

The Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, Supplement to Part 1 and 2

Introduction

Since writing this article, a few new illustrations have shown up from my own and other sources.

Canadian Automobile Machine Gun Brigade No. 1



Autocar armoured cars and bicycles, c. 1914.

Fra Photos of the Great War.

The photo is taken at Camp Valcartier in Montreal, Canada, before the unit left for England in October 1914. The machine guns are of the Colt type, bought in USA. The machine guns were later replaced by Vickers machine guns.

Eaton Motor Machine Gun Battery

In Part 2 of this article, an Autocar light armoured car bearing the number 5792 and a triangular badge with three C's. The same triangular patch is also shown on this Autocar truck, bearing the number 5786. The photo is taken in September 1916, just after the Battle of Courcellette at the Somme River.



Autocar XXI truck, from Eaton Motor Machine Gun Battery.
From Source 1.

An article in the 6 September 1917 edition of the Toronto Evening Telegram identifies the unit as being the Eaton Motor Machine Gun Battery [1](#).

The soldier to the right (in greatcoat) is Corporal C.G. Vickers ... a rather appropriate name for a soldier serving in a machine gun unit!



*A reconstruction of the
triangular badge shown on
the Autocar truck of the Eaton
Motor Machine Gun Battery,
September 1916.*

The combination of a triangular badge with three C's is known from other units in the Canadian Corps, cf. Colour Patches of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (Booker Collection, Digger History), but I am not aware of the symbolism.

The Canadian Corps could count for the first two C's, but the third ...?

Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade



Representatives from the 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade seen at a parade in Mons, late 1918. From Source 2.

Of special interest is the badge at the front of the Autocar light armoured car. My interpretation is that it is the badge of the 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, as shown in Part 2 of this article.

The location is taken from Source 2, which is written by motorcycle enthusiasts, and the motorcycle in the photo is identified as a Triumph. Further, it is noticed that an inner tube is wrapped around the headlamp and that the front fender is missing.

The motorcyclist is a lieutenant, identified by the old pattern rank badge on his left arm with two stars.

Besides the Vickers machine gun, the armoured car is equipped with a Lewis Gun. This additional armament is mentioned in certain data of the armoured car, e.g. The Royal Canadian Armoured Corps Association (Cavalry); here it is shown in real life.



An Autocar light armoured car from "C" (Borden) Battery, 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, photographed in Germany, in December 1918.



*Badge of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps.
Fra Cap badges of the
Canadian Expeditionary
Force 1914-1919.*

The photo derives from a correspondence in 2005 in the Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group Forum, where a certain Les Fowler received help in identifying his grandfathers' unit; the soldier above the X is private Harold Eston Fowler..

The conclusion of a long, and very interesting exchange of information was that the unit is the "C" (Borden) Battery, 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade.

The soldier to the left appears to wear the cap badge of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps.

The badge existed in a number of variations, but the below drawing is very much like the cap badge shown in the photo.

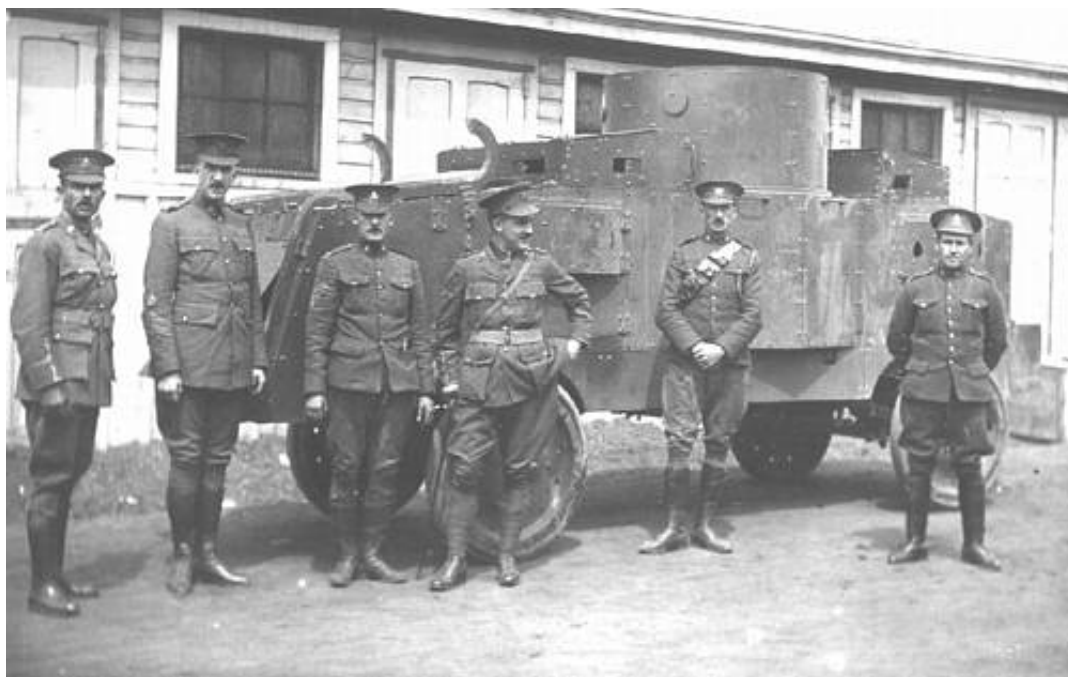
Sources

1. *The Somme - The day-by-day Account* by Chris McCarthy, Arms & Armour Press, London 1993, ISBN 1-85409-206-5.
2. *The Winged Wheel Patch - A History of the Canadian Military Motorcycle and Rider* by Max Burns og Ken Messenger, Vanwell Publishing, St. Catharines, Ontario 1993, ISBN 0-920277-85-3.
3. *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery - Western Front 1914-18* by Sir Martin Farndale, Royal Artillery Institution, London 1986, ISBN 1-870114-00-0.
4. *War Cars - British Armoured Cars in the First World War* af David Fletcher, HSMO Books, London 1987, ISBN 0-11-290439-4.

Per Finsted

Addendum

The Eaton Motor Machine Gun Battery started out with armoured cars of a different type, i.e. Jeffrey Quad armoured cars.



Jeffrey Armoured Car, Niagara Camp 1915, Eaton Motor Machine Gun Battery.
From Jeffrey Armoured Car (Colin Stevens).

The Jeffrey Quads came from the American car factory, Thomas Jeffrey Company in Wisconsin, who made 40 armoured cars of this type. They were financed by the Canadian businessman Timothy Eaton, and were pretty advanced for their time.

When the Eaton Machine Gun Company arrived in England in 1916 there was not much need for armoured cars on the Western Front, thus leaving the cars unused. It was considered to convert the armoured cars to lorries as originally delivered from the Thomas Jeffrey Company, but in 1917 the Indian

Government became interested in the cars.

At some time it was considered sending the cars to Mesopotamia, but in the end they were sent to India. Four armoured cars and a huge number of spare parts were lost when the ship transporting the cars was torpedoed in the Mediterranean. However, 20 armoured cars arrived safely to India, where they were supplied to a number of Armoured Car Companies. The remaining 20 armoured cars were used in Ireland during the disturbances there.

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Notes:

1) The article, including a brief description of Corporal Vickers was at some time part of the Canada & World War One - The First Contingent homepage (At present, I can't re-trace the photo). The Eaton Battery was named after Timothy Eaton (Nationmaster), a wealthy businessman and founder of the large chain of department stores, *Eaton's*.