

pass to a comrade saying, "Give this to the captain; I have no further use for it."

Such is the story of the 102nd Bn's share in the capture of Regina Trench. It was a great achievement, and in recognition of his valuable services in this operation Lieut.-Colonel Warden was later in the year awarded the D.S.O. But the success was a costly one and the casualty figures given above witness the price paid and include the following officers:—Killed—Capt. R. W. Nicholls, Lieuts. A. Carss, T. P. Copp, McL. Gordon, J. H. Grant (died of wounds), and C. T. Rush. Missing, believed killed—Major G. Rothnie. Wounded—Majors H. E. H. Dixon, J. S. Matthews; Capts. W. J. Loudon, J. E. Spencer; Lieuts. L. J. Bettison, A. G. MacDonald, J. H. Wilson.

For twelve days the battalion remained in the Chalk Pits, a muddy depression honeycombed with inadequate shelters, lying between Headquarters at Bailey Woods and Pozières. The weather was wet and the chalky soil was quickly reduced to a deep stickiness which made every movement a labour; a battery of "Heavies" had taken up its position in the same area and the resultant din added greatly to the general discomfort. During this period working-parties were requisitioned regularly for the units in the line, or to construct the great sand-bag wall which was to protect the south-western end of Death Valley. This was a tremendous undertaking of great importance. Death Valley had well earned its name. Lying as it did between our base and the front and being under direct observation by the enemy who raked it constantly with shell and machine gun fire, it had proved a veritable death-trap. For the protection of the troops a huge barricade of sand-bags was erected across the valley and it long remained as a monument to the devotion of the 102nd Bn., which was largely responsible for its completion. The work entailed on the carrying parties was exhausting in the extreme; it must be remembered that everything that went forward of the Sunken Road, about two miles east of Pozières, had to be taken in by hand; the light railways which were to prove such a boon in other sectors were practically useless in the Somme, as they were destroyed by shell-fire as soon as laid. Every shell for the Field Guns had to be packed in by mule teams; drinking-water had to be carried through miles of trench system in converted gasoline tins, and every man had to carry in addition to his burden his full fighting equipment. Add to this the handicap which the mud and darkness entailed and the reader will have some faint idea of the exhausting strain placed upon the troops when in Reserve after a front line tour. And then a paragraph like the following is to be found in the Regimental Diary: "Oct. 29th.—Church Parade was ordered for 9.45 a.m., but owing to inclement weather this had to be cancelled." Thank God sometimes for the rain; these Church Parades on active service, especially when called in the Forward Area, were the grimmest and ghastliest of Service jokes, and were provocative of more blasphemy and discontent than any active operation.