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## "For gallantry in blowing up an enemy strong point"--reads the citation

Just as every airman has one ambition above all others—namely, to bring down a Zeppelin—so every tunneller has a pet desire, and that is to "hole" into a Boche gallery. Not to destroy his gallery with a mine, which is an everyday occurrence, but to break direct into it.

Everyone knows what a Zeppelin looks like, and quite a number have seen them brought down burning beautifully, but very few have ever seen a tunneller "hole" into a German gallery. The reason is that the tunneller is usually by himself when the opportunity, long hoped for, arrives.

Sometimes the result of his single-handed efforts in the bowels of the earth is noised further abroad than the company's mess. Then honour comes.

The tunneller's job is first to protect the infantry from enemy mining, and, secondly, to assist the infantry to advance by gently hoisting Fritz into the air at a given moment by means of a well-laid charge, thereby destroying sundry and badly damaging the morale of many. Fritz's tunnellers try to do likewise—but less successfully.

Tunnellers—that is, British tunnellers—hate defensive mining. What they really enjoy is a big offensive job, such as the last "show" at Ypres. When orders come to drive a gallery some hundreds of yards long at a depth considerably below the surface, to reach a given strong point in the enemy's lines through a country

known to be infested with Hun galleries, there is joy in the miners' mess.

The tunneller's hope of "holing" into a Boche gallery is usually realised during an offensive operation.

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Poking along his galleries, the tunnelling officer comes suddenly upon an excited miner, who whispers hoarsely that "they've broke into summat."

"Don't look like our timbers neither," confides the man.

"Good lad!" mutters the "Sub," hitting his head against a projecting timber in his excitement. Then, kicking off the heavy gum-boots, which may make too much noise, he creeps to the "face" in stockinged feet. The "face" is the end of the gallery.

Another miner is crouching there in the dark, listening.

The subaltern's electric torch, flashed with infinite caution, glitters momentarily on a pick held threateningly. Tunnellers never take rifles underground with them.

"Ye can hear 'em gabblin' German quite plain," croaks the listener. "Zounds as though they be loadin', zur."

The "Sub" beckons the man back, and, squeezing past, carefully examines the timbers which cut his own gallery at right angles.

It is a "dead-on hole," and the intersecting timbers are almost on a level with his own. Satisfied that it is really a Boche gallery, he switches off the light and puts his ear to the timbers.

For a minute or two he hears nothing except the beating of his own heart and the stifled breathing of the two men.

Suddenly, startlingly near, there is a tramp of heavy boots. One, two, three men pass, separated from them only by meagre boards.

The three tunnellers hold their breath. The steps tramp on and fade away.

"Perhaps they be goin' to touch her off," whispers one of the miners.

"Perhaps! And they again perhaps not," rejoins the officer. Then suddenly coming to life,

"Now then, lads, down with this lagging, and make as little noise as you can."

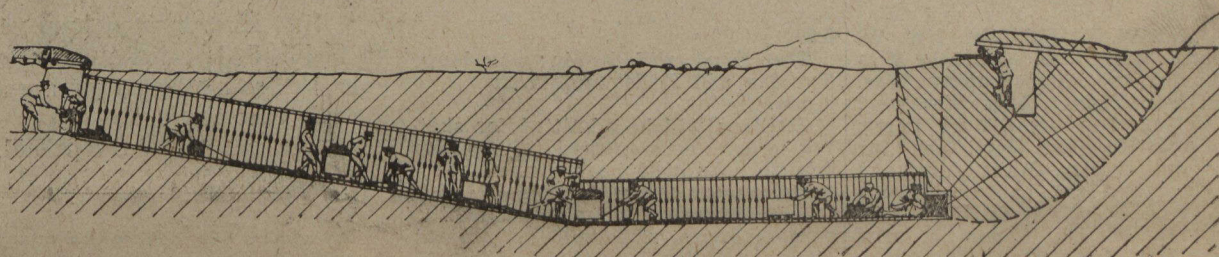
In a few minutes the timbers are down and the black hole of the Boche gallery with its unknown mysteries lies revealed.

"Smith, back you go to the shaft, tell Sergeant Robinson that we've 'holed' into the Hun's gallery and to come here at once with three good men, bayonets and bombs; hurry! You, Jones, stay here and hold this gallery at all costs until I'm back. Any Boche that shows up hit, and hit hard." And the tunnelling officer pulls out an automatic pistol and creeps forward into the darkness.

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"For conspicuous gallantry in entering the enemy's system of mine galleries, unloading an enemy mine, and bringing back prisoners and valuable information," reads the official version.

"Just my luck, that I happened to be on shift when we 'holed,'" confided Lieutenant X., M.C., R.E., to the approving mess. "Any of you chaps would have done the same thing, or better, if you'd had the chance."



"When orders come to drive a gallery x x x x under the Hun strongpoint, x x x x there is joy in the miner's mess."