

THE ROYAL FUSILIERS  
IN THE GREAT WAR



H. C. O'NEILL



J. Bradley

Served with the  
26<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers  
from Oct 1915 to Feb 1919

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*George R. S.*

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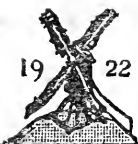
BY

H. C. O'NEILL, O.B.E.

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF THE WAR"

*ILLUSTRATED*

19 22



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LONDON · WILLIAM HEINEMANN





*Dedicated*  
by  
*HIS MAJESTY'S GRACIOUS PERMISSION*  
to  
*KING GEORGE V.*  
*Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Fusiliers*



## PREFACE

To the army the subordinate armies are the units ; to the sectional armies, the army corps ; to the army corps, the divisions ; to the divisions, the brigades ; to the brigades, the battalions. Only when we reach the battalions does the full incidence rest upon the companies and the individuals who compose them. It is this that constitutes the main difficulty of writing a regimental history. In a regiment a private or N.C.O. is not X Y Z 123456, but " that bandy-legged little chap who played the fiddle," a distinct and quite human personality. It is the human side of war that is uppermost. But the historian cannot on these grounds excuse himself from dealing with the military framework into which these men fitted. The stress falls in this, as in the more personal side of the war, upon detail. If regimental histories were all written with a perfect knowledge of detail, the history of the war would be made supremely easy for those who have to deal with operations in their larger aspect.

But in the case of the Royal Fusiliers the historian is faced with the task of dealing with 235,476 men who fought in every theatre, except Mesopotamia, put in an appearance at almost every considerable battle of the war, and whose dead numbered 21,941. The problem of dealing with the history of these battalions in the space has been extremely difficult, and I have been reluctantly compelled to adopt a compromise. The complete story could not be told in all its detail. On the other hand, the purely military narrative which makes the more irresistible challenge to my mind might have been concentrated, but it would have tended to be lifeless. I have attempted to meet both claims by dealing with every engagement that seemed to deserve notice as correctly and completely as

possible, while singling out incidents appealing to me as more significant. In the final resort some loss of perspective and some injustice are inevitable. But injustice is inevitable on any plan. In this laborious, though fascinating, inquiry I have been struck by nothing so much as the terrible disproportion and fundamental injustice of the awards.

Take, for instance, the one case of the landing of the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers in Gallipoli, which so far has not been justly appreciated. The tardy recognition that came to the battalion came so late that many whose work should have been recognised had fallen, and only the Victoria Cross is given posthumously. Many, of course, fell on the day of the landing; but many more had passed away before recognition came to the survivors. One or two regiments were seen to fall in heroic action, and their story ran on every one's lips. But other men quite as heroic fell unmarked, frequently unnoticed, by their fellows, and sympathetic friends try to soothe wounded hearts at home by recollections which are frequently found to be incompatible. If I were asked to say what incident in the three landings in Gallipoli, "X," "W" and "Y," appealed most to me, I should say with little hesitation it was the stand of the gallant company ("X") of the Royal Fusiliers under Captain Leslie on the left of the "X" beach. The company dwindled to a platoon in the day's fighting. Leslie himself fell. But he held off the repeated onslaughts of the Turks, protected the landing of the 87th Brigade, and made possible that swift march to the right that secured elbow-room for the Lancashire landing.

My story therefore is probably not more unjust than in any case it must have been. It is impossible here to set down all the books I have consulted. I have read all I knew to be published. It is also impossible to thank all who have helped me. Without the help of Generals Donald and Newenham I could not have made much headway, and I have received the most generous help

from all to whom I have appealed, from Colonel W. Hill, Lieut.-Colonel T. R. Mallock, and Lieut.-Colonel Malone, especially. As it was wholly impossible within the space to do full justice to the personal side of the story, a long appendix has been devoted to accounts of soldiers who actually took part in the various operations. I must thank those who have kindly allowed me to use their contributions. I have also to thank Captain Gibson, of the Infantry Records Office, and Mr. A. E. Dixon, of the Committee of Imperial Defence, for bearing with an ambitious and continuous series of demands.

But, of course, the responsibility for the book is wholly mine, and I trust it is not altogether an unworthy tribute to the war record of the Royal Fusiliers.

H. C. O'N.



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# THE ROYAL FUSILIERS IN THE GREAT WAR

## CHAPTER I

### REVEILLE

AT the outbreak of the war there were four regular and three special reserve battalions of Royal Fusiliers, besides the first four (City of London) battalions, the London Regiment (Territorials), who are affiliated to the regiment. Before the armistice forty-five battalions had been raised, thirty-five of which served overseas; the Territorial battalions had thrown off numerous duplicates, and there had been formed the 10th Cadet Battalion, also a Royal Fusiliers unit. Omitting the last mentioned, there were formed in all before the armistice fifty-nine Royal Fusilier battalions.

Even so summary a survey gives one pause. It is obvious that already more battalions have been enumerated than took part in the first battle of the British Expeditionary Force; and the regiment does not diminish, but grows, as the inquiry into its numbers and services is prosecuted. At the battle of the Somme there were a greater number of Royal Fusiliers engaged in France than the total allied force at Inkerman. The *dépôt* dealt with a body of men (153,000) exceeding the whole of the original Expeditionary Force, and although not all of them were necessarily drafted to the regiment, the total number of Royal Fusiliers must have exceeded the total number of combatants in any of the great battles of the nineteenth century, with the exception, perhaps, of half a dozen.

It is a difficult matter to give the exact number of men

who passed through the regiment during the war.\* Clearly the number was very considerable. Apart from the City of London Regiment, a rough † estimate would give about 195,000. This may be taken, at any rate, as a first approximation. The 29th Londons numbered about 3,681, and the 30th about 2,807. If we add these and also the number attributable to the 1st (c. 9,408), 2nd (c. 8,133), 3rd (c. 9,199), and 4th (c. 7,248) Londons, we get a total of 235,476 men who wore the badge of the Royal Fusiliers during the war. It is a great number; and, even with the changed regard for numbers which the war insensibly produced, it is impossible to think of it but as amazing.

So great is the roll of the regiment that it may be taken to be the British Army, or indeed the British race, in little. If you seek men of leisure, you may find them here; if sportsmen, here they are; if bankers, accountants, stock-brokers, lawyers, men of science, administrators, poets, writers or 100,000 cockneys grousing in a characteristically hearty manner and concealing a wealth of heroism and kindness under a proper protective irony—here they are. In fine, here is the British race in frieze and fustian.

\* \* \* \*

It will be useful to assemble the battalions in summary form.

#### BATTALIONS OF THE ROYAL FUSILIERS DURING THE GREAT WAR.

1st.	Regular.
2nd.	Regular.
3rd.	Regular.
4th.	Regular.
5th.	Reserve (Dover).
6th.	Reserve (Dover).
7th.	Special Reserve, France, 23/7/16.
8th.	Service.
9th.	Service.

\* The war is taken as having ended on November 11th, 1918

† This estimate is called "rough" because it is difficult to determine its precise accuracy. But it is given only after a very careful survey with the help of the Records Office.

- 10th. (Stockbrokers.)
- 10th (b) (Intelligence Corps.)
- 11th. Service.
- 12th. Service.
- 13th. Service.
- 14th. Training, later 31st Training Reserve Battalion.
- 15th. Training, later 32nd Training Reserve Battalion.
- 16th. Training, later 22nd Training Reserve Battalion.
- 17th. (Empire.)
- 18th. (1st Public Schools.)
- 19th. (2nd Public Schools.)
- 20th. (3rd Public Schools.)
- 21st. (4th Public Schools.)
- 22nd. (Kensington.)
- 23rd. (1st Sportsman's.)
- 24th. (2nd Sportsman's.)
- 25th. (Frontiersmen.)
- 26th. (Bankers.)
- 27th. Training Reserve, later 103rd Training Reserve Battalion.
- 28th. Training Reserve, later 104th Training Reserve Battalion.
- 29th. Training Reserve, later 105th Training Reserve Battalion.
- 30th. Training Reserve, later 106th Training Reserve Battalion, then 459th Infantry Battalion, then 51st Young Soldiers' Battalion.
- 31st. Training Reserve, later 107th Training Reserve Battalion, then 265th Infantry Battalion, then 52nd Young Soldiers' Battalion.
- 32nd. Service (East Ham).
- 33rd. Labour.
- 34th. Labour.
- 35th. Labour.
- 36th. Labour.
- 37th. Labour.
- 38th. (Jewish.)
- 39th. (Jewish.)
- 40th. (Jewish.)
- 41st. (Jewish) Training Reserve.

- 42nd. (Jewish) Training Reserve.
- 43rd. Garrison, raised in France, 25/9/15.
- 44th. Garrison, raised in France, 25/9/15.
- 45th. North Russian Relief Force, Park Royal, 8/4/19.
- 46th. North Russian Relief Force, Park Royal, 8/4/19.
- 47th. New Garrison, raised Hounslow, 14/5/19.

## CITY OF LONDON BATTALIONS.

- 1st Londons\*. 3 overseas battalions and 1 reserve.
- 2nd Londons . 3 overseas battalions and 1 reserve.
- 3rd Londons . 3 overseas battalions and 1 reserve.
- 4th Londons . 3 overseas battalions and 1 reserve.
- 29th Londons . { Home service battalions of low category
- 30th Londons . { men, many of whom had been overseas and disabled.

\*

\*

\*

\*

The brigades and divisions in which the Royal Fusilier battalions spent the greatest part of their service overseas may be seen at a glance from the following table :—

1st Battalion .	} 17th Brigade .	24th Division.
12th " .		
2nd Battalion .	86th Brigade .	29th Division.
3rd Battalion .	85th Brigade .	28th Division.
4th Battalion .	9th Brigade .	3rd Division.
7th Battalion .	190th Brigade .	63rd Division.
8th Battalion .	} 36th Brigade .	12th Division.
9th " .		
10th Battalion .	} 111th Brigade	{ 37th Division. (34th Division, July and August, 1916.)
13th " .		
11th Battalion .	54th Brigade .	18th Division.
20th Battalion .	19th Brigade .	33rd Division.
22nd Battalion .	99th Brigade .	} 2nd Division.
23rd " .	99th " .	
17th " .	5th " .	
24th " .	5th " .	

\* In order to avoid confusion the Territorial battalions Royal Fusiliers are referred to throughout this book as 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Londons. The Regular and Service Battalions are referred to as " 1st Battalion," or " 1st Royal Fusiliers "; " 2nd Battalion," " 2nd Royal Fusiliers," etc.

26th Battalion	.	124th Brigade	.	} 41st Division.
32nd	„	123rd	„	
1/1 London Regt.	.	167th Brigade	.	} 56th Division.
1/3	„	167th	„	
1/4	„	168th	„	
1/2	„	169th	„	
2/1 London Regt.	.			
2/2	„	} 173rd Brigade	.	} 58th Division.
2/3	„			
2/4	„			
	*	*	*	*

Some idea of their war service may be gathered from the table given on pp. 6 and 7, which summarises the movements of the Regular and Service battalions. The movements of the Londons do not yield as readily to tabular arrangement.

\* \* \* \*

For the first year of the war large numbers of recruits for the regiment arrived at the depôt, were given a few hours of squad drill and, if time allowed, a little elementary musketry. They were then sent off in batches as soon as the various battalions could receive them. At times the nucleus of a whole battalion was despatched in one day. At first clothing and necessaries presented considerable difficulties, and in many cases recruits were sent off in their civilian suits. A little later a plain blue serge uniform and a field service cap were issued; and, when the cold weather set in, civilian overcoats of various shapes and colours were provided. At this time there was a serious shortage of blankets; but, as the result of appeals, a number of sympathetic civilians brought upwards of 1,000 blankets and rugs to the barracks. Later on, when these were no longer required for the troops, they were distributed among a number of hospitals.

In the early days the task of dealing with the large number of recruits devolved upon a very limited staff, composed for the most part of old Royal Fusiliers, either over military age or unfit for active service. Towards





18	FRANCE
19	FRANCE
20	FRANCE
21	FRANCE
22	FRANCE
23	FRANCE
24	FRANCE
25	EAST AFRICA
26	FRANCE ITALY FRANCE
32	FRANCE ITALY
38	EGYPT
39	EGYPT
40	EGYPT
43	Formed of Garrison Guard Cys. in FRANCE
44	" " " " FRANCE
45	North Russian Relief Force, raised 8/4/19.
46	" " " " "

the end of 1914 twelve metropolitan policemen were lent to the depôt, and for the months they remained at Hounslow they proved a very efficient help in the training of the recruits. Sometimes the accommodation was strained almost to the breaking point, when large bodies of men were sent to the depôt at very short notice. "Labour" recruits from all over the country were the first to test the depôt in this way. Later on, numbers of men for substitution from various units arrived at the barracks and stayed for some time as "the Substitution Company." Bodies of men discharged from hospital were also quartered at Hounslow and put through a course of "hardening" before being returned to their reserve units. There were also agricultural companies; and, towards the end of the war, several thousands of "Imperial recruits," nominally British subjects, recruited in U.S.A. and South America, had to be accommodated at the barracks. It is hardly necessary to say that the work represented by all these activities was immense.

The first four battalions were Regular battalions which served with great distinction throughout the war. Two of them, the 2nd and the 4th, each gained two Victoria Crosses. The 5th and 6th were Reserve battalions. Both of them mobilised at Hounslow and went to their war stations a few days after the declaration of war, the 5th under Lieut.-Colonel Vivian Henry and the 6th under Lieut.-Colonel R. C. Batt, M.V.O. There they formed part of the Dover defences and, fully equipped for the field, manned defensive positions. Drafts were prepared for the Expeditionary Force, and within a few weeks began to arrive in increasing numbers. The work became very strenuous. Instructors had to be improvised, the battalions at times being over 4,000 strong, with numerous recruits under training. Before the end of June, 1915, 80 officers and about 3,000 men had been sent to the front by the 5th Battalion alone. Sent to Carrickfergus, Ireland, at the end of 1917, the 6th Battalion had the pleasure of entertaining for three days about 600 N.C.O.'s and men

of the American Expeditionary Force who had been rescued from the S.S. *Tuscania*, torpedoed off the Irish coast early in 1918.

The 7th (Extra Reserve) Battalion after demobilisation reported daily to Finsbury Barracks for roll call, lectures, etc., until August 8th, when it entrained, 18 officers and 750 other ranks strong, for Falmouth. Before leaving London 100 men, under the command of Major the Hon. A. C. S. Chichester,\* had marched to the Guildhall and handed over the battalion colours to the Lord Mayor for safe custody.

The battalion, at first commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Cockerill † and later by Lieut.-Colonel R. S. I. Hesketh, became a draft-finding unit and, like the 5th and 6th Battalions, sent out periodic reinforcements to the Fusilier battalions overseas. This continued until July, 1916, when the 7th mobilised for service in France, becoming part of the 190th Brigade of the 63rd (Naval) Division.

Some of the battalions formed during the war were the direct product of the units already existing. The 8th and 9th, both service battalions, began in this way. A draft of one officer (Lieutenant T. G. Cope) and 100 O.R. left the depôt on August 15th for Colchester in company with a similar draft under Lieutenant D. E. Estill to form the 8th and 9th Battalions respectively. The 8th was reinforced by a draft of at least 500 from the 5th Battalion, and on August 21st Lieut.-Colonel A. C. Annesley arrived to take over command. This battalion secured two Victoria Crosses during the war. Lieut.-Colonel J. C. Robertson was the first C.O. of the 9th, and both battalions, after a period of strenuous training at Colchester and Aldershot, left for France at the end of May, 1915.

The 10th ("Stockbrokers'") Battalion was raised at the direct suggestion of Sir Henry Rawlinson, then Director of Recruiting, by Major the Hon. R. White. In a letter

\* Later transferred to the Irish Guards.

† Transferred to War Office on August 4th. He became Director of Special Intelligence.

to the latter at the Travellers' Club Sir Henry stated his belief that there were "many City *employés* who would be willing to enlist if they were assured that they would serve with their friends." Major White was asked to collect the names and addresses of those who would be willing to serve in the service battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. The battalion, which would be composed entirely of City *employés*, would be sent abroad as soon as it had attained a sufficient standard of efficiency. The letter was dated August 12th. Recruiting began on the 21st, when 210 men presented themselves. The following day the battalion was 425 strong; it was 900 on the 24th, 1,300 on the 25th and 1,600 on the 27th. The numbers speak for themselves; but they represent the result of a careful selection among the eager flock who presented themselves. Parading in all sorts of clothing, from silk hats and morning coats to caps and Norfolk jackets, the battalion was inspected on the 29th by Lord Roberts in Temple Gardens, and marched thence to the Tower Ditch, where they were sworn in by the Lord Mayor, Sir W. Vansittart Bowater, who afterwards became Honorary Colonel. The battalion proceeded to Colchester to begin training, their first C.O. being Lieut.-Colonel Hawker, D.S.O., who was succeeded in November by Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. R. White. In July, 1915, they went to France, where they won many decorations, including a V.C. (Lance-Corporal Robertson) and suffered 2,647 casualties.

There was a twin to this battalion, differing wholly in characteristics from it. How it was raised cannot be told in a few words. Its description was "10th Battalion Royal Fusiliers or Intelligence B," abbreviated I (b). It seems, like Topsy, to have just "growed." The first nucleus was provided by a small body of men from Scotland Yard especially selected for their knowledge of French and German. It performed mysterious and wonderful things, such as forming the buffer state between a colonel and a babel of tongues. This representative of I (b), a professor of languages, had to explain any lapses



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEOFFREY BARTON, K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G.,  
COLONEL OF THE ROYAL FUSILIERS.



from discipline to the colonel, and any punishments inflicted on behalf of discipline to the recruits who were possessed of the gift of tongues. The latter appears to have been the more wearing task, though only by a shade. In France their work consisted in the detection of German agents. Working generally in civilian clothes, the small nucleus expanded into a numerous body of officers and men, recruited for their knowledge of languages, from various units. In civil life these men represented the oddest mixture of classes. There were some of those mere idlers who pick up a variety of languages from their penchant for travel. One was a travelling showman of Russian bears, who piloted performing bears from the extreme north to the southernmost point of Europe. Another was an Anglo-Armenian sergeant, born in France and educated in Czecho-Slovakia and Italy. Another was a strange cross of Aberdeen and Naples.

This aggregation of strange types was at length placed for administrative purposes in one unit, the 10th (b) Royal Fusiliers. Beginning in France, where their counter-espionage work did much to make our intelligence work almost invariably superior to that of the enemy, I (b) gradually spread to Italy, Salonika, the East, and, finally, to Russia.

The 11th Battalion is an example of the meaning of personality. Recruited at Mill Hill as a battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, they were received at Colchester by Colonel the Hon. R. White (of the 10th), who asked them if they would care to be a sister battalion to his own. This was agreed to unanimously. At this time the battalion was simply a body of enthusiastic recruits from Manchester and Notting Hill; and they slept their first night at Colchester under hedges. During the next week officers began to arrive. Major Taylor was the first officer in charge of the battalion; but Lieut.-Colonel C. C. Carr was their first commander. The 10th battalion, which had given the name to the 11th, was transferred to the 11th Brigade; and the 11th battalion was left to

represent the Royal Fusiliers in the brigade. The 11th battalion had the good fortune to find in Mr. S. C. Turner, a City business man, an ideal godfather. It has been very difficult to trace some of the war battalions of the Royal Fusiliers. They have disappeared with a completeness hardly credible in so short a time. But in Mr. Turner the 11th Battalion lives on its individual life. During the war he took charge of every effort for the amelioration of the men's conditions, and saw to their relatives. He invented an ingenious contrivance for drying the men's socks—a very pressing need—and devised a special paper currency for the use of the battalion in France. These "Fusilier" francs and centimes were accepted, not only in the canteens, but by the French people in billeting areas; and, issued at first in exchange for the men's money, were soon used, at the request of the men, for their pay. The difficulties of small change were thus overcome as easily as ingeniously. Between 5,000 and 6,000 men went through this one battalion in the 54th Brigade, with whom they went out to France in July, 1915.

The 12th Battalion was collected at Hounslow and taken down to Shoreham. It was apparently formed in pursuance of Lord Kitchener's policy announced by Sir Henry Rawlinson to Major the Hon. R. White—the desire to extend the scope of the Royal Fusiliers by adding further units to the regiment. About September 25th, 1914, Colonel C. J. Stanton arrived to take command, and the battalion went to France on September 1st, 1915. During the first day of the battle of Loos Colonel Stanton was called to Divisional Headquarters to take over the work of Brigadier-General, and he handed over command to Lieut.-Colonel Garnons-Williams, the second in command, who was mortally wounded the same day. Thus, at one stroke, the higher direction of the battalion, in whom all had learned to trust, was wiped out. Fortunately in Major Compton the unit found a worthy successor to these distinguished soldiers.



The 13th Battalion was formed in much the same way as the 12th. It was assembled in October, 1914, the first C.O. being Colonel F. P. Hutchinson. After a period of training the battalion left for France in July, 1915, where it performed distinguished service. Colonel Des Vœux took the unit to France, and remained in command until August, 1916, when he was evacuated sick.

In the "Army List," at the end of 1914, the 14th appears as a service battalion, as do also the 15th and 16th. But these were all training reserve battalions. The nucleus of the two latter was furnished by the 6th (Reserve) Battalion, like which they performed the most necessary and important *rôle* of training drafts for the front. The battalions were first commanded by Lieut.-Colonel C. R. Hely-Hutchinson, Colonel S. G. Bird, D.S.O., and Lieut.-Colonel G. R. Lascelles, respectively. The staffs of these units consisted chiefly of N.C.O.'s of the Royal Fusiliers, and the work of training went on so smoothly that reinforcements were sent out at regular intervals. The 16th Battalion despatched drafts every nine weeks.

The 17th (Empire) Battalion was raised by a body of gentlemen styled "The British Empire Committee." The motive which drew them together in August, 1914, was the desire to assist in the raising of troops; and their first intention was to raise a cavalry regiment on the lines of the Imperial Light Horse. After various communications with the military authorities it was found that cavalry were not desired, but the Committee were authorised on August 30th, 1914, to raise a battalion of infantry to be designated the Empire Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. It was subsequently numbered "the 17th (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (Empire)." The battalion was raised within ten days, and it went into camp at Warlingham on September 12th. This successful result says much for the energy of the Committee, under the chairmanship of General Sir Bindon Blood, G.C.B., who, at the request of the battalion, became their honorary colonel. The Committee also included Mr. Herbert Nield, K.C., M.P.,

and Major-General Lionel Herbert, C.B., who became secretary early in 1915, and very largely contributed to the successful completion of the task. The same gentlemen later raised, at the request of the War Office, two brigades of Field Artillery, a Field Company R.E., and a Divisional Signal Company R.E. They clothed, equipped and hutted the battalion, whose first commanding officer was Major G. Harland Bowden, M.P. The men never forgot the welcome they received at Warlingham, and "Warlingham Crater," near Givenchy, perpetuated their connection with the pleasant Surrey village. Their war service secured many distinctions, including a Victoria Cross for an action which stands out even among heroic deeds.

British Public Schools and Universities yielded the material for the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st Battalions. The origin of these four battalions is fortunately clear. On August 26th, 1914, there appeared in *The Times* a letter over the signature "Eight Unattached," calling upon all Public School men of similar age and qualifications (*i.e.*, marksmen at Bisley between the years 1898 and 1903) to discuss the formation of a "Legion of Marksmen" at 59a, Brook Street, W., between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m., on August 27th. On proceeding to the rendezvous some of the "Eight Unattached" informed inquirers that they had that day joined the 10th City of London Regiment; but that, if any of those who had come wished to carry on, the manager of Claridge's had kindly placed a room at their disposal. Mr. J. P. Thompson, a young man of fifty-three, who had spent fifteen years ranching in Texas, decided to see if anything could be done, and with about forty others took advantage of the offer of the manager of Claridge's. A meeting was held at which he was elected chairman and Mr. H. J. Boon secretary. After some discussion it was decided to offer to form a brigade 5,000 strong of old Public School and University men. Offices were taken at 66, Victoria Street, and Dr. Hele-Shaw and Mr. S. M. Gluckstein were added to the first committee.

The War Office soon recognised the usefulness of their efforts and the plan was launched.

Mr. Thompson \* resigned from the chairmanship, fearing that it would preclude his going to France ; and Mr. H. J. Boon became chairman in his place. Recruiting offices were opened throughout the country, and the Public Schools and Universities Force (" U.P.S.") came into being. Within eleven days over 5,000 men had been recruited. In the early days Sir Francis Lloyd inspected the London contingent, some 2,000 strong, in Hyde Park, and remarked, " The finest body of men I have ever seen." They *were* fine men, a great number of them very young, but a sprinkling between thirty and forty years of age. The 18th and 19th and half of the 20th Battalion went to Epsom on September 18th, the other half of the 20th to Leatherhead, and the 21st to Ashstead.

They were all enormously keen on their drill, and settled down to their work in grim earnest. On October 11th the first rifles were issued, 200 to each battalion, and the command was as follows :—

Brig.-General R. Gordon Gilmour, C.B., C.V.O.,  
D.S.O.

Major H. E. Raymond.

Captain R. Hermon-Hodge, M.V.O.

18th Battalion : Colonel Lord Henry Scott.

19th Battalion : Lieut.-Colonel W. Gordon.

20th Battalion : Lieut.-Colonel C. H. Bennett, D.S.O.

21st Battalion : Lieut.-Colonel J. Stuart-Wortley.

The controversy on the supply of commissions came to a head early in 1915, on a suggestion that the " U.P.S." should provide an obvious reservoir. It was suggested in the Press that the men were being prevented taking com-

\* Mr. Thompson became a private in the 18th Battalion ; but, under the well-established fear that it would become merely an officers' training unit, offered himself to the A.S.C., by whom he was accepted after manipulating his age. He became Captain in January, 1915, and served in France from September, 1915, to March, 1918.

missions. How untrue this was may best be appreciated from a stanza appearing in *The Pow-Wow*, the brigade magazine :—

“ Eight little P.S.U.’s feeling fit for heaven,  
 One joined the Flying Corps, and then there were seven ;  
 Six little P.S.U.’s tired of being alive,  
 One applied for Sandhurst, and then there were five ;  
 Five little P.S.U.’s found the ranks a bore,  
 The worst got gazetted, and then there were four.”

And on April 15th a letter, signed by the committee of the brigade, stated that when the new demand for officers had been satisfied no fewer than “ 3,083 men will have been taken altogether ” for that purpose.

How the brigade coped with such a drain is impossible to say. In some way they kept their corporate spirit and looked forward eagerly to going out. It was this sort of impatience that inspired the quatrain in *The Pow-Wow*,—

“ Some to the Pyramids have raised their Eyes,  
 Others declare that France shall be our Prize ;  
 Some speak of Aldershot—This much is Truth,  
 We are at Woodcote—and—the Rest is Lies.”

A very delightful cartoon of “ Our Lady of Rumours ” emphasised the point by suggesting such places as Spain (!), Sahara, Timbuctoo and China.\*

At length the brigade went out and learned its paces where a very great number of battalions first took lessons in trench warfare : in the area about the La Bassée Canal. There were at least seven battalions of Royal Fusiliers in this area simultaneously : the four Public School Battalions, the 8th, 17th and 24th. They went out to France in November, 1915, and after a short acquaintance with trench warfare, the demand for officers still continuing, the 18th, 19th and 21st Battalions were disbanded in April, 1916, the bulk of the men going to various cadet

\* Cf. “ The History of the Royal Fusiliers ‘ U.P.S.’ (University and Public Schools) Brigade (Formation and Training),” published by *The Times*.

schools, and the remainder as drafts to other Royal Fusilier battalions.

Before disappearing as a unit, however, the 18th had the good fortune to capture a big Fokker behind the lines on April 10th, 1916. They came on the scene when a private of the Royal Engineers was attempting to convey his delight at meeting a presumed French airman who was trying to restart his machine. The German, finding his hand warmly gripped, tried to look the part; but the 18th Royal Fusiliers instantly recognised the machine, with its Iron Cross, for what it was. They doubled, unslung their rifles, and, thinking the German was trying to pass papers to the other man, opened fire. But their zeal outstripped their performance. The sapper, now thoroughly bewildered, took to his heels; and the 18th took over the machine and the pilot. The 20th Battalion continued in being, and did good service, until February, 1918, when they too were disbanded.

The 22nd (Kensington) Battalion was raised by the Mayor of Kensington, then Alderman William H. Davison. C and D Companies were directly enlisted for service in this battalion; but A and B Companies were formed as King Edward's Horse, and joined C and D at the White City in September, 1914, to form the 22nd (Service) Battalion Royal Fusiliers. The battalion combined a very good type of Londoner and a very good type of colonial, and the two amalgamated very successfully. They trained at the White City, Roffey (Horsham), Clipstone Camp, and Tidworth, sailing for France on November 15th, 1915. Two depôt companies were formed to keep the unit up to strength; and these, with the two depôt companies of the 17th Battalion, formed the 27th Reserve Battalion. The 22nd were disbanded in February, 1918, being chosen by lot from the 99th Brigade when it was decided to reduce the number of battalions in the brigades. By that time the 22nd had earned for themselves a name for courageous and skilful fighting. Sergeant Palmer gained the Victoria Cross and a com-

mission for an act which not only called for pronounced personal bravery, but also for no little foresight and skill.

By a strange turn of fortune it devolved upon General R. Barnett Barker, the former and best-beloved commanding officer of the battalion, to disband them. He had left the battalion in November, 1917, to take command of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, and he succeeded General Kellett in command of the 99th Brigade in January, 1918. He sent them a farewell message which deserves a permanent record :—

“ In bidding farewell to the 22nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers (Kensington),” he wrote, “ I am sure that I voice the feelings of all ranks of the 99th Brigade in expressing our deep regret that we have to part with such comrades.

“ Since November, 1915, under the able leadership of our beloved and gallant brigadier, Brig.-General R. O. Kellett, C.B., C.M.G., we have fought together in the following actions :—Delville Wood, Vimy Ridge, Ancre, Miraumont, Grevillers Trench, Oppy, and Cambrai, in every one of which the 22nd Royal Fusiliers played a conspicuous part. The mention of these important actions, in which we have added fame to the 2nd Division, is sufficient to prove the magnificent part you have filled in making the history of the 99th Brigade.

“ We all understand with what feelings you must view the disbanding of your fine battalion. We know full well your splendid *esprit de corps*, which engendered your fine fighting spirit. We know of the N.C.O.'s and men still with you who gave up their all in 1914 to join you. Nor do we forget your many heroes who died for you and us all.

“ Knowing full well all this, we can truly offer you our heartfelt sympathies in your day of trial.

“ The 22nd Battalion never lost a yard of trench or failed their comrades in the day of battle. Such is your record, and such a record of you will be handed down to posterity.

“ All of you, I am thankful to say, will remain in our famous division, and 300 of you in the old brigade.

“ I know that the 22nd Royal Fusiliers will accept the inevitable in their usual fine spirit, and will in time transfer the *esprit de corps* they always prized so dearly to their sister battalions.

“ I feel certain their sister battalions will welcome them with open arms and endeavour to heal the sores they now so intensely feel.

“ As one who served with you from the day of your foundation to your disbandment (except for two months), I know full well what this step means to you all.

“ I also know that, though the 22nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers has ceased to exist as a unit, you will not forget that we are all Englishmen fighting Germans, and that the fine, indomitable spirit of the battalion will still carry you on until the one red and two white stars are inscribed on the forts of the Rhine.”

The 23rd and 24th were the Sportsman's Battalions, which owed their origin to Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen,\* daughter of the late Sir Philip Cunliffe-Owen, K.C.B., and wife of the late Edward Cunliffe-Owen, C.M.G.

The idea arose quite spontaneously. Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen, on rallying some men-friends for not being in khaki, was challenged to raise a battalion of middle and upper class men up to the age of forty-five. She promptly went with them to a post-office and telegraphed to Lord Kitchener, “ Will you accept complete battalion of upper and middle class men, physically fit, able to shoot and ride, up to the age of forty-five? ” The reply was, “ Lord Kitchener gratefully accepts complete battalion.” The India Room, Hotel Cecil, was taken for a month, a dozen ex-officers were begged from the Officers' Association, and the enrolment began. Each applicant, in the presence of one of these ex-officers, filled in a form stating his chest measurement, height, weight, nationality, and whether he could shoot and ride and walked well. The form was then taken to a screened-off part of the room, where Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen signed it. The men were then

\* Now Mrs. Cunliffe Stamford.

sent to a recruiting office to be medically examined and attested.

The first battalion was complete in four weeks, and Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen hustled a contractor into putting up a fully equipped and model camp in nineteen days. These were astounding achievements. Most other battalions raised outside the War Office *régime* called upon more or less elaborate organisations. Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen formed her own organisation, looked into everything—even the menu—and pushed the scheme through to a triumphant success.

The 23rd Royal Fusiliers, in uniform with full band, marched through the streets of London to entrain at Liverpool Street Station for Hornchurch, Essex, after being inspected in Hyde Park by Colonel Maitland. On March 17th, 1915, the 24th Royal Fusiliers (2nd Sportsman's) were inspected on the Horse Guards' parade ground by Brig.-General Kellett, who, after thanking Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen in the name of the King and the nation for raising two such fine battalions and congratulating her on being the only woman in the world to have achieved such a feat, requested her to take the salute. The recruits for these battalions were a fine body of men, and were drawn from all parts of the world. "A man who had gone up the Yukon with Frank Slavin, the boxer; another who had been sealing round Alaska; trappers from the Canadian woods; railway engineers from the Argentine; planters from Ceylon; big-game hunters from Central Africa; others from China, Japan, the Malay States, India, Egypt—these were just a few . . ." \* of those who presented themselves at the Hotel Cecil in the autumn of 1914.

The connection of the 23rd and 24th with London was very intimate. They did physical jerks in Savoy Street, and were put through their early paces in the very heart of London. The men were all big fellows, the average height being over 6 feet, and they took to their work

\* *The 23rd Service Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (First Sportsman's)*, by Fred W. Ward, p. 26.



gaily. Both battalions formed part of the 99th Brigade of the 33rd Division at first; but almost immediately after their arrival in France on November 17th, 1915, the 24th Battalion was placed in the 5th Brigade. At the same time the brigade lost the 17th Battalion. These changes were carried out in accordance with the reorganisation of the 2nd and 33rd Divisions into brigades, each consisting of two new and two regular battalions. From first to last 4,987 officers and men served overseas in the 23rd Battalion, and their casualty list came to a total of 3,241.

Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen had supplied 1,500 fully trained officers to the army by April, 1915, and when she formally handed over the two battalions to the War Office on July 31st, 1915, she did not cease to follow their fortunes. She wrote to every sick and wounded man, and visited most of them in hospital. She, furthermore, raised the nucleus of the 30th Royal Fusiliers as a training reserve battalion, and put up the Eagle Hut in the Strand as extra recruiting offices for them. F. C. Selous was one of the 24th's most eminent recruits. He was already an old man, but he enlisted as a private. Another distinguished recruit was Warneford, who, after four months' service in the battalion, joined the Royal Air Force, and gained the Victoria Cross for first bringing down a Zeppelin. When the 23rd Battalion was demobilised, Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen was presented with one of the original drums as a souvenir.

To many it will seem that the field from which the 25th (Service) Battalion was chosen resembled that which provided the Sportsman's Battalion; and, indeed, there was a distinct similarity. But the Frontiersmen who formed the 25th were already an existing organisation. Numbers of the Legion passed through London soon after the outbreak of the war and found a home in various units.

But on February 12th, 1915, Colonel Driscoll, who led "Driscoll's Scouts" in the South African War, was informed that approval had been given for the raising of

“ an infantry battalion 1,000 strong, to be called the 25th (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (Frontiersmen).” It was stated later that the battalion was to be used to stiffen troops in East Africa, then invaded by German troops. Within three weeks of the subsequent appeal, the unit had raised more than the required strength. About a third of the men were members of the Legion ; and the battalion included men of various ages and with strange experience from all quarters of the globe. Among them were F. C. Selous, the famous big-game hunter, explorer and naturalist, who had been a private in the 24th, Cherry Kearton, Martin Ryan and George Outram. On April 10th the battalion—accepted and sent on active service without preliminary training, the only unit so treated during the war—embarked 1,166 strong at Plymouth. They had travelled nearly 6,000 miles *viâ* Aden before they reached Mombasa, on May 4th. Fighting in East Africa involved the overcoming of two enemies, nature and the Germans ; and so terrible did the first prove, even to such hardened and splendid adventurers, that by Christmas, 1916, only 60 of the original unit remained in the field, and a draft of 600 were sent out. The 25th certainly left a name in East Africa and secured a V.C. (Lieutenant W. Dartnell). But this is a trite summary of a campaign that proved a heavier strain on endurance than any other.

The 26th (Service) Battalion the Royal Fusiliers (Bankers) was raised early in 1915 from bank clerks and accountants by Major William Pitt, an old Volunteer officer ; and it had Sir Charles Johnston and Sir Charles Wakefield, two Lord Mayors of London, as honorary colonels. Drawn from all parts of the country, the men carried through the first part of their training at Marlow and High Beech ; and, made up to full strength in November, the battalion moved to Aldershot, becoming part of the 124th Brigade of the 41st Division, commanded by Sir Sydney Lawford. Under command of Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. W. F. North they embarked for France on May 4th.

The 26th was one of the two Fusilier battalions to see service in Italy ; but they were brought back to France early in 1918 in time for the German March offensive.

In order to retain even the battalions enumerated at full strength a number of special training reserve units were formed, the 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st, being raised and used for this purpose.

The 29th and 30th Battalions, who sent a specially picked Volunteer Company to Russia in June, 1918, were battalions of the London Regiment, formed of low category men and men who had been disabled overseas. This was apparently the first formed British infantry unit to serve in Russia since the Crimea. The company took part in most of the operations at Murmansk, and in July—August went to Archangel. From the landing up to the capture of Oboyerskia they remained in the Archangel area and returned to Murmansk on relief by American infantry. Two other battalions also served in Russia, the 45th and 46th, and the former won two V.C.'s. Each of these was awarded long after the war proper had ended.\* But the exploits are worthy of record here.

The first was awarded to Corporal Arthur Percy Sullivan

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on August 10th, 1919, at the Sheika River, North Russia.

The platoon to which he belonged, after fighting a rear-guard covering action, had to cross the river by means of a narrow plank, and during the passage an officer and three men fell into a deep swamp.

Without hesitation, under intense fire, Corporal Sullivan jumped into the river and rescued all four, bringing them out singly. But for this gallant action his comrades would undoubtedly have been drowned. It was a splendid example of heroism as all ranks were on the point of exhaustion and the enemy less than 100 yards distant.

And the second to Sergeant Samuel George Pearse, M.M.

For most conspicuous bravery, devotion to duty and self-sacrifice during the operation against the enemy

\* See note, p. 2.

battery position north of Emtsa (North Russia) on August 29th, 1919.

Sergeant Pearse cut his way through the enemy barbed wire under very heavy machine-gun and rifle fire, and cleared a way for the troops to enter the battery position.

Seeing that a blockhouse was harassing our advance and causing us casualties, he charged the blockhouse single-handed, killing the occupants with bombs.

This gallant non-commissioned officer met his death a minute later, and it was due to him that the position was carried with so few casualties.

His magnificent bravery and utter disregard for personal danger won for him the admiration of all troops.

There were still other battalions who served in the operations which are more strictly comprised under the title The Great War. The Mayor of East Ham had raised three or four brigades of artillery when he formed the impression that an infantry battalion could also be formed. After consultation with Major F. Cannon, the recruiting officer at East Ham and Barking, he wrote to the War Office early in October, 1915, and approval was given, subject to the proviso that if 600 men were not raised before Christmas the approval would be withdrawn. Major Cannon took up the recruiting, and in the first three weeks secured only one recruit, a typist, who was employed in the office. A few more offered themselves early in November, and at the end of the month the total sprang to 500. Only one N.C.O., C.Q.M.S. Childs, afterwards killed in action while serving with the 10th Queen's, was available to pay, billet and look after the new recruits. Major Cannon was placed in command, and the other units of the regiment supplied officers. At Christmas the battalion (the 32nd) was ordered to Aldershot and remained there until May 5th, when it embarked for France under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Key, of the Yorks and Lancs. Regiment, who had lately returned from Gallipoli. The men were quick to learn and, though the officers were drawn from various units, the battalion worked well



CORPORAL G. JARRATT, 8TH ROYAL FUSILIERS,  
who gained the V.C. near Pelves on May 3rd,  
1917.



SERGEANT S. G. PEARSE, M.M., 45TH ROYAL  
FUSILIERS, who gained the V.C. in North  
Russia, August 29th, 1919.



together, and with the 26th did good service in the war.

An honourable group of units was formed as Labour battalions. Among these were the 34th, 35th, 36th and 37th Battalions, which were raised in the spring of 1916 at Falmer, near Lewes, and left for France in June. Colonel N. A. K. Burne was in command of the 35th, Colonel G. E. Even, C.B., of the 36th, and Colonel Savage of the 37th. The battalions served in various parts of the country, unloading ships, making roads, or constructing ammunition dumps. While working on a ship at Rouen in the morning of January 28th, 1917, Private Noble slipped on the gangway and fell into the Seine. It was bitterly cold and the Seine was crowded with boulders of drift ice. In spite of this Private Robert Barker, of the 35th Labour Battalion, finding that Noble could not swim, jumped into the river and supported him until both could be pulled out. He was awarded the Royal Humane Society's Testimonial on Vellum for this brave action.

But for the most part the work of the Labour battalions did not offer the opportunity of spectacular actions. The men worked steadily and well. The work was heavy, and for some time the 35th worked in shifts, by night as well as day, unloading heavy gun ammunition from ships at Rouen. In May, 1917, the Labour battalions were broken up and formed into Labour companies of 500 each, the 35th becoming the 103rd and 104th Infantry Labour Companies; the 36th, the 105th and 106th Labour Companies; the 37th, the 107th and 108th Companies. Sergeant Lyles, of the 36th, was among those who, at the end of the war, received a decoration, being awarded the M.S.M.

Another group of battalions was composed of Jewish recruits. When the idea was first mooted in the autumn of 1915 by Mr. Joseph Cowen and Dr. Eder, it met with no sympathy at the War Office. But in April, 1915, the Zion Mule Corps was formed in Alexandria, Egypt, by some 500 or 600 Palestinian refugees and local Jews. It

was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel J. H. Patterson, D.S.O., and did good service in Gallipoli, but was disbanded in the summer of 1916. About 100 of its members re-enlisted in the British Army, were brought to London and posted to the 20th London (Territorials). They afterwards formed the nucleus of Jewish N.C.O.'s and instructors for the Jewish infantry battalions.

In the meantime the old idea had sprung to life once more and the Government was pressed to allow the formation of a Jewish unit for Palestine. The movement was led by Mr. Vladimir Jabotinsky, and was strongly supported by Dr. Weizmann, the President of the Zionist Organisation. In April, 1917, the War Cabinet decided to allow the formation of the unit. In August its formation was announced under the name of " Jewish Regiment of Infantry "; but this description was subsequently withdrawn and the Jewish battalions became the 38th to 42nd Royal Fusiliers, with their depôt at 22, Chenies Street, W.C., and their camp at Plymouth. The battalions were chiefly intended for the reception of Russian Jews, to be enlisted under a special convention with M. Kerensky's Government. Permission to use Kosher food was granted with the assurance that the battalions would be employed on the Palestine front, and would be granted a Jewish name and badge if they distinguished themselves.

About 2,000 Jews joined from England, a proportion of them being volunteers. Their enlistment was stopped after the fall of M. Kerensky's Government and the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia ; but, in the beginning of 1918, a widespread movement of voluntary recruiting began in the United States and Canada. Jews in the Argentine were also allowed to enlist, and practically the whole of the able-bodied young Jews in the liberated part of Palestine (Judea) applied to be enlisted. These various sources involved large numbers ; but owing to technical difficulties connected with the numerous nationalities and difficulties of transport, only a small proportion of those overseas could actually be enlisted. But altogether about



10,000 joined the Jewish battalions, of whom over three-quarters were volunteers; and some 5,000 actually served in Palestine. The recruiting campaign in the United States, Canada, the Argentine, and especially Palestine, evoked unprecedented enthusiasm, both Zionist and pro-British.

The 38th Battalion, under Lieut.-Colonel J. H. Patterson, landed in Egypt in January, 1918, to complete their training, and went to the front in June, 1918. They reached Ludd on June 6th, and were inspected by General Allenby, for the second time. After a few days they marched off to take their share in the line and took over the three miles lying between Jiljilia (some three miles west of the Nablus road) and Abwein. They speedily won their spurs in the tasks of the hour—scouting, patrolling and trench digging—and were then given a most trying part of the line in the Jordan valley. The seven miles for which they were responsible stretched westward from the Jordan above Jericho, and seemed at times to be almost an island in a sea of enemies. On the west was a gap which offered a constant invitation to the enemy; but the battalion ably supported the Anzac Mounted Division in harrying the Turks and discovering their plans. They also took part in Allenby's attack in September by capturing the ford of Umm-esh-Shert on the night of the 21st, and so enabling the mounted troops to cross the river towards Es Salt (Ramoath Gilead) and outflank the Turks. In this operation they were assisted by the 39th battalion, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel E. L. Margolin, a former officer of the Australian Expeditionary Force. The force known as Patterson's column crossed the Jordan and occupied the road between Tel Nimrin and Es Salt until the collapse of the Fourth Turkish Army and Second Turkish Corps, when they returned to Jerusalem with a large body of Turkish and German prisoners. They had performed distinguished service, and were awarded a number of distinctions.

The 40th Battalion consisted chiefly of Palestinian

recruits. Many Turkish Jews, who were prisoners of war in Egypt, asked permission to join, and 150 of them were accepted. They were trained at Tel-el-Kebir and were employed on garrison duty during the autumn and winter of 1918-1919. Their first commander was Lieut.-Colonel Scott, who was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel F. Samuel.

These battalions had some well-known recruits. Major James de Rothschild was in the 39th. Jacob Epstein was for some time a private in the 38th. Anton Tchaikov, the violinist, and now the Director of the School of Music at Jerusalem, was at first a private and later a sergeant in the 38th. Mr. V. Jabotinsky, the initiator of the movement, was a sergeant and later honorary lieutenant in the 38th; and M. Smeliansky, the well-known Jewish novelist, was a corporal in the 40th, who also numbered among their privates Mr. Vinnik, the Chemical Director of the Rishon Wine Cellars, and Mr. Ben Zivi, a member of the Advisory Council to the High Commissioner for Palestine. Other names of distinguished and remarkable men who enlisted in these battalions might be quoted; but it is obvious that the units started with a strangely ideal impetus and naturally cast a wide net among Jews. The 41st and 42nd Battalions were formed as draft-training units for the three battalions on active service, and were stationed at Plymouth.

All these battalions performed good service. During the trouble in Egypt these were practically the only white infantry troops in Palestine. They guarded the whole railway line from Romani up to Ludd-Haifa-Semach. In the autumn of 1919 they were officially given the name "Judeans" with a special badge "the Menora" (the eight-branched candlestick, the symbol of the Maccabeans), with the Hebrew word "*Kadima*" ("Forwards and Eastwards"). The sleeve badge Shield of David (38th, purple; 39th, red; 40th, blue) was granted in 1918.

The Territorial battalions mobilised at the outbreak of war and first acted as guard to the London and South Western Railway main lines. On September 4th they

embarked for Malta, and after a period of service there left for France on January 2nd, 1915. Second line battalions were formed when the first line battalions left England, and these later became the units of the 173rd Brigade of the 58th Division, as the first line units joined the 56th Division. Third line battalions were formed when the second line left England for Malta in December, 1914; and fourth line battalions were raised as draft-forming units. These battalions were telescoped towards the end of the war as a consequence of severe losses and the drain of supporting three battalions per unit, *i.e.*, twelve battalions in all. The third lines generally became the second line battalions, and at least one second line battalion disappeared as a distinct entity. The draft-forming units were also turned into one. The battalions of the London Regiment distinguished themselves in many battles of the war, and, like the new service, labour and training battalions, were proud of being Royal Fusiliers. At times, it was said that the war was mechanical, but no one can study the expansion of the Royal Fusiliers without being more conscious of the spiritual side. It was largely the old leaven of a famous regiment which turned these strangely assorted units into splendid fighting battalions who left their mark on the history of the war.

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Such in brief outline is the field covered by this book. The sources are the battalion diaries, personal diaries of officers, special accounts of particular incidents contributed by soldiers actually engaged in them, a considerable number of letters and numerous conversations with officers of various battalions.

A very interesting chapter could be made of the official diaries. A certain high officer drew attention to the low standard attained by the units of his command in this matter; but the suggestions made for improvement are not always beyond criticism. The weather is "never" a necessary entry, it is stated. This is obviously unsound. The weather is a deciding factor in many operations; and

when of two battalions in the same area, one attacks and the other desists *on account of the weather*—an actual case of two Fusilier battalions—it becomes absolutely necessary to know the circumstances in detail. There is also a presumably sarcastic remark that the regimental historian will shrink from the statement that “the battalion played the Brigade H.Q. at baseball and beat them.” On the contrary. When the men play their football matches there is a clear indication of the *morale* of the unit ; and when, as in a particular case, a battalion is stated to have been too tired to carry out its fixtures it is reasonably certain that the unit was too weary to be of much use in active operations. A final statement that “it is certainly not necessary to state when officers went on and returned from leave” is clearly absurd.

It is frequently most difficult to discover who was actually in charge of a given operation ; and unless the command is stated in detail before every engagement, the only indication of the sort of force that went into action is provided by the notes about leave.

But the actual diaries are singularly instructive. Those of the Regular battalions are almost invariably restrained and bald to an irritating degree. The new battalions, on the contrary, give much information, some of it *naïve* to an almost incredible extent, some of it most interesting to the historian, all of it useful in forming a picture of the unit. All the mechanism of posting sentries, carrying out reliefs, standing-to, etc., is described by one tireless diarist. Everything is put down coldly and carefully, with machine-like detachment, until the battalion goes to Murrumbidgee Camp. Nothing hitherto had disturbed the perfection of this officer's self-possession. But there was something about this camp that stirred him to his depths ; and, in place of the usual carefully dispassionate description, he states that the camp is “a filthy hole with a debauched and frozen bath-house which battalion is supposed to work.”

Another diarist ventures the callow remark “One of our

Lewis guns claimed to have hit a German who exposed himself." A little later we find him slaughtering whole units without any tentative claims. Another diarist is perpetually reporting the remains of dead soldiers. Either he was morbidly interested in this or the battalion had an unusually gruesome experience. There is a certain humour in the description of a shelling of billets which concludes: "One man hit on pay parade." And surely, as the full description of an early spring day, the following can hardly be beaten: "Snowed heavily. Men rested and bathed. Football match." A man who could write in that vein was certainly innocent of shell-shock! One diarist kills three men on two different occasions, with full details. But as a *tour de force* the description by a diarist of a certain battalion which went through the great retreat in March, 1918, stands supreme. On March 25th every unit appears to be retiring about him. The provisional line is crumbling. There is amazing confusion. Then comes the statement "4 p.m. Artillery falling short on X (a neighbouring division). Brigade informed. Quiet evening." This from a "K" battalion is suggestive. One wonders what a disturbed evening would have been like.

But the diaries are not always complete. One battalion diary gives no map references for the first seventeen months, and the first map reference does not give the number of the sheet. Frequently, perhaps invariably, the diaries give the position of battalion headquarters, though part of the battalion may have billeted some miles away. In most cases this would be of little importance. But in the case of the 4th Battalion at Mons on the night of the battle in 1914, it is of the first importance to know that part of the battalion slept *north* of the line which von Kluck appears to have reported held by one of his corps! The battalion diary gives the *locus* of the battalion that night as Cibly. Captain Harding notes that they slept that night in a field "at Mons Hospital." \*

\* Lieutenant Longman, of the same company, says "Nimy Hospital." This is clearly a slip for Mons.

At times, where detail is most desirable, incidents have had to be slurred over because of a complete conflict of evidence. The time for anonymous heroes would seem to have passed ; but, with the perversity of the Regular battalions impelling them to cover up their deeds and the conflict of evidence where the broad outlines are given, it will still require years of research before the full flower of the British soldiers' achievement can be known.

## CHAPTER II

### FIRST BATTLES—MONS TO THE AISNE

IN England the first contact of the British forces with the German Army formed a unique episode. Other encounters took on a grander colouring; others were viewed with a graver anxiety. But the battle of Mons, which saw the first entry of the British Army into the world war, stirred the emotions deeper than any subsequent action.

It was not in this way, however, that the army first gave battle. The 4th Battalion Royal Fusiliers engaged at Mons with a coolness which is bewildering and almost distressing to the civilian. Stationed at Parkhurst at the outbreak of war, it had reported mobilised before midnight on August 8th. It began to move on the 12th and sailed for Havre at 6 p.m. on the following day. The speed and smoothness of its preparations had outpaced the arrangements for its reception; and only the Northumberland Fusiliers of the 9th Brigade could be accommodated in tents at the rest camp at Harfleur. The weather was hot. The battalion had embodied 734 reservists; and as the troops struggled up the steep hill to the rest camp after a seven mile march about 97 fell out.

The men had met with an enthusiastic reception at Havre. French soldiers on the quay gave them a hearty welcome, and the troops did their best to show their sense of gratitude by whistling the "Marseillaise." By a transition which needs no explanation to those who know the ordinary Tommy, they then turned to "Hold your hand out, naughty boy." This, sung with great fervour and seriousness, was received with bared heads by the French, who quite pardonably thought it the British National Anthem. It was a great day, and even the

settling down into orchards for the night did not chasten the men's spirits.

But that night a terrific thunderstorm burst over the camp, and the men, lying in the open, were soaked to the skin. The rain came down in torrents and it continued almost to the moment when, on the 16th, the battalion entrained for the concentration area. The train slowly crossed the country *viâ* Amiens to Landrecies, and everywhere on the line were cheering French crowds with presents of flowers. Early on the 17th the battalion arrived at Landrecies and marched to Noyelles, where, with a little rest and marching, the men got into condition. These were the days when people at home were almost holding their breath ; but if they could have seen several officers and men fishing in a tiny pond and catching minnows on pins they might have been reassured, or perhaps, more apprehensive !

On the 20th the battalion left Noyelles for Taisnaires, and on the following day they marched out as advance guard and billeted at La Longueville. On this day the outposts of the 9th Brigade lay across the battlefield of Malplaquet. The hour of departure on the 22nd had been fixed at 4 a.m. for 6.30 a.m., but at five o'clock a message reached brigade headquarters that the starting time was to be advanced by an hour and a half.

The 4th Battalion were on the march before 5.15, a very remarkable performance. They were again advance guard, and by the evening they had reached Nimy, after meeting with an enthusiastic welcome from the people of Mons, who loaded them with presents of eggs, fruit, tobacco, and even handkerchiefs. The position at this moment deserves notice. Army orders issued by von Bulow at 8 p.m. on the 22nd showed very clearly that no appreciable force of the British was thought to be within the marching radius of the First and Second German Armies. On the other hand, the British Army did not expect to meet with anything more than a stimulating opposition from the Germans. It is necessary to bear the





BRIG.-GENERAL N. R. McMAHON, D.S.O., WHO COMMANDED THE 4TH ROYAL FUSILIERS FROM MONS TO YPRES.



latter fact in mind to appreciate the dispositions of the Royal Fusiliers.

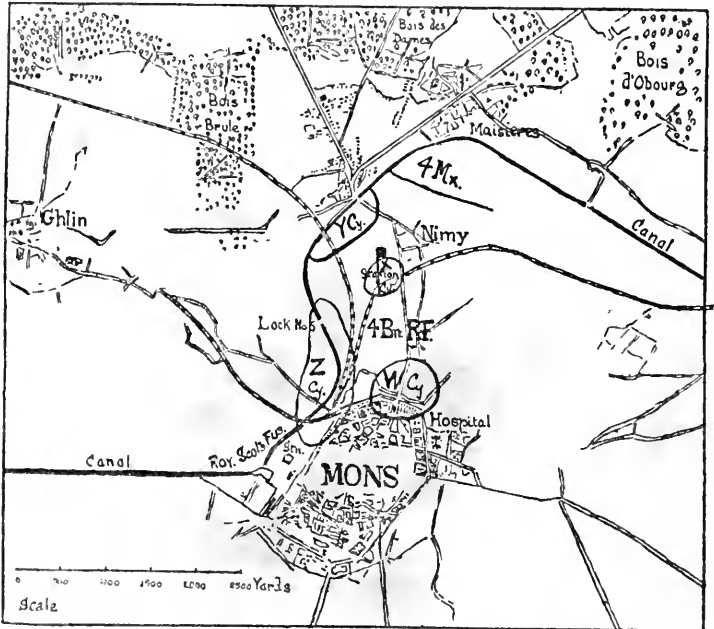
They formed part of the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Division, and their orders were to the effect that the canal was to be "the line of resistance." But on the night of the 22nd the battalion was occupying posts covering Ghlin, just south of the Bois de Ghlin and the Bois Brûlé. There was no field of fire, and every opportunity for unseen approach. Such a position, obviously, would have been unthinkable if any prolonged defence had been contemplated; and, indeed, late in the afternoon the men were withdrawn to the canal. Even now there were strict orders that the canal bridges should not be destroyed without explicit orders from the 3rd Division; and, finally, the general disposition of the line, with its sharp salient about Mons, sufficiently emphasises the provisional nature of the position and the implied probability of a light encounter and a subsequent advance.

**Mons.**—The Royal Fusiliers were to bear the brunt of this misconception. As the right-hand battalion of the brigade, they were disposed along the western face of the canal bend, with the charge of all the crossings up to and including Nimy Bridge. On their right lay the 4th Middlesex, charged with the defence of the eastern face of the canal. The left (IX.) corps of the First German Army was engaged on this part of the front, each of the two battalions in the canal bend having to withstand the attack of two regiments (each of three battalions) of the 18th Jäger Division. On the morning of the 23rd the battalion, mustering 26 officers and 983 other ranks, was disposed as follows:—

Y (or "C") Company, under Captain Ashburner, lay north of Nimy, its right joining with the 4th Middlesex, and its left a little north of Lock 6. Captain Forster, with two platoons, held Nimy Bridge; the two other platoons and company H.Q. were entrenched at the railway bridge and on the canal bank to the left of it.

Z (or "D") Company, under Captain Byng, held positions about Lock 6 and the Ghlin-Mons bridges.

X (or "B") Company, under Captain Carey, lay about Nimy station in support, at battalion headquarters; and Captain Cole lay with the battalion reserve W (or "A") Company north of Mons. In point of fact, therefore, the two companies, Y and Z, were on the defensive against six German battalions.



SKETCH MAP SHOWING THE GENERAL DISPOSITION OF THE 4TH ROYAL FUSILIERS AT THE BATTLE OF MONS.

To the right lies the hospital, near which part of the battalion lay on the night after the battle.

The march to Mons had been trying, and there was no time for rest. After a twenty miles tramp the men were set to work to put the wood position about Ghlin into a state of defence. When a good deal of labour had been spent in an attempt to make it defensible, the men were withdrawn to the canal line. Captain Byng's company still lay on both sides of the canal; and at first the main position was on the German side. The Ghlin-Mons railway bridge was blocked by the ingenious expedient

of wheeling cable drums thither and then turning them over on their sides. But Z Company was not seriously attacked except during the last three-quarters of an hour before the retirement. The heavier attack was delivered against the Nimy bridges, and particularly the railway bridge. On the eastern face of the canal the German attack was made more advantageously, because unhampered by buildings. To avoid a similar handicap on the western side, the Germans made little attempt against Nimy Bridge, which is covered by houses and buildings, and in any case was swung back, but struck more violently against the railway bridge and its neighbourhood, where the ground was opener. The German side of the bridge was blocked by a wire entanglement, and across the track within the canal loop a trench had been dug. The railway embankment stood high and the trees on its sides gave some cover to the troops between it and the Nimy Bridge. The two machine guns were in small emplacements built on either buttress of the railway bridge, the right one, with a fair radius of action commanding the flats, below the bridge. They afforded an inevitable focussing point for the German fire.

It was a body of very weary men who met the Germans on the morning of the 23rd, for many of them had been working practically all night. The Germans could be heard moving about in the woods north of the canal in the dark, and early in the morning a cavalry patrol consisting of an officer and about six men suddenly appeared on the Nimy road. They galloped straight towards the bridge, which was swung round, making an impassable obstacle. The Fusiliers opened fire, shot four of the men and wounded the officer. Two of the men were apparently untouched, and rode off. The officer, with his horse shot and wounded in the leg, was captured. By a singular irony it was Lieutenant von Arnim, son of the commander of the IV. \* German Army Corps. He was wearing his Death's Head Hussar

\* Engaged against the left of Smith-Dorrien's corps.

uniform ; but the brave show merely threw into higher relief the folly of his action. His notebook showed that he had been observing the British position from the edge of the wood. An aeroplane had been seen making a thorough reconnaissance of the position the night before ; but, despite this activity, the Germans were in complete ignorance of the dimensions of the force in front of them, and when, at about ten o'clock, they opened the attack, they appeared above the skyline, approaching the railway and Nimy bridges in column of route. They were only about 1,000 yards distant ; and the rapid fire, assisted by the machine guns, in a few minutes destroyed their leading section of fours. The men had never expected such targets, and they eagerly seized upon the opportunity. The column retired out of view, and the position was thoroughly shelled before the advance was resumed in extended order. There was no reply to the German guns, and their fire was particularly galling because of this fact.

When the Fusiliers had first taken up their positions there had been no thought of retreat, and ammunition boxes had been distributed about the trenches. But as the battle developed an order came that the battalion was to be ready to move at ten minutes' notice. The ammunition was then put into carts with the result that a shortage was experienced, later, in the firing line. The German artillery very soon crept round the whole of the canal salient and Y Company was taken in rear, in enfilade and frontally. Some of the rifle fire aimed at this company caught Captain Attwood's post at Lock 6, where Lieutenant Harding's platoon lay, and, taking one of the trenches in enfilade and reverse, led to its abandonment. Apart from this and periodic bursts of shrapnel Z Company suffered little. They had early sunk the boats and fired the barges in case of retreat, and for the rest they could do nothing but witness the plight of Ashburner's company.

In this section of the canal the position was almost desperate. The field of fire was indifferent, but the great volume of converging German fire could not fail to tell.



LIEUTENANT M. J. DEASE, 4TH BATTALION, WHO WON THE FIRST  
V.C. OF THE WAR AT MONS, AUGUST 23RD, 1914.





Ashburner sent to Nimy for reinforcements, and Captain Carey sent up Second Lieutenant Mead with a platoon. He was shot in the head at once, but went back whistling to have it dressed behind the trenches. He returned to the front and was again shot through the head and killed. All this time the company kept up a destructive fire against the German infantry who lost very heavily. More reinforcements were sent for, and Captain Bowden-Smith and Lieutenant E. C. Smith went up with a platoon. The latter was killed and the former was left dying on the retirement. Captain Fred Forster, of Ashburner's company, was also killed. Ashburner himself was wounded near the eye, and Lieutenant Steele was hit. The fight grew hotter and more terrible. The machine gun crews were constantly being knocked out. So cramped was their position that when a man was hit he had to be removed before another could take his place. The approach from the trench was across the open, and whenever the gun stopped Lieutenant Maurice Dease, the young machine gun officer, went up to see what was wrong. To do this once called for no ordinary courage. To repeat it several times could only be done with real heroism. Dease was twice badly wounded on these journeys, but insisted on remaining at duty as long as one of his crew could fire. The third wound proved fatal, and a well deserved V.C. was awarded him posthumously. By this time both guns had ceased firing, and all the crew had been knocked out. In response to an inquiry whether any one else knew how to operate the guns Private Godley came forward. He cleared the emplacement under heavy fire and brought the gun into action. But he had not been firing long before the gun was hit and put completely out of action. The water jackets of both guns were riddled with bullets, so that they were no longer of any use. Godley himself was badly wounded and later fell into the hands of the Germans. He was cheered in his captivity to learn that he also had been awarded the V.C.\* At 1.40 p.m. the battalion was finally ordered

\* These were the first V.C.'s won and awarded during the war.

to retire, and did so in perfect order. Ashburner's company had lost about 75 men, and the Germans were within 200 yards of their position. They fell back slowly upon Mons and, when they were well clear of their position, Byng's company retired. For three-quarters of an hour this company had been under direct frontal attack from the woods in front ; but the Germans had made no headway. Now they had about a mile to cover, the first 250 yards over open ground with the German guns firing shrapnel at 500 yards range, and a heavy rifle fire. There were two railway embankments to cross ; but the company suffered little beyond thrills despite the heavy fire. The infantry were firing high, and even shrapnel burst too high to be effective. At the second embankment they met X and Y Company, and with them got safely through to Mons. The retirement was covered by W Company acting rearguard with Major Mallock in charge. No Germans crossed by the bridges which the Royal Fusiliers had defended, while the rearguard stood north of Mons. But the enemy had forced the Obourg bridge on the eastern side of the canal bend, and from the higher ground to the west of it a heavy fire was opened upon the last Fusiliers to retire. The rearguard joined the rest of the battalion in the Market Square, where a short halt was made.

The 4th Battalion had suffered very heavily. Besides the officers already mentioned there were about 150 other ranks' casualties. There were many remarkable escapes. Lieutenant (" Kingy ") Tower, of Y Company, had his hat shot off, his rifle hit and two bullets through his puttees. Private Denners, of the same company, had three shots through his hat, one on the end of his rifle, and one through the sole of his boot, but he was unhurt.

The men had exacted a very heavy price for these losses, and it is now known that this factor had a material influence on the later German tactics.\* On the immediate course of the battle its influence was of decisive importance. Though the canal bend was abandoned at 2 p.m.

\* " Forty Days in 1914," General Maurice, p. 83.

and there still remained several hours of daylight the troops were not molested, and part of the Royal Fusiliers were joined by the Middlesex Regiment in an open field at the hospital in Mons.\* The IX. German Corps reported its outposts after dusk in touch with the main British position. Von Kluck states that "the IX. Corps had occupied the southern edge of Mons † . . ." But this was apparently an euphemism. General von Bülow, who seems to have been more alive to the chances of the situation, attempted to compel the IX. Corps to bestir itself. His order issued "between 8 p.m. and 10.15 p.m." ‡ and received at 0.7 on the 24th directed that the corps should "advance immediately west of Maubeuge . . ." An order was also sent direct to the IX. Corps that it "was to be alarmed and advance at once. In reply to this, a message was sent back that both the IX. and III. Corps were already in a battle position facing the enemy . . . and that the advance ordered was therefore impracticable."

They had learned a new respect for the British fire, and no small part in the inculcation of this lesson was played by the 4th Battalion.

**Retreat.**—But while General von Bülow was receiving caustic but very unsatisfactory replies from General von Kluck, the Royal Fusiliers were on the move once more. At 2 a.m., after about four hours' sleep, the battalion left Mons Hospital and took up a position south of Mons, covering Frameries. An attempt was made to put an extended line into a state of defence. The battalion was in support to the 7th Brigade at this time beyond the

\* This much seems clear—Byng's company were at Mons Hospital and probably Ashburner's. The other two companies and headquarters were clear of Mons at 3.30 p.m., and at 7 p.m. arrived at Cibly, two or three miles south of Mons. The first point is substantiated by the private diaries of two officers of Byng's company, and the second by the battalion diary and Major Mallock's diary.

† "The March on Paris, 1914," p. 48. There is a certain ambiguity about the time to which this refers. If the words "by the evening" govern the rest of the paragraph, von Kluck is inaccurate. But during the night, *i.e.*, on the 24th, the British fell back.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

brow of a hill. On the crest was a small house which Lieutenant Longman's platoon loopholed, and it was later used to cover the retreat of the firing line. The officers of the battalion were receiving verbal instruction as to the way the supports would have to go when the Germans attacked, opening with an artillery bombardment to which the British guns replied. Dawn had just broken when Byng's company was sent to reinforce the left flank of the position which the Germans were trying to turn. This part of the line had not been entrenched and the half company lying on the extreme left suffered very heavily. The rest of the line had fallen back when Byng retired with a loss of about 40 per cent., covered by Longman's platoon. About 2,000 yards farther back the battalion stood in an entrenched position, and waited for the Germans to appear over the crest of the hill. The British guns were bursting over the reverse slope and the heavy rifle fire which met the enemy as they reached the crest line caused them to fall back. The battalion remained on this position a little longer and then retired through Genly. Byng's section of this company alone had lost 43 men.

Then followed a long and tiring march as rearguard across the French frontier to Bermeries, which the battalion reached at 10.30 p.m. Despite the weariness of the men they marched very steadily, and on the following day covered about thirty-five miles to Inchy. They had left Bermeries at 5 a.m. and arrived at Inchy about 6.15 p.m. It began to pour with rain as the battalion reached the northern side of Inchy. This was the worst day of the retreat. The men were all deadbeat and suffering badly from sore feet. Two of the companies, X and Y, were put on outpost duty. The French maps had been handed in on the 22nd, when only Belgian ones were retained; and, consequently, the men were compelled to operate in an unknown country. The night, in a spiteful mood, sent alternate downpours and high wind. Not far to the north the sky was lit by the flames of burning houses.

The cavalry could be heard exchanging shots with the enemy.

**Le Cateau.**—About 6 a.m. the battalion fell back through Inchy. The cavalry had ridden through about two hours before. The battalion had now reached the battlefield of Le Cateau. Trenches had been dug the preceding day south of Inchy by civilian labour, but as they faced the wrong way the battalion had to begin digging feverishly. They had only been engaged between half and three-quarters of an hour when the battle began. The Northumberland Fusiliers took over the trenches and the Royal Fusiliers moved back into support. A little distance behind the firing line, and roughly parallel to it, was a sunken lane. The battalion was moving into it when a sudden burst of shrapnel caught them. Second Lieutenant Sampson was wounded, one man was killed, and about 20 to 25 were wounded. A slight panic resulted, but the cool and firm handling of Mallock brought the men speedily under control. For the remainder of the battle the men had a comparatively good time. The cooks were in Troisville and a hot meal was obtained. About 250 yards in the rear of the lane were two batteries of artillery and, as a result, shells from both sides continually crossed overhead, but without doing any damage.

**The Retreat resumed.**—About 1 p.m. there was a short lull, and then came a sudden burst of firing about half a mile to the right. It was about 2 p.m., and the Germans could be seen passing through the British lines. Shortly after this the order was given to retire. The Royal Fusiliers had had a good rest and Colonel McMahon, whose coolness, clearness and decision had meant so much to the battalion, was now ordered to command the rearguard to the 3rd Division with the 4th Battalion; and half the Royal Scots Fusiliers were placed under his orders. The roads leading south were packed with the retreating troops in considerable confusion. The rearguard formed up in front of the junction of two converging roads until the confused mass had streamed past, and then fell back in

perfect order in a series of extended lines. The Germans had learned a new caution and when pursuit would have been perhaps decisive, none was made. The attempt had been made to separate the two corps ; but when it was virtually achieved there followed the inexplicable failure to exploit the success. The 4th Battalion marched through a village at attention, arms sloped and fours dressed. They were seen about this time by General Hamilton, the Commander of the 3rd Division, who, no doubt, contrasting the disorderly retreat of the garrison of the firing line, could not resist exclaiming, " Well done, Fusiliers ! "

The battalion marched on till about 2 a.m. on the 27th, when a halt was made by the roadside until 3.30, when the retreat was resumed. They reached Hargicourt about 10 a.m., and after an hour's rest marched on again as rearguard to Vermand, where they arrived at 6.30 p.m. With the exception of about two and a half hours' rest they had had twenty-eight hours' continuous marching. Shortly after midnight they were on the move once more. Ham was reached at 9.30 a.m., and after a short halt the battalion fell back once more to Crissoles. Arriving at 6.30 p.m., the men were billeted and had a rest and hot food.

On the next day, Saturday, the battalion moved out again as rearguard to the division. Here the country is well wooded and the Fusiliers could see several Uhlan patrols. In front of a large forest they were even able to shoot two Uhlans who proved over-venturesome. At dusk the battalion fell back through the wood and marched all night *viâ* Noyons to Cuts, and, after a short halt, to Montois. On arrival at Montois at 7 a.m., on Sunday the 30th, the battalion rested and did not leave the village till twenty-four hours later. Leaving Montois at 7 a.m. the battalion arrived after a hot march through woods at Vauciennes, midway between Villers-Cotterets and Crèpy on the national road to Paris. They were billeted in a sugar factory, which did not leave very comfortable recollections behind it. The battalion was once more

rearguard when it marched south at dawn on September 1st to Bouillancy. Starting at 4.30 a.m. on the following day they arrived at Penchard, on the main road to Meaux, at 2 p.m., and placed outposts for the brigade. On September 3rd the battalion passed through Meaux to Le Mans Farm, where much wholesome food was obtained. At 1 p.m. on the following day the Fusiliers were ordered out to take up a defensive position south of La Haute Maison; and at 11 p.m. the march was resumed to Châtres, which was reached at 7 a.m. on September 5th. It was the southernmost point of the Fusiliers.

Despite their ordeal at Mons the battalion had suffered comparatively little, and the fatigue and hardships of the long retreat had not weakened their spirit. And when on Sunday morning the order came to advance once more, it was certainly received with a sigh of relief. It was exactly a fortnight since the men had first found contact with the German troops and they were anxious to resume that inconclusive encounter. They had been rearguard during the retreat. Now they marched as advance guard, moving at first with the uncertainty that characterised the British Army's entry into the battle of the Marne. About 10 a.m. they passed the First Corps, and at 7 p.m. reached billets in Lumigny. The advance was resumed on the following day at 12 noon, on crowded roads, to La Martroy,\* where, at 7 p.m., the battalion billeted. Two hours before the battalion had passed through Coulommiers, where signs of the German occupation were in evidence though the trains were again running. At La Martroy the Fusiliers received their second reinforcements, Second Lieutenant Hughes and 93 men.

Leaving La Martroy at 6 a.m. on the 8th the division first achieved contact with the enemy at Orly, where they

\* It is perhaps useful to point out that officers' diaries frequently differ as to the places reached. Thus, on Sunday, August 30th, the battalion halted at Montois; but some diaries give this as Vic, about a mile north. Similarly, Vaumoise is cited instead of Vauciennes, close by; La Bretonnière instead of La Martroy. The places given in this chapter are those at which battalion headquarters rested.

were held up for some hours, so that the battalion only reached Les Fauchères at 8 p.m.

On the following day the Royal Fusiliers crossed the Marne unopposed ; and, though not engaged in the day's fighting, were on outpost duty all night and lay in the trenches. On September 10th the battalion came into contact with the enemy at Veully. The men were tired after the outposts, and a cold rain set in. But about 9 a.m. the cavalry brought information that the German rearguard, about two miles ahead, was breakfasting ; and the Royal Fusiliers went forward at once. Lieutenant Steele's platoon was first engaged, and Lieutenant Longman was sent up as a reinforcement. A sharp engagement followed, in which 5 men were killed, 29 wounded, and Lieutenants Tower, Beazley, Jackson and Longman were wounded, the first two severely. The rearguard was quickly overcome and, in conjunction with the Scots Fusiliers, the battalion captured 600 prisoners and the machine gun which had inflicted most of the wounds on Y Company. With four more officers wounded and two, Captain Whinney and Lieutenant Barton sick, the command of the battalion was seriously weakened. On the following day the battalion arrived at Grand Rozoy at 1 p.m., and the day was memorable as the first on which firing had not been heard. The Germans had fallen back hurriedly. Small bodies were encountered in the woods south of Brenelle on the 12th ; but they were quickly put to flight and the battalion billeted in Brenelle.

**The Aisne.**—On the 13th the battle of the Marne began to merge into the battle of the Aisne. The bridges had been blown up, and when the battalion reached Vailly their only means of crossing was by a narrow plank which wobbled very suggestively as the men went across. A position had to be taken up to the left of Rouge Maison Farm. When the battalion approached the spot it was pitch dark and pouring with rain. X and Z Companies pushed forward and took up an outpost line, just after midnight, on the Rouge Maison Spur. The other two



companies occupied a hollow road in the rear ; and all spent a very wet night in the open. The importance of this bold advance in the dark was not realised at the moment ; but it soon became apparent from the German efforts to dislodge the Fusiliers from their position. The morning of the 14th dawned wet and foggy ; and it was at once seen that the depth of the battalion's advance had been too great for the extent of its hold on the plateau. One of Byng's posts was so close to the enemy main line that the Germans could be clearly heard talking. The two forward companies began to extend their line towards the left, W and Y being sent forward to support them. As W advanced to support X it was discovered that there was a trench about 300 yards from their right, and the company wheeled to face it. A patrol sent forward was immediately fired upon, and the position had hardly been disclosed before the battalion on the right was seen to be retiring. The Germans immediately profited by this mischance to take the Fusiliers' right flank in enfilade with machine guns, and many casualties were suffered. Cole and Hobbs fell at once. The whole of the plateau now came under rifle, machine gun and shell fire, with the support of which the Germans attacked. Byng moved too far to the left and Ashburner, who had now resumed command of Y Company, ceased to follow and moved to support W. Ashburner's company was ordered to move to the cover of the steep bank west of the road and remain in reserve. These positions were held till nightfall, when the losses of the day were seen to have been extremely heavy. Captains Byng, Cole and Attwood and Lieutenant Hobbs were killed, Lieutenant Orred wounded, and 200 other ranks were killed or wounded. The battalion had been compelled to readjust their position and reconcentrate about the sunken road west of the farm.

Two platoons of X Company occupied Rouge Maison Farm that night, and beat off an attack with rifle fire and the bayonet. During the 15th the battalion clung to its positions, retiring from the farm during the day, but

reoccupying it at night with a platoon of X Company. It was attacked during the night, but the Germans were beaten off, a few of them being ejected from the farm at the point of the bayonet. The night was very wet, and the battalion was in no enviable position; but during the three following days they were little disturbed and the position was strengthened. German shells continually shrieked overhead as the enemy devoted himself to the bombardment of Vailly.

On the 19th a very heavy bombardment began about 2.30 p.m. The British artillery was outranged, and made no effective reply. After a particularly severe shelling of the whole battalion front at short range, the Germans attacked about 6 p.m. with great determination. They were beaten off with heavy loss, and one party, losing direction in the darkness, offered its flank to the Fusiliers, who were not slow to take advantage. Before the barrier in front of one small part of X Company 25 German dead were counted. The battalion suffered 50 casualties during the day. At dawn on "Alma" day the attack was resumed, and a heavy howitzer was brought to within 800 yards of the position, and, taking it in enfilade, caused several casualties. Two field guns had also been entrenched within 500 yards of the trenches, and the battalion's position in the salient was becoming precarious when the British artillery began to give effective support. The howitzer had to be withdrawn. The attack was beaten off, and although Second Lieutenant Hughes and about 20 other ranks were killed and wounded, the Germans suffered more heavily. At 5 p.m. the Lincolnshires relieved the Royal Fusiliers, who went back to Vailly after having been in the trenches for seven days and eight nights. Their total casualties were 5 officers and 300 men; but their work again had been of a very high quality, and they were the recipients of warm praise from the brigade and divisional commanders.\*

\* "The commanding officer received last night from General Hamilton, commanding 3rd Division, and from General Shaw, com-

In the early hours of the morning of the 21st the battalion, relieved in Vailly, moved to Courcelles. During the afternoon Sir John French visited them in billets, and complimented them.\* On the following day Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien came to Courcelles to add his own appreciation of the Fusiliers' work. During this rest two drafts arrived, and the battalion was brought approximately up to strength, and at 9 p.m. relieved the Royal Irish in trenches on the south-west side of the Rouge Maison Spur. This tour of the trenches was uneventful, and on the evening of October 2nd the battalion was relieved, marched south through Braisnes, and billeted north of Servenay after a trek of sixteen miles.

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Meanwhile the 1st Battalion under Lieut.-Colonel R. Fowler-Butler had reached the Aisne and made their *début* in the war. They were in Ireland on August 4th, but by mid-August had arrived at Cambridge, and reached St. Nazaire during the advance to the Aisne. They left Courcelles two days before the 4th Battalion went into billets there, on relief after their tenure of the Rouge Maison salient. On the 21st, as the latter battalion were coming out of the line for a rest, they marched from Dhuizel to trenches north of Soupir, *viâ* Vieil Arcy, St. Mard, Cys and Chavonne. The brigade (17th) front

manding 9th Brigade, emphatic expressions of their appreciation of the splendid service rendered by the battalion during the eight days' close fighting just concluded. From the warm terms of praise used by the divisional and brigade commanders the C.O. thinks it may be assumed that the battalion has earned some measure of distinction in these operations, and feels that this recognition of something achieved for the country at heavy cost to the regiment, coming, as it does, after several acknowledgments of good work at Mons, of good marching and of all-round efficiency, will increase the feeling of pride which all have in their regiment, and encourage all ranks to earn further distinction in the future. From his own personal observation, the C.O. has been extremely gratified by the fine bearing and soldierly endurance of the battalion during the campaign. Every effort must be made to maintain, and even to improve upon, this high standard.—(Signed) N. R. McMAHON, Lieut.-Colonel."

\* "No troops in the world could have done better than you have. England is proud of you, and I am proud of you."

stretched between the canal at Fort de Metz and the road at La Cour de Soupir. At the latter place lay the Leinsters, with the Royal Fusiliers on their right. Their first tour of the trenches was comparatively uneventful. On the part of the line where they lay the periodical rumour that the Germans were abandoning their positions resulted in the only casualties suffered in the first acquaintance with the enemy. Where the 4th Battalion had stood it was quite evident that the Germans were still in possession; and, indeed, even on the Soupir section the 1st Battalion were sufficiently certified of the enemy's tenure of the trenches 300 yards distant by observation from the branches of a tree. But some of the higher powers proved sceptical, and patrols were ordered out. On the night of the 22nd Captain Howlett was wounded, and 2 other ranks were killed, 13 wounded, and 3 missing after one of these feelers. A daylight patrol on the 27th resulted in 17 O.R. being killed and 12 wounded. Apart from these two unfortunately successful attempts to test the strength of the German trench garrison, the first tour of the trenches was uneventful. They were relieved on October 1st, and were billeted in Dhuizel. On the 4th they relieved General de Lisle's cavalry brigade as corps troops at Chassemy, a lively spot near the Condé bridge, held by the Germans. The bridge consisted of only a few planks across the broken section; but the enemy had also two or three boats on the river, and the approach to the battalion's position became possible only after dark. On the evening of the 6th the battalion marched south to follow the 4th Battalion in the gradual movement of the British Army to the northern flank.

## CHAPTER III

FLANDERS—LA BASSÉE, ARMENTIERES, YPRES

By the end of the second week in October the 1st and 4th Battalions were both in Flanders, moving among places which saw more of the British troops during the war than any others. But the condition of the two battalions was very different. The 1st Battalion was one over strength in officers on the Aisne; the 4th required a draft of 11 officers to bring it within sight of full strength. Junior officers who had attained exalted rank returned to their platoons, and the battalion marched, with little interval, into the thick of a hot battle. The atmosphere of the struggle had changed, and the troops got their first experience of village fighting.

On October 12th the 4th Battalion moved towards Vieille Chapelle along roads almost blocked by French cavalry. They were in divisional reserve, and remained so until the 15th, when they moved forward towards the Estaires-Neuve Chapelle road. The battalion attacked through Pont du Hem, W and X Companies being in the front line; and easily brushed aside the cavalry screen in front of them. The advance was resumed on the following day to the Rue d'Enfer, where the enemy were found holding houses, and at dusk a halt was made on a line extending from Trivolet (W, Captain Swifte), along Rue d'Enfer, to Moulin du Pietre (X, Carey). There had been little resistance, and the few casualties suffered were due to snipers.

**Herlies.**—Aubers had been evacuated during the night, and the battalion entered it unopposed on the morning of the 17th; but there some German cavalry

were encountered advancing from Fromelles. The battalion was on the left of the division, with its flank supposed to be covered by French cavalry. The advance of the German cavalry delayed the march upon Herlies, which was found to be held in some strength. Captain Swift, with W Company, marched direct upon it by the Aubers-Herlies road, while Colonel McMahon took the other three companies through Le Plouich and Le Riez. The Lincolns, on the right of the Fusiliers, moved due eastwards ; and under this converging attack the Germans were forced out of the village. At about 6.30 p.m. Colonel McMahon entered from the north as Swift, with the Lincolns, was pushing the enemy out at the point of the bayonet. W Company lost Lieutenant Hodges, killed, and about 10 other casualties. An outpost line was taken up from Le Petit Riez to the southern outskirts of Herlies. The houses were searched, and a few Germans were discovered.

The division had now reached an uneasy equilibrium with the German forces on their front, and no further advance was possible. The 18th was spent in strengthening the positions, all of which came under a heavy bombardment from field and heavy guns. About 5 p.m. the battalions on the right and left of the Royal Fusiliers, the Scots Fusiliers and the Royal Irish, attacked after a preliminary bombardment. The Germans at once replied. Captain Waller, Lieutenants Cooper, Gorst and Longman, all of Z Company, were at this time having tea in a farm at Petit Riez, near their trenches. The three first ran out to see what was happening. Longman stayed behind ; and a shell fell upon the farm, burst in the room and killed him as he sat at table, a tragic end to a life of much promise.

During the morning of the following day the 8th Brigade took over Le Grand Riez, thus enabling the battalion to contract their front. The Fusiliers supported by their fire an attack on Le Pilly made in the afternoon by the 18th Royal Irish. The latter reached the station with

heavy loss, but were counter-attacked after an intense bombardment and suffered more casualties. During the night Lieutenant Moxon's platoon was sent to the support of the Royal Irish in Le Pilly—it was all the help that could be given—and the Northumberland Fusiliers took over the position south of Herlies. The 4th Middlesex also relieved Z Company in Le Petit Riez. The Royal Fusiliers now held the west side of Herlies from the Le Pilly road. About 7 a.m. on the 20th a violent bombardment of Herlies with heavy guns began, and the town was speedily reduced to ruins. The only building left intact was the convent behind the church. The German infantry followed this up by repeated attempts to penetrate the village, which now lay at the angle of a narrow salient. About 9 a.m. the Northumberland Fusiliers reported determined attempts to outflank them on the southern boundaries of Herlies, and Captain Carey was sent up with a company to attempt to relieve the pressure by initiating an outflanking movement towards Moxon's position. They had to advance over the open, which was now covered by shell fire, and they lost very heavily. Carey was severely wounded by a shell splinter. Moxon had sustained a serious wound in the head. But a platoon reached his position. Ashburner was wounded by a shell splinter in Herlies.

About 1 p.m. Z Company was sent back to prepare a second position. The struggle grew more bitter, and about 4 p.m. half a battalion of Royal Scots was sent to Colonel McMahon to reinforce Herlies. During the night the Northumberland Fusiliers were relieved by the Scots Fusiliers. W and Y Companies still held their positions on the west of Herlies, but the French had evacuated Fromelles; and in the afternoon the battalion was ordered to abandon Herlies. During the night the retirement was carried out to a position between Haut Pommereau and Le Plouich. The movement was unnoticed by the enemy, who continued to shell Herlies long after the battalion had left. The fighting in and about this village resulted

in 5 officers and 150 other ranks being killed and wounded. The 22nd was spent in organising the new position, when orders were received to retire some four miles further back. No transport was available for much of the ammunition and rations, and they had to be abandoned. After a night march the battalion reached Pont du Hem at 4 a.m. on the 23rd and went into divisional reserve. They had been farther east than any British troops were destined to be for nearly four years ; but the enemy was too strong for the position to be maintained.

**Armentières.**—Meanwhile the 1st Battalion had become involved in the battle of Armentières, which embodied that series of encounters that took place on the left flank of the battle of La Bassée. They started to rejoin the brigade at Merris on the 14th and had to march single file because of the congestion on the road. The conditions of this march are sufficiently indicated by the fact that part of the platoon under Goodliffe had to be detached to rescue the car of General Keir (O.C. VI. Division), which had run into snipers holding a farm about 500 yards off the road. The car was restored with little trouble, though it was nervous work in the dark ; and the battalion were settling down into bivouacs when another platoon was ordered to capture a gun which had flung two shells into the middle of the square formation. It was thought to be 300 yards distant, but was eventually estimated to be about 1,000 yards farther off. On the next day they moved to Bac St. Maur. They were compelled to wait several hours in the road, and the men were constantly found swaying with sleep as they stood. Several horses even fell down in the road asleep. The battalion was near the limit of its endurance. If the crossing had been defended in force it is difficult to imagine what would have happened ; and the delay was due to the fact that on the first approach a number of shots had been fired across the river. At length some of the R.E. got across, swung back the central section, and the battalion crossed by the bridge.



They billeted at La Chapelle d'Armentières on the following day, and on the 18th marched in support of the Rifle Brigade to test the strength of the enemy at Parenchies and Premesques, preparatory to the movement of the III. Corps up the Lys. At 2 p.m. the battalion went up on the left flank of the Rifle Brigade, who were held up at the Halt before Parenchies. The Fusiliers advanced on L'EpINETTE, where a hot fire was encountered. It was there that an attempt was made to rescue the people from a burning farm; but when an entry was at last forced through a window no one could be found. The Germans were pressed back slightly, but Captain Palairt and Lieutenant Cooper were wounded and 4 other ranks were killed, 27 wounded, and 4 missing. It was difficult to move without coming under fire, and the wonder is that more casualties were not sustained. The battalion settled at night in a deep dyke.

Two minor attacks, chiefly on the Rifle Brigade, took place during the night, and at 9 a.m. (20th) a rush was made for a gap between that regiment and the Fusiliers. During the rest of the day the positions were subjected to bombardment and sniping; and Lieutenant Scholefield was wounded while crawling to obtain touch with the Rifle Brigade. The battalion were ordered to retire their positions slightly during the night, and the move was successfully carried out without molestation by the light of burning houses. Another feeble attack took place on the 21st after a desultory bombardment, and though this was easily beaten off, two officers, Fisher and Galsworthy, were wounded. The battalion were relieved on the 23rd after a short but costly German attack. The machine guns caught the Germans at a range of some 500 yards in the open. On relief the Fusiliers marched back to Armentières, having to take cover from a heavy outburst of firing on the way, and thence south to the Rue Petillon, which lies about two and a half miles north-east of Fromelles, from which place the French had retired three days before, as we have seen. In this position they

were on the zone connecting the battlefields of Armentières and La Bassée.

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The 4th Battalion had not long to rest. On the 24th they received an urgent order to fall in and to retake some trenches which had been lost by a battalion of the 8th Brigade. There was no staff officer to show which were the trenches, and Colonel McMahon was informed that the Germans were in a wood. A company was just forming up to take the wood at the point of the bayonet when an officer of the Royal Scots came up and said that his regiment had reoccupied the trenches and that no Germans were found. Nerves seemed to wear thin in these days.

The battalion returned to billets only to be summoned out once more—noon, October 25th—to retake lost trenches. The battalion moved to the Rue du Bacquerot, and Y Company was ordered to move thence to the Fleurbaix-Neuve Chapelle road. The remainder of the battalion moved south to Pont Logy, about 1,000 yards due west of Neuve Chapelle. Two companies attacked from this point in a north-easterly direction, thus presenting a flank to Neuve Chapelle. Y Company, on the north, advanced across the open under a heavy shrapnel fire. The two companies at Pont Logy also came under heavy fire, but suffered few casualties until they approached the outskirts of Neuve Chapelle, the northern houses of which the Germans had occupied. There was no artillery support, and Sir Francis Waller was mortally wounded in leading his company (Z) in a gallant charge against the enemy positions. After a severe struggle, in which many losses were sustained, the lost trenches were reoccupied. Neuve Chapelle was cleared, and two field guns, which had been abandoned, were recaptured. Colonel McMahon was ordered to leave two companies and to return the other two to billets. Y Company was left in the firing line, with two platoons of Z in close support and two platoons in reserve. Major Mallock was left in charge of these companies.

On the following day the Germans attacked; and at about 2 p.m. the two companies were brought up from billets to support. Some of the trenches recaptured by the battalion had been taken in an overwhelming onslaught in which the Germans pressed up to the parapets; and a determined attempt was made during the night to recapture them. This engagement was one of the fiercest in which the battalion had taken part, and the attack was not only unsuccessful, but resulted in many casualties, including 8 officers. Sergeant Osborne, who was sent back by Gorst, had the utmost difficulty in getting away. The Germans were then at the trench parapets, and the Fusiliers fought there till they fell. On the 27th another attempt was made to recapture the lost positions, in conjunction with the remains of six battalions. Two companies of Chasseurs Alpins co-operated with the Fusiliers, and, after very severe hand-to-hand fighting, the trenches were almost recovered, when the weight of the battalion was too light to retain the positions. They were compelled to fall back to a new line. Two officers were among the heavy casualties of this day, and the battalion was reduced to some 8 officers and 350 other ranks. Major Mallock, who was seriously wounded in this attack, was a heavy loss. Second in command, he had been to the fore in every action from Mons to this moment.

The battalion were relieved on the night of the 29th and marched to Merris *viâ* Vieille Chapelle and Doulieu. Several drafts were received, and on November 4th the battalion was inspected at Bailleul by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and warmly complimented. The terms of this speech deserve record. As remembered by Captain R. H. C. Routley, they were as follows:—

“ I asked Colonel McMahon to bring you into this small yard because I wanted to express to you my admiration for the work that your regiment, under his leadership, has been doing.

“ I have asked you to come in here because one can

hear better, and I shall be very glad if you will let it be known to the men later on.

"I simply cannot find words enough to express my admiration for the way in which your regiment has behaved. All through the campaign up to now they have had the hardest work of any regiment in the brigade, and any work they have had to do they have carried out exceedingly well. In fact, I can safely say that there is no better regiment in the British Army than the Royal Fusiliers.

"I may add that I am the officer who writes the King's diary every day, and the work of your regiment has been specially mentioned in it; and I can tell you that, when this war is over, you will have special mention made when you get home.

"Now I must say a few words about your colonel, who stands here with us. Of course you know quite well that he has recently been promoted to a brigade, but the work he has done with the regiment has been so valuable, and so well done, that we cannot spare him to take up the position he ought to be now occupying, and, therefore, I am here to tell you—and I'm afraid it will be a great disappointment to you—that, instead of the seven or eight days' rest you were looking forward to at Bailleul, I am very much afraid that in another twenty-four or forty-eight hours you will find yourselves back in the trenches again.

"You will remember a short time back General French came up and especially and personally thanked Colonel McMahon and your regiment for the work done, and it was the only regiment he thanked on that day in the whole division.

"So, when you get back, I will ask you to thank the men from me for all they have done."

**Ypres.**—General Smith-Dorrien's warning was soon fulfilled. On the night of November 6th the battalion took over the positions from the 6th Cavalry Brigade, east of Hooze, on the south side of the Ypres-Menin road. They had some difficulty in reaching their positions as the roads about Ypres were blocked with the traffic. But

they settled down on the edge of Herenthage Wood with Zouaves on their left and the Northumberland Fusiliers on their right. Almost at once the battalion, now so weak, became merged in the great crisis of Ypres. On November 7th the Zouaves were blown out of their trenches. On the following day the shelling continued all day, and several minor attacks were beaten off. The most serious blow fell upon Y Company, but was dealt with summarily. But the Zouaves were forced back, and the Germans got into the wood, round the Fusiliers' open flank. Stapleton Bretherton and Jackson, with half of Y Company, delivered a violent counter-attack and penetrated to the German trenches. Very few of these gallant fellows came back. The two officers and 62 men were seen no more. But, thanks to this charge and the advance of the West Ridings, the line was restored.

On the 11th came the last attempt of the Germans to cut through to the coast. The attack was expected; the battalion order issued before it took place is notable. The order, which was to be read to companies, ran as follows:—

“ It may be assumed that we are about to fight the decisive battle of the war. The German Emperor has arrived to command his troops in person, and Sir John French hopes that the British Army will prove to him that they are better men than the Germans. Both armies are composed of regiments more or less exhausted, and short of officers, and the result will depend very much on the prolonged energy of every soldier in the fight and the endurance shown during the next few days. Fire must be carefully controlled at night, men must assist to the last, be ready to cover every movement with fire, well aimed and well sustained, and there must be no straggling or straying from the platoons to which men belong. The C.O. hopes that every man will sustain the great reputation that the Royal Fusiliers have already made during this war.

(Signed) “ G. O'DONEL,  
“ Captain and Adjutant.”

The morning dawned dull and misty, and about 6.30 a terrible shelling began, "much the most severe I (O'Donel) have ever seen." It continued for two and a half hours. The front trenches were knocked to pieces, and many of the men were killed or buried. Routley, in command, tried to send back a report of the plight of his men, but it was impossible to live in such a bombardment. Then followed the infantry attack by the twelve battalions of the Guard Division. The 4th (Queen Augusta's) Guard Grenadiers seem to have struck the Royal Fusiliers, and the little band of men received the first assault with the bayonet and hurled it back. Routley, about this time, was the only officer left, and he was wounded in the head. The Grenadiers delivered a second charge. Some of the men were driven from their trenches, and their appearance in the rear created a panic among the battalion supports, who appear to have been chiefly special reservists, a draft who arrived on the day before the battle and had not yet been organised into their platoons. Colonel McMahon went to them and tried to rally them. Suddenly he was seen to sink on one knee and begin to remove his legging as though hit in the leg. At that moment a shell burst close to him and killed him. He was a most gallant and distinguished officer, who impressed all who came into contact with him. "A Royal Fusilier," he said to the battalion on the eve of embarkation, "does not fear death. He is not afraid of wounds. He only fears disgrace; and I look to you not to disgrace the name of the regiment." Not merely the battalion and the regiment, but the army as a whole, lost by his death.

Part of the West Ridings had also been driven from their trenches, but a determined counter-attack on both sides of the Ypres-Menin road by the Sussex and Scots Fusiliers drove the German Guard back with heavy loss and partly restored the line. At 1 p.m. the remainder of the Royal Fusiliers were very much disorganised and scattered. In the evening only O'Donel and Second Lieutenant Maclean, with 50 men, could be collected. The

night was very wet, and the fighting died down but little. On the following day about 100 men were collected and withdrawn, but they were back again in the firing line during the evening in support of the Scots Fusiliers and Lincolns. On the 13th they were still in support with the two officers and 170 men. Next day under German pressure they were compelled to retire slightly. On the 15th, wet and tired out, they were still holding on in the rain and snow. But on the following day (November 16th) they went into divisional reserve at Hooge. The attack by the Imperial Guard had petered out without achieving its objective.

On the 20th they relieved the King's Own Scottish Borderers, south of Hooge, in heavy snow; but on the following night they handed over to the French, marched to Westoutre through Ypres, and billeted. It was now freezing hard, and the men's feet were beginning to suffer. At night on the 21st Major Hely Hutchinson arrived to take over command, with Captains Lee, Pipon and Magnay from the 1st Battalion. A draft of 300 special reservists arrived, and companies were reorganised and given some training. But on the 27th the battalion had to take over the trenches at Kemmel from the Norfolks. It was the last test to apply to men so little accustomed to warfare; but the days were critical, and such risks had to be taken. Major Hely Hutchinson had to deal with some serious cases of nerves, but under his firm hand the unit settled down, and spent three days in the trenches. On the night of the 30th they were relieved by the Gordons, and marched to Westoutre to billets. The trenches had been wet, and many of the men had bad feet. Moreover, the shortage of N.C.O.'s made discipline a little slack. One can hardly wonder at this. The battalion had been wiped out twice since the opening of the war. In these four months they had lost 1,900 N.C.O.'s and men and over 50 officers, killed, wounded, sick, and missing. These figures must surely be unique! At any rate, there were not sufficient troops available in these early months

to allow more than a few units to renew themselves three times.

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The march southwards of the 1st Battalion on October 23rd had taken them once more to within a short distance of the 4th, who at that time were withdrawing from the advanced positions in the Aubers area. The 1st only arrived about Fleurbaix at 6 a.m. on the 23rd, very tired and sleepy, and on reaching Rue Petillon they were accommodated, some in houses and some in ditches. Their orders were to support the right of the Welsh Fusiliers; but some Indian troops had arrived there first. The Sikhs lost their two British officers on the 25th, and the Fusiliers found them "jumpy" neighbours. A good deal of firing went on, especially during the night, and the 1st Battalion, after being compelled to stand to night after night, at length took over the bulk of their trenches. There were heavy losses from the German bombardment. But the rhythm of the struggle had changed to that of trench warfare. On November 5th there were 20 casualties from the persistent shelling. Snipers, too, became obtrusive. On the 9th a German shell secured a direct hit on a trench. A gunner observer was killed and three men were wounded. Sergeant Tuersley was wounded in assisting Corporal Taimer, who had been hit, but continued to help him though the trench was still under fire. Three days later, at about 3.30 a.m., a dug-out in which Captain H. J. Shaw was sleeping was knocked in, and when the earth was removed he was dead.

The trenches now became ankle and even knee-deep in mud. The Germans were only about 150 yards away, and they won the approval of the Fusiliers by a rough attempt at sportsmanlike behaviour. Frequently they would call out, "Hullo, Cock Robin!" and at night, "Look out, you English swine—we're coming!" Then a volley, followed by "Good-night" and silence. Both English and Germans put out targets to fire at, and the



conventions were well observed. It was bitterly cold, and fires were lit along the trenches, each side ignoring the smoke. While on tour in the trenches on November 29th coke braziers were issued, and proved very acceptable. On the following day sheepskins were supplied. The next day saw Véry pistols; and, little by little, all the familiar accompaniments of trench warfare appeared.

The 4th Battalion on December 3rd were lined up on the road for the King's visit. After the terrible experiences of the first four months the year slowed down for them. But for the 1st Battalion the trench tours were not without incident. They were occupying a position with their right on the Rue du Bois, south-east of Armenitières, when they were ordered to co-operate with the attack of the 4th Division east of Ploegsteert on December 19th. They carried out this rôle by pinning the enemy to his trenches by means of bursts of intermittent fire. The Germans retorted with a bombardment, in which Captain G. E. Hepburn was wounded and one man killed. At about 1.30 p.m. on the 20th a number of shells were thrown upon a farm in which were battalion headquarters and one platoon. A few sick and some of the headquarters staff went into the cellar, while the remainder filed into a trench in the rear. It was an anxious moment, and a shell went through to the cellar, killing two men and wounding eight others.

Something akin to a truce fell over the armies on Christmas Day and the last days of the year. The trenches were worse than ever. Parapets fell in, and it was found easier to build new trenches than to drain the old. The Saxons opposite the 1st Battalion appeared to be engaged on the same tasks. In the old days armies went into winter quarters. On the Western Front in the winter of 1914 they at any rate ceased from major military operations.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FIRST SPRING CAMPAIGN—NEUVE CHAPELLE, YPRES

EARLY in January of 1915 Lieut.-Colonel Campbell took over the command of the 4th Battalion, who suffered much both from the inclemency of the weather and from avoidable hardships. The trenches were almost intolerable through mud and water ; and in the rest area near Ouderdom, early in March, owing to the huts not being rainproof, the camp became a sea of mud, and afforded little or no rest to its victims. They also suffered from the enemy snipers, the battalion losing no less than 58 men within forty-eight hours from hostile rifle fire on February 23rd. They had, however, the distinction of being thanked in person by General Sir H. Smith-Dorrien on March 8th for saving the situation at Ypres.

Previous to this their brigade (the 9th) had been transferred to the 28th Division to replace the 85th Brigade, a considerable number of whom went sick after scarcely ten days in the firing line. Of these the 3rd Royal Fusiliers had been not a little affected by the vagaries of climate, having only arrived from India in December. They lost temporarily about 25 per cent. of their strength owing to acute bronchial and laryngeal catarrh on their arrival at Havre, and large numbers had to be evacuated to hospital with trench feet during February. But, with the number of those who returned to duty at the beginning of March and several large drafts, the battalion attained the fighting strength of 25 officers and 870 other ranks by March 10th.

**Neuve Chapelle.**—The 3rd Londons had reached France in January, and on February 17th found themselves with the Garhwal Brigade of the Meerut Division



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR REGINALD PINNEY, K.C.B., WHO COMMANDED THE 23RD BRIGADE AT THE BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE, AND LATER THE 35TH AND 33RD DIVISIONS.



at Vieille Chapelle. They were the only Fusilier battalion to be engaged in the operations against and around Neuve Chapelle. On March 10th they supported the advance of the 2nd Leinsters in the Meerut Division's attack on the south of the village.

A deviation of 1/39th Garhwal Rifles to the right caused that regiment to encounter the enemy's line beyond the part where the wire had been destroyed by our artillery fire, and in this fashion a gap of some 200 yards was left unaccounted for, with the result that the Germans with the aid of machine guns maintained a steady resistance at this point, which was finally reduced about 6 o'clock in the evening.

The way in which that point was won will not easily be forgotten by the 3rd Londons. The battalion were in brigade reserve, and by 3.30 a.m. had taken up position behind a long breastwork, in the rear of the trenches along the Estaires-La Bassée road. The country still looked beautiful as the day broke. It was snowing a little, but the fearful din of the bombardment put every other thought out of the heads of these young soldiers as they lay huddled up behind their sandbags for their first battle experience. The roars and barks of the guns were accompanied by the easily distinguishable ping of the bullets. At 8.5 a.m. the infantry advanced and the 3rd Londons moved up to the forward trenches to take their place. Two companies went forward to support the left of the attack, and the other two proceeded to a circular breastwork, on the right of the trench line, known as "Port Arthur."

It was about 8.30 a.m. that the first two companies advanced with the 1st Seaforths and a company of the Garhwal Rifles to support the left flank. A Company was ordered to take a house at the corner of the village, which was reported to have a garrison of about twelve Germans. The order was given to charge and the men at once came under a terrible fire. There were, in fact, almost a complete company of Germans well provided with machine guns. Captain Pulman fell almost at once with about

ten or a dozen men. There was a momentary hesitation in the rest of the company. Lieutenant Mathieson, one of the gayest and best beloved of their officers, then pushed forward, shouting, with his infectious smile, "Come on, boys; don't be shy!" Few, except those in his immediate neighbourhood could hear him. But they saw the gesture and sprang forward. In a few seconds he fell, shot through the head, and died almost immediately. They lost indeed terribly, but somehow they won through and helped on the battle a little.

The other two companies remained in "Port Arthur," the ruined part-skeleton of some farm building, buttressed with walls of earth and sandbags, with machine guns mounted upon them. At 2 p.m. only one officer had escaped in A Company; and at 5 p.m. the order came that this obdurate German trench that made a gap in the line must be taken. The men climbed over the breastwork in full view of the enemy to cross some 200 yards of open country, pitted by shells and strewn with dead, in a frontal charge on the German position. With bayonets at the charge they rushed across the open, cheering as they went. Lieutenant Crichton was one of the first in the open and, stepping in front of his platoon, he cried, "Follow me." He fell after a few yards, shot in the leg. One or two men ran to help him, but he struggled to his feet and, shouting "Charge!" went on again. He was wounded again, this time mortally. Half the men who went across that space became casualties. Men fell on all sides, but the charge continued, and at length they rushed the German trench and the gap was healed. "It was the finest charge I ever saw," said an Indian officer. After the charge the wounded trickled back to "Port Arthur," where the colonel and another officer attended to them. One of these wounded boys said to his officer with a smile, "They can't call us Saturday night soldiers now, can they, sir?"

Captains Livingston and Moore remained in the captured position for four days, and had to repel a German counter-attack. It was during this period that Acting-

Sergeant W. Allen won the D.C.M. He was out on a reconnoitring patrol on the night of March 13th and discovered three small bridges laid down by the enemy for their advance. These he removed, which caused the Germans to be held up in their counter-attack, when they were met by machine guns. This action was a splendid opening of the Londons' fighting. The 3rd Londons lost 8 officers and 340 other ranks, but they had won their spurs.

The 4th Londons went into the trenches at Rue des Berceaux for the first time on the night of March 12th/13th and their admirable conduct under most trying conditions in a totally novel experience won the appreciation of Major-General H. O. N. Keary, commanding the Lahore Division, while visiting the battalion headquarters at Vieille Chapelle some four days later.

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It was about this time that the 3rd Royal Fusiliers were in the trenches east of Kemmel. Orders had been given that considerable activity had to be shown by the troops in the trenches. It is probable that no soldier ever welcomed this order. Attacks are intelligible, but "hates" merely meant counter-hates. The rôle of this activity was to occupy and preoccupy the Germans during the attack at Neuve Chapelle, but it resulted, as was foreseen, in the Fusiliers' positions being badly knocked about. On the night of March 9th battalion headquarters were shelled and burned. Official correspondence, a machine gun, rifles and eighty sets of equipment were destroyed. It was on this occasion that Lieut.-Colonel Guy du Maurier, D.S.O., was killed. Lance-Corporal Fovargue, who was at headquarters at the time, stated that they were asleep when a shell suddenly tore off part of the roof. The colonel rushed to the doorway, and just as he reached it a shell fell on the spot and killed him instantly. Colonel du Maurier was not only an experienced soldier, but also a dramatist who made a stir with the war play "An Englishman's Home." He was the elder son of Mr. George du

Maurier, the famous black and white artist, and brother of Mr. Gerald du Maurier the artist. Lieut.-Colonel A. V. Johnson, D.S.O., took over the command of the battalion, who next saw service in the Ypres area. They took over trenches from the French with parapets not more than a foot thick at the top ; " death traps " as a Fusilier officer aptly termed them.

**Second Battle of Ypres.**—On April 20th they moved into the Gravenstafel trenches on the left of the 28th Division. It was not their first visit ; and on the last occasion they had suffered 72 casualties. On their left were the Canadians with the French prolonging the line to the north. The 3rd Battalion reached the trenches when it was obvious a German attack was pending. The bombardment of Ypres had begun. Its destruction could only mean that the enemy were blocking the avenues by which supplies must reach the Ypres sector, and accordingly the command looked for an attack in the general direction from which, in fact, it came. But its onset was so unlike any previous assault that for some days the position was critical, and the Royal Fusiliers went through a period of unique strain. On the evening of April 22nd the Germans first released gas on the Western Front, and the poisonous green cloud swept away part of the French line on the Canadians' flank. As there was a four-mile gap in the line the Canadians refused their left. On the 23rd this flank was becoming more and more involved ; and a counter-attack was launched east of the Ypres Canal. Lieut.-Colonel Arthur Percival Birchall, an officer of the Fusiliers commanding the 4th Ontario Battalion, fell in this gallant attempt to redeem a lost position. The battalion came under a very heavy fire and appeared to waver. Birchall, carrying a light cane, with great calmness and cheerfulness rallied his men, but at the moment when he had succeeded he was shot dead. He had twice been wounded, but insisted on continuing with his command, and he died at the beginning of the last charge which captured the German shelter trenches and, at least



for the moment, arrested the advance. He was recommended for the Victoria Cross.

The 3rd Canadian Brigade, on the left flank, was now bent back almost at right angles and they lay in this position when, after a violent bombardment on the morning of April 24th, the Germans delivered a second gas attack. It was about 3.30 a.m. ; and the 3rd Brigade, gassed for a second time, fell back to the south-west of St. Julien. The 2nd Brigade, on their right, swung round to conform, and the 3rd Royal Fusiliers were now left almost at the angle of the line. Attempts were made to restore the position, but to little purpose ; and on April 25th the Germans attacked the 2nd East Surreys on the Fusiliers' right. The 3rd Battalion helped to repel this attack with their machine guns.\*

On April 26th the 1st Hants came up to establish connection on the left of the Royal Fusiliers, and the 2nd Buffs carried out a partial relief ; but in spite of all the Germans penetrated to the left rear of the Royal Fusiliers. The battalion's position was almost intolerable. Even after the Germans were ejected they were " absolutely plastered with shell and every other kind of fire from three sides at once the whole time, with practically no assistance at all from our guns, and nothing could exist or move over the ground in rear, as every yard of it was plastered without ceasing by enormous shells." †

Late on the afternoon of May 2nd strong bodies of the enemy had been observed moving from Passchendaele towards the left trenches, which from that time onwards suffered very severe bombardment, parts, indeed, being blown to pieces, necessitating their evacuation. Between April 22nd and May 3rd, when the line was ordered to retire, the 3rd Royal Fusiliers had had Lieutenant H. M. Legge, Second Lieutenants A. Hyam, G. Lambert, W. Grady, F. Franklin and W. Dunnington-Jefferson and

\* " Great slaughter was caused by a machine gun of the 3rd Royal Fusiliers, under Lieutenant Mallandain " (Conan Doyle, " The British Campaign in France and Flanders," Vol. II., p. 64).

† An officer's statement.

100 N.C.O.'s and men killed, 13 officers wounded, and 363 additional casualties among the other ranks. But they had clung to their position under the most desperate conditions and had not given a yard of ground until the whole line was ordered to fall back.

On the evening of May 3rd the battalion moved back to bivouac in the wood north of Vlamertinghe-Poperinghe road, where they were inspected by General Bulfin (the Divisional Commander) on May 4th. At noon on the 8th they were ordered to support an attack made by East Surreys and the 3rd Middlesex between Verlorenhoek road and Railway to regain some trenches lost in that vicinity. The battalion took no more active participation on this occasion than that of being the victim of perpetual sniping from their front and right.

However, on the 12th, reinforced by several large drafts, they were relieved by Leicester Yeomanry and moved back to bivouac in a wood east of Poperinghe, having lost Second Lieutenants W. Curwen and A. Ford, with 40 N.C.O.'s and men killed ; and there were 3 officers and 141 other ranks additional casualties during the four days of active support.

In the severe losses they suffered the 3rd Royal Fusiliers experienced this consolation, that they were highly complimented by the Commander-in-Chief and Brigade on May 20th, for their services and operations extending from April 22nd to May 13th.

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The 4th Londons had meanwhile made a forced march to Ouderdom on April 25th, and delivered an attack in support of the Connaught Rangers at St. Jean, an effort which was unsuccessful owing to the poisonous gas employed by the enemy. On the following day the 4th Londons made another gallant attempt, this time upon the right flank ; but also unsuccessfully. They sustained heavy losses, Lieutenant Coates and 32 other ranks being killed, 7 officers wounded and 165 additional casualties to N.C.O.'s and men.

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**Aubers Ridge and Festubert.**—Meanwhile an attempt was being made by the First Army to engage the enemy in the locality adjoining the scene of the Neuve Chapelle operations. The first part of the operations began on May 9th and the main advance was made towards Fromelles.

On May 8th the 1st Londons had moved to assembly positions south of the Rue Petillon with A and B Companies on the right and C and D on the left. On the following day, after an artillery bombardment of the German wiring and trenches, the leading platoons of A and C Companies advanced from their assembly positions only to be recalled by the Brigadier. At 6.10 a.m., however, the battalion advance \* was resumed, being carried out by platoon rushes during which the right half of the battalion alone lost 3 officers and 120 men, most of which casualties occurred before the river Layes was reached. At half-past seven information was received that Brig.-General Lowry Cole had been killed, and an hour and a half later the battalion was ordered to withdraw to the cross-roads at Rue du Quesnes, from which they were directed to return to billets at Bac St. Maur, having lost in the operations Captain G. M. D. Mouat and Lieutenant R. G. B. Bowen killed, Lieutenant J. Seaverns, died of wounds, Captain A. A. Lyle and Lieutenant H. J. Boyton wounded and 194 other ranks casualties.

The 3rd Londons took part in the second advance which was made, farther to the south, east of Festubert. The Londons co-operated with their former companions, the 2nd Leinsters and Garhwal Rifles, in an unsuccessful attack on May 16th on the enemy's trenches not far from the scene of their previous enterprises, and in consequence remained in trenches south of Neuve Chapelle, with their headquarters on the Rue du Bois.

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\* " They advanced over 400 yards of open with the steadiness of veterans " (Conan Doyle, "The British Campaign in France and Flanders," Vol. II., p. 119).

**Bellewarde Ridge.**—Meanwhile, before Ypres there had been a ten days' lull in the fighting ; but on May 24th the enemy delivered a gas attack. This was the worst discharge of all. Five miles away, at Dickebusch, the 4th Battalion experienced its effects, many men suffering from sore eyes.

It was a perfect summer day and the light north-easterly breeze just after dawn carried the poisonous fumes across the British lines between Shell-trap Farm, north of the St. Julien road, and Bellewarde Lake. The surprise gained the enemy a considerable advantage, and, as the men were searching for their respirators there began a violent bombardment. It was a terrible experience, waking to this inferno ; and some of the troops left their trenches. The 3rd Battalion were at this time lying south of the Ypres-Roulers railway, and they at once found themselves not only obliged to cope with the poisonous fumes and the terrible bombardment, but also with the uncovering of their left flank, where the troops had left the trenches. Half of No. 2 Company, under Second Lieutenants Sealy and Holleny, were sent to occupy the abandoned trenches north of the railway. Both officers were killed later in the day. After 5 a.m. telephone communication with brigade headquarters ceased, and though constantly repaired it was as persistently broken again by shell fire. Nos. 1 and 4 Companies were also cut off from battalion headquarters, and the battle line appeared to fall to pieces with small islands of steadfast troops alone standing in the way of the German advance.

Major Johnson received a message from brigade headquarters ordering him to counter-attack. Two companies of the Buffs were to support, and the East Surreys were to co-operate north of the railway. The remainder of No. 2 Company and certain stragglers at once prepared to advance against the ridge from the road 200 yards south of the railway crossing ; and at the same time a half company of the Buffs moved up the sunken road south of the wood, close to the level crossing. Major Baker crossed

the railway and sent forward the other half of No. 2 Company under Lieutenant Sealy with orders to make good the old trench line 350 yards to the east.

But now disaster began to crowd upon disaster. Major Johnson's attack had not been successful, and he was wounded and had to go to the dressing station. Major Baker collected Major Johnson's party in the wood south of the railway and placed them in the third line trenches. But before the Fusiliers had taken up position the Germans had worked round to the south of Ridge 44 and were enfilading the road south of the railway. Baker now got together some of his men and placed them in the ditch on this road, from which position they could return the German fire with less disadvantage. The Buffs' reinforcements sent up were so thinned out by shell fire that when the various small parties were collected they totalled only 200 ; but they were a useful reinforcement. The immediate danger was the Germans' turning movement on the right, and the Buffs extended the line south of the road as a counter manœuvre.

The Germans had been in possession of our fire trenches since 8 a.m., but the surviving 150 (out of an original 880) Royal Fusiliers, with the assistance of the Buffs, succeeded in holding the third line to the end of the day. A party of Durham Light Infantry filled up the 300 yards' gap between the Royal Fusiliers, north of the railway, and the East Surreys. To complete the chronicle of disaster the 84th and 80th Brigades attacked that night, but, after a bitter and prolonged struggle, nothing further was achieved than a final checking of the German onslaught. A restoration of the original position had proved impossible, and the 3rd Royal Fusiliers were relieved and left the line.

In the final summing up the Germans had only produced a surface abrasion on the positions for which the Fusiliers had so obstinately fought. Almost from the beginning their plight seemed hopeless. The gas, where it did no worse, made the men incapable of all effort ; and yet the time had come for a super-human effort. They had to make

good the defection on the left and, thus weakened, bear a heavy onslaught from the Germans, and finally make a deliberate counter-attack. By 8 a.m. Major Baker was not only commanding officer ; he was the only officer left out of seventeen. At the end of the day the battalion casualties amounted to 536. This was probably the worst loss in a day's battle of any Fusilier battalion during the war.

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**First attack on Bellewarde.**—At the end of May the Germans were left in possession of Bellewarde Lake, and they established positions which made an uncomfortable sag in the Ypres salient. The 3rd Division was given the task of effecting a local straightening of the line in this area, and the 9th Brigade was selected to storm the Bellewarde Farm Ridge.

The 4th Royal Fusiliers were in position, east of Cambridge Road trench, at 1.30 a.m. on June 16th, on the right of the brigade front. Immediately in front of them lay the wood with a trench guarding its western edge. At 2.50 a.m. the artillery bombardment began, and two hours later two companies advanced in half-company column and captured the front German line without much resistance, the wire having been so effectually cut that no difficulty was experienced by our infantry in climbing through it and scaling the enemy parapet. In some places the wire was swept away as though it had never been. Dead and wounded were lying about ; and the unwounded appeared to have been demoralised by our shell fire—a welcome change—into surrender.

On the right the two supporting companies of the 4th Battalion pushed through the wood to the trench on the west bank of Bellewarde Lake. But they advanced too quickly for our artillery and suffered very heavily, despite every attempt to correct the range by coloured screens. At 10 a.m. the brigadier of the 7th Brigade had taken command ; and he ordered Major Hely Hutchinson to go into the wood which had been just captured by the battalion

and organise the men who remained. This was immediately done.

But the bombardment by our own and the enemy's artillery was too much, and after considerable loss the 4th Battalion withdrew to a communication trench which had been turned into a fire trench by Captain de la Perrelle. This position was held against all counter-attacks until in the early part of the afternoon orders were received to retire.

All the day the battalion was under heavy artillery fire, and during the afternoon gas shells were used freely; but the men's behaviour was very fine. Lance-Corporal Filter and Sergeant Jones were both wounded, but remained at their machine guns until sent to the dressing station. Sergeant H. T. Smith very bravely bandaged two wounded men and carried them to cover, all under heavy fire; and Private A. Beckett was killed while assisting a wounded comrade along a trench. Private McGee was wounded in two places, but continued to carry messages through the shell-swept area until sent to the dressing station by his captain. Indeed, the battle was full of heroic deeds, but at the end of the day only a handful of ground remained in the hands of the battalion of all that had been taken in that first eager rush, and the losses had been all too heavy. Of the 22 officers and 820 men who entered battle some 15 officers and 376 men became casualties. Captain and Adjutant O'Donel, who had been with the battalion from their arrival in France, was killed. Lieutenants Thornton, Harter, Warde and Rogers, with Second Lieutenants Dudley and Banister, were also killed. Major Hely Hutchinson was badly wounded and Captain de la Peverelle took over the command of the battalion.

The day's fighting had been a very terrible experience, though the divisional commander congratulated the battalion, and General Allenby talked to the men in groups on the 18th and told them they had done the finest bit of work in the campaign.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SUMMER OPERATIONS—LOOS

As the spring wore on to summer a number of new Royal Fusilier battalions made their way to France, so that at the opening of the battle of Loos there were nine Regular and Service battalions on the Western Front. They settled down very easily, and showed every eagerness to get to grips with the enemy. At first many things had the charm of novelty. When, on July 29th, the 8th Battalion exploded a mine in front of Frelinghem and a trench mortar threw twenty 60 lb. bombs into the German trenches, this formed a wonderful episode. It was the first occasion on which a trench mortar had been used on the battalion front, and it excited great interest. The retaliation was even more engrossing, and a little disturbing, too. On August 9th the Germans exploded a mine and began a very heavy bombardment. Over 4,000 rounds from five batteries fell on the battalion front. The artillery were asked to reply, and 147 rounds were fired. The trench parapet was blown in, and Second Lieutenant Allen and C.S.M. Perkins gallantly dug out Lieutenant Chell, who had been buried by the mine explosion, though they were completely in the open and under heavy fire. The rest of the morning appears to have been occupied by answering indignant expostulations from the artillery about the reason for causing such a huge expenditure of ammunition! But Brig.-General Borrowdale later congratulated the battalion on their soldierly bearing in this episode. It was all very characteristic of the period.

On August 18th another typical incident occurred.



The 10th Battalion, who had only been in France some eighteen days, were attached to the 8th for instruction in the trenches.

During the early autumn the 1st Battalion remained in the neighbourhood of Ypres, and the 4th was involved in the operations about Hooge, which seemed ever to be bubbling with activity. On September 29th the battalion exploded a mine under a German trench, and the night was occupied by a great bombing battle.

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**Loos.**—But in the meantime the army had launched the battle of Loos, which, waged with intensity for some days, set up ripples throughout the area for over a month. The attack was elaborately staged and, in order to conceal its exact dimensions, smoke clouds were released over an extensive sector of the British front. This led to an amusing incident. The 8th Battalion, still lying near Houplines, had been ordered to light smoke fires along their front at 4.30 a.m. on the morning of the attack. At 4.15 this order was cancelled, and directions were given to raise the smoke cloud at 5.30. The 40th Division, on the right of the 8th Battalion, kept to the original order, and about 5.0 a.m. voices from the German trenches inquired when the 8th Battalion were going to light their straw!

It was, however, the 12th Battalion, the last to arrive in France, who were the first to be involved in the battle of Loos. They formed part of the 73rd Brigade of the 24th Division, one of the two reserve units which Sir John French had kept in hand "to ensure the speedy and effective support of the I. and IV. Corps in case of their success." They had only arrived in France on September 1st, and they reached Beuvry on the 24th by a succession of tiring marches, with sick cases reported every day up to the 22nd. They had not yet become acclimatised to the realities of war. They had had no trench experience. Beuvry lies about four miles from Vermelles as the crow flies; but when it is remembered that at times a battalion

took five hours to travel a mile, and that these roads were packed with traffic, this short distance will be appreciated as a considerable undertaking. The 73rd was the leading brigade, and on the approach march they were detached and led off by a staff officer to the neighbourhood of Fosse 8, perhaps the hottest corner of the Loos battle area.

This only skims the surface of the 12th Battalion's difficulties. Colonel C. J. Stanton was destined for a brigade, and he was summoned on September 25th to divisional headquarters. He handed over to Major R. D. Garnons-Williams, who was ordered to the front line to relieve the Black Watch, who had suffered heavily in the morning attack. There had been no time for preliminary reconnaissance. The troops were quite new to the area, and in the confusion of marching up the battalion became split up. Garnons-Williams, with a platoon of No. 1 and the whole of No. 2 Company, carried out the relief, and so came to a position where the advance had been most bitterly resisted and the gain was still not admitted to be final. From their entry into the trenches until they left them on the morning of the 28th, the battalion was continually under shell fire. In the mornings and evenings the trenches were attacked. The battalion, while subjected to this unique ordeal, had no rations, no water, no sleep. They had arrived without bombs, yet they beat off every enemy attack until the morning of the 28th, when, after a heavy bombardment, the flanking battalions were attacked and a footing was gained in the trench on the battalion's right and left. Their position was now hopeless, and, under an attack from both flanks, they were forced to retire. But they went back fighting. Lieutenant Neynor organised and led four bayonet charges as they retired, and the enemy was driven back.

Meanwhile the other part of the battalion, under Major H. W. Compton, endeavouring to regain touch, had halted in the dark. When the moon came out they were

at once seen, and shelled in the open. They took cover in some trenches, and waited for the dawn. On the morning of the 26th they were placed by a staff officer in the old British firing line, where they remained until the 28th, when they were relieved. The battalion's losses had been very heavy. Major Garnons-Williams, Captains Waddell and Phillips, Second Lieutenant Newcombe were killed. Major Gibson and five other officers were wounded. Two officers fell into the hands of the Germans. Of other ranks 20 were killed, 27 wounded, 64 wounded and missing, and 142 missing. The test to which they were subjected one would say was too hard ; but, bearing in mind the manner in which they bore the ordeal, it is inevitable we should wonder if any test could be over-hard for such troops.

The 3rd Battalion entered the battle when the 12th were near the end of their ordeal. On the evening of September 25th Fosse 8 lay in our hands, and Hohenzollern Redoubt lay behind our lines ; but on the morning of the 27th Fosse 8, which, with its slag heap, commanded Hohenzollern Redoubt, had reverted to the Germans, and the redoubt itself was mainly held by the enemy. On this day the 3rd Battalion were ordered to take over some 700 yards of the German line north of the redoubt, with the Buffs on their right. But as the line was at that moment again in German hands, verbal orders were given to company commanders at 2 a.m. to attack the redoubt at once. No. 2 Company was upon the right, and No. 3 on the left, with Nos. 1 and 4 supporting, and the machine gunners on the flanks. The battalion moved off, preceded by General Pereira (85th Brigade), who was hit during the afternoon, when the command of the brigade devolved upon Colonel Roberts. The trenches were congested with men wounded and men retiring, but Colonel Roberts succeeded in leading No. 2 Company and half No. 1 Company into the redoubt, when, having placed them on the south and south-east sides, he retired to brigade headquarters. Major Baker took command of the

battalion, and between 6 p.m. and midnight he succeeded in placing the battalion on three sides of the redoubt, the East Surreys occupying the other. The operation was carried out with great difficulty. The units were mixed. There were no guides, and in the dark it was hard to recognise the positions.

During the morning of the 28th the enemy attacked the north face with bombs, but were repulsed by No. 3 Company. Another bombing attack followed an advance of the Buffs and Middlesex. On this occasion the Germans penetrated some distance up the south face, but were eventually driven back by three platoons of No. 2 Company. The following morning the enemy bombed down Little Willie, the trench leading north from the redoubt, and the north face of the redoubt itself. They were only forced back after a fierce struggle, in which No. 4 Company had reinforced the East Surreys. No. 2 Company, after attempting to straighten out the line by an advance along the southern face, was caught in the most violent attack of all. The Middlesex, who had been holding Big Willie, the eastern limb of the redoubt, evacuated it, and No. 2 Company found its flank in the air. The Germans bombed down the western face, and drove No. 2 Company back almost to the head of the communication trench. There a counter-attack was delivered by a company of the Yorks and Lincs, and finally, after heavy loss, Nos. 2 and 4 Companies drove the Germans out of the western face and Big Willie, and blocked the southern face. As far as the 3rd Battalion goes, this disposition survived attack. On the morning and afternoon of the 30th bombing attacks along the southern face were all repulsed. Captain Sutton arranged stores of bombs along the western face and relief bombers, to be despatched to any point as needed. At 4 a.m. the following morning the battalion was relieved. They marched to Beuvry much weaker than they set out. Captain R. S. Scholefield, Lieutenant G. Murray Smith, Second Lieutenants S. W. Bowes, J. E. Bull, G. H. L. Ohlmann and J. V. C. Batten

had been killed, and 12 other officers wounded. Among other ranks the casualties totalled 337.

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On September 30th the 8th Battalion relieved the Irish Guards in trenches captured from the Germans on the 25th in front of Hulloch. The following day there was very heavy shelling by both sides. The British shelling made it impossible to carry out the order to dig a jumping-off trench in front of B Company's trench. For the latter, and the ground in front of it, were constantly under our own shrapnel, as the battery had had orders to prevent the Germans from wiring this ground! The 9th Battalion had occupied neighbouring trenches on September 30th, and both battalions, after a few days out of the trenches, moved up again on October 13th. The 9th Battalion, on this occasion, arrived at the German old line at 10.30 p.m., after having taken nearly five hours to cover about a mile. The 35th Brigade had attacked that day, and the 8th at night had two companies carrying bombs for them, the other two being in trenches north of the Hulloch road in support of the 37th Brigade.

Another small attack was delivered by troops of the same division on October 18th. A German trench west of the Quarries was attacked by the Essex and the 9th Battalion supported with two squads of bombers under Second Lieutenant W. W. Smith. The detachment undoubtedly consumed a large supply of bombs, and the attack was successful. The trench was captured and consolidated. A and B Companies were in the fire trenches, and the battalion were responsible for Pt. 54, with the support of the Berks. At night the 9th were pleased to receive a message from the Guards saying, "Well done, neighbours. Many thanks for splendid co-operation."

The Essex were not left in undisturbed possession of their gains. On the following day there was a sharp attack on the captured trench. The bombardment began at 7 a.m., and the new trench came under a concentrated fire about 3.30. Shortly afterwards an attack developed

on the line of the 9th Battalion, and the 8th sent up 32 bombers under Second Lieutenants Oliver and Barrow. Oliver was killed and Barrow wounded, but they had assisted in beating off the attack. A more serious mishap was the wounding of Lieut.-Colonel Annesley while he was directing the 8th to "stand to."

\* \* \* \*

But the battle had by this time practically died down, and the battlefield sank into that uneasy state of rest which covered the whole line. Winter had come, and the new battalions had time to grow accustomed to the realities of the war. Many of them amused themselves by erecting notice-boards near the German trenches when any particularly heartening piece of news was available. Thus, on December 10th the 10th Battalion placed a large notice-board with a report of a peace demonstration in Berlin on the German wire. Three months later the enemy retaliated with a German cartoon showing a Highlander gathering the German harvest. On the back was written "Come on and let us have drink at Doberitz, the newest British colony." This was found, neatly wrapped in oilskin near the battalion's wire; but, unfortunately, the postmen were shot.

**The Chord.**—By this time, however, local actions had begun, and in two of them the Royal Fusiliers were engaged. The first was the action on March 2nd, 1916, at the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and was carried out by the 8th and 9th Battalions. The objective was The Chord, joining Big Willie and Little Willie. At 5.45 p.m. the 8th Battalion, on the left (or north), exploded three mines and the 9th four. The largest of the latter ("A") was intended to wreck the bulk of The Chord, but it only affected about one-third of its length. The trench mortars and artillery were to have begun simultaneously, but the former began half an hour and the latter a quarter of an hour earlier. Immediately after the explosion of the mines 50 men of A Company of the 8th Battalion, under Captain A. K. K. Mason and Second Lieutenant Wardrop,

and 50<sup>+</sup> men of B Company of the 9th, under Captain the Hon. R. E. Philipps, rushed across and seized the part of The Chord allotted to them. Twenty of Philipps' party were buried through the explosion of the mine blowing in part of the assembly trench, and Philipps was slightly wounded in the face. But the men went forward rapidly and either cut through the wire or went over it where it was covered by the earth cast up by the explosion. Of the party of the 8th Battalion, only Wardrop and one man reached The Chord, the rest being either killed or wounded. Captain Mason was killed, but reinforcements were sent out, and A Company, though bombed along The Chord to within thirty yards of "A," where they found contact with the 9th Battalion, held to the position. Major Cope \* took 24 men up to Wardrop, and the position was held for the rest of the day. Meanwhile C Company, under Chard, had seized Crater "C," the northernmost, and A Company had taken "B" Crater, on the right of "C." Thus all the craters had been occupied according to plan, but there was still a body of Germans holding out in The Chord.

The 9th Battalion had, in the meantime, seized their objectives. They found many Germans in their sector of The Chord who, though dazed, did not surrender and consequently had to be killed. There followed a number of fierce grenade fights, the Germans rushing down from the north end of The Chord and along the trenches leading from the east into it. C Company, under Major N. B. Elliott-Cooper, rushed Craters Nos. 1, 2 and "A"; and then seized the crater in the Triangle. The grenade attack on the right lost direction, and Sergeant Cronyn rushed down the south-east face of the Triangle into Big Willie, throwing grenades into the crowded dug-outs, until held up by a party of Germans. A fierce grenade encounter followed until the Triangle was consolidated. The 8th had to call on the supporting battalion before the day was over, but the craters were held against enemy bombing attacks during the night.

\* Major Cope and Colonel Annesley were both granted the D.S.O.

Though both battalions lost heavily, the operation on the whole had been most successful. On the part of the 9th Battalion it had been particularly so, and Lieut.-Colonel Gubbins was awarded the D.S.O., Major Elliott-Cooper, Captain the Hon. R. E. Philipps and Lieutenant E. W. T. Beck the M.C.; Sergeant Cronyn, Lance-Corporal A. Lowrey and Private McIntosh received the D.C.M. The battalion also received warm congratulations from General Gough, G.O.C. I. Corps; General Scott, G.O.C. 12th Division; and from Brigadier-General Boyd Moss, G.O.C. 36th Brigade. Both battalions were mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's despatch of May 12th, 1916.

**St. Eloi.**—A more imposing operation was that carried out by the 4th Battalion with the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers on March 27th. This attack was described in the despatch of May 12th, and in the published edition of the despatches it is illustrated by a plan. The object was to straighten "out the line at St. Eloi," and cut "away the small German salient which encroached on the semi-circle of our line in the Ypres salient to a depth of about 100 yards over a front of some 600 yards. The operation was begun by the firing of six very large mines; the charge was so heavy that the explosion was felt in towns several miles behind the lines, and large numbers of the enemy were killed. Half a minute after the explosion our infantry attack was launched, aiming at the German second line."\* The right attack by the Northumberland Fusiliers met with little opposition; but the 4th Royal Fusiliers fared very differently.

The attack† was launched at 4.15 a.m., with W and X

\* Despatch.

† There is little use in amplifying this account. The episode seems, on calm reflection, to have been the most tragic of any in which the Royal Fusiliers figured. There can be no possible doubt of the splendid gallantry of officers and men. There is as little doubt as to the skill of the command. No troops could have done better; but a certain glamour surrounded the action of the Northumberland Fusiliers because of their greater success. It is one of the many instances in which the caprice of fate involved a grave injustice.



Companies on the left and Y and Z on the right. The men ran forward on the explosion of the mines, but they were met by intense rifle, machine gun and artillery fire. The Germans appear to have been fully on the alert, and the battalion at once lost heavily. They stormed the German wire, unbroken as it was, and took the first German trench. But they had been so weakened and the opposition was so heavy that they could get no further, and the ground was consolidated. The rest of the day was occupied by an artillery duel. The German fire was intense, and until midnight it was impossible to relieve the battalion. Small parties of the 2nd Royal Scots then began to get through, but the relief was not complete until 6 a.m. on March 28th. The casualties for the day were 10 officers and 255 other ranks. Captain Moxon, Second Lieutenants Tothill, Howard, Boddy and Perrier, were killed, and Lieutenant Hardman died of wounds on the 30th. It was on the 29th that the chaplain, the Rev. N. Mellish, went out repeatedly with a volunteer party to get in the wounded, and he was awarded the Victoria Cross, being the first chaplain to receive it during the war.

The action of March 27th was but the beginning of a long series of local attacks and counter-attacks in this area until May 19th, when the *status quo ante* was perforce accepted as the best compromise.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GREAT ADVENTURE—GALLIPOLI

“ It was an impossible task for any but highly-disciplined, well-trained, skilfully-led, heroically brave, grimly-determined Britishers, animated by high ideals, and upheld by the traditions of their battalions and of their race. It may truly be called the achievement of the impossible.”—*Lieut.-General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, M.P., “ The Times,” June 7th, 1921.*

MEANWHILE the 2nd \* Battalion had written a memorable page in one of the most tragic episodes of the war. Landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula with the 29th Division on April 25th, they saw the campaign through to its close in brilliant failure.

At the outbreak of the war the battalion was in India, and it did not embark for England until December. January 18th, 1915, a week after they had settled down at Stockingford, was the first day of mobilisation ; and a few days later Lieutenant J. V. Scudmore and Second Lieutenant H. Cooper handed over the colours to the Lord Mayor of London. But the 29th Division, of which the battalion formed part, was not destined to leave England yet. It was not until March that orders arrived which suggested an Eastern destination. On March 12th the division, now commanded by General Hunter-Weston, was inspected by the King near Dunchurch, and four days later the battalion embarked on S.S. *Alaunia* at Avonmouth.

*Alaunia* steamed her stately way through beautiful weather to the Eastern Mediterranean. When she was still some distance from Gibraltar the navy began its

\* General Hamilton's despatch speaks of the battalion as the “ 1st.”



Copyright "The Sphere"

H.M.S. *Implacable* WITH THE 2ND ROYAL FUSILIERS APPROACHING "X" BEACH, GALLI POLI.



attack on the Narrows. But apparently there was no advantage in speed, and the division waited a few days at Malta. *Alaunia* then steamed towards Lemnos until the night of the 26th, when, in conformity with orders received by wireless, she changed her course and at length arrived at Alexandria on Palm Sunday, March 28th, about noon. The troops did not disembark until the following day, when they proceeded to Mex Camp. The routine of the next few days outlined with sufficient accuracy the task which the battalion was to undertake. There were practice disembarkations with subsequent attacks on enemy positions. One of the Lancashire Fusiliers attempted to relieve the tedium by almost drowning himself while bathing in a rough sea, but Lieutenant Anstice, who added a happy zest for life to a facility for finding adventures, very bravely rescued him.

The routine became a little more strenuous and life-like after the battalion reached Lemnos on April 11th. The mere operation of disembarkation as carried on in some of these rehearsals was the reverse of inspiring. The vessel stood high out of the water, and to enter a boat, bobbing up and down in the water, by means of a rope ladder was like leaving the roof of a sky-scraper by means of a spider's web leading to a cockle-shell. Fortunately the operation was simplified for the landing on the peninsula. *Implacable* did not stand nearly so high out of the water, and wooden ladders were let down to the boats.

On the evening of the 23rd the 2nd Royal Fusiliers left Lemnos with the covering force for Tenedos, where the last preparations were carried out. There the battalion was split: W and X Companies, with headquarters, went on board H.M.S. *Implacable* about 7 p.m. on the 24th, while Y and Z, with Major L. Brandreth, went on board a minesweeper. About 10.30 p.m. the approach to Gallipoli began. The night was calm and clear, and the short journey was made under a brilliant moon. The two companies on *Implacable* had a hot breakfast about 3.30 a.m. (April 25th), and the men were then put into

boats. The moon had already set, and the night had become dark and still. At 4.45 the fleet bombardment began, and about half an hour later *Implacable* steamed in until her anchor, hanging over the bows to six fathoms, dragged. On each side of her were two tows of six boats.

The difficulty of the task which these heroic troops were about to undertake is now commonly realised; but although Sir Ian Hamilton pays it lip-service in his admirable despatch, the objective visualised for the covering force shows no appreciation of it. In point of fact, this objective, "the ridge across the peninsula, point 344—Achi Baba peak—472—coast line," remained to the end an unrealised dream. The Turks had had full warning, and had prepared for the reception of their uninvited guests with a defence built upon their own unquestioned courage and the conscientious organisation of their German allies.

Before the attack was launched Brig.-General S. W. Hare, the officer commanding the covering force, issued the following order to the 86th Brigade: "Fusiliers, our brigade is to have the honour to be the first to land to cover the disembarkation of the rest of the division. Our task will be no easy one. Let us carry it through in a way worthy of the traditions of the distinguished regiments of which the Fusilier Brigade is composed, in such a way that the men of Albuhera and Minden, of Delhi and Lucknow, may hail us as their equals in valour and military achievement, and that future historians may say of us, as Napier said of the Fusilier Brigade at Albuhera, 'Nothing could stop this astonishing infantry.'" The Fusilier Brigade certainly deserved this tribute for the landing at Gallipoli, and no unit more than the Royal Fusiliers.

The landing place of the 2nd Battalion was a small natural amphitheatre with a narrow floor of sand about 200 yards long, lying on the north-west face of the peninsula. The cliff was some 100 feet high, rising somewhat steeply from the beach, and there was no natural way up. The boats were towed in by the pinnaces to about 100 yards



THE 2ND ROYAL FUSILIERS AT THE TOP OF THE CLIFF, "N" BEACH, GALLIOLI.





from the beach, when, cast off, they had to look to themselves. Each boat had a midshipman and two blue-jackets, who were to take them to the mine-sweeper when the first half of the battalion had landed.

The men rowed in as rapidly as possible until the boats grounded, when they jumped into the water, and waded ashore. In places the men were chest-deep in the sea; and, in any case, the thorough wetting would have been a very dangerous handicap where success and the cost of it depended on speed. But apparently no one thought of this handicap, and the men forced their way ashore and scrambled up the crumbling cliff. Up to this point the battalion had suffered hardly any casualties. The beach "X" was naturally less likely to encourage a landing, and *Implacable's* most skilful covering fire kept down the Turkish reply until the cliff was topped. Colonel Newenham signalled the position of a half-battery of Turkish guns in the scrub in front of the centre of the battalion, and they were promptly knocked out by the battleship's fire. After that its immediate usefulness was small, and the Royal Fusiliers ran into a heavy converging fire. But there was no hesitation, no wavering, and the men kept on and rapidly seized one of the Turkish trenches.

By this time Y and Z Companies, with Brandreth, were disembarking from the boats which had landed the first half of the battalion; and Lieut.-Colonel Newenham, with an instant appreciation of the situation, sent X (Captain F. K. Leslie) to the left front, W (Major G. S. Guyon) to the centre and right front, and then, taking all the troops he could gather, marched towards the right \* to effect a

\* The objective, as stated in Colonel Newenham's Operation Order No. 1, was "Hill 114, and secure flank towards N.E." One company of the Lancashires was to assist in taking Hill 114.

The disposition (same order) was as follows: "On landing, W Company will be on the right and X on the left. The cliff will at once be scaled in platoons or half-platoons. The trench at top of cliff will be immediately rushed with bayonets. X Company will then be prepared to attack on the left (N.), and W Company will be prepared to the right (S.). As soon as Y and Z Companies land, Z Company will at once ascend the cliff in platoons or half-platoons. Y Company will

junction with the Lancashires at "W" beach. The smallest pardonable indecision at this point, and the whole landing would have failed. Colonel Newenham had learned by signal that the troops on "Y" beach were hard beset, and could not join with his force on "X," and that the landing on "V" was hung up. He had seen that the Lancashires were suffering terribly in even approaching their beach.

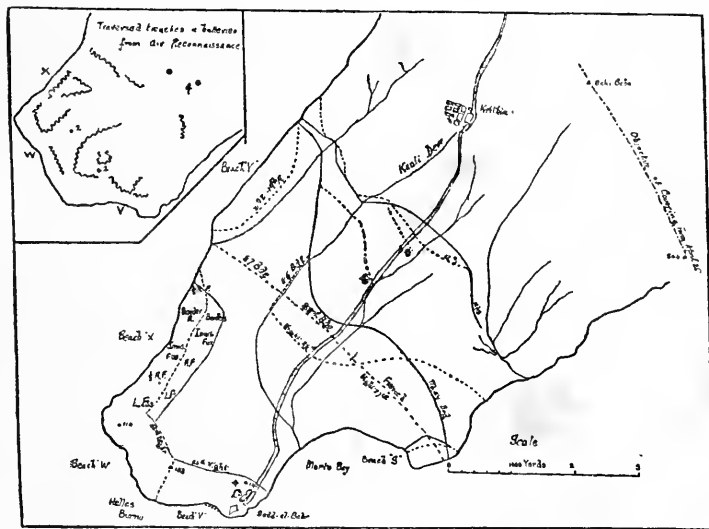
The little force which marched towards the Lancashire landing was made up of W and part of Z Company (Major F. Moore). Y (Major W. A. B. Daniell) was left as a reserve and to carry ammunition and water, and the orders were to hold on left and front. Between "X" and "W" beaches lay Cape Tekke, crowned by Tekke Hill (Hill 114), \* and, in order to join hands with the Lancashires, the Royal Fusiliers had to carry it. The hill had been elaborately entrenched and was also defended by land mines, but about 11 a.m. the Fusiliers, cheered on by *Implacable's* crew, carried it at the point of the bayonet. The battalion sent back about sixty prisoners. They then re-formed and advanced north-east and east, and met with heavy opposition on the reverse side of the hill. The Turks were dislodged from their entrenchments, and the Royal Fusiliers then dug in for the night. They had achieved contact with the Lancashires, and their *rôle* had been amply filled.

Meanwhile, X Company had fought through as terrible an experience as any troops on the peninsula. Between "Y" beach and "X" beach was a considerable Turkish force at "Y2" or "Gully" beach. The first 300 yards of the advance to the left from "X" beach was made against little opposition; and the Turks, retiring at 9 a.m., left the first line of trenches in Captain Leslie's hands. But the Turks fell back upon heavy reinforcements

first unload the boats, and then be prepared to support Z Company or to carry up stores, as is necessary."

\* This hill cannot be accurately described as between "V" and "W" beaches, as in General Hamilton's despatch.

at "Y2," and when X Company approached the second line they became involved in heavy fighting. Part of Y Company went up in support, but the struggle gathered in intensity, and the centre began to give way. The main mass of the battalion had been concentrated on the flanks and had marched outwards, and the centre was inevitably thinned. Part of Z had been extended to the left, and the



SKETCH MAP SHOWING THE POSITION AT THE SOUTH-WEST OF GALLI-POLI ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 25TH, 1915, ON THE NIGHT OF THE 26TH, AND UP TO MAY 17TH, 1915.

The various lines show the stages in the advance. The disposition of the 2nd Royal Fusiliers on the night of April 25th gives some suggestion of the strain through which they had passed during the day.

whole of Y had become involved. A remnant of Leslie's company began to fall back under cover of a platoon of Z, commanded by Lieutenant Jebens.

But at 3 p.m. Shafto informed Colonel Newenham that the centre was falling back ; and for a moment it seemed as if the whole position was crumbling, just when it had been so dearly won. At this critical juncture Colonel Newenham telephoned to the 87th Brigade, who were now landing at "X" beach, and a little later the 1st

Border Regiment reinforced the left of the line. For the rest of the day X was attached to them, and at night lay on their left. In the attack on Hill 114, Colonel Newenham had been wounded. He was assisted into a little gully with some other wounded, but between 3 and 4 p.m., when the line appeared to be giving at a number of points, the little party was almost cut off and captured. With the assistance of the Border Regiment and the 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the line was consolidated; and though it was heavily attacked and under a sustained fire during the night, the dawn saw the Turks fall back to a rear position.

From the force eventually required to hold the line some idea of the magnitude of the 2nd Battalion's achievement may be gathered. At night they lay somewhat scattered along the rim of the cliff. Between the small party on the extreme left and the section on the left of the Lancashires lay the Border Regiment and the Inniskillings. The battalion's losses had been very heavy. Lieut.-Colonel Newenham \* and Major Brandreth, second in command, were both wounded. Of X Company only O'Connell remained, with about a platoon. Captain Leslie and Lieutenant R. E. G. A. de Trafford were killed. Captain Tottenham and Lieutenant S. Winslade were wounded. Lieutenants J. V. Scudamore (W) and M. Brickland (Y) were killed. Second Lieutenants Hanham and Collings were wounded. No company commander escaped, and the battalion was reduced to about half strength. But a careful study of the situation during this day makes it evident that their contribution had been decisive. The troops at "Y" beach were held, and actually withdrew the following day. The landing at "V" beach was in the air. The first hours of the

\* Colonel Newenham had the hard fate of only seeing the battalion he had so carefully trained in action on this one occasion. But the praise which it won from the closest observer, quoted several times in these pages, for its efficiency, discipline, and courage, is sufficient tribute to his command. He was granted a well-deserved C.B. for his services on this occasion.



BRIG.-GENERAL H. E. B. NEWENHAM, C.B., WHO COMMANDED THE  
2ND ROYAL FUSILIERS IN THE LANDING AT GALLIPOLI.



Lancashires' landing found them hardly able to do more than hang on. The swift march upon and capture of Hill 114 turned the scale on "W" beach; and with the linking of the two beaches a feasible, if precarious, foothold was established on the peninsula.\*

Captain Moore's wound proved slight, and on the night of the landing he took over the command of the battalion. On the afternoon of the 26th they had to beat off two determined Turkish attacks. The first assault was made with a force estimated at 1,500, and the second, half an hour later, with an additional thousand. The Turks achieved no success, and Hill 141, to the right of "V" beach, having been taken, the Turks could be seen withdrawing towards Achi Baba. On the following day a general advance was made without opposition, the 86th Brigade being in divisional reserve.

On the 28th there occurred one of those unfortunate incidents which seemed to appear with undue frequency on the peninsula. The battalion advancing on the extreme left, by the coast, were ordered to move to the

\* A few sentences in General Hamilton's despatch tend to give a wrong impression of the battalion's achievement: "The battalion then advanced to attack the Turkish trenches on Hill 114 . . . but were heavily counter-attacked and forced to give ground. Two more battalions of the 87th Brigade soon followed them, and by evening the troops had established themselves . . . as far south as Hill 114." The Royal Fusiliers not only carried the hill positions, but by 2 p.m. had also taken the entrenchments on the further side. Help from the 87th Brigade came at least two hours later, and to the weakened centre, not to the victorious right. The despatch, speaking of the Lancashires, also says that "a junction was effected on Hill 114 with the Royal Fusiliers," without any suggestion that, unless the 2nd Battalion had promptly marched upon and seized it, there would have been no possibility of effecting a junction. Mr. Nevinson shows a better appreciation of the position when he says (speaking of the Lancashires on "W" beach), "No further advance could be made until 2 p.m., when, owing to the positions held by the two companies on the left, the landing had become fairly secure" ("The Dardanelles Campaign," p. 103). The position held by these two companies was made possible by the decisive march of the Royal Fusiliers. General Callwell summed up this episode in the words: "The success of the Royal Fusiliers at beach 'X' must be set down as a particularly memorable exploit" ("The Dardanelles," p. 67).

support of the 88th Brigade, who were meeting with strong opposition. The 86th were to take ammunition to the 88th, and to carry the line forward to the spur north-east of Krithia. The Royal Fusiliers and the Lancashires were to attack, the former being on the left of the directing platoon of the Lancashires. When the latter at length began to advance, the 2nd Battalion, under Cripps and O'Connell, conformed, and carried the line forward with a series of short, swift rushes. Heavy fighting continued all day, but the battalion dug in on a line about a mile south of Krithia. Cripps was wounded, and the strength of the Fusiliers ebbed still further. What appeared more lamentable was that the farthest point reached could not be maintained for lack of support, and a month's hard fighting and heavy losses were required to regain the ground won in this determined advance. The battalion was in brigade reserve on the two following days, resting and reorganising. Indeed, some respite was called for. On leaving Mex Camp they had mustered 26 officers and 948 other ranks. On April 30th the strength was 12 officers and 481 other ranks.

On May 1st, after a quiet day, the battalion was called upon for another *tour de force*. At 7.30 p.m. orders had been issued for the relief of the 86th Brigade, but it was still in the line when a very heavy attack developed at 10.30 p.m. "The first momentum of this ponderous onslaught fell upon the right of the 86th Brigade, an unlucky spot, seeing all the officers thereabouts had already been killed or wounded." \* It was a weak spot for another reason. At this point of the brigade front the line was cut by a bifurcating nullah. The Turks organised this first massed counter-attack with great skill. The trenches were first heavily shelled, and then, just before moonrise, the first line of the Turks hurled themselves against the Allied positions with fixed bayonets. From prisoners captured by the Royal Fusiliers it was

\* Despatch.



later discovered that this attack was delivered by 16,000 Turks, with 2,000 in reserve.

The effect of this onslaught on the already weak Munsters might have been foreseen. The heavy weight of living bayonets, bursting out of the darkness into their trenches and up the nullah, overwhelmed the defence. Some of the Turks penetrated to the reserve trench held by the 1/5 Scots.\* But the position was critical, and the Royal Fusiliers, who were in brigade reserve, were again called upon. Captain North-Bomford and Lieutenant Jebens took up Z Company. The line at this moment was pierced. The Turks were massed in the nullah. The Fusiliers at once charged into it, and though North-Bomford was wounded, the breach in the line was healed. The nullah was soon choked with dead and dying. Forty prisoners were sent back, and when Y Company came up the line was restored on both sides of the nullah. The trenches were held all night (May 2nd), despite incessant attacks, in which the Turks on more than one occasion fought their way up to the trench parapets. Lieutenant Anstice,† who had distinguished himself for his coolness and gallantry in carrying ammunition to the front line, was killed. Jebens was wounded, and Captain Moore was again hit, and had to hand over the command to Captain H. M. Hope-Johnstone. It was immediately after discussing the position with his new C.O. that Shafto, one of the most popular of officers, was shot dead while examining the front line in the early morning. The battalion had again lost very heavily, but their intervention at a critical juncture had "saved the situation."‡

"All through the operations the Royal Fusiliers worked with the smoothest precision; never for a moment did they lose their high standard of efficiency. No task was relinquished while it was humanly possible to com-

\* General Hamilton's despatch attributes to this regiment the saving of the situation, and does not mention the Royal Fusiliers.

† He was recommended for the Victoria Cross.

‡ From a letter of the Brigade Major, May 22nd, 1915.

plete it. With such men as Moore, Shafto, and Hope-Johnstone in control, all officers inspiring confidence, and the disciplined conduct of the men showing their friendly trust in them, there was never a fear that the reserve might fail in stemming the assault. Captain Moore, in telephonic communication throughout the night with the firing line and brigade headquarters, gave accurate and constant information of the progress of the fight, and acted on his own initiative or carried out orders rapidly to deal with every situation." \*

There were now only six officers left. Munday became Adjutant. Huggett, O'Connell, Hewitt and Cooper were the other officers; and there were still 425 other ranks. On the night of the 2nd the bulk of the battalion was again sent up in support. The two following days were quiet. On the 4th the 86th Brigade was broken up, the Royal Fusiliers, linked with the Hants, though as a separate battalion, going to the 88th Brigade. The landing phase was over. In a letter dated May 22nd, 1915, the Brigade Major of the 86th Infantry Brigade said, "Where all have done well, the Royal Fusiliers have been beyond praise. With five junior officers and under 400 men, they have never lost their form for a moment. Not only have they always done what might have been expected of them, but they have risen to a standard of soldiering which could not be higher, and never departed from it. I am filled with admiration for them." Praise could hardly be higher than this.

On May 6th began the second battle of Krithia. At about 11 a.m. the battalion moved to the extreme left of the brigade front in support of the Hampshire Regiment, and at 12.30 p.m. Huggett's company reinforced the Hants' left in the advance. The Fusiliers' left rested on the Saghir Dere (Gully Ravine), and in about four hours' hard fighting they had carried the line forward several hundred yards; and, no further advance being possible, dug in as fast as

\* The Brigade Major, 86th Brigade, quoted from "With the 29th Division," p. 190.

possible under fire. So the position stood that night, and on the following morning it was found impossible to make headway against the Turkish opposition, while the flanking brigade was held up. The Essex who advanced through the battalion at 5 p.m. were in trouble for the same reason, and during the night the Fusiliers had to send up a party to fill the gap on their left to the nullah. All that day the battalion had been under very accurately aimed shell fire, and on the 8th they still suffered from this unwelcome attention. But the second battle of Krithia died down under heavy counter-attacks and the battalion went into reserve 5 officers and 384 other ranks strong, after sixteen days in the fire zone.

When the Fusiliers went back into the line again on the 17th they had the novel excitement of enfilading a Turkish trench. Though at some 1,200 yards distance, the fire very efficiently checked the activity of enemy snipers. But this was merely an interlude. Saps were driven forward and several attempts were made to lift the battalion front with them. The second was on the 22nd, when gallantly led by Moore, Hope-Johnstone and Webb-Bowen, the Fusiliers captured a Turkish trench; but a heavy counter-attack forced them to withdraw with 40 casualties, including Moore and Webb-Bowen. Both were wounded, Moore for the third time. Major Brandreth had by this time returned to the battalion, and there had been no pause in the fighting when they were called upon to take part in the third battle of Krithia, on June 4th.

The Turks had now organised a systematic defence across the peninsula and the battalion had to advance against a determined resistance. A small machine gun redoubt, lying about 150 yards in front, was among their objectives. Admirably sited on rising ground the position was strong out of all proportion to its size. When the advance began at noon W Company (Captain Amphlett), on the right, rushed this redoubt, and there, for the first time, the battalion came face to face with Germans. The garrison was composed of a machine gun

crew from the cruiser *Breslau*. "One ugly looking customer was captured, evidently the naval equivalent of a military pioneer sergeant. He was armed with a rifle, revolver and a serrated sword. The others retired on the arrival of our men, leaving four heavy naval machine guns, and belt boxes of S.A.A. . . . I collected these guns and sent them to brigade headquarters with labels, stating time of capture, etc. The guns had evidently been taken from the *Breslau*, the belt boxes were all marked S.M.S. *Breslau*."\*

Captain Amphlett was killed on this occasion. A police magistrate in Grenada at the outbreak of the war, he was one of the new officers and appears to have shown his quality at once and to have died beloved by his company.

The battalion swept past the redoubt and established themselves in the first objective. No further advance could be made as the Indians on the left were held up by uncut wire. The brilliant French advance was followed by a retirement which compelled the R.N.D. to fall back. The Manchester Brigade of the 42nd Division had reached the second objective; and to strengthen their position the Royal Fusiliers on the left advanced once more under artillery support, and carried the line well beyond the first objective. This was not an unmixed advantage, as the sequel showed. The new front line was not continuous, and, with the coastal sector at the original position, the ground gained formed an irregular salient in the Turkish lines. Some 80 yards of the Fusiliers' line on the left was a Turkish communication trench which lay practically at right angles to the main line, and the battalion on the left, lying some distance ahead, shared this trench. After the main attack on June 4th followed a quiet day;

\* Statement by R.S.M. Huband (June, 1921). General Hamilton's despatch says "*Goeben*." I cannot determine whether there were two similar incidents, and the brigade diary is missing for this date. It seems more probable that "*Breslau*" should be substituted for "*Goeben*."

but at dawn on the 6th a loud noise of bombing was heard on the Fusiliers' left. Almost immediately afterwards a large body of men were seen retiring; but instead of going straight back they ran along the parados and rushed into the left of the Fusiliers' sector. The trenches were narrow and soon became choked. Brandreth seeing the possibility of panic spreading, ran across with Munday and Sergeant Marston. Every effort was made to restore order, but the vacated trenches were now occupied by the Turks. Very soon the battalion were taken from the left rear. Many men were shot in the back. Only one officer, Second Lieutenant Cooper, remained. Word was sent back to the brigade, but the company which was sent up refused to counter-attack without information from the C.O., who was missing. So the battalion had to retire. In the three days' fighting it had suffered very terribly. The ten new officers were all lost, and they included such men as the famous embryologist Captain Jenkinson. The loss of Brandreth was of greater importance to the battalion; and Munday, who had also fallen, had revealed unexpected strength. When it was relieved, the following day, it marched, 2 officers and 278 other ranks strong, to Gully Beach.

Four company organisation was dropped and the two companies fell under the command of Captain A. A. C. Taylor, of the Dublins. While in reserve they were joined by Major Julian Fisher, D.S.O., who brought with him a draft of 10 officers and 400 other ranks from England. Captain P. N. Wilson, who was commanding the divisional cyclists, was allowed to rejoin the battalion, and the unit was given ten days to reorganise. The new draft consisted of very young men who had not received much training. None of the officers were Regulars, but men who had gathered from the ends of the earth to take their part in the war. When the battalion went back to the line once more, on June 23rd, they mustered 13 officers and 667 other ranks. Lieutenant Eustace commanded Y company, Captain Ayrton X and Captain Gudgeon Z. About three

days later Captain FitzClarence \* arrived from England and took over the duties of the second in command.

On the 28th the battalion again attacked, leading the brigade with three companies ; and their advance, though successful, was dearly bought. They advanced about 1,000 yards, " a magnificent sight, the men never losing their formation under a heavy artillery and rifle fire." † The ground had been carefully ranged and the bulk of the casualties were due to well-placed shrapnel. There were few from rifle fire ; but in attempting to round off their achievement in the night the battalion became involved in hand-to-hand fighting. Few details of these encounters have been preserved ; but when the Fusiliers were relieved they were in the last stage of exhaustion. A twenty-four hours' struggle in oppressive heat with hardly any water has its unforgettable terrors. The actual losses included nine officers: FitzClarence, Ayrton, Andrews killed ; Bulbeck, Freer and Harford wounded ; Gudgeon, Eustace and Willett missing. Of other ranks, 27 were killed, 175 wounded, and 57 missing. Not one of these officers had been with the battalion when it landed in Gallipoli, and the continuity was preserved by an ever-thinning thread.

When the battalion returned to the trenches on July 3rd, Major Cripps had rejoined and taken over the duties of adjutant ; and in this tour the 9 officers and 409 other ranks had companies of newly arrived troops attached for instructional purposes. On the 15th the Fusiliers proceeded to " V " beach and embarked for Lemnos. The next day was spent in bivouacs about a mile from Mudros, the first day since April 25th that the 2nd Battalion had not been under rifle or shell fire. There they were rejoined by Major Guyon who took over the command from Major

\* Captain A. A. C. FitzClarence was the sixth of his family to serve in the regiment. He was a cousin of Brig.-General FitzClarence, V.C., also a Royal Fusilier, who initiated the counter-attack which restored the line at Ypres on October 31st, 1914.

† Mr. Ashmead Bartlett in *The Times*, July 9th, 1915.

Fisher. Drafts were received from the 3rd,\* 5th and 7th Battalions and the unit was able to return to three company strength once more.

The battles of Suvla saw them in Gallipoli again. The trenches were practically the same as those occupied before the rest in Lemnos. Indeed, one of the terrible characteristics of the whole of this campaign was the impression of always advancing at great cost and never changing the position. The actions of Krithia Vineyard, which were subsidiary to the battles of Suvla, saw the battalion bringing in the wounded of the 88th Brigade. They had moved to the reserve trench before the opening of the battle, and as the 88th Brigade left the trenches early in the morning of August 6th, they took them over. Well-directed and sustained, the Turkish counter-bombardment exacted a heavy toll. The firing line was found to be full of dead and wounded, belonging to different units. Z Company, on the left, also suffered severely. Some relief was afforded by the luck of a machine gun. Mounted in a communication trench, this gun, at a range of 850 yards, enfiladed a trench near the vineyard and wiped off some of the score.

**Suvla.**—On the 16th the battalion relieved the Border Regiment who were holding the extreme left of the line to the sea. W Company lay on the cliff side as it rose from the sea. The line occupied by Z ran almost at right angles to this position, turning back roughly parallel to the sea. It was not a sector that one would naturally choose. The Turkish snipers were in the ascendant. The steel loopholes were being shot away and periscopes could not be raised for more than a second or two. From the Turkish trenches which, in places, were only 15 yards distant, bombs were being continually thrown into the British lines. The conditions, in fine, were intolerable, and arrangements were made to relieve them. An intensive treatment with jam-tin bombs and trench mortars somewhat chastened the Turkish bomb throwers, and a minor

\* Men who had suffered from trench feet in France.

attack was planned for the 20th. But it was never to take place. On the 19th the battalion were relieved. They embarked from "W" beach at 7 p.m. on the following day, and at midnight they disembarked at "C" beach, Suvla. Packs were dumped and the battalion marched to Chocolate Hill, arriving there at dawn on August 21st.

Their *rôle* was to assist in redeeming the past. On how many occasions during the war were the Royal Fusiliers faced with a similar task? A single battalion, 6th E. Yorks. Pioneers had occupied Scimitar Hill on Sunday, August 8th, and had been withdrawn, apparently by an oversight. Its value, recognised later, led to the plan in which the 2nd Battalion were to play their part. The key to "W" hill and Anafarta Sagir, its possession was necessary if a further advance were to be made; and, untaken, even the security of the main Suvla landing was prejudiced. Scimitar Hill was to be taken by the converging attack of the 87th and 86th Brigades, the 86th advancing from the right. The Royal Fusiliers in brigade reserve, were behind Chocolate Hill, their position being connected with that of the Munsters and Lancashires by a narrow communication trench. At 2.30 p.m. (August 21st) the bombardment began. A quarter of an hour later, the men began to file down the communication trench in order to be ready to take up the position ahead as soon as it was vacated by the Munsters and Lancashires. At 3.30 these troops went forward; but the brigades on the right had lost direction in front and little headway could be made. While filing down the trench the Royal Fusiliers came under a heavy enfilade fire from shrapnel. It became blocked with dead and wounded, and to add to the horror of the moment, the thick bush on both sides was kindled by the shell fire. Such facts beggar description.

At 6 p.m., a patrol under Captain Bruce found that the battalion was not linked up with the yeomanry on the right. And during the night 150 men, under Captain



Stevenson, began to dig a connecting trench in the open. But slow progress was made, and the men were picked off all too easily. During the day it was realised that the advance had fizzled out, and at 6 p.m. the battalion moved back behind Chocolate Hill, in order to take over trenches on the left of the 87th Brigade.

During the night of the 22nd the battalion took over the fire trench from the 6th Royal Welch Fusiliers. The position was beginning to harden in this part of the peninsula. The fine hope that sped the Suvla battles had faded away, and it became necessary to secure a real grip on the ground already won. Consolidation was pressed on, and trenches were dug to connect up with the 88th Brigade on the left. The position was exposed, life unusually precarious even for the peninsula. All rations had to be brought up by night. But the Fusiliers concentrated on their work, and the trenches and the whole position were improved and strengthened. A large draft brought the strength of the battalion to 16 officers and 1,015 other ranks, higher than it had ever been in Gallipoli, and 150 yards of the Dublins' line was taken over.

On relief, the battalion, after a week spent in dug-outs, embarked for Imbros on September 8th. It was their first rest for six weeks, almost all of which had been spent in the front trench under constant rifle and shell fire. That week over 200 men were down with diarrhœa, and another of the perils of the peninsula began to be experienced. The casualties up to this time (September 14th) were as follows :—

	Officers.	Other Ranks.
Dead . . . .	19	260
Wounded . . . .	40	914
Sick . . . .	24	376
Missing . . . .	7	96
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	90	1,646

With so terrible a disproportion in officer casualties

it was obvious that there would be a shortage ; and this was a characteristic of all the British units in Gallipoli. Of all the original officers of the battalion not one had been able to see the campaign through, and only 166 other ranks had escaped wounds. Two officers, Guyon and Cripps, and about 100 other ranks had returned from hospital.

On September 21st the battalion embarked in such rough weather that it was with the greatest difficulty the men could be transferred from lighters to the ship. But at length this was achieved without mishap, and the troops returned to Suvla, where they relieved the S.W. Borderers in the firing line. During this tour of the front trenches parties of the 2/3 London Regiment, who had only recently landed in Gallipoli, were attached for instructional purposes. It was a strange chance that cast these two battalions of the regiment together. The 2/3 Londons had replaced the 1/3 in the Malta garrison, and then, in April, 1915, had left for Khartum. Detachments were also stationed at Atbara and Suikat. In Gallipoli they reinforced the 86th Brigade, and took part in various minor engagements.

The last days of September saw almost perfect weather. The days were warm and sunny, the nights cool. It seemed as if the terrible peninsula, which was yet to show its worst, was, for the moment, determined to exhibit its best. Under such conditions labour seemed no great hardship, and the men settled down to the never-ceasing task of improving the trenches. In early October they took over a new stretch of fire line from the Munsters and a company of the Dublins, and at once set to work like ants on improving these positions. A new fire trench was constructed, and a communication trench to it. In the latter task Second Lieutenant Jepson was killed (October 16th) and Lieutenant Fletcher was wounded. But the battalion here, as everywhere, seemed imbued with a divine discontent. The perfect alignment required the assimilation of some elements of the Turkish system,

and so three night attacks were made, the last on October 22nd. These operations won the congratulations of the corps commander.

On October 18th the 2/4 Battalion London Regiment landed at Cape Helles. They had left Malta in August for Egypt, and had been two months in camp at Alexandria. During their service in Gallipoli they were attached to the Royal Naval Division, and took part in the trench warfare until the evacuation.

It was in the latter part of October that Guyon, commanding the 2nd Battalion, fell ill with appendicitis, and for a week he lay in his dug-out before it was possible to remove him to hospital. It was at this time, too, that the pace of the operations on the peninsula settled down as though for an indefinitely long tenure. From the view-point of the 2nd Battalion this period was marked by ingenuity and daring initiative. On November 2nd a small body attempted to pull away the Turkish wire *en bloc* with ropes. Unfortunately, the atmosphere had sapped the fibre of the ropes, and the exploit proved more ingenious than serviceable. Turkish sniping posts received one or two unwelcome visits from bombing parties. There were several good reconnaissance patrols. But, despite all attentions, the Turkish snipers proved a pest to the end, and on November 12th Second Lieutenant E. J. Haywood, the acting brigade machine gun officer, was killed while visiting a machine gun post.

Lord Kitchener had visited Gallipoli and passed through Greece on his way home again when the worst calamity befell the battalion. November 26th dawned fine, and so continued until about 5 p.m., when it began to rain. Almost at once it became a characteristic tropical down-pour. In an hour there was a foot of water in the trenches. From the hills where the Turks lay a tremendous flood of water swept towards the Fusiliers' position.\* The barriers reared so painfully against the Turks were swept

\* "The Royal Fusiliers suffered much more than any other regiment" ("The Dardanelles Campaign," Nevinson, p. 384).

away in a flash. In a few minutes the face of the country had changed. Into the trenches swept a pony, a mule, and three dead Turks. Several men were drowned. The whole area became a lake. The communication trenches were a swirl of muddy water. All that could be seen was an occasional tree and a muddy bank where the parados had been particularly high. The bulk of the battalion had scrambled out of the trenches, and stood about on the spots which remained above water, soaked to the skin, and at least half of them without overcoats or even rifles. The moon lit up these small knots of shivering men on little banks of mud in a waste of water. Not a shot was fired on either side. The common calamity had enforced an efficient truce.

Orders came by telephone that the battalion was to hold on to the line at all costs. Meanwhile two orderlies, Frost and James, had been sent to brigade headquarters, and had been compelled to swim most of the way. About 10 p.m. the water subsided slightly, and the men threw up rough breastworks of mud. There they lay huddled together in extreme discomfort, cut through by a piercing wind. The next day the trenches were still from 4 to 5 feet deep, and the men were forced to keep to them. The truce had ended as strangely as it had begun, and any one showing above the trenches was liable to meet the familiar fate. Captain Shaw was shot dead, Lieutenant Ormesher was mortally wounded; and with such object lessons the bitter discomforts of the trenches were made to seem preferable. In the afternoon the wind rose again. It became intensely cold. A blizzard swept the country. Men were sent back to hospital; but some of them died on the way, from exposure and exhaustion. Two of them, belonging to W Company, who shared this fate, had struggled on until they found some sort of shelter near the Salt Lake. There they had paused to rest. The younger of the two could probably have got back to camp alone, but he would not leave his comrade in the storm and darkness and snow. The next morning they were found together—frozen stiff.

The younger, his arms round his companion, held a piece of broken biscuit in each frozen hand, and there were biscuit crumbs frozen into the moustache of the elder man.

Under such conditions the tacit truce was renewed. Rum and whisky were brought up to the trenches ; but with the utmost difficulty.

At midnight on the 27th, the wind was colder, the snow thicker. About 4 a.m. (November 28th) the commanding officer and the adjutant were the only survivors in the reserve line ; and it was clear that even superhuman endurance had limits. Permission was obtained to bring the battalion back to the brigade nullah, where the ground was higher and more sheltered. There were only about 300 left in the firing line, and they were got back with great difficulty. Hardly a man could walk normally. The trench was crossed by a single plank. A few of the men were shot as they staggered across. Some failed to get back at all. Others were kicked along with merciful brutality, or they would have given up the struggle. There are few pictures in military history which equal in poignancy that of this little band who, having faced what was almost beyond the power of men, struggled back to life from the very gates of death.

By 7 a.m. the battalion had arrived at the nullah, where they were given warm food and put into blankets. The majority were taken to hospital during the day suffering either from exposure or frost-bite. The strength of the battalion was now 11 officers and 105 other ranks. A party of men, under Second Lieutenant Camies, were sent back to the Dublin Castle post to hold on to next evening. On the 29th it froze hard, and after midnight it was found that the party from another regiment who were to have relieved Second Lieutenant Camies, had lost their way. At 4 a.m. (November 30th) Camies and his men were found still at their posts, but in an almost helpless condition. Sergt.-Major Paschall was sent to take out the relieving party and bring back Camies. The outpost on return all went to hospital, and at 4 p.m. roll call showed only 10

officers and 84 other ranks (70 effective) remaining. The storm had wrought a greater havoc than any battle.\*

On December 2nd the draining of the reserve trench was begun, and on December 3rd the weather became a little warmer. Some drafts arrived, and the battalion, organised in two companies, began to hold the Dublin Castle position by companies, forty-eight hours at a time. On the 13th the line was handed over to the 88th Brigade, and on the following day the battalion embarked for Mudros, and after a day's rest proceeded once more to Helles. Here the time was spent in training and fatigues until December 31st, when the news of the approaching evacuation was received. A line of defences was at once mapped out, and work begun on them. At 10 p.m. on January 2nd the two companies embarked on a trawler from "W" beach. A few hours earlier the beach was being shelled, but the actual embarkation was uneventful. The next day the battalion was transhipped to S.S. *Caledonia* on arrival at Mudros, and the course was set for Alexandria. On January 8th they arrived at Alexandria and entrained for Suez.

It was little more than a year since the battalion, a splendid fighting unit, had reached this very place, travelling in the opposite direction. The intervening period enshrined one of the most terrible experiences any soldiers were called upon to suffer. But the 2nd Battalion can look back with pride on this campaign in Gallipoli. In attack, in defence, in endurance they were, as a close observer said more than once, "beyond praise." †

\* The 2/3 Londons also suffered very terribly in this storm, being reduced to 4 officers and 60 men.

† Brigade Major, 86th Brigade. See p. 96.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

By a strange coincidence the 2nd Battalion made its second *début* in major operations in another attempt to achieve the impossible. On this occasion it took part with the 29th Division in the holding attack, north of the Ancre, which was launched simultaneously with the opening of the Somme battle on July 1st, 1916.

At the battle of Loos the *rôle* of the British Army had been subsidiary to that of the French. Neither men nor material justified the hope of the army playing a part of decisive importance. But at the battle of the Somme there were ample numbers ; and the army had increased until, on the Western Front, it commanded 660,000 bayonets and sabres. And the atmosphere in which the battle was launched was completely changed. Loos was fought when the Russian Army appeared to be at its last gasp. Russia had already won a striking victory when the battle of the Somme began ; Italy had recovered from the Austrian attack in the Trentino, and France had weathered the attack at Verdun, though with heavy loss. The expansion of the Royal Fusiliers was symptomatic of the change in the equilibrium on the west. There were now twenty-one battalions in France, in addition to battalions in the Balkans and in Africa.

**Beaumont Hamel.**—From first to last no fewer than twenty battalions of Royal Fusiliers were engaged in the battle of the Somme. But no other Fusilier unit fought so unsatisfying an action with such heavy loss as did the 2nd Battalion. Its *rôle* was to hold the German reserves and occupy his artillery in order to assist the main attack south of the Ancre. But, as ill-fortune would have it, the

enemy had expected the main attack on the front allocated to holding and subsidiary attacks, and the units engaged there suffered accordingly.

The preparations for the opening of the first great British attack in France had been very elaborate, and on the front of the division, north of the 29th, they included the driving of an enormous mine towards the Hawthorne Redoubt. The explosion of this mine was to launch the battalion's attack and provide its first objective. The Fusiliers lay just north of the Ancre, below Beaumont Hamel, which nature and artifice had turned into a very formidable fortress. The troops were in position at 5.15 a.m., and the bombardment became terrific. Shortly afterwards a smoke barrage was put down, and then at 7.20 a.m. the mine was exploded, filling the air with a cloud of *débris*. At once D Company rushed forward with machine guns to occupy the crater, but they were met by a heavy German barrage and machine gun fire. Five minutes later was zero hour, and the whole line advanced.

Upon the battalion front the attack never had any chance of success. When D Company reached the mine crater they were only able to occupy the nearer lip as the other side was already held by the Germans. No advance could be made there, and, on the rest of the front few of the men reached the enemy's wire. The British barrage was persistent in its attentions to the second and third lines of the German first defensive system, with the consequence that the battle was restricted to the first line where, armed with an ample supply of machine guns, the enemy was able to crush every attempt to rush it. At mid-day the few men remaining in No Man's Land had to give up the futile attempt and retire. The losses of the battalion had been very terrible. Major Cripps who had been ordered to brigade headquarters to be brigade major, was seriously wounded within two hours. Lieut.-Colonel A. V. Johnson was buried and wounded in the front line trench by a shell from one of our own batteries. He attempted to carry on, but was clearly unfit to do so and was evacuated.





MAJOR-GENERAL SIR W. B. HICKIE, K.C.B., WHO COMMANDED  
THE 16TH DIVISION FROM DECEMBER, 1915, UNTIL IT WAS BROKEN  
UP IN APRIL, 1918.



Captain Goodliffe, who was to have occupied the German front line when captured, examined the wounded in order to gain information. One poor fellow, whose jaw was shattered, could only mumble, but he insisted on telling his story. A guess was made at his meaning, "We are doing no good on the right." When this was repeated to him, he nodded and smiled, and went off to the dressing-station. Such was the spirit of the men in one of the worst experiences of the war.

The total casualties for the day amounted to 490, including 20 officers, three of them killed. This was in addition to the eight officers who became casualties during the preliminary bombardment. Lieut.-Colonel G. S. Guyon was killed while gallantly leading the 16th Battalion West Yorks. The battalion had suffered, in fact, worse than in the landing in Gallipoli, and drastic reorganisation was necessary. Captain Swifte assumed command with Captain Goodliffe as second and Lieutenant P. T. O. Boulton as Adjutant.

Dearden and Baldwin alone of the officers who went over the top did not become casualties and the former had his steel helmet dented by a shell. For forty-eight hours the wounded dribbled in, some of them mad. The Germans left their trenches under a Red Cross flag and collected some of the wounded. They also removed Lewis guns on stretchers, a slight blot on otherwise unexceptional behaviour!

On July 2nd the artillery was extremely active on both sides and the day was given over to the salvage of dead and wounded. On the 4th the 2nd Battalion were relieved by two battalions of the 4th Division, and later in the month they passed from the Somme area.

**Gommecourt.**—Farther north, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Londons had been involved in the subsidiary attack south of the Gommecourt salient, the 1st being in divisional reserve. The 2nd Londons lay in the front line until 1.30 p.m., when D Company were ordered up to the first German line (Ferret Trench); but Lieutenant H.

W. Everitt and several men were hit as they left the trenches and the company made three unsuccessful attempts to cross the open in the face of the artillery and machine gun fire. A little later A and C Companies were directed to make good the German front line on the left and right of Ferret Trench and to recover parts of the trenches beyond. C, on the left, was held up before the German wire. Captain Handyside was wounded about 15 yards from the front line but crawled forward encouraging his men until killed by a shell. After dark about fifty of the men, including many wounded, crawled back. A Company fared similarly, losing all its officers and all but 35 men; and at 3.15 p.m. the battalion were ordered to cease the attempt to reinforce and to hold the old front line. Soon after noon the Germans showed a white flag in Ferret trench and an informal truce took place for about an hour for the collection of wounded. Ten minutes before the end of the truce the Germans gave warning by firing shells over the men. Some of the wounded stated that the Germans had given them coffee during the night. On July 3rd the battalion received the congratulations of the divisional general on their gallantry. Indeed, there was no lack of courage and the 2nd Londons lost 12 officers, including Captains Handyside and Garland killed, and 241 other ranks.

The rôle of the 3rd Londons was to dig a communication trench from "Z" hedge to the junction of Fir and Firm Trenches—on the left of the point which C Company of the 3rd Londons attacked; but when this was begun at 10.10 a.m., the German barrage was so heavy that the task had to be abandoned. "Z" hedge, occupied by Second Lieutenant Johnson and No. 15 Platoon was so heavily shelled that at 1.15 p.m. only Johnson and one man were left. The battalion lost 3 officers and 120 other ranks.

The 4th Londons supported the attack on the right of the 3rd, and they also came under so heavy a fire that any considerable or lasting success was impossible. At 8.45 a.m. two companies were ordered to support the

Rangers in the German front trench (Fetter) ; but, although six runners were despatched with the message by different routes and two others after an interval of fifteen minutes, only one returned, having failed to locate the left company. The others were all killed. A Company, very gallantly led by Captain A. R. Moore, went forward and pushed up to the second German line, but at that point all the officers had become casualties and all but 18 men. The two platoons of C Company who went forward suffered little more than the two who had not received the order, owing to the front line trench being destroyed by the German barrage. The company lost all their officers and were brought out of action by C.S.M. Davis. B Company, whose rôle was to "clear up," lost very terribly, and only about 10 men got back from the German line. The battalion had 23 officers and 700 other ranks, headquarters and firing line on going into action, but only 7 officers and 356 other ranks answered the roll call that night. But they had shown a fine courage and discipline, and, in the end, the function of the 56th Division had been fulfilled.

**Montauban.**—The 11th Royal Fusiliers took part in the attack of the 18th Division towards Montauban. It was their first battle and they engaged in it with peculiar zest. They had already tested the effect of our bombardment in a raid on June 27th/28th, in which Second Lieutenant W. R. Havard gained the M.C. ; and by 2 a.m. on July 1st they were in battle positions, as the left assaulting battalion of the brigade. About 4.30 a.m. tea was sent up and was warmly appreciated, for a fine rain was falling and the men were thoroughly chilled. About 7 a.m. a thick mist shrouded the foreground ; but before 7.30 it had cleared and the men went over the top "like bloodhounds let loose from the leash." The German trenches had been so battered that it was only with the utmost difficulty the men carried out the pre-arranged plan. The Fusiliers ran through the German barrage and went across their front line in great style.

An attempt to check the advance from Austrian Support was dealt with, one of the machine guns being rushed by Lance-Corporal A. Payne. Between Bund Trench and Pommiers Trench, a space of some 500 yards, uncut wire was encountered by the battalion on the right of the Fusiliers, and the consequent check was seized upon by the Germans in Mametz to strike against the battalion's left flank. Second Lieutenant Parr-Dudley turned his platoon half-left and, with a vigorous charge, accounted for the small enemy party, but lost his life in the action.

A small party bombed up Black Alley, leading to Pommiers Trench. Private W. T. Taverner, locating a machine gun in the latter trench, and unable to get at the gunner, won a M.M. by standing on top of the emplacement and directing the waves right and left. Private J. Nicholson shot six German snipers and then knocked out a machine gun. And so by numerous acts of individual bravery and initiative Pommiers Trench was won, the Fusiliers securing a machine gun. There was then a pause and a Fusilier officer noted that "the men were by this time quite cool and collected, and apparently very happy. Several of them were holding miniature sing-songs, whilst others were energetically shaking hands and wishing their officers good luck."

Pommiers Redoubt had still to be taken, and this was the worst stage of the day's fighting. Captain Johnson was held in Black Alley by a machine gun, and could not approach that way. He then attempted to take the redoubt from the rear. Second Lieutenant Savage accounted for the snipers in Beetle Alley, on the north-west, and Johnson was able to bring his machine guns up to enfilade the front of the redoubt. With this assistance the Bedfordshires were able to advance frontally, and the obstacle was won at 9.30 a.m. Beetle Alley was rushed shortly afterwards, but an hour's delay was experienced here, as the flanking battalions were not up. At length the advance was resumed, and in the afternoon the Fusiliers were 1,000 yards still farther ahead, in White

Trench, below Mametz Wood. A line of strong points was begun later in the day. "It was very hard for the diggers, but it was really pitiful to see the others. Everybody was tired out, and I had to keep on constantly waking the men up, for as soon as they touched the ground they automatically succumbed into deep sleep. It is not altogether fun being so tired as we all were in the face of the enemy." \* Digging was continued until dawn was breaking.

The battalion had made one of the deepest advances of the day. On July 2nd the Bedfordshires were withdrawn, and the Fusiliers took over the defence of the brigade front till the following day, when, on relief, they returned to Carnoy. They had lost very heavily. Savage, Parr-Dudley, Mild and Greenwood were killed, and 49 O.R. ; 148 were wounded, four were suffering from shell-shock, and 17 missing—a very much smaller casualty list than that of the 2nd Battalion, who had fought their heroic abortive battle at Beaumont Hamel. On July 5th they were visited by officers of the 4th Battalion, who were later to take over from them.

**La Boisselle.**—On the following days the victory of July 1st was rounded off in a series of local operations. On the 3rd the 9th Battalion were in support, just north of Ovillers, during the 12th Division's unsuccessful attack on that day. Four days later the 13th Battalion had moved to the right of the 9th, and delivered an attack. La Boisselle had fallen on the 3rd, with part of Ovillers. But the latter and Contalmaison were unreduced, and the 13th Battalion struck between the two.† At 2 a.m. on July 7th the 13th Battalion was assembled in the old German line in front of La Boisselle, with orders not to attack without orders from the brigade, or until the flanks were well ahead ; but at 8.25 the flanks had advanced, and, touch being lost with the brigade, the

\* Captain Aley's diary.

† This attack was of some importance, but it is not mentioned in the despatch, nor in any book that I have seen.

order to advance was given. Major Ardagh led off with Nos. 1 and 2 Companies, with bombing sections covering the flanks. Due east of La Boisselle some resistance was encountered that held up No. 2 Company for some time, and when this was overcome, the right flank had lost touch with the brigade on the south. The battalion had lost direction, and at 9.30 a.m. the right flank was swung back to within about 1,000 yards due west of Contalmaison. The line was consolidated, and it was at this point that casualties were experienced from the German artillery. On the following day the battalion was ordered to push on to the next line. Captain Nelson took Nos. 3 and 4 Companies to this objective, which stretched from a little below the main Albert road to about 700 yards west of Contalmaison. A small party pushed too far ahead, and suffered severely; but in the two days' operations, with fairly moderate casualties, the battalion had advanced the line materially, captured a battery of field guns, a few machine guns, and nearly 200 prisoners. Lieutenant Bleaden was killed on July 7th; Captains Bliss and Nelson and Second Lieutenants Lewis and Morgan were wounded. The casualties in other ranks were 20 killed, 127 wounded and 13 missing.

**Ovillers.**—On the 7th two other Fusilier battalions were also engaged in the battle. The 8th and 9th Battalions of the 36th Brigade, with the 7th Sussex between them, made another attempt to capture Ovillers, and few more costly actions were fought in the whole of the battle of the Somme. The 8th Battalion was on the right, and the plan was to take Ovillers from the S.W. flank. The bombardment began at 4.30 a.m., and at 8.26 the two leading companies, A and D, crawled over the parapet and lay out in the open. The weather was bad; and though no rain fell during the night, the fumes of the gas shells were blanketed into the hollows of the ground, and formed a death-trap for many who fell wounded. Lieut.-Colonel Annesley, waving his stick, led the attack as the barrage lifted, and the men leaped



forward into a withering machine-gun fire. The Prussian Guards who held these battered positions were worthy foemen, and though the first and second trenches were captured, the cost was very terrible. Annesley, a most gallant officer, was early hit in the wrist. Later he was wounded in the ankle; but he still kept on, and for a time the final objective was in the 8th's hands. Annesley was at length shot above the heart, and fell into a shell-hole, where he lay till evening, when he was taken to Albert and died that night. Shortly after noon the Fusiliers were in Ovillers, and the brigade held about half of it on a north and south line. But every officer engaged was either killed, wounded or missing. Captain Featherstonhaugh, who had been wounded, but refused to leave, was killed. So also were Captains Chard and Franklin. Captain and Adjutant Robertson-Walker was never heard of again, and Second Lieutenant Procter was killed; 17 other officers were wounded. The battalion had gone into action 800 strong; they mustered 160 at night, but held on until relieved on the following day.

The 9th had fared similarly. They had fought under the same conditions, and their losses were only slightly less than those of the 8th Battalion. Rawlins, Cook, Philipps, Street, Osborne, Bindett, Peacock and Manson were killed, and Vere-Smith later died of wounds. Spiers, Brown, Bastable, Twiddy, Garrood (missing), Mackenzie and Evans were wounded. In all about 180 men came out. The gallant survivors of both battalions were congratulated, and it is merely the sober truth that the ordeal through which they had come was unique. Ovillers held out some days longer, and it was not taken until the village had been more completely obliterated than any other in the Somme area and its garrison reduced to 126. The two Fusilier battalions carried the reduction to its penultimate stage.

When the 10th Battalion came up on July 10th they left one amazing experience to go to another. On the night of the 9th the battalion camp at Albert was heavily

shelled, and a grenade dump (50,000) detonated, wounding an officer, killing one man and wounding two others. But in the front line death and desolation were everywhere. La Boisselle was level with the ground. The trenches were battered and exposed. Dead bodies lay about on all sides. At 9 p.m. on July 10th C and B Companies were pushed up in relief of the 13th Rifle Brigade, who, attacking towards Pozieres, had suffered from machine-gun fire; and the battalion lay in advanced positions under heavy shell fire for two days. The men preferred attack when losses sustained went to pay the price of some tangible success, or at least to further an obvious purpose.

**Trones Wood.**—One platoon (No. 14) of D Company of the 11th Battalion assisted the 12th Middlesex in their successful attack on Trones Wood on July 14th to 15th. As they were moving up from Maricourt in the early hours of the 15th they ran into a barrage on the Maricourt-Briquetin road. They had "one casualty, a poor devil who gets his head blown off by a large piece of shrapnel. Still no signs of fear. The men keep in their fours, and go on as if nothing had happened." \* Aley was wounded in Trones Wood, and the platoon suffered heavily. After serious losses from the continual bombardment the battalion left the Somme area on the 18th.

**Pozieres.**—Meanwhile the 10th Battalion had been engaged, and had fought their way to the orchard on the south-west entrance of Pozieres. At 9 a.m. on July 15th they had advanced up Sausage Valley in support of the main attack. About 300 yards from the village they were held up by machine-gun fire. The hollow road seemed to be blocked with troops; and it was obvious the attack had failed before it was abandoned. The C.O. asked permission to place a barrage at the southern end of the village and to take part in the attack. The battalion advanced with a dash, and Lieutenant F. M. Taylor, with D Company, seized the orchard, and an attempt was made to penetrate the outlying orchards. But this movement

\* Officer's diary.

was defeated by concentrated machine-gun fire, and the advanced positions had to be evacuated. Headquarters in chalk pit, about 900 yards from the edge of the village, had been in constant communication with all the companies, and in the afternoon a renewed effort was made. After a pause for reorganisation the village was bombarded from 5 to 6 p.m., and the signal was given for the advance. But at this point there was an unfortunate mischance. The rockets failed, owing to dampness; and the battalion did not start in unison. Some advanced, others still waited, and the blow failed. Most determined and repeated attempts were made to rush the village, but nothing could live in such a machine-gun fire. The battalion were driven back to cover in the afternoon positions, and the 10th Loyal North Lancashires took over the positions after dark. All the company commanders were casualties, and so heavily had the battalion lost that, with the division, they were taken out of the line.

**High Wood.**—To the south-east the 4th Battalion were assisting in the capture of the Bazentins. On July 8th they had relieved the 11th Battalion at Carnoy, and on the 14th they provided working and carrying parties for the brigade attack on Bazentin-le-Grand. A few days later the 20th Battalion were sent to hold the front line in Bazentin, and, later, supported the 19th Brigade attack on High Wood. As the brigade cleared the southern end of the wood the battalion cleared up and consolidated in their rear, and at least this part of the wood was securely held that night. They organised a front and support line across the wood from east to west, with a strong post in the support line, and held on to the position until relieved at midnight. Their task cost them dearly. Lieut.-Colonel Bennett was wounded; Captain Toller, Lieutenant Wallwork, Lieutenant Rawson, Lieutenant Palmer, Second Lieutenant Price and Second Lieutenant Coventry were killed; Second Lieutenant Hine was among the missing; Captain Hollingworth, Second Lieutenant Bell, Second Lieutenant Cooke, Second Lieutenant Brooke, Second

Lieutenant Fabricius, Second Lieutenant Ives and Second Lieutenant Herbert were wounded. The casualties in other ranks were 375 killed, wounded and missing.

**Delville Wood.**—On the 20th the 4th Battalion moved up to Delville Wood, which saw a number of Fusilier battalions in the next few days. This wood, which the soldiers aptly called “ Devil’s Wood,” was one of the many German positions which were apparently captured many times without ceasing to be the scene of very bitter fighting. The South Africans had their outposts on the outer fringes of the wood on the night of July 15th; but on the 18th a heavy German counter-attack swept away the British troops, and in the recoil only the southern end of the wood could be retained. The following day was occupied by the struggle to clear the wood once again; and it was in the lull after the fighting had temporarily died down that the Fusiliers took over from the Essex, Suffolk and Welsh Fusiliers in the south-east of the wood.

It was a deadly area. Even in getting into position 40 casualties were experienced, but the battalion, who had been complimented for their steadiness after Le Cateau, showed no trace of wavering. There were practically no trenches, and the position was methodically consolidated under the worst conditions. A continuous trench line was constructed, though the men were working so close to the Germans that many British shells fell into the trench. At 10 p.m. on the 21st the Germans delivered a local counter-attack. Well prepared and vigorously pressed, it still disturbed the Fusiliers very little. The repulse cost the battalion a number of casualties: Major Wrenford, Second Lieutenant Cook, and 30 other ranks were wounded. Second Lieutenant Sparkes was shot through the head earlier in the day. He was in command of Z Company, and was looking for a place for two of his platoons. His was a well-known Fusilier name.

When the 4th Battalion were relieved at midnight on the 24th they had lost 12 officers and 340 other ranks, killed, wounded and missing, in thirteen days, without taking

part in any attack. In beating off the counter-attack in Delville Wood they lost scarcely more than the daily average. The losses under such conditions form a striking illustration of the plane on which the Somme battle was fought.

The 2nd Division had now been brought to the Somme area, and the first of its four Fusilier battalions to enter the battle zone was the 17th. It was also their first entrance into any battle zone when they took over the support line at Longueval Alley on July 25th. We have already seen that actual attack was not necessary for the suffering of casualties, and Lieutenant Richmond was the first to succumb. There was a heavy bombardment with tear shells, and he was gassed on the first day in the trenches. On the following day there was little intermission in the German shelling, and with every precaution 15 further casualties were suffered. On the 27th A and B Companies went to Delville Wood in the afternoon, and on this occasion there were 118 casualties.

But this was the day on which Delville Wood was again overrun. Four battalions of the Royal Fusiliers had their share in this memorable exploit, and the place of honour was given to the 23rd Battalion. They had had an uncomfortable time in Bernafay Wood previous to the attack. Words fail to do justice to the situation at this moment. It was hot weather. The ground was pitted and torn by shell fire. Dead bodies lay about, and before the troops began to move up the Germans had indulged in a heavy bombardment with gas shells. Fortunately a welcome breeze made the wearing of masks unnecessary. The approach was covered by the British barrage, and near Longueval one shell fell close to the Fusiliers, badly wounding one man.

"It's hard lines," said the man when the C.O. went to him.

"I know it is," said the C.O., "but you'll soon be all right. The stretcher-bearers are coming."

"Oh! it's not that," was the man's rejoinder. "It's

being hit just now! Here have I been all this time in France without having a real go at the b——s, and now the chance has come, here I go and get knocked out." \*

The battalion formed up in a trench at the edge of the wood with the 1st K.R.R.C. on the right and the 1st Royal Berks in support. The coolness of the men was remarkable, and one man, hearing that there were still five minutes to zero, calmly went back to his breakfast. The position to be assaulted was as difficult as any in the Somme area. The wood was now merely a collection of bare stumps, but the trees which had crashed and the thick undergrowth provided ideal obstacles and cover. The ground seemed to be alive with machine guns, and the German barrage effectually cut off all approach to the wood. The defending troops were the Brandenburgers; and after the first objective had been captured, numbers of them were taken prisoner.

The barrage lifted at 7.10 a.m., and the first wave, consisting of A and B Companies, who had formed up in front of the existing trenches when the barrage began, went forward, and with little opposition captured the Princes Street line. This avenue practically cut the wood in two from east to west; and it was occupied and consolidation begun within nine minutes of the advance. D and C Companies had occupied the line vacated by the first wave, and when, at 7.40 a.m., the barrage lifted again, the second wave passed through the first. The barrage had lifted again (8.10 a.m.), and the advance began on the final objective, while the second wave was struggling with a redoubt on the left front. Excellently covered and strongly manned, the obstacle seemed to defy capture until two Lewis guns were sent up and placed so as to take the redoubt from the flank. Assisted by bombers, the Lewis guns soon put an end to the resistance. Two machine guns were put out of action, and Sergeant Royston, finding a third intact, turned it upon part of the garrison who were

\* Major N. A. Lewis, D.S.O., M.C., quoted in "The 23rd (Service) Battalion Royal Fusiliers."

escaping. Shortly afterwards (9.40 a.m.) the final objective was captured, and the men dug in on the further edge of the wood, with a good field of fire. The rest of the day was occupied in dealing with attempts to get round the flanks.

At 11 a.m. the 1st K.R.R.C., who held the exposed flank on the right, were attacked by German bombers, and B Company bombers and a machine gun were sent to support. At this moment also began the enemy bombardment of the whole of the wood, and, persisting until midnight, it made life very precarious. Most of the casualties suffered by the 23rd were sustained in this ceaseless fire. But their position was safe compared with that of the K.R.R.C. The 17th Battalion Royal Fusiliers lay south of the wood with the 22nd Battalion forward on their left. A and B Companies of the 22nd were sent up as carrying parties, and passed the headquarters of the 17th with S.A.A. and tools. At 1 p.m. a message was sent to the 22nd to reinforce the K.R.R.C. At 2 p.m. A and B Companies of the 17th moved up to Delville Wood, and before the end of the day every available man of the 22nd was thrown into the struggle on the right. At 3.30 p.m. a strong counter-attack was delivered by the enemy on this flank, and the situation was only cleared up by the assistance of the 23rd's bombers and the full remaining strength of the 22nd. Captain Walsh collected all the carrying parties, to the number of about 250, and organised them into a fighting unit. Captain Gell took the last 100 men of C and D Companies up to the wood from Bernafay Wood, and with them held the south-east flank of the wood. The wood undoubtedly justified its nickname on this day. Wherever the men stood they were under shell fire, and it seemed impossible that any troops should be left to hold what had been won.

But at the end of the day the wood was handed over intact; and the 23rd, though they had lost 12 officers (5 killed) and 276 other ranks, came out at night, jauntily enough, smoking German cigars and well pleased with

themselves. Theirs had been the straighter task of over-running German positions. They had taken six machine guns and, with the K.R.R.C., 160 prisoners. The 22nd, who had had the less stimulating task of beating off the continued attacks of the enemy and of suffering their shell fire, had possibly achieved a greater thing. Largely owing to them, the flank was held up, and unless this had been accomplished the wood would have been lost almost before it was won. They lost Captain Grant, commanding the brigade machine gun company, killed, 4 other officers wounded, and 189 other ranks killed, wounded and missing. The 17th lost Lieutenant Fletcher and Second Lieutenant Penny killed, 3 officers wounded, and 113 other ranks killed, wounded and missing.

On July 30th C Company of the 24th Battalion was engaged. On the previous evening the battalion had taken over the front line from the southern edge of Delville Wood to Waterlot Farm, and on the 30th they advanced against a German trench some 600 yards east of Waterlot Farm. A thick mist lay over the ground as the men went forward, and it was very difficult to keep direction. When this initial and serious handicap had been overcome, it was found that the German wire had been uncut. "The king of the war," as the French called barbed wire, exercised its sovereignty once again. Captain C. S. Meares was killed on the wire, leading his men, and the company fought valiantly, but to no purpose. C Company attacked with 3 officers and 114 other ranks. One wounded officer and 11 other ranks remained at the end of the day. Such was the price paid for co-operation in the attack on Guillemont.

During the next few days the 17th, 22nd and 23rd Battalions saw further service in this very perilous sector. On August 1st the 22nd Battalion moved into Delville Wood. Lieut.-Colonel Barnett Barker was placed in command of the wood, with the 23rd Battalion in support. These dispositions remained in force until the night of the 3rd, when the Royal Fusiliers were relieved during



a heavy bombardment which caused a number of casualties.

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**Pozieres Ridge.**—The 8th and 9th Battalions were engaged once more in the first week of August in operations about Pozieres. That these were minor operations does not detract from their interest or from their influence on the capture of the Pozieres Ridge. The 8th Battalion attacked with the 6th Buffs. Their objective was a section of 4th Avenue, a trench north-west of Pozieres. The attack was made at 11 p.m. on the night of August 3rd, and as the barrage lifted two platoons of A and B Companies walked slowly forward until within 50 yards of the trench, when they charged. The Germans were taken completely by surprise, and the trench was captured. The Germans sent up phosphorus red flares which lit up the storming troops; and they fought very well. Colonel Cope, commanding the Buffs, personally reconnoitred the ground during the attack, and owing to his prompt decision, part of the 5th Avenue trench was also seized and held. By midnight the position was being consolidated, and the two battalions had captured 2 officers (one wearing the Iron Cross) and 89 other ranks. Lieutenant Wardrop and Second Lieutenant A. Stiles were killed in the attack, and Second Lieutenant R. W. Hampton was wounded, and there were about 150 other casualties. About 1 a.m. a bombing block was established in the new trench, and Captain Clarke held it against two enemy attacks. As day broke on the 4th a company was seen to be charging down on the battalion's right flank. Only by good luck was disaster averted, for it was soon realised that these were the Sussex, who had lost direction in the dark.

The darkness made it difficult to determine the positions with accuracy. At one time it was thought that Ration Trench had been taken. When the mistake was discovered later it was decided to attack the position in the evening with the three battalions of the 36th Brigade, the 2nd

Anzac Division co-operating with an advance to the north-east of Pozieres. Night attacks have their own peculiar difficulties and terrors. Even in broad daylight actions could rarely be carried out exactly as they were planned. So severe and constant was the bombardment by both sides that even villages were difficult to recognise, and trenches appeared to be little different from the pitted lines of shell-holes.

In the attack on Ration Trench on August 4th many circumstances conspired to add to the strain on the men. The battalions engaged advanced on lines which might have led to hopeless confusion and did, in fact, result in isolated encounters of almost unimaginable horror. The Sussex were moving against a section of the trench which involved an attack in a westerly direction. The 9th Fusiliers were directed partly to the north. The New Zealands were striking north-east. Germans seemed to turn up everywhere during the night: in front, on the flanks, even in the rear, and the Fusiliers appeared to form little islands in a sea of enemy. Zero was at 9.15 p.m., but detailed attack orders were not issued till 8.17, and everything had to be arranged in less than an hour. The 9th Battalion moved off at 3 p.m. to take over part of the 8th Fusiliers' trenches, and were at once spotted by the Germans and shelled on the way. About 6.30 p.m. they were in position in parts of 3rd and 4th Avenues, approximately 1,000 yards due west of Pozieres, after losing about 15 men while moving up.

An intense bombardment began at zero. Five minutes later the two battalions advanced, and at about 50 yards from Ration Trench charged. The objectives were gained in less than an hour on the left, but on the right an unknown trench held up the attackers. At 1 a.m. on the 5th came the first reports of Germans still existing between the lines. The Fusiliers began to be sniped from the rear, and the situation was not cleared up until the afternoon. The 8th Battalion had charged over the trench on their way to Ration Trench, and left unnoticed 2 officers and

100 other ranks. Lance-Corporal Camping \* and one or two men who could speak German crawled out of their trench, though exposed to constant sniping, and threatened the Germans with a severe bombardment if they did not give themselves up before dark. The whole party then surrendered. They were part of a Jaeger battalion who had reached the trenches only a day or two before, and they had decided to break through Ration Trench to their own lines during the evening.

The two battalions were now in contact and engaged in the work of consolidation. Bombing posts were organised in Ration Trench, and the day (August 5th) was generally quiet. But shortly after midnight a heavy bombardment of the lines began, and the shelling continued until 4 a.m. (6th). The 9th Battalion, lying west of the 8th, were subjected to a determined counter-attack during this time. Many of the men were quite new to warfare. For some it was their first experience of actual fighting, and their bearing was admirable. The assault was made by *flammenwerfers*, supported by bombers using smoke as a screen. The flames burst through the clouds of smoke from various directions, and all the conditions of panic were present. The fumes alone were sufficient to overpower some of the men. But no panic took place. The situation was handled very coolly. The attack was made on the north-east end of Ration Trench, and about 20 men were extended in the open on either side of the trench with two Lewis guns. The attack was thus beaten off with a loss of only 40 yards of trench. Many fine incidents

\* I have been continually amazed at the uncanny skill with which published accounts of the various incidents of the war wrongly identify the units engaged. The Royal Fusiliers came in for more than their share of being passed over. An ironic poem written by Corporal Warren, of the 11th Battalion, in the rhythm of the British Grenadiers, comments on this tendency.

"The papers get the money,  
So they praise the Royal West Kents,"

is, perhaps, the least offensive distich. I am reminded of this by Mr. Gibbs' attribution of the whole of this incident to the men of Sussex, which in this case means the Sussex Regiment or nothing.

marked this defence. Private Leigh Rouse \* (9th), who had never visited the trenches before, was in the sap when the *flammenwerfer* attack began. He managed to get back along the trench and, though nearly choked with fumes and with his clothes burnt, refused to go to the dressing station. He continued to throw bombs until his arm gave out, and then, joining the covering party, used his rifle with great effect.

During the next night, when another attack was expected, he remained close to the barricade. Sergeant Charles Quinnell † twice went out from Ration Trench with a patrol, and obtained valuable information. Most of the men in his platoon had never been in a front line trench before, and their remarkable coolness and endurance were largely due to his fine example. Lance-Corporal Cyril Cross † took his Lewis gun into a shell-hole outside the trench during the *flammenwerfer* attack, and engaged the enemy, who were in great strength, at close range, inflicting many casualties until his gun was put out of action. Private Tom Crow † continued to throw bombs from the very edge of the flames, showing a complete disregard of the enemy. He was finally wounded by a sniper as he was closely pursuing the enemy. All these men belonged to A Company, commanded by Captain G. L. Cazalet, M.C., who had led his men across the open on the night of the 5th, in less than three-quarters of an hour had taken his objective, and was responsible for the defence of 500 yards of Ration Trench, the flank of which was held by the enemy. Though wounded, he refused to leave the trench; and it was chiefly owing to his fine example that his company, though almost quite new to warfare, behaved so finely. He was awarded a well-deserved D.S.O.

All day on the 6th and 7th the German bombardment of the Fusiliers continued. In the afternoon of the latter day the two battalions were relieved. Both had lost very

\* Awarded M.M.

† Awarded D.C.M.

heavily. In addition to those already mentioned, the 8th lost Lieutenant J. A. Pearson; Captain S. H. Clarke was wounded, and there were about 30 other ranks killed and wounded. The losses of the 9th were heavier. Green, Stevens, Lupton, Heaver and Bungay were killed; Knott, Cazalet, Pilgrim, Calwell, Fox, Thornton and Fifoot were wounded; and there were 281 other ranks killed, wounded and missing. But they took prisoner 2 officers and 1 wounded officer with 135 other ranks, and received congratulations from the Commander-in-Chief. The battalions marched off to Bouzincourt, and on the 10th lined the road at Senlis for the inspection by the King and the Prince of Wales.

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**Guillemont.**—On the other operative flank of the British attack several other Fusilier battalions were now engaged. Of the two great pivots of the German defensive in what Sir Douglas Haig calls the second phase of the battle of the Somme one, Guillemont, still remained untaken. It had been entered on July 30th, but was evacuated, as the flanking positions still remained intact. It was entered once more on August 8th, and again abandoned for the same reason. From these two failures it was evident that the capture of the village could not be regarded safely as an isolated enterprise, and it was accordingly arranged for a series of attacks in progressive stages in conjunction with the French, whose sphere of action was not 2,000 yards to the south.

Three battalions of the Royal Fusiliers played their part in these operations. In "the first stage of the prearranged scheme" \* the 4th Battalion was engaged. At this time Major H. E. Meade was in command, as Lieut.-Colonel Hely-Hutchinson had been thrown from his horse on the 11th and had been removed to hospital. On August 15th the battalion took over the trenches facing the southern corner of Guillemont. The 1st Battalion was only 1,000 yards to their rear, preparing

\* Despatch.

to take its share in the struggle. On the way up the 4th had lost Second Lieutenant Goolden, who was killed by a shell. The approach was across open country over which the enemy had direct observation, and the Germans had concentrated a heavy volume of machine gun fire in the village. This may serve to explain why the attack failed in spite of the most gallant and persistent efforts of all ranks. The 4th had on their left flank the 24th Division, and on their right the King's Liverpools. X and Z Companies led the attack at 5.40 p.m. (August 16th) after a short but intense bombardment, but they encountered a very heavy machine gun fire. Both company commanders were killed as they crossed the parapet, and before the fighting ceased every other officer had been killed or wounded, and there were 160 other ranks casualties. It was a discouraging episode ; and the badly weakened unit were left to hold the original front line under a heavy bombardment until the 18th, when a further attempt was made by other troops. The battalion passed to brigade reserve, and was organised into two companies.

After this abortive attempt to eat into the Guillemont defences the positions were bombarded for thirty-six hours, when the 1st Battalion co-operated in immediate support. They had been in the area from August 8th, when they took over trenches from Delville Wood to Trones Wood, with headquarters in Waterlot Farm. It was a warm quarter, and two days after taking over the line the situation was made still more uncomfortable by one of those unhappy mischances which, apparently, could not be altogether prevented. A number of our own 9.2 shells fell upon B Company, and caused 23 casualties. Lieutenant W. van Grierson \* showed great gallantry in rescuing buried men, and, unfortunately, was mortally wounded in so doing. Private Tanner \* and Corporal Silcox \* courageously brought Private Lynch from No

\* Van Grierson was awarded the M.C., Silcox and Tanner the M.M., for the same operation.

Man's Land in broad daylight, from within 100 yards of the German trenches, under heavy machine gun fire.

After a few days in the rear trenches, they took up their positions for attack on the 17th. C Company was in Trones Wood, supporting the 8th Buffs, A in Sherwood Trench, in support of the 3rd Rifle Brigade, while B and D occupied Dummy Trench and Longueval Alley. The attack began at 3.30 p.m. on a broad front, with three other divisions co-operating. The objective of the 3rd Rifle Brigade was Guillemont station, while the 8th Buffs were directed against a trench some 200 yards from the front line in the direction of Ginchy. Both objectives were attained. The station, lying on a light railway just outside and to the north of Guillemont, had become a tactical feature of some importance, and later in the month it was the scene of a vigorous counter-attack. Only on the extreme right of the 24th Division did the attack fail, and this led to the postponement of a third advance timed for 5.30 a.m. on the 19th. The battalion on this occasion suffered 66 casualties, including three officers wounded.

The 12th Battalion had been in reserve during the battle. They had assisted in covering the attack on the 16th by putting up a smoke barrage on part of the front. On the 18th they provided a party to consolidate during the attack, and carrying parties for S.A.A. to the front line. After dark No. 4 Company, under Captain Anderson, went up to the front line and dug a communication trench from the old line to the new positions.

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One of the minor excitements of the battle occurred early on August 21st. An ammunition dump in Bernafay Wood was fired. Continuous explosions came from the Stokes mortar ammunition. Flying splinters filled the air, and men were blown bodily into the fire by the explosion. R.S.M. Hack (1st Battalion) very gallantly rescued wounded in the midst of the flying fragments of exploding bombs, and there were many casualties in the

attempts to put the fire out. Second Lieutenant Tiffany (12th Battalion) rescued several men who had been blown into the fire, and at length the mishap expended itself without compelling the postponement of the afternoon operations against Guillemont. The 1st Battalion on this occasion had two companies, A and D, engaged, with the 3rd Rifle Brigade on the left and the 8th Queen's (72nd Brigade) on the right. The Fusiliers advanced at 3.30 p.m. "Hill Street" and "Brompton Road" were the objectives. The 1st Battalion got away with great dash, and after a strenuous fight drove the enemy out of the trench in front of Hill Street; but the flanking battalions were both held up, and, although the Fusiliers pushed well ahead, it was necessary to withdraw to the trench already mentioned. A Company, under Captain Bell, went into battle only 70 strong, and both the company commanders and Second Lieutenant Jacobs displayed great courage and coolness. The headquarters bombers also did good service, and Sergeant Pye, though wounded, volunteered to take a message to his company commander. He was wounded again as he returned. This was the 1st Battalion's last period of service in the Somme battle. On relief, the following day, they went to Happy Valley and later to Bussus: "a very pleasant place," notes the battalion diary, "after the desolation in and around the villages of the battle area." The battalion had suffered 403 casualties during the Somme operations. Captain Bell was awarded the D.S.O., Second Lieutenant Jacobs the M.C., R.S.M. Hack the M.C., and Sergeant Pye the D.C.M.

\* \* \* \*

Fighting still continued in and about Delville Wood, but on August 24th the situation was much improved by an attack in which the 20th Royal Fusiliers took part. The advance began at 5.45, and the battalion sent up two platoons to occupy part of the trench captured by the 100th Brigade. The trench lay to the west of the northern part of Delville Wood, and the Fusiliers took over a bombing post at the corner of the new



trench, and at once set about connecting it with the support line.

The 12th Battalion were suddenly ordered up to this sector of the front on September 1st. On the way up they were delayed for two hours in Caterpillar Valley owing to a very heavy gas barrage and the guides going astray. Many of the men were very sick from the effects of the gas, and it was only at 3.30 a.m. that the battalion arrived in Carlton Trench, which lay between Delville Wood and High Wood. The front here had been lifted well to the north-east since the 20th Battalion had left, but the 3rd Rifle Brigade and the 2nd Leinsters were very much weakened in the forward positions. No. 3 Company was sent up on the 1st to reinforce the 3rd Rifle Brigade, and on the following day a platoon, ten bombers and one Lewis gun of No. 1 Company were sent to the 2nd Leinsters in the bombing post in Worcester Trench. The day was dull and misty, and the Germans attacked this post with great determination, but were repulsed, though the Lewis gun team had several casualties. Early in the evening the remainder of the battalion took over the trench held by the 3rd Rifle Brigade, and on the following day co-operated in the general attack which swept over Guillemont into Ginchy. The 24th Division was represented in this attack by the 8th Buffs.

At midday the whole line advanced. The sector between High Wood and Delville Wood was obstinately defended, and the Buffs and Fusiliers could make little impression on it. The Buffs' main objective was the strong point at the junction of the Wood Lane Trench and Tea Trench, which lay at the north-west corner of Delville Wood. No. 4 Company, under Captain Anderson, bombed up Wood Lane towards the strong point; but though the Buffs attacked twice, they failed to reach their objective. The artillery preparation had not been sufficient to rub the surface off the opposition. From Orchard Trench the Fusilier Lewis guns did considerable damage, and claimed to have caused at least 100 casualties. But this was the

only success achieved on this small sector, and the battalion suffered 58 casualties, 10 killed. They were relieved on September 4th and went south to Fricourt, and later left the Somme area.

**Ginchy.**—On September 3rd Ginchy was seized, as well as Guillemont ; but the former could not be retained in face of the immediate German counter-attacks, and after three days' struggle the greater part of the village reverted to the enemy. Preparations for a further attack upon Ginchy continued without intermission, and at 4.45 p.m. on September 9th the attack was reopened on the whole of the Fourth Army front. At four o'clock a heavy enemy barrage was put down on the assembly trenches of the 4th Londons in Leuze Wood, but the battalion went forward at zero in six waves. In little over an hour the battalion captured its objectives and pushed out two advanced posts to positions overlooking Morval-Lesbœufs road. The Rangers were not in touch on the left flank, and a strong point was established ; and during the night the advanced posts were connected up and manned by Lewis guns.

Meanwhile A Company of the 2nd Londons had been involved in the attack of the London Rifle Brigade further east. At 6 p.m. this regiment called upon their support company, but the barrage was so heavy that A Company of the 2nd Londons went forward instead. Taking up their position in the north-east corner of Leuze Wood, they began at once to suffer casualties. They were ordered to bomb up Combles Trench. Captain J. W. Long and Second Lieutenant E. W. Lockey were killed by snipers, and, all the officers becoming casualties, C.S.M. Pellow took over the command. But the attack failed. The strength of the company had been weakened too much. The attempt of B Company to support on the following day similarly failed with heavy loss. But the two battalions had contributed to the very considerable advance of their (56th) division.

**Flers.**—The ground had now been prepared for

another general attack, and on September 15th "The third phase—Exploitation of Success" \* began. "Practically the whole of the forward crest of the main ridge on a front of some 9,000 yards from Delville Wood to the road above Mouquet Farm was now in our hands, and with it the advantage of observation over the slopes beyond. . . . The general plan of the combined Allied attack which was opened on September 15th was to pivot on the high ground south of the Ancre and north of the Albert-Bapaume road, while the Fourth Army devoted its whole effort to the rearmost of the enemy's original systems of defence between Morval and Le Sars." † The Royal Fusiliers were represented in this advance, the greatest that had been made in any one day since the opening of the offensive, by the 26th and 32nd Battalions, both of them in the 124th Brigade of the 41st Division, which was in the command of a Royal Fusilier, General Lawford; and by the 2nd Londons. For thirty-six hours the positions to be attacked had been prepared by a continuous bombardment, which had, as usual, battered some places to dust, but had left intact obstacles that might have wrecked the plan. To deal with such eventualities, however, the army now had a new instrument, the tank, which made its first appearance in this battle.

For the 26th and 32nd Battalions it was their first experience of battle. They had only been in France four months, but both of them created an excellent precedent in their first action. Each of them was in support, the 32nd on the right and the 26th on the left, following the 10th Queen's R.W.S. Regiment and the 21st K.R.R.C. Three tanks were allotted to the brigade.

At 6.20 a.m. the leading waves moved off. The 32nd, who had been assembled some fifty yards inside Delville Wood, advanced with the utmost precision with the 14th Division on their right. The barrage was followed very closely, and the battalion met with little resistance

\* Despatch.

† Despatch.

in Tea Support Trench and Switch Trench, half-way to Flers. They had been advancing in four waves originally, but at this point the fourth wave was left behind to consolidate, and the other three waves became mixed up with the survivors of the 10th Queen's and, on the flanks, with men of the 14th Division and of the 26th Battalion, who had lost direction. When Switch Trench had been won the battalion was reduced to two parties, under Captain H. A. Robinson and Lieutenant W. V. Aston respectively. Robinson pushed on with his party, about 80 strong, beyond Flers, capturing three field guns, five Bavarian officers and about 40 other ranks. The field guns were later destroyed by the Germans' concentrated artillery fire. Aston's party, after being held up some time by machine gun fire, advanced with a tank beyond Flers. The battalion in this very successful advance lost 10 officers (wounded) and 283 other ranks killed, wounded and missing.

The 26th Battalion advanced with the 32nd against little resistance, but in the early part of the action the left battalion passed through our own barrage. Captain Etechells was at this moment senior officer on the left of the brigade front, and he promptly and coolly reorganised the line. With this readjustment the troops were able to advance again.\* Later in the morning there was a check on the brigade front, but the same officer went forward to a tank lying south of Flers and arranged that the 26th would follow if the tank would lead. This arrangement was carried out. The tank moved along the south side of Flers, assisting the troops who were in the village by firing on the retreating enemy and also assisting the 26th to get well ahead. In the late afternoon the battalion were north and east of the village. In the battle the 26th lost 9 officers (5 of them killed) and 255 other ranks killed, wounded and missing. The losses of both battalions, though very heavy considering the numbers involved, were less than might have been expected, for the German

\* Captain Etechells was awarded the M.C. for this service.

artillery, though late in starting, was most skilfully handled. The smallest parties moving in the battle zone at once became a target. At times even a single stretcher party was marked down. It was for the greatest courage and devotion to duty under these conditions that the medical officer of the 26th, Lieutenant J. McIntyre, R.A.M.C., was awarded the M.C. He was four times buried by shell explosions, but each time recommenced his work of attending to the wounded.

One of the singular points about this action is that the tanks impressed our own men more than the enemy, though at one point the Fusiliers were amused to see a panic among the enemy, who caught a drift of a tank's exhaust fumes. They imagined it a new form of gas, and attempted to adjust their gas helmets before retiring.

The 32nd Battalion were relieved on the morning of the 16th, but one company of the 26th remained at the front till night, when they followed the rest of the battalion and the 32nd to support positions.

\* \* \* \*

The 2nd Londons also attacked the same day. Their objective was the Loop Trench, connecting the sunken road with Combles Trench. C and D Companies attacked and very quickly gained all their objectives, with the exception of the junction of the sunken road and Loop Trench. Captain A. G. L. Jepson, Lieutenant P. C. Taylor and Second Lieutenant A. G. Sullivan were killed, and two officers were wounded, in the heavy bombing attacks against the captured positions. So great were the losses that all available men of A and B Companies were sent to the line to reinforce before three o'clock. Two blocks had been established, one in the north end of Loop Trench and the other in Combles Trench, and the battalion bombers were sent up in small parties to assist in holding them. But they also suffered heavy loss, and reinforcements had to be sent by another regiment. The battalion held their positions with this assistance, and they were later congratulated by General Guignabaudit, who, com-

manding on the French left, had watched the attack from Savernake Wood.

**Thiepval.**—On September 26th the 11th Battalion took part in what Sir Ivor Maxse afterwards described as a “distinct and memorable” episode—the capture of Thiepval. The whole of the 54th Brigade, of which the battalion formed part, was allotted only 300 yards of frontage, but in the area were located 144 deep German dug-outs, in addition to those round the Chateau Redoubt and the positions in the original front line along which the Fusiliers had to advance. This line was the western bastion of Thiepval, and for nearly three months the village had been the focus of the stern resistance on the left flank of the Somme operations. The effect of the successful action on the 25th was thought to justify a rapid following up.

At 12.35 p.m., D Company, under Captain R. H. V. Thompson, advanced against the German positions. The British barrage was most intense, and the Germans, taken by surprise, were at first thrown into confusion. “We met Bosches running about, scared out of their wits, like a crowd of rabbits diving for their holes. Men were rushing about unarmed, men were holding up their hands and yelling for mercy, men were scuttling about everywhere, trying to get away from that born fighter, the Cockney, but they had very little chance.”\* But this applies only to the first moments of the assault. D Company was soon checked on the left, at the junction of Brawn Trench with the original German line. At this point, about 250 yards below the south-west corner of Thiepval village, the company was held up, and with it the left flank of the Middlesex; but Thompson flung part of his men against the trench and led the rest against the strong point at the junction. He was hit in the head, but kept on until hit again and killed at the moment that the post was rushed. He was one of the best company commanders the battalion ever had.

\* Captain Cornaby's diary.

In the hand-to-hand fighting, Lieutenant R. A. Mall-Smith was also killed, and Lieutenant G. A. Cornaby was wounded. But the Fusiliers killed numbers of the enemy and took 25 prisoners. They then continued their advance along the German line, fighting their way yard by yard. Some relief was obtained by posting the Lewis guns so as to fire along the trench, but the gun team suffered heavily. About 200 yards west of the chateau another strong point was encountered, and there followed a protracted encounter. The attack was assisted by the timely appearance of a tank, which also checked the fire from the chateau, and so helped the Middlesex. D Company got forward north-west of the chateau, where Lance-Corporal Tovey (B Company) captured a machine gun single-handed. Such was the position about 1 p.m.

A Company, under Major Hudson, turned to support the Middlesex at the chateau, and, diverging to the right, made a small gap in the line. Captain Johnson promptly put in B Company, and attacking northwards, gave the last touch requisite to carry the first objective. This company had already lost two officers, all but three N.C.O.'s and half the men. Major Hudson was wounded in the shoulder west of the chateau, but continued fighting until the final line was won. He was shot through the thigh as he left the line and died a few days later.

Colonel Carr went forward about 1.15 with Captain Cumberledge, the Adjutant, and after visiting the C.O. of the Middlesex, went towards D Company. He was immediately wounded in three places, and as Cumberledge and Hudson were also wounded, Captain Johnson was in command until the evening, when Major Meyricke, the second in command, took over. The fighting on the Fusiliers' left was full of incident. Before the first objective had been won they had cleared twenty-five dug-outs. Some of them contained large bodies of men provided with bombs, grenades and machine guns. One very deep dug-out was garrisoned like a fortress, and the men, armed with two machine guns, refused to come out. The Fusiliers

had to set it on fire. Eleven Germans ran out and were killed, and 14 wounded were taken prisoners. Many more probably were burned to death.

C Company, in command of Lieutenant A. E. Sulman, had gone over with the Middlesex to clear up. They had a vivid time and were successful in locating the German telephone headquarters. Sulman was given a German map, and quickly realised its importance. The men were set to look for the place. It was discovered by Lance-Corporal F. Rudy \* with four men, who captured it, taking 20 prisoners, cut the wires, and so severed communication with the German artillery. Sulman left two platoons to assist between the chateau and the right flank, with which he went forward. His company enveloped numbers of the Germans who were retiring to the north in front of D Company. While the left were advancing well to the north of the chateau, A Company, with two platoons of C, pushed to the second objective and established a position at the north-eastern end of the village. The Middlesex were now on the right, a considerable deflection from the original direction of advance.

This was the position at 3 p.m.; but the reports reaching headquarters were largely contradictory. Most of them were sent by N.C.O.'s, as the officers were out of action; and, without maps, their references could not be expected to be more than approximate. Sulman, with his composite party, could not be located. By 4.30 p.m. the position was cleared up. D, B, and part of A Company were still holding their position north of the chateau, and north-west of the mass of the village. There was a gap of 100 yards between this position and Sulman's flanking platoons, which were disposed diagonally across the village on a line facing north-west. Two other platoons of C and part of A were on the second objective beyond the north-east end of the village. The Fusiliers had not a bomb left; they were perilously short of ammunition, and their numbers were dangerously weak.

\* He was awarded the D.C.M. for this serviceable achievement.



The left was still under constant attack ; sometimes as many as twenty German stick bombs were in the air at the same moment.

Captain Johnson reported his position to Colonel Maxwell (Middlesex), who was in chief command, and a company of Northants was sent to him to fill the gap between his right and left, and to reduce the strong point which held up the further advance of the left. The attack proved a failure, and at 5.45 p.m. Captain Johnson was ordered to dig in on his present line and connect his right and left. The Fusiliers, Middlesex and Northants were then collected and the position organised, a stranded tank making the nucleus of a strong advanced post. On the left fighting continued till 11 p.m., and the Fusiliers suffered heavy casualties, until a barrage forced the Germans to retire northwards. "Thiepval," wrote Lieut.-General C. W. Jacobs, the Commander of the Second Corps, "has withstood all attacks upon it for exactly two years." All but the north-west corner of the village had been taken in less than six hours. At 4 a.m. the Bedfords arrived, and Captain Johnson and Lieutenant Sulman were ordered to put them in attack formation in front of the line. This was done, and at dawn they carried the north-west corner of the village in a dashing attack. The Fusiliers then left the line. They had suffered very heavily, but they had achieved much. Captain Johnson and Lieutenant Sulman were each awarded the M.C.

Private F. J. Edwards, of the Middlesex, was awarded the V.C. for "one of those decisive actions which determine the success or failure of an operation. His part of the line was held up by a machine gun. The officers had all become casualties. There was confusion, and even a suggestion of retirement. Private Edwards grasped the situation at once. Alone, and on his own initiative, he dashed towards the gun, which he bombed until he succeeded in knocking it out. By this gallant act, performed with great presence of mind, and with complete disregard for his personal safety, this man made possible

the continuance of the advance and solved a dangerous situation." Private Edwards was transferred to the Royal Fusiliers on April 13th, 1918, and was taken prisoner eleven days later.

\* \* \* \*

The 11th Battalion was in the line again on October 23rd, and the plan at that time was for it to attack Petit Miraumont. "For this attack the assaulting battalions of the brigade were to have been the Fusiliers and the Bedfordshire Regiment. The weather was awful, and the mud beyond words. Fortunately, the attack did not come off. If it had, it must have been a colossal failure. The first objective was, I believe, 1,700 yards away, and in that mud, and after going that distance, the men would have been dead-beat. The brigade was to go on to the Ancre, cross the river, which was in flood and about 300 yards wide, and hold the crossings for the 53rd Brigade to go through. It was seriously suggested that trees might be felled across the Ancre, and the men might cross on them." \* The battalion went into the line three or four times, but each time the attack was postponed. It rained nearly every day. "The men were soaked to the skin with liquid mud for days on end, and after ration-carrying fatigues were dead-beat. It was a long carry, and the mud was appalling. . . . The sick rate in the battalions at this time was the worst I have ever known. One morning each battalion in the brigade had over 150 sick, and one had nearly 250." \*

**Bayonet Trench.**—"These conditions multiplied the difficulties of attack to such an extent that it was found impossible to exploit the situation with the rapidity necessary to enable us to reap the full benefits of the advantages we had gained." † They also explain the inconclusive character of much of the fighting between the capture of Thiepval and the Battle of the Ancre. In one of these attacks four Fusilier battalions fought side

\* A Fusilier officer's account.

† Despatch.

by side. The Fourth Army operated along the whole front from Les Bœufs to Destremont Farm in support of the French advance on Sailly-Saillisel. The front upon which the Royal Fusiliers were engaged stretched, roughly, between the road running from High Wood to Le Barque and the road running north from Gueudecourt, the 26th and 9th Battalions being on the extreme left and right respectively. Before them lay a network of trenches and strong posts forming the outer defences of Ligny-Thillois.

The 8th and 9th Battalions on this occasion suffered very heavy losses, and did not reach their objectives. When the attack began at 1.45 p.m. on October 7th everything, from advanced headquarters, appeared to go well. Within half an hour reports came back that this was the case, but in an hour it was known that even the first objective, Bayonet Trench, had not been reached. The German positions were found to be held in great strength, and it was later discovered that the attack had coincided with a relief. The artillery and machine gun fire were too heavy, and the front companies were mowed down. The 9th alone had 15 officer casualties, and about 250 other ranks. They mustered, on relief, 144, with B Company reduced to 12. The 8th had 9 officer casualties and 244 other ranks. Each of these battalions received from General Boyd Moss the following message: "Will you please thank all ranks of your battalion for the magnificent gallantry they displayed yesterday. They advanced steadily under a heavy fire which only the very best troops could have faced. Though unfortunately unsuccessful, their gallant conduct has added to the fine reputation which you have already won for yourselves."

The 26th and 32nd Battalions, attacking at the same time, fared no better. Despite all gallantry, no appreciable headway was made. Each of the four battalions was at this time much under strength, and went into battle considerably less than two companies strong, although organised as four. From first to last the 26th

only advanced about 300 yards; but the position could not be maintained, and their casualties were 14 officers and 240 other ranks. Insufficient preparation and support, reduced strength and the terrible state of the ground, had proved too heavy a handicap for units who had each performed excellent service before. Major Coxhead (9th Battalion) noted the state of the roads was so bad that the transport took three hours and a quarter to traverse the five miles to Becordel.

The 20th Battalion had a tour in the trenches north of Morval in the last week of October, and suffered 75 casualties, including five officers. They then moved into trenches to the north of Les Bœufs, and on November 6th, after three attempts, established a bombing post about midway between that village and Le Transloy. In this small action they had about 100 casualties. So the month wore on to the 13th, when the Battle of the Ancre was fought.

**The Battle of the Ancre.**—In this action, which in duration was only comparable to one of the many battles embraced under the general title of the Battle of the Somme, eight battalions of the Royal Fusiliers were involved, though one of them, the 4th, was in brigade reserve, and remained in the same position in Sackville Street, opposite Serre, all day, as the assaulting brigades did not reach their objective. The front of attack had a bad history, for it was here that several divisions attacked in vain, and suffered heavy loss, on July 1st. The situation on November 13th was very different. The gains south of the Ancre had placed the troops in a position to take the German positions north of the river in enfilade. On the other hand, "the enemy's defences in this area were already formidable when they resisted our assault on July 1st, and the succeeding period of four months had been spent in improving and adding to them in the light of the experience he had gained in the course of our attacks further south; . . . the villages of Beaucourt-sur-Ancre and Beaumont Hamel, like the rest

of the villages forming part of the enemy's original front in this district, were evidently intended by him to form a permanent line of fortification. . . . Realising that his position in them had become a dangerous one, the enemy had multiplied the number of his guns covering this part of the line. . . ." \*

The Germans, indeed, were confident that they had neutralised the disadvantages of the approach from the south by their new precautions, and General Ludendorff described the victory of the Ancre as "a particularly heavy blow, for we considered such an event no longer possible." † But it is obvious that the tip of the salient, created by the Somme advance, was highly vulnerable, and it was there that the greatest successes were won. The preliminary bombardment had lasted two whole days, with bursts of great intensity, and at 5.45 a.m. on November 13th it developed into a very effective barrage.

On the northern flank of the attack, as we have seen, the 4th Battalion remained undisturbed the whole day, so little had the attack succeeded on that sector. The wire was insufficiently cut and the ground too sodden. Four other Fusilier battalions belonged to the 2nd Division, which lay north of Beaumont Hamel, between the 3rd and 51st Divisions. The 24th Battalion alone took part in the initial advance. As the left battalion of the 5th Brigade their flank was influenced by the failure further north. At 5.15 a.m. the attacking companies left the trenches in a dense fog, reformed in No Man's Land, and moved forward with the general advance at 5.45 a.m. The barrage was followed closely, the men being within 20 yards of it over the whole battalion front. Some shells, indeed, fell short and caused casualties, but the men followed coolly at a walking pace into the German front line trenches, and a numerous dug-out population emerged to surrender. The troops went on, and at 6.15 had taken the major part of their objective, the Green

\* Despatch.

† "My War Memories," Vol. I p. 290.

line—the German third line system. C and D Companies were cleaning up the trenches. It was early realised that the assault on the left flank had been unsuccessful, and all trenches leading north were blocked. This advance, though not spectacular, was useful in the general scheme of things; and it had not been achieved without considerable losses. On the 14th the battalion's positions were taken over by the supporting battalion, the 2nd Oxford and Bucks.

On the left of the 24th the 2nd Highland Infantry had advanced, and the 17th Royal Fusiliers, as the supporting battalion, had passed through, and with the 2nd Oxford and Bucks had attempted to advance from the German third line to Munich Trench and Frankfort Trench. At 10 a.m. the third German line was strongly held, and four companies of the 17th Battalion, now reduced to a total strength of 180, were well to the east. They had met with a heavy enfilade fire owing to the units on the left of the 5th Brigade being held up. Some parties of the Fusiliers with the Oxfords and Bucks had penetrated into Munich Trench, but could not maintain themselves. After 10.30 a.m. the front line was reorganised with the battalion holding Crater Lane Trench, a line that was apparently further east than any other north of the Ancre held by our troops.\* Later in the day the line of Wagon Road was also held. At 4.30 p.m. the Germans counter-attacked the advanced positions and attempted to work across the battalion's front towards Beaumont-Hamel, lying to the south-west. Artillery support was called for and the attack was not pressed. The 17th lost 187 in their advance, including Lieutenant E. P. Hallows, Second Lieutenants K. W. Hamilton, G. C. Levon, C. W. Taylor, R. Davison, R. Pearce and H. J. Riches wounded. Munich Trench, reached but not held by the battalion, was attacked by other troops † on the 14th and by another division on the 15th, but without success.

\* There was, of course, a small party outside Beaucourt, still farther east.

† The 1st Royal Rifles and the 1st Berks, with the 23rd Royal Fusiliers in support.

The 22nd and 23rd Battalions, belonging to the 99th Brigade, who were in reserve, found themselves committed to the support of the unsuccessful left flank of the Ancre attack. The 22nd went up to form a defensive flank to the 5th Brigade, but such were the difficulties that this object was not achieved until 9 a.m. on November 14th. But when the line was once taken up it was firmly held, despite a persistent and very accurate shell fire throughout the day. It was nervous and wasting work, but the battalion bore it so well that, on the 15th, they were able to leap forward and seize the Quadrilateral. They were reinforced by the 4th Battalion, who crossed the open and shell-swept ground with only 8 casualties. The position was consolidated and held till 7 a.m. on the 16th, when the battalion was relieved.

At 10 a.m. on the morning of the 13th A and C Companies of the 23rd Battalion had been placed under the orders of the G.O.C. 5th Brigade, and about 5 p.m. they were sent to support the 2nd Highland Light Infantry in the third German line. They were then in the rear of the 17th Battalion and on the right of the 24th. B and D Companies had been lent to the 6th Brigade, and at 7 p.m. they succeeded in carrying the front forward to the second German line. The whole battalion supported the unsuccessful attack on Munich Trench by the 1st Royal Rifles and 1st Berks. on the 14th. The 2nd Division's advance, considerable on the right and gradually lessening on the left, owed not a little to these four Fusilier battalions.

Another Fusilier battalion which took part in the battle of the Ancre on November 13th was the 7th. This unit formed part of the 190th Brigade of the 63rd (Naval) Division, which was engaged immediately north of the river. At 5.45 a.m. C and D Companies advanced with the H.A.C. on their right. On their left was the redoubt which, for the whole of the day, made a deep salient in the British position. Both of the leading companies met with heavy rifle and machine gun fire. The first two waves of C were held up by the remains of the German wire, and

after losing heavily returned to the starting point. There, in our front line, were the second two waves and about 60 men from other battalions. It was so foggy that no one could see what was actually happening, and Captains Foster and Clarke decided to make another advance with all the men in the trench. The men came again under heavy fire, and all the platoon commanders—Second Lieutenant W. Ford, Second Lieutenant St. Aubyn, Second Lieutenant Bouchier and Sergeant Cookson—became casualties. Nevertheless, the German front line was rushed in five minutes. In it were found 20 German dead, and one officer and 50 men surrendered. A machine gun was also captured. The trench line was consolidated and blocked against the German strong point, and the company remained there until ordered to proceed to the Green line. Sergeant Bright with three Lewis guns and 13 men was left to hold up the German strong point. The Green line was reached with little loss except from snipers and was held till about 9 p.m., when, on relief by the H.A.C., they went back to the German front line. D Company, in the meantime, had made three attempts to advance, the last with the elements of several other battalions, and had failed to make headway against the German rifle and machine gun fire. At the end of the third attack the company was reduced to 50, and Captain Rattigan decided to hold on where he was in front of the German wire. They remained in this position for four and a half hours. During this time Captain Rattigan was killed, and Second Lieutenant Downing, finding a mine shaft leading back, went down it, reported to battalion headquarters and was ordered to bring the remains of the company back to the British front line.

Sergeant Bright held up the German strong point all day. He was not a little assisted by the supply of German bombs found in the trench, and by Private Hawkesley, who daringly lay out along the parapet with a Lewis gun. Captain Goddard, of B Company, took over this post at 3 p.m., and the captured trench was organised. The



battalion was reorganised about 2 a.m. on November 14th, and at 6 a.m. the Fusiliers attacked once more. It was at this point that the 7th Battalion came into contact with the 13th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, who attacked between the 13th Rifle Brigade and the 13th King's Royal Rifle Corps. The 13th moved off a little too eagerly and suffered some casualties from our own barrage. They withdrew 50 yards and then resumed the advance under a harassing machine gun fire from Beaucourt village. A strong point on the left flank resisted with great determination, and the 13th Rifle Brigade were to the rear of the 13th Royal Fusiliers when the first objective was taken. Meanwhile, Captain Goddard, with the 7th, had amalgamated the battalion's two waves, and after one and a half hours' shelling of the final objective, advanced and took it without much opposition. He had turned to the right and with elements of the 13th Battalion, the 13th K.R.R.C., and the H.A.C., consolidated the right flank on the bank of the Ancre, south-east of Beaucourt, which had fallen a little earlier to the charge of Freyberg's force.

Up to this point the position on the left of the 13th Battalion still caused trouble. Most of the casualties suffered by the 7th in their advance to the final objective had come from this quarter, and the 13th remained on the first line captured. But the 10th Battalion, who, like the 13th, belonged to the 111th Brigade, had had the pleasant experience of co-operating with a tank in the reduction of the German redoubt which had held up the centre of the 63rd Division. The mere appearance of the tank seems to have been sufficient, and without firing a shot the 10th Battalion took 270 German prisoners,\* and three machine guns. They also liberated 60 British prisoners who had been well treated, but were naturally glad to get back to their own army. The 7th Battalion passed from this area and the 13th did not figure again in the battle. The former had attacked 22 officers and

\* Eight hundred prisoners in all were taken from this redoubt.

629 other ranks strong. They lost 13 officers and 331 other ranks, more than half the total strength. The casualties of the 13th were 8 officers (including Lieut.-Colonel Ardagh, wounded) and 130 other ranks. But the victory was complete. It was a great blow to German prestige, and it made an important improvement in the British positions.

\* \* \* \*

There were still some local operations in this area before the battle died down and a final line could be organised for winter. The 10th Battalion took a prominent part in these attempts to round off the gains of the first three days. Part of the final line still remained in German hands. The 13th Battalion, on the morning of the 14th, had been held up by opposition on its left, and patrols sent out failed even to locate the objective. Muck Trench, as it was called, continued to lure the 11th Brigade, and the 10th Battalion attacked at dawn on November 16th with the object of capturing it. They were beaten back by intense machine gun fire. In the afternoon two bombing parties attempted to get forward and actually reached the trench, but they were promptly attacked by superior forces and compelled to retire. Lieutenant R. Stephenson was killed on this occasion. The German barrage prevented a third attempt, but Second Lieutenant Ground succeeded in establishing two posts in the trench on the left before dusk, and two others were established during the night by Second Lieutenant Bainbridge. These posts were reinforced and organised. But during the night of the 17th the machine gun team in the trench was shelled and almost wiped out. At 6.10 a.m. on the 18th the battalion attacked on the right of the 32nd Division and stormed all its objectives but one. Unfortunately these gains had to be abandoned owing to the failure of the right of the 32nd Division. On November 19th the 10th delivered yet another attack. Two patrols, under Second Lieutenants Bainbridge and Heywood, respectively, reached the objective, but were compelled

to withdraw. During the night the battalion was relieved after an extraordinary exhibition of tenacity of purpose.

The most important and most spectacular achievement of the Fusiliers in the battle of the Ancre was the capture of the redoubt which had almost brought the advance to a standstill. But it was the least difficult task, and the 10th, who accomplished it, did more distinguished service in the following days, though their repeated attacks merely served to secure a few points of tactical importance.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GERMAN RETREAT AND THE BATTLE OF ARRAS

THE Battle of the Somme, which had formed a more critical episode for the Germans than was at the time appreciated, had obviously gravely weakened them, and Sir Douglas Haig felt that it was desirable to allow them no respite during the winter. There was consequently little rest either in the Somme area or beyond it. The mere routine of trench occupation at this period involved much more than mere alertness. The movements and disposition of troops were carefully watched by means of repeated raids. One of these may be mentioned for a singular coolness that marked its execution.

The 26th Battalion were in the line towards the north of the Wytschaete Ridge. On December 15th, 1916, Lieutenant C. R. W. Jenkins took a patrol to the German front line trench in order to secure identifications. Leaving a corporal on the parapet, he went into the trench alone, and, meeting two German sentries, promptly shot one ; but the other ran back and gave the alarm. Jenkins, seeing how things were shaping, jumped out of the trench, but, after waiting a few minutes, returned and took the desired identifications from the body of the sentry he had shot. For this act of coolness and courage he was awarded the M.C. But the night was not yet over. About 11.30 a party of Germans raided the battalion's front line, and a number of men who were out attending to the wire were caught in the barrage. The Germans got into the front line, and there Private H. Jones, though isolated, continued to handle his machine gun to such effect that the raiding party were beaten off. He was awarded the D.C.M., and Lieutenant M. B. Maude won

the M.C. for his persistent courage in helping to bring back the men who had been caught in the German barrage. The mud dragged his boots off, and his feet were badly torn by the wire, but he continued to help until the work was done.

There were many similar incidents on other parts of the front. Just north of Loos a more elaborate raid was carried out in broad daylight on January 26th by the 12th Battalion, in conjunction with the 8th Buffs. Of the Fusiliers 4 officers and 100 other ranks were engaged. The German front and support lines were reached, machine gun emplacements were destroyed, dug-outs were bombed, many Germans were killed and 16 were taken prisoner. The German barrage on No Man's Land and the Fusiliers' front and communicating trenches was accurately placed. All the officers were wounded. Lieutenant Murless died on February 8th, and Second Lieutenant A. E. Hughes was severely hurt. There were 24 other ranks casualties. The British communiqué of February 1st included \* the 12th Battalion among those who had specially distinguished themselves during January; and they were also warmly congratulated by the Army Commander.

Many, too, were the deaths which had no obvious savour of heroism about them. Such was the death of Captain R. L. Roscoe, M.C., who was mortally wounded on February 3rd during his sleep in the company head-quarter's post (Courcellette Sector). He was only nineteen years of age and one of the 22nd Battalion's most efficient officers. Two days later the 22nd Battalion carried out with the Berks a successful bombing raid. The men wore white overalls, and guns and hats were whitened. The ground was covered with snow, and the raiders brought back 57 Germans at a very light cost.

A more important series of incidents from the point of view of the German retreat was that which began with a raid by A Company of the 11th Battalion on the night of February 10th. Second Lieutenants B. G. Sampson

\* Only eighteen battalions were thus mentioned.

and B. P. Webster led the platoons in an attack on a German strong point between Miraumont Road and Sixteen Road. The position was captured, but the Germans concentrated a very heavy machine gun and grenade fire on the garrison. Both officers and the N.C.O.'s became casualties, and the Germans recovered the position in a violent counter-attack. The few remaining men were compelled to retire. The battalion was relieved, but after a few days out of the line moved up once more for the first concerted action of the year 1917. The object of this attack was to carry our line forward along the spur which runs northward from the main Morval-Thiepval Ridge about Courcellette, and so gain possession of the high ground on its northern extremity. This would give us the command of the approaches to Pys and Miraumont from the south, and observation over the upper valley of the Ancre and its concealed batteries. While immediately regarding Pys and Miraumont, the operations were also designed to weaken the defences of Serre, which these batteries supported.

**Boom Ravine.**—The three divisions engaged all contained battalions of Royal Fusiliers; but the 7th Battalion, in the 63rd Division, was not called upon. On the right of the 63rd Division, and south of the Ancre, lay the 18th Division, with the 2nd Division on its right. The 11th Battalion (18th Division) was the left assaulting battalion of the 54th Brigade, and their *rôle* was to advance from in front of Desire Trench to South Miraumont Trench, crossing Grandcourt Trench and the deep sunken road called Boom Ravine—a name which the Fusiliers and the brigade always associate with the action. A thaw had just set in. The night was dark and misty. In fine, all the conditions were against the attack; but the wire was cut, and forming-up lines taped in the forming-up place, the Gully, during the night. The assembling place was very crowded at 4.45 a.m. on February 17th, and, unfortunately, the Germans had discovered the plan in detail. A heavy barrage was opened upon the Gully just before

zero and the Fusiliers suffered very heavily. It was raining, pitch dark, the Gully was slippery with mud and packed with troops. Such an ordeal, gallantly overcome, speaks volumes for the spirit and discipline of the troops ; for the Fusiliers leapt forward at zero as though no hour of horror had preceded it.

At zero only Captain Morton and Captain Colles Sandes, of the officers of A and B Companies respectively, remained unwounded. At 5.45 came the barrage and the men followed closely ; but little progress had been made before these two officers joined the others, Captain Morton with a serious foot wound and Captain Colles Sandes with a wound in the neck. The two leading companies were now without officers ; and the men continued their advance over the shell-pitted slippery front in the darkness and rain. Some delay occurred at Grandcourt Trench, where the wire was not sufficiently cut, though it was less uncut than in front of the battalion on the Fusiliers' right. The men pressed ahead and reached the 40-foot deep cleft called Boom Ravine. There was now not an officer in the four companies who had not become a casualty. The battalion was held together by the sergeants. C.S.M. Fitterer (B), although wounded in the thigh, reorganised the companies and directed the advance ; and Sergeants Choate, Berry and Hazell, of A, C and D Companies respectively, ably assisted him.

It was hardly light till 6.5 a.m., but by 6.30 Fitterer had got the Fusiliers to resume their advance from the Ravine, where they had taken over 100 prisoners. The Middlesex were left in the Ravine to mop up. But already there had been a serious delay and the barrage had got too far ahead. As a consequence, the Germans were ready in South Miraumont Trench ; and the weak force, facing uncut wire in a heavily manned trench, could only take refuge in the muddy shell-holes. At about 8.30 a.m. a German counter-attack compelled the men to retire, and it was while steadying the withdrawal that Lieut.-Colonel R. J. F. Meyricke, who had only left the 11th Battalion a

fortnight before to command the Northants, was killed. For some time Second Lieutenant G. S. Percy, the signalling officer of the battalion, rallied the Fusiliers during this part of the battle until Lieut.-Colonel C. C. Carr, D.S.O., and Captain Cumberledge, D.S.O., the Adjutant, took control and the line was halted. The remains of the assaulting battalions, with two companies of the Middlesex, went forward once more in the afternoon and recovered some of the lost ground. This battle was one of the most tragic episodes in the battalion's history. Of the officers 2 were killed, 1 died of wounds, and 11 were wounded; of other ranks 36 were killed, 162 wounded and 69 missing. But, on the whole, it was not an exorbitant price to pay for an advance which carried the troops so near the defences of Petit Miraumont.

The 22nd and 23rd Battalions (99th Brigade, 2nd Division) were also engaged on the same day. The 22nd assembled in battle position between East and West Miraumont roads and began the assault with A and B Companies, D forming a defensive flank from the old British line to the final objective. In so doing, the company advanced along the east side of East Miraumont road and came under a heavy fire from machine guns on the right. For a moment it looked as though the attack would fail utterly because of this check; but Sergeant Palmer cut his way through a stretch of wire under a heavy and sustained machine-gun fire, and rushed the trench running up to the north-east, on the company's right. He established a block at a point where the trench turned eastward and thus covered the right flank of his battalion's advance. With a handful of men he held the position for three hours, during which the Germans delivered seven heavy attacks. When the supply of bombs gave out he went back to headquarters for more, and while he was away the post he had won and so skilfully defended was driven in. He was badly shaken by a bomb explosion; but he collected a few men, drove back the Germans and restored the essential flank-guard. He was





LANCE-SERGEANT (LATER LIEUTENANT)  
F. W. PALMER, 22ND ROYAL FUSILIERS,  
who gained the V.C. near Miramont,  
February 17th, 1917.



PRIVATE S. F. GODLEY, 4TH ROYAL  
FUSILIERS, who won the V.C. at Mons  
immediately after Lieutenant Dease,  
August 23rd, 1914.



granted a well-deserved V.C. for this act of courage and skill.

Meanwhile A and C Companies found the wire uncut in front of them. One platoon west of West Miraumont Road was surrounded and captured. But the troops had reached the road south of South Miraumont Trench when an outflanking movement from the right caused them to fall back to the first objective, which was consolidated with elements of the 1st King's Royal Rifles and the 23rd Royal Fusiliers. This engagement was marked by numerous acts of gallantry. The Lewis gun section, who bore the brunt of the German counter-attack from South Miraumont Trench and brought back eight of its fourteen guns, though three-quarters of the team had been killed or wounded, deserves mention; and the fine work of D Company had its influence on the action to the end. Well posted in an advanced position, it prevented the Germans debauching on East Miraumont Road. But the battalion lost very heavily. At noon only three officers remained. Major Walsh, who had joined the battalion in February, 1915, and had had command of a company since March, 1916, was mortally wounded. A natural leader of men, he was a great loss to the battalion. The 23rd Battalion, who co-operated on the right and carried their objectives, were also severely hit, losing 13 officers and 227 other ranks. The battalion held their final position during the following day until relieved.

**Retreat.**—It was only a week after these actions that the enemy was found to be evacuating his positions. The 17th Battalion, in the Courcellette Sector, on making this discovery, advanced their front line to new positions. The 7th Battalion patrols had found evidence of the enemy's withdrawal north of the Ancre the day before, February 24th. Strong battle patrols were therefore pushed forward in co-operation with the neighbouring units. After a thorough reconnaissance the battalion advanced early in the morning of the 25th in artillery formation. The eastern edge of Miraumont was reached without opposi-

tion, and an outpost line was established and a further reconnaissance was made by scouts. The advance was later continued under a weak artillery fire. The battalion had advanced nearly two miles when, on the night of February 25th, they were relieved.

Three days later this process of testing the German grip on various positions was extended southwards. The 2nd Battalion, whose march discipline while making a move had been recently pronounced by the G.O.C. 29th Division "fit for an inspection parade," delivered a successful attack in the Combles area. The advance was finally held up by a shortage of bombs, and the battalion had to fall back under pressure of a heavy counter-attack.

By the end of February the enemy had been driven back to the Transloy-Loupart line, with the exception of the village of Irlès, which formed a salient in their position. The 2nd and 18th Divisions were ordered to attack the village, in preparation for a larger operation against the whole of the Switch Line. The 22nd Battalion assisted in this engagement by supplying carrying parties, a covering company and several Lewis guns. The 23rd gave more active assistance, taking the feature known as Lady's Leg Ravine. They killed 20 of the enemy, captured 30 and also a machine gun. The casualties were slight, hardly more than the number of prisoners captured; and this was the case over the whole of the battle front. Not long after this the general withdrawal took place, and the Germans fell back to the Hindenburg Line.

**Arras.**—Part of Sir Douglas Haig's pre-arranged plan was not disturbed by this retirement of the Germans. As far south as the Arras-Cambrai road, the position was completely unchanged, and it was north of Arras that the Canadians and seven of the British divisions were to deliver their blow. The weather broke in April; it was cold, and on the 2nd it began to snow. At the end of that day the snow lay an inch deep in Arras. Numerous troops had been moved up to this part of the line and

found easy accommodation in the cellars. They were dark and damp, but stoves made them a little more comfortable. Some of the cellars were very deep, and these accommodated battalion headquarters. To some of the Fusiliers this cellar life proved an amusing episode, and it was not sufficiently prolonged to become irksome. Zero was at 5.30 a.m. on Easter Monday. Wire-cutting had begun nearly three weeks before, and on April 4th the preliminary bombardment started. On the 8th, a fine cold day, the shelling seemed to die down; but in the dark of the Monday morning it began with extraordinary intensity, and the troops moved forward. Strange but very welcome rumours were heard by those Fusiliers left behind in Arras, and the troops of cavalry trotting by seemed to give point to them.

On the Arras battle front there were a number of Fusilier battalions waiting to take their part in the struggle. Farthest north were the 8th and 9th Battalions (12th Division), just above the Arras-Cambrai road. Behind this division was the 37th with the 10th and 13th Battalions. Below the Arras-Cambrai road lay the 3rd Division with the 4th Royal Fusiliers; and farther south, before Neuville-Vitasse, was the 56th Division with four battalions of the London Regiment R.F. (Territorials).

The 8th and 9th Battalions reached their objectives, and with small loss took a considerable number of prisoners. The 8th was the left support battalion of the brigade, and the men moved off so rapidly after the barrage that in many cases they became merged in the assaulting battalion, the 7th Royal Sussex. The front German line was reached without a single casualty. The attack went exactly according to programme.\* The enemy put up a resistance at two strong points, but they

\* Message from Brig.-General C. S. Owen: "Please convey my very best congratulations to all ranks who took part in the attack to-day. They did magnificent work. They went forward and carried out their job as if they had been on the practice trenches. . . ."

were outflanked, and at 10 a.m. the whole objective was taken with two machine guns and 129 prisoners. The total casualty list was 175 killed, wounded and missing (only 7 of these last). On the right, the 9th Battalion also gained all objectives and captured two machine guns and 220 prisoners. C Company captured 150 of these in one dug-out. But the dug-outs were unhealthy places. One of them, in the 11th Middlesex area, was suddenly blown up by the explosion of a mine; and as a consequence German dug-outs were afterwards forbidden. These positions, the "Blue Line," were at once consolidated.

The 4th Battalion, south of the Arras-Cambrai road, moved off with the 9th Brigade after the 76th had taken the first objective. Advancing at 7 a.m. the battalion came under heavy shell fire as they moved across the open; but they kept on until they had covered about a mile, the men keeping their ranks and formation in spite of casualties. In their path lay the highly organised defensive system below Tilloy called the Harp, and in conjunction with other battalions the 4th Royal Fusiliers swept across it. Such a position in the Battle of the Somme frequently remained a stumbling block for days and weeks. W Company, leading on the right, suffered very heavily from rifle and machine gun fire, and also partly from our own barrage. All the officers were wounded, Captain Furnie severely, and the command devolved on Second Lieutenant the Earl of Shannon, who, though wounded, led the company from Nomeny Trench and was the first man to enter String Trench. Before this trench, with its wire only partially cut, many losses were sustained. A portion of the company carried on with the 9th Rifle Brigade to Neuilly Trench. Z Company were caught by the fire from the north-east corner of Tilloy village, but, with the help of two platoons of X, assisted in the capture of Lynx and String Trenches. Captain A. E. Millson (C.O., X Company) was mortally wounded as he entered the latter trench. X and Y Companies supported the two assaulting companies

mopped up Nomeny Trench and carried the battalion forward to the final objective. The battalion gained little support from the tanks, although one sat down upon Nomeny Trench after they had carried it. Among the captures of the day were 5 officers and 70 other ranks, three machine guns, two minenwerfer and four granatenwerfer. But the battalion lost 225 officers and men. Besides Captain Millson, Second Lieutenant Paddock died of wounds, and seven other officers were wounded, Captain Furnie and Second Lieutenant K. C. Marlowe severely.

The Territorial battalions had more obvious objectives, and carried out their task well. The 3rd Londons lay before Neuville-Vitasse, and with the 8th Middlesex early got a hold on the village, and pushed on until at 10.30 the whole of it was in their hands. On this the 1st Londons went ahead against the Cojeul Switch Line. For a short time they were held up at a belt of uncut wire, where they lost very heavily. Colonel Smith, with most of his officers, became a casualty ; but, reinforced by the 7th Middlesex, the battalion held on until the line was captured. The 2nd Londons entered the battle during the night, and, by an advance to the trench junction at Rum Jar Corner, and thence to the high ground surmounted by Wancourt Tower, secured the flank.

**Monchy le Preux.**—Meanwhile the 37th Division had moved up. The 13th Battalion reached Blangy at 11.30 a.m. without casualties, and at 1.10 p.m. orders came to move forward and take up positions in Battery Valley, along the line of Fred's Wood, which lies about 200 yards north of the railway, and east of Blangy. At about 6.45 p.m. the battalion moved to the point from which they were to begin the attack on Monchy le Preux, a village standing on a small hill about 90 feet above the surrounding country. Up to the "Blue Line," which had been taken and consolidated early in the day, there was no shell fire ; but on crossing it the Fusiliers soon saw that the next line had not been taken in their immediate front

and there was no alternative but to attack it preparatory to the final advance. With the 10th Royal Fusiliers on the right, the troops advanced steadily for about 2,000 yards and were at length brought to a halt just east of the Feuchy-Feuchy Chapel road. Their left was in the air, and the 13th Battalion had to form a defensive flank there. In this position they dug in at nightfall. Shortly before dawn they were withdrawn to near Broken Mill and another brigade took over the positions. The 10th Battalion had fallen back to Feuchy Chapel at 4 a.m., and then later to the "Brown Line," farther back.

About noon on April 10th the Royal Fusiliers moved forward once more. The 13th Battalion crossed the northern end of Orange Hill and then swung half-left towards the outlying woods west of Monchy. The 10th Battalion on the right were in touch, and both units continued to advance under a heavy barrage until the 10th were only 600 yards west of Monchy. The losses of both battalions had been very heavy. At 7.40 p.m. only three officers besides the C.O. and the adjutant remained with the 13th Battalion, and a provisional line of trenches had to be dug west of the village, after consultation with the Royal Engineers. This line was completed by about 4 a.m. on April 11th. About an hour and a half later the 10th and 13th Battalions made a last spurt forward and the 13th established themselves north of the village, about a hundred yards west of Hamers Lane; and this position they held throughout the day. The 10th Battalion, now commanded by Major A. Smith, stormed the village itself and occupied it under a heavy barrage. The west side was entrenched and a small advanced post was established on the east of the village. The cavalry entered the village about 11 a.m. and were heavily shelled.

The Royal Fusiliers held these positions until relieved at 11 p.m. that night. It was a memorable day. At one time there was a blinding snowstorm; but the troops ignored such small inconveniences, and, though the Arras front changed considerably in the subsequent operations,



the positions at this point were little changed. In December the line was not 1,000 yards farther east than that achieved on April 11th by the Fusiliers. When Lieut.-General Sir R. C. B. Haking, G.O.C. XI. Corps, inspected the 10th Battalion on January 5th, he said it was the best-turned-out unit he had seen for twelve months. Their achievement at Monchy le Preux must place them in the front rank for courage, tenacity and skill. Their losses were twelve officers (including Lieut.-Colonel Rice, wounded) and 240 other ranks. The 13th Battalion had also suffered very heavily, and Colonel Layton's words, in reporting the detail of the action, "I consider that the battalion behaved magnificently, and I have nothing but praise for every one in it," were well merited.

Other divisions were now appearing in this area bringing with them Fusilier battalions. On April 11th the 2nd Division moved up to the left of the Canadians and the 24th Battalion entered the forward trenches in the Farbus line. On the following day the 20th Battalion took over the trenches won that day about 1,000 yards west of Heninel. On the 13th it was discovered that the battalion on the left of the 24th Royal Fusiliers had found the railway line unoccupied and it was decided to advance at once. Under heavy artillery fire the Fusiliers reached the railway line and then a line from the eastern edge of Willerval to Bailleul. This line covered the sugar factory in the orchard of which a German naval 6-inch gun was captured. This line was consolidated for the night. On their left the 23rd Battalion, who on the 11th had relieved the 1/5 Gordons west of Bailleul, advanced with the 24th to the railway, and, pushing farther on, occupied Bailleul. A line was established on the east of the village and patrols were sent forward towards Oppy. A platoon of C Company, misinterpreting orders, went out to attempt the capture of Oppy, and was itself captured, after a spirited fight before the village. The 23rd captured four guns in this advance. But they lost heavily, for, in addition to the platoon cut off at Oppy, Captain Lissmann, the

adjutant, was killed by a shell as he walked with the C.O. towards the railway. They were relieved on the following day. But the 24th continued their advance at 3 p.m. on April 14th, and, despite a heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, succeeded in getting to within about 500 yards of the Arleux en Gohelle-Oppy line. This was a formidable sector of the German front, and the 24th had to lie facing it with both flanks refused, since the units on neither side had advanced.

**Guémappe.**—It was on April 13th, also, that the 4th Battalion were sent forward against Guémappe. Monchy lay in an uneasy salient, and its importance suggested that the sooner it was finally secured the better, if there were any expectations of further advance or even if the position was to be held easily. The attack was launched hurriedly and was unsuccessful. The order (cancelling a previous order and) directing the attack to take place that evening was only received at 5.55 p.m. and zero was to be at 6.20 p.m. The battalion were formed up about ten minutes before the barrage lifted and they advanced very steadily although they encountered three German barrages. When they approached the spur lying about 750 yards north-west of Guémappe they came under a very sustained rifle and machine-gun fire from both flanks, but particularly from the direction of Wancourt. They continued to advance and crossed the spur. But by this time most of the officers who had gone into action had been wounded. Captain Gibson, in charge of the right leading company, was severely wounded; Second Lieutenant the Earl of Shannon, commanding the right support company, was killed; Second Lieutenant B. C. Martin was killed; Second Lieutenant C. A. Brasher and Captain K. J. Barrett were both wounded. Still the battalion advanced and the sunken road was reached. They had pushed forward nearly 3,000 yards, an apparently irresistible advance in defiance of all the enemy could do.

But now Captain Barrett, who had continued in command though wounded, was again severely wounded, and

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was carried out of action. Before leaving, however, he gave instructions in writing. It was now 8 p.m. Lieutenant Hiddingh and Second Lieutenants Thoday and Burr were the only officers left. The King's Liverpools, who had started off fifteen minutes before the 4th Royal Fusiliers, had not been seen since. The 12th West Yorks whom it was intended to support were not seen at all. The Royal Fusiliers had passed through some of the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers during the advance, and this unit's right was found to be on the cross-roads north-west of Guémappe, and practically in line with the 4th Battalion, halted on the sunken road facing the village about 500 yards away. This advance, launched almost at a moment's notice, without any time for preliminary reconnaissance, was a very wonderful performance. Success could have added but little to it. The battalion were ordered to withdraw at 1 a.m. on April 14th; and the movement was carried out steadily and skilfully. Of the 12 officers who went into action, five became casualties, and there were 86 other ranks casualties.

It was on the same day, April 13th, that the 12th Battalion made a striking advance near the extreme left flank of the Arras battle. About 9.30 a.m., the Germans were observed to be shelling their own third line. Major Neynoc and Lieut.-Colonel Mobbs (7th Northants) thereupon went forward to the 3rd line positions north-east of Souchez. The trenches were found to be almost smashed out of recognition by our fire, and unoccupied. At midnight Nos. 3 and 4 Companies, in close support under Neynoc, relieved the units in the front line, and at 8 a.m. on the 14th patrols were pushed ahead. On a report that all was clear, No. 3 Company proceeded through Calvary Trench and No. 4 Company, under cover in the Bois de Rollencourt, advanced and occupied the sunken road up to the mill in the outskirts of Lieven. At 2 p.m. the companies went through Lieven and occupied the line of the Souchez River. The latter part of this advance was over open country, under the observation of low-flying

aeroplanes which directed a heavy fire. At night the left of the battalion were in contact with the 17th Brigade at the north corner of the Bois de Riamont and their right with the 5th Division at the bridge on the Souchez river in Cité de l'Abattoir. This flank was slightly drawn back. Two fighting patrols under Second Lieutenants A. H. Lee and Deakin were pushed forward on the 15th into the Cité de Riamont, but they were later ordered to withdraw, as it was not intended seriously to engage the enemy in this quarter. But this very decisive and skilful exploitation of a chance discovery won warm praise from the divisional commander, who told the commanding officer that he had a battalion he might be proud of.

**Oppy.**—On April 16th another attempt was made to test the strength of the Oppy line. A daylight raid was ordered to be made by the 17th Battalion, and Lieutenant Brodie and three men moved out at 3 p.m. It was not the sort of adventure which encourages the soldier. The small party were sniped from Arleux and never had a chance of doing more than swell a casualty list. Brodie was wounded and taken prisoner. Corporal Town was killed. Another man was wounded and made prisoner. Only one returned to report that the wire was thick and unbroken. The battalion were ordered on the following day to find three companies to enter the Oppy switch line and bomb it clear with the help of the 2nd Oxford and Bucks. Fortunately the division prevented this project being carried out. Four separate brigades attempted to take this line later on, and all failed. The defence had, in fact, made a recovery, as the 20th Battalion also discovered when they attacked south-east of Heninel on the same day. This small operation attained no success.

**Second Battle of the Scarpe.**—On April 23rd, the second Battle of the Scarpe began. The 7th Battalion's share in this battle was an attack north of Gavrelle which assisted the other units of the division to capture the village. Even in the preparatory stage of the battle the battalion fared badly. A new line, about 200 yards

from the German positions was dug ; but it was no sooner ready than a sustained bombardment beat the trenches to pieces, and a new line had to be constructed during the night. The battalion proceeded to take up positions for attack at 8.30 p.m. on the night of the 22nd, and at 4.45 a.m., zero, the infantry began the advance. The men followed the barrage closely ; but on reaching the front line found that the wire was only cut in one place, forming a narrow south-easterly lane. The men were thus congested and lost direction ; and they encountered bombing parties and a very heavy machine-gun fire. Many casualties were sustained from this cause until a party was organised to attack and capture them. The guns were rushed and twenty-three prisoners were captured. The Fusiliers then pressed on to the support line, and established a post against the Germans' bombers, who were shepherded back up the trench. The battalion had now got forward to the railway where it was hoped to dig a trench under cover of darkness. Posts were established about 25 yards from the railway and were maintained in spite of the activity of the low-flying German planes which signalled the Fusiliers' position. At 8 p.m. the line was linked up with that of the 6th Brigade on the left, and at daybreak the battalion had been relieved after a successful engagement. The number going into action was, 18 officers ; other ranks, 358. Four officers, Captain Gast, Captain Granville, Lieutenant Wood and Lieutenant Randall were killed, eight others were wounded. The battalion had been practically wiped out.

The 10th Battalion also attacked at 4.45 a.m. on the same day and took the German second line without much difficulty, but further advance was held up by machine-gun fire and snipers until the 13th Battalion came up on the left flank. The advance was then resumed ; but the 10th Battalion lost touch with the right and left units later on. At 9.30 a.m. the 10th, now consisting of 3 officers and 50 other ranks, had occupied Cuba Trench, and the 13th Battalion came up again about half an hour

later. But the 63rd Brigade on the right were not found again until 9.55 p.m. The 10th Battalion had advanced up to the road running due south of Gavrelle and established a line not far from the north-western slopes of Greenland Hill.

On the same day the 29th Division had gained ground east of Monchy. But the attack as a whole had been brought to a standstill short of the success which had been expected, and orders were given for the resumption on the 24th. The 2nd Royal Fusiliers advanced on a three-company front from Shrapnel Trench at 4 p.m., zero. Some 60 yards from the starting point, the battalion were turned towards the right in order to avoid some British troops in front of them. At about 600 yards west of the Bois du Vert, the right (Z) Company were held up by machine-gun fire, and the left Company (X) turned half right to take the wood in flank. But at this point the company were very weak, and contact could not be achieved with the troops on either flank. There was one officer left, and he had 30 men with him. At 6.50 p.m. the position became untenable and they withdrew; but W Company went round the north side of the wood, took up the position X had occupied, and beat off the enemy attacks, while Z Company on the right at length succeeded in overcoming the German resistance. The positions were consolidated and many German dead bodies were found on the ground with much equipment, packs, rifles, etc. If the 2nd Battalion had paid heavily for their success, the Germans found their resistance even more expensive.

The 20th Battalion on the same day took over the advanced positions in front of Fontaine les Croisilles, from which the Germans had just retired. An outpost line consisting of ten strong points was organised and patrols were pushed out up to the Sensee.

\* \* \* \*

On April 28th began that series of attacks which aimed principally, if not wholly, at assisting the French. The

13th Battalion attacked from the trenches about 300 yards east of the Gavrelle-Roeux road. Their objective was the Whip cross-roads, south-east of Gavrelle. The attack began at 4.25 a.m. About four hours later No. 3 Company were sent up to the right of the 13th Rifle Brigade, who had secured their objective; but the company could not get into contact with any troops on the right, and a German machine gun was in action at the cross-roads. At 10.15 a.m., however, the position had been cleared up and the two companies, Nos. 3 and 4, held the road, including the cross-roads, for some 250 yards. The success was complete though the Fusiliers had been constantly harassed by fire from snipers and machine guns. The positions were retained intact until the battalion were relieved on the night of the 29th. While the Fusiliers were on their objective a body of the 63rd Brigade swept across their front leading towards Square Wood from the south-west. They had lost direction, but they succeeded in carrying a body of Fusiliers with them until they were recalled. The 10th Battalion, in support of the 13th on their right flank, had made persistent attempts to get into touch with this brigade, but without success.

**Oppy.**—The attack was continued on April 29th, and four battalions of the Royal Fusiliers made another attempt to conquer the Oppy defences. The Canadians took Arleux on the left and the 24th Battalion formed the left of the attack on Oppy Wood. They went forward at 4 a.m., and A and B Companies reached their objective, the sunken road between Arleux and Oppy, capturing 64 prisoners, only to find that the right battalions had not reached their positions in the wood. Their right flank was therefore in the air. A furious bombing attack took place on the left flank, and such were the losses that it was decided to swing the right flank back to Oppy Trench, west of the sunken road and gradually retire along it. This was successfully accomplished. C and D Companies were sent that night to relieve the 2nd Highland Light

Infantry, immediately north of Oppy Wood, who had suffered very terribly from the fire from Oppy Wood. The 17th Battalion, who had been supporting the 24th during the day with B Company, finding their right in the air, formed a defensive flank. The line along this front was, in fact, pitted with gaps. Farther south the 22nd Battalion advanced in perfect order, but were held up against dense wire, and when this was partly cut came under heavy machine-gun fire.

On the right B Company found the wire still unpenetrable and Second Lieutenant J. Steele had a whole platoon shot down. At this juncture Second Lieutenant S. F. Jeffcoat, a newly-joined officer, found a gap, and with a handful of men jumped into the trench and throughout the morning was engaged bombing up it to the right. At every traverse the Germans resisted, but Jeffcoat, assisted by a few men of the 63rd Division, cleared a considerable length of the trench by sheer personal courage and leadership. He was mortally wounded, and was recommended for the V.C. C.S.M. Roger also ably assisted. The whole objective of the battalion was taken chiefly owing to Jeffcoat's fine work, and the 23rd Battalion reinforced on the final line.

The 7th Battalion on the right had gallantly fought to the sunken road just north of the railway. Repeated bombing attacks on the left flank were beaten off, and a strong post was established near the ruined cottage, south of Oppy and 300 yards north of the railway. At one time the Bedfords, whom the 7th Battalion were supporting, were in touch with men of the 22nd Battalion. But for the most part the battalions engaged this day fought small engagements under peril of envelopment from both flanks; and in the final result the general position was little changed. Three days later a company 100 strong of the 22nd attacked north of Oppy as part of a composite battalion, but with little success.

\* \* \* \*

On May 3rd another attack was launched for the same



purpose as that of April 28th, but on this occasion the battle front totalled sixteen miles. The 8th and 9th Battalions were engaged just south of the Scarpe and fought a very amazing battle. Together they totalled no more than 900 men and their rôle was to cross about 1,000 yards, and their objective was almost 9,000 yards long. The 9th Battalion on the right started off from a trench which was partly in German hands, with a block dividing them from the Fusiliers. Zero was at 3.45 a.m. Scabbard Trench, the first objective, was reached by both battalions, and the line held for the moment lay just south of Roeux, south of the Scarpe. But a bombing attack along the river pushed both battalions out of the position, and at noon the British artillery put a 12 minutes' barrage on Scabbard Trench. A small party of the 9th had gone ahead and were now cut off, in advance of this line. Surprisingly enough they rejoined the battalion in the evening. They had been taken prisoner, but, caught by our own machine-gun fire on the road to Douai, they had escaped as the Germans ran away. Major Coxhead,\* the acting C.O., was killed in this battle. He had gone out into the open, as the trench was packed and he wished to reorganise. When he left the trench the first waves were well ahead; behind them a desperate fight was going on for the possession of Scabbard Trench, and in the starting-off trench the Germans were counter-attacking from the block. Few positions have been as involved as this; and it was due to Coxhead's courage and decision that something solid emerged at the end of the day. The 8th Battalion had gone through a similar train of vicissitudes. The machine-gun fire from Roeux caused numerous casualties and there was the same bold advance, a sudden and temporary crumpling in the intermediate positions, and active fighting on the jumping-off position. They took 1 officer and 44 other ranks prisoners. At night they formed one company, and the 8th and 9th were

\* Major Coxhead's diary, dispassionate, critical and detailed, has been almost invaluable for the period it covers.

joined under the command of Lieut.-Colonel N. B. Elliot-Cooper. The 8th alone had lost 282 officers and men. The unit on the left had failed to carry Roeux and there was no support on the right.

It was the strange vicissitudes of this engagement that provided Corporal G. Jarratt, of the 8th Battalion, with the opportunity for a splendid act of heroism. He had been taken prisoner with some wounded men, and was placed under guard in a dug-out. In the evening the troops drove back the enemy and the leading infantrymen proceeded to bomb the dug-outs. A grenade fell into the dug-out in which were Jarratt and his companions; and, without a moment's hesitation, he placed both feet on it. He had instantly seen that the lives of all were at stake and he risked his own to save those of his companions. In the subsequent explosion both his legs were blown off. The wounded were later safely removed to our line, but, before this, Jarratt was dead. "By this supreme act of self-sacrifice the lives of the wounded were saved." He was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross.

Farther south, the 4th Battalion had attacked from a line about 1,000 yards east of Monchy, and had reached positions 100 yards east of the Bois des Aubepines. The men followed the barrage closely; but the 1st German line had apparently been missed, and heavy loss was experienced there. A hostile counter-attack from the east and north-east was beaten off; but a second counter-attack got round the flanks of the 13th King's Liverpools and 4th Royal Fusiliers. The two leading waves, with all the officers casualties, were cut off; but the remainder of the battalion held their ground till nightfall, when, with only one officer left, they retired to the original position. It had been impossible to maintain communication with the front line. Runners were almost invariably shot down; and one who got through took five hours to make the journey. The battalion on this day had 299 casualties, including 11 officers. About 1 a.m., on May 4th, Second

Lieutenant E. M. Buck returned from beyond the German front line system. He had lost all his men and had himself been blown up. On the night of the 9th, six days later, there also returned three men who had been east of Infantry Hill since the morning of May 3rd.

The 11th Battalion were engaged opposite Cherisy in mopping up, moving dumps and supporting the assaulting battalions of the 54th Brigade. B Company, under Captain Neate, were to mop up the village. The Middlesex with B Company got into and cleared Cherisy; but the small band who had accomplished this serviceable achievement were practically wiped out in a counter-attack from the right. No officers of either regiment returned. Neate, a young, spirited, and very efficient officer, was last seen with his revolver in his hand at the head of his men. C Company made an unsuccessful attempt to take Fontaine Trench which had not been captured by the assaulting companies, and merely sustained heavy loss.

Another gallant but abortive action was fought by the 2nd Londons who, with the 56th Division, lay on the left of the 3rd Division. The battalion went forward gallantly in the darkness, and took Cavalry Farm on the Arras-Cambrai road and the German position 100 yards to the east of it. The left battalion had not advanced in step and the 2nd Londons' left flank wavered a little before it got into its stride, when, after the farm buildings had been taken, it formed a defensive flank. These positions were held, despite heavy losses for nearly twenty-four hours, when, both flanks being exposed, they had to be abandoned. A sergeant on this occasion distinguished himself by an admirable piece of bluff. In his endeavour to find the left flank battalion he crossed the Cambrai road and walked into a German dug-out where he was taken prisoner. Before dawn on May 4th he had persuaded the seventeen Germans to surrender. By this time the battalion had retired; but the sergeant safely brought his little flock across to the British line. On the north of the 2nd Londons, the 1st Londons had fought a very costly

engagement to as little purpose as most of the units attacking that day ; but on May 14th Cavalry Farm was recaptured by them with practically no loss.

It was in May that the 3/4 Londons and the 3/3 Londons took over from the Australians a sector of the line on the right of Bullecourt. On the 14th of the month, after a bombardment of nineteen hours, they were attacked by the 3rd Prussian Guard. The two battalions fought magnificently and crushed the attack with rifle and machine-gun fire before it reached the trenches. Both of them suffered heavy loss ; but the line was maintained intact, and Lieut.-Colonel Beresford, who directed the 3/3 with great courage and skill, was awarded the D.S.O.

\* \* \* \*

This long-drawn-out narrative may be terminated here. The battle had been initiated for distinct and valuable objectives ; but it was continued from loyalty to the French. It was in the latter period that the smallest gains and the greatest losses were recorded. But the struggle called on the gallantry and skill of the Fusilier battalions, who gave of both very remarkably.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BATTLE OF MESSINES

THE Arras offensive gradually died down after May 3rd, though there were actions on the Hindenburg line and about the Souchez River and Avion until almost the end of June. But it was on May 4th or 5th \* that it was agreed "to give immediate effect to the British plan of a Northern Offensive." To this plan the Battle of Messines formed a preliminary operation, and, after elaborate preparation, it was launched on June 7th, 1917.

The objective was the Messines-Wytschaete ridge, which formed a most important observation post in the British positions, and the chord across it running slightly east of the hamlet of Oosttaverne. In the plan of battle the first German defensive system and the second, following the crest of the ridge, were to be carried in a first assault; and the Oosttaverne line was to be captured by a second distinct movement. Four battalions of Royal Fusiliers took part in the battle, two of them being engaged in the opening attack. The 41st Division lay near St. Eloi, toward the north-west face of the salient, and the 26th and 32nd Royal Fusiliers, who belonged to it, went forward with great dash and secured their objectives.

At 3.10 a.m., zero hour, there was a terrific explosion caused by the mines which had been driven under the German position, and at the same time the enemy lines were deluged by a bombardment that seemed the heaviest of the war. Then, in bright moonlight, the 26th Battalion advanced promptly and steadily, under the direction of Lieutenant R. C. Brockworth, M.C., suffering very few

\* Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches, p. 100, Note.

casualties. They were the first troops on the Dammstrasse, Lieutenant Brockworth sending back the report of its occupation. So swiftly and successfully had the advance gone that Brockworth was awarded a bar to his M.C. Some 203 casualties were sustained before the day ended ; but up to this point there had been little appearance of resistance and very little loss.

The 32nd advanced in support of the 26th Battalion. They went forward in four waves, keeping admirable order, and reached the first objective without opposition. There, a pause was made for reorganisation ; and the battalion passed through the 26th at Dammstrasse, and moved towards their final objective. It is amazing that the units kept to their orders so well, for the whole of the ground was beaten out of recognition and the objectives were originally definite trenches. Near the final position most of the Germans fled. About thirty were taken prisoner, the majority of them very eager to give themselves up ; but a few were bombed out of dug-outs. But at the Black Line, from Goudezoune Farm to a point on Obstacle Switch 250 yards to the north, there was no opposition. The battalion dug themselves in about 100 yards beyond Obstacle Trench and established advanced posts with seven Lewis guns. The engagement was admirably carried out largely owing to the efficiency of the signalling under Second Lieutenant Horne Galle and Sergeant Scoble. After passing the first objective, the Red Line, the companies were kept in constant touch with headquarters by visual signalling. The battalion went into action 17 officers and 551 other ranks strong and came out with 11 officers and 384 ranks. For an attack with important objectives which were secured in schedule time, the losses were not excessive.

At 8.10 a.m. the work of these two battalions was over, except for the consolidation and organisation of the positions. It was 3.10 before the second phase of the battle began with the advance upon the Oostaverne Line. The 1st Royal Fusiliers attacked in this part of

the battle, forming the right assaulting battalion of the 17th Brigade. The 12th Battalion were left in dug-outs on the north and west edges of the Etang de Dickebusch in support; but as this position lay nearly three miles from Dammstrasse they were not engaged during the battle. At 11.15 a.m., the Fusiliers learned that all the objectives of the 41st and 19th Divisions had been taken; and an hour later they were ordered to move to the old front trench at 11.30 a.m. The battalion moved forward five minutes afterwards in artillery formation. It had become a swelteringly hot day, and the advance in such conditions was not over-enjoyable. At 2.10 p.m. Dammstrasse was reached and the battalion moved through the 26th preparatory to the attack.

The 1st Battalion had about a mile to go to their final objective. At 3.10 p.m. the advance began and the men moved very close to the barrage. Although the Germans had had a certain amount of time to recover there was still little organised opposition. The wire had been well cut, the strong points were battered, and the Germans were demoralised. But the swiftness and completeness of the Fusiliers' success was due to their splendid dash. Second Lieutenant Field, with a handful of D Company, rushed a strong point which was holding out and captured 25 prisoners and two machine guns. B Company crossed Odyssey Trench and, despite a strong opposition, with the help of a platoon of A Company under Second Lieutenant Douglas Crompton rushed the strong point which formed part of the final objective. Crompton was unfortunately killed, as also was Second Lieutenant Shoemith, who had also shown great gallantry in attack. At one point when B and D Companies had drawn apart and there was danger that the Germans might profit by the gap between them, Second Lieutenant Mander ran forward with his platoon and filled the gap. Sergeant Haldane's unselfishness in attending to the wounded of his two sections is also worthy of record. The sections being all casualties, he carried the wounded back, and bandaged them before

reporting himself, when he fainted from loss of blood and exhaustion. The Rev. Studdert Kennedy also did excellent work for the wounded.

The final position was gained early, and at 4.30 p.m. the companies reported all objectives attained and that they were in touch with the battalions on the flanks. The line extended from the point where the Roozebeek cut Odyssey Trench to within a few yards of the road running north-east of Oosttaverne. At this point the position lay some 500 yards north-east of the hamlet. The 1st Battalion in this battle took 130 men of the 150th Prussian Regiment prisoners, with a machine and two field guns, for a loss of 5 officers and 110 other ranks.

When the 1st Battalion were consolidating the advanced positions, the 12th moved up to the old front line and before midnight went forward to the Dammstrasse near Hiele Farm. From this position they took rations and supplies to the 1st Battalion and the 3rd Rifle Brigade in the front line. At 9.30 p.m. on June 9th they moved forward to relieve the front line about the Roozebeek stream. The battalion headquarters were established in Oosttaverne Wood, near the Wambeke road; and it was close to this place that the battalion suffered a very searching blow. They were destined to take part in rounding off the battle and yet at one stroke they lost four of their chief officers. A shell fell close to headquarters, catching Lieut-Colonel Compton, Captain Gordon, Captain J. V. Wilson and Captain Whittingham (R.A.M.C.), and wounding them. Captains Gordon and Whittingham died at midnight. Lieut.-Colonel Compton lingered till July 7th, when he too succumbed. At 10 p.m., Captain Ventres assumed command of the battalion, pending the arrival of Major Neynoc, who reached headquarters about 3.30 a.m. At 9.35 that night (June 10th) the battalion was relieved, and suffered 52 casualties in the barrage during relief. It was an unfortunate tour.

Major Hope Johnstone of the 1st Battalion took over command on the 11th; and at 11 p.m. on the 12th, the



12th Royal Fusiliers relieved the Durham Light Infantry in Impartial Trench preparatory to attack. Their rôle was to round off the battle by the capture of the dug-outs north of the railway, at Battle Wood, in conjunction with the 8th Buffs. The battalion attacked at 7.30 p.m., June 14th, on a two-company front, and a very stiff fight ensued. The bombardment had left the dug-outs\* undamaged; they were well garrisoned and a very strong resistance was offered. The right leading company, No. 4, came under intense machine-gun fire from the flank on reaching the line of dug-outs on the railway embankment. The first dug-out contained 1 officer and 20 men and a machine gun, and the platoon ordered to deal with it had a fierce hand-to-hand battle and had to kill practically the whole garrison. Another dug-out had a garrison of 40 and the men came out and fought it out in the open. The platoon ended the resistance by a fierce bayonet charge in which 20 Germans were killed and 20 taken prisoner. These encounters had so weakened the company that reinforcements had to be sent for. Two platoons of No. 2—the reserve—Company were sent up, and had to go through a heavy barrage; but with careful leading they came through without too heavy a loss.

Meanwhile No. 1—the left leading—Company had met with little opposition, except at a post in the ravine in Impartial Trench. This ravine was the objective of the right platoon of the company, but the platoon commander saw that another ravine which ran along the road 100 yards farther south offered a better site for a strong post, and accordingly this was made good under heavy machine-gun fire. The battalion had orders to establish five strong posts, but the conditions made this task extremely difficult. The pill-boxes were very hard to cope with, and one of them kept up a consistent machine-gun fire

\* This was the first experience of the real formidableness of the "pill-boxes," as these concrete dug-outs came to be called. They had survived the attacks of another division and had won a certain unfortunate notoriety already.

during the process of consolidation. The work, however, was pushed through in full view of the enemy, and before darkness fell the posts were consolidated and an organised defensive established. When it is remembered that the attack was only launched at 7.30 p.m., it will be appreciated that the battalion had added a considerable achievement to their record. The organisation was not only remarkably good ; it was even remarkably successful in weathering the stresses and strains of battle. Tapes were laid from the forward posts to battalion headquarters and to the dressing station. These tapes were of great assistance to the stretcher bearers. Second Lieutenants W. S. Nathan and H. A. Bayly were killed, Second Lieutenant Bescoby was mortally wounded and died four days later, four other officers were wounded, and there were 92 other ranks casualties. Considering the nature of the fighting, and that all objectives were gained, and 28 prisoners and a machine gun captured, these casualties cannot be considered excessive.

Appreciative messages followed speedily. The commander of the division congratulated the battalion on their success. The Second Army Commander sent a message congratulating "all concerned in the success of last night's operations which have succeeded in substantially advancing our whole line. The operations reflect much credit on all concerned."

In action the 12th appeared to have a fair share of luck. Out of it, they seemed to suffer every sort of mishap. The loss of four officers by a chance shell has already been recorded. A little later in the month they were in Hill 60 area. Back areas came in for a heavy bombardment, preventing rations being brought up. Four yards from battalion headquarters—the coincidence is remarkable—a shell blocked up the gallery. Lieutenant Martin was partly buried by the explosion and gassed. Captain Skene (R.A.M.C.) and Captain Simkins were also gassed, and Major Hope Johnstone, Major Neyoc and Second Lieutenant Fonteyn suffered slightly, but were able to

remain at duty. Three days later when they relieved the 1st Battalion, a shell caused 19 casualties in a working party.

The Battle of Messines was a prelude to the Ypres battles of 1917. The Fusiliers had a distinct hand in the launching stage, and also a very vivid and vital part in rounding it off.

## CHAPTER X

### THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES

THE Flanders offensive was very elaborately staged and was launched with high hopes. The Battle of Messines was a prelude, which was very successfully performed, but another part of the plan was anticipated by the Germans. If the offensive achieved sufficient success before the end of the season it was intended to attack along the coast from the Yser positions.

**The Yser.**—But on July 10th the Germans made a surprise assault on these positions and part of the bridge-head was lost. At that moment the third battle of Ypres had not begun, and the coastal and Yser defences were still maintained for some time. In this part of the scheme the 20th Battalion took part, and the novelty, if not the importance of their *rôle* deserves some record. On the opening day of the Ypres battle (July 31st) the battalion detrained at Dunkirk and embarked on barges, in which they slept that night. In the early morning of August 10th they were moved up the canal to Bray dunes. On the following day they took over the Bray dunes defences. Posts between the frontier and Bray Plage were to be manned in case of attack by the sea. It was not a very strenuous life, and the battalion were able to put in a fortnight's training. On the 15th they moved to Kuhn Camp, near Oost Dunkerque, and on the following day marched *viâ* Welpem and Nieuport to take over trenches in the Lombartzyde sector. C Company occupied Nose Trench below the Lombartzyde position and received a welcome from gas shells on arrival. Little beyond the ordinary routine marked this tour of the trenches, and they were in support when B Company had to go up to

the line suddenly on the night of August 25th to support the Camerons who had been compelled to evacuate the Geleide Brook position. B Company took over and organised Nasal Trench, and held two posts on the Geleide Brook. It was their last active part in the work of this sector, for they were relieved on August 27th, and on the last day of the month went into training near St. Omer. Though they had been involved in little beyond the ordinary trench activity they had lost, in the month, 63, including 12 killed.

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By this time the third battle of Ypres had been launched and had shown those features that, in the end, robbed it of the strategic significance expected when it was planned. On July 31st two Royal Fusilier battalions took an active part in the opening attack. They were engaged on a sector that from the beginning meant hard fighting and little success. The 26th Royal Fusiliers attacked at Battle Wood, but little progress was made. An hour before zero, which was at 3.50 a.m., a heavy rain began to fall and the ground was a mass of water-logged shell-holes. The men could hardly keep their foothold, and it is surprising that the battalion lost no more than 160 killed, wounded and missing.

On the right of the 41st Division, of which the 26th Battalion formed part, was the 24th Division, containing the 1st and 12th Battalions. The 1st attacked at zero with the 12th Battalion 200 yards in the rear. The leading companies as usual clung closely to the barrage. A number of casualties were sustained as the men crossed the valley in which lies the sunken road towards the eastern end of Shrewsbury Wood, but the Germans did not attempt to stand until the strong point south of Jeffrey Avenue was reached. This trench runs from the north-eastern face of Clonmel Copse to the northern edge of Shrewsbury Wood. At this point the battalion were held up until Lieutenant Flack's party rushed it. Flack knocked out the machine gun with a rifle grenade, and

was subsequently awarded a bar to the M.C. for this service. This part of the line was then consolidated. C Company, under Captain Leeming, reached the trench on the south-western face of Bodmin Copse, and here he was killed. The German snipers were very active, and C Company was deprived of an efficient leader. This company on the left of the advance alone maintained its direction. A very sustained fire had been kept up from Lower Star Post, in the heart of Shrewsbury Wood, and it was owing to this, apparently, that the battalion on the 1st Royal Fusiliers' right swerved, causing the Fusiliers' right company also to swerve.

At 4.15 a.m. the 12th Battalion passed through the 1st in Jeffrey Avenue. They had been held up while the 1st were reducing numerous strong points, and had suffered heavy loss. Captain H. J. Cox, Captain H. D. Doudney, Lieutenant A. J. Waby and Second Lieutenant W. F. Cooper were killed, and Second Lieutenant E. Cohen was mortally wounded. Captain F. C. Day was also wounded. These casualties could not but gravely weaken the battalion. Five minutes before the 12th passed through the 1st, Second Lieutenant H. Martin with the signallers advanced, but he was killed on the way up. The advance from Jeffrey Avenue had made but little way before it was held up at a strong point on the western edge of Bodmin Copse. No. 3 Company rushed this position, and the 12th pushed through the copse to its eastern edge, but were there held by machine-gun and rifle fire. The advance had to be abandoned and a line was established enclosing the greater part of Bodmin Copse. A strong point was established in the trench about 100 yards to the north-east of the north-eastern corner of the copse, and there Lieutenant N. P. Mussbaum was wounded.

That night a final line was established some 500 yards west of Bassevillebeek and held by the 1st Battalion, the 12th, with the 3rd Rifle Brigade and the Leinsters. On this day, the 1st Battalion sustained 277 casualties, 12 being officers, 3 of whom were killed. The 12th Battalion

lost 9 officers and 170 other ranks, killed and wounded. One officer was killed at the jumping-off place and one, the C.O., had almost exactly the same fate as the officer he succeeded. Battalion headquarters were moved up as the advance made progress, and Lieut.-Colonel Hope Johnstone was mortally wounded as he approached the new position. Captain A. Simpkins took the command of the battalion. Headquarters were moved again because of the heavy shelling; and even in its third position it fell under a severe bombardment. Messages failed to reach headquarters, the runners being knocked out on the way. As the command of the battalion was so gravely weakened, they were relieved at 11 p.m. Three-quarters of an hour before it had begun to rain again, and the ground seemed unnecessarily irritating to the weary men who had to make their way back over it.

Fighting was still in progress on the line south of Shrewsbury Wood, and the conditions at the front were very terrible. Many wounded were still lying about in shell-holes as the stretcher bearers had suffered so many casualties. Seven officers and 69 other ranks were sent up to the 1st Battalion from the transport lines on August 2nd, and on the next day they moved back with the 12th Battalion to Micmac Camp.

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The 32nd, who had moved up to the front near Klein Zillebeke, had a strange experience on August 5th. The Germans had delivered counter-attacks on various parts of the front, and on that day the blow fell to the left of the battalion front. At 4.10 a.m. the enemy barrage lifted and the Germans advanced under cover of fog and smoke bombs. Only half the front was involved; and there the attack was held up by rifle and machine-gun fire. But the Germans broke through the right flank of the battalion further north and a party of them got to the rear of the 32nd Royal Fusiliers. At midday it was ascertained that the enemy were holding 100 yards of Jehovah Trench, which was sited in a strip of wood lying north of Klein

Zillebeke road and some 500 yards east of the village. This situation was cleared up by the bold and decisive action of Major Robinson, Captain H. L. Kirby and Second Lieutenant G. W. Murrell, and when the battalion moved back on relief, the next day, the position was restored. Major Robinson led a few men against the German detachment who had got behind the centre post in the forward zone and succeeded in killing part of them and dispersing the rest.

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On August 10th the 11th Battalion took part in one of those minor operations which are the aftermath of all great battles ; and it was their fate to fight over much the same ground as that on which the 4th Battalion had clashed with the Grenadier Guard Regiment in the first Battle of Ypres. The Fusiliers, the right assaulting battalion of the 54th Brigade, had their right flank near the Ypres-Menin road ; and at 4.35 a.m. B Company (Captain Fuller) on the left, D (Captain Gray) on the right, attacked from this position. They advanced steadily against little opposition until the machine-gun fire from Inverness Copse—in the neighbouring brigade area—brought up the right flank and made it swerve to the left. On the left, however, the men penetrated some distance into Glen-corse Wood, despite the ten or twelve “ pill-boxes ” standing like sentinels on the edge, some 200 yards from the south-west corner of the wood. Some of D Company also got well forward and, with Captain Gray, reached Fitz-clarence Farm. Gray was there shot through both knees, but continued to fire from a shell-hole. Fuller was shot through the head in a gallant attempt to rush a machine-gun emplacement.

As a natural consequence, a gap was made between the 11th Battalion and the brigade on their right. In less than two hours all the officers of the assaulting companies were casualties, and a counter-attack was initiated by the Germans. The Fusiliers were out of touch with the troops on both flanks ; and a skilful bombing attack down the



Jargon and Jap Trenches rendered their position impossible to maintain. Issuing from Inverness Copse the Germans almost penetrated to the rear of (C) the support company. Despite the cool and courageous handling of the men by the N.C.O.'s, Sergeants Wilson, Berry and Burch, and Corporal Hallett, the Fusiliers could only remain where they were at the imminent peril of envelopment. They were compelled to retire and establish themselves some 200 yards east of Clapham Junction, in touch with the 55th Brigade on the right. Some of the men were cut off, and one of them gave a good account of himself. Private Arthur Jakes remained calmly in an advanced shell-hole, sniping all the day, and at night found his way through the German lines back to his battalion. The 11th remained in their position until 4 a.m. on August 11th when they were relieved. They went back to Dickebusch huts weaker by 17 officers and 328 other ranks than when they entered battle.

**Battle of Langemarck.**—On August 16th the "second attack" was launched, and the Royal Fusiliers were represented in it by the battalions of the London Regiment. But practically no progress was made. The "pill-boxes," which had proved so formidable an obstacle to the Royal Fusiliers on August 10th, and even at the end of the Messines battle, now began to attract official attention. Nothing short of a direct hit put them out of action, and standing inconspicuously but a few feet above the ground it was almost impossible to hit them except by chance. It was the "pill-boxes" that proved too much for the London Regiment. The 2nd Londons attacked on the left of the London Rifle Brigade, eastwards and slightly north from the western face of Glencorse Wood. The men fought very gallantly and reached all objectives, but the flanking battalions had found it difficult to maintain themselves when the objective was reached. The machine-gun fire was very heavy, and Nonne Boschen and Polygon Wood provided ample cover. In spite of this one officer reached the racecourse in Polygon Wood

with his platoon, where, fighting desperately, he was surrounded and forced to surrender, when quite defenceless from lack of ammunition. Before doing so, however, he was able to send a message by pigeon: "Ammunition and bombs exhausted. Completely surrounded. Regret no course but to surrender." Colonel Kellett and almost all the officers became casualties; and at length the battalion with their neighbour had to go back to the starting point. With one officer, Captain Stevens, the adjutant, and about 50 other ranks, they were withdrawn.

The 4th Londons, attacking between Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse, had an even worse fate. They came up against the "pill-box" system which had neutralised the success of August 10th, and the objectives were never taken. The battalion lost heavily in the unequal struggle. And the 3rd Londons also failed to capture their objectives. In each case where the troops achieved success they found themselves gravely weakened when the speedy and heavy counter-attack was launched. The bad weather made aeroplane reconnaissance practically impossible; and hence there was no warning of the counter-attacks and no artillery support against them. The new tactics led to a modification of the artillery tactics and the readjustment of the command, so that the Menin road area could be placed as a separate feature under one commander. The sector was entrusted to Sir Herbert Plumer.

On August 16th another Fusilier Battalion, the 2nd, were ready to attack north of the Ypres-Thorout railway, if called upon, being attached to the 88th Brigade for the purpose. But the 29th Division's attack was so successful that the battalion were not called upon, and reverted naturally to the orders of the 86th Brigade. It was on this night that a shell falling outside headquarters severely wounded Second Lieutenant Hewlett and killed C.S.M. Rolfe—a great loss, for Rolfe had always carried himself in action with conspicuous gallantry.

An amusing incident occurred in this sector of the line

two days later. Two men of the 2nd Battalion were carrying water to the advanced trenches when they lost their way. They were unarmed, and they ought to have felt duly depressed when they ran into an armed German patrol of three men. However, arguing that the best defence is a resolute offensive they at once attacked and captured the enemy, a striking and amusing illustration of the difference between German and British *morale*.

On August 22nd, a patrol of the 1st Battalion, who were then in the line near Bodmin Copse, carried out a minor operation which was thought sufficiently good to merit the study of all the battalions in the II. Corps. The G.O.C. sent round a report which may be printed here: "Following account of a minor operation is forwarded for information as an example of the success which attends good leadership and initiative when coupled with the correct use of fire to cover movement. Efficient reconnaissance prior to the operation ensured that the fire of the light trench mortars was both effective and accurate, and this conduced largely to the success of the operation.

" At zero two trench mortars opened fire on the enemy's strong point, quickening the rate of fire at zero plus five minutes. At zero plus seven minutes the trench mortars lengthened range and the infantry advanced.

" The assaulting troops—about a platoon \*—advanced in two waves, and were stubbornly opposed by the enemy with rifle fire and bombs. Second Lieutenant Stonebanks at once ordered his flanks to swing round and come in on the flanks of the strong point, the centre meanwhile keeping up a heavy fire on the enemy's position and distracting his attention.

" The enemy, finding himself surrounded, surrendered.

" The assaulting party pushed on to a second strong point which was found unoccupied. This was at once consolidated and a German machine gun, which was

\* One officer and 20 men actually, who accounted for double their number, fighting in prepared positions.

captured with a large quantity of ammunition, was brought into action against the enemy.

"Five of the enemy were killed and 35 taken prisoner, of whom five were wounded.

"Our casualties were four other ranks wounded, two of whom are at duty."

It only remains to add that Second Lieutenant Stonebanks was himself wounded, but the brilliant little operation deserved the praise it received. Stonebanks received the M.C.

\*            \*            \*            \*

After the attack on August 16th the wet weather and the arrangement of new tactics to suit the new elastic defence of the Germans imposed a long interval in the operations ; and, although minor assaults were delivered here and there, no further concerted movement took place in this area until September 20th. There was minor activity on other parts of the line. Several heavy raids, for instance, were carried out by the 4th Battalion in the Lagnicourt sector. On August 8th, on taking over trenches there, the battalion had discovered a German telephone wire leading from the wire in front of one of their posts towards the German line. Major Winnington Barnes put an end to any usefulness it might have by cutting it about 60 yards from the German wire. On the 17th they began an exchange of compliments with the enemy by delivering a gas attack, which was acknowledged by a bombardment of 3,000 shells. Strong raiding patrols carried out operations on the 23rd, 29th and 30th.

**Menin Road Ridge.**—In the Ypres area the second line battalions of the London Regiment were engaged on September 20th. These battalions were originally third line battalions, but the second line battalions had been amalgamated with the first in May, 1916, and the third, thereupon, became the second. The 2/3 Londons were in the 173rd Brigade and operated on the right of the division north of St. Julien ; and all the battalions had uniform success on this occasion, taking their objectives

with distinct skill. It was to some extent a justification of the new tactics ; but it was also an endorsement of the training and *morale* of these battalions in their first major operation. Schuber Farm was gallantly rushed by the 2/4 Londons, with the help of the 8th Liverpool Irish and two tanks.

Below the Ypres-Menin road the 26th and 32nd Battalions were engaged, their object being the Tower Hamlets spur. The 26th were on the left and the 32nd on the right of the brigade front, both battalions being in support, with their front on the road running north from the west of Lower Star Post. The approach was characteristic of the time and place. The 26th had to step off the duckboard track to allow the 32nd to get in front. This meant stepping into the mud which clung to several of the men so tightly that they found very great difficulty in getting out again. At zero both battalions moved forward so close to the barrage that the German barrage fell behind them. The 26th ran into heavy machine-gun fire almost at once ; but for the first 200 yards the 32nd found no opposition until the fire from the left checked them. Lying out in shell-holes the Germans inflicted heavy casualties on the right of the 26th and the left of the 32nd.

At this point the majority of the officers of the 32nd had become casualties. The front assaulting battalion had been almost wiped out. But A Company, under Second Lieutenant Christie, and B under the C.S.M., pushed right and left, respectively, and the advance was enabled to resume progress. Through the check, the advantage of the barrage had been lost, but the enemy now put up little opposition. Small parties of Germans began to come forward with white flags, and the Fusiliers thus encouraged, made another spurt forward. By 9.0 a.m. the two first objectives had been captured. The 32nd had now lost more than half its strength, and no further progress could be made against the fierce and sustained machine-gun fire.

The 26th had fared no better. Lieut.-Colonel G. McNichol, D.S.O., was killed early in the battle, and Major A. Maxwell, who took over the command, was awarded the D.S.O. for his gallantry and skilful leadership. All the officers but one were either killed or wounded. Indeed, in less than ten minutes there was only one unwounded officer of the 19 who had gone forward. But Lieutenant S. H. Firth and Second Lieutenant F. A. B. Jones \* finding they were the only officers in the front line, held on with a small body of men. No communication could be obtained with headquarters until a staff officer arrived with some pigeons. A message was at once sent off by pigeon, and at four o'clock in the afternoon the 20th Durham Light Infantry came up. The enemy had now got the range of the position, and so effective was their fire that the five Fusilier officers, who were sent up just before dark were all casualties within two hours, four being killed and one wounded.

At one time the line was broken on the left, and the men in the support line on the right were turned about, fighting with their backs to the front line. Their unexpected volley checked the German advance and the left flank recovered. On the morning of the 22nd no food and little ammunition remained from what had been brought up on the night of the 19th, and Private Sturgis volunteered to go back for supplies. Three times on his way back he was blown up, and when at length he found battalion headquarters he fainted. But as soon as he recovered he started off with a party carrying food and ammunition. The enemy barrage caught them about half way, and the party were inclined to run back. But Sturgis threatened to shoot them if they did not go forward ; and at length they came to the front line. When the battalion was withdrawn in the early morning of the 24th, they had suffered 363 casualties, including 23 officers. This was

\* Second Lieutenant Jones was wounded in the chest early in the fight. A little later a shell exploded near him and burst the drums of both ears. But it was not until two days later that he reported wounded

the heaviest casualty list the battalion had ever incurred in a single operation. The Menin road area continued to be true to its reputation.

**Battle of Polygon Wood.**—On September 26th the 4th Battalion began a series of operations which add a touch of relief to the bitter and unsuccessful fighting on the Menin road area. So fine was their discipline, and so skilfully were they handled that all orders were carried out with precision that was only too rare in this terrible battle. The battalion stood to in the Zonnebeke area at zero, 5.50 a.m., while the 3rd Division attacked. At 3 p.m. the battalion received a verbal warning that they might have to reinforce the line as the attack on Hill 40, just north of the Ypres-Roulers railway, and near Zonnebeke, had been unsuccessful, and in this case they would come under the orders of the 8th Brigade. Major Winnington Barnes was at this time in command, as Colonel Hely Hutchinson had been attached to the 4th Division as *liason* officer the day before.

At 5.30 p.m. this order was confirmed in writing and the battalion were ordered to occupy the old British front line in Bremen Redoubt. This movement carried out in daylight under full observation was the source of many casualties. Low-flying German aeroplanes bombed them as they were forming up, and signalled the position to the enemy artillery. As a consequence a heavy barrage was put down, but despite severe losses the battalion were in no way disorganised and moved forward in great style. On taking up position at the Bremen Redoubt the Fusiliers again suffered heavily. The barrage was now on the redoubt, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the men could be got to their positions. In front of them this determined German resistance had produced some disorganisation in the attacking force, and it was decided to move the battalion forward to a ridge some 300 yards in front of the Bremen Redoubt. This position was taken up and all stragglers in the neighbourhood were rallied. The shell fire continued to be severe, and the losses heavy.

The ground was very bad, and it was difficult to collect the men in the midst of the heavy bombardments when the battalion were ordered to move forward at 1 a.m. on the 27th. Their new position was between 200 and 300 yards west of the road running north-west from Zonnebeke, with the right flank about 400 yards north of the railway. In the morning the battalion had two companies in front and two in rear, with the 13th King's on the right and the 59th Division on the left.

At 2 p.m. the battalion were ordered to move forward and occupy a line some 200 to 250 yards west of the road from Zonnebeke station to Jacob's House and to connect up with the East Yorks and K.S.L.I., still keeping touch with the 13th King's on the right. In spite of the heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from Hill 40, which caused many casualties, the movement was carried out in good order. The two battalions on the left, holding a line of shell-holes to Jacob's House were relieved by the Royal Fusiliers on the night of September 28th; and the battalion dug and consolidated two lines of trenches along the whole of their front to the left of the 13th King's. On September 30th they were relieved, after a tour of four days, during which time they had carried out every duty allotted to them with perfect discipline and efficiency. Their casualty list totalled 205, but they had found a crumbling position and they left one established and organised.

It was on September 30th that the 13th Battalion were called upon to deal with a local counter-attack. They were lying at the time astride the Menin road, with an advanced blockhouse near the western edge of Gheluveld Wood. At 5.30 a.m. a heavy bombardment by trench mortars was opened by the Germans on the whole position, and the support lines as far back as Bassevillebeek valley came under a heavy barrage. Ten minutes later the advanced post, which was held at the time by Second Lieutenant Shorman and 10 other ranks of No. 2 Company, was attacked by about 300 Germans, armed with *flammen-*



*werfer*. After a short and fierce struggle the post was captured, all the garrison being killed or wounded. An immediate counter-attack was organised by Captain T. Whitehead, commanding No. 2 Company, and very swiftly the blockhouse was cleared of all the enemy. Second Lieutenant Shorman, who was badly burned and was last seen fighting, was missing. Second Lieutenant H. C. Bevan, who had been on patrol at the moment of the attack, was found beside the post badly wounded; and the total casualties were 26 in an operation which occupied a very short space of time, but was carried out with bitter hand-to-hand fighting. The morning mists had prevented the rifle grenade rocket from being seen, and there was consequently no artillery support, though the whole battalion on the right had a barrage put down on their front. Captain Whitehead was awarded the M.C. for his skilful and energetic leadership, and C.S.M. J. Edwards and Private W. Digby, both of No. 2 Company, received the D.C.M. The battalion also received the congratulations of the Brigadier,\* the Divisional † and the Corps commanders.

**Battle of Broodseinde.**—Five similar attacks were delivered by the Germans on October 1st. Yet another was launched on the morning of the 3rd, and that night there was a heavy gale with much rain. But the advance was resumed once more. The 13th Battalion took part in the attack with the 10th supporting. Since repelling the German attack on September 30th, they had lost heavily from the enemy bombardment. No. 2 Company in Bodmin Copse suffered very seriously on October 2nd, when No. 1 Company was practically wiped out, and No. 3 Company's carrying parties lost heavily. The remainder of No. 2 Company was divided between Nos. 1 and 3; and when the battalion attacked its total strength was 13 officers and 233 other ranks. The rôle of the

\* "You have worthily upheld the traditions of your regiment."

† "For very gallant defence and prompt and successful counter-attack."

battalion on October 4th was to seize the dug-outs strung across the northern part of Gheluvelt Wood and form a defensive flank to the 5th Division who were engaged north of the Menin road. The battalion were in position at 5.15 a.m., and a quarter of an hour later a heavy German barrage was put down. Fortunately for the battalion it fell chiefly north of the Menin road. Zero was at 6 a.m., and at that moment the battalion advanced, following the barrage so closely that though the German artillery were very prompt in their counter-barrage the assaulting troops suffered very little. But they encountered a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from a blockhouse and also from Lewis House which had escaped the bombardment.

The 13th King's Royal Rifle Corps, who were to have raided Lewis House, were therefore unable to effect much there, and this un-reduced centre, lying to the right front of the Royal Fusiliers, was chiefly responsible for their failure to carry the objective. Their original line faced roughly east. To capture the line of blockhouses in Gheluvelt Wood they had to wheel so as to take up a final position facing towards the south. This operation brought them more and more under the fire from Lewis House, and Second Lieutenant A. A. Allen's leading platoon were at one point reduced to two. Later on he collected 14 men, but the flanking fire from Lewis House and the blockhouses compelled him to dig in. No. 3 Company suffered heavily from the short firing of our own field guns, but established their line with less difficulty. It was not until night that touch was gained with the Royal West Kents on the left. At first their right flank had been in the rear of the Fusiliers' left, but towards the end of the day the advance was continued, and finally their right forward post was some 100 yards in front of the Royal Fusiliers. Though the 13th Battalion had not secured their final objective, they had covered the flank of the 5th Division, and the major part of the task given them was carried out. In killed, wounded and missing they lost 208 officers and men out of the 246 who had gone into battle.

**Battle of Poelcapelle.**—The weather now appeared to have definitely broken. In the early days of October it had been intermittently rainy. On the 7th heavy rain again fell all day. These conditions interfered with the artillery preparations; and, though it was possible to crush two hostile attacks on the 7th, the perfection of counter-battery work, which was needed to cover a further advance, was impossible. The night of the 8th was almost as terrible as any experienced in the campaign. It was impenetrably black. The ground was deluged with rain, and a high wind drove the rain into the men's faces with the sting of whips. It was perilous to stray from the path, for the ground was now for the most part a trough of mud. Under such conditions it was not easy to assemble for the attack in the early hours of the 9th. But somehow the troops had become inured to such conditions, and the 2nd Battalion were in their places at zero. The attack was launched at 5.20 a.m. in conjunction with the French. Once more there was little from which to draw satisfaction in the rôle of the battalion. They were in support to the Lancashire Fusiliers, on the right of the 29th Division, about 500 yards south of the Ypres-Staden railway. Captain Hood, with two platoons of Y Company, pushed forward to reinforce the leading battalion and came under severe rifle fire after crossing the Conde House-(or Houthulst-) Poelcapelle road. But, advancing from shell-hole to shell-hole, they got forward about 200 yards east of the road and were then brought to a standstill by sustained fire from the right front. The 4th Division on the right could not be located, and Corporal Floyd sent out with a patrol reported a gap of 300 yards on this flank. The second objective had not been made good; there were no supports, and, accordingly, Captain Hood consolidated the line from about 250 yards north of Conde House to about 100 yards north of Miller's House.

Second Lieutenant Saul, with the right platoon of Z Company, followed Y Company. The other officers of Z became casualties; and Saul followed Hood, passing

through a few groups of Lancashire Fusiliers in shell-holes, until he was drawn off to the right, near the huts, about 300 yards north-east of the Mill on the Poelcapelle-Houthulst road, where he was held up by rifle fire. On the left X Company, followed by W, advanced by the watch, passed through a line of Lancashire Fusiliers in shell-holes and prepared to advance on the third objective. They were in contact with the Worcesters on the left, but could not locate any one on the right; and the line of Lancashires who were thought to be in front did not exist. They went forward once more by the watch; but the right was held up by short shooting of our own barrage at Conde House, and when they could advance again the protection of the barrage had been lost.

It was at Conde House that Sergeant J. Molyneux won the V.C. From the trench in front of the house a machine gun kept up a persistent fire on the advancing troops. Molyneux, who belonged to W Company, seeing that the attack was completely checked, at once organised a bombing party to clear the trench. Many of the Germans were killed, and the machine gun was captured. Molyneux then jumped out of the trench, and, calling on the men to follow, rushed forward against Conde House. He was well in front, and, when the others arrived, he was in the thick of a hand-to-hand fight. So swift and impetuous had been the assault that the struggle was soon over. Some 20 to 30 prisoners were taken, and the position, which had threatened to bring the whole battalion to a standstill, was captured. His action was as serviceable as it was daring.

But despite the heroism of the advance, the final objective could not be reached. No troops were found ahead, and the second objective had not been taken. A line was therefore established with the right about 200 yards below the road which runs from the Poelcapelle-Houthulst road north-east to the Ypres-Staden railway, and the left resting on the Poelcapelle-Houthulst road about 200 yards below the railway. It was literally a



SERGEANT MOLYNEUX, 2ND ROYAL FUSILIERS, who gained the V.C. north of Ypres, October 9th, 1917.



LANCE-CORPORAL C. G. ROBERTSON, 10TH ROYAL FUSILIERS, who gained the V.C. near Ypres in March, 1918.



filthy advance; it was costly; it was unsatisfactory. The battalion had advanced according to plan, but apparently no one else had. There was no obvious landmark to stake out the day's work and round off their ordeal. But it was not so much a misfortune of the battalion's as a general characteristic of the operations in this phase of the battle.

"By this time the persistent continuation of wet weather had left no further room for hope that the condition of the ground would improve sufficiently to enable us to capture the remainder of the ridge this year. By limited attacks made during intervals of better weather, however, it would still be possible to progress as far as Passchendaele, and, in view of the other projects which I had in view, it was desirable to maintain the pressure on the Flanders' front for a few weeks longer.

"To maintain his defence on this front the enemy had been obliged to reduce the garrison of certain parts of his line to a degree which justified the expectation that a sudden attack at a point where he did not expect it might attain a considerable local success. The front for such an attempt had been selected. . . ." \*

Such thoughts, however, were not the inspiration of the troops, who had only their determination to see the thing through to carry them over an ordeal that remains almost indescribable. Another local attack was made on October 12th despite the heavy rain that continued almost throughout the day. There was a further attack on October 22nd, and the 11th Battalion were called upon to hold the positions taken by the 10th Essex, who had successfully attacked the brewery east of Poelcapelle, until the 24th. They were then relieved and passed to Dirty Bucket Camp, a very aptly described place.

**Second Battle of Passchendaele.**—On October 25th a strong west wind somewhat dried the surface of the ground and the night was fine. The stars shone out with the sharpened clarity of a frosty atmosphere. Another

\* Despatch.

small attack was planned for the 26th ; and the 2nd line battalions of the London Regiment took up their positions with the 58th Division, below the Poelcapelle-Spriet road. The 2/2 Londons, attacking at 5.40 a.m., reached Cameron House—about 250 yards below the Poelcapelle-Spriet road—at 7.15 a.m. A Company under Captain Harper cleared three of the four “ pill-boxes ” at this point and sent back 17 prisoners. D Company, in command of Second Lieutenant J. P. Howie at 6.30 a.m. reached a “ pill-box ” about 200 yards above the Lekkerboterbeek and stormed it, capturing 32 prisoners ; and three-quarters of an hour later had to repel hostile counter-attacks directed against this point and Cameron House. A Company, finding their flank uncovered by the retirement of the unit on their left, were compelled to withdraw ; but D clung to the mebus they had captured until the end of the day. Moray House, lying about 550 yards due east of this “ pill-box,” held up C Company all the day. The casualties were 11 officers (3 killed) and 386 other ranks.

The 2/3 Londons were not so fortunate. The men were up to their waists in mud, and it was almost impossible to reach the enemy, who shot down the men as they struggled to advance. Nevertheless they managed to push their way, on the left of the 2/2nd half-way to the final objective, but were then unable to withstand the prompt and violent counter-attack. The Germans in the later stages of the battle depended much on wearing off the edge of the attack by light advanced troops, and then endeavoured to wipe out any success by immediate and heavy counter-attacks. Part of the 2/2 Londons had been able to hold their own against these tactics. But the 2/3rd were forced back, and their retirement involved the left of the 2/2nd. The 2/3rd fell back to the assembly positions where, with the help of the 2/1st, they were able to beat off the enemy. The 2/3rd lost so heavily on this occasion that when the battalion were relieved only two officers and 17 men returned. Among



the casualties were Lieut.-Colonel P. W. Beresford, D.S.O., who was killed.

Somewhat similar was the fate of the 2/4th, who made some headway, but could not capture their objectives. D Company, under Captain C. A. Clarke, seized and held advanced positions, and the battalion, with a casualty list of 11 officers and 368 other ranks, had to be content with this result. The Londons all suffered very terribly from the state of the ground. Many men were drowned in the shell-holes.

\* \* \* \*

Another attack was delivered on October 30th, and the 7th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, who took part in it, suffered from the conditions that had so gravely affected the second line Londons. They too, were fighting in the trough of mud and water while other battalions advanced along the main ridge, where it was at least possible to move. The 7th Battalion moved up to their position below the Lekkerboterbeek, about 1,000 yards west of the Paddebeek, on the afternoon of the 28th, and on the following morning a practice barrage was put down about 200 yards beyond the line of the advanced posts. The German counter-barrage came down on the support and reserve companies, but it was fortunately not very heavy. A strong position on the left of the front gave considerable trouble and was reported to the brigade. It was then arranged that this point should be attacked by C Company, under Second Lieutenant Snelling.

The barrage came down at 5.50 a.m. on the 30th and the advance began. The men soon lost touch with headquarters, and this proved a serious handicap. Five runners were sent up, but only one returned. Later, by interrogating the wounded it was found that the right of the line had got as far as the Paddebeek, though the left was still held up by the strong point which had been marked down before the beginning of the attack. The resistance of this single focus conditioned the battle on the 63rd Division's front. At 12.55 p.m. Second Lieutenant

Wells, who arrived at headquarters wounded, reported that heavy machine-gun and rifle fire was coming from this quarter. Men of all companies were lying out in front of it and there had been heavy loss already in the fruitless attempt to capture it. At 2.0 p.m. it was arranged that Second Lieutenant Hawkins, with two Stokes guns, should assist in another attack. Part of C Company were to make a feint from the front while Second Lieutenant Tricker led the attack from the flank. Every effort was strained to make this assault successful. It was arranged to deliver the attack at 5 a.m. on the morning of October 31st, and about four hours before Captain Ogle and Second Lieutenant Hawkins went forward to complete the arrangements. But at 7.45 a.m. they returned to report that the attack had again failed. Before the attack began, a shell destroyed one of the guns and its double crew of 20 men. The other fired six rounds and then ceased to function owing to the mud. A withering machine-gun fire was opened from the strong point, and Second Lieutenant Tricker was compelled to abandon the attack. The battalion had to hand over their positions on relief with this obdurate focus of resistance still defiantly active.

But in the meantime the men had pushed forward on the right, though they failed to cope with the main enemy of the area and the time—the deep, adhesive mud. Officers and men tried to find some feasible pathway through it, but when they contrived to get forward the mud and water had robbed them of the advantage of the barrage. A small “pill-box” on the right was captured and an escaping German shot. They pressed up to within about 100 yards of Sourd Farm, about 600 yards east of the obdurate strong point and not 150 yards south of it.

At 10.30 p.m. on the 30th it was arranged to relieve the battalion by the Royal Marine Light Infantry, but this was later changed to the Hawke Battalion. Arrangements were completed by 1.15 p.m. on the 31st, and the Hawke Battalion began to arrive at 7.30 p.m. The 7th Royal Fusiliers were still lying in their advanced positions.

Stretcher bearers had been active since noon and practically all the wounded were evacuated. Corporal Hancock, who was wounded on the 30th, had been taken prisoner by the Germans. He was removed to a dug-out where his wounds were dressed and he was fed. Later on he was handed over to the Fusiliers' stretcher bearers with the condition that he gave no information as to the German dispositions.

It was 10.45 p.m. on the 31st before the relief was complete. A desultory shelling was taking place at the time, and the battalion passed through a gassed area on their way to Irish Farm, where German aeroplanes greeted them. Fortunately there were no additional casualties; for the battalion had already lost heavily. Captain Seward, Second Lieutenants Snelling and T. L. Williams, and 65 other ranks were killed, Second Lieutenants D. Bishop, M. A. Townshend, C. R. Wells and S. W. Dunthorn, and 148 other ranks wounded, and 19 missing. Both of the attacking divisions were congratulated by the XVIII. Corps commander, who stated that "Nothing but the impossibility of crossing the mud prevented their usual complete success." The condition of the ground could not be exaggerated, as the commanding officer could testify from personal observation. "No troops could possibly pass over it." The seal is set on this statement by the fact that the line, on this sector of the Ypres front, lay at the end of the campaign very much as the 7th Battalion left it.

But the long-drawn-out battle had now reached its last stage. On November 6th, the Canadians carried Paschendale together with the high ground immediately to the north and north-west. The 11th Battalion returned to the area in time for the ringing down of the curtain. On this occasion (November 10th) they took over positions south of Houthulst Forest. The ground was water-logged. Beyond the duckboard tracks, drowning was an ordinary risk, and it was hardly decent drowning. The water in the shell-holes was strongly impregnated with Yellow Cross gas. There was a considerable amount

of gas shell expended on this area, and in their first tour of the trenches the 11th Battalion had 21 gassed to 13 wounded. The latter included Lieut.-Colonel Sulman. On November 22nd, the adjutant, Captain O. C. Whiteman was killed on the way up to the front. He was walking up with Major Ford, the second in command, a few minutes before the battalion arrived, and finding that one part of the track was being persistently shelled, they took refuge behind a "pill-box," intending to wait for the next shell and then dash across the dangerous spot. Unfortunately the next shell fell just over the "pill-box" and Whiteman was killed at once.

An incident that was marked with better luck will serve to round off the narrative of the campaign. "In the Houthulst Forest sector on the night of November 24th-25th, 1917, Private T. Wright was accompanying his platoon officer who was visiting his front line posts, when an enemy patrol was seen approaching. The officer and Private Wright, who were in No Man's Land at the time, allowed the patrol to get close to the post, and then placed themselves between the patrol and the enemy's lines and called upon the patrol to surrender.

"The patrol, consisting of an officer and a corporal, attempted to get away, but were prevented from doing so by Private Wright, who shot the German officer in the thigh and then knocked down the corporal, who offered considerable resistance, and, moreover, was a strong opponent, standing at least six feet one in height, and strongly built. The two were made prisoners and valuable documents and other information was obtained from them." Such is the official account of the incident which gained for Private Wright the Military Medal.

But by this time the other project to which Sir Douglas Haig had referred in his despatch as the chief reason for maintaining the pressure on the Flanders' front had seen fulfilment. At Cambrai the troops had gone through the German line, and, attaining complete surprise, had secured a remarkable success.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI

AT 6.20 a.m. on November 20th the Battle of Cambrai began, the troops moving forward without any previous artillery bombardment, on a front of six miles from the east of Gonnellieu to the Canal du Nord, opposite Hermies. Three battalions of the Royal Fusiliers were included in the attacking divisions; and it may be said, with due reserve, that they and other Fusilier units who were involved before the operations died down in December won for themselves undying honour.

**Noyelles.**—The second battalion began to move up to the area in the second week of November. On the 18th they lay at Peronne. The following day they reached Equancourt, some 8,000 yards from the nearest point of the British front line. They advanced to Dead Man's Corner, marching through Fins and Queen's Cross, and were in assembly positions on the right rear of the 16th Middlesex at 5.20 a.m. on the 20th. An hour later they began to move up, in diamond formation, W Company being in front, X and Y on the right and left rear respectively, and Z in support. They marched on a bearing of 40 degrees until the original front line was reached, when they halted in front of Plough Support. At 10.20 a.m. they resumed the advance on the same line of bearing until they passed through the 6th Division, who had captured and were holding the Hindenburg line. Shortly afterwards they came under heavy machine-gun fire and extended, continuing the advance in two waves, with the support of numerous tanks. This was the period of the general movement towards the final objective, and the resistance which had been inappreciable in the earliest

stages was now, in places, very obstinate. At the outskirts of Marcoing several Germans ran forward and gave themselves up; but at the cross-roads the advance was temporarily held up by machine-gun fire and a small amount of rifle fire. However tanks reduced all obstacles, and the battalion went forward again. Second Lieutenant Burton was killed in the approach to Marcoing, and Captain Leaming and Second Lieutenant Piper were wounded. Two platoons, under Captain Griffiths, went through the village, and, after some brisk street fighting, captured about 100 prisoners and some machine guns.

In the approach to Noyelles the enemy's fire was once more experienced, the resistance on the Marcoing road being very stubborn. But this was overcome and the battalion reached their final objective at 3.15 p.m. and dug in. A patrol of W Company at once pushed forward to secure the bridge over the canal, north-east of Noyelles; but the intermediate bridge over the Scheldt, on the Noyelles-Cambrai road, had been blown up, and the canal bridge could not be reached. The wooden bridge over the river farther south had been blown up within sight of a scouting party. Z Company went forward to hold the village and link up with the post beyond the cemetery, on the north-western outskirts of the village. X dug in between the River Scheldt and the canal, making two strong points, one facing eastward and the other towards the north, as a protection to the right flank, which was in the air. Z Company promptly put the village in a state of defence. A patrol of the 4th Dragoons, who had come up a little after 4 p.m., were posted on the northern outskirts of the village. The blown-up Scheldt bridge was seized and held; and also the wooden one still intact in the grounds of the Chateau, on the east of the village. So the battalion lay that night. A German patrol was beaten off by Lewis-gun and rifle fire. Not three miles away was Cambrai. In front of them across the Scheldt Canal was the enemy's Marcoing line. Behind them lay a greater depth of country than had ever before been covered in

one day's advance ; and the success had been achieved with much less loss than had almost invariably accompanied the fierce battles in which the battalion had taken part.

The following day, November 21st, appeared like a reversion to type. By some oversight the outskirts of the village had been abandoned early in the morning by the Dragoons before the relief troops arrived. As a consequence, when the enemy counter-attacked about 7.30 a.m. they secured an immediate success, and the eastern end of the village was overrun up to the church. There a machine gun was established, and throughout the day a bitter struggle took place. Second Lieutenant Peel very gallantly destroyed two German machine guns in this phase of the fighting and Second Lieutenant R. L. Sparks was killed. The 18th Hussars, who were now in the village, were involved in this fighting, and little headway was made until about 4 p.m., when the two tanks Ben Mychree and Buluwayo II. came up. These, advancing with moppers-up of the 2nd Battalion and the 18th Hussars, cleared the village, which was handed over to C Company of the 1st Buffs, who relieved the Royal Fusiliers. This phase of the battle had not been bloodless, but the 2nd Battalion had the satisfaction of handing over intact the position which they had won at first. They had captured 400 prisoners, two light and ten heavy machine guns and three *granatenwerfer*. The battalion billeted in Marcoing, where General de Lisle called to congratulate them. The Mayor visited brigade headquarters and thanked Captain Hood and the men who had fought in Noyelles.

Meanwhile, on the southern flank of the advance the 8th and 9th Battalions had also advanced successfully. The 8th formed up north and the 9th \* south of the Cambrai

\* The 9th Battalion had been commanded since July 3rd by a very remarkable officer. Lieut.-Colonel W. V. L. van Someren, D.S.O., M.C., was reading for the Bar when war broke out, and, joining the Inns of Court O.T.C. in August, 1914, he went out to France with the 9th Royal Fusiliers as the junior subaltern. He was only twenty-one

road in the Gonnellieu Trenches, in the rear of sections of the Tank Corps. A certain amount of machine-gun fire was encountered ; but both battalions captured all objectives. Barrier Trench, south of la Vacquerie, was taken ; Sonnet Farm was cleared, and also parts of the Hindenburg front and support line. The 8th captured 35 prisoners and two machine guns for a total casualty list of 22, including Second Lieutenant Symonds and 15 other ranks killed. The 9th Battalion lost 94 all told, including Captain A. Greathead and Lieutenant G. Hall, M.C., Second Lieutenant E. C. Butterworth died of wounds later. At 10 p.m. that night the 9th moved up and relieved the 7th East Surreys in the front line of the defensive flank between Bleak House and Bonavis Farm, and held this position during the night. The 8th Battalion relieved the 9th on November 22nd, and two days later carried out a local attack on Pelican Trench towards Banteux, in conjunction with the 35th Brigade. They attacked at 8 a.m. In seventeen minutes they had secured their objectives, and within fifteen minutes were heavily counter-attacked. There had been no time to consolidate and 400 yards of Pelican Trench between B and D Companies were lost. Bombing blocks were established in the rear of the section of trench lost and the positions were handed over on the following day to the 7th Royal Sussex. In this brisk little engagement the battalion lost 58, including Second Lieutenant Reed killed, and they took 28 prisoners.

**Tadpole Copse.**—The Londons had by this time entered the battle. On November 20th they had cooperated with the main assault by a Chinese attack, but now they were to take their share in the actual fighting. The early successes of the advance had been at once too little and too great. If they had carried the troops no years of age when he took over the command of the battalion, and must have been one of the youngest, if not actually the youngest, of commanding officers. He retained command of the unit until it was disbanded in June, 1919, and was in charge of the 36th Brigade for the two weeks preceding the Armistice.



further than Flesquières ridge, a position would have been gained which was possible to hold without undue risk. But the line had been flung out to the north well beyond the ridge, and this ground could not be held unless the Bourlon ridge which commanded it was also in our possession, except at excessive cost. On the west of the ridge the 56th Division was involved. Tadpole Copse, lying about 1,000 yards west of Mœuvres, formed "a commanding tactical point in the Hindenburg line . . . the possession of which would be of value in connection with the left flank of the Bourlon position." \* It was stormed on the evening of the 22nd by the Queen's Westminsters. The trenches in advance of the copse were retaken by the enemy on the 24th; and at 1 p.m. on the 25th bombers of the 4th Londons, with the Rangers, attacked and recaptured the trenches. A patrol of D Company under Captain A. M. Duthie pushed forward and captured three machine guns. Late at night the Germans attempted to rush one of the battalion's bombing blocks, but they were beaten off. The 2nd Londons on the left of the position spent several days beating off the intermittent German attacks. Constant vigilance was necessary and, it may be added, was forthcoming. On the Lagnicourt sector a patrol of the 1st Londons distinguished themselves on the night of the 22nd. Second Lieutenant Long and three men of A Company crossed to the enemy wire, passed through and lay in a German outpost trench until a hostile patrol, sent out to examine their own wire, passed them. The Londons allowed them to pass and then surrounded and captured the two Germans.

**Bullecourt.**—In the subsidiary attack about Bullecourt the 4th Royal Fusiliers were cast for the *rôle* of maid-of-all-work. They had to be prepared to support the Connaught Rangers (16th Division) on their left; a company was lent to the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, and another to the 12th West Yorks. They held the remainder of the 9th Brigade front on the flanks of the battle front,

\* Despatch.

holding 300 yards of the 16th Division sector. During the night work was begun on a communication trench towards the left of the objective, and a post was dug in advance of the line and made defensible before zero. Four platoons advanced at a minute after zero (6.20 a.m.) and began their work of establishing posts between the old front line and the objective. A listening post was encountered by the right company, two of the enemy being made prisoners and the rest killed. With their aid, in a confused battle, the assaulting troops completed the work of the Spring Campaign by capturing the remainder of the Hindenburg support trench on this sector. Another spirited advance was made on November 25th, in which the 4th Battalion passed through the enemy wire without opposition, and took and consolidated the German first and second lines north-west of Bullecourt. Finding a German post unoccupied due north of the town, they seized it and worked along Bulldog Trench until held up by a block. Consolidation was at once carried out, and the positions were firmly held.

**The Counter-attack.**—The 2nd Division had now come up to consolidate the new positions, and the four battalions of Royal Fusiliers were disposed about Bourlon Wood. But already it was evident that the Germans did not intend to admit the finality of the British success. The increased registration of hostile artillery, the movements of troops and transport behind the German lines, pointed to the imminence of a counter-attack. The ground gained in the Battle of Cambrai made a distinct salient in the German lines, and the German activity embraced not only the front affected by the advance, but extended as far as Vendhuile. When the German advance began it was directed upon converging lines against the northern and southern faces of the salient.

On the latter sector the 8th and 9th Battalions felt the full shock of the German assault. The 8th, on the left, lay east of La Vacquerie, and the 9th, on the right, lay in trenches south of the Gouzeaucourt-Cambrai road. At 6.45 a.m.

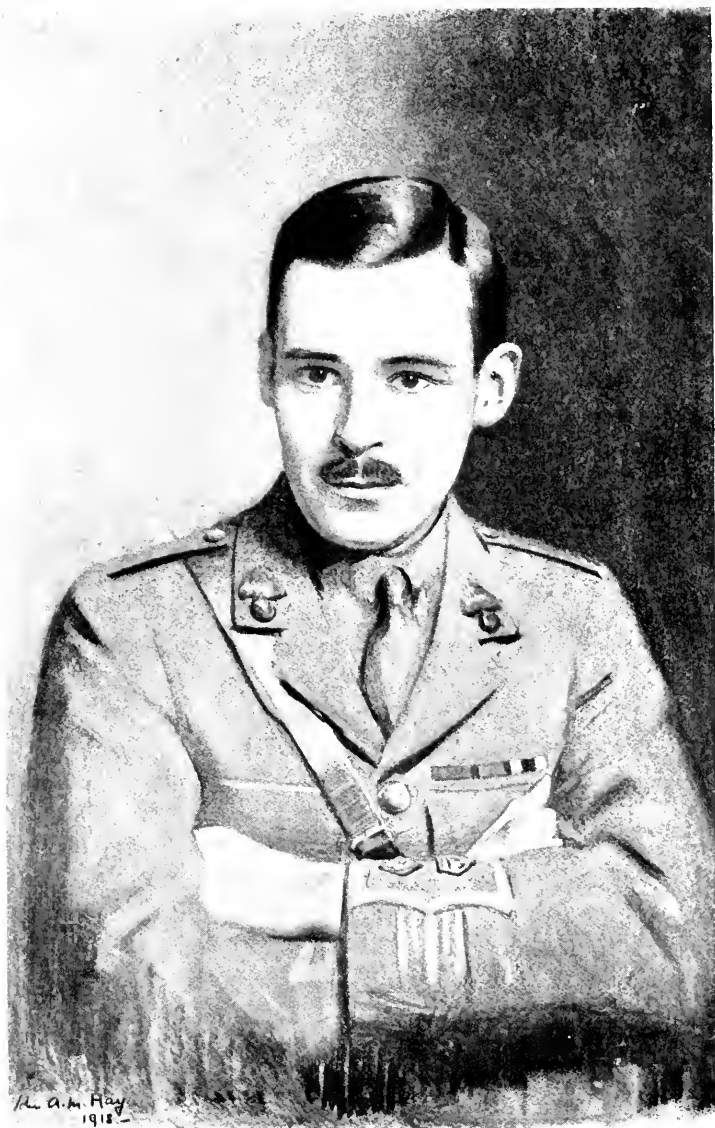
on November 30th an intense artillery bombardment began, and at 7.40 infantry attacks developed. Almost immediately the resistance of the 35th Brigade and part of the 55th Division on the right of the 9th Battalion was overcome, and C Company was forced to withdraw, taking up a position astride the Cambrai road. The Germans advanced down the Hindenburg front line after the troops of the 35th Brigade to the brigade headquarters. B Company at once delivered a counter-attack over the open, forced back the Germans 200 yards, when bombing blocks were made in all the trenches and the position was held firmly. D Company, on the left, were surrounded, and most of them became casualties. Only 1 officer and 13 other ranks succeeded in fighting their way back to the main body of the battalion. Contact was made on this flank with the 8th Battalion, who had taken up the trench near the road running *via* Good Old Man Farm to Ribecourt; but the right flank was still in the air until 10 a.m., when the 7th Royal Sussex manned the reserve line immediately in the rear of the battalion, and this position was connected with that of the 9th Battalion. Throughout the day bombing encounters continued. Neither water nor rations could be obtained. German aeroplanes flying only about 50 feet above them harassed them continually with machine-gun fire, despite the attempts of Lewis guns and rifles to drive them off. Yet, with the help of about half a company of the 7th Norfolks, they held to their positions.

The 8th Battalion, on the left, had gone through a similar ordeal. The Germans, who had broken through on the south, appeared in great strength on the right rear of the front line companies, who, in a few minutes, were completely cut off. Some 12 men only fought their way back to the reserve line. D Company went up to support and were overwhelmed and fell back, fighting, to the reserve line where the Battalion headquarters were established. The Germans were only 50 yards from the reserve line when the Commanding Officer, Lieut-Colonel N. B.

Elliott-Cooper, D.S.O., M.C., collected all available men of battalion headquarters and C and D Companies, about 120 in all, and led them in a counter-attack. The position was critical, but Colonel Elliott-Cooper's forlorn hope achieved an immediate success. The small body went forward cheering; the Germans wavered and were then driven back over the Cambrai road. But there heavy machine-gun fire was encountered. Elliott-Cooper himself fell. All the officers became casualties; and, seeing the impossibility of maintaining and consolidating the position, he ordered the withdrawal. He was only 29 years of age, and by this order he deliberately accepted the bitter fate of falling into the hands of the Germans. His advance had been daring and resolute. His order for the withdrawal was marked by high courage and selflessness. He deserved, as he received, the Victoria Cross; but, unfortunately, he died a prisoner in Germany.

The survivors fell back as they were ordered and withdrew to the reserve line. The German advance was checked in this quarter, and, with the 37th Brigade on the left and the 9th Battalion on the right, the new line was established. All enemy attacks were beaten off. The 8th lost 10 officers and 247 men. The 9th had lost 13 officers, including Lieutenant H. Reeve, Second Lieutenants Levi, Wason and Disney, killed, and 208 other ranks.

There was no further attack that night. But at 7 a.m. on the morning of December 1st the Germans attempted to cross the Cambrai road on the front of the 9th Battalion, towards La Vacquerie. They were repulsed by rifle and machine-gun fire; and the attack was repeated seven times with the same result. At 12.30 p.m. the enemy opened a heavy bombardment and then began bombing attacks. These were beaten off until about 1 p.m., when the supply of bombs had completely given out. The battalion were forced to withdraw 150 yards to a point just north of the Cambrai road, where they held the enemy. These two battalions had fought an engagement in conditions that were not paralleled until the German offensive of March,



LIEUT.-COLONEL N. B. ELLIOTT-COOPER, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., who won the V.C. while commanding the 8th Royal Fusiliers at the Battle of Cambrai.



1918, and, never ceasing to be an ordered fighting force, had given ground only when no troops could possibly have held it. At the end they handed over an organised position to the relieving troops. The 9th Battalion were the only troops to retain their positions south of the Cambrai-Gouzeaucourt road for these two days, during which no rations reached them, and the supply of bombs completely failed.

**Les Rues Vertes.**—The 2nd Battalion had come back into support on November 28th as counter-attack battalion; and when the German assault began Y and Z Companies were lying about the sugar factory at Masnières, W was in the quarry and X off the Cambrai road. Masnières was heavily shelled from 2 to 5 a.m., and at 6.15 the battalion stood to arms. At 7 a.m. the German attack from Crèvecœur made such rapid progress that the battery positions were taken in reverse, and the southern flank of Masnières was uncovered. X and Z Companies were quickly brought across the canal by the lock bridge near the sugar factory to form a defensive flank as far as the old Brigade rear headquarters in Les Rues Vertes, while two platoons of X Company were sent to help in the street fighting. For the Germans had not only penetrated the suburb, but had even captured the ammunition dump. The troops in point of fact were called upon to defend a position which virtually had already been lost.

Into this picture it is difficult to fit the achievement of Captain Gee, who won the Victoria Cross for multiplied acts of daring that seem, on calm reflection, to outshine the inventions of writers of fiction. At 8.50 a.m. the position in Les Rues Vertes seemed to be lost; and the amazing thing is that it was not abandoned. No one exactly knew where the Germans were, but they appeared to be everywhere and certainly in the most inconvenient places. Captain Gee, who was then at brigade headquarters, was ordered by telephone to form a defensive flank with servants and headquarters details. He at once sent Captain Loseby with 6 men to get into touch with

the right flank. Taking 4 signallers and 2 orderlies with him, he then set out to get a grip of the situation. But at the first corner firing was heard. A little further on the Germans could be seen. With four of the men he opened fire, while the other two seized whatever came first—tables, chairs, etc.—to form a barricade. The enemy were held off for about five minutes, and then a Lewis gun came up, and there was time to breathe. The second house beyond the barricade was the Brigade ammunition dump, full of small arm ammunition, bombs, etc., and Captain Gee determined to get to it. He knocked a hole through the wall of a house on his own side of the barricade and crawled through to the first dump, only to find both dump men dead and the quartermaster-sergeant missing. He then climbed a wall to the bomb store and was immediately seized by two German sentries.

He had a bayonet stick with him and a revolver, but he could not reach the latter, and in the struggle he killed one of the sentries with the stick while an orderly shot the other. He got back to the road again with a better realisation of the desperate nature of the crisis. Some 30 or 40 men had now arrived. Half of them were sent to Captain Loseby, others were set to the task of building another barricade; and, with the six remaining, he recaptured the bomb store and cleared three houses. Two companies of Guernsey Light Infantry now arrived from brigade headquarters. These were sent to the uncovered flank, posts were established on the three bridges across the canal, and a strong company were sent to the outskirts of the village with orders to build a barricade and link up on the left.

After this a bombing party were organised to set about clearing the houses on the Marcoing road. At this point the Germans' nerves appeared to wear thin, and they ran from house to house as the bombers got to work. Captain Gee, seeing that this part of his task appeared to be approaching completion, began to attend to the supply of ammunition and bombs to the troops across the canal and





CAPTAIN R. GEE, V.C., M.P., WHO WON THE V.C. AT THE BATTLE  
OF CAMBRAI.



at the bridges. He then worked up to the chateau and through a hole in the wall into the brewery yard. The Germans had already left ; and it was evident that when the houses on the other side of the Marcoing road were cleared, the village would again be in our possession. This task was handed on to a small party, and Captain Gee went up to the roof of the chateau to take stock of the position. The Germans were seen to be digging in about 100 yards clear of the village. He at once got a supply of bombs, and with the help of another orderly he put the machine-gun team out of action and captured the gun. Another machine gun was in the house near the Crucifix. A Stokes gun was ordered up, and Captain Gee now saw that there were posts all round the suburbs.

At the end of the village the men were still being troubled by a machine gun, and there were also numerous snipers at large. For a moment he had to take refuge in a shell-hole ; but it was necessary to order up a Stokes gun before dark to deal with the machine gun, which was situated in a corner house. So he made a dash for the barricade, reaching it across the open in safety, but was caught in the knee by a sniper as he jumped the barricade. He had had four orderlies shot at his side, had been a prisoner for a few minutes and had come through almost unprecedented risks. He wished now to carry on, but was ordered back to have his wound dressed.

Meanwhile part of the open flank had been held steadfastly by the 2nd Battalion. At 2 p.m. Captain Lathom Browne, with two platoons of W Company and the remaining platoon of X, took over the defences of Les Rues Vertes. The remaining platoon of W Company, under Second Lieutenant Brain, was sent to the sugar factory to hold the lock bridge. To these positions the troops held firmly. At 6 p.m. warning orders were issued in case the Brigade had to evacuate the area ; but, later in the evening, congratulations and orders to hold on to the end were received from army headquarters.

At six o'clock the next morning a heavy hostile barrage

was put down and a counter-attack followed. The enemy were beaten off by machine-gun and rifle fire. At 4 p.m. the enemy attacked in great force once more. On this occasion the advanced posts were driven in and the Germans entered the village. They were checked; but it was clear that the thin line of weary men could not hold out indefinitely in so precarious a position. At 7.30 p.m. the order to evacuate Masnières and Les Rues Vertes arrived; and at 11.15 the withdrawal began. In exactly an hour from the beginning of the retirement the last post at the sugar factory moved away. In small parties the battalion moved off westward, crossed the canal near Marcoing, and thence marched south of the Villers Plouich road to the Hindenburg support line, about 500 yards east of the Bois Couillet. At this point the battalion found their cookers and blankets. They were very weary; but they had steadfastly held to their positions in a time when the front line was like a leaky dam; and their defence must be accounted one of the great episodes in the battle.

**Bourlon.**—But it was in the Bourlon area that the main attack was delivered some two hours after the assault was made in the south. The density of the attack was extraordinary. Against the three divisions in line, the 56th, 2nd and 47th, four German divisions were directed with three more in support. From high ground within the salient, officers could see through their glasses the enemy advance, and the area seemed to be packed with men. The 2nd Division had taken over the section of the line between Bourlon Wood and Mœuvres. In the front line, lying between the 1st Royal Berks on the right and the 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps on the left, were the 17th Royal Fusiliers. At the opening of the battle they were holding a long trench (the "Rat's Tail"), which ran, almost at right angles from the main British line, 1,000 yards to a point overlooking the enemy's position. B Company, under Captain Walter Napoleon Stone, were occupying the sector nearest the German front line when



LIEUTENANT W. DARTNELL, 25TH ROYAL FUSILIERS, who won the V.C. in East Africa.



CAPTAIN W. N. STONE, 17TH ROYAL FUSILIERS, who gained the V.C. at Cambrai, November 30th, 1917.



the attack began ; and he was ordered to withdraw his company to the main line, leaving a rearguard to cover the retirement, as the position was judged to be too exposed. Captain Stone sent back three platoons, but, with Lieutenant Benzecry, remained behind with the rearguard. The action of this rearguard, under their inspiring leader, stands out remarkable in a day of extraordinary exploits. With bayonet, bullet and bomb, they held off the whole of the German attack until the main position of the battalion was fully organised, and they died to a man with their faces to the enemy.

Captain Stone's behaviour will never be forgotten while heroic deeds continue to inspire. The attack had developed against him and his small rearguard with unexpected speed, owing to the enemy being concealed in some dead ground. He stood on the parapet with the telephone, under a tremendous bombardment and hail of bullets, closely observing the enemy, and sending back valuable information. When last seen, the enemy had closed in upon the little band. Stone was seen fighting to the last, until he was shot through the head. The extraordinary coolness of this officer, and the accuracy of his information, enabled dispositions to be made just in time to save the line from disaster. In the official account of this incident, published at the beginning of the year 1918, Captain Stone's action is described "as a devoted example of the greatest of all sacrifices." He was granted the Victoria Cross. This was the third to be won by the Royal Fusiliers on the same day.

At 1 p.m. the 17th Battalion reorganised their line. The two advanced companies in the "Rat's Tail" had been withdrawn to the main line ; but C still retained two blocks beyond it, and these were held throughout the day. Their line was intact. Their positions were closely linked up with the units on the right and left ; and the men "were really enjoying the experience of killing Germans in large numbers at point-blank range." \*

\* Official account.

Early in the afternoon a very heavy attack was delivered on a front a mile west of Bourlon Wood. This was beaten off except on the extreme right of the 2nd Division, where the 1st Royal Berks lay on the right of the 17th Royal Fusiliers. Three posts were there lost, and a gap was formed at the same time between two battalions of the 47th Division. A company of the 23rd Royal Fusiliers were sent up, and, by a sharp counter-attack, re-established the Royal Berks' line. Another company assisted the 17th Battalion later in the day; and at 10 p.m. the battalion were relieved by the 24th Royal Fusiliers. The strength of the 17th Battalion on leaving the line was 20 officers and 351 other ranks.

The 22nd Battalion relieved the 13th Essex with two companies and the Highland Light Infantry with one company on the night of December 1st. The 13th Essex, on the left of the 2nd Division, had been heavily engaged on November 30th, but the 22nd Battalion's tour of the trenches was comparatively uneventful, except for a bombing attack on December 3rd, which was beaten off after half an hour's brisk fighting; and on the 5th the battalion were withdrawn to support in the old British line east of Hermies.

On the night of December 4th the 24th Battalion evacuated their positions according to orders; and on the following day, when the Germans began to make their way cautiously forward, they did considerable execution on them. On December 6th, at 6.15 a.m., the enemy attacked one of the battalion's bombing posts about 100 yards south of the Bapaume-Cambrai road. For about half an hour the Lewis gunners and bombers fought at close quarters, causing the Germans considerable damage. The defence rallied round the cool action of Sergeants A. F. Wood, E. Tarleton and Lance-Corporal G. Day, and the enemy were driven off. These three men were awarded the Military Medal for their skill and courage. A little later the enemy penetrated through a gap in the lines into the village of Graincourt. Sergeant D. McCabe was sent



out, with a patrol of two men, down the sunken road on the east of the village. By skilful and daring handling of his patrol, McCabe located the position of the enemy and inflicted heavy casualties upon them. McCabe also was awarded the Military Medal.

Another evacuation, the final one, was carried out on the night of the 6th, and by the early hours of December 7th the troops had successfully reached the new positions. The 17th Battalion had taken up positions in front of Lock 7, on the canal, on December 4th. At that time the guns were passing through them and dug-outs were being destroyed preparatory to the first stage of the withdrawal. Two days later the rearguards were withdrawn in front of the advancing Germans. At 1 a.m. on December 7th the battalion were ordered to establish three posts roughly 500 yards in front of the line, to be held at all costs. But it was impossible to site them in the darkness, and they were not established until dawn. On the following day the battalion were in touch with advance parties of the enemy. Corporals Whitson and Lowry made a gallant attempt to capture seven Germans, but they were unable to sprint fast enough! Intermittent bombing engagements took place during the whole of the day, and the Germans began to register on the front line. Shelling continued during the night, and the following day they were repeatedly attacked. They were holding at this time 2,000 yards of the front line; and when they were relieved on the night of the 9th they were thoroughly exhausted. But by this time the fighting had died down. The positions remained substantially the same for some months until the German offensive began.

## CHAPTER XII

### INTERLUDE

THE period which filled the interval between the Battle of Cambrai and the German attack on March 21st, 1918, marked a change in the general outlook which had its influence on the character of the training and daily routine. The High Command issued in December orders "having for their object immediate preparation to meet a strong and sustained hostile offensive. In other words a defensive policy was adopted. . . ."\*

In any case the winter imposed a truce on the armies, though it was impossible, in the earlier part of the period, to rule out the possibility of further operations on the Italian front, and several British divisions were sent thither. Included in this force were the 41st Division with their two Fusilier battalions.

But the lines were never quite at rest. Raids and counter-raids took place intermittently even on the quiet sectors. One incident that deserves mention is the German raid on the extreme left of the 17th Battalion's front. They were stationed on July 24th, 1917, in the canal sector, the training ground of numerous units, when a German patrol of about nine men suddenly fell upon three men holding a post in East Surrey Crater. A desperate struggle took place. One of the men contrived to make his escape and warned the front line. The other two were wounded, and the Germans dragged them back towards their front line. But the wounded men, finding the prospect uncongenial, kept their wits about them, and one of them suddenly broke away, and although wounded in five or six places, braved our own Lewis guns, which had opened

\* Despatch.

fire, and regained our lines. One German was left dead in the crater, and in this way both sides secured identifications at equal cost.

Another raid upon the same battalion, but in the Cambrai sector, had also a slightly paradoxical result. On December 21st some 30 Germans suddenly raided the battalion front at 10 o'clock in the morning. They were beaten off with ease by D Company, as the enemy obligingly forgot to pull the strings of their bombs before throwing them. A prisoner was taken and an interesting trophy secured. This was one of the new automatic pistols, which held 32 rounds in its magazine. The 17th determined to return the compliment, and on the following day a fighting patrol went out. But suddenly the fog lifted, and modesty suggested a prompt retirement.

A more important and useful raid took place almost on the eve of the German offensive. Second Lieutenant Fish and 17 other ranks entered the German lines on the night of March 18th, 1918. The previous day much movement had been observed in the opposite lines, and it was desirable to know the state of the trench garrisons and to secure identifications. Entering the German trenches opposite Anchor Sap, the small patrol killed 8 or 10 Germans, brought back three shoulder straps, secured useful information as to the defence system and returned with only one casualty. For this excellent little action the battalion received the congratulations of all the brigades and of the 2nd Division.

Both the 13th and the 10th Battalions figured in a more serious operation which took place on March 8th, 1918. On this day the 13th Battalion were in the front line astride the Menin road, with the 13th King's Royal Rifle Corps on their left, when they were warned by the brigade that the enemy intended to attack during the night to capture the high ground north-west of Gheluvelt, which had been won by a great outpouring of blood in the summer and autumn offensive of 1917. The companies were warned, and a preparatory bombardment was fired at

dawn, but without provoking a reply. At 6.30 a.m. the Germans opened a bombardment, which grew fiercer after 9.30 a.m. and continued with a short break at 1 o'clock until about 5 p.m. North of the Menin road the shelling was very severe, and the S.O.S. was sent up by the battalion on the left. The counter-barrage came down on the whole sector within two minutes. On the front of the 13th Battalion no attack developed; but the bombardment had caused heavy casualties in No. 3 Company, north of the road, and at 6.30 p.m. Sergeant A. Clark sent back a message, "Please send as many stretcher-bearers as possible. Only few men left to carry on. Two officers killed, two wounded. Please send reinforcements as soon as possible." Clark, in the meantime, took over the command of the company, re-disposed the men under heavy shell and trench-mortar fire, until such time as reinforcements could be sent, thereby denying to the enemy an attempted lodgment in our front line posts. Clark received the Military Medal for his behaviour on this occasion. A platoon of No. 2 Company was at once sent forward, and platoons of No. 4 followed afterwards under Second Lieutenant H. J. Rowland, and the line was held intact. Captain F. W. Bower and Second Lieutenant W. Henderson were killed on this occasion; five officers were wounded, and there were 140 other ranks casualties.

Meanwhile, on the left, the 10th Battalion had become involved. They were in support at the beginning of the battle, but at 2 p.m., after a heavy bombardment, the Germans attacked the 13th King's Royal Rifle Corps, and D Company were sent up as reinforcements. The Germans attacked in great force, and, after a severe struggle, penetrated the British positions. The desperate situation which resulted provided Lance-Corporal Charles Graham Robertson, M.M., of D Company, with an opportunity for an action calling as much on his skill as his heroism. He was in charge of a machine gun, and, finding the Germans had almost cut him off, he sent back two men for reinforcements. Meanwhile, with one man, he remained

at his post, and inflicted heavy loss with his gun until he was completely cut off. No help arrived, and he withdrew about 10 yards, and there stood again, pouring a sustained fire into the enemy. The two men were at length compelled to evacuate the position, and they fell back upon a defended post. The Germans continued to press forward in great numbers, and Robertson mounted the parapet with his comrade, and, fixing his gun in a shell-hole, resumed his task of shooting down the Germans who were pouring down and across the top of an adjoining trench. The value of Robertson's resolute and skilful defence can hardly be exaggerated. His comrade was killed ; he himself was severely wounded. But he worked his gun until his ammunition was exhausted, and then he managed to crawl back, bringing the gun with him. He was awarded the V.C.

At 7.15 the Germans had broken into the line, and B Company were sent up. Lieut.-Colonel Waters now took over the command of the brigade sector. Communications with brigade headquarters had been cut. The 13th Rifles had lost heavily, and the Germans had established themselves, with machine guns, in our lines. Second Lieutenants Dexter and Scott, of the Fusiliers, made several journeys to the front under a most severe fire with 20 men from 13th K.R.R.C. headquarters and carried up 2,360 bombs. When darkness fell the Germans had secured a small part of the British positions, but were firmly established there. During the night three counter-attacks were launched. B Company attacked first and failed through lack of bombs. A and B Companies then advanced and succeeded in establishing a strong point, but were unable to press the attack further. On the third attack a complete success was achieved, the enemy were driven back and the position was re-established. The 10th had lost heavily in the operations, but not so heavily as the 13th Battalion. Second Lieutenants H. C. B. Sandall and W. G. Crook were killed, five officers were wounded, and there were 61 other ranks casualties. Later in the day

(March 9th) a divisional wire was received: "The Corps Commander wishes to congratulate the division, and especially the two battalions concerned, for their successful defence in last night's attack." Lieut.-Colonel Waters and Captain Bainbridge received the D.S.O., Captain Tanner and Second Lieutenant Edington the M.C., and Captain Penfold a bar to the M.C., for these operations, with the congratulations of the Corps, Divisional and Brigade Commanders.

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The 7th Battalion on December 21st performed an exploit which seems almost incredible. They were resting and refitting in the north when Lieut.-Colonel C. Playfair succumbed to the stress and strain of the Ypres operations and had to go to hospital. Major A. E. Gallagher, D.S.O., took over command on the 2nd until two days later, when Major E. G. L'Estrange Malone rejoined from divisional headquarters. On December 9th they left the area and a week later relieved the 9th Royal Irish Fusiliers on Welsh Ridge, in the salient south of Marcoing. On the 21st a message was received from brigade headquarters asking that every endeavour should be made to secure a prisoner for identification purposes. It was a bright moonlight night; there was a white frost on the ground, and for 300 yards one could see clearly. It was therefore the very last kind of night for patrol activity. But Lance-Corporal T. Norris took out a patrol, and, discovering that the enemy were also desirous of securing a prisoner, decoyed them into the hands of a standing patrol under Corporal G. Collins. A prisoner was thus captured within three and a half hours of the request being received from the brigade. The Divisional and Brigade Commanders congratulated the battalion on their promptitude, which was surely unique, and Lance-Corporal Norris secured the Military Medal.

The battalion spent Christmas out of the trenches, but on December 27th they went back to the front line in time to receive a heavy German attack. The position was

almost untenable. The trench was the former Hindenburg support trench, and the wire was still standing *westward*. There were no communication trenches leading back to the support line, and the right of the line formed a sharp salient with a sap at one point to the German trench blocked by a pile of sandbags. At 8 a.m. on the morning of December 30th the Germans opened a furious barrage, chiefly enfilade, and then attacked over the snow in white suits. B, C and D Companies suffered heavily. D in the salient lost all their officers and most of the men either killed or captured. The men could not retire, even if they had wished to do so, because of the lack of communication trenches. The wire precluded a retirement over the open. Captain Davidson, the medical officer, and the whole of the aid post in D Company headquarters were captured. A counter-attack was delivered, and, though it failed, the Germans were held and the position was consolidated. On the following day the enemy put down a heavy barrage, and between twenty and thirty Germans were seen approaching the line. A sharp burst of Lewis-gun fire dispersed them, and the battalion were relieved later in the day. They had lost 9 officers (6 missing) and 244 other ranks. The bulk of the latter were missing. The 7th were now reduced to a trench strength of 11 officers and 167 other ranks, and when Lieut.-Colonel Malone returned from leave on January 13th he found his battalion amalgamated, temporarily, with the Artists Rifles.

The 1st and 12th Royal Fusiliers had left the Ypres area in the third week of September; and on the 25th found themselves at Vadencourt, near the Omignon River. On October 28th—29th both battalions were in the front line when a patrol of the 1st were caught by a much heavier German patrol who attempted to surround them. But the Fusiliers retired behind their wire and inflicted heavy casualties. It was apparently the same German patrol which, a few hours later, ran into the "Day Posts" of the 12th Battalion in Somerville Wood. They were driven off, leaving behind a German officer who provided

a useful identification. Second Lieutenant Burch and Lance-Corporal J. Thompson were officially commended for their services on this occasion. The 12th Battalion were very active in patrolling at this time, and a letter from Major-General A. C. Daly, G.O.C. 24th Division, congratulated the battalion in striking terms: "Second Lieutenant Hills, of the 12th Royal Fusiliers, spends most of his time in No Man's Land, and has been doing exceptionally good reconnaissance and patrol work ever since the division came into this bit of the line. He has gained valuable information several times. Another officer who always accompanies Second Lieutenant Hills is Second Lieutenant Mears-Devenish, also of the 12th Royal Fusiliers." It was but natural that after this the patrols should be more active and venturesome than ever; and on November 27th Lieutenant A. H. Lee, M.C., proceeded along the Omignon River in daylight reconnoitring. Congratulations were received for this piece of work from the Brigade and Divisional Commanders.

The 1st Battalion, while in divisional reserve at Vendelles on December 16th, had the honour of being inspected by Major-General W. B. Hickie, C.B. They had returned to the line on the Hervilly left subsector, with Major Hebden in command, when they were called upon to assist a raid of the Rifle Brigade. Their rôle consisted of making a demonstration to deceive the Germans as to where the raid was taking place. On the night of January 19th, 1918, dummy figures were erected in front of the barbed wire, and at 6.45 the following morning the Rifle Brigade, on the right of the Fusiliers, raided the enemy trenches. The 1st Battalion assisted at the same time with intense Lewis-gun fire, and no doubt the three groups of dummy figures looked sufficiently impressive. The German artillery retaliated, but there were no casualties, and the episode seemed only an amusing interlude.

On December 11th the 4th Battalion relieved the 8th East Yorks in the Noreuil right subsector, very near the place where they had been engaged at the time of the battle



of Cambrai. The Pudsey support trench was lost the following day, and it was arranged that the 4th Royal Fusiliers should retake it and London support trench. But the Germans heavily bombarded the line immediately before the attack, and the venture proved a failure. W and Y Companies relieved the 12th West Yorks and 1st Northumberland Fusiliers in the front line and London support. Y and Z were placed under the orders of the 13th King's Liverpools, and the latter company, holding a block in Pudsey support, succeeded in advancing it 150 yards up the trench. But this useful little success proved to be a dubious advantage, for Second Lieutenant Goddard was killed on December 15th owing to our own artillery falling short into this support. In addition to this, there were 65 casualties among other ranks.

**Italy.**—For two of the Fusilier Battalions the winter held a very pleasant experience. The 26th and 32nd Royal Fusiliers entrained in the second week of November for Italy. At Ventimiglia, where they crossed the Franco-Italian frontier, C and D Companies of the 26th Battalion marched through the town amid scenes which recall the reception of the British troops in France in August, 1914. The march became a sort of triumphal progress, and showers of carnations fell upon the men. Italy had recently suffered a very heavy defeat, and the troops had not yet shown that they could check the apparently irresistible advance of the enemy. It was this that made the appearance of the British troops so welcome to the Italians; and the two Fusilier battalions, to the end of their stay in Italy, received the most cordial reception from the people. At Genoa the officers of C and D Companies of the 26th Battalion were welcomed in the waiting-room of the main station, though it was near midnight and they were in easy stages of undress. Barrels of wine were broached on the platform, and the companies departed flushed and happy.

On November 19th the 26th Battalion began a series of forced marches from Cerlongo to the front. They marched

in battle order with advance guards, and at night outposts were placed. During the seven days November 19th—25th inclusive, the battalion covered 141 kilometres with only one day's rest. On the 24th they made 32 kilometres over rough mountain roads. The billets were almost invariably poor on this march ; and it says much for the battalion that few men dropped out, though many were of short service. On December 1st the battalion reached Bavaria, south of the Montello, on the right rear of the brigade.

Service in Italy was not very strenuous for either battalion. The Montello is a hog's-back hill which lies in the angle of the Piave where it turns south towards the coast. It falls sharply to the river with a shallow foreshore.

The river in winter was rough and icy cold, with a swift current that constantly changed the landmarks in the shallows, and made cross river patrols precarious and well nigh impossible. Cover was plentiful on the Montello. Caves and dug-outs in the sides of the numerous hollows of the hill gave ample protection, with the river as a guard against surprise. But movement during the day was forbidden, and the night was turned into the normal day with its routine of meals, beginning at 6 p.m. A series of parallel roads cut the hill ; and the 26th held the left series between roads 3 and 5, with the 32nd on the right, guarding the Nervesa bridgehead.

There were many patrols during the second tour of the front line trenches after the Christmas interlude, but the success was not proportioned to the amount of energy and willingness expended. The river proved too great a handicap. On January 18th the battalion were relieved, and a few days later moved by march route to the G.H.Q. training area at Padua, where life was easy and pleasant. Athletics formed part of the training, and a routine feature was a run, in the afternoon, uphill to the Monastery and back. The battalion had only left Galzignano a few days when the news came that they were to return to France. At the beginning of March they left Italy, and

after a long train journey and a march arrived at Sous St. Leger, where the division was reorganised.

The brigades lost one of their battalions ; and the 32nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers was disbanded, the *personnel* being amalgamated with that of the 26th Battalion. It was a fate which befell several other battalions of the Royal Fusiliers about this time. The 8th, who had fought so magnificently throughout the campaign, ceased to be in February. They had been closely and intimately associated with the 9th during their service in France, and their stand at Cambrai had been memorable. The 12th Battalion, who had been linked with the 1st for over two years in the 17th Brigade, also disappeared the same month. Parties of this battalion went to swell other Fusilier battalions: the 1st, 10th and 11th. The 20th, the one remaining Public School battalion, received orders for disbandment on February 1st, and the *personnel* were divided between the 2nd, 4th and 13th Battalions. The 22nd (Kensington) Battalion were disbanded by the Brigadier who had been the most popular and inspiring of their commanding officers, and the 23rd and 24th Battalions were strengthened accordingly.

At the outbreak of the great German offensive in March, 1918, there were only fifteen battalions of Royal Fusiliers apart from the battalions of the London Regiment.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE

It is strange now, looking back on the past, how little people in England knew of the turn of events in the early part of the year 1918. Sir Douglas Haig had pointed out that the British Army definitely looked to the defensive ; but his despatches were not published until long afterwards, and the suggestions of a German offensive were almost as quickly denied in the English Press as they were expressed. At the front there was little ambiguity about the position. Towards the end of the second week in March the Germans apparently threw aside all attempts at concealment. Troop movements could be seen from the British lines, and German officers were observed a few days before the attack examining the British positions through their glasses. But, despite the knowledge of the staff and the open demonstration of the enemy, the attack burst over the line with remarkable suddenness and developed with unexpected speed.

The Germans struck between the Oise and the Scarpe. At the moment when the blow fell the extreme right of the line was held by the 58th Division with the second line Londons, with the 18th Division on their left. This division also included a Royal Fusilier unit (11th Battalion), and thus the regiment were represented in one of the critical sectors of the front by a number of battalions. Further north, almost in the centre of the Fifth Army front, lay the 24th Division, including the 1st Battalion. Within the Third Army area lay the 7th and 4th Battalions, the former being still in the Cambrai salient and the latter on the Cherisy-Fontaine sector. The 56th Division, with the first line

Londons, lay north of the Scarpe, just beyond the main area of the German attack ; and there were other Fusilier battalions in reserve in the Third Army sector. The 2nd Division were near Rocquigny, and the 41st west of Albert. These two divisions included four Royal Fusilier units, all of whom became involved in the actions of the German offensive in Picardy.

Of the other battalions of Royal Fusiliers who were in France at this moment, the 2nd, 10th, and 13th were in the Ypres sector when the attack began ; but the two last were involved in the aftermath of the Picardy offensive. The last remaining Royal Fusilier battalion, the 9th, took up station on the Ancre at a critical moment in the attack and did excellent service.

To each of the battalions their own individual experience was of paramount importance, and these were days when almost every hour held an episode of thrilling interest. But much of the experience was characteristic and typical rather than unique, and it is possible to form some picture of this phase of the fighting in France from the detailed record of one or two battalions.

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The 7th Battalion, in the front line on Highland Ridge, experienced a German gas barrage on March 11th. It began about 7 p.m. and continued until 4 a.m. the next day. During these hours there was a continuous whistle of shells which fell upon the support lines and battery positions, exploding with a very slight noise. The wind being towards the German lines, the gas was carried back to the British front line, and the men had to wear their gas helmets for four or five hours. At the point of exhaustion, they removed the helmets only to fall a prey sooner or later to the fumes rising from the ground. The barrage was also put down on the following night, when the battalion were to be relieved ; and, despite the risk, the arrangement for relief was confirmed. The men stumbled along through the gas. The night was dark, and the fumes of the explosions made it darker. The road was pitted with

shell holes, and the men fell into them. Some, splashed by the contents of the shells, were burned on the arms and neck. Weary, bathed in perspiration, half stifled, they stumbled on through the gun positions to the train of open trucks, in which, as a sort of natural climax, they were kept waiting long enough in the biting air to encourage chills before being moved to the rest camp, five miles away. Coughs, sore throats, sore eyes, voices reduced to a whisper, were the portion of all; but about 250 men had to be sent to hospital. The battalion went back to the Ribecourt right sector; and, on the night of their return, 100 boys joined them. They had come from England and arrived after three days' travelling in trucks at 11 a.m. on March 21st. They had never seen a trench and had no experience of actual war.

**March 21st.**—At 4 a.m. the preliminary bombardment began. High explosive shells with trench mortars firing with extraordinary rapidity made a deafening noise. But the 7th Royal Fusiliers were incorrigibly cheerful. "Nothing to worry about" was the report from A Company on the right. D reported a strange cloud approaching, and this was soon of the density of a London fog. B discovered that the Germans were attacking and had got into the trenches of the battalion on the left. B beat off the attack on their front by Lewis gun and rifle fire. The S.O.S. rocket was invisible in the smoke. A pigeon insisted on choosing the wrong direction. Runners at last got through, and the barrage came down in front of the front line. But the bombardment grew heavier and heavier. B Company had to withdraw on the uncovering of their flank. Captain K. Hawkins, M.C., the commander, was killed at the entrance to his headquarters. Captain J. Foster, M.C., was called up to battalion headquarters to arrange a counter-attack with C Company. He was twice buried on the way up and knocked about by the *débris* of explosions, but eventually he arrived. The men from the left battalion began to drift in. The right battalion's line was pierced, and the men flowed into the

Royal Fusiliers' trench. A Company was ordered to re-organise them and take the lost ground, and the situation was restored. An officer's servant had taken charge on the left, and the line was organised and vigilant. At the end of the day the battalion had held their own and assisted to prop up a shaky position.

But this was one of the bright spots in a disastrous day. The 4th Royal Fusiliers had been subjected to the same almost unbearable bombardment. The front line posts were lost in the attack which followed, but at 9.45 a.m. the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers had restored the brigade front. At 3.40 p.m. the Germans came on again. They were beaten off by machine-gun fire in the battle zone, but at 6.15 p.m. the battalion were ordered to retire to Brown Support. They took up the new positions with the 2nd Suffolks on the right and the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers on the left.

On the extreme south of the line the Fusilier Brigade of the 58th Division had been heavily engaged and had fought valiantly against overwhelming odds. The 2/2 Londons were holding a long line, the northern boundary being Travecy and the southern the Oise Canal, nearly 5,000 yards. Their strength at this time was 22 officers and 585 other ranks, an absurdly small body for so perilous a length of front; and, as three German divisions appear to have been thrown against them, the battle had not opened long before the battalion were overwhelmed. The marshes of the Oise were thought to justify so long a line; but the water was unusually low, and the thick mist more than neutralised the advantages of this obstacle. Travecy was gassed, and no further news was gained of A Company, stationed there. With the ten men of the trench mortar battery, they numbered no more than 200; and within an hour they were a besieged garrison, cut off from all communication with the rest of the army. These men held their original positions as long as there remained even the ghost of a chance of success. A platoon, reduced to 10 men and an officer, held the southern end of the village

until only the officer and a wounded man remained. Two or three hundred dead Germans lay about their post before they fell back to the central keep. The other platoons fought with similar stubbornness until at noon the remnants of all were concentrated in the keep. This small body, perhaps 50 to 60 strong, was seldom left in peace. Throughout the day and night and up to dusk on March 22nd attempts were made to rush the position, for they found time and opportunity to enliven the enemy transport on the St. Quentin road, and a group of German staff officers who paused on the road were reminded forcibly that the little garrison still existed. At length, when darkness fell on the 22nd, the weary and hungry men had exhausted all their ammunition. They had used in their gallant resistance 18,000 rounds S.A.A., 200 trench mortar shells and 400 hand grenades. They had exacted a heavy price, and the remaining 44, including the wounded, were taken prisoners after two days' resistance to the inevitable.

B Company and battle headquarters at La Fère stood to their positions, though they, too, were cut off at 9.30 a.m. They were still firing in the evening, and then, their ammunition almost at an end, tried to fight back to the battalion. At 10 a.m. Captain Houghton and part of C Company attempted to defend the right flank. A quarter of an hour later Captain G. C. Lees, the adjutant, and 40 other ranks were all that remained of the battalion. With these men C.S.M. Boag fell back to the Crozat Canal to defend the battle zone. The 2/4th had moved to the canal bank at Fargniers the night before; and, stationed in the battle zone on the morning of the attack, they became almost at once involved in the fighting. The Germans, advancing with great rapidity, gained a footing in the eastern half of Fargniers, but at 11 a.m. were completely held in the battle zone, despite repeated attacks. The 3rd Londons, who had now joined the brigade, were in the rear zone, and two companies reinforced Fargniers and the Farme Rouge in the afternoon. Quessy was garrisoned by a composite



force, including the reserve and tunnelling companies. At 8.30 p.m. the enemy were still held, but the Fusiliers were ordered to withdraw across the canal on the reorganisation of the division's front. The retirement was carried out successfully, without the enemy's knowledge. At the end of the day, in which it had seemed almost hopeless to attempt to cope with the situation, the battle zone had been lost, and the Fusilier Brigade were weaker by 1,266 officers and men. The 2/2nd had been practically wiped out. Their task had been quite impossible, and they had fallen under its dead weight.

Even the 11th Battalion in the division lying north of the 58th agreed that the opening bombardment was the worst ever experienced. They were at Caillouel when the battle opened, on the right rear of the Fusilier brigade of the 58th Division. But at 8 a.m. they were ordered to the Tombelle Wood, and by midday the lorries had taken them thither. At 1 p.m. they were ordered to counter-attack and retake the switch line between Montescourt and Ly Fontaine. The Germans were already at Gibercourt, half-way between these two places; and it was necessary to check the advance. The Fusiliers crossed the Crozat Canal to Montescourt, and then, with the Northants on their right, swept ahead at dusk. The 11th Battalion's advance brushed away all obstacles, and a little after 7 p.m. the battalion set about the work of consolidation. But by this time the enemy were close up to the canal from Fargniers to Quessy, and the work of the 11th was interrupted by the arrival of further orders. They had to form part of a rearguard covering the retirement of the 14th Division on their northern flank and then to withdraw across the canal to Jussy. The men marched back with the experience, novel on this day, of having carried out a successful advance.

The 1st Battalion had been in the line in front of Vendelles on March 12th, and five days later could easily see the German officers examining the positions with field glasses. But they were relieved on the following day, and

were out of the line when the offensive began. They promptly moved to battle positions—A and B were in the front line, C and D in the brown line east of Vendelles—and for an hour were compelled to wear gas helmets. Battalion headquarters had to be moved four times owing to the heavy shelling, and the German aeroplanes were very active. But there were singularly few casualties, though Second Lieutenants J. A. Mears-Devenish and L. G. Peaston were killed, and Second Lieutenant C. H. Matthews seriously wounded.

**March 22nd.**—On March 22nd the attack was continued over the whole front. The left front of the 24th Division after a gallant stand had been forced back through the successes of the enemy further north; and in the afternoon the 1st Battalion, with the rest of the division, retired through the 50th Division to the third line of defence at Bernes. On this day they suffered more severely, among the casualties being Second Lieutenant R. W. Uphill killed, Captain W. L. T. Fisher wounded, and Captain G. A. Jones, Second Lieutenants A. Kerry and S. W. Wallis, missing.

The 7th Battalion had held the line on the first day of battle; they were now to retire. At 1 a.m. they were ordered to withdraw to the support line and be clear of the front line within two hours. There was no transport, and what could not be carried had to be destroyed. Heavy trench mortars and gas cylinders were made useless, and the battalion took to the duckboard track. The next morning the enemy advanced in small disconnected bodies, while an aeroplane, flying about 150 feet overhead, took stock of the new positions. The British artillery at first showed no sign of life; the German was all too active, and the infantry moved ahead in perfect security until they came within range of the Lewis guns. At about 11 a.m. the British artillery opened, and the German advance was checked. At 8 p.m. the withdrawal was resumed.

The 4th Battalion also were compelled to retreat on this

day. The Germans had made considerable headway on the right of the 34th Division, causing that unit to retire and thus exposing the right flank of the 3rd Division. In the afternoon a determined attack was made on the 4th Battalion's block in Shaft Trench, but it was beaten off. The battalions on both sides of the 4th were driven from their positions ; and the Royal Fusiliers, after holding the enemy off for some time with both flanks in the air, were withdrawn. The new front line was established about 7 p.m., and some time after parties of the 2nd K.R.R. and 2nd Suffolks reported themselves. It had been an unsatisfactory day, for the battalion had been compelled to retire while they were still perfectly able to hold up the weight of the attack on their own sector. Captain J. A. Coley was killed during the action, but the casualties were not heavy.

At the other end of the line the remains of the London battalions fought valiantly to hold the Germans off the canal. A Company of the 3rd Londons held out in Tergnier against counter-attacks, and it was not until evening that the village changed hands. The 2/4th were in the reserve line, about a mile to the west, at Voetul. At 6.30 p.m. low-flying aeroplanes attacked the position, and were beaten off with machine-gun fire. At night patrols were sent out. Though the battalion had suffered so heavily, they had lost none of their spirit ; and they succeeded in capturing a number of prisoners, including a machine gun and its crew.

The 11th Battalion had reached their new positions after the withdrawal across the canal, after midnight. They were thoroughly tired out and very hungry, and the cooks were the most pleasant sight they had on the west bank of the canal. Everything else was sufficient to suggest despair. The canal was an obstacle to the German advance ; but above Jussy it makes a sharp bend to the west, leaving the town in a small salient. The German machine guns were able to enfilade the position and make it untenable. The 11th Royal Fusiliers soon

had experience of the difficulties of the position. Shortly after daylight the German attack began. Field guns and trench mortars were brought up, under cover of which repeated attempts were made to cross the canal. In the afternoon, after renewed attacks in strength, the enemy secured a footing on the west side of the canal. A fierce struggle took place on the towpath, but, with the help of A Company of Northants, the situation was restored, and the Germans were forced back across the canal. Tergnier had been lost; the enemy were across the canal in that sector; but on the front of the 54th Brigade, which included the 11th Royal Fusiliers, the line was still intact at nightfall.

**March 23rd.**—The following was one of the most critical days of the offensive. Both the Third and Fifth Armies had readjusted their front, and the day was to put the new positions to the test. The night had witnessed another withdrawal of the 7th Battalion. At 8 p.m. on the 22nd the battalion had begun to move back through Trescault to the Metz switch at the southern edge of Havrincourt Wood. The imposing name was applied to a group of trenches, about two feet deep, with no field of fire and without dug-outs. There was no cover, and no communication. There was no water, no transport, little ammunition; and when the Germans were seen advancing in the morning the battalion were ordered to retire once more. Captain Thomas was placed in command of the rearguard, while Captain Foster led the first two companies. They marched through the wood to Neuville. Shells fell among the rearguard, but fortunately the casualties were few. The battalion at length reached Lechelle. The trenches were poor. The battalion had no rations. The water was cut off. There was no reserve of ammunition. The Germans were seen to be advancing from the south and from the right flank. At this moment the 1st Artists Rifles and the 4th Bedfords were holding a line east of Ytres, and the 7th Royal Fusiliers were in support. The position rapidly grew

critical. Heavy shell began to fall on the huts in Lechelle where the men had been placed for greater safety. But unless they retired, they would be cut off. So the battalion had to fall back over the open to the Rocquigny-Bus road. The Germans opened fire from the south. Shrapnel, high explosive and machine-gun fire made the situation almost intolerable. At last the battalion got through the barrage; and then Captain Forster sounded his hunting horn, and the stragglers began to collect from various directions. Major Whigham was evacuated with shell shock. Lieut.-Colonel Malone had been wounded by a machine gun. From the point of view of efficiency these were very severe blows. Captain J. Forster, M.C., assumed command. At 7 p.m. the battalion were ordered to fill the gap between the 47th Division and the right of the 190th Brigade. The left of the battalion was moved to the Bus-Lechelle road, when the enemy were reported advancing on Bus. An intense machine-gun fire was opened on the men, and touch could not be obtained with troops on the left, where the rest of the Brigade were supposed to be. A patrol sent out to Bus found the Germans there, and did not return. Dumps were on fire on every side. The enemy were seen to be advancing rapidly towards the main road. The position appeared to be beyond hope.

Many battalions in these days had the same feeling of complete isolation, as though no one was fighting and prepared to fight but themselves. The 2nd Division were operating very close to the area of the 7th Battalion, and to the Fusilier battalions included in it the retirement of the 63rd Division appeared inexplicable and tended to make their own position untenable. The central control of the operations appeared to have given way. The 17th Battalion Royal Fusiliers had been in the line near La Vacquerie in the third week of March. On the 20th they could observe a number of German staff officers in the enemy positions opposite their front. Hundreds of men were seen entering and leaving the trenches in full pack,

and machine guns were being taken up to the front and support lines. But the Royal Fusiliers were not left to resolve the riddle. They were relieved that night and went back to Rocquigny. On March 22nd they began to move up again with the 24th Royal Fusiliers, the 5th Brigade being attached to the 17th Division as reserve troops. The 17th Battalion moved up to the Green Line as the 24th moved back to it on March 23rd. At 2 a.m. the 17th were standing to in expectation of an immediate attack. Colonel Weston was appointed outpost commander of the 6th Brigade. At 10 a.m. and again at 1 p.m. the line was heavily shelled. Headquarters had already been twice moved; and they were moved once again in the afternoon, to the north-east corner of Haplin-court. About 4.50 p.m. the Germans were seen to be entering Velu Wood in large numbers, and a few minutes later enemy shells began to burst all round and over the back areas. The Germans were already in Bus.

Meanwhile at 2 p.m. the 17th Division had retired through the Green Line, which now became the front line. The 24th Battalion were astride the Bertincourt-Velu road, but two companies were now sent to reserve positions south-west of Bertincourt. The 17th Battalion at this moment had already moved further west under the threat of an outflanking movement from the south. At 10 p.m. the enemy attacked the headquarters troops and the remains of the 1st K.R.R. just north of Bus. The two reserve companies of the 24th formed a defensive flank north-east of Bus, and the attack was beaten off. The troops fought in complete ignorance of the dispositions of the 63rd Division, on their right. The Germans were in Bus, but the 7th Royal Fusiliers could not have been much more than 1,000 yards away, and between them were the other battalions of the 190th Brigade.

The readjustment of the Third Army positions south of the Scarpe required the withdrawal of the 4th Battalion with the 3rd Division and the divisions on their flanks. The retirement was carried out between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m.

The Germans were already in the rear of the support line, but no casualties were suffered, and the movement was completed without incident.

On the front of the Fifth Army the day witnessed a more critical development. In the morning the 1st Battalion took up positions in front of Monchy Lagache, with C and D Companies in the front line and A and B in support. On the previous evening General Gough had intended to secure the main Peronne bridgehead by a line between Vraisne and Croix. Monchy Lagache lay at about the centre of the position, and the 1st Battalion were therefore looking forward to a stand. But in the morning Gough's position was such that he judged it too great a hazard to risk decisive action with tired troops against an apparently limitless stream of advancing Germans, and orders were accordingly given for a gradual withdrawal to the line of the Somme. The 1st Battalion therefore retired from Monchy Lagache, fighting rearguard actions. Part of the retreat was covered by the 72nd Brigade, and the battalion reached the Licourt position at night after a very trying day, in which, however, but few casualties had been sustained.

On the night of the 22nd the 11th Battalion, as we have seen, were still holding the left sector of the canal to Jussy. But at dawn on the next morning, under cover of a thick fog, the Germans forced the canal crossing and began to issue in force from the town. Second Lieutenant Smedley scouted right out to the left flank, now in the air, "and up to the village under heavy machine-gun fire. This highly valuable work was carried out with the greatest pluck and determination. During the subsequent withdrawal Second Lieutenant Smedley, although wounded, carried his task to completion by covering the left flank." Such is the official description of an action which gained for this officer the M.C. But in reality this piece of work was one of extraordinary daring. The fog was almost impenetrable beyond a few feet. The battalion had only moved back to Jussy the day before, and it was under

such conditions that Smedley felt his way to the German position. No one, indeed, could tell, under such conditions, where the enemy were. And when a little after noon they became located, they were some distance in the rear of the canal on the Jussy-Faillouel road. The thin line on the canal became like a sieve, and knots of Germans trickled through. The battle line became a scene of small isolated encounters. Major Deakin and Captain Percy were captured. The Germans had got round both flanks, and penetrated through the patches of the line they had obliterated. Captain Brooking for fourteen hours defended the position held by his company on the canal line against repeated attempts by the enemy to cross in large numbers. The thick fog made this extremely difficult, " and it was by his personal example and skilful handling that the enemy were frustrated with considerable losses. Eventually he was badly wounded, but continued to encourage his men with the utmost disregard of danger " until he was cut off.

The defence of the canal was most gallant. The officers everywhere suffered terribly, fighting till they fell or were cut off and captured. Lieutenant Knott killed four of the enemy, and then, his ammunition exhausted, clubbed another before he was killed. Part of the battalion did not receive the order to retire, and when the fog lifted at midday the Germans were in front and on both flanks ; only a small party got back to the railway line. There another stand was made with the headquarters troops, until the Germans were within 100 yards and were again working round the flanks. The colonel fought with this body and escaped with the remnants. Sergeant W. Brisby, M.M., gained his D.C.M. by his coolness and extraordinary courage. He organised the party who fought through the enveloping line and took part in the last stand. Private Jordan secured the same decoration for organising a bayonet attack when called upon to surrender. By this means the remainder of his company secured the freedom to get back to the battalion.



With various intermediate halts, the 11th Royal Fusiliers at length reached Caillouel; but they returned to the village in a very different condition from that in which they had left it. They had held an exposed position on the canal, and no gallantry could compensate for the handicaps of their position and the day. They were now only 2 officers and 25 other ranks strong; and even when the battle surplus had been embodied, including tailors, police, pioneers, shoemakers and drums, they only mustered 8 officers and 180 other ranks. Yet the battalion were full of spirit, though they were placed in brigade reserve.

The 3rd Londons on the same day were engaged at Noreuil, and fell back to Chauny, where, with the 2/2nd Battalion, positions were taken up for the morrow.

**March 24th.**—On the night of March 23rd—24th the battle front south of Ypres was the critical quarter of the line, and the 24th saw the development of the disorganisation which had begun on the previous day. The 4th Battalion again gave more than they got, and the constantly repulsed attacks cost the enemy dearly. Ludendorff noted how exhausted the Seventeenth Army were on March 25th, and the steadfast stand of the 4th Battalion played its part in the general scheme which achieved this successful result, for this flank became the fixed point upon which the remainder of the Third and the Fifth Armies pivoted.

The 26th Battalion (41st Division) had been brought up to the front hurriedly on the first day of the offensive. On the 22nd the division had entered the front line near Vaulx-Vraucourt to fill the breach which was opening between the 40th and 6th Divisions. The battalion were in support, though one after another the companies became involved on the flanks of the brigade, and fought very valiantly against repeated attacks. On the 24th the position on the Fifth Army front had changed so fundamentally that the Third Army front was drawn back a much greater distance, and Lieut.-Colonel H. M. Tuite was killed while commanding the rearguard, who covered

the retirement of the mass of the battalion. When he fell an attempt was made to carry him back ; but, seeing how near the enemy were and how inevitable it was that the men should be captured if they stopped to remove him, he ordered them to leave him. He was heard of no more, and died in this way on the field of battle very gallantly.

At the same time, a little to the south the 2nd Division were also retiring. The 17th Royal Fusiliers were the last to retire, after fighting a stubborn rearguard. They passed through Villers and Beaulencourt to Ligny, where the 24th Battalion joined them in position south of the village. Further south lay the 23rd Battalion, who had held the position on the flank of the Third Army, and after fighting an engagement with both flanks in the air had fallen back on Le Transloy at dusk.

The 7th Battalion at 5 a.m. were covering the main Bus-Rocquigny road, and in this position held up for a time the enemy's advance. Rocquigny was heavily bombarded and subjected to machine-gun fire ; and at 8 a.m. the battalion fell back on Le Transloy, where they were congratulated by the G.O.C. division on their fine work during the first stage of the retreat. In a few hours the enemy pressure on their position was such that the battalion were ordered to fall back once more. They retired as left flank guard across country through Flers and High Wood to Bazentin le Petit. The village was reached at 6 p.m. after several encounters with the enemy. The battalion were now ordered to divisional reserve at Courcellette, and spent the night in a chalk quarry in the open.

While these movements were taking place in the Third Army the 1st Royal Fusiliers were being withdrawn from the line on the Somme front. At 7 a.m. they began their march to Chaules, where they took up outposts for the night. The 11th Battalion were still not far from the Oise. During the day they were in brigade reserve behind the Crepigny ridge. To the north, the village of Beaugies was thought to be held by the French, and a

patrol of the 11th Battalion were sent out to clear up the position. The road rises sharply from Crepigny through a thick wood, and it was difficult to see clearly. Captain Wattenbach with five men and a Frenchman went out after dark, and near Beaugies ran into a body of Germans. At first it was thought that they must be British troops, since no one at the time knew that the enemy had penetrated so far west; but when the true state of the case was discovered the patrol made their way back to report. The brigade fell back, but the position was not cleared up till the following day.

Still further south the 2/2nd and 3rd Londons, who had taken positions east of Chauny on the previous day, were attacked with great force after three hours' bombardment. Despite their weakness, the attack was beaten off, and the battalions were enabled to continue their retirement, the 2/2nd to Abbecourt and the 3rd Londons to Quierzy and Manicamp.

**March 25th.**—The 4th Royal Fusiliers were not engaged on March 25th. The position on this part of the front had hardened. The Germans had been fought to a standstill, and for two days there was no attack. But further south the enemy had crossed the Somme and were now fighting on the old Somme battlefield. North of Bapaume the 26th Battalion were heavily engaged during the day, as the Germans delivered repeated attacks east of Achiet le Grand. But, under the command of Major Etchells, all attacks were beaten off.

On the night of the 24th, the 17th and 24th Battalions had assembled just east of Ligny Thilloy, and contact had not been made with the enemy when they withdrew and marched south-west along the Bapaume-Albert road. Between Pys and Le Sars the brigade to which both battalions belonged took up positions and met the German attack with rifle and machine-gun fire. But at noon fresh attacks were delivered. Grevillers and Bihucourt fell. These villages were on the north of the position held by the two Fusilier battalions, and their division

was out of touch with the divisions farther south. At 2.10 p.m. the Germans were pushing through Le Sars, and could be seen advancing under cover of a smoke screen on Courcelette. At 4 p.m. the 17th Battalion were ordered to stand at all costs. But two battalions moved off on the right, and Colonel Weston led a counter-attack with about 40 men and drove the enemy back over the railway. The 51st Division, on the left, were now forced to retire. The right flank gave way, Major Pretty being killed. The battalion, now at Miraumont, began to retire along the main road to Beaucourt, which appeared to be full of officers and men of different units. Another move was made to a spot just south of the Ancre near Hamel. The 24th Battalion had also fallen back to the spur east of Hamel, and in these positions the night was passed.

The 23rd Royal Fusiliers had spent the night 24—25th at Le Transloy. Their position had been necessarily exposed, as their brigade (90th) had been detached from the 2nd Division in an attempt to fill the gap between the Third and Fifth Armies. But at dawn on the 25th the troops moved westwards and took up positions around Gueudecourt. They reverted to the 2nd Division at this place, but their position was still exposed. The neighbouring troops were well to the west of them, and, not far away, units could be seen to the north and the south retiring, though in perfect order. Brig.-General Barnett-Barker (99th Brigade) was urged by generals and staff officers of other units to retire with them. A 5.9 shell burst beyond the village, and a little later Barnett-Barker was persuaded of the uselessness of defending the village. A tent had been put up for him by the roadside on the west of the village, and he wrote the order to retire at discretion at 5.30 p.m., stating that brigade headquarters were moving back a mile. Another shell fell near by, and he was killed at once, as he was leaving his tent for his new headquarters.\*

\* The first commanding officer of the 22nd Royal Fusiliers in France, Barnett-Barker was closely associated with the battalion until its

At dusk the 23rd Battalion fell back to Eaucourt l'Abbaye after an unsatisfactory day. They had stood like an island in the wash of retiring troops, and at length had themselves been forced to fall back. Lieut.-Colonel Winter, as senior colonel, assumed command of the brigade, and Major Lewis took over command of the battalion.

It is a remarkable fact that, though the 23rd were never seriously challenged at Gueudecourt on this day, the 17th Battalion had been heavily attacked at Miraumont, five miles to the west, the 24th Battalion were compelled to retire from the neighbourhood of Le Sars, three miles further west, and the 7th were outflanked at Courcelette, four miles to the west. Neither Le Sars nor Courcelette lay as much as a mile distant from Gueudecourt in a north and south direction. At noon the 7th Royal Fusiliers took up a high position covering Courcelette. The enemy were still advancing in force, and the troops in front of the battalion were forced behind their position, and touch was not maintained on the flanks. As a consequence the battalion began to withdraw slowly towards Thiepval at 2 p.m., covered by a rearguard, with the Germans pressing round both flanks. They became involved in a heavy engagement, and many men were cut off. At 8 p.m. they took up a position on the right of Thiepval road and held on until 4 a.m. on the next day. The anomalies in the Third Army position, as reflected in the fortunes of the Royal Fusilier battalions, appear greater than those of the Fifth Army.

The 1st Battalion moved forward this day from Chaulnes to Dreslincourt; but, encountering very heavy forces, they were compelled to fight their way back to Chaulnes. The remnants of the 11th Battalion further south were sent to hold the Montagne de Grandru\* and prevent the

disbandment. The conventional phrase that he was beloved by the battalion was in this case literally true, for he earned and won an extraordinary regard and respect from all who came in contact with him.

\* It is a point of interest that on this position they lay only two or three miles from Crisolles, where the 4th Battalion had halted in the retreat after Le Cateau in 1914.

Germans getting round to the rear of the 18th Division. The enemy had been seen earlier in the morning marching behind a band to the west, on the left flank of the division. About 11 a.m. a heavy machine-gun fire was opened from Belericourt, on the right rear of the Fusiliers' line. They were almost cut off, and the Bedfordshires had to move up on their right to cover their retreat. The 11th Battalion slipped away by platoons under a very heavy fire, and, some French troops coming up, the Fusiliers and Bedfordshires were withdrawn to the reserve. All endeavours were being shaped to enable these troops to cross the Oise, and the Germans, in attempting to get round to the rear, hoped to cut them off. When the Fusiliers returned from the Montagne de Grandru it was hoped that they could cross by the bridge at Babœuf. But the Germans were found to be already in possession; and the troops were moving westwards when it was discovered that there was a gap between the French and the 53rd Brigade with only a thin line of 75's in position. It was at once determined to prevent the Germans forcing this gap and capturing the guns by a counter-attack; and the Fusiliers were put into the fighting once more with the Bedfords. With a spirited advance\* at 5.30 p.m. Babœuf was retaken, after some street fighting; and the Fusiliers were then withdrawn westward to Varesnes, where they crossed to safety over the half-demolished bridge, and left the line for a few days. The battalion had lost practically all but its spirit. The London battalions of the 58th Division had already found sanctuary across the Oise, and on this day held Quierzy and Manicamp on the south of the river. On the following day the remnants of the three battalions were formed into one battalion under command of Lieut.-Colonel R. H. Dann, D.S.O.

**Aveluy.**—The positions on the north of the Somme now began to take final shape. The 23rd Royal Fusiliers had slipped back from Eaucourt l'Abbaye during the night, and on the 26th were occupying positions near the 17th

\* "A brilliant counter-attack, capturing 150 prisoners" (Despatch).

and 24th Battalions, close to Beaumont Hamel. At Hamel the 17th and 24th Battalions held positions near the final resting place of the 3rd Army front. On the north, however, the Germans crossed the Ancre and took Colincamps in the morning, but the village was retaken by New Zealand troops in the afternoon. On the left flank the 23rd Battalion were heavily engaged until relieved by the New Zealand Division, but the 17th and 24th were not attacked.

Further south the 9th Battalion had now entered the battle. On the 24th they had been at Auchy le Bois, and on the 25th had been compelled to travel all night to Albert. The position changed so rapidly in this area that they were first ordered to Montauban, then to Carnoy. The second order was cancelled, and they remained by the roadside. On the 26th they had new orders to take up position on the western bank of the river Ancre, in front of Aveluy, and they were in line by 6 a.m.

To the north lay the 7th Royal Fusiliers, who had crossed the river by the Authuille bridge and were holding the eastern edge of Aveluy Wood. From the high ground they could see the Germans moving towards Aveluy at 8 a.m., and the bridges were at once destroyed. An hour later, troops of the 12th Division relieved the battalion, who thereupon withdrew through the wood to Martinsart and Engelbelmer.

From the hollow, where the 9th Battalion lay, the enemy were not seen until midday, when they were observed advancing over the high ground east of the river. During the night the Germans made a determined attempt to cross the Ancre but were driven off by Lewis guns, machine guns and rifles. Farther north the enemy succeeded in forcing his way into Mesnil and the eastern edge of Aveluy Wood. To the south Albert was lost. At 3 a.m. on March 27th the 7th Battalion were in support to an attack of their brigade on the railway west of Albert. The Germans were prevented debouching from the town, and the battalion were moved to the Bouzincourt-Aveluy

road, where they checked the enemy advance till late in the evening, when they were relieved and left the line.

In this sector, March 27th again saw heavy fighting. At 8 a.m. the Germans renewed their attempts to force a crossing, but were again driven back by the 9th Royal Fusiliers. The battalion on the right were overwhelmed half an hour later and were closely pursued by the enemy. The 9th Battalion, with their right in the air, were forced back. A platoon under Captain Beaurains held on until completely surrounded, and then fought their way back to the high ground on the west of the village. D Company attempted to deliver a counter-attack, but the enemy machine-gun fire prevented them reaching the river. At 5 p.m. the Germans resumed their attack from the direction of Albert; and, the right flank being again turned, the battalion fell back to the high ground in front of Martinsart Wood, where a line was organised during the night with the 5th Royal Berks on the right. To the north of the 9th Battalion, the enemy had attacked in strength with such success that the 5th Brigade were recalled, and the 24th Royal Fusiliers took over positions in close support along the northern edge of Aveluy Wood. On the 28th the enemy attacked the railway embankment west of the wood, but the 24th Royal Fusiliers counter-attacked with two other battalions and drove them back. The right of the 9th Battalion was once more attacked at 9 a.m., but the attack was beaten off with loss. On the following day posts were established in the southern edge of Aveluy Wood without opposition; but an attempt to establish a Lewis gun post down the forward slope was checked by machine-gun fire. The 9th and 24th Royal Fusilier Battalions on this front were relieved on the evening of this day, and the battle began to die down. The 17th Battalion, who relieved the 99th Brigade, were not disturbed in Aveluy Wood, and on March 30th suffered comparatively little in the German bombardment.

**To Amiens.**—During these same days, while the opposing forces about Aveluy had been fighting for a mile or two of



ground, the 1st Battalion had covered a distance of nearly seventeen miles as the crow flies, and considerably more as an army marches. They were the last troops to leave Chaulnes on March 26th, and they did not retire until the Germans were pressing round their left flank. They marched back to Lihons, crossed the Amiens railway and reached Vrely, where they lay in support on the following day. On March 28th they fell back once more for the same reason that had compelled them to abandon Chaulnes. Their left flank was in the air, and a local counter-attack with the 3rd Rifle Brigade could not do more than interpose a temporary check. They continued their retirement through Caix, and formed a covering flank towards the north-east for a French counter-attack. But the Germans, ever pressing onward, were once more round the battalion's flanks, and they marched back to Villers aux Erables and thence across the Avre to Castel for the night. The 29th found them on outpost positions on the high ground between Castel and Hailles. On March 30th a persistent rain fell and imposed a check upon the enemy advance, though it did not impede the gathering of the French, who were now arriving in great numbers. The position even on this part of the front was approaching equilibrium. Montdidier had fallen. The Germans were established across the Avre and before Hangard; but successes gained by the enemy were now smaller, more bitterly contested, and more dearly bought. At 3 p.m. on the following day the 1st Battalion were ordered out to protect the Hailles bridgehead. A few days later they saw service in the Gentelles-Hangard line, but the tour was without incident.

This last phrase hardly describes the projected attack by the 11th Royal Fusiliers on the Aubercourt ridge, north-east of Hangard, on the evening of April 2nd. They were fired on from the front and the rear; and the enemy barrage was so heavy that the attack was abandoned. The following night they were ordered to counter-attack, and after crossing ploughed fields in pouring rain by

compass, found themselves moving towards a vast gap. A line was determined upon, and word was sent back that at least another battalion would be required to fill the gap. The Essex were sent forward and the position cleared up.

**Arras.**—Meanwhile an attack had been delivered on the northern or pivotal flank of the battle front. Decisively checked in this quarter at the beginning of his offensive, the enemy on March 28th made a determined effort to obtain greater freedom for the development of his offensive by a blow in great force along the valley of the Scarpe, though the attack extended as far south as Bucquoy. Three first line battalions of the Londons and the 4th Royal Fusiliers were involved in this heavy battle. In a message to the 3rd Division on March 30th, Lieut.-General Haldane, commanding the VI. Corps, wrote: "The repeated efforts, made in great force by a determined enemy, to break through the left of the Corps where the soldiers of the 3rd Division stood were repulsed time after time, and where ground had to be yielded to maintain an unbroken line, every foot was contested with a resolution which can hardly have been surpassed in the annals of the British Army. Had the 3rd Division, much weakened by several days of hard fighting and nights devoid of rest, not maintained an unbroken front on March 28th, it is difficult to believe that the enemy could have failed to attain his objective—the capture of Arras."

The 4th Royal Fusiliers, forming part of this division, had left the front line on March 27th, but at 9.40 a.m. on the following day X Company was ordered up to the Green Line to occupy the position vacated by Z Company. The 9th Brigade lay below Neuville-Vitasse, and early in the battle the brigades on both sides had been driven back. Z Company had reached the support line of the first system, only to find it already gravely prejudiced and under a heavy attack. Captain Lord, M.C., accordingly formed a defensive flank for the brigade with the company, and, with the remainder of the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers and the 13th King's, held the position against all attacks

until 5 p.m. The line being no longer tenable, they successfully withdrew through the Green Line which, with Neuville-Vitasse, now became the front line. Before the withdrawal a platoon of W Company had been sent up to strengthen both flanks of the battalion.

The remaining platoons of W Company were sent up to the left flank to try to fill the gap between the battalion and the 76th Brigade. But this brigade had been driven out of Neuville-Vitasse, and the two platoons could not gain contact with them. Z Company were then sent up to form a defensive flank west of the village. They had been heavily engaged all day and had steadily covered the withdrawal through the Green Line. But they were still able to perform a new and perilous task. Taking up position in a number of shell holes, they successfully closed the gap and enabled the division to present an organised front once more. During the March fighting the battalion suffered 13 officers and 193 other ranks casualties. On March 29th the four companies were in the line and headquarters details in support. But the attack had been definitely checked, and on this sector of the front no further appreciable change took place.

North of the Scarpe, where the three London battalions were engaged, the plane of fighting was not very different. The 1/4 Londons, who bore the brunt of the attack, lay a few hundred yards west of Oppy. The main defences of the forward area were three posts, Oppy Post (north-west), Wood Post (facing Oppy), and Beatty Post (south-east of the village). The first and last were overwhelmed early in the battle; and the enemy gained a footing in the positions on the right and left of the battalion. Wood Post, however, held out for about an hour. The preliminary bombardment had caused little damage and no casualties; and the small garrison of 2 officers and 45 other ranks inflicted heavy casualties with rifle and Lewis-gun fire. A small body of Germans who had gained a footing in the trench connecting the old and the new posts were promptly bombed out. When Beatty Post fell the

enemy attempted to get round Wood Post from the right. Attempts to get round the left were repeatedly checked, but the right flank was more vulnerable; and at length, when bombs and ammunition were almost exhausted, the survivors of the garrison, 1 officer and 15 other ranks, withdrew, covered by the Lewis guns. Beatty Post had been badly damaged by the German trench mortars, and although it was overwhelmed by the attack in fifteen minutes, the garrison had first inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy as they advanced in great density through the wire. Only 1 officer and 6 other ranks escaped of the 3 officers and 84 other ranks who had garrisoned the post. Oppy Post garrison had lost heavily in the preliminary bombardment and only 6 returned of the original 50.

The resistance of Wood Post saved the Marquis line astride the Ouse valley from being overwhelmed. About 9.30 a.m., after it had fallen, a strong body of the enemy were seen working up Ouse Trench towards the forward battalion headquarters. Major F. A. Phillips, who was in charge of the forward area, at once counter-attacked over the open with 20 headquarters details. The Germans were pressed back and a block established, which was held with grenades by a party under Sergeant Udall. Second Lieutenant Hudson, with a platoon in Marquis Trench, formed a defensive flank and held his positions with fine spirit. Time after time during the day the enemy gained a footing in the line but was immediately thrown out; and the defence of the forward line undoubtedly did much to stem the enemy advance. The battalion lost 236 officers and men, 160 being cut off in the disconnected fighting, chiefly at the three posts. But this action, probably the most important and useful fought by the battalion, deserves to rank high among the fine defensive battles of this day.

**Bucquoy.**—In the last days of March the 10th and 13th Royal Fusiliers had been brought down from the Ypres area and had reached the neighbourhood of Gommecourt. On March 31st the 13th Battalion went into the front

line at Bucquoy. The following morning the Germans attempted to rush the bombing posts of No. 2 Company. The attacks were beaten off, and Second Lieutenant J. Davis, though wounded, stood on the top of the parapet and continued to direct the bombers. It was noticed that during these days the enemy exposed themselves very freely and provided good practice for the snipers. But on April 5th the battalion were involved in a very determined attack which the enemy delivered from the Somme to some distance beyond Bucquoy. The preliminary bombardment at 5.30 a.m. practically obliterated the trench positions of Nos. 1 and 3 Companies. At 8.45 strong bombing attacks were made on Nos. 2 and 3 Companies, and the men were pressed back to company headquarters before a counter-attack restored the position. About two hours later it was seen that other battalions had not been so successful, and the left of the battalion being uncovered, the order was given to retire. Nos. 2 and 3 Companies fell back covered by No. 1 Company's support platoon under Second Lieutenant G. E. Vickers. The flank of No. 1 Company being uncovered in the withdrawal, they were at once rushed, and a desperate fight followed at company headquarters, which were partially blown in, several men being buried. Before the company could extricate themselves a number of men were cut off. By 2 p.m. the line was reorganised with parties of several other battalions and of the trench mortar battery, and no attempt was made to press the attack home. A great many decorations were given for this spirited defence, including the D.S.O. to Lieut.-Colonel H. A. Smith, M.C., through whose skilful handling of a crumbling position the neighbouring battalions were organised into an effective fighting force, and the M.C. to Second Lieutenant J. Davis.

A little to the south the 7th Royal Fusiliers were involved in the same attack. They had taken over the front line positions near Mesnil from the 24th Royal Fusiliers on April 3rd, when Captain (acting Major) P. L. E. Walker, of the 7th Hussars, had taken over the command of the

battalion. The preliminary bombardment had cut all communications, and at 10.30 a.m. the position was already critical. The great loss of officers led to some disorganisation, and, with the battalion out of touch on both flanks, the men were overwhelmed. The Germans had got through the line and were firing upon the men from the rear. Captain Tealby withdrew his men, and in the new positions inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. Hand-to-hand fighting persisted throughout the afternoon. At dusk the right of the position was taken over by another battalion, but it was impossible to effect contact with the troops on the left, and in the gap there were three enemy patrols. At 4.30 on the morning of April 6th further attempts were made to get into touch with the Bedfords on the left. The adjutant and three men at length achieved contact, and posted a Lewis-gun team with a small party of the battalion on that flank. Major Walker had been severely wounded, all the officers were now casualties and a N.C.O. took charge. A counter-attack by the Royal Marine Light Infantry, in which the remainder of the battalion took part, recovered much of the lost ground, and by 2 p.m. the position was partly consolidated. It was held till dusk, despite the heavy barrage, and the 7th Battalion were then relieved. They had lost 12 officers and 205 other ranks in two days of most bitter fighting, but in the end the Germans had not appreciably changed the position.

The area of the Somme offensive bubbled up into action at various points for some little time yet. But the worst was over, though no one as yet knew it, and the centre of interest had already moved northward to the area about the Lys, where similar startling changes swiftly appeared to wash away all the landmarks which three and a half years' occupation had established.

**The Lys.**—With the same suddenness that the offensive on the Somme had begun, the storm broke on the Lys. Almost at once defences which had the prescriptive right of three and a half years' tenure were swept away, and

new crises appeared. In the original attack no Royal Fusilier units were involved. But the battle had not been joined long before the 2nd and 4th Battalions were both summoned to the area. During the Somme offensive the 2nd Battalion had been engaged on the Gravenstafel defence line, and they remained in the Ypres area until the Battle of the Lys began. On April 10th they arrived by bus at Vieux Berquin at 6.30 a.m. They were sent in the evening to occupy positions in support of the troops holding Estaires, but at 4 a.m. they withdrew, handing over to the 5th Durham Light Infantry, who had evacuated Estaires. At noon they took over the defences of Doulieu with three companies. In a few hours the village was the centre of brisk fighting, and the support company (Z) had to be sent to the right flank position, where the Germans were making headway too rapidly.

As the day wore on Doulieu tended to become the apex of a small salient, but the men held on until 2 a.m. of the 12th, when they were ordered to retire. They fell back about two miles, and at 9 a.m. they were heavily attacked in an isolated position. The 3rd Division, on the right, had retired; and the battalion fell back gradually to the village of Bleu, which was held by the remnants of the 86th and 87th Brigades until 4 p.m. The British line had now begun to show gaps under the continued pressure of superior forces, and the enemy pushed through and seized Outtersterne and Merris. The 2nd Battalion fell back once more to the Vieux Berquin-Outtersterne road up to the Farm Labis, where the left was drawn back along the edge of a wood. The day had been one of very heavy fighting on positions which could not be maintained in face of the forces pitted against them.

The Germans attacked heavily early in the morning of the 13th, but were held up by the left post, which inflicted considerable casualties by machine-gun fire. The catching fire of an ammunition dump on the right front of the battalion formed a useful diversion by causing confusion

among the Germans as they formed up in its vicinity. But the attack developed very heavily against Vieux Berquin on the right of the battalion, and the troops holding it were driven back. The support troops on the right of the 2nd Battalion also retired, and the right flank was then left open. At nightfall both flanks were open, Vieux Berquin had fallen, and the Germans had passed the small island of troops on the north and the south. The battalion were withdrawn during the night, and on the 14th arrived at Borre. In the fifty-two hours they had spent in the Lys battle area the 2nd Royal Fusiliers had 15 officers and 324 other ranks casualties. They were true to their fate in finding the hottest part in the battlefield; but their steadfast stand had played no small part in gaining time for the deployment of reinforcements. Included in the casualties were Captain H. V. Wells, Lieutenant L. B. Solomon, Second Lieutenants H. Norwell, N. H. Willett, H. L. Mephram, G. T. S. Rumball and F. J. A. Wilson. On April 15th a composite brigade was formed, the 2nd Royal Fusiliers forming No. 1 Battalion, two other battalions making up No. 2 Battalion, of the 87th Brigade.

Meanwhile the 4th Battalion had also made their appearance in this area. They had been brought up hurriedly on April 9th. About 5 a.m. on the 10th the battalion took up position from the La Bassée Canal to the north-east corner of Gorre Wood, coming under the orders of the 55th Division until April 15th. On this sector of the Lys battleground the troops had offered a most stubborn resistance. The front of the 166th Brigade, to which the 4th Battalion were attached, was dented several times at Loisne, not a mile from where the Royal Fusiliers lay; and the men shared every bombardment which was aimed at the troops holding the line. All day on the 10th they were subjected to a rain of 5.9 shell. On the following day the two left companies experienced a particularly intense bombardment and suffered twenty-three casualties. Battle-tried units in support were relieved on the 13th, and on the night of the 14th the



4th Battalion took over the left sector of the front line. "All ranks of this battalion did all that was demanded of them in a soldierly manner," wrote Brig.-General R. J. Kentish, of the 166th Infantry Brigade, on handing over the sector to the 9th Brigade, to which the 4th Battalion belonged.

**Villers Bretonneux.**—Local attacks continued to be made at various parts of the Somme battle-front during the struggle in the Lys area, but the engagement that took place at Villers Bretonneux on April 24th was a more serious operation. The Fusilier battalion formed from the remnants of the three London battalions of the 58th Division had been disbanded on April 4th, and it was three battalions who made their appearance in the Hangard area in the third week of April. This sector of the front south of the Somme had a particular attraction for the enemy, for it covered the junction of the British and French Armies. On April 23rd A Company of the 2/2 Londons wounded and took prisoner a German, who gave the details of the attack which began the next morning at three o'clock near Hangard Wood with a heavy barrage and gas bombardment. At 6 a.m. the infantry attacks began, and the 3rd Londons\* south of the Hangard Wood held their line all day in spite of the flanks giving way. The 2/4 Londons did not fare so well. The first attacks were beaten off successfully, but when the attack was resumed with tanks in the afternoon, the left flank was turned and the battalion fell back. A little later another readjustment of the line became necessary; and the 2/4th took up position in the Cachy Switch Line, east of the village, continuing in a line of shell holes near the Cachy-Hangard road. They had given way, though not to such a depth as the troops further north at Villers Bretonneux; and battalion headquarters did not move the whole day from the quarry east of Cachy. But their losses were extremely heavy, including 4 officers and 203 other ranks missing.

\* Lieut.-Colonel Chart was awarded the D.S.O. for his services on this occasion.

The 3rd Londons were still in line when the counter-attack at 10 p.m. on the 24th partly restored the positions of their left flank, and on the following day they saw a further German attack broken up by British artillery. Both battalions were relieved on this day. The 2/2 Londons were not engaged, nor were the 11th Royal Fusiliers, who were in support to the 58th Division. But the 3rd and the 2/4th played no mean part in an action in which the enemy were first decisively checked in the Somme area, and then pushed out of their momentary gains.

## XIV

### SALONIKA

AFTER their heavy losses at Loos the 3rd Battalion were withdrawn from the line for a brief rest, had a term of trench duty near Givenchy, and then entrained for Marseilles. On October 25th, just a month after the battle of Loos, they embarked for Alexandria, where they remained about a month. By December, 1915, they had reached Salonika. The troops found little to occupy them. For the first six months they were in the standing camp at Salonika, with the Bulgars some thirty miles away, across the frontier. They were accommodated for some time in tents and dug-outs in a small depression of the hills, west of the Dehrbend Pass. The Lembet Plain and the bay to the south made a very beautiful vista, and on a good day Mount Olympus looked scarcely ten miles away. For work the battalion had to turn their hand to the construction of observation posts for the artillery and also to road-making.

One or two air raids were all that gave a touch of excitement to life. The only provision against aircraft at this time was a few 18-pounder guns set up on improvised carriages. On one occasion the enemy airmen had a great success. The German airmen who crossed the lines on March 27th just after dawn dropped a bomb on the ammunition dump, which contained practically the whole reserve stock. There was a tremendous explosion, and a column of smoke rose high in the air and spread out like a mushroom.

Another break in the monotony was the four days' brigade trek which began on April 4th. Its real object was to give the men some chance of stretching their legs.

They marched in shirt-sleeves, but without helmets, as these had not yet been issued. The country is very fine, but the brambles, which are alive with tortoises, made marching the reverse of comfortable. Camp fires were allowed at night; and with a flute, two drumsticks and a canteen lid, an improvised band filled the air with music. Shortly after the return from this trek the battalion, being among the troops selected to represent the British infantry at the presentation of the G.C.M.G. to General Sarrail, paraded for a rehearsal. In the midst of this a wolf galloped across the front of the troops. Wild wolves had been heard of, but this was the first one seen. On May 3rd the battalion started on an eight days' divisional trek. When they returned numerous kit inspections were held in anticipation of the movement north to the Struma. The hitherto accepted excuse for the loss of any article—"Lost at Vermelles, sir!"—had to be finally abandoned.

In June the battalion with the 85th Brigade moved north to reinforce the 22nd Division in the Vardar Valley, and as the aeroplanes then available could only fly between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., the troops were confined to those hours for marching. They had got as far as Sarigeul, on the Salonika-Seres-Constantinople railway, when they were ordered back to go to the Struma hills. Marching in the hot weather was an almost unendurable strain, and the 3rd Battalion have an imperishable memory of Whit Monday's march. In spite of a long midday rest, the heat had been so trying that many men fainted on getting into camp. When the men reached a well near Orljak Bridge there was almost a free fight for water. They at length reached Tureka and camped around the village. Road-making again became the order of the day. The Struma lay a mile to the east, and in the dry weather it seemed unbearably inviting. But some French soldiers had been drowned, and bathing was forbidden. This order was obeyed until, at a certain spot, cattle were seen standing in the river to drink. It was also forbidden to cross the

Struma ; but the sight of some wild ducks proved too much, and some shooting took place in which the sportsmen did not trouble about a kit.

In the summer malaria began to make inroads on the troops. Drafts reaching the country seemed to be attacked almost immediately on arrival. Yet, in spite of this scourge, the men worked well at the arduous occupation of roadmaking ; but it was decided to move camp, for the sake of health, to the hills. After a few weeks' stay there the Fusiliers moved *viâ* Paprat to Petkovo, on the southern crest of the Krusha Balkans ; and the battalion were given some five miles to prepare for defence on the right of the French. On arrival the Petkovo Valley was full of cattle, and permission was asked to drive them behind the lines. This was refused, and the cattle were seized later by the Bulgars ! The minor operations preparatory to the entry of Rumania into the war took place, but they were eclipsed by the advance of the enemy armies into Greece. One morning (August 17th, 1916) the Bulgarian Army was seen to be moving southward through the Rupel Pass. They approached the Struma, and in this way began that long series of minor exchanges which lasted till the end of the Salonika campaign. The battalion for the most part were merely spectators, being almost invariably in support. At one point it was decided to clear all the villages to our front, and the inhabitants were evacuated to the west. As the French had received orders to evacuate them to the east, they had a bad time until this matter was straightened out. It was a strange life the troops led in these months. A sort of pigeon English had been invented in order to communicate with the local inhabitants. The exordium was generally " Hi, boy ! " and the peroration " Finish, Johnny "—brief, clear and pointed.

On October 23rd the battalion advanced into the valley for winter, and camped at Lositza. The Italians had replaced the French on the left of the battalion, and the men made some experiments with wine bought from our

allies. The Italians appeared to be always singing, but the amount of work they got through was wonderful. The Fusiliers were really startled when a soldier arrived in camp wounded through the arm. They had been in the Balkans for nearly a year, and this was their first casualty at the hands of the enemy. They were now stationed near the issue of the Butkova River from the lake, and the Bulgars were on the other side. The mountain battery used to water and wash their mules in the river until the authorities decided to stir up the Bulgars. A patrol of No. 4 Company was ordered to cross the river by a pontoon. The Bulgars resisted, and Major Burnett Hitchcock, who was second in command, was wounded ; a soldier who was also wounded died on the way to the ambulance.

**The Butkova Crossing.**—On November 24th, 1916, the attempt to cross the river was renewed. Two platoons of D Company with two canvas pontoons lay concealed on the bank opposite the creek. It was heavy mist that morning, and the mountain battery could not open fire till 8.30. The boats were lowered into the water ; and two men, already stripped, swam across under heavy rifle fire, with telephone lines attached to towing ropes, covered by two platoons with Lewis guns. The boats were pulled across by means of these ropes, and the troops, moving up the northern bank of the river, occupied two Bulgar trenches. Half of a covering platoon crossed with picks and shovels, and began to organise the position. Patrols were posted in the adjacent woods, and the men remained in the captured positions until the afternoon of the following day. At 6.0 that morning the Bulgars counter-attacked, and in the mist reached the wire. They were then dispersed. The battalion lost three wounded in this small operation, and inflicted 15 casualties on the Bulgars. One of the latter was taken prisoner, and the Fusiliers recrossed the river after securing the information they had set out to obtain. Another similar raid took place on November 28th.

In January, 1917, the battalion crossed the Struma and

moved into trenches near Barakli-Djuma, where they remained until May 17th. Their sector of trenches lay about a third of a mile west and north-west of Barakli-Djuma. During their first ten days in the trenches, which were now close up to the Bulgar positions, they were shelled at intervals throughout the day. In February malaria began to make inroads on the unit. Forty-five cases were treated, and 1 officer and 12 other ranks were evacuated to hospital. It was not a good preparation for active operations; and their rôle in the readjustments preparatory to the April offensive was to prevent the Bulgars moving their troops to the Doiran sector, where the army was to attack. This was achieved by a demonstration on March 2nd, when the battalion suffered five casualties. During this month 98 men were detained with malaria, and 58 were evacuated to the field hospital; and in April the number sent to hospital had increased to 80, including 1 officer.

On May 15th Major Villiers-Stuart, who had been in command of the battalion since August 1st, 1916, was appointed to command the 7th Oxford and Bucks L.I. He was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel E. M. Baker, who had charge of the operations against the Ferdie outpost sector. The spring campaigning season was almost at an end. The growing number of malaria cases proved that the troops must be moved to the hills if they were to be retained as effective soldiers; but the enemy were in a position to hamper the withdrawal, and accordingly, in order to mislead the Bulgars, an attack was made against the trench system guarding the approach to Spatovo, the sentinel of the Rupel Pass. The battalion were assembled at 6.15 p.m. on the night of the 15th. In ten minutes' time the bombardment began, and five minutes later the Fusiliers advanced, No. 4 Company being on the right and No. 3 on the left. Under cover of the barrage, the men reached the enemy wire, passed through where it had been cut in the preliminary bombardment, and occupied the front trenches with little opposition. No. 4 Company

captured five men and one machine gun. In half an hour the troops had secured these successes, reorganised and resumed their advance. Further trenches were secured, and more prisoners; and at 7.20, covering parties having been put out 150 yards in front of the advanced positions, wiring and consolidation began. Two small attacks were made on these trenches at 9.45 p.m. and midnight, but they were broken up by Lewis-gun and rifle fire. Two hours later a more determined counter-attack, supported by artillery, machine guns and a trench mortar, was made upon the right. The Bulgars on this occasion fought their way to the wire, but were then driven off by Lewis-gun and rifle fire, leaving nine dead. In the morning the enemy guns were found to be registering on the new British positions, and at 3 p.m. in the afternoon officer patrols made reconnaissances of the ground in front of the new line. The next group of trenches was found to be evacuated. From the beginning of these operations 57 unwounded men and 2 wounded prisoners had been captured, as against a total battalion casualty list of 40. Captain J. E. French and Lieutenant R. L. G. May and 2 other officers were wounded, and 3 other ranks were killed.

On May 17th another strong patrol was sent forward. A bombing encounter followed, and the Fusiliers retired in face of superior numbers, having lost 4 other ranks killed and 18 wounded. The new positions were now finally consolidated; and on May 26th the battalion were relieved, and marched back to Orljak, west of the Struma. On June 8th they relieved the 5th Connaught Rangers on the Elisan-Dolap line, south and slightly east of Barakli-Djuma, and were employed on dismantling the outpost line. This was actually evacuated on the 13th, and the battalion marched to Tureka. The malaria cases increased during the next few months, and in September they had reached the heavy total of 159.

During October the troops were moved once more to the lower ground from which they had been withdrawn in



May. The battalion crossed the Struma and occupied Yenikoi on the 13th, and on the 21st Tupolova. But in this case the Fusiliers had to fall back in front of superior forces. This village lies near the Salonika-Constantinople railway, and on the 26th a patrol reached Kalendra, south-east of Tupolova. On November 1st Captain Woolfe led a patrol into Kalendra again, and on this occasion encountered a strong Bulgar party. The Fusiliers had to retire after a brisk exchange, in which they lost one killed. Three days later an observation post at the Belica brook, which runs for some distance west of, and roughly parallel to, the railway, was cut off. Seven men were lost in this mishap; but one, though wounded, made his way back to the line through another brigade. A third raid was made on Kalendra on December 5th. This time the village was found to be unoccupied; but a Bulgar patrol was encountered as the Fusiliers were leaving, and two prisoners (wounded) were taken. These local raids were the order of the day of many months yet, before the troops were ready for major operations.

A memorable event in the new year was the inspection of the battalion by the King of Greece on February 9th, 1918. On May 11th Lieutenant F. Parker and Lieutenant A. F. Balding, with a patrol of 30 other ranks, went out to Cakli station to intercept a Bulgar patrol. The station was found to be occupied by between 40 and 50 Bulgars. In the fighting which ensued Lieutenant Parker was wounded, and two scouts were cut off. On his return to the line Lieutenant Balding had his party made up to 50 strong, and a search was made for the missing scouts, but without success.

This was the last engagement of the 3rd Battalion in the Balkans. The unhealthy season was approaching again, and the advanced outpost line was being dismantled once more preparatory to a withdrawal to the higher ground. On June 1st the withdrawal to the summer positions was carried out. But by this time the Germans had seriously weakened our army in France by the March-April offen-

sive, and the British battalions abroad were, as far as possible, being quietly sent to France. The 3rd Battalion were soon under orders. On July 3rd they embarked on the French transport *Timgrad* for Taranto, which they reached on the following day. At 6.30 p.m. of the same day they entrained for Sergueux, France, travelling by the east coast route, Bari, Foggia, and so on along the Riviera to Cannes. There on July 8th they bathed in the sea, and entraining later in the day, reached Sergueux at 6.30 p.m. on the 9th. They had been absent almost three years in a theatre where the worst enemy was disease.

## CHAPTER XV

### EAST AFRICA

THE 25th Royal Fusiliers arrived at Mombasa, in British East Africa, on May 6th, 1915, and went at once to the military post, Kajiado, on the Uganda railway. Half of the battalion then went to Nairobi, the capital of the colony, for two months' training; and the other half, split up into small bodies, was dotted about as outposts. Their work was the protection of the railway line from raiding parties, and up to the end of the year it never ceased to be necessary.

**Bukoba.**—On June 19th this part of the battalion was assembled and moved to the Victoria Nyanza in preparation for a raid on Bukoba, on the south-western shores. The boundary between British and German East Africa cut the lake into two parts; and Bukoba, lying within German territory, was the centre of all the raiding activity on the Uganda frontier. With ample stores and a powerful wireless installation, it was an important base of German activity. About 400 strong, the detachment of the 25th Battalion detrained at Kisumu, the terminus of the Uganda railway, and on the 22nd sailed across the lake with the rest of the small force. At sundown on the second day Bukoba was sighted, and a night attack was planned. Three Fusiliers were to have overpowered a sentry at the landing place. But when at midnight the ships drew in, a sudden burst of rockets showed that all hope of a surprise was out of the question, and the ships drew off and waited for the dawn.

The main attack was made from the north; and the troops landing there found themselves faced with the task of climbing a steep, cliff-like incline. It was fortunate

that no opposition was attempted at this point. But a vigorous resistance was encountered when the battalion attempted to cross the rocky ground, at the southern foot of the hill, towards Bukoba. The black powder used by the Germans made the smoke-puffs clearly defined, and outlined their position. But it was late afternoon before it could be cleared, and then the weary men summoned their last resources of energy and charged up the opposite slope, from which the town was commanded. The sudden darkness gave the enemy a respite, and at the same time added a further burden to the troops, who slept as they could without food.

During the final advance on the following day a heavy thunderstorm imposed another pause on the operations; and when the battle was resumed it was a body of men soaked to the skin, and with rifles out of action through the downpour and the mud, who broke down the last resistance and entered Bukoba. The wireless installation was blown up, ammunition and stores destroyed; and at sundown on the 24th the men re-embarked and returned to Kisumu. It was one of the few incidents which were wholly satisfactory during the campaign.

**Patrols.**—The patrol work was nervous and responsible. The Germans were full of initiative, and did not hesitate to take risks where the objective seemed to justify it; and in these vast spaces a small force might move for days without notice. In August, 1915, the battalion had their headquarters at Voi, in the eastern part of British East Africa, about fifty-five miles north of the frontier. Two companies lay at Maktau, to the west, much nearer the frontier; and about half a company were operating along the coast. A small body of mounted infantry had been got together at Maktau, and about 50 of the battalion were lent to them. On September 3rd a party of the unit marched into an ambush, the inevitable accompaniment of warfare in such a country, and the Germans closed in on the little band. Lieutenant Wilbur Dartnell, of the 25th Battalion, was wounded in the leg,

and was being carried away when he noticed the seriousness of the situation. The badly wounded could not all be removed; and, knowing that the black troops murdered the wounded, he insisted on being left in the hope of saving the others. He was twice asked to leave, and at length directly ordered that the men should abandon him. When he was last seen the Germans were within twenty-five yards of his post. He fought to the end in defence of his fellows, and was awarded a well-merited posthumous V.C. He had only been with the mounted infantry two days, and it was but two days before the enemy party was itself ambushed and left 31 dead on the field.

**Advance to Kahe.**—So the year wore on to the close. The Fusiliers covered the extension of the line from Maktau towards the German frontier, and kept the area of their activity in a reasonable state of security. Troops arrived from South Africa in January, 1916, and on March 5th 450 officers and men of the battalion joined General Stewart's column, which was to move round the west of Kilimanjaro, while van Deventer marched to meet it at the German town of Moschi. After a long and wearisome march, fortunately little molested by the enemy, the troops arrived in the rear of the German positions and marched into Moschi, which had already been taken. After three days' rest the battalion moved southward to take part in the operations against Kahe. About 5 p.m. on March 20th a brisk engagement developed. After a hot and trying march the men were having a bathe near Store when suddenly shots were opened on them. One of them bolted as he was, and encountering the general and the colonel in a condition which hardly made for dignity, was forced to give a report of the situation. The firing suddenly died down, but three hours later the enemy advanced in force. Twenty times they charged and almost forced their way into the entrenched line, but at length they were beaten off with heavy loss.

On the following day another action was fought a few miles away at the Soko Nassai River. The enemy were

entrenched at the defile where the river joins the Defu; and the Germans fought not only gallantly, but skilfully. The machine guns were excellently placed and well served, and the battle ranged from early morning to nightfall. The Germans moved off under cover of darkness. Van Deventer, who had taken Moschi, had now captured Kahe station, and nothing remained for the enemy but retreat.

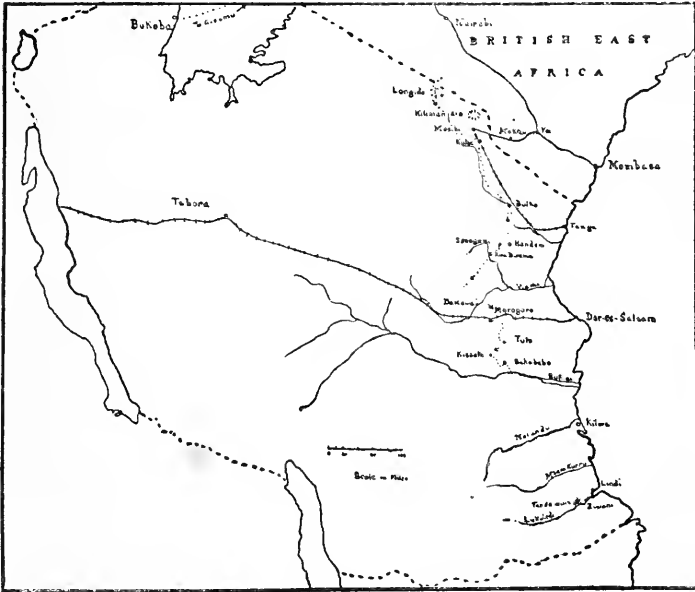
**To Handeni.**—After a short rest the Fusiliers again moved ahead, marching southward to the east of the Pangani River, while other columns marched along the railway line, and so cleared the richest, healthiest, and most populous part of the German colony. The route of the battalion literally involved "hacking through." The bush was so thick that small parties had to be sent ahead to clear away. Progress under such conditions was neither rapid nor pleasant but, as speed was necessary for the success of General Smuts' plan, the battalion frequently trekked all night. They became so weary at times that they marched like automata, practically asleep. A sudden halt had much the same effect as the checking of an express train. Food began to be short, owing to transport difficulties. The fearful monotony of it sank into insignificance.

On the last day of May, 1916, they reached Buiko, where the Pangani runs south some miles towards Handeni, after a trek of 145 miles in thirteen days. The main body of the enemy had passed through the village, and on June 9th the British column started once more. They now left the railway which the Pangani meets at Buiko, and marched south for the Central railway. On the 15th they left the river and followed the trolley line. The following day they were at Gitu, to the north-west, and on the 17th arrived at Ssangeni, west of Handeni, on the great caravan road.

**Kwa Direma.**—On June 22nd the column started south once more. Smuts' plan aimed at cutting off the enemy, as had been done in South-West Africa, by the operation

BATTLE OF KWA DIREMA, JUNE 24TH 273

of a number of swiftly moving columns. The alternative to envelopment was withdrawal, but the consummate skill with which the German commander put off his retirement to the last possible moment and compelled the British to suffer every disadvantage of operating in such a country dragged on the campaign to the end of the war. The Germans were first to be denied the use of the Central railway,



SKETCH MAP OF GERMAN EAST AFRICA.

The faint dotted line shows the route of the 25th Royal Fusiliers to the Rufigi.

and the Fusiliers formed part of one of the columns destined to cut this artery. On the 24th, after a practically continuous march of over twenty-four hours, they went into battle at Kwa Direma, on the Lukigura. They attacked at 4.30 p.m.

Utter weariness made them intolerant of opposition; and before dark they stormed the position, Major White leading A and D Companies in a fierce bayonet

charge. Among the captures were a 1-inch Krupp gun and three machine guns. The enemy were posted so as to command a bridge across the river, and were taken by surprise. They had barely time to redirect the guns; and Colonel Driscoll, seeing that delay was dangerous, obtained permission to rush the position. The battle was over in less than half an hour; and, despite the hail of bullets which tore the trees and shrubs to pieces, the battalion only lost 3 killed and 18 wounded. The Askari, who fought with such remarkable courage, were unable to stand the bayonet, and they lost 25 killed and 28 wounded. Three whites were also killed, and 13 wounded. The battalion were warmly congratulated by the general, and their spirit after such a march was indeed wonderful. Some days were spent at Kwa Direma, where mails were received, an infrequent occurrence.

On July 7th the battalion moved south to Makindu, on the edge of the Ngura hills, and rested there for a month. The rest was very welcome, for this splendid body of men, who, number for number, could hardly have been surpassed for physique in any army, had dwindled from nearly 1,200 to less than 200. Long marches on rations which were intolerably monotonous and short, and with malaria almost invariably lurking ready to seize its victims, had taken their toll. At Makindu the enemy lay near, and the Fusiliers were shelled almost immediately on arrival with guns removed from the *Konigsberg*. But for the most part their stay there was restful, and some six-months-old letters marked a welcome break in the operations. On August 9th the Fusiliers assisted in clearing the Ruhungu position, a region of hill and bush country, of the enemy, who had turned it into a stronghold. Lying on the left rear, it threatened the communications, and the time had come to resume the advance.

**To the Railway.**—Every bridge had been blown up on the line of advance, and weary nights were spent in reconstructing them. The battalion marched by Turiani and Dakawa, on the Wami River, and then turned east-



ward to cut the railway on the flank of Morogoro. This was achieved on August 28th, and within a week the eastern terminus at Dar-es-Salaam had also fallen. Morogoro was some 350 miles from the point of departure of the battalion; but, though the railway was soon completely in allied hands, the enemy still remained at large. They had escaped by an unknown road through the hills, and the advance had to be continued.

**Kissaki.**—On August 31st the battalion marched south once more in the central of the three columns operating in the Uluguru area. They moved by a “zigzag, well-engineered road cut out of the steep hillsides in pre-war days at the expense of gigantic labour.”\* This was the unknown road by which the Germans had escaped. The scenery through which the men were now moving was very beautiful, but the conditions of the march were even more trying. On one day no rations at all were received, and the strain of long marching in blazing sun on insufficient food provided a heavy ambulance population. Some days 5, sometimes even 10, per cent. of these hard-bitten troops collapsed and had to be carried back. At Magali on September 5th the troops had the satisfaction of destroying the elaborate observation post from which the naval guns had been directed, and three days later had a small skirmish at Mwuha. Tulo was found deserted, with every appearance of disorder. The battalion had a few days’ rest here, and some of the huntsmen filled up the larder for the moment. But the columns had outmarched the commissariat, and weary months of delay followed. On September 30th the Fusiliers moved to Kissaki, on the Mgeta River, there to remain for about three months.

**Behobeho.**—Despite the hardship of marching under such conditions, the battalion were consumed with impatience at the delay, and the only relief was elephant hunting. At this time the battalion had dwindled to about 60 before reinforcements arrived. Selous, returning on

\* “Three Years of War in East Africa,” by Captain Angus Buchanan, M.C., p. 127.

December 16th from England, where he had been invalided, brought 150 of these with him. He was sixty-five years of age at this time, and this return to the front after an enforced absence through sickness stands out as remarkable even in a remarkable man. Its effect on the Fusiliers was very noticeable.

Checked by the weakness in the ever-lengthening line of communications, the column was now immobilised in December by heavy rains. On January 1st, 1917, the Fusiliers took part in the attack on the Mgeta position, which in the end was almost surrounded. About midnight on January 2nd the battalion halted below Wiransi, only to find that their resting-place was an encampment of fighting ants. It is a striking testimony to the men's weariness that, after much swearing, they dropped off to sleep in the midst of their enemies. In this part of the march the Fusiliers had been sent out to the west of the main advance, and before dawn on January 4th they turned eastwards towards Behobeho to cut off fugitives from the main column. Very few were encountered, and the battalion marched to a ridge north of the settlement. The reflection of the sun from the white gravel proved a terrible experience even for men who had long experience of tropical suns, and sniping from the adjacent trees made the position costly. It was while commanding his company in attack on this occasion that Selous was killed. He was a striking figure, and his loss was felt. The enemy were well entrenched, and when Selous fell Lieutenant Dutch took over the command of the company, and, though soon riddled with bullets, continued to direct the attack while being attended to. He was carried back to Dakawa, and died two days later.

The position was taken. Behobeho was occupied, and the bank of the Rufigi. But the rains were at hand. The battalion were marched back to Morogoro, and then went to the Cape for three months' rest. On May 12th, 1917, this very welcome break came to an end, and the battalion left Cape Town *en route* for Lindi. When the battalion

had left German East Africa, the enemy had been driven into the unhealthy region south of the Rufigi. They were now to be driven from the country altogether. In the strategy of converging columns, which had proved itself successful, the last phase of the fighting would take place in the south-eastern part of the colony. Columns were striking from the Rufigi and from Kilwa, and the Fusiliers formed part of the Lindi column operating near the Portuguese frontier.

**Ziwani.**—Lindi was reached at the beginning of June, and on the night of the 10th the battalion, with three machine guns, were placed in two lighters and towed eight miles up a creek to the head of the delta by motor launch. " We landed in a swamp past the enemy's lines and made our way inland. By 7.30 a.m. we had covered about twelve miles of ground, and came up behind and against their main position in dense bush and bush-covered valleys and ridges; somewhere inside of all this they had a 4-inch naval gun with which they used to bombard the town. They knew we had landed, as shots had been exchanged with their scouts in the darkness. The path we followed led into a swamp belt in the valley between us and the enemy, and from various hidden places on the enemy's ridge machine guns and rifles opened fire on our advance guard. We immediately took up a position in the bush with our main body and called in the advance guard. Meanwhile they kept up continuous rifle and machine-gun fire, and we sustained a few casualties, but did not fire a single shot in return. In about two hours they were all round, and still our men lay low and silent. About noon they started a terrific fusillade from all round; and on one flank three machine guns and a considerable force crept up within thirty paces, under cover of the bush, and opened a terrific fire. Our three machine guns moved at once to that side, and engaged them at close quarters, twenty-five to thirty paces, putting one of theirs out of action immediately. For an hour the noise of firing was deafening. Then, having reinforced the company nearest to the main

attack, we made a bayonet charge through the bush, which caused them to retire, and we captured the three machine guns. Two of them proved to be British guns taken from our people early in the war. Next morning, finding a better path, we pushed forward, only to find they had disappeared from their positions, abandoning all their stores, workshops, etc., and they had removed their big gun through the valleys by a cleverly constructed and hidden trolley line. They have vanished from the district entirely. During the fight the bees came for us in swarms and stung us badly. I saw some of the men running round not caring a penny for the bullets, but trying to beat off the bees." \*

In this engagement the battalion lost 20 killed and wounded, including Captain Robinson. It was his first battle, and his gallantry and coolness were remarkable. In the letter already quoted a strange coincidence was remarked. In the action at Kwa Direma the Royal Fusiliers had captured three guns. One, a German gun, lacked its feed block, and the substitute never acted satisfactorily. When the guns captured at Ziwani were being examined, one of them was found to have the missing feed block, which had been adapted to a British gun.

**Tandamuti.**—After this battle it was thought necessary to wait until the column from Kilwa could cooperate, and the battalion spent the next six weeks at Lindi. Captain Buchanan established an outpost on the north-west approach to Lindi, but the twenty-four days spent on this work were without incident. In the first days of August the enemy were holding a strong position on the left bank of the Lukuledi River, five or six miles south-west of the site of the battle of Ziwani and on the Ziwani ridge. Its southern flank lay on Tandamuti hill. The battalion moved out against this position on the night of August 2nd, and came into contact with the enemy about 6 a.m. on the 3rd. Two companies of Fusiliers

\* Extract from a letter from an officer of the 25th Battalion published in the *Frontiersman*, War Number, 1918.

reinforced the King's African Rifles in the attack on the hill fortifications. A gallant charge brought the men to a dense thorn obstacle, and they had to withdraw under intense fire. Some fifty yards away the machine guns and Stokes guns opened a galling fire, and at 3.30 p.m. the enemy's reply had ceased. At this moment, when the enemy were retiring, the battalion were ordered to fall back. The British had fared badly on the rest of the battle front. The Fusiliers found Germans in their rear, and had to fight a brisk skirmish to open up the way to Ziwani. On the 10th the position was occupied without opposition after the monitors *Mersey* and *Severn* had heavily bombarded the hill.

**Narunyu.**—On August 18th the Fusiliers marched out with the 1/2 King's African Rifles to attack Narunyu, about twenty miles south-west of Lindi. They moved north, then west, and then south, to take the position from the west. Near the hill overlooking Narunyu the King's African Rifles were heavily engaged, and the Fusiliers at once formed with them a hollow square. It was as well they had taken the precaution, for very soon they were attacked from all sides. In this confined position they fought for five days, with very little water, no cooked food and hardly any undisturbed rest. On the night of August 22nd they were ordered to retire, and did so under cover of darkness. The battalion, as usual, were really suffering more from the terrible climate than from the enemy. On September 4th they took over the front line at Narunyu from the 8th South African Infantry, who were suffering still more. About six weeks later the Kilwa and Lindi columns joined hands, and another action was fought in the Lukuledi Valley on August 18th. In this action the troops found themselves suddenly confronted by an overwhelming body of the enemy, and in covering a temporary retirement the Fusiliers were cut to pieces.

In many ways this was a supremely fitting ending of the 25th Battalion's work in Africa. The enemy were at their

last blow. Six weeks later Von Lettow was over the frontier, and before the end of the year the colony was clear of Germans. It was the Royal Fusiliers' last action. They had sprung into existence quite suddenly; they passed cleanly when the work was done. A romantic body of adventurers, they desired no better fate. Colonel Driscoll, their commander, had a genius for the sort of warfare which filled this campaign. Swift in decision, resolute, ingenious and experienced, he directed his battalion with marked ability, and the 25th won for itself great fame in the most trying campaign of the war.



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR SYDNEY LAWFORD, K.C.B., WHO COMMANDED  
THE 22ND BRIGADE, AND LATER THE 1ST DIVISION.





## CHAPTER XVI

### THE HUNDRED DAYS—FIRST BATTLES

THE German offensive had spent itself for the time being at the end of April, but the British Army had been seriously weakened numerically and strategically. Every effort was strained to make good the grave impairment of the Allied positions by the loss of the full use of the important junctions of Amiens, Bethune and Hazebrouck, which had been brought under the effective fire of the enemy's guns ; and incessant labour was applied to the construction of a new defensive system. Between April and August these were the most important preoccupations of the British Army ; and to such purpose were their energies directed that at the end of the period over 200 miles of broad gauge track had been laid and " a complete series of new defensive lines had been built, involving the digging of 5,000 miles of trench." Apart from these labours, the period saw many operations of a minor character, and witnessed a definite and significant change as the inevitable phase of active defence approached its close.

Though the Royal Fusiliers delivered numerous raids, in only one of the minor operations mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's despatches did any of them figure. Many of them shared one experience which will not easily be forgotten. An epidemic of influenza played havoc with the troops in June. Thus between the 16th and 21st June inclusive some 77 officers and men of the 1st Battalion went sick, and other Royal Fusilier battalions also had a sick-rate that began to resemble the malaria inroads in the Balkans.

**The Lys.**—In the attack of June 3rd, when the Mont de Merris was captured, the 2nd Battalion co-operated by

capturing Lug Farm. Major Tower and Second Lieutenant Stokes went out after dark on the night of June 2nd and taped the assembly positions. The attack was delivered by Y Company, commanded by Second Lieutenant W. E. Stokes, at 1 a.m., and in twenty-seven minutes the capture of the farm was signalled. Fifteen prisoners were taken, and a considerable amount of equipment. The position was consolidated by daylight, and was improved on the following night, when the Lewis-gun posts were pushed out eastwards to conform to the general alignment. The small operation, which was carried out with great rapidity and at a small cost, won the congratulations of the corps, divisional and brigade commanders. The latter wrote: "It upholds the finest traditions of your regiment."

On the night of June 14th another operation took place in the Lys area. The 4th Battalion were still lying on the southern face of the salient made by the German advance, and the purpose of the attack was to secure better positions across the canal. The ground was open, and the chances of success depended upon the possibility of securing the advantage of complete surprise. It was accordingly planned to strike at night and without preliminary bombardment. Dumps of material for consolidation and two days' rations were accumulated across the canal in case the enemy's barrage should prevent movement across it; and after dark on the night of the 14th the position of the canal foot bridges was changed.

The 4th Royal Fusiliers with three platoons of the Northumberland Fusiliers represented the 9th Brigade on the right of the attack, and there were two other battalions of the 3rd Division on their left. Zero was at 11.45 p.m., and the barrage was intense and accurate. It lifted after about eight minutes, and the battalion advanced, X Company (Captain Mabbott, M.C.) being on the left, and Z (Captain Lord, D.S.O., M.C.) on the right, with W (Captain Attewell) in support to both companies. Advancing in three shallow columns, wearing white armllets, the men quickly reached their objective.

On the extreme left of the battalion Lieutenant Brasher's platoon was held up for a time before a machine-gun post, but the garrison were eventually bombed out. One platoon of Y Company, under Second Lieutenant B. D. Robertson, with two platoons of the Northumberland Fusiliers, attacked and cleared two posts in the German front line. By dawn the objective had been taken and consolidated. The line had been lifted forward an average distance of 500 yards, support posts had been dug (by W Company), about 60 prisoners and 7 machine guns had been taken, and the battalion were in touch with the units on both flanks. The total casualties were 3 officers and 94 other ranks. But the operation had been very successful, and the battalion received the congratulations of the divisional commander.

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During the month of July the 7th Battalion were exceptionally active and daring in their raids. They were still in the Maily area, and their raids were instrumental in causing the whole divisional front to be advanced. A raiding party on the night of July 4th did considerable damage in the German front line, killed 5 and captured 4 of the enemy for a casualty list of 1 wounded. Sergeant West became separated from the main body of the patrol. He had taken a prisoner, and the two wandered about in No Man's Land. They were completely lost, but West stuck to his prisoner and at length brought him in to the Drake Battalion. West was awarded the M.M. for this exploit. This and further raids during the month won the congratulations of the G.O.C. division, and the front of the division was carried forward about 400 yards. On July 27th, when the new forward positions had been taken up, the battalion received the following message: "The divisional commander is extremely pleased with the good patrolling work done by the 7th Battalion Royal Fusiliers during their last tour of duty in the trenches, which reflects great credit on the officers and other ranks concerned. He is also pleased with the manner in which this battalion

advanced their line and occupied the forward posts in the vicinity of Hamel on the night of 22nd—23rd, which was also very creditable.”

The men had never lost their spirit even in the darkest moments, and this increased activity and growing success on various parts of the front indicated the approach to equilibrium through the waning of the German superiority. Some excitement was caused when, on the 29th July, the C.O. of the 2nd Battalion received a wire stating that the French had captured 500,000 prisoners and 600 guns. The battalion were enjoying a concert during a period of training. No one knew whence the news had come, but it seemed appropriate and obviously acceptable, so it was read out. It was discovered later that the signallers had been sending a test wire! But these were days when such stories appeared good enough to be true. General Mangin had delivered the great counter-attack which, threatening the German communications in the Marne salient, compelled a retreat under risky conditions. The plans for the attack destined to disengage Amiens were soon to be put to the test.

**The Battle of Amiens.**—The share of the Royal Fusiliers in the great battle that first, beyond all ambiguity, marked the turn of the tide, is apt to be overlooked, sharing in the quite undeserved criticism that has been applied to the work of the 3rd Corps on this occasion. By an unfortunate coincidence the Germans anticipated the advance of the 3rd Corps, and the 11th Royal Fusiliers lost very heavily in this undesigned prelude to the Fourth Army advance. A reorganisation of the sector north of the Somme was in progress in the early morning of August 6th when the Germans suddenly attacked. This part of the front had been the scene of a striking Australian victory on July 29th, and the fresh 27th Wurttemberg Division had been brought down from the Lille area to restore the *moral* of the neighbouring troops by a sharp local attack. To the normal difficulties of a relief were added those of a side-stepping relief. The Bedfordshires

were relieved by troops of the 58th Division, and they themselves were engaged in relieving the East Surreys lying to the north. The attack in such circumstances was assured of success ; and, in fact, it penetrated about half a mile into the British positions and secured 200 prisoners. This was not the worst of the attack, for it had changed the starting point of the infantry and also the artillery programme for August 8th. An attempt was therefore made to restore the original situation, though even this prejudiced the battle of Amiens by exhausting troops who were to have taken part in the advance.

During the night of 6th—7th a persistent drizzle fell, and the trenches were filled with mud. The counter-attack was delivered by two companies of the 11th Royal Fusiliers, north of the Bray road, with one company each of the Bedfords and Northants, of the same brigade. But misfortune continued faithful. B Company, on the left of the 11th Battalion, could not locate the unit on their left, and the gap of 300 yards in this part of the front had to be filled up by two platoons. The whole plan was vitiated by this mischance. When the barrage opened at 4.40 a.m. the company had 300 yards of front more than had been allocated to them. An attempt to advance with two platoons proved a failure, and the men returned without taking the objective. In effect they filled the *rôle* which had been given to a company of the East Surreys on the left. D Company, in command of Captain P. Baker, had meanwhile captured their objective.

But the barrage died down at 5.10 a.m., and at 6 o'clock four attacks were delivered by the Wurttemberg troops. All of these were beaten off, but one platoon, having exhausted their bombs, had to fall back. The enemy gained a footing in Cloncurry Trench, the German front line, and began to bomb down it. Private Maloney's Lewis gun had been knocked out by a direct hit from a trench mortar ; but after a search he discovered another, and promptly bringing it into action, checked the enemy advance. Both flanks of D Company were now in the air,

but Captain Baker held on until all his bombs were exhausted and only three men remained. He was wounded, but crawled back and reorganised Croydon Trench. Lieutenant Wixcey with two platoons of B Company pushed up this trench shortly afterwards and recaptured part of Cloncurry Trench. They were working north and south when another heavy German attack at 3 p.m., after a sharp fight, pushed them back. The brigade had decided to make a carefully prepared counter-attack in the evening, but before this could be rearranged officers on the spot delivered a counter-attack, which completely exhausted the battalion ; and at the end of the day they had to fall back to the original positions. Many were the acts of gallantry in this action. Captain Baker was awarded the M.C., as also were Second Lieutenants Measures and Ross for their courage and skill. Private Maloney secured the M.M. But the net effect of the gallantry and skill was not to be measured by positions. The battalion inflicted heavy loss on the enemy, and thus had their part in the success of the morrow without the glamour which that victory threw over the battle.

The 9th Royal Fusiliers were lent with their brigade to the 18th Division to take the place of the 54th Brigade, who, as we have seen, had been badly handled on the two preceding days. They had had no time for preliminary reconnaissance of the ground, and the Somme Valley, with its gashes of deep ravines, was pre-eminently an area for careful study. The early morning was very misty, and with the night's gas bombardment this proved an additional handicap. The tanks were rather effectively mixed up through these conditions, and the 9th Battalion had to attack without them. The battalion were assembled on the starting line by 3.30 a.m., but three officers and the bulk of two platoons had been placed *hors de combat* by the heavy shelling while moving up. Indeed, the enemy expected a counter-attack after their advance on the 6th, and the element of surprise was unfortunately lacking on

the sector which most needed some adventitious counterpoise to its inherent difficulties.

Zero was at 4.20 a.m., and the barrage fell ten minutes earlier. At this moment the men could see only about ten yards ahead owing to the mist. Yet in these conditions A and B Companies promptly gained the first objective, and D and C passed through to the second battalion objective, *i.e.*, the first objective for the day. The 53rd Brigade then passed through towards their objective, assisting in their stride in establishing the units on the first. But a prompt German counter-attack drove them back, and in the afternoon the 9th Battalion found that they were holding the front line. This was a little to the west of the first objective of the day ; and in this position the battalion consolidated in touch with troops on the right, and eventually with the 5th Royal West Kents on the left. They had lost 6 officers, including Lieutenant W. E. Hill and Second Lieutenants R. T. Eagar and A. Nicholson, killed, and 350 other ranks ; but they had captured 300 prisoners, 30 machine guns, and 8 trench mortars. Taking into account the extraordinarily difficult conditions under which they attacked, this must be held a very creditable performance.

To the south the 174th Brigade (58th Division) played a similar rôle to that of the 11th Royal Fusiliers, and the 173rd or Fusilier Brigade went through towards the second objective of the day. The three battalions were all engaged in this phase of the battle. The thick fog nearer the river caused the 3rd Londons to lose direction, and they became involved in fighting before the 174th Brigade had gained their objective. Battalion headquarters pushed forward and attacked the quarry beyond Malard Wood. After a sharp struggle they captured four machine guns and over 70 prisoners. But when the first objective had been captured by the 174th Brigade, the 3rd Londons were already too weak to go further. The 2/4th, on the left of the 3rd Londons, fared no better ; and a final attack of the 3rd, 2/4 and 2/2 Londons in the

evening, though it carried them on to the Chipilly Spur could not achieve success. An outpost line was taken up during the night. On the following day the attack was renewed. At 5.40 p.m. the three battalions moved forward again, and captured Celestine Wood and Chipilly Spur, north of Chipilly. They were relieved on the 10th, by which time they had lost 680 officers and men. On this day, while the 3rd Londons were in close support, Lieut.-Colonel S. E. Saunders, M.C., was severely wounded, a serious loss to the battalion.

Morlancourt fell on the 9th, and the 9th Royal Fusiliers moved to the east of the village to consolidate. At 10 p.m. on August 10th they too were relieved and moved back to the old British front and support lines north-west of Morlancourt.

Further action on this part of the front was of a local character. The 9th Battalion on August 13th took part in a useful little engagement, which gave their division a foothold on the highest part (Hill 105) of the ridge which rises above Morlancourt, Dernancourt and Meaulte. The attack was delivered at 4.55 a.m., covered by a heavy barrage, and was immediately successful. But a German counter-attack drove back the 7th Sussex on the Fusiliers' right, and the 9th Battalion, retaining their positions, swung round their right flank to the original front line, where they achieved contact with the Sussex. This small engagement cost the 9th Battalion only four casualties, all wounded.

**The Battle of Bapaume.**—The resistance of the enemy in front of the Fourth Army having stiffened, Sir Douglas Haig determined to transfer the front of attack to the sector north of the Somme, where an attack seemed unexpected, and "it was arranged that on the morning of the 21st August a limited attack should be launched north of the Ancre to gain the general line of the Arras-Albert railway, on which it was correctly assumed that the enemy's main line of resistance was sited."\* The

\* Despatch.



forward positions across the Ancre, including Beaumont-Hamel, Serre, Puisieux and Bucquoy, had been evacuated a week before. The 13th and 10th Royal Fusiliers formed up in the newly recovered ground; and at 4.55 a.m. the 13th, lying south-west of Bucquoy, for a loss of only 13 captured their objectives, which consisted of part of the high ground east of Bucquoy and Ablainzeville.

The 10th Royal Fusiliers had a more eventful day, though their right companies, B and D, reached their objectives and consolidated within thirty-five minutes. B's rôle was to move south of the village of Ablainzeville, followed by D, and assist in cutting off the village from the east. The heavy ground mist enabled the men to assemble unobserved, and very little opposition was encountered. C and A Companies pushed through the village with eight tanks, C on the left and A on the right. The latter also had a very quiet journey, and cleared their part of the village without a casualty. C, on the other hand, was under machine-gun fire from the very beginning. The starting point lay so near the village that the north-west corner escaped the barrage. But after a brisk fight, assisted by the tanks, the village was completely cleared, 56 prisoners (including 2 officers), six machine guns, and one trench mortar were captured.

In the second stage of the advance the fog proved a greater handicap than in the first phase. The leading brigades of the 63rd Division who passed through to continue the advance became confused. It was difficult for the platoons, in artillery formation, to keep in touch. The tanks lost their bearings, and when the brigades re-formed for attack their barrage had stopped, and they were held up. The 7th Royal Fusiliers with the 190th Brigade passed through the leading brigades, and with some difficulty were able to consolidate positions on a line parallel with the southern edge of Logeast Wood. But this was not achieved until soon after dark. Meanwhile the 23rd Royal Fusiliers, starting at zero from before Alette, advanced about 2,000 yards to Aerodrome Trench.

At this point the 3rd Division passed through the 2nd, and with them went the 4th Royal Fusiliers. The battalion had already suffered heavily on the way up to assembly positions when in a burst of shell fire they lost their C.O., Lieut.-Colonel Hartley, severely wounded, another officer and 50 other ranks. The whole brigade, moreover, found the greatest difficulty in finding their positions in the Blue Line, secured by the 2nd Division. By a diligent use of the compass they at length arrived, after reducing a few machine-gun posts on the way. For the next stage of the advance the 4th Battalion were in the rear of the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, the right battalion of the 3rd Division.

Very little opposition was encountered in reaching the railway, but in the 2,500 yards between it and the Blue Line the utmost difficulty was experienced in keeping touch with the other units. The 4th Battalion completely lost the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, and advancing by compass, marched direct upon the railway, which they reached before the "leading" battalion. They were then lying some 2,000 yards east of the north-east corner of Logeast Wood. But the 63rd Division had not come up on their right. The right front (Y, Captain Royle, M.C.) and support (Z, Lieutenant Evans) companies both lost their commanders; and Lieutenant F. A. Hicks, M.C. was also killed. By 10.20 a.m. the Northumberland Fusiliers were signalling that the railway crossings were fit for whippets. The position was established and consolidated, with the Northumberlands' right flank drawn back from the railway towards Logeast Wood.

The 4th Royal Fusiliers were now drawn back to support. During the following day several attacks were delivered on the new positions, and shortly after noon the Germans pushed into the gap between the right of the 3rd Division and the left of the 63rd Division. The 7th Royal Fusiliers found their position turned, and there was a fierce struggle before the gap was filled and the original line restored. The day was very hot, and the

7th Battalion suffered much from lack of water and small arm ammunition. The expenditure of ammunition was very heavy, and the arrangements for supply by aeroplane did not work very well. Some was dropped in No Man's Land, some in Logeast Wood, where it could not be found. At one point the battalion had to borrow 3,000 rounds from the Bedfords, and at 6 p.m. the brigade supplied 20,000 rounds.

Of the heavy casualties suffered in these two days the bulk in the 2nd Division units were caused by gas. The 17th Royal Fusiliers, who were in support, had 92 casualties from this cause, and the 23rd Battalion lost 14 officers and 369 men. Gas does not seem to have proved so terrible a weapon to other units; and this, with the strange differences of movement and achievement among the troops, goes to round off an attack which, though successful in the main, reads like failure in the detailed experience of many of the battalions who carried it out.

But on this day, August 22nd, the attack was extended according to plan. The Third Army advance had brought their front forward to positions before Achiet le Grand and along the north bank of the Ancre. The action of August 22nd on the Fourth Army front was designed to bring forward their left in preparation for a joint attack of both armies on August 23rd. The enemy had to be driven out of his positions in and around Albert, and the 11th Royal Fusiliers were involved in the capture of the ground between Meaulte and Albert. They had first to cross the Ancre, and the trestle bridges made by the R.E. were placed in position on the night of August 21st. It was bright moonlight, and many of the men seemed to regard the undertaking as a joke. As a consequence the attention of the enemy was aroused, and the men came under a heavy machine-gun fire. Private F. G. Hughes, finding one of the bridges could not be placed for this reason, jumped into the river and pulled the bridge into position, despite the concentrated fire from three machine guns.

The patrols anticipated the barrage, and seizing \* a foothold on the Albert-Meaulte road above Vivier Mill, enabled the 11th Battalion to cross the Ancre and form up on this road. In front of them lay a belt of marshy ground which, outside a few paths, was quite impassable. Frequently the men had to wade with the water up to their hips, and Sergeant Ryan, seeing two platoons held up in the marsh, went back under an intense fire and guided them by a path to the German position. C.S.M. Balchin reorganised his company under similar conditions, and headed the assault on the first position. Wounded men were in danger of drowning; but the gallantry of Private C. Smith, in charge of the stretcher-bearers, saved many by repeatedly crossing the treacherous ground, despite the enemy's fire. The battalion, through these and other acts of cool courage, carried their front to about 500 yards east of Bellevue Farm, with their left bent back to Black Wood. Until the brigade on their left got through Albert no further progress could be made, and the battalion were relieved in these positions.

A little to the south the 9th Royal Fusiliers went forward on a front of 1,000 yards to a depth of 2,500 yards, keeping pace on their left with the 5th Royal Berks, who captured and cleared up Meaulte. The 9th Royal Fusiliers, with an easier task, overcame the resistance in their front readily, and for a total casualty list of 83 captured 100 prisoners, twelve machine guns and four trench mortars. Unfortunately among the casualties were Lieutenant H. A. Kilmister, Second Lieutenant L. F. Wade, and Second Lieutenant A. H. King killed; and the experience of the day proved the need of officers.

**Bullecourt.**—On the following day the main attack was launched as far north as Mercatel, and by the end of the month the British positions on this front had changed remarkably. The 1st, 2nd and 4th Londons—56th Division—had in front of them a region of country that

\* "This very well-executed enterprise" ("The Story of the Fourth Army," p. 76).

had never yielded much to the repeated assaults of both British and German troops. At the beginning of the German offensive the front had only been some four and a half miles to the east. Over a week's hard fighting was now necessitated to carry the positions over the five miles, including Bullecourt. On the 23rd the 4th Londons were in the centre of the brigade who carried Boyelles and the ground up to Summit Trench, 1,000 yards west of Croisilles. Less than 3,000 yards to the east lay the Hindenburg line, and the 1st Londons pitted B and D Companies against this obstacle on August 24th. But five belts of wire lay in front of them, and the attack was unsuccessful. Fooley Trench (south-west of Fontaine les Croisilles) and Fooley Post provided the objectives for several further abortive attacks. The 1st Londons made an attempt on the 25th, but without success. They were relieved on the following day by the 2nd Londons, who, attacking due east towards the Hindenburg line, captured and cleared Fooley Trench, capturing twelve machine guns and four prisoners. The wounded still remaining in No Man's Land from an earlier counter-attack were collected under fire by a party under Second Lieutenant G. H. Merrikin, who lost his life while so doing. Croisilles, which formed the objective of another unit this day, was as yet unreduced, and the battalion came under heavy enfilade fire from the right, the northern corner of the village. But they fought on against a heavy resistance up Sensee Avenue, when, reduced to 2 officers and 63 other ranks, they were ordered to stand and abandon the attempt to advance further. They consolidated with a line of strong posts. In this battle they lost 9 officers and 199 other ranks.

On March 28th the 4th Londons relieved the 2nd, and they had the distinction of twice fighting through Bullecourt in the next few days. On the 31st, in about half an hour after the beginning of the attack, the left company (D) were half-way through the northern end of the village. The right company (C) were at this time held up, but the support company entered the village and began to " mop

up." Slow progress was made, but by 8.40 a.m. the left company were through the northern end of the village and in touch with the Middlesex. The reserve company filled the gap between the two leading companies, and C Company were able to push through to the east, where they were held up some time by machine guns in a derelict tank. At 3 p.m. the village was clear of the enemy, and Lewis-gun posts were established across the eastern outskirts. After this very useful attack the battalion were relieved on September 1st. The three battalions of the London Regiment lost in the August operations 38 officers and 805 other ranks, and after the recapture of Bullecourt they were withdrawn to refit.

**The Lys.**—Meanwhile the rest of the front had changed more rapidly. Even in the Lys area the German gains were being surrendered. The 2nd Royal Fusiliers returned to the sector of the line, which in April had seen their brave but unsuccessful attempts to check the German advance, on August 17th, and two days later co-operated with the attack on Outtersteene Ridge by sending out patrols to Lynde Farm. It was thought that in this sector with a little persuasion the line could be advanced, but a very hot machine-gun fire soon brought disillusion. Second Lieutenant Quinn was killed, with 5 other ranks, while 15 men were wounded. A planned attack was delivered at 5 p.m. on the 19th. The fortified farms Lynde and Lesage were captured; and W Company, on the right, also assisted the 12th Norfolks in the capture of Labis Farm. The battalion that night held a line in front of the sector of the Vieux Berquin-Outtersteene road, running from the cross roads to the railway. Their total casualty list was 73 killed and wounded, including Second Lieutenants Whyte and Brown killed; but they took prisoner 1 officer and 110 men and captured ten machine guns and two trench mortars. On the next two days patrols were pushed forward to Haute Maison, over 1,000 yards due east. No opposition was met, and the forward positions were consolidated.

**Kemmel Hill.**—A more important readjustment of the line took place before the end of the month on the northern face of the Lys sector. The 26th Royal Fusiliers had moved to this part of the front at the end of June, their division relieving the French troops who were then holding it. When they went into the front line on July 10th the defences still showed signs of bitter fighting. The front line companies held shallow rifle pits without any communications. They were consequently confined to their positions during the long summer days, and could only leave them in the brief hours of darkness. Even then the commanding position of Kemmel Hill made movement risky. Despite all handicaps, Second Lieutenants Hector and Freemantle took out a raiding party of B Company towards the end of the month and secured the necessary identifications.\* They were relieved by American troops on July 31st, but returned to the line on August 29th. They were due to be relieved on August 31st, but on the preceding evening they were very heavily shelled. About 9 p.m. the barrage appeared to be directed on the German front line positions; and, appreciating the significance of this procedure at once, the commanding officer sent out patrols under Second Lieutenant K. B. Legg and Second Lieutenant F. J. Quinton. The German front line was reported evacuated, and it was inferred that the Germans were abandoning Kemmel Hill. The relief was cancelled; and C Company, under Lieutenant W. Willson, were ordered to follow up the retirement. They began to move forward before dawn, and were half-way up the western slope before they met with any opposition. A very heavy machine-gun fire was then experienced from the left, and the company were halted while scouts went forward. At 10.30 a.m. C and D Companies crossed the hill and advanced down the eastern slopes. In the lower ground the enemy could be seen retiring covered by small rear-guards. The 26th Battalion now formed part of an organised advance; and they rapidly pushed eastwards

\* Both these officers received the M.C.

about a mile and a half, in which position they were relieved in the morning of September 1st. The only casualties were two men wounded in one of the most bitterly contested areas on the whole of the front, a striking indication of the different *tempo* of the fighting. The Lys front was yielding, and the 2nd Battalion advanced on August 31st and September 1st to a line from La Becque to a point about 1,000 yards due west of La Crèche. The German guns had been moved back, and only a few shells and occasional snipers met the troops as they advanced.

\*             \*             \*             \*

Meanwhile the main attack had been delivered to the south. On August 23rd the 4th Royal Fusiliers were to advance with the general movement of the 3rd Division. As the 76th Brigade moved on Gomiecourt at 4 a.m., the 9th were to complete the capture of the railway. The 2nd Division were to pass through the 3rd Division at 11 a.m. with the 37th Division on their right; but at 10.20 a.m. the 9th Brigade were ordered to fill the gap between the 2nd and 37th Divisions, the Northumberland Fusiliers being followed by the 4th Royal Fusiliers. The Northumberland Fusiliers accordingly advanced about a mile beyond the railway and the 4th Royal Fusiliers closed up to the west side of the line.

The 24th Royal Fusiliers, who went through with the 2nd Division at 11 a.m., met with a heavy artillery fire at once. In crossing the railway they also suffered from rifle fire directed from a small post on their right. Gomiecourt was left on the south, and the battalion swung to the right in the face of a heavy fire from all arms. Their way was pitted by 8-inch shells, and machine-gun fire met them on both flanks. The conditions, in fine, were almost intolerable; but the battalion went through the barrage, cool, unhurried, unfaltering, and, with the Highland Light Infantry, they reached and consolidated the ridge west of Behagnies. Here a field gun, limbers, and eight horses were captured, with much booty, including a number of valuable documents.



C Company of the 17th Battalion, advancing in support of the 1st King's attack a little to the north, captured five 77-mm. guns. The 23rd Battalion provided a composite company, who also attacked in this sector of the front, and succeeded in securing positions just west of Sapignies.

**Achiet le Grand.**—The 13th Royal Fusiliers, attacking on the south-west, had a more stirring time. No. 2 Company, under Captain Whitehead, M.C.,\* on the left front, skilfully turned the brickworks west of Achiet le Grand, capturing 60 prisoners and 11 light machine guns; but No. 3 Company, on the right, met with intense machine-gun fire on the top of the railway embankment. The Germans were in good cover, and could not be easily located. The attack was held up temporarily, and then, under cover of a heavy and sustained fire, the men were enabled to crawl up the embankment and enfilade the enemy. A Lewis-gun team rushed across and took the Germans in the rear. Indeed, this was a fight of fights. The team were picked off one by one, but not before they had so demoralised the Germans that a sudden rush finished the struggle. The cutting was like a rabbit warren. It was simply alive with Germans, and their surrender was almost embarrassing. Dug-out after dug-out was cleared. One of them disgorged a German staff, including an officer who spoke English. He was promptly pressed into service, and went round with the mopping-up party. His authoritative orders to come out and surrender were obeyed with alacrity. Out of this cutting at least 400 Germans were taken, with many light and heavy machine guns. The position had been thought so secure that in one of the dug-outs a meal had just been taken. Hot coffee lay on the table. It was one of the greatest days experienced by the battalion, and their right flank was apparently in the air. Patrols were sent down for 1,000 yards without locating any other troops. The cutting was crossed, and the advance was resumed. Through the battalion's collecting station that day over 1,000 prisoners passed, and

\* He received the D.S.O. for his services on this day.

the battalion's casualties from the 21st to the 27th inclusive were little more than a fifth of this number. Captain J. Marguard and Second Lieutenant A. McCarthy were killed in this engagement, and 5 officers were wounded.

The 10th Royal Fusiliers passed through to attack Achiet le Grand at 1.30 p.m., after the village had been bombarded for an hour. D Company were on the left, A on the right, with B in the centre. The village held a large German garrison; but apparently the crushing of the resistance in the cutting to the west, combined with the bombardment, had broken their *morale*, for Second Lieutenant W. F. Smith with his platoon, only 19 strong, alone captured 118 of the enemy. The village was soon cleared and the battalion advanced to the east; but their right flank was in the air and so continued throughout the day and night. About 200 yards south of the village the enemy were still in possession of a strong post, and a heavy machine-gun fire was kept up from this quarter. The village was also heavily bombarded; but there were few casualties, as the battalion had withdrawn to the east. On the following day the battalion were relieved and went back to the dug-outs in the cutting which had been so skilfully cleared by the 13th Royal Fusiliers.

**Behagnies.**—The attack of the 24th Royal Fusiliers on August 23rd carried the battalion to the ridge west of Behagnies, while the 23rd Battalion were moving to the threshold of Sapignies. On the 25th Behagnies, Sapignies, and Favreuil were attacked, the first and last by the Royal Fusiliers to whom they fell. In effect, the troops were aiming at the northern flank of Bapaume. On the 24th the 17th Royal Fusiliers had co-operated in the attack upon Mory. The contribution of the regiment to the successes of the 25th was more significant. The 24th Battalion had spent a day in reorganisation and preparation for the resumption of the attack. The assault began at 3.30 a.m., and was a complete surprise. Behagnies was strongly held, and there were 110 machine guns. But

the troops followed the barrage so closely that they were upon the positions before the elaborate defences could be manned. Many of the men were sleeping in their dug-outs. These for the most part recognised the inevitable and surrendered. Some who attempted to escape were promptly shot down. The support company did their work of mopping up thoroughly and expeditiously, while the leading companies pushed through the village towards their objective, the ridge about 300 yards east of Behagnies. This was occupied and put into a state of defence; and the support company, having completed their work in the village, took up positions to guard the southern approaches. Many young and untried troops took part in this action. It was their first battle, but they behaved with all the *sang froid* of veterans. At 6 p.m. the village was completely in the hands of the battalion with 200 prisoners, a number which exceeded the total casualties of the battalion for the two days' operations.

**Favreuil.**—In the afternoon of the same day the 10th Royal Fusiliers moved up in support to their brigade, passing through a heavy barrage straight to Favreuil. Five hundred yards west of the village they found the 13th King's Royal Rifle Corps held up by a heavy machine-gun fire. The battalion were intended to attack from the west and north-west, but under the circumstances such action would have been costly folly. The battalion accordingly moved southward, and achieving a position from which they enfiladed the enemy lying on the west of the village, caused them to surrender. The orchard and north-west corner of the village were still strongly held with numerous machine guns. When darkness fell a concerted attempt was made to reduce these positions. Second Lieutenant C. W. N. Woodcock with a platoon moved along the northern edge of the village. Machine guns opened fire upon them from the orchard, and several were rushed. Another platoon moved through the centre of the village, and established contact with the 13th Rifle Brigade on the east side. This platoon also came under

fire from the orchard, but towards midnight the two platoons began to approach each other, and the enemy withdrew under the threat of envelopment. A gap between the 13th Rifle Brigade, 400 yards east of the village, and the New Zealand Division, was filled by two platoons of A Company, under Second Lieutenant A. W. Usher. The village was completely held by 3 a.m. on August 26th, but the battalion had not achieved contact with the 2nd Division on the north. A few hours later they were relieved.

**Thilloy.**—The 63rd Division on August 26th attempted to capture Thilloy, Ligny Thilloy and Riencourt. But the two brigades devoted to this attack were held up before the first two villages, and in the renewed attack on the following day the 7th Royal Fusiliers advanced with the 4th Bedfords. The day appeared to be out of joint. At 11 a.m. the barrage began, and was short, many casualties being inflicted on the troops assembled for attack. The first assault, launched with such handicaps, produced nothing but further casualties. In the afternoon another attack was delivered, and the troops penetrated into the village of Thilloy. But the battalion were now seriously weakened, and the losses of officers were particularly heavy. The surviving men, being leaderless, at length withdrew; and the battalion were relieved after a disastrous day.

**Towards Peronne.**—Meanwhile the Royal Fusiliers in the III. Corps had been heavily engaged against a growing resistance north of the Somme. On August 25th the second line London battalions and the 9th and 11th Royal Fusiliers were all involved in the attack. Moving from positions west of Bronfay Farm, the 2/2 and 2/4 Londons pushed well forward to the east of the Carnoy-Suzanne road. The 2/2nd at the end of the day lay astride the Fricourt-Maricourt road east of Carnoy, after capturing Carre Wood and an elaborate trench system; while the 2/4th held positions to the north-east of Billon Wood, which they had captured after a very fierce struggle. To the

north the 9th Royal Fusiliers advanced on a front of 1,200 yards to a depth of about 2,000 yards, carrying the line forward to the south-western edge of Fricourt. Patrols were sent eastward along the north-west edge of Mametz, and reported the village evacuated. Fricourt was also found to be clear of the enemy at the same time, and the division advanced. But this weakening resistance did not confront the 11th Royal Fusiliers, who, attempting to capture the high ground in front of Montauban, encountered a most stubborn resistance, and were unable to capture their objectives. The struggle was renewed on the following day, and fighting vigorously across ground where they had first gained their spurs, the battalion pressed into Montauban.

The 3rd Londons on this day (August 26th) represented the Fusilier Brigade. Attacking at very short notice astride the Peronne road, the battalion had gained all objectives by 9.30 a.m. Their final line lay across the western outskirts of Maricourt. B Company, indeed, had entered the village, but had been forced to retire. The village was attacked and carried on the 27th, and on the following day the 2/2 Battalion captured the German positions between Bois d'en Haut and Support Copse, while the 9th Royal Fusiliers, on their left, advanced about 2,000 yards to their objectives. Hardecourt fell to them, and 50 prisoners of various battalions of the 2nd Guards Division with sixteen machine guns. They had suffered heavily from machine-gun fire, but the capture of prisoners from a famous division was an inspiring performance. The second line Londons on August 26th received a note of well-earned praise from their Brigadier: "The Major-General commanding the division, in congratulating you all, wishes me to tell you that Sir Douglas Haig, the Army Commander, and the Corps Commander, have all expressed the highest praise for the way in which the brigade is fighting. For myself, I cannot say how proud I am to be in command of such a brigade as the Fusilier Brigade."

At 5.15 a.m. on August 30th the 11th Royal Fusiliers

advanced through the Northants. The preceding day the brigade had gone forward in column of route, the leading companies alone being in open formation, and with little resistance had reached the edge of Combles. But the 11th Battalion came under heavy fire and were held up at Priez Farm. By this time this battalion had secured during August 3 officers and 450 other ranks prisoners. They had received a letter of warm congratulation from Sir Henry Rawlinson for their feat in crossing the Ancre, and, indeed, their action had been deserving of all praise.

On August 31st the 4th Battalion, who had moved up to positions south-east of Ecoust, attacked eastwards. Ten minutes before zero the assembly positions were subjected to a heavy shell and machine-gun fire, and there were many casualties ; and when our barrage began, five minutes later, it missed the chief obstacles in the way of the Royal Fusiliers' advance. As a consequence, while the battalions on both flanks advanced with little trouble, the 4th Royal Fusiliers were decisively checked by machine-gun fire from the sunken road, about 250 yards to the east. Z Company made several most gallant attempts to reach these guns, but the men were mown down, and all the officers but one became casualties. The tank which should have assisted in coping with this obstacle caught fire a few minutes before zero. Another tank broke down actually in the road, and a German officer, climbing on top of it, shot or took prisoner the whole of the crew. A machine-gun nest in the south of Ecoust also devoted too much attention to the battalion, who were completely held up. About 8 p.m. the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers cleared the sunken road under a creeping barrage, and before dawn on September 1st the 4th Royal Fusiliers had advanced 1,500 yards. At 6 p.m. on the same day, with only eight casualties, the battalion carried the line still further, clearing the sunken road midway between Longatte and Noreuil. In this operation 70 prisoners and several machine guns and trench mortars were captured.

As a result of the fighting since August 8th, the enemy

had been beaten out of his positions over a great stretch of front. "During the night of September 2nd—3rd he fell back rapidly on the whole front of the Third Army. By the end of the day he had taken up positions along the general line of the Canal du Nord from Peronne to Ytres, and thence east of Hermies, Inchy en Artois and Ecourt St. Quentin to the Sensee east of Lecluse."\* The retirement was promptly followed up. At 5.20 a.m. on September 3rd the 17th Royal Fusiliers began to advance. Only two hours before, they had reached the position, relieving another battalion, on a line about 1,000 yards east of Vaux-Vraucourt. With A Company (Captain Ashwell) on the right and B (Captain Sword) on the left, the battalion rapidly advanced to the first objective, about 5,000 yards from their starting point, and they were ordered to resume their progress at 1 p.m. Major Smith, the adjutant, who rode forward to give final instructions, could not locate the battalion at first; and they did not resume the advance until 2.30 p.m. Doignies was soon passed, but about 1,000 yards to the east they were held up by machine-gun fire from the neighbourhood of Boursies. At this point two platoons of C Company were sent up to make good the casualties in B Company. At 6.20 p.m. the advance was resumed with the help of artillery, and Demicourt was taken. At 6.55 p.m. positions were taken up covering Demicourt and Boursies, which B Company occupied. At the latter village they were in touch with the Guards, and on the left they were in contact with the South Staffords. The battalion had been advancing almost continuously for over thirteen hours, prepared for anything, in verification of an inference of the high command. In this period they had covered some 9,500 yards,† at a total cost of 52 casualties.

The next day the 13th Royal Fusiliers carried on the

\* Despatch.

† The difficulty of representing most movements on a map, except of large scale, and the striking ease with which this movement can be shown on a map of almost any reasonable scale, shows sufficiently how times were changing.

advance a little to the south, but their progress was more chequered, and at the end of the day they encountered a firm resistance. They set out at 7 a.m. from near Hermies, with the purpose of taking up a line east of Havrincourt. But they had only advanced 200 yards before they were held up by machine-gun and trench-mortar fire from the right flank. But the trench mortars were put out of action and the machine guns compelled to retire, and the advance was continued. The Canal du Nord runs roughly parallel to the railway about 1,100 yards south of Hermies, and then turns northward about 2,000 yards east of the village. Near the bend, on the southern side, is the north-western extension of Havrincourt Wood. At the west corner of the wood a platoon crossed the canal to the south. The 1/1 Herts, who were on the right of the 13th Battalion, were at this point 500 yards in the rear; and the Royal Fusiliers were suffering from enfilade fire from this quarter. After a halt to enable the Herts to come up the advance was resumed due eastward, and Lewis guns were established on Yorkshire Bank. The right were now once more out of touch, and Germans could be seen moving up in the wood at the bend of the canal. The right company were then withdrawn to the tunnel under the canal a little to the west. On the left the line was established in front of Square Copse, and in the evening touch was achieved with the 2nd Division. The battalion had covered about 2,500 yards in their advance, but under greater difficulties than had faced the 17th Battalion. The next two days patrols were pushed out eastward, and the position consolidated in depth at the same time that it was being advanced.

But the enemy resistance had now definitely hardened on this part of the front, and the 23rd Royal Fusiliers, attacking east of Doignies (September 7th), suffered very heavily. The Canal du Nord, with the approaches swept by enemy fire, formed a formidable line of resistance. Below, from the neighbourhood of Havrincourt, the main line was the Hindenburg system; and at this time the



Germans held very strong positions, in advance of the main trench system, at Havrincourt and Epehy. Before the attack on the Hindenburg line these outliers had to be taken. It fell to the Royal Fusiliers to put the strength of one of these outposts to the test.

**Epehy.**—Epehy-Pezieres forms topographically not two, but one feature, and against this position the Fusilier Brigade of the 58th Division advanced on September 10th. The battalions were all weak, the 2/2 Londons mustering only 17 officers and 481 other ranks before the battle. The 2/2nd and 3rd Londons advanced to the attack at 5.15 a.m. The objective of both battalions was the east of the two villages. Pezieres was to be taken by the 2/2nd, and Epehy by the 3rd Londons. The German line in this sector had been heavily reinforced; and the Alpine Corps, a body of formidable troops, held the objectives of the Fusiliers' attack. The advance began in a heavy storm of driving rain; and, despite the stubborn resistance, the objective was gained by both battalions. But such positions could not be reduced in face of the resistance of organised garrisons without a much heavier treatment by artillery and the assistance of tanks. Neither Epehy nor Pezieres was thoroughly mopped up, and as a consequence when the counter-attack came the attacking companies of the 2/2 Londons found themselves surrounded. The men had to fight their way back. They retired on Tottenham Post, in the north-western outskirts of Pezieres, with a loss of 8 officers and 164 other ranks. The 3rd Londons were also compelled to abandon their objective. They had suffered heavily in the advance from fire directed from the trenches south of Epehy. In the afternoon the commanding officer led a bombing attack on these trenches and succeeded in turning the Germans out. The remnants of A and C Companies who, under Captain S. W. Johnson, had held positions on the railway embankment for some time, were forced back by the counter-attack from the railway embankment to a position slightly behind the assembly position. The 3rd

Londons lost only 7 officers and 87 other ranks, a sufficiently heavy casualty list for an unsuccessful action, but not half the loss of the sister battalion. The 2/4 Londons, who had been in support and were occupied in mopping up, took 80 prisoners, twenty machine guns, and three anti-tank guns. Owing to the difficulty of replacing the casualties, the 2/4th were amalgamated with the 2/2nd on September 12th.

On September 12th Trescault and Havrincourt were taken, and the 24th Royal Fusiliers became involved in the 2nd Division's attack near Mœuvres. An attempt by the 10th Royal Fusiliers to capture the Bilhen Chapel wood switch on the 14th led to one of the most protracted bitter and evenly contested actions of this phase. For the next few days the troops were rested and exercised in preparation for the larger action against the approaches to the Hindenburg system.

**Battle of Epehy.**—At 5.20 on the morning of September 18th the Fourth and Third Armies struck on a front of about seventeen miles from Holnon to Gouzeaucourt. North of the main attack the 13th Royal Fusiliers were engaged on this day in one of those actions that recurred almost to the very end of the war. The assault was launched in a rain storm, and the battalion found themselves held up by a strong belt of wire. The artillery had failed to destroy it, and there were several bombing blocks which had escaped untouched. No headway could be made, although the battalion three times attacked. After this the attempts ceased, and the battalion retired to their original positions.

A few miles farther north the 4th Battalion were heavily attacked by the enemy. At 3.30 p.m. a bombardment of the battery area began, and three-quarters of an hour later the front line and headquarters came under an intense barrage. At 5 p.m. the Germans attacked and succeeded in penetrating the battalion front in three places, pushing vigorously along the sunken road and railway leading into Havrincourt. Captain A. J. Lord,

D.S.O., M.C., and Captain Mabbot, M.C., on the right and left fronts respectively, counter-attacked, drove the enemy out and completely re-established the original front line. Captains Smith and Howard, support and reserve, threw the Germans back from the exposed left flank which they had penetrated. Seventy prisoners and five machine guns were captured. Second Lieutenant E. Twigg and 19 other ranks were killed, and there were 52 other casualties; but the honours of this small engagement remained in the hands of the Royal Fusiliers.

In the main attack the two London battalions again moved against Epehy-Pezieres. The 2/2 Londons were on the left and the 3rd Londons on the right. Despite the bad weather and the most obstinate resistance, the two battalions made excellent progress, and by 10.20 a.m. had cleared Pezieres all but one post. The 2/2 Londons found the second stage of the attack more difficult. They had to cross the tangle of trenches north-west of Pezieres, and very little impression could be made upon Poplar Trench. This trench threw a roughly semicircular loop over the ridge above Catelet Valley, on the road leading north-west from Epehy. At 9 p.m. Captain Whitehead, M.C., attacked it with all the force available, but was only able to establish three posts on the road below the trench. It was attacked again at 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. on September 19th, and a block was established about half-way up the trench. Another attack at 11 a.m. made but slow progress. At 3 p.m. a platoon under Second Lieutenant A. K. Chesterton reinforced Captain Whitehead's party and did good work, but it was not until 7 p.m. that the whole of the trench had been cleared and touch obtained with the brigade on the right. Every yard had been fiercely contested, and it says much for the 2/2 Londons that their persistence at length wore out a famous German unit. Meanwhile the 3rd Londons had the task of reducing the strong points in Pezieres. Their task was made more difficult by the successful resistance of the Alpine Corps in Epehy. Fisher's Keep, one of the

objectives of the 3rd Londons, held out until 7.45 p.m., when only 17 unwounded men remained of the original garrison of 3 officers and 45 men. On September 19th No. 1 Company held four of the enemy posts, and No. 2 had a grip on the railway cutting east of the village.

The 9th Royal Fusiliers moved due east from the railway south of Epehy and north of Ronssoy to their final objective, about 1,500 yards ahead. The battalion on the left lost direction, and when the 9th Royal Fusiliers had reached their final objective, their flanks were in the air. On the right they had been in touch at the first two objectives, but not at the final one; and the resistance in Epehy disturbed the day's plan. At the end of the day the battalion dug in on their objectives with Lewis guns protecting their flanks. They had captured 1 officer and 65 other ranks from the Alpine Corps and 1st Guard Grenadier Regiment with seven machine guns. Captain W. E. Bott and Second Lieutenant G. S. Lowe, killed, were among the 113 casualties. On September 21st the 9th Royal Fusiliers were again called upon to attack in an endeavour to secure the final objectives of the 18th; but, despite several gallant attempts, little headway could be made, and the battalion lost very heavily. Eleven officers were lost, three, Second Lieutenants F. C. L. Harrup, M.C., V. H. Isaacs and B. Spence, being killed. These were very important losses, and, with the 270 other ranks casualties, badly weakened the battalion.

Hard fighting was the lot of all these units in this battle, but, for the complexus of difficulties involved, the 11th Royal Fusiliers' rôle must have been almost unique. The R. W. Kents, attacking with the 54th Brigade, were to capture and hold a line through the eastern outskirts of Ronssoy. The Bedfords were to pass through them and establish a line at the junction of the Bellicourt and Guillemont (farm) roads. The Northants on the left and the 11th Royal Fusiliers on the right had then to form up and attack northwards, at right angles to the main line of advance, with May and Lempire among their objectives.

By 7.30 a.m. (September 18th) the 11th Battalion were formed up. This alone was no slight matter under the circumstances. In the fog the attacking lines of the three battalions became considerably mixed. Despite the heavy machine-gun fire about Ronssoy, Captain G. E. Cornaby exposed himself freely in order to organise his company; and this done, he led them forward under the barrage to almost the whole of their objectives. Captain Hornfeck with Captain Cornaby "led his men forward, and, in spite of his exposed right flank and heavy machine-gun and point-blank artillery fire from that direction, succeeded in gaining his objective, capturing two field guns and several trench mortars. On Captain Cornaby becoming a casualty he took command in this area, reorganised round the principal strong points and drove off two counter-attacks."\* Some of the men moved throughout the morning to the whistle of the sergeant-major as though in extended order drill. To complete the anomaly, a German prisoner, eating black bread and sausage, insisted on following the sergeant-major, and, all threats notwithstanding, cheerfully continued to do so. But, despite all gallantry and skill, the troops did not reach their final objectives, and when the 55th Brigade attacked through them they, too, could make very little headway. The enemy's resistance on the east of Basse Boulogne and in Lempire could not be overcome.

In order to complete the capture of the objectives of September 18th, the attack was resumed at 5.20 a.m. on the 21st, the 11th Royal Fusiliers being in reserve. But about midday two companies, organised as one, were attached to the Bedfords, and they were sent forward against Duncan Post at 12.15 a.m. on the 22nd. There was a little moonlight, but not much, and the company, losing direction, captured Cat Post (500 yards farther south) and some trench elements, sending back 20 prisoners. There was thus a gap on their left flank. About 1 p.m. the Bedfords carried Duncan Post with a

\* Both of these officers gained the M.C.

number of prisoners. About 100 Germans attempted to escape eastwards, and the attached Fusiliers gave chase. In the midst of this incident our barrage came down to break up a counter-attack farther north, and some of the Fusiliers were caught in it. Somehow out of the confusion a solid achievement emerged, and the ground was cleared for the general offensive.



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES TOWNSHEND, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.P.





## CHAPTER XVII

### THE HUNDRED DAYS—LAST BATTLES

THE battles which began with the Franco-American attack north of Verdun on September 26th logically opened a new and the last phase of the war. The general offensive consisted of a series of converging attacks which "depended in a peculiarly large degree upon the British attack in the centre. It was here that the enemy's defences were most highly organised. If these were broken, the threat directed at his vital systems of lateral communication would of necessity react upon his defence elsewhere."\* Yet it must be evident that the British armies entered upon this critical phase weary and weakened from the almost continual fighting from August 8th. The engagements fought, now here, now there, by the various battalions of the Royal Fusiliers, under great stress and with heavy casualties, are in their way a fairly just indication of the state of the Army generally. But when Sir Douglas Haig decided to embark upon the new offensive against a defensive system of extraordinary strength, he recognised that never had the *morale* of the British troops been higher. This confidence had been fed by a long series of victories, and as the last phase developed it was inflamed by the successive defection of Germany's allies and the German efforts to obtain an armistice.

But it must not be thought that the Germans did not fight very valiantly through the greater part of this period, though the resistance was "patchy." Almost to the end some of the Royal Fusilier battalions had to make their way against very heavy fighting; and it is part of the difficulty of describing these last days that in some places

\* Despatch.

the battalions covered great distances without meeting any real resistance over ground that seemed to offer every evidence of enforced and hasty retreat, through scenes and experiences entirely novel, while others fought numerous heavy battles, and could make little headway against the defensive.

**September 27th.**—The British offensive on the St. Quentin–Cambrai front was not launched as one great attack. The defence was more formidable on the southern half of the front, and the British artillery on this sector laboured under a handicap until the Hindenburg line and the approaches to Cambrai had been won. In order to assist the Fourth Army attack, Sir Douglas Haig, therefore, struck first between Gouzeaucourt and Sauchy-Lestree on September 27th. On the extreme north of the front of attack the 2nd Londons, who on the preceding night had assembled midway between Villers-lez-Cagincourt and Baralle, advanced to the canal and waited there while the Canadians cleared up Marquion. They then crossed the canal, headed by D Company under Captain D. Sloan, moved through the village and advanced to the first objective. D Company encountered some resistance on the canal line, and B, under Captain W. T. Telford, M.C., took their section of the line at the double. At 3.28 p.m. the advance was resumed behind a creeping barrage. A Company, on the right, went forward as steadily as if on parade, and their first prisoners were a German doctor and his Aid Post staff. Sauchy-Lestree was captured with little difficulty, a company of the London Rifle Brigade clearing it up while the Londons advanced. Part of Sauchy-Cauchy was within the battalion's boundaries, and the troops wheeled left to deal with it. A cleared Cemetery Wood, and their patrols found numbers of Germans in dug-outs between it and Oisy le Verger. Some machine-gun nests north of the wood resisted four attacks, but succumbed to the fifth, and by 3 a.m. on the 28th the Londons were on the final objective after a very brilliant advance. A company (C) continued the advance towards Palluel at

10.30 the following day and established posts between the village and the Bois de Quesnoy as directed. Besides much *matériel* they had captured 6 officers and 454 other ranks, and their total casualties were only 71. Meanwhile the 4th Londons assisted in clearing up the western side of the canal up to the railway south-east of Palluel.

Some miles to the south the 7th Battalion had to attack over familiar ground. Assembling on the railway west of Moeuvres, the battalion moved forward at zero (5.20 a.m.) and crossed the canal without much opposition; but on the spur south-west of Bourbon Wood, the final objective, the Fusiliers had to crush by rifle and machine-gun fire an attempt to hold them up. The battalion quickly took the trench on the spur, and reorganised before the 188th Brigade passed through. Second Lieutenant R. H. Righton was killed by a shell in the trench; but the casualties were few, and the battalion had captured a field gun, 10 light and 10 heavy machine guns, and 4 officers and 400 other ranks. They remained in the trench during the night.

The Royal Fusilier battalions of the 2nd Division were not engaged this day, but the 17th Battalion, resting at a place where they had stood after the German counter-attack in 1917, Lock 7, suffered 32 casualties from a German aeroplane which secured three direct hits. The 4th Royal Fusiliers carried out a businesslike advance to Ribecourt. Moving off in artillery formation behind the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers and 13th King's Liverpools at 8.20 a.m., the battalion's progress was uneventful until the leading companies found themselves held up by a machine-gun nest about 800 yards west of the southern end of Ribecourt. The two support companies then closed up, and the four companies, advancing in line, surrounded and captured the post. The battalion were again checked at the western edge of Ribecourt; but at 10.30 they had penetrated into the village, and in another hour they had crushed all resistance and had begun to consolidate on

the eastern edge of the village. Among their captures on this day was a 6-inch howitzer.

**The Canal Crossing.**—On September 28th the 17th Royal Fusiliers found themselves faced with a task calling for every spark of their daring and resource. Two companies, C and D, had been directed after dark on the preceding day to form a defensive flank on the left of the brigade, and were ordered to attack on the 28th with the high ground across the canal, north-east of Noyelles, as their final objective. By 8.30 a.m. Noyelles had been captured and the River Scheldt crossed. But the resistance stiffened very considerably at the canal crossings, and the whole of the division were held up. At this juncture it was decided to make an attempt to put a company of the 17th Royal Fusiliers across the canal by sending them down the river on a raft to the point where it is crossed by the canal. The plan was to raft the company under the canal arches, and then land and form up on the east of the canal. D Company with a platoon of B were ordered to undertake the task. Second Lieutenant F. G. Waters was ordered to reconnoitre the river with a view to the practicability of the operation. This young officer "swam the Scheldt in broad daylight with a rope in order to get a raft across for an attack to be made on the enemy; and reconnoitred the ground on the east side with the enemy only fifty yards away. He was in charge of the leading wave of the attack, and led his men with great courage and determination against two machine guns, killing both crews. Later, when the enemy counter-attacked, he rallied his men and led them forward, remaining at duty after being wounded." \* D Company started to cross at 5.15 p.m., but the low clearance underneath the arches proved too great a handicap; and the bulk of the men crossed by the lock bridges in single file under heavy fire. It is one of the odd chances of war that these men, silhouetted against the skyline, got across with extremely few casualties. But their adventures on the

\* Official account. He was granted the M.C.

other side speedily reduced their numbers. At 3 a.m. on September 29th the Germans counter-attacked the King's Own, on the right, driving them back upon the 17th Royal Fusiliers. There was much confusion, and many fell back to the west side of the canal. Captain Spencer, M.M., assisted by Captains Sword and Panting (C.O. of D Company) rallied the men and restored the situation. But the machine-gun fire was intense and the casualties heavy. On the morning of the 29th they were ordered to take up a position between Paris Copse and Range Wood, towards the outskirts of Cambrai. They advanced beyond this line. The C.O. and Captain Spencer (Adjutant) went forward to bring them back and organise them in depth. This was done, and C Company formed a defensive flank on the right until the battalion were relieved a little before midnight. The establishment of this bridge-head, so necessary to the division, and depending upon multiplied acts of gallantry, cost the battalion the loss of 249 officers and men.

**Vendhuile.**—But by this time the Fourth Army attack had been launched, and the northern front was being revolutionised. The 11th Royal Fusiliers were on the left of the Fourth Army line, and, forming up at Sart Farm, about 500 yards south-east of the Lempire, advanced to their objective, the trench line on the outskirts of Vendhuile. To this position they held throughout the day (29th), despite the unwelcome attentions of German artillery and some short firing of our own guns. As the enemy were observed to be withdrawing on the following day, the 11th went forward to clear the village. Very brisk fighting took place before this was accomplished, but it had been completed when the Bedfords arrived to help. The battalion were relieved that night, and with the brigade left the line for a well-earned rest.

**Flanders.**—Two battalions of the regiment were also involved in the fourth of the converging attacks mentioned by Sir Douglas Haig, the advance in Flanders. The 2nd Battalion had left the Lys area on September 27th,

and at 5.30 the next morning moved forward from the position of assembly east of Ypres in support of the Dublins. W and X Companies formed the first wave, and, passing through the Lancashires at 7.8 a.m., moved after the Dublins. On the Stirling Castle ridge considerable opposition was encountered from pill-boxes and from the short firing of our own artillery; and the Royal Fusiliers became involved in the firing line. Several pill-boxes were smartly cleared, forty prisoners being taken from one and the garrison of another, who refused to come out, being put out of action. After passing through the Dublins, the first opposition was encountered from a trench about 200 yards north of Veldhoek. W Company put an end to the resistance, capturing 15 prisoners.

A number of pill-boxes were rushed at this point, and the total of prisoners began to swell. At 9.45 a.m. the battalion rushed the line Polderhoek Ridge-Cameron House, and three-quarters of an hour later they crossed the Menin road and captured Gheluvelt. The positions which had resisted so obstinately all the earlier assaults now began to fall into the hands of the troops like ripe fruit. On this day the 2nd Royal Fusiliers made a striking advance, suffered very few casualties, and captured about 300 prisoners, many machine guns, and a complete battery of 5.9's. That night they formed a defensive flank to the 88th Brigade, a little to the east of Hooge. The advance was resumed the following morning, the Royal Fusiliers being echeloned on the left rear of the 88th Brigade. In spite of heavy machine-gun fire the ridge across the Menin road, which the Becelaere road follows, was captured and held. A line was established on this ridge for about 1,000 yards north of the road, and on this the battalion remained until night under persistent sniping, machine-gun and shell fire. Up to this time they had only had 47 casualties in the two days' fighting.

On October 1st they relieved the Lancashires at about the centre of the road between Gheluwe and Dadizeele;

and on the following morning they attempted to advance with the 88th Brigade to the capture of Gheluwe. This was the hardest day's fighting yet experienced in the new offensive, and despite the utmost gallantry neither the Royal Fusiliers nor the troops on their right could make much headway. If the advance had been continued at the pace of the first two days, Lille would have been outflanked. The defence was accordingly strengthened on this sector, and the battalion were relieved at night after a heavy day.

The 26th Royal Fusiliers had also been brought up to the Ypres area for the offensive, and advancing without artillery support at 2 p.m. (28th) from a position about 100 yards west of Canada Tunnels, met with no resistance worth speaking of, except from snipers, for 3,000 yards. At this point the battalion faced Green Jacket ridge, where a stubborn resistance was experienced. On reaching the crest they encountered a heavy fire, and a counter-attack was attempted from Dumbarton Wood. But D Company on the left charged down the slope under Lieutenant H. Van Der Weyden and broke up the German counter-attack with very heavy loss. The battalion then resumed their advance to a line a few hundred yards east of Basseville beek, and on this position the battalion rested that night, D Company forming a defensive flank on the left. The advance was resumed on the following day, an hour after dawn, B and C Companies passing through A and D. At the outset many casualties were suffered from rifle and machine-gun fire; but this did not prevent the battalion reaching their objective, the road running north-east from Houthem to the Tenebrielen-Zandvoorde road. At this stage the 123rd Brigade passed through and advanced towards Comines, but they were beaten back and retired through the 124th Brigade's line. The 26th Royal Fusiliers held their positions that night, and at 2 a.m. rations came up, and they had their first food for twenty-four hours. A and D were in the van once more when the advance began on September 30th. There were numerous

small and fierce encounters as the battalion moved south-east, but they reached their objective, the railway about Godshuis, and posts were pushed out to the Lys. In this very striking advance of three days the battalion's casualties only totalled 61, killed, wounded and missing. They spent eight more days in this area, constantly under shell fire, prepared for anything, before they were relieved.

**Towards Cambrai.**—The 7th Royal Fusiliers attacked at 6.30 on the morning of September 30th from positions east of the Proville—Mt. St. Œuvre road, while two companies of the 23rd Battalion advanced against Mt. St. Œuvre. It was a very difficult area for attack, and the 7th Battalion, after advancing about 200 yards with the barrage, were held up by machine-gun fire from the north and the east. The same reason accounted for the non-success of A and B Companies of the 23rd Royal Fusiliers. On the following day the 24th Royal Fusiliers were engaged in much the same area. To co-operate with the attack of another division on Rumilly, two companies of the 24th Battalion were ordered to clear the ground north-east of the village and establish a line east of the railway. The attack on Rumilly began at 5.45 p.m., and at 6.30 B Company, with four platoons in line, advanced close up to the barrage and rushed the enemy positions. There were two quarries, honeycombed with dug-outs. B were only 3 officers and 67 other ranks strong at this time, but they captured over 200 prisoners and 50 machine guns, and the supporting company were able to pass through and establish the line east of the railway with ease. The position was consolidated after a very striking success.

**Le Catelet.**—On October 4th the 3rd Royal Fusiliers again made an appearance on the Western front. They had arrived at Dieppe on July 14th, and, after resting and training, had marched up towards the battle zone two months later as one of the battalions of the 149th Brigade, 50th Division. They marched throughout the night of October 3rd, and at 6.10 in the morning of the following day they advanced between Le Catelet and Vendhuile



upon the redoubt at Richmond Copse. It was not an advance that one would choose. The battalion had to move down the slope to the Scheldt Canal and then up a valley on the opposite side. They were enfiladed on both flanks, from the neighbourhood of Vendhuile and from Le Catelet. But they reached their objective at 7.30 a.m., and then, finding themselves practically isolated, had to go back step by step to near their starting point. They had swept a path clean, taking some 300 prisoners from machine-gun teams, so that the 4th King's Royal Rifles could advance over the same ground in the evening with few casualties; but they had lost very heavily. Lieut.-Colonel E. H. Nicholson, D.S.O., Captains R. T. T. C. Chadwick and J. M. McLaggan, M.C., R.A.M.C., Captain and Adjutant W. T. Humphries, Lieutenants E. C. Nepean, R. A. L. Davies, C. E. P. Cross, B. J. O'Connor and Second Lieutenant H. Marsh were killed\*; 2 officers were wounded, and there were 139 other ranks casualties. Few actions of the Royal Fusiliers had been more tragic. Many had been more costly, but very few had carried the troops to their objective only to see them compelled to fall back almost to the starting point with the bulk of their leaders killed.

This point forms a natural division in the British offensive. By October 5th the first phase had been completed. "The enemy's defence in the last and strongest of his prepared positions had been shattered. The whole of the main Hindenburg defences had passed into our possession, and a wide gap had been driven through such near branch systems as had existed behind them. The effect of the victory upon the subsequent course of the campaign was decisive. The threat to the enemy's communications was now direct and instant, for nothing but the natural obstacles of a wooded and well-watered countryside lay between our armies and Maubeuge." †

\* This appears to have been the greatest number of officers killed in any one action of the Royal Fusiliers.

† Despatch.

**Second Battle of Le Cateau.**—"The second and concluding phase of the British offensive now opened, in which the Fourth and Third Armies and the right of the First Army moved forward with their left flank on the canal line which runs from Cambrai to Mons, and their right covered by the First French Army." \* The first stage of the subsequent fighting began with the second battle of Le Cateau, which was launched on October 8th.

The 7th Royal Fusiliers were in position near Niergnies on the morning of the battle, and held their position while the division secured their objectives. During the day the enemy counter-attacked with tanks; but the assault was easily beaten off, and when the battalion left the line at night they had only suffered three casualties. The 23rd Battalion at the same time attacked and captured Forenville, and, despite a number of counter-attacks, held it all day. The 4th Royal Fusiliers, attacking a little to the south at 4.30 a.m., had gained their objective in less than two hours, but were ordered to assist the 13th King's in a further attack on the second objective at 12.40 p.m. The battalion pushed ahead on to the slope north of Serainvillers, but were there held up by a converging machine-gun and artillery fire. Heavy casualties were sustained in this position, and the battalion became too weak to hold on to the forward line. They retired to the line west of Serainvillers, and at two o'clock the next morning withdrew to Masnieres to enable the Guard to take up the attack. Their total casualties were 121 officers and other ranks; but against this they could set 128 prisoners, thirteen machine guns, and three guns, and they had so heavily treated the enemy that the Guards found very little opposition when they advanced.

Both the 10th and 13th Royal Fusiliers attacked on this day against the Masnieres-Beaurevoir line. The final objective of the 10th Battalion was the sunken roads north-west of Hurtebise Farm. The companies moved off at 4.34 a.m. close to the barrage, and reached the

\* Despatch.

Beaurevoir line to find the wire not sufficiently cut. There was some difficulty in passing through, and the machine-gun posts inside the wire took advantage of the situation. Two platoons of C Company were left to hold the Beaurevoir line, and the other companies pressed on and captured Bel Aise Farm, with a considerable number of prisoners. A platoon of C were left to complete the mopping up, and the battalion advanced to their final objectives, which they reached and held, despite an intermittent bombardment throughout the day. The objective of the 13th Battalion was Hurtebise Farm, about two miles north-west of Walincourt. They started under the handicap of having to fight their way to their jumping-off line, as Bel Aise Farm and part of the Beaurevoir system were still incompletely cleared. But they went forward so rapidly that they were within half a mile of their objective before the barrage had gone sufficiently far to check the enemy machine guns on the high ground south of the farm. But Nos. 2 and 3 Companies pushed straight on, and at 7.15 a.m. had begun to consolidate their final position. The enemy's fire compelled them to withdraw from the south and east sides of the farm until the 1/1 Herts passed through to Briseux Wood.

On the following day they were ordered to continue the advance in support of the 1/1 Herts, who reached Ligny en Cambresis without opposition by 8 a.m. Within less than two hours the 13th Royal Fusiliers had established a line on the road right and left of the town. They advanced once more on October 10th to establish strong points on the south and east of Caudry, thereby cutting off the town from the east while the 1st Essex carried out a similar operation on the west. The battalion met with little resistance, except from our own tanks, which apparently did not expect British troops so far east, and from the barrage, which was late. No. 3 Company, finding no resistance in their path, pushed forward, captured Bethencourt and threw out a line of outposts to the east. Lieut.-Colonel Smith and Major Whitehead had in the mean-

time entered Caudry, where they were enthusiastically received by a large number of French people. In these three days the battalion had covered a considerable amount of ground, had captured 200 prisoners and some twenty machine guns. Their total casualties were 116, including Second Lieutenant E. M. Rees killed, Second Lieutenant J. Kinahan died of wounds, and 10 officers wounded. A few days later General H. Bruce Williams, G.O.C. 37th Division, inspected the battalion, and commended them in words which deserve record: "I am extremely pleased with the smartness of the battalion under extremely trying conditions, and also with your steadiness on parade. The work you have done under all circumstances since August 21st, when the offensive opened, has been of the highest order. At present you are the making of the 112th Brigade. You have served under me for two years now, and have never failed me or let me down. I congratulate you."

The 1st Battalion attacked on October 11th from Rieux, but were caught heavily by the enemy barrage while assembling for attack. This mischance was but the beginning of a series which dogged the steps of the battalion during the day. The enemy machine-gun fire was so sustained that the battalion were definitely held up with heavy loss before reaching the first objective. Rieux lies in a shallow valley through which the river Ereclin flows. To advance meant to ascend, and from the high ground the enemy were prepared for all such ventures. There were no tanks available; but a German tank came up as the battalion were relieving the 73rd Brigade, fired a few shots and sheered off. During the night the patrols found that the enemy had retired, and posts were then established on the high ground west of Villers en Cauchies and St. Aubert. Captain J. H. Jacobs, M.C., Second Lieutenant G. B. Wright, and Second Lieutenant R. W. Reed were killed on this occasion; 6 officers were wounded, and there were 125 other ranks casualties.

**Flanders.**—While the Third and Fourth Armies were

approaching the Selle River the forces in Flanders were preparing for another attack, and this was launched on October 14th. The 2nd Royal Fusiliers, who took part in this battle, assembled near Ledeghem, and began to advance at 5.35 a.m. They went straight through the village, brushing aside the weak resistance in their stride. The small posts of three or four men here and there were quickly rushed through the smoke screen. A battery of field guns was surprised by No. 9 platoon of Y Company from the flank, and was captured with ease. The enemy had been so completely taken by surprise that, though some of the troops carrying the light bridges for the crossing of the Wulfdambeek lost direction in the smoke and caused the left flank to cross later than the right, the objective, the ridge lying north-east of Moorseele, at the limit of the field artillery barrage, was reached and consolidated by 8 a.m. But when the advanced posts were pushed forward towards the village of Drie Masten, the troops were caught by machine-gun fire and were compelled to retire to the ridge, where they were shelled by field guns firing over open sights. In spite of this, the battalion stood firm until support reached them, and at length the Dublins and Lancashires advanced from the ridge. The battalion took 150 prisoners, and captured twenty machine guns and ten field guns.

The 26th Battalion, attacking in the same action, fought a confused action north-east of Menin. With the 124th Brigade they were to pass through the 122nd Brigade, but when the advance began the fog and smoke made it almost impossible to maintain formation. In such circumstances the German Army of 1916 would have taken a terrible toll of the assailants. Fortunately, the Germans were too weak and too badly shaken at this stage of the offensive to take full advantage. But in the obscurity small isolated encounters occurred, and the men, being full of confidence, profited by the chances as they offered. Second Lieutenant J. Layfield with two men rushed a field gun, killing the gunner with his revolver. A

battery of guns suddenly emerged from the fog at full gallop. But they were brought up by Lewis-gun and rifle fire and captured. At length, after several hours of this over-stimulating experience, the battalion reached Wijenberg and were able to reorganise. A smart counter-attack pushed the men out of the village, but they were rallied by Captain Spottiswoode, of B Company, and the village was retaken. The position was consolidated, and on the following day patrols were sent forward from A and D Companies to the river Lys. Second Lieutenant J. Layfield penetrated to Wevelghem, but his patrol suffered heavy casualties. Posts were, however, established some 500 yards ahead, and that evening the battalion were relieved. In the day's fighting they had captured about 200 prisoners, fifteen field guns, a number of machine guns and several horses, while their total casualties were only 78.

**To the Scheldt.**—The advances in Flanders and on the front of the Third and Fourth Armies threatened to turn the Lille-Douai area into a dangerous salient; and while the troops operating on these fronts frequently had to make their way forward against the most bitter resistance, those engaged about Lens found the obstacles to their advance suddenly smoothed away. The 3rd Londons and 2/2 Londons and the 9th Royal Fusiliers had been brought up to this sector of the front before the beginning of the general offensive, and though the first two were lightly engaged at Loison, east of Lens, on October 9th, for the most part their advance eastwards to the Scheldt was a triumphal progress. The 9th Royal Fusiliers had taken up positions east of Vimy on October 7th, and finding during the night that the German front line had been evacuated, pushed forward B and C Companies to occupy the enemy positions. Acheville was cleared on the 9th, and the trenches on the north up to the railway were occupied. A rearguard counter-attacked at this point, but it was crushed and a machine gun taken. The next few days saw an almost uninterrupted advance. There was a certain amount of resistance in Noyelle-

Godault, but by October 13th the battalion had penetrated to the west bank of the Canal de la Haute Deule. The battalion rested for a few days at this stage, and on October 18th began to move eastwards again. It was not until they reached Rumegies that the battalion came within sight of the heels of the enemy. At the St. Amand-Maulde road, which they reached on the same day, October 21st, they came under heavy machine-gun fire. Two platoons of D Company who attempted to move up the railway to the Scarpe were held up by machine-gun fire from Flagnies. The battalion were now in touch with the 58th Division on the left and the 37th Brigade on the right; and they were near the Scheldt, where the enemy had the advantage of position and where also they must perforce make some attempt to stand.

But what an extraordinary change had come over the situation on the Western front! The Belgian coast was now in the hands of the Allies, Lille had been evacuated, and the Allies were now thinking not so much of the redemption of their territory as of the chances of a decision.

**The Selle.**—In the centre of the British front the enemy lay upon the Selle on October 17th, and on this day the 3rd Royal Fusiliers co-operated in the battle which opened upon a front of ten miles by an attack across the river between Benin and St. Souplet, and after hard fighting established themselves near the Le Cateau-Arbre Guernon road, but were beaten back in a counter-attack in the afternoon. The battalion, now commanded by Major Trasenster, were only 11 officers and 308 other ranks strong, and during the day they lost 98 officers and men.

**Courtrai-Bossuyt Canal.**—The 2nd Royal Fusiliers once more attacked on October 20th, north of Courtrai. About midday they moved off in column of route behind the Dublins until they were within a few hundred yards of Esscher, when they deployed in diamond formation of platoons. They now began to advance almost due south, Z and X being directed towards the west to fill the open

flank to the Courtrai-Bossuyt Canal. By 5 p.m. these two companies had taken up a line covering Kappaart and Krote after suffering some casualties from farms on the western and steeper slopes of Banhout Bosch. W Company lay at St. Louis, in support to the Dublins on their left rear. On the following day the advance was resumed through Banhout Bosch ; but, about half-way through, the companies were held up by the fire from a machine gun installed in a farm. About 500 yards south of the edge of the wood Second Lieutenant H. H. Shields managed to get forward with three Lewis guns into some houses a few hundred yards to the north-west of the farm, and under cover of their fire the farm was rushed. In their advance the men had fired from the hip with good results. A position was taken up for the night in *liaison* with the neighbouring units. There had been very few casualties in this advance, the resistance being due to a few energetic men acting as rearguards to the Army. This was the last appearance of the 2nd Royal Fusiliers in action. They heard the news of the Armistice at St. Genois.

While the 2nd Royal Fusiliers were advancing on the eastern side of the Courtrai-Bossuyt Canal on October 21st, the 26th Battalion were operating west of the canal. The brigade moved forward about 11 a.m. towards the Laatste Oortie-Hoogstraatje Ridge. On reaching this point the left battalion, the 10th Queen's, were to turn half left and seize the canal crossing and the tunnel beneath. The 26th Royal Fusiliers were to move forward from support to the position vacated by the Queen's and then move forward to the Scheldt. Under the most favourable conditions this involved a considerable advance, and unfortunately the troops had only reached the ridge when heavy artillery and machine-gun fire caught them from the east of the canal. The 26th Battalion could not advance, despite repeated efforts ; and an attempt by D Company at night was also checked by unbroken wire and machine guns. A line was consolidated, and patrols were sent out ; but the latter found the enemy very vigilant,



and, indeed, the defence on this sector was well maintained for the next few days. The battalion were relieved on the night of the 23rd, and when they next attacked towards the Scheldt, on the 25th, it was in the area east of the canal. But the battalion had no better luck on this occasion. The German barrage was very heavy, and the machine-gun fire so intense that the whole line was held up on the west of Ooteghem. Lieutenant A. E. Chambers and Second Lieutenant H. M. Tuck with their platoons attempted to enter the village from the right, but were driven back, both officers being mortally wounded. An attempt was made to rush the windmill on the ridge southwest of Ooteghem. Lieutenant T. Robinson, of A Company, was killed in a first gallant dash; but it was eventually captured. After further heavy losses, including Lieut.-Colonel H. A. Robinson, D.S.O., the battalion dug in for the night. Fighting patrols were pushed forward next day, but the battalion were relieved before they had reached the Scheldt, and the battle line saw them no more.

**To Mormal Forest.**—Meanwhile the Selle positions had been taken, and the army now opened an attack having for its objective the general line Valenciennes—western edge of Mormal Forest-Sambre-Oise Canal. With this advance the junction of Aulnoye, which links up the Mezieres and Hirson main line with the Maubeuge, Charleroi and main lines to Germany, would be brought under effective fire. The 24th Royal Fusiliers took up positions west of Vertain on the night of October 22nd, and at 3.30 a.m. D Company attacked the village, C advancing against the road running eastward from it an hour later. Both objectives were gained by 5.10 a.m., though the task of reducing the village was by no means easy. They captured 250 prisoners and between fifty and sixty machine guns and much other booty. They were billeted in the village that night, and on the next morning the 23rd Royal Fusiliers carried the line still further forward by the capture of Ruesnes. With comparatively few casualties they cleared and consolidated the village, and sent outposts forward to the railway.

They were assisted in their operations by the 4th Royal Fusiliers. On the ridge below Ruesnes were numerous field guns, and when the 4th Battalion crossed the river Ecaillon at 4.24 on the morning of the 24th, and began their advance up the slopes of this ridge, they came under point-blank fire from these guns. Many prisoners, with light and heavy machine guns, had already been captured ; and with a concerted Lewis-gun fire the German gunners were put to flight, and three field guns were taken. The battalion then continued their advance to the final objective, the western end of the Ruesnes-Le Quesnoy road. Their left flank lay just off the road from the north-eastern corner of Ruesnes to the railway. The battalion were very weak, and all four companies were in the line. The 4th Battalion with their brigade thereafter held the main line of resistance until relief, the 8th Brigade pushing on to gain touch with the retreating enemy.

The 11th Battalion attacked in the moonlight at 1.20 a.m. from the railway embankment north-east of Le Cateau ; and, being the second wave, came under a very heavy bombardment as they advanced after the Bedfords. At the outset they had to move in single file across a narrow footbridge ; and, as a heavy barrage was playing upon it, there was a certain amount of nervousness. Captain Hornfeck at once pushed forward and stood calmly at this danger spot until all the men were across. In the half-light, the Bedfords halted about 500 yards short of their objective, and on this line the 11th Royal Fusiliers passed through, Captain Hornfeck's company reaching their objective near the Epinette Farm road. But in this position they were isolated and were under fire from both flanks. After two hours of this ordeal they were compelled to fall back to the ridge above the road, where they found the other companies ; and the 55th Brigade passed through their line at 7.30 a.m. The battalion were about two companies strong by this time, but they had alone captured eleven field guns and a considerable number of prisoners.

The attack was resumed on the next morning, and again there was some confusion in the darkness, as a consequence of which the Royal Fusiliers became involved in the fighting before they reached the line on which they were to pass through the Northants. They had to beat off a German counter-attack at Bousies Wood Farm, and when they were able to advance they found the ridge in front of them swept with machine-gun fire. A pause was made in order that the position might be further treated by artillery; but the barrage, when it came down, caused a number of casualties in our own ranks. Lieutenant E. L. Moody had become the commanding officer of three companies. He reorganised them when held up; and, freely exposing himself under machine-gun fire, he was more than a little responsible for the battalion's final advance. Lieutenant P. E. Tyler also showed outstanding courage, and although shot through the lungs, continued in the direction of his company for some three hours until he collapsed. At night the troops held a position near the Robersart-Englefontaine road.

On the second day (24th) of the battle the 13th Royal Fusiliers attacked from the north of Salesches, the way having been cleared up to this point in a spirited attack of the 10th Battalion on the preceding day. Some casualties were caused by the enemy bombardment as the troops were assembling, and, in the darkness, there was a certain amount of confusion and lack of direction; but at length the battalion advanced, No. 3 Company and two platoons of No. 2 forming a defensive flank on the right against the enemy, who were still holding the high ground south-west of Salesches station. Shortly after 5.30 a.m. the left company (No. 4) were held up by wire. The advance was resumed at seven o'clock, and the Ecaillon was crossed, the two platoons on the left wading across some 500 yards from the western edge of Ghissignies. In the village a few prisoners were captured and added to the collection, which had been steadily growing from the beginning of the advance. East of Ghissignies heavy fire

was experienced from a chapel, and the leading platoon of No. 1 Company were wiped out. The left company were also held up by machine guns, and when they were reduced to a strength of 40, they were withdrawn and moved north-east to the orchard beyond the road. No. 1 Company retired to the main line in front of the village, and at 6 p.m. the line was consolidated. On the following day the battalion attempted to push forward once more, but were held up near the De Beart Farm. The battalion were relieved at 9 p.m. on this day, and received the congratulations of the divisional commander for their "fine work." With 120 prisoners and numerous guns and trench mortars and an advance of about 5,000 yards to their credit, they deserved congratulations; but they had lost 108 officers and men and were now reduced to 11 officers and 269 other ranks.

\* \* \* \*

The war was now ringing to a close. The Royal Fusilier battalions who had been engaged in constant battles since the opening of the offensive on August 8th were many of them worn to the shadow of their former selves. The wastage in officers had been terribly high; and yet, filled out with drafts, frequently young men of little training, they appeared in the fighting line once again. The astonishing thing is that they entered battle with the *flair* of the expert and were prepared for all risks. The last battle was now to be fought. Germany's allies had all forsaken her, and she had herself abandoned every fiction and requested an armistice.

**The Battle of the Sambre.**—At dawn on November 4th the First, Third and Fourth Armies struck from the Sambre, north of Oisy, to Valenciennes. On the left flank of the attack the 4th Londons crossed the river Aunelle at Sebourg and then turned northward to Sebourquiaux and cleared it of machine guns. A Company, on the left, were unable to secure touch with the Canadians, and came under heavy machine-gun fire from Rombies; but when Sebourquiaux was cleared they were able to

advance to the Aunelle. The main bridge had been destroyed, but they crossed by a footbridge and formed a defensive flank across the river. On the right the battalions were in touch with the Queen's Westminsters, but on the left their flank was still in the air. They were relieved the next morning on these positions, and other battalions of the division carried the line forward. At midnight on the 5th the 2nd Londons relieved the London Rifle Brigade, and suffered heavy casualties in moving into position. On the following morning they advanced after the barrage across a deep ravine, covered with thick undergrowth, to the Honnelle. The river was at this time swollen with the recent rains, and its steep wooded sides formed admirable cover for the German machine guns. C and D Companies reached and crossed the river, but, both flanks being in the air, were almost surrounded, and had to fall back to the western side. A and B also forced their way across and advanced to the railway at the edge of the Bois de Beaufort. But beyond this the ground was swept by machine guns, and the flanking battalions could not be located. The Germans pressed round their left flank, but were put to flight by a bayonet charge. Another party of the enemy got through the wood to the rear of the detachment, and the officer in charge called out, "Hands up!" Half of the small detachment delivered another bayonet charge in reply. It was obvious that to recross such a river under such pressure was an extremely difficult operation; yet, under the direction of Captain Rowlands, M.C., the detachments retired, taking their wounded with them. The battalion reorganised along their assembly positions and were relieved in the evening, after a total loss of 5 officers and 107 other ranks, sustained in attempting an operation that no troops in the world of equal strength could have carried out.

The 1st Royal Fusiliers attacked on November 5th, advancing from Jenlain, and on the high ground east of Wargnies le Grand, passing through the 73rd Brigade. After an advance of about 5,000 yards the troops came

into contact with the enemy about 1,000 yards west of the Hogueau stream, which casts a wide loop about Bavai, to the east. At this point there was considerable machine-gun fire, and the barrage put down did not affect the position. The battalion therefore held their ground for the night. At dawn on November 6th the battalion advanced, but were held up on the east bank of the river, as all attempts to carry the high ground to the east proved unsuccessful. The German rearguards were very stubborn on this part of the front. The next day the 3rd Rifle Brigade passed through the battalion, who on the 8th went into billets at Bavai, where they still lay on November 11th.

On the 37th Division front both the 13th and the 10th Royal Fusiliers were engaged. The latter were to pass through the 13th King's Royal Rifles, who were to mop up the village of Louvignies and advance to a line about 500 yards to the east. At this point the 10th Royal Fusiliers were to pass through and advance about 1,000 yards. At five o'clock in the morning all companies were in position on the railway, on which shells had been falling throughout the night. Lieutenant A. N. Usher, M.C., commanding A Company, was killed at this point. Half an hour later the companies, advancing under the barrage, encountered several machine-gun posts, which they reduced. D Company went through the village, killing or taking prisoner all the Germans met with, and the battalion reached their objective in schedule time. About 8 p.m. that night they went back to Beaurain after a finished little engagement in which, for a total loss of 52 officers and men, they had captured 300 prisoners, three field guns, a motor lorry and a large number of machine guns.

The 13th Battalion were to pass through the Essex on the Red Line, nearly 3,000 yards further east, on the edge of the forest. In Ghissignies at 7.35 a.m. they came under heavy fire, and machine-gun bullets were whistling across the road. The companies were halted outside Louvignies for the Essex to come up, and at 9.40 this

battalion had passed through. After crossing the Louvignies-Le Quesnoy road under fire at 10.45 a.m., they lost touch with both flanks owing to the enclosed nature of the ground. About noon B Company was moving after the Essex through Jolimetz and helping to mop it up ; and A Company, after helping the Essex to reduce a machine-gun pocket south-west of the village, was moving forward towards the Red Line. At 3.45 p.m., after surmounting the difficulties of assembling owing to the thick undergrowth, the companies began to enter the forest. It was already growing dark. There was a spasmodic machine-gun fire down the railway and the *laies*, and the battalion made but slow progress. They were only about the strength of a full company, and the German Army a year before would have made a jest of dealing with such a force in the forest. At 6 p.m. four platoons had reached the cross-roads about the railway, where a machine gun was captured and the team killed ; and had formed a strong point there. Posts were thrown out to the cross-roads about 500 yards to the south-west, where contact was made with the 8th Somerset Light Infantry. Platoon No. 9 of B Company was out of touch. This platoon, under Sergeant W. Green, M.M., had with great daring pushed on through the wood in complete darkness to the point where the Villereau-Berlaimont road is crossed by two other roads. At this point on November 4th the continuous area of standing trees ended, though there were other considerable patches of standing trees about 4,000 yards to the east. The platoon, completely isolated, dug in, patrolling for 1,000 yards to the east, and held on until morning, when the 5th Division passed through. The rest of the battalion, nearly 1,000 yards distant on the right rear, could find no troops on their left. Sergeant Green's platoon, in fact, was the only unit for at least 1,000 yards north and south which reached the dotted Red Line.\* By 5.30 a.m. on

\* So far as I can discover, it was the most easterly post held that night on the British front. Sergeant Green was awarded the D.C.M.

November 5th the battalion were on this line, and when they were passed by the 5th Division they went back to Le Rond Quesne.

At 6.15 in the morning of the 4th the 11th Royal Fusiliers attacked Preux au Bois. A composite company with the Bedfords and a company of the 6th Northants moved from a position north of the village already taken by the rest of the Northants, while the rest of the 11th Battalion demonstrated from the west. By eight o'clock the composite company (C and D) were in position to clear the village from the north. Captain Hope, commanding this company, although held up by machine-gun nests and the breakdown of the tank which was to deal with them at the beginning of the attack, eventually "succeeded in breaking through with some 20 men. Without waiting for the remainder, he at once pushed on with such effect that he succeeded in clearing up the whole area, capturing over twenty machine guns and some 200 prisoners, including 5 officers. The success of the attack in this area was entirely due to his leadership and determination, while the example of coolness and courage he gave was beyond all praise."\* By 11 a.m. other battalions were pushing ahead, and the 11th Royal Fusiliers' work was done.

On the morning of November 4th the 3rd Royal Fusiliers took up assembly positions astride the Fontaine au Bois-Landrecies road, about 1,000 yards south-east of the village of Fontaine. The weather was damp and misty, and when the battalion advanced about 500 yards the leading companies were out of touch, and the support company went up to fill the gap. It was about this point that the 13th Royal Highlanders were held up on the Englefontaine road. The German machine-gun defence was very elaborate on this sector of the front, and without the co-operation of the tanks it is difficult to see how it could have been crushed by such light forces. About 8 a.m. the Scottish Horse were across the road,

\* Official account. He was awarded the D.S.O.



and the 3rd Royal Fusiliers, who had been mopping up a few houses on their front, resumed the advance. The village of Les Etoquies was reached and cleared, and by about 11.30 the Red Line was reached and the objective consolidated. The Red Line lay some 3,000 yards from the starting point and about 1,500 yards from the Sambre. The outposts of the battalion extended to about half the distance to the river. The total casualties for the day were 120 officers and men, including Captain Murray Large, who was killed on the tape line. Field guns, machine guns, wagons and horses were among the captures.

The troops reached Hachette Farm, north of the railway near the Maroilles road, at 5 p.m. on November 5th, and spent the night there. On the following day the battalion began to follow up the retreating Germans, crossing the Sambre below Hachette Farm and advancing through Laval. Little opposition was encountered, and when in the evening two Germans, fully equipped, were met with on the road, they were so surprised that they screamed with fright. At 8.30 p.m. on the 7th the 3rd Battalion were in billets at St. Remy Chaussée when an order was received that deserves record: "If German officer bearing a flag of truce presents himself at any point of British front, he will be conducted to the nearest divisional headquarters and detained there pending instructions from G.H.Q."

This was welcome news. Weariness was almost the chief handicap of the time. The transport animals were in poor condition owing to overwork, and still there was not enough transport. Blankets and great-coats had been dumped at Fontaine for this reason, and on November 7th wagons were sent for them. The roads were very heavy and much damaged by mines.

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On November 8th the 7th Battalion were heavily engaged. On the preceding day they had moved through Sebourquiaux, taken on November 4th by the Londons, and at noon on the 8th they moved along the Andregnies-

Witherries road without opposition, but met heavy machine-gun and trench-mortar fire before Offignies. After a brisk fight the enemy fell back, after inflicting five casualties. The battalion advanced again on November 9th, carried the Montrœul wood and the Eugies-Sars La Bruyere road, and reached a position on the road from Quevy le Petit to the Mons-Maubeuge road.

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The 3rd Royal Fusiliers advanced to Mont Dourlers on the 8th under heavy machine-gun fire, and amid the sounds of exploding mines which told their tale of continued retirement. Patrols on this evening were sent to the western edge of the forest of Beugnies. Before dawn on the following day the patrols began to push through the forest. On the left they came under machine-gun fire, but the centre company were through the wood by 5 a.m. A few hours later the battalion were withdrawn to Mont Dourlers to billets, thoroughly exhausted, but pleased with having seen the last of the enemy in the war.

On November 10th the 7th Battalion reached the Nouvelles-Harveng road with little difficulty at 8.30 a.m. The 188th Brigade went through them at this post, and in the afternoon the battalion proceeded to Harveng and billeted there for the night. They were still in this village, a few miles south of Mons, when the Armistice took effect the next morning. On November 15th 5 officers and 180 other ranks embussed to Mons and took part in the formal entry of the First Army commander.

The 4th, 17th, 23rd, 24th, and 26th Battalions went into Germany as part of the Army of Occupation. The long-drawn-out war had come to an end. The individual share of any regiment in the final victory it were unwise to estimate. But at least it may be said in a final survey of the achievement of the Royal Fusiliers in Egypt, in Africa, in the Balkans, and on the main Western front, that everywhere they showed themselves worthy of the traditions they inherited, in fine, a very gallant company.

# APPENDIX

## THE ROLL OF HONOUR

### OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL FUSILIERS

- Adams, Ernest Frederick, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 22/6/17.  
Adams, Ralph Newton, M.C., Capt., k. in a., 10/10/16 (7/Bn., att. R.F.C., 23/Sq.).  
Addis, David Malcolm, 2/Lt., 26/Bn., d. of w., 9/6/17.  
Aldrick, Charles Pelham, 2/Lt., 26/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
Allen, Archibald Stafford, Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 3/10/15.  
Anderson, William Francis, Capt., d. of w., 10/12/15.  
Andrews, Alan Charles Findlay, 2/Lt., 16/Bn., k. in a., 29/6/15.  
Andrews, John Leonard, M.M., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 19/5/18.  
Anketell, C. E., 2/Lt., killed, 11/5/18 (R.A.F.).  
Annesley, Albemarle Cator, D.S.O., Lt.-Col. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 8/7/16.  
Anstice, John Spencer Ruscombe, Lt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 2/5/15.  
Anthony, Clarence Case, Capt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., d. of w., 15/12/15.  
Aris, Thomas Arthur, Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 16/4/17.  
Armstrong, Christopher, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/4/16 (14/Bn., att. 6/N. Lan. R.).  
Armstrong, John Owen, 2/Lt., 10/Bn., k. in a., 15/7/16.  
Arnold, A. C. P., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 18/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
Arnould, Derek Clement, Lt., died, 7/5/18 (4/Bn., att. R.T.E.).  
Aspden, Ronald William, 2/Lt., 5/Bn., d. of w., 8/8/17.  
Astley, Aston Giffard, Major (Tp.), k. in a., 1/10/16 (att. M.G. Corps).  
Astwood, Edward Leicester Stuart, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 20/9/16.  
Attwood, Algernon Foulkes, Capt., k. in a., 8/10/14.  
Ayres, Victor Albert, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 1/9/18.  
Ayrton, Frank Frederick Joseph, Capt., 16/Bn., k. in a., 28/6/15.  
Backlake, Brian Ashber, Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
Badenoch, Ian Forbes Clark, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., died, 19/3/17.  
Baker, Bertram Reginald, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/16.  
Baker, John Bartrup Harwood, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 1/9/1.  
Balbirnie, John Victor Elphinstone, 2/Lt., 23/Bn., k. in a., 7/9/18.  
Bambridge, Rupert Charles, D.S.O., M.C., M.M., Capt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 23/5/18.  
Bambridge, William Herbert, Lt. (Tp.) (A/Capt.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 19/8/17.  
Banister, Charles Wilfred, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/6/15.  
Banks, Edward Francis, 2/Lt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 28/2/17.  
Bantock, Arthur Thomas, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., d. of w., 23/11/15.  
Barber, George, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 16/Bn., k. in a., 3/10/16.  
Barker, Hugh Edwin, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., died, 31/1/18.  
Barnes, Edward James, 2/Lt., 5/Bn., d. of w., 4/5/18.  
Barnes, Vincent Kendall, 2/Lt., 24/Bn., k. in a., 29/4/17.  
Barnes, Wilfred Oliver, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 18/11/16.  
Barnett-Barker, R., D.S.O., Brig.-Gen., 22/Bn., k. in a., 25/3/18.  
Barnett, Bret Hercules, 2/Lt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
Barnett, Herbert William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
Barrell, Victor Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 22/8/18.  
Barrett, Keith Joy, Lt. (Tp.), 2/Bn., d. of w., 16/4/17.

- Barrow, Hector Henry, 2/Lt., 8/Bn., k. in a., 20/10/15.  
 Barten, Donald, 2/Lt., 8 Bn., k. in a., 30/11/17.  
 Barton, Frank Hubert, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 5/11/18 (att. T.M.B.).  
 Barton, Kenneth Cyril, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9 Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Barton, Stanley Ernest, 2/Lt., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Batty-Smith, F. C., Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 4/6/16.  
 Baugh, Charles, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., d. of w., 5/4/18.  
 Bayly, Harry Ayrton, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., k. in a., 14/6/17.  
 Bayley, Reginald John, 2/Lt., 13/Bn., k. in a., 29/4/17.  
 Beale, Ernest Frederick, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., k. in a., 28/4/17.  
 Beausire, Herbert Arthur William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/3/15.  
 Bentley, Howard Lidyard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 2/Bn., k. in a., 28/2/17.  
 Berrill, Bernard Francis Gotch, Lt., 6/Bn., k. in a., 17/3/15.  
 Berry, A. L., 2/Lt., 8/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
 Bescoby, Edgar Laurence, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., d. of w., 18/6/17.  
 Bettesworth, Tom, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 3/11/15 (12/Bn., att. R.E. 172/Fld. Coy.).  
 Betts, Henry Lee, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Bevir, R., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 15/7/16.  
 Bingham, Frank Oldfield, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 14/9/18.  
 Birchall, Arthur Percival, Capt. (T/Lt.-Col.), k. in a., 24/4/15 (att. Can. Div.).  
 Bird, Clement Eustace, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., d. of w., 28/6/17.  
 Bird, Eric Hinckes, Lt., d. of w., 27/6/16 (1/Bn., att. R.F.C., 25/Sq.).  
 Bishop, Charles Frederick, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 4/4/18.  
 Black, George Dudley Austin, Lt. (Tp.), 22/Bn., k. in a., 21/6/16.  
 Blackwell, Charles, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 20/7/15.  
 Blackwell, Cyril, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 16/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Blackwell, William Gordon, Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 5/10/16.  
 Bleaden, Lionel, Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 6-9/7/16.  
 Boddy, G. G. D., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 27/3/16.  
 Bolland, Frederick William Henry, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 7/6/17.  
 Bond, William Henry Hugh, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 22/6/17.  
 Booth, John, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Bott, William Ernest, Capt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 18/9/18.  
 Bourne, Leonard Cecil, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 2/Bn., d. of w., 14/8/17.  
 Bourne, S. M., Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 4-5/4/16 (8/Bn., att. 8/R.W. Fus.).  
 Bowden-Smith, Walter A. C., Capt., d. of w., 28/8/14.  
 Bower, Frederic William, Capt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 8/3/18.  
 Bracey, Frederick Sidney, Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 13/11/16.  
 Brand, Ernest Stanley, Capt., k. in a., 8/10/14 (and W.A. Rifs.).  
 Brandreth, Lyall, Major, k. in a., 4/6/15.  
 Bray, George Thomas, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., d. of w., 26/10/17.  
 Brickland, Charles Hampton, 2/Lt., k. in a., 25/3/15.  
 Bridgman, William Louis, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., d. of w., 20/9/17.  
 Bright, Francis John, 2/Lt., 32/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Broad, A. M. Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 12/7/16 (15/Bn., att. M.G.C.).  
 Brodie, Sidney Edward, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., d. of w., 17/4/17.  
 Brown, Frederick Arthur, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 7/Bn., k. in a., 13/11/16.  
 Brown, John Gordon, M.C., Capt., k. in a., 5/10/18 (att. 47 Div., Arty H.Q.).  
 Brinkworth, W. H., Lt., k. in a., 4/8/18 (R.A.F.).  
 Bruce, Wallace Edward, Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Buckland, C. J., 2/Lt., died, 19/8/18 (R.A.F.).  
 Bulbeck, Henry Edmund, Lt. (Tp.), 16/Bn., k. in a., 6/11/16.  
 Bull, Percival John, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Bullock, Robert, Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Bullock, William Acton, 2/Lt., died, 25/10/18 (att. 2/17 Lond. R.).  
 Bungey, Gerald Edwards, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 4/8/16.  
 Burdett, C. P. B., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9 Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.

- Burdett, William Allan, M.C., A/Capt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Burgess, Eric Archibald, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., k. in a., 17/2/17.  
 Burgess, Reginald Charles, 2/Lt., 23/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Burnham, Andrew William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 15/Bn., k. in a., 13/11/16.  
 Burton, Charles William Gordon, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., k. in a., 22/11/17.  
 Bushell, R. H. C., 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 27/7/16.  
 Butchard, Robert Archibald, Lt. (Tp.), 31/Bn., k. in a., 5/11/16.  
 Butterworth, Edward Cyril, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., d. of w., 21/11/17.  
 Byng, Arthur Maitland, Capt., k. in a., 14/9/14.  
 Calthrop, Alfred Gordon, 2/Lt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
 Calwell, Theophilus Legate, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Campbell, Charles, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., d. of w., 20/4/18.  
 Campbell, Frederick Charles, 2/Lt., (Tp.), 17/Bn., k. in a., 24/3/18.  
 Campbell, Ronald Walter Francis, Capt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 11/8/16.  
 Cane, Leonard Dobbie, Capt. and Adj. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 24/1/16.  
 Carey, Francis Ambrose, 2/Lt., 32/Bn., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Carey, Leicester William le Marchant, Capt., k. in a., 17/10/14.  
 Carmichael, David Arthur, Lt., k. in a., 17/4/18 (3/Bn., att. M.G. Corps).  
 Carpenter, Clarence, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 17/2/17.  
 Carr, James Walter, M.C., D.C.M., Lt., died, 16/11/18 (23/Bn., att. 99 T.M.B.).  
 Carter, Ernest Lionel, M.M., 2/Lt., 13 Bn., k. in a., 24/10/18.  
 Case, Joseph, Lt., d. of w., 15/11/18 (5/Bn., att. 1/Bn.).  
 Chambers, Alfred Ernest, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 29/10/18.  
 Champion, Sydney George, Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 17/3/17 (5/Bn., att. 2/K. Afr. Rifs., P.O.W.).  
 Chapman, Donald John Stuart, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 13/7/16.  
 Chard, Robert Alexander Farmer, Capt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 8/7/16.  
 Chatham, George Henry, 2/Lt., 10/Bn., k. in a., 23/11/16.  
 Chell, Harold, Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 10/8/15.  
 Cheshire, Eric Corveroy, Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Christie, Murray Inglis, D.S.O., 2/Lt. (Tp.) (A/Capt.), 32/Bn., d. of w., 34/3/18.  
 Chuter, Harry Athelstan, Lt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 25/3/17 (and R.F.C., 70/Sq.).  
 Clapton, Arthur, 2/Lt., 32/Bn., k. in a., 5/9/16.  
 Clark, Arthur James Richard, Lt., 8/Bn., d. of w., 9/10/16.  
 Clarke, Edward George, Lt. (T./Capt.), 7/Bn., k. in a., 13/11/16.  
 Clifford, Watling Wallis, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 12/10/17.  
 Coates, W. F., Capt., d. of w., 30/4/15 (6/Bn., att. 1/Bn.).  
 Cocker, Arthur Wilfred Kingsley, 2/Lt., 17/Bn., k. in a., 30/11/17.  
 Coggin, Algernon Oswald, Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 27/10/6.  
 Cohen, Edward, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Cole, Mowbray Lyster Stanley Owen, Capt., died, 14/9/14.  
 Cole, Wilfred Samuel, Lt. (Tp.), 25/Bn., died, 11/5/16.  
 Coley, Joseph Alfred, 2/Lt. (A/Capt.), k. in a., 22/3/18 (5/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Collings, Sydney Walter, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 20/4/18.  
 Collis-Sandes, Maurice, James, Capt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 17/2/17.  
 Combe, Boyce Anthony, Lt., k. in a., 11/11/14 (6/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Compton, Harold A., Lt.-Col. (Tp.), 12/Bn., d. of w., 7/7/17.  
 Consterdine-Chadwick, Robert Thompson Consterdine, Lt. (Tp.) (A/Capt.), k. in a., 4/10/18 (17/Bn., att. 3/Bn.).  
 Cook, Arthur Basil Kemball, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
 Cook, S. Frank, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., k. in a., 5/8/17.  
 Cooper, Frederick Edmund, Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 18/12/18.  
 Cooper, Henry Weatherley Frank, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 7/Bn., d. of w., 28/4/17.  
 Cooper, William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Coppack, Charles Richard Stewart, 2/Lt., d. of w., 24/3/18 (22/Bn., att. 24/Bn.).

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- Coppard, William John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., d. of w., 23/3/18.  
 Corben, Victor Leslie, 2/Lt., 26/Bn., died, 22/7/18.  
 Core, Charles Gooch, 2/Lt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
 Corlett, Douglas Stephen, T/Lt. (A/Capt.), 3/Bn., d. of w., 12/11/18.  
 Cornaby, C. Ernest, M. C. Capt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., d. of w., 23/9/18.  
 Cornes, Henry Percy Griffiths, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 27/9/17 (23/Bn., att. 99/T.M.B.).  
 Coull, Frederick, 2/Lt. (T/Lt.), k. in a., 30/9/18 (att. 23/Bn.).  
 Coventry, Eric, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 20/7/16.  
 Cowell, J. G., 2/Lt., killed, 28/1/18 (att. R.F.C.).  
 Cowie, Gerald James Hardwicke, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 23/4/17.  
 Cowie, Lionel Jack Hardwicke, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 2/Bn., k. in a., 24/4/17.  
 Cox, Cecil Arthur, Capt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 16/10/16.  
 Cox, Henry Jack, Capt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Coxhead, Maurice Edward, Capt. (T/Major), 9/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Crabb, Thomas Henry, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., d. of w., 18/3/10.  
 Crampton, Edgar Walter, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/10/17 (5/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Croal, Kenneth McFarlane, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 19/10/18 (att. 2/10 R. Scots).  
 Crook, William George, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 9/3/18.  
 Crookes, Ronald Orme, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 4/6/16.  
 Cross, Christopher Edric Percy, Lt., 3/Bn., k. in a., 4/10/18.  
 Crowe, Hugh Parby, Lt., drowned, 28/10/15.  
 Curwen, Wilfred John Hutton, Capt., k. in a., 9/5/15 (6/Bn., att. 3/Bn.).  
 Cuthbert, David, Capt. (Tp.), k. in a., 7/10/16 (29/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Dadd, Reginald John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 7/Bn., k. in a., 5/4/18.  
 Daines, Allan Edward, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 30/12/17.  
 Daines, Roland Lewis, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., k. in a., 3/8/17.  
 Daniell, George Francis Blackburne, 2/Lt., k. in a., 24/4/17 (6/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Darker, Richard Owen, 2/Lt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 12/4/18.  
 V.C. Dartnell, Wilbur, Lt. (Tp.), 25/Bn., k. in a., 3/9/15.  
 Davies, Donald Frederick, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 15/4/18 (22/Bn., att. 23/Bn.).  
 Davies, Roland Arthur L., Lt. (Tp.), 3/Bn., k. in a., 4/10/18.  
 Davies, William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 10/4/17.  
 Davis, George Leith Blakeman, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 27/9/18.  
 Davison, Robert Charles, 2/Lt., d. of w., 19/5/17 (5/Bn., att. 4 Bn.).  
 Dawson, Frederick Charles Blakeman, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 3/5/17 (11/Bn., att. R.A.C.).  
 Day, Frederick Charles, Capt., k. in a., 31/7/17 (att. 12/Bn.).  
 Day, Hubert Francis, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
 Day, Hubert Victor, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 9/4/17.  
 V.C. Dease, Maurice James, Lt., k. in a., 23/8/14.  
 De Beck, George Clifford, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 18/2/17.  
 De Trafford, Ralph Edric Galfrid Antony, Lt., k. in a., 25/4/15.  
 De Trafford, Thomas Cecil, Capt., k. in a., 10/11/14.  
 Dilnutt, Eric William, Lt. (T/Capt), 8/Bn., k. in a., 2/3/16.  
 Disney, Arthur William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 30/11/17.  
 Dixon, Robert William, M.M., 2/Lt., (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 5/9/18.  
 Docker, George Arthur Murray, Capt., k. in a., 17/11/14.  
 Done, Neville Savage, 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/3/17 (6/Bn., att. 22/Bn.).  
 Doudney, Hugh Denham, A/Capt., 12/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Douglas-Crompton, Sidney Harold Lionel, 2/Lt., 5/Bn., k. in a., 7/6/17.  
 Downing, Ernest Gillespie, Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Drinkill, Frederick Maurice, Lt., 2/Bn., d. of w., 1/7/16.  
 Drummond, Samuel Frederick, 2/Lt., 17/Bn., k. in a., 29/7/17.  
 Dudley, Leonard Thomas, M.C., Lt., 10/Bn., d. of w., 8/10/18.  
 Dudley, Walter Joseph, Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 16/6/15.  
 Du Maurier, Guy Louis Busson, D.S.O., Lt.-Col., k. in a., 10/3/15.

- Dunnington-Jefferson, Wilfred Mervyn, 2/Lt., k. in a., 22-29/4/15 (7/Bn., att. 3/Bn.).
- Dunwell, Frederick Leslie, 2/Lt., 5/Bn., k. in a., 4/1/16.
- Dupres, Ernest Cruzick, T/Lt. (A/Capt.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 29/8/18.
- Dutch, Ernest James, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 6/1/17 (14/Bn., att. 25/7/Bn.).
- Eagar, Rowland Tallis, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/8/18 (att. 9/Bn.).
- Eames, William Stanley, Lt., d. of w., 16/2/16 (7/Bn., att. 12/Bn.).
- Eathorne, Francis John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 21/7/16.
- Eborall, John Arthur, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., d. of w., 25/2/17.
- Echlin, Frederick St. John Ford North, 2/Lt., 5/Bn., d. of w., 27/9/16 (and R.F.C.).
- Ede, Edwin William, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), A/Capt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 30/8/18.
- Edwards, Albert John, 2/Lt., T./Lt., 26/Bn., k. in a., 2/8/17.
- Edwards, Guy Thulkeld, Capt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/16.
- Edwards, Leslie Edward, M.C., Capt. (Tp.), d. of w., 6/12/17 (6/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).
- Edwards, Wilfred William, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., d. of w., 22/1/17.
- Elliott, Walter, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 13/11/16.
- V.C. Elliott-Cooper, Neville Bowes, D.S.O., M.C., Lt.-Col. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 11/2/18 (in German hands).
- Enderby, Arthur Aaron, Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., d. of w., 2/8/17.
- Etheridge, Hugh Dimsdale, M.C., M.M., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., d. of w., 2/10/18.
- Evans, James Bansall, Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 20/8/16.
- Evans, Lawrence Picton, Lt., k. in a., 21/8/18 (6/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).
- Farquharson, Peere William Nesham, 2/Lt., 26/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.
- Featherstonhaugh, G. R. A., Capt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 8/7/16.
- Fergusson, Robert Arthur, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/4/17 (6/Bn., att. 17/Bn.).
- Ferrier, Gilbert Colin Cunninghame, 2/Lt., k. in a., 11/11/14 (7/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).
- Fetherstonhaugh, Harry, 2/Lt., k. in a., 25-27/10/14.
- Field, Arthur Clarence Henley, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 4/4/16 (14/Bn., att. 4/S.W. Borderers).
- Field, William James, M.C., 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.
- Fielding, Alexander, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 26/10/18 (att. 124/L.T.M.B.).
- Fisher, Percy Watkins, 2/Lt., 22/Bn., k. in a., 12/9/16.
- Fitch, Louis C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 1/Bn., k. in a., 28/7/18.
- Fitton, Norman, 2/Lt., k. in a., 14/11/6 (7/Bn., att. 22/Bn.).
- Fitzclarence Augustus Arthur Cornwallis, Capt., k. in a., 28/6/15.
- Flack, Wilfred George, M.C., Lt., d. of w., 7/9/17.
- Fletcher, Arthur Joseph, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 33/4/17.
- Fletcher, Robert Henry, Lt. (Tp.), 14/Bn., k. in a., 27/7/16.
- Ford, A., 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/5/15.
- Ford, John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 25/Bn., died, 16/6/16.
- Ford, Richard Nagle, M.C., Capt. (T/Major), k. in a., 6/1/18.
- Forster, Frederick Albert, Capt., d. of w., 23/8/15.
- Forster, Herbert Cyril, Capt., k. in a., 25/5/15.
- Forster, John, M.C., Capt. (A/Major), 7/Bn., d. of w., 2/10/18.
- Forsyth, Gordon Amhurst, 2/Lt., 8/Bn., k. in a., 27/8/16.
- Foster, Edward, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 23/4/17.
- Fowler, Charles Jefford, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 22/Bn., d. of w., 1/6/16.
- Fox, Charles Joseph, 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/6/16 (16/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).
- Francis, William Joseph, 2/Lt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 22/3/18.
- Franklin, Francis, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/5/15.
- Franklyn, Henry, Capt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 8/7/16.
- Fraser, Donald Charles, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/5/17 (5/Bn., att. 9/Bn.).
- Freston, Charles Albert Edward, 2/Lt., d. of w., 25/3/18 (5/Bn., att. 23/Bn.).
- Friedberger, William Sigismund, Capt., k. in a., 24/5/15 (3/Bn., att. 5/Bn.).

- Fripp, Joseph, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., died, 12/3/18.  
 Fugeman, William Alfred, Capt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 1/12/17.  
 Fuller, Dunstan Milley, M.C., Capt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
 Fuller, Morris Richard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 11/4/17.  
 Gaddum, R. Charles Sydney, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., k. in a., 10/9/16.  
 Gardiner, C. T., 2/Lt., d. of w., 1/6/15.  
 Gardiner, Kenneth Edward MacAlpine, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/10/15 (14/Bn., att. 8/Bn. Lond. Regt.).  
 Garnons-Williams, Richard Davie, Lt.-Col., 12/Bn., k. in a., 25/9/15.  
 Garrad, Edward Victor, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 22/1/16 (14/Bn., att. 6/N.Lan. R.).  
 Garratt, Leslie Thomas, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., d. of w., 3/7/16.  
 Gibson, Pendarves Christopher Foll, Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 10/4/17.  
 Gilbert, Edward Burton, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 25/Bn., k. in a., 21/3/18.  
 Gilbert, John Ewart, Capt. (Tp.), died, 6/11/18.  
 Gilbert, L. S., 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 4/4/16 (13/Bn., att. 8/R.W. Fus.).  
 Gill, Colin, 2/Lt., 12/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Gjems, Albert Ole Möller, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/8/17 (5/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Goddard, Frederick Sidney, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 15/12/17.  
 Goddard, Philip Henry Thomas, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 26/9/16.  
 Godfrey, Frederick, 2/Lt. (T/Capt.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 16/8/16.  
 Goff, Alfred Laurence, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 16/1/17 (14/Bn., att. 6/L.N. Lancs).  
 Goldthorp, Guy, Capt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 23/4/17.  
 Goodman, P. N., Capt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 3/3/16.  
 Goolden, Donald Charles, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/8/16 (6/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Gonne, M. E., M.C., Capt., k. in a., 7/8/18 (and R.A.F.).  
 Gordon, Alexander Maurice, Lt., k. in a., 23/1/16.  
 Gordon, Gerald Montague, Capt. (Tp.), k. in a., 9/6/17 (5/Bn., att. 12/Bn.).  
 Gordon, S. E., Lt., k. in a., 13/3/15 (6/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Gorst, E. W., 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 25/10/14.  
 Gosling, Frederick Horace, 2/Lt., 32/Bn., k. in a., 7/6/17.  
 Grady, Walter Henry, 2/Lt., k. in a., 22/4/15 (att. 3/Bn.).  
 Granville, Basil Raymond, 2/Lt. (A/Capt.), 7/Bn., k. in a., 23/4/17.  
 Gray, Hubert McKenzie, A/Capt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
 Gray, John Hunter Wood, T/Capt. and Qtm., 17/Bn., died, 17/11/18.  
 Greathead, Alan. T/Capt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 20/11/17.  
 Green, Henry Morris, Capt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 4/8/16.  
 Green, Leslie Alan, 2/Lt., k. in a., 13/11/16 (6/Bn., att. 23/Bn.).  
 Greenwood, Charles Stuart, 2/Lt., 11/Bn., died, 21/7/16.  
 Gregory, Stanley Harris, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 13/11/16 (15/Bn., att. 24/Bn.).  
 Griffith, Rupert Varden De Burgh, Lt., k. in a., 12/3/15.  
 Griffiths, Charles Ridley, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 7/Bn., d. of w., 1/5/17.  
 Griffiths, Leon David, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 29/4/17 (24/Bn., att. 5/T.M.B.).  
 Grisot, Reginald, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 6/8/18.  
 Gudgeon, Frederick Gustavus, Capt. (Tp.), k. in a., 28/6/15 (10/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Gush, William George, 2/Lt. (Tp.) (A/Capt.), k. in a., 23/4/17.  
 Guyon, George Sutherland, Lt.-Col., 2/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Gwynne-Vaughan, Kenneth Duncan, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 15/Bn. k. in a., 6/9/16 (and 33/M.G.C.).  
 Haddon, Vernon, 2/Lt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
 Hall, Geoffrey, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 20/11/17.  
 Hall, William Ernest, Lt., 5/Bn., k. in a., 23/5/15.  
 Hamilton, Albert Edward, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 18/8/17.  
 Hammond, Robert Whitehead, M.C., Capt. (Tp.) (A/Lt.-Col.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 30/9/17.



- Hanna, David Wishart, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 24/6/16.  
 Harding, Charles Egerton Hugh, Capt. (Bt.-Major), died, 10/12/17.  
 Harding, Donald Stanley, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.) (A/Capt.), 13/Bn., k. in a.,  
 10/4/17.  
 Hardman, Adrian Thomas, Lt., 4/Bn., d. of w., 30/3/16.  
 Hardman, Frederick McMahon, 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/10/14.  
 Hardy, Ferdinand H., Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 4/9/16 (2/Bn., att. 22/M G.C.).  
 Harrup, Frederick Charles Leonard, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a.,  
 21/9/18.  
 Harter, Clements Jesse, Lt., k. in a., 16/6/15.  
 Harvey, Albert Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Harvey, R. W., 2/Lt., 17/Bn., died, 22/10/18 (and R.A.F.).  
 Havelock, Ernest Wilfrid, Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 18/9/16.  
 Haviland, John Doria, Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 16/7/16.  
 Hawkins, Kenneth Edwards, M.C., Lt. (A/Capt.), 7/Bn., k. in a.,  
 22/3/18.  
 Hawkridge, Joseph Arnold, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 6/11/16 (15/Bn., att.  
 9/Suss. R.).  
 Haycraft, Alan Montague, Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16 (6/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Hayes, Claude Julian Patrick, Capt. (A.), 1/Bn., k. in a., 9/8/16.  
 Hayward, Cecil Bernard, Capt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 27/7/16.  
 Hayward, Edward John, 2/Lt., k. in a., 12/11/15 (5/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Heathcote, Martin Arthur, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 18/7/16.  
 Heaver, Douglas Cams, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 4/8/16.  
 Heinemann, John Walter, Capt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., d. of w., 6/3/16.  
 Helmore, S. T. J., 2/Lt., 23/Bn., killed, 14/5/18 (and R.A.F.).  
 Hendriks, Augustus Mark, Capt., k. in a., 25/5/15.  
 Hendry, Charles Arthur, 2/Lt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 27/3/18.  
 Henley, Frederick, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 27/10/16.  
 Hersee, Charles Patrick Allen, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 3/3/16.  
 Hicks, Frank Alan, M.C., Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 21/8/18.  
 Hicks, Walter Gerald, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 12/8/15.  
 Hiddingsh, Stephen Van Der Poel, Lt. (A/Capt.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Hilder, Maurice Lake, M.C., Lt. (T/Capt.), k. in a., 3/5/17 (5/Bn., att.  
 23/Bn.).  
 Hill, William Ernest, Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 8/8/18.  
 Hine, T. C., 2/Lt., 20/Bn., k. in a., 20/7/16.  
 Hinton, Norman Charles, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., d. of w., 4/4/18.  
 Hoare, Walter, John Gerald, D.S.O., Capt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a.,  
 25/10/16.  
 Hobbs, Frank Matthew, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/9/14.  
 Hodding, James Douglas, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 10/7/16.  
 Hodges, Charles Edward, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/6/15.  
 Hodges, Sydney Howard, 2/Lt., k. in a., 17/10/14.  
 Hodgson, Michael Reginald Kirkman, Capt., k. in a., 17/3/15 (att.  
 York L.I.).  
 Hogbin, Raymond, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Holdcroft, Eric Crane, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 4/10/17 (Res., att. 13/Bn.).  
 Holland, Jack Harold, 2/Lt., 22/Bn., died, 16/6/18 (and R.A.F.).  
 Hollands, Wilfrid George, 2/Lt., k. in a., 12/10/16 (7/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Honeywill, Stanley Ross, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 8/10/18.  
 Hope-Johnstone, Henry Murray, M.C., Capt. (A/Major), d. of w.,  
 31/7/17 (att. 12/Bn.).  
 Hosegood, Henry Arnold, 2/Lt., 5/Bn., k. in a., 24/2/15.  
 Houghton, William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 9/4/16 (11/Bn., att. 15/Bn.) (att.  
 8/R.W. Fus.).  
 Howard, Leslie Rayner, Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 27/3/16.  
 Howells, David Geoffrey, 2/Lt. (Tp.), died, 1/12/18.  
 Hudson, Arthur Cyril, Major (Tp.), d. of w., 2/10/16 (att. 11/Bn.).  
 Hughes, Sidney Russell, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 30/9/18 (23/Bn., att. 11/Bn.).

- Hughes, William Francis, M.C., M.M., Lt., 17/Bn., d. of w., 7/9/18.  
 Hugill, Edwin Abbott, Capt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., died, 25/9/17.  
 Hugill, Valentine Francis Herbert, 2/Lt., 16/Bn., k. in a., 16/10/16 (and R.F.C., 42/Sq.).  
 Hume, Ronald, Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 6/4/17 (and R.F.C., 20/Sq.).  
 Humphreys, William Thomas, Lt. (T/Capt. and Qr-Mr.), 3/Bn., k. in a., 4/10/18.  
 Humphrys, Stewart Francis, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 26/8/16 (20/Bn., att. 14/Bn.).  
 Hunter, Arthur Lawrence, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 8/8/18.  
 Hyams, Alec Hallenstein, Lt., k. in a., 3/5/15 (9/Bn., att. 3/Bn.).  
 Illing, Francis, 2/Lt., d. of w., 8/5/18 (5/Bn., att. 13/Bn.).  
 Inglis, W. R., Col., 33/Bn., died, 30/3/16.  
 Ireland, Joseph Knowles, Capt., 26/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Isaacs, Vincent Harcourt, 2/Lt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 21/9/18.  
 Jackson, Arthur Rushton, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 25/4/18.  
 Jackson, John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 26/Bn., 20/9/17.  
 Jacob, Arthur Henry Augustus, Lt., 4/Bn., d. of w., 16/7/16.  
 Jacobs, John Harry, M.C., A/Capt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 11/10/18.  
 Jeffcoat, Stanley Ferns, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 22/Bn., d. of w., 29/4/17.  
 Jeffreys, Hubert Leslie, 2/Lt., 13/Bn., k. in a., 29/4/17.  
 Jepson, Norman Richard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 15/10/15 (14/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Johnson, Newton Farring, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 16/8/16 (15/Bn., att. 26/Bn.).  
 Johnson, Robert Deane, Capt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 6/7/16.  
 Judge, Wilfred Justice, 2/Lt., d. of w., 21/8/16 (5/Bn., att. 1/Bn.).  
 Juniper, John Harvey, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 30/4/17.  
 Kay, Albert, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 1/8/17.  
 Kaye, Frank Leon, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 11/4/17 (5/Bn., att. 9/Bn.).  
 Kentfield, Edwin Nelson, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 17/2/17.  
 Kerry, Albert, 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 22/3/18.  
 Kilmister, Harold Howard Linsdell, M.C., Lt., k. in a., 22/8/18 (5/Bn., att. 9/Bn.).  
 Kinahan, James, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., d. of w., 8/10/18.  
 King, Alan Howard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 22/8/18.  
 Knight, Arthur George, Lt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 29/6/15.  
 Knott, Charles Singleton, 2/Lt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 23/3/18.  
 Lamb, Harold George Wellesley, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/10/18 (6/Bn., att. 10/Bn.).  
 Lambert, George, 2/Lt., k. in a., 22/4/15.  
 Lambert, Leonard Walter, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 28/3/18 (att. 4/Bn.).  
 Larcombe, Henry Reginald Reader, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., k. in a., 2/9/17.  
 Large, Ronald Murray, Lt. (A/Capt.), 7/Bn., k. in a., 4/11/18.  
 Law, James Kidston, Capt., k. in a., 21/9/17 (and R.F.C., 60/Sq.).  
 Lawford, Herbert Martin Benson, Capt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Lawrence, John James, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 23/10/18.  
 Lawrence, Norman Alan, 2/Lt., k. in a., 30/4/17 (and R.F.C., 16/Sq.).  
 Leatherland, Frederick Arthur, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 7/8/18.  
 Lecky, John Rupert Frederick, Capt., k. in a., 28/9/15 (7/Bn., att. Norf. R.).  
 Lee, William Robert Charles Paul, 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/7/15 (7/Bn., att. R. Welsh Fus.).  
 Leeming, Alfred Johnson, 2/Lt. (A./Capt.), 6/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Legge, Hugo Molesworth, Lieut., k. in a., 5/5/15.  
 Lelievre, Albert Frederic Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., d. of w., 4/8/16.  
 Le Marchant, S. H., 2/Lt., d. of w., 25/5/15 (6/Bn., att. 3/Bn.).  
 Lenton, Harold Bertram, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 30/10/17.  
 Lethbridge, Cecil Augustus, Lt., 8/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Leslie, Frank King, Capt., k. in a., 25/4/15.

- Levi, Harry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 30/11/17.  
 Lewis, David Jacob, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 2/Bn., k. in a., 28/2/17.  
 Ling, Frederick William, Capt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 27/6/17.  
 Linstead, Douglas Walter, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., k. in a., 6/5/16.  
 Lipp, Vernon Robertson, 2/Lt., k. in a., 17/6/16 (5/Bn., att. 12/Bn.).  
 Lissaman, Arthur John, Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 13/4/17.  
 Little, Norman James Richard, Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 13/3/17.  
 Long, William Charles, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., d. of w., 31/8/18.  
 Longman, Frederick, Lt., k. in a., 18/10/14.  
 Lowe, George Stanley, 2/Lt., k. in a., 18/9/18 (att. 9/Bn.).  
 Lucas, John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., d. of w., 28/12/17.  
 Lupton, Frank William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 4/8/16.  
 Macartney, Hussey Burgh George, Capt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 24/6/15.  
 Macdougall, Allen, Capt. (Tp.), 22/Bn., k. in a., 4/8/16.  
 Mackadam, Harold James, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 7/Bn., k. in a., 30/12/17.  
 Mackay, Alexander William, M.C., Capt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 28/9/17.  
 Mackay, Angus, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., d. of w., 10/5/18.  
 Maclean, Donald Frederick Durant, Major (Tp.), died, 10/12/17.  
 McCarthy, Alexander, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 23/8/18.  
 McCullum, Rae Bruce, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 2/9/17 (4/Bn., att. 9/Bn.).  
 McGregor, Ian Alexander, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 10/9/16 (2/Bn., att. 2/N'd. Fus.).  
 McIntyre, James Lennie, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 14/5/18.  
 McMahan, Norman Reginald, D.S.O., Brig.-Gen., k. in a., 11/11/14 (H.Q. 10 Inf. Bde.).  
 McNaught, Ernest Henry, 2/Lt., 12/Bn., k. in a., 18/7/16.  
 Magnay, Philip Magnay, Capt. (T/Lt.-Col.), k. in a., 13/4/17 (att. 12/Bn. Manch. R.).  
 Maguire, Edward Alphonsus, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 8/10/18 (att. 4/Bn.).  
 Malcolm, Albert Victor Sadler, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 17/2/17 (16/Bn., att. 11/Bn.).  
 Manson, John Cochrane, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
 Marquard, John, Lt. (Tp.), (A/Capt.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 23/8/18.  
 Marsh, Harold, 2/Lt., 5/Bn., k. in a., 4/10/18.  
 Marshall, Dudley, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/9/17 (6/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Marsland, Eric Forbes, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16 (6/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Martin, Bertram Charles, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 13/4/17.  
 Martin, Harold, Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Mason, Arthur Edward Wright, Capt., k. in a., 2/3/16 (7/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Mason, Royston Alfred Robson, 2/Lt., d. of w., 20/11/17 (5/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Massey, Louis Oger, 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 21/8/16.  
 Masters, Charles William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 30/8/17 (5/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Masters, Geoffrey, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 9/4/17.  
 Masterton, Frank, 2/Lt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 5/4/18.  
 Matthews, Charles Henry, 2/Lt., 1/Bn., d. of w., 22/3/18.  
 Maude, Gervase Henry Francis, 2/Lt., d. of w., 9/4/17 (att. 8/Bn.).  
 Mawdsley, Norman Hargreaves, Lt., 6/Bn., died, 17/6/18.  
 Mayer, Frank, Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 3/10/18 (att. 4/Bn.).  
 Mead, Bernard Wallace, 2/Lt., d. of w., 2/6/15.  
 Mead, Joesph Frederick, 2/Lt., k. in a., 23/8/14.  
 Mead, Robert John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 2/8/15.  
 Meares, Cecil Stanley, Capt. (Tp.), k. in a., 30/7/16 (19/Bn., att. 24/Bn.).  
 Mears-Devenish, John Augustus, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 22/3/18 (12/Bn., att. 1/Bn.).  
 Measures, William Henry, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 22/8/18 (5/Bn., att. 11/Bn.).  
 Mellor, Harold Welton, Capt. (Tp.), died, 28/5/18 (15/Bn., att. 2/K.A.R.).  
 Menzies, Alastair Forbes, D.S.O., Lt. (Tp.) (A/Capt.), 17/Bn., k. in a., 4/5/18.

- Mephram, Horace Leslie, 2/Lt., k. in a., 11/4/18 (6/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Meredith, Eric D., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., k. in a., 4-10/10/16.  
 Meyricke, Robert James Francis, T/Major (A/Lt.-Col.), 11/Bn., k. in a.,  
 17/2/17.  
 Miall-Smith, Ralph A., Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 26/9/16.  
 Michell, Noel Burgess, Capt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 22/3/18.  
 Miles, John Harris, 2/Lt., k. in a., 27/9/15 (7/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Miles, Leonard Percy, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16 (6/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Millson, Alvan Ewen, Capt. (Act.), 6/Bn., k. in a., 9/4/17.  
 Milway, Edwin Horace, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 8/10/18.  
 Minchin, William Smith, M.C., Capt. and Qr.-Mr., 11/Bn., k. in a.,  
 20/4/18.  
 Monkman, Fred Kerbey, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 28/9/17.  
 Morgan, Albert Ernest, Capt., k. in a., 10/3/15 (att. R.F.C.).  
 Morgan, F. J., 2/Lt., 7/Bn., d. of w., 16/5/18 (and R.A.F.).  
 Morgan, William Alfred, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 23/4/17.  
 Morris, Collin Dwight, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 14/3/16.  
 Mortimer, Leonard James, Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., d. of w., 24/11/17.  
 Mortlock, Percy George, 2/Lt., 26/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Moscrop, William Noel Jobson, M.C., 2/Lt. (A/Capt.), k. in a., 27/5/18  
 (att. 5/Durh. L.I.).  
 Mott, Francis Stanley, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., d. of w., 23/7/16.  
 Mount, Edward Alfred, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 4/1/16.  
 Moxon, Gerald John Mortimer, Capt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 27/3/16.  
 Mullane, Bernard Patrick, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., d. of w., 1/4/18.  
 Munday, Lionel Clement, Lt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 6/6/15.  
 Munds, Percy, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 7/Bn., d. of w., 8/10/18.  
 Murless, Herbert Reginald, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 7/2/17 (1/Bn., att.  
 12/Bn.).  
 Murphy, Harry Eustace, Lt., 1/4/Bn. (and R.A.F.), k., 22/4/18.  
 Murray-Smith, Geoffrey, Lt., k. in a., 29/9/15 (6/Bn., att. 3/Bn.).  
 Nathan, William Sylvester, 2/Lt., k. in a., 14/6/16 (att. 12/Bn.).  
 Neate, Nelson Rayner, M.C., Capt., k. in a., 3/5/17 (11/Bn., att.  
 H.A.C.).  
 Neate, William, 2/Lt., 24/Bn., k. in a., 24/3/18.  
 Neely, Clive William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 14/Bn., died, 20/6/16.  
 Neighbour, Walter Bayard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., d. of w., 16/8/16.  
 Newcomb, Cyril, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., k. in a., 25-28/9/15.  
 Newland, Edward Albert, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 23/10/18.  
 Newnham, Alfred Geoffrey, 2/Lt., k. in a., 11/11/14.  
 Nicholls, John Watson, Lt., 5/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Nicholson, Albert, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 8/8/18.  
 Nicholson, Bruce Hills, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/5/17 (6/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Nicholson, Edward Hills, D.S.O., Major, A/Lt.-Col., k. in a., 4/10/18  
 (att. East Surr. R.).  
 Nield, Wilfred Herbert Everard, Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Noel, Honble. Robert Edmund Thomas More, Capt., died, 2/2/18 (6/Bn.,  
 att. 1/Nigerian R.).  
 Norman, Garnet, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 2/4/18.  
 Norris, Cyril Norman, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., d. of w., 19/8/17.  
 Norwell, Herbert, 2/Lt., k. in a., 12/4/18 (5/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Notcutt, Leonard, Ernest, Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17 (and 27/M.G.C.).  
 Nyren, Dudley Richard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 24/3/18.  
 O'Connor, Bernard Joseph, Lt. (Tp.), 3/Bn., k. in a., 4/10/18.  
 Ohlmann, G. A. L., 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/9/15.  
 Oliver, Edgar Alexander, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 27/7/16.  
 Orbell, Ivan Scott, 2/Lt., k. in a., 25/10/17.  
 Osborn, Ernest John, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), (A/Capt.), d. of w., 13/4/18 (att.  
 5/T.M.B.).  
 Osborne, H. C. B. Major (Tp.), 27/Bn., died, 28/6/16.

- Osborne, Robert Lionel, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 7/7/86 (14/Bn., att. 9/Bn.).  
 Ottley, Glendower George, Major (Tp.), k. in a., 3/9/16.  
 Ozanne, Edward Graeme, Capt., d. of w., 16/2/15.  
 Paddock, William Francis, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., d. of w., 9/4/17.  
 Page-Green, Reginald Sebastian, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a.,  
 22/6/7.  
 Paiba, Ellis James Alfred, Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 20/10/15 (15/Bn., att.  
 2/Bn.).  
 Pallet, Edward Roy, Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 6/4/18.  
 Palling, William Lionel, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 15/3/16 (att.  
 111/T.M.B.).  
 Palmer, Edward Charles Maxwell, 2/Lt., k. in a., 23/4/17 (13/Bn., att  
 111/T.M.B.).  
 Palmer, John Henry, Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 20/7/16.  
 Parker, Walter Henry, Lt. (A/Capt.), k. in a., 15/6/17 (att. 2/4 Lon. R.)  
 Parkes, Robert Lionel, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Parr, Wilfred Alexander, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Parr-Dudley, John Huskisson, 2/Lt. (Tp.) 11/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Parr-Dudley, Walter, 2/Lt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 5/4/18.  
 Parry, William Henry Liddon, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., d. of w., 29/11/16.  
 Parsons, Alfred Ernest, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Parsons, George Jonathan, 2/Lt., d. of w., 31/8/18 (att. 4/Bn.).  
 Patman, Harold George, 2/Lt., 12/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Pattinson, H. L., Capt. and Adj., k. in a., 4/8/15 (att. 9/Bn.).  
 Payne, William Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 22/Bn., k. in a., 17/2/17.  
 Pearson, Angus John William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 14/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Pearson, John Ashworth, Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 4/8/16.  
 Pearson, Neil M., 2/Lt., k. in a., 17/8/16 (5/Bn., att. 1/Bn.).  
 Peaston, Leslie Gordon, 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 21/3/18.  
 Peacock, Edward Gordon, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
 Pennington, Harold Cocking, Lt. (Tp.), 1/Bn., d. of w., 20/6/17.  
 Penny, Bernard Willoughby, 2/Lt., 2/Bn., d. of w., 18/8/17.  
 Penny, Stanley, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 14/Bn., d. of w., 28/7/16.  
 Penrose, Harold, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 27/3/17 (12/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Penrose, Harold Wesley, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 26/3/18.  
 Penwarden, William Francis, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 31/8/18.  
 Perraton, Frank Mayvour, 2/Lt., 22/Bn., k. in a., 29/4/17.  
 Perrier, William Samuel, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 27/3/16.  
 Perry, Cullen Hay, Lt. (Tp.), died, 3/2/18 (and R.F.C.).  
 Persse, Henry Wilfred, M.C., Capt. (A/Major), 2/Bn., d. of w., 28/6/18.  
 Phillipps, The Honble. Rowland Erasmus, Capt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a.,  
 7/7/16.  
 Phillips, Sydney, Capt., 12/Bn., k. in a., 25/10/15.  
 Pickop, James Taylor Greer, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., d. of w., 21/6/17.  
 Pickop, William Bannister Augustus, Lt., 4/Bn., d. of w., 24/10/18.  
 Pilgrim, Hugh Thomas, M.C., Capt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 25/8/18.  
 Pincombe, Lionel John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Pinney, John Charles William Adderley, Lt., k. in a., 1/12/17 (1/Bn., att.  
 38/Horse).  
 Pitt, Geoffrey Stanhope, T/Capt., 26/Bn., died, 11/2/19.  
 Pollak, Otto Dennis, Lt., 17/Bn., k. in a., 8/7/16.  
 Porter, Robert Ernest, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., d. of w., 10/8/17.  
 Portlock, Alfred Edgar, 2/Lt. (Tp.), killed, 6/12/17 (att. R.F.C.).  
 Potts, Ernest Alexander, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 15/10/18 (24/Bn.,  
 att. 10/Bn.).  
 Powell, Eric Layton, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 16/4/17.  
 Pratt, William George James, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 28/9/17.  
 Price, Harold Strachan, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 24/5/15.  
 Price, John Thomas, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/16.  
 Price-Edwards, Owen, Capt. 8 Bn., k. in a., 22/6/16.

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- Pride, A. R., 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Prior, H. L., 2/Lt., died 3/7/18 (1/4/Bn., att. R.A.F.).  
 Procter, Alexander Duncan Guthrie, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
 Prynne, Edgar George Fellowes, T/Lt. (A/Capt.), k. in a., 16/9/16  
 (4/Bn., att. 1/23 Lond. R.).  
 Pugh, C. Arthur, 2/Lt., 26/Bn., k. in a., 10/10/16.  
 Puzey, Arthur Kenneth, Capt., k. in a., 11/11/14.  
 Pye, Francis John, Capt., k. in a., 15/12/16 (5/Bn., att. Gold Coast Rgt.).  
 Quin, James Davidson, 2/Lt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 19/8/18.  
 Radcliffe, David, Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 18/3/16.  
 Radford, Francis Buckley, 2/Lt., k. in a., 25/3/18 (3/Bn., att. 13/Bn.).  
 Raine, George Stevenson, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k., 15/3/17 (26/Bn., att. R.F.C.).  
 Ralls, Arthur, Lt., d. of w., 16/9/16 (5/Bn., att. 9 Lancs. Fus.).  
 Ramsay, A., Lt., 5/Bn., died, 28/4/15.  
 Ramsbottom, Reginald, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 29/7/16 (29/Bn., att. 17/Bn.).  
 Randall, Edwin Walter, Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 23/4/17.  
 Ranken, Dudleigh Chalmers, Capt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 27/7/16.  
 Rattigan, Cyril Stanley, Capt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 13/11/16.  
 Rattray, David Lindsay, Capt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 17/2/17.  
 Rawlins, Gerald Edmund Adair, Capt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
 Rawson, Stuart Milner, Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 20/7/16.  
 Reed, James Richard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 24/11/17.  
 Reed, Russell Walter, 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 11/10/18.  
 Rees, Eric Montague, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/10/18 (6/Bn., att. 13/Bn.).  
 Rigby, Charles, Lt., 6/Bn., k. in a., 4/11/18 (R.A.F.).  
 Remington, Wallace, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 23/3/18.  
 Rennie, Donald Williamson, 2/Lt., k. in a., 11/11/14.  
 Richards, Percival Morgan, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 15/7/16.  
 Richards, Roland, Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 7/12/15 (16/Bn., att. 7/R. Mun. Fus.).  
 Richardson-Jones, Charles Harry, 2/Lt., 6/Bn., k. in a., 11/6/16.  
 Righton, Richard Harry, 2/Lt., k. in a., 27/9/18 (6/Bn., att. 7/Bn.).  
 Roberts, Arthur Colin, C.M.G., D.S.O., Brig.-Gen., died, 17/5/17 (80 Inf. Bde. H.Q.).  
 Roberts, Frederick Norman, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 3/Bn., d. of w., 19/11/18.  
 Roberts, Francis, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 27/10/16.  
 Roberts, William Arthur, Lt. (Tp.), died, 20/8/17 (30 T.R.B.).  
 Robertson, Barrie Dow, 2/Lt. (Tp.) (A/Capt.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 22/8/18.  
 Robertson-Walker, Arthur Murdoch Maxwell, Capt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
 Robinson, Arthur Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 25/Bn., k. in a., 11/6/17.  
 Robinson, Thistle, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 25/10/18 (att. 26/Bn.).  
 Roe, William Richard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), died, 11/5/17 (11/Bn., att. H.A.C.), in German hands.  
 Rogers, Benjamin Richard Corlay, 2/Lt., k. in a., 17/10/18 (6/Bn., att. 3/Bn.).  
 Rogers, Sheffield Digby Kissane, Lt., k. in a., 14/6/15 (4/Bn., att. North'd Fus.).  
 Roope, Charles Francis, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 2/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Roper, Eric Walter, Lt. and Adj. (Tp.), 17/Bn., d. of w., 12/9/16.  
 Roper, William Frank, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 29/9/18 (11/Bn., att. 54/T.M.B.).  
 Roscoe, Richard Lang, M.C., Capt. (Tp.), 22/Bn., d. of w., 4/2/17.  
 Rose, Theodore William Frank, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 4/4/18.  
 Rowe, Benjamin Franklin, Lt., k. in a., 1/6/17 (and R.F.C.).  
 Royer, Harold Ernest, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 27/9/18.  
 Royle, Dennis Carlton, M.C., Capt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 21/8/18.  
 Rumball, George Thomas Sydney, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 13/4/18 (att. 2/Bn.).

- Ryan, Martin, Capt. (Tp.) (A/Major), 25/Bn., k. in a., 18/10/17.  
 Sampson, Bertram George, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 12/2/17.  
 Sandall, Horace Cecil Blandford, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 9/3/18 (12/Bn., att. 10/Bn.).  
 Sanders, Frederick John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., d. of w., 6/8/18.  
 Savage, William Howard, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Savours, Arthur William, Lt., k. in a., 2/8/18 (6/Bn., att. 11/Bn.).  
 Saward, Ralph, 2/Lt., 22/Bn., k. in a., 29/4/17.  
 Sayer, Leonard Charles, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., d. of w., 4/7/16.  
 Sayer, Robert Bramwell, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., d. of w., 19/2/17.  
 Schofield, Cuthbert, Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 25/9/15 (14/Bn., att. 12/Bn.).  
 Scott, Arthur Ernest Mortimer, Lt., k. in a., 7/11/16 (7/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Scott, William David, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 3/8/17.  
 Scott-Miller, Walter Dudley, 2/Lt., killed, 22/6/17 (att. R.F.C.).  
 Scudamore, John Venables, Lt., k. in a., 25/4/15.  
 Sealy, Charles Frederic Noel Prince, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 24/5/15.  
 Selous, Frederick Courteney, D.S.O., Capt. (Tp.), 25/Bn., k. in a., 4/1/17.  
 Seward, Stanley Richard, Lt. (A/Capt.), k. in a., 30/10/17 (7/Bn., att. 7/R. Sco. Fus.).  
 Seymour-Ure, William Bruce, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., k. in a., 4-10/10/16.  
 Shafto, Thomas Duncombe, Capt., k. in a., 2/5/15.  
 Shannon, Richard Bernard, Earl of, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 13/4/17.  
 Sharp, Humphrey, Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 5/10/15.  
 Sharpe, Sydney William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 25/Bn., d. of w., 25/3/18.  
 Shaw, Hugh James, Capt., k., 11/11/14 (5/Bn., att. 1/Bn.).  
 Shaw, Max Joseph, Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 15/9/16 (16/Bn., att. 26/Bn.).  
 Shaw, Raymond Pugh, Lt. (1/Capt.), k. in a., 28/11/15 (5/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Shaw, Walter Douglas, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 8/11/18 (att. 1/10 Manch. R.).  
 Shepherd, Gordon Strachy, D.S.O., M.C., Brig.-Gen., k. in a., 19/1/18 (and R.F.C.).  
 Sherwood, Clement Walter, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., k. in a., 28/11/17.  
 Shoesmith, Edward James, 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 7/6/17.  
 Shillingford, Stanley Charles, Lt., k. in a., 16/6/18 (2/Bn., att. R.A.F.).  
 Shorrocks, Thomas Dudley Ralph, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Shurey, Charles, Capt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 21/7/16.  
 Sidwell, Albert Edward, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/17.  
 Simonds, Ernest Hugh, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 28/3/18.  
 Simmons, Robert George, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 22/3/18.  
 Simons, Leon, M.C., Capt., 22/Bn., k. in a., 17/2/17.  
 Simpson, Christopher Byron, Capt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Simpson, John Parker Norfolk, 2/Lt., d. of w., 27/5/15 (5/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Sims, Heber Harold, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., d. of w., 1/9/18.  
 Sinclair, Frank, Lt. (Tp.), drowned, 3/10/18 (att. Nigeria Rgt.).  
 Skelton, Harry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., d. of w., 12/10/16.  
 Skinner, Stephen William, 2/Lt., 32/Bn., k. in a., 4/10/16.  
 Smith, Arthur William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 23/Bn., k. in a., 7/9/18.  
 Smith, Dugald, 2/Lt. (Tp.) (A/Capt.), 4/Bn., d. of w., 8/10/18.  
 Smith, Everard Cecil, Lt., k. in a., 23/8/14.  
 Smith, James Clement, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 27/3/16.  
 Smith, Sydney John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Smith, Walter Wyville, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 18/10/15.  
 Snaith, William Ernest, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Snelling, Frederick John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 7/Bn., k. in a., 30/10/17.  
 Solomon, L. B., Lt. (Tp.), 2/Bn., k. in a., 12/4/18.  
 Soro, William, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 16/4/17.  
 Sparks, James Elliot, Lt., k. in a., 21/7/16.  
 Sparks, Robert Lionel, 2/Lt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 22/11/17.  
 Speakman, Alan Edwards, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 5/9/18 (att. 2/Bn.).

- Spence, Bertram, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 21/9/18.  
 Spicer, George Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 17/Bn., k. in a., 6/6/18.  
 Spooner, George Piercy, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 20-23/9/17 (att. 26/Bn.)  
 Stables, Harold Rolleston, Lt., k. in a., 15/11/14 (5/Bn., att. Chesh. R.).  
 Stafford, Cyril Francis, 2/Lt., 24/Bn., d. of w., 14/4/17.  
 Stanley, Lawrence Aston, 2/Lt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 30/11/17.  
 Stapleton-Bretherton, Wilfred Stanislaus, Capt., k. in a., 8/11/14.  
 Stearns, Eric Gordon, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 7/8/15.  
 Steele, Frederick Wilberforce Alexander, Lt., d. of w., 25-27/10/14.  
 Stephens, Geoffrey Duncan, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/7/16 (5/Bn., att. 1/Bn., att. T.M. By.).  
 Stephenson, Rennie, Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 16/11/16.  
 Stevens, Arthur Reginald Ingram, Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 4/8/16.  
 Stevenson, Frederick, 2/Lt., 22/Bn., k. in a., 29/4/17.  
 Stileman, Cecil Herbert, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 23/2/16 (and R.F.C., 5/Sq.).  
 Stiles, Arthur James, 2/Lt., 8/Bn., k. in a., 3/8/16.  
 Still, Reginald Sidney Hewitt, 2/Lt., k. in a. (28/Bn., att. 9/Bn.).  
 Stirling, Richard Kellock, Lt., k. in a., 21/8/15 (5/Bn., att. 1/Bn.).  
 Stocker, Frederick Luff, Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 23/8/18 (28/Bn., att. 20/Bn.).  
 Stollery, John Cecil, 2/Lt., k. in a., 24/5/15 (5/Bn., att. Warwicks).  
 V.C. Stone, Walter Napleton, A/Capt., k. in a., 30/11/17 (3/Bn., att. 17/Bn.).  
 Stovold, Grosvenor Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
 Stoyle, A. P., Lt., died, 27/2/19 (4/Bn., att. R.A.F.).  
 Street, Frank, Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 7/7/16.  
 Stringer, John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Stuart, John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 6/Bn., died, 24/4/18.  
 Sykes, Ronald Arthur, Lt., 7/Bn., d. of w., 28/4/17.  
 Symonds, Arthur, 2/Lt., 23/Bn., k. in a., 17/2/17.  
 Symons, Charles Handley Lamphier, 2/Lt., k. in a., 20/11/17 (5/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Tardugno, Ray, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 7/7/17 (17/Bn., att. R.F.C., 57/Sq.).  
 Tate, William Lewis, Lt., k. in a., 13/3/15.  
 Taylor, Arthur George Ernest, Lt. (A/Capt.), 7/Bn., d. of w., 26/5/17.  
 Taylor, Clives Wailes, M.C., 2/Lt., 17/Bn., d. of w., 25/2/17.  
 Taylor, Eric Francis M., 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 27/7/16.  
 Taylor, Francis Maurice, Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., k. in a., 15/7/16.  
 Taylor, Maurice, 2/Lt., k. in a., 23/3/18 (att. 11/Bn.).  
 Tealby, Harold Edgar William, 2/Lt. (A/Capt.), k. in a., 5/4/18 (6/Bn., att. 7/Bn.).  
 Templar, John Franklin Hopwood, Capt., 2/Bn., died, 8/2/19.  
 Thoday, Albert Eric, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Thomas-O'Donel, George O'Donel Frederick, Capt. and Adjt., k. in a. 16/6/15.  
 Thompson, Albert Martin, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 21/12/15 (att. 1/15 Lond. R.).  
 Thompson, Richard Henry Vaughan, Capt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 26/9/16.  
 Thomson, Spencer, M.C., Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 24/4/17 (14/Bn., att. 2/Bn.)  
 Thornburn, R. W., Capt. (Tp.), 32/Bn., d. of w., 7/8/17.  
 Thorp, Leslie, 2/Lt., 10/Bn., k. in a., 16/11/16.  
 Tiffany, Harry Waddington, M.C., 2/Lt., 12/Bn., k. in a., 15/11/16.  
 Toller, Edward Northcote, Capt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 20/7/16.  
 Tothill, Geoffrey Ivan Francis, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 27/3/16.  
 Tower, Bertie Christopher Butler, M.C., Capt. (A/Major), d. of w. 22/8/18.  
 Tristram, Eric Barrington, 2/Lt. (T/Lt.), k. in a., 6/9/17 (att. 1/5 Lanc. Fus.).  
 Troup, Frank Monck Mason, Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 10/4/17.  
 Tupper, Harold, 2/Lt., 10/Bn., d. of w., 22/7/18.



- Turney, Leonard William, Major, k. in a., 3/5/17 (6 Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Twigg, Ellis, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 4/Bn., k. in a., 18/9/18.  
 Twyman, Percy Gedge, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 10/Bn., d. of w., 15/4/17.  
 Ullman, Douglas Maurice Jaques, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 23/4/17.  
 Umney, Basil Charles Lovell, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., k. in a., 22/7/16.  
 Underwood, Edmund Poole, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 30/7/16 (17/Bn., att. 29/Bn.).  
 Undery, John Alfred, 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/10/14.  
 Uphill, Reginald William James, 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 22/3/18.  
 Usher, Arthur Norman, M.C., 2/Lt., 10/Bn., k. in a., 4/11/18.  
 Van Gruisen, Wilfred, M.C., Lt., 1/Bn., d. of w., 1/11/16.  
 Vaughan, John Montgomery, 2/Lt., d. of w., 25/5/15.  
 Veresmith, Evelyn Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 9/7/16 (14/Bn., att. 9/Bn.).  
 Vincent, George Samuel, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 4/10/17.  
 Waddell, James Douglas, Capt., 12/Bn., k. in a., 25/9/15.  
 Waddell-Dudley, Robert Rowland, Lt., k. in a., 15/4/15.  
 Wade, Lawrence Frank, 2/Lt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 28/8/18.  
 Waghorn, Percy William, 2/Lt., 8/Bn., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Waley, Aubrey John, Lt. (Tp.), 12/Bn., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Walker, Alfred English, Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 22/8/16.  
 Waller (Bart.), Francis Ernest (Sir), Capt., k. in a., 25/10/14 (6/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Waller, Richard Alured, 2/Lt., 5/Bn., died, 1/11/17.  
 Wallwork, Herbert, Lt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 20/7/16.  
 Walsh, John, Major (Tp.), 22/Bn., d. of w., 19/2/17.  
 Ward, Eric, 2/Lt., 10/Bn., d. of w., 27/2/18.  
 Warde, Brian Edmund Douglas, Lt., k. in a., 16/6/15 (6/Bn., att. 4/Bn.).  
 Wardley, Miles Edward, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 22/Bn., k. in a., 29/4/17.  
 Wardrop, John, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 8/Bn., k. in a., 3/8/16.  
 Wason, Cyril Ernest, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 9/Bn., k. in a., 30/11/17.  
 Watt, Robert, 2/Lt., 11/Bn., k. in a., 10/8/17.  
 Weare, Frederick John, 2/Lt., 4/Bn., d. of w., 9/10/18.  
 Webb, George Tudor, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 24/Bn., k. in a., 21/4/16.  
 Webb, R. B., Major (Tp.), 25/Bn., died, 26/7/16.  
 Wells, Frederick Bennett, 2/Lt., 23/Bn., d. of w., 10/10/18.  
 Wells, Hurlestone Vesey, Capt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 12/4/18.  
 Westaway, Leslie Thomas, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 2/Bn., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Whiteman, Ormonde Charles, Capt. (Tp.), 11/Bn., k. in a., 22/11/17.  
 Whitworth, James Frederick, Capt., k. in a., 21/3/18 (from W. Yorks.).  
 Whittall, Noel Charles, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 13/9/17 (7/Bn., att. R.F.C., 6/Sq.).  
 Whyte, Mark Gilchrist, 2/Lt., k. in a., 19/8/18.  
 Wickham, Cyril Henry, Capt., d. of w., 15/1/15.  
 Wigger, Robert Harrison, M.C., 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 17/2/17 (15/Bn., att. 23/Bn.).  
 Wilcock, Maurice Nettleton, Lt., 13/Bn., k. in a., 18/9/18.  
 Willett, Nelson Herbert, 2/Lt., 2/Bn., k. in a., 11/4/18.  
 Williams, Idris Havard Joseph, Capt., d. of w., 3/6/15.  
 Williams, Rowland, 2/Lt., 9/Bn., k. in a., 23/10/18.  
 Williams, Trevard Lewis, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 30/10/17.  
 Williams, William Frederick, 2/Lt., 17/Bn., k. in a., 27/9/18.  
 Wilmshurst, Edwin Roy, Lt. (Tp.), d. of w., 1/12/16 (20/Bn., att. 20/Bn.).  
 Wilshin, J. H., 2/Lt., d. of w., 25/4/18 (6/Bn., att. 1/Bn.).  
 Wilson, Arthur Hone, Lt., d. of w., 18/11/16 (4/Bn., att. 7/Bn.).  
 Wilson, Frederick Thomas Austen, 2/Lt., k. in a., 12/3/18 (5/Bn., att. 2/Bn.).  
 Withall, John, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16 (6/Bn., att. 8/Bn.).  
 Wolfe, Bernard, Lt. (Tp.), 38/Bn., died, 20/7/18.

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- Wood, Hector Frederick, M.C., Capt., 32/Bn., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Wood, Henry, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 19/Bn., d. of w., 2/1/16.  
 Wood, Paul Barnard, Lt., 5/Bn., k. in a., 23/4/17.  
 Woodcock, Cecil William Napier, 2/Lt., 10/Bn., k. in a., 14/9/18.  
 Woodville-Morgan, Eric Theodore, 2/Lt., k. in a., 20-23/9/17 (6/Bn., att. 26/Bn.).  
 Wright, Cecil Keith Foyle, 2/Lt., 10/Bn., k. in a., 21/8/18.  
 Wright, Eric Tracey, Capt. (Tp.), 20/Bn., k. in a., 13/3/16.  
 Wright, George Bertram, 2/Lt., 1/Bn., k. in a., 11/10/18.  
 Wright, Norman Stanley, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 26/Bn., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Wright, Richard Bertram, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/7/18 (att. 1/6 W. Yorks. R.).  
 Wright-Ingle, Cecil Hubert, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 30/4/16 (19/Bn., att. 2/Lein. R.).  
 Yandle, Thomas, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 10/4/17.  
 Yellen, Cyril Francis, 2/Lt. (Tp.), k. in a., 30/11/17 (att. 17/Bn.).  
 Young, James Cecil, 2/Lt., 7/Bn., k. in a., 6/4/18.  
 Young, Rowdon Morris, 2/Lt. (Tp.), 13/Bn., k. in a., 11/8/16.  
 Young, Henry Harman, 2/Lt., k. in a., 24/5/15.

### CITY OF LONDON REGIMENT (ROYAL FUSILIERS). 1ST BATTALION.

- Allender, John Harold, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Andrew, Arthur, 2/Lt., k. in a., 23/11/17.  
 Arden, Reginald Douglas, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/10/16.  
 Atkins, Leslie Gordon, 2/Lt., k. in a., 25/5/18.  
 Auerbach, Albert Arthur, M.C., Lt., k. in a., 1/9/18.  
 Balfour, B., Lt., k. in a., 16/4/18 (and R.A.F.).  
 Barker, Charles Haydn, 2/Lt., d. of w., 8/10/18.  
 Barton, William Ewart, 2/Lt., d. of w., 25/8/18.  
 Bell, Kenneth Frederick Hamilton, 2/Lt., k. in a., 25/9/15.  
 Besley, Howard Napier, 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/6/17.  
 Bowen, Rowland George P., Lt., k. in a., 9/5/15.  
 Buck, Geoffry Sebastain, M.C., D.F.C., Capt., k. in a., 3/9/18 (and R.A.F.).  
 Burnaby, Geoffry, Lt., d. of w., 23/10/16.  
 Campbell, Walter Stanley, M.C., 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Carr, Leslie George, M.C. and Bar, Capt., d. of w., 27/4/18.  
 Carter, Cecil Edward, 2/Lt., k. in a., 20/9/17.  
 Chamberlain, John Harold, 2/Lt., d. of w., 21/11/15.  
 Chapman, Fred, 2/Lt., k. in a., 22/8/18.  
 Chichester, William George Cubitt, Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Coleman, Sydney, Capt., d. of w., 14/10/18.  
 Collens, Edwin Theobald, Lt., d. of w., 3/9/18.  
 Crowe, Harold Archer, 2/Lt., d. of w., 1/6/15.  
 Cundall, Hubert Walter, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Dickinson, Lionel St. Clair, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/9/16.  
 Dowden, Reginald Stanley, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Eiloart, Frank Oswald, A/Capt., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Fry, John Desford, Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Glover, Richard Bowie Gaskell, Capt., k. in a., 5/11/15.  
 Harper, Reginald Alexander, 2/Lt., d. of w., 16/9/17.  
 Heaton, Norman Child, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Henderson, Alec Stuart, Capt., d. of w., 25/4/15.  
 Hill, Gerald Stanley, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Houghton, John Reginald, M.C., A/Capt., k. in a., 21/3/18.  
 Huggins, Douglas Frank, Capt., k. in a., 29/8/18.  
 Johnson, Edmund George, 2/Lt., k. in a., 24/8/18.  
 Kekewich, George Capt., d. of w., 28/10/17.  
 Le Tall, Cyril Herbert, Capt., k. in a., 30/8/18.

Long, Daniel Edward, 2/Lt., k. in a., 28/5/18.  
 Martin, Edwin, John, 2/Lt., k. in a., 4/9/18.  
 Mayer, Gerald Max, Lt., d. of w., 16/2/17.  
 Mews, John Keith, Capt., d. of w., 24/8/18.  
 Meyers, Stanley Arthur, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Mockford, Joseph, 2/Lt., d. of w., 8/4/17.  
 Mouat, George Mouat Dundas, Capt., k. in a., 9-10/5/15.  
 Mytton, Richard, 2/Lt., d. of w., 3/10/16.  
 Naylor, James Reginald, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Newall, Leslie, 2/Lt., k. in a., 2/9/15.  
 Nunn, Frederick Arthur, 2/Lt., k. in a., 2/4/18 (R.A.F.).  
 Parslow, William Hunt, A/Capt., d. of w., 10/8/18.  
 Petley, Hugh, Capt., k. in a., 16/9/16.  
 Prentice, Oliver, 2/Lt., k. in a., 27/3/18.  
 Richards, Robert Ingram, 2/Lt., d. of w., 27/10/17.  
 Rowland, Cyril William, M.C., Capt., k. in a., 23/8/18.  
 Scott, Ronald Burrell Ind, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/9/16.  
 Seaverns, Joel, Harrison, Lt., d. of w., 10/5/15.  
 Shail, William Archibald, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Sheasby, Edwin William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Smith, Duncan Vaughan, D.S.O., Lt.-Col., d. of w., 13/4/17.  
 Snowdon, Henry Frederick, Lt., k. in a., 6/10/16.  
 Snowdon, Sidney Frank, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Stapleton, Harold Frederick, Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Stevens, William Philip, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/8/18.  
 Townend, Cecil Pelham, 2/Lt., d. of w., 24/9/16.  
 Vawser, Thomas Edmund, 2/Lt., k. in a., 21-23/3/18.  
 Waddams, Walter Herbert Leonard, M.C., A/Capt., d. of w., 12/4/17.  
 Westlake, Geoffrey Arthur, Lt., k. in a., 7-8/10/16.  
 Wilkinson, Eyre Spencer, Lt., k. in a., 12/1/16 (and R.F.C.).  
 Williams, Harold Edward, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7-8/10/16.  
 Wilson, David Oliver, 2/Lt., d. of w., 8/10/16.

CITY OF LONDON REGIMENT (ROYAL FUSILIERS).  
2ND BATTALION.

Bennett, Harold Percy, Lt., k. in a., 21/3/18.  
 Buxton, Bertie Reginald, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Child, David Leslie, Lt., d. of w., 11/9/16.  
 Clayton, Albert James, M.C., 2/Lt., d. of w., 24/8/18.  
 Cooke, George Josiah, 2/Lt., k. in a., 23/11/17 (and R.F.C.).  
 Coppen, William Joseph, Lt., k. in a., 2/11/17.  
 Falkner, Clarence Beach, Capt., k. in a., 25/10/17.  
 Farley, Frederick Albert, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Fradd, Kingsley Meredith Chatterton, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16 (M.G.C.).  
 Gant, Harold Holden, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/9/18.  
 Garland, James Richard, T/Capt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Gordon, Colin, Capt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Gosnell, Harold Clifford, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Grainger, John Scott, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Gretton, Horace Edward, Capt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Hammond, Frederic Robert Cyprian, 2/Lt., k. in a., 6/7/15.  
 Handyside, Percy James Alexander, Capt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Hawkins, Harold Engleby, Capt., k. in a., 16/6/17.  
 Heagerty, Richard Browne, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Heaumann, Richard, Capt., k. in a., 8-10/9/16.  
 Henderson, Graeme Von Hope, Lt., k. in a., 16/6/17.  
 Howard, Herbert Quey, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/8/18.  
 Inwards, Horatio, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/6/17.  
 Jepson, Arthur George Leslie, Capt., k. in a., 16/9/16.

## 354 ROYAL FUSILIERS IN THE GREAT WAR

Keen, Stephen Whitworth, M.C., Lt., d. of w., 21/8/18 (and R.A.F.)  
 Lockey, Ernest William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8-10/9/16.  
 Long, James William, Capt., k. in a., 8-10/9/16.  
 McMurray, Stuart, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/8/17 (and R.F.C.).  
 Martin, Stanley, M.M., 2/Lt., k. in a., 18/9/18.  
 Merrikin, George Houlden, 2/Lt., k. in a., 27/8/18.  
 Missen, Edward Roland Cecil, 2/Lt., k. in a., 4/10/18.  
 Murray, Cyril, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Noel, Alfred, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Perris, Noel Frederick, 2/Lt., k. in a., 20/7/18 (and R.A.F.).  
 Preedy, John Benjamin Knowlton, Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Prince, Frederick George, 2/Lt., k., 18/5/19 (and R.A.F.).  
 Rawle, William Richard, Capt., d. of w., 8/8/18.  
 Richardson, John Ernest, Lt., k. in a., 7/5/15.  
 Rolleston, Francis Launcelot, 2/Lt., k., 26/4/15.  
 Royce, R. Francis, 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/9/18.  
 St. Leger, St. John Richard, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15-17/9/16.  
 Skeet, John Richard, Lt., k. in a., 27/4/18.  
 Smoothy, Albert Victor, 2/Lt., d. of w., 9/11/18.  
 Solley, Bernard John, 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/8/18.  
 Spong, Frederick William Edward, 2/Lt., d. of w., 2/8/17 (in German hands).  
 Stacey, Gerald Arthur, D.S.O., Major, k. in a., 9/10/16.  
 Starling, Benjamin Alfred, 2/Lt., k. in a., 23/3/18.  
 Stockley, Harold Brodie, Lt., killed, 22/7/18 (R.A.F.).  
 Strange, William Frederick, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Stubbs, Cecil Arthur, 2/Lt., d. of w., 2/7/16.  
 Sullivan, Arthur John, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Symes, John Bond, Capt., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Taylor, Philip Charton, Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Thorman, Alan Marshall, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Urcell, William, Lt., died, 4/11/18.  
 Walton, Frank Arthur, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/9/17.  
 Williams, Henry Evan Vincent, Lt., d. of w., 22/5/17.  
 Winterbourne, Frank Thomas, Capt., drowned, 10/10/18.  
 Wright, John George William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 11/5/17.

### CITY OF LONDON REGIMENT (ROYAL FUSILIERS). 3RD BATTALION.

Aberdeen, Louis Frederick, 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/9/16.  
 Agius, Richard Victor Joseph Roy, Capt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Arnold, Leonard Frank Cecil, M.C., Lt., d. of w., 21/12/19 (att. S2/Punjab).  
 Atkins, Arthur Charles, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/9/16.  
 Austen, Edward John, Lt., k. in a., 21-23/3/18.  
 Barton, Harry, 2/Lt., k. in a., 22/3/18.  
 Beresford, Percy William, D.S.O., Lt.-Col., d. of w., 26/10/17.  
 Burgess, Harold Torrence, 2/Lt., k. in a., 2/4/17.  
 Burrows, William Arthur, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Cahill, Alfred Gilbert, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/10/16.  
 Christmas, Bernard Lovell, Capt., d. of w., 11/5/16.  
 Clarke, Eric Fitzgerald, Capt., k. in a., 9/4/17.  
 Crichton, Cyril William Alfred, 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/3/15.  
 Cummins, Thomas Morris, Lt., died, 7/11/18.  
 Curtis, Arthur, M.C., Capt., k. in a., 27/8/18.  
 Davison, Rutherford Willoughby, 2/Lt., d. of w., 10/10/16.  
 Ferris, Alfred William, 2/Lt., d. of w., 5/3/17.  
 Fraser, Charles Douglas, 2/Lt., k. in a., 22/3/18.  
 Gedge, Cecil Bertie, 2/Lt., k. in a., 25/9/15.

- Groves, Robert Harry, M.C., 2/Lt., d. of w., 12/4/17.  
 Gunn, Walter Roderick Hamilton, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/9/18.  
 Gunton, Reginald Oliver, 2/Lt., k. in a., 21/3/18.  
 Haines, Herbert Henry, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/5/17.  
 Hall, Hugh Wilfred, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/5/17.  
 Hard, William Thomas, 2/Lt., k. in a., 23/3/18.  
 Howard, Francis Stanley, Capt., k. in a., 28/11/15.  
 Howell, Arthur Anthony, C.M.G., T.D., Lt.-Col., (T/B.-Gen.), died  
 15/1/18.  
 Jeffree, Johnson Vivian, 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/8/18.  
 Jeffries, Thomas, 2/Lt., k. in a., 14/8/17.  
 Jones, David William Llewellyn, Lt., d. of w., 2/7/16.  
 Jones, John Llewelyn Thomas, Capt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Jones, Thomas Capel, Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Knight, Edgar Frederick, 2/Lt., k. in a., 28/5/16.  
 Knott, Stuart Wallace, 2/Lt., k. in a., 24/4/18.  
 Lee, C. P., 2/Lt., k. in a., 22/10/18 (att. R.A.F.).  
 Lidiard, Richard John Abraham, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Luscombe, Henry, Lt., k. in a., 11/4/17.  
 Lynch-Staunton, Eric Margrave, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/5/17.  
 Mason, Charles Henry, M.C., 2/Lt., d. of w., 10/9/18.  
 Mathieson, Herbert Gerard, Lt., k. in a., 10/3/15.  
 Minshull, John Lewis, Capt., k. in a., 2/4/17.  
 Moorey, William Edward, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Morrison, Arnold, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Newson, Walter Alexander, Major, died, 15/4/17.  
 Odell, Oliver Henry Cecil, 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/9/16.  
 Oldrey, Montague, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Parry, William Norman Maule, 2/Lt., d. of w., 19/8/17 (in German  
 hands).  
 Pulman, Harry Robert Sauve, Capt., k., 10/3/15.  
 Randall, Albert William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 8/8/18.  
 Ring, Leslie Gordon, Lt., k. in a., 18/9/18.  
 Rodd, Frederick Trevor, Lt., k. in a., 16/6/17.  
 Scarlett, Harold Ernest, 2/Lt., k. in a., 17/9/16.  
 Sheffield, Ralph David, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/6/17.  
 Smith, Harold Spencer, 2/Lt., k. in a., 31/7/18 (att. R.A.F.).  
 Smith, Raymond Alexander, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Starling, Frederick Leslie, 2/Lt., k. in a., 13/9/16.  
 Stephens, John Lockhart, Lt., k., 10/3/15.  
 Stuart, Herbert Gordon, Lt., d. of w., 7/3/19.  
 Taylor, Gilbert Leslie Frederic, Capt., d. of w., 26/8/17.  
 Thomas, James Leonard, Capt., k., 28/2/17 (and R.F.C.).  
 Watts, Leonard, M.M., 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/10/18.  
 Wharton, Christopher Willis, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Whiddett, Horace, 2/Lt., d. of w., 27/8/18.  
 Wybrants, John Holman, 2/Lt., d. of w., 30/7/18.

CITY OF LONDON REGIMENT (ROYAL FUSILIERS).  
 4TH BATTALION.

- Atterbury, Lewis John Rowley, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Backler, Alfred Milne, 2/Lt., died, 25/5/18 (R.A.F.).  
 Blows, Cyril Sydney George, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/9/16.  
 Bottomley, Eric William, Capt., k. in a., 15/6/17.  
 Bradford, Frederick Reith Campbell, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Brodie, Colin James, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/9/16.  
 Brown, Norman Algernon, 2/Lt., died, 1/3/19.  
 Butcher, Clarence Edward, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Campkin, Reginald Ernest, 2/Lt., k. in a., 28/3/18.

## 356 ROYAL FUSILIERS IN THE GREAT WAR

Carlisle, Frederick Albert, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/9/17.  
 Clarke, Edward Rupert, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/4/17.  
 Coates, Alan David, Lt., k. in a., 27-28/4/15.  
 Colomb, George Lushington, Lt., k. in a., 22/11/16 (R.F.C.).  
 Colomb, Mervyn William, 2/Lt., d. of w., 11/5/15 (R.F.C.).  
 Giles, Eric, Capt., d. of w., 16/7/16.  
 Goodes, George Leonard, M.C. and Bar, Capt., k. in a., 6/10/16.  
 Davey, William Henry, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/9/16.  
 Davis, Harold Charles, 2/Lt., k. in a., 4/4/17.  
 Edkins, Charles, 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/10/18.  
 Elliott, John Benjamin George, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Evans, John Baynes, Lt., k. in a., 23/3/18.  
 Ewing, Gordon Craig, M.C., 2/Lt., k. in a., 20/9/18.  
 Fanghanel, Frederick Charles, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Foden, Frank Joseph, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/9/16.  
 Garner, Edward Harold, 2/Lt., k. in a., 27/8/18.  
 Geering, Sydney Cecil, 2/Lt., d. of w., 3/5/18 (P. of W.).  
 Gifford, William Roy, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Hannay, Herbert Thomas, 2/Lt., k. in a., 28/3/18.  
 Haycraft, Leonard Courtenay, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Hewlett, Harold Alcester Tom, Capt., k. in a., 23/8/18.  
 Humphrey, William Pryn, 2/Lt., k. in a., 27/5/18.  
 Hunt, Frederick Frank, 2/Lt. (T/Lt.), k. in a., 27/6/15.  
 Jones, Harry, Lt., k., 15/5/18.  
 Langton, Hugh Gordon, 2/Lt., k. in a., 26/10/17.  
 Leake, George Ernest Arthur, D.S.O., Capt., d. of w., 2/6/17.  
 Lewis, Charles Edward, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/9/16.  
 Mansbridge, William Kenneth Elliott, 2/Lt., k. in a., 4/10/17.  
 Mawby, Thomas Henry, 2/Lt., k. in a., 24/6/18.  
 Monk, Ernest William, Capt., k. in a., 29/3/18 (R.F.C.).  
 Moody, Thomas, 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/7/16.  
 Moore, Arthur Robert, M.C., Capt., died, 1/7/16 (in German hands).  
 Mortleman, Charles Ibbetson, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/9/16.  
 Oldrey, Vernon Roy, Lt., k. in a., 31/8/18.  
 Osborne, William Edward, 2/Lt., d. of w., 11/9/16.  
 Pratt, Ernest Charles, 2/Lt., k. in a., 14/5/17.  
 Prince, Victor Charles, M.C., 2/Lt., k. in a., 1/9/18.  
 Rix, Leslie Gordon, Capt., d. of w., 11/2/17.  
 Saunders, Charles Robert Edgar, Capt., d. of w., 28/4/15.  
 Scougall, Douglas Muir, 2/Lt., k. in a., 4/5/17.  
 Shaw, Thomas Charles Whitehall, 2/Lt., k. in a., 24/8/18.  
 Smith, Brian Rivers, Capt., k. in a., 8/8/18.  
 Speyer, Cecil Arthur, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Spicer, Eric Evan, Capt., k. in a., 28/3/18.  
 Stavert, Robert Elliott, Capt., k. in a., 25/8/18.  
 Stedman, Philip Bertram Kirk, Lt., d. of w., 19/8/16.  
 Stoaling, Thomas, 2/Lt., k. in a., 14/5/17.  
 Sylvester, George Harry, 2/Lt., d. of w., 4/11/18.  
 Taylor, Cecil Meakin, 2/Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Taylor, Herbert Berwick, 2/Lt., k. in a., 31/7/17.  
 Towse, William Norman, Capt., k. in a., 15/9/16.  
 Vernon, William Hams, Lt., k. in a., 7/10/16.  
 Waters, Bernard Stanley, 2/Lt., k. in a., 3/5/17.  
 Webster, Walter Henry, D.S.O., 2/Lt., k. in a., 10/2/17.  
 Wheatley, Joseph Horace Lyncham, 2/Lt., k. in a., 15/6/17.  
 Wreford, Leslie Warren, 2/Lt., k. in a., 16/8/17.  
 Yeoman, Basil Frank Lawson, 2/Lt., died, 11/5/18 (R.A.F.).

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 Total . . . 1,054
 

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## WARRANT OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN.

Battalion.	Name of Battalion.	Description.	Numbers.
Depot	Royal Fusiliers . . .	—	29
1st . . .	" " . . .	Regular . . .	747
2nd . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	1,399
3rd . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	765
4th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	1,642
5th . . .	" " . . .	Special Reserve . . .	35
6th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	21
7th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	818
1st . . .	" " . . .	Territorial Force . . .	1,667
2nd . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	1,279
3rd . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	1,274
4th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	1,146
<i>Posted from other Corps to</i>			
1st . . .	Royal Fusiliers . . .	" " . . .	23
1/2nd . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	32
2/2nd . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	322
3rd . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	146
1/4th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	46
2/4th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	163
8th . . .	" " . . .	Service Battalion . . .	1,021
9th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	1,333
10th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	728
11th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	979
12th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	443
13th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	738
17th . . .	" " . . .	Empire . . .	519
18th . . .	" " . . .	Public Schools . . .	22
19th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	33
20th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	566
21st . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	18
22nd . . .	" " . . .	Kensington . . .	440
23rd . . .	" " . . .	Sportsman's . . .	723
24th . . .	" " . . .	Recruits . . .	2
24th . . .	" " . . .	Sportsman's . . .	534
25th . . .	" " . . .	Frontiersmen's . . .	127
26th . . .	" " . . .	Bankers' . . .	498
27th . . .	" " . . .	Training Reserve . . .	4
31st . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	18
32nd . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	5
32nd . . .	" " . . .	East Ham . . .	403
34th . . .	" " . . .	Labour . . .	27
35th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	1
36th . . .	" " . . .	—	1
37th . . .	" " . . .	Labour . . .	13
38th . . .	" " . . .	—	—
39th . . .	" " . . .	Jewish . . .	50
40th . . .	" " . . .	—	—
43rd . . .	" " . . .	Garrison Battalion . . .	20
44th . . .	" " . . .	—	6
45th . . .	" " . . .	—	41
46th . . .	" " . . .	—	14
103rd . . .	" " . . .	Training Reserve . . .	2
105th . . .	" " . . .	" " . . .	3
10th . . .	" " . . .	Intelligence " . . .	1
			20,887

DECORATIONS AWARDED TO THE ROYAL FUSILIERS.  
OFFICERS.

V.C.	C.B.	C.M.G.	C.B.E.	D.S.O.	1st Bar to D.S.O.	2nd Bar to D.S.O.	O.B.E.	M.B.E.	M.C.	1st Bar to M.C.	2nd Bar to M.C.	3rd Bar to M.C.	D.F.C.	1st Bar to D.F.C.	Air Force Cross.	Mentioned in Despatches.	Mentioned in War Office Communique.	
5	7	18	5	112	14	1	27	15	571	55	3	1	3	1	2	780	62	
<p>Total: 838 Decorations. 842 Mentioned in Despatches.</p>																		
FRENCH.			CHINESE.		PANAMA.		BELGIAN.		RUSSIAN.		SERBIAN.		ITALIAN.		GREEKIAN.		EGYPTIAN.	
Ordre du Merite (1)			Order of Wen Ho, 4th Class (1)		Medal of Solididad, 3rd Class (2)		Ordre de la Couronne (3)		Order of St. Stanislas (2)		Order of White Eagle with Swords (2)		Crown of Italy (3)		Order of Redeemer (2)		Order of the Nile (1)	
Croix de Guerre (41)			Croix de la Legion d'Honneur (23)				Ordre de Leopold (1)		Order of St. Anne (1)		Order of Sacred Treasure (1)		St. Maurice and St. Lazarus (4)					
													Croce di Guerra (2)					

WARRANT OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN.

V.C.	M.C.	D.C.M.	Bar to D.C.M.	M.M.	1st Bar to M.M.	2nd Bar to M.M.	M.S.M.	Mentioned in Despatches.	Mentioned in War Office Communique.					
8	21	343	11	1,699	130	4	241	430	30					
<p>Total: 2,457 Decorations. 400 Mentioned in Despatches.</p>														
FRENCH.			BELGIAN.		RUSSIAN.		SERBIAN.		ITALIAN.		ROMANIAN.		PORTUGUESE	
Medaille d'Honneur avec des Glaives (18)			Ordre de Leopold (1)		Order of St. George (14)		Cross of Kara-George (1)		Croce di Guerra (1)		Order of Military Valour (1)		DECORATION	
Croix de Guerre (58)			Decorations Militaire (2)				Serbian Gold Medal (1)		Medal for Military Valour (6)		Medaille Barbatie si Credintia (1)		Military Medal for Good Service (3)	



## GENERAL OFFICERS

It would be almost impossible to trace every Royal Fusilier who was employed extra-regimentally, and if this could be achieved it is doubtful whether such a catalogue would be of general interest. After giving the most prominent names, the author cannot pretend to have done more than follow the caprice of his material. Where it seemed sufficient to form at least an outline picture inclusion has been justified ; where the facts missing were obviously more important than those available it has seemed better to omit these biographies.

MAJOR-GENERAL E. COOPER, C.B., M.V.O., D.S.O., commanded the 46th Brigade from August to November, 1914, when he took over command of the 13th Brigade in France until February, 1915. Between May, 1915, and September, 1916, he commanded the 2/1 London Division, afterwards the 58th Division, in England. He was later in charge of Section 3, Portsmouth Defences, and No. 2, Dover Brigade, until January, 1918, when he became the National Service representative at Paddington.

MAJOR-GENERAL C. G. DONALD, C.B., went to India on the outbreak of war in command of the Wessex Division (Territorial Force). In India he was appointed Inspector of Territorials, and on his return, in 1915, was appointed G.O.C. Reserve Division in the Western Command, England, and afterwards G.O.C. the Western Reserve Centre. He was awarded the C.B.E.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR W. B. HICKIE went to France in 1914 as A.Q.M.G. 2nd Army Corps, and was appointed D.A. and Q.M.G. with rank of brigadier-general during the Mons retreat. He commanded the 13th Infantry Brigade at the battle of the Aisne, and afterwards the 53rd Infantry Brigade, until promoted in December, 1915, to command 16th (Irish) Division. He remained in command till this division was broken up in April, 1918, and took part in all its battles. He was mentioned six times in despatches, promoted major-general, and received the K.C.B. and French Croix de Guerre.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR SYDNEY LAWFORD commanded the 22nd Infantry Brigade of the "immortal Seventh Division" from September, 1914, to September, 1915. With it he took part in all the engagements of the division from the advance from Zeebrugge into Belgium to the first battle of Ypres. General Lawford had some very striking escapes from death in these days. On one occasion, being in a hurry and on foot, he borrowed a gunner's horse which he found tied to a tree. On completing his tour he was galloping past the spot where he had first found the horse when a shell practically took the horse's head off without its rider suffering a scratch. The brigade also took part in the battles of Auber's Ridge and Festubert, 1915. Promoted temporary major-general in September, 1915, he proceeded to England, raised and trained the 41st Division (which contained the 26th and 32nd Battalions Royal Fusiliers), and took it to France, May 2nd, 1916. The division captured Flers (September 15th, 1916); took part in another general attack, October 25th to 28th, 1916; advanced nearly 3,300 yards and took the Dammstrasse in the battle of Messines, 1917; co-operated in the battle of Ypres, 1917, near Hill 60 (July 31st), and at Menin road (September 21st). The division went to Italy in November, 1917, and on returning to France in March became involved in the fighting during the German offensive from March 22nd. After a fortnight's hard fighting the division was sent to the line covering Ypres, took part in the general advance, crossing the Lys at Cambrai and the Scheldt at Kerkove, reaching Grammont on November 11th, 1918. The division marched into Germany and held part of the Cologne bridgehead. General Lawford was awarded the C.B. in January, 1915; the K.C.B. in January, 1918; the War Medal, 1914-19; the Victory Medal and Mons Star; the Order of St. Vladimir, Third Class; Commandership of the Legion of Honour and Croix de Guerre; the Order of Leopold and the Belgian Croix de Guerre, and the Order of St. Maurice and Lazarus.

MAJOR-GENERAL R. S. MAY served on the Staff in various capacities, beginning as G.S.O., third grade, on the lines of communication. Later on he was appointed deputy quartermaster-general at G.H.Q. in France. Mentioned in despatches no less than eight times, he received the C.B., C.M.G., and D.S.O., and numerous foreign decorations.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR R. PINNEY in 1914 and 1915 com-

manded the 23rd Infantry Brigade in France, and took part in the battle of Neuve Chapelle. He was promoted major-general, and in 1916 commanded the 35th (Bantam) Division; and subsequently, from September, 1916, to end of the war, he commanded the 33rd Division. He was awarded the K.C.B. and Legion of Honour.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES V. F. TOWNSHEND, M.P., C.B., D.S.O., took command of the 6th Division in Mesopotamia in May, 1915. The division had been concentrated for the advance up the Tigris; and after defeating the Turks in the second action of Qurna, May 31st, 1915, he pushed up the river in H.M.S. *Comet* to Amara, and received the surrender of the Turkish force there. On August 1st the division began their advance against Kut-el-Amara, which was occupied on September 29th, after a brilliant little action extending over two days. The advance was continued towards Baghdad, and at Ctesiphon a heavy battle was fought on November 22nd to 24th, after which the division fell back to Kut. On December 7th the town was closely invested, and, despite the attempts to relieve him, General Townshend had to surrender on April 29th. He remained a prisoner in Turkish hands until October 17th, 1918, when he left for Smyrna to initiate peace *pourparlers* on behalf of the Turks. He reached Mitylene on October 20th, and telegraphed a long message to the Foreign Office. The peace negotiations thus begun were carried to a successful issue, and General Townshend made his way home.

BRIG.-GENERAL L. F. ASHBURNER was present at the Suvla landing as brigade major of the 34th Brigade, and later on commanded the 96th Brigade at Messines. He was five times mentioned in despatches, and for a time was Inspector of Infantry in England.

BRIG.-GENERAL R. BARNETT-BARKER, D.S.O., assisted in the organisation and training of the 22nd Royal Fusiliers as second in command, and went to France as lieutenant-colonel in command of them at the end of 1915. He was appointed in November, 1917, to the command of the 3rd Brigade, and in January, 1918, was transferred to the 99th Brigade. He was killed in action on March 25th, 1918.

BRIG.-GENERAL G. K. COCKERILL was in command of the 7th Battalion Royal Fusiliers at the outbreak of war; but before the battalion left for France he was moved to the War Office as Director of Special Intelligence, where he rendered very valu-

able service. He was awarded the C.B., became a Commander of the Legion of Honour, and, in addition to Japanese and Russian orders, he received the Orders of the Crown of Belgium and Crown of Italy.

BRIG.-GENERAL T. G. COPE commanded the 176th Infantry Brigade, and was awarded the C.M.G. and D.S.O.

BRIG.-GENERAL C. J. HICKIE commanded the 7th Infantry Brigade.

BRIG.-GENERAL E. T. LE MARCHANT commanded a brigade during 1915 and 1916, at first with the temporary rank of colonel and graded for pay as A.A.G., and later as temporary brigadier-general in command of the 190th Brigade while they were devoted to coast defence and draft-finding. In 1917 he was attached to the Staff in France. He was awarded the C.B.E.

BRIG.-GENERAL H. NEWENHAM commanded the 2nd Battalion in the landing at Gallipoli and was severely wounded. He was later employed in the War Office and in command of an area. He was awarded the C.B. for his services at Gallipoli.

BRIG.-GENERAL B. G. PRICE was a major in the 1st Battalion R.F. from August, 1914, to April 5th, 1915, when he received the brevet of lieutenant-colonel and took command of the 7th Battalion Warwickshire Regiment. In July of the same year he was in command of the 1st Battalion R.F. as lieutenant-colonel until February 5th, 1916, when he became brigadier-general commanding the 150th Infantry Brigade. He took part in all the battles of his brigade until March 1st, 1918, when he went to Plymouth and remained there till October 1st, 1918. From October 20th until the Armistice he commanded the 152nd I.B. in its advance from the Scheldt to Mons. He received the brevet of colonel, and was awarded the C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., and several foreign orders.

BRIG.-GENERAL A. C. ROBERTS, C.M.G., D.S.O., commanded the 3rd Battalion in France and Salonika, and was promoted to a brigade in the latter theatre.

BRIG.-GENERAL GORDON S. SHEPHARD, D.S.O., M.C., flew over to France with the first five squadrons on August 13th, 1914. He received the Legion of Honour from General Joffre for good reconnaissance work during the retreat from Mons; and in January, 1915, he won the Military Cross. He was promoted temporary major and squadron commander R.F.C. on December 1st, 1914. Subsequently he became brevet major and brevet lieutenant-colonel, received the D.S.O., and was five

times mentioned in despatches. For the last year he was in command of a brigade of the R.F.C. He was one of the youngest brigadiers in the army when he was accidentally killed early in the year 1918.

BRIG.-GENERAL C. T. SHIPLEY, C.B., commanded the Notts and Derby (afterwards called 139th) Brigade (T.F.) in the 46th North Midland Division from August 4th, 1914, until June, 1917 (in France from February, 1915); and the 193rd Brigade at home from August, 1917, until April, 1919. He was awarded the C.B.

BRIG.-GENERAL G. A. STEVENS, C.M.G., D.S.O., was adjutant of the 8th Durham Light Infantry (Territorials); went to France with the battalion April 18th, 1915, and served as adjutant until December 20th, 1915, when he was given command of the 6th Durham L.I. (T.) with rank of lieutenant-colonel. On April 25th, 1916, he joined the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade as brigade major, with rank of major. On July 12th, 1916, he joined the 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiment in command, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. On July 20th he became commander of the 2nd R.F. He took over command of the 90th Infantry Brigade on November 13th, 1917, with the rank of brigadier-general, retaining this appointment until the disbandment of the brigade in September, 1919. He was awarded the D.S.O. January 14th, 1916; promoted brevet lieutenant-colonel January 1st, 1917; received the Belgian Croix de Guerre January 10th, 1919, and the C.M.G. June 3rd, 1919; and was six times mentioned in despatches.

BRIG.-GENERAL W. F. SWENY was in 1915 promoted from major 4th Battalion R.F. to command the 2nd East Yorkshires. He was wounded at Hill 60 and again at Turko Farm. On his return to France he was given command of the 61st Infantry Brigade; and in June, 1916, he was again wounded in Ypres while making a personal reconnaissance. Rejoining again in 1917, he commanded the 72nd Brigade in the fighting at Vimy Ridge and Messines. After a short rest in England he commanded the 41st Infantry Brigade in 1918 during the crossing of the Lys (when he was awarded the Legion of Honour) and the crossing of the Scheldt. Seven times mentioned in despatches, he gained the C.M.G. and D.S.O.

BRIG.-GENERAL H. A. WALKER in 1914 was brigade major in the Meerut Division, and subsequently commanded the 16th Infantry Brigade until he lost his left arm in action on

October 16th, 1918. Nine times mentioned in despatches, he received the C.M.G. and D.S.O.

BRIG.-GENERAL HON. R. WHITE raised and commanded the 10th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, was promoted to command the 184th Infantry Brigade in 1916, and retained his command until March, 1918, when he was severely wounded. Six times mentioned in despatches, he was awarded the C.B., C.M.G. and D.S.O., and promoted to the rank of brigadier-general.

## THE BATTLE OF LE CATEAU

WE \* halted on the near side of Inchy just as it started to pour with rain, and then, to put the lid on it, we were taken for outposts. This was the worst day we had at all ; for some time I had been having a job to get along at all, what with my feet and chafe, and the men were dead beat. However, D Company were not taken for outposts after all, they were only in support, so we did get some sleep in. Also I got my boots off for the first time for six days, and managed to buy a pair of socks and some boracic powder, after which I was a new man. At dawn of the 26th we moved back through Inchy and took up an entrenched position behind it at Cambrai. We dug trenches frantically for a short time, but there were not enough tools, and no facilities for overhead cover, and very little time.

When we had done what we could, the 5th † relieved us in the trenches, and we were ordered back in support. By this time the artillery duel was in full swing. Behind the position was a little sunken lane running parallel with the position, and just as we were getting back to this a hail of shell burst right over the battalion. My platoon was sitting down just by the lane, and the first shell knocked over five men and punctured my water bottle. We then doubled about 20 yards into the lane, where there was a good deal of confusion, and on the right there was a short panic before the officers got the men under control. I am glad to say my platoon did not get out of control at all.

We then lay in the lane all day, quite snug. Pellets of all sorts whistled over our heads, but down in the lane there was practically no danger, and we were able to cook and eat a hot meal. Our guns pounded away hour after hour, and in front the rifle fire kept going pretty steadily. At about one there was a lull in the firing, and we all thought we had beaten them off.

Suddenly they opened a tremendous burst of firing in the centre of the line, to our right. All their guns seemed to be

\* 4th Royal Fusiliers.

† Northumberland Fusiliers.

concentrated on a village that was there, and about 3.30 the order came for a general retirement. Then I saw a sight I hope never to see again. Our line of retreat was down two roads which converged on a village about a mile behind the position. Down these roads came a mob. Men from every regiment were there, guns, riderless horses, limbers packed with wounded, quite unattended and lying on each other, jolting over ruts, etc. It was not a rout, only complete confusion. This was the Germans' chance. One battery of artillery sent forward or one squadron of cavalry would have turned this rabble into a complete rout, and the whole army would have been disposed of and cut up piecemeal. Meanwhile we were the only regiment I saw in any order. We had not been engaged, and had only lost 1 officer (Sampson, hit in the stomach) and about 30 men; we had also had a hot meal, so that we were in good condition. When the retirement was ordered we went back in a succession of extended lines, in absolute order, and formed up behind a farmhouse near where the roads met. Here we waited in mass, while the rest of the army streamed past. It was a most trying half-hour. It seemed inevitable that they would follow up, and then the jam in that village would have been indescribable. I have since heard that they had sustained fearful losses, and also a division of French cavalry was covering our retreat. When the rabble had got past we moved off, marching at attention, arms sloped, fours dressed, etc., through the village. By this time the rest of the brigade had formed up, and we took up a covering position behind the village, which we hung on to, expecting an attack any moment; but it never came, and about 7 p.m. we moved off again, and marched till 1 a.m. I believe we got a good mark for this show from Smith-Dorrien and Hamilton. Of course, we had no reason to lose our formation, but a panic is very catching, and there is no doubt that at one time we were the only troops who could have put up any show at all.—*Extract from the diary of Lieutenant Frederick Longman, killed at Herlies, October 18th, 1914.*



## THE LANDING AT GALLIPOLI

WE had several reconnaissances by air and sea. I took part in one on the *Queen Elizabeth*, which was most interesting, from Lemnos. We had assembled here transports and fleet, a splendid sight, and here we practised landing and getting men into boats, rowing, etc.

On the 23rd, by night, the ships containing the covering force, *i.e.*, 86th Brigade, consisting of the 2nd Royal Fusiliers, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Royal Munster Fusiliers, Lancashire Fusiliers, and warships, sailed to Tenedos, where we lay on the 24th and completed necessary transfers of men to warships, etc., etc. Half my battalion and headquarters went on board H.M.S. *Implacable* about 7 p.m., from which ship we had been practising getting into boats, and so on; the other half-battalion, under Brandreth, went on board a fleet minesweeper for the night. At about 10.30 p.m. we all sailed for the Gallipoli peninsula, arriving there by night. We had a good breakfast on the *Implacable* at about 3.30 a.m. We then proceeded to load up the boats, four rows of six boats each and a steam pinnace, about 25 to 30 men in a boat besides the six bluejackets to row when the pinnace cast us off. At 4.45 a.m. the bombardment by the fleet began, twelve or fourteen battleships (including the *Queen Elizabeth*, with 15-inch guns) all blazing away with all guns possible. You never heard such a din, but that was nothing to when we landed. About 5.15 we started off in our tows with our mother-ship, the *Implacable*, in the middle, like a most majestic eagle and her brood.

The captain of the *Implacable*, Lockyer, is a splendid chap. Indeed, the whole lot are top hole. He had his anchor hanging with a few feet of spare cable and took his ship right in along with our boats till the anchor dragged; it was a very fine thing to do, and most undoubtedly saved us many losses in the boats and landing.

All the officers and men of the *Implacable* were splendid and most awfully good to us; they fed the men in the evening, and

gave them a splendid hot meal at 3.30 a.m., which made all the difference to them in the bad time that was coming. However, to continue, while we (W and X Companies) were being towed towards our beach, called "X," the remaining half-battalion (*i.e.*, Y and Z Companies), on the minesweeper, were coming on. They were to come in as far as the vessel could go and then be landed by the boats in which we were when we had got on shore. Very soon the ships had to stop firing on the beaches, and then at once the enemy opened fire, and then began such an awful carnage as I hope I may never see anything like again.

As regards our half-battalion in the boats, we got off in the most extraordinary way while getting ashore. I can only put it down to the way the *Implacable* plastered the beach at close range. However, we were to have our bad time later on.

As we were being towed ashore a few rifle shots sang over us and round us. I *think* we only lost a few men actually in the boats. About 100 yards from the shore the launches cast us off, and we rowed in for all we were worth till the boats grounded, then jumped into the water, up to chest in some places, waded ashore, then swarmed up the cliff, nearly perpendicular, but fortunately soft enough for a good foothold. The cliff was about 100 to 120 feet high. As soon as we got up we came under fire from front and both flanks. However, we pushed on and got into one of their trenches. Meantime the other half-battalion was landing. I then sent one company (X Company), under Frank Leslie, to the left front, one (W Company) straight on and to the right front. The fire was very hot from rifles, machine guns, and shrapnel, and our losses were very heavy at once. However, it was absolutely necessary to secure a footing to enable the beach to be used, so we went on. I can never say enough for the gallantry of the men under these really trying circumstances, exposed to fire from front and both flanks and losing heavily. I had instructions to join up with the Lancashire Fusiliers who were landing at "W" beach and to capture Tekke hill, so I gave orders to hold on left and front and took all I could muster (about seven platoons) to attack Tekke. This we eventually captured with the bayonet and got a good many prisoners.

To go back a moment, as we were rowing ashore we saw the Lancashires also rowing under a tremendous fire, one or two boats adrift with nearly all in them killed or wounded, so I

knew that there would not be many of them ashore. At about 7 or 8 a.m. I got signal communication with brigade west of Tekke through H.M.S. *London*, and learned that I was in command of brigade (General Hare being wounded). I could, of course, not get there at present. I also got signal communication with the King's Own Scottish Borderers from "Y" beach to say that they and Anson Battalion had landed, but could not join up (they were about three miles north of us). I also learned by signal later on that the landing on "V" beach was hung up for the present.

To return, it was more than ever important to capture Tekke now, so we pushed on and eventually reached the hill, which was strongly entrenched, with some mined trenches in front of it. The hill was taken about noon under view of the *Implacable*, whose crew cheered us on. I was wounded here, but managed to carry on for a bit and eventually, with the help of Crowther, my servant, managed to get into a sort of gully with some more wounded, where we were more or less under cover. Shafto then came to me about 3 p.m. and told me that our centre, which was necessarily very weak, was falling back. I sent a telephone message to our beach, where the 87th Brigade were now landing, and some time later we got reinforcements from the Border Regiment. In the meantime our party were very nearly cut off and captured; it was a most unpleasant time. The men made a splendid stand, and we were reinforced about 4 p.m. I was then obliged to get to the dressing station. I had had my foot "first-aided," and with Crowther's help managed to get to the station, the most unpleasant journey I ever had.

We lost Frank Leslie, Scudamore, Brickland, C. de Trafford, killed during the morning, and 12 other officers wounded, George Guyon shot in the head, Brandreth (slight), Totty had his arm amputated three times, Winslade shot through thigh, Daniell broken thigh, Collings shot through chest just above heart, Hanham right arm (slight), and self.

The tremendous fire of the warships did very little damage to the enemy's trenches, which were very good and elaborate, but all stone work was knocked flat.

Our beach was a mass of enormous holes from the fire of H.M.S. *Implacable*.

Our brigade was washed out temporarily, as the losses were so heavy. The remainder of the battalion joined to the Hamp-

shires to make one battalion. The Dublins and Munsters were joined also.

My battalion had lost, killed and wounded, on May 10th, 20 officers and *about* 800 men.

We hung on during the night, and were attacked five or six times.—*Letter from Lieut.-Colonel H. Newenham from Gallipoli, April 27th, 1915.*

## DESCRIPTION OF THE FLOOD AT GALLIPOLI

### A GREAT DISASTER

IT was a dark night in the trenches at Suvla Bay, and November 26th will long be remembered, and perhaps spoken of, in years to come. The men had just "stood to," and the sergeant-major reported "Garrison's correct, sir," when a terrible clap of thunder, worse than a bombardment of high explosive, broke the stillness of the night. This was followed by zigzags of lightning which appeared to split the heavens in two, and then rain fell as only it can fall in the tropics. Within half an hour the trenches held a foot of water, rushing so quickly that it was difficult to stand. At 7 p.m. the barricade gave way, and a solid wall of water 7 feet high swept into the trench, carrying everything and everybody before it. By 8 p.m. the flood had reached its height, and the force of the water had somewhat abated, so that I was able to swim from a tree to No. 1 Platoon. The men were on the parapets of the trench up to their breasts in water. It was the same with No. 2 Platoon. Only about nine rifles had been saved. No. 3 Platoon had gathered on a high bit of land, and having no trees to hang on to, had formed groups and were clinging to each other. No. 4 Platoon were fighting for their lives, their part of the line being a maze of trenches, many of which had been washed away, burying men in the mud and making it very difficult for the men to retain a footing anywhere.

At 2 a.m. the water began to subside, and the men were set to work to construct a breastworks behind the trenches. No tools being available, we had to do this by scooping up handfuls of earth, and by dawn a resemblance of cover had been formed, and we found it useful, for the enemy gave us about a dozen shrapnel. To add to our comforts, it began to freeze hard, and a snow blizzard came down, and the whole of the place was soon covered by snow. Many of the survivors of the flood died from exposure. With the help of the sergeant-major, I counted the company, and of the 139 only 69 remained. It was soon

discovered that the ration party had been drowned, and all the food or drink we had was one gallon jar of rum. This we issued out, and Private Oldfield, who had swum to headquarters, brought up orders that the line was to be held at all costs. This order was also brought to me by the adjutant.

During this time—the first night—the cheerfulness of the men was marvellous. The slightest joke or mishap produced roars of laughter. By eight o'clock I had a few rifles in working order, and we were able to return the firing of the Turks. But I gave the order to cease firing as soon as the enemy ceased, and during the whole of the 27th very little rifle fire took place. All day the weather was freezing, and more men died. Towards night it turned to rain, and it was impossible to move.

At 2 a.m. 28th the commanding officer brought me half a bottle of whisky and told me that the adjutant and himself were the only living persons at the battalion headquarters.

At 3.30 a.m. the adjutant brought me two officers to help me—all my own officers and most of the N.C.O.'s had gone under—and told me to let the men who could not fight make their own way to the Red Cross station. I passed the order on to each platoon and about 30 men left, hardly one of whom could walk upright, most of them having to crawl through the mud and water on all fours. I then counted up and found I had only 27 living souls in the firing line and only ten rifles in working order.

About 5.30 the order to "retire to brigade headquarters" came along, and, after waiting for X Company to get clear, the company started in the following order: No. 1 Platoon, No. 4, No. 2, No. 3. I stayed with the last four men. We had hardly gone 30 yards before the first, third and fourth man were killed, the two first shot through the head and the latter through the heart. Ten yards further the other man got it, and as I lifted him to dress his wound the breath rushed out of his body with an awful sound. I remember falling in the mud and sticking a bayonet in the ground to help me out, and the next clear thing was Lieutenant Wilkinson rubbing my feet and bending my toes. They did hurt. On Tuesday, 30th, the corps commander, Sir Julian Byng, inspected the battalion, 84 strong, survivors of 661 O.R. and 22 officers. Poor W Company mustered two, Sergeant-Major Paschall and myself.

## W COMPANY.

Total strength . . . . .	27
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Distribution :—

Effective . . . . .	18
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Non-effective . . . . .	9
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Distribution of effectives :—

Signallers . . . . .	1
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Sergeants . . . . .	4
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Regimental dump* . . . . .	10
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Other ranks . . . . .	3
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18—8=10

ROBERT GEE.

(CAPTAIN ROBERT GEE, V.C., M.P.)

\* Eight reported unfit.

## “ NO. 8 PLATOON.”\*

By H. E. HARVEY, D.C.M., M.M.

“ Presence of mind and courage in distress  
Are more than armies to command success.”

“ DUFF, old son, that’s my kip, and I’m ‘ getting down to it ’ right now.”

Duff looked at the speaker with an annoyed air, but proceeded to drag his “ gear ”—full marching order, bomber’s “ kosher,” rifle, a couple of gas helmets and a blanket—along the dirty floor of the disused and darkened French brewery at Hersin, in search of a space yet unclaimed.

The whole battalion was tired and “ fed up ” with daily plodding back to the line, and courtesies were scarce.

“ Hi ! keep your ugly feet out of that ‘ possie,’ ” yelled one termed “ Spud,” partaking of a meagre supper—a mass of jam on a biscuit.

Duff turned slowly and contemplated the youngster in silence. Then came a shriek and a muffled curse from beneath another grimy blanket, on which the forlorn bed-seeking Duff had planted a heavy foot.

He wandered off.

“ Say, Vic, can’t you shove a bit for your old pal ? ” And, thus finding room, he pulled off his boots, and, after roughly

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\* This sketch refers to the counter-attack by the 22nd Royal Fusiliers at Vimy Ridge May 22nd—23rd, 1916. The salient facts are true, and the following decorations were given in connection with the episode :—

### *Distinguished Service Order.*

Captain WILLIAM ARCHIBALD MILLER, M.B., R.A.M.C., Spec. Res.  
(attd. 22nd (S.) Bn. R. Fus.).

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Capt. Miller followed the front line of our attack over ground swept by shell, machine-gun and rifle fire. He searched in every direction for wounded, and gained valuable information regarding the situation. This he at once communicated, and again continued his search for wounded. This officer has on previous occasions shown distinguished gallantry.

### *Military Cross.*

2nd Lt. RICHARD HUGO GREGG, 30th Bn. (attd. 22nd (S.) Bn. R. Fus.).

For conspicuous gallantry and initiative. His senior officer being wounded in attack, 2nd Lt. Gregg took command of the company, and on reaching the captured trench at once consolidated



arranging his tackle and extinguishing the stump of candle was, like the majority of B Company, soon sleeping soundly.

The crowded and inhospitable billet, save for snores, was noisy no longer.

Maybe an hour had passed, when, though few were conscious of it, heavy feet clambered up the rickety iron staircase outside the building, and, thrusting aside the sacking that hung across the doorway, the orderly sergeant lumbered into the room. Kicking a couple of the nearest blanketed figures, he shouted, "Stand to, every man! D'yer hear that, yer blighters? Full marching order!" then vanished to spread the joyous news elsewhere.

The gentlemen so rudely aroused each contrived to thrust forth a grubby, sleepy face, and asked the other "what the — all the racket was about." Seeing no others moving, they contented themselves with the conclusion that some "chump" had been "vin-rougeing," or had had an extra lot of rum, and curled up once more to slumber.

One or two others, also disturbed, lay awake a while in the dark, discussing the undreamed-of occurrence.

"What the devil's the game now?" demanded "Press." He was dubbed "Press" because of his wonderful capacity for collecting, magnifying and spreading rumours.

"Stand to! What the devil next? What's he talking about? 'Blige me! that's a very poor joke."

the position. Then, finding that his flanks were unsupported, he showed remarkable ability in the withdrawal of his company.

*Distinguished Conduct Medal.*

278 Sgt. P. W. FISHER, 22nd Bn. R. Fus. (killed Oct., 1916).

For conspicuous ability. When his company had attacked and captured an enemy trench he organised the defence of a flank with great coolness and skill. When a withdrawal was ordered he again displayed great ability, directing the various parties by the bearings of certain stars.

1226 L.-Sgt. C. A. WHEELER, 22nd Bn. R. Fus.

For conspicuous gallantry. He volunteered for, and carried out, two very risky reconnaissances after a successful assault by his company. Later he guided an officer of the R.A.M.C. and remained with him under machine-gun and rifle fire till the last wounded man had been brought in.

671 L.-C. W. H. METCALFE, 22nd Bn. R. Fus.

For conspicuous gallantry when assisting an officer of the R.A.M.C. and carrying wounded men into safety under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire.

ALSO

D.C.M. to Pte. G. WEBB, 22nd Bn. R. Fus.

M.M. to Pte. P. CANNOT, 22nd Bn. R. Fus.

But little Joey took a more serious view, and thought he'd better get his equipment together.

Spud, too, suggested that perhaps the Boches had broken through somewhere.

"Don't talk soft," said Dave; "and what if they have? We're not the reserve brigade. Why, man, we're not due 'in' for a fortnight, and then only for fatigues. And don't forget," he added with great impressiveness, "we're nineteen kilos from the line. Don't talk soft, boy. It's some one having a game. I'm 'getting down to it' again."

In a few minutes slumber once more reigned supreme.

But shortly afterwards agile feet bounded up the stairs. The gleam of an electric torch found its way through the canvas at the doorway, followed immediately by the figure of the captain. For a second or two he stood like one amazed. "Scarce a soul of 'em stirring! By ——, turn out! Stand to, every man!" he shouted in a voice that moved the drowsiest. . . . "Turn out there! D'yer hear? Take that man's name, corporal. Where's the sergeant? Turn every man out at once, battle order."

The sergeant jumped up in bewilderment. Men groped in the darkness and confusion for candles, cursing lustily. Blankets and feet were indiscriminately trodden upon. Irritability was a common possession, while discipline seemed cast to the winds.

Notwithstanding, the company tumbled out on parade within fifteen minutes, though scattered about the now deserted billet floor were stray gas helmets, mess tins, etc., and pieces of bread and cheese upon which some bold rodents had already pounced voraciously.

Outside in the cobbled yard, beneath stars half hidden by driving clouds, the company answered a hurried roll call.

Curious expectancy seemed to fill the minds of everybody, from the sergeant-major downwards.

Dave, however, was jocular.

"Try-on," he muttered.

"Time test," asserted Soaker.

But when the quartermaster came along the ranks handing to each man a tin of Maconochie speculation grew wild and varied.

Still Dave was jubilant, and refused to be discomfited.

Then came the order, "Bombers to the front!"

Dave's mouth opened wide, for Dave was a bomber !

The company " moved to the left in fours " out into the now crowded Rue Cambon. Men of A Company pushed past on their way to the alarm post. Ammunition mules and limbers forced their way in the darkness through columns of men moving left and right.

The unexpected tramp of feet and rumble of wheels had brought the inhabitants to their windows and doors, while the battalion moved to the outskirts of the town, passing the — shires *en route*. The whole brigade was evidently on the move.

Reaching the main road, the column halted, while slowly towards them came a number of now grim-looking motor 'buses, black and boarded, no longer the gay crimson things that had once flitted down Bond Street, London.

" What about it now ? " queried Joey as No. 8 Platoon clambered aboard one of the vehicles, in which, packed together in uneasy postures and careless of future developments, most of the men fell asleep.

Some one muttered something about a " joy-ride."

" Joy-ride ! " said Spud. " Yus, an' it means dirty work somewhere. Don't get joy-rides for nothing ; there's some ' stunt ' on, I'll bet."

The promoter of this outburst sneeringly suggested that " some one " had got the " wind up." Spud merely spouted contemptuously at the speaker.

The 'bus rocked and jolted along the worn and ill-kept road, whither none save the driver knew ; but the guns at length sounded louder, and as the 'bus toiled to the top of the hill the pale, sickly glow of Verey lights lit up the horizon.

A few minutes later the vehicles stopped at the cross-roads. Sleepy and cramped Tommies turned out once more, while officers and N.C.O.'s moved quickly up and down, getting order out of chaos and their various platoons into " fours " ; and even as men leaned heavily on their rifles the column began to move.

Moody silence possessed the usual bright spirits of No. 8, while only one or two sought the solace of a cigarette as, half dozing, they tramped wearily on.

The faintest streak of dawn was just discernible as B Company of the 22nd Royal Fusiliers filed into a wood on the left of the road, the interior of which had, for an obvious purpose, been cleared of undergrowth.

It was now plain to all that there was a big *strafe* on to their front, about three miles away, and flares had now given place to the lurid glow of bursting shells.

Obeying orders, the men lay down fully equipped, to snatch what sleep they might ; and 6 a.m. saw them eagerly sipping excellent hot tea which the cooks, who in some remarkable way had " turned up," had prepared.

The gunfire had died down considerably by 8 a.m., and a buoyancy of spirits had returned. Dave started his pet song about the " Tulip and a big red rose," but this outburst was at least temporarily subdued when, after an order that no man was to touch his water bottle without permission, each was handed an extra bandolier of ammunition and a couple of Mills' bombs.

The platoons then moved out into the sunlight at intervals towards the line.

No word had filtered through as to what the hurried move really meant, and it was not until the communication trenches were reached that wounded stragglers told of " lost trenches."

B Company, being unfamiliar with this sector and its characteristics, immediately concluded that the chaps at present in the position must be " a poor lot." So far *they* could boast they'd never lost a trench (or, be it noted, *won* one) ; and as they passed small parties of the — Rifles, the present garrison, they felt elated and proud to have been called upon to " take over."

The new-comers filed into the " communicator " towards the position, in due time reaching low ground beneath a ridge.

From the R.E. dump by which they passed each man grabbed alternately a spade or pick.

Despite this additional burden, hearts grew lighter. After all, then, it was not to be the somewhat distrusted " stunt over the top," but merely a digging fatigue—a new line, perhaps. Thus hope and conjecture swayed from side to side, but futile discussion was checked by the sergeant's strongly voiced order to No. 8 to " lead on."

Along the battered communication trench of French origin, which ran snake-like up the chalky slopes of Vimy Ridge, the men struggled panting, whilst on all sides lay ghastly signs of recent havoc and slaughter.

After all, it was admitted, " the poor blighters must have had a hellish time " ; and this flash of generous feeling met

with general endorsement as the enemy opened out a barrage just ahead.

A few yards below the crest of the ridge the captain climbed out of the trench, the platoons obeying the order to crawl after him in single file across the grassy, shell-pitted slope. Then the order was passed along to "halt and dig in," some unauthorised person adding, "like the devil."

And B Company dug, using pick and spade with a zeal that none could reproach. Nor needed they any goading, for a Boche airman had evidently "spotted" the movement, and his heavy batteries, anticipating trouble, were already "searching" the ground.

Five p.m. saw their toil nearly completed. B Company was well down out of sight; and some, having delved their allotted 6 feet, sat complacently smoking on the new trench bottom.

The shelling which had continued throughout the day had proved troublesome, and although the "Fritzes" had not so far correctly gauged the range of the new line, they had succeeded in putting a number of 5.4's horribly close and bespattering it with shrapnel; and the popular Corporal Valentine, only back from leave the preceding day, was among those who had "gone west."

With their work completed, the men found time to talk things over; and the varied opinions expressed and the caustic criticism which some aroused would have proved interesting reading had it been recorded *verbatim*.

The German artillerymen were accorded a good deal of hearty abuse, and a sudden retaliation by one of the British heavy batteries pleased Joey in particular; and as the weighty 9.2's flew overhead the chirpy little cockney assured everybody that "that was the 'stuff' to give 'em."

Now it so happened that the position of the new trench did not afford much, if any, opportunity to its occupants for locating with any accuracy the enemy lines. The immediate front of No. 8 Platoon was a rising grassy slope of about 25 yards, disfigured by numerous shell holes, some of recent date, others partly overgrown with tufts of grass and bright-tinted poppies—a vivid contrast with the chalky soil in which they flourished.

As to what lay beyond the crest of the ridge none yet knew; and as there were strict orders that men were not to leave the trench, venturesome spirits, keen for reconnaissance, were held

in check. Views left and right, too, were partially obscured, on the one hand by the high parados of the communicator, which ran almost at right angles with the trench, and on the other by the natural contour of the ground. Away to the rear it gradually dropped some hundreds of feet, and about three miles off, half hidden by surrounding trees, lay the small, shell-wrecked village Villers-au-Bois.

Late in the afternoon the captain arrived to inspect the trench, and, after making a few suggestions for its improvement, moved away again without further instructions.

The corporal thought it "darned funny"; but further conversation was discouraged, as the enemy again commenced to drop some "big stuff" in the vicinity.

As it grew dark, Verey lights once more shot upwards, some coming to earth just at the top of the ridge, where they burned themselves out with the fierce familiar hissing.

The "Boche," it was evident, was disturbed about something, for suddenly his lights of ill omen, blood-red, burst upwards in the darkness.

Prepared for the inevitable response to this urgent call for artillery support, No. 8 Platoon crouched low in the trench; and as shells of all descriptions crashed to earth around them oaths and threats were plentiful and varied. It was, at any rate, of some satisfaction to know the opposing front line of "square-headed swabs" were to some extent discomfited by their own artillery, for vivid green rockets hurriedly followed, the enemy's signal to the guns to lengthen range.

"'Tain't too' ealthy," piped Spud, "but I reckon we'll be relieved to-night. I'm about beat. Can't march and dig all day and 'stand to' all night too. They're bound to relieve us to-night. 'Tain't reasonable to expect fellers to 'stick it.'"

"Perhaps not," said the corporal, "but you must recollect there's a war on somewhere!"

At this some grinned; others grouched.

It was shortly after 8 p.m.—ten minutes after, to be precise—when along the top of the trench scudded the company sergeant-major with the order, "Get your 'stuff' on." The "stuff" referred to was merely haversacks, extra bandoliers and bombs, for in positions such as this complete fighting equipment was worn continuously day and night.

The men buckled each other's haversacks with alacrity; spades and picks were slung across the back and held in position

by the equipment. Cigarettes were proffered freely, and appetites became already whetted at the thought of omelettes and fried potatoes, for, of course, they were "being relieved."

But this and other fond imaginings were quickly dispelled. "What was that?"

"Going over in ten minutes!"

The sergeant now confirmed the hurriedly spread news.

"Yes, my lads," he said, with an attempt at gaiety, "and there's nine minutes to go; and don't forget your *bayonets*, lads; that's the stuff to give them."

Just at that moment a heavy shell exploded near at hand, making what Duff termed "a nasty mess" of our poor old sergeant-major.

Officers now hurried along the top, and dropped into their respective positions with the platoons. Instructions were promptly passed along—"that the brigade were attacking, Berkshires on the left, K.R. Rifles on the right. No. 8 Platoon to get into touch with the Rifles on their right flank, go *over* first two lines, take the third and consolidate."

An officer went along the trench ensuring that every man understood the order.

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"Three minutes to go!"

The last moments, maybe, of life found each man making final adjustments to his equipment, tightening belt or puttees and satisfying himself that his bayonet was securely fixed, his rifle bolt clean.

Each had already picked a convenient foothold, or made one, by which to mount the parapet. Here and there chums shook hands and exchanged a few words of encouragement.

"Half a minute to go!"

Some one said, "God love you all," then "Over you go, you fellows!" from the subaltern; and No. 8 Platoon sailed away into the night and the shriek and droning of countless shells and bullets. . . .

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"What the —? Who's that? Are you hit, chum?"

The reserve Lewis gun corporal stooped down to the huddled figure. "Where's it caught you, old man?" he asked.

The wounded man, a "runner" from brigade headquarters, slowly raised a blood-soaked arm, his hand tightly clenching a crumpled and be-mired scrap of paper.

"Rush it along, chum," he pleaded "O.C. B Company. *Stop 'em!* Attack's off!"

The "runner" dropped back unconscious.

Clutching the written message, the gunner sprang to the top of the communicator, and plunged forward through the enemy barrage towards the crest of the ridge where he had seen B Company digging earlier in the day.

He reached the newly made trench, but, save for some poor torn corpses, it was empty!

"Good God!" he exclaimed; "they're gone!"

He stumbled across a moaning figure.

"Where's B Company?" he demanded, with seeming callousness; and in a weakened voice a dauntless spirit replied, "Gorn, chum! Went over like one man, like 'eroes."

The gunner dashed to the top of the ridge and yelled, "B Company, retire!" It was the forbidden word, and futile in effect, for not a soul heard. The shriek and crash of missiles drowned his voice.

The inky darkness was lit up by the explosion of thousands of shells; while high above the fringe of flame red, green and white, and to the left orange, rockets rose and burst into myriad stars.

The gunner raced forward. He must fetch the boys back!

But, just then one of the countless Boche bullets found a precious billet. The gunner dropped.

B Company's only line of communication had snapped!

\* \* \* \*

Ignorant of disaster, Platoons Nos. 5 and 8 had topped the ridge, joined flanks, and walked over "into it" with scarce a fear.

"Don't bunch!" yelled a warning voice.

The line straightened out.

It thinned.

The men stumbled across the first trench—the old support line, pounded almost level.

The British curtain of fire surged forward ahead of the advancing troops, while the enemy barrage enveloped them.

Vile fumes partially choked them, and the torn ground shook with the concussion of heavy shells. Broken strands of barbed wire tore legs and feet. "Spent" nosecaps whizzed and hummed past overhead. Shrapnel burst and flew in all directions, while spraying machine-gun bullets swept the line from



end to end, finding here and there a target in quivering flesh.

There were now wide gaps in the line of indistinct figures, and a machine gun sputtered and spat spitefully to No. 8's direct front.

Tripped and torn with low entanglements, the attackers sighted their objective, pressed forward eagerly and covered the last few yards with a rush. Rifles were gripped for vicious thrusts with the bayonet; but, reaching the parapet, they discovered that the enemy had rapidly withdrawn.

Was it a ruse?

One, a bomber, whose position at the commencement of the attack had been about the centre of the line, now found himself apparently the extreme left flank. Surprised, but unperturbed, he hastily set to work to barricade the trench, goading others, more mystified, to improvise a reverse firing step.

Boche machine-gun emplacements were torn down and the handy tinted sandbags flung into useful positions.

Almost encircled, as it now seemed, by enemy fire, the men worked feverishly to consolidate, expecting momentarily heavy counter-attacks.

The man on the extreme left moved along the captured portion of the trench, to collect bombs for the barricade, and to ascertain who was now in charge; he had seen the captain fall half-way over.

Pushing past several somewhat startled men, he at last came across the new subaltern, to whom he reported the situation on the left.

"How many men are there down that end?" anxiously inquired the sub.

"I passed seven, sir."

"That's only twenty-six all told!" Glancing quickly around, he continued, "I want a volunteer to try and find out what's happened, to see if supports——"

"I'll go, sir," said the man from the left.

Turning, the officer called, "Here you are, sergeant; here's a chap who'll go with you."

"I'll go too, sir," said Hamblin.

"Get back to the line if you can," said the subaltern. "Tell 'em how it is, and ask if they're sending supports. We're sticking here till you return."

Taking a hurried glance at the stars and the arc of fire for

some guide as to direction, the three clambered over the top of the trench, out into the area where death still hurtled through the air in every direction.

Keeping low, crawling, running and stumbling along, they moved away in the darkness. Then for a while they lay panting in the temporary shelter of a shell hole, and gazed around. Suddenly, 30 yards to the right, a Boche gunner opened fire, sending a hurricane of lead spraying over their heads.

"Who is that?" all three involuntarily whispered as for a few seconds a figure was silhouetted against the pale glow of a dropping flare. "A Boche outpost, possibly."

Cautiously they crawled forward.

Prepared for trouble, they approached in some sort of extended order, to discover a number of chums badly hit, lying in and around a large shell hole, while one, less hurt than his fellows, was binding up their wounds as best he could.

"Is that you, Duff?" asked one, mortally wounded, of the bomber.

"Yes. Who is—is that you, Dave?"

"Ah! they've got me badly, I'm afraid."

"We're going off for stretchers, old man. Keep quiet a bit; we'll soon be back."

The bomber did what he could to ease another poor lad who lay groaning alongside, then moved away with the others in search of assistance.

They proceeded unchecked for about another 100 yards, and were brought to earth by a fiercely muttered challenge—in *English!*

"B Company patrol! What the devil's B Company doing out there? . . . Went over, d'yer say? . . . My God! The attack was *cancelled!*!"

The battalion medical officer—for it was he—was clearly astounded. Fearless, and with a high sense of duty, he always found work to do in the front line on such occasions as this.

"You must all come back. It's madness to stay there."

"Well, sir," said the sergeant, "Mr. Carter won't withdraw without a satisfactory order; and there's Mr. Thane and a bunch of our boys hit bad out there—walked right into a Boche gunner."

"Must get them in somehow! Can you show me the way back to them?" said the M.O., thinking hard.

He gave a few curt orders to a group of stretcher-bearers, who, together with his orderly, quickly climbed out of the trench after him, and followed the figures moving away. The darkness of night was gradually giving place to the faintest grey of dawn—a sign which bade them hurry ere disaster overtook them.

Leaving the stretcher-bearers to attend and bring in the group of wounded, the M.O. pressed on with the other three, still unscathed.

It was folly now to halt for a second; so, with enforced contempt of lead and iron, they once more providentially reached the captured sector of the trench.

The M.O.'s order was brief.

"The attack was cancelled," he told the subaltern. "You must withdraw at once!"

Grasping the situation, the subaltern said to the nearest man: "Pass it down from Mr. Carter, every man to lead out this way at once. Sergeant, you'll bring up the rear."

So the haggard file of men crossed yet again the contested "strip," picking up *en route* among their own wounded one of the Londons (the late garrison), who had lain for three nights with a ghastly gash under a hurricane of missiles.

Some, too, there were who are now numbered among the "missing"; and at roll call No. 8 Platoon, of 40 odd, numbered 17.

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There were individual honours gained that day; but on the morrow, when the brigadier addressed the remnants of the company in a little ruined orchard behind the line, he bestowed an honour on all with the revelation that they had "saved the face of the brigade" and gained for the battalion an envied reputation.

## THE SOMME

### I.—BEFORE THE BATTLE

THE valley of the Somme was indeed superb and a picture that hundreds would have liked to have viewed.

In the early morning you would awaken to the song of birds in the trees above you, and that alone seemed to drive all care and worry away and made the heart young. Dragon-flies, at least six different colours, would drift noiselessly through the air; beautiful coloured butterflies and fancy kinds of flies made every moment of the day really enjoyable.

In Chipilly village there were some baths alongside of the canal, where our men had a hot bath and a change of underclothes, and 100 yards away was an open swimming bath, where, when time permitted, our men splashed about in the water, and those who could enjoyed a good swim.

Our tents in the wood were undermined by moles, and occasionally they would appear above ground, much to the amusement of the men.

One morning my batman found one of them who had made himself quite snug in my slipper. He suffered the penalty for trespassing, was duly executed, his skin cured and sent to London.

The magnificent view of the Somme and the lagoons we had from the wood seemed to elevate all our minds, and it stirred some of us on still further, for a few of the officers managed to get a boat and row from one lagoon to another until they reached Saily Lorette. On their way some of them indulged in a swim, whilst the others prepared tea, which was afterwards enjoyed in true picnic style.

Another day two of us paddled up again to the same place and then back by moonlight. It was truly a delightful trip.

With regard to amusement for the men, they were not at all neglected, for we arranged cinema shows, concerts and football matches during our stay in the wood. The last open-air concert was a very successful one, nearly all officers and men attending.

In the afternoons when the men happened to be free they would indulge in a little fishing down on the Somme lagoons in the valley below, and sometimes I believe they were rewarded by good catches.

However, we were soon to leave our home of natural splendour and go further afield to school ourselves into the gentle art of defeating the enemy.

We had orders to move, so we packed all our belongings and marched to the station, where we entrained for the villages of Ailly-sur-Somme and Picquigny, just a little south of Amiens. D Company were very comfortable and happy at the former place, and the rest of the battalion at the latter.

After a few days D Company joined the remainder of the battalion at Picquigny and then, in conjunction with the rest of the brigade, went through five days of hard training. The section of the German line we were to attack at the beginning of the great offensive was almost exactly reproduced on the ground near Ailly-sur-Somme, and on this we rehearsed for the day itself.

They were hard days, but that we did not mind so much, for at the end of it all the real thing was to come for which we had waited so long, and then we were to have the honour of being one of the assaulting battalions.

On the day itself every available man would be wanted in the attack, so accordingly every man was sent out to the training ground.

On June — we had orders to move, and in the early hours of morning we marched in full marching order, and carrying a supply of bombs, to Ailly, where we entrained for Heilly, in the forward area.

The march to Ailly was not entirely a pleasant one, and I suppose the early hour of the day and the heavy load we carried accounted for anything but a pleasing or easy march.

Our train journey was very slow, as seems usual in France, and we reached our destination and detrained by about 11 a.m.

Then we proceeded on a march to Bray, where we were to be billeted for a night or two, and then up to the firing line.

On our way we halted for an hour for a meal just off the Bray-Corbie road, where the Morlancourt-Chipilly road meets it.

Our meal finished, we cleared up and continued our journey to billets, which were reached by 6 p.m.

Our stay in Bray was a brief one, for on the 23rd we left in the early morning for Carnoy.

Whilst we were here an army order was issued that all officers were to be equipped as much like the men as possible, and accordingly we went and interviewed the Q.M., who served us out with Tommies' tunics. We put them on. They felt strange, and we looked very funny in them, for they were really too short. We laughed ourselves, and everybody laughed when they saw us. However, we complied with the army order and had a good deal of fun out of it. Several times in the trenches the men would mistake their officers for other Tommies and would say such things as "After you with the mug, mate!" "Give us a light, Bill," which highly amused the parties concerned.

*June 23rd.*—We arrived at Carnoy and found it a hive of industry. Everybody was working; shells of all sorts and sizes were being brought up; plum puddings and flying pigs (trench mortar shells) were being carried to the forward dumps practically day and night. Barbed wire, corrugated iron, wood and iron stakes, trench ladders and a multitude of other things made up the R.E.'s dump, and in many other nooks and corners one would see cylinders of gas and liquid fire, smoke bombs, small arms ammunition and Red Cross appliances. Everything that was necessary to defeat the enemy was brought up from the rear and dumped in or near the trenches.

On our way up from Bray we were delighted to see guns of every calibre dug in, it seemed everywhere; in fact, the whole ground seemed alive with them, and every valley behind the line was indeed a very hotbed of destruction to spit at the enemy. So close were some of the batteries that if the Germans could only have discovered they were in those valleys a few shells from them would have put a good many out of action. In vain did they search for them, because they were so cleverly concealed.—*From the diary of Captain H. Aley, 11th Battalion.*

## II.—AFTER THE BATTLE

*October 19th, 1916.*—It was fine seeing the places where all the heaviest fighting had been, *e.g.*, Guillemont Station, the sugar refinery, etc., both now a pile of ruins of course. . . . The appearance of the country was lamentable. All trees are stripped of leaves, and Bois des Trones presents the most awful

ruins I have ever seen—dead horses, battered trees and trenches, ammunition, huge shell holes, all in one huge jumble. Efforts are being made to reconstruct the railway line which once ran through the wood. Once through the wood, the ground is not so bad, but the strength and command of the enemy's position at once become obvious on looking back. Having crossed that, we were soon in the neighbourhood of Guillemont. Here our howitzers are very much in evidence, guns of all calibres, and a bombardment is in progress. Shells can be seen coursing through the air every second. The position of the railway station is known only by a few almost demolished railway trucks. Our walk took us back *viâ* the sugar refinery, where the enemy white flag of surrender is still flying. A previous walk took us down the valley from our camp in the direction of Mametz Wood. The railway is reconstructed nearly to the head of the valley now, and when this is done communications will be improved a hundredfold.—*From the diary of Major Coxhead, 9th Battalion.*

## RECOLLECTIONS OF MIRAUMONT \*

THE story of the battle of Miraumont on February 17th, 1917, is a sad one, and but for the fact that there are some bright spots in the gloomy narrative recollections of what was perhaps the most disastrous of the battalion's engagements might well remain a fading memory. But there was glory too in that unsatisfactory battle, during which Fred Palmer earned his just reward of a V.C.

It had been freezing for months, and the ice and frozen snow in the broken trenches and "over the top" made the trek to the jumping-off position a trying and arduous task. A party of the battalion had a night or so previously spent time and patience in setting a tape to mark the line that was to be taken up at the start; but most of this was lost when the men arrived, tired and fed up, at about 11.30 p.m. on the night of the 16th. Most of the tape had been blown up by the enemy shells, and some trodden out of recognition.

It was not until the file of men bundled into a line of another regiment of the same brigade that the approximate position of our starting line was ascertained.

The Boche was ready for us, for his barrage opened even before our own, and before our battalion had passed over our own front line—a weak line of scattered shell holes—there were great gaps torn in our waves.

Just over the second enemy line our "waves" became groups, and the steady advance appeared to be in artillery formation. The officers, many of whom were in an attack for the first time, did all they could to put matters right, and some of them managed to continue their advance on approximately the right bearing and in correct formation.

Presently the notorious "Boom Ravine" was encountered, but we met with no further danger than a lurking German here and there who whiled his time away until he should be taken prisoner by sniping. After this point the battalion appeared to me to vanish, and instead one saw small parties

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here and there moving in varying directions. A Company and C appeared to have separated completely.

Petit Miraumont was sighted at about the same time as a party of about a dozen, with an officer of another battalion of the same regiment, went wandering across the front. It was learnt that he had no idea as to where the remainder of his battalion was, or the position they were attacking, so joined his small band to that of C Company, and took charge of a second wave which was now established.

Fifty yards further, and the men ran into such a hail of bullets that it was impossible to press forward, and the men lay down in the shell holes to return the fire of the enemy, who were found to be lying about 20 yards away. A few minutes later A and C Companies' flank was rolled up by the battalion of Germans coming up to the counter-attack.

Exactly what happened now is a question, but we have heard it stated that the Boche only took wounded prisoners on this occasion, and probably many a man earned the V.C. out there in the one-sided scrap. It would appear that these companies were more or less lost.

Meanwhile a flank action by B and D was favoured with some success after some hard fighting.

The battalion lost practically all its officers, and the casualties in the ranks were great, while many of the good fellows who left Wolf Huts with the battalion on February 16th are unfortunately still numbered amongst the missing, and over eighty names were recorded on the imposing cross the battalion pioneers made as a memorial to the heroic dead.

Later in the morning some of A Company's men were found among the survivors of D, on the opposite flank, and Mr. Seaward, Fred Palmer and Jimmy Carr and their gallant men were making the best of things in waterlogged shell holes, hardly daring to raise their heads because of the sniping.

Freddy Palmer's exploit has become historic. How he held the flank—a vital position—against repeated attacks by superior numbers and only gave way when his supply of ammunition ran out, only to make his way back to B.H.Q. for more bombs and men and regaining the strategic line, has become famous, and, as the War Office said, "it was a deed of heroism which cannot be exaggerated." Jimmy Carr (who died in the 'flu epidemic after the Armistice) gained the

D.C.M. and a commission, and decorations were bestowed on others of the little band.

It was the first time the 22nd had lost prisoners to the enemy, but the battalion had the satisfaction of knowing that the stand they made at such great odds saved the situation, and was crowned with the great Boche retreat two or three days later and the capture of Bapaume.

## THE 20TH BATTALION VISIT THE COAST\*

1917

FOR days past, nay for weeks past, the rumble of the guns in the north had foreshadowed that there was to be trouble for the Hun before long ; the official *communiqués* in the daily papers spoke continuously of heavy bombardment in that neighbourhood, so that when on July 29th we heard that we were to leave Airaines, where we had spent a very pleasant few weeks in rest billets, conjecture ran wild as to what was to be our destination. We were not long left in doubt, and learnt that we were off to Dunkerque. Dunkerque—why ? Perhaps we were off to England, not likely. What could be afoot ?

We busily packed up on July 30th, and on July 31st we marched to Pontremy, leaving Airaines at 07.00. At 11.35 hours we entrained for the coast. No sooner had we entrained than down came the rain, and it rained persistently for the rest of the day, and for several days following—a striking contrast to the weather of the past weeks, which had been magnificent. It was, indeed, unfortunate, as we afterwards learnt, that the opening of the great fight for the Paschendaele Ridge should have been so visited with such an upheaval of weather conditions.

Our journey to Dunkerque was only marked with one incident which is worthy of record. I have forgotten the name of the place, but as the train was proceeding past a small village in Belgium two tremendous explosions occurred, and the carriage windows rattled. We jumped up and seized rifles and revolvers, thinking that the train was being bombed ; on closer examination we found that it was merely some Belgian engineers employed in blasting stone. They did not seem to mind that the stones in some quantity entered the carriages of the train.

We reached Dunkerque at 21.00, and had the failing daylight to assist us in detraining ; that is to say, the men were off quick enough, but the transport had to be offloaded. In spite

\* By an Officer of the Battalion.

of the dilatoriness and language of the Belgian officials, however, this was fairly quickly accomplished, and the transport set off in the pouring rain for the seaside resort known as Bray Dunes, a six-hour trek. The battalion did not march; they were conveyed by barges up the canal; the men found the barges comfortable, and, as these did not leave their moorings till daylight, all on board had time to get to sleep before the movement of the ships could affect their slumbers! The transport got into Bray Dunes eventually at 04.30 on August 1st, but what a long trek it had seemed! Men, animals and everything were wet through. The battalion marched into the village about noon. Here were comfortable billets for officers and men, and we hoped to be allowed a day or two to enjoy them. At this time there was a considerable amount of hush-hush, and we did not know how or when we were to be employed. Whether the change in climatic conditions had impeded the British offensive, or whether the plans of the high command were for other reasons altered, we knew not, nor were we disposed to inquire, the fact being that we remained in Bray Dunes until August 15th and then spent twelve days in the Nieupoort sector of the line, the two periods, namely, August 1st—15th and 16th—27th, firmly impressing themselves on the minds of all those who live to remember them as presenting the veriest contrast of pleasantness and unpleasantness.

Bray Dunes, as most readers will know, is a little seaside town somewhat resembling Deal or Sandwich, but typically Belgian. There is the esplanade, which extends for 100 yards or so, with an hotel or two and some nice houses, but the greater part of the village stands back inland, and is separated from the sea by the sand dunes. The inhabitants were still in occupation, though the hotels and houses on the sea-shore had not their pre-war usage and were occupied mostly by military staffs.

The sand dunes had been placed in a state of defence, with trenches dug and much barbed wire erected. Batteries were here and there, and there was an elaborate defence scheme, which we all had to study and know, so that in case of emergency each man knew his appointed task. There is a gorgeous stretch of sand, which reaches eastward as far as La Panne and westward a considerable distance towards Dunkerque. This stretch of sand provided a most excellent training ground,

and when the weather during the second week of our stay there improved, the men used to parade there each morning, carry out manœuvres, drill, rifle and bombing practice, and then take a bath before marching back to dinners. The afternoons were spent in recreation, and here again the sand proved a very useful playground. The officers indulged in a good deal of riding, and races on the sand amongst the officers in the brigade on their respective chargers were a great form of amusement, the only restriction being that riding was not allowed on that part of the sands which passed the esplanade, where was situated the corps headquarters. Our transport officer, Jones Williams, had a very fast mare, a grey, who won him many races and, I fancy, small wagers, though, if he wanted to be more certain of his money, he would get some one of less bulky build and correspondingly lighter weight to pilot her. We had an officers' riding class, and representations were made that the chargers were being overworked, so the class took place on mules. I should be sorry to relate the number of times that certain officers were unseated in this escapade, and riderless mules were seen very frequently making their way home. Later the officers became more expert in their methods of sitting on, but a mule's mouth is sometimes hard, and the class dispersed itself one day not at the command of the officer in charge, not at the wish of the students, but because the mules thought they'd like to go off on their own.

Leave was granted to a percentage of officers and men to visit La Panne and Dunkerque. The former was the more attractive place, and incidentally more healthy. There were a number of aerodromes about, and we saw a lot of one particular squadron, playing them twice at cricket and interchanging dinners. They had a most excellent concert troupe, and gave us a splendid show. Unfortunately neither my memory nor my notes supply the number of the squadron the officers of which so kindly entertained us.

This passed the time at Bray Dunes, and we left it with very pleasant memories, the only fly in the ointment being the extraordinary number of persistent and irritating flies which swarmed around us in billets in their varying degree of size.

In the small hours of the morning on August 15th, and whilst it was still dark, we got ourselves up and paraded ready to march, and just as dawn was breaking we proceeded on our way. It was a gorgeous morning, and we saw our flying fellows

set forth on their daybreak reconnaissances, and caught occasional glimpses of the Hun trying to have a look-see, but driven off by the numberless little puffs of our Archie shells.

We proceeded to a camp—at Oost Dunkerque it must have been—until the minor offensive in this region by the Boche in July, the last thing in comfort in the way of camps, every hut being lavishly fitted with electric light, and wire beds and bunks for almost every man; tables and comfortable arm-chairs adorned the officers' quarters. History relates that before the offensive the camp had been occupied by a battery of our allies' artillery for some months, and that during these months only one gun of that battery had been known to fire, and that only occasionally. In the afternoon of the 15th we learnt that we were to go into the Nieuport sector of the line the next night, and that therefore reconnaissance must be made by officers that afternoon; it was also stated that the commanding officer would not on this occasion take the battalion in, but would be given a rest. This was only in accordance with custom, the second in command at times taking the battalion, the idea being that it was not desirable that both the commanding officer and the second in command should be up the line at the same time. Away, then, we went to reconnoitre, and to see our opposite numbers, so to speak, from whom we should take over. We rode to the outskirts of Nieuport, and then proceeded on foot.

Nieuport is a largish town, which had recently suffered considerably from bombardment. Though the streets were quite intact, they contained a good deal of *débris*, and covered-in "ways" had been made along the sides of the streets; in almost every case these "ways" had been dug for a few feet, so that one was, so to speak, half above and half below ground level. Everywhere there were gas gongs and rattles, for only recently had the town received a goodly libation of the Huns' new mustard gas, and in various parts of the town the smell of this gas was still fairly potent. The brigade headquarters was situated in a cellar in a street in the town, and having reported there, we proceeded to the headquarters of the battalion which we were to relieve. To achieve this it was necessary to cross the main canal; in fact, the headquarters of three battalions, that is to say two front line battalions and the support battalion, were all on the other side of the canal. It was the right front line battalion we were seeking. Now

the canal could be crossed in one of three places, by one of three bridges, and these bridges were merely wooden structures which the Hun had got taped. He used to amuse himself by knocking them down by day, and our engineers were busily employed repairing them by night. Two of the bridges were intact on the afternoon in question, and we made our reconnaissance, saw the people whom we were to relieve, and who incidentally expressed themselves as devoutly thankful that we were coming to relieve them, and made our way back to the battalion without incident, excepting for the fact that we had to return by a roundabout route, as the Hun had selected part of our proper road for his afternoon target shoot. Before proceeding further I think I should explain, for the benefit of those who do not know this part of the British front, that the left front line battalion headquarters and the whole of the support battalion (including, of course, its headquarters) were across the main canal, and on what is known as the "Redan." The Redan is a triangular island almost entirely surrounded by water, the main canal on the one side, the base of the triangle and offshoots thereof on the other two sides, so that first one had to cross water to get to the Redan and then cross water again to get off to the country beyond, where lay the trenches. In the middle of the Redan lies a building known as the India-rubber House, so called because of its imperviousness to shells. This house had two storeys with a gabled roof, the roof was concrete, about 2 to 3 feet thick, the walls were of a similar thickness, and the flooring dividing the two storeys was also of solid concrete, about 2 feet thick. The building was about 80 to 100 feet long, with a door either end. Incidentally the Hun seemed to know where these two doors were! The house was cubicled off into little partitions downstairs, and there was a large mess-room, and upstairs were quarters for the staff of the two battalion headquarters which occupied the building. The whole was beautifully lit up with electric light; in fact, it was some headquarters!

I have attached to these few notes an aeroplane photograph taken whilst we were in the line, which, if it can be reproduced, will give the reader a good idea of this section of the line. I should add that there was one other means of getting to the trenches from Nieuport without going on to the Redan, and that was by way of a lock to the north-east side of the town, but

this way was a very unhealthy way, and not really advisable by day, and the use of it was discouraged.

It was a grand evening on the 16th, when we set out for the line, and the relief was accomplished with only a single casualty, which was fortunate, seeing that the Hun elected to shell the bridges just as we were coming in, and one bridge was put out of action. No sooner were we in than he indulged in an hour's gas-shelling, which performance was not much appreciated by the unfortunate fellows who were going out. In the early morning, too, he exercised a little hate, and heavily bombarded our front line for about half an hour at dawn ; he was certainly uneasy in his mind as to our intentions. The ground in this part of the country is, as every one knows, extraordinarily wet, and the trench line was really a series of broken-down breastworks ; they had in the past apparently been extremely comfortable, for there was evidence that all the dug-outs had been lit up with electric light ; in the past they may have been the acme of comfort : they certainly were not so now. The approach to the trenches was over the open, and consequently visiting was not encouraged by day for obvious reasons, and more especially in order that the position of our posts should not be given away. That first morning's bombardment cost us a dozen casualties, for unhappily a direct hit was made on one of the shelters.

The 2nd Royal Welsh Fusiliers were on our left, with their headquarters in the India-rubber House, and the 5th Scottish Rifles were in support, also with their headquarters in that mansion. The Hun continued to be peculiarly active with his artillery in the morning and evening, but he certainly got plenty back from our gunners.

Our patrols were busy at night, but were generally held up by water. This was especially so upon one occasion when we endeavoured to snaffle a Boche post to obtain identifications. The Hun tried the game on one night with us, but before he could reach our posts he was spotted and cleared off.

On the night of the 21st we changed places with the 5th Scottish Rifles, and went into support, our headquarters being in the India-rubber Mansion.

The next night was full of interest for us, though we were not directly concerned. As will have been gathered, we were sharing the india-rubber place with the headquarters staff of the left front line battalion, the 2nd Royal Welsh Fusiliers,



who were being relieved by the Cameronians. During this relief the Hun successfully raided one of the left battalion posts in the Geleide Flood. The relief was consequently much delayed, but was eventually completed in the small hours. Plans were at once set afoot for revenge, and raids were prepared by the Cameronians and ourselves. The Cameronians were to do their show on the night of the 24th, and we were to go back on the 25th and do ours. On the night of the 24th we were all up all night. The Cameronians did their show, captured the Boche posts and with them a machine gun and nine prisoners, all of whom we had the pleasure of seeing at headquarters, one of them being closely interrogated for information. On the 25th it was decided that our show had better be postponed twenty-four hours. We were rather disappointed, as all was in readiness, and we were satisfied that every detail had been arranged. As it turned out that show never came off, because on the night of the 25th the Hun put in a very heavy counter-attack on the left battalion, which was to a certain degree successful, and we had to send one company—as a matter of fact, the very company which was to do our raid—to reinforce the left company of the left battalion, the company commander of which had been killed. As may be imagined, the night of August 25th was pretty much disturbed and full of interest, but the line in front was straightened out before dawn, and on the night of the 26th our company, which had proceeded in support, were relieved. All chance of our show coming off finally vanished when on the 26th we heard that on the 27th the brigade were to be relieved, and on the 27th the 1st Battalion Dorset Regiment came and took over from us.

One cannot finish the history of the episode without referring to the day of the 26th, when the headquarters of the brigade and those of all the battalions were at different times during the day closed, the occupants being compelled to move elsewhere. This was brought about by the Hun, who amused himself throughout that day by shelling with 15-inch shells. He seemed to attack all the headquarters in turn and give them a few rounds. He actually hit the brigade headquarters in Nieuport, and landed two sufficiently close to the India-rubber House to rock that building, crack one of the concrete walls, and extinguish the electric light.

By 3 a.m. on the 28th the relief was complete and we were on

our way out. We had been in a good many parts of the line, but it was generally agreed that this particular tour was to be remembered as one of the most unpleasant ; we had sustained a good number of casualties, and the Hun artillery had been very active with shell of every calibre and with plenty of gas shell. Our consolation, however, was that our guns were very active, too, and the best feature was the weather, which was on the whole good.

We marched back to Oost Dunkerque for a few hours and then proceeded to La Panne, where we had good billets, baths and a change of clothes. The officers indulged in a good dinner that night at the Terlinck.

On the 30th and 31st we travelled by 'buses to Petit Synthe and Houille Moolle respectively. At the latter place we were to be for a short time whilst the division were in rest.

## BOURLON WOOD AND AFTER \*

By W. J. PHYTHIAN ADAMS

A CONNECTED account of our movements at Mœuvres and Bourlon Wood would require a war diary and the whole O.R. staff, and these are not accessible in Jerusalem, but I give, for what it is worth, a sketch of that very trying ordeal, through which the battalion passed so triumphantly, and I give it, as I must, from the point of view of battalion headquarters.

We had barely got over the cramping day in the train from Herzele and the still more tiring march afterwards when we got orders from the brigade to move into the line opposite Mœuvres and relieve the Irish. The blizzard which escorted us that night will not be forgotten by those who had to face it. It was a fit beginning for a week of battle.

We were not to rest, however, for things in the wood had been going badly. An urgent message to H.Q. brought us stumbling through the dark to a brief interview with General Kellett, a hand-shake and another half-hour of stumbling to the quarters of a new brigade. There in a few words General Bradford outlined the situation. His men were exhausted and were being withdrawn, and only two dismounted cavalry "battalions" remained to garrison the position.

My orders were to proceed at once to the wood, leaving the battalions to follow at full speed, and to represent to the battalion commanders on the spot the need of attacking and capturing Bourlon village by dawn. Back again to H.Q. company commanders' conference, a bite, and a much-needed drink, and off to Bourlon Wood. How the battalion got through that night I only know from what I saw and heard afterwards. All honour to those who triumphed over every difficulty!

Hardly were we out of the shrapnel which fell impartially on the unjust and just (and perhaps more on H.Q. than anywhere else!) than the real battle began, and with it the most bewildering sequence of operations that we ever had in France.

\* Reprinted from *Mufti*, published by the Old Comrades' Association of the 22nd Royal Fusiliers.

We had never rejoined the 99th Brigade, and now for two or three days passed from the 5th to the 6th, just as we moved from one battle station to another. To add to the general confusion, "detached" parties from other corps picketed themselves happily in our lines, and at one time two companies of another battalion of our division were lent to us in the event of an enemy attack.

From the point of view of the 22nd the situation was not an amiable one. Our "front line," as we finally took it up, was really an enormous sap, sucking out to the German redoubts, without an inch of wire on either side, a bad enough position even without the danger which threatened both our flanks. We knew only too well that things were decidedly groggy, and we had to face the prospect of a strenuous rearguard action.

The decision to blunt the salient's nose came as a welcome surprise. The orders were to keep the move a secret even from company commanders, who were to be informed that a relief, and not a retirement, was to take place that night. Only the rearguard commander was to know the real facts, and he had to, as it was his business to blow up the dug-outs behind him.

The 22nd may congratulate themselves on the way they carried out the movement, and I do not think the enemy found much material at their disposal. My only regret—and it was a deep one—was that so much of the gallant labour of our tump line brigade had been unavoidably wasted. The whole division throughout the battle owed very much to their efforts, and during the more critical moments it was a blessed relief to feel that we had more stuff in our hands than the Huns could afford to swallow.

This was a fight in which the 22nd, to their lasting regret, were forced to play the "ever ready" rôle without the chance of first-class "scrapping" which fell to the lot of the 17th Royal Fusiliers, who took our place in the line and in our own brigade.

At Mœuvres our part was not a minor one: we had the hardest task of any, to manœuvre under another command after days of shelling and fatigue from which our comrades were exempt, to move here or there wherever we were most wanted, and finally, when endurance seemed no longer possible, to enter the front line and at the eleventh hour to come to grips with the enemy.

## LIFE IN THE LINES (FEBRUARY TO MARCH, 1918) \*

### THE BIG GAS SHELLING

WE were now settled down in the front line (Highland Ridge). Imagine the battalion therefore quite untrained, with officers and men strange to one another, awaiting the much-talked-of great German offensive.

The back areas were full of rumours and false alarms. In the trenches matters were viewed with stolid indifference.

The men had to work day and night. Double sentries were posted in every conceivable spot, even though our position was on a hill, and one or two sentries could see the whole expanse of country for miles around.

The Germans were not nearer than 800 yards, except at certain points.

One day was much like another till the night of the great gas barrage. In the first week in March about 7 p.m. it commenced.

Shells poured overhead, landing in the support lines and battery position. Every enemy gun must have been at work.

From 7 p.m. till 4 a.m. there was a continuous whistle of shells passing overhead. They burst with a very slight explosion.

The wind was from behind us, and the gas drifted back our way. The men put on their gas helmets and wore them for four or five hours. Almost suffocated and quite exhausted, they took them off, and sooner or later as the fumes rose from the ground in the valleys they collapsed.

The gas barrage commenced again on the next night—the night on which we were to come out of the line. Again it was very intense.

I telephoned to the brigade headquarters, which were behind the gas barrage, and asked if it was advisable to bring the battalion through it.

\* By a Commanding Officer.

The reply was in the affirmative.

This relief night will never be forgotten by any one who took part in it.

One barrage was falling on the support line, but the greater one was on the roads behind brigade headquarters. We passed through the first one and dodged the splinters by dropping down in the trenches, which gave us protection.

Then out on to the open road, platoons 100 yards apart.

A dark night, in front of us a heavy barrage of gas shells falling thickly over the open country. The air was impregnated with fumes, and the fog caused by the explosives made the night even darker.

We wore our gas masks. After half a mile walk we were bathed in perspiration. Carrying one's equipment with one's head encased in a stifling gas helmet is a fatiguing proceeding.

The military police had prevented our horses coming to meet us owing to the heavy shelling.

The road was rough and full of shell holes. Men fell into them.

Literally thousands of shells were falling on each side of the track.

Still actual casualties were slight.

Some got burned on the arms and neck by being splashed by the contents of the shells.

There was nothing for it but to plod on, too exhausted and overladen to hurry. It was the weirdest experience walking through that shower of missiles, but not nearly so terrifying as going through a high explosive barrage.

At intervals our own guns opened fire *en masse* on the enemy.

As we were just passing through the gun positions we got the full benefit of their terrific noise.

At last we get clear of the barrage, and at the foot of the hill below the ruined village we climb on board our train.

The train (so called) consists of a few open trucks. We wait impatiently for it to start. A few minutes ago we were bathed in sweat with our exertions. Now the frosty air of early morning bids fair to give us chills and rheumatism.

The train takes us to rest camp five miles distant. The men are all much the worse for gas. Coughs and sore eyes are the chief results, developing later to loss of voice.

On arrival about 3 a.m. we find a message to say that the

battalion must furnish a digging party at 8 a.m. up in the reserve line in the area where the gas barrage had been thickest and the ground reeked of the fumes.

One hundred and fifty men are required. They are not fit for it, but the brigade are obdurate, and they have to march five weary miles back again, do eight hours' hard work and return home on foot in the evening.

They dug a trench which was never used in any operations.

Before 10 a.m. the divisional general visits us. He shows a certain amount of sympathy with the men for their sufferings. By this time hardly an officer or man could speak above a whisper.

At midnight on the day (March 20th) of our return to the front line 100 boys from England join us. They have been travelling for three days in trucks, and arrive dirty and sleepless. They know nothing of war and have never previously seen a trench.

#### THE FIRST DAY

When the big offensive opened we occupied the front seats of the stalls. It had the advantage that one was able to see the performance clearly, and the usual disadvantage that one was deafened by the noise of the orchestra and was further from the exit.

It began about 4 a.m., and it was composed of high explosive mingled with trench mortars. The latter fired with incredible rapidity. Imagine a drummer beating a roll on his side drum just over your head, multiply the noise ten thousandfold, and that was what seemed to be going on, on the roof of our pill-box.

The overture to the great offensive has started. The question is, on which flank are the enemy going to attack?

I settle down by the 'phone and anxiously ring up A Company, on my right. Luckily the wire is not yet cut. A Company say things are pretty quiet in their sector. "Just flinging over a bit of heavy stuff now and then," says their captain, "nothing to worry about."

D Company, in the centre, ring up and report a curious cloud of smoke drifting towards them. No, it is not the smoke of the guns; it is some device of the Germans. Soon we are enveloped in the density of a London fog, which brings tears to

the eyes. B, on the left, report that the enemy are coming and have got into the next battalion's trenches.

*Now* we are entitled to send up the S.O.S. Up goes the rocket ; no one sees it owing to the smoke. Off goes a pigeon, apparently in the direction of the German lines. The signallers send the message on the power buzzer, as the wires are broken. Runners take the message through the barrage. One hates ordering them to do it. Mercifully they get through. Anxiously we await the result. At last our guns open ; shells drop all along in front of our front line—they ought to take heavy toll of any advancing Germans—the fog prevents us from seeing ; the wire to brigade is cut ; we are isolated. Thank Heaven, the company wires still hold. Reports come in continually from right, left and centre.

The noise of the two bombardments becomes louder and louder. The whole earth seems to shake with concussion. I can stand it no longer ; I leave the pill-box and dive down to the depth of the dug-out.

My left-hand post has withdrawn ; it was no longer tenable when the battalion on my left gave way. The captain of my left company (Captain K. Hawkins, M.C.) is missing ; he is killed. His body is found at the entrance of his headquarters. A gallant, fearless fellow, he thought nothing of going out in the midst of the barrage. His only other officer is away on the extreme left. The captain's servant takes charge, makes the men put on their respirators, and sends in intelligent reports on the 'phone to me. Truly the private soldier is a marvel. The left is badly threatened. I must prepare a counter-attack. I ask my support company commander (Captain J. Forster, M.C.) to come round and see me when there is a lull.

It is essential to have *him* at headquarters in case the wires break. He is another of those wonderful fellows who don't seem to know what fear is. He does not wait. He comes up straight through the barrage. He is buried twice. An H.E. shell lifts a pile of duck-boards and throws them at him, but he gets through. Though badly shaken, he soon recovers, and we arrange our plans for a counter-attack.

Officers and men from the battalion on our left come running into our trench. They have had a terrible doing ; they don't know how they got here ; their speech is inarticulate from fright. The less terrified tell me of abandoned trenches and



hordes of advancing Germans. Our left is in the air. We put piles of sandbags in each of our trenches to form blocks. We mount Lewis guns to cover our left, and open rapid fire on the enemy.

A messenger goes back to ask if the support battalion will come up and counter-attack. It seems madness to leave the Germans in possession of these trenches, and our flank exposed. Through it all that marvellous man, the mess cook, is at work. With a Primus stove in the passage, he produces the most perfect eggs and bacon and the most refreshing tea. And the sergeant-major, quite unperturbed, makes out his complicated returns.

Now the brigade on our right have let the Germans into their front line, and the garrison come rushing along our trench. I order my company commander to re-organise them and retake the lost ground. He is a stout fellow, and soon has despatched his bombing party, and his little enterprise is crowned with success.

At last there is a lull. One can go out and see the damage—blown-in trenches, duck-boards smashed to atoms, and, alas! many a good man who will never fire a rifle again. The doctor is hard at work—the wounded are being dressed and sent down to the field ambulance.

The smoke cloud drifts away, the sun shines brilliantly, and the gas respirators are removed and the gas curtains pulled up. The strain has been great; for the past four hours every one has been working at high pressure, one officer at the telephone, one writing down all the messages, and another keeping a time-table of all that takes place. While the sentries remain on the fire step, the remainder of each section waits near the dug-out entrance ready to rush out with fixed bayonet as soon as required.

We feel pleased with ourselves. We have held our ground.

### THE SECOND DAY

The second day was a peaceful one comparatively. It was essentially an unsatisfactory day.

About 1.30 a.m. an order came that we were to evacuate our trenches and fall back to the support line. We were to be clear of our front line by 3 a.m. There was no transport of any description; we could only take away what we could carry

ourselves. Heavy trench mortars must be blown up; a pile of gas cylinders must be destroyed. These had been specially brought up to the front line on the previous night.

Now one must devise the best method of evacuation. One remembered what one had read of the Dardanelles. One wondered whether the enemy would suspect and open heavy fire on us, whether the division on our flank would retire before us, and, above all, why this retirement had been ordered for no apparent reason.

We regretted leaving our excellent dug-out and comfortable mess. It was but little satisfaction to see the subalterns smash up the chairs and tables and do their best to render it uninhabitable for the Germans.

3 a.m., and we filed slowly for the last time down the long duck-boards track to the support line. Luckily we were unmolested by the enemy.

After daylight it was most interesting to watch the advance of the enemy over our late front line. It was unmethodical in appearance, but at the same time undoubtedly sound. Small disconnected groups of men appeared here and there moving steadily forward. An aeroplane flying at a height of about 150 feet patrolled over our lines. It noted our dispositions, and, I should think, must have counted every man. In vain did our Lewis gunners empty their magazines at it. In vain did we telephone to brigade and ask the general if he could induce some of our planes to come up and tackle it. Not a sign of a British plane in the sky, not a shot from an Archie.

Behind the infantry patrols, who were now swarming all over the country, came the German artillery. With marvellous rapidity the enemy pushed forward his guns, and with unerring accuracy his shells dropped on our new line. Where were our guns? We telephoned to our brigade; we told them where the enemy guns were, and where the infantry patrols were advancing, all to no purpose. Scarcely a sound could be detected from our own guns.

It was most depressing to watch the leisurely advance of the enemy and to see him practically unmolested. The only time he was harassed at all was when he came within range of our Lewis guns, whereupon he wisely advanced no further.

At night the evacuation was once more repeated. We retired to a more or less imaginary line of trenches in a wood. The trenches were about 2 feet deep, the field of fire was *nil*,

and there were no dug-outs. The men tried to sleep in spite of the shells constantly dropping around. The noise of the explosions and the firing of our own guns rendered the night anything but peaceful.

We still had no idea as to why and wherefore we had retired.

### THE THIRD DAY

March 23rd, 1918, will always remind me of a bad nightmare. Daybreak found us in our inadequate trench in the wood, without any cover, with but little water and no means of communication with any one. Ammunition was scarce, as we had had no transport, and hundreds of boxes in consequence had been abandoned in the trenches.

It was a glorious morning, and we lay and basked in the sun among the anemones, waiting for the Germans and waiting for orders. At last we saw the rearguard of our brigade falling back towards our lines. Our artillery opened on them promptly, evidently mistaking them for Germans. The enemy were not long in following them up. Over the open came their never-ending procession of small patrols. Their field guns, moving up with almost uncanny rapidity, commenced to drop shells all over our wood.

Our orderly arrives from brigade, of course just at the moment I had started to shave and was looking forward to breakfast of a sort. We are to fall back at once to divisional reserve at Bus. Two companies are to act as rearguards. Company commanders are summoned. Captain Thomas is detailed to furnish the rearguard, Forster leads the first two companies, and I follow with headquarters.

Through the wood in single file we wend our way, and out on to the wooden track to Neuville. Progress is slow: the day is as hot as midsummer; the men are overloaded. Lewis guns and magazines have all to be carried by hand, as there are no limbers. Where our transport has gone to no one knows.

We trek over the open in small columns, one platoon at a time. We pass a beautiful new German aeroplane, which has been forced to land at the edge of the wood. No one has attempted to destroy it; it is thoughtfully left for the enemy to recover it.

Every one except the infantry seems to have fled, not an engineer to be seen, not an attempt to place obstacles in the enemy's way or to blow up the few roads by which his guns can

advance, not a machine gun to check his progress. As we slowly move along we wonder when the first shell will land amongst us, or whether we shall just get away in time.

We feel painfully visible. We reach Neuville, a deserted ruin, and as we look back we see our rearguard are coming over the open. The enemy has opened fire on them, and, with his usual accuracy, he is dropping shells right amongst them. It is marvellous how few casualties they suffer, and it is marvellous to watch those undaunted men, the regimental stretcher-bearers, attending to the wounded and slowly carrying their helpless burdens through a regular storm of shells. No class of men deserve greater admiration.

The canteens in Neuville are deserted, and the men wisely fill their pockets with chocolate and cigars ; better than leaving them to the enemy. The darkest cloud has a silver lining !

Crumps are falling on our left and pretty close to the road. We hope he won't change his target. Thank Heaven, the two companies are clear of the village at last.

We hear that a shell wiped out a neighbouring brigade staff on that very road just half an hour before we arrived. We've had luck so far. We don't linger near the spot. From every village a huge column of smoke is ascending to heaven. These are the dumps being destroyed, the piles of stores that could not be carried away—at least a portion of them, for the whole country is littered with material.

The brigadier and Staff are by the roadside. They are supervising two of our battalions who are taking up a new line of indifferent-looking trenches. We are to go on another mile and remain in reserve at L——.\*

It is hot as midsummer, and the men are heavily laden and begin to straggle.

L—— is a small ruined village with a camp of huts on the east side. As we draw near we see it is being heavily crumped. Some of our guns have halted there. The German aeroplane flying very low, and as usual unmolested, has spotted them, and the enemy heavy artillery is landing shells amongst them with wonderful accuracy, and his aeroplane is bombing them.

It is one of those moments in which it is so difficult to know how to act, whether to remain in the open or to try and get into the huts in spite of the shelling and at all events lie hidden

\* Lechelle.

from view. The huts will keep out splinters and perhaps shrapnel.

I decide on the latter, as I fear we shall be spotted if we remain in the open, and the guns turned on to us.

Slowly platoon by platoon the battalion reaches the huts. One feels so utterly helpless. One can do nothing by way of retaliation ; one just walks along dazed by the noise and prays that the next shell will not be any nearer than the last. We gain the huts, and lie flat in them ; it is the only hope. Terrifying as these high explosives are, the actual damage is only very local. A huge shell—10-inch, judging by the base plate—lands and explodes 30 yards from our hut, and with the exception of one splinter, which makes a hole in the roof, no damage is caused except a huge crater in the grass.

Stragglers from all units join us. My artillery officer and his telephonists are still with me, but there is no telephone wire, and no one knows where the guns are. A machine-gun officer with one gun, five men and two belt boxes arrives ; we are becoming a mixed commando.

All over the open grass country parties of men are wandering, all going towards the west. Why they are retiring they know not. It begins to look like a panic, and one wonders how the battalions will ever be collected again. Even the motor machine guns fall back. The prospect looks more and more grim.

We send off a report to brigade, and in the report I call attention to the fact that we have no water, no reserve of ammunition, no rations, and no ambulance.

We find some rations in the huts, luckily. Our major is suffering from shell shock ; there is not an ambulance within a mile ; two other officers are missing. There are only seven officers left. The rest of our brigade are a mile to the east of us. To the south are supposed to be the N. Division. Their C.R.E. rides past and tells us that there is a big gap in the line. The N. Division are not in their place. His information proves correct, as very soon the Germans are seen advancing from the south round our right flank. We are in an impossible place—a hollow with no field of fire.

There is no reserve of ammunition. Our mobile reserve is with the transport, fifteen miles away. The mobile reserve is carried about by regiments for miles and miles ; it seems almost sacred, a sort of household god which must be most carefully

guarded and never made use of. At this moment it would have been invaluable to us.

We have no means of communication by signal or by telephone.

To fall back towards "R," on to the higher ground, seemed the only course. No sooner had the companies collected their men and were about to start over the open from various points than the Germans started to shell us from the south. It was too late to alter one's plans: the companies were already in open formation, crossing the open. The next few minutes were among the worst in our experience. It had been bad enough in the morning lying flat in the huts while shells dropped within a few yards. It was infinitely worse walking slowly over the grassy plain while black shrapnel burst overhead and high explosive made great craters in the ground. In addition the enemy machine guns had been brought up, and bullets were beginning to fly pretty thickly. One just walked on with a feeling of utter helplessness.

At last we were through the barrage, but very scattered. We collected all the men we could, and, standing on the road, Forster blew his hunting horn, and the stragglers came limping in from all directions as they heard the familiar sound.

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