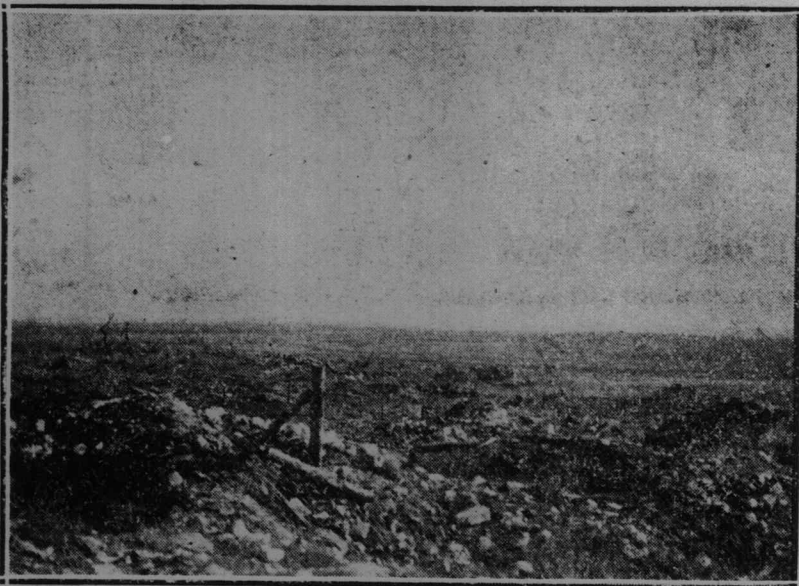


The Battle Fields of France *Continued*

parties of the 29th Division were on the field, seeking bodies for burial. They told us they had come across many bodies of Newfoundland soldiers, but only two could be identified, and they could not then give us the names. The bodies recovered had been buried in a cemetery about four miles distant. They intended continuing the work until the whole area had been searched.

I saw two bodies of Germans, recognized by their three quarter boots. I saw the bodies of three British soldiers lying in shell holes, but could not find anything to distinguish their regiment. The letters on their helmets had disappeared. Their boots protruded and contained bones of the feet and parts of their stockings. The bottom of the bigger shell holes was covered with water. Even on Infantry Hill, which is considerably elevated, the shell holes were almost filled with water. Scores of spots in this vicinity had been opened up and bodies recovered therefrom by the search party.

I brought a piece of shell and an open clasp knife



Infantry Hill. Near here Lieut. Cyril Gardner and many other heroes fell; about 90 Newfoundlanders were taken prisoners on this hill. The post is a machine gun station.

which I found by the remains of a body. In a pocket of a coat I found an indelible pencil and cigarette papers. The blade of the knife was broken about an inch from the top. It had been opened by the wounded owner who had cut away all obstacles in the shape of clothing and kit in order to locate and dress his wounds, only to die on the spot perhaps that night or next day, as he had fallen on No Man's Land and British comrades could not venture to search for wounded, to do so meant instant death by German machine guns.

I went into a British dugout near Infantry Hill. It was about twenty-five feet down, but it was intact. The names of some of the lads who inhabited it were cut in the wood. In the trenches before Monchy I came upon a machine gun fixture. Two names were cut in the fixture. Under what circumstances were they cut? Monchy, oh Monchy! around thy field plots fell a couple hundred of our noblest manhood. They died for France and Liberty.



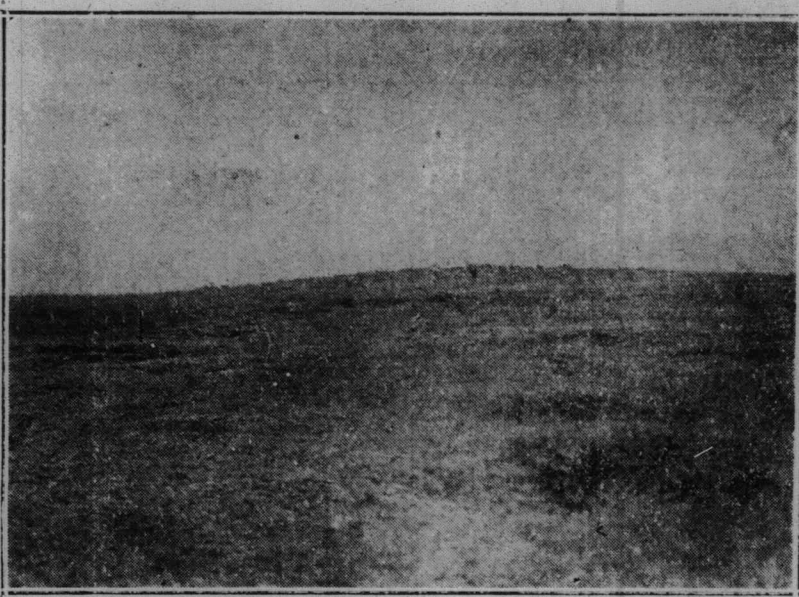
A trench in Flanders during winter of 1918 flooded with water.

No graves mark their remains, yet those noble boys voluntarily went forward to an alien land, ready to lay their young, promising lives upon the altar of Freedom, while at home far away across the seas, some of their countrymen became rich in gold filtered at the cost of the blood of ten million men who fell upon the fields of France and Flanders.

One who fell at Monchy—Cyril Gardner—I knew well. He had worked as an employee of the Trading Company. He had sailed his schooner to and from the rugged Labrador coast. I met him before he enlisted; he had been in the United States and returned to enlist. He believed it to be his duty. His brother Edward soon followed him and enlisted. Edward fell on July 1st. It was Cyril who won the D.S.O. for capturing, single handed, a German trench near Les Boeup, and took 72 German prisoners. Cyril Gardner was a splendid type of man. I wanted him to be a Union Candidate for Trinity Bay in



The ruins of Messines.

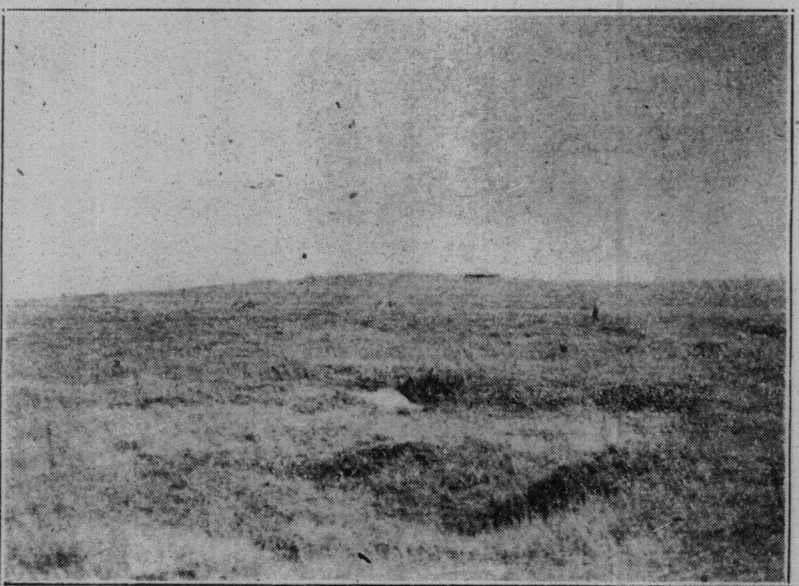


Monchy—showing the ground our boys covered when they marched to Infantry Hill that fatal day.

1913, but he thought there were others who were better fitted for that job. I felt it a privilege to visit the field where his bones lie—I feel sure—at rest until that day.

If all humanity could visit France and Flanders and see only what we beheld—true only a fraction compared with the total destruction! If all the mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and wives of dead heroes could gather on the fields of France and Belgium, their cry of agony would reach around the world, and then surely war would end for always.

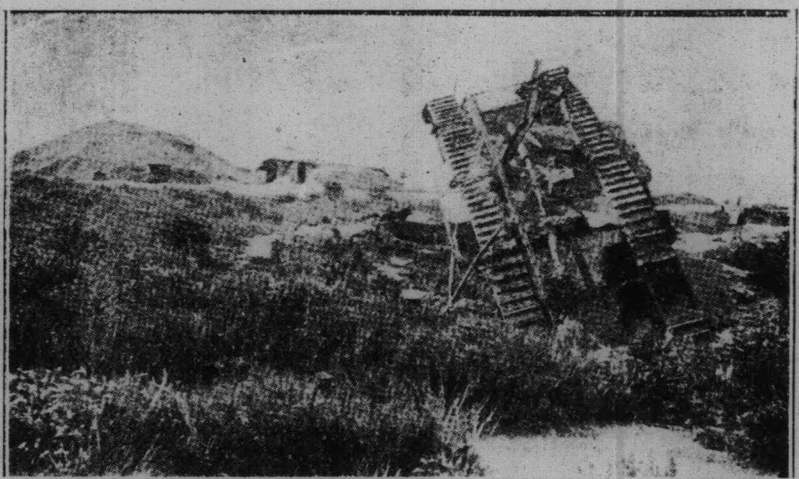
Those nine men that gathered in a trench quite near the ruins of Monchy and held back the victorious Germans who believed Monchy was held by a strong British force, were indeed brave men. There were but nine true British soldiers that evening between the German trenches at Monchy and Arras five miles back. Terra Nova will ever be proud of Monchy—of those who died heroes and of the nine all-comers who gathered to hold the trench and village, and succeeded. But there is a discordant note in the



Monchy from Infantry Hill.

glorious annals of Monchy. Some did not join the nine, but made for Arras unwounded and arrived broken and bleeding—wounds that did not savour of glory. What could have been their feelings when they learnt of the conduct of the noble nine and the honours they earned and received. I give no names, conscience punished them soon after, but it was one black stain upon the memory of glorious Monchy.

We passed on to Arras and on to Vimy Ridge about five miles from Arras. From Vimy Ridge, where the Canadians added more glory to their laurels, we could see Monchy, South of Arras, and could gather an idea of how the forces lay in this area. From Vimy Ridge to the North could be seen the ruins of Lens and Loos. On Vimy Ridge the Canadian commanding officers have erected a splendid memorial to the memory of their officers and men who



All that remains of Langemark—with a destroyed Tank. The mound in the rear is all that remains of the Church.

fell defending that ridge. It is not what we would call a stiff ridge; it is a long, even slope, reaching from its base probably two miles to its summit. A gentle rise of two miles on smooth ground—cultivated fields, but an ideal range for machine gun fire. The Germans held the Ridge and commanded the slope and covered the whole area with machine gun fire. They literally mowed down the brave Canadians who faced the bullets and inch by inch won the slope, but at an awful sacrifice. The Canadians that day took 12,000 Germans from their dugouts and trenches.

Don't ever say that men to-day are not as brave as in the days of yore. Those who think so should visit Beaumont Hamel, Infantry Hill, Cambrai Canal, Vimy Ridge, Mont Kemmel, Ypres and other places and learn of the valour of Britons who fought and died on those fields as gloriously as ever soldiers did in any age; probably more

valiantly, because in ages past no fighting men had to face such destruction and death dealing instruments as the machine guns. It is no wonder that Canada is proud of Vimy Ridge, for on that slope, Canadian soldiers proved themselves as good as the best that ever shouldered a rifle or faced a foe.

We must leave this scene which cost Canada thirty thousand of the prime of her manhood, and pass on to behold man's inhumanity to man, exemplified in the appalling ruins of Lens and Loos. This area produced coal and coal mining machinery covered the area. Every atom of mines and huge blocks of machinery have been destroyed. The ruins are appalling.

Poor France, how cruel is thy fate! What damnable and ferocious power had gathered on thy fair domains to hurl at an innocent and almost helpless people such destruction, misery and death. Who dare affirm that Germany was sane in her insatiable thirst for the wealth of others? Who dare affirm that the sin of greed is not the root of all evil? Go behold once fair and prosperous France and Flanders, and be convinced even though you are as Germanic as the Kaiser. Miles and miles of flourishing mines—the lungs of France—deliberately destroyed by an enlightened people, twenty centuries after the teaching of Christ. There can be but one answer, and

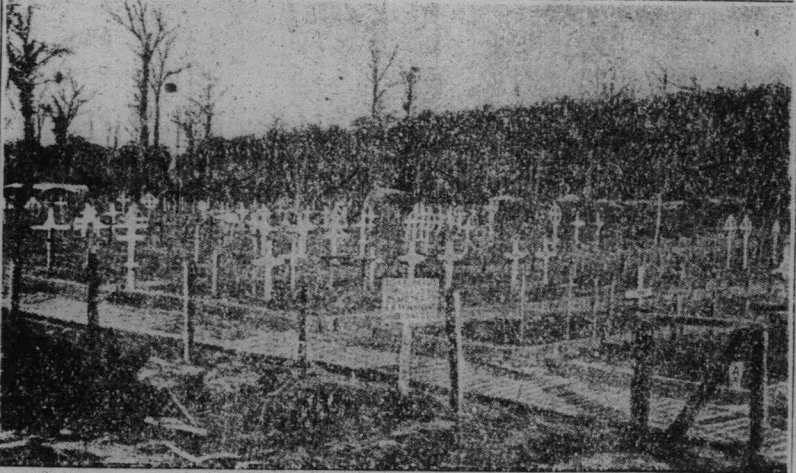


Belgium Soldiers' Graves.

that is, the people capable of such baseness are unfit to remain a nation amongst nations.

That is not all, for from every village, every slope, every ridge, in the war-destroyed areas of France and Flanders arise groups of little crosses standing sentinel on the graves of millions of this world's primest manhood. Shall this sacrifice be in vain? You who pity Germany, go behold at Boeschepe, about ten miles from Ypres, a British Cemetery containing 22,000 graves, amongst this multitude being one of our hero officers who fell at Neuve Eglise, dying eighteen hours later at a dressing station near Boeschepe. I insert a photo showing a fragment of this cemetery, also others containing the bodies of heroes who died defending the Ypres Salient.

We lunched at Ypres in a shed used as a restaurant. We spent some time inspecting Ypres and took some interesting photos of important points, which will be found in this article. Ypres is to the British probably the most important sector of the war. The Somme valley is an

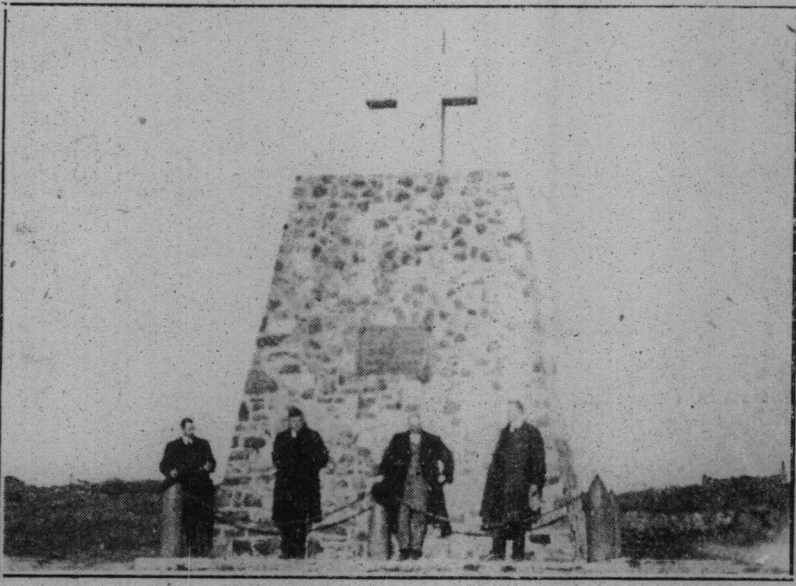


Ploegstreet Cemetery.

other sector dear to Britain, but as Ypres cost the British 250,000 in dead, another 250,000 crippled and maimed, and another 100,000 in prisoners, it will ever remain the dearest and most glorious section of Flanders to the British.

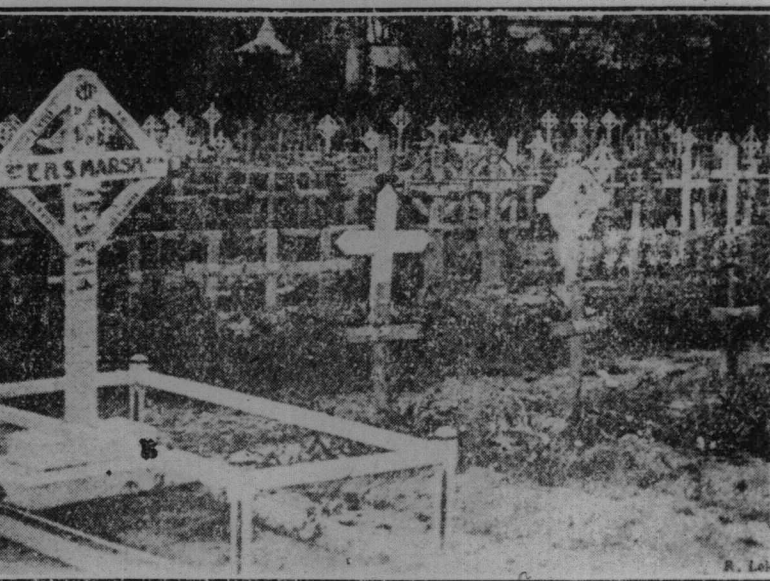
Our regiment spent a good deal of the war period in the Ypres Salient. The Salient generally extended from Armentieres, near the Belgian frontier, to Dixmude. The big German offensive of April 9th, 1918, which was intended to smash through between LaBasse and Armentieres, covered an area from LaBasse to Nieupoort. The Ypres Basin is not as familiar to us as its importance in the war and the connection of our regiment with it, warrants.

The town of Ypres lies in a sort of natural basin formed by a maritime plain intersected by canals, and



Canadian Monument at Vimy Ridge—The figures being the four pilgrims.

dominated on the north, north-east and south by low wooded hills. The hills forming the sides of this basin are very low and partly wooded. The line of their crests runs from north to south, through Houthulst Forest, Poelcappelle, Passchendaele, Broodseinde, Becelaere, Gheluvelt, the strategic Hill 60 (south of Zillebeke) and St. Eloi. Fur-

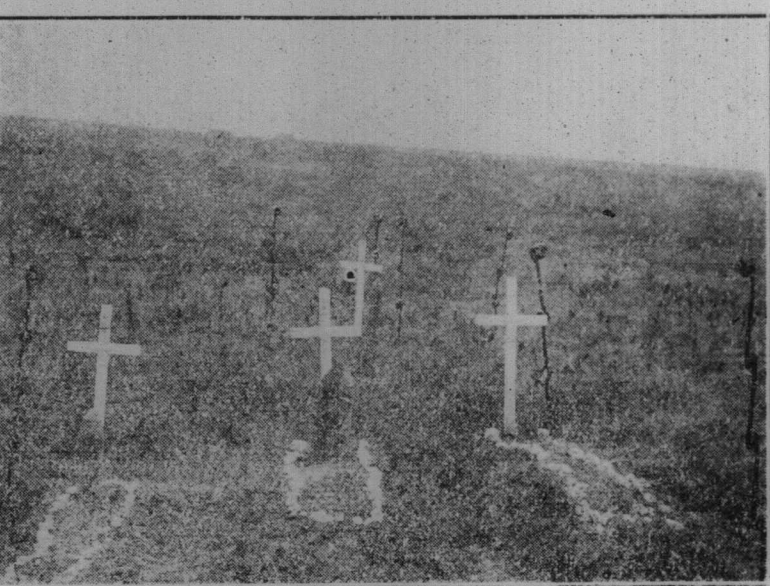


French, English and Belgium Cemetery.

ther south is the Messines-Wytschaete ridge, and to the south-west the Hills of Flanders. Houthulst Forest is the largest of the woods. Next come the islets of Westroosebeke and Passchendaele, then south of Zonnebeke, Polygon Wood, Nonne-Bosschen Wood, and the Woods of Glencorse, Inverness and Herenthage.

In this region, with its essentially maritime climate, the war assumed a character entirely different from that of the rest of the front. The marshy ground, almost at sea level, is further sodden by constant rain and mists, and forms a spongy mass, in which it is impossible to dig trenches or underground shelters. Water is found immediately beneath the surface, so that the only possible defence-works were parapets. The bursting shells made huge craters which, promptly filling with water, became so many death-traps for wounded and unwounded alike.

The defence on both sides consequently centred the woods, villages, and numerous farms, which were converted into redoubts with concrete blockhouses and deep



Graves in Flanders' fields.

wire entanglements. The slightest bits of rising ground here played an important part, and were fiercely disputed. The crests which dominate the basin of Ypres were used as observation-posts—the lowering sky being usually unfavourable for aerial observation—while their counter-slopes marked the concentration of troops for the attacks. It was therefore along the line of crests and around the fortified farms that the fighting reached its maximum of intensity.

The principal military operations which took place in the vicinity of the town between October 1914, and November 1917, may be divided as follows:—First, a powerful German offensive—a counter-stroke to the battles of the Yser—then a definite effort to take the town. The second stage was marked by a British and Franco-British offensive, begun in the second half of 1916 and consider-



A portion of Boeschepe Cemetery which contains 22,000 graves, amongst them that of Capt. C. Strong.

ably developed during the summer and autumn of the following year. The object of these operations, which ended in November 1917, was the clearing of Ypres. All the objectives were attained and the plains of Flanders were opened to the Allies. A final effort by the Germans in great strength to the south of the town was checked by the resistance of the Allies in April 1917. In September and October 1918, the enemy troops finally evacuated the country under pressure of the victorious Allied offensive.

In the April 1918 offensive, Germany manoeuvred secretly and in twelve days placed 27 divisions between La Basse and the river Lys. On March 28th when the Somme sector was in retreat before the Germans, there were only seven divisions facing the LaBasse-Lys sector. The first offensive against the right of the British Army was extremely severe, but without resting another offensive, more violent than any yet experienced, suddenly broke out opposite the left wing of the same British Army.

The first was aimed at separating the French and British Armies, and failed. The second aimed at break-

(Continued on page 6.)