

12-11-16.

"Dear Colonel Warden:—

"I want to congratulate you and through you all the officers and men of your battalion who took part in it, on last night's splendid operation. It was one of the best I have seen. The Divisional, Corps and Army Commanders also send their congratulations. Special commendation is due to Major Worsnop, Capt. Trousdale, Lieut. Lister, Lieut. Mackenzie and Lieut. Matheson. The 102nd Bn. has now carried out two successful operations and I am exceedingly proud of it. The battalion has already established a record to live up to.

"Sincerely,

"V. W. ODLUM,

"Commdg. 11th C.I.B."

For conspicuous services in the field, Lieut. Lister was awarded the Military Cross and Sergt. E. W. Holbrook the D.C.M., the latter storming single-handed a machine gun post, accounting for its defenders and capturing the weapon intact. To illustrate the dash and enthusiasm of the men and to emphasize the difficulties under which operations were carried out during that season of the year the following is recorded. As mentioned above, gum boots had been issued for use during the time that the men were in the trenches, but the mud was so deep and so sticky that the men literally had to pull their feet out of their boots and then their boots out of the mud. In the assault at least three men sprang to the charge leaving their boots sticking behind them and covered the ground to the opposing parapet and went over the latter in stockinged feet.

Such was the second successful operation of the 102nd Bn., who returned to Albert on the following evening, once more to reorganize and to await the next call to duty; nor did they have long to wait. On the 17th the battalion once more found itself encamped at Brigade Headquarters supplying working parties, and two days later orders were suddenly received to relieve the 75th Bn. in the front line. Two hours after receipt of the order the battalion with Lieut.-Colonel Warden in command ploughed its way in the gathering dusk through the familiar mud of Courcellette. The night was more than usually dark and the mud worse than ever; in consequence it was not until the early hours of the 20th that final relief was effected. This meant that the men had been struggling through natural difficulties for many hours before their real ordeal commenced. Throughout the coming tour of duty our men found the Germans even more active and aggressive than on previous occasions. Though there was no "going over the top" the tour was a heavy one. The battalion was beginning to feel exhausted before going in, and the long stretch of hard work under particularly galling conditions tried the men severely. Moreover a paralyzing blow had been sustained during the brief spell spent out of the front line; orders had been received from Brigade that for the future the rum issue for all units of the 11th Brigade would