
The Battle of Ypres

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ON the night of the 16th April, the 14th Battalion Royal Montreal Regiment, to which I belong, relieved the French at Ypres, and we were in the trenches until the 21st. Most of the time was very quiet, with the exception of the German snipers, who accounted for the lives of some of our boys. At certain parts of these trenches we were separated from the Germans by no more than a distance of 25 yards, and at times the boys threw tins of bully-beef over at them, and also often called out different remarks, replies to which the Germans always gave. Well our time came when we were to be relieved of our responsibility, and the 5th Royal Highlanders, of Montreal, took our place in the trenches. Things were very quiet that night, which was on Wednesday, April 21st. They came into the trenches and we went out without, as far as I can remember, a shot being fired by the Germans, which certainly was a very rare occurrence to happen. Thus we all at once started to form different suspicious opinions on the matter. It was about midnight when we arrived at our billets, the company to which I belong going into Brigade Reserves, and the balance of the battalion went into a village near to St. Julien. We were, of course, glad for the rest from the trenches, and next morning most of us slept on until about 10 a.m. It was a lovely day, the sun was shining brightly, and the skies were clear and blue, and we all got outside and got busy in shaving and washing up in general. In the wrecked once-on-a-time house in which we were billeted we happened to have a piano, and the boys got playing, singing and dancing, making the best of things under the circumstances. German aircraft were very busy all the morning around our way, and at about 3 p.m. we were treated to a shelling with asphyxiating shells. We were all formed up in our billets, issued with 200 rounds of ammunition, and told to get into skeleton