

THE CANADIANS  
IN FRANCE  
1915-1918



CAPTAIN HARWOOD STIDLE



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THE CANADIANS  
IN FRANCE

1915-1918

## **A GALLOPER AT YPRES**

### **And Some Subsequent Adventures**

By MAJOR and BREVET LIEUT.-COLONEL  
P. R. BUTLER, D.S.O., The Royal Irish.  
With a Frontispiece in colour by LADY  
BUTLER. Cloth 15/- net.

In the glorious, but obscure work of the immortal Seventh Division in Flanders, Captain Butler (as he then was) held a position which enabled him to combine in an unusual degree a close and a more distant view of the fighting. The result is a vivid and thrilling, if necessarily harrowing, account. The author, after being wounded at First Ypres (when galloping for a very famous general), returned later on to serve as a Company Officer with his regiment in the Second Battle of Ypres, and in other parts of the line. The later chapters of the book deal with this phase.

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD., LONDON

# THE CANADIANS IN FRANCE

1915-1918

BY

CAPTAIN HARWOOD STEELE, M.C.

AUTHOR OF "CLEARED FOR ACTION," "SONGS OF THE NAVY"

WITH 8 SKETCH MAPS

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD  
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN the record which follows, the reader will find a detailed—though entirely unofficial—history of the Canadian Army Corps, that great force of four divisions and “Corps Troops” which won for the Dominion the praise of the world as the mother of warrior sons.

Certain points in connection with the work require explanation. I have dealt solely with the operations of the Corps in the presence of the enemy. Events not actually connected with the operations have been omitted, except when of peculiar importance or essential to the proper understanding of the narrative. As a result, non-combatant units and those not normally concerned with the all-important work of killing Germans may appear to suffer. I have given these credit for their performances in certain places. The reader must look upon these troops as the invisible parts of the machine, as necessary to its efficiency as the fighting men and without which the entire mechanism would break down.

It has not been possible to mention all persons who earned the right to have their individual achievements set down in history. If this were done, the book would be merely a directory. But many hundreds of gallant officers and men receive their due.

Care has been taken in defining the identity of units. All troops referred to are Canadians and infantry unless otherwise stated. The term “Imperial” has been used to indicate troops recruited in the British Isles, except in the case of units of the Tank Corps and Royal Air Force, which were all raised in the United Kingdom and so need no such distinction. Readers who desire to ascertain the areas from which various Canadian battalions, etc., were drawn are referred to the Appendix.


Technicalities have been avoided as far as possible.

The majority of the events dealt with were enacted under my own observation.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Captain C. Donnelly, Canadian Engineers, and Messrs. A. W. Ellis and A. L. Smith late Royal Engineers, in the preparation of the maps.

H. S.

LONDON, 1919.



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BRITISH FRONT—LENS TO ARRAS.

April 1917—April 1918.

# The Canadians in France

## CHAPTER I

### INTO THE TRENCHES

ON February 7, 1915, the First Canadian Division, the pioneer of Canada's fighting troops, began to leave Salisbury Plain, where it had been training during the winter, for the front.

The composition of the division was as under :

First Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General M. S. Mercer, consisting of the First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. W. Hill ; Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. Watson ; Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. Rennie, M.V.O., and Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. H. Labatt. Second Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General A. W. Currie, which was composed of the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. S. Tuxford ; Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. Hart-McHarg ; Eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. J. Lipsett ; Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. L. Boyle. The Third Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General R. E. W. Turner, V.C., D.S.O., consisting of the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. O. W. Loomis ; Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. S. Meighen ; Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Currie, and Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. G. E. Leckie.

The artillery, commanded by Brigadier-General H. E. Burstall, consisted of the First Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. E. W. B. Morrison, D.S.O. ; the Second Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. J. J. Creelman ; the Third Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. J. H. Mitchell, and the Divisional Ammunition Column, Lieut.-Col. J. J. Penhale.

The remainder of the division consisted of three Field Companies of Canadian Engineers (the First, Second and Third) and the usual administrative units. The Divisional Mounted Troops were a special squadron of the Nineteenth (Alberta) Dragoons, Lieut.-Col. F. C. Jamieson.

Such was the division which, under the command of Lieut.-

General E. A. H. Alderson, C.B., a distinguished officer of the Regular Army, was to strike Canada's first blows in France.

The division disembarked at St. Nazaire, a French sea-port town on the west coast, near the mouth of the Loire. The journey from England was made in heavy gales, but was otherwise uneventful. The whole division was on French soil in five or six days, and February 17th found it marching into billets near Hazebrouck, a small town not thirty miles south-west of the stricken and fateful city of Ypres. The Canadians remained in these billets for a week, awaiting orders to enter the firing-line.

On the 20th they were inspected by the Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshal Sir John French. Three days later they marched to Armentières. Here they received a royal welcome from the British troops, the survivors of the first immortal Seven Divisions.

For some twelve days the division was billeted in Armentières and the neighbouring country, and it was here they received their baptism of fire. One company of each battalion at a time was taken into the trenches of the Imperial regiments near Saily, and they received their first experiences of unvarnished war with the coolness and indifference which was so evident in the ranks of the Regular Army.

The fighting experienced by the division at this time was of the unvarying hanging-on description continued during the first winter of the war. From day to day troops went into the rain-soaked trenches and endured with the calm fortitude of the Imperial men. The enemy systematically shelled their trenches and billets, and occasionally lives were lost. Whether in trenches or billets the officers and men did their duty, proving in a few days their ability to look after themselves.

On March 2nd, seven days after their inspection by Sir John French, the right to stand shoulder to shoulder with England was granted them, and the Canadians took over from British troops trenches to the south of Armentières. These trenches were flanked right and left by the Fifth (Imperial) Division.

The Canadians passed day after day in this position, following the monotonous routine of the Allied troops. Each of the three brigades stationed two battalions at a time in the front line, the other two battalions of the brigade being in billets in rear. Each battalion lived four days in the firing-line, holding their ground through the fitful fighting of their tour. At the end of the fourth day they went back to rest in billets covered with mud, heavy-eyed and weary, while a fresh battalion of their own brigade took their places.

On March 10th the effort at Neuve Chapelle was made. The Canadians were eager to take part, but their hour had

not yet struck. They rendered some assistance by supporting artillery and small-arm fire.

For two weeks following Neuve Chapelle the Canadians remained where they were. They were then relieved by the Eighth (Imperial) Division, and on March 25th began to march to Estaires. Here they were billeted for some ten days, which were spent in reorganization. On April 5th marching orders were again received and they moved to Cassel, about fifteen miles north-west of Estaires. Their objective was far from Estaires, and indicated that they would soon be fighting in another district.

A week after their arrival in Cassel found them on the road to Ypres.

Situated less than thirty miles from Calais, connected with it by roads and a railway admirably suited for the rapid advance of hostile troops, Ypres stood as the key to that city. It was, previous to the war, a town of some nineteen thousand inhabitants, and one of the wealthiest and most important in Belgium. Its history dates back to the thirteenth century, when two hundred thousand people dwelt there. From the earliest times it was famous for its cloth manufactories.

On April 11th, the day of the first Canadian entry into Ypres, though the troops anticipated severe fighting, they did not realize that a very few days later they would be engaged in one of the greatest and most terrible battles ever fought by British arms.

The next morning found the stage being set. And here a description of the portion of the stage occupied by Canada is necessary. The trenches which the Canadians were to take over from the French lay to the left of the British Army. The line was part of a salient—the Ypres Salient—and ran roughly north-west and south-east of Ypres about four odd miles from the town. Covering a front of about three thousand five hundred yards, its left rested upon the Ypres-Poelcapelle Road, its right immediately north of the Ypres-Roulers Railway. Here and there villages and cottages unharried by the devastating artillery were used as battalion and brigade or other headquarters by either side. Chief among these were St. Julien, Fortuin, St. Jean and Wieltje, on the British side, and Poelcapelle in the territory of the enemy.

For six days after they had occupied their new positions the Canadians found everything quiet and normal. Then, on the night of April 21st, the enemy opened a heavy artillery bombardment upon Ypres, killing numbers of billeted troops and non-combatants. From that day until they were forced out of range years after, their artillery attack of the city never ceased.

With the roar of the German guns heralding its entry, April 22nd dawned.



## CHAPTER II

### THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES

APRIL 1915

At 4.30 p.m. on April 22nd the First Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General M. S. Mercer, was in reserve near and in the city of Ypres. The Second Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General A. W. Currie, was in action, holding the right of the Canadian line. The Third Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General R. E. W. Turner, V.C., D.S.O., occupied the left sector. The three brigades of Canadian Field Artillery supported the infantry.

This was the distribution of the division when, at the hour named, the German Army launched a tremendous assault upon the whole left of the Allied line in a great effort to break through to Calais and the conflict known to history as the Second Battle of Ypres began.

The day was sunny and peaceful, the afternoon drawing to a close, when, so suddenly that it took every man in the trenches completely by surprise, a light, misty cloud rose slowly from the German position and, blown by a favourable wind, rolled towards the right flank of the French. The troops posted there suddenly found themselves treacherously overwhelmed by choking clouds of poison gas, an instrument of war as devilishly effective as it was unexpected. Totally unprepared for such an attack, the native troops, who feared nothing which they understood, broke, and, mad with agony, reeling and tearing in frenzy at their throats, staggered down the road to Ypres. As they went the enemy's artillery burst into an eruption of fire, and many thousands of men hurled themselves into the gap and swept over the totally unprotected flank of the Canadian division.

Along the whole front held by the Dominion, shell after shell burst, and the assault, unequalled by any previously launched since war began, was simultancously delivered at every point within range of the gas cloud. The pitiful little body of Canadians saw it coming. They saw that they were outnumbered beyond hope of resistance, and so, because they saw it and knew the

awful consequences of a retreat, resolved to resist to the end. They saw the French pouring in masses from their left, leaving the flank utterly exposed to the advancing thousands, which approached with appalling rapidity. Yet there was no panic, though the men of the Third Brigade were gasping and sinking in the edge of the gas zone and the myriad bayonets were closing around them.

The guns behind the trenches, the moment the attack began, opened fire upon the enemy, who were visible from the Observation Posts as clouds of grey and blazing steel, moving down upon the crashing trenches. These guns began hurling shrapnel into the oncoming troops. The batteries of the Third Artillery Brigade also took the mobs of men advancing into the French trenches by surprise and poured a storm of shells into their gathering crowds. Supported by this aid, the infantry hung on with grim courage and for the moment held up the swaying thousands on the very threshold of victory.

It was at once decided by the brigadier of the Third Infantry Brigade that he could not possibly hold the original line, as it then stood, a continued resistance in that position being certain to end in the complete outflanking of the division. It was therefore decided to move the brigade, fighting all the way, until the line should form an angle with its apex resting on the original left extremity of the division and its new arm covering the Ypres-Poelcapelle Road. This meant that the force would not only be holding its old line of trenches but would also be strung out for over a mile southward. An effort was then to be made to reunite with the French at the new left flank of the Canadians and to hold the zigzag line thus formed, which would represent the high-water mark of the German advance, should the attempt to beat them back be successful.

While the men in the trenches, under a wilting tempest of shrapnel, high explosive and rifle fire, clung fiercely to their ground, help was being rushed up as fast as possible. The first signs of anything amiss coming to the men in reserve were the faint smell of chlorine in the air and a greenish tinge in the distant sky. Then, without warning, the Ypres Road became swarmed with troops stumbling in the wildest confusion from the abandoned line. They came in mixed mobs of Europeans, Algerians and Turcos, officers and men reeling in one writhing crowd, rending their clothes, coughing and vomiting blood, and falling by the road as they came. Staff officers rushed out to stop them, but the line, like tortured spirits released from Hades, continued to rush past in appalling numbers. Behind them, just in rear of the whistling shrapnel from their own guns, followed hundreds of German infantry, butchering the stragglers, until

the proximity of the town compelled them to retire. And it was into this unknown Hades, the signs of which were before their eyes, that the reserves were rushed.

By the time dusk had set in the battalions were marching. The First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. W. Hill, was quickly assembled and sent up to the aid of the left flank. The Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. Watson, in company with the Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. Rennie, M.V.O., began to move towards Wieltje to the support of the Third Infantry Brigade at about half-past eight in the evening. The Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. P. Birchall, accompanied the First Battalion in its march to the assistance of the left flank. The two battalions of the Second Infantry Brigade in reserve when the assault was delivered were the Seventh and Tenth. The Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. Hart-MeHarg, was ordered to support the Third Infantry Brigade, which was in the greatest danger, and the Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. L. Boyle, received instructions to move from Wieltje into the reserve trenches. The battalions of the Third Brigade which had been resting were the Fourteenth and Sixteenth. The Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. S. Meighen, was near the G.H.Q. line of defences before Wieltje. The Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. G. E. Leekie, in Ypres, crossed the Canal and held it whilst the broken French troops fell back through them.

In the meantime, with indomitable gallantry, the men ahead were holding on. The enemy were rolling forward in overwhelming numbers, their artillery and machine guns lashing the line. The Canadians fought until they were literally blown out of their trenches and, stubbornly struggling, replied with a continual tornado of bullets that withered the clamouring waves of their opponents.

The Third Brigade now began to take up its new dispositions. In this movement they were given the support of the Third Artillery Brigade, which was actually forced by rifle fire to retire upon St. Jean during the evening, so far had the enemy advanced. They were also greatly assisted by that Imperial battery of 4.7 guns stationed in rear of the wood near St. Julien. These guns were perforce abandoned, but their loss was of no importance, even in those days when British guns were few.

The enemy was now in complete possession of a wedge of country extending from the left of the original Canadian line to the new right of the French line, the apex resting on the south side of the small wood in which the battery stood. Great forces in solid formation were holding this ground. The movement of the Third Brigade still left their left flank unprotected, as the junction with the French had not yet been renewed, and



it seemed that the tremendous weight of the German attack must eventually crumple up their line on itself and annihilate the division. It was, then, decided to hurl a hasty counter-attack against the overpowering army that was swiftly surrounding the desperate battalions.

The only available battalions were the Tenth Battalion, which had been ordered, as before stated, to move into reserve trenches at Wieltje, and the Sixteenth Battalion, holding the Canal. The Sixteenth Battalion was at once lined up and, having received instructions, marched by a roundabout route to St. Julien. In silence and with bayonets fixed they set off through the darkness.

At St. Julien they met the Tenth Battalion, which had marched from Wieltje and was waiting for them. They were formed into line, the Sixteenth on the left and the Tenth on the right. They kept stolid silence, and presently the word came to advance.

So, as majestically as if advancing in review order, the battalions moved unhesitatingly forward. When within a few score yards of the position the marching troops were greeted for a moment by the scattered shots of the retreating outposts of the enemy, which had possibly heard the tread of many feet or seen the flicker of the feeble moon upon a bayonet. This was the signal for the attack. The Canadians lay down and removed their packs. Then at midnight with a roar they rushed forward, and the wood suddenly burst into fire.

In brigade headquarters, to rear, they thought that no man could live in the furious storm that poured into the charging battalions. The wood seemed one mass of scorching flame. The men fell everywhere. Lieut.-Col. R. L. Boyle and Major MacLaren, of the Tenth Battalion, were soon mortally wounded. Captain John Geddes, of the Sixteenth Battalion, also collapsed mortally wounded, and the men of his command saw him waving them on and splendidly struggling on hands and knees to reach the enemy before he gave up his life. Captain Godson-Godson, the Adjutant, was dangerously hit at the same time, while gallantly directing the advance of the battalion.

And so the attackers pressed irresistibly on. The Huns cringed as the Canadians, without firing a shot, reached their position. The assault swarmed over the parapet and cleared the trenches with the bayonet. Machine guns were abandoned, and in a few moments the wood was cleared except for isolated little groups that fought in unbroken silence. Soon every German in the position was dead, and the remnants of the two battalions entrenched themselves in the northern edge of the wood, the position won.

Major Ormond now took command of the Tenth Battalion, in succession to Lieut.-Col. Boyle. He, too, was wounded shortly afterwards, whereupon the command devolved upon Major Guthrie, an officer attached to the battalion, who led it thenceforth with great skill.

The position now held by the Canadians in the wood was several hundred yards in advance of the line of the Third Brigade upon the right, and was not in touch with any troops upon either flank. This meant that the battalions were in great danger of being cut off. Lieut.-Col. Leckie therefore caused a retirement to be made to the south side of the wood, where the men dug in and where touch was gained with the Third Brigade before dawn.

By the success of the attack upon the wood the weight upon the left flank was much lessened, and it gave a footing to the troops which were to strengthen the line along the Ypres-Poelcapelle Road. Throughout the Canadian line the men were still indomitably retaining their positions. While the charge was being carried out, the reserve battalions were rapidly coming up. The First and Fourth Battalions had taken up a position in line facing north about two thousand yards north of Ypres, the left upon the eastern bank of the Canal, and were there rapidly digging in. Their presence there was a precautionary measure, as the exact whereabouts of the French troops was unknown. In the location adopted by these battalions they stood as a barrier to any thrust upon Ypres or the Canal and as a flank guard to that struggling line of Canadians to the east.

Meanwhile, also, the Second Battalion had secured touch with the Tenth Battalion on its left and the Third Brigade on its right, helping to strengthen the staggering defences. The Third Battalion was in reserve close behind them. The Seventh Battalion was also by that time in the breach, fighting on the left of the Thirteenth Battalion and endeavouring to get in touch with the Second Battalion and complete the thin fence of steel that shut the Germans back.

By this time, also, the first of the Imperial troops to come to the support of the Canadians had appeared upon the scene. This was a mixed force of battalions, or portions of battalions, which had just been engaged at Hill 60 and elsewhere, and which, at the commencement of the German gas attack, had been enjoying a well-earned rest in billets in rear. They were hastily gathered together, anyhow and by any means, and placed under the command of Colonel Geddes, of the Second Buffs, for the purpose of the existing situation. They became known as Geddes' Detachment, and they did grand work at a critical time.

These troops, arriving towards midnight, were directed to

fill the gap between the left of the Sixteenth Battalion and the right of the First and Fourth Battalions further to the west, and thus to close the last break in the Canadian line.

The grey, heavy-winged dawn at last came slowly over the far-flung Canadian line and found a gaunt, haggard little handful of men still making an incredible stand in the path of enormous forces of the Kaiser's best. From the right of the line to the left were the Fifth, Eighth, Fifteenth, Thirteenth, Seventh, Third, Second, Tenth, Sixteenth, Fourteenth, Fourth and First Battalions, men of whom it could be truly said that they never knew they were beaten.

The German wedge, when the morning broke, was still jammed firmly in the gap it had forced. There was one break in the wedge, however, which they knew to their cost was impossible to close. This was caused by the wood near St. Julien, which the Tenth and Sixteenth Battalions had taken the night before. A few attempts to retake the position had been beaten back with such heavy losses that the enemy were well content to keep out of it and run their line about the further border.

The Germans had made a fatal mistake after their initial success of the previous afternoon. They had halted for a time to consolidate, thus giving us breathing space when lack of it would have meant the end. Throughout the night, nevertheless, they had made continuous, though isolated, efforts to exploit the advantage they had gained and to enlarge the entrance they had forced, but the obstinate resistance of the Canadians had hitherto checked them. The possession of the wood for the time had relieved the situation. The German attacks, however, were constantly increasing in frequency and power, and were again threatening to crush in the left flank, where Geddes had not yet arrived, and destroy the division. In order to stop this and finally to arrest the advance at this point as well as to re-establish touch with the French, it was decided vigorously to counter-attack the enemy's trenches. The First and Fourth Battalions, in their position immediately east of the Canal, and Geddes' Detachment, marching rapidly forward, were ordered to advance in a north-easterly direction and take the position to the left of the troops in the trenches and west of the wood.

The enemy here was holding a very strong position, well wired, on a long slope, facing south-west and about one thousand yards in front of the two Canadian battalions. The Fourth Battalion, closely supported by the First Battalion, was ordered to advance with its right on the Ypres-Pilekem Road, while Geddes kept pace with it on the right. The French, an indefinite way off to the north, were attacking at the same time.

It was easy to see the terrible casualties such an attack would

demand. They also saw the consequences if the fierce charges of the enemy were not broken and junction made with the French. The fate of the whole force rested in their hands that morning, as the fate of the whole Empire hung upon the valour of the division. So, in order to save that division, when, at 6.30 a.m., the advance began, they unhesitatingly rushed into destruction.

Under cover of the most violent fire that our scanty array of guns and small arms could muster, the advance was thrust through a terrible bombardment of German artillery and in the face of an ever-increasing and terrific infantry and machine gun fire. Man upon man died, until the attack seemed to sink away, but the rest pushed on. Lieut.-Col. A. P. Birchall, a shining example of the British Regular officer, gallantly led his men and fell dead before their eyes. Fired by his actions and those of the other valorous leaders, the troops rushed forward, up to the very muzzles of the raving machine guns holding the most advanced positions. There was a short struggle in the outlying trenches, where the goring bayonets filled them with dead. The last German fled; the fire of the Canadian and English guns lifted to destroy the survivors and the remains of the assaulting regiments halted.

The advance had won to a line roughly one thousand yards in front of the jumping-off position. Further than this no progress could be made, for in the machine gun fire from the more northerly German troops no man could live. But Geddes' Detachment had gained touch with the Canadians on his right near the wood, and at 9.30 a.m. that morning the First and Fourth Battalions dug in, the First in support of the Fourth. Both battalions, with their left now four hundred yards east of the Ypres-Pilekem Road, gained touch with the French and at last closed that awful gap that had yawned five miles wide the night before.

The price paid for this triumph was very great, but those who fell had not given their lives in vain. They had saved the division.

The gain was indeed of immense value. It had effectively extended the Canadian line from the left of the Fourteenth Battalion to a point far west of that flank. The division's trenches were now roughly in the shape of an S. From the original right of the Canadians, which was still rigidly held by the Second Brigade, the line ran north-west along the entire front held by the division before the battle. From this point it curved south and ran along the Ypres-Poelcapelle Road, to tend thence in a generally western direction to the place of junction with the French. Thus it may be seen that the Canadians, helped by Geddes' Detachment,



were actually holding a line over three times longer than that first given to them.

It was from this time that Fortune for a time began to favour the splendid efforts of the Allies. In spite of violent attacks undertaken by huge hordes of the enemy, the trenches were retained. The French, in concert with the British, that morning had begun a series of heavy assaults upon the German line. These attacks succeeded in that a footing was gained all along the wedge and communication established. The result was that the evening found the enemy's wedge entirely hemmed in with an immovable chain of flame and steel through which they could not break, despite the eternal hammering of their raging masses of men. The Canadians were now being strongly reinforced by Imperial troops, the first of which had arrived in time to assist the counter-attack of the First and Fourth Battalions. Moreover, fresh men were continually coming to the assistance of the French, and the new line, though sadly distant from the old, grew every hour stronger.

The attempt to get forward and further contract the German spearhead was resumed by the Canadians in the afternoon, when the Thirteenth (Imperial) Brigade, moving with its line astride the Ypres-Pilekem Road, co-operated with the First and Fourth Battalions, who emerged from the trenches won that morning and again attacked. The advance was made with magnificent vigour and in perfect order at 4.25 p.m., in the face of appalling fire. After enduring agonies, the remains of these fine troops at 5.45 p.m. reached a line about seven hundred yards in advance of their foremost starting-point and running east and west from the Canal to a farm two thousand yards beyond it. The farm and the trenches on this line were taken after a desperate struggle and the shattered regiments consolidated.

While this advance was being carried out the slow clouds of poison gas, carrying death within them, were drifting down once again upon the devoted survivors of the Third Brigade. The Germans rained shells upon the remains of their trenches at the same time, and then twice followed up with bomb and bayonet. The Third Brigade were still unbeaten, however, and, gassed, bleeding and exhausted though they were, drove back both attacks with great loss.

On the day the events of which have just been described, the first Victoria Cross was gained by Lance-Corporal Frederick Fisher, of the Thirteenth Battalion. He went forward with the machine gun of which he was in charge and most gallantly assisted in covering the retreat of the Tenth Battery, C.F.A., Major W. B. M. King, losing four men of his gun team. Later,

after obtaining four more men, he went forward again to the firing-line and covered the advance of supports. This courageous hero was the first of three Canadians, among the hundreds in that battle who gave unrecognized proof of their gallantry, to earn the distinction.

Major King had waited for the enemy to reach a position only two hundred yards away before opening fire with great effect over open sights. With Fisher's assistance he got his guns away in dashing style and suffered little for his audacity.

With the battle at the stage described, the second terrible night closed down upon battalions worn with fighting but still retaining their ground with unshaken courage.

At about 4.30 a.m. on April 24th, following the dastardly course they had already adopted, the enemy let loose a fresh emission of gas, this time upon the trenches of both the Second and Third Brigades.

Immediately after the fresh employment of gas the Germans attacked the Canadians while they were yet staggering from the effects of the vile assault, delivering their strongest blows upon the weakest part of the front. The point selected was the angle of the line where it turned from the original left of the division to cover the Ypres-Poelcapelle Road. A constant hammering of this section must eventually result in its collapse upon itself and an opening through which fresh throngs could pour to complete the defeat of the Allies.

The sorely tried Third Brigade received the full force of these assaults. For a short time they fought with terrible fury, broken and mingled together though they were, but unbroken in courage and determination. The enemy with his overpowering masses overran the left of the Second Brigade and most of the Third Brigade, and the survivors, unable to remain longer in that place of vaporous death, were forced to give way.

It was at about this time that Lieut.-Col. W. Hart-McHarg, the commander of the Seventh Battalion, was mortally wounded. Major V. W. Odlum, assisted by Captain Gibson, Lieut. Mathewson and Sergeant Dryden, brought him in with great gallantry. Major Odlum then took command of the battalion.

To meet the desperate situation that had arisen, General Alderson at once withdrew the Tenth and Sixteenth Battalions from their positions near the wood and sent them to the assistance of the Second Brigade. When they arrived, however, the situation had crystallized and they were not used. At the same time one company of the Seventh Battalion, also part of the Fifth Battalion, was sent forward. By 7.30 a.m. it was clear that the remnants of the right of the Third Brigade had been driven almost upon St. Julien. The Imperial troops in that

village were at once ordered to attack and restore the line, but already all these troops were in the firing-line and fighting desperately in scattered groups.

The Eighth Battalion, in a most gallant counter-attack, had now regained all its trenches, and rapidly threw out a line, with the aid of part of the Seventh Battalion and other troops, towards a point about one thousand yards north of St. Julien, in order to regain touch with and cover the Third Brigade. The enemy was attacking everywhere with great force, and towards noon the pressure upon the Second Brigade became almost unbearable.

Two battalions of the Yorkshire and Durham (Imperial) Brigade, from the vicinity of Wieltje, had been placed at the disposal of the Third Brigade with which to restore the situation. At 1 p.m., however, as the enemy was gathering new masses north of St. Julien, these battalions were instead ordered to assist in staying the line. At the same time the First Battalion was moved from its position on the left of Geddes' Detachment to Wieltje, as the situation at St. Julien was becoming desperate. At 3 p.m. still further assistance was lent, this time to the Second Brigade, by the Eighth Middlesex, two companies of the Eighty-fifth (Imperial) Brigade and two battalions from the Twenty-seventh (Imperial) Division.—The latter—the Suffolks and the Twelfth London Regiment—advanced in a north-easterly direction towards the line of the Second Brigade, heavily fired at from near St. Julien and from in front, and after a magnificent advance with many casualties, were held up in rear of the Second Brigade, where they dug themselves in.

Thus was the worn-out battle-front of the Canadian division stayed.

The artillery, throughout that long and terrible day, though hampered by a failing supply of ammunition, strained every nerve to help the infantry, but their assistance was of little avail. The enemy's guns all day maintained a murderous fire. This our gunners had to contend with also. The First Artillery Brigade was gallantly supporting the line where Canadians and French joined hands. The Second Artillery Brigade, in the course of the day, was actually firing to front and rear at once as the Germans crushed in the salient. The Third Artillery Brigade, which had been compelled to retire on St. Jean the night before, was pounding the ceaseless tide which crashed about the devoted survivors of the Second Infantry Brigade and its supports. Through the entire battle the artillery fought nobly, but never more valorously than upon April 24th.

When the evening closed down once more upon the weary but unconquerable troops, the retirement of the Third Brigade was almost completed. The battalions had now swung round

with the regiments to the left as a pivot until the right of the line was almost upon St. Julien. The whole of the country vacated was now alive with the Kaiser's infantry, which had completely outflanked the Second Brigade, but could not surround them, owing to spirited supporting fire.

The second of the Victoria Crosses awarded for deeds performed in the battle was earned during the fighting when one of the Second Brigade, Colour-Sergeant Frederick William Hall, Eighth Battalion, carried in two of his men who had been hit while entering a trench from an exposed position. When another man, who was lying wounded some fifteen yards from the trenches, called for help, Colour-Sergeant Hall endeavoured to reach him in the face of a very heavy enfilade fire which was being poured in by the enemy. The first attempt failed, and Corporal Payne and Private Rogerson, who attempted to give assistance, were both wounded. Colour-Sergeant Hall then tried again, and in doing so was shot dead.

Again another night passed and brought little relief to the exhausted men slowly dying in the firing-line. During the night General Currie further strengthened his feeble left, flung out towards the Third Brigade, with the remains of the Seventh and Tenth Battalions. He also relieved two decimated companies of the Eighth Battalion with two companies of Durham Light Infantry which were at his disposal, and sent the relieved troops to the south side of the Gravenstafel Ridge. Thus far no touch had been gained with the Third Brigade, and a perilous gap still yawned on the left of the Second Brigade.

At 5.30 a.m., in a last endeavour to save St. Julien and render support to the Third Brigade, which was still being ferociously bombarded and endlessly pressed, the Tenth (Imperial) Brigade made a counter-attack in a northerly direction from a line some five hundred yards south of the village. It was pressed forward after an artillery bombardment with great fire and courage, and actually won, in the teeth of terrific opposition, to the southern outskirts of St. Julien. It almost rescued the undaunted groups of the Third Brigade still fighting in the ruins, though now completely surrounded. Eventually it was forced to fall back, roughly, to its starting-point. It had done gloriously. Though it had not driven the enemy off, it had arrested their advance.

St. Julien, however, had fallen, and from it very heavy machine gun fire was being poured on the much enduring survivors of the Seventh and Tenth Battalions, who, assisted by the Suffolks, Londons and Northumberland Fusiliers, were still clinging to the line north-east of the village. At 5.15 p.m. the Second Brigade was at last compelled to fall back. All but its immediate right, which held on marvellously until 3.40 a.m. on April 26th,



were forced to retire to Wieltje. This brigade had done truly wonderful work. Without its strong stand the wheeling movement and subsequent retreat of the Third Brigade would have been impossible.

The Eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. J. Lipsett, under the inspiration of their heroic leader, who exposed himself recklessly throughout, had resisted the enemy until their trenches were crumbling ruins, their companies surrounded, enfiladed and reduced to half-erazed little groups of men mechanically fighting.

But the end of that horror was at hand. During the night the Third Brigade were withdrawn to immediately north-east of Ypres and the First Brigade to the Canal just north of the city. The Twenty-eighth (Imperial) Division became responsible for the front between Fortuin and the left of the Second Brigade. On the following night, that of April 26th, the Second Brigade went into reserve east of Fortuin, and on the night of April 27th, out of the field where it had suffered and endured so much, to bivouacs west of the Canal.

But their share—the share of the Canadians—in that homeric conflict was not over even then. On the night of April 28th the First Brigade was entirely employed on digging new trenches east of the Canal. On the night of April 29th, the Third Brigade was sent into support of the French immediately east of the Canal and the Fifth and Tenth Battalions of the Second Brigade were placed on the western bank, guarding the bridges.

On May 2nd, long after these worn-out men would normally have been in rest billets, the First Brigade was moved forward to support the Twelfth (Imperial) Brigade, which was heavily gassed upon that day. By 11 p.m. the same night, fortunately, the danger had passed and they were back in billets. On May 3rd they moved to Bailleul, followed by the Third and Second Brigades respectively on the 4th and 5th. Thus the Canadians, who took their artillery out with them on this last move, left the field of their glory and sacrifice after such an ordeal as few troops in the world have ever survived.

Before closing this narrative the winning of a third Victoria Cross during the retirement of the Third Brigade near St. Julien must be mentioned. Captain Francis Alexander Caron Seringer, C.A.M.C., Medical Officer, Fourteenth Battalion, was in command of an aid post. He courageously superintended the removal of wounded, himself carrying out Captain H. F. MacDonald, of the Third Brigade staff, who had been dangerously wounded. Captain Seringer did not, like the other heroes, die in performing his valiant deed.

Mention must also be made again of the many Imperial troops who assisted the Canadians after the first blow fell. These

were the Second and Third Cavalry Brigades, the Tenth, Twelfth, Thirteenth and Yorkshire and Durham Brigades, the 1/1st Northumberland Brigade, and, last but not least, Geddes' make-shift command, the gallant leader of which was killed by a shell on April 28th.

All these troops did splendidly.

It is idle to discuss the pros and cons, the tactics displayed by this side or that in the terrible battle in which the Canadians had their first real taste of naked war. It is incredible, in the light of later events of the war, that the enemy, with all his vast superiority in men and material, should have accomplished virtually nothing but the infliction of casualties which did not exceed his own. It is even more incredible that the British troops, Canadian and Imperial alike, ludicrously small in numbers for the task they were called upon to perform, should yet have held the line and retrieved the Allied arms from almost irreparable disaster.

Taking the battle broadly, it was very well handled and skillfully fought. It must be remembered that practically the whole of the British Army was stemming a great assault at the same time as Canada was holding the gates of Ypres. The promptitude and the strength with which reinforcements were provided was therefore most remarkable.

Nevertheless, the very fact that the whole of the British line was desperately engaged adds greater glory to the isolated effort of the Canadians, raw troops left for many hours upon their own resources. The glory of the achievement of closing the gap is Canada's, and hers alone. The world was saved by the men of the First Division.

The toll was great. The Canadians lost nearly two hundred and fifty officers and six thousand men. The First Brigade alone lost sixty-four officers and the Second Brigade one thousand seven hundred and seventy men.

But they had won a great victory, they had worked a miracle. God had steeled their hearts and given them strength. And they had done something which was to endure till the end—they had written the fear of Canada into the heart of Germany, so that they had delivered towards her defeat a blow greater even than they knew.

### CHAPTER III

## FESTUBERT AND GIVENCHY

MAY-JUNE 1915

THE terrible fighting at Ypres, wherein the Canadians won their spurs, did not cease when the shrunken division was withdrawn. On the contrary, it proceeded to develop into a most longdrawn and desperate defensive battle.

It soon became apparent that some diversion must be created to relieve the pressure upon Plumer's Force. An attack was therefore delivered by the First Army, to the south of Ypres, in the district between Richebourg and La Bassée, with the object of drawing off some of the overpowering German Army that was pounding relentlessly against the Yser line and also of pinning the enemy's troops already opposite the First Army to that sector, so that they might not be used in the North.

The Canadians, after a short period of recuperation in Bailleul, were ordered South to take part in these operations.

On the night of May 14th the Canadians moved to Buenes and the vicinity. On May 17th they moved again, the Divisional Headquarters establishing itself at Locon. And upon that day the infantry began the moves which were to place them in the firing-line.

The Canadian Artillery had relieved the artillery of the Fourth (Imperial) Division between May 6th and 10th, but proceeded to support their own infantry when the latter became engaged.

First to enter the trenches at Festubert were the Third Brigade, which entered the reserve trenches at Le Touret on May 17th, relieving a brigade of the Seventh (Imperial) Division there. On the following day this brigade struck Canada's first blow in her latest battle-field.

The attack was made at 5.15 p.m. on a frontage of about five hundred yards in a north-easterly direction from Festubert. The Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. S. Meighen, and the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. G. E. Leckie, delivered the attack, the latter on the right. It was finely pressed in the face

of considerable fire, and the position reached was rapidly consolidated.

It was originally intended that the attack should be resumed during the night, to include a small orchard some distance in advance of the new line, but this was ultimately postponed to allow time for proper preparation.

On May 18th the Second Brigade took over from the Seventh (Imperial) Division trenches in reserve south of the Third Brigade.

The Second Brigade moved up from the reserve trenches on May 19th to relieve the Twenty-first Brigade of the Seventh (Imperial) Division, and had finished the relief by 11 p.m. that night.

The postponed attack on the Orchard was delivered with great fire by the Sixteenth Battalion on the night of May 20th. All known strong points on the front of the Canadians had been steadily bombarded throughout the day. At 7.45 p.m. the artillery fire ceased. Instantly, two companies of the Sixteenth, led by Major Peck, Captain Rae and Captain Morison, climbed out of their trenches and with a wild shout rushed for the Orchard.

A terrific machine gun fire struck the troops as they advanced. They suffered heavily, but were over the intervening ground in an instant.

The Orchard was bounded by a thick hedge and a ditch containing five feet of water. There were only one or two gaps in the hedge through which a man might pass. The attackers plunged into the ditch neck-deep, crawled out beyond, and one by one made their way through the gaps in the hedge. Throughout the Germans fired furiously, directing their machine guns upon the passages through which the Highlanders were struggling. The toll paid at those entrances of death was heavy, and they were continually blocked by dead bodies. The living came on, nevertheless, dragging the dead away, marshalled their red and dripping strength in the long grass beyond the hedge, and then advanced and cleared the Orchard with a rush. The enemy did not wait for them. They did not like the look in the eyes of the Canadians or the glimmer of their naked steel.

The Sixteenth hastily dug in along the northern and eastern sides of the Orchard, the Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. B. Marshall, prolonging its flank to our former line. One company of the Sixteenth Battalion had advanced south of the Orchard, not entering that position, and captured about two hundred yards of trench running south-west from the Orchard. It was on the right of this company that the Fifteenth Battalion had advanced and prolonged the line.

While this fighting had been going on, the Second Brigade



to the south attacked at the same time a redoubt a short distance in front of their line. The attack was repulsed. A party of the Tenth Battalion advanced with great determination, but were met by concentrated rifle and machine gun fire, in which the leaders were shot down.

At 8.30 p.m. on May 21st, after an artillery bombardment, the Second Infantry Brigade again attacked the redoubt—known as K5—which had repulsed them the night before. Assisted by the grenade company of the First Brigade, two companies of the Tenth Battalion debouched through two egresses in the British parapet and rushed for the objective.

They were met with a terrific fire. In this fire the company of the Tenth Battalion attacking on the left was at once checked with heavy casualties and made no progress. The company attacking on the right met with greater success. After clearing the nearest trenches on their immediate front, this company seized and consolidated four hundred yards of the main communication trench leading up to K5 from the British side. A block was built in the most advanced portion of the communication trench.

At dawn the German artillery began to take full advantage of the targets offered by the men holding this beaten down and ruined line. All the courage, endurance and resolution of the Canadians were required to enable them successfully to withstand this long ordeal. Numerous casualties occurred, but the position was held.

It became necessary to abandon the southern or more advanced end of the trench during the day, as this was being raked by shrapnel and small-arm fire and was quite untenable. With darkness the Forty-Seventh (Imperial) Division and a portion of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade took over this trench from the Tenth Battalion, which then withdrew.

During the day's bombardment the men were much encouraged by the fine example of Major E. J. Ashton, who, though twice wounded, refused to leave them until completely exhausted.

The Canadian Cavalry Brigade was under the command of Brigadier-General Seely, and was composed of three regiments of cavalry, Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), Lieut.-Col. A. C. Macdonell, D.S.O., the Royal Canadian Dragoons, Lieut.-Col. C. M. Nelles, and the Second King Edward's Horse, Lieut.-Col. V. S. Sandeman.

The brigade had only landed in the theatre of war a short time before. They came as infantry, during the emergency which then existed and demanded the presence at the front of every man who could fire a rifle.

A portion of the Second Brigade was relieved by the First

Brigade while the Canadian Cavalry Brigade was relieving the remainder. The First Brigade at the same time relieved the whole of the Third Brigade. The relief was complete at 1.15 a.m. on the morning of the 23rd, and the Second and Third Brigades withdrew.

Mention must be made of the very fine display of dogged determination made by the Eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. J. Lipsett, during all the fighting which has just been described. This battalion was on the right of the Third Brigade and the left of the Tenth Battalion. Sandwiched between these two units, which were continuously attacking, the Eighth Battalion, though only holding the line, came in for a great deal of the hard knocks with which the enemy retaliated. It sustained a continuous and merciless bombardment, losing Captains McMeans and Passmore, killed, also Lieut. Smith-Rewse, killed, and Lieuts. Weames and Denison, wounded. Captain J. M. Prower was also wounded but remained at duty.

The Eighth Battalion held on throughout. Captain McMeans set a particularly fine example. During the heaviest stages of the shelling he sat on the parapets of the trench, with cool disregard of his exposed position, and encouraged his men with calming words. This conduct had such a beneficial effect that it still inspired the men long after all the officers, including himself, and a large number of the N.C.O.'s of his company had been killed or wounded.

At 2.45 a.m. on May 24th, a final assault was made upon K5.

After a thorough reconnaissance of the ground over which the attackers were to pass, Lieut. R. Murdie, with two platoons of the Fifth Battalion, placed a number of light bridges over several deep ditches, some containing barbed wire, which constituted formidable obstacles between our line and the objective.

The bridging party carried out their work in bright moonlight and under heavy fire. This fire prevented them from laying the bridges over which the men attacking on either flank were to pass. The bridges for the use of the centre were successfully placed.

This alone might have proved fatal to the success of the attack. But other obstacles now appeared. It was found impossible to direct the artillery bombardment which was to precede the assault, as all the artillery telephone wires had been cut by the bombardment. This bombardment, as a result, did not take place. In addition, the communication trenches were so bad that the attackers were seriously delayed in their advance to the assembly positions.

In spite of all these misfortunes, the Second Brigade took and captured K5 with great dash.

Over the parapet went two companies of the Fifth Battalion and a company of the Seventh Battalion as working party, under the supreme command of Major N. S. Edgar, of the former unit. They were greeted with a most intense fire, some of the men falling as they rose above the sand-bags, so rapidly did the enemy open fire. At the ditches the men in the centre got across safely. The others found no bridges. They sprang over or fell into the water, which was four feet deep or more. Some died in the water—hit and drowned. The rest dragged themselves out, holding their rifles high, and dashed on after their more fortunate comrades. Nowhere was there any hesitation.

The Germans fled as they approached, not daring to face the bayonet, and some of them were shot in flight.

At 3.15 a.m. the clearing of K5 was completed and the position was won. Knowing well the temper of their enemies and their determination to get K5, the Germans had mined their trenches with the intention of blowing them up if we captured them. A mine which demolished a machine gun was the only one they succeeded in discharging. Corporal E. H. Hester had cut the wiring of the remainder.

Consolidation now began. The enemy opened a terrible bombardment. Officers and men were killed with appalling swiftness. Captain Anderson, totally blinded by a shell, refused to leave his men, as he was the only officer "fit" to command his trench. Captain Meikle also refused, though wounded, and later paid for his gallantry with his life. Captains McGee and Innes-Hopkins, of the Fifth Battalion, were killed at about the same time, the latter endeavouring to reach Lieut. Mundell, who was fatally wounded and died in hospital. Lieut. Mundell cheered on his men as he lay dying in the trench. Meanwhile shell after shell was storming upon the Canadians, who held on grimly under the fine example of their officers.

At 4.45 a.m. one company of the Seventh Battalion reinforced the line. Major Edgar having been wounded early in the fight and his second-in-command, Major Tenaille, being killed, Major V. W. Odium, commanding the Seventh Battalion, was ordered at 7 a.m. to take command of the Fifth Battalion as well as continuing to lead his own.

The Seventh Battalion sent another company to reinforce the attacking troops during the morning. They were unable to get far forward on account of the hostile fire, but by nightfall had strengthened all the weak points in the line.

That night orders were issued to consolidate the captured

ground without making any further effort to advance. The troops had not only seized and held K5, but also two hundred yards of trench to the left and a short length to the right, and that was all that was expected of them. The artillery surrounded the workers with a ring of fire, and, somewhat sheltered from infantry attacks by this means, the new gains were successfully consolidated.

The action was most successful, though the cost was heavy. In addition to the officer losses of the Fifth Battalion, the Seventh Battalion had lost Lieut. G. Hornby, killed, and Captain S. D. Gardner, the Adjutant, wounded.

At 11.30 p.m. on the night of May 24th the Third Battalion made an attempt to advance down a trench some two hundred yards east of the Orchard. The attack was delivered with determination, but failed in the face of concentrated fire from four machine guns.

The First Brigade made no further attacks. The remainder of their time in the Festubert trenches was spent in consolidation. This work entailed much digging under heavy fire.

May 25th and 26th were spent by the Canadian Cavalry Brigade in slowly pushing down disputed trenches with bombs and bayonets and thus gradually adding to the gains that had already been made. On the night of the 26th they were relieved by the Third Brigade.

No further action of importance took place. The First and Third Brigades went on consolidating and advancing by yards down abandoned trenches under heavy machine gun fire. By June 1st, the Forty-seventh (Imperial) Division had completed its relief of these two brigades and the Canadians were then withdrawn.

This finished the series of hard-fought little actions known collectively as Festubert. The casualties of the Second Brigade in the battle were fifty-five officers and nine hundred and eighty men. These casualties are typical of those suffered by the division.

After a short rest in the vicinity of Bethune the Canadians were sent in to fight in front of Givenchy, an insignificant ruin of a village just north of the La Bassée Canal, but, like all the ruins behind that line of 1915, a shrine of British courage. The Givenchy fighting was a continuation of those isolated actions which had been the rule at Festubert, a few hundred yards to the north.

The First Brigade on June 15th made an attack in conjunction with the Seventh (Imperial) Division on their left. Their business was to secure the right flank of that division by capturing one hundred and fifty yards of a double line of trenches to the south,



between two redoubts known unofficially as Stony Mountain and Dorchester. The First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. W. Hill, with parties from the Second and Third Battalions for carrying out consolidation, delivered the attack.

After a protracted bombardment during the day, two field guns of the Fourth Battery, under Lieuts. C. S. Craig and L. S. Kelly, were suddenly unmasked at 5.45 p.m. and began battering the enemy's lines from positions in our front trenches where they had been previously placed. Under point-blank fire these guns knocked out six German machine guns and flattened the German trenches and barbed wire. The gun-shields were riddled by bullets, which crackled like hail on the guns. The gunners fired furiously for fifteen minutes, when their work was over.

At 6 p.m. a mine was exploded under the German line and the infantry attacked.

By most unfortunate ill-luck we lost a great number of officers at the very beginning of our attack. The explosion of the mine was preceded by violent enemy artillery fire, which killed Lieut.-Col. Beecher and three subaltern officers. The mine explosion also killed a number of essential bombers.

In spite of this handicap, the companies of the First Battalion, together with their helpers, went forward successively and with great gallantry. Dorchester and the enemy's front line were captured immediately. The men holding these positions had been blown to pieces or buried by the explosion.

Stony Mountain, however, had not been affected by the mine. It maintained a machine gun and rifle fire of terrible intensity, which caused much loss. One company alone lost Captain Delamere, wounded, and Lieuts. Young and Tranter, killed, by this means.

The two leading companies, ignoring their losses, attacked the second line as soon as the first was taken. The second line was also taken. The blood of the men was up. They did not flinch in the wilting terror of the enemy's machine gun and rifle and shell fire, though it created havoc among them. Those who dared stand before them went down under their grenades or were bayoneted with scant mercy.

While two companies of the First Battalion, unaided by the working parties from the rest of the brigade, who could not get to them through that hell-fire, were busy consolidating the captured trenches, the remnants of the leading companies attacked Stony Mountain. These succeeded in getting some distance down the trench leading to the strong point, and were then held up by a barricade over which they could not climb except to certain death.

Here Lieut. F. W. Campbell and Private Vincent won the

Victoria Cross and the Distinguished Conduct Medal respectively. Hoisting a machine gun upon Vincent's back, Lieut. Campbell opened and maintained a terrific fire on the enemy. Attempt after attempt was made to overpower the pair when the Germans counter-attacked, but Campbell smashed the enemy back in confusion. Eventually he fell mortally wounded and was carried back dying by Sergeant-Major Owen, while Vincent, the Germans at his heels, dragged the machine gun into safety.

Having failed to get Stony Mountain, the men bent every effort on holding the ground they had. Bombs had run out, however, and very few men were left. Reinforcements of the Third Battalion, which had now arrived, were of little avail. The inevitable conclusion was that at 10 p.m., after resisting in every trench, the survivors of the attack had been driven back to our own line and entirely out of the position.

Only three officers out of twenty-three were left in the First Battalion when this happened.

The attack of the Seventh (Imperial) Division also failed. For the most part they met with great masses of barbed wire, through which they could not penetrate.

Next day the Third Battalion, in conjunction with the Imperial troops, made an attack upon the same ground with the same objective. Their conduct was as gallant. A footing was gained in the German trenches all along the frontage of the battalion, but a heavy bombing assault made the trenches untenable and they were also forced to return to the British line. The supporting attacks of the troops on the flanks were also a failure.

On June 17th the First Brigade was relieved by the Second and went into reserve. The Canadian division was then withdrawn, and in the first week of July began to move to a quiet sector of the line.

The new area into which the Canadians moved was immediately east of Bailleul, and faced the village of Messines, just in the enemy's lines, while it encircled the Bois de Ploegsteert, commonly called Plug-street Wood. With the First Brigade in the centre, the Third on the left and the Second on the right, the First Canadian Division entered into a phase of tranquillity in its history which was welcome.

Divisional Headquarters were established in Nieppe, east of Bailleul.

July went quickly by with nothing but an odd patrol encounter and a steady digging on new defence lines to mark its passing. In August important changes were made in the division. Over in England a second Canadian division was in the last stages of its training preparatory to joining its predecessor at the front.

It had long since been decided to band the two forces into the formation known as an Army Corps. The promotion of Lieutenant-General Alderson to the command of the Canadian Corps would leave the First Division without a leader. Two new Major-Generals were created to command the two divisions.

Brigadier-General A. W. Currie, C.B., was selected to head the veterans in Flanders. Brigadier-General R. E. W. Turner, V.C., C.B., D.S.O., was given the command of the Second Division.

Lieut.-Col. L. J. Lipsett, C.M.G., and Lieut.-Col. R. G. E. Leekie, C.M.G., were appointed Brigadier-Generals and to the command of the Second and Third Brigades.

On August 12th Brigadier-General Turner left for England, and was immediately succeeded by the new commander of the brigade. On September 13th Lieut.-General Alderson assumed command of the Canadian Corps and Major-General Currie took his place.

Lieut.-Col. D. Watson, of the Second Battalion, left for England in August to take command of the Fifth Canadian Infantry Brigade, of the Second Division, in England.

Then the Second Canadian Division came to France.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CANADIAN ARMY CORPS

THE composition of the Second Canadian Division was as follows :

Fourth Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General Lord Brooke, consisting of the Eighteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. S. Wigle ; Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. S. McLaren ; Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Rogers, and Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. St. P. Hughes. The Fifth Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General D. Watson, was composed of the Twenty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. M. Gaudet ; Twenty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Gunn ; Twenty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. A. Le Caine, and Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. L. McAvity. The Sixth Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General H. D. B. Ketchen, made up of the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. I. R. Snider ; Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. F. L. Embury ; Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. S. Tobin, and Thirty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell.

The artillery, under Brigadier-General H. C. Thacker, consisted of the Fourth Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. W. J. Brown ; the Fifth Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. Dodds ; the Seventh Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. J. S. Stewart, and the Divisional Ammunition Column, Lieut.-Col. W. H. Harrison.

The rest of the division was composed of three Field Companies of Canadian Engineers (the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth), a squadron of Cavalry, Lieut.-Col. I. Leonard, a Cyclist Company, Major G. I. Davison, and administrative units.

This division was under the command of Major-General Turner. Of the artillery, only the Fourth Brigade arrived with the infantry. The remainder was left training in England, while four brigades (the 1/1st, 1/2nd, 1/3rd, and 1/4th Brigades West Lancashire R.F.A.) of English artillery, Brigadier-General J. J. MacMahon, formed worthy substitutes.

The division sailed to Havre and Boulogne on September 14th, concentrated about Gaestres, west of Bailleul, for a week, and on September 23rd had completed the relief of the Twenty-eighth (Imperial) Division in the Kemmel sector and was holding the line with, on its left, the Seventeenth (Imperial) Division, and the First Canadian Division on its right.

Thus was formed the Canadian Army Corps, which was to clothe the name of Canada with splendour.

The Canadian Army Corps, before the Third Canadian Division was organized, had with it, as a reserve, various units (which subsequently provided the nucleus for the Third Division) under the command of Brigadier-General M. S. Mereer. Some of these had already seen long, hard service in the field; the remainder were regiments newly brought out. Among the former were the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, which achieved distinction at Festubert, and the gallant Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Among the latter were the Royal Canadian Regiment, the Forty-second and Forty-ninth Battalions and four battalions of Canadian Mounted Rifles.

The forces of Canada were now holding over twelve thousand yards of trenches—nearly seven miles. The left of the Corps rested almost upon St. Eloi, the right lay near Armentières. The line took in Neuve Eglise, the wooded hills of Mont Kemmel and Scherpenberg, and faced the desolate skeleton of Messines.

On September 25th the attack at Loos was made, and the Canadians, new and old divisions alike, rendered some assistance by demonstrating with smoke and artillery.

No event of importance enlivened the first few weeks of the life of the Canadian Corps, and patrol activity provided the chief interest. The Canadian patrols were gaining an ascendancy over the enemy which was to make No Man's Land theirs wherever they set foot in it. And in the stories of these patrols lie themes for tales of daring without which no books of individual heroism could ever be complete.

At this period a new departure was introduced into trench warfare. It took the form of raids carried out upon the enemy under the cover of night. The purpose of these raids was to fall upon the drowsy Germans, kill as many as possible, capture all that the raiders could lay hands on, and withdraw before the bewildered enemy could organize a defence or get his artillery into action. By this means much information might be gathered concerning the enemy's trenches, dispositions and *moral*, and the confidence and steadiness of his troops might be greatly undermined.

The Canadians were the pioneers in this form of warfare. Later they became its foremost exponents.



The Fifth and Seventh Battalions carried out the first raid on the night of November 16th, in the neighbourhood of Messines. Two parties of picked men—those of the Fifth Battalion led by Lieuts. Campbell and Purslow, and the Seventh Battalion party commanded by Captains Costigan and Thomas and Lieuts. Holmes, McIllree and Wrightson—attacked the enemy's trenches at two points, killed and captured numbers of the enemy and withdrew. Heavy salvos of shrapnel and the daring work of scouts who cut the wire under the close reach of the hostile sentries, hacked two passages through the German entanglements. The Fifth Battalion party at the last moment discovered a wired ditch which they could not cross, and so had to be content with bombing the enemy. The Seventh Battalion party, however, had better luck, and, led personally by Captain Costigan, who slew three of the enemy with his own hand, killed thirty Germans and brought back with them twelve prisoners, their own casualties, with those of the Fifth Battalion, being only one man killed. As the whole expedition only numbered fifty, these results were more than satisfactory.

Soon after this affair, on December 6th, the West Lancashire Artillery was withdrawn from the Corps and the artillery of the Lahore Division took its place. The presence of these gunners behind the Canadians was a living proof of the solidity of the British Empire.

Christmas was celebrated royally. Immediately after, early in January, the Third Canadian Division was organized.

The organization of the division was no mean achievement. It meant that in just a little under eighteen months of war Canada's strength at the front had trebled and the country was prepared to maintain that strength. The Dominion was now rapidly nearing her maximum effort.

This was the composition of the Third Canadian Division, with Major-General M. S. Mercer in command :

Seventh Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General A. C. Maedonell, C.M.G., D.S.O., consisting of the Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. A. H. MacDonnell, D.S.O.; Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Lieut.-Col. H. C. Buller, D.S.O.; Forty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. S. Cantlie, and Forty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. A. Griesbach. The Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General V. W. Williams, consisted of the First Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. Shaw; Second Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. L. Bott; Fourth Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. F. H. Ussher, and Fifth Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Baker. The Ninth Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General F. W. Hill, D.S.O., was composed of

the Forty-third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. M. Thomson ; Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. W. Hay ; Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. A. Genet, and Sixtieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. A. de L. Gaseoigne.

The artillery of the division was commanded by Brigadier-General J. H. Mitchell, and was made up of the following brigades : Eighth Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. V. Eaton ; Ninth Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. H. G. Carscallen ; Tenth Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. G. H. Ralston ; Eleventh Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. A. O. L. MacNaughton.

These did not actually join the division until July 1916. In the meantime the guns of the First Division were placed at the division's disposal. To fill the gap caused by this movement, the Fifth and Seventh Brigades, C.F.A., were brought out from England and, though actually part of the artillery of the Second Division, were attached for the time to the First Division.

Something must be said here of the great work of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry before it joined the Canadian Corps.

This unique regiment of veterans landed in France in 1914 and formed part of the Twenty-seventh (Imperial) Division. It lost its gallant leader, Lieut.-Col. Farquhar, early in the fighting, and was thrust forward on March 14, 1915, to stem an assault on St. Eloi, the ruined village which stood at the southern end of the Ypres Salient.

At St. Eloi there existed a small hillock known as the Mound, from which it was possible to dominate the surrounding territory. When the regiment was standing to arms the enemy were making furious and partly successful attempts to seize the Mound.

On arrival at the scene they found that most of the disputed line had been retaken, but that the enemy still held the trenches to the left of it. An attack was at once thrown forward.

In three lines, swept by gusts of harrowing machine gun fire, "B" Company rushed for the objective. The machine guns on the Mound crushed it almost instantly, but those who were not stricken down came on through the appalling tempest and actually reached ground to the right of the position. This ground was held, and next day the men were withdrawn from the struggle, handing their trenches over to an Imperial unit.

This was the first conflict of any magnitude which the regiment experienced. It was a blood-letting which amply prepared them for the fearful agony to follow.

It followed hard and fast upon the days when they lay under shell fire to the south of Ypres while the First Canadian Division was immortalizing the name of their native country in the terrible

salient. By May 6th the battle line had reached its final position. On that day the "Pats" were thrown into it to strengthen the barrier of steel.

With dawn a shell fire which created a hell began to batter their line. Before sunrise German infantry surged forward and fell beneath the rage of the regiment's rifle fire. By sending every available man into the trenches the battalion developed an intensity of fire which checked the German charge. The hostile infantry succeeded in seizing several houses which commanded our positions, however, and from here played havoc with the regiment.

Our casualties were terrible. By seven o'clock that morning a subaltern, Lieut. Niven, was commanding the battalion.

Another attack, soon after Niven took command, was thrust upon the Canadian position. Once more it was flung back, shattered and dismayed, by the Patricia's, who were by this time in desperate straits. Immediately afterwards the shelling recommenced, and, without any help available, they were assaulted by an awful bombardment. Whole trenches disappeared in smoke. Every machine gun they possessed was smashed up or buried. With magnificent tenacity the crews kept the guns in action as long as their condition would allow it. And, battered, exhausted, surrounded by heaps of corpses and hideous fragments of human bodies, in the roaring fury of the German guns the regiment clung grimly to every foot of ground, clung with a determination beyond all praise and would not retire.

This was the terrible situation the Patricia's were in when, in the early afternoon, reinforcements consisting of some of the Fourth Battalion, the Rifle Brigade, arrived and were pushed into a position on their right flank.

In a charge of immense vigour the Kaiser's battalions swept down upon a feeble but indomitable force of Canadian and Imperial soldiers, a force which stood almost isolated, since its weaker neighbours on either hand had slightly given ground, and could only muster a fire which must have caused the enemy's staff much amusement. The German counted only upon numbers. *Moral* did not enter into his calculations. In this case it was a bitter mistake, for the Princess Patricia's and their comrades, worn, weak and hard hit though they were, threw back this third assault with a fury incalculable.

That was the turning-point. From there on the violence of the offensive slackened and the casualties did not mount rapidly. By midnight the battalion was well on its way to reserve. With two officers in command, Lieut. Niven and Lieut. Papineau, one hundred and fifty men, of all those who the night before had entered, withdrew from that man-made inferno of Death. One



hundred and fifty men came forth. The glory of the Princess Patricia's battalion was assured, its name immortal.

Before November 1915 had quite passed into history, the regiment was sent to the Canadian Corps. It came to the Corps with a great record, and this record it never ceased to uphold.

Before passing to other things, mention must be made of the sacrifice which the C.M.R. Battalions inflicted on themselves. These battalions were originally organized to serve as Mounted Riflemen. They were faced later with the prospect of either taking up the formation and the work of infantry or disbandment. They accepted the former. They never saw their horses again.

For several weeks before the forming of the Third Division the Seventh and Eighth Brigades had served in France. The Ninth Brigade had no previous experience.

During March 10th and 11th the First, Second and Third Canadian Pioneer Battalions arrived from England and joined the Corps.

On January 25th the Canadian Cavalry Brigade left the Canadian Corps to get back their horses and fight elsewhere.

The Second Division carried out its first raid on the night of January 30th, with great success, when two parties of roughly thirty men each, one from the Twenty-ninth and one from the Twenty-eighth Battalion, made an entry into the German trenches and accounted for a large number of the enemy.

The party from the Twenty-ninth Battalion was led by Lieuts. Wilmott, O'Brien and Gwynne, while Captain D. E. MacIntyre and K. C. C. Taylor led the men from the Twenty-eighth Battalion.

The raiders were all volunteers and armed as their fancy pleased them. The wire was cut in front of the German trenches without discovery and entirely by hand, to prevent the betrayal of the raiders by needless artillery. In this work Sergeant G. S. Turner and Sergeant F. W. Kirkland, of the Twenty-eighth and Twenty-ninth Battalions respectively, greatly distinguished themselves. At 2.45 a.m. both parties leaped in upon the sleeping enemy and created havoc. At least one hundred Germans were accounted for, Private J. C. Andrews, of the Twenty-eighth Battalion, killing five with his own hand. Eleven prisoners, five of whom were shot by the enemy, were taken. The raiders retired under cover of a bombardment, Captain A. J. Rendel, R.F.A., commanding the trench mortars with much skill.

The casualties in this raid were only two killed and ten wounded—only one seriously. Of the six prisoners the raiders dragged back with them three died, so that three prisoners alive represented the final captures.

The Lewis gun was introduced into the Canadian infantry during February.

This was the season for sniping, and at no time did Canadian snipers, always among the best in the British Army, show greater prowess. Among the best was Private MacDonald, a full-blooded Indian from Western Canada and a member of the Eighth Battalion. MacDonald was killed at this time. He had forty-two niches in the butt of his rifle—each representing a verified hit—when he fell. Then there was Sniper J. Atkinson, of the Twenty-fourth Battalion, with twenty-nine hits to his credit, and Private Patrick Riel, a direct descendant of Louis Riel, leader of the North-west Rebellion of 1885, who had atoned for his ancestor's treason by killing the same number as Atkinson.

The Ninth Canadian Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier-General Hill, arrived in France during the second week in March to complete the infantry establishment of the Third Division.

Spring brought the end of the calm which had for so long reigned over the destinies of the Canadian Corps. They began to move into more turbulent territory as the last days of March slipped away. Their destination was the bloody girdle of smoking trenches which lay about the broken centre of Flemish trade—the Ypres Salient.

The Canadian Corps relieved the Fifth Corps of the Imperial Army. Its headquarters changed from Bailleul to Abeele. The First Division took over the trenches of the Fiftieth (Imperial) Division, the Second Division those of the Third (Imperial) Division, and the Third those of the Twenty-fourth (Imperial) Division.

The line taken over by the Canadians was three and a half miles long, the lower half of the Salient. Its left rested on Hooge, the "Bloody Angle" of the dread wedge. Its right just took in St. Eloi. The Third Division held the line from Hooge to a point opposite Zillebeke. The First Division held it thence to the Ypres-Comines Canal. The Second Division held it from there to the right of St. Eloi.

The relief of the First and Second Divisions was complete on April 3rd, and that of the Third Division on March 22nd.

And Canada's offering lay on the Altar of Sacrifice.

## CHAPTER V

### ST. ELOI

APRIL 3-19, 1916

As has already been described, the Canadian Corps moved into the Ypres Salient during the last days of March and the first days of April. The First Division found no abnormal activity in progress. The Third Division found no abnormal activity in progress. The Second Division found itself thrown into a desperate fight with the object of retaining several hundred yards of enemy trenches newly taken by British troops.

The scene of operations was the country about St. Eloi. There five great mines had been fired several days before. These mines were the largest ever exploded on the British front. Their craters averaged one hundred yards in diameter.

Immediately after the mines went off and while the rain of debris was still falling, infantry of the Third (Imperial) Division had swept forward over the disrupted ground and seized all the enemy's first and second line trenches on a frontage of about five hundred yards. These were held by them with very little opposition and connected on the right by a trench some three hundred yards long to our original front line, the work of digging this trench being done by men from the Second Canadian Pioneer Battalion. Immediately after the rush, however, the Germans pushed forward a hasty counter-attack and occupied the crater on the left of our new position. The remainder of the craters were securely in our hands and well behind our new front line. It was decided that the enemy must be ejected at once.

This took place while the Second Canadian Division was holding its area in front of Kemmel, before its arrival in the Salient. The Fourth Infantry Brigade, on the left and nearest St. Eloi, was called upon to assist in the assault on the lost crater with its bombers. The assistance was of course given, and together Imperial and Canadian troops cleared the enemy out. The crater was then enclosed by our front line, which was next extended to meet our old position, as desired.

With the situation at this stage, the Second Canadian Division on the night of April 3rd relieved the worn-out division of Imperial men occupying the St. Eloi sector. The Sixth Canadian Infantry Brigade was put into the line for the honourable, if terrible, task of consolidating the position. The Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. I. R. Snider, was given the right of the section to hold. Holding the left of the brigade front was the Thirty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell.

A short distance in rear of these units were the Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. F. L. Embury, in brigade reserve, and the Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. S. Tobin, in brigade support.

No words can describe the ghastly conditions prevailing in the trench area at St. Eloi and hope to present a true or vivid picture of the awful state of affairs in that zone when the Sixth Brigade took it over. But such a description, no matter how inadequate, is necessary before any idea of what the brigade suffered in holding the flattened trenches can be obtained.

When the Canadians came in, of trenches practically nothing was left. Continual shelling had reduced them to the merest vestige of what they had been. The entire area was pitted and torn by war until the ground looked like the surface of the moon. Millions of shells bursting on this tortured territory had crumbled it, churned it up again and again, and turned it into a sea of heavy mud, riddled with innumerable shell holes and the rain-washed gulfs of countless old mine craters. These holes were filled with water, so that, to the eyes of aviators who swept over it, the scene resembled nothing so much as a great sponge soaked with continual immersion.

During the whole of April 4th the work of consolidation was continued under terrible conditions. The enemy began battering the whole of our trenches in the area at 10.30 a.m. on April 4th, and continued to do so with practically no pause until 2 a.m. on the morning of April 5th. Gradually the line was improved. Dugouts and machine gun emplacements were commenced.

The work was continued through April 5th. At 11 p.m. that same night, as the Twenty-ninth Battalion with two companies were relieving Colonel Snider's two companies in the advanced trenches, the enemy, possibly aware that a relief was in progress, began a frightful bombardment. This bombardment really began the desperate fight for the craters.

The fire of the artillery of two entire German divisions began to rend our trenches and was concentrated on the narrow front held by the brigade.

The effect of such a fusillade upon the short sector against which it was directed cannot be worthily described. Officers



of great experience declared that they had never seen its equal, and the First Division, watching it from the left, never expected to see a single man escape.

A stand of magnificent tenacity was offered. It seemed as if each and every man had made up his mind that he would rather die than give way one inch. So great a spirit animated these dauntless troops that they continued firing their rifles until shells tore them from their hands or they jammed as the bombardment covered them with mud. Machine guns were kept firing in the teeth of the advancing storm, manned and remanned as the crews were struck down, and repaired again and again.

At 3.30 a.m. the Germans fired their last flares and the guns fell silent. Immediately afterwards, expecting to find no opposition in our destroyed positions, the enemy launched his infantry attack. A force, which must have equalled a battalion, moved forward against our lines through the semi-darkness.

For the purpose of easy identification the huge craters which were his objective were numbered from one to five, and from the right of our position to the left. In the narrative which follows the same system is employed.

The eager infantry which rushed for the broken ruins where our men waited were violently disillusioned if they imagined that no fight was to be put up. In Craters 2 and 3 and the advanced trench to the south-east they found no living man capable of closing with them, and they swept on over the pitiful remnants of their garrisons without a check. But on the rest of the front they met a different situation.

Advancing in the face of the Canadian defence, the Germans attempted to wrest Craters 4 and 5 from us, as well as the captured line to the right of Craters 2 and 3. They were hurled back by our desperate defenders holding the latter position. In Craters 4 and 5 they expected to meet no hostile fire, for it seemed impossible that any men could be left alive in the shattered ruins of the distorted works. But they found that Major P. J. Daly's company of the Thirty-first Battalion was still capable of throwing them back, broken and reeling, to their own lines. And a similar dash at 9 a.m. next day on the same point met with a similar reception. Here the garrisons, full of fight in spite of the nerve-racking and withering bombardment, gathered their feeble strength and repulsed them.

Two most serious factors now entered into the desperate conflict. One was that the Germans succeeded by a frightful concentration of artillery in killing, or rendering unfit for fighting, every man in Craters 4 and 5 and the trenches in front of them. The other was that telephonic communication, which was poor



from the first, broke down between battalions, and frequently was cut between the infantry and brigade headquarters.

When the communications failed a system of runners was put into operation. All were volunteers. They did magnificent work, carrying messages over absolutely open ground in tempests of shells. Many were killed, but volunteers always arose to take their places. Foremost among them was Sergeant James Harvey, of the Twenty-ninth Battalion, who made no less than fifteen trips through the fire and brought reinforcements forward with him, taking wounded back.

As courageous an action was that of Privates A. Davis and L. R. Seymour, of the Thirty-first Battalion. These men not only carried messages but also brought in several wounded men. This feat they crowned when Seymour was wounded as the pair were attempting to rescue two men buried by an explosion. The shell which hit Seymour killed the soldiers they were attempting to succour; so Davis hoisted Seymour on his broad back, and struggled with him in mud which reached to his hips across more than one hundred yards of death-swept ground to safety.

The brigade, though two of its craters were lost and two others unoccupied, possessed no idea of allowing them to remain thus. Counter-attacks were at once arranged for. After a most violent bombardment of the craters by our guns, the bombers of the Twenty-eighth and Thirty-first Battalions at 1.30 on the afternoon of April 6th were launched forward in an attempt to retake Craters 2 and 3 and reoccupy 4 and 5.

They attacked in two parties from either flank of our main position. In the fearful violence of the barrage which the German guns immediately created, the men advancing from the right were instantly overwhelmed. On the left the bombers met with greater success. But owing to the countless mine craters in the small space in which operations were proceeding and the fact that no guides were available, this party mistook two small craters which they reached for Craters 4 and 5.

From these two craters, under the impression that they were in 4 and 5, they made numerous attempts to reach Crater 3, in order to attack it. To do so it was necessary to advance through a morass of slush in a frightful hail of infantry and artillery fire. The exhausted Canadians found the attempt too great a trial of their strength. Word was sent back to headquarters that if reinforcements were hurried up the position could be held. That night, believing that Craters 4 and 5 were again in our hands, reinforcements were accordingly pushed forward. The conduct of this part of the fight is described in due course.

In the meantime, as the tide of battle ebbed and flowed,

other changes were taking place. The shelling which checked the advance of the bombers attacking from our right was not commenced with the sole object of breaking that assault. In order to render their grip upon Craters 2 and 3 secure, it was necessary for the Germans to obliterate the resistance of the Canadians still clinging to the trenches south of the craters. The guns of the enemy were in action with this object.

At no stage of the fight did the spirit soar more bravely over flesh than during the bloody attempt of the enemy's artillery to drive the garrisons out of these positions which they were now bombarding. The men were lying on what the pitiless guns had converted into ground entirely devoid of cover. With every shell their strength grew less and less. The dirty rainwater was crimson with the price they were willing to pay. They knew no supports could reach them. Yet they could not be driven back until they were rendered helpless by the destruction of every weapon they possessed.

When the last rifle became useless, the commander of the garrisons, Captain Gwynne, of the Twenty-ninth Battalion, who had distinguished himself in the January raid on the German trenches, decided to evacuate the position. The remnants of his small force, supported by every available British arm, thereupon retired to our main line.

Captain Gwynne's retreat left the enemy in possession of Craters 2, 3, 4 and 5, though he was not yet actually in 4 and 5 and we were under the impression that our own men held them. And in possession of these craters the enemy was eventually to remain.

It is unnecessary to state that we entertained no intention of allowing the Germans to do so without making a great effort to evict them. Having placed the Eighteenth Battalion, which was at his disposal, in support of the Thirty-first Battalion, and the Twenty-first Battalion in reserve at Scottish Wood, further to the rear, General Ketchen launched a strong bombing attack of seventy-five men of the Twenty-eighth Battalion, with two Lewis guns, against Craters 2 and 3. They moved forward after dark that night and reached the craters which we thought were 4 and 5. Owing to the intense darkness, heavy downfall of rain and the grave danger of the party losing itself in the maze of craters, the attack was abandoned. To have tried to carry it through would have ended only in disaster.

This concluded the efforts of the Sixth Brigade to retake the craters. On the following night (April 7th) the Fourth Canadian Infantry Brigade relieved the men of the heroic battalions which had borne the brunt of the desperate hostile attacks. The latter entered this deadly line with units at full

strength. They left it with perhaps two-thirds that number capable of bearing arms.

The struggle did not cease with their departure from it. During the period in which the other two infantry brigades of the division were occupying the trenches, frequent attacks were launched by both sides. Much work was done to rebuild the battered line.

Despite the shelling, the antagonists strained everywhere to strengthen their respective positions. The British trenches were rebuilt time after time until a fairly strong section, with a passable system of barbed-wire entanglements, had been constructed. Though our fire was terrific, the Germans succeeded in consolidating their gain, and dug a trench around the northern lips of the craters in their grasp. It was when this trench appeared that our troops discovered that we were not holding Craters 4 and 5.

The effect of this discovery was to cause us to number the two small craters which were mistaken for Craters 4 and 5. They were in future to be known as Crater 6 Right and Left. Our garrisons were not withdrawn.

An effort to capture Crater 2 was made by bombing detachments from each battalion of the Fourth Brigade on the night of April 9th. Through a very fierce fire the attackers pushed on, and succeeded in gaining a temporary footing in the crater. They established a bombing post near it.

This attack was almost immediately countered by a heavy enemy bombing assault, which took place on the following night. After an unsuccessful advance by two parties, the Huns approached Crater 6, but were immediately repulsed. Our trenches further to the right were at the same time most fiercely attacked and part of the line in the centre was heavily bombarded. The Eighteenth Battalion, with the Nineteenth Battalion, threw off these rushes, and the enemy eventually fell back with severe casualties.

During the period of comparative calm which followed, the Fifth Canadian Infantry Brigade took over the trenches. Bombing affrays were numerous. On the night of April 13th hostile artillery preparation commenced, and at 5.20 next morning four assaults were beaten off by the detachments of the Twenty-fifth Battalion under Lieuts. Morgan, W. A. Cameron and L. H. Johnstone, holding Crater 6. The vicinity of Crater 1 was also heavily shelled, and was later charged by twenty-five of the enemy in broad daylight. This attack failed, as it deserved. While occupying the craters, Lieut. E. J. Brooks, of the same battalion, with his men, repulsed two attacks.

Several more attempts to drive us out of the craters we held

were made during the next few days, but all were easily frustrated.

The Sixth Brigade relieved the Fifth Brigade on the night of April 17th. And on the afternoon of April 19th the last scene of the desperate drama was staged when the German troops, following a bombardment of violence, attacked and captured Crater 6 Right and Left.

When the relief took place the Twenty-ninth Battalion took over the right of the brigade line, which included Craters 1 and 6 Right and Left, from the Twenty-fourth Battalion. The Twenty-eighth Battalion held the rest of the front. In brigade reserve was the Thirty-first Battalion, and the Twenty-seventh Battalion waited in brigade support.

On the night of the relief "C" Company of the Vancouver unit easily defeated a bombing attack on Crater 6. The succeeding days saw nothing more than endless artillery fire and entrenching by either side.

The night before the attack was launched, Lieut. Myers and Lieut. Biggs, both of "D" Company of the Twenty-ninth Battalion, relieved the men of "C" Company holding Crater 6. They had with them ninety-nine men, each being in command of a party of about fifty.

At about 5 o'clock in the morning the enemy's guns commenced bombarding the entire Canadian Corps frontage, with an especially strong concentration of artillery upon the St. Eloi area. The batteries firing on the latter portion continued their work practically ceaselessly till 4.30 p.m. that afternoon. Our guns replied with equal vigour.

The effect of the bombardment on Crater 6 can easily be imagined. Such dugouts and trenches as the former occupants had managed to construct began to disappear in deafening sheets of flame and cascades of black mud. Shells of every calibre were used against the valiant handful holding the position. High explosives blew up the supplies of bombs, causing fearful injuries to the men near by. With appalling rapidity groups of the garrisons were shattered into atoms or struck down into piles of streaming and horribly mutilated corpses.

This bombardment, before it ceased, caused a great many casualties, Lieut. Myers being one of those wounded. When the fire finally lessened and the smoke of the fire drifted away, it revealed to the astonished eyes of the German gunners a number of men still alive in the craters, in open defiance of their terrible power, gaining a brief rest from the slaughter.

As the survivors of the hurricane still showed fight, the guns opened again to pave the way for the final advance. They bent every effort during the next half hour in pouring the



maximum number of shells upon the devoted remnants of the crater holders. Owing to the fierceness of the barrage the men in the craters had to be left to their fate. So they died—magnificently.

When the guns had done their work and a total of less than twenty-five men were left alive, the shelling ceased, and at 7.30 p.m. the Huns' infantry—about one hundred men—advanced. They met with a vigorous fire from our main trenches, but came on. They met with a fire from the craters as well. There the white-faced, weary Canadians whom no bombardment could break looked to their officers, asking "Will we fight?" Myers, covered with bandages, came out of his dugout. "Yes, boys," he said; "we will make a fight for it." So they made a fight for it. Every useful rifle commenced firing. There were three useful rifles!

Lieut. Biggs, in Crater 6 Right, sent five of his men into Lieut. Myers's position. He had nothing with which to resist, and the remainder of his garrison, with himself, were captured.

Some of the enemy swept into his crater. Lieut. Myers, when his three rifles became useless, held the rest off with his revolver till all his ammunition was expended. Someone handed him a fourth rifle, which jammed after one shot. With a yell his opponents came on. The officer decided, further resistance being useless, to retire. He gathered the remains of his garrison together and withdrew, throwing his machine gun into the bottom of the crater as he went.

After this the Germans entered. Lieut. Myers continued on his way through the gathering dusk. His party consisted of five men beside himself. They were all that remained of the garrisons of both points.

As soon as the men in our main line witnessed the taking of the craters, word was sent back to brigade headquarters, and every gun in the area crashed into action. A barrage was placed behind the lost positions and, following the German tactics, the positions themselves were subjected to the fury of the artillery. This prompt action probably prevented the proposed advance upon the Canadian line from the craters. The bombardment was kept up continuously through the whole night. It was opposed by the enemy's batteries, which began firing when they perceived that their infantry were unable to move.

A counter-attack was at once organized. Major Tait, of the Twenty-ninth Battalion, was placed in command of one company of his unit and two companies were placed behind him, ready to follow him in his charge for the craters. With one company of the Twenty-first Battalion at his disposal, the remainder close behind, and the rest of the division standing to arms, his force was ample for the proposed assault. After a long, toilsome



march through the gloom of a rainy night the counter-attack force reached the trenches of the Twenty-eighth Battalion, from which it was to be launched.

Major Tait saw that no men could possibly reach their objective if led into the darkness of the night to face the German artillery. He therefore strengthened the Twenty-eighth Battalion with his command and by his advice the counter-attack was cancelled.

To ascertain conditions in the craters which had been taken, that night Major Tait, Lieuts. Jackson and MacLean and two men crept across the ground which lay between. Though they were not in British hands the artillery had seen to it that they were untenable to the enemy. Death, and Death alone, held them.

This ended the fighting of St. Eloi, or at any rate the more important fighting. Further bombing affrays took place from time to time, but all, directed by the enemy, were small and were thrown back by the Canadians in the trenches without difficulty.

The Second Division's casualties in this battle amounted approximately to forty officers and twelve hundred men killed, wounded and missing, in the short period leading up to April 19th and the final loss of Crater 6. Before the fighting had simmered down to normal they had reached the high figures of approximately fifty officers and sixteen hundred men.

The determination and heroic endurance of the Second Division left its mark in the soul of the Germans. These were beginning to get the measure of the stuff that Canada had sent against them. Such blows, small in themselves, were nevertheless in the far future to bring the enemy to his knees as, through the long years, they drained the life-blood out of him.

And they were gaining for the Canadian Corps a reputation for military virtue that was to live for ever.

## CHAPTER VI

### SANCTUARY WOOD AND HOOGE

JUNE 1916

DURING the heavy fighting which fell to the Second Canadian Division at St. Eloi, described in the preceding chapter, the troops of the other Canadian divisions were doing their best to assist them. This assistance took the form of strong artillery support and also of a continuous small-arm fire, which kept the Germans north of the Ypres-Comines Canal perpetually engaged. In addition, they took some of the strain off the shoulders of the crater defenders by repulsing several determined enemy attacks.

The most serious of these assaults was made upon the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. V. C. Buchanan. Just previous to the loss of Crater 6 the battalion, holding trenches on the Bluff, immediately north of the Canal, was heavily bombarded for the whole afternoon by mixed fire. After sundown the German infantry attacked a large crater just in front of our main line.

Owing to the poor state of our trenches and heavy casualties on our side, the enemy managed to secure a footing. But our artillery shelled them so violently that when our counter-attack came forward it found the crater empty. The situation was immediately restored to normal.

On April 26th the First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. A. Creighton, and the Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. Swift, were furiously shelled for over an hour. Immediately after the fire lifted on to our support lines a mine was exploded under each battalion and German infantry lumbered forward to the attack.

The assailants attacked in three parties. The Second Battalion broke up the first party with machine guns almost at once. The second party won a hold in a bit of trench held by the First Battalion, but was immediately ejected. The same fate met the third party, which had managed to drive in some of the battalion's advanced posts.

These actions were the most important which occurred on

the front of the two northern divisions during the St. Eloi fighting.

No fighting of importance fell to the lot of the Canadians during the following month of May, and only one event of great note occurred at that time. This event was the departure of Lieut.-General Sir E. A. H. Alderson, K.C.B., for England on May 28th and the arrival of Lieut.-General Sir Julian Byng, K.C.M.G., to take his place as commander of the Canadian Corps.

During this month of normal trench warfare, practically invisible to the troops, a great storm was brewing. When it burst, it was once more to emphasize to the world the heights of Canadian courage.

To understand what happened, it is necessary to describe the topography of the country occupied by the Canadians on June 2nd, the day on which the attack began. The ruins of Ypres were in a valley. East of them, some three thousand yards distant, was a low ridge running roughly north and south. This ridge was one of a series of ridges rising parallel to each other like gently undulating waves. It was the last strip of high ground between Germany and Ypres. Bit by bit, during a period of nearly two years, the Kaiser's troops had wrested the outer ridges from the British. The object of the enemy's attack was to seize this last ridge.

The ground wherein the actual fighting took place was in the form of what was almost an equilateral triangle, and lay north of the Ypres-Comines Canal. Ypres stood at the western corner of the triangle. On the main Ypres-Menin road, directly east of the city, was the village of Hooze, the eastern corner. The southern corner was officially known as Hill 60.

Within that triangle there were infantry of three Canadian brigades on the day of the assault. On the left were the Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Hill, D.S.O., with its left flank in front of Hooze. On its right were the "Princess Pat's," Lieut.-Col. H. C. Buller, D.S.O. These battalions belonged to the Seventh Canadian Infantry Brigade, of the Third Division. Next were the First Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. Shaw, and the Fourth Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. F. H. Ussher, of the Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade. The Second Canadian Infantry Brigade, on the right of Lieut.-Col. Ussher's command, were represented by the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Dyer, which was on the extreme right flank of the line attacked.

The bombardment previous to the infantry assault began at 9 a.m. It steadily and rapidly swelled to a violence equalled only by the artillery fire at St. Eloi in April, and, owing to the

wide front to which it swiftly spread, caused even greater devastation. Frightful casualties occurred. The situation, early in the morning, was made particularly desperate by the incapacitating of the two highest commanders of the troops concerned, Major-General M. S. Mercer, C.B., commanding the Third Division, and Brigadier-General V. Williams, the leader of the Eighth Brigade.

The two officers, with their personal staff, were in the trenches conducting an inspection, when the suddenness of the bombardment caught them. What happened to them is rather uncertain. Both were wounded. Major-General Mercer was struck on the head by a flying sand-bag, which injured him severely. He appears to have been unable to help himself, and his companions could do virtually nothing. He was bandaged—whether by our men or by the Germans after they captured the line is unknown—and placed in a dugout, which was subsequently destroyed by a shell, eliminating any chance of his escape from death.

Brigadier-General Williams was badly wounded in the face and was senseless when the enemy attacked. He was captured and removed to a hospital in Menin a prisoner.

Nor was the tragedy of the two commanders only of general effect. The serious results attending their disappearance on an occasion when they were so badly needed can easily be imagined. To their boundless credit, Brigadier-General E. S. Hoare-Nairne, Commander of the Lahore Divisional Artillery, attached for service with the Third Division, and the staff of the Eighth Brigade, took up the reins of leadership, directing the operations of the Third Division and the Eighth Brigade respectively. Lieut.-Col. J. C. L. Bott, Second C.M.R. Battalion, assumed temporary command of the Eighth Brigade at 6.30 p.m. that night.

The enemy's shell fire, extending from Hooge to the left of the Second Infantry Brigade, south of Mount Sorrel, had reached a tremendous intensity by 11 a.m. It is unnecessary to describe its terrible effects in detail. It wrecked the defensive work of months in a few hours. Hundreds of men fell under it. Bomb stores were blown up and machine guns were destroyed.

Meanwhile, measures to meet the attack were, of course, being taken. By noon the support battalions of each brigade were standing to arms and manning the reserve lines immediately in rear of the front trenches. The infernal wall built up by the hostile barrage fire between the battalions in the line and their supports prevented the arrival of reinforcements. Our own guns were firing mightily.

At 1 p.m. the infantry attack was launched. A mine was



fired under Trench 48, held by the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion, in Armagh Wood, a position about one thousand yards north-east of the Canal. Before the quivering thunder of the explosion had rumbled away the German battalions charged. The remnants of the Canadians, overwhelmingly outnumbered, dazed by the effects of the mine, and suffering from the long torture to which the enemy's guns had subjected them, were unable to stop the advance. In spite of a glorious but heart-breaking resistance, they lost their line and the support trenches behind it.

As soon as the mine was fired, Brigadier-General Lipsett, commanding the Second Infantry Brigade, ordered the Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Odium, to form a defensive flank in rear of the lost trenches. The left of his brigade was entirely exposed, since the Germans had captured the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion's ground on that flank, so this movement was absolutely necessary to stop the enemy's further advance and form a barrier around which he might not pass to turn the brigade.

The Seventh Battalion therefore occupied a line running north-west and south-east and approximately one thousand yards long, and the Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Rattray, took its place in the reserve trenches. The left of the battalion rested on Zillebeke, a village a mile west of our front line, and the right on Square Wood, a thicket five hundred yards north-west of the captured trenches.

Shortly after the loss of Trench 48, the Germans, extending the attack northward, assaulted and captured all the trenches held by the Canadians up to a thousand yards south of Hooge. It took them several hours of most desperate and bloody hand-to-hand fighting to do it. Each trench had to be carried separately. Positions changed hands again and again. But in the end weight of numbers prevailed and the whole of the front line, and part of the support, between Trench 48 and the point indicated near Hooge was torn from us.

There were magnificent deeds done at this time. The noble leadership of the officers commanding the battalions stands out most prominently. There was Lieut.-Col. H. C. Buller, D.S.O. His battalion held on with concrete determination and was compelled to throw back its right flank only to conform with the retirement of the survivors of the Eighth Infantry Brigade. In conducting their defence Captain Niven, well supported by Lieuts. Hagerty, Molson and Triggs—all hit—again exhibited great courage.

But to return to Lieut.-Col. Buller. He was in the line, cheering on his men and firing them with quiet words, when the Germans charged. As their troops got round the flank and advanced afresh, this gallant officer stood up on the parapet,



in utter defiance of death, and shouted encouragement to the battalion. It was then that he was killed. He fell back dead from the position and the waves of the enemy passed over him.

Not less brave was Lieut.-Col. Ussher, commanding the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion. He gathered a group of his command about him and fought on until the overwhelming mass of antagonists surrounded them and took the exhausted survivors prisoner.

Lieut.-Col. A. E. Shaw, of the First C.M.R. Battalion, also made a wonderful stand with a group of his unit. Lieut.-Col. Shaw banded a small number of soldiers into the ruins of a strong point just behind the front line—the remains of the fire-trenches were then in German hands. Lieut.-Col. Shaw, together with Major Palmer and Lieut. Rowles, was killed as he fought there with cold steel.

Then there was Lieut.-Col. G. H. Baker, commanding the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion. He led his men in their tremendous efforts to maintain the support line in Maple Copse, and, leading them, was mortally wounded. He fell at dusk while encouraging his men in "digging in."

With such commanders as these it is no wonder that the men fought with a pitiful, hopeless valour which was a glory to Canada. As already stated, few of them survived to tell the stories of their valour.

Thousands of incidents of the defence might be narrated, but these are sufficient to illustrate its heroism. It was a resistance which could only end one way. Nine German battalions attacked the last survivors of four Canadian units. Our supports were cut off from the line and to come up was impossible. The secret concentration of hostile artillery resulted in a vast outnumbering of our own guns. The enemy had every advantage which we had not.

Though our losses were heavy, the Germans' were also very severe. They paid a bitter price for the line. Our machine guns reaped a bloody and terrible harvest when the packed lines of infantry came. Our guns took them in enfilade and at short range and ploughed ghastly lanes in the advance, and later rendered the captured positions almost untenable.

One remarkable instance will serve to show what magnificent support was rendered by the artillery. Lieut. Charles Cotton was in command of an advanced pair of field guns of the Fifth Battery, C.F.A., in Sanctuary Wood. His orders were to destroy them in the event of a successful enemy advance. Instead, he dragged his guns into the open and fired furiously at almost point-blank range.

The Germans could not endure the fearful fire and rushed for the guns. They got them at last—but only over mangled

and gory heaps of their dead, and after repeated attempts. Every one of Cotton's men was killed or disabled. The attackers were unable to remove the guns and, when retaken by our counter-charge, they were found surrounded by great piles of shell cases, silent testimonies to the grand effort of this Canadian "L" Battery.

Despite all this valour the enemy, besides capturing the front and support trenches on the lines previously indicated, had pushed forward to a depth averaging three hundred and fifty yards from the lost first line. On either flank, at Hooge and Hill 60, our men were in their original positions. But from in front of Hooge the new German line, curving in a south-westerly direction, ran through Sanctuary Wood, near and south of Hooge, to Observatory Ridge—a thousand-odd yards east of Zillebeke—thence through Armagh Wood to take in Armagh House, and joined the old line near Trench 48. Some advanced parties even penetrated Maple Copse, a small wood about a quarter of a mile west of Sanctuary Wood, at about 9.30 p.m., but the effective action of our artillery and the defence of the Canadian supports drove them out again. In this defence two companies of the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion fought splendidly. Meanwhile the counter-attack troops were being moved into their places. The Forty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Griesbach, was under orders to counter-attack and was marching up from its supporting positions in order to deploy on the line from which the assault was to be launched. The Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Hay, and the Sixtieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Gascoigne, both of the Ninth Infantry Brigade, were also moving up to counter-attack. The Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Rattray, was preparing some fifteen hundred yards to the west of Hill 60. The First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Creighton, was moved into the second line, running just in front of Ypres. The Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. D. Allan, was on its way to take the place of the First Battalion. The Second C.M.R. Battalion, now commanded by Major M. V. Allan, with the Forty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Cantlie, were reinforcing their respective brigades in their new positions. The Third Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General G. S. Tuxford, was marching up from divisional reserve to counter-attack.

Finally, two companies of the King's Royal Rifles, begged from the adjacent Sixtieth (Imperial) Brigade by Brigadier-General A. C. Macdonell, also came up to support the Hooge line.

The enemy, apart from his temporary lodgment in Maple Copse already mentioned, made only one more effort to get forward. This was on Mount Sorrel, where some of them succeeded in gaining a precarious footing in two small trenches

which the Fifth Battalion had been compelled to evacuate, owing to heavy enfilade fire. This battalion did great execution with its machine guns against their advance.

A gallant effort at counter-attacking was made by the remnants of the Second and Fifth C.M.R. Battalions, under Major Allan, at 11 p.m. This counter-attack issued from Maple Copse and was directed against Mount Sorrel. It met with extremely strong opposition, however, and after making some progress, was eventually obliged to fall back into the copse again.

Meanwhile, through a long, dark night of wet and cold and heavy shelling by both sides, the troops for the counter-attack were slowly getting into position. It had been originally proposed to utilize the Forty-ninth, Fifty-second and Sixtieth Battalions for the counter-attack in the Seventh Brigade sector, the whole being commanded by Lieut.-Col. Griesbach, who was succeeded, in order to free him for this work, by Major Weaver. Unfortunately, the Fifty-second Battalion and Sixtieth Battalion were much delayed by the darkness and an intense barrage through which they had to pass. Both battalions had very heavy casualties, the Fifty-second losing their commander, Lieut.-Col. Hay, wounded, and the second-in-command, Major Young, killed. The Sixtieth lost practically all its officers and a large number of N.C.O.'s. Hour after hour went by, and still these units could not get forward. The Sixtieth Battalion had been struck so heavily that it was scattered considerably. The battalion in the darkness had got in front of the Fifty-second Battalion, which was accordingly unable to pass forward.

These two fine battalions did everything possible to get into position in time.

The result of this delay was that for the Seventh Brigade's stroke only the Forty-ninth Battalion was in the assembly line when the time of attack came. It was decided to push this battalion forward alone.

At 5.10 a.m. most of the counter-attacking troops were in position. The battalions forming the first line were: on the right the Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Odium, which, when it advanced, was replaced in the front line by the Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Rattray, which in turn was to be replaced by the Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. D. Allan; on the right of the Seventh was the Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Bent, supported by the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Leekie; on the left of the Fifteenth was the Fourteenth Battalion, Major McCombe, supported by the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Buchanan; while to the left of the Fourteenth was the Forty-ninth.

The objective of each of the four attacking battalions was

the old front line immediately in front of it, the objective of the whole force the entire system of lost trenches.

At 6.40 a.m., as the grey light of dawn crawled over the wilderness of the field, the intense artillery bombardment preceding the counter-attack began. At 7.10 a.m. the rockets fired by the Third Canadian Division burst in the smoke high above the crouching troops to signal the advance, and the men moved forward.

Unfortunately, owing to the inevitable delays, the enemy had had time to consolidate his line and put out barbed wire, which the preliminary bombardment did not sufficiently cut. The same delays caused the assault to be launched in daylight. It did not entirely fail. It thrust the Germans back in some places as far as our old front line. In other places the old support trenches were cleared, and here and there small portions of our old front line were reoccupied. But the main object, which was the regaining of our former positions in entirety, was not accomplished.

As the battalions moved across the open they were enveloped in storms of shells and slashed by devilish machine gun fire. The Seventh Battalion on the right were unable to make much progress, but advanced until they were just outside the German wire, and there attempted to dig in, as they were unable to go on, on account of the machine gun fire. Captains Holmes and Fisher, both very gallant officers, were killed here. The battalions of the Third Brigade suffered very heavily, but drove the enemy back from his most advanced position, and, like the Seventh Battalion, did their best to consolidate. On the left the Forty-ninth Battalion, moving forward without other infantry support, regained parts of our old communication trenches and established a line slightly in advance of the positions whence they had advanced. Major Weaver, leading them, was wounded, and was then succeeded by Major Hobbins. Captain McNaughton, with six other officers, was killed.

The counter-attack swayed to and fro over the disputed ground certainly until noon. There is no doubt that isolated parties actually reached and gave battle in our old front line. After persistent rumours of success, however, it became clear that the assault had failed. By 1 p.m. all survivors, excepting those of the Forty-ninth Battalion in Sanctuary Wood, had fallen back into our jumping-off line.

The performance of the Forty-ninth was very creditable, as that attack was the first serious action in which they had been engaged. All battalions, however, showed great courage and determination. It is impossible adequately to describe the machine gun fire which they had been compelled to face,



As soon as the situation had quietened the attacking battalions were relieved by the support battalions. On the night of June 3rd the Seventh, Tenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Battalions were relieved by the First Brigade, and the Ninth Brigade relieved the Eighth Brigade, "Princess Pat's" and Forty-ninth Battalions. The following day was marked by a very violent and continual enemy bombardment. Our men worked like beavers at consolidating. On the night of June 5th the relief of the last of the troops hitherto engaged was effected when the Sixth Brigade relieved the remainder of the Seventh Brigade.

The new counter-attack, which was intended to regain the whole of our old front line, was to have been made at the earliest possible moment, but was eventually postponed until the night of June 12th, or, rather, the early morning of June 13th. Bad weather had set in, and, as a continual drizzle of rain was falling, it was considered the wisest course to put off the attack until the date mentioned.

On the afternoon of June 6th a new loss added to the difficulties of an already very serious situation. After a fierce bombardment of Hill 60, commencing at 1.10 p.m., followed by a similar one upon Observatory Ridge and Hooge, the enemy, between 3 and 3.30 p.m., fired four mines under the trenches of the Sixth Brigade and captured the front line on a frontage of about three hundred yards.

Immediately after the explosions the infantry attack was made in force. The Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. E. L. Embury, made a most heroic resistance, although the companies holding the line were practically decimated. At the same time the Thirty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Bell, drove off several attacks to the right of the Twenty-eighth Battalion.

After the blowing of the mines no counter-attack of any magnitude was attempted. It was decided that the positions occupied by the defenders following the discharge were stronger and better from a tactical point of view than the old. The effect of the new loss was to place all our original front line from Hooge to Hill 60 in German hands. When the great counter-attack to recover the lost trenches was eventually launched, no attempt was made to regain the old lines at Hooge itself.

Preparations for that counter-attack were now being rapidly put through. It had been decided that no assistance of any kind was to be asked of Imperial troops on the contested ground, as the Canadians looked upon the recovery of the trenches as a point of honour. The only Imperial troops connected with the attack were the Fourteenth Corps, which made a gas demonstration on the north, the artillery of the Lahore Division, and the Third Division, whose infantry took over the St. Eloi sector



from the Second Canadian Division while it was engaged beyond the Canal, and whose artillery supported the attack from the right. The Second Cavalry Brigade also helped by occupying the second line at the most critical stages of the battle.

The following dispositions were made prior to the launch of the attack :

The Fifth Infantry Brigade, which had relieved the Fourth Infantry Brigade after it had completed the consolidation of the positions won on the morning of June 3rd, was in its turn relieved by the Second and Third Infantry Brigades on the ground in rear of Observatory Ridge and Mount Sorrel. The Sixth Infantry Brigade remained in its line at Hooge. The Fourth Infantry Brigade, which was in position south of Hill 60, and the Ninth Infantry Brigade, between the Sixth Infantry Brigade and Maple Copse, also remained in their line until after the assault.

These reliefs were completed on the night of June 11th. On the same day the artillery of the First and Second Canadian Divisions, the Lahore Division and the Third (Imperial) Division, supplemented by masses of heavy guns especially assembled, began the bombardment preliminary to the attack.

The bombardment took the form of a steady fire on the positions about Hill 60 and on any machine gun emplacements which had been located. On June 12th, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., the fire was continued, but was distributed over all the German line from Hill 60 to Sanctuary Wood. On the same day particular attention was paid to the new German positions, Hill 60 and the Snout, a small salient from which the former counter-attack had been held up. Finally, the full fury of the guns was to be directed on the objective from 12.45 a.m. to 1.30 a.m. on June 13th.

These bombardments had the desired effect. They smashed the new works of the enemy into rubbish. The wet weather had rendered the trenches easy victims to shell fire. The artillery also hammered the German *moral* into the condition which would mean least infantry resistance. It shut out food and reinforcements and took a terrible toll of lives.

When the hour of vengeance dawned the assaulting battalions were ready. On the left were the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Buchanan, with the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. E. Leckie, on their right. On the right of the Sixteenth were the Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. D. Allan. These battalions were supported by the Fourteenth Battalion, Major McCombe, Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Bent, and the First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Creighton, being extended from left to right in the order mentioned. The Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Genet, with a company of the Fifty-second Battalion, was to cover the left flank of the whole by a bombing attack.

The attack was divided into two parts: that of the Third Infantry Brigade, termed the Left attack, was under Brigadier-General Tuxford. The Right attack was under Brigadier-General Lipsett. The assaulters were to advance in two lines. The objective of the Left attack was all the old British front line from the left of the lost trenches to Observatory Ridge. The Right attack was to take our old trenches on Mount Sorrel.

Promptly at 1.30 a.m. the tornado of our shell fire lifted from the first objective. Our troops on either flank of the counter-attack opened up rapid machine gun and rifle fire. The smoke and gas arranged for was released on Hill 60 and the left of Hooge. At precisely the same time, as if propelled by a giant hand controlling the tremendous forces at work, the attackers rose out of their trenches and moved forward in silence through the dark.

Quietly, in order by ranks which even the roughness of the ground and the profound blackness of the night could scarcely disturb, the men moved steadily upon their objectives. They reached the desolation of the German first lines and captured it almost at once. Here and there was a savage hand-to-hand fight of short duration, but the victorious ranks surged on without a halt.

As they swung forward from the first objective, their rockets announcing its capture slashed the black with streaks of fire, a few flares shot up from the German positions ahead, and the resistance seemed to stiffen. In some places the long lines of advancing men came under fierce rifle and machine gun fire, and wild shells attempted to reply to the violence of our own barrage. The troops pushed on, though at this stage many fine officers went down, and many of their followers with them.

The machine guns which caused their deaths were silenced in tempests of bombs or at the bayonet's point as the men strode on. There were now furious struggles in the flickering horror of the darkness, in the mud and the rain. Several strongholds held out to the last and the garrisons were dispatched swiftly by panting phantoms behind darting bayonets which they could scarcely see.

Old Canadian bomb stores and ammunition dumps were recovered almost untouched. The battalions found themselves on familiar ground again, stumbling into the ruins of their old trenches and the old front line. At 2 a.m., out of the dazzling furnace of shell-bursts, the howls of the enemy wounded, out of the earth-shaking thunder of artillery, above the hoarse cheers of the conquerors, the rockets of victory darted up from one end of the attacking line to the other, to tell the gunners who toiled like slaves in rear that vengeance was complete.

Then the arduous work of consolidating the regained positions

commenced. It was heart-breaking, but splendidly carried out. In the very short time available before the inevitable counter bombardment and attack, the rain-washed ditches were cleared and braced and strengthened. Communication trenches were hewn out of the sodden ground and stores and ammunition were carried up. All this was done in complete darkness, in heavy torrents of rain.

At 5.20 a.m. the enemy's artillery fire began to crash on the hard-won line. It continued without cessation until 9.30 a.m. The effects on the trenches were severe and heavy casualties resulted. Then the enemy's infantry came out of No Man's Land to attack.

With a fine judgment the commanders of our assault had decided that the German counter-stroke might be expected at that exact hour. They had therefore arranged for an intense bombardment of the hostile positions. This commenced as arranged. It came at the most opportune time possible. All communication with artillery from our infantry had been cut by the German fire, so that had our guns not arranged to bombard as they did, no artillery support could have been obtained.

By virtue of this foresight our weary and drenched infantry were able, with such great support, to shatter that first counter-attack. The strongest enemy effort was directed upon Mount Sorrel. Fortunately, this effort had also been foreseen, and the most powerful concentration of our guns played on the lines before Mount Sorrel.

And now the consolidation was once more resumed. The support battalions had by this time in most cases relieved the assaulting troops. Two hours of desperate work went by before another counter-attack swept forward against our trenches and was withered and beaten back by our small-arm fire.

That was the last counter-attack attempted, but a continuous harrowing bombardment was directed on our positions throughout the day, all through the night, and did not cease for several days. Through this, in mud and water, under indescribable conditions, the men strove heroically. By noon consolidation was almost complete.

Nearly all the battalions concerned in the attack were withdrawn that night and other battalions of the First Division took their places. These fresh troops behaved splendidly. Though they suffered extremely heavy losses, they carried out the reliefs as steadily as they did in quiet times. They pushed forward, waist-deep in the quagmire of the battle-field, and occupied the line without a hitch.

During this relief another prominent officer was killed. While the First Battalion was handing over its line to the Eighth Bat-

talion, a huge shell struck the dugout where the staffs of the two units were at work. In the resulting shambles Lieut.-Col. Matthews was severely hurt and four others were injured. Lieut.-Col. Creighton was mortally wounded and two others were killed by the concussion. In this way a very gallant officer met his death and another colonel was added to the long roll of those who fell in the battle.

The Fifth Canadian Brigade relieved the troops in the line on the night of June 14th. Their entry might be said to have set the seal upon the third desperate conflict for Ypres.

Each brigade of the Canadian Corps took its turn in the recaptured line during the next few weeks, until the situation was again normal, which was at the end of June. They cleared the far-spread desert of the salient of the innumerable Canadian and German dead. There were many Canadians who were buried there on the field of their honour by night, with only the crash of shell fire as a requiem. The clearing parties discovered General Mereer's body in the dugout in Armagh Wood on the night of June 23rd. And next day this gallant soldier was buried in a little cemetery near Abeele, on the Poperinghe Road.

The casualties of the Canadian Corps in this protracted conflict were, in round figures, three hundred and ninety officers and eight thousand one hundred men. Of these seventy-five officers and one thousand and fifty-six men gave up their lives. Approximately two-thirds of the total casualties were incurred in the fighting of and about June 2nd. The Eighth Brigade in that period alone lost seventeen hundred and seventy men.

The aim of the German Army, in making this attack, was not merely local. The thunder was gathering in the Somme Valley. Shrinking from the menace of this forthcoming blow, the enemy struck at Ypres in an effort to divert troops and guns to that sector of the line—troops and guns essential for the battle of the Somme. The Canadians, by fighting from first to last alone, completely defeated this object, and the Commander-in-Chief carried on with his preparations undisturbed.

Indeed, the Germans did themselves more harm than good. They set the desire for vengeance alight in the ranks of the Canadian Corps; so that, far from crippling that Corps or gaining anything, the attack brought the Canadians down to the Somme in September with their zeal for offensive action on fire.

The new dead in the Ypres Salient, whom the Germans had called cowards, might smile in their sleep.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE SOMME

SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 1916

WITH the final settling down of the Canadians into their original trenches north of the Ypres–Comines Canal, a period of extraordinary quietness fell to them. It lasted from the end of June to the middle of August, and was marked by scarcely any important event. The chief happening was the landing of a Fourth Canadian Division in France, which will be duly described.

A few high promotions were made to replace losses suffered in the fighting. Brigadier-General Lipsett, of the Second Infantry Brigade, was promoted to command the Third Division.

The successor of General Lipsett was Brigadier-General F. O. W. Loomis, D.S.O. He had held the command of the Thirteenth Battalion prior to his selection as brigadier.

The whole of the month of July was devoted to an unbroken series of raids delivered by the infantry. It is not possible to describe all these sorties in detail, though every one was worthy of such a description. A few of the more important operations should be recorded.

On July 8th the Fifty-second Battalion assisted a small attack of the Fourth Battalion on Mount Sorrel by raiding the enemy's trenches to the flank. The Fourth Battalion's effort, made by "C" Company and the battalion bombers, was intended to drive the Germans out of an advanced trench on Mount Sorrel. Unfortunately, it failed with rather severe loss and the death of the commander of the attack, Captain A. G. Scott, but, as usual, the utmost bravery was displayed.

Other minor operations were carried out by the Twenty-fifth Battalion on the night of July 28th, followed by an exceptionally daring one by the Nineteenth Battalion on July 29th, which was made in broad daylight and was very successful.

August saw more of these raids, the most important being that made by the Royal Canadian Regiment in the early morning of August 18th. Two nights before, the Nineteenth Battalion,



by a clever ruse, drew the Germans into their front line opposite the battalion in crowds, and then watched our artillery smash up the enemy in their trenches.

Apart from these minor operations, warfare during the period of quiet was unvaried by anything unusually important.

On August 16th the Fourth Canadian Division, having duly assembled in the region of Steenvoorde, just west of the Canadian Corps area, marched forward in time to relieve one of the divisions of its fellow-countrymen *en route* for the Somme. This magnificent body of men had been training in England for several months previously.

The division was commanded by Major-General D. Watson, C.B., who had been succeeded in the command of the Fifth Canadian Infantry Brigade by Brigadier-General A. H. Macdonell, D.S.O., at the time of the St. Eloi fighting, and had gone to England soon afterwards to take over his new force.

The composition of this division was as under :

The Tenth Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General W. St. P. Hughes, consisting of the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. R. Wayland ; Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Dawson ; Forty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. N. Winsley, and Fiftieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. G. Mason. The Eleventh Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General V. W. Odium, D.S.O., composed of the Fifty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. G. Kemball, C.B. ; Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. S. C. Beckett ; Eighty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. W. Frost, and One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. W. Warden. The Twelfth Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General Lord Brooke, consisted of the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. M. Edwards ; Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Clark ; Seventy-third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. P. Davidson, and Seventy-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. Kirkaldy.

The artillery of the division was not formed until June 1917. It was then commanded by Brigadier-General C. H. MacLaren, D.S.O., and consisted of the following units, drawn and formed from the artillery of the First and Second Divisions :

Third Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Major J. A. MacDonald, D.S.O. ; Fourth Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. J. S. Stewart, D.S.O., and Divisional Ammunition Column, Major E. T. B. Gilmore.

The remainder of the division consisted of the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Field Companies, Canadian Engineers, and the usual administrative units.

The division, on its arrival in the battle-zone on August 16th, was immediately posted, brigade by brigade, to the Second and Third Divisions in the trenches.

During August the issue of the Lee-Enfield Rifle to all troops in the Canadian Corps was completed and the Ross Rifle, which had hitherto been used by most of the Corps, was discarded.

The gigantic struggle on the Somme was now in full swing. For several weeks the Canadians had feared that the greatest battle of all time was destined to go on to its ultimate end, perhaps to an overwhelming victory, without their being permitted to take part in it. The Commander-in-Chief eventually decided otherwise. And on August 13th, having handed over their sector to the Third Canadian Division, the First Canadian Division, infantry and guns, was well clear of the Ypres zone and swinging down the roads which led to St. Omer and the Somme.

Soon afterwards all the Canadian Corps, with the exception of the Fourth Canadian Division, which was to remain near Ypres for the time being, followed it. The Second Division was relieved by General Watson's command on August 25th, and also marched by road to the area at St. Omer. The Third Division left by train on September 7th for an area about Cramont, having been relieved on August 25th by the Fourth (Imperial) Division and spending the interval in training at Steenvoorde. Then, on September 3rd, Canadian Corps Headquarters handed the Ypres Salient into the safe keeping of the First Anzac Corps and the relief was complete.

Having gone through some preliminary training on the lines laid down by the development of fighting on the Somme in the area west of St. Omer set aside for that purpose, the First and Second Canadian Divisions entrained in turn, using the stations at Arques, St. Omer and Audruicq.

The First Division commenced to move on August 26th, and, having detrained, was concentrated in the zone west of the Somme, ready for action, by September 1st. The entraining of the Second Division began on September 4th, and it detrained and was also ready for action on the Somme by September 8th. The Third Division, which began its entrainment on September 7th, was also concentrated in the Somme area by September 12th. On September 5th the Corps Troops had assembled in the same district.

The night of September 1st found the First and Third Canadian Infantry Brigades ready to relieve two brigades of Australians east of Mouquet Farm. And before their entry launched the Canadians into the titanic struggle it would be well to describe briefly conditions on the Somme when they came in.

Trench warfare was now gone on the Somme front. But open warfare had not yet returned. The fighting was a combination of both. Shell-holes were occupied and linked up in a few hours and stood for a trench, or were occupied and not linked

up at all. Cavalry went out, but could not charge or quite get clear of barbed wire. Trenches of the old type still existed, but only here and there, and were then of enormous importance. There was little barbed wire to be found, except in the region of the old trenches. Batteries moved over the open and fired in the open according to the old ideas, yet were still hampered by trenches, shell-holes and slowness of infantry advance.

By slow degrees the two Canadian brigades relieving the Australians completed the relief on the morning of September 5th. This was the outcome of the handing over of their front to the Canadian Corps by the First Anzac Corps on September 3rd.

The line taken over was approximately two thousand yards long, a straggling, shell-hammered so-called trench set in the man-made desert astride the Bapaume Road beyond Pozières. Its left was just outside the famous Mouquet Farm, which had proved a stumbling-block in our advance for weeks.

On September 8th the Second Infantry Brigade of Canadians relieved the Third Infantry Brigade. Then at 4.45 p.m. on September 9th the Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. Swift, D.S.O., struck Canada's first blow in the Somme zone.

The battalion, moving forward from its trenches on the extreme right of the Corps line behind the overpowering curtain fire of the massed guns, seized five hundred yards of the German line with eighty prisoners and the loss of very few men. This trench was rapidly incorporated into our system of defence, and was used as a starting-place for the next drive.

With the relief of the First Infantry Brigade by the Fourth and Sixth Infantry Brigades the Second Canadian Division came into action on the right of the Dominion's line on September 10th. Two days later the Second Infantry Brigade's relief by the Eighth Infantry Brigade brought the Third Canadian Division also into the battle. This brigade went in on the left of the Sixth Infantry Brigade, thereby relieving the last of the First Division. These three brigades were destined to make the greatest and most successful attack of the Canadian Corps, and, indeed, one of the most brilliant of the entire British Army, on the Somme.

The terrain in which the first great attack was delivered, roughly, was bounded on the south by the straight but almost obliterated Bapaume Road. A short distance north of the Road and over a mile from the Canadian line was a rubbish-heap which once was Coureclette and is now a glorious name in history.

The main defences to the village consisted of a ruined Sugar Refinery just north of the Bapaume Road, which the enemy had turned into a great redoubt. This was one thousand yards from the Canadian trenches. Besides the enemy's immediate

first line, a strong defence line, running almost parallel to the Bapaume Road from the centre of the Corps line to a point south of Courelette and then turning at a right angle and crossing the Bapaume Road past the Refinery, guarded the approaches to Courelette.

There were many minor bits of line in which the Germans made a fight for the village, but these, known as Sugar Trench and Candy Trench, constituted the backbone of the enemy's resistance. This backbone was broken at one blow.

The Canadian attack was not merely of local importance. It was the pivot on which the whole of the forces from their left down to the right of the Army swung northwards in one day. Had the pivot given way or failed to turn, success might have been jeopardized. But the pivot turned precisely as required.

The preliminary bombardment began on the previous night and roared with the combined power of hundreds of Canadian and Imperial guns along the three-thousand-yard length of Sugar and Candy Trenches, barraged behind them to shut off assistance from the doomed enemy, searched every yard of rearward ground and drowned the fire of the German guns. This terrible bombardment did not cease all night.

Through the darkness the Canadian battalions stole and disposed themselves along the front line from Mouquet Farm to the Bapaume Road for the assault. These battalions were distributed as follows, from right to left :

The Eighteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. L. Milligan, the Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Rogers, the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. Jones ; these belonged to the Fourth Infantry Brigade. Of the Sixth Infantry Brigade, the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. P. J. Daly, D.S.O., and the Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. F. L. Embury C.M.G. ; the Thirty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, followed, mopping up for the Sixth Brigade. The Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. C. Draper, D.S.O., and the First C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. C. Andros, came from the Eighth Infantry Brigade.

The objective assigned to the seven front-line battalions was about equally divided among them. Each had first to overcome the enemy's line just in front of them. The Fourth Infantry Brigade was then to attack Candy Trench and take it from the Bapaume Road to the Sugar Refinery and also the Refinery itself. Sugar Trench and the remainder of Candy Trench were to be captured by the Sixth Infantry Brigade, while the C.M.R.'s were to capture the continuation of Sugar Trench as far as Mouquet Farm.

At 6.20 a.m. the "intense barrage" opened on the German lines. This was the signal for the great attack, and instantly the British troops all along the Somme line sprang out of their



trenches and, cheering wildly, surged over the shell-hole desolation to attack the enemy.

To assist them in their assault the two brigades of the Second Division each had with them a trio of the now renowned Tanks, or heavy armoured cars. This was the first appearance of the great steel fortresses, armed with machine guns and light quick-firers, upon the field of battle.

The artillery, the Tanks and the irresistible dash of the infantry carried everything before them. In successive lines and with fixed bayonets the infantry pressed on, following hard after the clamouring shield of shells and nobly supported by the Tanks. Machine guns here and there opened on them, but were quickly disabled with bombs. The wild shelling of the blind German guns, combined with the machine gun fire, caused many casualties, but was absolutely no hindrance to the heroic advance.

So brilliant was the assault that Sugar and Candy Trenches were taken within the hour. On this front Captain K. L. Paton, of the Twenty-seventh Battalion, though suffering from four wounds, continued to lead his men until he fell exhausted, and was succeeded by Lieut. A. E. McElligott. At many points desperate little hand-to-hand fights took place, but soon died down. The Fourth Infantry Brigade, pouring into the ruins of the Sugar Refinery, captured it at the bayonet's point and were in complete possession by 7.30 a.m.

The Tanks smashed the Refinery's resistance piecemeal. On the Sixth Brigade line of advance one landship reached the objective and destroyed a machine gun, but the other two were severely damaged at the outset and took no part.

By 8 a.m. every yard of the Canadian objectives had been secured. The line now ran approximately along the south edge of Courcelette, from the south-eastern corner of that place to immediately north of Martinpuich. From Courcelette our men were established westwards in trenches along the main road to Oivillers. Prisoners were streaming back, mingled with hundreds of wounded of both sides.

The Canadians had now performed their allotted task of the day, but the task of making further progress at every opportunity still remained. Before the afternoon was well advanced the Fourth Infantry Brigade pushed their men forward under a galling rifle and machine gun fire through heavy shelling and, after a short fight, captured Gunpit Trench. This trench was over two hundred yards from the morning objective and lay south of the Bapaume Road, parallel with the track from Martinpuich to Courcelette.

But this was only a beginning. Orders were rapidly issued for the capture of Courcelette itself. The wall had been broken



down, patrols from the Sixth Infantry Brigade had penetrated into the fortress, and it only remained for our troops to clear it.

While the morning objectives were being consolidated by streaming companies in a fierce fire and the warm sun of September, other battalions, white with dust, pouring with sweat and laden with their weapons, were marching at a forced pace to take Courcellette.

The attacking battalions, suffering heavy casualties as they passed into the desert where Death played, deployed along the whole of the new Canadian line from the Gunpit Trench almost to Mouquet Farm. These were the battalions, distributed from right to left in the order named :

The Twenty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. T. L. Tremblay, and the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Edward Hilliam, D.S.O., supported by the Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. G. Mackenzie. These belonged to the Fifth Infantry Brigade. On their left were the "Princess Pat's," Lieut.-Col. R. T. Pelly, and the Forty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. S. Cantlie, supported by the Forty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Griesbach, all of the Seventh Infantry Brigade. The Eighth Infantry Brigade was represented by the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. D. L. Gordon.

A terrific bombardment howled on Courcellette and the trenches to the west and east—the Fabeck Graben and those along the eastern edge of the village. In the fire the unseen German infantry lay and waited for the end.

At exactly 6 p.m. it came, as the sun was sinking on the close of one of Canada's great days. The Fifth Infantry Brigade, attacking Courcellette, arose out of the crumbled trenches captured in the morning, and, with their comrades of the Third Division moving on the Fabeck Graben, marched in waves, which kept their alignment magnificently, towards their objective.

This attack was also completely successful. The barrage of shells crept forward, a thick cloud of smoke, and the bayonets followed in steady, flashing lines, moving as irresistibly as Fate. Shell after shell blew gaps in the lines, hidden machine guns cut long swathes in the lines, officers fell and gasped out their lives in shell-holes, men went down in sudden heaps. The casualties were heavy as the inferno was traversed. Here three of the original members of the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Major E. J. Brooks, Major J. H. Tupper and Captain J. C. Stairs, all most gallant officers, were killed within one half-hour. But still the bayonets went on.

On the right the Fifth Brigade entered Courcellette with their Colonels at the head of their men. Through the ruins they

went. Fearful fighting took place here and there. Lieut.-Col. Hilliam, in the thick of the fight, was too busy to notice a wound in the hand. There were savage bayonet conflicts, struggles of bombers with machine gunners around the machine guns and hand-to-hand grapplings at dugout entrances. Hundreds of mousing, exhausted wrecks which once were German soldiers surrendered without firing a shot.

Straight through the village they pressed and into the Quarry beyond. This, although a strong point with deep dugouts, was quickly taken; digging in along the north and east sides of Courcelette began, and the place was won. At the forefront of the consolidation Lieuts. H. J. Chabelle, G. E. Dupuis and C. Greffard, of the Twenty-second Battalion, each did brilliant work, heedless of their wounds.

Meanwhile, on the left, the attack of the Third Division was in progress. The "Princess Pat's" and the Forty-second Battalions had been ordered to take two objectives—firstly, a sunken road running right across their front; secondly, the Fabeck Graben. The Forty-ninth Battalion was then to push through these units and establish a line along the whole of the Seventh Brigade front on the crest of the high ground beyond the Fabeck Graben.

The Forty-second Battalion took its objectives rapidly and without great difficulty. The "Princess Pat's," however, after taking the first objective, only succeeded in gaining a footing in the Fabeck Graben with two platoons on the immediate right of the Forty-second. Thence to the east was a two-hundred-yard gap filled with Germans, and thence again, along the Fabeck Graben to Courcelette, were parties of the "Princess Pat's." The Germans in the trench therefore had Canadians on both sides of them. This was the situation when the Forty-ninth came up to take the third objective. There followed long and obscure fighting. Eventually, the Forty-ninth Battalion cleared the enemy out of that portion of the Fabeck Graben in which they still had a footing and seized the Chalk Mound, some two hundred yards beyond the Fabeck Graben, where two companies consolidated and linked the position with the trench in rear. At midnight the line was secure.

To the left of the Forty-second Battalion the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion continued the attack. They had a further five hundred yards of the Fabeck Graben to conquer. Two companies attacked. The assault was launched at 6.30 p.m., in order that it might coincide with the entry of the Seventh Brigade into the Fabeck Graben.

It was rapidly delivered and completely successful, largely owing to the initiative of one man, the officer commanding the

attack of the battalion, Captain W. R. Patterson. The German barrage caught the second attacking company, "C," and inflicted such heavy casualties on this company as it deployed that it could not advance. Captain Patterson therefore quickly extended "B" Company to cover the whole frontage of the two companies and took the whole objective, consolidated, and gained touch with the Forty-second Battalion on the right.

Thus the whole of the main objectives of the Third Division were taken and a line established by the Canadian Corps nearly one thousand yards in advance of that captured only that morning.

In this way Sir Julian Byng and his Canadians crowned their victory about Courcellette and made their greatest Somme advance. With one stroke they smashed through the defence lines of the village, tore it out of the enemy's hands, and set free two square miles of France, while they took nearly a thousand prisoners and much material.

This success complete, new blows were at once delivered. Five hundred yards beyond, and roughly parallel to, the Fabeck Graben, was Zollern Trench, a ditch three thousand yards long, running from Thiepval to join the Fabeck Graben near Courcellette. In the centre of Zollern Trench, half-way between Thiepval and Courcellette and immediately north of Mouquet Farm, was the Zollern Redoubt, an extremely strong position, well provided with dugouts and machine guns.

The Third Division was ordered to take Zollern Trench and the Redoubt as well.

This was a difficult undertaking. These objectives had several times been attacked from the south by troops other than Canadians without success. It was therefore decided to carry out the new assault as follows:

The Seventh Brigade was to capture five hundred yards of Zollern Trench, from its junction with the Fabeck Graben westward, attacking frontally in a northerly direction. When this objective had been taken the Ninth Infantry Brigade was to deploy on a line running north and south between Fabeck Graben and Zollern Trench, its right in touch with the left established by the Seventh Brigade in Zollern Trench. From this line it was to advance and assault the Zollern Redoubt from the east. The Eighth Infantry Brigade was to co-operate by bombing up towards the Zollern Redoubt from the south-east.

The assault of the Seventh Brigade was ordered for 5 p.m. on September 16th. The subsequent assault on the Zollern Redoubt was to take place at 6.30 p.m., when it was thought that the Seventh Brigade might be on its objective line. It was of course impossible to launch the latter attack if the former were not successful.

The following battalions, from right to left, were employed by the Seventh Brigade :

The Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Hill, D.S.O., the Forty-second Battalion ; in support was the Forty-ninth Battalion.

The attack, after a bombardment of one hour's duration, was launched by these units promptly at 5 p.m. It was made under cover of an intense barrage, and was pushed with the greatest possible courage and resolution. It failed—the assaulting waves died in a hell of machine gun fire.

No footing was gained in Zollern Trench, but the “Princess Pat's,” co-operating on the right, succeeded in gaining a few yards of the trench by bombing along from its junction with the Fabeck Graben.

Brigadier-General Macdonell ordered the Forty-ninth Battalion to push forward and lend its weight to the assault. These orders, however, arrived too late and were eventually cancelled. The attack of the Ninth Brigade, wholly dependent on the success of the Seventh Brigade, was also cancelled.

Great courage was displayed in this fruitless attack. When all their men had become casualties, Captain S. J. Mathewson and Lieut. J. K. Mathewson, of the Forty-second Battalion, leading the attack of the right of the battalion, continued to press on alone until only one hundred yards from the objective. They could not get further, as the machine gun fire was indescribably intense.

In the Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut. Penniman, after all his men had become casualties, joined the bombers of the “Princess Pat's” and fought with them.

The Eighth Brigade, like the Ninth Brigade, was not called upon to advance after the assault of the Seventh Brigade had failed. At 7.30 p.m., however, while the remnants of those who had attacked the Zollern Trench were drifting back into the Fabeck Graben, the Second C.M.R. Battalion attacked and captured Mouquet Farm, that thorn in the flesh of the British Army. This position had been constantly raided and harassed by the Eighth Brigade during the preceding days. By 8.30 p.m. the Farm was in our hands. A line was quickly constructed around it, and the place was thus incorporated into our defence system.

Movements of relief were then set in progress. The Ninth Infantry Brigade, which was to have taken Zollern Redoubt, instead relieved the Seventh Infantry Brigade during the night. At the same time the Fourth Brigade was relieved by the Fifth Brigade and the Forty-sixth (Imperial) Brigade, while the Eighth Brigade was relieved by the Thirty-fourth (Imperial) Brigade. No further attempt to advance had been made that day. Everywhere



consolidation was in progress. Thousands of men toiled like slaves to secure the hard-won ground. Meanwhile the guns were moving up into position to support the next attack. During the next forty-eight hours the enemy made isolated efforts almost ceaselessly to regain Courcellette and the trench system they had lost, but all these efforts were crushed by the sleepless artillery and the infantry holding the line.

By September 17th all the victors of Courcellette were relieved. More territory passed into our possession that day. At 5 p.m. each battalion of the Fifth Infantry Brigade sent forward bombing parties, under a shrapnel barrage. These worked their way through a maze of trenches east of Courcellette and thereby drove the line forward two hundred yards along the whole of that side of the village. The night of September 17th brought the First Infantry Brigade into the trenches to their relief.

Thus the whole of the Second Division passed out of the Valley of the Shadow.

On the night of September 19th two small but extremely savage attacks were made in the vicinity of Courcellette Quarry, but proved entirely fruitless, owing to the fine defence of the Third and Fourth Battalions. In some places we pushed forward new outposts, especially around Courcellette.

The end of Zollern Trench came later. It was pounded to ruin by our great guns, and it ceased to be either an obstacle to an attacking force or a shelter for defence.

By September 25th every brigade of the First Division had fought its second turn in the front line. More progress had been made in the maze of trenches east of Courcellette. The Sixth Infantry Brigade then relieved the First Infantry Brigade.

And now begins the tale of Regina Trench. When men of the future tell stories of war and valour, if they know heroism, they will speak of this trench and the fights that won it.

Picture a densely wired defence line, sited with a serpent's cunning to take every advantage of concealment and protection from shell fire afforded by the ground, running unbrokenly from near Thiepval to south of Pys, across the Canadian front as it lay now beyond Courcellette. Between this line and ours was another trench, Hessian Trench, roughly parallel to it, but terminating abruptly north of Courcellette. A third line ran from Courcellette to join Regina Trench and cut Hessian Trench on the way.

Regina Trench was the densely wired line from Thiepval to south of Pys. Kenora Trench was the line connecting it with Courcellette. Never was a name more appropriate than that of Regina Trench, for it was a queen crowned by Canadian valour. Those who aspired to remove the obstacle it presented in the path



of their advance had a fearful task before them. Yet when, on September 26th, the first attack went forward, the six battalions engaged had no thought of failure. From right to left, these were the battalions :

Twenty-ninth Battalion, Major J. M. Ross, and the Thirty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, both of the Sixth Infantry Brigade. They were to seize part of Kenora Trench and the ground east of it. The Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. P. Clark, M.C., and the Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. E. Bent, of the Third Infantry Brigade ; the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. M. Dyer, D.S.O., and the Eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. M. Prower, D.S.O., of the Second Infantry Brigade. They were first to capture the Hessian line and Kenora before going on to take Regina Trench.

In conjunction with Imperial troops on the left, these battalions rose to the assault and set forth on their terrible task at 12.35 p.m.

Within an hour the struggle at close quarters for Hessian and Kenora Trenches was over and they were almost completely won. A small line south of Kenora, known as Sudbury Trench, was also captured. In the Fifth Battalion, Lieut. W. W. McLellan showed great gallantry. He was early wounded, but led his company in spite of it. With one man he captured a machine gun and turned it on the enemy. And, not content with this, he next rescued a wounded officer under intense fire.

For the moment the attack on Regina Trench was abandoned, as barbed wire was still thick before it, in spite of the fierce preliminary bombardment. The business of consolidation began under the usual gruelling opposition, and the Second Brigade commenced bombing to the left to effect a junction with the Imperials.

All night long these efforts were continued but proved fruitless. The artillery meanwhile were battering Regina Trench, five hundred yards ahead, paving the way for a new assault. Some elements of the Third Brigade, before dark and the abandoning of the attack, actually won to Regina Trench, but they could not hold on.

Next day the Seventh Battalion, pushed up to help the rest of its brigade, joined in its attempt to gain touch with the Imperials on the left. By grim, steady driving they brilliantly cleared five hundred yards more of Hessian Trench. As the Germans fled from them across the open, our machine guns swept down scores. An immediate counter-attack at 1 p.m. set foot in a small part of the new gain, but was at once ejected, and the entire move failed with great loss.

At the same time the Thirty-first Battalion, showing magnifi-

cent tenacity, and assisted by a company of the Twenty-seventh Battalion, under Captain McGaw, at last secured the greater part of its share of Kenora Trench and the ground east of that line. This battalion had battled for twenty-four hours to gain its objective, attacking three distinct times. By 9 p.m. on September 27th it had finally taken the line set out for it. It was almost decimated by its losses, but it performed its task.

A withdrawal began during the night of September 27th. The vigilance of the troops around Courcelette and infantry patrols, which were always out, discovered this almost at once. The enemy had evidently had enough of it on that front.

The Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. G. MacKenzie, and the Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. R. Turnbull, under Brigadier-General Ketchen's orders, at once deployed and advanced, with instructions to gain as much ground as possible. The Nineteenth Battalion, moving from between Courcelette and the Bapaume Road, reached a position nearly a mile ahead of our line, their right on the Warlencourt Road, their left five hundred yards north-west of that point, before heavy fire arrested their advance. Advancing north of Courcelette, the Twenty-sixth Battalion reached a trench three hundred yards south of Regina Trench between the roads to Miraumont. Unable to go further because of sniping, they established themselves in the trench.

Nor was this all. The Canadian Corps Cavalry Regiment, Lieut.-Col. C. T. Van Straubenzee, for the first time in the war's history, was able to advance. Before noon of September 28th a patrol under Lieut. Campbell had located the enemy in Destremont Farm, on the Bapaume Road, a mile from Courcelette. By nightfall the enemy was reported as established in force in a new line before Le Sars.

Before once more attacking Regina Trench a complete defence line was consolidated by our troops. Pushing to the right, the Canadians got into touch with the Imperials at Destremont Farm, which was now in their hands. Meanwhile, the Germans violently counter-attacked our new line between Twenty-three Road and Courcelette, held by the Twenty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Gunn, at 10 p.m. on September 28th.

Our guns awoke instantly: the iron door of our protective barrage came down in front of our trenches with an ear-splitting crash and set the night on fire. The machine guns and rifles got to work and swept the columns of the enemy from end to end. The assault seemed to melt in the furnace and failed with heavy casualties.

A strong attack on a post in Hessian Trench was also beaten back at the same time.

Touch was at last established between the flanks of Canadians

and Imperials in Hessian Trench next day. The Second C.M.R. Battalion effected this.

Everything was now ready for a new advance on the whole of the Canadian front. The following battalions were deployed from right to left on October 1st, with orders for the attack :

The Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Rogers, and the Eighteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Milligan, of the Fourth Infantry Brigade, on the line from Destremont Farm to the East Miraumont Road. The Fifth Infantry Brigade was to advance from the left of the Fourth Brigade to Twenty-three Road, using the Twenty-Second Battalion, Twenty-fifth Battalion and Twenty-fourth Battalion. The Fifth (on the right) and Fourth C.M.R. Battalions of the Eighth Infantry Brigade were to advance on a front from Twenty-three Road to the road from Courelette to Grandcourt.

On the front thus covered, Regina Trench as far as Courelette Trench, which ran parallel to the East Miraumont Road, thence a line straight to Dyke Road and from that road to Destremont Farm, was to be assaulted. At 3.15 p.m. the infantry waves went forward on all this two-mile deployment.

The guns had almost everywhere done their work, and with the creeping barrage arched like a shield in front of them, the battalions got almost everywhere into their objectives. But German machine guns were on all sides, in shell-holes between trenches and in concealed emplacements, filling the air with a dense crossfire which swept the advancing lines into ruin.

And yet the infantry reached their objectives, though the ground over which they went was carpeted with the men they lost. The way of the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion was hopelessly blocked by barbed wire which our guns had been unable to cut.

While elsewhere their breathless comrades were clearing the German positions, the men of this battalion sought with glorious courage to advance. They ran up and down in front of the entanglements, seeking a passage. Still, while these breakers of khaki dashed fruitlessly on the wall of wire, the remains of the other battalions were fighting furiously to clear the last Germans from the rest of the Canadian objective. A strong point at the junction of Courelette and Regina Trenches was the centre of this fighting.

Heavy German artillery fire now added to the difficulties and horrors of the situation. It ran, in the form of a barrage, straight across the ground over which the Canadians had advanced, completely shutting off assistance, and stormed down on the captured bits of the line. The ground behind our men was thus turned into a shambles where the wounded were blown to pieces and the living were struck down like flies.

Under such conditions consolidation was impossible. The

enemy immediately counter-attacked on the whole line. Everywhere they met with magnificent resistance, but they succeeded in retaking the trench held by the right company of the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion and getting a footing between the Twenty-fourth and the Twenty-fifth Battalions.

This marked the beginning of the end. Almost decimated by terrific machine gun fire through which they had passed in their advance and then pounded mercilessly by artillery, the Canadians in the German position found themselves unable to dislodge the enemy from the redoubt in Courcelette Trench or the parts they had just retaken. By 5 p.m. another violent counter-attack was made, and all Regina Trench, except that portion lying between Twenty-three Road and the Kenora Trench junction, was lost.

Kenora Trench itself would also have been captured, so fierce was the enemy's rush, had not the survivors of the Twenty-fifth Battalion occupied the trench and made a desperate stand there.

It is needless to say that a terrific fight took place before our men were driven from Regina Trench, and that the enemy paid the price in full.

So it went on, until, as has been told, only the Twenty-fourth Battalion remained in Regina Trench. The end of the tale of this attack is simple, but its simplicity is of great valour. Through all that dreadful night succeeding the counter-attack the remnants of our assaulting troops strove again and again to retake their objectives. The last men of the Eighth Infantry Brigade in Regina Trench—the left company of the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, reinforced by two platoons of the first C.M.R. Battalion—fought along the trench to gain touch with the Fifth Brigade, but they were swept back, out and into Hessian Trench. This rendered the position of the few soldiers left in the trench intolerable, and they were ordered to withdraw.

Regina Trench had only dead Canadians in possession after that. The men in front of it meanwhile had come back through all the night to the assault. But when the dawn came they gave up the struggle and consolidated on the ground they held. Regina Trench was still untaken. The new Canadian line, however, ran across No Man's Land from Hessian to Kenora Trench, thence across the East Miraumont and the Pys Roads down to Destremont Farm Road. Though their objectives were not secured, the Canadians had thus driven forward their whole line nearly five hundred yards.

During the two days following, advantage was taken of the comparative calm which succeeded the attack to relieve the troops which took part. The next few days were then utilized



in consolidating the latest gains and in rearranging the guns for a further drive.

It is to the boundless credit of the Canadian Corps that the two previous failures at Regina Trench did not in the least affect their iron resolution to capture it. The German troops had undoubtedly been ordered to hold the trench to the last—the fearful losses of their defence proved that. In the same way every man of the battalions which moved up to the trenches for the third assault was determined that the Canadians should take Regina Trench at all costs.

On October 8th the following battalions went over the parapet, deployed from right to left in the order named :

The Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. Rae, D.S.O., and the Third Battalion, Major J. B. Rogers, M.C. (Major Yates, Second Battalion, temporarily in command), both of the First Infantry Brigade ; the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Leckie, D.S.O., and the Thirteenth Battalion, Major G. E. McCuaig, of the Third Infantry Brigade ; the Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. A. Genet, and the Forty-third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. M. Thomson, of the Ninth Infantry Brigade ; the Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. Hill, and the Forty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Griesbach, of the Seventh Infantry Brigade.

At 4.50 a.m., as the glare of the terrible barrage began to pale with dawn, these battalions swept out in waves and assaulted Regina Trench from the Grandcourt-Courcelette Road to the Quadrilateral, and thence attacked a line to Dyke Road, thus advancing on a front of over two miles.

With the exception of the Forty-ninth and Thirteenth Battalions, which were held up by barbed wire and machine guns, every unit got into its objective, if with heavy losses. They found the trenches utterly smashed and crammed with German dead.

In view of what followed, this testimony that the enemy lost at least as heavily as ourselves is consolatory.

Shortly after we had gained a footing in our positions the inevitable counter-attack came. Pressing on through the storm of our shell fire, the Germans madly drove into the troops of the Seventh and Ninth Infantry Brigades, and retook the portions of Regina Trench which these brigades had captured.

The firmness of the Canadian defence is exhibited by the fact that it took the enemy all morning, aided though they were by their immense numerical superiority, their terrific shell fire, their knowledge of the ground and the courage of despair, to drive these scattered fragments of four Canadian battalions out of Regina Trench. The fight was a replica of the ordeal of October 1st.

When at last the objectives of these brigades had been re-



captured, the enemy, between 2 and 3 p.m., hurled forward his waves against the remainder of the Canadian attackers, where the Third and Fourth Battalions, in the Quadrilateral, and the Sixteenth Battalion, in Regina Trench, were holding their objectives.

Our machine guns, the sledge-hammer blows of our guns, and the fury of our rapid rifle fire tumbled the advancing ranks into chaos. But new ranks came on and on, and at last won to the trenches, threw themselves on our line, and took it from us.

A post of the Sixteenth Battalion managed to hang on, though everywhere else their support had gone. And there they remained, magnificent in their isolation, until ordered to retire, under cover of the night and their Lewis guns, from their impossible position.

Thus ended the third—and last—unsuccessful bid for Regina Trench. Though our casualties were severe and we had not yet won the Trench, the day was still a day of success. Over two hundred prisoners had been taken and the losses of the enemy in killed and wounded must have been appalling. But no gain of ground had been made by the Canadian Corps.

The last act of this drama of Regina Trench was now at hand. The attackers of October 8th were relieved, those of the First Division by the Second Infantry Brigade and those of the Third Division by the Eighth Infantry Brigade. The Fourth Canadian Division, which had arrived on October 5th, now came forward fresh from the Ypres Salient, to break the battered wall which their comrades had undermined.

The division relieved the Third Division in the line on October 11th. The veterans of the latter formation moved out of the Somme area on October 20th. The Second Division had already gone, leaving on October 10th. On October 21st, the First Division followed them. The Canadian Corps Headquarters had moved north on October 17th.

All the Canadians of the September battles had now left. They took away with them glory that few troops in the world have ever rivalled.

The Fourth Canadian Division was attached to the Second Corps. No finer troops could have been chosen to put the finishing touches to the fame of their countrymen on the Somme.

After much digging by the Tenth and Eleventh Brigades, which resulted in communications and defensive positions in general being greatly improved, the Fourth Canadian Division set to work to shatter Regina Trench and thereby at last to crown that hideous line with Canadian steel. In conjunction with an Imperial attack to the left, the Eleventh Brigade at 12 p.m. on October 21st attacked and captured four hundred yards of

Regina Trench and a further five hundred yards of ground to the right.

The Eighty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. W. Frost, was responsible for establishing a line facing north-east. Its right linked with our existing front line. Its left rested on the Courcelette-Pys Road. On the left of the Eighty-seventh Battalion the One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. W. Warden, carried on the attack. Its duty was to take Regina Trench between the Courcelette-Pys Road and Courcelette Trench. It was then to establish a line one hundred yards in advance of Regina Trench and gain touch with the troops on its flanks. The Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. S. G. Beckett, was to support the whole attack and dig a support line and new communication trenches to the line of the objectives.

The assault went without a hitch under an intense artillery barrage. One hundred and sixty-two prisoners were taken and the positions won were rapidly and firmly consolidated. It was a clean-cut, well-earned success. Our casualties were light, for the spirit of the defence was quite broken.

Now there remained in German hands only the bit of Regina Trench between Pys Road and Farmer Road, the track which ran across Dyke Road to Le Sars. The long, dreadful torture of gun fire and incessant attacks, and the bad weather which had developed, had put the enemy into a condition in which they would be no match for a determined foe. Canadian tenacity had won at last. For on November 10th, after an unsuccessful effort by the Forty-fourth Battalion, they attacked the bit of Regina Trench remaining, and finally wrested it from the Germans.

The Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Dawson, the Forty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. N. Winsley, and the One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. W. Warden (Major C. B. Worshop temporarily commanding), the first two of the Tenth and the latter of the Eleventh Infantry Brigade, were the attackers. The Trench had been systematically bombarded for days past. At midnight, in the glory of wonderful moonlight, the Canadians, supported by an artillery and machine gun barrage, slipped over the parapet and struggled across the morass of No Man's Land.

This attack also went without a hitch. The Canadians gained all their objectives by 1.30 p.m., and sixty prisoners. Thirty-two of the prisoners, with two machine guns, were captured by the One Hundred and Second Battalion. Then they drove on two hundred yards and consolidated a line north of the Trench. The enemy made a feeble attempt to counter-attack and failed miserably. And the Twelfth Brigade during the following night relieved the victors.

That ends the story of Regina Trench. Thenecforth troops came and went freely over the sinister ground where so many gallant men had died. Thenecforth a rapidly crumbling ruin straggling across the country behind our lines was all that remained.

Conditions on the Somme had by this time changed very much from those prevalent in September. Winter had intervened to save the Germans from a great strategical defeat—possibly the clearing of the invaded portions of France—which would have undoubtedly overtaken them had the weather remained fine. The continuous rain and cold, with the deep mud, had now made rapid advance impossible.

Although the state of affairs in the front area was so bad, heavy blows might still be delivered. This was violently demonstrated to the Germans on November 18th, when the Fourth Division set the seal to the record of Canada's Somme achievements in the assault which carried the British line to the outskirts of Grandcourt.

The six battalions in the forefront of the Canadian attack were, from right to left, as follows :

The Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Dawson, the Fiftieth Battalion, Major R. B. Eaton, the Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. S. G. Beckett, the Fifty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Kembell, the Eighty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. W. Frost, and the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. M. Edwards. The first two belonged to the Tenth, the next three to the Eleventh, and the last to the Twelfth Infantry Brigade.

In addition the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. R. Wayland, of the Tenth Brigade, was to co-operate by digging, as the attack progressed, a line to link up the right of our jumping-off position to the right of our objective.

The objective assigned to the Canadians was about fifteen hundred yards of the Desire Trench, so-called because of the fierce desire with which they yearned to take it. It ran for about two thousand three hundred yards roughly parallel to Regina Trench, at distances varying between two hundred to eight hundred yards from the positions held by our troops.

At 6.10 a.m. this final attack of the Canadians on the Somme went forward behind the sheltering curtain of the guns. Snow was falling heavily. The ground over which the assault passed was a sea of mud, churned and re-churned by the shells.

The right flank of the Canadians acted as a pivot on which their line swung round until the battalions on the left had reached Desire Trench, one thousand yards in advance of their assembly trenches. This difficult operation was carried out perfectly,

in spite of the appalling state of the ground, and the Canadians sprang into Desire Trench everywhere almost simultaneously.

In a very short time practically the whole of the objectives had been taken. The most determined opposition offered was about two hundred yards to the east of the Pys Road, where the trench line lay guarded by a burrow of machine guns. These guns prevented the left company of the Fiftieth Battalion from securing its objective and drove it back into Regina Trench.

The objective here was under intense enemy shell fire, which rendered it untenable. The attackers had the greatest difficulty with the machine gun nest referred to and suffered considerably. At about noon the remainder of the Fiftieth and also the Forty-sixth Battalion were heavily counter-attacked and driven out of Desire Trench. They eventually consolidated a line about three hundred yards south of the trench and gained touch with the Eleventh Brigade on the left.

The left flank of the attack was advanced so swiftly that the Eighty-seventh and Thirty-eighth Battalions not only seized their objective but sent forward patrols and captured a section of the Grandcourt Trench guarding the very outskirts of that village. And here they held on until ordered to withdraw so that the rest of the trench might be safely bombarded. Captain J. W. MacDowell, of the Thirty-eighth Battalion, in this affair captured three machine guns in a most dashing manner. Lieut. G. S. MacFarlane helped in this operation, though suffering from a wound received earlier.

"Digging in" began immediately, as each battalion secured its objective. This was carried out in a vile morass of earth and dirty water under continual counter-bombardments. After many hours of unabating toil the whole of the new line was consolidated.

Such, very briefly, was the Canadian part in the Grandcourt drive. The difficulties were enormous, and the state of the country was bad enough to make the stoutest general blench. Yet this new division drove across the quagmire on which the Germans vainly relied for protection, stormed into the great length of Desire Trench, and, having dragged and beaten the enemy out of his lair, held that chain of mud-holes and sent back over six hundred prisoners as trophies of their valour.

With this exploit the story of the Canadians on the Somme comes to a close. The Fourth Division held the line for a fortnight longer, while their Imperial comrades north of the Ancre were preparing for the move which gave us Beaumont-Hamel. During the last week of November they were relieved by the Fifty-first (Imperial) Division and followed the rest of the Canadian forces to the Vimy Ridge.



To sum up their material gains in the great battle: the Canadians took three guns, about fifty machine guns, a score or so of trench mortars, great quantities of every kind of ammunition, and two thousand five hundred prisoners. They drove forward a two-mile line about three miles. They overcame half a dozen intensely strong trench systems and several bastions of defence, in spite of every form of resistance by a desperate foe. In the gain of ground alone their achievement was unsurpassed by that of any other Corps.

Lack of space forbids the revealing of the human side of their great struggle. Only three of their many heroic deeds may be described in detail here—those which won the Victoria Cross. Corporal Leo Clarke, of the Second Battalion, in the attack of September 9th, gained the honour by repulsing, single-handed, an attack by twenty of the enemy. Led by two officers, this party rushed for a block which Corporal Clarke was building in the captured trench. Alone and armed only with a revolver, Clarke went out to meet them. Having emptied the revolver, he discharged two German rifles into them. A German officer next bayoneted him in the leg, whereupon he killed the officer. The rest of the enemy then took to flight, but this super-soldier shot four more and captured a fifth. And next day, having had his wounds dressed, he voluntarily returned to duty.

Unfortunately he died in hospital a few days later.

Piper James Richardson, of the Forty-third Battalion, won the Cross by an act of singular gallantry during the attack on Regina Trench on October 8th. He headed his company in its advance upon the objective, playing the pipes above the din of the battle. Coming upon the masses of wire guarding the trench, the company was checked and the enemy opened intense fire upon the men with devastating effect. The attack faltered, and for the moment a tragedy appeared imminent. Realizing the situation, Piper Richardson at once rose to the occasion. Playing the pipes in that terrific fire, he began to march up and down in front of the entanglements, as coolly as if on his native heath, far from the presence of death. The effect of his magnificent bravery and the wild rallying-cry of the pibroch upon his comrades was instantaneous. They hurled themselves through the wire and upon the enemy and took their objectives.

The situation saved, Piper Richardson proceeded to take part in the fighting which followed. Later, he was detailed to take a wounded comrade and a prisoner to the rear. After proceeding two hundred yards he remembered that he had left his pipes behind. He insisted on returning to recover them, and he has never been seen since. He remains one of the many unsolved mysteries of the war.



The equal of Corporal Clarke was Private John Chipman Kerr, of the Forty-ninth Battalion. During the attack of September 16th he lost a finger by a bomb explosion. Undeterred by his injury, he carried on his duty as bayonet man with a party of bombers until, when grenades began to run short, he dashed forward alone, and, firing heavily on them from point-blank range, killed many of the enemy and himself compelled sixty-two Germans to surrender. The result was that two hundred and fifty yards of trench were easily captured.

The casualties of the Canadian Corps during the Somme fighting, on the whole, were very heavy. It was impossible, attacking a most determined enemy frontally in positions of enormous strength as they were, that it should be otherwise.

These were the casualties :

The first three Canadian divisions and Corps Troops lost on the Somme, in killed, wounded and missing, one thousand and sixty-one officers and twenty-two thousand nine hundred and seven men. The Fourth Canadian Division lost one hundred and thirty-five officers and two thousand four hundred and seventy-one men. This gives a total of one thousand one hundred and ninety-six Canadian officers and twenty-five thousand four hundred and seventy-eight Canadian men. Over four thousand Canadians gave their lives in that desperate battle of three months.

Sometimes it is asked, Were the results of the Somme battle worth the price ? They were. Compared with the gains achieved in the later stages of the war, when the ground held by the enemy and the guns and the men of the enemy were overrun in advances of irresistible power, the visible, tangible results were small. But the Battle of the Somme made those later results possible.

There was no comparison between the fighting on the Somme and that experienced later, simply because the type of warfare was wholly different. On the Somme, Britain and Germany, of more or less equal strength—Germany filled with the conviction that every yard held or lost spelt victory or defeat—stood locked breast to breast in a grapple which each was determined should end only in one way—the death of the opposing force. Later the fighting became more flexible and the price paid for a thousand yards of ground infinitely less.

Yet the Somme was worth while. There was no other way to destroy the German Army than to attack its mighty fortifications by direct assault, cost what it might. Sir Douglas Haig did not shrink. He gained ground that, later, gave him the essential room wherein, in March 1918, to rally the British Army and save it from complete defeat. He took the lives of thousands

of the enemy, thousands which, had the Battle of the Somme never been, were the striking force with which Ludendorff might have delivered just that death-blow to the Allies that was imperative in July 1918. Thanks to the Battle of the Somme, that striking force was *not there!*

The flower of the German Army had been crushed in the mud between Albert and Bapaume. And the Canadian Corps, bleeding from many wounds, had done its share to crush it.

## CHAPTER VIII

### IN ARTOIS

OCTOBER 1916—APRIL 1917

WHILE the Fourth Canadian Division was winning its spurs in the Somme zone, the bulk of the Canadian Corps was marching northwards to take up a new position.

The first troops of the Second Canadian Division left the Somme on October 10th. They were followed by the Third Canadian Division, which reached the new area on October 22nd and the First Canadian Division, which was also in the district of its future activities on October 24th.

The Canadian infantry arrived in the zone of the First Army without artillery, except in the case of General Turner's command, which was accompanied by the Lahore Brigades. The rest of the Canadian troops left their guns at the Somme to keep the shell fire to its normal pitch, and did not hear them again until the beginning of December, when they relieved the Imperial artillery covering the Canadian infantry and so came to the support of their own divisions once more.

The three divisions successively concentrated in the reserve area around Bruay, and each in turn relieved an Imperial Division on the front between Lens and Arras, which was the sector they were now to occupy.

On October 18th, relieving the Thirty-seventh (Imperial) Division of the Seventeenth Corps, the Second Division went back into the trenches. They were followed by the Third Division, which on October 26th relieved the Sixtieth (Imperial) Division of the Seventeenth Corps. After them came the First Division, which, on October 28th, took over a section of line from the Twenty-fourth (Imperial) Division of the Seventeenth Corps.

This series of reliefs put the Canadians back into the trenches and established them in their winter positions. It also placed them on the soil wherein, with steel and blood, they were yet to write one of the greatest chapters in their history.

Never were the Canadians entrenched upon more historical ground. Souchez, and the field of Loos to the left, witnessed some of the fiercest fighting of the war. A year-long battle of awful character had been waged for Lorette Ridge, the key to the last coal-mines of France. Carency, Neuville St. Vaast, the Labyrinth—these are shrines of French valour.

The Canadians, during that winter in the shadow of Vimy Ridge, put in an enormous amount of work on their trenches, keeping old fortifications in repair and building new ones, improving roads and laying miles of light railway. The construction of new dugouts, great tunnels and railway was with a view to preparing for a project which, as yet, was but a dream in the minds of the General Staff. But the troops did not know that.

The Canadians at once began to make the front as "offensive" as possible and to give their opponents a disagreeable time. Though villages and rearward territory were barred, the first line Boche and his trenches were legitimate prey.

The best forms of annoyance were "artillery strafes" and raids. The Corps Commander laid down a policy of continuous aggression which the gunners and infantry were eager to follow. Throughout the winter, hours which did not hear the roar of combined gun fire were rare and raids were nightly occurrences. Sometimes two or three raids were delivered in twenty-four hours, and an average of at least one raid a week was maintained by each infantry brigade.

Another form of offence was the blowing of mines, followed by the occupation by our troops of the resulting crater. Fresh positions for outposts were thus obtained in No Man's Land. No part of the Western front witnessed more mining than that in Artois, where the desert between the hostile lines was broken by the wide mouths of countless craters, the products of two years' warfare in the bowels of the earth.

Major-General R. E. W. Turner in November was recalled to England, to take command of the forces there, and succeeded by Major-General Burstall, late Commander of the Canadian Corps Artillery. Brigadier-General E. W. B. Morrison, C.M.G., D.S.O., stepped into the vacancy created by Brigadier-General Burstall's promotion. General Morrison was succeeded by Brigadier-General H. Panet, C.M.G.

During the first week of December the Fourth Canadian Division, accompanied by the divisional artillery of the Canadian Corps, arrived in the area around Bruay, after its tour of duty and glory on the Somme. The division established its headquarters at Bruay and went into billets in the district to the south, the troops having marched from Albert. It was given a short

period in which to carry out its reorganization as its fellows had done.

Raids were now harassing the Germans with clockwork regularity, and a rich haul of prisoners, machine guns and equipment stood to the credit of the Canadians. This haul was greatly augmented when, on December 20th, one of the most successful raids ever launched was made upon the German lines.

The First C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. C. Andros, delivered the assault. The frontage attacked lay just north of the road from Arras to Lens, the right flank touching the road and the left lying four hundred and fifty yards beyond. The trenches here formed a small salient inviting aggression and contained several objectionable machine gun emplacements.

Major Laws, commanding the battalion at the time, was largely responsible for the careful planning of the attack. After very thorough wire-cutting and reconnaissances, which occupied several nights, the attackers, who numbered nearly seven hundred, manned the assembly trenches and a large crater in front.

At the appointed time dense clouds of smoke were released from our trenches, completely concealing the scene of action from the enemy around it. As the smoke poured over No Man's Land our furious barrage came into play, covering fire was opened from our machine guns, and at 3.15 p.m. our men moved forward in orderly waves through the smoke.

Majors Maxfield, Taylor, Casewell and French, each in command of his company, led the attackers, assisted, of course, by their subalterns. A few machine guns attempted to stop the advancing waves, but were of no effect and soon ceased their useless sweeping of the hidden country. The Germans were cowering in their dugouts and were unable to get out before the assailants were upon them.

Except for a brief bombing struggle, practically no resistance was made, and the men went quickly to their tasks of wholesale destruction. Pushing on to the support line, they established bombing posts in it, in all communication trenches and to the flanks. Then everything breakable was destroyed.

The machine gun emplacements were smashed to pieces. All dugouts were battered in by throwing down bombs or incendiary explosives. The Germans sheltering in them were given a chance to come out and surrender. Most of them were overjoyed to do so, but those who refused paid the penalty of their obstinacy.

Wherever sentries attempted to show fight they were either killed or overpowered. The prisoners were rapidly collected together and their arms disposed of.

The systematic wrecking of the hostile trenches was complete



before we had been in possession two hours. Under cover of night our men then very quietly withdrew, taking their prisoners with them. Long afterwards, during the midnight watches, the Germans violently shelled their ruined trenches and launched a counter-attack, thus displaying their complete ignorance of the situation.

Our casualties were very slight. The enemy's were heavy. They lost two officers and fifty-six men in prisoners alone, and their killed and their smashed trenches must have cost them dear.

This raid was the most fruitful raid on the Western front, up to that time. But the precedent it set—that it was possible to raid the enemy in daylight with impunity—was of even greater value than the mere local results. The decision to raid in daylight was a very daring one, but the success of the move justified the risk and blazed the trail for grander strokes.

In accordance with a decision to relieve each division in the Canadian trenches in turn and to give it a month of thorough rest and training, the Fourth Canadian Division relieved the First Canadian Division during the period of December 18th–21st.

On January 16th and 17th another raid on a grand scale was delivered, this time by the Second Canadian Division. So successful was this operation that it established a record which the rest of the British Army did not overtake for several weeks.

There were two distinct attacks, but they were made in conjunction with each other and really formed one operation. The scene of the assault lay in the German trenches opposite the Fourth and Fifth Infantry Brigades. The Fourth Brigade was to enter the enemy's lines on a front of eight hundred yards, while troops from the Fifth Infantry Brigade were to spring into the hostile trenches a mile to the south-west. Each assault was to be preceded by the explosion of a mine.

For ten days before the raid the guns leisurely and methodically pounded the German trenches and wire on the front of the Second Division, sweeping away the entanglements almost everywhere and thereby preventing the Germans from locating the objective which we were actually to attack. On January 16th the first, and smaller, raid was launched.

While the sun sank three officers and one hundred and fifty-five men of the Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. MacIntyre, waited with fixed bayonets and the artillery barrage got into its stride. Just before the hour of advance, smoke clouds were released to cover the movement, and at 4.30 p.m. the mine was touched off.

Instantly three parties of the battalion, led by Lieuts. G. W. Otty-Barnes, G. S. Reid and G. R. Harrison, followed by a party

of Engineers of the Fifth Field Company, C.E., under Lieut. West, C.E., and one of tunnellers from the Two Hundred and Twenty-fifth Tunnelling Company, R.E., climbed out of their trenches and went forward into the smoke and the swirl of falling snow. They did not heed the fire of the choking German machine gunners, but crossed the white fields and dropped into the first line of the enemy.

The front line was an empty wreck. The raiders pushed on to the support line, meeting thirty white-faced opponents on the way, who fled before them. Entering their dugouts, these men refused to emerge, so the New Brunswickers shut them in for ever.

The party of Engineers from the Fifth Field Company superintended the work of destroying the emplacements and dugouts, while the tunnellers searched and demolished the mine-shafts, and at 5 p.m. the task of the raiders was complete. They then returned, driving eight prisoners, but, by extraordinary bad luck, all the prisoners were killed by German shells. The enemy's guns had taken a very long time to grasp the situation. Our men had been in the German trenches twenty-five minutes before the first of their shells arrived.

The smaller raid had now played its part, and fifteen hours afterwards the second raid took place.

On the half-mile front south of the great Double Crassier, eight hundred and fifty men of the Fourth Infantry Brigade waited for the time to advance. They were drawn equally from the Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Rogers, and the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Jones. The Twentieth Battalion men, on the left, were led by Majors C. C. Wansbrough and H. W. A. Foster, M.C. The parties from the Twenty-first Battalion on the right were commanded by Majors Elmitt and Raymond. With each unit was a detail of Engineers from the Sixth Field Company, which was to supervise demolitions.

While the artillery barrage was gathering its full power, dense clouds of covering smoke were released from our lines. The machine guns of the brigade machine gun company, admirably handled, kept up a continual swelter of bullets. At 7.45 a.m. the mine burst in an eruption of flame and the raiders instantly went forward.

There was a brief but strong resistance, which was quickly crushed. The artillery shut the door on German reinforcements while the infantry proceeded to clear the trenches. This was done in twenty minutes, with every foe dead or a prisoner and every dugout or emplacement a wreck.

They pushed forward three hundred yards to the second line, where a lively combat with bombs took place on the left, but was

soon over. Again the earthworks were destroyed and the enemy killed or overpowered.

Two machine guns, a trench mortar, one officer and ninety-nine men were taken, and at 8.45 a.m. the second line was a complete ruin. Then our men withdrew, taking with them their prisoners and their trophies, as well as their few casualties.

Thus ended a dashing daylight raid, which set the pace for the British infantry for several weeks. Our own losses were small. In addition to the men captured, the Eleventh Reserve Division, which was the German force pitted against ours, lost at least one hundred and fifty killed.

The First Division had now completed its term of rest, and on January 20th it finished relieving the Second Division. The latter marched back to Bruay to enjoy a month of respite.

Several more raids of importance were launched by the Canadian Corps that winter. The first took place at 9 p.m. on February 3rd, when the Tenth Infantry Brigade sent forward seventy-five men of the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. D. Davies, D.S.O., on the right, and ninety-nine men of the Fiftieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. G. Mason, on the left, attacking the German positions on a front of seven hundred yards east of Carency.

The attack was made after a fierce artillery bombardment, the men going forward under cover of a terrific barrage fire. The entire line was cleared, prisoners collected and dugouts destroyed.

The raid was admirably executed and took only half an hour from start to finish. All our wounded were brought in. A total of twenty-one prisoners was taken. Our casualties for this dashing assault amounted to twenty-six all ranks.

Another raid took place on February 13th at 4 a.m. It was delivered by eight hundred officers and men drawn equally from each battalion of the Tenth Brigade, the whole commanded by Lieut.-Col. R. D. Davies, Forty-fourth Battalion. The front attacked covered six hundred yards of the enemy's line opposite Givenchy, and the advance, on the left, reached a depth of nearly five hundred yards.

Parties of the Forty-sixth and Fiftieth were employed to cover the left flank, while the remainder of the men from these units pushed forward and assisted their comrades of the Forty-fourth and Fiftieth Battalions. The latter were allotted the task of penetrating and mopping up the enemy's first and second defence lines on the whole front.

The attack was difficult, for it was carried out under the dominating summit of Hill 120, that great crown of Vimy Ridge commonly known as the Pimple.

The Forty-fourth Battalion under Captain Belcher, advancing on the right with the rest of the raiders, close to a terrific barrage, met with severe opposition. At the same time the Fiftieth Battalion co-operated. This battalion suffered greatly owing to casualties. Meanwhile, the Forty-seventh Battalion parties systematically mopped up, causing numerous casualties. Captain Wansborough led these parties bravely and well, and the raiders in front had no cause to complain of ineffectual mopping up.

On the left of the rest of the raiders the Forty-sixth Battalion met with a most determined resistance in a strong point where deep dugouts gave shelter to numerous Germans. The defensive flank to protect the remainder of the brigade was formed and maintained. Parties of sappers from the One Hundred and Seventy-sixth Tunnelling Company, Tenth Field Company and Sixty-seventh Pioneer Battalion, under Captain Gary and Lieut. Bird, C.E., assisted in destroying mine-shafts and dugouts.

By 5.30 a.m. all the raiders, including the wounded, were back in our trenches.

The results of this extremely successful and gallant raid were many. Over one hundred and sixty casualties were inflicted, fifty-two prisoners taken, and a large number of dugouts and mine-shafts were bombed. All this was achieved at a cost to ourselves of about one hundred and seventy-five casualties.

This raid was followed on February 19th by two very successful raids, the first at 9.30 a.m. by four officers and ninety men of the Seventy-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Kirkaldy, D.S.O., and the second at 5.30 p.m. by three officers and ninety-three men of the Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Dawson.

The raid of the Seventy-eighth Battalion was led by Lieut. Thornhill. Stiff opposition was met with on the right, where Lieut. Derbyshire was in command, but the allotted task was performed and several dugouts were destroyed, while three struggling Germans were dragged back as prisoners.

In the dusk of the winter evening the raiders of the Forty-sixth Battalion were led forward under an artillery barrage by Lieuts. Reymes, Gilpin and Bingham. They met few Germans, but, to quote the laconic report of the battalion on the subject, "these were dealt with." No prisoners were taken, but an immense amount of material damage was done with incendiary explosives, many dugouts and a machine gun being destroyed.

A large combined raid followed on February 22nd, when five officers and eighty-five men of the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Edwards, D.S.O., on the right, and two officers and twenty-seven men of the Seventy-eighth Battalion on the left co-operated to render the lives of the enemy even more unpleasant



than before. The attack was launched at 5.30 p.m., supported by an intense barrage, and was most successful. The Thirty-eighth Battalion inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, no less than thirty-five being counted lying dead in the ruined lines. This unit wrecked several large dugouts and worked steadily through the front line.

Meanwhile, on the left, the Seventy-eighth Battalion's party, their ardour unsatisfied by their previous raid, bombed their way along their allotted objective, killing twenty of the enemy and wounding many more.

By 5.40 p.m. all the raiders were on their way back to our lines.

Our casualties were light in this brisk encounter, totalling only thirty-six. The enemy's, on the other hand, were severe, the least optimistic estimating his losses at one hundred and twenty all told.

Yet another raid followed. This raid, unfortunately, was not as successful as those preceding it. If all had gone well, it would have been the greatest coup of the Canadians in that long winter of clean-cut fighting. But, well-planned and prepared though it was, circumstances were against it. Great praise is due to the men who took part, for, in spite of these difficulties, they carried out the original programme with the greatest gallantry.

The battalions concerned were the Seventy-second, Lieut.-Col. T. A. Clark, the Seventy-third, Lieut.-Col. H. C. Sparling, of the Twelfth Infantry Brigade, and the Fifty-fourth and Seventy-fifth Battalions, of the Eleventh Infantry Brigade, and commanded by Lieut.-Col. A. H. G. Kembell, C.B., D.S.O., and Lieut.-Col. S. G. Beckett respectively. These battalions, distributed from right to left as named, were due to attack at 5.40 a.m. on March 1st on a front of two thousand yards between Souchez and the Bois Corre. They were to be assisted by a gas demonstration, which was to begin at 3 a.m., and an artillery bombardment and barrage.

The time for the release of the gas arrived with the wind blowing as desired. The gas was released and blew into No Man's Land. The wind was not strong enough to carry the cloud out of the hollows in the ground, where it collected, unseen by our men. And in the interval before the hour at which the troops were to attack the wind changed.

A terrible German artillery barrage suddenly came down upon the front-line trenches, where our men were marshalling densely for the attack. This barrage started just before the hour at which the infantry were to cross the parapet. It caused severe loss. But the hands of the officers' watches and the orders said



“Advance!” and their sense of obedience was stronger than their fear of death.

The long lines rose up and went forward, and their alignment was perfect, although the Germans lashed them with shrapnel and machine gun fire. Many went down, and the rest went on, calmly and steadily, in a manner that Canada has a right to be proud of. They got into the pools of gas, and those who could not get their respirators on in time died there.

At last the dreadful journey was over and they could see the masked men behind the machine guns. The losses they had suffered goaded them on, and they shattered the German defence with their bodies and their bare steel, and pushed on to the support line, in one place winning forward seven hundred yards. There was desperate fighting in this line with grenades. Lieut.-Col. Kemball was killed in the forefront of the struggle. Lieut.-Col. Beckett had already fallen, rallying and urging on his men.

The infantry spent an hour and a half in the German lines. Their retirement, under cover of heavy machine gun and artillery fire, was conducted with great steadiness in the teeth of a terrific opposition. They brought one officer and forty-four men with them as prisoners, though the enemy endeavoured to rescue them in a most determined manner.

In all the German deeds of darkness occasioned by the war, any act of chivalry shines forth like a star. Such an act occurred after the withdrawal of our troops, and it should be set down as an acknowledgment of the decency of the German commander concerned. Our stretcher-bearers were allowed to bring in our wounded and gassed, who then lay suffering untold agonies in No Man's Land.

But these troops, who had suffered heavily, were to have their revenge. The story of their vengeance was written on the slopes of Vimy Ridge, and the pen that was to write it was even then prepared.

On March 31st, at 10.30 p.m., the Canadians proceeded to avenge themselves of the losses suffered by their comrades in the raid just described, when, for the last time ere they went forward to take the German lines in deadly earnest, the aggressive Tenth Brigade attacked, and took, for the duration of an hour, six hundred yards of the enemy's front and support system a short distance south of the Souchez River. The assault was made by fifteen officers and six hundred men drawn equally from the Forty-seventh, Fiftieth and Forty-sixth Battalions, attacking from right to left in the order named. It was covered by the usual intense and minutely accurate artillery, trench mortar and machine gun barrage without which no operation on a large

scale was ever attempted. Mention should here be made that the scene of the whole operation was deep in mud, through which the indomitable infantry struggled waist-high.

It was a complete success. The Forty-seventh Battalion, raiding a group of craters, killed every one of the sentries they found in those positions. Several dugouts were bombed.

The Fiftieth Battalion did equally well, bombed eight dugouts, and with them all but six of the Germans within. The six were wise and surrendered. The Forty-sixth Battalion party met with the heaviest opposition of all. The enemy even went so far as to attempt a counter-attack. In spite of this resistance, the men of this party killed a large number of Germans and bombed four dugouts full of the enemy.

Within an hour all the raiders were back in our lines and the panic of the German guns was dying away.

Licut.-Col. Dawson was in complete command of this well-conducted operation.

This raid was a fitting finish to the long series with which the Fourth Division, and especially the Tenth Brigade, had made itself famous in the Canadian Corps. The hour for which the men were yearning was now about to strike.

The culmination of the long campaign which the Canadians had waged against Vimy Ridge was at hand. The greatest honour which could be bestowed upon them was near.

These troops from the Dominion were to be ordered to take the Vimy Ridge, which had defied France.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE TAKING OF VIMY RIDGE

APRIL 1917

THE first definite movement of troops with a view to taking the Vimy Ridge occurred during the week of February 11th-17th, when the Second Canadian Division, having finished its period of training and recuperation, relieved the Third Canadian Division in the trenches south of Neuville St. Vaast. The Third Division went straight out of the line to Bruay, and the Second Division was left in the trenches from which it was to make its great advance.

Hardly had the Second Division found the bearings of its new front when the First Canadian Division began to move. By March 5th it was relieved in the trenches north of Souchez by the Twenty-fourth (Imperial) Division, and on March 8th it took over from the Second Division the sector of line between the Lens-Arras Road and a point immediately south-east of Neuville St. Vaast.

The preliminary orders for the attack appeared in February. In obedience to these orders, the gathering of material commenced at the beginning of March, and that process is fit to rank with the seven old wonders of the world.

Everywhere behind the Canadian front great gangs of men set to work. They began building huge dugouts for the reception of the wounded. They toiled at night with pick and shovel to dig extra trenches for the accommodation of the attacking troops. In the areas to be occupied by the brigades gigantic piles of trench munitions began to appear.

The trench tramways for the carriage of these munitions were extended and improved, and arrangements were made to thrust the lines through into the captured territory on the very heels of the attack. Food and water was stored in enormous heaps close to the trenches, the water being kept in petrol tins for convenient transportation and pumped into new tanks within

easy distance of the stores. Arrangements were made for accommodating the prisoners of war. A great cage was built at Le Pendu, on the main road from Arras to Bruay.

This cage was large enough to hold one thousand men at a time. But it was not large enough to hold the men that came back with the ebb-tide from the Canadian rush on Vimy Ridge.

While the material was accumulating, the men and the guns began to get into their places. The Fifth (Imperial) Division had been placed at the disposal of the Canadian Commander, and they marched into the area. With them came three brigades of artillery.

In addition to these guns several groups of heavy artillery also arrived and began to get into position. All these extra guns were supplementary to the divisional field and heavy artillery of the Canadians, and swelled the strength of the guns, which were to support the assault, to truly gigantic proportions. Altogether and in round figures, there were now seven hundred guns to assist the Corps.

The arrival of the Fifth (Imperial) Division added three infantry brigades and forty odd guns to the forces under Sir Julian Byng, so that he had now fifteen infantry brigades, about fifty thousand bayonets, at his disposal. He used practically all of them, with the result that the Canadian Corps struck with all its might and the whole of the Dominion did its share on the fateful day.

Having studied the preparations for the attack and reviewed the troops which were to strike for Canada, it is necessary to see what the plan which these troops were to follow was to be and to consider the obstacles which they had to overcome.

It had long before been decided that the British Army, when it was strong enough, should capture all the high ground held by the enemy immediately in front of it, in order to pave the way for further blows. The Vimy Ridge was the foremost and the greatest of the objectives of this plan.

A German withdrawal had taken place in the first months of 1917, making a big move appear feasible. At either end of the new front were Lens and St. Quentin, both keys to important territory behind. The plan was to capture these places by a turning movement of the Third Army, just south of the Vimy Ridge. To secure their flank and make this movement possible, Vimy Ridge had first to be taken. After this the First Army, with which were the Canadians, was to join in the movement of the Third Army.

Here, then, was the plan. The long and formidable bulk of the Vimy Ridge, held by a desperate and terribly fortified enemy, was at one and the same time the immediate obstacle

and the chief objective of the British Army and the Canadian Corps.

The Ridge lay between the two insignificant streams of the Scarpe and the Souchez, sloping gradually down from north-west to south-east, for a distance of about seven miles. At the extreme north was first the steep prominence of the Pimple, between Givenchy and the Souchez River, its crest four hundred feet high and seven hundred yards from the British front line. This was the bastion of the German right. Thence the ground fell away to a wide valley and rose again until crowned by Hill 145, one mile away, four hundred and seventy feet high and rightly regarded as the central bastion of the Ridge.

Between these two promontories was the village of Givenchy, which nestled in the depths of the valley on the eastern slope of the Ridge, and which stood as a formidable barrier to those who, having won the crest, might seek to push down into the plains beyond.

From Hill 145 the ground swept down easily on the western face of the Ridge for another mile. The eastern side, however, was very steep, dropping swiftly into the levels below. The whole of the eastern slope in this region was covered thickly with the trees of the Bois de La Folie, which ended at the Lens-Arras Road. Beyond the road the western face of the Ridge swelled into Hill 140, which was over four hundred and fifty feet high at the crest. The long, straggling village of Thelus and the hamlet of Les Tilleuls, both on the southern side of this hill, combined with it to make it the left bastion of the German position and one of the strongest.

The eastern slope of the Ridge beyond the main Lens Road was as steep as at Givenchy, and, near the road, was split by a ravine which ran straight out to Vimy village and which was clothed with the wood known as the Bois de Bonval. Beyond that ravine the eastern slopes were covered by the Goulot Wood, the Bois de la Ville and Farbus Wood. Between the last-named and Station Wood, north of it, was Farbus, a strongly fortified village.

South of Farbus Wood the Canadian attack did not go, but from that wood on to the southward the Ridge blended in easy sweeps with the plains.

This was the natural obstacle which faced us. It had been made a thousandfold more terrible by the work of over two years lavished upon it by the enemy. Along their front line scores of mine-craters, bristling with machine guns, formed an almost unbroken wall. Hill 145 and all the territory north of it was a maze of trenches and hidden tunnels. South of Hill 145 the orchards of La Folie Farm, the farm itself, the



Echolle Commune and the Bois de La Folie, together with the Schwaben Tunnel, which was five hundred yards long and capable of sheltering at least two thousand men, were united by a web of trenches into one great Gibraltar.

South of Hill 145, also, began the long and powerful Swischen Stellung, a trench which ran along all the Canadian front at an average distance of five hundred yards from the maze of the first line. East of Neuville St. Vaast was Grenadier Tunnel, as formidable as the Schwaben. Five hundred yards beyond the Swischen was the Zwischen Stellung, and beyond that again, guarding Thelus, was Thelus Trench. The backbone of this trench system was the woods around Farbus, wherein lurked the heavy guns.

All these things, linked together by many minor trenches, fringed with miles of terrible barbed wire—of which the two belts five hundred yards apart and forty yards wide between Thelus and Farbus are fine examples—and backed with hundreds of machine guns in concrete emplacements, formed what was admittedly the mightiest enemy stronghold on the Western front.

To the Canadian Corps was allotted the task of capturing the Vimy Ridge between Kennedy Crater, an old mine-crater in No Man's Land precisely opposite Souchez, and Commandant's House, a place south-west of Farbus Wood. This was to be captured in one day. They were then to push north and capture the Pimple, which would place the whole of the Ridge in our control. The Third Army, using the Canadians as a pivot, was at the same time to advance its whole line east of Arras. Kennedy Crater was the hinge of the entire advance.

To the Fourth Canadian Division was allotted the task of overcoming all the enemy's defences on the Ridge from Kennedy Crater to five hundred yards south of the crest of Hill 145, and thence thrusting their mile-long line forward one thousand yards until it could look down on Givenchy. They were then to take the Pimple.

South of this division the Third Canadian Division was to carry the wave up and over the top of the Ridge between Hill 145 and the Bois de Bonval, thus advancing a fifteen-hundred-yard line into the western edge of the Bois de La Folie, a mile east of the British trenches.

From the Bois de Bonval, the Second Canadian Division took up the attack. They were to drive forward three thousand yards on a front of a mile so that they might occupy the western edges of the Bois de la Ville from the Bois de Bonval to south of Farbus. This involved a very long march and the subjection of Thelus and Hill 140.

The advance of the First Canadian Division was on a front, slightly greater than the Second Division, which gradually converged to about five hundred yards at its furthest limit, which was to be just west of Farbus Wood.

Such were the obstacles which each Canadian division was to overcome. Their objective lines were four. The first was the *Swischen Stellung* and its continuation north and south. The second was the *Zwischen Stellung* and the line set down as the limit of the advance of the Fourth and Third Divisions. The Second and First Divisions alone carried on the Canadian advance thenceforward to a line five hundred yards east of Thelus, which was the third objective line, and afterwards to the limits already mentioned, the fourth objective. If any further advance proved possible to these divisions they were forbidden to press it beyond the Arras-Lens Railway, for the simple reason that our field guns were incapable of firing beyond that range.

A proportion of field guns on the fronts of the First and Second Divisions did not take part in the preliminary bombardment at all. Instead, they were brought up in the dead of night just before the attack and audaciously placed in positions a few hundred yards behind our front line, the better to support the advance on Thelus and beyond. These guns did not fire a single shot until that advance began.

The preliminary bombardment commenced on March 20th. The first stage lasted until April 2nd. During that time the field guns and trench mortars systematically shelled the German barbed wire on their first and second lines, while the howitzers smashed the German trenches with fearful blows and co-operated with hundreds of machine guns to search every road and communication trench down which must come food, ammunition and men for the German front system of defence.

The second stage began on April 2nd and ended with the hour for the assault. The wrecking of the enemy works and fortifications was completed at this time. The harrowing fire on the enemy's communications was increased to a terrible intensity. The field guns and howitzers finished the wire-cutting, the latter of heavy calibre devoting their attention to the entanglements beyond the German second line.

While the preliminary bombardment was in progress our guns twice barraged with creeping fire as far as the second objective.

The effect of this concentration of gun fire can be imagined. It swept the hostile trenches out as if by the hand of God. It turned the green heights into a desert bare and white and empty as the moon. The only things that survived were the belts of

wire beyond Thelus, and some of those on the front of the Fourth Division which our guns could not reach properly, a few deep dugouts and concrete machine gun emplacements, the gun-pits in the Bois de la Ville and a small percentage of German infantry.

In the week before the assault the brigades which were to take the first two objectives withdrew all their battalions but one from the trenches, in order to give them a period of rest. The reserve brigades were already out.

On the night of April 7th the only Tanks which were to assault the German trenches, the eight monsters of No. 12 Company, "D" Battalion, Heavy Branch Machine Gun Corps, got into position. They were to assist the attack of the Second Division.

April 8th came, and with it the attacking troops went from their rest billets behind the lines to the points from which they were to advance. They began to move early in the morning, and they marched forward all day by companies to their positions of assembly behind the lines. The infantry of the First Division gathered in the woods around Ecoivres; those of the Second Division concentrated in the Bois des Alleux; the wood about Villers au Bois hid the Third Division's battalions, and the Fourth Division gathered together about Souchez and Carency.

While these troops were marching, the headquarters of brigades and divisions were also moving up. The brigades fought their battalions from dugouts near our front line. The divisions, the First at Maison Blanche, the Second at Aux Reitz and the others further along the line of the Arras-Béthune Road, also worked in dugouts. At Camblain-l'Abbé was the headquarters of the Canadian Corps.

The concentration of the infantry in their trenches was over by 4 a.m. on April 9th, and at 5.30 a.m. on that day they were to cross the parapets.

April 9th was Easter Monday. It followed on a week of uncertain, squally weather. At dawn, sleet and wet snow were falling heavily and helping the shells to turn the vast bulk of the Ridge to a quagmire. A strong wind was blowing. Altogether the prospect did not look promising, but the elements were, in the main, upon our side. They provided a thick curtain of rain and mist which hid our trenches from all but the foremost of the enemy. And the wind blew straight into the faces of the Germans, blinding them with the lash of the snow and the smoke from the shells.

At 5.30 a.m. the intense barrage began, machine guns opened fire, and the British infantry climbed out of their trenches and went forward to reap one of the greatest triumphs of their history.

The artillery barrage which led the Canadians on was a

cataract of flame and steel of indescribable power. Seventy-five yards in front of the lines, two-thirds of the available eighteen-pounders maintained a murderous shrapnel fire. Beyond them, firing high explosive and shrapnel, the remainder of the field guns rained shells upon the ruins of the German lines and trench works. These light guns had each only a front of from thirty to sixty yards to cover, thereby combining to create a hell through which a man might live only by a miracle. The heavy guns fired on points in advance of the creeping barrage, which was made even more fearful by the fire of hundreds of machine guns.

Behind this dense wall came the infantry, marching in platoon formation and in waves, each battalion on a frontage of about three hundred and fifty yards. They had their bayonets fixed and they moved in line after line, so that the whole Ridge was covered with them.

The attack of the Canadian Corps can be dealt with in two parts. The three most southerly divisions were able to carry out their duty without a serious hitch, and it is to them that the first part automatically falls. The Fourth Division met with a particularly desperate resistance, and the story of their final success against this defence forms the second part.

The troops of the Third Division which now advanced were, on the left, the Seventh Infantry Brigade, and on the right the Eighth Infantry Brigade. The Seventh Brigade had, on the right, the Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Hill, D.S.O., in the centre "Princess Pat's," Lieut.-Col. A. S. A. M. Adamson, D.S.O.; the Forty-second Battalion, Major B. McLellan, D.S.O., on the left, and in support the Forty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. H. Palmer, D.S.O. The Eighth Brigade sent forward the First C.M.R.'s, Major B. Laws, D.S.O., on the right; the Second C.M.R.'s, Lieut.-Col. G. C. Johnston, D.S.O., M.C., in the centre; and the Fourth C.M.R.'s, Lieut.-Col. H. D. L. Gordon, D.S.O., on the left, with the Fifth C.M.R.'s, Lieut.-Col. D. C. Draper, D.S.O., in support.

These battalions were covered by the Field Artillery of the Third Canadian and the Sixty-third (Royal Naval) Divisions and by Number Four and Number Seven Groups of Heavy Artillery.

The Second Division had on its right the Fourth Infantry Brigade. The Eighteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. F. Morrison, D.S.O., advanced on the right; and on the left was the Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. H. Miller, D.S.O. This brigade was supported by the Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. Rorke, D.S.O., and the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. T. F. Elmitt, was in reserve. On the Second Division's left the Fifth Infantry Brigade were placed, the Twenty-Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. F. Ritchie, M.C., being on the right and the Twenty-sixth



Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. G. Mackenzie, D.S.O., on the left, while the Twenty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. T. L. Tremblay D.S.O., and the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. S. Bauld, were in support and reserve.

Covering these battalions were the Second Canadian and the Fifth (Imperial) Divisional Artilleries (consisting of Field Artillery) and the Twenty-eighth and Ninety-third Army Field Artillery Brigades. Backing the Field Artillery were Number Three and Number Five Groups of Heavy Artillery.

Further south, where the First Division was attacking, the Second Infantry Brigade advanced on the right and the Third Infantry Brigade on the left of the front allotted to that division. The Second Brigade employed the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. M. Dyer, D.S.O. ; on the right, the Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gibson ; in the centre, on the left, the Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. M. Ormond, D.S.O., with the Eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. M. Prower, in support of the whole. The Third Brigade attacked with the Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. E. Bent, D.S.O., on the right ; the Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. McCombe, D.S.O., in the centre ; the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, on the left, and in support the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. E. McCuaig, D.S.O.

The attack of the First Division was covered by the Field Artillery of the First Canadian and Thirty-first (Imperial) Divisions and the Fifth (Royal Horse), Seventy-second and Twenty-sixth (Army Field Artillery) Brigades, and the Number One and Number Two Groups of Heavy Artillery.

The infantry brigades just mentioned were to take the British line over the crest of Vimy Ridge. On the extreme right of the Canadian Corps the Fifty-first (Highland) Division moved out at the same time.

The ground over which they passed was difficult beyond description. Great shell-holes pitted the Ridge from end to end. Odds and tangles of the ruined barbed wire were scattered everywhere. On all sides were collapsed trenches, wrecked dugouts and the indescribable débris of the fortifications our guns had broken. The whole area over which the attack passed was deep in mud. This mud held up the Tanks which crawled out behind the infantry, and they did not get beyond the morass of the first German trench system, where they lay like stranded ships for the rest of the action. But over and through this desolation and around the yawning lips of the old mine-craters the troops advanced behind the beckoning of the ever-marching barrage.

They found the German defences wrecked and the German dead strewn about in the ruins of their shattered lines. There



was little fight left in those haggard little handfuls of men which survived. Here and there a machine gun or a group of men opened fire, but they were silenced by a tumult of rifle or hand grenades. The enemy's artillery, the shadow of its former strength, put down a barrage against our front line at the commencement of the assault, but the battalions were not to be stopped that day. They left their dead and wounded behind and shook the fire from them as a ship shakes itself when it emerges from tumultuous seas.

In the underground tunnels were found hundreds of white-faced Germans. These men had been living in terror of their lives for days while our guns roared over their heads, blocked the entrances to the tunnels and slaughtered their comrades up above like flies. The dugouts which had survived gave up their quota of prisoners. All these fell to the parties which were told off in each battalion for the grim work of "mopping-up."

The prisoners, mingled with our wounded, were now streaming back. An hour after the commencement of the assault, the last sectors of our first objective had been captured by our infantry.

There now ensued a slight pause in the advance of the operations of these three Canadian divisions. The leading battalions fired their victorious rockets and began to consolidate the first objective. Aeroplanes sent out to locate the British line came soaring through the murk high above the thunder, found the flares which the troops had lighted to mark their positions, and went back again to give their news to the staff. The machine guns which had hitherto supported the assault and the trench mortars of the leading brigades moved up to secure positions for the final phases, while at the same time other machine guns began to take their places for the assault on the second objective.

Far in the rear the gunners gained a brief respite from their labours. They slackened their fire to a slow rate and the full-throated roar of the shells diminished slightly. But before 7 a.m. all was ready for the continuation of the attack, and they fell fiercely to work again.

The barrage, which had hung in a thundering Niagara some hundred odd yards in front of the consolidating battalions ever since they had gained their objective, recommenced its majestic march. The machine guns reopened fire until the noise of their firing, heard through the clamour of the guns, sounded like hail beating against a thousand windows in a tempest. The reserve battalions of the brigades of the First and Second Divisions, one of each brigade, passed through their comrades and accompanied the brigades of the Third Division in their advance to the second objective.

This stage of the attack was much like the first. The troops formed up under the wing of the barrage with parade-ground precision. They followed up the barrage so closely that they were at its iron heels. In the fog and confusion of the smoke and sleet, numbers of men even moved forward too quickly and were struck down by the blast of our own shells. But there was method in this action of keeping close to the barrage. When the few German machine guns which survived the barrage began to fire, the infantry were so close upon them that their fusilade was choked at the outset.

The "mopping-up" parties again reaped their full harvest of terrified prisoners, who came out of ruined dugouts and trenches like dead men rising from the grave. Here was taken a German brigadier, comfortably engaged in shaving. He had been lulled into a false security by the long bombardments from which no infantry attack had developed hitherto, and, when he saw the bayonets and captivity, he wept.

And so, as the black pall of the barrage crept on, the infantry followed, gathering up their prisoners as they went, with a handful of shattered guns and scores of machine guns. Between 7.45 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. they reached and seized the whole of their second objective.

On the Third Division front the advance was over. But on the front of the First and Second Divisions the greatest part of the victory was still to come. The leading brigades had now done their work, and it remained for the brigades in reserve to carry it on.

The reserve brigades began to move forward to their starting-lines. They were the First Infantry Brigade, now commanded by Brigadier-General Griesbach, the late leader of the Fortyninth Battalion, and the Sixth Canadian and Thirteenth (Imperial) Infantry Brigades. The latter was part of the Fifth (Imperial) Division, and it was to continue the advance of the Second Division's left, while the Sixth Brigade continued it on the division's right and the First Brigade pushed out on the front of the First Division.

The reserve brigades pushed through their comrades, busy consolidating on the line of the second objective. As they went, the men who had taken the first trenches of the Germans ceased their work for a moment and cheered wildly. The advancing brigades returned the greeting and felt their courage stiffened by that generous applause.

By this time, the Third Division had thrust forward machine guns into the Bois de Bonval ravine to cover the left of the impending advance. The machine guns which were to provide the barrage for this advance were also in position. At 9.20 a.m.,

the concealed guns on the fronts of the First and Second Divisions opened fire with an ear-splitting clap of thunder, and began covering the ground from which the fresh troops were to start. At the same time the field guns on the Second Division front, which had hitherto covered the assault of the whole division, switched their fire to the line in front of the Thirteenth Brigade, while the hitherto active guns of the First Division ceased fire.

The reserve brigades, having crossed the second objective, now deployed. They were in the following order :

On the right was the First Brigade, with the First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. H. Hume, on the right ; the Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. B. Rogers, M.C., in the centre ; the Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. Rae, D.S.O., on the left, and in reserve the Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. T. L. McLaughlin, D.S.O. Next came the Sixth Brigade, with the Thirty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, D.S.O., on the right ; in the centre the Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. Ross ; and the Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. M. Ross, D.S.O., on the left ; all followed by the reserve unit, the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. P. J. Daly, C.M.G., D.S.O.

On the left of this brigade came the Thirteenth (Imperial) Brigade, with the First Royal West Kents on the right and the Second King's Own Scottish Borderers on the left, the other two battalions of the brigade being in support and reserve.

At 9.35 a.m., all else being ready, the barrage began to lift again, and these troops advanced to thrust the Canadian line down over the crest of Vimy Ridge.

In twenty minutes of almost unbroken marching these battalions reached Thelus Trench and took it in their stride. When the barrage surged beyond the trench it left behind only a few scattered men who soon were taken, a few machine guns, which were silenced at once, and a fleeting handful of Germans who were cut down in the storm of bullets from the attacking Canadians.

And now the advance went sweeping grandly on and submerging in one devouring rush strongholds and fortifications—or what was left of them—which Germany would have sold her soul to keep. Thelus village had also been entered by this time. It was found to be a levelled ruin filled with dead. The “moppers-up” dragged and hammered the living out of their holes, and sent their bombs crashing into the wreckage of the dugouts to place Death in complete possession. Hours after the tide had gone on, Germans were still being discovered in great tunnels, under the village, which had nearly proved their tombs.

Thelus Mill, the wood south of it, and Count's Wood to the

north, one by one were reached by the thunder-cloud and the lines which followed it. As a famous British Correspondent put it, "The Germans were like sheep attacked by tigers." At 10.40 a.m. the lines of Canadians were lapping the lower face of Hill 140 and Thelus was conquered. The third objective was reached everywhere by 1 p.m., and the lines halted.

The barrage resumed its advance at about 12.30 a.m. The reserve battalions of the Sixth and of the First Brigades followed it and began the final phase of the great assault. The Thirteenth Brigade on the left thrust its right into the Bois de Goulot as the pivot on which the remainder of the troops were to swing.

The great belts of wire in front of Farbus were found to be partially cut, but still capable of presenting a serious obstacle. A few machine guns and riflemen in trenches behind somehow survived the barrage and opened fire when our troops advanced. They were soon silenced, however, by a shower of rifle grenades, and the Canadians climbed through the wire and went on.

The advance had been so successful that it had got within sight of the heavy guns in the woods north of Farbus. And to reach the enemy's active guns had been the aim of the British infantry ever since the beginning of trench warfare. By this fact alone the triumph of Vimy Ridge may be gauged, for that aim was first realized there.

The German gunners, who had never expected to see the gleam of hostile steel, did not accept their fate without a struggle. They depressed the muzzles of their great guns and sent their monster shells roaring into the advancing lines. But the Canadians had already won through a continuous shower of gun fire, and not point-blank bombardment nor rifles nor revolvers nor machine guns, all of which the desperate German gunners employed, could stop them now.

The machine guns were soon knocked out by rifle grenadiers, and the last lines of the Canadian assault raised a cheer, dashed forward and sprang down into the gun-pits among the gunners and the guns. There was a fierce fight. The Germans who would not surrender were cut down with the bayonet and driven back from the guns, which they tried to disable. The last spark of their resistance was soon stamped out. Among the prisoners taken here was a colonel of artillery, who acknowledged to the full the bitterness of his humiliation and defeat.

Meanwhile the First Infantry Brigade to the south had won to their last objective. At 2 o'clock the barrage halted, and at 3.30 p.m. the final line of advance had been reached everywhere. This completed the capture of all the southerly slopes of Vimy Ridge.

Beyond, far across the Douai plain, a vista of green fields



and little villages had been opened. The sight of it was like the Promised Land.

There now remained to the three southerly Canadian divisions only the tasks of exploiting their successes and consolidating the ground which they had won. The consolidation was pushed forward rapidly. Outposts were sent into the eastern edges of the thick woods on the eastern slopes of the Ridge, a main resistance line was built along the crest, supported by strong points behind, and communication trenches were repaired and rendered serviceable. This was the task of thousands of men for the rest of the day and several days thereafter.

To exploit our successes the battalions which had captured the final objective of these three divisions were ordered to send out strong patrols into Petit Vimy, the Bois de La Folie, Farbus, and Farbus and Station Woods. During the afternoon platoons accordingly pushed forward into these places, worked their way through, and, on the First and Second Division fronts, dug in beyond and remained there. The ever-ready and hard-worked artillery provided a barrage to protect them as far as the Lens-Arras Railway, beyond which they could not fire except with heavy guns unsuitable for barrage.

The guns which had supported the first stages of the assault were now toiling up to get into suitable positions at close range.

And now, with the greater part of those terrible heights safely in Canadian hands, we turn to the fighting of the Fourth Division.

This division employed the Eleventh Infantry Brigade on the right, and on the left the Twelfth Infantry Brigade. The battalions were disposed as follows :

On the right of the Eleventh Brigade was the One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. Warden ; on the left was the Eighty-seventh Battalion, Major Shaw. They were supported by the Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. Workshop, D.S.O., and the Fifty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. V. V. Harvey, D.S.O. The Twelfth Brigade employed, on the right, the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. M. Edwards, D.S.O., and on the left the Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Clark, D.S.O. In support and reserve were the Seventy-third and Seventy-eighth Battalions, Lieut.-Col. H. C. Sparling and Lieut.-Col. J. Kirkaldy, D.S.O. The Tenth Infantry Brigade was in reserve for the whole division.

This infantry was covered by the Field Artillery of the Reserve (formerly Lahore) Divisional Artillery, the Second Canadian Divisional Artillery, and the Eighteenth, Two Hundred and Forty Second, and Seventy-sixth Army Field Artillery Brigades. It was also covered by Number Four Group of Heavy Artillery.



When, at 5.30 a.m. on April 9th, the troops of the Fourth Division surged forward with the rest of the Canadians, they had, in common with the rest, a well-laid plan, which was to place them in possession of all their objectives by noon that day. They had no reason to expect to meet opposition which would prove particularly difficult to overcome.

But it is the unexpected that happens in war. The division had no sooner left its trenches than it came under terrific artillery, rifle and machine gun fire. The effect was staggering, but, as once before, on that self-same ground, on March 1st, they had pressed on through such a fire, they pressed on now. The Eleventh Brigade came up against uncut wire, in the centre of its line, guarding the front trenches of the enemy.

And now was enacted the tragedy that inevitably follows the meeting of a gallant attacker and a determined defender behind machine guns and barbed wire. At the very outset of their journey, while those on the flanks worried their way through the awful fire, the men in the centre began to go down. They fell thick and fast at the fringe of the wire and in the wire, the living streaming with yells over the dead, only to be cut down in their turn. The threat to the success of the entire division was very serious.

Nor was this all. The men on either flank of the uncut wire had reached a line some two hundred yards west of the Givenchy-Thelus Road. This was short of their objective. But how could ranks greatly depleted by casualties, and with a gap in the centre filled only with their dead, hope to proceed further? No sooner had they reached their line than a number of caves and tunnels suddenly disgorged hundreds of Germans who had remained hidden while the waves of Canadians passed over their heads. These men, with rifles and machine guns, re-manned the ruins of the front trenches and began to add their quota to the fire which was now pouring into the attackers from every side.

The enemy thus announced that he was ready to fight to the last before he would willingly surrender the northern end of the Ridge.

But help was coming. At 6.30 p.m., as the long day was drawing to a close, General Odium launched the Eighty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Borden, which had been placed at his disposal, into the battle from our old front line, with the object of destroying the Germans now harassing his brigade from the rear and reinforcing the gallant remnants that were left.

The Eighty-fifth Battalion deserves special praise for its fine performance, and for two reasons. No barrage was possible, as it would kill our own men. They therefore attacked without

a barrage, for the first time since the days when we had learned that absence of artillery meant almost certain death. And it was a new battalion, which had been employed in digging trenches for several weeks and had never yet taken part in an attack. That a new battalion under these circumstances should do so well is the highest possible tribute to its efficiency.

The Eighty-fifth Battalion, then, advanced at 6.30 p.m. They did so in perfect order in the face of a strong fire. Without artillery support they disposed of the Germans at the bayonet's point. This done, they pushed on, joined up with the battalions ahead, and closed the gap in the front of the Eleventh Brigade.

The Twelfth Infantry Brigade, although it had suffered heavily and had been obliged to call on the Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Dawson, of the Tenth Brigade, for assistance, had meanwhile reached and held its final objectives. To complete the task there now remained only a strip of ground between the Pimple and the Bois de la Ville to be taken. This represented an advance to a line five hundred yards in front of the foremost Canadian line, as held that night, on a front of about one mile. As the Eleventh and Twelfth Infantry Brigades were too exhausted to attack this line, which was their final objective in the original plan, the Tenth Infantry Brigade was ordered to do so.

After continuous and bloody fighting had taken place on the Fourth Division front the whole night long, the Fiftieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. F. Page, and the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Davies, therefore attacked at 3.15 p.m. on April 10th. By the time this further Canadian assault was made the German resistance had been beaten out and they had received enough. Before night fell the last objectives had been gained.

In the meantime, on April 9th, the rest of the Canadians, busy consolidating the southern end of the Ridge, had dealt with several strong attempts to counter-attack. The Germans were now bombarding our positions heavily, and in this bombardment the majority of the casualties suffered on April 9th occurred. But the diggers went on steadily, and the cold moon that looked down upon the snow-covered world that night saw them firmly established in their hard-won ground.

At 10 a.m. on April 10th, a force of about six thousand infantry was observed advancing towards our line from the direction of Fresnoy. They marched in close order, led by mounted officers. Our gunners opened fire from every gun that could bear when the enemy came within range, and the column disappeared in the most appalling bloodshed which the Canadian guns had ever caused.

There was still left in the enemy's hands the Pimple. This objective was to be taken after the rest of the Ridge had been

secured. The task was allotted to the Forty-fourth Battalion on the right and the Fiftieth Battalion in the centre. Two companies of the Forty-sixth Battalion attacked on the left of the Fiftieth Battalion.

The attack was delivered in a blinding snowstorm, through waist-deep mud, at 5.30 a.m. on April 12th, in the dark hours just before the dawn. The artillery and machine gun barrage moved slowly in front of the troops, who were eager to stand once and for all as conquerors on that hill which they had raided so often. The state of the ground was a drag upon such eagerness. But the gale, as on April 9th, was on our side. It pushed the men along from behind and it blinded the startled German machine gunners waiting and staring through the gloom and the flying snow for the attack.

Like wraiths out of the storm our men bore suddenly upon them. The Forty-sixth Battalion joined issue hand-to-hand with the Prussian Guard who came forth to meet them, and wiped them out with the bayonet. Elsewhere the rest of the brigade, as keen and determined as ever, in spite of their gruelling fighting of April 10th, beat and drove the enemy out of their positions and entrenched on their ground.

The whole of the objectives were taken by 9 a.m., and with them the last of the Vimy Ridge.

Thus ended the fight for that dominating position which had been called impregnable. The gain of the Canadians had been great. In the first day of the assault and the week following, the events of which were the aftermath of the victory, the Canadian Corps captured over four thousand men, over forty guns—including two eight-inch, seven 5.9's, three 4.1's, and two field guns, all captured in action by the Sixth Infantry Brigade in the Bois de la Ville—some of which were employed to hasten the enemy's scurry from their lost fortress, and a large quantity of war material and ammunition.

Among the proudest of their trophies were four Victoria Crosses. All these were won in connection with "those inventions of the devil, machine guns and barbed wire." Major Thain Wendell MacDowell, D.S.O., Thirty-eighth Battalion, captured two machine guns and seventy-seven prisoners, aided only by two runners, during the desperate fighting of April 9th, and later held the position he had won for five days, although badly wounded in the hand at the beginning of operations. Sergeant Ellis Welwood Sifton, Eighteenth Battalion, on the same day rushed single-handed at an enemy machine gun which was holding up his company and killed the crew. He then held the trench till his comrades came up, but was killed in the process. Private William Johnstone Milne, Sixteenth Battalion, captured two

machine guns and put their crews out of action with no assistance, but he too was killed immediately after. Finally, Private J. G. Pattison, of the Fiftieth Battalion, rushed and silenced a machine gun, single-handed, killing the crew of eight men with bombs and the bayonet.

Casualties on the whole were slight—the Sixth Infantry Brigade, which lost five hundred and twenty-seven killed and wounded, is a fair example of the average price paid by each brigade. In the ranks of the Fourth Division the casualties were highest.

The taking of the Ridge was a very great achievement, even when compared with the events of later months. An immensely strong position was attacked and carried in extremely bad weather from a starting-line dominated and overlooked in every way by a fully prepared and ruthless enemy. As an isolated accomplishment it stands high. The possession of the Ridge gave us essential observation and elbow room. It gave us a bastion in that wall against which the desperate British Army was to stand a year after—a bastion which never fell, and around which the grey waves of the German assault beat in vain.

For Canada, Vimy will always be a name of reverence and the Ridge a monument of Glory.

## CHAPTER X

### LENS AND HILL 70

APRIL—OCTOBER 1917

It was apparent to all possessed of even a limited knowledge of the value of the victory of Vimy Ridge that immediate and possibly far-reaching consequences must follow. The central bastion of the German defence on the Western front had been carried at a blow. It therefore became necessary for the enemy to adjust his line instantly and do his utmost to repair the damage caused to his defensive fabric by the loss of a position which he had always considered impregnable.

How far the German High Command would alter existing dispositions as they were left when the last yard of the Canadian objectives fell into our hands was a matter of conjecture to all concerned. To any man who stands on the summit of the dominating crest which was now firmly in British possession and looks down upon the site of the enemy's front line as the Canadian rush had left it, the necessity of a withdrawal is apparent. The depth of the withdrawal was another matter.

The first plans of the Canadian Corps for continuing the advance after the subjection of the Ridge were for pressing on to the next main German defence system, the strongly wired trenches known as the Oppy-Mericourt-Vendin Line. This line covered the villages from which its name was derived, and stood as a strong barrier in the path of any advance to encircle Lens from the south-west. It was necessary for the First Army to break this line before the development of the second stage of Sir Douglas Haig's plan of campaign could take place. The duty of the Canadians was to accomplish the breaking of the line between Oppy and Mericourt, push on, and seize a low ridge running east and west beyond Acheville. In so doing they would completely outflank Lens and place the British line fairly and squarely on high ground overlooking the mining centres east of the great town, and with them the whole of the German lines of communication leading to the city.



To achieve this, however, it was first necessary to advance the Canadian line as it lay now at the feet of the Vimy Ridge to within striking distance of the Oppy-Mericourt Line. Not to be caught napping, the Canadian Corps ordered constant patrol activity, with the object of at once discovering any attempt of the Germans to sneak away unobserved.

At first these patrols had no success. The period of failure, however, was not wasted. Everywhere the troops that had followed the barrage to victory on April 9th and the days following were relieved by the reserve brigades of their own divisions. Then, after the lurid glare and smoke of the burning dumps of stores and ammunition in the towns and villages within the enemy's lines, notably in Lens, had for several days announced the German intentions to retire, the patrols in the dawn of April 13th found the enemy's resistance at an end and began to make rapid progress forward. At the same time, the Second (Imperial) Division on the right and the Twenty-fourth (Imperial) Division on the left kept close on the heels of the Germans.

The Canadians, with the First, Second, Fifth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Brigades, pushed on all day, while the artillery kept the enemy busy by firing on their trenches to the east. The First and Second Divisions' infantry before dusk were established along the railway from Bailleul to Vimy, and had outposts in Willerval. Vimy, Petit Vimy and La Chaudière were in the possession of the Third Division, and on the north the Fourth Division were early in Givenchy, where they incidentally added to their trophies by taking an eight-inch howitzer and two field guns. Before nightfall this division had reached the Vimy-Angres line of trenches south of Fosse 6, and, with the Twenty-fourth (Imperial) Division, had penetrated into the Bois de l'Hirondelle on the left.

The Second (Imperial) Division, south of the Canadians and advancing with equal boldness, was by that time in possession of Bailleul Railway Station.

The Fifth (Imperial) Division completed the relief of the Fourth Division during the night, and at 5.30 a.m. patrols everywhere resumed the advance. By noon the Imperial troops south of the Corps had advanced nearly two thousand yards, the Canadian line had reached and passed Mont Forêt Quarries in the centre, and on the left the patrols had cleared the Bois de l'Hirondelle, with the valuable ridge on which it stood, and had penetrated the outlying suburb of Lens known as the Cité de Petit Bois. So rapid had been the move of the Imperial Corps on the left that it was at that time in Liévin, where it had seized large quantities of German war materials.

On April 15th, however, hard clashes took place against the

enemy's positions, and it was definitely established that he held the Oppy-Mericourt-Vendin Line in strength, together with the switch trench covering Arleux—the Arleux Loop—and that he meant to keep it.

In the three days the Canadian line had been advanced about three thousand yards on a front of five thousand, and our foremost troops were now some thousand yards west of, and in an excellent position from which to attack, the Arleux Loop, as a preliminary to breaking the Oppy-Mericourt Line just beyond. Steps were at once taken to complete preparations for the necessary attack. The objective was extremely strongly protected by barbed wire, densely woven and many yards deep. The first course was to set to work with the artillery to destroy this wire.

Gun by gun, battery by battery, the Canadian and English artillery were steadily moving up to closer and deadlier range. On April 17th they were in a position to commence wire-cutting, and also to harass with fierce and irregular gusts of fire the communication trenches, roads and tracks which were the arteries carrying to the front line the life-blood of the enemy.

No visible incident enlivened this period of preparation, beyond artillery fire, except an advance of the Fifth (Imperial) Division on April 23rd under an artillery barrage. This attack took over two thousand yards of the trench line which ran in front of Thelus, east of Vimy and west of Lens, and secured the last portion of that line in German hands south of the Souchez River. It was an attack which was necessary in order to adjust the line to conform to the advance of the Imperial troops north of the river.

The latter all this time had been making relentless progress through the maze of suburbs, pit-heads, mines and railway embankments south-west, west and north-west of Lens. The enemy abandoned to them valuable stores, and nightly crimsoned the sky with the glare of his burning and exploding dumps. Everything seemed to point to the easy accomplishment of the immediate task before the Canadians.

On April 24th, the Fourth Canadian Division, reorganized and refreshed, relieved the Fifth (Imperial) Division in its new line, and thus became responsible for the front between the Vimy-Lens Railway and the Souchez River. Preparations for the attack on Arleux and the Arleux Loop were completed. At 5 a.m. on April 28th the attack was launched.

The Second Brigade had been selected to make the assault. The troops employed were, on the right, the Eighth Battalion, Major J. P. McKenzie, D.S.O., in the centre the Tenth Battalion, Major A. T. Thomson, D.S.O., M.C., on the left the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. M. Dyer, D.S.O. In close support of the

Eighth Battalion, to follow on its heels and do its "mopping-up," was the Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gibson. A battalion of the Third Brigade, the Sixteenth Battalion, Major R. O. Bell-Irving, M.C., performed a similar duty for the remainder of the assaulting troops.

The artillery of the First Canadian Division, augmented by three Imperial brigades of field artillery and strongly backed by the Canadian Corps heavy artillery and an Imperial group of Royal Garrison Artillery, provided the necessary covering barrage and counter-battery work. The whole was augmented by the admirable fire of the brigade machine gun company.

During the night the attacking infantry assembled without detection within three hundred yards of the Arleux Loop. At the hour of the assault the whole of the artillery supporting the advance, together with the machine guns, suddenly split the night with fire, and the infantry moved out under the lee of the barrage. On their right the Second (Imperial) Division went with them.

The frontage of the Canadian attack was but two thousand two hundred yards and the objective a line just beyond Arleux which would make the village and the Loop our own. The danger besetting an assault on such a comparatively narrow front was well realized. To prevent the enemy from grasping the fact that the area of attack was small, and thereby to cause him not only uncertainty as to the scope of the operation but also to distribute his responding gun fire over a wide front, the artillery barrage of the British guns crashed down upon the whole of the enemy's first line opposite the Canadian Corps, from end to end. The ruse was completely successful. From end to end of that line the German S.O.S. rockets rose, wildly and repeatedly calling for assistance, and answered everywhere by the startled fire of their artillery.

Close behind the barrage, which moved forward steadily in the gloom, the Canadian battalions pressed rapidly on. A scattered rifle and machine gun fire searched them as they advanced. In a short time they found themselves at the fringe of the deep wire guarding the Arleux Loop. The artillery had done its work well, but here and there strong entanglements still remained. As the attackers struggled through the wire the enemy's machine guns and rifles suddenly struck them with a terrific fire.

"B" Company of the Eighth Battalion encountered particularly strong wire and a most determined opposition, but they silenced their enemies with bombs and broke into the trench, cheering, to complete the work with the bayonet. "D" Company of the Fifth Battalion was thrashed at point-blank range by a

machine gun handled with diabolical skill from a position in the Arleux Loop. The company was in its death agonies in the wire. Major K. L. Campbell, M.C., its commander, grasping the situation instantly, rushed forward, snatched some bombs from the hands of the nearest men and charged the gun single-handed, only to fall riddled and dead before it. The result was promising disaster when Lieut. Foulkes of "A" Company, in support, broke into the trench further to the south, bombed his way with a few men rapidly up the trench, destroyed the resisting machine gun, avenged the gallant Campbell and enabled the advance to proceed.

The Tenth Battalion on the right, meanwhile, had made rapid progress, and now the whole attack swept into and over the Arleux Loop and pressed resolutely into Arleux itself. There followed desperate and bloody fighting in the sunken roads around the place and in the ruined houses, which were lairs for many machine guns. Between them, the Tenth and Eighth Battalions crushed the resistance of the enemy in Arleux, while the Fifth Battalion dealt with those to the north.

By 8 a.m. touch had been gained with the Imperial troops on the right and the Second Canadian Division on the left. The whole of the objectives were quickly taken and consolidation was set in progress. Three determined attempts of the enemy to assemble to counter-attack were dealt with during the day. When dusk fell, a line running roughly north and south through the eastern edges of Arleux, with a flank thrown back to our old line some seven hundred yards north of the village, had been put into a thorough state of defence. Its strength was tested at 8.30 p.m., when a strong counter-attack suddenly developed against the left, held by the Fifth Battalion. The S.O.S. streaked the dark with fire, the artillery and machine guns instantly responded, and by the combined action of this support with the infantry the enemy was rapidly repulsed.

Thus the Arleux Loop and Arleux were taken, together with seven officers and three hundred and sixty-five others, who fell into our hands as prisoners.

On April 29th, during the night, the Third Brigade relieved the purchasers of this considerable little victory.

The outer wall had now been broken and our troops were within reach of their real objective, the Oppy-Mericourt Line. The Second Division pushed its outposts into the sunken road from Arleux to Mericourt to conform to the new line to the south, and immediate preparations were set in force for the assault on the enemy's trenches.

The ensuing days witnessed great artillery activity as our guns began to cut the wire and break down the trenches of the



Oppy-Mericourt Line and to strive with the Germans for the ascendancy in power. Our heavy artillery were moving up. Our lighter guns were already in a position to support the proposed advance.

The Canadian gunners merited high praise in this stage of their fighting. In order to keep within range of the recoiling German lines they had moved down into the plains east of the Vimy Ridge. Here the Germans had left few gun emplacements and there was little or no shelter for the guns, which were compelled to fire in the open and in view of the opposing artillery. In their exposed positions the enemy harassed them night and day without rest, bombarding them with gas and every form of shell. They lost heavily, but they endured it all with stolid silence and supported the infantry with never-faltering accuracy and strength.

Their chief work was to place the Oppy-Mericourt Line in a condition which would justify an attack. Wire-cutting by shell fire went on steadily. By May 3rd it was decided that the hour had struck, and at 3.45 a.m. the infantry went "over the top."

The battalions were as follows :

On the right, the Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. B. Rogers, D.S.O. (less two companies); on their left the Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. P. Clark, M.C.; to the left of the Second Battalion was the First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. C. Hodson; the Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. Rae, D.S.O., and the remaining two companies of the Third Battalion were in reserve to these battalions. All these units belonged to the First Brigade. To the left of the First Battalion were the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. P. J. Daly, C.M.G., D.S.O., and the Thirty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Bell, D.S.O., both of the Sixth Brigade.

The final objective of these troops covered a front of two thousand five hundred yards. Their task was to break the Oppy-Mericourt Line between Fresnoy and Acheville, push forward outposts beyond and on the right, where the First Brigade was attacking, to fling a loop around the village of Fresnoy and the woods in the vicinity, five hundred yards in advance of these positions.

In the actual breaking of the trench line the First Brigade was responsible for smashing through from just south of Fresnoy to some two hundred and fifty yards north of the village. The Sixth Brigade was to push through from that point to the junction of the trench with the Arleux Loop. It was also to take the five hundred yards of the Loop which were still held by the enemy and prolong the new front to the original line. No such prolongation on the part of the First Brigade was necessary, as the



Second (Imperial) Division on its right was also attacking the Oppy-Mericourt Line at the same hour.

Covering the advance with a creeping barrage were the First and Second Divisions' field artillery, supplemented by a certain number of Imperial guns and by the machine guns. As Fate decided, the story of the action at Fresnoy fell into two parts—that of the First Brigade on the right, where complete success was achieved, and that of the Sixth Brigade on the left, which was only partially successful. The troops in both cases wrested their victory from the enemy only by desperate effort. The story should therefore be told as it occurred—in two portions.

Whilst the battalions of the First Brigade assembled in the intense darkness, they were subjected to much shell fire. The enemy was alert and extremely nervous, illuminating No Man's Land by a ceaseless succession of flares.

At 3.45 a.m. the hollow roll of the waking guns rumbled through the darkness, to swell instantly into the deafening clamour of intense barrage fire, and everywhere the infantry advanced. They were greeted almost at once by a deadly shell fire and the concentrated hurricane from numerous machine guns.

Through this storm of death the First Brigade moved rapidly, and were soon struggling, despite many casualties, in the dense wire guarding the German trenches. The artillery had done its work well, but the entanglements were still strong enough to cause serious delay. In the face of point-blank rifle and machine gun fire, the blast of which—so short was the range—seemed to scorch the gallant infantry plunging through the wire, they forced their way into the German front line. The line was strongly manned, filled with determined men who fought with wild courage. Yelling, the Canadians hurled their bombs into the packed masses barely discernible in the gloom and then went for them with the bayonet.

The enemy was superior numerically. Later, when the prisoners were questioned, it was discovered that they had actually been massing for an attack, which was to have been made at 6 a.m., when the barrage burst suddenly upon them. But their superiority in numbers was of little avail. They were cut to pieces. The trench line was taken and the Canadians swept on. An attempt to rally west of Fresnoy was shattered; the small woods flanking the village and the ruins of the village were taken after a nightmare struggle in the pandemonium of shell fire, and, almost to schedule time, the last of the final objectives, one thousand yards from the line on which the troops assembled, was secured.

On the right, though Gavrelle was captured, the Imperial troops had not been able to gain their final line. It was there-

fore necessary for the Canadians to form a flank facing south-east in order to link their exposed right with the arrested left of the English infantry. The two companies of the Third Battalion in reserve had been kept in hand for such a contingency. They were hurried up and they closed the gap.

Meanwhile the Sixth Brigade, on the left of the First Battalion, was fighting against great odds.

The difficulties facing this brigade were peculiar. They had to capture a line which was for the greater part at right angles to the main line of advance. This line was dominated by the high ground east of Acheville, by that at Mericourt and by Hill 65, far off in the north-west beyond the Souchez River. Machine guns on all the nearer ridges and the artillery around Rouvroy, Sallaumines and hidden in the ruins of Lens could combine a frightful converging fire on the brigade during and after the assault.

When the Canadian barrage started the Western infantry went forward.

The German reply to our fire was as prompt on the front of these units as it had been on the right. The troops had barely moved when from all sides, from east, north and north-west, shells and bullets flew into them. In a few moments the whole area over which they were to advance was blazing with the shattering explosions of innumerable projectiles, raining down upon the fragile waves so swiftly that they could not be counted. With the most appalling rapidity the waves were blasted away.

The Twenty-seventh Battalion was particularly hard hit. The leading company on the right was virtually annihilated as it deployed to attack. The enemy's barrage fell like a hurricane upon them. In a short time the company was reduced to a handful of men. The remainder were dead or dying on the ground.

The bravest heart might have failed in that hellish horror of darkness, lightning and violent death. For a moment the men wavered in the midst of it. At times like these, if a great leader is not there, the game is lost. This time there arose such a leader—Lieut. R. J. Combe, the last officer of his company, new to France, but with a soul that could overcome the terror of the unknown.

Combe steadied his men when they staggered in the grip of death. He stood up in the dark, and his voice and example made obedience come where paralysis had been. The pitiful fragment of a company got into line again. And with Combe leading them, it went on.

There were only five men with him when Combe got to the wire of the Oppy-Mericourt Line. Even his brave spirit must

have faltered when he saw the dense wire and that there were hundreds of forms in the dim trenches behind, waiting for them. But he faced them and began to bomb the trenches.

With his five men at his back, he burst through the wire and into the line beyond. Fighting the packed masses, he drove them back. More Canadians came up. He reorganized them and went on fighting. They cleared the whole of the objective allotted to his company, fought down to the right and gained touch with the First Battalion. Thus by the individual courage of one inexperienced officer the line was taken and held.

Combe was shot dead as he was consolidating his position after daylight—shot by a sniper in the moment of his triumph. But he had won the Victoria Cross.

Captain Charles Stinson, commanding the company supporting Lieut. Combe, had followed closely on the heels of the leading waves, and, when the barrage struck them, had kept his men in hand and brought them up to the fringes of the wire. Here they took shelter till, in response to the cry for reinforcements, he joined the remnants of the right company and strengthened the line. The men were trickled in small groups into the objective under very heavy fire as soon as the opportunity came.

Meanwhile the left company of the Twenty-seventh Battalion and the leading waves of the Thirty-first Battalion had been fiercely engaged. The Thirty-first Battalion encountered several strong outposts of the enemy soon after starting, and were inevitably delayed while they overcame these posts with bombs and the bayonet. Like the Twenty-seventh Battalion, they then came upon the dense wire guarding their objective and were similarly reduced to trickling men through such gaps as they could find, while the enemy shot them down with machine guns. After much bitter and obscure fighting the Sixth Brigade found itself with the right company and Captain Stinson's company of the Twenty-seventh Battalion in the support line of the Oppy-Mericourt Line. The right company of the Thirty-first Battalion was in possession of the greater part of the Arleux Loop—all except the last three hundred yards leading up to its junction with the Oppy-Mericourt Line. Thence the remainder of the Twenty-seventh and Thirty-first Battalions were forming a defensive flank facing north-east, on a line practically a thousand yards long, to connect the troops in the Arleux Loop with our old front line. Two companies of the Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. Ross, D.S.O., were pushed up in close support of the whole.

This was the situation as it finally crystallized. During the day the First Brigade, busy consolidating, dealt with two violent German counter-attacks, the more important being

delivered at noon against the First and Third Battalions. Both were repulsed after sharp fighting.

On the following day at 8 p.m., nothing daunted by its losses of the day before and its knowledge of the severe resistance forthcoming, the Sixth Brigade made a gallant attempt to take the rest of its original line. Following a bombardment, bombing parties of the Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. Ross, D.S.O., and the Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. M. Ross, D.S.O., the latter on the right, attacked in the face of violent opposition from strong bodies of the enemy. The Twenty-eighth Battalion secured all the original objective of the Twenty-seventh Battalion still in German hands. The Twenty-ninth Battalion, however, could only take about one hundred yards of the front and support lines of the Oppy-Mericourt Line.

Before proceeding to the events following Fresnoy, mention must be made of the great gallantry of the artillery of the Second Canadian Division, supporting the Sixth Brigade. Under the heaviest counter-battery fire, with their ammunition dumps blazing and losing many casualties, the men of these batteries stood to their guns and supported the infantry with skill and a high devotion.

The Fifth (Imperial) Division relieved the Second (Imperial) Division on the right of the Canadians on May 4th, and on the following day completed the relief of the First Canadian Division, which went back to rest in Bruay.

The troops which attacked at Fresnoy had achieved a considerable local success, displaying fine determination in spite of severe opposition.

Their prisoners alone—eighteen officers and four hundred and thirty-eight men—represented much achievement. Elsewhere, however, the general advance on May 3rd met with little result. The German resistance beyond Arras was now becoming so strong that it was quickly realized that no further advance could be made except by employing a larger number of troops than Sir Douglas Haig, whose real blow was still to come in Flanders, cared to commit to the operation. All hope and all idea of continuing to press on east of Arras was therefore abandoned.

This being the case, it was obvious that the project of the Canadians for outflanking Lens from the south had also to be put aside. A quick change of plan was made, and it was decided to push forward astride the Souchez River until our troops were within rifle-shot of the town. Once the line had reached the outskirts of the place, a rapid enveloping move might force the enemy out and save the necessity of fighting in the town itself.



To manœuvre into such close proximity involved considerable effort. It would be necessary to advance an average distance of over two miles, through a maze of railway embankments, pit-heads, mines, suburbs, slag-heaps and great manufacturing buildings, before the Canadian infantry could look into the heart of Lens. The comparative ease and swiftness with which the Imperial troops had hitherto made progress through the western suburbs gave good cause for hope that the plan might be accomplished without much fighting. As it happened, the enemy resisted desperately, so that the operations resembled the long advance of besiegers to within assaulting distance of a fortress. To save the valuable mining machinery and other institutions, it was hoped to achieve the objective by skilful use of infantry patrols unsupported by serious artillery action. Gradually the German defence, coupled with their policy of destroying and flooding the mines, made this restraint unnecessary and impossible. The fighting which was to come abounded in many fine acts of individual courage and resource, fine leadership of isolated patrols and some of the fiercest conflicts the Canadian troops ever experienced.

On the night of May 5th the first stroke in the new campaign was delivered with an attack by the Tenth Brigade of the Fourth Division. At 9.45 p.m. the Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Dawson, D.S.O., and the Forty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. M. Frances, attacked a system of trenches, covering some five hundred yards of ground between the Electric Generating Station and La Coulotte, officially known as the Triangle.

The Forty-seventh Battalion had a particularly severe fight, dealing with large numbers of the enemy with rifle grenades and bombs before they were able to enter the front line. It was estimated that over seventy casualties were caused in this fighting. Both battalions captured all their objectives, together with fifty prisoners and a machine gun. Several enemy counter-attacks were repulsed. It was a clean-cut little success, a good augury of others still to come.

On May 7th a fierce German counter-attack in force was delivered at 3.30 p.m. against the newly won Triangle. All arms skilfully co-operated to meet it, and the assault was repulsed with very severe casualties.

An intense barrage covered the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. D. Davies, D.S.O., which at midnight on May 9th attacked two hundred and fifty yards of trenches, both front and support lines, defending and slightly north-west of La Coulotte. The whole of the objectives were quickly taken and consolidated and a handful of prisoners were sent back. Our losses were very slight.

The enemy, with his policy of determined and furious contesting of every yard of ground, was not content with this. On May 10th he launched two fierce attacks, assisted by *flammenwerfer*, one at 7 p.m. and the other four hours later. The Tenth Brigade met this strange weapon with the coolness with which they were wont to face all others, and beat the Germans back in disorder. At 3.30 the next morning, however, the enemy advanced again. They attacked with more *flammenwerfer* and with large numbers of men. After a desperate resistance our lightly held outposts were driven back to the line which we had held before the last successful attack.

Here Major C. S. Belcher and Captain L. Moffatt, of the Forty-fourth Battalion, re-formed their men and established a line about one hundred yards from the lost positions. At 5 p.m. Belcher led forward the counter-attack in person without any previous artillery preparation. The determined rush of the Western infantry completely demoralized the enemy and carried all before it. The lost line was entirely regained.

The casualties of the Canadians in the strenuous and successful fighting for these positions amounted in all to only seventy, which were suffered by the Forty-fourth Battalion. On the other hand, careful estimates accounted for over two hundred grey-clad Germans dead in No Man's Land and in the grass in front of our outposts. The balance was thus well upon the credit side.

With no military action except much shelling and patrolling, May came to an end. On June 1st the relief of the Second Division by the First Division in the line north of Arleux brought the First Division into the trenches again and sent the former back to Bruay for an exceedingly well earned rest. The Third Division at the same time relieved the right of the Fourth Division south-east of the main Lens-Arras Road.

The Tenth Brigade at midnight on June 2nd struck again. The objectives were the Electric Generating Station, the Brewery at La Coulotte and La Coulotte itself. The attack was carried out by the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Davies, on the right, the Fiftieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. F. Page, D.S.O., on the left, and one platoon of the Forty-sixth Battalion, to which was assigned the task of capturing a concrete machine gun emplacement in the centre of the objective line.

All objectives were taken under an artillery barrage, but losses were severe. The strongest opposition was met with.

After holding on resolutely to La Coulotte and the Brewery for several hours, the Forty-fourth Battalion was compelled to drop back before dawn to its original line. The Fiftieth, however, retained the Electric Generating Station and the five-hundred-yard line with advanced outposts which they had established

in front. Through the whole of a blazingly hot day, cut off from reinforcements and ammunition by the intense barrage which the Germans kept playing continuously on the shattered ruins of the Generating Station, they stood fast. At 6.45 p.m., having lost a large number of men, they were driven back to the line from which they had emerged at midnight. The platoon of the Forty-sixth Battalion, which had taken and held the machine gun emplacement allotted to them, were forced to conform to this movement.

All told, the Tenth Brigade in this operation had taken one hundred and fifteen prisoners. They had shown a fine determination, but the exposed objectives they had taken were rendered quite untenable.

On June 4th the Eleventh Brigade relieved the brigade, which had incurred five hundred and eighty casualties in sixty hours of vicious fighting in the vicinity of the rusty steel skeleton of the Generating Station.

The One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Warden, promptly went out at 3.30 a.m. on June 5th and seized the place for the last time. The enemy, flying on the approach of the stealthy patrols, were wiped out by a burst of fire from rifles and Lewis guns. The gain of ground effected amounted to an advance of over two hundred yards.

The whole policy of the Canadian Corps was to harass the enemy without rest. Sounds of fighting were still to be heard from the darkness beyond the river, when, at 11.45 p.m., the whole front of the Third and Fourth Divisions suddenly became clamorous with the tumult of an intense barrage and one of the largest raids yet staged by the Canadians commenced.

From right to left the following battalions climbed out of their trenches and advanced in the darkness to annihilate the enemy :

The Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Hill, D.S.O., Forty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. McLennan, D.S.O., and Forty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. H. Palmer, D.S.O., all of the Seventh Brigade of the Third Division ; in reserve to this brigade was the Princess Patricia's, Lieut.-Col. A. A. M. Adamson, D.S.O., and the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion, Major W. R. Patterson, was attached for the operation. The Eighty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. V. P. O'Donahoe, D.S.O., Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. C. Harbottle, D.S.O., and One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Warden, of the Eleventh Brigade, continued the advance to the left of the Third Division.

The Third Division's infantry had for their objective the enemy's first and second lines between the Vimy-Lens Railway and the Arras-Lens Road. The frontage of the raid allotted

to these troops covered a thousand yards, and the deepest advance amounted to eight hundred yards.

The night was most unfavourable, being dark and rainy. The men pressed eagerly forward in spite of it. The Royal Canadian Regiment met with the strongest resistance. A machine gun which caused considerable trouble was disabled. Alcove and Amulet trenches and a communication trench, all near the Railway, were scenes of fierce fighting, in which the bayonet was used freely and many Germans were killed. Elsewhere little resistance was encountered. In all quarters many dugouts were destroyed with Stokes bombs. It was estimated that over seventy dugouts were treated in this way. At 2.30 a.m., with sixty-two prisoners and four machine guns as trophies, and leaving behind them over seven hundred German casualties, the men of the Seventh Brigade returned to our lines.

Meanwhile, on the left the Eleventh Brigade had not been quite as fortunate. The German artillery only made a feeble reply to the advance of the Third Division. On the front of the Eleventh Brigade, however, a devastating fire had commenced at 8 p.m. and continued steadily until within half an hour of the raid. As soon as the intense barrage broke in thunder on the hostile lines at 11.45 p.m., the lull in the enemy's bombardment ceased and a violent fire was maintained thenceforth.

In the shelling prior to the launching of the raid, enough damage was done to have ruined the success of the Eleventh Brigade. Three platoons of the Seventy-fifth were buried by the bombardment and the survivors were dug out only just in time to attempt the attack on the Brewery, their allotted objective. Similarly, among the Eighty-seventh all the officers and N.C.O.'s detailed to lead the attack of that unit on the Brewery were killed or wounded before the hour came to advance.

At that hour, disregarding these mishaps, the Eleventh Brigade attacked. The Eighty-seventh Battalion, which had lost thirty killed and one hundred and ninety wounded before a single man crossed the Canadian parapet, did not secure all its objectives, but put in some very useful work with bombs and bayonet in the darkness about the embankments near the Brewery. Similarly, the Seventy-fifth Battalion did not take the Brewery or the trenches in front of the Electric Generating Station, but they too sent many Germans to their last account. The northerly troops of the One Hundred and Second Battalion took the allotted objectives, but the rest of the battalion could not do so, and was forced to confine itself to inflicting losses from outside.

At 1.45 a.m. the Eleventh Brigade withdrew. They had taken seventy prisoners and five machine guns, bombed and



destroyed three other machine guns and eighty dugouts, and, around Fosse 7 and La Coulotte, had accounted for three hundred Germans. They also kept possession of two small trenches named respectively Callous and Candle, and rapidly incorporated them into their defences.

The whole area raided by the Canadians had been most systematically wrecked. Capable officers were certain that only ruined dugouts and dead or dying Germans were left behind.

June 9th witnessed the departure of Lieut.-General Sir Julian Byng from the Canadian Corps. He was succeeded by Major-General Sir A. W. Currie. The occasion was one of intense regret for all concerned. Sir Julian had been immensely popular with everyone in the Corps, which enthusiastically accepted the title of the "Byng Boys." In the hands of the departing Corps Commander the force had gradually developed into an almost perfect fighting machine, ranked by many as the equal of the Old Army—greater praise there could not be.

On the other hand, equal to the regret at the loss of their Imperial leader was the pleasure felt at the succession of Sir A. W. Currie, a Canadian born and bred, to the command of the Dominion's forces in France. It signified the end of Canada's apprenticeship in the Workshop of War.

Sir Arthur Currie was succeeded by Brigadier-General A. C. Macdonell in the command of the First Division. Lieut.-Col. H. M. Dyer succeeded Brigadier-General Macdonell as commander of the Seventh Brigade on June 29th, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Hill, D.S.O., commanding in the meantime.

General Currie at once applied his vigorous methods to the guidance of the Canadians. In the North, Messines and the ridge associated with the name had fallen, and Sir Douglas Haig's plans were moving smoothly and rapidly towards the culmination of the year's campaign—the general advance beyond Ypres. The rôle of the First Army was now to drive the enemy into the Oppy-Mericourt-Vendin Line from Fresnoy onwards, take that Line and secure possession of Lens. The part of the Canadian Corps in this operation was to capture Adept, Agent and Keane Trenches as far as the Arras-Lens Railway. These were certain trenches forming a kind of advanced outpost line in front of the Oppy-Mericourt-Vendin Line on the Canadian front. At the same time, by means of feint attacks, the discharge of smoke and so forth, the enemy was to be deceived into imagining an attack on the main line imminent. The threat would compel him to pin large reserves to the vicinity. The real attack would come later, when things were more favourable.

Then, with dramatic suddenness, the Imperial troops on June 25th captured Hill 65, north of the Souchez River, which took

all the enemy's positions south of the river, where the Canadians were in enfilade, and rendered them untenable. The enemy at once withdrew on this front. Orders were immediately issued for the Third and Fourth Divisions to push forward patrols and ascertain if he had departed.

Patrols of the Twelfth Brigade made rapid progress, and by dusk were in possession of the majority of the trenches north of La Coulotte. The Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. C. Draper, D.S.O., advancing on the Third Division front, found the Germans still in strength and made no gains.

During the night arrangements were swiftly completed for a resumption of the advance on the Corps front under an artillery barrage, and at 7.30 a.m. the first shell wailed over and the patrols went on. The Twelfth Brigade employed the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. M. Edwards, D.S.O., on the right, the Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Clark, D.S.O., in the centre, and the Eighty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Borden, on the left. The last-named had replaced the Seventy-third Battalion in the Twelfth Brigade in April, the latter unit having been disbanded. To the south the Ninth Brigade attacked with the Forty-third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. Grassie, D.S.O., on the right, and the Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. A. Genet, D.S.O., on the left.

Practically no resistance was encountered, the Eighty-fifth Battalion, which wiped out the crew of a machine gun, took the gun and five prisoners and slew another thirty-five, meeting with most opposition. All the enemy's trenches in front of the system defending Eleu dit Leavitte and Avion were taken. The Third Division's infantry got to within three hundred yards of Avion. The men of the Fourth Division probed the ruins of Eleu and Avion Trench and found that the enemy held both lightly.

After dark the steady movement went on. The Third Division cleared the whole of Avion Trench around the village, while the Fourth Division crossed to the eastern side of the Arras-Lens Road and placed its outposts five hundred yards beyond on all their front as far north as the Souchez River.

This operation involved an attack at 2.30 a.m. under a strong artillery barrage. The Third Division, employing the Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. B. Evans, D.S.O., on the right, the Fifty-eighth Battalion in the centre, and the Forty-third Battalion on the left, met with little opposition. The Forty-third Battalion, moving with its right on the Arras-Lens Railway, encountered the most serious resistance, but by 5.30 a.m. held five hundred yards of Avion Trench.

At the same time the Fourth Division, represented by the

Twelfth Brigade, attacked all the portions of Avion Trench and Eleu on their front still in German hands. With the same dispositions as before, this brigade advanced rapidly to the attack close in lee of the barrage. On this front also all objectives were secured by 5.30 a.m.

During the rest of the morning of June 28th touch was established by the brigades with the troops on their flanks and strong patrols continued the advance. The Third Division, employing the Fifty-eighth and Forty-third Battalions, had lively fighting, and after securing a footing on certain points were forced to withdraw. The Twelfth Brigade, advancing at the same time—7.10—got into the south-western end of Avion. The enemy was firmly established in the north-eastern portion.

The troops of the Twelfth Brigade involved in this action were those already employed in the morning.

With the exception of a small advance on the night of June 29th, in which the Fifty-second Battalion pushed its posts north-east along Avion Trench until they were within a stone's-throw of the Avion-Mericourt Road, no further gains as a result of the enemy's withdrawal were realized. Much useful work had been done. Objectives which were originally expected to require serious fighting were taken without much effort. Our troops, though faced with a most formidable network of trenches and railways, were now close to Lens on the southern side.

The last of the fighting just recorded had taken place under very adverse weather conditions, in a pelting downpour of rain. All the strenuous operations of the past month, in fact, had been much handicapped by most uncertain weather. This was now to change, however, to a fine July and a steadily dull period of early August.

On July 1st the Third Canadian Division relieved the Fourth Canadian Division in its new positions on the edge of the flooded land in front of Cité St. Antoine. The Fourth Canadian Division went back to rest after as strenuous a two months as it had yet experienced.

July was not conspicuous for any greatly outstanding incident, but much activity of a minor character took place. Early in the month, to mislead the enemy as to that blow on the north, where the Second Army was poised to strike and the Third Battle of Ypres was fast approaching, it was decided that the First Army was to simulate an offensive on its whole front. The original project of breaking the Oppy-Mericourt-Vendin Line had been postponed for the present—our troops were now in a position whence the line could be assaulted at any time. The original plan of securing Lens still remained. The taking of Lens would bring fear to the enemy for the safety of Lille. An

attack on Lens from the north-west would, by the more direct threat against Lille, cause greater alarm to the Germans than one from the west or south.

To take Lens from the north-west we had first to take Hill 70, which stood like a solid breakwater in advance of the city. So the First Army decided that the primary step now required was to seize Hill 70. Its passing into our hands would give us possession of a buttress in the walls of Lens, essential observation over a wide front into and beyond the town, and would greatly improve our positions. It might even force the enemy out of the place without further fighting. Little hope of successful resistance could remain to the Germans when our men on Hill 70 had the whole fabric of their defences laid out before their view.

To the Canadian Corps was allotted the honour of capturing Hill 70 and, incidentally, Lens.

They had first, however, to secure the ground gained in June and to simulate an offensive on the whole of the front now held by them.

The entire month was spent in digging and wiring new trenches. Many thousands of yards of line were built and vast quantities of wire were erected. The enemy did his best to hinder the work. The measure of his success may be gauged by the fact that on the night of July 3rd he fired six hundred shells into the area where a single working party was engaged without either stopping the work or disabling one man.

In simulating an offensive we discharged large numbers of gas drums into Lens, so that the city reeked with gas and was pregnant with death. We also harried the roads and trenches wherein the hostile army had its being with endless heavy artillery bombardments. Our patrols were unceasingly active. Everywhere they set upon and drove back the enemy whenever met with in No Man's Land. Our guns and trench mortars went on steadily cutting barbed wire as if in preparation for an assault on trenches which actually we intended to leave severely alone.

Raids were frequent. The most noteworthy was one carried out by the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. S. Sharpe, which had replaced the Sixtieth Battalion in the Ninth Brigade. The battalion was full of eagerness to prove itself. And it did so—brilliantly.

The scene of the raid was the trenches about Siege 4, east of Avion, and the hour of advance 1 a.m. on July 23rd.

The enemy bombarded the area of operations not only before but throughout the raid, so that the men were forced to wear their respirators during the period of assembly and also in the earlier stages of the attack. In spite of this and the fact that the battalion had never yet been seriously engaged, everything



went smoothly. Many fine acts of courage were performed. Lieut. J. Hughes himself shot two Germans who attempted to train a machine gun on his men, and put the gun out of action. Major Currie, commanding "C" Company, though wounded in the face and deprived of all his subaltern officers, led his men with great courage throughout. Sergeant Houston alone killed four and captured one of the enemy.

After penetrating to a depth of four hundred yards on a front of six hundred, taking all objectives and over fifty prisoners and destroying a machine gun and trench mortar, the battalion withdrew at 1.35 a.m. Their losses totalled only seventy-four. The German casualties in the dugouts which the Canadians bombed must alone have equalled these.

The Germans repeatedly attempted to imitate these successful tactics, but without exception every one of their attempts ended in colossal failure.

While this activity was going on, silently and steadily the Corps was preparing for the forthcoming bid for Hill 70. On July 16th, having been relieved by the Thirty-first (Imperial) Division in the line on the right of the Corps front, the First Division completed the relief of the Sixth (Imperial) Division in the line at Loos. On July 26th the Fourth Division relieved the Third Division. This placed two of the three Canadian divisions which were to be employed on their battle fronts. The immediate entry of the Second Division into the line between these two divisions and the move of Corps Headquarters from Camblain l'Abbé, where they had been ever since the Vimy offensive, to Hersin-Coupigny, a place more central for the proposed assault, completed the necessary rearrangements of troops.

A glance at the map will show that the Canadians had all but won to the position on the very outskirts of Lens to which they had aspired for so long. North of the Souchez River, however, they were still some distance too far westward. The last days of July and the early days of August were therefore devoted to closing in on the town on that side. The Eleventh Brigade, by much heroic fighting by individuals and patrols, worked its way into the Cité du Moulin and finally held posts within a thousand yards of the innermost position of Lens. The Second Division also pushed forward its outposts to positions in Cité St. Edouard and Cité St. Emile, not a mile north-west of the city.

The days before the launching of the great attack were days in which the fury of preparation reached its height. Small raids harried the Germans incessantly. In wire-cutting, trench destruction and counter-battery work our guns were never silent. In reply, the Germans searched our areas ceaselessly. They hurled thousands upon thousands of gas shells into the streets

at night, for the benefit of our ration- and ammunition-bearing limbers making their way up to the front lines.

Gas-discipline was so good that practically no casualties resulted. The Germans were powerless to stop our preparations. At 4.25 a.m. on August 15th the guns broke rumbling into the wild tattoo of an intense barrage, and the Canadian infantry went out to write "Hill 70" on their colours in letters of blood and fire.

The attack was made on a front of eight thousand yards, from the Lens-Béthune Road in the south to the Bois Hugo in the north. The first objective was the German second line, which ran parallel to and just beyond the Lens-La Bassée Road. Then came the intermediate one which, except for a small portion on the left of the Second Canadian Division, lay everywhere on the front of the First Canadian Division. It was a non-descript line of trenches five hundred yards beyond the first objective. The second objective was the line of Commotion, Nun's Alley, Norman and Hugo Trenches, which ran along Emily Road to the switch railway west of Cité St. Auguste, thence to the Bois Hugo. At its greatest depth (near Cité St. Auguste) this represented an advance of two thousand yards beyond the first objective.

The following troops were employed :

On the right, from Lens-Béthune Road to five hundred yards north of the railway running west out of Cité St. Auguste, the Second Division, using on the right the Fourth and on the left the Fifth Brigades ; from the left of the Second Division to the Bois Hugo, the First Division, with the Second Brigade on the right and the Third upon the left. For the attack on the first objective, the battalions, from right to left, were the Eighteenth, Lieut.-Col. L. E. Jones, D.S.O., the Twenty-first, Lieut.-Col. E. W. Jones, D.S.O., the Twentieth, Lieut.-Col. H. V. Rorke, D.S.O., the Twenty-fifth, Major A. C. Blois, D.S.O., the Twenty-second, Lieut.-Col. T. L. Tremblay, D.S.O., the Fifth, Lieut.-Col. L. P. O. Tudor, D.S.O., the Tenth, Lieut.-Col. D. M. Ormond, D.S.O., the Sixteenth, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, D.S.O., the Thirteenth, Lieut.-Col. C. E. McCuaig, D.S.O., and the Fifteenth, Lieut.-Col. J. W. Forbes, D.S.O.

On the front of the Fourth Brigade and of the Third Brigade, which had then but a short distance to go, the same troops were used for the assault on the second objectives. But the Fifth and Second Brigades, which had to take the intermediate and the second objective and advance a greater distance, thrust the Twenty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. F. Ritchie, M.C., Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. R. Brown, D.S.O., Eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. M. Prower, D.S.O., and Seventh Battalion,

Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gilson, D.S.O., through the infantry assigned to the first objective and attacked the intermediate and second objectives with the fresh battalions named, which advanced from right to left as mentioned.

The business of the Eighteenth and Twenty-first Battalions was to make a right wheel from east to south-east, so that their line faced Lens and was in a position to ward off any counter-attack from the town. For the rest of the troops the advance was a straightforward easterly march.

The advance was timed so that the Second Brigade would be on the intermediate objective at the same hour as the rest of the attackers reached the second objective. The Second Brigade was then to push on and secure the second objective allotted to it.

Backing the fourteen Canadian battalions were the First, Second, Ninth and Tenth Brigades of Canadian Field Artillery, together with an Imperial brigade on the First Division front; the Fifth and Sixth Brigades of Canadian Field Artillery and two brigades of the artillery of the Forty-sixth (Imperial) Division on the front of the Second Division; further to the south, on the Fourth Division front, the Third and Fourth Brigades of Canadian Field Artillery, with two English brigades; dominating all were the First Canadian, Sixty-third and Sixty-fourth Groups of Heavy Artillery, for destructive fire, and the Second Canadian, Fifteenth and Fiftieth Groups of Heavy Artillery for the work of keeping down the reply of the enemy's batteries. Each field gun had a front of only twenty yards to cover. The result was one of the most intense creeping barrages ever employed.

Hundreds of Canadian machine guns supported their own divisions by a constant fire.

In the almost complete darkness the barrage stormed swiftly forward. Avion, far to the south, was pelted with gas drums and boiling oil was fired into Puit 14 on the left of the Second Division. Dense clouds of smoke were released on the front of the First Division. Covered by all this, the infantry pressed eagerly on and rapidly overran the enemy's forward position. The hostile artillery responded with remarkable promptness, the first shells of their barrage falling heavily on our front and support lines within three minutes of the commencement of our attack.

There was fierce fighting here and there—notably at a place in the German front line called Dynamite House—but nowhere any real check. Many brave deeds were accomplished. Corporal Purman, of the Tenth Battalion, rushed an enemy machine gun single-handed, and, though wounded in the arm as he ran, seized the gun and hurled it on top of the crew, who promptly—and wisely—surrendered. Further north Corporal Gracie, of the Six-

teenth Battalion, by deadly fire with his Lewis gun wiped out the entire crew of a hostile machine gun in a swift duel.

Half an hour after the Canadians had commenced to advance the whole of the first objective was taken. The assault now pushed on, the First and Second Divisions, with the exception of the Second Brigade, which had the intermediate objective to secure, advancing on the second and final objective.

All the troops but the Second Brigade met with little resistance during this stage of the attack. The German artillery had now distinctly slackened. By 5.40 a.m. the last yard of the final objective allotted to these men was in our hands.

The intermediate objective gave the Eighth and Tenth Battalions much trouble. Daylight was now rapidly approaching and the German machine gunners were able to see the lines of misty figures moving forward in the cold light of early morning. They fired furiously, so that the trenches resounded with the hollow tapping of the machine guns even above the steady roar of the barrage. But the Second Brigade, as invincible as ever, ignored its losses, cleared the objective in bitter conflict, and, to quote the laconic report of a company commander, at all points "arrived on time."

Touch was rapidly established with the flanks, and the Eighth and Seventh Battalions advanced to the attack on their final objective, the thousand yards of trench, railway and quarry in the centre of the line coveted by the Canadian Corps.

These battalions had suffered severe losses in their advance to the intermediate objective. The result was that in the face of the extremely stubborn defence against which they now attacked they lacked the weight to drive home their assault.

The German machine guns in the trenches in front and on the flanks, in Cité St. Auguste, the Chalk Quarry and the railway, with one accord turned their fire on the advancing infantry. The attack in this frightful fire gradually lost momentum and became a slow progress from shell-hole to shell-hole by the few gallant survivors of the leading waves. Eventually the Eighth Battalion was definitely checked half-way up to the final objective. The Seventh Battalion was held up in front of the wire guarding the western edges of the Quarry. With great difficulty and through a diabolical fire, Lieut. Clarke and fifty men of the battalion secured a footing in the Quarry, but were unable to clear it.

The Canadian advance on the whole, however, had been a swift and unqualified success. The hour for the further development of the plan had come. It was thought that the threat to Lens might by this time be reasonably expected to have caused the evacuation of the city, and word was accordingly passed to the Eleventh Brigade, waiting eagerly to send strong patrols



forward, that it was to advance and see if the Germans had withdrawn from their positions west of and in Lens itself.

Accordingly, at 8.25 a.m. patrols of the Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Harbottle, on the right, and the Eighty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. O'Donahoe, on the left, advanced behind an artillery barrage.

The Germans, when the main attack on Hill 70 was launched, had made by far their strongest artillery reply upon the west of the city, where no infantry actually moved forward. This was natural, for the advances of the Canadians for weeks past had been upon that front. Thoroughly warned by the attack, they were ready to meet any such a thrust as that now delivered with a repetition of their heaviest gun fire. As it was with the hostile artillery, so it was with the infantry. These had not retired, but, on the contrary, were ready to make a desperate resistance. In fact, the whole defence of the Germans was of the most obstinate character, as their violent counter-attacks on the north were soon to prove.

The patrols, advancing with the primary object of occupying Aconite and Alpaca Trenches, five hundred yards ahead, and the Green Crassier, a huge triangular slag-heap north of the Souchez River, were greeted as soon as they emerged from their trenches with an indescribably heavy fire of all arms. In spite of this the survivors took Aconite Trench, passed into the houses east of it, and secured possession of several important points in the vicinity. The Green Crassier and Alpaca Trench they could not take. The very heavy rifle and machine gun fire from these positions, which were strongly held, defied all their efforts.

At 10.15 a.m. the Germans vigorously counter-attacked and drove our men back to Bell Street, two hundred and fifty yards beyond. Here the Germans were held after fierce fighting and eventually the line of Bell Street was consolidated.

While this was in progress, the two divisions to the north had been working like slaves in preparing their hard-won ground for defence and the first of the German counter-attacks had developed.

The rest of the story of that August day is one long record of the repulse of innumerable counter-attacks. In the whole story of Canadian achievements there is nothing finer than this tale of the holding of the new gains upon Hill 70.

The first of these counter-attacks took place about 8.45 a.m., when the Germans advanced in two waves against Commotion Trench, held by the Twenty-first, Twentieth and Twenty-fourth Battalions. The waves were withered and beaten back by a tempest of rifle, Lewis' gun and machine gun fire on the grey slopes in front of the trench. At 9 a.m. masses of the enemy were observed

gathering and were shelled and rent to pieces by our watchful artillery. Between 10.30 and 11 a.m. the masses gathered again, clouds of tiny figures seen through the smoke of battle on the plains in the far distance among the mines, and nearer figures which looked like ants in the trenches to the eyes of the men behind the guns. Once more our shells broke in whooping thunder among these masses of men, surrounding them with points of twinkling fire and scattering death in their midst.

At 11.45 a.m. the Germans, moving down from the north across the open, advanced against the Fifteenth Battalion, that strong hinge on the extreme left of the First Division. The infantry and the artillery combined against them and the attack collapsed in disorder.

At 12.30 p.m. the Germans emerged from the Bois Hugo and fiercely attacked the Thirteenth Battalion, while they endeavoured at the same time to push down Humbug Alley. There was desperate fighting with bombs, and the attackers were driven back.

In defeating this attack the infantry had great assistance from the artillery, which switched from target to target with magnificent promptness and accuracy.

While this was going on the Fifteenth Battalion, on the left, was again heavily attacked, this time in great force. Four waves of the enemy stormed up against the defenders, their bayonets fixed and their faces filled with a wild despair. The artillery and the machine guns reaped a bloody harvest among these desperate ranks and left many dead or dying on the ground. One or two Germans got into the trenches held by our men, but they were promptly bombed out by a dashing counter-attack.

About half an hour after this sanguinary defeat the enemy made a second attempt to get into the trenches of the Fifteenth Battalion, but were easily driven back by rifle fire. At 1.47 p.m. the enemy launched yet another counter-attack, this time against the Twenty-fourth Battalion. This unit, calmly holding its trenches as it had held them all the morning, met the advance with an accurate and rapid fire. The Germans pressed on bravely, falling everywhere, but they were playing a lost game. The attack was finally checked well beyond the Canadian positions, with the heaviest loss.

Forty minutes after the development of this assault, the Germans hurled their grey waves against the Eighteenth Battalion. After losing heavily and fighting with great fury, the enemy eventually gained a slight footing in Chicory Trench. A counter-attack was quickly organized, and by 5 p.m. the last of the hostile infantry was driven out of that small gain for which they had paid so much.

While this struggle was in progress, the enemy once more attempted to drive back the Fifteenth Battalion. Various parties came rushing along the different communication trenches leading up to the line held by the battalion, in another despairing effort to clear the Canadians out. The battalion stood as firm as the mountains of the land of their Scottish forbears and the attack was hurled back in ruin from every point.

At 5.25 p.m., as the blue twilight was closing down on the bitterly contested ground, a last frantic counter-attack was made upon this battalion. Their S.O.S. rockets floating above the trenches in the distance roused our tireless artillery, and the fury of an intense shell fire overwhelmed the Germans and drove them flying to their own lines, leaving many dead in front of the Fifteenth Battalion's positions. This was the last attempt against the left flank.

It is not too much to say that the great defence of the Fifteenth Battalion at that critical point was one of the primary causes of the successful retention of the new line.

At 6 p.m. a hostile concentration was observed to be taking place on the front where lay the trenches which the Second Brigade had as yet been unable to secure. A new attack on these trenches had been planned, and at 6 p.m. the barrage to cover this attack commenced. Heavy losses, difficulties of communication and other causes made it impossible for the Seventh and Eighth Battalions to advance. The barrage, however, served a most useful purpose, for it shattered the German masses gathering on the front.

The evening came steadily on, the front quietened, and at 8.50 p.m. it seemed that the Germans had exhausted themselves. At this hour, however, the S.O.S. was suddenly fired from one end of the Corps front to the other. The guns responded with superb promptness, and the darkness beyond the Canadian outposts was split with fire. After half an hour's barrage the artillery gradually slackened off. Word filtered through that the Twenty-fourth Battalion had beaten off two counter-attacks, one delivered through the trenches and one across the open, and the left of the Fourth Division had also successfully accounted for an attempted enemy advance. Everywhere else the German infantry had been caught in the barrage and destroyed.

Quietness came once again, and the rest of the night passed calmly.

Such is the record of a day as full of terrific fighting as any in the annals of the Canadian Corps. A most successful blow of devastating power had been delivered. During the day prisoners of four different enemy regiments (equivalent to British brigades) had been taken. All the support battalions of the troops

holding the line had been engaged by 6 a.m. Thence troops from reserve were steadily thrown in and as steadily engaged by our guns, with the fine observation at their disposal, as soon as they came within range, shattered by our infantry and utterly defeated.

During the night the Fifth and Tenth Battalions relieved the Seventh and Eighth Battalions, prior to making an attack with the object of taking the portion of the final objectives still retained by the enemy.

The two outgoing units went back to reserve after as glorious a day as any in their annals.

Mention must be made of the splendid gallantry displayed by Private M. J. O'Rourke, of the Seventh Battalion, during the fighting of this period, gallantry which later won for him the Victoria Cross. Private O'Rourke was a stretcher-bearer and had already won the Military Medal. His performance on Hill 70 is one long record of self-sacrifice. He repeatedly tended the wounded, bringing them food and water and dressing their injuries under that frightful enemy fire. Several times he was buried by shells, but when ordinary men would have retired with shattered nerves, he continued to carry on. On one occasion one of our men, blinded by a shot, was seen standing in No Man's Land beyond our barrage, hands outstretched, a pitiful object of compassion. O'Rourke, disregarding the fire of friend and foe alike, won through the hell that lay between and brought the man into safety. On another occasion, when certain of our posts were forced to fall back, O'Rourke brought in a wounded man who had been left behind, though the enemy's fire was unceasing and intense.

O'Rourke was of the type that stands for all that is best in man.

In the first hours of daylight on August 16th the enemy made a feeble effort with three small parties to attack the Thirteenth Battalion. These attempts were all beaten off with bombs and rifle fire. At 4 p.m. an intense barrage began, and the Fifth and Tenth Battalions advanced to make their attack.

The Fifth Battalion attacked on the right. The Tenth Battalion, when two hundred yards from their objective, were held up by a furious machine gun fire. Their Lewis guns at once engaged the machine guns, and, after a strenuous duel, secured the mastery and enabled the advance to proceed. There was violent fighting for the objectives, but one hour after the commencement of the advance they were firmly in our grasp. During this struggle a trench a short distance west of the Quarry yielded a large number of prisoners. Posts were quickly established in front of the objective, and not a moment too soon.

Between 7 and 8 p.m. a counter-attack in great force developed,



It lasted over an hour, and the severity of the fighting may be gauged from the fact that the battalions never ceased firing during the whole of that time. There was an obscure swaying to and fro of the battle, but eventually our troops drove off the enemy, who gained nothing. On a portion of the Fifth Battalion front a slight withdrawal finally took place, as very few men were left and ammunition was exhausted.

During the counter-attack the artillery lent admirable support to the infantry. The German waves rolled up in the dark and were blasted by rifle and machine gun fire, swayed, recoiled desperately, their dead strewn on the ground, and were driven back into the barrage and smashed to pieces there. Again they came up and recoiled and were shattered and rallied, and came on and were shattered again. So it went until even the finest of the enemy's troops were forced to cry "Enough!" and vanish into their own lines, defeated.

For a time there was peace. Half an hour after midnight the horror began again. A vast German counter-attack developed on the whole Corps front, covered by a heavy barrage to which our guns replied vigorously in response to the widespread S.O.S. Dim waves of Germans came on in the fierce light of flares, surrounded by vivid haloes of flame, ear-splitting tumult and smoke. One could imagine them thrust into the furnace by a panic-stricken General Staff in rear, without reason or a chance of success. Masses were driven back by the Fourth Battalion of the First Brigade, which was in the process of relieving the rest of the First Division, and which was holding the Quarry. On the entire Canadian front, following terrible slaughter, the enemy's attack was finally repulsed when within one hundred yards of our positions by the deadly precision of our rifle and machine gun fire.

It was during the repulse of these great counter-attacks that a runner of the Tenth Battalion, Private Harry Brown, a young lad, carried a message through the enemy's barrage when all the telephone wires were cut and it was impossible to call for artillery support except by runner. Brown with another soldier was told that the message must be delivered at all costs—the Germans were even then massing in front of the Canadian line. The other man was killed. Brown worked his way alone through the annihilating shell fire. His arm was shattered to bits, but he kept on, his teeth set and his body racked with agony. Drenched with blood and sweat, he reached his destination, staggered in, and gasping "Important message!" fell down the steps of the dugout.

He died a few hours later, never regaining consciousness. But he had saved the men in the line. The counter-attack was

repulsed and Brown got the Victoria Cross. There never was a decoration more bravely earned.

During the day the Second Division bombed northward along Norman Trench to gain touch with the First Division on the left. On the right the Eighteenth Battalion, which had taken a large portion of Amulet and Colza Trenches, was compelled to evacuate these gains, as the Eleventh Brigade on its right found it impossible to conform.

On the early morning of August 18th the enemy renewed his counter-attacks with as great a fury as ever. His first assault was made upon the Fourth Battalion at 2.30 a.m. The Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. T. Thomson, D.S.O., M.C., waited until the Germans were within eighty yards of the outposts. Then they opened fire with every rifle and Lewis gun which could be brought to bear. The effect was staggering, and the assaulting waves literally disappeared, shrivelled up in the fire.

There was a short period of quietness, but by 3 a.m. the whole Corps front was under intense artillery bombardment. This continued for forty minutes, and dumps blew up, men fell wounded and killed in every part of the line; in the outposts and the fire-trenches in front, every man was on the alert, enduring the hellish barrage with grim steadiness for the sake of the compensation that was coming. At 4.45 a.m. the enemy's fire lifted and their infantry advanced.

The full power of the attack fell on the Twenty-first, Second and Fourth Battalions. The Germans gained a slight footing in the Chicory Trench near the La Bassée Road. The Twenty-first Battalion, holding the line here, counter-attacked with energy and swiftness, and threw the Germans out again before they had time to realize it. The Fourth Battalion, in the Chalk Quarry, was attacked once more, but with equally futile results. Our barrage, which had come down on a line two hundred yards nearer our positions than before, burst into the very midst of the attack and blasted it asunder. The enemy, caught in the rush of shrapnel and high explosive, died like trapped wolves. Their losses were very heavy.

On the front of the Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. T. McLaughlin, D.S.O., there was terrific fighting. The enemy had bombarded this unit with great fury, and large numbers of the hostile infantry then emerged from the portions of the Bois Hugo still held by them and bore down on the Canadians like a whirlwind.

For a moment Major O'K. M. Learmouth's company was surprised. Major Learmouth rapidly gathered some of his men about him and led a counter-attack against the Germans. The dash and vigour of this rush completely restored the situation. There

followed a long and desperate struggle in which the enemy, covered by a most intense fire of machine guns, fought like madmen, and bombs and bayonets were used with fearful effect by both sides. Major Learmouth was the soul of the defence. He stood up on the parapet of the trench, catching the enemy's bombs and hurling them back into the packed masses raving around him. He was the centre of an endless hail of bullets, but seemed to bear a charmed life. At last he was mortally wounded, but continued to direct his men, inspiring them to a magnificent resistance. Everywhere he was to be found, shouting to the men to stand fast. Physical exhaustion notwithstanding, he insisted on remaining with the company until all danger had passed and he had handed over the command. Unable to move, this invincible leader was finally carried out in dying condition.

The Victoria Cross was awarded to Major Learmouth for his gallantry in those dreadful hours.

The Victoria Cross was won also in the repulse of the German counter-attacks by Sergeant Frederick Hobson, of the Twentieth Battalion. A Lewis gun holding an important trench junction on the front of this battalion was silenced by a shell during the enemy's preliminary bombardment, all but one man of the crew being killed. Sergeant Hobson, though not himself a Lewis gunner, at once rushed forward and extricated the gun. The enemy at that moment attacked. He opened fire upon them till the gun jammed. Realizing the desperate nature of the position and the danger to the safety of the line that would follow any success of the Germans at that point, Sergeant Hobson left the sole survivor of the crew, who had now recovered from the first shock, to repair the gun, and ran out alone to meet the enemy. Using the bayonet and the butt freely, he dashed into the midst of his antagonists. Stricken with momentary terror when this one man attacked them, they recoiled. For several minutes Hobson held them at bay. Then a bullet killed him; the German attack swept up again. By that time, however, the Lewis gun had been repaired, reinforcements arrived, and the attack was bloodily repulsed.

Hobson's heroic sacrifice had not been in vain. Once more the Canadian line was held by the gallantry of a single man.

The rest of the day passed quietly. During the night a small withdrawal was made on the extreme right of the First Division, it having been found inadvisable to hold the outposts as they then existed.

The last desperate bid for Hill 70 had now been made by the Germans. Thenceforth no more serious counter-attacks were made. While all this strenuous fighting had been going on north-west of Lens, continuous local actions of a fierce character

had been in progress on the front of the Fourth Division, west of the city. An effort had been made on August 17th at 4.35 a.m. to capture Aloof Trench. The trench had been entered in several places, but finally all footing was lost. A slight advance on a five-hundred-yard front immediately south of the Lens-Grenay Railway followed on the night of August 18th. This was carried out by the Tenth Brigade.

On August 20th there was long and hard battling on the front, north of the Souchez River, where the Tenth Brigade was striving with the utmost gallantry to gain the last of the objectives originally assigned to the Fourth Canadian Division on August 15th. The struggle took place around Amulet and Aloof Trenches. The Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Dawson, D.S.O., secured possession of several buildings well in advance of their line, but were mercilessly shelled and were forced to withdraw. Later attempts to re-establish our posts in these buildings were unsuccessful. The Fiftieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. F. Page, D.S.O., on the left of the Forty-sixth, meanwhile had been violently engaged. Posts which were placed in Aloof Trench after desperate fighting were finally driven back to Amulet Trench by a strong counter-attack, combined with the raking fire of a number of machine guns placed in commanding positions in houses east of the trench.

While all the furious fighting subsequent to August 15th was in progress, the Canadian Corps, fully alive to the fact that, instead of retiring, the enemy was resolved to contest every foot of ground, had been preparing steadily to carry out another attack in force with the object of tightening the jaws of the pinchers slowly closing around Lens. On August 21st, at 4.35 a.m., the new attack was delivered by the Tenth Brigade on the right and the Sixth Brigade on the left, which employed the following units, named in order from right to left :

The Forty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. M. Frances, the Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Dawson, the Fiftieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Page ; these belonged to the Tenth Brigade. The Sixth Brigade attacked with the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Daly, and the Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. S. Latta, D.S.O.

The attack was covered by an intense artillery and machine gun barrage.

The objective of the Tenth Brigade consisted of a line about fifteen hundred yards long in Alpaca and in front of Aeonite and Aloof Trenches. This entailed an advance of about three hundred yards and the subjection of many strongly defended houses and small lines of trench. To the north, the Sixth Brigade had to advance on a front of about one mile to a maximum



depth of five hundred yards. Their objective consisted of the general line of Combat, Cinnabar and Nun's Alley Trenches as far north as Commotion Trench. These positions were strongly held and fringed with belts of formidable wire.

The attack falls automatically in the telling into two distinct parts, which if described simultaneously result only in a confused, incoherent story. The first part is that of the Tenth Brigade, where, except on the left, complete success was realized after heavy fighting. The second part is that of the Sixth Brigade, which succeeded almost everywhere in attaining its objectives but lost so heavily in trying to take what still remained untaken and in holding the positions it won, that it could not withstand the unrelenting pressure of the enemy and had eventually to relinquish all for which it sacrificed so much. The attack of the brigade was a failure, but, like the Gallipoli failure, a splendid one. Canadians will never have a prouder memory than that of the unsuccessful attack by these men from Manitoba and British Columbia and the North-west, on August 21st, within rifle-shot of Lens.

To describe, then, the part played by the Tenth Brigade.

The brigade swept forward at dawn under cover of its barrage. The Fiftieth Battalion started under exceedingly adverse conditions. Just before zero, that hour at which the quiet of the morning was broken by the sudden crash of artillery and the shouts of advancing men, the battalion had the misfortune to be heavily and consistently shelled. Casualties were severe. None the less the battalion, depleted though it was, pressed forward. It instantly met with the fire of a host of massed machine guns in Aloof Trench and in every house and building overlooking the area astride the Lens-Grenay Railway. The effects were instant. The men who survived in places got into the objective, but their gallantry was in vain. At noon the remains of the battalion were back in the original line.

Meanwhile the Forty-sixth Battalion on their left and the Forty-seventh Battalion beyond had battered their way in the face of very heavy machine gun fire into their objectives.

The fighting on the front of these two battalions was of a desperate and prolonged nature. The battalions, continually counter-attacked, harassed by point-blank machine gun fire and violent shelling, worked their way steadily and doggedly through their objectives. By 5 p.m. these had been entirely taken, after a day of bloody and furious individual conflict. The Forty-seventh Battalion withstood six determined rushes of the enemy during the day, engaging and driving them back in rough-and-tumble struggles with bayonets and hand-grenades.

During this fighting of the Forty-seventh Battalion west

of Lens, a member of the unit, Private Felip Konowal, won the Victoria Cross for as sustained an effort of individual daring and fierceness as any ever recorded. Konowal was a Russian, with all the cold-blooded contempt for human life and for personal danger common to his race. He was in charge of a section, to whom he continually set a magnificent example. He "mopped-up" numerous cellars, craters and machine gun emplacements. On one occasion he personally bayoneted three Germans in a cellar. On another, single-handed he killed seven who fought madly for their lives in a crater. Yet again, in the midst of a desperate struggle, he rushed a machine gun emplacement whence a machine gun was holding up the advance of the right. He calmly entered the emplacement alone, killed the entire crew and brought back the gun. Not satisfied with this achievement, he repeated it the following day, killing the whole of the crew of a machine gun and then destroying the gun and emplacement with explosives.

Altogether this most gallant fighter killed at least sixteen of the enemy single-handed, and it was only when completely exhausted by wounds that his ardour was satisfied.

Men like Konowal made the individual Canadian soldier the terror of his enemies and the pride of his own country.

The Sixth Brigade meanwhile had been most heavily engaged.

Before the hour of assault a severe bombardment had been directed against the brigade almost continuously. It ceased shortly before the battalions advanced, and though the casualties had been many, hope was high and unusual difficulty was not anticipated.

A sudden hurricane of trench mortar bombs was fired on the left trenches of the Twenty-ninth Battalion just as the men were getting ready to "go over." Ten minutes before the hour, at 4.25 a.m., the two platoons of the battalion holding the left were violently attacked. There was fierce and hard fighting, the platoons doing their utmost against a greatly superior force to retain their positions, guarding the whole of the impending attack from a rush in flank which would be its ruin. The struggle was deadly, all the Canadian officers at the threatened point being killed or wounded, together with most of the senior N.C.O.'s. In this desperate situation Sergeant Croll rose nobly to the occasion, took command of the men and held the trench against all comers. At the crisis of affairs a platoon of the Twenty-eighth Battalion reinforced the threatened post and temporarily relieved the situation.

But the hour of attack had come, the full fury of the Canadian guns had been loosed, the barrage was shrieking and whistling over the heads of the attacking infantry, and still the fight on

the left was going on. A final effort pressed the Germans back; those leaders still on their feet rallied their men, and the left pushed forward in line with the general advance.

There can be only one solution to explain the dreadful opposition which was instantly encountered on the whole front of the Sixth Brigade, and especially on the extreme left. The solution lies in the fact that the enemy must have been not only about to launch a general counter-attack, but must have actually launched it when the troops moved out. For, without warning, there suddenly bore down upon the feeble left a great number of the Fifth Guard Grenadiers (among the finest of the German infantry). At the same time a terrific barrage fire started on the whole of the Canadian front line. Fortunately, as the Sixth Brigade started its attack from a line in No Man's Land, the leading waves escaped this fire.

While "D" Company of the Twenty-ninth Battalion saw these men sweeping towards them, "C" Company, the centre company of the battalion and fighting to the south of "D" Company, came upon a great force of the enemy deployed along Twisted Alley and obviously about to advance. The surprise such a meeting created was mutual. Then the ranks closed and both sides rushed at each other with levelled bayonets.

There followed such a fight at close quarters with cold steel as has rarely been seen either in the Great War or any other—a fight in No Man's Land, in front of the Canadian objective, that old Homer would have loved.

The left of "D" Company, slashed by point-blank machine gun fire and already greatly weakened by its defence of the flank, was completely wiped out. But the Canadians inflicted even greater loss, for the Twenty-ninth Battalion were masters of the art of bayonet-fighting. Fifteen minutes of pistol-work, the trampling underfoot of dead and dying men, and the swaying struggle of a host of determined opponents, ended in the collapse of the enemy, and the Twenty-ninth pushed forward. Those that remained got into Cinnabar Trench at its junction with Nabob Alley, and, reinforced by "A" Company, led by Major Grimmett, which came up at a decisive moment, the left went on with a rush and captured the whole of Nun's Alley within the allotted objectives.

"C" Company was not everywhere so successful. A strong point held by one machine-gun and surrounded by a web of unbroken wire met the renewed advance of the company with an annihilating fusillade. Instantly the whole of the company was virtually destroyed.

There was a temporary check while the few survivors of this sudden opposition, seeking shelter in shell-holes from the

devastating swish of endless streams of bullets and the blast of great shells, took stock of the position. Then Lieut. Carter, though already shot in the chest, rushed at the gun, a handful of men behind him. He was killed at once; his body fell in the wire that guarded that little devil of steel and the rush melted away. Sergeant Stevens, now in command, rose up among the dead of his company, and himself attacked the gun. It killed him and a corporal who followed him.

It was at this juncture that Company Sergeant-Major R. Hanna, in command of the company, since no officers remained, arrived upon the scene. He took in the situation at a glance—saw the corpses of his men all about him, wounded crawling madly for shelter, and, dominating that dreary shambles where so many gallant men lay stiffening in blood, the machine gun rapping out whistling death beyond.

In the midst of this mortal hell he proceeded, calmly and steadfastly, made of that stuff which knows not fear, to organize a final rush. That done, he led the attack, seconded nobly by the living that remained to him. Single-handed he pushed through the wild tornado of machine gun fire. With the flame from the gun in his face, he climbed through the barbed wire to destroy it alone. Single-handed he killed three of the crew with the bayonet and brained the last with the butt of his rifle. The gun was silenced, and the advance, relieved from its fire at last, went on.

Hanna was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross for a deed that should live as long as Canada itself.

The position on the front of the Twenty-ninth Battalion was that, by noon, except for a gap of four hundred yards between the extreme right and the rest of the battalion, the whole of its objectives were taken.

The Twenty-seventh Battalion all this time had been dealing with opposition equally as stubborn. Advancing with the creeping barrage after a gruelling bombardment of their line, the right of the battalion overcame a most determined defence, forced its way into strongly held trenches through a mass of wire, and hurled the enemy out of the objective in nearly four hours of hand-to-hand conflict. Lieut. J. W. Wood, leading a portion of the company, himself stormed a machine gun post in the western end of Combat Trench, killing five of the crew and capturing two prisoners.

The centre company, however, was not so fortunate. It encountered a very determined defence and a large amount of barbed wire, with the result that it never got into Combat Trench. It also encountered a machine gun post which, in spite of several determined attacks, was never taken. The company managed



to establish and hold a post in Cinnabar Trench north of Combat. The left company, together with a platoon of the reserve company, battled its way into Combat Trench and also into Cinnabar on either side of Conductor Trench. During the morning, after herculean effort, touch was gained by this company with the Twenty-ninth Battalion on the left.

During the morning also Major A. J. S. Taunton, D.S.O., and Lieut. J. M. MacKie organized and personally led a gallant effort to overpower the resisting machine gun post on the front of "B" Company in the centre. The effort failed, and thenceforth the post remained active and inflicted much loss.

The business of the Sixth Brigade was now to hold the ground they had gained. It was a terrible task. The enemy swept their positions with fire, shelled them with an intensity rarely equalled, sniped them from every possible point, and never ceased from first to last to counter-attack. The German infantry seemed to pour in an endless stream from the houses of Lens. The Canadians who were unfortunate enough to be in the open could find no shelter from this unceasing pressure. In many cases the ground they held was strewn with a deep mass of bricks, stone and other débris into which it was impossible to dig.

During the afternoon, it being quite hopeless to attempt consolidation in this rubble, the right of the Twenty-seventh Battalion fell back two hundred yards and dug-in on the line thus taken up. But even this was of little avail.

At 4 p.m. the inevitable end had come. The survivors of the attack of the brigade at that hour had been forced to fall back everywhere to our original line. It was a heart-breaking end to as magnificent an effort as could be conceived.

This may be said with truth—the losses of the Germans must have been at least equal to our own. The toll taken by the bayonet-fighters in No Man's Land was greatest on the German side. Later, the casualties inflicted by our guns and small arms, which fired throughout the day, were very heavy. A final consolation lies in the achievement of so much of the original aim when the attack was opposed with such ardour from the outset.

The fighting of August 21st finally ceased after a violent assault by the enemy on our positions in Chicory Trench. The false hope which his expensive success north-west of Lens had evidently aroused within him was violently shattered, for this effort was completely repulsed with severe loss.

This concluded the fighting of the Canadian Corps in the neighbourhood of Hill 70. During the period August 15th–22nd, twenty-four officers and one thousand three hundred and fifty-four others had been taken prisoners by the Corps. The futile

counter-attacks subsequent to August 15th had cost the enemy two fresh divisions. Altogether at least four German divisions had been practically destroyed. A most important position had been taken. All this was achieved at a cost of one hundred and ninety-nine officers and five thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine men killed, wounded and missing in the Canadian Corps. Of these, thirty-three officers and eight hundred and thirty-five men had been killed.

The British artillery, Canadian and Imperial, had borne a noble share in the victory. Their barrage work had been perfect, and on all occasions they responded to the repeated calls upon them with splendid skill and precision. As an example of their devotion it may be mentioned that on the night of August 17th they had maintained an incessant barrage though violently bombarded by high explosives and immense quantities of gas shell, which forced them to wear their respirators almost continuously.

The fighting west of Lens was fated to continue for a considerable period after that on the north-west had ceased. On August 23rd, at 3 a.m., General Hilliam's tireless Tenth Brigade attacked Fosse St. Louis and the Green Crassier.

The attack was carried out by the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. D. Davies, D.S.O. Two companies attacked and one company followed and "mopped-up" the dugouts, trenches and houses, which the waves in front passed over. After half an hour's fierce battling in the narrow defiles of trench and up and down the vast mountain of shifting slag, the Crassier and Alpaca Trench were taken. Fosse St. Louis was a scene of great slaughter and ceaseless fighting throughout the day. Two platoons of the Forty-fourth Battalion, assisted by the Forty-seventh Battalion, which co-operated on the north side, made desperate efforts in the face of the ceaseless fire of five machine guns to gain a footing in that mass of battered steel. It was not until 8.30 a.m. that the machine guns were overpowered and the place cleared of the enemy.

Immediately after the loss of the Fosse the Germans began a series of terrific counter-attacks against the men holding the place, disregarding casualties, time and fatigue. At the same time they continually strove to take back the Green Crassier and Alpaca Trench. Up and down the fight swayed, and there were many dead on the ground.

Fosse St. Louis changed hands at least three times. The enemy had a trick of emerging with a sudden rush of men from a tunnel in the shadows of the building and overpowering our posts in one fierce sweep. Thereafter the Canadians holding the posts entered the place again, to clear it with a shower of

grenades, a press of red bayonets and the converging fire of Lewis guns.

Time and again Captain Martyn, of the Forty-fourth Battalion, led his men into that place of horror.

Meanwhile the Green Crassier was rendered absolutely untenable by the combined bombardment of all the Germans guns within range. Machine gun bullets mingled with the shrieking shrapnel playing like lightning over the slag. Not one man who attempted either to reach or leave the Crassier won through alive.

At 3 p.m. a combined assault on the Crassier resulted in its passing into the hands of the enemy. Only a few survivors came back from it. At the same time, throwing up all hope of carrying the Fosse by assault, the enemy shelled our posts out of the place by a violent bombardment. Alpaca Trench was held, however, despite a final rush upon it, and the assault was beaten back. Our Lewis guns around the Fosse took up positions whence the whole of the interior might be denied to the enemy.

Thus ended a day of sustained and terrible effort. The Forty-fourth Battalion, already much depleted by its previous fighting, had lost seven officers and two hundred and fifty-three men casualties. On the other hand, the German losses were estimated as from four to six times our own. Practically no prisoners were taken.

Certain reliefs had now been completed. The Third Canadian Division, on August 23rd, had relieved the First and Second Canadian Divisions, which went out to enjoy, at Bruay and Cambain l'Abbé respectively, the rest they had so nobly earned. This was followed on August 27th by the relief of the right brigade of the Third Division by the Sixth (Imperial) Division and a consequent shortening of the front.

The operations on the Canadian line were now to quieten gradually. Much minor activity still enlivened the autumn days.

On September 4th three companies of the Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. W. Foster, made a powerful raid on Cinnabar Trench from Nun's Alley to a point four hundred yards south of it. The whole of the raid, which was launched at 12.35 a.m. under cover of an artillery barrage and clouds of smoke, went without a hitch. Nun's Alley, near Cinnabar Trench, was found to be full of dead. Here all dugouts were destroyed. In the centre of the objective, "B" Company was much hampered by barbed wire and machine guns, but broke into the crowded trenches and wiped out the garrison. Captain Fryer, leading "D" Company on the right, was killed early in the raid and Lieut. King, who took command, though his arm was broken,

remained with his men through it all and reported all details of the raid to his battalion commander before he would leave the line. Cinnabar Trench was packed with Germans and very severe hand-to-hand fighting took place, the enemy resisting gallantly and refusing to capitulate until only a sergeant-major and seven men were left. These, together with three others and several machine guns, were taken and all our casualties safely brought back to our own line. On withdrawal, the raiders established a post three hundred yards in front of our former line, and this was afterwards maintained there.

On September 8th the relief by the First Canadian Division of portions of the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions placed the oldest formation back in the line. The Third Division thereupon "side-slipped," taking over a portion of the front hitherto held by the Thirty-first (Imperial) Division in front of Mericourt. On September 14th the Second Canadian Division, relieving the left sector of the Third Division, also returned to the trenches. A portion of the left of the First Division was subsequently relieved by the Seventy-first Brigade of Imperial troops. Thus from north to south the Canadians were now disposed as follows: First Division, Fourth Division, Second Division, Third Division. The whole front had shifted southwards, and where but one division had held the line astride the Souchez River, four were now disposed.

The gathering of the Canadian divisions south-west of Lens was actually the prelude to what was intended to be the last and final assault on the town. The Canadian authorities had been quick to grasp the fact that the Germans were prepared for all attacks from the direction of Hill 70 or from the west, and that further assaults from these quarters would meet with intense opposition and would probably cost heavily. It was therefore decided that an attack from the south-west, where quietness had reigned for so long, would stand the best chance of success.

The plan was first formulated in the last week of August, and preparations were to be completed by the beginning of October. Then with sudden swiftness the entire scheme was postponed—as it afterwards ensued, for ever.

During the whole summer, from July 31st onwards, the great offensive in the North had been in progress. The time had now come for the culminating blow of the campaign. In that hour Sir Douglas Haig turned to that weapon which a season of unbroken fighting had proved to be one upon which, as ever, he might implicitly rely. On October 7th the first suggestion of employing the Corps at Passchendaele was raised. Within a week it was moving swiftly and secretly to the North, the new battle-field that was yet as old to them as the Corps itself.



Thus Lens never fell into Canadian hands, though their guns had been beating at the very gates of that stronghold. Yet the name is one of the proudest with which British troops were ever associated. In six months of bloody and sustained effort the Canadians had forced their way through country most admirably suited to defence, and held by a courageous and determined enemy until they were within an ace of final victory. They had drawn into their breasts the spears that might have slain that Army smashing with grim courage through the hordes in Flanders—they had held to the area around Lens, fearful to go to their comrades in the North, a great force of Germany's finest troops.

## CHAPTER XI

### PASSCHENDAELE

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1917

IN the first week of October the preliminary moves for the transfer of the Canadian Corps to Ypres were made. The First Canadian Division relieved the Fourth Canadian Division in the line, and the Fourth Division went out to the area about Barlin. At the same time the Third Canadian Division was relieved in the line by the Second Canadian Division and proceeded to the Villers Chatel area. Thus the two senior Canadian divisions became responsible for the front of the whole Canadian Corps, and the remainder of the Corps began its journey to the scene of its earliest activity.

It was intended that the Fifth Corps (Imperials) should relieve the two Canadian formations left in the line at an early date in order to free the whole force for its new work in the North.

The move of Corps Headquarters, Corps Troops, and the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions now began, and was accomplished rapidly and smoothly by rail, road and omnibus, most of the mounted personnel and transport moving by road, while the infantry and dismounted men moved by omnibus and train. The Fourth Canadian Division was in a position to relieve the men fighting in front of Ypres by October 20th. Similarly, the Third Canadian Division moved on October 14th, and into the forward area by October 22nd. Meanwhile the artillery of these divisions had marched by road, commencing on October 12th, until they were in a position to go into action behind their own infantry when the latter began their operations. Corps Headquarters on October 12th had handed over the front around Lens to the Fifth Corps; it then staged through Lillers and Poperinghe, moving to these places on October 12th and 15th respectively, until finally, on October 18th, General Currie took over the command of the front held by the Second Anzac Corps, with Headquarters at Ten Elms, near Poperinghe. This front

was held at that time by the Third Australian Division and the New Zealand Division.

All was now ready for the launching forward of the Canadian Corps into that arena wherein had taken place for over two months a tremendous battle. To those still serving in the Corps who had been present at that first battle in April long ago when the enemy had loosed his clouds of poison gas (they were now lamentably few), the occasion was a momentous one. The front they were to take over was almost that on which they had stood on that memorable afternoon in spring. Almost the same—the great endurance of the Anzac infantry had already carried the line beyond Gravenstafel, that ridge of evil memory where the troops of the Corps Commander had made their splendid stand, when General Currie led them as a brigadier.

When the Canadians came into the line in sight of Passchendaele the wet season had arrived and the whole of the battle area was a quagmire—a veritable Slough of Despond. In this quagmire the British Army had been struggling with indomitable valour, driving the enemy from ridge to ridge with a dogged determination which was proof against mud, rain, wounds, shell fire, bullets and fatigue. The weather and the ever-growing strength of the enemy due to the collapse of Russia were now in alliance against us, and the offensive had reached a stage where loss of momentum made further sustained effort useless.

There were, however, certain limited objectives which, if taken, would be of great worth. Such an objective was the Passchendaele Ridge, lying athwart the British line, and the last high ground worth mentioning in Northern Flanders. The Ridge, if taken, would provide valuable observation in an easterly and north-easterly direction for many miles and an invaluable position whence to launch a new attack when conditions were more favourable.

It had been decided to take this Ridge before winter forced a conclusion. To the Canadian Corps was allotted the post of honour, with the objective of Passchendaele village, crowning the summit of the Ridge.

It did not seem an inviting task. Already many assaults had broken in vain against that dominating ground, beaten down into the mud by the elements and the enemy. The Anzaes had tried to take it several times with heroic endurance but no success, and their bodies lay everywhere in that terrible mud, practically engulfed, their faces forward towards the German position, a tragic and yet a splendid sight. The Canadian Corps, however, undeterred by the forbidding reputation of the Ridge, decided that it should take the objective in four phases.

The decision was accomplished, and at the end of the fourth

phase Canadian outposts stood upon the eastern slopes beyond Passchendaele. Between the entry of the Corps into the arena and the culmination of its plan lies a story of great achievement in adversity.

The Canadians, who by this time had experienced almost every form of warfare to be found in Western Europe, were now to make the acquaintance of a new and terrible type of conflict which may be summarized briefly in three words—mud and “pill-boxes.” The enemy, when the Third Battle of Ypres began, had depended for his defence upon trenches strongly wired and heavily manned. Finding these methods unfavourable, the crowds of troops falling easy victims to our barrage-fire and tanks, he next relied upon shell-hole defence—which consisted chiefly of isolated machine gun posts placed chequer-wise in convenient shell-holes. The advantage derived from this scheme, which was that it gave our artillery no definite target to fire on and enabled the Germans to ambush our advancing infantry, was brought to nought by the intensity of our searching fire. The enemy thereupon resorted to placing these isolated posts in small block-houses of concrete, distributed to cover one another by supporting fire and forming a deep belt of fortresses which it would be necessary to overpower one by one.

Such a method was a terrible obstacle to the advance. Then came the rain, which flooded all the little streams in that flat and marshy country and turned the shell-pocked land into an endless waste of mud, through which progress could be made only very slowly. That the British troops, toiling through this mud with no cover to attack the dominating and merciless block-houses—or “pill-boxes”—ever succeeded in progressing at all speaks volumes for their courage and determination.

With warfare at the stage described, the Canadian Corps moved up to take Passchendaele.

On October 22nd the Third Canadian Division relieved the New Zealand Division on the left of the Corps front, while the Fourth Canadian Division took over the right of the Corps front from the Third Australian Division. The frontage of the Canadians totalled approximately five thousand five hundred yards and was bounded on the south by the Ypres-Roulers Railway, while a line roughly parallel to the Railway formed the northern boundary.

While the infantry reliefs were in progress a series of artillery moves were completed, and by October 24th the following distribution of guns was in force: On the Fourth Division front were the artillery of that division with three Army brigades of field artillery (Imperial) and the Sixty-sixth (Imperial) Divisional Artillery. Two groups of Imperial heavy artillery, for bom-



bardment work—the Sixteenth and Seventy-seventh—and two groups for counter-battery fire—the Second and Forty-second—backed the lighter pieces on this front. To cover the front of the Third Division, besides its own artillery, were sited the artillery of the New Zealand and the Forty-ninth (Imperial) Divisions, together with two Army brigades of Imperial field artillery. In their support were the Seventieth and Thirteenth groups of heavy artillery for counter-battery work and the Sixty-second and Sixteenth groups for bombardment work. Dominating the whole Corps front were the First, Third and Sixth Canadian Siege Batteries.

This was a tremendous weight of artillery, but by no means excessive for combating the pill-boxes studding the enemy's territory.

It had been decided that the first Canadian attack—the first phase of the operations against Passchendaele and the sixth phase of that larger plan of the Second and Fifth Armies—should be launched at once. The divisions then in the line were to carry out this phase and also the one which followed, which would carry the front to within striking distance of the crest of the Ridge. The remaining two phases were to be carried out by the First and Second Divisions on arrival, and would end when the line was secure upon the heights.

Preparations were pushed rapidly forward. Before October 26th the elusive Germans, hiding in their pill-boxes in the marshes, had been located about one thousand yards beyond our outposts, which had moved forward slowly until the line, running generally north-west and south-east, had reached on the right the point where the main Gheluvelt-Passchendaele Road crossed the Ypres-Roulers Railway. The objective was thereupon assigned as a line about one thousand yards beyond and roughly parallel to the positions of our outposts. On the right this line touched Decline Copse, the grisly remains of a small wood on the railway, and in the centre just included Snipe Hall, a collection of pill-boxes—nothing more. On the front of the Third Division an intermediate objective had been decided upon. This was some five hundred yards from the main objective on the left boundary of the Corps, while it rested on Snipe Hall on the right, a short distance north of the boundary between the Third and Fourth Divisions.

At 5.40 a.m. on October 26th all was ready for the attack, and the infantry advanced at that hour to begin the renewed offensive of the Canadians.

The following was the order in which the Canadian Battalions advanced, from right to left, as named :

Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Dawson, D.S.O., of

the Tenth Brigade ; Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. A. Genet, D.S.O., and Forty-third Battalion, Major W. K. Chandler, of the Ninth Brigade ; and the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion, Major W. R. Patterson, of the Eighth Brigade.

These battalions were covered by an artillery barrage of tremendous power, travelling in lifts of one hundred yards in eight minutes. The slow movement of this barrage was maintained in order to allow the plodding infantry to keep up with it. In addition to the gun fire, four batteries of machine guns of the machine gun battalions of the division concerned, aided by one battery of the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade—each battery consisting of eight guns—covered each division, sprinkling the whole area in front of the battalions with bullets and filling the gaps in the artillery barrage with their deadly fire.

As the battalions assembled in the shell-holes they held as an outpost line, a sickly drizzle of cold rain was falling and dawn was coming up, bleak and cheerless. The weather cleared later in the day and for a time it was possible to see some distance. But at the hour of the attack the whole of that miserable scene was blurred with mist and rain.

At 5.40 a.m. the guns suddenly spoke with a hollow roll of thunder and the first shells of the barrage burst in dazzling swirls of flame in the murk beyond the waiting infantry. The thunder-roll quickened into the hurrying drum of intense fire and the assault began.

On the Canadian right the First Australian Division acted as flank guard by thrusting out its posts south of the railway. On the left the Eighteenth (Imperial) Corps, represented by the Sixty-third (Royal Naval) Division, attacked a menacing post called Source Farm and fired heavily upon another enemy position named Vat Cottage, whence the Germans were able to command the greater part of the area over which the Canadians advanced.

The Forty-sixth Battalion, despite violent opposition from Decline Copse in the form of heavy machine gun fire, made sure progress, and, closely supported by the Fiftieth Battalion, steadily overpowered the enemy as the barrage crept forward.

Machine gun fire was very heavy, and as the battalion neared Deck Wood and Haalen Copse, these places suddenly belched forth storms of bullets. But, in spite of this opposition, the battalion captured all its objectives well on time. It was a neatly carried out piece of work under conditions of much difficulty. The going was not extremely bad and little or no wire was encountered. With much ardour the battalion pushed its centre well over the main road to Passchendaele, beyond the objective and secured fine observation points as a result.

While this was going on, the Third Division had been fighting its way forward with set teeth through an indescribable machine gun resistance, knee-deep in mud and water. The Ravebeck, a small stream along the right of the division, now long since flooded over, proved a desperate obstacle, and many men fell and were drowned in the water, or, wounded, went under and were not seen again.

In spite of the appalling machine gun fire good progress was made at first by the Ninth Brigade, attacking in the centre of the Canadian line. The fire of the machine guns was diabolical. It came chiefly from Crest Farm, the south side of Bellevue Spur, Bellevue and Snipe Hall. All these places, where stood almost impregnable pill-boxes, impervious to the fearful bombardment, converged the fire of countless machine guns on those thin lines of men struggling valiantly through the mud. The battalions were enveloped in this storm, as dry grass is withered by a roaring fire. Everywhere the men fell and died in the mud, or lay helpless and moaning in the water, where their blood mingled with the rain, or got up when wounded to plunge forward again and fall again, motionless. The living continued to press on, sometimes in short rushes with pauses to get breath, and sometimes without stopping until, drenched with mud, sweat and rain, and often blood as well, they collapsed from sheer exhaustion. And all the time, from first to last, that merciless fire never ceased.

By 8.15 a.m. the remains of the battalions, with the exception of some of the Forty-third and a few men of the Fifty-second, who were scattered about in ones and twos over the ground leading to the objective, were back on the line from which the attack had been launched. It seemed that a tragic end to a great effort had come.

But Brigadier-General F. W. Hill had no intention whatever of acknowledging defeat. He set about to organize another attack.

While these events were taking place on the Ninth Brigade front, the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion had been fighting with splendid gallantry. In the face of the fiercest fire this battalion pushed on until within a short distance of the intermediate objective. They fought their way through all opposition, overcoming pill-box after pill-box, until the critical situation in which they found themselves called a halt.

Many fine feats of great courage were performed by this battalion in the wild battles that they fought among the pill-boxes. There was Private John William Holmes, who was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross. One of those terrible block-houses had checked the right and was causing many casualties. Alone Holmes faced the dreadful fire from that dominating

fortress and struggled to within bombing distance of two machine guns placed in the open near the place and sweeping the area with merciless bursts of fire. Surviving by a miracle, with two well-directed bombs he silenced the guns and scattered their crews, dead and dying, around them. But the pill-box was still alive, spitting out venomous death. He got another bomb, returning through the hail of bullets. Retracing his steps, still under the heaviest fire and still alone, he got close to the pill-box and threw the bomb inside, where it burst with devastating effect.

Thoroughly cowed, nineteen Germans emerged from the pill-box and surrendered to this lonely and bedraggled Canadian without another move. The fire from the pill-box ceased and the advance went on.

By 10 a.m., then, the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion was established in a critical position on the left, its flanks exposed but the men full of fight and determined to hold their ground. The Naval Division had now come up. On the right yawned a gigantic gap where the Ninth Brigade were reorganizing on their original line.

At 10 a.m., however, dramatic news came through, which indicated a great act of gallantry and which altered the whole complexion of affairs. It was suddenly learned at that hour that one officer and about fifty men of the Forty-third Battalion, with two Lewis guns, had not only penetrated the enemy's lines as far as the northern slopes of Bellevue Spur, but had actually taken two pill-boxes in that position and held them still. Isolated and far beyond their comrades though they were, they were still capable of holding on. They only asked for assistance so that the advantage gained might not be lost.

The officer in command of this party of dauntless men was Lieut. Robert Shankland, D.C.M. The last officer left when, after the terrible advance through the machine gun fire in the early hours of the morning, the remains of his battalion captured the pill-boxes on top of Bellevue Spur, he had risen grandly to the occasion. While the whole of the main attack, beaten back by the severe losses it had suffered, was drifting slowly into its forming-up line, he took command of the men that remained. Under his leadership they garrisoned the pill-boxes. The enemy, streaming away into the east before the more successful troops on the flanks, presented a great target. Shankland was quick to take advantage of it, and bursts of fire from his gallant handful scattered many Germans dead upon the ground. A counter-attack was launched, but it was repulsed with much loss by the men in the pill-boxes.

When the situation had somewhat quietened, Lieut. Shankland



proceeded, wounded though he was, to report to his battalion commander. Then he returned to his men.

By his heroic determination this officer had snatched success out of the grasp of defeat. The little band of men under his command—rallied and steadied and led by him under appalling fire—gave a foothold on which the new attack now in preparation might depend. It formed a solid barrier in the path of the enemy, behind which the new attack gathered unmolested. Shankland well deserved the Victoria Cross which he subsequently received.

It was decided that the new assault should satisfy itself with the intermediate objective. Between 10.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. the remnant of the two attacking battalions, strongly reinforced by the Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. W. Foster, D.S.O., set out again to fight their way through the enemy's defences and seize the ground hitherto denied them.

The attack was a complete success, and at the end of it, as darkness was closing down, the Ninth Brigade had secured a line which in places was practically that of the final objective and which nowhere was more than seven hundred yards from that position. Dad and Lambeek Trenches, in which a few of the Fifty-eighth Battalion had secured a footing, were completely cleared by the advancing waves. Moving on without a barrage through an endless welter of fire, they worried their way forward yard by yard. The enemy still on Bellevue Spur were disposed of and the pill-boxes in their possession were cleared by bombing. The men smashed a passage into those grim dens and exterminated the garrisons. Sixty prisoners were extracted from Lambeek Trench alone.

Captain C. P. J. O'Kelly, of the Fifty-second Battalion, was a leader and a moving spirit in the gallant recovery of the Ninth Brigade. His own company took at least six pill-boxes and one hundred prisoners, with ten machine guns. He led the advance and the subsequent struggle among the pill-boxes, careless of the fire of the enemy and of death itself. Captain O'Kelly won the Victoria Cross, and no finer leadership in the midst of appalling conditions has ever retrieved a lost battle.

The gap between the brigade and the Fourth C.M.R.'s, holding on with tireless energy to the ground they had won, was closed by the Fifty-second Battalion. The achievement of this unit in that day's fighting is one of which it had good cause to be proud.

During the afternoon the situation on the Canadian front was gradually improved, touch was gained throughout, and a line averaging five hundred yards beyond the former German outposts was established. This line was held all day against several desperate counter-attacks. At 4 p.m. the enemy's first

serious effort was launched. This came in the shape of a combined assault by two battalions, reliably estimated as numbering five hundred each, bearing down on Bellevue from the direction of Meetcheele. In response to the S.O.S. the guns, standing in the open in the rear, hurled shell after shell into these drifting grey masses and the machine guns swept them away. The attack was beaten off without loss to ourselves. Another assault at 4.45 p.m. and one at 6.40 p.m., both moving along the main road to Passchendaele, were dealt with and achieved no success whatever. The shattered remains of these three counter-attacks yielded nearly a hundred prisoners.

During the afternoon the First C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Andros, reinforced the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion, who had lost very heavily in their sustained defence. Everywhere the Canadian positions were organized for the night and the men settled down on the newly won ground.

Thus ended the first phase of the Canadian offensive. An advance averaging a depth of six hundred yards had been realized, and approximately three hundred prisoners had been taken. The day had been notable for the grim determination of the infantry, particularly in the Ninth Brigade. Most important work had been done. The troops received the thanks of the Commander-in-Chief on the following day, Sir Douglas Haig especially singling out the Third Canadian Division for his appreciation—an honour which they had more than earned.

The night of October 26th witnessed a slight withdrawal by the Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Dawson, of the Tenth Brigade, defending Decline Copse. Hitherto, in the midst of a murderous fire—which never ceased to pound the Copse throughout the day—despite casualties, the place had been held. The men were covered with mud from head to foot and their weapons rendered useless by the mud which caked them. The battalion took up a position just outside the Copse and held it.

The Tenth Brigade had repulsed two counter-attacks and endured a terrible barrage during the afternoon.

The night of October 26th also witnessed a renewed attack on the part of the Ninth Brigade. A cluster of pill-boxes in the centre of the brigade front, on the line of the intermediate objective, was taken after sharp fighting, and eighteen machine guns fell into the hands of the attacking troops. This action resulted in a considerable advance, and all but some three hundred yards of the objective still in the enemy's possession were secured.

Until the launching of the second main attack (the second phase of the Canadian Corps offensive, the seventh of that greater scheme of the British Armies) the chief action on the Corps front was that of preparation. But Decline Copse became a centre

of very bitter fighting. This fighting went on during all the interval between the two phases—an *entr'acte* in the great drama of Passchendaele.

The fighting was done almost entirely by the Tenth Brigade.

Immediately after the loss of Decline Copse on the night following the first phase, steps were taken to set about winning it back again. The Forty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. M. Frances, which relieved the much-tried Forty-sixth Battalion after the loss of the Copse, was ordered to retake it. It was not until 10 p.m. on October 27th that the assault could be launched. At that hour the battalion advanced on the northern side of the main road to Passchendaele, while the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Davies, attacked south of the road. Decline Copse was reoccupied. No enemy were seen, but fierce resistance was met with from distant enemy machine guns.

The advance was finely supported by the artillery.

During the whole of the following day the positions in Decline Copse were held under a frightful and incessant artillery fire. It is difficult to understand how men could survive that fire or could hold their ground if they did. There was no cover except such as that afforded by an occasional crowded pill-box. Even the pill-boxes were rarely available for the use of outposts—they were far too precious for that, and more often were utilized as regimental aid posts or as battalion headquarters. But the men in the outposts stuck there, and losses, mud and shell fire could not drive them out.

At 8.45 p.m. on October 28th the Germans delivered a strong counter-attack. They advanced from the Australian side of the railway and attacked Decline Copse at about midnight in co-operation with other troops from the north. There was a bitter struggle in the Copse, and at the end of it the place was once more in German hands.

The officers on the spot acted with great promptitude and determination. The Twelfth Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General J. H. MacBrien, had arrived while the fight was in progress in order to relieve the Tenth Brigade after its sustained effort. Two platoons of the Eighty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. H. Borden, which was to relieve the defenders of the Copse, at once joined forces with the Forty-fourth Battalion and drove the enemy out.

The relief of the Tenth Brigade then proceeded slowly to a successful conclusion.

While the fight swayed to and fro about Decline Copse, all preparations for the second phase were rapidly pushed forward. This was a matter of stupendous toil under immense difficulties. Ammunition for guns and small arms, stores of water and rations,

grenades and sand-bags and tools all had to be carried up to the fighting-line through the vast expanse of swamp. Wagons and lorries, toiling over roads newly reconstructed, carried these necessities as far forward as possible, and pack-mules and carrying parties transported them the rest of the way. Not a round arrived at the gun-positions, where the eighteen-pounders clamoured incessantly for more and still more ammunition, unless brought up by men and mules, who suffered the pangs of hell to feed the guns. The lives of the infantry and machine gunners were wholly dependent on these labouring trains, as the weapons that they fought with were dependent.

Communications, too, had to be extended and improved and those already existing had to be kept in repair. Roads had to be mended with the brick and rubble of ruined villages, new shell-holes being instantly filled in so that there might be no check in the all-important traffic, which began in a tremendous river of horse and motor vehicles roaring along the road from Ypres to Poperinghe and ended in a trickle of swaying limbers plunging along in the mud among the bursting shells. Plank roads had to be mended and thrust on. The light railways, those thin arteries of steel straggling over the flats to carry trucks of ammunition for the heavy guns, had to be pushed up and added to, mile by mile. The duck-board tracks, which formed the only safe means of transit for the infantry going forward and the wounded coming back, had to be pushed up also, to carry the tide of battle to and from the line.

Nor was this all. The buried cable and the unburied wires linking up the foremost positions had to be kept going and constantly improved, so that the news on which the fate of attack or defence depended might pass with the greatest despatch between those who fought and those who held the reins. Wireless had to be moved further forward as headquarters and dumps and aid posts moved.

In labours such as these the engineers, pioneers and supply units of the Canadian Corps, assisted by such infantry help as could be spared, toiled day and night, not only between the first and second phases of the operations, but between the battles and during the battles, with splendid skill and unabating zeal.

By the efforts of these troops all was ready for the resumption of the offensive on October 30th, four days after the launching of the attack upon Bellevue Spur. At 5.50 a.m. on that date the following infantry advanced from right to left in the order given :

The Eighty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Borden, Seventy-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. Kirkaldy, D.S.O., and Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Clark, D.S.O., all of the Twelfth



Brigade of the Fourth Division ; then Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Lieut.-Col. Adamson, and the Forty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. H. Palmer, D.S.O., of the Seventh Brigade of the Third Division ; on their left the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. C. Draper, D.S.O., of the Eighth Brigade.

The artillery covering the attack was the same as that which supported the assault on October 26th, with the exception that the Sixty-sixth (Imperial) Divisional Artillery and the guns of the New Zealand Division had now been replaced by the divisional artillery of the First and Second Canadian Divisions, newly arrived from Lens. Thus the advance was backed almost entirely by Canadian guns.

The machine gun support was the same as that rendered during the first phase, and each gun had only thirty yards of front to cover. There were certain machine guns allotted to the task of covering the infantry as they advanced and others which followed the battalions and took up positions to guard the consolidation when the advance ended. These duties demanded high qualities, and the Canadian machine gunners were not found wanting. The Germans were in the habit of searching our forward area with devastating artillery fire to destroy the machine guns before the hours at which they expected an assault. This made it necessary to withdraw the machine guns till the attack was imminent. Such tactics imposed a great strain on the men, who endured it all with stolid courage. Passchendaele witnessed many gallant actions by machine gunners—one of these won for them a Victoria Cross, on October 30th, and is described in due course. They suffered an extraordinarily high share of the total Canadian casualties.

The objectives of the advance which now went forward lay on a front of two thousand yards. The troops of the Fourth Division had only one objective, which necessitated a penetration to a maximum depth of a thousand yards on the extreme left and covered their whole front. Their task included the subjection of Crest Farm, an extremely strong position about seven hundred yards in advance of the line from which the attack was launched.

The Third Division, still operating on the lower and more difficult terrain, had two objectives, the intermediate objective being a line pivoting on the right and attaining its greatest depth in the centre at Meetcheele. The next (and final) objective lay another five hundred yards ahead ; thus a total penetration of thirteen hundred yards was required of the infantry of this division. The strong positions of Vanity House, Vapour Farm and Graf were obstacles on the front, as well as Snipe Hall, which repeated efforts had hitherto failed to overcome.

Thus the Canadian Corps, facing the powerful combination

of innumerable pill-boxes, strong points, mud, water and the resistance of a desperate and ruthless foe, were confronted with a great defensive which it would require all their courage and their determination and their fine physical strength to defeat. But success would carry their line on to the slopes of Passchendaele Ridge.

It was intended to carry out certain exploitations of success, if possible immediately after the taking of the objective, but in any case before the next phase of the offensive. The places known as Grun, Graf, Mosselmarkt and Valour and Vegetable Farms were to be seized. There would then be little between the Canadian Corps and the crest of the Ridge that was its goal.

A bright moon was shining during the hours prior to the assault. It aided our men in their assembly, but it caused much anxiety for fear that the enemy should discover the movement of the troops. Before the dawn of the attack, however, scurrying clouds swept over and obscured the moon, so that there was almost total darkness and everything was very still at 5.50 a.m.

Suddenly the silence was blasted by the crash and scream of the barrage and the men advanced. A strong wind had dried the higher ground, and this aided the attack greatly. Throughout the day the weather was cold, but it was fair and gave the operation a sporting chance of success.

The fight was almost a repetition of that of October 26th. On the right, despite a most desperate resistance, the gallant Fourth Division secured every foot of that line to which they aspired and in places even penetrated beyond. The enemy's artillery and machine guns opened fire with fine promptness and with the most deadly intensity hitherto experienced by the Twelfth Brigade. The Eighty-fifth Battalion received the full force of this terrible counter-blow. The battalion staggered in the heart of the hurricane, losing half its men from shell and machine gun fire. But it pushed on, heedless of its dead, and by 7.30 a.m. it stood triumphant on its objective line, its courage as unshaken as ever. The rest of the brigade lost almost as heavily, but went on with equal gallantry. The Seventy-second Battalion, suffering heavily from fire from all directions and particularly from the left, where the Third Division was struggling desperately to make headway, was in full possession of Crest Farm by 6.45 a.m., and had secured its objectives shortly afterwards. Threatened with an attack on its exposed left and from behind, the battalion rapidly formed a defensive flank along the swollen Ravebeek, which was the boundary of the two divisions. Firm on its objective the Twelfth Brigade remained, and all the wild efforts of the enemy failed to shift it one yard from its tenacious hold.

The Third Division on the left was by this time locked fast in a death-grapple with the Germans, where men died with their faces set towards Passchendaele and their fingers tight on bomb or trigger. So far the enemy retained possession of practically all the final objective and had no intention of surrendering it. The brigades attacking the position were among the very finest in the Canadian Corps. So they would not recognize defeat as long as they could speak or breathe or see. They took the intermediate objective, but they were not satisfied with that, and they would continue to push on until death or exhaustion called a halt.

The Seventh Brigade suffered heavy losses as they toiled through a tempest of fire. They went on, though, and their dead dropped everywhere. The scattered lines in the wake of the barrage disappeared, but re-formed and went on and were lashed mercilessly, but went on and were killed. Their bodies gathered around the pill-boxes, that spat flame and seemed to glare like lions among dead wolves. There were colonels who prayed for tanks as they watched those splendid men of theirs go down. No tanks could operate on such ground.

This fight was the hour of sacrifice for very many gallant souls. Major T. M. Papineau, M.C., was killed as he called on his men. With him there died one of the very last of Princess Patricia's original officers and a great soldier.

Then there was Sergeant George Mullin, of that regiment. Mullin performed a wonderful feat of arms. There was a pill-box in front causing the heaviest loss and gradually destroying the force which moved against it. Snipers were firing from the vicinity as well and picking off numerous officers. Sergeant Mullin did not hesitate a moment, though death stared at him from the loopholes of that house of hell. Alone he fought his way up to within bombing distance of the snipers. They tried to run as he drew near, but he threw his bombs with deadly effect and killed them all. The pill-box rained its fire around him, but he went on, and the bullets rent his clothes to ribbons. It was marvellous that he escaped. Crawling on top of the pill-box—men gazed at him open-mouthed, forgetting to move as they watched him—he shot the two German machine gunners operating the murderous weapons, coolly and deliberately firing through the loopholes with his revolver. Then he rushed to the entrance of the pill-box to kill the garrison. But the garrison had seen enough and it came out—ten men strong—and surrendered tamely to Sergeant Mullin at the door.

This N.C.O. got the Victoria Cross for this splendid act of courage.

Meanwhile the Forty-ninth Battalion, striving desperately

to push on to the final objective, were displaying feats of equal bravery. Such another as Sergeant Mullin was Private Cecil John Kinross, of the Forty-ninth Battalion. Early in the advance of his company they came under intense artillery fire and were then held up by machine guns. Kinross rose up among the remains of his comrades and in full view of the enemy. Heedless of the concentrated fury of shrapnel, high explosive and machine gun bullets, he searched the distance for the machine gun causing the greatest loss. Finding it, like a man preparing to thrash a bully and all the while under that annihilating fire, he stolidly removed his equipment and all else that might encumber him until he carried only a cotton bandolier and his rifle with bayonet fixed. Alone he then proceeded to walk across the open ground separating him from the machine gun. This weapon poured out a wild stream of fire around him, but failed to touch him. Kinross got close to the gun, moving with the irresistible sureness of Fate. When within a few yards he rushed. There followed a brief fight—six men to one—and then the gun ceased fire and he waved to his company to come on, the whole of the crew dead at his feet. The company, freed from the menace, was able to resume its advance.

Private Kinross was wounded later in the day, but lived to get his little token of bronze.

These were but some of the many great individual achievements which marked the fighting of the Seventh Brigade among the pill-boxes and the machine guns opposed to them. The Princess Patricia's, in spite of Sergeant Mullin's valour and the desperate efforts of all the men, were held up in another quarter by machine gun fire. The whole of the officers and N.C.O.'s in the vicinity were down and the remnant of their followers were now confronted by a nest of machine guns.

It was at this moment that Lieut. Hugh MacKenzie, D.C.M., of the Seventh Canadian Machine Gun Company, covering the advance around Graf and Meetcheele, came up and took a hand. Lieut. MacKenzie was in command of four machine guns following the troops with the object of protecting the consolidation of the line captured. Seeing the men checked in the fire of the machine guns, he handed over his command to an N.C.O., and, hurrying forward, took control. The men instantly recognized a natural as well as an official leader. Under a furious fire, Lieut. MacKenzie organized an attack on the nest of German machine guns and rapidly drove it home. It was an instantaneous success, the nest being completely exterminated.

There was in the intermediate objective a pill-box on the crest of the hill before Meetcheele which the men now confronted. Lieut. MacKenzie immediately prepared a new plan of campaign.



A converging assault was then launched, and in the face of the heaviest opposition the pill-box was reached and silenced. But the gallant officer who had brought about its capitulation was dead. He had been instantly killed leading the main frontal attack upon the pill-box.

For his magnificent leadership Lieut. MacKenzie received the Victoria Cross. That he did not live to get it was the greatest regret of the men of the Princess Patricia's whom he had so gallantly commanded.

While these things were happening around Meetchcele, the Fifth C.M.R.'s had been making steady progress under conditions of desperate difficulty. The task of this battalion in any event was a very hard one. They had to advance over the lowest ground on the Canadian front, with an almost impassable morass on their flanks and between them and their final objective. All their positions were overlooked by those terrible pill-boxes on the high ground to the right, where the Seventh Brigade were. The safety of the battalion depended to a great extent on the capture of the final objective allotted to the troops on the right and also to the troops on the left, the Sixty-third (Royal Naval) Division. The Fifth C.M.R.'s, battling grimly through the marshes with both flanks exposed—for neither on right nor left were the final objectives ever taken—not only seized most of their final objective but held their gains with inflexible resolution.

The line which the Fifth C.M.R.'s secured as a result of their advance included Vanity House on the right, Vapour Farm in the centre and Source Farm on the left. For a long time after the opening of our intense barrage at 5.50 a.m. no word came through as to the fate of the attack, and this caused much anxiety. The battalion had disappeared into the swamps, and wounded slowly drifting in brought only vague and uncertain news. At 10 a.m. this uncertainty ended with dramatic suddenness when an exhausted pigeon struggled home with a message that Major J. R. Pearkes with forty men had captured the greater part of his unit's objective as well as a considerable portion of that allotted to the unit on the left, that he had the situation well in hand and that he could hold on. No fear for the safety of his little force was evident, but reinforcements were badly needed.

On receipt of this news every effort was made to reinforce that little band of gallant men clinging on to their line with such a fine contempt for the dangerous position they were in. By 11 a.m. the whole of the Second C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. C. Johnston, D.S.O., M.C., was on the move to reinforce the line. During the hours that followed, while the enemy shelled the whole area with great severity, the supports gradually toiled up.

By degrees the outposts of the Canadian battalions settled down. On the whole front of the Fourth Division, every yard of the final objective was held. The Princess Patricia's had reached Meetcheele and were digging-in in front of Furst Farm and the swamps near Graf Wood. Thence the Forty-ninth Battalion lay with its left thrown back from Meetcheele, short of the intermediate objective, which they had not been able to take. There was a huge gap of about five hundred yards on their left between them and the right of the C.M.R.'s, but this was largely swamp, and when machine guns and Lewis guns took up positions to cover the gap only death by fire or drowning awaited any German who attempted to pierce it. Further to the north the reinforced Fifth C.M.R.'s held their line and, apart from the loss of Vanity House, which it is doubtful if we ever really owned, no change in that line occurred.

Such was the situation when night fell on the Canadian front. This situation was not one which befell of itself. It cost fierce efforts to bring about and fiercer efforts to maintain, for the enemy counter-attacked bitterly many times.

The first of these counter-attacks was launched at 8 a.m. from Mosselmarkt and was beaten out and destroyed by barrage fire. This counter-attack, aiming at the Canadians near Meetcheele and Graf, was also opposed by the Seventy-second Battalion in Crest Farm, who used, among other weapons, the machine guns they had wrested from the enemy. The Germans finally fled in disorder north of Passchendaele. By 9.30 a.m. they could be seen massing again around Venture Farm and Vindictive Cross-Roads, and at 10 a.m. their heaviest effort of the day was made. A large force advanced again on Meetcheele and at least a battalion moved down from Vat Cottage to attack the remnants of the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion. Major Pearkes, who moved about everywhere with complete contempt of danger, inspired his men to great efforts (he was later awarded the Victoria Cross) and successfully shattered the advance. A similar fate met the attack on Meetcheele, the survivors of the Seventh Brigade plying their weapons with great effect.

Not satisfied with this repulse, the enemy again advanced at 11.15 a.m., with the object of driving back the troops holding the junction point of the two Canadian divisions. A like fate met this move, enormous execution being done at short range by every weapon the Canadians could muster.

These were the outstanding counter-attacks in a long day of counter-attacks, many of which had to be dealt with as our men were engaged with machine guns and pill-boxes in their efforts to secure their objectives. The last serious assault occurred after nightfall, when a strong party of the enemy,

estimated at over eighty, secured a footing in a trench in front of Crest Farm. The support company of the Seventy-second Battalion promptly came up and dislodged these Germans at the point of the bayonet, over thirty being killed or captured.

The second phase of the offensive was over. The Canadians, except in the left centre, had taken and held their final objective. The fighting had been very bitter, as the small number of prisoners taken—less than two hundred and fifty all told—bears witness. But now the waves were lapping round the heights of Passchendaele, and that white ruin of the village church, pointing heavenward, a beacon and an inspiration, lay less than a thousand yards from the outposts that watched it through the blur of the misty rain.

Certain of the strong points which had been our objectives, and others which it had been intended to seize had the original plan of exploitation been possible, had now to be taken, with a view to thrusting our line into a good position for the launching of the third phase. Minor patrol enterprises took place with the object of securing the strong points referred to.

The first of these enterprises occurred at 1.15 a.m. on November 2nd. At that hour, following an increase in our usual artillery harassing fire, two parties of the First C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Andros, left our line under cover of two machine guns. Their object was to secure possession of Vine Cottage and Vanity House. Lieut. Shannon led the attack on Vine Cottage while Lieut. Davidson led against Vanity House. This latter place was easily taken. On approaching Vine Cottage our men were challenged, but at once killed the sentry and rushed the pill-box. They were busy dealing with the garrison when they were suddenly counter-attacked by a large body of the enemy who emerged from east of the road near the Cottage. As a result they were driven back to Vanity House. Here they joined our men already in position and held on.

On the following night the Seventy-eighth Battalion occupied Grun, pushing out other posts at the same time. On the same night patrols of the Forty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. McLennan, D.S.O., took Graf, which had hitherto resisted all efforts to overpower it. The enemy countered in force and with great vigour and promptness. After heavy fighting our men were finally ejected from Graf.

The strength with which the enemy attacked the place gave an inkling of what was coming. At the very moment when our patrols were fighting for Graf, a vast attack was massing behind the German outpost line. On the right, in spite of a violent German bombardment as a preliminary to the assault, our patrols discovered this gathering storm and warned the defence just in

time. At 5 a.m. the barrage fire of the enemy reached a climax and then lifted, and their infantry, reliably estimated at a strength of two regiments (each equivalent to a British brigade), advanced. The Canadian infantry fired one S.O.S. and the artillery answered with magnificent rapidity. The Germans who penetrated through the artillery barrage—they were very few—were almost everywhere wiped out by the lesser arms. Only at Crest Farm did they secure the slightest footing, and there the Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. H. Millen, D.S.O., and Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. Jones, D.S.O., the latter on the right, immediately drove them out again. In a very short time the front had quietened, and a further advance on Crest Farm at 5.40 a.m. was easily repulsed by the infantry.

This finished the German effort to stave off the impending blow for Passehendaele.

Mention of the Nineteenth and Twenty-first Battalions brings the Second Canadian Division into the narrative. This division had been relieved on October 17th by the Forty-eighth (Imperial) Division and, leaving the line at Lens, moved in the wake of the First Division, which had handed over its Lens position to the Fifty-ninth (Imperial) Division on October 14th and had then moved from Barlin. Thus both divisions were concentrated about Ypres during the second phase, and then, moving forward immediately afterwards, relieved the rest of the corps in their new lines. The Second Division took over the front of the Fourth Division, while the First Division relieved the Third Division. The tired troops then went back to Ypres.

The outgoing divisions had done fine work—the fact that in one week they had won no less than seven Victoria Crosses gives the measure of their achievements. Mention should here be made of Brigadier-General Odlum's Eleventh Brigade, which, though not employed in any attack, was allotted the monotonous and costly task of consolidation, carrying and repair work, which it performed adequately, under most difficult conditions.

Preparations were now pushed forward rapidly for the resumption of the offensive—the third phase of the Canadian scheme, the eighth of the greater project of Sir Douglas Haig.

On November 6th all was ready for the third phase, and at 6 a.m. this phase began with the creeping barrage that led the infantry assault.

These were the battalions that advanced, named from right to left:

Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. G. MacKenzie, D.S.O.; Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. P. J. Daly, C.M.G., D.S.O.; Thirty-first Battalion, Major C. D. McPherson; Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. Ross, D.S.O.; the first-



named belonged to the Fifth and the remainder to the Sixth Brigade. On the left of these were the First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. W. Sparling, D.S.O. ; Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. T. McLaughlin, D.S.O. ; and Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. B. Rogers, D.S.O., M.C., all of the First Brigade.

The artillery supporting the attack was the same as that employed in the preceding phase. The machine gun support was also similar, save that the machine gun companies of the divisions concerned supplied the machine guns which had hitherto been found by the Third and Fourth Divisions. The barrage moved more rapidly than on previous occasions, as the ground was higher and the weather cold and fairly dry.

During the few days prior to the assault in which the attacking divisions had been in the line they had completed the work of their predecessors towards manœuvring into the best available starting-line. As a result, the troops on the right had less than five hundred yards to go to the church of Passchendaele, and the greatest distance to be traversed by any man was not more than a thousand yards. The objective was a semicircular line three thousand yards long, well beyond Passchendaele on the right, Mosselmarkt in the centre and Vine Cottage on the left.

No Australian or English troops co-operated except by providing artillery and machine gun fire. Australian machine guns in particular rendered valuable assistance by keeping down the fire of the enemy on the Keiburg Spur.

The barrage opened with promptitude and tremendous fury at 6 a.m. With the bursting of the first shell the Canadian infantry pressed forward, full of eagerness to be at grips with the enemy. The reply of the German guns, which had been maintaining an intermittent bombardment all night, was vigorous and rapid. It was directed against our outpost positions until 7 a.m., when it switched to the ground won by the advance and remained there steadily for the rest of the day.

The attack from start to finish was a complete and dashing success—one of the best and cleanest pieces of work to the credit of Canadian arms. On the right the Twenty-sixth Battalion swept over the front line of the Germans, driving them before their swift rush, rapidly overpowered the pill-boxes and machine guns in the south-eastern portion of Passchendaele, and had secured the whole of their objectives within an hour.

Meanwhile the Sixth Brigade, carrying out the main attack around the church and on the high ground north of the village, were engaged hand-to-hand with the enemy. This brigade behaved with all its old dash and gallantry.

So rapidly were the men upon the Germans holding the outposts that they had practically no chance. Four machine guns

were taken in the front line before the crews could get them into action and the gunners were despatched at the point of the bayonet. The men used the steel with an ardour and skill born of long practice and high *moral*. Almost all the Germans in the front line were bayoneted.

The determination of the Twenty-eighth Battalion, wading through a swamp in some places waist-deep in water, was very noticeable. Pressing fiercely on, the whole of the Sixth Brigade hurried through a waking shower of machine gun bullets to deal with the pill-boxes around the church and in the village, where lay the enemy's main resistance line. The Germans holding this line saw the eager rush of Canadians approaching, and most of them threw down their arms and ran in sheer terror. But many of the pill-boxes held out, and much deadly fighting took place before they were subdued. Great acts of courage were performed in this fighting.

For example, there was the work of Private J. P. Robertson, of the Twenty-seventh Battalion, later awarded the Victoria Cross. For a moment his platoon was held up by a mass of barbed wire and caught in a concentrated machine gun fire. It was suffering heavily when Private Robertson broke through a gap in the wire, rushed at the offending gun and disposed of the crew of four, killing them all with the bayonet or the butt. The platoon was enabled to advance. Robertson shot down the Germans running away from the advancing platoon, causing much loss, then bodily picked up the gun and went with his comrades to the final objective. Here he set up the weapon, and, though fired at continuously, proceeded to operate it against hostile snipers with extraordinarily good results.

The Canadian snipers, following their usual practice, were by this time out in shell-holes in front of our line and doing great execution. Later in the day, during the consolidation, two of these men were severely wounded. Not content with the wonderfully fine work he had already done, the gallant Robertson went at once to the rescue. Under a diabolical fire, to which every German within range added his share, while the area was searched by gusts of shrapnel and high explosive, he got one of the men into safety. Returning through the inferno, he had started back with the second man when he was instantly killed.

So died a splendid type of British fighting-man, terrible to his enemies and willing to lay down his life for his friends.

The fight swirled fiercely up and down among the pill-boxes and the machine guns. Lieut. Cameron, of the Thirty-first Battalion, dashing through the Canadian barrage, attacked the Germans with great fury. Single-handed he transfixed with his bayonet a bomber in the act of throwing his bomb. Several

more Germans felt the terrible thrust of his steel, and the sight of this slaughter so terrified twelve more that they surrendered, abandoning a machine gun without firing another shot. Lieut. Cameron had already been wounded and yet, another wound notwithstanding, he continued to lead and inspire his men throughout the day.

Such another was Lieut. Kennedy, of the same battalion, who completely cowed the entire garrison of a pill-box, containing three officers and thirty-four men, all alone and armed only with a revolver though he was. Corporal L. H. Lindell, of the Twenty-eighth Battalion, further to the north, displayed equal gallantry. This N.C.O. located a machine gun firing through the barrage. Rushing forward alone, he silenced the gun with the bayonet, and, disregarding a severe wound, forced an officer and thirteen men to surrender under pain of death.

So the Sixth Brigade smashed their way irresistibly through Passchendaele behind the tumultuous barrage. The First Brigade, on their left, at the same time rapidly overran the whole of their objectives. Desperate fighting took place, but the men were irresistible.

One great example of the individual dash of the First Brigade will serve to show the mettle of the whole. Corporal Colin Barron, of the Third Battalion, was with his unit when three machine guns in front caused a check. Barron acted without the least hesitation. Dashing alone through the most appalling fire, he burst into the nest and ran amok with the bayonet. Four of the crew he killed, and was about to despatch the rest when these surrendered. The possibility of successfully resisting such a man as this seemed non-existent. So they gave in. Ignoring them, Corporal Barron seized one of the guns and turned it on the Germans fleeing from all sides, with most gratifying results.

That was how another Victoria Cross was won.

The fiercest fighting centred around Vine Cottage and Mosselmarkt. The entire garrison of Mosselmarkt was either killed or captured. At Vine Cottage one and a half companies of the enemy fought with great fury, and it was only when thirty of the defenders were left to be taken prisoner that the place was finally secured.

The Canadians at length beat out all opposition, and by 8 a.m. the whole of the aim of the assault had been realized and our men stood victorious on their objectives on the whole front.

By 8.50 a.m. the German counter-attacks had commenced. At that hour a force estimated at a battalion emerged out of the smoke north of Passchendaele and began to move towards our new line. At 9.50 a.m. the enemy assembled in strength

round Vindictive Cross-Roads, and again at 10.30 a.m. and yet again at 11.45 a.m. All these gatherings were dealt with by the Canadian artillery and the guns of the Imperials on the left and were broken up at the outset. As soon as it was clear to the Germans that the Ridge was lost, they began to pull out their guns from east of Passchendaele in a panic, and splendid shooting against these fleeing guns was recorded by the British batteries.

Thus the third phase ended in complete success. Over five hundred prisoners had been taken—among them two battalion commanders, one of whom commanded the local support battalion—and every foot of the objectives had been secured. The victory was not gained lightly, for the Germans had orders to fight to the last for the retention of Passchendaele and in many places put up a desperate defence. But the dash and vim of the highly trained Canadian infantry and the power and skill of their artillery were a combination which proved irresistible.

The campaign, which had lasted so long in front of Ypres, had thus reached a valuable conclusion at last. Practically all Passchendaele Ridge was now in our hands. Certain portions remaining had still to be taken, north of the village, towards Westroosbeke. Besides giving us possession of all the high ground worth having beyond Passchendaele, the taking of this ground would enlarge the salient which the Canadians had forced into the German lines and thus relieve an awkward situation.

The attack which was designed to take the ground referred to, constituted the fourth phase of the Canadian offensive and the ninth in the strategic plan of the British Army. All effort was bent on preparing for this final Canadian assault.

After the loss of Passchendaele the enemy had faded temporarily into the mists beyond, and it became one of the first duties of patrols to locate the exact position he had assumed as a preliminary to a fresh advance. In this work the patrols were assisted greatly by what were known as "Army barrages" or, as some preferred to call them, "Army shoots."

The practice was simply this: at a prearranged hour and for a fixed period, every gun, field or heavy, flat trajectory or howitzer, on the whole of the front of the Second Army would open and maintain intense fire upon the enemy's batteries and forward areas, pill-boxes, trenches, tracks and roads. The lighter weapons would combine into a terrible barrage, which rolled backwards and forwards among the suspected German outpost positions, searching every yard of the tortured ground in front of our lines.

These barrages were frequent and were let loose at any hour of the day or night. They produced various results. Besides undoubtedly causing much havoc, they kept the hostile army



in a perpetual state of nervousness, so that their *moral* was worn to shreds as they cringed in the heart of that fearful bombardment and waited for the attack which might never come. They drew out the fire of the enemy's guns, thus forcing him to disclose his battery positions, and they set the infantry sending up hundreds of alarm rockets, which gave their outposts away, since it was from the outposts that the rockets rose.

On November 10th, at 6.5 a.m., all being ready, the new and last attack was launched. These were the battalions which went forward :

The Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. V. Rorke, D.S.O., the Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gilson, D.S.O., and the Eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. M. Prower, D.S.O.

They attacked from right to left as named. The first belonged to the Fourth and the remainder to the Second Brigade.

The infantry were supported by the same force of artillery as that which backed them up on November 6th. The machine gun support varied, however, as three batteries of the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade covered the whole Corps front, while a similar number, found by the division concerned, supported each division.

The objective allotted to the attackers covered a front of about two thousand yards and involved an advance on the left of about seven hundred yards from the starting-line. The advance went in a generally northern direction, and as it was not wished to gain much ground to the east, the depth of the drive that way was small.

The story of this last Canadian attack at Passchendaele is one which will bear comparison with any other. The assault was carried out in a violent rain-storm which flooded the whole area and did not cease throughout the day. The assembly prior to the attack and all the fighting was done in an indescribably severe bombardment, in which the enemy hurled every conceivable kind of shell, up to eight-inch, upon the devoted infantry. Communications, after the signal service had performed wonders to keep the lines going, eventually failed, and all messages had to be transmitted by pigeon, lamp and runner. The runners sacrificed themselves without hesitation, so that the despatches might get through, facing machine guns and the awful artillery fire and the horrors of mud and tempest again and again.

Despite these dreadful conditions, the Canadians carried the whole of their objectives and held them while the converging gun-fire of the enemy blew the line to shreds.

Attacking on the right, the Fourth Brigade quickly took their objectives. The Second Brigade at the same time forced their way through a desperate resistance, suffering very heavily, and

also took their objectives. They had to overpower a particularly strong defence at Vindictive Cross-Roads, but the exhausted troops were in full possession of the line they desired by 9 a.m. The Eighth Battalion, to achieve this, were compelled to go through a most powerful barrage which the enemy laid down four hundred yards in front of their jumping-off line. This was in addition to the machine gun and artillery fire faced by all the other attacking troops.

Having captured their objectives, the battalions began consolidation. On the Seventh Battalion front this was rendered practically impossible by the fire from Venison Trench, which lay about five hundred yards from the Canadian positions.

It was quickly decided by the Seventh Battalion that Venison Trench must be disposed of. Accordingly, at 7.45 a.m. Lieut. Carmichel, now commanding the right company, as Captain Morkill had been wounded, and the only officer left in that company, led his men out to the attack.

Venison Trench was taken after sharp fighting in which thirty prisoners were captured. A pill-box in the trench offered a very stout resistance, however, and refused to capitulate, the Germans firing heavily upon our men from inside and also maintaining an intense fire from two machine guns located in the trench nearby. Private C. S. Dorais thereupon took up a commanding position with his Lewis gun and proceeded to knock the hostile machine guns out. The guns were silenced, and four parties of Germans who emerged from the pill-box in turn and endeavoured to retrieve the guns were all scattered by the accurate fire of Private Dorais. Eventually his Lewis gun was put out of action and things looked decidedly unfavourable. At this moment a Lewis gun operated by men of the Twentieth Battalion, who nobly supported the attack, came up and opened a heavy fire on the pill-box. Under cover of this fire a determined rush secured the pill-box, together with eighteen prisoners and two machine guns. It was a first-class little demonstration of good team-work between Lewis gunners and riflemen.

Owing to the pronounced salient which our line now formed as a result of the failure of the Imperial troops on the left, orders were received soon afterwards that the position must be vacated. Under the supervision of Captain Loughton the Seventh Battalion thereupon fell back to the original objective at noon. Here the right company was reinforced by two platoons under Lieut. Donaldson and proceeded to dig-in.

The Twentieth Battalion, which had closed the gap between its left and the Seventh Battalion when the latter advanced on Venison Trench by sending up two platoons from its support company, now fell back again.

Meanwhile the Eighth Battalion, with its left entirely "in the air," had been suffering desperately from the fire of Vox and Vocation Farms, the objectives of their English comrades on the flank. These places, which were heavily manned and full of machine guns, lay well to the rear and close to the left of the Canadian battalions. An immense gap separated the battalion from the Imperials, who were now back on the line whence they had started. The whole of the support and reserve companies of the battalion, as well as "C" Company of the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Tudor, had to be utilized to close the gap. Thus the Canadians faced west, north and east at once. Later "B" Company of the Fifth Battalion came up on the left of "C" and so strengthened the point of junction.

At 1.45 p.m. the enemy began to mass for a counter-attack north-east of Vindictive Cross-Roads and near Venison Trench, and at 2.50 p.m. launched his effort. Our artillery, which maintained an almost ceaseless barrage the whole day, had kept the Germans under steady fire while they were massing, and it now joined with the infantry in repulsing the advance with severe loss. This was the one and only counter-attack attempted. The artillery during that grim struggle was superb.

As if fully realizing that their dispirited infantry could never hope to turn our men out of their new line, the German gunners bent every effort to do so with shell fire. The bombardment which they maintained all day was said to be the heaviest ever experienced by Canadians during the war. It rained shells down upon that irregular line from every point of the compass. All battalion headquarters were furiously shelled, as were the dressing-stations. These places were pill-boxes and were crammed with men, wounded and unhurt alike. The wounded were everywhere, propped against the walls, on tables and on top of one another on the floor. The atmosphere was dense with the fumes of the shells and foul air, and, while the pill-boxes rocked to the ear-splitting din outside, the rain flooded the floor where the wounded lay and men splashed up and down in pools of curdling blood and water.

The horrors were worse outside in the storms of rain and steel, where no shelter was available and the exhausted men lay wet to the skin in shell-holes among their dead or dying friends. But the stuff that gives way was not in them. By 9 p.m. they were in touch with the Imperials at Venture Farm, a strong if erratic line had been established, and the ground they had won was firmly and indisputably theirs.

The total of prisoners captured by Canadians at Passchendaele rose to forty-two officers and one thousand and eighty-seven men as a result of the day's fighting. Four field guns were also

taken by the Eighth Battalion at Venture Farm. Many of the prisoners were killed by their own shell fire.

On November 12th the relief of the Canadian troops who had carried out the final phases of the Corps offensive was commenced, when the Third Division relieved the First Division, the former having come up from its rest area around Watou for the purpose. Next day the Fourth Division from Caestre relieved the Second Division. The outgoing troops commenced their journey back to Lens.

The return of the Third and Fourth Divisions to the line was not with a view to any further offensive action, since the four phases of the Canadian Corps operations had been completely and triumphantly achieved. But Canadian troops had to hold the line until the arrival of their Imperial comrades destined to relieve them.

The Third and Fourth Divisions were soon relieved by the Eighth and Thirty-third (Imperial) Divisions respectively, and on November 18th, when these reliefs were complete, Canadian Corps Headquarters handed over its line to the Eighth (Imperial) Corps and followed its divisions back to the South.

Thus were concluded the Canadian operations beyond Ypres, and the Corps left that accursed region never to return to it again. The last drop of Canadian blood had been shed in Flanders and the association of the Dominion with the city was finished. As Ypres is symbolical of pain and adversity to Canadians, so did the departure of the troops from its vicinity synchronize with the end of their struggle against desperate odds. Thenceforth the rôle of the Canadians was to be one only of triumph in attack, with some of the odds at last upon their side.

The achievements of the Canadian Corps at Passchendaele may be briefly summarized as follows: In sixteen days, working to a fixed plan and a time-table to which the courage of the men enabled them to adhere with almost mathematical faithfulness, tried by a whole summer of desperate fighting elsewhere, they advanced their line a distance of over a mile, where every yard of ground was completely devoid of cover, swept by the fire of innumerable machine guns, searched by the fire of hundreds of guns converging on it from all sides, and dominated by innumerable pill-boxes, every one of which was held by a ruthless and determined enemy. Against these odds, fighting troops which the Germans, owing to their increasing numerical superiority due to the Russian collapse, were able to relieve constantly, the Canadian battalions worried over the field where so many men of British stock had already died, and, after terrible sufferings in unspeakable mud and rain, finally stood victorious on the heights to which they set their aim.



They took twelve hundred prisoners and many machine guns in this fierce effort, and lost in killed, wounded and missing a rough total of ten thousand casualties.

In all probability, no battle ever fought by Canadians demanded more from the individual of every arm than the three weeks in that period in the autumn of 1917. Infantry, artillery, engineers, pioneers, signallers, transport and medical personnel—all endured much peril and suffering. The medical men did grand work. They drove their motor-ambulances over roads that were not roads at all. How they ever got the wounded out of those dreadful miles of waist-deep mud and water only the God who made them can say.

These things are forever linked with the name of Passchendaele, "Passion Dale" or, as the English have it, "Easter Valley," a name symbolical of sacrifice. It is not too much to compare the Canadian troops struggling forward, the pangs of hell racking their bodies, up the Ridge, their dying eyes set upon the summit, with a Man Who once crept up another hill, with agony in soul and body, to redeem the world and give Passchendaele its glorious name.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE WINTER OF 1917-18

NOVEMBER 1917-MAY 1918

ON being relieved by the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions at Passchendaele, the First and Second Canadian Divisions at once moved back to the vicinity of Lens. On November 17th the First Canadian Division completed the relief of the Fifty-ninth (Imperial) Division in the Lens and Avion sectors of the line, while on the following day the Second Canadian Division relieved the Forty-eighth (Imperial) Division in the sectors of Mericourt and Chaudière. This was followed on November 20th by the assumption of control of the front now held by these divisions by the Canadian Corps Headquarters.

By that time the Corps Troops had concentrated in Pernes, Divion and Hersin, and the Canadian artillery was on the march. The artillery of the Fourth Division relieved the artillery of the Forty-eighth (Imperial) Division in the line. The Third Division's artillery went to a well-earned rest in St. Hilaire. Starting on November 16th and 17th respectively, the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions moved to the First Army area, the former going to train and rest at St. Hilaire, while the latter went to Auchel for the same purpose.

There were now left in the North only the artillery of the First and Second Canadian Divisions and the heavy guns. The artillery of the divisions began to leave Belgium on November 23rd and 24th respectively, and, having arrived in the area administered by the Canadian Corps on November 26th and 27th, went straight into the line to relieve the guns covering their respective divisions. Having relieved the Fifty-ninth (Imperial) Division's artillery, the batteries of the First Canadian Division went into action behind their own infantry, and the guns of the Second Canadian Division, relieving the Fourth Canadian Divisional Artillery, did likewise. These moves were completed by November 27th. The effect of this complicated series of

reliefs was to place two Canadian divisions in the line, holding trenches covered by their own guns, while two Canadian divisions with their own artillery were training and resting in the rear. By the middle of December all the Canadian heavy artillery had also returned to the South and the whole Corps was complete again in its old area.

Meanwhile the Corps front had been teeming with activity. The ever-growing German Army was beginning to feel its strength, and was becoming more and more aggressive every day as it prepared itself for its supreme effort in the spring. It attacked the Canadians by means of raids, artillery "strafes" and other minor forms of warfare without rest and received many lusty blows in return. The record of the winter's work is a long story of ceaseless fighting on a small scale leading up to the supreme height in March 1918. It is a record of almost continuous Canadian success and German failure.

During the months of November and December the enemy attempted a raid practically every night. All these raids were dispersed, two against the Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. McCombe, D.S.O., on November 29th and December 1st, being repulsed in particularly fine style. Heavy bombardments were frequent and we used great quantities of gas. Fierce patrol fighting took place. Much work was also done on trenches and wire by the Canadian troops.

On December 20th the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions began to move back into the line. The First Canadian Division and a portion of the Second Canadian Division were relieved by the Fourth Canadian Division, while the Thirty-first (Imperial) Division took over the front of the remainder of the Second Canadian Division on the right. The Third Canadian Division meanwhile relieved the Eleventh (Imperial) Division in the Lens sector.

These moves were completed by December 23rd, and the relieved troops went back to rest, training and Christmas dinner in the areas in the rear.

During January raiding continued violently on both sides. At 7.30 p.m. on January 13th a very fine "stealth" raid was carried out by two officers and forty-two men of the Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. A. MacFarlane, D.S.O. Lieut. A. H. Jucksch, M.C., commanded, with Lieut. W. W. Johnston, M.C., as assistant. The idea was to rush a heavily wired post in a sap near Commotion Trench and then to attack a portion of the front line and wipe out any Germans encountered therein.

After over an hour's hard work by Lieut. Jucksch personally, a tube containing ammonal was placed in the entanglements guarding the post. It was then fired; a gap in the wire resulted,

the men dashed through, and the post was rushed, the garrison of six men being all killed or captured. A barrage of trench mortars and machine gun fire was placed around the objective in the front line, and the raiders bombed their way into it. A post was encountered there and was overpowered after stiff fighting. The party then split into three groups, each of which took up a position in a different trench to keep off any Germans attempting to come up, while a fourth group under Lieut. Johnston systematically "mopped-up." When this had been accomplished, the whole withdrew, Lieut. Jucksch being the last to leave.

The complete success of the enterprise may be gauged from the fact that eleven prisoners were taken, thirteen Germans were killed and many other casualties were inflicted. As further evidence of the surprise effect of the raid and the superiority of the Canadians involved over the enemy, it may be mentioned that our men suffered no casualties whatever.

Many other fights of a minor character followed this success.

The dispositions of the Canadians holding the line were altered on January 20th, when the Second Division took over the Mericourt and Avion sectors of the front from the Fourth Division, while the Fourth Division in turn took over the Lens sector from the Third Division. On January 23rd the First Division came forward and completed the relief of the Third Division in the Cité St. Emile and Hill 70 portions of the line. The Third Division then went out to Auchel to refresh itself by rest and training.

January came to a close with much patrol activity and much defence construction on the part of the Corps, which was putting out miles of barbed wire, digging miles of new trenches, constructing new dugouts and emplacements and lavishing every scrap of material available, whether issued by the engineers or salvaged from the field of battle, upon the task. February brought in fiercer raiding and more frequent battles in No Man's Land. The two Armies were sparring out the round before the Germans let loose their last desperate offensive.

On February 5th the enemy opened a heavy barrage on the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. O. Blois, D.S.O., and the Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. S. Latta, D.S.O., at 10 p.m., and then attacked about twenty minutes later. A party of about one hundred attempted to rush one of the posts held by the Twenty-fifth Battalion, but met with such a hot reception that they did not reach our trenches at any point.

While this fighting was in progress, the Twenty-ninth Battalion had also been very hotly engaged. Three parties, totalling over fifty officers and men, had advanced against them. The Canadian artillery, in response to the S.O.S., at once barraged No Man's



Land, and the fire of the infantry and machine gunners repulsed the attack. Our patrols promptly issued from our trenches and pursued the retreating Germans into the barrage, where they suffered heavily. Three Germans wounded and one unwounded were taken prisoner by the patrols in the pursuit.

At 3 a.m. on February 13th the Third Brigade struck back in the Hill 70 sector of the front. The extremely dense wire guarding the German positions on this portion of the line had been destroyed in most places by a long bombardment by Canadian trench mortars and heavy guns. The raiders were fortunate in having a dark and completely moonless night for their enterprise.

There were to have been five raids, each covered by what was called technically a "box" barrage, which was a barrage designed to enclose the objective, on all sides but that from which our own men advanced, with a wall of fire. At the last moment, however, the wire in front of the objective of the Fourteenth Battalion was found to be too dense to negotiate, and this raid was cancelled. The four attacks remaining were carried out by two officers and thirty-nine men of the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. K. M. Perry, D.S.O., on the right; the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, D.S.O., on their left, represented by a party of two officers and thirty-two men; on the left of this party were one officer and fifty-three men of the Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. W. Forbes, D.S.O., and on their left were another party of two officers and thirty-four men of the Sixteenth Battalion.

Six hundred yards separated the objective of the party on the right from that of the next party; thence was a further gap of two hundred yards to the next objective, and finally another gap of five hundred yards to the extreme left. Thus, while all parties were entirely dependent on themselves for support, yet the broad front of attack, from Cité St. Auguste to the Bois Hugo, tended to distribute the enemy's resistance accordingly.

The raids were launched simultaneously at 3 a.m. in the midst of pandemonium. The Thirteenth Battalion party met with extremely heavy machine gun fire, and the few men who managed to penetrate into the objective were forced to withdraw. The Sixteenth Battalion party on their left, most gallantly led by Captain Scroggie and Lieut. R. E. Allan, met very similar opposition. Under heavy fire they attempted to hack their way through the wire, but after more than half an hour's courageous effort were forced to withdraw with their casualties, among whom was Lieut. Allan, who had been wounded severely.

The story, however, was different elsewhere. The Fifteenth Battalion party fought its way with difficulty through the wire and came to close grips with the enemy. They bombed a machine

gun, killing all of the crew but one, whom they captured, together with his weapon. Several German dugouts were then destroyed. Lieut. Johnston and Lieut. B. W. Allan, leading the raid on the extreme left, with their men of the Sixteenth Battalion, broke into the German trenches without much difficulty and proceeded to demolish everything they came in contact with. A machine gun was bombed and five prisoners were taken. A series of deep dugouts were then treated in a similar manner and afterwards blown up with mobile charges.

On counting gains and losses when all the raiding parties had returned, it was found that six prisoners and two machine guns had been taken and heavy loss inflicted on the enemy—the left party alone having counted eighteen dead in the trenches they attacked. Our total casualties equalled this figure. Success, therefore, was once again on the Canadian side.

The Fourth Division was relieved by the Second Division in the Lens sector on February 20th, and on the following day the Third Division took over from the Second Division their part of the front in the vicinity of Mericourt and Avion. The Fourth Division proceeded into Army Reserve at Bruay and began a fresh course of training and rest.

February passed into history with a fine "stealth" raid by the Twenty-fifth Battalion to mark its final days. This raid occurred on February 26th, during the night. Lieut. P. R. Phillips led one party of seven men while Lieut. M. McRae led a second party of five. Lieut. McRae took up a position in a shell-hole near a wall—the scene of the raid was the vicinity of Fosse St. Louis. Lieut. Phillips then led his men forward to inflict all possible damage on the enemy. A sentry behind the wall was stalked and finally shot by Lieut. Phillips. Getting through a hole in the wall, the party next proceeded to bomb a cellar which was known to be occupied. While this was going on a number of Germans came up and attempted to interfere. Covered by the fire of his men, Lieut. Phillips promptly seized one of the Germans, dragged him bodily to the hole in the wall, and passed him into the safe custody of the party in support. The whole Canadian force then retired under a shower of grenades from the enemy.

Six Germans were killed and one prisoner taken as the result of this little effort by fourteen Canadians at a cost of only one slightly wounded.

With March, raiding activity increased on both sides until the whole Canadian front seethed with continuous minor fighting. The British Army was now expecting the German thunder-cloud to burst at any moment, and ceaselessly probed the fringe of the cloud to glean the latest information from behind,

The Germans, swiftly gathering their forces for the supreme blow, sought ever to find any change in the disposition of their opponents which might threaten the success of the coming effort. The air was tense before the storm of which these little operations were the preliminary rumblings in the hills.

On March 4th the enemy raided the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. Jones, D.S.O., with four parties averaging each fifty strong. After four minutes' intense shell fire these parties attacked at 5.58 a.m., just as day was breaking. They were strongly assisted by a party of forty men from a battalion specially trained in assault tactics. The main blow was directed against "D" Company, and met with such a fierce fire from all available Lewis guns and rifles that the attackers were practically wiped out and failed to gain any footing in our positions. Another blow fell on the front line, which in the daytime was held only by observers. The night garrison had been withdrawn in the usual way just before the barrage began, and the enemy, to a strength of seventy-five men armed with *flammenwerfer* and bombs, were able to penetrate the thinly held line and proceed down our communication trenches. At this stage of the proceedings Captain A. W. Black, although already wounded in the hand, organized a counter-attack with the support platoon, and led it with such dash that the enemy were entirely ejected and our line was re-established at all points.

The Twenty-first Battalion countered this effort two days later when they raided the German lines at 2.15 a.m. on March 6th. Two officers and sixty-five men attacked under an intense barrage. Lieut. A. W. May, M.C., commanded, ably seconded by Lieut. J. R. Smith. The latter led his men to the attack on a number of cellars and dugouts, killing three Germans who fled upon the way. The dugouts and cellars were bombed with little resistance. Lieut. May then dashed through Smith's party with forty men and attacked four dugouts further on. With the exception of one man, who was taken prisoner, all the occupants refused to come out and so were killed at once, nine being accounted for in one dugout alone. In the fighting around these places Lieut. May, single-handed, despatched five of the enemy. The raiders then returned to their own lines, leaving a total of thirty dead behind them, in return for very slight losses among themselves.

Thus the Germans could not claim to have scored in their encounters with this New Brunswick battalion early in March.

On March 14th the whole of the Second Division and the portion of the First Division holding the line at Cité St. Emile were relieved by the Fourth Division, which had marched up from the area around Bruay, refreshed and eager to get at the

enemy again. The Second Division went back to Bruay in its turn, there to be in Army Reserve ready to close any breach in the line which the coming German offensive might effect.

On the following day the artillery of the division were relieved by the Fifth Canadian Divisional Artillery. The latter artillery had originally been raised as part of the Fifth Canadian Division, which was subsequently disbanded. It was then decided to send the artillery over to France, where it would prove a very valuable addition to the large force of guns already serving with the Canadian Corps. At that time it was commanded by Brigadier-General W. O. H. Dodds, C.M.G., and consisted of the Thirteenth Brigade Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. E. G. Hanson, D.S.O.; Fourteenth Brigade Canadian Field Artillery, Lieut.-Col. A. T. Ogilvie, and the Fifth Canadian Divisional Ammunition Column, Lieut.-Col. R. Costigan.

The artillery landed in France in July, and after a certain amount of training in the back areas, finally took up positions covering Canadian infantry in the Lens sector at the beginning of September 1917. From that time, with short intervals of rest, these batteries had been continuously in action around Lens, doing steady work requiring much endurance, skill and gallantry.

On March 15th the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. C. Draper, D.S.O., carried out a most successful raid. No Man's Land at this point—near Mericourt—was nearly nine hundred yards wide. It was therefore important that possession of this ground should be denied to the enemy. Accordingly a group of scouts under Lieut. Atto went out prior to the raid and patrolled it constantly, thus ensuring that the assembly and advance of the raiders should not be interfered with. To safeguard the movement still further, Lieut. Morrissey, with twenty men and a Lewis gun, took up a position in No Man's Land to the right of the objective, while Lieut. Dixon with a similar party assumed a corresponding position to the left. At 3.45 a.m. the assembly of the raiders was accomplished without mishap under the supervision of Major T. D. Sneath, M.C., who commanded the whole force. The assembly was largely assisted by a perfect night and a confident and tranquil enemy. Shortly afterwards a terrific barrage began, and the one hundred and fifty men comprising the main attack went forward. At the same time a demonstration—technically known as a "Chinese attack"—was made upon the left.

Little resistance was met with, and the raiders rapidly overcame their objectives. Many Germans were killed and a large number of dugouts were destroyed. The raiders withdrew



in exceptionally good order after taking fourteen prisoners—including a warrant officer—and a machine gun.

The cost of this enterprise was only thirty casualties all told. Unfortunately it included Major Sneath, who was killed while directing the operation.

On March 20th the Fifth Canadian Divisional Engineers arrived in the Corps area, having recently landed in France from England. They came, like the Fifth Division's artillery, to augment the force of technical units at the disposal of the Canadian Corps. Their arrival when skilled men were in such demand was not a moment too soon, for on the following day the last bid of the enemy for victory was launched.

It was on March 21st that the German wolf, so long defiant in its reeking den, emerged to make a final frenzied attempt to burst through the ring of steel around him. At first he was destined to inflict frightful wounds upon his enemies, but in the end his recklessness proved his undoing. By leaving that position in which he had lain trapped but safe for so long, he gave the hunters their chance, and the world knows how, though mangled by his dreadful blows, they finally fell upon him and destroyed him. Prospects looked very black in those early days of the great German offensive, but the fact that the hostile Army had abandoned its trenches and come into the open at last was not a disaster for Allied arms, but a blessing in disguise. As Sir Ian Hamilton said, the enemy came forth from his defences and the Lord delivered him into our hands.

The Canadian Corps was as ready for the forthcoming blow as any troops on the Western front, and had done everything that mortal man could do to render its position impregnable. As soon as it returned from Passchendaele it had set about the task of putting its house in order. A defensive system of three zones, each consisting of an immensely strong series of trenches protected by vast belts of barbed wire and sown with concrete machine gun posts and deep dugouts, and totalling over six thousand yards in depth, stretched completely across the front. The principle of manning these trenches was by a series of strong localities completely wired in, rendering each other mutual support, but each stored with rations, water and ammunition, and capable of holding out alone for an indefinite period. These were held in cases of emergency by garrisons of at least one platoon under an officer. Small and easily overpowered outposts were avoided.

This was exactly the principle laid down by Marshal Foch later and adopted by all the Allies when bitter experience had proved it to be the best. All these localities could be covered by guns placed in pits already prepared. Every gun-pit within

three thousand yards of the front line was surrounded by barbed wire to keep off German infantry, so that the gunners might fight to the last. Sniping guns for firing into the initial assault at short range and anti-tank field guns had been arranged for. The speed and accuracy of the Canadian gun fire were tested daily by a practised S.O.S. In short, all possible steps had been taken to ensure the perfect co-ordination of all arms.

Every available man who could handle a pick and shovel, supervised by expert engineers, was put to work; the whole directed by Brigadier-General W. B. Lindsay, C.M.G., D.S.O., the Chief Engineer of the Canadian Corps.

In addition to work on defences, the engineers had spent, and continued to spend, many months of labour on camps, light railways, roads and waterworks.

Apart from these material measures for the safeguard of the ground entrusted to them, every man who could fire a rifle was allotted a definite task to perform in the event of a German attack, and all plans for the defence had been prepared and orders issued before the launching of the enemy's great effort. As time went on these were added to and improved, on the theory that perfection is never arrived at.

A very powerful force was formed from the men in the Divisional Wings (or reinforcement camps), Army Troops Companies and Tunnelling Companies in April. This force totalled three hundred officers and nine thousand men, and was organized into two brigades commanded by Lieut.-Col. H. T. Hughes, C.M.G., and Lieut.-Col. A. McPhail, D.S.O., and styled "Hughes' Brigade" and "McPhail's Brigade" respectively.

The next step taken was to organize on similar lines all the men of the Special Companies of Royal Engineers—such as those responsible for firing gas drums—for action in case of attack. These amounted to three thousand and were placed under orders of the Third Canadian Division.

With measures such as those described—which are but few of the many important ones—the Canadians prepared themselves for battle. Secure in the knowledge of their own strength, with the Vimy Ridge as a citadel behind them and the defence systems they had perfected as their ramparts, they awaited any assault the enemy might launch with every confidence. Their feelings are well exhibited by the words of the order issued to them by Sir Arthur Currie early in the fighting, when the sky was dark and it seemed as if the British Army was in its death throes. As Fate and the enemy decided, no serious attack was directed against them, even March 21st passing comparatively quietly, and they were left in proud isolation while the waves of grey roared everywhere around them. It was as if the German

High Command dared not attack either their strong positions or the men who manned them. Though their power was never tested, the past record of the force justified the belief of its leaders that they would perish to the last man among a shambles of dead Germans before a single Prussian would place his foot upon the Vimy Ridge that they had so nobly won a year before.

As soon as it became evident that the main blow of the enemy had fallen on the front of the Third and Fifth Armies, the Canadian Corps at once took steps to lend its aid. The assistance rendered took two main forms. The Dominion troops proceeded to relieve a number of Imperial divisions, to set them free for the all-important task of checking the hostile onrush. They thus assumed responsibility for the defence of a larger front, until at one time the Canadians were holding the greater part of the line of General Horne's First Army. They also stripped their reserves of a large proportion of their best troops in order to lend the weight of their forces to the staggering British infantry reeling before the shock of the first encounters.

These movements are described in due course in the pages that follow. The earliest was the sudden transfer of the First Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade to the Amiens front, which began on March 22nd. Twenty-four hours after the receipt of the first warning the brigade was heavily engaged with the enemy. No story of Canadian achievement in battle is complete without some description of the doings of the brigade in front of Amiens, when it went to the rescue of the remnants of the splendid Imperial divisions standing at bay before that ancient town.

On March 22nd, when it became obvious that the city would be in great danger shortly, the British High Command gathered every available man in a desperate effort to save it. The chief requirements of the moment were speed, in order that rapid manœuvre might be carried out, and above all so that the troops might get into the threatened area in time, and fire-power, so that the resisting powers of the exhausted divisions might be strengthened. The High Command, laying its hand on every unit that could fulfil these qualifications, could not fail to demand the services of the First Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, which, thoroughly armed with Lewis and Vickers guns, each equivalent to the fire-power of at least ten rifles, and comprised entirely of armoured car and motor-cycle detachments, of high speed, possessed both the necessary qualifications. At 3 p.m. the brigade, which was widely scattered, some of it in the line and some of it in rest billets, received orders to move to Amiens. At 5.30 a.m. on the following day—March 23rd—the whole night having been spent in withdrawing the guns in the line, concen-

tration and preparation, the brigade moved off, Lieut.-Col. W. K. Walker in command.

At noon Amiens was reached. The brigade was sent on to Villers-Bretonneux at once and arrived there at 4 p.m. It was then split up, various batteries going into action on different portions of the front. From that moment until April 8th, with scarcely any respite whatever, these batteries were desperately engaged with the enemy.

Two batteries were sent from Villers-Bretonneux to Roye under the orders of the Eighteenth (Imperial) Corps. These batteries were "D" battery, under Captain R. D. Harkness, M.C., and "E" battery, under Captain H. F. Meurling, M.C., who was responsible for general supervision of the two. At 8 p.m. "B" battery, under Captain E. H. Holland, M.C., and "C" battery, under Captain W. C. Nicholson, M.C., the whole commanded by Captain Holland, were sent to the assistance of the Seventh (Imperial) Corps. Finally, at 1 p.m. on March 24th Major W. F. Battersby, with "A" battery, was hurriedly sent to fill a gap in the front of the Nineteenth (Imperial) Corps.

On March 24th the whole force was fighting furiously. Captain Meurling's detachment on the extreme right was pushed forward to Nesle, after reaching Roye at 2 a.m. Various groups of machine guns were then rushed out from Nesle to help the Sixtieth and One Hundred and Eighty-third (Imperial) Brigades and the artillery covering the town. Captain Harkness arrived in time to assist Brigadier-General Spooner, commanding the One Hundred and Eighty-third Brigade, in organizing a counter-attack after the enemy had broken the line. In the stand which followed at Mesnil St. Nicaise the cars were riddled with shrapnel, but fortunately no one was hurt.

The artillery, which were being covered by Lieuts. Vosburgh and Black, had been forced to retire. These officers thereupon took their guns to the aid of the exhausted infantry in front and were welcomed royally.

Major Battersby, speeding to support the men of the Nineteenth Corps, was just in time to save the situation south of Cizaucourt, on the Somme. The enemy had battered their way over the river and were making rapid progress, when the Canadian machine guns came into action and raked them with fire. The attack was shattered and for the moment the hostile advance was checked.

On the left, in the vicinity of Cléry, over fifteen miles north of Captain Meurling's force, the detachment under Captain E. H. Holland meanwhile had been locked in death with the overwhelming mass of the enemy. The detachment came into action in front of Cléry, which was held by a small body of worn-out



infantry, with both flanks hopelessly "in the air" and the whole under terrific shell fire. During the morning the Germans attacked the village in great force, and the infantry and machine gunners, fighting to the bitter end, were cut to pieces. The remains of the force fell back and entrenched a thousand yards west of Cléry. By the time dusk set in there were only four machine guns in action. The rest had been captured or smashed. Very severe losses had been suffered, Captain Holland, Lieut. W. H. Snyder, Lieut. F. G. Waldron and Lieut. R. H. A. West having all been killed as they fought their smoking guns among the raging masses of the enemy. Captain Nicholson had been wounded, and almost all the N.C.O.'s were casualties, as were the majority of the men. But the determination of those who were left was as fierce as ever.

On March 25th the retreat continued, and very bloody fighting again took place. On the following day Captain Meurling's detachment—or what was left of it—was told that it might rest at Quesnil. Exactly twenty minutes passed before they were entreated to get on the move again, for the enemy had again broken through, this time at Fouquescourt, less than five miles away. The motor-cycles and cars dashed off, and by 12.30 p.m. had filled the gap and were in action once more. They were no sooner firing than another desperate plea for help arrived. The enemy had broken the line at Bouchoir, on the right rear of the position held by Captain Meurling, creating an extremely dangerous situation.

Captain Meurling, who had already augmented his feeble strength with all the Imperial machine gunners or infantry he could get, despatched Lieut. Black with four guns manned by these improvised crews to the rescue. They arrived in the nick of time, met the oncoming enemy with annihilating fire, rallied the infantry in the vicinity and saved the position, together with the headquarters of the Twentieth (Imperial) Division, which had nearly been taken.

The German Army evidently saw Amiens already in its grasp, and was pressing its attack through the ruins of the British line with remorseless energy. Soon after the fight at Bouchoir, German cavalry came down upon Hangest, three miles due west, and still further in rear of the threatened positions at Rouvroy and Warvillers. Lieut. Black's men aided the infantry in beating off their advance.

By this time desperate fighting was in progress at Warvillers and Rouvroy. Six of the sixteen machine guns helping to hold this front were destroyed. Captain Harkness, in command of the guns at Rouvroy, had lost the majority of his men and came back on a motor-cycle through violent shell fire to get

reinforcements from Captain Meurling. He was blown off his machine by a shell on the way, but struggled on and reached Captain Meurling in an exhausted condition and explained the situation. Every man available was sent up—there were four men available—and all day and all night the Rouvroy machine guns and the infantry with them fought for and held the place in the face of an endless series of assaults.

Major Battersby and Captain Nicholson on the left had also been fiercely engaged. Two of their armoured cars under Lieut. W. E. Smith, on the road from Villers-Bretonneux to Hamel, completely broke up the enemy's wild efforts to get across the Somme from the north. These cars fired into the endless columns of German infantry for over four hours, causing immense loss.

On the morning of March 27th the detachment under Captain Meurling was withdrawn, and went to Hebecourt for the first real rest it had obtained since it entered the battle. On the following day the brigade concentrated and moved to positions covering Villers-Bretonneux and the vicinity—Hangard to the south and Hamel to the north. Carey's celebrated force of labour units, signallers, pioneers, convalescents, drafts and the remnants of certain units of the Fifth Army, was now in contact with the enemy, and, as it proved, the real crisis had passed. This force held its ground until April 1st, beating back a continuous series of attacks with the aid of the Canadian machine gunners, who moved about wherever the fight was thickest and constantly frustrated attempts to break the line. Carey's command was then disbanded, properly organized Australian and Imperial troops having come up. Before leaving, Brigadier-General Carey assured the Canadian officers that their machine guns had been the backbone of the defence.

The machine gunners were withdrawn from the line on April 3rd and went to rest at Hebecourt. At that time the whole of Captain Meurling's detachment of two companies totalled only twenty-five men. They had not finished with the enemy in front of Amiens, however. On the following day they were hurriedly sent forward to Villers-Bretonneux and Hamel to help in repulsing another German attack. The attack was completely crushed, Lieut. Black doing particularly severe execution with four armoured cars against the enemy's battalions assaulting the Bois de Hamel. On April 8th the brigade was finally relieved. It then returned to the Canadian Corps, having received the thanks of every British officer, from subaltern to Corps Commander, with whom it came in contact.

The moral effect of the appearance of these cars on exhausted English infantry and triumphant Germans alike was very great, and helped to spread confidence among their friends and panic

among their foes. The murderous fire with which they met all hostile advances completed it. They could not have done better work or played a more important part.

While the First Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade was thus engaged, the rest of the Corps was not standing by inert and unconcerned. On March 24th the Second Canadian Division was ordered to move into G.H.Q. Reserve at Villers Chatel and north of Arras, prior to joining the Third Army with a view to checking the enemy's advance. The Third Canadian Division at the same time released the Sixty-second (Imperial) Division for service in the operations by extending its front and taking over the line of its neighbour. The Fourth Canadian Division, moved hurriedly up from reserve, on the same day completed the relief of the First Canadian Division in advance of Hill 70. The latter formation then concentrated around Château de La Haie in reserve.

On March 25th the divisional artillery of the Second Division, *en route* to Camblain l'Abbé, was checked before it left Frevin Capelle and ordered to await further instructions. By that time the whole of the division were standing to arms ready to go wherever they might be needed. On the following day they moved up to Basseux.

At midnight the First Canadian Division, urgently needed to aid exhausted Imperial troops to the south, took their places, every man except those who normally moved by horse, wagon or cycle, in convoys of omnibuses bound for a destination unknown. They reached the area in the vicinity of Henu and Couin, west of the centre of the Third Army front as it extended now between Bapaume and the River Ancre. They were in the act of leaving the buses—about half the vehicles had been unloaded—when orders were suddenly received to re-enter the convoys and proceed at once to the area around Wanquentin, about eight miles due west of Arras, with headquarters at Fosseux, prior to relieving troops in the line the following day. It appeared that a new attack had developed and fresh battalions were urgently needed.

Accordingly the division was diverted, and had concentrated in the required area by noon on March 28th.

Two Canadian divisions were now under the orders of the Third Army ready to enter the battle—the First and the Second Divisions. Yet another—the Third—had passed out of Canadian Corps control on the same day as the division came under the control of the Eighteenth Corps.

On March 29th the First Canadian Division completed the relief of the Forty-fourth (Imperial) Brigade of the Fifteenth Division holding the front from just north of Neuville-Vitasse

to the Arras-Cambrai Road. The next day the Second Canadian Division completed the relief of the Third (Imperial) Division from Neuville-Vitasse south to Boisleux-St. Marc. These divisions now came under the control of the Seventeenth and Sixth Corps respectively.

The line for which Canadians were responsible had been gradually shifting south. The Fourth Canadian Division, having been relieved by the Forty-sixth (Imperial) Division near Lens on March 29th, finished relieving the Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division on the following day on the front immediately opposite Gavrelle and Oppy. These moves placed the whole front of the First Army south of the Souchez River under the control of the Canadian Corps. The Eighteenth Corps had gone out to a hard-won rest, so the Third Canadian Division again reverted to its own Corps. This series of rapid reliefs, very dull to read of and duller still to carry out, involving continuous hard work for all concerned, had the effect of setting free for action on other parts of the front a large number of Imperial divisions.

While the movements described were in progress the Canadians, in consequence of the precarious salient in which the enemy's advance in the South had placed them, were obliged to withdraw their whole front to a maximum depth of about one mile, from their positions facing Mericourt and Acheville, and in the vicinity of Arleux, Oppy and Gavrelle. The withdrawal hinged on Avion. It was carried out successfully and without hostile interference.

An important change in organization was completed on April 3rd, when all the Pioneer battalions and Field Companies of Canadian Engineers were formed into brigades, each division having one of these, commanded by the Chief Engineer of the division and made up of three battalions. Under this arrangement, which proved its value to the hilt in operations which followed, the units and their commanders were as under :

First Canadian Engineer Brigade, Lieut.-Col. H. F. Hertzberg, M.C., made up of the First Canadian Engineer Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. C. Walkem, Second Canadian Engineer Battalion, Major J. M. Rolston, and Third Canadian Engineer Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. Pepler ; Second Canadian Engineer Brigade, Lieut.-Col. S. H. Osler, D.S.O., comprising the Fourth Canadian Engineer Battalion, Major H. D. St. A. Smith ; Fifth Canadian Engineer Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Allan, D.S.O., and Sixth Canadian Engineer Battalion, Major C. B. Russell ; Third Canadian Engineer Brigade, Lieut.-Col. J. Hauliston, composed of the Seventh Canadian Engineer Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. B. Kingsmill, D.S.O. ; Eighth Canadian Engineers Battalion, Major E. J. C. Schmidlin, M.C., and Ninth Canadian Engineer



Battalion, Major N. R. Robertson ; the Fourth Canadian Engineer Brigade, Lieut.-Col. W. L. Malcolm, was composed of the Tenth Canadian Engineer Battalion, Major W. P. Wilgar, Eleventh Canadian Engineer Battalion, Major H. L. Trotter, D.S.O., and Twelfth Canadian Engineer Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. T. C. Thompson.

Minor raiding activity, great artillery action and much digging kept the Canadians busy during the first week of April. Small clashes with the enemy occurred every night. Our guns took advantage of the exposed positions, in which the check of the German advance had left the hostile batteries, to shell them heavily. On one occasion over ten thousand rounds of gas shell were fired in one "shoot," resulting in a marked decrease in the liveliness of the German artillery. All the men available, including drafts, were used to dig new trenches and keep old ones in repair. This was particularly urgent on the fronts of the First and Second Divisions, where a new line had to be constructed at the edge of the high-water mark of the enemy's tidal wave.

On April 7th two men of the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Corporal C. A. Patriquin and Private J. H. Gardner, went out hunting in No Man's Land. They encountered a German machine gun nest, jumped in among the crew of five and took them prisoner. They then returned to their trenches in triumph, driving their captives, who carried the machine gun before them.

On April 8th the First Canadian Division relieved the Fourth (Imperial) Division astride the Scarpe, having handed over the front it held north of Neuville-Vitasse to the Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division.

On April 11th the storm of battle, forever playing up and down the Canadian front, leaped to the portion of the line held by Brigadier-General J. M. Ross, Fifth Brigade, in front of Neuville-Vitasse. That day witnessed a powerful effort on the part of the Germans to take what was left of the village. The attack was the last lightning-stroke of the tempest which had forced back the British line in March, and a form of accompaniment to that new tempest now in full flood in Flanders.

After a short and extremely violent bombardment the first attack was delivered under an intense barrage at 4.35 a.m. against the Twenty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. T. L. Tremblay, C.M.G., D.S.O., and the Twenty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. H. Clark-Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O. The attackers numbered eighty and came on in waves with great determination. The fire of the Canadian rifles and Lewis guns met them, scattered them, and drove back the remnant into the gloom whence they came. At 9.15 a.m. the attempt was repeated, in spite of the very heavy casualties already suffered, and the Germans, who

numbered about fifty, succeeded in occupying the position normally held by a post of the Twenty-second Battalion, the garrison of which had withdrawn for the moment to escape the enemy's barrage. Lieut. Gelineau, of the battalion of French-Canadians, grasping the situation instantly, at once led a counter-attack, which retook the post and caused considerable loss to the enemy. The Germans who survived fled to their own lines, and in doing so were caught in our barrage—which never ceased to lend its powerful aid to the harassed infantry—and many died there.

For the third and last time the enemy attempted to achieve their aim at 2 p.m. that day. The left company of the Twenty-fourth Battalion was again attacked at that hour. The Germans managed to penetrate between two advanced posts. Savage fighting with grenades followed, and as a result the Germans were all accounted for and the line was re-established.

There was no more activity on the Fifth Brigade front that day, but the hostile artillery fired heavily and steadily during the night, as if enraged at the failure of the infantry.

It was quite obvious that the Germans had intended to take Neuville-Vitasse and, once taken, to keep it, for they all carried two water-bottles and extra rations to sustain them during the period of consolidation.

During the next few days several important adjustments of the Canadian front were made. On April 12th the Corps extended its left and took over the front hitherto held by the Forty-sixth (Imperial) Division. The Corps Commander thereupon became responsible for the whole of the line from the Broken Mill, south of the River Scarpe, to Chalk Pit Alley, near the Chalk Pit on Hill 70. This covered a distance of over twenty miles of front line and represented the widest front held by Canadian troops during the war.

April 16th witnessed a fine piece of work by the Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. C. Hatch, D.S.O., holding the extreme right of the Canadian line.

At about 9 a.m., following an intense bombardment, the enemy attacked and captured two hundred and fifty yards of the front line of the First King's Liverpool Regiment, on the right of the Nineteenth Battalion. As a result, the flank of the Canadians represented by "A" Company, under Captain M. C. Roberts, was left "in the air." Captain Roberts proceeded to act with promptitude. The lost trenches were not his affair, but his flank was in danger. He accordingly launched a counter-attack with one platoon commanded by Lieut. Borthwick. The latter led his platoon in a dashing manner, until killed, and they retook one hundred and fifty yards of the English trenches,

together with a few prisoners. This they proceeded to hold until noon, when a platoon of the Liverpools arrived and took over the trenches. The Nineteenth Battalion now lent two platoons of "C" Company to the Imperial battalion, who counter-attacked during the afternoon and recaptured the rest of the line.

The combination between the two battalions thus resulted in a complete restoration of the English positions.

The big raid of the season came on April 28th, and was made by the Third Brigade, those veterans in the art. It was carried out by the Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. Worrall, M.C., on the right, and the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, D.S.O., on the left. The main raid covered a total front of six hundred yards and penetrated to a depth of four hundred yards. The raid was made under cover of the usual "box" barrage provided by artillery, trench mortars and machine guns, and was made in two distinct parts—"A" Raid by the Fourteenth Battalion, and "B" Raid by the Sixteenth Battalion.

Besides the main raid, separate subsidiary raids, known as "C" and "D," were made at the same time on posts five hundred and a thousand yards respectively to the north of the main attack. These minor actions were entrusted to the Sixteenth Battalion. Each battalion employed one company.

At 1 a.m. the barrage started and the raiders advanced. A cloudy night had assisted the assembly, and the Fourteenth Battalion broke into their objectives undetected. The first objective was captured on time, with plenty of fierce fighting. Numerous prisoners and machine guns were taken and the bayonet was freely used. A number of dugouts were bombed and destroyed.

Lieut. G. B. McKean, in command of "E" group of the Fourteenth Battalion, met with a particularly desperate resistance, but dealt with it in such fine style that he was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross.

The party he commanded was held up by a block in a communication trench and came under a most intense machine gun fire while pelted with innumerable bombs. The block was held by two Germans, strongly wired all round and covered by a machine gun within thirty yards. Disregarding the concentrated fire raining about him, Lieut. McKean ran forward, got through the wire and leaped on top of one of the men holding the block. After a desperate struggle he shot the man dead with his revolver, and similarly disposed of another man who rushed at him with fixed bayonet. The machine gun he silenced, and then, when bombs had come up, he led the attack on a second block. This he rushed, killing two and capturing four of the garrison. The

remainder fled, taking a machine gun with them into a dug-out. Lieut. McKean, still under the heaviest fire, proceeded to destroy the dugout and with it the men inside.

The Sixteenth Battalion's men, under Captain Scroggie, M.C., were at this time in the thick of it. Just before the hour of assault they were discovered, and a heavy fire was opened on them as they lay within eighty yards of the enemy's outposts. They endured the fire without flinching, and at the hour appointed rushed forward. On the front of the main raid only two machine guns put up any resistance, and these were quickly silenced. Corporal Langtry was responsible for accounting for one, which he did by killing the whole crew, single-handed, with the bayonet.

After the barrage had rested for twenty minutes on the second objective, the shell fire lifted and all the raiders of the brigade pushed on to that objective, a trench full of deep dug-outs two hundred yards ahead. All the dugouts were bombed and destroyed and more prisoners fell into our hands. Where the enemy refused either to surrender or leave the dugouts they were killed without ceremony. On the Sixteenth Battalion front Lieuts. Gibson and Tuxford had scaled an embankment fifteen feet high in dashing style in order to lead their men to the second objective.

"C" and "D" Raids were accomplished with equal success. Lieuts. Cameron and McIvor led "C" Raid and drove the enemy before them, both being wounded as they did so. Lieut. Thomson, leading "D" Raid, was killed, but his men pressed on, took a machine gun and destroyed post and garrison, thus avenging their leader's death.

Their work accomplished, the raiders all withdrew. They had achieved a notable success. The Fourteenth Battalion had taken twenty-four prisoners, two machine guns and a trench mortar, while the Sixteenth Battalion secured twenty-eight prisoners—including an officer—and three machine guns. Eighty dead had been counted in the trenches and a reliable estimate placed the enemy's total casualties at two hundred. All this had been done by less than three hundred Canadians at a cost to themselves of only thirty-three casualties.

A notable feature of the raid was the readiness with which the enemy in the open surrendered as soon as their officers were killed.

On the following day a raid by the Fourth Brigade, with five officers and one hundred and forty-five men of the Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Hatch, and four officers and one hundred men of the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. Jones, D.S.O., brought excellent results. The raid was made



at 2 a.m. on a front of a thousand yards and penetrated to the unusual depth of a thousand yards.

The advance was made under a dense barrage and gained all its objectives. The Nineteenth Battalion, led by Lieut. Waldron, M.C., and Lieut. Steward, attacked on the right and disposed of all opposition with the bayonet. Six prisoners fell into their hands, together with a machine gun. They accounted for at least twenty of the enemy and lost only eleven themselves, all of whom were wounded.

With the Twenty-first Battalion, under Major H. W. Cooper, results were similar. One party, by smart work with rifle-grenades, silenced a machine gun which was firing on the Nineteenth Battalion and captured the gun and the crew. Another party, led by Lieut. Currie, M.M., broke through the strong wire guarding a German post of six men, covering their movements with a shower of grenades, and killed or wounded all who resisted. Elsewhere machine guns and Germans were overpowered and the covering party of the raiders had an opportunity to break up a large body of Germans with small-arm fire, causing many casualties. The total losses of the battalion amounted to fifteen, all wounded.

By 2.45 a.m. the raiders were back in their own trenches, with ten prisoners and four machine guns as trophies.

This ended the activity of April. Other forms of activity, however, continued as they always did, being as necessary to the life of an army in the presence of the enemy as breathing to the men who held its lines. Patrol fighting, sniping, wiring, trench maintenance, the ceaseless fire of artillery and machine guns, and all the manifold industry of the non-combatant went on. The Canadians were continuing to live up to their record in all these things. In sniping, for example, they stood as high as ever. Lance-Corporal H. Norwest, a Cree Indian of the Fiftieth Battalion, since landing in France with his battalion, had so excelled himself as a sniper that at this time he claimed one hundred and one observed hits, each representing a German certified by watchers as falling a casualty to his sure aim.

May came and the winter had gone. Spring had arrived. The poppies were breaking in crimson pools along the dusty flanks of Vimy Ridge. The woods of Château de La Haie were clouding with green, the sun was drying the mud in the trenches, the birds sang in the ruined skeletons of the mines. The end of another winter had come, too, for the Canadian Corps—the long winter of defensive tactics. Thenceforth they were to know only the joy of offensive action, rising from victory to victory, until the autumn brought respite to a broken and routed enemy.

The German assaults were not yet over. But Marshal Foch

had got the measure of his foes and was merely waiting for the final effort before he struck. Men in high places were beginning to think of the counter-attack. It was a right won by the Canadians in years of battle that they should be in the forefront of the counter-attack when the hour came.

Before they could be ready for this they needed rest and training—training as a Corps, as one machine, so that they might glean all the latest knowledge of assault, practise what they learnt, and be able to act as one man in the attack.

On May 3rd, to free the Canadian Corps for this training, the Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps began to relieve it. The Third Canadian Division and a portion of the Fourth Canadian Division were relieved upon that day. By May 6th the First Canadian Division had also been relieved. On the following day the rest of the Fourth Canadian Division were relieved. The Corps Commander then handed over the front, and Corps Headquarters moved from Camblain l'Abbé to Pernes.

The Imperial Divisions which relieved the Canadians were the Fifteenth, Twentieth, Fifty-first, Fifty-second and Fifty-sixth.

Certain Canadian troops were left in the forward area for the time being. These were the entire Second Canadian Division, which was still in the trenches of the Sixth (Imperial) Corps and could not be spared; and the Third, Eighth and Tenth Brigades, which remained behind to support the Ninth, Eleventh and Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps respectively.

## CHAPTER XIII

### AMIENS

MAY–AUGUST 1918

THE First, Third and Fourth Divisions on relief proceeded to the recognized training areas of the First Army. The First Division went to Wanquetin, Beaufort and the neighbourhood; the Third Division went to St. Hilaire, Auchel and Dieval; while the Fourth Division was assigned to Magnicourt, Monchy-Breton and the vicinity.

These troops were in reserve to the First Army. After a short rest they began the most strenuous and thorough period of training ever spent by them in France.

It is not proposed to describe this training in detail or to refer to any but the most important events which occurred at this time. Let it suffice to say that it went by progressive stages, from the individual to the section, from the section to the platoon, thence to the company, and so on until the whole Corps, horse, foot and guns, and all the auxiliary troops, had practised evolutions together. Open warfare was the chief theme, for it was hoped that open warfare was to be the rule. Aeroplanes, tanks and armoured cars frequently took part in these manœuvres. Thus the many complicated parts of the machine gradually learned to work in perfect harmony.

While the rest of the Canadians were engaged in preparing for attack, the Second Division was still hard at it near Neuville-Vitasse, holding the line and giving the Germans no rest.

One of their most successful raids took place at 12.45 a.m. on May 22nd and was launched by the Thirty-first Battalion. It had for its objective a series of posts in the portion of Neuville-Vitasse held by the Germans.

The raid was carried out by two companies, Captain H. Norris, D.S.O., commanding one and Captain Robertson, M.C., commanding the other. The companies were to converge, one from the west and one from the north; a party from the Fourth Field Company, Canadian Engineers, accompanied the latter

with the object of destroying a concrete observation post and dugouts near the ruins of the church.

A noteworthy feature of the operation was the care with which every man had been assigned to a definite objective and the determination with which the allotted tasks were accomplished.

Bright moonlight, while causing some anxiety lest it should betray the raiders, nevertheless facilitated their assembly, which was completed without casualties. When the drum-roll of the barrage boomed out, the men pressed forward with great eagerness.

Two parties which had been assigned objectives beyond a barricade were unable to overpower it. Strong barbed wire had been erected in front of the barricade, and the Canadians crowding around it were swept by the cross-fire of machine guns. After several gallant attempts to surmount the obstacle, Lieut. J. O'Hara being wounded as he led his men to the assault, the men were finally compelled to withdraw. Another party of twelve men, with Sergeant Holmes in charge, in the meantime rushed and destroyed a strong point, accounting for the garrison, and then pushed on and attacked a machine gun post further up the road. Captain W. N. Graham, leading another party, consisting of twenty-five men, went through the rest of the raiders and became heavily engaged in an exchange of bombs with the enemy. A mad rough-and-tumble struggle took place and Captain Graham was severely wounded.

As an incentive to capture Germans rather than to kill them all—the latter being the more prevalent desire among the men—a prize of ten francs had been offered in this company for every prisoner secured. One man, carried away by the excitement and being business-like as well as aggressive, leaped down among the Germans and was heard to shout, as he pitched one bodily up to his comrades, "My name is Mitchell and the ten francs is mine!"

Private Leadbetter, already wounded in the face, was attacked by three of the enemy in this *mêlée*. One of them seized him by the wrist, but in spite of this hindrance he shot all three dead with his revolver.

When the work of Captain Graham's party had been accomplished, Sergeant MacNieve, now in charge, led them back to our trenches. On the way a body of Germans attempted to cut them off, but they turned tail when attacked with the bayonet. Lieut. Barman had now passed through to the final objective. The enemy took refuge in a shallow trench and shammed dead in the manner of ostriches. Failing to respond to shouts or blows, they were systematically shot. A party of twelve fled, but, perfect targets in the moonlight, were cut to pieces by the prompt fire of a Lewis gun.



Captain Robertson's men had now destroyed the concrete observation post and dugouts near the church. They met with little opposition. A machine gun was taken by smart work under the covering fire of rifle-grenades and a number of the enemy were bayoneted.

When the raiders withdrew they brought with them eleven prisoners and a machine gun.

This success had been bought by hard fighting in the face of strong opposition from many machine guns and from determined posts of infantry.

One or two other raids brought May to a close. The morning of May 26th witnessed a smart piece of work by Corporal Kelly, of the Eighteenth Battalion. Corporal Kelly, supported by a small covering party, went out alone into the enemy's positions. A German sentry he surprised, sprang upon and overpowered. Two men who rushed to the rescue he shot. Then he returned to our trenches with his prisoner. A party of fifteen Germans followed at a discreet distance and were fired upon by our men, with the result that six were hit.

On June 3rd yet another brilliant raid was launched by the Second Division. The Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. V. Rorke, D.S.O., was entrusted with the task of raiding the system of trenches known as the Maze, south of Neuville-Vitasse. The Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. S. Latta, D.S.O., at the same time raided the enemy's line of outposts along the Arras-Bapaume Road. The artillery and machine guns covered the raid with a barrage and zero hour was 12.45 a.m.

Two companies, each finding two parties of one officer and thirty men, all commanded by Captain A. A. Smith, carried out the raid of the Twentieth Battalion. Prior to the raid the enemy was alert and watchful, illuminating the night with the glare of many flares and breaking the strained silence with the tapping of machine guns. Twenty minutes of violent fighting yielded thirteen prisoners, a machine gun and a trench mortar to the Canadian marauders.

While this was in progress two companies of the Twenty-ninth Battalion, "A," under Major W. N. McLean, M.C., on the right, and "C," under Captain O. H. Hepworth, on the left, had been busy along the Arras-Bapaume Road. The advance here was on a front of five hundred yards to a depth of three hundred. Prior to zero the Germans showed as much nervousness as they had in front of the Twentieth Battalion and frequently threw bombs into their own barbed wire. As soon as the Westerners appeared from the darkness on the heels of their barrage most of the enemy fled, carrying their machine guns with them, to set them up again at a safe distance and harass

our men with fire. Those that stayed fought hard and required considerable fighting to overpower.

Certain individuals excelled their fellows. For example, Lieut. H. Jefferies rushed a hostile machine gun single-handed, killing three of the men behind it. A naturalized Canadian, Sergeant Bogichavich, enjoyed bombing a large tunnel full of Germans greatly. A candle was burning at the bottom of the shaft where the cowering Germans lay awaiting death. Sergeant Bogichavich hurled his grenades into the tunnel, and, as he described it later, "de candle, she go out."

At the appointed hour the Twenty-ninth Battalion's men drew off, having bombed or destroyed all the dugouts they came across, and brought with them six prisoners and two machine guns.

Casualties among the Canadians as a result of the operation were very slight.

An enemy raid, though in itself unimportant, is noteworthy because it earned for one of the Canadians a Victoria Cross. On June 9th the Germans attempted to raid the Twenty-second Battalion, Major A. E. Dubuc, D.S.O. An intense bombardment heralded this effort. While the shelling was in progress, Corporal Joseph Kaeble, in charge of a Lewis gun section in a front-line post, stood at the parapet, his gun shouldered and ready, so that he might open fire the moment the Germans, who were holding positions a very short distance away, should appear on the scene. All the Lewis gun section save one were disabled by the bombardment, but Kaeble stood calmly awaiting the enemy's rush with contempt of the danger of death. Then the barrage lifted and fifty Germans advanced against him.

He at once sprang upon the parapet and, firing one magazine after another from the hip, though wounded many times by shells and bombs, he checked the enemy. Finally he was mortally wounded and fell back dying into the trench. But ere he lost consciousness he shouted out to his comrades, "Keep it up, boys! Don't let them get through! We must stop them!" and fired his last cartridges at the enemy, now in full retreat. Later he died. But the post had been saved by his indomitable spirit. Elsewhere the enemy were repulsed.

June 25th witnessed the star effort of the Second Canadian Division before the curtain came down on their performance at Neuville-Vitasse. The raid was carried out by the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Riley, D.S.O., and the Thirty-first Battalion, Major E. S. Doughty, with a party of Canadian Engineers. The usual barrage covered the raiders, as well as a bombardment of oil and gas drums just before the hour of advance.

The assembly having been carried out without discovery, a

ground-mist hiding the men from view, the barrage began at 1.15 a.m. and the Canadians advanced. The Twenty-seventh Battalion advanced on the right, and the front covered by all the raiders was one thousand yards to a depth of four hundred.

The Twenty-seventh Battalion met very irregular resistance. The right company found no enemy. The right of the company next to it did likewise, but the left of the company had some fighting and took some prisoners. "C" Company, third from the right, became hotly engaged and rushed a number of machine guns and small groups of Germans. In one case Corporal Chipman, at the head of his men, destroyed the crew of a machine gun and took the gun. Similar incidents occurred elsewhere. With "B" Company, on the left, Lieut. Parker and his men met the fiercest opposition, were heavily attacked by the enemy and all became casualties except one man, Lieut. Parker himself being several times wounded. On the left of the company Lieut. Moring led a rush on a machine gun, and two of the crew were killed and the gun captured.

All objectives of the Twenty-seventh Battalion were taken and the tasks assigned to it were performed.

The Thirty-first Battalion had equally severe fighting. "A" Company on the right lost its commander, Captain P. B. R. Tucker, early in the raid. A desperate and swaying struggle ensued. The left of the company was fired on very heavily by machine guns, which the mist concealed from the eyes of the covering party told off to deal with such trouble. "D" Company on the left fought its way to its objectives in the teeth of terrific fire. Four out of five of its officers were hit at the beginning, Captain H. Norris, D.S.O., being killed. The N.C.O.'s took up their duties and carried on with great bravery and resolution. Sergeant Rodwell, leading the attack on a sunken road, set a fine example to all around him. A number of Germans in a hut fought furiously against his men. Under heavy fire the sergeant climbed on top of the hut and dropped a Stokes bomb into it through a hole. This he followed up with several hand-grenades. The resistance inside collapsed. Eleven dead Germans were counted in the hut.

Before the raiders of this battalion fell back, Lieut. J. H. Gainor, M.C., planted in a conspicuous position a Canadian flag and left it there, a defiant slap in the face of the enemy. Tied to the staff was a message, which, translated, ran :

To O.C. No. 10 Co., 3rd Bn. I.R.

Next time we raid you we will go through to your Battalion H.Q. The moral of your company is damned rotten.

While the raiders were withdrawing, Lieut. Williams, of the

Thirty-first Battalion, who had already rushed a post and killed two Germans, discovered the crew of a machine gun about to set up the weapon to fire on our men as they withdrew. He promptly bombed the gun, destroying the crew, and captured it.

The net results of the raid were extremely satisfactory. One officer and twenty-one men had been taken and some estimated that one hundred Germans had been killed.

The term of the Second Canadian Division with the Sixth (Imperial) Corps was now over. On the whole the men had enjoyed their stay. Much praise had been bestowed upon them for their long and successful harassing of the enemy. They left the Imperials with a reputation higher than ever.

The Third Canadian Division completed the relief of the Second Canadian Division on July 1st, the former coming under the control of the Sixth (Imperial) Corps and the latter joining its comrades in the training areas.

By this time the Canadian Corps had practically completed its course of training. The occasion was celebrated by a great athletic meeting at Tinqués, known as the Corps Sports Spring Championship, on July 1st—Dominion Day. At this gathering His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, Sir Robert Borden and twenty-five thousand spectators were present, including representatives from nearly every formation in France.

Within a week the Canadians were again in the trenches north-east of Arras. On July 12th the Fourth Canadian Division completed its relief of part of the Fifteenth and the whole of the Fifty-first (Imperial) Divisions on the left of the front. To the south the First Canadian Division on the following day took over the line held by the rest of the Fifteenth and part of the Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Divisions. Finally, on July 14th the Second Canadian Division finished relieving the rest of the Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division. On July 15th the Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps handed over command of the line to Canadian Corps Headquarters, which moved to Duisans for the purpose.

The tenure of the Second Canadian Division did not last long, for on July 18th the First Canadian Division relieved them and they went out to reserve in Harbarq, Hermaville and Ecoivres.

It will be noted that the return of the Canadians to the trenches coincided more or less with the first blow of Marshal Foch's counter-attack on the Marne. They were to stay in front of Arras for a very short time and were then to move elsewhere on a deadly errand. Secrecy did not permit any of them to know this yet. Their presence at Arras had in it a purpose—it misled the enemy.

During the fortnight ending July they maintained their customary activity. Several raids on a small scale, notably



by the Forty-fourth Battalion on July 19th, the One Hundred and Second and Fifty-fourth Battalions on July 22nd, the Forty-sixth Battalion on July 27th, the Sixteenth Battalion on the day following, and the Seventy-fifth and Eighty-seventh Battalions on July 29th, served to show the enemy that the Canadians had returned.

In addition to these raids, each of which accounted for a dozen or so Germans, secured two or three prisoners and an occasional machine gun, a larger operation by the Second Brigade on July 26th in the vicinity of Oppy inflicted severe loss.

The raid was launched at 9 p.m. by the Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. MacDonald, D.S.O., M.C., represented by five officers and one hundred and forty-seven men under Major B. Walker, and the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. P. O. Tudor, D.S.O., with nine officers and two hundred and forty-two men, commanded by Major C. K. L. Pyman. The frontage of the raid was about one thousand yards, the depth about three hundred.

The assembly was carried out on the night before the raid in a novel manner. The men took up positions in old dugouts and shelters in No Man's Land and lay there concealed throughout the following day. The fact that they were not discovered in itself testified to the patience and keenness of the men, especially as heavy rain fell throughout and added to their discomfort.

At zero, after a long and anxious day, the artillery and machine gun barrage commenced and the Second Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery began firing high explosive, intermingled with smoke shell to conceal the advance. The men sprang out and pushed forward rapidly. Owing to their assembly so close to the objective, the raiders took the Germans in the first objective completely by surprise. They fled, and the objective was taken without opposition. In the second objective the Germans were only turning out when the Canadians burst in upon them. Lively fighting followed. Ten sappers of the Third Battalion, Canadian Engineers, assisted the Fifth Battalion in its "mopping-up." Lieut. W. J. Cogland, of the Fifth Battalion, led his men in this difficult operation with great skill and courage. Lieut. T. B. Chapman, of the same battalion, continued to command his party although wounded.

The Tenth Battalion, which had the task of protecting the right of the Fifth, had little luck and saw no Germans.

At 9.45 p.m. the withdrawal of the raiders began and was safely accomplished. On counting heads, it was found that our casualties totalled twenty-five. In return the Canadians had taken seven prisoners and a machine gun and had inflicted heavy casualties in killed and wounded on the enemy.

On July 23rd a conference was held at Corps Headquarters. It dealt with a proposed offensive against Orange Hill, east of Arras. Then, suddenly, the projected operation was cancelled—as a matter of fact, there had never been any intention to launch it.

It then became known that, when the Canadians were relieved by the Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps at the end of the month, they were to proceed to Flanders, there to take part in a great offensive. Orders were issued by the Corps for the move.

Before the relief, however, the Corps Commander took into his confidence his chief subordinates, who in their turn gave to their brigadiers and their staffs an outline of what was actually to happen. No word of the truth went to the units of the Corps. These did not know the plan until they arrived in the area behind the scene of action.

On July 30th the Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps began the relief of the Canadians and finished it on August 2nd. The Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division and a portion of the Fifty-seventh (Imperial) Division relieved the First Canadian Division, while the rest of the Fifty-seventh with the Fifty-second (Imperial) Division relieved the Fourth Canadian Division. The Second and Third Canadian Divisions, being out of the line, were not relieved, but had, in fact, already begun the moves which were to take them to the battle-ground.

Advantage had been taken, too, of the presence of these formations in the back areas to utilize them in the elaborate fabric of deceit whereby the Germans were completely baffled. A battalion from each of these divisions was sent up to Kemmel and put into the trenches there. These troops, by making their presence known to the enemy, through studied carelessness in conversations on the telephone and other methods, gave the impression that the whole Corps was either in the Belgian trenches or about to enter them. All the wireless sets of the four Canadian divisions were sent to Flanders, there to use Canadian code calls to the edification of the German receiving stations. Casualty clearing stations were transferred to the Second Army, as if in readiness to receive the huge losses of a great offensive.

Later, the troops involved, having done their work and succeeded in entirely bewildering the German High Command, returned post-haste just in time to join in the real encounter.

The reasons for these elaborate precautions were many, but chiefly they were designed to mislead the enemy as to where the actual blow was to fall. Thus surprise effect might be obtained and the Germans, unconscious of the menace to the real objective, might be prevented from strengthening the force holding that objective. So successful were these measures and those of keeping

the men destined for the assault in the dark until the last possible moment, that the Germans never reinforced their two weak divisions astride the Luce and the British thunderbolt fell out of a clear sky and overwhelmed them.

The movement of the Canadians to the assembly areas began on July 30th, when Corps Headquarters moved from Duisans to Molliens Vidame, a small village fifteen miles west of Amiens. This movement transferred the Corps from the First to the Fourth Army. On the same day the Second Division concentrated in the area about Cavillon prior to moving forward.

On the following day the Third Division concentrated about Hornoy.

Immediately afterwards the First Division, on August 2nd, also began to move southward, and with it the Fourth Division.

The majority of the Canadian troops moved by train to the primary assembly areas west of Amiens, entraining at Frevant, Petit Houvin, Ligny St. Flochel, Aubigny, Savy and Tinqués. The artillery, with the exception of the batteries of the First Division, moved by road, as did the motor transport. The Second and Third Divisions began then to advance in stages towards the line, followed by the First and Fourth Divisions, and utilizing a broad strip of country south of Amiens as billeting areas *en route*.

All moves were carried out at night, in omnibuses for the most part, so that no spying German eyes on the ground or in the air might discover the vast flood of troops rolling steadily forward to break their ramparts to atoms. By day the men and horses lay hidden in woods and villages, traffic being cut down to a minimum.

Meanwhile the Australian Corps, holding the line south-east of Amiens astride the River Luce, gave no sign of coming battle. Australians continued to hold this line until the night of August 7th. Then quietly they gave place to Canadians of the Third, Fourth, Eighth and Ninth Brigades, who came up in the calm clearness of the summer night and took over the front of battle for the morrow. The Germans heard and suspected nothing.

The Canadian Corps in its entirety had hitherto been in hiding immediately behind the front. The First Division had concealed in Boves and the great wood of that name the First and Third Infantry Brigades, with the units affiliated to it and the divisional artillery. The Second Infantry Brigade and attached troops were then in the trenches just west of the front line known as the Blangy system. In that system also had been hidden the Sixth Infantry Brigade with its attached units, and the Fourth and Fifth Infantry Brigades, also with the units attached to them, were in reserve trenches close behind the line. The Second

Division's artillery were in Boves Wood. The Third Division, meanwhile, were assembled, the Seventh Infantry Brigade in Saleux, the Eighth in support behind the front line, the Ninth in Boves Wood, all with their affiliated troops, while the artillery were also in Boves Wood. The Fourth Division also occupied Boves Wood, with the Eleventh and Twelfth Infantry Brigades and their attached units, as well as the artillery, and the Tenth Infantry Brigade and affiliated troops were in Saleux.

Elsewhere in the vicinity were all the many auxiliary units, heavy artillery, cavalry, cyclists, signallers, machine gunners, engineers and medical men, supply columns and so forth, required to complete the machinery of that mighty force. The feat of transferring that great host, as large as Wellington's Peninsular Army, secretly and in one week from Arras to the concentration areas south-east of Amiens was one of the most outstanding achievements of the Canadian Corps.

While the Canadian Corps waited in ambush the men were busily preparing for the battle, the plan and the object of which had been fully explained to them on their arrival in the Amiens area. The details of this project were as follows:

After the launching of the first counter-attack of the Allied Armies on July 18th, it was decided to develop these attacks until they should involve the greater part of the front. To accomplish the gathering of troops and the despatching of supplies necessary it was imperative to improve the lateral railway communications of the Allies, which the German onrush had broken in many places. The portion of railway which the British Army had been ordered to set free was that from Paris to Amiens.

In order to set the railway free it was decided that first the line of the old Amiens defences between Le Quesnel and Mericourt-sur-Somme should be taken, the River Somme being used as a shield to the left flank. As a development, the attack was then to press on towards Roye and include the capture of Chaulnes, a valuable railway junction, which would have the effect of cutting the communications of the Germans at Montdidier and Lassigny. Thus at one blow we would win back one great railway line for ourselves and take another from the enemy.

In addition to these more important results, several other lesser but extremely desirable objects would be attained by such a victory. The German defence line, which had cost so much to attain and which the enemy had hitherto held successfully, would be shattered, and with it any hope he might still cherish of some day securing Amiens. The moral effect of this achievement alone, upon our troops and upon his, following fast the heavy blow of the recent Marne battle and accompanied by inevitable and very serious losses in men, guns and material, would be very



great. Finally, after suffering these losses, in themselves considerable, the enemy would find himself faced with the prospect of withdrawing his line on the flanks of the battle-ground or having it overwhelmed by reason of the awkward position in which it would be left. Thus a great part of the recent gains bought at so high a price would fall into Allied possession again.

The Fourth Army, with the First French Army, on the right was given the task of freeing Amiens. The British troops selected were the Canadian Corps on the right, the Australian Corps in the centre and the Third (Imperial) Corps on the left.

The force available for the attack of the Canadian Corps, in addition to the troops actually belonging to the Corps, consisted of the following: the Third (Imperial) Cavalry Division; the Fifth Squadron of the Royal Air Force; the Third and Fourth Tank Brigades and the Canadian Independent Force. The last-named was under the command of Brigadier-General R. Brutinel, C.M.G., D.S.O., and consisted of the First and Second Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigades (each containing five eight-gun batteries of machine guns on armoured cars and motor-cycles), the Canadian Corps Cyclist Battalion and a section of six-inch Newton trench mortars mounted on lorries.

There were also assigned to the Canadians many heavy and light guns which will be mentioned in due course. The Thirty-second (Imperial) Division came under the control of the Corps at a later stage in the operations.

This great army, numbering fifteen brigades of infantry alone, which totalled approximately forty-five thousand bayonets, besides an immense array of cavalry, tanks and guns, was to commence its attack on a front of seven thousand five hundred yards. Such was the length of the line which, covering Thennes, crossing the Luce south-west of Hangard, thence running west of the village through the western portion of the wood of that name, swept south of Villers-Bretonneux to cross the railway a mile east of that town, and from which the Canadians were to issue at the appointed hour. On emerging from the line they had to secure three objectives. The first was called the Green Line. It ran from a point in the front line east of Thennes, parallel to the Amiens-Roye Road as far as Hollan Wood; thence in a generally northern direction along the eastern face of Hamon Wood east of Courcelles, through Cancelette Wood to a point east of the station at Marcelcave. The Red Line, the second objective, on the right touched a hamlet called Maison Blanche, the northern outskirts of Cayeux (on the Luce) in the centre, and cut the railway three-quarters of a mile east of Guillaucourt on the left. Beyond this was the third and final objective, called the Blue Dotted Line; this line ran roughly parallel to

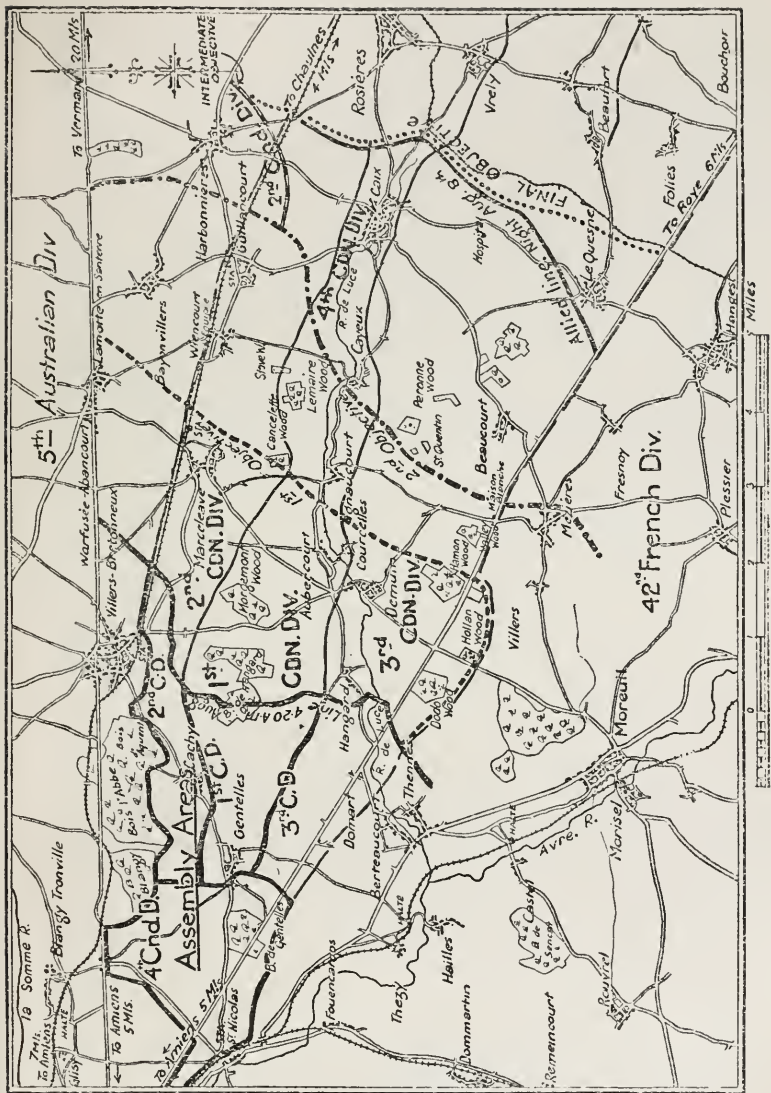
and a few hundred yards west of a switch railway from Hangest to Rosières. The objective followed this line as far north as the Caix-Vrély Road. Thence it went north to a point three hundred yards east of the level crossing where the road from Harbonnières to Rosières crossed the railway from Rosières to Amiens.

The greatest distance to be covered from the jumping-off line to the first objective, and thence to the second objective, and from that line to the third objective was in each case about three miles. In all, then, the maximum depth of the advance was to be nine miles. It was an immense penetration; but when the Blue Dotted Line was taken the whole of the Amiens outer defences would be once again in Allied possession.

It was, of course, intended that the troops, having taken these objectives, should push on towards Chaulnes as soon as possible. No definite stages for the advance on Chaulnes, however, could be laid down, as these depended entirely on the situation as it stood when the time came to drive home that phase of the battle. The Higher Command entertained the hope that the troops might overcome the Amiens outer defences before midnight on the first day of the operations. This was the maximum distance which the stoutest infantry could be asked to cover in one day. The Blue Dotted Line, then, was practically an unlimited objective, for it would take all the courage, dash and endurance of the British, going "all out," to secure it before midnight brought August 8th to a close.

In this, the plan, from an Allied point of view, was unique. No Allied troops, since the days of Loos in September 1915, had endeavoured to penetrate, in one day, to the fullest possible depth the territory held by the Germans in the West. It was a bold scheme, for which only the best troops could be employed, on account of the far-reaching consequences of failure. The Canadians rejoiced, not only because they had been selected for the task, but also because for the first time they were to be permitted to do their utmost against the Germans.

These were the arrangements made for the attack. On the right of the Canadian Line the Third Division was to advance as far as the Red Line. In the centre, the First Division ended its attack when it reached the Red Line. The Third (Imperial) Cavalry Division was then to pass through and secure the Blue Dotted Line, whereupon the First Division would resume its advance with the object of assisting the cavalry, if necessary, or of taking over the line when gained. On the left the Second Division was to secure the Red Line and then thrust forward its left to take an intermediate objective called the Blue Line, which was a line about two thousand yards long,



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running roughly east and west from the railway to the centre of the Red Line as held by the Second Division. This Blue Line was really the southern portion of an objective assigned to the Australians beyond the Red Line. As soon as the Second Division was on this line the Third (Imperial) Cavalry Division, passing through the First Division, as already stated, at the same time, would move through them and secure the Blue Dotted Line. The Second Division was then to follow up the cavalry with the same object as that with which the First Division so advanced.

The task given to the Fourth Division was to follow the First and Third Divisions as far as the Red Line. It was then to push through these divisions on that line and move in the wake of the cavalry to the Blue Dotted Line.

Brigadier-General Brutinel's force was to operate along the main road to Roye, aiding the battalions and the cavalry wherever it might be necessary and lending its speed to the pursuit. To the machine gun battalions and the trench mortar batteries no definite task was allotted. They were to help the advance as the situation might demand. The artillery, that all-important arm without which the whole plan was impossible, were first to provide a barrage until the advancing infantry passed beyond the extreme range of effective field gun fire. The batteries were then to follow the infantry and lend all possible support.

Such, in general terms, were the duties of the various formations under Canadian control. The order in which they were to operate was as follows :

The Third Division, attacking on the right, employed, on the right, the Ninth Brigade, and on the left the Eighth Brigade, for the attack on the Green Line. These brigades used, in the case of the Ninth Brigade, on the right the Forty-third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. M. Urquhart, D.S.O., M.C., in the centre the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. R. Pearkes, V.C., M.C., and on the left the Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. A. MacFarlane, D.S.O., while the Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Sutherland, supported the whole. The Eighth Brigade, to which was assigned a narrower front, used the First C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. Laws, D.S.O. The Fourth C.M.R.'s, Lieut.-Col. W. R. Patterson, D.S.O., supported the battalion, and the Second and Fifth C.M.R.'s, commanded by Lieut.-Col. G. C. Johnston, D.S.O., M.C., and Lieut.-Col. W. Rhoades, D.S.O., M.C., respectively, followed in reserve. For the attack on the Red Line the Seventh Brigade alone was employed, the Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. C. R. E. Willets, D.S.O., on the right, the Forty-second Battalion, Major R. L. H. Ewing, D.S.O., M.C., in the centre, and the Forty-ninth Battalion, Major



C. T. Weaver, on the left, with the Princess Patricia's, Major C. J. T. Stewart, D.S.O., in reserve.

To assist the division in its attack the Tank Corps provided a large number of tanks, which were distributed among the brigades, fourteen to the Eighth Brigade and twenty-eight to the Ninth Brigade, for the attack on the first objective. The Seventh Brigade was allotted six tanks for the assault on the second objective, while all tanks surviving from the first objective were also to assist this brigade.

The artillery covering this division consisted of the divisional artillery of the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions, together with the Eighth Army Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, the One Hundred and Fourth and the One Hundred and Seventy-ninth Army Brigades of Imperial artillery. The Fortieth Brigade of Imperial garrison artillery provided the heavy guns to support the attack.

The foregoing were the dispositions made by the Third Canadian Division for the advance south of the River Luce. On the north the assault was delivered by the First Division with the following :

For the capture of the Green Line the Third Brigade was employed, assisted by twenty-two tanks. The Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, D.S.O., attacked on the right, the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. E. McCuaig, D.S.O., in the centre, and the Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. Worrall, M.C., on the left, supported on the right by the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. P. O. Tudor, D.S.O., of the Second Brigade, and on the left by the Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. E. Bent, C.M.G., D.S.O.

After the Green Line was taken the First Brigade, passing through, was to assault the Red Line, supported by the surviving tanks from the first objective and six fresh tanks. The Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. T. McLaughlin, D.S.O., advanced on the right, the Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. B. Rogers, D.S.O., M.C., in the centre, the Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. H. Nelles, M.C., on the left, and the First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. W. Sparling, D.S.O., followed in reserve to the whole.

To the task of following up and assisting the cavalry to the Blue Dotted Line the Second Brigade was assigned. This brigade attacked with the Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gilson, D.S.O., on the right, and the Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. MacDonald, D.S.O., M.C., on the left. The Eighth Battalion, Major T. H. Raddall, D.S.O., supported them, and in reserve was the Fifth Battalion, which reverted to the Second Brigade after the taking of the Green Line. For tank support these battalions had to rely on any roving tank they might encounter,

as these monsters would be ranging the country at will by that time.

The artillery supporting these battalions was as follows: the First and Fifth Canadian Divisional Artillery and the Seventy-seventh Army Brigade of Imperial field artillery. The heavy guns of the Ninety-eighth Brigade of Imperial garrison artillery also supported them.

The Second Canadian Division planned to carry out its attack in a similar way to that of the First Division. For the advance to the Green Line it employed the Fourth Brigade, with the Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. C. Hatch, D.S.O., on the right, and the Eighteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. E. Jones, D.S.O., on the left, the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. Jones, D.S.O., in support, and the Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. O. Hooper, M.C., in reserve. The Red Line was then to be carried by the Fifth Brigade, using the Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. G. MacKenzie, D.S.O., on the right, the Twenty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. H. Clark-Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O., on the left, the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. Wise, M.C., in support, and the Twenty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. T. L. Tremblay, C.M.G., D.S.O., in reserve. For the assault on the Blue and Blue Dotted Lines in the wake of the cavalry the Sixth Brigade was utilized, the Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. Ross, D.S.O., on the right, the Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. S. Latta, D.S.O., on the left, the Thirty-first Battalion, Major E. S. Doughty, in support, and the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Riley, D.S.O., in reserve. As the Twenty-ninth Battalion swung round on the Blue Line the Thirty-first Battalion was to pass through and press on the attack with the rest of the brigade.

A large number of tanks supported the division, operating with the same methods as those supporting the First. The guns covering the advance were the Second Canadian and Twelfth (Imperial) Divisional Artillery, and the One Hundred and Fiftieth Army Brigade of Imperial field artillery. The Third Brigade Royal Garrison Artillery (Imperial) provided the necessary heavy artillery support.

The Fourth Canadian Division had a very different task. It had, it is true, only one objective—the Blue Dotted Line—and that was in open country, after the rest of the Corps had broken the enemy's backbone. On the other hand, it was required to advance to an immense depth on a very wide front, and liable to meet the heavy counter-attacks and stiffening resistance of the Germans as they recovered from the first shock.

The Eleventh and Twelfth Brigades were employed in this advance. The Eleventh Brigade, on the right, used the Fifty-

fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. B. Carey, D.S.O., on the right, the One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. Lister, D.S.O., M.C., on the left, the Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. C. Harbottle, D.S.O., in support, and the Eighty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. K. M. Perry, D.S.O., in reserve. The Twelfth Brigade attacked with the Seventy-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. Kirkaldy, D.S.O., on the right, the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. M. Edwards, D.S.O., on the left, the Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Clark, D.S.O., supporting the former and the Eighty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. L. Ralston, the latter.

Behind these brigades came the Tenth Brigade, in reserve, the divisional machine guns and the divisional artillery, which, after firing in the initial barrage, were to limber up and follow their own infantry. Thirty-four tanks assisted the division.

Besides the heavy artillery allotted to the divisions, a great number of guns—six brigades of Royal Garrison Artillery, three six-inch batteries and a battery of twelve-inch guns—under Corps control, was to cover the attack. These guns were to keep down the fire of the enemy's guns. In the immense force of artillery allotted to the Canadian line—totalling over four hundred light and two hundred and forty heavy pieces—hope and pride ran high. The majority of the guns were tied down to conventional barrage work up to and, on the right, where the line was nearer, beyond the first objective. Afterwards, however, they were to be free to do their part in the open warfare which would follow the breaking of the German defences.

On the night of August 7th the troops began to take their places for the assault. The three leading divisions, moving out of the positions where they lay concealed, assembled in areas to a depth of three miles in rear of the front line. Behind them, around the Bois de Gentelles and for a further three miles between the main roads from Amiens to Villers-Bretonneux and Roye, the Fourth Division assembled.

The artillery at this time completed its assembly, which had commenced three days before. The tanks, which had been concealed in Gentelles and Trouvilles Woods during the day, moved forward to positions a thousand yards behind the line from which the leading infantry were to start. During the day Corps Headquarters had moved to Dury, whence they were to direct the battle. Divisional Headquarters had also moved to their battle stations, the First in the western end of the Bois de Gentelles; the Second just west of Blangy Wood; the Third to the Quarry at Domart and the Fourth to the eastern end of the Bois de Gentelles.

The night of August 7th was clear and mild, giving promise

of a fine, warm day to follow. The sky was ablaze with stars, which gave a vague, uncertain light. Through the night came the trampling of unseen hosts and the hoarse roar of the tanks feeling their way forward. Big bombing machines flew up and down over the German positions to drown the noise of the tanks, which, on a still night, could be heard a great way off. This they effectively did, for there was no alarm in the enemy's territory.

At 2.10 a.m. the assembly was complete and there was silence. An occasional gun flashed, but there was to be no preliminary bombardment, no concentrated artillery fire to give away our intentions before the hour came. So the random gun spoke, a rifle cracked here and there, a machine gun hammered a note or two, but all else was still.

At precisely 4.20 a.m., August 8th, the guns shattered the dawn with a grand, united burst of stupendous thunder, and everywhere on the twenty-mile front between the Somme and the Avre the British troops went forward. The hurricane broke madly on the unsuspecting Germans and they were overwhelmed.

The Canadians, with the Forty-second French Division of the Thirty-first Corps of the French First Army on the right and the Fifth Australian Division on the left, pushed forward rapidly. The French attack did not start until 5.05 a.m., but the Anzacs began to advance at the same time as the Canadians.

A heavy ground-mist hung in the valleys and along the rivers as the attacking troops advanced, and did not clear up until the sun had risen well above the eastern horizon. While in one respect this aided our men, in that it hid them from the enemy, in others it proved a great disadvantage, for it also screened the Germans and the landmarks which the Canadians wished to use as guides. Their long training, however, and their adhesion to the compass as a means of keeping direction, prevented any confusion. But some of the tanks lost their way, and consequently were late when the attacks on certain objectives developed. This was not surprising, for a tank at all times was an extremely difficult creature to drive, and in a mist almost impossible to keep in a straight course.

Nevertheless, tanks and infantry as a whole pushed forward with speed and precision.

The German artillery was completely surprised by the powerful and unexpected bombardment, and from the first did not stand a ghost of a chance. In many cases their batteries never got into action at all, either because the rapid and accurate fire entirely prevented the newly roused gun-crews from getting at their guns or destroyed the crews before they could fire a shot: Here and there, as on the right of the Second Division, which was



bombarded comparatively heavily for an hour before zero and a short time afterwards, or at Domart, where the bridge was violently shelled, the reply was vigorous. But on the whole it was weak and wild.

Pushing on resolutely, disregarding the presence of minor groups of the enemy until they could be dealt with at leisure and systematically enveloping the more formidable obstacles, the attackers made rapid progress. The German resistance was of a very irregular variety, but all efforts at defence were swamped and the Green Line was taken everywhere on schedule time.

The Forty-third Battalion enveloped the large Dodo Wood in fine style, entering the place, which was full of machine guns, at 5.30 a.m. from the north, and finally clearing it after two hours of hard fighting. Elsewhere the battalion, though at first troubled by the mist, secured all its objectives within the allotted time. Hollan Wood was secured after a brief struggle.

The One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion at 6 a.m. encountered an attempt by the enemy to make a stand on the road from Dodo Wood to Hangard, but turned the flank of the Germans and soon overpowered them. Without much more difficulty it stood triumphant on the Green Line by 7.30 a.m. The marshy ground along the Luce gave the Fifty-eighth Battalion a good deal of trouble, as it was covered with wire and swept by machine guns. In spite of this, the battalion made extremely swift progress. Demuin they outflanked from four sides and Courcelles fell into their hands a little later. The tanks, the terrific weight of the artillery and the dash of the infantry proved such an effective combination that great numbers of prisoners, machine guns and guns were taken by this brigade with ridiculously small casualties.

The First C.M.R. Battalion meanwhile had been keeping pace with their comrades on the right. Moving along the north bank of the Luce, they quickly captured Hangard. Shortly after 8 a.m. the battalion was in possession of its full share of the Green Line, had established a bridgehead south of the river and pushed out patrols to keep in touch with the Canadians on that side. This was accomplished despite an eighteen-foot gap in the bridge at Hangard, the men getting over as they could and under fire. As an example of the efficiency of the Canadian Engineers it may be mentioned that this bridge, together with that at Demuin, which was also destroyed by the Germans, had been repaired by 11 a.m. and field guns were hurrying over it in the wake of the infantry, now miles ahead.

The First Division covered the great distance between its jumping-off positions and the Green Line in remarkably quick time. An extremely strong system of trenches about half-way

to the objective constituted the enemy's main resistance line, covering his gun-positions. Except on the right, he fought very hard in this line and showed little or no inclination to surrender.

It was not until they were nearing the road junction north of Demuin that the Sixteenth Battalion encountered serious resistance. Heavy casualties were caused at this point. The defence was beaten out largely owing to the intrepid conduct of Lieut. McLellan, the battalion scout officer, who crept up a sunken road occupied by the German machine gunners and calmly shot five of them dead with his revolver. A similar deed by Private Sumner, who shot the whole crew of the machine gun which offered resistance in Aubereourt, secured that village for the battalion a little later. Thus bit by bit the enemy were gradually jostled from ridge to ridge, abandoning many machine guns among the large numbers of dead strewn over the ground. A large quarry was stoutly defended by a hapless German brigadier and his staff just before the Sixteenth reached the Green Line, but the tanks quickly put an end to this and the brigadier and staff were taken.

To the north the Thirteenth Battalion had a hard nut to crack in Hangard Wood, but it was smartly enveloped with the aid of tanks. A trench in the German main line of resistance then offered a serious obstacle, but Stokes mortars and dogged infantry finally carried it in triumph, numerous prisoners being taken. Then, disregarding the desperate stand of the crews, who fought frenziedly with pistols, rifles, rammers and point-blank gunfire, the battalion pushed on and captured several German batteries.

Morgemont Wood offered a violent opposition to the Fourteenth Battalion, which had perhaps the hardest fighting of the Third Brigade. When its teeth were drawn the wood yielded eight machine guns and many prisoners. After overcoming further strong machine gun fire a short distance ahead—the Third Battalion, following close behind, lent invaluable assistance in the silencing of these guns—the Fourteenth Battalion, emerging from Morgemont Wood, came upon the enemy's main resistance line. The Germans here were evidently made of stern stuff, for they fought very hard. The Canadians at considerable cost forced their way into a position whence they took the trench in enfilade and the enemy raised the white flag. When our men advanced to take the surrender, the rottenness of the German character again showed itself, for a very heavy fire was at once opened on them. Needless to say, when the Canadians returned this with so fierce a fusillade that more white flags rose up, these were disregarded. The garrison was exterminated and the attackers pressed home their final assault.

During this advance light trench mortars proved extremely useful against hostile machine guns, in several cases locating these in the thick mist by the flashes alone.

In the attack on the first objective the Second Division met strong resistance. As already mentioned, the Germans were alert and were shelling this front before zero. Owing to the mist, the tanks which were to assist this stage of the assault were so delayed that the infantry had to go forward without them. Nevertheless the Fourth Brigade lived up to its record and took the Green Line on time.

At first machine gun fire and shelling were very severe and casualties were heavy. Lieut.-Col. E. W. Jones, D.S.O., commanding the Twenty-first Battalion, was wounded so severely that he died shortly afterwards. The Eighteenth Battalion encountered fierce machine gun fire in Morgemont Wood. In spite of severe losses it helped the Fourteenth Battalion to overpower this fire, Captain R. O. Rayward conducting this operation. He also led his men to the capture of a battery of eight-inch guns in the northern portion of the wood. Cancelette Wood next succumbed to this battalion, great havoc being wrought among the enemy in a ravine near the wood and among those who attempted flight in preference to surrender. At 7.45 a.m. the Eighteenth Battalion held all its objectives.

The Nineteenth Battalion an hour after the attack started was held up on the left. Captain R. H. Bliss quickly organized an operation for the silencing of the opposing strong point, which was rushed and destroyed. At 6.30 a.m. the battalion, closely supported by the Twenty-first Battalion, was in Marceleave. Brisk fighting took place among the houses, and many prisoners, including several senior commanders, and a number of machine guns were secured. East of Marceleave many guns were taken, the crews in most cases flying for their lives or, if they remained, taking no action to defend themselves, being paralysed with surprise and fear.

These were the chief incidents of importance in the capture of the Green Line by the Corps. Scores of batteries were now on the move. The first guns had limbered up and galloped after the infantry within half an hour of zero, and soon after the Red Line assault was launched—at 9 a.m., to be exact—all close support batteries were on the move. Many of the captured German guns, manned by special parties of British gunners, had been slewed round by this time and were firing furiously into the retreating troops they had been supporting shortly before.

At 8.20 a.m. the battalions assigned to the assault on the Red Line began their advance.

So rapid was the progress of the Seventh Brigade that it was passing over Hill 104 by 8.30 a.m. The Royal Canadian Regiment cleared Valley Wood and a copse named Wheelbarrow Wood, and by 9.45 a.m. held all the objectives assigned to it. The Forty-second Battalion, equally determined, rendered useless the fire of a number of German guns by clever manœuvring. At 10 a.m. the battalion, with the Forty-ninth Battalion on the left, had taken the Red Line.

The brigade received considerable assistance in its advance from the tanks which had survived the attack upon the Green Line. It met little resistance, on the whole, and machine guns were the chief trouble. Once the German guns were in British hands, the hostile artillery fire diminished greatly, and none of the Canadian units attacking the second and subsequent objectives was strongly opposed by German batteries.

The Independent Force, having rushed through the Green Line, was soon at close grips with the enemy. It quickly formed the desired link between the first and the second objectives. The French were in difficulties at Mézières, which proved extremely formidable and resisted stoutly. A platoon of the Royal Canadian Regiment, under Lieut. J. W. Miller, had already secured a footing in the eastern end of the village and were of much assistance. A battery of machine guns commanded by Captain W. T. Trench, of the Independent Force, hurried up through intense fire and joined in the struggle for the village. The effect of these guns was so great that Mézières soon fell and the French were able to proceed.

In the meantime the First Division was moving on irresistibly. The Second Battalion captured Ignaucourt without great difficulty, and the adjoining farms were quickly in their hands. East of Ignaucourt a number of machine guns caused a check, but dogged determination accounted for these and the valley south of Cayeux was reached. Here direct artillery fire caused considerable loss. The guns were silenced in a short time, however, and at 11 a.m. the battalion stood triumphant on the Red Line. Cayeux was cleared with the bayonet.

The Fourth Battalion, on the left of the Second, crossed the Luce under fire. When Lemaire Wood was reached very fierce machine gunning caused a check, and the battalion worried its way through this fire to the vicinity of Ruisseau Wood, its Lewis guns covering every yard of the advance. At Ruisseau Wood the enemy's machine guns developed an intense fire and it became impossible to proceed. A tank was sent for, and one of these friendly monsters arrived and gave its powerful aid. The Wood was cleared and the battalion, passing on, helped to clear Cayeux, and was soon on its objective.



The Third Battalion also encountered desperate resistance at Lemaire Wood and in the vicinity of Stove Wood to the east. While Lewis guns and snipers engaged the enemy, tanks and reinforcements were sent for. Reinforcements arrived at 10.25 a.m. and the advance went on slowly, heavily covered by Lewis guns. The tanks, four of them, arrived twenty minutes later. The field gun firing at point-blank range, the deadliest enemy of the tank, instantly got into action and two of the tanks were destroyed. Undeterred by the fate of their companions, the remainder assaulted the German machine gunners with the greatest gallantry. Within ten minutes the enemy broke in disorder. The advance was then pressed home. All objectives were finally taken by the Third Battalion at 11.30 a.m.

Too much praise cannot be given to the tanks of the Fourth Tank Battalion assisting the First Division at this stage. Twelve tanks survived the assault on the Green Line, and they joined in the attack on the Red Line with fine courage and skill.

The Second Division meanwhile had been desperately engaged at Pierret Wood, on the left of the line and west of Wiencourt. The tanks had come up by this time. Tanks and infantry co-operated to clear the Wood and it was eventually overpowered, yielding over one hundred and fifty prisoners and a large number of guns. After Pierret Wood fell the advance was thrust on swiftly. The Germans fought hard in places, notably in small woods and copses, and wherever they resisted caused severe loss. In the villages, however, their defence was weak. Wiencourt was taken by 9.20 a.m.; Guillaucourt half an hour later, and very soon afterwards the Fifth Brigade could call the whole of the Red Line its own.

The Canadian Corps, as a whole, stood on its second objective by 10.30 a.m.

The hour had now come for the employment of the cavalry, which had orders to take the Blue Dotted Line and, if possible, to go on still further. They were assisted by the Third Tank Brigade, mainly composed of whippets, or light tanks of great speed. Immediately after the taking of the Red Line the cavalry rode boldly forward through the Canadian infantry. It was the first occasion during the war on which British cavalry on the Western Front had been able to drive in an attack on a large scale, and they made the most of it. They presented a magnificent spectacle—five miles of horsemen covering a depth of one thousand yards, the sun on their lances and sabres. The Canadians cheered them, and they waved a reply and began to break into a gallop. So they vanished with the whippets "into the blue," spreading the fear of death like wildfire in the broken ranks of the enemy.

As soon as the horsemen had gone through it became the duty of the infantry to press forward in their support. No definite hour at which the battalions were to move could be laid down. They advanced as soon as it was possible to do so.

Among the first to advance was the Second Brigade of the First Division, which followed hard on the heels of the cavalry. Owing to the presence of the squadrons in front and the disorganization in the German lines the brigade had very little resistance to overcome. Shortly after 1 p.m. they took over Caix from the cavalry, who, with the tanks, had mopped up the place two hours before, and established themselves on the final objective. They lent very valuable aid to the troops on the flanks by enfilading strong points, groups of Germans and hostile guns, on the front of neighbouring divisions, which caused trouble.

The Fourth Division had a task of peculiar difficulty in getting to the scene of its deployment. It was the only entire Canadian division which had to cross the Luce River during the battle before it could attack. In spite of the destruction of numerous bridges the whole division, including transport, had crossed the river by 10.30 a.m.

The infantry by that time were completing their assembly along the Moreuil-Demuin-Courcelles Road, and orders were issued for the advance from that line to begin at 12.10 p.m. Accordingly, the division advanced at that hour, and within thirty minutes had passed through the Third Division and were pushing on after the cavalry.

It was inevitable that certain German units would stand fast and put up a strong defence, especially as the first wave of terror had by this time dissipated itself. This occurred on the front of the Fourth Division and led to desperate fighting.

The Eleventh Brigade, advancing on Beaucourt, found that the cavalry had gained a footing in the place after a severe struggle. They had suffered heavily from machine gun fire coming from Beaucourt Wood and from the direction of Fresnoy, to the south. The Fifty-fourth Battalion arrived at a most opportune moment and, advancing with great gallantry through the village, finally secured it. They then pushed on to the attack on Beaucourt Wood.

This evil spot was full of guns and machine guns, which opened heavy fire on the advancing infantry. It had so far resisted all efforts, and dead cavalymen and horses, with the shattered remains of several tanks spurting flames, provided a bloody and terrible warning to those who would attempt to take it. Disregarding these things, Lieut.-Col. Carey reconnoitred the position and then courageously led an attack upon it, though it was not on his front. Spasmodic fighting continued all around

the wood until the One Hundred and Second Battalion arrived. This battalion at once hurled itself on the enemy, and at 4.30 p.m. the wood was cleared. Over one hundred and fifty prisoners were taken out of it.

The Seventy-fifth Battalion in the meantime had been engaged with equal ferocity at Le Quesnel. Very intense fire of all descriptions held up the battalion. The country here was flat and entirely open, the villages of Le Quesnel and Fresnoy, which commanded every yard of it, sweeping the ground with machine guns. Fresnoy had not yet been taken by the French, and was a thorn in the side of the Seventy-fifth Battalion for the greater part of the afternoon. Eventually, the battalion succeeded in establishing itself on the line from which it was originally intended to take Le Quesnel. Here the battalion was left, with instructions to push men into the village by twos and threes during the night, should this be possible.

The Twelfth Brigade met with equally fierce resistance. Péronne and St. Quentin Woods it secured with comparative ease. As soon as the men emerged from these woods, however, they came under terrific fire from the front and right. A large quarry, the wood north-east of Beaucourt, a hospital on the right flank and several other places proved to be strongholds filled with machine guns. The Quarry was taken by a very fine piece of combined action in which a company of the Seventy-eighth Battalion, a field gun battery, several tanks and a six-inch mortar co-operated.

The Seventy-eighth Battalion then pushed on and took its objectives. Two companies of the Seventy-second Battalion passed through them and drove home the final blow. In the face of violent small-arm fire the battalion pushed its way to the Blue Dotted Line and was in full possession of that line shortly after 6 p.m.

The rest of the Twelfth Brigade, except for a certain amount of machine gunning north of Cayeux, met little resistance and was able to secure all its objectives. Before darkness brought a close to that wonderful day, the whole of the Fourth Division, except on the right, held the Blue Dotted Line. The achievement was remarkable, for the majority of the men had marched ten miles since zero. Yet spirits were high, for the air was full of victory.

It is impossible to exaggerate the gallantry of the tanks which supported the Fourth Division and the cavalry. Out of thirty-four tanks of the First Tank Battalion, only six got to the final objective. In the fighting near Le Quesnel nine tanks were put out of action by a battery firing over open sights. Only one actually reached the village, and this had to retire.

The Independent Force did fine work during this stage of the advance. Corporal C. G. Kirkham did particularly well. The armoured car in which he was fighting came under severe fire during the afternoon, when the Force was assisting the French in the attack on Fresnoy, and the driver was wounded. Corporal Kirkham thereupon took the wheel and drove the car remarkably, penetrating the enemy's lines time after time through intense machine gun fire and bringing back valuable information. He drove the car four hours and enabled much loss to be inflicted on the enemy.

The Independent Force fulfilled its duty of protecting the Canadian right, assisting the cavalry and acting as a link between the horsemen and the French in a remarkable manner.

While the Fourth Division was desperately engaged, the Second Division was in the progress of securing its final objectives with the Sixth Brigade. This brigade, passing through Marcellave shortly after midday, launched its attack at 4.30 p.m., and, under a certain amount of shell fire, passed through the Ninth Hussars on the Blue Line and secured its objective.

Thus ended the greatest day in the history of the Canadian Corps as a unit of shock action, and one of the most brilliant attacks in the annals of Allied arms. The battle-line that night, as held by French and British, included the villages of Plessier, Fresnoy, Caix, Harbonnières and Morecourt, and in many places lay over a mile to the east of these hamlets. Nearly seventeen thousand prisoners and over four hundred guns, besides vast stores of ammunition and material, had been taken. The front line of dawn on August 8th was now nine miles behind the foremost of the Allied outposts. Practically every inch of ground and every aim to which the British had aspired was reached. For the first time in the history of the war on the Western Front British cavalry had achieved a great offensive success. For the first time since Loos, Allied infantry were allowed to go forward to the limit of their desire, and well they had borne themselves. In surprise and thoroughness and dash the victory was complete.

The Canadians had performed their full share in the operations and reaped the full fruits of their victory. Nearly four thousand prisoners, hundreds of guns and enormous numbers of machine guns had fallen into their hands. Their advanced troops lay that night with the old Amiens outer defences in their possession, tired and chilled, but happy.

Mention should be made of the actions which later were recognized by the bestowal of Victoria Crosses. Two of these were won by the Thirteenth Battalion in their advance to the Green Line. Corporal James H. Good accomplished many heroic deeds against hostile machine guns. Three of these he rushed



single-handed, under very heavy fire, killed many of the crew, and captured the rest as well as the guns. Later on, in the attack on the enemy's guns, he led three of his comrades to the attack on a battery of 5.9's. The gunners fought desperately, firing point-blank at the indomitable quartet, but Corporal Good and his friends quickly overpowered them, capturing three guns and the remnants of the crews.

Private John Bernard Croak distinguished himself greatly. In the early stages of the attack he went hunting by himself, found a machine gun in action and bombed it with such fury that gun and crew became his captures. He then rejoined his platoon, although wounded, and went with it to the attack. Shortly afterwards a machine gun nest in a trench was encountered. Private Croak led a magnificent charge under heavy fire, was first into the trench, and was largely instrumental in killing or capturing the whole garrison, three machine guns being taken. The bayonet came into its own in this episode. Then Croak was severely wounded and soon his gallant soul passed away.

Corporal Harry Bedford Miner, of the Fifty-eighth Battalion, was another who won the Cross on August 8th, but gave his life as he did so. Early in the advance he received several severe wounds, but he resolutely refused to leave his men. The attack proceeded and Corporal Miner went with it. A German machine gun soon gave him an opportunity. He dashed forward alone, killed the whole of the crew, and turned the gun on the retiring Germans. Later, assisted by two men, he attacked and put out of action another machine gun. Finally, he attacked an enemy bombing post single-handed, and in a desperate fight killed two of the Germans and put the rest to flight. But in this encounter he received a fatal wound and died before sunset. His memory remains, for it cannot die.

These are but typical examples of the feats by individuals that made the advance of August 8th possible.

The alarm of the Germans showed itself throughout the hours of darkness following the taking of the Amiens outer defences. Everywhere the eastern sky glared and thudded with the explosions of abandoned German ammunition dumps and was shot with flames from blazing camps, villages and rolling stock. The hostile transport and guns and masses of men streamed all night long over the country in full retreat for the Somme, harassed at every step by Allied aircraft.

The British generals had no intention of allowing the opportunity presented by this flight to slip through their fingers. While the night went on orders were being rapidly issued for the resumption of the advance on the morrow, towards Chaulnes

and Roye, thrusting back the enemy in the general direction of Ham.

The first step to be taken was the subjection of Le Quesnel, which hitherto had resisted the attempts of the Eleventh Brigade to dribble men into it. The Third Division, which yesterday's attack had left on the Red Line, but which during the afternoon and evening had reorganized and prepared for a new advance, was then to pass through the brigade and attack the villages of Folies, Bouchoir, Parvillers, Le Quesnoy and Damery. On their left the First Division, shifting its whole front southward, was to advance on Beaufort, Warvillers, Rouvroy and Fouquescourt, after it had passed through the Twelfth Brigade. The Second Division, on the left of the First, was to resume the advance and capture Vrély, Rosières, Meharicourt, Maucourt and Chilly.

At the same time the French on the right were to secure Andechy, while the Fifth Australian Division on the left were to take Lihons, Framerville and Mericourt.

The Canadians were still to have the assistance of the Independent Force, which was to continue to operate along the main Roye road and thence along the main road to Noyon, if possible. They were also to be assisted by all the remaining tanks of the Fourth Tank Brigade. Each division was to be covered by its own artillery, a battery of sixty-pounders and one of six-inch howitzers.

The general idea of the advance was a movement in support of the cavalry, who, as soon as the infantry relieved them on the Blue Dotted Line, had pushed forward anew. Owing to the extremely stiff resistance of the enemy, the cavalry made little progress and the attack became an infantry operation, which was somewhat aided by the presence of scattered groups of cavalry which had secured a footing here and there in front.

While this was going on the Fourth Canadian and Thirty-second (Imperial) Divisions were to remain in reserve, covered by their own guns and all others not mentioned as supporting the advance, and consolidate the Blue Dotted Line. This line was to be maintained as a position on which the attacking troops could retire if compelled to do so. The Thirty-second (Imperial) Division, which had marched from Amiens on the previous day, was now under the orders of the Canadian Corps and moved early in the morning to the Blue Dotted Line.

In accordance with this scheme the Seventy-fifth Battalion attacked Le Quesnel at 4.30 a.m. on August 9th, and an hour later was in full possession. The battalion then pushed on and captured Quesnel Wood. All resistance was finally stamped out and touch gained with the Eighty-seventh Battalion at 11 a.m.

The main attack was to be resumed by 10 a.m. Owing,

however, to unavoidable delays, caused by the necessity of carrying out minor repairs, replenishing with fuel and ammunition and reorganizing, the tanks were not able to arrive in time to start the advance at that hour. It was not until considerably later that the new attack began.

To deal first with the Eighth Brigade, carrying forward the thrust of the Third Division. The Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, Licut.-Col. Rhoades, attacked on the right, and the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion, Licut.-Col. Patterson, on the left, supported by seven tanks. At 2 p.m. these battalions passed through the Eleventh Brigade, holding the wood south of Le Quesnel, and went into action.

The Fifth C.M.R.'s, assisted by four tanks, came under very heavy machine gun fire soon after starting. Fine work by the tanks soon quelled the trouble and the advance went on. The French on the main road to Roye met with very fierce resistance, but two tanks went to the rescue at this point also and overpowered the enemy. The battalion pressed on, occasionally meeting and destroying nests of German machine guns. By 4.20 p.m. Folies was in their possession, as well as the Beetroot Factory south of the place, and our men were on the road leading from the village to Arvillers. The French, who had suffered heavily, were not yet in possession of Arvillers. Three hundred of the enemy, perceiving the menace of the Canadians on the north, now fled out of the village towards Erches.

It was evident that the place was held in great strength, for even then the French were unable to take it, though they could be seen pushing on boldly on the right of it. By 5 p.m. Bouchoir was taken, and the battalion continued to advance until it was looking into Le Quesnoy, a short distance ahead. It was now found necessary to check the advance.

The tank and the Canadians, combined with the continuous pressure of the French, had their effect shortly before 6 p.m. The enemy had been streaming out of Arvillers steadily, and the village fell into the hands of the attackers at that hour. Shortly afterwards the French outposts were in position five hundred yards in front of it.

The Fourth C.M.R. Battalion's advance was greeted with a most intense machine gun fire and heavy shelling. Anti-tank guns opened fire with deadly effect on the three tanks assisting the battalion and put two out of action. The third tank escaped, and rendered excellent assistance during the afternoon. Moving forward steadily, the battalion destroyed the German machine guns which faced them and were soon encircling Folies, in conjunction with the Canadians on the right. Most of the enemy fled at the approach of the attacking troops. Ere dusk the

battalion had reached the line held by the Fifth C.M.R.'s and was in touch on both flanks.

At 1.10 p.m. the First Division's attack was resumed, the First Brigade advancing on the right and the Second Brigade upon the left.

The First Battalion attacked on the right of the First Brigade. Soon after passing through the Fourth Division it came under intense fire from the woods and the high ground on its right. Its right company immediately attacked the machine guns in these positions, in conjunction with the Eighth Brigade, and then, pushing on, helped them to take Folies. In the meantime, the remainder of the battalion was strongly engaged at Beaufort. The Second Battalion, attacking on the left, joined it in the assault, and together they swept the village clear of the enemy, taking a number of prisoners. The First Battalion then drove home its blow to a system of trenches just east of the village, converged upon it, and thrust the Germans out with the bayonet.

The Second Battalion, before attacking Beaufort, had overpowered a most stubborn resistance, the enemy making a stand successively in a trench system west of Beaufort Wood, in the wood, and finally in the streets of the village. The defence mainly consisted of machine guns, but the tanks, those sure destroyers of such weapons, assisted the Canadians so well that it was quickly shattered. The battalion debouched from the village, swept away a gathering counter-attack east of it, and by 4 p.m., in spite of considerable shell fire and a staunch resistance, took Marmites Farm. On advancing from the Farm, they met heavy machine gun fire from Rouvroy and the small woods in the vicinity. Two tanks cleared the woods and the battalion forced its way into Rouvroy, smashed the enemy's resistance in the northern portion, and halted with its line half a mile beyond.

After the First Battalion halted east of Beaufort the Fourth Battalion, which had closed the gap caused by the deflection of a company of the First to Folies, went on in the direction of Rouvroy. Very heavy fire from all directions caused a check when the line of the Folies-Warvillers Road was reached. Eventually the battalion reached a position south-east of Rouvroy and penetrated the southern portion of the village.

At this stage, the whole of Rouvroy not being yet in our hands, the Third Battalion from reserve was launched into the attack. It began its advance shortly after 7 p.m., and two hours later had cleared the entire village.

The Second Brigade had commenced its attack at 1 p.m. Before the attack it was intended that the Seventh and Tenth Battalion, holding the line, should support the Fifth and Eighth Battalions, which were to make the advance. As it was necessary



for the brigade to start its assault from a line two thousand yards to the south of that held by the brigade after the fighting of the day before, and the Seventh and Tenth Battalions could not be disengaged till the Second Division had passed through them, the Fourteenth Battalion was assigned the duty of supporting the attack on the left while the Fifteenth Battalion did so on the right.

The Fifth Battalion, advancing on the right without the support of artillery or tanks—the latter had not yet arrived—made rapid progress, advancing over growing crops under very heavy machine gun fire in most gallant fashion. Warvillers and the woods around it were taken without serious opposition and the battalion resumed its advance. A number of machine gun nests along the wood from Rouvroy to Vrély caused trouble, but these were soon destroyed with the help of the tanks, which had now appeared. The battalion then pressed on and reached a continuation of the line held east of Rouvroy.

A Victoria Cross was won by Sergeant R. L. Zengel, of this battalion, during the day's advance. This most gallant N.C.O. first rushed and disposed of a machine gun on the right of the battalion, killing an officer and the operator of the gun and scattering the crew. This action he performed alone and under intense fire. Later, as the battalion passed into the zone of the Germans' greatest resistance and it became necessary to resort to covering fire, the sergeant directed the fire with such skill that the whole battalion was able to press on. Soon afterwards he was rendered unconscious by a shell, but when he recovered he insisted on resuming his duties and leading his men.

His example and devotion were an inspiration to all he came in contact with.

In the meantime, the Eighth Battalion on the left had been steadily making headway under diabolical fire, overcoming nest after nest of machine guns in a dogged and determined manner worthy of great admiration. A large wood gave much trouble, but it was dashingely cleared in a bloody and costly struggle. The place yielded no less than three hundred prisoners and a large number of machine guns. After reorganizing, the battalion pushed on. Then a temporary halt was caused at one point. Major T. H. Raddall, D.S.O., commanding the battalion, went over to investigate and was instantly killed as he went.

Made, if possible, more determined by the loss of this gallant leader, the battalion continued its advance. Serious opposition then developed in a large wood north of Warvillers, the mill north-west of the village, the western houses of the village and among clumps of trees around it. Bit by bit, with the assistance of a company of the Fourteenth Battalion, the battalion battered

its way over these lairs of death. One by one the nests were destroyed, and at last these Western men gained a line on the left of the final position of the Fifth Battalion.

The Eighth by this feat accomplished one of the finest deeds of the day and one of the first of the Amiens battle. Before sunset, fifteen officers and four hundred and twenty men had shed their blood for the honour of the battalion on that day.

Two Victoria Crosses were won by the battalion during this advance. Corporal Alex. Brereton dashed forward alone to attack a machine gun which opened fire on his platoon. He got in among the crew, heedless of the intense fire, shot one of the gunners and bayoneted a second who made an attempt to operate the gun. So great an effect did this individual daring produce that nine other Germans instantly surrendered to him. At a later stage in the attack machine guns again gave trouble. Unhesitatingly, and again in terrific fire, Corporal Brereton rushed forward alone. Five nests of these vipers of steel were firing when he sprang into their midst. He exterminated them all.

Corporal Frederick George Coppins was the second winner of the Cross, and never was it gained more bravely. Accompanied by four other men, he made a rush upon several machine guns under intense fire. There was no cover and the fire was rapidly annihilating his platoon. All Coppin's companions were killed in their heroic charge and he himself was severely wounded. Nevertheless, he pushed on alone, and killed the operators of the first machine guns he reached. Four others gave in to him. Thus he silenced the guns and saved the platoon. His officers tried to persuade him to leave the action, as his wound was dangerous, but he refused to do so until the end of the advance for the day.

The Second Division in the meanwhile had been advancing steadily. The Fifth Brigade advanced on the right, the Sixth upon the left.

The Fifth Brigade employed the Twenty-fifth Battalion on the right, the Twenty-second Battalion on the left and the Twenty-fourth Battalion in support. The Twenty-fifth, advancing shortly after 10 a.m., met with considerable artillery fire as well as the concentrated effort of several machine guns. They went on advancing and fighting heavily. Two hundred and fifty Germans gave in to them in the enemy's outpost position. Then they took Vrély, assisted by the Twenty-second Battalion, and also a wood to the right of it. There was hard fighting in the wood, "D" Company losing all its officers. They made further progress and Meharicourt fell into the hands of the brigade without much resistance by 5 p.m.

The Twenty-second Battalion did equally good work, driving

the enemy from position to position with dogged courage and taking the southern portion of Rosières in conjunction with the Sixth Brigade.

It was in this advance that the Twenty-second Battalion lost a most gallant officer, Lieut. John Brilliant, who was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross for his magnificent work in the battle. Lieut. Brilliant had been indefatigable throughout the operations. Shortly after zero on August 8th, a machine gun which had not been mopped up held up the left flank of his company. He immediately rushed and captured the gun, killing two of the crew. He was wounded, but he resolutely refused to leave his men. On the following day, in the fighting just described, his company was again held up. He at once organized and led an attack on the enemy's position, with magnificent success, fifteen machine guns and one hundred and fifty prisoners being taken. This feat was accomplished by the remnants of two platoons inspired by his dash and bravery. Lieut. Brilliant alone killed five of the enemy.

Although again wounded, he again declined to leave the men. Thus it was that, when his company once more came under fire, this time from a field gun firing at them over open sights, he led an attempt to take the gun. They had covered six hundred yards when he was wounded for the third time. But still his great spirit would not admit failure. He struggled on another two hundred yards. And then he at last fell senseless, to die a short time later.

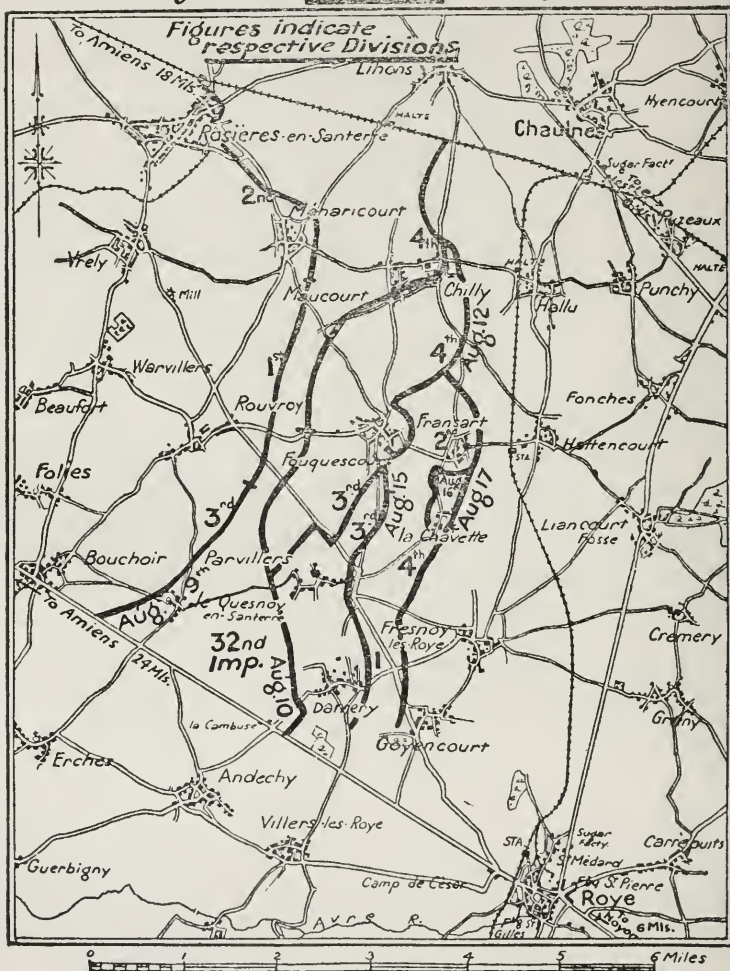
The Sixth Brigade attacked with the Thirty-first Battalion on the right and the Twenty-ninth Battalion on the left, the Twenty-eighth Battalion supporting the whole. They were covered by a light artillery barrage provided by the Fifth Brigade of Canadian Field Artillery. The Fifteenth Australian Brigade attacked at short notice to protect the left of the brigade.

At 11 a.m. the attack began. It was thrust home across an open plain through terrific fire. The German machine guns, as usual, were everywhere—in the Railway, in a big dump in Rosières Station, in the houses of the village and the church tower. The brigade advanced with great dash in the face of this iron resistance.

Tanks co-operated in the attack of the Second Division and, though nearly all were destroyed, did very gallantly.

The Twenty-ninth Battalion, having toiled forward through heavy shelling and much fire from the left, the Sixth Brigade was at length in a position to assault Rosières. The Ninth (Imperial) Cavalry Brigade, with a number of whippets, having helped to quell the resistance on the left, and the right flank being securely in touch with the Fifth Brigade, the advance on the village was made at 1.30 p.m. The place was cleared without

*Successive Stages of Canadian Advances Aug. 9<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Includ.*



BATTLE OF AMIENS.

Canadian operations, August 9-17, 1918.



great difficulty, a tank lending extremely effective aid. Innumerable machine guns were taken, the Thirty-first Battalion, which had been reinforced by a company of the Twenty-eighth Battalion for the assault on Rosières, removing three from the church tower.

After leaving the eastern side of the village the brigade encountered terrific machine gun fire, and the enemy, who had just emerged from an omnibus park a short distance away, counter-attacked with great violence. It was evident that these troops had been in the course of hurrying up to oppose the Canadians when the new advance compelled them to tumble out of the buses with their enemies in sight. Fierce and swaying fighting followed, during which another company of the Twenty-eighth Battalion reinforced the centre of the line. The Germans were driven off by infantry fire and the Sixth Brigade pushed on again, the Twenty-ninth Battalion securing another one hundred and fifty prisoners. The line finally halted for the night along the road from Meharicourt to Rosières.

This fighting of the Sixth Brigade was among the hardest of the day. As an example of the enemy's machine gun resistance alone it should be stated that the brigade took two hundred machine guns during the day.

Dusk was now at hand, and it was necessary to call a halt for the night. The line was adjusted in places to make it straight; here and there troops were relieved or reinforced. The Canadian line then lay just west of Le Quesnoy and included Rouvroys, Meharicourt and Rosières. This represented an advance of three miles on a front of six miles. Much had been achieved. The infantry had overcome a very powerful and gradually stiffening defence with little artillery or tank support.

The Fifth Brigade, in the wounding of Brigadier-General J. M. Ross, D.S.O., sustained a serious loss in the afternoon. Lieut.-Col. Tremblay, C.M.G., D.S.O., of the Twenty-second Battalion, took command of the brigade, while Major Dubuc took over the battalion.

Preparations were now in hand for a resumption of the unrelenting pressure on the morrow. The following was the scheme of operations.

The Third Division was first to attack and capture Le Quesnoy with the Eighth Brigade early in the morning. The Thirty-second (Imperial) Division was then to advance through them and carry on the attack, while the Fourth Division, moving through the First and Second Divisions, was to advance on the left. On the right of the Canadian Corps the French were to capture Andechy and Villers-les-Roye, while the Australians on the left again attacked Lihons.

In addition to its own artillery, the Thirty-second (Imperial) Division was covered by the Fifth Canadian Divisional Artillery and the Eighty-sixth Mobile Brigade of Royal Garrison Artillery; and the Fourth Division was supported by the One Hundred and Fourth and One Hundred and Seventy-ninth Army Brigades of Imperial field artillery, together with the Twenty-ninth Mobile Brigade of Royal Garrison Artillery, in conjunction with its own batteries.

Two and a half companies of tanks were to support the Fourth Division and two companies the Thirty-second (Imperial) Division. These were to be supplied by the Fourth Tank Brigade.

At 6 a.m. the Independent Force was to be withdrawn. The cavalry had already gone. This marked the end of the rapid advance of the previous phases. The British were now confronted by the old French and German front lines, which required strong fighting on the part of the infantry to overcome.

The main advance was to be resumed at 8 a.m., but, if conditions were not favourable at that hour, was subject to postponement.

While the leading divisions advanced, the divisions left behind—the First, Second and Third—were to consolidate the line reached the night before as a position on which the attackers might retire in the event of a successful German counter-attack. Arrangements were made to cover the line with all the remaining artillery of the Corps.

The main objective was the general line of the Railway between Roye and Chaulnes. The Canadian front extended from west of Grunzy to the Chaulnes–Amiens Railway. The Thirty-second (Imperial) Division's objectives included Damery, Parvillers, Fresnoy and La Chavette. The Fourth Division was to secure Fouquescourt, Maucourt, Chilly, Fransart, Hattencourt and Hallu. It was realized that the resistance of the enemy might prevent the taking of these objectives in their entirety.

At 4.20 a.m. the Second C.M.R. Battalion, having been conveyed from Quesnel Wood to the assembly position by motor transport of the Independent Force, attacked Le Quesnoy with great dash. Four tanks, which arrived soon after the advance began, rendered much assistance. The enemy fought desperately with machine guns, striving to gain time to strengthen his 1916 positions, now so closely menaced. Tanks and infantry beat down their fire, and at 7.30 a.m. the village was ours. The First C.M.R. Battalion, which had followed up the leading unit closely, then advanced through them, and at 9.30 a.m. wrested from the enemy his trenches north of Le Quesnoy. A line east of the village was consolidated and the Thirty-second (Imperial) Division crossed this line and carried on the attack.

The leading troops of the division advanced at 9.45 a.m.

The men had marched a great distance since the beginning of the battle. But they attacked with all the ardour of fresh battalions. Through a terrible machine gun fire from numerous weapons concealed in that broken ground, they forced their way forward over ruined trenches and belts of old wire tangled with vegetation. At the end of the day, despite severe losses, they had carried their line to the western outskirts of Damery and Parvillers.

The Fourth Division was unable to commence its advance until 10.15 a.m. At that hour, however, nineteen tanks being available, the attack was launched under an artillery barrage.

The Tenth Brigade attacked on the right, employing the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. D. Davies, D.S.O., on the right, and the Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Dawson, D.S.O., on the left, supported respectively by the Forty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. L. Keegan, D.S.O., and the Fiftieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. F. Page, D.S.O. The attack made rapid progress at first, but as the brigade entered the zone of the old French "Somme Defences," laced with trenches and barbed wire, furious machine gun fire from Maucourt and Fouquescourt caused a check. The Forty-sixth Battalion pushed on a short time afterwards and by 4 p.m. had secured possession of Maucourt. The enemy in the village fought hard, but were finally overpowered, two field guns, several machine guns and a number of prisoners being taken in the village.

In the meantime, the Third Brigade of Canadian Field Artillery and the One Hundred and Seventy-ninth Brigade of Imperial Artillery had come up and taken up a position to cover the Forty-fourth Battalion more effectively. At about 3 p.m. this battalion, strongly covered by these guns and assisted by the Forty-seventh Battalion, as well as three tanks, resumed its attack with great dash. Until the artillery were able to beat down the fire of the hostile guns the tanks had been unable to cross the Maucourt-Rouvroy Road. This had deprived the infantry attacking Fouquescourt of their assistance. Now that the artillery had come up, the tanks were able to advance. By 5 p.m. the village was in the hands of the Tenth Brigade.

The hour had now arrived for the support battalions to carry on the attack. The Fiftieth Battalion on the left accordingly passed through the Forty-sixth Battalion at 7 p.m. Pressing forward under cover of their own fire, they reached the Railway west of Hallu and gained touch with the Twelfth Brigade upon the left. The Forty-seventh Battalion, advancing on the right, was unable to get so far. The Fiftieth Battalion was therefore compelled to throw back its flank to connect the line. So at dark that night the brigade held Fouquescourt and Maucourt.

The Twelfth Brigade, on the left of the Tenth, employed on the right the Seventy-second Battalion, supported by the Eighty-fifth Battalion, and on the left the Seventy-eighth Battalion, with the Thirty-eighth Battalion in support.

The Seventy-second Battalion, advancing on Chilly, encountered fierce machine gun fire from Maucourt as soon as they emerged from Meharicourt. The enemy also fired upon the advancing men from in front, but this opposition was resolutely mastered. At 12.30 p.m. the battalion carried Chilly at the point of the bayonet, having driven the enemy into the place in disorder. The Eighty-fifth in the meantime had cleared the Germans out of a powerful system of trenches on the left. The two supporting battalions now swept forward, passed through the foremost battalions, and fought on. The Seventy-eighth Battalion at 2 p.m. had crossed the railway west of Hallu and captured the village. The Thirty-eighth Battalion, continuously lashed by flanking fire from the Australian area, fought hard and finally held all the German trenches along the road from Chilly to Lihons.

Though much had been gained, the situation on the divisional front was somewhat serious, owing to the havoc created by the enemy's machine gun fire. The Seventy-eighth Battalion had both flanks "in the air." The Thirty-eighth Battalion was exposed to very heavy fire from Lihons. Between this battalion and the Seventy-second Battalion a large gap existed. And the enemy was still holding out in groups in several places behind the advanced line.

The Germans, too, were beginning to counter-attack, a sign of increasing stability. At 3.30 p.m. a strong attack was delivered against the Seventy-second Battalion. It was repulsed when it had got to within fifteen yards of one portion of the line. Yet another attack developed at 7.30 p.m. The Germans advanced with great boldness around the exposed left of the Seventy-eighth Battalion. They were nearing the north-eastern corner of Chilly when Lieut.-Col. Kirkaldy, gathering together every available man of his headquarters, checked the German onrush and hurled them back in confusion.

Darkness at last came down upon a day of very severe fighting. The line was adjusted here and there during the night. As a result of the day's effort, the Canadian outposts then stood in the western outskirts of Damery and Parvillers, where the Thirty-second (Imperial) Division was stationed; Fouquescourt, the western outskirts of Hallu and the trenches north-west of that village as far as the Amiens-Chaulnes Railway were also in Canadian hands. The attack had penetrated to an average depth of two miles, and on the left, where the Twelfth Brigade



had fought so stubbornly, a penetration of nearly three miles had been realized.

The day provided proof that the enemy was recovering from the blow dealt with such deadly effect in the earlier stages of the battle. The old trench area, difficult for tanks and impassable to cavalry, was ideal from a defensive point of view. It was the intention of the Higher Command to resume the advance on the following day. But no attempt was to be made to capture a distant objective. The purpose of the renewed offensive was to carry the Allied line through the trench area before the ever-increasing resistance of the Germans rendered the task too difficult.

Early on the morning of August 11th orders were issued for a resumption of the advance due east to the Somme between Offoy and St. Christ. Shortly after noon, however, they were cancelled, as the enemy's resistance was strengthening everywhere, and the Thirty-second (Imperial) Division and Fourth Canadian Division, holding the line, were instructed to continue organizing the position for defence and to prepare to continue the advance some days later.

These instructions were not put in force a moment too soon, for the enemy at once began a number of fierce counter-attacks. Hallu was bombarded very heavily at 10 a.m., and shortly afterwards the Fiftieth and Seventy-eighth Battalions met a furious advance of German infantry. The attacks were driven off with the heaviest loss. The Seventy-eighth Battalion, holding Hallu, had withdrawn to the railway west of the village, but maintained its outposts in the village throughout, hoping that the advance was to be resumed. The battalion's flanks were still exposed. It had been impossible to gain touch with the neighbouring units during the previous night.

Many other counter-attacks were delivered against the battalion all day, and the villages of Chilly, Maucourt and Hallu were violently shelled, but the men never budged. In the hours of darkness, however, the battalion was instructed to fall back to a position five hundred yards east of Chilly, as, the operations being postponed for the moment, the value of the exposed line at Hallu had decreased.

The Thirty-second (Imperial) Division, though the general advance had been abandoned, was instructed to secure Damery during the day, in order to improve the position on the right. Desperate fighting took place, but, in spite of the greatest determination and courage, the division was unable to take the village.

Elsewhere on the Canadian front the day was spent in filling in gaps in the line. Fine weather still continued and aided such adjustments.

Another officer who was later deemed worthy of the Victoria

Cross, Lieut. James Edward Tait, M.C., of the Seventy-eighth Battalion, gave up his life in the fierce fighting encountered by his unit on August 11th. During the previous stages of the battle he had done magnificent work. On the first day, when his company was swept by terrific machine gun fire, he steadied it, regardless of his own safety, and led it on again through the tempest. One of the hostile machine guns he attacked alone, bayoneting the gunner and taking the weapon, which had been causing much loss. He it was who led the company that took the Quarry near Beaufort, on the same day, with a great number of machine guns.

The counter-attack against the battalion on August 11th found him rallying and steadying his men and directing the defence with much courage, though he was mortally wounded by a shell. And so he died, leading his company.

On August 12th the Thirty-second (Imperial) Division, which had suffered many casualties, was relieved by the Third Canadian Division. And now the fighting that occurred throughout the remainder of the Canadian operations beyond Amiens became confined to the front of that division. Here the troops undertook a series of strong local attacks with the object of driving the Germans out of their 1916 line. North of Parvillers practically all these trenches were already in our hands.

Covered by an artillery barrage, the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion attacked at 8 p.m. Middle and Square Woods, south-west of Parvillers. All objectives were gained.

While this was going on the Seventh Brigade had been fighting in the trenches around Parvillers. The Princess Patricia's attacked from a position in the old German trenches west of Middle Wood, while the Forty-second Battalion and a company of the Royal Canadian Regiment attacked from the west and north of the village. The whole of the brigade had Parvillers as an ultimate objective and bore down upon it in a converging assault.

The Princess Patricia's, with the assistance of some of the Forty-ninth Battalion, succeeded in getting into the village. The enemy, who fought for the village with great skill and much determination, then counter-attacked them on both flanks, and the battalions were driven just beyond the western and southern outskirts. At the same time the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion was violently assailed and lost its hold on Middle Wood.

On the west and north two companies of the Forty-second Battalion and the company of the Royal Canadian Regiment already referred to were hotly engaged. The former attacked from south of Fouquescourt, the latter from west of Parvillers.

Their objective consisted of the old German front line between the two villages.

The attack of these battalions began at 7.30 p.m. The Forty-second Battalion greatly distinguished itself by its determined and irresistible advance. The enemy at first were taken by surprise and fought badly, but as the bombers got nearer to Parvillers their resistance stiffened. Through this stubborn defence the Forty-second battered their way in the old trench-warfare style. In this way the battalion fought as far as the main road from Parvillers to Rouvroy and then to Black Wood, not far beyond. At about 9 p.m. the two leading companies were each reinforced by a company of the Forty-ninth Battalion.

After dark the enemy counter-attacked the Forty-second Battalion repeatedly, but nothing could shake their hold from the trenches they had won.

Private Thomas Dinesen, of the Forty-second Battalion, won the Victoria Cross in the furious struggle north of Parvillers. Dinesen set a truly marvellous example of courage and spirit. Single-handed he rushed and put out of action hostile machine guns five times in succession. Altogether he killed at least twelve Germans with bombs or the bayonet.

On the rest of the Canadian front, despite vigorous shelling of most of the villages, nothing of importance occurred. The night brought up the Second Canadian Division to the relief of the Fourth Canadian Division. At 5.30 a.m. on August 13th the relief of the Tenth Brigade was completed, except for the Forty-sixth Battalion, which remained in the line until the following night. The Twelfth Brigade remained in the line also, pending relief. Strenuous fighting went on during the whole of August 13th on the Third Division front. The jaws of the trap were close around Parvillers, and the Seventh Brigade spent the day tightening the grip.

The enemy started the round by a violent attack on the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion east of Middle Wood. The attack was made early in the morning, and once more, after a fierce defence, the battalion was compelled to abandon the wood and fall back to a trench four hundred yards south-west of it.

At 6.30 a.m., following fifteen minutes' hurricane bombardment, the Princess Patricia's on the right and the Forty-ninth Battalion on the left attacked Parvillers from the west and north. The attack was a complete success. The battalions established a line from the Rouvroy-Parvillers Road through the western outskirts of the village and patrols were at once pushed through.

At noon, however, the enemy counter-attacked with great strength. After a desperate struggle, lasting throughout the afternoon, the Canadian patrols were driven back to the line

won in the morning. This line in itself represented a substantial gain, and here the enemy was checked and the hold on Parvillers retained.

During the morning, too, the Germans attacked the right of the Princess Patricia's with great fury. The fighting was very severe and the battalion was compelled to give ground a little. But great havoc was wrought among the enemy, who advanced recklessly to the attack across the open in column of route. The amount they secured was far exceeded in value by the price they had paid.

Later, at 7.30 p.m., the Forty-second and Forty-ninth Battalions launched a minor attack which succeeded in gaining the objectives desired, after a hard struggle.

The many desperate counter-attacks gave Sergeant Robert Spall, of the "Princess Pat's," the opportunity of winning the Victoria Cross. The enemy counter-attacked his isolated platoon. He held them off with a Lewis gun, which he operated alone from the parapet of his trench in terrific fire, until he could get the platoon into a more favourable position. Then, pending the arrival of reinforcements, he again took up his stand on the parapet and single-handed held the enemy off with a second Lewis gun. Eventually they killed him. But by that time he had beaten off the attack and the platoon was safe. Sergeant Spall deliberately gave his splendid life for the men he commanded.

Night passed, and on August 14th the enemy's artillery fire increased. It was now quite evident that the Germans had recovered from the stupendous blow which had been dealt them and were once more holding a well-organized position backed with a strong array of guns. But the Third Division was determined to complete its conquest of Parvillers and Damery.

So at 11 p.m. the Royal Canadian Regiment went through the Princess Patricia's and the Forty-ninth Battalion to finish it. At 3.40 a.m. on August 15th, after severe fighting, the village was entirely wrested from the enemy. At the same time the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion to the south, determined to secure its prize, advanced and took Middle Wood and the trenches in its vicinity. The wood never changed hands again.

The Fifty-second Battalion of the Ninth Brigade now attacked to end the long struggle around Damery. At 9.30 a.m. it advanced against the village, well covered by artillery and machine guns, while the French to the South assaulted Damery Wood and the Bois en Z. Complete success crowned all these efforts. After a brief fight with German machine gunners in the ruins, Damery was entirely taken by 11 a.m.

It was to be expected that the Germans would make a powerful



attempt to win back the village. During the afternoon they hurled three battalions against it. There was a desperate mêlée between Canadians, French and Germans. But at the end of it the Germans drew back, having gained not one inch of ground and having lost one hundred and fifty prisoners to the Canadians, besides a great number of dead and wounded.

The northern front of the Corps remained quiet, and during the morning the Second Division was able to complete its relief of the Fourth Division. This left the Third and Fourth Divisions in the line.

August 15th brought to a culmination the very hard battling of the Third Division in the old German trench system. It had been a strenuous and costly time, but much valuable ground was secured. The Seventh Brigade, in particular, did great work. This brigade cleared a labyrinth of intricate trenches covering a front of three thousand yards to a depth of two thousand, overcoming by fierce hand-to-hand fighting with bomb and bayonet an admirably placed and determined foe.

The First Canadian Division now came forward and relieved the men holding Damery and Parvillers, and on the same day—August 16th—the Tenth Brigade began the relief of the Second Canadian Division by the Fourth Canadian Division. In spite of an incessant and ever-growing German gun fire an excellent gain of ground was secured upon that day. With a view to improving the line before undertaking further operations, the Canadian patrols pushed out into the territory to the east. Ere night fell the whole line as far as a point about one mile south of Chilly on the north and the western outskirts of Goyencourt on the south had been advanced to an average depth of half a mile. These little bodies of men from the Ninth Brigade, before they were relieved, and the Third, Tenth and Fifth Brigades accomplished this substantial gain, taking the villages of La Chavette and Fransart in their progress. The Germans did not resist very strongly.

The next two days, apart from the completion of the relief of the Second Division by the Fourth Division on August 17th, witnessed little of importance in the battle-zone. On August 19th the Second and Third Divisions commenced to move away from the Amiens area, and Corps Headquarters from their battle-positions in the newly captured zone moved back to Dury, prior to going further afield.

The First and Fourth Divisions quickly followed the remainder of the Corps. On August 21st the former was relieved by the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth French Division, and by August 24th was concentrated between the Rivers Celle and Avre, with headquarters at St. Fuscien. The Fourth Division followed on

August 25th, being relieved by the Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth French Divisions and concentrating on relief around Gentelles Wood, with headquarters at Sains-en-Amiénois. The artillery, with the Eighth Army Brigade, C.F.A., was in the Luce Valley.

On August 25th the two divisions and all the troops of the Corps still left in the south began to leave the vicinity of Amiens—not for a rest, as one might have supposed, but to join issue with the enemy again on another portion of the front.

And so ended Amiens, the greatest isolated victory to the credit of Canadian arms.

What was achieved by this action? In five days Amiens and its railway had been freed. Four hundred tanks, thirteen British infantry and three British cavalry divisions (in the British infantry one includes, of course, Canadians and Australians) and an American division operating with the Third (Imperial) Corps, had met and utterly shattered twenty German divisions. Twenty-two thousand prisoners and over four hundred guns fell into Allied hands. The line was advanced a distance of over twelve miles from the positions held at 4.20 a.m. on August 8th. Above all, a great moral victory had been won. The Germans had been taught that the British Army had recovered from its wounds of the earlier part of the year. The Allies had been shown that it was possible for British troops to surpass the greatest achievements of the enemy in open warfare.

For the Canadians, of these totals may be claimed ten thousand prisoners, nearly one hundred and seventy guns, a thousand machine guns and over a hundred trench mortars, besides huge masses of other material. They had freed over sixty square miles of territory, though territory mattered little compared with the removal of the menace to Amiens and the cutting of the German railways at Chaulnes and Roye. They had been the point of that sword of flame and steel which pointed out the road to victory for the rest of the British Army. The price of this success in Canadian casualties was exceeded by the number of prisoners taken from the enemy.

People may ask, why was it not possible to achieve these things before? The answer is this: the Germans at Amiens did not stand in those deadly fortresses of trench and wire which they had been wont to hold in all the fighting of previous years, but on what was at best a temporary and improvised line. But the answer is greater than that. The Canadians achieved these things because they had never before been as highly trained or as efficient a military force as they were at dawn on August 8th. The enemy, on the other hand, for the first time was on the edge of the precipice of utter defeat.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CAMBRAI

AUGUST-OCTOBER 1918

AFTER the Battle of Amiens the greater battle of the Western Front began. Mile after mile of line, division after British division, became involved. And soon that great strategic counter-attack, of which men had dreamed and for which they had yearned so long, was in full swing, driving back the hosts of evil into the country whence they came.

The attack spread gradually northward, beating in the German lines so that they collapsed like ramparts of cards, each of which brings down the one beside it as it falls. On August 21st the fighting reached the Third Army front, and as these troops advanced, the time came for the First Army to join the forces pressing irresistibly against the enemy.

The right of the First Army lay around Arras, and it was this portion of the line which was now to be involved. No British battalions knew that country better than the Canadians, who had held it during many weary months of the earlier part of the year. Thus it came about that as soon as they returned from their adventure south of the Somme they were put into the line at Arras, before the Germans realized they had returned, before the gun fire of the Amiens operations had ceased to sound in their ears, and ordered to attack the enemy.

The return to Arras was accomplished as secretly as the departure had been. The Corps made use of the sidings at Longueau, Boves, Saleux, Baconel, Prouzel and other small places south of Amiens. There was a special pride in the use of these railways, for were they not the lines freed from the enemy by the valour of Canadian troops and made usable by battalions of railwaymen from Canada? A large number of the men, also, were moved by omnibus, and guns and transport moved by road.

By August 21st the Second Canadian Division was in the area around Arras. They were followed by Corps Headquarters, which moved from Dury to Hauteclouque on August 22nd, and the

Third Canadian Division to billets south-east of Arras on the same day. August 26th found the First Canadian Division there, and on August 28th the Fourth Canadian Division were also concentrated in that area. By that time all Corps Troops had returned to the villages around the old Artois town and all the Canadians were ready to do battle beside the Scarpe—in fact, the Corps on that date was locked fast in a death-grapple with the enemy along the road to Cambrai.

The transfer of the Canadians into the Arras line began on August 23rd, when Corps Headquarters took over from the Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps at Noyelle Vion the control of the sectors then held by the Fifteenth and Fifty-first (Imperial) Divisions. On the following day the Second Canadian Division on the right and the Third Canadian Division on the left completed their relief of the Fifteenth (Imperial) Division.

When these moves were completed the Fifty-first, that celebrated division from the Highlands of Scotland, held the trenches north of the river Scarpe and had passed under Canadian control. South of the Scarpe were the Canadians.

At 3 a.m. on August 26th these divisions struck the German line with a shock of thunder and began the long series of struggles which were to carry the Canadians into Cambrai little more than a month after.

In some quarters this first battle was spoken of as the Battle of Arras. It was not the Battle of Arras, for only the fact that Arras was behind it connects the city with the battle. It was the preliminary stage of a gigantic operation that had as its main object the destruction of the German Army, beside which all else mattered little. But because this operation went by successive phases to the gates of Cambrai, in itself a distant and ambitious objective, Cambrai it should be named. The word stands more for the havoc wrought among the Germans than any greatness to be found in the taking of a city.

The town was over twenty miles away when the Canadians assembled in the moonlight on August 25th, and many formidable obstacles had to be overcome before they held the city in their hands. First there was the deep and terrible trench system now occupied by the enemy's outposts and covering a belt of country several miles deep. Then there was the Drocourt-Quéant Line, famous the world over and deemed impregnable by the German High Command. Here the main artificial defences of the Germans ended, though trenches and wire lay athwart the country to the east in places. But then there was still the Canal du Nord, an admirable natural line backed by Bourlon Wood and other places of evil memory, and all very strong positions. Finally there was the deep and wide Canal de l'Escaut, with high ground



on both sides and full of water. The whole of the land in between these main features was rolling prairie-like country, a territory of ridges, villages and small woods, each capable of prolonged defence by resolute men.

On August 26th the Canadian Corps set out to capture the enemy's front-line system. The operation was one which it would take several days to accomplish, for the distance to be covered before the Drocourt-Quéant Line was reached was over twelve thousand yards. Had the German defences been similar to those on the Amiens front, it might have been possible to take this ground in one day. But they were totally different. The Amiens line was an improvised one, the work of two or three months on territory which the enemy had not held before the March offensive. The country east of Arras, however, had always been slashed with trenches, and the enemy had held the greater part of it since 1914. As a final difficulty, the old 1916 line was joined by the famous Hindenburg Line at this point, and the hinge of the two systems consisted of one of the most complicated trench areas on the Western Front. Moreover, this sector was naturally very strong.

The most outstanding obstacles on the Canadian Corps front were the trenches. First there was the front-line system, averaging two thousand yards deep. Then, on the right, there was the northern end of the Hindenburg Line. From the Hindenburg Line various reserve lines ran northward, roughly parallel to the front-line system. Around Monchy-le-Preux, to the Hindenburg Line in the south and the River Scarpe in the north, a maze of trenches, bewilderingly complicated, formed a terrible barrier. When this had been taken there was still on the right the double line of trenches called the Vis-en-Artois Switch, which ran from the village of that name to join the Drocourt-Quéant Line north of Hendecourt. All the rest of the territory on the Canadian Corps front as far as the Drocourt-Quéant Line was covered with trenches.

The majority of the systems above described were guarded by belts of barbed wire, in some cases over fifty yards wide; many dugouts and machine gun emplacements, tunnels and concrete pill-boxes added to the strength of the area. It is true that some of the trenches were shallow, half-completed portions of the defences. Even these, however, might be rendered dangerous, provided the artillery attack was not abnormally heavy.

Very powerful natural positions, such as Orange Hill, west of Monchy-le-Preux, and Wancourt Tower Ridge, east of Wancourt, added to the strength of the enemy's defences. Orange Hill was an ugly, gnarled mass of rock and chalkland, slit by

formidable valleys and ravines, interlaced with trenches and commanding the country for miles around. The Scarpe on the north and the River Cojeul on the south provided it with powerful flank defences. Altogether it was a position which a few determined men with machine guns could render almost impregnable. The British knew its strength to their cost, for many gallant lives had been lost in the taking of it in 1917.

Such was the German forward system of defence which the Canadians attacked on August 26th on a front of nine thousand yards. The left of the attacking Canadians rested on the River Scarpe west of Feuchy, the right lay south of Neuville-Vitasse.

For the first day's operation three objectives were assigned. The first objective ran along a strong line of German trenches about two thousand yards east of the Canadian front line. The second objective, about one thousand yards beyond the first, ran roughly north and south, also in a line of German trenches, across the Corps front, and lay a short distance west of Guemappe and Monchy. This objective included the capture of Orange Hill. No final objective was definitely laid down, but after the taking of the second objective the Corps was to exploit its success in a generally eastern direction, taking Guemappe, Wancourt Tower Ridge and Monchy.

The Fifty-first (Highland) Division, north of the Scarpe, had no set task to perform. After the Canadian attack had started, at 9 a.m., to be exact, this division was to follow up any retirement north of the Scarpe resulting from progress to the south, and was to protect and keep up with the Canadian left as it advanced.

The Third Canadian Division was allotted the task of overcoming the enemy's defences from the Scarpe to a line running roughly east and west just south of Monchy. For this it employed the Eighth Brigade, and planned to envelop Orange Hill and Monchy by a powerful movement from the north, with a minor one from the south. When Monchy had fallen the division became responsible for following up the Canadian success between the Scarpe and the Arras-Cambrai Road as far east as the western outskirts of Boiry-Notre Dame. The first phase of the division's operations ended with the fall of Monchy, the second with the seizure of the fringe of Boiry. The rôle of the Second Canadian Division in the first phase was to attack from the right of the Third Canadian Division southwards, securing possession of Wancourt with patrols and carrying the line thence to the south of Monchy. In the second phase it was to synchronize its advance with the movement of the Third Canadian Division, capture Guemappe and the Wancourt Tower Ridge, pushing beyond these positions if



possible. The Sixth Brigade on the right and the Fourth Brigade on the left were assigned the tasks of the day.

The operations on the Sixth Brigade front were carried out in a somewhat novel manner. This brigade had to attack in a north-easterly direction along the valley west of Wancourt. The valley was very strongly defended by trenches, not only in the low ground, but along the ridges commanding it. Courageous and well-placed machine gunners could make the advance of the brigade impossible.

The initial advance therefore was to leave the valley severely alone. The Fourth Brigade on the north and the Imperial troops attacking on the south were to move forward, leaving the Sixth Brigade behind in its jumping-off line. No attempt was to be made to clear the enemy from the valley at this time, but, as the troops on either side advanced, they were to form defensive flanks facing this pocket of Germans, so that the latter would be penned in, unable to take the British in the rear. When the second objective had been secured by the advancing line, the enemy facing the Sixth Brigade would find themselves virtually surrounded. The Sixth Brigade was then to push forward, converging on the positions from north and west. The dullest German could see that such a situation was hopeless and that there was left for him only surrender or death.

These bold plans succeeded completely, and their story will be told in detail in the narrative of the day's operations.

The Canadian divisions were covered by their own artillery, augmented by Imperial guns. As there had not yet been time to concentrate the whole of the Canadian artillery east of Arras, the number of guns was light. Machine guns of the divisions provided a barrage in the opening stages of the assault, and others accompanied the infantry to lend support as necessary. The cars and cycles of the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigades were concentrated on the Arras-Cambrai Road ready and waiting for a summons. A few tanks had been secured, but the majority of the infantry had to attack without them.

Handicapped, then, by the unavoidable shortage of tanks and with an unusually light array of guns behind them, but with hearts and courage high, the Canadian infantry gathered in their positions west of the German lines. On the Second Division front the Sixth Brigade had a difficult assembly to carry out. On the night of the assault they had to yield up a thousand yards of their front to the north, the Fourth Brigade taking this over. They had then to concentrate on their shorter front before the hour of advance. This they successfully accomplished.

Rain fell steadily during the early part of the night and made the assembly of the attacking troops somewhat difficult,



but at 2.30 a.m. on August 26th the last man was in his place. By that time the moon was shining faintly from a troubled sky. At 3 a.m. pandemonium succeeded silence. The barrage kindled blinding and tumultuous fires in the east, where lay the quiet outposts of the enemy, and, with the Fifty-second (Imperial) Division on their right, the Canadians pressed forward, a tide of khaki and gleaming steel, on the heels of the barrage.

The infantry drove home their blow with great swiftness and precision. The German resistance as far as the first objective was comparatively weak. Prisoners explained this by stating that the bulk of the German forces had withdrawn to a depth of two thousand yards twenty-four hours before, leaving few men to hold the abandoned positions. They also said that they were expecting the attack. As the enemy fought desperately for Monchy, Guemappe and Wancourt Tower Ridge, there may have been some truth in these assertions. In any case, the Canadians made such rapid progress that they held all their first objective by 6.20 a.m.

The Third Division, attacking the vast bulk of Orange Hill, without tank support, covered by a barrage lifting one hundred yards in three minutes, quickly surrounded it and conquered its bewildered garrison. The Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. Rhoades, D.S.O., M.C., attacked it on the south, while the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. R. Patterson, D.S.O., after following the Second C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. C. Johnston, D.S.O., M.C., wheeled to the right and encircled it from the north. Meanwhile the Second C.M.R. Battalion went on, pressing back the enemy along the southern bank of the Scarpe. The Germans on the Hill, gazing down in confused panic at these battalions creeping round them like grim waves of an unbounded sea, offered a certain amount of resistance, firing their machine guns and sending up their coloured lights in an endless prayer to their artillery. The answer of their guns was a mere shadow of the weight and power of the British barrage fire. The defence of the enemy was broken. In the dim moonlight the last German machine guns on Orange Hill and down by the river were silenced by the bombs and rifles and bayonets of the "moppers-up." Less than an hour after the attack the Eighth Brigade had carried the Hill and were in touch along their first objective.

The First C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. Laws, D.S.O., now advanced through the Second and Fourth C.M.R. Battalions and moved to the attack on the second objective with the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, which continued to push forward on the right. The enemy offered some opposition with machine guns and snipers, but these were dealt with and gave no more trouble.

7.30 a.m. found these battalions in possession of the second objective.

Most of the artillery supporting the Third Division was now on the move forward. While the infantry were still fighting for the second objective, these guns were flashing from the western slopes of Orange Hill.

In the meantime the Fourth Brigade, attacking on a front of two thousand yards, had also secured its objectives. The Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. E. Pense, M.C., attacking on the right, the Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. O. Hooper, M.C., on the left, with the Eighteenth Battalion, Major J. A. MacIntosh, in support, and the Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. H. Millen, D.S.O., in reserve, had carried all before them. The two leading battalions were each assigned three tanks of the Ninth Tank Battalion, while another trio from the same battalion accompanied the Eighteenth Battalion.

The troops met little opposition at first. The Twenty-first Battalion encountered its first serious obstacle in Nova Scotia Trench, a powerful line five hundred yards west of the first objective. Here a number of machine guns fought strenuously. But Lewis guns were quickly rapping out bullets around them, and under cover of this fire and a shower of rifle-grenades the trench was rushed and taken, together with all the machine guns and many prisoners.

The advance was then resumed and the whole brigade bore down on its second objective. The Twenty-first Battalion met a defence of temporary firmness in a trench called Southern Avenue, running north from Wancourt. In this trench some stout-hearted Germans rallied the shaken infantry, backed by three field guns close by, to make a stand. Through annihilating point-blank fire from guns, rifles and machine guns, the New Brunswickers carried the trench at the point of the bayonet. Twenty gunners and three guns, as well as a number of infantry, were captured, and the battalion seized its objective.

The Twentieth Battalion, on emerging from the first objective, overcame several machine guns which opposed them. Three field guns, hidden among ruins just north of the cross-roads where the track from Monchy to Wancourt joined the road from Arras to Cambrai, then opened fire upon the battalion. This battery was surrounded and silenced. No further trouble was encountered until the second objective was almost reached. A number of machine guns placed on both sides of the Arras-Cambrai Road then held up the advance. One of the tanks crawled forward and beat the life out of the guns along the southern side. As it heaved its great body over the road to deal with the weapons to the north, a German shell struck it and destroyed

it. Enough had been done, however, to enable the advance to proceed. The Twentieth swept up, silenced the machine guns north of the road, and taking their objectives, began to consolidate.

When the Fourth Brigade advanced to take its second objective the Sixth Brigade went forward. At that time the defensive flank protecting the Fourth Brigade from attack from the Wancourt Valley was in position. This flank was formed by the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Riley, D.S.O., from about one mile north of Wancourt, where it joined the right of the Fourth Brigade, to a point twelve hundred yards east of the old Canadian front line north of Neuville-Vitasse. The remainder of the flank to the old front line was formed by a company of the Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. S. Tobin, D.S.O.

The forming of this defensive flank was accomplished by the Twenty-seventh Battalion's co-operation with two companies in the advance of the Fourth Brigade. The rest of the battalion followed, and after them came the company of the Twenty-ninth Battalion detailed for this duty. As they advanced they swung round until the whole formed an unbroken line from the first objective to Neuville-Vitasse, facing south.

Then came the hour of the Sixth Brigade's advance, synchronizing with the advance of the rest of the Corps to the second objective. The two leading companies of the Twenty-seventh Battalion wheeled down into the Wancourt Valley, pivoting on the right of the Fourth Brigade and changing front from south to east as they moved. The Twenty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. Ross, D.S.O., advanced at the same time from its assembly position south of Neuville-Vitasse in a northeasterly direction and came up on the right of the Twenty-seventh. The remainder of the troops hitherto forming the defensive flank—the rest of the Twenty-seventh Battalion and one company of the Twenty-ninth Battalion—moving practically due south, went into the valley and “mopped-up.”

There was some resistance from isolated German machine guns, but on the whole the enemy surrendered freely. Many prisoners fell into the hands of the Twenty-seventh Battalion, the company attacking on the right securing one hundred and thirty.

Having taken the first objective, when the rest of the brigade had assumed positions in rear of that line, the Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Battalions resumed the advance. By 9 a.m. they held the second objective, patrols had taken Wancourt and our men were across the Cojeul River. Before noon touch was gained with the Fourth Brigade on the left.

The attack of the Sixth Brigade was made almost entirely

without a barrage. Thanks to the terror inspired in the hearts of the enemy by the successes on the flanks, and thanks to the skill and dash with which the brigade carried out its complicated manœuvres, it was an unqualified success.

The whole Corps was now on its second objective and consolidating.

Having taken the second objective, the First and Fifth C.M.R. Battalions lost no time in attacking Monchy. The village, like Orange Hill, was taken by a turning movement. The first C.M.R. Battalion attacked it from the north and the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion advanced against it from the west, the two battalions meeting in the village and finally forming a line east of the place, the First C.M.R.'s with their left flank thrown back along the Scarpe and the Fifth C.M.R.'s, on the right, in touch with the Twentieth Battalion on the right.

The whole operation was carried out with great speed and precision. The first Canadians entered the village at 7.30 a.m., and the whole place was in their hands half an hour afterwards. Little resistance was met with in Monchy itself. The enemy had fled from it and was shelling it heavily. But on the flanks groups of machine gunners gave trouble until the gunners fled or were overpowered.

It was during this fighting that Lieut. Charles Smith Rutherford, M.C., M.M., of the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, won the Victoria Cross for an extraordinary exhibition of cool daring. This officer, some distance ahead of his men, perceived a large body of Germans standing outside a pill-box. He nonchalantly summoned them with a wave of the arm to come to him. Apparently amused at this, the Germans shook their heads and summoned him in their turn. Coolly waving his revolver, Lieut. Rutherford complied. On arriving at the pill-box he was politely invited to enter. This he as politely refused. Then, waving the revolver to emphasize his points, he persuaded the Germans that they were surrounded and advised them to surrender. They gave in accordingly, two officers and forty-three men with two machine guns, and he took the surrender alone. Another German machine gun was firing on our men from a nearby position. At the request of Lieut. Rutherford one of the officers ordered the gunner to cease fire, which he did. At this stage, when things were getting critical, support arrived, and Lieut. Rutherford's prisoners were taken over by his men.

Later on this officer took charge of a Lewis gun section and with them captured another pill-box, with a further thirty-five prisoners, enabling the advance to go on.

It is doubtful if courage and the quality known to Canadians as "nerve" have ever achieved greater results.



At 9 a.m. the Fifty-first (Highland) Division advanced north of the Scarpe. The enemy, threatened by that sword thrust into their lines to the south, had fled, and during the day, with little opposition, the Scots took Rœux Chemical Works and Gavrelle, and pushed up into line with the Canadians.

With Monchy in our hands, the hour of the Seventh Brigade had come. The brigade had followed in the wake of the Eighth Brigade in the early part of the battle, and was waiting among the guns on Orange Hill. It now advanced and deployed for the attack.

The Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. C. R. E. Willets, D.S.O., advanced on the right and the Princess Patricia's, Major C. J. T. Stewart, D.S.O., upon the left. The Forty-ninth Battalion, Major C. T. Weaver, was placed in a position to the north of the Princess Patricia's, to protect their left from attack from Pelves or that vicinity. The Forty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. L. H. Ewing, D.S.O., M.C., were held in brigade reserve to deal with any emergency.

The brigade's advance was covered by the artillery, which rendered fine support from its new positions. Two tanks were assigned to each of the leading battalions. As they had to come up from the rear, however, the tanks allotted to the Princess Patricia's did not catch up with them until the close of their advance. Those which were to accompany the Royal Canadian Regiment were put out of action near Monchy and the battalion advanced without them. Tank support was therefore negligible.

The brigade passed through the Eighth Brigade at 11 a.m. and advanced due east, with their general objective a north and south line through Boiry-Notre-Dame. As they advanced they were to fling back their left to the Scarpe, where the line from which they started touched the river.

The enemy held the trenches east of Monchy in great strength. This belt of trenches, over a mile deep, and guarded by scattered lines of wire, was crammed with German machine gunners. As the long waves of men came forward these weapons began to fire. Through this, the waves came on. About fifteen minutes after the launching of their attack, the enemy's intense machine gun fire checked the Royal Canadian Regiment a thousand yards east of Monchy, where it took up positions in the labyrinth of trenches.

A short time afterwards the Princess Patricia's, having stormed nest after nest of machine guns, were also checked. The battalion at that time had pressed into and through the Bois du Sart, a large wood two thousand yards east of Monchy, and held Faction Trench, north-east of the Wood. Beyond this they could not go; the battalion was already far in advance

of the general line held by our troops. The enemy was holding the Bois du Vert, south of the battalion, and Jig-Saw Wood, north-east of them, and his innumerable machine guns crackled like flame in their hiding-places among the scattered trees. The battalion were in a dangerous situation, exposed to a converging attack from flank and rear.

The two tanks assigned to the battalion now came forward and, gliding through the gusts of fire beating on their iron hides, bore down on the machine guns holding up the men in Faction Trench. The watchful anti-tank guns saw them, and opened fire over open sights and destroyed them. At 5.40 p.m. it was evident that the advance of the Seventh Brigade had reached its limit.

The Second Division shortly after 1 p.m. withdrew all its men north of the Arras-Cambrai Road, as, in accordance with the adjustments of boundaries set in force after 11 a.m., they were no longer responsible for the ground north of the Road. The Third Division, to close the gap between the Seventh Brigade and the Second Division caused by this withdrawal, sent up the Eighth Brigade. The Eighth Brigade then took up positions from the Road northwards, and the Forty-second Battalion, in reserve near Monchy, was ordered to attack Factory Trench, running north and south between and slightly in advance of the Road and the Bois du Vert. At the same time it was to clear all the intervening maze of trenches south-east of the village. After very hard fighting against an ever-increasing resistance the battalion reached a line between the Road and the Bois du Sart, to the south-east of the latter, of which the Germans still retained possession.

The Second Division, after taking its second objective, endeavoured to capture Guemappe. The Eighteenth Battalion, passing through the leading units of the brigade, advanced to the attack, but was checked by intense machine gun fire before it reached the village.

The Sixth Brigade in the meantime was preparing to resume the advance with the object of capturing the Wancourt Tower Ridge. This was a long spur of naked land running north-east and south-west a thousand yards south-east of Wancourt, beyond the Cojeul River, and formed a portion of the heights rising on either side of that little stream. It was laced with many trenches providing excellent fire-positions for the enemy, and some of these were protected by barbed wire.

The brigade was allotted as an objective Egret Trench and its continuation to right and left. Possession of this trench would carry the line to the eastern face of the Ridge, with observation over a large tract of country. The left of the brigade was to

move along the Cojeul. At the same time the Fourth Brigade was to advance its line in conformation on its whole front between the Cojeul and the Arras-Cambrai Road.

At 4.30 p.m., covered by a shrapnel barrage provided by guns now in position in the valleys near our old front line, the Twenty-eighth Battalion on the right and the Twenty-seventh Battalion on the left moved out to the attack. They were each supported by a company of the Twenty-ninth Battalion.

The advance swept up the slope of the Ridge through fearful machine gun fire, against which tanks, had there been any, would have proved extremely useful. There were no tanks. The men made the best of it, and relied on their own courage and fortitude for victory. Fortunately the machine gun fire, perhaps on account of panic among the gunners, was high and ineffective until the men topped the crest of the Ridge, and our losses were not very heavy. But as soon as the line of Canadians rose along the skyline they were swept by murderous machine gun fire. It came from a position called The Nest, in the centre of the attack, from the many trenches beyond the brigade right and from the front and the left, all at very short range.

Despite this terrible opposition, the battalion took The Nest after a deadly struggle, while the right company of the Twenty-eighth Battalion turned aside, toiled through the hail beyond their flank, and throttled the fire of the guns at that point. At the same time the Twenty-seventh Battalion, bursting through thick wire, stormed into Egret Trench and two other trenches, called Stag and Duck respectively, to the west of Egret. The Germans fought desperately, firing at the men in the wire and then closing with them hand-to-hand when they got into the trenches. The Twenty-seventh shot, bayoneted and brained the resistance out of them and took the position.

Egret Trench, however, was found to be very shallow and afforded little or no protection from the devastating German machine gun fire, which took it in enfilade and swept it from end to end. The battalion was forced to drop back a little out of the trench. The Sixth Brigade then held Crow Trench, The Nest, Wancourt Tower and Duck and Stag Trenches. Though not the line of the objective, this was practically the same. It ran along the top of the Ridge and commanded all the country held by the enemy.

At 5 p.m., while the Sixth Brigade was enduring the galling fire along the slopes beyond the Cojeul, the Eighteenth Battalion, in accordance with the plan, advanced to conform the line of the Fourth Brigade with that to the south. It was entirely successful, and took Guemappe with comparatively light casualties. After dark it gained touch on both flanks and dug in.

The approach of night now called a temporary halt to the operations of the Second Division. Shortly before 6 p.m. the enemy endeavoured to counter-attack the Sixth Brigade. The counter-attack was broken up and driven off.

The Germans, apparently recognizing the uncomfortable position of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in the Bois du Vert, at 6.30 p.m. launched a powerful converging assault from the Bois du Vert and Jig-Saw Wood. The counter-attack was beaten back by the fire of every weapon in range, with severe loss. The Canadian artillery did excellent work, especially against the attack from Jig-Saw Wood.

It was recognized that the Princess Patricia's were in too exposed a position. After the counter-attack had been defeated they were withdrawn, without molestation, from the Bois du Vert. At 7.30 p.m., then, the line of the Third Division ran in a northerly direction from the Arras-Cambrai Road half-way between the Bois du Sart and Monchy, with the left thrown back to the Scarpe, the line in this sector facing, and a thousand yards west of, Pelves. The Fifty-first were in touch upon the left at Rœux.

Further south, when dark fell, the Second Division held Guemappe and Wancourt Tower Ridge. Before midnight the Twenty-eighth Battalion captured Grey Street, a trench six hundred yards long and slightly in advance of Crow Trench. One hundred prisoners were taken in the trench and the right of the brigade was made secure.

This ended the fighting of the day, a day of hard battling in strong and tenaciously held positions. Much had been achieved. The greater part of the German forward system was in our hands, the line having been advanced to an average depth of six thousand yards. There were also in our hands two thousand Germans and a number of guns, with a large quantity of machine guns.

On the following day the operations were resumed at dawn. The Third Division employed the Ninth Brigade, passing it through its comrades east of Monchy. The Second Division employed the Fourth and Fifth Brigades, the former passing through the Sixth Brigade, which was then withdrawn into reserve.

The general plan of operations for the day involved a considerable advance. The Second Division was to attack at 4 a.m. in a south-easterly direction, with the Sensée River as an immediate objective. The division was then to push on if possible and break through the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line and the Vis-en-Artois Switch until within striking distance of the Drocourt-Quéant Line. The Third Division, beyond the Arras-Cambrai Road, was to resume its advance with the object of capturing the Bois du Vert, Bois



du Sart, Boiry-Notre-Dame and Artillery Hill, north of Boiry. It was to conform to the attack of the Second Division, advancing about an hour later and exploiting any success it might gain as opportunity offered.

The attack of the Corps was covered by the usual type of artillery creeping barrage and by machine guns. Sixteen tanks of the Fourteenth Tank Battalion were equally divided among the Fifth and Ninth Brigades.

It was found necessary to postpone the advance of the Second Division until 10 a.m., in order to permit final preparations to be completed. The Third Division, however, attacked at 4.55 a.m. as arranged. The advances of the Corps upon August 27th were therefore made in two distinct parts. The Third Division, during the advance of the Second Division, awaited orders to conform to them.

To deal with the attack of the Third Division. During the night adjustments had been made along the front, and the Eighth Brigade now held the line from the Arras-Cambrai Road to the Bois du Sart, while the Seventh Brigade held from the Bois du Sart northwards. To Brigadier-General D. M. Ormond, D.S.O., commanding the Ninth Brigade, were loaned two battalions, one from each of the other brigades of the division. These were the Forty-ninth Battalion, Major C. T. Weaver, and the Second C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Johnston.

The Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. W. Foster, D.S.O., attacked on the right with the Bois du Vert as its objective. The Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. A. MacFarlane, advanced on the Bois du Sart on the left. When the Bois du Vert was taken, the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion, Major Sutherland, was to press through the Fifty-second Battalion and capture Boiry. The Forty-third Battalion, Major W. K. Chandler, D.S.O., was held on the right, ready to advance in conjunction with the Second Division at 10 a.m. Behind this battalion was the Second C.M.R. Battalion, prepared to support the Forty-third or go through them to exploit any success obtained. The Forty-ninth Battalion was in reserve.

So at 4.55 a.m., with dawn flushing the sky beyond their objectives and the lightning of the barrage mingling with the dawn and the glow of the troubled stars, the Ninth Brigade went forward. The German barrage came down fairly heavily five minutes after ours, but their machine gun fire, as ever, was the most formidable. It was particularly heavy on the left, but it was heavy everywhere and caused many casualties. The tanks proved of little use to deal with the menace, for they were quickly disabled one after another by anti-tank guns.

Nevertheless, our men made dogged and steady progress,

At 6.50 a.m. they had driven the enemy out of the Bois du Vert and the Bois du Sart, held a portion of a strong point called the Green Work south of the Bois du Sart, and were in Hatchet Wood to the north of the Bois du Sart. The Germans delivered a prompt and vigorous counter-attack against our patrols in Hatchet Wood and drove them out, gaining slight footing in the Bois du Sart. A company of the Fifty-eighth Battalion as promptly counter-attacked in turn and hurled the Germans out again, the whole of the Bois du Sart being cleared by 7.30 a.m.

Half an hour later large numbers of the enemy were seen moving up to reinforce Artillery Hill, which was still holding out. Our artillery shelled these parties heavily and the enemy's guns retaliated on our men, causing some loss. Brigadier-General Ormond thereupon despatched a company of the Forty-ninth Battalion to reinforce the Fifty-eighth Battalion and a company of the Second C.M.R.'s to help the Fifty-second and One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalions. These companies strengthened the line and replaced losses.

At 9.30 a.m. the brigade had completed the capture of Green Work and also held Vert Work, east of the Bois du Vert. This was accomplished by the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion, which had attacked Boiry and Artillery Hill with the greatest gallantry earlier in the day, but had been unable to secure them. Major Sutherland was now engaged in organizing a new attack. He was killed by machine gun fire while at this work, after having set a high standard of courage and determination.

At 10 a.m. the Canadian guns to the south broke into intense fire and the Second Division attacked. The Forty-third Battalion, as arranged, went with them. The Germans obligingly chose this hour for a counter-attack on the Fifty-second Battalion. They were driven off with much loss, and their remnant was pursued into the barrage covering the attack of the Forty-third Battalion, where it was destroyed.

The One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion, now commanded by Major A. W. Pratt, resumed its attack on Boiry and on Artillery Hill at 12.10 p.m. under cover of a new barrage. At first the advance progressed well and the battalion beat its way forward steadily through the fire of the enemy's machine guns. Later, however, as our barrage slackened off and the strength of the men ebbed and the losses mounted, a check occurred, and the enemy's machine gun fire swelled to a withering fierceness in which no man could live. The battalion, much weakened, dropped sullenly back to their line in Vert and Green Works, whence they started.

The Second Division launched its new attack at 10 a.m. under cover of a barrage. This division had spent an active

night. The Eighteenth Battalion had advanced the line of the Fourth Brigade at 10 p.m., sending one company into Rake and Cavalry Trenches, east of Guemappe. During the night, too, the Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Battalions once more attacked Egret Trench, working independently of one another. The trench was rushed and many prisoners were taken.

Under cover of this fighting the attackers prepared for action. Eventually, after many difficulties the assembly was complete and the advance began. The Fifth Brigade, attacking from the line held by the Sixth Brigade, employed the Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. G. MacKenzie, D.S.O., on the right, the Twenty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. H. Clark-Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O., in the centre, the Twenty-second Battalion, Major A. E. Dubuc, D.S.O., M.C., on the left, and the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Major C. J. Mersereau, in support. The Fourth Brigade attacked on its old front with the Nineteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. H. Millen, D.S.O., on the right, the Eighteenth Battalion, Major MacIntosh, on the left, the Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. O. Hooper, M.C., in support, and the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. E. Pense, M.C., in reserve.

It was, of course, broad daylight when the division attacked, and the men were greeted with dreadful machine gun fire as soon as they appeared. The German artillery rained shells, including gas, on the advancing troops, especially against the Twenty-fourth Battalion. But the whole array went on majestically through the hell of bullets and shrapnel. A thousand yards from its jumping-off line in Crow Trench, the Twenty-fourth Battalion reached Mallard Trench and captured a large number of trench mortars, machine guns and prisoners there. These weapons had caused the battalion much loss. The fire of the machine guns against the Fifth Brigade slackened somewhat, but the fury of the enemy's artillery increased. The brigade struggled on against this, and the two southernmost battalions swept into and over the Sensée River, in which only a little water was flowing. Cherisy was found empty by the Twenty-fourth Battalion and they occupied the ruined village.

After half an hour's bombardment of Occident Trench the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-fourth Battalions resumed their advance. Occident Trench, east of Cherisy and running parallel to the western side of the Fontaine-lez-Croisilles-Haucourt Road, was taken by the Twenty-fourth Battalion and the two battalions crossed the road. Here the Twenty-sixth Battalion was checked by very heavy machine gun fire and dug itself in. The Twenty-fourth Battalion, under the inspiration of its heroic commander, who was ever at the danger-point, went on still. It was not until the battalion reached the fringes of the dense wire guarding

the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line six hundred yards beyond Occident Trench that it was checked. Here exposed flanks and dreadful machine gun fire caused a halt and compelled the battalion to dig in. It was then several hundred yards in advance of the troops on either side.

At that time all the tanks had become casualties.

Meanwhile the Twenty-second Battalion was consolidating along the west bank of the Sensée. It had suffered severely, many officers being among the casualties. No less than three senior officers—Major A. E. Dubuc, D.S.O., Major J. H. Roy, M.C., and Major A. G. Routier, M.C.—were wounded and twelve other officers had fallen. But the battalion had taken a very heavy toll among the enemy.

The Fourth Brigade had also been checked on the west bank of the Sensée by very severe fire from a series of works east of the Vis-en-Artois Switch. In the whole of its advance it had been most doggedly opposed and had inflicted very severe casualties. The Eighteenth Battalion, assisted by the Forty-third Battalion, made fine progress, advancing over three thousand yards during the day. Between them they captured Vis-en-Artois, the Forty-third crossing the Cojeul River under heavy fire for the attack on the village.

The German infantry and artillery manœuvred with reckless daring throughout the afternoon. The infantry continually reinforced the troops opposite the Second Division by moving across the open. Several guns came into action against our advancing troops from Upton Wood, less than a thousand yards from the line finally reached by the Twenty-fourth Battalion. Our artillery silenced the guns and caused many casualties amongst the enemy infantry.

When darkness settled on the weary and blood-stained battalions of the Canadian Corps, a notable day's work had been completed. The line then ran along the eastern side of the Fontaine-lez-Croisilles-Haucourt Road to the wire on the western side of the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line; thence north to the Sensée and along the Sensée east of Vis-en-Artois. It then ran back in a north-westerly direction to the Green and Vert Works, the Bois du Sart, and so to the Scarpe River on the western outskirts of Pelves. The line of the Canadians had moved forward three thousand yards.

The Fifty-first (Highland) Division had kept pace with the attack during the day by moving along the northern bank of the Scarpe.

On August 28th the Canadians again advanced, maintaining with untiring ardour their relentless pressure on the enemy. The Second Division once more employed the Fourth and Fifth



Brigades, while the Third Division, gathering itself together for its final blow, utilized elements of all its infantry. The attack was made under an artillery barrage, but without tanks. The tanks had been withdrawn for reorganization—those that had not heroically sacrificed themselves in previous action. The entire attack was in the nature of the last effort of two determined divisions following forty-eight hours of bitter fighting.

The Third Division was again the first to advance. During the previous night the division had adjusted its battalions for the morrow's assault. The Eighth Brigade, with the Forty-third Battalion, which was too closely engaged to remove, were now responsible for the front between the Arras-Cambrai Road and the Cojeul River. From the river to the Bois du Sart the Ninth Brigade, with the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion, held the line. Beyond the Bois du Sart to the Scarpe was the Seventh Brigade.

To the Eighth Brigade was allotted the task of capturing Seventy Ridge, west of Remy, Remy and Remy Wood, north of the village. It was then to swing southwards across the Sensée River with the object of capturing St. Servins Farm, about one thousand yards south of Remy. To the Ninth Brigade were assigned the objectives of Boiry and Artillery Hill, against which they had striven in vain the day before. The Seventh Brigade was to take Pelves and Jig-Saw Wood. The average depth of the advance was to be one mile, starting on a front of seven thousand yards. It is worthy of note that this was double the front held at dawn on August 26th.

Owing to the comparatively small number of guns available for barrage work, arrangements were made for the artillery allotted to the division to cover each brigade in turn, the attacks of each brigade following one another from north to south. This method of rendering artillery support proved entirely successful, for all objectives were taken. The tired troops rose to the occasion nobly, enveloping their objectives with great dash and precision.

At 5 a.m. the first advance was made when the Forty-ninth Battalion carried Pelves and the trenches south of it with little difficulty. Then at 11 a.m. the Princess Patricia's on their right and the Forty-second Battalion further south joined in the advance, and all three battalions attacked Jig-Saw Wood. At the same hour the Ninth Brigade attacked its objectives on the right of the Seventh Brigade. The Canadian artillery concentrated all its efforts on providing an adequate barrage to cover the infantry. The result was that a dense and most effective gun fire supported the battalions, which made rapid progress.

On the left, the enemy's artillery, greatly disorganized by its hasty retreat before the British onslaught, proved to be capable of only scattered and ineffective fire, and, as usual,

machine guns gave the greatest trouble. Though heavily enfiladed from the left, the Seventh Brigade quickly completed its work and cleared Jig-Saw Wood.

The Ninth Brigade employed the Fourth C.M.R. Battalion on the right. On the left of that battalion was the Fifty-second Battalion, and on their left the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion. On the left of the latter was the Fifty-eighth Battalion, supported by two companies of the Royal Canadian Regiment. In the face of extremely heavy cross-fire from machine guns in Boiry and on Artillery Hill, and under violent bombardment from the German artillery, which were here not only prompt but efficient, the brigade proceeded to envelop its objectives by a turning movement from the south-east.

The whole brigade pressed over the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line north and south of Boiry, and the Fifty-eighth Battalion began to encircle Artillery Hill. By 11.45 a.m. the remainder of the brigade was sweeping round the village. The Fifty-eighth Battalion at 1.30 p.m. had succeeded in overcoming the greater part of their objective, with over two hundred prisoners. At 3 p.m. the whole brigade had performed its task, and Artillery Hill and Boiry were firmly in Canadian hands.

At 12.30 p.m. the Eighth Brigade launched its attack. The Forty-third Battalion attacked upon the right and the Fifth C.M.R. Battalion on the left.

The Forty-third Battalion advanced to attack Remy village and Remy Wood along Seventy Ridge. Through very heavy fire they carried their line forward with a rush, cleared the whole of the ground on their front west of the Sensée River and took all their objectives. The battalion at 1.20 p.m. had driven the enemy out of Haucourt Wood, captured the greater part of Remy, swept up Remy Wood, and were in position to the east of it.

The Fifth C.M.R. Battalion on the left made equally swift progress. Following a severe gas bombardment, the battalion crossed the Cojeul River. At 1.50 p.m. it advanced, the artillery lifting from the front line of the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line to let them in. The wire guarding the trench proved little obstacle, being old and well cut. The rush was admirably covered by the battalion's Lewis guns, which riddled two resisting machine guns into shreds and filled the line with dead. After bombing the dugouts, the battalion pressed on to the support line and overcame a powerful resistance there. By 1.15 p.m. they held the line on all their front, patrols went out, and touch was established with the flanks.

The Second Division, south of the Arras-Cambrai Road, had now launched its attack. The objectives assigned to the division

were, first, the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line, and second, the Drocourt-Quéant Line as a goal of exploitation. The night on the front had passed quietly on the whole, and zero hour found the remnants of the battalions somewhat rested, and eager, in spite of their weakness, to close once more with the enemy.

The brigades employed by the division were the same as before. The Fifth Brigade attacked with the units it had used on the previous day. On the Fourth Brigade front, however, the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. E. Pense, M.C., on the right, and the Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. O. Hooper, M.C., on the left, advanced through the attackers of the day before, the Nineteenth Battalion thereupon going into support and the Eighteenth Battalion into reserve.

After a strong bombardment by heavy artillery the division attacked at 12.30 p.m. under cover of a field gun barrage. The general direction of advance was parallel to the Arras-Cambrai Road and the frontage about four thousand yards, of which the Fourth Brigade covered about seven hundred.

The Germans had resolved to guard the Drocourt-Quéant Line to the last. They attached extraordinary importance to this system, because it was not only very strong but also represented the last well organized trench line left in their possession. With troops which had been steadily reinforced during the night the enemy had prepared a powerful machine gun defence commanding all the country in front of the German positions.

When the Canadians emerged from their assembly places and attacked, the German machine gunners flayed them with a dreadful fire. Their riflemen added their share and so did their artillery. Through and into this appalling opposition the thin waves advanced, and though many gallant men went down, those that lived went on.

On the right the Twenty-sixth Battalion pushed its right flank forward twelve hundred yards, and its left flank reached a point eight hundred yards in front of its jumping-off position. Lieut.-Col. MacKenzie was in the forefront of their attack. When for a moment there was a check, he advanced to call on his men for another attempt and was killed. Captain H. G. Wood, M.C., took temporary command and carried on the attack. The Twenty-fourth Battalion and the Twenty-second Battalion by dint of herculean effort won to the wire guarding the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line. Further to the left, the Twenty-first and Twentieth Battalions struggled over a terrain of banks and sunken roads full of machine guns and also reached the wire along this line.

With its men in front of the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line, the Second Division was definitely checked. The enemy, in the

trenches and behind, set the wire and the country in front ablaze with fire. But the men looked straight into the eyes of death glaring out of the trenches, and again and again fought through the wire to close with the machine gunners, who killed them.

All afternoon they strove to get forward, led by their officers. Major J. P. Vainer, M.C., Major J. P. Archambault, D.S.O., Captain W. E. Morgan, M.C., and seven other officers of the Twenty-second Battalion were wounded, urging their men on to fresh assaults, and inspiring them all to fight, to suffer, to die but not give in.

Lieut.-Col. Clark-Kennedy, of the Twenty-fourth Battalion, was the shining light in those grim hours. Though wounded early in the advance, he insisted on directing his men from a shell-hole, and there, despite intense pain and serious loss of blood, he remained until 5.30 p.m., when the situation had quietened and he permitted the stretcher-bearers to remove him. Lieut.-Col. Clark-Kennedy received the Victoria Cross later for his magnificent leadership during the desperate fighting of August 27th and 28th.

Eventually the division established a line slightly west of the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line, with posts in the Vis-en-Artois Switch near the Fontaine-lez-Croisilles-Haucourt Road, and thence three hundred yards beyond, and parallel to, the Sensée River as far as the Arras-Cambrai Road.

The day's operations had realized a substantial gain for the Canadian Corps. At the close of the advance the line had reached the fringe of the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line. North of the Arras-Cambrai Road our troops were on the Sensée, had probed the outskirts of Haucourt, held Haucourt Wood and part of Remy and Remy Wood, beyond the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line. Boiry, Artillery Hill and Pelves were securely in our hands further to the north. On the whole Corps front, notwithstanding the violent resistance by the enemy, an average advance of a thousand yards had been realized, the achievement of very tired but indomitable troops.

The enemy delivered two powerful counter-attacks in the evening, as the battalions were settling down for the night, one against Artillery Hill at 6 p.m., and the other against our posts in the Vis-en-Artois Switch at 7.45 p.m. Both were beaten off.

And now it was deemed expedient to relieve the men who had hitherto borne the brunt of the great battle east of Arras. They had accomplished a great deal. They had carried the Canadian line forward over ten thousand yards of trench-scarred, shell-pocked country—a country of naked, formidable ridges strewn with barbed wire and with enemies lying in wait behind



every favourable bit of cover and fighting desperately when the time came. In their assault they had taken over three thousand prisoners and fifty guns, besides innumerable small arms and much material, and had killed great numbers of the enemy. Finally, they had broken through the greater part of the German forward defence system. The relieving troops had only two thousand yards of ground to cover before they could batter in the Drocourt-Quéant Line. It should not be forgotten that all this was done by divisions which had been furiously engaged at Amiens less than a fortnight before.

During the night of August 28th the First Canadian Division moved up from the ruins of Arras and relieved the Second Canadian Division. At the same time the Fourth (Imperial) Division, which had been attached to the Corps, relieved the Third Canadian Division. A force of machine gunners, dismounted cyclists and other troops of that type, under the command of Brigadier-General Brutinel, and styled Brutinel's Brigade, relieved the left sector of the Third Canadian Division and formed a defensive flank south of the Scarpe. The relieving divisions brought in their artillery with them to swell the strength of the Canadian and Imperial guns already in action.

The new arrivals were ordered to clear the enemy out of the ground intervening between them and the Drocourt-Quéant Line. This they immediately proceeded to do. August 29th was devoted to the relief of the left sector of the Fourth (Imperial) Division by the Eleventh (Imperial) Division, and the Fifty-first (Imperial) Division reverted on the same day to the Twenty-second (Imperial) Corps north of the Scarpe. On the following day Brutinel's Brigade thrust forward the left flank of the Corps and the Fourth (Imperial) Division succeeded in establishing posts in Haucourt and pushing further into Remy.

At 4.40 a.m. on August 30th, to bring forward the Canadian right, the First Canadian Division attacked the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line, the Vis-en-Artois Switch and Upton Wood, south of the junction of these lines. The attack was made by Brigadier-General Griesbach's First Brigade and was a complete success. It was a most ingeniously planned operation.

The Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps had recently captured Hendecourt, to the right front of the Canadian objective. This enabled the brigade to carry out its main assault from the south. The First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. W. Sparling, D.S.O., assembled immediately north of Hendecourt and advanced in a northerly direction straight towards the Vis-en-Artois Switch, with the support line of that system as its final objective. The Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. T. McLaughlin, D.S.O., on the left and slightly in rear of Lieut.-Col. Sparling's command, advanced

up the front and support trenches of the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line. The Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. B. Rogers, D.S.O., M.C., advanced from the west and north along the communication trenches leading into the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line and the Vis-en-Artois Switch and joined hands with the others. On completion of the operation the Canadian line ran along the Hendecourt-Dury Road and the support trench of the Vis-en-Artois Switch to connect the new front with the troops on the flanks. Upton Wood and Upton Quarry were surrounded and could be dealt with at leisure.

An artillery barrage was provided to cover each battalion and to enclose the whole area, and a smoke screen was released to hide the advance from the Germans on the flanks. The barrage was a marvel of intricate and accurate gunnery. The attack, coming from a new quarter and in a new fashion, had all the advantage of surprise.

At 4.40 a.m. the intense barrage started. The enemy holding the objectives were taken completely by surprise, not being prepared for an attack from the rear or able to adjust their defence to meet the unexpected. Large numbers of them were taken. As the First Battalion advanced it protected itself from attack from the east by wheeling men into position facing that direction. Less than an hour after the commencement of the attack the battalion held all its objectives, and at 7 a.m. the whole brigade had achieved its purpose. It had been opposed throughout by heavy machine gun fire from the flanks.

The enemy, when he had recovered from his surprise, endeavoured to retrieve the situation by a counter-attack. At 1 p.m., covered by a barrage, German troops attacked from the east and north-east. Lieut.-Col. McLaughlin organized an immediate counter-attack and checked the enemy. Between 4 and 5 p.m. the Fourth Battalion, Major G. G. Blackstock, was sent up from reserve, and this battalion stamped out the last spark of resistance in Upton Wood and assisted in regaining the positions the Germans had taken. At 10 p.m. all gaps in the line had been filled, all objectives were once more secure. Over three hundred and fifty prisoners and nearly one hundred machine guns had been taken in this perfect example of modern infantry and artillery tactics, a figure which was only slightly exceeded by the total casualties of the brigade. And the men who died in previous attempts to carry the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line and the Vis-en-Artois Switch were amply avenged.

At 3 p.m. the Third Battalion made an effort to capture the strong point known as Ocean Work, beyond the northern end of the Vis-en-Artois Switch, but machine gun fire from all sides and a heavy artillery bombardment prevented them from doing so.

On August 31st Ocean Work was taken by the Eighth Battalion, Major A. L. Saunders, M.C. The battalion attacked with two companies under an artillery barrage at 5 a.m., and at 6 a.m., despite heavy machine gun resistance, had secured all its objectives. Captain J. Boswell and Lieut. George, commanding the attacking companies, were both wounded in the operation.

Thus ended August 1918, the most successful month in the history of the Canadian Corps. In that period the Canadians had taken thirteen thousand five hundred prisoners, two hundred and sixty guns and two thousand machine guns. Vast casualties had been inflicted on the enemy. Over one hundred square miles of France had been freed from the invader. All this had been achieved at the relatively small cost of twenty-one thousand casualties, of whom the great majority were slightly wounded.

During the hours that ushered in September, the Fourth Canadian Division, taking over positions astride the Arras-Cambrai Road from the First Canadian and Fourth (Imperial) Divisions, entered the arena.

The early hours of September 1st witnessed the final actions of the First Canadian Division in its campaign of clearing the country west of the Drocourt-Quéant Line.

The attack was carried out by Brigadier-General J. S. Tuxford's Third Brigade, with the co-operation of the Second Brigade. On the right the One Hundred and Seventy-first Brigade of the Fifty-seventh (Imperial) Division assaulted Hendecourt, around which there had already been much fighting, at the same time. The Third Brigade attacked Hendecourt Château Wood on their right, Crow's Nest and, on the left, Hans Trench. With them the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. P. O. Tudor, D.S.O., advanced upon Orix and Opal Trenches, which formed a portion of the Vis-en-Artois Switch not yet in our hands.

The coveted positions were extremely formidable. Hendecourt Château Wood was filled with machine guns. So was Crow's Nest, a strange hummock of earth, stones and shaggy trees. Hans Trench was also strongly held, and Orix and Opal were equally powerful.

At 4.50 a.m. the brigades attacked, the Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. E. Bent, D.S.O., on the right, supported by the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, D.S.O., and the Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. Worrall, M.C., supported by the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. E. McCuaig, C.M.G., D.S.O., on the left. Covered by a creeping barrage and under very heavy artillery and machine gun fire, the battalions made sure and swift progress. An hour after zero the whole of our objectives were in our hands.

Following the capture of the objectives, the enemy counter-attacked repeatedly. At 11.30 a.m. he advanced in great force against the right of the Fifth Battalion, gained a footing between the battalion and the troops to the south, and forced them slowly to give ground. At 1 p.m. the Fifth counter-attacked, and by 4 p.m. had wrested all the enemy's gains out of his grasp. At 6 p.m. the Germans massed again, and shortly afterwards counter-attacked on the Fifth Battalion and on the Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Clark, D.S.O., holding the line to the north of them. The Seventy-second Battalion hurled back the Germans before they reached their outposts. The Fifth Battalion, after the enemy had gained a slight footing, drove them out once more, and by midnight the last yard of the lost ground had been retaken.

The Fourth Division's infantry in the meantime had been heavily engaged. Coming into the line on August 31st, the Twelfth Brigade of necessity attacked at dawn on September 1st before they had been able to learn the peculiarities of the sector. The Seventy-second Battalion and the Eighty-fifth Battalion, Major M. I. Millar, on its left, fought all day in the country between the northern portion of the Buissy Switch and the Arras-Cambrai Road. In spite of repeated counter-attacks by the enemy, the brigade had established a good jumping-off line by 6.30 p.m. At that time large numbers of Germans were still holding out in the vicinity of the Road, within the jumping-off line, but it was decided to leave them there until the hour of the main attack, when they would soon fall victims to tanks and infantry.

This brought to a close the fighting of the Canadians prior to their new offensive.

Frequent small counter-attacks were delivered against the Third Brigade during the day, but all were repulsed. It was a day of hard conflict in fierce shell and machine gun fire, as had been all the days preceding while the divisions were battering their way up to the Drocourt-Quéant Line. The Germans—when they did not surrender tamely—opposed them bitterly. Was not that Line they were guarding the inner wall of the fortress on which depended everything, including their hope of Victory?

And now the Canadians were on the threshold! Already they were nearly half-way to Cambrai. Their guns were roaring like lions outside the Drocourt-Quéant Line, yearning for their prey. The iron blows of their fury thundered upon the quivering door incessantly. Behind the ramparts the German General Staff was white with fear, for in that clamouring storm they read their doom and the doom of the Central Empires. On the night



of September 1st, in intense darkness, the hosts of the British Armies were marshalling for the storming of the Line.

What was this Drocourt-Quéant Line on which the Germans staked their hopes, which the world had given a legendary power? It was the northern extension of the vaunted Hindenburg Line, and, as its name implies, it ran from Drocourt, in the north, half-way between Lens and Douai, to Quéant, in the south, near Bullecourt of evil memory. It was intended as a line upon which the enemy could fall back in the event of the Hindenburg Line near Arras being lost to him, a contingency which finally had come to pass. The system consisted, throughout its length, of a front line, with an immediate support line three hundred yards away, and, five hundred yards beyond that, a second line which was called the support line because it was meant to hold the troops assigned to support duties, as distinct from those holding the front line itself. Many communication trenches connected the line, and there were numerous subsidiary trenches and great belts of red barbed wire guarding the whole. It was admirably sited, with all the devilish cunning of the German High Command.

On the Canadian front it covered the three large villages of Cagnicourt, Dury and Etaing. The northern half of the line on that front, beyond the Arras-Cambrai Road, had a very formidable system of trenches lying a thousand yards to the west of it, a buffer which the assailant had first to storm. South of the Arras-Cambrai Road there was the Buissy Switch, also a double system of equally formidable trenches. The Buissy Switch covered Villers-lez-Cagnicourt and ran on south to Buissy and so to join the Hindenburg Support Line. The Switch was a system into which the enemy might retire if someone burst in at the junction of the Hindenburg with the Drocourt-Quéant Line.

But, though these switch lines made the general task more difficult, the real obstacle was the Drocourt-Quéant Line itself. It had innumerable dugouts for the reception of its intended garrisons, huge, gloomy tombs fitted with electric light and bunks. It had tunnels joining the dugouts which could hold hundreds of men. Innumerable machine gun emplacements dotted it, placed by the same diabolical genius which planned the trenches and the wire. The entire system was the work of years—years of patient toil by driven droves of Germans. For years it had waited there, untenanted and silent, until the hour of need which those who built it never thought would come.

And now the dugouts were filled with breathless men and the emplacements were manned and the whole world waited to learn if the Line would prove impregnable. The hour of need had come. The Canadians were upon the threshold.

In the operations which were about to begin the Corps had been allotted a peculiar and honourable rôle. The German defences now before the Third and First Armies were of varying strength. The Third Army, represented by the Seventeenth Corps on the immediate right of the Canadians, was confronted with a terrible mass of trenches, the Hindenburg Front and Support Lines, the Drocourt-Quéant Line and the great hinge of these two systems, all positions which should prove appallingly costly to take by frontal attack. The First Army, represented by the Canadians, though faced by the Drocourt-Quéant Line and its subsidiary trenches, had before it no obstacle approaching the power of those to the south.

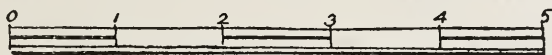
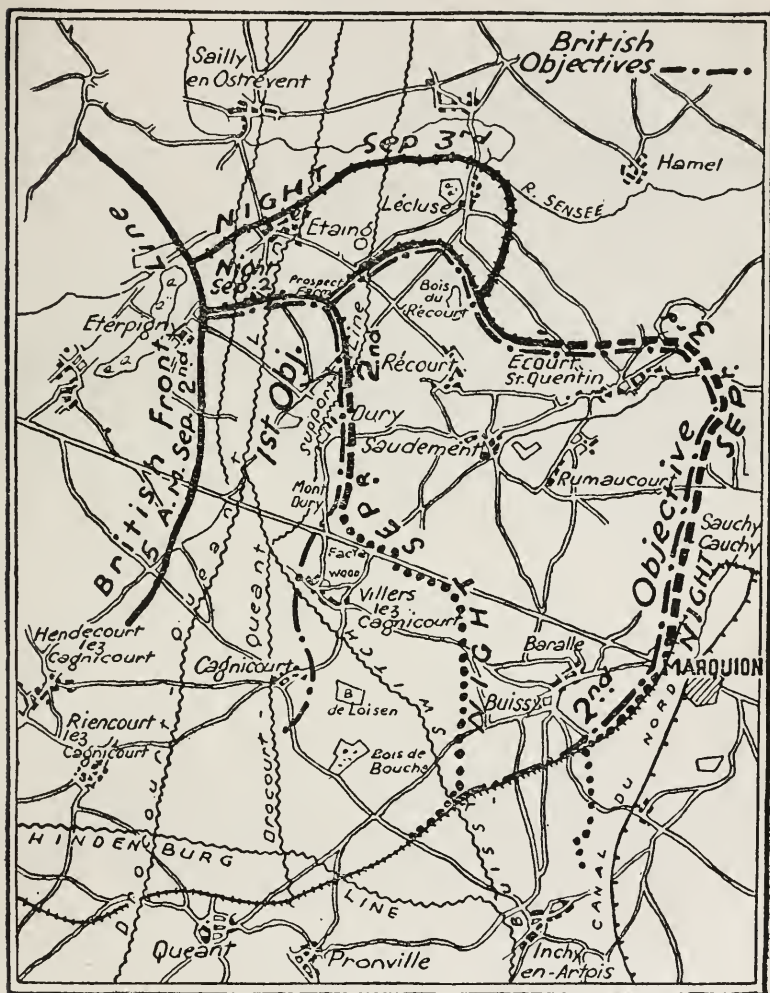
It may therefore be seen that the Line were best assaulted on the Canadian front. A successful "break-through" in that section, followed by a rapid advance eastwards astride the Arras-Cambrai Road, would take all the formidable positions on the front of the Seventeenth Corps in enfilade and, eventually, in the rear. The enemy holding these positions would then be faced with the alternative of retiring or being surrounded. Even if he fought, the presence of the Canadians on flank and rear would weaken his resistance to the Seventeenth Corps, who would be able to attack him with a reasonable chance of success.

The plan outlined above was that on which the forthcoming battle was based. To the Canadians was allotted the task of breaking in the Drocourt-Quéant Line. As soon as they had achieved a breach, the Seventeenth Corps and the Canadian reserves were to pour through and exploit the situation. But until the Canadians had broken in, not one Imperial division was to attack the Line. The Corps was the battering-ram for blasting a way into the fortress to admit the besiegers. The whole operation depended on their valour, skill and endurance.

The manner in which the Canadian Corps proposed to carry out the difficult duty assigned to it was as follows :

The First Canadian Division on the right, with two brigades—the Second and Third—the Fourth Canadian Division in the centre, also with two brigades—the Tenth and Twelfth—and the Fourth (Imperial) Division with one brigade on the left, were to take the first objective. The advance to the second objective was to be made by the same brigades, in the case of the First Canadian Division. The Fourth Canadian Division was to take the second objective with the Twelfth Brigade, the Eleventh Brigade, which would pass through the left of the Twelfth Brigade on the first objective, and the Tenth Brigade. The Fourth (Imperial) Division was to employ a fresh brigade for this advance. Following the capture of the second objective, the First Brigade

1st. Cnd. Div..... 4th Cnd. Div --- 4<sup>th</sup> Imp. ———



THE DROCOURT-QUÉANT LINE.

Canadian operations, September 2-3, 1918,

of the First Canadian Division was to exploit the success of the division towards the Canal du Nord.

The first objective thus assigned to the Canadian Corps rested, on the right, upon the Support Line of the Drocourt-Quéant System south of Cagnicourt. From this point it ran northwards from the eastern outskirts of Cagnicourt to the north-western outskirts of Villers-lez-Cagnicourt. Crossing the Arras-Cambrai Road, it then ran along the eastern face of Mont Dury, south of the village of that name, then east of Dury itself to Prospect Farm, in the Drocourt-Quéant Line, a mile to the north. Thence it turned westward and so to its left extremity at Eterpigny.

The second objective rested, on the right, at the point where the Quéant-Marquion Railway crossed the Cagnicourt-Inchy Road. It ran along the Railway as far as the Buissy Switch, around the western outskirts of Buissy, thence to the Arras-Cambrai Road north of Baralle. Crossing the road, it passed through the outskirts of Sauchy-Cauchy, west of the Canal du Nord, around the eastern and northern edges of Ecourt St. Quentin and the Bois de Récourt and so, in a wide curve, to join the first objective near Prospect Farm.

The third objective, from the Arras-Cambrai Road at the crossing-point of the Marquion-Bourlin Railway, ran north to Oisy-le-Verger, thence through the Bois du Quesnoy to the northern edge of Palluel, along the southern lip of the swamps to Lécluse, and thence followed the Sensée River to a point north of Eterpigny. When this objective was taken our men would have penetrated a further four thousand yards, having crossed the Canal du Nord, captured the trench systems east of the Canal—known as the Canal du Nord Line and the Marquion Line—and the villages of Buissy, Baralle, Marquion, Sauchy-Cauchy, Cauchy-Lestree, Oisy-le-Verger, Palluel, Lecluse and Etaing. Their outposts would hold all the high ground immediately east of the Canal. By that time the Canadian Corps would be twelve thousand yards beyond the line from which it started in the morning. This was to be accomplished by the diverging movement of the reserves, fighting outwards from the first objective.

The whole operation was to be carried out in a swift rush, sweeping the enemy out of the objectives before he recovered from the shock of the encounter and carrying the line over the Canal du Nord in the early afternoon.

Two Companies of Mark V and Mark V Star Tanks, of the Third Tank Brigade, were assigned to each attacking division. An Independent Force, under Brigadier-General Brutinel, consisting of the Tenth Hussars, part of the Canadian Light Horse,



the Canadian Corps Cyclist Battalion, six armoured cars of the Seventeenth Tank Battalion and the two Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigades, were held in reserve at Wancourt.

All the divisional artillery of the Canadian Corps, and practically every other light and heavy gun it owned, supported the attack. These field guns provided a creeping barrage as far as the first objective and then limbered up and got into position to cover the further advances of the various brigades to which they were allotted. The heavy artillery fired steadily on trenches, strong points and bridges beyond the field artillery barrage. The gunners had been busy cutting wire since August 30th in anticipation of the new assault.

The Canadian machine gun battalions covered the advance of the infantry with barrage fire as far as the first objective. Afterwards, those machine guns which came behind the infantry were to lend their aid where possible.

Zero hour was 5 a.m. on September 2nd.

It was a dark night, and drizzling rain fell intermittently while the men assembled for the attack. Our guns fired spasmodically, in claps of thunder which drowned the clank and rumble of the tanks. The enemy replied vigorously now and then, with high explosive or barking gusts of shrapnel. These bursts of activity testified to his nervousness. Machine guns tapped restlessly, and there was an occasional sound of bombing from the front, where fighting was still in progress at disputed points in the jumping-off line.

At dawn the world seemed to burst asunder. The intense barrage awoke, a thing of dreadful clamour and violent lightning. The Canadian infantry swept forward, on their right the Fifty-seventh (Imperial) Division, on their left the Fourth. It was 5 a.m., and the hour of doom for the Droecourt-Quéant Line.

The reply of the German artillery was prompt and fairly heavy, but fortunately their shells fell behind most of our men. Heavy machine gun fire greeted our men everywhere. The enemy fought poorly in the first stages of the day's fighting, though here and there some stout groups resisted sternly. The advanced positions were overwhelmed. At 8.50 a.m. the whole of the Droecourt-Quéant Line and the Droecourt-Quéant Support Line were in our hands, burst in as if they were built of glass. At 9.15 a.m. the Canadian Corps had gained all its first objective.

The attack of the First Division on the first objective was carried out by three battalions—the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, on the right, and the Thirteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. E. McCuaig, C.M.G., D.S.O., on the left, attacking on the Third Brigade front, while the Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gilson, D.S.O., attacked on the front of the Second Brigade,

Great numbers of Germans, evidently thrust blindly into the Drocourt-Quéant Line and the positions west of that line, were encountered. They were so numerous that in many places they greatly outnumbered the attackers. But on the Third Brigade front they were completely submissive, and the majority of them gave in without a murmur and went white-faced to captivity.

On the Second Brigade front the Fifth Battalion, holding the line, was still fighting with the enemy when the Seventh Battalion pushed through them to begin the advance. The Seventh Battalion took up the fight and pressed on into the masses of terrified Germans. The ground was strewn with grey corpses—the toll of the merciless artillery—and every shell-hole seemed to hold a living enemy. By the time our men reached the Drocourt-Quéant Line the hostile resistance had almost collapsed, for the tanks were then in front of the infantry, and the mere presence of these monsters subdued the foe. Six hundred prisoners fell into the hands of the Seventh Battalion in their triumphant advance. Much of their success was due to the magnificent gallantry and determination of Private Walter Leigh Rayfield. Well in advance of his company, he began the day by rushing a trench of Germans, killing two of them with the bayonet and capturing ten others. Later on, when a hostile sniper began to cause heavy casualties, he discovered the man's position and engaged him under very severe rifle fire. Then he proceeded to rush the trench where the sniper had been, where he so terrified the Germans that thirty of them surrendered to him. But he was not satisfied with this. One of his comrades was lying badly wounded on ground heavily swept by machine guns. Rayfield at once went to the rescue and succeeded in bringing him into safety. He was awarded the Victoria Cross.

The Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. Worrall, M.C., went through the Thirteenth Battalion as had been arranged and cleared Cagnicourt in dashing style. Large forces held the village, but they were absolutely overwhelmed—so much so that an entire battalion was taken, as well as a German Staff Officer who had not the time to escape. Several batteries in and around the village were also captured, the crews being shot down or rushed with the bayonet.

On the front of the Fourth Canadian Division this phase of the operations met with equal success. The division attacked with the Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. A. Clark, D.S.O., on the right, the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. M. Edwards, D.S.O., in the centre, and the Eighty-fifth Battalion, Major Millar, on the left, on the front of the Twelfth Brigade. The Tenth Brigade, Brigadier-General R. J. F. Hayter, on the left of the Twelfth, employed the Forty-seventh Battalion,

Lieut.-Col. H. L. Keegan, on the right, and the Fifteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. F. Page, D.S.O., on the left. The Twelfth Brigade attacked on a front of fifteen hundred yards, the Tenth on a front of one thousand.

At 7.30 a.m. the Twelfth Brigade, on the right, was in possession of all its first objective—an extremely rapid piece of work. The Eighty-fifth Battalion, waiting for the help of the tanks to master the group of Germans still holding out in their jumping-off line, were compelled to attack them alone, as the tanks were delayed. Half their casualties were caused here. Many strong points—notably two garrisoned by thirty and forty-five Germans respectively—were on the wrong side of the initial barrage, which missed them, and the battalion was obliged to overpower these without aid also. They succeeded, by dint of strenuous and determined effort, and captured eighteen machine guns in doing so. Then they pushed on and arrived on their objectives on time.

As elsewhere, the Germans holding the Drocourt-Quéant Line, though numerous, showed little inclination to fight and betrayed their masters by tamely giving up the system.

The Tenth Brigade also passed quickly forward. Contrary to the experience of other Canadians, this brigade found that the Germans facing them were inclined to fight very hard, until the tanks were glaring into their positions and the bayonets of the assaulting troops were at their throats. They and their machine guns were very numerous.

Private Claude J. P. Nunney, M.M., of the Thirty-eighth Battalion, in this fighting completed the exhibition of zeal and courage which later gained for him the Victoria Cross. On the previous day, during the swaying struggle for a jumping-off position, the Thirty-eighth Battalion, near Vis-en-Artois, was heavily counter-attacked under an intense barrage. Private Nunney at once sallied forth on his own initiative, and, going through the fury of shell fire, visited all the outposts of his company, encouraging his comrades, with such success that the attack was completely beaten off. When the battalion moved out against the Drocourt-Quéant Line he was ever foremost in the advance, accounting for many Germans single-handed. He was severely wounded during the day.

When the Tenth Brigade was in possession of the Drocourt-Quéant Line the Forty-sixth Battalion, Major J. S. Rankin, D.S.O., pressed forward to carry the Drocourt-Quéant Support Line and the village of Dury by assault. After taking the Support Line, they were arrested in their advance by very heavy machine gun fire from the southern outskirts of the village. By a skilful and daringly executed turning movement the resisting Germans

were forced to surrender, one hundred and twenty strong, with nine machine guns.

All opposition thereupon ended, and Dury was taken with over one hundred prisoners more. The Area Commandant of the district and his assistant were among them, much to their disgust and the huge delight of their captors—hailed from their beds, it was said.

The Fourth (Imperial) Division on their left made equally certain progress and captured their first objective in good time.

The whole Canadian Corps was thus upon its allotted line and the first phase of the operation was complete. Much of the success gained was due to the tanks, which wiped out many points of resistance, spread panic among the Germans and rolled passages through the dense wire of the Drocourt-Quéant Line to admit the infantry. The artillery, too, had provided a powerful and most effective barrage. Their teams were now hooking in everywhere and beginning to drag the guns through shell fire to places from which to support the renewed advances.

Between 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. the attacking waves began to move forward towards the second objective, each brigade launching its fresh effort as soon as possible after the first objective had been made secure. The fire of the German artillery had slackened—probably because their gunners were getting their weapons into safer positions to the east. The machine gun defence stiffened, especially astride the Arras-Cambrai Road. The renewed attack was faced with the enemy's second system of defence, consisting chiefly of vast numbers of machine guns and judiciously placed anti-tank guns, against which progress was extremely difficult.

The Third Brigade, in their fresh attack, employed the Fifteenth Battalion, Major Girvan, on the right, and the Fourteenth Battalion, which had already taken Cagnicourt, on the left. The Fifteenth Battalion had been following closely behind the Sixteenth Battalion, and now passed through it and went straight on in a south-easterly direction, its right on the Cagnicourt-Inchy Road. The Fourteenth Battalion advanced to the attack on the Bois de Loison, with the Thirteenth Battalion close in rear, to go through the leading troops when the Bois was taken and capture the Buissy Switch by rolling it up from the left.

The Fifteenth Battalion had to pass, on its way towards the second objective, a large wood known as the Bois de Bouche, north of the road to Inchy. This wood was full of machine guns, which opposed a most determined and desperate resistance. Troops in the Bois de Loison and Villers-lez-Cagnicourt also swept the battalion with merciless enfilade fire. On the right the Sixty-third (Royal Naval) Division, to which had been assigned the



task of taking the second objective of the Seventeenth Corps, was meeting similar opposition on the high ground to the south-west. The machine gunners facing the Naval Division also swept the Fifteenth Battalion with fire. Thus it will be seen that the battalion was raked by machine guns from left and right and front and rear.

It was quite impossible to make rapid progress through this terrific fire. But progress was made—slow, painful and costly, every yard marked by a trail of blood. The Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. B. Rogers, D.S.O., of the First Brigade, following the Fifteenth Battalion with the object of passing through to a fresh attack when the second objective was taken, became involved in the fighting and added its weight to the struggle. Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, D.S.O., observing the difficulty on the right, having reorganized his Sixteenth Battalion after its initial advance, led his men personally into the fury of machine gun fire on the immediate flank and flung them to the rescue. There was a large trench—the southern end of the Drocourt-Quéant Line—from which the enemy were firing intensely upon the Naval Division and the Canadians. The Sixteenth Battalion closed with these Germans and overpowered them.

Lieut.-Col. Peck was largely responsible for the final success of the advance in this quarter. He was quick to grasp the situation, give the tanks their orders and organize his new attack, which lent immense aid to the Naval Division and the Fifteenth Battalion. Through the whole of these operations he exposed himself recklessly, directing his men under terrific fire. Later, he was awarded the Victoria Cross for his superb leadership and valour.

It was in the course of this fighting, too, that Lance-Corporal Henry Metcalf, of the Sixteenth Battalion, displayed magnificent courage and won the Victoria Cross. Under the intense fire of the German machine guns he rushed to a passing tank and explained the situation. Then, holding a signalling flag in his hand, he led the tank along the trench, giving it directions by waving the flag. The enemy, astonished at his daring, concentrated every effort on his destruction. But by a miracle and his own bravery he guided the tank through it all, and one by one the tank stamped out the points of resistance. Later on, Metcalf was wounded, but he would not leave the line until ordered to do so.

Great numbers of prisoners were taken by the battalion in this struggle.

The Royal Naval Division sent a battalion—the Drake—to help at the Bois de Bouche. This battalion advanced with great gallantry and flung its weight into the scale. With the aid of

the Third Battalion and the Sixteenth and the Naval unit and the surviving tanks, the Fifteenth Battalion finally carried the Bois de Bouche shortly after noon, with many prisoners and machine guns. In the hours that followed they pushed on to the Buissy-Quéant Road south-east of the Bois and there halted, worn with their desperate effort. The Third Battalion went through them to the second objective, along the Railway, which was reached towards dusk. At the same time the Naval Division came up on their right along the Railway.

The fighting experienced by the rest of the Third Brigade was equally fierce and exhausting. The Bois de Loison resisted the Fourteenth Battalion frantically, and German guns trapped in the neighbourhood of Villers-lez-Cagnicourt, scarcely more than a thousand yards away, fired on them heavily from the left, causing severe casualties and destroying several tanks. Machine guns also poured their fire into them from that village and from the Bois de Loison and the Bois de Bouche. They persisted sternly. The greater part of the resistance in the Bois de Loison had been overpowered and the Wood taken at 11 a.m.

It was now the business of the Thirteenth Battalion to go on, through the Fourteenth, and attack the Buissy Switch. Owing, however, to the furious fighting still in progress on the left, where the Second Brigade had encountered strong opposition and was not yet as far forward as the Third Brigade, the battalion had been compelled to take up a line facing north on the left to ward off any attack from the front of the Second Brigade. Captain Brewer, of the Fourteenth Battalion, led his men into the Switch as soon as the Bois de Loison had been taken. With this Canadian foothold to aid them the Thirteenth Battalion then made a determined effort to carry out its original rôle, but was held up by terrific fire from the left as soon as it began to move.

The Second Brigade, as already implied, all this time was fighting most desperately. Soon after emerging from the first objective, at 8.45 a.m., the advance of the brigade was held up.

To the Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. MacDonald, D.S.O., M.C., had been assigned the task of capturing the second objective. At 8.45 a.m., a short distance beyond the first objective, with all its attendant tanks out of action, its left exposed, the enemy flooding it with the fire of numerous well placed machine guns and bombarding it with guns and trench mortars over open sights, the battalion was checked with severe loss.

Nevertheless they had no thought of giving up the advance. Major Bingham and a party of men of the battalion proceeded to bring a group of captured guns into action. Then the Sixth Battery, Canadian Field Artillery, took charge of these weapons, and with their own guns provided a hastily arranged barrage,

while a Canadian machine gun battery chimed in. Supported by this aid, the battalion slowly but surely forced its way forward. With infinite effort, the wood west of Villers-lez-Cagnicourt and the southern trench of the Buissy Switch to the right of the village were taken, with eighty prisoners and eight machine guns. The company on the left in the meantime proceeded to envelop the Factory on the Arras-Cambrai Road north of the village. The sunken road leading from the Factory to Villers-lez-Cagnicourt was first rushed, Lance-Corporal Holmes having silenced the enemy's machine guns with a Lewis gun from an exposed position in advance. They then enveloped the Factory, and took from it and the vicinity—the sunken road and elsewhere—seventy-three prisoners and four machine guns. At 4 p.m. they held a line to the east.

This aided the attack on Villers-lez-Cagnicourt, which was now in progress, driven home by the centre company and some men of the left company taking it in the rear. All this fighting was of a most furious and bloody character, for the battalion was opposed by greatly superior forces of Germans, who defended themselves with the courage of despair.

It was 4 p.m. when the struggle just described came to a close. At 6 p.m., under a barrage, the battalion renewed its advance, working south-eastwards along the Buissy Switch. Wild fighting took place, especially in the sunken road east of Villers-lez-Cagnicourt and in the northern trench of the Switch, the enemy resisting very stubbornly by heavy bombing and the fierce fire of machine guns. This checked our men for a time, but with indomitable spirit—the spirit wherein lies the secret of our final victory—they renewed their advance. In conjunction with the attack in the southern portion of the Switch, where the companies on the right were fighting hard, assisted by the Third Brigade, a swift rush was made. The Switch was turned into a shambles—over two hundred dead Germans were counted afterwards. Completely routed, the defence broke down at last. The Seventh Battalion secured over one hundred and twenty prisoners and numerous trench mortars and machine guns in this final phase of the attack on the Buissy Switch.

To the First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. W. Sparling, D.S.O., and the Fourth Battalion, Major G. G. Blackstock, much of the success of the fighting around Villers-lez-Cagnicourt is also due. These battalions, following the Second Brigade, perceived the opposition they were encountering and sent men up to assist, which they did with the utmost ardour, not only at Villers-lez-Cagnicourt, but also in the Buissy Switch.

As already stated, the Third Brigade had joined in the assault in the Buissy Switch. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Battalions

cleared the Switch upon their front. At 11 p.m. the Eighth Battalion, Major A. L. Saunders, M.C., passed through the units holding the Buissy Switch on the front of the Second Brigade and established outposts along the forward slopes well in front of the Switch.

The First Brigade, which was to have exploited the Canadian success beyond the Switch, had not the lateness of the hour intervened, now relieved the Third Brigade, which proceeded into reserve. All the First Brigade battalions which had fought so well with other brigades were extricated and concentrated with their own.

Sergeant Arthur George Knight, of the Tenth Battalion, played a magnificent part in the terrific conflict of his unit with the enemy. Sergeant Knight, leading a party of bombers, was personally responsible for overpowering a temporary check. Alone he rushed forward and bayoneted the crews of several machine guns and trench mortars, putting the rest to flight. He then brought up a Lewis gun and played havoc with it among the retreating Germans. In subsequent operations this heroic N.C.O. killed three more and captured twenty, quite alone. Still later, he completely put to flight another party which attempted to resist his platoon. Then he was fatally wounded, and on September 3rd he died, after as gallant a period of service as any man might offer. Sergeant Knight was awarded the Victoria Cross.

The fighting of the Fourth Canadian Division in the advance beyond the first objective was equally strenuous. Shortly after 8 a.m. the battalions which were to take the second objective began their advance. These were the Seventy-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. Kirkaldy, D.S.O., of the Twelfth Brigade, on the right; in the centre the Eleventh Brigade, employing the Fifty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. B. Carey, D.S.O., on the right, the Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. C. Harbottle, D.S.O., in the centre, and the Eighty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. K. M. Perry, D.S.O., on the left. In reserve to this brigade was the One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. Lister, D.S.O., M.C. On the Tenth Brigade front was the Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. D. Davies, D.S.O.

As these battalions topped the rising ground between the Drocourt-Quéant Line and the Support Line, they came under the most intense machine gun fire ever experienced by the division. The battalions reached and held the Villers-lez-Cagnicourt-Dury Road between the Arras-Cambrai Road and Dury, but further forward they were unable to go. The terrific fire from Villers-lez-Cagnicourt, which, of course, was still in German hands, the absence of tanks and the overpowering tempest



that thrashed the lines from in front rendered further advance impossible.

The Independent Force, moving along the Arras-Cambrai Road according to orders, did their utmost to relieve the situation, but without avail. Three armoured cars and two lorries containing six-inch mortars endeavoured to surmount the crest and were instantly put out of action.

Captain Bellenden Seymour Hutcheson, Canadian Army Medical Corps, the Medical Officer of the Seventy-fifth Battalion, through all that day of torment and death, stayed on the field and dressed the wounds of every man who had been hit. He attended to a seriously wounded officer under that dreadful fire, and saw him carried out to safety by prisoners and our own men, who suffered many casualties. Later he dashed through the fire to a wounded sergeant, and, in full view of the enemy, dragged him into a shell-hole and dressed his injuries. These were but two of his many acts of gallantry.

Then, in the Eighty-seventh Battalion, Private John Francis Young showed similar high courage and devotion to duty. Over the utterly exposed and death-swept ground, Private Young, who was acting as a stretcher-bearer, went to and fro among his comrades, dressing their wounds. Several times, his stock of bandages being exhausted, he had to return to his company headquarters for more. In this way he saved many lives. Later on, during the afternoon, when the fire slackened, he directed the stretcher-bearers in the work of carrying out the wounded.

Private Young, in the succeeding days of action, showed equal bravery and was finally awarded the Victoria Cross. Captain Hutcheson also received the Victoria Cross. Theirs was the type of valour—the valour of the Red Cross man, of the non-combatant—which too often escapes recognition in the more glamorous light of the bravery of men who fight the enemy.

The Fourth (Imperial) Division met with a similar resistance, but nevertheless made good progress. During the afternoon it crushed the enemy's defence in Prospect Farm and got within a thousand yards of Etaing.

On the front of the Fourth Canadian Division the Twelfth Brigade was drawn into reserve after dark.

When the dull night came down, the line of the Canadians on the right was over six thousand yards in front of the position it had occupied at dawn, when the attack began, and nowhere had the troops gained less than two thousand yards. Their line at midnight ran along the Quéant-Marquion Railway from the Cagnicourt-Inchy Road to the Buissy Switch. North of the Railway all the Switch was in our hands and the line was a

mile beyond the Factory north of Villers-lez-Cagnicourt. Thence it ran along the Arras-Cambrai Road to the Factory, and so up to Dury's eastern outskirts and to the new positions held by the Fourth (Imperial) Division to the left. It was true that all that had been hoped for had not been realized. But the great aim of the day had been achieved. South of the Canadians the hinge of the Hindenburg and the Drocourt-Quéant Lines had been taken. British troops were threatening Quéant and Pronville. Many miles of formidable trenches had been cleared. And above all, the Drocourt-Quéant Line on the whole Canadian front had been battered in. To the Germans it was as if the sky had cracked. A blow had shattered the wonderful armour over the German heart. The Drocourt-Quéant Line was but a memory.

Many prisoners, vast numbers of machine guns and scores of guns had passed into British keeping. Eight thousand prisoners had been taken, of whom the Canadians could claim more than half. At 6 p.m. the officers in charge of the prisoner-of-war cages far in rear had counted one hundred and twelve officers and four thousand three hundred and thirty-seven men to the credit of the Corps. Many more white-faced victims were scurrying through the dusk to join their comrades in the cages. There had been no time to count trophies.

That night the enemy was silent—suspiciously so. He was preparing for the inevitable aftermath of such a defeat as he had suffered. Knowing that it was hopeless to counter-attack, he was preparing to get back to his next line of defence. He was about to give us our second objective without a battle. At dawn he was in full retreat.

The retirement was not unexpected, but the British Command did not intend to wait for the Germans to go. Orders had actually been issued for a fresh attack on September 3rd, and some of the Canadian battalions were on the move in compliance when our aeroplane patrols brought back word that the main forces of the enemy had been withdrawn to the eastern side of the Canal. Instantly the whole British line was set in motion.

It was found that the Germans had left behind only a light screen of machine gunners, and these were easily dealt with. The only serious opposition encountered by the troops of the Corps was intermittent artillery fire. At 9.30 a.m. the whole of the Second Brigade front was on the move, and at 5 p.m. they had reached the Canal du Nord. The First Brigade reached the Canal about an hour afterwards. The Fourth Canadian Division on their left made very rapid progress, took Rumaucourt, Ecourt St. Quentin, Sandemont and Récourt without difficulty, and at 8 p.m. were also on the Canal. The Fourth (Imperial) Division

by noon had taken Etaing and Lécuse. Buissy and Baralle fell naturally to the First Canadian Division.

While this movement was in progress the Sixty-third (Royal Naval) Division on the Canadian right made an equally rapid advance, and were able to cross the Canal during the day, but were compelled to fall back again to the western bank in the late afternoon.

The advance was to have been pressed beyond the Canal, but it was soon found that this was not possible. Canadian patrols thrust down to the western bank discovered that the enemy had very carefully blown up all the bridges. The enemy held all the high ground beyond the Canal with well placed and very numerous machine guns. Many Germans were also in the dry portions of the Canal bed, and at one or two places small posts still held out on the western side. On the greater part of the Canadian front the Canal was full of water. Every time a man showed himself he was fired at, and any concerted movement brought whistling tornadoes of machine gun bullets.

Of course, the idea of crossing the Canal was not relinquished without a struggle. On September 4th well led and determined patrols made an effort to win the passage, but the resistance of the enemy was too strong. This was not surprising. The Canal du Nord, a very formidable natural line of defence, was the first position to offer the enemy good protection on the loss of the Drocourt-Quéant Line. This was one reason why he selected it as the position on which to make a fresh stand. Another reason was that it protected the main portion of his Hindenburg Line, on which depended his last hope of salvation.

The Higher Command, having discovered that the Germans intended to fight fiercely for the Canal—a thing it had long ago foreseen—accepted the situation. It saw at once that the general advance was of necessity arrested for the present. To carry such a position as the Canal du Nord, a carefully planned and very powerful attack was now required. This would take time to prepare. In the meantime the tired troops, who had done so well, had to be relieved.

On September 4th the Fourth (Imperial) Division was relieved by the First (Imperial) Division, which thereupon was transferred, with the front it held, to the Twenty-second (Imperial) Corps. The latter had now reached the northerly extension of the line held by the Canadians. On the same day the First Canadian Division was relieved by the Third Canadian Division and went into reserve for rest and reorganization. The Third Canadian Division on the following day relieved the Fourth Canadian Division, which also went back to reconstruct and rest its units in the rear.

The operations which broke the Drocourt-Quéant Line closed with the departure of the victors. These men had accomplished great deeds. They had won a great moral victory, which had far-reaching effects. They had conquered a trench system, of which the world had spoken with bated breath, in one triumphant rush. Many material things had passed from the enemy's possession into theirs. Among these should be numbered eight thousand prisoners, sixty-five guns and four hundred and seventy-five machine guns. Their line was now only seven miles from Cambrai.

A period of quietness followed. The British were preparing to cross the Canal. The Germans were preparing to resist them. The enemy continually attacked our posts, but were as often beaten off. The posts we held on the Canal banks were incessantly machine gunned. On September 16th the Corps Commander ordered these to fall back until safe from the domination of the German machine guns.

On September 13th Major-General L. J. Lipsett, C.B., C.M.G., was succeeded in the command of the Third Canadian Division by Brigadier-General F. O. W. Loomis, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. Major-General Lipsett proceeded to the Fourth (Imperial) Division to take command. Great regret was felt throughout the Corps at his departure, for there never was a braver or more popular leader. He was killed by a sniper shortly after he left, and the news was a source of great sorrow to the Canadians.

Brigadier-General Loomis was promoted to Major-General. His successor in the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade was Lieut.-Col. R. P. Clark, D.S.O., M.C., who took command on October 6th, Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gilson being in command in the meantime.

On September 19th the Third Canadian Division was relieved by the Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division of the Twenty-second (Imperial) Corps. The Second Canadian Division extended its front to the right by taking over a portion of the front of the Fifty-second (Imperial) Division, including the northern part of Mœuvres. Thus the whole Corps front was now held by this one division, which was on a comparatively short line.

The Fifth Brigade, holding the newly acquired sector, on September 22nd and 23rd, with a view to improving the position north of Mœuvres, made several minor attacks and pushed forward its outposts, closer to the Canal. The Germans offered some resistance and counter-attacked several times, but to no avail.

And now the plans for a continuation of our offensive operations were ready. The project for the crossing of the Canal du Nord was complete. On September 27th the new attack was launched.

It is as well to consider first what the British Higher Com-



mand proposed to do, and so to learn the relation which the rôle of the Canadians in the forthcoming battle bore to the rest of the British forces.

By hard fighting in the latter part of September the Fourth British Army between St. Quentin and Gouzeaucourt, and the Third British Army thence to Mœuvres, had placed themselves within assaulting distance of the Hindenburg Line. The First Army, with the Canadians on the right, lay along the Canal du Nord on most of its front. The general strategical plan for the resumed offensive was an advance of the whole towards Maubeuge.

To get to Maubeuge our troops had first to take the Hindenburg Line in the south and cross the Canal in the north. The most difficult task was the former. Accordingly, arrangements were made for the Third Army to cross the Canal and, by a rapid advance in a generally eastern direction, to outflank the Hindenburg Line from the north. The Fourth Army meanwhile was to bombard the very powerful defences of the Line, and then, when the Third Army was threatening it from the north, to attack. The Third Army, of course, could not do its part with its left exposed. The Canadian Corps, therefore, was allotted the duty of keeping pace with the Third Army on the north. The flank of the Canadian Corps, in its turn, would be guarded by the marshes of the Sensée River.

These troops were faced by an obstacle of awe-inspiring strength. The Canal du Nord was a desperately strong line of defence. It was also a most difficult thing to cross. Few attacks have ever been made with such a powerful barrier set in the path of the initial advance.

This Canal du Nord linked the Somme Canal with the Sensée Canal, twenty miles apart. Southwards from Mœuvres, owing to advances recently made, it had passed into our hands. From Mœuvres, northwards, however, the enemy held all the eastern bank, and in some cases was on the western side also. The Germans had sown the borders of the Canal with machine guns in immense numbers, mined the approaches, blown up the bridges, placed great numbers of batteries to sweep the approaches, and had perfected a system of anti-tank guns to deal with any tanks which we brought against it. Behind the Canal itself, on the high ground, they had distributed many more machine guns. They had worked hard on improving the trench systems still remaining to them. The high ground east of the Canal, and especially the wood-crowned hill of Bournonville, gave them excellent observation over many miles of the territory we held.

Had all the Canal been filled with water, matters would have been desperate indeed. But fortunately, between Inchy and

Mœuvres, and opposite these villages, the Canal was dry. On this frontage two thousand five hundred yards of the Canal had not been completed when war broke out. In the uncompleted portion there was no water.

It was possible to cross the Canal at this point, provided an artillery bombardment of unprecedented violence first annihilated the defence and then protected the attackers as they made the passage. Once over, the British could proceed to develop their assault as they wished. They would have to set to work at once, however, to clear the enemy out of the positions he held along the watershed to north and south.

The Germans realized their danger, and had done everything to make the dry portion of the Canal impassable. Their machine guns were thickest there. They intended to fill the narrow defile to the brim with British dead.



The plan of the Canadian Corps for the operations was as follows: First, covered by the terrific barrage provided, the infantry were to cross the Canal from Mœuvres to Inchy. Then, while the Imperial troops of the Third Army, who had also crossed at this point, were pushing in a generally eastern direction and along the south side of the Bapaume-Cambrai Road, they were to strike out fanwise, along the north side of the Bapaume-Cambrai Road, north-east towards the Sensée and north along the east side of the Canal du Nord. The move along the Canal was to be made with a view to clearing up the Germans there, for until these had been disposed of, no advance could be safely made. Continuing the general assault, the Corps was to manœuvre forward until its left was on the Sensée. Then, with its left thus secured and its right in touch with its Imperial comrades south of the Bapaume-Cambrai Road, it was to advance due east, keeping pace with the Third Army.

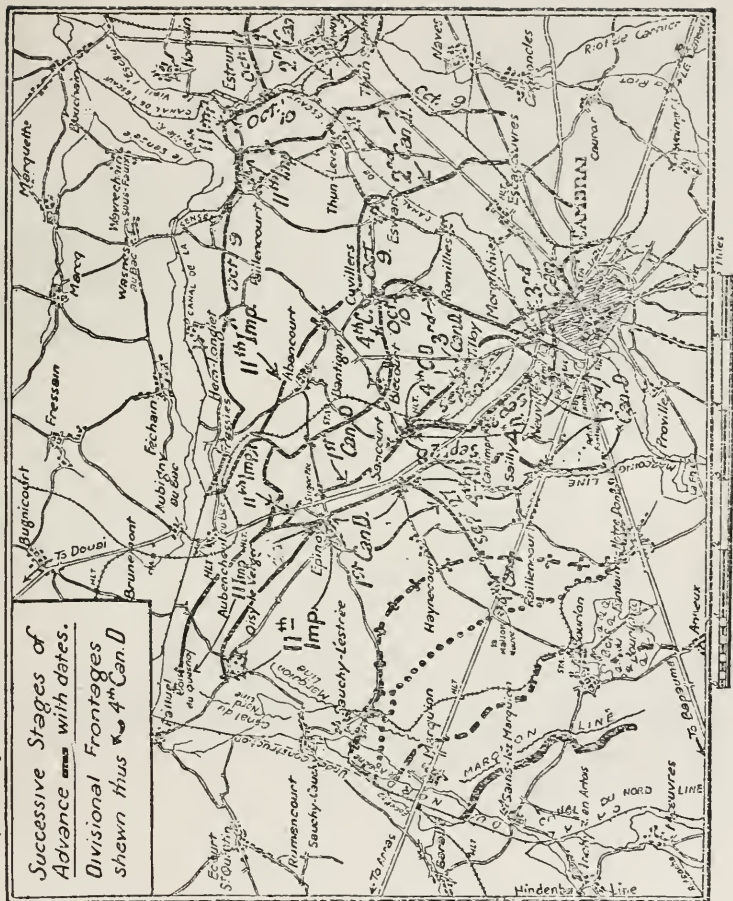
Such was the general plan. The details may now be given.

The first phase of the operations was to consist of the crossing of the Canal, followed by the subjection of the Germans on the eastern bank to a point north of Marquion and the capture of Bourlon Wood, Bourlon village and the high ground between the Wood and the Arras-Cambrai Road. The second phase was to consist of the capture of the high ground overlooking the valley of the Sensée and the establishing of bridgeheads over the Canal de l'Escaut (or Scheldt Canal), which guarded the city of Cambrai.

In the first phase there were four objectives. The first objective consisted of the front line of the Marquion Line on the Corps front, with the left thrown back to include Sains-lez-Marquion. This objective, from the right, about three thousand yards east of Mœuvres, ran roughly parallel to the Canal and

1st Can. Obj.  Sept 27<sup>th</sup>  2nd C. Obj.  3rd C. Obj. .... 4th Can. Obj. 

Successive Stages of  
Advance  with dates.  
Divisional Frontages  
shewn thus  4th Can. D



CAMBRAI.

Canadian operations, September 27 to October 11, 1918.

about two thousand yards east of it. The second objective ran through the western edge of Bourlon Wood, northwards east of Bourlon, thence along the Bourlon-Marquion Railway for about one mile, and so by the Bourlon-Marquion Road to include Marquion. The third objective ran along the Railway from a point north of Fontaine-Notre-Dame to a point east of Bourlon village. Thence, crossing the Arras-Cambrai Road at a place called La Maison Neuve, which was five thousand yards from the Canal, it ran north-west to a point five hundred yards south of Sauchy-Lestrée and then west to the Canal. Finally, the fourth objective ran due north from Fontaine-Notre-Dame to west of Haynecourt, and thence to the southern outskirts of Sauchy-Lestrée and so to the Canal.

The whole advance in the first phase would reach a maximum penetration of eight thousand yards, starting from a jumping-off line with a frontage of about two thousand yards and ending on a frontage five times greater.

For the second phase no definite objectives had been arranged, but this phase involved the securing of all the ground beyond the fourth objective between the Canal de l'Escaut and the Sensée River.

The first phase was to be carried out by the First and Fourth Canadian Divisions, the latter on the right. The second phase was to be carried out by these divisions plus the Third Canadian and Eleventh (Imperial) Divisions. During the pause between the two phases the Third Canadian Division was to take over the southern portion of the Fourth Canadian Division's front, while the Eleventh (Imperial) Division passed through the northern portion of the First Canadian Division. All four would then advance, the Third Canadian Division on the right, on their left the Fourth Canadian Division, on their left the First Canadian Division, and on their left the Eleventh (Imperial) Division.

The artillery support arranged for was on a truly stupendous scale. An intense barrage was to be provided up to the second objective. Thence the guns were to follow up and render improvised support. A pause of an hour was to be made on the first objective by the infantry to enable the guns to get forward for the barrage to the second objective.

The barrage covering the First Canadian Division was provided by the divisional artillery of the First and Second Canadian Divisions, the Thirty-ninth (Imperial) Division, and by the Fifth Canadian Divisional Artillery, also two brigades of Imperial field artillery.

The Fourth Canadian Division was covered by the barrage of the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions' artillery plus the



divisional artillery of the Fifty-seventh (Imperial) Division, the Eighth Army Brigade of Canadian Field Artillery and three brigades of Imperial field artillery.

The heavy artillery of the Corps was divided into two groups : the first, for bombarding villages, strong points, etc., the second for counter-battery fire. The first group consisted of the following brigades: First Canadian, Eighth, Thirty-fourth and Ninety-first Royal Garrison (Imperial). The second was made up of the Second and Third Canadian and the Imperial Seventh, Forty-eighth, Fifty-third and Eighty-first Royal Garrison Artillery.

This was the force of guns under Canadian control which first devoted all its energies to barraging the Canal and then covered the advance as far as the second objective. As the whole of the field guns, as well as those of the Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps to the south, fired on the two thousand yard length of dry Canal during the first stage of the attack, the violence of their fire may be imagined. It was said that only nine yards of frontage were allotted to each gun. As these were each capable of dropping four shells upon the nine yards in one minute of intense fire, the result of such a concentration was terrific. The barrage was the heaviest ever created in the history of the war.

After the taking of the second objective the guns were grouped as follows :

To the First Canadian Division, in addition to its own, were allotted the Thirty-ninth (Imperial) Divisional Artillery and part of the Ninety-first Brigade (Imperial) of Royal Garrison Artillery. The third Canadian Division was allotted the Fifth Canadian Divisional Artillery and the Eighth Army Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, part of the Eighth (Imperial) Brigade, Royal Garrison Artillery, and their own guns. The Fourth Canadian Division was allotted its own artillery with that of the Second Canadian and Fifty-seventh (Imperial) Divisions, and part of the Thirty-fourth (Imperial) Brigade of Royal Garrison Artillery. The Eleventh (Imperial) Division was covered by four Imperial brigades of field artillery, its own artillery, and some of the First Brigade of Canadian Garrison Artillery.

The balance of the First Canadian and Eighth, Thirty-fourth and Ninety-first (Imperial) Brigades were grouped for bombardment work, and all the rest of the heavy artillery for counter-battery work against the enemy's guns.

A company of tanks of the Seventh Tank Battalion was allotted to each division for the battle.

On September 25th the Twenty-second (Imperial) Corps took over all the Canadian front north of the Arras-Cambrai Road. During the night the Tenth Brigade of the Fourth Canadian

Division, the First and Third Brigades of the First Canadian Division and the Thirty-second Brigade of the Eleventh (Imperial) Division relieved the Second Canadian Division in the line. The rest of the Corps spent the day and September 26th in moving forward to their assembly positions.

Corps Headquarters, which since moving from Arras had been in a camouflaged camp on the Neuville-Vitasse-Wancourt Road, established itself near Quéant for the battle.

At 5.15 a.m. on September 27th the last man was in his place and the whole Corps was concentrated in one vast array close to the Canal du Nord. It had been a dark, wet night, and the troops had marched long distances over soggy ground, but all awaited the assault with eagerness. The excellent marking out of routes and assembly positions by the Engineers had greatly facilitated the gathering of the force into its various concentration areas.

Just before zero there was an uncanny hush over everything, and it was difficult to realize that what was to prove the last general attack of the Canadian Corps was about to be launched.

It was the hush before the storm.

At 5.20 a.m. the first gun spoke, the barrage opened on the Canal with overwhelming power, and the whole vast torrent of men began to move. The battle had begun.

Never had the world known anything to compare with the strength and majesty of that terrible artillery fire. It was as if the pillars of the earth had fallen and God had struck the Germans with His anger. The gloom behind the advancing troops was blazing with fire, and the gloom in front. The night overhead shrieked and moaned and howled with the passing of the shells, hurrying, hurrying, hurrying to keep their appointment with death. The German machine gunners in the Canal and immediately behind it were blown to pieces and the German guns were throttled with their answers in their lips. One or two machine guns, perhaps because the devil was watching over them, survived the hurricane and could be heard tapping through the clamour of the shells. But they were very few.

Behind the barrage came the infantry and the machine gunners, one immense river of khaki, with faces full of eagerness and blood-lust in the glare of the gun fire, and over all a leaping mist of steel. The torrent rolled forward hot-foot behind the barrage, an irresistible force which could not be checked by any human power. The pressure of this mass of men was so great that those behind forced those in front into the barrage. Men who went down wounded were submerged in the onrush and left behind. Some idea of the weight and majesty of that advance may be gathered from the statement that, at a conservative

estimate, twenty thousand Canadian and Imperial troops passed through that narrow defile in an hour. Long after these were ranging into open country the stream of infantry was pouring through as steadily as ever.

The Germans with a thousand machine guns could not have checked the tidal wave of men advancing behind that terrific shell fire.

The leading battalions carried scaling ladders and other devices for use if the Canal banks proved too steep or too slippery, but they were rarely needed. Thanks to the artillery and a special smoke screen provided to hide the advance from the left and front, little difficulty was encountered. All the tanks got over safely and, barring one which was destroyed by a mine north of Inchy, went on with the infantry. Thus an obstacle which had been looked upon with anxiety, if not with fear, was crossed as easily as open ground.

When the Canal was crossed the attack on the first objective developed.

The Tenth Brigade was employed by the Fourth Division for this attack. The Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. D. Davies, D.S.O., advancing on the right, with the Forty-sixth Battalion, Major J. S. Rankin, D.S.O., on the left, carried out the first stage of the attack. The two battalions halted in a sunken road five hundred yards east of the Canal, and the Forty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. L. Keegan, on the right, with the Fiftieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. L. Page, D.S.O., on the left, passed through and went on.

Quarry Wood gave some trouble, but it was rapidly encircled and its machine guns were taken. The brigade reached the Marquion Line at 7.15 a.m. It was heavily garrisoned, but the Germans were too frightened to offer much resistance.

The First Division, attacking on the left, with the First Brigade on the right and the Third upon the left, secured the first objective with little difficulty. The Fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. H. Nelles, was employed by the First Brigade for this phase, while the Fourteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. D. Worrall, M.C., attacked on the Third Brigade front. The latter encountered considerable opposition from machine guns as it worked its way along the Canal and lost a number of men, but shortly after 9 a.m. was in possession of its objective, including Sains itself. Elsewhere the First Division reached the objective with little opposition.

There was a pause in the advance from 7.30 a.m. to 8.30 a.m., and the artillery began to stream down to the Canal to support the next stage of the attack. The Engineers, with excellent speed and efficiency, were already at work bridging the Canal and improving the communications from bank to bank

through the dry bed. At 8.30 a.m. the barrage began to march forward again, and with it went the infantry.

In this advance the Eleventh Brigade on the right and the Twelfth Brigade on the left passed through the Tenth Brigade and continued the operations of the Fourth Division.

The Eleventh Brigade, employing the One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. Lister, D.S.O., M.C., on the right and the Eighty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. F. S. Meighen, C.M.G., on the left, pressed on rapidly towards the objective. As they advanced they came under heavy machine gun fire from the flanks, and particularly from the right, where groups of the enemy were still offering a lively resistance in the Hindenburg Support Line, which the Sixty-third (Royal Naval) Division was attacking. The One Hundred and Second Battalion was temporarily checked by a strong point on its front. Lieut. Graham Thomson Lyall, commanding a platoon of the support company, immediately exercised a bold flanking movement and captured the point of resistance, together with a field gun, four machine guns and thirteen prisoners.

As the brigade continued its advance, the firing from the right and from in front became heavier. A nest of machine guns opened fire on the One Hundred and Second Battalion and again Lieut. Lyall dashed forward. Single-handed he rushed the position and killed the officer in command, and the whole defence collapsed, forty-five prisoners with five machine guns surrendering to him. Later, Lieut. Lyall captured a further forty-seven prisoners. Through all the operations he continued to show great gallantry, leading a company in the desperate fighting which was to ensue with fine judgment and courage. He was wholly responsible for the taking of one hundred and eighty-five prisoners, twenty-six machine guns and a field gun, during the struggle at Bourlon Wood and beyond, and well merited the Victoria Cross which he subsequently received.

The Eleventh Brigade was on the second objective to the minute and looking into the depths of Bourlon Wood.

Meanwhile the Twelfth Brigade was advancing, the Eighty-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. L. Ralston, on the right, the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Edwards, on the left. The right battalion, suffering considerable loss from artillery and machine gun fire from the direction of Bourlon Wood, swept over the remaining trenches of the Marquion Line. One hundred and fifty prisoners and fifteen machine guns were taken in these trenches. The enemy in Bourlon offered a pitiful fight. By 9.45 a.m. the Eighty-fifth Battalion stood triumphantly on the second objective, with the village securely in their hands. At that time the German guns from far off were shelling it heavily.



On the left, however, there was sterner fighting. When the Thirty-eighth Battalion cleared the Marquion Line, German machine guns hidden in that portion of the Bourlon-Marquion Railway forming the battalion's objective opened very heavy fire upon them. The left company was held up, but the reserve company came to their assistance. The Seventy-second Battalion, following to pass through for the attack on the third objective, also joined in the struggle, and with this aid the advance was thrust through the machine gun fire, the resistance was beaten out and the second objective was taken shortly after 11 a.m.

The First Brigade and the Third Brigade on the First Division's front had launched their attack on the second objective between 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. The First Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. W. Sparling, D.S.O., secured this line on time after a dashing advance under machine gun fire.

The Thirteenth Battalion, Major J. M. R. Sinclair, M.C., had a peculiar rôle to perform in the operations of the Third Brigade. After passing through the Fourteenth Battalion on the first objective, its duty was to advance and secure the second. It was then to turn westwards, take the Canal du Nord Line in enfilade and capture these trenches and Marquion beyond, while it cleared the enemy out of all the woods east of the Canal around these places. The battalion encountered heavy masses of barbed wire and the Germans everywhere offered a fierce resistance.

By slow and painful effort in the dense wire and among the woods, the battalion first captured the second objective on the right, i.e. the easterly portion of its front, the Fifteenth Battalion and the Seventh Battalion to the south, which were to carry on the later stages of the advance, rendering invaluable assistance. Two companies of the Sixteenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. W. Peck, V.C., D.S.O., fed in from reserve, joined in the struggle on the left, but, together with the men of the Thirteenth Battalion attacking at that point, were checked. The Fifteenth Battalion and troops of the Eleventh (Imperial) Division, all of whom had crossed the Canal between Sains and Marquion by means of planks under a heavy machine gun fire, meanwhile continued to assist the Thirteenth, and between them these forces cleared Marquion and captured the rest of the second objective on the Third Brigade front. All resistance in the woods and the village and along the Canal having been overpowered, the troops rallied, and the battalions assigned to the attack on the third objective prepared to go forward.

The whole of the second objective was in Canadian hands by noon. The tanks, most of which had exhausted their ammunition, were now withdrawing, having seen the infantry safely

into open country. These weapons of war had once more proved their sterling worth under favourable conditions.

To return to the Fourth Division. The Eleventh Brigade shortly after 12 a.m. advanced to the attack on the third objective. They had before them an extremely difficult task, involving the subjection of Bourlon Wood. The Wood, standing on a great hill which commands all the surrounding country, was filled with German guns. Well placed machine gunners in the Wood might hold up an attack indefinitely with comparative ease. The strength of the position had been amply proved a year before, when it had first resisted desperately against a great British advance, and had then, once taken, defied the enemy's counter-blow for several days.

Knowing full well the risk of a direct attack through the wood, the Corps had arranged to deluge it with gas, with a view to making it untenable. The advancing Canadians were not to enter the wood, but to go round it on north and south, thus surrounding any Germans who might still be inside. The Eleventh Brigade accordingly attacked with the Fifty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Carey, on the northern side of the wood and the One Hundred and Second Battalion on the southern side, with orders to meet on the third objective beyond. The advance was closely supported by artillery and was completely successful. The wood, a sinister mass towering up against the grey afternoon, silent and clouded with a drifting mist of gas, offered some resistance—the enemy had not entirely abandoned it. On the flanks, too, a strong and determined defence was met with. To the left the Twelfth Brigade were fighting heavily, and the Germans opposing them poured their fire into the battalion moving along the northern edge of the wood. To the right the enemy was standing most determinedly in front of Anneux. Here the Sixty-third (Royal Naval) Division was fiercely involved. Thus the enemy was on the right rear of the Canadian brigade and raked the flank with heavy fire. On their own front, too, outside the wood, the Eleventh Brigade were strongly opposed by nests of machine guns.

Despite these many difficulties, the brigade gradually forced their way to their objective, which was taken at 5 p.m. The Fifty-seventh (Imperial) Division, which was to pass through the Naval Division as soon as the latter had taken Graincourt and Anneux, had not yet attacked Fontaine-Notre-Dame, its first objective. As the village lay directly on the exposed right of the brigade and was filled with machine gunners who knew how to take full advantage of the fact, the situation there was distinctly unpleasant.

The Eleventh Brigade thereupon formed a defensive flank

with the One Hundred and Second Battalion. The flank followed the general line of the Bapaume-Cambrai Road and faced Fontaine-Notre-Dame, ready to ward off any rush from that quarter. Many prisoners, some guns and numbers of machine guns had been taken.

The Twelfth Brigade, on the left of the Eleventh, attacked the third objective with two battalions, the Seventy-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. Kirkaldy, D.S.O., on the right and the Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. H. Kirkpatrick, on the left. The former, having a clear field, advanced through the Eighty-fifth Battalion at about 11.30 a.m., and at noon had penetrated several hundred yards beyond the second objective. During the afternoon it fought through stiff opposition and gained the third objective. A German post on the right held out stubbornly until 8 p.m., when it was rushed by a dashing attack which exterminated the garrison. This completed the battalion's conquest of the objective. It was compelled to fling out a defensive flank to the left during the afternoon, as the Seventy-second Battalion had not yet come up.

Lieut. Samuel Lewis Honey, D.C.M., M.M., won his Victoria Cross in these operations. He took command of his company when all other officers had become casualties, reorganized it under terrific fire and led it on to the objective. He then located a nest of machine guns which were causing severe casualties, and, single-handed and without the slightest hesitation, rushed the nest, capturing the guns and ten prisoners as well.

When the enemy began to counter-attack later in the day, he inspired his men to a heroic resistance, four of these attacks being repulsed. After dark he went out alone in front of his line, where he located a German post. Returning for a party, he led them forward and captured the post with three guns. This most gallant officer, after continuing to show the utmost zeal and courage, was killed some days later.

The Seventy-second Battalion, having become embroiled of necessity in the fight of the Thirty-eighth Battalion for the second objective, was delayed, and began its advance without the barrage, which, keeping up to its time-table, had marched on. This was a great disadvantage. The battalion was met with terrible direct fire from field guns and small arms. Nevertheless, covering their movements by rifle and Lewis gun fire, the men advanced with great courage and resolution. Shortly after 1 p.m. they attacked the resisting Germans, who were fighting from a group of gun-pits a few hundred yards beyond the second objective, and by a fine enveloping assault captured the position, taking eight field guns and one hundred and twenty prisoners out of the pits. A nest of German machine guns near

the third objective next resisted desperately. A fresh barrage was arranged for, and at 2.45 p.m., under cover of this barrage, the attack was resumed. At 5 p.m. the battalion held all its objectives.

In the meantime the First Canadian Division had long since secured the third objective on its front. The Fifteenth Battalion, Major Girvan, having disengaged itself from the fight for the second objective, in which it had rendered such sterling service, pushed on with much ardour, and at 2 p.m. held the third objective.

Posts were then placed upon the fourth objective by the battalion. This completed the work of the Third Brigade for the day.

The attack on the third objective in the centre of the First Canadian Division was carried out by the Second Brigade. To the Seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gilson, D.S.O., had been assigned the task of passing through the left of the First Brigade and taking the third objective. The battalion, becoming involved in the general mêlée, had to fight its way up to the second objective. The barrage by that time was far ahead. Notwithstanding, they pressed forward. Large numbers of the enemy were still resisting the Third Brigade, in Marquion, and others came forward to the Arras-Cambrai Road and placed themselves athwart the advance. These men opened a terrific fire on the Seventh, and several field guns and trench mortars joined in and fired on the battalion over open sights. The Canadians in return replied with every available rifle and Lewis gun, and an old-fashioned fight for superiority of fire developed. Then a local barrage was provided, the left was reinforced and the whole battalion swept forward. At 2 p.m., having overpowered the resistance of several isolated machine guns, the battalion was in full possession of the third objective. Posts were pushed out to the fourth objective, and a counter-attack which gained a footing in our line was speedily deprived of it.

On the right of the First Canadian Division the First Brigade launched the attack on the third objective. The Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. T. McLaughlin, D.S.O., advanced on the right, the Third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. J. B. Rogers, D.S.O., M.C., upon the left, the two battalions pushing through the First Battalion on the second objective. Soon after moving forward they were checked by heavy machine gun fire from the Railway, a short distance ahead. Steps were taken to bring artillery fire to bear, but at noon, before the artillery began its bombardment of the points of resistance, the battalions seized an opportunity of advancing, dashed forward, and with great gallantry cleared the Railway, carried the third objective and thrust out patrols to



the flanks, and posts to the fourth objective, while they proceeded to consolidate.

During the rest of the day the troops holding the third objective on the whole Corps front gradually succeeded in placing posts on the fourth objective, as the First Canadian Division had done.

It was during the fighting for the third objective that Lieut. George F. Kerr, M.C., M.M., of the Third Battalion, won the Victoria Cross. Lieut. Kerr was in command of the left support company of the battalion. He had already led his men with great skill and courage, outflanking a machine gun which was causing much trouble during the first stages of the operations. Later, when the advance was checked by a strong point near the Arras-Cambrai Road, Lieut. Kerr, far in advance, rushed the position alone and captured four machine guns and thirty-one prisoners.

The taking of the third objective, with the placing out of posts upon the fourth, brought the first phase of the operations to a close. The second phase—a fresh advance by the First, Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions and the Eleventh (Imperial) Division—was now before them. The Third Canadian Division was about to take over its battle-front from the Fourth Canadian Division, but it was not until next morning that the advance of the Canadian right actually began. The First Canadian Division, on the other hand, with the Eleventh (Imperial) Division, were ready to resume the battle at once.

To the First Canadian Division, represented by the Second Brigade, was allotted the task of capturing Haynecourt and continuing the advance in a generally eastern direction. The Eleventh (Imperial) Division was to attack on their left, with the object of capturing Aubencheul-au-Bac, Epinoy and Oisy-le-Verger. The Second Brigade assigned to the Fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. L. P. O. Tudor, the task of capturing Haynecourt and the high ground on which it stood, while the Tenth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. W. MacDonald, D.S.O., M.C., was to pass through the Fifth and carry on the advance.

The Eleventh (Imperial) Division was to attack at the same time on their left, passing through the Third Brigade, which then came into reserve. The First Brigade also came into reserve at the same time.

At 3.20 p.m. the Fifth Battalion and its Imperial comrades on the left advanced and made very rapid progress. Haynecourt was soon taken, and with it the high ground about it.

The Tenth Battalion now went on, through the Fifth Battalion. The men were under steady fire from the right. Machine guns and field guns east of Haynecourt also swept the advancing

waves, the latter firing over open sights. But the battalion sent out strong patrols, encircled these weapons, which were surrounded by webs of barbed wire, and one by one silenced them. Then they came upon dense entanglements along the western side of the Douai-Cambrai Road, and behind the entanglements were machine guns. Though lashed by tempests of bullets, the men calmly hacked their way through the wire and rushed these centres of resistance. Beyond the road were more belts of wire and more machine guns.

A halt was then made, as it was nearly dark, the right flank was entirely unprotected and the left had not gained touch with the Eleventh (Imperial) Division. The latter in the meantime had made equally gallant progress, covered by an enfilade barrage in the earlier stages, and had captured Sauchy-Cauchy, Sauchy-Lestrée, Oisy-le-Verger and Epinoy. This gave them entire domination over the Sensée. Their line having reached an excellent defensive position, they, too, halted, and the two divisions at dusk were in touch south-east of Epinoy.

At this time the enemy took advantage of the exposed right of the Tenth Battalion to push in a counter-attack round that flank on Haynecourt. The Fifth Battalion met the shock of the encounter and drove the Germans back south of the village. Arrangements were now made to safeguard the position. The Fifth Battalion got touch with the right of the Tenth Battalion on the Douai-Cambrai Road and established a line facing south-east, repulsing two more counter-attacks in the process. The Eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. L. Saunders, D.S.O., M.C., with two companies prolonged the line thence to the left of the Fourth Canadian Division. The Tenth Battalion held the Douai-Cambrai Road on a front of a mile as far as Epinoy. The brigade proceeded to dig in on these positions, to hold them for the night.

This ended a brilliant advance in open-warfare style. The Second Brigade, from the third objective, had penetrated five thousand yards into the enemy's country. The machine gunners and the artillery had backed up their attack excellently. The guns in some cases were over the Canal by 10.30 a.m. and engaging the enemy at point-blank range over open sights.

The Canadian Corps, with the Eleventh (Imperial) Division, that night held the outskirts of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, thence a line along the Railway and north to a point seven hundred yards east of La Maison Neuve. The line then ran north-east, around Haynecourt—five hundred yards south, and south-east of the village—and so to the Douai-Cambrai Road and Epinoy. From Epinoy it proceeded to Oisy-le-Verger and the Canal du Nord. The frontage under Canadian control, which at 5.20 a.m. had been two thousand yards, was now seventeen thousand. The

Canal du Nord, one of the strongest positions left to the enemy, had been crossed almost without loss. The machine guns still in position on the eastern bank, the Canal du Nord Line and the Marquion Line had been rolled up ; Bourlon Wood, with its wired trenches round it and its formidable hill, had been enveloped and taken. The left of the Third Army had been perfectly protected. As for results in prisoners and weapons of war, over four thousand prisoners, over one hundred guns, great numbers of machine guns and vast quantities of stores were in the hands of the Canadians.

This had been accomplished by the most complicated, and yet the most perfect, piece of combined action the Corps had ever performed.

The Imperial troops to the south had broken the portion of the Hindenburg Line on the front of the Third Army and brought the totals up to ten thousand prisoners and many guns. Altogether it was a great day for British arms.

In the dusk of the evening the Canadian guns finished getting into position to cover the captured line. At 9 p.m. the Eleventh Brigade made an effort to secure Fontaine-Notre-Dame, though this was not on their front, and to take the Marcoing Line, two thousand yards east of their positions, the first in order to relieve their flank, the second to bring up their front to conform with that of the First Canadian Division. The night was very dark and extremely heavy fire was encountered. It was not found possible to take these positions before it was necessary for the brigade to hand over its front to the Third Canadian Division for the operations of the following day.

During the night the latter division took over its battle-front on the right of the Corps line. Numerous local counter-attacks took place, but all were flung off, defeated. At dawn on September 28th all was ready for a fresh advance.

On September 28th the development of the second phase of the operations was continued. An attack was made by the four divisions working under the Canadian Corps with the object of forcing the Germans back to the Canal de l'Escaut on the whole front.

It was recognized that in view of the advanced position of the First Canadian Division their attack should be deferred until the troops on the flanks had come up. Whereas the Eleventh (Imperial) Division on the left and the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions on the right attacked at 6 a.m., the First Canadian Division did not launch its troops forward until two hours later.

The operations of September 28th, while successful and inflicting severe loss, were most desperately opposed by the Germans, who realized to the full the importance of the struggle. Never-

theless our battalions battered their way through this defence and gained a considerable amount of ground.

The attack of the Third Canadian Division on the right was made by the Ninth Brigade on the right and the Seventh Brigade upon the left. The attack of the Ninth Brigade was delivered by the Fifty-third Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. K. Chandler, D.S.O., on the right, and the Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Sutherland, on the left. The Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut.-Col. C. R. E. Willets, D.S.O., attacked on the Seventh Brigade front, closely supported by the Princess Patricia's, Lieut.-Col. C. J. Stewart, D.S.O.

The attack was pressed home under a barrage with fine determination, through very heavy fire. At 9 a.m. the Seventh Brigade had captured the front line of the Marcoing Line, a strong trench system running roughly north and south across the Canadian front from the Canal de l'Escaut on the south to Raillencourt, and so to Sancourt and beyond. The northernmost portion of the line between the Arras-Cambrai Road and the Bapaume-Cambrai Road, was taken by this brigade. On their right, the Fifty-second Battalion struggled against desperate resistance to a position in front of the Marcoing Line. South of the Bapaume-Cambrai Road, the Forty-third Battalion had cleared Fontaine-Notre-Dame and thrust its right forward to a point eight hundred yards south-east of the village, while its left was in the Marcoing Line beyond the Road.

The Ninth Brigade had for the time being reached the limit of its advance. The Seventh Brigade, emerging from the Marcoing Line to carry the attack beyond, was instantly met with terrific fire from the Support Line. They were checked. Lieut.-Col. Willets at this stage was wounded and Captain C. L. Woods took command. The Princess Patricia's, Lieut.-Col. C. J. T. Stewart, D.S.O., was thrust in to assist upon the left. Following this move, there ensued violent and bloody fighting. Lieut.-Col. Stewart was killed by shell fire and was succeeded by Captain G. W. Little. With Lieut.-Col. Stewart there passed a most gallant and able officer. Eventually the Seventh Brigade was unable to penetrate the Marcoing Support Line, and it was decided by the Third Canadian Division to launch a fresh attack later in the day.

The Fourth Canadian Division in the meantime had made excellent progress. The Tenth Brigade, having moved forward from west of Bourslon Wood, passed through the Twelfth Brigade, and with the Forty-seventh Battalion on the right and the Fiftieth Battalion on the left advanced at zero hour. The two battalions pushed on rapidly, and it was not until the outskirts of Raillencourt were reached that serious opposition was met



with. Then the Marcoing Line and the houses of the village suddenly blazed with machine gun fire. Through intense resistance, the battalions encircled the village and reached the wire fringing the Marcoing Line. Here it seemed as if the dreadful machine gun and rifle fire from the trench would annihilate the attack, but Lieut. H. A. Sharpe, of the Fiftieth Battalion, broke into the line with his Lewis guns and took the enemy in the trench in enfilade, slaughtering them in a tornado of well directed fire. Eighty dead were counted afterwards. The rest of the garrison fled, and the battalions pushed on, enveloped Saily, stamped out all remaining defiance in the two villages, and at 8.45 a.m. halted five hundred yards ahead, on their objectives.

The Forty-fourth Battalion on the right and the Fifty-sixth Battalion on the left then formed up east and north of Saily and carried on the advance. Large numbers of Germans were wiped out with the Lewis gun fire. When the battalions were about five hundred yards beyond the forming-up line they were checked by the intense fire which poured into them from every side. Later in the day the brigade renewed its attack and got to the Douai-Cambrai Road, with the object of securing a good jumping-off line for the morrow.

At 9 a.m. the First Canadian Division attacked again, and it was the Tenth Battalion of the Second Brigade which moved forward. The Fifth Battalion was held in readiness to push on later. The men advanced under cover of an artillery barrage.

As soon as they began to move, innumerable German machine guns broke into a tempest of fire. To the south and north, on high ground which had not yet been taken, there were other machine guns, and these joined in until the air cracked and screamed with the whimper of the bullets and a man could hardly hear an order for the din of the chorus that the rattling weapons sang. To make matters worse, field guns at close quarters began to hammer the battalion with shrapnel. But the men went on and got to the dense belts of wire facing them.

Time after time they broke into the wire and began to hack their way through, only to be struck down. The fire was too murderous. No one could get at the enemy's machine guns.

One instance of the nobility of these splendid men will serve to show the temper of the whole. Captain Jack Mitchell, M.C., rallied his men and led them on again and again. A machine gun bullet broke his hand, but after the wound was dressed he returned to the attack. Again he was wounded. This time it was the ligaments of his foot which were torn. He hobbled out and had it dressed. Then, fainting from fatigue and pain

but as indomitable as ever, he went back to his men. A third time he was wounded—this time fatally—but, until his senses reeled, he urged his men forward. They carried him out at last, dying in their arms.

Eventually, after over two hours of heroism, the attack was abandoned and the Eighth Battalion relieved the remnants of that glorious effort.

At 7 p.m. the new advance of the Third Canadian Division was launched, with the Douai—Cambrai Railway as final objective to the Seventh Brigade, while the Ninth Brigade carried their line through St. Olle. The Seventh Brigade attacked with the Princess Patricia's and the Forty-ninth, the latter on the right. The Ninth Brigade attacked with two companies of the Fifty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. A. MacFarlane, which were to attack the Marcoing Line in enfilade from the north, while the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion, Major D. Carmichael, D.S.O., M.C., passed through them and captured St. Olle.

The attack was made under cover of a very effective artillery barrage and succeeded in clearing the whole of the Marcoing Line as far south as the Bapaume—Cambrai Road. The One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion drove its line into the western outskirts. The Princess Patricia's, striking north-east, had then reached a position south of the Douai—Cambrai Road.

The attack, though darkness and the enemy had not permitted the full development of the plan, was very successful notwithstanding. A new advance of two thousand yards had been realized, and the divisions had everywhere thrown the Germans out of the Marcoing Line.

During the terrific struggle that waged all day for the possession of these trenches, an officer of the Royal Canadian Regiment, Lieut. Milton Fowler Gregg, M.C., won the Victoria Cross.

While the brigade was held up, violent fire sweeping every yard of their front, Lieut. Gregg crawled forward alone and examined the dense wire guarding the German trenches. He found a small gap, and through it forced his way into the trench with his men. The Germans promptly counter-attacked in great force. Bombs ran out and the situation became decidedly critical. Lieut. Gregg, who had now been wounded, went back through the annihilating fire, obtained a further supply and rejoined his men. They were now very much reduced in numbers, but Lieut. Gregg planned an attack and they went on and cleared a large portion of the trenches, inspired with the utmost determination by the gallantry of their commander.

Lieut. Gregg alone killed or wounded eleven Germans, and took twenty-five prisoners and a dozen machine guns, though wounded a second time. Afterwards, during the bitter fighting of the

days which followed, he continued to lead his men until incapacitated by severe wounds received on September 30th.

The whole of the Third Canadian Division took many prisoners and machine guns during the day.

On the left of the Corps front the Eleventh (Imperial) Division accomplished a substantial advance.

At midnight on September 28th the Canadian Corps line, from its right astride the Bapaume-Cambrai Road in the Marcoing Line, ran north-eastwards to St. Olle and thence north-east of Sailly to the positions held by the Tenth and Second Brigades along the Douai-Cambrai Road, two hundred yards west of the road, to a point about one mile north of Epinoy and so to the Bois du Quesnoy. In the area astride the Arras-Cambrai Road an advance of four thousand yards had been realized. The Marcoing Line from the Arras-Cambrai Road as far north as the Douai-Cambrai Road was in Canadian possession. Hundreds of prisoners and scores of machine guns had been taken and large numbers of the enemy had been killed. Far more important than any of these was the fact that the Germans, well aware of the jeopardy in which they stood, were hurling masses of men into the path of the Canadians and yet were powerless to check their advance.

Brigadier-General MacBrien, C.M.G., D.S.O., commanding the Twelfth Brigade, was wounded during the day, and was succeeded by Lieut.-Col. J. Kirkaldy, of the Seventy-eighth Battalion.

At 6 a.m. the first attack of September 29th was launched by the Thirty-second Brigade of the Eleventh (Imperial) Division with the object of capturing the high ground beyond the Douai-Cambrai Road east of Epinoy. The attack failed, owing to machine guns and barbed wire. At 8 a.m. the brigade again attacked, in conjunction with the Canadians, and again was unable to gain its objective. The Canadians were more successful.

The new advance was made with the object of driving the line forward to the Canal de l'Escaut and seizing the bridgeheads on the Canal. It was conducted by the First Division on the north with the Second Brigade, which employed the Eighth Battalion. On account of its advanced position the attack of this brigade was again timed to commence at a later hour than the movement on the flanks. The Eighth Battalion did not advance until 8.36 a.m. Southwards—i.e. on their right—the Twelfth Brigade of the Fourth Division carried on the attack, and, on their right, the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Brigades, from left to right as named.

The tasks assigned to these troops were severally as follows: On the right the Ninth Brigade was to complete the capture of the Marcoing Line from the Canal to the Bapaume-Cambrai

Road, capture Petit Fontaine and St. Olle, and clear the area between the Bapaume-Cambrai Road and the Arras-Cambrai Road, seizing the bridgehead into Cambrai east of the junction of these main highways. The Eighth Brigade was to clear the ground between the Arras-Cambrai Road and the Douai-Cambrai Road, forcing its way to the Canal. The Seventh Brigade was to capture Tilloy from the north and seize the crossings of the Canal at Ramillies and Pont d'Aire, while the Twelfth Brigade captured Sancourt and Blécourt. The Second Brigade was to keep pace with the Twelfth on its right. The operation was in the nature of a turning movement, pivoting on the right.

At 8 a.m., under cover of an intense barrage, the line advanced.

On the right, among the intricate streets west of Cambrai, severe fighting developed at once, resembling the bloody struggles around Lens a year before. Nevertheless, the troops made good progress.

The Fifty-eighth Battalion continued its strenuous labours of the previous day in the Marcoing Line. One company, crossing the Fontaine-Cambrai Railway and the main road to the south, swept by murderous fire from the trenches and from houses some distance to the east upon the road, fought down into the Marcoing Line beyond, and at 1 p.m. were in possession of their objective. The fighting experienced by the battalion was of the grim, foot-by-foot variety of old trench-warfare.

The One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion meanwhile had been desperately engaged at St. Olle. On their advancing, a small trench in front of the village, and the houses of the village and of Petit Fontaine beyond, broke into a storm of machine gun fire. The leading companies were hard hit, but the battalion never faltered. A Canadian field battery at this stage began to drop its shells with deadly accuracy—it had direct observation on the target—into the trench and played havoc with the Germans there. Under cover of this, six platoons, admirably led by Lieut. Bonner, outflanked the position. "D" Company of the battalion then went on, cleared the whole of the Arras-Cambrai Road, got its posts on to the junction of the road with the Bapaume-Cambrai Road, and exterminated the holders of Petit Fontaine. At 3 p.m. the whole of the positions held by the Ninth Brigade were indisputably theirs.

The Eighth Brigade were then close-locked with the enemy. At 8 a.m. they had attacked, the First C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. Laws, D.S.O., on the right and the Second C.M.R. Battalion upon the left. At noon, after the First C.M.R.'s had been checked for some time by the fire from St. Olle, the successful attack of the One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalion on the village enabled the advance of the battalion to proceed, and it swept on, clear-



ing the buildings along the north side of the Arras-Cambrai Road and capturing many prisoners. In the meantime the Second C.M.R.'s had fought forward doggedly. When darkness fell the brigade was less than a mile from the Canal de l'Escaut on its whole front.

The advance of the brigade was greatly facilitated by the daring and self-sacrifice of Captain John MacGregor, M.C., D.C.M., of the Second C.M.R. Battalion. The forward movement being checked in the course of the day by the annihilating fire of the enemy's machine guns, Captain MacGregor, who had already showed the greatest gallantry in leading his men through this opposition, located a nest and ran forward, alone and wounded, to destroy it. Making his way through the fire, he got to the guns and, single-handed, killed four of the enemy with rifle and bayonet and captured eight prisoners. Then he reorganized his command, resumed the advance, rendered valuable support to the units on the flanks, and through the fiercest phases of the attack moved up and down his front, encouraging his men and carrying them with him.

On the left of the C.M.R.'s the Forty-ninth Battalion and the Forty-second Battalion, the latter on the left, pushed forward the line of the Seventh Brigade. At 8 a.m., covered by a barrage, they advanced from a line north of St. Olle in the general direction of Tilloy, the Eighth Brigade moving into position on their right as they did so.

After overpowering a nest of machine guns the Forty-ninth Battalion pressed on. About five hundred yards from the Douai-Cambrai Road the German machine guns once more proved troublesome. Captain B. H. Tayler, superintending the attack, ordered the right company to outflank the guns, which they did, executing a neat turning movement which resulted in the taking of one hundred and fifty prisoners and three machine guns.

Meanwhile the Forty-second Battalion on the left had come upon wide, low belts of wire a short distance from the Arras-Cambrai Road. This caused some delay, as the men had to work through the wire and were fired on briskly. On emerging from the wire they were swept by sudden bursts of murderous machine gun fire from every side. In spite of this they struggled on across the Douai-Cambrai Road. A party led by Captain H. B. Trout managed to cross the Douai-Cambrai Railway, where it held on until dusk, though Captain Trout was severely wounded and the post was practically exterminated.

The Forty-ninth Battalion had now reached the Douai-Cambrai Road also. Eventually the Seventh Brigade established itself along the general line of the road.

Further to the north the Twelfth Brigade had made a most

dashing and successful advance. They attacked on a front of two thousand four hundred yards, the Thirty-eighth Battalion on the right and the Seventy-second Battalion on the left. They were covered by an intense and effective barrage, which rested for twenty minutes on a line along the Douai-Cambrai Road to enable the battalions to deploy and then went forward, followed by the infantry.

The Seventy-second Battalion started its advance about fifteen hundred yards west of the Douai-Cambrai Road. Under very heavy machine gun fire and violent shelling, the battalion stormed Sancourt and, hurling themselves into the enemy, took two hundred and fifty prisoners and drove the Germans out in disorder. The whole battalion then surged over the Douai-Cambrai Railway. Here the right company was checked. The left company, however, pushed on and seized the high ground astride the Sancourt-Abancourt Road, north-west of Blécourt, with another group of prisoners—one hundred and twenty of them—and a score of machine guns. The centre company, after crossing the Railway, encountered terrific fire. In this fire Lieut. J. Knight and an indomitable handful of five men pressed into Blécourt and captured the western portion, over eighty Germans surrendering themselves to him. As soon as the enemy realized that no serious force was in possession, they attacked, while many other Germans in the village joined in. When four of his men were wounded—not before—Lieut. Knight fell back to the Railway.

At noon large numbers of the enemy, under cover of very intense machine gun fire, began to advance down the valley towards Sancourt, rendering the position of the Seventy-second's company north-west of Blécourt untenable. The battalion therefore assumed the line of the Railway on its whole front. The Eighty-fifth Battalion, moving up to attack Blécourt again at 3 p.m., was diverted to a position south of Sancourt, where it formed a defensive flank. The village was under heavy artillery fire as the Eighty-fifth Battalion came up, and they suffered severely.

The Thirty-eighth Battalion was checked in its advance by terrific fire between the Douai-Cambrai Road and the Railway just beyond. At 1.30 p.m. a new barrage was provided, and the Seventy-eighth Battalion passed through to carry on the attack. Such violent opposition was met with that the battalion was unable to progress more than a few yards beyond the positions of the Thirty-eighth Battalion.

It is now necessary to go back to 8.36 a.m., when the Eighth Battalion moved forward to the attack. Their story is soon told, for it is a repetition of that which had befallen the Tenth Battalion the day before.

At 8.36 a.m., as already narrated, the troops on the right were not yet in line and the troops on the left were repulsed. The Eighth Battalion advanced, and the machine guns on their exposed flanks and in front concentrated a murderous storm of fire upon the men. On the left they were once more held up by the wire. On the right they got through the entanglements—two belts of formidable wire many yards deep—and pushed on into the weltering fire, Lieut. T. E. Millar, M.M., leading them, as he was the only officer left. They penetrated almost to the Railway, over two thousand yards beyond their starting-point. There they dug in. During the morning, as the troops on the right, near Blécourt, were forced to fall back, their flanks became exposed and shell and machine gun fire rained into them from all sides. Nevertheless, they hung on with grim courage, and the Germans came out of the valley to the right and delivered three fierce counter-attacks against them. But Lieut. Millar and his men repulsed them all. The battalion finally assumed a line along the Sancourt-Epinoy Road after as glorious an effort as any in their history.

Darkness came at last upon those dreadful ridges, and the Canadian Corps settled down into its positions for the night and prepared to resume the fight on the morrow. The enemy's resistance was still stiffening, as he strove to obtain equilibrium. But in spite of all his efforts the line was creeping nearer and nearer to the Canal de l'Escaut and that open country beyond, which, once gained, meant victory for Allied arms.

At dawn on September 30th the Canadian Corps resumed the desperate struggle. The attack was made at 6 a.m. in two phases. The first phase was to carry on the effort to capture the bridges on the Canal de l'Escaut, and was to be conducted by the Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions. The second phase, to be carried out by the First Canadian and Eleventh (Imperial) Divisions, was to consist of an attack with the object of securing the high ground overlooking the Sensée still in German hands. The Eighth Brigade was to conform to the Seventh Brigade, which continued its attack with the objectives allotted to it on the previous day. On the left of the Seventh Brigade the Fourth Division was to push the whole line up to the Railway and to Blécourt and beyond. As events transpired, the First Brigade of the First Division, which had relieved the Second Brigade during the night, was not called upon to attack, nor was the Eleventh (Imperial) Division.

The events of this day can be described in comparatively brief terms.

The Seventh Brigade, with the Princess Patricia's on the right and the Royal Canadian Regiment on the left, advanced

with great dash. The Princess Patricia's, with orders to seize Tilloy and push on to the high ground a thousand yards north-east of the village, and subsequently to seize the bridge at Pont d'Aire, made rapid progress and had soon reached the north-western outskirts of Tilloy. One company then pushed forward to the south-eastern end of the village, while the rest of the battalion moved on towards the high ground. Machine guns in Tilloy and on the high ground now concentrated terrific fire upon the companies on the left. With nearly all officers and N.C.O.'s casualties, they were forced to withdraw to the Railway west of the village. But there was not a man among them who would admit failure. Captain J. N. Edgar and Lieut. A. J. Kelly reorganized them, and they advanced again, with indomitable determination, to attack the village. All but the northernmost portion was taken after desperate fighting, and attempts were made to push on to the high ground, but, though a company of the Forty-ninth Battalion reinforced, it was impossible to do so.

The Royal Canadian Regiment meanwhile had battered its way through annihilating fire as far forward as the Tilloy-Blécourt Road. In the subsequent hours the fire from all sides became so intense that the remnants of the battalion were forced to evacuate their position. They fell back to north-west of Tilloy in the vicinity of the Tilloy-Sancourt Road. In the evening the Seventh Brigade held nearly all Tilloy, and on the left was well in advance of the Tilloy-Sancourt Road, facing south-east.

The Eighth Brigade, during the day, still employing the First and Second C.M.R. Battalions, conformed its line to that upon the left. By means of strong patrols, which ousted the enemy step by step from the outskirts of Neuville St. Remy and Faubourg Cantimpré, south of Neuville, the brigade won to a position a stone's-throw from the Canal de l'Escaut. On the left, by their progress, the Second C.M.R.'s rendered great assistance to their comrades fighting in Tilloy. It was here that Captain John MacGregor completed the splendid work he had done the day before and performed the feats that made his Victoria Cross assured.

The Eleventh Brigade, somewhat refreshed by a short rest, came forward early in the morning and, attacking at 6 a.m., went into battle on the left of the Third Division. The brigade employed the Seventy-fifth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. C. C. Harbottle, D.S.O., for the first stage of its attack.

The battalion advanced from a position along the Douai-Cambrai Road under the intense barrage. As they came up to the portion of the Douai-Cambrai Railway which the Twelfth Brigade had been unable to secure on the previous day, terrific machine gun fire enveloped them from the Railway and the



flanks. But they struggled on and cleared the Railway of the machine guns and got to their objective, slightly beyond. Here the Fifty-fourth Battalion, which was following hard on their heels, was to pass through and continue the advance. At this stage, however, the flanks being entirely exposed—keeping touch in these more open operations was a most difficult task—and great numbers of the enemy gathering to counter-attack, the Seventy-fifth were ordered to fall back to the Railway, which was a better position.

And not a moment too soon. The Germans followed their withdrawal in a most threatening manner and immediately launched a counter-attack in great force. The Fifty-fourth and the Seventy-fifth answered the oncoming masses with tremendous bursts of rifle and Lewis gun fire. The enemy persisted desperately, but that deadly fire held them off like an iron hand. At length they drew off, leaving many dead on the ground. The Seventy-fifth Battalion were then withdrawn, leaving the Fifty-fourth Battalion to hold the Railway.

The front of the Canadian Corps quietened in the afternoon. The line at dusk ran through the Faubourg Cantimpré and Neuville St. Remy, along the eastern edge of Tilloy, thence in front of the Railway as far as the Eleventh Brigade front, and thence along the Railway to the positions formerly held at Sancourt and beyond.

The gain of ground on the fighting portion of the front amounted to an average depth of over a thousand yards. When one considers that this was accomplished by a force depleted by casualties, and made up of men who had been fighting for over three days at least, against a most dreadful resistance, the advance was a very fine one.

As a proof of the resistance offered, it should be mentioned that prisoners were secured during the day from three new German divisions, a fresh regiment (equivalent to a British brigade) and many companies of marksmen, none of which had been hitherto engaged.

At midnight the captures of the Canadian Corps since September 27th had risen to a total of two hundred officers and five thousand five hundred men and two hundred guns. Since those bloody struggles in front of the Drocourt-Quéant Line on September 1st, twelve thousand seven hundred and fifty prisoners, two hundred and eighty-two guns and fourteen hundred and fifty-four machine guns had been taken by the Canadian Corps. Already they were in the outskirts of Cambrai. And the end was near—nearer than they dreamed. This had been achieved at a total cost in September of sixteen thousand seven hundred casualties,

But October 1st saw the most appalling of all those battles between the two Canals. On that day the indefatigable divisions resumed the attack. The general plan was to complete the operations begun the day before. The Ninth Brigade, which relieved the Seventh Brigade before the advance began, was to capture the high ground north-east of Tilloy and then continue its thrust down to the Canal de l'Escaut, establishing itself in Pont d'Aire and Ramillies and seizing the bridgeheads at these places. The Eighth Brigade to the south was to conform to this line, pushing posts to the Canal. North of the Third Division the Eleventh Brigade was to resume its attack and carry the line to the Ramillies-Cuvillers Road. On their left the First Division was to attack, the Third Brigade on the right to capture Blécourt, Cuvillers and Bantigny, while the First Brigade was to capture Abancourt and the high ground to the east. Finally, the Eleventh (Imperial) Division was to secure possession of the ridges between the Douai-Cambrai Road and the Douai-Cambrai Railway to the north of the First Division.

At 5 a.m. this fresh advance began.

On the Ninth Brigade front the Forty-third Battalion attacked on the right, with the Fifty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Sutherland, on the left. They were followed by the Fifty-eighth and One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalions, the former leading. The duty of these battalions was to support the leading units if required and to ensure the capture of the bridgeheads.

In spite of severe opposition, the high ground north-east of Tilloy was taken, with over three hundred and fifty prisoners and hosts of machine guns. After a halt of fifteen minutes the barrage moved on and the battalions went down the slopes towards the Canal. As they marched down the open ground, innumerable machine guns concealed in the low levels in front, and in the woods and on the canal bank to the right, assisted by the furious fire of German artillery situated on the spur north of Ramillies, resisted them desperately. The leading battalions kept on, and the Fifty-eighth and One Hundred and Sixteenth Battalions, observing the difficulty, pressed forward gallantly and, passing through, carried on the advance. At 9 a.m. the men had reached a line running roughly north-east and south-west from a point in a small wood a mile west of Ramillies to the southern outskirts of Tilloy. Even then the left had advanced over two thousand yards.

While this was going on, the Eighth Brigade had pushed its line down to the Canal on the right, the First and Second C.M.R. Battalions doing the fighting.

The One Hundred and Second Battalion of the Eleventh Brigade launched the attack on that front. They were followed

by the Eighty-seventh Battalion, which was to pass through them on the objective being gained, to exploit success beyond.

The battalion was also covered by a barrage. They began their advance at 5 a.m. from the Railway south of Sancourt, and four hours later, after severe fighting, had crossed the Ramillies-Cuvillers Road south of the latter village, and were on their final objective with an advanced line five hundred yards beyond the Road. The Eighty-seventh Battalion had fought its way forward to a position on their right, but was unable to penetrate beyond.

It is now necessary to describe the operations of the First Brigade on the left portion of the First Canadian Division front, together with those of the Eleventh (Imperial) Division to the left, on which they hinged. The Thirty-second Brigade of the latter division carried out its attack on the high ground which was the division's objective, but owing to terrific machine gun fire was unable to secure it. As the high ground commanded the front of the First Brigade, this affected the Canadian battalions greatly. The First Battalion advanced on the right, with the Fourth Battalion on the left. The rôle of the former was to take the Abancourt Spur, passing through the southern portion of the village to do so, while the latter, on a wider front, took the remainder of the place. A line was to be established five hundred yards beyond.

At 5 a.m., playing its part in the general advance, the brigade advanced under the barrage from the line which it had taken over on September 29th. On the left all went well until the advance was within two hundred yards of the Douai-Cambrai Railway. Then fearful machine gun fire from the front and left began to harry the Fourth Battalion. This checked the attack, for no man could expose himself and live. The tempest was so intense that even an exposed limb was hit. The Germans playfully fired on the wounded. One man was hit six times. The leg of another was practically shot off.

The First Battalion covered eight hundred yards without serious difficulty. Then they too came under very heavy fire from in front. But they pushed on, and enemies lurking in the sunken roads west of the Railway they disposed of with the bayonet. On reaching the Railway they were checked, and all the dash and bravery of the men could not carry the line beyond.

A Victoria Cross was won by Sergeant William Merrifield, of the Fourth Battalion, in this fighting. Sergeant Merrifield, his men being held up by fire from two machine gun emplacements, rushed forward alone and overpowered them both. The first he silenced by killing the occupants, and, though wounded, he

also killed those in the second by bombing. He would not leave his men until once more severely wounded.

Sergeant Merrifield's splendid bravery was but typical of his brigade as a whole.

The Third Brigade all this time had been engaged in one of the most sanguinary struggles of its history.

To the Thirteenth Battalion was allotted the task of capturing Blécourt. The Fourteenth Battalion was to take Bantigny by a turning movement from the south and send out patrols beyond. The Sixteenth Battalion at the same time was to take Cuvillers and seize the high ground to the east. The operation was extremely complicated, but it was carried out as successfully as if a peace-time manœuvre.

The whole brigade advanced, in conjunction with the rest of the Corps, beneath its barrage, the Thirteenth Battalion leading off for Blécourt.

The leading company cleared the ground up to the Douai-Cambrai Railway. Then two companies pushed on, enveloped the village, and secured all their objectives. Most obstinate resistance was encountered, though large numbers of Germans surrendered.

The Fourteenth Battalion meanwhile had passed on, seized Bantigny after heavy fighting, and captured a hundred prisoners. Two batteries of twelve guns about a thousand yards north of the village were abandoned by their crews.

The Sixteenth Battalion was by this time in possession of Cuvillers. Having overpowered a number of hostile posts on their front, and under the direct fire of fifteen guns a short distance east of Cuvillers, as well as the fire of other guns and great numbers of machine guns on the left, the battalion fought forward, captured Cuvillers—the village itself was not strongly held—seized the guns to the east and finally halted triumphantly on its last objective, two thousand yards north-east of Cuvillers.

Thus far the entire operation had been brilliantly successful.

It was now about 10 a.m. The Fourteenth Battalion, in position north of Bantigny, suddenly observed a large German aeroplane flying very low a short distance ahead. The plane dropped a coloured light. Immediately the gunners ran back to their abandoned guns, large numbers of Germans began to move forward to reinforce the troops holding Abancourt and the ground between that village and Bantigny, while the machine gun fire from all sides increased to an extreme violence. The guns commenced shelling our men at point-blank range with deadly effect, and many hostile machine gunners whom it had not yet been possible to mop up took this as a signal and joined in the firing.



At the same time a last counter-attack developed from the direction of Paillencourt.

It was quite obvious that the position was rapidly becoming untenable. The left of the brigade was completely "in the air," with the enemy pressing forward in great numbers round that flank. Hundreds of German machine gunners were among those advancing troops, all firing continuously. The counter-attack from Paillencourt gradually forced a wedge between the Sixteenth and Fourteenth Battalions. The Germans in the villages and behind the Canadians had now awakened to feverish activity, so that the battalions had immensely superior forces all around them and even among them.

The fight that developed was one of the most homeric the brigade had ever known. The Fourteenth Battalion swept the guns with intense fire. All around the guns were disabled men and horses, but the gunners stuck there gallantly and went on shelling our men with the utmost fury. Meanwhile the infantry attacks and the machine gun fire continued to develop. Our artillery wrought great havoc, but the Germans still advanced.

The positions became hopeless, and the battalions, greatly reduced in numbers and with nearly all their officers casualties, were faced with the alternative of cutting their way out or being overwhelmed. They fell back slowly, disposing of the enemy behind them as they went and covering their retreat by mutual supporting fire. So desperate was the fighting that the Fourteenth Battalion ran out of ammunition, and the men held off the onrush by using German rifles, machine guns and ammunition. It was not until the Third Brigade reached Blécourt that the hostile advance was definitely arrested. All the enemy's efforts could not dislodge the brigade from their positions in the village.

The One Hundred and Second Battalion, though the enemy's advance on the left exposed their flank, hung on with grim determination to their ground, formed a defensive flank facing north from Cuvillers to Blécourt, and could not be moved. The Seventy-fifth Battalion was then marched up to close a gap on their right, which was duly accomplished, touch being gained with the Seventh Brigade.

At 3.30 p.m. the Eleventh (Imperial) Division renewed its attack on the high ground between the Douai-Cambrai Road and the Douai-Cambrai Railway, pressing its assault with great gallantry and securing all its objectives. This improved the situation on the left immensely.

The enemy, having kept the front under terrific fire all afternoon, at 6 p.m. delivered a strong counter-attack from Pont d'Aire against the Seventh Brigade. After desperate efforts

he succeeded in pushing back our outposts two or three hundred yards.

When night came down the Germans had exhausted themselves. At an immense cost they had recovered about two thousand yards of ground on the front of the Third Brigade and an insignificant slice on the front of the Third Canadian Division. Even then they had recovered less than one quarter of the territory they had lost during the day, so that the balance was still nicely on the Canadian side.

That night the Corps line ran from the Canal west of Cambrai through the eastern edge of Neuville St. Remy, thence straight to a point immediately south-east of Cuvillers and west to Blécourt, through the western outskirts of the village to the Railway and along the Railway to the Sensée.

It was on that line that the majority of the troops were relieved that night. For the present the operations were over. The High Command had decided to launch a new "set-piece" attack, which would carry the whole line down to and over the Canal de l'Escaut, in a few days' time. During the night the Second Canadian Division relieved all the troops between the Arras-Cambrai Railway and the northern outskirts of Blécourt. The Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division took over the northern portion of the front held by the Eleventh (Imperial) Division, and the First Canadian Infantry Brigade was relieved by the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade.

The great series of actions beyond the Canal du Nord had now come to a close. It is well to consider what had been accomplished. The line had been advanced a distance of over fifteen thousand yards—nearly eight miles—in a little over four days' time. The Canal du Nord had been crossed. The last German trench system worthy of the name had been overcome. Positions of great natural strength had been taken and our outposts, though not everywhere on the Canal de l'Escaut, nevertheless held all the high ground worth having just west of it, commanded the Canal completely and were within easy distance of the bridgeheads. The rôle of protecting the flank of the Third Army had been completely fulfilled. Thus protected, the British troops to the south had battled their way through the Hindenburg Line and stood in open country beyond on October 5th, having taken over thirty thousand prisoners and great numbers of guns.

The Corps helped to swell the total. Since September 27th seven thousand one hundred and seventy-four prisoners, two hundred and five guns, twenty trench mortars and nine hundred and fifty machine guns had been taken. Thirteen German divisions, excluding special machine gun detachments, had been

torn to shreds by one Imperial and three Canadian divisions. On October 1st ten divisions had opposed these weary but unconquerable troops.

The terrific fighting towards Cambrai was now over. Cambrai was not yet taken, but its capture was not the culmination of the autumn battles. It was the beginning of a new phase—the aftermath. When Cambrai fell, it was to let the Canadians into open country. They did not know it then—but on October 1st they fought their last pitched battle. They had achieved something far greater than the capture of a city. They had broken the German Army, utterly and beyond repair.

A few words will suffice to tell of the capture of Cambrai. After an unsuccessful attack by the Germans on October 2nd, in which the Second Canadian Division threw off two hundred and fifty hostile infantry, a quietness fell on the Corps front.

Meanwhile the Germans were burning and plundering Cambrai, prior to the evacuation which they knew must come. And still the troops waited.

On October 8th the Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps on the Canadian right delivered a general attack in conjunction with others to the south. It was a great success, and the Sixty-third (Royal Naval) Division took Niergnies, south-east of the city. This was the signal to the Canadian Corps.

At 1.30 a.m. on October 9th the silence of the night following the battle was broken by the drum-roll of the Canadian guns. At the same time the infantry moved forward.

In spite of darkness, the assembly of the attacking battalions had been carried out perfectly. The Fifth C.M.R. Battalion, Lieut.-Col. W. Rhoades, D.S.O., M.C., attacked from in front of Neuville St. Remy with the object of seizing bridgeheads on the Canal there. On their left the Twenty-sixth Battalion, Lieut. Col. W. R. Brown, D.S.O., and the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Major C. J. Mersereau—the latter on the left of the Twenty-sixth—were first to seize the bridgeheads over the Canal as far as Ramillies and then to advance and capture Escaudœuvres, establishing themselves on the Cambrai-Valenciennes Railway with the flanks bent back to the Canal and the right looking into Cambrai. On their left the Twenty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Riley, D.S.O., was to take Ramillies and the bridgehead there and form a defensive flank facing north, which the Thirty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. S. Doughty, D.S.O., was to prolong another two thousand yards to the jumping-off line. Circumstances being favourable, the whole Corps would then be passed over the Canal.

The seizing of the bridgehead and the forming of the defensive flank were to be carried out under an intense barrage, while

the advance beyond to Escaudœuvres would be covered by a smoke screen and a special barrage. Great precautions for secrecy were taken. But the Germans as a whole had gone.

By 2.30 a.m. all the bridgeheads were secured and Ramillies was in our hands. The Fifth Brigade crossed the Canal a short time later. At 6 a.m. the Sixth Brigade had passed patrols through Blécourt, Bantigny and Cuvillers. At 8 a.m. the whole of the Eighth Brigade had gone through Cambrai, meeting patrols of the Twenty-fourth (Imperial) Division in the city. Fierce fires were burning there, and parties set to work to quench them.

At 8.20 a.m. the Eleventh (Imperial) Division was on the move, and the Twenty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. S. Tobin, with the Thirty-first Battalion, captured Esuars, in conjunction with the Imperials, three hours later. The Canadian Light Horse, Lieut.-Col. I. Leonard, D.S.O., moved forward over the intact bridges and galloped hot-foot after the enemy.

In the meantime the Engineers had been working furiously to throw more bridges over the Canal. It was entirely due to the very smart and gallant work of an officer of the Canadian Engineers that one of the most important bridges was saved from destruction by the German rearguards.

Captain Coulson Norman Mitchell, M.C., Fourth Battalion Canadian Engineers, with a small party of his men, advanced in front of the infantry in the attack on the bridges, intending to prevent their demolition. At this point the Germans were sweeping the banks with intense fire, in order to hold the Canadians off until they could complete the work of blowing up the crossings. Through this fire Captain Mitchell went. The first bridge he examined had been destroyed. At the second he cut a number of wires connecting the charges with the firing party. Then, in complete darkness and ignorant of the strength or position of the enemy guarding it, he dashed over a third bridge, posted a sentry, and with an N.C.O. proceeded to cut the wires under the bridge, which he found heavily charged for demolition. At this stage a large party of Germans attempted to rush the bridge. Captain Mitchell at once dashed to the assistance of his sentry, who had been wounded, killed three Germans single-handed, took twelve prisoners, and continued to hold on until the infantry arrived. Then he went on calmly removing charges which might blow him sky-high at any moment and finally cleared the bridge.

For this act of gallantry Captain Mitchell received the Victoria Cross.

At dusk the Canadian line lay a thousand yards west of Cagnocles on the right, thence ran north to the Cambrai-Valen-



ciennes Railway, north-east along the Railway, and so through the eastern outskirts of Thun St. Martin and Thun-Lévêque. The Eleventh (Imperial) Division were established in the last-named village, in Paillencourt and in the southern outskirts of Hem-Longlet and Fressies. Patrols of cavalry and motor machine guns were out beyond these positions.

Cambrai was indisputably ours.

## CHAPTER XV

### MONS—AND VICTORY!

OCTOBER—NOVEMBER 1918

ON October 10th the advance of the Canadians beyond Cambrai was resumed.

The Independent Force, leading the advance on the extreme right along the Cambrai—Bavai Road, on October 10th reached the Erelin River, a very small stream crossing the road north-west of Rieux. Here the Germans had blown up the bridge, rendering it impossible for the armoured cars to get over. Notwithstanding, portions of the Force on foot went on another thousand yards up the road and remained there.

This was the deepest penetration realized during the day—the enemy further south were scurrying back to Le Cateau. Behind the Independent Force the Fourth Brigade secured Naves and the Sixth Brigade manœuvred into a position a thousand yards west and south of the large village of Iwuy prior to attacking it on the following day. The Eleventh (Imperial) Division, further north, completed the establishing of its posts everywhere along the Canal de l'Escaut and also pushed others into Hem-Longlet, south of the Sensée.

During the day the Third Canadian Division was withdrawn to a rearward area about the Canal du Nord, having been "squeezed out" by the converging attack of the Second Canadian Division and the Seventeenth (Imperial) Corps on the previous day. The Forty-ninth (Imperial) Division shortened the Canadian front by relieving the right section of the Second Canadian Division.

At 9 a.m. on October 11th the latter division attacked Iwuy under an intense barrage.

The attack was carried out by the Twenty-eighth Battalion, Major G. F. D. Bond, M.C., while the Fourth Brigade, represented by the Twenty-first Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. E. Pense, M.C., on the right and the Twentieth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. B. O. Hooper, M.C., on the left, moved forward on the south.

A fierce defence was met with, the enemy fighting hard with machine guns. But at 11 a.m. the village was in our hands, except for one or two points where groups of exceptionally courageous Germans continued to hold out. These were dealt with methodically, and soon the entire village was clear.

The Fourth Brigade meanwhile made steady progress through severe artillery and machine gun fire. The Twentieth Battalion co-operated nobly in the attack on Iwuy, Lieut. Wallace Lloyd Algie, of that unit, greatly distinguishing himself and displaying such bravery and self-sacrifice that he was later awarded the Victoria Cross.

The hostile posts in Iwuy gave the battalion much trouble and began to sweep the advancing waves with murderous enfilade machine gun fire. Lieut. Algie immediately called for volunteers to attack the nearest machine gun. Nine being forthcoming, he led them forward, rushed the gun, disposed of the crew and turned the weapon on the enemy. This done, he went on with his men into the village. Here they encountered another machine gun. Lieut. Algie at once dashed at this gun, killed all the crew, took prisoner an officer and ten men, and so cleared the end of the village.

He then went back for reinforcements, having done much to clear the place of the resistance still remaining. While leading them forward he was killed.

The brigade, continuing its advance, finally reached the high ground about two thousand yards north-east of Rieux. At this point the Germans were extremely strongly placed, with well arranged posts covering the whole line of the Canadian advance. Seven hostile tanks emerged from Avesnes-le-Sec as the attackers approached the positions held by the Germans, and proceeded to patrol up and down, as if to hearten their infantry and warn our own men off. It was not possible for further progress to be made against the tanks. The troops consolidated the line they held. As the presence of the tanks constituted a menace to our safety, field guns were sent forward to deal with them. One by one the tanks were destroyed by direct fire.

During the evening an adjustment of front and of command was made between the Twenty-second (Imperial) and the Canadian Corps. When this had been completed the Canadian Corps became responsible for the line astride the Sensée. This was held by the Second Canadian Division, from east of Iwuy to the Canal de l'Escaut; by the Eleventh (Imperial) Division thence along the southern bank of the Sensée to the Canal du Nord. North of the river the Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division held the front facing Arleux, and on their left the First Canadian Division

was established on a line west of Estrées, Gouy-sous-Bellonne and Corbehem. The First Canadian Division had just taken over the line after a period of rest. The Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division was transferred to the Corps as it stood on the adjustment with the Twenty-second Corps.

It will be observed that on practically the whole of this twenty-mile front the Canadians were faced by water, the enemy, with some cleverness, having taken advantage of the admirable positions of defence offered by the rivers and canals. The Canadian left, fronting the Canal de La Sensée, was far in rear of the general alignment of the right, for the Germans still clung to Douai. The centre, on the southern bank of the Sensée River, could not easily cross the marshes. It was therefore necessary to advance the left in order to straighten the line. Fortunately, the Germans retired and thereby enabled the left to advance without a serious attack.

Continually probing the front with patrols, the divisions north of the Sensée River on October 12th caught the enemy in the act of withdrawing in an easterly direction. By the end of the day they held Estrées, Gouy-sous-Bellonne and Corbehem, and their patrols had reached the Canal de La Sensée on the whole front.

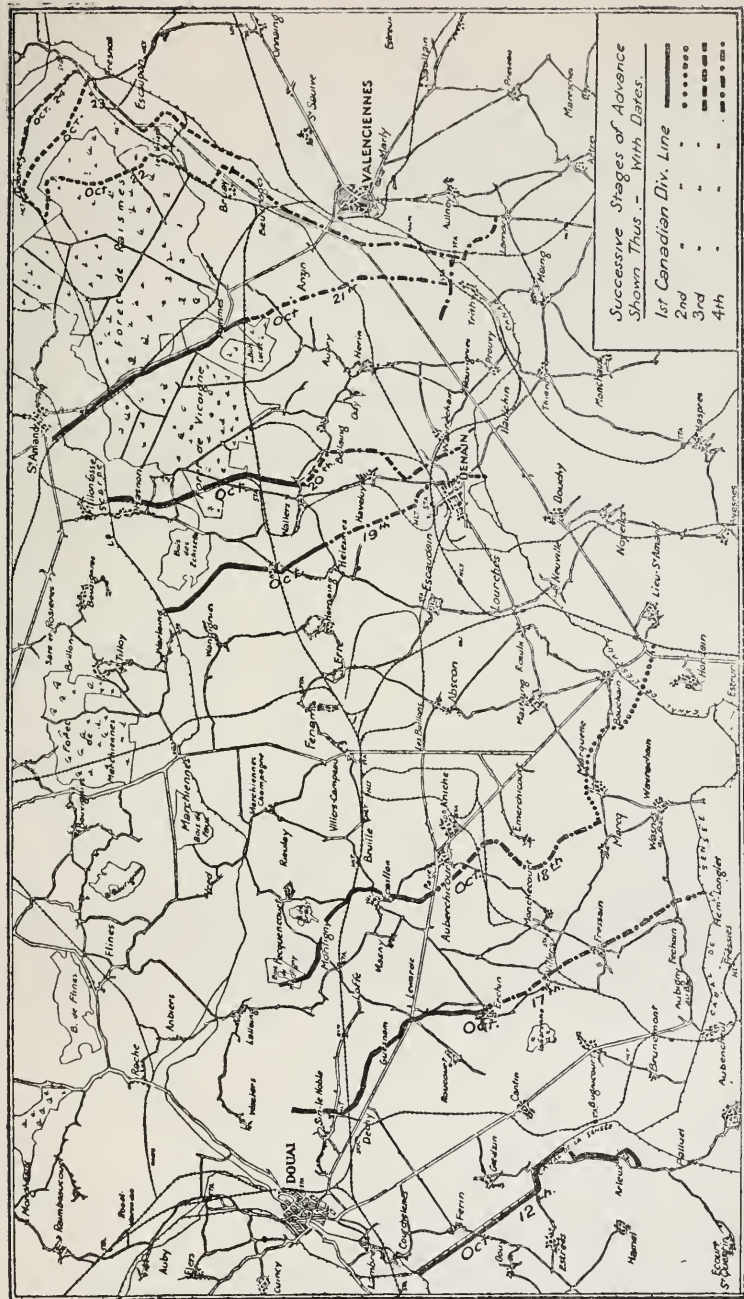
With the object of ascertaining the enemy's intentions and, if possible, anticipating them, the Fifth Brigade attacked Hordain, on the south bank of the Sensée, ten miles east of the front held by the First Canadian Division. The attack was a complete success, and by 1.30 p.m., an hour and a half after the commencement of the operations, the whole place was held and the line had been advanced to a point west of Lieu-St. Amand.

There was now a slight pause in the forward movement of the Canadians, and it was not until October 17th that any advances of importance occurred.

On October 15th the Fourth Canadian Division relieved the Fifty-sixth (Imperial) Division, arriving just in time to take part in pursuing the enemy to Valenciennes. The First and Second Brigades of the First Canadian Division crossed the Canal de La Sensée on October 17th, and the Tenth and Eleventh Brigades of the Fourth Canadian Division joining in the advance, the whole line north of the Sensée River began to move. The Germans, under the unrelenting pressure of the Army, once more took refuge in flight.

During the next ten days, with practically no check, the Canadian infantry, following a light screen of cavalry and motor machine gunners, pressed on rapidly after the broken rearguards of the enemy. On October 19th the Second Division was withdrawn and the First and Fourth Divisions, the latter on





# FROM CAMBRAI TO VALENCIENNES.

Successive stages of Canadian advance, October 12-31, 1918.

the right, were left to carry on the chase between the Scarpe and the Sensée.

The advance was made over the canalized and densely populated country east of Douai. By the night of October 19th the highly important railway junctions of Aniche and Somain were securely in our hands, and on the following day Denain, a populous town on the Sensée, only five miles from Valenciennes, was encircled and taken by the Fourth Division. Next day more progress was realized, the First Division on the left fighting its way into the thick woods of the Forêt de Vicoigne, north-west of Valenciennes. The evening of October 21st found our men in possession of Trith, on the western bank of the Canal de l'Escaut, and the First Division's patrols held the Valenciennes-St. Armand Road on their whole front. The Forêt de Vicoigne was then behind them, and the line was about to enter the larger Forest of Raismes to the east.

On October 22nd the Third Canadian Division came forward and passed through the First Canadian Division to continue the pressure on the enemy. While the First Canadian Division withdrew to rest billets in the vicinity of Aniche, the Seventh and Ninth Brigades, the latter on the left, pushed on into the forest, and at nightfall had almost reached the eastern limits. The Fourth Division, though its right was arrested for the moment on the Canal de l'Escaut at Trith, never relaxed its efforts for a moment, and before dark had reached the outskirts of the Faubourg de Paris, a suburb of Valenciennes west of the Canal, St. Waast-La Haut and Beuvrages. Next day these places were cleared of the enemy, and during the following night our posts reached the Canal de l'Escaut north of Valenciennes. By that time the Third Division was in the eastern edge of the Forest of Raismes.

Resistance now stiffened. The enemy had dammed the Canal as a last resource, and great tracts of country were rapidly passing under water. From Valenciennes northwards the valleys had been turned into lakes and marshes shining like silver in the blue October air. Behind these stretches of water and the Canal the Germans waited for our men with numerous machine guns. They did not dare to face a blow. To the elements, in their despair, they turned wildly for protection, knowing that no German alone could stop the British advance.

In spite of these immense obstacles our men reached the general line of the Canal de l'Escaut everywhere between Condé and Trith before the end of the month.

The method of carrying on the pursuit employed by the Canadians was such that it gave the enemy not one moment's rest. It has been seen how division passed through division,

fresh troops coming up from the rear, moving through the ranks of their comrades who had hitherto maintained the advance, and taking up the chase in their turn. In a similar manner the divisions passed their fresh brigades into action through the line held by their comrades of the brigades which had till that moment represented the division in the forefront of the pursuit. Similarly, the brigades passed battalion through battalion and the battalions sent company through company. At night the line halted on the ground reached during the day, and defensive positions were assumed until at dawn the process began again. Meanwhile cavalry and infantry patrols probed the enemy's front all night.

The Germans, though they had orders to hold their ground until the main body of Canadians had been delayed, as a general rule retired without fighting on the approach of our men. Those groups of stouter quality which showed a desire to dispute the advance were generally outflanked and disposed of without much difficulty.

It was a very pleasant form of warfare—the warfare of which men had dreamed for years, while they held those terrible trenches of the old front line through endless ages of enduring mud and cold, rain and water, shell fire and the indescribable hell of war to the death with a murderous enemy a stone's-throw away. The day on which they should find the Germans incapable of offering serious resistance had become for them a beacon, a star beckoning them from heights so rocky and so steep that sometimes it seemed that they would never reach it, in spite of all their blood and sacrifice.

And now they were driving the enemy hot-foot from the country. He did his best to make their advance as difficult and unpleasant as possible. Practically every bridge and every cross-road of importance he destroyed with explosive charges. Others, though not yet destroyed, were mined—either with delayed-action fuses or with devilish arrangements that would go off when a heavy vehicle passed over them, blowing up the bridge or the road and its burden together. He tore up the railway, shattered all the culverts, threw poles across the roads, cut the telegraph, smashed the instruments and generally wrecked the system. He posted snipers and machine guns to cover all the front and pick off our patrols as they advanced. He blew up his ammunition dumps and destroyed his depôts. It will be observed that most of these methods were legitimate acts of war. As the advance went on it was perceived that the Germans abstained from preparing the childish “booby-trap”—which long ago had ceased to be effective. They damaged no buildings as far as they could avoid it. And they left the civilians alone.

Their reasons for this apparent leniency were obvious. The

shadow of the scaffold lay across their path. It is hard to see what they might hope to gain by this grave-side repentance, after four years of cruelty and ruthlessness.

Under cover of his rearguards and his wrecking of communications the enemy managed to get most of his mobile equipment and his guns away. But he could not destroy half his ammunition, his supplies and his dépôts. Vast quantities of every conceivable war material fell into the hands of our troops. As our advanced guards quickened the pace, so the booty increased. It was found possible to quicken the pace. There was a remedy for all the hindrances set before the path of the advance.

Engineers and pioneers followed on the heels of the infantry, mending and improvising bridges and filling in the craters in the roads almost as fast as they appeared. The Engineers performed marvellous feats of bridge-building. Parties of specially trained men worked forward with our patrols, ferreting out mines which had not yet been fired and thereby drawing the teeth of the enemy. Railway troops, though for the moment the speed of the advance had outstripped the rapidity of the repair work on the line, built new culverts, laid new steel and put the railway in order with remarkable swiftness. As for the enemy's snipers and machine gunners, few offered any resistance to our troops. Those who still retained enough sense of duty to do so were easily overpowered.

And then there were the civilians. Every man in the ranks of the British Army had dreamed at one time or another of the day when they should release the French and Belgian non-combatants from bondage. Now, with every mile flung behind them more civilians passed from tyranny to liberty. From October 17th to 21st ninety thousand people were released by Canadians, nearly forty thousand being rescued in Denain alone.

Their gratitude was pitiful. In Denain they tendered a public welcome to the men of the Fourth Canadian Division. Elsewhere they ran to greet the oncoming patrols and kissed the hands that held the rifles and wept upon the shoulders of the scouts, thanking God that they had lived to see that day. Flags—the Tricolour—appeared on every house, though where they came from it was impossible to say. The men marched through miles of country hung with the colours of liberty, which had not been seen for years. They laughed among themselves, shared their rations with the inhabitants and went on again, the simplest knights the world had ever known.

In this way they came to Valenciennes.

While Canadian and German infantry faced each other across the flood-lands the High Command was not idle. Every effort



was made to improve communications, push forward supplies, and complete arrangements generally for a resumption of the advance. By the end of October the inevitable dislocation caused by the rapid German retreat had been put right and all was ready for another blow. On the night of October 29th the Fourth Canadian Division relieved the Imperial troops between the Canal de l'Escaut and Famars, a village four thousand yards south of Valenciennes, east of the Canal.

This gave the Canadian Corps a footing beyond the Canal whence it was possible to attack the city. The line here, covering a front of about two thousand five hundred yards, the left on the Canal near Poirier Station, the right slightly east of the Famars-Valenciennes Road, faced northwards, skirting the southern slope of Mont Houy and the northern end of Famars.

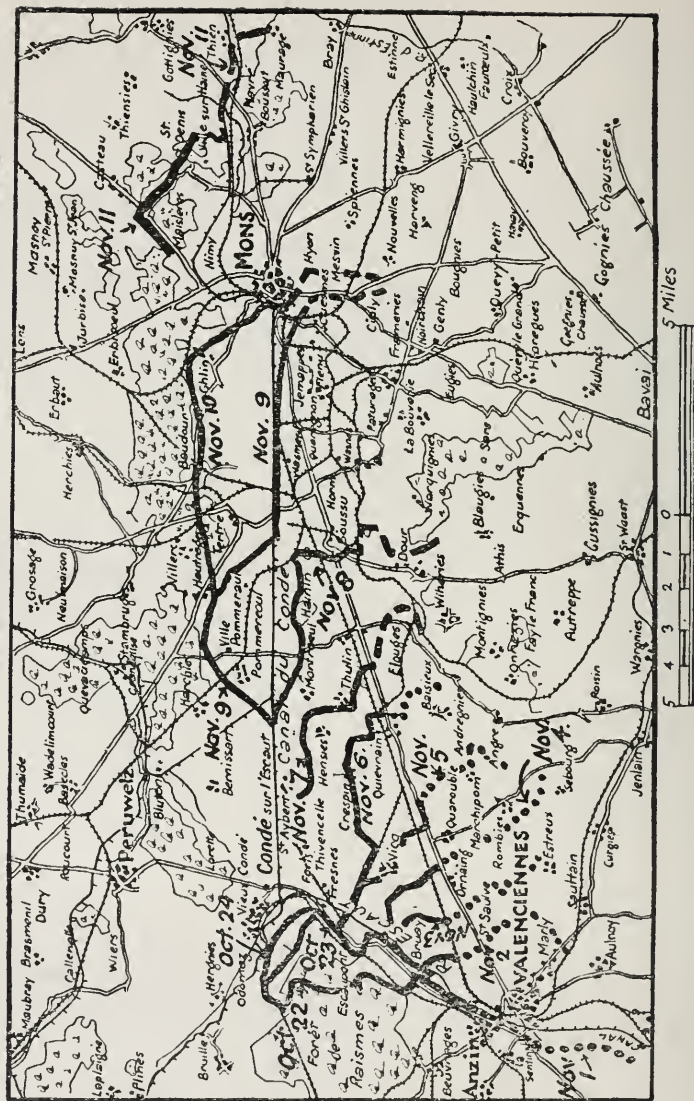
October brought the end of another phase in the operations. It had been an exceedingly fruitful month for the Canadians, who had borne their full share of the great successes brought by Allied arms. Three thousand prisoners, one hundred and thirty-six guns and howitzers, four hundred and sixty-seven machine guns, forty-two trench mortars, and enormous quantities of material, including six locomotives and much rolling stock, had been taken, either in pitched battle on the ridges north of Cambrai or in the swift pursuit which followed its capture. Many villages and towns, with their inhabitants, had been recovered from the enemy, and the whole line had been advanced over twenty miles. This had been achieved at a cost of seventeen thousand casualties, the great majority being wounded. The strategical value of the operations far exceeded any of these achievements, since the month witnessed the death-agonies of the German Army.

At 5.15 a.m. on November 1st the final phase of the war began when the Canadian Corps, represented by the Tenth Brigade, resumed the advance, in conjunction with the Twenty-second (Imperial) Corps.

The plan of operations was briefly as follows: The Tenth Brigade was to capture Mont Houy, dominating the Canal de l'Escaut, clear the straggling village of Aulnoy, astride the Rhonelle River (which ran roughly southwards from the south-eastern outskirts of Valenciennes), seize the bridgeheads on the river and pass troops over in pursuit of the enemy. This operation would envelop the city from the south and force the Germans in the place to retire. If all went well, the Twelfth Brigade, holding the Canal west of the city, were to cross the Canal and enter Valenciennes, hastening the flight of the defenders.

For several days prior to the assault the Canadian artillery had bombarded the objectives heavily, leaving Valenciennes and its environs carefully alone. It now provided a terrific

Successive Stages of Advance shown thus. (With dates.)



FROM VALENCIENNES TO MONS.

### Successive stages of Canadian advance, November 1-11, 1919

barrage, and the Tenth Brigade pressed rapidly forward on its heels.

The Forty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. A. Davies, D.S.O., attacked on the right, the Forty-seventh Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. L. Keegan, D.S.O., upon the left and both battalions met with instant success.

The first objective assigned to the attack lay two thousand yards beyond the jumping-off line, north of Mont Houy, its right on the Rhonelle River, at Aulnoy, its left in the southern outskirts of the Faubourg de Cambrai.

Through a very violent, if brief, hostile counter-barrage, which included a large quantity of gas shell, the Forty-seventh Battalion fought doggedly forward. Great numbers of Germans were encountered, particularly around Poirier Station, where numerous buildings and the railway system gave them shelter. Our guns had slain scores of these men, but many of the living, being strongly entrenched, offered a desperate resistance and died by bayonet or bullet without surrendering. At 7 a.m. the battalion held its share of the first objective.

On the right the Forty-fourth Battalion also met masses of Germans, apparently thrust into the line by a Staff which had lost its head completely and staked its last hope on numbers alone. These men fought hard in places, notably on the extreme right and on Mont Houy, but were overpowered at little cost. The Forty-fourth also secured its first objective by 7 a.m. Over six hundred prisoners, with three field guns, twenty trench mortars and eighty-three machine guns were captured by this unit alone.

To the Forty-sixth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. H. J. Dawson, D.S.O., which followed the Forty-fourth Battalion to the first objective, had been allotted, by mutual arrangement of the battalion commanders, the task of looking after a portion of Aulnoy. The men came upon hosts of Germans along the road from Aulnoy to Marly and from Famars to Valenciennes. These roads on both sides were fringed with houses, and every cellar was filled with grey-clad men clamouring for mercy. In the streets, between the houses, groups of their stouter-hearted comrades fought desperately and were bayoneted until the ground was covered with corpses.

At 7.05 a.m. the barrage, after resting for fifteen minutes in front of the first objective, began to creep onwards to the second objective, which was the line of the Bavai-Valenciennes Railway from the Canal on the left to the Rhonelle River on the right. The Forty-sixth Battalion, in accordance with the plan, pushed through the Forty-fourth Battalion on the right and continued the attack, while the Forty-seventh Battalion advanced upon the left.

The Forty-sixth Battalion again encountered and overpowered large forces of the enemy. The brickfields on the Aulnoy-Marly Road, about half-way between the two objectives, were the centre of a violent struggle.

A large body of Germans, with three field guns, a trench mortar and seven machine guns, garrisoned the brickfields. Major Gyles, Company Sergeant-Major Gibbons and Sergeant Hugh Cairns, D.C.M., directing a group of eleven men, were responsible for the successful reduction of this defence. Under very heavy fire they reached a point whence they were able to rake the position with Lewis guns. Company Sergeant-Major Gibbons and Sergeant Cairns with four men and two Lewis guns then moved off to a position on the right, while their comrades covered them by bursts of fire. They completely outflanked the Germans and finally manœuvred into close proximity, when they opened fire. So deadly and accurate was their marksmanship that the enemy suffered very severely, and the remnant, fifty strong, at once capitulated. Soon afterwards the Forty-sixth Battalion reached its objective.

This success was largely due to Sergeant Cairns, who showed splendid gallantry throughout the day. He had already rushed and disposed of three machine guns single handed under heavy fire, killing seventeen and capturing eighteen Germans. Later in the operations against Marly—which will be dealt with in due course—though already severely wounded, he captured sixty prisoners, and continued to fight on until he collapsed from weakness and loss of blood.

Sergeant Cairns died on November 2nd. He was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross.

The Forty-seventh Battalion in the meantime had fought through the Faubourg de Cambrai and reached its objective. Both battalions by 9 a.m. were in full possession of the second objective and had patrols thrust out towards Marly, on the eastern side of Valenciennes.

It was now feasible for the Twelfth Brigade to attempt the crossing of the Canal de l'Escaut. At 11.30 a.m. the Thirty-eighth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. A. D. Cameron, M.C., on the right, facing the western edge of Valenciennes, began to cross, while the Seventy-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. G. H. Kirkpatrick, D.S.O., north-west of the city, commenced fifteen minutes before. The Thirty-eighth Battalion got over in small groups by short rushes with only three casualties, utilizing two broken-down bridges for the purpose, and by 12.40 p.m. the whole battalion was safely on the eastern bank. The Seventy-second Battalion met considerable opposition and was not so fortunate. Using boats, rafts and a cork-float bridge which were constructed by



"C" Company of the Twelfth Battalion Canadian Engineers, the battalion worked their way across under heavy fire. The bridge broke down and it was necessary to rely mainly on the boats, one of which was sunk by machine guns. Nevertheless the battalion drove the enemy off and gradually completed the passage.

A field gun of the Fifty-second Battery Canadian Field Artillery did extremely useful work in keeping down machine gun fire while the battalion crossed. It was placed in position near the Canal to command the main Condé-Valenciennes Road leading into the city, and fired on hostile machine guns in the network of railway a hundred yards away.

Once over the Canal, the Twelfth Brigade entered Valenciennes, overpowering the German posts in the city. Throughout the afternoon and all night there was patrol fighting in the deserted streets. On the morning of November 2nd Valenciennes was cleared of the enemy and the brigade occupied a line beyond the eastern limits.

The Canadian operations of November 1st yielded fourteen hundred prisoners, a number of guns and many machine guns. Dreadful bloodshed had occurred among the Germans. Over eight hundred dead were counted on the battle-field. The field-grey corpses were everywhere—in the battered houses, in ruined buildings, scattered over the railway embankments and along the ties, in the streets and on the banks of the stagnant Canal.

Our men marched past these bodies and took no heed of them, for their hearts were hardened to sights of that description. But the French civilians, who had lain in hiding for days while the battle raged about them, coming out of their cellars like timid creatures of the woods emerging from their warrens on the night that followed the taking of Valenciennes, looked at them dumbly and shuddered.

The relentless pressure was not relaxed during November 2nd. The Twelfth Brigade fought forward all day, and ere dusk had taken the greater part of St. Saulve, over a mile beyond Valenciennes along the road to Mons. The Eleventh Brigade in the meantime had passed through the Tenth Brigade, and at 5.30 a.m. attacked Marly with the Fifty-fourth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Carey, cancelling a barrage which had been arranged for, as it seemed unnecessary. The decision was justified, Marly being taken without difficulty and the garrison surprised and captured.

At 12.45 p.m. the One Hundred and Second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. E. J. W. Ryan, D.S.O., was placed on the left of the Fifty-fourth Battalion and advanced through the southern outskirts of Valenciennes while the latter unit moved in an easterly direc-

tion. Ere nightfall they had reached a line fifteen hundred yards east of the city and had taken one hundred prisoners with only twenty-five casualties.

The further advances of the Canadian Corps—the Third Division on the left and the Fourth Division on the right—met with little resistance during the next days. In uncertain autumnal weather the patrols moved on steadily, gathering in hundreds of prisoners, a gun here and there, numerous machine guns and dumps of every conceivable material. The difficult dyke country north of the Mons-Valenciennes Road and the country of little rivers to the south, which a well-organized and spirited rear-guard might have rendered impassable, passed surely into our possession. Every day the men went out under a light barrage, rolled up the German outposts and covered another mile or two towards Mons.

On the night of November 5th the Fourth Canadian Division experienced a slight check, but on November 6th the Corps was once more advancing. Athwart their path that morning was the Aunelle River, a shallow but tumultuous stream brawling between steep banks impassable to transport, with all the bridges destroyed. The Germans, knowing the great natural strength of the river, made a desperate attempt to stand there. But the two divisions attacked under a barrage and were soon across the river. Numerous prisoners were taken. Then they pushed on, the Eleventh and Twelfth Brigades crossing the Honnelle River some distance beyond. Basseux was captured by the One Hundred and Second Battalion, and the Seventy-eighth and Eighty-fifth Battalions got into Quiévrain. At 4 p.m. the village of Crespin, which had offered strenuous resistance all day, was attacked and carried by the Third Division, while a footing was secured upon the Honnelle before darkness fell.

During the night the Fourth Division was relieved by the Second Division, and at 8 a.m. on November 7th the Corps resumed its advance. It continued to make rapid progress, and the Third Division cleared the last bit of France on the Corps front while the whole force south of the Condé-Mons Canal penetrated far into Belgium.

And now the line went sweeping on like a tidal wave, beating back the broken German breakwater with irresistible fury. On November 8th Montreul-sur-Haine, Hamin and Dour fell into our hands, and on the following day the whole of the country south of the Condé-Mons Canal as far south as a line parallel to the Canal through the Bois de Colfontaine and as far east as Cuesmes was cleared of the enemy. Our troops pushed north over the Canal and took Ville Pommereul with a great slice of country between St. Ghislain and a point five miles west of that

village. To help the infantry they had the Fifth Lancers, who were attached to them on November 9th and had fought on that ground as a unit in August 1914. The territory released that day included the densely populated district south-west of Mons—St. Ghislain, Boussu, Hornu, Wasmès, Pâturages, Quaregnon, Jemappes, Frameries, La Bouverie—places which had known the “Old Contemptibles” in the dreadful long ago.

After the “Old Contemptibles” had gone it was waiting, just waiting, months and years and eternities for the return of the deliverers. And hope had risen and burned low and risen innumerable times in the breasts of these civilians, until at last it seemed that the deliverers would never return. Then God, in His mercy, worked a miracle. They saw another retreat, but it was not a British retreat this time. The sound of the guns grew near again and the Germans moved away before the guns. Then came the day when they saw khaki again, not the khaki of the “Old Contemptibles” but of big, strange men with coloured patches on their sleeves and “Canada” written on their shoulders. At first they saw only a single scout, but soon afterwards the great tide of the whole Corps, cavalry and infantry, batteries and ambulances, an endless river of men and horses and guns. And the people dashed out into the streets, screaming “Les Canadiens!” and went mad with joy.

The colours of Belgium appeared as if by magic, from places where they had been hidden for years, so that the men marched through one vast display of red and black and gold. Little flags nodded at the horses' ears, in the muzzles of the rifles and the guns and over the transport, turning the army into an army of glorious colour, like those of old. Vast crowds thronged every street, crying and laughing in their frantic thanksgiving. There was not a heart that was not brimming over with happiness. The air was filled with victory.

But Victory was not yet. Though British troops were marching through the environs of Mons, the wheel had not yet turned full circle. Mons had still to be taken. Canadian patrols were at that moment within rifle-shot of the city.

During the evening the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Captain G. W. Little, on the right and the Forty-ninth Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. H. Palmer, D.S.O., on the left succeeded in dislodging the enemy from the railway south-west of Mons, where hostile machine guns had resisted stubbornly. They pushed forward and gained a footing in the western outskirts of the city. On November 10th the Royal Canadian Regiment, Major G. W. MacLeod, D.S.O., and the Forty-second Battalion, Lieut.-Col. R. L. H. Ewing, D.S.O., took over this line from the Seventh Brigade and worked their way forward, while the enemy

opposed them with machine guns and heavy shell fire, which did not cease until 5 p.m. At dusk, Baudour and Ghlin, north of the Condé-Mons Canal, and Hyon and Mesvin were in Canadian hands and it was safe to attempt an entry into Mons itself. Accordingly, at midnight a company of the Forty-second Battalion, supported by a company of the Princess Patricia's, having overpowered the Germans on the Canal, entered the city.

On November 11th the historical telegram which put an end to the most appalling war ever known was flashed through the Canadian Corps. At 11 a.m., it said, hostilities would cease and troops would stand fast on the ground reached at that hour. Examining posts would be established on all roads and there would be no parleying with the enemy.

At 6 a.m. the whole line was on the move, driving back the Germans so that Mons and the great strategic point it represented might be secured before the armistice cried "Halt!"—secured against all trickery and treachery of the enemy. The Seventh Brigade went through Mons, while the Sixth Brigade of the Second Division kept pace with them on the south. The men attacked with the great gallantry and sense of duty that had made them famous. There was no lagging, though every one knew that in a few hours it would be all over. Fortunately, casualties were infinitely small. At 8 a.m. Mons was cleared. At 11 a.m. our troops were miles beyond. Promptly at 11 a.m. the line halted, and men stood with bated breath while the last seconds of the world's great tragedy slipped away on quiet wings. The hour struck. The fighting was over.

At 11 a.m. on that wonderful day the Canadian line ran from the right, east of Petit Havre, and in touch with the Imperials there, along the little La Haine River to the Canal du Centre which led to Mons; thence along the Canal to the Bois de la Taille des Vignes, where it turned north, running along the eastern face of the Bois, through the Bois de Becqueron to St. Denis. From St. Denis it ran north-westwards as far as the main road from Mons to Brussels, where it turned south-west along the road to Maisières. At Maisières touch was established with the Imperial troops on the left and the line of the Corps ended.

Holding this line were the Sixth Brigade of the Second Division and the Seventh Brigade of the Third Division. The former held the southern portion, its left one thousand yards north of the Canal, with the Thirty-first Battalion on the right and the Twenty-eighth Battalion on the left. The northern portion was held by the Seventh Brigade, with the Royal Canadian Regiment on the right and the Forty-second Battalion on the left.



The wheel of Fate had turned full circle. At Petit Havre, Canadian troops were ten thousand yards due east of Mons and the city was firmly in British possession. Thus God had brought back to Mons, as avengers of the Old Army, the crusaders from beyond the Atlantic seas.

Elsewhere on the British front the situation was equally satisfactory. Maubeuge, the strategical objective of the entire Army, had been taken two days before. As for the condition of the enemy, one cannot do better than quote Sir Douglas Haig's despatch dealing with the subject :

"The military situation . . . can be stated very shortly. In the fighting since November 1st our troops had broken the enemy's resistance beyond possibility of recovery, and had forced on him a disorderly retreat along the whole front of the British Armies. Thereafter, the enemy was capable neither of accepting nor refusing battle. The utter confusion of his troops, the state of his railways, congested with abandoned trains, the capture of huge quantities of rolling stock and material, all showed that our attack had been decisive. It had been followed on the north by the evacuation of the Tournai salient, and to the south, where the French forces had pushed forward in conjunction with us, by a rapid and costly withdrawal to the line of the Meuse.

"The strategic plan of the Allies had been realized with a completeness rarely seen in war. When the armistice was signed by the enemy his defensive powers had already been definitely destroyed. A continuance of hostilities could only have meant disaster to the German Armies and the armed invasion of Germany."

To the reader may be left the judgment of the Canadian share in the accomplishment of the victory.

The rest of November 11th passed quietly. During the day Corps Headquarters moved from Valenciennes to Mons, and the Corps Commander made his official entry into the city at 3.30 p.m. amid scenes of the wildest enthusiasm. The men, examining posts having been established, settled down to enjoy the best billets they had yet known and to await orders for the march to the Rhine.

Contrary to the expectations of many, there was little or no demonstration among the fighters. The emotion felt by officers and men was too deep for outward expression. Their thoughts did not turn to flag-wagging, but to Home and Peace and those at home whom they had been spared to see again. And their minds went back over the dreary years to fifty thousand comrades who were not so fortunate, from a worldly point of view, and who would never see Home or loved ones any more, but who

had died, God bless them ! for the freedom of the whole world and for the Canadian Army Corps and its place in history.

And then for the hundredth time—scarcely daring to believe it—they told each other that the menace of death or slavery had gone forever ; they had heard the last rifle-shot of anger and had seen the last glare of shell fire along the midnight sky.

This was *Victory*. At last !

## APPENDIX

### PRINCIPAL UNITS OF THE CANADIAN ARMY CORPS

*(As organized in 1918)*

NOTE.—During the later stages of the war it was not possible to maintain all units with drafts of men from the towns and cities whence these units had originally been raised. In such cases they were reinforced with men from their respective provinces, so that their territorial associations might be preserved as far as circumstances permitted. On the whole, these original associations were rigidly adhered to, especially with the infantry.

#### CANADIAN ARMY CORPS HEADQUARTERS AND CORPS TROOPS

<i>Unit.</i>	<i>Originally Recruited from—</i>
CANADIAN ARMY CORPS HEADQUARTERS	All parts of Canada.
CANADIAN ARMY CORPS HEAVY ARTILLERY.	
1st, 2nd and 3rd Brigades, Canadian Garrison Artillery	All parts of Canada.
5TH CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY.	
13th and 14th Brigades, Canadian Field Artillery	All parts of Canada.
8TH ARMY BRIGADE, CANADIAN FIELD ARTILLERY	All parts of Canada.
5TH CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS	All parts of Canada.
CANADIAN ARMY CORPS SIGNAL COMPANY, C.E.	All parts of Canada.
CANADIAN LIGHT HORSE . . . .	All parts of Canada. Formed first from Divisional Cavalry of 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions end of 1916. Was called Canadian Corps Cavalry Regiment until early in 1918.

<i>Unit.</i>	<i>Originally Recruited from—</i>
CANADIAN ARMY CORPS CYCLIST BATTALION	All parts of Canada. Formed from Cyclist Companies of 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions end of 1916.
1ST AND 2ND CANADIAN MOTOR MACHINE GUN BRIGADES	All parts of Canada. First organized from independent batteries end of 1915.
Canadian Army Service Corps Units .	All parts of Canada.
Canadian Army Troops Companies, C.E.	All parts of Canada.
Canadian Tunnelling Companies, C.E.	All parts of Canada.

## FIRST CANADIAN DIVISION

1ST CANADIAN DIVISIONAL HEAD-QUARTERS	All parts of Canada.
1ST CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY. 1st and 2nd Brigades, Canadian Field Artillery, and 1st Canadian Divisional Ammunition Column	All parts of Canada. In June 1917 the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Canadian Divisional Artillery was transferred to the 4th Canadian Division.
1ST CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS. 1st Canadian Engineer Brigade (1st, 2nd and 3rd C.E. Battalions)	All parts of Canada. Prior to April 1918, 1st Canadian Divisional Engineers consisted of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Field Companies, C.E., and 1st Canadian Pioneer Battalion.
1st Canadian Divisional Signal Company, C.E.	All parts of Canada.
1ST CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE. Brigade Headquarters . . . . . 1st Canadian Battalion . . . . . 2nd Do. do. . . . . 3rd Do. do. . . . . 4th Do. do. . . . . 1st Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade. Central Ontario. Eastern Ontario. Toronto, Ont. Central Ontario. Units of Brigade.
2ND CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE. Brigade Headquarters . . . . . 5th Canadian Battalion . . . . . 7th Do. do. . . . . 8th Do. do. . . . . 10th Do. do. . . . . 2nd Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade. Western Provinces. British Columbia. Manitoba (chiefly Winnipeg). Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Units of Brigade.



<i>Unit.</i>	<i>Originally Recruited from—</i>
<b>3RD CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.</b>	
Brigade Headquarters . . . . .	Units of Brigade.
13th Canadian Battalion . . . . .	Montreal, Que.
14th Do. do. . . . .	Montreal, Que.
15th Do. do. . . . .	Toronto, Ont.
16th Do. do. . . . .	Manitoba and British Columbia.
3rd Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade.

<b>1ST CANADIAN MACHINE GUN BATTALION</b>	All parts of Canada. Formed early in 1918 from Canadian Machine Gun Companies, which until summer of 1917 were called Brigade Machine Gun Companies. The Brigade Machine Gun Companies were formed from Infantry Battalion Machine Gun Detachments in summer of 1916.
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<b>1ST, 2ND AND 3RD CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCES AND 1ST CANADIAN SANITARY SECTION</b>	All parts of Canada.
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<b>1ST CANADIAN MOBILE VETERINARY SECTION</b>	Eastern Provinces.
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<b>1ST CANADIAN DIVISIONAL TRAIN AND 1ST CANADIAN DIVISIONAL SUPPLY COLUMN, C.A.S.C.</b>	All parts of Canada.
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## SECOND CANADIAN DIVISION

<b>2ND CANADIAN DIVISIONAL HEAD-QUARTERS</b>	All parts of Canada.
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<b>2ND CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY.</b> 5th and 6th Brigades, Canadian Field Artillery, and 2nd Canadian Divisional Ammunition Column	All parts of Canada. In June 1917 the 4th Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Divisional Artillery was transferred to the 3rd Canadian Division. Subsequently the remainder (5th and 7th Brigades) of the 2nd Canadian Divisional Artillery were reorganized as 5th and 6th Brigades.
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<b>2ND CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS.</b> 2nd Canadian Engineer Brigade (4th, 5th and 6th C.E. Battalions)	All parts of Canada. Prior to April 1918, 2nd Canadian Divisional Engineers consisted of 4th, 5th and 6th Field Companies, C.E., and 2nd Canadian Pioneer Battalion.
2nd Canadian Divisional Signal Company, C.E.	All parts of Canada.

<i>Unit.</i>	<i>Originally Recruited from—</i>
<b>4TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.</b>	
Brigade Headquarters . . . . .	Units of Brigade.
18th Canadian Battalion . . . . .	Central Ontario.
19th Do. do. . . . .	Central Ontario.
20th Do. do. . . . .	Toronto, Ont.
21st Do. do. . . . .	Eastern Ontario.
4th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade.
<b>5TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.</b>	
Brigade Headquarters . . . . .	Units of Brigade.
22nd Canadian Battalion . . . . .	Province of Quebec (French-Canadians).
24th Do. do. . . . .	Montreal, Que.
25th Do. do. . . . .	Nova Scotia.
26th Do. do. . . . .	New Brunswick.
5th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade.
<b>6TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.</b>	
Brigade Headquarters . . . . .	Units of Brigade.
27th Canadian Battalion . . . . .	Winnipeg, Man.
28th Do. do. . . . .	North-West Canada.
29th Do. do. . . . .	Vancouver, B.C.
31st Do. do. . . . .	British Columbia.
6th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade.
<b>2ND CANADIAN MACHINE GUN BATTALION</b>	All parts of Canada. See remarks <i>re</i> formation of 1st Canadian Machine Gun Battalion.
<b>4TH, 5TH AND 6TH CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCES AND 2ND CANADIAN SANITARY SECTION</b>	All parts of Canada.
<b>2ND CANADIAN MOBILE VETERINARY SECTION</b>	Eastern Provinces.
<b>2ND CANADIAN DIVISIONAL TRAIN AND 2ND CANADIAN DIVISIONAL SUPPLY COLUMN, C.A.S.C.</b>	All parts of Canada.

### THIRD CANADIAN DIVISION

<b>3RD CANADIAN DIVISIONAL HEAD-QUARTERS</b>	All parts of Canada.
<b>3RD CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY.</b>	
9th and 10th Brigades, Canadian Field Artillery, and 3rd Canadian Divisional Ammunition Column	All parts of Canada. Originally 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Brigades, Canadian Field Artillery. Prior to their arrival in France with the 4th Canadian Division,

<i>Unit.</i>	<i>Originally Recruited from—</i>
	the "Lahore" (afterwards called "Reserve") Divisional Artillery (Imperials) and Brigades from 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisional Artillery did duty with 3rd Canadian Division.
<b>3RD CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS.</b>	
3rd Canadian Engineer Brigade (7th, 8th, and 9th C.E. Battalions)	All parts of Canada. Prior to April 1918, 3rd Canadian Divisional Engineers consisted of 7th, 8th and 9th Field Companies, C.E., and 3rd Canadian Pioneer Battalion.
3rd Canadian Divisional Signal Company, C.E.	All parts of Canada.
<b>7TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.</b>	
Brigade Headquarters . . . . .	Units of Brigade.
Royal Canadian Regiment . . . .	All parts of Canada.
Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry	All parts of Canada.
42nd Canadian Battalion . . . . .	Montreal, Que.
49th Do. do. . . . .	Edmonton, Alta.
7th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade.
<b>8TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.</b>	
Brigade Headquarters . . . . .	Units of Brigade.
1st Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion	Brandon, Man.
2nd Do. do. do. . . . .	Victoria, B.C.
4th Do. do. do. . . . .	Toronto, Ont.
5th Do. do. do. . . . .	Province of Quebec (chiefly Montreal).
8th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade.
<b>9TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.</b>	
Brigade Headquarters . . . . .	Units of Brigade.
43rd Canadian Battalion . . . . .	Winnipeg, Man.
52nd Do. do. . . . .	Western Ontario.
58th Do. do. . . . .	Toronto, Ont.
116th Do. do. . . . .	Central Ontario. This Battalion replaced the 60th Canadian Battalion in the 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade in April 1917. The 60th had been recruited in Montreal, Que.
9th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade.
<b>3RD CANADIAN MACHINE GUN BATTALION</b>	
	All parts of Canada. See remarks re formation of 1st Canadian Machine Gun Battalion.

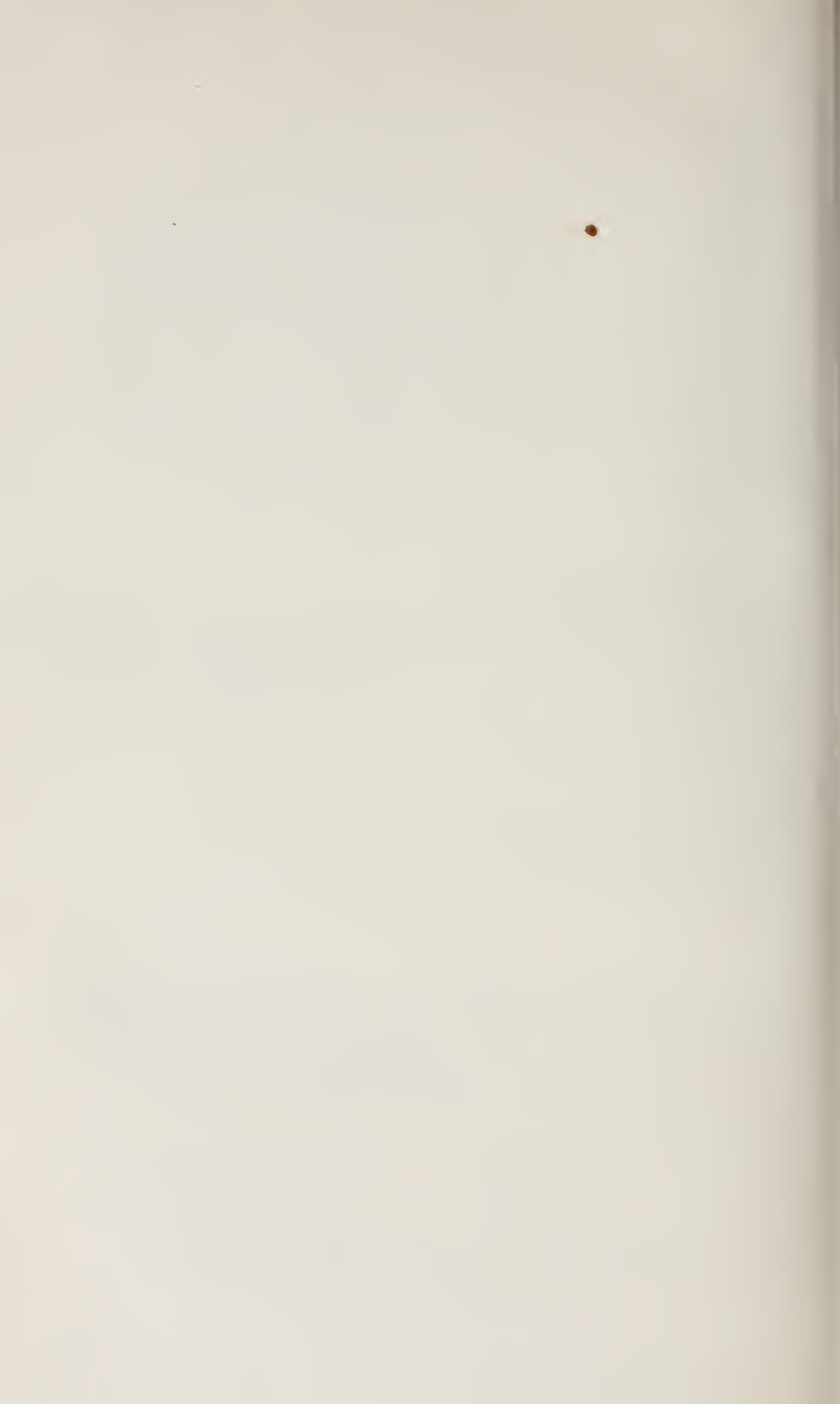
<i>Unit.</i>	<i>Originally Recruited from—</i>
7TH, 8TH AND 9TH CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCES AND 3RD CANADIAN SANITARY SECTION	All parts of Canada.
3RD CANADIAN MOBILE VETERINARY SECTION	Eastern Provinces.
3RD CANADIAN DIVISIONAL TRAIN AND 3RD CANADIAN DIVISIONAL SUPPLY COLUMN, C.A.S.C.	All parts of Canada.

## FOURTH CANADIAN DIVISION

4TH CANADIAN DIVISIONAL HEAD-QUARTERS	All parts of Canada.
4TH CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY. 3rd and 4th Brigades, Canadian Field Artillery, and 3rd Canadian Divisional Ammunition Column	All parts of Canada. These Brigades were transferred from the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisional Artillery in June 1917. Prior to that date the "Lahore" (afterwards called "Reserve") Divisional Artillery (Imperials) and Brigades from other Canadian Divisions did duty with the 4th Canadian Division.
4TH CANADIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS. 4th Canadian Engineer Brigade (10th, 11th and 12th C.E. Battalions)	All parts of Canada. Prior to April 1918, 4th Canadian Divisional Engineers consisted of 10th, 11th and 12th Field Companies, C.E., and 4th Canadian Pioneer Battalion.
4th Canadian Divisional Signal Company, C.E.	All parts of Canada.
10TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE. Brigade Headquarters . . . . . 44th Canadian Battalion . . . . . 46th Do. do. . . . . 47th Do. do. . . . . 50th Do. do. . . . . 10th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade. Winnipeg, Man. South Saskatchewan. British Columbia. Calgary, Alta. Units of Brigade.
11TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE. Brigade Headquarters . . . . . 54th Canadian Battalion . . . . . 75th Do. do. . . . . 87th Do. do. . . . . 102nd Do. do. . . . . 11th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade. Kootenay, B.C. Toronto, Ont. Montreal, Que. North British Columbia. Units of Brigade.



<i>Unit.</i>	<i>Originally Recruited from—</i>
<b>12TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.</b>	
Brigade Headquarters . . . . .	Units of Brigade.
38th Canadian Battalion . . . . .	Ottawa, Ont.
72nd Do. do. . . . .	Vancouver, B.C.
78th Do. do. . . . .	Winnipeg, Man.
85th Do. do. . . . .	Nova Scotia. This Battalion replaced the 73rd Canadian Battalion in the 12th Canadian Infantry Brigade in April 1917. The 73rd had been recruited in Montreal, Que.
12th Canadian Light Trench Mortar Battery	Units of Brigade.
<b>4TH CANADIAN MACHINE GUN BATTALION</b>	All parts of Canada. See remarks re formation of 1st Canadian Machine Gun Battalion.
<b>10TH, 11TH AND 12TH CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCES AND 4TH CANADIAN SANITARY SECTION</b>	All parts of Canada.
<b>4TH CANADIAN MOBILE VETERINARY SECTION</b>	Eastern Provinces.
<b>4TH CANADIAN DIVISIONAL TRAIN AND 4TH CANADIAN DIVISIONAL SUPPLY COLUMN, C.A.S.C.</b>	All parts of Canada.



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