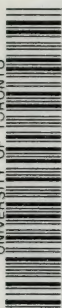


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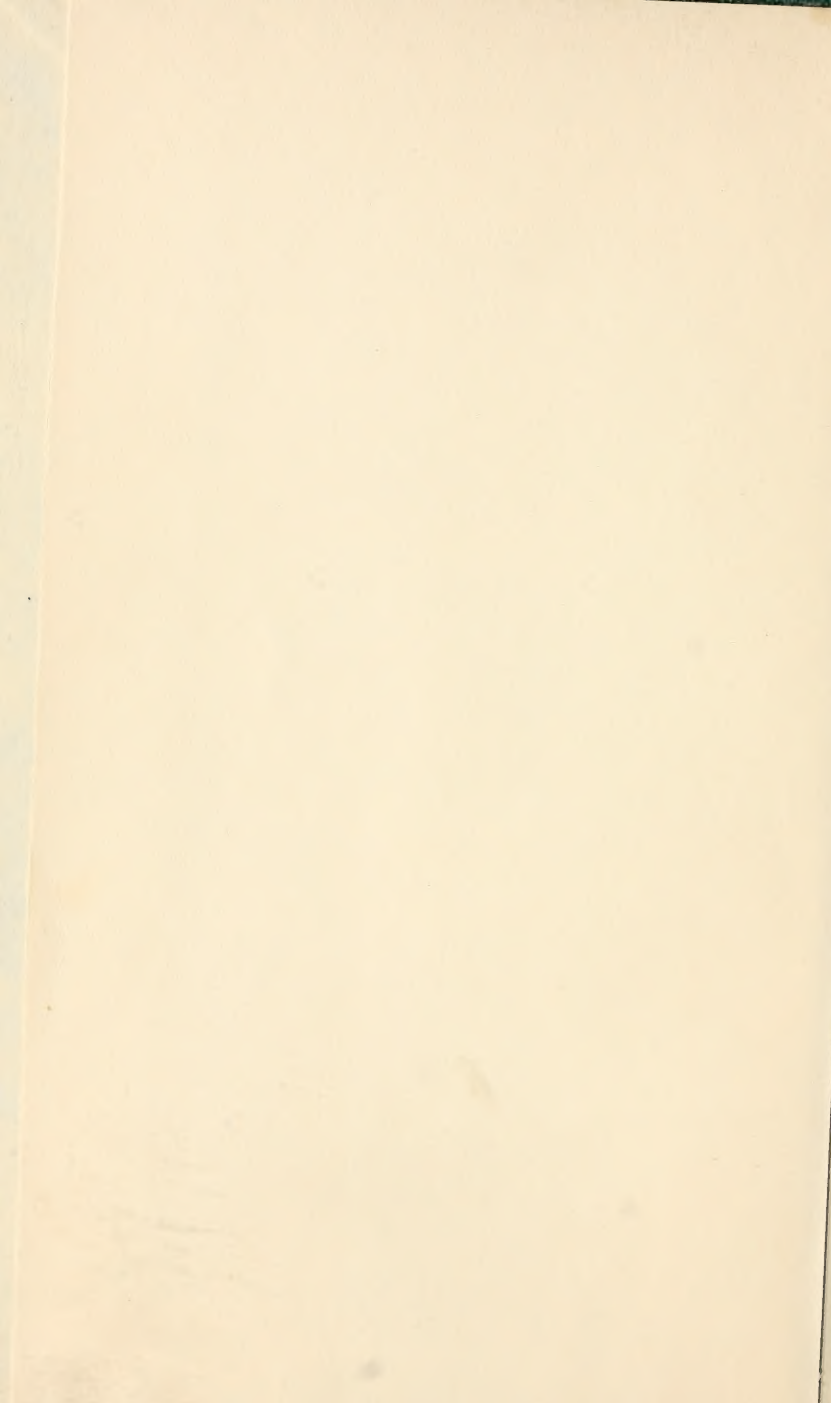
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# ANNALS OF VALOUR

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## EMPIRE DAY

F R I D A Y  
MAY 23rd, 1919



ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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The Legislative Assembly of Ontario

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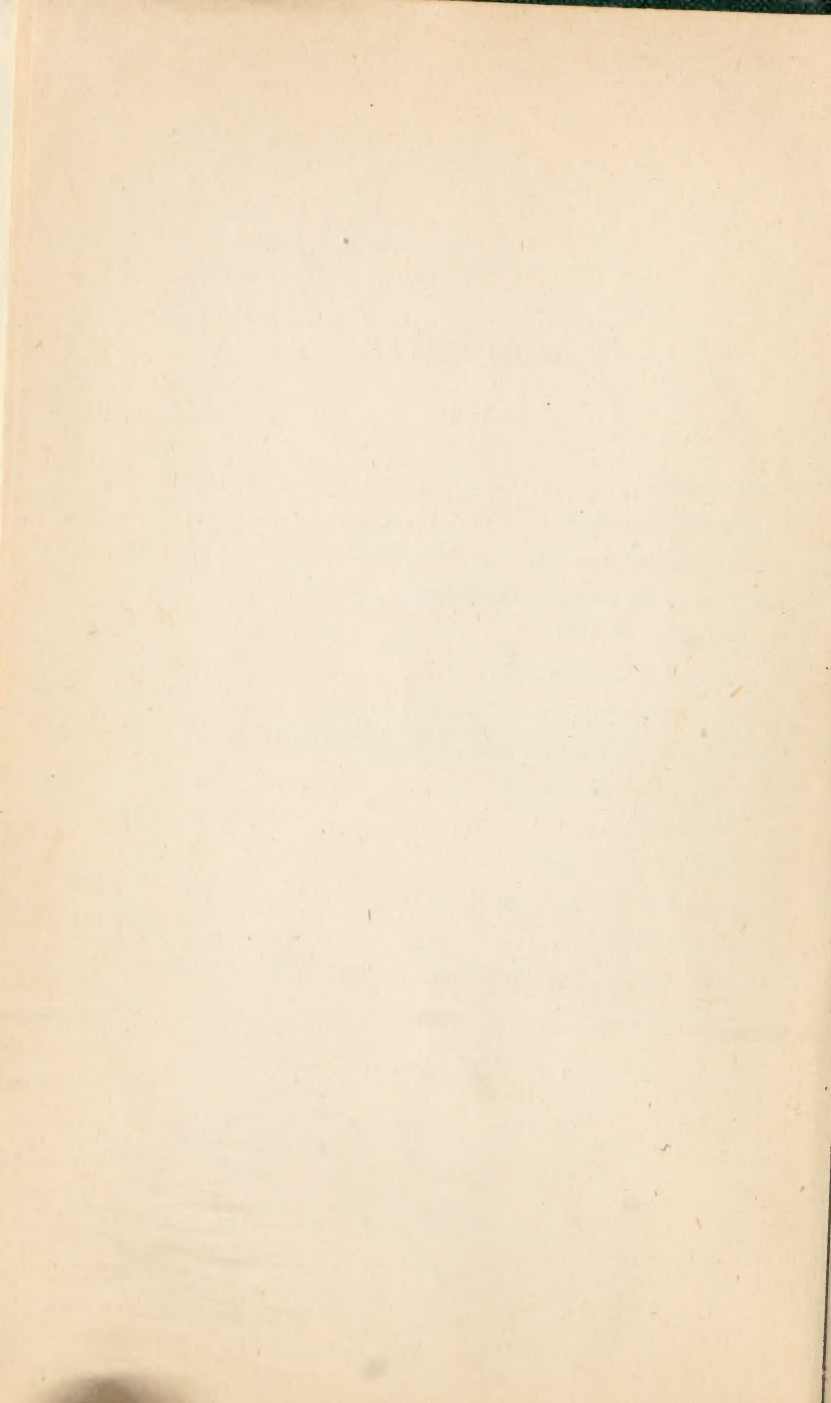


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## INTRODUCTION

If the lessons taught by the experiences of the recent Great War are not thoroughly learned and faithfully practised by the people of the present generation, the world will have suffered in vain; if these lessons are not learned and applied by those of the next generation, the world of the future will be little better than was the world before 1914. What has the Great War taught? The list of its precepts is long, but a few of them may be mentioned: The pre-eminence of right over wrong,—the blessings of democracy and the perils of autocracy,—the pleasures of peace and the pains of war,—the weakness of strength and the strength of weakness,—the power of unselfishness, of kindness, of benevolent brotherliness, the triumphs of personal courage, initiative, and resourcefulness.

It is to furnish a basis for teaching some of these lessons to the youth of Ontario that this book has been written. The problems confronting the citizens of this war-torn globe will require all the courage and all the resource of which individuals and nations can become possessed. Approached with the cheerful and dauntless daring so characteristic of Canada's sons in the last five years, obstacles will vanish, vexatiously intricate problems will be solved. Not alone on the battle-field is personal courage needed—it is the essential asset also in times of adjustment to unfamiliar conditions. Times have changed; people must change with them. Indolent and disinterested drifting is now fatal and criminal; high-hearted progress through difficulties, perils, and opposition, is necessary to true achievement.

For the inculcation of these great lessons every day is to the teacher a time of opportunity. But Empire Day is of all these the greatest. It should be made a day to which every pupil will look back to strengthen his national pride, to renew his patriotic resolves. Empire Day has never been of such wonderful importance as it is in this year—1919—when the British Empire has been saved from an unthinkable catastrophe, when it faces duties and potential perils which require the supreme valour, the unswerving allegiance, of every loyal citizen.

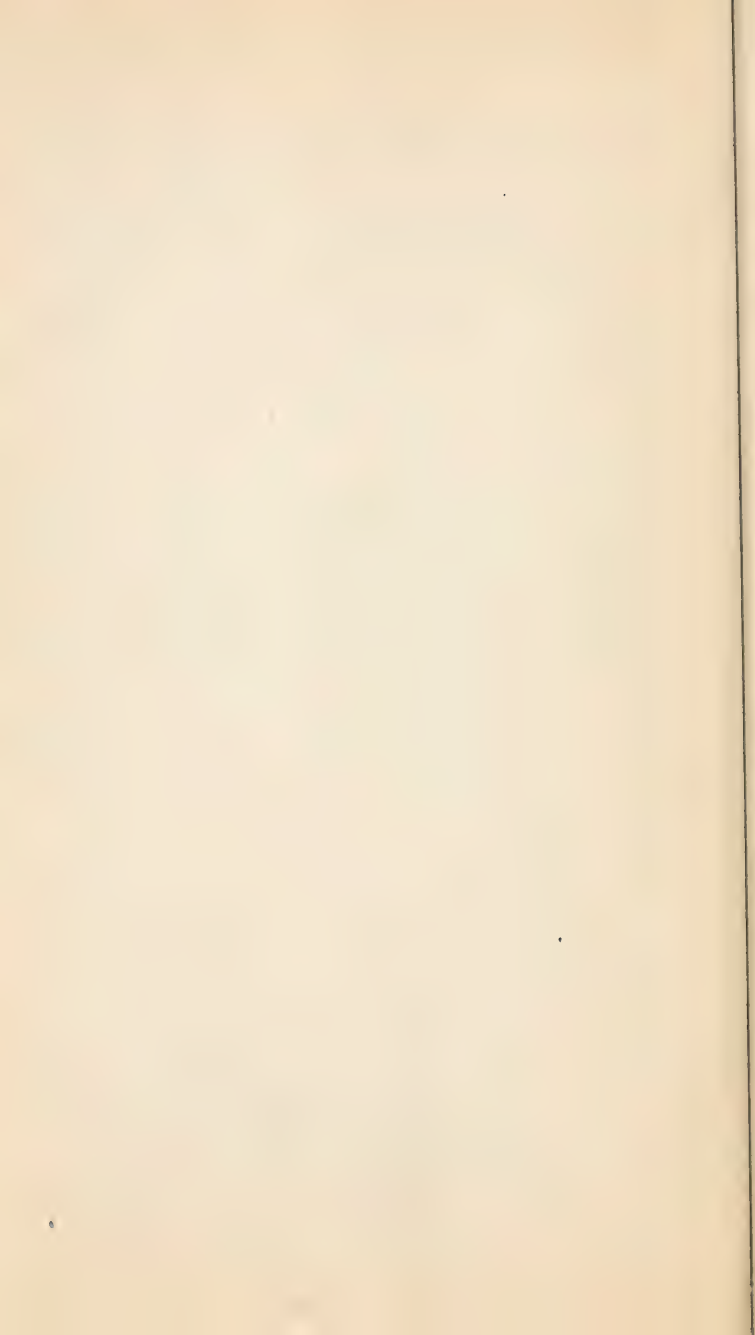
This book attempts to recount in some detail the part played by Canada's soldiers in the campaign of last year, the campaign which closed so victoriously at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year 1918. But the major part of the book is devoted to recitals of the valorous deeds of individual soldiers. It may be thought that it is a simple matter to secure stories of the brave deeds performed in a war which, more than any previous war, abounded in instances of heroic acts. It is not. Heroes are reticent. As illustrations of this, two instances may suffice. An Inspector of Public Schools returned from the war to resume the duties of his inspectorate in Ontario. Asked by the editor of this book for some account of what he had "been through", he admitted with some reluctance that he had been decorated by the French and the Belgian Governments but "preferred not to explain" for what these honours had been bestowed. A messenger boy enlisted from a large educational institution. He returned early in 1919, wearing the ribbon of the Military Medal. Asked what he had done to earn that decoration, he replied, "Oh, nothing". There seems to be only one means of securing even a partial story of the details of a heroic deed, and that is through the hero's mother. But this method is not always practicable.

The deeds that won the V.C. are grouped in this book according to the battles in which they occurred; and hence not all V.C.'s are mentioned. Nor was it possible to obtain accounts of all the acts of heroism. Only V.C.'s who belonged to the infantry are included—those who were cavalrymen and airmen have been reserved for a future publication. Could they be secured and told, the stories of the valour of Canadian fighting-men would fill many volumes. Over 17,000 heroes were decorated! Perhaps ten times that number performed deeds of extraordinary daring!

It is interesting to note that the Government of France has realized the value of giving to the young people in the schools the unvarnished accounts of the heroism of individuals in the Great War. One volume of these *Nouveaux Récits Héroïques* is largely devoted to Canadians; and of these stories three have been borrowed for inclusion in this book.

Teachers are asked to use this book as effectively as possible on Empire Day; to see that, afterwards, it is given a place in the school library; and to encourage the pupils to read it when they may have opportunity.

In the lives of those who, during four and a half years, were protected by the incomparable sacrifice of thousands of the best of Canada's sons and daughters, fatuous pleasure-seeking and irresponsible idling can have no place. May the example of those soldiers, sailors, airmen, nurses, workers be an inspiration which will impel the boys and girls of to-day to be as courageous in peace as were their defenders in war, to use their time in school to the best advantage, to learn the best lesson that the schools can teach—preparation for effective citizenship!



# Empire Day, 1919

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## ANNALS OF VALOUR

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### SUGGESTED PROGRAMME

Empire Day exercises should be open to the public, and all citizens should be invited to the school, especially for the afternoon. The trustees, local clergy, and other prominent persons should be given a part in the programme. The outline given below is intended merely to suggest how this book may be of service in the celebration. Certain parts of the book might be read by the teacher and other portions by those of the pupils who can read fluently and expressively.

#### FIRST SESSION

(9.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.)

Scripture reading (Psalm 92, or 90, or 46); the Lord's Prayer; the National Anthem; lesson—a part of "The Campaign of 1918" (see page 28); a patriotic song; reading—the story of one of the V.C.'s (see pages 91 to 150).

#### SECOND SESSION

(10.45 a.m. to 12.00 m.)

Patriotic song; lesson—geography—Great Britain's Allies in the Great War (see *The Thrift Campaign in the Schools of Ontario*, Chapter II); readings, by some of the pupils,—stories of the deeds of Canadian heroes, (see pages 151 to 158).

## THIRD SESSION

(1.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.)

The assembling and saluting of the flags of Great Britain and her Allies (see page 165); address—"A Survey of the Canadian Campaigns" (see page 15); a patriotic song; the Story of our Flag (see *Ontario Teachers' Manual on History*, page 68).

## FOURTH SESSION

(2.45 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.)

Patriotic song; address—The Story of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (see page 66); patriotic song; address—What we learn from the experiences of the Great War (see Introduction); readings, by several pupils, of stories of valorous deeds of Canada's fighting men (see pages 151 to 158); hymn—O God, our Help in Ages past; National Anthem.

## THE SCHOOLS AND THE WAR

Associated with school life is the glamour that surrounds the time of childhood and of youth. No period brings with it the care-free enjoyment, the buoyant freedom, that accompanies the stage of life preceding and immediately following adolescence. The youth will not admit this; to him manhood bears the promise of achievement and of happiness. But the mature man admits it readily enough; he looks back with pleasure to the halcyon days. Food tasted better then, games were more exciting then, and teachers and schools were better then! He has vivid recollections of the teachers who first opened to him the intricacies of mathematics, the treasures of history, or the wonders of science. Those were "good teachers"—there are none like them to-day! His boy is not taught as logically as he was taught thirty years ago! Hence, with honest conviction, he avers that the educational systems of to-day are tremendously inferior to those of his youth. This man forgets that the teachers of to-day are vastly superior in academic knowledge to their predecessors of thirty, or twenty, years ago; that their professional training is more thorough; that their tenure of office is longer. He judges teachers and educational systems by an ideal—an ideal that has grown and become more highly coloured with the passing years.

Another critic of present-day systems of education is the successful business man who takes, from time to time, into his employ, boys and girls of fourteen to sixteen years of age—the graduates of the Public and the High Schools. He finds that these young people are stupid; that they cannot compute; that they cannot spell; that they cannot write a legible hand; that they have no general knowledge!

And mightily does he inveigh against modern educational systems! Why do teachers waste time on "fads and frills"? Why don't they teach reading, writing, and arithmetic? When he left school at twelve years of age he was an expert mathematician, a legible writer, an accurate speller, and had a fund of general knowledge! Now, had he? Could some of the work done by this man when he left school be produced now, perhaps it would not compare so very favourably with what children of the same age are doing in the schools of to-day. Perhaps his first employer, if questioned, would recall with unconcealed merriment the "rawness" of the youth who is now the successful business man. The latter forgets how much he has learned in the intervening years! His present attainments are, forsooth, the standard by which he judges the product of the modern school! This man has no patience with the enriched curriculum of the schools of to-day. He has obtained all this knowledge since he left school! Of course, he has—but what of the others of his time? Did they happen to obtain these treasures of knowledge? Many of them did not. Present-day educational systems endeavour to give every child an equal opportunity—in a democracy every man's child is entitled to the best that can be had. What would happen if the humanitarian subjects were swept with ruthless hand from the curriculum? The few would pick up this enriching knowledge, this refinement, in after life; for the many, the books containing it would be always sealed.

At another extreme is a third critic who maintains that the schools do not teach enough. Children are unmannerly to-day; they are rude; they are lacking in respect to their elders. Why do the schools not teach them how to conduct themselves properly? This man is now, in his mature age, looking through a different end of the



telescope. He forgets the tricks that he, and others like him, played when they were boys. He remembers his early virtues and forgets his boyish failings. Did he receive his training in conduct in the school of his day or in his own home? If the children of this generation are, as he asserts, ill-mannered, why blame the schools and the educational systems? Has the modern home no responsibilities? But are children really very much different in any generation from what they have been since the world began?

In this age much is being done for social and moral reform. And rightly so. Some one finds what he considers a panacea for all social ills. No doubt he is largely right. What is his first step in putting his idea into effect? He at once demands that the teaching of this reform be added to the curriculum of the schools. "Why is this not taught in school?" he asks. Very likely it should be so taught; but can the schools do everything that should be done and bear the blame for everything that is not done?

So is education assailed from all angles. Some critics are honest and well-meaning; some are critics and nothing else. It is very easy to say that an educational system is "no good" and to multiply derogatory adjectives in reviling it. More thought is required to show what is wrong and how it may be made right.

True, very true, is it that the educational system of Ontario needs improvement. So does any educational system anywhere, at any time. Conditions of life change, and education must change with them—because education is preparation for life. Unfortunately, reform in education is often allowed to lag behind other reforms—money is not usually spent as freely on education as it is on other activities.

Every critic admits, no matter how he may express his opinion, that the real aim of education is training for effective citizenship. Judged by this test the educational system of Ontario cannot be said to be hopelessly bad. On the contrary, it has been proved exceptionally good. Was there ever a better opportunity for testing citizenship than that afforded by the recent Great War? It is only necessary, for instance, to think of the conduct of the war, to contrast the Ontario soldier and the German soldier, in order to see the difference between education in Ontario and education in Germany—to see where the German educational system failed and the Ontario system succeeded. (And everyone remembers how Germany's methods of education were lauded before 1914!) The youth of Ontario enlisted voluntarily in numbers unprecedented and unequalled anywhere. They gave up profitable civilian pursuits; spent tedious hours, and days, and weeks, and months in monotonous drilling under unpleasant conditions; went to the incredible hardships of the front-line trenches with cheerful enthusiasm; fought as soldiers never fought before—and won! The individual initiative, the resourcefulness, the clear-headed personal courage and daring, the true and clean uprightness of the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, from Ontario, from Canada, have never been surpassed in any land, at any time. Rarely, if ever, have these characteristics been found so well developed in any nation. The Old World stood amazed at their achievements. And of Canada's wonderful army, navy, and air force, almost one half was supplied by Ontario. Did they prove themselves good citizens? Were they so educated that they were prepared for effective living—and noble dying? They received their education in the schools of Ontario!

## A SURVEY OF THE CANADIAN CAMPAIGNS

A few months after the beginning of the war, there appeared in the London *Punch* a cartoon so apt and so striking that it instantly seized the imagination of the world. The background of the picture is a scene of Belgian desolation—ruined homes and ragged refugees. In the foreground the Kaiser, with an air of contemptuous triumph, is saying to King Albert, “So, you see, you have lost everything”. Whereupon, King Albert, agonized but unconquerable, manfully rejoins, “Not my *soul*”.

Now it might be too much to say that this war had saved to Canada her soul, but it would not be too much to say that one result of the war has been to reveal us to ourselves. An oft-noted tendency in the British race is to minimize their own accomplishments and to criticize their own virtues; and Canadians had, to some extent at least, inherited this tendency toward self-depreciation. But the splendid achievements of our soldiers have made us realize that we are no degenerate descendants of those heroic Britons whose exploits history has recorded, and that Canadians can now challenge comparison, man for man, and deed for deed, with the noblest of the ages. The war record of the men of Canada shows that without the least exaggeration it may be said of them that “When duty called or danger they were not wanting there”. With that record, stained with their life-blood, but illumined by the glory of their unselfish devotion, it is not merely the patriotic duty, but also the high privilege of every Canadian to become familiar. To aid in the acquisition of that familiarity is the purpose of these pages.

Who can ever forget the thrilling effect of the news that filtered through about the part played by Canadians at

St. Julien, or, as it is officially known, the Second Battle of Ypres? We felt a new consciousness of nationhood. With the exception of the Patricias and some South African veterans, the First Canadian Division was made up of untried troops. And no one could have anticipated how terrible an ordeal their first real trial was to be. To leap into the breach at a moment of frightful peril, to face the unknown terrors of a new form of offensive, to be greatly out-numbered and to have nothing to expect but certain death, to be beaten by all the rules of war and yet to carry on, to attack, and to hold until "the situation was saved"—this was the initial task set for these untried soldiers. What wonder, then, that we heard the news with mingled consternation at the extent of our losses and exaltation at the extent of our countrymen's fortitude. And when it was more fully realized what an immense and perhaps fatal disaster Canadian heroism had helped to fend off, the pæan of national thanksgiving rose to a higher note.

When another Creasy comes to write of other *Decisive Battles of the World*, he will have to include this Second Battle of Ypres. Its pre-eminent significance has perhaps never been better set forth than by Major Charles G. D. Roberts in the third volume of *Canada in Flanders*:

"The Second Battle of Ypres, on the other hand, belongs not to Canada and the Empire alone but to the world. It must rank among those few outstanding achievements of uncalculated and self-sacrificing heroism which serve as an incentive to noble spirits for all time. There was that of the miraculous about it which startles and grips the imagination. There was that mingling of high tragedy and terror and devotion which purges national pride to the purest patriotism. It tore victory—men hardly know how to this day—from the jaws of overwhelm-

ing and seemingly inevitable defeat; and, had it failed, who can set a limit to the catastrophe that might well have followed? Finally, at the Second Battle of Ypres, a young nation came suddenly to full manhood through a well-nigh unparalleled initiation of blood and splendour and tears. It is right that the name of Ypres should stand apart, and its imperishable glory not be infringed upon when their meed of praise is being allotted to other notable operations of the Canadian Forces."

How the tenacity and heroism of the Canadian Division were regarded by their British comrades was nobly shown on the Saturday morning of the battle, when two British brigades, sent forward by General Alderson on a relieving attack, paused as they passed through the Canadian lines and saluted our men with ringing cheers. It was a dramatic instance of *morituri vos salutamus*.

No more heroic stand than that of these three Canadian brigades has been recorded in history. Greece had her Thermopylae; Canada has now her St. Julien. It is to be hoped that some future historian of Canada's part in the Great War will compile something like a complete account of individual deeds of valour as examples for posterity. Some of these are described in another part of this book. Suffice it to say here that what St. Julien showed was evidenced also in all the other conflicts that followed; and that was that officers and men alike vied with one another in heroic self-sacrifice. Officers freely risked their lives to rescue privates, privates to rescue officers; and nothing seemed impossible to these brave hearts.

But in addition to courage and endurance, military efficiency was also put on trial at Ypres. Many of us at home had doubtless asked ourselves the question: "In the stress of actual combat, when emergencies arise, will these citizen-soldiers of ours, amateurs in war, drawn from every

sort of peaceful occupation, be able to rise to the occasion?" We had heard that professional opinion doubted this capability and was particularly sceptical about the officers. "Mascots", the sceptics dubbed them, whom the ranks would have to carry. But Ypres changed all that. "Mascots" they were called, but "masters" they proved themselves. Ypres had emergencies enough for a campaign, but these inexperienced officers and men met these emergencies like veterans. So Ypres indicated what was to be proven abundantly in scores of later engagements, when the other three Divisions were also tested, the possession, that is to say, on the part of the Canadians, of native resourcefulness. Doubtless, too, the high standard set by the First Division had its effect upon those that were to follow.

As the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry was composed largely of veterans, the Canadian people reposed great confidence in their fighting powers; and never was confidence more richly merited. Who that has ever read the story of that dreadful 8th of May at Polygon Wood can refuse to such incredible valour the tribute of admiration not unmixed with tears! On the night of May 7th, 635 men answered the roll; at 11.30 on the night of May 8th, after a day that had been nothing short of an inferno, 150 bruised and battered heroes—"all that was left of them, left of six hundred"—bared their heads, while the gallant Niven, the colours presented by the Princess in his hand, repeated the burial service over his fallen comrades, beside the trenches still unwon by all the powers of darkness, which, as it seemed, had combined to force them.

The campaign of May and June of the year, 1915, served to show that not yet had been solved the problem of making much headway against an enemy holding the

advantage in men, artillery, machine-guns, ammunition, and ground. But, as far as the Canadians were concerned, Festubert and Givenchy proved that their combination of coolness and dash in attack was to be as notable as the pertinacity and "dourness" previously displayed in their defensive tactics. It was at Festubert that Corporal Pym crawled out twice into the fire-swept area between the lines to bring home a wounded comrade. It was at Givenchy that Lieutenant Campbell, with a machine-gun crew reduced to Private Vincent, used the broad back of this Bracebridge lumber-jack as a firing base. That scores of valorous deeds like these did not make the campaign successful was not our fault but our misfortune. Not so easily to be overcome was the handicap of long years of military unpreparedness. But at any rate, the way was pointed for future success, and the later Canadian motto for objectives—"We gain them", was plainly foretold.

With the arrival in September of the Second Division came the forming of the Canadian Corps. It was these autumn months that witnessed the invention of the trench raid, at which Canadians were to become such experts. This "nibbling" became, before the end, quite demoralizing to the enemy. Curious to relate, one of the most successful "nibblers" on the Western Front was a young Canadian officer of German origin named Juchsch, a Grey County boy, later drafted into the 58th Battalion. His ingenuity was remarkable, and his knowledge of the language was of much use in this work. One of his most successful raids resulted in bringing in eleven prisoners, without a single casualty in his party. This sort of work gave variety to trench life and scope to Canadian enterprise.

The New Year of 1916 was marked by the formation of the Third Division; and, in August of the same year,

the Fourth Division arrived in time for the campaign on the Somme. But before the Second and Third Divisions had a chance to show their grand driving powers in the offensive at the Somme, they had to endure the fearful experiences of St. Eloi and Sanctuary Wood. The conditions under which the Second Division fought to hold the craters at St. Eloi were unspeakable. It was literally a battle in the dark, for the mists made the days only less murky than the nights. No one, not even the soldiers, knew which craters they had reached; and this misapprehension, lasting for weeks, caused a failure in artillery support. Weapons were speedily rendered useless by the clogging mud, and all advantage lay with the enemy. That for almost a month, under these impossible conditions, the men continued to strive, was magnificent, but it was not war. If there is any blame, it does not rest with the soldiers. They did all that mortal men could do, and finally withdrew only when ordered. The pity of it is that the order did not come till the casualties had reached 4,000. The glory of it is that the men came out undismayed.

Further north, at Hooze and Sanctuary Wood, the Third Division, a little later, endured such a baptism of fire as the war had not yet witnessed. Trenches and men disappeared before the fusillade, and only the supreme heroism of the 7th and 8th Brigades averted disaster. Here fell, almost at the outset, General Mercer; and Canada lost a splendid soldier and a noble gentleman. Ypres Salient, that scene of heroism and death, was almost gone. But Providence intervened. The enemy halted when victory seemed in his grasp, and time was given for organizing a counter-attack, which the troops of the First Division, under cover of grand artillery support, carried through with such impetuosity that the lines of



defence were regained. In these eleven days, Canadian casualties numbered 11,000. But Ypres was still safe!

Notwithstanding the appalling significance of the title applied to the autumn campaign—"the blood-bath of the Somme", it is a relief to turn from the terrible Ypres Salient. One may judge of the estimation in which our troops were held by the High Command, by the fact that they were assigned to the vital area near Courcelette. The capture of this place was the outstanding achievement of the Canadians during 1916. It was a feat of sparkling brilliancy, and made September 15th, 1916, a day ever memorable in Canadian annals. No battle ever exemplified better that "close co-operation and everlasting team work" which Rudyard Kipling tells us "makes soldiers win the day". The victory goes to the credit of the Second Division, those heroic survivors of St. Eloi. It was a beautiful illustration of that careful planning and prompt execution which were to characterize the long roll of Canadian feats of arms. Everything went like clock-work. In fact the objective set for the day, the capture of the Sugar Trench and Sugar Factory, was so quickly gained, that the major operation, the taking of Courcelette itself, has been called by Major Roberts, "an improvisation of the battle-field", carried to a successful issue in little more than an hour. Courcelette was notable as the first occasion for bringing into use those new, amazing, and effective engines of war called tanks. The official eyewitness tells us that instances of individual heroism were too numerous to chronicle. Lieutenant Clarkson fell wounded in the knee just as four Germans issued from a dug-out. Covering them with his revolver, he made them act as his stretcher-bearers back to our lines, where he handed them over as prisoners.

The effect of team-play was especially notable in the

work of the Third Division on the flank, which checked a great counter-attack and succeeded in capturing Mouquet Farm. The struggle for "Regina Trench" was of a different nature—long, relentless, and costly. Not till November 11th, after the first three Divisions had left the Somme for the Arras-Lens front, did the Fourth Division carry the trench, adding "Desire Trench" on the 18th.

Though the Somme cost 22,000 men, the Corps continued to show unabated vigour and audacity in raids and sorties on the new front. Vimy Ridge has been described as "that grim hill which dominates the plain of Douai and the coal-fields of Lens". No wonder that the High Command coveted it or that the Germans had so protected it by tunnels and wire and all known devices of defence that they—and others—deemed it impregnable. But not so the Canadians who were chosen to assault it. "Before the advance", remarks Philip Gibbs, "these men had an utter and joyous confidence of victory." Careful planning and an unparalleled concentration of artillery fire made possible the charge which swept away all resistance and made Vimy Ridge ours in that one day of April 9th, 1917—a day never to be forgotten. In this charge our Corps was associated with a division of Scottish Highlanders, by whose side the Canadians, perhaps recognizing a congenial strain, always rejoiced to fight. So great had been the obstacle, so clean-cut was the victory, so important the gain, that about Vimy more than about any other scene of battle, has gathered the romance of war. A writer in *The Times* has suggested for a general grave on Vimy Ridge the following epitaph:

You come from England? Is she England still?  
Yes, thanks to you who died upon this hill.

The French Government has but recently put forward the proposal to make over this Ridge to Canada as a possession for ever; and a French journal declares this act singularly appropriate, because "on that Ridge the gallant troops of the Dominion won an immortal renown". Doubtless in the time to come, this spot will be the Mecca for many a faithful pilgrimage, "in memoriam".

The fighting which ensued around Lens after the capture of Hill 70 was said to be the fiercest of the war, and the Corps lost over 9,000 men. This conflict was halted by the request of the Second Army for Canadian help at Passchendaele. And so it was back again at the old Ypres front! If you meet a soldier who has been through the campaign on the Western Front and ask him about his battles, he will say that Vimy was easy but Passchendaele a nightmare, not merely because of "the pill-boxes", the concrete huts *en echelon* on the ridges, but also, and more, on account of the bogs over which they had to advance. Once off the "duck-boards" or covering planks, and you were in mud and slime, often up to the neck. It is clear that the High Command of each army valued the height, for the Germans were instructed to hold to the death, and the attempts to possess it had already cost the British dearly. Two gallant attempts by British and Anzacs had failed through weather and ground conditions. And, finally, in operations with four distinct phases, on October 26th and 30th, and November 6th and 10th, General Currie succeeded. The success cost Canada 15,000 men. Philip Gibbs calls it "the most terrific achievement of war ever attempted and carried through by British arms". "Nothing", he says, "that the Canadians did at Courcellette and Vimy and round about Lens was finer than the way in which on Friday they fought their way up the Bellevue

Spur, were beaten back by an intense destructive fire, and then, reorganizing, went back through the wounded and scaled the slope again and drove the German machine-gunners out of their blockhouses."

After reorganizing, the Corps returned to Lens and continued there till the great German offensive of March, 1918. Through these critical days the main body was held in reserve and not allowed to take part in the defensive operations. It was significant that in their formidable drive the Germans sheered off from Vimy, which was held by Canadians with orders from General Currie to die at their posts, if need be, but to take enough of the enemy with them to make the sacrifice worth while.

The tide of battle turned on July 18th, on the defeat of the Germans at Soissons; and preparations were made for the Allied offensive which was to result in the German debacle. The Canadians had been in training for their part in this attack, in which they were to play the proud rôle of spear-head. We may be certain Sir Douglas Haig chose for this spear-head metal already tried and proven. After the masterly camouflage in which Canadians were used and which deceived the enemy into expecting an attack in the north, the grand triumphal progress of British arms began at Amiens on August 8th and closed only at Mons on the day of the armistice, November 11th, 1918.

The magnificent work of all arms of the service in this advance has won unstinted praise and must fill all Canadians with patriotic pride. The chief engagements are described elsewhere in this book, but the mere official summary of them here transcribed is enough to arouse exultation at their remarkable achievements.

"As a fitting conclusion to the series of successes which marked the activities of the Canadian Corps in 1915, 1916,

and 1917, the notable victories of the final three months' fighting will ever rank among the proudest achievements of British arms.

“ Acting as the spear-head of the Allied thrust on the Western Front, commencing on August 8th and concluding at Mons on November 11th, the Canadian Corps effected captures which totalled over 32,000 prisoners, 750 field and heavy guns, and 3,500 machine-guns; the advance attained a depth of 95 miles, representing 100 towns and villages and 450 square miles of territory; and more than 300,000 French and Belgian civilians were liberated from German domination.

“ In this period the Canadian Corps sustained 46,100 casualties, but encountered and defeated decisively approximately fifty German divisions, or nearly one quarter of the total German forces on the Western Front.”

While we must remember that Canadians did not win these battles by themselves, and while we should be ever willing to pay just and generous tribute to the great services and accomplishments of all the Allied forces in this world-conflict, yet it is our first duty as Canadian patriots to understand and appreciate the work of our own countrymen. This work in all the arms of military service has redounded to the everlasting credit of Canada. The air service was one which particularly attracted adventurous Canadian youth, and a large proportion of both air forces were Canadians. One has only to cite aviators like Bishop, Collishaw, and Whealy (among a host), to remind us of distinctions won and marvellous efficiency acquired. General Currie, in his admirable messages to his troops, attributed the many magnificent successes achieved to efficient administrative and organizing staff work, coupled with supreme devotion, courage, and initiative on the part of

all ranks, the product of good discipline, good training, and good leadership. And we may well leave it at that, though we at home know of their incurable cheerfulness, too, and their invincible optimism.

The relations between officers and men may well be illustrated by this extract from a letter written by a private to the mother of a captain killed in battle. "I want you to know how I, with the rest of the boys of the old platoon, esteemed your son who now sleeps in France. To us he will ever be 'whizz bang Bill,' the best officer that ever left Canada. He who never ate a meal till he saw we were fed, and never turned in at night till he saw us under cover, and felt sorry he had not better food and lodging for us. In the front line he was ever with us; a word of encouragement here; a joke there; a cheery word always. Is it any wonder we loved him and called him 'a white man' and were willing to follow him anywhere?"

No longer should it be necessary to resort to foreign history, ancient or modern, for models to set before our youth of unselfish patriotism and devotion, of shining heroism and unflinching valour, of iron endurance against fearful odds, indeed, of every high and noble attribute of a soldier. We have such models by the thousand in our own citizen-soldiery; nor can we too soon know them or too often quote them. As our boys come marching home, and we greet them with welcoming cheers, we see through misty eyes the ghostly ranks of the fallen marching by their side; and to them also we pay tribute, "for the battles are won by the men that fall". And to all our heroic defenders we owe the sacred duty of making possible the realization of the ideals for which they fought, of making this our native land a better place to live in.

Lo! a cloud's about to vanish  
From the day:  
And a brazen wrong to crumble  
Into clay.  
Lo! the Right's about to conquer;  
Clear the way!  
With the Right shall many more  
Enter smiling at the door;  
With the giant Wrong shall fall  
Many others, great and small,  
That for ages long have held us  
For their prey.  
Men of thought and men of action,  
Clear the way!

## THE CAMPAIGN OF 1918

**Stemming the German Tide—March and April.**—The immense weight of the enemy's onslaughts in March and April and the unprecedented masses of men and material employed by him had called for practically the whole strength of the British armies and left the Allied forces greatly weakened. Correspondents and critics sought in some mysterious failure in the Fifth Army the reason for such a reverse. The true explanation probably lies in the recognized fact that either side was able to do such a thing if it paid the price—the Germans were willing to pay the price. The soldiers of the Fifth Army were not lacking; they fought as heroically as men ever fought. They fought where their leaders directed; they fought with individual initiative when their leaders were gone. Blacksmiths, cooks, railway men—every department of the service—became for the time a fighting service. In this defence some Canadian units played a noble part.

Canadian railway troops, in the discharge of their regular duty, in facilitating orderly withdrawal, incurred casualties running into the hundreds. They saved *many* hundreds! The Canadian Cavalry Brigade, by rearguard actions, materially assisted in slowing up the German advance toward Amiens. The Canadian Motor Machine-gun Brigade suffered a thousand casualties at Villers-Bretonneux; but they made possible the maintenance of that line of defence where early in April the Germans were brought to a standstill.

**Conditions in the Early Summer—May, June, July.**—The French, though they had not been engaged so heavily, had been obliged to employ large proportions of their



reserve in supporting the British. The American army, though rapidly increasing in numbers and efficiency, was not yet ready to take the field in sufficient strength materially to affect the situation.

The Germans, failing indeed to break the Allied line, had, however, stretched the resources of the Allies to the uttermost; and, further, had gained positions perilously near the most important strategic centres—Amiens and Hazebrouck. In these circumstances, the possibility of an immediate renewal of the enemy's offensive could not but be viewed with grave anxiety. On the other hand, the enemy had paid dearly for his successes in the loss of many of his best divisions. He must needs pause to restore his strength, to establish lines of communications through the devastated areas, and to make his preparations for a fresh advance.

It was well known that the Germans would attempt to force the issue as early as possible; the Allies hoped to postpone the final struggle, in the meantime making local attacks only where improvements in the line could be effected.

During these three months the Canadian Corps was not engaged at the front, but was placed with the General Headquarters Reserve. Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, in his despatch to the British War Office, speaks of his action in thus detailing these troops: "I arranged a special force for action as occasion might demand. Measures were taken to permit of the employment of the Canadian Corps for counter-attack in event of the enemy succeeding in piercing my front". A fine intimation this, of the trust imposed by the Commander-in-Chief in the Canadian soldiers!

**Battle of Amiens—August 8th-17th.**—The Germans had penetrated to within twenty-five miles of Paris.

Foch had found an exposed flank in the Soissons sector and had delivered a blow on July 18th, the success of which now gave some promise of a brighter future. But still Amiens was in danger, and the railway between there and Paris was under fire. Communications were badly impaired, and no great Allied success could be hoped for until greater ease of movement between the centre and the north was provided for. So Foch decided upon an attack over a twenty-mile front, east of Amiens. Most of this front was held by the British Fourth Army under General Rawlinson, to whom must be given a large share of the credit for suggesting the plan of attack.

The essence of the British scheme was *surprise*. Strong local concentrations must be brought about without disturbing the enemy. On the left, the Australians were doubled up on a narrow front. On the right, French divisions were added to the command of Rawlinson. The Canadians, at that moment near Arras, were to take the centre. The first task was to make this transfer of the Canadians without alarming the Germans.

When the order came to move, no intimation was given as to the destination. All units travelled by night and rested by day in woods and villages. All were enjoined to keep silence and suppress curiosity. Each night the great black serpent moved stealthily toward the south. By the night of August 5th the whole force was moved into Gentilles Wood—infantry, artillery, engineers, tanks, motor machine-guns, cavalry, railway troops—every branch of the fighting force. During the next two nights they got into positions for attack. Supplies were stored, ready to be sent forward; dressing stations were arranged for. The first part of the task had been successfully concluded—not a mean accomplishment in itself.

For once the weather was favourable; or, more correctly, no longer was scientific meteorology being neglected by the British. By its aid the attack was properly timed. A thick summer fog that morning blanketed the countryside over the twenty miles of front south of the Somme selected as the battle-ground.

At 4.20 a.m. August 8th, the artillery (which until then had not fired a shell) opened fire all along the line of which the Canadians held about one third. There had been no registering of ranges by trial shots; the setting of the range, the pointing of the guns, the weight of the charge, the rate of fire, had all been worked out by the staffs from maps furnished by the intelligence department. The gunners were like so many stokers in the hold of a cruiser. This was a new departure in gunnery and proved an unqualified success—some of the German batteries never came into action. The bombardment lasted but *four minutes*; four days was considered necessary in 1916!

Simultaneously, the tanks and the infantry advanced to the assault. The enemy was taken completely by surprise; utter confusion prevailed. In twenty minutes German prisoners were being passed back in hundreds. Soon the fog began to thin, and the Germans were, to some extent, recovering from the initial panic and manning their machine-guns. The big tanks were let through to ride down these nests; the "whippets" went ahead after groups of Huns, who, with true Teutonic instinct, were hastening in the direction of Berlin. Close in the rear moved forward the daring field artillery. Down the road toward Roye rushed the Motor Machine-gun Brigade exploiting all openings. Overhead flew the aeroplanes—leading the tanks into action, screening them by dropping smoke bombs, directing forces so as to am-

bush reinforcing enemy troops, pouring machine-gun fire into huddling soldiers, and all the while fighting off enemy formations.

So rapid was the advance that many batteries were taken in their entirety with the ammunition beside them. These were promptly turned on their erstwhile masters. In one place a German cook was captured as he was preparing breakfast for his hungry comrades in the seclusion of a disused pig-pen. (And yet the Germans used to speak of English swine!) In another place gunners were noticed firing their guns at tanks coming up the road; they hadn't time to pick up a defensive weapon against men who rounded the bluff in their rear. In another section was discovered an idle battery of howitzers; idle gun-crews were caught asleep in nearby dug-outs. A German column of transport wagons leaving a village began halting from rear to front. The officers in charge rode back to see what was wrong. Some Ontario men introduced themselves and relieved the officers of any further burden with respect to the transports.

Everything went as per schedule. The time to reach the first objective was 10.20 a.m. One division arrived five minutes ahead of the two others who were on time to the second. A hasty realignment took place; and the whole front moved on in the second dash of the attack.

About noon of this day of continuous battle, Canadian cavalry (for the first time operating with Canadian infantry) came into action gloriously. They had been secretly concentrated twenty miles in the rear, behind Amiens. They had ridden up during the morning and went pell-mell into the disorganized Germans. The infantry cheered them as they went through wave after wave over the wide level front. The horsemen signalled back their appreciation of the cheers. The tanks co-

operated with the cavalry thoroughly; while the cavalry handled the more open fighting, the tanks looked after the concealed points of resistance. Never before had all arms of the service worked together so extensively and successfully, and that over country that was absolutely new. What volumes this speaks for the marvellous work of the staffs concerned and for the reliability of the troops executing their plans!

By the evening of August 8th, the Canadians had advanced about seven miles and had captured 6,000 prisoners. (Five hundred of these prisoners had comprised a trainload of reinforcements who steamed into a village already in the hands of Canadian cavalry.) One hundred guns and immense quantities of materials also passed into the hands of the victors. Several villages were liberated from the domination of the Hun.

By the next morning the enemy had rallied sufficiently to deliver a counter-attack. Though so long in coming, it was still weak. The Canadians gave them a warm reception and returned the call by rudely quartering themselves upon two or three more miles of enemy territory. All branches were working smoothly; provisions in abundance helped to keep the men in fine fighting trim.

In the succeeding days the resistance gradually stiffened, as the Germans retreated into the old Somme battle-field. But the gate had been opened to let the French move around the end and gradually push the battle southward behind Montdidier. The logical results of the Canadian efforts continued to pile up for some time. On the other wing the Australians had been doing equally valiant service in the common cause.

The statistics are illuminating. Commencing on a front of four miles, the Canadians pushed south-eastward

fourteen miles, ending up on a front covering six miles. The total casualties in all ranks numbered fewer than 8,000. Yet the captures included 12,000 prisoners, 185 guns, 125 trench-mortars, 1,000 machine-guns, and much additional booty.

The Paris-Amiens railway was entirely freed from enemy interference, and the danger of the separation of the French and British armies was materially lessened. The effect upon the morale of the opposing troops was very evident. The Germans were definitely and finally thrown upon the defensive. For a very large proportion of these results Canada's soldiers were responsible. Canada may well be proud of her sons who went forth to war!

**Battle of Bapaume—August 21st-31st.**—The Battle of Amiens had been carried into the old Somme battle-field, where the land was so broken that tanks could not be used to the best advantage. In the circumstances, Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig decided to extend his attack to the north in a drive on Bapaume. The fighting would then be waged on a wide front; the enemy would not know when or where the main blow was to fall, and so would be led to throw in his reserves piecemeal as they arrived at the front.

In the ten days following, the Germans were hurled back across the Somme battle-field toward the Hindenburg Line. Bapaume and Peronne were both taken in this second stage of the British offensive. The enormous captures, especially in unwounded prisoners, placed beyond doubt the question of the declining morale of the enemy.

**Battle of Arras—August 26th-September 4th.**—The Germans were relying on the taking up of the Hindenburg defences to restore to their armies any loss in organization

or morale. Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig anticipated that a sudden and successful blow, of weight sufficient to break through the northern hinge of these defences, would surely produce results of the first magnitude. On the other hand, should it fail, the German reserve of 1,000,000 men, now resting in preparation for the final conflict, might easily turn the failure into disaster. It was a momentous decision calling for the exercise of much wisdom and much courage. He decided to go on.

The British were still really inferior in numbers. This condition had to be balanced, partly by a finer and more extensive use of tanks, but largely by asking every man to do the work of two or three. Units fought for two weeks and then were allowed to "rest" a week, "standing-to". After their heavy fighting in the south, the Canadians took *their* "relief" by making long nocturnal marches back to Arras. As when going in the opposite direction, so now, the movement was carried out without observation.

The ground of the new battle-field in front of Arras was not open, as it was in front of Amiens, but shell-torn, wire-strewn, and honeycombed with old and new trenches. Five complete trench systems barred the way. The first of these was the old British line, the present forward line of the German resistance. Then came what had been old front-line fortifications. The third line was a duplication of the first. The fourth was the notorious Drocourt-Quéant stronghold running north and south—a cap on the northern end of the Hindenburg system and considered by the Germans quite impregnable. Farther back still was a fifth supporting line. In such a country the use of cavalry and even of tanks would of necessity be very restricted; the burden would fall on the artillery and the infantry.

At 3 a.m. on August 26th, the Second and Third Canadian Divisions, assisted on the left by that Scottish division that had fought with them at Vimy Ridge, set off. They attacked from the mouth of the tunnels that had been built under Arras a year or so before. Before they could at all deliver their attack on the main trench systems, it was necessary to take the strong position at the hill and village of Monchy-le-Preux, two miles out. So vigorous was the advance that the Germans were pushed back on the south flank of the hill before they knew what had happened. The Canadians delivered their attack on the hill from the rear, disconcerting the gunners who had been expecting, and were prepared for, a frontal attack only.

Elsewhere over the five-mile front the Canadians were uniformly successful. By night enough had been achieved to give great encouragement for the future. During the next week they prosecuted the work of bringing the intervening territory within their lines and carrying their front forward within striking distance of the main rampart.

The Germans had always accounted the Drocourt-Quéant line a veritable Gibraltar, and marvelled at the audacity of our troops in attacking that point. They were taking no chances, however; they knew how important was the successful defence of the positions upon which they were now making a stand.

Every branch of the corps was fully prepared for action—motor machine-guns, armoured cars, cavalry, and forty tanks. The assault was launched by the First and Fourth Divisions, with English divisions on their right. At 5 a.m. September 2nd, following a carefully planned and skilfully projected storm of metal, the tanks and infantry advanced to the attack. Inside an hour a wide



gap was torn right through the whole maze of trenches, and the victors stood on firm land beyond. But it was an hour of terrible fighting! The Germans had been ordered by Ludendorff to hold at all costs. Some tried to carry out the orders of their chief. Others, less gallant, turned and fled before the advancing tanks and infantry, while many quickly surrendered. By 8 a.m. engineers were making alterations in the trench systems and patching up the road leading to Cambrai. Field batteries were already moved across, and "heavies" were on the way; with such speed and such completeness had objectives been carried!

It was evident that the Germans did not in the least expect a break-through. The German town-major of Dury was found asleep, along with his whole staff. An officer just returning from leave was met riding into the village—he returned too soon! The captures included butchers, bakers, and men of like services; even a concert company, with a long list of bookings, made a "tour" through to the Canadian rear.

During the afternoon further progress met with a good deal of resistance from machine-gun nests in woods, villages, and small trenches scattered over the open country. Aeroplanes reported German reinforcements being rushed up in every conceivable conveyance. Two strong Bavarian battalions were sent in against a Western battalion. Of those two battalions the two hundred men who escaped lost no time in making their surrender. There was hard fighting until dusk; but by nightfall this opposition had been largely overcome, and the Canadian troops dominated the situation. Another attempt at midnight suffered an even worse disaster than that which had befallen the two Bavarian battalions in the afternoon; the attackers were simply annihilated.

The Canadians were now almost two miles beyond the main barrier. Over 4,000 prisoners, from at least ten German divisions, had been sent back to the cages. Many whole batteries of heavy guns fell into Canadian hands, besides hundreds of machine-guns and an untold stock of materials which the Germans had had no time to destroy.

Early the next morning the airmen flying over the German lines came back with reports that the enemy was falling back in a manner that indicated a state of mind not at all restful. Only machine-gun groups were discernible west of the Canal du Nord. When this information had been verified by reconnoitring parties, the whole front began to move forward. Beyond the Canal the roads were choked with traffic of all kinds moving hurriedly eastward. The Canadian artillery concentrated its fire on the points of intersection and wrought terrible havoc among men and horses, vehicles and gun-carriages. The aeroplanes swooped down and emptied rounds of fire into the huddled masses. From the dreadful inferno there was no escape!

All the arms of the service lived up to the reputation won in the Arras battles. Indeed, the Canadian Corps had been making themselves so troublesome lately that the German General Staff saw fit to issue a document stating that fifty-two Canadian divisions (about 1,000,000 men) had taken part in the war! Such a paper was taken from an officer-prisoner.

Particular credit must, of course, go to the artillery and infantry: but they received the most courageous co-operation and backing from signallers, air force, medical units, nursing sisters, chaplains, and the Y.M.C.A. The officers played their part nobly. No fewer than five battalion commanders took personal charge of their men,

leading them out to meet counter-attacks. Excellent staff work and speed of execution kept the casualties down to 12,000 in the entire fight—a number only slightly in excess of the number of prisoners taken.

Strategically, the victory was even a greater one than that won at Amiens. It had always been a patent fact that sooner or later the problem of handling the Drocourt-Quéant stronghold must be faced. The solution decided upon was the unexpected one—the same as that applied to the Gordian knot by Alexander—the Canadians were commissioned to cut through it! And cut through it they did in the most incisive manner. The tremendous significance of their brilliant feat of arms is to be appreciated only when viewed in the light of the events that followed it.

### THE CAMPAIGN OF 1918—*Con.*

**The Capture of the Canal du Nord and Bourslon Wood.**—After breaking through the supposedly impregnable Drocourt-Quéant switch line, two more formidable barriers lay in the path of the Canadians who were advancing toward Cambrai. These were the Canal du Nord and Bourslon Wood. To the troops from this Dominion was set the task of taking both of these defences and of driving the Germans out of the area to the north and west of Cambrai as far north as the Sensée River.

The Canal du Nord is some fifteen miles in length, running about due north and south eight miles west of Cambrai. Between it and Cambrai and quite near the Bapaume road on a high ridge of land is Bourslon Wood, the same wood that the British under General Byng had taken ten months before when they all but pierced the Hindenburg line. The Canal is about sixty feet deep

and seventy feet wide at the top, with sides built of brick. All the locks on it and almost all the bridges across it had been blown up by the Germans when they retreated from the switch line a few weeks before. The bridges that were left were so exposed to the German guns in the nearby Bournon Wood that it was not considered safe to make use of them.

It was fully expected that the Germans would vigorously oppose the crossing of the Canal by the British armies; but the German General Von Bülow made a tactical mistake. He stupidly imitated General Gouraud's trick in the Champagne district in July. He withdrew most of his men from the magnificent moat of the Canal du Nord and left only a rearguard of machine-gunners to repel the attack which he was fully aware would take place. Throughout almost its entire length the Canal was deep in slush. Only in an unfinished stretch of 3,000 yards between the villages of Inchy and Moeuvres was it dry enough for troops to work across by scaling ladders. If Ludendorff had ordered a few thousand skilled, resolute men to be stationed under cover on the opposite side of the Canal, the armies of Byng could have been held up. As it was, this most difficult of all obstacles on the Western front was not strongly held.

Our men did not know how strong their opposition was to be, but they knew that the enemy had one hundred and five batteries ranged about the dry gap they were to cross. It was, indeed, a great risk, but they did not shrink from taking it, for they had the greatest confidence in their strength and in their luck; and it is now well known that they were justified in this faith.

Early on the morning of September 29th, before daylight, the men who were to cross first were assembled close to the Canal. They brought up scaling ladders

with them, and with these they were to descend to the bottom of the Canal, run across, and ascend on the opposite side. At the same time the Canadian guns were to put down a barrage on the opposite side of the Canal. These were the plans in brief. The success of the attempt depended on the first rush. An officer said: "Give us fifteen minutes and we shall be all right". The troops waited, tense but calm, for what seemed certain death. There have been few more trying situations on the eve of an attack.

At 5.20 a.m. the guns began to bark, and in a short time there was a crashing bombardment all along the line. At the same time the infantry who were to cross started on their dangerous trip. The first assaulting forces came to the dry part of the Canal, climbed down their ladders, and went up the opposite side on the ladders, one after the other, as rapidly as they could. Although they were carrying bombs and heavy packs they were less than fifteen minutes in crossing. They went across without a single mishap or a moment's pause. Arrived at the top they began bombing the enemy machine-gunners from the dug-outs to which they had withdrawn. The enemy began to put down a barrage on the side from which the Canadians had come, but it was too late, because the attackers were by that time safely across.

Having disposed of the machine-gunners in the near vicinity of the Canal, the Canadian forces spread out in fan shape to nine thousand yards northward, eastward, and southward. The batteries which the enemy intended should stay the advance had previously been located by aeroplanes and were abruptly overwhelmed by concentrating the fire of the guns upon them. At 7.15 a.m. the Fourth Canadian Division had reached a point 1,000 yards beyond the Canal and then turned toward Bourlon

Hill, the key position to Cambrai. The First Canadian Division followed up the line of the Canal and took the village of Marquion. The enemy was fighting stubbornly, but could not hold the courageous assailants. He was indeed taken by surprise by the rapidity of the advance, for at 9.15 a.m., the Fourth Division had reached the outskirts of Bourlon Wood. Hundreds of sixty-pound guns shelled the high wood and the approaches to the north, west, and south. The missiles contained only smoke, but in such huge quantities that the forces of the defence were entirely blinded. The smoke served as a protection for the advancing infantry. The enemy continued to sweep the slopes with bullets from their numerous machine-guns, but, of course, the attacking troops had anticipated this.

The Canadians who were leading did not attempt to climb the hill. In order to avoid the penalty in casualties that a frontal attack might involve, they went around it. At the same time the First Canadian Division broke across the German line above Bourlon Hill and, linking with the southern encircling brigades, helped to drive a broad wedge up the Arras-Cambrai road, reaching close to Raillencourt and Haynecourt, almost within rifle-shot of the north-western suburbs of Cambrai.

That the Canadian forces were able to advance so far and so rapidly in such a short time is due to the remarkable skill of the engineers and sappers, who were truly the organizers of this victory. Within four hours of the opening of the battle they had constructed railways up to the Canal and had flung a number of bridges over it, thus enabling the guns and trains of ammunition that had come up to pass over safely. The tanks also crossed over the bridges and rushed ahead along with the batteries to support the infantry and to complete the rout of the enemy.

At 12 a.m. the Germans, who were strongly reinforced, attacked again and again; but, with guns and tanks now available, the Canadians finally repulsed them; and at 1 p.m. Bourslon Wood and Bourslon village at the foot of the hill were captured by the Fourth Division.

The results of the battle were most gratifying to General Sir Arthur W. Currie, who had directed the operations. His troops had penetrated the enemy's territory to a depth of about five miles, had taken possession of the Canal du Nord, and had captured Bourslon Wood which overlooked Cambrai. They had taken prisoner some seventy officers and four thousand men. Besides this, one hundred and two guns, hundreds of machine-guns, and huge quantities of material had been captured. The casualties of the Canadians were not heavy, being much fewer in number than the prisoners taken. The day's work was considered exceedingly successful.

**The Encircling and Capturing of Cambrai.**—The Battle of Cambrai may conveniently be divided into three phases. The first and opening phase was the crossing of the Canal du Nord and the capture of Bourslon Wood. The second phase was the taking of the Canal L'Escaut and the bridge-heads to the north-east and south-east of the city, the former by the Canadians and the latter by the British forces. The third and closing phase was the struggle to enter the city on the morning of October 9th, and the meeting of the Canadians and the British in the centre of the city at daybreak the same morning.

Cambrai was a vital point in the Hindenburg defence system. The Germans realized that, if they had to surrender Cambrai, their whole line from St. Quentin to the Belgian coast would have to be readjusted. It would mean that they would have to give up the valuable mines

at Lille and retire from Douai, and also from Ostend on the North Sea. Realizing this, many German soldiers continued to fight with desperate courage under adverse conditions. At last they saw, clearly and thoroughly, that they were fighting to save themselves from perishing in the greatest rout of history; and they set themselves grimly to the task of holding out until an armistice could be arranged which would save them from utter defeat. Even while Ludendorff was preparing for a general surrender by an armistice, he issued from Headquarters the order: "Cambrai must not fall". It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the struggle for Cambrai was one of the severest in the history of the whole war.

The second and the most severe phase of the Battle of Cambrai occurred on September 30th and October 1st. After taking Bourlon Wood on September 27th, the tanks proceeded east toward Cambrai and broke up many machine-gun nests on the western defences of the city. Coming up to the city they passed around it to the north. The Third Division on September 28th took the famous Marcoing line at St. Olle, while the Fourth Division farther north had taken Sailly and had also reached the Marcoing line. During the day the front was pushed forward three thousand yards toward Cambrai.

On September 29th the First Division at the north took Abancourt Station, the Third Division took the western outskirts of St. Reimy, while the Fourth took Sancourt and approached Blécourt. It is, therefore, apparent that the plan of the High Command was to surround Cambrai on three sides, and thus force the Germans out of it. The Canadians were west and north-west of the city, while the British were south and south-west of it.

On September 30th the Canadians attacked at dawn, after spending a bitterly cold and rainy night along the



Cambrai-Douai road. The German line ran by the railway connecting these two cities at a distance from the road varying from two hundred to fifteen hundred yards. The spurs of Cuvillers and Ramilles were held as redoubts to the L'Escaut Canal, or Scheldt Canal, as it is sometimes called. In a most gallant endeavour the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions broke across the railway and pressed into the villages of Blécourt and Tilloy and swung their front forward against the murderous fire of machine-guns. The enemy commander, Von Albrecht, had concentrated a great number of batteries by the Sensée River, and with these he broke into the northern Canadian flank, winning back some of the high ground near the railway.

General Currie accepted the reverse; and, without allowing it to develop into a serious disaster, withdrew his men and spent the evening and night in getting more guns forward for a heavier barrage to match the great hostile parks of guns on his flank. On an arc of some five and a half miles around the northern suburbs of Cambrai there were eleven German divisions against the Canadian Corps and two English divisions, who had come up to support the Dominion troops in the dreadful wrestle for the city.

South of the Canadians, English and Scottish troops fought through the village of Proville to the south of Cambrai right up to its southern suburbs. They stormed the moat of the Canal, crossed it, and held it. Then they continued the struggle for the southern bridge-head, but did not at that time succeed. The German defence still held. On October 1st the attacks by the British and the Canadians were continued, and the fighting was severe and stubborn all day. The angry Canadians came out to avenge their little reverse of the preceding day. They did not capture Cambrai itself, but they loosened the enemy's hold upon it by the terrible losses they inflicted upon him in one of the greatest slaughters of the war.

General Currie had brought up his guns to balance the artillery of some eleven divisions which General Von Albrecht had massed for the defence. With a tremendous barrage fire the Canadians returned to the Cuvillers and Ramilles hills. The Germans had more heavy guns ready and fresh infantry forces in reserve. Their defensive curtain of fire fell five minutes after the barrage opened for the attack, and their machine-gun fire, with the machine-gunners only four yards apart, immediately met the Canadians. The British and Canadian artillery, which was the stronger, hammered and blasted a broad path for the Canadians, who broke through the line of machine-gunners and riflemen and reached the northern stretch of the Scheldt Canal, taking Ewars and Morenchies, and outflanking the city. As soon as it was known that the Canadians had reached the Canal, a great pillar of smoke arose from Cambrai. The incurable barbarians, having pillaged the famous city, were setting it on fire—and this at a time when they were appealing for an armistice!

But Von Albrecht was not ready yet to leave Cambrai. On October 2nd and 3rd he took desperate measures to hold the city for a few days longer, so that he might get better terms for the armistice which was impending. On these two days he resorted to the method of mass attack to press the Canadians back from the Canal line. The Germans poured along the valleys of Bantigny in such dense formation that the Canadian and British artillery shot them down at short range, through open sights, while machine-gunners and riflemen fired until their rifles were hot. It was a terrible slaughter. The men who wrought the massacre doubted whether there were ever so many Germans killed in a single fight. The columns came on faster than bullet or shell could kill, and the Canadians fell back a few yards near Blécourt. A Toronto battalion, however,

held on near Cuvillers for four hours on October 2nd, even after its position was encircled. But, after covering its withdrawal on either side, it cut its way back to the main line. Against the middle of the Canadian line the massed rushes continued till nightfall; but the Germans secured no compensation for their terrible losses.

During the next five days, October 4th to October 8th, the Canadian line was again pushed up to the Canal and closer to the city at the north-east where the bridge-head was located. At the same time the northern divisions pushed on eastward and northward, bending more and more the line held by the Germans. During these five days no attack was made on the Canadians, because the German forces were so weakened by the attacks of October 2nd and 3rd. With the Canadians now holding the high ground to the north and north-west of the city and the British holding the ground and the bridge-head to the south of the city, there was nothing left for the enemy to do but to retire. So, on the night of October 8th the Germans began to withdraw most of their forces.

At 1.30 on the morning of October 9th, it was planned that the Third Division should make an attack on the city in conjunction with the British to the south. The problem presented was twofold—first, the bridge-head to the north was to be captured and, secondly, a junction with the British was to be made in the city itself. Precisely at the hour arranged the infantry started south. It was very dark. No guides were used. The proper direction was maintained by means of compasses. The New Brunswick battalions were on the right; the Nova Scotia battalions on the left; and the French Canadians and a Montreal battalion formed the supporting troops. The Nova Scotians secured the crossings of the Canal at Point d'Aire, and soon afterward the bridge-head was taken and the city entered.

It was just at four o'clock in the morning, in darkness complete except for the light of the stars, that the Canadian and British troops, pressing close from north and south, joined hands in the chief square of Cambrai. At 5.30 a.m. all the troops had reached their objective in the city, four thousand yards from the starting-point. The enemy was in retreat behind his rearguards, and the whole city of Cambrai had been taken.

The success of the attack was as complete as could be imagined or desired. Had the British and Canadians not struck when they did, all the Germans would have escaped. But they did strike, and caught ten thousand of the enemy's men, killed many more, and drove the Teutons back before their preparations were complete. Here again the Hun played true to his nature and his reputation. Explosions, great and small, followed in some places by the crashing of roofs and walls, in others by the leaping up of fires, resounded from all quarters of the town during the first day of occupation. Many of the important buildings and churches, which the British and Canadians had refrained from shelling, were ruined by the destructive work of these set explosives, while everything of value that could be carried off was taken by the fleeing Germans.

Canadian losses in the taking of the city the last morning were very small; but the casualties in all the engagements of the preceding weeks around Cambrai were fairly heavy. This was to be expected, since the place was a veritable nest of machine-guns. While the losses were heavy, they were not fruitless, because these battles materially hastened the end of the titanic struggle of the long four years.

**The Capture of Douai.**—After the intense struggles on October 1st and October 2nd, when the Canadians reached and held the Canal L'Escaut to the north-east of Cambrai,

they still continued to harass the enemy in other directions. Raiding parties went out every day, and prisoners were brought in. On the morning of October 8th the troops of the First Canadian Division pushed on toward the northwest and came to the outskirts of Douai.

Douai lies on the Scarpe River not far from the junction of the Sensée Canal and the Scarpe. Between Douai and Denain there was a rather large salient projecting toward the Canadian line. Orders from German headquarters were to the effect that this salient was to be held at all cost. It was, accordingly, strongly manned. The reason that the retention of this part of the line was so necessary lay in the fact that Douai was the pivot about which the German line to the sea was swinging. The Fifth British Army was hammering toward Lille and the great manufacturing towns of northern France. The Belgian Army under King Albert in the north was driving the Germans at a rapid rate from the coast.

By October 16th it was evident to the enemy that Ostend, Lille, and Douai would have to be given up. On this date the Canadians were furiously attacking the Germans who were holding the salient. In this attack they did not cross the Sensée River and make a frontal attack, but went around the salient and, by pushing back the loops of the bag, they forced the enemy to evacuate it. The night of October 16th found the Germans who were assembled in Douai loading up all the available motor trucks with the archives and every other valuable article they could obtain. On the morning of October 17th the Canadians entered the town, and the German occupation of over four years was at an end.

The Canadians found Douai sacked but not destroyed. A half-hearted attempt was made to burn down a part of it, but as a whole the buildings were intact. But the hand

of the Hun was evident in the moving of the pictures. All the best of these were carried off. Everything of value that was movable was either taken or destroyed, and articles not of value were trampled to pieces. Even the cathedral was despoiled of its vestments. The shell was perfect but the contents were gone. It was a city of echoing silence, the inhabitants having been ordered out by the ruthless foe. Not even one German was to be found. They had all retreated toward Denain and Valenciennes.

**Denain.**—After retreating from Cambrai on October 9th, the enemy took up, as his new pivot of retreat, the salient thrust out in front of the radial line connecting Douai and Denain. This he held in strength while he continued his methodical retirement north and south. On October 16th the Canadian line extended from the southwest of Douai on the west side of the Canal de la Sensée to the south bank of the Sensée River and thence east, connecting with the British line. This position was maintained for some days without change though not without activity. The enemy harassed the whole line with machine-gun fire and at times threw over considerable quantities of shells. Snipers were very busy. A successful frontal attack could have been made by crossing the river, but it meant the massing of artillery and the payment of the price of victory in heavy casualties. It was not worth it. It was better to leave the Teuton in the salient in which he was sustaining heavy daily losses and which he would eventually be compelled to evacuate when the pincers from Courtrai and Valenciennes closed in upon him. Meanwhile Canadian artillery and aircraft were shelling his back areas and making it impossible for him to leave the salient without heavy loss in material. Heavy rains during these days added to the discomfort of all and to the difficulty of the enemy's problems. Nevertheless, he fought bravely to

the last ditch, serving his machine-guns until his pursuers were at him with bomb and bayonet.

On October 20th the Canadian Independent Force of Motor Machine-guns and the Cyclist Corps pushed out east along the roads to test the strength of the enemy's resistance. They found it weak; only a fringe of machine-guns had been left to keep up an appearance of fight. Some of these were captured when a Western Ontario battalion burst into the town. Touch was maintained with the enemy throughout the day, but his main forces were far beyond reach. In his retreat he had with customary thoroughness destroyed bridges and blown large craters in in the roads.

Since August, 1914, the town of Denain had been in German hands—its people in bondage. And what a reign of terror it had been! It is impossible to give an adequate picture or even to describe a small part of the heart-rending scenes occurring within those walls during those four long years of German tyranny and oppression! Human pen is unequal to the task. Only those who have actually experienced the ordeal can fully understand it. But one may gain a partial insight into what those awful days meant to this captive people when one reads the account of the reception they accorded to their deliverers. During the German occupation Allied flags had been strictly forbidden. But the Boche had not left the east end of the town before flags, as if by magic, appeared in hundreds. Women and children threw autumn flowers in the path of the Canadians as they marched in; pretty girls came forward and kissed their deliverers; small boys clung to the hands that had saved them; mothers held up their children to be kissed. Everyone exhibited the wildest enthusiasm, and "Welcome! Long Live England!" rang through the streets; everyone was ready with an enthusiastic reception to any one in khaki.

**Valenciennes.**—By October 30th the Canadian troops had advanced to the western outskirts of Valenciennes. They lay in the triangle formed here by the Scheldt and were safe from attack other than artillery concentration. Progress was prevented by a large flooded area in front of the town. The German engineers had made effective use of the intricate canal system and had dammed the Scheldt and the Canal de Conde, backing up the water south of Valenciennes, and thus placing a watery waste between their pursuers and the town. Some adventurous spirits among the Canadians sought to cross into the city from the south by boat, but returned unsuccessful, with their boat's sides riddled with machine-gun bullets. The Canadian guns could speedily have rendered the town untenable, but scrupulous care was exercised to prevent any damage being done. Fire was, therefore, concentrated on communications and areas of support. Thus pursuers and pursued sat for some days opposite each other, sniping, firing machine-guns, and engaging in an occasional artillery duel.

On November 1st the Fourth Division attacked south of the town, just above Famars. They were supported by a terrific artillery bombardment, one of the heaviest of the whole war, during which many smoke shells were sent over. This obliterated all view, and enveloped the Germans in a haze so dense that they could not see three paces ahead of them. No targets being visible, their machine-guns were helpless and their infantry as well. One German officer who was taken prisoner said the position was so hopeless that he led his company forward to surrender to the advancing Canadians. The enemy's guns, which had laid down a fierce fire, were soon overwhelmed by the power of the Canadian artillery. Thus the resistance was weakened, and the Canadian infantry pushed on to the railway running south from Valenciennes.



In certain places the enemy fought stubbornly at first, but they usually surrendered promptly when in a tight corner. Light tanks did invaluable work in destroying outlying machine-gun nests; and this enabled the advance to proceed so rapidly that in some places motor ambulances and mechanical transports were captured before they could be cranked up to get away. The whole attack was an unqualified success. The Canadians were surprised at the number of German dead lying about the little Rhonelle River after the fight. The banks were literally strewn with corpses numbering in the neighbourhood of eight hundred. Fourteen hundred prisoners, several artillery guns, and many machine-guns were captured, with but very light casualties among the Canadians.

The Germans evidently anticipated an attempt to storm the town, for they began to evict the civilian population. Vigorous counter-attacks indicated that they intended to cling to this important strategic point as long as possible. But their stay was limited. They knew it was only a matter of hours before the city must be given up, and they began to rush out by the eastern gates of the city all possible material, leaving snipers and machine-guns to protect their rear. Transports and troops raced to the north-east along the highway, in a despairing attempt to escape destruction by the Canadian artillery fire which was working havoc in the retiring ranks. The last stroke in the capture of the city was made on November 2nd, when converging infantry met east of the city and began a further advance on enemy territory. At 7.50 a.m. the Canadian commander sent back the following laconic message: "I have the honour to report that Valenciennes is completely in our hands". Many enemy machine-gunners had been captured, and many had sacrificed their lives to protect the rear of the main German line. The pursuit of the foe to the south-east was hotly continued.

So this historic old city of lace-makers passed out of the hand of the enemy after four years of oppression and brigandage. As the troops came riding across the bridge, a few scared faces peered from doors and windows. Then people began to pour into the streets, unmindful of stray shells and machine-gun bullets that were spitting about. They were so delirious with joy at deliverance from their long serfdom that this immediate danger was insignificant. Officers and men were smothered with the embraces of women who seemed unable to give adequate expression to their gratitude. This place, the prize of so many sieges and conflicts among robber princes in the days of chivalry, had probably never before witnessed such dramatic scenes. Sir John Froissart, that mediaeval knight, would have thrilled with exultation to behold his beloved city thus freed from the accursed tyrant and would have hailed its deliverance with just as hilarious an enthusiasm as these people exhibited.

**Mons.**—Mons is one of the more conspicuous names connected with the events of the great world war. It was at this Belgian town in August, 1914, that the old British "Contemptibles" received their first baptism of fire and put up such a tremendous resistance against the Hun hordes which swept through Belgium upon them. It was here that the famous strategic retreat commenced for which Sir John French became so famous. At Mons, too, the vision of the angels is said to have appeared. Many versions of this story are current, but the one most common among soldiers is as follows: In the midst of the battle, when the German masses were exerting the greatest pressure on the exhausted British, a sort of wall of yellow light suddenly appeared, and a figure on horseback, similar to that of St. George, led rank upon rank of horsemen and bowmen against the Huns. Later, many German prisoners

inquired who this strange leader was whom it was impossible to shoot down, and soldiers testify that many of the German dead were found without marks or wounds upon them. Whether the British were aided by supernatural power or not, the fact remains that the defence of the town was most heroic and when, overwhelmed by enormous numbers, they began the retreat, every yard of the way was bitterly contested and was bought by the Germans at the cost of many lives.

Now, after more than four long years of fighting, as the Canadians again approached this point where the conflict had commenced, memories of the British retreat and of their fallen brothers came crowding in upon their minds. Although rumours of an impending peace were in the air, there was a tacit understanding that Mons should be taken by the Canadians before peace intervened—that the Allied flag should fly in victory on La Grande Place of Mons before “cease fire” sounded. They were not urged to fight, on the contrary they had been restrained and cautioned against incurring unnecessary casualties; but the Canadian infantry had made it a point of honour to drive the enemy from the stronghold where the British first tasted the bitterness of retreat. Their triumph would have been marred had they not been able to celebrate it in this memorable little Belgian city.

On November 9th the infantry of the Third Division were moved on toward the city and were followed by field and heavy batteries. The Second Division co-operated on the right with an encircling movement and at nightfall began to shell the environs of the historic town. One company of the Princess Pats was close to the suburbs, and, although weary and worn by a three days' advance, they declined to be relieved. They were determined to get into the town before the armistice was declared. Mons is situ-

ated on low ground, dominated on the south and west by ridges and slag-heaps that afford ideal observation-posts for artillery. The outskirts were bristling with the enemy's machine-guns in carefully camouflaged emplacements, and these, together with his artillery from beyond the town, spat forth a really dangerous fire. So formidable was it that, though the Canadians had approached close to the place, it was deemed inadvisable to proceed farther. Of course, they were greatly handicapped, because the town was full of civilians and, therefore, no reply could be made to the enemy's fire. The infantry could have rushed the place, but this would have necessitated heavy casualties.

There was no method in the enemy's fire; shells of all calibres seemed to whizz aimlessly over, but the bombardment was, for that reason, all the more dangerous, because there was no certainty as to where the next explosion would take place. During the day this firing continued, and there seemed to be no hope of driving the enemy out of the town, at least before nightfall, but it was obvious that when once darkness obscured movement, the Canadian soldiers would commence operations. Clouds of smoke were seen rising from the city during the day, and it was learned later that the Huns, with their customary mania for destruction, were burning the building containing the inhabitants' food supply, which had been requisitioned and stored there.

Since it was useless to launch an attack upon the city in the face of the enemy's bombardment, the "show" was postponed till four o'clock on the morning of November 11th. Then the Canadian and British troops moved quickly forward toward the gates. There was more or less resistance in the form of an organized and tenacious machine-gun fire, but no spectacular fighting, because the enemy was so busy retiring, in order to avoid being com-

pletely routed, that he had little time to use in resisting. The city was captured in half an hour; and the few of the defending Huns who had not been killed or captured were fleeing with all speed from the eastern gates, hotly pursued by Canadian advance troops.

The first Canadians to enter Mons were the 42nd Highlanders. This battalion, through the parent regiment, the 5th Royal Highlanders of Canada, is affiliated with the famous Black Watch. On August 23rd, 1914, the last British battalion to leave the city was the 42nd Highlanders, the Scottish Black Watch. Thus Canadian troops have furnished a curious coincidence in British military history.

Early on the morning of November 11th, the roads leading to Mons were crowded for miles with all kinds and conditions of vehicles and people returning home from exile. Every sort of conveyance was utilized, from a hand wagon to a motor truck. Here an old woman and a dog were hitched to a small cart piled with the family belongings; there an old man and a cow attempted to drag along a top-heavy wagonette loaded to capacity; many of these people had marched all night and even part of the preceding day. In strange contrast to this weird procession the villages all along the road were en fête. Orderly battalions were marching along with bands playing, and batteries of artillery were clanking merrily over the cobblestones to join in the celebration which, rumour had it, would be held in Mons at eleven o'clock.

When the city was entered, the bodies of Germans slain in the recent battle still lay in the gutters and on the side-walk; but little notice was taken of this ghastly sight. Here and there groups of people gathered about the corpses as if they were an appropriate part of the function: indeed, the sight aroused some of the citizens

to such fury and hatred that they deliberately spat upon the dead men.

When the troops entered the city, which but a few hours before had been wrested from the Hun, the streets and public buildings around the square were black with people awaiting the joyful moment when the armistice should commence. The burgomaster with the notables of the city was present, and the cavalry, infantry, and artillery, grimy and mud-stained from battle and travel, rapidly formed into line. Slowly the hands of the clock moved toward the hour that would mark the close of the greatest war in history. There was little cheering, though much suppressed excitement, among the civilian multitude. All eyes were on the clock. Three minutes! Two minutes! A sharp command rings out and a thousand rifle-butts crash to the ground. "Fix bayonets! Present arms!" The massed bands burst into "God Save the King". Everyone comes to the salute! The war is over!

Then came the cheering. Everyone from the burgomaster to the last Canadian battalion was cheered to the echo by these Belgians, who were in a perfect frenzy of delight at their rescue from Hun bondage. In the afternoon a still more impressive scene was staged, when Sir Arthur Currie formally entered the city with his staff and troops. The parade was dazzling, and the civic reception spectacular. The Commander received the general salute and then dismounted to meet the burgomaster and the councillors of the city. A eulogistic address of gratitude and welcome was read, and then the General presented to the city his battle-flag attached to a lance. Afterwards he and his senior officers were conducted into the ancient council chamber where, by the light of tallow candles, they inscribed their names in the Golden Book. The officers in their war-stained uniforms and the city fathers in black

robes standing round the great carved council table, signing their names by the light of sputtering candles in a quaint old candelabra, made a historic scene which will always be remembered by the participants.

Another scene that will live in history was enacted on the same day at the cemetery, when representatives of the liberated city joined with the men of the Third Canadian Division in paying tribute to the eight gallant young Canadians who fell in the fight for Mons on the last day of the war. The ceremony was impressive, and no soldier of France was ever buried with greater honour. The last few words of the address to the fallen heroes give some idea of the feeling of the Belgian people toward them: "Mons will preserve their memory in stone and bronze, but more lasting still will be the tale of glory that every father will tell to his son and every mother pass on to her child in future years as an ideal to be worshipped. In the ages to come the name of Canada will be associated with the very concept of those words—Honour, Fidelity, Heroism. We ask you to carry back with you to your homes the homage of our eternal gratitude. We bow our heads at the graves of these heroes, but our hearts, proud to have been defended by them, cherish their sweet memory forever".

So the war ended with the Canadian Corps fighting to the last, successful to the last. Sir Arthur Currie, in a recapitulatory despatch, has said: "The Canadian Corps in the last two years of strenuous fighting never lost a gun, never failed to take an objective, and never has been driven from an inch of ground once consolidated. Yet its casualty list among the rank and file bears the smallest percentage in proportion to its strength of all the British forces".

## ORDERS AND DECORATIONS

The strips of coloured ribbon worn by officers and men on the breasts of their uniforms generally cause a civilian a good deal of mystification. About as far as most people can go is to associate the pieces of coloured silk with orders or medals, but very few can distinguish between them by a mere glance at the ribbons. Indeed, so nearly alike in colouring are many of these, that even an experienced military observer often identifies them by their positions rather than by their appearance. It is definitely laid down that ribbons of orders and decorations shall be worn in a certain sequence on the left breast, the position of priority being in the centre of the chest. The sequence laid down is as follows: 1. The Victoria Cross; 2. British Orders; 3. British Medals; 4. Foreign Orders; 5. Foreign Medals. Medals awarded for the saving of life are worn on the right breast. Though it is true that many decorations may be won in times of peace, yet a tolerably complete summary of a man's fighting career may be obtained by noting the coloured strips on his tunic.

Medals for war service were not issued generally to all officers and men engaged in a war until well on in the nineteenth century, the only exception in Great Britain being the medal for the Battle of Dunbar, 1650, which was awarded by vote of the House of Commons to all officers and men of the Parliamentary forces who had been present at the battle. During the wars with France, (1793 to 1815) it became customary to award medals to admirals and captains in the navy, but not to junior officers and men. It was not until 1848, by which time many of the veterans had died, that the Military General Service Medal was issued to all surviving officers and



men who had participated in these wars. The only exception to this was the Battle of Waterloo, 1815; for in 1817 a medal was issued to all officers and men who had taken part in it. It is interesting to note here that Napoleon had a medal all ready to issue to his troops when they should have taken London—in fact it bears the motto in French “Struck at London”—a case of premature preparedness.

The actual medals are worn only with full-dress uniform; and in the late fifties it became customary for officers and men to wear only the ribbons. Only one General Service Medal is given for a war or for a period of service covering several wars in one country. A good example of this is the “India Medal, 1854” which covered twenty-three wars, each indicated by a bar. Quite a different type of decoration is that awarded for gallantry in action; and it is with such decorations that this article is chiefly concerned. The V.C. is fully described elsewhere in this book.

**Distinguished Service Order, or D.S.O.**—This Order was established in 1886, to reward the distinguished services of officers (not N.C.O.’s or men) in the naval and military services of the Empire who had been specially recommended for it in despatches for service in the field or before the enemy. The badge consists of a gold convexed cross, enamelled white with gold edges, having on one side a wreath of green laurel leaves and on the other an imperial crown. The ribbon is blue, red, and blue. Five hundred and thirteen Canadian officers have been made companions of this Order during the war, forty-one have received a first bar, and six a second bar. These bars are indicated by small silver roses in the centre of the ribbon.

**Military Cross.**—This is commonly called the M.C., and was instituted on December 31st, 1914. It is entirely an army decoration; and no person is eligible to receive it unless he is a captain, a commissioned officer of lower rank, or a warrant officer. It consists of an ornamental silver cross, on each arm of which is an imperial crown and in the centre the imperial cypher "G.R.I". The ribbon is white, purple, white. Recipients are entitled to use the letters M.C. after their names. Bars are also awarded for further service, and the same regulation, that is, wearing a silver rose for each bar, applies here. During the late war 1,882 Military Crosses and ninety-nine bars have been awarded to Canadians.

**Medal for Distinguished Conduct in the Field, or D.C.M.**—This decoration was instituted in 1845. It is exclusively for non-commissioned officers and men in the army and is given as a reward for gallantry in action. The ribbon is crimson, blue, crimson. Men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force have won 1,186 D.C.M.'s and sixteen bars for gallant conduct during the Great War.

**Military Medal.**—In March, 1916, His Majesty instituted this new medal, to be awarded to non-commissioned officers and men of the army for individual acts of bravery brought to notice by the recommendation of a commander-in-chief in the field. The medal is silver, and the ribbon is dark blue, having in its centre three white and two crimson stripes alternating. In the course of the recent war 6,697 Military Medals, 271 first bars, and ten second bars have been awarded to Canadians.

**Meritorious Service Medal.**—This decoration was instituted in 1845. It is awarded to non-commissioned officers—generally to sergeants—for distinguished ser-

vices and devotion to duty not actually under fire. The ribbon is crimson with white edges and a central white stripe. Most of the awards of this medal were made to railway and transport troops whose work, often under shell fire, was above all praise. It is well known that railway stations and lines, ammunition dumps, and supply depots were the objects of special attention from German gunners and airmen. During the great German offensive last spring, Canadian railway troops salvaged enormous military stores. For such work 430 Meritorious Service Medals were given.

**Royal Red Cross.**—This decoration was instituted in 1883, really corresponds to the D.S.O., and is awarded nursing sisters who may be recommended for special exertions in attending to sick or wounded soldiers or sailors. Ladies upon whom the Royal Red Cross is conferred are distinguished by the letters R.R.C. after their names. This decoration consists of a crimson enamelled cross with the words "Faith, Hope, Charity" and the date "1883" on its arms. The ribbon is dark blue with crimson edges and is worn in a bow on the left shoulder. For their work, 192 Canadian nurses have been given this reward.

Besides the above decorations, many others have been won by Canadians for their gallant and devoted services. Thus 3,333 have been "mentioned in despatches" and 226 have received various British honours such as the Distinguished Service Cross and Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Royal Air Force Cross. Finally, 410 have received French decorations, chiefly the Croix de Guerre and the Legion of Honour; while still others have had their services recognized by the Belgian, Serbian, Italian, Montenegrin, and Russian Governments, as shown below. This makes a grand total of 15,574 acts of

gallantry and devotion to country performed by Canadians during the war. It must be remembered, too, that this represents only a very small part of the brave acts really performed; for, without in the least belittling the men who have been rewarded, it can readily be seen how many hundreds of acts just as brave go unnoticed and, therefore, unrewarded, in the heat and confusion of battle. Probably, if the figure given were multiplied by ten we should be a good deal nearer the truth. The total as it stands is stupendous; it should make every boy and girl who sees it swell with pride, not the flag-flapping, boasting "swank" that so often passes as pride, but the calm determination to be worthy of the sacrifices and the awful trials that these scraps of coloured ribbon stand for.

DECORATIONS AWARDED MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN  
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE UP TO DECEMBER 20TH,  
1918. (From *Canada's Part in the  
Great War*)

Victoria Cross .....	53
Distinguished Service Order .....	513
1st Bar to Distinguished Service Order .....	41
2nd Bar to Distinguished Service Order .....	6
Military Cross .....	1,882
Bar to Military Cross .....	99
Distinguished Conduct Medal .....	1,186
Bar to Distinguished Conduct Medal .....	16
Military Medal .....	6,697
1st Bar to Military Medal .....	271
2nd Bar to Military Medal .....	10
Meritorious Service Medal .....	430
Mentioned in Despatches .....	3,333
Royal Red Cross .....	192
Other British Honours .....	226
Foreign Decorations—	
French, 410; Belgian, 7; Serbian, 7; Italian, 28; Montenegrin, 8; Russian, 159 .....	619
	<hr/>
	15,574

An official statement recently made (March, 1919) in the House of Commons, Ottawa, shows that the figures to date are higher than those given in the above list. The Victoria Cross was awarded to 61 Canadians, the D.S.O. to 605, the Military Cross to 2,312, the D.C.M. to 1,453, and the Military Medal to 7,785. The numbers may be higher still when all the records have been completed.

## THE STORY OF PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY

The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry was raised and equipped by the efforts and munificent generosity of Major Hamilton Gault of Montreal. The regiment was composed largely of South African veterans and British reservists; but there was also a goodly proportion of Canadians coming from anywhere between Halifax and Vancouver, between the international boundary and the Arctic Ocean. There were miners from New Ontario, cow-punchers from Alberta, lumber-jacks from British Columbia, and trappers from the Hudson Bay Territory. Hard men they were, men who could "shoot the eye off an ant", men to whom the Great Adventure made the strongest and most immediate appeal.

Their first parade in Ottawa in August, 1914, was a strange spectacle. They wore all sorts and conditions and colours of equipment. One large fellow from British Columbia had a complete Highland costume, except that he wore ordinary gray socks, while a stiff "Christy" hat with a big feather adorned his head. Another wore a Toronto police tunic and bright gray trousers, while still another had an ordinary "civie" suit, but wore on his head a C. P. R. parlour-car conductor's cap much too small for him, the source of which he firmly refused to disclose. When seen later, on a Sunday near the end of August, they were all in service khaki, not nearly so picturesque, if more soldierly. This was at Lansdowne Park in Ottawa, when the gracious Princess Patricia presented to the regiment the colours which she had worked for them with her own hands.

The Patricias, containing a far larger proportion of experienced soldiers than any other unit in the Canadian

Corps, were not called upon to endure so long a period of preparation as the rest of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. They went to France about the end of 1914 and were attached to the 80th Brigade of the 27th Division of the British Expeditionary Force—which had suffered very heavily and was badly in need of reinforcements. The Pats took over a considerable length of trenches in front of the village of St. Eloi. Throughout the months of January, February, and part of March, 1915, the Battalion carried on with no more than the ordinary casualties, sometimes “stone-walling”, sometimes advancing a little, rarely giving ground. Their first engagement of major importance was fought on March 14th-15th before St. Eloi, when, to quote John Buchan, “their deeds were a pride to the whole Empire”.

On March 20th the Battalion suffered its severest loss to date, in the death, by a stray bullet, of its commanding officer, Colonel Francis Farquhar. He had been military secretary to the Duke of Connaught in Canada and the Pats were really his creation. He had that rarest of gifts—the power of obtaining the strictest discipline without antagonizing his men. Hardly a Pat but idolized “Fanny” Farquhar.

After Colonel Farquhar's death, the Battalion retired to rest billets and in April took over a section of line in Polygon Wood in the Ypres Salient. Here they lay midway between the sanguinary struggles of St. Julien and Hill 60, spectators of both, waiting with ever-growing impatience for the order that never came, to take part in the battle where the newly-arrived Canadian First Division was suffering such a cruel ordeal. Although subjected to constant alarm, they had a comparatively quiet time of it. By day and night the gun-fire of both battles beat back on them in great waves of sound. Those

were the days when the first rumours of German poison gas, perhaps the most fiendish means ever devised by distorted minds to destroy human life, began to get about the front lines. Time and again the Pats donned their water-soaked handkerchiefs for the vapour that always threatened. Quick on the heels of the first news of the gas, the women of Great Britain with one accord laboured day and night, so that shortly there poured into the trenches a steady stream of gauze pads for mouth and nostrils. These were soaked in the foul water of the trenches, shell-holes, and even graves, and were a great improvement on the filthy rags the poor fellows called handkerchiefs. Always there were the glowering fires of a score of villages, while nearer was the greater mass of burning Ypres; but always in the temporary lulls came the full-throated spring songs of many birds, like the promise of God to those dazed, nerve-shattered men.

So overwhelmingly superior were the Germans in numbers and artillery that by May 3rd they had worked around to the right and left of the Pats so far that the supporting British batteries turned around the other way and fired straight backward without shifting their positions. Soon they were withdrawn and the infantry "stuck it" alone. Then came the dreaded order to retire; and, under protest, like the beaten men they knew they were not, the Pats fell back to new lines three miles to the rear. The movement was executed under cover of darkness and was accomplished with little or no loss of men or material. On the following days, up to May 7th, the Pats suffered badly enough, but were all in high spirits. On the night of the 7th a roll call showed their strength to be 635—less than half the original total.

Then came May the 8th! A little over a year ago the writer was standing in front of the Château Laurier in



Ottawa, when Major Hamilton Gault came out of the revolving doors and limped down the broad stone steps toward a waiting automobile. As he reached the sidewalk, a private wearing the cap and collar badges of the Pats came along. He was minus one arm and a terrible scar slashed his face from ear to chin. As he saw Major Gault, he hesitated; then they both grinned and, clasping hands, said in the same breath, "May the 8th". It was like a password, the sign of an imperishable brotherhood.

The night of May 7th was quiet—"too good to be wholesome", said one of the men. Then about 4.30 a.m., across the dead quiet of the mist and smoke-ridden Flemish morning, came a single German shell. In an hour the bombardment had worked up to an intensity that no one had hitherto seen or even imagined. The fire was especially destructive because it was enfilade—that is, it played up and down the trenches like a hose, not from straight in front, but from concealed positions on the right. Each burst of high-explosive shells, each terrible pulsation of the atmosphere, if it missed the body, seemed to rend the brain. The word-tools do not exist to describe the horrors of that day. Besides, the foul fumes of the bursting projectiles eat into the tissues of a man's brain and lungs, destroying, with other things, most memories of the shelling.

Very early in the bombardment Colonel Buller, the new commanding officer, was hit by a shell-splinter; then Major Gault had his left arm and thigh shattered; and by 10.30 a.m. only four officers, all lieutenants, remained fit for action. The senior of these was Lieutenant Niven; and, during the rest of the day, he fought the Battalion, to his undying fame. So short were the British of artillery at this time that a German airplane hovered over the Pats' trenches at a height of 300 feet, and, by drop-

ping smoke bombs, directed the terribly accurate fire of the German batteries.

It was with a sense of intense relief that the Pats at last saw the German infantry break from their trenches and charge across the open. Here was a chance to give as good as they got at any rate! Standing, head and shoulders fully exposed, or even leaning on their stomachs far out on the top of the ragged parapet to get a better rest for their rifles, the Pats gave the enemy "rapid fire". Every hand was racing at the lever, rifle barrels grew red-hot; had a cartridge jammed, the metal would have snapped like a pipe-stem. Then the gray-green line wavered; soon there were two such lines, one lying in huddled heaps, one going in the other direction. The business then was to keep as many as possible of these from getting back over the hill.

By this time the Pats' communications were all cut—not a telephone wire remained unbroken. However, Lieutenant Niven established contact with the British regulars on his right and left; and very comforting it was to the pathetic little remnant to know that, at least, they were supported by seasoned troops. The Germans had now located the Pats' machine-guns and proceeded with every shot in their locker to demolish these. One by one they were buried or smashed. One gun was actually disinterred three times, when finally a shell destroyed both gun and crew.

At 1.30 in the afternoon a cheer arose from the trench. It was for a platoon of the King's Royal Rifles which had come as a reinforcement. Nor did those Tommies come empty-handed. They brought a real prize package in the form of a machine-gun. Now Lieutenant Niven got word through to Brigade Headquarters as to his desperate plight. "Can you stick it?" asked Headquarters. "Yes.

Sir", said Niven, and back he went to the awful shambles. Twice more the Germans charged and twice more they were rolled back. The last time they got so far that they mounted the parapet and bayoneted the wounded Pats below them; but no more than a few individuals actually entered the trench.

By ten o'clock that night the Pats had all vacated the fire-trench and were holding the support and communication trenches. Lieutenant Niven held a short burial service over the fallen, most of whom were shell-buried in the fire-trench; and the survivors then retired to reserve trenches. The roll was called and 150 answered it of the 1,800 who had come to France a few months before!

Even then the Battalion had no rest. On May 9th they were again holding another part of the line; on the 10th they carried ammunition to Belle-Waarde Lake. On the 13th they were sent to support the Fourth Rifle Brigade, and on all these days they suffered casualties. From then until November 27th, 1915, they "carried on" at different points, and on that day they were reunited with the Canadian Corps after a long absence. Such is the story of the Patricias. It is inadequately told, because the words do not exist to tell it properly; but, as Lord Beaverbrook says: "Never in the history of arms have soldiers more valiantly sustained the gift and trust of a lady".

The subsequent history of the Pats is part and parcel of the story of the Canadian Corps. They were brought up to strength by companies recruited in the Canadian universities, and soon presented an odd mingling of boys and veterans. Thus they are particularly interesting to school-boys, because many of the young men in these university companies were just out of High School. The

following is a fairly complete list of the engagements in which the Pats took part: 1915—St. Eloi; Polygon Wood; Ypres. 1916—Zillebeke; Somme; Regina Trench; Courcellette. 1917—Vimy Ridge; Hill 70; Passchendaele. 1918—Amiens; Monchy; Jigsaw Wood; Cambrai; Valenciennes; Mons.

## OVER THE TOP! TO BLIGHTY!

*Written by a Canadian who Served in the Imperial Army*

Once again my turn had come! "Over the top" for me on the morrow, and my platoon in the first attacking wave. This was the post of honour, of course, but no less surely the post of gravest danger. I had no premonitions. That I would not be killed, whatever befell, had been my firm conviction—my "hunch", as Tommy says, ever since I had come to France; but in my wildest imaginings I had never dreamed that I should figure as I was destined to do in an incident such as I have to tell.

A V.C. incident it is—the story of a V.C. earned, though never awarded. I who tell it am alive to-day because it was my good fortune to have in my platoon a young English lad of V.C. calibre. Pentelow was his name, lance-corporal his rank. I had not known him in England, and as he joined me in the line just three days previous to this day of which I speak, I had little opportunity to become acquainted with him—hence it can be seen that the deed he did was not done through any personal feeling or friendship for me. He was simply doing his duty as he saw it. In his path of duty there lay another "bit" to do. Without stopping to count the cost, and utterly unconscious of the fact that, in the truest sense, he was playing the role of hero, he undertook and did this, his last "bit".

It was in September, 1916, the third month of our first terrific Somme offensive. My Division, the famous "First" of the English Army, one of the original "Contemptibles", had been thrown into the fight about the middle of July, and our rest was long overdue; but the

Corps Commander had set us one more task, with the promise that our well-earned holiday would follow immediately. The objective that September day was a stretch of trench on the High Wood crest, and we of the Northamptonshire Regiment were the centre of the attacking force. Our particular duty was the clearing of the upper section of the wood itself. It was small but of immense strategic value, for it crowned the slope and commanded the country for miles around.

At one stage of the battle the whole wood had been captured, but by desperate counter-attacks the Germans had regained control of the upper half. We had clung stubbornly to the lower and more difficult ground, and again and again had tried vainly to recover the rest of the wood. The famous Black Watch Regiment, with the help of liquid fire, gas, and a heavy bombardment, had made the attempt and had been beaten back. A hidden strong-point, a veritable nest of machine-guns, made the German position almost impregnable. In our attack no gas or fire were being used, nor did the "heavies" give the German trenches a preliminary "strafing"; but a mine had been driven under No Man's Land. This, it was hoped, would wipe out the strong-point and demoralize the defenders.

It came to my knowledge later that our particular "bit" was really somewhat in the nature of a sacrifice attack. Those in authority had decided that High Wood could not be cleared by a direct frontal assault. It was necessary first to capture the flank trenches. The offensive on this day was designed, primarily, to secure the flanks; but to attack these, and not at the same time make at least a feint attack on the centre, would leave all the enemy guns in the wood free to play on the flanking troops. To the civilian mind it comes as an awful thought

—“deliberately throwing away lives to keep guns occupied!”—but in this instance the tactics were fully justified. The guns were kept busy! The flanks were captured, but the wood itself did not fall until a week later. It held out until practically surrounded on that occasion when “tanks” were first used.

“Zero” was set for a quarter to five in the afternoon. Promptly at that hour the mine was to be exploded, and it was to be the signal for the attack. It took us all morning and most of the afternoon to march our men up from support trenches and make the necessary preparations in the “jumping-off” trench; but by 4.15 I had my men all ready, mounted on the fire-steps, tense and anxious for the fateful signal. A whole half-hour with nothing to do but think! What were my thoughts? It first occurred to me that I had eaten nothing since early morning, so I took out my haversack ration. That day it happened to be an enormous beef sandwich, and, as I was about to bite into it, a rather curious thought came to me. The previous day one of my pals had said: “Don’t forget, old chap, that if you get hit in the tummy to-morrow, it is just as well to have your tummy empty”. I knew that to be perfectly true. “Perhaps I had better not,” I thought to myself, “I may get mine in the stomach to-day.” I smiled at the thought, decided to risk it, and set to, but to be perfectly honest about it, I had no “stomach” for that sandwich anyway! The most of it found its way again into the haversack. Then I took my post at the end of my platoon and waited.

No need for me to say that that was the longest half-hour I ever knew. Never did seconds tick away so slowly as those seconds. Each one seemed to me a minute, a day, a week! We could hear the booming of our heavies away in the distance; we could hear the barking of our

trench-mortars just behind us; but from across No Man's Land, from Fritz's trench, there came not a sound. Fritz was lying low waiting for "zero" even as we were.

But all half-hours have an end. "Zero" came. The mine went off—a terrific roar—and my first impression was one of terror as I looked above and tried to dodge the clods of earth that came hailing down upon us. Next, Hell's inferno had broken loose! The crack of rifles, the rattle of machine-guns, the bursting of shells, the awful "sw-ish-ish-ish" of bullets sweeping the parapet—the din of it all rings in my ears to this day. Then in a flash: "I've got to go over into that! It's sure death!" My blood ran cold. What made me go? I have tried and tried to answer that question—in vain; but something stiffened my knees and I went. "Come on men," I cried, and we were away.

We tried to go fast, of course, but we couldn't. Shell-holes, tree-trunks, bully-beef tins, barbed wire, débris of every kind impeded our progress. I remember dodging to the right to avoid some barbed wire. A flick on my sleeve—"There! They've got me in the arm!" A pause to pull the pin from a bomb, then I hurled it blindly ahead. My orderly following close behind me got a bullet clean through his steel helmet and dropped. A marvellous escape, I learned later, for he was not even wounded. On and on we struggled. No pen can describe the awful din and turmoil of those minutes of our mad, mad rush. How long they lasted, how far we got, I have never learned. In the twinkling of an eye it happened. I "got mine"—As Tommy expresses it—fair in the middle, four nasty shrapnel fragments from a bursting shell. (Missed the stomach by inches, let me add; so I might just as well have eaten the whole of that sandwich!) The next moment I was on the ground and realized at



nce, instinctively, that I was exposed where I lay and could easily be picked off by a German sniper. So somehow—I don't know how, for I never moved again for about four months—but somehow I did manage to scramble into a shell-hole; and there I lay flat on my back, perfectly helpless but still conscious. And there I found Corporal Pentelow and two other men, all more or less seriously wounded. At first I bade them "carry on", and they opened fire with their rifles and my revolver; but I soon saw how futile was our effort, so I ordered them to cease fire.

Then the Corporal crept to my side. "Let me bind up your wounds, Sir", he said, but knowing that I was perhaps best left undisturbed just then, for my heavy shirt, my "woolly", and my tunic served very effectively as bandages, I told him to look to himself. "Well here, Sir, take this then", and he handed me a throat tablet. "Put that in your mouth," he added, "it will keep your lips moist." Then, with an apology for taking the time to attend to himself, he bound up his own wound.

From now on I was conscious only at intervals. It was still broad daylight. Fritz was still searching No Man's Land to pick off any wounded lying exposed. One of my men, deceived by the comparative calm, raised his head cautiously to calculate our distance from the enemy trench. A sudden sharp "crack", and the poor lad "went west". But when I next became conscious I found that the corporal had begun his next "bit". He was going to save his officer's life.

To leave me there unattended until nightfall would mean my death. To pick me up and carry me back in the open would be madness. The only thing to do was to drag me back, keeping me so low that I could not be seen. So he began. At my head there was a depression

opening out of our shell-hole. Through that he dragged me for a yard or two. With his entrenching tool he then hollowed out a shallow trench—along this slowly carefully, for another few paces; connected up at that point with another shell-hole. Inch by inch, foot by foot, yard by yard, he dragged me along, and when next I came to I found that he had gotten me to within six or eight feet of our trench and safety.

Just at that spot we happened to be opposite our sniper's post—a narrow trench driven out in front of our line, widened at the end just sufficiently to accommodate two or three men. The officer in charge there that day happened to be a particularly good pal of mine, and most distinct perhaps of all my recollections of those awful hours was his cry at this moment: "Keep your head down, keep your head down!" A most vivid reminder it was even to my dimmed senses that not yet was the danger over. The Germans were still trying their best to finish me off and to put an end to my gallant corporal, too. Thanks to his wonderful thought and care for me I was still safe, nor had a bullet as yet found him. But the end came more quickly than I can tell it. That last tragic scene will never fade from my memory. It is an indelible picture. As though it happened but yesterday, I can still see the figure of the corporal bending over me as he worked away in feverish haste, for his task was almost done. I was his one concern. "Another minute and I'll have him safe!" Some such anxious thought was reflected on his face as I looked up at him. Then, suddenly, quick as a flash, there came the sharp "crack" of a German rifle, and his head dropped lifeless on my knee.

Two months later, while I was still in hospital, and while my writing was still shaky and almost illegible, I

wrote a full account of this incident to the proper authorities and tried to have the V.C. awarded to my noble hero. It has been awarded many times in previous wars for just such a deed as this. But I did not succeed. And the reason? Not because the deed failed to reach the V.C. standard of other wars, but because in this war the standard for the V.C. has had to be raised; and this is due only in part to the unprecedented numbers engaged on active service. In this war the incident I have told has been duplicated times without number. We who have returned from "over there" cannot believe that soldiers ever before responded more nobly or unselfishly than did our British soldiers to that loud duty call that went forth in August, 1914; and I tell this story of my wounding and my rescue to do honour to them, and in order that the name of Corporal Pentelow may be recorded at least on the roll of unofficial V.C.'s.

## THE UNKNOWN HERO

Not all the heroic deeds of the war are told in the records of V.C. awards. Many a soldier who well earned the highest reward for valour lies at rest in Flanders' fields beneath the blood-red poppies, and with him sleep all who could tell of his glorious death. Their stories will never be told, even their names will never be known; never shall we have that feeling of intimate kinship with them which full knowledge of their names and deeds would bring. But let us never forget that the victory in which we now rejoice was bought, and dearly bought, with the blood of these unknown men who guarded us from worse than slavery. This story tells of one of these.

Not even his name survives him. If any knew, they are not here to tell. He reached the Princess Pats with a draft of fifty men in the spring of 1915, when the regiment was helping to hold the terrible Ypres Salient. He was just a golden-haired lad in the first years of budding manhood. The desire of life was strong in him. Who that is young likes to die? He could see before him a vista of happy years crammed full of pleasure and of joy. For to young men the treasures of life seem sure and limitless. They are his for the taking. That death should snatch them from him before he has even touched their fringe is a thought unthinkable.

This youth saw death on every hand. No matter how quiet the day might be, it took its toll of the haggard men who held the trenches. No night passed without adding its quota to the dead. The lad sickened at the thought that he might be the next; in his heart he prayed that it might not be he, and then cursed himself for the selfish, cowardly wish. When the heavy shells kept bursting on the trench, and the air was rent asunder with nerve-

racking noise, a terrible fear clutched at his heart—death, death, nothing but death—until he was nearly crazed with the overwhelming desire to run, hide, get away at any cost from the terror and horror of it all. But he did not run; something stronger than his fear overcame the shrinkings of the poor flesh; something greater than his panic held him firm and steadfast amid the carnage. Therein lies true heroism—the power to conquer fear when known in all its terror.

So the days passed until the morning of May 8th, that terrible day on which the Princess Pats were almost annihilated. Nothing that had gone before was comparable to the hideous agonies of that awful day. The Hun had made an enormous concentration of his artillery in that sector. The trenches were pounded from end to end for hour after hour, until they ceased to be trenches and became writhing lines of tortured earth and flesh. The least sign of life in them brought heavy fire, a hand or helmet carelessly exposed drew a hurricane of shells. The air was literally filled with lead. The passing bullets droned continuously, like the buzzing of a swarm of angry bees. The air was torn apart with the heavy explosions and driven like solid balls against the men until their bodies ached with its impact. Several times in the course of the day the enemy attacked in an attempt to take the trench. Then only came relief from the incessant shelling; and the men in joy of action sprang at the foe and took bloody toll for the agonies they had endured. With rifle clubbed, with thrusting bayonet, with smashing fists, they drove him back. That day added a glorious page to the annals of the regiment.

After one such attack, the Pats counter-attacked and chased the discomfited Hun back to his trenches over No Man's Land. Then the heavy shelling began again, and

the Pats ran back to such shelter as their trench afforded them, taking their wounded with them. Then again came the strain of waiting for the next attack.

In that day's work the lad had taken his full part. He had waited and fought with the others. He had crushed the horrible fears which had threatened to overpower him, and death, which he had looked for every moment, had passed him by. The day was almost gone, and with night the regiment might be relieved. Hope was creeping into his heart that the day might, after all, end before his turn should come. He thought vaguely of his home, his mother, the bright-eyed maiden waiting for him in far-off Canada. Perhaps he might see them again. His luck was with him yet—he would live!

An order was passing down the line. "Volunteers to bring in wounded!" Some poor fellow, hit in the last counter-attack, was lying out there exposed to the fury of that hellish fire. Few regiments would have tried to bring him in, for the attempt meant the almost certain sacrifice of two lives when every man was needed. But the Pats made it their boast that no wounded man of theirs was left to suffer without help, and that boast must be made good at any cost.

Still the task seemed so hopeless that the order passed by man after man without a volunteer. Small blame to them! Not one of them would have hesitated a second if there had seemed the least chance of accomplishing the feat, but why throw away one's life to no purpose?

At last one man, a sergeant, volunteered. Two were needed, and still the word was being passed along without a second response. The lad watched the men with eager eyes, praying in his heart that some one would volunteer before the word reached him. He knew that he would have to go if asked. Something stronger than himself

would drive him to it. His only hope was that the word would never reach him. Still the shout came nearer. Would it come to him? No, no, a thousand times no! Life was sweet, life was glorious, he must live!

At last his right-hand man passed him the word. "Volunteers to bring in wounded!" He tried to pass it on, but could not. His throat was parched, his tongue refused to act. His whole body quivered in an agony of indecision. Go to his death? No, he could not. Refuse to go and leave a wounded mate exposed? That, too, could not be done. "It's the end!" he said; and, stumbling out of line, crawled up the trench to join the sergeant. He had chosen death.

They seized a stretcher and in a moment were over the top. Running like madmen through the hail of bullets, they reached the wounded soldier. An instant, and he was on the stretcher. Turning toward their trenches they ran as swiftly with their heavy burden through that sticky, treacherous mud as sprinters over a cinder track. Twenty yards to go, ten yards to go, and still they miraculously escaped. Then came the heavy crash of a huge high-explosive shell, and, wrapped in the pall of its dark smoke, their bodies passed beyond the ken of man.

So died one of the unnamed heroes of the war, one of the many who perished gloriously on the blood-soaked battle-fields of France. They have won for Canada an imperishable glory, for themselves a quiet grave in Flanders' fields. May their rest be sweet, in the full confidence that their memory is enshrined in the heart of every Canadian as its most holy possession!

## STORIES FROM THE FRENCH

(By Charles Guyon in *Nouveaux Récits Héroïques* (G. Bell & Sons, London). In translating these stories from the French, as much as possible of the "atmosphere" of the original has been retained.)

### THE DEFENCE OF THE BRIDGE

In the vicinity of Ypres, the Germans were endeavouring to take possession of a bridge whose capture was of absolute necessity for the movements of their troops. They had posted considerable forces in the adjacent plain and were making their preparations to attempt a decisive attack.

The British general ordered a detachment of Canadians to defend this bridge, cost what it might, awaiting the coming up of strong reinforcements.

"I am entrusting to you one of the most dangerous undertakings," said the general to the Canadian captain.

"I am aware of it, Sir," answered the captain.

"The enemy are quite close and very numerous!"

"My soldiers will sacrifice their lives, if need be, to hold them back."

"Very well! This position has the greatest importance for us, and, if the enemy should cross the river, our army would be in a bad position."

"We shall hold it, Sir."

The Canadians took their stand at the bridge-head, on the left bank of the Yser. There were about two hundred of them, and they had only one machine-gun to defend the crossing.

After an hour of waiting the sentries gave the alarm: "Look out! Here come the Germans."

The enemy came out of a wood on the right bank a short distance from the bridge: their numbers increased con-



stantly, and their gray masses covered the banks of the stream.

“Place the machine-gun at the entrance to the bridge”, ordered the Canadian captain. “It must cut down all those who attempt to cross. Independent firing.”

The Germans, crowded on the opposite bank, were altogether exposed; the fire of the Canadians made terrible gaps in their ranks. The enemy hesitated and fell into disorder. Their officers were heard shouting: “Forward! Cross the bridge.”

But all those who rushed forward were killed at once. Unfortunately the gaps were very quickly filled up, for the lives of these men seemed to be of no value.

“Where on earth do all these Boches come from?” wondered the Canadians. “The more we kill, the more come on.”

“All the same, they will never pass!”

“Not unless they fill the river with their dead!”

It must be acknowledged that the corpses were forming heaps on the right bank.

Suddenly the boom of the guns was heard. The Germans had brought up in their rear a battery which was hurling shrapnel on the bridge. The Canadians were terribly rent by the shells.

“Stick to it!” shouted the captain.

“We shall stick to it till death!” answered his brave men.

The guns swept the bridge and the bank of the river; the Canadians were falling one by one. The captain, mortally wounded, sent for the sergeant.

“Take the command and hold firm to the end”, he said.

“Yes, Sir.”

But the sergeant was killed in his turn, and his place was taken by a corporal. He brought together the few men who were still left.

“We have in front of us several thousand Germans and there are only twenty of us left. What shall we do, men? For my part I am determined to die at my post.”

“Death but no retreat”, shouted all the Canadians.

The guns became more and more violent; in a few minutes there remained only one soldier, who had escaped death as by a miracle. He looked about him and saw all his comrades stretched on the ground.

“If the Boches think that I am going to leave the bridge to them they are much mistaken”, said he to himself.

He took the machine-gun, placed it on his shoulders, and under a perfect hail of fire, carried it into a sheltered corner from which he could sweep the bridge.

“Here” said he to himself, “I shall be able to hold them back for a long time.”

Seated behind his machine-gun he kept up the fire, driving back the enemy who ventured to advance to the bridge. The amazing bravery of this new Bayard allowed the British reinforcements to come up soon enough to keep possession of the crossing and to drive back the Huns.

The commander of the new troops hastened to congratulate the brave Canadian, but he had just rolled over on the ground beside his machine-gun. When they picked him up he was already dead, pierced with many wounds.

This wonderful defence, which had saved the British army, excited a tremendous enthusiasm among the allied troops. To the Canadian heroes were given funeral rites worthy of their valour.

## SAVED BY THE CANADIANS

In the vicinity of La Bassée, a detachment of French infantry, carried away by their fighting spirit, had penetrated beyond the German lines and had taken up their position in a little wood. There they were suddenly surrounded by a regiment of German infantry which had been concealed behind a ridge covered with undergrowth.

“We are surrounded by the enemy”, said the officer in charge of the platoon; “they are in greater numbers than ourselves, and I frankly confess that our situation is critical. We have only one plan to follow—to try to break through the circle which incloses us.”

“Yes, yes”, shouted the soldiers; “death rather than surrender.”

A German officer shouted to the French: “Surrender!”

“Never!”

“You cannot resist; you are only a handful of men against a regiment.”

“We are not yet captured; you are going to see!”

Hot firing takes place at once; the French soldiers, with their officer at their head, rush upon the Germans, who receive them with a lively volley. The little troop of French is soon reduced in numbers.

“Surrender”, again shouted the German colonel, “or you will all be killed.”

A new effort by the French is the answer to these words; but in spite of their heroic resistance the little squad of troops was going to give in, when suddenly the French officer exclaimed:

“The British! Here are the British!”

It was a Canadian regiment which had heard the crackling of the rifle-fire. They were hastening to the aid of their friends.

“Courage! Stick to it!” shout the Canadians.

“Bravo! Bravo! Hurrah for the Canadians!” answer the French.

With indomitable valour our Allies hurl themselves on the Germans, who were not expecting this formidable support. At first their ranks fall into disorder, but, furious at having missed a victory so easy, they come back to the attack; they resist their opponents with an energy born of despair. For more than an hour the Canadians drive them back with the bayonet in terrible hand-to-hand struggles in which our nimble, well-trained Allies valiantly down their heavy adversaries.

Finally the Germans are compelled to retreat with enormous losses, whilst the French enthusiastically cheer their Allies: “Hurrah for Canada! Hurrah for our Canadian brothers!”

#### AN HEROIC LIEUTENANT

“You see that little hill”, said the commander of a Canadian detachment one evening to Lieutenant N———. “It has the greatest value for us; if we can take possession of it, it will be an excellent observation post from which we shall be easily able to watch the movements of the enemy.”

“We are quite ready to capture it, Sir.”

“The matter seems quite simple, but the Huns are guarding this spot carefully, and it will require all the skill, the prudence, and the coolness which I know you possess to succeed in it.”

“When are we to begin, Sir?”

“You will set out to-morrow morning at early dawn, with about fifty men. I rely upon you.”

“Thank you, Sir.”

The next morning, when the first streaks of dawn were beginning to whiten the sky, the Canadian squad, led by Lieutenant N———, glides away along the trenches, as

far as the little plain which separates the Allied lines from the little hill.

“We have arrived at the dangerous spot,” said the officer; “we must leave the trenches and cross, as far as the hill, this absolutely open space. Take good care not to attract the attention of the Huns.”

“They are asleep, Sir.”

“Yes, like cats, with one eye open.”

The officer is the first to leap out of the trench, followed at once by his trusty Canadians. They advance slowly, prudently, bent over. They have already passed over one third of the way when a shout is heard:

“*Wer da?*”

“Good, shout as much as you like,” said the Lieutenant in a whisper; “we do not understand your lingo.”

He continues to climb up with his men.

A shot is heard.

“Keep on going,” said the officer; “his rifle does not frighten us.”

The squad continues to climb toward the little hill.

But the shot has awakened the Boches; they fire from all sides; the bullets whistle around the Canadians; several are wounded.

“Courage, boys, courage! we are nearing the goal; over yonder there is a little wood where we shall be under cover!”

Suddenly the Lieutenant shouts: “Look! There is a road to cross”.

“And a bank alongside the road,” adds a Corporal; “it is there that the Fritziees are going to shoot us with ease.”

“What difference? We must go on; forward boys!”

He climbs up the bank, and the Canadians follow him with ardour; but they are halted by a volley fire; the

officer is wounded; the blood streams down his neck, but nothing can stop him.

“Forward, forward!” he keeps shouting.

But the fire of the enemy becomes more and more rapid; the Canadians are badly cut up.

“We are getting there,” said the Lieutenant, “we cannot retreat! Courage, we are over the slope!”

At this moment he turns pale, his strength deserts him; a superhuman effort had borne him up till that moment, in spite of his terrible sufferings. He falls upon the bank.

His Sergeant and his men rush up to him; they wish to bear him away.

“No, no,” said the young officer, “keep on going, leave me here; you can come back to get me later. If you stop your advance, you will be surrounded.”

The soldiers insist, and the officer becomes angry.

“You are going to endanger your success,” he exclaims; “go, leave me here, those are my orders!”

The Canadians obey, and, with a wonderful display of spirit, at last reach and capture the little wood which crowns the hill. Their job is finished. Then the Sergeant exclaims: “Now, let us go and look for the Lieutenant”.

All volunteer to go in spite of the great danger.

“Four men and myself, that is enough.”

They retrace their steps, and at last reach the officer, who is still breathing but has lost consciousness. With extreme care, they carry him to the wood. For a moment Lieutenant N——— revives; he opens his eyes and sees his men about him.

“Have we won?” he asks.

“Yes, Sir, we have taken the hill.”

“Then I die happy.”

These were his last words, a noble lesson in soldierly virtue for his comrades-in-arms.

## CANADIAN V.C. HEROES IN THE GREAT WAR

### THE VICTORIA CROSS

During the Crimean War Queen Victoria was so intensely impressed with the heroism of the British sailors and soldiers that she wished to give to some of the most distinguished a mark of special honour. But no decoration that had ever been given before seemed to her quite suitable, so she had a new medal made, the famous Victoria Cross.

This is a small Maltese Cross of bronze. In the centre is a royal crown, upon which stands a crowned lion. Below is a scroll bearing a motto. When the design for the cross was sent to Queen Victoria to see, the words on the scroll were "For the Brave", but she thought that seemed to imply that no one was brave save the men to whom the cross had been given, and she said the motto should be simply "For Valour". The cross (the sign of self-sacrifice) hangs by a broad capital V from a clasp adorned with laurel branches (the token of Victory); and so the much-prized medal tells its story of the final triumph of heroic unselfishness. The ribbon from which the cross hangs was, until very recently, blue for the Navy and red for the Army, but now the ribbon is red for both services. The crosses were made originally from cannon captured from the Russians.

It was on June 26th, 1857, at a grand review in Hyde Park, that Queen Victoria herself pinned the medals on the breasts of the first sixty-two V.C.'s,—men whose bravery had shone out conspicuously, amidst the courageous endurance and gallantry of thousands, during the hardships and struggles of the Crimean War.

Amongst the dauntless sixty-two was one Canadian, Lieutenant Alexander Robert Dunn, of Toronto. His

name deserves remembrance. On that gala day of glorious sunshine, his was a remarkable figure even in the crowd of notables, both from his great height, six feet two, and his brilliant Hussar's uniform of blue and gold and crimson. He had won his decoration in the world-famous "Charge of the Light Brigade" at Balaklava, or rather during the desperate ride back "thro' the jaws of Death", when he stopped, at great risk to himself, to rescue first a sergeant and then a private from otherwise certain death. He lost his horse, but struggled back to the British lines **on foot**.

#### THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES \*

Sixty years after Lieutenant Dunn won the first Victoria Cross for Canada came the outbreak of the Great War. In these years some ten or twelve other Canadians had gained the same much-prized distinction for deeds of gallantry in different parts of the world. Several crosses had been awarded to Canadians for outstanding bravery in the Boer War.

One of these is worn by Sir Richard Turner, now commanding the Canadian troops in England. In April, 1915, he was in command of the Canadian 3rd Brigade and played an important part in the desperate Second Battle of Ypres, when, as Lloyd George said, the Canadians "saved the British army".

It is a story so wonderful that, if any one had invented it, it would have been declared impossible. The Canadian Division (there was only one in those days)

\* NOTE.—For the military details in the following sketches the writer is indebted to *Nelson's History of the War*, *The Times' History of the War*, and various official publications, including *Canada's Triumph* and *Thirty Canadian V.C.'s*, of which the last-named has been particularly useful. For the personal information the writer has to thank many of the near friends of the V.C.'s for letters and the loan of local newspaper clippings, etc.



had just been sent to help in holding the dangerous Ypres Salient, which jutted out like a cape into the sea of German forces.

The Canadians, for the most part, were absolutely new to war, and the trenches which they had to occupy were "bad, wet, and repellent". Many of the British big guns and some of the French regular troops had been taken to assist in an attack farther south. And the Germans chose this occasion to launch a horrible surprise-attack. Throughout the day of April 22nd their artillery had kept up a fierce bombardment, to which the Allies could make only a feeble reply. The evening was calm and pleasant with a light north-east wind blowing steadily into the faces of the Canadians and the French coloured troops from Africa who held the trenches on their left. This was exactly what the Germans wanted; and about half-past six they began to send over their fearful new invention of suffocating gas, which choked and blinded and killed those who breathed it in. The poisonous green clouds swept first across the lines held by the unhappy Africans. Hundreds died where they fell, and, mad with terror as well as pain, their comrades broke and fled wildly, leaving a great four-mile gap which opened the way to Ypres and to Calais.

Now the Canadians, too, felt the horrible effect of the gas, and their casualties were terribly heavy; but they blocked the great rent in the line against a mass of Germans—four or five to one. To prevent the enemy's getting in behind him, General Turner had to bend back his line almost to St. Julien. All through the wild night the Canadians fought desperately, holding the enemy till a British detachment closed the gap.

**Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher.**—In the fearful confusion of this "soldiers' battle", as it has been called,

the 13th Battalion (Royal Highlanders) did not give way at all; and it fell to this Battalion to win, in the desperate fighting which continued all next day, Canada's first Victoria Cross of the Great War. In the ranks of the 13th there was a young lance-corporal, a boy of nineteen, named Fred Fisher, born at St. Catharines, but latterly living in Montreal. When the war broke out, he was attending the Engineering School of McGill University and was one of the players in the University hockey and foot-ball teams which competed in intercollegiate leagues. He enlisted in August, 1914, at Valcartier, and one of the officers of his Battalion, Lieutenant W. G. Hamilton, M.C., in an article in the *American Magazine*, says that at first many of the men did not understand him. He was "a quiet chap" who "never drank or swore or played cards, and some of the fellows may have thought he was a prig". Little by little, however, "the men found out what he really was . . . He never shirked, he never complained, and for all his quietness there wasn't a braver man in the whole Battalion . . . and when the company had found out Fisher as he really was, there wasn't any one better liked or more respected. After a while he was wounded and was in a hospital near the front when one of the big shows began" (the fighting at Ypres). "He learned in some way that his regiment was having a serious time of it. He left the hospital, made . . . his way to his own Battalion," and "got hold of a machine-gun." He set up this in a most exposed position and successfully covered the withdrawal of a battery of Canadian 18-pounders which had been firing into the masses of Germans at unusually close range. Fisher's crew of four men were put out of action. As they fell, men of the 14th Battalion, who were toiling to drag back those obstinate 18-pounders, sprang to their places, and

amongst them they stayed the German onslaught long enough to save the guns. This was not enough for Fisher. Going further forward, the gallant lad and his equally gallant crew "continued to check and slay the Germans". One by one the men fell at their post, and at last Fisher himself was shot dead with his finger on the trigger.

**Sergeant-Major F. W. Hall.**—During the following night, the 8th Battalion (90th Winnipeg Rifles) of the 2nd Infantry Brigade (under General Currie) relieved the 15th Battalion (48th Highlanders) which had suffered terribly in the first gas attack. Unhappily the relieving troops had to cross a high bank about fifteen yards behind the "fire-trench" for which they were bound; and the Germans kept sending up flares and firing incessantly upon this exposed spot. There were many casualties—how many it was not easy to tell in the darkness and confusion. Twice Sergeant-Major Frederick William Hall of Company C discovered that one of his men was missing. Twice in the night he went back to the top of that bullet-swept bank, found his man, and brought him in. Again about nine in the morning, the men in the trench heard the sound of groaning from somewhere over the crest of the bank. Hall suggested a rescue, though to go out on that exposed slope in full daylight was courting death. Corporal Payne and Private Rogerson offered to go with him, but had hardly left the trench when both were wounded. Hall helped them back to shelter, then started again—alone—to reach the wounded man. He crept slowly up the slope, amidst a patter of German bullets, reached the sufferer, and contrived, whilst lying flat, to get him on his back but, raising his head slightly to see how best to return, was instantly shot. A moment later the man whom he had given his life to save was killed also. This gallant man was born

in Belfast, Ireland, but had lived in Winnipeg, where he enlisted at the very outbreak of the war.

**Captain F. A. C. Scrimger.**—On the following day, (and indeed during the three days from April 22nd to 25th), another Canadian, Captain Francis Alexander Caron Scrimger of the C.A.M.C., did such heroic self-sacrificing work for the wounded that the Victoria Cross was awarded to him also. This story ends more brightly than the former two, for not only does Captain Scrimger live to wear the decoration he so gallantly won, but he succeeded in saving the lives of many of his patients, including that of a very badly wounded officer, whom at the last he made his special care.

Captain Scrimger is a Montreal man by birth and upbringing. He is the son of the late Rev. John Scrimger, D.D., who was for many years Principal of the Montreal Presbyterian College. He took a brilliant course at McGill University; and, after giving some time to study in Europe, became a surgeon in his native city and a lecturer at the McGill Medical School.

At the time of the desperate fighting at Ypres, he was attached to the 14th (Royal Montreal) Battalion and was in charge of a dressing-station in an old farmhouse near Ypres. It was surrounded by a moat over which there was but one road, and, during the heavy fighting on April 22nd, the German artillery found the lonely house and began to shell it. Regardless of danger, the staff, with Captain Scrimger at their head, worked on for the wounded who came pouring into the dressing-station from that fearful battle-field. Meanwhile, the Germans were still pushing on. The farm-house was soon in range of their rifles. The doctor and his assistants did not budge.

At last, on the afternoon of April 25th, the enemy began to send over incendiary shells. One set the farmhouse on fire, and the wounded had to be moved by some means, though a storm of shrapnel was beating upon the road. Some of the less seriously wounded patients and some of the staff swam the moat. At last only one patient—Captain Macdonald, of London, Ontario, was left. He had been brought in that afternoon, badly wounded in the neck and shoulder, and he could neither swim nor walk. Captain Scrimger's helpers were gone, and, as he was preparing to move the helpless man, several direct hits from the German guns sent shrapnel bursting through the rafters. The doctor bent over his patient to protect him till the storm slackened. Then he got him on his back and carried him down to the moat. Here they lay half in the water, Captain Scrimger still trying to shield his companion with his own body till the firing decreased and he was able to obtain stretcher-bearers to carry Captain Macdonald to the dressing-station. "No man ever better deserved the soldiers' highest honour", said his grateful patient. Later Captain Scrimger was promoted to be Lieutenant-Colonel and was placed in charge of the surgical work in No. "3" Canadian General Hospital—that supported by his Alma Mater, McGill University.

#### THE BATTLE OF GIVENCHY

The last Victoria Cross of 1915 was won near the village of Givenchy in the Lens district, where, in 1917, many Canadians were to win the great distinction in the successful struggle for "Hill 70" and the mining suburbs of Lens.

The Battle of Givenchy in the middle of June, 1915, was one of the minor actions fought during that summer

when the British armies were still only mustering, and the Allies were ill-equipped with artillery and munitions compared with the vast supplies which the enemy had in hand. The result was that what was gained by the dauntless courage of the British, was often speedily lost "owing to the weight of the enemy's gun-fire". In the case in point, the strong positions so gallantly won soon had to be abandoned.

On June 15th, the 7th (British) Division was detailed to drive the Germans from a strong position called "Stony Mountain", while the 1st Canadian Infantry Battalion was to cover the right flank of the attacking Division. This meant that the Canadians must, for their part, capture 150 yards of German front line running from "Stony Mountain" to another stronghold which they called "Dorchester".

On this occasion the British batteries began to bombard the enemy's positions late in the afternoon. At two minutes to six a mine was exploded close to the first German trench, and, while the air was still full of dust and smoke, the leading company of Canadians leaped out of their trenches, dashed across the seventy-five yards of No Man's Land despite the fierce machine-gun fire from "Stony Mountain", cleared the foe out of the "Dorchester" defences, and began to work their way toward the British on the left.

**Captain F. W. Campbell.**—A second wave of Canadians now surged across No Man's Land, and with it went a machine-gun officer, Lieutenant (acting-Captain) Campbell, with two guns and their crews.

Campbell was quite a remarkable man. It chanced that this tumultuous day of battle, on which he was to win the little bronze cross "for valour", was his forty-seventh birthday. He was the first Canadian farmer to

find a place on the roll of V. C.'s. He was also a veteran of South Africa (having served in a Maxim gun squad), and, consequently, was one of the comparatively few members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force who, before this great war, had "seen a cannon fired in anger".

There is in the Citadel of Quebec a curious memento of Campbell's presence in South Africa, in the shape of the wheel of a gun-carriage fashioned out of the legs of a table from a Boer house. The gun-carriage had been struck by a shell at the Modder River; and the gun must have been abandoned had it not been for Campbell's ingenuity.

From his early youth he had been a member of the active militia, serving first as a private, and later becoming successively Lieutenant and Captain of the 30th Wellington Rifles. At the time of his birth, his father, Ephraim B. Campbell, was teaching a school in Oxford County. Six months later he moved to a farm in Normanby Township, Grey County; and thus his only boy was brought up to farm. Before his marriage the young man bought another farm near that of his father. He made a specialty of raising horses, and was a director of the Mount Forest Agricultural Society. But when the call to arms rang through the Empire, Campbell did not even wait to let the busy summer season go by, nor did he hold back on account of his three children—the eldest a boy of ten and the youngest a little girl of three.

He went at once to Valcartier and was accepted for service as Lieutenant in the 1st (Western Ontario) Battalion. He sailed with the First Canadian Contingent on September 24th, 1914, and reached France in February, 1915. His Battalion took part in the awful fighting at Ypres, though it was in reserve at the beginning of the gas attack; and now he was celebrating his birthday in this fierce struggle at Givenchy.

Starting from the "jumping-off" trench with two machine-guns, as already stated, Lieutenant Campbell reached the German front trench with only one gun and a part of its crew. The whole crew of the other gun had been put out of action in the dash across the open. He pressed on along the trench toward "Stony Mountain", but was soon held at a block in the trench. Now he had but one man left, Private Vincent, but this big lumberman from Bracebridge proved a host in himself. When Campbell failed to find a suitable base for the gun, Vincent offered to support it with his broad back; and this enabled the Lieutenant to fire more than a thousand rounds upon the Germans who were massing to attack. Between them the gallant pair frustrated the enemy's schemes; but, as they were retiring, Campbell was seriously wounded, and four days later he died at No. "7" Stationary Hospital, Boulogne, leaving behind him a noble memory of courage, kindness, and cheerfulness. He was buried in a beautiful cemetery on a hill-top which sloped toward the sea and the little Island-Mother of the Empire that lay across the shining waters.

#### THE ENGAGEMENTS NEAR COURCELETTE

Two Canadian crosses were won in the engagements near Courcelette during the latter part of the Battle of the Somme which began, as it chanced, on Dominion Day, 1916, and lasted till the middle of November. At its close the enemy's power was not yet broken; but, as Sir Douglas Haig said, this battle "had placed beyond doubt the ability of the Allies" to gain the objects for which they were fighting.

Late in August the 1st Canadian Division was transferred from the battle-ground in the Ypres Salient (where the Canadians had won so much glory) to the neighbour-



hood of Albert, a town a little to the north of the River Somme, and on September 15th they took part in the attack on Courcellette. It was the memorable battle in which the famous "tanks" were used for the first time—to the dismay of the enemy and the uproarious delight of our own men.

After a terrific bombardment lasting for three days, the mysterious tanks crawled toward the enemy's lines, and behind them followed the infantry with their bayonets. In the main the attack was successful; and it was a great day for the Canadians. They captured the sugar refinery and the village of Courcellette, a large section of German trenches, and over 1,200 prisoners. Some French-Canadian troops did brilliant work and had the satisfaction of "winning back some miles of French soil for their ancient Mother-land".

**Corporal Leo Clarke.**—Curiously enough, neither of the Canadian V.C.'s whose achievements are associated with Courcellette won the decoration on September 15th. It was on the 9th, in an action in preparation for the great assault, that Corporal Leo Clarke distinguished himself.

The full name of this brave and resourceful fellow was Lionel Beaumaurice Clarke, but his nickname amongst his boy friends was "Nobby". He was born on a farm in East Flamboro', near Waterdown, but his parents returned to England when he was three years of age. Eight years later they settled in Winnipeg and he attended Mulvey and Argyle Schools in that city. After school hours the future V.C. used to sell newspapers.

He showed "no interest in any military work prior to going to the War", but was keenly interested in athletic sports, especially boxing and running, and in 1910 he won the five-mile championship race in Saskatchewan.

He was at this time working as a surveyor in that Province, and in this capacity he had been employed by the C.N.R. and the C.P.R. ever since he began work.

He enlisted at Winnipeg with the 27th Battalion, but, after his arrival in France, obtained a transfer to the 2nd, so that he might be with his brother who had gone overseas a few months earlier. He had been in France for about seventeen months when the final preparations began for the capture of Courcelette.

On September 9th, the 2nd Battalion was detailed to take "a salient of German trench about 550 yards long", which, lying between the Canadians and Courcelette, had to be captured before the village could be attacked. Following their barrage, the three companies of the Battalion detailed for the assault found the trench still very strongly held by the enemy. To Corporal Clarke fell the duty of leading a party of bombers to clear out the enemy on the left of the Canadians whilst a sergeant built a block in the trench. Clarke and his men fought their way along the trench with bombs and bayonets and clubbed rifles. But the Germans were too many for them, and at last Clarke was the only one of the party who "was not a casualty". His bombs were all gone, and he decided to build a temporary barrier to hold back the enemy and give time to the sergeant to complete the permanent block.

While Clarke was doing this, he saw a party of Germans (nineteen in all) coming along the trench. Boldly he went to meet them, armed only with a revolver; and, when he had fired off its contents, he used the rifles of the fallen Germans, and so chased the enemy down the trench. In vain a German officer attacked him with a bayonet. Of the enemy, only one, who begged in English for his life, escaped. Clarke had saved the situation and gained time for the building of the permanent block

which was important for the safety of his Battalion. He also secured some valuable papers in the possession of the German officer. Though wounded, the young man refused to leave his post until ordered to do so.

On the day of his single-handed fight he was recommended for the Victoria Cross, and three days later he was called before the General and congratulated on his work. He was gazetted V.C. on September 26th, 1916, but did not live long to enjoy the honour. On October 14th, he and five others were buried in a trench, when a great shell exploded nearby and sent a mass of earth over upon them. His brother and others sprang to their assistance and dug them out; but four had been killed outright, and Leo Clarke, though just able to speak, was so badly injured that he died in the hospital at Etretats five days later.

**Private John Chipman Kerr.**—On September 15th, the 49th Battalion (to which the second V.C. of Courcellette belonged) had been in support of the Princess Pats and the 42nd, which had captured all the trenches and machine-gun posts on the left of the village, with the exception of some 250 yards of trench still held by the enemy. Or it might be more correct to say, it “still held the enemy”, for its defenders were truly in evil case. They could not retreat—the Canadians had taken the lines to right and left of them, their communication trench was blocked, and they dared not expose themselves by trying to escape across the unsheltered ground behind them. But the Canadians were in no hurry to deal with them. They left the unhappy Huns alone until the afternoon of September 16th, when a bombing party from the 49th was detailed to clear this piece of trench.

In the story of that afternoon's work, the figure of one man, John Chipman Kerr, stands out conspicuously.

This fearless Nova Scotian lumberman, now in his thirtieth year, had left his old home in Cumberland County a little before the beginning of the war and had crossed the Dominion to take up land in the Spirit River district.

As news of the great European war filtered in to that out-of-the-way settlement, fifty miles from the nearest railway, it stirred the hearts of the stalwart young men who were engaged in preparing their new lands for cultivation; and in that very month of April, 1915, when their compatriots were winning undying honour for the Dominion "in Flanders Fields", near Ypres, a dozen of these homesteaders—Kerr amongst them—were tramping to the railway to enroll at Edmonton in the 66th Battalion.

McCrae's noble poem was yet unwritten; but the spirit of its stirring appeal was in every line of bad news from the front, and there was plenty of bad news in those days.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

And so the sturdy little band from Spirit River travelled some 5,000 miles to the heart of Britain's far-flung Empire.

The 49th Battalion had suffered severely in the fierce struggle at Sanctuary Wood, and in June, 1916, it was reinforced by a draft of 400 men from the 66th. Amongst these was Private Kerr, and now, after a summer's experiences in the Ypres Salient, he was ready for whatever duty should fall to him in the new scene of action near Courcelette.

As first bayonet-man Kerr went forward, on that September afternoon, ahead of his party, scrambled over the block in the communication trench, and had advanced

about thirty yards along the German trench when a sentry flung a bomb at him. Instinctively he threw up his arm to shield himself, and escaped with the loss of a finger-joint and a slight wound in his right side. He was anything but disabled, however.

The rest of his party had now come up; and, though the Germans were out of sight behind an angle of the trench, there was a vigorous bombing match. As it was impossible to judge of its effectiveness, Kerr, armed with his rifle and two bombs, suddenly jumped out of the trench and ran along the parados—until he could see the enemy and they could see him. Instantly he tossed his bombs into the crowd beneath him and followed them up with rapid rifle-fire, while at the same time he directed the work of the bomb-throwers. The Germans fled; the Canadians hotly pursued them. Then all but Kerr delayed to search a dug-out. He pressed on and again came up with the fleeing Germans. But the danger was over. The enemy—sixty-two in all—surrendered themselves and what remained to them of the 250 yards of trench. Kerr and two other men completed this excellent piece of work by marshalling their prisoners, under heavy fire, to a support trench; then he returned to report for duty before going to have his wounds dressed. He was the first man of the Provinces down by the sea to win the Cross.

#### THE CAPTURE OF VIMY RIDGE

Vimy Ridge consists of a series of low hills commanding the coal-fields of Lens, the plain of Cambrai, and the approaches to Arras. The Germans had held it since the third month of the war and had spared neither cost nor labour to make this naturally strong position impregnable. It was, indeed, "regarded by military experts as the backbone of the whole German position in France". In May

and June of 1915, the French Tenth Army had battled for it in vain; in the following September, during the Battle of Loos, the Allies had won part of the heights, only to be thrust back again to the boggy lower ground.

In the spring of 1917, following the tremendous Battle of the Somme, the German armies retired upon the new system of entrenchments called by the Allies the Hindenburg Line; and still the possession of Vimy Ridge (which by this time had cost the enemy 50,000 men) was vital to his whole scheme of defence. The Allies knew this and laid their plans accordingly, spending infinite pains on their preparations for the great blow. The Canadian Divisions—officers and men—trained for weeks in advance, so that they might be able to cope with the appalling difficulties of capturing this “inland Gibraltar”.

For long the old city of Arras, war-scarred but not absolutely shattered, had been as deserted in appearance as if plague-stricken, but at the beginning of April it woke once more to busy life. Troops and transport wagons thronged its “broken streets”. To minimize the danger to the forces massing for the intended attack, they were gathered in the ancient vaults, passages, and quarries which lay beneath Arras. The “Tommies” ensconced in these strange caverns, with electricity to light and signposts to guide them, might laugh at the worst that “Fritz” could do with his great guns.

Meanwhile, outside, our flying men were busily “blinding” the enemy by fighting and destroying his aircraft—at heavy cost to themselves; the artillery was cutting his wire, and the heavy guns were incessantly bombarding his positions, especially the great fortress of Vimy Ridge.

On Easter Sunday (April 8th), the Germans, uneasily suspicious of the impending offensive, rained shells on and around Arras; while for miles behind the British front,

troops, field-batteries, supply-columns, ambulances, and an army of stretcher-bearers surged forward in a restless, unceasing tide. Next morning, in the dusk of a drizzling, bitterly cold dawn, Allied batteries along miles of front broke at a given moment into such a hurricane of fire as utterly passes imagination. At 5.30 a.m. the troops went over the top under "a canopy of shrieking steel". Already the storm of high explosives had pounded the enemy front line out of existence; in a few moments more his second line had become "a hummocky waste of craters and broken wire", and in fifty minutes his first position was captured.

To the Canadian troops had been assigned the task of ousting the Germans from Vimy Ridge itself; and right gallantly they did their work. They reached the crest with a bound; but, after that, success had to be won by hours of desperate fighting from shell-hole to shell-hole.

**Captain Thain Wendell MacDowell.**—In the very careful preparation for this attack every company had been given its own special piece of work. For instance, B Company of the 38th Battalion, from Ottawa, was detailed to capture a certain stretch of trench from which opened a great dug-out.

Captain (now Major) Thain Wendell MacDowell, the young officer commanding B Company, was the son of a Methodist minister, the late Rev. John Vincent MacDowell. Thain was born in 1890 at Lachute, in the Province of Quebec, but for many years his home has been at Maitland, near Brockville. Every one of his mother's five sons enlisted, all but the youngest seeing active service. The Major is a Victoria College graduate of the University of Toronto and made a high reputation in athletic circles as a hockey and foot-ball player. In his third year at Victoria College he was awarded the

“athletic stick”, denoting that its holder has for that year the best athletic record, unsmirched by marks of failure in examinations. In his fourth year he played in the college hockey team which won the “Jennings Cup” for Victoria. Finally he won the coveted “T”, to be worn only by men counted worthy to uphold in Rugby the honour, not of a single college, but of the whole University. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that, when in the winter of 1914-15 he was doing excellent recruiting service in Brockville, where some years earlier he had attended the Collegiate Institute, he played on the Brockville hockey team; and possibly that may have had something to do with the fact that it was a season of “no defeats!”

Major MacDowell had gone to Alberta in the summer following his graduation, when there came the crash of war in Europe, and immediately he hastened eastward to Ottawa and there joined the 38th Battalion. His next step was to enter the officers’ training course which had been organized at London, Ontario. Later he spent some time with the Battalion which he had helped to recruit, at Barriefield Camp, Kingston, and, before going with it to the seat of war, participated in its somewhat irksome task of doing garrison duty in Bermuda. Thus, in spite of his early enlistment, he did not reach France till November, 1916, when the tremendous and long-drawn-out Battle of the Somme was in its final stage.

On the last day of that mighty struggle, Captain MacDowell (as he was then) particularly distinguished himself. His superior officer, Major J. A. C. Macpherson, described him as “a whirlwind”, and declared that there was nothing too dangerous for him to attempt. “When we were in the attack on Desire Trench”, said the Major, “Captain MacDowell was in the thick of the fight. The casualties were heavy, and when all the officers were out of



the fight he took command, consolidated the lines, and led in the attack." The result of his initiative and daring was the capture of three machine-guns and fifty prisoners. In the struggle he was wounded, but remained on duty. The official notice of this exploit, for which he was awarded the D.S.O., concludes, "He greatly assisted the success of operations".

Behind the barrage on that dismal Easter Monday morning, the Canadians attacking Vimy Ridge here dashed forward over comparatively dry ground, there struggled through mud knee-deep or shell-holes filled with water.

Captain MacDowell, with two runners named Kebus and Hay, reached his objective ahead of his men, capturing two machine-guns on the way, and then dashed impetuously on without waiting to collect a party. In his special piece of trench no Germans were to be seen, but the triple entrance to the big dug-out suggested where they were hiding. MacDowell shouted to the concealed enemy to surrender. There was no answer. This did not satisfy him. Posting his two men to guard the entrances to right and left, he descended the fifty-two steps leading down to the middle entrance, making "an awful racket" as he went. Turning a corner he plunged into a mass of seventy-seven awe-stricken Germans, two of whom were officers. His cool audacity saved him. Turning, he began to shout orders to the company, which he knew to be out of hearing. Up went seventy-seven pairs of German hands and a chorus of German voices cried, "Kamerad!" Accepting the surrender without a sign of the misgivings which even he must have felt, the big Canadian hustled them out of their lair, three at a time. Presently there was a halt in the procession. A German had caught up a rifle and shot at one of the runners, who answered in kind. MacDowell went up to restore order, then returned to drive out the

rest of his prisoners, who were finally sent to the rear.

In the dug-out Captain MacDowell found plentiful supplies of food and cigars. He also found some five tons of high explosives connected with wires for firing them; these he cut. Obviously his capture of this dug-out and its occupants saved many lives. MacDowell had been wounded in the hand; but for five days and nights he kept unsleeping watch at his post, until at last, when the enemy artillery had slackened, reinforcements arrived to relieve him.

For his amazing exploit, which reads like a chapter from some thrilling historical romance, the dauntless Captain received the Victoria Cross from the King's own hands.

**Lance-Sergeant Ellis Welwood Sifton.**—On that same Easter Monday, two other members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force won the Victoria Cross, but neither lived to know it.

One of these, Ellis Welwood Sifton, was a young Ontario farmer from Wallacetown, Elgin County. He was descended from a race of hardy pioneers and was his father's only son and the pride of his heart. But when the terrible call to sacrifice came in August, 1914, the quiet, resolute country lad faced it in the same spirit as when at school he had championed the cause of the oppressed "little fellow" bullied by bigger boys.

He enlisted immediately in the 18th Battalion at St. Thomas and went overseas in April, 1915. He spent some time at training camps in Kent, England, where his work took the form of sham battles, route marches, and entrenching. Sifton also took a special course in physical training and bayonet fighting, having been chosen as one of the instructors for the Battalion. He was much interested in the methods of farmers in Kent and, later, in

Belgium; and his thoughts went back frequently to the old Ontario farm where he was born.

He was in France at the beginning of 1916, serving as a transport-driver for his Battalion. This, though sometimes described as "a safe job", had its peculiar trials and risks. Before he had been long at the front he had been thrown off his load several times and had had one or two upsets in the mud, "but the worst that has happened as yet", he wrote home on one occasion, was the explosion of a shell "within ten feet of the wagon", when a large stone fell on his "cocoanut", and he saw "several stars, every one of a different colour". As he wrote, there were "some heavy guns doing a little persuasion", and the shells passing overhead sounded like an express train in the distance. It was a dreary wet night and he was on guard, a fact which perhaps prompted his comment on a huge new gun he had seen, "I could crawl into the barrel and sleep very comfy". This "monster mass of iron and steel" threw shells that weighed "just 300 lbs. more" than the new driving horse that his father had bought since he left home.

After a while, Ellis Sifton "threw up his job" with the Transport "because", as he told one of the officers of his Battalion, he wanted "to take a chance with the boys in the front line". And he knew full well what it meant. "There is hard work ahead", he wrote home a few days before his last fight. But though, amidst the exciting preparations for the attack, his thoughts travelled back to those in "the old, dear home", he was none the less stern and unflinching in the grim hour of action.

On the morning of April 9th, the British barrage, searching and terrific as it was, swept over some hidden machine-gun nests in the second line. The advancing Canadians suffered severely. C Company of the 18th

Battalion was held up by one of these concealed "nests", when Lance-Sergeant Sifton (he had recently been promoted) caught sight of the barrel of a gun shining over a parapet. Every instant counted in men's lives. The gallant young fellow dashed forward, leaped into the trench, charged the gun, and attacked the gunners with his bayonet. No other Canadians suffered from that crew. His comrades were hurrying to his assistance, but before they could reach him a party of the enemy rushed down the trench. Sifton held them off with his bayonet and clubbed rifle till his men could join the fight. In the very moment of victory he was shot by a mortally wounded German. But, as an officer of his Battalion put it: "He died a hero, in a glorious and just cause".

**William Johnstone Milne.**—To the right of the 18th Battalion worked the 16th, which was to give the third V.C. to Canada for the historic day when the lads from the Dominion swarmed over the crest of Vimy Ridge. The 16th was the "Canadian-Scottish" Battalion, and William Johnstone Milne was not only of Scottish parentage, but was born at Cambusnethan, near Wishaw, in the heart of old Scotland. He had left his native land at the age of eighteen, however, and, before enlisting in 1915, had spent half a dozen years in Saskatchewan farming near Moosejaw. He is described as "a cheerful and bright boy, full of innocent fun, and kind and obliging to everybody. He was a general favourite".

He crossed to France in May, 1916, not quite a year before his Battalion took part in the great struggle for the Ridge. As his company approached the "Zwolfe Graben", the first Canadian objective, in the half-light of that tempestuous April dawn, a withering fire from a German machine-gun cut down many a gallant fellow. Peering through the smoke and gloom, Milne located the gun; but

instead of attempting to rush it, as many a man has done under similar circumstances, he dropped on his hands and knees and began to work his way forward like a hunter stalking his prey. He carried a dangerous burden, but one essential to his purpose, a bag, full of bombs, slung over his shoulder, and, as he crawled forward, enemy bullets whistled about his head. They missed their aim. Yard by yard Milne crept on till he reached the "objective" he had set for himself—a spot within bombing distance of that deadly gun. Then he sprang to his feet and hurled his bombs, one after another, into the midst of the German crew. Every one was put out of action, and, dashing forward, Milne captured the gun. The result was that the Battalion was again able to go forward, and the troops reached their first objective, the "Zwölfe Graben", with a rush. They overcame any Germans who attempted resistance, made a number of prisoners in deep dug-outs, and then pressed on.

But again, as the troops advanced, they were met with sudden bursts of fire from carefully hidden machine-guns. One of these, in a concrete emplacement, was concealed by a hay-stack; and the amazing thing was that Milne successfully "stalked" that gun, as he had stalked the first. When he had put it out of action the crew surrendered.

The 16th Battalion soon afterwards gained its second objective; but the resourceful young Scottish Saskatchewan farmer, who had so gallantly saved the lives of many comrades, helped forward his Battalion on its way to victory, and brought glory to his adopted country, fell during the day's fighting.

**Private John George Pattison.**—Next morning the Ridge itself, "patched with snow-drift, was quiet", says Philip Gibbs, "as any hill of peace. It was astounding to think that not a single German stayed up there out of all

those who held it yesterday." Instead, "thousands of them were down in our lines, drawn up in battalions, marshalling themselves, grinning at the fate which had come to them and spared their lives". But much remained to be accomplished; and, on the afternoon of April 10th, yet another man of the Canadians did so fine a piece of work that to him also was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Private John George Pattison was middle-aged when the war began, and it had dragged on for over a year when this steady-going, useful citizen of Calgary determined that he must turn soldier. The new Alberta city and the waterside borough of Deptford in old London both claim this V.C.; for though, about 1907, he had emigrated to Canada with his wife and four children, he had spent the previous twenty-eight years of his life in Deptford. He and his son, a lad of seventeen, were both in the employ of the Calgary Gas Company, and, enlisting in the 137th Battalion at the same time, went to England together. The boy, on account of his youth, was held back from active service; but the father was drafted into the 50th Battalion and went to France in January, 1917.

The 50th was one of the battalions which had been held in reserve when Vimy Ridge was taken on April 9th; but it was ordered next day to assist in the capture of the eastern edge of the Ridge lying beyond "Hill 145", and at 3.15 that afternoon the men leaped over the top and got away with a dash. They were met instantly by a storm of bullets. German machine-guns were posted behind every tree stump and every bit of cover of any kind. The Canadians pushed on in the teeth of this devastating fire. But their ranks thinned rapidly, and it became more and more difficult to envelop and overcome the numerous machine-gun nests. Finally the Battalion was brought to a standstill by the persistent fire from one of these small

strongholds. Two or three times the men of A Company tried to rush the position. They were beaten off with many casualties. B Company came to their aid. Again they attacked. Once more they failed.

Then Private Pattison had one of those inspirations which lift a man above any thought of his own personal safety and send him out to do and dare to the utmost for the sake of his duty and his comrades. Such a man is a very dangerous enemy, often achieving—as the V.C. records show over and over again—what by ordinary standards of reckoning is the impossible.

Rushing suddenly from among his comrades, Pattison dashed, or jumped, from one shell-hole to another. There were many of them, affording a certain amount of shelter from the fire of the mischievous machine-guns. His mates watched him—this stalwart man of forty-two—in amazement. At every leap he was so much nearer to the enemy's strong point. At last, within thirty yards of it, he stood straight up. The German gunners saw and fired at him point blank. They missed their mark, but Pattison aimed better. He threw three bombs into the midst of them in quick succession, putting the guns and crews out of action. As his last bomb exploded, he dashed from his shell-hole to attack and overcome the five surviving Germans. Single-handed, Pattison had utterly destroyed that machine-gun nest which had cost so many Canadians their lives, and thanks to his "clear-headed bravery" the Battalion now swept triumphantly on to its objectives.

Through all the heavy fighting of that day and the next Pattison came without a scratch. He knew that he had been recommended for the highest military distinction; but, on June 2nd, two months before he was gazetted V.C., he was killed in action.

## THE FIGHT FOR HILL 70 AND LENS

The fight for Hill 70 and the city of Lens, in which a number of Canadians won the Victoria Cross, began in the last week of July, 1917, but was part of the great British offensive known as the Third Battle of Ypres, which had opened terribly on June 7th with the simultaneous explosion of nineteen British mines blasting off the top of the Wyttschaete-Messines Ridge.

The Allies had now far larger supplies of munitions than the enemy; and the bombardments preceding an attack and the barrages behind which the infantry went to the assault, were so tremendous and appalling that it is hard to understand how anything human could endure such storms of fire and bursting shell.

The Ypres Salient "was, after Verdun, the most tortured of Western battle-fields. Constant shelling of the low ground west of the ridges had blocked or diverted the streams and the natural drainage and had turned it into a sodden wilderness", where, if there was much rain, the troops were exposed "to the last degree of misery". And, on August 1st, 1917, when the Allies started their offensive near Lens, the weather "joined the enemy", and for two weeks the British operations had to be delayed.

During and after the Battle of Arras (in which the Canadians took Vimy Ridge), the "Canadian Corps had eaten into the defences of Lens from the south and south-west". Now, when there came a break in the storms in the middle of the month, Sir Douglas Haig ordered a new attack from another direction.

Just north-east of Lens is the low hummock of ground known as Hill 70. It afforded the Germans a good observing point. It had been taken by the British two years earlier and lost again. In the middle of August, 1917, when the assault upon it was assigned to the Canadians, it



was "criss-crossed with trenches and burrowed with dug-outs", and all about were "separate villages of ruin joining up with the streets of Lens itself".

Our troops attacked at dawn on August 15th, after the usual fearful bombardment of the German positions, and that day they captured Hill 70, took two mining suburbs of Lens, won a wood here and there, and, with one trifling exception, gained all their objectives for that time. But the struggle about the hill and its neighbourhood lasted for days; and in the intense fighting were many opportunities for individual deeds of courage.

It seems strange in this war, when every kind of mechanical invention has been pressed into service, when guns have grown in size and destructiveness beyond the wildest dreams of last century's warriors, when soldiers are reckoned by the million instead of by the thousand, that still the courage, the endurance, and the resourcefulness—not only of the generals, but of private soldiers and young officers—have counted so enormously.

At Hill 70 six Canadians (of whom five were privates and "non-coms" and one a captain) gained the Victoria Cross; but it is absolutely safe to assert that behind these six were a great multitude of men who possessed the spirit of the V.C.'s, doing their duty and standing by their comrades to the very death, without counting the cost to themselves.

**Private Harry Brown.**—In the 10th Battalion, which took part in the attack on Hill 70, was a young private of nineteen years of age named Harry Brown. Of Scottish-Irish descent, he was born at Gananoque in 1898, and his brief school-days were passed at Peterborough. But he was only twelve years of age when he began to work upon his mother's farm in the township of East Emily, in Victoria County, Ontario. After farming for about five

years, he went, at Easter, 1916, to work in a munition factory in London, living with a married sister. He was a broad-shouldered, well-grown lad, and when he offered for army service six months later, was accepted, though not yet eighteen. He reached France in the spring of 1917, but was not sent up to the front-line trenches until the day before the attack on Hill 70.

His Battalion was "in position" before midnight of August 14th, and at dawn, just before the attack began at twenty-five minutes past four, screaming shells passed over the ruined red roofs and the pit-heads of the collieries in the suburbs of Lens, and the stormy sky glowed with fierce flashes of light from the great guns and the bursting shells.

The attack on the German first line was successful. Later in the day, A, B, and C Companies of the 10th Battalion were ordered to assault the "Chalk Pit" redoubt on the left of Hill 70. The first rush was checked by heavy machine-gun fire. But, finally, the Canadians swept forward and captured the pit and a trench seventy-five yards beyond it.

It now became necessary, in order to protect the flank from a counter-attack, to reinforce a position on the right. Harry Brown was one of the party detailed for this service. They tried to dig themselves in and deepen some shallow trenches in the unyielding chalk. They dulled their tools and exhausted themselves in this slow and most disheartening labour; and all the while the Huns rained wounds and death upon them from machine-guns and field-guns. Still the Canadians held grimly on; but the Germans were seen gathering in great masses to make a counter-attack. All the wires to Headquarters had been cut by the enemy's shells, and it was clear that something must be done to avert that threatened attack, or the com-

panies in the trench would be wiped out and the position lost which had been won at such a price.

It was of desperate importance to get news of the situation back to Headquarters. The elaborate modern contrivance of the field telephone had broken down; but there remained the primitive old way of sending news by human messengers. The boy of nineteen, Harry Brown, and another gallant fellow, whose name is not recorded, undertook to carry the message, though, to prevent the arrival of reinforcements, the enemy had interposed a terrible curtain of fire between the Canadians' new positions and their Headquarters.

The two heroic lads pressed on together amidst the bursting shells for a little way. Then one fell, to rise no more; and the only chance of saving his Battalion was bound up with Brown's strength and courage and power to accomplish that seemingly impossible task. He refused to despair. He thought of his comrades behind him and plunged on alone through the tempest of lead and high explosives over ground torn into great holes and thrown up into hummocks, slowly drawing nearer to his goal. He was hit by something that shattered his arm, but bleeding and all but exhausted, he still pressed forward. At last he came through to the support line, found an officer at the entrance to a dug-out, and though "so spent that he fell down the dug-out steps", he retained command over his senses long enough to say: "Important message", and then giving up his precious slip of paper became unconscious. A few hours later he died in the dressing-station.

In the long waiting time behind the front lines, Harry Brown had written to his sister that it was his "heart's desire" to "have a crack at the Germans". But he did more effective service by that lonely journey through the German barrage in his one day at the front, than any-

thing he could have dreamed of in the way of actual fighting. Surely his example may help many another Canadian to triumph over fear and pain and weakness and be faithful even to death. It is good, for the sake of others in the years to come, that the bestowal of the Victoria Cross will tend to keep fresh the inspiring memory of this "loyal and determined" lad.

**Sergeant Frederick Hobson.**—The next V.C. of Hill 70 was a man of more than twice Brown's age, who in his forty-one years of life had had many and varied experiences before he became a soldier in the Great War.

By birth Frederick Hobson was a Londoner. He had lost his mother when he was ten or twelve, and his father, a foreman mason, whose work obliged him to go to different parts of the country, frequently took the boy with him and sent him to school as there was opportunity. He grew up to be a tall, fine-looking man, nearly six feet in height. He enjoyed athletic games, and, in later life, averred that the training he had had as a foot-ball player had greatly helped him to be temperate.

He did not learn his father's trade, but became a professional musician, playing a great variety of band instruments; and this led to a continuance of his wanderings. In his youth he joined army bands, and thus saw something of army life. With one of these bands he went to India, spending some two years in that wonderful country. Soon afterwards he had actual experience of the soldier's life, for, on the outbreak of the Boer War, he enlisted in a mounted infantry regiment and fought through the war, winning two medals.

It was after this experience that he decided to come to Canada, feeling that he "wanted more room" than seemed attainable in England. It could hardly be said that he settled in the Dominion, for he was still led hither

and thither by the old roving spirit; but he lived for the greatest length of time at Simcoe, in Norfolk County. Here he worked for the Dominion Canning Company, and here he was living in the fateful August of 1914. Being a very "loyal Englishman" and possibly something of "a fighter by nature", Hobson immediately offered for service. Unfortunately, he had recently had an attack of pneumonia. Twice the doctors refused to pass him, but, on applying a third time, he was accepted for overseas service and went to England as a member of the 20th Battalion. Though much older than most of the recruits, this veteran campaigner, with his delightful ability to make music and his earnest desire to "have things fair and square", was very popular with his comrades.

In the spring of 1915 he crossed to France. Twice he was wounded, but not so severely as to oblige him to go back to "Blighty", and he was soon in the lines again. Thus he had spent some two and a quarter years of his life in France, when, on August 15th, he went "over the top" with his Battalion to oust from their trenches the Germans who had survived the dreadful British barrage. In this operation Sergeant Hobson and a few men of his company bombed the enemy out of about seventy yards of a trench known as "Nabob Alley". There they established a post.

But, as already stated, the Germans did not leave their conquerors in peace. For three days they sought for weak spots in the Canadians' new lines, and, in the small hours of the 18th, savagely bombarded the whole Canadian Corps, sending over a quantity of gas-shells on one unlucky village. The advance posts had a particularly hard time, and the Headquarters of the 20th Battalion fared as badly. Struck by a big shell—it "vanished", and all the wires connecting it with the various posts were cut at one blow.

In the midst of the horrible confusion came a message from a neighbouring battalion that the Germans were crossing No Man's Land. It was about half-past four in the morning. In the half light, Hobson saw gray masses of men coming on, and in that part of the line only one machine-gun had escaped destruction. A minute more and it, too, was buried by a bursting shell. All its crew were killed except one, Fuller, and he was buried with his gun.

Hobson, though not a gunner, realized the immense importance of the position. Rushing from his trench, he dug out gunner and gun. He was hit by a bullet, but paid no attention, and soon had the gun in action against the enemy who were now pouring down the trench and across the open. Suddenly the gun jammed, and Hobson, leaving the other man to get it into working order, advanced to meet the German host. Alone, with bayonet and clubbed rifle, the gallant Sergeant barred the way. The Huns fell fast. Hobson was determined that they should not pass, and he held them till the machine-gun was again ready for use. At that moment, when his task was accomplished, a German shot him dead. Fuller answered with a stream of bullets from the Lewis gun. Then reinforcements "took the enemy in the flank and chased them back across No Man's Land". But it was Hobson's self-sacrifice that had saved the situation.

On a May morning nearly nine months later, a concourse of notables gathered on the steps of the Parliament Buildings at Toronto to witness the presentation of medals by His Excellency the Duke of Devonshire, the Governor-General of Canada, to a number of soldiers and representatives of soldiers who had fallen. The presence of 3,000 soldiers (most of whom would soon be in the fighting line) added interest to the ceremony. First on the list of heroes came the name of Sergeant Frederick Hobson, V.C. His

bronze cross was given to his sister, and a score of men from his Battalion attended to show their pride in their comrade and the honour he had brought to the 20th.

**Captain Okill Massey Learmouth.**—At midnight on August 16th, the 2nd Battalion relieved the troops who for two days had been holding “Hugo Trench” from the Chalk Pit to a spot called “Hurrah Alley”. All the next day the Germans kept up a devastating and incessant bombardment: and by daybreak on the 18th, the strength of the Battalion had been reduced to 614 men. But the enemy had not yet done his worst. At four o’clock he rained a hurricane of shells into the Battalion’s position. This lasted nearly three-quarters of an hour; but it was not enough to break the spirit of the garrison, thinly strung out along those battered trenches.

Conspicuous amongst those gallant soldiers was a young officer from Quebec, Captain Okill Massey Learmouth. He was but twenty-three years of age, but was acting-Major in command of Companies 2 and 3; and, during that frightful bombardment, he was continually in the trenches, encouraging those under his command and keeping constant watch lest the Huns should find some weak point by which they could gain an entrance. He seemed indeed to be everywhere at once”. When the barrage lifted, the Germans came on, using liquid fire. They forced their way into a part of the line held by No. 4 Company, but were bombed out again: and by the same means were driven from a small wood in which they had taken refuge. Learmouth himself, standing on the parapet, took a hand in the bombing: and it is told of him officially that more than once he “actually caught bombs thrown at him by the enemy” and hurled them back.

Twice wounded, he "carried on as if perfectly fit and whole", and his example inspired his men to a wonderfully determined resistance.

Wounded a third time, so that his leg was broken, he refused to be carried out of the line, but lay in the trench encouraging his men and directing the fight until about a quarter past six, when the enemy gave way. Carried to the Battalion Headquarters, he "gave valuable information to the officers there before he was taken to hospital. He died shortly afterwards—the man who would not give in".

**Private Michael James O'Rourke.**—Private Michael James O'Rourke of the 7th Canadian Battalion was born in Ireland and enlisted in British Columbia, to which Province he has returned after many hairbreadth escapes in the Great War.

His story is "the old yet ever new and moving tale of succouring the wounded under fire". He was a stretcher-bearer, and therefore classed as a non-combatant; but the task of these rescuers of the disabled was especially perilous, for their work had often to be done out in the open, under fire, and the Germans frequently sniped at them as they worked. On August 15th, at the beginning of the fight for Hill 70, the 7th Battalion had sixteen stretcher-bearers. On the 18th, after several days of desperate struggle, all but three of the dauntless band were casualties.

O'Rourke showed such persistent and absolute disregard for his own safety that it seems almost miraculous that he escaped. He worked to exhaustion for three days and three nights, bringing in the wounded, dressing their injuries, and getting food and water for them; and all the while huge shells were bursting around him and shrapnel and rifle bullets were whistling by. Several times he was knocked down and partly buried when a shell landed close



to where he was working. Once "he went forward about fifty yards in front of our barrage, under very heavy fire from machine-guns and snipers" and brought in a wounded comrade. Afterwards, when certain advanced posts had to be retired to the line, he faced a storm of fire "of every description" and brought back a wounded man who had been left behind. Another time, when he saw a comrade, who had been blinded, stumbling about in plain view of the enemy's snipers who were shooting at him, he leaped out of the trench and brought the poor fellow in, while the snipers did their best to get them both.

Never was Victoria Cross more nobly won, for O'Rourke went "wherever there were wounded to succour, and his magnificent courage and devotion" saved many a life.

**Company Sergeant-Major Robert Hanna.**—The Victoria Cross which was won for the 29th Battalion during the fighting about Lens in August, 1917, was gained by the prowess of Sergeant-Major (now Lieutenant) Robert Hanna, who, like O'Rourke, was an Irishman by birth and had enlisted in British Columbia. Hanna was gazetted V.C. in November, 1917, just three years after his enlistment.

In the very early morning of August 21st, the Battalion was preparing to take part in a new offensive, when a heavy bombardment and counter-attack was launched by the enemy. It caused some loss and confusion, but did not prevent the Canadian assault. Three companies of the 29th duly went forward behind their barrage. They suffered many casualties, especially of officers.

B Company (to which Hanna belonged) reached its objective; but was obliged to go to the help of C Company, and soon every one of its officers was put out of

action. The command now devolved upon Sergeant-Major Hanna, who, perceiving that much of the mischief was done by a machine-gun post protected by heavy wire, collected a party, and, amidst a hail of bullets, rushed through the wire. He himself killed the four German gunners and overturned the gun. The post was captured. Again and again the enemy tried to retake it; but, though short of bombs, the gallant little handful of Canadians with the dauntless Hanna at their head held fast until relief came.

**Acting-Corporal Filip Konowal.**—The last Canadian V.C. of the desperate fighting of August, 1917, in the vicinity of Hill 70, stands in a class almost by himself, for in the list of the sixty-one Canadian V.C.'s of the Great War gazetted down to the middle of March in this present year (1919), there are only one or two representatives of the great crowd of foreign immigrants who during recent years have made their home in the Dominion.

Acting-Corporal Filip Konowal, of the 47th Battalion, was born in Russia in 1888; and there, when he went to the war, his wife was still living. He won the decoration for two days' grim work after the Canadian assault in the "Green Crassier". This is a great "slag-heap overgrown with weeds" to the south of Lens, and Philip Gibbs tells of "the astounding resolution" with which, in the suburbs of Lens, the Canadians were fighting "past high slag-heaps and pit-heads, along railway embankments, and down sunken roads until they have broken a route through frightful defences to the western streets of the inner city".

There was much fearful underground fighting in the cellars of tumble-down red houses and in tunnels burrowed beneath the ruins; and, after the big fight, came the dangerous business of "mopping up", or searching for hidden Germans and machine-guns.

Konowal, who seems not to have known what fear is, was an adept at this work. For two days he and his section searched for the enemy, and, single-handed, the Corporal destroyed one party of Germans in the cellar of a ruined house, another in a big shell-crater, and a third in a tunnel, the two latter having machine-guns. He destroyed the enemy to save the lives of his comrades.

In September, 1918, when about to join the Canadian Expeditionary Force for Siberia, he returned to Ottawa, where he had enlisted some three years earlier, and there, in broken English, chanced to tell his story to a correspondent of a Toronto newspaper. Once, in that process of "mopping up" at Lens, he had found three Germans in a "pill-box", and these cried "Kamerad!" "All right," replied Konowal, "come along." He loaded one with the machine-gun, the second with its spare parts, and the third with the ammunition box, and so, in triumph, he took them all in and was greeted by his Battalion with vociferous cheers.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR PASSCHENDAELE

In October and November of 1917 were fought the four fierce battles "which finally won for the Canadians the possession of Passchendaele"; and the recollection of the part played by our dauntless "civilian soldiers" in this great achievement will always be one of pride to Canada. It was none the less magnificent because the splendid Anzacs had also done great things in the effort to force the Huns from their vantage ground on the long, crescent-shaped ridge. Nor does it detract from the glory of our men, who forced their way through "seas of mud" to fling the enemy from the heights, that they fought side by side with the resolute troops from every part of the old

Mother-land. The whole Empire was at one in this tremendous struggle, and that was the finest thing of all.

“Passchendaele”, wrote Philip Gibbs on the day when the Canadians took the village, is “the crown and crest of the ridge which made a great barrier round the salient of Ypres and hemmed us in the flats and swamps . . . . looking down across the sweep of the plains into which the enemy has been thrust, where he has his camps and dumps, where . . . . if we are able to keep the place, we shall see all his roads winding like tapes below us and his men marching up them like ants, and the flash and fire of his guns and all the secrets of his life, as for three years he looked down on us.”

Reading and hearing what eye-witnesses say of that fearful battle-ground, the mud, even more than the shell-fire, stands out as the appalling feature of the picture. “General Mud” fought mainly on the side of the Germans, who held the higher ground, but even for them added enormously to the wretchedness of the campaign. At the best of times the low-lying lands of Flanders were dank and marshy. And that summer of 1917 was abnormally wet, and the explosion of huge shells had diverted the course of the “beeks”, or small streams, which ordinarily carried the drainage from the ridges through the lower lands. Now, in the neighbourhood of Passchendaele, there was a desolate wilderness of “crater-land, eight miles deep”, where the shell-holes, filled with water, were deep enough to drown a man, where at times the mud and slime held men and guns and transport wagons fast “as though in glue”, where frequently the attacking forces, wading and finding it all but impossible “to haul out one leg after the other from this deep sucking bog”, could not keep pace with their barrage and so lost its protection.

The British field-guns had to stand out in the open, because, if they had been placed in gun-pits, they would have sunk' out of sight. "Duck-boards", or narrow plank walks, were thrown across the morasses. Unluckily these made an excellent mark for the German gunners; but men who stepped off them into the bog had to be pulled out by their companions.

On October 26th "the troops, English and Canadians . . . . attacked in rain and mud and mist . . . . the worst of all combinations". And on this day the most important position was given to the Canadians to carry.

**Private Thomas William Holmes.**—The troops were assembled for the assault soon after five o'clock on the morning of October 26th. The 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles made the extreme left of the Canadian Corps; and amongst the privates of A Company was a lad from Owen Sound who had just passed his nineteenth birthday.

Thomas William Holmes was born in Montreal but had lived in the busy lake port on the Georgian Bay almost as long as he could remember. He had managed to enlist in the 147th (Grey County) Battalion when only seventeen, but was transferred to the 8th Reserve Battalion, and finally was sent in a draft to the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles. With this Battalion the boy fought at Vimy, receiving a "blighty" in the arm, which kept him in England for some months. In fact, he returned only just in time to earn his V.C. at Passchendaele.

During the 25th, the weather had been unusually fair. This had to some extent dried the ground: but had also given the enemy opportunity to see and to bombard the troops preparing for the assault and the transports bringing up supplies. At the moment when the British barrage opened at twenty minutes to six on that fateful Friday

morning, the rain began again, and "the going" through mud and water and up the slippery slopes of low hills, defended by the little round concrete machine-gun forts which our men called "pill-boxes", became extraordinarily difficult.

Somehow C and D Companies of Holmes' Battalion forced their way on and up, storming the pill-boxes on the slippery hill-side; till they met with a serious check before one strongly held, which "had also a machine-gun mounted close to the building on each side".

Reinforcements from A Company now came up, and valiantly the men of the C.M.R. tried again and again to rush and silence that German post. They were beaten back with heavy loss, and at length took cover to rest about fifty yards from the pill-box before continuing the disheartening struggle.

In this emergency the daring and quick-witted boy from Owen Sound took a desperate chance. Carrying a couple of bombs, he dashed suddenly out from amongst his comrades and sprang into a shell-hole some yards nearer the enemy. They let fly a hail of bullets, and his comrades watched breathlessly to see the lad fall. He did not. Mud and earth flew up about him, but, unheeding, he dashed from shell-hole to shell-hole, and at last, in the lull of a few seconds, when the crews of both guns chanced to be reloading together, he made his final spurt to a shell-hole within fifteen yards of the gun. Then with cool deliberation he flung his bombs one after the other, with such force that both the guns and both their crews were put out of commission.

He had more to do, however. Back to his comrades went "Tommy" Holmes to obtain another bomb. Then he raced forward—still alone, and still the mark for vicious fire from the pill-box itself—and hurled his third bomb

into the entrance at the back of the little fort. There was another explosion, after which those of the unnerved garrison who survived—nineteen men in all—came out and surrendered. And Holmes and his comrades pushed forward to a new line, where, for some hours, they had to withstand one counter-attack after another.

At the time he won the cross, which was pinned on his breast at Buckingham Palace by the King himself, Holmes was the youngest of Canadian V.C.'s.

**Lieutenant Robert Shankland.**—On the same day, a bold and clear-headed Scottish officer of the 43rd Battalion, which went to the attack on the Passchendaele ridges on the right of the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, gained the Victoria Cross by his daring resourcefulness and did much to change the fortunes of the day, in his part of the field, from a disaster to a victory.

Lieutenant (now Captain) Shankland was born at Ayr on the Firth of Clyde in 1887, and is the second son of William Shankland, a railway guard.

After leaving school he became a clerk in the station-master's office at the Ayr passenger station. In 1910 he came to Canada and entered the employment of the Crescent Creamery Company at Winnipeg, presently rising to be assistant cashier. He enlisted with the 43rd as a private in 1914, and, before the Battalion went overseas, became a sergeant-major. He landed in England in June, 1915, and was able to pay a brief visit to his old home. He reached France in February, 1916, and, during his first summer at the front, was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and recommended for a commission.

On October 26th, 1917, the 43rd attacked in the centre of the front held by the Third Division. Despite heavy fire from the enemy artillery and from the pill-boxes

scattered on the top and slopes of Bellevue Spur, some forty men of D Company, led by Lieutenant Shankland, gained the crest of the hill about half-past six and captured several pill-boxes; but, as a trench fifty yards further on held them up, the weary remnants of the Company dug themselves in to the best of their ability.

On the left the 4th C.M.R. was having its own troubles, and on the right the 58th, under the concentrated machine-gun fire from "Snipe Hall", failed to reach its objective. But some of the soldiers of the 58th and of different companies which had lost their officers joined Shankland's platoon on the crest of the hill; and for four long hours maintained the vital position of a "rough and disjointed line of shell-holes" across Bellevue Spur, under the most appalling artillery fire, which, besides causing numerous casualties, flung up mud and water over the Canadians and often rendered their weapons temporarily useless. A heavy counter-attack failed to dislodge them, but the withdrawal of the 8th Brigade on the left exposed that flank completely. The right was also exposed; and Shankland, seeing that German troops were making a movement which threatened to "cut him off altogether", left a wounded machine-gun officer in command and went himself to report to Battalion Headquarters and obtain assistance. The result of the very clear information which he gave was that the 52nd and 58th Battalions were ordered to drive back the enemy, who were trying to rush the thin line of almost exhausted troops on the hill-top. Shankland lost no time in making his way back through mud and falling shells to his undaunted Company and held on till reinforced. How this was done will be told later.

During the day, and again in a little over a fortnight, he was wounded—the second time so seriously that he had to return for a time to Scotland; and it was while he was



at home with his parents at Ayr that he was gazetted V.C. in recognition of his most important achievement; for the taking of the Bellevue Spur and the high ground about it was "an essential preliminary to the capture of the whole Passchendaele Ridge and town".

**Lieutenant Christopher Patrick John O'Kelly.**—The 52nd Battalion has to its credit the third Victoria Cross awarded for deeds done on that momentous 26th of October, though it began the day, not at all to its own satisfaction, "in support". By half-past eight it was clear that the attacking troops were suffering severely in the grim struggle on the muddy slopes of Bellevue Spur, and A Company of the 52nd was ordered to go to the assistance of Lieutenant Shankland's hard-pressed handful of men on the ridge.

The Company was fortunate in having as its leader a most gallant young officer, who was born in Winnipeg and had enlisted there in 1916. Lieutenant (acting-Captain) Christopher Patrick John O'Kelly was still not much more than twenty years of age; but, besides the dash and daring of youth, he possessed wonderful skill and judgment in the handling of his men. Pressing forward on the left through an enemy barrage, which did not seriously weaken the force, the troops worked their way toward the crest, where the excellent shooting of Shankland's determined fellows was distracting the attention of the Germans from the proceedings of the 52nd.

Sweeping rapidly over the hill-top, in the teeth of the "spasmodic" fire from numerous German posts, the newcomers caught on the flank the enemy forces moving to attack the Canadians on the hill-top, and, driving them back across the fire from Shankland's post, completely routed them. Then O'Kelly turned his attention to the

pill-boxes which made the position very "unhealthy". His Company captured six of the pill-boxes, together with their machine-guns and many of their inmates. Later, when his force was joined by B Company, he advanced his line a full half-mile and held on, though the Germans tried first to blot out his new position with a tornado of shells and then to wrest it from his grasp with a savage counter-attack.

Even this brilliant day's work did not satisfy the ardent young Lieutenant and his followers. In the night they raided several strong points that might have been mischievous later on. In the twenty-four hours' work they captured nine officers, two hundred and seventy-five men, and twenty-one machine-guns. No wonder that O'Kelly's name presently appeared in the list of V.C.'s!

**Captain George Randolph Pearkes.**—On October 30th, six Canadian battalions made a further advance toward the conquest of the whole Passchendaele Ridge, by attacking on both sides of the little river Ravebeek. On the left they pushed their way from Bellevue Spur to the top of Meetcheele Spur; on the right they gained Crest Farm, "the outer fort" of Passchendaele village. It was a desperate battle, in which many wonderful deeds were done by the four Canadians who gained the Victoria Cross on this day, and also by others.

Of the four, one was an officer, George Randolph Pearkes (now Lieutenant-Colonel, V.C., D.S.O., M.C.), who had already proved himself a most brilliant soldier. Born in Hertfordshire in 1888, he had been educated at Berkhamstead Public School and at one time lived in that most fascinating of English woodlands, the New Forest. At seventeen he came to Canada to learn farming on the large ranch at Red Deer, Alberta, owned by Dr. Fry, Dean

of Lincoln, formerly headmaster of his old school. Four years later he joined the Royal North-West Mounted Police Force and was stationed at White Horse in the Yukon. He had been three years in this famous Force when the war began; but it was not till 1915 that he obtained permission to enlist. He joined the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles as a private and went overseas with them in June.

“In France, promotion and honours came quickly”, says Carolyn Cornell, (to whose articles on “Canada’s Victoria Cross Heroes”, in the *Toronto Weekly Star*, the writer is indebted for the personal details in this article and in the two which follow on Privates Kinross and Robertson). In a little over two years, Private George Pearkes had become successively Lieutenant and Captain in the 2nd C.M.R.; Major in the 5th C.M.R.; and Lieutenant-Colonel of the 116th (Infantry) Battalion. He had been wounded seven times, and came very near to losing his life just at the close of the tremendous struggle, but recovered “in time to participate in the rejoicings of November 11th, in London”.

On the day when Captain (acting-Major) Pearkes led his men up through the bogs to attack “Vapour Farm” and the outlying defences of Passchendaele, he had just received one of his many wounds; but, not being positively disabled, he took even more than his share in the fight, part of which was a hand-to-hand contest with the enemy in mud “waist-deep”. With some fifty men he reached his objective, only to find both flanks dangerously exposed. On his left the attacking battalion had been unable to capture its objective, “Source Farm”, so Major Pearkes now turned upon this stronghold—the fire from which was enfilading his exposed line—and his Company carried the place by storm, afterwards going forward till its strength was reduced to twenty men. Pearkes then took up a

position in a rough line of shell-holes and beat off a strong German counter-attack; but his ammunition was failing before his party was at last reinforced by a Company of the 2nd C.M.R. Even then it was only by means of desperate work that he held on to the positions gained until dusk, when additional troops were sent to his assistance.

**Private Cecil John Kinross.**—On the right of the 5th C. M. R. worked the 49th Battalion, with "Furst Farm" and other points beyond as its objective. The night before the attack was clear and beautiful. The moon was nearly full, and this made it easy for the men to pick their way about midnight to "the assembly" on the comparatively dry ground between the flooded craters.

It made it easy also for the enemy to gain an idea of what was going forward; and about half-past four, he sent up his green signal flares near Furst Farm and began a hot artillery fire on the Canadian lines. Two minutes before six, or "zero" hour, the barrage began, and the troops went forward. The morning was clear, bright, and breezy, and the ground had dried a little; but the successive "waves" of the 49th, though they pressed on most heroically, were met by a storm of "mixed fire"—from rifles, machine-guns, and artillery—and the casualties were appalling. Still the men struggled on, till, near Furst Farm, they were held up and forced to take any cover available, on account of the fire of a machine-gun in a commanding position.

In this emergency a young private, Cecil John Kinross, like a knight-errant of old, pitted himself against that fire-spitting monster. Very calmly he prepared for the unequal contest, by throwing off all his equipment save his rifle and bandolier. By "devious courses" he deliberately worked his way some distance forward. Then, when

circumspection could do no more, he cast prudence to the winds, and, alone, over the open ground, in broad daylight, rushed the German position, killed the crew (six men to his one), and destroyed the gun.

The few remaining weary fighters of the 49th now swept triumphantly forward another three hundred yards, gained a most important position, and held it till reinforced after many hours. This they could not have done, if Kinross had not conquered the modern dragon, cleared their path, and put new heart into them.

Kinross was an Englishman of twenty-two years of age. He was born at Uxbridge, about ten miles from London, England, and came with his family to Canada in 1911. His father, who had farmed in England, settled near Loughed, Alberta. Cecil, the only son, worked with him on the farm until he enlisted in October, 1915, when his place was taken by his sister. He reached France in the following March, was wounded during the Battle of the Somme, and was wounded again, more seriously, in the grim fighting of the day just described. He received the news that he had been awarded the Victoria Cross whilst at Orpington Hospital in England, and "was the most surprised man of his company".

**Sergeant George Harry Mullin.**—On the same day, one of the three Canadian V.C.'s who were born in the United States gained the cross for the famous Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, who that morning were fighting their way on the right of the 49th to attack Graf and Meetcheele.

At first all went well, but, as the men fought their way up the Ravebeek valley and amongst the pill-boxes on the hill-side, the casualties were very heavy; and there seemed a doubt as to whether the "advance might die out through sheer numerical weakness".

Still forward struggled the "Princess Pats", until forced to halt at a point where the front of the attack was "dangerously narrowed by marshy ground on each side of a dry spur" leading up the hill to Meetcheele. On the hill-top was perched a concrete fort. Its guns had caused casualties half a mile away, and on the slopes were numerous machine-gun emplacements. With unyielding determination the men tried to make their way up this slope, then Sergeant George Harry Mullin (the resourceful young American mentioned above) went forward to investigate the chances for a flank attack on the terrible pill-box.

Mullin was born at Portland, Oregon, in 1891, and his portrait in the *Times' History of the War* shows a merry, laughing face with a big dimple in the cheek. That picture somehow helps one to believe in the amazing, boyish audacity of the sergeant's next performance. It struck him that there were possibilities in a flanking attack by one man alone (even if a party could not creep up unobserved), and that he was the man to make it.

Cautiously he crawled through some brush till close to a sniper's post near "the master pill-box". This he destroyed with bombs, then rushed straight toward the pill-box, while his comrades recklessly swarmed up the hill to see the fight. "Bullets riddled his clothing", says the *Times' History of the War*, but Mullin escaped unharmed, and, climbing on the roof of the pill-box, fired down with his revolver through an opening in its centre upon the machine-gunners below. Sliding from the roof, he reached the entrance just as its garrison of ten came out crying "Kamerad!" The captured pill-box was made to do effective service against its former owners and, thanks to Mullin's intrepid deed, the Princess Pats won through to their objective.

**Lieutenant Hugh Mackenzie.**—On this same day another Company of the Princess Pats was brought to a standstill by another pill-box on the hill-top near Meet-cheele. This also was taken, the dominating factor in this instance being the great bravery and skilful leadership of a Scotchman, Lieutenant Hugh Mackenzie.

He was a native of Inverness and was now about thirty-two years of age. He had enlisted at Ottawa in 1914, as a private in the Princess Pats. In January, 1917, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and was given a commission in the Canadian Machine-gun Corps.

On the morning of October 30th, Lieutenant Mackenzie was in charge of a section of four machine-guns. These he took forward to the attack with the 49th Battalion and the Princess Pats. The guns did good service in all sorts of ways; but when Mackenzie saw that one Company of the Princess Pats, which had lost two thirds of its effectives including all its officers, was held up by the pill-box mentioned above, he left his guns in charge of a corporal, and went through murderous fire to see what could be done to silence the pill-box and the machine-gun emplacements on the hill.

First he made a bold reconnaissance. Then he took command of the few men left of the Company and sent small parties to attack the pill-box from the flanks, while he himself led "the forlorn hope" up the slope to attack in front. Just as the flanking parties effected the capture of the fort from the rear, Mackenzie (who was gazetted V.C. in the following February) was killed by a shot through the head. But he and the others who fell in the assault did not die in vain. They made possible a firm hold on the positions gained on that part of the front and assuredly saved the lives of many of their comrades.

**Corporal Colin Barron.**—November 6th was the crowning day in the struggle for Passchendaele, for it was then that the Canadians captured all that was left of the village, “the ruin of its church—a black mass of slaughtered masonry, and nothing else, not a house left standing”. Of the two Canadian Victoria Crosses of that day, the 3rd Battalion claims one. This was won by Corporal, now Sergeant, Colin Barron, who was born at Banff in Scotland, in 1893, and enlisted at Toronto in 1915. He had previously been a teamster. His major says that he “was wonderful”; and he had already played a gallant part in many a big battle.

The 3rd Battalion was expected to reach the Goudberg Spur; but, on the way, the platoon to which Corporal Barron was attached as Lewis gunner was detailed to capture a German pill-box built inside the damaged walls of a Belgian house called “Vine Cottage”. Outside, machine-guns defended every way of approach. The Canadians had tried in vain to take the post a week earlier, and on this rainy November morning they were beaten back from its walls, again and again, with heavy loss.

Meanwhile Barron had “worked round the flank, with his weapon, and was knocking out the German crews one after the other with his well-directed fire”. He thus silenced two batteries, and then, before his comrades could come up, charged into the remaining battery and overcame the crews with his bayonet. The Canadians took advantage of the lull in the firing to dash forward right up to the walls of the building and Vine Cottage was won.

**Private Peter James Robertson.**—Peter James Robertson, the other Canadian hero who gained the Victoria Cross that day, was also of Scottish parentage, though his birth-place (Pictou) is not in old Scotland, but in its



Latinized namesake on this side of the Atlantic—Nova Scotia. He has six sisters and four brothers, and in 1898 went west to settle at Medicine Hat, Alberta. Some time later Peter became an engineer on the Canadian Pacific Railway. He enlisted at Macleod, in June, 1915, when about thirty-two years of age, and at that time wrote to his mother, "The Empire needs the very best that's in us".

He was a great big man, six feet three inches in height, and was as daring as he was big, always ready to volunteer for a dangerous duty. He had many hairbreadth escapes. Once, with several others, he was buried all day in a dug-out, but their comrades succeeded in digging them out at dusk.

In his last fight, the objective in his Battalion was Passchendaele itself, the aim of the whole great offensive; and for once the Germans seemed to be taken by surprise. Many fled, and the Canadians followed fast after their barrage to the outskirts of the ruined village.

But still here and there enemy machine-gun emplacements wrought havoc. One such post, surrounded by ruined masonry and uncut wire, caused many casualties. In vain the Canadians charged the position. Three times in succession they were beaten back.

Then Robertson—alone—dashed round the flank of the position, jumped the barbed wire, and was in amongst the amazed and terrified garrison. Several fell under his unlooked-for onslaught, the rest fled; and the huge Nova Scotian, like Barron, turned the captured gun on the fleeing foe. Indeed, he did more. He carried it with him down the main street of the ruins of Passchendaele and used it to help in driving the last of the Germans from their lairs.

But the enemy revenged himself by pouring a hurricane of shot and shell on the village. Amongst others,

Two Canadian snipers were wounded by shell-fire in front of the lines. Robertson went to bring them in. He carried the first through a hail of bullets without disaster and went out again for the second. He had almost got him in, when a shell exploded near by, killing him instantly.

He nobly won the cross "for valour", but, stern fighter as he was, officers and comrades speak of his abounding cheerfulness, which "helped to keep the boys in good spirits even under the most trying conditions". In the old days, when travelling up and down the line on his engine, his chums had named him "Singing Pete".

It is of interest to know that, when the Robertsons were living in Springhill, Nova Scotia, a brother of Peter's, wounded in a terrible explosion of gas in a colliery, "went back at great risk and saved a fellow-worker", for which brave deed the late Sir Charles Tupper presented him with a golden cross.

#### TWO TEACHER V.C.'S

Amongst the Canadians who won the Victoria Cross in the last triumphant phase of the Great War were two men who had previously been teachers. Both, as it happened, earned the decoration by a series of gallant deeds displaying not only that conspicuous courage which in this war has impelled many a hero to attempt and carry through, single-handed, some seemingly impossible achievement, but also the power of inspiring and leading others to similar heights of valour.

Both, moreover, won the culminating distinction of their military careers in the Battle of Cambrai. At the beginning, on September 27th, 1918, "the task assigned to the Canadians was to protect the left flank of the Third Army, seize the high ground overlooking the Sensée Valley, and capture Bourlon Village and the adjoining Wood", which was strongly fortified.

The Canadian line, at the "jumping-off" point, was between three and four thousand yards in length, but was to open out like a fan, so that by the time an advance of about three and a third miles had been made, the front of the attacking force was to stretch to nine thousand yards.

The elaborate plan of attack worked out admirably. The gunners protected the infantry with a most "careful and skilful barrage", and progress was so rapid that the enemy was taken by surprise. In some instances, his batteries were captured while they were getting into action.

Early in the day, one division of the Canadians began to surround Bourslon Wood and Village. The machine-gun crews in the latter were put out of action and dispossessed of the guns before half-past ten. The enemy counter-attacked, but was repulsed; and at one o'clock the Wood was captured.

That day saw the beginning of a series of successful operations that brought the Canadians ever nearer to Cambrai; and, on October 9th, they entered that ancient city, which had suffered much wanton injury at the hands of the Huns.

But neither of the two heroes mentioned above was with the troops which occupied Cambrai, for both had been seriously, and one, mortally wounded, in the earlier engagements.

**Lieutenant Milton Fowler Gregg.**—One of these two schoolmasters, Milton Fowler Gregg by name, was born in 1893, at Mountain Dale, New Brunswick, which is still his home. Lieutenant Gregg attended the Provincial Normal School at Fredericton, and taught successively at Benton, Canterbury, and Dubec, in his native Province.

He is much interested in athletic sports and was a star football player".

When he enlisted in October, 1914, he was a sophomore of Acadia University at Wolfville, Nova Scotia. He received his military training at Halifax and in England. He enlisted as a private in the famous 13th Battalion of Royal Highlanders of Canada. Afterwards he transferred to an Imperial regiment, but returned to the Canadians, and became an officer of a Nova Scotia Regiment of the Canadian Mounted Rifles.

He landed in France in March, 1915; obtained his commission in November, 1916; and was awarded the Military Cross in June, 1917, and the bar to it in the following August. He was wounded at Festubert, Vimy, and in the great battle of Cambrai, during which he won the Victoria Cross. The official account is that the decoration was awarded to him "for the most conspicuous bravery and initiative during operations near Cambrai from September 28 to October 1. On September 28, when the advance of the Brigade was held up by rifle fire on both flanks and by thick uncut wire, he crawled forward alone, explored the wire until he found a small gap through which he subsequently led his men, and forced an entry into the enemy trench. The enemy counter-attacked in force; and, through lack of bombs, the situation became critical. Gregg, although wounded, returned alone under a terrific fire and collected a further supply; then rejoining his party, which was now much reduced, despite a second wound, reorganized his men and led them in the most determined way against the enemy trenches, which he finally cleared. He personally killed or wounded eleven of the enemy and took twenty-five prisoners, besides capturing twelve machine-guns in this

trench. Remaining with the Company despite his wounds, he again, on September 30th, led the men in attack until severely wounded". His readiness to sacrifice himself if need be, and his daring leadership, enabled the advance to continue and saved many of his comrades from wounds and death.

It was on February 26th, at a "Dominion investiture" in the ball-room of Buckingham Palace, that the King conferred the Victoria Cross and also the bar to the Military Cross upon Lieutenant Milton Gregg. It was a great occasion, when two hundred and fifty decorations were bestowed upon officers and men of the overseas forces. Lieutenant Gregg has since returned to Canada.

**Lieutenant Samuel Lewis Honey.**—The other V.C. of the teaching profession, Samuel Lewis Honey, was born at Conn, Wellington County, Ontario, on February 9th, 1894. He was the son of Rev. George E. Honey, a Methodist minister (now of Louth and Grantham Circuit). His mother, whose maiden name was Metta Blaisdell, lived in Boston before her marriage.

"Lew", as his family called him, was a clever lad. He attended the Continuation Schools of Drayton and Princeton, and began his work as a teacher very early. He was, in fact, little more than sixteen and a half when he took charge of a school on the Six Nations' Indian Reserve near Brantford. Young as he was, he was particularly successful as a disciplinarian.

He had hardly entered on his eighteenth year when he undertook to teach a school near Drumbo, in Blenheim Township, Oxford County. This had proved too much for the former teacher: but Lew Honey successfully held his ground till midsummer, keeping firm control over the obstreperous pupils who had routed his predecessor. On account of these months of teaching, he was allowed,

when considerably under eighteen, to enter the Normal School at London. He graduated in the following June.

After a year's teaching at Londsborough School in Huron County, he spent the next school year studying at Walkerton High School; and, in June, 1914, he passed the Honour Matriculation examinations with first-class honours in English and French and second-class honours in Latin and German. He received also the sixty-dollar Carter Scholarship awarded by the Department of Education. No doubt the lad was dreaming of further honours and successes in the world of learning, when suddenly his life's plans were broken by the crash of war.

In that anxious autumn of 1914 he did indeed return to his teaching, taking the Bloomington School in Whitechurch Township, York County; but he could not rest in his work. In January, 1915, he enlisted as a private in the 34th Battalion at Walkerton; and, in the following October, he went overseas with the rank of sergeant.

Though a diligent student, he had always found time to take part in outdoor sports. As a little fellow of thirteen, he had won the championship in the field-day games at Drayton Continuation School, competing with much older lads. He was particularly fond of skating, hockey, canoeing, and base-ball. He also took great interest in photography and music.

As a man he was not very big, being only about five feet six inches in height; but in his military, as in his student life, he "made good". He was one of the men of his Battalion chosen to take special training at Aldershot in bayonet fighting and physical exercise; and from January till August, 1916, he acted as instructor in these branches at Bramshott Camp. Then he went to France as a sergeant in the 78th Battalion.

In the following spring he received the first of his three decorations. "There's a little piece of news that I suppose you have a right to know," he wrote home. "I'm receiving the military medal. I won't say that I don't know what it's for, but I will say that I think the rest of the party deserved recognition as much as I did. You have probably been reading accounts of our raids on Fritz's trenches, penetrating his lines to varying depths. Some of these raids are on a small scale, some on a large one. I took part in two raids in three days, both completely successful, and that's what I'm being decorated for. When all is said and done, what I did, didn't amount to much, but our party was lucky. The first time we had only one casualty, and the second time we had only six, and got them all back safely. The biggest part of my job was leading the party across, and it really isn't as easy as one would think. But my bump of locality is pretty well developed, and both times I struck our objective within ten yards. Some day, perhaps, I'll try to tell you what it feels like to go 'over the top', as the boys say, but . . . I'm due to go out on a working party to-night."

These raids, according to a famous war-correspondent, were a definitely Canadian contribution to the tactics of the war. Their uses were manifold. If a general wished to know the composition of the enemy's forces at a particular part of the front, raids were made on the German trenches for the capture of prisoners; and so the desired information was obtained. Raids harassed and disturbed the foe, kept our men "fit" and ready for offensive warfare during the long periods of comparative stagnation in the trenches, and were an effective means of preparing raw troops to take part in larger operations.

In the following April, Sergeant Honey won the D.C.M. in the big "show" at Vimy; and, after his death, one of his brother-officers of the 78th wrote to his parents: "He was one of the very few N.C.O.'s left after the memorable attack of April 9th, 1917, and by his coolness he was able to organize the men and consolidate the hard-won positions. He seemed to have a great store of strength and did wonderful work . . . Lew had a great faith. He realized the dangers quite fully and went on just the same", setting "a good example to others not fortunate enough to have such faith and strong will". Honey's own comment on winning this second distinction was, "I guess I'm a pretty lucky boy". He was then in England, and went on to tell how three officers and five sergeants, including himself, had deposited the colours of the 78th in the stately old Cathedral at Canterbury for safe-keeping till after the war. The privilege of taking part in this interesting ceremonial was one which Honey was well able to appreciate.

After Vimy, he had been recommended for a commission, and on May 1st had left the front to act again as instructor at Bramshott Camp, pending the opening in July of the Officers' Training Course at Bexhill-on-the-Sea. He returned to his Battalion early in October.

In the following summer he took a "Lewis Gun Course" and, throwing himself into it with his accustomed energy, distinguished himself for "exceptionally good work", as he had, four years earlier, in that widely different course for his university matriculation.

A few weeks later he was to win still higher honours in the fierce fighting in and about Bourlon Wood on the way to Cambrai, which began at 5.20 in the morning on September 27th, 1918. When the other officers of his Company were casualties, he took command, reorganizing



it under very heavy fire, and led a dash to the objective, which was speedily gained. An enfilading fire from a machine-gun nest caused many casualties, but not for long. Lieutenant Honey rushed the hostile post single-handed, capturing the guns and ten men. Afterwards he had to repel no fewer than four counter-attacks. When darkness fell, he again sallied forth alone to locate a German post. He discovered its whereabouts, led a party to attack it, and captured the post and three guns. So, for several succeeding days, he carried on with the noblest courage and self-sacrifice; but he died of wounds received in action on the 30th of September.

"I was in command of the Battalion serving that section in which he received his wounds," wrote his Commanding Officer, "and nowhere have I seen such gallant work as this boy of yours displayed . . . He was the first to reach the final objective during the first day, and throughout the days that followed he was an example of grit and determination that was the talk of the whole command. The men idolized him, and as they bore him by me that morning there was a tenderness in their care that only strong men can show."

He was buried in Quéant Cemetery, in a district taken back from the enemy only a few days earlier.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many of the stories of our V.C.'s (and of other Canadians as gallant and dauntless) recall Wordsworth's fine word-painting of "The Happy Warrior",

Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth  
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,  
Or he must fall to sleep, without his fame,  
And leave a dead, unprofitable name—  
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause.

Each one of the men whose achievements have been touched upon in the foregoing pages has shown himself as strong

in heart and hand, as loyal to a great cause, as the old heroes of our race to whom our fathers have taught us to look back and to look up.

There is one thing that may have made the work of our modern heroes even more difficult than that of the champions of the rough days of old. Brought up in the pursuits and ideals of peace, with no preparation for the grim business of war, they may well have found the terrible sternness and the seeming wastefulness of their task a fiercer trial than the worst hardships of the trenches. Indeed, the more one knows about these valiant soldiers, the more clearly it appears that they were not actuated by love of fighting for fighting's sake.

“They were keen in spite of hardships and perils, because they were enduring for others, that in the end of the day there might be a new peace and wealth in life”, says a Canadian minister who has been through the fight. “It is wonderful what men will do under the influence of a great compelling idea. They will develop a contempt of danger and death of which in the ordinary way they are incapable; the soul rises with the demand.”

An older writer, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, had observed the same thing; and in his honour roll he gives a place to those “who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness . . . escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens”.

## TALES OF HEROISM

On Fame's eternal camping-ground  
 Their silent tents are spread,  
 And Glory guards with solemn round  
 The bivouac of the dead.

**Colonel Watson.**—In April, 1915, during the terrible and bloody days of the Battle of Ypres, Colonel Watson (now Major-General) who was editor of the *Quebec Chronicle* before he took charge of the 2nd Battalion, performed a wonderful act of heroism, which, but for his rank, would undoubtedly have won for him the coveted V.C.

About noon of April 24th, Colonel Watson received a message from Headquarters asking him whether he could hold the line of which he was in charge. He replied that he thought he could hold on, although the position was precarious. Matters, however, grew worse; and, about two o'clock, he was ordered by the General Officer Commanding to fall back at once. Unfortunately, the message was delayed in transmission; and, when it was received, the position had become desperate.

The Colonel personally supervised the removal of the wounded, of whom by this time there were about 150, and then arranged for the removal of the companies from the trenches one by one. From a shattered house he and his second in command watched the retirement of the companies through a rain of bullets before which they fell like grain before the scythe. When the last company had left the trenches, the two officers decided that it would be best for them to take separate routes back to Battalion Headquarters. Shaking hands—for they never expected to see each other again—they dashed through the hail of bullets and flying shrapnel. When Colonel

Watson had gone about three hundred yards, he paused for a moment to watch the retirement of one of his companies, and saw not far from him Lieutenant Hughill, who was pausing to recover his breath before making another dash.

Almost at the same moment a private was shot through the leg. Colonel Watson immediately suggested to Lieutenant Hughill that between them they might get the private back to a place of comparative safety—almost one half-mile away. The Colonel knelt down, got the private on his back and staggered along with his load, although the air was literally alive with bullets. The enemy's fire was growing heavier and heavier as he advanced; but, in spite of the heavy fire, the two of them managed to carry the wounded private over the fire-swept ground. Although the ground was ploughed with shells which fell around them during their heroic retreat, they were successful in getting their man to a place of safety.

**Major Dyer and Captain Hilliam.**—On April 25th, the position of the 5th Canadian Battalion on the Gravenstafel Ridge had become untenable; but the men in the trenches had no thought of retiring. It was absolutely necessary to get an order through to the battalion to fall back, but the question was how to accomplish this, because the wires between the trench and Headquarters had been cut time and again by the terrible fire of the enemy. Major Dyer, a farmer from Manitoba, and Captain Hilliam volunteered to carry a written order signed by the brigade commander to the fire-trench. They advanced with an interval of about twenty yards between them, for one of them simply had to get through. Soon they were on the bald hill-top where there was no cover of any kind and where machine-gun and rifle fire swept the ground. Unhit they reached a region filled with shell-

holes of different sizes. Scrambling from one hole to another they advanced nearer and nearer the trench. When within about one hundred yards of it, Captain Hilliam fell, shot through the side. Major Dyer went on, and, when within a few yards of the trench, was shot through the chest. He was able, however, to deliver his message, and what was left of the battalion retired. When men went to assist Captain Hilliam, they found only a board on which he had written with clay, "I have crawled home". It is a pleasure to relate that both these gallant officers were able, later on, to return to their battalion.

**Corporal Baker.**—On the night of April 22nd-23rd, Corporal Baker of the 10th Battalion performed a wonderful deed of valour which won for him the Croix de Guerre. After the occupation of a part of the German trench by his battalion, Corporal Baker, with sixteen bombers, moved along the German line, bombing the enemy out of the trench. The Germans fought desperately and put nine of his men out of action. They then established a redoubt by digging a cross-trench. Corporal Baker and his six surviving companions held, during the remaining hours of the night, a position within ten yards of this redoubt. Early in the morning, the Germans received a fresh supply of bombs and renewed their attempt to drive out the Canadians. In a short time Baker was left absolutely alone to fight the enemy. Gathering bombs from the dead bodies of his comrades, he coolly began to throw them into the enemy's redoubt and succeeded in slackening their fire. He held his position within ten yards of the cross-trench all day and all night; and, just before dawn of the 24th, stepping over the bodies of the dead and wounded who had fallen

before the terrible fire of the enemy, he regained his battalion.

Could anything be more inspiring than such an heroic fight against so great odds?

**Sergeant Ferris.**—One of the most thrilling and heroic deeds performed in the early part of the war was that of Sergeant C. B. Ferris of the 2nd Field Company of the Canadian Engineers. From April 25th to April 29th, the road between Fortuin and the Yser Canal was pounded by German shells. As it was vitally important that this road should be kept open, Sergeant Ferris was sent out with a detachment of men to keep the roadway in repair. They stuck to their task day and night amid the dust and splinters and shock of bursting shells, and succeeded in keeping the road open.

About a month later, the 2nd Field Company was ordered to link up a trench in the Canadian front line with an attempted advance of the British Division on the left. When the pre-arranged signal was given, indicating that the advance had reached and was holding a point where the connection was to be made, two sappers attempted to carry the tape marking out the line for digging the connecting trench, but were at once shot down. Another sapper followed, but never returned. Sergeant Ferris, without a moment's hesitation, sprang over the parapet; and, in the face of a galling fire, crawled, revolver in one hand and tape in the other, toward the flaring signal.

He soon stumbled on a German redoubt right on the line his section intended to dig, and discovered that a mistake had been made, and that the advance had not reached the point indicated. At this moment he was shot through the lungs, but managed to stagger back and make his report. The officers listened eagerly, rallied

their men, and led the detachment to another point, from which they were successful in laying the line under heavy fire from the German trenches. For this act of heroism Sergeant Ferris was awarded the Croix de Guerre.

**Corporal Pym.**—At the battle of Festubert, Corporal Pym of the Royal Canadian Dragoons exhibited self-sacrifice and contempt for danger almost without parallel in the record of valorous deeds.

The British and the German lines were only about sixty yards apart, and Pym, who had heard cries in English for help, decided to go to the rescue of the sufferer in No Man's Land. The space between the lines was swept with incessant rifle and machine-gun fire; but Pym was able to discover a wounded private who had been shot in both thighs and had been lying there three days and three nights. The man's pain was so intense that Pym was unable to move him alone, so he called back to the trench for help. Sergeant Hallowell crept out to join him, but was shot dead just as he reached the wounded man.

Pym then crept back over the fire-swept space in an endeavour to get a stretcher; but when he reached the trench he thought the ground would be too rough to drag the stretcher across. Once again he crawled over the fire-swept No Man's Land and with the greatest difficulty brought his man in alive. For this heroic deed he was awarded the D.C.M.

**Private Smith.**—During an attack on what was known to our men as "Stony Mountain", the supply of bombs ran short, and Private Smith of Listowel, not more than nineteen years of age, undertook to replenish it. It is said that he was singing, "I wonder how the old folks are at home", when a mine exploded and he was buried.

When he dug himself out, he found that everything, including his rifle, had disappeared. He realized, however, that there was a great need for bombs to use on the German trenches a score of yards away. He gathered bombs from the dead and wounded about him, and set out, mainly on all fours, to supply the demand. Twice he went up to the trenches and handed over his load to the bombers. So hot was the fire at times that he was forced to lie down and toss the bombs (they do not explode until the safety pin is withdrawn) into the trench to his men. His clothes were literally shot into rags; but, strange to say, he was untouched. He explains his escape by saying, "I kept moving". This is another example of how, through all these terrible battles, the spirit of man endured and rejoiced, indomitable.

**Private Gledhill.**—Private Gledhill, who lived near Frederich and who was, at the time of the Battle of Givenchy, only eighteen years old, won the D.C.M. by a deed which thrills the very soul of every true Canadian.

He saw Germans advancing down the trench and also saw that only three Canadians were left in the trench, two with the machine-gun, and himself. As the Germans advanced, a bomb exploded under him and, wonderful to relate, landed him unhurt outside the trench with his broken rifle. He picked up another rifle and began to fire until he was forced to retreat. While retreating cautiously, he stumbled over Lieutenant Brown, who had been wounded, and offered to take him back. The wounded officer replied that he could crawl, and when Private Ullock asked Gledhill whether he would take him, he replied, "Sure". But Ullock was a heavy man, and Gledhill could not carry him. So, getting down on his hands and knees, he asked Ullock to take hold of his Webb equipment, and in this manner he drew him care-



fully to within a few yards of the home trench. Here he left Ullock under cover, cut some wire from the entanglements, threw the looped end back to Ullock, who put it about his body; and then Gledhill drew the wounded man back to the parapet, where he was taken charge of by the stretcher-bearers. This brave deed was carried out from first to last under a veritable tempest of fire, and yet Gledhill came through it untouched.

**Captain Costigan.**—In March, 1916, Captain Costigan, D.S.O., performed an exceedingly daring deed which won for him the highest commendation.

At one point in the position held by the Canadian Corps, the stream of the Douve, flowing rapidly with the winter rains, ran through the trenches and disappeared into the German line. This fact suggested to Captain Costigan the idea of floating a raft loaded with high explosives down the stream and exploding it within the enemy's lines.

As the stream was narrow and there was danger that the raft might lodge somewhere on the way down, Captain Costigan proposed to guide it himself until it was within certain reach of the objective. Along with a corporal he accompanied the raft and its cargo past overhanging boughs and numerous obstacles to within thirty yards of where German barbed wire, stretched across the channel, made further progress impossible. Here he waited in the water until the light of a flare gave the signal. The fuse was lighted, and the load shot fair at the enemy's obstruction from a distance of thirty yards. So frightened were the Germans that they fired off several concealed machine-guns, thus revealing their position.

The exploit was one which an ordinary man could not reasonably have been expected to do. The long stumble in the dark, with sudden death always imminent,

the plunge into the icy stream, the struggle with overhanging boughs and obstacles of all kinds, the swift journey down toward the enemy, and the calm waiting in the cold, dark water for the given signal, serve to show that the most romantic deeds of the hero of fiction can be matched by the true recitals of deeds performed frequently in the recent Great War.

**Major Roy.**—It was a French-Canadian officer, Major Roy, who performed one of the bravest deeds of the early part of the war in Flanders. About October 5th, 1915, when the Battle of Loos was raging, the 5th Brigade was subjected to a particularly heavy bombardment. The shriek of shells, the roar of guns, the columns of mud spouting up to heaven—all this was enough to try the nerves of even the most hardened warriors, to say nothing of a brigade which had been only a week in the trenches. Their leaders, however, set a wonderful example of heroism and valour. The Brigadier-General had just passed Major Roy in the trench when a huge shell from a trench-mortar fell in the midst of the men. Without a moment's hesitation the gallant Major rushed at it and stooped to pick it up and hurl it over the parapet, to save the lives of his men. But, just as he was about to grasp it, his foot slipped in the mud, and the shell exploded in his arms. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

## DETAIL OF ACTIONS OF THE CANADIAN CORPS, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918

(From the official report)

### **St. Eloi, February 28th, 1915**

A German saphead and trench section captured by Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in a successful minor operation

### **Neuve Chapelle, March 11th, 1915**

Canadian Artillery in action at Neuve Chapelle

### **St. Eloi, March 14th, 1915**

The St. Eloi line broken by the enemy. An unsuccessful counter-attack upon the mound made by Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry

### **The Second Battle of Ypres, April 22nd, 1915**

The second great German offensive against Ypres checked by the First Canadian Division

Troops engaged: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Brigades

Casualties: Approximately 8,000

### **Polygon Wood, May 8th, 1915**

Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry maintained its position in the South Ypres Salient against continued attack and under concentrated bombardment, suffering over 500 casualties.

### **Festubert, May 20th, 1915**

The initial stages of the Aubers Ridge offensive. The First Canadian Division attached to the First Army continued the stubborn fighting for La Quinque Rue K.5, and the Orchard.

Troops engaged: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Brigades

Casualties: Approximately 2,000

### **Givenchy, June 15th, 1915**

The Aubers Ridge offensive continued from the south. Here the Canadian Division renewed the attack upon Rue D'Ouvert, Chapelle St. Roche, and Violaines.

Troops engaged: 1st and 2nd Brigades

Casualties: Approximately 900

### **Loos, September 25th, 1915**

The Canadian Corps took no great part in this battle, but by artillery work, minor attacks, and a simulated offensive, prevented the movement of German reserves to the point of the British attack.

Troops engaged: 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, Canadian Artillery

**St. Eloi, April, 1916**

Throughout the whole month the Second Canadian Division fought a stubborn but unsuccessful battle for the possession of the mine craters before the village of St. Eloi.

Troops engaged: Second Canadian Division

Casualties: over 4,000

**Sanctuary Wood, June 2nd, 1916**

The third great German attempt for Ypres. The Third Canadian Division bore the brunt of the attack and was driven from its main line of defence.

**Hooge, June 6th**

The German offensive continued. Hooge captured by the enemy.

June 13th. A most successful counter-attack made by the First Canadian Division, regaining practically all the ground lost since June 2nd.

Troops engaged: First, Second, and Third Canadian Divisions

Casualties: 11,000

**The Somme, September, 1916****Mouquet Farm, September 4th-15th**

Captured by First Canadian Division

**Courcelette, September 15th**

At 6.20 a.m. six battalions of the Second and Third Divisions attacked and captured Courcelette. The operation was brilliantly successful, and in the afternoon the Canadian line was still farther advanced.

**Fabeck Graben, September 15th**

Captured by the Third Division

**Zollern Graben, September 16th**

Inconclusive fighting

**Zollern, Hessian, and Kenora Trenches, September 26th**

Successful attack by the First and Second Divisions

**Regina Trench, October-November**

The scene of some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. Regina Trench finally captured by the Fourth Division on November 11th.

**Desire Trench, November 18th**

Captured by the Fourth Division. The final Canadian action on the Somme

Casualties: 21,179

Prisoners captured: 3,000.

**Longasvesnes, Lieramont, Equancourt, March 26th-29th, 1917**  
 These three villages were captured by the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, attached to XV Corps.

**Villers Faucon, Saulcourt, Guyencourt**

Cavalry operations continued. Three more villages successfully occupied

Troops engaged: Canadian Cavalry Brigade, R.C.H.A.

Casualties: Approximately 60 all ranks

**Vimy Ridge, April 9th, 1917**

The enemy considered this position impregnable. It was captured by the Canadian Corps in one of the most carefully conceived and brilliantly executed enterprises of the war.

**Hill 145, April 10th**

Captured by the Fourth Division

**The Pimple, April 12th**

Captured by the Fourth Division

Troops engaged: First, Second, Third, and Fourth Divisions

Casualties: Officers 266, other ranks 9,700

**Vimy—Thelus, Trench Systems, April 23rd**

The attack continued by the First and Second Divisions, with local successes

**Arleux, April 28th**

Captured by the First Division

**Fresnoy, May 3rd**

Captured by the First and Second Divisions

Prisoners and material captured: During April and May, 1917, the Canadian Corps captured nine villages, over 5,000 prisoners, 64 field guns and howitzers, 106 trench-mortars, and 126 machine-guns.

**Messines, June 7th, 1918**

A great proportion of the effective mining and tunnelling which rendered possible the capture of the Messines-Wytsehaete Ridge by the Second Army was carried out by the Canadian Tunnelling Companies and Engineers.

**Lens, August, 1917**

The Canadian Corps advancing toward Lens

**Avion and La Coulette, August 1st**

Captured by the Fourth Canadian Division

**Hill 70, August 15th**

Captured by the First and Second Divisions

**Cité St. Auguste**

**Chalk Pit**

**Green Crassier**

Troops engaged: First, Second, and Fourth Divisions

Prisoners captured: 1,400

Casualties: 6,138

The advance toward Lens was continued on the 23rd, 25th, and 26th by the Third and Fourth Divisions.

Casualties: 2,962

**Passehendaele, October-November, 1917**

This operation was carried out in four distinct phases, resulting in the capture of every objective.

Casualties: 14,867

Troops engaged: First, Second, Third, and Fourth Divisions

Prisoners captured: 44 officers, 1,148 other ranks

**Cambrai, November 20th, 1917**

At this point a squadron of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade penetrated the German line and advanced toward Rumilly and Cambrai.

Casualties: 100 approximately

Troops engaged: Fort Garry Horse

Prisoners captured: 40

**Villers-Guislains, December, 1917**

During December the Canadian Cavalry Brigade assisted in the attack on Villers-Guislains and Bois Gauche.

Casualties: Officers 10, other ranks 85

**The German offensive of March and April, 1918:  
The Defence of Amiens**

**Fondé-Pas Defence Line**

Here Canadian Railway Troops took an active part in the resistance to the German advance.

Casualties: Approximately 350

**Bois Moreuil, Rille Wood, Hangard, Villers-Bretonneux**

The fighting of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade materially assisted the check to the German advance before Amiens.

Casualties: Over 900

Prisoners and material captured: 200 prisoners and 27 machine-guns

**Villers-Bretonneux, Clery**

The action of the 1st Canadian Motor Machine-gun Brigade at Villers-Bretonneux, on March 26th-31st, made possible the maintenance of that line of defence.

Casualties: 29 officers, 1,000 other ranks

**Amiens, August 8th-17th, 1918**

The Canadian Corps held the approximate centre of the British battle-front between the Avre and the Ancre. In this successful action the enemy was driven back over 14 miles, and the danger to Amiens finally averted.

Casualties: 7,763

Troops engaged: The Canadian Corps, to which were attached the Third Cavalry Division and the 4th Tank Brigade.

Prisoners captured, 12,000

Material captured: 185 heavy guns, 1,000 machine-guns, and 125 trench-mortars

### **Arras, August 26th-September 4th, 1918**

In this action the Canadian Corps broke the Drocourt-Quéant line and advanced to the Canal Du Nord, capturing some 50 square miles of territory.

Casualties: Approximately 11,500

Prisoners captured: 10,200

Troops engaged: Canadian Corps

Material captured: 100 heavy guns, 1,100 machine-guns, and 75 trench-mortars

### **Cambrai, September 27th-October 9th, 1918**

Cambrai was captured by the Canadian Corps on October 9th.

Casualties: Approximately 18,000

Troops engaged: The Canadian Corps, to which the Eleventh British Division and units of the Fifty-Sixth British Division were attached.

Prisoners captured: 7,200

Material captured: 205 heavy guns, 1,000 machine-guns, and 30 trench-mortars

### **Le Cateau, October 9th, 1918**

Captured by the Canadian Cavalry Brigade

Casualties: Approximately 150

Prisoners captured: 400

Material captured: 5 heavy guns, 5 trench-mortars, and 102 machine-guns

### **Denain**

Captured by the Fourth Division on October 20th

### **Valenciennes.**

Captured by the Fourth Division on November 2nd

Casualties: 1,000

Prisoners captured: 1,500

### **Mons**

Captured by the Third Division on November 11th

Casualties: 75

Prisoners: 100

## SUMMARY OF FACTS COVERING THE CANADIAN CORPS

The total of the most notable captures includes:

Prisoners .....	45,000
Artillery, guns .....	850
Machine-guns .....	4,200

The advances made by the Canadian Corps have resulted in:

Cities, towns and villages recaptured .....	130
French and Belgian civilian population liberated .....	310,000
Square miles of allied territory reclaimed .....	550

Casualties in the Canadian Forces during the war, total.. 213,268

The above total may be classified as follows:

Killed in action .....	35,128
Died of wounds .....	12,048
Died of disease .....	3,409
Presumed dead .....	4,620
Missing .....	842
<hr/>	
Total .....	56,047
Wounded .....	154,361
Prisoners of war .....	2,860
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Total casualties .....	213,268

The most notable engagements fought by the Canadian Corps are:

Ypres .....	1915
St. Eloi .....	1916
Sanctuary Wood .....	1916
The Somme .....	1916
Vimy Ridge .....	1917
Passechendaele .....	1917
Lens .....	1917
Cambrai .....	1917
Amiens .....	1918
Arras .....	1918
Cambrai .....	1918
Valenciennes .....	1918
Mons .....	1918



## THE FLAG OF BRITAIN

Flag of Britain, proudly waving, over many distant seas;  
 Flag of Britain, boldly braving blinding fog and adverse breeze.  
 We salute thee, and we pray, "Bless, O God, our land to-day".

Flag of Britain! Wheresoever thy bright colours are outspread,  
 Slavery must cease for ever, light and freedom reign instead.  
 We salute thee, and we pray, "Bless, O God, our land to-day".

Flag of Britain! 'Mid the nations, may it ever speak of peace,  
 And proclaim, to farthest nations, all unworthy strife must cease.  
 We salute it, and we pray, "Bless, O God, our land to-day".

But if duty sternly need it, freely let it be unfurled,  
 Winds of Heaven then may speed it to each quarter of the world.  
 We salute it, and we pray, "Bless, O God, our land to-day".

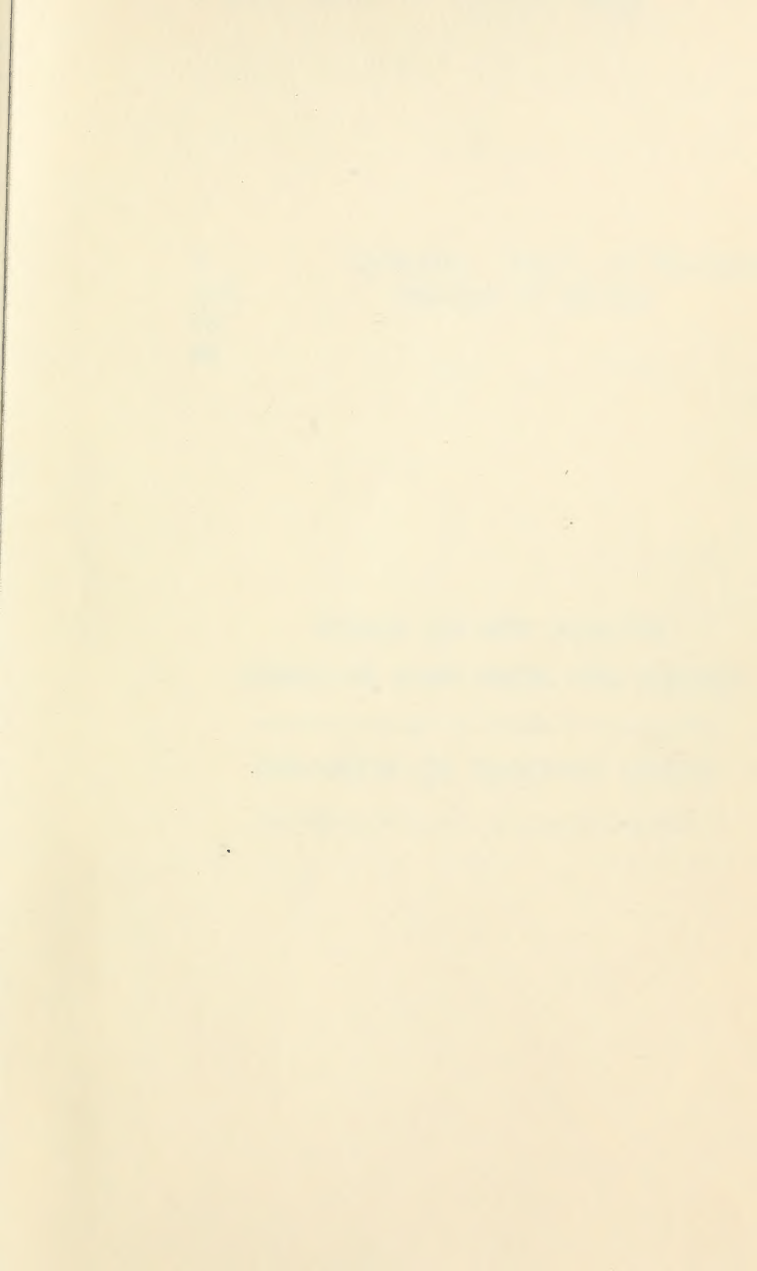
Love of it, across the waters passing with electric thrill,  
 Binds our distant sons and daughters heart to heart with Britain  
 still.  
 We salute it, and we pray, "Bless, O God, our land to-day".

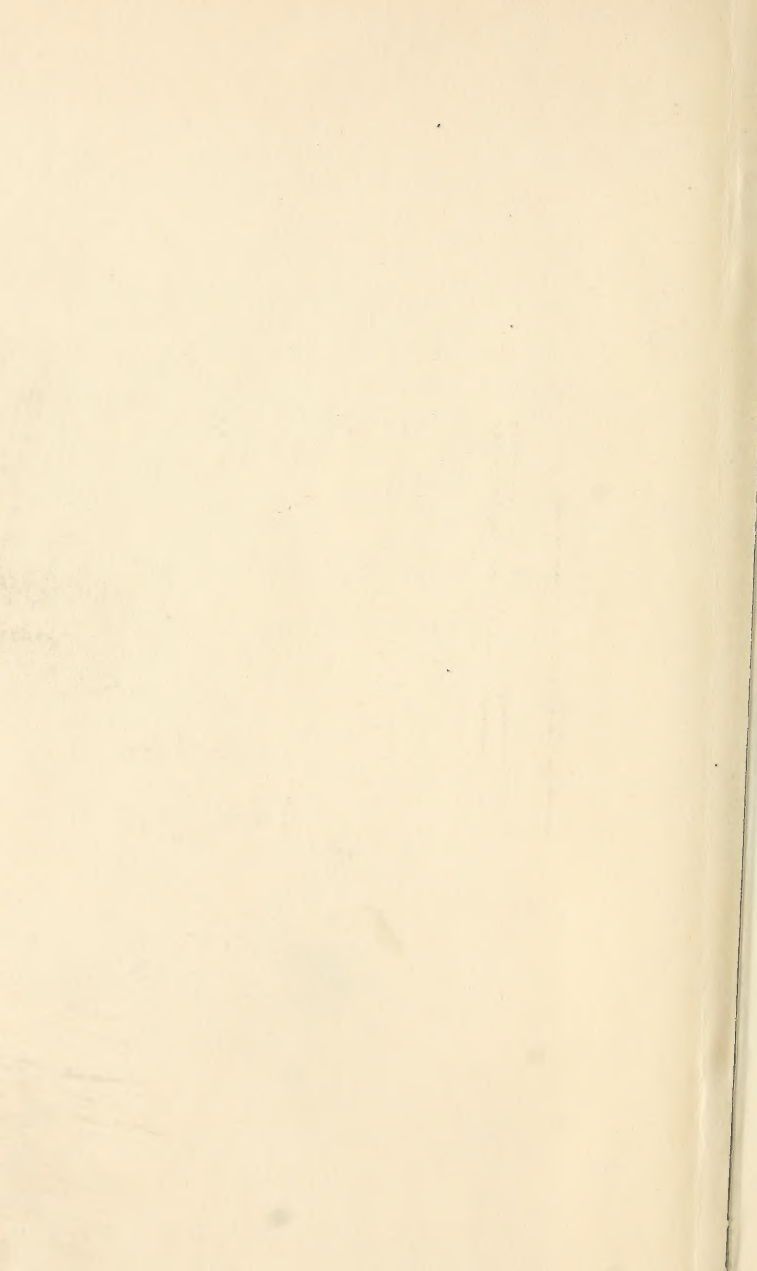
Regions East and West united, all our Empire knit in one;  
 By right loyal hearts defended, let it wave beneath the sun.  
 We salute it, and we pray, "Bless, O God, our land to-day".

E. A. WALKER.

At the words "We salute", the hand should be raised in the attitude of salute. At the words "And we pray", the head should be bowed, still retaining the hand at the salute. It is desirable that the Union Jack should be raised during the singing or the recitation of the song.







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