

to No. 2 Crater, which is ascribed on p. 144 to the infantry of the 5th Brigade, was in reality done by the Pioneers, who also took a large share in placing No. 2 Crater itself in an adequate state of defence.

There is an inevitable tendency to give to the work of the troops immediately behind the firing line less attention and credit than they deserve.

The infantry sustain most of the hard knocks when it comes to climbing the parapet, and in return obtain the greater notice from the historian. But behind the thin and scattered lines, which wave after wave fall or go plodding on, the gunners, the sappers, and the pioneers are preparing or consolidating the victory. The battle is no longer between the opposing lines of the infantry, for to win a position you must hold it, and to hold it you must have brought up swiftly and safely from the rear bombs, ammunition, wire, rations, and a means of entry for the supporting and relieving troops. The area of the battle is no longer the front line. It is behind this that the enemy barrage descends, and over a wide field of fire the German shells are searching for all those who would bring up succour and relief. It is under these conditions that the pioneers must do their work. In the night, only illumined by the fitful flare of the star-shells shedding a pale and sudden luminance behind the front line and leaving the darkness more intense than ever, the old and battered communication trench of the Germans has to be made good to the front line. The trench from previous occupation is well known to the enemy, and as the pioneers shovel out the mud and the dirt to the left and right a new illumination is provided by the sudden glare

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