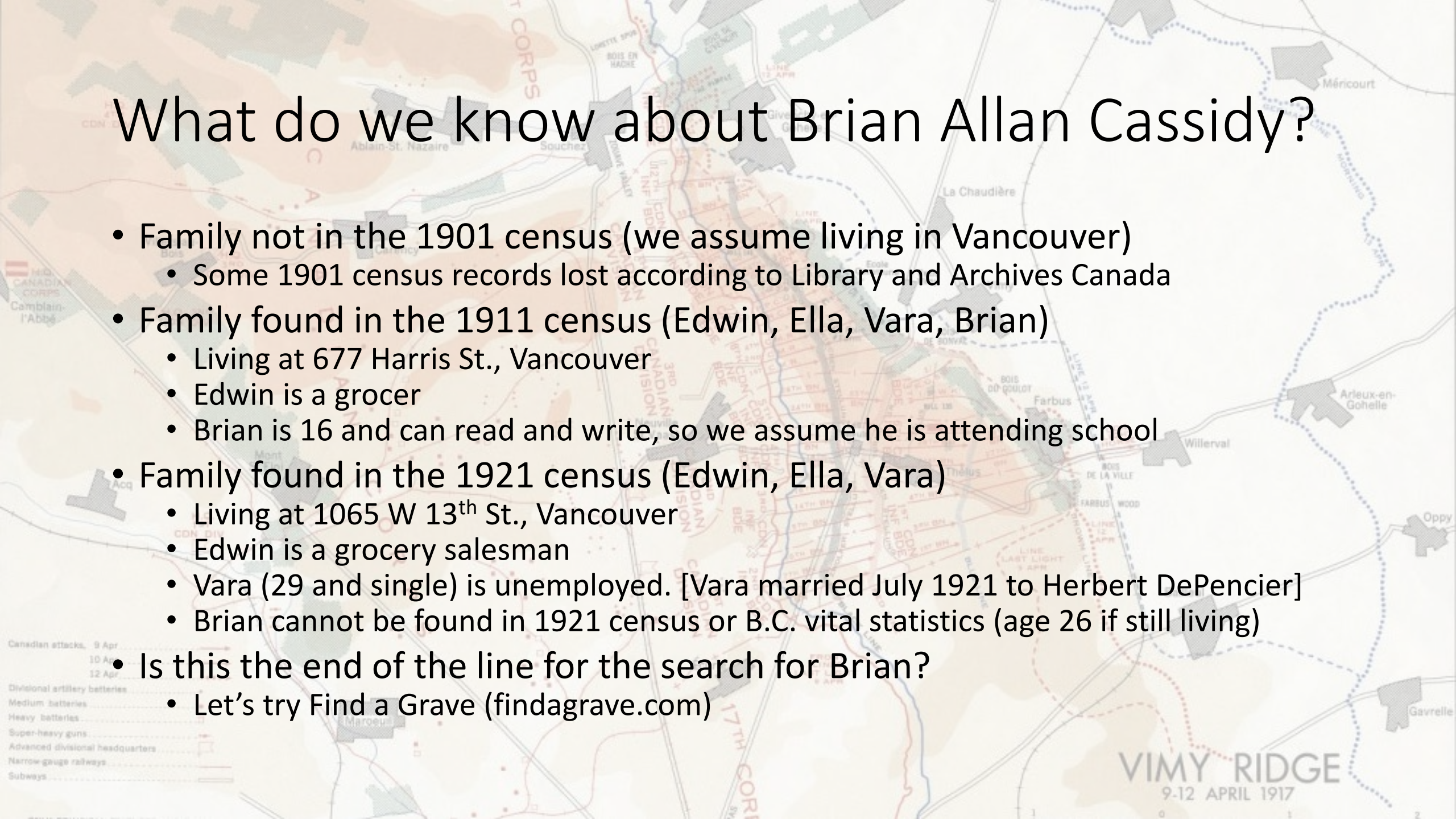
Brian Cassidy

Paul Cassidy

VIMY RIDGE
9-12 APRIL 1917

What do we know about Brian Allan Cassidy?

- Family not in the 1901 census (we assume living in Vancouver)
 - Some 1901 census records lost according to Library and Archives Canada
- Family found in the 1911 census (Edwin, Ella, Vara, Brian)
 - Living at 677 Harris St., Vancouver
 - Edwin is a grocer
 - Brian is 16 and can read and write, so we assume he is attending school
- Family found in the 1921 census (Edwin, Ella, Vara)
 - Living at 1065 W 13th St., Vancouver
 - Edwin is a grocery salesman
 - Vara (29 and single) is unemployed. [Vara married July 1921 to Herbert DePencier]
 - Brian cannot be found in 1921 census or B.C. vital statistics (age 26 if still living)
- Is this the end of the line for the search for Brian?
 - Let's try Find a Grave (findagrave.com)



Found him on Find a Grave!

Pvt Brian Allan Cassidy

BIRTH 20 Jan 1895
Vancouver, Greater Vancouver Regional District, British Columbia, Canada

DEATH 14 Apr 1917 (aged 22)
France

BURIAL [Lapugnoy Military Cemetery](#)
Lapugnoy, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France

PLOT III. E. 10.

MEMORIAL ID 56528062 · [View Source](#)

SHARE



SAVE TO

SUGGEST EDITS



MEMORIAL

PHOTOS 

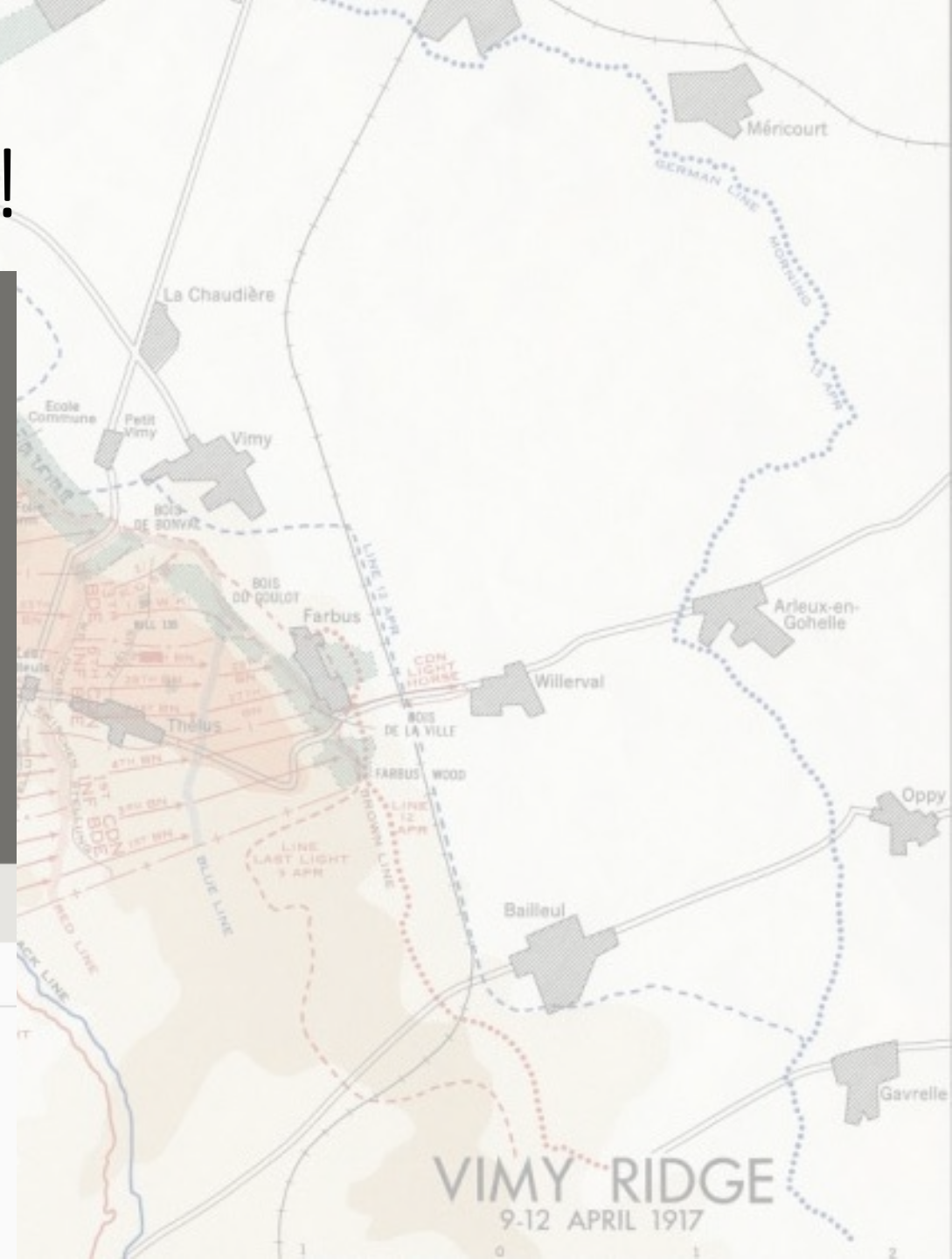
FLOWERS 

Inscription

129937

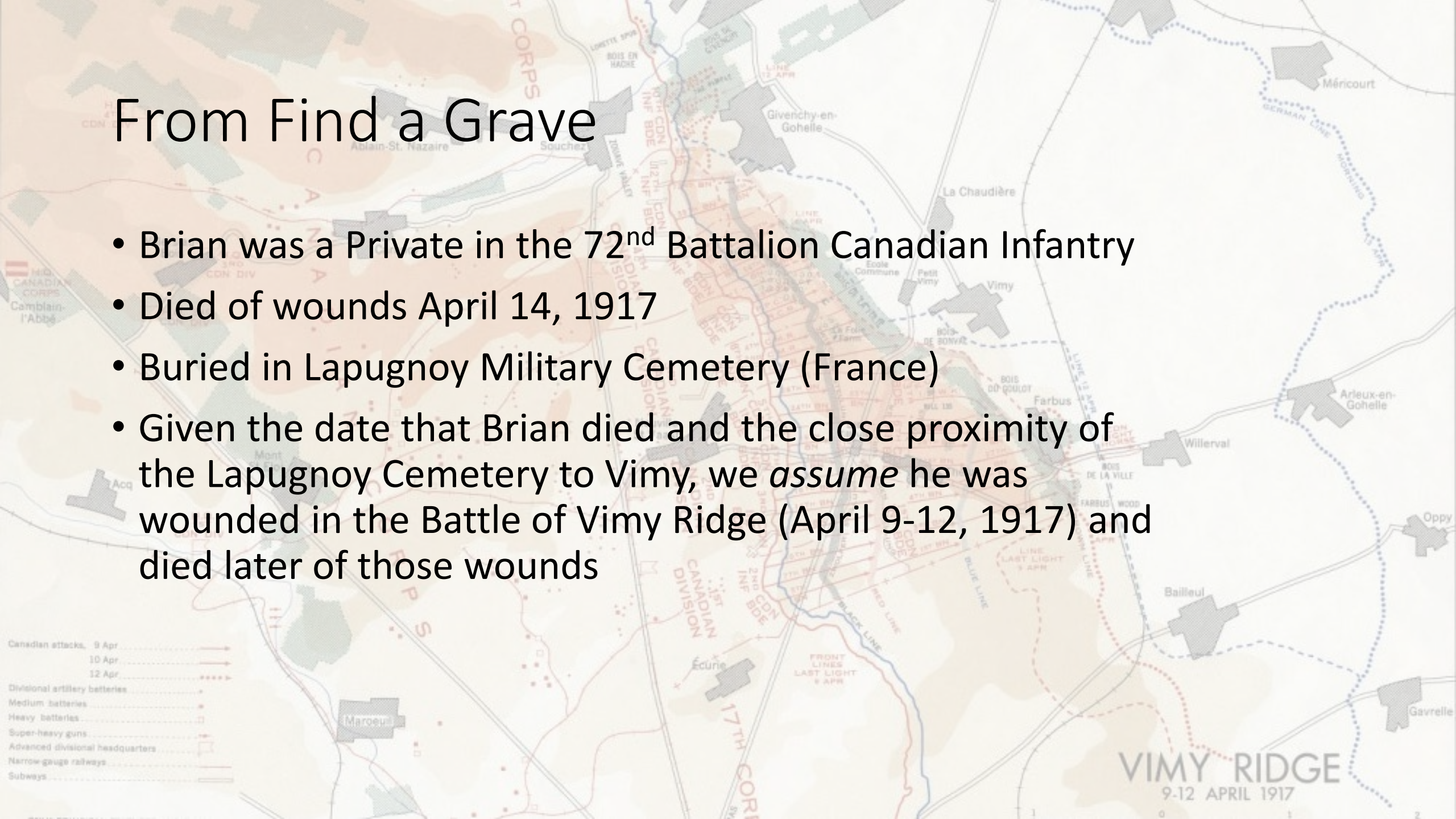
Gravesite Details

Private, 72nd Battalion, Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment). Died of wounds. Age: 22.



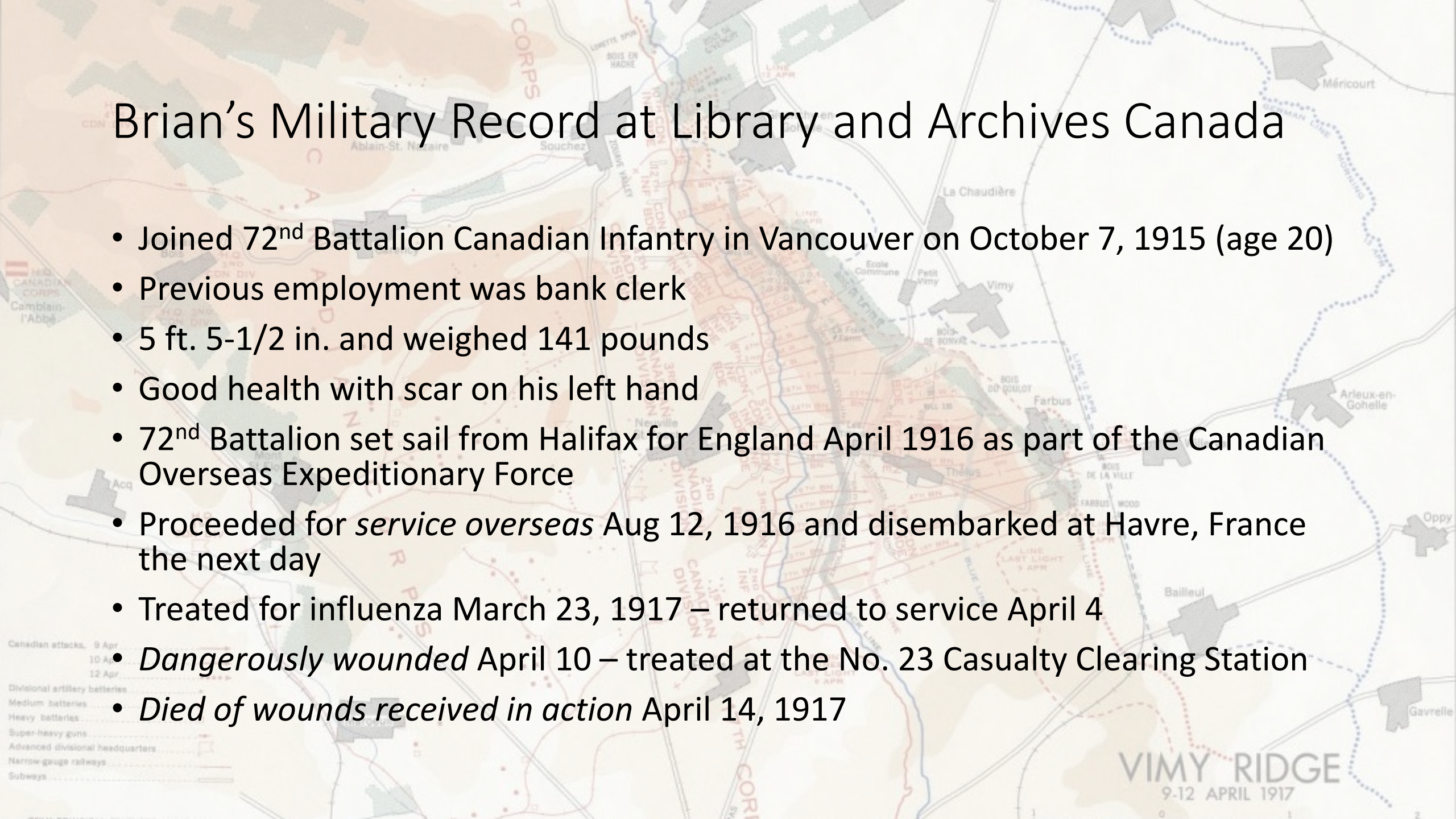
From Find a Grave

- Brian was a Private in the 72nd Battalion Canadian Infantry
- Died of wounds April 14, 1917
- Buried in Lapugnoy Military Cemetery (France)
- Given the date that Brian died and the close proximity of the Lapugnoy Cemetery to Vimy, we *assume* he was wounded in the Battle of Vimy Ridge (April 9-12, 1917) and died later of those wounds



Brian's Military Record at Library and Archives Canada

- Joined 72nd Battalion Canadian Infantry in Vancouver on October 7, 1915 (age 20)
- Previous employment was bank clerk
- 5 ft. 5-1/2 in. and weighed 141 pounds
- Good health with scar on his left hand
- 72nd Battalion set sail from Halifax for England April 1916 as part of the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force
- Proceeded for *service overseas* Aug 12, 1916 and disembarked at Havre, France the next day
- Treated for influenza March 23, 1917 – returned to service April 4
- *Dangerously wounded* April 10 – treated at the No. 23 Casualty Clearing Station
- *Died of wounds received in action* April 14, 1917



Perforated sheet for Will from Pay Book of Reg.

No. 129937

Name Brian Alan Cassidy

Unit 72nd Battalion (Canadian)

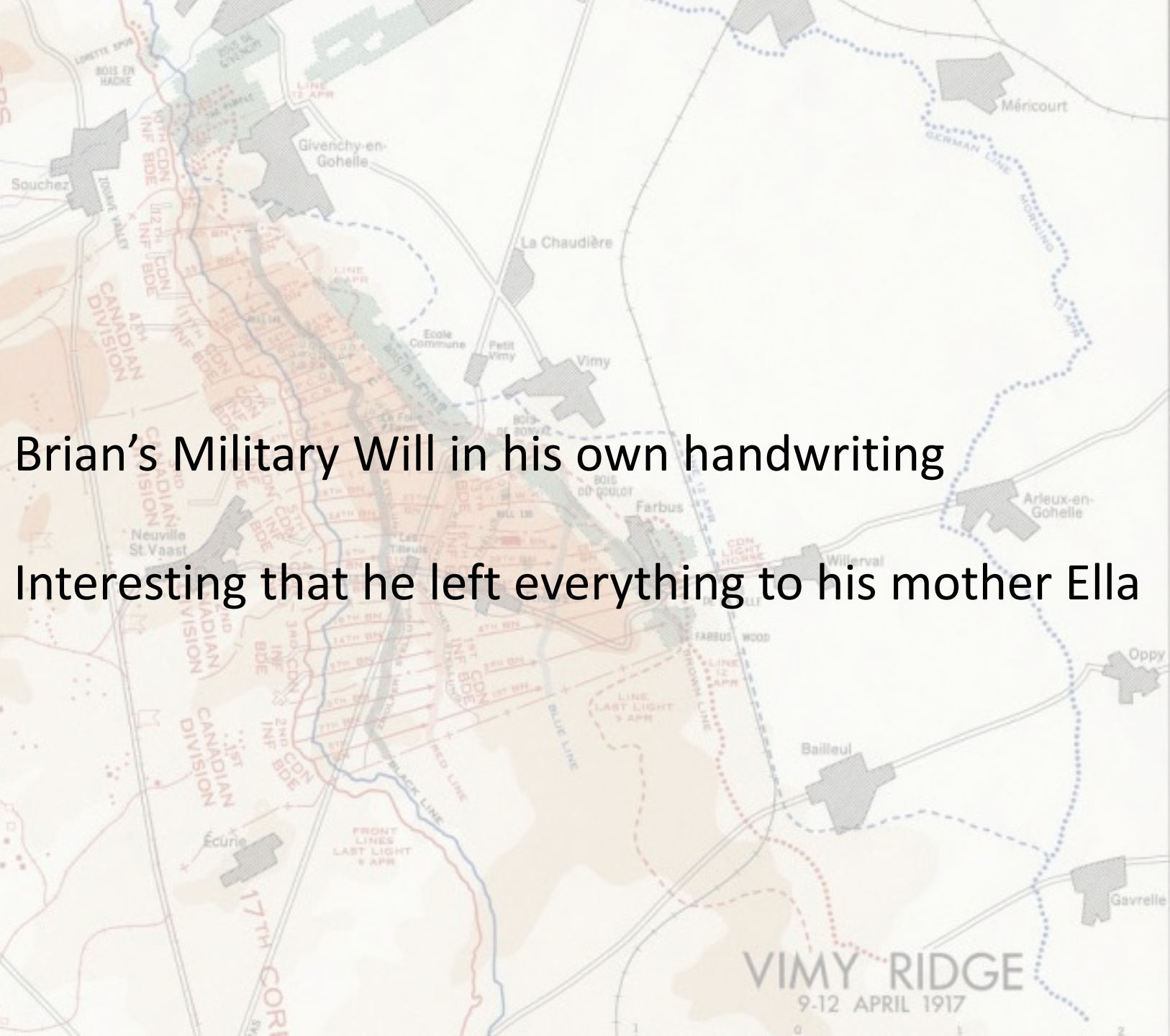
Military Will.

In the event of my death,
I give the whole of my
property and personal effects
to my mother, Mrs. Ella
E. Cassidy, 827 Sutherland
Ave., North Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada.

Signature Brian Alan Cassidy

Rank and Regt. Private #129937

Date 72nd Battalion (Canadian)
June 22/1916. A.D.



Brian's Military Will in his own handwriting

Interesting that he left everything to his mother Ella

Rank ☒ Name CASSIDY, Brian Allan. ☒ Reg'l No. 129937 ☒ R-122
Unit 72nd. Bn. ☒ If in perm. Corps, }
What Unit? } Married or Single Single. ☒
Place and Date of Enlistment Oct. 7th. 1915. ☒ Vancouver, }
Place of Birth Vancouver, B.C. ☒ }
Name and Address, Next-of-Kin Edwin V. Cassidy. ☒

827, Sutherland, North Vancouver, B.C. Can. ☒ Relationship Father. ☒

Assigned Pay Monthly\$ Payable to Relationship ☒

Separation Allowance\$ Payable to Relationship ☒

Discharge, Date and Place Reason Character

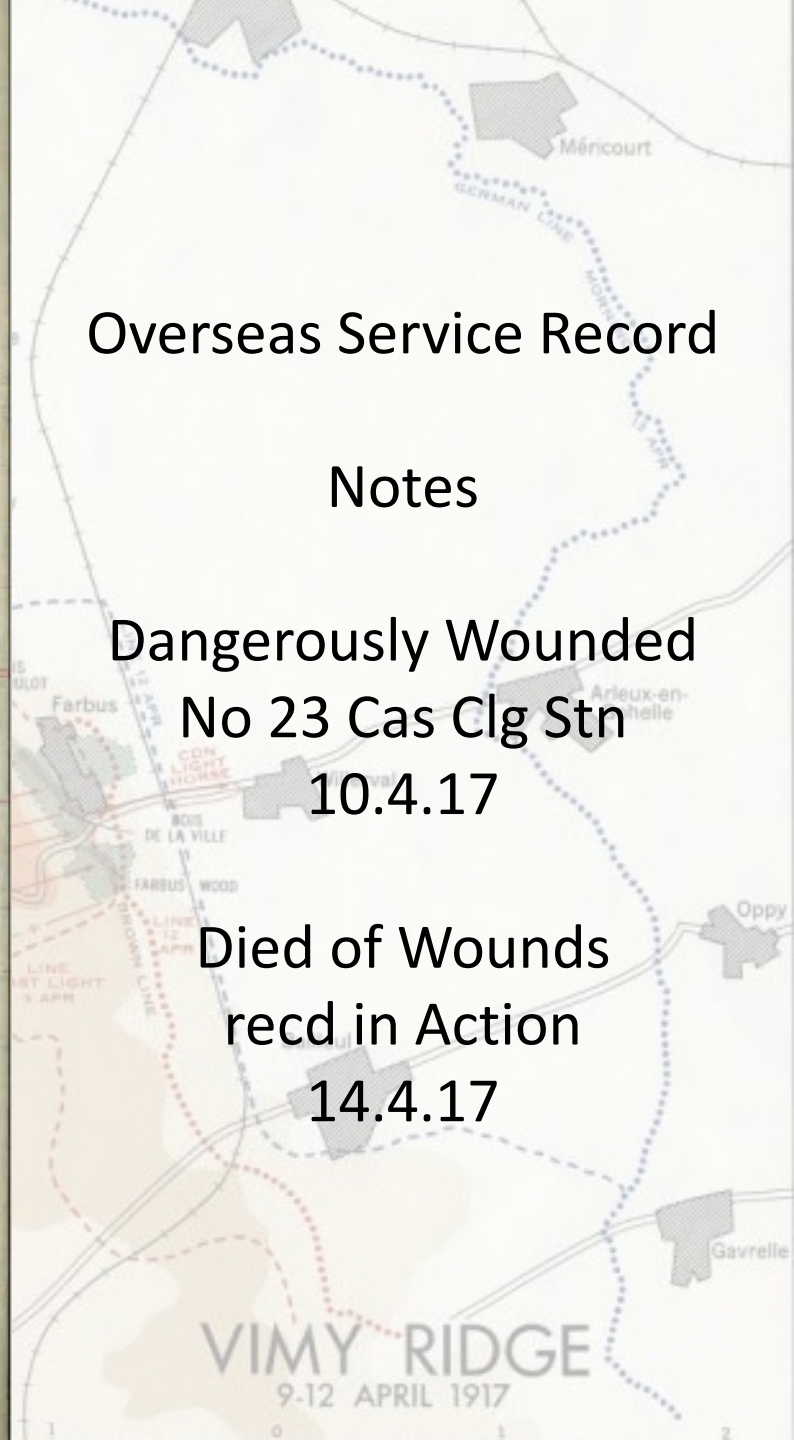
Report.		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place.	Date.	REMARKS. Taken from Official Documents.
Date.	From whom received.				
11 8-16	72nd.	Embarked For France	Præmshott	12-8-16	Part 2 D. O. 315
11.4.17	"	Adm 12 th Can Hld Amb.	Field	23.3.17	CHA 176. Influenza
23-4-17	"	Returned to Duty	"	4-4-17	6.2.2.186
13.4.17	"	Dangerously Wounded. No 23 Cas Clg Stn	"	10.4.17	CHA 178. Wounded Q. m 1683
20.4.17	"	Prev reptd Dangerously Wounded. now reptd. Died of Wounds	"	14.4.17	CHA 184. Not Stated m 2283
17.4.17	"	Died of Wounds recd. in Action	"	14.4.17	Part II O 38.

Overseas Service Record

Notes

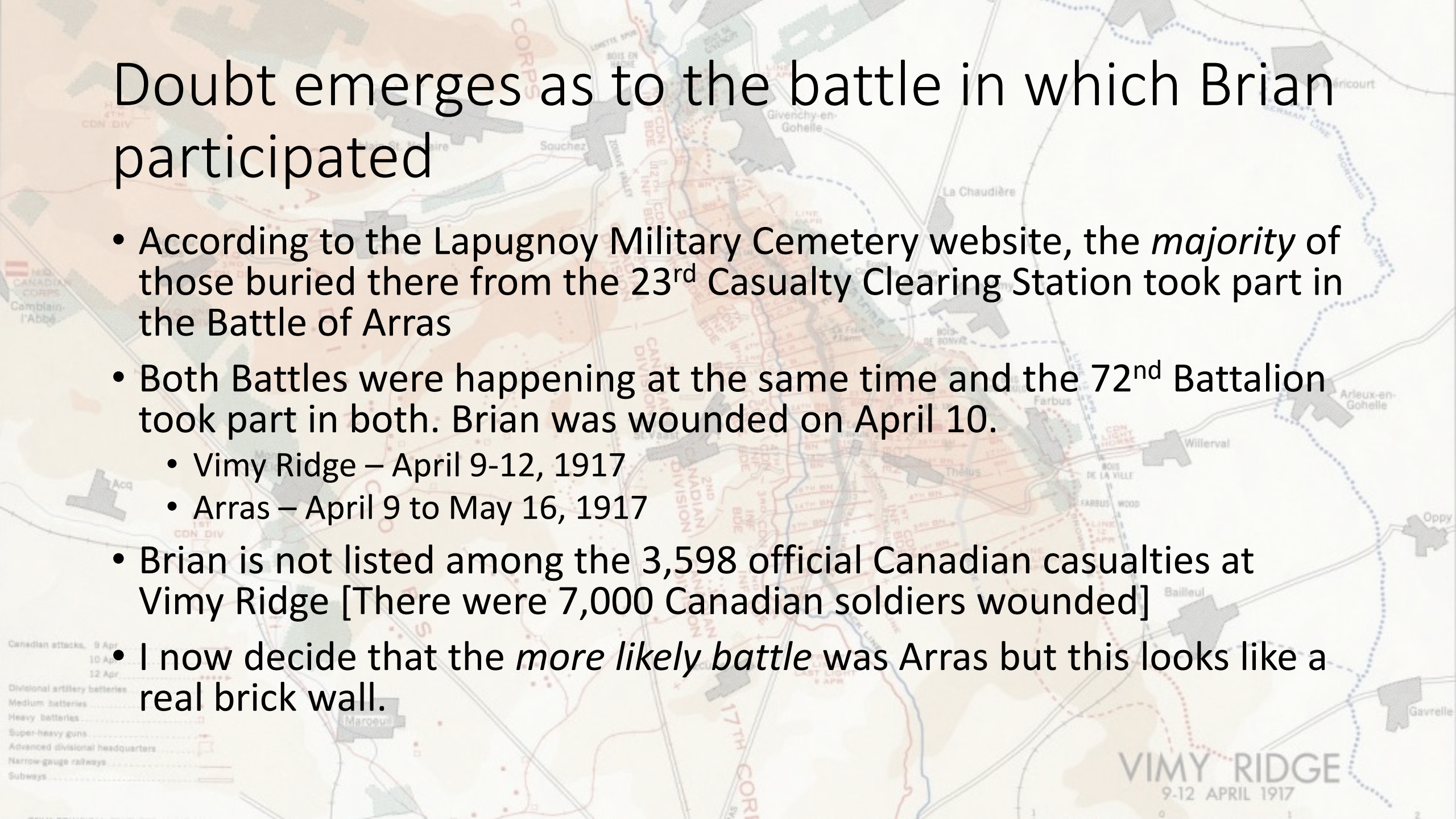
Dangerously Wounded
No 23 Cas Clg Stn
10.4.17

Died of Wounds
recd in Action
14.4.17



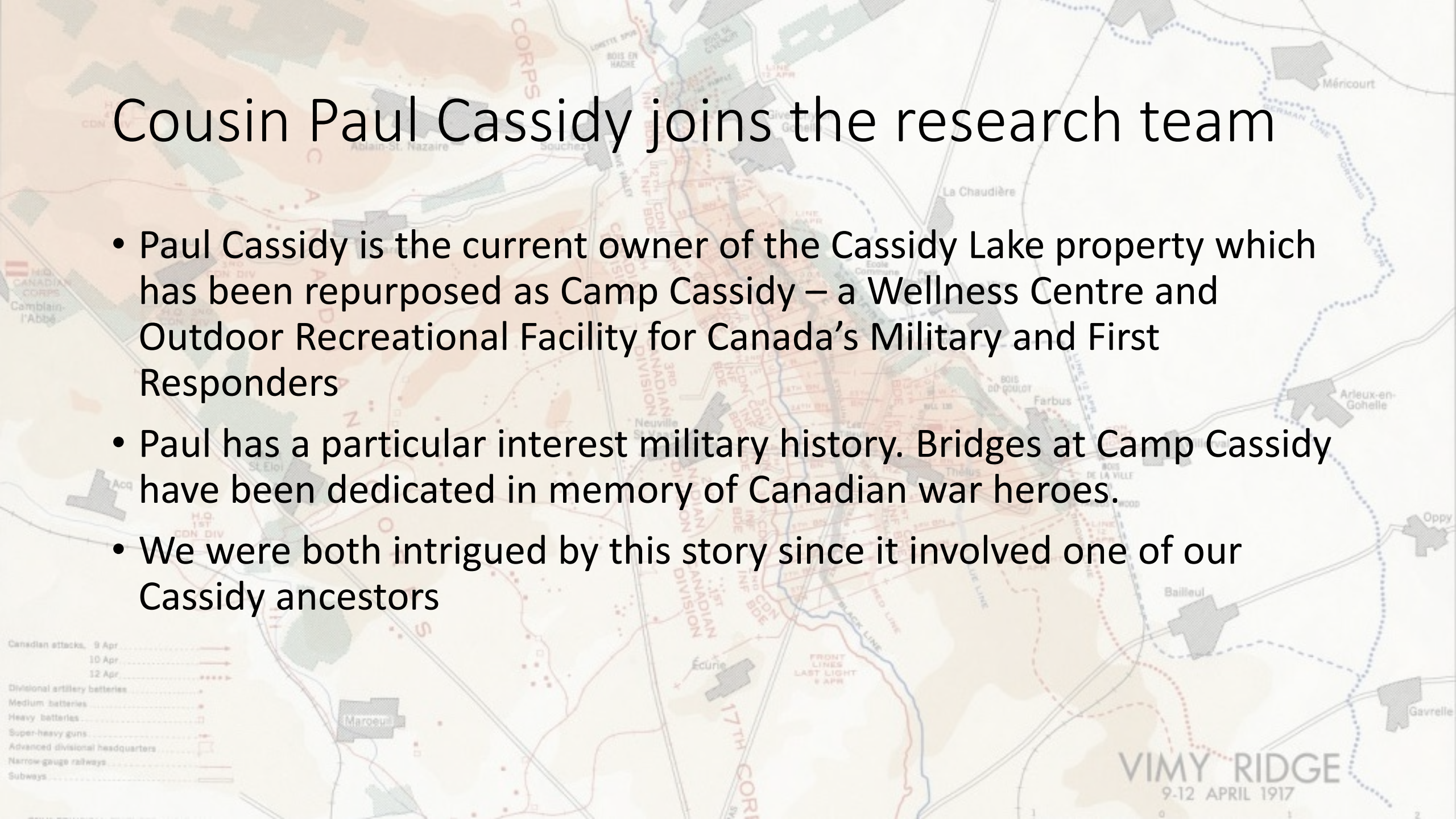
Doubt emerges as to the battle in which Brian participated

- According to the Lapugnoy Military Cemetery website, the *majority* of those buried there from the 23rd Casualty Clearing Station took part in the Battle of Arras
- Both Battles were happening at the same time and the 72nd Battalion took part in both. Brian was wounded on April 10.
 - Vimy Ridge – April 9-12, 1917
 - Arras – April 9 to May 16, 1917
- Brian is not listed among the 3,598 official Canadian casualties at Vimy Ridge [There were 7,000 Canadian soldiers wounded]
- I now decide that the *more likely battle* was Arras but this looks like a real brick wall.



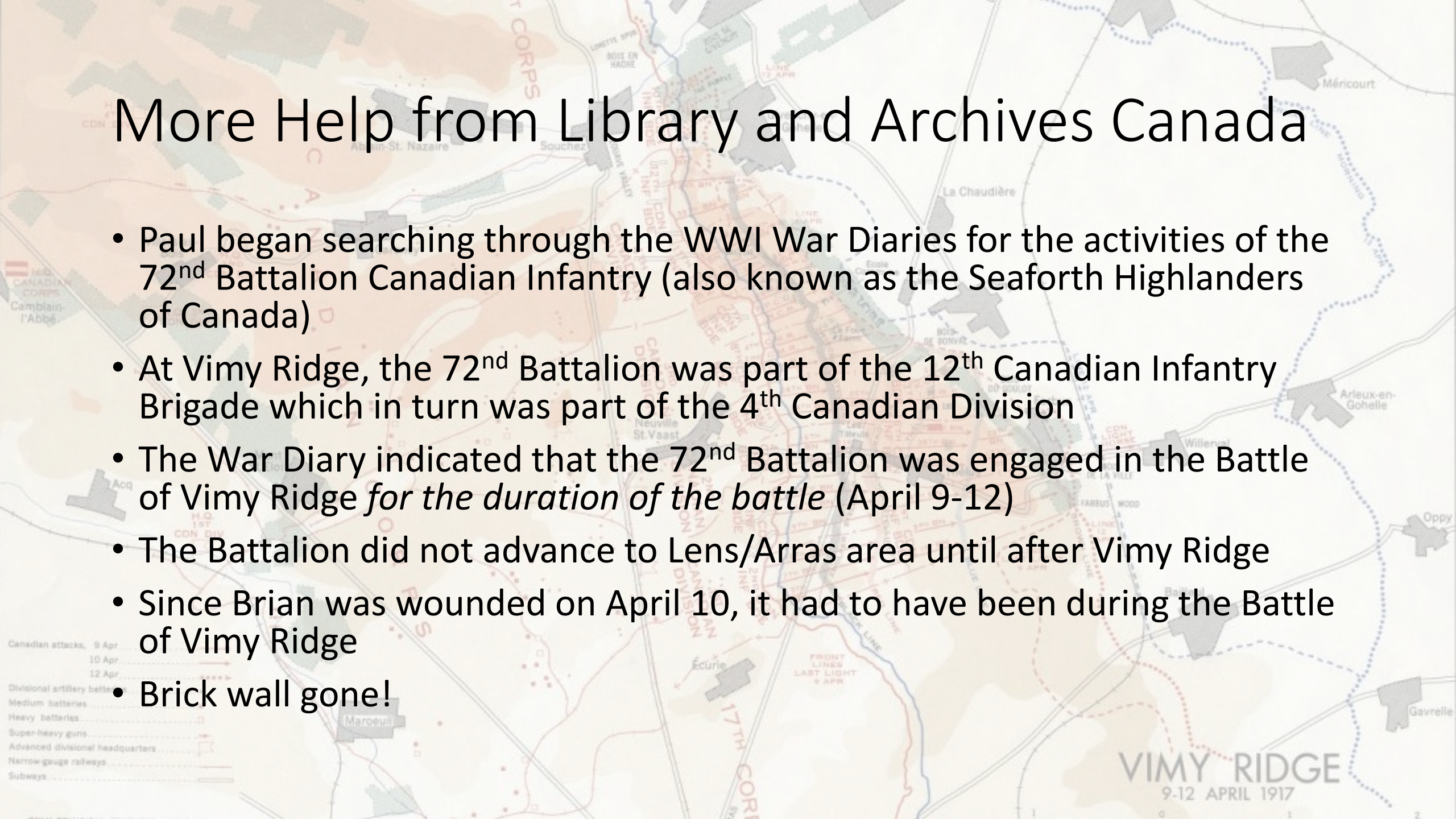
Cousin Paul Cassidy joins the research team

- Paul Cassidy is the current owner of the Cassidy Lake property which has been repurposed as Camp Cassidy – a Wellness Centre and Outdoor Recreational Facility for Canada's Military and First Responders
- Paul has a particular interest military history. Bridges at Camp Cassidy have been dedicated in memory of Canadian war heroes.
- We were both intrigued by this story since it involved one of our Cassidy ancestors



More Help from Library and Archives Canada

- Paul began searching through the WWI War Diaries for the activities of the 72nd Battalion Canadian Infantry (also known as the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada)
- At Vimy Ridge, the 72nd Battalion was part of the 12th Canadian Infantry Brigade which in turn was part of the 4th Canadian Division
- The War Diary indicated that the 72nd Battalion was engaged in the Battle of Vimy Ridge *for the duration of the battle* (April 9-12)
- The Battalion did not advance to Lens/Arras area until after Vimy Ridge
- Since Brian was wounded on April 10, it had to have been during the Battle of Vimy Ridge
- Brick wall gone!



War Diary – 72nd Battalion – April 1917

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY				ORIGINAL	Army Form C. 2118.
Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages will be prepared in manuscript.				72 nd Army F.A. Bde.	
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices	
Fisc 88	1-4-17		Batteries registering hostile artillery quiet. Nothing to report	RMB	
-	2-4-17		Orders received that Canadian Corps will attack Vimy ridge on Z day. Batteries started preliminary bombardment according to orders from 1 st Canadian D.A. firing on an average 1000 Rds in 24 hours	RMB	
-	3-4-17		Bombardment continues. now including daily bombardment of THÉLUS.	RMB	
-	4-4-17		Orders received that the german wire is not properly cut. A.B.C. turned on to wire cutting	RMB	
-	5-4-17		Results good as only 5 hours were allowed. RMB	RMB	
-	6-4-17		Bombardment continues. Z day fixed for 8 th 4-17.	RMB	
-	7-4-17		Z day postponed 24 hours. Batteries (16 th Bde) continue wire cutting and bombardment.	RMB	
-	8-4-17		Bombardment (and wire cutting up to 12 noon) continued.	RMB	
-	9-4-17		Zero hour having been fixed for 5.50 am all firing was stopt at 3 am for the Brigade. at Zero all Batteries opened a creeping barrage starting on the enemy front line covering 3 rd Canadian Bde. First two objectives were taken according to programme. all batteries turned onto standing barrages. The whole attack was successful and all objectives of 3 rd Canadian Bde. were taken also all important high ground on Canadian Corps front. Two M.C. in the Bde were wounded. Infantry casualties light. THÉLUS Village was taken without opposition. D72 was kept very busy all day first with neutralizing hostile batteries then on standing barrages. Brigade did not move forward on 9 th still in position road forward very bad.	RMB	
-	10-4-17		Ditto. Col J.A. Stirling C.M.G. now Brig Gen gone to command 59 th D.A.	RMB	
-	11-4-17		Rde move forward to LEVS. ARRAS Rd Lt Col Richy RFA arrives to Command 1 st CO	RMB	
A-10 D	12-4-17		all in action. Enemy out of range.	RMB	
-	13-4-17		C72 & D72 move forward near THÉLUS	RMB	
-	14-4-17		Nothing to report	RMB	
-	15-4-17			RMB	
-	16-4-17			RMB	

War Diary – 72nd Battalion – April 1917 – Vimy, France - Transcription by Brian Cassidy

9-4-17 Zero hour having been fixed for 5:30 am all firing was stopped at 3 am for the Brigade.

At Zero all 4 Batteries opened a creeping barrage starting onto enemy front line covering 3rd Canadian J Bde. First two objectives were taken according to programme. All batteries turned onto standing barrages. The whole attack was successful and all objectives of 3rd C R Bde were taken also all important high ground on Canadian Corps front. Two N.C.O. in the bde were wounded. Infantry casualties light. Thélus Village was taken without opposition.

D72 was kept very busy all day first with neutralizing hostile batteries then on standing barrages.

10-4-17 Brigade did not move forward on 9th. Still in position road forward very bad

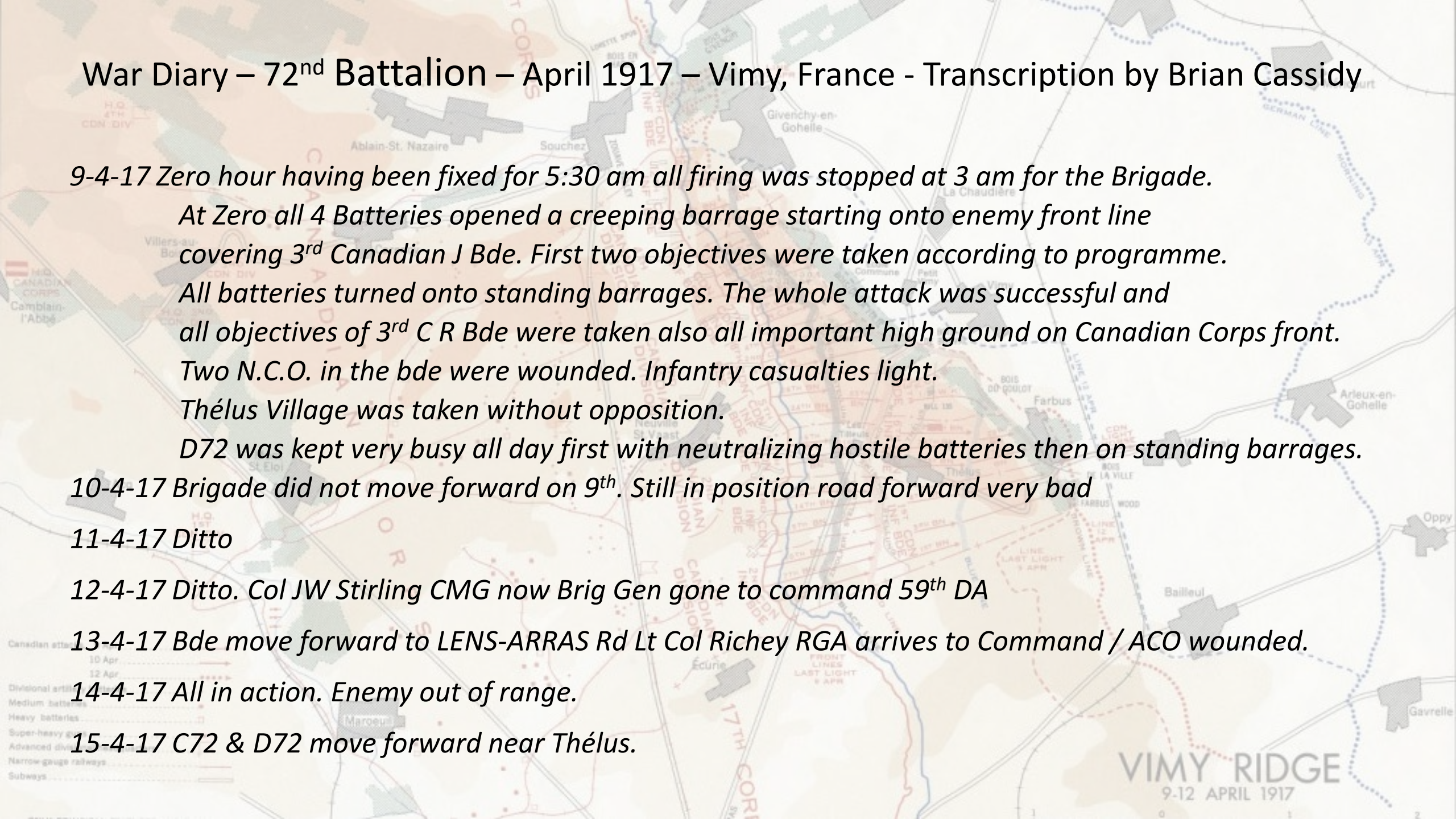
11-4-17 Ditto

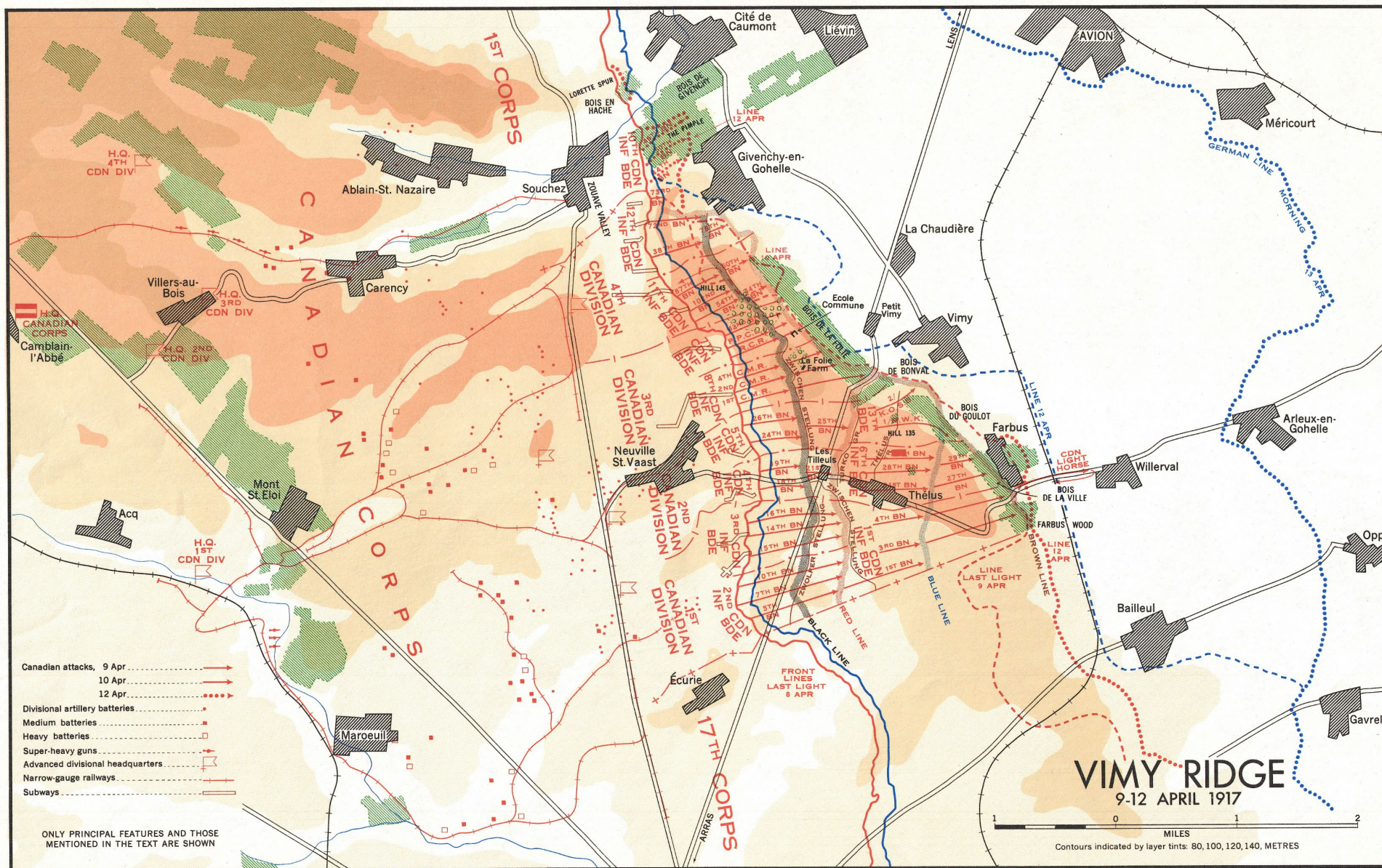
12-4-17 Ditto. Col JW Stirling CMG now Brig Gen gone to command 59th DA

13-4-17 Bde move forward to LENS-ARRAS Rd Lt Col Richey RGA arrives to Command / ACO wounded.

14-4-17 All in action. Enemy out of range.

15-4-17 C72 & D72 move forward near Thélus.



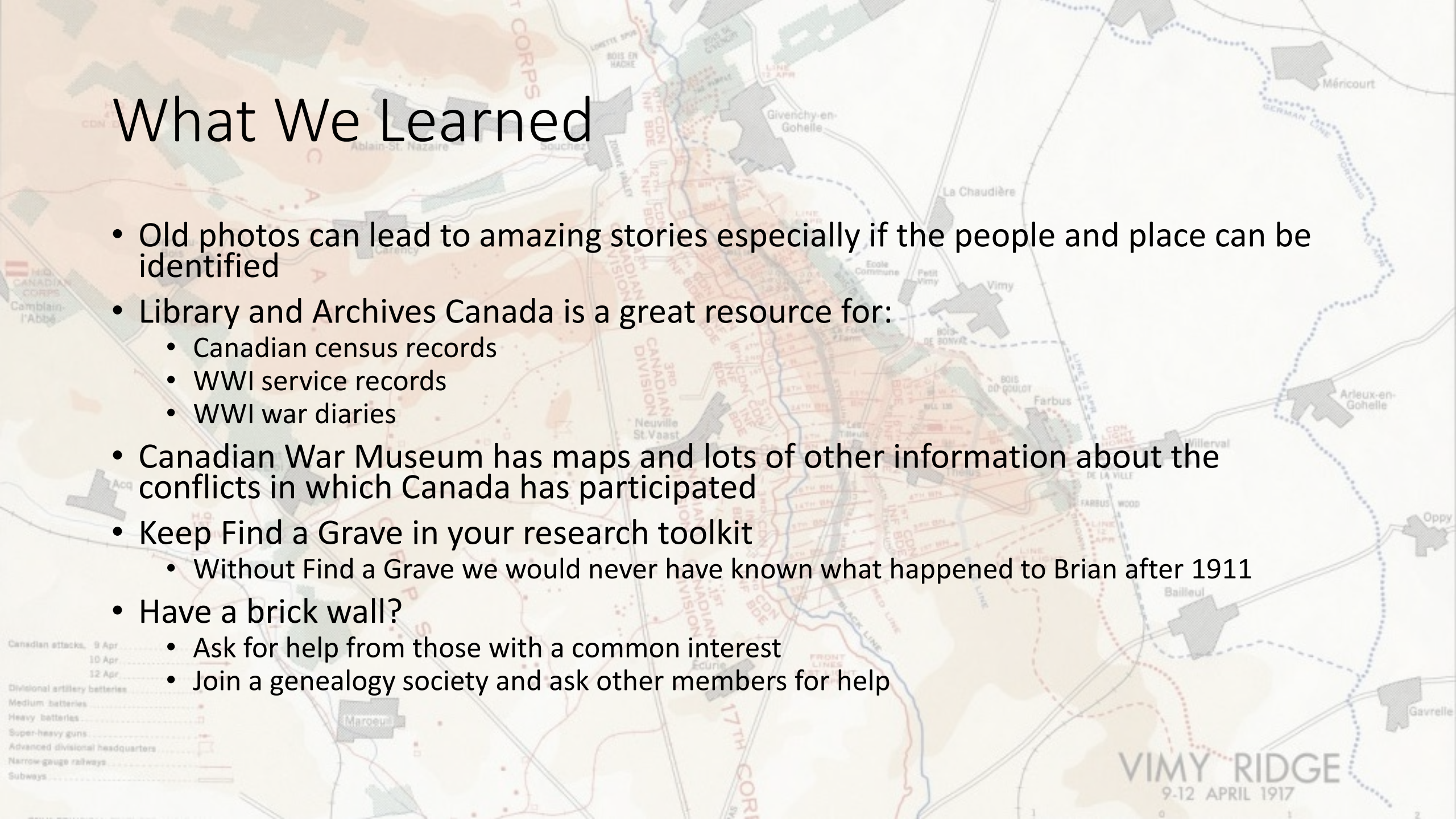


Reproduced by Army Survey Establishment

Compiled and drawn by Historical Section G.S.

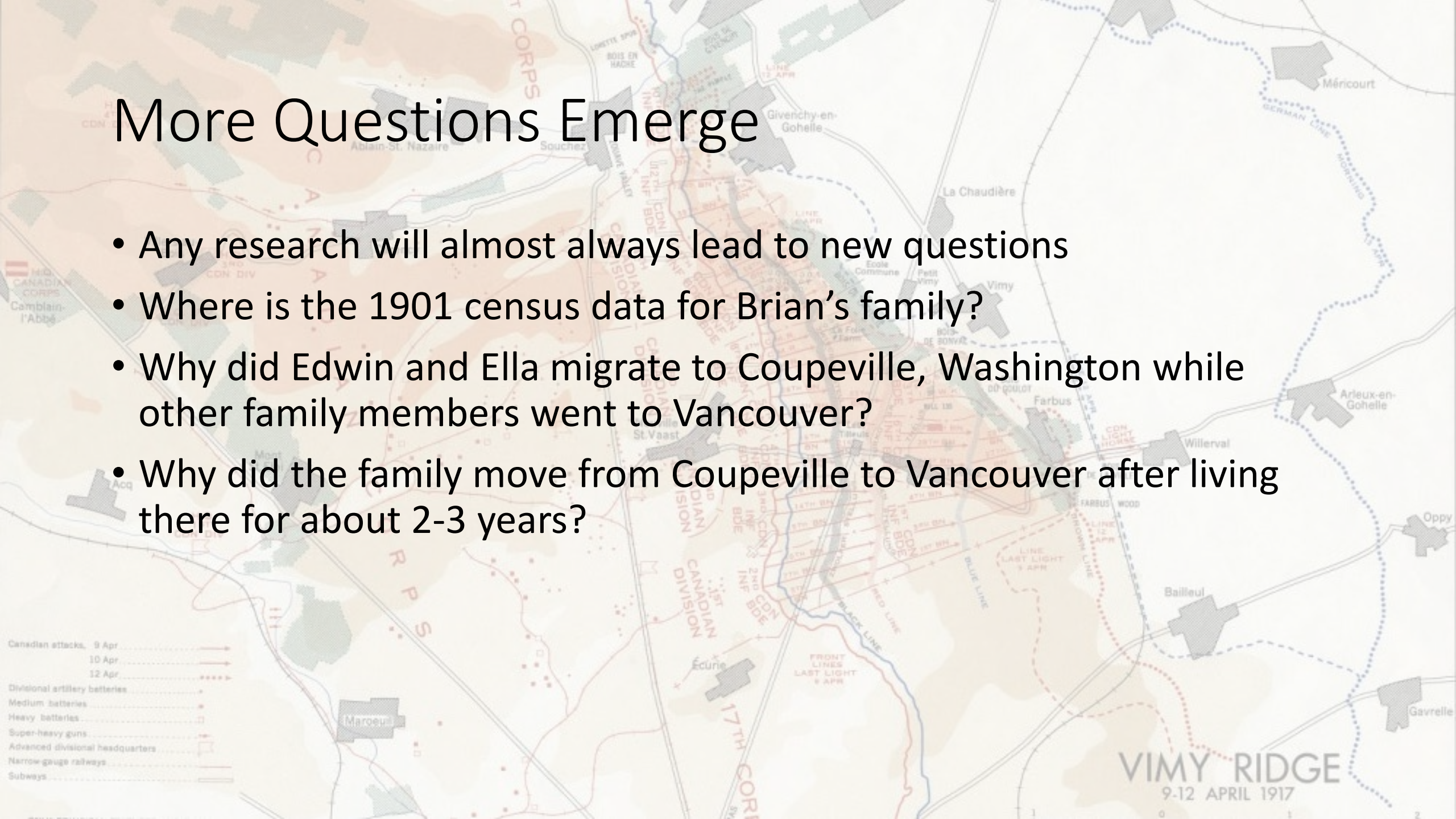
What We Learned

- Old photos can lead to amazing stories especially if the people and place can be identified
- Library and Archives Canada is a great resource for:
 - Canadian census records
 - WWI service records
 - WWI war diaries
- Canadian War Museum has maps and lots of other information about the conflicts in which Canada has participated
- Keep Find a Grave in your research toolkit
 - Without Find a Grave we would never have known what happened to Brian after 1911
- Have a brick wall?
 - Ask for help from those with a common interest
 - Join a genealogy society and ask other members for help



More Questions Emerge

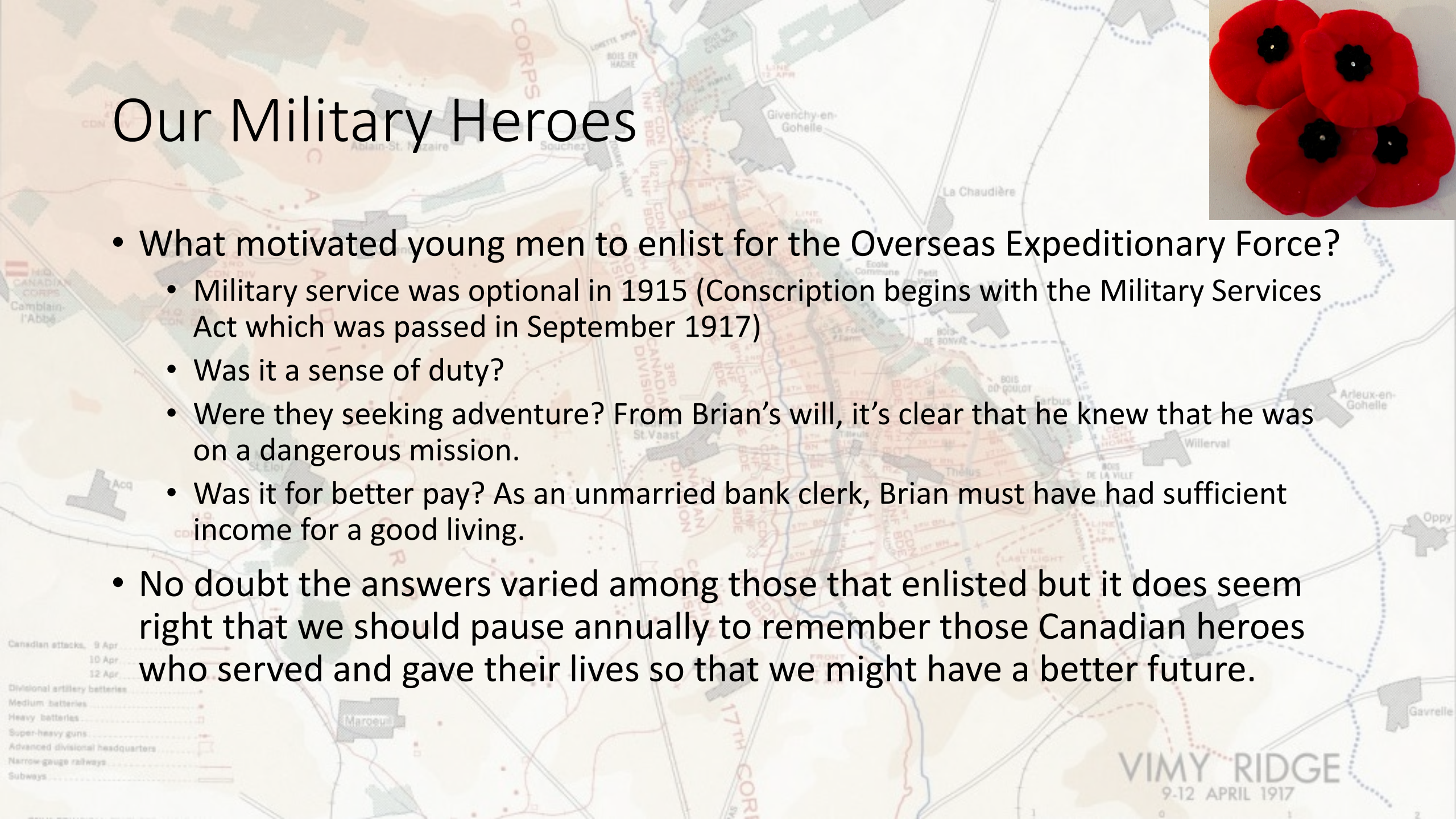
- Any research will almost always lead to new questions
- Where is the 1901 census data for Brian's family?
- Why did Edwin and Ella migrate to Coupeville, Washington while other family members went to Vancouver?
- Why did the family move from Coupeville to Vancouver after living there for about 2-3 years?



Our Military Heroes

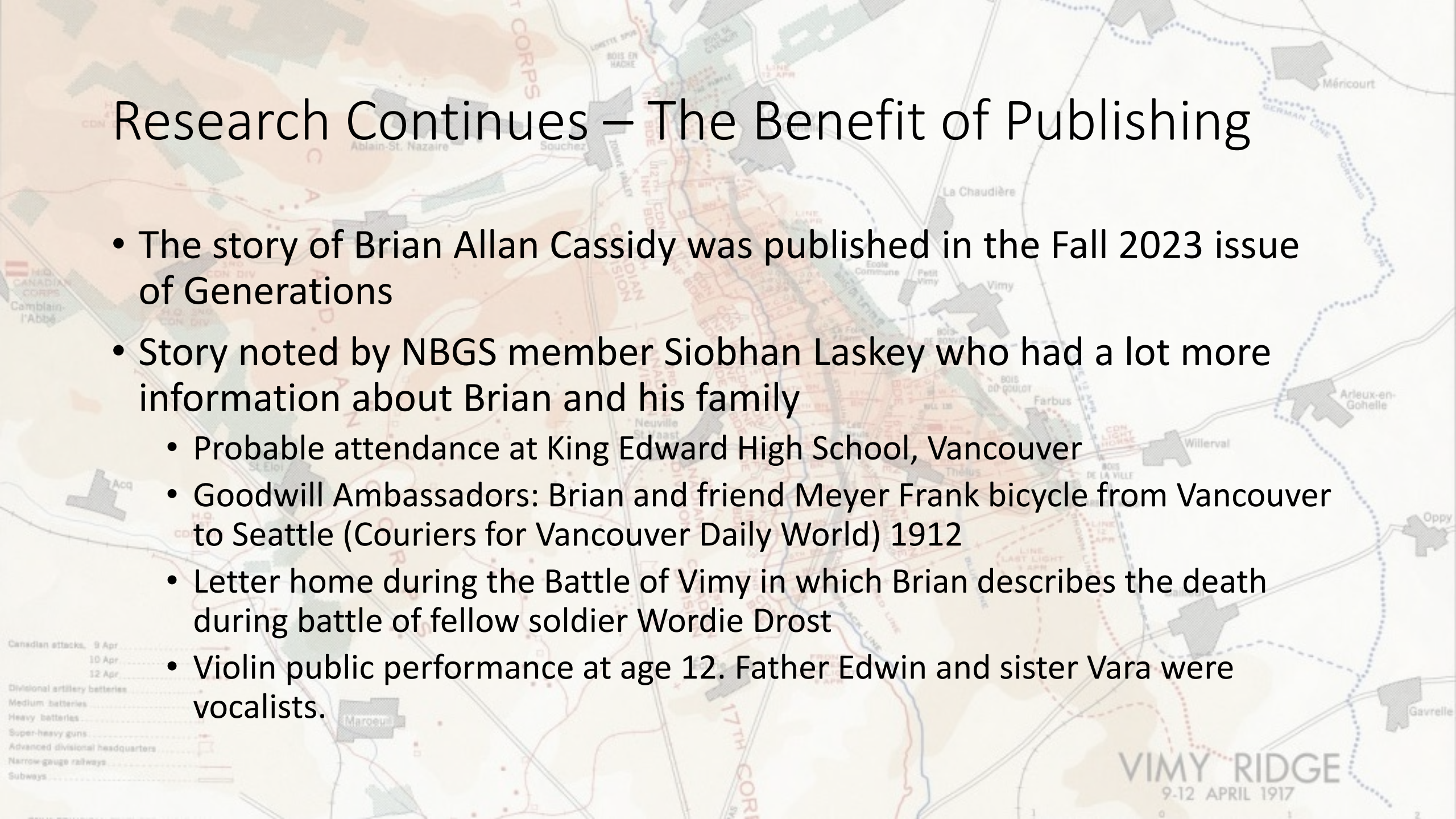


- What motivated young men to enlist for the Overseas Expeditionary Force?
 - Military service was optional in 1915 (Conscription begins with the Military Services Act which was passed in September 1917)
 - Was it a sense of duty?
 - Were they seeking adventure? From Brian's will, it's clear that he knew that he was on a dangerous mission.
 - Was it for better pay? As an unmarried bank clerk, Brian must have had sufficient income for a good living.
- No doubt the answers varied among those that enlisted but it does seem right that we should pause annually to remember those Canadian heroes who served and gave their lives so that we might have a better future.



Research Continues – The Benefit of Publishing

- The story of Brian Allan Cassidy was published in the Fall 2023 issue of Generations
- Story noted by NBGS member Siobhan Laskey who had a lot more information about Brian and his family
 - Probable attendance at King Edward High School, Vancouver
 - Goodwill Ambassadors: Brian and friend Meyer Frank bicycle from Vancouver to Seattle (Couriers for Vancouver Daily World) 1912
 - Letter home during the Battle of Vimy in which Brian describes the death during battle of fellow soldier Wordie Drost
 - Violin public performance at age 12. Father Edwin and sister Vara were vocalists.



Vancouver Daily World – July 23, 1912

BICYCLE COURIERS OF THE WORLD START ON RECORD BREAKING TRIP



BRIAN CASSIDY.

MEYER FRANK.

In order that The World may more Cornell. Two years ago they made

Brian Cassidy and Meyer Frank plan
bicycle trip Vancouver – Seattle

Both are students of King Edward
High School - Vancouver

VIMY RIDGE
9-12 APRIL 1917

Vancouver Daily World – November 27, 1907

FWLER CONCERT WAS GREAT SUCCESS

Miss Alberta V. Fowler, assisted by the Misses Cassidy and Fowler, Mr. W. J. Butler, Mr. Cathrea and Brian Cassidy, gave a most pleasant entertainment in Larson's Pavilion Tuesday evening.

The program opened with a duet by Misses Vera Cassidy and Alice Fowler, the rendering of which was acknowledged with prolonged applause from the audience. Miss A. V. Fowler followed with a reading entitled "Sunday Thieves." The several characters in the piece was well interpreted by Miss Fowler. The next item was a vocal solo by Mr. Cassidy accompanied by Brian Cassidy with the violin. Mr. Cathrea has been heard in North Vancouver before and is always very much appreciated. Following Mr. Cathrea's solo was a dramatic sketch by Miss A. V. Fowler and Mr. R. J. Butler, of this city and was entitled "A Pair of Lunatics." Miss Fowler and Mr. Butler both did credit to themselves in the rendering of this piece and were encored heartily. Miss R. E. Fowler gave a vocal solo (selected) with pleasing effect and Mr. Brian Cassidy may almost be termed a boy wonder by the masterly way he played "Berceuse" on his violin. Following this was a reading by Miss Fowler, "Chariot Race," (from "Ben Hur"), a vocal solo (selected) by Mr. Fisher and the concluding item on the program, a comedietta, "Chalk and Cheese," by Misses R. E. and A. V. Fowler and W. J. Butler. A notable feature of the program was the punctuality with the appearance of each item and the splendid manner in which each was rendered. Mrs. Wyndal was accompanist.

The next item was a vocal solo by Mr. Cassidy Accompanied by Brian Cassidy with the violin.

Mr. Brian Cassidy may almost be termed a boy wonder by the masterly way he played 'Berceuse' on his violin.

Brian would have been 12 years old at this concert.

Canadian attacks, 9 Apr
10 Apr
12 Apr
Divisional artillery batteries
Medium batteries
Heavy batteries
Super-heavy guns
Advanced divisional headquarters
Narrow-gauge railways
Subways

VIMY RIDGE
9-12 APRIL 1917

The Province – April 18, 1917

Brian documents the horror of Vimy Ridge

WORDIE DROST DIED GAME

Smiling. He Cried "Good Luck, Fellows," As He Expired.

Mrs. E. V. Cassidy of 827 Sutherland avenue, North Vancouver, has just received a letter from her son, Pte. Brian Cassidy, in which the latter describes the death of the late "Wordie" Drost, son of Mr. and Mrs. P. G. Drost of Mt. Pleasant. The letter is in part as follows: "It happened about 6 o'clock in the morning during a very heavy Fritz bombardment. I was out in the cook-house dugout containing four men. It was hit by a large shell and I came out a few seconds afterward. Our machine guns behind me were spitting fire and steel across the valley with a fierce crackle. 'Fritz' rum jars, 'H. E. shells,' 'minnies,' etc., were falling around like flies and when I came out, alone, I shall never forget the sight, and I have seen things before now, too.

"I did the best I could and ran down a block and got two stretcher-bearers and a stretcher. It was hopeless, however, but they did their best. Then I heard about an hour afterwards that "Wordie" was killed. Art Drummond, Major Johnson, "Flum" (Douglas Flumerfelt) shot through the leg and about forty more. 'Wordie' was shot through the heart about 100 yards the other side of Fritz' front line. He fell and, turning on his back, said with a smile: 'Good luck, fellows.' He was recommended for a commission, too, and would have gone on a two months' course about now. Well, he died game like the man that he was, for he certainly was a fine boy."

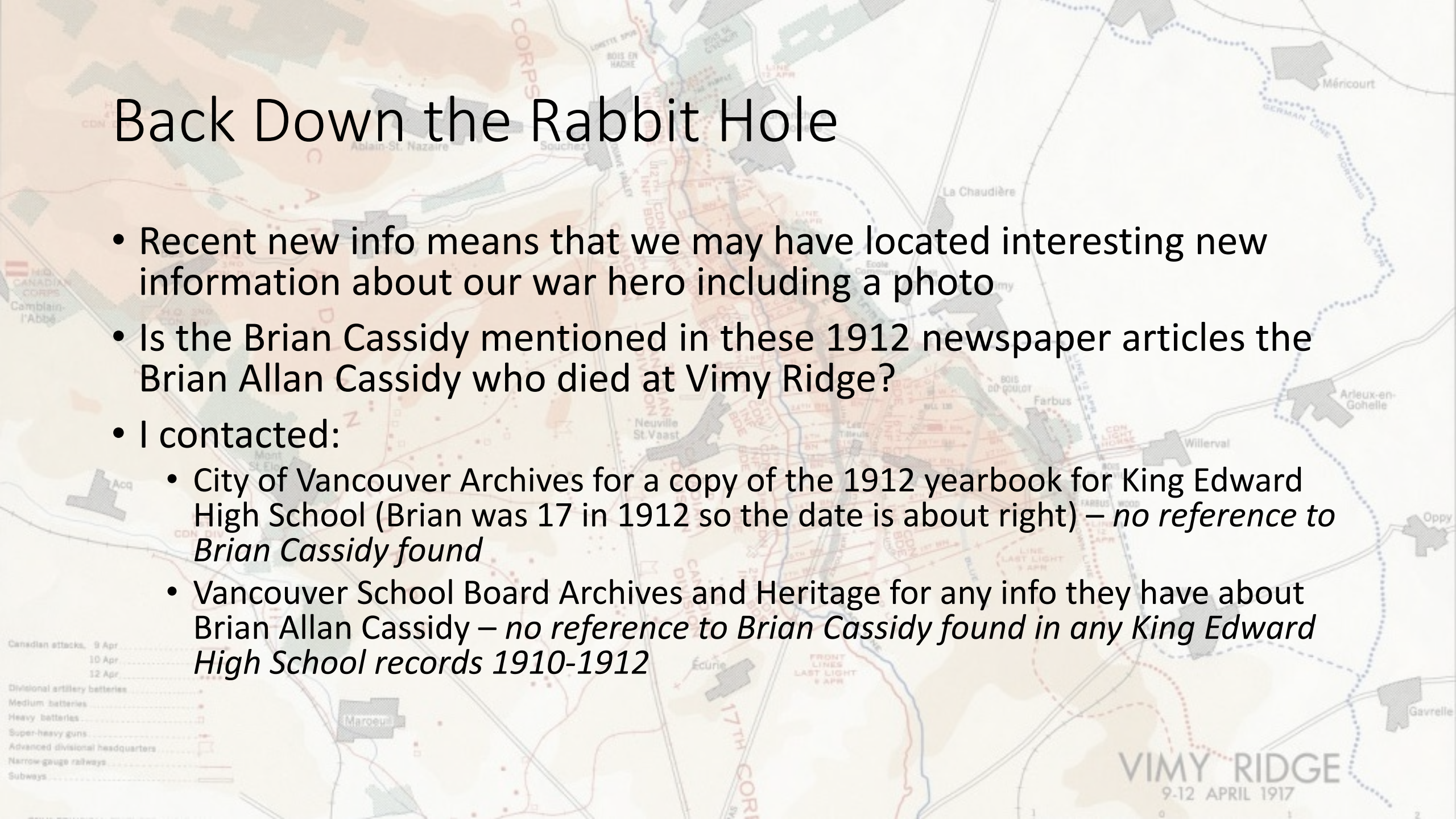
Our machine guns behind me were spitting fire and steel across the valley with a fierce crackle. Fritz rum jars, H E shells, Minnies etc. were falling around like flies ... I shall never forget the sight and I have seen things before now, too.

Wordie was shot through the heart about 100 yards the other side of Fritz' front line. He fell and turning on his back, said with a smile: 'Good luck, fellows.' Well, he died game like the man he was, for he certainly was a fine boy.

VIMY RIDGE
9-12 APRIL 1917

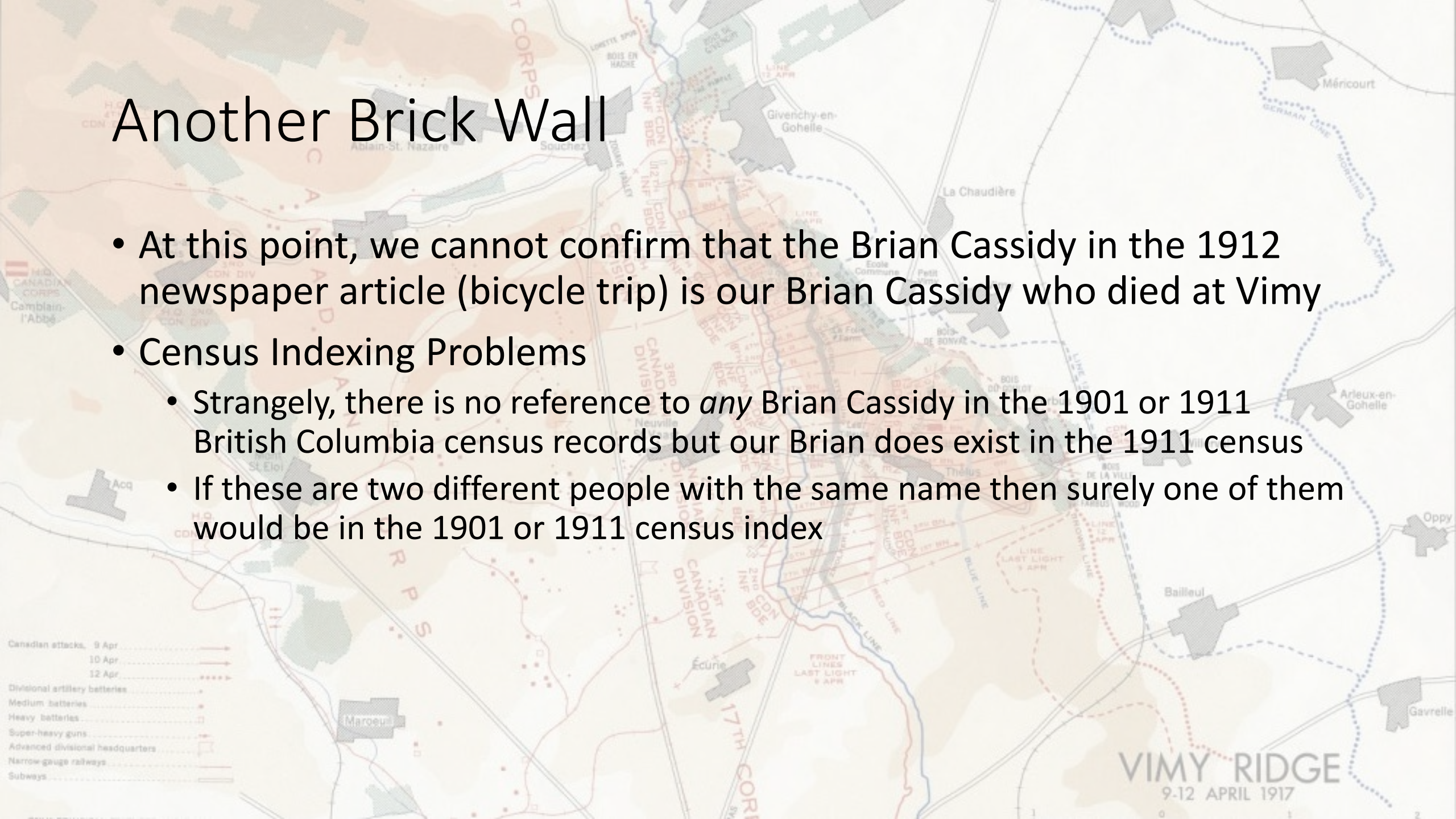
Back Down the Rabbit Hole

- Recent new info means that we may have located interesting new information about our war hero including a photo
- Is the Brian Cassidy mentioned in these 1912 newspaper articles the Brian Allan Cassidy who died at Vimy Ridge?
- I contacted:
 - City of Vancouver Archives for a copy of the 1912 yearbook for King Edward High School (Brian was 17 in 1912 so the date is about right) – *no reference to Brian Cassidy found*
 - Vancouver School Board Archives and Heritage for any info they have about Brian Allan Cassidy – *no reference to Brian Cassidy found in any King Edward High School records 1910-1912*



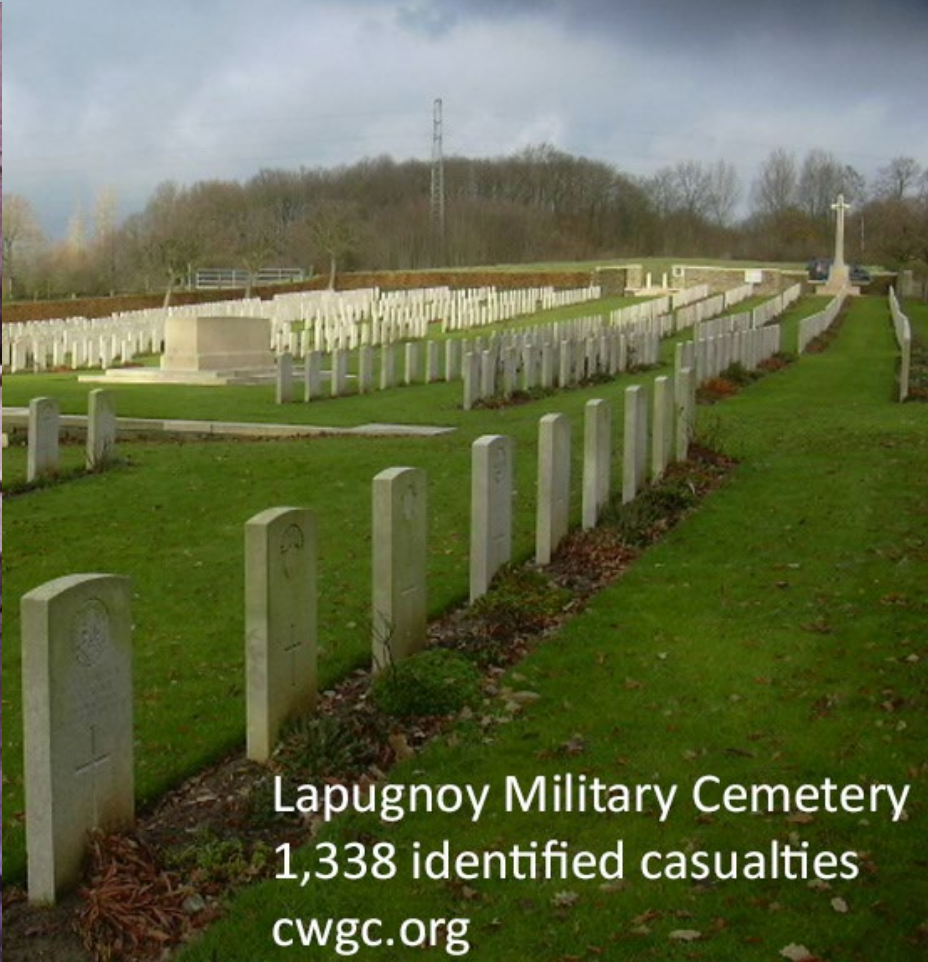
Another Brick Wall

- At this point, we cannot confirm that the Brian Cassidy in the 1912 newspaper article (bicycle trip) is our Brian Cassidy who died at Vimy
- Census Indexing Problems
 - Strangely, there is no reference to *any* Brian Cassidy in the 1901 or 1911 British Columbia census records but our Brian does exist in the 1911 census
 - If these are two different people with the same name then surely one of them would be in the 1901 or 1911 census index



Questions?

Ella Laskey Cassidy
Memorial Cross Mother



Lapugnoy Military Cemetery
1,338 identified casualties
cwgc.org



Vimy Ridge Memorial
vimyridge.valourcanada.ca