

It had an average depth of twenty feet between its banks. In some parts the canal was cut through high ground, while in others it ran between built-up banks. On the northern portion of the divisional front there was about four feet of water, leaving only a little over a thousand yards of dry canal bed on the southern half. The ground on both sides of the canal rose sharply. On the eastern side the slope continued in a general rise for a distance of from three to four thousand yards, ending on the right in Bourlon Wood and Village, and on the left in a clearly defined hill, on the crest of which was a shrine known as Pilgrim's Rest. Half way between the canal and Bourlon Wood was a patch of brush and scrub, called Quarry Wood. On the left, immediately east of the canal and in the valley, was the village of Sains-lez-Marquion. Continuing down the valley to the north were a series of woods, the most important named Keith Wood, and then the village of Marquion, lying astride the Arras-Cambrai Road. North of this road and further to the east, and lying on the forward slopes of the high ground leading up to the village of Epinoy, were three small woods—Leek Wood, Bois de Cocret and Dartford Wood. Four thousand yards north and east of Bourlon were the villages of Raillencourt and Sailly, and twenty-five hundred yards due north of these villages was the little town of Haynecourt. A railway line, passing in many places through cuttings or over embankments, ran from Sauchy Lestree south to Bourlon, then swung east, skirting the wood and continuing to Cambrai.

TRENCH SYSTEMS.

Paralleling the canal, and running from two to five hundred yards east of it, was a heavily-wired trench system—the Canal du Nord line. About fifteen hundred yards further east, and half-way up the slope, was the Marquion line. Further to the east of this there was only one organised and systematically wired trench system—the Marcoing line—running north and south through the village of Sailly, but between these trenches the enemy had organised many series of fortified shell-holes, protected