

# PORT ARTHUR MAN ASSISTED IN INVENTING THE TANKS

**Pte. Edgar May, Returned, Had Tank Idea in 1915**

**—Invented other War Materials—**

**His Papers Prove**

Claimants of the inventing of the tanks have been as numerous as the tanks themselves, and now another man has stepped into the limelight. This man has, however, papers to prove his statements. The man is Pte. James Edgar May, twenty-five years old, a patient in the Keefer convalescent home, and while he does not claim to have invented the tanks, he does claim to have invented an important part of them. This is not the only invention of Pte. May's, however. He has a dispatch case full of drawings and letters in connection with military inventions. His inventions have been connected with rifles, mines, tanks and submarines. His latest invention is one whereby one may receive messages over the telephone, which is one which records messages over a telephone during the owner's absence.

Before becoming a soldier Pte. May had been an electrical engineer. He had been employed by the New York Foundation company and had come to Port Arthur to accept a position with Mahon Bros. He arrived here on August 3, and only the war was foremost in his plans. When calls for volunteers came he enlisted with the 96th Lake Superior regiment and went to Valcartier camp with the first men to leave here. On sailing for England he met his first mishap; on boarding the vessel he was kicked in the head by a horse and suffered concussion of the brain. On recovering he proceeded to England and France where he served as a dispatch rider with the Canadian Engineers. Eight months after arriving in France he fell off his motorcycle and again suffered from concussion of the brain.

His first thought of inventing in May, 1915, it is costly in lives to cut barbed wire by hand and Pte. May endeavored

to invent a machine which would, as he said, "save British lives and destroy German lives." He invented a machine something of the same style as the present tanks. The difficulty was, however, to obtain a machine that would traverse ditches and trenches without difficulty. It is this invention which is incorporated in the present tanks, according to Pte. May. A letter dated Sept. 8, 1915, to his officer commanding, was shown to bear out his statements. Pte. May submitted his designs to the war office and a short time later a letter, which he still possesses, was forwarded stating that a representative of the French government would be pleased to see him. On fully going into the invention, the French officer suggested that some improvements could be made and when Pte. May stated that he could make them, he was given authority to submit his plans.

Another invention of Pte. May's is an earth torpedo which has been accepted by the British war office. A torpedo redirector is designed to protect merchant vessels from attacks by submarines. An arrangement attached to the ships divert torpedoes from them. An X-ray periscope allows submarines to obtain ranges without appearing on the surface of the water.

These are but a few of Pte. May's inventions. There are many others as letters to the patent office bear witness. Whether all are successful cannot yet be ascertained. The war office, according to Pte. May, simply accepts plans and that is all there is to it. The invention may be manufactured and it may not. One does not obtain remuneration until after the war, when a fund of approximately \$25,000,000 which has been set aside will be disbursed.