

ENTRENCHMENTS AT BRAMSHOTT.

Lieutenants Gillingham, Baker, Falkner, and Wooler, with thirty-six non-commissioned officers and men, recently journeyed over to Bramshott Camp for the purpose of attending a class on Trench Work. While in Bramshott the Western Scots contingent were attached to the 50th Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force, 14th Brigade, who saw that both the officers and men were well taken care of. The course of instruction consisted in the main of practical work, and it soon became evident to the Staff Officers, as the work progressed, that the Western Scots boys must have had previous training in trench work. The other battalions who have recently arrived in England also had their representatives, and various styles of trenches and revetments were demonstrated. Our work was laid out in a valley, and necessitated a high command trench. A very substantial huddle was made back of the line and brought up into place, firmly driven into the banquettes, and wired back. As the only tools available were the pick and shovel, our men showed a great deal of ingenuity, and the large knives issued to the men were quite in evidence. Unable to get any sandbags, the parapet and parados were both built up with sods, alternate rows of stretchers and headers being placed in position and firmly pegged. The dimensions of the fire trench built were 20 ft. long, 3 ft. 6 ins. wide at the top, 2 ft. 6 ins. at the bottom. A banquette 1 ft. in width was made and solidly revetted. Two 10 ft. traverses were also made. The superior slope of the parapet was 4 ft., and the exterior slope built up at an angle of 2/1. The earth needed for the parapet was excavated from in front, the exterior slope continuing below ground level at the same angle. In this latter excavation wire entanglements and abattis would naturally be placed.

During the course a most interesting and instructive lecture was given by Colonel Ironsides, G.S.O., in which he illustrated the various types of trenches adopted both by the Allies and Germans. Actual photographs taken from aerial observation of the German trenches were shown, and from these accurate plans are drawn. The style of trenches adopted are various, and there is no set rule to go by. The "L" type of fire trench, however, seems to be the favourite style among the Allies, as they are quickly dug, and natural traverses are already made, a communication line connecting up the different trenches made in the rear. Back of the fire trenches 10 to 20 yards is the communication trench referred to above, called superior or command trench, in which the dugouts are placed. From this superior or command trench are run back the communication trenches, 150 to 200 yards, connecting up with the support trenches built somewhat similar to the system of fire trench.

Systems of narrow trenches are built in from these communication trenches on either side, terminating in bombing pits, to effectively deal with the enemy who manage to take the first line, and as they are advancing along the communication trench the bombers are most active. False traverses, loopholed, with machine-guns behind, are very effective in dealing with the enemy as they come down the communication trench. In fact all sorts of obstacles to impede a passage of troops are built into the communication trenches, and while the enemy are busy breaking down the barricades, the bombers, etc., get very busy, and the defenders have time to form up and institute their counter-attack. From the communication trenches also are built a system of deep and narrow trenches, just wide enough for a man with full equipment to get into, and to hold eight to ten men each. These are occupied when a heavy bombardment takes place, and when the shelling ceases the men can quickly get out and into the fire trenches again, prepared to meet a charge. To prevent these narrow trenches, which are called "feathers," from caving in, props are placed at intervals along the top.

Altogether, the course, being practical, and with such a clever lecturer as Colonel Ironsides, was most instructive. Both officers and men enjoyed the course, and when not on duty the surrounding country, Haslemere particularly afforded the men relaxation and amusement galore.

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