

The Germs must have thought there was a big assault on, and their gunners were putting a zone of fire behind the trenches to stop supports coming up. An' we had to go through that same zone, if you please. 'Strewth, it was hot. There was big shells an' little shells an' middle-sized shells, roarin' an' shrieking up and bursting H.E. shrapnel or smashing into the ground. If there was one threw dirt over us there was a dozen. One buzzed close past and burst about twenty feet in front of the F.O., and either the windage or the explosion lifted him off his feet and clean rolled him over. I thought he was a goner again, but when I came up to him he was picking himself up, an' spittin' dirt an' language out between his teeth, an' none the worse except for the shakin'. We couldn't find that break. We had to tap in all along the wire to locate it and all the time it was a race between us finding the break and a shell finding us. At last we got it, where we'd run the wire over a broke-up shed. The F.O. was burnin' to talk to the Battery, knowing they'd be anxious about their shoot, so he picked a spot in the lee of a wall an' told me to tap in on the wire there. Just as he began talkin' to the Battery a Coal-Box soars up an' bumps down about twenty yards away