

but meant to do the job right. Our officer was out in front reconnoitering while we were asleep. He was a fine chap and we felt he knew what he was about and we could follow him with confidence. At about a quarter to four the corporal came around with a shot of rum, which was welcome, for we were cold all through.

"At four twenty a 6-inch naval gun set the ball rolling, followed by 12-inch howitzers and the terrible racket of a whizz-bang battery right in the valley behind us. We waited twenty-five minutes, our Third Brigade jumping-off first—they were the Canadian Highlander battalions. The tanks were a great sight. All night long we had heard them puffing and groaning as they took up their position and wondered why the Boche didn't too. But our bombing planes flew overhead drowning their noise.

"We couldn't see anything of the battle because of the slope in front of us, but soon we were off, and as we reached the front line we passed the time of day with the Australian boys. The mist came down but lifted again an hour or two later and by that time we were working along through wheat fields. Over on our flank we saw some Boche machine-gunners beating it back, fighting as they went, and we started to work round them. Our own gun was now in action. Suddenly I spotted a Boche machine-gun 75 yards dead ahead of us. We threw ourselves down and tried to outflank him, but he got me here and killed our No. 1. Our N. C. O. took the gun and another man my harness and ammunition. Our section commander was hit and had to go out, but he took out with him a Boche machine-gun officer, who had surrendered. He was hit in the leg and was leaning on his arm. I beat it out too and ran across this dressing-station. There won't be room in the lorries so after my arm is dressed I shall hike back to a Casualty Clearing Station."

He didn't say much about himself, this lad, but he had been through some of the hottest fighting of the war. "Our barrage," he said, "didn't seem anything like so bad as what the Boche put down on us in March 1917."