

land, with all the excitement of week-end leave; the great kindness of English families whose friends in Canada had written to them about us, and who had forthwith sent us their invitations to visit them, which we did with the greatest pleasure, enjoying every minute spent in their beautiful houses; and then the greatest thrill of all — when we were ordered to France.

The 24th of April was a beautiful spring day of quivering sunshine, which made the soggy ground in the part of Belgium where I was fairly steam. The grass was green as plush, and along the front of the trenches, where it had not been trodden down, there were yellow buttercups and other little spring flowers whose names I did not know.

We had dug the trenches the day before, and the ground was so marshy and wet that water began to ooze in before we had dug more than three feet. Then we had gone on the other side and thrown up more dirt, to make a better parapet, and had carried sandbags from an old artillery dug-out. Four strands of barbed wire were also put up in front of our trenches, as a sort of suggestion of barbed-wire entanglements, but we knew we had very little protection.

Early in the morning of the 24th, a German aeroplane flew low over our trench, so low that I could see the man quite plainly, and could easily have shot him, but we had orders not to fire — the object of these orders being that we must not give away our position.

The airman saw us, of course, for he looked right