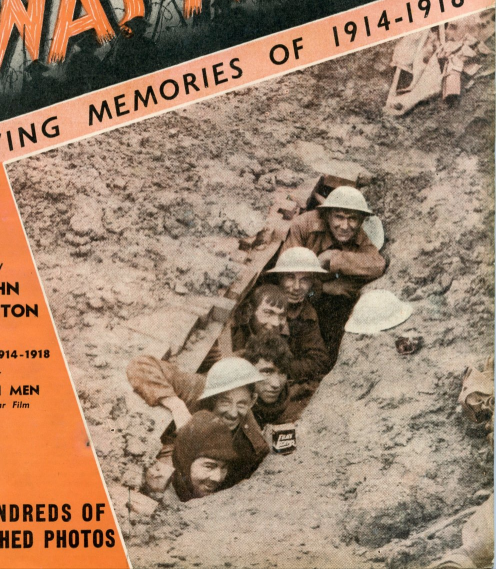
PART 27
NINEPENCE

To be completed in 51 Parts

THE GREAT WAR . . .

I WAS THERE!

UNDYING MEMORIES OF 1914-1918



Edited by
SIR JOHN HAMMERTON

Editor of
WORLD WAR 1914-1918

Writer of
FORGOTTEN MEN
The Famous War Film

MANY HUNDREDS OF UNPUBLISHED PHOTOS

LITERARY CONTENTS OF THIS PART
With Acknowledgements to Authors and Publishers

WEEK by week we acknowledge here our indebtedness to the many authors and publishers without whose courteous permission to reprint selected pages from the books written and published by them the compilation of the present work could not have been achieved. In our volumes as finally bound these acknowledgements will be repeated in the preliminary pages.

Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

John Carpenter House, London, E.C.4

AMONG the letters on my desk this week there are a number of recognitions and identifications of photographs published in our pages, and various controversial military matters arising out of them. Page 3, Part 1, has an illustration showing a party of Scottish soldiers which Mr. W. Thorne, of Watford, says "is my old company (London Scottish) somewhere near Arras in 1917." The photo is officially said to show "London Scottish on Doullens-Amiens Road, July 1916"—but as neither the official caption attached to the photograph nor my correspondent specifies the company, we shall have to leave it to any other readers who may be interested to throw further light upon it.

THE double-spread picture of the Fighting Fifth in pages 596 and 597, Part 15, has brought a letter from Sergt. H. R. Mantle, of Morden, who says: "The Fusilier lying on the ground with the German helmet and crossed puttees is myself. . . . I gave that helmet to the photographer. . . . A few hours after that picture as taken we were rushed to the trenches to retake a section that had been lost by our relief, and suffered heavy casualties." Sergt. Mantle served three years and four months, and was awarded the M.M. with bar.

IT must be a surprising and exciting experience to glance along the publications arranged on a bookstall and suddenly to see oneself on the cover of I WAS THERE. This has happened to Mr. W. Seward, of Sidcup, Kent, who recognizes himself on the cover of Part 14, having tea with Prince Albert, as King George VI then was. In some cases we are able to obtain enlargements of these photos for a modest sum, and this we are very pleased to do, with the help of the Imperial War Museum. From Scotland, C.S.M. John Tait (Innerleithen) writes to say that he recognizes his own company (C Coy.), 11th Batt. Royal Scots, in the upper illustration of page 728, Part 18. Part 3 also contains, in page 725, a photo which Mr. Clifford Mitchell, of Montrose, recognizes:

> "I am the 'Gay Gordon' with the cat on my knee, and my pal was a Pte. D. Marshall, D.C.M. who came from Kirkcaldy. But I'm sorry to say I have not heard of him since 1916, and do not know if he survived the Great War or not.
>
> "The incident of taking this photo remains very clear in my mind as just a few minutes after it was taken a British aeroplane made a forced landing about twenty yards from this spot and was wrecked, the pilot being killed. Needless to say, 'Jerry' sent over a few shells to make things a little uncomfortable, both for us and the aeroplane."

A PHOTOGRAPH which recalls not only names and faces but attendant incidents is of especial interest. Mr. A. Law (Jersey, Channel Islands) comments vividly on the two photos in page 65, Part 2. They were taken, he believes, between one and two o'clock on Sunday afternoon, August 23, 1914; and he corroborates Mr. E. J. Thierrin's recognition (Editor's Note-Book, Part 16) of C.S.M. Thompson. He continues:

> "In the top photo you plainly see the burst of a large explosive shell on the small village of Hainin which was just behind our brigade (14th Brigade) of which the 1st Batt. East Surrey Regt was part. Being a stretcher-bearer of the battalion I was about 25 yards behind the bridge, and well remember the awful noise it made. That shell caught a lot of people coming from Mass for the little church is nearly darkened out by the shell, it being just by the right of the burst. After that affair I was too busy dressing our wounded to notice any more. In the lower photo, I believe it is our C.O. coming down the slope after visiting the machine-gun on the bridge, but I am not sure on the matter. It was by this bridge that our machine-gun did awful damage to the enemy. I also recognize other faces, but cannot recall their names."

Our photographs are not only of interest to the "rank and file," as I have frequently had occasion to point out. The centre illustration in page 305, Part 8, showing the grave of Capt. the Hon. R. G. Morgan Grenville (Master of Kinloss),

[*Continued in page iii of this wrapper*

THEY HAD FOUND A READY-MADE HOME

These six smiling soldiers are men of the 10th Royal Fusiliers occupying a German dug-out which they have captured. It is situated at Feuchy cross-roads, and its unusually narrow entrance makes it very safe cover. The village of Feuchy, or the heap of debris which had once been a village, fell to the British on April 19, 1917, after being three years in German hands. Its capture was a great achievement, as it had two strong points of sinister memory—"Church Work" and "Chapel Work."

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WHEN THERE WAS LAUGHTER IN ARRAS

By the middle of May 1917 the battles of Arras were drawing to a close and it was possible for the sorely-tried troops to have some relaxation. Above is a group of spectators at a horse show on May 17, 1917, at Liencourt, west of Arras, where, as Sir Philip Gibbs states in this chapter, the troops had their playground and there was laughter in Arras. The horse show, in this case, was held by the 15th (Scottish) Division, and military wagons from the divisional transport form a grand-stand occupied by officers and men of many units.

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village. I was in the valley below Observatory Ridge on the morning of 11th April when cavalry was massed on that ground, waiting for orders to go into action. The Headquarters of the Cavalry Division was in a ditch covered by planks and the cavalry generals and their staffs sat huddled together with maps over their knees. "I am afraid the general is busy for the moment," said a young staff-officer on top of the ditch. He looked about the fields, and said, "It's very unhealthy here." I agreed with him.

THE bodies of many young soldiers lay about; 5·9s were coming over in a haphazard way. It was no ground for cavalry. But some squadrons of the 10th Hussars, Essex Yeomanry, and the Blues were ordered to take Monchy, and rode up the hill in a flurry of snow, and were seen by German gunners and slashed by shrapnel. Most of their horses were killed in the village or outside it, and the men suffered many casualties, including their General—Bulkeley-Johnson—whose body I saw carried back on a stretcher to the ruin of Thilloy, where crumps were bursting.

It is an astonishing thing that two withered old French women stayed in the village all through the fighting. When our troopers rode in these women came running forward, frightened, and crying, "Camarades!" as though in fear of the enemy. When our men surrounded them they were full of joy, and held up their scraggy old faces to be kissed by these troopers.

Afterwards Monchy was filled with a fury of shell-fire, and the troopers crawled out from the ruins, leaving the village on the hill to be attacked again and captured again by our infantry of the 15th and 37th Divisions, who were also badly hammered.

HEROIC folly! The cavalry in reserve below Observatory Hill stood to their horses, staring up at a German aeroplane which came overhead careless of our "Archies." The eyes of the German pilot must have widened at the sight of that mass of men and horses. He carried back glad tidings to the guns.

One of the cavalry officers spoke to me. "You look ill."

"No, I'm all right. Only cold."

The officer himself looked worn and haggard after a night in the open.

"Do you think the Germans will get their range as far as this! I'm nervous about the men and the horses. We've been here for hours, and it seems no good."

I did not remind him that the aeroplane was undoubtedly the herald of long-range shells. They came within a few minutes. Some men and horses were killed. I was with a Highland officer, and we took cover in a ditch, not more than breast high. Shells were bursting damnably close, scattering us with dirt.

"Let's strike away from the road," said Major Schiach. "They always tape it out."

We struck across country, back to

NOT QUITE UP TO CONCERT PITCH

The unfailing good humour and love of a joke which were characteristic of the British troops on any and every occasion, were just as noticeable in the men who came from distant parts of the Empire to fight. Below is a happy episode at Blangy, about a mile and a half from Arras, on May 3, 1917. Some men of the 4th South African Regiment have got hold of the remains of a grand piano, and one of them is giving an unmelodious demonstration of the possibility of using it as a harp.

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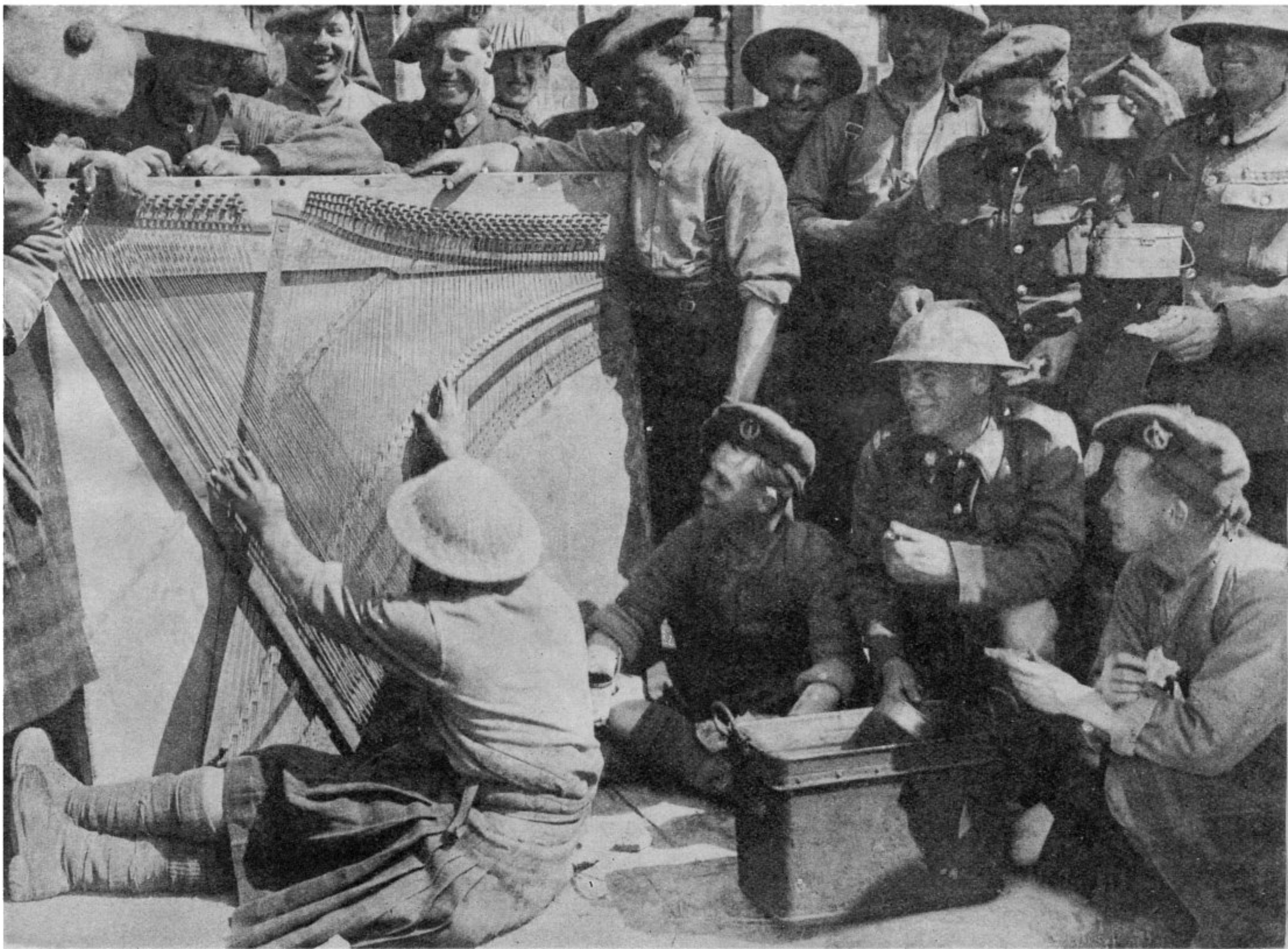

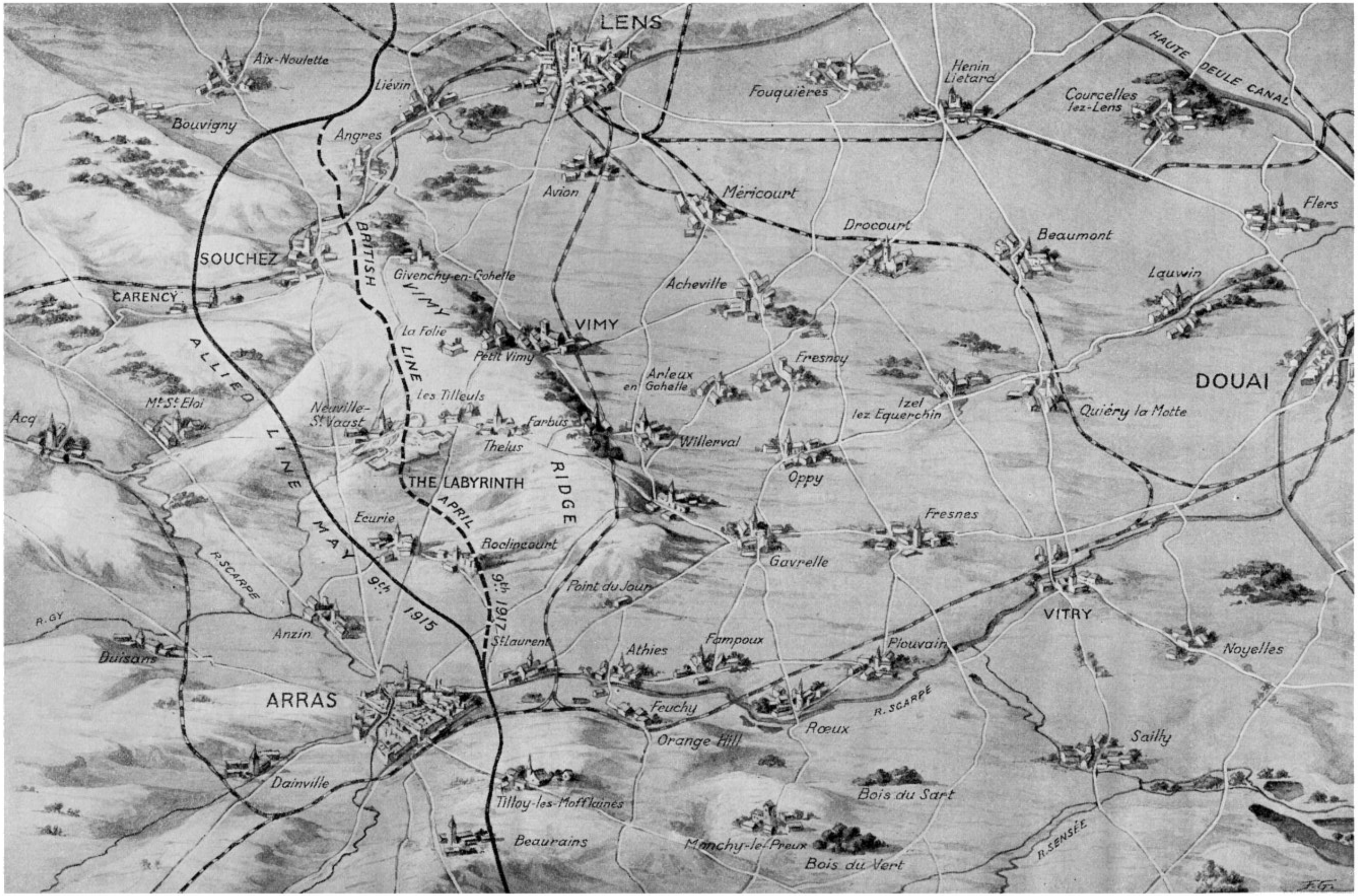

NEARLY 200,000 MEN FELL HERE

In this contour map is seen the terrain on which much of the fighting described in this section took place. It was from the dotted line that the heroic Canadian attack on Vimy Ridge started on April 9. During the battle of Arras, which went on until June 7, the British casualties numbered close upon 200,000, to some extent due to the fact that the attack, as happened at the battles of the Somme (1916) and 3rd Ypres (1917), was pressed long after all chance of important gains had gone.

TROOPS COME AND TROOPS GO — BUT THE WAR GOES ON

Arras, a sorely tried and stricken town during the World War, was occupied by the Germans in September 1914, and recovered by the French during the same month. In 1916 the British took over the town from the French, and after that many thousands of British infantrymen and long lines of transport passed through its streets on the way to and from the front. Above, through the rain-soaked streets of Arras, a British infantry battalion is returning from the front line on April 14, 1917.

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Arras, glad to get there . . . other men had to stay.

The battles to the east of Arras that went before the capture of Monchy and followed it were hard, nagging actions along the valley of the Scarpe, which formed a glacis, where our men were terribly exposed to machine-gun fire, and suffered heavily, day after day, week after week, for no object apparent to our battalion officers and men, who did not know that they were doing team work for the French. The Londoners of the 26th Division made a record advance through Neuville Vitasse to Henin and Heninel, and broke a switch line of the Hindenburg system across the little Cojeul river by Wancourt.

There was a fatal attack in the dark on 3rd May, when East Kents and Surreys and Londoners saw a grey dawn come, revealing the enemy between them and our main line, and had to hack their way through if they could. There were many who could not, and even Divisional Generals were embittered by these needless losses, and by the hard driving of their men, saying fierce things about our High Command.

Their language was mild compared with that of some of our young officers. I remember one I met near Henin. He was one of a group of three, all gunner officers, who were looking about for better gun positions not so clearly visible to the enemy, who was in two little woods, the Bois de Sart and Bois Vert, which stared down upon them like green eyes. Some of their guns had been destroyed; many of their horses killed; some of their men. A few minutes before our meeting a shell had crashed into a bath close to their hut where men were washing themselves. The explosion filled the bath with blood and bits of flesh.

The younger officer stared at me under the tilt forward of his steel hat, and said: "Hullo, Gibbs." I had played chess with him at Groom's café in Fleet Street in days before the war. I went back to his hut and had tea with him close to that bath, hoping that we should not be cut up with the cake. There were noises "off," as they say in stage directions, which were enormously disconcerting to one's peace of mind, and not very far off.

I had heard before some hard words about our generalship and Staff work, but never anything so passionate, so violent, as from that gunner officer. His view of the business was summed up in the word "murder." He raged against the impossible orders sent down from Headquarters, against the brutality with which men were left in the line week after week, and against the monstrous, abominable futility of all our so-called strategy.

His nerves were in rags, as I could see by the way in which his hand shook when he lighted one cigarette after another. His spirit was in a flame of revolt against the misery of his sleeplessness, filth, and imminent peril of death. Every shell that burst near Henin sent a shudder through him. I stayed an hour in his hut, and then went away towards Neuville Vitasse with harassing fire following along the way.

I looked back many times to the valley and to the ridges where the enemy lived above it, invisible but deadly. The sun was setting, and there was a tawny glamour in the sky, and a mystical beauty over the landscape, despite the desert that war had made there, leaving only white ruins and slaughtered trees, where once there were good villages with church spires rising out of sheltering woods. The German gunners were doing their evening hate. Crumps were bursting heavily again amidst our gun positions.

Henin was not a choice spot. There were other places of extreme unhealthiness where our men had fought their way up to the Hindenburg Line, or, as the Germans called it, the Siegfried Line. Croisilles and Cherisy were targets of German guns, and I saw them ravaging among the ruins and dodged them. But our men who lived close to these places stayed there too long to dodge them always. They were inhabitants.

The Australians settled down in front of Bullecourt, captured it after many

desperate fights, which left them with a bitter grudge against tanks which had failed them, and some English troops who were held up on the left while they went forward and were slaughtered. The 4th Australian Division lost 3,000 men in an experimental attack directed by the Fifth Army. They made their gun emplacements in the Noreuil Valley, the valley of death, as they called it, and Australian gunners made little slit trenches and scuttled into them when the Germans ranged on their batteries, blowing gun-spokes and wheels and breech-blocks into the air.

Quéant, the bastion of the Hindenburg Line, stared straight down the valley, and it was evil ground, as I knew when I went walking there with another war correspondent, and an Australian officer who at a great pace led us round about, amidst 5·9s, and debouched a little to see one of our ammunition dumps exploding like a Brock's benefit, and chattered brightly under "woolly bears," which made a rending tumult above our heads. I think he enjoyed his afternoon out from Staff work in the Headquarters huts. Afterwards I was told that he was mad, but I think he was only brave. I hated those hours, but put on the mask that Royalty wears when it takes an intelligent interest in factory work.

The streams of wounded poured down into the casualty clearing stations, day by day, week by week, and I saw the crowded Butchers' Shops of war, where busy surgeons lopped at limbs and plugged men's wounds.

YET in those days, as before and afterwards, as at the beginning, and as at the end, the spirits of British soldiers kept high unless their bodies were laid low. Between battles they enjoyed their spells of rest behind the lines. In that early summer of 1917 there was laughter in Arras, lots of fun in spite of high-velocities, the music of massed pipers and brass bands, jolly comradeship in billets with panelled walls upon which, perhaps, Robespierre's shadow had fallen in the candlelight before the Revclution, when he was the good young man of Arras.

As a guest of the Gordons, of the 15th Division, I listened to the pipers who marched round the table and stood behind the colonel's chair and mine, and played the martial music of Scotland until something seemed to break in my soul and my ear-drums. I introduced a French friend to the mess, and as a guest of honour he sat next to the colonel, and the eight pipers played behind his chair. He went pale, deadly white, and presently swooned off his chair—and the Gordons thought it the finest tribute to their pipes!

The officers danced reels in stockinged feet with challenging cries, Gaelic exhortations, with fine grace and passion, though they were tangled sometimes in the maze. . . . Many fell in the fields outside, or in the bogs of Flanders.

On the western side of Arras there were field sports by London men, and Surreys and Buffs, and Sussex, and Norfolks, and Suffolks and Devons. They played cricket between their turns in the line, lived in the sunshine of the day and did not look forward to the morrow. At such times one found no trace of war's agony in their faces or their eyes, or in their laughter.

. . . . . .

"THIS makes for madness," said a friend of mine, a musician surprised to find himself a soldier. "In the morning we see boys with their heads blown off"—that morning beyond the Point du Jour and Thélus we had passed a group of headless boys, and another coming up stared at them with a silly smile, and said: "They've copped it all right!" and went on to the same risk; and we had crouched below mounds of earth when shells had scattered dirt over us and scared us horribly, so that we felt a little sick in the stomach—" and in the afternoon we walk through this garden where the birds are singing. . . . There is no sense in it. It's just midsummer madness!" But only one of us went really mad and tried to cut his throat, and died. One of the best, as I knew him at his best.

GUNS RUMBLE THROUGH A 'GARDEN OF SLEEP'

Arras was quivering with ceaseless activity for weeks before the British offensive was launched on April 9, 1917, and men and material poured into the city in a gigantic concentration. This photograph, taken in Arras cemetery, which was littered with smashed tombstones, shows field guns passing through en route to their new positions from which they pulverized the German lines that lay not far distant.

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A TUNNELLER at ARRAS

What I Saw on My First Battlefield

by Captain H. W. Graham, M.C.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM, of the 185th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers, was responsible for much of the excellent tunnelling work which was made use of in the opening stages of the battle of Arras, and which is also described in this section by the Editor and Sir Philip Gibbs. Captain Graham had a first-rate view of the fighting, and he committed his impressions to paper at the time in a letter to his father, which is here reproduced

IN WAR-TIME KIT

A graduate of the S.A. School of Mines, Johannesburg, Captain Graham left S. Africa in 1915, and after a short period of training with the Inns of Court O.T.C. received his commission and was posted to 185th Tunnelling Co. R.E., of which unit he eventually wrote the war history.

THE 9th of April was chosen as the day of attack, and at dawn the troops assaulted the defences of the Vimy Ridge and Arras fronts. I attempted to describe the battle as I saw it and the humble share we took in it in a letter to my father four days later, and I think it would be interesting to record those views and thoughts in their entirety.

April 13, 1917.

. . . Since I last wrote I have been in the battle area for four days, beginning on the 9th at break of day. For many months past we knew that a big " push " was going to take place in this neighbourhood, both from observation of what was going on and other sources of knowledge. Our own work was concerned with the impending attack and we saw " things " (dumps) steadily growing on all sides, with general activity increasing in the air and the artillery growing in volume day by day, which led us to believe that on the day of battle the intensity of artillery preparation would be greater than that used for the Somme offensive.

All knowledge gained there was put into effect here. Every detail was thoroughly worked out beforehand, even to the probable amount of petrol and rum consumed ! At the last moment, I take it, the powers that be were waiting for a spell of fine weather to launch the attack. A few days before " the boys " went over the bags, as it is generally expressed, I was relieved in the front line (by Douglas), but we were all kept in close touch with forward operations. The bombardment went on in spells for many days preceding the assault, and it was intended in effect for wire destruction, to generally dismantle the Hun defences, to silence his batteries, and to break down his morale.

WATCHFUL EYES IN THE PRELUDE TO BATTLE

The preparation for the battles of Arras in April 1917 was marked by an intense bombardment, and while the British infantry, concentrated within the tunnels and shelters in the town, awaited the word to attack, the guns turned the enemy's trenches into a ghastly morass. This photograph, taken while the preliminary shelling was in progress, shows artillery officers observing fire, and R.E. telephonists passing word back to the batteries. The scene was in Cuthbert Crater, which lay 2½ miles N.E. of Arras.

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I had already watched a good deal of this from the front line, and it was a joy to the heart to see his lines flying into the air. The Hun retaliation was poor in comparison to the volume and calibre of our own, but still it was warm enough to give us some very trying moments, especially when walking in and out of the trenches for our turn in the line. It was no joke by any means. There is little doubt that Fritz's artillery had all our trenches taped off and he could pretty well put a shell wherever he chose. However, we came out of the ordeal lightly, especially in the latter stages of the bombardment.

I should first explain that the lines in front of us had been prepared for every resistance during the last two years, and were in themselves veritable fortresses covered by masses of barbed wire entanglements and seething with machine-guns. Without an immense artillery preparation our offensive would be held up from the jump off. It was not only left to the artillery to engage the enemy in these preliminary stages—the infantry carried out large and small raids by day and by night in order to harry the Hun and break down his courage. Constant expectation of an attack soon saps one's peace of mind.

Things reached their climax on the morning of the 9th, when at break of day (zero hour 7 a.m.) a terrific bombardment, far intenser than any of its predecessors, took place, and under cover of the barrage the boys went over to the attack, and as the barrage lifted and crept forward, so did our troops. I was in camp at this time with most of the Company waiting for orders to proceed to the firing line as soon as it was known that the initial attack was successful and the troops advancing according to plan.

Captain Cardwell was deputed to obtain this information at Corps headquarters. Presently he 'phoned the news that we had reached our objectives, and after a hasty meal on bully and biscuits, we went forward in lorries and box car. The O.C., Smith, and I were the first up in the box car, which we had to leave at Maroeuil and foot it for a mile to the trenches. We arrived at the old line amid a scene of tremendous enthusiasm; everybody was walking about in the open laughing and talking, with much hand-shaking and almost crying for very joy.

Trenches were avoided, in fact they were regarded with contempt, and the once clean, happy communication trenches seemed broken down and dilapidated. Dispatch bearers were hurrying to and fro, and the quiet work of the stretcher-bearers was carried on without a hitch. There were scores of the latter about, and large numbers of wounded were attended to. But joy of all joys was the scene of prisoners coming in, some singly and others in batches of half a dozen or more; some were employed in carrying stretchers or on some similar work.

Our Tommies were far too pleased and happy to mount guard over every single Boche, but these knew when they were best off and were reconciled to their lot. Some looked clean and healthy, and their ages ranged from mere boys of 18 to men of 40. The stronger were used as stretcher-bearers, whilst the weak and feeble were marched direct to the Prisoner of War Collecting Cages. It seemed so odd that these fellows were allowed to walk about without any apparent guard, yet they were all accounted for. I spoke to one or two. Some would answer jocularly and others morosely, and, to be honest, the latter were to be more respected. The truculent kind I had no time for.

It seems that the attack came as a bit of a surprise, but I fancy that they were kept on the qui vive for so long with successive bombardments that their nerves were numbed with expectation, and when the attack eventually did come they thought it just another feint and perforce fought mechanically. They evidently experienced a good

SHOULDER HIGH — BUT NOT IN TRIUMPH

Here is one of those batches of prisoners coming in, the sight of which was, as Captain Graham says in this page, the "joy of all joys" to the British soldiers. The stoical acceptance of fate which characterized the average batch of prisoners is particularly noticeable in this photograph. This incident occurred in April 1917, during the battle of the Scarpe, and it is remarkable that at this late date only four out of a dozen prisoners are wearing steel helmets.

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THE TUNNELS IN THE MAKING

The work of digging such tunnels as those at Arras in which Captain Graham took part before the incidents described in this chapter is here in progress. The tunnels were constructed in the same way as the workings of a coal-mine, having, as described in page 1067, "a fine suggestion of enduring strength," with "stout pine logs standing rigidly erect at every few feet supporting the heavy cross timbers of the roof."

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deal of difficulty, in face of shelling, in bringing up supplies, water and ammunition, and may have considered themselves lucky to be out of it.

It was inevitable that there would be a large number of casualties, but it was agreeable to learn that they were well within the number estimated by the Corps, and a large percentage of walking cases at that. It was pleasant passing many of these cases mounted on motor buses after they had been roughly bound up at the dressing stations on their way to the C.C.S. and thence by train to Blighty. They knew it meant three or four months of ease and comfort at some beautiful English seaside resort, and we could hear them singing gleefully until the buses receded far into the distance. Our work had been intimately connected with the early stages of the advance, and it is satisfactory to know from G.H.Q. that its purpose (the subways) was successful. We were attached to the Canadians, and all the officers with whom we came in contact were enthusiastic about the results, and undoubtedly we were responsible for saving innumerable casualties in the initial stages. (It transpired a few months afterwards that, except in a few cases, the uses to which these subways were put were somewhat exaggerated, whilst the monetary cost was high. It is also noteworthy that the tunnels were not made for battle purposes of this kind again.)

The fellows tell me the night preceding the attack the excitement was intense and few were able to get much sleep. I am sorry I missed that part of it. Thousands of troops were brought into the line at an early hour, so that they could get to their allotted battle positions in the assembly trenches in good time, and the congestion and consequent confusion was worse than a general mix-up of traffic at a busy hour in Piccadilly Circus.

SOON after our arrival we were detailed for respective jobs. By this time the troops had fought their way well ahead, and the demoralized Hun and his artillery were puzzled what to do. He subjected us, now two miles to the rear, to some rather erratic shelling, and little damage was done. Most likely at this juncture he was preparing to move his artillery back for fear of being captured.

News filtered through to us at intervals during the afternoon of the advance, but one could put little reliance on some of it. Owing to the haze, smoke and conformity of the ground, I could not see much fighting, but the roar of guns and the rattle of musketry were continuous. The net result of the first day's fighting was that all final objectives but one had been taken, and the important Vimy Ridge was in our hands. Smith and I went forward over the battle ground about 2.30 p.m. to inspect a number of dug-outs suitable for accommodating various infantry headquarters and to report what repair work should be done immediately to make them habitable for the units concerned.

It was during this inspection that we saw what havoc our artillery had wrought. The trenches and wire entanglements of the enemy were literally shattered and the whole countryside was a mass of shell holes. The ground was simply torn to shreds by our "heavies," and the Hun must have had a hell of a time. We entered a large number of Boche dug-outs—some were good and some poor, but mostly all were fairly deep and a few provisioned

ALL QUIET ON THE LOOS FRONT

During the period when heavy fighting was going on around Arras, as is related in this section, certain other parts of the British line remained comparatively peaceful. Such was the case in the sector just north of Lens, where, apart from trench raids, such as the one described by Captain Hitchcock in Chapter 181, there was little fighting. Above is a communication trench in the neighbourhood of Loos, the scene of fierce fighting in the autumn of 1915, but now, in April 1917, a relatively quiet portion of the line.

Imperial War Museum

with black bread, etc. In one dug-out there were several cases of Rhine wine and we helped ourselves.

In a few others there were some wounded Huns taking shelter, and they had been roughly bound up, but we could pay no attention to them at the time; in others again there were some waiting to be made prisoners, but unfortunately I met none such, although I don't know what I should have done with them had I done so.

In any case, I went down each dug-out with my revolver at the "ready," prepared for eventualities. In case of resistance no quarter would be given, but the invader stood a poor chance, as he would be clearly silhouetted against the light. I am glad that I met no such truculent fire-eaters.

At any rate, I wanted to get a prisoner if only to take possession of his revolver—a souvenir much prized.

Of course, where the fighting was fiercest the ground was strewn with dead and wounded, friend and foe alike, and the Red Cross men were hastily removing the wounded for proper treatment. Rifles and equipment were here, there and everywhere, having been discarded by the fleeing or wounded. I slung two German rifles over my shoulder as souvenirs, which I hope I may be allowed to keep. (They were so common that I eventually threw them away.)

Early in the afternoon, the troops in our immediate front, having won their final objectives, were consolidating their positions, and parties were "clearing up" the area won. We had taken two villages (Thélus and Farbus) and two woods, each constituting a veritable battle in itself. Every foot of ground was contested, so you can imagine how fierce was the conflict. Our troops had the moral advantage of attack and primary success, as well as the gladdening boom of our guns banging away like rolls of thunder.

Having completed our reconnaissance, Smith and I amused ourselves by wandering over the battle-ground. The old front line had now become a back area, and in it the shelling was spasmodic. Tanks had been used in the attack on the left, but the ground was too sodden, and three or four of them got hopelessly bogged in the heavy mud of the old front line. I understand they were to assist in the taking of Thélus village, a strong point bristling with machine-guns, and to clear the woods in the neighbourhood of the village.

We had a look at these formidable monsters, and were interested in watching them extricating themselves from the mud when the Hun, noticing the movement, started to shell them, so we made off as quickly as we could. I had a good look at No Man's Land between the trenches of our old area (Zivy and Douai), and it was interesting to reflect on the positions.

Here we had been for twelve long months facing one another, neither side daring to show itself or having the least notion of the life of the other. We wondered and surmised during the days we faced each other. What did he think of the war? How did he bring up his rations? We would think one thing, then another, the desire to put the most favourable interpretation on ourselves. It is extraordinary that in trench warfare a man can stand all this modern machinery of gunnery and ammunition and other allied branches of science, yet treat it with a certain amount of philosophical indifference—and we were indifferent to some aspects of the war.

The slogan runs, "It's a hell of a war, but a damn good war all the same." I suppose in peaceful times a man would be considered a fool to risk a walk in the open while shells were flying overhead and bursting 200 or 300 yards off, yet here we do it day after day, giving it scarce a thought—it all seems part of the business.

So it all goes on and no one a bit the worse; each one admires the man in front, who seems so cool and unconcerned. Herein lies the truism that we take our courage from the man beside one, and many a time a glance to right or left has stood me in good stead. It's a satisfying and uplifting feeling, and yet had we exchanged thoughts I have no doubt it would have exposed our mortal funk!

In the aftermath of the first day's battle I studied many points in the old front line, points which gave us considerable uneasiness several months ago. In December, for instance, we had been subjected to very severe trench mortaring around about the Mill, and I think I told you what an accursed nuisance they were; well, we found the two demon mortars in a deep emplacement. I looked hard at them for a long time and then examined them—after all the awe we had for them I now felt inclined to kick the brutes, and, seeing a man spitting on one, I could hardly prevent the impulse to do the same.

They were artfully concealed, and it was just by chance I alighted on them. Unfortunately they had been discovered before and I could not bag them for the glory of the Company. By this time it was getting dark, so we made our way back to Douai Tunnel. Having made out our report, I left with Plummer for Bentata. It began to snow heavily and the boom of the guns had ceased. It seemed to us that this unwelcome snow augured ill for the morrow; it made us glum and disconsolate, and we thought of the poor wretched men in front exposed to the cold. "Plum" and I lost our way hopelessly, and it was fortunate that eventually we heard the exhaust of the electric light motors and were thus able to take our bearings....

This concluded my letter on the first day's fighting, and it was a vivid experience of my first battlefield.

In the UNDERWAYS of ARRAS

Amazing Memorials of Vain Sacrifice

by The Editor

THE following word picture of the quiet, deserted tunnellings at Arras, where a few months before men had toiled in high hopes that thousands of warriors would pour through to victory, was written by the Editor for "The War Illustrated" when these hopes had been quenched and naught but ghosts were tenants. The Underways still endure as memorials of vain sacrifices

SURPRISE, the soul of wit, is the soul of many other things in peace and war. It is also the acid that "bites in" the etching of a scene on the memory. Nothing will ever erase from mine the first impression of the underways of Arras, and when I went back again to explore those wonder-works of British labour the surprise of my first visit overmastered in my mind the actuality of the second.

The first time I found myself walking in underground Arras I was experiencing the sensation of a new thing, a secret thing, of which no vague hint had been bruited about in rumour's whispering galleries. When I went again, Sir Douglas Haig had meanwhile let all the world into his secret, since its need had passed. Even so, I doubt if all the world is much the wiser, as in his famous dispatch of January 1918 the Field-Marshal had to dismiss in a sentence an achievement worthy of a volume.

MY first acquaintance with the Arras tunnels had every element of surprise. Our guide that day was a grave Highlander, an elderly staff major whose long service in the thick of the battles had deepened the native melancholy of the Gael, leaving him still a kindly, gentle soul, with a quiet, reserved humour, which may have suggested to him the manner of our introduction. In a deserted avenue he stopped our car and, dismounting, gave to me and my companion each a candle, saying we should need these where we were going. I was reminded of the guide to the catacombs of Rome with his handful of tapers. Our little candles were to throw their beams upon works as wonderful and not unlike the catacombs.

In the middle of the weedy, rubble-strewn grass that occupied the space between the two roadways of the wide avenue, once so trim, we come to an opening in the ground and follow the major down the wide and easy steps as if we might be going to take train on some rough-finished "Tube." Presently the need of the candles appears, the darkness enclosing us before we have reached the bottom of the steps. So with candles flickering we continue, now thirty feet or so below the level of the avenue.

Well, a tunnel is a tunnel, and little is there to distinguish one from another, save that some are semi-circular and some are square. Beyond these varieties it is a matter of dimension and the character of the soil that determine their individuality. This of Arras is after the manner of the familiar pit gallery, its top clearing the head of the average man by a foot or so, and it is wide enough for two to walk abreast. It is hewn from the stratum of soft, porous stone that underlies the fields of Artois, and crops out here and there in boss and hummock. The countless chisel-marks left by the willing hands engaged in this titanic hewing are eloquent of the mighty labour that went on here for eighteen toil-filled months until the hour had struck for the Battle of Arras.

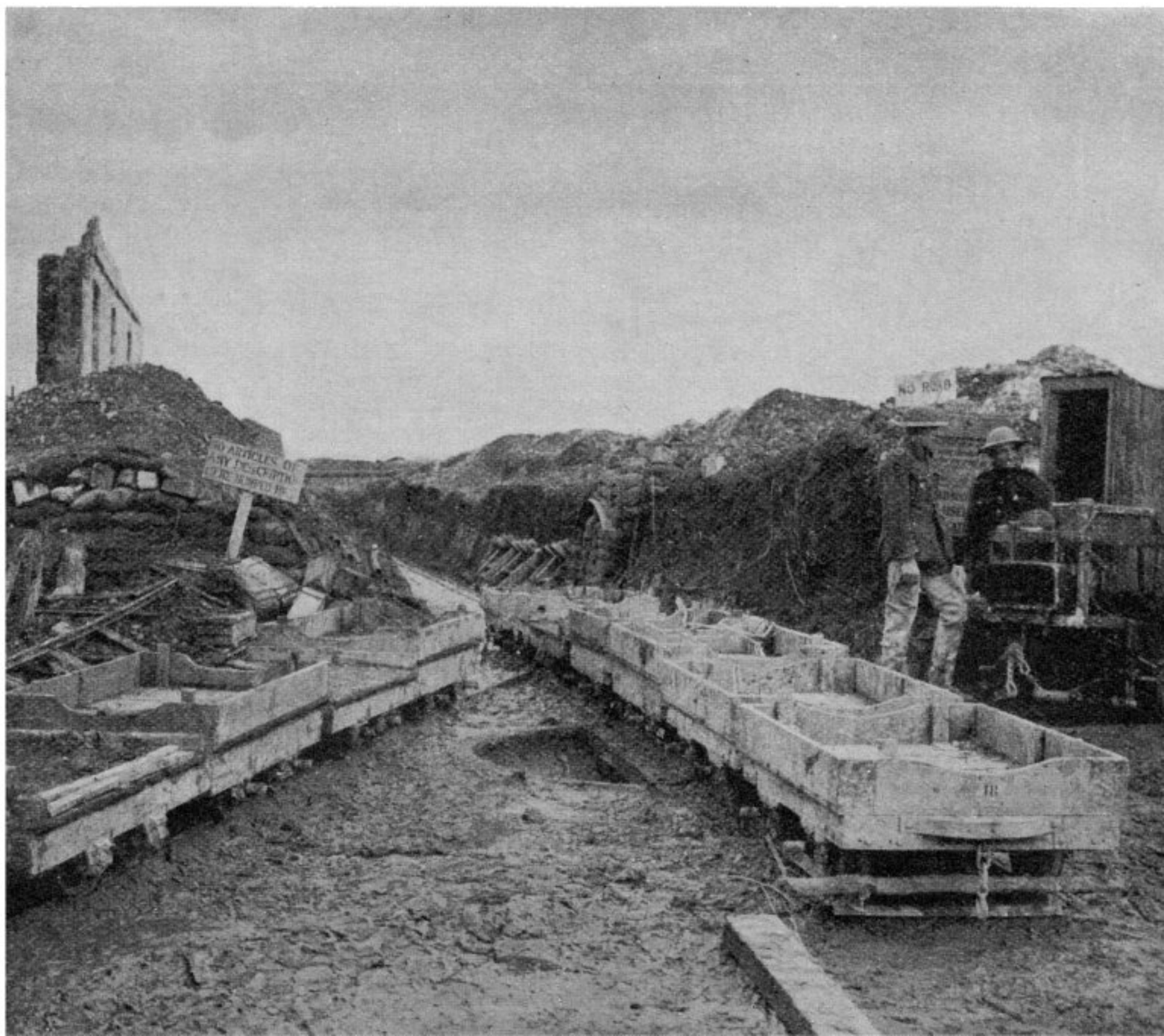
Along the first hundred yards of the tunnel the mind of the visitor was busied chiefly in noting the splendid work-manship. With a fine suggestion of enduring strength, stout pine logs stand rigidly erect at every few feet, supporting the heavy cross timbers of the roof. They give one a feeling that this underway has been made to last for ever. Suddenly the major calls to us to look out, as there has been a heavy roof-fall, and the ground is heaped high with the stony débris. We realize swiftly that "ever" is a long time, and Nature has a habit of letting her rocks crumble and decay.

Now and then we come to a point

UP FROM THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH

The amazing extent of the underways of Arras needed a network of light railways far below the ground to carry away the soft, porous rock through which the workings were cut. Here are some of the trucks employed. They are low enough to go forward when the workings were but a few feet deep. On the right of the photograph can be seen one of the tractors used to draw them. On the left, above a heap of rubbish, is a notice that obviously has been honoured only in the breach: "No articles of any description to be dumped here."

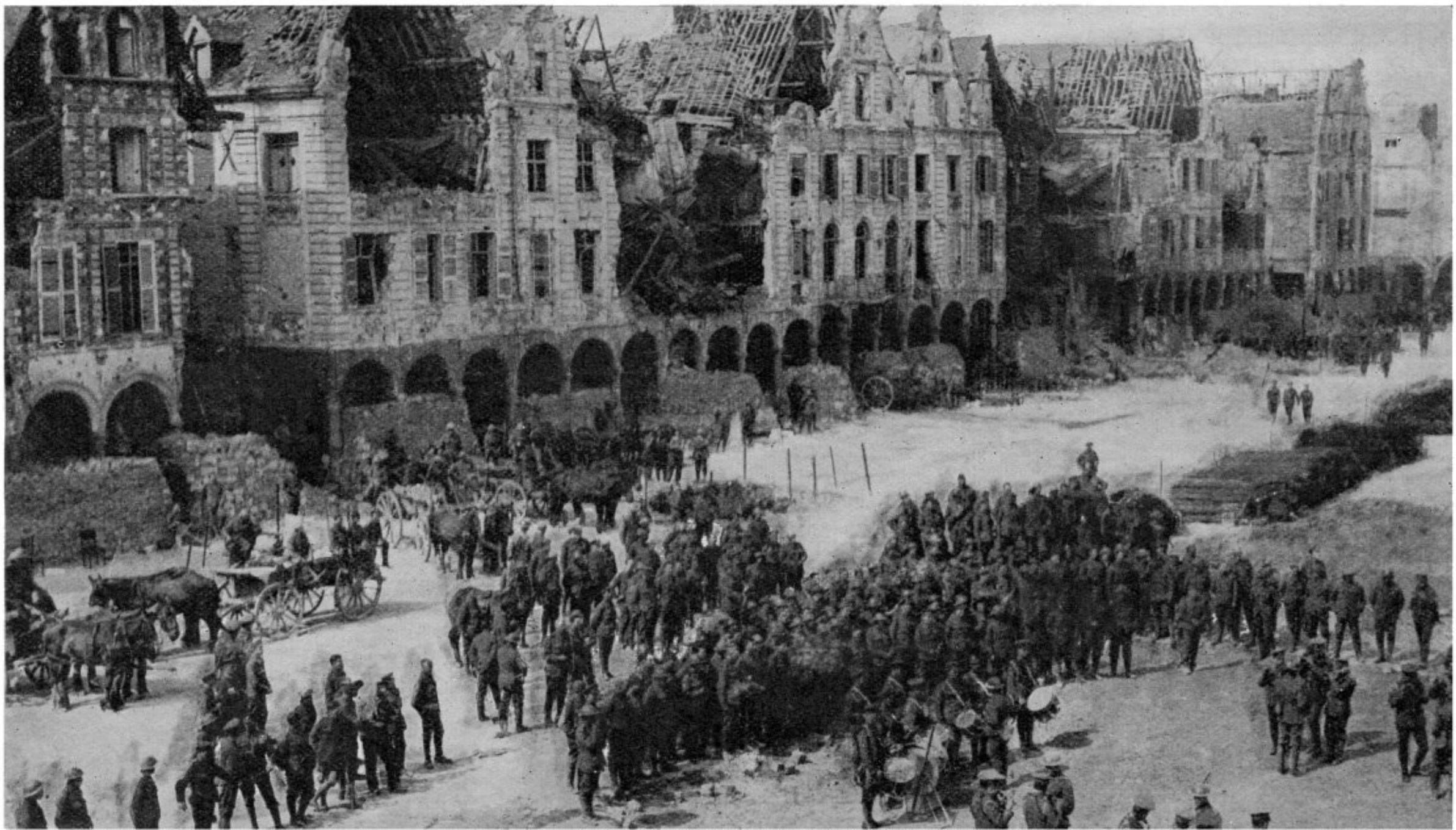
Imperial War Museum



ARRAS STILL SHOWS HER WAR-TIME SCARS

After the war, Ypres was entirely rebuilt, whilst Arras was gradually patched and restored through the post-war years. Most of the old Flemish houses in the Grand' Place, seen below as it was in April 1917, have now been restored, but there are still gaps, as can be seen from the photograph, left, taken in 1938. In April 1917 hardly a house in Arras remained intact, and a very good idea of what the town looked like then may be gained from the photograph above of armoured cars going through one of its main streets.

Photos, Imperial War Museum, and A. J. Insall, copyright A.P. Ltd.



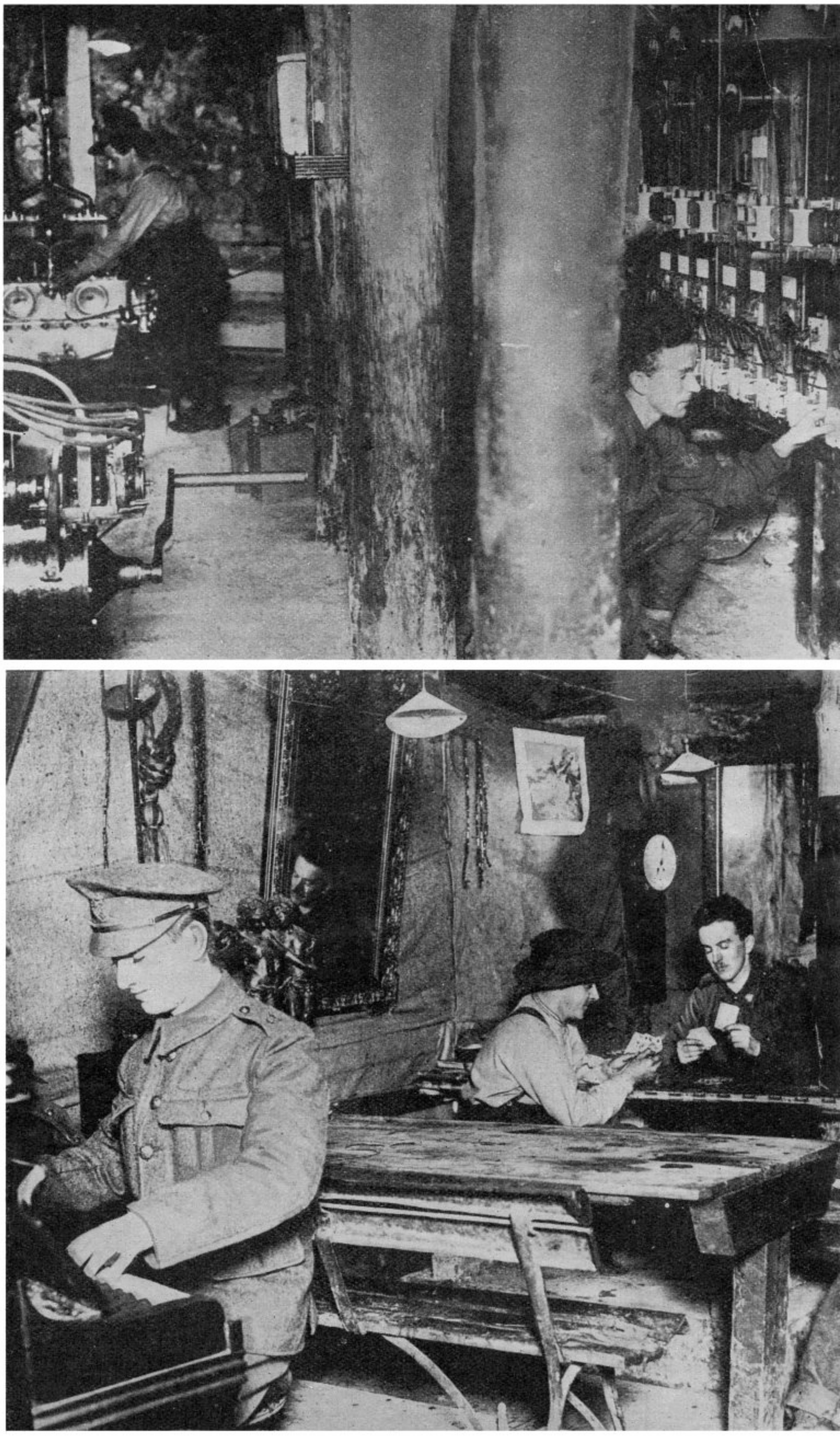
where water drips through, and in all such parts sooner or later there will be roof-falls. These oozy places but serve to make more remarkable the general dryness of the underway, and the atmosphere carries no foulness, as air-shafts are frequent, and high above we can see the sky through them.

As hundred yards of our subterranean progress are added to hundreds, the impression of the extensiveness of these underways deepens; we pass junctions where cross-ways intersect the main tunnel we are following; "Glasgow," "Manchester," and many another name of home are revealed on signposts by the gleam of our candles; vast cavernous recesses loom weirdly dark and still, like grottos in the gorges of the Tarn, explored by candlelight lang syne.

Voices are heard, lights appear down one of these sideways, and, our guide piloting us in that direction, we come upon a labour gang winding up the electric cables which were used for lighting this underworld when the great enterprise they were designed for was still in being. We had noticed many smoked and grease-smeared patches on the walls where tallow flares had lighted the workers before the electricians with their magic wires and bulbs had come upon the scene, and candles were serving again when the miles of wiring and the thousands of little lamps were being gathered up now that the great "show" was over.

A WONDERFUL sight it must have been in those long preparatory months when by day and night the ever-lengthening tunnels were thronged with perspiring soldier-workmen, hewing down the stone, sending the thousands of tons of it which they cut away back in little buggies drawn by electric motors along the miniature railway whose terminus was every day a little nearer the forward trenches east of Arras. Down in these underways labour would go on as steadily as in the railway tunnelling of London Town, though houses would be crashing into ruin, and great holes opening in the roads above when the Boche shells were bursting in Arras and its suburbs.

I often wondered if this aspect of the war, its unimagined triumphs of manual labour, would ever be adequately recorded. The energy used up in the making of such engineering marvels as this subterranean city, and all the unchronicled preparations for the great battles, was so stupendous that no estimate of it could be made comprehensible. London itself might have been rebuilded by it. Surely houses for all the poor our islands will ever know could have been made by it.



LIGHTING UP THE UNDERWORLD

The two photographs in this page show scenes in the underways of Arras when the workers with their tallow flares had gone and the electricians "with their magic wires and bulbs had come upon the scene." The electrical installation which, as related in this chapter, was installed in 1917, was renewed in 1918 in preparation for the expected German offensive. The top photograph is of one of the two generating stations of the second installation, while the lower one shows part of the quarters of the Australian Engineers who took over the tunnels at the end of the war.

Imperial War Museum

END OF A CAVALRY CHARGE

For the first time since High Wood during the battle of the Somme, cavalry were in action at the taking of Monchy-le-Preux on April 11, 1917. They helped towards victory, but at a terrible cost, as described in Chapter 198. Above is the scene at Monchy on May 30, 1917. A few shattered buildings still stand, and the field of battle is littered with the dead bodies of the cavalry's horses caught by the German guns.

Imperial War Museum

And yet this mammoth store of the nation's energy was given freely and without stint that the nation might endure and overcome its mortal enemy among the races of man.

The purpose of the underways of Arras was to save the lives of soldiers. From the earliest days of the war the enemy had been able to cling to a trench system in the outward eastern suburbs of the town, and in places there no more than the cellarage of a suburban house separated the antagonists. There were streets down which the Boche could stream his machine-gun bullets, and trenches and wire entanglements were made where the *petite bourgeoisie* had once lived in peaceful comfort. The Arras battle of April 1917 was planned to thrust the foe away from his lair, to sweep him backward on his base at Cambrai; and the slaughter of the British in an enterprise so perilous, owing to the exposed nature of the terrain and the German field defences, would have been too great a price to pay for victory.

Fortunately, Arras abounds in splendid cellars, many of them as strong as old church crypts, and there is a system of underground quarries in the eastern suburbs. So these tunnels were built to link up cellars and quarries, and thus an immense underground city was constructed, in whose electric-lighted highways and byways not merely a regiment or two, but an army corps, could be sheltered and moved up to the trenches in the open country eastward, whither the tunnels were driven.

How well they served their purpose may be judged from Sir Douglas Haig's official description of the opening of the Arras battle.

After a three weeks' bombardment the general attack was launched at 5.30 a.m. on April 9, under cover of a most effective artillery barrage. Closely following a tornado of our shell fire, our gallant infantry poured like a flood across the German lines, overwhelming the enemy's garrisons. Within forty minutes of the opening of the battle, practically the whole of the German front-line system on the front attacked had been stormed and taken.

WHEN the German third line and Monchy-le-Preux, five miles east of Arras, had been taken with the aid of cavalry and the Tanks two days later, the battle of Arras was already drawing to a close. Those glorious "forty minutes" of the opening attack had been made possible by the long and laborious burrowing in underground Arras. Eighteen months of ceaseless toil had gone to the making of the underways; for six weeks only the military movements in and through them continued, and forty minutes was really the time in which the harvest of all that stupendous toil was garnered.

The fact that a year and a half went in the making of these underways tells us something about the inconceivable magnitude of modern military movements. The hour of Arras battle struck at 5.30 a.m. on April 9, 1917, so that it was already being planned in the autumn of 1915. In other words, while thoughtless optimists were babbling about the war being over before its second Christmas, "or at latest next spring," the British Staff was wisely planning a battle—but one of many then foreseen—for eighteen months later.

The battle of Arras was really being fought in those long months of underground preparation; the chisel-marks along the tunnel walls are the records of so many little blows contributory to the great achievement of those three April days of 1917. And the secrecy with which the making of this subterranean city of shelter, these underways for immense bodies of troops to issue safely on the actual field of battle, was carried through, is no less worthy of remembering, when we are being regaled with admiring tales of the Germans' genius for organization and their ingenuity in field fortifications.

So ran my thoughts during my visits to the underways of Arras, where, although we wandered about until our candles guttered, we explored no more than a corner of this strange undertown.

ON my first visit we regained the daylight by climbing some forty feet up a rough wooden ladder fastened flat against the dripping wall of an airshaft, and found ourselves blinking amid a great collection of "dud" shells and those queer trench-mortar bombs, with long handles like sledge-hammers, which had been sent over by Fritz without doing a ha'p'orth of damage. We were in a distant quarter of the town from the avenue where we descended.

When I revisited the scene we entered a little battered house and went down a trapdoor in its cellar into the underways, coming out again, after our exploration, through the kitchen of another house. There were many such entrances and exits, and now that Arras is restored to peaceful days, what possibilities of romantic and criminal adventure might not arise from these cellar doors that lead into this weird and widespread city of the underworld!

Our Fierce DOG-FIGHTS over ARRAS

I Saw the Last of Captain Ball, V.C.

by Cecil Lewis

NO better description of the work of a fighting squadron in France has ever been written than the following chapter by Mr. Cecil Lewis, whose adventures on the Somme are related in Chapter 138. His lucid account of aerial fighting is made the more dramatic in that the patrol which he describes was the last undertaken by the famous V.C., Capt. Ball. This distinguished pilot met his death on May 7, 1917

L.N.A.

MASTER OF AIR COMBAT

Serving with the author of this chapter in No. 56 Squadron, R.F.C., was that very gallant pilot, Captain Albert Ball, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., seen above. Unassuming and quiet in manner, he was, at the same time, an air fighter of supreme courage and daring. He was but twenty-one years old when he was killed in the fight which is here described.

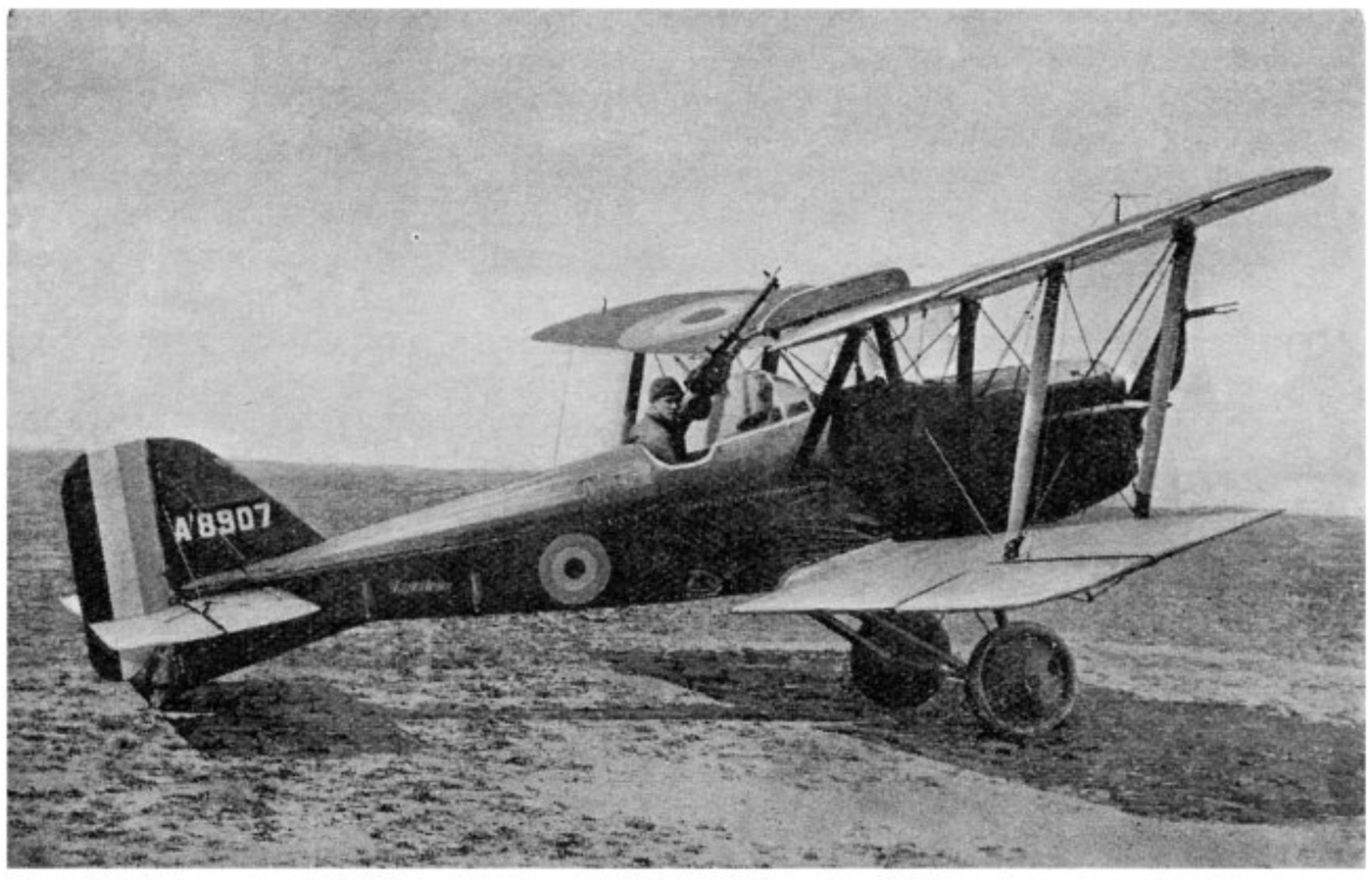
ON the first Offensive Patrol [in April 1917], with two others, we attacked five German scouts: four bright red and one green. I chose one and dived, got him in the sights, and pressed the trigger of the Vickers. Not a shot! I continued in the dive, trusting to the Lewis gun to do the trick: it fired two shots and jammed! Damnation! I zoomed away, trying frantically to clear the Vickers jam. Nothing would shift it, so I pulled the Lewis down its sliding quadrant to clear it and reload. The spade grip of the gun knocked down the hinged wind-screen, and the blast of a 100 m.p.h. wind nearly blew my head off. This was a pretty state to be in surrounded by five enemy scouts!

I WAS a sitter for any Hun, so I turned west and climbed away, working all the time to get my screen up and clear the Lewis jam. At last I managed it; but then, try as I would, I could not force the gun up the quadrant back into place on the top plane. The slide was twisted. I came home fed up, my gun pointing straight up into heaven. Nevertheless, that day the squadron got four Huns: a good start. Ball accounted for two of them. . . .

IN 1917 co-operative tactics in single-seater fighting were rudimentary. A combat was a personal matter. In a fight no pilot has time to watch others; he is too occupied in attempting to down his own man or in avoiding an enemy intent on downing him. Tactics apart, the vital question is that of performance. A machine with better speed and climbing power must always have the advantage.

During the next ten days Offensive Patrols were carried out daily, and, unfortunately, it soon became clear that, good as the SE5 was, it was still not equal to the enemy. Scrapping at high altitudes, fifteen to eighteen thousand feet, the Huns had a marked superiority in performance. This naturally tended to make us cautious, since we knew that, once we came down to their level, we should not be able to get above them again. Height, apart from its moral superiority, means added speed for the one above, who in his dive and zoom away has gravity on his side. Since machine-guns in a scout are fixed, firing forward in the line of flight, it follows that the pilot aims the whole machine at his adversary. If that adversary is above him, he will be forced to pull his machine up on its tail to get him in the sights. That means loss of speed, manoeuvrability and, if carried to an extreme, a stall, and wandering about at stalling speed is asking for trouble when there are enemy guns about. This inferiority of performance was an initial difficulty. Later, when the SE5 got a larger motor, things looked up.

Single combat, a duel with another



FAMOUS FIGHTER AND RENOWNED MACHINE

In this photograph Captain Albert Ball is seen seated in the cockpit of his SE5 biplane, one of the machines he used when he was serving with No. 56 Squadron. The SE5 was powered with a 150-h.p. Hispano-Suiza engine and had a Lewis gun as well as a Vickers gun as armament. With this plane and his Bristol Scout and Nieuport, Ball accounted for more than forty enemy aircraft.

machine, was, performance apart, a question of good flying. Two machines so engaged would circle, each trying to turn inside the other and so bring his guns into play. Ability to sustain such tight vertical turns is the crucial test of a fighting pilot. Once the balance of the controls is lost, the machine will slip, lose height, and the enemy will rush in. Then, by all the rules of the game, you are a dead man.

'CATCH-AS-CATCH-CAN' IN THE AIR

BUT when a number of machines had closed and were engaged in a "dog-fight," it was more a question of catch-as-catch-can. A pilot would go down on the tail of a Hun, hoping to get him in the final burst; but he would not be wise to stay there, for another Hun would almost certainly be on *his* tail, hoping to get him in the same way. Such fights were really a series of rushes, with momentary pauses to select the next opportunity—to catch the enemy at a disadvantage. . . .

But, apart from fighting, when twenty or thirty scouts were engaged, there was always a grave risk of collision. Machines would hurtle by, intent on their private battles, missing each other by feet. So such fighting demanded iron nerves, lightning reactions, snap decisions, a cool head, and eyes like a bluebottle, for it all took place at high speed and was three-dimensional.

At this sort of sharpshooting some pilots excelled others; but in all air fighting (and indeed in every branch of aerial warfare) there is an essential in which it differs from war on the ground: its absolute coldbloodedness. You cannot lose your temper with an aeroplane. You cannot "see red," as a man in a bayonet fight. You certainly cannot resort to "Dutch" courage. Any of these may fog your judgement—and that spells death.

OFTEN at high altitudes we flew in air well below freezing point. Then the need to clear a jam or change a drum meant putting an arm out into an icy 100 m.p.h. wind. If you happened to have bad circulation (as I had), it left the hand numb, and since you could not stamp your feet, swing your arms, or indeed move at all, the numbness would spread to the other hand, and sometimes to the feet as well.

In this condition we often went into a scrap with the odds against us—they usually were against us, for it was our job to be "offensive" and go over into enemy country looking for trouble—coldbloodedly in the literal sense; but none the less we had to summon every faculty of judgement and skill to down our man, or, at the worst, to come out of it alive ourselves. So, like duelling, air fighting required a set steely courage, drained of all emotion, fined down to a tense and deadly effort of will. The Angel of Death is less callous, aloof, and implacable than a fighting pilot when he dives.

THERE were, of course, emergency methods, such as standing the machine on its tail and holding it there just long enough to get one good burst into the enemy above you; but nobody would fight that way if he could help it, though, actually, an SE5 pilot could do the same thing by pulling his top gun down the quadrant. He could then fire it vertically upward while still flying level.

This was how Beery Bowman once got away from an ugly situation. He had been scrapping a couple of Huns well over the other side of the lines. He managed to crash one of them, but in so doing exhausted the ammunition of his Vickers gun: his Lewis was jammed. The other Hun pursued him and forced him right down on to the "carpet"—about a hundred feet from the ground. There was nothing to do but to beat it home. The Hun, out to avenge the death of his friend, and having the advantage of speed and height over Beery, chivvied him back to the lines, diving after him, bursting his gun, zooming straight up again, hanging there for a moment in a stall, and falling to dive again.

HE WAS A ROTTEN SHOT

HE repeated this several times (he must have been a rotten shot) while Beery, with extraordinary coolness and presence of mind, pulled down his Lewis gun and managed to clear the jam. The next time the Hun zoomed, Beery throttled right down and pulled back to stalling speed. The result was that when the Hun fell out of his zoom, Beery was not ahead of him as before, but beneath him. As the Hun dropped into his dive Beery opened fire with his Lewis gun, raking the body above him with a long burst. The Hun turned over on his back, dived, and struck the ground, bursting into flames. Beery laconically continued his way home. He was awarded the D.S.O.

With the exception of Ball, most crack fighters did not get their Huns in dog-fights. They preferred safer means. They would spend hours synchronizing their guns and telescopic sights, so that they could do accurate shooting at, say, two or three hundred yards. They would then set out on patrol, alone, spot their quarry (in such cases usually a two-seater doing reconnaissance or photography), and carefully manoeuvre for position, taking great pains to remain where they could not be seen, i.e. below and behind the tail of the enemy. From here, even if the Hun observer did spot them, he could not bring his gun to bear without the risk of shooting away his own tail plane or rudder. The stalker would not hurry after his quarry, but keep a wary eye to see he was not about to be attacked himself. He would gradually draw nearer, always in the blind spot, sight his guns very carefully, and then one long deadly burst would do the trick.

Such tactics as those were employed by Captain McCudden, V.C., D.S.O. [killed in an accident in July 1918, having accounted for more than 50 German machines], and also by the French ace Guynemer [killed without trace in September 1917].

BALL WAS ABSOLUTELY FEARLESS

THE squadron was doing well in Huns. Ball came back every day with a bag of one or more. Besides his SE5 he had a Nieuport scout, the machine in which he had done so well the previous year. He had a roving commission, and, with two machines, was four hours a day in the air. Of the great fighting pilots his tactics were the least cunning. Absolutely fearless, the odds made no difference to him. He would always attack, single out his man, and close. On several occasions he almost rammed the enemy, and often came back with his machine shot to pieces.

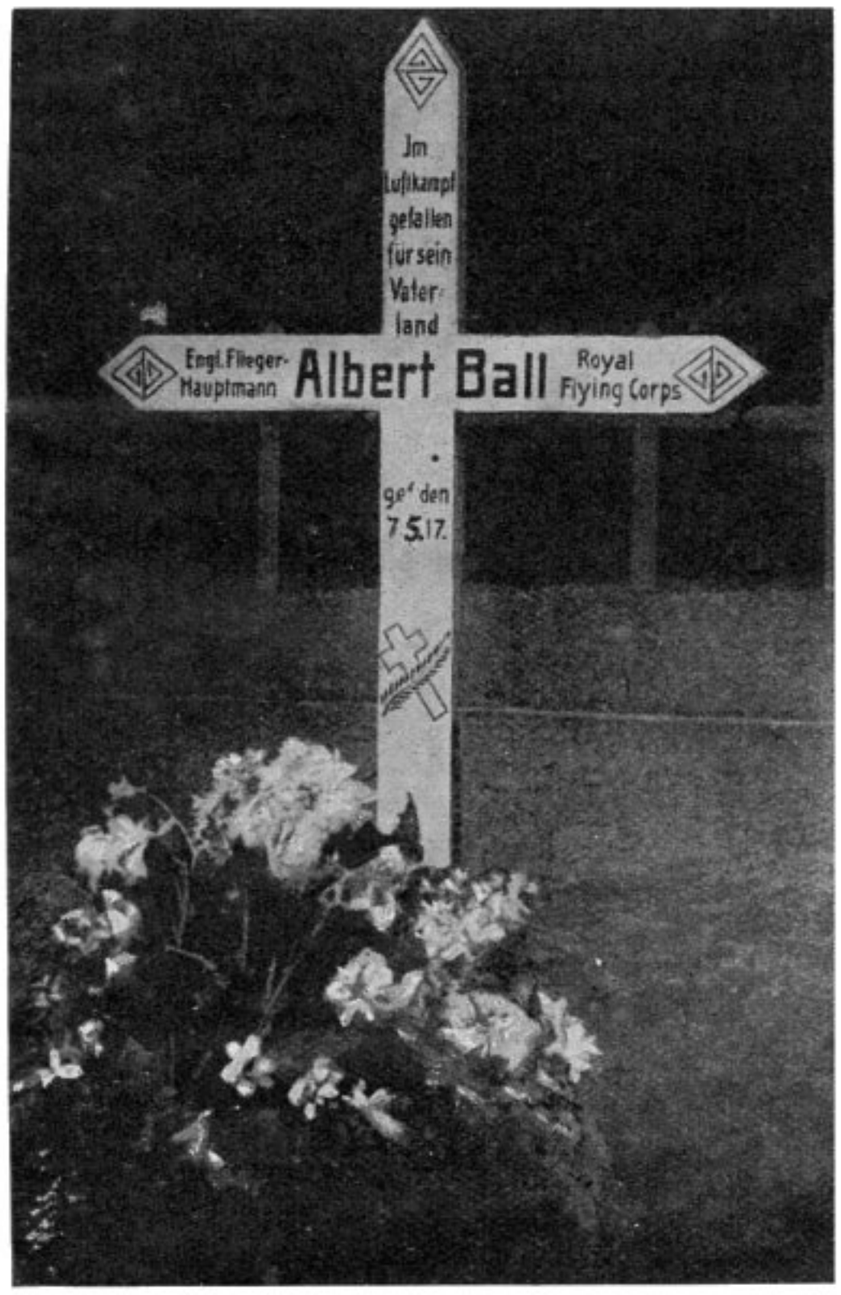
One morning, before the rest of us had gone out on patrol, we saw him coming in rather clumsily to land. He was not a stunt pilot, but flew very safely and accurately, so that, watching him, we could not understand his awkward floating landing. But when he taxied up to the sheds we saw his elevators were flapping loose—controls had been completely shot away! He had flown back from the lines and made his landing entirely by winding his adjustable tail up and down! It was incredible he had not crashed. His oil tank had been riddled, and his face and the whole nose of the machine were running with black castor oil.

He was so angry at being shot up like this that he walked straight to the sheds, wiped the oil off his shoulders and face with a rag, ordered out his Nieuport, and in two hours was back with yet another Hun to his credit.

Ball was a quiet, simple little man. His one relaxation was the violin, and his favourite after-dinner amusement to light a red magnesium flare outside his hut and walk round it in his pyjamas, fiddling! He was meticulous in the care of his machines, guns, and in the

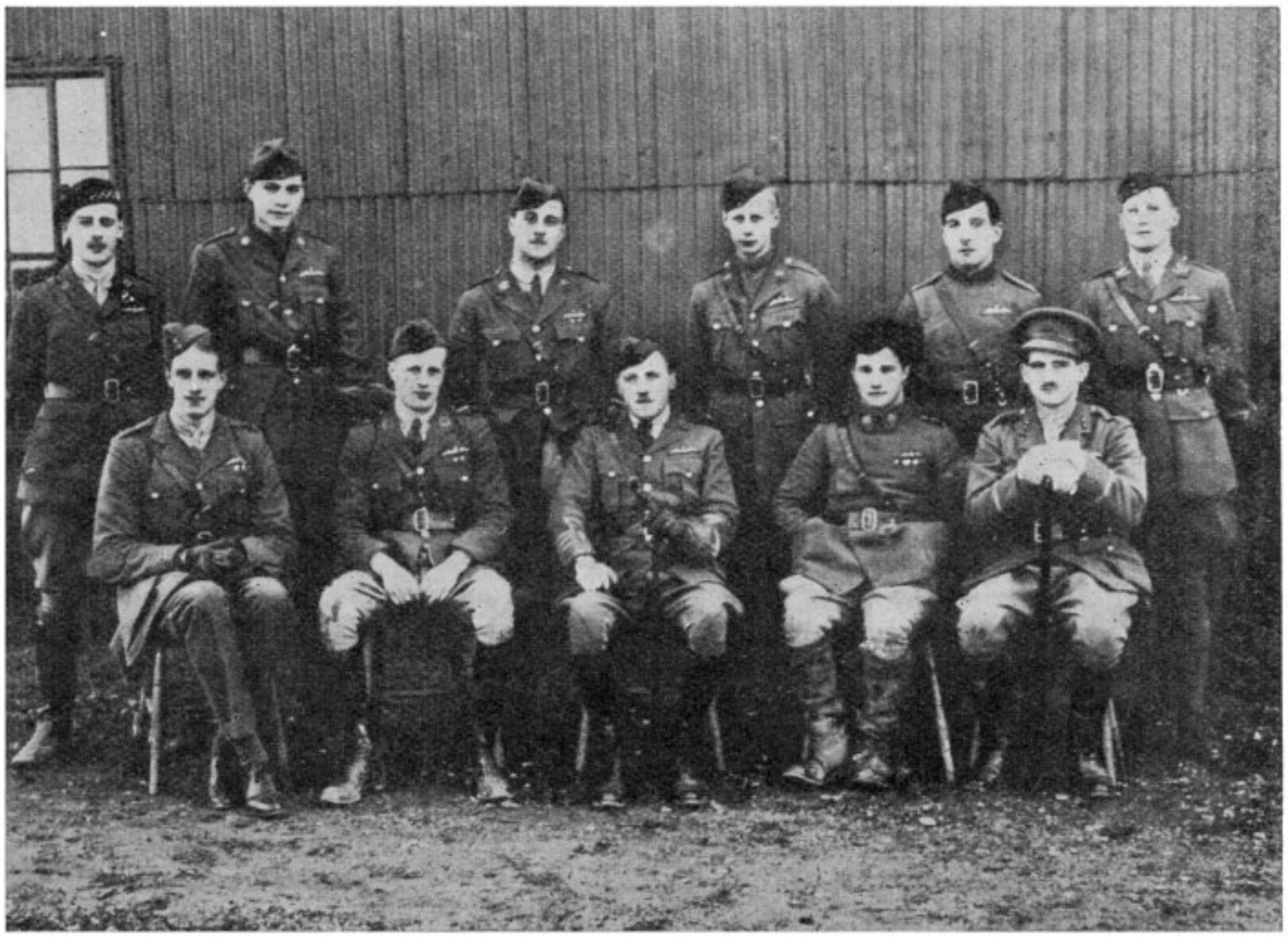
examination of his ammunition. He never flew for amusement. The only trips he took, apart from offensive patrols, were the minimum requisite to test his engines or fire at the ground target sighting his guns. He never boasted or criticized, but his example was tremendous. . . .

THE squadron sets out eleven strong on the evening patrol. Eleven chocolate-coloured, lean, noisy bullets, lifting, swaying, turning, rising into formation —two fours and a three—circling and climbing away steadily towards the lines. They are off to deal with Richthofen and his circus of Red Albatrosses.



The May evening is heavy with threatening masses of cumulus cloud, majestic skyscrapers, solid-looking as snow mountains, fraught with caves and valleys, rifts and ravines—strange and secret pathways in the chartless continents of the sky. Below, the land becomes an ordnance map, dim green and yellow, and across it go the Lines, drawn anyhow, as a child might scrawl with a double pencil. The grim dividing Lines! From the air robbed of all significance.

Steadily the body of scouts rises higher and higher, threading its way between the cloud precipices. Sometimes, below, the streets of a village, the corner of a wood, a few dark figures moving, glides into view like a slide into a lantern, and then is hidden again.



THESE YOUNG MEN WERE 'ACES'

This photograph, taken in 1917, shows some of the pilots of No. 56 Squadron. Under the command of Major R. G. Blomfield, who is seen seated in the centre, this squadron did magnificent work, and many of its pilots became famous as "aces" of the highest order. Seated on the extreme left is Cecil Lewis, author of this chapter, and second from the right is Captain Ball, who was killed shortly afterwards. On the left is shown the cross placed over his grave at Annoeullin near the place where he fell.

Imperial War Museum

But the fighting pilot's eyes are not on the ground, but roving endlessly through the lower and higher reaches of the sky, peering anxiously through fur-goggles to spot those black slow-moving specks against land or cloud which mean full throttle, tense muscles, held breath, and the headlong plunge with screaming wires—a Hun in the sights, and the tracers flashing.

A RED light curls up from the leader's cockpit and falls away. Action! He alters direction slightly, and the patrol, shifting throttle and rudder, keep close like a pack of hounds on the scent. He has seen, and they see soon, six scouts three thousand feet below. Black crosses! It seems interminable till the eleven come within diving distance. The pilots nurse their engines, hard-minded and set, test their guns and watch their indicators. At last the leader sways sideways, as a signal that each should take his man, and suddenly drops.

Machines fall scattering, the earth races up, the enemy patrol, startled, wheels and breaks. Each his man! The chocolate thunderbolts take sights, steady their screaming planes, and fire. A burst, fifty rounds—it is over. They have overshot, and the enemy, hit or missed, is lost for the moment. The pilot steadies his stampeding mount, pulls her out with a firm hand, twisting his head right and left, trying to follow his man, to sight another, to back up a friend in danger, to note another in flames.

But the squadron plunging into action had not seen, far off, approaching from the east, the rescue flight of Red Albatrosses patrolling above the body of machines on which they had dived, to guard their tails and second them in the battle. These, seeing the maze of wheeling machines, plunge down to join them. The British scouts, engaging and disengaging like flies circling at midday in a summer room, soon find the newcomers upon them. Then, as if attracted by some mysterious power, as vultures will draw to a corpse in the desert, other bodies of machines swoop down from the peaks of the cloud mountains. More enemy scouts, and, by good fortune, a flight of Naval triplanes.

But, nevertheless, the enemy, double in number, greater in power and fighting with skill and courage, gradually overpower the British, whose machines scatter, driven down beneath the scarlet German fighters.

It would be impossible to describe the action of such a battle. A pilot, in the second between his own engagements, might see a Hun diving vertically, an SE5 on his tail, on the tail of the SE another Hun, and above him again another British scout. These four, plunging headlong at two hundred miles an hour, guns crackling, tracers screaming,

suddenly break up. The lowest Hun plunges flaming to his death, if death has not taken him already. His victor seems to stagger, suddenly pulls out in a great leap, as a trout leaps on the end of a line, and then, turning over on his belly, swoops and spins in a dizzy falling spiral with the earth to end it. The third German zooms veering, and the last of that meteoric quartet follows bursting. . . . But such a glimpse, lasting perhaps ten seconds, is broken by the sharp rattle of another attack.

Two machines approach head-on at breakneck speed, firing at each other, tracers whistling through each other's planes, each slipping sideways on his rudder to trick the other's gun fire. Who will hold longest? Two hundred yards, a hundred, fifty, and then, neither hit, with one accord they fling their machines sideways, bank and circle, each striving to bring his gun on to the other's tail, each glaring through goggle eyes, calculating, straining, wheeling, grim, bent only on death or dying.

But, from above, this strange tormented circling is seen by another Hun. He drops. His gun speaks. The British machine, distracted by the sudden unseen enemy, pulls up, takes a burst through the engine, tank and body, and falls bottom uppermost down through the clouds and the deep unending desolation of the twilight sky.

The game of noughts and crosses, starting at fifteen thousand feet above the clouds, drops in altitude engagement by engagement. Friends and foes are scattered. A last SE, pressed by two Huns, plunges and wheels, gun-jammed, like a snipe over marshes, darts lower, finds refuge in the ground mist, and disappears.

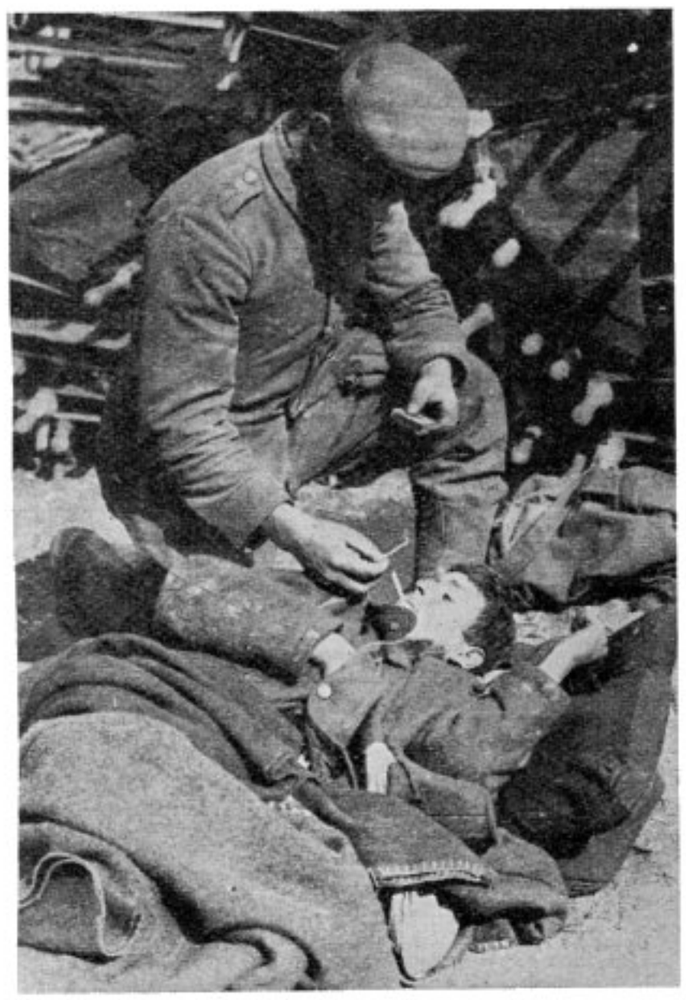
Now lowering clouds darken the evening. Below, flashes of gun fire stab the veil of the gathering dusk. The fight is over! The battlefield shows no sign. In the pellucid sky, serene cloud mountains mass and move unceasingly. Here where guns rattled and death plucked the spirits of the valiant, this thing is now as if it had never been! The sky is busy with night, passive, superb, unheeding.

. . . . . .

Of the eleven scouts that went out that evening, the 7th of May, only five of us returned to the aerodrome.

The Mess was very quiet that night. The Adjutant remained in his office, hoping against hope to have news of the six missing pilots, and, later, news did come through that two had been forced down, shot in the engine, and that two others had been wounded.

But Ball never returned. I believe I was the last to see him in his red-nosed SE going east at 8,000 feet. He flew straight into the white face of an enormous cloud. I followed. But when I came out on the other side, he was nowhere to be seen. All next day a feeling of depression hung over the squadron. We mooned about the sheds, still hoping for news. The day after that hope was given up. I flew his Nieuport back to the Aircraft Depot.



WAITING HIS TURN

With pathetic patience the wounded men lay on their stretchers waiting until the overworked doctors could attend to them That was the time when a cigarette was a godsend; and above we see a German prisoner who has been acting as a stretcher-bearer lighting one for a wounded British soldier.

Imperial War Museum

* 197 April 8—12, 1917

A DOCTOR'S TASK in BATTLE

Behind the Scenes of the R.A.M.C.

by Col. David Rorie, D.S.O., T.D.

WITH admirable good humour Col. Rorie describes the manifold duties which devolved on a senior medical officer during the progress of a major battle—in this case the battle of Arras—and tells a delightful story of the assistance he received from a German prisoner. Col. Rorie, at the time of which he writes, was O.C. 1/2 Highland Field Ambulance. He later became Assistant Director Medical Services of the 51st (Highland) Division

For the next impending battle our advanced dressing station and the walking wounded collecting post were fixed at Anzin on the Arras–Mont St. Eloi road, where some accommodation capable of extension already existed; while at Madagascar, a kilometre across country in front on the Arras–Béthune road, was a dug-out serving as relay bearer post; leaving a collecting post—the Lille Road Post—to be constructed another good kilometre nearer the line, in an old trench running alongside the Arras–Lille road.

Here, marking off some seventy feet of the trench, we set about deepening it, broadening it, and roofing it with iron "English Shelters," a thinner type of the heavy "Elephant Shelter"; on top of them, again, laying sandbags filled with excavated earth. Three tiers of stretcher racks were fitted on each side of the interior, the whole available space being about fifty feet by ten and holding forty wounded; while in the middle, with sandbagged partition walls in case of a hit, was a chamber set apart as a dressing room.

All this meant steady and hard work for the R.A.M.C. fatigue parties of the three Divisional Field Ambulances from the end of February up to the very eve of the battle, as the bulk of the work had to be done in the dark owing to the position being under enemy observation. Steps, too, had to be cut down from the road and fixed with wood; while, at the top of these, the road itself had to be widened and stones hammered in to make a turning-point for the motor ambulance cars. Still, when the job was finished on the night of 8th April and we had gone below for a rest before zero hour—a retiral that was hastened by a dose of shrapnel from the enemy, as it was moonlight and we had been over-trustful in the concealing power of a ground mist—our post was safe enough, short of a direct hit from heavy stuff.

On our right, some three kilometres away, lay St. Catherine, a suburb of Arras; on our left, the remains of the village of Ecurie; while in front of us, in the dip, were the ruins of Roclincourt, to which, and the trenches, ran a hand trolley line, similar lines running back to Madagascar and Anzin. It was on our programme that these were to be used

RAIL TRANSPORT FOR ARRAS CASUALTIES

Light railways proved very useful during the battle of Arras, both for the transport of men and material. After the journey up the line the wagons did not return empty, but often came back laden with the human wreckage of war. This photograph, taken through a ruined wall, shows wounded being moved to a casualty clearing station by light railway, and was taken just outside the village of Feuchy, captured by the British on April 9, 1917.

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THEN DEATH TOOK ITS TOLL

Here, in spring sunshine, amidst a peaceful country scene, the 10th Royal Fusiliers are taking a midday rest at Wagnonlieu on April 8, 1917. Two days later both the weather and the scene had changed. On April 10 the battalion took part in the capture of Monchy-le-Preux on the Arras–Cambrai Road. The fighting took place in a snowstorm, and owing to the British plans failing in part the casualties were heavy. The 10th Royal Fusiliers lost 12 officers and 240 other ranks.

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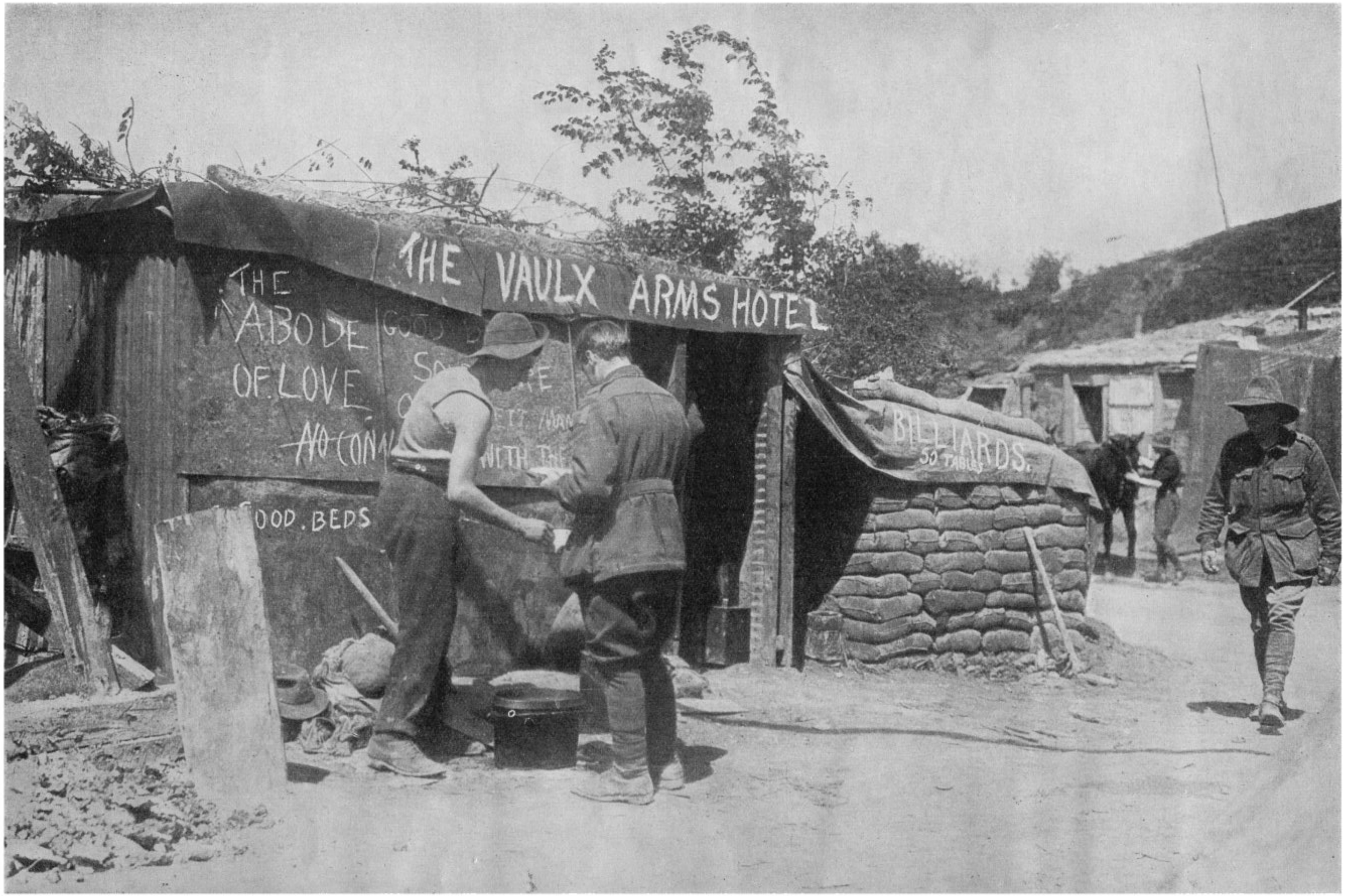

HUMOUR GAVE SAVOUR TO THE FARE

The British soldier's sense of humour, if not always subtle, was nevertheless irrepressible, and enabled him on many occasions to rise superior to the miseries he was forced to undergo. Many a dug-out bore a fanciful, and at times an unprintable, name ; and this Australian cook-house at Vaulx-Vraucourt, near Bapaume, has been dubbed with a title rather belying its appearance. Yet judged by front-line standards it is indeed an hotel, and no doubt its fare was very welcome.

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WHERE THE WORK OF THE R.A.M.C. BEGAN

Above is one of the Regimental Aid Posts mentioned by Colonel Rorie in this page. In this rough-and-ready shelter men of the R.A.M.C. are waiting until the wounded begin to come in. Regimental Aid Posts, situated in the support trenches, were the first stage in the weary journey of the wounded. Here first aid was given before the men were sent on to the Collecting Post. This R.A.P. is near Guémappe and was photographed in April 1917.
Imperial War Museum

for carrying back casualties, but the combatant traffic soon knocked this on the head; so we were dependent throughout the battle on hand and wheeled stretcher carriage from the line to the collecting post, and on motor ambulance cars from the collecting post to the advanced dressing station at Anzin.

. . . .

At 4.30 a.m. on 9th April, the day of the battle, all hands were roused and the collecting post given a final clean up. At 5 the first car was up in readiness, and at 5.30 our barrage started, presenting a weird spectacle of hellish intensity.

Day was just breaking, and the dawn was illuminated with the long line of bursting shells, to which the golden rain and coloured S O S rockets of the enemy lent a strangely picturesque variety of colour. The noise was terrific with the continuous whistling scream—like a furious gale of wind—of the thousands of heavy missiles going over us to the enemy's lines, and the thunderous drumming of their arrival.

At 6 the barrage ceased and the advancing troops were visible from the Lille Road going over the first ridge. But casualties were now coming in (chiefly men hit in the assembly trenches before the advance had commenced), and soon everyone was busy—carrying the wounded down to the shelter, dressing them there and loading the cars.

In a nook left between the end of the stretcher racks and the exit from the shelter was set a small collapsible table whereto were pinned a map of the district and a more detailed one of the trenches, both together making up the board on which you played your own special little game of chess against unforeseen circumstances. A clip took in all the "chits" from the M.O.s at the various R.A.P.s [Regimental Aid Posts], chronologically arranged as they came in, and marked with the hour of receipt, by the Sergeant-Clerk who sat beside you.

Each message was supposed to have the hour of its dispatch written on it by the sender: fifty per cent of them never had. Many were soaked and barely decipherable—medical handwriting is somewhat peculiar at best, especially when written in indelible pencil which had "run." Many demands were indefinite—"more stretchers," "more bearers," "more dressings"; others asked for impossible and exaggerated quantities. Here your knowledge of the sender's mentality had to come in, and you discounted the requests of the M.O. who thought too imperially, and dealt with him on more parochial lines.

One M.O. who was a bit "rattled" (and no wonder) might have sent off three messages one after another, all without the hour of dispatch stated; and you had to make a shot at which was the latest one (and, therefore, that to be dealt with), as messengers 2 and 1 might turn up in that order after messenger 3.

All the time, too, if you were wise (for it paid you to do it), you were jotting down a running tale of how things progressed, your literary efforts interrupted by visits here and there to lend a hand in dressing cases and loading cars; or by interviewing messengers and supervising the issue of stores in response to indents, and seeing that other indents were going back at once for fresh supplies.

Then your map had to be kept up to date as the regimental aid posts changed when the battalions advanced, and all such changes had to be duly notified to the A.D.M.S. [Assistant Director Medical Services]. Altogether you were the head of a somewhat irritable family, whose nerves, after some hours of it, were apt to get a bit jangled: knowing, too, as regards yourself, that you were the certain recipient of criticism, both from those above and those below you in rank, for all that went wrong; and at the very least expected to remedy the unexpected with the speed of Hermes and the patience of Job.

But, above all, your métier was to "cock your bonnet and whistle," to be, like Sydney Smith, a "good humorist," and to preserve throughout all your troubles the placid, enigmatic smile of a Mona Lisa.

WHEN THE STORM OF BATTLE BROKE

Some idea of the appalling task which confronted a Medical Officer when a big battle was in progress is afforded by the above photograph. It shows an advanced dressing station at Tilloy in April 1917, during the battles of Arras. As Colonel Rorie states in this chapter, casualties began to come in even before the barrage had ceased. The light railways such as that seen below also carried back to the base their quota of stretcher cases.

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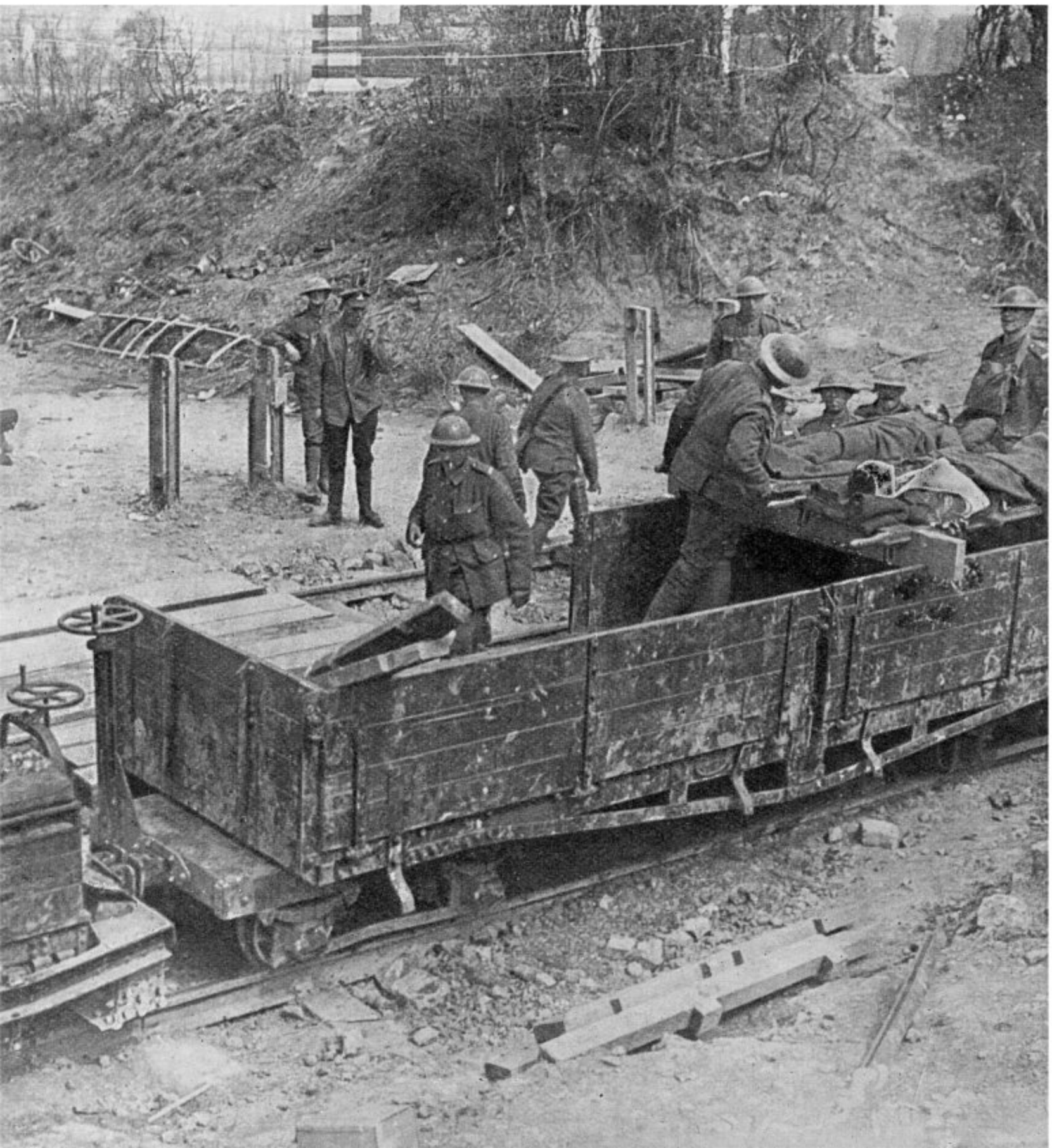

The comic relief at Lille Road Post was supplied by "James," one of our Hun auxiliary loaders. His real name, I suppose, was Heinrich Schneider or something of that sort; but as he spoke good English he was appointed interpreter for enemy wounded, and put in charge of his whole-skinned countrymen who were assisting to carry casualties down to and up from the dressing room. He had been—so he said, and there was no reason to doubt it—for ten years before the war a waiter at the Hotel Cecil, hence the temporary name bestowed on him; and his behaviour was certainly a curious mixture of the soldier and the waiter. When spoken to he came sharply to attention (military), with a gentle bend forwards from the waist (Hotel Cecil); while his prompt "Yessir!" almost made one see the napkin over his arm. Stoutish, broadish, and—to us, his captors—affable, he magnified his office with evident relish, and treated his hoplites with true Hunnish high-handedness.

From the entrance to the dressing room I overheard my colleague, who was busy with a wounded enemy casualty at one period of the first day's work, giving James a high moral lesson, in a clear, somewhat professorial style.

"You will observe, James, that here, contrary to the custom of your countrymen in this war, we treat our wounded enemies with the same consideration extended to our own troops."

"Yessir!"

"Before the war, James, I had travelled much in your Fatherland, and had failed to detect the degeneracy——"

"Yessir!"

"——which has since, evidently, developed with such alarming rapidity."

"Yessir!"

"Cruelty, on our part, is not made a matter of military routine."

"Yessir!"

"You mean 'No, sir,' I think, James?"

"No, sir!"

"Ah, well! The case is dressed; summon your comrades."

"Yessir! Achtung! Zwei träger! Aufheben!"

And away went James with his compatriots to load the case on a back-going car.

After twelve hours of it, James came to me, saluted, and remarked:

"Sir, I and my men are exhausted."

"I and my men are also exhausted, James."

"Yessir! But we had no sleep for two nights before this battle."

"Right, James, I shall believe you and relieve you." So, in charge of a sergeant, James and Co. were sent along the trench to the divisional soup kitchen to have a good feed, and were thence taken below to an old French dug-out.

Later, it was reported to me that James was missing; and although we made a perfunctory search for him, we could not find him. Two hours afterwards I was passing a small recess blanketed off from the sandbag wall of the dressing room, in which was a stretcher and some blankets, placed there for my accommodation with kindly forethought by the staff-sergeant, should an opportunity for rest come along. Hearing a stertorous snort, I pulled back the blanket and discovered James sound asleep in my bed, evidently under the impression that his "staff job" entitled him to some precedence. The humour of it tickled me so much that I left him; but his snores gave him away to others before long, and he was "put back where he belonged."

When the time came to hand him and his comrades over to the A.P.M.'s guard, James asked to see me, and giving his salute-cum-bow, said: "Sir, I trust I have given satisfaction."

"Let your mind be easy, James."

"Sir, I hope we shall meet again."

"When, James?"

"After the war, sir."

"And where, James?"

"At the Hotel Cecil, sir!"

With which pious hope James solemnly saluted and vanished into the gloom of the trench.

WAR AND WOUNDED IN THE OPEN

The battle of Arras brought the British Army once more into the open, and this scene is at Monchy-le-Preux on April 24, 1917. The Germans are shelling the village, and the smoke and dust from the exploding shells rise into the air in the distance. Field guns are in action in the middle foreground, and below them is a dressing station with a group of stretcher-bearers who, when the enemy gets the range, may be called upon to play their heroic part.

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SENSELESS SLAUGHTER of MEN and HORSES

Blood and Snow and Confusion at Monchy

by D. W. J. Cuddeford

THE author, who joined the Scots Guards as a private and was commissioned in January 1916 in the Highland Light Infantry, was present at the battle of Arras on April 9, 1917. In the following chapter he records the action of the infantry in an attack near Monchy, the futile slaughter of a squadron of cavalry and the death of a gallant cavalry officer, Brigadier-General Bulkeley-Johnson

THE offensive by the British Third Army (General Allenby) was launched on April 9 at the zero hour of 5.30 a.m. On our divisional front (the 15th Scottish Division) the attack was led by the 44th Brigade on the right and the 45th Brigade on the left, while on our right flank was the 12th Division, and on the left, on the other side of the river Scarpe, the 9th Division. In the opening phase of the attack, our 44th and 45th Brigades had for their first objective the German front line with its immediate support trenches (designated in Operation Orders the " Black Line "), and for their second objective the rising ground about fifteen hundred yards beyond, known as " Observation Ridge " (the " Blue Line ").

The task allotted to our own brigade, the 46th, was to follow in support of the other two brigades, and after the capture and consolidation by them of the first two objectives, to pass through them to the capture of a third objective, Himalaya Trench (the " Brown Line "), a very strong trench system on the slope of Orange Hill at a distance of over two miles behind the enemy front line. Himalaya Trench was in fact part of the strong German secondary line of defence better known later as the Hindenburg Line.

Zero hour was 5.30 a.m., as I have said, but it was earlier than that when we commenced to move from the cellars to the front. The first part of our subterranean journey was very slow, as we could only proceed in single file through the narrow and tortuous passages that had been constructed from cellar to cellar, but when we reached the main sewer the going was easier, though still slow and in single file. Many jokes were passed among the men as we made our way along that salubrious emergency thoroughfare. In the good old days, troops went into battle with colours flying and bands playing, but there is not much romance in advancing to the attack through a sewer !

However, we eventually reached the long flight of dug-out stairs that took us up to the fresh air. When we emerged among the factory ruins above, it was still rather dark and raining, and as the attack was now well started the din of the guns had reached crescendo, though not many enemy shells were coming our way.

FROM there we proceeded for some distance along an old communication trench ; then we crossed the railway cutting, the steep muddy banks of which presented rather a difficult obstacle for our heavily laden men ; and so on through the streets of the faubourg on the other side to the cemetery, through which we passed by a fine new communication trench that had been constructed a few weeks before by our own pioneer battalion, the 9th Gordons. The yellow skulls of many former citizens of Arras grinned at us from the walls and heaped-up parapets of that trench as we pushed our way by.

So far we had suffered no casualties, and it was not till we were winding through the streets of the faubourg that we saw the first dead man that day ; an English infantryman who had just been killed by shrapnel. He lay sprawling across the sidewalk, with a rivulet of blood running to the pavement kerb. Some of the reinforcement draft that

PONTOONS FOR PROJECTILES

Every available means of transport was pressed into service during the battles of Arras, and since the river Scarpe flowed through the battlefield the waterway was used to supplement the roads. Here gunners are seen loading pontoons with shells from a light railway on the banks of the Scarpe near Blangy, just east of Arras. The pontoons will probably meet with fewer obstructions on the river than will the limbers on the road.

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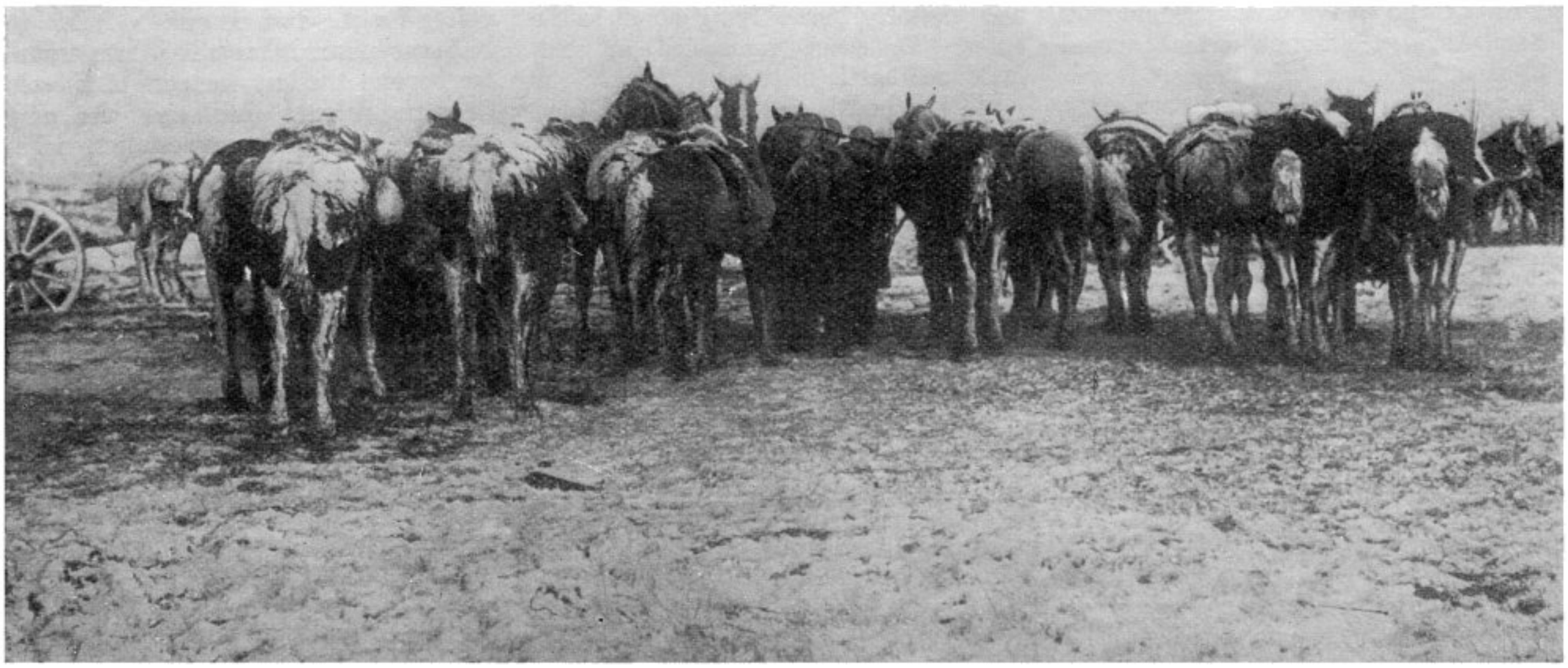


FROM SNOWSTORM TO SHELL-STORM

The attack on Monchy was made in a snowstorm. The 3rd Cavalry Division took part in it, and above is the scene behind the lines when the cavalry were waiting to go forward; the horses have their backs to the wind, while their riders are clustered among them for warmth and shelter. An advance by cavalry at such a moment was, as Mr. Cuddeford says in this chapter, sheer madness, and the shell-storm with which they were met took a terrible toll of man and beast.

Imperial War Museum

had recently joined us were fresh conscripts, and as we filed past the dead man I glanced back to observe how these new lads took the sight. One or two of them were making forced jokes, but others sheered round the corpse with white faces and sidelong glances, as if it was something to be avoided.

On clearing the cemetery, we left the communication trench and extended over the open in "artillery formation," that is, in line of platoons in single file columns at wide intervals. In that order we continued the advance across our own and the German front line trenches into his support area, which by this time had been captured by the 44th Brigade in front of us. While getting over that open ground, however, a distance of more than a thousand yards, we had a bad gruelling, for the enemy artillery just then laid down a fierce barrage that caused us a large number of casualties.

IN that short space of time, even at this early stage before our own part in the attack had commenced in earnest, our casualties included half the company-signallers and stretcher-bearers, the men we could least afford to lose. From the intensity of the enemy barrage, and the promptness with which it opened on us as we emerged to the open ground, it was obvious that the 44th and 45th Brigades had not yet succeeded in penetrating to their second objective on Observation Ridge, where the Germans must still have had observers directing their artillery fire on us.

Apart from the hot barrage just mentioned, we encountered practically no opposition at this stage, although we found several pockets of Germans in shell holes and side trenches that had been overlooked by the troops that went over before us. In this way we pushed on to the main support trench of the enemy front defences, a thickly wired trench named in our maps Hermes Trench (the "Black Line"), which according to Operation Orders was our assembly point for the second phase of the operations, that is, for our long two-mile advance against the formidable Himalaya Trench and Orange Hill.

Here in Hermes and the adjacent trenches we had a lengthy wait until the scheduled hour for the continuation of the attack; the time of waiting being spent by us in reorganizing our forces, which had become somewhat mixed up, and in putting in some consolidation work on the position; also in searching around the trenches and clearing the dug-outs.

THIS enemy support trench was a very deep one, much deeper than any German trenches we had seen on the Somme, and from the strength of its construction it seemed to have been intended as the main line defence in the enemy front system. Like all the other trenches we had passed over so far that morning, it was badly damaged by our artillery preparation for the attack, which, as was evident also by the number of dead and wounded Germans lying about, had been very thoroughly carried out.

Some of the German wounded we sent back to our own lines in care of prisoners that were routed out from the dug-outs, and whom we utilized as emergency stretcher-bearers, so many of our own stretcher-bearers having become casualties themselves, but I am afraid a good number of the more seriously wounded died from lack of prompt surgical attention, although we did what we could for them with the means at our disposal. As usual in the case of high explosive artillery fire, the wounds were mostly rather ghastly.

I remember one young German soldier there who had been disembowelled by a shell splinter. He was lying on a fire step with his intestines looped up in a bag formed by his undershirt pulled over them, and as we moved about in the trench he eyed us with an air of mild interest, as if we were the first British soldiers he had ever seen.

Of course, he and others in a like condition, of whom there were many, were beyond our help, even had there been a sufficient number of stretcher-bearers left with us to attend and evacuate the enemy wounded as well as our own. The man who was wounded at an early stage in these shows was fortunate, for there was a chance of him getting quickly back to a dressing station, whereas the hope of being safely evacuated diminished the farther an advance progressed beyond our own lines.

In our search through the dug-outs in these trenches we found many things of interest, besides a number of live

Germans who were still taking refuge in them. In one big dug-out, which seemed to be a battalion or company headquarters, the occupants had evidently been in the custom of doing themselves well, judging by the number of empty bottles lying about. Amongst these we discovered one or two full bottles of cognac and "rhum," which, of course, we promptly "salved," as well as a large quantity of cigars of the usual German "army issue" kind. Our commanding officer joined us as I was squatting outside that dug-out in the midst of several dead Germans, writing a situation report and smoking one of these cigars, as were most of our men in the vicinity at the time, and I think he rather disapproved of this general cigar smoking during business hours as rather unsoldierlike!

. . . . .

DURING a lull in the snowstorm [on the morning of April 11] an excited shout was raised that our cavalry were coming up! Sure enough, away behind us, moving quickly in extended order down the slope of Orange Hill, was line upon line of mounted men covering the whole extent of the hillside as far as we could see. It was a thrilling moment for us infantrymen, who had never dreamt that we should live to see a real cavalry charge, which was evidently what was intended.

In their advance the lines of horsemen passed over us rapidly, although from our holes in the ground it was rather a "worm's-eye" view we got of the splendid spectacle of so many mounted men in action.

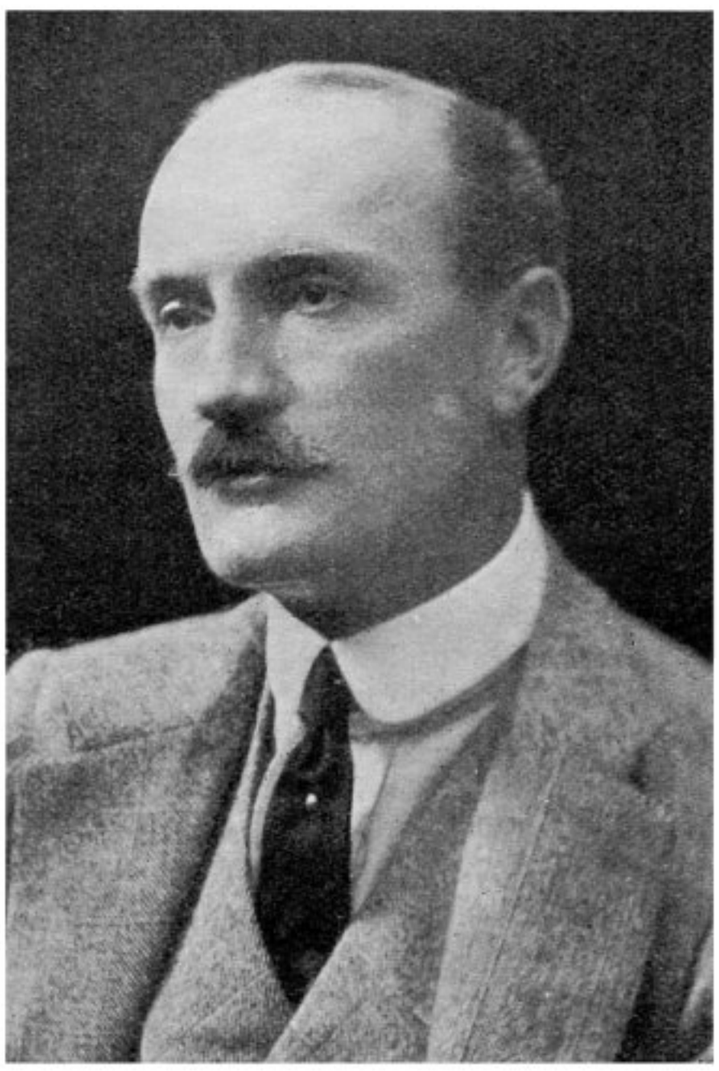
It may have been a fine sight, but it was a wicked waste of men and horses, for the enemy immediately opened on them a hurricane of every kind of missile he had.

If the cavalry advanced over us at the trot or canter, they came back at a gallop, including numbers of dismounted men and riderless horses, and—most fatal mistake of all—they bunched behind Monchy in a big mass, into which the Boche continued to put high-explosive shrapnel, whizz-bangs, and a hail of bullets, until the horsemen disappeared and finally melted away over the hillside from where they came.

THEY left a number of dead and wounded men among us, however, but the horses seem to have suffered most, and for a while after we put bullets into poor brutes that were aimlessly limping about on three legs, or else careering about madly in their agony; like one I saw that had the whole of its muzzle blown away. With the dead and wounded horses lying about in the snow, the scene resembled an old-fashioned battle picture.

Why it had been thought fit to send in cavalry at that juncture, against a strongly reinforced enemy who even then were holding up our infantry advance, we never knew. Cavalry may still have their uses in some kinds of warfare, but for a large force of mounted men to attempt an attack on the enemy positions that day was sheer madness.

The snow continued on and off throughout the day, and although there



GALLANT CAVALRY LEADER

Brigadier-General Bulkeley-Johnson, whose tragic death through eager daring is described in this chapter, was a fine cavalry officer of the old school. The photograph was taken shortly before the war.

Photo, Dudley Glanfield

were occasional clear spells in between, the weather generally was so bad that it practically put a stop to all operations on both sides for the time being. Owing to the lack of visibility in the long advance through the snowstorm that morning, and the subsequent confused fighting in and around Monchy, our division was inextricably mixed up, men of different units finding themselves together in the same shell hole without having any idea of the whereabouts of the rest of their battalion or even company.

We endeavoured to sort ourselves out somewhat, but it was rather a hopeless task, there being no old trenches or other known places in the neighbourhood that could be used as fixed rallying points for the various units. It has to be borne in mind that we had penetrated far beyond the last trenches of the old German defence line, and the only cover we had was in very crude trenches that we had hurriedly made for ourselves within the past hour or two. As a matter of fact, most of our Division, and the 37th Division also on the other side of the village, were scattered over the countryside in shell holes which they were now linking up into some sort of defence line, although a very irregular one.

While the snow was falling, and we could move about more freely without being observed by the Boche machine-gunners and snipers, some of us went out to give what help we could to the many wounded men lying about in the open. An extensive orchard belonging to the big château-farm on the north side of the village was full of dead and wounded men of our 45th Brigade.

SEVERAL units of that brigade in their first attack during the morning had swung round against the north side of Monchy, and in the snow beneath the masses of blossom on the fruit trees in that big orchard their dead and wounded were lying in heaps and rows. To add to the horror of it all, since the attack in the early morning in which these men had fallen, the Germans had heavily shelled the orchard and vicinity at the time the cavalry were retiring round that side of the village.

As we moved through the orchard in the falling snow, wounded men on every side were shouting and blowing whistles to attract attention, but only too many of them lay like still hummocks of snow.

I remember one of these hummocks heaved and cracked open on our approach, as a poor kilted Highlander turned over at the sound of our voices. His bare thigh was only a blackened stump, but he complacently and without a murmur accepted the cigarette we lit for him.

HE, and a great many others of the wounded, must have died that day from loss of blood and exposure. It was a pitiful sight; the sort of thing that made one rage at the utter futility of it all.

A little later on in the day (I have no idea now of the exact hour, my watch having stopped, but it must have been about midday) one of my sergeants came to where we were working at the consolidation of a support line and reported that a staff officer had come up. I accompanied the sergeant to where we found two officers waiting in a sheltered part some little distance behind, one of whom I at once perceived to be a

general by the gold-laced tabs showing on his collar under the trench coat. The other, a tall dark man, I took to be one of his staff.

It was not until afterwards that I learnt that the general officer was Brig.-Gen. Bulkeley-Johnson, commanding the 8th Cavalry Brigade, the mounted troops that earlier that morning had made such a disastrous attempt to get through against the enemy. He was a tall fine-looking elderly man, the perfect type of pre-war regular soldier, and I remember he was wearing one of those new-fangled two-piece trench suits over his uniform—a sort of short waterproof trench coat with separate trousers reaching to below the knee—under which his gold-laced tabs and cavalry boots could be seen.

His staff officer was attired much the same, and they appeared very spick and span to us mud-plastered infantrymen. However, the Brigadier wanted to know what the situation was. I informed him that the enemy in front had been strongly reinforced during the past twenty-four hours, and that instead of our resuming the offensive just then, we were doing our best to consolidate our position to repel another counter-attack in force, which was expected at any time. Also that the enemy were especially concentrating around the village of Pelves down on our half-left front by the river.

The Brigadier thought he would like to see something of the enemy dispositions for himself, and I told him it could be done, but that to reach a point of vantage on the low ridge in front, the snow having cleared just then, the greatest caution was required, and that if the German snipers spotted us it would be necessary to dodge them by sprinting diagonally from shell hole to shell hole, as we did.

Nevertheless, the General insisted on going on against my advice, and perhaps being rather old for that sort of active dodging or, as it seemed to me at the time, too dignified to get well down at the sound of a bullet, he would persist in walking straight on. That, of course, was deadly, as I well knew.

I led the little procession, and sure enough as soon as we reached the ridge a fusillade of bullets hummed around our ears. We had not got far when one skimmed past me and struck the General full on the cheekbone. I shall never forget his piercing shriek as he tumbled down and rolled over on the ground.

As for the staff officer and myself, we dived for the nearest shell hole, where we found two signallers of the Royal Scots of the 45th Brigade, whom I got to crawl out with me and bring in the General. We had to be very careful, as all the German riflemen seemed to be concentrating their attention on our locality, but by working backwards on our bellies we succeeded in dragging the General to the shell hole. However, he died as we were getting him there. I did not see the staff officer after that, so presumably he managed to make his own way back.

After I returned to my company and the snow had come on again, I went out with a party and brought back the General's body to our support line, where it was laid on the parados of the trench we had constructed. Things were quiet for a while after that, and as I sat there idly contemplating the body and watching the snow flakes settling gently on the blue upturned dead face, with its grizzled moustache, I could not help reflecting that there lay a well-known professional soldier, whose whole life had been devoted to the study of war, and yet he was killed the first time he got within rifle range of a really formidable enemy, while we amateur soldiers who had known nothing about soldiering only a year or two before, still kept on surviving and coping with the most highly trained troops the Germans could put in the field against us.

SAFE, YET AMIDST SHELLS

Next to the taking of a batch of prisoners, the "joy of joys" to the soldiers was some such trophy as that seen below. These men posed for the photographer at Monchy-le-Preux on April 11, 1917, after the village had fallen. They are standing by a German ammunition limber, which has been ditched in the hurry of a withdrawal. The shells lie scattered and useless, and the wheels will turn no more.

Imperial War Museum

WE PUSHED the BOCHE off VIMY RIDGE

Story of a Glorious Canadian Victory

by Kim Beattie

THE author is the chronicler of the 48th Highlanders of Canada (the 15th Battalion C.E.F.), which is an allied regiment to the Gordon Highlanders. He describes magnificently the heroic action of April 1917, when the bravery and dash of this battalion contributed to a glorious victory. Vimy Ridge today is Canadian soil, and young maples grow where once was a ghastly shambles

PROUD RELIC OF VICTORY

This flag was the battalion flag of the 54th Canadian Infantry at Vimy. Afterwards it flew above the battalion headquarters, and was taken down on only one occasion because it drew fire. It is being held by the C.O.'s chief runner; the C.O. is on the right.

Canadian Records

SOME of the High Command had been taken aback by the audacious idea that the Canadians could take formidable Vimy Ridge. The enemy boasted no troops could take it, Ludendorff confidently said so, and General Nivelle was outspoken against the attempt. But, judging by the feeling pervading the area where now all was ready, there never was any doubt in the minds of the Canadians. As the hours wore along with that awful, exasperating slowness of before zero times, there was noticeable everywhere a confidence that eased the nerves of the front line and took some of the strain from Company and Battalion H.Q., where officers looked often at their wrist-watches and prayed that nothing had been forgotten.

To envision the 15th Battalion, then, on the eve of the great battle, which was one of the most tactically brilliant and striking incidents of the entire war, is to see a battalion of men in crowded trenches, weary, most of them, from constant shelling and from plodding trenches knee-deep in slime ; nervous, as all men are who wait for the momentous hour, but sure that their objective would be taken, and unafraid of their destiny at dawn.

Lieut. Eric Haldenly, the Adjutant, had issued the operation orders of the O.C. for the battle at the time when the Battalion moved into the front line. They started with the simple and historic statement that :

" The Canadian Corps will take Vimy Ridge."

. . . . .

During the period from Thursday night, when the 3rd Brigade came into the line, to Sunday night, the eve of the attack, there had been inter-company reliefs to ensure that each man had as much sleep and as much nerve-rest as conditions would allow. The front line was taut, ugly and prone to break into trouble, and there was little sleep for the garrison. The main communication trench—Douai Avenue—was deep with mud and was under the steady pound of 5·9s, which hammered at it incessantly, so that in spots it was 15 feet wide, a gaping ditch with the bottom a clinging quagmire. . . .

Now, in the last hours of that cheerless Easter Sunday, along the length of the Ridge, files of men were weaving forward in the thick, wet blackness, loaded with battle equipment, tense with what awaited, and by midnight had started to line their jump-off positions in battle array.

. . . . .

IT was cold, awful waiting for that historic zero. The guns rumbled their threat far down by Arras and nearer, where crouched the kilted, waiting waves of the 51st (Highland) Division. The 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade were on the Battalion's right, and beyond them were the Imperial Highland Battalions.

To the left, along the entire length of the mighty Ridge, Canadian men-at-arms waited in that same fearful suspense. The infantry of the entire Canadian Army Corps were lying there in the drizzling dark, waiting for the moment when they would make the first concerted attack as a Corps, the four divisions side by side. The minutes dragged in interminable nervous perversity from 4 o'clock to 5. It was raining a thin, cold, driving rain. . . . Down in Douai Tunnel, the O.C. and H.Q. fumed in an agony of inaction, and along the line the Highlanders cursed softly as nerves cried for the relief of a smoke they couldn't have. Officers moved like shadowy ghosts along their platoon or company lines. A sergeant peered at the luminous dial of a watch that in twenty minutes was to dangle redly on the wire. Everywhere watches which had been carefully synchronized were looked at again and again as the seconds ticked relentlessly on—5.25 a.m.

Five minutes to go, and the belts came tight : for miles men were tensing for the spring as a Hun machine-gun coldly chattered over the prone line of No. 4 Company and a lazy star shell went up and over, misted and beautiful, and sizzled out in the evil water of a crater.

Two minutes ; one minute ; thirty seconds ; men gasped—perhaps a brief prayer. A mighty roar shook Douai Tunnel and all that trench world, and the stupendous, stunning barrage of April 9 crashed down before the Highland line. In a flicker of time the dawn was raving. A frantic shower of coloured lights sprayed up through the fog from the German line.

. . . . .

NOW they were up and moving like automatons towards the inferno. Throats were parched and men were weak from nerves. But now they could move, there was action. . . . At once it was noted that the German artillery positions had been smothered by the well-laid fire of the British gunners. So there were few casualties in the Battalion from shells, but the sting of machine-guns was still there. . . . The Highlanders pressed forward against a thin rain in which now and then were traces of snow.

. . . . .

They were over and into the front line on the very heels of the barrage. It was a blasted ditch now, in places

obliterated. Sergeant Fred Wade of the Scouts was one of the first to go down, killed by machine-gun fire on the Hun wire.

Maxims were spurting here and there all along the line, though the infantry defence was broken by the barrage as it never before had been for the Battalion. Lieut. Ian Cameron was killed as he drove for one of them, and Sergeant Monaghan fell beside him and men were going down in clusters in the livid blackness. The song of the machine-guns grew with the passing minutes.

THERE were countless clashes and many instances of gallantry unseen in the fitful light as trench-pockets and machine-gun nests were bombed out. They were "in" throughout the Battalion's front, and the advance to the Black Line [Zwölfer Weg, the first objective], far forward and down a slow slope, was started with little delay.

. . . . . .

It was stumbling, blind and laborious progress. The entire area was harrowed, rowelled and blasted, and smoking from the roll of our barrage. Ahead, it was still vomiting redly, bursting deep, well-built trenches into mere gullies in the earth. . . . Now the prisoners were going back, arms high.

THUNDER OF GUNS AND LEADEN HAIL OF MAXIMS

These two photographs show strangely-contrasted scenes during the taking of Vimy Ridge. As stated in this page, though a terrific barrage had broken the infantry defence, Maxims were still spitting along the line. The photograph above shows the reason. The German machine-guns were in such concrete emplacements as this, which were proof against all but a direct hit. In the lower photograph, Canadians at Vimy are enjoying the pleasure of turning a captured German gun against its former owners.

Photos, Canadian Records

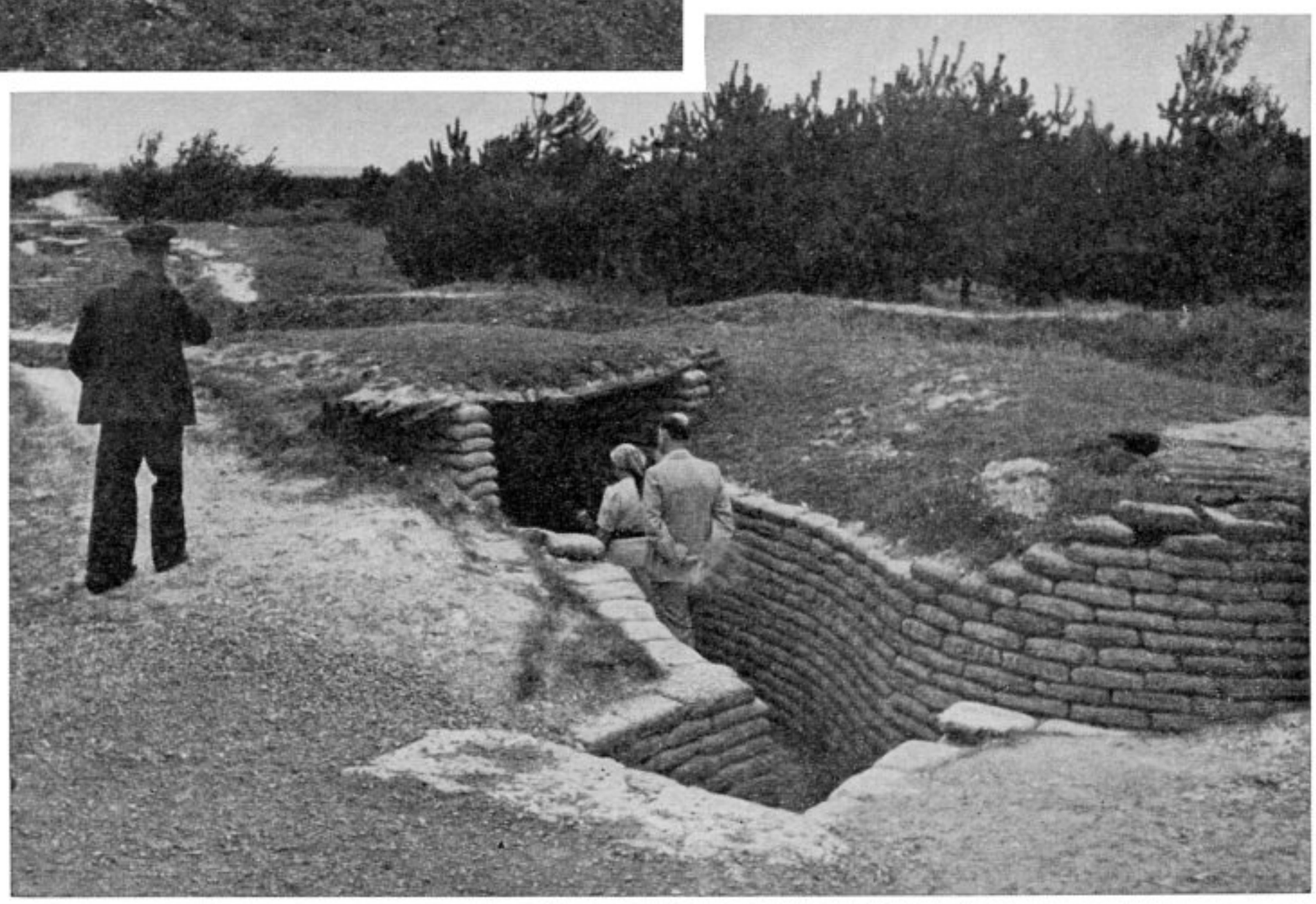
VIMY RIDGE—

WHERE CANADA

FOUGHT AND WON

Here are scenes on Vimy Ridge photographed shortly after the great battle of April 1917, in which Canadian troops wrested the heights from the Germans. Above is a provisional memorial to men of the 2nd Canadian Division who lost their lives on the shell-torn Ridge. Right, the battlefield as seen from the top of the Ridge, looking eastward over the Douai plain towards the new German line. The lower photograph shows an enormous mine crater on the Ridge, with a memorial in the background. Temporary monuments erected during the war have now been replaced by the magnificent Canadian National Memorial seen in page 1095.

Canadian Records



WHERE CANADA TRIUMPHED

VISITORS NOW WANDER

On Vimy Ridge can still be seen many of the old war-time trenches. They have been reconditioned, the sandbags concreted to give them permanence, and the whole incorporated in a park as part of the Canadian memorial scheme. These photographs show: top left, what once was No Man's Land; above, Mr. Stubbs, the Canadian custodian of the park, who fought at Vimy, standing by the old Canadian front line; left, visitors examining a portion of the trenches; and below, the German front-line trenches of 1917. "Danger de Feu" refers to danger from unexploded ammunition still lying about.

Photos, W. A. Davis, copyright A.P. Ltd.

THIS WAS THE VILLAGE OF VIMY

When the Canadians had taken Vimy Ridge they looked down on the east side upon the village of Vimy, to which, as well as to the railway near by, the Germans clung until April 13, when they retired and British troops entered Vimy. These Canadian soldiers are walking through what was once the main street of Vimy, razed almost to the ground by the intense bombardment of the previous week.

Canadian Records

in greater numbers as they were rooted out. They were taken prisoner by the dug-outful.

. . . . . .

The Black Line was likewise battered and pummelled by the barrage, and the garrison, after a feeble resistance, gave it up. Many prisoners who were taken were too dazed to realize what was happening to them. Some instinctively fought and were killed. It was not the usual bucket-helmeted, grey-clad regiment which the Battalion defeated on Vimy, but a fresh unit of Marines. Some of their officers were clad in the blue of the Navy, and the entire garrison of Vimy Ridge, from the front line to Zwölfer Weg, was killed or taken prisoner. They had no time to get back.

THERE was a forty-minute pause at the Black Line. . . Day was coming slowly, dull and grey, as the moppers-up joined the attacking line. . . Swiftly the Black Line was temporarily consolidated while the barrage arced over their heads with a weight that could only spell success. It roared down for thirty-eight minutes in a monotonous welter of sound 200 yards beyond them. . . Machine-gun posts were pushed forward and the next phase of the advance of the Battalion's attack prepared.

At 6.55 a.m. they were going on. The Black Line was left behind. Captain Turnbull [O.C. No. 1 Company] now followed Hapsburger Weg, the left flank of the Battalion beyond the Black Line. Where the barrage had pounded, the trenches were literally smashed out of existence, garrisons were wiped out and countless Huns were buried under the flails of the guns. The Germans met were staggering and dazed. The Battalion swept over 700 yards to Zwischen Stellung—the last objective of the 3rd Brigade—almost exactly as planned. . . Here and there were casualties and at isolated spots there was nasty fighting in the grey light of morning. . .

The Highlanders were settling into their newly won line well before 7 a.m. and were swiftly consolidating long before the 1st Brigade were due to go over their heads. . . The Huns were aiding the Highlanders to dig and were working with a vigour that only the urge of a bayonet prick produces.

Lieut.-Col. Peck of the 16th Battalion came along for a chat with Lieut.-Col. Bent [O.C. 15th Batt.] and the two battalion commanders watched the shelling of Thélus together. The entire Brigade front moved about freely, a full mile forward from the Hun front line that had stood since 1915. All ranks were watching Thélus vanishing in the smother of fire from our artillery which was blasting out a road for the Canadian waves still to come. The defences of Vimy Ridge had been irretrievably smashed.

. . . . . .

IT was broad day. The weather was clearing. Victory was in the air and the 1st Brigade were given a joyful greeting at 9.55 a.m. as they passed through. By 11 a.m. they were over the Ridge and had established a line beyond the eastern bank, far inside the German lines of the previous day . . . By the time all the personnel of Battalion H.Q. had moved up from Douai Tunnel a check was being made of the casualties, and the Battalion had another thrilling sight as the kilted waves of the 51st Division, far on their right, went up the slope in the sun, which came out for a time to brighten the thundering world below with a portent of final victory.

Shortly after noon . . . the entire area of the Ridge appeared to be cleared. The face of the historic slope, still smoking here and there from burning dug-outs and wild with shell fire on the left where the 4th Division fought desperately to oust the Boche from the Ridge top, was crawling with men—pioneers, engineers, entrenching parties and artillerymen. Gun teams were sweating laboriously forward over the shell-tumbled battlefield and the famous plank road was already crawling forward as parties ahead uncovered the Lens–Arras Road from the earth flung over it by months of shell fire. It came into view like some prehistoric highway, and few of the men in the ranks, for they were not map students, had known before of its existence. Men had not walked in daylight here for nearly two years. Already the entire area of the Battalion's advance had been combed by stretcher and burial parties. Shortly the Battalion's dead—they numbered at this time more than 60—were lying beside the Lens–Arras road awaiting burial in the new cemetery established near by, and soon a regimental cross was erected at the head of the 15th Battalion's graves. . . . This original Vimy Cross is now preserved in the Armouries in Toronto.

. . . . . .

THAT afternoon . . . many of the Battalion visited the top of the Ridge, surveyed the smoking ruins of Thélus, and examined the caves near by. Standing here, gazing over the brow of the hill towards the clean, green fields of the plain of Douai, the real thrill of the glorious attack of the Canadians in the morning became apparent. From the crest of the Ridge, which on the German side dropped about 100 feet in the 700 yards to the railway, and at places was almost sheer fall, Douai was visible far back, one white spire standing like a beckoning finger, and lesser ones keeping it company.

The eastern slope, which sometimes was almost a cliff, was green and thick with underbrush and at the bottom ran the high, raised road-bed of the Lens–Arras railway. Men marvelled how the Hun had allowed himself to be pushed off this vast promontory. And so, as the word sang forth on the wires of the World that " The Canadians have taken Vimy Ridge," men of the Battalion were thrilling to their deed as seldom, if ever, they did on a day of victory. The average soldier takes such things as all in the day's work, and leaves the outward evidence of the elation of triumph to his war correspondents. But Vimy was different.

THEY DID NOT FIGHT ON EMPTY STOMACHS

Here is a scene in one of the villages taken by the Canadian troops during their advance to Vimy Ridge. A queue of Canadian soldiers has formed up to get their rations, and with their mess tins in their hands they step up for some welcome stew which the cook is ladling out from the dixie. Nothing matters more than souvenirs. They would probably rather lose their dinners than their trophies; so they proudly display them in the certainty that a tin hat might be left behind more safely than a pickelhaube.

Canadian Records

ALL My TANKS were KNOCKED OUT

'We Bit Off More Than We Could Chew'

by Major W. H. L. Watson, D.S.O., D.C.M.

IN the early days of the war Major Watson was a dispatch rider and was awarded the D.C.M. for conspicuous gallantry. Later he became an officer with the Tanks, commanding a company of these new engines of war. He lived to see the Tanks fully justify their usefulness at the battle of Cambrai, but the following account is one of gallant but disheartening failure

THE night passed with slow feet, while my tanks were crawling forward over the snow. The Brigade-Major re-wrote his orders. Officers and orderlies came in and out of the cellar. We had some tea, and the General lay down for some sleep. There was a rumour that one of the tanks had become ditched in climbing out of the road. I went out to investigate, and learned that Morris's tank had been slightly delayed. It was, unfortunately, a clear cold night.

When I returned to the cellar the Brigade staff were making ready for the battle. Pads of army signal forms were placed conveniently to hand. The war diary was lying open with a pencil beside it and the carbons adjusted. The wires forward to battalion headquarters were tested. Fresh orderlies were awakened.

Apparently there had been little shelling during the early part of the night. Noreuil itself had been sprinkled continuously with shrapnel, and one or two 5·9s had come sailing over. Forward, the railway embankment and the approaches to it had been shelled intermittently, and towards dawn the Germans began a mild bombardment, but nothing was reported to show that the enemy had heard our tanks or realized our intentions.

I received messages from Haigh that all my tanks were in position, or just coming into position, beyond the railway embankment. Zero hour was immediately before sunrise, and as the minutes filed by I wondered idly whether, deep down in the earth, we should hear the barrage. I was desperately anxious that the tanks should prove an overwhelming success. It was impossible not to imagine what might happen to the infantry if the tanks were knocked out early in the battle. Yet I could not help feeling that this day we should make our name.

We looked at our watches—two minutes to go. We stared at the minute-hands. Suddenly there was a whistling and rustling in the distance, and a succession of little thumps, like a dog that hits the floor when it scratches itself. The barrage had opened. Constraint vanished, and we lit pipes and cigarettes. You would have thought that the battle was over. We had not blown out our matches when there was a reverberating crash overhead.

Few reports arrive during the first forty minutes of a battle. Everybody is too busy fighting. Usually the earliest news comes from wounded men, and naturally their experiences are limited. Brigade headquarters are, as a rule, at least an hour behind the battle. You cannot often stand on a hill and watch the ebb and flow of the fight in the old magnificent way.

AT last the reports began to dribble in and the staff settled down to their work. There were heavy casualties before the German wire was reached. The enemy barrage came down, hot and strong, a few minutes after zero. . . . Fighting hard in the Hindenburg trenches, but few tanks to be seen. . . . The enemy are still holding on to certain portions of the line. . . . The fighting is very severe. . . . Heavy counter-attacks from the sunken road at L.6 b. 5.2. The news is a medley of scraps.

Soon the Brigadier is called upon to act. One company want a protective barrage put down in front of them, but from another message it seems probable that there are Australians out in front. The Brigadier must decide.

One battalion asks to be reinforced from the reserve battalion. Is it time for the reserve to be thrown into the battle? The Brigadier must decide.

They have run short of bombs. An urgent message for fresh supplies comes

OLD AND NEW IN WARFARE

This is a scene behind the lines at the time of which Major Watson writes, April 1917, and it affords an interesting contrast between the old and the new in warfare. Transport horses and mules which have accompanied armies in the field from time immemorial are clustered round a tank, the newest weapon of all. With surprising docility the patient animals became inured to all the terrifying sights and sounds of the battlefields, and it was not long before they learnt to pass without shying the tanks lumbering and rattling along the road.

Imperial War Museum

AFTER A GREAT FEAT OF ARMS

In this chapter Major Watson describes how philosophically the Australians suffered the shattering of their hopes when it became known that all the tanks on which they had depended for support had been knocked out. The Official History of Australia in the War declares in regard to " First Bullecourt " that the 4th Australian Division had achieved what most soldiers then in France would previously have believed impossible—broken without artillery barrage the Hindenburg Line. Above are Australians in a sunken road at Noreuil, a few days after their great feat.

Imperial War Museum

through, and the staff captain hurries out to make additional arrangements.

There is little news of the tanks. One report states that no tanks have been seen, another that a tank helped to clear up a machine-gun post, a third that a tank is burning.

At last R., one of my tank commanders, bursts in. He is grimy, red-eyed, and shaken.

" Practically all the tanks have been knocked out, sir ! " he reported in a hard, excited voice.

BEFORE answering I glanced rapidly round the cellar. These Australians had been told to rely on tanks. Without tanks many casualties were certain and victory was improbable. Their hopes were shattered as well as mine, if this report were true. Not an Australian turned a hair. Each man went on with his job. I asked R. a few questions. The Brigade-Major was listening sympathetically. I made a written note, sent off a wire to the colonel, and climbed into the open air.

It was a bright and sunny morning, with a clear sky and a cool invigorating breeze. A bunch of Australians were joking over their breakfasts. The streets of the village were empty, with the exception of a " runner," who was hurrying down the road.

The guns were hard at it. From the valley behind the village came the quick cracks of the 18-pdrs., the little thuds of the light howitzers, the ear-splitting crashes of the 60-pdrs., and, very occasionally, the shuddering thumps of the heavies. The air rustled and whined with shells. Then, as we hesitated, came the loud murmur, the roar, the overwhelming rush of a 5·9, like the tearing of a giant newspaper, and the building shook and rattled as a huge cloud of black smoke came suddenly into being one hundred yards away, and bricks and bits of metal came pattering down or swishing past.

The enemy was kind. He was only throwing an occasional shell into the village, and we walked down the street in comparative calm.

When we came to the brick shelter at the farther end of the village we realized that our rendezvous had been most damnably ill-chosen. Fifty yards to the west the Germans, before their retirement, had blown a large crater where the road from Ecoust joins the road from Vaulx-Vraucourt, and now they were shelling it persistently. A stretcher party had just been caught. They lay in a confused heap half-way down the side of the crater. And a few yards away a field-howitzer battery in action was being shelled with care and accuracy.

We sat for a time in this noisy and unpleasant spot. One by one officers came in to report. Then we walked up the sunken road towards the dressing station. When I had the outline of the story I made my way back to the Brigade headquarters in the cellar, and sent off a long wire. My return to the brick shelter was, for reasons that at the time seemed almost too obvious, both hasty and undignified. Further reports came in, and when we decided to move outside the village and collect the men by the bank where the tanks had sheltered a few hours before, the story was tolerably complete.

ALL the tanks, except Morris's, had arrived without incident at the railway embankment. Morris ditched at the bank and was a little late. Haigh and Jumbo had gone on ahead of the tanks. They crawled out beyond the embankment into No Man's Land and marked out the starting-line. It was not too pleasant a job. The enemy machine-guns were active right through the night, and the neighbourhood of the embankment was shelled intermittently. Towards dawn this intermittent shelling became almost a bombardment, and it was feared that the tanks had been heard. (We learned later that this was so.)

LANDSHIPS IN LINE AHEAD

Above two tanks of C Battalion, C.21 and C.26, are going into action. It can be seen that in open country such as they are here crossing they make an easy mark for the enemy guns once they are spotted. " Ditching " in the trenches was the next worst disaster that they had to face, and these two machines are carrying torpedo booms, such as were used to support the torpedo nets of a battleship, to assist in the difficult work of unditching.

Imperial War Museum

Skinner's tank failed on the embankment. The remainder crossed it successfully and lined up for the attack just before zero. By this time the shelling had become severe. The crews waited inside their tanks, wondering dully if they would be hit before they started. Already they were dead-tired, for they had had little sleep since their long painful trek of the night before.

Suddenly our bombardment began—it was more of a bombardment than a barrage—and the tanks crawled away into the darkness, followed closely by little bunches of Australians.

ON the extreme right, Morris and Puttock of Wyatt's section were met by tremendous machine-gun fire at the wire of the Hindenburg Line. They swung to the right, as they had been ordered, and glided along in front of the wire, sweeping the parapet with their fire. They received as good as they gave. Serious clutch trouble developed in Puttock's tank. It was impossible to stop since now the German guns were following them. A brave runner carried the news to Wyatt at the embankment. The tanks continued their course, though Puttock's tank was barely moving, and by luck and good driving they returned to the railway, having kept the enemy most fully occupied in a quarter where he might have been uncommonly troublesome.

Morris passed a line to Skinner and towed him over the embankment. They both started for Bullecourt. Puttock pushed on back towards Noreuil. His clutch was slipping so badly that the tank would not move, and the shells were falling ominously near. He withdrew his crew from the tank into a trench, and a moment later the tank was hit and hit again.

Of the remaining two tanks in this section we could hear nothing. Davies and Clarkson had disappeared. Perhaps they had gone through to Hendecourt. Yet the infantry of the right brigade, according to the reports we had received, were fighting most desperately to retain a precarious hold on the trenches they had entered.

In the centre Field's section of three tanks were stopped by the determined and accurate fire of forward field-guns before they entered the German trenches. The tanks were silhouetted against the snow, and the enemy gunners did not miss.

THE first tank was hit in the track before it was well under way. The tank was evacuated, and in the dawning light it was hit again before the track could be repaired.

Money's tank reached the German wire. His men must have " missed their gears." For less than a minute the tank was motionless, then she burst into flames. A shell had exploded the petrol tanks, which in the old Mark I were placed forward on either side of the officer's and driver's seats. A sergeant and two men escaped. Money, best of good fellows, must have been killed instantaneously by the shell.

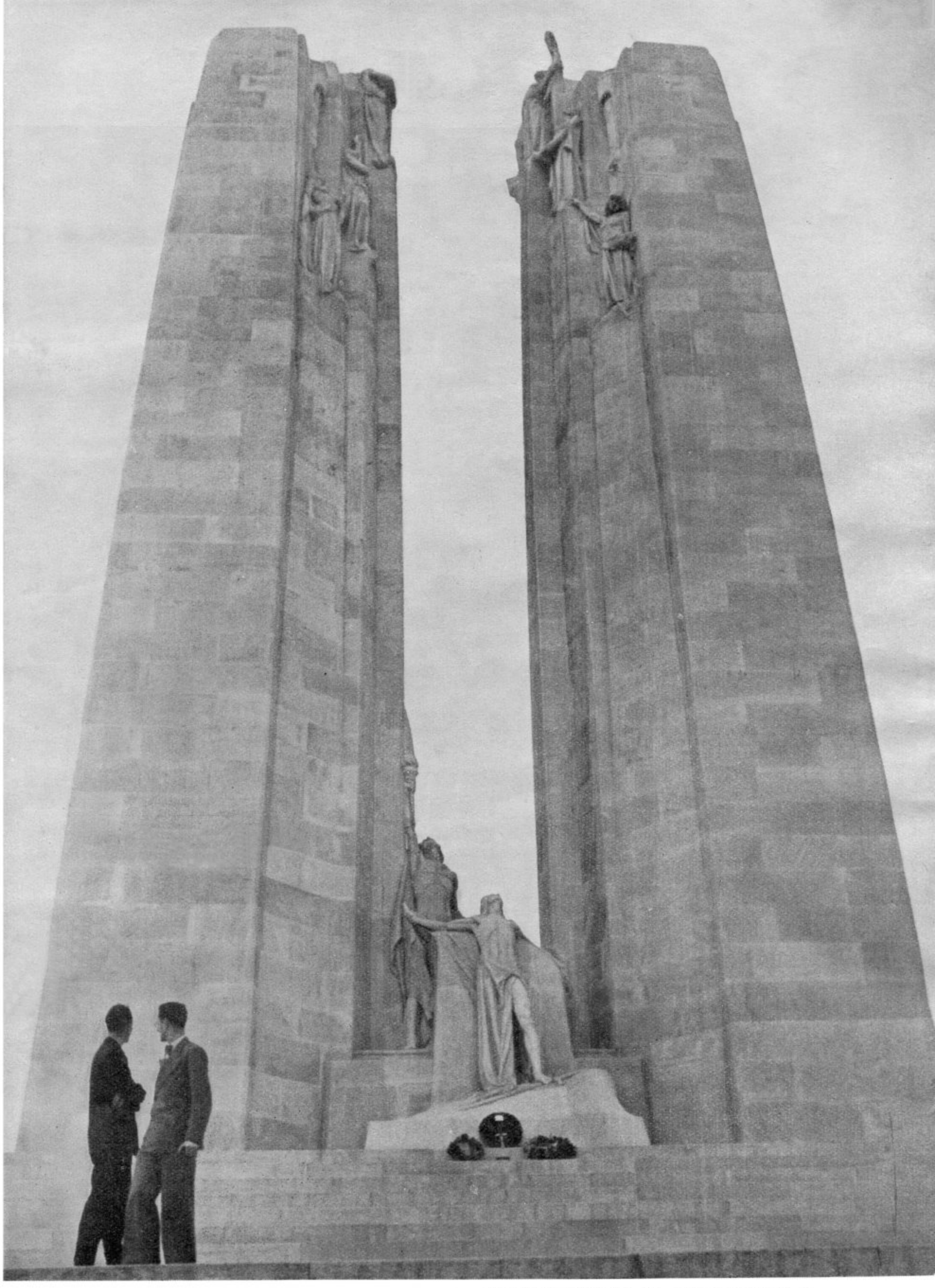
Bernstein's tank was within reach of the German trenches when a shell hit the cab, decapitated the driver, and exploded in the body of the tank.

The corporal was wounded in the arm, and Bernstein was stunned and temporarily blinded. The tank was filled with fumes. As the crew were crawling out, a second shell hit the tank on the roof. The men under the wounded corporal began stolidly to salve the tank's equipment, while Bernstein, scarcely knowing where he was, staggered back to the embankment. He was packed off to a dressing station, and an orderly was sent to recall the crew and found them still working stubbornly under direct fire.

Swears' section of four tanks on the left were slightly more fortunate.

BIRKETT went forward at top speed and, escaping the shells, entered the German trenches, where his guns did great execution. The tank worked down the trenches towards Bullecourt, followed by the Australians. She was hit twice, and all the crew were wounded, but Birkett went on fighting grimly until his ammunition was exhausted and he himself was badly wounded in the leg.

Then he at last turned back, followed industriously by the German gunners. Near the embankment he stopped the tank to take his bearings. As he was climbing out, a shell burst against the



CANADA'S TRIBUTE TO HER HERO SONS

This noble double pylon, rising from a massive platform, is the Canadian National War Memorial, honouring the memory of her 60,000 fallen. It stands on Vimy Ridge, the scene of Canada's epic effort during the Great War. The memorial, which is the work of Mr. Walter Allward, was unveiled by King Edward VIII in the presence of the President of the French Republic on July 26, 1936. Standing on Hill 145, this glorious monument, floodlit by night, is visible for many miles across the Douai plain.

Photo, W. A. Davis, copyright A.P. Ltd.

THE CAVALRY HAVE BEEN BUSY

After a long period of dismounted work, the cavalry once more took to their horses, acting as contact patrols and outposts during the withdrawal of the Germans to the Hindenburg Line. Above are British Yeomanry, looking contented with their lot as they halt for a rest and a smoke in the ruined village of Caulincourt, not far from St. Quentin, on April 21, 1917. The man on the extreme right is sporting a German gunner's helmet, which is, however, minus its chinstrap and the metal ball which normally surmounted it. During this retreat several villages were captured, says an official correspondent, " in the best cavalry style, according to the old traditions."

Imperial War Museum

Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

(Continued from page ii of this wrapper)

has called forth a letter from a friend of Lady Caroline Grenville, who asked me to help him to obtain copies of the photo. This I have done. Lady Grenville is the late Master of Kinloss's aunt. She and the Baroness Kinloss, his mother, had never before seen a picture of his grave.

BOTH realistic and romantic are the memories which our picture of the Mine Crater near Hooge (Part 11) brings back to Mr. Joseph Phillips, of Dublin :

> " The dead bodies, the stench, the heat, the flies eating the human flesh ; in fact, if you got a dead German by the finger-nails and pulled, his flesh would come off just like pulling off a glove. I remember quite well lighting a fire on the edge of the crater close to the dead bodies to make some tea. When there was some of the General Staff, including naval officers, looking at the destruction the Huns caused, one of the officers remarked to me that I would have a good appetite. Dead bodies never gave my mind a thought ; I was used to it. We all were. I wish I had a penny for all the poor chums I laid to rest."

Yet out of this melancholy business good was to come, for Mr. Phillips writes :

> " I buried a dead comrade at Hooge. He was unknown to me at the time. I found a photo in his haversack ; kept it as a keepsake. About nine months after, when I was on leave in Dublin, I showed the photo to the editor of our local newspaper He inserted same in the press. This same photo was claimed by a young lady as one that she sent to her brother. I sent the original photo to the young lady, and all particulars of her dead brother We were married ten days afterwards."

It was also through this photo that my Dublin correspondent met the friend who was best man at his wedding. They were in the same regiment, but had hitherto known each other only by sight.

COL. GRAHAM SETON HUTCHISON'S contributions to our pages have proved very popular, both among those readers who are thoroughly familiar with his books, as well as those who see his writings for the first time. The story of High Wood (Part 18, " Mad Cavalcade ") has inspired Mr. H. H. Tyson, late of the 20th Royal Fusiliers, 19th Bde., 33rd Division, to send me a vivdly written commentary on that disaster. His Division followed close on the heels of the Welsh through Mametz while waiting their turn, and bivouacked in Death Valley on the eastern side of Mametz Wood :

> " Naturally, we scrounged about in the Wood and got a first and lasting impression of wood fighting. Little did we think that we should endure the same horrors a few days later at High Wood (Bois de Foureaux) —a pretty name for one of the most hellish glades on the Somme.
>
> " It was evident that Mametz Wood had been contested foot by foot at great cost It was a shambles, bodies blown to pieces by vicious bombing at point-blank range. I noticed the body of Lieut. Cowie of the Welch Regiment, kneeling straight up in a very shallow trench with a Mills bomb in his hand, ready to be thrown as he himself was struck down.
>
> " Farther inside the Wood were snipers' bodies in trees, trees smashed to matchwood ; trees uprooted had fallen on men already dead in an effort to crush out life which had long since yielded. In the Wood I came across a heavy cumbersome siege gun, taken from the Germans, which bore the name ' Liège,' and a date in the late part of the nineteenth century which I cannot now remember. We were told it had been a Belgian gun captured earlier in the war and put into use against the Allies."

DURING their stay round this part the 19th Brigade went up to support the attacks by the 98th and 100th Brigades at High Wood. " The attacks," says Mr. Tyson, " proved futile because these brave fellows were asked to attack across about 1,000 yards of open ground against unmasked machine-guns and hidden wire Both attacks got into High Wood, but their terrible losses left insufficient numbers to hold what had been gained." Mr. Tyson pays tribute to the veracity of Col. SETON HUTCHISON–" he was there, and handled his machine-guns well ; but there were too few guns and too few gunners."

THE gunners at Mametz Wood could not understand the accurate ranging on their position. The 18-pounders, on the small ridge where the road to Bazentin-le-Grand branched off, were badly knocked out :

> " Later that day some of the Scottish Rifles in our Brigade were scrounging in Mametz Wood and on entering a dug-out took prisoner a German artillery officer who was still through to his battery and was conducting a shoot on the gun position I have just mentioned. He was in telephonic communication and had remained alone except for his servant, although Mametz Wood had been cleared some four days previously. It was a brave effort which should be recorded, and I am pleased to say that, in spite of the frayed tempers of our boys, they took him into captivity. At least I saw him leave under escort, but whether he got safely to the ' pen ' I don't know."

ON July 19 and 20, 1916, the Wood was at last gained, with the exception of the north-west corner :

> " I was through to the east side and saw the houses in Flers, which were not very badly knocked about. Many were still roofed. Against heavy barraging and counter-attacks we came back to the centre of High Wood, and a decimated brigade handed over to depleted battalions of what remained of the 100th Brigade.
>
> " They handed over to the relief division who were cleared out after heavy fighting to the south-western edge of the Wood. You could not blame men for not doing the impossible. It took two months' battering and the first assault of Tanks to get that Wood, a place very little bigger than a large English copse."

The time from attacking to relief was 22 hours :

> " Out of my own regiment . . . there answered at roll call, 105 men and two officers out of 25 officers and 885 other ranks. . . . Our other brigades lost just as heavily. Thus was a splendid, highly trained New Army Division utterly wasted. May it never happen again."

Thus, too, do we learn again the bitter lesson that human beings are far less efficient than the machines they have created and in some part have learned to control. In modern war, where the machine is nearly the master, the price paid for inefficiency in its control is human life, and it is a price that is paid patently and at once.

ATROCITIES were matters which more often inflamed the Home Front than the armies. Rumour, no doubt, exaggerated a few instances of butchery committed by the enemy ; but such instances are still vouched for by men who saw them. Mr. Charles Towner, of Clapham Common, mentions incidents at Messines, October 30, 1914. He was a sergeant in 4th Troop, " C " Squadron, 6th Dragoon Guards (" Carabiniers "). On that fine, clear afternoon, he recalls, the London Scottish were coming up to support them, and on the way many received their " baptism of fire." Confusion was general, and this the Germans afterwards tried to turn to their advantage :

> " As evening drew on the surrounding hedgerow of the farm just in our rear was afire, and as we were gazing at the well lit up hedge figures were popping up, as rabbits from their burrows. They were

[*This Note-Book is continued overleaf*

Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

(Continued from page iii of this wrapper)

'Jerries,' dressed up in 'London Scottish' dress and with Scottish caps on. They were approaching us from the rear, and as they neared us, and saw by the light made by the well lit up glare of the hedge that we were Englanders, shouted, 'Don't shoot; ve air de London Schottish!' We were surrounded by them in a very short space of time. We fired rapidly at them as fast as they came on from both flanks, front and rear, with terrifying effect."

Morning brought a spectacle of vengeance after the night's success :

"Imagine our horror on that morning, retiring past the remains of the farmhouse, when we saw one of the finest soldiers in our squadron hung crucified on the door of the farmyard. Such atrocities some people would not believe, but seeing is believing and that was not the only case during the war."

How was "House" played? It would seem that many who were there have forgotten its finer points. Envious tales are told of "bankers" who made small private fortunes out of the game, and the odd numerical terminology it employed has remained in everyone's memory.

The game was referred to in Major Franklin Lushington's chapter, "A Gunner at Festubert," Part 10; and Mr. D. L. Waugh (Coleshill, near Birmingham) believes that the author has confused "House" with "Pontoon." Here are Mr. Waugh's directions for playing "House":

"A card was handed to each participant, for which he paid a penny, and it bore a number of lines of figures in squares, each card differing. A man then produced from a bag, one at a time, small circular wooden blocks bearing a number, which was called out. On hearing the number the players placed a bit of match-stick or small pebble over that number if it appeared on his card. Immediately he had covered a complete line of figures, a player would call (shout rather), 'House—on top line,' or whichever line he had covered. He was the winner for that round, and would receive his winnings, which consisted of the whole of the amount paid for the cards less twopence in the shilling, which was retained by the owner of the cards and blocks"

This, my correspondent believes, was the only game permitted by the Authorities, and there were several variations of it. "House" numbers are explained thus :

"'Clicketty Click' was used as easier to say than sixty-six. 'Number seven was so-called to distinguish it from 'Legs' eleven 'Kelly's Eye' was number one 'Number' nine, or 'medicine and duty' was called to distinguish it from five: 'Top of the house' was 99—there were 99 blocks used.

"'Connaught Rangers' was 88—the 88th Foot, and various other regiments' names were called and one needed to know that each was the — Foot."

Mr. Waugh adds that "old sweats" in the branch of the bank where he works often find it convenient to use these "number names" for accurate dictation.

It was to be expected that Gallipoli would bring in a great quantity of correspondence. Indeed, letters about it began to arrive long before the Parts devoted to Gallipoli were in my readers' hands. The evacuation of the British position is the subject of Mr. S. W. Blythman's letter. Mr. Blythman was a guide at both Suvla Bay and Cape Helles, and writes :

"I led my battalion off at the evacuation. After leaving Suvla Bay, we went to Mudros. From there we went back to Cape Helles. One officer, myself and one man were in charge of a post in 'Y' gully, at the junction of Eskie Lines. My officer checked the troops out of the line on the final night. After they had all passed we went behind them"

Two R.E.s closed the barbed wire gap across the Gully, and the troops proceeded to the beach :

"When we arrived there in the darkness, a voice came from out at sea telling us they could not take us off, the landing-place having been smashed up; so we had to proceed round the cliffs to the end of Cape Helles. There were not many of us, but I can bet the majority did not feel any too bright. But we got a jerk on, and a voice met us in the darkness with, 'For God's sake, get a move on: it will soon be getting light!' So we were crowded into a lighter and taken to Imbros. The R.E.s who closed the wire gap have a reunion in London. I believe there are six of them altogether."

Returning to his regiment at Mudros, Mr. Blythman was greeted by his Adjutant: "So you've arrived safe. You know, you were left behind so that the main body of troops could be got away." His guide's pass was worded thus (he has it still) :

"L/Cpl. Blythman and 1 Man have permission to proceed to the beach via Lu La Babu to ascertain route with view to acting as guides in future.

(Signed) CAPT. PARRY,
40th Bde. Divisional Headquarters."

One of the last men in his sector to leave Gallipoli, Mr. Blythman's story is interesting to compare with that of Mr. J. C. Fenton (Droylesden, Manchester), a survivor of one of the first units (Plymouth Div., Royal Marine Light Infantry) to land in the Dardanelles, and one of the youngest, as he is now only 41. He is using the Old Comrades' Corner to trace the relatives of a Captain Tetley, who :

". . . . . tried to stop me from landing, but I had to go: and on the 10th of May 1915 we went over the top with the cry ringing in our ears, 'Good-bye, lads!'

"We were sent out for snipers, but instead of snipers our platoon went straight into the Turks' front-line trenches and got badly cut up."

All the time Pte. Fenton was on the left of Capt. Tetley, who recommended him for the M.M., and was afterwards killed when he returned to the line from hospital in Malta. Mr. Fenton thinks the real blunder of the Dardanelles was made :

". . . on the 4th of March 1915—landing a company of Marines on either side of the Dardanelles and then taking us away to Port Said for 10 days to reorganize the ships' stores and then go back to the general landing in April, which gave the Turks plenty of time to have barbed wire and other obstacles to prevent operations being carried out."

After an interval of some weeks, Gunner Darbyshire and his gun team reappear in my correspondence. Yet another member of the team, Mr. Harry Nunn of Carlisle, adds further points of information to the letter I quoted (in Part 10) from Driver Mansfield : "'Tich,' my Gun Wheel Driver—I thought he was dead. The last time I saw him he was sitting on one side in the ambulance—said he was having a ride to Berlin. I know he got captured afterwards." Gunner Darbyshire, Mr. Nunn recalls, joined them from "H" Battery on mobilization from Trowbridge :

"Darbyshire and Osborne got a French Medal for their bit of stuff and Darby got the stripe when we came to England and St. John's Wood. Osborne was sent back to France from the Wood, and I never heard any more about him. The Battery "L" left the Wood again for Gallipoli on March 16, 1915, and were in the Landing. Darby thought so much of his French Medal he carried it about in his pocket. Sergeant Scarsbrook was No. 1 of our Gun, Darby No. 2, and I was Gun Layer. Scarsbrook was killed outright and Darby was badly wounded and died as he was put on board ship; but our C.O. got permission to have him buried on shore [Gallipoli]."

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