



*The story
of*

PRINCESS
PATRICIA'S
CANADIAN
LIGHT 
INFANTRY

PRICE SIXPENCE NET.



The
STORY OF
PRINCESS PATRICIA'S
CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY
1914 - 1917

By
R. RICHARDS.

(This series of histories is written under the direction of and edited
by Capt. T. G. ROBERTS of the Canadian War Records Office.)

PRICE SIXPENCE NET.

The net profits on this publication will go to the
Canadian War Memorials Fund.

Printed and Published for the
CANADIAN WAR RECORDS OFFICE,
15, Tudor Street, London, E C. 4.

By
CHARLES and SON (W. Charles), 10, Paternoster Square, London, E C. 4.

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H.R.H. PRINCESS PATRICIA OF CONNAUGHT

Photo by Mme. LALLIE CHARLES.

The Story of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

COMMANDING OFFICERS.

	Hons and Awards.	Date appointed.	Vacated.
Lt.-Col. F. D. FARQUHAR.	D.S.O.	22-9-14	21-3-15
Lt.-Col. H. C. BULLER.		21-3-15	5-5-15
Major R. T. PELLY.	D.S.O.	15-5-15	7-12-15
Lt.-Col. H. C. BULLER	D.S.O.	7-12-15	-6-16
Major A. A. M. ADAMSON.	D.S.O.	17-6-16	3-8-16
Lt.-Col. R. T. PELLY.	D.S.O.	3-8-16	31-10-16
Lt.-Col. A. A. M. ADAMSON.	D.S.O.	31-10-16	27-3-18
Major A. H. GAULT.	D.S.O.	9-9-17	10-10-17
Major C. J. T. STEWART.	D.S.O.	27-3-18	

ACTIONS.

Ypres—St. Eloi; Polygon Wood; Hooge; Sanctuary Wood.
Somme—Fabeck Graben; Regina Trench.
Vimy Ridge. Lens.
Ypres—Passchendaele.

THERE must still be a few men left who remember the first days of the Regiment, and those old hands must instruct recent comrades in many small glories which have of necessity been omitted by the writer. Those semi-uniformed days in August, 1914—the parade and the Flag on the 12th—that heart-stirring embarkation and the inglorious anticlimax—parading in the rain at Point Levis—there are so many things that one would like to dwell upon. Even at this time, four years later, that space of days seems a long one. It was good to be a soldier in the early morning of the war.

The sailing of the first contingent has been chronicled

often enough. The regiment arrived, in a somewhat similar condition to that of a well-bred, under-exercised, stud of horses, at Bustard Camp, on Salisbury Plain, and the men settled down to the fairly serious business of training, and the vitally serious business of keeping men of other battalions out of their canteen. This was a very arduous task indeed, and exciting, and the knowledge of close warfare gained during this period proved of material aid to the troops in the trench fighting of the spring.

A month after the arrival of the regiment the King reviewed the Canadians, and on the 14th of November the P.P.C.L.I. moved to Winchester to join the 80th Brigade, 27th British Division.

The weather during the ensuing month served to prepare the men for the Flanders conditions. The rain came down steadily until all the ground about the soaked canvas camp on Morne Hill became a swamp. But the town was close, money was not too scarce, and distractions were possible. The regiment was brigaded with the 2nd King's Shropshire Light Infantry, the 3rd and 4th King's Royal Rifle Corps, and the 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade, under Brigadier-General Fortescue; and with the rest of the brigade it was ordered to keep in readiness to move out at four and a half hours' notice.

The short Lee-Enfield rifle was substituted for the Ross, and as much practice as possible given the men in those days of limited ammunition. Early in the morning of December 20th the troops moved out on the fourteen mile march to Southampton.

FRANCE.

That was a very weary tramp, and as the boots of the battalion generally were either brand new or in the last stages of dissolution, there were many sore feet on board the transport. But the cheerfully destructive

spirits of the men were in excellent condition. Le Havre was sighted early in the morning and disembarkation completed by 3 p.m., when the regiment moved to a base camp in the vicinity of the town.

The stay in Le Havre was of short duration. The next night the men entrained for St. Omer, and arrived there on the 23rd December, after one of the most trying journeys imaginable. Only one train of 48 trucks had been allotted to the regiment, and many soldiers were unable to secure sufficient floor space to sit down. As each man's feet were excessively sore, and crowding was inevitable, that weary train journey formed the grave of many promising friendships.

The billets finally achieved at Blaringhem were comfortable enough, however, and Christmas Day, with a couple more rest days, restored waning enthusiasm to its usual fervour. Then the brigade was employed for several days in the construction of a line of defence between Mount Croquet and Steenbecque, an arduous task, and the first real trench digging the Canadians had accomplished.

On New Year's Day Sir John French inspected the battalion, and four days later the brigade, with the P.P.C.L.I. as advance guard, swung off on the long march to the Ypres salient.

The night of January 5th was spent at Meteren, and the tramp through the town was pleasantly enlivened by the eagerness of the inhabitants to point out the bullet marks, and other less pleasant traces of the recent German occupation. Early the next morning the march was resumed, and this time no long halt was made until the regiment arrived at Dickebusch, where the men rested in a field close to the town until it was time to move up to the trenches. Dickebusch was being shelled as the regiment marched into the village, a very mild shelling, however, that barely interested the Canadians and caused no particular damage. About 4 p.m., Major Gault, who had gone on

ahead, returned to the battalion with general instructions as to the trenches to be taken over, and as soon as it darkened the regiment moved off to the line.

TRENCHES.

After some experience it becomes hard to imagine a man's sensations on moving up to his first period in the trenches. The routine, the waiting, the heated discussions with vague guides, the "stepping short in front"—there grows such a sense of permanency with repeated visits that it is almost impossible to remember first impressions. It has always been the same, one imagines—always one tramped up to the trenches, more or less burdened with pick and shovel, rifle and pack, extra ammunition, a couple of pieces of corrugated iron, or a duckboard, as an after thought—and the same old fireworks banged and spluttered, flared and dwindled, while the soldier sweated along the same old road between the poplars. There appears to have been nothing before one began to do these things.

The Canadians relieved the 53rd Regiment of the 32nd French Division, in the South Ypres salient, and found the trenches in an exceedingly water-logged condition. Communication trenches were few and far between, and it was not until early in the morning of the 7th that the men in the line had been properly backed with reserves of ammunition and supplies. There was some heavy shelling, but few casualties—Captain Newton was mortally wounded while reconnoitring before our lines on the night of the 8th—and on the 9th the regiment was relieved by the 3rd K.R.R.C., and moved into support behind the trenches. There was a weary tramp to Westoutre on the 11th, when the battalion was finally relieved, but the men secured only one day of rest. A sudden attack to the north threatened a general hostile advance, and the Princess Pats were brought back to the line. The impact, however, was

not felt on the Canadian sector, and the general routine of trench life continued until the 22nd of February, when the first draft arrived to reinforce the battalion. The draft consisted of 111 men, and was in charge of Captain Adamson, who was later to command the regiment in many tight places.

A CAPTURED SAP.

On February 28th, conditions were considered favourable for a frequently postponed attack upon a German saphhead opposite our St. Eloi trenches. This sap, and its possible imminent eruption, had caused our engineers some anxiety, and accordingly an attack was arranged, to be carried out by No. 4 company. The assault, led by Major Gault and Lieutenants Crabbe, Colquhoun and Papineau, was very successful indeed, and everything was accomplished that had been desired. Major Gault and Lieutenant Crabbe were both wounded, but Lieutenant Colquhoun, who went through the fighting without harm, penetrated deeper into the German lines on a daring reconnaissance, and failed to return.

Lieutenant Colquhoun's success in leading the Battalion Snipers Company had practically eliminated the indiscriminate hostile sniping that had gone on behind our lines. This sniping had cost the battalion many good men during the first weeks, and Lieutenant Colquhoun's loss was serious. The Canadian snipers had been exceptionally successful. On one occasion, shooting from a certain mound between the lines, two or three snipers under Sergeant Christie had accounted for 24 of the enemy in as many minutes, and an even larger bag would have resulted had not unlimited hostile high explosive terminated the practice.

The routine of trench warfare continued until March 14th, when the regiment was resting at Westoutre. About this time the enemy attacked the British line at St. Eloi, and succeeded in driving in the brigade line

and securing the front trenches, with the greater portion of St. Eloi itself and its outlying buildings. At 5.30 p.m. on the 14th, the regiment received instructions to fall in on the Battalion Alarm Post, and by midnight the column had reached Voormezeele. The ruined village was crowded with stragglers, and the tumult and alarmist reports made a plan of concerted action difficult enough. Colonel Farquhar worked out his scheme, however, and with as little delay as possible the battalion moved to the breastwork about two hundred yards west of Shelley Farm. From this point No. 2 Company went forward in a gallant attack towards the mound, but the German machine gun fire was too heavy to admit success. Our fellows had to come back, and now the element of surprise being lost, it was deemed useless to expend more men in another attack. Three platoons were left to hold the breastwork, and the remainder of the battalion returned to Dickebusch.

DEATH OF COLONEL FARQUHAR.

The following days were spent in the construction of the trenches and a second line behind St. Eloi, known as the Canadian support trenches. It was here that the battalion suffered a very severe loss indeed. Colonel Farquhar was mortally wounded on the night of March 20th. Crossing the open country behind our line, equally indifferent to communication trenches or the fire of the enemy, he was hit by a stray bullet and died a few hours later. He was a strict officer, but very much liked by his men—hackneyed sentence that for once is true. He had that divine and sympathetic spark in a commanding officer which leads him to appear before his men at exactly the right time and circumstances, and to say exactly the right thing at a time of stress. There may be one or two men left who will remember a certain night of February, 1915,

a night when relief was due after many weary days in the flooded trenches, days doubled in fatigue by the terrible weather. An attack broke out to the north and relief was postponed. That extra sentence seemed a lot to those men who had not slept for five days, and there was some cursing in the darkness. Colonel Farquhar, following his usual custom of considering the front line as healthy as a village lane, appeared at the back of the trench. "And how is the merry band of sportsmen?" he remarked, cheerfully. No one had heard or noticed his approach, but the replies were ready enough. "Going strong, sir"—"Good for another week"—"Enjoying ourselves, sir." The Colonel chuckled and departed, while the men looked at each other and wondered why they had answered that way. But really there was no other way to answer. The occurrence, of course, was slight enough, but it may serve. Lieut.-Colonel Farquhar was buried in the Battalion Cemetery at Voormezeele, where Lieutenant Price and several other officers, and many men, already lay. Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Buller took command of the regiment in his stead.

A day or two after the death of Colonel Farquhar the regiment moved back into rest billets, and on April 9th marched to the Polygone Wood sector, still in the Ypres salient. A great deal of work was done upon the trenches by the Canadians, and their section of the line was brought to a high pitch of defensive efficiency. Through the anxious days of the second battle of Ypres the Princess Pats remained in their trenches, a distance south-west of the 1st Canadian Division, and every man hoped for the order to move to their comrades' assistance in that close fight. The Princess Pats, however, were to have their share.

POLYGON WOOD, MAY 8TH.

On May 3rd the line was withdrawn, to conform with a new line to the north, and on the 4th strong hostile

formations were observed massing for an attack. This attack was repulsed, and the same night the regiment was relieved by the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, and retired to reserve trenches. The German shelling was heavy and continuous, and on the following day Colonel Buller was wounded in the head by a shrapnel splinter. Major Gault took over the command of the regiment.

On May 6th the battalion returned to the line, and was instantly subjected to a most infernal bombardment. This bombardment was maintained throughout the 7th, and only decreased during the night. At 5.30 a.m. the next morning the shelling began again and increased steadily in volume. At the same time the enemy attacked.

Shells and dangers are usually forgotten when the soldier sees the enemy before him in the open. Lining the broken parapet our fellows poured in such a fire upon the advancing Germans that the attack withered up. Instantly the shelling began again, even more severe than before. In half an hour every telephone wire and line of communication had been destroyed. Whole sections of the parapet were blown in and the men behind them buried.

By this time every Canadian on the strength—signalers, orderlies, pioneers, even cooks—had been placed in the Canadian support trenches. About 7 a.m. Major Gault was wounded, and the command devolved upon Lieutenant Niven. Two hours later the shelling decreased, but it was only to permit the advance of masses of German infantry. There were men and guns left, however, in the Canadian line, and again the attack was repulsed. In this attempt very heavy casualties were inflicted upon the enemy, but our own losses were terrible. Machine guns pushed forward by the enemy swept the battered line as the Canadians exposed themselves to fire, and many men went down. After this attack Lieutenant Niven managed to establish touch with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry on the

Canadian left, and the Rifle Brigade on the right. Both of these battalions had suffered severely from enfilade and shell fire, and indeed, the British line at this sector scarcely resembled an organised defence, so battered was it by the bombardment. The men were scattered in a rough line of shell holes, or lying flat upon the ground where the trench had once been. There were gaps where every man had been killed for perhaps a space of fifty yards.

The shelling began again, and soon even the semblance of a fire trench had been destroyed. Lieutenant Edwards was killed, Lieutenant Crawford severely wounded, Captain Hill, Lieutenants Martin, Triggs, and De Bay had all been wounded previously. Lieutenants Denison and Lane were missing, probably buried alive when the right fire trench was blown in. Captain Adamson had been hit in the shoulder, but continued to distribute ammunition with his remaining good arm. Fraser, the R.S.M., was killed while similarly engaged. Only four officers were left, Lieutenants Niven, Papineau, Vandenberg and Clark.

The battalion snipers were doing wonderfully good work in carrying messages to Brigade Headquarters at Bellewaarde Lake, and bringing up ammunition, but so many of them had been killed that supplies had been steadily decreasing. At 1.30 p.m. a platoon of the Rifle Brigade came up and occupied a perilous line of shell holes on the battalion right flank. The Canadians cheered them as they came up under heavy fire. At 2 o'clock Lieutenant Niven made his way to headquarters, and gave details of his situation, returning at once to the line. The orderlies accompanying him were killed by shells. About 3 p.m. a platoon of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry reached our support line with twenty boxes of small arms ammunition, and remained to reinforce the position. The troops on each flank of the P.P.C.L.I. had withdrawn to a line about 300 yards to the rear.

At this moment another attempt was made by the

enemy to advance. There were too few riflemen left to check the whole attack, and on the right a few Germans reached our old fire trench, where all the garrison had been killed. They were driven out later. The shelling continued all the afternoon, until at 11.30 p.m. the remainder of the P.P.C.L.I., some 150 rifles strong, was relieved by the 3rd King's Royal Rifles. As many of the dead as possible were buried before the survivors, under Lieutenant Papineau, moved back to reserve trenches. The 8th of May, 1915, should be remembered in Canada.

There was no time for rest, however, and for the next few days practically every able-bodied man was employed in carrying supplies to the line or digging support trenches. On the 13th the Princess Pats and the 4th K.R.R.C. formed a composite battalion and marched to the trenches at Hooze Chateau.

Major Pelly arrived from England on May 15th and took over the command from Lieutenant Niven. Major Pelly had suffered severe concussion on March 15th from the accidental explosion of a trench mortar in the front line, and had been sent to hospital. The men were very glad to see him again. A draft of officers arrived on the 21st, but the entire strength of the regiment under Major Pelly was less than that of the company he had commanded when the battalion went to France.

The enemy had not given up his attempt for Ypres, however, and on the 24th of May a counter-attack was carried out by the 27th and 28th Divisions on the trenches at Hooze Chateau, which had been lost during a gas attack. The operation was unsuccessful. On June 1st the regiment moved to a quiet sector on the Armentieres front.

The new front was a very pleasant change to the weary men. They had been badly battered, and there were few left of the original members of the regiment. On July 28th a draft of five officers and 244 men arrived, the McGill contingent, and a very fine lot of

men they were. They were full of enthusiasm, those Jam-wallahs, and as keen for fighting as for boxing and ragging, and training, and other competitive movements for efficiency—all of which caused many expressions of pained horror on the part of the hard-bitten old veterans whose comrades they became. Another large draft on September 1st brought the battalion nearly to strength.

In the middle of September the brigade moved to the Amiens front, and the Princess Pats went into the line near Cappy. The sector was quiet, but was rapidly enlivened by the Canadians. On the 7th of October Sergeant Christie, the N.C.O. in charge of the snipers, took out a party of men to intercept a German patrol which had been noticed to pass at a regular time each day along the Curlu—La Grenouillère road. Crossing the swamp before our lines, our fellows concealed themselves well enough on the German side and had not long to wait for the return of the patrol. Unfortunately the Germans outnumbered our party of 10 men by three to one, and, in addition to this, a hostile flanking party was approaching behind the Canadians. Rapid work was necessary. Christie called upon the patrol to surrender, but as the Germans demurred, a number of bombs were thrown into the close mass of men upon the road, while heavy fire was opened immediately by the snipers. Leaving a number of men dead and wounded upon the road, the enemy decamped briskly, while Christie led his party away in the opposite direction without a casualty. The hostile flanking party came up too quickly to allow examination of the dead and wounded, and the odds were too heavy even for Christie to attempt conclusions. He and one of his men, Fleming, covered the retreat of his party, and everyone got back safely.

The even routine of trench life continued quietly enough, with some small occasional excitement caused by the persistence of the enemy's trench mortars, until November 8th, when the regiment moved to Flixecourt.

That was a very sad day, for the Princess Pats had been ordered to return to the Canadian Force, and had to bid farewell to their companions of the 80th Brigade. Officers and men felt the separation very keenly. In the heavy fighting and terrible conditions of the first winter and spring they had found many friends amongst the regiments of the brigade.

At the headquarters of the Third Army School the Canadians stayed two weeks, instructing novices in the art of warfare, and being themselves used for experimental material by the aspirant officers of the school.

WITH THE CANADIAN CORPS.

On November 25th the regiment marched to Pont Remy, entrained there, and arrived at Caestre at 9.30 p.m. Here the battalion was met by General Alderson, who welcomed the Princess Pats to his command, and the band of the 1st Canadian Division. Billets were found at Fletre, and the regiment settled down to parades and general training with the Canadian Corps. Lieutenant-Colonel Buller arrived from England on the 7th of December to take command of the regiment, and on the 16th Major Pelly, who had commanded the P.P.C.L.I. since May 18th, returned home to take charge of the 8th Royal Irish Fusiliers.

By January 1st, 1916, the regiment had been properly assimilated into the Canadian Corps, and now formed part of the 7th Brigade under Brigadier-General MacDonell, D.S.O., and the 3rd Canadian Division, under Major-General Mercer. On the 12th the regiment went into the trenches at Dranoutre.

Through the following weeks the brigade worked briskly enough, draining and revetting the trenches, and improving the defences, until March 20th, when the 3rd Division returned to the Ypres salient. The 7th Brigade relieved the 17th British Brigade in the Hooge-

Sanctuary Wood sectors. The general tenor of trench life continued through April, for the 7th Brigade was not called upon to assist the 2nd Canadian Division in the terrible fighting of the St. Eloi craters. The 3rd Division had its share of fighting later, however.

SANCTUARY WOOD.

On the morning of June 2nd, the 7th Brigade was holding the line from the Menin Road south to Warrington Avenue, with the R.C.R. on the left of the line and the P.P.C.L.I. on the right. The Princess Pats were in touch with the 8th Brigade on their right. The enemy's shelling had been unusually severe for several days, and it is likely that our Higher Command was aware of a possible German offensive about the Sanctuary Wood sector, for on the morning of the attack Major-General Mercer and Brigadier-General Williams had visited the line to inspect the defences.

At 7.45 a.m. the Germans began an unprecedented bombardment of our front line and supports. Not even at St. Eloi had the shelling been so heavy. Our communications were severed almost immediately, and all messages to the rear had to be conveyed by runners. The Canadian Mounted Rifles and the right of the Princess Pats suffered terribly. Whole trench sections with their garrisons were blown up, and in many small sectors the Canadian resistance was simply annihilated. The barrage advanced at 1.30 p.m., and behind it came the Germans in a third attempt to break through to Ypres.

The two companies of the P.P.C.L.I. in the line had been reinforced by the supporting companies, and on the left towards Hooge Captain Niven held on to his position under increasing difficulties. On the right Lieutenant-Colonel Buller collected all his available men and moved up to Warrington Avenue to meet the enemy. There was some fierce and bloody fighting in

the wrecked trenches, but finally our fellows managed to establish blocks in Warrington Avenue and Gourcock Road. Colonel Buller was killed while cheering on his men to this assault. He could not move forward fast enough along the littered communication ways, so he climbed on the top of the trench and stood in the open. He was killed at once.

About these blocks the fighting continued for some time. By sheer masses of men the enemy would overwhelm one post, only to find another block behind it, hastily improvised during the fighting for the first. One record of this battle states that the P.P.C.L.I. constructed and held one after the other no less than six blocks, their garrisons dying where they fought. To the north-west, Captain Niven, the only officer left of his company, still held out with the remnants of his force, though nearly surrounded by the enemy. On the right of his line his men were firing at the enemy over the front and back of the trench. General Macdonell sent up all his available supports—two companies each of the R.C.R. and the 42nd Battalion—but these men were not in sufficient numbers to do more than postpone a withdrawal. After 18 hours of practically continuous close fighting, the P.P.C.L.I. retired to a support line running roughly from the west of Zouave Wood to Gourcock Road. Before this Lieutenant Scott had made his way back to Brigade Headquarters with the Battalion flag, for the situation was extreme. The Canadians were now defending the "R" line, and the necessity of maintaining their position was impressed upon them. There were no trenches behind that "R" line, and if the Germans broke through they had practically cleared the way to Ypres. They were concentrating their attack upon Maple Copse and Border Lane, and for a time carried everything before them. Some forty of the enemy penetrated Border Lane and were wiped out with the bayonet by the Princess Pats. The Germans in Maple Copse

suffered similarly at the hands of the reinforcing companies of the 42nd.

At 7 a.m. on June 3rd, a counter-attack was carried out by the 1st and 3rd Divisions, but the difficulties in the way were enormous. Under the continued heavy fire, and hampered by the vague and contradictory reports that reached them from the front line, the men were unable to make good their objectives. Most of the senior officers, who had been carefully instructed in the plan of assault, were killed or wounded before the attacking troops went forward, but nevertheless gaps in our rough line were filled and some valuable ground gained.

The casualties of the 7th Brigade totalled 45 officers and 1,051 men, a very heavy percentage indeed. The Princess Pats came out of the line on June 4th, with a strength of some 210 rifles. They had borne the brunt of the actual fighting and had suffered accordingly, but the regiment had played a very great part in the saving of Ypres.

Beyond holding themselves in readiness to move at a moment's notice, the Princess Pats took no active share in the Hooge fighting of the 6th of June, nor in that subsequent successful counter-attack of the Canadian Corps which regained the ground lost on June 2nd. On the 9th and 10th of the month large drafts were received, including the Fifth University Company, and drilling and special training occupied the men until the 26th, when the Regiment relieved the R.C.R. in the trenches. There was some heavy shelling, and the 3rd Brigade on our right nipped a German attack in the bud, otherwise the trip was uneventful. After their recent experiences it took a great deal to rouse the Pats to any degree of excitement.

Early in July Major Adamson, commanding the Regiment, and Major Gray, received the D.S.O. These decorations were awarded for distinguished conduct previous to the Battle of Sanctuary Wood. Later in

the month Captain Niven also received the D.S.O., and many other officers and men were decorated for gallant behaviour. The Regiment had a good list of distinguished men. On August 3rd, Lieut.-Colonel Pelly, D.S.O., rejoined the Battalion, and took over the command from Major Adamson.

The following weeks in the trenches were quiet enough. On one occasion the proceedings were enlivened by the R.C.R. on our right, who, tiring of the ordinary methods of military wire-pulling, attached a grapnel to the German wire before their front and succeeded in removing some 50 yards of it to the Canadian side of No-Man's Land. This caused a great deal of excitement to the enemy, and the subsequent display of S.O.S. signals and so on gave our men much pleasure. This comparatively peaceful existence, however, lasted only a short time. The Canadian Corps was ordered to the Somme, and on the 7th of September the P.P.C.L.I. began the long march to the most terrible fighting of the war.

THE SOMME—COURCELETTE.

There was never much resting time for the troops on the Somme. The Regiment reached Albert on the night of the 13th, and spent the 14th in bivouacs in the Brickfields. At 6 a.m. on the 15th the 2nd and 3rd Divisions attacked and captured Courcelette, gaining a brilliant victory, with results so effective that it was decided at once to send forward additional troops and attempt to extend our gains. Accordingly at 6.15 p.m. the 7th Brigade attacked.

The 7th Brigade objectives consisted of the Sunken Road Trench and the Fabeck Graben, the main assault to be carried out by the P.P.C.L.I. and the 42nd Battalion. On the successful occupation of these lines the 49th Battalion was to pass through and consolidate a

new line on the crest of the hill some 350 yards beyond Fabeck Graben.

FABECK GRABEN.

The Princess Pats reached their jumping off line near Sugar Trench at 6 o'clock, and penetrating the German barrage in file, immediately launched the attack. Their first objective, the Sunken Road south of Courcellette, was achieved without very much difficulty, though the enemy's machine-gun fire was very severe, and casualties were heavy. The battalion pushed forward at once towards the Fabeck Graben, but in the centre the men were unable to make much headway. Several attempts were made, and footing was gained in the Fabeck Graben on each flank, but the enemy's machine-guns were too numerous and well placed. At 7.30 p.m. Major Stewart reported that the second objective was not secured and that a line was being consolidated before it.

The rebuff was not final. At 4 p.m. on the 16th, the Princess Pats went forward again, and this time secured the whole of their second objective. At 5 o'clock the R.C.R. and the 42nd Battalion attacked Zollern Graben, but without success, and after this the German shelling became very heavy indeed. Before daylight on the 17th the Princess Pats were relieved, and reached Tara Hill in the afternoon. The battalion had suffered some 300 casualties, but the men were happy in having successfully completed the task set them.

The regiment did not take part in the heavy fighting of September 26th and October 1st. The Canadian Corps was pressing forward to Regina Trench, and finding the German resistance stiffer than any that had yet been experienced.

REGINA TRENCH.

Our casualties from shell-fire were very numerous even in the most sheltered trenches. It must be remembered that such an aggregation of guns had never before been equalled—practically every available gun on each side, both British and German, had been placed in position in the Somme area, with the result that trenches and roads were blown out of recognition in a single day. All this made the supply of munitions to our men in the front line a very difficult business, and every so-called road and track behind our lines was hedged with dead men and horses, and broken vehicles. Later, when the bad weather came, these conditions were intensified. There was no shelter in trench or dug-out from the inevitable searching shells, and the nervous strain of such continuous fighting may be imagined.

At 5 a.m. on October 8th, the R.C.R. and the 49th Battalion, with the P.P.C.L.I. in support, attacked the line of Regina Trench between the West Miraumont and Twenty-three Roads. The men went forward splendidly, and news was received that the attack had been successful; accordingly the Princess Pats moved forward to Hessian Trench and prepared to assist in the final consolidation.

But later developments were not so favourable. It appeared that the German wire had not been well cut, and that only scattered parties of the R.C.R. had been able to reach Regina. These few men had captured a number of prisoners, and were preparing to send them back when the German counter-attack was launched. Numbers were bound to tell, and the men of the R.C.R., fighting desperately, were forced back to their jumping-off line and Kenora Trench. Here the bombers of the P.P.C.L.I. got into action. The operation was unsuccessful, though our front was advanced along the line of Kenora Trench.

This engagement completed the battalion's activities on the Somme. It went out of the line on the following day, and on the 12th began the march to the Arras—Lens front. There was much joy at leaving the Somme. On the 24th the regiment occupied the trenches on the left of the divisional line north-east of Neuville St. Vaast.

The men thoroughly appreciated the changed conditions, and brought into the quiet sector a fighting zest that the Germans opposite failed to understand. There was practically no hostile shelling, and this was a blessed relief in itself, though the enemy attempted to compensate for the lack with trench-mortars. Colonel Pelly left the battalion on the 31st for instructional work in England, and Major Adamson took charge. The men settled down to the business of raiding the enemy's line and preparing for the winter.

VIMY RIDGE.

The next four months were quiet enough. The Canadian Corps was preparing for the capture of Vimy, and with the exception of keeping in touch with the enemy through constant and successful raiding, there was little time for anything else. On March 22nd, the 7th Brigade moved to Villers-au-Bois, and relieved the 9th Brigade in the line. Special training for the attack had been practised for months, until the men felt that they could carry out the operation in their sleep, but the final training of the next two weeks outclassed all previous efforts. Never had an attack been prepared so carefully, and the results amply justified the months of toil.

The regiment was to attack through La Folie Wood to the Staubwasser Weg, with Britt Trench as the approximate final objective. At 4.30 a.m. on the 9th of April the men were ready at the point of assembly, and at 5.30, in a slight mist which later turned to sleet,

the attack went forward. Prisoners began to come in ten minutes after the offensive had been launched, and the intermediate objective was captured exactly on time. Altogether the resistance was not so stubborn as had been expected, and by 8.30 a.m. our fellows were reported in the final objective. The casualties in the actual attack were light, but during the consolidation of the new line the enemy's shelling increased vastly in accuracy and violence, and by the afternoon the list was heavy. The Germans attempted a counter-attack along Brook Trench into Staubwasser Weg, but they were met with the bayonet and routed completely.

Our patrols pushed forward promptly, but became involved instantly in cross-fire machine-gun actions which prevented our further advance. This was the case on the whole brigade front, and no further progress was made until the 12th, when the concentrated fire of Canadian and captured German artillery blew the enemy bodily from the foot of the hill. The regiment left the line on the 11th, and carried out no further offensive operations until the 28th, when the 1st Division attacked Arleux and Sunken Road. The Princess Pats, however, were only called upon to form a defensive flank by means of advanced machine-gun posts and demonstrations, and this they did, suffering a great deal of shell-fire and little glory.

On the 24th of June Major Hamilton Gault, D.S.O., returned to the battalion, but was attached at once to 3rd Division Headquarters. Major Gault is truly representative of the regiment. He has taken charge in some of the most stressful days of its existence, and in spite of four wounds has always had to be actively deterred from returning immediately to the very foremost trench of all front trenches. Soldiers like a man who is completely and obviously indifferent to his own life, and he is popular for other qualities as well.

LENS.

Through the summer of 1917 the regiment fought with the 3rd Division on the Lens front. In July one of our posts near Eleu Trench was rushed by the enemy, and the garrison converted into casualties, but a few days later Captain Papineau balanced the account by penetrating the enemy's lines and capturing a brand-new trench-mortar. The battalion did not share in the major operation of August 15th, though on the 26th our fellows went forward most successfully and established a block in Commotion Trench. During this time there were repeated patrol engagements about the outskirts of Lens, and the Princess Pats did well at the work.

In October the offensive planned by the Canadian Corps against the Mericourt-Sallaumines Ridge was postponed. Operations on the Ypres front were being pushed forward by the Second and Fifth Armies, and the Canadian Corps was ordered to the Passchendaele Front. On October the 18th Lieut.-General Currie took over the command of the Passchendaele sectors, and preparations were made for the offensive.

PASSCHENDAELE.

On the 22nd, the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions relieved the New Zealand and 3rd Australian Divisions in the trenches before Passchendaele. The Canadian scheme of attack was arranged in three phases, and later, owing to the extension of the original objectives, was finally completed in four. The 3rd and 4th Divisions were to carry out the first and second phases, while the 1st and 2nd Divisions completed the operation with the capture of Passchendaele itself and the high ground to the north-east.

FIRST PHASE.

At 5.40 a.m. on October 26th, the 3rd and 4th Divisions attacked the German line before Passchendaele, the P.P.C.L.I. remaining in support. The operation, as a whole, was fairly successful, but the final objective was not gained. The fighting was close and desperate, and only the spirit of our men saved a serious check.

SECOND PHASE.

On October 30th, the 3rd and 4th Divisions continued the offensive, and this time the Princess Pats had as much work to do as the most ardent fighting man among them could wish. At 5.50 a.m. the Regiment went forward, and for a time the men made good and steady progress. But the low ground about Friesland proved a serious obstacle, and there were numerous casualties as the Princess Pats made their way through the water-logged country. Major Papineau was killed during the advance upon Meetcheele, a very serious loss to his regiment and to Canada. Men will remember his letter to the French-Canadian politician. For a time a pill-box upon the crest of the hill beyond Meetcheele checked our advance, but this was captured by Sergeant Mullin, who won the Victoria Cross as well as the position. Finally Graf was secured, and our approximate objective consolidated.

Altogether the regiment won much glory in that fight, but it was won at a very heavy cost. Nine officers were killed or died of wounds, and eleven wounded, and there were some 340 casualties amongst the men.

The Princess Pats, of course, took no part in the operations of November 6th and 10th, which completed a most successful and hard-fought offensive; and military rules forbid us to follow further the adventures of the regiment.

On November 18th, exactly a month after Lieut.-General Currie had taken over the command of the Passchendaele front, the 3rd and 4th Divisions in the line were relieved and began their return to the Lens front. Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry has made a lot of history since then, and some day we shall be able to tell it.

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