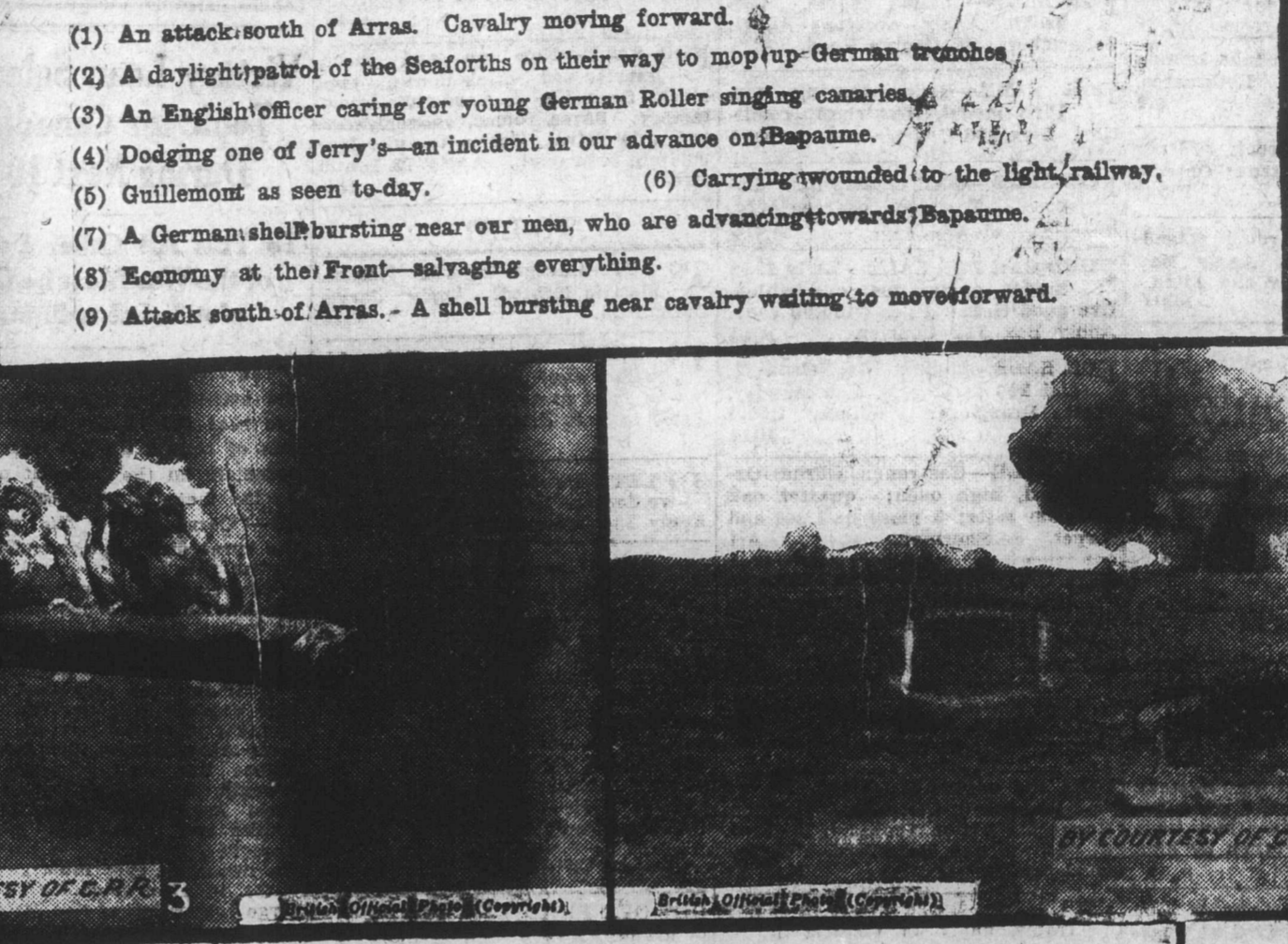
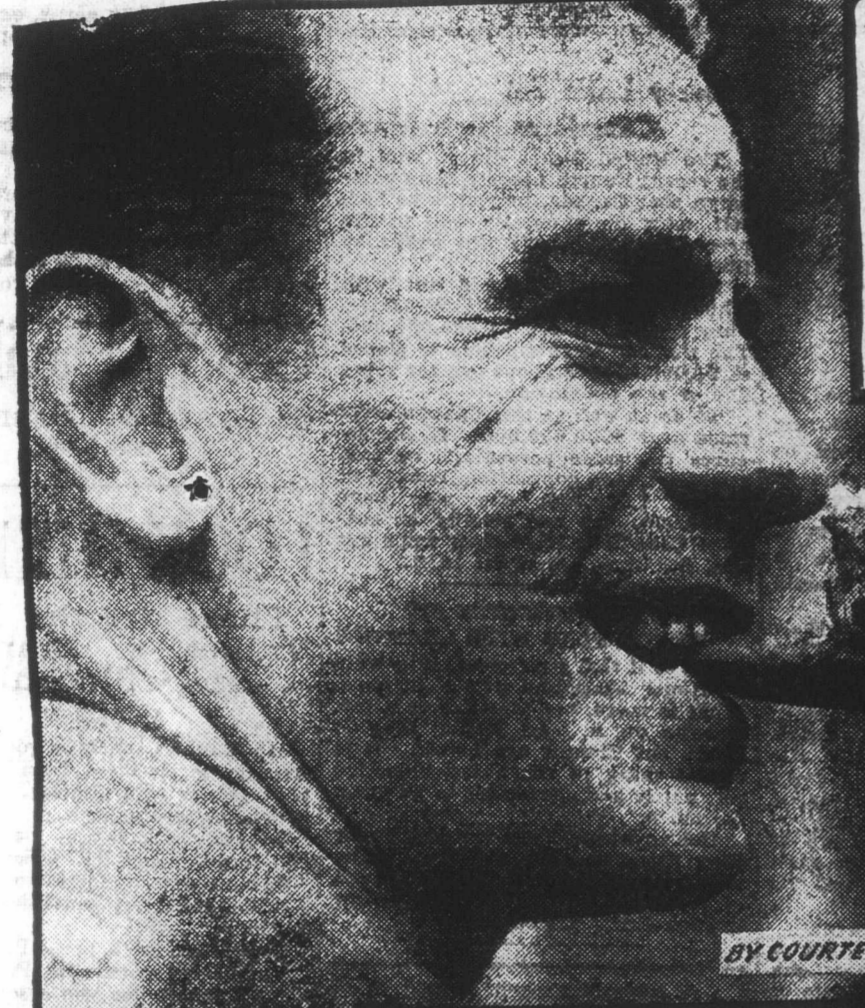


# Dodging One of Jerry's-- British Driving Out The Germans



- (1) An attack south of Arras. Cavalry moving forward.
- (2) A daylight patrol of the Seaforth's on their way to mop up German trenches.
- (3) An English officer caring for young German soldier singing canaries.
- (4) Dodging one of Jerry's--an incident in our advance on Bapaume.
- (5) Guilleumont as seen to-day.
- (6) Carrying wounded to the light railway.
- (7) A German shell bursting near our men, who are advancing towards Bapaume.
- (8) Economy at the front--salvaging everything.
- (9) Attack south of Arras. A shell bursting near cavalry waiting to move forward.



## The Trouble Hunters

By - ROLAND HILL  
Canadian War Correspondent

AS "The Trouble Hunters" of the Western Front Canada's Railway Construction troops have had their full share in the great victories since the Canadians first "went over" on August 8. From the coast to Cambrai they have fought up behind the Allies, with British, French, American and Belgians, have rebuilt the shell torn roadbeds and straightened out the twisted rails into workable lines to take up guns and supplies. They have built bridges across the deep Nord Canal, dug out tanks from the mire of the Scarpe Valley, drawn the dangerous teeth of the booby traps and mines of the Beche left as legacy, and otherwise proved themselves the most versatile of engineering units along the battle front.

Perhaps their finest feat in these shows was when a party went into Resieres with the Canadian infantry. They excused their presence with the bayonets--although they had bayonets themselves--by saying they wanted to see how the Germans had left that big main line that links up Amiens with Cambrai. Then they got into the fight. In the yard at Resieres, still under shell fire, was an undamaged giant German railway heater and truckloads of ammunition. The tracks were blown up on each side of it but the temptation was too strong for the railway men. They patched up the lines with what German material they could find, they mended an old Stuttgart engine and fired her up and then they hauled the big gun back two miles into a deep cutting and handed it over to a Canadian gunnery crew. That night it was dropping its big shells into the Germans at Peronne and Chaumes. "It was a picnic," said the young officer who had charge of the stunt.

The big double track line from Amiens to Chaumes and the branches to Peronne and Ham were repaired in record time, although the Germans had blown up every switch and joint and had wrecked all the bridges. The first gang tore up one line and used the material from that to make one complete through track. It kept on close up behind the infantry that it was often "taken by shell fire" but all night long huge trains of reinforcements and supplies went out from Villers Bretonaux.

At one point the Huns had mined a big embankment, covering all traces of their work so cleverly that the eagle-eyed engineer from Toronto missed it. There was a long copper wire cutting itself away in an acid bath that ran right through the slit and old cinders concealed the place where the embankment had

been dug into. Twenty yards of track went up into the air and the railway troops investigated. They scoured each side of the embankment for three miles and found fifteen more mines which they gently removed and saved themselves fifty hours' hard work. Generally the Huns don't fool them, for one of the versatile "trouble hunters" jobs has been the clearing of villages and dugouts of traps.

When the Belgians broke across the Yser River and threw back the Huns towards Ostend the Canadian Railway troops were in evidence too. For many months some of Col. "Bill" Hervey's men, old Canadian Pacific track and bridge gangers, had been laboring for this end. Their diving outfits had been working silently, almost in No Man's Land, putting in concrete foundations on the river bed. At Dunkirk they had collected huge British Columbia timbers and constructed them to fit like a jig-saw puzzle, numbered off and bolted and plated in place. Already headed on big trucks, as soon as the Germans fell back, these were rushed up and in less than a day there was a fine Canadian type of bridge spanning the turbulent stream, ready to take over the heaviest guns into that part of reconquered Belgium. By now it must have a double track railway line stretching its way longingly towards Ostend.

In the same area there's a little band of the Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps. For months, since the original battalion went south to the Marne, they have been building railway spurs for the big British naval guns that hammer away at the Germans. They build the concrete foundations for the megalithic fifteen inch and when one pedestal becomes too warm they load the big guns, weighing scores of tons on trucks and find another position. They started as an experiment. Now the Canadian command allows them to stay on at the request of the British navy. Some of them have naval decorations for their work and the young Whilpoe officer has been made a regular member of the sea force.

Up with the Belgians behind Houthur Forest and Langemarck there are more of the "Trouble Hunters." Under Colonel "Jim" Cornwall, of Peace River fame, they have been waiting patiently for the line to break there and have been gathering material ready for the happy day. Now they are rushing the tracks that will follow up the dodging troops into Belgium, one of the Germans main

front is not like constructing a transcontinental. The right of way is won by the fighting men and the price they pay is not in money. The penalty clause, if the line is not constructed and working on time, is defeat. The Canadian Railway troops have never had to pay the penalty. From the little battalion of experts that went out in the early days of the war under Colonel Ramsey, the Canadian Pacific engineer, Canada's Railway troops have grown to the equivalent of five brigades. Each unit has its experts and there has never been a job refused. They have raided No Man's Land and stolen tons of rails the Germans thought were quite safe. Some of them during the March retreat fought the Huns back with machine guns while their comrades rushed guns and rolling stock away. They destroyed the miles of track they had built so well and hampered the enemy. It is all in the day's work for the "trouble hunters."

How they started out prepared to do anything is best told in a story Colonel Ramsey relates. The original battalion was building a strategic line for the Canadians around Kommand at the time. One day they rushed up in a big British Royce car an Imperial staff officer who wished to see the colonel immediately. He found a business-like man in shirt sleeves and a corn-cob pipe in the colonel's office who asked him what he wanted.

"I must see the colonel personally," he explained. "It is most important."

"Well, I'm the colonel," answered the figure in shirt sleeves.

The staff officer suggested that the Canadian Construction unit hadn't any divers in their battalion. He wanted divers to rush to Dunkirk and help save a boat loaded with important stores which had struck a mine but managed to reach port.

"Sure, we've got divers," answered the colonel. "How many do you want?" The Imperial officer asked for two.

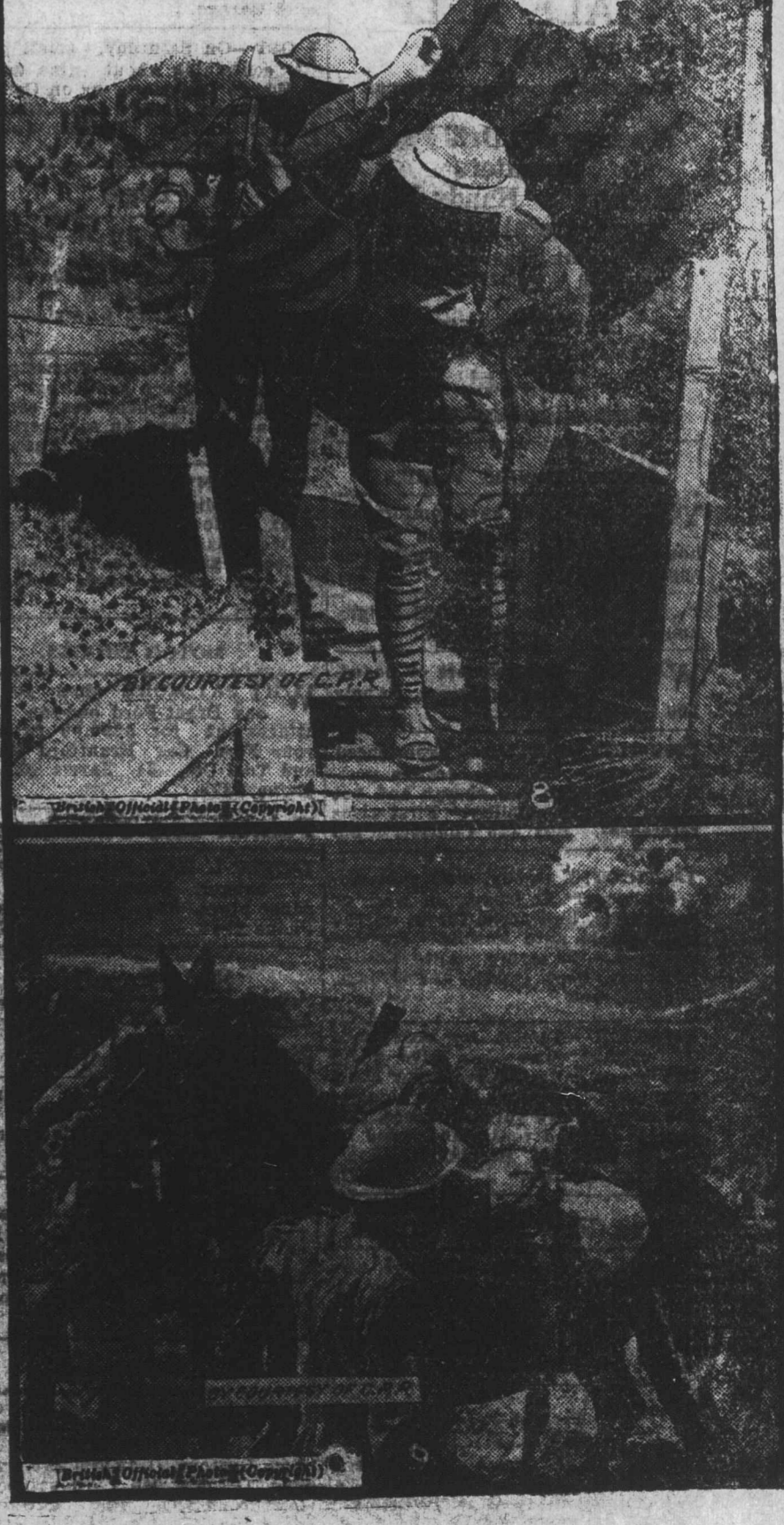
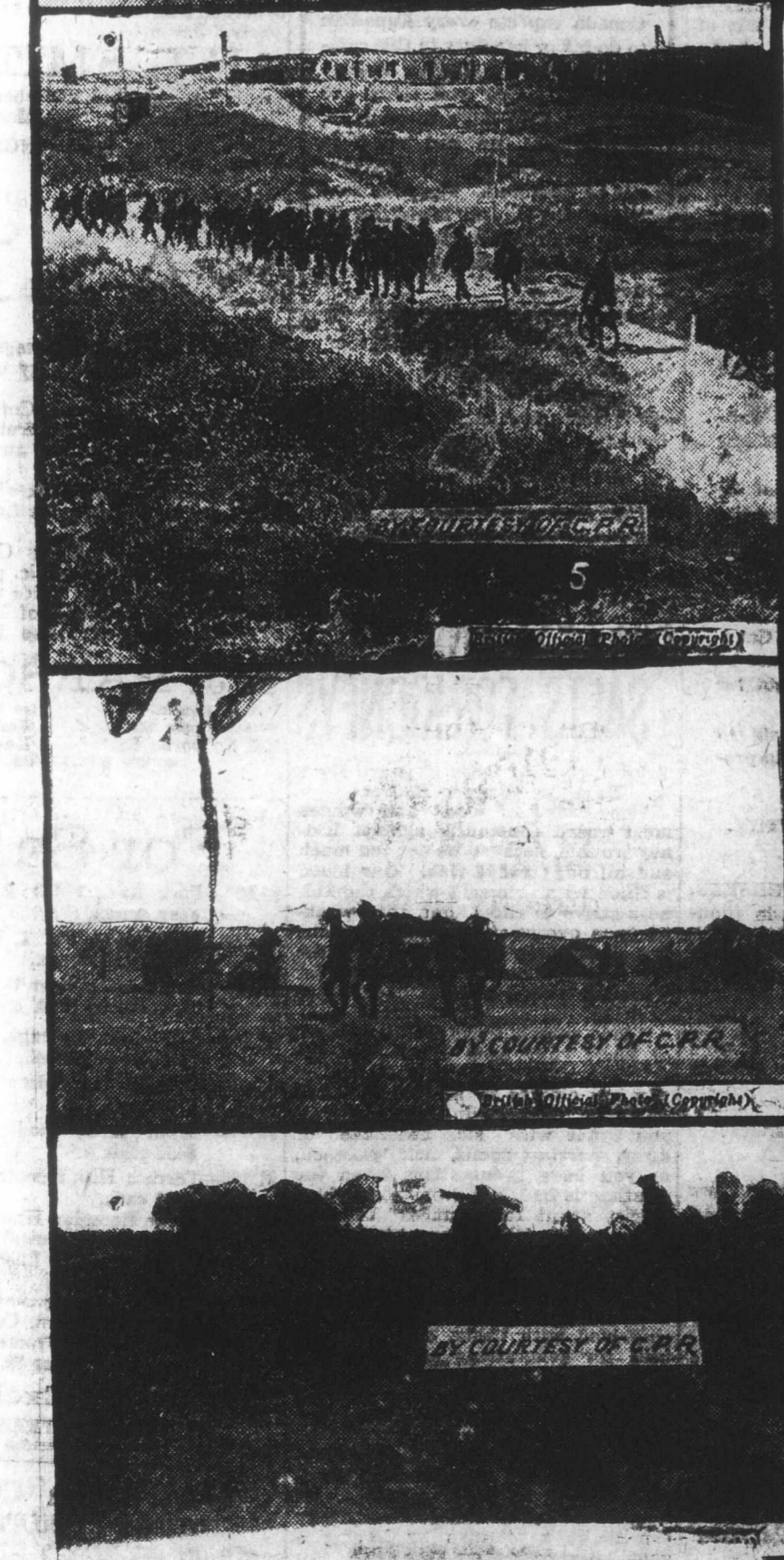
"You can have four if you like," suggested the Canadian.

Two were enough, however, and they went to Dunkirk with a gas mask and saved the cargo.

"I only had two divers," explained Colonel Ramsey, relating the story afterwards. "But there were half a dozen men I knew who worked with me on construction in Canada who would have gone diving if I had said the word."

That is the spirit that the Railway Construction troops have kept up. Ready to go anywhere; to do any thing.

ROLAND HILL.



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