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H. L. Livingstone: I joined the 106th Battalion because my older brother was an officer in that outfit I joined up in a recruiting meeting in the schoolhouse at Big Bras d'Or--a town meeting with a colonel talking to it. A lot of it, I think, was showing off. I became an important person-- I was only a boy, 18--before the community meeting, by joining up. This feeling, feeling created by propaganda, permeated the whole of society, even to the country districts. I can remember somebody coming to our house, and my mother posting up a picture of a soldier, with quotations from Robert Burns: "For gold, the merchant plows the main,/ The farmer tills the manor./ Glory is the soldier's prize,/ The soldier's wealth is honour," That was clever propaganda. It became an emotional thing. Patriotic, emotional. And everybody was very well brainwashed, I would say. Oh, Cape Breton was completely. And everybody went in the army, and about half of them were killed. See, they all joined infantry battalions, from Cape Breton, unlike Halifax and other cities in Canada, where they joined the artillery or army service corps or medical corps or something else. And the infantry was almost sure suicide. Your only chance to escape being killed was to be wounded. Imagine going across an open field there-- you can't call it a field, because it was shellholes--against machine gun and shrapnel fire, just calmly walking toward the German line. Or, at the latter part, they had a better method of running in waves. The front wave would drop down flat on the ground and the next wave would pass over and then drop down again. I suppose the German artillery had difficulty in concentrating on the people when they did that. Machine gun fire, likewise. I don't know exactly what the goal was. There were very few goals! It was such a fiasco, such a miserable business. For many years, most of us didn't want to think about it. The only thing I ever did in my life that I'm thoroughly ashamed of was going away to war and leaving my mother alone on the farm at Big Bras d'Or. There were three of us in the 25th Battalion. My brother Bill was foreman of a construction gang, cleaning up telephone lines in Montana, when the war broke out. And he came all the way home from Montana to enlist. My brother Dan was sailing out of New York at the time on a ship. And he left the job, came up to New Brunswick, and joined the 64th Battalion, where they were mobilized at Sussex. Now, why we did those things, I just don't know. I think love of adventure and excitement is the best explanation. It's not a very good one, but it's the best one. But why I did the things I did is something else again. I have no adequate explanation. (I often wonder whether I would have the stomach to do the things that I might be called on to do.) Well, you probably would. I can remember catching a German patrol when the fog lifted in the early morning, right in the open field, not more than 300 yards away, and shooting them with as much gusto and as much fun as I would shoot rabbits. CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

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