

With the Transport.

I wonder how many of my readers realise the enormous amount of work and responsibility that rests on a Battalion Transport—the enormous responsibility of supplying over 1,000 men with the necessities of life, when roads are shelled and roads are closed—when every sort of device has to be employed to ensure delivery? Think what it means: they are responsible for the delivery of ammunition, water, food, medical equipment—in short, the men in the trenches are absolutely at the mercy of the Transport. If you grasp these facts, then you will have some admiration for the Transport. Only on two successive occasions during the past twelve months have the men fallen short of the necessities of life. That was during the great battle of Ypres, when it became a sheer impossibility for a fatigue party to leave the trenches. In spite of grave peril, and in the teeth of persistent shelling, the rations were brought up as far as the Transport could come; only, as I say, the risk of trying to convey them from that point to the men was too great—it would have been suicide to have made any such attempt. The roads, I am told, were utterly impassible in places—torn by shells, strewn with dead horses and broken-up waggons; the situation for the Transport at times was desperate, and it was only courage and determination that enabled Captain Marshall and his men to reach the troops. During these evil days you had to be ready of resource; you had to make headway somehow—through ploughed fields, no matter what—it was just one eternal scout for ways that promised less danger. At Ypres and Festubert, the only safety lay in pressing forward at full gallop, and often the journey was made two or three times a day.