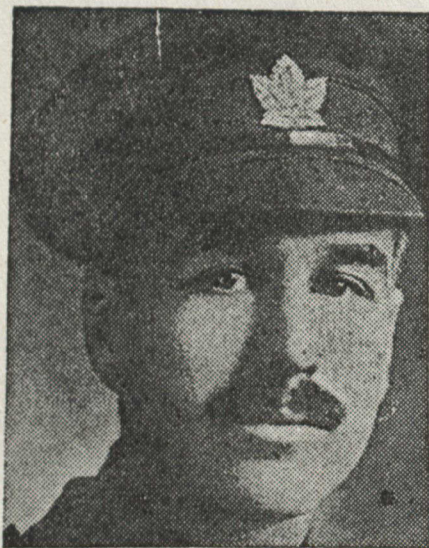


The Second Battle of Ypres

By Lieut.-Col. Warden



LIEUT.-COL. WARDEN
Warden's Warriors

In unaffected colloquial style Lieut.-Col. Warden told the story of "The Second Battle of Ypres."

I will try to give you an outline of our mobilization over to the front and what happened there. When war was declared we in Canada were not prepared. Volunteers were called for, and I went. I must not forget to pay a tribute to the Minister of Militia for the way in which he organized the first contingent. He mobilized 35,000 men; he put up one and a half miles of targets and good rifle ranges, laid in water near the camp and put it in first-class sanitary condition, all within thirty days. The fleet which took us across the Atlantic, then the largest in the history of the British Empire—since then it has been exceeded by contingents coming from Australia and India—consisted of about eighty vessels. It was a grand sight to see the fleet—the ships one behind the other and right and left from the horizon to the horizon. Our ship was right in the centre. We could only see the smoke of the warship until we came near England. Then we heard that there were German submarines waiting for us. We were going to land at Portsmouth, I think, but we got into

Plymouth before anyone was aware of it. After we landed, it took us some few days to disembark; we went to Salisbury Plain, where we underwent three months' training. There we did a little of everything. We not only trained as soldiers but we built railroads and highways. We did almost every kind of work. For the greater part of the time the weather was very bad. There was a rumor that the Canadians were finding fault with their treatment, but I contradict that. After we had trained for a certain period we were taken over to France. We embarked at Avonmouth and went to St. Nazaire in France, and to show you how careful the authorities were in transporting us there, I may tell you that the convoying ships followed a zig-zag course all round our ship the entire way across, so that no submarine dare show itself above the surface. These torpedo boats went at thirty-five miles an hour, while we were doing only about sixteen. The safe transport of troops has been a marvel.

After we landed in France we spent two days in the train going to the front. We thought we should be kept behind the lines for a time, but they did us the honor of sending us to the trenches direct. When we got there we went into the famous Ploegsteert or 'Plugstreet.' We got into the trenches in the evening in small groups in company with the British regulars to give our men an idea of trench fighting, and of the way the trenches were built and how they should be held. We were obliged to stay there until the next night, for they could not, of course, move in the daylight. If you move in the daylight you are considered a suicide. After we had been in the trenches for about two weeks we were given our part of the line to hold. The general commanding told us that we were a surprise to every officer there, as they did not think we would be able to take our places in the line at such an early date. That was a compliment that we much appreciated.

After they had tried us out, came the battle of Neuve Chapelle, where we had the first real taste of heavy action. Captain Tupper, of the Highlanders, was one of those engaged; and it was there that we got into real heavy fighting. The Boer war was nothing compared with this war. I had been in South