

panic. If one wonders why they were placed in this highly critical sector at all, one must consider not merely the enormous length of line held by the French, and the arrangement by which the British were to take over the Northern sectors, but also the fact that nothing crucial was expected here. Even the placing of the Canadians in this sector was in the nature of an experiment. Even after the First Battle of Ypres, the Higher Command did not seem fully to realise that here was the Allies' most vital part: that if Ypres were over-run there would be nothing to prevent the onrush to continue until Northern Flanders and Dunkirk and Calais were in possession of the enemy, from whence they would have England at the mercy of their guns.

At 4.45 the signal was given by the enemy, whose troops were in readiness to advance, to release the gas. A few minutes later a cloud of poisonous vapour was rolling swiftly before the wind from their trenches, running almost due east and west, between a point north of Langemarck-Steenstraat on the Ypres Canal.

At this moment of the afternoon, General Alderson was with the artillery commander, Colonel Morrison, at a point north east of St. Julien inspecting the position of a battery. Suddenly heavy rifle fire on the right of the French line was heard.

"Directly afterwards," he states, "two clouds of yellowish green smoke appeared. These clouds spread rapidly, literally until they appeared to merge into each other. It was evident from the nearing sound of their rifle fire that the Germans were advancing rapidly behind the clouds."

The General instantly divined that some devilry was afoot and that no time was to be lost to cope with it. He and his companion had left their horses at Wieltje and they hurried back thither in order to avoid being cut off. As they passed through the batteries south east of FORTUIN, they heard the order "Stand to," being shouted. By the time they got to Wieltje village they saw a panic stricken