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THIRTY CANADIAN V.Cs.

23rd APRIL 1915 to 30th MARCH 1918

Compiled by the Canadian War Records Office

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A DEDICATION

BY

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR R. E. W. TURNER, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.

IT is difficult to write an introductory in words to adequately do justice to the gallant deeds performed by our Canadians since the outbreak of the war in France and Belgium.

Canada's Army has grown beyond all the expectations of the world, and glorious pages will be written, in future history, of the self-sacrifice of those true sons, many of whom have laid down their lives for the highest traditions of the British Empire.

No finer inspiration is needed for the future than the words of Corporal Joseph Kaeble, V.C., a French-Canadian, when mortally wounded in repelling a German attack—"Keep it up, boys! Don't let them get through. We must stop them!"

To the Canadian V.Cs. of the Great War, and the many others deserving, this little volume is respectfully dedicated.

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THIRTY CANADIAN V.Cs.

LANCE-CORPORAL FREDERICK FISHER, 13TH BATTALION

In March, 1915, Canadian guns took part in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, and a Canadian regiment, the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, fought well at St. Eloi; but it was not until April that the infantry of the 1st Canadian Division came to grips with the enemy.

The Canadian Division moved into the Ypres Salient about a week before the Germans commenced their terrific and wanton bombardment of the unfortunate city of Ypres. They relieved troops of the 11th Division of the French Army in five thousand yards of undeveloped trenches.

Fisher, a lance-corporal of the 13th Canadian Infantry Battalion, performed the deed of valour (at the cost of his life) for which he was granted the Victoria Cross, on the 23rd of April, 1915. He was our first V.C., in this war, by one day.

On the afternoon of the 22nd of April the Germans projected their first attack of asphyxiating gas

EDITOR'S NOTE.—These narratives are the work of three members of the Canadian War Records Office—Captain Theodore Goodridge Roberts, New Brunswick Regiment, late H.Q. Canadian Army Corps, B.E.F.; Private Robin Richards, late the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, B.E.F., and Private Stuart Martin, late No. 5 Canadian General Hospital, Salonika.

against a point of our Allies' front. Turcos and Zouaves fell back, strangled, blinded and dismayed. The British left was exposed. A four-mile gap—a way to Calais—lay open to the enemy. The 1st Canadian Division, the only Canadian Division in the field in those early days, held the British left. It blocked the four-mile gap and held up Germany, gas and all.

There were no such things as gas masks in those days; but the Canadians were undismayed by that new and terrific form of murder. They had left their offices and shops, their schools and farms and mills, with the intention of fighting the Hun, and, in return, of suffering the worst he could do to them. They did not expect him to fight like a sportsman, or even like a human being. So they accepted the gas as part of the day's work. It was the last day's work for hundreds of those good workmen.

A battery of Canadian 18-pounders, commanded by Major W. B. M. King, C.F.A., maintained its original position well into the second day of the battle—the 23rd of April. The gunners were supported by a depleted Company of the 14th (Royal Montreal) Battalion, and kept up their fire on the approaching Germans until their final rounds were crashed into " the brown " of the massed enemy at a range of less than two hundred yards.

This is a class of performance which seems to make a particular appeal to the hearts of gunners. It calls for more than steadiness and desperate courage, for technical difficulties in the matter of timing the fuses to a fraction of a second must be overcome under conditions peculiarly adverse to the making of exact mathematical calculations. But this sort of thing is frequently done—always with gusto and sometimes with the loss of the guns and the lives of their crews. The gunner then feels all the primitive

excitement of the infantryman in a bayonet charge. He claps his gun, that complicated, high-priced and prodigious weapon, at the very head of the enemy, as if it were no more than a pistol.

On this occasion the guns were not lost. They were extricated from beneath the very boots and bayonets of the enemy and withdrawn to open fire again from a more secure position and at a more customary range. They were "man-handled" out and back by the survivors of their own crews and of the supporting company of infantry; but all those heroic and herculean efforts would have availed nothing if Corporal Fisher had not played his part.

Fisher was in command of a machine-gun and four men of his battalion—the 13th. He saw and understood the situation of Major King's battery and instantly hastened to the rescue. He set up his gun in an exposed position and opened fire on the advancing Germans, choosing for his target the point of the attack which most immediately menaced the battery of field-guns. His four men were put out of action. They were replaced, as they fell, by men of the 14th, who were toiling near-by at the stubborn guns. Fisher and his Colt remained unhit. The pressure of his finger did not relax from the trigger, nor did his eyes waver from the sights. Eager hands passed along the belts of ammunition and fed them into the devouring breech. So the good work was continued. The front of the attack was sprayed and ripped by bullets. Thus it was held until the 18-pounders were dragged back to safety.

Not satisfied with this piece of invaluable work, Fisher advanced again, took up a yet more exposed position, and, under the combined enemy fire of shrapnel, H.E., machine-guns and rifles, continued to check and slay the Germans. The men who

went up with him from his former firing position fell, one by one, crawled away or lay still in death. But the Lance-Corporal continued to fire. The pressure of his finger did not relax from the trigger until he was shot dead.

SERGEANT-MAJOR F. W. HALL, 8TH BATTALION

In the lesser wars of the past the Victoria Cross was more frequently awarded for demonstrations of valour in connection with the rescuing of wounded under fire than for courageous acts designed and carried out with more material and purely military advantages in view. To risk one's life, perhaps to lose it, in a successful or vain attempt to save the life of a disabled comrade was—granting favourable circumstances and conditions—to be recommended for that crowning award. When we consider the nature of those lesser wars we appreciate the admirable spirit in which those recommendations were made. Those were days of small armies, long marches and short battles. The fate of the Empire, say even of the world's freedom, never hung upon the turn of any one engagement. A soldier was something more romantic then than a unit of manpower.

The length, the unrelieved ferocity and the stupendous proportions of this war, have somewhat altered the spirit in which recommendations for awards are made. The deed of valour must show material rather than sentimental results; the duty that inspires the deed must show a military rather than a humane intention. The spirit of our heroes

is the same to-day as it was yesterday, whether the courageous act results in the holding of a position, the killing of a score of Germans, or the saving of one comrade's life. Only the spirit of official appreciation has changed; but this new spirit is logical.

F. W. Hall was recommended for his Cross in the old spirit.

The deed of valour for which Company-Sergeant-Major Hall, of the 8th Canadian Infantry Battalion, was awarded the Victoria Cross was performed on the morning of the day following the great achievement and death of Lance-Corporal Fisher. Hall, too, lost his life in the very act of self-sacrifice by which he won immortality.

During the night of April 23rd the 8th Battalion, of our 2nd Infantry Brigade, relieved the 15th Battalion, of the 3rd Brigade, in a section of our front line. In moving up to our fire-trench the relieving troops had to cross a high bank which was fully exposed to the rifle and machine-gun fire of the enemy in the positions opposite. This bank lay about fifteen yards in rear of our forward position at this point. Its crest was continuously swept by bullets while the relief was taking place and the incoming battalion suffered a number of casualties. In the darkness and the confusion of taking over a new trench under such adverse conditions, the exact extent of the casualties was not immediately known; but Sergeant-Major Hall missed a member of his company on two separate occasions and on two separate occasions left the trench and went back to the top of the bank, under cover of the dark, returning each time with a wounded man.

At nine o'clock in the morning of the 24th, the attention of the occupants of the trench was attracted to the top of the bank by groans of suffering. Hall immediately suggested a rescue, in spite

of the fact that it was now high daylight, and Corporal Payne and Private Rogerson as promptly volunteered to accompany him. The three went over the parados, with their backs to the enemy, and instantly drew a heavy fire. Before they could reach the sufferer, who lay somewhere just beyond their view on the top of the bank, both Payne and Rogerson were wounded. They crawled and scrambled back to the shelter of the trench, with Hall's assistance. There the Sergeant-Major rested for a few minutes, before attempting the rescue again. He refused to be accompanied the second time, knowing that as soon as he left the trench he would become the target for the excellent shooting that had already put Payne and Rogerson out of action. It was his duty as a non-commissioned officer to avoid making the same mistake twice. He had already permitted the risking of three lives in the attempt to save one life and had suffered two casualties; but doubtless he felt free to risk his own life again in the same adventure as he had already successfully accomplished two rescues over the same ground. He may be forgiven, I think, for not pausing to reflect that his own life was of more value to the cause than the life of the sufferer lying out behind the trench.

The fire from the hostile positions in front and on the flanks of this point in our line was now hot and accurate. It was deliberate, aimed fire, discharged in broad daylight over adjusted sights at an expected target. Hall knew all this; but he crawled out of the trench. He moved slowly, squirming along very close to the ground. The bullets whispered past him and over him, cut the earth around him, pinged and thudded upon the face of the bank before him. Very low shots, ricocheting off the top of the parados in his rear, whined and hummed in erratic flight. He reached and crawled up the slope of the

bank without being hit. He quickly located and joined the wounded man, guided straight by the weakening groans of suffering. He lay flat and squirmed himself beneath the other's helpless body. Thus he got the sufferer on his back, in position to be moved; but in the act of raising his head slightly to glance over the way by which he must regain the shelter of the trench, he received a bullet in the brain. Other bullets immediately put an end to the sufferings of the man on his back.

Hall had been born in Belfast, Ireland, but Winnipeg was his Canadian home.

CAPTAIN FRANCIS ALEXANDER CARON SCRIMGER, C.A.M.C.

DURING the terrible days from April 22nd till April 25th, 1915, the Canadian troops had their mettle tested to a supreme degree. In those four days the second battle of Ypres was fought and the German drive held up where its authors had thought it irresistible. Even the deluge of gas—the first used in the war—gained them less benefit than they expected. That battle of Ypres was decidedly a Canadian victory.

Captain F. A. C. Scrimger, of the Canadian Army Medical Corps, was attached at the time to the 14th (Royal Montreal) Battalion. On April 22nd he was in charge of an advanced dressing station situated in an old farm building near the battered city of Ypres. The house was surrounded by a moat over which there was only one road; and that afternoon, during the heavy fighting, the

German artillery found the lonely house and began to shell it.

For three days and nights Scrimger worked among the wounded, heedless of the pandemonium of the battle, in a situation which was perilous in the extreme. The Germans, in their forward rush, brought the farm within rifle range, but still Scrimger and his staff went about their work.

On the afternoon of the 25th the German artillery sent over incendiary shells, and one of these, landing on the farm, set the place alight. The staff were at last forced to move.

The single road was almost impassable owing to a heavy German shrapnel barrage, but the wounded were nevertheless taken back to places of comparative safety. Some of the staff, and some of the less badly wounded patients, swam the moat. They were all removed except one badly injured officer; for him swimming was out of the question.

Scrimger took upon himself the task of saving this patient, but, as he was preparing to move, several direct hits were made on the house by the German artillery. Shrapnel burst through the rafters. Scrimger bent over his patient, protecting him with his body as the splinters fell around them, and finally, during a lull, carried him out of the blazing house on his back.

But in the open there was not even the protection of the shaky walls of the farm, and Scrimger had not gone far with his burden when he saw that the officer was too severely wounded to bear this kind of journeying. There was no shelter in sight, nothing but the shrapnel-swept wastes and the torn, shuddering earth.

Laying his patient down, Scrimger remained beside him, shielding him again with his own body, till help arrived later in the day.

LIEUTENANT F. W. CAMPBELL, 1ST BATTALION

On the afternoon of the 15th of June, 1915, the 1st Canadian Infantry Battalion moved up to a jumping-off position in our front line, with two other battalions of the same brigade on its right, and a third in support. The 7th Division (British) was about to make an attempt to drive the Germans out of an important and formidable position known to our troops as "Stony Mountain," and the 1st Canadian Battalion had been told off to the task of covering and securing that division's right flank of attack. This meant the conquest and occupation of one hundred and fifty yards of the enemy's front line running southwards from "Stony Mountain" to another German stronghold called "Dorchester." It was too big a job to be undertaken in a casual, slap-dash manner or a happy-go-lucky spirit. Experts prepared it, and the artillery and the engineers took a hand in it.

We know that our gunners are always eager to fight at pistol range. Major George Ralston, C.F.A., had two guns of his battery dug into place and sandbagged at a point in our fire-trench called "Duck's Bill" by the morning of the 15th. These guns had been brought up to and through Givenchy during the night, in the usual way, and from the forward edge of the village they had been "man-handled" into the places prepared for them. One was commanded by Lieutenant C. S. Craig and the other by Lieutenant L. S. Kelly. All was ready before daybreak. The German line opposite was only seventy-five yards away

During the afternoon our batteries, firing from

normal positions in the rear, bombarded selected points of the hostile front. At 5.45 the field of fire of our two entrenched guns was uncovered by knocking away the parapet in front of them. They immediately opened fire; and in fifteen minutes they levelled the German parapet opposite for a distance of nearly two hundred yards, slashed the wire along the same frontage and disposed of six machine-gun emplacements.

Then we sprang a mine close in to the German trench; and then our infantry went over.

The leading company of the 1st Battalion charged across the open ground through the smoke and flying earth of the explosion. They were met and swung slightly from their course by withering machine-gun fire from Stony Mountain; but the unhit ran onwards, entered the hostile trench and took and occupied that system of defences called Dorchester. They fought to the left along the trench; but Stony Mountain itself held them off.

With the second wave of the attack came Lieutenant Campbell, his two Colt's machine-guns and their crews. On the way, before reaching the shelter of the captured trench, all the members of one of his gun-crews were wiped out. He got into the trench with only one of his guns and a few unwounded men. He immediately moved to the left towards Stony Mountain, until he was halted by a block in the trench. By this time one Private Vincent was the only man of his two crews still standing and unhit. All the others lay dead or wounded behind him. Vincent, who had been a lumberjack in the woods of Ontario in the days of peace, was as strong of body as of heart and a cool hand into the bargain. When his officer failed to find a suitable base for his gun in that particular position, Vincent saved time by offering his own broad

back. So Campbell straddled Vincent's back with the tripod of the gun and opened fire on the enemy.

By this time our supply of bombs had given out and our attack was weakening. The Germans massed for a counter-attack. Campbell fired over a thousand rounds from his gun, from Vincent's back, dispersed the enemy's initial counter-attack, and afterwards maintained his position until the trench was entered by German bombers and he was seriously wounded. Then Vincent abandoned the tripod and dragged the gun away to safety.

Campbell crawled back towards his friends. He was met and lifted by Sergeant-Major Owen and carried into our jumping-off trench, where he died.

CORPORAL LEO CLARKE, 2ND BATTALION

TWICE veterans of Ypres, the 1st Canadian Division moved southward to the Somme on the first day of September 1916, and established headquarters near the battered town of Albert. A few days later they marched up the Bapaume Road, under heavy enemy shelling, and entered trenches behind Mouquet Farm, to the south of Courcelette, where they relieved the 4th Australian Division. This time the Headquarters were in the shaky shelters of Tara Hill. As soon as the division arrived in the new position the German artillery began to plaster the trenches with every variety of explosive missile, hoping to shake the nerve of the men from Ypres.

About half-past two on the afternoon of the 9th of September the 2nd Battalion relieved the 4th Battalion in a trench on the right of the Canadian

position. The 2nd had been chosen to attack a salient of German trench about 550 yards long, near the north end of Walker Avenue. This salient lay between the Canadians and Courcelette. Before they could attack the village, which was about a mile behind the German trench, the danger of the salient had to be swept from their path.

The attack began that afternoon at a quarter to five. Only the first three companies of the battalion made the assault, the fourth being held in reserve; but when the attackers reached the German line they found that our barrage had not reduced the resistance of the enemy to the extent hoped for. Crowds of Germans were waiting to repel them.

Corporal Leo Clarke was detailed by Lieutenant Hoey to take a section of the bombing platoon and clear out the Germans on the left flank. When the trench was captured, Clarke was to join up with Sergeant Nichols at a block which the latter was to build in the meantime.

Clarke was the first of his party to enter the trench, which was found to be strongly garrisoned. His followers came close on his heels. They bombed their way along the trench from bay to bay, and forced a passage with bayonets and clubbed rifles whenever the need arose. But the odds were heavy against the Canadians, and at length, with his supply of bombs exhausted, Clarke found himself supported only by his dead and wounded. He decided to build a temporary barricade to the left of where Nichols was erecting the permanent block. As he was working at this, a party of Germans, including two officers, advanced cautiously towards him along the trench.

The officers urged forward their reluctant men, who had already experienced more than they liked of Clarke's offensive methods. Clarke left his work of construction and advanced to meet them, deter-

mined to keep them at bay until Nichols had finished the job on the permanent block.

His only weapon was a revolver. He emptied its contents into the mob, picked up a German rifle and exhausted its magazine in the same target, flung that aside, snatched up another and continued his hot fire.

As Clarke was thus employed, the senior German officer took a rifle from one of his own men and lunged wildly at the Canadian. The point of the bayonet caught Clarke just below the knee; but that was the officer's last act in the war, for Clarke shot him dead where he stood.

There were still five Germans left. They turned and ran—and Clarke dropped four of them as they dashed along the trench. The survivor, shouting in excellent English, begged so hard for his life that he was spared. Clarke had killed two officers and sixteen other ranks.

But for Clarke's action, Sergeant Nichols could not have erected the permanent block, which was of vital importance to the security of the Canadian position.

Though wounded in the back and the knee, Clarke refused to leave the trench until ordered to do so by Lieutenant Hoey. Next day he returned to his platoon in billets.

PRIVATE JOHN CHIPMAN KERR, 49TH BATTALION

The war was no new thing, many Canadians were veteran soldiers and many were in Flanders graves, when Kerr decided that his services were more urgently required on the field of battle than on his own new acres in the Province of Alberta. He had gone north and west shortly before the outbreak of

war, from the home of his family in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, to virgin land on Spirit River, fifty miles from the nearest railway.

Kerr found other "homesteaders" on Spirit River who saw eye to eye with him in this matter—a dozen patriotic adventurers who were determined to exchange safe establishments in life for the prospects of violent deaths. Together they "footed" the fifty miles to the railway. In Edmonton they enlisted in a body in the 66th Battalion.

Early in June, 1916, four hundred officers and other ranks were drafted from the 66th, then training in England, to the 49th, then fighting in France. Private J. C. Kerr was a more or less unconsidered unit in that draft. These reinforcements, with others, reached France shortly after the Battle of Sanctuary Wood, an engagement in which the Germans attacked with so crushing a superiority of men and metal and the Canadians fought so stubbornly as to necessitate the withdrawal of fragments of battalions of a whole division for reorganization. The 49th Battalion was represented by one of these indomitable fragments.

The Canadians marched from the Salient to the Somme in the autumn of that year. The 49th, up to strength once more and with its old spirit renewed, reached Albert on the 13th of September.

Forty hours later it took up a battle position at a point near the Sunken Road, before and to the left of the village of Courcelette, with other battalions of the same brigade.

In the great Canadian advance of September the 15th, in which our morning and evening attacks drove the Germans from the Sugar Refinery, Courcelette, and many more strongholds and intricate systems of defence, the 49th Battalion supported the Princess Patricia's and the 42nd Battalion on the extreme

left of our frontage of aggressive operations. These battalions advanced the line to the left of Courcelette, keeping abreast of the units that assaulted and occupied the village and mopped up its crowded dug-outs and fortified houses. Their activities were devoted entirely to the subjection and occupation of strong trenches and trench machine-gun posts. They moved irresistibly forward, cleaning things up as they went. They reached and occupied their final objectives—with the exception of a length of trench about 250 yards in extent, which remained in the hands of the enemy until the following day. But the defenders of that isolated section of trench could not retreat, for the head of their communicat ing trench was blocked, they dared not attempt a rearward flight on the surface and they were flanked right and left by the Canadians. So the matter rested for the night, with no more stir than an occasional exchange of bombs across the flanking barricades.

On the afternoon of the 16th, a party of bombers from the 49th Battalion undertook to clear this offending piece of trench and so make possible the consolidation of the entire frontage gained in the previous day's offensives. Here is where the ex-homesteader from Spirit River steps into that high light which illuminates more frequently and glaringly the feeble activities of the music-hall stage than the grim heroics of the battle-field.

Private John Chipman Kerr, as first bayonet-man, moved forward well in advance of his party. He twitched himself over the block in the communicating trench in less time than he had ever taken to negotiate a pasture fence on the home-farm. He advanced about thirty yards into the hostile position before a sentry took alarm and hurled a grenade. Kerr saw the grenade coming and, in the fraction of a second at his disposal, attempted to protect him

self with his arm. He was partially successful in this, for when the bomb exploded it did no more than blow off the upper joint of his right fore-finger and wound him slightly in the right side.

By this time the other members of the assaulting party were close to his heels. The exchange of bombs between the defenders and attackers now became general, though an angle in the trench hid each party from view of the other. Good throwing was done by our men, who were all experts; but Kerr felt that the affair promised to settle into a stationary action unless something new and sudden happened. So he clambered out of the trench and the shocks of that blind fight and moved along the parados until he came into close contact with, and full view of, the enemy. He was still armed with his rifle and two grenades; and, despite loss of blood, he was still full of enterprise and fight. He tossed the grenades among the crowded defenders beneath him and then opened fire into them with his rifle. Mud jambed the bolt of his rifle, whereupon he replaced it with the weapon of the second bayonet-man, Private Frank Long, who had followed him out of the trench and had just then caught up with him.

While Kerr pumped lead into the massed enemy beneath his feet he directed the fire of his bombers so effectively, by voice and gesture, that the defenders were forced back to the shelter of the nearest bay. He immediately jumped down into the trench and went after them, with all the Canadian bombers and bayonet-men at his heels. A dug-out was reached; and while this was being investigated Kerr went on alone, rounded a bay and once again joined battle with the defenders of the trench. But the spirit of combat, even of resistance, had gone out of them. Up went their hands!

Before having his wounds dressed, Private Kerr

escorted the 62 Germans across open ground, under heavy fire, to a support trench, and then returned and reported himself for duty to his company commander.

The official recommendation says: "The action of this man at this juncture undoubtedly resulted in the capture of 62 prisoners and the taking of 250 yards of enemy trench."

This seems to be a conservative statement of the case. It takes no account of the other Germans who were involved in that brisk affair. They have been dead a long time.

MAJOR T. W. MACDOWELL, 38TH BATTALION

MAJOR MACDOWELL won his D.S.O. on November 18th, 1916, for his quick decision and determined action in an attack made by his battalion—the 38th, from Ottawa—on the British front, south of the Ancre, against Desire Trench and Desire Support Trench. With "B" Company, of which he was Captain, he advanced to within throwing distance and bombed three German machine-guns which had been holding up the advance, capturing, after severe hand-to-hand fighting, three officers and fifty of the enemy crews. It was this enterprise which cleared the way for the advance to the final objective.

The same qualities of courage and swift decision were manifested on the occasion on which he won the Victoria Cross during the action of Vimy Ridge on the 9th of April, 1917. MacDowell delights in battle detail. He wants to know just where he is going when he enters an engagement, and before the big attack on Vimy he studied all the available Intelligence Reports and aeroplane maps, even selecting

the particular German dug-out in which he intended to establish his headquarters after the position was won.

The 38th, having been reorganized after the battle on the Somme, had moved up to the trenches at Vimy just after Christmas Day, 1916. For four long winter months the battalion remained in front of the famous ridge until, on that day in April, it went up, in conjunction with other Canadian units, in full battle array and snatched the position from the enemy.

It is impossible to over-estimate the strategic value of Vimy Ridge. Its two spurs, flung out west and south-west in a series of heights which dominated the western plain, were regarded by military experts as the backbone of the whole German position in France. The Ridge was not only a naturally strong position made as impregnable as German skill could make it; it was more than that. Upon it, it was argued, hinged—and still hinges—the entire strategy of the enemy's retreat in the west. The enemy had held the heights since the third month of the war. They were the great bastion of his lines. Four times had the Allies attacked the position, biting deep into the German line; but still the enemy held the Ridge, though the holding of it had cost him sixty thousand men. It was to obtain possession of this famous series of hills that the Canadian battalions climbed out of their trenches at 5.30 a.m. on that April day.

Few men slept soundly on the night before the great attack. The stern, hard training for the operation which had been in process for some weeks had tightened and toughened every link in the chain from the highest rank to the lowest, and the last few hours dragged fitfully. All watches had been synchronized and immediately 5.30 o'clock ticked

a roar of artillery, awe-inspiring and stupendous, burst from the batteries, the hiding-places of which were only revealed by the short, sharp flashes; and Vimy Ridge was all afire with cataclysmic death and destruction.

Behind the barrage, driving through No Man's Land towards their objective, went the Canadian battalions. Captain MacDowell reached the German line about fifty yards to the right of the point for which he was aiming; but most of his men, having worked slightly farther to the right, became separated from their leader, who found himself alone with two runners. The German dug-out where he aimed at establishing himself could be seen in the shell-torn line, but there was no time to collect a party to clean the place up. But on the way to his destination MacDowell captured two enemy machine-guns as an aside. He bombed one out of action, then attacked the other. The second gunner did not wait, but ran for shelter to a dug-out whither MacDowell followed and got him.

Working their way along to the big dug-out the three Canadians saw that the place was more formidable than they had anticipated. It stretched far underground. MacDowell bawled down the deep passage, summoning the German occupants to surrender. No answer came from out the depths to his demand; but that Germans were down in the underground there seemed no doubt. The captain decided to go down and find out. It was a gigantic game of bluff he was playing, and it succeeded by reason of its very audacity.

A flight of fifty-two steps led to the earthen floor below, and down those fifty-two steps went Captain MacDowell. Along a narrow passage he went and then, suddenly, as he turned a corner, which led into the main room of this subterranean fortress, he

found himself face to face with a large group of the enemy. There were seventy-seven of them—though he did not know the exact number till afterwards, when they were counted—mostly Prussian Guards. Now, by all the laws of arithmetic and logic Captain MacDowell ought to have been taken prisoner or killed. But he was not out to be governed by the laws of arithmetic or logic. He was out to capture Boches and to kill those he could not capture.

Quick as a flash he turned and began to shout orders to an imaginary force behind him—and up went the hands of the seventy-seven stalwart Guards. "*Kamerad!*" they said.

It was one thing, however, to accept the surrender of this large party and quite another to get them out of the dug-out, for there was more than a chance that when they discovered there were but three Canadians to look after them they would try to overwhelm their captors. The captain decided to send the Germans up in batches of twelve, and the two runners, Kebus and Hay, marshalled them in the open at the top. Among the prisoners were two officers.

What had been expected, once the Germans were marched up into the daylight, occurred. Some of them were furious at the trick which had been played on them and one of them caught up a rifle and shot at one of the Canadians. The rebellion did not last long, for it was checked by quick, drastic measures.

That afternoon, when the riot of the attack had quietened somewhat, MacDowell and his two men made a thorough exploration of the dug-out and a report on the position was sent back to headquarters. Here is the report in his own hurried words, written with a stump of pencil, with his notebook on his

knee as the German shells were crashing all around the entrance to the dug-out:

"While exploring this dug-out we discovered a large store of what we believe to be explosives in a room. There is also an old sap leading down underground in the direction of No. — Crater. This was explored . . . we have cut all the wires, for fear of possible destructive posts. The dug-out has three entries, and will accommodate easily 250 or 300 men, with the sap to spare. It is seventy-five feet underground and very comfortable. The cigars are very choice and my supply of Perrier water is very large. . . .

"They are firing at us all the time with their heavy guns from the south-east, but I have no casualties to report since coming in here, except being half scared to death myself by a 'big brute' . . . .

"We have taken two machine-guns that I know of; and a third and possibly a fourth will be taken to-night. This post was a machine-gun post and was held by a machine-gun company. I believe they are the Prussian Guards; all big, strong men who came in last night. They had plenty of rations; but we had a great time taking them prisoners.

"It is a great story. My two runners, Kebus and Hay, did invaluable work getting them out of the dug-out. . . . There is a large number of wounded in front of here, as I can see by the rifles stuck in the ground. We are using German rifles as ours are out of commission."

Five days later, when the enemy artillery slackened, reinforcements were sent up and succeeded in reaching the captain; and when, finally, he was relieved from the position and reported himself at his battalion headquarters, one can imagine that his brother officers —those who were left—were glad to see him.

LIEUTENANT FREDERICK MAURICE WATSON HARVEY, LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE.

THE first Canadian cavalryman to win the Victoria Cross in this war is Lieutenant Harvey, of Lord Strathcona's Horse.

The Strathconas, raised for service in South Africa, and originally recruited largely from the Royal North-West Mounted Police, distinguished themselves in the Boer War and afterwards were established as a unit of the Canadian Permanent Militia. Along with the other regiments of our cavalry brigade they fought as infantry in the trenches throughout the autumn and winter of 1915–16. The brigade was then withdrawn from the line, rehorsed and embarked upon a long course of training and waiting.

March, 1917, found the Canadian Cavalry Brigade serving with the 15th Army Corps, north of Peronne on the Somme. At this time the brigade consisted of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, Lord Strathcona's Horse, the Fort Garry Horse, the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, the Canadian Cavalry Machine-Gun Squadron and a field ambulance.

On the morning of March 24th the brigade received orders to form on a twelve-mile frontage, with Nurlu as its centre, and from there to advance beyond our infantry positions. By the evening of the same day the Royal Canadian Dragoons were in possession of several hostile positions, including the woods to the south-west of Lieramont; and during the night the Fort Garry Horse, on the left of the advance, took the villages of Ytres and Etricourt.

On the afternoon of the 25th Captain Sharpe,

with his squadron of F.G.H., dislodged the Germans from the smaller of two woods that they held in strength. From this first wood he launched an attack upon the second and larger, in open order at the gallop, and drove the enemy through and out of that cover and into the shelter of a trench beyond. This was the first instance, in more than two years, of cavalry riding straight at a position held by rifles and machine-guns.

At six o'clock of the following day (March 26th) the Strathconas gained a wood south-east of Equancourt, where they dismounted, and from which they advanced upon and captured the village at the point of the bayonet. At the same time the Fort Garry Horse, attacking from the north, made their objectives in spite of heavy machine-gun fire. The admirable shooting of the R.C.H.A. had much to do with the success of the operation.

During the night, and early in the morning of the 27th, the R.C.D's occupied the villages of Longasvesnes and Lieramont. They handed the defence of the former over to the infantry ; but they remained in the latter and there repulsed a strong counter-attack.

High ground about the village of Guyencourt and Grebaussart Wood was the final objective of a series of attacks made by the Lord Strathcona's Horse and the Fort Garry Horse on the evening of the 27th. A heavy snow-storm delayed the initial stroke until 5.15 ; but then, the moment the air was clear enough for the leaders to see the way, a squadron of the Fort Garry Horse galloped forward to Hill 140 and there established two machine-guns in commanding positions. This squadron then pushed around the hill into Grebaussart Wood, Jean Copse and Chauffeurs Wood, and successfully posted three more machine-guns. Other squadrons of this regiment rode straight at the village of Saulcourt,

and penetrated its outskirts. The Germans, retiring before them, were caught by our machine-gun fire.

The Strathconas, with Guyencourt in view, charged on to a ridge on the left front of that village, where they were confronted by machine-guns and strongly wired positions; so they swung to the right, rode at the north-west corner of the village and won to the partial shelter of its walls.

It was at this stage of the swift action that Lieutenant Harvey performed the conspicuous deed of valour that was recognized by the highest award. He commanded the leading troop of the charging Strathconas and rode well in front of his men. He was close to the edge of the village, when, by the failing light, he discovered a deadly menace to his command set fairly across his course—a wired trench containing a machine-gun and a strong garrison. He swung from his saddle and sprinted straight at the gun, firing his revolver as he ran. He reached the triple entanglement and hurdled it, shot the machine-gunner and jumped on to the gun.

The man at the gun must have lost his nerve and his wits in the face of that amazing, swift frontal assault; his hands must have fumbled, misguided by his flinching brain: we know that his gun jammed and that he died a violent death.

Thus the trench became ours, the Strathconas took Guyencourt, and Harvey won the Cross.

PRIVATE WILLIAM JOHNSTONE MILNE,
16TH BATTALION

THE 16th Canadian Battalion (the "Canadian Scottish") occupied the left sub-sector of the 3rd

Brigade front in the attack on Vimy Ridge on April 9th, 1917. On the left of the 16th was the 18th Battalion and on the right was the 14th Battalion. Private W. J. Milne was of the 16th.

In due time the important and detailed story of the attack on the ridge will be given to the outside world and in that day the victory of the Canadian troops will be seen in its true perspective. The enormous amount of preliminary work required before the attack took place has been hinted at elsewhere in these pages. The 16th Battalion had its share in these preparations and also in the glory of conquest.

The 2nd and the 3rd Brigades were appointed to capture the first two objectives, namely, Zwolfe Graben and Zwischen Stellung. After taking these two positions they were to consolidate and allow the 1st Brigade to pass through on their way to capture the farther objectives.

Every unit was reported assembled and ready well ahead of " Zero " hour, which was 5.30 a.m. Two minutes after our barrage opened on the enemy front our infantry climbed out of their trenches and went forward. As they went over No Man's Land a rising north-westerly wind blew up a storm of snow and sleet which continued for several hours.

As the 16th Battalion approached the first objective an enemy machine-gun opened a heavy fire on them, causing many casualties. Milne located the gun, and, crouching on his hands and knees, began to work his way forward. Over his shoulder was slung his bag of bombs. Several times he was fired at, but he continued to crawl till he was within bombing distance, then leaping to his feet, he hurled his bombs into the midst of the gun crew. Every German went down, dead or wounded. Milne rushed forward and captured the gun.

The Canadian line reformed and the battalion continued its advance. They swarmed over the Zwolfe Graben, bundled out as prisoners those Germans who still crouched in the deep dug-outs, killed those who still offered resistance; and then went ahead to the second position.

Here again the hidden German machine-gunners gave considerable trouble. Many of those nests of machine-guns were concealed in pockets near or in dug-outs, and as our men advanced they were met by unexpected bursts of fire. Just before reaching Zwischen Stellung the battalion was again held up by a concrete emplacement hidden in a hay-stack near Terry Trench.

Milne undertook to clear out this nest as before. He repeated his tactics, stalking the gun in the same way. He was again successful. This time he knocked out the weapon, causing the garrison to surrender. The second objective of the battalion was taken soon afterwards.

Milne, however, did not live to know his bravery had won him the Victoria Cross. He was killed not many hours afterwards; but his contribution towards the Vimy Ridge victory was officially recognized when the dust of conflict had settled down.

LANCE-SERGEANT ELLIS WELWOOD SIFTON,
18TH BATTALION

On Easter Monday (April 9th), 1917, in a mixture of recurrent rain and driving sleet, the Canadian troops took Vimy Ridge from the Germans.

When it is said that the Canadians "took" this ridge the literally correct phrase is used. No other

word expresses the historic incident so well. The Canadian battalions took Vimy Ridge; and Lance-Sergeant Ellis Welwood Sifton, of the 18th Battalion, from Ontario, was one of a few men whose deeds on that tremendous day won for them the highest mark of admiration their fellows could offer for valour. He gave his life for the award.

The taking of Vimy Ridge was an operation which involved practically every Canadian unit. It was a scheme the authors of which hardly dared to hope would be so completely carried out, for the ridge was the pivot of the German millions on the whole western front. It was an eight-thousand-yards-long fortress, deemed by its occupants to be impregnable, a bastion of inestimable strength and importance, an inland Gibraltar.

British and French armies had tried several times to wrest it from the German grasp. The Germans had met their smashing blows, had quivered under them—but had continued to hold the ridge. On the morning of that Easter Monday they held it, arrogant as ever. In the evening they were gone!

The slopes of Vimy were a maze of trenches of superb construction, fashioned to withstand the pounding of any artillery. The dug-outs were vast, fortified underground chambers—some capable of sheltering entire battalions—where enemy shells could not find the occupants. Its machine-gun fortresses were formidable as miniature battleships.

To familiarize themselves with the difficulties which an attack on this ridge would involve, the Canadian Divisions went into strict training for weeks behind the lines. Battalion commanders were called in conference to the headquarters of their brigades, brigadiers to their divisions, divisional commanders to corps; the results of these deliberations were made

known to regimental officers; officers lectured the non-commissioned officers, the non-commissioned officers passed it on, as non-commissioned officers do, to the rank and file. All ranks trained.

At 5.30 on the fateful morning the 18th Battalion was in position on the right wing of the 4th Brigade front. The dawn was dull, uncertain, depressing. Heavy clouds lay over the battlefield and a biting north-west wind scudded across the waste lands.

With the first crash of the barrage which fell on the German front the waves of assaulting troops rose out of their trenches like gnomes of the night and started for the enemy lines. The 18th Battalion assaulted on a three-platoon frontage in four waves. Before them the fire-edged barrage swept on, destroying with the completeness of a flaming guillotine.

The first German line was gained and captured with very small loss to the attackers. The Germans were stunned and demoralized by the hurricane of explosives which was being hurled at them. They called "*Kamerad!*" and were dispatched, still meek and submissive, to a safer place.

But at the second line, after the barrage had swept over it, the first opposition of importance was met. Here small parties of machine-gunners, tucked away in their concrete fortresses, had escaped the terrible shelling and as the Canadians advanced they enfiladed the waves of men as they passed.

One such nest stemmed the advance of "C" Company. Men began to fall, hit by the unseen enemy. The others peered around in the gloom, trying to discover the nest. Lance-Sergeant Sifton saw it first. The barrel of the gun showed over a parapet.

Sifton did not wait to work out an elaborate attack, for there was no time to lose. He rushed ahead, leaped into the trench, charged into the crew, overthrew the gun and turned on the gunners with his

bayonet. Before they had time to resist, every one of the Germans was out of business. With the demolition of the machine-gun, the advance of the 18th Battalion moved on.

Sifton's men hurried up to support him, but before they reached the position a party of Germans advanced on him from down the trench. He attacked them with bayonet and clubbed rifle and held them off till his comrades jumped into the trench and ended the unequal fight. But none noticed a dying German, one of Sifton's victims, who rolled over to the edge of the trench, picked up a rifle and took careful aim.

That was how he died—the man from Ontario, of whom it was stated in official phraseology that " his conspicuous valour undoubtedly saved many lives and contributed largely to the success of the operation."

LIEUTENANT ROBERT GRIERSON COMBE, 27TH BATTALION

WHEN Captain Stinson, of the 27th Canadian Battalion, received a message from a breathless runner during the darkness of early morning on May 3rd, 1917, to the effect that Lieutenant R. G. Combe had but five men left out of his entire company, he realized that matters were serious on the right wing of the attacking formations. How serious he did not know until later. By the time he had sent reinforcements and investigated the situation, Lieutenant Combe had lost his life and won the Victoria Cross.

It had been planned by headquarters that the attack on the German front-line system in the vicinity of Acreville should take place before dawn.

But Lieutenant Combe and a handful of followers were the only men of the 27th Battalion (City of Winnipeg) who reached their objective. Darkness and the enemy's concentration of artillery were responsible for the hold-up of the other sections of the advance.

The battalion was in the ridge line with headquarters at Thelus Cave just prior to the attack, and they relieved troops who were already weary after a strenuous spell in the trenches. The attack began at 3.45 a.m. on the 3rd May; but the Germans had guessed very accurately the time of the intended assault, and two hours before our barrage opened they began to shell the assembly area with determined severity. So heavy was the fire that the attacking forces sustained many casualties before they were in the jumping-off trenches, and it was plain to the leaders that the problem of maintaining any kind of formation would be a difficult one.

The 31st Battalion worked on the left of the 27th. It was still dark when the first waves of infantry went over the top and forward behind our barrage. They left in perfect order, walking into a darkness as intense as that of the Pit, save for the fitful flash of exploding shells. Terrible gaps were torn in their ranks as they advanced; whole groups of men were blown out of the line, and those who continued to stumble on soon lost touch with their fellows. The fears of the battalion commanders were fulfilled. Formation was impossible, and it was only with small groups that touch could be kept.

The leading companies were forced to take cover at a distance of seven hundred yards from the German front line. They lay down in shell-holes and on the torn, trembling earth, scratching feebly at the hard surface to secure cover while they got their second wind. In a short time they were up and

stumbling forward again; but they had only gone two hundred yards when the German artillery shortened range and the full force of the barrage fell on them.

Under that staggering blow men collapsed in dozens, crushed by the weight of uptorn earth or blown to fragments. In the right company, Lieutenant Combe was the only officer who had survived so far. His company was but a tattered remnant of what it had been a few moments before; but Combe had his orders surging at the back of his head, and he meant to carry them out. Collecting the handful of men left to him he began to work his way through the German barrage. He managed it. He brought his followers safely through that terrible curtain of fire, only to find that if he would reach the German line he must also get through the barrage of our own guns. He steadied his men and accomplished the second journey also. Just how he piloted them through the hail of shells it is impossible to explain; these things can only be guessed at. But he did it; and he had only five men left when he reached the German trenches.

Back in the rear, Captain Stinson, of the supporting company, saw the advance checked on the right; but there was no sign of failure on the left. He concluded that the latter wing had reached its objective. With a runner he scrambled forward towards the German line. When he was within twenty yards of the enemy trench he stopped, amazed, for the Germans were lining their parapet, waiting to meet the assaulting battalions. That was how Captain Stinson discovered that the 31st Battalion had not reached its objective. He retired with the information.

It was then that he received the message from Lieutenant Combe, asking for reinforcements and

stating his position. Captain Stinson ordered Sergeant Boddington, of "A" Company, to send forward twenty men to help Combe. The Captain himself went forward in advance, with a runner. He found Combe in the act of winning his posthumous decoration.

Combe and his men had entered the German trench after a terrible struggle, aided by a few men of another company whom they had picked up. They bombed the Germans along the trench with German bombs, having exhausted their own long before. Eighty prisoners had been captured and were on their way back to our lines, and 250 yards of trench were in the hands of the invaders.

Again and again the gallant little band charged the enemy, Combe always at their head, leading them around traverses and into dug-outs. Along the whole of that 250 yards of trench lay dead and dying Germans.

Combe was killed by a rifle bullet as he was leading his gallant bombers up the trench in the climax of his triumph.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM AVERY BISHOP, R.F.C. (LATE CANADIAN CAVALRY).

"GIVE me the aeroplane I want," said Captain W. A. Bishop, "and I'll go over to Berlin any night—or day—and come back too, with any luck."

It was during a discussion in the mess on the question of air reprisals that Canada's champion airman slipped in the quiet remark; and when a man who has won the V.C., the Military Cross and the D.S.O. with a bar, says he could bomb the German

capital it may be taken that he means what he says. He had then brought down nearly fifty German flyers, besides a few balloons.

Born at Owen Sound, Ontario, in 1894, a son of the registrar of Grey County, this stripling received a commission in the Canadian Cavalry in March, 1915, and went to France with a cavalry unit. He was in the trenches in the days when our Cavalry Brigade held a section of the line as infantry. Later, after only one experience of fighting Germans from horseback, he decided that he wanted more excitement and joined the increasing host of airmen.

His headquarters in France as a flying man were until recently in the cosiest of aerodromes, cuddled close up against a small bunch of cool trees, which looked innocent enough from the air. An ancient farm is in the vicinity and the title of the young airman's hut was "The Abode of Love." It is a fitting answer to the Hymn of Hate.

Commanding this squadron of airmen, he brought it to perfection, and none disputed that he was a fitting successor to Captain Ball, the famous English V.C. hero, who was the leader until his death. Every man of the squadron has brought down at least ten Germans and the cheerful group is reputed to have the greatest percentage of flying nerve on the western front.

His best and most daring work, however, has been done when he has been "solo" flying. It is true that he attributes most of his success to "luck," but his comrades know that more than luck is needed to bring an airman safely out of some of the awkward situations in which he has been placed. On the 24th April, 1917, he was climbing slowly against the wind a few miles east of Monchy when he saw an enemy two-seater busily making observations of the Allied line and sending wireless messages to the

German headquarters in the rear. He dived at the big machine, firing in bursts from his Lewis gun as he went. But his gun jammed and he was compelled to wheel round, tinkering with the weapon as he flew. In a few moments he had remedied the trouble and banged fifteen more shots at the enemy; but again his gun jammed, and before he could clear it the big German had escaped.

When he got the gun into working order again he flew eastward towards Vitry, hawking the air lanes for other opponents. Before long he observed another two-seater, also on observation work. This time he tried his gun at long range, then rushed at the enemy, firing in bursts as he charged.

The German machine wriggled, flying first one way then another, with the Canadian hanging on at its tail and spouting gusts of bullets at it in short intervals. Hit at last in the fusilage, the German made a dive for earth. Swift on the track of the two-seater came the captain, firing all the way; and when the German machine finally landed in a meadow he finished the remainder of his ammunition drum into it as it lay on the ground. Neither pilot nor observer climbed out. Both had been killed as they sat in the 'bus.

Ten minutes later, after he had recharged his gun, Bishop climbed into the clouds to continue his cruise of the front line. As he rose he saw, away ahead, a British Nieuport being attacked by three Albatross scouts. He flew to his compatriot's assistance, and, coming up from behind, emptied his gun into one of the enemy. The German collapsed and went down like a stone. The Nieuport by this time had started in pursuit of one of the other Albatrosses, which was trying to escape, so Bishop tackled the third. A few buzzing, manœuvring circles, a few bursts from the deadly little gun—and the German was diving

steeply to earth. Captain Bishop slid down in his smoking wake and saw him crash, a heap of broken spars and flames.

There is no trick of aircraft that this young Canadian does not know, though he is not a showy flyer. The number of his exploits is endless, and as his squadron moved from one part of the line to another he constantly found new pastures for adventure, new opponents to defeat, more Germans to kill. He has fought German airmen high over the waves of advancing battalions and has heard, as a faint whisper coming up to him, the cheers of his fellow countrymen when he shot down his enemies at their feet. He has chased a German Staff automobile along a dusty road and opened fire on it so that the driver lost his nerve and ditched the car, and the occupants threw their massive dignity to the winds and scrambled for shelter into a dug-out.

Not very long ago, when he was roaming alone, twelve thousand feet high, he heard the stutter of machine-guns from out the clouds, and drove in their direction to find his own juvenile major fighting single-handed against five formidable German battle machines. Down swooped the captain on the tail of the nearest enemy, riddled the pilot and observer with bullets, fought another for a few minutes and sent him also to the ground, dived down, reloading his gun as he went, then up again and blew a third into eternity with a terrific burst of fire; and then, joyfully and with calm happiness, escorted his major home in a merry, zig-zag course which told the watchers of his aerodrome that all was well with the world.

The incident which brought him his Victoria Cross occurred one June day in 1917, when he was working, as usual, independently. He *zoomed* across No Man's Land, over the German front and support

trenches, driving on to where he thought was game worth seeking. The game in this instance was an aerodrome. But as he circled above the enemy hangars at fifteen thousand feet the place seemed to have a strangely deserted appearance. Down he came to within three hundred feet of the hangars to investigate; and the only occupant of the aerodrome proved to be a very nervous gunner who feebly turned a machine-gun on him. The nervous gunner was sent scuttering to cover by a few bursts of fire. Then the disappointed captain turned the nose of his machine upwards, wondering whether he would find any hostile craft waiting for him above the clouds. Through the thin clouds he mounted into the clear spaces above. No enemy was to be seen, nothing but the blue void; and the warm, soft atmosphere was very pleasant that day. The captain was out for adventure. He flew on deeper into the German lines.

Twelve miles from the German front line he looked over the side of his 'plane and saw, basking in the pleasant sunshine, the very thing he had come to smash. It was another German aerodrome, with a number of machines lined up in front of the sheds, ready for a journey.

Bishop counted the machines—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Seven new, beautiful bombers all in a row, brass burnished, oiled, a few of the engines running, all ready for a trip into Allied territory—or perhaps to England! It was a very tidy aerodrome and the seven machines on the lawn looked very trim. The captain descended to have a closer look—and the Germans spotted him and raised the alarm; guns began to splash white puffs of shrapnel around him.

Down dived this youngster through the barrage till he was within fifty feet of the ground and then

his machine-gun began to spray the German machines and the lawn with bullets. A mechanic, who was trying to start one of the aeroplanes, fell beside the propeller, riddled with shot. Up raced the Canadian then, rising in sharp spirals as fast as his machine could travel. Up after him went a German, throbbing with a desire for revenge. But Bishop was expecting this very thing ; and as the German reached sixty feet from the ground he swooped down and around suddenly and fired into the chasing machine at close range. The German 'plane crashed to earth, carrying a dead pilot with it.

Turning swiftly, the captain saw a second Albatross rising. He closed with this one till about 150 yards separated them ; then, getting the German full on his sights, he sent a blast of thirty rounds into him. Away went the Albatross, side-slipping into a tree, where it hung a wretched, broken thing.

A third Albatross came up to the combat, while the invader swung over the aerodrome sheds in the midst of a storm of shrapnel from the enemy guns. Bishop cleared the sheds and swept upward a thousand feet, met his third enemy as he mounted and emptied the remainder of his drum of ammunition at him. The Albatross swerved, slid, fluttered and fell to earth within three hundred yards of the spot from which it had mounted but a few moments before.

The invader quickly inserted a new drum and swung round again to where a fourth machine was humming towards him. He took no chances with this antagonist, but opened fire at a fair range as it headed at him.

Already a fifth German was coming out of the blue, trying to sandwich him between it and its fellow. He had no time to waste on the fifth. He kept hammering at the fourth till it also left the fight and

planed down to the green sward below, out of control and little better than a wreck.

He faced the fifth—had him, indeed, in a favourable position for ending his career also—when he realized that he had finished his ammunition. That fact saved the life of the German airman. Captain Bishop regretfully raised his empty drum and waved a farewell to this, his latest adversary, and started on his hundred-mile race for home.

The solitary German was soon left behind; but from another aerodrome came four German scouts who had been sent to the rescue of their friends of the now untidy aerodrome. They had seen the latter part of the battle. Though they were about a thousand feet above him they did not attack, but fell behind after following for about a mile.

With his machine slashed almost to ribbons, Bishop made a safe landing near the bunch of green trees beside the ancient farm. That night there was great rejoicing at the "Abode of Love," for the news spread quickly and men came from neighbouring parts of the line to offer congratulations.

PRIVATE J. G. PATTISON, 50TH BATTALION

During the morning of April 10th, 1917, the 44th and 50th Battalions were instructed to capture and consolidate, as an outpost line, the Eastern edge of Vimy Ridge lying beyond Hill 145. The men of the 10th Brigade had been in reserve while their comrades swept over Vimy on the previous day and were anxious to get in some good work with the rest of the Corps. There is no doubt that they succeeded.

The men of the 50th made their way to Beer Trench, and at zero hour, 3.15 p.m., went forward with a rush. Opposition was immediate and severe. From every broken tree and battered piece of cover machine-gun fire swept the attack, and casualties were extremely heavy; but the men continued to push forward.

On the right "C" Company attacked, with "D" Company in close support; on the left "A" Company, with "B" Company in support. The leading companies found the "going" extremely hard, but for a time all went well, and though the advance was slow, steady progress was made.

As the incessant fire thinned the waves of attacking troops, greater difficulty was encountered in enveloping the machine-gun nests that barred our progress. In the first stage of an attack made by determined troops the resistance close at hand is easily swamped; but as the men continue to push forward the innumerable obstructions and perils of the battlefield gather against their weakening impact, fatigue slows them, their front is broken and their connecting files are shot down; and so a steady enveloping movement becomes a series of bitterly contested little battles, where small parties in twos and threes fight strategic engagements with isolated strong points of the enemy. Finally a series of partial checks culminates in an abrupt cessation of the advance—and a gathering company finds itself held up before an embattled fortification whose point of vantage covers the whole local zone of attack.

Then the real trouble begins. Time and again in the history of the war one hostile fortification left in otherwise captured territory has changed or materially affected the final issue of the engagement.

It may serve as a rallying-point for a determined counter-attack, or by its wide zones of fire hamper the advance of reinforcements on the flanks, or prevent the supply of vital munitions to a new and precarious front line; its effectiveness is limited only by its natural position, and as this has been selected with care and forethought by an efficient enemy, one small but actively hostile strong-point may prove a very capable thorn in the side of a harassed general.

On that April afternoon the 50th Battalion encountered just such a check. It was on the left of the battalion attacking zone, and the men of "A" Company, gradually gathering in the nearest cover, had organized and carried out several gallant attempts to rush the position. Each time they had been beaten back with heavy losses.

Now "B" Company arrived to reinforce the assault. Another attack was organized, with no more success than the last; and then, as so often occurs, a critical situation was relieved by the clear-headed bravery of a single soldier.

Private Pattison, an engineer from Calgary, proceeded to deal with the situation. He advanced single-handed towards the machine-gun post in a series of short rapid dashes, taking cover on the way in available shell-holes while deciding his next point of vantage. In a few moments he had reached a shell-hole within thirty yards of the vital strong-point. He stood up in full view of the machine-gunners and under their point-blank fire threw three bombs with such good aim that the guns were put out of action and the crews temporarily demoralized. This was Pattison's opportunity, and he took it without hesitation. As his last bomb exploded amidst the Germans he rushed across the intervening space and in a moment was using his bayonet upon

the unhappy enemy. He had killed them all before his companions had caught him up.

Twenty minutes later all objectives were gained and the Canadians busy consolidating the captured line. Pattison came unscathed through the day's fighting, and through the successful attack on the Pimple on the following day; but he never wore his V.C., though he was aware that he had been recommended for the honour. He was killed on June 2nd in the attack upon the Generating Station.

Very few men of Pattison's age now reach the honour of the Victoria Cross, as this war has set almost too high a standard for their physical activity. Pattison was 42 years old—a smart soldier and a good fellow. His son, a young soldier in his father's battalion, wears the ribbon upon his right breast, and probably will wear it on his left side too, before this war is over.

PRIVATE HARRY BROWN, 10TH BATTALION

Most men who have won the Victoria Cross have gained it by some act of violent, passionate valour. Private Harry Brown, Number 226353, of the 10th Battalion, won it by suppressing the impulse to violence. Whilst others on the same field of battle were earning the decoration in the impetuous fury of assault Harry Brown was earning it by the terrible, pitiless restraint which he imposed on his emotions. His was the supreme courage of self-control, the silent valour of abnegation.

The 10th Battalion took part in the attack on Hill 70, near Loos, which began on the 15th of

August, 1917, and lasted for several days. Before midnight of the 14th the battalion was in position, and at 4.25 a.m. the attack began. The first German line was captured in face of fierce opposition, the fighting continuing intermittently throughout the day; but the position was held. During the night, attempts were made to consolidate the new line; but the 7th and the 8th Battalions were in difficulties and the 10th Battalion was ordered next morning to move to their assistance.

This second attack began at four o'clock on the afternoon of the 15th. Chalk Pit, the redoubt on the left of Hill 70, was assaulted by "A," "B" and "C" companies. "A" company encountered terrible enemy machine-gun fire when within two hundred yards of the pit and were forced to take cover in shell-holes for a time. After a short rest the position was captured in a rush, the waves of attackers, carried forward by the impetus of the advance, reaching a trench seventy-five yards beyond Chalk Pit. The German occupants were all either killed or captured.

The position was being consolidated when Sergeant J. Wennevold and a party of men of "C" company went out to reinforce a post to the right of the new battalion front in order to protect the flank from a counter-attack. Consolidation of that position was terrible work. To the men who tried to dig into the hard, chalky soil that attempt must always remain a nightmare. They could make little impression on the earth. In one part of the front the result of the previous night's labour was a trench scarcely two feet deep, blunted tools and aching hands and backs.

While the work was in progress the Germans poured a hurricane of fire from machine-guns and field-guns on the position. Men were killed and wounded

faster than others could take their places. The crisis of that day and night of endurance and agony came at a quarter to five o'clock in the afternoon, when the Germans were seen massing for an attack on the right.

By this time every wire to headquarters was cut by the enemy artillery. If they were allowed to attack, the companies in the trench would be annihilated and the hard-earned position lost. The situation was desperate.

Only one chance of averting disaster remained.

A runner must get through with a message to our artillery asking them to smash the German attack. Private Harry Brown and another runner undertook to deliver the message. When they set out on their desperate mission a hostile barrage was raking the open behind the newly occupied ground, the enemy's intention being to prevent supports coming up. The messengers had to get through this curtain of fire, a curtain under which nearly every yard of ground was being churned into a mess or torn up savagely in tons and tossed on high as if by some unseen Brobdignagian hand.

They had gone but a little way on their adventurous journey when one was killed and Brown was left, the only link between his isolated battalion and its hope of succour. If he failed to get through his comrades would be wiped out to a man.

He continued to stumble along, sinking into new, smoking craters, now and then up to the waist, dragging himself out and crawling through the debris, lying still for short intervals till the shock of the explosions had passed. Flying missiles hit him and shattered an arm. He was bleeding and exhausted. He sat down, dazed and uncomprehendingly. But his will forced him to his feet again. He staggered onward towards the support lines,

walking like a man in a dream, his brain in constant dark motion, his thoughts in a flux even as the ground on which he strove for a footing.

It was a pained, dreary thing, sore and weary, that kept doggedly crawling and staggering on through the intensity of the shrapnel and the high explosive. His strength ran from him with the blood from his mangled arm. His steps were automatic. The last part of the journey was the worst. It was his *Via Dolorosa*.

* * * * * * *

An officer standing in a dug-out in the support line was peering out at the devastation which the enemy artillery was spreading so prodigally. Shells rained on every side, the earth shuddered and shrank at every blow. But the telephone to headquarters was working.

A dark form crawled out of the ruin and stumbled towards the dug-out. It was a soldier—hatless, pale, dirty, haggard, one arm hanging limp and bloody by his side, his clothing torn and stained. He reached the steps of the dug-out, and seeing the officer, tried to descend. But his strength was gone, his limbs refused to act. He fell down the short stairway, spent—utterly spent and dying.

The officer lifted him gently and brought him into the dug-out and laid him down. Then Brown handed over his precious slip of paper.

"Important message," he whispered.

And Private Harry Brown lay back and drifted into unconsciousness. He died a few hours later in the dressing station.

COMPANY SERGEANT-MAJOR ROBERT HANNA,
29TH BATTALION

WHEN the first big attack was made by the Canadian troops on Hill 70 on the 15th August, 1917, the 29th (Vancouver) Battalion moved forward to the support of the 5th Brigade, remaining in the area for three days while the battle raged in the forward lines.

The first stage of the attack ended on the 18th; and that night, under severe shelling, the 29th Battalion took over Commotion trench from the junction of Caliper and Conductor trenches to the junction of Nabob Alley and Commotion trench. On the morning of the 21st August the second stage of the offensive was resumed. It was then the battalion took an active part in the struggle.

The opening of the second phase was timed for 4.35 a.m. At 1 a.m. the companies began to move into the assembly positions. At 3.15 a.m. the scouts reported that the tapes had been laid, the companies were getting into position uneventfully and none of the enemy was to be seen.

But about 4.10 a.m. the German artillery began to plump shells along the front of the parapet, increasing the intensity of the barrage towards 4.30, when a sudden deluge of "fish-tails" descended on the trenches. Accompanying this bombardment was a curious kind of bomb, square in shape, which exploded with a great flame and sent out a dense, suffocating smoke. One of those dropped in the trench occupied by "D" company, wounding practically every man in a platoon.

While attempts were being made to clear the

débris, Sergeant Croll, who was stationed near the corner of Nun's Alley and Commotion trench, heard the word passed along: "Heine has broken through the 25th and is coming down the trench."

Croll collected five unwounded men and kept the advancing Germans at bay by bombing them till reinforcements arrived from the 28th Battalion and drove the enemy out.

Major Grimmett, who was in command of "A" company in support, hearing the bombing and concluding that something had gone wrong with "D" company, sent forward a platoon under Captain Abbott. Our opening barrage by this time had begun and was moving forward. Abbott's platoon took up the fight, carried it into Nun's Alley and established a block there.

The other companies—"B," "C" and the remainder of "D"—had gone forward behind the barrage. One platoon of "D" company, which attempted an overland attack on Nun's Alley, was wiped out almost to a man by machine-gun fire. "C" company, attacking in the centre, was badly mauled. The left platoon was swept away by German machine-gun fire before it reached its objective. The right platoon had almost reached its objective—Cinnebar trench—when it ran into a strong enemy machine-gun post surrounded by barbed wire. Lieutenant Carter, who had already been wounded, was killed in an attempt to drive the Germans out of this stronghold.

Lieutenant Sutherland, on the extreme right, got into Cinnebar trench and gave the order for rapid fire on a party of Germans who were advancing overland. In the act of picking up a rifle he was mortally hit by a sniper's bullet. Sergeant Stevens, who then took command, was lifting Sutherland's rifle when he too was shot through the head. A corporal took the sergeant's place. A moment

later he also was killed. The remainder of the men fought on desperately till a platoon of the 28th Battalion came to their aid.

In the meantime " B " company, to which Sergeant-Major Hanna belonged, had reached the objective in Cinnebar trench. Believing that all was well with " C " company, Lieutenant Gordon, the commander, was about to send off the pre-arranged signal when it was discovered that the signal cartridges were wet. Before a substitute could be found word was brought that " C " company, on the left, was being badly smashed, all the officers having been killed. Lieutenant McKinnon was sent along with a bombing party to aid " C " company. He was killed just as he joined the fight.

Gordon then went along to the relief of the company on his left, after ordering Lieutenant Montgomery to get a party of snipers outside the trench so that they could take toll of the enemy. Gordon was badly wounded in the arm. Lieutenant Montgomery was soon afterwards killed by a German sniper. The leadership fell upon Sergeant-Major Hanna.

Hanna saw that the crux of the position was a German post protected by a heavy wire and armed with a machine gun. He collected a party of his men and led them against the post amid a hail of rifle and machine-gun fire. Rushing through the wire he bayoneted three of the Germans, brained a fourth, and overthrew the machine gun. The redoubt was captured.

The Germans arrived in force and counter-attacked. Hanna, who was now short of bombs, built a block. Again and again the enemy tried to rush his position ; but he and his handful of men held it until they were relieved later that day. Next day the battalion frontage was taken over by another Canadian unit and the 29th went back to a well-earned rest.

SERGEANT FREDERICK HOBSON, 20TH BATTALION

THE men of the 20th Canadian Battalion lay down in their trenches before Hill 70 on the night of the 14th August, 1917, in a soft drizzle of rain. They were to take part in the attack on the hill early next morning and the artillerymen behind had already trained their guns on the enemy trenches, ready to let loose the bellow of destruction when the word was passed.

Hill 70 lies near the La Bassée-Lens road, in the vicinity of Loos, the village of Cité St. Auguste on its right, Bois Hugo and Chalk Pit on its left. Its sides and crest are scarred with trenches and bruised by much shelling. The Allies have taken it from the Germans and have been pushed out of it by the Germans more than once. On the 14th August, 1917, it was in German hands.

Precisely at 4.25 o'clock on the morning of the 15th, just as a red streak smeared the horizon, the word for which the Canadians had been waiting was given and the artillery barrage fell like a hammer stroke on the German front line. For six minutes it pounded the trenches into pulp, then lifted to a hundred yards farther on, tore a line of devastation there for another six minutes, lifted again in another hundred yards' stride and so continued its work of destruction at similar intervals.

As the curtain of our shells rose from the German front line the men of the 20th Battalion, with other units, leaped from their jumping-off trenches and waded across No Man's Land. They found the Germans—all who remained of the front line garrison—shaken, bruised, more or less subdued. Where

they surrendered they were taken prisoners; where they resisted they were killed. In Cowley trench only one enemy machine-gun was working and soon it was out-flanked and captured. In Commotion trench an emplacement was in action. It was smothered.

Sergeant Frederick Hobson and some men of "A" company went forward up the enemy trench known as Nabob Alley. They bombed their way along, beating back the Germans, who retreated slowly and grudgingly; and, having conquered about seventy yards of the trench, they established a post at that point. The objectives of the battalion elsewhere were also gained and the position was consolidated. The attack was a success.

All this happened on the 15th of August. But to take a position is one thing: to hold it is another. For three days the Germans kept probing various parts of the line, hoping to find a spot which would yield. At 1.40 a.m. on the 18th, their artillery opened a heavy bombardment on the whole Canadian Corps front and for half an hour shells were rained on every part of the line. The general bombardment slackened for a short time, during which the village of St. Pierre received an avalanche of gas-shells; and at twelve minutes past four o'clock every gun the enemy could muster opened again on the front.

The concentration of artillery was nerve-racking. It was almost demoralizing. Up in the advance posts the majority of the Lewis gun positions were obliterated, men and guns being buried in the vast upheavals. Twenty minutes after the shelling began the headquarters of the 20th Battalion was hit by a heavy shell and vanished. Every wire leading to the posts was cut, every light extinguished. And in the darkness and confusion came word from

the battalion stationed on the right of the 20th to the effect that the Germans were out in No Man's Land, coming to attack.

Sergeant Hobson in his trench saw the grey figures swarming across the open ground. The Lewis guns had all been wiped out except one—and as this one was being brought into action a German shell landed beside it. When the smoke cleared, only one man of the crew remained alive, and he and the gun were buried in the debris. Hobson was no gunner, but he knew the importance of the position. He raced forward, seized an entrenching tool and hauled the dazed survivor out of the mud.

"Guess that was a close call," said the survivor, Private A. G. Fuller.

"Guess so: let's get the gun out," replied Hobson.

They began to dig. Across the open ground came the Germans, firing at the two men as they advanced. A bullet hit Hobson, but he took no notice of his wound. Together he and Fuller got the gun into position and opened up on the Germans, who were now pouring down the trench. They were holding the enemy well when the gun jammed.

Hobson picked up his rifle.

"I'll keep them back," he said to Fuller, "if you fix the gun!"

He ran towards the advancing enemy, a lonely, wounded, desperate man against many and with bayonet and clubbed rifle barred their passage. No man knows how many Germans were killed by Sergeant Hobson in that fierce encounter; dead and wounded were heaped in front of him when a shout from Fuller intimated that the gun was again ready for action.

And just at that moment a German pushed his rifle forward and fired point blank at the Canadian Horatius.

As Hobson fell Gunner Fuller pressed the trigger of his Lewis gun and threw a stream of death into the German mob. A few minutes later reinforcements from "B" company took the enemy in the flank and chased them back across No Man's Land; and the machine-guns of "B" company cleaned them up as they ran.

They found Sergeant Frederick Hobson where he had fallen, still grasping his deadly rifle. His enemies were sprawled around him, silent witnesses to his prowess. His heroism had saved the situation —and he had fought his last fight.

PRIVATE MICHAEL JAMES O'ROURKE, 7TH BATTALION

Down by the docks of the city of Victoria, B.C., you may observe a man who keeps a fruit stall and wears about an inch of dark red ribbon on his left breast. That fruit vendor is Michael James O'Rourke, late of the 7th Canadian Battalion; and the inch of dark red ribbon means that he has won the Victoria Cross.

O'Rourke gained the decoration when he was a stretcher-bearer in the 7th Battalion during the big attack on the German positions near Lens which began on the 15th August, 1917, and continued for several days.

At 4.25 on that morning the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Canadian Brigades attacked and captured Hill 70 and the German defences about Cité St. Laurent. In conjunction with this operation a gas attack was successfully launched in the Avion sector and a subsidiary attack west of Lens.

The opening of the main operation was no

surprise to the enemy. Prisoners taken during the attack admitted that they had expected it and had been "standing-to" for a fortnight in anticipation; and orders which were captured confirmed this statement, for they contained elaborate instructions in the method of procedure to be adopted when the attack was launched.

Two hours before the advance began that summer morning the Germans were sending streams of gas shells into the district around Maroc and the Lens–Béthune road, while a 5.9 howitzer was playing on Loos at intervals of five minutes.

When our barrage opened the 7th Battalion went forward and formed up in No Man's Land in the rear of the 10th Battalion which was to capture the front German line. At first there was a slight mix-up of battalions owing to enemy fire, but before long, though only after heavy fighting, the objectives were gained with the exception of the centre where our men were held up by machine-gun fire from Cité St. Auguste and the brickworks. In time, however, reinforcements arrived and that obstacle was removed.

For three days the fighting was the fiercest the Canadian battalions had up till then experienced. The Germans were in no mood to give up their positions without stubborn resistance and the struggle ebbed and flowed day and night with bitter violence. On the front on which the 2nd Division attacked many Germans held out in small parties hidden in ruined houses and in deep cellars until cleared out by bomb and bayonet, while counter-attack after counter-attack was thrown against the battalions which had succeeded in clearing the German trenches.

With the 7th Battalion were sixteen stretcher-bearers, including O'Rourke. Out of that sixteen, two were killed and eleven were wounded, for the

Germans sniped at them as they worked to carry the wounded from the field. During those three days and nights O'Rourke worked unceasingly rescuing the wounded, dressing their injuries under fire and bringing food and water to them. The area in which he worked was continually subjected to the severest shelling and was frequently swept by machine-gun and rifle fire.

Several times he was knocked down and partially buried by shell-bursts. Once, seeing a comrade who had been blinded stumbling along in full view of the enemy who were sniping at him, O'Rourke jumped out of the trench and brought him in, being himself heavily sniped at while doing so. Again he went forward about fifty yards in front of our barrage, under very heavy fire from machine-guns and snipers, and brought in another wounded man; and later, when the advanced posts retired to the line, he braved a storm of enemy fire of every description and brought in a wounded man who had been left behind.

It was for these acts, in which he showed an absolute disregard for his own safety, that O'Rourke gained the highest award—one of the comparatively few men who have been given the Victoria Cross in this war for saving life under fire.

CAPTAIN OKILL MASSEY LEARMONTH, 2ND BATTALION

WITH the Military Cross already in his possession, Captain O. M. Learmonth, of the 2nd Battalion, was one of that small number of Canadians who won the highest decoration during the capture of Hill 70 in August, 1917.

The weather in which that attack began on the 15th of the month was unsettled and sultry. The weather in which the fighting ended on the 18th of the month was clear and sunny. It was during the fighting on the latter date that Learmonth died.

On the 15th, the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Canadian Brigades attacked the hill and the German defences about Cité St. Laurent. For the next two days they held the new trenches against constant counter-attacks and under incessant bombardment from every gun the Germans could bring to bear on the position. At midnight on the 16th the 2nd Battalion relieved the troops of the 3rd Brigade in the trenches from Chalk Pit down Hugo Trench to Hurray Alley. During the whole of the 17th the German bombardment continued with an even intensity which made the position one pandemonium for the men of the 2nd Battalion.

The line was very thinly held. The whole strength of the battalion was only 614 souls when day broke on the 18th. That was the day which knew the climax of the situation.

At four o'clock in the morning the German artillery opened a terrific fire on the whole battalion front line and supports. For forty minutes the bombardment continued at full pressure. Then it lifted and the German troops attacked, using liquid fire. On the left wing the Germans succeeded in entering the trenches held by No. 4 Company; but a bombing party was at once organized, and they were driven out again, leaving behind a *flammenwerfer* and a considerable number of dead.

Learmonth (who was then Acting Major) was in command of Nos. 2 and 3 Companies. He saw that a number of the Germans, after their advance had been checked within a few yards of our trenches, had found shelter to some extent in a small wood;

and to rout them out of the wood a bombing party from No. 3 Company was sent forward. They bombed the Germans out of the wood and down a trench named Horse Alley, driving them into the open, where our snipers and machine-gunners engaged them and cleaned them up.

Throughout the whole of the attack Learmonth showed what his Commanding Officer has named a "wonderful spirit." Absolutely fearless, he so conducted himself that he imbued those with whom he came into contact with some of his personality. When the barrage started he was continually with his men and officers, encouraging them and making sure that no loophole was left through which the enemy could gain a footing. When the attack was launched against the thin Canadian line, Learmonth seemed to be everywhere at once. When the situation was critical, he took his turn at throwing bombs. He was wounded twice, but carried on as if he were perfectly fit and whole. He was wounded a third time, his leg this time being broken, but still he showed the same indomitable spirit. Lying in the trench, he continued to direct his men, encouraging them, cheering them, advising them.

At a quarter past six that morning the battalion headquarters received word that Learmonth was badly wounded and was being carried out of the line on a stretcher; but the enemy attack had been repulsed. He had waited till he saw the finish.

They brought him down to headquarters, and, lying on his stretcher, he gave valuable information to the officers there before he was taken to hospital. He died shortly afterwards—the man who would not give in.

CORPORAL FILIP KONOWAL, 47TH BATTALION

THE fighting about Lens in August, 1917, called for more individual dash and initiative on the part of the troops engaged than had been required before. The house-to-house fighting, the repeatedly isolated and difficult positions, the many knotty problems which required instant solution—all these combined to make leadership, whether of a section or a battalion, more arduous and responsible and, with it all, much more fascinating. Such fighting is after the hearts of most Canadians. As was expected, our men did well at it.

After the successful attack on Hill 70, incessant fighting was forced upon our troops to maintain the new positions. The enemy's bombardment was constant and intense. It was decided to continue the offensive and improve our line. The 10th Brigade was instructed to capture Green Crassier and the enemy's defences about this point, and accordingly the attack was arranged for the 21st, with two companies each of the 50th, 46th and 47th Battalions, the 47th Battalion on the right to attack through Cité du Moulin to the Lens–Arras Road and Alpaca Trench.

At 4.35 a.m. our men went forward, penetrating the immediate German barrage without hesitation, and moving as if on parade. The morning was bright and sunny, and our fellows got away in splendid style, though they were badly harassed by machine-gun fire from Green Crassier, a barren expanse of slagheaps and broken railway tracks on the right front. However, our smoke barrage was most

effective, and the drums of blazing oil thrown upon the enemy's communication lines and attempted formations did much to take the heart out of his resistance. Crossing the Lens–Arras Road, the troops plunged into the ruined houses beyond, and stiff fighting, in cellars, long dark tunnels, and comparatively deserted outhouses, ensued. Many were the isolated heroic combats that took place, and many men were reported missing after the battle who had fought out their lives in some underground chamber.

Corporal Konowal was in charge of a mopping-up section. In fighting of this description it is an undecided point whether the original assailants or the moppers-up get most excitement. The main attack sweeps on; but in such a rabbit-warren of broken houses and tunnelled foundations many Germans and frequent machine-guns are left to be eliminated at some cost by our following waves. The buildings about the Lens–Arras Road proved difficult enough to clear. The main body of our troops had passed through and continued to the objectives beyond, but a couple of buildings still held Germans and German machine-guns, and there was heavy firing upon the rear of our advancing men. Entering one of these houses Konowal searched for the Germans, and finding no living traces of their occupation, dropped daringly into the cellar. Three men fired at him as he landed, but this he escaped unharmed. Then ensued a sanguinary battle in the dark, a mêlée of rifle fire and bayonets, with the odds three to one. Finally the scuffling ceased and Konowal emerged into the daylight—he had bayoneted the whole crew of the gun!

But this is all taken for granted in the business of mopping-up, and the corporal and his section continued their way along the road, every sense

alert to locate the close rifle-crack that might betray the wily sniper. There was a large crater to the east of the road, and from the bodies of our good men before the edge it seemed obvious that a German machine-gun had been in position there. Halting his men, Konowal advanced alone. Upon reaching the lip of the crater he saw seven Germans endeavouring to move the ubiquitous machine-gun into a dugout. He opened fire at once, killing three, and then, charging down upon them, accounted for the rest with the bayonet.

These drastic methods rapidly concluded the clearing of their section of the line, and the corporal and his men moved on up to our new front, where the enemy was delivering heavy and incessant counter-attacks.

Heavy fighting continued throughout the night, and in the morning troops of the 44th Battalion, who were making an attack upon the Green Crassier, requested the aid of a party of the 47th in a raid upon a machine-gun emplacement in a tunnel about Fosse 4. Corporal Konowal was an expert in this subterranean fighting, and his party succeeded in entering the tunnel. Two charges of ammonal, successfully exploded, somewhat demoralized the German garrison, and then Konowal, dashing forward in the darkness with the utter disregard of his own safety he had displayed all through the fighting, engaged the machine-gun crew with the bayonet, overcoming and killing them all. Altogether this good fighting man killed sixteen men in the two days of the actual battle, and continued his splendid work until he was very severely wounded.

PRIVATE THOMAS WILLIAM HOLMES, 4TH CANADIAN MOUNTED RIFLES

HEAVY rain had been falling on the Passchendaele country for two days before the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles waded up to their positions in the front line, between Wallemolen and Bellevue. All the dykes and ditches of the low country were full and overflowing, and even in that short space of time ground that was firm and solid had become dangerous swamp. However, the men pushed on through the darkness, and the slipping and splashing, the long halts, the interminable discussions with somewhat vague guides, all came to an end at last, and at five o'clock on the morning of October 25th the regiment had arrived at its battered line. Through the day the weather cleared, the sun and wind considerably improved the ground, and the men were able to discern their objectives for the following day's attack—occasionally with mild misgiving, for there seemed entirely too much water about the low hills and copses they had to traverse.

The C.M.R. were on the extreme left of the Canadian Corps front, with the Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division on their left, and the 43rd Battalion on the right. Their objectives were Woodland Copse and Source Farm, and it was hoped to consolidate a strong line upon Wallemolen Ridge, all with a view to the establishment of a good jumping-off line for the capture of Passchendaele town itself. Though the clearing of the weather had greatly improved the ground, it also improved the visibility and the German artillery and riflemen made very

effective shooting upon our hastily improvised communication lines. The persistent bombardment was very severe indeed, and while many gallant attempts were made to supply the soldiers in the front line with munitions, time after time the men of the carrying party were wiped out and the supplies dispersed by the incessant shells. Ammunition was plentiful, however, but the men went into action the following day with practically empty water-bottles.

Soon after five o'clock on the 26th the troops were assembled in the jumping-off positions, "C" and "D" Companies in advance of the front line, and "A" and "B" Companies in close support. As our barrage opened at twenty minutes to six, the heavy rain began again, making the ground very difficult and slippery as our fellows went forward. Heavy fighting occurred at once, a line of pill-boxes across the flanks of the low hills maintaining concentrated machine-gun fire, and all these small fortresses had to be stormed with the bayonet. But they did not take long to clear, and after a few minutes of close bayonet work our troops swept through and on to the stubborn resistance of the Wallemolen–Bellevue line. Here was a serious check. North-east of Wolf Copse a German pill-box was situated, its own strong defences supplemented by a machine-gun mounted close to the building on each side, and against their fire our men advanced, at times up to their waists in water. It was not possible to advance quickly, and man after man of our small attacking force went down into the mud. Reinforcements from "A" Company came up on the right, and a series of gallant attempts were made to rush the enemy's position, which was holding up our entire local advance. Each time our men failed to get home, and eventually they were forced to take whatever cover was possible some fifty yards from

the pill-box. At this moment Private Holmes advanced alone.

Making his way forward, indifferent to the concentrated fire of the two guns, Holmes reached a point from which he could throw his bombs. Then, with marvellous coolness, he hurled his missiles, with such precision that he succeeded in knocking out each gun, one after the other, killing or wounding every man about them. But this result was not sufficient for him, and he returned to his comrades for more ammunition. Securing another bomb from a friend, once more Holmes ran forward alone, this time getting close to the pill-box itself. Landing his bomb within the entrance of the concrete fort, he caused such an explosion in the confined space that the unhappy survivors of the garrison crawled out and surrendered. One does not know how Private Holmes escaped the sweeping fire that was poured upon him, but there is no doubt that his gallant action saved a critical situation, and allowed our men to push forward and establish a strong line in advance of their intermediate objective. Here they held back counter-attack after counter-attack, subjected to intense bombardment and heavy machine-gun fire from the high ground on the right, until later in the day the gallant capture of Bellevue Spur by the 43rd and 52nd Battalions cleared the situation, and permitted the consolidation of a strong line.

LIEUTENANT (ACTING CAPTAIN) CHRISTOPHER PATRICK JOHN O'KELLY, 52ND BATTALION

WHEN the Canadians went up to take the ridges before Passchendaele the men of the 52nd Battalion

were in support, and were not pleased with their minor share in the preliminary offensive. Their fears were not justified, however, for no battalion engaged played a larger or more gallant part in the attack.

The 9th Brigade attacked at "zero" hour with the 43rd and 58th Battalions, and at first reports were good, and the Canadians appeared to be making excellent progress up the difficult slopes of Bellevue Spur. But by 8.30 a.m. the news had changed, weary parties of survivors came straggling back in twos and threes to the jumping-off line, and the 52nd Battalion troops were aware that their services would be required in short order. Colonel Foster, the Commanding Officer, went forward to the front line and returned with news of a critical situation. On the right the 58th had encountered terrible machine-gun fire and had been unable to make any progress, while some forty men of Lieutenant Shankland's company of the 43rd had managed to fight their way to the crest of the spur, had roughly entrenched themselves, being able to advance no more, and were still holding out after four hours of steady fighting, under heavy close-range fire from pill-boxes on the ridge, and in constant danger of a flanking move by the enemy on either hand. Lieutenant O'Kelly, in charge of "A" Company, was ordered to move at once to their assistance, advancing on the left flank of the 43rd Battalion post upon the hill, and filling the gap between the 8th and 9th Brigades.

Drenched by the steady rain and pounded by the enemy's shells, the men of the 52nd were very bored indeed with inaction. They went forward strongly, penetrating the German barrage on the flank without losing very heavily, and making good progress up the low northern slope towards the cres

of the spur, where their comrades of the 43rd were not only doing most effective shooting on their own account, but were preventing the Germans from paying very much attention to the manœuvres of the 52nd. The top of the hill was defended by numerous concrete machine-gun forts, and these fired spasmodically upon the advancing troops, causing a number of casualties but no delays. Lieutenant O'Kelly had brought his men up well, and sweeping over the brow, they caught the flank of the enemy advancing against the 43rd Battalion post, driving the Germans before them and shooting them down as they ran. For a moment it was a most successful rout, but then the fire from the pill-boxes grew heavier, and there ensued a series of gallant attacks upon the strong points before them. Our troops rushed pill-box after pill-box, small parties of men striving to win close to the walls of each fort, while sections to the rear bombarded every opening and loop-hole with bullets and rifle-grenades. This made it very difficult indeed for the Germans to take aim, and allowed the actual assailants an opportunity of gaining the dead ground close beneath the walls and hurling their bombs inside through any aperture. The effect of quite a small bomb upon the mass of men in the confined space of a pill-box is very terrible, and usually the treatment requires no second application before the surrender of the garrison. However, the reduction of these forts is a very costly business, and many a time the attacking section would be caught within the zone of fire of a machine-gun and practically wiped out, though on more than one occasion the attack was carried to a successful conclusion by two or three survivors, who would compel the garrison of thirty or forty men to surrender to them. Through all this fighting Lieutenant O'Kelly led his men with wonderful judgment, selecting the point

and method of attack with cool precision, and never losing sight of his main object—to gain ground and consolidate the ridge. Finally his force was joined by "B" Company, and the two companies of the 52nd set out to advance their line. The buildings of Bellevue Farm proved excellent cover for the retiring Germans, and there was stubborn fighting about the ruined outhouses before our fellows got through. A clear half-mile of ground was captured and consolidated, our men reaching the Wallemolen–Bellevue Road and driving the enemy before them from the country west of it. For a time the hostile bombardment was vague and uncertain, though on occasion a barrage would be placed before our advancing men, the enemy's gunners appearing to be supremely indifferent to the scattered parties of their own troops who were still holding out bravely enough before the Canadians. But directly our new line was in process of formation the German shelling became intense. For an hour the countryside was hammered and pounded, and then the inevitable counter-attack developed at two points of our thinly-held line. However, O'Kelly's men felt that they had saved the situation, his pluck and initiative had pulled a victory from a defeat, and the men of the 52nd had no intention of giving up a foot of the ground they had won. So heavy a fire was developed upon the attacking enemy that the counter-attack was shrivelled and dispersed two hundred yards from our line. The shelling began again, but our position was strong and clear, and consolidation was continued, while during the night Lieutenant O'Kelly's men went forward again, and raided several strong points that might have hampered the advance of our men in the next phase of the offensive. The men of the 52nd Battalion have great reason to be pleased with themselves for that day's work, for they captured

9 officers and 275 men, no less than 21 machine-guns, and more important still, saved a very critical situation indeed.

CAPTAIN (ACTING-MAJOR) GEORGE RANDOLPH PEARKES, M.C., 5TH C.M.R.

THERE are many wonderful deeds recorded in the history of the Canadian Corps at Passchendaele, but for stubborn endurance carried far beyond previous standards of physical limitations, for cool pluck and pertinacity under very terrible conditions, the story of the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifle Battalion on October 30th, 1917, is remarkable.

The night of the 29th was clear and fine, and the moon was nearly full, the light helping our men to pick their way through to the assembly on the comparatively firm ground between the flooded shell-holes. Soon after 5 o'clock on the morning of the 30th the troops were in position, and at ten minutes to six "A" and "C" Companies went over the top and forward to the attack on Vapour Farm and the outlying defences of Passchendaele. The ground immediately before the 5th C.M.R. was very swampy, and owing to this it had been previously found impossible to send troops straight through Woodland Plantation. Accordingly the waves of our attacking infantry divided, and "A" Company went forward and round the south of the Plantation, while "B" Company attacked on the north. For nearly an hour the smoke covering the plantation prevented any observation of our progress, but soon a wounded runner stumbled into Headquarters with a report that the left of our

attack had reached the intermediate objective. On the right the men of " A " Company had encountered the enemy south of the wood, and fierce hand-to-hand fighting was still going on, with the Canadians steadily making their way forward. In this bayonet work, with the opponents waist deep in mud and water, our men won the advantage, for the knowledge that a mis-step or a disabling wound meant a peculiarly unpleasant death in suffocating mud was an incentive to desperate fighting, and the Germans hated it from the start.

By the time the smoke had cleared our troops had won their way around the copse, and the two companies, now barely half their original strength, had joined and were resting while our barrage hammered the line of the intermediate objective. But this halt was a mistake. The Germans, retreating before our advance, were given time to re-form, and in a moment or two machine-gun and rifle fire became terribly heavy from the high ground to the east. However, led by Major Pearkes and reinforced by the remaining companies, the 5th C.M.R. went forward again, until our observers lost sight of them as they went over the ridge. Then occurred a time of anxious suspense for the men at Headquarters, until half an hour later a message came through from Major Pearkes saying that he was holding a line near to his final objectives with some fifty men, that the fighting was close and desperate, and that help was required.

Major Pearkes was in a very difficult situation. He had taken his men forward, fighting his way through obstacle after obstacle until he had reached his objective, and now he was holding a hastily improvised line with both his flanks exposed to any German attack. The troops attacking with him on each side had been unable to make any headway,

and only the well-directed and aggressive shooting of his men prevented a flanking move that might have cut him off completely. On his left the Artists Rifles had been unable to capture Source Farm, and from this point heavy enfilading fire was poured upon his exposed line. It was impossible to maintain any position under such fire, and the major realized that the only hope of holding his ground lay in the capture of this strong point. With the few men at his command he organized and led an attack, and the gallant recklessness of the assaulting party carried the place by storm. Now he could get forward again, and he did so, only halting to establish his line when it became obvious that his handful of men, though willing enough, could hardly fight their way through an entire army corps.

He withdrew his men from Vanity House, consolidated a line of shell-holes from Source Farm to Vapour Farm and prepared to meet a strong counter-attack. His fighting strength was now twenty men. It is hard to conceive how so small a party may hold a previously unprepared position against a determined attack, but these men did so, and beat the Germans back in disorder. However, it was scarcely possible to withstand another such attack—ammunition was running short, the rate of casualties was much too high for so slight a garrison, and a flanking attack by the enemy could hardly fail to be successful—but Major Pearkes and his men held on, praying for reinforcements and determined to see it through.

A company of the 2nd C.M.R. had been sent forward to reinforce the original assailants, and finally, as the fresh troops advanced, they came within sight of the weary garrison. Most of the ground behind the latter was low and swampy, and all of it was swept by the enemy's machine-gun fire,

but the supporting company came over the heavy ground in splendid style. The men in the shell-holes could see the casualties occurring in the wave of men, but never for a moment was there any hesitation, and at last the reinforcements tumbled into Pearkes' rough line of defence.

Affairs were still in a serious condition. The shell-fire was very heavy and counter-attacks were imminent, and it was not until after dusk that sufficient supports were available to cover the flanks and enable the successful consolidation of our new line.

LIEUTENANT ROBERT SHANKLAND, 43RD BATTALION

THE attack made by the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions on October 26th formed an essential preliminary to the capture of the whole Passchendaele Ridge and town. It was necessary to establish a good jumping-off line for the attack on the village itself, and this was accomplished, though our men went through some very stiff fighting indeed before the position was won. The troops of the 9th Brigade had as their objectives Bellevue Spur and the high ground about it, and after the fighting a captured German officer remarked that the Spur was considered to be the key of Passchendaele town, and that its capture by the Canadians was a notable feat of arms, considering the efforts made by the German Higher Command to ensure its successful defence. One does not know if the officer was merely endeavouring to alleviate the mild rigours of his captivity, but in any case the fighting was most difficult and critical, and too much praise cannot be given to the scattered parties of men who hung

on to isolated positions in shell-holes and ditches along the crest of the hill, under the most intense shell-fire, and held back the enemy until reinforcements arrived and consolidated the line.

The 43rd Battalion held the centre of the 3rd Divisional front, on the left of the Gravenstafel-Bellevue Road, with the 58th Battalion on the right and the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles on the left. At 5.40 a.m. the troops went forward in the steady rain, advancing splendidly over the muddy, wet ground, and by half-past six men of the 43rd were seen against the sky-line going over the crest of Bellevue Spur. The German artillery fire had been immediate and heavy, and formidable pill-boxes on the top and flanks of the hill maintained steady fire upon our troops, causing many gaps in the waves of infantry stumbling and slipping upon the muddy slopes. "D" Company, led by Captain Galt and Lieutenant Shankland, made good progress up the hill, until checked by the heavy fire of a machine-gun in a strong emplacement to the right front. Collecting a few men, Captain Galt attempted its capture, while Lieutenant Shankland continued the advance with the remainder of the company. He gained the crest of the hill, and here close fighting won our men more ground. The pill-boxes were captured, but a trench some fifty yards beyond them checked the advance, and the weary survivors of the attack dug themselves in as well as possible.

In the meantime the battle was going badly enough. On the right the troops of the 58th Battalion, held up by determined resistance and the concentrated fire of many machine-guns at Snipe Hall, had been unable to make good their objective, and were drifting back in twos and threes to the comparative shelter of the jumping-off line. But a

few parties of men held out with Shankland's company on the crest, and maintained a rough and disjointed line of shell-holes, of which there were many, across the hill top. Upon this line the Germans poured a relentless stream of lead. At no time previously had our men experienced such shelling. The mud and water dispersed by the bursting shells clogged the weapons of the Canadians, and, in spite of instant attention, in many cases rendered them temporarily useless. The going was terribly hard, but Lieutenant Shankland held his battered line for four hours along the crest of the Spur, keeping his men together and in good spirits, recruiting those soldiers of other companies who had gained the hill but were left without officers, and maintaining against heavy counter-attack the Canadian position that had cost so much to win. But here a new danger asserted itself. On his left Shankland had established rough connection with the 8th Brigade, but now these troops were forced to withdraw, while on the right his flank was completely exposed, and German troops were advancing from the direction of Snipe Hall, enfilading his line, and threatening to cut him off altogether. After a careful survey of the whole position, he handed over the command to the Machine-gun Officer, who, though wounded, had refused to leave the line while his guns were in action, and making the best of his way back to Headquarters, handed in a very valuable report, giving a clear summary of a critical situation, and enabling steps to be taken that previous lack of information had rendered unwise. While the men of the 52nd and 58th Battalions drove back the enemy on the flanks, the Lieutenant got back through the mud and shell-fire to his own company on the hill top. The Germans had attempted to rush this precarious position, and had been beaten back by our machine-

gun fire with heavy losses. They had continued to lose, for the 52nd Battalion, advancing in splendid style, drove many of them back across the fire of Shankland's company of the 43rd upon the crest of the Spur. Finally, the flanks were firmly established, and our troops consolidated the new line, with the object of our attack accomplished, though they had not penetrated as far into enemy country as they had hoped.

PRIVATE CECIL JOHN KINROSS, 49TH BATTALION

On October 28th, 1917, the 49th Canadian Infantry Battalion, under Lieutenant-Colonel R. H. Palmer, moved from Wieltje area and relieved three companies of the 116th Battalion in the front line south-east of Wolf Copse, on the left of the Gravenstafel–Bellevue Road, the P.P.C.L.I. relieving the remaining company on the right of the road. The strength of the Battalion consisted of twenty-one officers and 567 other ranks. The relief was a difficult business, the enemy very alert, and the bad weather and heavy going rendering the operation exceedingly arduous. However, by 1.50 a.m. on the 29th the relief was effected, and preparations for the morrow's offensive were immediately undertaken.

The 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions were to continue the attack on the outlying defences of Passchendaele; to capture Vapour Farm, Vanity House, Meetcheele, Friesland, the high ground about Crest Farm, and other strong points; and to establish a line approximately from Goudberg Copse in the north to the railway line just south of Vienna

Cottages in the south. Six battalions were to attack at zero hour, 5.50 a.m. on the 30th, the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles, the 49th Battalion, P.P.C.L.I., 72nd, 78th, and 85th Battalions, in order from left to right.

The troops of the 49th Battalion had as their objective Furst Farm and the pill-boxes about and beyond, and the strong points to the north of Meetcheele. Late in the afternoon the barrage maps were received at Battalion Headquarters, and Colonel Palmer found it would be necessary to evacuate the front-line positions occupied by "A" and "D" Companies and establish a jumping-off line to the rear, as the conformation of the ground rendered the establishment of a really effective barrage a most delicate task. Of late the enemy had developed a mischievous habit of keeping very close indeed to our front line, making his way inside our barrage at the moment of its inception, and so being enabled to meet our attacking troops with a volume of fire quite unmitigated by the curtain of lead designed to eliminate such resistance.

About midnight October 29th–30th the troops moved to the assembly, the evacuation of the forward positions being postponed until the very last possible moment. The night was very clear, and as it was possible to discern almost any movement from a distance of two hundred yards it is probable that German patrols were aware of the gathering. At any rate, about 4.30 a.m. two green flares went up near Furst Farm, were repeated in a moment from the rear, and at once the hostile shelling became more local and intense. By a quarter past five assembly was complete, and at 5.48 a.m., two minutes before zero hour, our barrage opened on the right and the troops went forward.

The morning was clear and bright, a strong wind drying the ground somewhat during the night and

making better foothold possible for the men; but such a hurricane of fire encountered the troops as they advanced that only slow progress was possible. "B" Company, on the right, lost most of its effective strength before crossing the Wallemolen–Bellevue Road. "B" and "C" Companies, forming the first wave, were met at once by intense rifle, machine-gun and artillery fire, and progressed in a series of rushes, going forward indomitably in spite of their heavy losses. The supporting waves, "A" and "D" Companies, fared little better, and it was painfully evident that the advance would be brought to an early conclusion through sheer lack of the men to force a passage. Considering the resistance, however, good progress was made, the men taking no heed of their losses and fighting every inch of the way. Near Furst Farm the first real check occurred, a well-mounted machine-gun covering our whole local advance and holding up the assailants, who took what cover the torn ground afforded, continuing to reply as well as might be to the heavy fire, until the situation was lightened by the heroic action of a private soldier.

Private Kinross, completely indifferent to the bullets directed upon him, surveyed the whole position coolly and carefully, deciding upon a plan of action that pleased him thoroughly.

Returning for a moment to cover, he cleared himself of all unnecessary equipment and made his way by devious courses to a point as near as possible the vicious machine-gun. Arrived there, he rushed the position, against point-blank fire, alone and in broad daylight, killing the six men of the crew and finally destroying the gun. It is impossible to tell properly of such deeds, but the daring of it, and the complete success, so heartened our men that in their immediate advance our line was carried forward a full three

hundred yards and two strong positions stormed without a halt. This brought our men to the intermediate objectives, where the line was cleared of the enemy, held and consolidated.

By this time the strength of the Battalion had decreased to four officers and 125 men, and no further advance was possible, incessant fighting being necessary to maintain the position already gained. Throughout the day and night the troops held on, several platoons of the Royal Canadian Regiment reinforcing the sadly depleted ranks of the 49th, and assisting in the defeat of three strong counter-attacks. By the evening of the 31st all our wounded had been removed from the forward area and the tired troops were relieved by the 42nd Battalion. In the fighting of October 30th the 49th Battalion gained more glory than German ground, yet a great deal of German ground was captured.

LIEUTENANT HUGH MACKENZIE, CANADIAN MACHINE GUN CORPS

THE 7th Machine Gun Company had been in the line for eight days before the second phase of the Canadian operations against Passchendaele, and the continual heavy rain that had fallen before the 30th of October made offensive preparations very difficult indeed. But on the 29th, the day before the attack, the weather cleared, and a strong west wind made footing somewhat easier upon the higher ground—the lower ground was all flooded, or consisted of almost impenetrable swamp. The night was very clear, and the moon full, and our fellows blessed the welcome light as they moved their guns to the

forward positions; the enemy, too, took advantage of the change in the weather, and there was some fairly heavy shelling of our lines and communications, though few casualties were caused among the machine-gunners.

Lieutenant MacKenzie, in charge of the four guns of his company, was covering the 7th Brigade in the attack upon the difficult country about Friesland, Meetcheele and Graf. With his gun-positions on the high ground, he was prepared to bring direct fire upon the enemy as our troops advanced, and to lay an effective barrage before our line upon the occupation of the objectives.

At ten minutes to six on the morning of the 30th, the P.P.C.L.I. and the 49th Battalion attacked, the troops for a time keeping close to our barrage and going forward wonderfully well, in spite of the terribly heavy hostile fire. But soon after zero our communications were cut by the intense shelling, and then came the usual anxious time in the support areas, when news is vague and contradictory, and there is no information available save that afforded by some wounded soldier stumbling back to safety. At last at 7 o'clock a message came through saying that all was going well, and subsequent communications were fairly regular.

Lieutenant MacKenzie took forward his guns, two behind the Princess Pat's, and two with the 49th Battalion, finding many opportunities for effective fire. The casualties amongst his men were pretty heavy as they advanced, but they stuck close to the infantry, and took advantage of every piece of rising ground from which direct fire might be delivered. But the critical point of the attack was still to come.

About the intermediate objective before Meetcheele the rising ground supplied much natural cover to the German riflemen and machine-gunners retreating

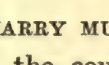
before our men. In addition to the enemy's supplementary defences of pill-boxes and concrete emplacements, the difficulties of the assailants were enhanced by the swampy ground on each side of the spur, limiting the field of attack to a narrow strip of ground, every foot of which was exposed to the fire of the machine-guns upon the slope.

One pill-box in particular on the crest of the hill maintained such a murderous fire that the attacking company of the Princess Pat's was brought to a halt upon the slope of the hill, with every officer and N.C.O. shot down, and the men remaining seeking what cover they could, unable to advance and unwilling to retreat. All this time MacKenzie had been ploughing forward with his guns, seeking good positions and finding them, rendering a German emplacement untenable, wiping out some hostile formation that threatened a sudden counter-attack, and endeavouring to keep down the heavy fire of the Germans immediately before our advancing infantry. Noting the hesitation of our men on the slope of the hill, he left a corporal in charge of his guns, and made his way through the heavy fire to our fellows in their terribly exposed position. The Company had been very hard hit, two thirds of its effectives were gone, but still the men were determined enough. Taking command of the company, he cheered them by his good spirits, and instantly set about arranging a plan for the downfall of the pill-box above them. Not only was there the pill-box to deal with, but the upper hill was a veritable nest of machine-guns, and MacKenzie had to make a daring reconnaissance before he could effect a suitable scheme of attack.

Detailing small parties, he sent them off to work their way round the flanks, overcoming any hostile resistance they might encounter, and to be prepared

at a given moment to make an attack from the rear upon the pill-box that was holding up the advance. Then he arranged the frontal attack, choosing himself to lead a small party of men directly up the slope to the fort, while the remainder of his men attacked the same front from a different angle. At the word they went forward, MacKenzie leading the forlorn hope on the most exposed front of the attack. It was not possible to win through such fire unharmed, and he was shot through the head and killed at the moment of the capture of the pill-box by the flanking parties he had detailed. One may hope that he saw his object attained.

This pill-box, in its dominating position upon the crest of the hill, commanded the lines of our attack for many hundred yards. By its capture Lieutenant MacKenzie and his men saved the lives of many soldiers, and enabled the successful consolidation of our objectives upon the whole local front.



SERGEANT GEORGE HARRY MULLIN, M.M., P.P.C.L.I.

THE conformation of the country about Graf and Meetcheele made the arrangements of a really effective barrage a highly technical affair. In that district of swamps and hills and copses it was impossible that our line should be straight, and on the night before their offensive the men of the P.P.C.L.I. were compelled to establish their assembly position close in rear of the front line. This enabled our artillery to place a heavy barrage just before our attacking troops without too much risk of casualties among our own men.

On the morning of October 30th, when the Princess

Pat's went forward to the attack upon Graf and Meetcheele, our artillery fire was effective enough, and good progress was made, though our casualties were heavy. Stubborn bayonet fighting took place about the enemy's pill-boxes on the flanks of the hill, and along the valley of the Ravebeek, where the heavy smoke barrage covered the right of our advance.

For a time all went well: but the enemy's fire was close and intense, and our men suffered so heavily that for a time it seemed as if our advance might die out through sheer numerical weakness. But we kept on, and reached the foot of the hill at Meetcheele before a really serious check was encountered. A German pill-box was situated upon the top of the hill, and all the higher ground was dotted with the machine-gun emplacements of the enemy. From the commanding position of the concrete fort upon the crest, direct observation could be obtained over our whole local advance, and the sweeping fire of its guns inflicted casualties upon our men attacking half-a-mile away, who were in complete ignorance of the existence of such a strong point.

As in many cases during the Passchendaele fighting, the front of this attack was dangerously narrowed by marshy ground on each side of a dry spur leading direct to the top of the hill.

It is an interesting fact to consider that the Germans, after the first Canadian attack, altered the zones of fire of a number of their machine-guns so as to cover swamps and marshy ground that previously had been considered impregnable from their natural difficulties. This was a real compliment to our men—for apparently the enemy thought the Canadians quite capable of attacking over ground impassable to other troops.

However, in this case, the Princess Pat's fought their way up the slope until most of their effective

strength was gone; and then Sergeant Mullin went forward to reconnoitre the possibilities of a flanking attack. Finding a place where one man could advance unobserved, but where the movement of a party would certainly bring disaster, he made his way forward alone.

Crawling through the brush, he reached a point close to a sniper's post just before the master pill-box on the top of the hill. He destroyed this post and its garrison with bomb-fire, then made straight for the pill-box. It must have appeared most heroically absurd—this attack by one man upon a concrete fort bristling with men and guns—but Mullin knew very well what he was about. It was all done before the eyes of our men, who were swarming up the slope, regardless of the heavy fire in their anxiety to be in at the finish. Mullin climbed on to the roof of the pill-box. Crawling to the centre, he fired down upon the German machine-gunners inside, laying them out across their weapons. Then, sliding down the roof, he landed beside the entrance just in time to receive the surrender of the thoroughly demoralized garrison.

The capture of this fort decided the issue upon the local front, for the offensive capacity of the pill-box proved as great in the hands of the Canadians as it had in those of the enemy. Our objective was gained and consolidated, and excellent positions assured for the next attack.

PRIVATE JAMES PETER ROBERTSON, 27TH BATTALION

LATE in the afternoon of November 5th, the 27th (City of Winnipeg) Battalion, under Lieutenant-

Colonel P. J. Daly, D.S.O., left Hill 37 and began the weary tramp along the duckboard trail to the front line. The village of Passchendaele was to be captured by the 2nd Canadian Division on the morrow, and all along the Corps front soldiers, weary with long days in the trenches, were being replaced by fresh men. The relief of the 29th Battalion was completed early in the evening, but the move to the assembly position was not made for several hours, Colonel Daly contenting himself with establishing a line of posts some fifty yards in advance of the front line, to intercept any inquisitive Hun. Soon after midnight the men moved to the assembly, and by 3 a.m. the gathering was complete and the troops resting in the mud after their long tramp from the reserve area.

The night was very dark, and, though the enemy did not spare his artillery, few casualties were caused. On the left of the 27th Battalion lay the troops of the 31st, and on the right those of the 26th. Their objective this time was the village of Passchendaele itself, and the men were pleased because it was their part to attack the real objective of the whole offensive, after the stubborn preliminary operations of the 26th and 30th of October.

Promptly at 6 a.m. our barrage came down, 150 yards in advance of our front line, and from there it advanced, at a rate of 100 yards in eight minutes, with our men close behind. The morning was dull and overcast, and the attack appeared to be a complete surprise, the assailants following so close upon the curtain of shell-fire that they were amongst the enemy and using their bayonets freely before the surviving Germans had recovered from the whirl of flame and explosions that had so suddenly enveloped them.

The German front line of defence consisted of

fortified shell-holes, and many of the machine-guns established there were knocked out at once by our heavy fire; the occupants stood no chance against our men with the bayonet, and the Canadians swept over with scarcely a halt, catching up the barrage and reaching the outskirts of Passchendaele town just behind it. The troops holding the enemy's main line before the village had no desire to try conclusions with the owners of those free-swinging bayonets, and without hesitation they bolted, unfortunately for themselves, arriving in the middle of the ruined town simultaneously with our barrage, which had been arranged to play on this portion of the objective for a double space of time. But strong emplacements amongst the masonry still gave our men pause.

On the left flank of the 27th Battalion a German machine gun, surrounded by uncut wire and broken, reinforced walls, formed an ideal point for stubborn defence. The flanking platoon charged this position three times, and on each occasion was driven back. The assaults were met by the point-blank fire of the machine-gun, and by bullets from riflemen in the ruined houses along the main street of the village. Then, while his platoon brought as heavy rifle and Lewis gun fire as possible to bear upon the emplacement, Private Robertson crossed the open line of fire alone, and running round the flank of the position, leapt the barbed wire and got in with his bayonet among the garrison. He had bayoneted several men before the gun crews had gathered their wits to meet the sudden onslaught, and his furious fighting daunted the remainder. They fled, nothing left them but the instinct of self-preservation. But Robertson did not intend to let them escape—he had been told too often at his training camp that his aim in life, nay, his whole ambition and purpose,

should be centred on the elimination of the Bosche. Seizing the captured gun, he swung it about and opened fire on the running men, killing most of them before his platoon had arrived at the position he had captured so gallantly. Then, bearing the captured gun with him, he continued on his way towards the final objective, the eastern outskirts of the town, meeting with several opportunities to use his new weapon and wasting none. The troops followed him down the main Passchendaele street, past the broken church, mopping up the enemy's strong points among the masonry as they advanced, and taking few prisoners. About each damaged machine-gun and every ruined cottage they left German dead, almost every man killed with the bayonet.

Little further resistance was encountered. The enemy had no taste for the brand of fighting in vogue, and our snipers, passing through the foremost line, lay out in advance of our busy troops, harassing points of possible hostile observation, and making an end of many Germans who sought refuge in the woods behind the town. But the enemy's shell-fire was intense and destructive. With his range noted to a nicety from his previous occupation of our new line, he pounded the unfortunate village, occasionally revenging himself for our successful shooting with a burst of shrapnel just in advance of our line.

During the consolidation, Private Robertson had been busy with his new machine-gun, but, seeing two of our men lying wounded well in advance of the line, he abandoned the gun and without hesitation went forward to bring them in. He got in successfully enough with the first man, but now the Germans, stiffened by reinforcements, had returned on their tracks and were establishing posts behind every available piece of cover. In spite of a veritable

storm of bullets, Robertson went out again. He fell before reaching the second man—he was probably hit—but picking himself up, he continued his way, and secured his wounded comrade. Slipping on the sticky mud, nearly exhausted, he stuck to his man, and had put him down close to our own line, when an unlucky shell exploded near by, killing him instantly. He did not live to know the honour he had won, but the men of his battalion who fought through Passchendaele village will not forget him.

CORPORAL COLIN BARRON, 3RD BATTALION

THE two preliminary assaults on the high ground before Passchendaele had secured the Canadians an excellent jumping-off position for the attack on the village itself. The capture of Crest Farm on October 30th by the 4th Division gave our men almost direct observation into the town, and the consequent concentrated fire of our riflemen and machine-gunners rendered the position of the German garrison most uncomfortable.

The 6th of November was the date chosen to justify the costly operations of October 26th and 30th, and at 6 a.m. the Canadians resumed the offensive, the 2nd Division troops on the right going forward to the capture of Passchendaele town, while on the left the 1st Division occupied the hills to the north.

The 1st Division had difficult country to manage. Not only were there many pill-boxes to occupy, but ways and means of progress were terribly limited and clearly defined by the areas of swampy and impassable ground that lay before our advance.

In view of the fact that we had so recently driven the Germans from the ground we were to cover, it was too much to hope that they were unaware of our limited attacking fronts, and the subsequent machine-gun barrages that swept our lines of progress proved the contrary.

The 3rd Battalion attacked on the extreme left of the Canadian Corps front, with the intention of reaching the Goudberg Spur. But between our line and the Spur there lay a very formidable strong point indeed, the pill-box at Vine Cottage. Now the pill-box itself was a standing testimonial to the thoroughness of German defensive works, but, in addition to its 18-inch walls of reinforced concrete and its appropriate armament, no less than six machine-guns had been placed in positions commanding every approach to this *chef d'œuvre*. Our fellows had attempted the reduction of this minor fortress a week before Corporal Barron and his section of the 3rd Battalion took the matter in hand, and had gained no appreciable results beyond a somewhat depressing casualty list and a raised estimation of German defensive ingenuity. However, its capture was imperative, and a special plan of attack was arranged.

At zero hour, Lieutenant Lord's platoon jumped off towards the south-east, intending to capture Vine Cottage and swing round northwards to the final objective. Advancing through the rain, our men got near the strong point and were met at once by heavy fire. Vine Cottage itself, though hardly justifying its name, was a pleasant building enough in its Belgian way, and it was not until the observer had approached it nearly that he could define German handiwork behind the crumbling bricks.

The enemy, with simple cunning, had raised a concrete building within the broken walls, with

such successful camouflage that our scouting aeroplanes had not reported it as a pill-box for some time, while the easy unconcern with which the building received a direct hit by an 18-pounder shell had caused our gunners anxiety to a degree. As the Canadians drew near they extended and attacked the position from three sides. Their advance was slow over the sodden ground. It was impossible to win close enough to the building or gun positions to throw bombs with good effect. Time and again our fellows charged, but from every point machine-gun fire drove them back, and finally they were forced to take whatever cover they could find, while a fresh scheme of attack was planned. The going was very heavy, and the mud and constant rain made the condition of the wounded terrible beyond description. Our men started to attack once more, and as they rose to their feet a diversion occurred to the front.

Corporal Barron, a Lewis gunner, had worked round the flank with his weapon, and was knocking out the German crews one after the other with his well-directed fire. Completely exposed, he directed his gun undisturbed by the point-blank shooting of the enemy, until he had silenced two of the opposing batteries. Then, without waiting for his comrades, he charged the remaining position with the bayonet, getting in among the gunners and killing four of them before the rest of his platoon could arrive. The slackening of the heavy fire gave the Canadians a chance to get well forward, and in a moment they were about the position. The guns Barron had been unable to reach kept up a heavy fire until our fellows were on top of them, when most of the crews surrendered, while others attempted to escape to the rear. But the Canadians had lost too many of their comrades to feel merciful, and they were

infuriated at the general morale of men who would maintain murderous shooting until imminent danger pressed, and then calmly sue for mercy. They took few prisoners.

Corporal Barron, however, had not finished his good work. Turning the enemy's guns about, he opened fire upon the retreating Germans, catching the groups upon the hillside, and shooting them down with such good effect that hardly a man escaped.

That was a job well done and the remaining men of the platoon moved northwards to the consolidation of Goudberg Spur with the capture of six machine-guns and a strong pill-box to their credit, and the satisfying knowledge that the German losses were double the number of their own.

LIEUTENANT HARCUS STRACHAN, FORT GARRY HORSE

It is generally admitted that initiative and an aggressive spirit are very necessary concomitants of the successful cavalry leader. Their possession does not prove an infallible rule—cavalrymen claim no monopoly of these qualities—yet on occasion a cavalry officer's possession of them to a degree marks an exploit abnormal in its exceptional dash and daring. Such an exploit was that of Lieutenant Strachan of the Fort Garry Horse, in November, 1917, at Cambrai.

During the morning of November 20th, the Canadian Cavalry Brigade moved forward to the outskirts of Masnieres, and there the troopers halted, awaiting word from the G.O.C. 88th Brigade, whose men were preparing the way for the cavalry. The

British infantry and tanks had broken the enemy's line between Gonnelieu and Hermies, and it was the intention of the Higher Command to push the cavalry forward through the gap, and with the mounted men to seize Bourlon Wood and Cambrai, to hold the passages across the Sensee River, and to cut off the enemy's troops between Havrincourt and the Sensee.

Riding forward into Masnieres, General Seely received word that the attacking troops had secured their objectives, and accordingly the brigade advance guard, the Fort Garry Horse, entered the town and managed to get across the river bridge in the main street. The canal bridge beyond, however, had been broken down, either by the weight of a tank or blown up by the enemy during the crossing of one of these machines. At any rate, one of our tanks had plunged through into the canal beneath, and, without very radical repair, the bridge was impassable to mounted men.

Another bridge, in a rather better condition, was discovered to the south-west, and Major Walker, of the Machine Gun Squadron, commandeered the help of every available man, including civilians and German prisoners, and by three o'clock the bridge was strong and practicable. This work was accomplished under very heavy fire.

Upon the completion of the bridge, " B " Squadron of the Fort Garry Horse, under the command of Captain Campbell, pushed forward across the canal and attacked the enemy's line upon the ridge, while the remainder of the regiment prepared to follow. But conflicting statements arrived from the infantry —there had been a check—and before the rest of the mounted men could advance, Colonel Patterson, commanding the Fort Garry Horse, received orders instructing him not only to remain west of the

canal, but to withdraw any of his troops that might have crossed.

Colonel Patterson immediately sent messengers after " B " Squadron, but the orderlies were unable to deliver their instructions. The Canadian troopers had wasted no time—opportunity had been denied them too long—and there had been little delay in getting to grips with the enemy. They were well away.

Captain Campbell's men came under machine-gun fire directly they left Masnieres, and for a few minutes the horses were hard put to it in the marshy ground about the canal. Before them the infantry had cut a gap in the German wire, and winning through the swamp they charged for this at the gallop, taking little heed of the heavy fire.

Casualties were rather heavy at the gap. Captain Campbell went down, and command was taken by Lieutenant Strachan. There was no delay. Sweeping through the gap, Strachan led his men north towards Rumilly, and soon encountered the camouflaged road just south-east of the town. This obstacle was negotiated successfully enough, with some slight damage to the screens and an occasional telephone wire, and, forming in line of troop columns, the men went forward at the gallop to an objective dear to any cavalryman's heart. A battery of field-guns lay before them.

A good horse, firm ground and guns to be taken —a cavalryman wants no more. The Canadians charged down upon them, and in a moment were among the guns, riding the gunners down or sabreing them as they stood. Two of the guns were deserted by their crews as our fellows came thundering down, the third was blown up by its gunners, and the crew of the fourth fired a hasty round point-blank at the advancing troopers. This shot might have seriously

disorganized the mounted men, but fortunately the gunners were much too demoralized to train their weapon surely. The shell went wide. There was a brief mêlée of plunging horses and stumbling artillerymen. Then the business was finished, and the men hoped for a breathing-space.

But there was no rest for a while. Behind the guns a body of German infantry appeared, and, swinging his men about, Strachan led the troopers on into the thick of them. A few saddles were emptied, but the firing was vague and ragged. The Germans were not accustomed to this kind of thing and would not stand. They fled, our fellows cutting them down as they ran.

Strachan gathered his men and continued towards Rumilly, under constant fire from block-houses on the outskirts of the town. A sunken road crossed his line about half a mile east of the town, and here the troopers halted and prepared a hasty stronghold. All this time Lieutenant Strachan had been anxiously waiting for news or sight of the main body of the Cavalry Brigade, and as the day passed and there was no sign of his regiment he realized that something had gone wrong. He could not face the German Army with less than a hundred cavalrymen, however determined, but he decided to hold on awhile in the rough cover of the sunken road until it became obvious that no supports were coming to his assistance that night.

The enemy had collected what troops he could, and the band of dismounted troopers were surrounded on three sides. Several tentative rushes had been made, but the steady fire of the Canadians had driven these back in disorder. Still, without rapid support it was impossible for the party to hold out much longer. Only five horses remained unwounded, and the strength of the squadron was

under fifty men. Ammunition was none too plentiful, and Strachan called for two volunteers to carry messages back to Headquarters in Masnieres.

The job was risky enough, but there was more difficulty in selecting applicants than procuring them. Two troopers, Privates Morrell and Vanwilderode, were dispatched, and in the meantime the lieutenant set his men to cutting three main telephone cables that ran along the side of the sunken road. This small operation in itself should have caused the enemy some slight annoyance.

The light was going fast, and Strachan decided to abandon his horses and cut his way through to Masnieres. He imagined, shrewdly enough, that though the Germans were in no manner of doubt as to his presence, they were very vague about the strength of his party, and were by no means anxious to try for a definite conclusion until their numbers were assuredly overwhelming.

The light was just strong enough to distinguish the church tower of Rumilly, and taking a compass bearing from the building, Strachan started off to fight his way back to the brigade. First he collected his horses, and with some commotion stampeded them to the eastwards. This manœuvre drew the fire of every machine-gun in the vicinity upon the unfortunate animals, for the Germans thought that, not content with the havoc that they had already created behind their lines, the irrepressible cavalrymen were starting off again upon their destructive mission.

With the mêlée at its height, Strachan gathered his men, and led them off quietly towards the British lines.

The journey back was hardly less eventful than the outgoing trip, though it was a great deal slower.

Leading his men through the dark, Strachan made as straight a line as possible for the town where he had left the brigade. One might have imagined that the military ardour which had fired these troopers throughout the day would have been temporarily damped, but there was no sign of it. No less than four parties of Germans were encountered on the homeward route, and each time attacked and dispersed. On two occasions the enemy was numerically a great deal stronger, but disregarding the obvious, the dismounted troopers went forward with the bayonet, routed the unsuspecting Germans and captured more prisoners than they could conveniently handle.

However, most of them were brought along, and after an hour of somewhat nervous travelling the remainder of the squadron reached the wire. At this point there was some slight difficulty in finding a gap that would admit the passage of the men, and in the search in the darkness the party became separated. Lieutenant Cowen with the prisoners and half the men made the best of his way back to Masnieres, while Strachan sought another road with the rest of his squadron. Both parties were successful and came in without a further casualty.

Comment on the day's action would be superfluous. Strachan had destroyed a battery, inflicted well over a hundred casualties, most effectively tangled German communications over a wide radius, and captured or caused the surrender of a number of the enemy exceeding the original strength of his squadron. Had conditions been favourable for the use of cavalry upon a larger scale a very great victory might have been won.

LIEUTENANT GORDON MURIEL FLOWERDEW,
LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE

MARCH 30TH, 1918, dawned full of menace for the Allied line.

Early that morning the Canadian Cavalry Brigade received information that the Germans had captured Mézières and were advancing on Amiens. The brigade was ordered to cut across country and arrest the advance.

Already the Germans had occupied the Bois de Moreuil, the strategic importance of which could hardly be over-estimated. From the wood they could overlook the whole of the valley leading up to Amiens and to the main railroad to Paris. The cavalry decided to attack.

Reaching the north-east edge of the wood, headquarters were established in a small wood adjoining the large one. The smaller wood had not then been occupied by the Germans, but they were sending bursts of rifle and machine-gun fire at the cavalry from their cover and it was imperative that the attack should not be postponed.

The Royal Canadian Dragoons, who were leading, sent an advance-guard squadron, commanded by Captain Nordheimer, around the north-east corner at a gallop. A second squadron, under Captain Newcomen, rode at the south-east face, intending to get into touch with Nordheimer's squadron. A third squadron, under Major Timmis, followed in support of Captain Nordheimer.

Though raked by a heavy fire, Nordheimer's squadron charged into the north-east corner of the

wood, and came to grips with the enemy in a hand-to-hand combat. Many of the enemy were killed, for they refused to surrender; but at last a large party, of about three hundred, driven from cover, retired from the wood south of the point at which the cavalry had entered.

It was then that Lord Strathcona's Horse received the order to advance, Lieutenant Flowerdew's squadron in support of Nordheimer, while the remainder of the regiment moved, dismounted, against the southern front of the wood.

The mounted squadron rounded the corner of the wood at a gallop, to cut off the retreat of the enemy on the eastern side. They were nearly at the destination when suddenly in front of them they saw, from the top of a road in a cut bank, two lines of Germans facing them. There were about sixty Germans in each line, and machine-guns were posted in the centre and on the flanks of both, the rear line about two hundred yards behind the first. Immediately the enemy saw the horsemen they opened fire.

Flowerdew quickly ordered a troop under Lieut. Harvey, V.C., to dismount and carry out a special movement. With the remaining men he charged the German lines.

From the enemy machine-guns came a concentrated stream of fire on the rushing cavalry. There is little need to describe that charge. It was a return to the days when battles were decided by the strength of men's arms. It was the charge of the Light Brigade over again, on a smaller scale—smaller in physical weight of onslaught and opposition, but equal in spirit.

The Germans stood up boldly to the attack. They never expected that the horsemen would penetrate into their midst. There was no question of sur-

render, nor much time for it. Through the first line went the squadron, across the intervening space and through the second line, cutting down the enemy as they passed. Behind the second line they wheeled and rode through again full tilt. Over seventy per cent. of the attackers were casualties, but the fury of the charge was more than the Germans could face. They broke and fled. Nor was this all, for the enemy who were still fighting in the wood, hearing the clatter of hoofs behind them, believed themselves surrounded and their resistance to our dismounted troops weakened.

The survivors of Lieutenant Flowerdew's men established themselves in a position in which they were joined later by Harvey and those of his force who were left. Both leaders had been wounded, Flowerdew having been shot through both thighs.

Only after the action was the full importance of the victory realized, and of Flowerdew it is written in official language that " there can be no doubt that this officer's great valour was the prime factor in the capture of the position."

THE END

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