

THE COLONEL MISSING — A STORY FROM THE SOMME BATTLEFIELD.

It was after the big attack. The Canadians had beaten the Germans back for over a mile when we got the order to retire fifty yards to an old enemy trench, so that our lines would conform with those of the battalions on our flanks. We had to reverse the parapet and generally consolidate our position during the night. Patrols were sent out, and we all got busy in the digging, some of us throwing off our harness and gas helmets so as to work more freely.

My three pals and myself had got our section of the trench in pretty good shape and were taking a breather and discussing the prospects of a rum issue when the news came along the line that the Colonel was missing.

"The Colonel missing, good gawd!" said Ginger Smith.

We all stood dumb for a minute or two, as the significance of the news dawned on us. Shorty Long was the first to break the silence. "How the devil are we going to win this war now that the sausage-eaters have Billy and Kitchener out of the way?"

"The last time I saw the Colonel," said I, "was when he told us to buck up and dig ourselves in here."

"Yep, I remember the very spot," broke in Ginger. "He may have got hit right there."

"I ken it fine," said Scotty Kerr, who had just recovered his speech, "and he nicht belying oot there wounded, waiting for us to gang and fetch him in. Is there a man amang ye who'll gang oot wi' me tae rescue the Colonel? He gaed me seven days first field for getting drunk and absent without leave, but I dinna see hoo there is going to be an 'issue' the nicht if the Colonel's no here."

"Sure, I'll go," said Ginger.

So Scotty and Ginger slipped into their harness, took their rifles and a couple of bombs each, and hopped over the little bit of a parapet we had made.

"Better take your gas helmets," I shouted after them, as I noticed them lying behind the trench.

"Oh, we won't need them," replied Ginger, and they kept on their way.

This was about 2 a.m., and the moon was giving a fair amount of light. They crawled out carefully for about fifty yards, when suddenly Scotty gripped Ginger by the arm.

"Wheesht; whit's that?"

"Somebody's talking; I bet it's some of those blessed Bosches coming over to sling a few bombs in the trench. Look, Scotty, there are a couple of heads sticking up; let's take one apiece."

"No, don't shoot, Ginger, we'll manoeuvre roon aboot them and capture the lot. We'll get the D.C.M. for that, and if we get the Colonel furst, and he sees us doing it, it will be the V.C. for sure, and maybe a comeeshun."

"I don't want their d—n commissions."

"Aye, but it will improve your social position when you get back tae Edmonton, and ye'll be able to hobnob wi' the Lieutenant-Governor, the Mayor, Joe Clark, and the other nobeelity."

They decided to move half right, so as to get round the position where they saw the two heads. They had proceeded twenty yards when Ginger stumbled and fell on top of something soft. Then something hard met him on the jaw.

"Where the sam hill do you think you're going, you blind bat?"

Scotty, who had been fingering the pin of a Mills bomb, recognised the voice. It belonged to the Sergeant of the patrol.

"It's a'richt, Sergeant; that's Smith, and I'm Kerr. We've been sent out to look for the Colonel; he's missing."

"Good heavens! All right, hurry up, Scotty, and report to me when you come back," and the Sergeant passed the word to his men not to shoot till the two got back.

Scotty and Ginger got going again, the latter swearing an everlasting vengeance on the Sergeant as he rubbed his jaw.

They finally arrived at the place where they had last seen the Colonel, but could find no trace of him. They hunted around for over an hour, but all they could find was the bodies of a few dead Germans. After