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Captain Powell, M. C., Must Have More Lives Than a Cat!

THE KING RECOGNIZED THE LOSS OF TWO LIVES BY BESTOWING THE MILITARY CROSS TWICE; BUT THE CAPTAIN LOST A COUPLE MORE LIVES AFTER THAT! TO HEAR HIM CHUCKLING ALONG ABOUT HIS WORK ONE WOULD THINK HIS WORST FEAR WAS WHETHER THE SQUAD SHOULD EVOLUTE ACCORDING TO THE DETAIL GIVEN BY SOME BUDDING CORPORAL, OR ACCORDING TO K. R. O. IN SPITE OF HIS WAR EXPERIENCE CAPT. POWELL IS ONLY 26 YEARS OLD!

Possessing a delightful sense of humour, and a natural disposition to look upon his part in this war as a matter of little moment, the subject of our article, Captain R. W. Powell, C.E., represents our ideal of the soldier.

It is to such men as this we can attribute the complete mystification of the Hun in his estimation of the characteristics of his enemy. The Hun takes the war seriously, as we know, and fails utterly to understand the character of the British fighting forces; and so misunderstanding, has misjudged time and again the effect of his frightfulness, and highly disciplined ruthlessness, to his own detriment.

Captain Powell is a surprisingly young man, being only twenty six years of age. Born, October 11th, 1891, at Ottawa. He graduated at Royal Military College, Kingston, in 1911 and was engaged, after leaving College, as a civil engineer in the Department of Public Works of Canada at Ottawa.

He was employed on the following works between 1911 and the time of his enlistment in the Canadian Expeditionary forces in September of 1914:—Georgian Bay Canal, Kingston Harbour improvements, improvements to the middle

channel, St. Lawrence River, Canadian Northern Railway (Trans-continental), and on the St. Charles River improvement works with Messrs. Quinlan and Robertson, Contractors.

Captain (then Lieut.) Powell proceeded overseas with the second division in April 1915, being stationed at Shorncliffe until September of that year, leaving at this time for France with the 4th Field Company under the command of the late Colonel (then Major) Inksetter, C.E.

The second division arrived in Flanders at the time of the battle of Loos, standing by at this engagement, and later taking its baptism at Messines.

After Messines Capt. Powell proceeded north to the sector between Veerstat and the spoil bank north of St. Eloi. Here he was engaged in field defence works of all descriptions until the battle of St. Eloi was fought at the end of March 1916.

In his first engagement, at St. Eloi, he was wounded twice in the legs. The first wound, from a piece of shrapnel, put him in hospital for four days; three weeks later he was wounded by a machine gun bullet which necessitated his retire-

ment to Etaples Base Hospital; thence to the 2nd London General Hospital in England. At this stage he was three months in England, the last of the three being spent with the fourth Division at Bramshot.

On his return to Flanders about the middle of August, 1916, he was stationed at St. Eloi, his old "stamping ground", for about



CAPT. R. W. POWELL, M.C., C.E.
Chief Instructor, E. T. D.

(Photo by Pinsonnault)

three weeks, then went south to the Somme.

On November 18th, during the renowned Battle of the Somme, he was wounded in the eye by a shrapnel splinter. On this occasion he was leading a party of six sappers on their way to lay out work for the night and got into the barrage

fire. Capt. Powell (then Lieut.) was the only one wounded or hurt in the party the shell exploding at graze about thirty feet immediately in front of the party he was leading along the shallow communication trench.

After receiving this wound he "carried on" and the next day was sent back to Etaples Base Hospital, occupying the same bed, in the same room and being attended by the same nurse, as before at this hospital.

From Etaples he went to Boulogne to an eye specialist for one month, and was there granted leave to go to England—and later received permission to return, on leave, to Canada, arriving about Xmas day.

Capt. Powell joined the instructional staff at the E. T. D., St. Johns, while in Canada, and his lectures on Entrenching and Field Defences came as a refreshing boon to many an officer anxious to learn conditions at the front.

In listening to Captain Powell giving a lecture on these subjects one cannot but see that he knows his subject perfectly and has certain convictions rather than opinions on the way things should be done. One minute he is seriously taking to task certain methods of foolish design; the next he is illustrating his point by a reference to "some poor blighters" with a "chuckle" so characteristic of him that any sketch of him is incomplete without reference to this, (for the want of a better word) "chuckle".

He is a splendid lecturer, pin-

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