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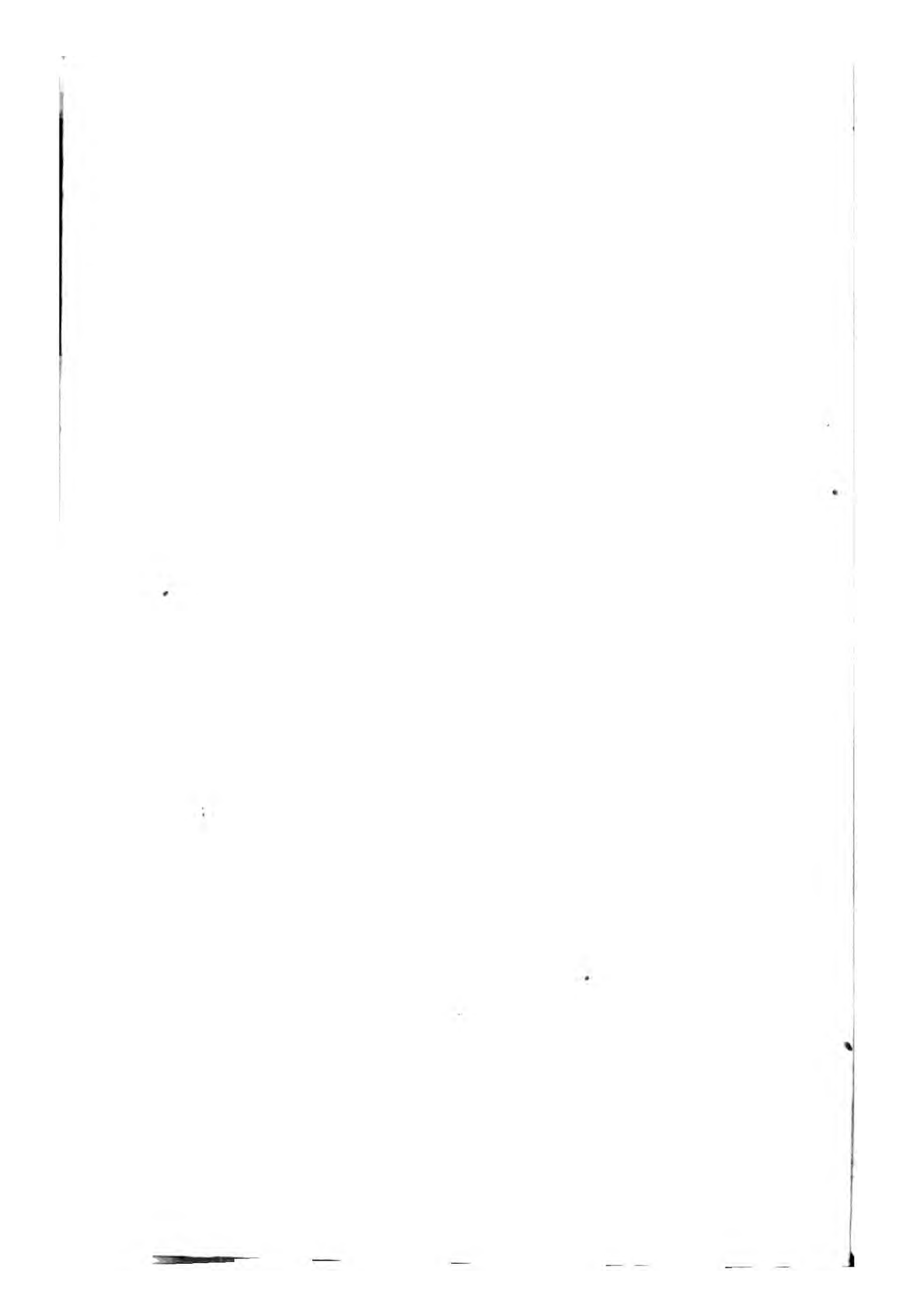
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“The Robin Hoods”

1/7th, 2/7th & 3/7th Battns. Sherwood Foresters

1914—1918.

Written by Officers of the Battalions.

With a Foreword by GEN. SIR H. L. SMITH-DORRIEN,
G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.S.O., Col. Sherwood Foresters,
Commanding 2nd Army.

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1921.



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HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF PORTLAND, K.G., G.C.V.O.

President Notts. Territorial Force Association.

Hon. Col. 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

TO
COLONEL HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF PORTLAND, K.G.,
HON. COLONEL OF THE ROBIN HOODS
PRESIDENT OF THE NOTTS. TERRITORIAL FORCE ASSOCIATION,
WHO HAS GRIEVED WITH US IN OUR SORROWS, AND
REJOICED IN OUR HAPPINESS
AND TO
THE MEMORY OF OUR COMRADES WHO HAVE PRECEDED
US IN THE GREAT ADVENTURE,
THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

SECTION I.
THE FIRST SEVENTH.

SECTION II.
THE SECOND SEVENTH.

SECTION III.
THE SEVENTH.
(From 30th Jan. 1918 to termination of War).

SECTION IV.
THE THIRD SEVENTH.

SECTION I.

**HISTORY OF THE 1/7TH
(ROBIN HOOD) BATTALION
SHERWOOD FORESTERS
1914—1918.**

SECTION I.

PREFACE.

At the request of the Notts. Territorial Force Association, I reluctantly undertook to write the First Section of the History of "The Robin Hoods" during the late War, as I felt that I could never write an account that would in any way be a worthy record of the labours, endurance and valour shown by all ranks.

I had always hoped that Capt. W. H. Round, with his brilliant scholarly achievements, would have been spared to do this, but alas, it was not to be; he was killed on that illfated day of July 1st, 1916, at Gommecourt. I have tried as far as possible to avoid writing personally, but this has been most difficult when describing events that were happening around me. I am also disappointed to have so few photographs taken in France with which to illustrate this work, as the Battalion was only allowed to use a Camera for a few weeks in April and May of 1915, after which the permission was withdrawn, and instructions were received for a return to be forwarded on the 1st day of each month certifying that no Officer or man in the Battalion was in possession of a Camera.

I am indebted to the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office for permission to publish trench plans taken from various maps issued by the War Office, which illustrate the various operations and Sections of the Trench Line, occupied by the Robin Hoods in Flanders and France during the war; to Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin, C.M.G., for the use of photographs taken at Locre and Kemmel in 1915.

I am also indebted to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, for so kindly permitting me to give quotations from "The British Campaign in France and Flanders, 1915"; to Lieut.-Col. W. S. N. Toller, D.S.O., for writing Chapters 8, 9 and 10 of Section I. and Chapter 1 of Section III.; to the Rev. C. W. Good, Chaplain to the Robin Hoods, for the greater part of Chapter 7, "Gommecourt," (he was at this period, a Lieutenant in the Battalion, and acting as Intelligence Officer to the Brigade); to Lieut.-Col. G. A. Wigley, O.B.E., and Captain W. Foster, M.C., for the last two Chapters of this History, and to Mr. C. W. Allen for his valuable assistance in preparing the various Maps and Trench Plans; to Captain Kenneth McCraith for so kindly allowing me to quote from a number of letters written by him to his family whilst he was serving with the Battalion in France, and to Mr. J. C. Warren for allowing me the use of the Diary kept by his son, the late Major J. C. Warren, M.C.

The Robin Hoods landed in France at the end of February, 1915, to re-inforce the Regular Army. A leading article in "The Times" of October 30th, 1917, said, "We have had three Armies in this War,—The immortal seven divisions, the old Army, who 'Gathered the spears of the Prussian legions in its heart, and in perishing saved Europe'; the Territorials, who held the line while the new Army was being organised, and the new Army. Of all, the fame is imperishable while our race and our language endure upon the earth. The Old Army sacrificed itself. It made the terrible retreat from Mons; it helped to hurl back the German horde when Paris seemed in their grasp; it saved the Channel Ports in the first Battle of Ypres. 'No sacrifice has ever had greater results.' It saved France, and it saved civilization. The remnant of the shattered 'Contemptible little Army, and the Territorials had to bear the agony of the first winter, the winter when our men had to hold their

trenches, with hardly any ammunition for their guns. They did it, and no grander feat of arms stands recorded in the annals of war.' '' They were confident the cause of right would win; win or lose they were resolved to do their duty. They felt that this struggle was for their all; not for greatness, not even for safety, but for those high ideals of the race without which greatness is of small account, and safety cannot long endure; for ordered liberty, for right and for law; for the abiding peace of which these are the foundations from of old.''

Lastly, I know that all Ranks of the Robin Hoods would desire me to place on record their heartfelt gratitude for the tender, loving care, and for the great sacrifices mothers, wives and sisters made during their absence at the Front, and especially to those who bore with such wonderful fortitude and courage the loss of their dear ones who made the supreme sacrifice on the Battlefields of France and Flanders.

Who shall sing the song of them,
The wonder and the Strength of them,
The Gaiety and tenderness,
They bore across the sea.
In every heart's the song of them,
The debt that England owes to them,
The chivalry and fearlessness,
That strove—and won her free.

ARTHUR W. BREWILL,

Lieut.-Colonel.

Commanding
7th (Robin Hood) Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

INTRODUCTION.

We can never be sufficiently grateful to the Minister of War who planned and organized the Territorial Force.

In the two years immediately preceding the Great War it was my good fortune to be in close touch with the Force, having twelve counties under my Command, and I became a confirmed believer not only in the system, but also in the zeal and efficiency of the personnel.

Accordingly in the early days of 1915, when we were hard pressed on the Western Front, I was overjoyed to find Territorial Units being poured into France.

In February the 46th North Midland Division under Major General E. Stuart Wortley, the first complete Territorial Division to move overseas, arrived, and was sent as a reinforcement to the 2nd Army, which I was commanding.

In this Division was a Sherwood Forester Brigade under Brigadier General Shipley, consisting of the 5th, 6th, 7th (Robin Hoods) and 8th, Battalions.

As this Brigade was entirely composed of Battalions of the Regiment of which I had, and still have, the honour to be Colonel, and in which I have done all my regimental soldiering, I was especially glad to welcome them.

Well do I remember the pride with which on the 4th March, 1915, I inspected them on the march to a billeting area near the Trenches, with a view to gaining instructions in trench warfare. The Brigade very soon took over a section of the actual front, and at once proved themselves to be troops second to none in reliability, enterprise and fighting spirit.

It is unnecessary to say more in writing a brief introduction to the History of the 7th or Robin Hood Battalion, so ably compiled by their Commanding Officer, for the History itself will disclose the deeds of heroism and patriotic devotion, individual and collective, which will secure to the Robin Hoods a high place in the roll of units which saved the Empire in the hour of her need.

H. L. SMITH-DORRIEN, *General,*
Colonel Sherwood Foresters.

Gibraltar, 3rd March, 1921.

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SECTION I.

CHAPTER I.

MOBILISATION—PREPARATORY TRAINING—ENGLAND.

August 4th, 1914 to February 25th, 1915.

July, 1914,
Brigade Camp,
Hunmanby.

The 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts. and Derby Regiment) better known as "The Robin Hoods," were in camp at Hunmanby near Filey, Yorkshire, with the Notts. and Derby Brigade during the last week in July, 1914, for their annual training. During this time the European situation was constantly discussed, and whilst an optimistic view was taken, everyone felt that events were very grave.

Murder of
Archduke Franz
Ferdinand and
his Wife.

It will be remembered that at the end of June, 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and the heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife had been assassinated at Serajevo. On July 23rd the Austro-Hungarian Government handed to the Serbian Government a note of such a character as had never before been presented to an independent State. An answer was demanded within forty-eight hours. The Serbian answer appeared to the Austrian Government to be insufficient and Diplomatic relations were broken off by Austria.

Austria Declares War against Serbia. When the European Chancellories and the general public became acquainted with the Serbian note everyone was amazed at the attitude taken up by Austria, for which no other explanation could be found than that they intended unconditionally to provoke a War, and on July 28th, Austria declared war against Serbia. This had the effect of compelling Russia in her own interests to take counter measures, particularly as Austria had been systematic in frustrating all attempts to bring about an understanding made by the English and Russian Governments.

Russia Mobilizes July 31st. The Russian general mobilization took place on July 31st, and on this day "Kriegsgefahrzustand" or "Conditions of danger of War," was proclaimed by the German Government at 7 p.m., also a demand was made to Russia that she should demobilize within 12 hours; and from France a declaration was required within eighteen hours "whether she would remain Neutral in the event of a Russo-German War."

This was the position of European affairs as we understood it in the Camp on Saturday, August 1st, after reading the papers on the return of the Battalion from a Field day in the neighbourhood of Reighton. On Sunday morning the Battalion attended Divine Service in Camp, the Chaplain taking his text from the Book of Samuel, "Be strong, quit you like men." This day was also marked by the first visit to the Brigade of the new Divisional Commander, Major General The Hon. E. J. Montagu-Stuart-Wortley, C.B., C.M.G., who took over the command of the Division from Sir Hubert Hamilton. This Territorial Division under Sir Hubert had been trained under peace conditions to a high state of efficiency. The Divisional Staff Tours held twice each year for the Senior Officers had been of the greatest

service, as these Officers, drawn from all units, became personally acquainted, and it also gave the Divisional Commander an opportunity of better knowing his Senior Officers and ascertaining their capabilities. Sir Hubert proceeded to France with the Expeditionary Force in command of the 3rd Division and was killed in action at Richebourg on the 14th October, 1914. A more brilliant leader of men it would be impossible to find, and his death was a great loss to the Nation.

On Sunday afternoon the Battalion was instructed in erecting Shelters, each to hold four men. This was done in a few minutes out of a couple of blankets with two rifles as improvised tent poles, the four corners securely held down by bayonets driven in the ground and a cord hitched at either end to tent pegs to prevent any lateral movement. It was little thought at the time how often the Battalion would make these Shelters and under what different conditions.

On Monday, August 3rd (Bank Holiday) the *Aug. 3rd.* Battalion marched down to the sea to bathe and on returning was informed that orders had been received for the Camp to be struck and the Battalion to return to Nottingham and await further instructions. The work of striking the Camp was at once proceeded with, the men packed their personal belongings, brought out their equipment and bedding from the tents, and piled it in orderly rows in the lines preparatory to returning it to the Quartermaster's Stores. All these details were accomplished within a couple of hours, dinner was served, the Camp struck, and the Battalion marched to Hunmanby Station to entrain for Nottingham in two trains. The first train arrived at the Victoria Station at 9.5 p.m., and the second shortly afterwards. Here dense crowds had assembled, the Regiment marched out of the station to Shakespeare Street where they were dismissed. Nottingham turned out in numbers to meet

her Regiment, and the reception "The Robin Hoods" received, though by no means demonstrative, was full of deep and significant cordiality.

Meanwhile events had been moving rapidly in Europe. On Aug. 2nd Germany at War with Germany had presented to Belgium an ultimatum in which a free passage France, Aug. 3rd, 1914. through this Neutral Country was demanded for her troops. On August

3rd the stupendous blow of which the whole world had stood in hourly dread for a week, had fallen at last. War had commenced between three of the great powers, and Europe was plunged in a cataclysm, the end and outcome of which no man could foresee. Without troubling to go through the formality of declaring War upon France, Germany began to pour her legions across the frontier.

On August 4th, the British Government repeated the request they made the previous week to the German Government that they should give the same assurance to respect the Neutrality of Belgium that was given to them by France, and asked that a reply to this request and a satisfactory answer to their telegram should be made before midnight. Later the same evening the Government issued the following statement:—

"Owing to the summary rejection by the German Government of the request made by His Majesty's Government that the Neutrality of Belgium will be respected, His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin has received his passport and His Majesty's Government has declared to the German Government that a state of War exists between Great Britain and Germany as from 11 p.m., August 4th."

The Army Reserves were ordered to be called up, and the Territorials mobilized.

At 7 p.m., August 4th, 1914, the Com-
Aug. 4th, 1914. manding Officer of "The Robin Hoods,"
Orders for Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin, received a
Mobilization. telegram "Mobilize," and immediately
 wired this to all the Officers of the
 Battalion and sent out embodiment notices to all other
 ranks.

Printed notices setting forth the call to the Colours
 were posted throughout the City of Nottingham, and
 crowds of people assembled to read them. Within a
 very short time a stream of men, some in uniform and
 some in mufti, had begun to flow from all parts of the
 City towards the Territorial Headquarters on Derby
 Road where their definite orders were learnt.

At 9 a.m., August 5th, "The Robin
"The Robin Hoods" Hoods" paraded in full marching order
Mobilized. at Headquarters, Derby Road, and on
 the Roll Call being taken it was found
Aug. 5th to there were only seven absentees, and
Aug. 9th, 1914. these men joined up later in the day.

During this time nothing was more
 remarkable than the quiet dignity and silent confidence
 of the British Nation. It was a day when all felt proud
 to be Englishmen: a wonderful dignity clothed the whole
 nation and an almost religious seriousness appeared upon
 the surface current of its daily life. At last the Terri-
 torials were to be put to the test. For the past fifty
 years as Volunteers or Territorials they had been con-
 sidered by many to be "playing at Soldiers," and were
 often the object of illtimed jest; surely no one again will
 ever doubt the value of the Citizen Soldiers; in many
 a hard fought fight they have more than justified them-
 selves.

At 10 a.m. "The Robin Hoods" marched from
 Headquarters to the centre of the City, A B C and D
 Companies being billeted in the Mechanics' Hall, and

E F G and H Companies in the Victoria Hall. Special leave was given in many cases for those men who desired to sleep at their homes.

During this period the nation as one man felt that this War had been forced upon them, and that they were about to fight to fulfil a solemn obligation of honour. Surely no Nation had ever entered into a great conflict with a clearer conscience or a stronger conviction that it was fighting not for aggression but in defence of principles, the maintenance of which were vital to the civilization of the World.

In the following days, August 6th to August 9th, "The Robin Hoods" were chiefly engaged in completing their equipment, in Route Marches and Company Drills.

Aug 10th On Monday, August 10th, "The Robin
Robin Hoods Hoods" paraded in the Great Market
leave Nottm. Place at 10 a.m. to march to Derby (the
for Derby. temporary War Station for the assembly
of the Notts. and Derby Brigade after
mobilization).

On this occasion the Mayor (Mr. F. Ball) the Mayoress, the Sheriff (Mr. J. H. Gregg), the Town Clerk (Mr. W. J. Board), Sir John Turney, Sir J. T. McCraith, Ald. F. R. Radford, Colonel Sir Lancelot Rolleston, K.C.B., D.S.O., and many other leading citizens were gathered to bid the Regiment farewell.

The Mayor in addressing the Battalion said :—
" Officers, Non.-Com. Officers and Privates of the Robin Hoods, I desire on behalf of your fellow citizens to say farewell, and wish you a safe and victorious return. We are delighted to know that Nottingham can send forth so fine a body of patriotic and loyal men to fight for King and Country. We are satisfied you will worthily uphold the high traditions of our forefathers for valour and bravery in whatever duty you may be

called upon to perform. Every man may rest assured that no dependent left behind, whether wife, children, father or mother will suffer want. You are nobly doing your duty to us—we shall do our duty by you, and when you return it shall be to see the happy smiling faces of children, wife and friends who have been well cared for during your absence. May God's richest blessing and protection be with each of you. We wish you luck and a safe and victorious return, followed by a long and lasting peace."

The Battalion then marched from the Market Place via Derby Road to Derby, arriving there about 5 p.m. At Derby Market Place the Battalion was met by the Brigade Commander and was repeatedly cheered by huge crowds which filled the Market Place and the approaches thereto; the Regiment then marched to the Technical College where they were billeted.

Aug. 11th to 14th, Derby. During the days August 11th to 14th the Battalion was exercised in Route Marches and in Company Drills. On the 14th

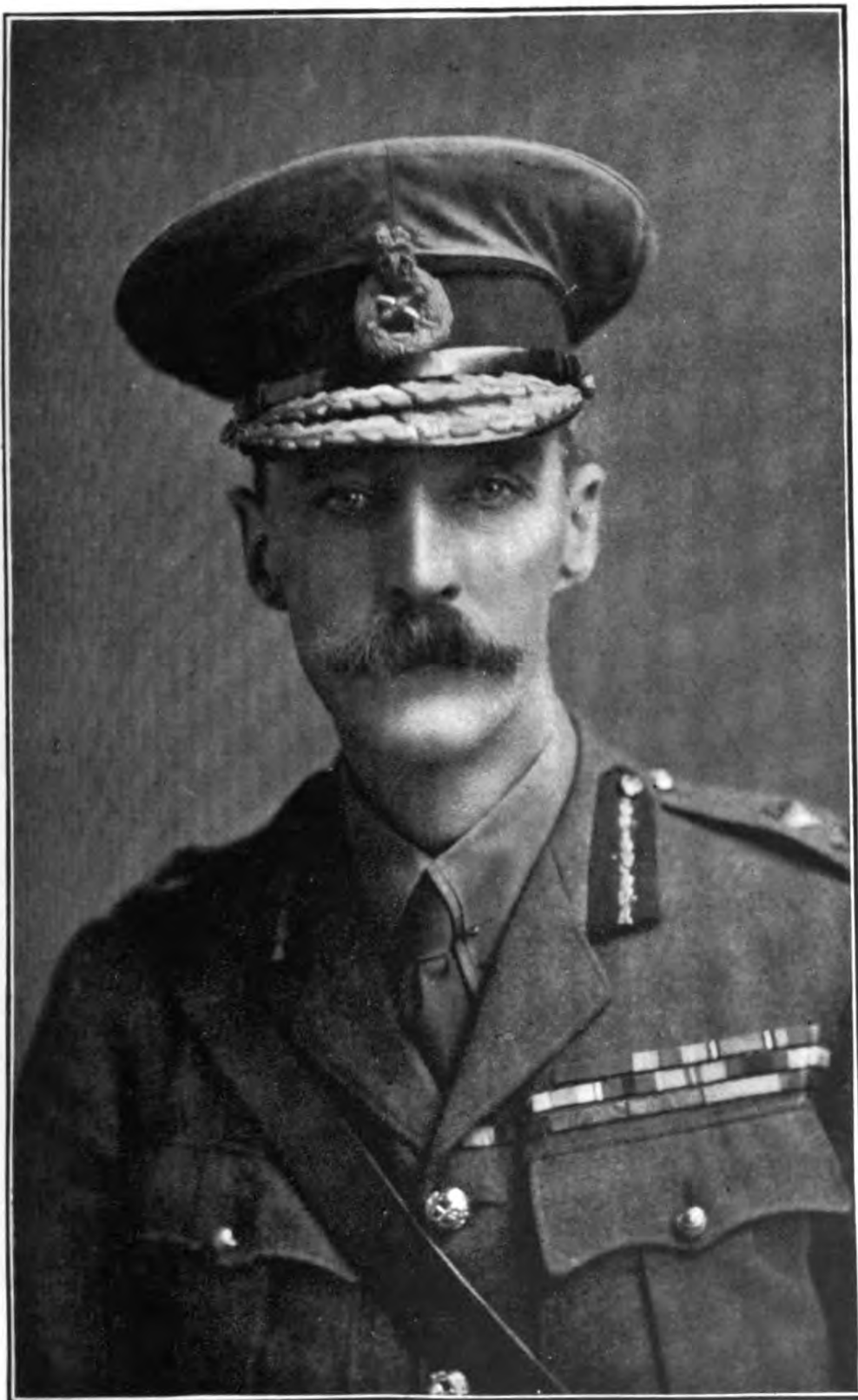
Orders were received for the Battalion to proceed to Luton on the following day. The Second-in-Command had arranged the Billeting of the Regiment at Derby and he was ordered to proceed to Luton to arrange for the billeting in that town. It was a curious coincidence that when this Officer attended the last Divisional Staff Tour in the preceding May under Sir Hubert Hamilton, one day's instruction consisted of "Billeting"; the village of Spondon near Derby being selected for this purpose, the various Officers proceeded there and arranged the billeting for a Division, afterwards sending their reports in to the Divisional Commander, who in the evening criticised the work done, and pointed out the mistakes that had been made. The Officers engaged on this day's work little thought at the time how valuable the instruction had been and that they

would many of them be selected in the course of a few months to actually billet troops on the civil population. In the first towns in which "The Robin Hoods" were billeted the large Public Buildings and Schools were invariably selected for this purpose, but experience proved that troops were far more comfortable and better looked after when they were billeted by threes and fours in private houses. At first the inhabitants much resented this, as they were somewhat afraid of the new experience of billeting soldiers, but when they became accustomed to it they invariably welcomed the troops and the Battalion never had one complaint of bad behaviour on the part of the men, and the greatest kindness was shewn to them in almost every billet.

At Luton the Billeting Officer commandeered the Schools and Chapels in the area allotted to the Battalion, but as these did not provide sufficient accommodation he took over the front sitting rooms of the houses on each side of a Street and arranged for four or five men to occupy each of these rooms. The windows being left open enabled the Officer on duty, on walking down the street, to have complete supervision over all the billets.

On August 15th, A B C and D Companies of the Battalions entrained at *Robin Hoods* Derby Midland Station at 11 a.m., and *proceed to* E F G and H Companies entrained at *Luton.* 12 noon. The first train arrived at Leagrave, about four miles from Luton, at 9 p.m., and the Companies marched to the billets at Luton allotted to them. The second train arrived at Leagrave at 10 p.m. and the men marched to their billets at Luton.

During the following days, August 16th to August 20th, the Battalion continued its training in Company Drills and Route Marches.



MAJOR-GENERAL THE HON. E. J. MONTAGU-STUART-WORTLEY,
C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., D.S.O., Commanding 46th North Midland Division.



The whole of the 46th North Midland Division had now concentrated at Luton, and the Divisional Commander had taken up his quarters at the Town Hall.

Major-General Stuart-Wortley, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. proved himself a most excellent Divisional Commander. He had a distinguished career in the Field. His first campaign was the Afghan War of 1879, when he was mentioned in despatches for his services in the assault of Zaiva. He served in the South African War of 1881 and the Egyptian expedition of the following year, receiving the Medal with clasps for Tel-el-Kebir and the Khedive Star. He operated brilliantly throughout the Soudan expedition of 1884-85, serving in the actions of Abu-Klea and El-Gubat. He was again mentioned in despatches for the Wad-Habashi Action. He went through the Nile expedition of 1897-8, being present at the occupation of Berber. The Major-General won the Queen's Medal with six clasps for the Boer War. He marched into Ladysmith with the relief column and was present at the battles of Colenso, Vaal River, Tugela Heights, and Pieter's Hill. It was largely owing to the ability with which he supervised the preparatory training of the 46th Division in England that they made such a great historic name for themselves in France. He was thorough in all he undertook and no small detail escaped his attention. In France it was often remarked how clean, well-shaven, and smart the men of this Division were, and it was under his command that the North Midlanders were asked on one or two occasions to accomplish the impossible. No Territorial Division landed in France better trained or with a greater *Esprit-de-Corps* than the 46th, and there can be no doubt that the splendid behaviour of this division in the trenches on the Messines

Ridge; in the Ypres Salient; at Hooze, July, 1915; at the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, October 13th, 1915; at Gommecourt 1st July, 1916, was very largely due to the able leadership and careful training the Division received whilst under his command. The glorious deeds of the Division later in the War were also due to a considerable extent to the preparatory training of the Division in England.

Luton was much congested with the large number of troops billeted in the town, and the Divisional Commander decided to move the Notts. and Derby Brigade to Harpenden.

On August 20th the 2nd in Command of the "Robin Hoods" received instructions from the Brigadier to proceed to Harpenden and arrange the billets for the Notts. and Derby Brigade, having one Officer from each Battalion detailed to work under his instructions.

<i>Aug. 21st to</i> <i>Nov. 15th, 1914,</i> <i>Harpenden.</i>	On August 21st the Battalion paraded in marching order and proceeded to Harpenden, arriving there at 12 noon, after which each Company was moved off to its allotted billets.
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The Notts. and Derby Brigade were now billeted for some considerable period at Harpenden, and the very strenuous training of the Brigade was taken seriously in hand. All the Battalions recognised that in their Brigadier, Brigadier-Gen. C. T. Shipley, they were fortunate in having an exceptionally able soldier, whom they learnt to love and revere. They felt that in the days that lay in front of them he would be an ideal Commander, and that he would never ask the Brigade to go where he was not prepared to lead. He was a strict disciplinarian, yet always giving the greatest thought and care for the comfort of the troops, and never were his abilities shewn to better advantage than when danger was at its greatest. It would be difficult to speak too highly of our Chief,



BRIGADIER-GENERAL C. T. SHIPLEY, C.B.,
Commanding Sherwood Foresters' Brigade.

and later we proved in France that our Brigadier was second to none in the British Army. He was ably supported by Major E. M. Morris, the Brigade Major. All ranks will affectionately remember this typical British soldier and the careful attention he gave to the training of the Brigade. Company Officers and Subalterns more than once have had the "wind up" when they saw him in the distance, but knew that in spite of his frequent "strafings" he had made them better soldiers, and probably taught them also a few good Old English words.

From August 21st to August 31st the Battalion continued its strenuous training. On *Sept. 1st* the 31st the Chaplain of the Battalion, the *Battalion* Rev H. T. Hayman, joined for duty. On *Medically* September 1st the Divisional Commander *examined.* asked for the number of "The Robin Hoods" that would volunteer for service abroad, and on September 2nd the Medical Officer carefully inspected all ranks who had volunteered for oversea service. Five Officers and 30 N.C.O's and men were not passed fit. There were also about 150 men who for one reason or another did not volunteer.

It was with deep regret the Battalion lost the services of Major G. A. Wigley, who was detailed to take over the Command of the Provisional Battalion, also Major P. M. Payne and Lieut. L. L. Cooper, who were detailed for duty at Headquarters, Nottingham.

It was during this period that the Officers and men found unfit for service abroad and the 150 men who did not volunteer left the Battalion, and were replaced by drafts, bringing the Battalion again to full strength. On September 2nd, 2nd Lieut. W. H. Round joined for duty, and on September 3rd, 2nd Lieut. E. N. H. Cordeux joined up.

During the days of the 17th, 18th and 19th September, the Battalion was inoculated with Anti-Enteric Serum. There was some opposition to this on the part of a few men, but Senior and Company Officers pointed out to them the necessity for this and eventually every man was inoculated. The value of this has been more than fully proved in France, as enteric in a severe form was rarely known among the troops.

Sept. 29th, Brigade inspected at Luton Hoo by Lord Kitchener. The training of the Battalion for the following week after inoculation was proceeded with in a modified way. On September 29th the Robin Hoods marched with the Notts. and Derby Brigade from Harpenden to Luton Hoo, where they were inspected by Lord Kitchener and afterwards returned to their quarters at Harpenden.

Oct. 8th and 9th Entrenching and Outpost line at Sundon. From September 29th to October 13th the training of the Battalion was proceeded with. One or two long and exceptionally trying Route Marches were made, and on October 8th and 9th the Battalion marched from Harpenden via Luton to Sundon, where the Brigade was instructed in making a line of trenches on Sundon Hill. The Robin Hoods taking up an outpost line about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles on the S.W. of Sundon in the direction of Dunstable, the Divisional Artillery taking up a position in the rear of the trench line. During the night the trench position was attacked by the Lincoln and Leicester Brigade. Afterwards, on October 13th, a conference was held at the Town Hall, Luton, under the Divisional Commander, when the trench line, outposts and attack at Sundon was criticised and mistakes pointed out.

On October 6th, Capt. J. R. Hardstaff being medically unfit was appointed to the Reserve Battalion. On October 6th and 8th Capt. C. W. Milner and Major G. N. Colville, D.S.O., joined the Battalion for duty.

Oct. 14th, 46th North Midland Division inspected by Divisional Commander. On October 14th the Robin Hoods paraded with the Notts. and Derby Brigade at Harpenden, marched to Luton Hoo, formed up with the Division, and were inspected by the Divisional Commander. A few days later the Battalion was engaged with the Brigade in "Attack" operations in the neighbourhood of Ayre's End, under the supervision of the Divisional General who was accompanied by Field Marshal Lord Roberts, V.C. After the operations were finished the Brigade was drawn up and inspected by the Field Marshal.

During October the Companies of the Battalion proceeded on various days to Warden Hill Range near Luton to fire their musketry course.

Battalion notified to proceed to France, Oct. 30th. On October 18th, at 10 p.m., the Battalion was notified that orders had come through for the North Midland Division to embark for France about October 30th. (This was afterwards cancelled).

Bishop of Southwell preached at Brigade Parade. The Bishop of Southwell on hearing of this arranged to officiate at the Church Parade of the Brigade on Harpenden Common on the following Sunday, and a very impressive service was held on this day. A large number of the inhabitants of Harpenden being present.

On October 20th, 2nd Lieut. C. G. Vickers joined for duty.

The Battalion was most fortunate in the billeting area allotted to them at Harpenden. The houses were generally those tenanted by the Professional and Middle Classes and most of the rooms occupied by the troops had French windows opening on to the gardens, these forming the entrances to the billets. The occupiers took the greatest interest in the men and generally they devoted one evening each week to entertaining them, and did all in their power to make the men as comfortable and happy as possible.

The Battalion would specially desire to remember the interest taken in them by Mr. and Mrs. H. Mardle of Bower Cottage. Mr. Mardle was a member of the Urban District Council and gave considerable time in making arrangements for the men's recreation, and it was through his endeavour that the Pond on Harpenden Common was surrounded by a Canvas Screen, and formed into an excellent bathing place which was very much appreciated.

The Y.M.C.A. also opened a recreation tent which was extensively used.

The feeding of the Battalion was carried out *Cooking.* in two large tents fitted with tables and seats, which were pitched in a field in the centre of the Area, and all the cooking was done by Battalion Cooks. This arrangement enabled the billets to be kept exceptionally clean, and gave the minimum of trouble to the householders. The ladies of Nottingham, through the Duke of Portland, presented "The Robin Hoods" with two field Cookers which were found most useful, as at this time the regulation Field Service Kitchens had not been supplied by the War Office.

The Chaplain, The Rev. H. T. Hayman, who had served with the Regiment for a long number of years and is known to all as "Friar Tuck," devoted himself during this period to looking after the welfare
The Rev. H. T. Hayman.

of all ranks. He has a wonderful personality, and no Officer of the Regiment is more loved and respected than he. Being the Senior Chaplain of the Brigade all looked forward to him accompanying the Battalion to France, and it was with the greatest regret that they heard this would not be sanctioned, as he was over the age limit allowed for Chaplains proceeding with the Forces overseas.

The country surrounding Harpenden through which the Battalion frequently marched was very beautiful, and everyone will remember the charming grounds placed at their disposal for drill purposes at "The Hyde" and "Rothamsted."

On October 20th all ranks were inoculated
Inoculation— with Anti-Enteric Serum for the second
second time. time.

On October 23rd the Mayor of Nottingham
Visit of the with certain members of the City Council
Mayor of visited Harpenden to see the Robin Hoods
Nottingham, at work. They were much interested in
etc. watching the Battalion digging trenches,
and also in the barbed wire entanglements
erected by the Divisional Engineers.

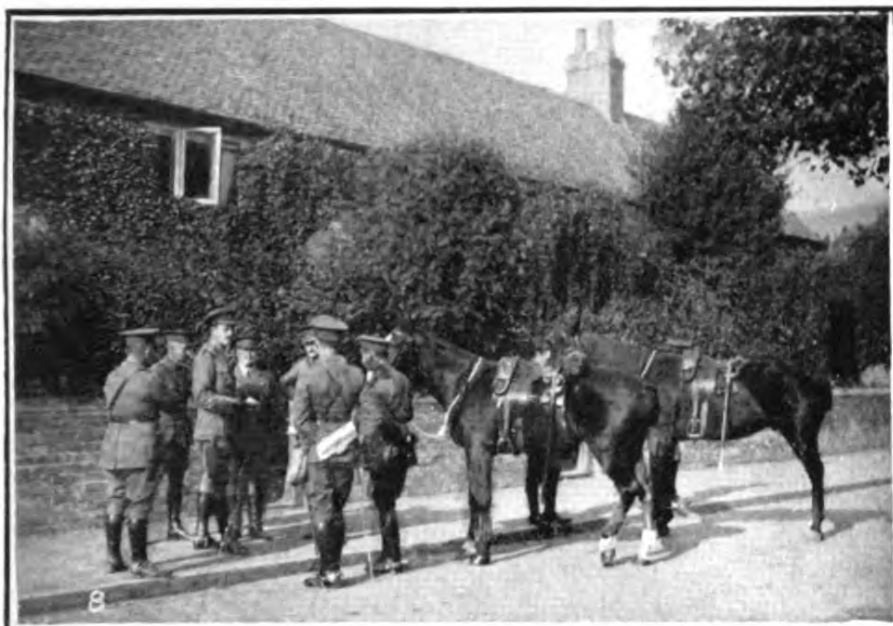
On November 5th a Cycle Company was formed for the Division, and Lieut. T. S. Black of this Battalion was selected for the 2nd in Command. The Robin Hoods also provided two Artificers, two Corporals and thirteen Privates towards the establishment of the Company.

On November 10th in accordance with War Office regulations for the Territorial Expeditionary Force, the strength of the Battalion was increased, and 2nd Lieuts. A. S. Bright and R. G. Pyatt, with 120 men from the Reserve Battalion, joined for duty.

Robin Hoods During the evening of Sunday the
leave Harpenden 15th November, orders were received
and march to for the Robin Hoods to march with
Harlow, Nov. 16th. the Brigade to Harlow on the
 morning of the 16th November.

The 2nd in Command was instructed to proceed in command of parties detailed from each Battalion and arrange for the billets at Harlow. This detachment left Harpenden by an early train on the 16th arriving about 10 a.m. During the day Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., watched with much interest the various billeting parties at work, and on the arrival of the 8th Sherwood Foresters (who were billeted in the vicinity of his residence) sent them a ration of hot soup.

After the cancellation of the order to proceed to France, Battalion leave had been granted for the week end on a liberal scale, as all now thought the Robin Hoods would remain at Harpenden over the winter, and arrangements were being made for a series of entertainments. The sudden news that the Battalion was to leave at once came as a great surprise. On receipt of this order all ranks spent a busy night in drawing under-clothing and other articles from the Quartermaster's Stores to complete their kit, and also drew these articles for the men on leave and who would not return until about 1 a.m. This issue was not completed until about 6 in the morning. Afterwards mufflers and mittens which had been made by the Ladies of Nottingham, and kindly forwarded by Mrs. C. W. Birkin, were distributed. This gave but little time for the men to have their breakfasts, especially as some of the Companies were ten minutes march from the Mess Tents, and the Company parades had been ordered early in order to issue 150 rounds of ammunition per man, which was carried for the first time on march. The Battalion had been up most of the night and had but little time for breakfast,



Brigade Headquarters at Harpenden (third from left the Brigade Major) Major E. M. MORRIS.



The Robin Hoods cooking a mid-day meal.

and no haversack ration was provided, which was not a good start for an exceedingly long march.

The inhabitants of Harpenden knew nothing about the move until breakfast time, when they turned out in large numbers to bid the Battalion farewell, some of them motoring or driving as far as Wheathampsted to say a final good-bye. The Brigade left Harpenden at 8.15 a.m., and marched via Wheathampsted, Hatfield, Hertford, Hoddesdon and Roydon to Harlow, arriving at 8 p.m., having marched a distance of 33 miles, the longest halt being for twenty minutes near Hatfield. The whole of the Brigade were much fatigued on arrival, the extra kit and ammunition they carried combined with little or no sleep or food before starting on the journey made this a record march for Territorial Troops. The good comradeship prevailing in the Battalion was shewn by the stronger men helping to carry the rifles and packs of the weaker, some of the Officers and men finishing the march carrying two or three rifles. At one point on the line of march near Hoddesdon, the Battalion experienced a particularly trying time by having to proceed in file or even single file through the rides in a wood with mud up to the knees. It was remarkable how well the Battalion marched during daylight, but when it commenced to get dark (just before arriving at Roydon) it was more difficult to keep a steady swing, the men's endurance being severely tried, with the result that there was a certain amount of straggling. On arriving at Harlow rain was falling and it was very dark, but in spite of this billeting was quickly proceeded with, dinners served, and the men turned in for the night very tired.

<i>Nov. 17th left Harlow, and Marched to Great Dunmow.</i>	On the following day, the 17th November, "The Robin Hoods," with the Brigade, marched to Great Dunmow, a distance of 16 miles, where they were billeted for the night, and on the 18th
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Nov. 18th left they left Great Dunmow at 10.30 a.m.
 Great Dunmow and proceeded to Bocking Church
 and marched to Street (near Braintree) a distance of
 Bocking Church about 12 miles. Thus, in three days
 Street, the Battalion marched 61 miles, starting
 Braintree. with every disadvantage and with the
 exception of a few casualties arriving
 perfectly fit.

On hearing the news that the Brigade had left Harpenden the Lord Bishop of Southwell sent the following letter to all ranks :—

Bishop's Manor, Southwell,
 November, 1914.

Sherwood Foresters,
 Brothers,

In this War for King and Country the Territorial Regiments are being called to the Front for the first time. You have responded to the call.

For you and all of us who live in Notts. and Derbyshire, this is a proud if anxious moment.

You go to support your Comrades in the regular Battalions, many of whom have laid down their lives, but have brought honour to the Regiment.

To whatever place you may be sent, in that place we trust you. We trust you in the fighting line, but we trust you in all places and at all times to uphold the character of our best British soldiers. That is a high standard, but aim at it.

Faith in God; willing obedience; courage under fire; patience during hours of waiting; cheerfulness in the moment of discomfort; courtesy towards women; generosity to enemies in the hour of victory; these are some of the marks of a good soldier.

Be sure of this, that we shall not forget you. Throughout the Diocese your names are on the Parish Church doors. Often you will find it difficult to pray. It may help you then to remember that others are praying for you.

Finally, we shall try to care for and cheer those whom you have left behind. This we hold to be our first duty.

So farewell, and may God give you all health and victory, a speedy return and a clear conscience !

Yours sincerely,

EDWYN SOUTHWELL.

November 19th all ranks were busy in settling themselves down in their new billets at Bocking Church Street. Two Companies were accommodated in the large factory of Messrs. Courtaulds', and the remainder in various houses.

Six of the Officers were located at the Deanery, and great hospitality was shewn them by the Dean of Bocking, who also took the greatest interest in the Battalion during their stay in the village. The Robin Hoods understood that the order for them to proceed to France was cancelled owing to the great probability of the Germans at this time endeavouring to attempt a landing on the East Coast, and three lines of defence covering the East of London were in the course of construction, one of the important positions being at the village of Panfield near to Bocking Church Street. This village was now being converted into a strong point under the supervision of the Royal Engineers, and the Robin Hoods for the next month were very largely engaged in digging trenches and constructing machine gun positions, with occasional intervals in which they were practised in attack formations. The weather was rainy and very cold, and work was carried out in the worst climatic conditions. One section of the trench line made by the Robin Hoods surrounded Panfield churchyard, and this was continued round the Hall.

During this period, whilst the Battalion were engaged on trench work, the Machine Gun Section was most efficiently trained under Lieut. A. M. Williams, the Battalion Machine Gun Officer, and also the Signallers under 2nd Lieut. W. G. Walker, the Battalion Signalling Officer.

On November 28th and the following days, the rifles in use by the Battalion were withdrawn, and replaced with M.L.E. Mark 1* Charger Loader re-sighted for Mark VII. Ammunition.

Quarter Master Serg. E. Skinner at the beginning of this month was promoted to Quarter Master with the Hon. rank of Lieutenant.

The Battalion was most fortunate in having the services of such a highly skilled Quarter Master who took the greatest interest in his work, and was always most considerate and courteous to all ranks. It would not be too much to say that no Battalion had a better Quarter Master, and all will remember with gratitude the very efficient way he carried out his duties and never on any single occasion either in England or France, did the Battalion go without their full rations.

On December 11th the Base detail left behind, when the Battalion vacated Harpenden, consisting of two Officers and 122 other ranks rejoined the Battalion arriving at Braintree Station at 2.20 p.m., and marched to the village of Panfield where billets had been allotted to them.

The Medical Officer re-examined a certain number of the men who during the strenuous training of the previous months had shewn signs of exhaustion, with the result that 20 Privates were discharged as being medically unfit and these were replaced from the Reserve Battalion at Nottingham.

On the 16th December the Regiment heard with regret that Major G. N. Colvile had been appointed Adjutant to No. 27 General Base Depot, Expeditionary

Force, and he left for Southampton on December 17th. Major Colvile had in previous years been the Adjutant of the Robin Hoods and it was with the greatest satisfaction that all ranks (when at Harpenden) heard that he had been Gazetted to the Battalion again, this time as Major, and they were most pleased to have a highly trained Officer with them who had rendered most distinguished Service in the South African Campaign for which he was awarded the D.S.O.

During the period December 9th to December 27th the Battalion having completed the entrenched position round the village of Panfield, were now engaged in making another line of trenches on the east side of Lions Hall Farm, near Bocking.

On Christmas Day and Boxing Day the Battalion kept up the spirit and joy of Christmastide as far as possible, the Officers providing their Companies with the Christmas dinners and on Boxing Day concerts and other Festivities were arranged.

On December 28th the Battalion left Bocking Church Street at 7.15 a.m., entrained at Braintree and proceeded to Luton where they were once more billeted, and on the following days proceeded to Warden Hill Range to fire the Musketry course for the second time, and on January 2nd and 3rd the Battalion marched to Dunstable Range to carry out Field Firing and having completed this the Robin Hoods on the following day entrained at 11.15 a.m. at Luton Station and returned to Bocking Church Street.

During December Sergt. H. Freestone and Private J. W. Austin were given commissions in the Battalion and were posted to the Reserve Battalion stationed at Nottingham.

During the month of January, Captain W. R. Rook proceeded to Chelsea Barracks, London, for a special course of instruction. Lieut. J. Boot, 2nd Lieut. J. C. Warren, and five

January,
1915.

privates of the Battalion Transport proceeded to Stansted for a course of instruction in Infantry Transport Drivers duties. Sergt. Inst. Benson and Sergt. J. Mortimer also proceeded to Stansted to instruct the 1st North Midland Brigade, Royal Field Artillery Officers and Non.-Com. Officers in Infantry Musketry.

Sergts. J. Ball and S. Carnell attended a Special Musketry course at Bisley, December 28th to January 15th. Both these Non-Com. Officers obtained "distinguished" in their examinations, and they afterwards proved themselves exceptionally able Musketry Instructors to the Battalion and in this capacity rendered invaluable service.

It was also during this month that the Battalion was re-organised, the eight Companies being formed into four Companies. The new Companies were commanded as follows:—Capt. L. A. Hind, A Coy.; Capt. W. R. Rook, B Coy.; Capt. E. H. Spalding, C Coy.; Capt. B. E. Baily, D Coy.

On the 8th February, Capt. B. E. Baily proceeded to Chelsea Barracks, London, for a course of instruction.

During the months of January and February the Battalion was trained in the new Company formations, using Gosfield Park, about four miles from Bocking, for this purpose, and generally one day in each week the Battalion was engaged in a Route March. The Robin Hoods also had valuable instruction in constructing temporary rafts, some made with barrels and poles lashed together, and others with bundles of straw wrapped in tarpaulin sheets and well tied up, and on these rafts the Battalion crossed the river Blackwater near Bocking. Probably this experience was found useful when in later days the Brigade crossed the Bellenglise Canal. The sighting and digging of trenches at night was also practiced.

Robin Hoods Inspected by the King at Hallingbury Park, Feb. 19th, 1915. On February 19th the Battalion proceeded to Hallingbury Park near Bishop Stortford, where the 46th North Midland Division was inspected by His Majesty the King, and afterwards returned to Bocking Church Street in the afternoon. A few days afterwards the Battalion was notified that His Majesty The King had been pleased to sanction the alteration in the title of the Brigade, this being changed from "Notts. and Derby Brigade" to "The Sherwood Foresters Brigade," (T.F.) a name which in future days they made historic.

About February 20th the Battalion received information that orders had come through for them to proceed to France on February 25th. Training was now complete and the Robin Hoods were shortly to take their part in the fighting in France and Belgium. Equipment was overhauled and inspected by the Commanding Officer, who felt the great responsibility that rested upon him, and was very careful that every man was as highly trained and perfectly equipped as possible.

Left Bocking Church Street, Braintree, for France, Feb. 25th, 1915. On the Morning of February 25th, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin, with A and B Companies and half of the Regimental Transport left Bocking Church Street, and proceeded to Braintree Station, where they entrained at 9.45 a.m. for Southampton. They were shortly followed by Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill with C and D Companies and the other half of the Regimental Transport who entrained at 12 noon.

The Chaplain was the last to bid farewell to the Battalion at Braintree Station, and all ranks felt much sorrow at leaving their beloved Padre behind. It must have been the saddest day in all his life for him to see

the lads to whom he was attached by every tie that can sanctify humanity, leave for France without him.

On arriving at Southampton the right half Battalion embarked on S.S. *Empress Queen*, leaving Southampton that night for Havre where they disembarked at 9 a.m. February 26th, and went into rest Camp to await the arrival of the remainder of the Battalion.

The left half of Battalion with the whole of the Regimental Transport embarked on S.S. *Glenarm Head*, which on steaming out into Southampton water received orders to anchor and wait further instructions. The steamship dropped anchor close to H.M.S. *Hermione*, (the Guard Ship in Southampton water) and was informed the passage across the sea had been delayed owing to some German Submarines having been seen in the Channel.

During the time the *Glenarm Head* laid at anchor the men were practised in equipping themselves with the lifebelts provided for each, and standing to alarm quarters, and were also carefully instructed as to what should be done in case the vessel was torpedoed. The Naval Officers from the H.M.S. *Hermione*, among whom was Lieut. A. W. L. Brewill, the son of the 2nd in Command, paid one or two visits to the ship, and presented the Officers with a basket of lobsters for lunch, which was very much appreciated. The passage across the Channel was evidently at this time considered somewhat precarious, and instructions were received that only a limited number of men should be allowed on each vessel crossing, and as the number on board exceeded this limit Capt. E. H. Spalding with 172 Non.-Com. Officers and men were taken off by S.S. *Tudno* and returned to Southampton. The *Glenarm Head* remained at anchor from Thursday evening February 25th until Saturday, February 27th, when she sailed at 7 p.m. It was a

beautiful moonlight night and all watched with much interest the lights of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, as the vessel passed down the Solent. Many could not help thinking this would be the last glimpse of England for some of them. The ship was accompanied by two Naval Destroyers in her passage across the Channel, and at 7 a.m. Sunday, February 28th, the troops were disembarked on Havre Quay. The Captain of the vessel told the 2nd in Command that he had been engaged for the last three or four months in conveying troops to France, but he had never had on board better disciplined men than the Robin Hoods, and spoke most highly of their excellent behaviour.

Meanwhile, Capt. E. H. Spalding, with C Company, after being taken off the *Glenarm Head* proceeded to Southampton, where they were billeted in the Rest Camp until 12 noon on Saturday, February 27th, when they embarked on S.S. *Trafford Hall* and proceeded to Havre, arriving there at 9 a.m. on Sunday, February 28th, and joined up with the left half Battalion on Havre Quay, so that the whole of the Robin Hoods were now safely landed in France.

The following is a roll of the Officers who were with the Battalion on disembarkation :—

Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin, Commanding.

Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill, Second in Command.

Capt. H. G. Wakefield, Adjutant.

Lieut. J. W. Scott, M.D., R.A.M.C., Medical Officer.

A Company.—Capt. L. A. Hind.

Capt. H. Bradwell.

Lieut. L. C. Brewill.

2nd Lieut. M. Rook.

2nd Lieut. H. H. Walton.

B Company.—Capt. W. R. Rook.
 Lieut. G. H. R. Mellors.
 Lieut. K. Y. McCraith.
 2nd Lieut. J. C. Warren.

C Company.—Capt. E. H. Spalding.
 Capt. G. H. Black.
 2nd Lieut. A. A. Walton.
 2nd Lieut. W. H. Round.
 2nd Lieut. A. S. Bright.

D Company.—Capt. B. E. Baily.
 Capt. C. W. Milner.
 Lieut. A. M. Williams.
 2nd Lieut. R. M. Gotch.
 2nd Lieut. C. G. Vickers.
 2nd Lieut. E. H. N. Cordeux.

Lieut. J. C. Boot, Transport Officer.
 2nd Lieut. W. G. Walker, Signalling Officer.
 Quarter Master Lieut. E. Skinner.

*Out of the above twenty-seven Officers, nine have been
 killed and ten wounded.*

*Roll of Regimental and Company Sergt. Major and
 Quarter Master Sergeants who were with the Battalion
 on disembarkation.*

Regt. Sergt. Major Francis, G. H.
 Regt. Qr. Master Sergt. Cuckson, R. C.
 A Company.—Coy. Sergt. Major Smart, J.
 Coy. Qr. Master Sergt. Brameld, A.
 B Company.—Coy. Sergt. Major Stagg, H.
 Coy. Qr. Master Sergt. Hunt, J.
 C Company.—Coy. Sergt. Major Clayson, S. F.
 Coy. Qr. Master Sergt. Gidlow, W.
 D Company.—Coy. Sergt. Major Herrod, J. W.
 Coy. Qr. Master Sergt. Mann, A.

CHAPTER II.

FRANCE—KEMMEL.

February 28th to June 20th, 1915.

The left half Battalion of the Robin Hoods *Havre, Feb. 28th, 1915.* together with the Regimental Transport had, as previously stated in the last chapter, landed safely on the Quay at Havre, with the exception of one or two Transport Waggon's which were damaged during disembarkation, but these were at once replaced from Government Stores in the Harbour. All ranks had Goat Skin Coats supplied to them which they found most useful in the cold weather experienced later on. At 4 p.m. the left half Battalion, with Transport marched from the Harbour to Havre Station where they found the right half Battalion waiting. On the march to the station some forty German Prisoners were passed in the street; these were the first German soldiers the Robin Hoods saw. There was a long wait at the Station before the Battalion entrained, but they eventually left about 7 p.m., the train consisting chiefly of covered cattle trucks, each of which held forty men, and proceeded via Calais to Cassel where the Battalion detrained about 5 p.m. on March 1st after a journey lasting nearly twenty-two hours. It might here be interesting to state that Cassel was the furthest point to which the German Cavalry advanced, and from which town they were driven back to the East of Ypres by the British Troops in the Autumn of 1914.

The Robin Hoods having detrained at Cassel
March 1st Station, marched via Cassel to the village of
proceeded Ryveld, a distance of some six miles, where
from Cassel the Battalion was billeted. The majority of
to Ryveld. the billets were indescribably dirty. The

Battalion Headquarters occupied a typical French Farmhouse, and the Farmer's wife said the last troops billeted with her were German Uhlans. It was here for the first time the guns were heard booming in the distance. The Battalion stayed in this village the following two days. On the evening of March 3rd orders were received to proceed the next day to Ploegsteert.

The Battalion marched off at 9 a.m. on
Marched from March 4th and on arriving at Terdeghem
Ryveld to was met by General Sir H. L. Smith-
Ploegsteert, Dorrien, G. C. B., Commanding the
March 4th. Second Army. He was very cheerful, and gave the Battalion a most hearty welcome. He called out the Officers and addressed them, saying as Hon. Colonel of the Sherwood Foresters Regiment he was particularly pleased to have the Territorial Brigade of the Sherwood Foresters to serve in the Second Army under him. Afterwards the Battalion marched past in Column of Route and continued their march to Caestre.

On arriving at this town Motor Busses
Ploegsteert, took the Battalion through Bailleul to
March 4th, Nieppe, and from this point they marched
to March 9th. to Ploegsteert, where they were billeted.

This village is about one mile in rear of the Front line trenches, and it was here for the first time the Robin Hoods came under shell fire, many shells falling round and near the buildings occupied by the Companies. It caused some surprise to see the quiet way the occupants of the village behaved whilst shells were falling in and around their houses. They did not

appear to worry, merely coming out to see the damage done. The Battalion had been sent to Ploegsteert to receive instructions in Trench warfare in the Front line trenches before being sent to occupy trenches on their own responsibility.

*Trenches,
Ploegsteert,
March 5th
and 6th.* On March 5th A and B Companies were ordered to proceed to the Section of the Trench line in front of the village of Ploegsteert occupied by the East Lancashire Regiment. One Officer writing home describes his visit to the trenches as follows :—

“ Friday night I took my platoon into the trenches with the East Lancashire Regiment for twenty-four hours. After having read of trench warfare for six months you can imagine one’s feelings to at last experience the actual thing. The trenches are very wonderful, but still fairly full of water in parts. We were about 120 yards from the German trenches, and in one part only 50 yards, and could hear them talking. There are several tumble down houses on the line of trenches and in the cellar of one of these I had my meals. I slept the night in a ‘room’ of another house. It was rather draughty, as there were several shell holes in the roof, but I slept comparatively well in spite of snipers knocking bits off the wall and the fact that my legs were covered in mud and water. During the daytime I made a thorough inspection and interested myself by watching the trenches on our right being shelled. Opposite to us the Germans were fairly quiet, but snipers got busy now and then. At night time it is rather exciting getting into another trench as a novice always imagines that some German is deliberately aiming at him, but apparently they can’t see you, as our working parties were at work in front of our trenches in comparative safety.”

“ Every few minutes one side or the other sends up brilliant lights in case of attack. There are several dead Germans lying out in front of our trenches with their old toes sticking up in the air. About mid-day things are moderately quiet as both sides cook their dinners and smoke can be seen all along both lines of the trenches. To-night I take my platoon for digging in our support trenches. This is quite exciting sport, as bullets which pass over the first line of trenches very often drop amongst the supports, but it is surprising how very quickly one gets used to it, but I must say England seems a very long way from here ! I have almost forgotten already what it is to see houses with windows in them.”

C and D Companies were sent for instruction with the Hampshire Regiment to the Section of the Trench line immediately in front of Ploegsteert Wood, and it was here the Battalion had their first casualty. Private C. W. Sheppard of C Company, being accidentally shot in the trenches by a Lance-Corporal of the Hampshires. It was in these trenches that one of the strangest and most significant events of the war marked Christmas. The Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* in describing this, states :—

<i>Christmas Day, 1914, in Trenches front of Ploegsteert Wood.</i>	Darkness fell about 7 o'clock on Christmas Eve and with it a sudden calm. The German Snipers seemed to have disappeared. Then the sound of Carol-singing arose from the trenches, and at that time the British Snipers in turn ceased. The Germans called across, “ Why don't you English come out.” Our men went out into no man's land, and very soon fires and candles were burning along the parapets hitherto guarded with ceaseless vigilance. The men were fraternising, exchanging gifts and experiences, and agreeing that the truce should
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continue until mid-night of Christmas Day. It was all arranged privately and started by one of our fellows going across. The only thing forbidden was to make any improvement to the barbed wire and that firing would not be opened without due warning on both sides. A Chaplain gave a German Commander a copy of the "The Soldier's Prayer," and in return received a message for the bereaved family of a certain British Officer. He had been killed, and, as he was dying, the German Commander happened to pass, and saw him struggling to get something out of his pocket. He went up and helped the dying man, and the thing in the pocket was a photograph of his wife. The Commander said, "I held it before him, and he lay looking at it till he died, a few minutes after."

Christmas day passed in burying the dead, where bodies lay in scores between the trenches, in carolling, each side cheering the other, and in a football match which the Saxons won. "War was absolutely forgotten—God bless you Comrades say I." Such acts, such men, give us back our faith in the virtue of life and the common human heart. The vision of these hours of reconciliation will last when many a day of dear-bought but necessary victory has sunk into oblivion. The men who went back to their guns, if they survive, will recall it as the day when Christmas became real for them.

The Robin Hoods left the trenches on the evening of March 6th, and on the following two days attended lectures and received valuable practical instruction in making trenches, revetments, etc., from Officers detailed from the East Lancashire and Hampshire Regiments.

<i>March 9th</i> <i>marched from</i> <i>Ploegsteert</i> <i>to Merris.</i>	On March 9th the Battalion marched at 6.15 a.m. from Ploegsteert, via Nieppe and Bailleul, to Merris arriving at 2.20 p.m. and went into billets. It was at Merris that the Robin Hoods were informed that the Sherwood Foresters Brigade had been
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detached from the 46th Division and would be attached to the 2nd Cavalry Division under Major General H. P. Gough. March 10th was spent in settling down in billets and generally cleaning up of equipment and arms.

March 11th On March 11th, about 11 a.m., orders were received for the Robin Hoods to proceed march at 12.30 with the other Battalions from Merris to of the Brigade to Bac. St. Maur. The *Bac. St. Maur.* men on this march carried blankets and goat skin coats in addition to other equipment and 150 rounds of ammunition. This great weight made the march exceptionally fatiguing. The weather was cold, misty, and wet, and the destination was not reached until 7 p.m., when it was quite dark and raining hard. The streets of Bac. St. Maur were clogged with Army Transports, and the Battalion remained halted in the main road for an hour or two until billets were allotted to them. It was afterwards known that the Battalion had been marched at very short notice to this town as on the previous day the British had attacked the village of Neuve Chapelle and driven the Germans out, and if the further attacks then being carried out proved successful it was hoped the Cavalry would be able to break through, in which case the Brigade would have made forced marches to support the Cavalry.

Sir John French in his Despatch states, "On the morning of the 12th I informed the General Officer Commanding 1st Army that he could call on the 2nd Cavalry Division, under General Gough, for immediate support in the event of the success of the First Army opening up opportunities for its favourable employment." This Division and a Brigade of the North Midland Division (The Sherwood Foresters Brigade) which was temporarily attached to it, was moved forward for this purpose.



The Chaplain of the Robin Hoods, the Rev. H. T. HAYMAN, V.D.



Rev. J. P. HALES, Chaplain, Sherwood Foresters Brigade, having tea (taken outside the Convent, Locre,) April, 1915.



Captain E. SKINNER, Quarter-Master, Robin Hoods.



Captain J. W. SCOTT, M.D., M.C., Medical Officer,
The Robin Hoods.



Machine Gun Section of the Robin Hoods. Sitting centre - Sergt. Hildyard,
Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin, Lieut. A. M. Williams (Machine Gun Officer) Captain H. G. R.
Wakefield, Adj. Photo taken at Locre, April, 1915.



Signalling Section of the Robin Hoods.
Lieut. W. E. G. Walker (Signalling Officer) centre. Photo taken at Locre. April, 1915.



Doctor's House at Kemmel used as Battalion Headquarters.



Doctor's House, Kemmel (Battalion Headquarters) shewing interior of House damaged by shell fire.

We here heard that on the night of March 9/10th the British troops in single file were taken up to the trenches in front of Neuve Chappelle which in many cases were less than a hundred yards from the enemy. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle describing this stated :—" Before daylight the trenches were crammed with men waiting eagerly for the signal to advance. Short ladders had been distributed so that the stormers could swarm swiftly out of the trenches. The obstacle in front of the army was a most serious one. The barbed wire entanglements were on an immense scale. The trenches were bristling with machine guns and the village in the rear contained several large outlying houses with walls and orchards, each of which had been converted into a fortress. At 7.30 a.m. the first gun boomed from the British position and within a few minutes three hundred were hard at work.

At 8.5 a.m. the guns ceased and our infantry poured over the parapet. The assault overwhelmed the German trenches, in an instant seizing the bewildered survivors who crouched, yellow with lyddite and shaken by the horror of their situation, in the corners of the earthworks. At 12 noon the position had been carried, and yet it was not possible to renew the advance before 3 o'clock. These hours were occupied in re-arranging the units, which had been greatly mixed up during the advance. The troops slept upon the ground which they had won ready for the renewal of the battle in the morning of the 11th, which broke with a thick mist, a condition which continued during the whole day, and the 12th was hardly more favourable. For the first time in the war the Germans abandoned a position they had lost, and made no further attempt to retake it.

The First Battalion Sherwood Foresters very greatly distinguished themselves these three days. Although



this battle was not crowned with the success hoped for, it proved a fierce and murderous encounter in which every weapon of modern warfare—the giant howitzer, the bomb, the machine gun—was used to the full, and where the reward of the victor was a slice of ground no larger than a moderate farm, and yet the morale prevails over the material, and the fact that a Prussian line, built up with four months of labour, could be rushed in a couple of hours, and that by no exertion could a German set foot upon it again, was a hopeful first lesson in the Spring Campaign.”

March from Bac. St. Maur to Neuve Berquin March 13th. On the morning of March 13th all hope of the Cavalry being able to break through was abandoned and the Robin Hoods received orders to leave Bac. St. Maur and proceed to Neuve Berquin. The Battalion paraded at 1.30 p.m. and marched via Estaires to Neuve Berquin, where they arrived at 4.30 p.m. and were billeted.

Neuve Berquin, March 13th to March 24th. The village of Neuve Berquin in the Autumn of 1914 had been the scene of some serious fighting, and the Church and many of the houses bore evidence of shrapnel and bullets. Most of the inhabitants did their best to make the Battalion comfortable, but in one or two instances this was not the case. One man in particular said, “He would rather have the Germans in the village than the English.”

In writing home one Officer describes his arrival in Neuve Berquin as follows:—

“I found a billet in a small cottage where the old man and woman did their best to make us as comfortable as possible. Over a cup of coffee in the evening I heard many stories from the old couple. Seven

civilians were killed here for apparently no reason, these two cowered down in a small attic, but the Germans came in and ransacked the house taking sheets, blankets, and everything. They smashed the windows to fire on the French, and generally made a mess of the house as I saw for myself. The same signs were everywhere. Small cottagers were threatened and made to give up everything in the house. The estaminet I am at present writing this letter in was absolutely emptied of all wines, etc., the cellar floor being a foot deep in wine which had been spilt or poured from smashed-in casks. The day before yesterday I went into the village to search for vegetables; the woman in the shop who had billeted several German Officers said the majority of them were most agreeable. She showed me a paper given to her by one of them allowing her so many days lodging in Berlin at the end of the War. This in lieu of payment! They never paid for what they took. The misery and desolation round about is really terrible."

Sunday, March 14th, Divine Service was held in a field within sound of heavy firing from the trenches, the Brigade Chaplain, The Rev. J. P. Hales taking the Service.

During the time the Battalion remained at Neuve Berquin, viz., from March 13th to March 24th, the careful training of the Regiment was continued and a Company of bomb throwers was formed and trained. The Battalion was also instructed in making bombs out of old jam tins and were taught how to throw them. The Robin Hoods had several long route marches and were practiced in the art of wood fighting in the portion of the Forest de Nieppe known as Bois D'Aval, about four miles N.W. of Neuve Berquin.

On March 24th, the Battalion left *Left Neuve Neuve Berquin* and marched to the *Berquin, March* village of Bleu, where they were billeted, and remained in this village until *24th and marched* April 2nd. During this period the *to Bleu, March* Battalion continued their training, *25th to April 2nd.* March 27th being devoted to a tactical exercise, in attacking a Farm strongly held by machine guns, under the personal supervision of Major General H. P. Gough, Commanding Second Cavalry Division.

On April 2nd orders were received that *April 2nd* the Sherwood Foresters Brigade were *left Bleu and* detached from the 2nd Cavalry Division, *marched to* and were to rejoin the 46th North Midland *Locre.* Division. The Battalion left Bleu on this day and marched via Bailleul to Locre, arriving at 3.30 p.m., where they were billeted. This village became the Base and Rest quarters of the Robin Hoods, who with the 46th Division were about to take over the Front line trenches on the Messines Ridge about a mile and a half East of Kemmel.

Saturday, April 3rd, the Battalion paraded for Divine Service at Locre, the Service being taken by the Bishop of London. The following day, April 4th, being Easter Sunday, Communion and Divine Service was held in the Nunnery at Locre under the Brigade Chaplain.

The Battalion was at last to go into the *Trench line East* Front Trenches and take over a section *of Lindenhoeck,* of the trench line on its own responsibility, and it was on Easter Sunday *April 4th,* evening, April 4th, that the Robin *Easter Sunday.* Hoods marched from Locre via Kemmel to Lindenhoeck to take over from the Suffolk Regiment the line of trenches immediately under Spanbroekmolen, known as F4, F5, F6, and Strong Point 3. A and B Companies garrisoned the Front line trenches on the

night of April 4/5th, C and D Companies being in support and occupying Farms in the vicinity of Lindenhoeek about one mile behind the fire trenches. The Battalion Headquarters were in a Cottage at Lindenhoeek known as Lindenhoeek Chalet.

The following is an extract from a letter written home which gives a very interesting description of a Company of the Robin Hoods taking over a trench line for the first time. The names of places which were, of course, omitted in this letter and one or two other particulars have now been supplied :

“ At last I have time to write to you after three of the most eventful day of my life. In my last letter I said we were going into the trenches for four days. The following system has been adopted, namely, that two Companies remain for 48 hours in the firing trench, the other two being in reserve about one and a half miles behind. After forty-eight hours the Companies in reserve relieve the Companies in the front line trenches. A and B Companies with the 2nd in Command were the first to go in. We marched from Locre via Kemmel direct to the trenches, a distance of about five and a half miles, entering them under cover of darkness about 2 a.m. and relieving the Regular Battalion of the Suffolks then occupying the Section of the trench line. The Company Commanders had previously spent a day in these trenches to have a look round and to receive instructions as to what was being done to improve them, etc. The rest of us had never seen them and were only too thankful when dawn broke. It is very difficult to describe these two days, but I now realise what our troops went through in the Winter. Rain came down almost continuously, making the trench a quagmire. We all had to be on the alert during two nights and were not allowed to sleep, as the Germans chose such nights for attacking,

The result was we were wet through and caked in mud the whole time. Rations are brought up by a fatigue party from Lindenhoeck and these arrived the second night wet through from the men continually falling into shell holes, or lying flat in the mud when the star shells went up. The water is brought up in petrol tins."

"Of course, now that we have properly started the game casualties are bound to occur, and we have had several. We only had one man killed in our Company. The worst part of it is that a man killed or wounded in the day time must remain in the trench until night time, when the Stretcher Bearers take him away. Our man was killed in the day, and thank goodness no pain. (This was Private G. H. Cawthan, the first Robin Hood killed in action, and he was buried at mid-night April 5/6th in a corner of field adjoining Lindenhoeck Chalet)."

"Naturally not being used to it yet I felt pretty bad for a short while owing to the nature of the wound. One soon gets used to it however. The second afternoon the Germans put about thirty shells over us, evidently searching for our guns, two burst over the trench luckily not hurting anybody. It was rather an exciting period, our guns knocked the opposing trench about rather badly. British, French and German dead are lying about on the "No man's land" between the two trenches and when digging to improve the trench we have to dig a bit only in case we unearth things! "

"The time of relief came at last and in pitch darkness and pouring rain C and D Companies relieved us. We left the trench in file. It is most important for each man to keep close touch with the man in front of him when going in or leaving the trenches on relief nights, as one is exposed to the enemy a good deal of

the way and the losing of touch of the man in front of me caused me quite the most anxious time of my life. I was following almost in rear of the Company and we hadn't proceeded far when everyone lay down for several minutes and waited, why I couldn't tell. At last a message came down "Officer to the front immediately." Thinking someone had been shot I made my way slowly to the front and to my horror found that the two leading platoons were not there. One of the men had fallen down and lost touch, result myself being in charge of 100 men and no guide, pitch dark and quite ignorant of the way back. To make matters worse we were in an exposed place and bullets were flying perilously close. However, I told them to follow me and we proceeded blindly on our way avoiding the numerous shell holes as best we could. A little further on I slipped down flop into a "Jack Johnson" hole full of water. Owing to wearing a heavy coat, pack, haversack, etc., I went right under, I really thought I was done for. Luckily three of the men managed to get me out. As a result I felt more miserable and anxious still. A little further on, thinking it useless wandering on, I called a halt and sent for a luminous compass, mine having been damaged in my fall. I suddenly remembered marching West would get us into safety, and sure enough some further wandering on brought us to a road absolutely pitted with shell holes. After this, with the exception of negotiating these holes in the darkness, it was all plain sailing. It will be impossible I know for you to properly picture the scene and imagine the relief I experienced when I reported all present to my Company Commander, Capt. Rook, who said I was the most wonderful sight he had ever seen, being caked in mud from head to toes. They had been very anxious about us and had sent out Lieut. J. C. Warren and two or three men to try and find us."

As previously stated our Battalion Headquarters were at a small cottage at Lindenhoeck and was connected with the front line trenches by telephone. The house was fully visible from the German Trenches, so that all the windows had to be boarded up and no one was allowed to enter or leave the cottage during daylight except under very special circumstances, and then this had to be done with the greatest care not to be exposed to view, for if the Germans had seen the house occupied it would not have been many minutes before it would have been destroyed. It was the same with the farms occupied by the two Companies in support. These had already been damaged somewhat by artillery fire, and no man was allowed to leave the building by daylight. At night the dead were brought down from the trench line and buried at midnight in a field adjoining, and close to Battalion Headquarters, the Chaplain riding over from Locre every night at mid-night to read the burial service.

About this time an incident happened which is worth the telling. The chaplain of one of the Battalions in the Brigade was reading the burial service and the Pioneer Sergeant stood on the other side of the grave giving the responses. Just at the moment he was to recite the response "Good Lord, hear us," a bullet whistled between the Chaplain and himself which somewhat startled him, and his response was "Good Lord, listen to that."

Lient.-Col. Birkin very fully realised the great responsibility resting on him in taking over this section of the trench line, as he knew there were no troops in reserve available in case of a serious attack, and that the few guns behind the lines had a very insufficient supply of ammunition. The Divisional General informed us after the war that the Commander-in-Chief had told him at this time that his Division was to hold the trench line at all cost, as there was nothing on the Divisional



OFFICERS OF THE ROBIN HOODS - LOCRE, April, 1915.

Back Row: †Lieut. K. V. McCraith, †Lieut. C. G. Vickers, †Lieut. E. Skinner (Qr.-Mr.) Capt. J. C. Root, *Capt. G. H. R. Mellers, *Capt. H. Bradwell, Capt. W. R. Rook, Capt. G. H. Black, *Lieut. J. W. Scott, R.A.M.C., *Lieut. W. E. G. Walker, *Lieut. W. H. Round, †Lieut. A. A. Walton, †Lieut. J. I. Dobson. **Centre Row:** †Capt. E. H. Spalding, *Capt. L. A. Hind, Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill, †Lieut. Col. C. W. Birkin (Commanding), Capt. H. G. R. Wakefield (Adjutant) †Capt. B. E. Baily. **Front Row:** †Lieut. L. C. Brewill, *Lieut. R. M. Gotch, Lieut. J. H. M. Mackie, *Lieut. H. H. Walton, Lieut. M. Rook *Lieut. A. M. Williams, †Lieut. A. S. Bright.

* Afterwards killed in action. † Afterwards wounded. Eight of the above Officers were killed in action, and eleven wounded.

Front between the Germans and the Channel Ports except the 46th Division. The Commanding Officer never spared himself in constantly visiting the front line trenches. These trenches were chiefly breastworks constructed with sand bags, as the ground was too waterlogged to allow for them being dug below the surface, also the trenches were disconnected. They were, in fact, small trenches at varying angles isolated from each other, and made originally by either Platoons, or half Companies, in the last advance of the British late in November, 1914 and they remained practically in the positions the troops occupied at the time the war of movement ceased, and the winter campaign commenced. The Colonel at once commenced work to get these various trenches connected so as to form a continuous line and this involved an enormous amount of hard labour during darkness by the Companies occupying these trenches.

To relieve the trench line it was necessary for the relieving troops to pass over the open ground which was constantly under fire from the German trenches, and many casualties occurred during these reliefs, but as the weather improved and the ground became drier the Commanding Officer ordered a long communication trench to be dug from Lindenhoeek Road to the trench line, which, when completed, materially lessened the casualties suffered by the troops going to, or leaving the trenches.

At Rest Billets, Locre, April 10th to 13th. On the night of April 9/10th the Battalion was relieved by the 5th Sherwood Foresters and returned to rest billets at Locre. During this period they furnished several fatigue parties for work behind the trench line. These parties left Locre just before dusk, marched to the trench line and worked there during darkness, leaving off work immediately before dawn and returning to Locre. These

working parties necessitated very hard work, and were a strain on the men, interfering very much with the rest they so much needed after their trying time in the trenches.

The Brigadier desired at this time to put on record his great satisfaction with the manner one working party consisting of 50 N.C.O's and men under 2nd Lieut. H. H. Walton and 2nd Lieut. Hickling had carried out their duties under exceptional difficulties whilst working under the Brigade Royal Engineer Officer on the night of April 11/12th.

Trenches, On the evening of April 13th the Robin
Lindenhoek, Hoods relieved the 5th Sherwood Foresters
April 13th in the trenches east of Lindenhoek. On
to 18th. April 16th the Commanding Officer
received a confidential communication that

the Fifth Corps would attack the enemy on Hill 60 s.e. of Ypres at dawn on April 17th, and instructions were given for the 46th Division to do all that was possible to harrass the enemy between the hours of 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. Orders were given to the troops manning the trenches to keep very quiet until the former hour. At that time they were then to engage the enemy with rapid rifle fire; hand and rifle grenades; sniper-scopes; rifle batteries and trench mortars, so as to hold the Germans during the progress of the attack on the North of our line. The attack began in the early hours of the 17th and was destined to rage with great fury, though at intervals, for several weeks. Hill 60 was taken, lost, and retaken several times during this period, but eventually Hill 60 remained with the British. The losses sustained by both sides were very heavy. Sir Conan Doyle says "it was not a question of the little mound (although this largely dominated the salient round Ypres) important as that might be, it could not justify so excessive a loss of life, whether German or British. Hill

60 was a secondary matter. What was really being fought for was the ascendancy of the British or the Prussian soldier, that subtle thing which would tinge every battle which might be fought thereafter. Who would cry "Enough" first? Who would stick it to the bitter end? Which had the staying power when tried out to a finish? The answer to that question was of more definite military importance than any observation post, and it was worth the three thousand slain or maimed to have the award of the God of battles to strengthen us hereafter."

From the Kemmel Hill behind the Battalion Headquarters, the awesome and magnificent spectacle of the artillery bombardment of Hill 60 could be clearly seen. It was the first concentrated terrific artillery fire the Robin Hoods had witnessed, and the shells falling in the woods then covering Hill 60 appeared like a heavy hail-storm, every drop of hail being a shell which on bursting lit up the woods with terrifying grandeur. It was a sight that those who witnessed can never forget.

On the night of Sunday, April 18th, *At Rest Billets* the Battalion handed over their section *Locre, April 19th* of the trench line to the 5th Sherwood *to April 23rd.* Foresters and marched to rest billets at Locre. On April 22nd the Battalion having retired to rest were suddenly ordered to parade as there were signs of the Germans attacking in strength the trench line East of Kemmel. The Robin Hoods left Locre at 1.30 a.m., April 23rd, and marched to Kemmel to form the reserve to the trench line in case the attack was launched, but the night passed quietly and the Battalion returned to Locre at 10 a.m. Immediately before dusk the same day the Robin Hoods marched from Locre and relieved the 5th Sherwood Foresters in the trenches East of Lindenhoeck.

Trenches, Lindenhoek, April 23rd to April 27th. Nothing eventful happened in the trenches during this period of occupation, but work was steadily proceeded with in improving the trenches, strengthening the barbed wire entanglements, and making new machine gun positions.

Locre, April 28th to May 1st. On April 27th the Battalion was relieved by the 5th Sherwood Foresters and returned to rest billets at Locre, and again relieving the 5th Sherwood Foresters in

Trenches, Lindenhoek, May 1st to May 5th. the trenches on the evening of May 1st and during this period of occupation, some new trenches were taken over continuing our present line to the North.

These were immediately opposite to the German trenches on the slope of the Hill under Wytscheate. The trenches were in bad condition having been considerably knocked about by the enemy's artillery. The Companies worked very hard each night in repairing and improving them. Some of the breastworks were only one sand bag in thickness. Advantage was taken during a foggy night to have these carefully inspected from the enemy side and the men worked on the exterior, heaping up sand bags and making the parapet as secure as possible. Such good work was done by all that the previous occupants of these trenches would scarcely have recognised them, so improved were they.

A Company Officer writing home describes the occupation of these trenches during this period as follows :
 " In the evening our trench mortar got to work (it fires a very powerful kind of cylindrical bomb). On explosion they make a deafening noise, throwing up clouds of smoke, sparks and debris. It destroyed a windmill opposite to our lines and gave the Germans a very uncomfortable time. The damage they do, however, is local. We knew we were in for something after

that, and for some time there ensued an ominous silence whilst all remained on the *qui-vive*. Sure enough they retaliated with rifle grenades and their trench mortar, so it became their turn to laugh and watch the fun. Luckily beyond terrific explosions outside our trench they did very little harm except in one instance—our Company Headquarter's dug-out, being about the centre of our trench. This I think the Germans knew, as there is a big traverse by it, which is continually sniped. Luckily the dug-out had been moved a few days before. Anyhow, the enemy fired a Rifle Grenade at this place, dropping it just short of the trench; thinking they were getting the range of it the men cleared out of this section. Hardly had they got out, in fact two were still in, when the Germans fired a trench mortar bomb which dropped clean in the trench at this place, making a large hole and an awful mess of the trench. One of the men received nine wounds. Of course, we stirred up a hornets nest by firing our mortar first, but at this game we must show the initiative and put aside all thought of the enemy's reprisals. The thing is to get the upper hand of them in all things and make them frightened of us. If they throw bombs we throw back two or three for every one of theirs. The bomb can always be seen coming when it has left the mortar as it has a fuse at the tail of it which catches light on its journey. It comes quite slowly so one has time to run down the trench. This, however, entails great alertness on the part of everyone in the trench. At one point in our line the German trenches are only 30 yards away. They do most of their business with bombs which they throw and they have quite a lot of fun there. We are all taking it in turn to occupy this trench. Two nights ago we put out barbed wire in front of our trench, the Germans proceeded to do like-

wise, thus both parties were working within a few yards of one another. Immediately our men got back to their trench after their job was completed they sent up a flare in order to fire at the Germans, but they had also hopped back at the same moment."

On the night of May 5/6th the Robin
Rest Billets, Hoods were relieved by the 5th Sher-
Locre, May 6th wood Foresters and proceeded to Rest
to May 10th. billets at Locre. During the time
 the Battalion rested at this village many
 of the Robin Hoods walked to Mont Rouge about a mile
 away where a magnificent view of the trench line could
 be seen during the day time from Ypres on the North,
 to Messines on the South, and in the evening the line of
 trenches was clearly marked by the starlights sent up
 by both British and Germans. This had the appearance
 of a magnificent firework display extending as it did
 some twenty miles. Mixed with the vivid white lights
 were red and green. Some of the lights were suspended
 from small parachutes which, floating over the lines,
 lasted for several minutes. From Locre and also from the
 trench line we saw the town of Ypres in flames. It was
 one of the most awe inspiring episodes seen during the
 war, lasting several days and nights. During this
 period in Rest billets, the Battalion saw their first
 Zeppelin. It was between 12 mid-night and 1 a.m. when
 the Robin Hoods were awakened by bullets hitting the
 walls and dropping on the roofs of their billets. For
 a moment they thought that the Germans had broken
 through and were firing on Locre, but they found that
 a Battalion billeted near were firing at the Zeppelin
 which had just passed over, and the spent bullets were
 dropping on their billets. The Battalion also at this
 time saw that most sad and pitiable sight, the Refugees
 from Ypres passing through the village, some wheeling
 handcarts with what belongings they could collect. Old

men, women, and children. One old man nearly eighty years of age stopped at one of the billets. He was some relation of the occupants and said his house had been destroyed by German shells; he had lost everything. The poor old man was in an utter state of collapse, and no wonder.

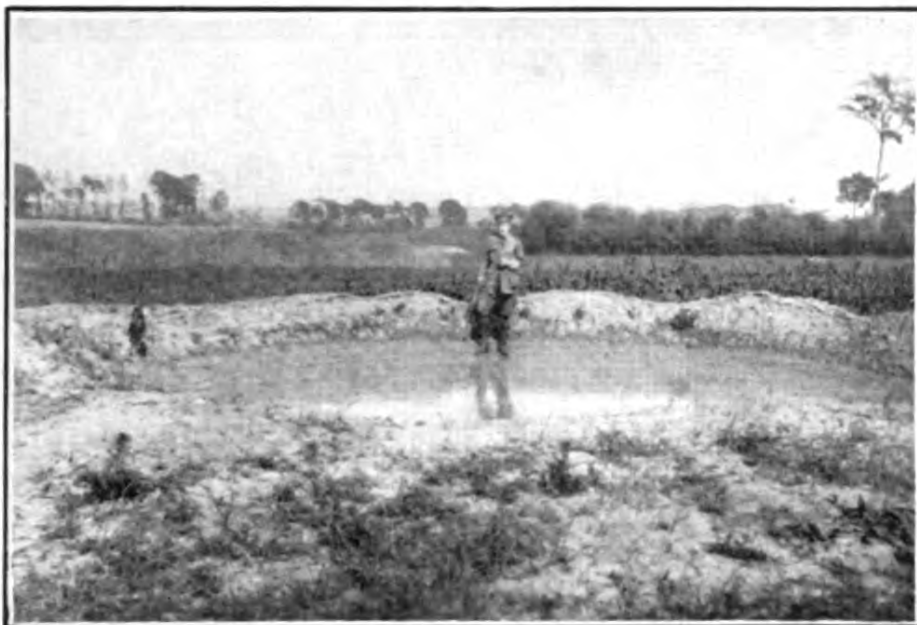
We also saw the long line of ambulances passing in a continuous stream for some forty eight hours bringing the British and Canadian troops from the Ypres salient when they succumbed to the first inhuman gas attack made by the Germans during the second Battle of Ypres. Up to this time the enemy had fought cleanly, and it was with a feeling of loathing we were told they had now degraded warfare to a depth unknown among savages, and a great army which had long been honoured as the finest fighting force in the world became in a single day an object of horror and contempt. In addition to the dangers of ordinary warfare the Robin Hoods now knew that they had to reckon in the future with this new menace. Col. Birkin immediately telegraphed to Nottingham to send out gauze respirators soaked in a chemical which was understood to be an antidote to the German gas, and within three or four days these came to hand. They were found to be a slight protection, though they were never efficient, but to some extent answered their purpose until the Battalion was supplied with their first gas helmets provided by the War Office. These had celluloid eye-pieces and were found to be efficient protection except for the liability of the celluloid to crack with rough usage, which at once rendered them of no avail.

Trenches, On the night of May 10th the Battalion
Kemmel, May marched from Locre to Kemmel and
10th to May took over a new line of trenches East of
15th. Kemmel. Up to this period the Robin
 Hoods and the 5th Sherwood Foresters
 had worked together relieving each other
in the trenches and at rest billets, but from this date

the Brigadier altered the arrangement, and henceforward the Robin Hoods and the 8th Sherwood Foresters were grouped together, alternately relieving each other in the front line trenches. The trenches now taken over were situated about one mile East of the village of Kemmel, and were known as G3, G4, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, with J1, J2, J3 and Strong Point 4. They were irregular, disconnected trenches. The communication between consisted of very shallow communicating trenches not more than three feet deep, having at the bottom some twelve to eighteen inches of mud. One trench known as J3, right, was particularly isolated. This trench was about 35 yards long and within 50 yards of the Germans. The Battalion Headquarters were at the Doctor's house on the East side of Armentieres-Ypres Road, facing the grounds of Kemmel Chateau, about three-quarters of a mile in rear of trenches.

The Battalion at this time received permission to use one camera, and most of the photographs here reproduced were taken during this time. In the course of fourteen days or so this sanction was withdrawn and all felt deep regret that no photographs in the future could be taken which would have been so full of interest.

In previous weeks the Battalions of the Brigade during the time they were in rest billets at Locre, sent large working parties at night and made an excellent communication trench which was named Via Gellia, running from the Main Road, Kemmel, up to the Front line trenches. The ground during this period having gradually dried enabled this to be done. In the rear of J3 trench there remained in the open a considerable number of unburied British who fell whilst taking these trenches. They were lying out just where they fell, with their full equipment on, and were unable to be buried owing to this portion of the ground being fully exposed to rifle fire from the German trenches.



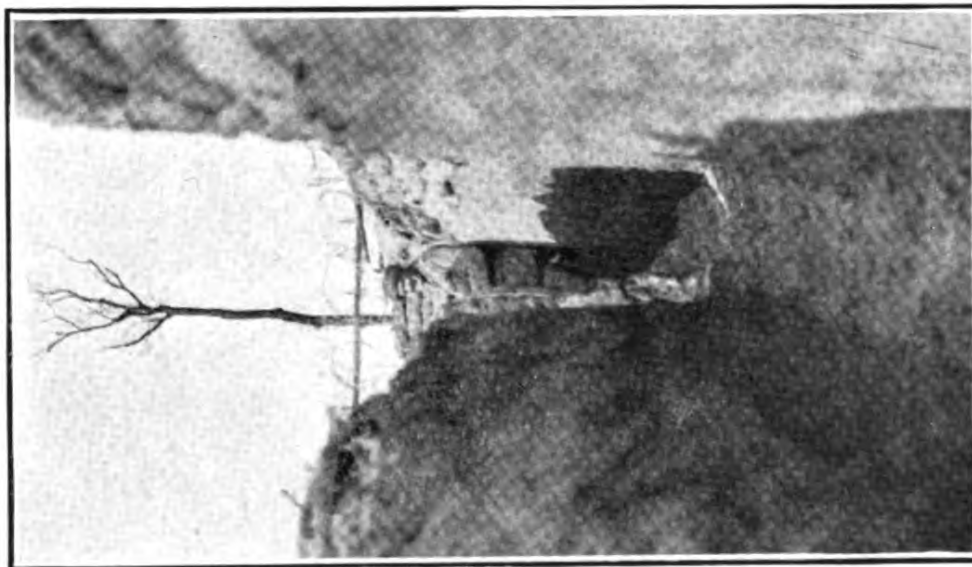
Large Shell Hole near to Battalion Headquarters at Doctor's House, Kemmel
(Lieut W. E. G. Walker in background) taken April, 1915.



J to Support Trench.



In Support Trench, Kemmel, May 1915.
CAPT. H. BRADWELL. CAPT. L. A. HIND.
LIEUT. J. C. WARREN.



Lieut. G. H. R. MELLERS
in Communication Trench leading to J 8.



In the Front Line Trenches (Kemmel).
Lieut. M. ROOK, Lieut. I. C. BREWILL, Capt. W. R. ROOK



Lieut. J. C. WARREN in Front Line Trench.
(Kemmel).



Captain C. G. VICKERS, V.C.



Privates WRIGHT, CAUNT and HUDSON in Front Line
Trenches. Privates Caunt and Hudson were the two youngest
Robin Hoods.

The trench H₄, was also an isolated point immediately below Petit Bois, West of Wytscheate, and was at times heavily bombed with trench mortars by the Germans and it came in for a considerable amount of sniping. It was thought the enemy snipers climbed the trees in the wood and used these for sniping posts and so our machine guns frequently swept the upper part of the trees. The Robin Hoods on occupying these trenches at once commenced to work in improving them, and to connecting each isolated trench with the adjoining one, and to make the barbed wire entanglements more secure. The trenches had suffered a good deal from "whizzbangs," which did a considerable amount of damage, and caused many casualties.

During the afternoon of May 13th the Germans opened with Artillery fire on a trench immediately adjoining the right of our sector of the line, and afterwards made a raid on this portion of the line. The Robin Hoods in G₃ and G₄ trenches opened with machine gun and rifle fire, the enemy then retired having several casualties and leaving one dead German behind. His buttons soon disappeared as souvenirs.

On the evening of May 15th the Battalion was relieved in the trenches by the *At Rest Billets*, 8th Sherwood Foresters and returned *Locre, May 15th* to rest billets at Locre. For the next *May 19th.* month the Robin Hoods and the 8th Sherwood Foresters relieved each other *Alternately in trenches* in the trenches, the two Battalions *Kemmel and* alternately occupying the trench line for *at Rest Billets* four days and going into billets for *Locre May 19th* four days. During these periods the *to June 19th.* trenches were very greatly improved and strengthened, the isolated trenches being joined together. Nothing of special importance occurred beyond the ordinary trench warfare, and the daily

casualties. During this period the 8th Battalion King's Royal Rifles and the Shropshires (New Army) were sent into these trenches for instruction in trench warfare. Additional trenches to the North of our sector of the line were taken over. These were known as J3 (left) and K1, with Strong Point 6 near Farm Vandamme.

A large shell hole immediately behind H5 Support trench concealed from view of enemy afforded an excellent bathing pond for A Company, who were garrisoning this trench. An Officer writing home said, "I have very happy recollections of three huge shell holes merged into one, close behind H5 Support trench, which we made good use of in those hot days of June, as a swimming bath. How we enjoyed those dozen strokes or so across the mud-stained waters of Flanders in bliss and comfort!"

On May 24th whilst in rest billets at Locre, the Battalion was inspected by General Sir H. C. O. Plumer, C.M.G., K.C.B., who had recently taken over the Command of the Second Army. When at Locre the Companies were frequently sent to the excellent baths at Bailleul which needless to say were greatly appreciated.

On May 28th in the trenches, the Battalion unfortunately lost one of its excellent Company Commanders, Capt. B. E. Baily. His Company had suffered a good deal from the enemy's snipers during the time they occupied one particular trench in this sector, and the Captain decided to excavate under the parapet and make a small observation post in front of the trench, so that if possible the German snipers might be located and shot. When this post was completed, the Captain, who was a good shot himself, went into the observation post, and having located the snipers, endeavoured personally to shoot them, but unfortunately after firing a few rounds he must have been seen by the enemy, and was shot through both hands, which afterwards necessitated him

having his right arm amputated. Losing the services of this most capable Officer was a great loss to the Battalion.

On June 7th the Battalion Headquarters moved from Kemmel to a small estaminet at Rossignol. The Battalion Transport now came up at nights to Seige Farm which was occupied by one Company of the Robin Hoods forming support to the trench position, and the Battalion was unfortunate in having Lieut. Qr.-Mr. Skinner wounded at this Farm, whilst superintending the issue of rations to the orderlies sent down from the fire trenches.

It may here be interesting to give an extract from a letter written by an Officer on June 8th during one of the periods the Battalion occupied this sector of the line. It gives a graphic account of the daily routine in the front trenches.

“ It rained like the devil this morning, and when I woke up about 8 a.m. most of the trench was flooded. Have since been directing operations for draining. It has been dull all day but it is still warm enough to go about in shirt only, without collar. The trench is now more or less dry. We’ve had considerable fun with Rifle Grenades to-day, the men call them “apples on sticks;” they yell out to the Allemans “We’ve got apples on sticks for yer.” The Allemans were shooting at McCraith’s forward trench and we replied to protect him. They did no damage whatever, but I have since heard we got one at least in their trench, one on the parapet, and one hit a tree just over their trench, and burst with good shrapnel effect I hope. It’s great fun. The only thing that worried me is, that we can’t see theirs coming, you can hear them. Ours you can see all the way, but perhaps as they are not very conspicuous things it is much easier for the shooter to watch them than for others to pick them up in the air. I’ve got one of theirs unexploded, found it yesterday.

It is hanging up as an ornament in my dug-out. Very similar pattern to ours, in fact, I should think ours is a copy of theirs. I also got one of their hairbrush bombs, unexploded, which they threw into J3 trench, I opened it with one of your excellent tin openers! Nothing in it but a detonator and explosive, no destructive. Our jam tins are loaded up with rivets, nails and any old bits of iron and are therefore, I think, more effective."

" At mid-night a thickish mist and a pitch black night. Just before twelve bang, bang, upon J3 trench again, and a regular fusilade. I seized jam tins and rushed to find they'd been grenaded again, and were manfully chucking bombs back. It appears that the Allemans had been crawling up where they couldn't be seen, one man actually fired his revolver over the parapet wounding a man. You will probably say our men weren't alert or doing their job properly, but from the position of their observation post they probably can't see the Allemans. I was out there the rest of the night putting wire up. After "stand to" I got some well-earned sleep. About 9 a.m. I had breakfast, and then they began rifle grenades. We replied with great vigour, and I think good effect, partly because sentries in two trenches heard a man yell when one burst, so I'm hoping I hurt someone, and partly because soon after they got 'Little Minnie' to work, but did no damage beyond making an infernal noise. 'Little Minnie' is a small specie of "Big Minnie" or Minnewerfer, Trench Mortar. We came in for Minnie and some rifle grenades, but the majority of the latter were aimed at J3 trench. Luckily no one was wounded by any of these daytime destructives. I was hurling rifle grenades practically all day, on and off, the only trouble being shortage of supplies. In that trench you want unlimited grenades. McCraith had five men wounded and one killed (by bullets) so had a badish time, and

his men were rather shaken which is only natural after four days and nights on the strain the whole time.”

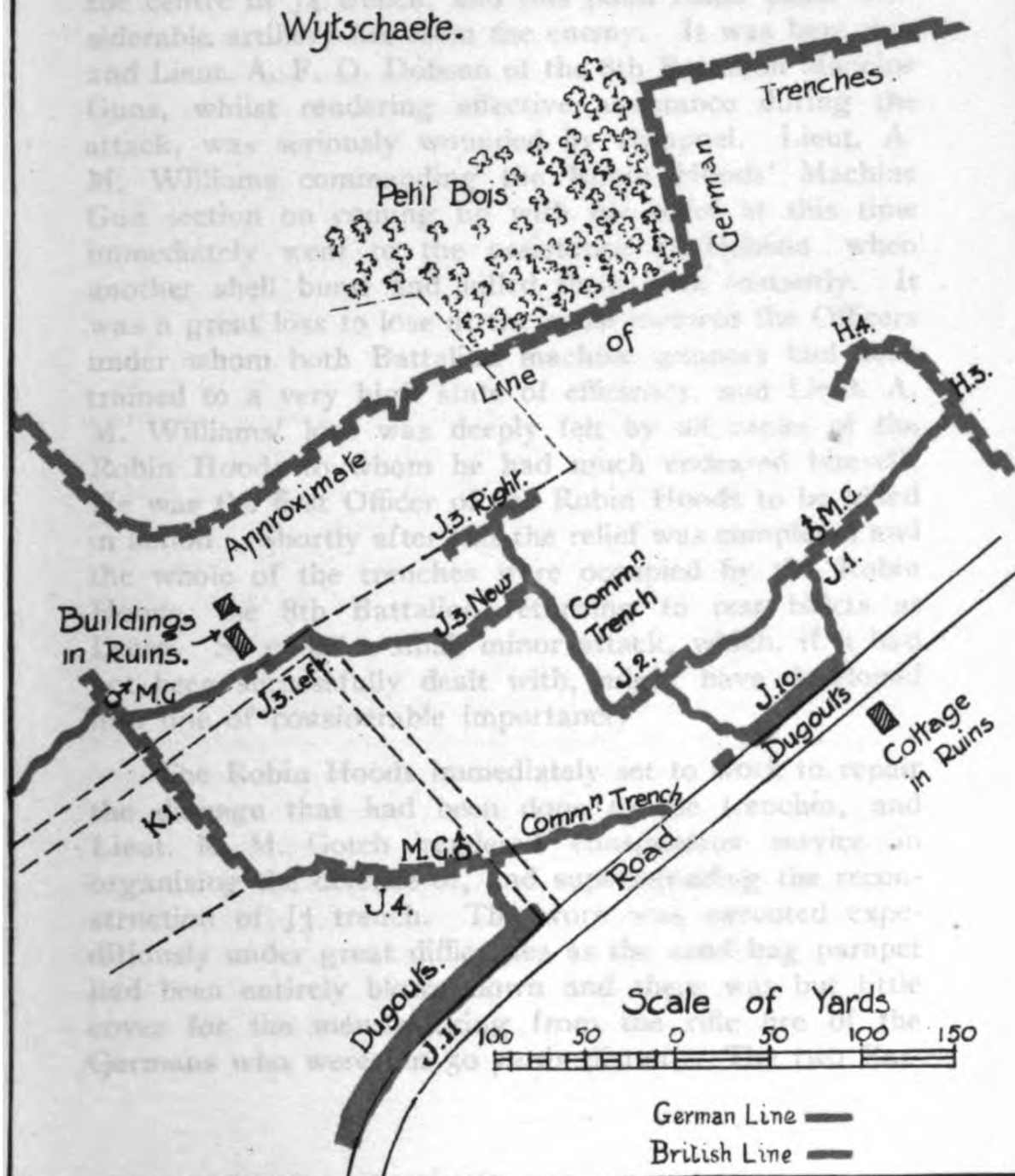
“ Last night, our relieving night, they began again, but only threw them across without getting near the trench at all. I went up again with one of my pet blackguards and we crawled out to try and waylay them if they came again. We were out about half-an-hour, during which they threw another bomb across the front, but made no attempt at a raid again. We’ve now strewed the ground with tins and barbed wire balls to try and make a noise and then give them a jam tin. We had two other men hit while getting out of the trenches after relieving but neither very badly. The 8th Sherwood Foresters had five casualties before they had finished relieving. Yesterday another trench near got pretty heavily shelled and one of my men who was temporarily there to make room for the Shropshires who were attached to my platoon, got buried in his dug-out, but is quite fit now. All he seems to have suffered is the spilling of his tea, at which he swore volubly. That is more or less what happened during the trenches period this time. Rather more breezy than usual, but I enjoyed myself immensely, and so did my men. Of course, we were awfully lucky never to have either a rifle grenade or a Minnie in the trench.”

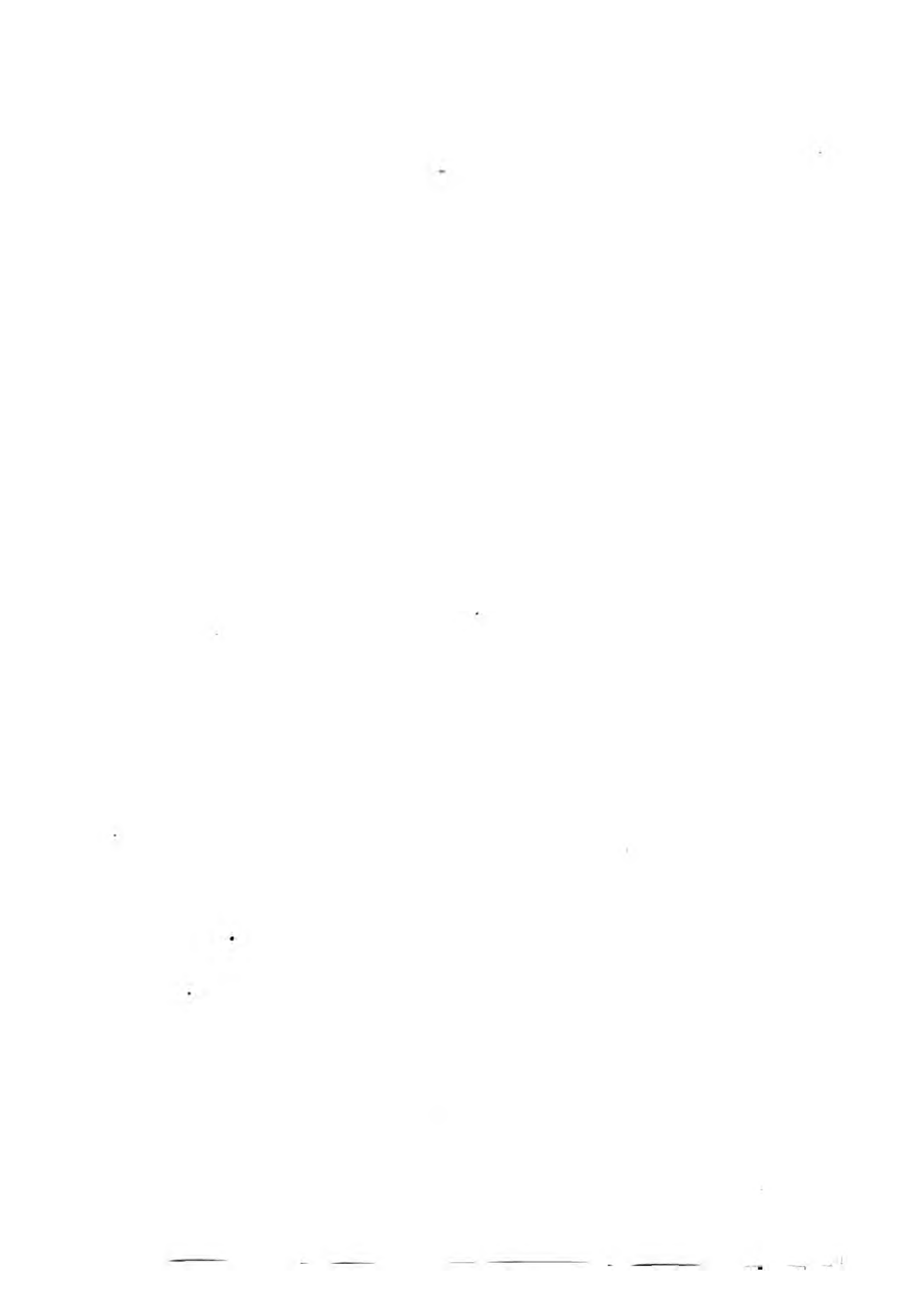
On the evening of June 15th the Battalion left their rest billets at Locre and marched to Kemmel to take over the trench line from the 8th Battalion. The four Company Commanders and Machine Gun Officer as was the custom had gone on in advance. During the march an unusual amount of Artillery and rifle firing was heard on our immediate front, and on arriving at Kemmel the Robin Hoods were informed that the Germans had exploded a mine and blown up J3 trench, and that they had afterwards attacked and captured some of the trenches.

Col. C. W. Birkin at once went forward to ascertain personally what had really happened, the Battalion taking up a defensive position along the east side of the Kemmel Road, and waited further developments, also the information received was forwarded to the Brigadier, with a request to know if the Battalion should proceed with relieving the 8th Sherwood Foresters, and on a reply being received in the affirmative, the Companies were withdrawn from the defensive position, and proceeded by scouts and flanking patrols moved up to the trench line.

J3 trench had always been a difficult trench to hold, and on referring to the reference map No. 2 it will be seen that this trench was in advance, with the other trenches in more or less of a semi-circle behind. It was a question which had been carefully considered whether this trench should not be abandoned and destroyed as in its position it cloaked the fire of the trenches in the rear, and from its isolation suffered an unusual amount of " strafing " from the enemy, but it was considered that it would be bad for the " Morale " to give up a trench that had previously been taken from the Germans at very considerable loss, and also this trench might be of use as cover from which to tunnel and mine the enemy's trenches opposite, but on the miner's commencing this work they got into difficulties with quick sand near the surface and found that it would be impossible to dig a mine gallery. Evidently the Germans on their side had mined on a lower strata and it came as a great surprise when on the night of the 15th they blew up this trench, which was afterwards attacked, but the 8th Battalion generally maintained their position, and when the Robin Hoods came up it was felt that with both Battalions present all danger of losing these trenches was gone. A portion of J2 trench, immediately covering J3, had been vacated with the exception of a Coy. Sergt.-Major of the 8th Battalion and Capt. E. H. Spalding of the

MAP OF TRENCH LINE AT LINDENHOEK & KEMMEL.





Robin Hoods; the latter picking up a rifle joined the Coy. Sergt.-Major in cool and deliberate firing on the Germans who were then in the occupation of J3. They were, however, counter attacked and later on the debris of what was once J3 trench was again in our hands. The Battalion Machine Guns occupied a position about the centre of J4 trench, and this point came under considerable artillery fire from the enemy. It was here that 2nd Lieut. A. F. O. Dobson of the 8th Battalion Machine Guns, whilst rendering effective assistance during the attack, was seriously wounded by shrapnel. Lieut. A. M. Williams commanding the Robin Hoods' Machine Gun section on coming up with his relief at this time immediately went to the assistance of Dobson when another shell burst and killed them both instantly. It was a great loss to lose at the same moment the Officers under whom both Battalion machine gunners had been trained to a very high state of efficiency, and Lieut. A. M. Williams' loss was deeply felt by all ranks of the Robin Hoods to whom he had much endeared himself. He was the first Officer of the Robin Hoods to be killed in action. Shortly after this the relief was completed and the whole of the trenches were occupied by the Robin Hoods, the 8th Battalion returning to rest billets at Locre. So ended a small minor attack, which, if it had not been successfully dealt with, might have developed into one of considerable importance.

The Robin Hoods immediately set to work to repair the damage that had been done to the trenches, and Lieut. R. M. Gotch rendered conspicuous service in organising the defence of, and superintending the reconstruction of J3 trench. The work was executed expeditiously under great difficulties as the sand bag parapet had been entirely blown down and there was but little cover for the men working from the rifle fire of the Germans who were but 50 yards distant. The two Bat-

talions had three Officers and about 60 other ranks killed and wounded.

On June 19th Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin returned to England on five days leave, and Lieut.-Col A. W. Brewill took over the command of the Battalion.

June 19th left trench line Kemmel and proceeded to Rest Billets at Locre. On the evening of June 19th the Robin Hoods handed over the Sector of the trench line at Kemmel to the 2nd Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment and returned to Locre. Owing to the troops of another Division having been moved up to this village the old billets allotted to the Battalion were not now available, so the Robin Hoods bivouacked for the night in a field immediately east of Locre Church. They here heard that the 46th Division were to take over a sector of the trenches in the Ypres salient.

June 20th left Locre and proceeded to Vlamertinghe. Sunday, June 20th, the Battalion paraded for Divine Service at Locre at 4.45 p.m. and afterwards at 6.30 p.m. to receive their Corps Commander, Lieut.-General Sir Charles Ferguson, Bart., C.B., who in addressing the Robin Hoods spoke very highly of their behaviour and of the way they had carried out all their duties during the time they had been in the 2nd Corps. He further said the work done in the trenches was particularly good. When the 46th Division took over the trench line in front of Kemmel they were the worst trenches on the British front and during the time the Division had occupied these trenches they had converted them into almost if not the best trenches on the British line. In fact the work done by the various Battalions was so good that they were specially selected on this account to receive Battalions of the new Army for practical instruction in making trenches and in trench warfare. He further said how very much he regretted



J 3 Trench before being blown up by enemy's mine.



J 3 Trench after mine explosion (notice the tall tree in top picture has fallen and the willow trees in front of parapet have been destroyed).

that the Sherwood Foresters Brigade was now being taken from his Corps, and he wished them "God Speed," and hoped that in the near future they would again come under his Command.

Mr. Lloyd George, at Manchester, on September 11th, 1918, speaking of this period of the War, said, "The enemy rained destruction upon our gallant troops with mocking impunity. The troops could neither silence the enemy guns, nor retaliate upon their murderous threat, and nothing but the most dauntless courage, and most amazing endurance displayed by Soldiers in the history of the World enabled them to hold the water-logged trenches during the winter of 1914 and the spring-tide of 1915, after never having been driven out."

Later in the evening at 9 p.m. the Battalion marched with the Brigade from Locre to Cantonments about one mile South of Vlamertinghe.

CHAPTER III.

YPRES SALIENT—HOOGE—
THE BLUFF.*June 21st, 1915 to September 30th, 1915.*

The Robin Hoods settled themselves in the Wood Huts on the South side of the *Vlamertinghe* Reninghelst-Vlamertinghe Road. These *June 21st to* huts being along side the Main Road, *June 23rd.* enabled the enemy (after they had been located by aircraft) to accurately fix the range, and they were subject periodically to long range fire from the heavy German guns. On the afternoon of the 22nd, six grooms were sitting on a board supported by two boxes cleaning saddlery, etc., when a large shell burst about five yards in front of them. The ground was very soft and the shell buried itself deeply. All the men were knocked over by the explosion, and on running to their help and expecting they would be very badly wounded or killed, it caused no little surprise to find them unwounded and suffering only from shell shock. When this shelling commenced, the Battalion at once disappeared into the shelter trenches (which had been dug near the Cantonments) until the firing ceased.

On June 23rd, the Commanding Officers and the 2nds in Command of all the Battalions in the Brigade proceeded through Ypres, via Zillebeke Lake, the village of Zillebeke and Maple Copse to the East side of Sanctuary Wood, to inspect the trenches which the Brigade were to take over. These Officers came under shell fire when passing through Zillebeke, some of the shells falling unpleasantly close.

In the evening the Battalion left the *Sanctuary Wood* Cantonments and marched via Ypres (*Ypres Salient*) and Zillebeke to Sanctuary Wood, where they relieved the 4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment, taking over the huts, trenches and redoubts which formed the support line to the front fire trenches. The wood at this time was fairly thick and gave good cover from view, the fir trees being in full foliage. The huts in the wood had been erected by the French troops and were triangular in shape, made of Fir poles and covered with bracken. The wood itself stood on a slight hill sloping away from the enemy so that bullets passed well over, though constantly hitting the upper branches of the trees, and occasionally the wood was shelled by the Germans. The Battalion Transport now under Command of Lieut. J. C. Warren (Lieut. J. Boot being unfortunately invalided home) came up each night during darkness as far as the west of Sanctuary Wood, being constantly exposed to both rifle and artillery fire during their journey. They deposited the ammunition, rations, water, and R.E. Stores at the Battalion dump formed just inside Sanctuary Wood at the point marked A (on reference map No. 3). During this first occupation of the support line, nothing of special importance happened, and on the night of June 29/30th the Robin Hoods were relieved by the 4th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment and marched back for a period of rest. The Cantonments near Vlamertinghe, which had hitherto been the rest station for troops in the sector of the line the Battalion now occupied, had been so heavily shelled during the previous week that it was decided to abandon them, and the weather now being settled and warm, the Battalion was taken some five miles further back to a field about one-*Poperinghe* and-a-half miles South of Poperinghe where they constructed bivouacs. The *July 4th.* Officers slept in their tent valises which *June 30th to*

they laid out in an orchard of cherry trees adjoining a small farm house. On arriving the Robin Hoods found Lieut. R. G. Pyatt together with 103 other ranks, who had been sent out to make good the casualties suffered by the Robin Hoods up to this date, thus bringing the Battalion again up to full strength.

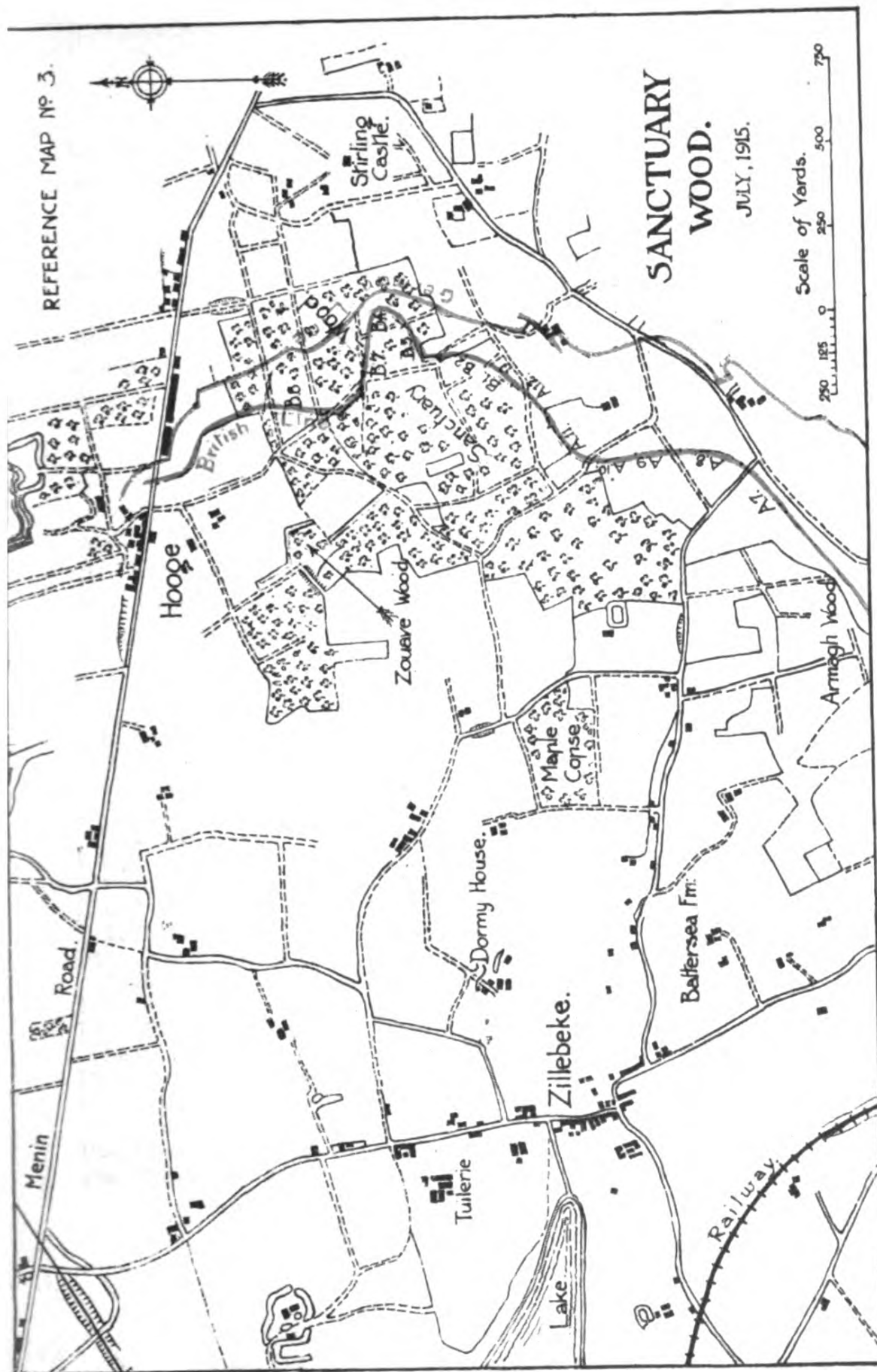
On the evening of July 2nd a strong working party consisting of three Officers and 200 other ranks marched to Maple Copse to assist the Engineers in digging trenches for burying telephone wires. During this operation one man was killed and several wounded.

The Brigadier General at this time returned to England on short leave and Lieut.-Col., C. W. Birkin took over the Command of the Brigade; Lieut.-Col., A. W. Brewill replacing him in the Command of the Battalion.

On Sunday, July 4th the Robin Hoods left their bivouacs near Poperinghe and marched to the village of Kruisstraat, occupying July 4th to July 10th. Dug-outs in the woods surrounding the Chateau. These dug-outs were much in the nature of rabbit holes, but were fully protected from view by the trees overhead. On the evenings of July 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, strong working parties were sent out to the Salient to assist the Royal Engineers in making strong points, communication trenches, telephone trenches, and suffered many casualties in carrying out this work.

On Sunday, July 11th, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin resumed command, and the Robin Hoods marched from Kruisstraat to Sanctuary Wood and took over the sector of the front line trenches occupied by the 5th Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment. The trenches A10, 11, 12 and B1, 2, 3 (reference map No. 3) were excellent trenches, being deep, narrow, dry and sandy. The

REFERENCE MAP No 3.



SANCTUARY

WOOD.

JULY, 1915.

Scale of Yards.

250 500 750

German trenches opposite were nearly 300 yards away, and the ground between had to be frequently patrolled during each night. One evening during this period Lieut. J. C. Warren on arriving at Sanctuary Wood with the Battalion Transport, had his horse shot under him. After a period of seven days in the trench line the Battalion was relieved by the 5th and 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, and marched back to Ouderdom where they bivouacked.

During the period in the trenches, No. 1 Platoon and No. 2 Platoon of A Company, who were holding the Strong Point near Maple Copse, played a Cricket Match within the Strong Point; the ball was an old jam tin, the bat one of the good old army spades; the game was keenly contested, No. 1 Platoon winning, the scores being as follows :—

No. 1 Platoon.		No. 2 Platoon.	
Cpl. Richardson, c and b		Pte. Dennis, b Richardson...	2
Pritchett	2	Pte. Thompson, c Hore,	
L-Cpl. A. G. Mortimer, c		b A. G. Mortimer	2
Yeomans, b Tatham	2	Pte. Yeomans, b A. G.	
L-Cpl. Hore, c Burton, b		Mortimer	2
Pritchett	0	Cpl. Swindell, not out	0
L-Cpl. Ford, c Todd, b		Pte. Crofts, b A. G. Mortimer	5
Pritchett	2	Pte. Burton, c A. G. Mor-	
L-Cpl. A. D. Mortimer, b		timer, b Flint,	2
Tatham	6	L-Cpl. Seal, c Richardson,	
Pte. Lister, c Crofts, b		b Flint	3
Tatham	1	Pte. Todd, b Richardson	7
Pte. Wilmott, run out	17	Pte. Hallam, st Lister, b	
Pte. Finch, c Burton, b		Flint	0
Seal	1	Sgt. Pritchett, b A. G.	
Pte. Hudson, b Dennis	1	Mortimer	7
Pte. Watkinson, c Pritchett,		Cpl. Tatham, b Richardson	0
b Crofts	1	Pte. Booth, b Richardson	0
Pte. Flint, b Tatham	5		
Pte. Pykett, not out	3		
Extras	17	Extras	12
Total	58	Total	42

Ouderdom, The Battalion now commenced to suffer considerable inconvenience from lice, which
July, 19th. seems to be inevitable in trench warfare.
to July 23rd. Everything possible was done during the time the troops were in rest bivouacs to get rid of these pests, the Companies going to the Baths at Poperinghe where all underclothing was removed and new supplied, and it was not until later days that special disinfectors were sent out when this troublesome and irritating animalculæ was more efficiently dealt with. At this time it was no uncommon sight to see a number of men during their leisure sitting in the sunlight taking off their clothing and very carefully searching for these insects which concealed themselves in the hems of their clothes. This was not the least of the many discomforts suffered.

On the night of July 21st a strong working party, consisting of four hundred of all ranks, was sent to Kruisstraat to work under the R.E. Officers it being decided to entrench round this village and make it into a stronghold in case any disaster should occur to the troops holding the salient.

Trenches On the evening of July 23rd the Battalion proceeded from Ouderdom and
Sanctuary Wood, relieved the 8th Sherwood Foresters
July 24th to in Sanctuary Wood, taking over
July 29th. trenches B3, 4, 7, 8 (reference map No. 3) situated on the East side of the wood, B4 forming the apex of the Salient, with the German trenches about 25 yards distant. This trench came in for a considerable amount of bombing and suffered much from Artillery fire, not only from the front and sides but also from the rear, and there is little doubt that the enemy's long range guns situated in the vicinity of Wytschaete shelled the rear of this sector of the trench line.

The Germans at a point opposite B₃ and B₄ trenches had, on several nights, thrown up a considerable amount of new earth and were evidently attempting to dig a new fire trench from which our trenches would be dominated. Early in the morning, one of "A" Company's Officers being at the Battalion Headquarters, was requested on returning to the trenches to ask his Company Commander to ascertain as far as possible what the enemy were doing. This Officer on returning informed his Captain that the C.O. desired a reconnaissance to be made at once, and in accordance with this verbal message Capt. L. A. Hind, taking with him Capt. L. C. Brewill, crawled over the parapet and proceeded through the wood across no man's land as near to the enemy's work as possible, and confirmed the report that the Germans were commencing to make an advance fire trench. On this being reported to the C.O. he was naturally much annoyed that two of his Officers through an erroneously given order should have run into such danger as to have gone out beyond the trenches in broad daylight, as in the message, he had clearly conveyed that this patrol should be undertaken at dusk, and it was with deep satisfaction that he heard these two Officers had returned safely from a most perilous mission.

The Germans on several nights sent out small parties and endeavoured to raid B₄ trench, but were always successfully driven back. The bombing of this trench became so great and casualties so numerous that many expedients were tried to render it more secure. The top of the trench was covered with wire netting, but this was not a success, eventually a vertical wire fence was constructed on the top of the parapet, so that the enemy's bombs either passed over the wire netting and fell in the rear or hit the netting and rolled down on the front side of the parapet where they harmlessly exploded. While in these trenches, the 10th Battalion Sherwood Foresters

were sent to the Robin Hoods for instruction in trench warfare.

During the period the Robin Hoods were in these trenches a very interesting fight was seen in the air between a German and British Aeroplane. An Officer writing home describes this as follows:—

“ I must relate one glorious thing that happened at the beginning of our nineteen days in the trenches. A German Aeroplane had been making a careful reconnaissance above our line, and quite worrying us. Suddenly a British Aeroplane appeared above it opening fire with a machine gun. At the same time our anti-aircraft guns opened fire. Suddenly the tail of the Taube was seen to be shot away, and the machine enveloped in flames. A terrific outburst of cheering was raised by all our men as it was practically overhead. Then the Taube turned turtle, and the observer came hurtling several thousand feet to the ground (more cheers, arn't we callous). His body was recovered not far behind our trench, his gold watch and cigarette case were found just behind the trench by one of the men in our Company, and his monocle case actually fell in my sector of the trench. In the meantime the machine descended a blazing mass, in graceful spirals to the ground just behind our lines, where it burned itself out, and also the pilot who was strapped in.”

On July 21st, Capt. H. G. R. Wakefield, the Adjutant of the Battalion left to take up a staff appointment, and Lieut. R. M. Gotch was appointed Adjutant in his place, and on July 22nd, 2nd Lieuts. S. T. Durose, T. H. Leman, C. W. Shelton and T. Hancock arrived from England and joined up with the Battalion.

On July 29th, the Battalion heard with great pleasure that Lieut. Qr.-Mr. E. Skinner had recovered from his wound and had rejoined the Battalion, taking over again



Lieut. Col. C. W. BIRKIN, C.M.G. (Commanding).

the duties of Quarter-Master. This work had been most efficiently carried out during his absence by Quarter-Master Sergt. E. A. Cuckson.

Support On the night of July 29/30th, the Robin
Maple Copse Hoods were relieved in the trenches by the
July 30th. 8th Sherwood Foresters. A. and B
 Companys, with Battalion Headquarters, proceeded to Maple Copse, a small wood about half a mile in rear of Sanctuary Wood, C and D Companies taking over the support trenches in Sanctuary Wood, also garrisoning the Redoubts known as R4, R5, and R6.

On the early morning of July 30th, heavy artillery and rifle fire was heard on our left front and Maple Copse was heavily shelled. About 9 a.m. the Commanding Officer received instructions to send the two Companies in Maple Copse to support the 7th Battalion King's Royal Rifles in the trenches between Sanctuary Wood and Hooge.

The Commanding Officer, the 2nd in Command, Capt. L. A. Hind and Capt. W. R. Rook were discussing the best route for the Companies to take when a shell burst immediately over them, severely wounding Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin. At first it was feared he had been killed. The Battalion Medical Officer, who very fortunately was close at hand, at once went to his assistance. The loss at this particular moment of the Commanding Officer was very grave; it was under him the Battalion had been trained for the past six years, and no Commanding Officer ever spared himself less than did Col. Birkin in bringing the Robin Hoods to a very high state of efficiency. He felt very much the great responsibility resting on him on taking a Territorial Battalion for the first time on Active Service, and he gave the greatest attention to every detail of the preliminary training, and at all times made the welfare and comfort of the men

his special care. It was with the deepest regret that all ranks heard he had been dangerously wounded; especially they regretted this at the commencement of a day that seemed fraught with so much danger and uncertainty.

Engagement at Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill now took over the command of the Battalion, *Hooge, July 30th.* and in accordance with orders proceeded with A and B Companies *Reference Maps* across the open ground between Maple 3 and 4. Copse and Sanctuary Wood, which

was at that time being swept by rifle and artillery fire. On entering Sanctuary Wood a message was received that the two Companies were to return to their support positions in Maple Copse, and wait for further instructions, as the 8th Battalion King's Royal Rifles had been sent up to support the 7th Battalion of that Regiment. On returning to Maple Copse information came through that shortly after 3 a.m. in the morning of this day the Germans had exploded a mine under the British trenches immediately South of Hooge. These trenches had for the previous ten days been under continuous rifle and artillery fire which blew down the parapet and caused great losses to the defenders.

Now the Germans for the first time during this war sprayed the trenches running from Sanctuary Wood to Hooge (marked A, B, C and D on reference map No. 4) which were manned by the 7th King's Royal Rifles and the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, with liquid fire, which formed a flame immediately over the British trenches. The soldiers thought they would all be burnt alive. In one trench, held by the 7th K.R.R's, only one man is known to have escaped. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in describing this episode states, "This fire was accompanied by a shower of aerial torpedoes from the "Minnewerfer," which were in themselves sufficient to destroy

the Garrison. The Germans instantly assaulted and occupied the defenceless trench, but were held up for some time by the reserve Companies in the supporting trenches (marked K.L. on reference map). Finally they were driven out by the weight of the German attack, and fell back about 200 yards, throwing themselves down along the edges of Zouave and Sanctuary Woods in the immediate rear of the old position. What with the destruction of men in the front trenches, the heavy losses of the supports and the previously unknown terrifying liquid fire, the Battalions engaged had been very highly tried, but they still kept their faces to the foe in spite of a terrific fall of shells. The British Artillery was also in full blast. For many hours from dawn onwards its shells just skimmed over the heads of the front British line, and pinned the Germans down at a time when their advance might have been a serious thing, in the face of the shaken troops in front of them. It is said that during fourteen hours only five of their shells are known to have fallen short, though they fired from a distance of about three miles, and only a couple of hundred yards (or less) separated the lines; a testimony to the accuracy of the munition workers as well as of the gunners.

The position gained by the Germans placed them behind the line of trenches held by the 8th Sherwood Foresters. These brave men, shot at from all sides, and unable to say which was their parapet and which their parados, held on during the whole interminable July day." The 8th Battalion King's Royal Rifles had been relieved in the trenches (marked A, B on reference map) during the previous night, July 29/30th, they had marched back some ten miles to their rest billets near Poperinghe and had just turned in to their bivouacs when they received orders to return at once to Sanctuary Wood to attack the trenches taken by the enemy in the early morning. They had no sleep during the previous night and but

little food, and after a march of another ten miles they at once attacked. It is difficult to imagine any greater trial for troops, since half of them had already been grievously reduced, and the other half were greatly exhausted. They were now asked to advance several hundred yards without a shadow of cover, in the face of a fire which was shaving the very grass from the ground. "As they came out of the woods the German machine gun fire met them and literally swept them away line after line. The men struggled forward only to fall in heaps along the edge of the woods. The Riflemen did all that men could do, but there comes a time when perseverance means annihilation," and later in the afternoon, in spite of the determined attack made, the captured trench remained still in the German hands. This was the position when General Nugent, Commanding the 41st Brigade, sent for Lieut.-Col. Brewill, to meet him at 7 p.m. in the ruins of an old Windmill s.w. of Zouave Wood, which at that time was the Headquarters of the 41st Brigade. The Commanding Officer, taking Cpl. Worn with him, proceeded from Maple Copse to the old Windmill, passing over open ground at this time being intensely swept by machine gun and rifle fire. On arriving he was shewn into a Basement room in the ruins of the Windmill where General Nugent was seated with a map in front of him, and said :—

"I have sent for you as I have received permission from your Divisional General for the Robin Hoods to be placed for the moment under my command, and pointing to the map said the position is extremely serious. These trenches between the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters and the Hooze Road have to-day been taken by the Germans, and I wish you to move your Battalion this evening to the North side of Sanctuary Wood, and take up a position from which you will attack in the morning the trenches lost to-day."

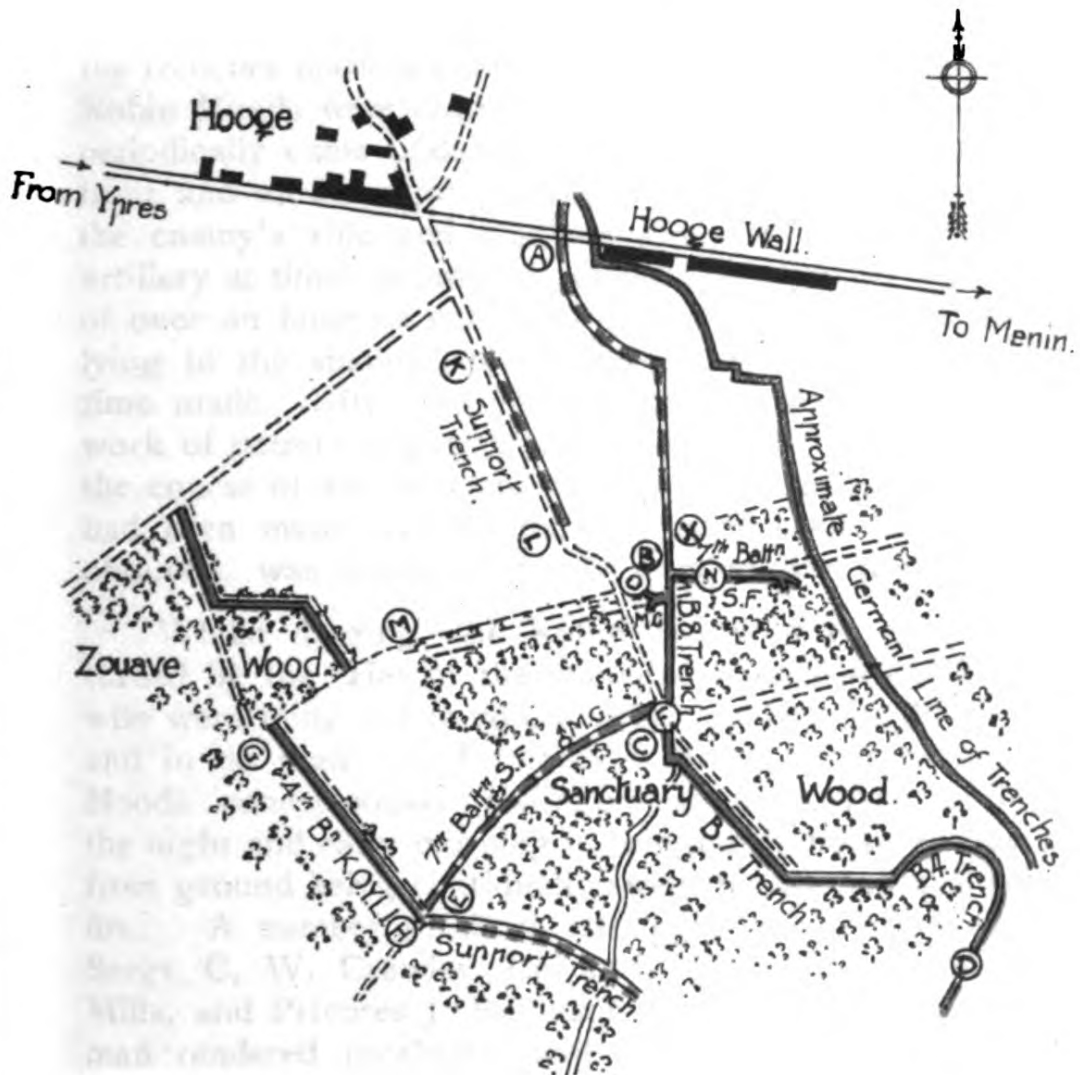
The Commanding Officer asked if there were any spades and picks available with which the Robin Hoods could entrench themselves during the night, and was answered in the negative, so he said the Battalion would do this as best they could with their entrenching tools. The interview being ended the C.O. returned to Maple Copse and afterwards with A and B Companies proceeded to Sanctuary Wood where C and D Companies joined up, and the Battalion then moved through Sanctuary Wood down the communication trench to B8 trench, which had been held throughout the day by one Company of the Sherwood Foresters, under the splendid leadership of two Officers, Lieut. E. C. A. James and Lieut. B. W. Vann.

It was an unusually dark night for this period of the year, and it was very difficult in the darkness to gather a clear conception of the trenches, this being entirely new ground to the Robin Hoods. On arriving at B8 trench, a message was received from the Brigadier for the Battalion to occupy as much of the lost trenches as possible during the night. Lieut. E. C. A. James pointed out the positions of the various trenches, and the C.O. then ordered A and B Companies to line the North edge of Sanctuary Wood (on the line marked M.O. on Ref. map) with half of C Company in support in a short trench that had been dug during the day (near E. on Ref. map) A and B Companies having extended along the edge of the wood, at once commenced under heavy fire to entrench themselves as best they could, using their entrenching tools for this purpose. The C.O. then proceeded with Coy. Sergt. Major Herod and four men along the front line trenches taken by the enemy as far as the point marked X on reference map. On arriving at this position some wounded men of the 7th K.R.R's lying in the trench speaking in very low voices

said they could go no further as the Germans were behind the next traverse a few yards further on. Six bombers and six privates were sent to hold the trench at this point and to build it up with sand bags. On returning it was found the sap trench (marked N on map) which when previously passed was garrisoned by a half Company of the 7th K.R.R's had been vacated, and on making enquiries why this had been done, the C.O. was informed that the Officer had withdrawn his men as he understood the Robin Hoods were taking over the trench. This trench as will be seen on referring to the map was, owing to its situation, in a very dangerous position. It was entirely a breastwork with no parados, and consequently very much blocked the British rifle fire from B7 and B8 trenches. The easterly end of this trench was within a very short distance of the German line, from which the whole trench was enfiladed. A detachment of Battalion Bombers under Lieut. H. H. Walton was ordered to occupy the end of this trench nearest to the enemy, and Capt. H. Bradwell to send half D Company to garrison the remainder of the trench. It was arranged with Lieut. E. C. A. James of the 8th Sherwood Foresters to make a machine gun position near O on reference map. A and B Companies meanwhile were busily entrenching themselves near the North edge of Sanctuary Wood, and suffering a considerable number of casualties owing to the wood being heavily shelled, and there being no cover. It was ascertained that some seventy yards in rear there was a much better position, the natural contour of the ground giving a certain amount of protection from the enemy's rifle and machine gun fire, so permission was asked to move the two Companies from the edge of the wood to the position selected, which was sanctioned. Orders were at once given for A and B Companies to move through the wood

HOOGE.

JULY 30-31, 1915.



- Trenches taken by Germans after use of Liquid Fire.
- ⓐ ⓑ New Trench made by 7th Battⁿ S.F. on night of 30/31 July, 1915.
MG. 7th Battⁿ S.F. Machine Guns.
- Ⓒ Ⓓ Trench occupied by 4th Battⁿ K.O.Y.L.I.
- B.8., B.7., B.4. Trenches occupied by 8th Battⁿ S.F.

Approximate Scale of 0 125 250 375 500 Yds.

to the new position, and together with C Company to entrench themselves. This was done on the line marked E.F. on map, and this new trench when completed connected the trench line with the 8th Sherwood Foresters on our right and with the 4th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry on our left, the latter occupying the trenches marked G.H. on reference map. Whilst the Robin Hoods were entrenching in this new position they periodically came under artillery fire, but the ground in front and on the right protected them considerably from the enemy's rifle and machine gun fire. The enemy's artillery at times became so terrific that once for a period of over an hour no entrenching could be done, the men lying in the shallow trench which they had up to this time made. After the shelling became less violent the work of entrenching was rapidly proceeded with, and in the course of the next six hours a good practical trench had been made which later on, when sand bags were obtained, was constructed into a good fire trench.

Whilst digging, the Robin Hoods were much disturbed by the cries of the wounded King's Royal Rifles who were lying out in considerable numbers in the wood and in no man's land further in front. Many Robin Hoods conspicuously distinguished themselves during the night and early morning in bringing in these wounded from ground being continually swept by artillery and rifle fire. A number of dead also lying out were buried. Sergt. C. W. Crawley, Corpl. G. Cooke, Corpl. R. B. Mills, and Privates J. Bullivant, G. Clifton, T. R. Truman rendered invaluable and most conspicuous service whilst carrying out this work.

Meanwhile the sap trench (N on reference map) had suffered considerably from artillery fire, and the end near the enemy had been destroyed by trench mortar bombs, a number of the Robin Hoods being killed and many buried under the debris. Lieut. H. H. Walton rendered

most gallant service in retaining possession of this point of the trench, encouraging his men who were greatly shaken, and also in rescuing those who had been buried. He showed the greatest courage at a most trying and anxious time, and it was largely due to the fine example set by him that this trench remained in our possession.

In the early morning of 31st July the Germans made a determined attack on Zouave Wood and succeeded in taking the front line trenches, which were eventually counter-attacked and re-taken by the British. A, B and C Companies of the Robin Hoods, together with the machine guns opened with rapid fire, enfilading the left flank of the enemy's attack, causing them severe losses. It was during this attack that the new trench dug during the night was subject to violent artillery fire, Capt. L. A. Hind, Capt. E. H. Spalding and Capt. L. C. Brewill being wounded, and about 100 other ranks killed or wounded.

During the early morning information was received that the attack to re-take the lost trenches was for the time postponed, but the Battalion was to continue to work on the new trench as it would be the "jumping off place" for the attack in the near future.

July 31st the C.O. received the following messages :
 "Following wire received from 6th Corps begins aaa.
 Following received from 2nd Army begins aaa Army Commander wishes to express to G.O.C. 46th Division his appreciation of good work done last night by Battalion of 139th Brigade aaa."

August 1st :—

"Army Commander sends following message, begins aaa. The Army Commander is glad to receive such a satisfactory report this morning. Please convey to all troops engaged his appreciation of the way in which they have held their ground and improved their position."

On the morning of July 31st the C.O. made a personal reconnaissance of the north edge of Sanctuary Wood, and was much surprised to find the front of the wood strongly protected with barbed wire entanglements with a large number of Riflemen lying dead in the wire. When on the night of July 30th the position on the edge of the wood was taken up by the Robin Hoods no information that any barbed wire entanglements were in existence had been given, and had the original orders to attack at daybreak been carried out, this wire entanglement would have been a serious obstacle and undoubtedly caused a very considerable number of casualties.

During the days August 2nd, 3rd and 4th, considerable work was done in improving the new fire trench, and in generally consolidating the trenches held by the Battalion.

On the night of August 3/4th instructions were received from the Brigadier General to make a reconnaissance to ascertain if the support trench (marked KL on map) in rear and West of the captured trenches was held by the Germans. Lieut. H. H. Walton was selected to take Command of this patrol, which was carried out with great skill. The support trench was entered and found to be unoccupied and in good condition, which information was of great value in arranging the details for the attack made a few days later. The enemy's position being found to be of great strength the Army Commander decided to send up the 18th Brigade to attack and recapture the lost trenches. The 2nd Durham Light Infantry were selected to attack with the 2nd Battalion Sherwood Foresters in support and the Queen's Westminster in reserve.

On the afternoon of August 4th, the C.O. 2nd Durhams, with his 2nd in Command and Adjutant, reported to Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill, who took them over

the trench line garrisoned by the Robin Hoods and carefully pointed out the position, particularly drawing attention to the very strong barbed wire entanglements on the North front of Sanctuary Wood, which the Durhams would have to pass through when attacking, and said he would have passages cut through this during the night, but the C.O. 2nd Durhams said that this was his work and he would arrange for his Battalion to do it.

On the following afternoon about 4.30 p.m. two Captains of the 2nd Durhams arrived at the Robin Hood Headquarters and asked if the other two Company Commanders had arrived, as they had started a couple of hours earlier. They were much surprised on being told these Officers had not yet turned up, and on making enquiries by telephone, information was received that one of the Officers had been killed and the other wounded on their way to the Salient.

About 6 p.m. the Colonel of the 2nd Durhams arrived. He was in much trouble, and said that the Brigade in marching along the Poperinghe-Ypres Road had been shelled by the enemy and suffered a number of casualties, having the 2nd in Command, Adjutant, and one Officer killed and about 60 other ranks killed or wounded. The 2nd Sherwood Foresters had also suffered severely. Thus the 2nd Durhams who were detailed to be the attacking Battalion had lost their 2nd in Command, Adjutant, two Captains and one Subaltern. This was a serious position in which the Battalion was placed, in view of the work in front of them.

On the night of August 5th, the 2nd Durhams took over the trenches occupied by the Robin Hoods and two Companies of the latter Battalion relieved the 8th Sherwood Foresters in B3 trench, the other two Companies occupying support trenches in Sanctuary Wood.

One Officer's dug-out behind B3 was destroyed by a shell, several being killed. The Company Commander

on reporting this, said he considered several of the casualties were from the shells of the British Artillery falling short.

Representations were made through the Brigade Staff to the Battery Commander covering this sector of the line, who replied that he was convinced that nothing of this kind had occurred from the Battery he commanded. The Company Officer was not at all satisfied with this explanation, and had the ground carefully dug over for any trace of the shell which had destroyed the dug-out, and eventually found the nose of a British shell. Further representations were then again made to the Battery Commander who now said how much he regretted what had happened, but his guns owing to much firing had become worn, causing the shells to drop short.

On the morning of August 9th the attack to retake the lost trenches was commenced. The artillery had concentrated their fire on the German trenches (between A and B on Reference map) and the bombardment was extraordinarily intense and accurate. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle states in his history that "So perfect was the co-ordination between the infantry and the guns that the storming Battalion dashed out of the trenches whilst the German lines were still an inferno of exploding shells with a certain conviction that the shell fire would have ceased before they had actually got across the open. The cease fire and the arrival of the panting, furious soldiers, were practically simultaneous. On the left some of our men ran into our own shrapnel, but otherwise all went to perfection. The wave of infantry were over the German parapet in an instant. All resistance was in vain, and those who stood were bayoneted, while the fugitives were pelted with bombs from traverse to traverse wherever they attempted to make headway against their pursuers. So sudden had been the British rush that many of the Germans were found in the dug-outs and in the old mine-crater, from

which they had not time to emerge to meet the assault for which they were waiting. Over a hundred of these were taken prisoners. The whole place was a perfect Charnel-house, for there were 200 German dead in the crater, 300 in front of the line, and a great number also of the riflemen who had been killed nine days before when the trench had been lost. The Sappers with their usual disregard of danger sprang forward into the open and erected barbed wire. The gains were rapidly consolidated, men were sent back to avoid overcrowding and protection cover raised against the heavy shelling which always follows swiftly upon the flight of the German Infantry. It came in due course and was succeeded by an attempt at a counter attack. About 10 o'clock the enemy was observed creeping in four parties towards us. They were very near us and came forward on their hands and knees, laden with bombs and hand grenades. We opened fire with rifles and machine guns. Our bomb throwers worked like machines and splendid work they did. The Germans were all mowed down and blown to atoms, or else ran for their lives. The enemy artillery fire was very deadly, both the Durhams and the Sherwood Foresters being hard put to it to hold on to their trenches. At 4.30 in the afternoon the Sherwood Foresters fell back to the edges of Sanctuary Wood, some of their trenches having entirely ceased to exist.

There were several German Infantry attempts during the day, but all of them met with the same fate as the first. The losses of the enemy, both in the attack and the subsequent attempts to recapture, was very heavy, running certainly into some thousands of dead and wounded, whilst the British losses in the actual attack, owing to the admirable Artillery arrangements, were very moderate. It was a fair revenge for the set back of July 30th, and it was won in honest, virile fashion by the use of legitimate weapons of civilised warfare."

The Officer Commanding the 8th K.R.R's sent the following letter to the Adjutant of the 8th Sherwood Foresters and asked him to forward it on to the Robin Hoods :—

8th August.

My dear Collins,

I have been meaning to write to you for some time, to thank you for your kindness to us while at Sanctuary Wood. We returned to the trenches almost immediately we left you and have only just come out. We are very grateful to you for burying our Officers and men. When we left our men had been without food for thirty-six hours and had been working hard, and had each reached that stage when there was nothing more in them. Otherwise we would have left a party behind to bury our own dead. We shall always remember with deep gratitude the kindness of your 7th and 8th Battalions to us since our arrival in this Country, and I trust that some day we may have an opportunity of repaying, in some slight way, our debt of gratitude to you.

With renewed thanks,

Believe me, yours sincerely,

H. R. GREEN.

<i>Bivouacs at Busseboom, August 12th to Aug. 17th.</i>	On the night August 11/12th the Robin Hoods were relieved in the trenches by the 5th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, and marched back to Bivouacs at Busseboom, where they remained in rest until August 16th.
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The C.O. whilst in bivouacs received the following letters : the first from Major C. J. W. Hobbs, Commanding the 2nd Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

August 12th, 1915.

My dear Colonel Brewill,

I have been meaning to write every day to thank you for all the good work your M.O. and Stretcher Bearers did for us on the 9th, but I assure you I haven't had a spare minute till now.

I am deeply grateful to them all for their valuable services.

It was a great help to me to know that I had my old friends the Robin Hoods so near that day, ready and willing to do all they could to help my Battalion.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. W. HOBBS.

The second letter, from Lieut.-Col. J. H. Fowler, Commanding 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters :—

August 12th.

Dear Colonel Brewill,

I want to take this opportunity of writing to thank you and the Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and men of your Battalion for the great and ever ready assistance which they rendered to my Battalion during the past fortnight. Whenever help was wanted, either during the critical times of the German attack or later, for any kind of work whatsoever, the Robin Hoods were always there, and it was given ungrudgingly. I shall be glad if you will convey our thanks to your men.

It gives us all the greatest pleasure to think of the splendid way in which the two Nottinghamshire Battalions worked together.

With kind regards, yours sincerely,

J. HERBERT FOWLER, Lieut.-Col.

*Visit of the
Commander-in-
Chief to the
Robin Hoods,
Busseboom,
Aug. 13th, 1915.*

On August 13th, at 2.30 p.m., the Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, Sir John French, visited the Robin Hoods at their bivouacs at Busseboom. It was raining tropically, so the Commander-in-Chief sent for Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill, and said:—

“ I have ridden over to-day specially to see the Robin Hoods, but as it is raining so heavily I will not ask to have the Battalion paraded, but request you to take the first opportunity to convey to all ranks my high appreciation of the services rendered by the Battalion on the night of July 30/31st, and successive days near Hooze, and inform them that by their splendid behaviour they had saved the situation at a most critical time.”

On August 14th the Battalion paraded at 12.45 p.m. for inspection by the 5th Corps Commander, Lieut.-General Sir E. H. H. Allenby, K.C.B., who addressing the Robin Hoods after his inspection said how extremely pleased he was with the behaviour of the Battalion during the past fortnight.

On August 16th, the Battalion was inspected at 5 p.m. by Major General the Hon. Montagu-Stuart-Wortley, C.B., D.S.O., Commanding 46th Division, who informed the C.O. how pleased and satisfied he was with the splendid work done by the Robin Hoods, July 30th to August 9th, and he was very proud to have so fine and reliable a Battalion in his Division.

*Sanctuary Wood,
Aug. 17th
to Aug. 19th.*

On August 17th, the Battalion left their Bivouacs at Busseboom and marched to Sanctuary Wood, where they relieved the 8th Sherwood Foresters in the trenches B4, 7, 8 and support trench. During the afternoon of August 18th, the enemy bombarded with extreme violence from 4.15

p.m. to 6.15 pm., Zouave Wood, situated on the North side of Sanctuary Wood, having concentrated a very large number of guns on this position. A message was received that the troops lining the trenches in front of Zouave Wood were suffering considerable losses, and were much shaken, and the Battalion was to hold itself ready to go at once if necessary to the support of these trenches, but no enemy Infantry attack followed this Artillery fire and when darkness came on, all again became normal.

On the night of August 19th/20th, the *Bivouacs at Robin Hoods* were relieved in the *Busseboom*, trenches by the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire *August 19th* Regiment, and marched back to bivouacs *to Aug. 23rd.* at Busseboom. During this period in rest bivouacs the Commanding Officer received several letters, the first from the Hon. Colonel of the Robin Hoods, His Grace the Duke of Portland, K.G.

Welbeck Abbey, Worksop, Notts.,
August 16th, 1915.

Dear Col. Brewill,

Thank you very much indeed for the most interesting letter which you have been so kind to send me.

I am exceedingly glad to know that the men under your command have acquitted themselves so well.

Knowing them as I do, I was confident that in any emergency their behaviour would be such as would reflect credit upon themselves, and I rejoice that the vital importance of their services has been so much appreciated and applauded by the 2nd Army; Commander, and the Commander-in-Chief.

Will you please take an opportunity of telling them that I have read the story of their bravery and gallantry

with great pride, and will you allow me, through you, to give them in the name of the people of this County, not only our heartiest congratulations on their recent valour and intrepidity, but also our sincerest wishes that their future services may help to bring about the great victory for which we hope and pray.

Again thanking you for your letter,

Yours sincerely,

PORTLAND.

The Lord Bishop of Southwell wrote as follows :—

Bishop's Manor, Southwell, Notts.,

August 22nd.

Dear Col. Brewill,

I have read with intense pride of the doings of the Robin Hoods and write at once to congratulate you upon the behaviour of the Regiment.

I look back now upon those days at Harpenden when the Officers and men were getting into training and willingly facing the fatigue of those hot marches; now we see the fruit of all that training in the coolness, the pluck, and the tenacity, of the Regiment. In the midst of all our anxiety the splendid behaviour of our local Regiments cheers us and gives us hope for the future. Such a spirit is hard for any enemy to beat.

With hearty good wishes to all,

Believe me, yours sincerely,

EDWYN SOUTHWELL.

On August 17th, Lieut-Col. C. W. Birkin wrote from Hospital as follows :—

McShields Hospital,
No. 17, Park Lane, London,
August 17th, 1915.

My dear Brewill,

How delighted I was to get your letter and hear of the doings of the Robins. It is simply splendid, but only what I expected would happen. I am now very anxiously awaiting the casualty list, as the worst part about it is that these gallant fellows who have lost their lives in upholding the reputation of the Battalion cannot hear how much their efforts have been appreciated, but when I get the names I intend having a copy made of the contents of your letter and sending it to the nearest relatives as coming from Comrades in Flanders.

Will you please convey to the Battalion at some convenient opportunity, not only my humble but intense satisfaction at the message from the Commander-in-Chief at the excellent work of the Battalion on the occasion referred to, but also my utmost admiration and respect for the wonderful spirit of duty and discipline shewn by all ranks ever since the Battalion set foot in France and for the splendid cheerful way they have carried out all duties assigned to them, duties not so exciting as those of latter days, but duties that called for much endurance and self control.

Kind regards to everyone,

Yours sincerely,

CHAS. W. BIRKIN.

On August 25th the following telegram was received by the C.O. from the Mayor of Nottingham :—

Read to-day of the magnificent work of the Robin Hoods. On behalf of the City Council and citizens

generally I most heartily congratulate you and your Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men upon the splendid deeds of the Battalion. We are especially pleased at the fine tribute paid by Sir John French, and we sincerely trust that the casualties are not heavy.

GREGG, MAYOR, NOTTINGHAM.

In reply the C.O. wrote :—

In the Field,
August 25th, 1915.

To his Worship the Mayor of Nottingham,

Worshipful Sir,

I received your telegram to-day whilst with the Robin Hoods in the trenches. As the Battalion will have still sixteen days longer to remain before returning to their Rest Station, I shall have no opportunity until then of reading to them your telegram, but on behalf of the Officers, Non.-Com.-Officers and Privates, I desire to convey to you, to the City Council, and the Citizens of Nottingham, the great pleasure it will give all ranks to know their services are appreciated.

I can assure you how splendidly at all times and in all places, the Battalion has behaved during the six months they have been at the Front, and engaged in this arduous and very trying trench warfare.

When the full details may be told of all the hardships cheerfully gone through, I know that Nottingham will be very proud of her City Regiment.

I have every confidence that in all future fighting the Robin Hoods will continue to do their duty, and

uphold the excellent reputation the Battalion is making for itself out here.

I have the honour to remain,

Worshipful Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

ARTHUR W. BREWILL.

*Commanding 7th Battalion (Robin Hood)
Sherwood Foresters.*

On August 22nd, orders were received that the Brigade would on the following day take over a new sector of the trench line in the Ypres Salient between Hill 60 and St. Eloi, the centre being astride the Ypres-Comines Canal. On the morning of the 23rd the C.O. with Major Bradwell proceeded to inspect the new fire trenches and make the necessary arrangements for the relief of the troops now garrisoning these trenches.

In the afternoon the Battalion under Major Rook left Busseboom, marching across country by Platoons at about 400 yards intervals to Kruisstraat Wood where under cover of the Wood they remained until dark, when they marched to the new trench line s.e. of Verbrandon Molen, Known as "The Bluff" trenches, relieving the 1st Battalion Middlesex and the 1st Gordon Highlanders and taking over the fire trenches Nos. 30, 31, 32 and 33, support trenches 31S and 32S, reserve trenches 31R and 32R (See reference map No. 5). The Germans were only about 10 yards distant at one point opposite No. 33 trench. The Battalion Headquarters took over those occupied by Lieut.-Col. Radcliffe, 5th North Staffordshire (marked A on reference map No. 5). As there was considerable cover from view in the woods which were immediately in rear of the trenches, it was decided to bring up the Battalion cooks so that hot dinners could

REFERENCE MAP No 5

Strong Point

Cemetery

Dupouls

Emergency Trench

B. Hole

Pear Tree

Fir Lane

Maud Ct.

Wingate Ct.

Hedge Ct.

Byland Avenue

Davidson Lane

Queen St.

King St.

Angle Tr.

Freight Tr.

Wood C.T.

Drive C.T.

Canal

THE BLUFF.

SEPT^R 1915.

German Line

British Line

THE BLUFF.

~~SEPT^R~~
~~1915.~~

German Line —
British Line —

be supplied. This had been done by the Middlesex Battalion. Sergt. H. C. Mee was on the 24th Gazetted 2nd Lieut. and took over the command of the Battalion Transport. The route for the transport up to the Verbrandon Molen Wood was along good roads and very little exposed to the enemy's observation, and it was a great change for the better after the dangerous and precarious way the transport had proceeded up the salient to Sanctuary Wood. Capt. J. C. Warren, who had up to this time so very efficiently commanded the transport, was transferred to Command C Company.

The fire trenches in this sector with the numerous communication trenches were a regular maze, and it was difficult to find one's way about until one became accustomed to them. The Germans seemed to dislike "The Bluff" extremely, from which their trenches were dominated, as it gave most excellent positions for our Snipers, consequently it came in for daily and nightly strafing from the enemy.

The Brigadier on visiting the trench line considered the Battalion Headquarters were not sufficiently in rear of the fire trenches so the C.O. made a tour of the woods to find a more central position, and in the evening found the Headquarters of the 1st Suffolk Battalion, which was beautifully situated amongst the fir trees close to a road running through the wood known as "The Drive," and was informed these were being vacated that night, so he at once arranged to move into these Headquarters which were quite the best that had up to now been seen. They were luxuriously furnished with Empire furniture, mirrors and candelabra removed from Lankhof Chateau about a mile in rear. It was understood that permission had been given for this to be done, as it was understood the owner of the Chateau had some time previously been found signalling to the enemy, and was taken into his grounds and shot. Evidently the Germans by some

means heard of what had happened, and the Chateau after this was quickly destroyed by their artillery. The Battalion cookers were placed in the wood by the side of "The Drive," about 100 yards from Headquarters, and either the cookers or Battalion Headquarters were located by the enemy aircraft, as during this period both were at times heavily shelled.

In the fire trenches rifle grenades were extensively used. During the daytime a few were fired to get the accurate range and at night a continuous and deadly fire was kept up, which there was every reason to believe did considerable damage and caused many casualties to the Germans, for they constantly retaliated by Artillery fire. In this sector of the trenches the Robin Hoods were covered by a Belgian Battery whose firing was wonderfully accurate. At one point where the opposing trenches were only some 50 yards apart, the Belgian shells passed within two or three feet over our front fire trenches, and destroyed some 100 yards of the enemy's breastwork trench, which needless to say the Robin Hoods by rifle fire at night prevented the enemy reconstructing.

On August 26th, when practicing throwing bombs from a large catapult, Capt. G. H. R. Mellers was unfortunately slightly wounded and sent to hospital. The enemy's aeroplanes were at this time very active, and several interesting aerial fights were witnessed. Our lines were also under constant observation from some two or three German "sausage" balloons.

On August 28th, the Senior Officers of the 8th Sherwood Foresters, who were to relieve the Robin Hoods came up and were shewn round the trench line. A complete trench Howitzer position was made close up to the fire trenches. On the 29th the 8th Sherwood Foresters

Support-Dugouts on The Bluff, August 29th to September 4th.

relieved the Robin Hoods in the trenches, and the Robin Hoods moved to the Dugouts at the end of the Bluff, remaining as the supporting Battalion to the 5th and 8th Battalions Sherwood Foresters in the fire trenches. They also garrisoned an entrenched Strong Point near La Chapelle Farm.

It was with the deepest regret that on this day the Battalion lost the services of the Adjutant, Capt. R. M. Gotch, who was sent to the Hospital having developed trench fever.

At this time the C.O. was much troubled owing to the small number of Officers left with the Battalion. Of the combatant Officers there only remained three at Battalion Headquarters, and ten Company Officers. His anxiety in this respect was much relieved when on August 30th the following Officers arrived and reported for duty :—2nd Lieuts. J. A. Player, A. A. R. Kingsley, F. Stubington, F. A. Bright, B. T. Hooley, A. L. M. Dickins, S. P. Parr, C. D. Coulby, L. W. Wilde, but unfortunately on the following day the 2nd in Command, Major W. R. Rook and 2nd Lieut. A. S. Bright were sent to Hospital with trench fever. The loss of Major Rook was deeply regretted by all ranks. He had proved himself an ideal and most capable Company Commander, trusted in a very high degree by the men he commanded, who were devoted to him. Capt. H. Bradwell now became 2nd in Command.

On August 31st, Sergt. W. H. Dean, who had rendered most conspicuous service with the Battalion and had been recommended for a Commission was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant. Of the new Officers many of them had received their early training in the Nottingham University Officers' Training Corps under Capt. Trotman, and it would be difficult to speak too highly of the instruction they received from this most capable and efficient Officer. The Battalion also owed a deep debt of gratitude to

Lieut.-Col. G. A. Wigley, Commanding the 3/7th Reserve Battalion Sherwood Foresters for the very careful training all ranks received at his hands before being sent out as reinforcements. He took the greatest personal interest in each man, and when they joined the Battalion at the front they arrived as well trained soldiers as any C.O. would desire to have, and after a short experience with their comrades in the trenches they became most efficient.

During the occupation of the Bluff Support Dugouts the Battalion sent out each night strong working parties who were engaged on the construction of a long communication trench leading from the end of the Bluff up to the fire trenches on the West side of the Canal garrisoned by the 5th Sherwood Foresters. During this period many of the Robin Hoods bathed in the Canal near the Lock, behaving like schoolboys, splashing and shouting in the mid-day sun, although at times shells fell unpleasantly close.

<i>Battalion relieved the 8th Sherwood Foresters in Fire Trenches Sept. 4th to Sept. 10th.</i>	On September 4th, the Robin Hoods left the Dugouts on the Canal bank and relieved the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters in the fire trenches. During the past six days whilst this Battalion had occupied the trench line they had been very heavily shelled especially the Battalion Headquarters Dugouts. The C.O. 8th Battalion in order to protect the Field Cookers from injury had surrounded them with sandbags, and there is little doubt the enemy's aircraft thought they had discovered an artillery battery. This accounted for the enemy's very heavy and constant shelling of this area, most of the shells falling in the vicinity of the Battalion Headquarters which was adjoining the Field Cookers. The C.O. of the Robin Hoods had watched from the Support Dugouts on the Canal bank, not without personal interest, these bom-
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bardments, and he decided that when he took over from the 8th Battalion he would on the first night have a number of small shelter trenches dug for the use of the Headquarters Staff. Very fortunately these trenches were dug during the night and completed before 9 a.m. on the following morning, as about 10 o'clock the enemy's artillery commenced to heavily shell the Headquarters. The staff at once jumped into the new Shelter trenches, which had not been made a moment too soon. Possibly Bairnsfather's drawing, "If you knows of a better ole" will give a fair idea of the shelling the Battalion Headquarters came in for on this morning.

The Medical Officer's dugout was destroyed, also the dugout lately occupied by the 2nd in Command, whilst in one dugout in which Coy.-Sergt.-Major Mortimer (acting as Battalion Sergt.-Major) was sleeping was half blown away, but very fortunately the Coy.-Sergt.-Major was uninjured. This bombardment lasted on and off for nearly two hours. Trees and dugouts were destroyed and the area devastated. The C.O. managed to get through on the field telephone to the Brigadier and asked permission to move Battalion Headquarters to some dugouts in a Reserve trench, provided as Battle Headquarters for the Brigadier in case of attack (marked B on reference map). On receiving this permission the Headquarters at 12 noon moved to these Dugouts. About 2 p.m. lunch being finished the Brigade Major and Lieut.-Col. G. D. Goodman, commanding 6th Sherwood Foresters, who had been round the fire trenches, called to see the C.O., when the German artillery, much to everyone's surprise commenced to shell these new Headquarters. Fortunately the dugout entrances were connected with the Reserve trench, and all occupants hastily left the dugouts and ran down the trench to the woods on the Canal bank, from which they watched with much interest their new homes being shelled. These dugouts



had previously been very free from Artillery Fire, and it may have been that the Headquarters Staff were seen by the enemy's aircraft when moving into these new quarters and they communicated this fact to their artillery. The shelling lasted until nearly four o'clock, and when the situation again became normal the Battalion Headquarters Staff returned and found that shells had fallen all round the dugouts, but none of them had suffered a direct hit. Representations were again made to the Brigadier suggesting that it would be advisable to build new Battalion Headquarters on the Canal bank, in a position well concealed by the trees. Permission for this was sanctioned and arrangements were made for the Robin Hoods and the 8th Battalion to each send working parties to construct the new Headquarters. This was done during the following days, all ranks working their best to get them rapidly completed, and they were occupied on September 8th.

Lieut. C. R. Hemingway of the 8th Battalion, with his indefatigable energy, superintended the construction of these new Headquarters.

On the evening of September 10th the Battalion was relieved in the trenches by the 8th Sherwood Foresters and *Rest Bivouacs* *Busseboom,* *Sept. 10th to* *September 16th* marched back to Busseboom, where they remained in Rest Bivouacs until September 16th. During this period all ranks were much pleased on hearing that Capt. H. H. Walton had been awarded the Military Cross for most conspicuous services rendered on many occasions. He was the first Officer of the Robin Hoods to receive this well-merited recognition. The Official description of the deeds for which he earned this honour is given below :—

“ For conspicuous gallantry and energy on several occasions. On the night of 30th/31st July, 1915, near Ypres, when ordered to re-occupy an advanced sap, he

was heavily bombarded with trench mortars and rifle grenades, several of his men being killed and buried, but by his cheerful example and gallant conduct he kept his men in hand, and held on to his position. Had the enemy been able to get a footing in it, the defence of the next trench would have been difficult. On the night of the 3rd/4th August he led a patrol up an evacuated trench. It was not known if it was occupied by the enemy or not, and the information brought back was of great value. Lieutenant Walton has frequently reconnoitred close up to the enemy's trenches and obtained valuable information."

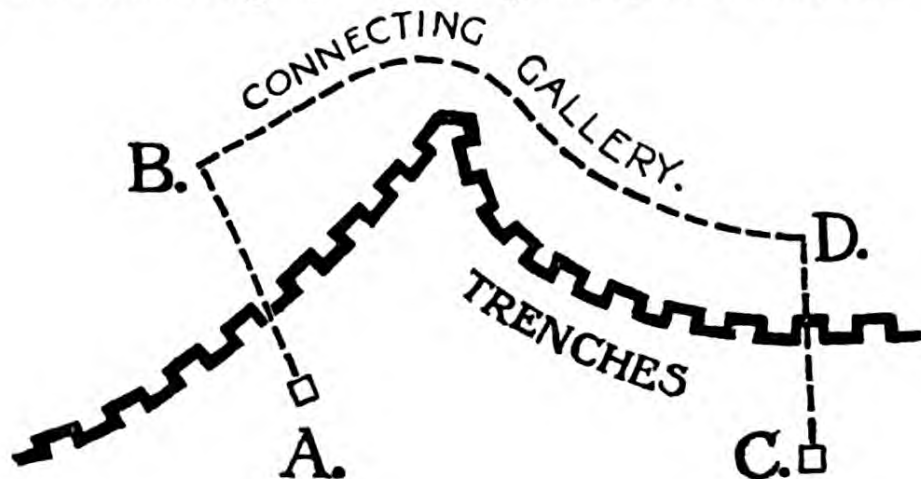
Sergeant C. W. Crawley and Private J. Bullivant were awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for conspicuous service in bringing in over twenty wounded King's Royal Riflemen who were lying out in no man's-land on the North side of Sanctuary Wood on July 31st and August 1st, this being done under very heavy artillery, machine gun and rifle fire.

During this period in rest Bivouacs the Battalion supplied large working parties who proceeded in small detachments and by various routes to Bedford House where they reported to the C.R.E. For a portion of the way they were conveyed in Motor Busses both on going and returning.

On September 16th the Battalion left their Bivouacs at Busseboom and *Relieved 8th* relieved the 8th Sherwood Foresters *Sherwood Forester* in the Bluff trenches South of Ver- *in the Bluff* branden Molen. During this period *Trenches, Sept.* in the trench line the German artillery *16th to Sept. 22nd* were very active, the Belgian battery retaliating with good results. There was also a considerable amount of bombing on both sides, especially during the day of the 18th between the occupants of No. 31 trench and the German trench immediately opposite.

On September 22nd the Battalion *Relieved by 8th Bat.* was relieved in the trench line by the *Sherwood Foresters* 8th Sherwood Foresters and went *and went into* into the Support Dugouts in the *Support Dugouts in* Canal bank. On the evening of *Canal Bank, Sept.* September 25th the Robin Hoods 22nd to Sept. 28th. "stood to," whilst the 8th Sherwood Foresters made a demonstration in the fire trenches with smoke and rifle fire.

The ground in this sector of the line was particularly suitable for mining operations, and as no Engineers were available for offensive mining it was considered necessary to use the Brigade Mining Section to excavate shafts and galleries for defensive purposes which also formed listening posts, to ascertain if the enemy were constructing galleries to undermine our trenches. This Section was ably commanded by Lieuts. C. M. Houfton of the 8th Sherwood Foresters, and N. E. Webster of the Robin Hoods. Two galleries marked A—B and C—D on sketch had been made for listening posts and sounds of the enemy working had been heard from both galleries. It was therefore considered desirable that a new gallery should be made a short distance beyond the front fire trench connecting up the two galleries at B and D.



This connection was completed on the 22nd September, and work was then commenced to extend the Gallery A—B towards the enemy. At 11 a.m. on the 23rd the enemy fired a small mine. A large portion of the explosive force was wasted in blowing through the sandy ground but unfortunately it destroyed the greater part of gallery A—B. Lieut. Webster and Corporal Boot were working in a neighbouring shaft and at once went to C, where they found two men had escaped from the gallery, both were badly gassed, but Pte. Harrison, the sandbag carrier, was missing. Lieut. Webster and Corporal Boot then proceeding along the underground gallery C—D, and found the gas fumes so dense that it was impossible to continue, so they returned and proceeded to mine shaft A, which was found to be completely destroyed. They therefore went back to C, and instructing Pte. Attenborough to follow with flexible air piping attached to a hand fan at head of shaft, they made another attempt to advance along the gallery C—D, this being done almost in the dark as the electric pocket lamp could not pierce the fog. Both now were feeling the effects of the gas fumes but still continued, and on arriving at the point D and proceeding a few yards along the connecting gallery they found Harrison, and on a moment's inspection saw he was quite dead, and being convinced that nothing further could be done returned to the head of the shaft C. where they were taken out just in time, as both had now become almost unconscious, but were soon pulled round under treatment with oxygen revivers. A few days later the Battalion heard with pleasure that Lieut. N. E. Webster had been awarded the Military Cross for this dangerous and gallant attempt he had made to rescue a comrade.

Whilst in support the normal work carried out by the Battalion consisted chiefly in sending out working

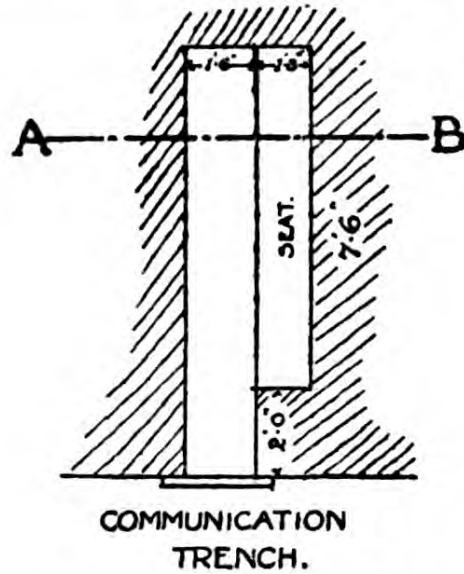
parties to strengthen the trenches on the West side of the Canal, to working on various communication trenches, and to improving the defences of the Stronghold near La Chapelle Farm.

On September 29th the Robin Hoods
Sept. 29th Relieved relieved the 8th Battalion Sherwood
8th Battalion in Foresters in the Fire trenches. Dur-
the Fire Trenches ing this night there was considerably
to Oct. 1st. more firing in the trench line than

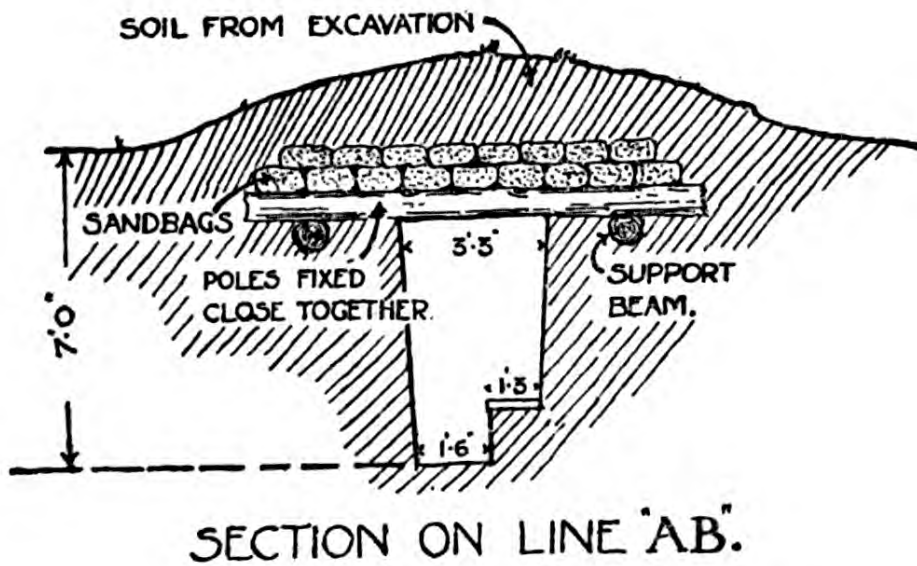
usual. Activity in the trenches on a night like this, has been very graphically described by a War Correspondent as follows. " Search lights stabbed about the skies, rifles cracked, machine guns flamed in orange plumes, Very candles soared and dwindled, mortars blazed among the trenches, field guns flashed under the trees, and always through the night men laboured with their hands—working parties, carrying parties, and wiring parties, digging a new trench, filling up sandbags, bringing up rations, fortifying the ground above, excavating the ground below. By day their hands rested, but by day, as by night, their eyes might not rest. Hundreds of eyes ceaselessly at watch, peering through periscopes in their trenches, peering through telescopes in observation points, peering down hill and valley. Eyes on the earth and eyes in the air—ever at watch, ever at dual. For ever as, with sniping bullet and sniping shell, watcher fought watcher on the earth below, so, in the stranger deadlier combat watcher fought watcher in the air above."

Information was received on the morning of the 29th that the enemy would probably make a serious attack on the trench line occupied by the Brigade, and orders were given to construct during the night and following day, covered shelters in which all troops in this area might be efficiently protected from the enemy's anticipated artillery bombardment. The communication

trenches known as Hedge Street, Wood Street, and along side "The Drive," were deep and narrow and for the most part excavated in good solid sand, so work was at once commenced to construct the shelters in these



PLAN.



trenches. The C.O. sent out plans and sections shewing how he desired to have the shelters made. Fortunately there was abundance of fir trees lying on the ground which could be used to make head cover, and during the next twenty-four hours, with the assistance of the 1st Monmouths, some seventy or more of these shelters were completed. The following sketch is a copy of the drawings sent out to the Officers superintending this work. Each shelter provided accommodation for five men, and owing to the very limited time available for constructing these shelters they were designed so as to reduce the labour involved, as far as possible, consistent with making them good protection from artillery fire.

These shelters had mostly been completed when information was received that the Brigade would be withdrawn from this sector of the line on the following night. The news affected the Robin Hoods as the news of an unexpected holiday affects schoolboys, for, to each in his own way, the horror of the place had entered into his soul.

During the occupation of these trenches a rather good tale is told of one of the Robin Hoods, but its accuracy cannot be vouched for.

A Robin Hood Sniper watching a loop hole in the enemy trenches saw the muzzle of a rifle protrude, he immediately fired when the rifle disappeared, but a few seconds afterwards was seen again. The Sniper fired, the rifle disappeared, but again was seen. The Sniper once more fired (this happened some sixteen times) when, after the Sniper's sixteenth shot no rifle again came through the loophole. At night a small raiding party was sent across no man's land to bring back a German to identify the regiment garrisoning the trenches. Our Sniper was one of the raiders. As fortune would have it, he entered the trench at almost the identical spot at

which he had during the day been firing, when to his surprise he found sixteen dead Germans, and each shot through the right eye???

On September 30th information was received that the Division would be relieved by the 17th Division. About 6.15 p.m. on this day the enemy commenced a very heavy artillery bombardment of the Fire, Support and Reserve trenches in our sector of the line. It was the worst shelling the Battalion had experienced up to this time. About 6.30 p.m., Lieut. E. H. N. Cordeux was killed by a shell in the Reserve Dugouts, immediately behind Reserve trench 31R. This young Officer had endeared himself to all ranks, and it was a great grief that a life so full of promise should be lost.

“ Heedless and careless, still the world goes on,
And leaves us broken—Oh! our Sons!
Our Sons!
Yet think of this!
Yea, rather think of this!
He died as few men get the chance to die
Fighting to save a world's morality.
He died the noblest death a man may die,
Fighting for God, and Right, and Liberty.
And such a death is Immortality.

Shortly afterwards the enemy blew up a mine under trench No. 29, garrisoned by the 6th Sherwood Foresters. The artillery fire had also increased in violence and there was every indication that the enemy were about to attack our position. The back area of the trenches was also under continuous shell fire, which was so severe that the 8th South Staffordshire Regiment due to relieve the Robin Hoods at 10 p.m. were unable to come up.

Further developments were anxiously awaited, but towards midnight the shelling ceased, and no Infantry attack having been launched, the 8th South Staffordshire Battalion were able to move up and relieve the Robin Hoods. The relief was not completed until 3.30 a.m., when the Battalion marched back to rest bivouacs at Busseboom, where they arrived about 8 a.m.

The Battalion had now said "Goodbye" to the Ypres Salient, where they had held sections of the trench lines for a period of over three vital and historic months.

SOLDIERS OF YPRES.

1914—1915.

"Who comes? Who gives our password with the right
To join our ranks?"

"Soldiers of England."

"Nay

Not these, we know our own. No host like this
Bore arms for England."

"Yet we are her Sons."

"Whence come you?"

"From your Calvary of Ypres.

That holy spot where valour reached a height

And, unsupported, held and saved the World.

You came more nearly to the high ideal

Of One who died for men, than e'er you dreamed,

There, where for God and Right—naught else—you
raised

The Standard in the face of awful odds,

One watchword only, "Duty" on your lips."

"Now God be thanked, and be you welcome—friends!"

England pledged her honour to Belgium to guard the soil of Ypres inviolate from the heel of the living enemy. It is only a heap of ruins, but it is an eternal memorial of British valour. It is only a shell-swept graveyard, but the graves are those of our heroic dead.

It was a terrible responsibility to stand steadfast, but every Robin Hood who died in the Ypres Salient yielded his life to protect his Country's honour.

Vulnerable the Salient may have been, but our troops were invulnerable.

CHAPTER IV.

LOOS-HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT.

October 1st, 1915. to October 26th, 1915.

On October 1st, the C.O. appointed Lieut. R. G. Pyatt to be Adjutant.

In saying "Farewell" to the Ypres Salient *Marched to* the Robin Hoods will always remember *Abeelee and* leaving "The Bluff" trenches, and the *entrained to* long march back through mud some two *Fouquereuil* feet deep. On Arriving behind Kruisstraat-*for Bethune,* hoek the Quarter Master had provided a *October 2nd.* very welcome breakfast, and the Battalion afterwards continued their march to their Rest Bivouacs at Busseboom, arriving at 8 a.m., October 2nd, greatly exhausted. About 12 noon orders came through for the Robin Hoods to proceed immediately to Bethune. At 4 p.m. the Battalion marched from Busseboom and entrained about 6 p.m. at Abeelee. On arriving at midnight at Bethune it was found the Station was being shelled by the Germans, so the train was taken to Fouquereuil, about two miles further West, where the Battalion detrained and then marched back into Bethune, arriving at 1 a.m. Owing to this alteration in detraining the Robin Hoods were considerably behind the time they were due at Bethune, and the Billeting Officer detailed to meet the Battalion could not be found. It was a beautiful starlight night, as they halted in the silence of the streets, with no knowledge of the area of the town allocated for them to be billeted in.

Fortunately Lieut.-Col. G. D. Goodman, Commanding the 6th Sherwood Foresters, was met, and said



Photo Hadley, Nottm.

Lieut. Col. A. W. BREWILL, D.S.O., Commanding Robin Hood Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

that he had just got his Battalion settled down in their billets, and he thought that at one of the Barracks where two of his Companies were quartered there would be accommodation for two Companies of the Robin Hoods. A and B Companies were therefore sent to the Barracks, the Officers finding sleeping quarters in the Dining Room of the Hotel de France.

It was now 2 a.m., and no billets had been found for C and D Companies, so it was decided to sleep on the cobble stones of the street near the Montmorency Barracks. Officers and men were so tired that they all slept well, except for being very cold immediately before dawn. On daylight arriving, Quarters were found in the Montmorency Barracks for C and D Companies. In the evening the Officers were able to arrange to dine at the Hotel de France, and this was the first time since leaving England that the Officers had been able to dine together, and a very memorable evening it was.

A curious incident happened later on. The Battalion Headquarters Staff had been billeted in a small private house, and after dinner the C.O. noticing the Adjutant was over tired insisted on him taking over his room at this billet, and had his own valise taken to the Orderly Room. He had not turned in many minutes when orders came through that the Battalion was to leave Bethune at 8.15 a.m. the following morning and proceed to Hinges. Battalion and Company Runners were at once despatched with orders, to deliver to the Company Commanders and to the Battalion Headquarters Staff. On the following morning the C.O. went down to Battalion Headquarter Billets about 7.30 and found all the Officers fast asleep, and on waking them each said that they had received no instructions about the Battalion being ordered to move.

The Battalion Runner was sent for and asked for an explanation for not delivering the orders the previous

evening to these Officers. The Runner said he had delivered the orders to each Officer, and to test his statement he was requested to particularise the rooms in which he found them. He replied, saying :—" First of all he had considerable difficulty in waking the occupants of the house. On obtaining admission he found the Adjutant sleeping on a mattress that had been placed in the middle of the floor in the Front Sitting Room facing the street. In the Back Room he found the Doctor sleeping on a sofa, and in the Bedroom immediately over he saw Major Bradwell, and to each of these Officers he read the orders and they all spoke to him." Not one of these three Officers, in the morning, had the slightest recollection of the Runner's visit. There is no doubt from the detailed description the Runner gave (which was quite accurate) that he had delivered the orders, but it is a curious fact that all these Officers were so overcome with the stress of the previous two days, that after having had the orders read to them and also speaking to the Runner, all knowledge of this interview became dormant.

Left Bethune, marched to Hinges, Oct 3rd. Time was very short before the Battalion would march off, but all these Officers managed to arrive on Parade in time, and the Robin Hoods marched from Bethune at 8.15 a.m. to the village of Hinges where they were billeted for the night.

Left Hinges and proceeded to Loos Trenches, October 4th. On the morning of October 4th, orders were received for the Battalion to proceed to the Loos trenches. The Robin Hoods left Hinges at 4 p.m. and proceeded to Choques where they, with the other Battalions of the Brigade, found London Omnibusses waiting, and with about forty men in each 'Bus left Choques at 6 p.m. and proceeded

to a point about one mile West of Vermelles where they debussed and marched to a section of the trench line captured in the last few days from the Germans. On arriving near the Church at Vermelles, several large German shells, fell very close to the Battalion, and they were under shell fire until they arrived at Le Rutoire Farm. Here the C.O. went on in advance and entering the captured trenches at a point East of the Lone Tree was pointed out the sector of the line the Robin Hoods were to occupy. He then waited for the Battalion's arrival. They marched from Le Rutoire Farm by platoons, at about 400 yards interval. The night was extremely dark, the ground perfectly level, and a sea of mud. The only means Company Commanders had of keeping to the right track was by following the line of debris of ammunition boxes, biscuit boxes and jam tins lying on the ground, until they could see the "Lone Tree." On the first platoon of A Company arriving at this point a large German shell fell within two or three yards of them, but very fortunately it did not explode or otherwise this platoon would have been wiped out.

The German barbed wire on the West side of these trenches held a very considerable number of dead British who had been killed in taking these trenches, and also some hundreds of men were passed who had all been laid out ready for burial. It was a very gruesome sight and not very cheering to the Robin Hoods in going into this new sector of the trench line.

When the Battalion arrived in the trenches it was found that they were much congested, all the Dugouts were occupied by troops, so nothing remained but for the Robin Hoods to sleep as best they could at the bottom of the trenches. During the night the enemy heavily shelled this portion of the line and unfortunately the Battalion had some twelve men killed and many other casualties.

On the morning of October 5th strong working parties were sent to the trenches near Hulluch, where they were employed in reversing the fire platform of the trenches and after a hard day's work returned to their former trenches. About 11 p.m. orders came through for the Battalion to leave that night and proceed to Mazingarbe. Maps were got out and the village of Mazingarbe located, and orders given for the march. The night was again very dark, and the Battalion moved from the trenches by platoons at 400 yards interval to Le Rutoire Farm, from which place the Robin Hoods closed up and marched in column of route, crossing the Bethune-Loos Main Road and then moving West across country, passing under a Railway Bridge, and on continuing the march the Battalion came to another Railway Bridge; a rest halt was given, and maps got out and carefully examined by pocket electric lights, but no second line of Railway was shewn on the map. The C.O. felt quite convinced that the Battalion had marched by the most direct route shewn on the map. After again continuing the march for twenty minutes a third Railway Bridge passed over the road. Maps were once more consulted, but no railway crossing the road was marked. It now seemed certain that in the darkness the Robin Hoods had taken the wrong direction, but on proceeding another half-mile they met the Quarter-Master, Lieut. Skinner, who informed them that all the billets were arranged and breakfast ready for the Battalion on their arrival at the village which was about one mile ahead. Afterwards on making enquiries about the maps it was found that all the maps supplied were from surveys taken some twenty years ago, and the two Railway Bridges that the Battalion had passed under on the line of march had been constructed since

Loos Trenches
October 5th.

Mazingarbe,
night, Oct.
5th/6th.

the survey was made and that a special section of Engineers was now engaged in bringing the maps up to date.

On October 6th, the Robin Hoods *Marched from Mazingarbe to Fouquereuil and billeted there until October 12th.* marched from Mazingarbe via Noeux les mines, Douvin, Vaudricourt, to Fouquereuil, a distance of some seven miles, where they were billeted. The Battalion remained in this village until October 12th, and during this period special training was given to all ranks in throwing the new Mills bombs, under the very able supervision of Capt. H. H. Walton, the Bombing Officer, assisted by Lieut. W. H. Dean, who had been appointed Assistant Bombing Officer. The Battalion was also kept in good physical condition by Route Marches each day through the beautiful country surrounding Fouquereuil.

H.R.H. the Prince of Wales was seen several times cycling in the village during this time.

News was also coming through as to the progress of the continued fighting at Loos and information was received that the 46th Division would be called upon very shortly to make another attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, which we heard had during the past ten days been taken and lost on two occasions. The Divisional General had his Headquarters at Gosnay, about a mile from the village of Fouquereuil, and on the ground in front of the Divisional Headquarters a replica to a small scale of the Hohenzollern Redoubt was made. The Senior Officers of the Division and Company Commanders had the whole of these trenches forming the Redoubt very carefully explained to them, and the particular portions of the Redoubt each Battalion would be called upon to attack. Major General Stuart Wortley held a meeting of all the Commanding Officers of the Division on October 12th, at which Lieut.-General Sir R. C. B. Haking,

K.C.B., Commanding the 11th Corps, was present. The details of the coming attack were carefully considered and Commanding Officers were informed that during the two previous attacks on the Redoubt the position of the enemy's machine guns had been most carefully located, and that prior to the Infantry attack on the 13th there would be the greatest concentration of artillery fire on this sector of the German line that the world had ever seen, and it was considered the enemy's machine guns would be absolutely destroyed, so that the Infantry in attacking would not have to face the devastating fire, which the troops in the two previous attacks had had to pass through.

During the four days preceding the great attack of September 25th at Loos, an incessant and severe bombardment was directed upon the German lines from La Bassee Canal on the North, to the village of Grenay on the South, a front of about seven miles. The main thrust was made immediately South of the La Bassee Canal near Fosse No. 8. West of this and quite near to it is a network of trenches, bomb proof shelters and huge caves, all bristling with machine guns. The key to the maze is an enclosure seamed with trenches, girdled with wire, and fringed with machine guns, from which the British lines were about one hundred yards distant. This fortress, because of its supposed impregnability, the Germans named the Hohenzollern Redoubt, out of compliment to their Kaiser. Heroism has turned it into an altar on which many hundreds of lives have been offered up in sacrifice to patriotism. Three times the Redoubt in parts has changed hands.

On Sept. 25th the attack on this position was entrusted to the Ninth Scottish Division, chiefly composed of the new forces which formed so considerable a proportion of the whole. They suffered enormous losses, but took the Redoubt and Fosse 8, some of the men

got nearly to Haisnes, but dropped back when they found themselves unsupported, and joined the rest of their Brigade, which was consolidating the position won in the neighbourhood of Fosse 8, but no reinforcements coming up, and having both their flanks turned, they were driven back in the direction of the Quarries, the Germans retaking Fosse 8 and a portion of the Redoubt. In other parts of the line much ground had been gained and hundreds of prisoners taken.

The Battle was strenuously continued on Sunday, September 26th, large numbers of reserves coming up. It was a day of hard fighting and severe losses, the troops being much exhausted by their long ordeal. On October 5th the Guards Brigade took over the portion of the Hohenzollern Redoubt still in our hands. On October 8th the Germans made a great effort to re-take the trench called "Big Willie," running out from the Redoubt. The enemy at first had some success, but were eventually repulsed. This fight lasted for two and a half hours, in the course of which 9,000 bombs were thrown. This was generally the British position at the Redoubt on October 11th, but unfortunately, prior to the attack of the 46th Division on the 13th, the trench "Big Willie" was retaken by the enemy.

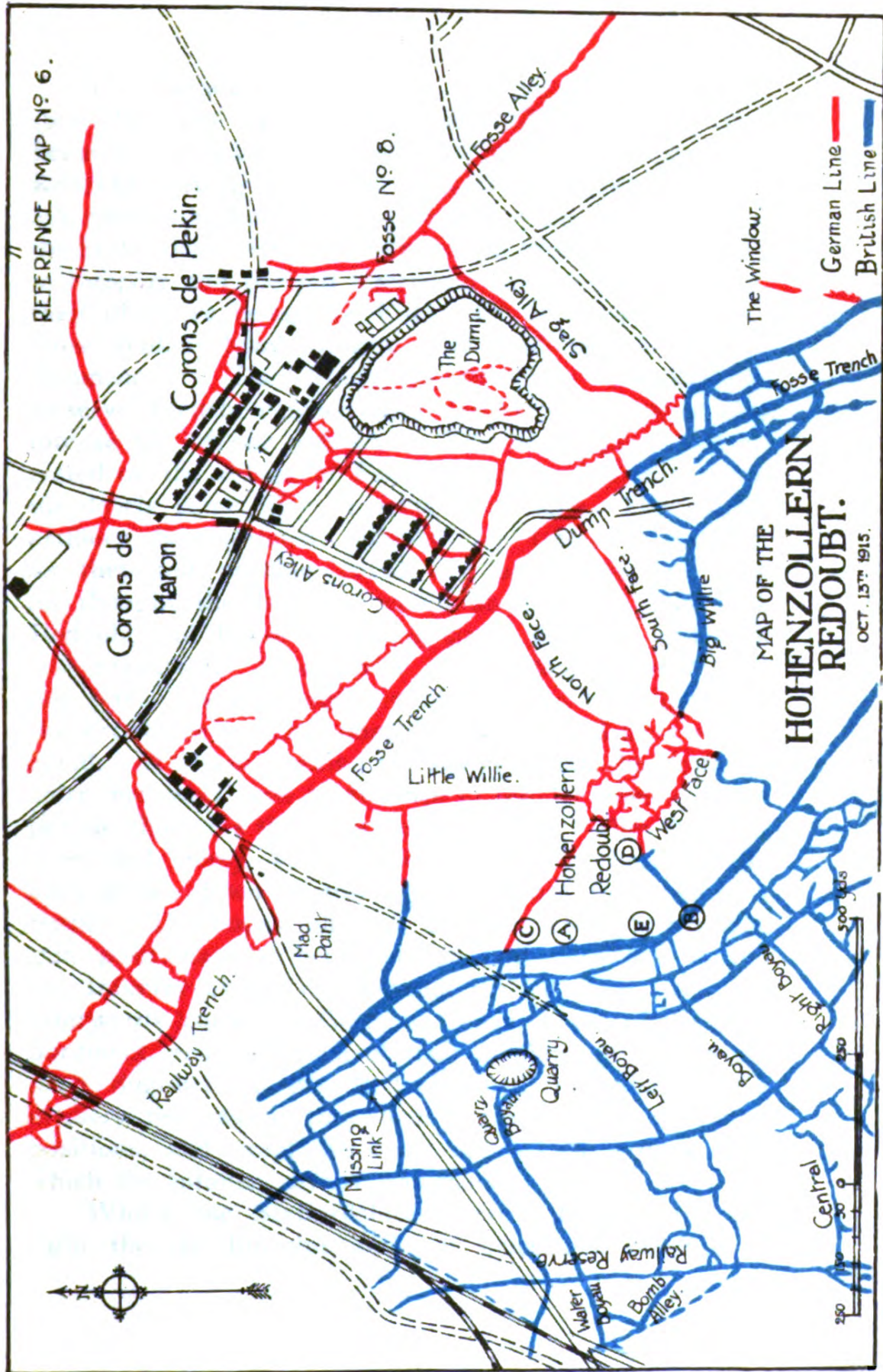
On October 10th the C.O. and 2nd in Command visited the British Trench Line opposite to the Hohenzollern Redoubt and carefully noted the communication trenches along which the Battalion would proceed on the night of the 12th. Later in the day all Officers went to Divisional Headquarters where the Corps Commander gave further details of the coming attack.

On October 11th, a conference of all Officers of the Battalion was held and the arrangements that had been made for the part the Robin Hoods would take in the offensive very fully explained.

Marched from Fouquereuil to British trenches opposite Hohenzollern Redoubt. Oct. 12th. On the morning of October 12th, Capt. H. H. Walton and Lieut. W. H. Dean with the Battalion Bombers were ordered to proceed and report to the C.O. 5th Lincolns, as they were placed under his command for the attack. A final conference was held, at which all Officers were present, and the latest arrangements for the coming attack being carefully gone into and explained in detail. At

3.30 p.m. the Battalion left Fouquereuil and marched via Vaudricourt, Verquigneul, Saily, to Noyelles-les-Vermelles, where at 7 p.m. the Robin Hoods moved off the Main Road into a field, and a meal, in a drizzling rain, was served at 9.30 p.m. Afterwards the Battalion marched from Vermelles where Mills' hand grenades had been served out to all men, in addition to a considerable number carried in boxes. On leaving Vermelles the Robin Hoods proceeded up the Scottish and Inverness communication trenches, and when the head of the Battalion arrived near the Water Tower they found the trench in front clogged with troops, and a long wait of some two or three hours was experienced before the Robin Hoods could again get moving, and consequently did not arrive at the Railway Reserve Trench until 4 a.m.; they had been nearly twelve hours on the march from Fouquereuil and owing to the addition of the heavy weight of the bombs which they carried during the latter part of the journey, found themselves very fatigued when they reached their destination, and were soon all asleep in the trench.

Attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, Oct. 13th to Oct. 15th, 1915. At 9 a.m., on October 13th, the C.O. in accordance with instructions, reported personally to General Kemp, the Brigadier Commanding the Lincoln and Leicester Brigade, the Robin Hoods being placed under his command during the attack.





The detailed dispositions for the attack by the 46th Division were as follows:—The Lincoln and Leicester Brigade was to attack the Hohenzollern Redoubt, having the Robin Hoods in Support and the 8th Sherwood Foresters in Reserve. On the right was the Staffordshire Brigade with the 6th Sherwood Foresters in Support and the 5th Sherwood Foresters in Reserve, their objective being the Fosse 8. At 12 noon an intense Artillery bombardment of the Redoubt and Fosse 8 commenced. The Robin Hoods from the Railway Reserve Trench watched with considerable interest this intense fire of our artillery. The heavy guns concentrated on the village of Fosse 8, and on bursting threw up debris some fifty or sixty feet high. This heavy artillery bombardment cheered all ranks exceedingly as they felt nothing could live under the fire, and all thought the Infantry would be able to take the Redoubt and Fosse 8 without great difficulty and with few casualties. This terrific bombardment lasted until one p.m., when an emission of gas was launched from the Front line trenches immediately followed by a smoke cloud. At 2 p.m., behind the smoke cloud, the Staffordshire men were seen to advance in regular lines as if on parade (but alas this was not for long). They had not proceeded many yards before we saw these steady lines mown down in rows, just as corn falls before a reaper. The hopes, all had, that the enemy's machine gun positions had been located and destroyed before the Infantry attack commenced, proved false. As was afterwards learnt, the Germans, during the artillery bombardment, removed most of their machine guns into the deep dugouts in the Redoubt, and immediately the artillery fire ceased they were replaced in their battle positions, and swept the whole area of the ground over which the Infantry attack was made.

Whilst the Staffordshires were attacking on our right the 4th Lincolns and 5th Leicesters swept over

"no man's land," drove the Germans out of the Redoubt and rushed forward with lighthearted courage, singing "Here we are, here we are, here we are again!" This advance was splendidly executed, in the face of a murderous fire, the attacking line sweeping on in open order which was only broken by the fall of stricken men, until they reached the outskirts of Fosse 8 and the adjoining Dump. Here they were held up by the enemy's concentrated machine-gun fire. The losses had been very heavy, especially in Officers, and they had held the ground gained with difficulty, but were greatly helped by the pioneer Battalion, the 1st Monmouths, who rushed forward with rifle and spade to consolidate the captured ground.

At 2.45 p.m. a telephone message was received from the Lincoln and Leicester Brigadier saying the attack had been held up from the South end of village Fosse 8 to the Dump, and asked for two Companies of the Robin Hoods to go forward to support the attacking line, the remaining two Companies were to occupy the English Front line trenches between the points A and B (shewn on reference map No. 6).

Orders were at once issued for Capt. G. H. R. Mellers with A Company, and Capt. K. Y. McCraith with B Company to reinforce the Lincoln and Leicesters, each Company Commander being given verbal instructions as to the route along which he was to move. After seeing these Companies move off the C.O. (who had been slightly wounded by shrapnel) proceeded with C and D Companies along Left Boyau communication trench, and on arriving at the front line trench (near point A on reference map) found that Capt. J. C. Warren with half of C Company, who were immediately in front, had gone over the trench across no man's land and entered the Redoubt. Consequently only D Company and half C Company were left

to garrison and hold the front line trench in case the attackers were driven back. In moving down the front line trench the C.O. and six men were between two traverses when a shell burst overhead. All six men were killed, the C.O. alone being untouched. He was fortunate at this most critical time to have escaped, as the Battalion being so divided it would have been difficult to have found a Senior Officer with a grasp of the situation to take over the Command.

Capt. Warren on entering the trenches of the Redoubt found Capt. H. H. Walton with a party of Robin Hood Bombers attacking the enemy in "Little Willie" trench, where he was slowly driving the Germans back, but unfortunately, about 4.30 p.m., he was mortally wounded, and the enemy made a slight advance, capturing our store of bombs. Fresh Bombers were sent forward to stop this advance, but owing to lack of bombs they were gradually driven back. The men of C Company then built a barricade across the trench "Little Willie," which they held until dark, the remainder of Capt. Warren's half Company consolidating their position in rear of the Bombers in the N.W. face of the Redoubt.

Meanwhile A and B Companies having advanced across no man's land in open order, suffering considerable losses from enfilade machine gun fire from Mad Point, in so doing, passed with great dash over the Redoubt, and on arriving at the N.E. face found this trench so congested with the Lincoln and Leicesters, that the men took cover in the numerous shell holes lying immediately behind the East face of the Redoubt. About 5 p.m. the troops on our right were seen to retire and the Lincoln and Leicesters in the East face fell back with them. A and B Companies of the Robin Hoods then fell back and occupied the trench running across the centre

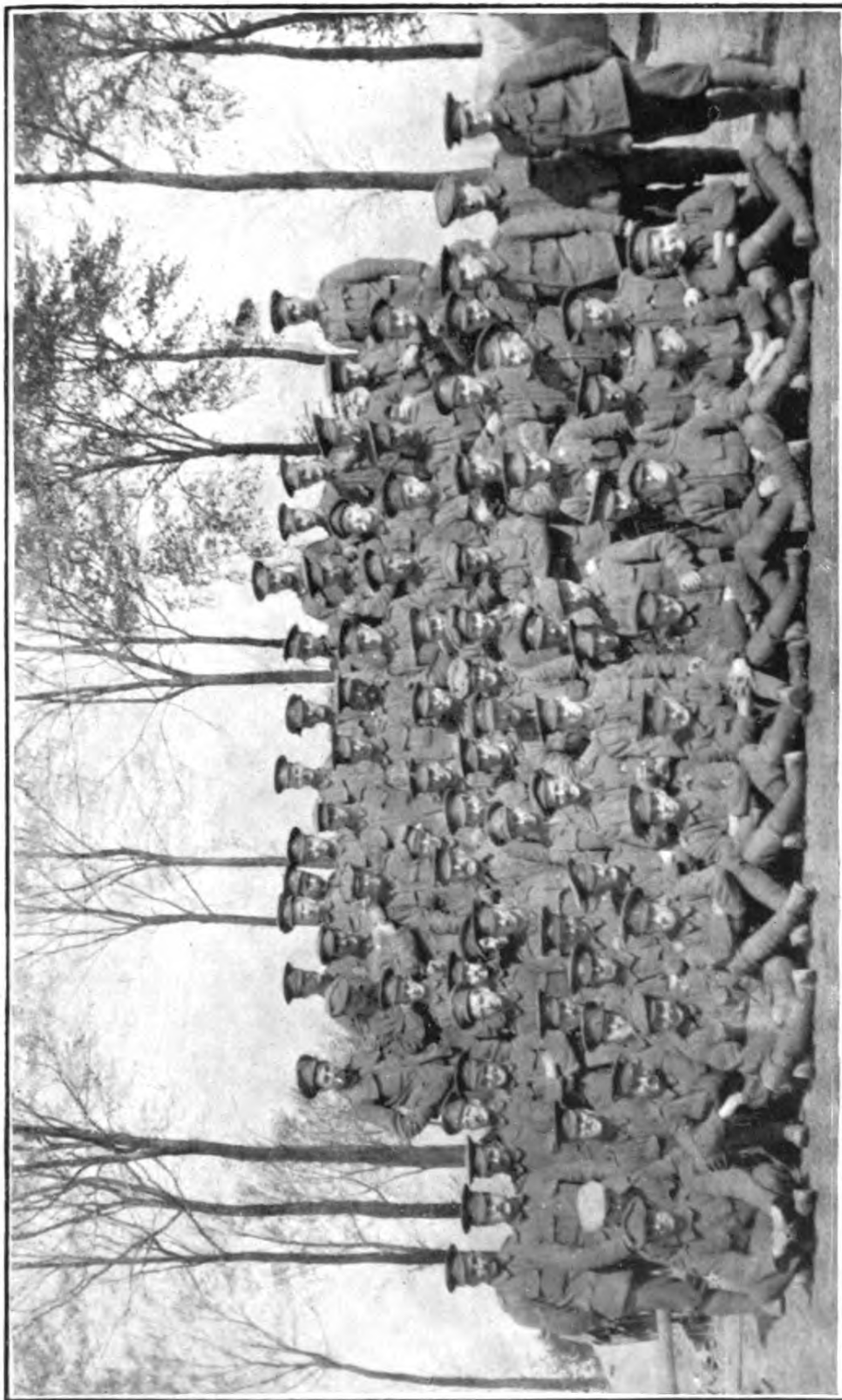
of the Redoubt and commenced to consolidate their position, coming into touch with the half of C Company on their left. It was during this period that A Company lost their Commander, Capt. G. H. R. Mellers. He was an ideal type of British Officer, a most capable leader of men, and much loved by all ranks. 2nd Lieut. F. A. Bright was also killed, 2nd Lieut. A. R. Kingsley wounded, and Coy. Sergt.-Major Benson killed. B Company had Capt. K. Y. McCraith wounded. This Officer had proved himself a most able Company Commander, endearing himself to all ranks. 2nd Lieut. C. D. Coulby of this Company was also wounded. Both Companies had suffered very great losses.

Capt. J. C. Warren and Coy. Sergt.-Major Mortimer, with a few of C Company Bombers, held for some considerable time the South end of " Little Willie " trench, also collecting and sending back the wounded.

About 8 p.m. the Germans worked their way down the n. face of the Redoubt to the junction with n.w. face (near " Little Willie "), and attacked the Bombing party from the rear cutting off their retreat. Capt. Warren with his men climbed out of the trench and passing over the open ground managed to re-enter the trench at a point below the junction of the two trenches, and finding himself the Senior Officer left in this trench he at once took over command of the remainder of A and B Companies and commenced to consolidate the position.

At this time the Adjutant, Lieut R. G. Pyatt, went across no man's land to the Redoubt to ascertain how matters were progressing; alas he had not gone far when he was killed. A most efficient and able Officer and an excellent Adjutant. His death was a great loss to the Battalion.

Meanwhile D Company and half C Company were busily engaged in arranging the defence of the front British trench line (between A and B on reference map).



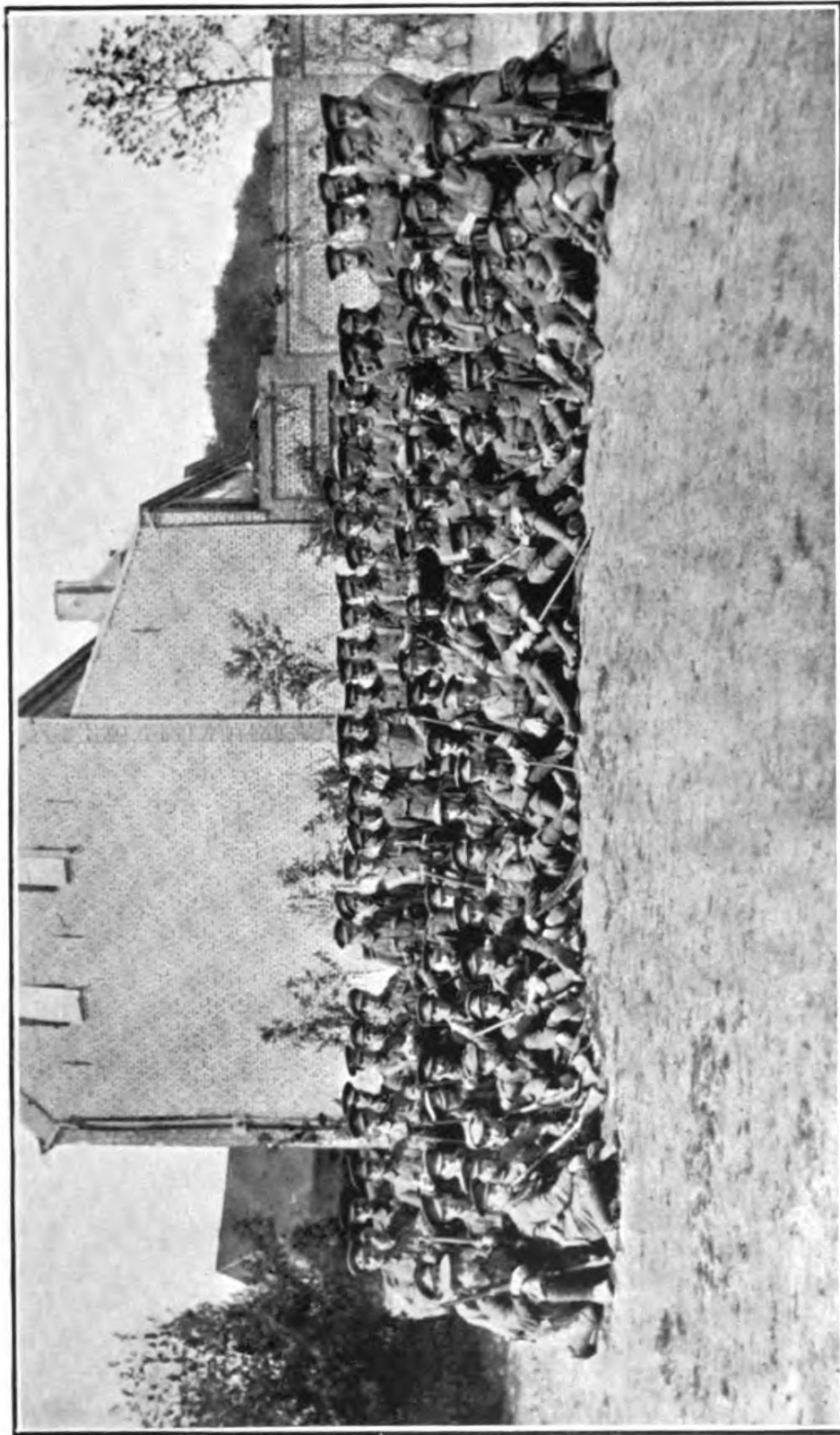
"A" COMPANY, taken at Locre, April, 1915 (Captain L. A. Hind).



Major E. H. SPALDING.



Major W. R. ROOK, O.B.E.



"C" COMPANY, taken at Locre, April, 1915 (Captain E. H. Spalding).



Transport—Robin Hoods. Photo taken at Locre, April, 1915



Major H. BRADWELL, on his horse "Sugar."

The machine guns under Capt. A. A. Walton and Sergt. Hildyard had taken up a most excellent position (marked C on reference map) from which they could with enfilade fire cover the whole of the ground between the front line trenches and the Redoubt. Sergt. T. W. Hildyard was afterwards awarded the D.C.M. for the most efficient work he did on this day.

After darkness had set in both Capt. Warren and Lieut. Leman each came over no man's land on two separate occasions to report to the C.O. how the fight was progressing in the Redoubt, and said they were running out of bombs, and if these were not replenished they could not hold on to the position gained.

The store of Bombs at the Battalion's disposal had all been used up, so the 2nd in Command, Major Bradwell, with Coy. Sergt.-Major Herod, were sent out with small parties to go round the British trenches in the vicinity and collect and bring as many boxes of Mills' hand grenades as they could find.

These parties fortunately came across a considerable store of these bombs in the Quarry dump just North of Left Boyau Communication Trench, which were brought to the Battalion Dump near to which the C.O. had taken up his battle position (at the point E on ref. map) to direct operations. Parties were organised to take these hand grenades over the open to the men in the Redoubt, and during the night it is estimated some ten thousand bombs were sent up. Constant appeals were received to send forward more and still more Stretcher Bearers to bring in the wounded, but owing to the large number of casualties the Stretcher Bearers available were altogether inadequate.

The Battalion Medical Officer, Capt. J. W. Scott (having with him Sergt. Fanshaw and Corpl. Thrale) had been detailed to take charge of the advanced Dressing Station. The casualties very greatly exceeded the

number anticipated and consequently Capt. Scott was working at very high pressure, the Dressing Station at all times being under continuous shell fire. It would be impossible to speak too highly of the services rendered by him during the attack, and the wounded who were taken to the Dressing Station will always remember with gratitude the tender and expeditious manner in which they were all treated before being sent to the rear.

The C.O. now made a further inspection of the general position and realised that if the trenches in the Redoubt were to be held the next day, it would be absolutely necessary to make a new communication trench to connect the British trenches with the Redoubt, as during daylight (unless this could be done) it would be impossible to send forward supplies of hand grenades, ammunition, water, etc., to the Robin Hoods in the Redoubt. The old communication trench (marked BD on reference map) had been totally destroyed by artillery fire and was now practically level with the surface of the ground, but it was considered this was the best position in which to make the new communication trench, so although it was weakening the defence of the British front trench line, almost to danger point, the risk was taken of sending the remaining half of C Company to commence to dig the new communication trench. This left only D Company to garrison the old Front British fire trench. Fortunately a small store of picks and spades, sufficient for the half Company, was found near at hand and work was immediately commenced.

It was soon realized that half a Company would be unable to get this trench dug before daylight, and the C.O. felt he dare not weaken his position further by depleting the small number of men now holding the trench B to D (see reference map), so he personally went back to ascertain if the 8th Sherwood Foresters who were in Reserve would send forward a Company. At

the same time small parties were sent out to collect picks and spades and bring them to the Battalion Dump. Fortunately these were soon found. The C.O. had not proceeded far before he came across Capt. J. W. Turner with one Company of the 8th Sherwood Foresters, and explained to him the position, saying there was no time to obtain permission from Lieut.-Col. Fowler, Commanding the Battalion, and that as he was the Senior Officer present he would take full responsibility of giving Capt. Turner orders to move up and reinforce the half of C Company now working on the new communication trench. Capt. Turner at once moved his Company to the Dump where the picks and spades previously collected had been deposited, and these were served out to the Company, who then proceeded to the new communication trench and by almost super-human exertion this Company of the 8th Sherwood Foresters and the half Company of the Robin Hoods managed to get this new trench connected with the Redoubt just before daylight. There is no doubt the digging of this trench was the chief factor in retaining our hold on the portion of the Redoubt that had been taken.

Whilst this trench was being dug, Major Bradwell, who had been slightly wounded, rendered the greatest service in finding and organizing parties of Stretcher Bearers to bring in the wounded. Meanwhile, in the Redoubt, the fight was raging furiously. It had developed almost entirely into a battle of bombs. The Robin Hoods were holding out desperately, but were at the last gasp.

About 5 a.m., Capt. J. C. Warren reported that his men in the Redoubt were utterly exhausted, and unless he could have reinforcements, he could not hold out any longer. Capt. C. G. Vickers with 50 men of D Company were sent up. On these arriving at the Redoubt, Lance-Corpl. B. Tester and six picked men were sent to hold

the South point of "Little Willie" trench. Amongst these men was Pte. J. Bullivant who had previously been awarded the D.C.M. for conspicuous service at Hooge. (He was afterwards awarded a bar to this decoration for his work in the Hohenzollern Redoubt on this day). Meanwhile, the defence of the trench was reorganized, but unfortunately a certain number of the men had only received a limited training in throwing the new Mills' bombs, but they carried on most gallantly. An unfortunate accident happened at this time, one of our bombs accidentally exploding laid out all the six men (except Bullivant) who were holding the extreme point of the trench nearest to the enemy. Lance.-Corpl. Tester, severely wounded in the head, returned and reported this to Capt. Vickers, who immediately went to the South end of "Little Willie" trench. Sir Philip Gibbs in describing this incident states, "That it was here that Capt. Vickers, a Robin Hood in heart as well as in name, as far as gallantry and chivalry of that English outlaw is known to us in old ballads, earned the V.C. It is a pity he had to fight with bombs instead of with the good old bow, which was a cleaner way, but that was not his fault, and he made the best of his bombs, and the valour of this young man makes us forget the frightfulness of high explosives, which are a dirty business. For hours he stood there against a horde of men eager for his death, eager to get at the men behind, but they could not approach. He and his fellow-bombers kept twenty yards or more clear before them, and any man who flung himself forward was the target of a hand grenade.

From front and from flank German bombs came whizzing, falling short sometimes, with a blasting roar that tore down lumps of trench, and sometimes falling very close—close enough to kill. Capt. Vickers saw some of his best men fall, but he kept the barrier intact by the cool nerve with which he still kept up his bombing.

When many of his comrades were dead or wounded, he wondered how long the barrier would last, and gave orders for another to be built behind him, so that when the rush came it would be stopped behind him, and over him.

Men worked at that barricade, piling up sandbags, and as it was built Capt. Vickers knew that his own retreat was being cut off, and that he was being confined in that narrow space. The few men with him were hardly enough to hand up bombs as quickly as he wished to throw them.

Away there up the trench the Germans were waiting for a pounce. Though wounded so that he felt faint and giddy he called for more bombs. "More," he said, "More," and his hand was like a machine reaching out and throwing.

Rescue came none too soon, and this Officer, wounded in some thirty places, was hauled over the barricade which he had ordered to be built up behind him closing up his way of escape."

Major B. H. Checkland, with a Company of the 5th Sherwood Foresters, at this time arrived in the trench to reinforce D Company of the Robin Hoods, and found Capt. Vickers isolated, but still throwing bombs, and keeping back the enemy from advancing down the trench. In his report afterwards, Major Checkland stated, "At 6 a.m. on the 14th October, 1915, my C.O. sent me with my Company to reinforce the left of the Hohenzollern Redoubt; there I found a barricade of sandbags had been erected, and Vickers was holding this by himself, all his party being either killed or wounded; the Boche were bombing the barricade and over it, bombs bursting all round Vickers, and he throwing bombs back as hard as he could throw. I thought it was the pluckiest thing I had ever seen, as he was quite on his own. He was later on badly wounded, and we got him out on a floor board."

For this splendid work, Capt. Charles Geoffrey Vickers was awarded the Victoria Cross, the first V.C. won in the 46th Division. The following is a copy of the Gazette :—

“ For most conspicuous bravery on the 11th October, 1915, in the Hohenzollern Redoubt. When nearly all his men had been killed or wounded, and with only two men available to hand him bombs, Capt. Vickers held a barrier for some hours against heavy German bomb attacks from front and flank. Regardless of the fact that his own retreat would be cut off, he had ordered a second barrier to be built behind him in order to secure the safety of the trench. Finally he was severely wounded, but not before his magnificent courage and determination had enabled a second barrier to be completed. A critical situation was thus saved.”

About 6.30 a.m., the remainder of D Company under Capt. Round was sent forward to further relieve the exhausted men in this portion of the Redoubt, and gradually all that was left of A, B and C Companies of the Robin Hoods were withdrawn from the Redoubt and garrisoned the front line British trench.

The Robin Hoods had held the captured trenches in the Redoubt the whole night long, and were now being much pressed by the Germans, but the position in the early morning became less critical owing to the brilliant attack made by the 8th Sherwood Foresters, who took the East face of the Redoubt, and this materially strengthened our hold of the position. There can be little doubt that it was largely owing to the tenacity with which the Robin Hoods held these trenches that the enemy was prevented from retaking the Redoubt.

At 7.30 a.m. the remainder of D Company was relieved in the Hohenzollern by a Grenadier party of the Welsh Guards and the 5th Sherwood Foresters. Gradu-

ally the Robin Hoods by platoons, as they were relieved, returned to the Railway Reserve trench, except the Battalion Machine Gun contingent which, owing to the excellent position in which it had placed their guns, was ordered to remain.

It was a very sad time when the decimated Companies of the Robin Hoods, all that was left of the Battalion, re-assembled in the Railway Reserve trench. There were but few dry eyes, and the C.O. will always remember, on going down the ranks the men saying, "Thank God, Colonel, you have been spared to us."

Short account by Sir Phillip Gibbs of attack by 46th Division on Hohenzollern Redoubt, Oct. 13th The attack of the 46th Division was very ably described by Sir Phillip Gibbs, the special War Correspondent, who wrote :—"Laurels that will ever be proudly remembered by the Midlands, were won by the Territorial Division recruited from that nursery of fine fighters, in the attack of the Hohenzollern Redoubt which secured for us, in the early days of October, possession of the main part of that coveted Stronghold. In the Offensive of September 25th the Redoubt was captured by our troops, but the position could not be held and further measures became necessary to master it. The task was entrusted to the North Midland Division, who on October 12th went into the trenches and next morning delivered the assault, which won them the admiration of the whole army.

Our artillery concentrated a tremendous fire upon the Redoubt, followed by volumes of smoke and gas. Intense as our artillery fire had been, it failed to destroy the enemy's barbed wire and front trenches sufficiently to clear the way, and the enemy were still working two machine guns, when the fuses were lengthened the fire lifted, and the gas clouds had rolled away. The attack

on the right was delivered by the Brigade of Staffordshire men who advanced in four lines towards the "Big Willie" trench, which forms the South-eastern side of the Redoubt. The leading Companies who were first over our own parapets made a quick rush, half blinded by the smoke and gaseous vapours which filled the air, and were at once received by a very deadly and persistent fire from many machine guns. On swept their ranks, and men fell on all sides, but others ran on in little parties flung out in extended order. Young Officers behaved with extreme gallantry, and as they fell cheered their men on, while others ran forward shouting, followed by numbers which dwindled at every yard, so that only few reached the "Big Willie" trench in the first assault. A bombing party of North Staffordshire men managed to clear thirty yards of the trench by the rapidity and skill with which they flung their hand grenades, and again and again they kept at bay the tide of men who swarmed up the communication trenches by a series of explosions which blew them to bits, as bomb after bomb was hurled into their mass, these grim, dour fellows of ours, who would not budge from the ground they had gained. They did not yield until nearly every man was wounded and many killed. The survivors fell back to the other side of the barricade made in the "Big Willie" trench by some of the Staffordshire men behind. Behind them again was another barrier, in case the first should be rushed. It seemed as if they might be rushed now, for the Germans were swarming up "Big Willie," with strong bombing parties and would soon blast a way through, unless they were thrust beyond the range of hand grenades. It was Lieut. Hawker, with some South Staffordshire men, who went forward to meet this attack, and with superb courage kept the enemy back until four o'clock in the afternoon, when their strength was spent and it was necessary to fall back to the second barrier.

Early next morning an attempt was made by other Battalions to come to the relief of those who held on behind these barriers in "Big Willie" trench. They were Nottingham men—"Robin Hoods" and other Sherwood lads—and they came across the open ground in two directions, attacking the West as well as the East ends of the German communication trenches which form the face of the Redoubt. They were supported by rifle-grenade fire, but their advance was met by intense fire from artillery and machine guns, so they suffered a terrible ordeal, and could not reach their comrades in "Big Willie" trench in spite of a most determined courage, but while one Brigade of the Midland men had been fighting like this on the right, another Brigade had been engaged in similar operations on the left. It contained Sherwood, Leicester and Lincoln men, who on the afternoon of October 13th went forward to the assault with every desperate endeavour. Advancing in four lines the leading Companies were successful in reaching the Hohenzollern Redoubt, smashed through the barbed wire, part of which was uncut, and reached the Fosse trench which forms the North base of the Salient. Machine gun fire tried the first two lines severely, and the two remaining lines were heavily shelled by the German artillery. It was an hour when the courage of those men was put to a supreme test. They were exposed on naked ground swept by bullets, the atmosphere was heavy with gas and smoke, all the agony of the battle was around them and in front a hidden enemy with unlimited supplies of ammunition and a better position. Nevertheless, the Robin Hoods, the men of Lincoln and the Leicestershire lads did not lose their nerves nor the spirit that has come to them through old Yeoman stock in which their traditions are rooted, and those who had not fallen went forward, past their wounded comrades (and that was hard) to the German trenches behind the Redoubt.

At 2.15 p.m. some Monmouth men came up in support and while their bombers were at work, some of the Lincolns pushed up a machine gun to a point within sixty yards from the Fosse trench, where they stayed till dark, when they were forced to fall back.

Meanwhile parties of bombers were trying to force their way up "Little Willie" trench on the extreme left of the Redoubt, and it was here that some of the most desperate fighting took place. Some of the Leicesters made a dash three hundred yards up the trench, but were beaten back by overpowering numbers of German bombers and bayonet men, and again and again other Midland lads went up that alley-way of death flinging their grenades until they fell or until few comrades were left to support them. Single men held on, throwing and throwing, until there was no strength in their arms to hurl another bomb, or until death came to them. Yet the grim business went on through the darkness of the afternoon and into the deeper darkness of the night, lit luridly at moments by the white illumination of German flares and by the flash of bursting shells. Some of the Robin Hoods up "Little Willie" trench were holding out desperately, and almost at the last gasp, and it was here that Capt. Vickers won for himself the Victoria Cross. Through the night and all through October 14th the Midland men held on to their ground, and some of the Sherwoods made a new and successful attack, clearing the enemy out of the East portion of the Redoubt. It was lucky that it coincided with a counter attack made by the enemy at a different point, because it relieved the pressure there. Bombing duels continued hour after hour, and human nature of the finest type could hardly have endured so long an ordeal without fatigue beyond the strength of men. So it seems, yet when a Brigade of Guards came up on the night of October 15/16th the enemy attacked

along the whole line of the Redoubts, and the Midland men who were just about to leave the trenches found themselves engaged in a new action. They had to fight again before they could go, and they fought like fresh men, and bombed the enemy back to their holes in the ground.

It was not a great victory. It did not gain much new ground. It left a position most elaborately "unhealthy," with the enemy on the other side of our barricades, in "Big Willie" and "Little Willie," so close that one could hear them cough and swear in guttural whispers, but for sheer individual gallantry it is hard to beat the fighting of these Midland men in their assault upon the Hohenzollern, where they left so much good blood."

In the foregoing account mention has been made of the work done by Capt. C. G. Vickers, for which on the recommendation of the C.O. he was awarded the V.C. Capt. J. C. Warren was also strongly recommended for the D.S.O. for the work he did in taking over the Command of A and B Companies after they had lost nearly all their Officers and for the splendid services he gave in holding, against overwhelming numbers, the captured trenches in the Redoubt. Fearless of death, he gave the best a man can give under exceptional stress of war. Whilst it was regretted that the Distinguished Service Order was not given to him, all ranks were very delighted when they afterwards heard that he had been awarded the Military Cross.

The Battalion went into action with twenty-three Officers and came out with eleven, five Officers being killed.

Coy. Sergt.-Major Herod was later awarded the Medaille Militaire for the excellent work he did during the Battalion attack on the Redoubt. The Divisional Commander wrote to him as follows:—"Your Com-

manding Officer and Brigade Commander have informed me that you have distinguished yourself by conspicuous bravery in the field. I have read their report with much pleasure and am bringing your conduct to the notice of the superior Command."

The C.O. wrote to the Honorary Colonel of the Robin Hoods, His Grace the Duke of Portland, K.G., giving him an account of the way the Battalion had behaved during their attack on the Redoubt, and received the following reply :—

Welbeck Abbey, Worksop, Notts.,

18th November, 1915.

My dear Colonel Brewill,

I have received with feelings of the greatest pride and pleasure the stirring account which you have given me of the splendid part which the gallant Robin Hoods played in the taking and holding of the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

It certainly redounds most highly to their credit, and as you rightly say the City of Nottingham may well feel proud of the valour and tenacity of her brave regiment.

I trust you will allow me, not only as Hon. Colonel of the Battalion, but also as Lord Lieutenant of the County of Nottingham, to make you the channel of conveying my most hearty congratulations to all ranks in the Battalion, and I shall be glad if you will tell them that your narrative of their deeds has deepened the pride I feel in my association with them.

The conduct of Captains Warren and Vickers, as described by you, seems to have been most gallant, and their example and services must have acted as an inspiration to all who came near them.

You yourself must feel proud indeed to be in active Command of such a magnificent body of Officers and men who are so nobly fulfilling their duty to their King and Country, and are reflecting glory upon the City which is their Regimental home.

With kind regards, and with every good wish,

I am, your sincerely,

PORTLAND.

Extract from Major Warren's Diary, Oct. 12th, 13th, 14th & 15th. Before completing the narrative of the attack on the Redoubt, it will be interesting to give an extract from the diary kept by the late Maj. J. C. Warren, M.C., relating to the following dates :—

Tuesday, October 12th.

A glorious morning. General preparations for action. Another pow-wow by C.O. at 12 noon. March off at 3.30. A very long and tiring march. We don't get many halts, only five minutes in three and a half hours. Halt for tea at 7 p.m., and move off to the trenches at 9.30. A terrible block in Communication trenches, and we don't get to Railway Reserve trench till 4 a.m. No dugouts at all, and I slept in a shell hole in front of the parapet. The morning very cold and foggy.

Wednesday, October 13th.

Continual shelling up till twelve noon, when the bombardment began. A most terrific din and a sight of a lifetime. One would think nothing could live through it. At 1 p.m. smoke and gas began, this appears to have been very useless. At 2 p.m. the 137th and 138th Brigades attacked. At 2.45 I received orders to report to C.O. 4th Lincolns in first line. Went up with Company. Eventually went over top. Got across with very few casualties and went up "Little Willie,"

where Walton was bombing. Soon afterwards he was killed. I was left there with Sergt.-Major Mortimer and a very few bombs. The Lincolns and Leicesters retreated and left us isolated, but hung on all we knew, getting the wounded out and keeping the Huns out. At last they got both sides of us and we had to get back over the open into the Redoubt where we built a barricade, and held it all night.

Thursday, October 14th.

Had to see to everything. Bombs, ammunition, Stretcher-bearers, etc. Never had such a time in my life. The casualties are awful, the open covered with our dead and wounded. No R.A.M.C., and no organisation. Had the whole left flank to myself and could get no help and no bombers. Colonel Brewill was splendid, and without him we should have lost the whole thing. Relieved at 5.30 a.m. by Vickers, went back to old first line and was shelled there all day. At 4 p.m. we were sent back to Railway Reserve. At 8 p.m. was sent up again with my Company, as if we hadn't had enough!! Stuck it all night and all next day, shelled the whole time. Not many casualties, but my nerves were beginning to go.

Friday, October 15th.

Relieved by the 5th Battalion at 5 p.m., a bit later relieved by Guards Division and set off for rest billets. We got to tea place and heard a counter attack going on. Later heard it was repulsed. Slept on my horse most of the way. Arrived at Drouvin, a miserable little village, at 3 p.m.

At 5.30 p.m. on October 15th the Robin Hoods were relieved in the Railway Reserve trench by the Irish Guards. Thus ended the ever memorable attack made by the Battalion on the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The Robin Hoods moved by Scottish Communication trench via Vermelles to Sailly-la-Bourse, at which place they

moved off the Main Road to a field where the Quarter Master, Lieut. Skinner, had a substantial meal ready which was much needed, as the Battalion had been for nearly two days almost without food.

The men had been most temperate as regards the rum issue previous to the attack on the Redoubt, but many did not find it too much trouble to carry back the surplus two gallon jars after they were relieved, and the rum mixed well with the tea, and certainly helped all to forget the ghastly show they had been through.

When this meal was finished and the *Left Hohenzollern Robin Hoods* rested, they continued *Redoubt, Oct.* their march to the village of Drouvin, *15th and marched* which place was reached at 2.30 p.m., *to Drouvin, Oct.* and went into rest billets, remaining in *16th to 19th.* this village until the 18th of October.

On the 17th Lieut.-Col. Brewill and Major Bradwell rode to Fouquieres to represent the Robin Hoods at the funeral of Lieut.-Col. C. H. Fowler, Commanding the 8th Sherwood Foresters, who had been killed after leading his Battalion in attacking and taking the East face of the Hohenzollern Redoubt. He gave his life in endeavouring to save his second in Command, Major Becher, who unfortunately afterwards died from wounds.

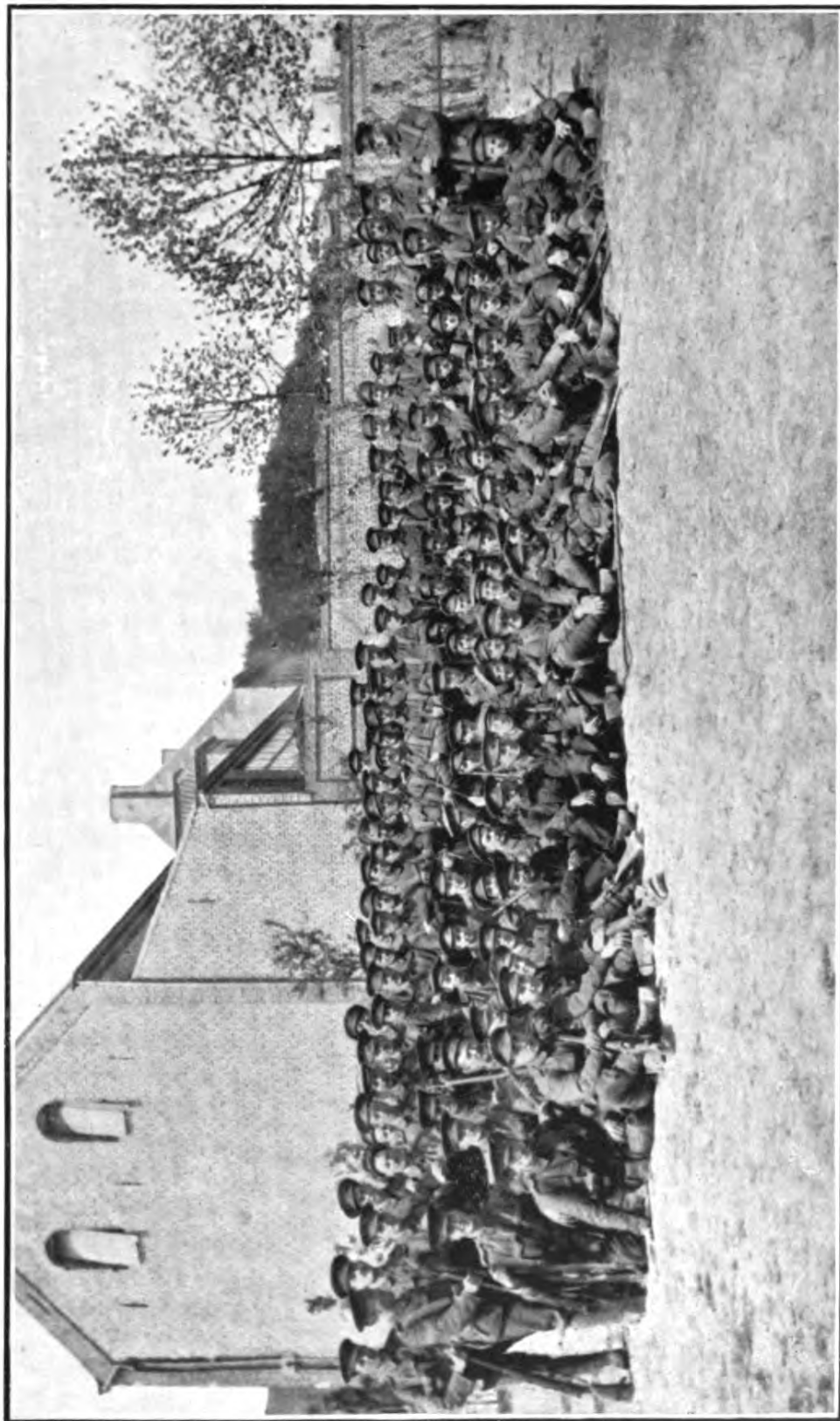
On October 18th the Robin Hoods and 8th Sherwood Foresters were inspected by Major General, the Hon. Montagu Stuart-Wortley, who expressed his congratulations on the manner in which both Battalions had behaved in the attack on the Redoubt, and especially upon the way they held and maintained the trenches won, and defeated all the powerful counter attacks made by the Germans to regain the position they had lost.

Capt. A. S. Bright was appointed Adjutant in place of Lieut. R. G. Pyatt, killed.

On October 19th the Robin Hoods *Left Drouvin and* left Drouvin and marched to Gosnay *marched to* where they remained in billets until *Gosnay where* October 25th. On October 21st the *they were* Robin Hoods were inspected by the *billeted Oct. 19th* 11th Corps Commander, Lieut.-General *to Oct. 25th.* Sir R. C. B. Haking, K.C.B., who complimented the C.O. and the Battalion for their splendid work in the attack on the Redoubt on the 13th October and following days, and said it was very largely due to the tenacity with which the Robin Hoods held on to the position gained that the greater part of the Redoubt was now in our possession. Afterwards he asked the C.O. to dine with him at Corps Headquarters and after dinner again told the Commanding Officer how highly satisfied he was with the wonderful fighting spirit shewn by the Battalion.

The following evening the C.O. was invited to dine with the Major General Stuart Wortley at Divisional Headquarters, who once more said how the Robin Hoods had distinguished themselves and brought lasting credit to the Division.

On October 21st a strong working party, under Lieuts. Hancock and Hooley, were sent up once more to the Hohenzollern Redoubt to remove the gas cylinders and piping laid in the trenches for the gas attack on the 13th.



"D" COMPANY, taken at Locre, April, 1915 (Captain B. E. Baily)



Photo Hadley.

Captain B. E. BAILY.



Capt. ALBERT BALL, V.C., D.S.O.
7th (Robin Hood) Battalion Sherwood Foresters, attached
Royal Flying Corps. Killed in Action, May 7th, 1917.



Major E. H. SPALDING, Lieut.-Col. W. S. N. TOLLER, Brigadier General C. T. SHIPLEY, Major R. J. WORDSWORTH.
Copyright—Imperial War Museum.



Communication trench, leading up to front line trenches, Kemmel; dug by Sherwood Foresters Brigade, April—May, 1915.

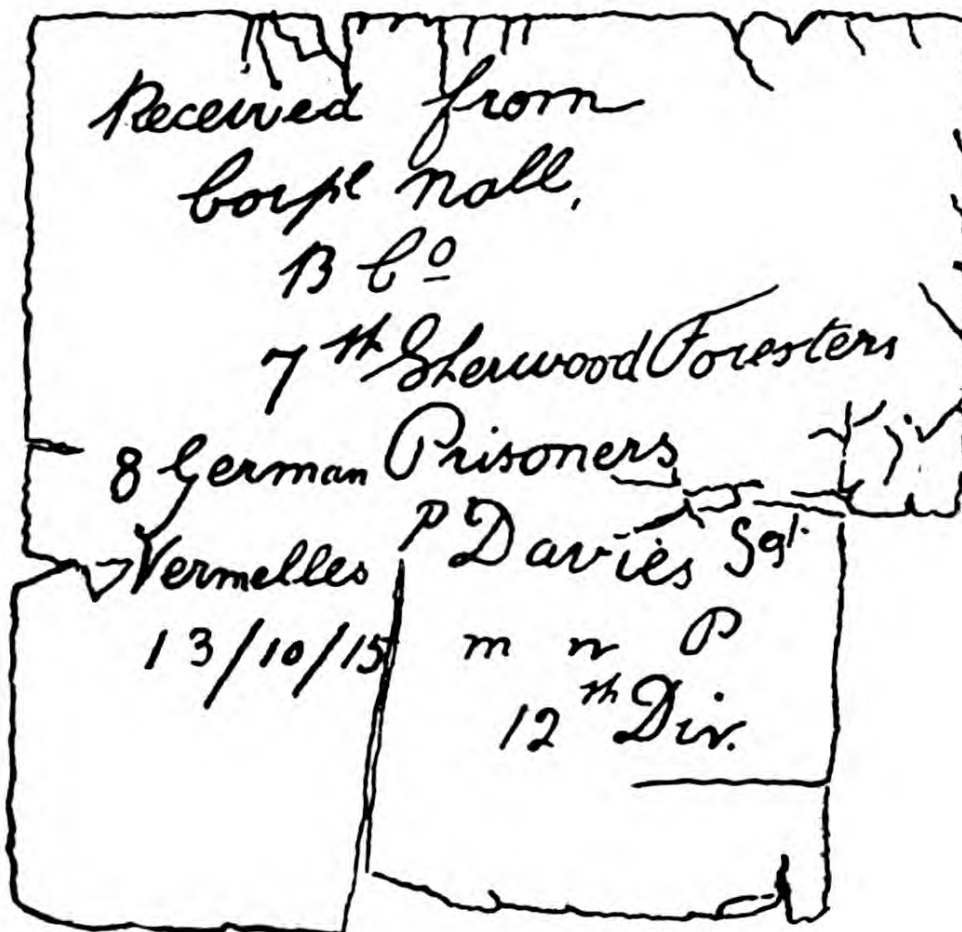


VIMY RIDGE (March, 1917)

Party returning from Front Line Trenches.

French Captain, Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill, Pte. Worn, Lieut. B. T. Hooley.

FAC-SIMILE OF RECEIPT GIVEN TO CORPL. NALL, 7TH (ROBIN
HOOD) BATTALION SHERWOOD FORESTERS, ON HANDING OVER,
AT VERMELLES, EIGHT GERMAN PRISONERS, TAKEN BY THE
ROBIN HOODS AT THE HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT, OCTOBER
13TH, 1915.



CHAPTER V.

RICHEBOURG TRENCHES, L'AVOUÉ--
MARSEILLES.

October 26th, 1915 to January 24th, 1916.

On October 26th the Robin Hoods marched from Gosnay to Bethune where they were billeted in a Tobacco Factory in the Rue-de-Lille. Orders were here received that the 46th Division would be inspected by H.M. the King, on the 28th inst. The 27th inst. was spent in re-hearsal of this Parade. On October 28th the Robin Hoods sent six platoons to this inspection; a finer lot of men it would have been difficult to find in the British Army, and they acquitted themselves well. Unfortunately the horse H.M. the King was riding became restive, slipped down and rolled on His Majesty, who was somewhat seriously hurt. It seemed that the Battalion Medical Officer, Capt. J. W. Scott, would have the honour of attending to the King, but a Medical Officer from a nearer unit arrived just before him. After the inspection, the Battalion returned to Bethune. On October 29th the Fatigue Party (of about two hundred of all ranks) which had been sent to the trenches opposite to the Hohenzollern Redoubt returned, having completed their work. On October 30th the Battalion attended Divine Service, and on October 31st the G.O.C. 46th Division inspected the Battalion at training. On this day 2nd Lieuts. W. F. Player, T. Macpherson and B. E. Emmett reported for duty, and

Major L. A. Hind returned to the Battalion after a short leave of absence in England. The days of November 1st and 2nd were spent in overhauling equipment, etc., the Battalion being informed that they were to take over a new sector of the trench line at Richebourg l'Avoué, at present held by the 2nd Black Watch.

On November 3rd, Major L. A. Hind, accompanied by four Officers and twenty Non.-Com. Officers, were sent in 'Busses from Bethune Station to Vielle Chapelle, from whence they proceeded on foot to the Richebourg l'Avoué trenches. Guides from the 2nd Black Watch being sent to meet them and take them up to the trenches, and they were shewn the sector of the trench line the Battalion would take over. They remained in the trenches for one night and returned to the Battalion on the 4th.

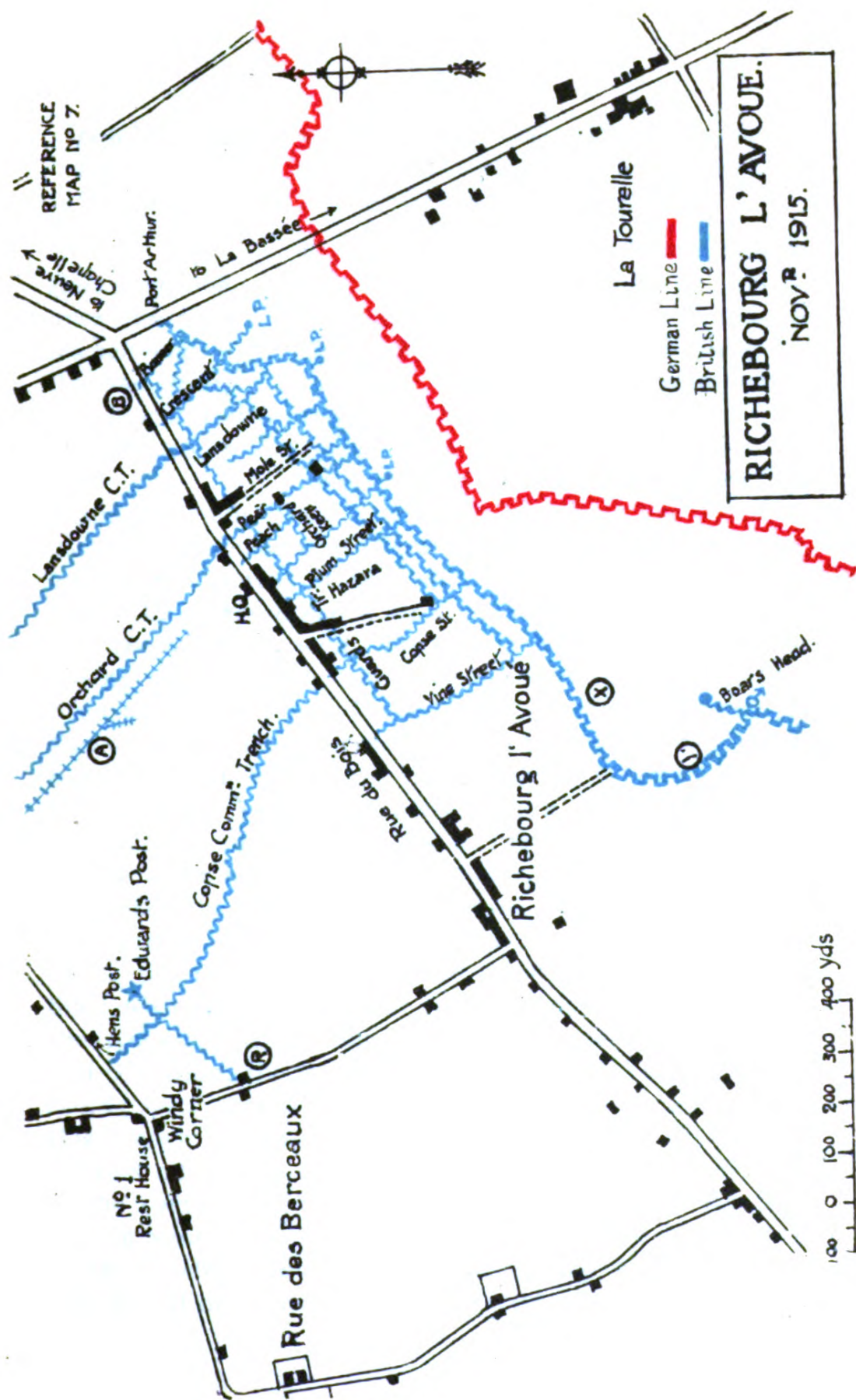
Battalion On November 4th the Robin Hoods left
marched from Bethune and marched to Paradis, where
Bethune to they were billeted for the night. Lieut.-
Paradis, Col. A. W. Brewill with four Officers and
November 4th. twenty Non.-Com. Officers proceeded in
 'Busses to Vielle Chapelle, where they
 were met by a Non.-Com. sent from the
 2nd Black Watch to guide them up the trench line. This
 party on arriving at Richebourg St. Vaast, proceeded
 alongside a small trolley line which had been laid down to
 take up stores to the trenches, and immediately before
 arriving at the point marked A (on ref. map No. 7) it was
 noticed the British artillery were shelling a position not
 more than one thousand yards in front, which the guide
 said was the German trench line. He was then asked
 why he was conducting the party over the open ground
 so near to the enemy when there was a communication
 trench some thirty yards on their left. The guide said
 this trench was in parts some three feet deep in mud
 and water and that it was quite safe to proceed over the

open. The detachment had not proceeded more than fifty yards when the enemy's artillery fired a salvo, two shells dropping on either side of the party, one shell immediately in front and one close behind, killing Lance-Corporals Garner and Sunday, and wounding Corporals Richardson and McCormick and Lance-Corporal Ball. It was a marvellous escape for the rest. Lieut-Col. A. G. Wauchope, D.S.O., Commanding the 2nd Black Watch, was much troubled that the guide he had sent had acted so contrary to orders and consequently sent him to be tried by Court Martial. The detachment spent the night in the trenches so as to become acquainted with them before the Battalion took over, and in the morning rejoined the Robin Hoods at Richebourg St. Vaast.

On this day the following Officers were taken on the strength of the Battalion:—2nd Lieutenants W. F. Cowern, R. D. Clay, H. W. Walker.

Battalion On November 5th the Robin Hoods left
marched to Paradis and marched to Richebourg St.
Richebourg Vaast, and were billeted for the night in
St. Vaast, ruined houses in this village. It was here
Nov. 5th. the Battalion heard with deep interest and
 pleasure that Capt. J. C. Warren had been
 awarded the Military Cross for his bravery
 at the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The following is the
 extract from the London Gazette:—

Second Lieut. (temporary Captain) John Crosby Warren, 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion Sherwood Foresters, for conspicuous gallantry at Hohenzollern Redoubt on October 13th, 1915, when with a party of four men, he held back the enemy in "Little Willie" for three hours. When the enemy got into a trench behind him, he withdrew across the open into the Western face of the Redoubt, where he built and occupied a barrier. Here he personally helped in



bombing back a strong attack, and held the trench for fourteen hours. Capt. Warren's name has previously been brought to notice for gallant conduct.

Battalion took over trenches, Richebourg l'Avoué, from 2nd Black Watch Nov. 6th to 15th. On November 6th the Robin Hoods marched from Richebourg St. Vaast and relieved the 2nd Black Watch in the front line trenches at Richebourg l'Avoué. As will be seen from reference map No. 7 the trenches the Battalion took over ran from the La

Bassee Road on their left to Vine St. Communication Trench on their right. The German front line trenches were about one hundred yards distant; and in the centre of no man's land, between the two trench lines, there ran a small stream, which in summer was about 12 feet wide, but now in November was some twenty feet. Both the Germans and the British had filled this stream with barbed wire, so that it formed an almost impregnable barrier between the two. The British front line trench was 300 yards East of the Rue-de-Bois Richebourg l'Avoué, and there were a number of houses on each side of this Road, all in ruins from artillery fire. The weather for some time had been almost continuously wet, and the trenches were three feet deep in mud and water; several of the Communication trenches between the Rue-de-Bois and the front line trenches being filled with water quite four feet in depth. The sandbag breastwork of the front trenches was in an extremely bad condition, the sandbags having rotted, and the earth falling out. From time to time considerable lengths of this trench fell in and required incessant work in continuous rebuilding. This trench had been originally dug in the summer months with no consideration to the fact that in winter the water level rises to within two inches of the surface, and in consequence the trenches were now full of mud and water. The mud was of the clinging

variety and made walking almost impossible, so much so that many a man had the greatest difficulty in withdrawing his foot and had to leave his gum boot behind, go in his socks, and return later with a shovel to rescue his boot.

The weather set in bitterly cold, which added to the great discomfort.

The Battalion Headquarters was situated in a dugout behind a ruined farmhouse. The C.O. and Major L. A. Hind slept in a dugout some four feet below the ground; the legs of the available beds were about three feet above the floor, made with fir poles, covered with rabbit wire, and the bottom of the dugout was about twelve inches deep in water. These two Officers on descending had to stand on broken chairs to unloosen their boot laces before laying down. This dugout was also infested with rats, being just about as wretched and miserable sleeping quarters as could possibly be imagined.

When taking over the trenches from the 2nd Black Watch, Lieut.-Col. Wauchope told the C.O. that the enemy started most nights at dusk (about 4.30 p.m.) to sweep the Rue-de-Bois with machine gun fire until midnight, generally in spasms of about five minutes fire with twenty minutes interval. This was very irritating, and added to the difficulties of bringing up supplies by the Transport and taking them to the Companies in the trenches, all the men carrying the supplies having to cross the Rue-de-Bois Road. There was also a very squeaky pump which, when used, generally drew machine gun fire. It was decided to take steps to stop this if possible, so Lieut. B. T. Hooley, the Machine Gun Officer, was ordered to endeavour to find a good position from which the enemy lines could be dominated. Eventually he found an old dugout partially destroyed, at position B (on reference map No. 7) and here the two

Maxim guns were placed and a large number of rounds of ammunition deposited; ranges were carefully taken on to the Cross Roads at La Tourelle, the Distillerie, and the road immediately in the rear of the enemy's trench line, and the Machine Gun Officer was instructed at night to wait until the Germans opened with machine gun fire, and on cessation, to give one minute's interval and then to open with both machine guns for twice the length of time the enemy had used their guns, and to sweep the roads on which the ranges and direction had previously been taken. This was repeated at each outbreak of the German firing. The consequence of this retaliation resulted during the first night in considerably lessening the enemy's fire, and eventually the Germans almost ceased from using their machine guns in this sector at night-time.

During the days and nights of November 7th, 8th and 9th, all Companies were working strenuously in repairing the trench parapet and also attempting to drain the trenches; the latter had eventually to be abandoned as quite impossible owing to the ground being absolutely water-logged almost to the surface. On the 10th the Robin Hoods were relieved in the trenches by the 4th Battalion Black Watch. Sergt. W. Simpson and Lance.-Corpl. R. Wilson, at considerable personal risk, did most excellent Patrol Work in no man's land, and obtained and brought back most valuable information as to the enemy's wire entanglements.

On November 10th the Battalion was relieved in the trenches and B and C Companies
Left trenches marched to Vielle Chapelle where they
and proceeded were billeted, A and D Companies forming
to billets Brigade Reserve and garrisoning
Vielle Chapelle, Landsdowne Place Farm.
Nov. 10th. On November 14th the Robin Hoods
relieved the 4th Black Watch and part of

Relieved 8th Batt. Sherwood Foresters the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters in trenches, Richebourg l'Avoué. The *Foresters in front line trenches* were now getting into worse and worse condition. One *trenches, Nov. 14th to 17th.* night some hundred yards of parapet entirely collapsed and the difficulty experienced in partially rebuilding this was great. The material to fill the new sandbags for re-construction was entirely liquid mud, and it was easier to fill the sandbags by hand than with a spade. The weather had been getting worse and worse, continuous rain day and night, and the higher authorities began to realise that it was impossible to efficiently reconstruct the front line trenches, so it was decided to build a new trench on the higher ground close to, and on the East side of the Rue-de-Bois, which was named the Guards trench, and when this was completed the front line trenches would be held as an outpost line only. Work was commenced at once and continued nightly in building the new trench, but unfortunately the portion of this trench being erected by the Robin Hoods was in full view of the Germans, and each day the work done by the Battalion during the previous night was partially destroyed by artillery fire, which became very disheartening to those engaged in building the new trench, but in spite of this, gradual progress was made, also the Communication trench known as Orchard Street became filled with water and rendered useless, so a new Communication trench was constructed from Windy Corner to Copse Street and named Copse Communicating Trench. When taking over the trenches from the 2nd Black Watch, Lieut.-Col. Wauchope said he had heard rumours that another attack would probably be made from the Richebourg l'Avoué trenches and strongly urged that, if such a scheme materialised, strong representations should be made to the higher authorities against this particular section of the line being selected for this pur-

pose. He said in May last when the climatic conditions were all favourable and the ground dry, the 2nd Black Watch with the Seaforth Highlanders on their right, attacked but could get no further than the Stream between the trenches, when each Battalion had over 500 casualties and had to retire to the trench position with no hope whatever of being able to cross the Stream. The difficulties were enhanced by the way this portion of the front was enfiladed by the German artillery in the neighbourhood of Les Brulot. It was an absolutely impossible task and meant simply butchery with no tangible prospect of success, so that it did not come as a surprise when the Brigadier on visiting the trenches said that another serious attack on the enemy was contemplated in the vicinity of Loos, and several feint attacks were to be made on other parts of the British Front, Richebourg l'Avoué sector being one of the selected. He was informed of the views expressed by Lieut.-Col. Wauchope, with which the Brigadier quite agreed, saying he was personally strongly against attacking from this position.

During the next day or so visits were made by the Staff of the 46th Division to the trench line, and they were taken round the front line trenches, and the impregnable position held by the Germans pointed out. The Stream with its crinoline of barbed wire, and no man's land enfiladed by the enemy's artillery, formed a barrier which it would be impossible for Infantry to cross. These Officers, after carefully inspecting the position, agreed with the views expressed and said they should report strongly against this sector of the line being selected for an attack, but meanwhile instructions were given for the Robin Hoods to make all arrangements to attack if ordered to do so. Consequently, long planks were brought up by the Battalion Transport, to be carried when attacking and laid as gangways over the Stream,

and short ladders made in order to climb quickly out of the front line trenches.

On November 17th, the Battalion was relieved in the trenches by the 6th Sherwood Foresters and marched to billets in King George's Road, between Richebourg St. Vaast and Lacouture, leaving C Company to garrison the strong posts in rear of trench line.

Relieved by 6th Sherwood Foresters and marched to Billets in King George Road,
Nov. 17th to Nov. 20th. During the rest period in these billets the Robin Hoods were visited by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Khartoum. He had formerly been a Curate at St. Andrew's and Vicar of Emmanuel Church, Nottingham, and was consequently well-known to most of the men in the Battalion. He held a short service in the barn of a farm and in his audience found quite a number of his old Sunday School boys. He lunched with the Battalion Headquarters Staff and told them at least one good tale of his Nottingham days. One is worth repeating :—

He was christening a child at Nottingham, the Godfather being a very large and stout man. On demanding, in the name of the child, if he would renounce the devil and all his works, etc., the carnal desires of the flesh, etc., etc., the Clerk whispered to the Godfather to say, "I renounce them all," but being deaf he only partially heard, and replied in a stentorian voice, "I recommend them all."

Billeting accommodation for the Headquarters Staff was very limited, the 2nd in Command and Major Bradwell occupying a hen roost, the access to same being in the farmhouse, approached by a hen ladder. It was amusing to see them retire for the night and on making their appearance in the morning, the other Officers commenced to crow whilst they descended from their roost.

Relieved 6th Sherwood Foresters in trenches, Nov. 20th to Nov. 23rd. On November 20th the Robin Hoods relieved the 6th Sherwood Foresters in the trenches. During this period a considerable amount of work was done in extending the new Guards trench. The Brigadier had now decided that if the Brigade should be called upon to attack from this sector of the line, that the 5th Sherwood Foresters should form the attacking Battalion from the Richebourg l'Avoué trenches with the 8th Sherwood Foresters in support, and on the right the 6th Sherwood Foresters should form the attacking troops with the Robin Hoods in support, so the Battalion was informed that after their period in the trenches they would be relieved by the 5th Sherwood Foresters, which relief was carried out on the night of November 23rd, the Battalion marching to Vielle Chapelle where they were billeted.

Relieved by 5th Sherwood Foresters and went to billets Vielle Chapelle, Nov. 23rd to 27th.

The following is an extract from Battalion Orders about this time :—

The G.O.C. has much pleasure in informing the Division that the Corps Commander was instructed by the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief to convey to all ranks his appreciation of the good work which has been performed by them on the various defence works allotted to the Division.

Relieved 6th Sherwood Foresters in trenches, Nov. 27th to Nov. 30th The Battalion, on November 27th, relieved the 6th Sherwood Foresters in the Right Sector of the Brigade Trench line, taking over trenches from Copse Street Communication Trench on the left to a point about 100 yards South of Boars Head (see ref. map No. 7). The front line trenches and the support trenches in this sector

were now full of water to the level of the ground and consequently could not be garrisoned, so two breastworks were erected on the front line trenches at points marked X and Y on reference map, and these with the breastwork known as Boars Head were the only positions occupied in the front line, the Battalion supports being in the ruined houses on the higher ground alongside the Rue-de-Bois, the Battalion Headquarters occupying a house about 200 yards from Windy Corner, and one Company in Reserve in a house at the n.w. angle of Cross Roads at Windy Corner. Windy Corner had an evil reputation. It was constantly swept by machine gun fire, and periodically heavily shelled, especially at the times relieves were moving up. The Reserve Company had a most fortunate escape during their occupation of this house. The enemy shelled this Corner very heavily about three o'clock in the afternoon of November 28th, several large shells dropping in close vicinity to the house, two falling in the yard. The occupants rushed at once and took refuge in some shelter trenches which had been dug a short distance in rear and had been provided for an emergency of this character.

Major H. Bradwell, who had for some time taken over the duties of Adjutant of the Battalion and done most excellent work, was relieved from this position as the Adjutant. Capt. R. M. Gotch having recovered from trench fever and returned to the Battalion, now resumed his duties as Adjutant.

It was only possible to visit the three detached posts on the front line during darkness, and these were visited every night by the C.O. and Adjutant or the 2nd in Command and the Adjutant. The visits were made generally between 10 or 11 p.m., and this party proceeded from Headquarters visiting the Supporting Companies located in the Basements of the ruined houses, Rue-de-Bois, after this crossing the open ground, great

care had to be taken on the very dark nights to avoid stumbling into the Support trenches which were some six feet deep and filled with water to the level of the ground. On one visit Lieut. B. T. Hooley, the Machine Gun Officer, accompanied the C.O. and the Adjutant, and in crossing a Support trench missed his footing and entirely disappeared beneath the water. It was with great difficulty he was rescued from being drowned. It was also on this particularly dark night that the party crossed the front line trench, thinking they were still near the Support trenches, eventually found themselves close to the German wire entanglements. The danger of these visits were greatly enhanced by the periodical bursts of machine gun fire from our machine guns situated in the houses on the Rue-de-Bois, which swept the whole of the ground between the Rue-de-Bois and the enemy's front line trenches. When these outbursts commenced the party had to lie flat on the ground until cessation of the fire enabled them to continue. The garrisons of the three advanced posts were relieved every twenty-four hours. It was a great strain all ranks endured whilst occupying these posts. The wet, cold weather, the entire isolation, and the danger of the post being rushed by largely superior enemy force. It was the most difficult and dangerous section of trench line the Battalion ever held.

<i>Relieved by 6th Sherwood Foresters and returned to rest billets at Vielle Chapelle, Nov. 30th to Dec. 2nd.</i>	Needless to say all ranks welcomed being relieved on the night of November 30th, by the 6th Sherwood Foresters, and marched back to rest billets at Vielle Chapelle. On December 1st, 2nd Lieuts. C. W. Good and F. E. Flint joined for duty. On this evening a strong working party of 250 all ranks from A and D Companies was sent to the trenches to work on the construction of
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the breastwork to the new Copse Street Communication Trench.

The weather had now for the past fortnight been of the worst possible description. Ground was water-logged, trenches full of water, and it was owing to these climatic conditions that the anticipated attack, which all had been dreading, was abandoned and the Battalion was informed that they would at the next relieve, again take over their original sector of the Brigade trench line.

On December 2nd the Robin Hoods relieved the 8th Sherwood Foresters in the old trench line—Crescent Street, Vine Street. The trenches had got from bad to worse, and all ranks garrisoning this line were standing in water, and although they had

been served out with gum boots up to the thighs, the water, in many portions of the trench, came over and ran down inside the boots. Dec. 3rd was a particularly dark night and raining heavily, the Battalion Transport experiencing great difficulty in getting up. With the Transport came 2nd Lieut. E. R. Barlow, ordered to report for duty. A Battalion runner was sent for, to guide this young Officer to Capt. Round, D Company, to which Company he was attached. He was wet through, and when he reported to his Captain found the Company Headquarters' Dugout some two feet deep in water, giving him no chance of lying down and obtaining much needed rest. The C.O. on visiting the line in the early morning was much pleased to find this Officer quite cheerful and not in any way depressed by the miserable outlook. It was wonderful the way these young Officers behaved under most difficult and trying conditions. England owes a great deal to them.

On taking over the trenches the Robin Hoods fully expected they would not be relieved for some four or five days, so when a telephone message arrived about 11 p.m. that the Battalion would be relieved the following night,

it came as a most pleasant surprise, especially the information further conveyed that the 46th Division had been ordered to proceed to Egypt. Such good news at first could hardly be believed, but evidence came to hand that this order was correct, as on the following night the 19th Division took over the sector of the line held by the 46th Division and the Robin Hoods were relieved in their section by the 7th King's Own Lancaster Regiment, and moved to Windy Corner where they were billeted for the night in various houses in the vicinity.

It may be of interest to give an example of Battalion orders issued at this period by Battalion Commanders in the trenches to Relieving Battalions.

In reading these orders reference should be made to Map No. 7.

On the following day, December 3rd, the Battalion proceeded to Vielle Chapelle where the Brigade concentrated and then marched via Calonne-Sur-La-Lys (halting about noon on line of march, when dinner was served) to Robecq, where they were billeted in the various houses in this village.

On December 4th the Battalion was inspected by the G.O.C. 46th Division. All ranks were now anxiously waiting for further orders in reference to proceeding to Egypt, and during the time the Robin Hoods were at Robecq they were daily engaged in route marches so as to keep themselves physically fit. On December 10th the Christmas parcels so kindly forwarded by the Citizens of Nottingham arrived. The boxes in which these presents were packed took some four or five limbers to carry them, and as it would be quite impossible to carry these on the line of march, in addition to the Regimental Baggage, and the Battalion might at any time receive orders

Relief of the Robin Hoods in Left Sector of trenches by 7th Battalion King's Own Lancaster Regt.

BATTALION ORDERS BY LIEUT.-COL. A. W. BREWILL,

COMMANDING 7TH (ROBIN HOOD) BATTALION SHERWOOD FORESTERS—December 4th, 1915.

Detail	Guides of Robin Hoods	Place where Guides will meet Relieving Companies.	Time	
Signallers	1	Entrance to Copse Trench near Windy Corner	p.m. 2.30	To relieve Signallers of Robin Hoods.
Four Company Officers and Sergt.-Major	1	Entrance to Copse Trench	3.0	To proceed to Robin Hood H.Q. where guides will be told off to conduct Officers to Companies to take over Trench Stores, and Sergt.-Major to take over Battalion Stores.
One Company	2	Entrance to Copse Trench	4.5	The Relieving Company of 7th King's Own to call at No. 4 Rest House and change into Gum Boots, and be at entrance to Copse Trench at 4.5 p.m., where guides will meet them, and relieve D Company of the Robin Hoods in Left Fire Trench.
One Company	2	Entrance to Copse Trench	4.30	The Relieving Company of 7th King's Own to call at No. 4 Rest House and change into Gum Boots, and be at entrance to Copse Trench at 4.30 p.m., where guides will meet them, to relieve A Company of the Robin Hoods in Right Fire Trench.
* One Company (less 2 N.C.O.'s and 20 men)	2	Entrance to Copse Trench	4.50	To relieve C Company of the Robin Hoods in Guards Trench.
One Company (less 1 Officer & 50 other ranks)	1	Entrance to Copse Trench	5.10	To proceed via Foresters Lane and along Tram Line to Robin Hood Headquarters to relieve B Company of Robin Hoods in Headquarter Dugouts, Rue-de-Bois. This Company should move in small detachments.
One Officer and 50 other ranks of above Company	1	Entrance to Copse Trench		To proceed direct to Lansdowne Keep to relieve Robin Hood Garrison now in Lansdowne Keep.

* The Robin Hoods have 2 N.C.O.'s and 20 men detailed from Company in Guards Trench, in St. Vaast Post, to bring up Stores and Food to rail head Dump near Battalion H.Q., Rue-de-Bois. One of these N.C.O.'s is in charge of Stores. One N.C.O. and three war worn men at Rags Post S.2 D.08.

*Christmas
Parcels from
Nottingham
distributed to
the Battalion,
December 12th.* to move, it was decided that it would be advisable to distribute them at once, so on the morning of December 12th these parcels were distributed to all ranks and were very much appreciated, the Battalion celebrating in the evening a foretaste of Christmas festivities. The

Commanding Officer, on behalf of the Robin Hoods, wrote the following letters of thanks to those who had, with such kindly thought, taken a prominent part in forwarding these Christmas parcels:—

In the Field, 13/12/15.

To Col. His Grace the Duke of Portland, K.G.

Welbeck Abbey, Notts.

My Lord Duke,

I am desired by the Officers, Non.-Com. Officers and men of the Robin Hoods now at the Front to write and thank your Grace, as Hon. Col. of the Battalion and Lord Lieut. of the City and County of Nottingham, for the kindly interest you have taken in arranging to forward a Christmas parcel to all ranks of this Battalion.

It is not only the gift, but the kind thought which has prompted the Donors to remember the Robin Hoods, which is so much appreciated.

During the very trying times and hardships the Regiment is at present enduring, it is very cheering to think that they are so constantly in the thoughts of those at home.

All ranks wish yourself and the Duchess as Happy a Christmas as possible, and hope that before long there may be again, "Peace on earth and goodwill to men."

I have the honour to remain,

My Lord Duke,

Your most obedient servant,

ARTHUR W. BREWILL, Lieut.-Col.

*Com. 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion
Sherwood Foresters.*

In the Field, 13/12/15.

To His Worship the Mayor of Nottingham.

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I am desired by all ranks of the Robin Hoods now serving at the Front, to write and convey to you and to the Citizens of Nottingham their sincere thanks for the Christmas presents which have so kindly been forwarded to each man of this Regiment. I need hardly tell you how much these parcels have been appreciated, not only for the present itself, but especially for the kindly thought of the Donors in remembering the Battalion this Christmas time.

I can assure you that the Robin Hoods are doing their best to uphold the splendid reputation which the Battalion has gained for itself out here. We all look back with pride to the part this Regiment took at Hooge on 30/31st July, and at the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on October 13th. These are now bright and glorious episodes in the history of the Robin Hoods. I can assure you that the same spirit of devotion and duty to King and Country is with all ranks to-day, and I cannot speak too highly of the cheerful way in which all ranks undergo the hardships of this Winter Campaign in the trenches. It is beyond all praise.

It is very cheering to us to think that we are in the constant thoughts of the Citizens of Nottingham and our loved ones at home.

Believe me, dear Mr. Mayor,

To be yours very faithfully,

ARTHUR W. BREWILL, Lieut.-Col.

*Com. 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion
Sherwood Foresters.*

In the Field, 13/12/15.

To J. H. Richards, Esq.,

The Guildhall, Nottingham.

Dear Mr. Richards,

On behalf of the Robin Hoods at the Front I am writing to thank you for all the trouble you have taken in acting as Hon. Sec. for the Nottingham and Notts. Comforts for Troops Committee.

The parcels arrived safely and have been very much appreciated by all ranks, and I do not think it would have been possible for you to have selected a a better assortment of articles than those in each package. We all wish you the best of Christmas Greetings, and again thanking you.

Believe me to be,

Yours very faithfully,

ARTHUR W. BREWILL, Lieut.-Col.

*Com. 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion
Sherwood Foresters.*

In the Field, 13/12/15.

To Miss Seely Whitby.

Dear Miss Whitby,

On behalf of the Robin Hoods I am writing to thank you for all the trouble you have taken, as Assistant Hon. Sec. for the Nottingham and Notts. Comforts for Troops Committee.

I feel sure the knowledge of the great pleasure the parcels have given to all men in the Battalion will be reward in itself for all your work, and I can only assure you how much they have been appreciated by all ranks.

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas.

Believe me to be,

Yours very faithfully,

ARTHUR W. BREWILL, Lieut.-Col.

*Com. 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion
Sherwood Foresters.*

In the Field, 13/12/15.

To Messrs. Forman & Sons,
The *Guardian* Office, Nottingham.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing on behalf of the Robin Hoods to thank you for all your kindness in collecting the funds through the medium of *The Guardian* and the *Evening Post* for the Christmas presents to this Battalion by the Citizens of Nottingham.

I can assure you how very much they are appreciated by all ranks and especially do they value the kind thought which has induced the Donors to subscribe. These parcels have been most welcome, especially after the great hardships the Battalion has lately endured in the trenches, as for some weeks past they have been standing up to the knees in mud and water, under most depressing climatic conditions, but in spite of this the men keep wonderfully cheerful, and I never hear the slightest "grouse" from anyone.

We all wish you a Happy Christmas, and trust that this war will be over before another winter, so that we may spend the next with our loved ones at home.

Believe me to be,

Yours very faithfully,

ARTHUR W. BREWILL, Lieut.-Col.

Com. 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion
Sherwood Foresters.

The following days, December 13th to December 18th, were spent at Robecq. The inclement weather prevented any serious training, but route marches, to keep all ranks physically fit, were undertaken daily. On 19th December the Robin Hoods left Robecq and marched via St. Vennant, Hayerskerque, Tannay, to Boeseghem, where they were billeted. The billets in this village were much limited, and in many instances Company Commanders had to be satisfied with haylofts in which to billet their men. On December 21st the following special order by Field Marshal Sir John French, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., Commander in Chief British Army in the Field, was inserted in Battalion Orders for information of all ranks:—

“ In relinquishing the Command of the British Army in France, I wish to express to the Officers, Non.-Com. Officers, and men, with whom I have been so closely associated during the last sixteen months, my heartfelt sorrow in parting with them before the Campaign, in which we have so long been engaged together, has been brought to a victorious conclusion. I have, however, the firmest conviction that such a glorious ending to their glorious and heroic efforts is not far distant, and I shall watch their progress towards this final goal, not only with intense interest, but in the most confident hope. The success so far attained has been due to the indomitable spirit, dogged tenacity, which knows no defeat, and the heroic courage so abundantly displayed by the rank and file of the splendid Army, which it will ever remain the pride and glory of my life to have commanded during sixteen months of incessant fighting. Regulars and Territorials, Old Army and New Army have ever shewn these magnificent qualities in equal degree. From my

heart I thank them all. At this sad moment of parting my heart goes out to those who have received lifelong injury from wounds, and I think with sorrow of that great and glorious host of my beloved comrades who have made the greatest sacrifice of all by laying down their lives for their Country. In saying good-bye to the British Army in France, I ask them, once again, to accept this expression of my deepest gratitude, and heartfelt devotion towards them, and my earnest good wishes for the glorious future, which I feel to be assured."

The Battalion remained at Boeseghem until December 26th, and during this period almost daily were engaged in route marches—march discipline being strictly enforced.

December 25th, Christmas Day—Christmas *Christmas* in France. Constantly during this day all *Day, 1915.* Robin Hoods thought of their loved ones in England. In the early morning a large number attended Communion Service in the schools at Boeseghem, the Service being taken by the Brigade Chaplain, the Rev. H. P. Hales. Afterwards Football matches and then Christmas dinner. Plum Puddings had been sent to the Battalion by the London *Daily Express*, and the Battalion Transport had the day before been sent to Aire where Company Officers purchased a number of other luxuries for their Company dinners. The stress of the past ten months had knit all ranks very closely together, and old comrades who had given the great sacrifice were on this day, of all days, specially remembered. Can they ever be forgotten? What a band of brothers the Robin Hoods had grown to be. The *esprit-de-corps* in the Battalion was wonderful; all ranks were bound together by danger, endurance and hardship, cheerfully borne in the days gone by, and the thought of the unknown future which lay before them.

The following are extracts from Battalion Orders of this date :—

1. The following message has been received from His Majesty the King : “ Another Christmas finds all the resources of the Empire still engaged in War, and I desire to convey on my own behalf, and on behalf of the Queen, a heartfelt Christmas greeting and our good wishes for the New Year to all, who on sea and on land, are upholding the honour of the British name. In the Officers and men of my navy, on whom the security of the Empire depends, I repose in common with all my subjects a trust that is absolute. On the Officers and men of my Army, whether now in France, in the East, or in other Fields, I rely with an equal faith, confident that their devotion, their valour, and their self-sacrifice will, under God’s guidance, lead to victory and an honourable peace. There are many of their Comrades now, alas, in hospital, and to these brave fellows also I desire with the Queen to express our deep gratitude and our earnest prayers for their recovery. Officers and men of the Navy and Army, another year is growing to its close as it began, in toil, bloodshed, and suffering; but I rejoice to know that the goal to which you are striving draws nearer into sight. May God bless you and all your undertakings.”
2. “ The G.O.C. Division wishes all ranks of the Division a Merry Christmas and a happy and glorious New Year. He thanks all ranks for their services during the past year and looks forward with every confidence to further distinction to be gained by them, in whatever work and fighting they may be called upon to undertake.”
3. “ The Officer Commanding desires to congratulate the Battalion on the splendid work done during the past year, and to wish them a Happy Christmas.”

The various Companies of the Battalion had their Christmas dinner served in the haylofts and other quarters in which they were billeted. In the evening a Battalion Concert was held in the largest room in the village, but unfortunately this could only accommodate a portion of the Battalion.

Battalion left Boeseghem and marched to St. Isbergues, billeted here, Dec. 26th, 1915 to Jan. 7th, 1916 On December 26th the Robin Hoods marched from Boeseghem to St. Isbergues where they were billeted in the vicinity of D'Aire La Basee Canal, and remained in these billets until January 7th, 1916, waiting for further orders to proceed to Egypt. During this period the Battalion undertook several route marches with the Brigade to surrounding villages, Mazinghem, Rombly, Quernes. It was whilst the Battalion was billeted in these quarters that they parted with their Mascot, a black and white dog of the collie type. This dog was found in Ypres in June, 1915, and attached himself to the Signallers, and accompanied the Robin Hoods on all their marches, always going with them into the trench line. He was known in the Battalion as "B——y Wipers," but as the Robin Hoods were now under orders for Egypt, it was felt there would be difficulty in taking him overseas, so with great regret he was given to a Frenchman on one of the Canal Barges.

During this month the following Officers joined for duty with the Battalion. On December 1st, 2nd Lieuts. C. W. Good and F. C. Flint; December 7th, 2nd Lieuts. F. Clay and J. E. Kemshall, Capt. A. A. Walton (re-joined on being passed fit again); on December 14th, 2nd Lieut. A. Mansell and on December 23rd, 2nd Lieut. G. F. Fish.

On January 1st the following Officers, Non.-Com. Officers and men were mentioned in F.M. Sir John

French's despatches for conspicuous service in the Field :—Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin, Major L. A. Hind, Capt. R. M. Gotch, Capt. H. H. Walton, Capt. J. C. Warren, 2nd Lieut. N. E. Webster, Coy. Sergt.-Major J. W. Herrod, Corpl. G. Cooke, Sergt. R. Mills, Private E. Banks.

On January 6th orders were received for the Battalion to entrain on the following day at Berguette Station to proceed to Marseilles.

On January 7th, the Robin Hoods
Left Isbergues, entrained at Berguette Station at
entrained at 10.21 a.m. and proceeded via Bethune
Berguette for Abbeville (halt 40 minutes). January
Marseilles, 8th, St. George's (halt 70 minutes);
arriving at Montereau (halt 45 minutes); Dijon,
1 a.m. Jan. 10th. Macon (halt 1 hour). January 9th,
 Valence, Lyons, Pierrelatte (halt 1
 hour), and arrived Marseilles at 1 a.m., January 10th,
 where the Battalion detrained.

The train consisted of 34 covered trucks, 13 Flats and one Passenger Coach. The covered trucks each held 40 men or 8 horses.

At the halts arrangements were made for the various meals, all of which were most excellently and expeditiously served to all ranks, in the railway carriages. On arriving at Marseilles, shortly after midnight, the Battalion was met at the Station by a guide who directed them to the camp at Parc Borely. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and the march through Marseilles to the camp, was a welcome change, after being confined in the train for over two and a half days.

On arriving at Parc Borely there was a
Camp Parc ground mist and some difficulty was ex-
Borely, perience in the large camp in finding the
Marseilles, tents allocated to the Battalion, but by 3
Jan. 10th. a.m. all were settled down. On rising at
 daybreak the sun was shining brightly over

the camp and this with the deep blue sea of the Mediterranean at the South end of the Camping ground, cheered all ranks after the long wet winter months spent in the trenches of Flanders.

The usual reports of arrival and strength of the Battalion were forwarded to the Camp Commandant and arrangements were made to allow all ranks not required for duty in Camp to go into the town of Marseilles, on condition that everyone returned to camp before 9.30 p.m. It speaks well for the discipline of the Battalion that no man was absent at "Tattoo report," and consequently this privilege was allowed during the whole time the Battalion remained at Marseilles. On January 10th, D Company of the Robin Hoods represented the British Troops in Marseilles at the funeral of a French Artillery Commandant, and on the morning of this day the whole Battalion bathed in the sea in glorious sunny weather.

Later the Battalion left Parc Borely and
Left Camp marched to another Camping ground at
Parc Borely, Chateau Mussot, taking over the camp
and marched to from the Base Dépôt of the Indian
Camp, Chateau Expeditionary Force. The new camp
Mussot, Jan. was situated at the foot of a range of
10th to 26th. hills covered with pine trees, and the
 Robin Hoods were the only white Battalion in a camp of about 10,000 men, all the other Regiments being Indian troops. It was an unique and interesting experience. The camp was on sandy soil, and never had the Battalion seen a camping ground (although being in use for a considerable time) so wonderfully clean and well organised. The sanitary arrangements were beyond all praise. No refuse was allowed to remain in the camp even for a few minutes, as a party of men were always on duty removing and burning the same in the incinerators.

The Battalion was constantly exercised during this period, in attack formation over the beautiful country adjoining the Camp, alternating with route marches, chiefly alongside the Mediterranean. On one of these days a very memorable route march was made to Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, a wonderful church, situated upon a high hill from which a magnificent view of Marseilles was obtained.

On January 15th, 2nd Lieuts. S. L. Lancaster, F. P. Gamble and C. H. Burton joined for duty with the Battalion.

During the days January 18th, 19th and 20th, the Robin Hoods were vaccinated, orders being received for this to be done before the Battalion embarked for Egypt. On January 28th all ranks heard with the greatest pleasure that H.M. the King had been graciously pleased to confer on Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin, the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, and the Distinguished Conduct Medal to Coy. Qr.-Ms.-Sergt. F. Mackenzie and Sergt. T. W. Hildyard.

On January 19th information was received that the Robin Hoods would embark on Sunday, January 26th, for Egypt, but as there was only limited Officers' cabin accommodation on the ship, twenty-one Officers were ordered to embark with the 5th Leicesters on S.S. *Andania*, which was due to sail on January 21st. On January 20th the C.O., with Major Hind, went down to Marseilles Harbour and visited H.M.T. *Andania* (late of the Cunard Line, which can only be described as a floating palace, fitted with every modern luxury) and arranged for Cabins for the Officers. On the morning of January 21st *Au revoir* was said to the twenty-one Officers who proceeded to Marseilles Harbour to embark, and afterwards the Battalion paraded in fatigue dress without rifles for a route march, as the effect of being vaccinated was now at its height. This march will

always be remembered by the Battalion owing to the beautiful country they marched through, winding their way in single file on goat tracks over mountainous country covered with pine trees and descending on the East to a small Bay surrounded on three sides by high hills covered with trees, and the sea the colour of the bluest sky.

On returning to the camp in the afternoon all were surprised to see the Officers to whom they had said *Au revoir* in the morning, back again in camp, and they told us they had embarked on the S.S. *Andania*, and had most luxurious Cabins allotted to them, had just finished lunch, when a telegram was received saying all orders for the 46th Division to proceed to Egypt were cancelled and the Officers were to return to their Battalions. All ranks were very much surprised and despondent at this news.

2nd Lieuts. E. J. Peach and S. E. Cairns joined for duty with the Battalion on January 21st.

On January 24th orders came through for the Battalion to entrain at Marseilles for an unknown destination at midnight on January 25th.

<i>Left Camp</i> <i>Chateau Mussot,</i> <i>for unknown</i> <i>destination,</i> <i>Jan. 25th.</i>	On January 25th, the Robin Hoods marched from the camp, Chateau Mus- sot to Gare D'Arenc, Marseilles, and entrained at midnight. There was in- sufficient accommodation provided on the train for all the Battalion, so C Company, under Capt. Walton, was left behind and returned to camp at Chateau Mussot. The coaches provided were in a very dirty condition, evidently having been previously used for the conveyance of horses and had not been cleaned out. The men allotted to each coach hurriedly attempted to clean them as quickly as possible and endeavour made, but without success, to obtain clean straw.
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OFFICERS OF THE ROBIN HOODS.

Photograph taken at Camp Chateau, Mussot, Marseilles, January, 1916.

Top Row : 2nd Lieut. H. W. Walker, 2nd Lieut. W. F. Cowern; *2nd Lieut. J. A. Cooper, 2nd Lieut. A. Mansell, 2nd Lieut. J. E. Kemshall, *2nd Lieut. C. H. Burton, 2nd Lieut. R. D. Clay, 2nd Lieut. F. Clay.

Middle Row : 2nd Lieut. C. W. Good, *Lieut. A. L. M. Dickinson, †2nd Lieut. R. B. Emmett, †Lieut. W. F. Player, †Lieut. J. Hancock, Lieut. F. P. Sims, *2nd Lieut. F. B. Gamble, Lieut. N. E. Webster, †2nd Lieut. W. G. Farrer, †2nd Lieut. F. C. Flint, †Lieut. and

Bottom Row : *Mr. E. Skinner, †2nd Lieut. S. L. Lancaster, *Lieut. J. Macpherson, Lieut. B. T. Hooley, *Capt. T. H. Leman
 Qr.-Mr. W. H. Round, *Capt. R. M. Gotch, (Major R. J. Wordsworth), †Major H. Bradwell, (Brigadier General C. T. Shipley),
 Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill (Commanding), *Major L. A. Hind, Capt. J. W. Scott, R.A.M.C., (The Rev. J. P. Hales, Brigade
 Chaplain), †Capt. A. A. Walton, — Absent, Lieut. E. R. Barlow and Lieut. G. F. Fish.

*Afterwards killed in action. †Afterwards wounded. Brigade Staff in brackets ().

Nine of the above Officers were afterwards killed in action, two died and nine wounded.

It was a very depressed Battalion that entrained, as all had been looking forward to going to Egypt, and felt that whatever dangers might lay before them they would be as nothing compared with the perils and hardships passed through.

At 1 a.m., January 26th, the train steamed out of Marseilles to take the Robin Hoods, they knew not where. The train proceeded via Valence, Lyons, Macon, Montereau, Villeneuve, St. George's, Versailles, Amiens, and on arriving at Pont Remy at 12.30 a.m. on January 28th, were ordered to detrain. The Robin Hoods had been in the train three days.

It was most difficult to unload the Transport in the sidings at this Station, as there was no platform alongside the train, and the extreme darkness added much to the difficulty.

Major Wordsworth, of the Brigade Staff, met the Battalion with orders for them to march to Domquer, where they would be billeted.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VIMY RIDGE.

January 28th to May 18th, 1916.

A French Guide had been detailed to meet the Battalion on detraining at Pont-Remy, and Pont-Remy, to conduct them to the village of Domqueur, a distance of some twelve miles. As mentioned in the last chapter, the night was exceedingly dark as the Robin Hoods, about 1.15 a.m., marched out of Pont-Remy Station. The Brigade Staff Captain had pointed out on the map the position of the village of Domqueur, but it was difficult to pick up the exact route as the map could only be indifferently read by the hand electric flash lamps, but the general direction and compass bearing of the march was carefully noted.

The Battalion had not proceeded far when it was noticed that the French Guide had, at a junction of roads, taken the one bearing to the left, whereas the direction by the map should have been to the right. The Guide was asked if he had not taken the wrong turning, but replied saying he was taking this road, as although it was slightly longer, it was much better for the Transport. The Robin Hoods thereon continued the march, with the usual ten minutes halt, until nearly 3 a.m., when the Guide was again asked if he was quite satisfied that he

was taking the Battalion the right way, and replied saying he was. On resuming the march and proceeding for nearly another two hours, the Guide was noticed to strike a match and look at one of the Kilometre stones. The Robin Hoods were halted and the Guide once more questioned, as the Battalion by this time should have reached or been quite close to their destination.

The Guide now confessed he had mistaken the road and lost his way. The Kilometre stone gave Abbeville 8 Kilometres distant (about 5 miles) so the Robin Hoods proceeded to the outskirts of Abbeville where they halted and slept on the roadside until daybreak when breakfast was served.

On referring to the map it was found that the Battalion had marched some thirteen miles from Pont-Remy Station to Abbeville, and they were now about 12 miles from the village of Domqueur (almost *Abbeville, march* the same distance as this village was *to Domqueur, Jan.* from Pont-Remy). About 9.30 a.m. *28th to Feb. 9th.* the Robin Hoods once more commenced their march to Domqueur, and arrived at 3.30 p.m., in which village they were billeted until February 9th.

Six Battalions of the Division had sailed for Egypt before the orders were cancelled and the remaining six Battalions were now billeted in the villages round Domqueur to wait the return of those who had already gone to Egypt in order to re-assemble the 46th Division.

On February 3rd the Robin Hoods paraded with the Sherwood Foresters Brigade for inspection by the Brigadier. The Brigade marched past and several other Brigade movements were carried out. Afterwards the Brigadier addressed the Battalions and congratulated them upon their splendid work during the past year. A list of casualties suffered, and honours won, by the Brigade was read out.

Whilst in billets at Domqueur the Officers were most kindly entertained by the owner of the old Chateau de Plouy-Domqueur, who was also the Master of the Hounds, Chasse-droit-Briquet d'Artois, and he showed with much pride a painting of himself, on a white horse jumping over a table laid out for a Hunt breakfast, which was hung in the Billiard Room. He said his ancestors had lived on the site for nearly eight hundred years.

The Battalion had most comfortable quarters at Domqueur and on being *Marched to Prouville and billeted from Feb. 15th to Feb. 21st.* ordered to move to Prouville left the village with much regret. During their stay at Domqueur, Lewis Guns were issued to the Battalion, and the Machine Gun Officer, Lieut. B. T. Hooley, very carefully and efficiently trained the machine gunners in the use of the new gun.

On February 10th a composite Platoon, under 2nd Lieut. W. G. Farrer, left the Battalion for Headquarters of the 17th Corps, to act as escort for the G.O.C. The Robin Hoods felt very proud of this Platoon as they watched them march away, and it would have been difficult for any Battalion to have sent a finer Platoon than this.

Later in the day of the 10th inst., the Robin Hoods left Domqueur and marched to Prouville, where they were billeted. On February 16th A and C Companies, under Major H. Bradwell, were detached from the Battalion and marched to Forceville, staying the night of 16/17th at Beauval.

2nd Lieuts. E. T. Peach and J. E. Hemshall and 36 other ranks were transferred to the Brigade Machine Gun Company now being formed, Sergt. Hildyard being appointed Coy. Sergt.-Major. On February 20th D Company proceeded to Beauval to be attached to the 46th Divisional Training School.

On February 21st Battalion Headquarters *Left Prouville* and B Company marched to Berneuil, *and marched* where they went into billets. Companies *to Berneuil,* were now for some days separated, A and *February 21st.* C Companies being at Forceville and D Company at Beauval. On February 24th, D Company marched to Fieffs and billeted there. On February 28th, A and C Companies left Forceville and marched to Louvencourt.

On February 29th Battalion Headquarters *Left Berneuil and* quarters and B Company marched to *marched to* Beauval via Montrelet and Bonne-Beauval, *Feb. 29th* ville, where D Company joined up, *to March 6th.* A and C Companies remaining at Louvencourt, leaving there on March 1st for Gezaincourt.

On March 6th the Robin Hoods left *Left Beauval* Beauval and marched with the Brigade *and marched to* to Beaudricourt, A and C Companies *Beaudricourt,* rejoining the Battalion on the line of *March 6th.* march South of Doullens. The Battalion was now once more complete, and on arriving at Beaudricourt was billeted.

On March 6th information was received that the 46th Division would take over a section of the trench line on the Vimy Ridge now held by the French troops. On March 7th, Lt.-Col. A. W. Brewill, Major Bradwell, Capt. A. A. Walton, Capt. W. H. Round, Lieut. W. F. Player and four Non.-Com. Officers from each Company, left Beaudricourt and proceeded by Motor 'Buss to Mont St. Eloy, to visit the trench line the Battalion was to take over on the 9th inst. On arriving at Mont St. Eloy the C.O's of Battalions in the Brigade went to the Headquarters of the French Commandant, who explained the general position and said it was very important that the enemy should not obtain information of the British

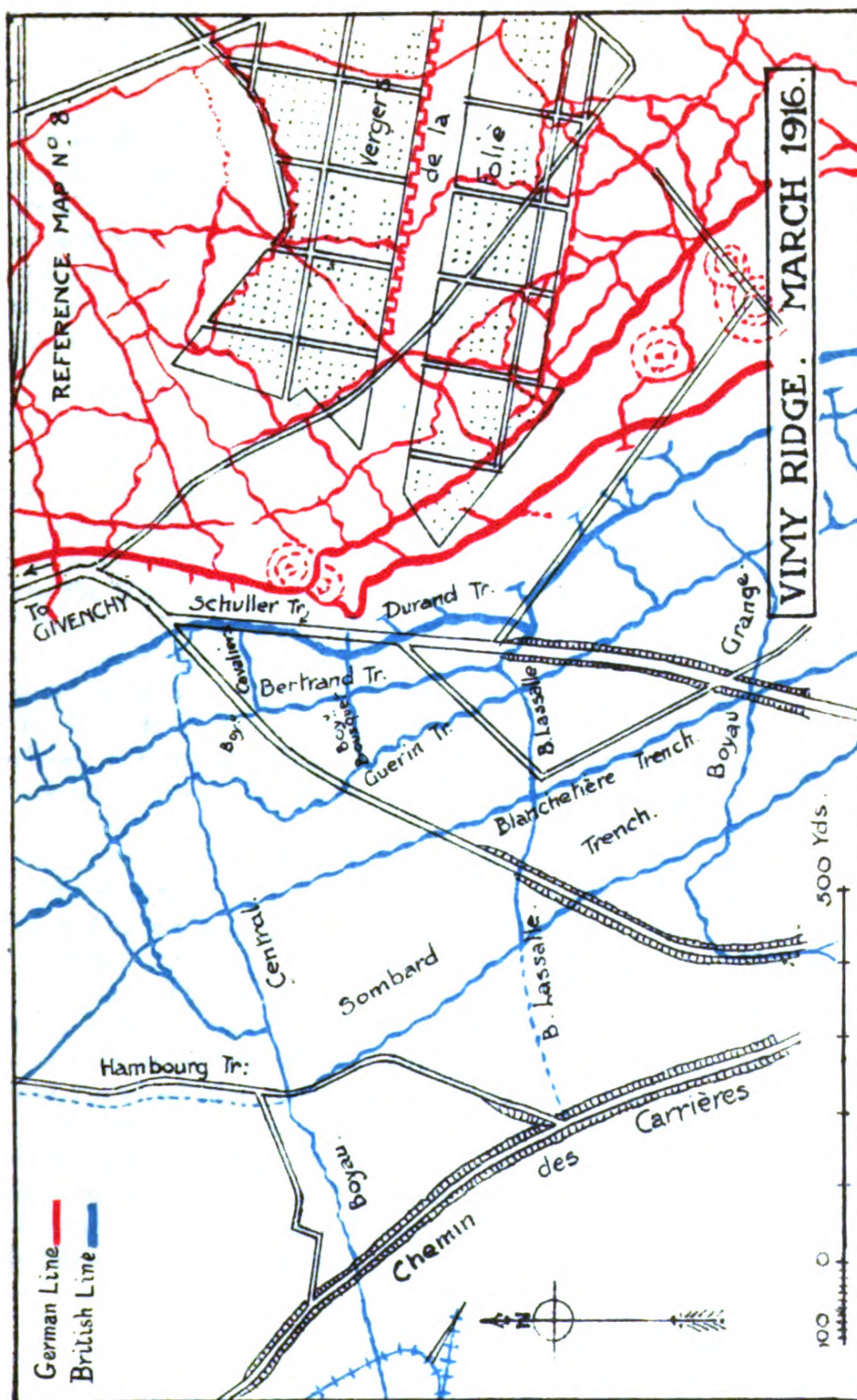
relieving the French troops in this area, so all Officers, and Non. Com. Officers, were supplied with French helmets prior to going up to the trenches.

The section of the trench line to be taken over by the Brigade lay between Souchez on the North, to Neuville St. Vaast on the South. It was in this area that some of the fiercest fighting of the war had taken place, "The Labyrinth" and Souchez Sugar Refinery being adjacent to our line.

In the early part of 1915 the trench line was about one mile further West than at present, near to the Route de Bethune (the Arras-Bethune Road). This road was marked by a line of trees on either side, now considerably destroyed by shell fire, the whole area being now an indescribable scene of desolation, old trenches fallen in, barbed wire, and shell pitted ground everywhere.

The French troops had by brilliant assault driven the Boche across the Route-de-Bethune nearly to the Ridge, but the Germans had been able to resist a further advance and their trench line now ran along the crest of the Vimy Ridge, from which they could, looking West, see and dominate the whole of the ground as far as Mont St. Eloy.

On leaving the French Commandant the Commanding Officers rejoined their Battalion parties, and under the guidance of a French Officer marched from Mont St. Eloy and proceeded South of Bois de Berthonval across the open to the Route-de-Bethune, the ground being a veritable quagmire with mud up to the knees, but the French troops had laid lattice boards, known as "duck boards," along which the detachments proceeded in single file at about 200 yards interval between parties. The most Western portion of the Communication Trench known as Boyeau Central, having been partially destroyed by artillery fire and partially fallen in, was some two



feet or more deep in mud and water, which prevented the parties availing themselves of the protection of this trench. The French Officer Guide at the head of the detachments had stopped on several occasions to point out trenches and positions in which the guns covering the sector were placed, the consequence of this being that the rear parties gradually closed on the leading.

Evidently their progress had been watched by the enemy, as on arriving at the Route de Bethune, a salvo was fired just as they arrived at the trench running alongside the road. Fortunately these detachments escaped without casualties, but there were several among the French troops garrisoning the trench at this point. On the East side of the Road the Communication Trench (Boyeau Central) was intact, and the party proceeded in this trench as far as Chemin des Carrieres, when each party separated and proceeded to the Headquarters of the French Battalions they were to relieve. The Robin Hood contingent found the French Battalion Headquarters situated in "The Happy Valley," at point B on reference map, and the C.O. and Major Bradwell were cordially welcomed by Colonel D'Olce, Commanding the 114th Regiment d' Infanterie, the other Officers and Non-Com. Officers going to the various positions in the trench line that would be taken over by their Companies on relieving. The French Commandant said that about ten days ago the Germans had, after exploding a number of mines under the French front line trenches, assaulted and captured the whole of the first line trenches, the second line trenches, now being held as the front line, were poor trenches, very shallow, full of water and mud, and just as bad as could be, and since the old front line trenches were lost, the Germans had continued their mine galleries, three of which had been located, one almost

under and the two others quite adjacent to the new front line. He said he was sorry to hand over to the Robin Hoods a situation so precarious, *Mais c'est la guerre*, and the best must be made of the position.

It had been somewhat difficult for the C.O. to understand all that was told him, as the conversation was entirely in French, the French Commandant being unable to speak English, but as one of his Officers could speak English, he sent for him to take the C.O. round the trench line. This Officer, Capt. M. Mesnil, shortly after came to Headquarters and, having lived in London some fourteen years, spoke like an Englishman, thus enabling all the further conversation to be clearly understood by each Commanding Officer.

The sector of the trench line to be taken over by the Robin Hoods occupied a frontage of some 600 yards between Boyau Central and Boyau Lassale (see reference map No. 8), the front line trenches being named "Schüler" and "Durand," about one hundred yards in rear being the support trench "Guerin." A further two hundred yards behind a new support trench had been commenced and partly wired, named "Blanchetierre," and again behind this the Reserve trench "Perrier," in which there were one or two deep dugouts, the front line trench having no dugouts or cover of any description.

The advance party of the Robin Hoods stayed the nights of the 8th and 9th in the trenches to become thoroughly acquainted with them before the Battalion came up.

*Battn. marches
from Beauval to
ACQ, March 8th.*

On March 8th, the Battalion, under Major Hind, marched from Beauval to ACQ, where they were billeted in huts, and on the evening of March 9th moved up to relieve the

Relieved the 114th Regt. d' Infanterie in Vimy Ridge trenches, March 9th to March 19th. 114th Regiment d' Infanterie in the sector of the line on Vimy Ridge, D Company taking over the left sector of the line, C Company the centre, and A Company the right, B Company going into Reserve in " Perrier " trench. On our left the 138th Brigade was to take over, and on our right the 5th Sherwood Foresters would take over the following night.

Owing to the positions of the German mine galleries, which had been located so close to the front line trenches, it was decided to hold this line with as few men as possible, and that the support trench " Guerrin " should be worked upon and made into a good defensive position.

The Crater of a large enemy mine, which had been exploded about 50 yards East of Boyau Bousquet dominated and to some extent enfiladed the front line trenches, making them a very unhealthy place for the garrison. The South portion of " Bertrand " trench, between " Boyau des Cavaliers " and " Bousquet " had been destroyed. The rapid reconstruction of this trench consequently became of vital importance in view of the mine gallery the Germans were pushing forward towards the point where Bousquet Communicating Trench joined the front line trenches. The Communication trench Boyau Lasalle also at several points was dominated by enemy machine gun fire from the Crater of the mine before mentioned.

During the ten days the Robin Hoods were in the trenches all ranks worked at high pressure and did much good work to improve the position.

From the front line trenches the old Communicating trenches originally running up to the trench line taken and occupied by the enemy, had been severed about half

way between the two lines, and the heads of these were held by friend and foe as sentry posts. Those running out from trench "Schüler" were now and during the whole time the Battalion occupied the trenches the scene almost nightly of fierce bombing fights.

A sentry in one of the saps running out from trench "Durand," located at night a party of some forty Germans working on the barbed wire entanglements in front of their lines. Lieut. Emmett being informed of this, took a Lewis gun section up the sap and opened fire, killing or wounding almost the whole of the party.

Relieved in the trenches by 8th Sherwood Foresters, and marched to Rest Billets at Mont St. Eloy, March 19th. On the evening of March 19th the Battalion was relieved in the trenches by the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, and marched to the West side of Mont St. Eloy, where they were billeted in huts. This period of rest was greatly appreciated after the severe strain of the previous ten days in the trench line. The precarious position, the absence of dugouts, the most depressing climatic conditions, had told considerably on all ranks.

In consequence of the very adverse weather conditions and the occurrence of a very large number of cases of "trench feet," the Medical Staff and Stretcher Bearers were tried to the utmost in their efforts to prevent serious reduction in the fighting strength of the Battalion.

Arrangements were made for the provision of hot drinks, for drying socks, and attention to the feet of those who showed symptoms of this condition, but in spite of this many men had to be sent down.

About this time Bugler-Sergt. Mills, who had been in charge of the Stretcher Bearers since mobilisation, left on expiration of his term of service. He had done most excellent work throughout. Previous reference

has been made to his gallantry in bringing in wounded men of the K.R.R. at Hooge.

Sergt. Morris succeeded him in charge of the Stretcher Bearers. This N.C.O. of genial countenance and burly build had inspired great confidence in his Company by his resourcefulness in the trenches. His Company Commander in England had pressed for his rejection for foreign service on account of his inability to take part in the leap frog exercises at physical drill. After experience showed what a great loss this would have occasioned unnecessarily if this objection had been sustained.

In this connection it may be mentioned how fortunate the Battalion was in the N.C.O's who acted as Medical Orderlies. A/Sergt. Fanthorpe, R.A.M.C., attached from the North Midland Mounted Field Ambulance for water duties was a priceless asset to the Medical Officer in this Department, also in the general routine of medical work, sanitation, and the treatment of sick and wounded.

The Battalion Medical Orderly, Corporal Thrall, a lad of 19 at mobilisation, was also one of the lights of the Medical Staff. His cheerfulness and unvarying good nature, also the fact that he was Captain of the Battalion Football Team, made him a great favourite in the Battalion. He was gifted with extraordinary endurance on long marches besides having to remain behind continually with men who had fallen out and to regain his place with the Battalion, he usually spent the time at the halts performing some service for others. It is sad to record that he lost his life at Gommecourt, July 1st, 1916.

It is impossible to do more than mention others who followed the above-mentioned in the early years of the War—Sergt. Argyle and Corporal Cope; but the fact that both received decorations shows that there is much that could be said.

On March 25th the Robin Hoods left their rest billets and moved up to relieve the 8th Trench Line Sherwood Foresters in the trench line. *Moved up to Trench Line and relieved the 8th Sherwood Foresters, March 25th.* This Battalion had during their period in the trenches done exceedingly good work in improving " Bertrand " and " Guerrin " support trenches, commenced by the Robin Hoods, but the position was daily becoming more precarious. The enemy were working hard at their underground galleries which they had now pushed to and almost under the front line trenches and it was expected they would be exploded at any time.

On taking over from the French, a certain number of their mining Engineers had been left who were now strengthened by a number of British, and counter-mining work was being carried out as rapidly as possible. The excavations being in white chalk, all material in the mining operations had to be filled in sand bags and carried away, for if the white chalk had been thrown in the vicinity of the mine shaft it would have at once drawn the enemy's artillery fire and the head of the shaft would have soon been destroyed. This necessitated very large carrying parties, night and day, to take away the excavated chalk.

At a meeting of the Commanding Officers and the Brigadier in one of the deep dugouts in trench " Perrier," very careful consideration was given as to what action should be taken when the enemy exploded their mines. It was decided in the left sector of the line garrisoned by the Robin Hoods to excavate two additional short communicating trenches from the support trench " Guerrin " to the front line, one being named " Broad Marsh," and the other " Birkin," and also secret orders were drawn up. Those issued by the C.O. of the Robin Hoods may be of interest.

Secret :—Action to be taken in case of mine explosion on front of Battalion holding left sector.

1. In the event of a crater being formed by enemy's mine explosion in any point of our front line, or within 30 yards of our front line, the near lip of the crater will be immediately occupied, and should the enemy have gained a footing in any part of our line, he will be ejected by bayonet and grenades.
2. The Company Commander in the trench affected will at once take the following steps :—
 - (a) Send message to Artillery. " Mine blown up opposite. Please give covering fire, also send report to Battalion Headquarters."
 - (b) Send covering party half platoon to hold near lip.
 - (c) Send digging party of half platoon which will draw tools and materials stored in the special dump which contains 1000 sandbags, 25 shovels, 5 picks, 2 rolls barbed wire, 40 corkscrew stakes and wire palisades.
 - (d) Send two parties of four Grenadiers each, to protect each side of flank digging party.
 - (e) Independent flanking parties will be sent out by O.C. Company concerned, as verbally detailed, in the event of explosion at one of the specified places, each party consisting of 1 Lewis gun contingent, 2 Rifle Grenadiers, 4 Grenadiers and 12 Rifles under one Commander.
 - (f) Bring up Support.
 - (g) Send constant information to Battalion Headquarters.
 - (h) Place a post on main Communicating trenches to prevent stragglers from getting to the rear.
3. Battalion Headquarters will, if necessary, fill the place of troops moved forward from support trench by sending forward a Company from the Reserve Battalion.

Relieved by 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters and marched to Rest Billets at Mont St. Eloy, March 31st. On March 31st the Robin Hoods were relieved in the front line trenches by the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters and returned to rest billets at Mont St. Eloy. During this period in rest, on the evening of April 4th, Capt. Round, with D Company, was sent up to the trenches for specially digging a new trench.

On April 5th the Robin Hoods were inspected at Mont St. Eloy by the G.O.C. 46th Division. There were rumours that on the previous days some of the other Battalions of the Division had been inspected by the Divisional General, and had not turned out satisfactorily, so particular care was taken to have every man as clean as it was possible to be after the very muddy state in which they had returned from the trenches. The inspection took place at 10 a.m., D Company having previously returned from the trenches about 8 a.m. The inspection of A and B Companies passed off well, but on going round C Company the G.O.C. stopped in front of one man and turning to the C.O. asked what he thought of him. He replied, saying that he considered he was the dirtiest man he had ever seen on any parade in all his experience, with which the G.O.C. fully agreed. (It was afterwards found this man had been on Sanitary duties and had at the last minute rushed up and unnoticed fallen in with his Company after they had been preliminarily inspected by the Company Commander). With this single exception the G.O.C. expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the creditable turn out of the Battalion, especially was D Company complimented on the smart and clean way they had paraded after just returning from a trying experience in the trenches.

The discipline of the Battalion was extremely good. It was a very rare occurrence for any man to be sent to the C.O. for trial, and up to this time not a single case

had occurred of any man being sent from the Robin Hoods for trial by Court Martial, but during this period in rest billets two men were brought, on April 6th, before the C.O. for drunkenness, and it was found they had obtained spirits from an inhabitant of St. Eloy who had been illicitly selling drink. One case was simple, and the man was given 14 days C.B. The other case was more complicated, as the man had a bad record, and he had evidently come across the Company Sergt.-Major, and had said to several of his comrades that the C.M.S. would not come out of the trench line alive again. A serious view was taken of this threat by several witnesses, and the man was ordered to be sent for trial by Court Martial. Punishments and waiting for trial did not excuse men from going with the Battalion for their turn of duty in the trenches, and these two proceeded with the Robin Hoods to the trench line on the evening of this day. On the C.O. and 2nd in Command going their rounds in the trenches about 4.30 a.m. on the 7th inst., they came across the man who had received 14 days C.B., dead, having been shot through the head, and shortly afterwards they found the other man who had been ordered for trial by Court Martial, very seriously wounded, so by permission the Court Martial proceedings were cancelled. What eventually happened to this man was not known.

On April 6th, the Robin Hoods moved up to the Vimy Ridge and relieved the 8th Sherwood Foresters. The trenches were in an extremely bad condition owing to a heavy fall of snow and the ground frozen, which entailed a very considerable amount of work in cleaning. Some 200 yards of the support trench "Guerrin," being so full of snow and water, could not be occupied. About 100 yards of the Communication trench "Boyau Central," near the

junction with reserve trench "Perrier," passed over low ground, and the sides of this trench had been built up with thick fir poles some 8 feet high, and banked up with soil, which had entailed an enormous amount of labour. Unknown to Battalion Headquarters, the Brigade Trench Mortar Officer selected a position close to this for his Trench Mortar Battery from which he shelled the enemy's front line, the result being the German artillery retaliated with a heavy fire on this position and destroyed some eighty yards or more of the Communicating Trench, especially the portion which had been constructed with so much hard labour. It was exceedingly annoying to have a portion of this important communication trench destroyed through the carelessness of the Trench Mortar Officer in selecting his position. The whole of the British trenches were so dominated by the enemy from their higher ground that it was difficult to find good posts for the Battalion Snipers, but in spite of this they did most excellent work.

Battalion Headquarters were situated near to the point where "Boyau Central" crossed trench "Carrières," and excavated under a hill where they were free from enemy observation, and safe from their artillery fire. The French who constructed these dugouts must have had some excellent artists on their Headquarters Staff, as on the boarded walls were some beautiful drawings of "Ballet Girls," done in poker work and white chalk, which were the admiration of all who visited Headquarters.

<i>Relieved by 8th Sherwood Foresters in trench line, April 12th.</i>	On April 12th, the Robin Hoods were relieved by the 8th Sherwood Foresters in the trenches, and returned to their rest billets, Mont St. Eloy, on the 15th. Capt. E. H. Spalding rejoined the Battalion after having recovered from his wounds, and on the 17th was appointed temporary Major.
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On the night of April 17th a working party was sent up to the trenches, under Lieut. W. F. Player, to work in the left sector of Brigade Front. During the night the enemy exploded one of their mines under the front line trench in the vicinity of the working party, who stopped work at once, attacked and seized the near lip of the crater, whilst the Garrison of the trench line dug a new trench in rear, again connecting up the front line trenches. The C.O. 8th Sherwood Foresters, wrote thanking the Robin Hoods for the valuable assistance given by the party at this difficult time. On the evening of the 18th an urgent message was received asking for one Company of the Battalion to be sent immediately to the trenches to support the 8th Battalion as another mine explosion was considered imminent. C Company and Battalion Bombers, under 2nd Lieut. Cooper, were at once sent forward, and on arriving at the trenches found that a mine had been exploded and a furious fight was in progress for the possession of the Crater. C Company replaced the garrison in Support trench "Guerrin" (from Boyau Central to Lassale) whilst the remainder of the 8th Battalion dug a new trench round the near side of the mine crater, C Company continuing to garrison "Guerrin" trench during the 19th.

<i>Battalion moved up to trench line Vimy Ridge, April 19th to April 29th.</i>	The following Officers joined the Battalion for duty—2nd Lieut. C. W. Shelton (rejoined), 2nd Lieut. W. C. Robinson, and 2nd Lieut. R. Neville.
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On the night of the 19th, the Battalion left their rest billets and moved up to Reserve trenches on the Vimy Ridge, to supply fatigue parties for the mining Engineers, as counter mines were now being worked as rapidly as possible. The Battalion also formed the Reserve troops to the 7th Brigade, 25th Division, who had taken over the sector of the line in the

front trenches previously held by the Sherwood Foresters Brigade. The dugouts taken over by the Headquarters and B Company were close to the Route-de-Bethune, A Company garrisoning the Reserve trench "Perrier," and D Company "Cross Street." The whole position was very heavily shelled during the day of the 20th, and at 10.30 in the evening the enemy exploded a mine at the head of "Boyau Central," making a huge crater and very severe fighting took place for the possession of the crater, which eventually was held by the British troops. C Company remained in "Guerrin" trench in support during this engagement and rejoined the Battalion in the dugouts Route-de-Bethune on the 20th inst. For the following six days, until April 27th, the Robin Hoods were employed almost entirely in furnishing mining fatigue parties.

The position on the Vimy Ridge became daily more precarious. The enemy's artillery fire was of unusual violence and increasing in its intensity. On April 28th B and D Companies were moved to dugouts in Neuville St. Vaast, A Company to "Cross Street," and C Company sent to garrison "Perrier" trench, afterwards moving forward and taking over trench "Guerrin," and forming supporting Company to 3rd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, 7th Brigade.

During this night the enemy sprang a mine at the head of "Broadmarsh" Communication Trench, the possession of which was furiously fought for.

The Battalion gave considerable assistance from time to time to the troops of the 7th Brigade in the front line, and the Brigadier General of this Brigade wrote to Brigadier General Shipley, thanking him for the services of the Robin Hoods.

April 30th, 1916.

Dear Shipley,

I am just sending you a line to tell you what excellent work the 7th Battalion Sherwood Foresters have done for us here.

I have had to send down to Mont St. Eloy for an extra supply of bombs on three nights in succession, and on each occasion the 7th Sherwood Foresters have given me the greatest assistance by unloading, detonating, and carrying up the bombs to the Battalions, thereby enabling me to keep up sufficient reserve.

I shall be very glad if you will convey to the 7th Sherwood Foresters my thanks and appreciation for their valuable services.

There has been considerable mining activity on our front, three surprise mines having been sprung by the Huns, none of them were expected by the Miners.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES GOSLING.

On the night of April 29th, the Robin Hoods were relieved in the Reserve Battn. relieved in trenches by the 5th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, the 46th Division having received orders to move South. The 5th Leicesters and marched to Mont St. Eloy, where tea was provided by the 10th Battalion Cheshire Regiment, and afterwards marched to ACQ, where 'Busses had been provided to convey the Robin Hoods to Penin and Doffine, arriving at 5.30 a.m., where they were billeted. During their stay in these villages the Battalion was exercised with the Brigade in attacks under smoke clouds on trench positions at Tincques.

On May 3rd, 2nd Lieut. F. B. Gamble was appointed to command Brigade Trench Mortar Battery.

On May 6th, the Robin Hoods left *Battalion proceeds* Doffine and marched to Ivergny, *by Route march to* where they were billeted. On May *Ivergny, May 6th.* 7th early Communion, and later Divine Service was held, the Chaplain being the Rev. Baldwin, a former Curate of St. Mary's, Nottingham.

At 2.30 p.m. the Robin Hoods marched *Marched from* during a heavy rainstorm from Ivergny *Ivergny to* to Humbercamp, arriving at 8.30 p.m., *Humbercamp,* and were billeted. On May 9th the *billeted from* following extract appeared in Brigade *May 7th to 18th.* Orders :—

The G.O.C. has much pleasure in publishing the following communication received by 17th Corps Commander.

“ I wish to convey to you that I most sincerely regret the departure of your Division, and only hope it may be of a temporary nature. I wish you and your Command every luck and plenty of glory and success, and shall be delighted when I hear of their doings.”

It was with the very deepest regret to the Robin Hoods that Major Bradwell (who had been with the Battalion the whole time since its arrival in France) left to take duty with the III. Army School at Auxi-le-Chateau, Capt. T. H. Leman taking over the command of A Company in his place.

During the period the Battalion was at Humbercamp they were sent forward to the trenches in the vicinity of Fonquevillers to clean out, repair, deepen the various Communication trenches, and to dig telephone trenches six feet deep.

On May 17th a very unfortunate accident happened, 2nd Lieut. J. A. Cooper, Battalion Grenade Officer, being killed by a premature explosion of a rifle grenade whilst instructing the Battalion Grenadiers. He had given most excellent service with the Robin Hoods, particularly during their occupation of the Vimy Ridge trenches. When grenade fighting was of nightly occurrence he organised and commanded the grenade attacks with conspicuous bravery and zeal. He was buried by his Comrades, in the British Cemetery adjoining the Churchyard at Humbercamp.

CHAPTER VII.

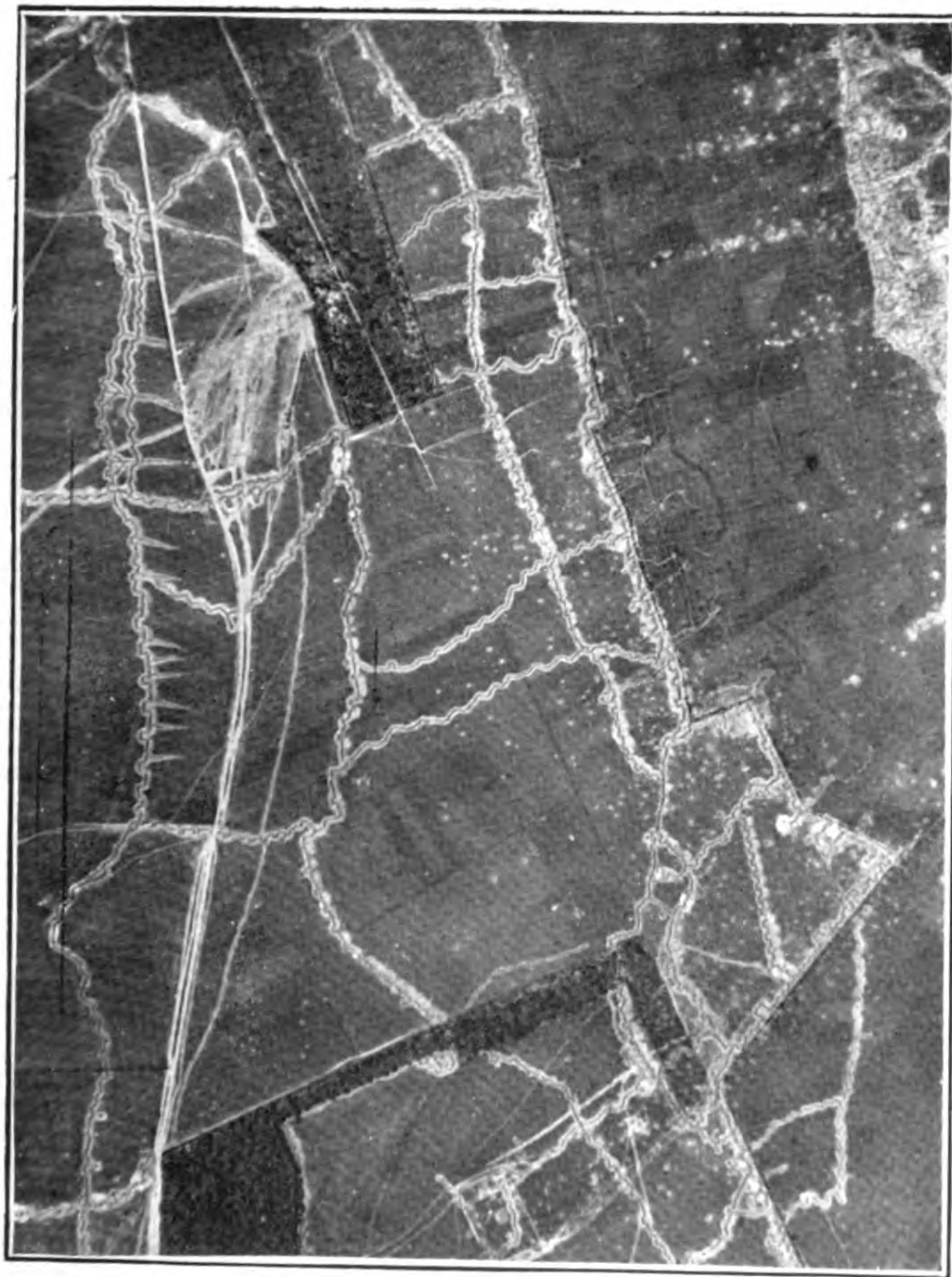
GOMMECOURT.

18th May, 1916 to 2nd July, 1916.

NOTE.—This Chapter has been contributed by the Rev. C. W. Good, Chaplain to the Robin Hoods; in 1916, he was a Lieutenant with the the Battalion, and Intelligence Officer to the Sherwood Foresters Brigade.

THE title this chapter bears is the name of a village situated North of the Somme, almost mid-way between Arras and Albert. It was held by the enemy during the whole of that long period of fixed trench warfare, from the beginning of 1915 until they were driven out in the Spring of 1917. The German defensive line ran round the Western side of the village, forming a sharp salient, and was the most Westerly point of the whole theatre of war known as the Western Front. It occupied a commanding position overlooking the British lines. By nature a veritable stronghold, and in addition fortified by every available means that modern engineering science could devise. The importance of this position from the enemy's standpoint may be gathered from the fact that it was held by part of the 2nd Guards Reserve Division—picked troops, numbering 1295 Rifles and 11 Machine Guns, with 56 Rifles and 1 Machine Gun in close support. This information being disclosed by the Official German Report on the Defence of Gommecourt, which subsequently fell into our hands. Briefly, the plan of attack was to cut off the village by driving in wedges from the North and South, these two storming parties meeting East of Gommecourt.

The Robin Hoods, together with the 5th Sherwood Foresters, were allotted the task of attacking from the



Attack Front, 46th Division, Gommecourt, July 1st, 1916.

Aircraft Photo.

North; while the attack from the South was entrusted to the Staffordshire Brigade.

Undaunted by the formidable duty ahead, the battalion proceeded with the preliminary preparations. Ill luck soon showed its hand, for, on May 18th, the Robin Hoods lost their Commanding Officer, Lt.-Col. A. W. Brewill. Actually on the day before the battalion took over the trenches from the 137th Brigade, from which the attack was later to be launched, Colonel Brewill was sent to hospital at Lucheux. The exacting strain of a long period of responsibility, and particularly that of Commanding the battalion on the Vimy Ridge, now began to tell, and the Medical Authorities insisted on his immediate return to England. It is impossible to proceed without paying a warm tribute to this very gallant Officer. His care—one might almost say affection—for every Officer and man under his command, coupled with his skill and resourcefulness as a commander, have remained an inspiration to all who had the privilege of serving under him. To him perhaps more than anyone else the Robin Hoods are indebted for that wonderful esprit de corps which thrilled every member of the battalion, and which carried them through many trying and desperate situations.

An able and worthy successor to Col. Brewill was found in Major Lawrence Arthur Hind, who took up the reins of command with vigour and determination at a very difficult period in the history of the battalion.

<i>Relieved 137th Brigade in trenches, Fonquevillers, May 19th to June 3rd.</i>	On May 19th, the Robin Hoods relieved a battalion of the 137th Brigade in the trenches West of Fonquevillers and East of Gommecourt. Thus gaining their first experience of the sector from which the attack was later to be launched. For several days previous, Officers and N.C.O's visited the line and reconnoitred
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the positions the various companies were to occupy. The battalion marched out of Humbercamp by platoons at half hour intervals, passing through the village of Pommier to Bienvillers. Here a long communication trench named " Berlin Street " was entered, which ran into the North-Western corner of Fonquevillers, about 800 yards from the German line. It was possible to leave the trench at this point and walk down the main village street, completely screened from the enemy's observation by houses in a fair state of repair, and many pretty orchards which surrounded the village. Several civilian inhabitants remained; one enterprising Frenchman actually ploughed his land in broad daylight within a thousand yards of the German positions. From Fonquevillers to the front line the main communication trenches were Roberts Avenue and Crawl Boys Lane. The relief was completed speedily and without mishap.

The energies of the battalion during this period in the line were concentrated in preparing the sector for the attack. Good work was done in clearing out derelict trenches and deepening those already in use. Picks and spades were more in evidence than rifles and bombs. However, this dream of becoming landscape gardeners received a rude interruption by a " demonstration " on the part of the Divisional Artillery. All men except those on sentry duty in the firing line were withdrawn; a regular canonade ensued, and the enemy sector opposite our trenches was literally smothered with bursting shells of all kinds. During this tour there were very few casualties: it was a quiet part of the line, and considering the importance of pressing on with all possible speed with the work in connection with the forthcoming attack, the policy of " live and let live " was allowed to continue, to our own great advantage.

Relieved On June 3rd the Robin Hoods were
in trenches, relieved, again during daylight, by
Fonquevillers, by the 8th Sherwood Foresters, and
8th Sherwood For. proceeded to billets in Bienvillers,
June 3rd. continuing the journey on June 6th
to Sus-St.-Ledger. The march was
carried out during the night in
torrential rain; but shortly after dawn the sun's cheer-
ing rays compensated for the unpleasantness of the long
dreary night, and the battalion entered Sus, drenched
to the skin, but in high spirits.

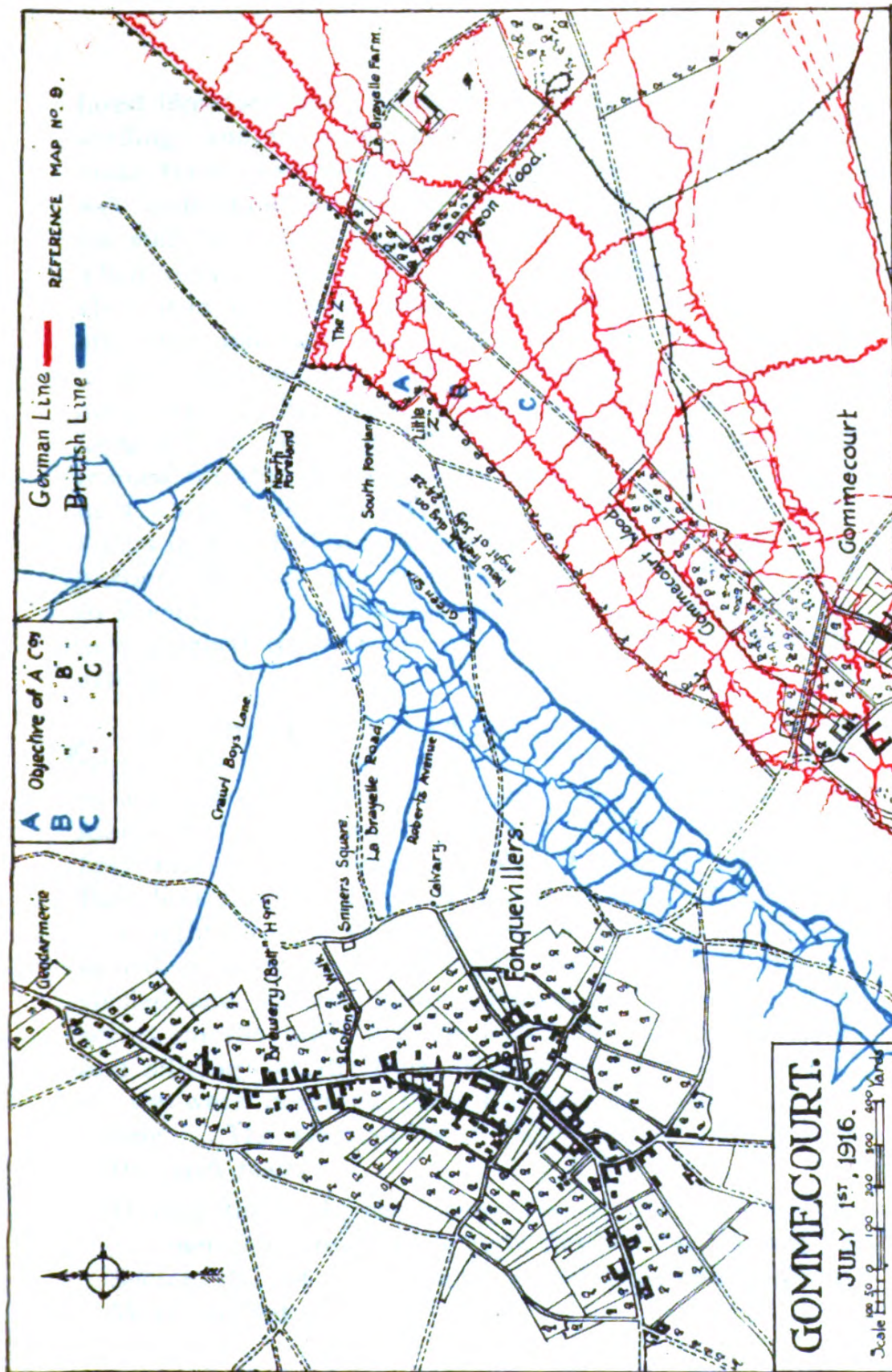
The spell of romance, which excellent billets and the beautiful scenery in and around Sus, cast over all ranks, was quickly broken. Such was the intensive training during this brief respite from the rigours of the front line that many expressed their preference for the trenches in unmistakable terms.

The training for the attack was now seriously taken in hand. A large tract of land had been secured and previous to our arrival, trenches—the exact counter-part of those held by the enemy at Gommecourt—had been dug. Dug-outs, machine gun emplacements, strong-posts, observation posts, etc., were all marked. As to the accuracy of these details there is no room for doubt, and no warmer tribute to the excellent work of our Intelligence Staff can be paid than is given in the following extract from the German Official Report, captured some months after the attack.

“ It must be acknowledged that the equipment and pre-
 paration of the English attack were magnificent . .
 . . The Officers were provided with excellent maps
 which shewed every German trench systematically
 named, and gave every detail of our positions. The
 sketches had been brought up to date with all our
 latest work.”

Those trenches must have been attacked fifty times. Every man knew his job down to the very last detail. Several enjoyable days were spent felling trees in Lucheux Forest. Any spare moments the battalion might have had were taken up with Physical Training and Bayonet Fighting, under the excellent supervision of Sgt.-Major Curley, who made the work attractive and interesting. All ranks threw live bombs. Our strenuous time at Sus was brought to a close by a final and realistic attack practice, under cover of a dense smoke screen; the sharpening of bayonets, and an enjoyable concert given by the Divisional Concert Party, the "Whiz-Bangs."

At 7 p.m. on June 18th the Robin Hoods left Sus-St.-Ledger and marched to Bien-
Bienvillers, villers. This sector now presented a very
June 19th to different spectacle. Guns were every-
30th, 1916. where; in many of the orchards on the
 outskirts of the adjacent villages they stood wheel to wheel. Heavy rains and the constant procession of guns and ammunition had churned the roads into muddy furrows. On the line of march near Saulty station the battalion passed a temporary field hospital, which had been erected specially for the accommodation of our casualties in the forthcoming attack. On every side were signs of the offensive. The civilians had left the area. The enemy artillery and our own kept up an intermittent but lively duel. The weather had completely changed the condition of the trenches; in the Communication trenches and the Fire trenches it was difficult to find a place where the muddy water came below the knees, and for long stretches it was up to the thighs. The effects of this disastrous weather were far-reaching; they were, in fact, a deciding factor in the attack. Large sections of trenches collapsed altogether, their sides simply sliding in, being undermined by the water. Bomb shelters, ammunition dumps, ration stores, &c.,



REFERENCE MAP NO. 9.

German Line
British Line

Objective of A Coy
" B "
" C "

GOMMECOURT.

JULY 1ST, 1916.

Scale 1:50,000

fared likewise. Add to this the damage done by hostile shelling, and the necessary drainage of the trenches to make them even passable with difficulty, and the reader will understand something of the problem confronting the staff, as to how to get the sector ready for the attack, when only 10 days remained. Needless to say this Herculean task never was accomplished. But why the attacking battalion was chosen for this work remains a mystery that can only be explained by those in authority. The Robin Hoods marched from Sus-St.-Ledger 'fit' down to the last-joined man, splendidly trained for the offensive work in hand, high in morale; in a word—ready for anything. But to remain at Bien-villers in a shelled area for 10 days, finding large working parties, fighting and reconnoitring patrols every night in drenching rain, reduced the strength of the battalion, and lessened the chances of success in the forthcoming attack.

One important achievement during this unpleasant period was the digging of a new trench about 140 yards in advance of the front line, nearly half way across Norman's-land. This was to form accommodation for the first wave and a jumping-off place for the attack. The Battalion supplied 250 men for this work. During the first night all went well and excellent progress was maintained. On the second night the party was heavily shelled and suffered many casualties. We prided ourselves on the quiet way in which the work proceeded, and although at the time we were blissfully ignorant of it, we were observed from the very beginning by the enemy. The German War Diary for Saturday, June 24th, 1916 reads:—

"During the night the enemy dug a new trench about 250 metres in front of the right flank of the Regimental Sector, N. of the Gommecourt-Fonquevillers Road. Wire not yet put up."

On the completion of this work the following telegram was received from the G.O.C. Division :—

“ The Major General Commanding wishes to congratulate all ranks of the Battalions concerned on their good work in advancing the line last night. The result has been most satisfactory and has been obtained with a minimum of casualties.”

On the nights of the 28th and 29th of June, two patrols were carried out which reflected great credit upon the Battalion. Each consisted of 2 Officers and 32 men. The purpose of the former was to ascertain the effect of our artillery bombardment on the German trench, and also to find out whether the enemy had evacuated his front line. The aim of the latter was to examine in detail the enemy's wire, reported to have been adequately cut by our artillery, so as to enable our own men to pass through easily during the attack. On the first night the enemy was discovered working in large numbers clearing out their trench, which had suffered severely during our bombardment. On the second night large numbers of the enemy occupied positions in No-man's-land in shell craters, &c., and surprised our patrol. Second Lieuts. Flint and Tootell and 8 men were wounded. During these patrols, good work was done by Second Lieuts. R. B. Emmett and C. H. Burton.

The attack was twice postponed, apparently owing to the incessant and heavy rains which had rendered our trenches almost impassable. Finally, the assault was ordered for 7.30 a.m. July 1st, 1916.

The Robin Hoods paraded by Platoons *Gommecourt*, at 2 p.m. on June 30th, and marched *July 1st, 1916.* from Bienvillers to Fonquevillers; platoons moving at short intervals, and by circuitous routes. The guns, which had been active during the past 10 days, now fired incessantly as the Battalion plodded its way through a sea of mud. As

they passed through Fonquevillers the various platoons drew their supplies of bombs, grenades, barbed wire, spades, picks, sandbags, and all the various paraphernalia essential for a modern attack. After this, a short rest was allowed, in the little tree-surrounded orchards which still survived, wild and tangled, on the outskirts of the ruined village.

There, sitting on the sandbags they were to carry, they rested and waited, eating enormous bacon sandwiches—the ration which had caused so much amusement when issued, destined to be, for many, their last meal. Presently came the Padre asking permission to say a few short prayers preparatory to proceeding to the trenches. Just two simple prayers, one of which began “Lord God of Battles,” then the Lord’s Prayer, said very humbly, very earnestly, and very reverently by all, and last the voice of the Padre half-drowned by the din of the guns “The Blessing . . . Almighty . . . upon you . . . now and for evermore.”

In the evening as dusk fell, about 9 p.m. the Platoons, straining with their heavy loads, filed through the muddy and flooded communication trenches en route for the front line, to the accompaniment of the music of the guns. This long and wearisome task was not completed until after midnight. The Carrying Company, owing to the additional loads they carried, were an hour later than this; they were unable at any time to relinquish their loads for fear of losing them in the mud: the result being, that every time a stoppage occurred, their legs became firmly embedded in the lower strata of mud, and were only extricated with the greatest difficulty. On arriving at the front line, the Robin Hoods were greatly exhausted, and the remainder of the night was spent up to the knees in mud and water, leaning against the sides of the trenches; none could sit down, and sleep was out of the question. The trenches were

so closely packed that it was a sheer impossibility to remove casualties; the only assistance possible was given to wounded men by their immediate neighbours. Now came the long and dreary wait for the appointed hour. As dawn broke the German guns concentrated on our front trenches, gradually increasing in intensity as the light grew stronger. Our artillery commenced a terrific bombardment, and again the enemy's shelling increased in volume. The ominous and oft repeated call of "Stretcher-bearer" told its own tale.

The attack was ordered in 5 waves. The first 4 waves were composed of A Coy., under Capt. T. H. Leman; B Coy., under Lieut. J. Macpherson; and C Coy., under Capt. A. A. Walton. The fifth wave, D Coy., under Capt W. H. Round, being a carrying and digging Company.

At 7.27 a.m. smoke was discharged to form a screen and cover the advance; this was much too thick and connection and direction were largely lost. At 7.30 a.m. (Zero hour) the first wave moved out of the newly-dug advance trench, and the 2nd wave out of the old front line. Immediately, the enemy opened with a heavy and accurate shell and machine gun barrage on our front line and wire, which practically annihilated the 3rd and 4th waves. A few survivors heroically pressed on. The Carrying Company was much hindered coming up the Communication trench, and did not get over until 8 a.m. By that time the wind had changed and most of the smoke was over our own trenches; No-man's-land was quite clear from 70 yards in front of our trenches up to the enemy's lines. The Carrying Company pushed on but lost very heavily.

Out of the leading waves only 12 men reached the German second line; when the smoke cleared they found they were isolated, and were compelled to fall back on to the German first line; about 5 men succeeded



Lieut.-Col. L. A. HIND, M.C. (Killed in action, July 1st, 1916, Gommecourt.).

in reaching it. Here they found about 24 of our men, who had been endeavouring to make some sort of fire position. At this point the enemy made a strong bombing attack from both flanks. Our men were unable to offer much resistance, their rifles, in some cases, were out of action, owing to the muddy water; and the supply of bombs was exhausted.

Eventually, those that were left, retired into shell holes, immediately West of the German wire.

A small party under Lieut. C. H. Burton, the Battalion Bombing Officer, pushed forward almost to the German 3rd line. This Officer, though mortally wounded, managed to get into a shell hole with some of his men, and from there fired rifle grenades into the German 3rd line. Finding themselves unsupported, those who were able, came back into the German 1st line. Here they found Capt. T. H. Leman, who, though twice wounded, was trying to organise the defence. They held out for some considerable time, but ran out of bombs, and got back over the parapet and sheltered in shell holes. Only about 6 of these men got back after dark, Capt. Leman being killed. This brilliant young Officer had celebrated his 21st birthday on the 8th February last, whilst with the Battalion at Domquer. He had previously very highly distinguished himself at the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, when he took over the Command of the Company after his Captain had been wounded. Company Sgt.-Major MacKenzie also got right up to the German 3rd line, but finding himself alone, came back.

The Battalion were most unfortunate in the early stages of the attack to have the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. L. A. Hind, and the Adjutant, Capt. R. M. Gotch, killed. As far as can be ascertained these two Officers proceeded with the first wave and passed over No Man's Land to within about 50 yards of the German

trenches. Taking shelter in a shell hole, the C.O. raised himself on his hands and knees to look for a place in the wire entanglements where he could get through, and in doing this he was shot through the forehead and immediately dropped. Private Tomlinson who was lying in the same shell hole at once went to him, but found that death had been instantaneous. The death of Lieut.-Col. L. A. Hind was a great and serious loss to the Battalion. He had endeared himself in an unusual degree to all ranks. He was an ideal Territorial Officer, with great knowledge of Military work, and always had the confidence of all ranks serving under him. He had been previously wounded at Hooze on July 31st, 1915, rejoining the Battalion early in November, 1915, after again being passed fit for service. No reliable information can be ascertained as to how the Adjutant, Capt. R. M. Gotch, was killed. He was the best of Adjutants and the Brigadier-General in writing home said, "I have always considered him to be one of the finest Officers in the Brigade."

Another very serious loss was sustained by the Battalion in the early stages of the attack, Capt. W. H. Round being killed by a shell at the time he was getting over the parapet. No Officer in the Robin Hoods was more loved than he, and those who had the honour of serving under him in D Company will remember with gratitude, the kindly interest he took in each member of the Company, their happiness and welfare being ever in his thoughts.

The severe losses the Battalion had sustained up to now had held up the attack. The Carrying Company and Support Company, owing to the deep mud in the trenches, had failed to get forward, and had each sustained a considerable number of casualties. They tried again and again, but each attempt proved a failure.

When the smoke barrage cleared, the men were exposed to the full view of the Germans, and came under most deadly machine gun fire from the right. It was now of the utmost importance to send forward the Supporting Company to reinforce the Robin Hoods and the Brigadier insisted this should be done under a smoke barrage, but owing to the difficulties in bringing up smoke bombs, the hour for the second attack was postponed two or three times, but finally settled to take place at 3 p.m. Even then the smoke bombs to cover the advance had not got up, the carrying party of the 6th Sherwood Foresters having absolutely stuck in the deep mud in the Communication trenches. Smoke bombs were discharged on the right by the Staffordshire Battalion, but it was thin, and drifted back over our line. The Staffordshires were unable to move and a Platoon of the 6th Sherwood Foresters who did dash forward was practically wiped out. Capt. Scott, the Medical Officer of the Battalion, with his party, advanced behind the fourth wave but on arriving about 70 yards beyond the front line trenches, found themselves in the open and in clear view of the German trenches, as the smoke had cleared away. All the men but one or two were hit. Captain Scott managed to get back to the advanced British trench. Here he stayed all day, organising the defence of the trench, taking charge of the men, as well as attending to the wounded. The Brigadier General recommended him very strongly for the D.S.O., and later he was awarded the M.C. for most conspicuous bravery shown on this occasion, and for the very excellent work he had done with the Battalion since their landing in France. Corpl. Thrall who had given such excellent work with the Medical Detachment of the Battalion, was killed and seven of the Stretcher Bearers, also Lance Corpl. Worn and Privates Popple and Caton. Another great loss was sustained by Coy. Sergt.-Major T.

Mortimer being killed in the trench line. He acted as Battalion Sergt.-Major and had always given the best a man can give. He won the respect and love of everyone.

It was a sad end to so fateful a day, when the large number of killed and wounded came to hand. It was found that in addition to those already mentioned, the following Officers had also been killed; Captain W. E. G. Walker (Signalling Officer), Lieut. J. Macpherson, 2nd Lieuts. A. Charles, F. B. Gamble, W. E. Flint, E. J. Peach, J. H. C. Fletcher; and the following Officers wounded; Captain A. A. Walton, 2nd Lieuts. C. W. Shelton, S. L. Lancaster, A. H. Wilkins, J. Garner, S. E. Cairns, H. D. Hempton. Lieut. S. E. Banwell was reported Missing, believed killed, but four days afterwards, on July 5th he crawled into the front line trench, completely exhausted and seriously wounded; his clothing was badly torn. During the time he lay out in No-man's-land he was constantly sniped at by the enemy. He had some seven wounds. During the whole of this time he was without food and water, except that which he was able to procure from the dead around him. Lieut. J. F. Bishop having entered the German trenches, shot four of the enemy with his revolver; he continued bombing until he was wounded, and then was taken prisoner. The only Officers remaining unwounded who went into action, were Major E. H. Spalding, Capt. J. W. Scott, (Medical Officer), Lieuts. S. P. Parr, B. T. Hooley, R. D. Clay and F. Clay.

The attack of the Robin Hoods on the German position at Gommecourt was not the success hoped for, but the failure was redeemed by the wonderful gallantry of Officers and men. It was not through want of pluck and determination that the attack failed. The Brigadier General later said, "I am positive that no troops could have done better, and few as well." Criticism after the event is easy, but the two main causes which prevented

Gommecourt falling into our hands, must be mentioned. These were, (1) The weather. Had the Battalion been kept at Sus-St.-Ledger until within 48 hours of the assault, and then brought fresh and fit for the attack, our chances of success would have been at least 50 % greater. The ten days of strenuous labour under such exacting conditions as then prevailed, completely undermined the strength and fitness of the Battalion. Morning after morning the men returned to their billets in the cellars of Bienvillers, drenched to the skin, with no means of drying their clothing; their rest was continually broken by having to turn out and take shelter in trenches near by, from heavy enemy shelling. (2) The German Wire. Although the Robin Hoods were told that the barbed wire entanglements in front of the German trenches would be swept completely away by our Artillery fire, only a few odd parties found places where they could force their way through by cutting the wire with special instruments previously fitted to their rifles, and also with the ordinary wire-cutters,—then scrambling through as best they could. This may be explained in some degree, but not to the satisfaction of the attacking Battalion, by an entry culled from the German War Diary.

“ The wire was unable to withstand the systematic bombardment. Although all damage caused by the bombardment. during the day *was repaired during the night.* ”

The Robin Hoods went into action with twenty-seven Officers and about 600 Other Ranks. A few Officers and a certain number of Non-Commissioned Officers and men were left behind, at La Bazeque Farm, to form the nucleus of another battalion, should this be necessary. It proved a wise precaution for only ninety men came out.

The remnants of the Battalion were relieved in the early hours of July 2nd, and proceeded to Bienvillers. Later in the day this little party marched to Warlincourt, arriving on the 3rd at Saulty. The Brigade was now in Divisional Reserve. On July 4th, Major E. H. Spalding took over the command of the Battalion until July 6th, when Lieut.-Col. W. S. N. Toller, D.S.O., was appointed to command the Robin Hoods.

On July 8th, we heard with deep regret that Major General The Hon. Ed. Montagu-Stuart-Wortley, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., was retiring from the command of the 46th Division which he had so ably trained and commanded, and in which, he instilled that fine fighting spirit, so conspicuously shewn, both in the trenches, and in attack. The following is an extract from Divisional Orders.

“ On relinquishing command of the Division, General Stuart-Wortley wishes to thank all ranks, especially those, who have been with the Division since mobilization, for their loyalty to him, and their unfailing spirit of devotion and duty. He trusts the friendships formed will be lasting and wishes the Division Good Luck and God Speed.”

Sir William Beach Thomas in writing an account of July 1st, 1916, said :—

Extract of account of Gommecourt, by Sir William Beach Thomas. “ Our attack at Gommecourt, the northern end of the long-fronted battle, was as heroic as anything in the war. I know the trenches there well, and happen to have intimate personal acquaintance with some of those engaged. I had played cricket with them and football. The other day I was up in their trenches, and among other curious experiences, put my head over the parapet—for all was dull and quiet—and stared at the silent and

thorny German lines. But in spite of appearances the Germans (who hold a sharp salient in Gommecourt wood) were known to be forewarned and forearmed. At 7.30 a.m., and earlier on July 1st their guns—closely concentrated and of full calibre—set up a triple barrage (fire curtain). Through all these three barrages of intense fire our men marched quite steadily, as if nothing was in the way, as if they were under review. At every step men fell; and our trenches are very far apart from the German. The gap was still wide, though a little while before the fighting we had built a completely new trench nearer the enemy, in the course of a single night. When these steady, steadfast soldiers, true to death, paraded in more than decimated numbers through and across the third barrage, the enemy—in their turn heroic—left their trenches, erected machine guns on the parapets, and fought one another in the open. I have not the hardihood to write more. Heroism could no further go. Our men died, and in dying held in front of them enough German guns to have altered the fate of our principal and our most successful advance in the south.

They died defeated, but won as great a victory in spirit, and in fact, as English History or any history will ever chronicle."

In connection with the attack on Gommecourt the following were received.

1. The Commander-in-Chief forwards the following wire :—" Please convey to the Army under your Command, my sincere congratulations, on the results achieved in the recent fighting. I am proud of my troops, none could have fought more bravely.

GEORGE, R.I."

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2. "The Corps Commander wishes to record his appreciation of the manner in which the Medical Services have carried out their duties, which the last few days have caused to be very onerous. The manner in which the collection, treatment, and evacuation of the wounded has been carried out reflects the highest credit on all ranks, and shows what care, energy, and forethought can accomplish."

3. The G.O.C. (46th Division), having read the reports of the action of all Units concerned in the attack on the enemy's trenches in the vicinity of Gommecourt, wishes to express his admiration of the conduct of all ranks. The Division maintained, in his opinion, the high reputation for gallantry which they have borne since their arrival in the field. The G.O.C. deplores the loss of so many brave comrades. He is confident that the gallant spirit which has always been characteristic of the Division will be maintained until the end of the war.

Territorial Force Association,
Derby Road, Nottingham.
July 13th, 1916.

4

To the O.C.

1/7th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters,

Dear Sir,

I have been asked by the Members of the Territorial Force Association, to convey to the Officers, Non.-Com. Officers and men of the 7th Notts. and Derby Regt. (Robin Hoods) their great regret for the serious losses in killed and wounded which the Battalion sustained during the recent severe fighting in France.

The Members of the Association deeply regret the loss of those Officers, Non.-Com. Officers and Men, who have given their lives for their Country, and they trust that those who have been wounded may make a rapid

recovery. Whilst giving expression to their feeling of sorrow, they would at the same time desire to congratulate all ranks, on their great gallantry, which they understand was shown by the Battalion, and they are glad to know that it rendered such efficient service to the King and Country. Will you be so kind as to take steps to make this letter known to all ranks.

Yours very truly,

PORTLAND.

President, Notts. Territorial Force Association.

During the months of May and June, the following extracts from Divisional and Battalion Orders appeared.

June 3rd. 2nd Lieut. C. H. Burton took over the command of the Battalion Grenade Platoon, and 2nd Lieut. A. A. Wilkins joined for duty.

46th Division R.O. dated 22.5.16. "In the two latter cases (Robin Hood and 1st Monmouth) the G.O.C., considers that the small number of sick at present in Hospital, reflects great credit on the Units concerned."

On June 8th, Battalion Orders gave "Extract from the London Gazette," which was read with much pleasure by all Ranks of the Robin Hoods. Major Wallis G. Neilson, D.S.O., (Brigade Major) Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, appointed to the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.

Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill, V.D., to be a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order.

Major L. A. Hind, The Military Cross.

C.S.M. F. Mortimer, (C Coy.), Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Sergt. F. Mahan, (A Coy.), Sergt. A. Croll, (D Coy.), Pte. W. Henrys, (D Coy.), The Military Medal.

On June 15th, the following Officers of this Battalion were mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch, dated 30th April, 1916, and issued from the War Office, June 15th, 1916. Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill, Captain D. P. Forman, and Hon. Lieut. & Quarter-Master E. Skinner.

In parenthesis to the glorious yet disastrous story this chapter records, it is some slight compensation to realise that it was the privilege of the Robin Hoods to chase the Germans out of Gommecourt in the following year, and to examine in detail the ground where so many brave comrades fought their last great fight.

The village has been completely wired off by the French, and is to be preserved in its present state as a historical monument of the most westerly point of the German line. A large Memorial Cross has been erected in memory of the Fallen of the 46th Division.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WAR DIARY OF THE GERMAN SECOND
GUARD RESERVE DIVISION, OCCUPYING THE SECTOR
OPPOSITE THE ROBIN HOODS.

(Captured later by British Troops.)

Saturday, June 24th.—During the night the enemy dug a new trench about 250 metres in front of the right flank of the Regimental Sector North of the Gommecourt-Fonquevillers Road. Wire not yet put up. Casualties one Other Rank wounded.

Sunday, June 25th.—8.45 a.m. Heavy fire on G. Right Sector. Patrol reports cannot be forwarded owing to the danger of losing runners.

12 Noon. The field-cooker of the 12th Company has been destroyed by a shell. Casualties, 1 Killed, 11 Wounded.

Monday, June 26th.—10.35 a.m. Bombardment very heavy, almost continuous.

11.30 a.m. Enemy gas let off. Our artillery opens heavy barrage fire.

11.45 a.m. Report from front line that gas cloud has passed high over trenches.

2.15 p.m. One blind 9.2 inch penetrated a dugout.

5.30 p.m. 517th Battery in Biez Wood received several direct hits.

9.20 p.m. One dugout badly damaged.

Tuesday, June 27th.—3 a.m. The Brigade reports that an English attack will take place at 4 a.m. Order to stand to.

5.30 a.m. Fifty yards of the English wire North of the Gommecourt-Fonquevillers Road has been removed.

9.30 p.m. Bombardment becomes less intense on front line. Shrapnel fire on all the approach roads. Front trench badly damaged, one dugout blown in. Several trenches badly destroyed. 1 Killed, 4 Wounded. Trench mortar emplacements partly destroyed.

Wednesday, June 28th.—7.50 a.m. Artillery bombardment begins afresh.

8.25 a.m. Right Sector reports gas attack.

8.50 a.m. Major Bothmer reports Stossel Trench partly blocked. Kern Redoubt partly blown in. Second Machine gun in G.1. badly damaged by artillery fire. Enemy appears to be using 15 inch shells.

Thursday, June 29th.—9.15 a.m. Trenches badly knocked about, but still capable of defence. Wire not so badly damaged. Scheele trench completely flattened out. Stossell and Pilier trenches impassable. One heavy trench mortar buried by a shell.

Friday, June 30th.—9.15 a.m. No signs of attack.

9.45 a.m. The impression of an attack on Gommecourt being imminent is not confirmed from the right sector.

2.30 p.m. An English prisoner makes the following statement: "No black troops present—no gas nothing known about attack—Prisoner was leading a patrol to ascertain effect of bombardment on our trenches.

5.45 p.m. Several gaps have been made in enemy's wire close together on a breadth of 15 metres. One Other Rank Killed. 11 Other Ranks Wounded.

Saturday, July 1st.—The intense bombardment shortly before the attack, succeeded in rendering the front trenches in G.1. and G.5. ripe for the assault. . . . It was then evident that the main attack would be directed North and South of Gommecourt village, in order to cut off the garrison of Gommecourt. . . . The enemy's attack, which was made under cover of gas bombs was perceived the shell holes were occupied exactly at the right moment and the attackers were received with hand grenades. The barrage fire which had been called for began at once. . . . The enemy built up his firing line and attempted to press forward with bombers and flame-projectors, but was repulsed everywhere.

PART II. REMARKS.

The English enfilading guns fired with such accuracy that every round fell actually into the trenches . . . rendering the line untenable. The Infantry

assault was perceived only when the enfilade fire on the trench was lifted beyond the parados, and simultaneously the English bombers appeared on the parapet.

Even the tunnelled dugouts, which were six metres deep, could not keep out the heavy 15 inch shells: they were blown in.

All the trenches bombarded on July 1st were completely flattened out. Only shell holes remained.

The English had excellent maps of our trenches. They were extremely well-equipped with bridging ladders, equipment for close fighting, obstacles, machine guns and rations; they were well acquainted with the use of our hand-grenades.

Our own barrage fire opened promptly and was very effective. The enemy's barrage frequently failed.

Our own losses on July 1st amounted to:—

Killed: 3 Officers, 182 men.

Wounded: 10 Officers, 372 men.

Missing: 24 men.

Total: 13 Officers, 578 men.

CHAPTER VIII.

BLAIRVILLE.

July 3rd, 1916. to December 31st, 1916.

Lieut.-Colonel W. S. N. Toller, D.S.O., the Author of this portion of the History from July 3rd, 1916, to March 21st, 1918, wishes to express his thanks to Capt. G. C. Vickers, V.C., for his valuable help. He much regrets that the details of many incidents are not more fully recorded, but the records available are far from complete. He realises that in many cases names of Officers, N.C.O's and men should have been mentioned, but the records are not clear, and rather than make the mistake of mentioning some and leaving others out through faulty memory he has adopted the principle of mentioning none unless he was sure.

July 3rd, 1916 After the battle of Gommecourt, what was left of the Battalion, having rested one night at Warlingcourt, went into billets at Saulty, a little village just North of the Doullens-Arras road and about half-way between the two places. Here we were joined by a new Commanding Officer, Major W. S. N. Toller, D.S.O., of the 5th Leicestershire Regiment, and we settled down to clean up and pull ourselves together after the heavy fighting at Gommecourt. We were very weak in both Officers and men, and in order to help in the re-organisation, General Shipley sent three Officers from the 6th Sherwood Foresters to help us. These were Capt. W. Seaton,



Lieut.-Col. W. S. N. TOLLER, D.S.O.

and Lieuts. G. S. Rivington and T. L. Darbyshire; the latter two afterwards transferred to the Robin Hoods.

We received a draft of 61 other ranks, some *July 5th.* of whom had served with the Battalion 1916. before, and all of them very well set up men. In our reduced state they were very welcome, and training went on with renewed vigour.

Here we must record that we lost our *July 6th.* Divisional Commander, Major General the Hon. E. J. Montagu-Stuart Wortley, C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., D.S.O., who went to England.

The Senior Officers of the 139th Brigade assembled at Brigade Headquarters, which was in Saulty Chateau; the Divisional Commander addressed a few words of farewell to us, and drove away in his car taking with him the heartiest goodwishes of all present. Major-Gen. Stuart-Wortley had commanded the Division since June, 1914, and it is not too much to say that he was beloved by all ranks. The following notice afterwards appeared in orders:—

“ On relinquishing the Command of this Division, Gen. Stuart-Wortley wishes to thank all ranks, especially those who have been with the Division since Mobilization, for their loyalty to him and their unfailing spirit of devotion to duty. He trusts that the friendship formed may be lasting, and wishes the Division good luck and God speed.”

The new Divisional Commander, Major-Gen. *July 10th.* W. Thwaites, soon made himself known to us, and we received him at a ceremonial inspection on a field just outside the village. After carefully inspecting every man he addressed the Battalion, and expressed his pleasure in taking over command of such a fine body of men, and congratulated the Battalion on the part played by them in the operations of July 1st.

A move was now made towards the line, and *July 11th.* we were billeted for two days in the North side of the little village of Bellacourt, but as the Germans were paying some attention to the village and there were two Battalions in it, we were moved two miles further back to the village of Bailleulval, which became the billets of the Battalion in Divisional Reserve. These were good billets, but during the stay of the Brigade in this area they were very vastly improved, each Battalion in turn doing its utmost to make them more and more comfortable. Before going up to the line we lost the services of our M.O., Capt. J. W. Scott, R.A.M.C. (T) who went to No. 19 C.C.S. for duty.

Capt. Scott had been with us since mobilization, and during that time he had endeared himself to us all. For his gallantry and devotion to duty, especially on July 1st, he was a few weeks later, awarded the Military Cross. A Regimental M.O. has many trying duties to perform, but Capt. Scott excelled in tact and foresight, while his popularity with all ranks testified to his skill and judgment.

On the 17th July we relieved the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters in the left sector of the Brigade front, and once more took our place in the line. *July 17th.* The 139th Brigade here held the line from just s.e. of the Mill at Blamont to the Bellacourt-Ransart road. It was divided, into two Battalions in the front line, one Battalion in Brigade Reserve, with two Companies at Bellacourt,—one Company at Breten-court, and one Company in strong posts just in front of, and between the villages of Bellacourt and Breten-court, and one Battalion in Divisional reserve at Bailleulval.

Brigade Headquarters were in the Chateau at Basseux. The English and German front line trenches were here about 300 yards apart, and both alike, in the respect that they had saps running forward with a strongly wired "listening post" in the head of each. Our trenches were for the most part fairly deep, but they were not revetted, and there were very few floor boards. The Company Headquarters were fairly good, but the shelters for the men were of the poorest description. The weather had been bad and we had to set to work to put the trenches in repair. Immediately in front of us was the village of Blaireville, and in front of the junctions of the two Battalions in this line Les Trois Maisons. We had a good, if somewhat shallow support line, and numerous communication trenches. Some of the latter were good, but some, La Motte for instance, were only about 3 feet deep. Battalion Headquarters was in a sunken road about 500 yards S.E. of the village of Bretencourt.

About this time the following Officers joined *July 20th.* us :—2nd Lieuts, L. C. Browne, R. L. 1916. Wallis, R. B. King, T. G. Inglesant, J. Barnes, J. N. Wightman, and Capt. E. S. Dixon, R.A. M.C., while we also had another welcome draft of reinforcements of 190 other ranks. 2nd Lieut. S. P. Parr left us to join the R.F.C. The only incident of note which occurred during our first two tours in these trenches, was a raid by the enemy on the Battalion on our right, on the night of July 19/20th. Under cover of a heavy bombardment of trench mortars and field guns, the Germans crept half-way across No Man's Land, but they were driven off. One man, evidently losing his way, got into our trenches, but it was between two of our posts, and although he was chased he succeeded in making good his escape without, however, gaining or leaving any information. Our neighbours on the left

were at this time the 11th Division, who had just returned from Egypt.

Our sector was a quiet one, but day and night the thunder of the guns in the South came to us, while we ourselves were by no means idle. First and foremost we set ourselves to make No Man's Land ours. This was done by means of strong patrols, and night after night we kept the Germans in their trenches. It was not done without a struggle. On the early morning of August 3rd the Germans attempted to raid the head of Cavendish Sap. Six of the enemy were seen cutting the outer wire; our men waited till they came closer. Unfortunately a challenge rang out from our front line trench and the Germans, after throwing a few bombs, ran off. The men in the sap head opened fire and a patrol started out to give chase; the enemy escaped only leaving behind him an unexploded bomb, which showed traces of our rifle fire. Night after night the patrolling continued, and late on the evening of the 13th, in one of his numerous visits to the osier bed, 2nd Lieut. R. B. Emmett, with his party, met a German patrol. A nice little scrap ensued and the enemy were driven back to their lines. 2nd Lieut. Emmett, for this action, was awarded the Military Cross; he and three of his party were wounded.

We believe that this was the last time for very many weeks that any of the enemy were known to attempt to visit us or to leave their own lines. The weather was now good and excellent progress was made with our work on the trenches. Mostly in chalk, the work was hard and necessarily slow, but wonderful progress was made. In addition we were making numberless trench mortar emplacements from which we might harrass the enemy, cut his wire, and make a raid on him successful. Much might be written of the worries

of a Company Commander, knowing he is responsible for the safety of his bit of the line, anxious that his men might have as much rest as possible in order to fit them for their arduous duties, and yet worried from Headquarters for larger working parties, a superhuman amount of work and endless returns and reports.

About this time our telephone system was somewhat disorganised owing to the fact that it had been discovered that the German listening sets could overhear conversations on the ordinary field telephone. Consequently, they were not allowed to be used except for "buzzing" within 2,000 yards of the front line. A new instrument was being introduced, the "Fullerphone," which could not be overheard, but they were scarce and very slow in arriving. All messages had, therefore, to be sent by Runner, which was a slow process, and an elaborate system of codes was introduced. All units were given names, the 139th Brigade being a selection from famous Derby winners. Ours was *Minoru*, and it was not an uncommon thing for *Minoru* to speak to *Jedda* or *Ladas*. At the same time a weird and wonderful thing called the "Bab" code was issued, and woe betide a luckless Company Commander who lost his copy. It is rumoured that on more than one occasion so careful were they of it that it was locked up in a box and left in the care of the Quartermaster!

Gas, of which we were using a good deal in the sectors on our left, was called "Gertie," and attack was "tickle." We therefore often received a message that "Gertie" would "tickle" or that "Gertie" would not "tickle." We also had a number of codes to the artillery for a raid or an attack: there were "concentrates," and "assists," and "test concentrates," and "test assists," all messages having to be kept ready written out in the signal office. The morning on which we received the instructions about these last, the Adjutant

was just opening the envelope when the C.R.A. arrived and asked for the signal office. He was directed there and at once told the signallers on duty to send the "test concentrate." Naturally, having heard nothing about it they looked in blank amazement; the signalling officer was sent for, the C.O. was sent for, and just as things were becoming heated the Adjutant walked in with a worried look and the papers in his hand, and matters were smoothed out. Life, however, was not all worry, and we looked forward to our six days every three weeks in Divisional Reserve at Bailleulval. Here we stretched our limbs, did some strenuous training and played many games. Our training consisted chiefly of physical training, bayonet fighting, and close order drill in the morning, while the afternoon was given over to sports and games. The "Specialists," *i.e.* Lewis gunners, bombers, signallers, etc., all received special training, and it was wonderful what these few days did for us in the way of pulling us together. At times of course the training was seriously interrupted by our having to supply large parties at night, either to carry up full gas cylinders or to carry out empty ones, or else to do some important piece of digging. We were, however, singularly fortunate, and these interruptions were few and far between.

Among other things at this time an Officers' riding class was started. At first it took place in the early morning, before breakfast, but later it was changed to the afternoon. Even to-day one has only to mention this class to bring a smile to many a face. To see the various mounts which were provided by our Transport Officer, Lieut. Mee, were enough to chill the heart of the bravest. There were mules, pack ponies, and light draught horses, and where all the saddles and bridles came from perhaps it is better not to ask. We must thank our friend, Lieut. Johnson, Transport Officer of the 6th Sherwood

Foresters, for the assistance he gave in these classes. Several things stand out at the end of August which cannot be forgotten. Our Officer strength was considerably increased by the arrival of the following :—Major R. W. Webb, Capt. G. H. Black, Lieut. L. Dare Mordle, and 2nd Lieuts. H. Metcalf, R. H. Wood, R. M. Pegg, T. Pigg, J. Kent, J. Hamilton, E. V. Swan, W. Mulligan and W. S. Moles.

We played a cricket match against the 5th Sherwood Foresters, on an indifferent and highly dangerous wicket; it is unfortunate that the actual scores are not available, but it is recorded that we lost by 9 runs, that the match was a great success and much enjoyed by all.

On Sunday, August 20th, the 139th Brigade *Aug. 20th.* horse show took place at Bailleulval. The

weather was perfect and everything went off most successfully. When we consider that it took place within about 4,000 yards of the enemy front line we must think ourselves lucky not to have been discovered by an enemy aeroplane or observation balloon. The Divisional and Brigade Commanders and practically all their Staff were present, together with a large crowd of spectators.

The events were as follows :—

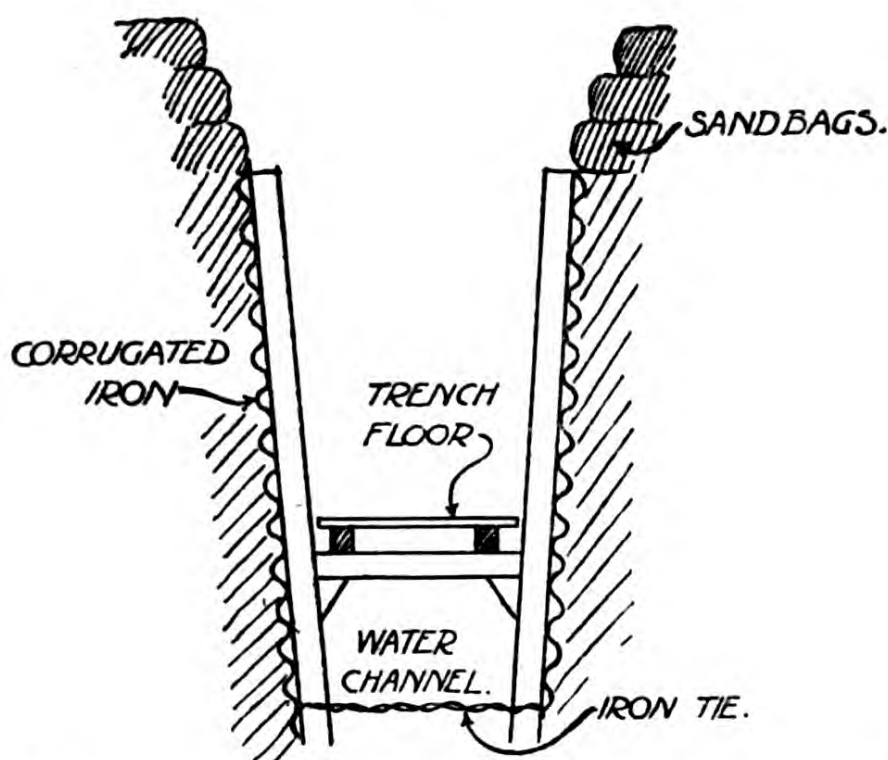
Officers Chargers	Won by 5th Sherwood Foresters.
Best turned out 2 Limbers and 1 Cooker	„ „ 6th „ „
Best turned out Pack Ponies ..	„ „ 7th „ „
Best turned out G.S. Wagon & Team (Affiliated Units). ..	„ „ A.S.C.
Jumping Competitions	
139th Brigade Officers ..	„ „ Major W. S. N. Toller, 7th Sherwood Foresters
Jumping Competition (Open) ..	„ „ Capt. Alton, 137th Brigade.
Mule Jumping	„ „ 8th Sherwood Foresters.
Wrestling on Mules	„ „ 139th Bde., M.G. Coy.
Q.M. Race	„ „ Lt. and Q M. Torrence, 8th Sherwood Foresters.

On September 2nd, we had a great ceremonial inspection by the Divisional Commander, Major General W. Thwaites. As none of us were very well up in our ceremonial drill, and we knew the Major General had a book, we had to do a good deal of practice and be very careful not to make a mistake. We were not the first to go through the ordeal, and rumours of what had gone before made us doubly anxious to do well. Here we may quote the War Diary, which says: "The inspection passed off very well." In speaking to the Officers afterwards the G.O.C. said, "A very well-turned-out Battalion."

We played a return cricket match against the 5th Sherwood Foresters, which we lost by 19 runs; and some of the Companies now began to play football in earnest, although it was usually too hot for such strenuous exercise.

Work continued steadily in the line. We got a fairly good supply of dugout frames, etc., from the sappers. These frames were made behind by the sappers and sent up to us in numbered sections. All we had to do was to dig the hole and fit them in. We call them dugouts, but they were at best "shelters."

At the same time some genius invented the "A" frame. This was a simple and labour saving device, consisting of a frame like a flat topped "A," which was placed in the trench upside down. The legs held the revetment against the sides, the floor board rested on the cross piece and left a good open space for a drain underneath. These were put in every three or four feet, and by their aid a length of trench was more quickly put in repair than otherwise would have been the case. At the same time, if the trench was blown in they proved a very great obstacle, as many a luckless working party has found to their cost in the blackness of the night.



We were now also introduced to the Ammonal tube. These were about 30 feet long, and made of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch water pipes, filled with Ammonal. One end was blocked with a pointed piece of wood, and the other end with a round wooden plug. The appearance of the whole thing was like a pencil. These tubes were used for blowing up the enemy wire at night, and were taken out by a party of about ten. The method was to push these tubes, sharp end first, along the ground under the wire. When in position all but three retired about 10—15 yards, and the three men remaining placed a detonator in the blunt end, lighted a half-minute time fuse and rolled away. It was found that anyone lying flat on the ground five or six yards away received no harm from the explosion, while a gap was blown in the wire some 30 feet long and 12 feet wide. These were used by us on very many occasions, and must have caused considerable annoyance and damage to the Bosche. Among those who went out in

charge of these parties were Lieuts.. N. E. Webster, L. C. Browne, J. Kent, J. N. Wightman, and others. Before the tubes were used a good deal of patrolling had to be done to make sure of the direction, and to find a suitable place in the enemy wire. The men were keen, and these small operations were thoroughly enjoyed.

In a line such as this, visitors were many, and *Oct. 1st.* we often saw the Corps Commander, Lieut. 1916. General Sir T. D'Oilly Snow. The Army Commander, General Allenby, who also made a tour of the front line and afterwards expressed his satisfaction at all he saw.

About this time we very pleased to have Capt. C. G. Vickers, V.C., with us once more, and he took over command of B Company. Oak Street dugout was a cheery place those days, and we believe that if the Royal Flying Corps had not swallowed the whole of the plans for the "hopper fed" bomb thrower, a very striking invention would have been evolved in the semi-darkness below ground.

C Company were now training for a raid which they were to carry out on the German line on the 8th October, A good deal of preparation, in the way of wire cutting was necessary by trench mortars, and patrols at night to report if good gaps had been cut. On the night of the raid several patrols went out and one tried with an ammonal tube to improve one of the gaps. When the raiders went over, however, they found the gaps were not clear through, and though ammonal tubes were used and they tried all they could to remove the "knife rests" by hand, their efforts were of no avail, and the main party failed to enter the German front line. Many gallant deeds were performed in trying to effect an entrance, as can well be imagined. One party, however, entered one of the German saps, but they found it filled with wire in the trench bottom, and no Germans were

discovered. Some tape to give direction was left attached to the German wire, and a telephone left in No Man's Land. These were brought in the next night by a patrol under Lieut. R. B. King, who received a congratulatory message from the Divisional Commander on his performance.

We held some most enjoyable sports at *Oct. 17th*. Bailleulval, the race between the "Horse" 1916. and the "Motor Bicycle," and the Officers mule race causing much merriment.

The Brigade also held sports in which we gained prizes, in the bombing and physical training competitions, and the Officers half-section jumping competition. In the latter Major Spalding, riding *Maron*, and Capt. W. F. Player, riding *Jim*, carried off the first prize.

Before we leave this sector a word must be said about the snipers. We had exceptional opportunities here for observation and sniping, as we were slightly above the enemy's line. Our snipers lost no chance of getting their own back, and many "bulls" were registered. With telescopic rifles and good glasses they were able to obtain the upper hand, and for once we knew what it was to snipe without being sniped at.

On October 30th we were relieved by the 18th *Oct. 30th*. Battalion the Manchester Regiment, and marched out in the pouring rain to the village of Warluzel.

The first days of November were occupied *Nov. 1st to* in moving Westward to our training area; *Dec. 31st,* and on the evening of the 3rd, after a day's 1916. rest at Neuville we reached Conteville, and found good billets waiting for us. The march had shown how much the Battalion was in need of rest and training, and we made a start immediately.

Our week at Conteville was spent mostly in physical training, light marching and football, with of course a daily modicum of steady drill, and by the 11th, when we moved on to Noyelle, the Battalion's condition was manifestly improving. The attractiveness of the country and improving weather conditions played no small part in this. Our way had lain through steep and wooded hills which gave place to the wide rolling plains of the Somme, then, an endless expanse of stubble. All the Officers who could ride (and many who couldn't) took advantage of this by entering enthusiastically into the noble and ancient sport of hare-chasing, usually led by the Colonel.

Noyelle was a large village and its billets were excellent. Most of the Battalion were housed in empty cottages, substantially built of stone, and best of all firewood was to be had in abundance. Frost had now set in, minimising the badness of the roads, and days were consistently bright and sunny. Training was confined to the morning, but became more ambitious. Company training was followed by Battalion schemes, and Officers and N.C.O's spent many nights moving to distant rendezvous by prismatic compass. As usual this branch of military science was found distinctly lacking at first; and despite the lucid explanations of the Intelligence Officer (Lieut. Good) these unfortunate instruments came in for a good deal of undeserved abuse from weary Officers, who found themselves far from home through having added the famous variation, when they should have subtracted it. However we soon became efficient enough to carry out Battalion schemes with fair success. We also improvised a range and put the whole Battalion through a very abbreviated Musketry Course. The afternoons were devoted to football and running. The Battalion football team again began to develop good form, and revenged a defeat by the 8th Battalion by beating the 6th.

During this period several Officers and N.C.O's had the benefit of the 3rd Army School, which was close to us at Auxi-le-Chateau. We were also cheered by receiving a long list of well-earned Military Medals, amongst the recipients being some veterans, such as Sergt. Argyle, Sergt. Thorpe and Lc.-Corporal Salt.

Meantime the Somme offensive had not yet died down, and its effects are reflected in an encouraging message which the Commander in Chief received from H.M. the King. It runs

"I heartily congratulate you on the great success achieved by my gallant troops during the past three days in the advance on both sides of the Ancre. This further capture of the enemy's front line trenches under special difficulties owing to the recent wet weather, redounds to the credit of all ranks."

We, too, were fully expecting to take part in some offensive on our return to the line, despite the lateness of the season, but this anticipation proved false. When we left Noyelle—not without regret—on the 22nd, our goal was "winter quarters," at Gommecourt.

Whilst at Noyelle our strength was abruptly reduced. On waking one morning we found that no less than six Officers had vanished during the night! Anxious enquiries revealed the fact that this was due, not to a minor variation of the "tenth plague," but to a scarcely less devastating agency of a "priority wire" from Army Headquarters, which had roused the C.O. at 2 a.m. to select and dispatch six of his subalterns to proceed immediately for duty with some distant and depleted Division. Incidents of this kind were particularly frequent when we were out of the line. Doubtless they were devised to provide Battalion Staffs with additional opportunities of combining "rest" with "training."

On the 21st we began our return to the line, moving by Maizicourt and Neuville back to Warluzel again.

The weather had again dissolved in teeming rain, and the march to Warluzel was memorable for this. It was therefore especially gratifying that the Brigade was complimented by the G.O.C. Division on its appearance on the march. At Warluzel we were first issued with small Box Respirators for which we were very grateful, not only because of the excellent protection they afforded, but also because we were able to dispense with the clammy horror known as the P.H.G. This type of respirator was simply a flannel bag soaked in particularly sticky chemicals and designed to be pulled over the head and tucked in at the neck. It had given us good protection for many months past and was carried as an emergency safeguard for many more. But its noisome stickiness rendered it particularly hateful to the Infantryman who was always more concerned about his comfort than his safety—except when he happened to be in immediate danger!

The village was in an appalling condition of dirt, and our first task was to clean it. We also furnished large daily working parties who cut timber and made bundles and facines in the forest of Lucheux, under the supervision of the R.E. On the rare occasions when it did not rain, this task was an evidently welcome change to many from the intensive training which despite these diversions was still going on. It culminated on the 3rd of December in an inspection of the Brigade by the Divisional Commander, General Thwaites, who complimented the Battalion highly on its march past—though we were deeply shocked to hear him allege that our 2nd in Command, that most punctilious of Majors, had actually marched past without saluting him! However the gallant Major drowned his sorrows by proceeding on leave the following day; and if his alleged omission did in fact occur, which is hard to believe, the explanation may perhaps be sought in this significant fact!

Our strength was depleted whilst at Warluzel by the loss of R.S.M. Francis, who returned to England after having been with the Battalion since it landed in France. His place was taken and very efficiently filled by C.S.M. Mann. B Company also had the misfortune to lose Lieut. Edmondson, who was appointed Town Major of Warluzel, where we had to leave him when we moved on.

One unique incident characterised our stay at Warluzel. This was a Divisional Cross-Country run, in which every Battalion in the Division ran successively *en masse* over a cross-country course, two and three-quarter miles long. The Battalion with the highest percentage of its strength finishing within twenty-five minutes was accounted the winner. Our place on the list was sixth with 31 per cent.; but as the course lay over sodden ploughed fields, and at least three thousand men had run over it before our turn came, the result was not discreditable. It was a very popular event and we returned to billets in excellent form.

On the 6th of December, after five weeks of well spent rest the Battalion left Warluzel and moved up to Souastre and Fonquevillers preparatory to taking the same trenches over, opposite Gommecourt Park, from which our ill-fated attack had been launched on July 1st, 1916. The place had already many grim associations for us, and was destined to acquire more in the months that followed; for it was a bad sector, and the memory of it is characterised by little but mud and "minnies," though like every other time, its lighter side was never far below the surface.

Souastre was separated from Fonquevillers by about four miles of undulating mud flats, scored with disused gunpits, across which ran a straight and melancholy road. The oily surface of the plain was pitted with an infinity of round pools of every diameter; and a shattered line of tree stumps festooned with broken telephone

wires, which marked the road, was the only feature to break the monotony of mud. The two villages were in perfect harmony with the rest of the picture. Both were in the last stages of dissolution. Souastre indeed still boasted some houses with ground floor rooms intact. Fonquevillers consisted of a few cellars, liberally covered with debris. From one such pile half covering a ragged and noisome hole projected a large notice informing the world that the "Town Major" of Fonquevillers lived below! This hapless individual spent a precarious existence in keeping up to date a census of available holes technically known as a "list of billets." We hoped he drew staff pay.

Our front line ran just outside the outskirts of Fonquevillers. Opposite, the enemy's trenches, in five successive lines, lay on the rising ground which had been Gommecourt Park. In addition to its facilities for keeping dry, their position was also of great natural strength and had been elaborately fortified, especially by the two "Z's" of evil memory. These were two salients formed by the projection of the enemy's line on the North which enfiladed their whole front. The whole position was said to be stronger than any other position of the enemy's line, except his defences at Wytscheate. They were certainly a marked contrast to our own. Our front line from its low-lying position and the terrific shelling of the summer had become a mere line of waterlogged shell holes, sparsely held by posts, to whom it afforded little protection either from the enemy or the elements. Our predecessors had evidently made gallant efforts to prepare for the winter by digging "sump-holes" in the floor of the trench and by laying a certain number of floor-boards on piles. Even the floor-boards however were now a foot under water, whilst where they were missing, the depth in water and slime was anything up to the waist. Worst of all the floor-boards which had

once covered the sumps had now either rotted away or had become loose and floated innocently on the surface, ready to drop the unwary into the hole beneath.

Such were the trenches which we took over on December 7th, and held until the end of the following February. Our routine of relief prescribed four days "in" and four days "out," the period of rest being spent alternately in Fonquevillers and Souastre. We at first attempted six days spells, but the result of the first four showed this to be too long. It must be admitted that we did not at the outset possess that "moral superiority" over the enemy of which one heard so much. This priceless asset was often referred to as though it were the free heritage of every British soldier, or at least a standard part of his equipment. It was as a matter of fact neither gained nor maintained without very hard work; and it was not as entirely disconnected with the respective numbers of trench mortars on either side as distant critics were inclined to suppose. In this case it cost us six weeks of struggle—but it was achieved.

The 2nd (Reserve) Division of the Prussian Guard, who held the opposite trenches during these months were very well provided with trench mortars, and during the first tour they employed them in a most exhausting manner by keeping up a slow but almost continuous fire all day and all night. The majority of our trench mortar batteries were not yet in position, and our "Stokes" guns found the range too great, so our own retaliation was perforce very slight. However our casualties were also small as the condition of the front line compelled us to hold it very thinly indeed, and our turn soon came.

Our form of offence was open to us from the first. Patrolling began with its usual vigour. General Thwaites was particularly "strong" on patrolling, and insisted that no patrol should leave our wire which was not a fighting patrol, and that a patrol should be strong enough

to attack anything it might encounter. Every night at least one patrol was found by each of the three Companies in the front line, and spent from two to four hours patrolling the enemy's wire. It was a duty that bore heavily on all, but particularly on the junior Company Officers, to whom its success was largely due. It meant that each spent at least one night in three, floundering in the morass of wire and water which separated the trenches, and on the other two nights, deprived of the help of one of his fellows on a similar errand, supported additionally heavy tours of trench duty. However the wisdom of the policy which had been proved to the hilt at Bellacourt was again demonstrated here, and No Man's Land speedily became a British freehold.

On the 12th we were relieved by the 8th Sherwood Foresters. The relief was attempted by daylight in a hostile trench mortar barrage and a snowstorm. It was not a success.

Our six days of rest were spent in getting ourselves as clean as circumstances permitted and trying to regain some measure of alertness. These long spells of sleeplessness and exposure, coupled with the all-prevailing cold and mud, tended to produce a sort of sodden lethargy of mind and body which was hard to dispel. However it was wonderful how quickly it was dissipated by that astonishing good humour which never seemed to desert the men. A very little stimulus was sufficient to bring it to the surface again; and in this we were helped by the "Whizbangs," our Divisional Concert Party, who paid us frequent visits at Souastre and greatly helped to enliven the evenings.

On the 18th we returned to the line to very similar conditions. Our own artillery had now joined us and we were able to retaliate in much greater degree, for the enemy's mortars were still very active. We were still very weak in this weapon, but now received some

strong reinforcement. In our section were installed two of the largest type of British mortar, familiarly known as "the flying pig." These had so far been silent as they had no charges. The charges however arrived during this tour, and the enemy promptly became more respectful. One incident particularly delighted us. A German light railway ran right up to the Battalion Headquarters opposite to us, and it was his practice to bring up stores by night. Now for several nights past the driver of the "toy engine" which pulled this train had had the impertinence to blow his whistle before starting on his return journey, a piece of bravado which vastly annoyed us. However these Headquarters, though out of range of most weapons, was not beyond the reach of the "flying pig."

The night after the charges had arrived the impudent Boche again blew his whistle, and was rewarded by a flying pig all to himself; and it was noticed with satisfaction that the practice of whistling on trench railways was discontinued from that night!

For weeks we had all been engaged in abstruse calculations to determine whether we should be "out" or "in" for Christmas, and we were fortunate in being "out," though we relieved the 8th Battalion again on Boxing Day. We had a good Christmas, despite weather and surroundings. It was celebrated by an absence of working parties, good dinners, and a smoking concert in the evening. "Presents," too, were not wanting, notably a gift of a hundred cigarettes per man from Mr. W. G. Player. We were glad to receive messages from many old friends, notably Colonel Brewill.

It is hard to write of this period without almost monotonous references to the weather. Indeed it dominated everything, and the concurrent problems of trench feet and trench fever came to the fore from the first. By now however we had perfected an arrangement which

was to prove almost entirely successful, and contributed perhaps more than anything else to the Battalion's health and success throughout the winter. A large cellar at Battalion Headquarters in the line was converted into a drying room. Here were wire beds for twenty men, with a plentiful supply of blankets and dry clothes. Braziers were always burning and stretcher bearers in attendance. When in the line, every man was sent down there every day, where his feet were inspected, washed in warm water, and rubbed, and dry socks and gum boots issued to him. Any man showing signs of frostbite was detained for some hours and allowed to sleep in warmth and shelter. The labour and organisation this involved were amply repaid, for as long as it subsisted only three or four men left the Battalion with trench feet. It was also of incalculable value for patrols, who invariably returned exhausted and drenched to the skin. They were given a hot meal and enabled to sleep whilst their clothes dried, and returned to their Companies the following afternoon ready for duty again. Another great boom were the Brigade Baths, which were established at Souastre. These were steam baths, and proved a remarkably effective way of utilising the scanty supplies of fuel.

We returned to the line on the 26th and the next day were visited by Mr. Philip Gibbs, and the official photographer. It was a very amusing visit and we were very glad of the excellent photographs which resulted—though had their visit been but a day or two later Mr. Gibbs would have found more stirring copy for his readers. The next morning at 3 a.m. under an intense barrage the enemy attempted a raid. It was hardly big enough to ruffle the quietness of the "Western front" in an official communique; but it was sufficiently serious for the troops who met it.

It was a well conceived raid, for the enemy's barrage never quite lifted from our line. The isolated forward posts, taking what cover the battered trench afforded noticed its weakening and saw the enemy already in our wire.

He appeared in great strength before our Lewis gun post, offering a splendid target. But the gun had been damaged in the barrage and the little party had to rely on their rifles. The fight was short and sharp. The enemy was repulsed, but not before Lieut. Barnes, who had taken command of the post, had fallen mortally wounded by a German bomb. In addition to this gallant Officer we lost one man killed, two wounded and two missing. The fate of the two latter remained a mystery, but it was thought that they must have been either struck by shells or caught in an unoccupied portion of trench whilst passing from one post to another, and so captured. The occasion however did not pass without gaining an honour for the Battalion, Lc.-Corpl. Stringer, who was attached to the Brigade Stokes Mortar Battery, being subsequently awarded the Military Medal for his gallantry on this as on many other occasions.

Relieved on the 30th, we returned to Fonquevillers and Souastre for a welcome rest, and found a draft of about a hundred reinforcements, of which we were greatly in need. These came from the Sherwood Rangers, and their splendid quality more than made up for their unfamiliarity with infantry drill—a deficiency which was very soon rectified. The two Companies who had been at Fonquevillers for Christmas now held belated but very satisfactory festivities at Souastre; and so the New Year came in.

CHAPTER IX.

GOMMECOURT, AGAIN—LENS.

January 1st, 1917. to November 14th, 1917.

The first half of January held little interest. *Jan. 1st to April 16th, 1917.* The enemy was now noticeably quieter, and No Man's Land we had entirely to ourselves. But about the middle of the month a change occurred which was to alter the whole face of trench warfare for seven weeks. The great frost began. The incessant rain changed to snow. The thermometer fell daily. In a few days the swamp in which we lived was frozen solid. The intense cold brought new discomforts but its advantages more than counterbalanced them. The health of the troops improved. We experienced the surprising sensation of being continually dry. Moreover our labours were lessened by a compulsory stoppage of work; for digging was impossible and even a pick axe had no effect on the frozen earth, except to send showers of devastating splinters over the unfortunate wielder of it. This unexpected interruption of our improvement schemes was most unfortunate; but it must be confessed that it did not damp the spirits of the troops in the line. The thin coating of snow lightened the darkest night and made sentry duty a much easier task, whilst the moonlight nights were almost as bright as day. Patrolling became more comfortable as well as more dangerous, and to obviate the latter difficulty we were issued with voluminous white capes and cowls. This traditional form of camouflage gave us considerable protection and still more amusement. Not only had they a most hideous effect

on our personal appearances, but they were somewhat ill adapted to stealthy movement. The sight of an austere and monk-like figure erect in the moonlight, clasp- ing a Lewis gun in one arm, and with the other striving to disentangle his priestly robes from the barbed wire, was enough to enliven the coldest night. The maximum number of degrees of frost during this period is not recorded, but it is believed to have been well over 30. So intense was it that where the rations reached the line at night the bread was often found to be frozen solid, and had to be thawed before it could be cut. The problem of keeping warm was all absorbing and largely insoluble.

The "fuel ration" of one pound per man was almost entirely needed for cooking, and the drying room, the stretcher bearers and the signallers had an obviously prior claim on what little remained. The villages were of course full of waste and shattered timber, but it was a court-martial offence to touch it. All sources of supply being thus accounted for it is an insoluble problem—at least for an official historian—where all the fires came from! The fact remains that many braziers were kept burning in some mysterious fashion. And even in their absence the frost was far more supportable than the damp cold of the previous months.

The war diary for January begins for the first time to record the number of shells and mortars that fell daily in the Battalion sector—a most significant fact. The most militant of Company Commanders in the preceding months would not have bestirred himself to count his mortars. No day or night passed without its modicum of mutual "hate," and its occasional more serious "strafe." Still the enemy was growing noticeably quieter, and we accepted his change of attitude as a hardly unsolicited testimonial. One night after one of our patrols had driven in a working party of his, we were further encouraged by seeing him bomb his own wire—

a sign of "windiness" we greatly appreciated. He repeated this a few nights later with rather better cause. Parties from each Company, under Griffin, Winnicott and Dickins respectively, carried out ammonal tubes and exploded them in his wire. It was a very well conducted enterprise. We had no casualties, and the next morning three clear gaps in his wire testified to its success.

Apart from more excitements of this character the routine of trench life proceeded as usual both in and out of the line. Captain J. H. M. Mackie rejoined us and temporarily took command of B Company in the absence of Captain Vickers at the 3rd Army School. We also received a welcome reinforcement of Junior Officers, namely, 2nd Lieuts. S. J. D. Burgess, F. H. Davis, S. E. Newbury and W. W. Lee. These additions lightened the labours of Company Officers on whom the continuous patrolling when in the line, and the almost continuous "working parties" when in "rest billets," imposed an exceptionally heavy task.

The remainder of the month was very uneventful. 2nd Lieut. H. C. Offler joined us, being attached from the 5th Battalion, and on the 25th Captain Brewill returned to the Battalion and took command of D Company. We also met some of our own second line for the first time in France. They had landed some time before, and as they lay not far behind us Capt. L. L. Cooper and other of their Officers paid us a visit in the line. They were not, however, to come to us for instructions.

Some changes took place in the posting of Officers at the beginning of February. Capt. Vickers returned from the 3rd Army School and resumed command of B Company; Capt. Mackie went from B Company to A Company; Capt Rivington from D to B. The Company Commanders were now Webb (A), Vickers (B), Player (C), and Brewill (D). Our strength in Officers was unusually high.

The frost was now less intense and the weather was better than at any time during the winter. The beginning of February was spent in instructing two units of the 58th Division, the 2/5th London Rifle Brigade and the 2/11th London Rifles. These each spent one tour in the trenches as platoons under our Company Commanders, and then for one tour held two of our Company sectors for us. They were both keen and fit, and were most commendably keen on shooting. In fact the continuous rattle of rifle fire from their sector at night reminded one of the Salient in 1915. We were sorry when they left us. They did not escape the misfortune which seemed to befall those whom we instructed, for on the 17th they were caught on working party and during relief by a small but unpleasant burst of gas shelling. We were more fortunate than they, and escaped casualties during the relief. This outburst was retaliation for unusual offensiveness on our part. For weeks preparations had been in progress for a large raid, and we had installed an immense number of trench mortars of all sorts. The raid was now cancelled, and we got rid of the vast amount of ammunition which had been collected, in daily bombardments of great intensity. It was our crowning satisfaction that before the enemy left the position that had harassed us so long we had become unquestionably dominant with his own weapon, and had been able to repay with interest those interminable "mortarings" which we had suffered in December.

On the 17th we left the trenches as we thought for the last time. The same day Capt. Vickers was ordered to England on special duty, and Capt. Mackie took command of B Company. After two days rest we moved to a new billeting area at Sus St. Leger where we trained for a week. Rumours of a retirement by the enemy were rapidly crystallising into facts. He had begun to

evacuate his front line trenches and the movement spreading North had nearly reached Gommecourt.

Our destination, however, was Arras, and on the 27th we moved on to Simencourt. This was as far as we got. The next day our orders were countermanded, and we were marching back to Pommeroy. Outside Goury whilst *en route* we were met by General D'oyly Snow, whose corps we were leaving after an attachment of one day. He said he was sorry to lose us, but he felt confident that we should have more fun chasing the Boche. It was the first indication of our new destination. We were *en route* for Gommecourt again. In the light of subsequent events at Arras and at Gommecourt one can hardly doubt that the General's estimate was right.

The march to Pommeroy was long and strenuous, and we arrived at 11 p.m. to find that the billeting had "gone wrong." However, the Battalion eventually got under cover, thanks largely to the efforts of our indefatigable interpreter, M. Gillier, whose magical power of solving billeting troubles had often stood us in good stead. The next day we moved to Souastre, and the next—the 3rd of March—found us back in the trenches in front of Fonquevillers, our right on "Roberts Avenue," and Battalion Headquarters at Hannescamps. The enemy was withdrawing his left, and the 8th Battalion, who were on our right, were already through this old front line and held a position running diagonally across Gommecourt Park. Their left was thus several hundreds of yards in front of our right, and flanked by the Z which the enemy still held, incessant patrolling was necessary to keep connection. But the position lasted for one night only. The next night strong patrols from A, B and C Companies entered the Z just as the enemy vacated it, and by the morning the Battalion had followed, advancing our line 500 yards and joining up on the right with the left flank of the 8th Battalion. The credit won by

this prompt and successful manœuvre was added to the next night by the repulse of a bombing attack on a platoon of A Company, due largely to the courage of Sergt. J. E. C. Hill. As his platoon, with three men killed, was being driven back, he jumped out of the trench and opened fire on the enemy with a Lewis gun, repelling them and winning for himself a very well-earned Military Medal.

On the 7th, after a further patrol encounter and some severe gas shelling, we were pulled out of the line and took over the right of the Brigade sector in Biez Wood, and Rettemoy Farm from the 5th Battalion. This was an equally strong sector, especially the latter place, which was the object of a heavy bombing attack at dawn on the 10th. However, the platoon of D Company which held it proved quite equal to the occasion. 2nd Lieut. Dennis, its commander, sprang out of the trench and fearlessly directed operations from the top, and the little garrison repulsed the enemy with rapid fire, though not before they had suffered several casualties, amongst whom was their gallant commander. The platoon won two decorations for its spirited defence, 2nd Lieut. Dennis receiving the Military Cross, and Private D. Andrews the Military Medal.

These operations combined all the difficulties of open fighting with the conditions of trench warfare. The lines we held were either mere groups of shell holes or portions of old German trenches, water-logged and impassable. With the breaking of the frost the whole country had again become a vast morass, and movement along the trenches even where they existed was quite impossible. The only way of getting about was "over the top," and the difficulty of finding the way, especially by night, over a strange and shell-pitted country almost entirely devoid of landmarks, was often insoluble. We tried to mark out tracks by tape, but these speedily disappeared in the

mud. A partial solution was the erection of small landmarks at intervals of some hundred yards. The direction from one to the other had to be learnt by long and bitter experience. A German "billican" stuck on a rifle is not a conspicuous object at the best of times. To strike it on a dark night across some hundred yards of mud, over which it was impossible to walk, even for a few paces in a straight line, was a nightly trial, which many who were there on Battalion Headquarters have good cause to remember. We also suffered a lot from gas shelling, especially in back areas—the No Man's Land of three weeks before—between Gommecourt and Fonquevillers.

A series of sad incidents marked these days. Ever since reaching Gommecourt we had been searching the old No Man's Land for the bodies of those who had fallen in the ill-starred attack on July 1st. The bodies of four of our Officers were found on the still uncut wire in front of Gommecourt Park, where they had fallen in the assault, and were brought in and buried. These were Capt. Leman, Capt. Walker, 2nd Lieut. W. E. Flint and 2nd Lieut. Gamble. Of the other Officers we found no trace.

On the 11th the Battalion, with the exception of C Company were relieved, and marched back to Fonquevillers. A Company, however, moved up again the following day, taking up a new position on the right of Biez Wood, and the following day the rest of the Battalion moved up in support into Landsturm Graben and Stafford trenches. Hardly had we reached these positions when we were ordered to send out strong patrols to cover the deployment of the 5th and 6th South Staffords, who we learnt were to attack the same night. Their attack was delivered at 1 a.m. under cover of a heavy barrage, but the objective when taken was found to be untenable, and the two Battalions were forced to fall back through us again. The next day found us still holding the line in front of Biez Wood, which was the

object of an intense enemy barrage during the attack. Our casualties were surprisingly slight. In spite of this set back, slow progress continued. The 5th Battalion occupied Retternoy Farm on the 12th, with little resistance, and by the 4th, Kite Copse was in our hands. This, however, was the last we were to see of the advance, and indeed of the line at all for some time. On the 16th the 6th North Staffords relieved us, and we marched back to billets at Souastre. This relief began at 7 p.m. and was completed at 4.30 a.m. !—a significant commentary on the conditions of weather and country !

Our four days at Souastre, which were spent in cleaning and refitting, were notable for a welcome increase of strength. Forty-nine reinforcements joined us and one new Officer, 2nd Lieut. Wilks, who was posted to C Company. We were also very glad to welcome Capt. Stanley Bright, who rejoined on the 17th, and Capt. Brewill, who returned from hospital on the 20th. The latter resumed command of D Company, whilst the former took over B Company. Unfortunately Capt. Brewill was again sent to hospital seven days later, and Bright took over his Company.

On the 22nd the "trek" began. We marched to Courcelles, and on the next day to Contay, where we picked up 54 more reinforcements. On the 24th we reached Bertangles where Headquarters were established at the Chateau by the courtesy of the Marquis de Clermont-Tonnere. On the 25th we "embussed" and were carried through Amiens to Pont du Metz, where we resumed march route and reached Pizzy the same evening.

After two days here, and during which 15 more reinforcements joined us, we moved on to our final destination—Nedonchelle—where training began in earnest. We were now in the 2nd Corps and the 1st Army, and we were quickly apprised of the fact by our Corps Com-

mander, General Jacobs, who gave the Brigade a very prompt and pleasant welcome.

The early days of April were spent at *April 1st to 16th.* Nedonchelle, where much football was played. We also had several most excellent "Staff Tours," for both Officers and N.C.O's, under the direction of the Brigade Commander; these tours reminded us of peace days at home, and were most instructive and useful to all.

The crowning incident of these days was a Divisional Route March, when the whole Division marched past the Corps and Divisional Commanders in Column of Route. The Staff work for this was very well done, and as far as could be seen the event went off without the slightest hitch.

Easter was spent in this village, and just about that time we had a heavy fall of snow which turned the roads into worse mud heaps than before and caused the whole Battalion to give a hand at snow clearing. We had a Battalion Mess, and several very interesting lectures were given in the Mess room during the evenings. On the 13th we marched to Annezin and on the 14th to Houchin where we were billeted in tents.

On April 16th, the C.O. and Company Commanders started off early to reconnoitre the village on Reserve line, w. of Lens, and the approaches to the front line then held by the 24th Division. They returned late in the afternoon, very tired, to find Houchin deserted! During their absence the Battalion had received orders to move to Cité Calonne for road repair work under the 24th Division. An hour's ride, and the Battalion were overtaken just before they reached the village of Bully Grenay. Here there was a long halt while the C.O. reported to a Brigade Headquarters, and tried to get some definite orders. At last we moved on

again, now in pouring rain, and arrived at the ruined mining village Cité Calonne. After an hour or so on one of the very darkest of nights, billets were found for all and the Robin Hoods, tired and very wet, turned in for the night. The next two days were spent in clearing and repairing the roads in and around Lièvin, the Germans before retiring having blown up numerous concrete emplacements and generally blocked the roads.

On April 19th, the 46th Division relieved the 24th Division in the front line which ran approximately from N.E. side of Cité St. Pierre South through Crook and Crazy redoubts to the South end of Cité de Riaumont, the latter an unpleasant place in which the Germans occupied the cellar of one house and we the cellar of the next; much bombing and taking and re-taking of each other's cellars went on from day to day. The Robin Hoods were in Brigade Reserve and were in billets in and around the Red Mill at Angres. Angres was a village of one long street and adjoined Lievin. It was in absolute ruins, hardly a house being left standing, and was full of our guns, consequently it was shelled almost daily by the Germans, and the wonder was that our casualties were not more numerous.

On the night of April 23rd, we relieved the *April 23rd.* 8th Sherwood Foresters, who in the early 1917. morning had attacked the trenches at Fosse 3 and Hill 65. Our line was from Absolom trench on the right through Crazy to Crook and Crony on the left, with supports in the Bois de Riaumont. At this time the Germans were thought to be preparing to go back from Lens as fires and explosions were going on daily, and their guns seemed to have been removed to the West of the town. This last was soon proved to be incorrect as we were subject to very heavy hostile artillery fire almost daily, and our casualty list mounted up, while reinforcements were slow in coming. At this

time the 46th Division were holding the line on a two Brigade front, while one Brigade was out for rest and training. The normal tour was 12 days in the line and 6 days out.

On April 29th, 200 gas projectors were
April 29th. fired over our lines into the German
 1917. trenches on Hill 65; this was the first
 time that we had seen the wonderful invention of 200
 cylinders filled with gas being fired all at once a distance
 of 800-1,000 yards. We were indeed getting a bit of our
 own back. The last day of April we were relieved and
 went into rest billets at Fosse 10. During the month
 Lieut. Moles was wounded while in the posts in the
 Bois-de-Riaumont, and new subalterns joined, 2nd
 Lieuts. J. F. Dennis and C. Lister.

At the beginning of May the 46th Division
May 1st. took over more line to the left, and when we
 went up to the line again on May 6th it was
 into the support trenches near to South of Loos. We
 were now in the old German trenches, the left of our
 front line joining up with the 6th Division across No
 Man's Land, just to the North of the " Tower Bridge "
 at Loos. Constant harassing of the enemy by raids,
 patrols and organised artillery shoots, together with gas
 projections and trench mortar bombardments livened up
 our tour in the trenches between the 6th and 19th of
 May.

Two things, however, stand out and must
May 14th. be recorded. On May 14th, B Company
 (Capt. Rivington) pushed their posts further
 forward into the German lines and joined hands with the
 6th Division on the left. Some sharp fighting took place
 in which Corpl. Akeroyd distinguished himself, and a
 telegram of congratulation on the operation was received
 from G.O.C. Division.

On May 18th, A Company (Capt. Mackie) raided the German trenches, but as the enemy had selected the same night and time to raid us,—an encounter took place in No Man's Land, and nothing definite resulted.

Much valuable information was gained by patrols, Capt. Dickins, Lieuts. Cairns and Griffin, and Sergt. Watson doing particularly good work in this direction.

May 20th. May 20th saw us back in our old billets at Fosse 10 for another 6 days rest and training.
1917.

May 25th. On May 25th we moved up to Lievin in Brigade support, and every available man was employed digging some new assembly trenches through the Cités des Garennes and Riaumont, and opening up Absolom and Assign as communication trenches. Breaking through from cellar to cellar and cutting through streets was no easy task, but so well did the men work that the trenches were ready on the appointed day, and a special letter of thanks was received from the G.O.C. Division. Night after night the enemy tried to delay work by sending over gas shells, but our box respirators proved better than Boche gas, and our casualties from this cause were slight. Towards the end of May we were very sorry to lose our Brigade Commander, Brigadier General C. T. Shipley, C.B., who had been with us so long, but he was obliged to go to England for a rest, and we wished him God speed and a quick recovery of his health.

June 1st. Early in June we were back in the trenches near Lievin, with an outpost line in a series of shell holes. There was very little wire protecting this line, so most of the first nights were spent in making this defect good, and strong parties were working every hour of darkness.

By the 8th of the month we had seen our
June 8th. work of this previous month made use of,
 1917. as the 138th Brigade made a large and very
 successful raid from the trenches we had worked so hard
 to prepare for them. It may be interesting to quote a
 message which was received on June 9th:

"The 138th Brigade wish to express their thanks to all
 Battalions of the 139th Brigade for the good work
 done in the assembly trenches in Riaumont. The
 assaulting Battalion were able to assemble yesterday
 without being detected by the enemy."

After a few days out at rest, during which the Bat-
 talion was inspected by the G.O.C. Division, we returned
 to the trenches in the St. Pierre sector and were
 welcomed by a gas attack which caused us 8 casualties.

Towards the end of the month we were
June 30th. back in our old line near Lievin, and after
 some very excellent patrol work a series of
 attacks were carried out which gained us ground, if only
 a few yards at a time, but which sadly thinned our ranks.

On July 3rd we were relieved by the 27th
July 3rd. Canadian Regiment, and started for a much
 needed rest.

At 4 a.m., on July 4th, we embussed at
July 4th. Bully Grenay, and after a few hours found
 ourselves in the little village of Chelers.

Here we stayed for three weeks and enjoyed ourselves
 immensely, with good weather, good billets, and plenty
 of games. We were far enough back from the line for
 a notice to appear in orders that "smoke helmets will
 not be worn," and the rest after the past $2\frac{1}{2}$ months of
 very strenuous work was enjoyed by all. Perhaps the
 chief feature of this rest period was the Divisional rifle
 meeting, a miniature Bisley, which took place at the end
 of it. The arrangements were made by Major Johnson
 of the Divisional Staff, and its success was a triumph for

his powers of organisation. How our snipers, and others, enjoyed shooting in perfect safety at the "running man," and what excellent (?) shots some of us found ourselves to be with a revolver when shooting at a target! On the whole the rifle shooting on both days was of a very high order, but unfortunately we did not carry off the G.O.C's Cup.

On the 23rd of July we received orders to
July 23rd. go into action again, and while a proportion of Officers went forward in motor 'buses to see the line, the Battalion marched under a blazing July sun, about 15 miles, to Vaudricourt, where we went into billets. Next day we marched up to
July 24th. Philosophe, and took over from the 2nd Battalion the Sherwood Foresters.

We now went into a most interesting sector of the line, which is perhaps worth describing. Our sector was called the "St. Elie left," and took its name from a destroyed coal mine, the Cité St. Elie, which stood just inside the German lines. About 500 yards on our right was the Vermelles-Hulluch road, and the same distance on our left Fosse 8 and its slag heaps, which was the chief feature for some distance round. All through 1916 active mining operations had been carried out, and though now underground there was a deadlock, the craters were daily contested; each side tried to retain its hold on the near lip. The right Company had six of these craters, joined together, called "Hairpin," from its shape on the aeroplane photographs. The centre Company had another group called "Border Redoubt," consisting of two huge craters, the Northern and the Southern, while between them was a short length of trench called "Rats Creek." The old front line between Border and Hairpin could be used by patrols at night but was impossible by day. The left Company held an isolated post at the end of Gordon Alley, called

Russian Sap. The only connection between this and the Border, 500 yards away, was over the top at night.

The centre and right Companies lived in tunnels with stairways up to the various posts they held; here also lived machine gunners and Stokes mortar teams with exits up to the positions of their guns and mortars. The various tunnels connected into one long tunnel some 300 yards in length, running back into Stansfield Road, about 200 yards in front of O.B.1, our support line or main line of defence. Beneath this tunnel system was another occupied by our miners and consisted of one long protective gallery, said to run from the sea to Loos, with only a few small lengths uncompleted. The object of this gallery was to detect sounds of German mining and contained the most wonderful and elaborate listening sets, so delicate that the ticking of a watch held against the wall of any of the "legs" of the gallery, could be heard by the man on duty. These tunnels were damp and slippery, the roof too low to allow any but the shortest man to walk upright; walls and roof constantly dripping, and ventilation of the very worst. Here we lived in an atmosphere enough to ruin one's health, and worse still moral also. Knowing we could easily slip down a stair-case to safety we fancied the dangers of the open air greater than they were, and lost the art of walking on the top. The tunnels were lighted by electric light, which often went wrong, when lamps and candles were the order of the day. Feeding arrangements were good, and elaborate kitchens were built which, when they got going, provided volumes of smoke and three good hot meals a day to the men in the front line. Mid-night tea and rum were also provided.

We remained in this sector till the middle
Aug. 16th. of August, when we went out for rest and
 1917. training. First to Drouvin and then to
 Fouquieres. Both these were pleasant places with good

billets, and we were able to arrange a Battalion Mess in the chateau at each. We played cricket and football and as we were within easy reach of Bethune we soon began to "pick up" after our existence in the tunnels. Bethune had many attractions; the 25th Division Concert Party occupied the theatre and had a full house nightly, while the Club, "The Union Jack" shop, and other famous establishments, not to mention the "Oyster Shop," provided excellent things at wonderfully high prices.

The beginning of September saw us taking
Sept. 1st. over the sector known as "Cambrin Left,"
 1917. and was the sector next to the Hohenzollern
 Redoubt sector. Here on our right was Railway Alley, and on the left Robertson's Tunnel. With one or two exceptions the trenches and dugouts were good and the line comparatively quiet. Some very excellent patrol work was done, and several congratulatory telegrams were received from the G.O.C. Division. One or two incidents are worthy of mention. The M.O's orderly shot a partridge, some of the Headquarters Officers, one misty morning at sun-rise, had a partridge drive, but as they were only armed with sticks and "very" pistols the bag was "nil." "Gazeka" got on the Movies, and last, but not least, we had a visit from Mr. Midwinter of the *Nottingham Guardian* Staff. Mr. Midwinter's arrival caused us some astonishment; he was clad in a light coloured civilian suit, with box respirator and tin hat. Never having seen a civi in the line before we had to call for glasses to celebrate the occasion. We hope he enjoyed his visit as much as we enjoyed having him. We tried to show him all the points of interest, and his cheery face was a bright spot in our memory for many days to come. At this time the R.E. (Special Company) were busily engaged in putting gas cylinders all along our front line, but as the wind persistently remained in

the wrong quarter we went out of the sector before it was discharged.

On the 22nd of September we were relieved
Sept. 22nd. by the 22nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers, and
 1917. marched out to Fouquieres *en route* for
 Mazingarbe. Towards the end of August the Canadians
 had taken the famous Hill 70, which had been won and
 lost again at the battle of Loos in 1915, and on arrival
 at Mazingarbe we knew we were destined to take over
 this newly captured line. Our route lay along the main
 Lens road past Fosse III. and Fosse VII.,
Sept. 24th. then over the plain, along tracks behind
 camouflaged wire netting held up by poles,
 past Privet Castle, a huge mound of chalk under which
 the Brigade lived in dugouts, and into Railway Alley.
 This communication trench, over a mile long, led past
 the famous Loos Crucifix to what had been the front
 line before the Canadian attack. Our new sector was,
 to say the least of it, bad. All the trenches were very
 wide and very much battered about; they were full of
 mud and dud shells and bombs, not to
Nov. 14th. mention dead Germans. On the top of the
 Hill was a mass of girders and twisted
 machinery which had once been Puits 14 Bis. Our front
 line ran from right to left through Bois Rase, Bois Hugo,
 across No Man's Land, and joined up with our old front
 line, which was held by the 137th Brigade. There was
 only one real communication trench, Humbug, and that
 was in an appalling state; there were other "alleys,"
 such as Hell and Horse, but they were quite unusable
 by day as they were almost filled up. Here we started
 to hold the line and work. No one who was there
 between the time when we took over the line and the
 14th of November when we were relieved can ever forget
 it; it almost baffles description. The weather was bad,
 the trenches full of water and mud, and we worked day

and night to clear them. Patrols were out every night, and much valuable information was gained. The enemy raided us on several occasions, but was beaten off every time and got no identification. We had seen plenty of trench mortars before in various sectors, but never had we seen them in such quantities as here. At times the air was literally full of them, and on one night when we were being raided, we counted as many as twenty in the air at the same time; all falling on one Company sector.

Through all this the health and spirits of the men were wonderful, many brave deeds were done, and the rifle grenade barrage which beat off a German raid one evening was particularly smart work. If one started to pick out names of those who did well during this time on Hill 70 it would mean a list of almost the whole Battalion, as everyone put their whole heart and energy into the defence and the work of consolidation under the most trying conditions it is possible to imagine. Perhaps our one recreation was bringing in salvage of which there was an enormous amount lying about. Night after night our returning transport was loaded with the days' gatherings which ranged from S.A.A. to Aeroplane engines. It is interesting to remember that all this time we were in possession of two war-dogs which had been trained in England. Their home was at Headquarters, and they were trained to return home at full speed once they were loosed from the lead. They were used for carrying messages, but while the telephone wires held we found that the quickest and most useful way of communication. We received many telegrams of congratulation from the G.O.C. Division, and at the end of our tour in this sector a special letter of thanks for all we had done on Hill 70.

On the 14th of November we were relieved by the 5th Leicestershire Regiment, and returned to Philosophie once more.

CHAPTER X.

SAINT ELIE.

November 15th, 1917 to January 31st, 1918.

On the 15th November we relieved the 4th
Nov. 15th. Leicestershire Regiment in the St. Elie left sector, and once more took over our old line in the tunnels. Vermelles was always a place to which the enemy paid a great deal of attention, especially at night, in the hope of catching reliefs and rations coming up, therefore tracks across the Le Rutoire plain were marked out by white posts, and we got into Chapel Alley or Stansfield Road well clear of the village. The routine of trench warfare went on much the same as usual except that we daily used very large quantities of trench mortar ammunition which kept carrying parties hard at work. The new 6 inch Stokes Mortars were now going strong, and did gallant execution on the German wire. Patrolling was even more active than usual, and through the gaps cut in the wire the German trenches and sap heads were entered almost every night. Unfortunately the enemy was practically always found to be "not at home," so no identification was obtained.

On 20th November the first of a series of
Nov. 20th. very daring daylight patrols was carried out; at 10.45 a.m. Capt. Dickins and two other ranks left our lines and working their way very carefully entered the German trenches. Many dugouts were inspected and bombed, but none of the enemy were found. Not satisfied with this, these three again left our lines at 3.50 p.m., and entering the German trenches sat down to wait for darkness and the return to the front

line of the German sentries. After a very long wait no one came, and so the little party returned to our lines, with much valuable information of the geography of the German trenches, and with very little respect for an enemy who left his front line unguarded.

The Corps Commander made the following remarks on this patrol:—

“ A very good patrol and one which reflects great credit on Capt. Dickins, M.C., and the two men who were with him. Daylight patrols require great enterprise and courage, but the results obtained from such patrols fully justify the risks.”

The activity, however, was not all on our side, as on the 30th of November, three times, at 2.45 p.m., 7 p.m. and 12.20 a.m. the enemy put down a very heavy barrage on our sector. During the last of the three, i.e. 12.20 a.m., six Germans were seen approaching Border Redoubt; the Lewis gun opened fire and drove them off. Cries were heard, but on a search being made no one was found, so the raiders must have carried back their wounded or killed with them, and so left us no identification.

The weather during the early part of December was fairly good, and a large amount of work was in hand. The support post, behind the unoccupied part of the line between Border Redoubt and Russian Sap was in very bad repair, and the trench on either side had to be cut out. As it was in the chalk this entailed no small amount of labour, and progress was slow. A plentiful supply of ‘A’ frames floor boards and revetting material was available, and the men in the post worked with a will, so that before long this post became quite respectable and was easily got at in daytime. Russian Sap was put into the hands of the sappers and was entirely re-cut, boarded, revetted and camouflaged over the top so that the men in this very

isolated post were able to move about without fear of detection. The camouflage was removed at night so that the fire step could be manned with ease. The enemy was very active with large trench mortars, especially on the reserve lines, with the result that Gordon Alley was blocked for nearly three-quarters of its length.

It was heavy work to clear this trench, but it was gradually accomplished.

On the 11th of December the Battalion on
Dec. 11th. the right raided the enemy at 3.40 p.m.,
 1917. capturing five prisoners and a light machine
 gun. For this raid the sappers placed some dummies
 between our front and support lines; these dummies
 were raised at the time of the raid, and from the number
 of "Casualties" they received it was evident that they
 had drawn a considerable portion of the hostile fire, and
 so achieved their purpose.

On December 12th, Major H. L. Birkin, of
Dec. 12th. the South Notts. Hussars, arrived for a
 month's liason with an Infantry Battalion
 before joining the Tanks—he was a very welcome addi-
 tion to the Headquarters Mess. The enemy celebrated
 his arrival with a very heavy bombardment of trench
 mortars and gas shells, but we escaped without casualties.

On the night of the 16th December the 8th
Dec. 16th. Sherwood Foresters relieved us in the line,
 and we went back to Virquin for 6 days.

As this was our last time out of the line before Christmas,
 the 2nd in Command (Major E. W. Cannings, M.C.) the
 Q.M. and his staff were very busy purchasing and pre-
 paring pigs for the Companies Christmas Dinners. A
 and B Companies had their dinner on the 19th, and C
 and D Companies on the 20th. The

Dec. 19th and 20th. Brigade Band played selections during
 dinner, and afterwards a Smoking Concert
 was held; the evenings were very much

enjoyed by all. The dinners were held in the Recreation Hut at Virquin, which was very nicely decorated, and the menu consisted of Roast Pork, Apple Sauce, Plum Pudding, Rum Sauce, and Oranges, Nuts, etc.

Dec. 21st. On December 21st, the Officers had their Christmas Dinner in the School behind the Headquarters billet, and a very merry evening was spent.

Dec. 22nd. December 22nd saw us marching back to the lines, where a very quiet and very unromantic Christmas was spent.

Dec. 25th. On Christmas morning the Padre held a continuous Holy Communion Service from 1 a.m. to 4 a.m., in a dugout in one of the front line tunnels; a large number of Officers, N.C.O's and men attended, and fully justified the Padre for his enterprise.

Dec. 28th. On December 28th we returned once more to Philosophe, where we heralded in the New Year.

Jan. 3rd, The trench routine in the early part of January was considerably enlivened by the urgent requests from the higher Authorities for an identification of the troops opposite.

1918. We therefore had strong patrols out night after night, who visited suspected posts in the enemy lines in the hope of getting round them and capturing at least one man, dead or alive. Our efforts, however, were not attended with success, and it fell to our sister Battalion (the 8th) to be the lucky ones.

Jan. 14th. Between January 14th and 18th the enemy were very quiet and our observers saw a considerable amount of movement behind their lines, mostly men in full marching order. A relief was expected and our artillery did a good deal of

"harrassing" fire on the roads and tracks, especially at night. Later the Brigade on our left captured a prisoner who belonged to the 3rd Battalion 362nd Regiment, 4th Ersatz Division. They had come from the Russian front and had just relieved the 6th Bavarian Division on our front, thus fully confirming our observers' reports that a relief was in progress.

On the 15th of January we received orders
Jan. 15th. that we were to be relieved in the line by the 11th Battalion the Manchester Regiment, but this was afterwards cancelled owing to the snow and frost which made the roads impassable for heavy traffic.

A few days later the frost and snow dis-
Jan. 22nd. appeared, the orders were re-issued and on the evening of the 22nd the relief was carried out, the Robin Hoods marching out to billets at Noeux-les-Mines. The next morning the Battalion formed up outside the town and marched past the Divisional Commander on their way to the village of Burbure, where we were to have a period of rest and training.

On the morning of the 23rd the G.O.C.
Jan. 23rd. Division held a conference of Commanding Officers, when he informed them of impending changes. The change in our case was, that the Officers, N.C.O's and men were to be split up among the other three Battalions of the Brigade, with the exception of 12 Officers and 200 other ranks who were to go to the 59th Division, unite with the 2/7th Sherwood Foresters, and with them reform the 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion the Sherwood Foresters. It was heart-breaking to see so fine a Battalion split up, but naturally the needs of the Country at such a time were the first consideration. From this time, until the end of the month the Headquarters Staff were hard at

work day and night preparing lists, and doing the hundred and one duties rendered necessary by such a change. It is only fair to them to say that they carried out their arduous task in the most efficient manner, and received the thanks of the Divisional Staff for their highly creditable performance.

Many touching farewells were said, and on *Jan. 30th.* the 30th of January the little party drove off in motor lorries, carrying with them the heartiest good wishes of the Brigade Staff and their old Comrades and friends, to Gouy-en-Ternois, where they found their sister Battalion waiting for them.

SECTION II.

HISTORY OF THE 2/7TH (ROBIN HOOD) BATTALION SHERWOOD FORESTERS 1914—1918.

SECTION II.

PREFACE.

By LIEUT.-COL. F. RAYNER, D.S.O., T.D.

In acceding to the request which was made to me to undertake the responsibility of compiling this Section of the " War History of the Robin Hoods," I appreciate the great difficulty of the task, and my own inability to do full justice to it.

To have declined would however, in my opinion, have been a failure on my part to perform a duty to my old Comrades, especially to those who are only with us in memory.

It is difficult to prepare a worthy history, covering so long a period, and with so many changes, unavoidable under War Service, in personnel.

My task would have been impossible but for the loyal assistance rendered by a number of my old brother Officers, especially in dealing with the period when, to my sorrow, I was not privileged to be serving with the Battalion.

My cordial thanks are due to these Officers, among whom I would particularly mention—

Martyn, Lieut.-Col., D.S.O., M.C.

Hanson, Major H.

Cooper, Capt. L. L.

Henry, Capt. F. G., M.C.

Pragnell, Capt. F., M.C.

Hickling, Capt. F. G.

Foster, Capt. W., M.C.

Brewill, Capt. B. H.

Each phase of the History has been written by the Officer best fitted by his personal knowledge to do so, and the whole has been carefully revised by others with a view to ensuring accuracy in detail.

It has been difficult to mention many names in the text owing to shortage of records, but where all have done so well, and rendered such service to their Country, this is hardly necessary. The History is essentially a history of the Battalion.

I wish also to express my deep obligation to those who have permitted the reproduction of photos, drawings, etc., and would particularly mention Messrs. Constable & Company Ltd., the publishers, and Mr. Sydney R. Jones, the artist, for generously allowing me to reproduce some sketches from that charming book, "England in France, Sketches mainly with the 59th Division." The enforced absence of Cameras in France makes this permission particularly valuable.

The Keeper of Photographs, Imperial War Museum, has kindly permitted the reproduction of the photographs derived from this source, and Messrs. Bassano, Ltd., Lafayette Ltd., and the other photographers whose names appear on the blocks have with equal generosity permitted the reproduction of the photographs which bear their names.

Copyright fees have been waived in all cases.

I wish also to convey my thanks to Lieut. H. Coop, M.C., for permission to reproduce some of his valuable sketches made while serving with the Battalion.

FOREWORD.

By LIEUT.-COL. CECIL FANE, C.M.G., D.S.O.,
COMMANDING 12TH ROYAL LANCERS.

*A few words from a Commanding Officer who
Commanded the Battalion from February, 1916 to
October, 1916.*

I arrived at Watford, February 21st, 1916, to take over the Command of the 2nd/7th Sherwood Foresters.

I found the physique and training of all ranks far above the average. Every Officer, N.C.O. and man shewed great keenness in their work and in keeping themselves fit by sports.

My one regret was not to have taken the Battalion to France.

I Commanded the Battalion during the Irish Rebellion, and all ranks showed their value as soldiers.

I shall always feel proud that I was associated with such a fine Battalion of the Territorial Force, a force which did so much to enable the war to be won.

CECIL FANE, *Lt.-Col.*,
Commanding 12th Royal Lancers.

April 10th, 1920.

SECTION II.

CHAPTER I.

THE BATTALION RAISED—EARLY
TRAINING.*August, 1914. to January, 1915.*

Battalion Raised, August, 1914. The Second Battalion of the Robin Hoods, which had been raised during the South African War, was abolished when the Territorial Forces Act came into force on the 1st April, 1908, and consequently when the Great War broke out there was but one Battalion, and this became the First Line Robin Hoods. Orders were received soon after the outbreak of war that a Second Line Battalion was to be raised which would form one of the Battalions of the 2nd North Midland Division.

Lieut. Colonel (then Major) G. A. Wigley, T.D., who had for many years been serving with the Robin Hoods and who had been ordered to take Command of the Sherwood Foresters Territorial Provisional Battalion, which comprised men of the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions of the Sherwood Foresters, who were ineligible to serve abroad with their 1st Line Battalions, was given Command of the 2nd Line Robin Hoods. He therefore found himself for some months holding the dual Command.

The work of the Provisional Battalion soon proved itself to be of a very onerous and responsible description, such duties as the construction of many miles of trenches

for the defence of London being allocated to it, and consequently much of the earlier organization and training of the 2nd Line Robin Hoods devolved upon the Second in Command, Major P. M. Payne, T.D., who devoted himself to the raising of the Battalion in Nottingham.

To realize the conditions under which the Battalion was raised, it is necessary after the lapse of over five years of war to consider what the actual position then was. The main considerations are undoubtedly :—

1. The War had only just broken out and men of all social ranks were coming forward in large numbers to enlist. With the splendid records of the Robin Hoods extending over half a century, and with the strong local *esprit de corps*, there was great competition to join the new Battalion of the Robin Hoods.
2. The duties of those responsible for raising the Battalion were therefore more concerned, not with getting the numbers, about which there was no prospect of difficulty, but with selecting the best men so as to make the Battalion, as it undoubtedly became, one of the finest Second Line Territorial Battalions in the country.

The first recruit was enlisted on 14th September, 1914. The Battalion when raised to its full strength was officered mainly by Officers who were :—

- (a) Robin Hood Officers who had gone on to the Territorial force Reserve.
- (b) Old Robin Hood Officers who had relinquished their Commissions and were re-commissioned.
- (c) Officers who had been trained as such in the Nottingham University College O.T.C.

The Officers who came under category (c) were perhaps the majority, and a history of the Battalion would not be complete without some record of the splendid services rendered to the Country by the O.T.C.

The principal credit for these services must be given to Major Trotman. This Officer who had commanded the original Junior O.T.C. at the High School had transferred his activities to the Senior (University College) O.T.C., and had done magnificent service in the training of this Unit. Immediately War broke out he realized the all-importance of the supply of young trained Officers for the Army. The College was then in vacation, but he at once summoned his old Corps to assemble; he quartered some in his own house, some in tents in his garden, and some on his friends, and set to work to complete, so far as he could, the training of as many as possible to fit them for the responsible duty of holding Commissions in Battalions which might, almost at any time, be proceeding on Active Service Overseas. The degree of efficiency which he produced in these young Officers and their expressions of affection and admiration for their old Commanding Officer are all-sufficient evidence of the excellent work, devotion and self-sacrifice of Major Trotman.

Too high a testimony cannot be recorded of the excellent services in this respect rendered by Major Trotman and the Officers of the Nottingham University College O.T.C. Particularly mention should be made of Capt. T. P. Black, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., and Major S. H. Piper, D.S.O., B.Sc., who later as combatant Officers in the 9th Sherwood Foresters crowned their previous services, the former making the great sacrifice for his country.

In these early days of the War there were so many willing volunteers that Major Payne felt strong enough to issue an order to the effect that except for a few men possessing special qualifications, no recruits under 5 feet 9 inches were to be enlisted into the Battalion.

Out of this splendid material in Officers and other ranks the Battalion was formed, and on its establishment being completed in November, 1914, the personnel consisted of—

Commanding Officer—Lieut.-Col. G. A. Wigley,
T.D.

Second in Command—Capt. (Hon. Major) P. M.
Payne, V.D.

Adjutant—

Company Commanders.—

A	Company—	Capt. W. S. Marshall.
B	„	„ H. Hanson.
C	„	„ L. L. Cooper.
D	„	2nd Lieut. F. G. Henry.
E	„	„ O. I. Preston.
F	„	„ E. F. Winsor.
G	„	Capt. F. Rayner.
H	„	„ H. M. Whitehead.

The duties of Quartermaster were taken over when the Battalion left Nottingham by Lieut. and Quartermaster Pollard, and the Battalion owes much to this Officer for his zeal in organizing his Department, his assiduous attention to the clothing and equipment of the men and his special attention to the mobilization stores of the Battalion.

From the raising of the Battalion until the end of January, 1915, the men were billeted in their homes in Nottingham, and their work consisted of training, drill, elementary tactical exercises, etc. On 15th January, 1915, the organization of the Battalion was changed from the single to the double Company, the Company Commanders then being as under:—

A	Company—	Capt. W. S. Marshall.
B	„	„ H. Hanson.
C	„	„ F. Rayner.
D	„	„ H. M. Whitehead.

There was of course a very large amount of administrative work : the selection and appointment of Warrant and Non-Commissioned Officers, the clothing and equipment of the Battalion, and much instructional work had to be done in administrative duties.

Most of this devolved on Major Payne, who had during this period no Adjutant, and much credit is due to him for the completeness of the Battalion in all these essentials when it left Nottingham.

To the end of January drafts amounting to two Officers and 169 N.C.O's and men were sent to fill vacancies in the 1st Line Battalion, men who had seen previous service being selected where possible. During January the Battalion went through two inspections, one by Lieut. General Sir R. Pole Carew, K.C.B., C.V.O., on the 2nd, who expressed his satisfaction with the appearance of the young Battalion, and the other by Colonel W. Wright Bemrose, on the 20th.

On 22nd January a start was made with the organization and training of the Machine Gun and Transport Sections, the former being placed under the Command of Lieut. O. I. Preston.

CHAPTER II.

LUTON—DUNSTABLE.

30th January, 1915 to 11th August, 1915.

Departure On the 30th January, 1915, orders were
for Luton, received that the Battalion was to pro-
Feb. 1st, 1915. ceed to its War Station at Luton, and
 at 5 p.m. on the same day Captain
 Rayner left Nottingham in charge of a
 billeting party. The Battalion followed on February 1st,
 and occupied billets in the neighbourhood of the Gas
 Stove Factory.

This district lent itself very well to this purpose, as it consisted of a number of parallel new streets with houses of a substantial industrial class, and was able therefore to be allotted to Companies like a camp, and the internal work of the Companies was thereby facilitated.

On arrival at Luton it was learnt that the Battalion would be in the 2/1st Sherwood Foresters Brigade, forming part of the 2/1st North Midland Division, the first Brigade Commander being Colonel W. Wright Bemrose, who had formerly commanded the old 1st Derbyshire Volunteer Battalion.

The first Divisional Commander was Brigadier General H. B. McCall, C.B.

After its arrival at Luton the Battalion was soon engaged in training of a more advanced nature, and took part in Brigade operations both tactical and route marching. The district was a good one for these purposes, there being suitable open country.

The health, conduct and morale of the Battalion were splendid.

One week after arrival at Luton the Battalion proceeded to Ongar and spent a fortnight in that neighbourhood. The Provisional Battalion was stationed there, and those who were coming to the 2nd Line Battalion were absorbed, and Lieut. Col. Wigley, T.D., took over the Command, with Capt. R. W. Webb as Adjutant.

Letters A, B and D Companies were billeted in the immediate neighbourhood of Ongar, and Letter C Company under Capt. Rayner was detached, and one half Company with Company Headquarters was billeted at Kelveden Hatch, and the other half at Blackmore four miles away.

The object of this visit to Essex was to give all ranks training in Field Engineering, and to assist in constructing works forming a portion of the London Defensive Line. The training thus received proved of great value.

The Battalion returned to Luton on February 24th.

On March 2nd the Battalion was inspected in Stockwood Park, Luton, by General Sir Ian Hamilton, G.C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C., the G.O.C. in C Central Force, and on the 3rd by the Divisional Commander Brigadier General McCall.

On March 2nd an exchange in Company Commanders took place between A and C Companies, Captain Rayner taking over A Company which was detailed as a draft Company to proceed to the 1st Line Robin Hoods in France. Capt. Marshall took over C Company.

Other interesting events which occurred during March were the arrival of pack ponies and Heavy Draught Horses, also the commencement of Range Practice. The Battalion was at this time equipped with Japanese rifles, which handicapped the musketry training

very much, but the firing of these practices in the absence of Service Rifles was a valuable experience.

Detachment On April 15th a detachment comprising
proceeds to the greater portion of the Battalion was
Emergency sent into Hertfordshire and Essex to
Operations, take part in some emergency operations.
April 15th 1915. They returned to Luton on the 18th,
but during those few days it was possible to form an idea of the hardships of Active Service, the weather was bitterly cold, and valuable experience was gained in Night Guard duties.

Dunstable On June 7th the Battalion marched from
Camp, Luton to Dunstable and took up their
June 7th, 1915 quarters in a canvas camp. On June
10th, to the great regret of all ranks, Lieut. Col. Wigley relinquished his Command on being appointed to Command the 3rd Line Battalion, and the temporary Command devolved upon Capt. Rayner, Major Payne being then engaged in Nottingham in organizing the 3rd Line.

During the same month the Battalion had the good fortune to be presented with a set of Band Instruments by J. D. Player, Esq., J.P., a most welcome addition to the equipment of the Battalion, and under Bandmaster Smedley a first-rate Band was soon trained, and it served on many a weary march to cheer the men up and help them in a way that only those who have been on long marches in "full marching order," with and without a band, can appreciate. The cheers which followed the announcement of the gift were sufficient evidence of appreciation.

On June 27th, Letter A Company proceeded as a draft to the 1st Line in France. The Company was played to the Station by the Band, and while the Battalion parted with their old comrades with many regrets

they were proud of the Company they were sending to their Comrades in France.

On July 12th, Major Payne returned to the Battalion resuming the Command, Capt. Rayner being appointed his Second in Command. 2nd Lieut. J. A. Player, who had been Acting Adjutant, proceeded to France about this period and was succeeded by 2nd Lieut. F. C. Dietrichsen.

On 19th July, the Command of the Brigade was taken over by Colonel E. W. S. K. Maconchy, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O.

The stay at Dustable was not a very long one, but much valuable training and instruction was carried out there. The country lent itself to some very useful tactical exercises, and the existence in the locality of Rifle Ranges enabled Range Practice to be conducted.

CHAPTER III.

WATFORD.

August 11th, 1915 to April 24th, 1916.

On August 11th the Battalion (less a detachment 200 strong which had left *Watford,* Dunstable on the previous day, marched *August 11th,* half way and camped at Angell's Farm, *1915.* completing their march on the 11th)—marched from Dunstable to Watford. It was a heavy day and its performance shewed the splendid condition the men had developed. Early in the morning camp was struck and the canvas loaded on to transport, the men marched to Watford, a distance of about 20 miles, pitched camp and slept in their new quarters that night. It was a hot day and a trying march, and everybody was glad when they reached the beautiful Cassiobury Park where their camp was to be. A party under 2nd Lieuts. Gascoyne and Arnold Bright had proceeded in advance and done much useful work, but it was certainly a fine achievement.

After settling down in the new camp Divisional operations were instituted and more advanced training carried out. Special attention was paid to rapid entrainments and the whole Division was soon capable of being moved by road or railway at very short notice in the minimum of time.

During this time the experience beng gained by Units abroad was being utilized, and every effort made to benefit by it in the training of the Division.

On August 15th the name of the Brigade was changed to the 178th Infantry Brigade, and of the Division to the 59th (North Midland) Division.

On September 20th, Lieut. E. P. Satchell, R.A.M.C., reported for duty as Medical Officer to the Battalion. He quickly endeared himself to all ranks by his devotion to his duties, and for his constant care and vigilance in everything affecting the health of those entrusted to him. No Battalion could have been better served by its M.O.

On October 1st the Division was inspected by General Sir Leslie Rundle, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., D.S.O., the G.O.C Central Force in Gorhambury Park.

During September the withdrawal of the Japanese rifles commenced.

While at Watford the Command of the Division was taken over by Major General Reade, C.B., and shortly afterwards on his being appointed to another Division, by Major General Sandbach.

On October 18th the Battalion moved from the Camp in Cassiobury Park to billets in Watford schools and other public buildings and large houses being mainly occupied.

On 21st February, 1916, the Command of the Battalion was taken over by Lieut. *Lieut.-Col. Fane assumes Command, Feb. 21st, 1916.* Col. Cecil Fane, D.S.O., 12th Royal Lancers. This Officer, who had rendered distinguished service in the South African War, and who was one of the old Con-

temptibles, having been through the retreat from Mons soon endeared himself to the whole Battalion. He many times expressed his admiration for the Battalion and his pleasure at holding a Command in the Sherwood Foresters, the regiment with which he was associated on first entering the Army.



Group of Officers taken at Watford, 1915.

Back Row (from Left to Right). 2nd Lieut. F. P. Sims, 2nd Lieut. P. W. Mellor, 2nd Lieut. P. C. Perry, 2nd Lieut. W. Foster, 2nd Lieut. G. F. Fish, 2nd Lieut. R. B. Emmett. *Middle Row.* Lieut. F. G. Henry, Lieut. W. F. Player, Lieut. J. Macpherson, Lieut. C. P. Maltby, 2nd Lieut. C. Gascoyne, 2nd Lieut. F. G. Hickling, 2nd Lieut. R. W. Hoyte. *Front Row.* Lieut. E. P. Satchell, R.A.M.C. (attached), Capt. L. J. Cooper, Capt. F. Rayner (Second in Command), Major P. M. Payne, T.D. (Commanding), Lieut. F. C. Dietrichsen (Adjutant), Hon. Lieut. and Quartermaster E. A. Pollard, Lieut. F. O. Wright. *Sitting on Ground.* Lieut. F. Pragnell, 2nd Lieut. B. H. Brewill.

[Photo—Bassano, Ltd., London.



Photo Lafayette.

Captain S. T. DUROSE.

Commanding "C" Company. Killed in action.



Photo Hadley, Nottm.

Captain and Adjutant F. C. DIETRICHSEN.

Killed in Action.

The Senior Personnel of the Battalion now was as follows :—

Officer Commanding—Lieut.-Col. C. Fane, D.S.O.
 Second-in-Command—Major F. Rayner.
 Adjutant—Capt. F. C. Dietrichsen.
 O.C. A Company—Capt. H. C. Wright.
 O.C. B Company—Major H. Hanson.
 O.C. C Company—Capt. F. Pragnell.
 O.C. D Company—Capt. L. L. Cooper.
 Transport Officer—Lieut. C. P. Maltby.
 Quartermaster—Lieut. E. A. Pollard.
 Medical Officer—Capt. E. P. Satchell, R.A.M.C.

The Battalion had by this time reached a stage of high physical fitness, much valuable training had been gone through, particularly marching, night operations, entrenching, field engineering, bombing, bayonet fighting, and other specialist training. During the months that had elapsed since leaving Nottingham many changes had taken place in the personnel of the Battalion. Large numbers of Officers and men had proceeded to the First Line Battalion, and to other Units. This of necessity retarded and made the training very difficult.

While unfortunate for the Battalion as a potential fighting Unit, this was necessitated by the exigencies of the Service. The places of the men sent away were taken mainly by others recruited under Lord Derby's scheme, and the great majority of them proved to be keen, intelligent fellows who were evidently anxious to become trained soldiers as soon as they could.

A complete record of these changes would occupy too much space, but mention may be made of two Officers who served with the Battalion in its earlier days. One is 2nd Lieut. (afterwards Captain) C. G. Vickers, who after proceeding to the First Line Battalion was awarded the V.C. on October 14th, 1915, for the most conspicuous bravery at the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The second is

2nd Lieut. (afterwards Captain) A. Ball, who left the Battalion to join the 59th Division Cyclist Company, and from there transferred to the Air Force, who was awarded the V.C., D.S.O. with two bars, and M.C. for conspicuous bravery and magnificent achievements in that force, but who ultimately made the great sacrifice in the performance of his duty.

The whole Division had gone through elaborate exercises on entraining so as to prepare it for rapid movement, and the 1st and 2nd Line Transport had been completed and the personnel trained in their duties.

CHAPTER IV.

DUBLIN.

April 24th, 1916 to May 30th, 1916.

Move to On the night of April 24th, 1916, orders
Ireland, were received to prepare for an im-
April 25th, 1916. mediate move to an unknown destina-
 tion. The same night was selected by
 the Bosch for one of his "Zepp"
 raids, which involved most of the Battalion being out
 on special duties, and considerably interfered with their
 night's rest. Elaborate orders were in force on the
 occasion of these raids, and there had been ample oppor-
 tunity during the stay at Watford to become thoroughly
 familiar with them. On this particular night they were
 the cause of even more bad language than usual.

The move took place the following morning, the half-
 battalions having each a special train, the entrainment in
 both cases taking place at the principal Watford Station.

There was naturally much curiosity as to where the
 Battalion was going, all that could be learnt was "The
 train is going to Liverpool."

The two half-battalions concentrated at the Prince's
 Landing Stage, Liverpool, and embarked with other
 troops on the S.S. *Tynwald*, which sailed about 8 p.m.,
 April 25th. It became known on embarkation that the
 destination was Kingstown, which port was reached
 about 4 a.m. on April 26th. Breakfast and a rest was
 arranged in a large empty hotel close to the Quay for
 Letters A, B and D Companies, C Company being ac-
 commodated in the Town Hall.

For some reason, probably difficulty in obtaining adequate shipping accommodation, the first line transport and Lewis Guns were detained at Liverpool, and on arrival at Kingstown the only arms in possession of the troops consisted of rifles and bayonets; this may have been unavoidable, but was very unfortunate as events afterwards proved.

It was learnt on arrival at Kingstown that a Rebellion had broken out in Dublin, that the rebels were holding many of the principal buildings, and that they had established themselves in strong positions with a view to preventing troops from entering the City.

The whole of the 178th Infantry Brigade had been despatched under the Command of Colonel E. W. S. K. Maconchy, who with his Headquarters had arrived before the Battalions.

Towards 9 a.m. Officers were called together, and received verbal orders, which may be summarized as follows :—

1. The rebels are known to be preparing to oppose the movement of troops from Kingstown to Dublin.
2. The 178th Brigade will move towards Dublin in two parallel columns. The left column, consisting of the 2/5th and 2/6th Battalions, will move by the inland road to the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. The right column, comprising the 2/7th and 2/8th Battalions, will follow the coast road through Booterstown and Ballsbridge. Opposition may be expected anywhere beyond the latter point. Starting point, Kingstown Harbour, 10.30 a.m.
3. The 2/7th Battalion will be the leading Battalion in the right column. Order of Companies: C (advance guard) A, B, D. O.C. advance guard will dispose his platoons as follows: one in advance, one to clear houses overlooking the road, one to deal with side

roads, and one in support. Every house and side road will be searched and cleared.

4. Fall in 10.15 a.m.

The right column moved off at about 11 a.m., after magazines had been charged, and field dressings and iron rations issued. The Commanding Officer went forward with the advance guard, Major Rayner marching at the head of the main body.

The Suburbs between Kingstown and Dublin are the abode of the well-to-do of the city, who received the troops with great enthusiasm. Refreshments were pressed upon the men, and in addition to much valuable verbal information, maps and, in more than one case, even field glasses were offered and gladly accepted. The day being intensely hot, and the men laden with full marching order, such kindness was of great material value; while the affection of the people for the troops was an encouraging sign.

Before noon information had been received from inhabitants that many of the rebels were wearing green uniforms, and that Northumberland Road was likely to prove dangerous. A great deal of other detailed and (as it proved) correct information was received in this way; and it was known to a house where the column would first come under fire.

It was stated in certain newspapers that the Battalion was "ambushed," but this was altogether inaccurate; ambush implies an attack by surprise, but there could be no surprise when the boundary of the danger zone was known to the Commander of the attacking force.

On arriving at the junction of Pembroke and Northumberland Roads, Colonel Fane halted his main body, which at that point came under fire for the first time; he advanced with letter C Company (Captain Pragnell),

taking with him the Adjutant (Capt. F. C. Dietrichsen), and his stretcher bearers under Capt. E. P. Satchell, R.A.M.C. He sent a platoon to protect his right flank which, from reports received, was evidently his threatened flank.

These advance troops proceeded along Northumberland Road under fairly heavy fire, and as there was no cover, many of the houses on both sides of the road being occupied by rebels, there were of necessity some casualties.

With the information he possessed, moving in the formation he did and taking the tactical precautions he did, any suggestion that the Battalion was ambushed can only arise from ignorance of the actual facts or of the meaning of the word. What Colonel Fane did was, knowing the resistance he was certain to meet, he pushed along as rapidly as circumstances permitted towards his objective, and there is no doubt that, by his determined action, he adopted the surest means of breaking the resistance and quelling the Rebellion. Had he shrunk from the course he adopted the rebellion would have been more protracted and the ultimate casualties more numerous. Colonel Fane knew that though not fighting Germans he was fighting Germany.

The first serious check to the advance was sustained at the corner of Northumberland Road and Haddington Road. The house forming the n.w. angle of this road junction had been thoroughly fortified by the rebels. The windows and doors were sand-bagged or barricaded, and provided with loopholes, through which an accurate fire was kept up. Our Officers were especially singled out, and Captain Dietrichsen and 2nd Lieut. W. V. Hawken were killed from this house. An attempt to rush the place was beaten off with considerable loss, and a further attempt was suspended until the arrival of explosives for blowing in the door.

Meanwhile, Colonel Fane sent C Company (Capt. F. Pragnell) up Haddington Road to try and turn the right flank of the rebels' position. Baggot Street Bridge was reached, but at heavy cost, for 2nd Lieut. W. V. Hawken was killed, and all the other Officers, and a considerable number of men were wounded. C.S.M. Towlson took command of the Company, and occupied the houses immediately overlooking the bridge. For his courage and resource in this very trying position he was later awarded the D.C.M.

At 2.45 p.m. the C.O. reported to Brigade Headquarters that he was holding Baggot Street Bridge, but held up in Northumberland Road as described. Soon afterwards an Officer from Elm Park Bombing School brought up some guncotton and Mills' bombs. The door of the house was blown in by Corporal H. Hutchinson and Pte. J. F. Booth of the Battalion Bombing Section, who succeeded in attaching some guncotton slabs to the door handle. For this gallant act, performed under considerable fire, they were specially promoted Sergeant and Corporal respectively, and were mentioned in despatches. Directly the door went down, men of B Company rushed the house, again not without loss, and the garrison was driven out.

During the check at this point, Colonel Fane was struck in the arm by a bullet, but in spite of great pain and loss of blood, continued to direct the operations of his Battalion.

One difficulty that had to be contended with was the fact that the rebels were not wearing any uniform or distinctive badge, and there is no doubt that many men who were dislodged from their positions walked through our lines as ordinary civilians and were able to proceed to some other point of resistance.

The ammunition which was used by the rebels was of a very destructive type; one cartridge secured was .5

diameter and flattened to a diameter of .25. Casualties from such ammunition were bound to be very severe.

Owing to the heavy fire coming straight down the street from Clanwilliam Terrace, and the oblique fire from the schools on the right of the road, it was impossible to press on immediately and make good the Lower Mount Street Bridge. The Commanding Officer therefore sent B Company (Major H. Hanson) down Haddington Road to reinforce C Company at Baggot Street Bridge, with instructions to force his way along Percy Place and so by distracting the enemy's fire, to relieve the pressure on the frontal attack. This attempt was subjected to particularly heavy fire. Major Hanson, 2nd Lieut. Lamb and 2nd Lieut. Hartshorn were all severely wounded, and in spite of gallant persistence, the men of the Company were obliged to take shelter among the neighbouring buildings. Meanwhile, on the other flank, A Company (Capt. H. C. Wright) had been sent to work round to the right, past Beggar's Bush Barracks, and up Grand Canal Street. This plan was frustrated by the fire directed into Grand Canal Street from the dominating windows of Boland's Mill. One platoon of A Company under Sergt. E. Hardy was requisitioned by the Officer commanding Beggar's Bush Barracks to help in the defence of that building, and this N.C.O. was later warmly commended for his conduct and that of his men.

The Reserve Company (D, Capt. L. L. Cooper) had come up during these operations, and was occupying the roofs and windows of the houses round the junction of Northumberland and Haddington Roads. From these positions our men were able to return in some measure the fire of their unseen opponents.

The next problem was the capture of the School in front of the Bridge: an operation which could not be anything but costly. A bombing party was selected from D Company, and orders were sent to Capt. Wright

to press the attack simultaneously from his flank. Unhappily, the Battalion was so reduced in numbers, and the men had become so much dispersed owing to the heavy losses among Officers and N.C.O's that it was deemed necessary to await reinforcements before attacking. The 2/8th Battalion was therefore ordered forward by the Brigadier, and at 6 p.m. passed the cross roads held by our men. Although at first slightly checked by the intense fire, the new Battalion charged with great spirit and swarmed over the wall dividing the Schoolyard from the road. In the yard they were joined by Capt. Cooper and two of his platoons who had worked their way forward among the houses between Northumberland Road and Grand Canal Street.

The Schools, to our great chagrin, proved to be empty, the rebels having evidently cleared in the nick of time. Captain Cooper and his men, together with the leading Company of the 2/8th, pressed forward to the Canal Bank, where they were again exposed to the fire of Clanwilliam Terrace. But our men found good cover behind a stone wall on the water's edge, and returned the compliment with enthusiasm.

The 2/8th Battalion had meanwhile gathered in sufficient strength to rush the bridge, which they did with the utmost determination. The first house in Clanwilliam Terrace was entered by a combined party of the 2/8th and 2/7th, breaking in the lower windows, and three of the rebel garrison at least met a violent death at Robin Hood hands. The upper floors were cleared by bombing, and the effect of these weapons upon buildings not intended to be used as a fortress, can be well imagined. The place was naturally soon ablaze, and the two houses nearest the road were completely burnt out.

Unfortunately the 8th, like the 7th, had many casualties, but Lieut. Col. Oates, Commanding the 8th, may well be proud of the conduct of his Battalion under the trying conditions they were suddenly brought to face.

The work of the Regimental Medical Officers and Staffs was splendidly supplemented by the operations of the Staffs of many of the Dublin Hospitals, the members of the Red Cross, and by the St. John Ambulance Societies, also by many medical men and civilians who did what they could to attend to the wounded.

Special mention should be made of the Nurses and Staffs of the Royal City of Dublin and Sir Patrick Dun's Hospitals who came out during the worst of the fighting and, regardless of personal danger, assisted to carry the wounded into their hospitals which were situated near to where the hostilities were taking place.

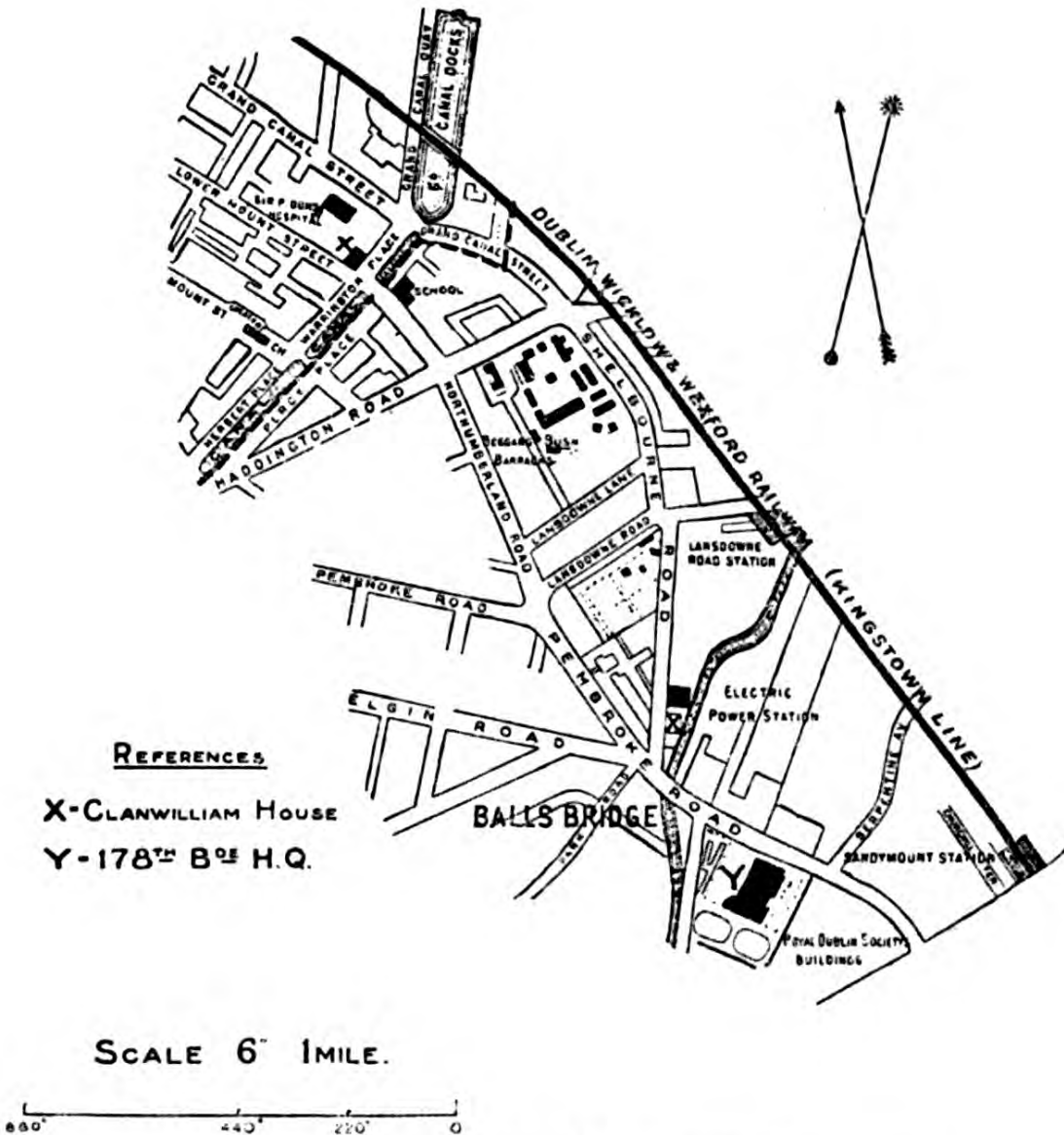
At about 11 p.m. guards and picquets were detailed and the others put into billets for a night's rest.

On the morning of April 27th orders were received that the 7th and 8th Sherwood Foresters were to concentrate at Balls Bridge, and the positions occupied by these Battalions on the previous day were to be taken over by the 5th Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment.

On the concentration being effected orders were received for this column to march to Kilmainham Royal Hospital. The column moved with the 8th Battalion leading, and proceeded via Dolphin's Barn and Rialto Bridge, in which neighbourhood considerable resistance was encountered and much sniping; the casualties of the Battalion were on that occasion however not numerous, most of the fighting on this day falling to the 2/8th Battalion. On reaching the Royal Hospital the Battalion was quartered there.

The Hospital is a similar Institution to Greenwich Hospital, being occupied by old soldiers; it consists of a large quadrangle, three sides, having in the centre an archway leading to the outer yards, etc. One of these archways looked towards Sackville Street, and the great area of burning buildings made a wonderful picture.

PLAN No 1
FIGHTING IN DUBLIN
ON APRIL 28th 1916.



By courtesy of Lieut.-Col. Oates, D.S.O., from the History of the
2/8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

On April 28th, General Sir J. G. Maxwell arrived in Dublin and assumed Command; one of his early acts was to address a parade of troops at Kilmainham Hospital, and congratulate all ranks on their conduct. He paid a special compliment to Lieut. (afterwards Captain) W. Foster.

On the evening of the 28th orders were issued that half the Battalion was to march to the North of the City, where reinforcements were required. Major Rayner was ordered to take command of this detachment, which comprised letters C and D Companies (Captains Gascoyne and Cooper).

A cordon of troops had been posted round the City, the Northern cordon being under the Command of Lieut. Col. Meldon, 4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who had established his headquarters at Broadstone Station (the terminus of the Midland Great Western Railway) under whose orders the detachment came.

During the night-march from Kilmainham the detachment had the unusual experience of coming "under fire" from air guns, bullets were whistling over their heads with no flash or sound to indicate the direction of origin, but the snipers fortunately were ignorant of the elementary rule of musketry to "aim low," and there were no casualties.

An attack in strength was anticipated from the North-west, and the detachment had to hold certain tactical positions; it had to provide reinforcements for Broadstone Station, stop rioting, and prevent the looting of shops.

All ranks carried out these somewhat difficult duties in a highly satisfactory manner, and without causing or suffering any casualties, the relations between the Sherwood Foresters and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers being the very best throughout.

On May 1st the detachment was relieved by the North Staffords, and returned to the Royal Hospital; Lieut. Col. Meldon reported his satisfaction with the way they had performed their duties.

On the evening of May 2nd the Battalion acted as escort to over 300 prisoners from the Richmond Barracks to North Wall, where they embarked for England, a small detachment proceeding with them.

On May 3rd the Battalion left the Royal Hospital to occupy a section of the Southern Cordon, the Battalion Headquarters being at the Portobello Barracks.

The Battalion continued on cordon duty until May 30th, holding a line extending from Kilmainham to Portobello Bridge, and occupying the area lying to the North; troops were quartered in the Iveagh House, Wellington Barracks and Richmond Barracks, where a Company was stationed to guard prisoners, large numbers of whom were concentrated there and sent in drafts to England and Scotland.

CHAPTER V.

POSITION IN IRELAND.

April, 1916 to May, 1916.

Before proceeding further with the narrative of the Battalion, some account should be given of the general position in Ireland, April, 1916. which led up to the incidents recorded in the last chapter, in order to give some idea of the relationship of the occurrences in the Country to the actual hostilities with Germany. In doing this no attempt will be made to touch upon Irish Politics *per se*, but which must of course to some extent be involved.

It has been abundantly proved that Germany sought to use the political state of Ireland to further her own ends, and as one disclosure after another became public, the Battalion had the consolation for the loss of so many of their gallant comrades and for the unavoidable postponement of their long anticipated move abroad, of feeling that though actually fighting Irish rebels they were really fighting Germany.

What had occurred prior to the arrival of the Battalion in Ireland was briefly as follows.

On Monday evening, 24th April, the following announcement was made by the Press Bureau :—

“ The Secretary of the Admiralty announces. During the period P.M. April 20th and P.M. April 21st an attempt to land arms and ammunition was made by a vessel under the guise of a neutral merchant ship, but in reality a German auxiliary, in conjunction with a German Submarine. The auxiliary sank and a number of prisoners were made, amongst whom was Sir Roger Casement.”



Lieut.-Col. CECIL FANE, C.M.G., D.S.O. From a snap shot taken by the late Lieut. R. W. Hoyte, at Kilmainham Hospital, Dublin.



During the days immediately preceding the dates mentioned the Rebel organization known as the Irish Volunteers had been making displays of an unusually aggressive nature. On Monday night, April 24th, an undated poster was published in Dublin declaring an "Irish Republic," in which it was claimed that the movement had the support of "Gallant Allies in Europe." Who the "Gallant Allies" were may be judged from a passage in an order issued by James Connolly, "Commandant General, Dublin Division," dated April 28th. "We have every confidence that our Allies in Germany and kinsmen in America are straining every nerve to hasten matters on our behalf."

Preparations for this coup had been in progress for many weeks, and on Monday, April 24th, the Rebel Forces in Dublin seized the Post Office and other Public buildings, and also occupied in strength many private buildings carefully selected with a view to delaying or preventing troops from entering the City.

There is no doubt that the energetic action of the Naval and Military Authorities, though they involved heavy casualties, caused the early collapse of the Rebellion, the formal surrender of the Rebels being made on April 29th.

The following extracts from the report of General Sir J. G. Maxwell, Commanding-in-Chief the Forces in Ireland, relate to the operations of the Battalion on April 26th :—

"The right column, consisting of the 7th and 8th Sherwood Foresters by the main tram route through Ballsbridge, and directed on Merrion Square and Trinity College. This column, with 7th Battalion leading, was held up at the Northern corner of Haddington Road and Northumberland Road, which was strongly held by rebels, but with the assistance of bombing parties

organized and led by Captain Jeffares of the Bombing School at Elm Park, the rebels were driven back.

“ At 3.25 p.m., the 7th Battalion Sherwood Foresters met great opposition from the rebels holding the Schools and other houses on the North side of the road close to the bridge at Lower Mount Street, and two Officers, one of whom was the Adjutant, Captain Dietrichsen, were killed and seven wounded, including Lieutenant - Colonel Fane, who though wounded, remained in action.

“ At about 5.30 p.m. orders were received that the advance to Trinity College was to be pushed forward at all costs, and therefore at about 8 p.m., after careful arrangements, the whole column, accompanied by bombing parties, attacked the schools and houses where the chief opposition lay, the Battalions charging in successive waves, carried all before them, but, I regret to say, suffered severe casualties in doing so.

“ The steadiness shewn by these two Battalions is deserving of special mention, as I understand the majority of the men have less than three months' service.”

The following message was received from His Majesty the King :—

Windsor Castle, 4th May, 1916.

To General Sir John Maxwell,
G.O.C. in C. Irish Command, Dublin.

“ Now that the recent lamentable outbreak has finally been quelled, I wish to express to my gallant troops in Ireland, to the Royal Irish Constabulary, and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, my deep sense of the whole-hearted devotion to duty and spirit of self-sacrifice with which throughout they have acted.”

GEORGE R.I.

Sir John Maxwell issued the following General Order to the troops :—

- “ I desire to thank the troops which have been engaged in the City of Dublin for their splendid behaviour under the trying conditions of street fighting which I have found it necessary to order them to undertake. Owing to the excellent direction of the Officers and the tireless effort of the troops all the surviving rebels in Dublin have now surrendered unconditionally.
- “ I especially wish to express my gratitude to those Irish regiments which have so largely helped to crush this rising.
- “ Many incidents of very gallant behaviour have been brought to my notice, which I am unable to refer to in this Order, but I must express my admiration of the conduct of a small detachment from the 6th Reserve Cavalry Regiment, which when conveying ammunition, was attacked in Charles Street, and after a splendid defence for three and a half days during which their leaders were struck down, safely delivered the ammunition.”

J. G. MAXWELL,

*General Commanding-in-Chief the Forces in Ireland,
Headquarters, “ Irish Command.”*

May 1st, 1916.

Space would not permit nor would the object of this volume require an account of the operations in other parts of Ireland during Easter week, 1916, but those who served with the Battalion in Dublin, who saw so many of their comrades killed and wounded, may well find satisfaction in the knowledge that they played a great part in rendering abortive the alliance between Germany and the rebel section of Ireland.

The casualty list of the Battalion was as follows :—

	Officers.		Other Ranks
Killed	3	...	15
Wounded	8	...	65
	11		80

The total casualties during the rebellion were as follows :—

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
Military Officers	17	46	—	63
„ Other ranks	86	311	9	406
Royal Irish Constabulary Officers	2	—	—	2
Royal Irish Constabulary—Other ranks	12	23	—	35
Dublin Metropolitan Police	3	3	—	6
Civilians and Insurgents	180	614	—	794
	300	997	9	1306

As the rebels were not wearing uniforms it was not possible to distinguish between them and civilians who were not taking an active part in the hostilities.

CHAPTER VI.

ORANMORE.

May 30th, 1916 to September, 1916.

On Tuesday, May 30th, the Battalion (less *Oranmore*, detachment left at Richmond Barracks as *May 30th*, guard over prisoners) left Dublin for Oranmore, Co. Galway. The main body was played to Broadstone Station from the Portobello Barracks by the Band of the Royal Irish Fusiliers. This compliment and indication of good feeling was much appreciated and was a fitting testimony to the happy relations which had subsisted between Colonel Madden, who was Commanding the 4th Battalion of that Regiment, and all his Officers, Warrant and Non-commissioned Officers and men, and all ranks of the Battalion, while they were quartered together in Portobello Barracks.

The entrainment took place at Broadstone Station, the Battalion travelling by two special trains, one conveying personnel and the other transport and baggage.

An advance party in charge of Lieut. and Quartermaster Pollard had proceeded some days before, and when the Battalion marched into camp they found it pitched and ready to receive them.

The Camping Ground was an ideal one; it had been used for some years as a Special Reserve training camp. It had permanent bases for ablution sheds, and other camp buildings which were erected on them in wood and iron, when required. There was ample space for the camp, drill ground, etc., and in the rough land adjoining

were two Rifle Ranges and plenty of ground for tactical exercises, trench construction, and other branches of training which the war had brought into existence.

The camp was about half a mile from Oranmore Station, and six miles from the City of Galway.

Oranmore is situated at the head of Galway Bay, and consists of a small village with a fine ruined castle, the scene of many old conflicts, looking as though it was still keeping guard on the placid waters of the Bay.

The country round was typical of the West of Ireland, and it is difficult to imagine more beautiful surroundings for troops engaged in the grim work of preparing for the still more serious service lying before them.

Four months were spent in Oranmore Camp, and very happy months they were. Training was of course the first consideration, but Lieut.-Col. Fane, who had fortunately recovered from his wound received in Dublin, always thoughtful for the recreation, comfort, and pleasure of those serving under him, ensured that the social side of military life was by no means overlooked.

Training under such conditions could not be irksome, the proximity of ranges enabled the men to practice musketry, an elaborate system of trenches was dug, and many battles were fought in them. Route marches and tactical exercises were practised over the adjoining country, and snipers, signallers, bombers, and all the other special branches of the service were trained.

The Band, under Bandmaster Smedley, was a great acquisition, and proved a fruitful source of entertainment.

The weekly march of the Battalion into Galway was a great event, the men resting and taking their mid-day meal in the public gardens while the Band played a programme of music in which Irish Airs took a prominent part.

It was not long before the resident population began to appreciate the splendid conduct and bearing of the troops, who had come to live amongst them, and practically no resentment was shewn against those who had done their duty as British Soldiers during the troubles in Dublin. It speaks well for the residents and the troops that during the whole time the Battalion was stationed in the County and afterwards in the City of Galway there was no untoward incident between the troops and the civil population.

No description of Oranmore Camp would be complete without some reference to the Canteens and Institute. There was no N.A.C.B. in those days, and the accommodation and service were provided by Messrs. Dickinson & Co., the Army Contractors. The service was excellently performed, and a range of marquees was provided which enabled splendid entertainments to be given; concerts were organized by Capt. Gascoyne, and every possible arrangement made for the comfort and recreation of the men.

Acknowledgement is due to the Midland Great Western Railway Company, who placed a special train practically at the disposal of the Battalion and ran it to and from Galway at convenient times, so that the men were able to vary the monotony of camp life with visits to Galway when otherwise they could not possibly have done so.

On several occasions a steamer was chartered to take large parties from the Battalion for trips on the beautiful Lough Corrib, and these were very much enjoyed.

There were various alarms of other risings during the stay of the Battalion in Oranmore Camp, and detachments had occasionally to be sent off on special duties, but nothing occurred in the way of further actual hostilities.

CHAPTER VII.

GALWAY—NAAS.

September, 1916 to January 13th, 1917.

Winter County Galway is not a suitable place to
Quarters, be under canvas late in the season, being
Sept., 1916. exposed to the fury of the Atlantic gales,
 and in September rumours began to arrive
 that the Battalion would soon be on the
 move again. When the orders actually arrived it was
 learnt with much regret that the two half-battalions
 would winter in barracks far removed from one another.
 One half was to be in Renmore Barracks, Galway, the
 Depot of the Connaught Rangers, and the other in Naas
 Barracks, Co. Kildare, the Depôt of the Royal Dublin
 Fusiliers.

On the 18th September the left-half Battalion, with
 details, including the Band, Complement of Transport,
 Signallers, Lewis Gunners, etc., marched off under the
 Command of Major F. Rayner and commenced their
 march of 118 miles to Naas. The route and time-table
 were as follows :—

1916	From	To	Miles	Time of Departure	Time of Arrival
Sept. 20	Oranmore	Loughrea	18	0910	1700
" 21	Rest				
" 22	Loughrea	Ballinasloe	18	0900	1700
" 23	Rest				
" 24	Ballinasloe	Athlone	15½	0900	1600
" 25	Athlone	Clara	16½	0900	1600
" 26	Rest				
" 27	Clara	Tullamore	7½	1400	1630
" 28	Tullamore	Portarlinton	16	0910	1730
" 29	Portarlinton	Kildare	12½	1000	1600
" 30	Kildare	Naas	12	1000	1540

The marching was carried out strictly in accordance with march discipline, there being ten minutes halt per hour, with $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours halt about mid-day for dinners.

The weather was excellent and all ranks thoroughly enjoyed the march. Supplies were arranged by Supply Officer, Athlone, and worked without a hitch.

Billeting was in schools or other suitable buildings; at Athlone the detachment was quartered at the Barracks, where every possible service was rendered to the troops, and hospitality extended to the Officers by the Commanding Officer and Officers of the Artillery stationed there.

At the other places the billeting was arranged by a party comprising 2nd Lieut. L. G. Flint and one N.C.O. from each of the two Companies, and one from the Transport. This party went on in advance by cycle and reconnoitred the town in conjunction with the Royal Irish Constabulary who rendered every possible assistance. A sketch of the town was made shewing the billets of each Company and the Transport in different colours; the party met the column about two miles outside the town and the N.C.O.'s guided their Units to their billets. Tea which was prepared in the field kitchens during the march was served each day to the men within five minutes of arriving at their new quarters.

The work of this party was most excellently done throughout the entire march, and reflects the greatest credit on those who constituted it.

During the march much hospitality was shown to the troops by many of the residents, which is not forgotten by them, it is only from a regard for the known wishes of their many hosts that this acknowledgment is not made more personal.

The Band, assisted by the vocal talent which was of the very best, gave concerts at various places *en route*; those at Clara and Tullamore were particularly successful.

One unfortunate incident occurred at Clara where a N.C.O. was attacked at night by a party of rebels, but they were unaware of the fact that they were tackling one of the best bayonet fighters in the Army. The N.C.O. was on duty next morning.

The final phase of the march was enlivened by the young Band of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who met the detachment about five miles from Naas and played them to their Barracks, a compliment and a welcome which was thoroughly appreciated.

On arrival at Naas Barracks, the Depôt of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the troops soon settled down in the quarters allotted to them, every possible provision being made by the Officers of that Regiment for their accommodation and comfort.

During the march on the 28th the Brigade Commander, Brigadier-General E. W. S. K. Maconchy met the detachment and informed Major Rayner that Lieut.-Col. Fane had been detailed to return to his old Regiment, the 12th Royal Lancers, to assume the Command, and that he (Major Rayner) was to take over the Command of the Battalion from him.

On the 30th, when crossing the Curragh, the Detachment was inspected by the Divisional Commander, Major General Sandbach, as they marched past, and he expressed to the Detachment Commander his appreciation of their appearance.

October 1st was devoted to settling down in their new quarters, and on the 2nd Major Rayner left Naas to take over the Command at Galway, where the Battalion Headquarters were situated. The Command of the left-half Battalion at Naas being taken over temporarily by Major Douglas, who was attached to the Battalion, and shortly afterwards by Major Hanson who had then recovered from his severe wound received in Dublin, and who continued to Command the half-battalion during its stay at Naas.



Lieut.-Col. F. RAYNER, D.S.O., T.D.

Photo Pendry, Nottm.

On September 28th the right-half Battalion and Battalion Headquarters marched from Oranmore Camp to Renmore Barracks, Galway, the camp being struck.

On October 3rd, Lieut.-Col. Fane handed over the Command to Major Rayner, and *Change in Command,* left Galway to take over the Command of the 12th Royal Lancers in France. It was *Oct. 3rd.* with the deepest regret that the Battalion parted with a Commanding Officer who had so gallantly led them in Dublin and who had endeared himself to them during the period of his Command. 1916.

Renmore Barracks, Galway, constitute the Dépôt of the Connaught Rangers, and were under the Command of Colonel Chamier, who placed all available accommodation at the disposal of the Sherwood Foresters, the conditions being somewhat similar to those at Naas, in each case the half-battalion occupying huts attached to the Barracks which provided quarters for approximately one Company, and the remainder were in blocks of the permanent buildings.

At both places the relations between the Sherwood Foresters and the Regiments whose barracks they were sharing were of the pleasantest.

Rumours soon began to arrive that the stay of the Battalion was not likely to be prolonged, but that an early move towards France was imminent.

The stay at Galway and Naas was a very pleasant one; in both towns the residents did much for the entertainment of the troops by providing Institutes, etc., but unfortunately the Band could only be in one place at one time.

After the left-half Battalion reached Naas the Band was left with them for several weeks and then brought back to Galway, and an excellent concert was given in aid of a deserving local charity.

The time of the troops was mainly devoted to training, particularly those branches likely to be of the greatest service in trench warfare. At Galway much hard work was done in assisting in the construction of stables, there not being permanent stabling for more than three or four horses. This was very necessary work because the barracks stand on a promontory, running out into Galway Bay, and the place was continually swept by Atlantic gales. The work was excellently done, and will no doubt prove a permanent useful addition to the Barracks.

At Naas the horses were quartered in some excellent hunting stables.

A detachment of recruits was sent from both places to fire their Musketry Course at the Curragh.

During the stay of the Battalion at Oranmore, the Rector of Galway (Canon J. Fleetwood Berry, B.D.) had come out every Sunday morning and conducted a Drum-head Service, and after the move into Renmore Barracks a military service was held every Sunday morning in the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas, to which the troops marched; these services were very impressive, and the Battalion owes much to Canon Berry for his care for the troops entrusted to him.

Orders were eventually received that the Battalion would move on January 13th, 1917, to Fovant, Salisbury Plain, and be relieved by the 2/7th Highland Light Infantry, who were then stationed in Essex, and in order to save transport an exchange of horses and much of the equipment was to be made.

On January 4th an advance party under Captain R. A. Charlton proceeded to Fovant, and on the 6th a further party under 2nd Lieut. Bullivant proceeded with nine horses (mounts) which were not being exchanged with the H.L.I. and with the baggage.

On the 8th a party under Lieut. and Quartermaster Pollard and 2nd Lieut. Wrighton went to take over the H.L.I. horses, transport, etc., in Essex, to rejoin the Battalion at Fovant.

The relief took much arranging as the H.L.I. would need a meal and rest after their long journey, and the Sherwood Foresters had an equally long journey before them, and there was no spare accommodation. However mutual consideration and good-will overcame the difficulties and there was no hitch.

A very pleasing ceremony took place on the Renmore Barrack Square, before the departure of the Battalion, Colonel Chamier addressing the troops and expressing his admiration for the splendid conduct during their stay in Galway. This was acknowledged by Lieut.-Colonel Rayner.

Acknowledgement is due to Lieut.-Colonel McNish, Commanding, and the Officers of the 2/7th H.L.I., for the smoothness with which the handing over and relief was effected, both at Galway and Naas.



CHAPTER VIII.

FOVANT.

January 13th, 1917 to February, 1917.

The detachment at Galway left by special train at 6 p.m., on January 13th; they were played to the station by the pipers of the 2/7th H.L.I., and so large a number of townspeople had come to bid them farewell, that a detachment of Royal Irish Constabulary had to keep the station approaches clear until entrainment was effected. The cordon was then withdrawn and the townspeople admitted to the station, and gave the Battalion a most affectionate and hearty farewell.

The departure was followed by a special report of Lieut.-Colonel Hildebrand, the District Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary at Galway, expressing his high opinion of the conduct of the Battalion.

The Battalion Headquarters and right-half Battalion, from Galway, the left-half Battalion under Major Hanson from Naas, and the Musketry Party who were under the Command of Lieut. B. H. Brewill, all concentrated at North Wall, Dublin, during the night of January 13th-14th, the weather being very bad, and sailed at 12.15 a.m. on the 14th on the S.S. *Ulster*, for Holyhead. Two special trains conveyed them to Dinton, which was reached about 6 p.m. Owing to the Military line from there to Fovant having been damaged by an accident, that portion of the journey had to be marched.

The Battalion took up its quarters in Camp No. 13, Fovant.

The whole of the 59th Division was on the Plain; the Divisional Headquarters were immediately opposite the No. 13 Camp, the Brigade Headquarters about a mile away; all the Battalions of the Sherwood Foresters and Lincoln and Leicester Brigades in the Fovant district, but the Staffords were a few miles away.

The weather was very unsatisfactory, the country being covered with snow and the roads sheets of ice; a thaw came, leaving the ground very wet.

The main work was completing equipment for overseas, and instruction in the latest approved methods of trench warfare and attack, these methods of necessity being frequently modified in accordance with the experience gained by troops already abroad. The excellent Manuals continually being issued as the result of that experience, and the lessons learnt by Staff and Regimental Officers, who visited the fighting fronts for purposes of training, rendered it possible for those Units which had not already gone abroad to learn many of the lessons which their comrades overseas were having to learn, often at the cost of many casualties.

It must be remembered that though the general principles laid down in the old Service Training Manuals remained as true as when they were written, the introduction of new arms and methods, such for instance as bombs and gas, made it essential that troops should be trained to the use of these as far as possible before actually coming in contact with them in action.

Honours List, 24th and 25th Jan., 1917. The *London Gazette* of 24th January, 1917, contained the announcement that the King had been graciously pleased to order various Honours and Awards for valuable services rendered in connection with the War. This included :—

D.S.O.—Captain (Temporary Lieut.-Colonel) Frank Rayner.

D.C.M.—No. 39, C.S.M., H. J. Towlson.

And the *London Gazette* of 25th January, 1917, contained the announcement that the names of a number of Officers and men had been brought to the notice of the Secretary of State for War for distinguished services rendered in connection with the War. These names included :—

Captain (Temporary Lieut.-Col.) F. Rayner, D.S.O.
Captain and Adjutant F. C. Dietrichsen.

Lieut. W. Foster.

Major A. N. Lee.

No. 2917 Pte. J. F. Booth.

No. 3426 A/Corporal H. Hutchinson.

Major A. N. Lee (subsequently awarded the D.S.O.) was an old First Line Robin Hood Officer, who was acting as Brigade Major to the 178th Infantry Brigade during the fighting in Dublin.

On Sunday, 11th February, the Battalions of the Sherwood Foresters attended a special service in Salisbury Cathedral, proceeding by special trains from Fovant Camp Station; the service was an impressive one, the sermon being preached by the Lord Bishop of Southwell (Dr. Hoskyns).

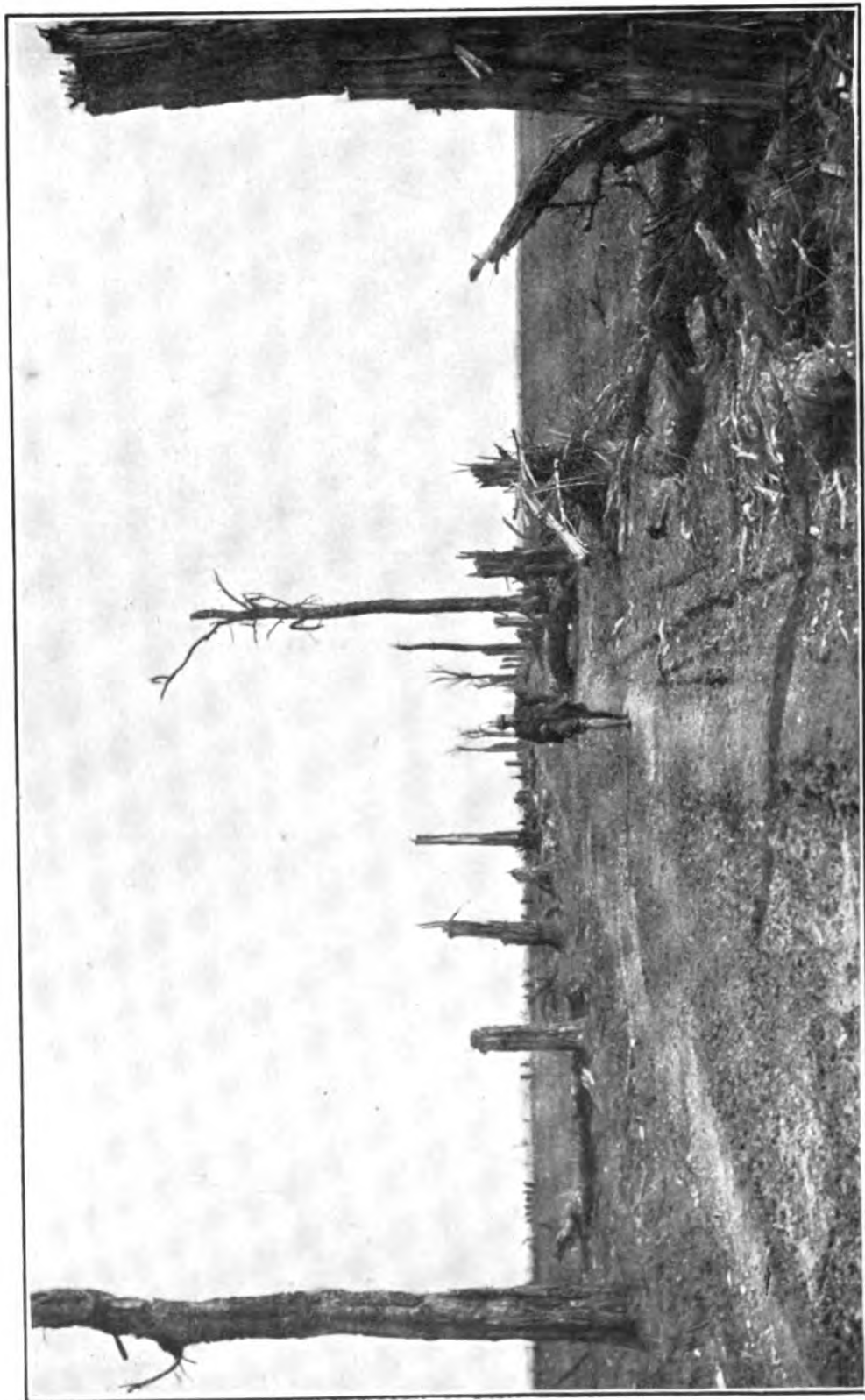
The service was also attended by His Grace the Duke of Portland, the Hon. Colonel of the Robin Hoods, Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire and President of the Notts. Territorial Force Association, and Major Baines, the Secretary of the Association. After the service the Duke of Portland addressed the two Nottinghamshire Battalions on the Cathedral Close. The whole ceremony constituting as it did an official blessing and God-speed from the mother country, was much appreciated by all ranks.



House at corner of Northumberland and Haddington Roads, Dublin.
(Many Officers and other ranks were shot from this house which was
eventually partially blown up and captured).



Clanwilliam House, Dublin. A rebel fortress, the scene of much fighting,
caught fire and was gutted.



The main Amiens—St. Quentin Road, shewing the destruction of the trees by Artillery fire.
Copyright Imperial War Museum.

On Tuesday, February 13th, the Brigade
Inspection by was inspected by H.M. the King, in
the King, Fovant village, as it marched past him in
Feb. 13th, column of route, subsequently those who
 1917. had been awarded decorations were
 honoured by investiture, and the Com-
 manding Officers were presented to him.

These acknowledgements of the work done in Dublin
 were much appreciated throughout the Battalions.

Other awards of special interest to the Battalions
 included :—

Brigadier General E. W. S. K. Maconchy, awarded
 the C.M.G.

Lieutenant Colonel C. Fane, D.S.O., awarded the
 C.M.G.

It was also a matter of satisfaction to the Battalions
 that various awards and mentions had been granted to
 their old Dublin comrades of the 2/8th Sherwood
 Foresters.

While the move of the Battalion was imminent no
 time or effort was lost during the short stay at Fovant
 to render the training of the Battalion as complete as
 possible, and much useful work was done. This included
 particularly range practices, the organization of the
 occupation and relief of trenches, route marching and
 live bombing, in the course of which a much regretted
 accident occurred in which a man was killed and one
 injured.

CHAPTER IX.

BOULOGNE—WARFUSEE—BOIS ST.
MARTIN—BELLOY-EN-SANTERRE—
BRIE—BOUVINCOURT—BERNES.*February, 1917 to March 31st, 1917.*

As a preliminary to the move of the *France at last*, Battalion, advance parties were des-
February, 1917. patched, whose movements are detailed below.

1. An instructional party consisting of 5 Officers and 14 N.C.O's and men, who entrained at Dinton, on February 2nd, at 23.30 hours, for Folkstone Their later movements are as follows :—

- Feb. 3. 06.00. Arrived Folkstone and spent night in Rest Camp.
- „ 4. 09.30. Embarked Folkestone, arrived Boulogne 12.00. Officers quartered in Hotels, other ranks at Ostrahove Rest Camp.
- „ 7. 16.30. Entrained Boulogne for Villers Bretonneux.
- „ 8. 10.00. Arrived Villers Bretonneux, billeted there.
- „ 9. 17.00. Proceeded by mechanical transport to Morcourt and attached to 1/4th East Yorkshire Regiment.
- „ 10. 09.30. Left Morcourt and arrived Foucaucourt 14.00 and billeted there.
- „ 11. 16.30. Left billets for trenches.

- Feb. 19. 22.00. Relieved by Durham Light Infantry and returned to billets at Foucaucourt.
- „ 26. Left Foucaucourt and marched to Warfusse and billeted there until arrival of main body.
2. „ 13. Captain R. A. Charlton and batman proceeded to Havre via Southampton for landing duties.
3. „ 25. The First Line Transport and personnel under the Command of Major H. Hanson, entrained at the Fovant Military Station at 15.45, and proceeded to Southampton and embarked the same afternoon.
- „ 26. 07.00. Sailed from Southampton and anchored off Netley until 15.00. Arrived off Havre midnight.
- „ 27. 02.00. Berthed at Havre. Spent night at No. 2 Rest Camp. Captain Charlton and batman rejoined.
- „ 28. 08.00. Entrained for Longeau.
- March 1. Detrained at Longeau and marched to St. Fuscien, where they rejoined the main body.

February 26th was a busy day for the main body. They had to pack up all their stores, leave their camp clean and tidy and entrain. Their last meal in the old country was the cause of endless worry. The only menu available was "sausage and mash," and the sausages had to be collected over a very large area and were late in arriving; however, they did arrive eventually, and were duly dispatched, and the Battalion entrained at the Fovant railhead; B, C and D Companies, with Battalion Headquarters, leaving at 23.40 and A Company being accommodated in one of the 2/8th trains, leaving at 01.45 on the 27th.

These two detachments concentrated at Shorncliffe on the 27th and had an excellent breakfast and a rest at the Folkstone Rest Camp, to which they marched, and at 09.30 they embarked for Boulogne, from which place they marched to the Rest Camp at Ostrahove.

The Climb from Boulogne to Ostrahove is always fairly heavy, but on this occasion the hill was a sheet of ice, and everyone was very glad when the camp was reached. There were not many applications for late passes that night.

It was not to be a very long night's rest for most of the Battalion, as Battalion Headquarters with A and B Companies were in the train at Boulogne at 03.45 on the 28th, sharing a train with the 2/6th Sherwood Foresters. C and D Companies entrained at 08.55.

The main idea of everyone in France seemed to be, when you get troops arriving push them on as soon as you can, and no doubt it was an excellent principle to work on, but in this case it meant the arrival of troops before they were expected.

The detrainment was at Saleux, and on arrival there the first detachment marched to the town some three miles away and waited for orders. Presently some of the Brigade Staff arrived in motor cars and seemed somewhat excited because the Battalion was a day too early. The quarters that night were at Vers, to which place the Battalion marched and soon found themselves billeted for the first time in a French village.

On March 1st the Battalion marched from Vers to St. Fuscien, and though the roads were bad it was a fine march through some beautiful country. Everyone was glad to see the First Line Transport on arrival at St. Fuscien, and the field kitchens were soon at work.

On March 2nd the march was continued to Warfusee where the 2/7th and 2/8th took over a French Camp.

The march was a long one, and the roads were in many places bad, but there was little straggling, and the Battalion marched into Warfusee in splendid form and were complimented by the Brigadier on their fine appearance and discipline after so trying a march.

The Camp had been left in a very dirty state by its previous occupants, and the whole Battalion set to work to cleanse it; the roads in the village were almost impassable, and there was much snow lying. The men soon made themselves at home in the French huts.

The Battalion remained in this camp until March 9th, most of the time being occupied with improving the roads and a certain amount of training. The instructional advance party rejoined the Battalion here.

As there had been various changes made in the personnel from various causes, the following roll of Senior and Specialist Officers, as the Battalion was then constituted, will be of interest:—

Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. F. Rayner, D.S.O.

Second in Command, Major H. Hanson.

Adjutant, Captain F. Pragnell.

Officer Commanding A Company, Capt. H. C. Wright.

„ „ B „ „ F. G. Henry.

„ „ C „ „ S. T. Durose.

„ „ D „ „ L. L. Cooper.

Signalling Officer, Lieut. B. H. Brewill.

Lewis Gun Officer, Lieut. Parry.

Bombing Officer, Lieut. Hoyte.

Transport Officer, Lieut. Bullivant.

Intelligence Officer, Lieut. C. C. Charlton.

Quartermaster, Lieut. E. A. Pollard.

Medical Officer, Captain B. Thompson, R.A.M.C.

Chaplain (Attached) Rev. J. McIlwaine, C.F.

On March 9th the Battalion marched to Bois St. Martin, an old French camp in a wood. The marching was good, along a main road, but when that had to be

left and the march was along bye roads leading to the camp, it was indescribable; fortunately the last portion was planked or probably some of the men would have been stuck in the mud. This camp would have been quite a pleasant spot in decent weather, but under the conditions prevailing it was very much the reverse.

At this time the Germans were holding a defensive line of trenches about two miles West of the Somme, the British line being held by the 177th Infantry Brigade, the 4th Lincolns being in support at Belloy-en-Santerre, the front line being held by the Leicesters.

The main road through this section was the important "National" road running due East from Amiens, crossing the Somme at Brie. This road had a row of tall trees on each side, but most of these had been destroyed by shell fire, and the road itself together with the branch roads had been badly damaged from the same cause and from the abnormal traffic passing over them. Large working parties had to be found to assist the Engineers in carrying out the necessary repairs.

During the stay of the Battalion at Bois St. Martin Camp, it was occupied in finding the necessary parties for this work, and also in improving the Camp and the road leading to it, and in carrying out Lewis Gun range practices.

Orders were received that the Brigade would relieve the 177th Brigade in the line on the nights of March 16th-17th and 18th-19th, and a party was sent away for instructional purposes on the 15th. This party consisted of the C.O., Adjutant, most of the specialist Officers, one Officer from each Company and one N.C.O. from each platoon, and was attached to the 4th Lincolns, whose Headquarters were at Belloy-en-Santerre.

On the 16th the C.O. walked over to see the Headquarters of the Leicesters, who were occupying the front line trenches, to make himself acquainted with the line

he was expecting shortly to occupy. On reaching the Headquarters he found the C.O. of the Leicesters in the hollow of a tree by the road side, and on *German* stating the object of his visit received the *Retirement.* reply, "Well, I don't know what you will take over, as my men are already in the German third line trenches." The great German retreat East of the Somme had commenced, and the taking over of the trenches never took place, as for all military purposes the line which had been stubbornly held by both Armies for many months had ceased to exist.

The party rejoined the Battalion at Bois St. Martin on March 17th.

On March 20th the Battalion marched to Belloy-en-Santerre. This village had been absolutely destroyed by the Germans, the streets hardly being discernable in the wreckage, and the parish Church could only be located by a rather larger heap of debris than at other points. The bell had fallen unbroken on the edge of a trench, and served as a useful landmark. The Battalion Headquarters were in the cellars of the Chateau, the only portion of the building remaining, the men were quartered in dugouts, many of which, owing to the bad weather, were in a very unsatisfactory condition.

The first line transport and Q.M. Stores were in a sheltered spot near Estreés.

During the two days spent at Belloy the men were occupied in improving the dugouts and in work on the roads. They were already experiencing the hardships of active service, but they worked splendidly, and the uncomfortable surroundings did not affect their good spirits.

On March 22nd the Transport and Q.M. Stores were moved forward to Villers Carbonnel, a ruined village $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles West of the Somme.

On March 23rd the Battalion moved forward to *Brie*. Brie, on the Eastern slope of the Somme valley.

The bridges over the Somme Canal and the several branches of the river had been destroyed by the Germans, and our Engineers were constructing new ones; only light transport was at that time able to cross them.



The Somme Crossing at Brie. From "England in France." by kind permission of Mr. Sydney R. Jones, the Artist, and Messrs. Constable & Co. Ltd., the Publishers.

The duty of the Battalion was to occupy old German trenches lying to the East and to form part of the bridge-head defences while the construction of the new bridges was completed.

The march to Brie was a very interesting one, as it involved crossing the recently evacuated lines, and there was ample evidence of the weary vigils which had been kept by both Armies. It was not without feelings of considerable satisfaction that these trenches were left behind, and the knowledge that the Battalion was moving into country for so long occupied by the enemy, and

that there was a prospect of open warfare and movement instead of the more passive duty of holding trenches.

The scene at the Somme was a busy one, the Engineers having already accomplished much in the way of bridging, and though at this time lorries were not allowed to cross, there was no difficulty for the troops and their first line transport.

The section of the bridge-head defences taken over by the Battalion comprised the trenches lying to the South of the Amiens-Vermand Road. The forward post was in the Athies Wood, where C Company had its headquarters. The right flank Company (A) had to ensure that no parties of the enemy could work round and destroy the work of the Engineers.

The remainder of these defences lying to the North of the road, consisted of the 2/5th Sherwoods.

Most of the positions occupied consisted of an elaborate system of indifferent German trenches, the majority of the men had poor shelters, and those mainly improvised by themselves, the weather being very bad some shelter was necessary.

There were some decent dugouts, but great caution had to be used before occupying them, as the enemy had provided all kinds of "booby traps," in readiness for our advance. In no case were men permitted to enter dugouts until they had been thoroughly examined by our Regimental Experts who had been specially trained to handle bombs and other explosives. The greatest credit is due to them for the skill and care they exercised in their responsible and dangerous duty, and to them is due the fact that no casualty of any kind occurred from this cause.

The Divisional Headquarters had circulated warnings as to the necessity for this caution, and it proved to be very necessary.

Two instances may be given of the nature of these traps which were discovered. In one case on entering a dugout an innocent looking glass marble was found on a table, any man not specially warned would be almost sure to pick it up, but had he done so he would not have come out alive. Through the marble was a small hole, and through that was an almost invisible wire connected



Mons en Chaussée Church. From "England in France," by kind permission of Mr. Sydney R. Jones, the Artist, and Messrs. Constable & Co. Ltd., the Publishers.

with a detonator, which would have exploded a charge. The second consisted of a board apparently part of other debris, lying on the steps of a dugout. Had this been kicked out of the way, a series of bombs would have exploded.

Lying to the East of these trenches was a hill in the side of which were some very elaborate dugouts, the former home of some German Artillery. Some of these were supplied with fine specimens of old furniture, evidently looted from the village before it was destroyed. Outside the dugouts were stacks of empty bottles shewing that the Bosche had not forgotten to attend to his own personal requirements.

Much arduous work had to be done in improving and reversing the trenches we were occupying, and the Corps Staff expressed high appreciation of the speed and thoroughness with which this was done.

The next move was to Bouvincourt, the *Bouvincourt*. bridge-head defences being handed over to the 2/6th Sherwoods.

The march was commenced in pouring rain and proceeded along the Amiens-Vermand Road to Mons-en-Chaussee. The destruction of the villages in this neighbourhood had not been so complete as was the case further West, the retreat of the Germans having apparently been more hurried, but great pains had been taken to impede transport by blowing up the roads, especially at cross roads, immense craters being formed. There was one in Mons-en-Chaussee village, the explosion having almost completely wrecked the Church.

The 2/5th Sherwoods were marching about 500 yards in advance of the Battalion, and when they reached Estrees-en-Chaussee they were seen to come under artillery fire, and the C.O. therefore decided to proceed across country, the ground affording cover, and though it was

heavy going, Bouvincourt was reached without casualty. The first line transport had to go a long way round but arrived safely.



Bouvincourt Church. From "England in France," by kind permission of Mr. Sydney R. Jones, the Artist, and Messrs. Constable & Co. Ltd., the Publishers.

A large portion of Bouvincourt had been destroyed, but there were still civilians in the village, many of whom had taken refuge in the Church. Some buildings had been left intact, presumably for the accommodation of the civilians, and these proved very useful for our men, but every precaution had to be taken as there was evidence that some of them were mined, and in one or two cases our troops were withdrawn.

The civilians were collected in the Church and evacuated by means of motor ambulances.

After arrival at Bouvincourt word was received that several motor ambulances and other transport was held up owing to a large crater at the cross roads, about a mile South of the village, and D Company, under Captain Cooper, marched off to relieve it. Though they had had a heavy march they worked like Trojans and managed to get all traffic on its way.

One of the refinements of German "kultur" is the destruction of fruit trees, and this was found to have



Ruined Fruit Trees, Bouvincourt From "England in France," by kind permission of Mr. Sydney R. Jones, the Artist, and Messrs. Constable & Co. Ltd., the Publishers.

been carried out to perfection, and not content with that even ornamental shrubs had been cut down.

Several advanced posts were pushed out, extending as far as point 114 near Nobescourt Farm, where a large crater at the cross roads was held and received considerable attention from the enemy guns.

The German retreat was still in full progress, *Bernes.* and we were soon again on the move, the next advance being made through Hancourt to *Bernes.* The enemy had apparently had more time here to perfect their methods of destruction. The houses had been blown up from the cellars, and there was hardly one brick left on another. Fortunately a few cellars were left, also some dugouts and some wooden stables which had been set on fire but only partially destroyed.

The advance from the Somme had been a series of outpost lines on a large scale, and very interesting it was to carry out in practice the lessons and exercises practised on many a field day in England, both in Volunteer and Territorial camps and during the war time training.

The only troops between us and the Germans were Cavalry patrols, and there is no doubt that the German retirement was being excellently carried out.

It was considered desirable that our new line should be protected by a series of advanced defensive posts in case the enemy should decide, in order to check or repel our advance, to attack us, and orders were issued for a series of cruciform posts to be dug, and a Company was detailed for each of these with Battalion Headquarters at *Bernes.* These were dug on the nights of March 28th-29th and 29th-30th.

The weather continued very bad, and the conditions most uncomfortable for the troops. Digging had to be done by night, and the only shelter was what could be

improvised, and while all attempts were made to avoid drawing the enemy's attention to those operations considerable shelling took place.

The posts which were dug were so designed that, if required, they could afterwards be made part of a continuous line of resistance.

This however was not to be, as the advance was resumed on April 1st.

CHAPTER X.

VENDELLES—LE VERGUIER—
ROISEL—TEMPLEUX-LE-GUERRARD.

April 1st, 1917 to April 23rd, 1917.

The first week in April, 1917, was an *Le Verguier*, eventful one for 178th Brigade, and *April 2nd*, equally so for the 2/7th Battalion Sherwood Foresters. For about a fortnight the

retiring Bosche had been followed until he had nearly reached the limit of his withdrawal. His strong and clever rearguard action had brought him to the high ground on part of which the village of Le Verguier stood, and here he was well entrenched with strong wire entanglements to protect him.

Le Verguier formed somewhat of a salient protruding into the territory which the British troops had occupied, and the 59th Division had been ordered to capture that position.

The enemy trenches and other defensive works had not been mapped, and the actual strength of this stronghold was unknown, but it was evident from the tenacity with which it was held that it represented the limit beyond which for the time being the enemy did not intend to retire.

On March 31st the 2/6th Sherwood Foresters had in accordance with their orders occupied the high ground to the South-east, but had been compelled to withdraw from it.

On April 1st the Robin Hoods occupied the Cruciform Posts they had dug to the East and North-east of

Bernes, the 2/8th Battalion holding a line in front with the 2/6th Battalion in support. The weather at this time was almost beyond description, rain, sleet and snow vied with each other to make life in this devastated area as difficult and miserable as possible. The land was almost a quagmire, and the roads chiefly liquid mud. On April 1st Colonel Rayner received orders to relieve the 2/6th Battalion that night, and also a warning order for an attack on Le Verguier on the following night. The relief was completed by 4 a.m. on April 2nd.

The same morning the enemy's position was reconnoitred as far as possible in view of the expected attack, but this reconnaissance could only be meagre, owing to the exposed nature of the ground and lack of time to make a careful survey.

Owing to an unfounded report that British troops had been seen in Le Verguier the artillery was unable to register on the village, and the Divisional orders for the attack were suspended until the report was disproved. Ultimately orders that the operation should proceed were received at 7.30 p.m., being the time at which one hour's artillery shelling of the position was to have commenced.

The Battalion Orders, which had been provisionally issued for the operation, provided for a main attack with B Company and half of D Company from the South-west in the direction of the Vendelles Le Verguier road; meanwhile C Company was to make a feint attack from the North-west in the direction of the Jeancourt-Le Verguier road.

The delay in the receipt of the final order at Battalion Headquarters that the attack was actually to take place, was fatal to any possibility of success as the departure of the different Companies had been delayed to such an extent as to render their combined action with the co-operation of the artillery impossible. In addition it became dark almost before the troops moved off on

their unknown roads. So black was the night that the party for the main attack on reaching a huge crater at the South-easterly outskirts of the village of Vendelles failed to find the road to Le Verguier and took instead the road leading more to the South, and marched in the mud and dark for some considerable distance before the error was discovered. Then they retraced their steps, but it was too late to make an attack which was to synchronize with other operations.

Meanwhile, what of C Company? Pursuant to orders this Company left Vendelles just as the artillery began its slight and scanty shelling. It had about one and three quarter miles to go before reaching its objective, and with the night as black as pitch and storms of sleet and rain, the carrying out of its orders was a most difficult duty.

About half way on its journey it met at Jeancourt a standing patrol of the 2/8th Battalion who stated that they were the most advanced of our troops. Captain Durose who was in command of C Company decided to advance across the open in artillery formation rather than by the road in column of fours. In this manner, with scouts about 50 yards ahead, they moved quietly and steadily on to Le Verguier, seeing and hearing nothing. Suddenly the scouts ran into barbed wire, and simultaneously—as if expecting them—the Bosche sent up his Verey lights and S.O.S. and opened a heavy rifle and machine gun fire from the front and both flanks. The Platoons immediately deployed as best they could in the darkness, and wire cutting parties went forward, but were shot down. Lieutenant Downer fell dead across the wire, and at the same time Captain Durose was mortally wounded, and many N.C.O's and men were down. Still the Company tried to reach the enemy, but in vain. A few managed to line a bank by the roadside, and obtained some slight cover, and here some of the wounded were collected.



Sergeant Yealand and Sergeant Hudson got to Captain Durose and carried him under the bank, but this gallant Officer, still conscious, knew he was finished, so ordered them to leave him and get the men back.

By this time Captain Gascoyne (the Company Second in Command) had come forward to ascertain the position. He found it hopeless to advance on uncut wire in the face of well entrenched and numerically superior forces, and ordered the remaining Platoon Commanders to withdraw to Jeancourt. He himself did not seek to accompany them, but very bravely tried to make his way towards the right and get in touch with the other attacking Company. He was however wounded and captured, subsequently dying of his wounds in Germany.

Colonel Rayner, on receiving the reports of the attacking Companies about 1 a.m., considered it hopeless to recommence the attack, so ordered a return to Vendelles, sending a platoon of D Company as a patrol to Jeancourt to send back C Company who were absolutely exhausted by their exertions. This platoon remained at Jeancourt to occupy it and to assist any of the missing men of C Company who might get back. The Officer in charge, with four volunteers, went forward towards Le Verguier to pick up any wounded or lost members of C Company, but he was without a guide and was heavily fired at from a Bosche outpost. Three wounded men were met at dawn who said the Bosche were outside their wire, fetching in our dead and wounded, but nothing further could be learned of the fate of those who had fallen.

The loss of these gallant lives was indeed a calamity, but the personal bravery of Captains Durose and Gascoyne, and of the Officers and men who fell with them, was a splendid proof of the material of which the Battalion was made. The fact that daylight reconnaissance had been impossible, the enemy defences not having been

mapped, the darkness of the night, the difficulty of the operation and the knowledge that the artillery preparation had not taken place, must have impressed Captain Durose and his Officers with the great difficulty of their task, but their conduct proved that if success had been attainable they would have attained it.

Captain Durose would not allow his men to carry him back, owing to the certainty that it would involve further loss of life.

That the enemy appreciated the qualities of those taking part in this operation is proved by the discovery, when the village was ultimately occupied, of the grave of Captain Durose, 2nd Lieut. F. Downer, Sergt. W. G. Parsons, and two of their comrades, with an inscription in pencil on a rough wooden cross, the translation of which reads :—

“ Here lie five Fighters,
Honour your enemies.”

This generous sentiment may surely be equally applied to the German Commander and his men who, after repelling with gallantry an attack as gallantly pressed home, found time to treat with soldierly respect the bodies of their enemies.

During the afternoon and evening of April 3rd the Battalion relieved the 2/8th Sherwood Foresters who were holding the line South of Le Verguier. A and D Companies occupied posts on the East of the road leading to that village from Vendelles. C Company were in the old German trench running parallel to, and to the West of the same road; with B Company (less one platoon) supporting them in the Southern portion of the same trench. The remaining platoon of the latter Company under 2nd Lieut. J. E. Hartshorn formed the garrison of a post on the Eastern side of Jeancourt. The conditions at this time were appalling, and it is impossible

to imagine a more searching test of discipline. The waterlogged trenches were without dugouts or shelters of any kind. The loamy soil had been turned by heavy rain into mud of remarkable penetration and heart-breaking viscosity; while the men were at all times exposed to the drenching rain and bitter cold of a spring week that eclipsed the rigours of the preceding winter. In addition the circumstances of the rapid advance necessarily deprived the men of many redeeming comforts of trench warfare. Letters and parcels could only rarely be delivered, and iron rations were the usual fare.

But in spite of these hardships the men stuck to their posts with the stubborn determination traditional in the regiment; and in some cases had to be carried down unconscious or even delirious through cold and exhaustion.

Reconnoitring Patrols. During the night of the 3rd a patrol of sixteen men under Lieut. C. C. Charlton pushed up the German trench in advance of C Company's posts in order to locate the enemy and discover something of his dispositions. Other patrols under 2nd Lieut. L. G. Flint and 2nd Lieut. F. Spencer co-operated in support, and an enemy post was found in the trench some way South-west of the village. 2nd Lieut. L. G. Flint and 2nd Lieut. F. Spencer, together with the men, came straight out of the line in order to go on this patrol. In spite of the fact that these Officers and men were wet through and half starved with the cold before they started, all returned to their Companies and occupied their posts for the remainder of the tour on completion of the reconnaissance.

On the following night 2nd Lieut. A. Catterall and 2nd Lieut. S. Shephard reconnoitered the enemy wire in front of the girdle trench round the South-western side of Le Verguier.

During this spell of duty, the men were hard at work by day and by night, digging new trenches, improving old ones, and strengthening our positions by wiring. Owing to the muddy ground and the exhaustion of the troops this was hard labour indeed, but had the merit of keeping the men occupied mentally and warm bodily.

At daybreak on the 4th, the 2/5th Sherwood
Attack by Foresters passed through our lines to assault
 2/5th Le Verguier. The attack was a failure owing
 Sherwood to the thick wire which defended the German
 Foresters. positions, and the assailants were obliged to
 withdraw under heavy artillery and machine
 gun fire. Two Companies of the Robin Hoods moved up
 to support the 2/5th Battalion in a blinding snowstorm,
 but were not called upon to advance.

On the night of the 4th, B Company relieved
Attack by the 2/6th Sherwood Foresters in a series of
 2/8th. small isolated posts on the hillside between
 Le Verguier and Jeancourt. The left posts
 were in a valley, and advantage had been taken of what
 natural cover there was to render them inconspicuous.
 But the right posts were on the forward slopes of an
 absolutely bare hill. The digging of these had already
 been commenced, and they were finished and occupied on
 the night of the relief. The soil was of white chalk,
 and next day the small trenches proved an easy mark
 for the enemy's artillery. Several casualties occurred,
 and one man who attempted to fetch medical aid was shot
 dead. The position had little or nothing to recommend
 it, and as soon as it was dark Captain Henry re-organised
 the defence on a stronger and at the same time less
 dangerous line, nearer Jeancourt. Lieut. Foster took
 charge of the movement of troops and casualties from the
 forward posts.

On the evening of the 8th, the Robin Hoods were relieved by the 2/5th Sherwood Foresters, and returned to Vendelles. Here the Sherwood Foresters billets were again in badly damaged cellars, poor enough accommodation for tired men, but welcome by comparison with the exposure of the last seven days.

On the morning of the 10th, the patrols of the 2/5th Sherwood Foresters reported that Le Verguier was evacuated by the enemy. The village was at once occupied, and in the afternoon the Robin

Hoods sent up a carrying party of 150 men with ammunition, and several parties during the night. On examination the abandoned German field works proved to be of great strength, and by reason of the situation of the village crowning a hill whose smooth slopes formed a natural glacis in every direction, the position was ideal for defence. The course of the operations suggests that the defence of the village was entrusted to picked men, well supplied with machine guns and supported by field artillery, and that their orders were to hold on at all costs until the time should come for a withdrawal to the permanent line in rear.

On the night of the 11th, the 178th Brigade was relieved by the 176th (Staffordshire) Brigade, and went into Divisional Reserve the Robin Hoods being billeted in Roisel.

This small town had of course been demolished in the German retirement, but owing to its larger size and its distance from the line, provided a good resting area. The men were again living for the most part in cellars some of which were capable of being turned into comfortable quarters, but were always in some degree damp, dark, and ill-ventilated.

On the 15th the Battalion was inspected by *Arrival of* the new Brigade Commander, Brigadier-General General T. W. Stansfeld, C.M.G., D.S.O., *Stansfeld.* who had formerly been Commandant of the 4th Army School. The days were devoted to training, particularly in open order attack in view of the probable nature of the fighting in the near future; in improving the state of the roads and billets, and in recreation.

On April 19th, B Company and two platoons of A Company relieved a company of the 2/4th Lincolns in a line of detached posts extending from the Southern outskirts of Hargicourt round the North-eastern edge of Villeret. The remainder of the Battalion relieved the 2/4th Lincoln Regiment (less one company) in Brigade Reserve at Templeux-le-Guerard. The following evening the whole of the Battalion was relieved by the 2/6th and 2/8th Sherwood Foresters on a re-organization of the Brigade front, and returned to Roisel.

CHAPTER XI.

HARGICOURT—VILLERET—BERNES.

April 23rd, 1917 to May 28th, 1917.

The respite proved a short one, for on *The Hargicourt Sector, April 22nd.* April 22nd the Robin Hoods relieved the 2/6th Sherwood Foresters in the left sector of the Brigade front. This sector comprised roughly the whole of the village of Hargicourt and the Northern part of Villeret. These two villages were just inside the British front line. The enemy held Hargicourt quarry, and a few houses on the Eastern fringe of both villages; but his main strength lay in a powerful trench system covering the Western slopes of the ridge which is crowned by Cologne and Unnamed Farms

Battalion headquarters were in the large quarry just North of the Templeux-Hargicourt road. The reserve Company, C, occupied a similar quarry a few hundred yards to the South-east. The three Companies in the front line were disposed from North to South as follows: on the left D held from Hargicourt Cemetery Northward; A in the centre was responsible for the rest of the village, their right post being at the nameless farm where the old German trench crosses Hargicourt-Villeret road. On the right B Company protected the North-western part of Villeret, joining up with the 2/5th Sherwood Foresters in the right Brigade sector.

The Post at Nameless Farm. The Nameless Farm which was on the right of A Company's sector afforded good observation over part of the enemy defences and was used as an observation post. It was however subjected to the most intense artillery fire and the garrison, distributed in trenches round the farm, underwent a most severe ordeal. Those not on duty crouched at the bottom of their trenches, hearing hour after hour the low whistle becoming a shriek, then feeling the earth rock as the shell after plunging many feet into the ground created its all shattering blast. The strain of holding a post such as this in the midst of comparatively quiet country is in its way more severe than the heat of a big action. The garrison however was frequently changed, 2nd Lieuts. Thompson, Hoyte and Beck of A Company, and Sergt. Cawthorne of B Company holding it in turn. The section held by B Company was one of great difficulty, as our hold on the village was precarious and frequently disputed by the enemy. The posts were widely separated and the area subjected to intermittent shelling. The Company runners had to be used for all communication and as guides; Pte. Page and Pte. Farrel being very prominent in this work, which was always dangerous and often difficult in the dark.

The village was roughly a long triangle in *Villeret.* shape, with its apex jutting well into the enemy's lines. As it was desired to deny the enemy the village there was a post under 2nd Lieut. H. C. Flint at the apex, another under Sergt. McCloughlin half way down, and a third at the left of the base under 2nd Lieut. Lamb. There were also supporting posts in the open country on our side of the village. At first the men were distributed in cellars and ruined houses, but as soon as possible short lengths of trench were dug.

Gallantry of the Stretcher Bearers. During the week of occupation the forward posts suffered a number of casualties. When bringing one from the forward trench the Company stretcher bearers were stopped by sniping. As a

number of hours of daylight still remained and the case required immediate attention L/Cpl. Bastable took the man from the stretcher, placed him on his back, and advanced in a series of little runs, stopping whenever a small bank or other cover offered. This had to be continued for some time and eventually the man was brought to safety. L/Cpl. Bastable so strained himself by his exertions that in a few days he himself had to go to hospital. Fortunately by then he had set up a standard of stretcher-bearing in the Company that lasted as long as the Battalion was on active service.

No shelling or difficulties of any kind ever prevented the stretcher bearers from fetching and at once taking to the First Aid Post really urgent cases.

A small Engagement. During the week Lieut. Flint's post was attacked by a very superior force of the enemy, and after a struggle and the loss of several men, driven in on to Sergt. McLoughlin's post, which had been sited with this contingency in view. Here the enemy was held up. A small party of reinforcements was sent to the spot, and before daybreak the village was cleared and the post re-established. The centre post suffered a good deal from shelling, and unfortunately a whole sentry group was wiped out by one shell.

The post under 2nd Lieut. Lamb was under machine gun fire, and the slightest movement by day was sufficient to draw fire. The whole sector was in fact in an active state, and the greatest vigilance was necessary on all sides.

Owing to the unfinished state of our trenches, a good deal of movement over the open was unavoidable, and attracted its usual meed of shell fire. The annoyance caused by this punishment was soothed in some degree by the vigorous retaliation of our own artillery. The gunners had excellent observation over the forward German positions from the crests of the ridges West of Hargicourt; an advantage of which the Battalion scouts were also quick to avail themselves. Two observation posts, one on the North and one to the South-west of the village were manned by them throughout the hours of daylight; and much detailed and valuable information was obtained in this way.

On the night of the 22nd, working parties from C and D Companies did good work by digging lines of trenches North and South of Hargicourt respectively, which trenches were intended to be a jumping off place for the next attack.

It was understood that an assault was soon to be delivered on the German positions in this sector, and urgent demands were being made by Brigade Headquarters for intelligence, and, if possible, prisoners.

On the night of the relief, a patrol of three scouts under Lieut. W. Foster was sent out to reconnoitre the German trench which ran between Hargicourt Quarry and the village. The party entered the trench where it crossed the Hargicourt-Villeret road and worked their way along the railway embankment and round the foot of the quarry. The patrol reached the road running due East past the end of the railway, where they were obliged to leave the shelter of the trench which was not cut through the road. Their examination of the wire barricade which blocked the road some twenty yards West of the trench was cut short by a hoarse shout of

"Wer Da," from the opposite side, followed by a general outburst of Teutonic alarm. Shots were being discharged and the enemy, seeing themselves cut off from their compatriots, tried to rush past our patrol to rejoin them. Something like a free fight ensued, in which one German was killed by a revolver shot from Lieut. Foster at close range, and the rest driven back to cover. This temporary lull provided a welcome opportunity of retiring, to the accompaniment of much machine gun fire, and a beautiful display of fireworks.

The coolness and resource of Lieut. Foster on this, as on many other occasions, undoubtedly brought the patrol out of a difficult situation with all the honours.

Further Reconnaissance. During the same night, another patrol under Sergt. H. C. R. Kimberley located a line of enemy rifle pits running in a Northerly direction from the farm at the cross-roads, 1,300 yards North-east of Hargicourt Cemetery. These rifle pits, as well as the farm, were further reconnoitred by Lieut. Foster on the following night, and both were seen to be occupied by the enemy. Owing to the urgent demands from Brigade Headquarters for a prisoner it was arranged, in consequence of this information that a raid should be made on this farm on the night of the 24th.

An unlucky Expedition. Lieut. Foster, 2nd Lieut. S. Shephard and ten men accordingly set out at 11.30 p.m. intending to crawl up a dry ditch which runs from the village straight to the farm. Unfortunately this ditch proved to be full of brambles which so hindered progress that the patrol was obliged to leave cover, and crawl over the open fields. Following the edge of the dyke, the leaders had come within 50 yards of the objective when their progress alarmed a number of owls who were roosting in the willows on the opposite side. The enemy was roused by their clamour,

and after sending up many flares, called down their S.O.S. barrage. Thanks to the protection of the ditch, only minor injuries were inflicted by their fire in spite of its intensity. After some ten minutes, the barrage was lifted on to the village, which was heavily shelled. Owing to the subsequent watchfulness of the enemy, assisted by the bright light of the moon, it was not possible to proceed with the raid.

During the night of the 23rd a patrol under 2nd Lieut. H. Coop had reconnoitred a large oval depression near Hargicourt Quarry, popularly known as the Egg; this proved unoccupied by the enemy, who seemed to be concentrating on the defence of the quarry and its supporting heights. Accordingly the following night 2nd Lieut. Lamb, Cpl. Clarke and a small patrol visited the slag heaps fronting the quarries, paying special attention to the strength and position of the wire and other obstacles which might hold up the impending attack. It now became known that the 2/6th and 2/8th Sherwood Foresters would attack the quarry, Cologne Farm, and the surrounding trench system on the morning of the 27th.

In order to protect the left wing of this attack, the Divisional Commander (Major-*A new Post Established.* General C. F. Romer, C.B., C.M.G., A.D.C.) ordered the Robin Hoods to secure at once the large chalk pits, about 800 yards North-east of Hargicourt Cemetery. On the evening of the 25th Lieut. W. Foster with scouts reconnoitred the pits, and took their compass bearings from the road junction North of our front line. At 11.30 p.m. they conducted a party of three Officers and forty men with two Lewis guns to the objective. The pits proved to be free from enemy, of of large extent, and much overgrown with bushes. 2nd Lieut. S. Shephard took command of the post and set to work to consolidate his position, while Lieut. Foster and his scouts on their way back, laid a telephone wire to

connect the new post with the existing strong point two hundred yards North-east of the Cemetery. The post was undetected till the following afternoon when it was spotted by an enemy aeroplane, and then bombarded. The telephone wire was early cut, and communication over the top could only be maintained by night. The post proved to be of great assistance to the attack on the enemy trenches, during which the garrison claimed many victims to their Lewis gun fire.

At dawn on the 27th, the 2/6th and 2/8th *The Attack.* Sherwood Foresters attacked Hargicourt Quarry, Cologne Farm, and the surrounding trench system. Owing to the heavy enemy shelling and machine gun fire the attack on Cologne Farm was a failure, but the quarry and trenches were captured and remained in our hands in spite of heavy counter-attacks. During the following night D Company's posts in front of the Cemetery were strengthened by the erection of a fresh belt of wire. The new post in the chalk pits was handed over to the 48th (South Midland) Division on our left, on a slight shortening of our Divisional sector.

On the night of the 28th, the Robin Hoods *Holding the* relieved the 2/6th Sherwood Foresters in *Captured* the positions which they had captured. On *Ground.* the left, D Company took over from the latter Battalion the left sector of the captured German trench, our Northern flank being about seven hundred yards North of the main road. At this point, the attackers had captured a German machine gun position, and had built a block in the trench to secure their flank. This line held by D Company on the left of the Battalion front was a large one, and was somewhat isolated. There were no communication trenches, and there was a large gap of 200 to 300 yards between the Company's left flank and the Division on our left.

Lieut. L. G. Flint held a post covering our flank, and at night patrolled the un-occupied ground. The platoons under Lieut. Flint and Lieut. Spencer dug at night and connected up the post with the front line, and also continued a half dug trench into the post, making a serviceable communication trench to a support position known locally as the tennis courts. Till this was done the easiest way to enter the line was by the main road through Hargicourt, but the last hundred yards was open to machine gun fire. Pte. Lokes, one of the Company runners knew this road well, and is sure to remember passing the Crucifix in Hargicourt with his Company Officer when both were literally blown on to the base of the Crucifix by a shell. Neither was hurt, but both had a distinct dislike for war, and two very shaken people crawled into the trench and passed the orders for that night's relief to Sergt.-Major Lear for him to carry out.

Although the line held by D Company was long and somewhat isolated, it did not offer a good mark for artillery, and received less attention than B Company from enemy guns.

In one part we overlooked the Hun line, and were able to observe their movements. Lieut. Catterall and Lieut. Spencer with a few good shots lay in wait for a Hun relief, and in one day shot with rifles 13 men and two Officers. A shoot was arranged with the artillery for the following day in conjunction with the Company, and very successful it was. The artillery traversed the trench driving the Hun along to the exposed part where they came in for our rifle fire—such as were left. A few were seen running back over the open and were dealt with by a Lewis gun.

Good hunting, April 30th.

In the Quarry. In the centre of the line the Quarry itself was held by C Company, whose front line extended perilously round its lip; fire steps and platforms had been cut out of the chalk, but it was of course impossible to dig real trenches in the face of so steep a slope. Consequently there was little cover from the persistent shell fire directed into the quarry, and the casualties in this Company were rather severe. The enemy however did not escape unscathed, Captain Hickling claiming one by sniping, and his Company catching a working party, discovered as usual by our ubiquitous Intelligence Officer.

Southward the line was continued by A Company, whose sector extended from the right edge of the quarry as far as the "Egg" inclusive. On the right D Company held their old line in and around Villeret, and also the advanced post formerly held by A Company.

A Company of the 2/4th Lincoln Regiment had been placed at the disposal of the Commanding Officer, and was used to strengthen the garrison of the front line.

Battalion Headquarters were moved to the quarry South of the Hargicourt-Templeux road, the old battle headquarters of the attacking Battalions.

The following day these dispositions were somewhat altered. B Company handed over their sector to the 2/5th Sherwood Foresters and joined C Company in the quarry. The positions of Battalion Headquarters and the other Companies were not changed.

The whole of the new line was very exposed, and subject to heavy fire from the German batteries. Much of it was only partially dug and wired, and in some places, as in the Quarry, it was impossible to make regular entrenchments at all.

Casualties. During the four days tour of duty, the casualties of the Battalion were one Officer and three other ranks killed, and twenty-one

other ranks wounded. 2nd Lieut. J. M. Jamieson, the Officer who was killed, was shot by a sniper, on April 28th, while temporarily attached for duty to the 2/8th Sherwood Foresters. He had only joined the Battalion from England the day before, and his death under such circumstances was particularly tragic.

During the tour of duty a great deal was done towards putting the sector into a more thorough state of defence. A switch was completed, connecting D Company's trench with the sunken ground North-east of the village, known as the "Tennis Court." A good deal of wire was put out with some difficulty, owing to the bright moonlight, and the existing trenches were deepened and improved.

On the 1st of May, the Battalion was *Out at Rest*. relieved by the 2/6th and 2/8th Sherwood Foresters, and returned to Roisel for a period of rest. Such a change was badly needed after the anxious time of the last fortnight, for the Robin Hoods had been continuously in the front line since the 19th April.

The spell of rest was expected to follow a normal course of training, working parties and games; but on the 4th orders were received to the effect that the Battalion was to move up to the main line of resistance. This was a chain of mythical defences running along the ridge South-west from Hargicourt, and seen as yet only by the eye of faith of the General Staff. The movement was carried out the same night amid many prophecies of worse things to come. These gloomy premonitions seemed about to be fulfilled the following day, when orders were received to attack a strong point North of Malakoff Farm. At 5 p.m. on the 5th, Battalion Headquarters, which had been moved forward to the quarry a few hundred yards South-east of Templeux-le-Gerrard, were again advanced to their old position in the quarry.



Photo Hadley, Nottm,
Lieut.-Col. M. C. MARTYN, D.S.O., M.C.



The rest of the Battalion was moving up to the position of assembly when, at 8.30 p.m., the attack was cancelled. The following morning the Battalion marched back into Roisel with the exception of A Company, who were sent into the front line North-east of Hargicourt to reinforce the garrison. From this duty they were relieved on May 7th, and rejoined the Battalion in rest billets.

On May 6th, the Battalion was relieved by the 2/6th North Stafford Regiment and *Resting at Bernes, May, 1917.* marched back to the sugar-factory at Bernes, where they formed the Brigade reserve. The only accommodation then standing was a number of French Adrian huts, long structures with room for fifty or more men in each. These were soon fitted with wire beds by the pioneers, and everything done to make the men as comfortable as possible. Battalion Headquarters and stores were under canvas in a small quarry hard by, where a stage for theatricals was also put up. The weather was glorious for nearly the whole of the three weeks the Battalion spent in the camp; in fact every circumstance seemed present which could make the stay as enjoyable as possible. As before, the mornings were generally devoted to training, the afternoon to recreation and rest, and the nights to working parties. With regard to the last-named duty, large parties were sent up every night to the forward area for the construction of field-works. Several hundred yards of trench were dug and wired in front of Le Verguier and Grand Priel Wood, in order to form reserve lines of defence.

Another important duty was the improvement of the roads in the neighbourhood, and the filling in of the great mine craters which the retiring enemy had blown up at most cross roads. With the cordial approval of the Brigade Commander, the Commanding Officer was able to arrange frequent excursions by motor lorry to Amiens,

a privilege which was much appreciated by all ranks. Visits were also paid to the R.F.C. Aerodrome at Mons-en-Chaussee, where the Officers kindly and patiently explained their machines and methods.

Among the many amenities of this delightful spot, asparagus and football have perhaps left the strongest impression on the memory; while rook shooting and the investigation of fox earths were always fascinating to the rural element. One afternoon an excellent programme of sports was carried out, at which we had the pleasure of seeing Colonel Fane and a large contingent of all ranks from the 12th Royal Lancers, who were then quartered at Tincourt, close by. The interest was perhaps greatest in the inter-regimental contests, in which the honours were fairly easy.

The Robin Hoods won the revolver shooting by a comfortable margin, but in the boxing the local favourite, Pte. Shore, was rather severely handled by the cavalry champion, who had a long record of Aldershot successes to his credit. The sports were preceded by a competition among the Battalion Transport for the smartest turn-out in the various classes.

Colonel Fane acted as judge, and in announcing his awards declared that they were based on the merest details, since in every essential the exhibits were beyond criticism.

It may be mentioned here that both at home and in the field, from the first day of its mobilisation until the last, and under each of its four successive Officers, Lieuts. Pragnell, Maltby, Wrighton and Bullivant, the Regimental Transport has been second to none in the Army both for efficiency and smartness.

Among those who contributed to the comfort and appearance of the Sucerie Camp, Sergt. Paulson and Sergt. Mounteney deserve particular recognition.

Of the work of the former as Pioneer Sergeant for for over three years (including the whole period in the field) it is impossible to speak too highly; while Sergt. Mounteney combined the duties of Provost Sergeant with those of Artistic Director. To his genius must attributed the wonderful Robin Hood Crest, constructed in mosaic fashion out of coloured stones, which ornamented the quarry above-mentioned.

Moreover his facile brush was always turning out some new creation of theatrical scenery or some striking notice-board.

Towards the end of the month it became known that the Battalion would be shortly returning to the line, and as it proved, " Oak Apple Day " was the last of this delightful semi-holiday.

CHAPTER XII.

HAVRINCOURT WOOD—BEAUCAMP—
GOUZEAUCOURT WOOD.

May 29th, 1917 to July 8th, 1917.

From Bernes the Battalion moved on *On the Move,* May 29th, to Hamelet, and the next day to Equancourt. Both of these villages, as indeed every village in the area we had occupied since early in March, had been absolutely destroyed by the enemy before he retired.

At Hamelet the Battalion were accommodated in tents, the only incident of note here being the long range shelling of some Indian Cavalry encamped a few hundred yards off.

A long day's march next day took us to Equancourt. During the march the Battalion were reinforced by a small party of about twelve men, the majority of whom had been out before. These men were drafted to C Company, and a very welcome addition they made. The draft had originally consisted of fourteen, but on the way up they had investigated, while souvenir hunting, a Bosche bomb dump. Two of the men overcome by curiosity concerning the use of the little bits of string protruding from the handle of the "potato mashers," found out their use, and appeared in the casualty list before ever seeing the Battalion.

We remained at Equancourt on this occasion only one day, and on the night of May 31st, relieved the 1/10th Manchester Regiment in the line immediately South of Trescault (this sector is shown on the map illustrating the Cambrai period, although unfortunately only our most advanced trench is indicated).

In the Line, The relief was carried out without incident
Trescault, after rather a long march. The new sector
May 31st. was a large but quite pleasant one. Battalion Headquarters and D Company in reserve were in Havrincourt Wood itself.

A Company in support was about 1,000 yards further forward, with its Headquarters in an excellent dugout in rear of the rising ground along which the front line ran. This position, although not actually joined to any system of trenches, was protected after being occupied, by digging a few short lengths of trench on either flank. From this position a well made communication trench led over the rising ground to the front line about 800 yards forward.

The Front This was a beautiful piece of trench work,
Line. sited slightly on the forward slope of the hill, giving a splendid view of the village of Havrincourt on the left, Ribecourt below in the valley, with Flesquieres, Marcoing, and even Cambrai, and the country in front clearly visible in the fine weather we experienced during the week we held the line.

The advanced posts of the Hindenburg line were some 700 yards away, at the bottom of the hill, and behind them could be seen the much talked-of Hindenburg line itself, with its enormously thick belts of wire.

All the villages we could see looked perfectly intact, their red roofs and Church spires showing through the greenery of the surrounding trees, awaking envy in the breasts of men who had for some months past dwelt among nothing but ruins and mud. The weather during the whole of this week was beautifully warm and sunny, and it is not surprising that the spirits of the whole of the Battalion rapidly rose.

Havrincourt Wood had hardly been damaged at all with the exception of certain broad avenues, which had been cut by the enemy to enable them to view the country

behind. The foliage was so thick that it was found quite safe to bring up two of the field kitchens, which were found very useful in providing hot meals for the whole of the Battalion. D Company Commander was however very annoyed when one day a heavy Howitzer shell dropped right between the kitchens, seriously chipping the paint which was his especial pride and joy.

The men were comfortably "housed" in shelters roofed over by branches and tarpaulin. The only inconvenience of the position was the presence of some 6 inch Howitzers a few yards off, whose firing seriously disturbed the rest of the men during the day-time. They worked by night while the gunners worked by day.

The approaches to the front line were so well concealed by the rising ground, and the enemy's line was so distant, that it was found quite feasible for rations and stores to be brought right up to the Front line Headquarters by pack ponies, thus saving an enormous amount of carrying.

The front line was held by B Company on the left, and C Company on the right. Immediately in the rear of B Company's line was Bilhelm Farm. This, standing as it did on the highest part of our line, offered a fine mark for the enemy's guns, and was much used by him for ranging. This did not worry us greatly, although B Company's Commander, whose Headquarters were situated in a trench shelter some 50 yards to the right of the farm, felt it wiser to visit his companion's Headquarters when ranging practice commenced, as he did not rely too much on the accuracy of the German gunners. His doubts were well founded, as one day the last shell of a series fell 100 yards short, dropping right in the front trench and killing seven N.C.O's and two men of B Company, including a splendid Platoon Commander in Sergeant Harper. These men happened to be assembled in one bay to receive instruction from Sergt. Harper as

to the night's work. The task of rebuilding the trench was a ghastly one and a severe test of discipline, rendered worse by the fact that several boxes of Mills' bombs were scattered about the trench by the shell.

During the tour much valuable work was put in. In particular on the 2nd inst., a patrol, consisting of 2nd Lieuts. Lamb and Westbury, with seven other ranks went out to examine a large hollow in front of our lines, which was reported to be used by the enemy as an Observation Post.

The patrol approached the hollow from two different sides, and 2nd Lieut. Westbury's party met an enemy patrol, and claimed a hit, one of our men also being wounded.

The distance between our and the enemy lines, while very comforting to the occupants of the trenches, was not so satisfactory to the higher command, and Lieut.-Col. Martin himself, with two of his Officers, reconnoitred and sited a new line of trenches. The new line, about 500 yards in advance of the old, was established and occupied without a casualty, although the nights were short and very bright.

The method adopted was as follows :—

First a covering party went out some hundred yards or so in front of the new line. When all was reported clear, the digging party went out and commenced work on a number of separate posts; at the same time a third party erected a wire obstacle in front of the posts. The next night the posts were occupied and maintained.

These posts were subsequently joined up and a communication trench dug back to the old front line.

The success of this work was largely due to the energy and organising ability of Capt. R. A. Charlton, who came up with his Company every night and took charge of the operations. (It is this trench that is referred to in the Cambrai chapter).

One night the enemy put up some very brilliant lights, including "golden rain," which was much admired by the whole of the front line. This however being identical with our gas alarm signal caused all the unfortunate troops in the back areas to don gas masks.

The Adjutant of the 2/7th, Capt. Pragnell, who was lying ill at Battalion Headquarters, received warning of the alarm. He unfortunately received no notice when it was found out that it was a false one, the result being that some time later the C.O. found his sick Adjutant still nobly wearing his helmet and feeling no better for the experience.

Company Sergt.-Major Towlson carried out some fine sniping from these trenches, obtaining two observed hits at 1,000 yards.

On the night of June 6th, the Battalion was *Relief.* relieved by the 2/8th Sherwood Foresters, and went into Brigade Reserve at Neuville. The rest in tents among the ruined orchards during this summer weather was much enjoyed. Working parties however were found each night for the front line extension, thus here again only the day time was available for sleep by the majority.

On June 11th, Headquarters and A and B Companies moved to Equancourt, C and D Companies following on the 15th. From then until the 20th June, the Battalion were in Divisional Reserve. They were in a compact and excellent camp with good facilities for training.

A good deal of competitive recreation was carried *Sports.* out in the Brigade, and, to the joy of all, the Battalion carried everything before it, winning the Brigade football cup, competitions for bayonet fighting, signallers, runners, shooting and revolver practice, also the majority of events at the Brigade Sports meeting when the Corps and Divisional Commanders were present.

At Equancourt Major G. C. S. Hodgson took over the duties of Brigade Major. Capt. H. G. Howitt, a local and very popular Officer loaned by the Divisional Staff, having acted in that capacity for a time.

One day the Bombing Instructor was explaining a live bomb to Lieut.-Col. Martyn and Major Hodgson, when he dropped it. The C.O. quickly took it up and threw it away from the group shouting "run." The only damage done was that the Brigade Major, who was of ample proportions, was slightly wounded and unable to sit down with comfort for some time.

On June the 21st, the Robin Hoods moved *Beaucamp*. again and relieved the 2/5th Lincolns in the front line trenches in front of Beaucamp. The village was just behind the crest of a hill and transport came into it every night, although machine gun bullets occasionally whistled down what had been the main street. In front of the village on the right was a sunken road, passing through some partly felled orchards. Some two hundred yards down this road were Battalion Headquarters and other shelters. In front of the village the ground sloped down to No Man's Land, and was cut up by three lines of our trenches.

The line extended immediately from the right of our former sector and overlooked the same terrain. Parts of the trenches were water-logged, and the front line was incomplete, so a good deal of work had to be done.

It will be noted that never since the Battalion had arrived in France had they held a position which had been established for any length of time.

There was again a large No Man's Land, and the enemy's patrols were very active.

The night following that on which we took over the trenches a large enemy patrol, or probably a raiding party, attempted to enter D Company's lines. Unfortunately for them the whole of C Company was also in the

line, deepening and extending it. The double Companies under Lieuts. Spencer and Catterall gave them such a hot reception that they were driven off in confusion, leaving several dead and much equipment in front of the wire.

Lieut.-Col. Martyn quickly decided that the improvement of the trenches could not be carried out in comfort unless we obtained control of No Man's Land.

With this object in view, on the night of June 23rd, Lieut. Shephard took out a large patrol of 30 other ranks with a Lewis gun. By starting immediately after dusk they reached the enemy lines before their patrols had got out. There they lay in wait, and after about one and a half hours a patrol of approximately 40 of the enemy were observed approaching through a gap in their wire. Our patrol lay quiet and waited until the enemy were within fifteen yards of them, advancing in file, and then opened fire with the Lewis gun and rifles, completely surprising them. They put up a good fight, bombing taking place on both sides. Realising the danger of this in open country Lieut. Shephard ordered a bayonet charge, and the enemy were driven off with heavy casualties, our patrol not escaping scot free.

On the next night another patrol went out and visited the scene of the action. The enemy had removed their casualties, but rifles, bombs and wire cutters were found. Patrols were constantly out after this, but the enemy had evidently learnt their lesson, for no more encounters took place.

Moderate aircraft activity on both sides prevailed during this tour. On the morning of June 29th, during a heavy rain storm which limited visibility to less than 200 yards, a German aeroplane appeared about 20 yards over our support trenches before its approach was observed, and swept them with machine gun fire, fortunately making poor shooting as our casualties were "nil." The

only casualties occurring during this tour, with the exception of those incurred during patrols were occasioned by the accurate fire of their long range trench mortars.

On the night of June 30th, the Battalion was *Relief.* relieved by the 2/8th Sherwood Foresters and went into Brigade Reserve in Gouzeaucourt Wood. The change from the muddy front line to the quiet of an Arcadian life in the wood was appreciated by everyone. Again all work was done by night, large parties proceeding under charge of the R.E's to the front line system, digging and improving communication trenches. Work in the morning was thus out of the question, but a short time in the afternoon was devoted to cleaning up, issuing fresh kit, and inspections. The influence which smartness and cleanliness exercise on the spirits of the men was never lost sight of by the C.O., who developed it whenever he could.

What the Battalion owed to him it is impossible to estimate. Fearless both of the enemy and of criticism, clear-minded, and, in spite of frequent ill-health, seemingly tireless; he had the gift of thinking of things just before the next man. No Battalion in France had a Commander of whom they could more justly be proud.

CHAPTER XIII.

LE MESNIL—ALBERT.

July 9th, 1917 to September 21st, 1917.

Le Mesnil, The next camp was about half a mile from
July 9th, the ruined village of Le Mesnil, situated in
 1917. midst of the desolate waste of the Somme
 battlefield. Though the village itself is of
 no military interest, the surrounding country
 is full of names that are now woven into the histories of
 France and Britain; Sailly Saillisel, Le Transloy and
 Morval, each within a few miles of the camp, had recently
 been the scenes of stern and momentous fighting.

The whole area was impassable except by the roads
 and paths, being scored with a network of shell holes,
 trenches and gun pits, and encumbered with belts of rusty
 wire. It was at this time overgrown with coarse grass
 and wild flowers, among which the scarlet poppies were
 the most conspicuous.

The Camp. An advance party had been at work for
 some ten days when the Battalion arrived,
 and had put up a canvas camp on the South-
 ern slope of a gentle ridge. The whole Brigade was
 camped together on the hillside, with the horses and wag-
 gons on the plateau above.

The usual camp routine was soon in full swing; a
 chalk quarry hard by was adapted to a rifle range, sports
 fields and training grounds were cleared and levelled and
 all the accessories of a semi-permanent camp, such as
 kitchens, washing benches and water troughs were run
 up by the handy men of the Battalion.

It soon became evident from the nature of the *Training.* training that the Division was to take part in another great attack, for besides prescribing exercise in advancing movements, the higher powers began to enjoin the cultivation of "the offensive spirit" in all ranks. On July 30th, when the news of the Ypres battle became known, the drift of these instructions was clear, and the following month was openly devoted to special training for the operations in Belgium. Field days of a harassing and complicated kind, involving night marching, "going over" at dawn, keeping up with imaginary barrages, and "exploiting the success," followed one another at short intervals. The history of each attack in the North was expounded at length with all its lessons and warnings, and towards the end of August Officers and men had become expert in their various parts. The old shell holes and belts of wire were revived to represent the real thing, and torn and muddy trousers were the rule after each day's exercise.

Football and cricket were played almost *Recreation.* every day, and a Brigade tournament was carried through amid the usual "barrack-ing," and much noisy local patriotism. The outstanding sporting event was a Brigade race meeting, at which countless five franc notes changed hands, and the horsey element had a magnificent and lucrative day. Our old friends, "The Crumps" (Divisional Concert Party), paid the camp a visit, but the high hopes entertained of the brand new Divisional Cinema were sadly disappointed. The apparatus arrived in good time, built into a special three ton lorry and attended by several opiated "professors" from the Army Service Corps. All the conditions were ideal: a snow-white sheet was unfurled in the rifle range; the night was fine, dark and warm. But Charlie Chaplin—when he could be kept on the screen at all—went through his antics in a ghostly mist, and

Mary Pickford appeared as in a glass, darkly. It was a hopeless fiasco, and the discredited machine trundled away amid unrestrained derision.

The stay at Le Mesnil was glorified by the first *Leave*. distribution of leave to the Battalion : there was not enough to go round, but sufficient to rouse lively anticipation in every breast.

On August 24th, the Brigade moved *Move to Albert*, partly by 'bus and partly on foot to the *August 24th*. Albert district, the first stage of the journey to the North. A week later, after an uncomfortable stay in huts, the migration was continued by rail to the Belgian frontier.

The new camp was at Oudezeele, an old-
Oudezeele, fashioned village a few miles from Cassel.
August 31st. The Battalion was once more under canvas, and as the weather was fine, the three weeks spent in the quaint, peaceful countryside benefitted both mind and body. Training was lighter than before, and when orders came through on September 21st to move up to the battle area, it was a thoroughly fresh, fit Battalion that marched out on the Poperinghe road.

The first halt was at Watou, some ten miles
Watou, East of the old camp, and just within the
Sept. 21st. Belgian border.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES—
VLAMERTINGHE—WITTES.*September 21st, 1917 to October 1st, 1917.*

Training at Watou. The three days spent at Watou were devoted to putting a few finishing touches to the training of the last two months. In order to give the Officers and N.C.O's some idea of the task which lay before them, and to reduce the risk of their losing direction during the attack, the Brigadier had a piece of country marked out with flags and tapes to form a full size model of the battlefield. The situation and nature of the enemy positions were then explained on the ground to the platoon and section leaders and their objectives pointed out.

Move to the Toronto Camp. On Sept. 23rd, the march was resumed to the Toronto Camp, a hut camp lying to the South of the Vlamertinghe-Ypres road, about two miles West of Ypres. Here the final operation orders were issued by the Commanding Officer, at 9 a.m. on the 24th. The Battalion sector for the attack, together with those of the Brigade and Division is shewn on the accompanying plan.

The Third Battle of Ypres. The town of Ypres stands on a low table-land, the Eastern edge of which is known as Frezenberg Ridge, and runs just East of Wieltje and Hooge. Beyond the ridge there is a low-lying belt of land extending with slight undulations to the foot of the famous Passchendaele chain. The capture of the latter feature, which dominates the Flemish coastal plain was the grand objective of the

British Northern Armies in 1917. The second Army had begun well by taking Messines Ridge to the South, but the main movement was long held up by the incessant rain of the early summer. The great attack was at length launched on July 31st, and met with considerable initial success, but the weather of the next six weeks was unfavourable, and the middle of September found the Fifth Army half away across the trough, and "up to its eyes" in mud.

The enemy had abandoned the old system of continuous trenches, and instead, had converted the valley and forward slopes of the Passchendaele Ridge into a defensive zone by building a large number of isolated but mutually supporting concrete forts. These forts, called by the Germans "Mebus," and by us "Pill Boxes," were sufficiently thick in front to stop even a direct hit from a field gun. The rear walls were quite thin, so as to afford no protection to a hostile garrison after capture.

To return to the Robin Hoods, on the evening of the 24th the Battalion marched up *Move to the Front Line.* through Ypres and Wieltje and relieved the 2/6th North Staffords in the front line round Schuler Galleries and Hindu Cot. After passing through the ruined city the Battalion reached the flat historic country East of Ypres. The whole district for miles round was churned up by the shelling, and nothing was left but an unending number of various sized shell holes, each touching several others, and many of them deep enough to cover a tall man. The artillery here had no cover (digging brought you to water in a few feet) and hundreds of guns were scattered here and there in batteries and brigades. The Ypres-Wieltje road had been kept under repair (at what cost of life can be guessed) and by night was busier than Piccadilly. If any one of the stream of waggon was hit, it was pulled to the side of the road and the stream flowed on.



Ypres Marshes, shewing the Hanebeek (the Battalion's left flank on 26th Sept., 1917). Taken some months after.
Copyright—Imperial War Museum.



Photo Hadley, Nottm.
Major H. HANSON.



Photo Hadley, Nottm.
Captain and Adjutant F. PRAGNELL, M.C.

The Battalion advanced in single file over duck board tracks, which wound in and out along the edges of the shell craters. Our guns were firing spasmodically, and by their flashes the men could see, silhouetted against the sky-line, phantom-like figures on the crowded Wieltje road. The roar of each of our guns was answered by the sullen explosion of an enemy shell. Soon after leaving the Brigade Headquarters dugout at the Wieltje cross-roads, the Battalion left our own guns behind them and, in the comparative quietness of the night, the stark desolation of the country seemed even more intense.

The relief was completed without incident, the night being fine and warm, a priceless blessing which endured throughout the operations. Each Company held a narrow frontage in depth, providing its own supports; Battalion Headquarters were in the concrete galleries known as Capricorn Keep.

Artillery Activity. On the morning of the 25th the enemy put down a heavy barrage on the front line, and on the line Capricorn Keep—Corn Hill—Fort Hill. This "morning hate," which on this occasion lasted no less than two and a half hours, proved to be a daily event, recurring with the utmost regularity as to time and place. At 6 p.m. our artillery put down on the German positions a practice barrage which lacked nothing of vigour or accuracy, but unhappily provoked retaliation in kind from the German batteries.

The Plan of Attack. During the night 25/26th, orders were received that zero hour (that is, the hour at which the operation begins, and from which its subsequent stages are calculated) would be 5.30 a.m. on the 26th. According to orders, the attack was to be delivered in two waves, each composed of two Companies, and the ground to be captured was divided into four areas, one for each Company, as shewn on the map. The first wave would advance up to the first

objective and halt. Then the second wave would pass through them (or "leap frog," to use technical language) and push on to the second objective. When both objectives had been taken, the 2/8th Sherwood Foresters were to pass through the Robin Hoods, and advance still further. The total depth to be captured by the Battalion was about 700 yards on a frontage of some 800 yards. These small advances in an



ON THE FIRST OBJECTIVE.

One of the many Pill-boxes encountered during one of the advances. An impression after it has been taken and passed.

From an etching by 2nd Lieut. H. Coop, M.C.

operation of such magnitude bear witness to the difficult nature of the ground, and the anticipated obstinacy of the defence. Each wave was divided into three ranks. The first consisted of scouts keeping close behind the barrage, and reconnoitring the ground. The second, forming the main body was composed of sections of men acting under their own leaders, each section pressing on to a definite objective. Behind the main body came the "moppers-up," whose duty it was to deal with such of





the enemy as had escaped the second wave, and also to occupy captured positions of tactical importance. Besides these general dispositions, special platoons and sections had been told off to attack such obvious centres of resistance as Kansas House and Fokker Farm and, by engaging the garrisons, permit our other units to get past.

A creeping field artillery barrage was ordered *Artillery* to begin at zero hour, 150 yards in front of the *Support.* forming up line, lifting forward by 50 yard jumps to the first objective. Its rate of travel was to be 200 yards in the first 8 minutes and 100 yards every 6 minutes thereafter. On the first objective it was to pause for 20 minutes, and then move on to the second objective at the same rate as before. The barrage consisted of high explosive percussion shell, with a small proportion of smoke shell. In addition, a machine gun barrage from some 40 guns was directed at such hostile strong points as Fokker Farm and Toronto, its lifts corresponding with those of the artillery. The attack was supported by the field artillery of four Divisions and eight Army Brigades, and by 38 seige and heavy batteries. It has been officially stated that the number of rounds fired in the Ypres sector on September 26th, was 1,600,000, the largest total of any day in the war. Four trench mortars of the 178th Battery under Lieut. Greaves were dug into positions round Schuler Galleries, and on the capture of Toronto two of them were moved forward to co-operate in its defence.

Two tanks were allotted to our sector, their *Tanks.* special objective being Otto Farm, but as both the machines were knocked out during the preliminary bombardment their services had to be dispensed with.

The attack was continued on the left by the *Flank* 50th (London Territorial) Division, who had *Units.* relieved us in the Havrincourt area in July, and on the right by the 2/5th and 2/6th Sherwood Foresters. The right Brigade of the Division was the 177th (Lincoln and Leicester) and the 176th (Staffordshire) Brigade formed the Divisional Reserve.

Soon after dusk on the 25th, the Company *Assembling* Commanders made their way to the points *for the* where their Companies would form up for *Attack.* the attack, and marked out the positions of assembly with white tape. Company and platoon boundaries were denoted by discs mounted on poles and shewing black towards the enemy, and white towards our own lines. This important duty completed, guides were sent back to the Companies, and the men led into the final position for assault.

The first wave was composed of D Company (Capt. E. Spencer) on the left, and A Company (2nd Lieut. R. H. Street) on the right; the rear wave of C Company (Capt. F. G. Hickling) on the left, and B Company (Capt. F. G. Henry) on the right. Major H. Hanson and Capt. L. L. Cooper, had been retained at the transport lines, conformably with instructions from Brigade that a proportion of senior Officers were to be held in reserve to replace casualties. Capt. B. H. Brewill had been sent to Divisional Headquarters as liason Officer.

Towards 4 a.m. our batteries bombarded the *The Battle.* enemy positions in order to divert attention from the movement in the British lines, and shortly afterwards our rear wave received artillery attention in return. There were still a few details to be arranged when this enemy barrage came down, but owing to its intensity it was practically impossible to move. The night was pitch dark, and the men were collected in the bottom of shell holes and behind such of the German

concrete shelters as were available. The volume of the shelling defies description. It seemed almost impossible that there should be any men left to attack at all. Our bombardment of the enemy lines was continued right up to zero hour when the creeping barrage opened with a mighty crash all along the front. Thankful to be relieved from their shivering wait among the shell holes the men advanced. It was still dark, and there was not a feature left to guide the advance, only shell holes and mud. As our men moved forward, the enemy, careless of his own infantry, brought back his barrage. Our barrage was in front, the enemy's behind, while shells and machine gun bullets whistled just over head. Shell craters in the soft earth and marshes to advance over, darkness all round, direction almost lost, units mingled together, hell was loose. The going was appalling, the surface being slimy and treacherous, and the craters both numerous and of great size.

Taking of Kansas House. The leading wave suffered heavily from the machine gun fire from Kansas House and Cross Cots, but pressed on until the objective was reached. Kansas House, a great concrete fort, surmounted by a steel cupola, was occupied by a considerable garrison, and bristled with machine guns, heavy and light. The difficult problem of its capture was solved by the splendid co-operation of the Lewis gunners, bombers and riflemen of D Company, and in a very short time the garrison "kameraded" and trooped out, headed by a young Officer, whose spick and span appearance would not have disgraced an Emperor's inspection.

Death of Capt. Spencer. This magnificent piece of work was largely due to the skilful and courageous leading of Capt. Spencer, who was killed in the moment of success. Formerly a Mansfield miner and Sergeant-Major in the 8th Battalion,

the splendid example of his life and death remain an ideal and an inspiration to those who were honoured with his comradeship.

Meanwhile, the attack had gone equally well elsewhere, and at 6.20 a.m. Lieut. Street, *Capture of First Objective.* now in Command of the first wave, reported that the whole of the first objective was taken and that the work of consolidating it for defence had begun.

The second wave had less opposition to contend with on their way to their objective, *The Second Objective.* but the hostile artillery and machine gun fire was heavy and accurate. Though day was breaking the smoke and haze of the battlefield made it very difficult to keep direction, and the necessity of picking a tortuous path round the great craters and marshes forced the men to act largely on their own initiative. Thanks, in great measure, to their determination to get on and get to work at close quarters, the second objective was reached at 7.12 a.m., and the 2/8th Battalion passed forward to carry the assault still further. The casualties on both sides were heavy and a number of prisoners were sent back. Capt. Hickling was severely wounded just as the final objective was reached; the command of C Company falling in turn on Lieut. Coop and 2nd Lieut. Brown. On the death of Capt. Spencer. Capt. Cooper came up from the Transport Lines to take over D Company. During the morning enemy shelling was comparatively light on the captured area, but the neighbourhood of Schuler Galleries was heavily bombarded. No praise can be too high for the Battalion Stretcher Bearers who made journeys without number through the lingering barrage. During the day Capt. Carr, the Battalion Medical Officer, and one of the most fearless men who ever went to France, personally went round the line, with two stretchers under his arm, to see if there were any cases still to be taken down.

Communication in a battle is always a difficulty. Telephone wires were out of the question, dogs and pigeons were tried, but as usual the main work fell on the runners. Privates Wyer and Hillman were only two among many who did fine work. In the same way Sgts. Trueman, Clarke, Whitehead and Pitcher were only four among many N.C.O's who rendered great service.



THE RUNNER.

These men did splendid work crossing the devastated and shell-swept zone after the advance. In many cases they were the only means of maintaining communication. An impression of a Runner engaged on his solitary and dangerous duty crossing what was once the Gravenstafel Road.

From an etching by 2nd Lieut. H. Coop, M.C.

At 2 p.m. the enemy launched a local counter-
A Local attack along the Brigade front. It was appar-
Counter- ently spotted at an early sage by our aircraft
Attack. and no sooner did it materialize than it was
 completely broken up by the heavy artillery
 barrage which was promptly put down. The rest of the
 afternoon was quiet until the enemy made a great attempt
 to regain his lost ground.

The Counter-Attack. At about 3.30 to 4 p.m. it was quite evident the enemy intended launching his main counter-attack, as about this time

several of his reconnaissance and fighting planes were flying very low over the heads of our most advanced troops. So close in fact were the Bosche airmen that they could be easily seen in their machines. They dropped flares over our lines and so gave their gunners our exact positions. Very soon after this the Battalion was subjected to a most intense barrage of 5.9's, which lasted for a considerable period, but thanks to the methods the Company Commanders had adopted of placing their men not in lines but in irregular formation and also to the softness of the ground, very few casualties were inflicted. During this time the enemy could be observed massing in large numbers on the heights of the Gravenstafel and the great counter-attack commenced. The Bosche could be seen coming down the slopes in front in several waves about 100 yards apart, and each line of men was so thick that they were almost shoulder to shoulder. In answer to our S.O.S. signals our artillery put down a wonderful barrage which lasted for an hour and a quarter. There is no doubt that this barrage was a decisive feature in defeating the counter-attack, but in spite of it, the troops on the flanks of our Brigade were giving way, and soon our left flank was "in the air," with nothing to stop the onrush of the enemy; on our right the 2/5th and 2/6th were bravely holding their ground. It almost seemed that our depleted Battalion must be enveloped. At this point Capt. Henry gallantly came forward with his Company and filled up the front line. Words fail to express the wonderful coolness and bravery of both Officers and men in these trying circumstances. Lieut.-Col. Martyn and Lieut. Foster who was then Brigade Intelligence Officer, were visiting the front line when the counter-attack started, and remained for

the whole period, greatly encouraging all ranks by their coolness; the presence of the Commanding Officer in the front line at this crisis having undoubtedly a steadying effect.

A volunteer was called for to take a message back to Brigade Headquarters. At once a private jumped up out a shell hole: "I'll go, sir." Poor fellow, he was killed almost immediately; and then another volunteered, only to meet the same gallant fate before he had gone a hundred yards, but another volunteer was ready, and he by a supreme effort reached the Brigadier, General Stansfeld. If one only knew the names of all the men who took part in this great trial, what pleasure it would give to record their names, as an everlasting record of their gallantry and cheerfulness under such circumstances. Every man stood with his rifle resting on the top of his shell hole, with itching finger, waiting for the word "fire" to be given by his Officers. During all this time our machine gunners, some hundreds of yards in our rear, were putting up a most wonderful over-head barrage and doing great execution to the advancing enemy; how we praised their shooting as we saw the Boche dropping in our front. They had now got on our left flank, and Capt. Henry, with his usual coolness, at once formed a defensive flank parallel to the small stream, the Hanebeke. Darkness was now coming on and the enemy's attack, which was intended to sweep right through to our artillery positions, was almost spent, and we had lost no ground, though the Bosche were in a dangerous position on our left rear. However by about 8 p.m. all was quiet, and we were given a short respite after a day crowded with attacks by us and counter-attacks by the enemy; not a single soul who survived those terrible barrages will ever forget the 26th of September, 1917.

Words fail to describe the countless acts of bravery performed by all ranks, and especial mention is due to Capt. Henry, Lieuts. Coop, Price and Brown. During all this time our beloved and brave M.O., Captain Carr, without food or rest, dressed wounded in the open and under the most heavy shell fire, and when his stretcher-bearers were all out of action himself went and collected wounded and carried them back to his dressing station, and it was the Commanding Officer's greatest regret that the gallant doctor did not get the decoration he so richly deserved and was recommended for.

After this failure, the enemy gave expression to his feelings by a vigorous shelling of Kansas House, and our front line generally, but by 9 a.m. all was quiet again, and the night was a peaceful one.

The 27th proved a quiet day until 6 p.m., when the whole of the Battalion area was very heavily shelled for two hours, apparently in connection with a counter-attack on some other part of the front. The men stood the long ordeal with high courage, and thanks to their steadiness our casualties were comparatively light, although there was a good deal of mustard gas about. In this bombardment Lieut. Flint. and C.S.M. Raistrick were wounded, the C.S.M. fatally. He had been kept out of the line during the attack, but on hearing of the severe casualties his Company had suffered, although he had himself been blown up by a shell, of his own accord came up to the line. If ever a man was faithful unto death, he was. Among other casualties was our excellent chaplain, the Rev. J. McIlwaine, C.F., who was badly gassed at a first aid station. After a long illness he obtained a convalescent's berth as Chaplain on a hospital ship, and the Battalion heard with a deep regret that he was drowned on his first voyage, the vessel having been torpedoed and sunk with all on board.

*Relief by
2/6th South
Staffs.* The 28th also followed a normal course until the "evening hate," which was again of a cordial nature. During the night 28/29th, the Robin Hoods were relieved by the 2/6th South Staffords, and moved back into reserve in the area Schuler Galleries, Pond Galleries, Fort Hill.

*Farewell to
Ypres.* On the 29th, the final relief took place, the Battalion handing over to the 2nd Canterbury Regiment of the Australian Corps, and marching back to Vlamertinghe. It was with a feeling of thankfulness indeed that this most revolting of battlefields was left behind, where many of us had been introduced to sounds, sights and scents which cannot fortunately be recorded. The casualty list was heavy: 1 Officer and 36 other ranks killed; 7 Officers and 238 other ranks wounded, and 48 other ranks missing. A big price to pay, and one from which the Battalion never quite recovered.

The march to Vlamertinghe and the night's rest were uneventful, though slightly disturbed by serial bombing. The 30th was a day of rest and washing, and on October 1st the Battalion entrained at Brandhoek and moved to the Steenbecque area.

CHAPTER XV.

WITTES—RECKLINGHAM—
CHATEAU-DE-LA-HAIE—SOUCHEZ—
LENS.*October 1st, 1917 to November 24th, EFES.*

The first resting place of the Battalion in the new area was Wittes, a quiet old fashioned village which contrasted strongly with the noisy salient. The men were billeted in farms and other places of a similar nature. The strength of the Battalion including its non-fighting portion was now about 400 all ranks of which about 12 were Officers.

No very hard training was carried out here. The principal need of the Battalion being rest and recuperation after their recent ordeal. Fresh kit was issued where wanted, and physical training and short route marches carried out. The men were paid as soon as money could be obtained from the field Cashier, and the estaminets did a fine trade in eggs, chips and light beverages.

Various conferences of the powers were held about this time with the object of bringing out points from the Ypres attack likely to be of use to other troops operating in similar circumstances, and also of improving our own methods. On October 30th a Divisional Parade was addressed by General Romer, when the Robin Hoods were complimented and thanked for their work.

Five days were spent at Wittes, and the Battalion then moved to Recklingham, marching part of the way and going by 'bus the remainder. Training continued until the 10th, when a fresh

move was made to Heuchin and Bouaval, two Companies being billeted at each place. The next day the march towards Lens was continued, and Pressy Les Pernes and Bours were the nights' resting places. On the evening of the 12th the Battalion came together again at Gauchin-Legal. This place was reached after a march in a down-pour of rain, and the billets proved to be very bad, some Companies having to sleep on stone floors in barns. The platoon Commanders managed to buy some straw for the men to lie on and arranged for clothes to be dried, but the whole place was filthy and knee deep in slush. It was a comfort to know that next day the Brigade was going into Divisional reserve at Chatleau-De-La-Haie, which place was reached early in the afternoon of October 13th, 1917.

Behind Lens, Vancouver Camp, in which the Robin Hoods were now quartered, was a collection of wooden huts, built on the slopes of a very muddy hill. The Division was temporarily relieving a Canadian Division who were moving North to take part in the Ypres battle. This portion of the front was, and had been for some time, a preserve of the Canadians, numbers of whom were still in the area.

The Canadians. There was a very great deal to admire in the way the Canadians went to war. The British are perhaps more inclined than any other nation to work on the presumption that war is war, and therefore horrible and uncomfortable, and the best thing is to get it over as soon as possible. The Canadians were much in advance of the British in many matters affecting the comfort of the troops, though it must be admitted they had been helped by the length of time they had been in that sector. There was for example an excellent Theatre, in which the 59th Divisional Concert Party, "The Crumps," were soon giving cheering shows.

The Divisional baths also were much superior to the usual standard. The system of light railways was wonderful, delivering rations right up to the trenches, to the saving of the Battalion transport and carrying parties, while trench reliefs were often carried out by the same railways. The excellence of the dugouts will be commented on later. There was also an Officers' Club in the area. The only drawback to Vancouver Camp was the mud; the intervals between training were devoted to battling with it; but fortunately there were also opportunities for football, baths and theatre-going.

On the 18th the Battalion moved to Souchez Camp, several miles nearer the line. From 18th Oct., this place working parties went out every night improving the trench system. Every trench system requires constant labour to keep it in repair. Duck Boards have to be placed on the bottom of the trench, and if there is much wet about piles have first to be sunk, so that the Duck boards may be laid above the water level and the men move about dry footed. Provision for drawing off surplus water has also to be made. In many types of soil the sides of the trench have to be prevented from falling in by revetting with brush-wood or hurdles. Shelters and dugouts for men and ammunition have to be constructed and barbed wire obstacles put out to hold up an enemy rush. All the material has to be carried up to the trenches and the work is done by the infantry themselves under the guidance of one or two Royal Engineers. War consists mainly of work, marching and discomfort. Endurance is the first requisite.

Souchez village lay on our side of the Vimy ridge. Much fighting had taken place there and practically no trace of the village remained. The Battalion was again in a huddled camp, one that had fallen into considerable disrepair. It was soon made fairly comfortable by the

pioneers, who are the Battalion carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers and handymen.

From this place the Battalion moved into *Red Trench*, the line on the 21st October, relieving a Battalion of the Lincoln Brigade in support in Red Trench. This support trench was considerably over a mile behind the front line, and did not receive much attention from the enemy's artillery. It contained an ample supply of deep and good Canadian dugouts, the principal of which provided accommodation for Battalion Headquarters and two Companies, with wire beds enough for about 200 men. Working parties were constantly out, those by day working on the communication trenches, those by night on the front line system. A canteen was started in a communication trench by the Battalion, and proved a great success. The trenches in this area were on the whole very good in spite of the wet weather. Rations were delivered each night to Red Trench by light railway, so for once carrying parties were reduced to a minimum.

While in support a party of reinforcements arrived from a pioneer Battalion of the Sherwoods, a number of new Officers having also joined since Ypres.

After the usual reconnaissance by Officers and N.C.O's, the Battalion moved into the front line on the 29th October, changing places with 2/5th Sherwood Foresters. The Brigade was holding a line running through Avion, a suburb of the mining town of Lens. The 2/8th Sherwood Foresters held the left portion of the line, the Robin Hoods the right. The Battalion was divided into two sections; A and D Companies on the left were under the Command of Major J. C. Warren (D Company), who had just come out again from England, and who spent some time with the second line before rejoining the first. The right section, under Captain Henry (B Com-

The Front Line. *Avion.*

pany) consisted of B and C Companies. During part of the period Colonel Martyn was acting in Command of the Brigade, Major Rickman being in temporary command of the Battalion, with Capt. Cooper as second in Command.

The other Battalion duties were held as follows :—

Adjutant, Captain F. Pragnell.

A Company, Captain B. H. Brewill.

C Company, Captain G. Bloodworth.

Lewis Gun Officer, Lieut. C. F. Parry.

Signalling Officer, Lieut. J. E. Hartshorn.

Intelligence Officer, Lieut. A. Catterall.

The right section had a continuous front line just behind Quebec road, with advanced posts up to the road. The line ran round the ruins of what had apparently been rows of suburban villas, but it was impossible to say definitely where or what anything had been. The character of the debris and the evidence of the map however, gave this impression. There was a support line, Avion trench, about 500 yards behind the front line, and further trenches behind this in a state of disrepair. In one of these, Souris trench, was the Headquarters dug-out of the section, a Canadian dugout of double decker type, that is having two storeys. It was a good and safe dugout, but although amply protected from surprise in front, the occupants were never very confident as to what lay between them and the enemy on the right flank, which was out of our Divisional sector and where the line swung round.

Avion trench contained a number of German *Dugouts*. dugouts, with entrances facing of course the wrong way, that is towards the enemy guns. These were protected as much as possible with sand bags. Battalion Headquarters was in a warren of a dugout, on the right flank. Many callers of various arms of the service wandered down here during the period, and it

was here that the Lieut.-General Commanding the Corps, after lingering a few moments in the doorway of the Colonel's sanctum, quietly announced himself with "my name is Fanshawe."

In front of the sector on the right, the enemy trenches ran within a few yards of our own among the ruins. They then ran back towards a railway embankment which was roughly parallel to our line a few hundred yards from the centre of the sector. Towards the middle of our line No Man's Land was fairly extensive and was commanded by a huge slag heap. On the left, owing to the ruins and broken nature of the country, it was difficult to say exactly where anyone was. A story ran that before the Robin Hoods' occupation of the sector the cellars of one house were occupied by both British and Bosche, a brick wall through which talking could be heard alone dividing them.

The railway embankment opposite our right *Trench* front was the home of some heavy trench *Mortars*. mortars. These played great havoc with our communication trenches, until arrangements were made for our artillery to open fire when the enemy mortars did. After one or two trials of this, the trouble ceased.

Two American Officers were attached to the Battalion for instruction during this period, and gave a very good account of themselves. Major Warren, Capt. Brewill and Sergt.-Major Whitehead did a good deal of informal patrolling among the ruins and looted some furniture from a cellar or dugout in No Man's Land. It is understood that a good deal of noise was made removing it, and when the party returned to the spot the next night, machine gun fire was opened on them.

Every morning just before daylight the enemy fired a few rifle grenades at our trenches, fortunately without

injury to anyone. It was always a matter of great doubt in this sector as to where the enemy actually were.

Twice during our occupation of the sector one of our special Companies of Royal Engineers fired gas projectiles into Lens from a sunken road near Battalion Headquarters, and our artillery opened a small bombardment to cover the noise of the discharge, while the Battalion stood by in gas helmets ready for any retaliation.

It was decided that a raid should be carried out from the right of the Battalion line to obtain information as to the troops opposite to us. *A Raid.* A party of the 2/5th Sherwood Foresters who were in reserve were specially trained for this raid, and the Robin Hoods did a considerable amount of preparatory work for them, patrols going out every night to obtain information they required before making their final plans. During one of these patrols Lieut. Marshall and several of our men were wounded, encountering a party of the enemy right on our wire. This party had evidently been in position, watching our men as they left our trenches.

The sector on the whole was an eerie one, *Relief, Nov.* and the Battalion were not sorry to leave it on November 5th, 1917, when they were taken by light railway back to Vancouver Camp, a Battalion of the Staffordshires taking their place.

Shortly after a party was ordered to reconnoitre the line at Lievin, a Northern suburb of Lens, and it was expected that the Brigade would go into the line there, but after a few days it was said that the Division were shortly moving to another part of the line, and tactical exercises were feverishly undertaken with a view to preparing the Battalion for open warfare, especially following up a beaten enemy. What the actual operations turned out to be will transpire later.

Colonel Martyn, still commanding the *Decorations*. Brigade, was entertained to Dinner by the Officers of his own Battalion to celebrate his D.S.O., and a very cheery evening was spent.

The Honours list for the Ypres operations, which had recently been published, contained the names of the following Officers and other ranks of the Battalion :—

Lieut.-Col. Martyn,	M.C.,	awarded D.S.O.
Capt. L. L. Cooper,		mentioned in Despatches.
Capt. F. G. Henry,		awarded M.C.
2nd Lieut. H. Coop	„	M.C.
C.S.M. Clarke,	„	M.M.
Sergt. Pitcher	„	M.M.
Sergt. A. S. Hunt	„	M.M.
Corpl. M. Given	„	M.M.
Lce.-Cpl. H. Smith,		mentioned in Despatches
Pte. C. D. Webster,		awarded M.M.

On November 13th, the Divisional Commander, Major General Romer, presented in Brigade parade the ribbons to those who were available.

On November 14th the Brigade marched to *Night* Etrun, and spent four days there. The 51st *Marches*. Division were also quartered in the neighbourhood. The next move was by night to Hendecourt, and the night but one after to Gomiecourt. From here the Officers made the reconnaissance referred in the next chapter, viewing the Cambrai battlefield.

On the 24th, the Robin Hoods entrained at Achiet-le-Grand for Fins, thence marching to Equancourt. The Cambrai period had now started.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF CAMBRAI.

November 25th, 1917 to December 6th, 1917.

Ireland, the German retreat, the fighting round Le Verguier, Ypres, and Lens, had each shown the Battalion a different type of warfare, but the first battle of Cambrai, into which the 2/7th were now marching was a type quite unlike any of these. The people who now dismiss the battle as a raid on a large scale, are probably identical with those who were ringing the joy bells in London, to celebrate its first phase. In any case, they have been fully answered by the Commander in Chief in his dispatch dealing with his plan of action. The work of the Battalion here can only be fully realised by looking at the battle as a whole. The British attack of November 20th, marvellously successful as it was, was yet not successful enough. At some vital points the enemy held us up too long, others we never took at all, so the right flank of the salient was never sufficiently secure to permit of the intended developments in which the Battalion had originally been allotted a part.

Bourlon Wood and village were never securely held by us. For days the fiercest fighting took place in its sinister thickets, and on the slopes on each of its flanks, and through this wood the Battalion should have marched to the canal and the heights North of the Sensee, to establish and hold the crossings for other troops, who would swing North and exploit the success.

These warning orders were received on the night the news came that General Byng had broken the Hindenburg line on a broad front round Havrincourt (see map) while the Battalion was moving by night marches from Lens towards, well towards the South any way, and towards trouble almost certainly, was all they then knew. They were following from camp to camp the Guards Division, with whom and one other Division, they formed General Byng's reserve corps.

But although our attack won the 60 square miles of ground shewn on the map illustrating this chapter, in spite of desperate efforts, Bourslon did not fall and plans were altered.

The German counter attack with 24 Divisions, though held on the left, gained ground on the already insecure right flank. Subjected to, not only frontal and flanking fire, but even to shelling from the rear, with its marshes and damp undergrowth holding the poison gas as nothing else would, Bourslon Wood became a literal death trap, and it was finally decided to withdraw the line from there to the Flesquieres Ridge. For the covering of the first part and carrying out of the latter part of this withdrawal, admittedly the most difficult of all military operations, Lieut.-Col. Martyn, D.S.O., M.C., and the 2/7th Sherwood Foresters were selected in the 59th Division, though they had to be attached to another Brigade for the purpose. This, and the events connected with it, form the next phase in the Battalion's history.

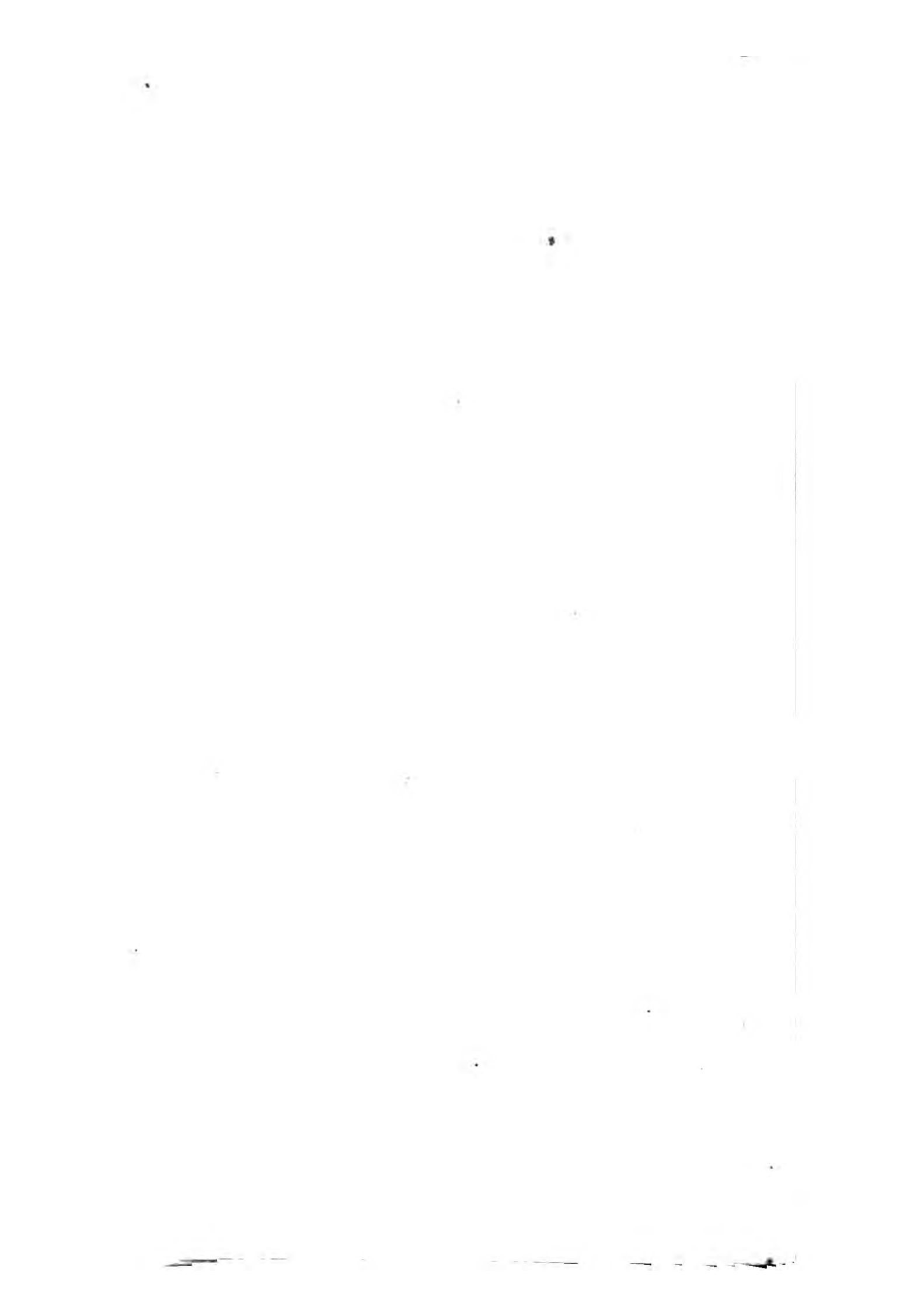
The Battle of Cambrai was full of interest. Doubly so to the Battalion, that in the spring had seen from their trenches round Bilhem Farm and Trescault the hazy spires of Cambrai, and the nearer red roofs of Havrincourt, Ribecourt and Flesquieres. All the ground behind our line they

knew. The trench which some of General Byng's men left to attack Ribecourt, had been sited by Col. Martyn and Capt. R. A. Charlton, and dug by the Battalion. The rest billets in the destroyed villages behind the line, though cleared of much of their debris, and boasting still more notices urging all passers by to "pick up every nail," were still recognizable, and Gouzeaucourt Wood, by which the Battalion marched to the line, had been their home for several weeks.

The battle was not only interesting, it was spectacular. The sweeping nature of the country, with its wide open valleys and commanding hills, allowed those not actively engaged to watch the progress of quite distant events; the panorama of men, horses, tanks, guns and all that goes to make a war to-day. Enemy movements could be seen at times from their commencement to their final phase. One could stand like a spectator watching a demonstration and contrast the enemy's methods with our own.

Certainly the Battalion saw nothing here so swiftly dramatic as that one of the counter attacks at Ypres which developed over the far sky line on their left front, built up and advanced by rushes undisturbed down the long slope, and then, when far from the crest and security of the reverse slope, was suddenly engaged by our extraordinary Ypres artillery, hesitated a moment, wavered a moment, then broke and was no more. But Ypres was too like a dull nightmare for anything to raise even a spark of interest. It was just dull, muddled, shell-blasted necessity; to win and to hold.

Cambrai was not a battle in mud, though there was plenty, red and tenacious, in the old German trenches that were occupied by the Battalion in some stages of the battle. The country had not been churned into an expanse of that soft, flaky dirt which only prolonged and terrific shelling can produce; it had in fact been chosen for the hard going it afforded the tanks.



The Battle area. It was not until November 26th, that the Battalion moved into the actual battle area, though parties of Officers had previously been on reconnaissance tours; on that date the Battalion was temporarily attached to the 20th Division for constructional work, and marched to Villers Pluich. As the Battalion left Equancourt they passed on the right the camping ground they had occupied in the spring, now being used as waggon lines.

The road through Fins and Gouzeaucourt, which had been comparatively quiet early in the year, was now full of the traffic which springs up like magic in the rear of an action like Cambrai. One of the hourly ten minute halts was actually in Gouzeaucourt, and many of the Battalion saw one of the 12 inch guns which had been brought up to within a few hundred yards of the German front line before the action and opened fire on Cambrai and the German back areas at zero hour. This gun was afterwards captured by the Germans and then taken again by us.

The Battalion was allotted a length of the old British front line in front of Villers Pluich as quarters. As they were there for accommodation and not for defence, arrangements were made to settle everyone down as comfortably as possible; field kitchens and water carts were brought up into a sunken road behind the trenches and blankets were given out.

A fruitless Reconnaissance. The next day Col. Martyn and a party of Officers were taken by the C.R.E. of the 20th Division to be shown the work they had to do. They went through La Vacquerie and Eastwards towards Bois Lateau. Col. Martyn was a fast walker, but he met his match that day. The C.R.E. of the 20th Division, after the first mile, led all the way, and the rest of the party ran. When the party returned to the Bat-

talion exhausted by keeping up with these pedestrian giants, they found the Battalion had received orders to return at once to Equancourt, and preparations were already well on the way. The Battalion went back to the quarters they had left the previous day. The cooks went on before, and when the Battalion arrived they found a hot meal waiting for them, and fires to dry wet puttees and clothes. The Battalion owed all through a great deal to its Company Quarter Master Sergeants, and the old hands, like Q.M.S's Ward, Sutcliffe, Mills and Neal, will always be affectionately remembered by men and Officers.

One rather distinctive feature of the Battalion was the way it kept up a Battalion Officers' Mess. Owing to difficulties of accommodation most of the Battalions had small Company messes, but Col. Martyn believed that a Battalion mess helped a feeling of comradeship amongst the Officers, especially with so many new Officers coming in to replace casualties. Whatever the reason, certainly a more united body than the Officers of the 2/7th was not to be found in France.

The next day was spent in cleaning up, hot baths were improvised and used, and the Battalion rested as much as possible, for it was clear that stiff work lay in front of them once more.

On the 29th the Battalion again moved forward. The 59th Division relieved the Guards Division in and around Bourslon Wood, and the 2/7th were in Divisional reserve in trenches behind Ribecourt. Next morning was misty, but soon cleared into a bright crisp day. It was very early obvious from abnormal hostile aeroplane activity and long range shelling, some of which came near the Battalion, that something unusual was the matter. The Battalion was nearly in the middle of the salient that had been made, a little

nearer the head than the sides and about four miles from the front line. (A reference to the map will shew the position behind Ribecourt).

German Soon wounded began to come down the Ribecourt-Trescault Road, with the news of a
Activity, great German attack. Time has now made
Nov. 30th, clear the details of the great counter attack
1917. the Germans made that day, and established
 that the holding of the left flank prevented
the troops in the salient from being surrounded. But
on that day the Robin Hoods had to find out the facts one
by one for themselves, and in the confusion of battle truth
is hard to find. The number of men coming down from
the front increased, a few German prisoners amongst
them, one, a lad of about nineteen, who spoke good
English, was absolutely delighted to be captured in his
first fight. Gunners came down with breach blocks in
their hands, removed to make their guns unusable by the
Germans. This was the clearest indication of all that
things were indeed going badly on the right. On the
left terrific shelling went on nearly all day long.

Creeping barrages repeatedly moved slowly into our
lines, though at a considerable distance from the Bat-
talion. All round were horse lines, ambulance waggons
and units of noncombatant troops; these acting under
orders began to move to the rear, and in a very short
space of time the 2/7th had what had been a populous
valley, almost to themselves. Other Battalions of the
Brigade were sent to assist other Divisions, but the Robin
Hoods had nothing to do but stay where they were; pre-
pared to move at a moment's notice. This waiting with
a possibility of being entirely surrounded was a most
nerve-straining experience. The inactivity forced on the
Battalion, making it many times worse than it would have
been if some definite work had been demanded of them.
Col. Martyn had in fact received orders to be prepared

to move instantly if required to counter attack at Marcoing or Masnieres and confidentially, possibly even at Gouzeaucourt in their rear; but the orders either never came or were always countermanded. Time passed so slowly it seemed the day would never end.

In the afternoon the Divisional Commander *A Patrol.* ordered a patrol to investigate the then obscure position on the right flank. 2nd Lieut. Hudson took out this patrol and returned in the evening with astonishing information that the enemy were in Gouzeaucourt. That day, owing to the congested state of the roads, there was considerable difficulty in getting rations up. Night brought a move for the Battalion, but only to some trenches a few hundred yards in front of those they had been occupying.

They remained here for December 1st and *Behind* 2nd. There was very little shelter in the *Ribecourt.* trenches, and a spell of sharp, frosty weather was experienced. As usual the Battalion made themselves as comfortable as possible until the next move. The Battalion Headquarters were in a wooden hut that had been a German light railway depôt. Here was found a barrel of beer, and after being tested this was dished out in mess tins to the men. It afforded proof that verbal messages can sometimes go right, when the order was passed, to send mess tins for beer.

Shortly after this some of our own Engineers who had moved when the counter attack commenced, came back for a barrel of beer they had left, and it had to be pointed out to them that to leave a barrel of beer unattended for 48 hours is simply asking for trouble. Near to this hut was a German dugout that had probably been a casualty collecting station, and instead of steep steps, a series of sloping platforms led down to the main room, for ease in moving stretcher cases. This was only one example of the great thoroughness and untiring work of

the enemy. The belts of wire entanglements, yards thick, and elaborate trench systems with which the whole neighbourhood was covered, were absolutely unlike any British system the Battalion had ever seen. A few yards behind the left flank of the trenches the Battalion were occupying were two batteries of 6 inch guns; all that was left of a Brigade. These guns were very active. It is not easy to sleep a few yards in front of a battery of 6 inch guns firing rapid!

Again on two successive nights the Battalion was ordered to stand by to make a counter attack, but each time the order was cancelled.

During the first few days of December the *Forward* other two Brigades of the 59th Division, the *again.* North and South Staffords and the Lincolns and Leicesters were in the line in and around Bourlon Wood. On the night of the 2nd the Battalion moved from their trenches behind Ribecourt into close support in the sunken road running South-east from Graincourt. The move was made by Companies, and as Ribecourt was subjected to a good deal of hostile shelling at uncertain intervals, a route was chosen by lanes and byways to the West of that village. The night was dark and soon the byways gave way to open country, but after the inevitable period of uncertainty as to whether the right track was being followed, Flesquieres was reached, and the guides, sent by the Battalion to be relieved, were found.

Flesquieres was at this time Brigade Head-*Flesquieres.* quarters, and the most dominating feature inside the salient. It was a good deal larger and more compact than the average English village, and contained many substantial red brick buildings, now partly destroyed, but not razed to the ground. It stood at the East end of a ridge which ran parallel to the Bourlon front for over a mile, and then swung back at a

right angle to Havrincourt and on to Hermies, being again roughly parallel to the front line on the left of the salient. Unless he followed the crest of this narrow ridge anyone entering Flesquieres must do so going up hill, so the importance of its position is soon realised.

The Sunken Road,
Dec. 2nd,
1917.

The guides led the various Companies down the Fontaine Road for a little over a mile, passed heavily shelled Orival Wood (afterwards better known in the Battalion as "Orrible") to the sunken road they were to occupy. As they were marching in, the Battalion had a warning of what they had to expect there. A shell landed on the road by C Company and wounded and killed about 13 men, including Company Sergt.-Major Twydale, a veteran regular soldier, who had been with the Battalion some months, and whose loss was much felt.

The Battalion to be relieved, the 2nd/6th North Staffordshires, had been reduced to a handful of men by a tour of duty in the gas ridden Bourslon Wood, and the relief was soon complete.

A Battalion of the Lincoln Brigade occupied the same line for a day after the Robin Hoods came in.

The Battalion.

It must be borne in mind in connection with the operations that follow that the Battalion had not had the customary period of recuperation after the Paschendaele offensive. It was usual to allow a Battalion, after an action as severe as that had been, a time for much needed re-organisation, but owing to circumstances which included the Italian debacle, the 59th Division had been constantly active since Ypres. The Battalion had not even been brought up to strength, and the Companies did not average one hundred men each, but all this had to be taken as the fortune of war.

The Scene of the action, Dec. 3rd, 1917. Daybreak on the 3rd enabled the Battalion to take stock of their new position. From Flesquieres ridge behind them the ground sloped, absolutely open, for nearly three miles to the foot of Bourlon Wood and the village of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, which stood on the steep sides of a ridge as commanding as the one we held at Flesquieres. But the slope the Battalion was on was saddlebacked, a slight depression running up the middle of it from the East end of the wood almost to Flesquieres. Half way down the slope ran the sunken road which the Battalion was occupying; the left flank not quite up to the village of Graincourt, the right within a few yards of the Flesquieres-Cantaing Road. The road down which the Battalion had marched went through the right centre of the position. Fontaine and the ridge behind were in the hands of the enemy, and gave him magnificent observation for several miles round.

The village of Anneux lay in a dip about a mile in front of the left of the Battalion's line. The road the Battalion were in was sunken at both ends, but level with the surrounding country in the middle, where there was an isolated farm house called La Justice. The inside of this had been strengthened with concrete by the Germans, and while Bourlon was our front line we used it as a casualty clearing station, and the motor ambulances came down to it even in daylight. This was one of the peculiarities that followed after a spell of open fighting with much movement. In an established trench system it would have been considered madness to send ambulances to such a place; and it certainly was bold, as the farm and the cross roads it stood by were the subject of much attention from the German artillery, so much in fact that when going down the Battalion line it was wise to leave the road and make a detour at that part, as there was

not a particle of cover anywhere near the cross roads. There was something sinister about this treeless farm and it remains in the memory with Kansas House, Unnamed Farm at Hargicourt, and one or two others, as a place where death was always near.

The sunken portions of the road contained several German dugouts, all in good condition. The one used as Battalion Headquarters had several rooms, and had obviously been used as a field telegraph centre. The left of the line had several gun pits, and one dugout full of shells. This part of the road had very steep banks and was used in several ways by units in Bourlon Wood. A relay stretcher post of a London Regiment was there, and many bad cases came through. Men who had been gassed mostly; some reeling like drunken men, and almost blinded; telling fearsome stories of the conditions in the wood, of the effect of the ceaseless shelling among the trees, and of how, if a man removed his gas helmet, even to eat, he was likely to be gassed.

At that time the Battalion orders were to be *Our Role.* ready to counter attack if necessary. It was not proposed to make a permanent defensive line along the road, and accordingly very elaborate constructional work was not started. Firing places were soon made at the top of the forward banks of the road, and shelters for the men underneath. Owing to the steep banks these were wonderfully secure from shell fire, and so made a very suitable collecting place for a counter attacking Battalion. On the night of the 3rd the Battalion was ordered to prepare to counter attack near Marcoing, which was right out of the Divisional sector, not in front of the Battalion at all, but about two miles to its right rear. The order was countermanded, but the feeling that flanks and even rear are insecure is not one to inspire the utmost confidence. This delayed work

that night, but some wiring was done in front of the Battalion's right flank.

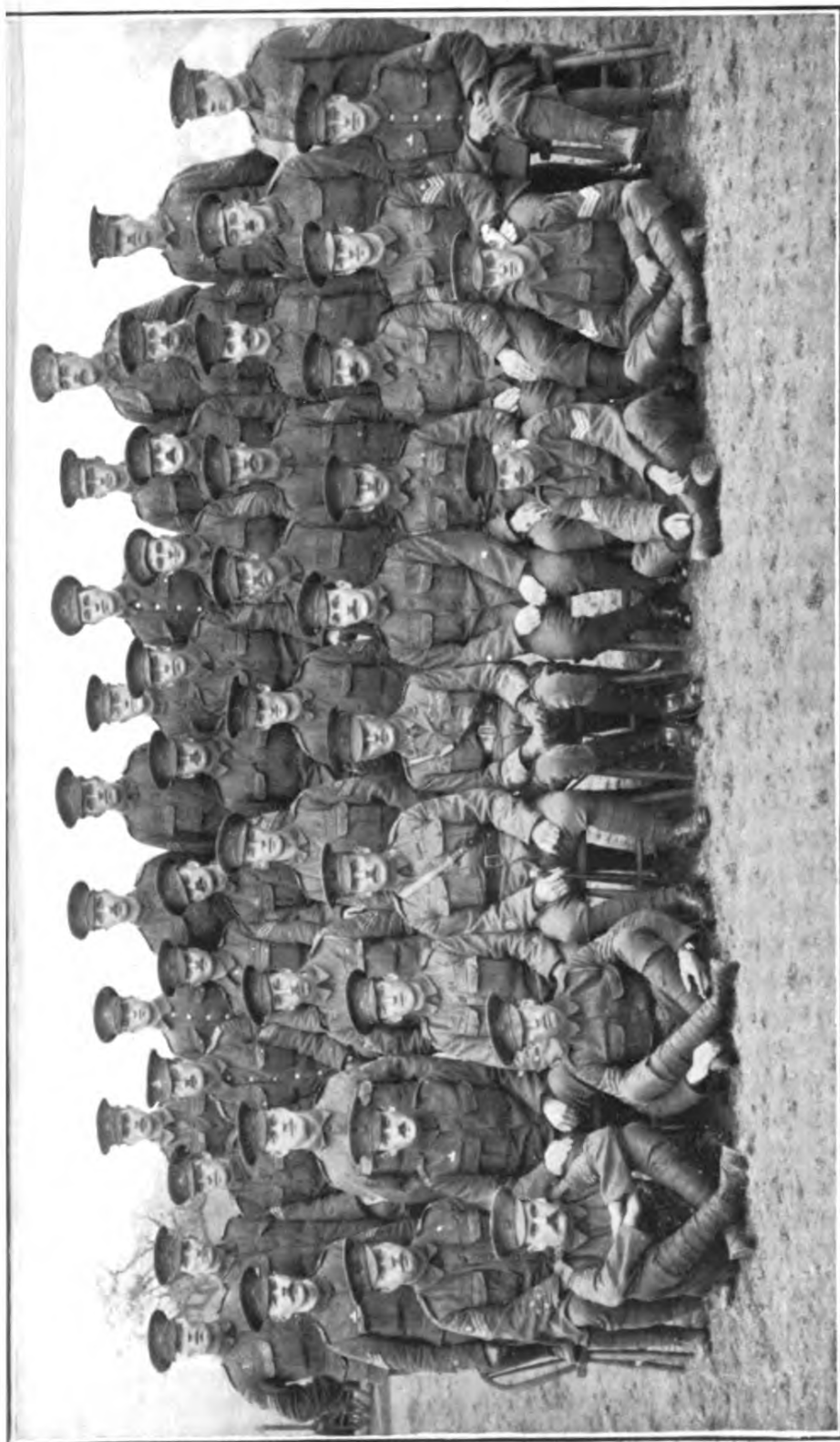
On the evening of the 4th, Lt.-Col. *Startling Orders*, Martyn sent for all Company and Dec. 4th, 1917. Specialist Officers, and told them that very special orders which he could not yet divulge were likely to come through during the night. For the remaining few minutes of daylight they were to examine the ground and see what rapid steps could be taken, if necessary, to make their position a last line of defence. This was a startling development, but nothing to the orders that followed. These were, that with two Companies of the 2nd/4th Lincolnshire Regiment the Battalion would form an outpost line where they then were, that our present front line would be evacuated, and by 5 a.m. the sunken road would be the British front line.

These were simply astounding orders. For hundreds of yards along the front there was not a single strand of wire. There were no trenches at all in the usual sense. There was no covered approach to the position, which was in the middle of absolutely open country. Owing to the convex slope the field of fire was bad. Six weak Companies were to hold over two thousand yards of front, and there were to be no supports other than those found from themselves. The nearest troops were to be on the Flesquieres ridge, over a mile and a half away, working day and night on what was to be the permanent line, and it was no part of their duties to support the outpost troops. On top of all this the enemy were in an active state, and already flushed by the successes they had gained, while the Robin Hoods had had no respite since before Ypres. However the Battalion had no time to consider these things.

The Outposts. Lt.-Col. Martyn was placed in command of the outpost troops, and formed them into three sections; on the right A and D Companies of the 2nd/7th Sherwood Foresters under Major Thursfield, with whom was Captain H. B. Brewill, commanding A Company; the centre section consisted of two Companies of the 2nd/4th Lincolnshire Regiment under Major Dean; the left section, B and C Companies of the 2nd/7th Sherwoods, under Captain Henry, with Captain Bloodworth commanding C Company.

Preparations. That night the Battalion worked as they never had before; wire was put out almost along the whole front, though it can be imagined only thinly, and small lengths of trench were sited and dug. This was rendered difficult by the fact that the frost had affected the ground to a depth of two feet. The orders restricted the siting of these trenches to within two hundred yards of the road. Stakes, wire, and tools were sent up on pack-ponies and in limber waggons, and ample supplies of hot food and tea in containers, not forgetting rum, were brought up by the Company Quarter-Master Sergeants. The centre section (the Lincolns) had been in Bourlon Wood, and did not arrive till almost day-break, so arrangements had also to be made for them. Just before 5 a.m. the last of our troops had passed through the Battalion line, and at daybreak the outpost troops were left in possession of the whole slope. Continuing the outpost line on the left was a Battalion of the London Regiment, in touch with Captain Bloodworth, and on our right was another Division.

Our Engineers had destroyed the dugouts in Bourlon Wood, and these had been seen flaming at dawn, so that it was not long before the enemy discovered that our line had been evacuated; the Engineers had wanted to



Group of Warrant and Non-Commissioned Officers taken at Watford, 1915. [Photo—Bassano, L.d., London.

Back Row (from Left to Right): Sergt. H. H. Neal, Sergt. A. Gamble, Sergt. A. F. Ward, Sergt. G. E. Smalley, Sergt. I. Mabbott, Sergt. A. Daws, Sergt. H. Smalley, Sergt. H. Cox.

Fourth Row: Sergt. A. Pope, Sergt. W. A. Wilson, Sergt. W. A. Grundy, Lance-Sergt. H. C. Fewkes, Lance-Sergt. F. Ward, Sergt. H. J. H. Skevington, Sergt. D. F. Simkins, Sergt. C. Birch, Sergt. E. H. Harper, Sergt. T. Percival, Sergt. R. A. Trueman, Sergt. W. G. Parsons.

Third Row: Coy. Quartermaster-Sergt. P. Sutcliffe, Sergt. J. J. Kirk, Lance Sergt. I. Oliver, Sergt. F. E. Robinson, Sergt. J. H. Wilson, Sergt. J. Newham, Sergt. A. J. Wright, Orderly-Room Sergt. J. H. Babington, Sergt.-Drummer A. Smedley, Sergt. A. P. Ash.

Second Row: Coy. Quarter-Sergt. A. A. Cutts, Coy. Sergt. Major A. C. Lear, Coy. Sergt.-Major H. J. Towilson, Regtl. Sergt.-Major E. Hare, Major P. M. Payne, T. D. (Commanding), Regtl. Quartermaster-Sergt. J. Bailey, Coy. Sergt.-Major W. Whittington, Coy. Sergt.-Major H. Holland, Coy. Quartermaster-Sergt. G. Mills, Coy. Quartermaster Sergt. C. T. Pidd.

Front Row: Sergt. A. Holden, Sergt. H. C. Raistrick, Sergt. J. Mabbott, Sergt. H. E. Pegg.



Investiture by H.M. The King, at Fovant, 13th February, 1917.



Transport, watering at Flesquieres.
Copyright—Imperial War Museum.

blow up the dugouts in the Battalion's sector; fortunately for the Battalion Col. Martyn would not allow them to do so at the time, for on the sectors where this was done local attacks were made during the day, both the Londons on the left and the Battalion on the right suffering more than the Robin Hoods after attracting attention in this way.

Before 12 noon the enemy were seen in *The enemy.* attack formation, coming down the slopes round Bourlon Wood. Groups halted to examine our tanks; derelict specimens of which were scattered all over the Cambrai battle-field. These groups were soon dispersed by our artillery. When the enemy reached a point level with the bottom of Bourlon Wood the line was completed by men who had advanced through the wood, and the main body passed out of sight into the village of Anneux and the valley in which it lay. Small bodies of men were still seen moving about at different points on both flanks.

During the day the enemy's artillery registered on the outpost line.

The first contact was made about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. It has already been explained that the defence consisted of small posts not connected up in any way. 2nd Lieut. Hall, a very gallant young Officer, was going out from one of these posts on the extreme right to examine the position in the dead ground in front of the line, when he was shot dead. Captain Brewill was sent for, and going out to the post into which 2nd Lieut. Hall's body had been brought, was several times fired at. These shots were replied to, and the enemy retired.

In the early evening 2nd Lieut. Hill took out a *Patrols.* patrol from the left section and reported a large concentration of the enemy in Anneux Village. About the same time 2nd Lieut. Ball took out a patrol from the right section and encountered the enemy very

near to our own wire in La Justice farm. The two parties engaged one another, and one of our Sergeants did not return. During the night parties of the enemy were sighted and fired on at various points along our very thin wire.

About midnight an alarm was raised on the extreme left; at first an attack was reported, but when the situation cleared it was found that the enemy had been driven off. Shouts and moaning were still heard in front of our left post, and Company Sergt.-Major Clarke went out with a few men and brought in a wounded German. When he was picked up he endeavoured to signal to his companions, but was soon persuaded to desist by the Sergeant Major and the butt end of a revolver. When brought in he proved to be almost a giant, and the stretcher bearers had never had such a load to carry. Two prisoners were also captured in the centre.

By midnight the enemy had established touch *Contact.* along the whole of the outpost line, not in the usual way of patrols, to see and not to be seen, but in every case showing fight; and it was quite clear to the commanders at least, that an attack in force was only a matter of hours, if that.

The Division on the right decided that the pressure on their outpost line was too great, and decided to withdraw it at once.

About 4 a.m. on the 6th, Major Rickman came to the line with this information and said that *The* to conform to this movement it would be *Defensive* necessary to form a defensive flank on the *Flank,* right. A Company of the Robin Hoods and *Dec. 6th,* one Company of the Lincolns were withdrawn *1917.* from the line, Captain Brewill moving at a moment's notice. The left section was left as it was, except that one or two of the posts on the extreme right of the section were brought back a little. The remaining

two Companies swung back almost at right angles to their former line, in front of Orival Wood, covering Flesquieres Village. As these orders were not received until 4 a.m., only about two hours of darkness remained to site and prepare the whole line. Thus are things done in actual warfare. Shell holes, of which there were not many, were utilised for small groups of men and arrangements of the most hasty nature made. Any form of wire was of course quite impossible.

During the night two Machine Guns were sent *Machine* up from the 59th Divisional Machine Gun *Guns*. Company under a young Officer freshly out from England, and excellent work they were destined to do.

Daybreak found the three Companies of the *The Crisis*. Battalion in the most critical situation they had yet faced. An enemy attack did not materialise at dawn, but the movement of small groups encircling the position recommenced and continued throughout the day. Their troops were reported in Graincourt just at the left of our line, which should have been covered by the Londons. Shortly after, Captain Henry received a message from a Major of the Londons saying how hard pressed they had been, their line had been pierced and the battalion split in two; the enemy were advancing in their rear up the sunken road to Flesquieres. Could he bring his half of the Battalion and form a defensive flank on the Sherwoods' left. Also was it true that the Sherwoods had a telephone working, if so would they try and report the position to his Division?

The report was sent, but the front was already so narrow that another defensive flank was impossible. A Lewis gun post was placed at the left rear to watch the direction of the sunken road. A supply of ammunition was sent to the Londons and arrangements made to hold

on side by side, and whatever situation developed to deal with it together, in view of which Captain Bloodworth kept in frequent communication with them. Very stout fellows these Londons were.

The combined front of the half Battalion of the Londons and Sherwoods now only amounted to about 700 yards, perhaps less. On the right, the defensive flank ran back for about a mile and a half, and was visibly being encircled; the left was in the air, and the Germans were between the outposts and the main defensive line on that flank.

Fresh Orders. Col. Martyn, realising that a situation demanding an instant decision might arise at any moment, discussed the position by telephone with the Divisional General, who left him a free hand and gave orders that in case of urgency an immediate withdrawal should take place, and if the situation remained stationary, the outpost line should be withdrawn to Flesquieres as soon as it was dark enough to move without being seen.

The Telephone. Mention has been made of the telephone, although there was no line from Battalion Headquarters to Brigade Headquarters, Lance-Corporal Robinson and the signallers of B and C Companies kept a phone working the whole time from the front line to Battalion Headquarters; the work of these signallers was simply invaluable.

As was always the case when things became difficult, Company Sergeant Major Clarke's example became more and more inspiring; cheerful and tireless, throughout the whole action he encouraged everyone by the force of his personal example. But all ranks displayed a steadiness beyond praise.

The Attack. The morning wore on, and it almost seemed as though the day was to pass without further event, but at 2.30 p.m. the enemy put down a heavy barrage along the outpost line. This

was most severe on the part of the line that had only been occupied that morning. The shelling lasted for an hour, and shortly after 3.30 it was seen that the enemy were launching a strong attack against the whole outpost line. Arrangements in anticipation of this had been made and communicated to a number of the Officers. Our artillery unfortunately failed to respond to the S.O.S. signal, and not a British gun opened fire for about half an hour.

The Defence. A heavy fire was opened on the advancing enemy, from Machine guns, Lewis guns and Rifles; but they still pressed on, eight waves or lines were counted. Communication by telephone had been opened between Col. Martyn and the left and centre section Commanders, and orders for an immediate withdrawal given.

The Objective. The objective of the enemy's attack was afterwards established to have been the whole Flesquieres Ridge, including the village and the British main position, and afterwards unlimited. Their troops had been brought from the Russian front, with the express purpose of turning our Cambrai venture into a great disaster. The men were found to be carrying several days rations above the normal in attack; and undoubtedly an advance of many miles was expected.

The Enemy's Advance. The attack reached the right outpost section first; the idea possibly being to drive the defensive flank in a Westerly direction and cut off the remainder of the outpost line. D Company of the Robin Hoods however, inspired by the magnificent leadership of Major Thursfield, who though wounded continued to direct operations, fell back slowly to the East of Flesquieres, contesting the ground step by step.

The Withdrawal. In the centre the Lincolns, hard pressed on their right, moved in conformity with D Company to the East of the village. It had been arranged for the left section to move to the West of Flesquieres. Thus neither party masked the fire of the main line of trenches in front of the village, also, by avoiding the small valley running up to the centre of the village, our men missed the worst of the enemy's shelling and over-head machine gun fire, which was very severe throughout the action.

The two 59th Divisional Machine Guns situated on the rise behind the left of the line did great execution amongst the advancing enemy and were most capably handled.

The left section withdrew by squads, and the enemy had cut the wire before the last party under Sergeant Harding left their trench. The withdrawal over a mile and a half of absolutely open country was carried out in excellent order at a walking pace; groups alternately covering one another's movement by fire.

As they moved over the open ground our men could hear overhead the swish of the bullets from the enemy's machine guns. The shells which were falling amongst them were raising cascades of frozen earth, and slowly dispersing columns of black and yellow smoke, while through this inferno could be seen the advancing lines of the enemy, faltering in places under our fire; but, the front line renewed by those in rear, still pressing forward.

On-lookers from Flesquieres Ridge declared that our men moved as though they had been on a field day.

On the left the Londons withdrew on the far side of the ridge that separated them from the Battalion.

The Line of Resistance. When at length the main line was reached it was fully manned and prepared to receive an attack. But the attackers had already had more than enough; and except in the

centre, where, as has already been explained, their advance had not been opposed in its latter stage, no real effort was made to attack the main line.

The outpost troops remained in the vicinity for some time in case they were further needed.

Subsequent information placed the enemy's *Casualties*. dead alone at many hundreds while the

Battalion's casualties all told were under twenty. The Lewis guns of the left section used all the ammunition they had; many of the Riflemen were in the same position, and when the Flesquieres line was reached the two Companies could only muster a few rounds between them. Company Sergeant-Major Clarke at once took a party of men to the nearest reserve ammunition supply, and more rounds were soon issued.

Some days after, the following letter was *Recognition*. received by the Battalion :—

Headquarters,
178th Infantry Brigade.

The following is from a letter from Headquarters 59th Division with reference to recent operations.

The Divisional Commander desires to congratulate Lieut.-Col. Martyn, 2nd/7th Sherwood Foresters, Major Gordon Dean, 2nd/4th Lincolnshire Regiment, and all ranks under their command for their gallantry in the successful performance of a difficult operation.

R. HART DAVIES, *Staff Captain*,
For Brigadier General,
Commanding 177th Infantry Brigade.

CHAPTER XVII.

FLESQUIERES—BERTINCOURT—
BEAULENCOURT.

December 7th, 1917 to December 24th, 1917.

The Battalion was now together in trenches
In Support. situated just behind Flesquieres village;
Dec. 6th— still attached to the 177th Brigade, and
10th, 1917. acting as Battalion in support. The
trenches they occupied were again a part of
the Hindenburg line, in fact the last German line of
defence of the village. They had been nearly two miles
from the front line before the Cambrai battle, and had
not been absolutely completed. They afforded very little
cover for the men, who suffered a good deal owing to the
severe weather.

There were one or two shelters of rather peculiar
design in the trenches, built of not very thick concrete
and having a wooden hut with glass windows attached.
Evidently the skeleton garrison that had held these
trenches had not been much troubled by our artillery.

On the left of our line several roads crossed the
trenches, and in a small space about seven of our tanks
were lying, all partially destroyed. The Battalion con-
jectured that here it was that the famous German Artillery
Officer on the opening day of the battle, continued serving
his gun single handed till he was killed, and destroyed
so many of our tanks as practically to change the course
of the battle.

Just beyond our sector was a German dugout of the type often read about, but seldom seen, with walls papered, proper beds and furniture.

The Battalion remained in these trenches from the 6th to the 10th of December, and the period was not a happy one. The weather became wet and the trenches were without drainage and adequate shelters. This and the reaction after the severe strain they had experienced so soon after Ypres, caused a damp miserableness to settle over all; the principal exception to this being the Adjutant, Captain Pragnell, who always presented a cheerful countenance, probably from a sense of duty to encourage the Battalion. Neither on this or any other occasion did anyone see the Adjutant either despondent or ruffled.

Col. Martyn at this time was at advanced Brigade Headquarters, ready to take command of the Brigade in case of emergency, and Major Rickman was acting in command of the Battalion. Col. Martyn was already suffering from the trench fever which, later, was the cause of his leaving the Battalion.

Every night working parties went out improving the front line defences. After trudging through the water-logged trenches in single file, a halt was made in Flesquieres village, to draw tools and wire from the R.E. stores. This was a favourite spot for the enemy's artillery, and no more time was lost over the operation than necessary. Next, guides were picked up and a start made for the part of the line to be worked on; always involving another wearying march over heavy country or through wet trenches. Arriving at the place of work, a covering party was put out to protect the workers from a possible surprise attack, and digging and wiring started. After the task had been finished the return journey was made in the same way, back to water-logged trenches, cheerless and cold.

The Battalion endured a good deal of shell fire in their trenches, and a number of casualties resulted. The trench system was shared with the 2nd/4th Lincolns who proved real comrades.

About this time the enemy's aircraft became *Aircraft.* very active. Our Anti-Aircraft Guns seemed to be non-existent. It was said they had been sent to England for the defence of London. Whatever the cause the enemy's planes took the most unheard of liberties, hovering low over transport lines and back areas, and working great havoc. They even flew along trenches, firing into them. One plane took a liberty too many with the Battalion, and nearly every man and Lewis gun team turned out to fire at it. When it was brought down in flames just behind our lines there was hardly a man who did not claim it as his bag.

During this period the Quarter-Master sent *The* up the rations right to the trenches, and *Transport.* several casualties were experienced. The Transport Officer, Lieut. Bullivant, who had a long and strenuous record of service with the Battalion in France, had his horse, which he was leading, killed by a flying piece of shell.

On December 10th, the Battalion were *The Relief,* relieved by the 2nd/5th South Staffordshire *Dec. 10th,* Regiment, who unfortunately had a number 1917. of casualties as they were coming up to relieve.

The Battalion also ran into severe shelling that night and reached their new position with much thankfulness.

This position was another part of the *In Reserve.* Hindenburg line further away from the front line, and containing more deep and fairly dry dugouts. It was situated midway between Havrincourt and Ribecourt, and slightly South of both. The Battalion here came back to its own Brigade.

Further away from the scene of action, the Battalion was able to make themselves a little more comfortable; shelling was not so severe and the weather improved a little. Parties of the men were sent down to the transport lines to bath in the improvised baths, which the ever-resourceful Quartermaster, Captain Pollard, had arranged. Clean underclothing was given out and boots and other items replaced where necessary. Cigarettes, Chocolates and Biscuits were obtained, and a species of trench canteen started. Live stock was very prevalent in all these old German trenches.

The time passed fairly uneventfully till the *Bertincourt*, 17th, when the Battalion was relieved by *Dec. 17th*, the 2nd/8th Sherwood Foresters, and 1917. marched to Bertincourt.

This ended the Cambrai period, the last nineteen days of which had been spent either in trenches or in the open during a spell of most severe winter weather, and which included the Bourslon Wood rear-guard action.

After this period the prestige of the Battalion stood higher even than ever before.

The Battalion remained at Bertincourt until the 22nd, training and cleaning up. On the 23rd they found themselves in Camp at Beaulincourt, having spent one night on the way, camped near Rocquigny.

Owing to an impending move Christmas *Xmas*, 1917. Day was celebrated on December 24th.

The Quartermaster and Transport Officer had been really busy. Many friends in England had remembered the Battalion, and a real Christmas dinner was enjoyed by the men.



CHAPTER XVIII.

GOUY-EN-TERNOIS.

On Christmas morning, in fine frosty
Xmas Day, weather, the Battalion moved off from hut-
 1917. ments at Beaulincourt, and marched a

distance of three miles to Bapaume, where
 it entrained for the rail-head near Gouy-en-Ternois.
 The ordinary discomforts of a troop-train, lacking heat
 (but not ventilation!) were enhanced considerably by
 the memories called up of Christmas warmth, food and
 cheer, and it was a very dispirited Battalion which
 detrained in a heavy snowfall to face a seven mile march
 after the interminable railway journey. The genius of
 the British soldier, however, can convert the most ram-
 shackle of quarters into a "home from home," and it
 did not take the men long to settle down in comparative
 comfort in the billets which Gouy-en-Ternois provided.
 The population of the village had dwindled owing to
 the exigencies of the war, fifty-five out of its normal
 population of three hundred being away on service, and
 only the youths and old men remaining to "carry on."

Frost and snow continued for some
Gouy-en-Ternois. considerable time, and very little hard
 training was done. The time was
 filled up by snow fighting, and what were meant to be
 football matches, but which the condition of the ground
 ruined from the point of view of skill. At this time an
 amusing and original competition was organised by the
 Brigade, consisting of a four mile run by Companies.
 Every available man had to parade with his Company,
 and the Company Commanders had to produce a parade
 state showing exactly how any absentees were employed.
 Marks were deducted for men who were not on parade,

unless a satisfactory explanation of their absence was given, and each Officer or man who completed the course within the prescribed time gained a mark for his Company. The going was particularly hard, as the roads were covered with ice; hence it was no mean task to obtain a mark. However, the men enjoyed the life thoroughly, and the semi-relief from hard training was regretted by very few.

The snow at the time was very deep, and the Battalion had to supply fatigue parties to dig out trains and stranded transport. These parties had to take rations for three days, and were often on duty for longer periods.

New Year's Eve was celebrated in fitting style, and the evening was concluded by saluting the departure of the Old Year by the sounding of the Last Post. At one minute past midnight Reveille was blown as a greeting to the New Year, which was ushered in with great hopes. It was little thought that before the year was ended, a successful peace would be concluded, or that the Battalion would pass through such terrible times as in the March and April which were to follow!

In the early part of the New Year a slight thaw set in, which enabled training to be pushed forward in real earnest. There were many Divisonal, Brigade, and Battalion Field Days, all of which were of the open warfare order. When these were not the order of the day, Barrack Square work, miniature range practice and physical drill were carried out.

The Battalion Football team achieved considerable fame by winning both the Divisional Cup and the Brigade Cup. This success was in a great measure due to the untiring efforts of Lieut. Collins, who captained the team. Their training, which was carried out in unconventional uniform and in which a leather spheroid played a much greater part than a Mills' bomb or box-respirator, took place in the most

secluded and least likely spot to be visited by any Red Hats. Their success and physical fitness perhaps justified their temporary neglect of military training.

The Divisional Concert Party gave a show in the village School, which was greatly appreciated, not only by the Officers and men, but also by a considerable number of the local inhabitants.

About the middle of January heavy rain set in, and did not add to the comfort of the Battalion. Day after day, Officers and men returned to their quarters very wet, very muddy and very miserable after seven or eight hours field training.

During this period of rest, Major General *Inspections.* C. F. Romer, the Divisional Commander, inspected the Battalion by Companies. These inspections were very rigorous, and to say the least of it, alarming for the Company Commander, as he had no idea what manœuvre he would be called upon to carry out next. The General was well satisfied, and his remarks were highly complimentary to the Battalion.

At the end of the month, a shooting competition was organised by the Brigade, in which the Battalion won the premier honours.

Apparently the villagers had no great faith *Home* in soap and water, for such a thing as a bath *Comforts.* was unknown in the village. This difficulty was successfully overcome by the Medical Officer, aided by the Pioneers. A large barn was hired and a hole about two feet deep and ten feet square was dug in the floor. This was lined with a large tarpaulin and filled with water, which enabled the Battalion to bathe at least once a week.

Unfortunately the village was not large *Transport.* enough to accommodate the whole Battalion, and the transport and horses were billeted about two miles away, which caused much inconvenience, and added considerably to the administration work.

CHAPTER XIX.

Towards the end of the Battalion's stay *Reorganization*, at Gouy, orders were issued for each 30th Jan., 1918. Brigade in the Army to be reduced from four Battalions to three, owing to the difficulty in keeping them all up to strength.

In the 178th Brigade the 2nd/8th Battalion was disbanded to the great regret of the 2nd/7th; there always having been a very warm feeling between the two sister Battalions of Nottinghamshire.

The 139th Brigade were, under the same scheme, to lose the 1st/7th Battalion, a large portion of which came to the 2nd/7th, afterwards, as the 7th (Robin Hood) Battalion, the Sherwood Foresters, to be the only Robin Hood Battalion remaining in the field.

Lieut.-Col. Martyn, D.S.O., M.C., who was appointed by G.H.Q. to continue in his command was unfortunately, at this time, suffering from illness in England, and Lieut.-Col. Rickman was temporarily in command.

Some re-adjustment of the personnel, arising out of the re-organisation, was of necessity carried out.

These changes having been effected and the title of the 2nd/7th Battalion having ceased to exist, this section of the History is ended.

It is not a chronicle of continuous trench holding; never during its service had the Battalion remained many weeks in one portion of the line, never had they returned to any portion they had previously occupied. Their rests were frequent and, as frequent, their battles. With the exceptions of Lens and Beaucamp, every time they went up to the line they went into action.

While the title of 2nd/7th Sherwood Foresters ceased to exist, the old spirit remained amongst those who survived to carry on the old traditions of the Robin Hoods. They may well look back with pride on the great part the Battalion played in the great drama which brought it into being.

The fighting in Ireland, the German retreat of 1917, the battles of Le Verguier, Hargicourt Quarry, Ypres and Cambrai, all these, together with the other services rendered by the Battalion, might well have found employment for abler pens; they all bear witness to the spirit and endurance of our comrades, so many of whom had given their lives that England might be free.

These have raised up their own memorial; we have only endeavoured, humbly, to record it. Their swords were broken, their courage never; their guns are silent, but their spirits speak to us, reminding us of the great comradeship and the great sacrifice they made.

“ O valiant hearts, who to your glory came
Through dust of conflict and through battle-flame;
Tranquil you lie, your knightly virtue proved,
Your memory hallowed in the land you loved.”

SECTION III.

**COVERING THE PERIOD WHEN THE
1/7th AND THE 2/7th BATTALIONS WERE
MERGED INTO ONE AND BECAME
"THE SEVENTH."**



SECTION III.

CHAPTER I.

BULLECOURT.

February 1st to March 21st, 1918.

At the time of the amalgamation, the 59th Division had fortunately several further days to spend in G.H.Q. Reserve, and the time was profitably occupied in organizing the new Battalion.

Feb. 8th. On the 8th of February the march up to the line began, and the first night we billeted at La Herliere, a small village on the Doullens-Arras Road. Next day we continued the march to Mercatel where we were billeted in huts. For some of us this march was most interesting, because we crossed our old front line near Blairville, where we spent several months in the summer of 1916. The "Osier Bed," the scene of so many patrols at night was visited, and was found to be not so formidable a place as it seemed to be on a dark night. A post in the old German line, which our scouts and Intelligence Officer had so often reported as a sniper's post, was also carefully inspected, and it was decided that the reports about it were perfectly true.

On the 11th, we marched through what had been Ervillers to the ruined village of Mory. Here we were billeted in huts as there were no houses left standing. Mory was about three miles behind the line, and while here the Battalion was in Divisional reserve.

On February 17th we relieved the 2/5th *Feb. 17th.* Sherwood Foresters in the line; we held the right sub-sector of the Brigade front, just N.W. of Bullecourt. The main line of defence here was part of the Hindenburg line, and was on the top of the rising ground. It had a wonderful field of view, and was very strong. The front line was held in posts, which in the bottom of the valley were very bad and very wet. The front line was very low and in bad condition, but the enemy were some little distance away, and the whole place was a perfect net-work of old trenches and "pill boxes." A good deal of patrolling was necessary to ascertain exactly where the enemy were, and many daylight patrols were carried out, bringing us very useful and valuable information.

The third line trench, called Tiger, was only a few inches deep, and we had to work very hard to get this dug out so that it would be possible to hold it in case of attack. The enemy was very quiet, but seemed to be working very hard on his trenches. On several occasions our patrols met and drove off enemy patrols, and our attempts to cut off and take prisoners, from German posts were always frustrated by the enemy leaving their post and running away before we could get round.

On the 2nd of March the Battalion was *March 2nd.* relieved by the 22nd Battalion the North-umberland Fusiliers and returned to Mory L'Abbaye Camp. Rumours of a coming German offensive were now very strong, and during the 7 days we spent at Mory more than half the Battalion was out every night digging new reserve lines and switch trenches. Lines of barbed wire and new trenches appeared like mushrooms, and Officers were kept busy visiting various front line sectors and getting to know the ways of approach to the new reserve lines, etc.

On the 10th of March we relieved the 2/6th
March 10th. South Staffords in the Sunken Road between
 Ecoust and Noreuil, and were in Brigade
 reserve to the 2/5th and 2/6th Sherwood Foresters, who
 held the front line. The enemy artillery was very quiet,
 but there seemed to be a good deal of movement in
 and behind his lines. Our artillery carried out very
 heavy bombardments at various times during each night,
 and from the number of fires and explosions which they
 caused in the German lines it was evident that a large
 quantity of ammunition was up fairly close to their front
 line.

We relieved the 2/5th Sherwood Foresters
March 16th. in the front line on the night of the 16/17th
 March. Our front line here extended from
 L'Hirondell Valley on the right, where we joined the
 Shropshire Light Infantry, across the railway cutting,
 round the apex and on to York trench where we joined
 the 2/6th Sherwood Foresters on the left, a distance of
 about 1,500 yards. The front line and support, or main
 line of defence, was held by three Companies, the fourth
 Company being told off to man the Noreuil Switch in
 case of attack. The front line was for the most part
 fairly good, but had no cover in case of shell fire. The
 worst part was perhaps the apex, the point of which ran
 to within a few yards of the enemy. On our first day
 in the line we were ordered to wire in the point and two
 sides of the apex, leaving the front line to run along the
 base. The main line of defence was good, but there was
 very little cover for men; a few "shelters" were in
 course of construction, but progress on them was very
 slow. Headquarters were in a sunken road about 800
 yards N.E. of Noreuil.

At 5 a.m. on the 21st of March the enemy
March 21st. opened a very heavy bombardment. On the
 front line it was mostly trench mortars and

gas shells; lines in rear H.E. and gas shells. The mist, the dust and the gas made it impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. All telephone wires were cut in the first few minutes and communication had to be carried on by runner. One Lewis gun team of A Company, with their gun, got out into shell holes in front of our wire, and escaped the worst of the bombardment; they did splendid execution among the Germans when they came over, until they were all knocked out by a well directed trench mortar. The front line was practically levelled to the ground, but a good deal of hand to hand fighting took place and the numbers of dead on both sides testified to the stubbornness of the defence. The Germans attacked about 8.30 a.m., and by 10 a.m. they had broken through both on our right and on the left. The mist cleared by 10.15 a.m., and a Battalion of Germans in fours could be seen marching along the ridge some 800 yards on our right. Very soon we could hear fighting going on in our rear, and we were gradually rolled up from the front and from both sides. Many famous Robin Hoods met their fate this day, the casualty list total being 26 Officers, and 629 other ranks. How well the Battalion fought on the memorable occasion may be gathered from the following messages which were afterwards received.

From Lieut. General Sir J. Aylmer Haldane, K.C.B., D.S.O., Commanding 6th Corps, to the Commander of the 59th Division (Major General Romer):—

“ Will you please convey to all ranks of your Division my admiration and thanks for the very gallant stand they made against overwhelming numbers of the enemy supported by a tremendous artillery. The Division nobly did their duty on the right of 6th Corps, and from all accounts that have reached me have inflicted heavy loss upon the enemy. I grieve for the heavy casualties among your gallant Officers, N.C.O's and

men, but the 59th Division have the satisfaction of knowing that they did their duty in as trying circumstances as can possibly happen in war."

From Brigadier General T. W. Stansfeld, C.M.G., D.S.O., Commanding 178th Infantry Brigade, to all units in the Brigade:—

"I would like to have been the first to tell the Brigade personally how much I appreciated their efforts on the 21st and 22nd of March, but now that H.M. the King and the G.O.C. Division have both inspected the Brigade and talked to them, I feel I cannot possibly add anything to what they have said in the way of praising their high fighting qualities. It might be of interest to all to know that all my telephone lines to the three Battalions in the line were broken during the first ten minutes of the bombardment, and beyond talking to the Signalling Officer of the 2/6th Battalion (Lieut. Hickman) about 5.5 a.m., I had no communication with them whatever, except as follows:— A wireless message came in from 7th Battalion to say that their right and left Companies reported they were being heavily bombarded at 6.30 a.m. A message by pigeon was sent off at 10.30 a.m. to say that the enemy had broken through on both their flanks, but they were still holding out.

Three or four messages by runners were received from 2/5th Battalion, the last one was timed 12 noon, saying that Lt.-Col. Gadd and 150 men were holding out in the Sunken Road between Noreuil and Longatte, and that the enemy had taken Dewsbury and Pontefract trenches and was working round his right. There is no doubt that the Brigade delayed the enemy's attack long enough for reinforcements to be brought up; to stop it altogether would have been impossible.

It took the enemy four hours to advance 2,500 yards. There were undoubtedly four Divisions if not five against us.'

I only wish to add that I am prouder than ever of the Brigade, and that I deeply regret the heavy losses incurred to all those gallant Officers and men who are killed, wounded, or missing."

Thus for the second time in their history the Robin Hoods were practically wiped out.

The following is a list of Officer casualties on March 21st and the days immediately preceding :—

Killed.

Capt. A. L. M. Dickins, M.C.
Major J. C. Warren, M.C.
Lieut. Ross.
,, Jones.
,, Lamb.
,, Hoyte.
,, Hoy.
,, Melhuish.
,, Collins.
,, Catterall.
,, Wilson.
,, Ball.

Wounded.

Capt. H. C. Wright.
Lieut. Bloodworth.

Prisoners of War.

Lt.-Col. W. S. N. Toller, D.S.O.
Capt. A. S. Bright, (Wounded).
,, F. Pragnell, M.C.

Lieut. R. B. Emmett, M.C. (Wounded).
 „ F. H. Clarke.
 „ Pritchett.
 „ Ellis. (Wounded).
 „ Parry. (Wounded).
 „ Ward.
 „ Breach.
 „ Allen.
 „ Hartshorn.

Major Warren had been acting Second in Command for some little time, and both as Second in Command and as a Company Commander he was beloved by all—always thinking of others before himself—working hard and doing his utmost for the good of his men and certainly as brave a man as it is possible to meet.

Capt. Dickins was one of the calmest and most fearless of soldiers; he was always in the thick of everything, and loved a “scrap” perhaps more than most men. His one thought was for his men, who would follow him anywhere, and his brightness and cheerfulness made him loved by all who knew him.

Lieuts. Ross, Jones, Lamb, Hoyte, Hoy, Melhuish, Ball, Wilson, Collins and Catterall were splendidly brave men, they never asked their men to go where they would not, or did not go themselves. Whether on patrol or in battle they were true leaders, and in the end fell as faithful British Officers at the head of their men.

Of the N.C.O's and men who fell and whose names are too numerous to be written here, it is impossible to speak too highly. They were true as steel and every man carried out his own particular duty in keeping with the highest traditions of his Regiment and the British Army.

CHAPTER II.

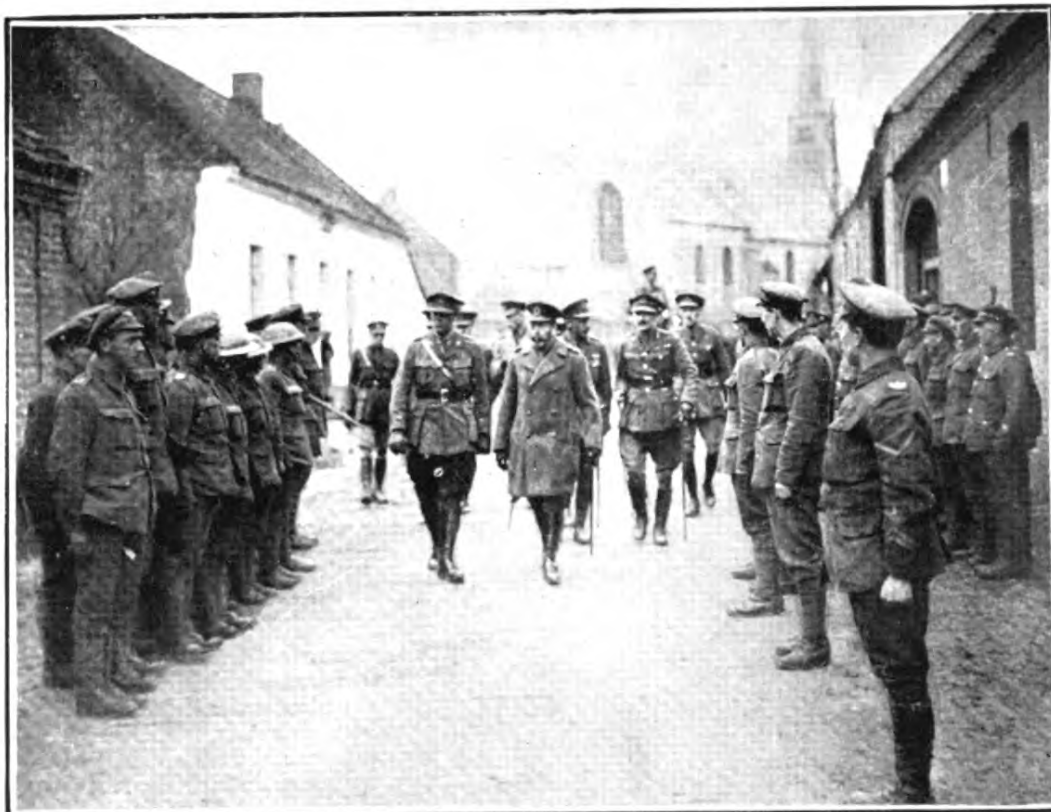
HAMELIN COURT—SENLIS—HERMIN—
S. JANTER BIEZEN—WINNEZEELE.

March 21st, 1918 to April 11th, 1918.

The Regimental Transport and details were
March 21st. at Hamelin court on March 21st. Although the village was seven or eight miles from the front, the heavy bombardment was distinctly heard at daybreak, and before midday the transport lines and stores were themselves being shelled. The fate of the Battalion became known during the afternoon, when orders were received that no rations were to be sent up at night. Soon afterwards all available men were ordered to be sent up into the firing line, then about three miles away. At night, Major Rickman who was at the transport lines on his way back from leave in England, received instructions to strike the camp and move back a further five miles to Alette.

The 22nd proved a fairly quiet day, the
March 22nd. enemy making little effort to advance
The Retreat. further, though during the night his troops attacked the village of Mory, which was stubbornly defended for several hours but fell about daybreak.

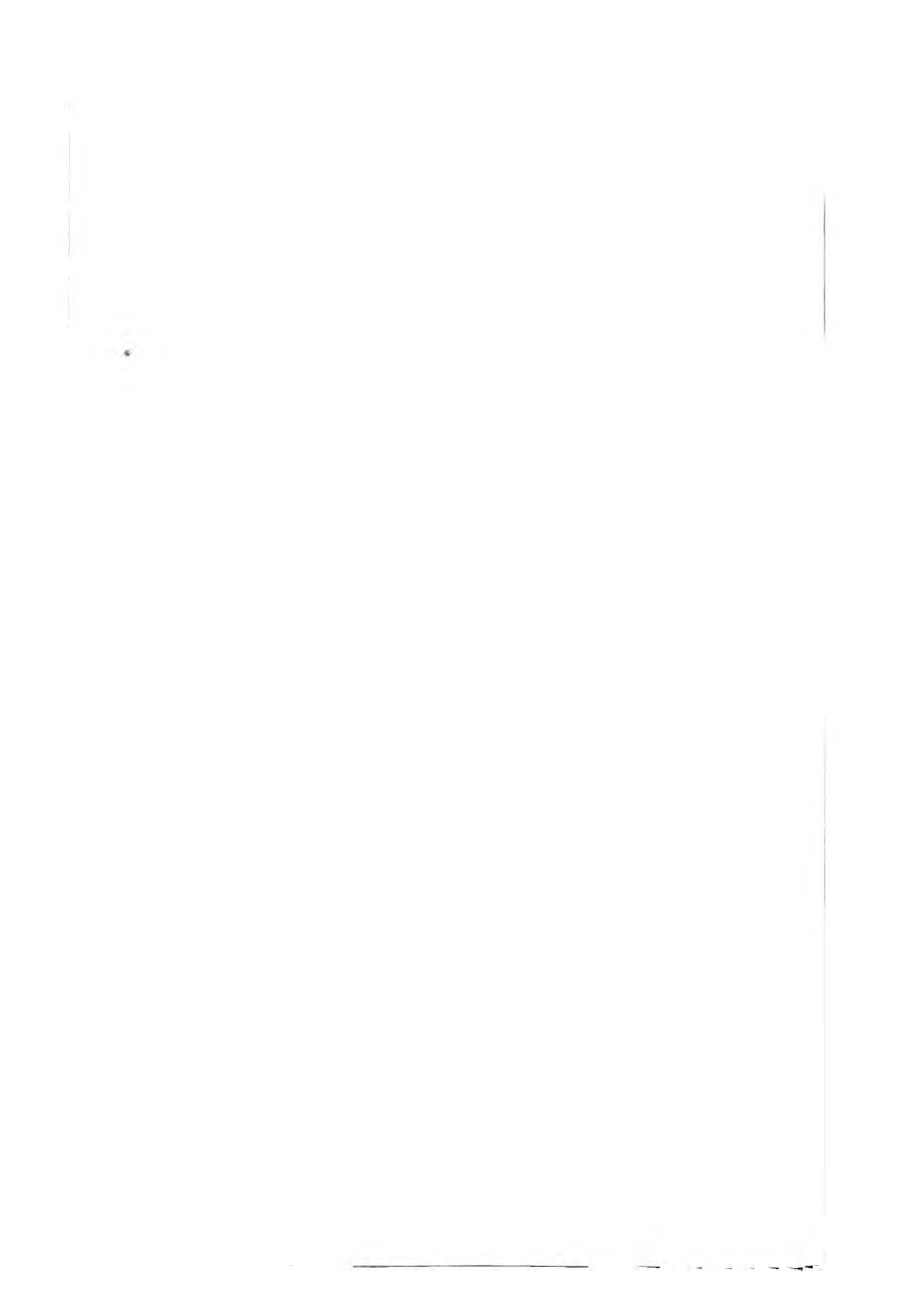
Early on the 23rd the remnant of the Brigade began a long and dreary march to Senlis, a large village North of Albert. The inhabitants, preparing with just anticipation for immediate flight, were not disposed to be friendly and the alarms and rumours which circulated among the troops and civilians made the stay a depressing



H.M. THE KING, escorted by Lieut.-Col. R. B. RICKMAN, inspecting the remnants of the Robin Hoods at Hermin after the Battle of Bullecourt, March, 1918.
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H.M. THE KING, accompanied by Lieut.-Col. R. B. RICKMAN and Capt. W. FOSTER, M.C, interrogating Pte. DENNY and the remainder of the Robin Hoods at Hermin, after the Battle of Bullecourt, March, 1918.
Copyright- Imperial War Museum.



one. Senlis was left at 3 a.m. on the 25th, Albert having fallen that night.

The road was crowded with miserable refugees with their cattle and goods, and Behencourt was reached with some difficulty just after daybreak.

The march was resumed the next day to Fieffes and from there the Brigade moved by train to La Boissiere and by motor lorries on to Hermin.

The latter village, which lies behind the *Hermin,* Lens sector of the front, was reached in *March 28th.* the middle of the night, and after the men had rested by the roadside, (an unoccupied pig-stye being gratefully accepted by the Commanding Officer), the transport came up and the men were fed and billeted.

On March 30th, the Battalion had the *Visit of H.M.* honour of an informal visit from His *The King,* Majesty the King. His Majesty inspected *March 30th.* the men's quarters, and afterwards talked to several of the men, inquiring the number of casualties the Battalion had sustained, and expressing the warmest admiration for the conduct of the Robin Hoods during the battle.

On April 1st the Brigade moved to Road *The Battalion* Camp, St. Janter Biezen, three miles *Re-formed.* West of Poperinghe.

On the journey, several drafts totalling about 300 men were picked up, and the next day a further contingent of 400 brought the Battalion practically up to strength. The men were mainly from Lancashire and Yorkshire Regiments, and in spite of the fact that many had been recently discharged from hospital in a state that would not normally have been considered fit for the fighting line, they were evidently as seasoned and stalwart a draft as one could wish to see. There were among them a number of recruits newly

arrived in France from the training battalions at home and these young soldiers, mainly under 19, were as keen and as steady in action as the veterans.

On April 3rd the Brigade was inspected *Inspection by* by General Sir Herbert Plumer, Com-
Gen. Plumer. manding the Second Army. After the inspection, with which the General expressed himself well satisfied, the Officers were called together to hear a detailed explanation of the military situation in Flanders. The General expressed his regret at being compelled by circumstances to send into the line troops who had so well deserved a rest, and said that he hoped to send the 59th Division into the Passchendaele salient, which was a quiet sector at that moment. "But," he continued, "the situation on my front is serious, and perhaps critical. If I have to alter my plans and send you into a defensive battle, you must tell your men that they are fighting for the life of England. I cannot afford " he concluded "to give away a yard of ground." In a few days the Robin Hoods were engaged in just such a battle, and bearing his words in mind, they never yielded so much as an inch. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of such a frank appeal to the intelligence and patriotism of the English soldier and it is perhaps to be regretted that on other occasions commanders did not take the opportunity of making a personal exhortation to their men before sending them into a critical battle.

On the same day Major J. S. C. Oates, D.S.O., M.C., of the 8th Sherwood Foresters, joined the Robin Hoods as Second-in-Command.

On April 7th the Battalion went into billets *Winnezele.* at Winnezele, where they had been in the preceding August. On the 9th, the great German attack was launched from Bailleul to La Bassée, and the next day the Battalion was rushed up by train to a position of reserve at Brandhoek.

CHAPTER III.

KEMMEL—NEUVE EGLISE
WULVERGHEM.*April 12th, to April 20th, 1921.**Defence of
Wulverghem and
Mount Kemmel,
April 12th to 20th,
1918.*

On the 12th, after two days of air bombing and long range shell-fire, battle orders were received to the effect that the 178th Brigade was to move at once to the Kemmel area where they would be attached to the 19th Division. On detraining at La Clytte, it was obvious that things were going badly. Our new division had suffered cruel losses, and the enemy had advanced so rapidly that everything was in confusion. Camp and battery positions had been abandoned, guns were firing in the open, and the whole country-side, not yet clear of civilians, was under shell fire.

The men were billeted roughly in the out-buildings of a large farm, which was shelled intermittently during the night. The only occupant of the farm-house was the "patronne" or farmer's wife, a brave Belgian lady who deserves especial mention in this history for the noble manner in which she supplied the Officers and a number of the men with an excellent supper of omelettes, bread and butter and coffee. The next morning she set off on her dismal journey Westward, leaving her shattered home to take care of itself.

The Colonel had been summoned early *Battle Orders.* to Brigade Headquarters, and just after breakfast his orderly returned with instructions for Major Oates to move the Battalion forward immediately. Through Kemmel village and along the wide cobbled road towards Neuve Eglise they marched, long intervals being kept between platoons in order to reduce the number of men passing through a shelled zone at the same time. At Linden Hoek, two miles East of Kemmel, the Colonel met his Battalion, and ordered a halt while he explained his orders to the Company Officers. It appeared that the 48th (South Yorkshire) Division had borne the brunt of the German attack to our immediate front and that one of their Battalions was then disputing with the enemy the possession of Neuve Eglise. The situation in that village being obscure, the 2/5th Sherwood Foresters had been sent up to support the Yorkshiremen and were believed to have suffered severely.

The Robin Hoods were to advance as far as Neuve Eglise in battle formation to try and clear up the situation.

Linden Hoek and Neuve Eglise face one *April 13th,* another across a shallow valley, at a *The situation.* distance of some three miles. At the foot of the valley runs a small stream fringed with willows, and a military line of railway. So on the morning of April 13th, as lovely a spring morning as was ever seen, the Robin Hoods marched down the hill and into the Battle of the Lys, the most critical battle since 1914. On reaching the railway, the Colonel sent forward Lieut. W. L. Hudson, his Intelligence Officer, with a small patrol to examine the village and report on the situation. Meanwhile, the Battalion deployed by companies and occupied the railway as a convenient line from which to launch an attack or conduct a defence.

The spare ammunition and rations were unloaded from the pack ponies which were sent back when the shelling began. The 2/5th Sherwood Foresters, under Lt.-Col. J. C. Baines, were holding a line to our right front, and although they had suffered badly from shell-fire, had not yet been engaged.

About noon, as Lieut. Hudson had not returned, Col. Rickman and his Adjutant, Capt. W. Foster, M.C., went into Neuve Eglise to look for first hand information. At the middle of the village they found the Headquarters of a Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment (T.F.) where it was learnt that the enemy had made repeated assaults on the village but had been always repelled by hand-to-hand fighting among the houses. At that moment, the result of their latest attempt in the shape of two score sturdy prisoners was leaving for the rear under an escort of wounded but cheerful "Tykes."

This gallant regiment, though reduced to a handful of tired and shaken men, had held on through a week of continuous hand-to-hand fighting, and was still more than a match for ten times its weight in "Sturmtruppen."

It was a great relief to find the village *Neuve Eglise*. still in British hands, but one could not help being impressed by the painfully obvious fact that it was surrounded on two sides and perhaps three by German infantry and field artillery. Soon after the Colonel's return, our patrol came back with the re-assuring news that no Germans were in the village, but confirming the ominous surmise that it was almost surrounded.

About 3 p.m. news came that the village had fallen and the Battalion moved forward and to the right into a favourable position for counter-attacking. Lieut. Hudson went forward again, but returned in a short time with a report that no attack had been made on the village, where the situation was unchanged. So the Battalion

went back to the railway, where they were shelled unmercifully for nearly two hours. Exeverything was done to reduce our losses, but no amount of skilful handling could get the men under cover in an open valley overlooked by the enemy on two sides. We were cruelly handled by the heavy howitzer fire; among the killed were Lieut. R. E. Sheldon, a brave and popular young Officer, and C.S.M. Domleo, a splendid warrant officer whose loss was severely felt in " D " Company.

At sunset, orders were received that the
A change of position. Robin Hoods were to relieve an Irish Battalion in front of Wulverghem that night.

This village lay some three miles away to the North East, across a tract of difficult and unexplored, and possibly enemy country. The task of carrying out a relief under such conditions seemed impossible. The runner who brought these orders had also instructions for Colonel Rickman to return with him to Brigade H.Q., as the Brigadier, properly impressed with the difficulty of rebuilding his units after a heavy action, had determined not to have all his Commanding Officers in the line at once.

The command devolved temporarily on Major Oates, who conceived a plan of relief that was as simple as it was daring. He had been in the district three years earlier with the 46th Division, and from his recollection of the ground, refreshed by a rapid survey between sunset and dark, he laid his scheme. The front ran parallel to the railway for about a mile and then turned North at right angles, intersecting it; the line we were to hold ran North from the railway and more or less at right angles to our present position. Shortly after dark the Battalion assembled by companies, and preceded by Major Oates and an advance guard of scouts marched in single file along the railway; A Company led, the others following in alphabetical order.

Near the level crossing, the railway crosses a wide stream but the bridge had been destroyed and the water was spanned by a single plank. It was an impressive sight to stand by this bridge and count seven hundred men as they tramped stolidly across the swinging plank, packs and rifles on their backs, steel caps on their heads, each man gripping the scabbard of the man in front so that the line might keep together in the dark. The Major's plan was to follow the railway until the scouts reported touch with the enemy; then, while the former halted and took up a covering position, the rest of the Battalion swung to the left, and, still moving parallel with the enemy, advanced until they filled the space allotted to them to hold. Then they halted, turned towards the enemy and collected in platoons and sections under their own commanders. In this way there was no complicated moving into positions, and had the enemy attacked during the relief he would have found an organised and extended line of infantry ready to receive him. The danger of the plan lay in the fact that it was carried out under the very nose of the enemy; any talking or stumbling might have been fatal. But the author of it was justified in relying on the discipline and intelligence of his men, and they trusted the skill and resolution of their commander.

The Irishmen whom we relieved proved to be the remnants of two battalions, April 14th, each reduced to a mere handful. Their headquarters were in a large tunnel dug-out bored through the crest of a hill, the rear entrance being in our lines and the forward one in the enemy's territory. The night before the Germans had raided the dugout, which had only been recovered after a stiff fight. The Irish retired just before dawn, and as the world grew light we were able to see where we had landed. The left sector was on the slope of the afore-

said hill, the dugout being at the top on the extreme left of the line; to the right, the line dipped into the valley and turned back to the right towards our old position in front of Neuve Eglise. The Battalion was disposed as follows: on the left, A Company, (Captain A. A. Walton), then B (Captain W. Mulligan), and C (Captain D. J. Winnicott, M.C.); D Company (Captain T. Williamson) was in reserve. The position on both flanks was very obscure but to our left were some more Irish, and to our right a scratch crew of Royal Engineers, and beyond them the 2/5th Sherwood Foresters.

The morning was undisturbed except for some shelling, but soon after mid-day the *An attack beaten off.* watchers at Battalion H.Q. saw from their point of vantage a Boche soldier creeping down a shallow gully leading obliquely towards B Company's front. He was followed by several others, and the little party made good their entrance into some scrub on the left of the Company's position. At the same time a good deal of movement was observed in some farm buildings and close country directly in front of the same part of our line. The plan was clear; a feint from the flank and an attack in force from the front. But what was to be done? These developments were not visible to the proposed victims in the valley; there was no chance of communicating with the artillery as the telephone wires were cut, and no probability that a messenger to B Company would arrive in time to warn them. As it proved, the problem solved itself; other eyes than ours had been on the watch, and in good time half a dozen of our shells dropped into the scrub where the flankers were concealed, "and the subsequent proceedings interested them no more."

But the frontal attack developed unobserved by our gunners, and the German infantry left their cover to attack without having been shelled. They were met with

a heavy burst of rifle fire, and after a good deal of firing on both sides, were forced to retreat. During the action, which lasted well over an hour, the battalion snipers under Pte. J. H. Van Doren, very boldly carried ammunition up to the front line under heavy fire: for his courage and coolness, Van Doren deservedly received the Military Medal.

Just below the crest of the hill in A Company's sector, was a farm called "South Midland," which was known to be garrisoned by the enemy. After consultation with Captain Walton, Major Oates decided to try and take the place by a coup-de-main in the dark, and elaborate preparations were made for the assault. But, to our consternation and annoyance, orders were received at nightfall to withdraw to "Daylight Corner" in front of Linden Hoek.

The line was abandoned with some difficulty, because many posts were isolated and could only be approached after dark, and orders were hard to issue and harder still to carry out.

Dawn of the 15th found the Robin Hoods *April 15th*, very cold and weary huddled into old shell *still on the* holes and with the situation everywhere *defensive.* obscure. Then came orders to advance again and fill a gap in the line near Wulverghem. Once more in position, the Battalion had to repel another determined German assault: during the day, our casualties were very heavy, C Company suffering in particular. In addition, the strain and exposure were beginning to tell on all ranks, but when cheerfulness became impossible it was succeeded by dogged determination to see the thing through.

Withdrawal to That night, (15/16th) Neuve Eglise
Mount Kemmel. fell, and back the Robin Hoods had to move; this time to Mount Kemmel itself. This withdrawal was a bad one

from the point of view of morale. The men were triumphant, though weary, and much keener to advance and attack than to retire again. Moreover, Kemmel Hill is an isolated conical hill, a notorious point of observation and rightly regarded as the key to a large stretch of front. Consequently, a withdrawal to its very base seemed a desperate move on our part.

On arrival, Kemmel Hill proved a beautiful *April 16th.* spot, thickly wooded, gay with flowers and generally reminiscent of Clifton Grove in May; on leaving, it was a tortured mass of brown earth, the trees blasted, and the air tainted. The morning of the 16th was very wet and there was no dug-out accommodation except for Battalion H.Q. The hill was being heavily bombarded, and though the men were on the Western or sheltered side, there was no safety anywhere. They tramped around in their sodden clothes and boots, keeping together in their sections and wandering over the hillside trying to dodge the shelling. Rations came up from Westoutre and it is bare justice to say that no two men deserved better of their country during this dreadful week than the Quartermaster and Transport Officer. In spite of constant movement and difficulties of every kind the Battalion never went hungry, which is a wonderful tribute to the brains and energy of Captain Skinner and Lieut. Bullivant.

Even the worst day must have an end, but night brought no rest in this case, for the Robin Hoods were ordered forward again at dark to man some derelict trenches near Linden Hoek cross roads. After several hours of hard work, somewhat mitigated by the excellent help of a few Royal Engineers, the trenches were restored to a state of defence. The night was unsettled and things were decidedly "jumpy," but no attack was made in any force.

On the 17th the Battalion front was extended somewhat round the base of Kemmel Hill. The 2/5th, 2/6th and 2/7th Sherwood Foresters all now had their H.Q. in the dug-outs on the hill, and the Commanding Officers were able to keep in close touch with one another; it was unfortunate that Brigade H.Q. were a couple of miles away. During the day another German attack, the heaviest perhaps of all, was launched against the 2/5th Sherwoods and the Robin Hoods, and was beaten off by rifle and Lewis Gun fire. In none of these operations was artillery support available for us though the German Field Artillery was very conspicuous. The night was quiet and it seemed as though the enemy were at length wearied of his fruitless efforts to break through. By this time our men had again and again clearly proved their personal superiority to the Germans, and were in good heart and anxious for more fighting.

The morning of the 18th brought a fresh sound; the unmistakable bark of the French "75."

The news was soon abroad that the famous French "Iron Corps" was coming up to relieve the garrison of Kemmel, and to hold it to the death for France. The news was confirmed from Brigade H.Q. and it was intended that the relief should take place that night. During the morning, Colonel Rickman, who had resumed command on the 16th, was recalled from the line, suffering from a severe attack of malaria.

The French Colonel duly arrived with a numerous staff, but as one of his battalions was late in coming up, he relieved the 2/5th and 2/6th Sherwoods, and requested Major Oates to leave his men in the line for another day.

This fell out rather unhappily, as rations had been countermanded in anticipation of the relief. A supply

of bully beef and biscuits was luckily found in the big dug-out and sent up in a blinding snow storm (quite a providence for the purpose) to the front line.

This day was remarkable for a severe dose of gas shelling; the fumes hung heavily among the sodden trees, but owing to good discipline in wearing masks, there were not many casualties.

The 19th found the Robin Hoods an island of khaki in a sea of horizon blue; the French. of khaki in a sea of horizon blue; the April 19th. French were everywhere, swamping the dug-outs and swarming over the hillside. They had, as usual, no hesitation in declaring that they were the only real soldiers in creation and those of every other race were clumsy amateurs. This particular regiment, the 99th Infantry, had some cause for pride as they were part of the famous "Iron Corps" of Belfort, which had been kept mobilised and theoretically on active service ever since 1871. They were proud of the fact that for 43 years they had been waiting under arms for revenge, and that in 1914 they had been the first in the field of all the legions of civilization. The Commander of the Regiment, Colonel Borne, a typical French Officer, weather beaten, scarred and wrinkled, with a fierce grey moustache was courteous but firm; not an Englishman must move until the French captains were all satisfied with their own dispositions. This ultimatum presaged, according to British standards, a good deal of delay, and provoked some hearty cussing of the "Froggies" and their ways. But everyone knew that the Frenchman was really quite right and some recalled Napoleon's reputed dictum concerning French Officers and British soldiers.

The day was an unhappy one; the enemy's shelling was accurate and intense and our casualties were heavy. At the crowded dressing station it was interesting to

compare the stoical groans of the English wounded with the shrill cries of the French.

At nightfall Captain de la Tour who was *The relief.* taking over the Robin Hood's sector gave a written certificate to Major Oates that he was satisfied that the relief was complete. The word was sent round to the companies, and the Robin Hoods turned their backs on their last battlefield. One of the companies was caught by heavy shelling near the base of the hill, but our casualties during the movement were not so heavy as had been expected. The men tramped wearily through the deserted villages of Locre and Westoutre. Some four miles back—a blessed sight, were the field kitchens drawn up in a field and steaming away merrily. After a hot meal the march was resumed by stages, ending with a trip on a light railway to " Dirty Bucket " Camp, West of Ypres, which was reached at mid-day. Conditions in the camp were bad, and the night was spoilt by a heavy air-raid.

CHAPTER IV.

HOUTKERQUE—ST. OMER
THE CADRE—DEMOBILIZATION.*April 21st, 1918 to June, 1919.*

On the 21st, the march was resumed to *Houtkerque*. Houtkerque, a pleasant village near Winnezele and far removed from the battlefield. The short stay was as Heaven after the horrors of the past week; but there was always the distant thunder of the guns and the knowledge that the German offensive was still going vigorously on. On the 25th the cannonade was stupendous; we heard later that Kemmel Hill had fallen and our French comrades all but wiped out by the furious bombardment.

On the 26th the Robin Hoods moved at *A false alarm*. a moment's notice up to S. Janter Biezen. but the German flood was stayed for the moment, and after three days of suspense, the Battalion returned to Houtkerque. On May 2nd a move was made to Watou where some distressing rumours got abroad as to the future of the Battalion; on the 5th a fleet of busses carried the men through pouring rain to St. Omer, and billets in the Caserne de la Barre, the French infantry barracks.

Here the most glowing eulogies were published from every source; the Army Commander, the Corps and Divisional Commanders, and the Brigadier, recorded in glowing terms their appreciation of the sterling services of the Robin Hoods

during the late battle. Sir Douglas Haig sent a message and even the grim old Generalissimo was known to have heard and approved.

But it was all over; the Robin Hoods, so *The end.* recently re-formed, had lost a third of their strength in one week; England was dry of men, and every battalion in France was crippled;—the melting-pot had to be re-filled.

On May 6th the final orders were received; Officers and men were to be drafted to new units, but a small "cadre" or framework was to be retained, round which it was hoped to rebuild the Battalion when opportunity should serve. Colonel Rickman, his headquarters staff, the four company Officers and their headquarters, and the transport section were to form the cadre. On May 7th the rest of the Battalion paraded in the barrack square and were addressed by General Romer and General Stansfeld. Then the band struck up, the gates were opened and the men marched away to entrain. It was a bitter parting: many were comrades of a single month, but comrades tried and proved by ordeal of battle. There were many who in that short time had added lustre to the name of the Regiment; 2nd Lieut. N. F. Spatcher and 2nd Lieut. F. Sellars were awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry; Sergeant J. H. Burton and Sergeant F. Harrison, two old Robin Hoods, were among several who received the Military Medal: the former in charge of a platoon of A Company, the latter as scout Sergeant had rendered most valuable and gallant service.

Colonel Rickman, who had been suffering *Colonel* from a severe bout of malarial fever, a legacy *Rickman.* of the South African War, during the latter part of April had so much aggravated his complaint by sticking recklessly to his post as long as possible, that a visit to hospital was enjoined as soon

as the Battalion left the line; he returned to Saint Omer just in time to take leave of the departing men. It was most unfortunate for the Robin Hoods to have been deprived of his leadership at a critical juncture, but his trust could not have devolved on a more capable substitute.

Major Oates, to use a trite phrase, was *Major Oates*. the life and soul of the Battalion; energetic and untiring, he was hardly known to sleep during the six days fighting; personally without fear, he inspired courage in others and no one ever saw him excited, harassed or dejected. The splendid services of the Battalion were largely due to the Company Commanders, each of whom set the highest standard of personal conduct to his men; in the Robin Hoods discipline and consideration have always gone hand in hand, and in a scrappy and rather chaotic action like the last, good feeling between Officers and men is as necessary as respect.

No Officer had this happy knack of *Capt. Walton*, commanding the affection as well as the *and others*. obedience of his men in a greater degree than Captain Walton. By virtue of his seniority and experience, his influence in the Battalion was perhaps greater than that of his brother Officers and the fact that his Company annexed decorations at the rate of one or two a day during the fighting, testifies to his capacity for getting the best out of his men. It is impossible to give the names of those Officers and men who specially distinguished themselves, as it would require several pages and then would necessarily be incomplete and partial. It is sufficient to record, as must now be apparent, that every Officer and man did his duty and more.

From May 8th to November 11th is a
The cadre. chronicle of hope unfulfilled. Three weeks were spent in Bours, where the transport left us; the time was mainly occupied with superintending the digging by Chinese coolies of reserve lines of trenches to meet an attack which never came. Latterly we helped to instruct defence battalions from England in some of the mysteries of modern war.

Leaving Bours at the end of May the cadre
With the moved to the Abbeville area to take over
Americans. the education of the 131st American Infantry Regiment. The work was exacting and responsible, but full of interest, and our relations with our cousins were always of the most cordial nature. We parted with mutual regret, and the cadre proceeded to Abancourt in Normandy to help in the training of the 66th (British) Division, newly arrived from the East.

On August 6th the cadre was transferred to
Calais. Calais, where in conjunction with the 4th Battalion East Lancashire Regiment, they originated and subsequently directed an instructional camp for Officers, known as No. 4 Officers Training Camp. On November 11th the Armistice removed the possibility of the Robin Hoods ever becoming a fighting unit again in the present war; on Christmas Day,
Demobilization. 1918, they were moved to Le Havre to superintend a demobilization centre and six months later Captain Skinner brought back to Nottingham the few N.C.O's and men who had remained with the cadre to the last.

Such is the short History of The Robin Hoods from Mobilisation and leaving Nottingham Market Place, August 10th, 1914, to the return of the Cadre to Nottingham in June, 1919. That the Battalion rendered most conspicuous service throughout the War to King and

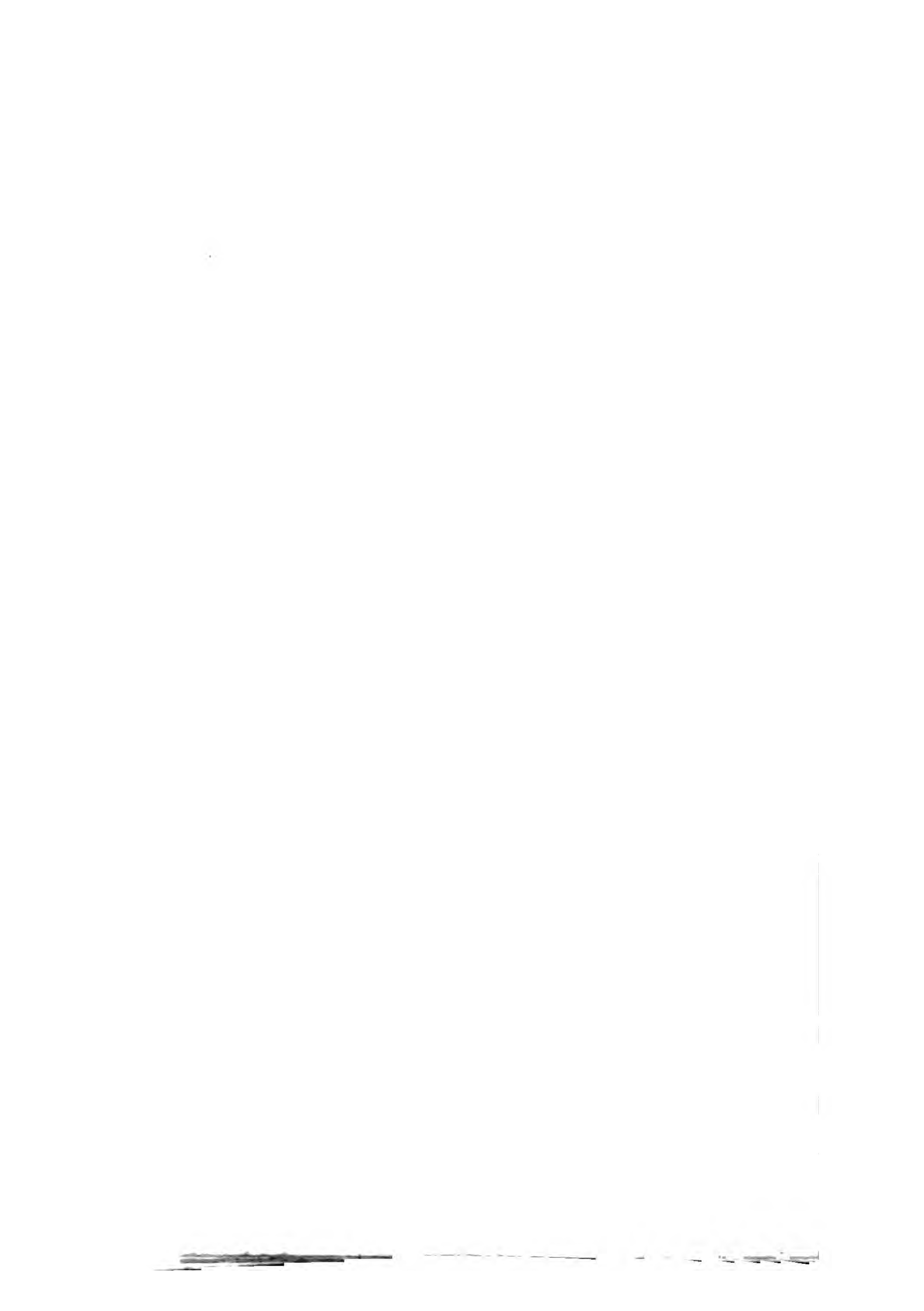
Country, is undoubted. The losses of sixty-five Officers, and nine hundred and twenty-eight Other Ranks, killed in action, or died of wounds, shews the severity of the fighting the Battalions took part in throughout the War. They worthily upheld the best traditions of the British Army; there was never one regrettable incident during the four years of active service to tarnish the fair name of the Battalion. May the future Robin Hoods remember with pride, the great traditions they have inherited, and the joy of faithful service even unto death.

SECTION IV.

THE 3/7TH RESERVE (ROBIN HOOD) BATTALION SHERWOOD FORESTERS 1915—1918.



Lt.-Col. G. A. WIGLEY, O.B.E.



SECTION IV.

THE 3/7TH RESERVE (ROBIN HOOD) BATTALION SHERWOOD FORESTERS.

(BY LIEUT.-COL. G. A. WIGLEY, O.B.E.)

THE THIRD LINE of the Robin Hoods came into existence in February, 1915. The First Line were ready to go overseas, and the Second Line were well advanced with their training and destined to go abroad also; it therefore became necessary that a Third, or draft finding line, should be formed.

Major P. M. Payne, a Robin Hood Officer with considerable pre-war experience, was appointed to take command, and he proceeded to Nottingham on leaving the First Line, where he quickly recruited some 500 men of excellent physique, and training was commenced; the men practically all recruited in Nottingham, living in their own homes and trained on the Forest—not without considerable difficulty on account of the absence of Officers and Non.-Com. Officers with pre-war experience as well as a great scarcity of rifles and other equipment: nevertheless a good deal of progress was made.

In July, 1915, the command of the Battalion was taken over by Lieut.-Col. G. A. Wigley. Owing to the fact that several other units were being recruited in the City, the numbers increased but slowly; but as no draft had so far been called for, the strength gradually increased to about 800, and three months later the Battalion moved to Belton Park, Grantham, where the

whole of the units forming the Third Line were concentrated, under the command of Colonel J. Gretton. Training proceeded with greater facilities than were available in Nottingham, and better organization and discipline became possible now that the regiment was concentrated in hutments.

The first draft was called for shortly after arriving at Belton Park, and there was great competition to get into it. About the same time the first party of men who had been wounded or invalided from the First Line overseas, joined the Third Line, to be drafted again overseas as soon as passed fit.

Rumours were prevalent that a large school for the training of Machine Gunners was to be located in Belton Park, and early in December orders were received that the North Midland Group of Reserve Battalions, or the greater part of it, would be required to make room for them. It was the fate of the 3/7th to be one of the earlier ones to go, with, so far as could be judged, nowhere to go to. They eventually moved into billets in Grantham town, pending quarters being arranged in Nottingham, to which they proceeded some few days later being accommodated in a large factory in Lenton, and in various schools, etc., in the City; an unsatisfactory arrangement, but probably the best that could be devised in those strenuous days.

Training undoubtedly suffered to some extent, and was further interfered with by an epidemic of measles. It was welcome news therefore, to hear in April that the Battalion was to move to the Lincolnshire Coast, and combine training with coast defence. At this time Major Spalding, (who had been wounded at Hooge, Aug. 1st, 1915) was acting as Second-in-Command, with Captain J. C. Boot as Adjutant, both having returned from the First Line,—the latter remaining with the Battalion as Adjutant until August, 1918; also Lieut.-

Col. C. W. Birkin, who had been wounded whilst commanding the Robin Hoods in France,—although not officially appointed to the Third Line, took considerable interest in its doings, and was later appointed to take charge and supervise the construction of the defences on the coast line for which the troops composing the Third Line of the North Midland Division were to be responsible on moving to the Lincolnshire Coast.

An advance party under Major W. R. Rook (who had been invalided home from France) proceeded to South Somercotes, a small village about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles West of Saltfleet, and a few days later the Battalion with others of the North Midland Group moved there, and went under canvas; with Colonel Sir H. MacMahon, Bart., in command of the Brigade. Directly after arrival there, 200 Derby recruits arrived, varying in age from 30 to 40 years, and though at first they took to military training more as a duty than a pleasure they eventually developed into excellent soldiers, and went on draft in wonderful spirits and did very well.

The Battalion at this time had three companies at South Somercotes, with one at Red Farm, about three miles away on the coast. Junior Officers were badly wanted, and as Cadet Units for the training of young Officers were not yet in existence, Officers commanding third line units had to use their own initiative in getting them. The 3/7th were fortunate in getting many from the Nottingham University College O.T.C., commanded by Captain (now Major) S. R. Trotman, and very efficiently trained they were;—but what was perhaps even more appreciated than the soundness and thoroughness of their training, was the good spirit and the sense of duty that had been instilled into them, and the 7th Sherwood Foresters First, Second, and Third Line all owe a great deal to the efficiency of the work done by Major Trotman and his staff.

Easter, 1916, saw the outbreak of the Irish Rebellion; training practically ceased and all work was concentrated on the construction of coast defences. Units on the coast were ordered to stand to arms an hour before daybreak until detachments on the coast reported "All Clear." This lasted for a few weeks, after which, normal conditions and training were resumed.

Recruits at this time were coming in very slowly, and in consequence, it was decided that the number of reserve units should be reduced, and the 3/8th Sherwood Foresters were ordered to amalgamate with the 3/7th. Lieut.-Col. Hodgkinson who had commanded the 3/8th becoming Second-in-Command of the newly organized unit, which was called the 7th Territorial Force Reserve Battalion, Notts. and Derby Regiment, and was commanded by Lieut.-Col. G. A. Wigley.

This meant that one Officer and N.C.O. in every rank had to lose his place, which caused some difficulty, but the new unit was eventually formed and soon settled down and continued on the best of terms, the 7th Reserve Battalion henceforth representing both the 7th and 8th as their draft-finding unit, as also being the unit to which Officers and N.C.O.'s from overseas were attached until fit for general service again being sent overseas; if unfit, assisting in the training and administration of the Third Line.

The North and South Staffords, 4th Lincolns, and 4th Leicesters and the 5th and 7th Reserve Battalions the Sherwood Foresters were now all on the coast, and came under the command of Brigadier General D. G. Prendergast, who had commanded a Brigade in Gallipoli; with Captain Harter, M.C., as Brigade Major, and Captain A. B. Leslie Melville, an Officer of the 2/8th Battalion, the Sherwood Foresters, who had been seriously wounded in the Irish Rebellion, as Staff Captain; a most excellent Brigade Staff, who got the

best work out of everyone, and the Battalions consequently continued to grow in efficiency day by day.

About the middle of November, Winter quarters were taken up at Saltfleet in hutments and various buildings in the village, the larger portion of the unit having remained under canvas till that time. Shortly afterwards, Lieut.-Col. Hodgkinson left to take up a staff appointment under Major General Sir Stanley Von Donop, who was in command of Humber Garrison; and Major C. W. Milner took over the duties of Second-in-Command.

The raw recruit was expected to be trained and made available for drafting overseas in twelve weeks; which, considering that in this time inoculation and vaccination had to be done, in addition to the ordinary training, also bombing and gas protection, which gave very little time to spare. However, with more rifles and better equipment for training generally, as well as excellent schools of instruction for Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers, it was remarkable what good results were obtained in so short a time.

A dull, monotonous time were these long winter nights, with the intense cold, and living in a small village ten miles from the nearest town,—but the spirits of all ranks continued excellent, and few evenings passed without an entertainment of some kind,—a pantomime even being arranged. A party of ladies, organized by Miss Talbot, did invaluable work, night after night for months on end, by going out to the outlying detachments, and in many ways making the lives of the men brighter; and they will probably never know how much their self sacrificing help was appreciated.

An unfortunate occurrence in the shape of a fire which destroyed the whole of the Officers sleeping quarters took place about 8 o'clock one bitterly cold night. The Officers at the time of the outbreak were

at dinner, and it was an unenviable position they were in, with nothing to fall back upon beyond the clothes they stood up in. A War Office enquiry was held, and eventually, after most people had given up hope, the Officers were granted a sum of money to renew their outfits. The claims sent in shewed a good deal of ingenuity, and on the whole were not ungenerously dealt with.

Extensive and costly coast defences were constructed by the Engineers, and a scheme for the manning of the same in case of necessity was got out and practiced by day and night.

The Battalion was inspected by General Sir J. Maxwell, G.O.C., Northern Command, who complimented it on the way it was turned out.

With these few incidents, one day was much like another, until in July the 7th Reserve Battalion was selected for the training of A IV. recruits, that is, recruits of 18 years one month; and was no longer to have returned B.E.F. men sent to it. As it was felt that youths of the age of 18 years one month would probably not stand the rigorous climate of the winter on the East Coast, the Battalion was ordered to change stations with the 5th Territorial Force Reserve Battalion the Sherwood Foresters, who were in camp at Elkington, just outside the town of Louth. The move was in consequence made in August, and very soon the Battalion was up to full strength with A IV. recruits, many young Officers from Officer Cadet Units were posted to it also, and training was varied to some extent as it was necessary that the younger Officers should be trained in the tactical work of a platoon in attack and defence; as there were sufficient junior Officers surplus to establishment to form a platoon, and sometimes two, some useful work was done.

The Battalion after again being inspected by Sir J. Maxwell, G.O.C., Northern Command, in October, 1917, moved into quarters in Louth, (many consisting of disused maltings), where it settled down for the winter months, and received the greatest kindness in every way from the inhabitants of that town, who did everything one could expect, and even more in making the lives of the personnel of the unit pleasant.

The winter passed uneventfully until the great German offensive began in the early months of 1918, when every available man had to be sent overseas, including a large number of the training staff,—and at one time it seemed that training efficiency must suffer,—but it was fully realized that the men were wanted overseas, and every fit man available was sent.

In a month's time a good training staff was, by one means or another, again got together, when the unit was ordered to go into summer quarters in camp at Elkington. Whilst the move into camp was in progress, orders were received that the unit was to move elsewhere,—destination unknown,—and with part of the unit left in quarters in Louth and part in camp at Elkington, and another part on the way between the two places, the unit was ordered to Skegness.

In the meantime a heavy snowstorm added to the confusion. However, in due course the unit took up its quarters in Skegness and occupied and patrolled a section of the coast there, only to hear in a few days after arriving, that it was to go elsewhere in a week's time,—and eventually moved about a fortnight later to Huttoft, the Battalion being in two camps about a mile apart, with detachments on the Coast about six miles away.

As the rifle range was about five miles distant on the other side, it soon became evident that training could not be carried on to the best advantage, and it therefore



Richards, George, 266588, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Richardson Alfred, 266416, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Richardson, Frederick, 267376, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 17/6/17.
 Richmond, A. C., 265945, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Rigley, Frank Marshall, 4657, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 23/5/16.
 Rivers, William, 266116, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Robertson, J., 102357, Pte., d., of w., F. & F., 14/4/18, formerly 8089.
 King's Liverpool Regt.
 Robinson, John George, 265378, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 27/6/17.
 Rogers, George Henry, 266690, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Royston, A., 265246, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Russell, E. E., 3132, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 7/7/16.
 Ryalls, S., 265814, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 13/3/17.
 Ryland, Charles, 266404, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Ryland, Harold, 3981, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/6/16.
 Sadler, A., 2011, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Sanday, George, 942, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 4/11/15.
 Saunders, Arthur, 265191, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16. M.M.
 Saunders, H., 265142, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Savage, Edward, 265216, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Savidge, William Lawrence, 3153, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Scofield, Ernest, 1225, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 11/6/15.
 Scott, Albert Walter, 3854, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 14/1/17.
 Scott, Arthur, 4945, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 8/7/16.
 Scott, Harry, 3180, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 30/11/15.
 Scrimshaw, H., 265394, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Seal, William, 768, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & D., 31/7/15.
 Sharpe, William, 2941, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 13/8/15.
 Shaw, F., 265685, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Shaw, John, 266215, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Shaw, John, 266646, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Sheard, George, 265296, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 7/12/17.
 Sheldon, John, 265597, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 27/4/17.
 Shelton, J. R., 265309, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Shepherd, Charles, 2023, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 8/4/15.
 Shepherd, Wilfred, 266810, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Sheppard, Alfred, 3899, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Sheppard, Clarence W., 1394, Pte., d., F. & F., 6/3/15.
 Shipman, F., 2626, Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 11/7/16.
 Singleton, Edwin, 265819, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Sisson, Aaron, 2914, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/8/15.
 Slater, Harold, 265987, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Slater, James, 102795, Pte., k. in a., 12/4/18, formerly 17864. East
 Yorkshire Regt.
 Slater, Roy, 1312, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Smedley, Fred, 1546, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 28/12/16.
 Smith, Ben., 4010, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 9/7/16.
 Smith, Charles, 5021, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/6/16.
 Smith, Ernest, 2139, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/10/17.
 Smith, Frederick, 307515, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/17

Smith, Fred W., 265771, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Smith, George, 269865, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 16/4/18.
 Smith, George, 5159, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 24/5/15.
 Smith, G. P., 266804, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Smith, George Albert, 2750, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 17/5/15.
 Smith, George, 265600, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Smith, H., 269743, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/4/17.
 Smith, Joseph Leonard, 269810, Pte., d., F. & F., 29/7/17.
 Smith, John, 266785, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Smith, Joseph Henry, 265079, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 16/9/17.
 Smith, James, 4633, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Smith, Owen, 2087, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Smith, Percy, 1418, Bugler, d. of w., Home, 7/7/16.
 Smith, Samuel, 266643, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Smith, S. A., 265938, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Smith, Theo, 3691, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Smithson, W., 3244, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Spear, Alfred, 2466, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/10/15.
 Spencer, Alfred, 606, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Spencer, A. E., 3595, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/5/16.
 Spencer, E. B., 266484, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/5/17.
 Spencer, Percival, 265723, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Spinks, Thomas, 265054, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 24/4/17.
 Spurr, Joseph, 231, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/8/15.
 Stableford, Albert Edward, 2782, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 29/6/16.
 Stainton, Joseph, 269236, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 25/4/17.
 Stapleton, Charles, 266283, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Starbuck, George, 265164, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Stephenson, James Edward, 300030, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/4/18,
 formerly 26671, King's Liverpool Regt.
 Stevenson, J. J., 3761, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 12/4/16.
 Stones, William Henry, 266778, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Stoneystreet, John, 3946, Pte., d., F. & F., 15/5/16.
 Storey, Walter James, 265501, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Straughan, William, 74253, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 16/4/18, formerly
 235727, Northumberland Fusiliers.
 Stubbins, G. H., 307663, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/7/17.
 Sturdy, F., 4588, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/6/16.
 Suter, Joseph, 269794, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/6/17.
 Tassel, George William, 892, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 16/7/15.
 Tatham, Thomas, 1420, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 10/10/15.
 Taylor, Bertie Henry, 1757, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 9/10/18.
 Taylor, Joseph, 266616, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/4/17.
 Taylor, Joseph Henry, 265351, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Taylor, Percy, 218, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 18/5/16.
 Tetley, A. L., 266813, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 16/2/17.
 Thompson, John Bertram, 265542, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Thompson, J. F., 2803, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 25/6/16.
 Thompson, William, 269893, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/3/17.
 Thorn, F. T., 93188, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 19/4/18.

Thornley, John, 267940, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 18/6/17.
 Thorpe, Richard, 1671, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/8/15.
 Thrall, Robert, 2025, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Timson, H., 1957, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Tinkler, Joseph Henry, 1842, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 17/9/16.
 Tizzard, J. A., 5202, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/12/16.
 Tollington, W., 1839, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/15.
 Tomkinson, William Welsh, 1525, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/6/16.
 Tomlin, E. W., 266677, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Tooms, Charles Frederick, 2605, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/16.
 Turner, A. B., 3467, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Turner, T., 1693, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Turpie, C. E., 3037, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Tutin, H., 1789, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Tyers, Geo. John Wm., 266242, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Viveash, W. G., 269842, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/4/17.
 Wade, Robert, 2149, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 15/7/16.
 Walker, Albert, 2979, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Walters, John William, 2420, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/8/16.
 Ward, Herbert, 2467, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Ward, John, 265041, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Ward, James, 265448, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Watkin, Bernard Lewis, 3786, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Watkin, Herbert, 266762, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Watson, Albert, 266060, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Watson, Harry, 2197, A/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Webb, John Addams, 3071, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Webb, J. G. H., 268358, Pte., d. of w., Home, 2/10/18, formerly 3067,
 North Staffs Regt.
 Webster, William Allen, 3807, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Welbourne, Charles Edgar, 95966, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 16/4/18.
 Wesson, Frederick, 3066, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Weston, George Herbert, 266606, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/3/17.
 Wheatley, Ernest H., 2340, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/15.
 Whiles, James William, 1866, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Whitchurch, Joseph, 1570, Cpl., d. of w., Home, 5/2/17.
 White, Thomas Alfred, 5001, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 25/7/16.
 White, William, 20538, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/9/16.
 Whitehead, Albert, 4739, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/16.
 Whitehouse, John, 265605, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Whitworth, George, 265233, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Widdowson, Frank, 266374, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Wildgust, Enoch, 1605, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Wilkinson, Harry, 266398, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Williams, Arthur, 266642, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/6/17.
 Williamson, Alonzo Thomas, 779, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/15.
 Wilson, Albert, 1589, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Wilson, Fred, 1280, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/7/15.
 Wilson, Herbert, 2940, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Wilson, L. A., 2233, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.

Wilson, Robert, 266244, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Windley, John, 265025, Sgt., d. of w., F. & F., 14/7/17.
 Woodford, Thomas Cyril, 2966, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Woodward, Albert, 1141, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 31/1/17.
 Woodward, G. Harrison, 265237, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Woodward, H., 265334, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Woodward, J. H. G., 2216, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 3/7/15.
 Wooley, Claude, 4912, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Wooley, Charles, 4905, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Wooley, Fred, 266153, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Wooley, H., 2195, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/10/15.
 Worn, Joseph, 1729, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Worne, Charles Robert, 267366, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 17/7/17.
 Worrall, H., 266794, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 30/6/17.
 Worsdale, A., 266042, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 30/6/17.
 Wragg, W., 1576, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Wright, Alfred, 4597, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 23/6/16.
 Wright, Harry, 74026, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/8/18, formerly 4527,
 Northumberland Fusiliers.
 Wroughton, Cyril, 4960, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/7/16.
 Wykes, L., 265818, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 18/6/17.
 Yealand, Sidney, 2687, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 30/7/15.
 Yorke, T. F., 269828, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/4/17.

2/7TH BATTALION.

Abbott, A., 267114, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Abraham, E., 72093, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 39844,
 Bedford Regt.
 Adams, George, 26750, Pte., d., F. & F., 23/7/18.
 Adcock, Matthew, 266916, A/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/6/17.
 Aldred, Wilfred, 91782, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 54299,
 Welsh Regt.
 Allen, Benjamin Seymour, 78203, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18,
 formerly 29285, Manchester Regt.
 Allen, Leonard, 266946, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Anderson, Ernest, 267758, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/12/17.
 Andrews, Frederick, 93925, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Andrews, Thomas, 269882, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 22/3/18.
 Archer, Thomas, 85136, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Arnold, William Jesse, 71466, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly
 81404, North Staffs Regt.
 Ash, A. P., 265596, Sgt., d. of w., F. & F., 24/4/17.
 Ashby, Samuel James, 267138, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Ashford, Arthur Frederick, 72094, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Atkins, William Thomas, 235210, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18,
 formerly 7882, Royal West Surrey Regt.
 Baldwin, William George, 201892, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Ball, Leonard, 31476, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.

Barber, B., 265901, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/4/17.
 Barker, H., 266861, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Barker, Joseph, 306762, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Barlow, Howard, 268795, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Barrond, William Arthur, 265386, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Barrows, Harold, 26724, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Barsby, Noel Edgar, 265855, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Barson, Albert John, 72129, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Bartlett, Albert Frederick, 267728, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/7/17.
 Basham, E., 267095, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Bayliss, Abraham, 265568, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 22/8/18.
 Beastall, C., 265809, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Bee, Frederick William, 265928, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Bell, William, 265636, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/12/17.
 Bell, William Henry, 70773, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 5/12/17.
 Beman, William Arthur, 76359, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly
 014381, A.O.C.
 Benham, Arthur J. Samuel, 235217, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/9/17
 formerly 7161, Northampton Regt.
 Bentley, Thomas G., 268733, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Bettle, Percy, 266498, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Bexon, H., 265986, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Birkenhead, W. G., 265353, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Blades, William Lawrence, 268124, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Blissitt, J., 5592, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Boden, Harry, 100024, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Bolton, Charles Thomas, 42543, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Boorer, G. W., 84121, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Booth, Frank, 305167, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 16/4/18.
 Booth, Joseph Frank, 265740, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Bostock, Harry, 265831, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Bowley, George William, 266954, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Bowskill, John, 306392, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/4/17.
 Boxall, Edward, 268087, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 1/10/17.
 Boxall, Vincent Alfred, 267684, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Brackell, Charles, 202878, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Bradford, Joseph Horace, 5617, Pte., d., Home, 5/5/16.
 Brandon, Henry George, 16227, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 2/12/17.
 Brierley, A., 266842, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Brierley, Arthur William, 266960, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/4/17.
 Briggs, Charles William, 266874, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Brindley, A., 265286, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Brotherhood, Albert, 265954, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Brothwell, Fred, 265544, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 18/5/18.
 Brothwell, W. D., 267040, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/9/17.
 Brown, Albert Henry, 266499, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/11/17.
 Bryan, G. H., 70652, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 7/4/18, formerly 24827,
 Leicestershire Regt.
 Buckley, Arthur, 203168, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 29/9/17.
 Buckley, William, 266949, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.

Bugby, Andrew, 72097, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17, formerly 39843, Bedford Regt.
 Bumstead, James William, 268132, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., formerly 7453, Royal Sussex Regt.
 Burgess, Charles Thomas, 26762, Pte., d., F. & F., 12/11/18.
 Burgess, Frederick, 306880, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Burton, Lewis, 28886, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Butler, Fred, 26367, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Butler, William J., 266999, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Butters, David, 267217, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Calvert, Albert, 267135, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 16/4/17.
 Cambrook, William, 267308, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Camm, Allen, 265853, Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 23/4/17.
 Carder, F., 266979, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Carter, George Richard, 42144, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Carter, Percy William, 242214, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Carter, Stanley John, 235226, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17, formerly 5208, Hertfordshire Regt.
 Carter, Victor, 235198, Drmr., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Cason, Sidney, 15035, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 8/12/17.
 Casterton, William, 268783, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/9/17.
 Caunt, Ernest, 17544, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Cave, Francis, 91199, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Cave, J. W., 202462, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 1/6/17.
 Champness, W. J., 235227, Pte., d., F. & F., 23/7/18, formerly 2889, Hertfordshire Regt.
 Chapman, Edward Ashby, 269261, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/8/18.
 Chappell, Arthur, 268418, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Chapple, George Henry, 266563, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Chester, A., 266108, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Clarke, Albert, 267212, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 27/3/18.
 Clarke, William, 268758, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 10/12/17.
 Clarke, Walter, 307036, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/6/17.
 Coldwell, J. H., 78216, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 12/5/18.
 Colledge, William, 267853, L/Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 13/4/18.
 Cook, Frank, 202684, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Cook, George, 265873, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 8/1/18.
 Cooke, Edward, 73464, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Cooling, William, 16066, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 5/7/17.
 Cooper, Harold, 266853, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Cooper, Sydney, 265708, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 22/3/18.
 Cooper, William, 266715, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Cordon, Percy, 26712, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Cottingham, Harry, 90164, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Cotton, Edward Albert, 265105, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Cowling, John Richardson, 267287, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 7/12/17.
 Cox, Charles William, 72099, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Crick, Robert, 268809, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Crooks, Frank, 22223, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Cupitt, Frank, 267035, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.

Davey, Clifford, 26634, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 16/4/18.
 Davis, Alfred James, 72136, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Davis, Herbert, 268015, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Davis, Leslie, 265361, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Davis, W. G., 269275, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 3769,
 Worcestershire Yeomanry.
 Davison, William, 305831, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Delves, S., 269871, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Derrick, John, 306405, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Derry, Thomas Arthur, 268781, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Dixon, T., 5532, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Dodd, Alfred Thomas, 267696, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Dudley, Herbert, 41937, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Dunsmore, Joseph, 26121, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Eaton, Albert, 85131, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/9/17.
 Edwards, Stanley, 242031, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/12/17.
 Edwards, William, 22896, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Elliot, A. G., 5480, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Elliott, Bernard, 90171, Pte., d., F. & F., 14/7/18.
 Ellis, Albert, 268024, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Else, George William, 265996, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Emms, Arthur William, 235201, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17,
 formerly 7416, Bedfordshire Regt.
 Evans, Hugh, 269279, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17, formerly 3805,
 Worcestershire Yeomanry.
 Everley, George, 27347, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Farnath, Harry Bernard, 266438, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Farnsworth, E. B., 268778, Pte., d., F. & F., 12/7/18.
 Farnsworth, Ernest, 2961, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Fearn, Frank, 81780, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Fearn, Wallis Smith, 266124, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/6/17.
 Fletcher, Bert, 82135, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Foster, Arthur, 269768, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Foster, Ernest, 82062, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Foulds, James, 78224, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 579,
 Northumberland Fusiliers.
 Fowler, George, 265880, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/5/18.
 Fox, John, 82131, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Franklin, Leonard Robert, 268812, Pte., d., F. & F., 19/10/18.
 Frier, Albert, 265383, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Frogg, Ernest, 201988, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Funnell, Albert Victor, 267721, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Furness, Herbert, 267977, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Gardner, Oliver, 72142, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Garner, Samuel, 267442, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/9/17.
 Gee, Daniel, E., 91768, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Gibson, A., 266964, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Gilbert, E. 265821, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 28/3/18.
 Gilding, Arthur Ernest, 265612, Pte., d., F. & F., 27/9/18.
 Giles, William H., 305059, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.

Gill, George, 204815, L/Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Given, Maurice, 266478, Cpl., d., F. & F., 17/5/18. M.M.
 Godfrey, Joseph, 72103, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Godfrey, Joseph C., 268532, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Goldwasser, Sebastian Henry, 267722, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Goss, Joseph, 3080, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Hale, Charles Edward, 266936, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Hall, Thos. Laverick, 267267, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Hamilton, R., 266064, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Hardy, Norman Frank, 265783, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Hardy, Thomas, 306051, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 31/3/18.
 Hargreaves, Ernest, 82404, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Harmer, Aubury G., 268098, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17, formerly
 2518, Royal Sussex Regt.
 Harmer, William F., 268112, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/6/17, formerly
 749, Sussex Regt.
 Harper, E. H., 265808, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 5/6/17.
 Harrihill, John T., 71464, Pte., d., F. & F., 4/11/18, formerly 31683,
 North Staffs Regt.
 Harris, B. E., 20263, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Hartley, Alfred William, 204797, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18,
 formerly 275158, Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry.
 Harvey, Wm. H., 12141, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Haslam, William, 267447, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 4/11/17.
 Hastings, Harold, 266219, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Hawley, Cornelius, 266287, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 31/3/18.
 Hayden, John Albert, 72117, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Hemsall, A., 268005, Pte., d., F. & F., 26/4/18.
 Henman, William, 267444, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/6/17.
 Hodson, Fred, 268020, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Hodges, Herbert Henry, 265194, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 11/4/18.
 Holborn, James, 268076, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/17.
 Holbrook, Arthur, 5605, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Holdaway, F. W., 269881, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Hollingdale, John, 267179, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Holmes, John Manby, 202677, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Holmes, William, 61043, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Holt, Harry, 28802, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/2/18.
 Hooper, W. P., 266967, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Hopewell, John Thomas, 93153, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/18.
 Hopkins, Albert George, 267735, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/10/17.
 Hopkins, Henry, 47860, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Hoyle, Charles, 6081, Cpl., d., Home, 26/4/16, formerly 2406, West
 Yorks Regt.
 Hubbard, William, 268797, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Hudson, Frank William, 266094, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Hudston, John, 266858, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Humphries, Richard Lewis, 267701, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Inger, H., 265897, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 22/12/17.
 Jackman, W., 268802, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.

Jackson, George, 266917, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 James, Henry Thomas, 267203, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Jarvis, Robert John, 307300, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 24/3/18, formerly
 25472, Somersetshire L.I.
 Jeffs, Percy, 4709, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Johnson, George, 265368, Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 21/4/18.
 Johnson, William Ernest, 266888, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
 Jones, Rowland, 267294, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Jordan, Harold, 72106, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 39839,
 Bedford Regt.
 Kent, Frederick, 266007, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/9/17.
 Kidman, E., 269786, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Kinder, James, 25181, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 King, Henry, 266559, Pte., d., F. & F., 29/4/17.
 King, Richard, 267803, Pte., d., F. & F., 4/4/17.
 Kirk, Arthur Sydney, 266511, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Knight, Victor Alfred, 267991, Pte., d., F. & F., 6/4/17.
 Knowles, George, 266922, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/9/17.
 Knowles, Horace, 82019, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Laker, Charles E., 268092, Pte., d., F. & F., 23/7/18, formerly 7414,
 Middlesex Regt.
 Lancashire, Smith C. W., 265752, Sgt., d. of w., F. & F., 1/4/17.
 Lang, William, 3290, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Langley, George, 267454, Pte., d., F. & F., 28/5/17.
 Larsson, Arthur, 235214, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17, formerly
 7875, Royal West Surrey Regt.
 Lawton, John Henry, 265581, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Layton, James, 267723, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Leadbeater, Daniels, 265037, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18. M.M.
 Lee, John Sidney, 267271, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 27/4/17.
 Lee, Roland, 268425, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Lee, William Alfred, 267755, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Limb, B. M., 265883, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Limm, George Thomas, 267801, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Lock, Arthur, 266924, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Lock, John Robert, 235202, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17, formerly
 8296, London Regt.
 Lockwood, George, 268188, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/6/17.
 Lokes, John William, 265702, Bglr., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/17.
 Lowater, Charles Harold, 266908, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 23/4/17.
 Lowe, A., 265258, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 9/12/17.
 Lumby, William, 267291, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Machin, W., 266147, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Madden, W., 266147, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Makin, Arthur, 266032, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/3/18.
 Maltby, Harold Thomas, 8765, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Marriott, Edward, 84373, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 20/9/17.
 Marsden, H., 266828, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 6/10/17.
 Marsden, William, 268741, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.

Martin, James, 76219, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 9890
 (H.F. Coy.), R.E.
 Masterman, John Henry, 266947, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 McCormack, John Ernest, 82093, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 McLoughlin, J., 265851, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Middleton, Stephen Lindley, 85322, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Miles, Ernest, 70433, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 9/4/18.
 Miller, George William, 241934, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Miller, Thomas H., 5664, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Mills, John Thomas, 21114, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Mitchell, George, 266929, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/17.
 Mycock, John Thomas, 69079, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly
 25288, North Staff Regt.
 Newman, Joseph Henry, 6811, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 5/12/17.
 Newman, Walter G. W., 307498, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Nicholson, Harold, 268110, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly
 2797, Royal Sussex Regt.
 Oakden, A., 266850, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Oates, George, 268729, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Ogelsby, George Smith, 265098, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Oliver, Harold, 268349, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Owens, Francis John, 266442, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Page, George Herbert, 268747, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Page, Joseph Tufrell, 267715, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Parsons, Hedley Stewart, 267013, Pte., d., F. & F., 10/8/18.
 Parsons, Jack, 266845, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Parsons, W. G., 265680, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/17.
 Peers, William Lawrence, 268323, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Perry, William Henry, 266900, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Pettit, Ernest, 73352, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 32088,
 Northamptonshire Regt.
 Plant, Edward, 241601, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 7/5/18.
 Pollock, James William, 268780, L/Cpl., d., F. & F., 18/10/18.
 Poole, Donald Arthur, 267427, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Potter, P., 70355, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/18, formerly 4620,
 Leicestershire Regt.
 Powell, H. R., 267191, Pte., d., F. & F., 27/11/18.
 Powley, George, 267753, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/17.
 Priestley, Herbert, 305913, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Purdy, H., 265788, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Pyle, C. T., 267281, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Raistrick, H. C., 265959, C.S.M., d. of w., F. & F., 8/10/17.
 Ralph, Samuel, 92011, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 18010,
 South Staffs.
 Raper, Alfred George, 267804, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Rayner, Joseph, 267695, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Reardow, William James, 235203, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17,
 formerly 6761, London Regt.
 Reed, Arthur, 235206, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17, formerly
 8476, Northamptonshire Regt.

Reed, Robert, 72110, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 30/9/17.
 Revill, Cyril, 3630, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Rider, William, 72116, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Roberts, Ernest, 266526, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Roe, Frank Edgar, 269316, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Roebuck, Albert, 19234, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Rook, Cecil Ernest, 266899, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 1/4/18.
 Rose, Arthur Evison, 266514, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/17.
 Salmon, Elijah, 305238, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Savage, Marcus Thomas, 58679, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Scally, Michael Henry, 95909, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 18/4/18.
 Sharp, F. J., 268814, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Sentance, Walter, 266483, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Sharpe, W., 266905, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 28/4/17.
 Shaw, Charles, 81617, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Shaw, H., 265676, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Sheaf, Walter Lionel, 72111, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly
 33149, Bedfordshire Regt.
 Shelbourne, J., 265929, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Sellors, John, 269734, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 6/4/18.
 Sheppard, J. H., 265820, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Shilling, L., 267171, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 23/4/17.
 Shipside, Marshall, 265553, L/Sgt., d. of w., F. & F., 30/4/17.
 Silbey, A., 3308, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Simkins, Daniel Frederick, 265019, C.S.M., k. in a., F. & F., 1/5/17.
 Sladen, Henry, 266443, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Smith, Charles William, 268162, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18,
 formerly 363, North Midland Division Cycling Coy. Royal Engineers.
 Smith, Chas. Thedham, 269813, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Smith, Ernest Lester, 267000, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Smith, Fred, 42385, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Smith, G., 267021, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/4/17.
 Smith, Henry, 266453, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Smith, Thomas, 265789, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Smith, Thomas Arthur, 307633, Pte., d., F. & F., 2/5/18.
 Smith, Wilfred Hanley, 267789, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Smithhurst, John George, 60310, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Snaith, J., 267282, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/17.
 Spibey, Alfred, 266480, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/17.
 Spurling, Walter Charles, 72122, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Stancill, Richard, 18696, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/12/17.
 Staniforth, C., 266864, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/12/17.
 Starsmore, Ernest Charles, 268182, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Statham, Fred, 266927, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Stevens, Frederick Henry, 100025, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Stevenson, Arthur, 265876, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Stevenson, George, 52908, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Stockdale, M., 267986, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 22/12/17.
 Stocks, John Tom, 21686, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Stone, Walter, 23042, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.

Stones, Claude, 215552, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Summers, E., 266041, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/6/17.
 Tacey, James Arthur, 59277, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Taft, George, 265756, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Tardif, Herbert, 266831, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 28/9/17.
 Taylor, Abraham, 268404, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Taylor, James, 268801, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Taylor, Wilfred, 26479, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Thomas, Sidney, 16966, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Thomas, Solomon, 202575, Pte., d., F. & F., 2/6/17.
 Thompson, William Dyer, 268730, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Thorne, Frederick, 267786, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
 Thurman, John, 266928, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Tinker, Frederick George, 266040, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Tomlinson, L., 6479, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Towers, William, 266870, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/6/18.
 Towlson, Herbert, 268754, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Tranter, H. A., 266780, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 31/3/18.
 Travis, Frederick, 268180, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Truswell, Jim, 268191, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/4/17.
 Tuckwell, Charles, 265842, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Tunncliffe, W. A., 5555, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Turner, Ernest Hampton, 268325, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 31/7/17.
 Turner, Henry, 266692, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Turton, Charles S., 265663, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/17.
 Twidale, W. S., 5852, C.S.M., d. of w., F. & F., 8/12/17.
 Twigger, Fred, 266353, L/Cpl., d., F. & F., 17/12/18.
 Twigger, John, 266372, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Tyrrell, Percy, 268092, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 4530,
 Middlesex Regt.
 Ufton, Leonard, 201495, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Upton, Reginald, 266508, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Uwins, Arthur William, 268083, Pte., d., Home, 1/2/18.
 Vickers, Alfred, 266445, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 23/4/17.
 Walker, John, 23485, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Wallis, William, 267458, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Wanford, James Arthur, 9778, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Warburton, Harry, 97334, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Ward, John, 266107, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Washbrooke, Alfred Charles, 72125, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Watson, Charles, 265801, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Watson, James, 267306, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Webster, Charles Douglas, 266112, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Webster, Horace, 45348, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Welch, Joseph, 267302, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/4/18.
 Wells, A., 266037, A/Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 5/6/17.
 Wesselhoeft, Frederic Grange, 2544, Sergt., k. in a., 20/9/17.
 Westoby, Charles, 242384, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Wheatley, Harold, 266875, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Whitbourne, Henry Herbert, 235196, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.

White, Maurice, 72605, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 18/7/18, formerly 05785, A.O.C.
 Whitehead, William, 25592, C.S.M., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18. D.C.M., M.M.
 Whitehouse, Percy, 266515, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 8/12/17.
 Whittaker, Herbert, 266872, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/17.
 Wilkins, W. G., 267048, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Wilkinson, Arthur, 266469, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/9/17.
 Williamson, John, 267301, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/9/17.
 Wills, Percy Wilfred, 268085, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Wilson, Joseph Arthur, 16591, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/12/17.
 Windley, Alfred, 267012, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/17.
 Winslade, Walter, 268121, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/17, formerly 2802, Royal Sussex Regt.
 Winter, Walter Joseph, 266465, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Wood, Ernest, 267177, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/9/17.
 Woodward, Charles H. H., 268183, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Wooller, Henry W., 93998, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Woolley, Frank, 268141, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18, formerly 2109, West Kent Yeomanry.
 Wright, Russell Campbell, 268021, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Wyld, George, 4530, Pte., d., Home, 26/4/16.
 Wynne, W., 4272, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.
 Yeomans, Albert Alfred, 202090, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/12/17.
 Young, George Richard, 202532, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/9/17.
 Young, Rowland, 266399, Pte., d., F. & F., 11/11/16.
 Zimmerman, Naheim, 267774, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/3/18.

3/7TH BATTALION.

Bond, David, 98443, Pte., d., Home, 9/4/18.
 Jackson, Reginald Roland, 98806, Pte., d., Home, 3/10/18.
 Overton, Thomas Osbert, 268130, L/Cpl., d., Home, 19/5/18, formerly 7451, Royal Sussex Regt.
 Siswick, Ernest, 92950, Pte., d., Home, 14/3/18, formerly 38279, Lincolnshire Regt.
 Tee, Boone Robert, 106625, Pte., d., Home, 4/7/18.
 Tingle, Charles, 119537, Pte., d., Home, 8/7/18.
 Wilkinson, Frederick Charles, 117870, Pte., d., Home, 15/8/18.

LIST OF HONOURS

AWARDED IN THE GREAT WAR,

1914—1918.

VICTORIA CROSS.

Captain C. G. Vickers
Captain A. Ball

THE MOST DISTINGUISHED ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL AND ST. GEORGE.

Lieut.-Col. C. W. Birkin
Lieut.-Col. C. Fane

COMPANION OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

Lieut.-Col. A. W. Brewill
Lieut.-Col. F. Rayner
Lieut.-Col. M. C. Martyn
Lieut.-Col. A. N. Lee
Captain A. Ball (with Bar).

ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

Lieut.-Col. G. A. Wigley
Lieut.-Col. A. N. Lee
Major W. R. Rook
Major N. E. Webster
Captain H. M. Whitehead

MILITARY CROSS.

Lieut.-Col. L. A. Hind	Lieut. R. B. Emmett
Lieut.-Col. M. C. Martyn	Lieut. W. Foster
Major J. C. Warren	Lieut. A. H. A. Gem
Captain H. H. Walton	Lieut. J. F. Dennis
Captain J. W. Scott, R.A.M.C.	Lieut. J. N. Whiteman
Captain A. Ball	2nd Lieut. N. E. Webster
Captain F. Henry	2nd Lieut. F. Touch
Captain O. I. Preston	2nd Lieut. S. Shephard
Captain F. Pragnell	2nd Lieut. D. J. Winnicott
Captain A. L. M. Dickins	2nd Lieut. H. Coop

ORDER OF THE SACRED TREASURE OF JAPAN (4th Class).

Lieut.-Col. A. N. Lee

OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF THE CROWN OF BELGIUM.

Lieut.-Col. A. N. Lee

COMMANDER OF THE ORDER OF THE CROWN OF SIAM.

Lieut.-Col. A. N. Lee

ORDER OF THE WHITE EAGLE OF SERVIA (with Swords).

Lieut.-Col. A. N. Lee

CROIX DE GUERRE (Belgian).

Lieut.-Col. A. N. Lee

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

C.S.M. F. McKenzie (with Bar).	Sergt. J. W. Hildyard
C.S.M. H. J. Towlson	Sergt. C. W. Crawley
C.S.M. F. Mortimer	Corpl. E. S. Dennis
C.S.M. W. Whitehead	Pte. J. Bullivant

MEDAL OF ST. GEORGE (3rd Class).

Lce/Corpl. J. E. Salt

MILITARY MEDAL.

C.S.M. J. H. Clarke	Corpl. A. Barber
C.S.M. F. Harrison	Corpl. M. Given
C.S.M. W. Whitehead	Lce/Corpl. T. R. Truman
Sergt. C. Gell	Lce/Corpl. W. Fox
Sergt. F. Lee	Lce/Corpl. J. E. Salt
Sergt. W. J. Glover	Lce/Corpl. W. Henrys
Sergt. J. E. C. Hill	Pte. J. E. Banks
Sergt. S. Argyle	Pte. W. Tacey
Sergt. W. Leach	Pte. G. W. Hill
Sergt. C. Francis	Pte. H. H. Hodges
Sergt. G. Bannister	Pte. T. W. Andrews
Sergt. J. H. Burton	Pte. G. H. Dalby
Sergt. F. Mahan	Pte. T. Bridgstock
Sergt. A. G. Hunt	Pte. J. H. Vandoren
Sergt. H. Pearson	Pte. C. D. Webster
Sergt. D. Leadbeater	Pte. A. Saunders
Corpl. C. Croll	

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL.

C.S.M. W. C. Yealand
 C.S.M. J. H. Wilson
 C.S.M. J. H. Clarke
 Sergt. P. Groves
 Sergt. H. H. Pottinger
 Sergt. D. H. North

MEDAILLE MILITAIRE.

C.S.M. W. Herrod

CROIX DE GUERRE (Belgian).

C.S.M. W. G. Domelo
 Corpl. G. L. Savidge





