

[Page 1 - Cape Bretoners in World War One](#)ISSUE : [Issue 33](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1983/6/1

Cape Bretoners in World War One H. L. Livingstone Howard Reid Dan E. MacQuarrie John Angus MacNeil Ken MacLeod Bill Daye Fr. Leo Sears Thomas Gillard Thomas R. Langley Kristopher Mayich H. L. Livingstone, Marble Mountain: It was just all that men could stand in the way of hardships. If it was a little bit more, of course they would have died. Lousy, hun? gry, cold--so cold that your feet began to rot, lack of circulation. They issued giom boots, rubber boots, one time, shortly af? ter I joined the battalion. They were no good at all, because you were always get? ting over them, getting mud inside them, and they'd be worse than nothing. But the winter of 1917 was one of the coldest in history, in France. We'd be up on what they called the firing step, little step up where you peered over at night. In the daytime of course, you couldn't--too many snipers. And we'd step down off when a ma? chine gun would open up, just flop down, in water up to the waist. And then crawl up again dripping wet, with that water freezing on you. That's exactly what it was: the edge of what man could stand. And man can stand more than would kill a dog or a horse in the mud. He can stand so much. That is, if he's young and in good physical condition. It's almost incredible what a man will stand. Howard Reid, Sydney: (Why did you join up?) Well, that's a conundrum. I suppose it was bom through my school days. When I was a- bout 12 years of age, I read in a boys' magazine all about the "Invasion of Brit? ain," "Britain at Bay," and "Britain's Re? venge." I can remember all the different stories--it was quite a story. I think it was two boy scouts that held up the Ger? mans on London Bridge. The pictures of the planes that I saw were very good--there was a plane in it, I remember--like one of our modem planes. I read those stories, and they did something. And I was always a marcher, I guess. Went off. The soldiers were parading past the end of our street one time, and I followed them all the way to the barracks. I think I was about 6 years of age. (So you were looking forward to being a soldier?) Well, it's something like that. It's kind of--born in you, I suppose. I don't know. I had this deafness when I was a child; and it wasn't too bad, but I wasn't heeding my lady teachers right. I think that had something to do with it. CAPE BRETON'S MAGAZINE, NUMBER THIRTY-THREE WRECK COVE, CAPE BRETON, NOVA SCOTIA SECOND CLASS MAIL -- REGISTRATION NUMBER 3014 (1)