



**From
Thunder Bay
Through Ypres
— with the —
Fighting 52nd**

BY
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of FORT WILLIAM

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Mr. A. J. Holmes
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Fifty-second.”

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THE LATE LIEUT.-COL. HAY
Officer Commanding the 52nd Battalion.









The 52nd Battalion Lineup for Inspection at Ottawa while on their way Overseas







From Thunder Bay through Ypres with the Fighting Fifty-second

CHAPTER I—BREAKING CAMP

The long-looked-for order to break up camp had come. After months of hard training we were to embark at last upon the Great Adventure. Every man had his kit bag packed, tents were down, the ground all cleaned up, and by four o'clock of the afternoon of November 3rd, 1915, Gresley Park Camp looked desolate indeed. Not so the boys of the 52nd. Everyone, from the Colonel to the bugler boys, was elated at the prospect of going overseas as a unit—a promise the Colonel had made months before on condition that they earned the right by good behavior, hard training and discipline. The only thing weighing upon the minds of all was as to whether we were to be in time to get to the front before the war ended. We were in time, all right! The evening of the third saw us all packed into our new quarters in the Armories, with strict orders that no man was to be absent from barracks that

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night ; but roll call was overlooked that evening—I have no doubt upon the instructions of our good-hearted Colonel, who understood human nature, especially that of his 52nd boys. Although there were many cots without occupants that night, no one was up for orderly-room next morning.

The Armories presented a lively appearance on the evening of the 4th, when the friends and relatives of the boys were allowed in to bid us God-speed on our journey. At last, with Bandmaster Sara in the lead, the first company started for the station, where thousands were gathered to see us off, in spite of the inclement weather. By ten o'clock the last of the gallant 52nd had moved out of Port Arthur, on what was to be the last trip out for many a poor boy. On our way east we met our new chaplain, the Rev. Allison, of Dryden. We reached Ottawa on the morning of November 6th, and were informed we were to be up for inspection. Every man looked his best, marching up to the Parliament Buildings, where, upon being put into formation, we were inspected by H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught, who complimented our Colonel on the soldierly appearance of his officers and men.

Sunday morning, the 8th of November, found us in the quaint old town of St. John, N. B., where, amid torrents of rain, the mayor and officials of the

town were waiting to welcome us. The welcome included a very good and substantial dinner, served to us all upon our arrival at the station. From the day we arrived in St. John until the day we left, the people there vied with each other in making our stay comfortable and pleasant. We all expected to train in St. John all winter, but, in a little over two weeks' time the order came to again move—this time overseas. To the tune of "Hail, Hail, the Gang's all Here," etc., etc., we moved out of St. Johns' armories on the morning of the 22nd, and were soon aboard the S. S. California. Most of the workers of St. Johns were given a day off to see us embark, and, judging by the tearful leave-taking between some of the ladies of the town and some of our boys, one came to the conclusion that they sure had been making the best of their short stay. Our voyage was very rough—so much so, in fact, that our lookout was blown from the crow's nest one night, and died as the result of his fall. We all attended the funeral. There is something so solemnly impressive about a burial at sea, when the body is dropped overboard into the fathomless deep. After eleven days on board, we at last sighted the shores of Old England. After lying in the basin all night, we boarded the train for our new camp. Traveling all day and part of the night, we reached Witley Camp

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in Surrey. Although "Lights Out" had sounded hours before, every battalion in camp turned out to welcome the Can-I-dians, as the English boys called us. We were the only Colonial Battalion in Witley Camp, the other twenty battalions being composed of English, Welsh, Irish and Scotch units. After a day's rest, we started hard training under English physical instructors, who had been "Out There" and could talk from experience. These instructors are, or were, the pick of the British Army, and were splendid examples of what physical training can do to develop a man. We spent six weeks in Witley Camp, then moved—this time to Bramshott Camp in Hampshire. Here we camped alongside the 44th battalion, of which so many of the men were of Port Arthur and Fort William, especially the machine gun section, which was chiefly made up of bartenders of the Twin Cities. We were at Bramshott about two weeks when it came out officially that we were brigaded with 43rd, 58th and 60th battalions forming the 9th Brigade. We stayed in Bramshott until the 20th of February when orders came for the 9th Brigade to go across the Channel.

CHAPTER II—THE ARRIVAL IN FRANCE

We landed in La Havre on the morning of February 21st, and pitched our tents on the hill-top overlooking the town, in a blinding snow-storm. We there had our first experience in roughing it, the snow being about a foot deep. Two days were spent in La Havre, and then we entrained for Belgium, the trip through France and into Belgium taking two days.

We arrived in Poperhinge station on the evening of February 26th. As soon as we came off the train we heard the big guns going, and saw numberless aerial combats between our own and enemy airmen. We walked 15 miles that night back to the vicinity of Eecke, where we were billeted out in farm buildings. Our billets lay four miles behind the famous Mont de Cats, for which position there has been so much fighting this spring. We spent a week around Eecke, and then had the order to move to the front line. We walked all that day, passing through Bal-leul, and reached the village of Locre on the evening of March 18th. Locre village lies about two

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miles behind Mount Kemmel, on which the French made such a gallant stand this spring in a vain effort to keep the German hordes off it. While in Locre we experienced our first shell fire from German heavy guns. The shells dropped in the main street of the village, killing two of the villagers, and one engineer. After spending three days in Locre, we at last had the order to move into the front line. Part of our battalion went into the front held by the 42nd battalion, and the other half with the Royal Canadian Rifles of Quebec. This is the battalion with which our senior major, Major Young, spent most of his military career as a sergeant-major. He was very highly spoken of by the few of the original R. C. R.'s who were then left. Our first two days spent in the front line with the R.C.R.'s passed off uneventfully, as things were fairly quiet then on that part of the front. After two days' training here, we went back to our former billets in Locre with all the confidence of veterans, and were greatly elated when we were told two days later to take up a position at Wytshaete of our own. We took up our position on the evening of March 11th, and gave the enemy in front of us, who were Saxons, the information that we were green and just "in" by blazing away all night at every flash of their guns—a thing no old timer does, as it

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is simply a waste of ammunition. But, as the Colonel told us when pointing out our mistake, we showed that we were in for business anyhow, even if we did shoot away a few rounds.

CHAPTER III—OUR FIRST CASUALTY

The second night we were in, two of the Russians of our battalion volunteered to go out and bomb a machine gun which had been spitting away all night. These men were both veterans of the Russo-Japanese war, and if all the Russians were of the same calibre as they, the war would have been over before now. They got over the parapet and through the barbed-wire safely, and were almost within bombing distance of the enemy when they were observed in the light of a flare which the Germans sent up. The enemy machine guns were turned upon them, and one went down, shot through the head. Private Mazerinka, the survivor, lay quite still for a while, then, seeing that his comrade was dead, made back, as he thought, for our lines, but possibly, owing to the excitement, and the intricate manner in which the trenches ran at this part of the line, he found, upon getting through the wire and jumping into the trench, he was in the enemy's territory. Luckily for him, the part he had entered had no sentry. It was only when he heard the Germans

talking as they worked at a pump he became aware of his plight. Cautiously backing up the way he had come, he managed to land back in our trenches just as daylight was breaking. The Germans reported the finding of his unfortunate companion, about a month later.

The battalion scouts, to which section the writer belonged, were instructed the following evening to go out into No-Man's-Land to search for the body of the Russian. Our scout section was composed of Lieut. Dougal, one of the youngest lieutenants in our battalion ; Sergeant Strong, Sergeant Lewis, Corporal Murray, Corporal H. Potter, Corporal McDonald, and eight private soldiers. Six of us went over the top that evening but were unsuccessful in finding the body.

That night—our first—will not soon be forgotten by any of us. We had not gone much further than the outside of our own wire when the enemy machine guns opened up fire, and we were glad enough to hug Mother Earth for a while. The bullets could be seen raising sparks on the barbed-wire as the gunners searched around for us. Were we frightened? No!!!! We were long past that stage. Our hair was raising the Balaclava caps we wore, nearly off our heads. To make matters worse, this particular place where we were lying was strewn

with the bones of French soldiers who had been shot down the year before. During a lull in the firing, we managed to patrol the ground as instructed, and felt very thankful to get back again to our lines, with a good old sand bag parapet between us and Fritzies' bullets.

That same evening the youngest lad in our battalion, Frankie Keenahan, of Fort Frances, was wounded by a piece of rifle grenade going through his shoulder blade. Although very young and rather delicate, he refused to be carried out, and gamely walked out to the dressing station, from which he was despatched down the line, on the way to Blighty.

Our casualties were about six in Wytschaete. After seven days there, we were relieved by the 27th battalion, and went back for special training in bombing, scouting, etc., for one week, then the whole of the 9th Brigade moved off for the Ypres salient. In passing through Renalherst that day we were inspected by Sir Douglas Haig.

We camped at B camp, which was situated on the road to the famous St. Eloi trenches. The second night in camp we witnessed our first real engagement from a distance. A Yorkshire regiment which was holding the St. Eloi trench nearby, blew up several mines below the Germans and took possession of the

mine craters. The wounded were carried past our camp all that morning, the badly wounded in ambulances, and the walking cases with heads and arms bandaged up. The first division of Canadians took the St. Eloi trenches over from the Imperials, and held them against repeated attacks all the summer of 1916. We were in B camp about a week when we had an O. C.'s parade. I shall never forget the talk Colonel Hay gave us that day—cautioning us, and advising us what to expect when we took up our position in the dreaded Ypres salient. He impressed upon us that we were to hold our position at all costs and when he gave ground to the enemy, it would be time for us to do so also, as he assured us he would never put us into any position without being himself in front to lead us. As future events proved, he kept his promise.

CHAPTER IV—IN THE YPRES SALIENT

Our first position in Ypres was at Maple Copse, to the left of the famous Hill 60, on March 23rd. Maple Copse was the name given this wood by the Canadians. It was really an oak grove, which gave good shelter from the sun, and from enemy aerial observers. The front line was about three hundred yards in front of the Copse. We had attached to us in this position the famous Lahore Royal Field Artillery. They had the reputation of being the crack British artillery, and from the way they handled their big guns, they certainly deserved their reputation. Our trenches in our first position in the salient were about two hundred yards from those of the enemy—No-Man's-Land between, having been at one time a field of rye, which had never been cut, gave good cover to enemy snipers. Our scouts soon had the run of No-Man's-Land in this locality, and were out night after night without encountering any of the enemy patrols. We lost a corporal of C company the fourth day we were in. He had been taking observations over the parapet with a peris-

cope. These periscopes are about a foot long, and when observing, a few inches of the periscope is raised above the level of the parapet, and the observer, looking at a reflecting mirror at the bottom end, can see all that is going on in No-Man's-Land without exposing himself. Corporal _____ thought the scene looked so peaceful that he might safely take a chance, and have a look over with his field-glasses. He did so, and nothing happened, and laughingly told the man next him that he guessed Fritzie was taking things easy. A few minutes later he ventured another look. His head had been exposed only a few seconds when, bang, and it was nearly blown off, and his fighting days were done. A sniper had spotted him the first time, and had set his gun for the place where he expected the corporal to show up again. The bullet must have been a soft one, as it blew most of the head away. The German sniper seldom misses. He is hidden in all sorts of places, sometimes taking shelter under a pile of harmless-looking old bricks. He will have a small hole dug out below them, and will creep in there before daylight with enough rations to last him all day, and will rest as soon as darkness falls. Another way of sniping—if it can be so called, is with set rifles. The rifles are set for a certain point behind our lines, usually for a cross-road where

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there is sure to be lots of traffic after dark. Sometimes a battery of six rifles is set on a frame, and a man told off to fire and reload them at intervals during the night. As they are sighted, and set firmly for a certain point, no aim need be taken. Any road that is known to have set rifles firing upon it is seldom used by any of the boys as a resting-place, going and coming to and from the trenches.

We held our position in Maple Copse for seven days, and then went out to support trenches for another seven, then out beyond Ypres for a bath, change of clothing and a rest. The bath houses are situated within a few miles of the firing line, and, owing to the number of men who make use of them, and the short time allowed, there is, necessarily, a system whereby no time need be lost. Each battalion has certain hours set aside for their use of the baths. The men are lined up into companies, and, at a given signal, divest themselves of all their clothing in a building adjoining the baths. As the time given to strip, have a hot or cold bath, get clean underclothing and dress again is about ten minutes, you can guess they keep moving.

CHAPTER V—HOOGE

Our next trip into the salient was at that point of the Menin Road called Hooge. Hooge was at one time the estate of Baron de Vinck, a Belgian nobleman, but is now only a mass of broken masonry, with the land for miles around plowed up into rough red heaps by shell fire. In the first year of the war, Hooge was the headquarters of Byng's third cavalry division, and around it some of the bloodiest battles of this war have been fought. In November, 1914, the Life Guards advanced to make their never-to-be-forgotten stand against the Prussian Guards. It was at Hooge that these well-known British noblemen were buried : Frazer, Bruce, Kinnaird, Gordon-Lennox, Fitzclarence, Cavendish and Wellesley. One of our Royal Family, Prince Maurice of Battenberg, also made the supreme sacrifice and lies buried there.

Our bombers, under Lieutenant Burns McKenzie, had their first real bombing experience, being told off to hold one of the mine craters there. The enemy were holding another one about forty yards

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distant, and all the time our bombers held this crater Fritzie got but little rest. As no one could enter or leave these craters in daylight, owing to the Germans having the shallow trench that ran into the crater covered by snipers, a man who was wounded had to wait until darkness before he could be brought out. Tommy Slater and "Big Jeffries," of Kenora, were the first casualties there, both being struck by bomb splinters. The bomb used in the craters was the No. 9 Mills' Grenade—a little beauty about the size of a turkey's egg. They are very simple in working, but terrific in effect. They are held in the palm of the right hand, and the split pin is drawn out with the left. This releases a spring which strikes a detonator, which in turn starts a time-fuse which goes off in five seconds. The explosion is awful, as the metal casing covering the bomb splits into over twenty pieces which fly in all directions. You can imagine the damage they do when dropped into a bunch of men. Our bombs were much superior to Fritzie's. His are the shape of a wooden potato-masher. The explosion is the worst feature of his bomb, as it contains no shrapnel. In my opinion, most of the German death-dealing implements, with the exception of the one mentioned, were, in 1916, ahead of ours—but not so now !!

About this time we had a Canadian major come over from England for "experience" and, for this, he was temporarily attached to our battalion. He came to the right man for experience when he came to Colonel Hay. The third night after he arrived, the Colonel took him up to the Hooge craters, to show him how a crater is held. Next morning the dread news spread amongst the boys that the two officers had not returned to headquarters, and were last seen leaving the Hooge trenches just before daylight came in. Everyone's spirits sank to zero at this news, as we knew only too well what it meant. Two scouts volunteered to worm their way up through the shallow trench between the Culvert and Hooge, and reported back from Hooge by telephone that they had arrived there, but could find no trace of the missing men. Nothing more was heard all day, and, even before darkness really set in, small patrols were out looking for the bodies of the missing officers. About eight o'clock that evening two figures staggered into the lines. A shout of joy went up when, through the mud which covered them, we recognized Colonel Hay and the visiting major. The latter was in a state bordering on collapse, and was supporting himself upon the arm of the Colonel. It appears that after leaving the Hooge craters that morning, the Colonel and his

companion had stepped out of the shallow trench to examine the ground a little way over, to see if it were possible to improve the trench there. Daylight was just coming in, and an enemy sniper had seen their forms against the sky-line, and had let go a couple of shots at them. The Colonel made back for the trench, but, upon reaching it, found that the major had not followed him. He immediately went back, and after creeping around, found the major lying beside a huge shell hole half filled with water. By that time daylight was nearly in, and the Colonel saw at once that if they did not get right down into the shell hole some sniper would surely get them. This accounted for the state they were in that evening, as they had lain all day with their bodies submerged. In spite of this trying experience, Colonel Hay was out next morning taking the company's reports, and the major,—well, the last heard of him, he was making a bee-line for England. Two evenings later we had our first attack from the enemy. Somewhere around seven o'clock in the evening the enemy put down a heavy artillery barrage on the front being held by the 58th battalion, and on the part being held by C company of our battalion. Our parapets and dugouts were badly smashed up, and quite a few casualties resulted. I have no doubt that the enemy figured that we would fall back

through the communication trench to a line about a hundred yards in the rear. But as we boys had no orders so to do, we just hugged the parapet to escape the shrapnel that was flying around, and waited. The enemy artillery suddenly quieted down, and over their parapets they came in hundreds. But our boys gave them such a hot reception that not one reached our lines, and they fell back again whence they had come, with heavy casualties. The 58th battalion, to the right of us, had a harder time, as the enemy attacked in stronger force there. A German sergeant and lieutenant got through their wire into their lines. The sergeant was bayoneted as he jumped into the trench by a little Scotch lad. Little Scotty was only five feet one and weighed an even hundred pounds, and from what I understand, the German was close on two hundred pounds. Scotty's four companions holding that part of the trench had all been wounded, and he was busy dressing one of them when the Germans came over. Luckily for him, he had just straightened up, after putting on the last bandage, when the squarehead appeared over the parapet a few feet away. As Scotty said, "The Freicht was awfae," (meaning the fright was awful), but remembering the bayonet-instructor's pointer as to how to treat the enemy when he came over the top, he used his

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bayonet with telling effect, getting the German in the throat, thus ending the career of that Hun. The German lieutenant was taken prisoner. He had five bullet wounds in his body, and died two days later. This incident will go to show that some of the Germans have real pluck.

CHAPTER VI—EASTER IN FLANDERS

We lost about fifteen men in Hooge that trip—all wounded. We came out of the line in time to hold Easter service in the cinema house at Ouderman. It seemed so incongruous to most of us to be holding a service of rejoicing to commemorate the Resurrection of the Prince of Peace, when, even at the service we were all armed to the teeth, with our hymn books resting upon our rifles, and the thunder of our own and the enemy's guns almost drowning out the singing with their noise.

The weather by this time was beginning to be lovely in Belgium, and the farmers were all getting their land in shape for another crop, even though they were under shell fire, and were never sure but that by harvest time the Hun would profit by their toil. I have seen Belgian women working in the fields with shells dropping all around them, and as little notice was taken of the shells as our farmers would take of a passing freight train. It is wonderful how one can get used to almost anything. Even the birds in that devastated area were used to the

noise of the guns, and I have often heard the Mavis' whistling their evening love-song in Maple Copse while Fritzie would be sending overhead his evening-song of Hate, in the shape of a few salvos of 5.9 shells. The cuckoo, of which there are a great number in Belgium in the spring of the year, were also quite unconcerned with artillery fire. Just below the bridge over the moat which surrounds the ramparts of Ypres, a swan nestled in the spring of 1916, and everyone who crossed the bridge took great interest in the swan family. In spite of a heavy battery of our own, which was within one hundred yards of the swan domicile, and which must have fired a thousand rounds during the time the swan was setting on her eggs, and, in addition to this, the almost continuous bombardment of the enemy's guns, this plucky bird brought three young ones into the world, and the last time I crossed that bridge I could see the whole swan family swimming gracefully around—the youngsters almost as big as their parents.

CHAPTER VII—DEATH OF LIEUT. HATTON

We again went into Maple Copse trenches about the last week in May. We could see that since we had last been there, the enemy had been busy running out new saps in the direction of our lines, and laying new wire. Our scouts were sent, the first evening we were in, to report on these trenches, and found that they were only saps, without any dug-outs, or any place for sleeping quarters. The real purpose for which they were intended was understood on the morning of June 2nd, when they were used as a jumping-off point when attacking the Canadian Mounted Rifles. It was on this trip we were to lose our first officer. Colonel Hay, accompanied by Lieutenant Hatton, the signalling officer, was going the rounds just about daybreak of the third morning we were in. The Colonel, before going into our company-officers' dugout, had remarked to Lieut. Hatton that he wondered just what were the enemy's intentions in digging these innumerable saps. It was thought that, while waiting for the Colonel, Lieut. Hatton decided to creep out

into No-Man's-Land and have a look around. At all events, the first intimation we had of anything being wrong was when the Colonel came out and missed Lieut. Hatton. He came along the trench inquiring if anyone had seen him. A sentry stationed at the junction of Peter street and the front line, taking a casual look over the top just as daylight was breaking, noticed an object like a man's body lying just inside our own barbed-wire. He reported the matter to his platoon-sergeant, and, when the light became brighter, they saw the form of the missing officer lying, face down, with his hands on either side of his face. It was then quite light, and Lieutenant Pringle, at the very great risk of his life, jumped the parapet and crept out to the body. He saw at once that life was extinct, so, taking certain papers off the body, he came safely back to our own lines. As Lieut. Hatton's cap was lying a few feet ahead of his body, we figured he had crept on his way back after reconnoitering the enemy's new work, and feeling, when within a few yards of our own lines, that he was safe, he had raised himself to make a run for it, when a sniper had seen him against the sky-line, and had "got" him. He was shot through the head. His body lay out there all day, and was brought in when dusk fell. He was buried beside Captain Shaughnessy, of the 60th

battalion, who was killed the same day. Lieutenant Hatton left Port Arthur as a sergeant-major of the signallers, and was promoted to commissioned rank while we were stationed at St. Johns, N. B. He was a hard-working officer, who never seemed to take any rest while in the front line, and was highly respected and well liked by his men. We lost about eleven men that trip in, three of them being killed.

CHAPTER VIII—SCOUTING IN THE GAP AT
HOOGE

We did our usual seven days' out, and then came back to our old lines at Hooge. While out on patrol the second evening, the scouts had instructions to patrol the gap, above what is called the Culvert. The battalion to the left of us were the famous Grenadier Guards, (in which the Prince of Wales is a captain), and we took turns about patrolling the post to the left of us ; one time the Guards' scouts would come to our post, and the next time our scouts would go to theirs. On their second trip to us, between twelve and one o'clock in the morning, one of the Guards, when within a few yards of our post, instead of continuing to creep the last few yards, stood up and walked. He had taken but a few steps when zip—a sniper who must have been hidden among the broken tree-stumps shot him. He dropped without a murmur, and when we crept out to his aid, we found that he had been shot in the stomach—the bullet passing right through. The sniper must have gone straight back to his own lines

and reported that we were out there, for very soon the enemy machine guns began to spray the wood. As long as we lay low we knew they could not get us, but to stand erect meant getting hit for certain. We had to get the wounded man back to his own lines to the doctor, before he bled to death, but we were unable to carry him, owing to the steady hail of machine gun fire that was sweeping the ground. We had been talking in whispers for a few minutes, wondering as to the best way out of the difficulty, when the wounded man solved the problem by telling the boys that he was able to crawl back by himself, which he proceeded to do. I heard later that he pulled through all right.

Two evenings later the writer, in company with Corporal Murray and Private Keenahan, was running a pull-wire from No. 8 to No. 9 post, which was held by sergeant-major—then Sergeant Morrison of C company. We had worked half way across the gap, the corporal holding the coil, Private Keenahan paying out the wire, and I carrying the rifle, when we heard the unmistakable sound of footsteps approaching stealthily along our old trench, which had a sap running into the German lines. As we were in the open, all we could do was to wait to see what happened. In a few seconds four figures could be seen coming out where the old trench fin-

ished in a marsh, and making directly for us. Not knowing just whom to expect, I intended firing first, and finding out afterwards who they were, but fortunately held off, and ordered them, in a whisper, to halt, and tell who they were. A voice replied that he was Colonel Hay, but as I at once knew that it was not Colonel Hay's voice, I have no doubt I would have fired upon him, if a voice, (this time unmistakably that of the Colonel), had not just then said, "All Right, Boys." It turned out afterwards that we were supposed to have had the message that the Colonel would be out there, accompanied by Lieutenant Naylor and two English engineers, who were there for the purpose of seeing what could be done toward extending a post across the gap, and joining up to the trenches on the left. This incident will show what kind of an officer Colonel Hay was—untiring in his efforts for the welfare of his country and his men.

We spent our seven days "in" this time with quite a few casualties. Sergeant Nicklin, one of our most popular sergeants, was wounded then, and is today walking upon crutches, although two years have passed. Jeffries, one of our best bombers, was killed in the crater one morning. He had just fired at a German sniper and was taking another shot when another sniper put a hole right through the part of

the rifle where Jeffries' cheek rested, and clean through his head. We had over twenty casualties this time "in."

We again moved out of Hooge trenches into support dug-outs in Ypres town and had a good opportunity of inspecting the ruined city. I understand this city has been leveled to the ground four times within its history. In 1914 it had a thriving population of forty thousand. All that now remain are a few stray cats—not a living soul of what was once a fine, prosperous city. The famous Cloth Hall was a mass of ruins ; also the Cathedral. I noticed once, in going through the grounds of the Cathedral, a little fenced-in plot, with trees and flowers, and what looked to be a model of a cave. Going over the fence and looking into the cave, I got a shock to see a life-size image of Christ upon the Cross, and the three Marys kneeling at the foot of the Cross. It may have been only a coincidence, but the fact remains that this was the only part around the Cathedral that was not utterly smashed and destroyed.

After seven days in Ypres, we again went back to the camp near Poperhinge. While going through the town one day while it was under shell-fire I took shelter near a nunnery. Attached to this was a shelter for Belgian women refugees who had lost their homes in the country taken over by the Ger-

mans. They were under the care of the sisters, and were engaged in doing some sort of work in regard to military underclothing. While we sheltered there, the shelling became intense, the enemy sending over some pretty heavy stuff. Some of it landed alongside where the women were working, and a regular stampede started. I could not help admiring the noble sisters, who moved about calmly, soothing the women and leading them to safe quarters, and by their very quietness reassuring them. The guns which were firing upon Poperhinge were of the naval type, as our artillery officers learned by examining the nose caps of the shells which dropped around the town that day.

On the evening of the 15th of May the advance party of the 52nd, under Captain Hunter, went into Maple Copse and railway dugout trenches. Before any battalion goes into a line, two men from each company go in a day ahead and take over the different dugouts from the battalion which they are to relieve. We relieved the 49th battalion, who were in the railway dugouts and Maple Copse. They reported to us that the enemy had been unusually quiet for the last few days, and it looked as if we were to have the same quiet time, as not a shell was fired at us coming into the line. It was the lull before the storm. On the evening of the 16th, the

whole battalion came in, A and D companies going into Maple Copse, and B and C into the railway dugouts. The latter were built below the railway embankment, and were practically shell-proof, as there were about fifteen feet of railway grading on the top of them.

CHAPTER IX—THE THIRD BATTLE OF
YPRES

The morning of the 17th broke bright and clear, and, had it not been for the khaki-clad occupants of the dugouts, one would never have thought by the appearance of the country that forty thousand armed men were scattered around a five-mile radius.

Taking advantage of the warm May morning, a few of the boys went bathing in a pond nearby, while others started in to try to entice the fish, of which there were many in the pond. Major Young who, although the strictest of military martinets when on parade, was one of the most human and kindly of men, was one of the fishing party, and having equipped himself with a line made of light copper telephone wire, and hooks carved from heavy cable, was showing one of the boys how to do likewise. Everything was going as merry as a picnic at home—the fishermen were getting lots of bites and losing all the big ones, while the swimmers were performing all sorts of aquatic stunts, and getting themselves blessed by the fishermen

for splashing and spoiling the fishing, when Whiz, Bang ! ! ! and we were all brought back to a realization that there was still a war on. A 5.9 shell had dropped on the edge of the pond. Major Young's voice could be heard shouting for everyone to take cover, an order which was hardly necessary, as everyone knew what was likely to follow the first shell. A mad scramble ensued for the cover of the dugouts. Clothes were a very unimportant detail, and most of the swimmers reached "home" wearing only a startled expression. They were none too soon, as a salvo of shells hit square in the centre of the pond. A German observation balloon about five miles away had spotted the boys in the pond and had phoned the range and the locality to their big guns. The first shell on the edge of the pond was a range-finder—the salvo was the result of same. The old saying, "'Tis an ill wind," etc., was amply proven that morning, as, after the shelling ceased, and the boys felt safe to look out the doors of the dugouts, a lot of small fish could be seen floating belly up on the surface of the pond. The concussion of the shells had killed them, so, quite unintentionally, Fritzie had provided us with a nice fish supper, which was certainly a welcome change from the regular army rations.

That morning volley was really the start of the

German artillery shelling which led up to the third battle of Ypres. From then on, we were shelled practically day and night. Every road and trench was treated to a few shells every day. Shells would drop all around a certain trench or cross-road, and would quit upon a direct hit being made. This kind of shelling is called "registering." Certain batteries will have a given point upon which to fire and will have either aeroplanes or stationary balloons observing for them. Immediately a direct hit is made upon that point, the fact is phoned back to the battery commander, and the angle of his gun, timing of his fuse, etc., is taken for future reference when that particular point is to be again shelled. We learned all this later, to our cost.

While in Maple Copse one of our scouts, Private J. Hill, of Port Arthur, was detailed off to climb one of the tallest of the oak trees, to see if it were possible to observe the enemy lines some eight hundred yards away. Jack got safely to his perch in the top of the tree, and was able, by the aid of the field-glasses with which he was equipped, to take some pretty good observations. But while observing he was, in turn, observed. Possibly the sun had glinted on the field-glasses, and had been seen by a German observer at the same game behind his own lines. At all events, Jack had not been at his post

fifteen minutes when two shells came crashing perilously near, tearing away the lower branches of the tree he was in. The third shell, striking his tree, a few feet away, got him, blowing away part of the shin of one leg. Although in very great pain, Jack shouted to the boys on the ground that he was hit, and was coming down. He started to drop from branch to branch, until he stuck within a few feet of the ground. He was helped down, rushed off to the dressing station, and from there down the line on the way to "Blighty," where he spent nearly a year on his back, owing to the severe wound received that morning.

We moved from the Maple Copse and the railway dugout supports somewhere about the 22nd of May. The enemy never letting up on his shelling, wrought great havoc amongst us, one shell alone killing five men in C company. He also kept pounding our trenches with his minnewafers. These are sausage-shaped shells which can be seen coming, but, owing to their shape and their erratic movements, one cannot figure within thirty feet where they are going to drop. They are filled with very high explosives, and the concussion is the destructive power which makes them, next to gas, the most dreaded agent of Death in this war. About the third morning after moving into the front line, a German scout was shot

by one of our boys. While sitting on the firing step having breakfast, Harry Hannon, one of the Kenora boys, was amazed, on taking a casual look through his periscope, to see a German reflected in it, creeping away from our wire. Harry jumped upon the firing step and gave him three shots, the second and third hitting him. Fritzie dropped, about forty yards out, amongst the heavy rye, and was completely covered up. Corporals Gray, Valentine and the writer went out as soon as darkness set in. We found the place where the squarehead had been lying all day, as the grass was all clotted with blood, but he had crawled away just before we had got there. We circled over as far as the German wire but could not get him. Being alone, he had possibly lost himself in No-Man's-Land the night before, and had crept to our parapet, mistaking it for his own, discovering his blunder when he heard our boys talking, and making his get-away when he was discovered.

The new saps in No-Man's-Land which I have already mentioned, were now as conspicuous as Fritzie's front line, and were heavily wired. We could all feel that something big was in the wind, and judging by the casualties we were having that week, we felt that we were getting our share in advance. One night while our scouts were out on

patrol, they had crept up to within a short distance of an enemy working party. Owing to this part of No-Man's-Land being covered with rye about three feet high, which had sprung from the uncut crop of the year before, there was plenty of cover for scouting. Our boys felt strongly tempted to drop a Mills' Grenade in the midst of the little party, but a scout is not supposed to do any fighting if he can possibly avoid it, being armed only for self-defence, so, after a whispered consultation, a message was sent back to the trench mortar battery, of which Capt. Horan was the O.C., as to the whereabouts of the enemy party. Getting into position a little to the left of the enemy party, in case a mortar might fall short, the patrol awaited results. Very soon the peculiar hiss of a salvo of mortars could be heard coming over and, to the credit of the gunners, a direct hit was made. Fritzie forgot all about "German System" that night, the only thought, seemingly in the minds of those who were unhurt, was to get back to their own front line. Our mortars must have accounted for over a dozen of the enemy that night. On the evening of May 31 we had orders to move a half-battalion-length to the right of the position we then held. This landed us on Mount Sorrell, a small ridge about three hundred yards to the left of Hill 60. We spent one day there, and were treated

to every kind of bomb, shell, rifle-grenade and minnewafer Fritzie had. Toward afternoon Lieutenant Naylor, the O. C. of Works, that is the officer who is responsible for the mending of broken wire, parapets, etc., on the battalion front, was killed instantly while on duty, by a heavy shell. He was very popular with the men, always with a smile on his face, and as lenient as possible toward the failings of the men under him. We took his body out that night.

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CHAPTER X—RELIEVED BY THE C. M. R.'s

We were relieved that evening by the 4th C.M.R.'s (Canadian Mounted Rifles), who had left Canada as a cavalry regiment, but, owing to conditions of trench warfare, were dismounted and made into an infantry battalion. We got back to C camp that morning after the hardest fifteen days we had yet had, having been under shell fire the whole time, which kept anyone from getting any sleep, and which caused about eighty casualties in our battalion.

That morning the first men to go on leave to England had their passes issued. Colonel Hay, as head of the battalion, had the privilege of being the first officer to go, but let Major Thompson go in his stead. Sergeant-Major Vincent of C company, with two others, made up the party.

The battalion turned in that morning for what was to be the first sleep in quarters they had had for fifteen days, expecting to have at least a week out of the line. We were given an hour or two longer in our huts that morning, and had had breakfast

when the shelling, which had quieted down in the salient the night before, seemed to waken to life again all at once, and although we were six miles from the shelled area, we could plainly see that something big was on. About eleven o'clock that forenoon the 3rd C. M. R. battalion, which was in B camp, was ordered to "Stand To." That meant that every man was to have his full fighting equipment on, and stand awaiting orders. In an hour's time they moved out toward the salient, their band playing them up as far as Vlamertynghe village. The 27th battalion followed them. It was an unknown thing at that time for a battalion to go into the salient in the light of day. By two o'clock the 43rd, 58th, 60th and our battalion, composing the 9th Brigade, also had the order to "Stand To," and by four o'clock in the afternoon were also on the way to the salient.

To give my readers some idea of what the Ypres salient was like: just imagine a huge horseshoe, four miles broad and five miles deep; Hooge trenches, which our Brigade always held, being at the point or toe of the shoe. Battalions holding this position could be enfiladed from both sides, and owing to the wet nature of the ground there, deep dugouts for protection were impossible to make, and dugouts of any size or strength, built above ground, were also

an impossibility, owing to the fine target they would make for enemy artillery. It was toward the toe of the salient our battalion made that afternoon, and on one of the loveliest days we could wish for. As we made our way up the Ypres road we could see the other three battalions of our Brigade going in the same direction. The picturesque Highland uniforms of the 43rd battalion, with their tartan kilts, and their distinguished-looking officer, Colonel Thompson, who has since made the supreme sacrifice, at their head, broke the monotony of thousands of khaki-clad infantry. The road to Ypres gave vivid evidence of the awful effect of the shelling we had heard that morning, and which had by then abated a little. Huge trees, two or three feet in girth, were smashed and fallen, and the great forms of a battery of our howitzers could be seen near the road, smashed by a direct hit from a German "Heavy." Artillery horses could be seen lying dead beside the road, having been killed while rushing up with guns and ammunition. On the road just ahead of us that night I witnessed a touching scene. We had stepped to one side to allow an ammunition wagon to pass, as they have right-of-way over everything else. They had gone but a few hundred yards past us, when one of the horses dropped, with a huge piece of shrapnel in its ribs.

By the time we had come up to it, the harness had been pulled off and put onto one of the spare horses of the battery, and the whole outfit was moving away. The poor stricken brute, seeing its teammate, with which it had probably run for months, leaving it, raised its head and made a struggle to rise, giving a pitiful call as it fell back. It seemed almost a touch of human nature in the poor beast.

By the time we were passing the Asylum at Ypres we were beginning to have casualties, but, as darkness had by now set in, we were hidden from the enemy's observation. We took our position on the outskirts of Ypres, about three miles from the front line. By then we were being subjected to a new kind of "Frightfulness" which we had never experienced before, which the boys called "Tear-gas shells." These cause the eyes to water so profusely that, if one does not have the eye masks it is almost impossible to see, and the effect is felt for days afterwards. We were all provided for just such an emergency as this, and were not slow in taking advantage of the goggles we carried.

We held these trenches until about midnight, when the order came for every man to drop everything but his skeleton equipment. We then knew we were in for the real thing. We were ordered to make for the front line. In the meantime, shells

seemed to be raining in every direction. We crossed the open fields with very few casualties, but upon reaching the Zillebeke road we ran into an enemy barrage which had been put down, knowing that reinforcements would be coming up that way to succor the hard-pressed and depleted battalions, vainly trying to keep back the enemy at the point of the salient. I shall never forget the calm manner with which Colonel Hay led us through that awful barrage. Accompanied by his adjutant, Captain Guild, and Corporal Kavanaugh, his runner for that night, he kept going ahead of the boys, and whenever a shell burst and blew a hole in our ranks, he would come back to encourage us to keep going. Although the responsibility must have been awful to a man like him, who thought of his men as a father would think of his grown-up family of boys, his voice remained as quiet and cool as though he were giving orders at Gresley Park Camp. He must have felt it deeply to see the boys of whom he had grown so fond, being blown to bits. At the junction of the Zillebeke and another road leading toward the Menin road, dozens of our boys were knocked out by about twenty shells which all came over about the same time. It left a gap of thirty yards in our ranks. When passing it, we had to step over the writhing wounded and dying men.

The sight and sound was awful.

By the time we started to cross the open to the right of that famous communication trench, the China Wall, the enemy machine guns also began to get us, and I have no doubt that in a very short time none of us would have been left alive had not the Colonel given us orders to "dig ourselves in." That was the last time we ever heard his voice. He himself pressed forward through the hellish barrage, in which it seemed impossible for even a rat to live. He became separated from his runner and the adjutant, and God alone knows how he died. No officer ever left Canada who more nobly did his duty to his God, his country and his men, than did Colonel Hay. The general opinion of the 52nd battalion survivors is that the Colonel must have been struck by a shell that morning, and that not enough was left to identify him—as was the fate of thousands—and was buried near the China Wall with dozens of his brave men. Major Young, who had been ahead of Headquarters Company, reached the precarious shelter of the China Wall, and found it impossible to proceed further, owing to the trench being blocked with dead and wounded. He himself had a piece of shrapnel driven through his hand, and, although advised to go back to the dressing station, he had his hand dressed by one of the boys and, collecting

the remnants of his company, made for the open. He was shot through the heart, and lies buried "Over There." Major Young, although up in years and having a son a sergeant in the army, was one of the smartest officers in our battalion—and we had many smart ones. He had been a soldier practically all his life, and could come on parade and give any instructor points in drill and musketry. On parade he was a strict disciplinarian, but anyone who ever got up before him was sure of a square deal. Off parade he was one of the most jovial of companions.

CHAPTER XI—WITH THE FOURTH C.M.R.'s.

By the time Major Young was knocked out, our battalion had dug in. Some were sheltered in an old brick-pile near Zillebeke road, and others in temporary trenches as far along as Maple Copse. I will digress from my story of the 52nd battalion, to state what happened the battalion which relieved us when we came out on the morning of the 2nd. From the time they relieved us at daybreak hardly a shell was fired at them, and they were looking forward to a quiet time, with the usual dozen casualties or so, when that morning, without warning, hell seemed to break loose from the German lines. Guns of every calibre poured salvo after salvo of shells upon all the roads and communication trenches adjoining the front line, then, shortening their range, practically obliterated every part of the front line. The thing all happened so suddenly that the men holding the line had not a fighting chance. Their machine guns were buried, officers killed and scarcely a man left unwounded when the German hordes

came over. That morning General Mercer, divisional commander ; Brigadier-General Williams and their staff, made a round of inspection and were on Mount Sorrell when the bombardment opened up. General Mercer was killed by a shell and General Williams wounded and taken prisoner. The enemy shell-fire had been directed toward the front held by the Canadians from Hooze to near Hill 60, and, pressing forward, they pushed back the point of the salient. Six hundred yards of the front was held by the Royal Canadian Rifles. To the right of them was about one hundred yards of what was called the Gap, being undefended and left as a trap for the enemy to come through, when he could be enfiladed from both sides. Then came the section held by the famous Princess Pats, part of which included the hollow known as the "Appendix" of the loop, which was only forty yards from the enemy lines. To their right was the Canadian Rifle Brigade, which held Sanctuary Wood and Armagh Wood.

There was a company of the Princess Pats on the loop when the German artillery fire opened up. Expecting every moment to see the enemy break across the narrow space dividing them, they waited to take toll of the Germans before they got across, but suddenly, without warning, came a mighty upheaval of the earth beneath them, and not one of that gallant

company was ever seen again. The Huns had blown a huge mine below them, and the entire company was buried far under the ground.

By this time orders had come for the men to fall back, but so shattered were the trenches and the telephone systems, that very few received the order and so fought on until the end. In the meantime our batteries were keeping up a steady fusillade, but it appears the enemy had known the location of our artillery for days, for, early that day, over half of our batteries were knocked out of commission. This left our infantry heavily handicapped, fighting against artillery and the oncoming hordes of the enemy. The dressing station of the C. M. R.'s was in charge of Captain Haight, who, in civil life, was ships' surgeon on a boat running between Vancouver and Honolulu. His dressing station was shelled, and he moved to one hastily erected a little further down, where he ministered to dozens of wounded men. When the Germans had finally broken through, he refused to leave the men who were too badly smashed to be carried out, and stuck to his post until the unspeakable fiends bayoneted him to death, along with his helpless charges.

CHAPTER XII—THE ENEMY BREAKING THROUGH AT HOOGE

Along about one o'clock, the enemy shelling on the Hooge sector, ceased just as suddenly as it had begun, and from the German lines came their men, rushing on as though they expected to find no men left alive in our lines after the terrific four hours' shelling. I saw some of the German dead in No-Man's Land a few days later, with overcoats on and rations for a two days' march, as if they had expected to march right down to Ypres town. They got the surprise of their lives that morning, for from out of the shell-holes and broken down dugouts swarmed the remnants of three battalions, taking the enemy unawares, and playing fearful havoc amongst the closely-packed Huns. But no power on earth could save our small body of men from the surging ranks which kept pressing steadily on, and in half an hour only a few wounded prisoners were left of those gallant sons of Canada, who fought against such fearful odds. The commander of the Princess Pats, Colonel Buller, who, before the war was secretary

to H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught, was killed while leading his men on along a trench called the Gordon road. In order to strike at the enemy, and to encourage his men, he leapt upon the parapet and ran toward the advancing Germans. He was shot through the heart and fell back dead at the feet of his advancing men, who charged over the body of their leader, and for a while drove the enemy back.

On the extreme left of Hooze, which was held by the R. C. R.'s, fearful casualties were inflicted upon the enemy. The Gap, which I have already mentioned, was covered by our machine guns, and the Germans, finding it undefended, poured through in hundreds. As soon as they were well in, our machine guns mowed them down. At one place a heap of enemy dead and wounded were piled six feet high in the gap, where the machine guns had got them as they surged over the top of the rise of ground at that point. A little further toward Sanctuary Wood they were more successful. Through the loop where the Princess Pats had perished, they drove a wedge into our lines as far as the Gordon Road. Then they drove a little further to the north, where Captain Nivin (who had risen from the ranks and is now a colonel) had hastily dug in with about a hundred men and two machine guns. His order to his men was to hold fire until he gave the signal. As

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the field-gray lines came over on the run, shooting at any body, dead or alive, that was lying around, they certainly had the look of a victorious army. They all appeared to be under the influence of spirits, as they were laughing and shouting, and many of them were shooting from the hip. Captain Niven let them get within thirty paces, and then gave the order "Give them Hell, Boys"—and they certainly got it. The laughing crowd was immediately turned into a panic-stricken mob, the few unwounded turning and running for the ridge, but very few reached it alive. At one point near Hooze, the bodies of a sergeant and two privates of the C.M.R.'s were found riddled with bullets, with twelve bayoneted Huns lying around them.

During the fight that day Captain Wilkin, a chaplain from Medicine Hat, had been busy ministering to the dying at Sanctuary Wood, but the sight of the enemy cutting down his boys was too much for this red-blooded parson, and, seizing a rifle, he flung himself into the fray. When last seen he was wielding the butt-end of a broken rifle, with disastrous effect, upon the head of a big Hun. We heard afterwards that he was wounded and a prisoner of war in Germany. It was toward the end of that day the 52nd came through the enemy barrage to the assistance of the depleted battalions.

CHAPTER XIII—"IN FLANDERS' FIELDS
THE POPPIES BLOW"

The morning of the 3rd of June broke bright and fair. After the awful artillery fire of the night before, the stillness which seemed to brood over everything was oppressive. The writer was one of a party of four, sent out by R. S. M. Springett, who had taken charge of Headquarters Company, to try to get in touch with Colonel Hay and the other missing officers. (The Colonel's fate was not then known.) In order to get into the communication trench, we had to creep over a field, which had once been cultivated, but was now grown up with poppies. I never read that vivid poem of the late Major McCrae,

"In Flanders' Fields the poppies grow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly,
Scarce heard amidst the guns below,
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe,
To you from falling hands we throw
The torch—be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep though poppies grow
In Flanders' fields."

without its calling to my mind the morning we crossed that field, seeing, every few yards, the ghastly, upturned face of one of our comrades, who had started out the day before so elated at the prospect of at last getting into grips with the enemy we had come so many thousands of miles to fight. The marble whiteness of their faces formed a startling contrast to the flame-red of the poppies which grew so thickly all about. In that scene one saw Nature work at its best and man's at its worst. I don't think I saw a single dead face with anything approaching a peaceful look. Every face was drawn with agony and horror, dying out there alone, with the hellish noise of the artillery deafening their dying ears, and without even a comrade to bid them God-speed on their last trip West. I have read of some of our ministers at home who, in their sermons, questioned the redemption of the souls of the men killed in this war. The good God above, who does all things right, I am sure, will know just what is coming to these men who have died and gone through a hell-upon-earth before doing so, in order

to make the world a safe, sane place for future generations to live in.

When we reached the China Wall that morning the light showed us an awful scene. In some parts of the trench the dead were lying feet deep. In one corner I noticed what must have been a platoon of the 43rd Highlanders, all mutilated and smashed up and only recognizable by the tattered rags of the kilts they had worn. I also saw Sergeant Rennie that morning, one of our most popular sergeants, who had left a safety job in Rouen to be with his battalion, waiting to have a bad-looking hole in his ribs bandaged up. He was making a vain attempt to be his usual cheery self amongst the dozens of wounded men lying around, although he must have been suffering a great deal of pain. Part of our battalion was now facing the enemy in temporary trenches at Maple Copse and Sanctuary Wood. Private Mazerinka, who had figured in the exploit at Wytshaete on our first trip to the trenches, had a wonderful escape from death while in with his company at Sanctuary Wood. The Germans, who were lying only about seventy-five yards from us, had been making vain attempts to strengthen their positions by sand-bagging, and were giving our boys some pretty good shots. Mazerinka had just potted one fat German (who

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evidently believed, like the ostrich, that by concealing his head, he was safe in leaving the greater part of his anatomy exposed), and was just pulling on another. He was just a second too late, as the German got in the first shot, which struck the peep-sight, through which one looks in sighting a Ross rifle. The steel sight was driven right through Mazerinka's eye, but luckily the bullet did not follow it, as it flashed past his head, and struck another man in the arm. Mazerinka's soldier days were over from that day, and he is now home, discharged, with a glass eye in place of his own.

Somewhere about the 5th of June, the Germans blew up four mines to the left of us. The 28th battalion, of which so many were men of Port Arthur and Fort William, lost two whole companies there. Captain Mills, Lieutenant McGovern, Jack Bain, T. Stewart and other well-known local men made the supreme sacrifice that day. Lieutenant Jarvis was blown up, and partly stunned by the concussion, and was made a prisoner of war by the Germans, who advanced immediately the mines went up. I can well remember how, at that time, every thing seemed to be going against us—our Colonel and most of our officers and men gone ; the Germans making another advance, then, to crown all, there appeared in front of the German lines a huge placard : "English,

take warning by Kitchener's fate, GERMANY IS INVINCIBLE !!!" This was the first intimation we had had of Kitchener's death, and you may be sure it did not tend to improve our spirits and nerves, which by this time were pretty badly frayed, owing to the long time we had been under shell-fire.

An incident happened at that time which will go to show that some of the enemy are not lacking in a certain sort of humor and nerve. A platoon of our battalion had been sent to repair a certain point of the trench we were holding which had been badly smashed by that day's bombardment. They were under the charge of Lieutenant ————. (We will omit the gallant officers' name, as he has too much really splendid work to his credit to have this story tacked onto his name). Upon reaching a part of the line near Sanctuary Wood, an N. C. O. of the engineers met the party, and, saluting the officer, introduced himself as Corporal Sally of the ——— Engineers. As it is customary for the infantry to work under the charge of the engineers, our officer took it as a matter of course when the supposed corporal suggested that, owing to the very dangerous position which was to be prepared, it would be advisable for the party to be numbered off before getting to the front line. He himself numbered off the men. He then went ahead and led the party to

where they were supposed to work. When they reached the part of the line being held by the 43rd battalion, he led them over the top of the parapet into No-Man's-Land, and halted them there. Fortunately for our boys, a lieutenant of the 43rd battalion, seeing the working party making, as he knew, straight into Fritzies' new position, leapt over the parapet and warned them of their danger. They immediately scuttled back to the safety of our lines, and from that day to this, Corporal Sally's name has never been found on any roll-call, either past or present. He had been a German, dressed in a dead engineer's uniform, and had intended leading the whole party into his own lines, where they would have had no choice but to surrender. Anyone who wanted to get Lieutenant ———'s "goat" at any time after this incident had only to ask him casually if he had any engineers in his platoon.

On the seventh of June, we lost one of our best lieutenants, Lieutenant Pringle, of C company, who had charge of a newly-dug trench which was being enfiladed by a gun somewhere at the back of Hill 60. A shell came down and blew in his dug-out, instantly killing his batman, and wounding himself. The boys dressed his wounds temporarily, and when volunteers were called for to carry him to the dressing station, every man there offered his services. As

it was then broad daylight, and the men would be exposed to rifle and artillery fire whenever they showed themselves outside the trench, the chances were slight for them making the trip alive, but, although they must have been plainly seen by the Germans, to their credit be it said that they allowed the stretcher-party to proceed without firing upon them—a most unusual thing for them, as they had always before made a point of firing upon the stretcher-bearers and their helpless burdens. I shook hands with Lieutenant Pringle in the dressing station, and he seemed quite cheery, and thanked the boys who had carried him down. We were surprised and shocked to learn that he died in hospital a few days later.

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CHAPTER XIV—RETAKEING OUR LOST
TRENCHES

About the ninth of June we were taken out of the line. We walked, or rather we staggered, back to the Belgian Chateau outside Ypres town, and we sure were a pretty miserable looking bunch ; ragged, thirsty, verminous, and our spirits down to zero at the thought of leaving the enemy in our positions. We had been out but a few hours, however, when the order came for us to get back to our old lines. Slinging on our equipment, we again made our way back to the salient. I often marvel how the young boys of our battalion stood the awful nerve-strain and the lying out in the mud for days at a time, with the rain coming down in torrents. Before daylight we were again facing the enemy, who were in a very nervous state of mind. This was proven by the continuous stream of flares which were being sent up. They well knew that we would never let them rest in our trenches without making an effort to re-take them. By this time we had our artillery placed in every road and hedge in the salient, every gun registering on the German positions. We were suppos-

ed to go over the top the morning of the 11th, but, for some reason, this was postponed until two days later. At one o'clock of the morning of the 13th, five hundred of our guns belched forth their charges of shrapnel and high explosives on the German positions. From Hooze to Hill 60, one long line of bursting shell-fire could be seen. So accurate was their range, and the shells dropped so close, that the area held by the enemy was one mass of flames. No masterpiece of any of the great composers ever sounded so beautiful to our ears as the whistling of the small shells, and the droning of the big ones, as they went over our heads to Fritzie, a few yards beyond, that morning. Now we were to have vengeance for comrades slain. Every man was waiting eagerly for the order to go over, which we knew would come soon. I have seen pictures in the movies and in pictorial papers of the boys going "over the top" with smiling, cheery faces. Personally, I have grave doubts as to where these pictures were taken. I did not notice one fellow that morning with a "Charlie Chaplin grin" on his face, as we all knew only too well that, before we reached the enemy positions, thousands of machine gun bullets would be facing us, as well as shell-fire, bombs, minnewafers, rifle-grenades, and the final bayonet thrust when we reached our goal. Half an hour of

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this terrific bombardment, then our guns lifted their range further back. Then the officer in charge of each company gave the order : "Over you go, boys," themselves leading the way. By this time the rain was coming down in torrents, and through this the whole line pushed forward to the German first position, which was taken with very little resistance. It was then we saw the awful havoc done by our artillery. Hardly an unwounded German remained in this trench, the dead lying about in heaps. A few minutes was taken to clean up this trench, then on, toward the next line, in which the enemy had hastily set up a few machine guns, which got quite a few of our boys ere they were silenced. Then forward again, toward what had been originally our first line. By seven o'clock that morning, we had regained all the ground lost, taken a big bag of prisoners, wiped out of existence thousands of Germans, and pushed the others back to the positions they had left on the morning of the 2nd of June. The 52nd bombers and machine gunners were specially mentioned in the official report of the retaking of the trenches that morning, for good work done.

The battalion was in charge of Major Reid during the last nine days of the battle. He held command until Major Thompson (second in command) came back from England.

CHAPTER XV.—RELIEVED

We were relieved on the morning of the 17th, and staggered down the Ypres road, after having been under continual shell-fire for thirty-one days, with the exception of one morning out, on June 2nd. Our own mothers would hardly have known us—gaunt, cheeks sunken, dazed, and our bodies sagging wearily with the light equipment we wore. Out of that gallant lot of 52nd boys who had marched up that same road 1,000 strong on the evening of the second, only a little over three hundred came back. Many were on their way to England—some blind ; others with broken or mutilated limbs, and a large percentage, along with Colonel Hay and our senior major, Major Young, had made their last trip into the Ypres salient, and lie there today with the poppies blooming over their graves.

The first Sunday after we came out, the Brigade chaplain, Major Gordon (Ralph Connor), who had been with us in the trenches, ministering to the wounded and dying, preached a very touching sermon, in which he made special reference to our dead

Colonel, which brought tears to many an eye. In his sermon to us that morning, he told us that our brigade had been longer under shell-fire than any other brigade since the war began.

To make up for the strain we had undergone, we were given two weeks' rest back in Steenvoorde in sunny France, away from the sight of the Ypres salient. How good everything looked to our tired eyes and nerves back there ; trim farms with no shell holes to mar their beauty ; lovely little gardens in front of the cottages, and the Heavenly luxury of sitting down in a restaurant, with nice clean covers on the tables, and trim, pleasant girls serving us.

By the time our two weeks were up, we were again getting ready to go back to the salient, and had almost forgotten our awful experiences. The draft from England had made up the gaps in our ranks ; privates had been promoted to non-commissioned rank and Major Thompson was acting as Colonel. We missed Colonel Hay very much, as he had always made a point, while we were in camp, of gathering us together and giving us a fatherly talk. By this time we felt sure he had died that morning of the third, and had kept his word, though he laid down his life to do it.

About this time Major Wilcox came back to the battalion. He had been gone over two months tak-

ing certain courses in balloon observation. Ere going back to our trenches after our two weeks' stay in Steenvoorde, we were told that Private Belanger, one of the Indian boys from the Mission, had been awarded the Military Medal for good work during the Ypres battle. He was a despatch runner, and through all the bombardments to which we were subjected during our stay "in," he never missed a trip going and coming with his messages. He had all the characteristics of his race; quiet, very seldom speaking to anyone and he was never known to back out of any run he had to make with a message. Poor boy, he made the supreme sacrifice later on, in the Somme drive.

We had a great many Indians in our battalion—born fighters, every one of them—as trim in their dress as any old-time soldier, and ever ready for a fight. A story is told of one of them who had been sent over to England wounded. He volunteered to go back to the front line, and being asked his reason for preferring the trenches to "Blighty," replied: "Too much salute here—not nuff shoot."

CHAPTER XVI—AMBUSHING THE GERMAN PATROL

The first week in July saw us back again in the Ypres salient in the Hooge sector, but not in the old trenches. Owing to the great loss of life in holding them, the Headquarters Staff had decided to abandon them for a new trench which had been made further back. The enemy were chary also of occupying the Hooge trenches, so these now formed a part of No-Man's-Land. The scout section had more scope here for their work, as there was over a quarter of a mile between the lines. Our first night in we had a report from the C. M. R.'s, whom we were relieving, that a strong German patrol had been seen once or twice on the outskirts of Zouave Wood, and, judging by the number of them, and the bold manner in which they were going about, they seemed to be out for trouble. At this time our scout officer, Lieutenant Dougal, was out of the line taking certain courses, and we were temporarily under the command of Lieutenant Hal Fryer.

68 FROM THUNDER BAY THROUGH YPRES

Owing to the reported size of the German patrol, it was thought advisable that, instead of the four men who usually formed our patrols, we go out that night with a stronger party. Eleven o'clock that night found our patrol, which was made up of Lieutenant Fryer, Sergeant Strong, a corporal of the machine gun section, three bombers and four scouts, cautiously creeping through the Zuave Wood. This wood, before the Germans broke through in June, had been the support trenches, and the remains of the old dug-outs could still be seen. Upon reaching the edge of the wood, Lieutenant Fryer laid out his plans of what he wished done in the event of the enemy patrol showing up. The Lewis machine gunner had his position at the back of a fallen oak tree, where he could sweep the ground in front, which was bare of any kind of shelter. The bombers and scouts were on either side of him, and then everything was ready for the expected guests. That night was a quiet one all along the line. Except for a few rifle shots, nothing could be heard. After waiting quietly for over an hour, with no signs of Fritzie showing up, chances began to look poor for any German prisoners that night. Before making back for our own lines, the lieutenant in charge suggested to Sergeant Strong that they two should creep a little nearer to the German lines, and ascer-

tain the condition of the barbed wire. They did so, and had gone only half the distance to the enemy lines, when our guests made their appearance. We noticed them just about a hundred yards away moving along the outskirts of the wood. They betrayed themselves by continuing to move while a flare was still in the air. Possibly they had been coming the same way for a week or two, and, knowing that there were two hundred yards of woods between them and our lines, they felt safe. The machine gun corporal being now in charge, during the absence of the lieutenant, was in a quandary. There was no time to give the officer warning of the approach of the German patrol which was coming along parallel with their own and our lines to the left of them, and would soon be in a position to cut them off. When the next flare went up the enemy patrol, which numbered about twelve, was within thirty yards of us. The machine gunner then swung his gun around upon them, but dared not open fire, as he was not sure by this time as to the whereabouts of the officers of our own patrol. He intended to let the enemy get fifty yards to the right before shooting them down, but the next move of the Germans spoiled that plan. Just as they got in front of our boys they took a turn to the left and made for their own lines. By this time it looked as though

the tables were to be turned, and our own officers were to be prisoners, as the Germans would have to practically walk over them, the way they were going. We experienced a great feeling of relief when Strong's Irish voice could be heard shouting out, "Hands up, you ——— ——— ! ! ! !" I have no doubt his last words gave the Germans the information that they were up against Canadians. It was a huge bluff for two men to order an enemy patrol of twelve men to put up their hands, but the bluff was partly successful, as every Fritzie dropped for cover. Lieutenant Fryer and Sergeant Strong then made sharply to the left on the run. Recovering from their surprise at seeing only two figures, the Germans opened fire with their automatic revolvers and made to follow them, but they were too late, as, knowing themselves now out of range of our machine gun, Lieutenant Fryer gave the order to fire. Our gunner did so, having had the Germans covered all the time. At forty yards a machine gun can play fearful havoc, and over half the enemy's patrol fell at the first dozen shots. The bombers and the scouts also opened up fire, and for a few seconds hell broke loose. Our officers were now safely back amongst us. The German front line was lit up with flares, thrown up to see just what was going on in No-Man's Land. Knowing that their own patrol

was out, they were unable to use their machine guns. Lieutenant Fryer suggested that we carry back some of the wounded Germans, but, just as our boys had made to follow his suggestion, an enemy party of about fifty was seen coming our way on the right. In order, as he said, to make the trip back lighter, our machine gunner emptied the remaining shells in his gun upon the enemy. We then had orders to make for our own lines. As soon as we reached there, our machine guns opened up, and kept spraying all that front until morning.

Lieutenant Fryer gave in his report, but, not having managed to bring back even an enemy's shoulder strap to verify his statements, the officer in command was skeptical as to the success of the exploit, but so confident were the boys as to what they had done, that the same party went out again the following evening and brought back two of the bodies. They found, in all, five dead, one of the bodies having the head blown completely off by a bomb which must have dropped beside it. This enemy patrol belonged to the 22nd Bavarians. Lieutenant Fryer and Sergeant Strong both received decorations for that night's exploit.

CHAPTER XVII.—BILL-POSTING IN NO-MAN'S-LAND

Next morning the enemy gave our front line a heavy bombardment, possibly in revenge for the cutting up of their patrol two evenings before. As my reader will doubtless remember, our Russian Allies were gaining big victories against the Germans and Austrians in July, 1916. In order to let the rank and file of the enemy know this, so as to impair their morale, an order came out from division headquarters that every battalion should place two huge placards, printed in German, in front of the enemy's wire, stating the Russian victories, prisoners taken, guns captured, etc. Our patrol went out to that point of Zuave Wood where we had ambushed the German patrol. We had orders to place the placard, which was printed on white cloth about the size of an ordinary table-cloth, as near the German trenches as possible. Eight of us went over the top that morning in charge of Lieutenant Dougal and Sergeant Strong. We reached the place where part

of the dead German patrol were still lying. Just as we reached there, a machine gun fired over us, and we hugged the ground, expecting that its range would be shortened—but luckily for us, it was not. We thought sure we had been observed, as it kept cracking away, the bullets whisting a few feet above our flattened-out bodies. After a little while the firing ceased, and we crept forward to within a few yards of the German wire. From where we were lying we could see the dull outline of the Germans' sand-bag parapet. None of us relished our bill-posting expedition, as we knew well what our fate would be if we were captured with that interesting placard in our possession. Lieutenant Dougal and Sergeant Strong were the official bill-posters. Laying the placard, printed side down in the grass, they hastily dug holes with their trench knives for the support poles, and hoisted the notice. It seemed to us, lying there waiting, as if it darkened the sky-line—it was so conspicuous. With the remark that he "guessed the notice would give Fritzie an appetite for his breakfast," Lieutenant Dougal gave the order to get back to our lines. By daylight our placard could be seen from our own lines, four hundred yards away, and it must have been easily read by the enemy at fifty yards.

The Australians away on our right had placed the

same kind of a notice in front of their lines. This was allowed to remain unmolested for one day, but on the following day they discovered that it had been taken down, and in its place was one printed in English : "England expects that every Russian will this day die and do HIS duty," proving that there is a certain amount of humor even in the Hun mind.

CHAPTER XVIII—STEALING FRITZIE'S
SENTRIES

During our last month in the Ypres salient the Great Somme Drive was on, and our orders were to raid the enemy's lines as much as possible in order to keep him on the jump, so that he would send no reinforcements from that part of the line to the Somme. A raid by C company, under Lieutenant Dougal, was planned for our last night "in" that trip. Corporal Cattnach, one of the best machine gunners in the 52nd battalion, accompanied the party with his Lewis gun. Big Jim, as he was called by the boys of the battalion, could take a machine gun down in pieces, and put it up again, in the shortest time done by any gunner in the brigade, and was never known to duck at night time, when the enemy machine guns started spraying our lines—he always made them quit. I heard a story of how, when going over the top at the Somme, where the mud was very soft and deep, Cattnach, in order to reach the enemy lines quickly, was seen to kick off his rubbers and arrived in the enemy trench in his stocking

feet, and was the first man to get his machine gun working. He won the Military Medal there.

To return to my story of the C company raid : The night chosen was as dark as pitch. The raiders' orders were to go over the top at eleven o'clock and cross No-Man's Land to within a hundred yards of the enemy ; there to await the artillery, which, to help our boys, was to give the enemy a fifteen minutes' bombardment. Whenever the artillery quieted down, they were to creep through the enemy wire and, if possible, get a few prisoners. Everything came off to the minute, but, upon reaching the enemy wire, it was found to be so close and high that a dog could not have gone through. The forty men comprising the raiding party were now all up, being but a few yards back from the wire, awaiting the scouts' report of a way through. Lieutenant Dougal and Sergeant Strong had twice crept along the wire in an effort to find an opening. At one point, a hollow in the ground below the wire was found, and Sergeant Strong suggested to the lieutenant that he would creep in a little way, to see if it led anywhere. He did so, and had been gone but a few minutes, when the lieutenant heard whispering. He came at once to the conclusion that Sergeant Strong had run into the enemy, and was being forced to creep toward the German lines, with a gun at his

head. He was just about to go back and tell the raiding party that he also intended going through the wire to see what had become of Sergeant Strong, when he heard the unmistakable sound of someone creeping toward him through the opening through which the sergeant had disappeared. Something was sure to be doing now. Keeping the opening covered with his automatic, he waited, and got the shock of his life at seeing one squarehead wriggling through, followed closely by a second, with Sergeant Strong bringing up the rear. The sergeant whispered for the lieutenant to look after one of the prisoners, and he would attend to the other one. They then crept back to the amazed men waiting them, and, as they were over the time figured upon, the order was given to get back to our own lines. The party had gone less than half way, when the enemy put down a heavy barrage, which wounded two privates. No trouble was experienced from the two prisoners, as they seemed as eager to reach our lines as were any of our own men. It was only upon reaching there, we got the story of how Sergeant Strong had landed his prisoners. It appears that he had crept about half way through the German wire, when he came to a piece of ground with no wire upon it. By this time he had come to the conclusion that the entry was a death-trap, and was just start-

ing to quietly retrace his way, when to his horror, he saw a German looking up at him from a hole about three feet ahead. He told us later that if the squarehead was one-half as scared as he was at that moment, he sure deserved sympathy. He dared not shoot, as that would mean sacrificing his life, and the lives of most of his party, by letting the enemy know they were near. He did what turned out to be the wisest thing. Placing his automatic at the head of the German, he motioned him to come out—an order which was obeyed with exemplary promptness. Then the sergeant saw that, instead of one prisoner, he had bagged two of them. One of them whispered what sounded like acquiescence, then out they came, the sergeant getting between them and their own lines. The slightest slip on the part of Sergeant Strong or Lieutenant Dougal might have turned this lucky venture into disaster. In scouting, one is often called upon to make a quick decision, and both of these officers have proven repeatedly that they could not only think quickly, but do the right thing at the proper time. * Sergeant Strong belongs to Rainy River, and at one time belonged to an Irish cavalry regiment. He is a veteran of the South African war. Among the non-coms of the 52nd, he was by far the most popular, and that his popularity is well-deserved is proven by the fact that

*Lieutenant Dougal was reported missing in August, 1918.

he has since been promoted to the rank of captain, has won the M. M., the D. C. M., and, since his promotion, the Military Cross. If he lives long enough I have no doubt he will win the coveted Victoria Cross. After this exploit, we again went back and took up our quarters in Ypres town. For obvious reasons I am at present unable to say too much regarding our positions there. How well the town is watched by observers, and how accurate is their artillery, fire, is shown by the following incident which happened at this particular time while we were billeted there. There was an orchard adjoining our billets, and, as the trees were loaded with fruit, several of our boys went out one morning to get some for breakfast. They had filled their caps, and were busy filling their faces, when a salvo of German shells made a direct hit on the orchard, killing one man and wounding three more out of the nine there. The nearest enemy line to that particular spot was four miles away, yet they had been seen by enemy observers, through powerful glasses. The observers had telephoned the range, etc., to a battery close by, with the above result.

CHAPTER XIX—AMBUSHED ON THE
MENIN ROAD

Our rest out of the trenches this time was very short, and we were soon back in our old positions near Hooge. The orders were, again, to raid and harass the enemy as much as possible, and with the good results we had achieved the last time "in," we were in great form to do the same again. It is customary for a battalion, upon being relieved, to give the relieving battalion any reports in regard to any unusual happenings during the time they have been in. The 60th battalion, which we relieved this time, reported that enemy working parties had been heard and seen on the Menin Road. We had instructions our first night in, to go out on a scouting expedition, to see if we could locate the enemy working party. If conditions were favorable, we were to come back and take a bombing and machine gun party out with us. The party was made up of Lieutenant Oxenham, a new draft officer, in the line for the first time ; Sergeant ————— (not

Strong) ; Corporal H. Potter, Private Morrison, Private J. Keenahan and the writer. When leaving the dug-outs that night, one of the scouts who was not on duty, laughingly told us to "pull off another good stunt" that night. Harry Potter, who was always of the most optimistic nature, soberly replied that the tables might be turned at any time. He must have had a premonition of what was going to happen. We reached the Culvert, which was part of No-Man's-Land, since we had fallen back in June. We had a machine gun and a trench mortar battery stationed there under Lieutenant Burns McKenzie. Another hundred yards up the Menin Road was our most advanced bombing post, held down by about ten bombers. We reported to the officer at the Culvert that we were to be out in front, and his men were cautioned not to fire low, in case they might hit us. We then set out on our patrol. The Menin Road, which we followed, was, like most Belgian roads, paved with heavy stone blocks, with great shady elm trees on either side. The road itself was graded about ten feet above the level of the ground. We traveled in single file, Sergeant ————— in front with Lieutenant Oxenham ; Corporal Potter, myself, Private Keenahan and Private Morrison coming along in the order mentioned. We knew that we could walk as far as the bombing post with

more or less safety—after that, creeping on our hands and knees was the only safe plan. We had gone, I should say, over a hundred yards, when Harry Potter, who was a few feet ahead of me, turned and asked me if I didn't think we had passed our bombing post. I agreed with him, but our sergeant, who was in charge, thought otherwise. Upon reaching a bend in the road, we came upon a wire entanglement of about a dozen wires stretched across. Potter whispered to me then that he thought we had better watch out, as we had heard of this wire entanglement from the 60th scouts. The sergeant, the officer and the corporal went over the wire and continued onward, walking erect, slowly. The other three of us halted at the side of the wire, knowing well by now that our guide was out of his reckoning. I had the indescribably creepy feeling of hostile eyes peering at us, and I believe the other boys felt the same, although we could see nothing wrong. After a whispered consultation we figured that the best thing we could do would be to warn the officer of the danger we were walking straight into. Running the intervening forty yards which they had covered while we others had halted at the wire, I had just got as far as Potter, when what we had feared happened. We had run into a German outpost, and the first evidence we had of

this was when, as nearly as I can judge, ten rifles blazed up in our faces. Sergeant _____ went down with a groan, shot through the stomach, the bullet coming out within an inch of his spine. Lieutenant Oxenham reeled back, shot through the arm. My moving to the side to pass Potter I have no doubt saved my life, as I can distinctly remember the vicious hiss of a bullet which just missed my head. Dropping to my hands and knees, I scurried across the road and dropped down the grade to the bottom of the ditch. Just as I left the road, I remembered seeing the sergeant, leaning upon the officer, stagger past. Reaching the ditch, I turned around and waited, expecting the enemy to follow up their advantage by coming down that way to cut off the two officers. To this day I cannot understand why they did not do so. Possibly owing to the bold manner in which we had come upon them, they figured that more of us were on either flank, on the lower ground, and, being afraid of being cut off from their own lines, had thought prudence the better part of valor. At all events, just as I had prepared myself, with my rifle ready to fire from the hip, I heard the unmistakable guttural sound of German voices growing fainter in the distance. I then began to wonder what had become of Potter, as he had dropped in the road the same time as I did. Creeping up

the embankment, I was shocked to see him lying in the middle of the road. Upon reaching him, I saw that he had been hard hit. He was quite conscious, and whispered, "I'm all in, Billy." We managed to make as far as the wire I have already mentioned, but owing to his weight, and the condition he was in, we were unable to get over it. We lay there for what seemed hours, but could only have been a few minutes, when the two young lads came over the wire and between us we carried the wounded man down to our post at the Culvert. It appears that the two boys had followed me when I ran forward to warn the officer, and had assisted the sergeant to the Culvert, then had returned immediately for Potter and me. These lads were both under twenty, and it speaks well for their pluck when they ventured back for us. Poor Jimmie Morrison—one of them—made the supreme sacrifice later on, in the Somme Drive. Potter lived only a few minutes after we reached the Culvert, the bullet which struck him passing through just below his heart. Most of the Twin City football boys will remember Harry Potter when he played football on the same wing as his brother, Horace, and will recall the clean, manly game he played. He played the same sort of a game all through his soldiering career, and I am sure he reached the Heavenly goal which we all

hope some day to make, as he was one of the cleanest lived, cleanest mouthed and kindest men in the battalion.

I trust the reader will pardon the oft-recurring "I" in this last narrative, but, under the circumstances, it would be impossible to give the full details otherwise.

From that night on until we came out for another rest, we raided the enemy outposts. One night, under Lieutenant Fryer, our party raided an outlying German post to the left of Hooge, but, upon jumping into the short trench which they had been holding, we found it empty, although we knew from the scout reports that the enemy had been there a half hour before. Possibly, hearing us creeping up, they had retraced their way through a sap which took them into their front line. Our last night "in" on this trip, we lost Captain Saunders. He and an English captain of the engineers were killed together in the same dug-out at the Culvert. Corporal Bert Attawell, the machine gunner there, was also fatally wounded at the same time. Captain Saunders belonged to Kenora, and was one of our most tireless officers, always on the job.

A rather amusing incident occurred while we were coming out of the trenches that time. A platoon under Lieutenant Churchill*, who is well

—*Lieutenant Churchill has since been killed.

known in Port Arthur newspaper circles, had reached a certain part of the road, the narrowness of which made it impossible for two battalions to pass each other, without one of them taking the ditch. Just at this particular part of the road a company of the Imperial Grenadier Guards, (in which the Prince of Wales is an officer, and all the officers, down to the non-coms, belong to the nobility), met our boys. It must be said for the Guards that they are about the best disciplined battalion in England, and their opinion of themselves is in proportion to their fame. Upon seeing a bunch of trench-mud stained, unwashed Canadians coming along, the sergeant-major in charge of the Guards shouted out, in a voice which only an Imperial sergeant-major can assume, "Make way for the Guards, make way for the Guards !!!!" Our lieutenant, who, I have no doubt, was seeing visions of a bath and possibly a bottle of champagne when we reached our billets, refused to be impressed, and made this characteristic reply: "To H—L with the Guards!!! CARRY ON, Fifty-second." Needless to state, the 52nd "Carried On" and for once in their lives, the Guards took the side of the road for the plebian Canadians.

CHAPTER XX—WOUNDED

We billeted in Ypres town that night. The night following, the writer, in company with about a dozen other men, were sent back to do some work at Sanctuary Wood. While crossing the open at Yeomanry Post, a machine gun opened up on us. The first few rounds passed harmlessly over our heads. The next ones hit around about us, striking sparks from the rails of an old railway we were passing. I was peering ahead at some of the boys in front, to see when some of them would drop. I had been lucky for so long, that it did not occur to me that I might sometime get hit myself, but suddenly I felt a burning sensation in my thigh, and went over as though I had been kicked by a mule. I crawled into a shell-hole and hugged the ground, as the gun was still spraying all around. Jerry Brimble, one of our scouts, was lying near me and, hearing me give a grunt of pain, whispered to ask me if I was hit. I was feeling too sick to reply and,

knowing that something was wrong, Jerry crept over and ripped up the leg of my trousers, and had me bandaged up in a very short time. It was some job—putting that bandage on, as we both had to lie down, owing to the machine gun bullets which were flying around. The bullet that got me had just missed the artery in my thigh by half an inch. I have no doubt that half inch made all the difference between a live man and a dead one. I was carried out as far as Hell-fire Corner on a stretcher, loaded onto a transport wagon there, and taken to a dressing station. There my wound was properly dressed, and the morning found me on a Red Cross train which pulled into Calais that night.

In spite of the fact that for over two years the arrival of Red Cross trains had been a daily occurrence, the kind hearted French people turned out in thousands to cheer us as we were taken off the train. We were conveyed from the train directly to the hospital, in motor ambulances driven by French and English girls, dressed in natty khaki uniforms and high-laced boots. Everywhere one looked in that or any other French town one saw, by the number of young widows, the heavy price France had paid—and is still paying—in this war.

That first night in Calais was the first time I had slept in a bed for months. In civil life, one takes

the little niceties as a matter of course, but to really appreciate the Heavenly comfort I felt in being once more clean, lying between white sheets in a spotless ward, one must have existed, as we had done, in the rat-infested, verminous trenches. The hospital to which I was taken overlooked the sea, and was situated in lovely grounds. Owing to the Somme Drive being on, every bed was occupied, and the nurses were working practically day and night. Far too little is heard of the great work done by these noble women in the base hospitals. Ever since the war began, these hospitals have received men from the different front lines—most of them badly mutilated, and, in cases where they had lain out—sometimes for days—before being picked up and their wounds dressed, blood poison had set in badly. Before they had been in hospital an hour, the nurses have them bathed, their wounds washed and dressed, and their pain soothed by every possible means. The ward to which I was taken was specially reserved for operation cases. A young Scotch lad, whom I am sure could not have been twenty, lay in the next cot to mine. His case was very serious, owing to the shrapnel wounds in both legs being poisoned. He had been lying out in No-Man's-Land for four days before being picked up by the stretcher-bearers. He was delirious and was contin-

ually calling for his mother. The nurses were preparing him for the operating theatre when I arrived, as the doctors had decided that the only chance of saving his life was to amputate both limbs. His mother arrived two days later, but was only in time to follow her boy to his last resting place, as he died soon after being operated upon. The poor old lady had travelled from the north of Scotland a few hours after receiving the cable. She was all broken up over the death of her boy, as she told the matron that he was her last son, being the third to make the supreme sacrifice in France. The operating theatres in these base hospitals are equipped with every modern surgical aid, and have a special room adjoining each, where X-ray photographs are taken to locate the position of shrapnel and bullets. My operation was for the purpose of removing the bullet which had become embedded in my thigh. I was wheeled into the theatre, had the anesthetic given me, and the next moment, it seemed, I was back in my bed, vainly trying to discover just what had happened to me, and where I was. After getting the ether out of my system a little, I discovered I was very much in the land of the living. I had the German bullet given me as a souvenir, which I certainly prized.

CHAPTER XXI—BOUND FOR BLIGHTY

After a few days' rest, I and a few hundred others was put on a hospital boat and started for Old England. We had all been eager to get to France, but I don't think many of us regretted leaving it, for a little while. We stretcher cases were all placed upon the upper deck, where we could be quickly removed to the lifeboats, in the event of the Hun sharks appearing, to pull off one of their humane stunts. The subs were the least of our troubles, as the thought of seeing Blighty again banished everything else. After a few hours, the white chalk cliffs of Dover were sighted, and we docked before dark. Red Cross trains were waiting to distribute us to hospitals all over England and Scotland.

Travelling all that night, I found next morning that I was in the town of Halifax, in Yorkshire. Although it was barely six o'clock in the morning, thousands of the town people were gathered at the station to cheer us along. I spent two months among these kindly north-country people, and will

never forget the many acts of kindness that were showered upon me. Street and suburban railways, as well as all the theatres and picture houses were free to anyone wearing the hospital uniform, and a steady flow of invitations poured in, for any who were able to get around, to garden parties, teas, etc., etc. Even the young factory girls brought gifts of fruit and other dainties bought from their all-too-small earnings, and I will never forget how, when resting one afternoon in one of the public parks, a poorly dressed old lady sat down beside me on the park bench and offered to share her lunch with me. She was a widow, with all her five sons in the army, two of them being at that time in hospital, wounded. Before leaving me, she drew an old worn purse out of her little hand-bag, and gave me two pence (about four cents). Poor old soul, badly as I knew she needed the money, I felt that I would have hurt her feelings by refusing to take it, as I knew she had taken me for an Imperial soldier, and was not aware I belonged to the Canadians, as the hospital uniforms we wore had no marks to distinguish them from those of the Imperials. The Imperial soldiers at that time received only one shilling (25 cents) per day, though their pay has since been substantially raised. This incident, as well as many others

which came under my notice, goes to prove how the British people appreciate their soldiers.

When a Canadian arrives in England, wounded, he is sent to any hospital which has accommodation for him, but as soon as he becomes convalescent he is sent to a Canadian convalescent home. I was fortunate enough to be transferred to Bearwood Park convalescent home, which is under the charge of one of our local doctors, Dr. Wodehouse. He is held in the highest esteem by any of the boys who have made a stay in his hospital. He takes particular interest in any of the local boys, and gives them every privilege in his power. Bearwood House belongs to the owner of one of the illustrated London papers, and was given over to the Canadian Government in the second year of the war. The grounds around it are among the loveliest in all England, being laid out, in typical English fashion, with Rose Gardens, Bowling Greens, Lawn Tennis grounds, etc., etc., all open for the use of the patients. There was also a pretty little lake with a well-stocked boat-house at the foot of the grounds. One of the patients who had lost his speech through shell-shock, was in charge. One day he slipped down the bank and into the lake, and, swimming ashore, he surprised everyone—himself most of all—by saying : "Hell, but that was stupid of me !!!" He never experien-

ced any difficulty with his speech after this. We also had a crack football team made up of patients. They surprised one of the best army football teams of that district by beating them, the winning goal being scored by that well-known Fort William foot-baller, Sandy Gibbs. The last I saw of Sandy in Belgium was when he was being carried out of Maple Copse with his throat opened up by shrapnel. He certainly looked then as if he had played his last game. When a man is transferred to a convalescent home, he is really taking his first step back to France, as he is there given a certain amount of drill, in order to gradually work himself back into condition. In Bearwood we had a First Contingent sergeant-major as physical instructor. He certainly had some job getting us to begin again the old military routine.

From Bearwood I was sent down to St. Leonards-on-Sea, a lovely summer resort in the extreme south of England. I spent a few months there, and in the spring of 1917, was busy training in ——— Camp for another trip over to France. I arrived in this camp about the same time as the local 141st Bull Moose battalion. Our second evening there, we had a visit from the Hun. We had just had supper and were lounging around the parade ground, when the sound of very powerful motors could be heard,

and the aeroplanes to which they belonged could be faintly seen thousands of feet up. As there was an airdrome not many miles from camp, little notice was taken of the planes until the—to us who had been over—only-to—familiar screeching sound of a bomb dropping through the air made us all break for cover in an adjoining wood. The first bomb dropped in the parade ground, but several which followed hit their marks. As our planes were then up and after the raiders, they made off for the sea, but, before leaving land, they bombed Folkstone and caused a great many casualties among the women and children. They also smashed up a few of the houses. One house in particular, owned by a naturalized German, was completely obliterated. As the authorities, a little time before, had decided to intern this Hun for his outspoken pro-German talk, his own countrymen, by an act of poetic justice, saved them the trouble, as little was left of him and his family after the raid. I seemed to have had a proclivity for running into air raids. I was on a trip to London about a month after the raid in Folkstone, when I witnessed one of the worst scenes of carnage I have ever seen. I was going through Westminster Abbey with a friend, when the signal was sounded that enemy airmen were crossing over from France in the direction of London. Ten min-

utes later the quick firing of the London anti-aircraft guns could be heard, and we knew the raid was on. It lasted over twenty minutes, and in that time over fifty bombs were dropped. Twenty enemy machines took part in the raid, and of these, three were brought down on the outskirts of London. As soon as we knew the raid was over we hurried out to view the damage. Hiring a taxi, we were soon at the scene where the most of the bombs were dropped, one going through the kindergarten of the school which had been bombed. Just as we arrived, the fire brigade started to bring out the bodies. Being in uniform, we were called upon to assist, but I could not face the sight of those innocent children, all mangled and disfigured, although I had gone to sleep in a dug-out with two of my comrades lying dead in the corner a few feet away. At the front, one grows accustomed to repeated experiences of this kind, but the sight of these children being tortured was too awful. Seventy-five children were taken out dead, and over fifty wounded, from that school. There were, in all, over five hundred casualties caused by bombs in that raid, but no damage of any military importance.

I trained in camp until June, 1917, when my health broke down from some sort of heart trouble. I spent the next three months in King George Military

Hospital. This is one of the largest hospitals in London, having over two thousand cots. While I was an inmate there, King George and Queen Mary paid a visit to the hospital. They came especially to see a "Jock," Sergeant Thompson, who had been recommended for the V. C. He belonged to a Highland battalion, and the deed for which he had been recommended was one of the bravest pulled off in this war. An officer with a small party, had made a raid on the enemy trench in front of them, and in the fight which ensued, the officer had been shot through the body just as his party were making back to their own lines with seven German prisoners. He dropped a few feet outside of the enemy parapet, and was not missed until his party regained their own lines, and, owing to the enemy having by then put down a heavy barrage, it was impossible to do anything but lie low until it ceased. By that time, daylight was in, and the fallen officer could be seen lying where he had fallen. Sergeant Thompson, who had accompanied the officer on this raid, without awaiting orders, jumped calmly over the parapet and walked straight for the German line. He reached the officer without being molested, as I have no doubt the sight of a man calmly walking across No-Man's Land in broad daylight puzzled the Germans, but, upon picking up the wounded officer,

a shower of bombs were thrown at him, as the enemy at once saw what he had come out for. Incredible as it seems, he reached his own lines, carrying the officer, who was dangerously wounded. He himself had eleven wounds in all, and collapsed after reaching his lines, from loss of blood. A few minutes later, a rousing cheer came from the German lines, and this was taken as a tribute to the Jock's bravery. I would scarcely have believed the above story had I not received it straight from a source upon which I knew I could rely. The King and Queen spent a long time talking to the brave man, who, I have no doubt, (knowing the Scotch character as I do), was less at his ease then than when he had crossed No-Man's-Land in the face of Death, to rescue his officer that morning. The Royal Couple made a tour of all the wards that morning, chatting here and there with the different patients. At half past ten on the morning of Saturday, July 4th, we had another air raid. The raiders passed over our hospital in plain view. They were flying in much the same formation as my reader may have seen geese migrating south, with the only difference that, at a short distance behind the rear points of the vee, two extra large planes kept circling around, in order, no doubt, to stop our attacking aeroplanes, which were in pursuit. The whole formation circled

around twice, dropping bombs all over. They were at last driven off, the casualties in London from that raid being very light. One man in our ward died of heart failure caused by shock from one of the bombs which dropped close to the hospital and bursted. From this hospital I was sent to a Canadian Convalescent Home, and from there back to the land of the Maple Leaf.

From what I can learn from some of the 52nd boys who have lately returned, the battalion made one more trip into the salient after I left, getting a hurry call about the 12th of August to come to the assistance of the 60th battalion and the C. M. R.'s, upon whom the Germans were preparing for an attack. The attack came off, but very few Germans ever reached our lines. Those who did so were either bayoneted or taken prisoners. Hundreds of others were shot down crossing No-Man's-Land, and only a few escaped back to their own lines in safety. This was the last trip in there for the 52nd. By this time only about ten per cent. of the original boys who left Port Arthur with the battahon were still fighting. The rest had been wounded, or had made the supreme sacrifice. Today only two of the original officers are left in France alive, and they have both been wounded and are back again in the firing line. Lieutenant McCachy, (now Major), lasted

longer there than any of the other officers, having been out in the thick of it until May, 1917. I understand, since then, he has been sent to England, to take charge of a training camp there. He certainly deserved it, for, although he was never wounded, he never missed a trip in.

Belonging, as I did, to the Scout Section, I have naturally gone into more details in regard to their experiences, but our section, in common with others, will always take off our hats to the Infantry, the backbone of any army. Their exploits may not be as spectacular as those of the Air Service, etc., but it is they who have the long, weary nights on sentry-go, make up the working parties, stand the brunt of the enemy attacks, and make the final attack when any positions are to be taken. Possibly my reader may think that I should have left out some of the more gruesome details, but, if the reading is not "nice," just picture what the actual experience must be. The experience of the 52nd battalion has been practically the same as that of any other Canadian battalion which has gone overseas, and our American cousins across the line will, no doubt, meet with the same experience.

There will be a great problem facing the people of this country when this war is over and the boys come back, in placing those who have been disabled

in suitable positions where they can make a living, and finding other positions for those who are physically fit, as nothing should be considered too good for these men. My readers can take it from me that these men, who have faced all the terrors that Hell is supposed to contain, will see to it that they get what is coming to them ; therefore, you Politicians and the Voting Public, start making preparations for these heroes' return, as the war, like everything else, will end some day.

Before closing, I would make a special appeal to my reader to see that Justice is given the widows and dependents of those who have made the supreme sacrifice, and see to it that they are never made to feel financial hardships, in addition to the loss of their dear ones. As the law stands at present, the soldier's widow who has any property at all has to pay the war taxes at the same rate as the rich capitalist (who has stayed at home and made his fortune out of the war) or the alien enemy within our gates. YOU, who have a vote, see to it that the Government you put into power has this awful blot upon our fair country wiped out, as it is YOU, collectively, who can get together and have it done, and YOU will be responsible.