

"On the afternoon of the following day the Germans made their first big gas attack. What happened has been fully chronicled in the Canadian press, together with many things that never happened.

"We counter-attacked at St. Julien about midnight, and about two o'clock I passed through Ypres in a nice motor ambulance. For me that was the finish of Ypres, and I don't think I was ever so happy in my life.

"When I rejoined the battalion I found them at Festubert, resting after their exploit of taking the orchard at La Quinque Rue. They were only about a couple of hundred strong.

"We next took over trenches at Givenchy on La Bassée canal, and remained in the neighbourhood for about a month, during which the First Canadian Brigade attacked, but without permanent success, and suffered heavy losses. We supported in reserve, which only means we stayed in billets, standing to.

"While in this neighbourhood I visited Béthune several times. It is probably the best town for shops, etc., in close proximity to the firing line.

"About the end of June we moved northwards in two night marches to the locality of Steenwerck and billeted for ten days.

"We had a fine celebration on Dominion Day—races and sports and a concert. It was here that I was one of the minstrel show.

"After this enjoyable rest we took up trenches near 'Plug Street.' (Ploegsteert is the correct name, but to the Tommies it is, and always will be 'Plug Street'.)

"We found ourselves in a rotten machine gun position, and our officer gave orders to build a new position. This we did during the night. The enemy were just under a hundred yards away, but we pulled down our parapet and built a ripping position with good head cover against shrapnel. We had just finished and were feeling jolly pleased with ourselves, when the M.G. officer (Lieut. S. W. G. Chambers, of Vancouver) came along, praised our work, and then said he would like a look at the traverse from the outside of the parapet. So over he hopped with our corporal (since killed). He had not been over a minute when there was a shot and a grunt, and down went Chambers with a bullet in his stomach. It took four of us to get him back over the parapet—he was a six-footer. The bullet entered below his hip and travelled up into his stomach. We carried him down to the Norfolks' dressing station, but he died that night. This cast quite a gloom over us, and it was the first night only of a sixteen-day spell in.

"Next night the Norfolks made a sham attack. They adjoined our gun on the right, in front of 'Plug Street' Wood. They hadn't passed along the word of this. The corporal and I (I was No. 1 on the gun) were sizing up an alternate position for the M.G., when the rapid fire racket started. We thought it was the real thing, and we tore back to our gun ready to give Fritz ruddy hell if he was starting to come over. But no luck! We learned, after waiting half an hour for Fritz, that it was only the Norfolks getting Fritz's wind up.

"I'd love to kill a few hundred Germans, but during a year in the trenches I have never had the pleasure of seeing the Allemands advance against us; I only had to advance against them.