

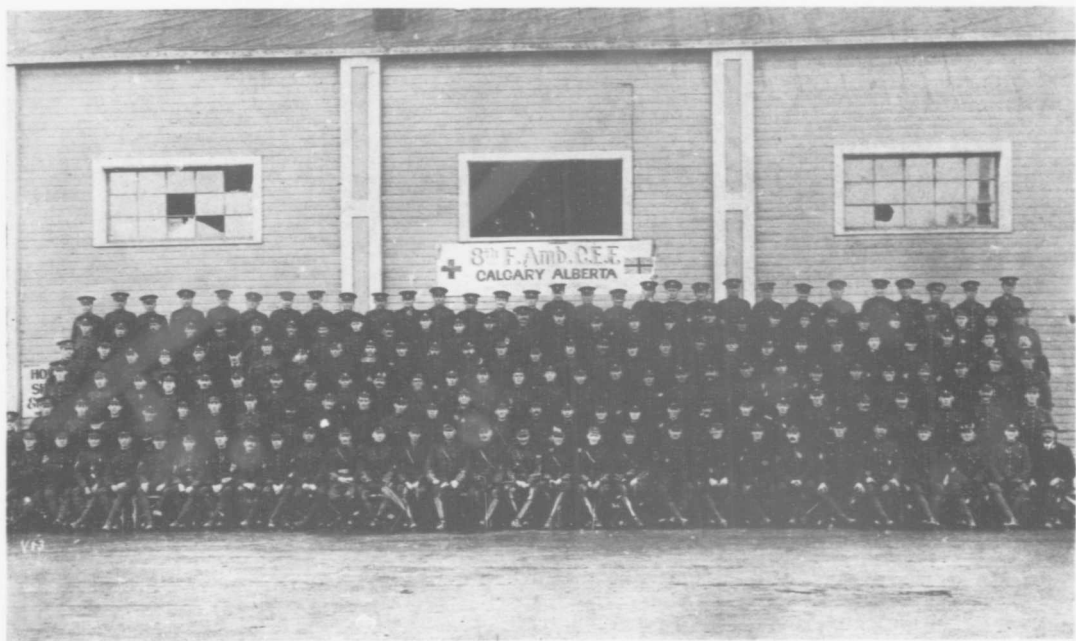


HISTORICAL RECORDS  
NUMBER 8 CANADIAN  
FIELD AMBULANCE  
1915-1919

1. Lt. Col. J. R. G. DSO. SSG. R. E. D. D. Hon.

HISTORICAL RECORDS  
OF  
No. 8 CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCE





ORIGINAL UNIT, No. 8 FIELD AMBULANCE, C.E.F., CALGARY, ALBERTA.

HISTORICAL RECORDS  
OF  
No. 8 CANADIAN FIELD  
AMBULANCE

CANADA, ENGLAND  
FRANCE, BELGIUM

1915 - 1919

BY

Lieut.-Colonel J. N. GUNN, D.S.O., M.R.C.S., Eng., M.B., Tor.  
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Private J. S. COLLIS

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LIEUT.-COL. J. N. GUNN.

TO THE MEMORY OF  
THOSE WHO WENT OUT WITH US  
NEVER TO RETURN, BUT WHO REST "OVER  
THERE." WE DEDICATE THESE NOTES, AND THOUGH  
WE RECALL THEIR SUPREME SACRIFICES WITH  
SORROW, YET IT IS ALSO WITH A MINGLING  
OF PRIDE, EXEMPLIFYING AS THEY DO AN  
UNSELFISHNESS AND DEVOTION  
WORTHY OF THE HIGHEST  
TRADITIONS OF  
OUR EMPIRE





## PREFACE

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THE purpose of this book is to place on lasting record the history of No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance. It does not profess to be an absolutely detailed account of this unit's service, but rather a summary of important events since its mobilisation. In one or two isolated cases it may be found to be incomplete, but it is hoped that the real purpose for which it is written will be accomplished, that is, to have some permanent testimony of the service rendered during the great European War. It is felt that the many experiences during the strenuous times when the ambulance served in France and Belgium are too significant to be thrown into the background of "forgotten and bygone days," and it may be that this book will also serve as a link between those many happy associations which were formed under such outstanding circumstances during those trying times.



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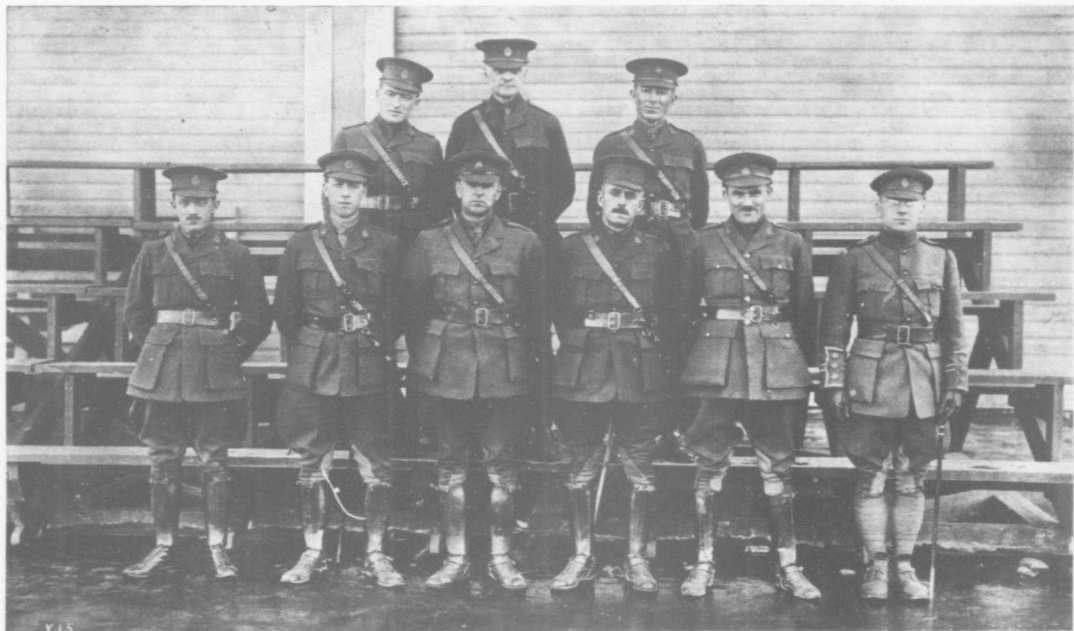
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ORIGINAL OFFICERS. No. 8 CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCE—CALGARY, 1915.

Capt. R. T. Washburn. Capt. R. D. Sanson. Capt. A. W. Park  
Capt. H. C. Chisholm. Capt. J. A. Reid. Maj. F. H. Mayhood. Lt.-Col. S. W. Hewetson. Capt. C. G. Cunn. Capt. J. J. Jamieson. Q.M.

# HISTORICAL RECORDS

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## CHAPTER I.

### *MOBILISATION.*

THE nation had been in the throes of war for sixteen months, when, on December 13th, 1915, word came through from the Canadian Military Headquarters at Ottawa for the recruiting of No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance. This was the first complete medical unit to be mobilised in Alberta, and to Calgary was given the honour of being the headquarters and recruiting centre of this particular unit.

Up to this time, since the commencement of the war, the Canadian Army Medical Corps had been represented in Alberta by "C" Section of No. 1 Field Ambulance Depot stationed in Calgary. At this depot men had been trained in general drill and first-aid work, and periodical drafts were sent overseas as reinforcements to field ambulances or other medical units. In the formation of No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance, permission was given for this depot to be drawn upon to the extent of seventy-five per cent. of its strength at that time, and it can be easily imagined the anxiety that prevailed amongst the men training in the depot, so desirous were they all of proceeding overseas.



The command of the field ambulance was offered to Major S. W. Hewetson, Medical Officer to the 13th Overseas Mounted Rifles, but at that time acting as Assistant Director of Medical Services to Military District No. 13. Major Hewetson accepted the command, pending approval of the appointment from Ottawa, and, for the time being, this officer filled the dual roll of A.D.M.S. and O.C. of the Field Ambulance.

The authorised establishment of the field ambulance was to be as follows:—

Officers . . . . .	10
N.C.O's and men . . . . .	238
	—
Total . . . . .	248

Out of this number one officer and fifty-six other ranks (transport, details, etc.) were to be attached on arrival overseas, leaving a total of nine officers and 182 other ranks to be taken on the strength in Calgary.

Actual recruiting commenced on January 5th, 1916, at 211 Judge Travis Building, Calgary, this being the medical office of Major F. H. Mayhood, who closed his private office in order to give preference to the mobilisation of the unit.

Apart from notices in the local press, no special recruiting campaign was organised, but, on the first day of recruiting, twenty-two men were sworn in, the first man to be enlisted being an Italian. There was no difficulty experienced in raising the required number to complete the establishment, and on January 17th, 1916, recruiting came to an end, the summary of nationality being as follows:—

MOBILISATION.

3

English . . . . .	95
Scotch . . . . .	24
Irish . . . . .	10
Welsh . . . . .	2
Canadians . . . . .	44
Australians . . . . .	2
Americans . . . . .	1
Italians . . . . .	1
Norwegian . . . . .	1
South African . . . . .	1
Dutch . . . . .	1
	<hr/>
	182
<i>Officers.</i>	
Canadian . . . . .	9
	<hr/>
Total . . . . .	191

The original officers actually proceeding from Calgary with the unit were as follows:—

- Lieut.-Col. S. W. Hewetson.
- Major F. H. Mayhood.
- Capt. C. G. Gunn.
- Capt. J. A. Reid.
- Capt. R. T. Washburn.
- Capt. H. G. Chisholm.
- Capt. R. D. Sanson.
- Capt. A. W. Park.
- Hon. Capt. (Q.M.) J. J. Jamieson.

Quarters for the unit were established in the O'Sullivan Block at No. 211 Seventh Avenue East, Calgary. Sleeping bunks for the men were erected, kitchens equipped,

and orderly-room and Q.M. stores opened. The men, however, were never actually stationed in these quarters, being billeted out pending completion, and the time of their stay in Calgary was ultimately found to be too short to warrant changing over into these barracks.

The ordinary training, consisting of drill, lectures and practical demonstration in general military principles and first-aid work, proceeded daily in Calgary, and keen interest was evinced by all members of the unit, many of them even returning at nights to practise bandaging, etc., with a view to becoming efficient in the work it was expected would confront them overseas.

Meanwhile, administrative work also proceeded apace, and everything was being pushed ahead in order that the unit might be ready to proceed overseas with the minimum of delay.

## CHAPTER II.

### *OVERSEAS.*

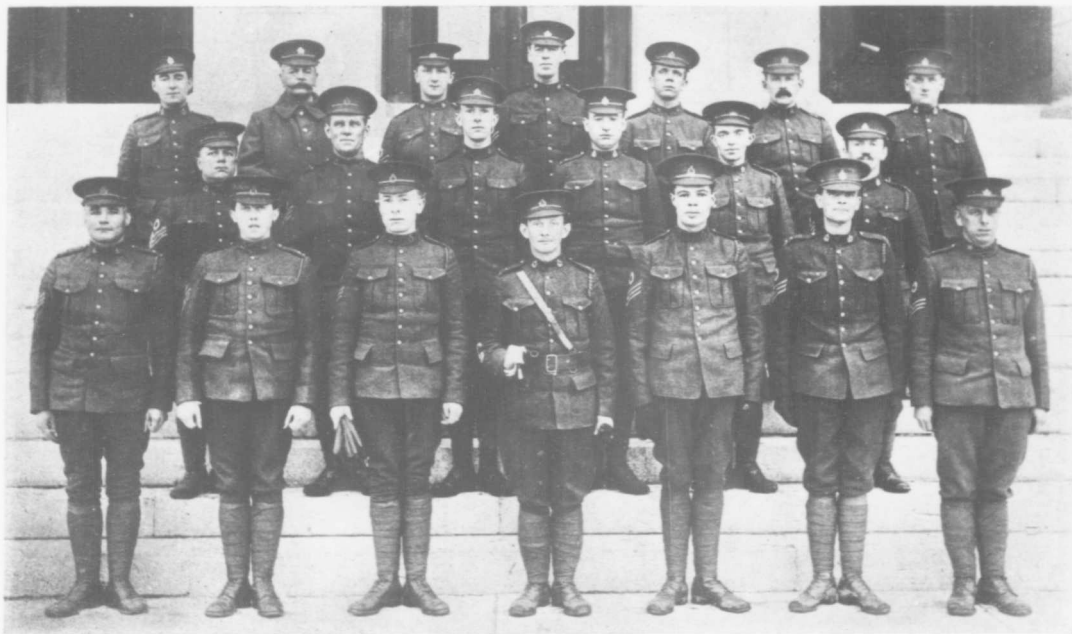
PERSISTENT rumours had been afloat as to the early departure of the unit since mobilisation was commenced. It was learned that the field ambulance was the only unit required to complete the 3rd Canadian Division, the major portion of which was already in France, and frequent telegrams were received from Ottawa requesting information as to when everything would be ready to proceed. Many were the anxious enquirers, many the misleading reports; speculation was, of course, rife, and plenty of opportunities were given and taken advantage of to jokingly mislead the anxious enquirers and to prove that rumour is "a lying jade." At length, however, all doubt was set at rest, for on Saturday, March 18th, 1916, a letter was received from the General Officer Commanding Military District No. 13, advising that the unit would proceed for Halifax en route overseas on Saturday, March 25th.

The last week in Calgary was full of incident, excitement, and celebration. One looks back, with pleasure, to the Sunday evening of March 19th, 1916, when the Sportsmen's Patriotic Association of Calgary arranged a concert in Pantages Theatre to raise funds for the providing of athletic goods, etc., for the field ambulance, when the "house" was crowded, many being turned away, and when Major F. H. Mayhood and Capt. R. D. Sanson, representing the unit, in the absence of

Lieutenant-Colonel Hewetson, briefly acknowledged, in appropriate speeches, the kindness of the Sportsmen's Association. Following this, on the Monday evening of March 20th, a farewell dance was given in the Al Azhar Temple, when 250 members and friends were present, and dancing was indulged in until the "wee sma' 'oors." These celebrations came to an end on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 22nd, when the unit paraded at the Calgary City Hall to receive the sporting goods and games purchased by the Sportsmen's Patriotic Association.

Saturday, March 25th, 1916, was ushered in by the unequalled sunshine of sunny Alberta, and much hustle and bustle were witnessed around the unit headquarters, as everything for the departure was hurriedly completed. All the men were happy, for all were anxious to get "over there," and all were ready at three o'clock, when the unit was inspected by the G.O.C. of Military District No. 13 (Brig.-Gen. E. A. Cruickshank), who expressed himself as very pleased with the general appearance, and wished them "Godspeed." A few minutes afterwards the long journey to "an unknown destination" began, the well-remembered voice of Lieutenant-Colonel Hewetson calling his unit to attention, being the signal to proceed to the depot, headed by the bands of the 82nd and 89th Battalions.

Those who left with the unit will not easily forget that day: the streets were crowded with interested onlookers, the wives, mothers and sweethearts, as they broke through the ranks to march as far as possible with their friends, the cheering as the train pulled out, and the city fire chief, Captain Smart, who journeyed by the side of the track in his automobile for a few miles,



N.C.O.'s, No. 8 CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCE—CALGARY, 1916.

Cpl. Berne.	Cpl. Fitzroy.	Cpl. Webster.	Cpl. Jackson.	Cpl. Holding.	Cpl. Montgomery.	Cpl. Wynn.
Sgt. Mitchell.	Sgt. Steele.	Sgt. Taylor.	Sgt. Evans.	Sgt. Stewart.	Sgt. Dutton.	Sgt. Cowdry.
	Sgt. Hav.	Sgt. Warren.	Sgt.-Major Cameron.	Sgt. Graydon.	Sgt. Cox.	Sgt. Davies.

waving greetings to the departing men, many of whom, alas, were destined never to see Calgary again.

The journey East proceeded comfortably and satisfactorily, excellent arrangements having been made by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the comfort of the troops. Short route marches were taken at Brandon, Winnipeg, Fort William, North Bay and Moncton, and cordial receptions were accorded by the people of the eastern towns and cities. Halifax was reached at about nine o'clock the night of Thursday, March 30th, and the troops detrained on the following morning, proceeding to embark on the White Star Line steamer *Adriatic* at about 12.15 p.m. on Friday, March 31st. The steamer had on board the following units:—

73rd Overseas Battalion, C.E.F., Montreal.

64th Overseas Battalion, C.E.F., Halifax.

Cobourg Battery Draft, Cobourg.

8th Canadian Field Ambulance, Calgary.

The steamer sailed at about 12.30 p.m. on Saturday, April 1st, 1916. There was excellent accommodation on board for all, and after a pleasant voyage, varied by life-boat drill, etc., the city of Liverpool was reached at 2.30 p.m. on Sunday, April 9th, 1916. Rumour had preceded the *Adriatic*, the people of Liverpool having had a report that this steamer was torpedoed the day previous to her arrival there.

The field ambulance was taken from the steamer without delay, boarding the train at Liverpool station at about eight p.m., and arriving at the camp in Bramshott at about seven o'clock the following morning. The sight of the green fields and the beautiful English scenery in the early spring morning was very pleasant.

The stay of the unit in England was limited to a few weeks, and during that time as much training as possible was undertaken. Repeated visits were made by the different sections of the unit to the old English commons at Ludshott and Grayshott, where main and advanced dressing stations were established, and everything possible done to get the men acquainted with the details of the field ambulance work.

Major W. A. Burgess joined the unit in England as second in command, and horses, vehicles, motor ambulances and necessary personnel for each were also attached in England.

On May 7th, 1916, the unit left Liphook Station for Southampton, arriving there complete by eleven a.m. Embarkation was completed by four p.m., and the boat *The Western Miller* left at 6.30 p.m. The short passage to La Havre was not a very pleasant one, everything being crowded and the general accommodation bad and unsanitary, resulting in considerable sea sickness. One amusing incident occurred during the trip, when, about midnight, while all were trying to sleep, the anchor of the boat was drawn, making an unusual noise. Most of the troops, with minds full of thoughts of torpedoes and dangers at sea, rushed, with one accord, to the decks, all fears, fortunately, being calmed before any harm was done by the "stampede."

La Havre was reached in the early morning of March 8th, and after staying in a rest camp there for two days, the unit left for "up-country" on May 10th, 1916. General interest prevailed, the men naturally wondered what war was like, what they were going to, and what experiences were in store. Soon they were to find out.



### CHAPTER III.

#### *FROM THE REAR TO THE FRONT.*

THE ambulance entrained at La Hayre at two p.m. on May 10th, 1916, and the train left for the forward area at six p.m. With the usual secrecy of military moves there was no general knowledge as to the actual destination, which fact alone gave excellent opportunity for the spreading of reports, one of which was to the effect that the unit was proceeding right into the line in one of the most dangerous and active sectors. As the train proceeded, the presence of aeroplanes overhead added excitement to anticipation, but ultimately all curiosity was settled as the train pulled up at Remy siding, just outside of Poperinghe, leading up to the famous Ypres salient, at two p.m. on May 11th, 1916. From the train the men were marched to a farm close by and billeted in the buildings attached thereto. These grounds had been arranged as a rest station for slightly wounded and sick men of the Third Canadian Division, situated directly opposite to the casualty clearing stations which received casualties from the Ypres salient.

No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance were in charge of the rest station at this time, but orders were immediately received that No. 8 was to take over from them as early as possible. This was done after sufficient time had elapsed for full instructions to be given and knowledge acquired as to the general system and routine. This divisional rest station received men of the Third Canadian Division from the Ypres sector, whose condition of

wounds or sickness was not considered sufficiently serious to necessitate evacuation to the base, and who could receive rest and treatment for a few days, after which they would probably be fit to return to duty. About fifty men were admitted daily in normal times, and the average remaining in the hospital was from 250 to 300. The work here progressed very satisfactorily, and all were busily occupied in keeping the places clean and sanitary, and in the care of the various patients admitted. Thus, the first experiences of service in Belgium were quiet and uneventful in the rest area of the division. Variation was found in outdoor games, while one could also mention the acquaintance formed with "Madeline," the lady of the farm, and her brother. "Madeline" had a natural propensity for farm work, including the slaughtering of her pigs, while her brother proved very apt in the acquisition of the English language, and afforded considerable amusement by the use of words which, fortunately, he did not understand.

Several of the officers were detached for duty shortly after arrival at Remy siding. Capt. C. G. Gunn went to Poperinghe as a medical officer of the "Lahore" Battery, Capt. J. A. Reid was attached to the 1st C.M.R.'s, and Capt. H. G. Chisholm went to the 43rd Canadian Battalion, the latter being coolly informed that the officer he was to replace had been killed shortly after arrival at the battalion. Parties of men for duty day and night were also detailed to the casualty clearing stations opposite, to assist in the loading and unloading of patients as they arrived and were afterwards sent on to the base by hospital trains.

Major W. A. Burgess also left the unit at this time, being evacuated "sick."

On June 1st, 1916, the first disasters of warfare came to a party of the field ambulance. As it was anticipated that at an early date the unit would be called upon to render service in the forward area, a party was sent by motor ambulance on the night of June 1st, the intention being to take them as far as the old asylum just outside Ypres, whence they were to proceed forward for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the roads and the general method of evacuation of wounded. The car proceeded with this party through Poperinghe towards Ypres. This main Poperinghe-Ypres road is one of the most historical in the whole of the war zone. At that time it was, particularly at night, the scene of much activity, transport supplies, rations, ammunition, etc., and marching troops, proceeding forward and returning from the region of the famous Hill 60, whilst the darkness was pierced continually by the blinding light of star shells, and the roar of British and enemy artillery intensified the warlike and weird atmosphere of this famous but dangerous road. On the night in question this main road was heavily shelled by the enemy, and as the ambulance car was nearing the gates of the Asylum, one shell exploded immediately by the side of it, doing much damage to the car, and wounding the following occupants:—

Capt. J. A. Reid (slightly).

Capt. J. J. Jamieson (slightly).

530023 Sgt. R. S. A. Jackson (slightly).

443080 Pte. C. Sandison (seriously).

510003 Sgt. F. Garnett (seriously).

The two last named were on the front of the car as drivers. Private Sandison was the most seriously

wounded, and quite incapacitated. Sergeant Garnett, despite serious wounds to the arm and face and the continued heavy shelling of the road, took hold of the steering wheel of the car and managed to drive it into the shelter of the asylum yard before collapsing. This was, indeed, a gallant feat, for Sergeant Garnett ultimately lost the use of one eye and one arm as a result of his wounds, and his gallantry on this, the first occasion of being confronted with danger from the enemy, was recognised afterwards by the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Private Sandison succumbed to his wounds the following day, the condition of the car afterwards made it appear miraculous that any of the occupants escaped uninjured.

This incident made everybody more serious and thoughtful as to the nature of the duty which had been undertaken, but the splendid example set, particularly by the two motor ambulance drivers, gave incentive to all others to prove at least as worthy as they.

At this time the enemy was displaying much artillery activity, both on our front line trenches in the Ypres salient and on the roads leading to our sector, so much so that it was thought this was a prelude to an early attack on our positions by the enemy. This attack materialised on June 2nd, 1916, and the fighting, which was most severe, extended over three days, the Germans endeavouring to break through the Canadian lines. A splendid defence was offered by the Third Canadian Divisional troops, although, by sheer force of numbers, some ground was taken and the Canadians forced back into muddy and unprotected positions. The Germans came along in great numbers, fully equipped and rationed, evidently with the full intent of pushing through and maintaining

their hardly-won positions. They were, however, stopped and ultimately forced back practically to their starting point. Meanwhile, the stretcher-bearer sections of the field ambulance had been ordered to "stand-to" and prepare for any emergency, while a later message ordered them to proceed at once to Poperinghe and report to the officer commanding No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance, which unit, at that time, was responsible for the clearing of the battlefield of the Third Canadian Division. These stretcher bearers went forward on the night of June 2nd, and from Poperinghe were sent to Brandhoek, where the main dressing station was operated. A portion of the stretcher bearers from here were ordered to the advanced dressing station in the Asylum at Ypres, and from there to the more advanced positions around Zillebeke Bund and Menin Mill. They were, of course, under the orders of the No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance, and assisted them in the rush of casualties which followed in clearing the line of wounded and carrying them back to the points where the wounded were collected by horse or motor ambulances. Naturally at such times there is always more or less congestion at the main dressing station, and to relieve this another hut was taken over at Brandhoek, this being operated by a party of No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance as an emergency main dressing station, through which several hundreds of cases passed during the three days of this severe fighting. In addition to this, the small remaining party continued on duty at Remy siding, where a great many cases were admitted from this attack of the Germans. One of the officers also assisted at the casualty clearing station opposite, where, of course, everything was extremely busy, and many urgent operations were performed.

These were, indeed, trying days, and it was a great relief when the activities subsided, more especially as the Germans had been pushed back, and their attack, though causing many casualties, was unsuccessful. This first baptism of fire for the members of the field ambulance was a severe initiation, but the men stood it well, working unceasingly under the difficulties of unfamiliar roads and trenches, and under a very intense and continuous bombardment from the enemy. Major F. H. Mayhood and Capt. H. G. Chisholm did excellent work at this time with the 5th C.M.R. and the 43rd Canadian Battalion respectively, their dressing stations on more than one occasion being wrecked, and they themselves extremely fortunate in escaping alive.

The horse and motor ambulances worked continuously, carrying the wounded back from the Zillebeke Transport Farm to the Asylum at Ypres and the main dressing station at Brandhoek, which work was at all times carried on under great danger. One of the motor ambulance drivers (No. 3293 Pte. E. F. Abell) was killed whilst continuing this duty. The second driver on the car at the time (No. 540312 Pte. E. Hanmer) then distinguished himself, coolly changing a tyre amidst the incessant shelling on the road where the casualty occurred. For this act and his general devotion to duty on this occasion he was afterwards awarded the Military Medal.

The Asylum at Ypres was naturally the scene of much activity, most of the casualties being taken there on the way to Brandhoek, and thence to the casualty clearing stations. Nine of the field ambulance men were wounded in the vicinity of the Asylum, and one of them ultimately died, *viz.*, No. 530107 Pte. A. W. Cosgrove. No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance, during these operations,

were very unfortunate in losing their very efficient officer commanding. Whilst organising the clearance of the field and personally attending to the general arrangements at the Asylum, Ypres, this officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Tanner, was seriously wounded, and died shortly afterwards. The personnel and ambulance returned to Remy siding on June 5th for a well-earned rest after the service they rendered in the ever-to-be-remembered battle of June 2nd, 1916.

Major E. R. Brown and Capt. P. Poisson joined the unit at this time, the former assuming "second-in-command."

## CHAPTER IV.

### *CLEARING THE LINE IN THE YPRES SALIENT.*

It may be of interest here to point out that at this time the system of field ambulance work was for the three field ambulances attached to the particular division to operate as follows:—

- One field ambulance actually clearing the line.
- One field ambulance in charge of a rest station.
- One field ambulance in reserve.

During active conditions, the whole of the stretcher bearers in the two ambulances in the rear are detailed to assist the ambulance clearing the battlefront, as was the case during the German attack of June 2nd, when the personnel of No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance worked under No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance. Each field ambulance was usually given one month in the line, at the end of which time exchanges were made. Acting on this system, No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance first became actually responsible for the clearing of the battlefront of the Third Canadian Division on the night of June 17th-18th, 1916, when they relieved No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance in all the forward posts. The exchange actually commenced on the night of June 16th-17th, and the following posts were manned on that and the following night:—

Headquarters at 65 Rue de Boeschepe, Poperinghe.  
Main dressing station at the Schoolhouse, Brandhoek.



Advanced dressing station at Menin Mill outside Ypres.

Advanced dressing station at Zillebeke Bund outside Ypres.

Advanced dressing station at the Asylum, Ypres.

The system of clearing the wounded was for the stretcher bearers to work forward from the dressing stations at Menin Mill and Zillebeke Bund, carrying back patients from the regimental aid posts of the battalions in the trenches to the Menin Mill and Zillebeke Bund. Here they were collected by horse ambulances, which brought them to the Asylum at Ypres, whence they were taken to the main dressing station at Brandhoek, and afterwards transported by motor ambulance to the casualty clearing stations. This tour of duty in the line extended until July 24th, and was without any active operations with regard to special attacks, the usual exchange of artillery fire being the predominant feature. Casualties during this period were not very heavy, and, fortunately, the field ambulance completed their tour of duty in the line without losses to their own personnel, although from Poperinghe forward to the most advanced positions the enemy had concentrated his shellfire, and the advanced posts at the Asylum, Menin Mill and Zillebeke Bund had always been places of considerable danger, affording good targets on more than one occasion. By this time, however, the men had learned the lesson of taking cover in the Asylum cellar and the dugouts at the other positions, and to expose themselves only when their duty necessitated it.

The official language to sum up this state of affairs would be, "Quiet and normal conditions prevailed," but

waiting and watching, in dark or dreary cellars and dug-outs, making periodical visits through trenches which, at such times, are like tombs of the dead, listening to the hiss of approaching shells which are scattered sweepingly as part of the daily round, uncertain as to what the next move will be, only knowing that some time something will happen—all this makes quiet conditions a heavy strain, in fact possibly heavier than when, in the excitement of action and ceaseless activity and danger, there is no time to think, only to be up and doing.

Thus the days of the month's forward work passed, the headquarters at Poperinghe really being the only place affording unusual excitement. These headquarters had been used as a place for the men to rest in, as they were relieved by others for line-work, but as events ultimately proved, Poperinghe was anything but what it was supposed to be in this connection. Members of the ambulance will smilingly recall what has been referred to as "The retreat from Poperinghe." The town of Poperinghe is an interesting place, being, of course, the concentration point for all troops and supplies for the Ypres salient. Its mixed population of civil and military added to its interest. The numerous shops continued their business activity, the soldiers being probably the best customers, whilst the many guns located here and the evidences of damage from enemy shellfire gave it a really warlike appearance, standing out in marked contrast to the quiet and peacelike pursuits of the civilians, as one in passing along the streets could notice the Belgian girls and women busy at their doors or windows making the lace which was ever the admiration of the soldiers. On July 10th, 1916, scattered enemy shelling of the town took place, and the most noticeable thing with regard to this

was the number of "duds"—*i.e.*, shells that did not explode. The civilians assured the ambulance men that this meant ultimately a heavy shelling of the town, and their surmise proved correct. On July 14th, 1916, the town was very heavily shelled from ten o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon. The shells were scattered in all directions, and two big guns were evidently being used. From the centre of the town back to the vicinity of the headquarters of the ambulance was swept with the shellfire, and the fragile building used as a dressing station swayed constantly with the concussion. Shells were repeatedly placed on every side of it, one in particular coming through the corner of the town major's house opposite and exploding in the middle of the road. The Rue de Boeschepe was covered with broken glass and other debris, and there were many casualties. The limited personnel at the headquarters could scarcely cope with the resultant work, but every man, no matter what his particular department, became a stretcher bearer, and the men rushed out of the station along the streets, picking up the wounded and bringing them, amidst the incessant shellfire, back to the headquarters dressing station, where Lieutenant-Colonel Hewetson and the few officers with him took charge of the dressing and the general administration. It was an exciting day, and there were some pitiful sights amongst the civil inhabitants of the town. Most of them immediately packed or carried their household goods the best way they could to the fields adjoining the town, whilst several of them suffered from the bombardment. One shell landed in the divisional baths in the Rue de Boeschepe, wounding several women in that vicinity. Two of the most heart-rending sights were of one woman, in an evident state of

pregnancy, suffering badly from shell-shock, and another young woman wounded severely in the breast. These are the ironies of warfare. Ordinary casualties amongst soldiers become natural and expected, but to see helpless women and children suffering, not only the mental anxiety caused by husbands and fathers being away, but also the actual direct effects of such a war, call forth all the hidden powers of passionate protest. Many were killed outright in Poperinghe that day, but the field ambulance managed to evacuate the wounded quickly back to the casualty clearing stations. In the afternoon word came along from the town major for the town to be cleared of all soldiers, and after waiting for all other troops to get out of the town, the ambulance packed up and withdrew to Remy siding, leaving a small party behind, with shelter in a cellar, to attend to any other casualties that might occur.

## CHAPTER V.

### *A CHAPTER OF VARIETY—RESTING AND CLEARING THE LINE.*

AFTER being relieved in the line on July 24th, 1916, No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance withdrew to the rest area. One section, "B," went on to Steenvoorde, under charge of Major E. R. Brown, and the remainder of the personnel occupied a site near Reninghelst, at both of which places sick were attended to, the latter station being used as a congregating point for men returning to their battalions. Opportunity was taken in these areas to encourage athletics amongst the men; football and baseball teams were organised, and inter-sectional games played. It is hoped that no ill-feeling will be caused by the recalling of "B" section's field day, the personnel of which had prepared a "home" of their own in Steenvoorde. They invited the other sections down on August 6th, 1916, celebrating the occasion by defeating the crack football team of "A" section by four goals to one, much to the satisfaction of Major E. R. Brown, commanding "B" section.

Whilst here, working parties were supplied to build dressing stations at Maple Copse, one of the men being badly wounded by machine-gun fire as this work was proceeding during the night. At this time the battle of the Somme had commenced, and the First Canadian Division, in preparation for proceeding there, withdrew from the Ypres sector adjoining that of the Third Division, thus causing the latter to extend its frontage

to embrace both divisional areas. This necessitated the field ambulance going back into the line, and on the night of August 9th, 1916, the following posts were taken over from the First Canadian Division:—

Vlamertinghe Mill—main dressing station.

Railway dugouts—advanced dressing station.

Lille Gate—advanced dressing station.

Kruisstraat—collecting post.

These posts cleared from the left of the Ypres sector back to Vlamertinghe Mill, from whence the cases were taken on to the casualty clearing stations by motor ambulance. Conditions remained normal during this tour, although normal times in this particular salient were more than trying for all concerned, as the enemy was able to scatter his "daily round of fire" on all sides and on all main avenues leading to the positions held. On August 12th, a little activity was caused by a gas attack of the enemy, which resulted in a slight rush of casualties, and on the night of August 20th, as the 73rd Canadian Battalion was returning from forward positions, and had reached the Vlamertinghe road just outside the main dressing station at the old mill, one shell landed right in their midst, causing much damage and crowding the room which was used as a dressing station with casualties. The war gave many lessons in contrasts, and this was one of them. Imagine if you can a silence, almost death-like, in the concrete room of an old mill, the faint lights showing up sitting figures of men—soldiers waiting and watching during the hours of the night for anything that might happen—possibly enjoying friendly games of cards to while away the hours. Thus does the time pass when there is "nothing doing on the western front." But

suddenly all this is changed by just one explosion outside the mill, one shell dropped in the right place, in the midst of marching troops of this new battalion. These men had just been forward for a short time for instructional purposes only, and were coming back, free from casualties, when the unexpected happened, and the inside of the mill was immediately changed from almost a quiet peacefulness to a scene of extreme activity, with stretcher bearers and ambulance drivers all on the alert, as they brought in the many wounded by this incident, several of whom died in the dressing station. Often these incidents happen, happen when least expected, and under these conditions men soon get into the habit of just living practically from hour to hour, the future being wrapped in the uncertainty of the fortunes of war.

The enemy was now using phosgene gas in combination with chlorine. The action of this was more delayed than the ordinary chlorine alone, but the casualties resulting were more severe and the mortality very high amongst those who were exposed to this torture.

The Third Canadian Division was relieved in the Ypres salient by Imperial troops on August 23rd and 24th, and the various sections of the field ambulance, those on duty in the forward area and those at Steenvoorde, together with the transport, congregated at the headquarters near Reninghelst to await definite orders to move to "another sector," which, in other words, meant "the Somme."

## CHAPTER VI.

### *MOVING TO THE SOMME.*

DURING July and August, 1916, whilst the Canadians were "holding the line" at Ypres, the battle of the Somme was raging in its intensity. The Assistant-Director of Medical Services of the Third Canadian Division had several consultations with the officers of the field ambulance, lecturing them on the new area, and, therefore, it was not a surprise when the order eventually came for a big move to be started. For this move, the ambulance became attached to the Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade, and on August 25th they marched with that brigade, their destination for this—the first of the moves leading up to the Somme—being a farmhouse outside Abeele, but more commonly known to all as "K24" (map location). The tents carried by the unit in their establishment were utilised at this place for the accommodation of the men, although, during this period, the weather was very bad, there being heavy rains, not at all conducive to pleasant "camp" life. Much time was occupied here in the studying of technical equipment, in route marches, gas drill, and practical first-aid, with a view to getting everybody fitted for the Somme offensive. Daily trips were made to the infantry battalions and other units of the Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade for the collection of any sick.

On September 7th the next move was made, the men marching to a point about one mile from their camp, where 'buses were waiting to take them to the town of



Cassell, from where they travelled all night by train, arriving at Candas at ten o'clock the following morning. From Candas the men marched to Rederie Farm, a distance of about twenty miles, which proved a most trying march, the weather being exceptionally hot, and causing much fatigue in their heavy marching order. After resting at this pleasant farm until September 10th, the march was continued with the infantry brigade, and, with one break of two nights resting at Fieffes, the ambulance arrived on September 13th at Val de Maison, which, for the time being, was to be its headquarters. Meanwhile, parties were detailed to the casualty clearing stations at Contay to assist in the rush of casualties which were being experienced at this time on the Somme.

The site at Val de Maison was used as a rest station for sick and slightly wounded troops from the Somme, and was usually operated by the field ambulance waiting in reserve to proceed into the line. The 8th Field Ambulance, therefore, took charge of this on arrival. About 250 to 300 patients were accommodated, and it was a very busy place indeed, hundreds of men passing through daily on their way to and from the front.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *THE SOMME OFFENSIVE.*

THE ambulance did not have the honour of being responsible for the clearing of the line at any time during the Somme offensive, but, as was usual in all times of activity and big attacks, all the personnel were engaged during these battles, working under orders of the ambulance who had charge of the clearance of the battlefield. On September 16th, 1916, Capt. R. T. Washburn took 100 of the 8th Ambulance stretcher bearers forward, staying at Albert that night, and proceeding the following day to the chalk pits a few miles outside Albert, where the advanced dressing station was established. From here they went forward to the aid posts of the 52nd and 60th Canadian Battalions, and undertook the clearing of their wounded. They found, as they went over this shell-swept country, many wounded still lying in shell-holes and dug-outs, and a thorough search was, therefore, instituted, and the wounded were cleared back to the advanced dressing station. The ambulance bearers worked very thoroughly, and in fact most of them carried on until absolutely exhausted. The bad conditions of the Somme added difficulty to difficulty, as the heavy rains made the open country, and what remained of the trenches themselves, a veritable quagmire. The artillery bombardment on either side was terrific, and the sights which the bearers witnessed during their work, with our own and enemy soldiers lying locked together in death in the German dugouts that had been located, will not soon be

forgotten. The battle of the Somme swayed to and fro, with gains here and there at the cost of many casualties. The stretcher bearers made two such trips into the line during this offensive, and it is interesting to quote from the report of Capt. R. T. Washburn, who had charge of them, and who made the following remarks in his official report:—

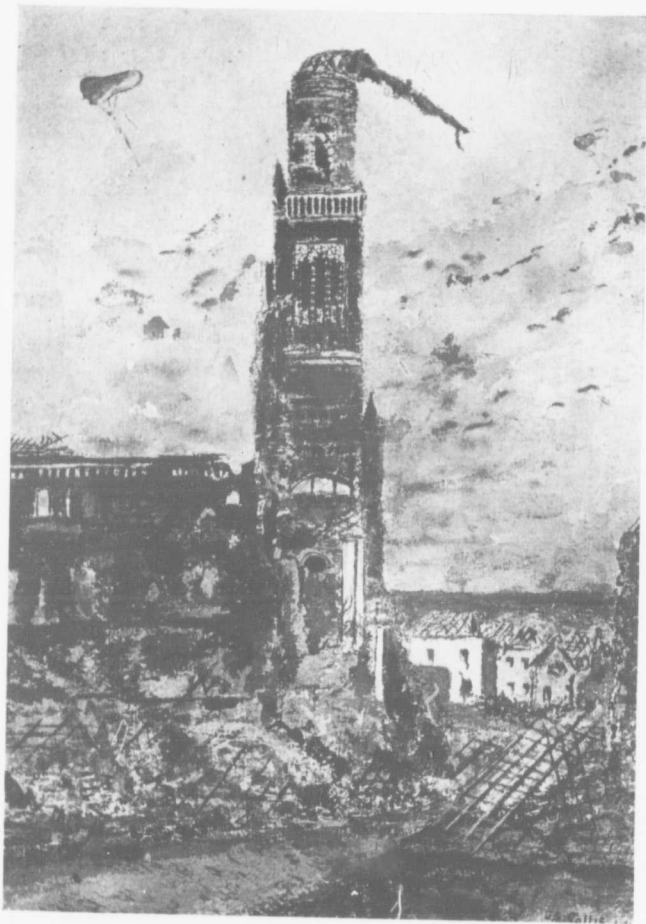
“ I wish to make mention of the fact that our stretcher bearers during the course of these operations behaved throughout in an excellent manner. The conditions were not at all conducive to good work, as the recent heavy rains had made the roads most difficult to traverse, in addition to which there was continuous heavy shellfire. Nevertheless, by marked concentration of thought and energy solely on their duty and work in hand, I am pleased to be able to report that all the wounded were well attended and cleared successfully with as little delay as possible.”

Whilst the casualties amongst the infantry battalions were particularly heavy, the field ambulance was very fortunate in having only six men wounded, one of whom (No. 530072 Pte. G. H. Roy) afterwards died.

Another field ambulance commander of the Third Canadian Division made the supreme sacrifice during the Somme battles, Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, of No. 9 Canadian Field Ambulance being mortally wounded.

Meanwhile, the personnel not engaged in the advanced positions continued to operate the station at Val de Maison, and the depletion of the ambulance by the calls made upon it for workers in the forward positions made it very difficult for the work at Val de Maison to be handled properly. At one time the only officer there

was the officer commanding himself, Lieut.-Col. S. W. Hewetson, and considering the numbers of men who had to be seen personally daily, it can be easily imagined that such a job was no sinecure. However, much can be done under pressure, and somehow the work was handled thoroughly. On October 3rd the personnel at Val de Maison also moved forward, staying at Vadencourt that night, and marching the following morning, in very heavy rain, to the schoolhouse at Albert, which was being used as a main dressing station for stretcher cases. This was operated until October 7th, on which day the ambulance was again ordered to move forward. The enemy, by way of farewell, heavily shelled Albert that day, causing several casualties in the vicinity of the schoolhouse, including the Earl of Rothesay, who was brought in by the ambulance men, suffering from a wound in the head. The move from the schoolhouse was to a large plot of open ground about two miles outside of Albert, designated "the brickfields." This had been converted into a regular tented city, with large marquees for the purpose of handling wounded from the front. The field ambulance was made responsible for the clearing of the walking wounded, and for this purpose one large double marquee was placed at their disposal. During the early morning of October 8th, the attack was renewed, severe fighting taking place for the famous "Regina" Trench. The walking wounded streamed through the marquee from morning until night, but good arrangements had been made for their treatment. They entered first a space separated, where their wounds were dressed, afterwards passing through enclosures where records were made of their case, receiving the usual injection against tetanus, and then passing to the rear end of the marquee specially



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set aside for them to rest in, where refreshments were provided as they waited for transportation to the rear. This was a record day for the number of cases handled, many hundreds being attended during the course of the twenty-four hours, and it is interesting to note that "Ralph Connor" was a willing helper to the field ambulance that day.

Our stretcher bearers returned from the advanced positions, with Capts. J. A. Reid and R. T. Washburn, on October 11th, and on that day the whole of the ambulance moved back to Warloy, where they took over the Canadian Corps rest station and the officers' hospital.

During this time Capt. C. E. Anderson was taken on the strength of the unit, and Capt. R. D. Sanson was transferred to the Corps Ammunition Park.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *THE ANZIN-ARRAS FRONT.*

THE ambulance found at Warloy over 300 patients in the hospital there, and on October 13th orders were issued for all Canadian patients to be moved preparatory to the Imperial divisions coming into the area. Considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining sufficient transportation to convey the patients to the casualty clearing stations in the Gazencourt areas, but subsequently 'buses were obtained, and the hospital cleared by ten o'clock the following morning, October 14th. On that date the ambulance started marching northwards, the march extending until October 23rd, stops being made at Herisart, La Vicogne, Fienvillers, Canteleaux, Liencourt and Tinquette. The ultimate destination was Haute Avesnes, a little village on the Arras side of the main Arras-St. Pol road. From this point a quiet sector was cleared on the Anzin-Arras front, Haute Avesnes being used as a main dressing station, and Anzin-St. Aubin as an advanced dressing station, with collecting posts for the right and left of the front at Madagascar and Ariane, near the Bethune road. Whilst here the ambulance elaborated a system of narrow-gauge railways for the evacuation of sick and wounded, parties working on this by night, and also during the days when the weather was cloudy. This system enabled evacuation to be done by several ways, according to the conditions existing. They could be brought by the narrow-gauge practically direct to the advanced dressing station at Anzin, motor ambulances

could clear at night, or when conditions were too bad for this, evacuation could be made in the ordinary way by a good system of existing trenches, or by wheeled stretchers down the Lille road. The ambulance spent over two months in this area, and with very few exceptions conditions were normal and very quiet. However, on December 20th, 1916, the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles carried out a successful raid of greater magnitude than usual left of the Lille road. Four hundred and twenty men took part in this, whilst east of the road a smaller party of sixty of the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles also went over. For the purpose of deception the men went over with faces blackened. A good artillery bombardment preceded the raid, which, contrary to the usual custom, took place in the daylight, being timed for 3.15 p.m. Very complete preparations had been made by the field ambulance to take care of the resulting casualties, and all the stretcher bearers were in position by one p.m., and the artillery bombardment which was presented to their view as they waited gave them a very pretty and effectual picture. An advanced post was established at the corner of "The Grand Collecteur and Fantoine," and from here the bearers carried stretcher cases back to the collecting posts at the Lille road. This road was passable for motor ambulances at dusk, so that it was possible for the casualties occurring from this raid to be transported by ambulances from the Lille road collecting post to Anzin, and from there to Haute Avesnes. The raid proved very successful, many prisoners were taken, and a number of casualties inflicted on the enemy. The ambulance cleared seventy-two cases of wounded, including nine Germans (one of whom was shot through the head and totally blinded). No casualties occurred to the stretcher bearers,



although they were exposed to the shellfire all the afternoon.

This raid can be marked down in history as a standard of a perfectly organised surprise sortie. Major Gunn was in charge of the ambulance work in the forward area, and also fulfilled the interesting duty of interrogating the German prisoners as they were brought in, victims of the attack. These men belonged to the 51st Infantry Regiment, and stated they had been brought to this part of the line for a "rest." They complained that their food was getting worse, that they had very little meat or butter, and further stated the attack had absolutely found them unprepared.

Nothing further disturbed the quietness of this sector, and the ambulance passed its first Christmas in France in the huts at Haute Avesnes and in the dugouts at the other positions in as good a way as was possible under the circumstances. All the places presented a "Christmassy" appearance. At Haute Avesnes two of the huts were used as hospital wards, and the patients came in for their share of the Christmas cheer. The personnel also had a real Christmas dinner, whilst at the forward posts due proportions of the good things were sent along, thus enabling all to enjoy the day. At Anzin the officers waited on the men in the forward area. Here in a shell-torn stone building, lighted by candles, apertures covered by blankets so that the Hun could not see the lights, the spirit of Christmas reigned supreme, and the warlike conditions failed to dampen the ardour of the occasion, the artillery display from surrounding batteries simply affording sky illuminations as a fitting part of the celebrations. During the dinner at Haute Avesnes, the officer commanding, Lieutenant-Colonel Hewetson, visited

the men and spoke a few words of greeting humorously concluding with "I hope the ambulance will not suffer any casualties to-night." Thus this Christmas of 1916 passed very pleasantly, the gifts from the 8th Field Ambulance Club in Calgary greatly helping in this regard.

Whilst we were in this area there were several changes amongst the officers of the unit. Major E. R. Brown went to the base for duty, Major F. H. Mayhood to the Third Division Engineers, Capt. J. A. Reid was taken sick in England and Capt. R. T. Washburn proceeded to England for duty. These vacancies were filled by:—

Major J. N. Gunn who became second-in-command and in charge of "B" section;

Capt. E. R. Selby,

Capt. W. G. Cosbie,

Capt. J. F. S. Marshall.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *PREPARATIONS.*

THE first few months of 1917 were spent in moving and in general routine. There was very little activity, although it was anticipated, with the opening of spring, the British would probably commence a series of attacks. Meanwhile a little variety and excitement was caused by "drawing for leave." This was rather a difficult matter to decide, for practically all the men had come over together, and it was felt that the only way to give a fair chance to all was to draw names from the hat, the men to proceed accordingly. Lieutenant-Colonel Hewetson and Major Gunn, with representatives present from the men, did the drawing, and the list was, therefore, compiled, to the pleasure of some and to the disappointment of many. Two or three men each week were now proceeding on the ten days' leave to England.

It might also be mentioned that the "Lena Ashwell Concert Party" from London had travelled as far forward as Haute Avesnes, and rendered an excellent concert to the men and patients in the hospital there.

The field ambulance was relieved in the Anzin-Arras sector on January 13th, 1917, on which day they marched to Villers Chattel, and were billeted in the spacious grounds of the chateau there. A stay was made here until January 29th, when a further move took place to Fresnicourt, two sections of the unit staying there, and headquarters and "A" section moving the following day

to Le Vielfort Chateau, situated close to the mining town of Bruay. At this station general training proceeded, and all preparations made for participation in future activities. A party was detailed to Mont St. Eloi, to take care of local sick amongst the troops working in that vicinity on the railways, roads, etc. Thus the winter passed almost without incident. The weather had been rather dull and dreary, with snow and rain, the coldest in twenty years, and it is interesting to note in the official diary for February 25th, 1917, the following summary of weather conditions, printed boldly and underlined—  
“FINE—SUN SHONE.”

Divisional sports had been arranged for the troops whilst in the rest area, and the football team of the 8th Canadian Field Ambulance won some interesting games, eventually being defeated by the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles by two goals to none.

Whilst at Fresnicourt opportunity was taken for the men to continue training and complete equipment, and the result of this can be summarised by quoting the remarks of Col. A. E. Snell, C.M.G., D.S.O., who inspected the men, and stated, “They are the best body of men I have ever inspected,” and congratulated them on their steadiness on parade, and the perfection of their equipment.

On March 5th the personnel at Fresnicourt were ordered to move to City No. 9, near Barlin, where they took over a small temporary hospital. From here a portion of this personnel went forward on March 11th, and took over the advanced dressing station at Neuville St. Vaast and Pont Street in the “Vimy” sector, whilst the headquarters of the unit moved to Les Quatre Vents (the Four Winds), a corner of the main Camblain-L'Abbe

road, from which point preparations were to be made for the great attacks for the famous Vimy Ridge.

During this winter the unit suffered the regrettable loss of the officer commanding, Lieut.-Col. S. W. Hewetson. This officer was taken very ill and evacuated to the base on February 20th, 1917, and word was received on March 11th of his death in England. Colonel Hewetson, in his gentlemanly command of the unit, had endeared himself to all, and his loss was keenly felt.

Major J. N. Gunn then became the acting officer commanding. This officer was the original commander of the "C" section, C.A.M.C. depot, having left Calgary with a draft in April, 1915, and had been serving in France with No. 2 Casualty Clearing Station up to the time he joined the ambulance in November, 1916.

The following other changes amongst the officers also took place:—

Capt. E. R. Selby, promoted to major.

Capt. D. R. Dunlop, taken on strength of unit.

Major H. L. Jackes, taken on strength of unit as second-in-command, and in charge of "B" section.

In the New Year's Honours list No. 530181 Lance-Cpl. L. Bradley was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for general brave work during the battles of June 2nd, 1916, and the Somme, and also for a particular action in carrying to shelter, under heavy machine-gun fire one of the ambulance men who was wounded whilst working at Maple Copse.



OFFICERS, No. 8 CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCE, BEFORE VIMY.

Capt. J. J. Jamieson. Capt. D. McLellan. Capt. F. S. Marshall. Capt. H. G. Chi-holm. Capt. R. Arkey. Capt. C. F. Anderson  
Capt. C. G. Gunn. Major H. L. Jackes. Lt.-Col. J. N. Gunn. Major E. R. Selby. Capt. W. G. Corbie, M.C.

## CHAPTER X.

### *THE TAKING OF VIMY RIDGE.*

"WHAT'S in a name?" Well might the poet ask, and so would we hand down the question to the ages. What is there for Canadians in the name of "Vimy Ridge"? Or is it a useless question, because all are so familiar with what it means? Does it not mean glory? Yes, but it means death. Does it not mean gain? Yes, but it means suffering. It means all these things and much more, and probably the greatest of these is that it means history unrivalled for Canada, marking an epoch which the children of this and future generations shall cherish as a sacred possession handed down to them by those who fought and won on that Easter Monday morning in April, 1917. Stand in imagination for awhile amidst the ruins of Neuville St. Vaast, let your glance run forward along the open country in front, watch the gradual ascent until the summit of the skyline is reached, and see the ridge upon the crest. That is "Vimy Ridge." Is it worth fighting for? A thousand times yes. It has proved a position of untold value to the enemy, and from where he has put into practical expression his feelings and hymn of hate. Walk forward to this little summit, note the huge craters resembling destroyed mines, the innumerable shell holes, and, above all, note the small crosses marking the last resting place of many of those who went forward with a cheer and never stopped until they offered the supreme sacrifice of a soldier. Note, too, the monuments which will stand for ever to the glory of Canada, and

having noted all these things, silently revere the nation which owns you as one of her sons and the great Dominion which claims you as its servant.

Thus, too, can the 8th Canadian Field Ambulance feel a just and worthy pride in the recalling of this wondrous ridge. For here it was that the ambulance was afforded the first opportunity of distinguishing itself as a distinct unit in any big battle. In previous attacks the ambulance had been split up and attached to other units, but for the attacks which led to the taking of Vimy Ridge the ambulance was absolutely responsible for the clearing of the whole of the battlefield of the Third Canadian Division frontage. It was no small honour, for the part the ambulance played not only during the actual fighting, but in many weary months of dreary and dangerous work day and night in the preparation of routes of evacuation, the building of dugouts for dressing stations, etc., culminating in a speedy and complete clearance of the field, all this has placed the field ambulance in the annals of Canadian history in no insignificant measure. Truly, Vimy Ridge and Calgary's own field ambulance are closely associated.

But it is necessary to bother the reader with military details, and in order to give as clear an idea as possible of the general arrangements, the following extracts of orders published and plan of medical arrangements are inserted:—

#### MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS, THIRD CANADIAN DIVISION.

“The front will include the two advanced dressing stations at Pont Street and Neuville St. Vaast and from there forward, and will be divided into two brigade fronts—left and right.

“The bearers of No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance,



headquarters at the advanced dressing station at Pont Street, will be responsible for clearing the regimental aid posts in the left brigade area.

“The bearers of No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance, with headquarters at the advanced dressing station Neuville St. Vaast, will be responsible for clearing the regimental aid posts in the right brigade area.

“The evacuation from the whole of the front area will be in charge of Major J. N. Gunn, acting officer commanding No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance, who will assist in every way the regimental medical officers to equip and stock the regimental aid posts.

“The officer commanding No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance will be responsible for clearing the wounded from the front to the advanced dressing stations.”

It will be seen from the above that the front immediately facing the ridge was divided into left and right brigades. The left was controlled by the Seventh Canadian Infantry Brigade, consisting of the 42nd Canadian Battalion, P.P.C.L.I., and R.C.R., with the 49th Canadian Battalion in reserve, whilst the Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade had charge of the right brigade, the battalions engaged being the 1st, 2nd and 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, with the 5th C.M.R. in support. The medical arrangements for the Seventh Canadian Infantry Brigade on the left were as follows:—

Regimental aid posts at the corner of La Salle Avenue and Quarries Road, and at Machine Gun Fort, wounded from these to be cleared back to the advanced dressing station at Pont Street.

On the right brigade (Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade) regimental aid posts were established in the dugout in Medical Trench and White City Cave,

casualties from these to be cleared back to the advanced dressing station at Neuville St. Vaast, which was an old wine cellar, the only remaining part of what had probably been a substantial residence.

The order that "The evacuation from the whole of the front area will be in charge of Major J. N. Gunn, acting officer commanding No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance," necessitated several weeks of preparatory work. The advanced dressing stations and regimental aid posts had to be put into such a condition that they would be capable of handling efficiently considerable numbers of casualties which naturally arise from "active operations," whilst methods of clearance and routes of evacuation from each of the regimental aid posts to the advanced dressing stations had to be thoroughly arranged and understood to avoid congestion and delay at the critical moment. Thus, as far back as March 11th, 1917, the first advance party of No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance, with Major E. R. Selby in charge, proceeded to the advanced dressing station at Neuville St. Vaast, and immediately commenced the necessary preparatory work. This work consisted chiefly in enlarging and improving each of the different posts and stations in order to find suitable accommodation in each for the handling of stretcher and walking cases. In addition to this, dugouts in the Roy Trench adjoining the advanced dressing station at Neuville St. Vaast, Nos. C5, C6 and C7, which had been adopted as quarters for the personnel, were cleaned and improved and made habitable for the maximum number. This work was pushed forward with all possible speed, and by the end of March was well on towards completion, what little remained being finished in the first days of April, 1917.

On one occasion, in making the rounds of the advanced posts, Major J. N. Gunn had a very narrow escape; a shell breaking overhead drove a piece of shrapnel through his steel helmet.

Whilst this work was proceeding, the headquarters of the unit at Les Quatre Vents were also the scene of much preparation. Here the question of keeping all the advanced stations and posts well stocked with rations and medical supplies was the chief consideration. Lists of possible requirements were prepared, stocks on hand inventoried, requisitions made for their increase where necessary, with the result that by the 8th of April, 1917, it could be assuredly stated that all the forward posts had been supplied with necessities to meet medical demands.

It was arranged for 100 stretcher bearers from the infantry brigades to be placed at the disposal of the field ambulance, to be stationed at the Machine Gun Fort and the White City Cave. These men were to be split up into parties of twenty-five, to be accompanied by one experienced field ambulance man, to assist and supervise the work as they went forward with the attack. These parties would be responsible for carrying wounded back to the respective regimental aid posts, from which points the field ambulance stretcher bearers would clear them to the advanced dressing stations. On the left brigade front patients would be carried to the advanced dressing stations at Pont Street, but a system of narrow-gauge railways, leading from Neuville St. Vaast up to the right of the front would, if these railways were still intact, enable casualties from that part to be transported on trucks to Neuville St. Vaast.

On the night of April 6th, final supplies were sent

forward ready for the attack, and the completion of the personnel also proceeded to the dressing station in Neuville St. Vaast, from which the medical operations were to be administered. The men made the journey from Les Quatre Vents to Neuville St. Vaast by horse ambulances, and it was, indeed, a long and dreary one. It rained heavily all the way, the night was pitch black, and the roads heavily congested with traffic taking the necessary supplies forward for the attack. There were many stoppages, and after being on the way for nearly five hours, the men decided to walk the rest of the way from a road leading to Aux Rietz and thence by means of the trenches to the advanced dressing station at Neuville St. Vaast. It was a weird night; the roads were in a bad state, with pools of water in some parts, and traffic blocking most of the way, and it was like walking in a city of death until the roar of guns and the artillery flashes of fire would illumine the darkness, and still and silent figures would be seen behind any kind of protection, sheltering both from the rain and the enemy shells as they exploded all around. At 11.45 p.m. the ambulance party reached the cellar at Neuville St. Vaast, and were immediately ordered to "bed" in the dugouts provided in order that as much sleep as possible might be obtained.

The two following days were spent in completing all arrangements, the regimental aid posts on either side were stocked with supplies, these being sent forward by trucks on the narrow-gauge railway under considerable difficulty, as the enemy was continually shelling the track. On one occasion at least a shell had demolished a portion of it immediately ahead of one of the medical supply trucks, causing the supplies to be unloaded there on the spot and carried the rest of the way into the regimental

aid post dugout. The whole of the front from Neuville St. Vaast forward to the front line facing the ridge was gone over by a party of ambulance officers and men, who carried directing signs with them for walking wounded. These were placed in advantageous places directing the best way for any man who was wounded, but able to walk, to proceed to the dressing stations. Nothing was left to chance, the merest details receiving full attention.

By 10 p.m. of April 8th all arrangements were complete, each post was manned with the necessary personnel, with good supplies of stretchers, blankets, bandages, splints, etc., whilst at Neuville St. Vaast there were held in reserve both men and supplies to be sent forward if necessity arose. A complete chain of connection was established between each post. The then "Major" J. N. Gunn established his headquarters in the cellar at Neuville St. Vaast, Major E. R. Selby was in charge of the working of the left front, and Major H. L. Jackes of the right, these officers keeping in constant touch with the officer commanding at Neuville St. Vaast, whilst the No. 4 man on every stretcher squad, as he came in with cases, also reported to the O.C. for any instructions or alterations in the method. Then at "Fort George," a short distance across country from Neuville St. Vaast, the divisional medical staff officers, Colonel Snell, C.M.G., D.S.O., and Major Gorssline, D.S.O., established their headquarters, and by means of "runners" on duty day and night, the officer commanding the ambulance kept in constant communication both with them and the parties scattered around the different parts of the front.

It is hard to imagine anything more perfect than the arrangements on this occasion. As one left the main

part of the cellar, which was really the "dressing station" in Neuville St. Vaast, and passed along the passage or small tunnel leading from it and turned off into one of the small and dark apertures, one would fancy he had entered a council of war chamber, for here the O.C. would be found, surrounded by documents, in front of him a full map of the front, with small flags marking the exact position of the troops and the ambulance men. Each slight advance or change in positions was duly noted, so that at almost any time full report could be given as to the exact circumstances at any position, and necessary action taken in accord with the particular requirements. Indeed, all these arrangements led up, as will be seen later, to the satisfaction gained from the knowledge that the "wounded" were cleared from the battlefield almost as soon as they fell.

The actual date and time of the attack on the ridge had been kept a secret, but it was generally understood to be on Easter Monday morning, April 9th, 1917. Meanwhile, the days preceding this had been fairly active. There had been rather heavy exchanges of artillery fire, and quite a few casualties had been passing through Neuville St. Vaast.

One could scarcely imagine a more dreary prospect than to stand (providing "Fritz" was willing) amidst the ruins of the village of Neuville St. Vaast, where not a house remained, looking across country towards the important position of Vimy Ridge, with not a sign of life in sight, for neither man nor beast dare show himself between Neuville St. Vaast and the ridge in those days when the Canadians stood waiting in their wet and muddy trenches for the signal which should send them forward conquerors of a great strategic position.



MONT ST. ELOI—April 9th, 1917.

Looking back upon many incidents of the war, one is led to wonder how it was possible to accomplish many of the things that were undertaken. Certainly man proved his ingenuity and adaptability (somebody has truly said that man and horse are the two most adaptable creatures on earth), and yet as a picture of the old cellar in Neuville St. Vaast is presented to the view, the main part itself not much bigger than an ordinary living room, it is almost impossible to imagine how hundreds of casualties lying on stretchers, or walking along, received the necessary attention, and were passed through on their way to the rear of the lines on that memorable Easter Monday. Certainly every inch of space was utilised. The right side of it was reserved for stretcher cases, with one or two racks for any cases it might be necessary to hold, whilst the left side was arranged into compartments; first, the "dispensary," next, a table for any necessary clerical work, and then a few seats judiciously placed for walking cases. Immediately at the entrance to the cellar the kitchen was kept going day and night, and it is safe to say the sergeant cook, Sergt. J. Nash, of the 8th Canadian Field Ambulance, will long remember those days when he fed not only the wounded men and the members of the ambulance, but practically men of every battalion in that area, as they passed along and stopped at his kitchen to beg a drink or a bite to eat. It is not necessary to say "none were turned away."

But the great day arrived. It was Easter Monday morning. Over the sea in England and Canada, during this auspicious week-end, people's minds and thoughts had been turned to that first Easter day, to the ignominious death and to the glorious resurrection. And over here in France, what had been the trend of thought?



Well, maybe few ever thought, or if so, only casually, that this—even this—was “Easter,” and yet who shall say that there was no connection between the “home land” spirit and the approaching activities in this historic war zone? For around Vimy was not the spirit of Easter exemplified, and lives offered freely in sacrifice—for what? It may be for an individual resurrection—it is not our purpose to theorise on that—but this we know, it was for the bringing in of that better day, when the great powers of might and evil should be scattered, and peace and right should receive their life once more.

At 5.30 a.m. the bombardment prior to the attack of the troops commenced. This artillery display has been described as “beautiful,” being a military term to mean that it was so intense and concentrated so accurately as to demoralise the enemy at once, by making his trenches and lines uninhabitable. The time of all units in the area was synchronised, so that there might not be the slightest hitch in arrangements, and at the hour set about one thousand guns opened fire as if discharged by one electric spark, like thousands of monster giant fire-crackers, making the surrounding sky one solid sheet of flame. More guns and more ammunition were concentrated on the Canadian front on this occasion than had ever been known before on a similar frontage. Unfortunately, one of the first casualties the ambulance handled was one of its own sergeants. No. 530113 Sergt. W. E. C. Dixon was proceeding from the dugout adjoining the dressing station at Neuville St. Vaast, when he was hit in the neck by a stray bullet or piece of shell, and though he was attended to promptly and evacuated to the casualty clearing station, he died three days later. The stretcher bearers were soon at work immediately the

infantry "rushed" over, and from both the left and the right sides they carried back their wounded, from some points right across the open country to the advanced dressing stations, whilst at others the narrow-gauge railway was used, although at points this had been blown up early in the morning by the enemy counterfire, and rendered useless. From 6.45 a.m. until three o'clock in the afternoon, the stretcher bearers worked incessantly, and there was a continual rush of wounded, both stretcher cases and walking. At three o'clock everything quietened down considerably, but towards eight o'clock at night there was another slight rush consequent on the maintained advance, and this continued until after midnight.

It was not long after the attack that the German prisoners came streaming towards the dressing stations, and good use was made of them by the field ambulance, who put them to work loading stretcher cases on to the waiting trucks, and later, as there was a shortage of the latter, carrying cases down the main road to the Aux Rietz corner, which was the collecting post for the motor ambulance cars clearing to the rear. The work at the advanced dressing station proceeded satisfactorily. As the cases arrived by trucks on the narrow-gauge railway, across country or down the main road, they were met by an N.C.O. and staff stationed outside, who arranged them according to urgency and prevented any congestion inside the station. This was kept full, and as each case (stretcher or sitting) was finished, word would be passed along to the outside, and another sent in to fill the vacancy created. There was no careless rushing in order to keep up with the increasing numbers of wounded, but the care of the patient was the greatest consideration,

splints were well padded, and everything possible done to minister to the comfort of the wounded man. Hot drinks were ready to hand and freely supplied, all confusion was avoided, each man knew his work and position and kept solely to that, and the whole proceedings were conspicuous for order and regularity. One feature of the day's casualties was the number of cases suffering from fracture of the femur—possibly the most troublesome injury to attend to on the field—and it was remarkable how speedily and efficiently these received the utmost first-aid in the application of the usual splint specially prepared for such cases. Naturally there were a few difficulties, the chief of these being a shortage of stretchers, as urgent requests for these were received in the afternoon from the regimental aid posts, and it was found that what had been considered an ample stock was fast dwindling. On inquiry it was discovered that the method of interchange, that is one stretcher being brought back on delivering each patient had not been adopted to the full, this probably being due to the lack of understanding on the part of the German prisoners of war. The situation seemed likely to become serious at one time, and many improvisations were made to overcome the temporary difficulty. Sheets of corrugated iron, padded with blankets, were utilised, also captured German stretchers, and 2 x 4 planks fixed securely with canvas made admirable substitutes, whilst Capt. D. McLellan, of the field ambulance, placed in use his own bedroll rather than delay evacuation of his patients from the forward posts.

The attack progressed satisfactorily, the final objectives being speedily taken. Regimental aid posts pushed forward, and made new locations in the German trenches,

on the right in the Zwischen Stellung Trench, opposite Ia Folie Wood, near the junction of Prinz Arnolf Graben, and on the left in Biggar Trench, east of Durand Crater, which was about 600 yards beyond the original front line. As these new posts were taken over officers from Neuville St. Vaast were sent forward to keep them supplied with all necessities, and particularly to see that their wounded were kept cleared.

It was realised that it was of vital importance for the field ambulance stretcher bearers to be within reach of the new advanced regimental aid posts during the night time, and with this in view, at eight p.m. a party of twenty-four stretcher bearers went forward under guides who had previously made the trip in the daylight. This party went forward over the land from which the enemy had that day been driven to locate the trenches and dug-outs in which the medical officers had established themselves. On their way they discovered isolated cases of wounded, which they sent back to the advanced dressing stations, and proceeding forward, they also cleared back the cases waiting in the aid posts. Not content with this, and in view of the report that had been received, the stretcher bearers went right on forward to the front of the new front line, No Man's Land, searching in the weird darkness the land, shell holes, and craters thoroughly, and though they discovered a few cases, there was no such number as had been reported. Before they definitely reported the posts and actual field of battle clear of casualties they made three such successive trips to this new front, and amidst the strange conditions and the heavy enemy shelling, once more made history for the men who wear the Red Cross, for such journeys can only be imagined, they cannot be described.

It is estimated that on that Easter Monday morning the field ambulance passed through its hands over 2,000 wounded, many of whom were stretcher cases. There were, of course, several German prisoners amongst these, some of whom volunteered the information that they gave up easily and had no reserves to come back, whilst one unwounded had a sad tale to tell. He was from Boston, U.S.A., and had gone over to Germany in July, 1914, to bring back his wife, who had been there on a holiday. He was, of course, called up for service, and now sadly said, "Let me get back over on the other side once again, and you will never see me on this continent any more."

The cheerfulness of our own troops and their general optimism was noteworthy. All were delighted at the success of their ventures. One wounded man laughingly remarked, "I wouldn't have missed this morning for anything," whilst another cursed his luck for having been wounded just as he was beginning to enjoy it, having had the pleasure of reaching a German gun, which he was turning round to use against them when he was hit.

Many of the ambulance stretcher bearers worked continuously for forty-eight hours. The heavy roads and the new districts, combined with the fact that this was their first experience in a sustained advance, made their work particularly arduous. Indeed, it was pitiful, as backwards and forwards they went, facing all the dangers and difficulties of the day, working until nearly exhausted, yet, although their extreme fatigue was evident, they were ever anxious to continue as long as there was the slightest possibility of a casualty which had not been "brought in." The weather, after promising fine on that Easter Monday morning, changed distinctly, turning cold and cloudy, with heavy falls of snow at night.

But, what mattered any conditions, or any suffering and inconvenience to those Canadian soldiers on that day? Was not the "Ridge" taken, and the Germans sent farther and farther back in a hurried retreat? Yes, what had seemed almost invulnerable had fallen to the fierce artillery display and to the undismayed attack of the infantry. This fact was made more obvious as one looked out the following morning across that well-known open country, where previously no movement could be seen, and found it now alive with horses and troops. Going still farther forward, until the crest of the ridge was reached, and then reversing the view, one could appreciate the importance of the position, as the shell-wrecked towns of Neuville St. Vaast, Mont St. Eloi, and even Camblain L'Abbe were plainly visible from this vantage ground. No wonder that whole district had been a veritable death-trap so long as the Hun held the ridge.

As soon as daylight permitted on the following morning (April 10th) the field ambulance sent over the ground another party, under Captain Cosbie, M.C., to get in touch again with the medical officers who had advanced with the infantry. This party found these medical officers in "dressing stations," which would better be called just "holes in the ground," down which it was almost necessary to slide or crawl in order to effect an entrance. The shell holes and craters were again searched twice in the daylight, but each time the report came back, "No wounded discovered, satisfied all clear." Surely that was sufficient testimony to the efforts of the tired men who went repeatedly forward the previous night. The shelling was now being scattered back to the vicinity of the dressing station in Neuville St. Vaast. Indeed, some of

the cooking utensils outside the "kitchen" were rendered useless, but, fortunately, the ambulance casualties remained very slight.

On the afternoon of April 10th, relief came to some of the men of the "8th," a very welcome party from the 9th Canadian Field Ambulance arriving to relieve some of the men in the forward posts, enabling them to get an absolutely necessary rest after their hard work of the previous day. It was expected that further attacks would now take place for the towns of Petit Vimy and Vimy itself, and preparations were speedily set in motion for this. Ultimately, however, it was discovered that the enemy had evacuated these places, and only at the town of Vimy was he encountered, where he offered a little resistance covering the retreat, and caused a few casualties. Through these towns a party in charge of Major Jackes went, chiefly for the purpose of obtaining samples of the water from the German wells. From the initial test of these most of the waters gave a yellow reaction, and, for precautionary measures, were labelled "Poisonous. Unfit for drinking," until a complete analysis could be made at a laboratory.

The Ninth Canadian Infantry Brigade (43rd, 52nd, 58th and 60th Canadian Battalions) had now relieved the other battalions, and it had become absolutely necessary, on account of the distance between the regimental aid posts and the dressing station at Neuville St. Vaast, to open a new advanced dressing station. A good dressing station was discovered, which had, until recently, been used by the Germans at Bois de Bonval, at a corner of the Lens-Arras Road, overlooking the town of Vimy. Personnel was, therefore, stationed here, and instructions received for the place at Neuville St. Vaast to be turned

into a main dressing station. Conditions were now quieter, with our troops consolidating in their new positions, although artillery fire continued with more or less severity, and there were the usual number of daily casualties. The ambulance headquarters moved up to Neuville St. Vaast, with all its transport, etc., and the main dressing station there opened at 5.15 p.m. on April 14th, 1917.



## CHAPTER XI.

### *AFTER VIMY.*

THE ambulance continued operations in the Vimy sector until May 6th. Ambulance cars were now stationed at Neuville St. Vaast, and clearance was effected from the new advanced dressing station in Bois de Bonval to the main dressing station at Neuville St. Vaast, from where the cars cleared direct to the casualty clearing stations. Immediately after the taking of the ridge, to convert Neuville St. Vaast into a main dressing station, marquees were erected in the open ground adjoining the cellar, the intention being to use these for a main dressing station. Possibly this was a little premature, for though the enemy had been driven back from important positions, he naturally endeavoured to disorganise all means of communication. Therefore, immediately after the erecting of the marquees, the vicinity was subjected to his continual shellfire, and it was found impossible to use them, so that the work had to be continued in the confined space of the cellar. Indeed, during the days immediately following the taking of the ridge, the whole area was alive with artillery activity, and the close proximity of our own guns to the dressing station made it a dangerous spot for the remainder of the stay in this sector. The whole area from the advanced dressing station at Bois de Bonval back to Neuville St. Vaast and Aux Rietz was always under heavy shellfire, and particularly at night, when supplies were going forward, were these roads concentrated upon. Capt. C. F. Anderson

had a very trying time on this occasion, and his dressing station was crumpled in by shellfire and the embankment surrounding it demolished. There was also much bombing, the enemy planes flying low overhead, scouring the whole area and certainly dropping bombs to the best advantage. This made the work of the stretcher bearers particularly hard and nerve-racking. Imagine if you can a road such as this narrow country street leading from Neuville St. Vaast to the front of Vimy; the sun has set and the darkness of night approaches, making a possibility of safe transportation to the front line, and the long procession moves slowly forward, carrying ammunition, rations, and all the appurtenances of warfare. What a slow journey it is. Will it ever end? Will those mule drivers, those gunners, "get through"? But straight on they go, intent on "getting there." At the side of them the British artillery is flashing away, while, as if answering to this death-dealing salutation, the hiss of the enemy shells is heard in reply, and somewhere overhead (it may be a mile away, but to all who hear it seems it must be right over them) is heard the well-known "whirr" which denotes a German aeroplane, scouting and searching for the road, which, if once found, is swept with bombs and even machine-gun fire, causing consternation and confusion as the long, almost never-ending procession is disorganised by this death-dealing visitor of the night. And amidst all this, the cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, the shouts and urgings of the men who must get to the journey's end, the field ambulance stretcher bearers must needs pass with their precious burdens from the advanced stations. What an experience to be sure, night after night, hour after hour, they themselves, with their heavy loads, escaping time

and again miraculously from shell and bomb, whilst on every hand their assistance is still further sought! It is through such scenes as this that the system of trench warfare continued, and it is through such experiences that the field ambulance men day and night "carried on" until absolute exhaustion brought them rest. On one such occasion as the stretcher bearers were returning to Neuville St. Vaast with cases, there being more wounded on the road from these night raids and shelling, a young Scotchman from the British infantry was called upon to help carry a wounded man down the road. He came staggering into the cellar at Neuville St. Vaast, tightly gripping his end of the stretcher, and placing it down, with the perspiration running from his face, he exclaimed, "Eh, I wouldna have yon job for anything. I wanted to drop it and run, and I couldna."

The dressing station at Bois de Bonval was subject to very heavy shelling, and one of the ambulance men (No. 530188 Pte. C. Clark) was killed instantly by a shell exploding right in front of him as he was returning from the kitchen there. This dressing station ultimately became untenable, and its location was moved to the left of Petit Vimy.

On May 6th, 1917, the ambulance pulled back to Villers-au-Bois, some of the men at that time having been in the forward positions in the Vimy sector for more than forty days. It is not surprising, therefore, that as they came back to Villers-au-Bois for rest a feeling akin to schoolboys taking a holiday prevailed. It meant a change to almost the maximum of comfort on active service. Barns, huts or tents, became equal to palatial hotels by comparison with recent experiences, whilst regular meals, with the minimum of time for duty and

the maximum for pleasure and athletics, accomplished the great object of all rest periods by keeping the men fit and fresh, ready for future activities. A pleasant stay was, therefore, enjoyed here, although in addition to caring for the sick amongst the troops in that reserve area, working parties were also detailed to La Chaudiere in the Vimy area. Also at Villers-au-Bois Major J. N. Gunn operated an eye clinic for the Third Canadian Division, and was kept extremely busy with this important work. Previously this had been done outside the area, causing a considerable wastage in man power to the division, so that, by opening this clinic at Villers-au-Bois, a considerable number of men were treated and fitted for glasses whilst still with their units, who otherwise would have been lost to their battalions for an indefinite period.

The work of the Y.M.C.A. cannot be too highly praised, for while in this area everything was provided by this excellent organisation to minister to the social side of the men's life. The grounds at Villers-au-Bois reminded one of a huge fair, with cinema shows, concerts, and everything imaginable in the way of sports, including football, baseball, lacrosse, and even excellent tennis courts. In considering the value of the work of this much-discussed association, one has only to ask, "What would conditions in France have been without the variety of attractions they provided?"

Whilst at Villers-au-Bois, opportunity was taken to arrange for the erection of a headstone at the grave of the late Lieut.-Col. S. W. Hewetson, who was buried in Scotland, all the men willingly subscribing to this.

Capt. J. H. Jones, from the Eighth Army Brigade, C.F.A., was attached to the unit during this period.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *THE SUMMER OF 1917.*

TOWARDS the end of June, 1917, the Third Canadian Division extended its front along the Vimy sector, taking over the portion previously held by the Fourth Canadian Division. In accordance with this, the 8th Canadian Field Ambulance moved on July 2nd to Grand Servins to a site well fitted with huts and good adjoining grounds suitable for a forward rest hospital or a main dressing station. Through this station all the casualties from the front passed, and were here sorted out, and either sent on to the casualty clearing stations or held for treatment in the area. The officer commanding (Major J. N. Gunn) also continued to hold the eye clinic here, men from the whole of the Canadian Corps, including members of British units, attending daily in large numbers. This, although at safe distance from the danger zone, was an exceedingly busy place as, in addition to casualties from the front, the ambulance also attended to all sick amongst the numerous troops billeted in this particular area, and approximately from 100 to 125 were actually admitted daily in addition to those merely receiving treatment and returning to duty. During all this time one section of the unit was also working at the advanced posts under No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance, who were then clearing the front. This section worked from the advanced dressing station at La Chaudiere, from where they manned two regimental aid posts at and near Bois de la Chaudiere under the Lens-Arras road, clearing the

wounded from these posts back to the advanced dressing station. The work at this time was normal and steady, with the exception of the night of July 23rd-24th, when the 116th Canadian Battalion made a big raid on the German positions. This raid was very successful, although numerous casualties occurred, and the stretcher bearers found it necessary to go forward into the advanced new position with the medical officer of the 116th Canadian Battalion in order to cope with the casualties as the raid proceeded. They remained in the advanced position for twelve hours, at the expiration of which they had cleared all the wounded, and the following copy of a letter afterwards received by the ambulance from the medical officer of the battalion (Capt. J. Moore) speaks for itself:—

“I desire to express the appreciation of the officers and men of the 116th Canadian Battalion for the splendid support given to us in the evacuation of the wounded of this unit during the raid on the night of July 23rd-24th by the staff and personnel of the 8th Field Ambulance. To Captain Marshall, N.C.O.'s and men, we extend our warmest congratulations for the prompt and untiring efforts, continued until the last man was taken from the advanced regimental aid post, which was shelled heavily for the last hour of our work, and it was owing to them that myself and staff were able to get away safely.”

On July 25th, the whole of the Third Canadian Division went into rest areas, and the ambulance withdrew, two sections to Estree Cauchie, and one section to Les Quatre Vents. At both of these places the sick of the surrounding troops were attended to, and at

Estree Cauchie all patients suffering from any skin disease were held there and specially treated.

Taking advantage of the rest period, the ambulance, as far as opportunities allowed, organised social and recreative events, a small orchestra was formed, consisting of piano, violins, clarinet, trombone, cornet and drum, these instruments having been presented to the unit by the officer commanding, Lieut.-Col. J. N. Gunn, and the members of this "active service orchestra" gave welcome music on several occasions. During this time also divisional sports were undertaken, and the ambulance was represented in the baseball and football games, making considerable headway, although not actually coming out final winners. Thus this diversion proved very beneficial and necessary. It created much-needed variety for the men when out of the line, and enabled all to look upon everything with greater optimism as the activities of the future presented themselves.

On July 11th, whilst the ambulance was at Grand Servins, His Majesty King George the Fifth passed the site there, and the men paraded as he went by.

In the rest area at this time the Ninth Canadian Infantry Brigade conducted manœuvre exercises, and the ambulance moved with them for two days on August 10th and 11th, 1917, establishing stations contingent with the manœuvres.

During this time Major J. N. Gunn, who had been commanding the field ambulance since February, 1917, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel whilst in command of a field ambulance.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *LOOS.*

WHILST the Third Canadian Division had been enjoying a much-needed rest for a short time, as described in the preceding chapter, the First Division had been conducting very important operations in the region of Loos and Hill 70. These operations were very successful, but gas was used profusely by both the enemy and ourselves, resulting in very heavy casualties in the First Division from this German-introduced weapon of modern war. The Third Division was, therefore, called to relieve the First in the Loos sector, and the 8th Ambulance was ordered into the line to take over the clearing of the battlefield in the left sector of the Loos area from the First Division field ambulances. At five o'clock on the morning of August 20th, 1917, the otherwise peaceful village of Estree Cauchie was alive with field ambulance men preparing once more to "go forward." This move took a considerable portion of that day to complete, as the ambulance had no less than twelve separate posts and stations to man on this particular occasion. Starting with the regimental aid post at Toch Keep, and three others at the Chalk Pits adjoining the trenches in front of Loos, the ambulance men worked back to advanced dressing stations at Fort Glatz and St. Patrick's, via two relay posts, and from the advanced dressing stations ambulance cars cleared back to the mining town of Noeux les Mines, where, in addition to the main dressing station in the schoolhouse there, a small hospital was opened in



the Marie. Dressing stations were also established in Les Brebis and Maroc to take care of sick amongst the troops waiting to take their turn in the line. At times a field ambulance could do with double its established number of men, and it will be readily seen that this was one of these occasions. How often have lists been compiled for the O.C. to show in actual detail how men were to be disposed of for duty, and to endeavour to find out if even one could be "placed" to better advantage in order to fully protect all positions for which the ambulance was responsible. The sergeant-major certainly had no sinecure, and it is no wonder that he could usually tell on the instant, and without reference, where any particular man was and what he was doing. However, by a judicious placing of all the men, the ambulance again completed the maintenance of each of these posts in the Loos area, and by six p.m. on the night of August 20th, the relief was finished. That night was a very busy one, and well on until the hours of the following morning casualties were being brought in by the bearers and conveyed back to Noeux les Mines. The activities had subsided to some extent, but hundreds of gas cases had to be handled, and excellent arrangements were made at Noeux les Mines for the treatment of these. The Germans had been using their famous "mustard" gas as a means of defence against the successful attacks of the First Division, and this had had very bad effect upon our troops. Possibly its worst result was upon the eyes of those whom it had reached, causing temporary blindness in addition to bad blistering of all parts of the body. Immediately these cases came in to the main dressing station at Noeux les Mines they were taken to a special room prepared solely for them. Here every

particle of clothing was removed, and a special prescribed treatment of bicarbonate of soda applied profusely to the eyes and body. This gave almost instant relief to the terrible pain and irritation, and was a very efficacious remedy for this hideous result of warfare. In addition to this treatment, an arrangement for the administration of oxygen had been prepared, and this was used on those urgently in need of air. If there was any consolation to our men suffering from this gas retaliation, it was the fact that German troops had also suffered likewise, and on the first night of the ambulance work in this area many of the enemy were brought in badly "gassed." It was a difficult matter to rescue these, as they were lying out well in front of our lines, and the Germans kept up a continual bombardment of the positions, making it almost impossible for the bearers to reach them. However, during the darkness of the night, the ambulance men brought them all in, and, in accordance with the great principle of the medical services, the foe received like treatment to our own men. The writer of these particular notes has good cause to remember that first night in the Loos area, the wretched state of these gas casualties, the intense suffering caused, and the whines of one German still rings in the ear, as he gasped, "Water, kamerad, water," and, being given drink, offered, as a mark of appreciation, his gas mask, saying, "Souvenir." Evidently this bulky mask of the Germans was more useful as a souvenir than a good protection against the gas.

No further attacks took place, but the Third Division consolidated and held the positions so hardly won by the divisions they had relieved, which was done under the continual heavy bombardment of the enemy. Indeed, artillery bombardment in this sector on both sides was

very intense, and one of our own batteries, *viz.*, the 36th Battery of the Ninth Artillery Brigade, suffered very heavily from the gas retaliation of the enemy, nearly all the gun crews being practically incapacitated in this particular battery.

The ambulance had a busy time with the sick and the wounded from the large area which they covered, and their work was not made any easier by the fact that on the second day of their stay in this area the Canadian corps rest station, which had been used to receive all sick and minor wounds, was reported as full and unable to receive any more cases. This necessitated a great number being held in the hospital in the Marie in Noeux les Mines, so that, with the clearing of the field, the establishing of dressing stations for sick in the support area, the running of the main dressing station and the hospital in Noeux les Mines, every single man was kept constantly busy, and the administration of the ambulance was again well tested. The tour of duty on this occasion was a short one, lasting only until August 26th. At that time the casualties had begun to decrease as the artillery exchanges lessened to some extent. It is noted that the official diary under date of August 24th, 1917, reads: "Day fairly quiet with decreasing number of casualties arriving at main dressing station," a condition which prevailed from then until the time the ambulance moved out.

On August 25th, 1917, the A.D.M.S. (Assistant-Director of Medical Services) of the Sixth British Division was conducted over the forward posts in the early hours of the morning, prior to that division taking over from the Canadians. On August 26th the Sixth British

Division went into the line, and the 16th British Field Ambulance took over the posts held by the ambulance.

The field ambulance personnel, on being relieved, congregated at Fosse 10, a short distance to the left of Noeux les Mines, where a small hospital was opened for men suffering from accidental injuries, such cases being kept until enquiries had been completed. As was usual, when the men were out of the line for a short time, opportunity was taken for such necessities as frequent bath parades, route marches, and gas drill, etc., all with the idea of keeping the men fit and prepared for future activities. The vicinity of Fosse 10 was really one big medical centre, the main dressing station for the left of Loos being established here in the large schoolhouse, and, situated in a typical French mining village, the surroundings were certainly very pleasant. However, as the soldiers have often remarked, "Fritz was always trying to take the joy out of life," and a coal mine in the vicinity attracting the attention of the enemy, the village was daily subjected to a little hostile shelling, which commenced shortly after the arrival of the ambulance. The chief damage appeared to be to the houses of the poor French villagers, more than one being completely demolished, and the ambulance official notes for September 2nd, 1917, read, "The enemy shelled Fosse 10 during the day—one baby girl killed." The last sentence speaks for itself, and is another example of the frightfulness practised by the enemy amongst these poor people, who knew no means of retaliation, but who could only wait and endure.

Meanwhile, the proverbial "working party" was called for from the field ambulance, this time to proceed

to the next village of Fosse 11, there to erect a barrier in front of the main dressing station in that place. A large party was on duty here constantly during the whole of the stay in that area. This barrier consisted of a barricade 90 ft. by 8 ft. by 12 ft., all sandbagged and filled, and carried by hand, which was an enormous undertaking. The field ambulance stayed in that district until September 4th, 1917, but before proceeding with the next move, it is desired to mention the following personal items:—

On August 13th, 1917, the members of the unit who were entitled to do so, voted for soldiers' representatives in the Alberta provincial election. The ballot was secret, and carried out with all the rules and regulations of a peace-time election. The officer commanding (Lieut.-Col. J. N. Gunn) acted as deputy returning officer, the polling booth being a marquee, which had been erected on our camping ground at Estree Cauchie, and which proved excellent accommodation for this particular purpose. Great interest was taken by all the Alberta men, and, with very few exceptions, each man recorded his vote in a real "good-citizenship" manner.

The eye clinic for the Third Canadian Division continued to be operated at Grand Servins, and Lieut.-Col. Gunn attended at that place twice weekly for the purpose of looking after the men of the Third Canadian Division who needed special eye or ear treatment.

The Canadian corps eye clinic was organised by Lieut.-Col. J. N. Gunn, D.S.O., and he was assisted by Lieutenant-Colonel Bell, D.S.O. In ten weeks these two officers handled 1,100 eye cases. Previously it had been necessary to send such cases a distance of forty-five miles

in ambulance cars, and they were necessarily lost to their units for any length of time from two days to a week, and it can, therefore, be readily understood that the new eye clinic prevented a great wastage in men to the units in the line.

Capt. J. H. Jones, who had been on temporary duty with No. 49 Casualty Clearing Station, near Poperinghe, was now permanently struck off the strength of the field ambulance. This officer was seriously wounded in the back whilst on duty at the casualty clearing station during an enemy air raid in that hospital area, he, with many others, being badly wounded on that occasion. This officer was only a short time with the unit, but had made himself very popular by his genial disposition both in and out of the line.

Major H. L. Jackes, C.A.M.C., who had been acting as second-in-command of the unit, now left to proceed to England for duty. This officer had proven very popular, particularly with the men of his own section, "B," and, as he had always been a leader in providing sports for the men where possible, and was himself an active participant, his departure was generally regretted.

These changes amongst the officers are indicative of the constant changes throughout the unit, which was fast losing its identity so far as the men who went from Calgary with it were concerned.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *BACK TO THE VIMY SECTOR.*

THERE are certain places in France and Belgium which the Canadians can rightly claim as their own. Ypres and the region of Hill 60 was one of these, for here the boys from the land of the maple leaf fought and suffered and withstood fierce and indescribable onslaughts when our army was still only in its preparatory stage. Vimy is another of these, for here our men had that great joy of battle in beholding an enemy fleeing almost helter-skelter in front of our victorious attacks. Therefore, when the ambulance was ordered back to this sector on September 4th, 1917, it was a return to a place where almost every nook and corner was familiar, and where vantage points in every sense were fully understood. The system of evacuation was found to be much the same as when the ambulance men left the sector in May, although naturally some of the forward posts had changed slightly. The unit established its headquarters at Villers-au-Bois, with the main dressing station in the same old cellar at Neuville St. Vaast, while advanced dressing stations were taken over at La Chaudiere and at Vimy, with another dressing station at Aux Rietz below Neuville St. Vaast, and an ambulance post at Bois Carre. The line was taken over in fine sunny weather, but immediately upon entering the sector misfortunes befell the Canadian troops, for the enemy caught the Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade severely with his gas, causing a great number of casualties. Indeed, the main dressing station at Neuville

St. Vaast for a day or two almost reminded one of the occasion when Vimy Ridge was taken. Some of the battalions on this later occasion were greatly depleted. In a few cases not an officer remained on duty, and, in one particular instance, at least, the padre was forced to become temporary officer commanding. It was the mustard gas which had been used in the Loos area which did the damage, causing the same symptoms of distress to the eyes and body, and in a great many cases two or three days elapsed before the irritation and pain exposed themselves. This was an unlooked-for occurrence, as it was expected the ambulance would simply have to "hold" the line without being taxed in any way, and for that reason the minimum number of men had been sent forward. To show how heavy had been the gas-shelling of the enemy, and how the air had been polluted, it might be mentioned that whilst one of the ambulance despatch-riders was riding through some of the low country in the forward area of the Vimy sector, he suffered considerably from the gas, which hung heavily all around, and had to be sent back to the headquarters at Villers-au-Bois for rest and treatment.

However, this gas shelling subsided in a few days, after which everything was quiet, with the exception of the usual interchanges of artillery, but, fortunately, there were not many more casualties.

Whilst the times were quiet opportunity was, as usual, taken advantage of to discover suitable places for further dressing stations should there be more activities in this area necessitating more advantageous medical arrangements. With this in view, the officer commanding early made a full tour of the front line, and eventually a dugout was discovered at the junction of what was



known as the Canada Trench and Vancouver Road. It was considered this could be utilised to good advantage, and working parties immediately set to work on this, Capt. D. McLellan being placed in charge, and it is believed that this officer's greatest disappointment during his active service was the fact that he never saw the actual completion of this work, in which he seemed to take so much pride. Indeed, such was excusable, for an elaborate dressing station was prepared in this dugout, located almost in the heart of the battle zone. Starting with this ordinary dugout, three separate chambers were dug, providing accommodation for all personnel, with one separate room which would hold fifty stretcher cases, whilst in another portion of the trench a further room was prepared, proof from shell splinters, for the purpose of handling all walking cases. A ventilating shaft was inserted for the three main chambers, whilst two fifty-gallon water tanks were placed in close proximity for ready use. It must not be forgotten also that an original method for holding stretchers was adopted, namely, a folding bracket made of iron fixed against the wall, and braced to give the necessary support to the stretcher. Much space was saved by this method as compared with the old one of fixed racks, as, of course, the brackets could be folded in when not in use, leaving the room free and clear. Much work of this nature was done during this tour, other dressing stations in the "Teddy Gerard," "Totnes" and "Toledo" Trenches along the same sector, being similarly enlarged and improved with a view to perfecting the system of clearance and capable of holding fifty stretcher cases. Indeed, "perfection" was the aim of all branches of the service, and though the enemy may have been envied for his thoroughness in

general organisation, certainly we had nothing to learn from him when it came to a question of providing conveniences such as these in dugouts overlooking "No Man's Land."

A big attack on Mericourt and Lens had been anticipated, and the No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance detailed to clear the battlefield. All arrangements had been made with this in view, and everything was in readiness; but whilst the ambulance was anticipating seeing the practical result of its handiwork, the inevitable happened, for on October 4th, 1917, the following despatch was received from the administrative headquarters, which was brief and certainly to the point. It read, "Please be prepared to move at twenty-four hours' notice." Thus, on October 5th and 6th, 1917, commenced a series of movements which were to culminate in what was probably the severest action in the whole of the ambulance field service. On the dates mentioned the unit, following in the wake of the Seventh and Ninth Canadian Infantry Brigades, established stations at Estree Cauchie, Caucourt and Le Petit Rietz, where they took care of all the sick amongst the troops who rested awhile in that area. Much speculation was rife as to where the Canadians were bound for. The men needed no signs that something "big" was coming off other than the completion of all equipment to the minutest detail, the continual inspections, and the other variety of things which meant future activity. It will not be out of place here to relate, for the remembrance of Capt. J. F. S. Marshall, how that officer, seeking to instil into the minds of reinforcements who joined the ambulance at that time, the correct method of folding blankets, brought as an example out of the

men's huts, one which he evidently thought "ideal," and after, at considerable length, impressing upon them that "this is how our men do it," and encouraging them to emulate, found, after later enquiry, that this "bed" belonged to one of the reinforcements themselves, much to the amusement of all concerned. Such little incidents added the spice of humorous variety to the daily round of active service.

The ambulance stayed in the Estree Cauchie area until October 15th, 1917, and on that date marched to the railhead at Tinques. The picture of the military scene at the small French siding is still vividly in mind. The evening dusk is approaching, the boys stand around, in the chilly air, drinking their hot tea and eating an emergency meal, which only soldiers can enjoy, and afterwards the scene is all activity, as whole waggons of equipment are loaded on to the waiting train, when the men themselves follow, finding comfort even in the crowded cars or closed trucks, wherein they make another journey to an unknown destination. At three o'clock in the morning the train arrived at Godawersvelde, and there was certainly a great scramble amongst the tired men, many of whom had removed their boots and fallen soundly asleep, not expecting to detrain until well on in the morning. However, all were eventually gotten out of the train, after getting together their equipment, and, met by a billeting party who had preceded them, were marched to temporary billets at the Commanderie Farm, Caestre, where they rested until October 22nd, 1917. What befell them after this in the great battles of Passchendaele will never be forgotten, and will be recorded in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *PASSCHENDAELE.*

HE who could write of Passchendaele calmly and unfeelingly, relating it as a story of just an incident of the great war would be no ordinary man, and, indeed, would lack all human emotion. Any man who experienced it, and is alive to tell the tale, and can still picture in mind all its dread and horrors, without even a slightest shudder, may have the qualities necessary for a good soldier, but would be something less than a real man. The Ypres sector was ever the deathtrap of the Canadians, and Passchendaele seemed the culmination of it. The experiences of the Somme stand out as dread pictures of darkness and almost despair, but yet it is questionable if they were so desperately awful as Passchendaele. Loos and Vimy called for all the best from the Canadians in endurance and venture, but somehow the glad results seemed more to justify the cost than in Passchendaele, where, although objectives were obtained, that which had to be faced and endured obscured the compensating results. For Passchendaele is a story of hardship unparalleled, of circumstances without comparison, of endurances that could not be believed, yes, worse than all these, an experience of very hell upon earth. From Ypres to Passchendaele is a quagmire of muddy road, leading to an almost impregnable position, with pools of water lying amongst the clay soil, running through which are the plank roads to make passage at least possible. Amidst all these natural difficulties, an

enemy, security made more secure by the strong pill-box defences, hangs on like very death, and rains bombs and shells profusely from morning to night, scattering death and destruction on every hand. But "onward" is the word, the Canadians have been ordered to take Passchendaele, and take it they must. New Zealanders and Australians have been battering away at the positions for many days; their forces now are almost depleted, and the Canadian Corps is called to endeavour to finish what they have so gallantly commenced.

Whilst all the stretcher bearers of the ambulance were ordered for duty under the unit allotted to clear the field, the 8th Field Ambulance itself was responsible for the corps main dressing station at Vlamertinghe Mill, and it is with this that we will deal first, bearing in mind that this is the last "forward" station where a wounded man is to receive final attention before being sent back from the forward area to the casualty clearing stations.

The ambulance instructions were contained in the following despatch, received by Lieutenant-Colonel Gunn on October 24th, 1917:—

"No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance will be in charge of the corps main dressing station for stretcher cases at Vlamertinghe Mill. This unit has instructions to be prepared to handle many walking wounded cases in the event of the prison in Ypres becoming untenable."

This was on October 24th, the first attack was to be made on the morning of the 26th, so that the familiar old mill had to be arranged in such a way and at such short notice as to handle probably several thousand casualties from these activities. The mill at this time was used as a station through which all the walking

wounded passed, and very elaborate and satisfactory arrangements were in use. It will, however, be easily understood that it is altogether a different matter to handle stretcher cases than it is walking patients, and at the same time it must not be forgotten that the probabilities were that the walking cases as well as the stretchers would pass through this station. Immediately on arrival at the mill the ambulance officers surveyed the ground and premises, and it was ultimately decided to work on what can best be described as an "inner" and "outer" circle plan. The "inner circle" was to be the primary centre, whilst the "outer circle" was to be reserved for emergency or to relieve congestion. The "inner circle" was naturally that leading into the mill from the main Ypres road. The big courtyard leading from this entrance had many months before been barricaded with sandbags for protection against hostile shells and aircraft, and as it was certain that all available room would be needed here for the free manœuvring of ambulance cars and lorries with their suffering loads, parties were first set to work to clear away even these desirable protections in order to keep the space absolutely clear and free. The mill had many capacious rooms suitable for the purpose of a dressing station, and these were utilised to the full advantage, whilst a great boon was also afforded to the workers by a quick installation of an electric light system, which fact alone will impress the reader with the up-to-date methods adopted even in this war-stricken area. The Y.M.C.A. installed the electric light plant. The exact arrangements adopted in this inner circle were as follows:—

1. Motor ambulance cars brought cases through the main entrance to the first door on the left of the entrance,

where they were unloaded and taken into the room. This room had good accommodation, was well heated, and was used as a waiting-room for the cases prior to being taken into the dressing-room. In this waiting-room everything was done to minister to the comforts of the men and to keep them warm and supplied with hot drinks.

2. The dressing-room adjoined the waiting-room, and had four dressing tables, a medical officer and dresser being stationed at each. Shelves ran all around the room, containing dressings and all necessary supplies, whilst beneath each stretcher table was placed an oil stove to give warmth to the patients as they were being attended to. It must be stated in connection with the latter that it is probable several lives were saved by this very simple device. At the end of the room two clerks were stationed at the desk, one taking particulars on slips and handing them to the other, who made out the official medical card for attachment to each patient prior to removal.

3. Next to the dressing-room was the outside waiting-room, where cases were laid ready for loading, and as each four cases were complete they were taken from there direct to the motor ambulance cars stationed at the outside door, and transported back to the casualty clearing stations.

4. Other large rooms next to the dressing-room were also reserved to keep cases, if necessary, to wait for cars, but, as will be seen later, this was not found necessary.

The emergency "outer circle" was arranged at the rear of the mill, with an entrance from the main road, cutting across vacant ground there, where a wide plank walk was placed leading to tents, and even an old slough bridged in order to make passage easy. The marquees

already erected were utilised with slight alteration. One was reserved for the reception and attention of walking wounded, barriers being arranged to separate the entrance from the exit, thus avoiding confusion and enabling the walking wounded to proceed in a direct route around the marquee, each receiving attention as they proceeded, and passing out to another waiting tent, from which they were evacuated by train.

Another line of three marquees was reserved for stretcher cases if it should be found that the inner circle was becoming overcrowded. In the first marquee cases were to be received, then passed on to the second compartment, which would accommodate two stretchers at a time, where they were dressed and received medical cards, afterwards passing into the last one used as a waiting-room, for evacuation by motor ambulance, a few of which were stationed near here for use as necessity required.

As a matter of record we will here state the officers who had charge of the various departments:—

Officer commanding, Lieut.-Col. J. N. Gunn.

In charge of "inner circle," Major E. R. Selby.

In charge of "outer circle," Major W. G. Cosbie.

In charge of walking wounded, Capt. H. G. Chisholm.

The tent subdivision of the ambulance attended to all dressing and recording, but on account of the stretcher bearers being detached for duty at the actual battlefront no other personnel was available for the considerable stretcher-bearing work of loading and unloading cars. It was, therefore, arranged to utilise the horse transport



men for this work, and in addition a number of other men were temporarily attached to the ambulance to assist in the receiving and evacuating of stretcher cases.

Meanwhile, as all these arrangements were proceeding apace, more dreary conditions could scarcely be imagined. Outside the continuous rain poured, the muddy roads were turned into a quagmire by the necessary passage of transport and men, the latter already wet through and tired out by their long journey as they proceeded to where the air was alive with war's activity, whilst inside the dressing station the few officers and men who could be spared from the work of arranging were busily engaged taking care of the steady stream of casualties which were coming in as the exchange was being made preparatory to the attacks.

The proof of all planning and theorising is, of course, in results. How often, during the course of the field ambulance service, have officers and men, after plans and arrangements have been studiously made, waited, almost tremblingly, for "the day" to arrive to see if everything worked smoothly and as provided for, for one little hitch in arrangements, one smallest detail overlooked, is likely to spell failure for the whole system of evacuation of wounded during activities. In dealing with casualties from the field, no more deplorable condition can be imagined than, after a quick and satisfactory clearance from the front posts, to find arrangements at the following stations not sufficiently efficacious to prevent confusion and congestion. The whole motive of the medical services is wrapped up in one sentence, "Complete attention to the alleviation of pain, combined with almost instant clearance and evacuation," and no small detail must be forgotten in guarding this principle. Thus, the ambulance

based its arrangements upon this when studying how best to clear away the wounded from the first of the Canadians' attacks on Passchendaele. Many consultations were held between the O.C. and his junior officers, and also the N.C.O's in charge of any particular work were consulted for suggestions to see if there was any possibility of improving upon the system.

At six p.m. on October 25th, 1917, the night before the attack, everything was ready at this main dressing station of the ambulance. Prior to that time just walking cases had been passing through the station at the average rate of from 150 to 200 every twenty-four hours, and now officers and men wait for the next few hours to pass away, when fury shall again be let loose, and bring in its wake much gruesome and arduous toil for the ambulance men from the West. The writer well remembers being on duty in one of the "chambers" of the mill, and being called to the telephone which had been installed to keep open constant communication, received this brief but military-like message, "Tell Colonel Gunn stretcher cases will begin to arrive at midnight." It was the signal that had been waited for, and it was taken to the officer commanding immediately, who at that time was surrounded by his junior officers, all waiting for the word, and when instructions were delivered the whole working system was put into operation. Indeed, before midnight it was tested, for the enemy had been paying nightly visits right back into the Poperinghe district, and the main Vlamertinghe-Ypres road had been scoured with his bombing planes, endeavouring to disturb transportation of supplies and men, with the result that on the night of the 25th in particular, many had casualties were inflicted on the road outside the mill, and the

various rooms rocked and reeled with the severe concussion from the exploding bombs, many of which were in close proximity to the marquees and dressing station rooms.

The morning of the 26th arrived, and the attack took place as scheduled. The opposition met with was most severe, and this, combined with the natural difficulties previously referred to, made the task of the troops a herculean one, and it is not surprising that the resulting casualties were almost appalling. It was about ten a.m. when the rush of wounded from the attack commenced to arrive at Vlamertinghe. What can be said about it? Not much, for it is simply a story of a long, straight road, along which hurry men, lorries, waggons and ambulances, passing each other up and down, going forward to greater danger and destruction, coming back to see still the evidences of war's awful toll. And as many of these conveyances wheeled speedily into the courtyard of the mill, unloading those gallant soldiers who, but an hour or so before, had been stricken down as they strove for the heights leading to Passchendaele, full opportunity was given to prove that the arrangements made for the attention and evacuation of these wounded men was all that could be desired. The first rush was, of course, received in the main "inner circle," where the patients were quickly transmitted through the waiting-room into the dressing-room, attended to carefully, received hot refreshment and stimulant, and passed out for evacuation. This "inner circle" sufficed for the first few hours, but walking wounded soon began to arrive, many coming by train on the light railway leading to the front and passing the dressing station. Stretcher cases, too, began to accumulate, so that it was soon necessary

to open up the "outer circle," thus disposing of all surplus cases and keeping the machinery of evacuation in perfect order. Thus the hours of this busy day went along, load after load arriving, with scarcely a minute's respite, but with every man knowing his duty, and with complete co-operation amongst all who worked with the sole aim of getting all the disabled "down the line." The friendly padres who were on duty had a busy day. They were ever on the watch to see if there was anything they could do, and immediately they saw any opportunity, would gladly and willingly step into the breach, would hand the wounded man a drink, or even take their end of the stretcher, this being typical of the anxiety of all on duty to do everything for the common good. Towards night things quietened down a little, the rush being over, with just occasional arrivals, and it was found that the "outer circle" could be closed during the hours of the night. The troops maintained the positions they had won, and reliefs were hastened forward to continue the advance. The next attack was on October 30th, which day was practically a repetition of the 26th, both in the number of wounded handled and the satisfactory method of evacuation. Stretcher and walking cases, with a good mixture of German prisoners, were received, and evacuated without the least delay. The patience of the wounded men can never be forgotten. At one time there were as many as a dozen cases in the station suffering with fractured femurs—one of the worst of wounds—and yet scarcely a moan could be heard as these brave men waited for attention.

Statistics are dry reading matter, but it is believed on this occasion figures will convey more than even anything that could be described or written. The work

of the field ambulance at this main dressing station is summed up in the fact that during the short time they were there a total of 3,270 wounded men were handled, 1,824 of these being stretcher cases, which number also included over 100 wounded German prisoners of war. The enormity of the task will be appreciated when it is realised that each of these 3,270 men was an individual case, receiving individual attention, each being attended to according to his particular needs, most of them being stripped of their muddy and blood-stained clothing and made warm and comfortable in pyjamas, many of them needing the most delicate handling in relieving and protecting fractured limbs, every solitary man (excepting where the peculiar seriousness of his wound prohibited this) receiving his hot coffee or cocoa with cake or biscuits, not forgetting that greatest of boons to the wounded soldier—a cigarette. The Canadian Red Cross did very valuable work in supplying comforts to the sick and wounded on this and many other occasions. And last, but not least, it must not be forgotten that every man had fixed to him, before leaving, his official medical card, showing his full particulars, giving an exact description of his wounds, and stating any special treatment that had been administered. Copies of these particulars were retained in the station, where the clerical staff, under Staff-Sergeant Hay, worked night and day in registering and recording and reporting particulars of the casualties to administrative headquarters, and even to the wounded men's individual units. Taken as a whole, it was a perfect example of successful clearance under the stress and strain of modern war, against immense difficulties which had to be overcome. All honour to those officers and men of the ambulance who, again upon this occasion

proved themselves equal to all emergencies, refusing, after long hours of the hardest toil imaginable, to rest or sleep so long as they thought their services were needed in helping in the attention to and evacuating of their wounded comrades. Of course there were some deaths at the station, but the small percentage of these was remarkable, there being not more than nine or ten. The principle of "While there is life there is hope" was acted upon, and many cases which at first appeared hopeless were tended and watched so carefully until application of warmth brought the flicker of life to the wounded bodies, which was the signal for the medical officers and their assistants to attend to the wounds sufficiently to enable the man to be carried to the casualty clearing station. One of the officers working with the ambulance at that time, and looking over a wounded man, who required the skilled eye of a medical man to see there was any life left, resolutely remarked, "After what he's gone through I'm going to do my best while he's got the shadow of a chance," and immediately set to work until he had the satisfaction of seeing him at least fit to be sent down to the casualty clearing station. When hundreds of wounded are coming through, it requires men of some imagination and devotion to concentrate all ability on a single case with the remotest chance, for, indeed, it is easy to think "what is one amongst so many?"

Whilst all this work is proceeding, what is happening to the ambulance stretcher bearers detailed to assist in the actual clearance of the field? One hundred of these, under Capt. J. F. S. Marshall and H. W. Hessian, had gone forward and reported to No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance, who had established their headquarters and advanced dressing station in a long tunnel, probably dug

from a disused mine shaft, at the village of Wieltje. From here they worked forward to the regimental aid posts facing the much-coveted Passchendaele Ridge. These were established on the right and left of the ridge in the famous German defences of concrete "pill-boxes," and named, for purposes of distinction, as "Waterloo" and "Kronprinz Farm," the latter, of course, being a retained German title. Half way between these aid posts and the advanced dressing stations a relay post was established, called the "Somme Redoubt." Here stretcher bearers were located to take cases from the men working still farther forward, and carry them either straight back to Wieltje or to an entraining point known as "Bridge House," where they could be loaded on trucks and carried by the tram line to Wieltje, and from the latter place transported by motor ambulances to Vlamertinghe Mill.

The stretcher bearers were equally divided between the two sectors. Starting their work immediately the attack commenced on the morning of the 26th, they continued unceasingly until noon of the 27th, only stopping when the field was officially reported clear of casualties resulting from the attack.

And what work it was! It is questionable if conditions had ever been worse for this most arduous work of bearing away the wounded. In previous actions the ambulance men had usually been able to get at least partial shelter by taking the route of the trenches from the front lines, but no such protection could be obtained in Passchendaele. The work was all in the open, and the landmarks were not friendly trenches, but merely the pill-boxes lately used by the Germans dotted here and there as points of objectives. The area along which the cases were brought was just the one solitary open way along which everything

was transported, and this fact alone will convey some idea of what such a road would be subjected to. Starting away back at the regimental aid posts, the German aeroplanes would be seen sweeping down so low that the occupants were easily visible, and their machine-guns played, like the music of death, along the road, whilst far and near the exploding shells and the activity of our own artillery added to the fearfulness of this day. The distance these stretcher cases had to be carried on this occasion would be approximately two and a half miles. Does such a plain statement convey anything? Possibly not, and yet it is doubtful if, away from the unnatural influences of war, men could possibly endure the fatigue and nerve-trying ordeal of such a task and under such conditions. As has been previously stated, the ground itself can best be described as a "quagmire." Trench mats had been placed along the route, but these were so narrow that to avoid the dangerous possibility of the bearers slipping from the side of these into the sinking ground beneath, it was impossible to adopt the usual system of a "four-man carry shoulder high," and necessary to resort to the two-man system, which, of course, greatly added to the arduous task. To increase the difficulty, the bath or trench mats were, from time to time, blown away in places, and as each squad of six bearers proceeded on the way, the only method to ensure reasonably safe transit was for one to act as guide and pass the word back to the others how to step as they proceeded. It seems almost impossible to imagine, but it is no exaggeration to say that a slip from the side of these trench mats was attended with grave risks of death by suffocation or drowning in the swamps which lay around.

The small "pill-boxes" afforded scanty accommodation



and the stretcher bearers were forced, when not actually working, to take what rest they could in the exposed open. Indeed, a good deal of the work in attending to the wounds of the men who had fallen had, perforce, to be done right out in the open, whilst all the immediate vicinity was being "pounded" with heavy shellfire. On one occasion, at least, one of the ambulance men thus engaged was blown to pieces, and the whole wounded party, which happened to be German prisoners, wiped out of existence. Such is an example of what was suffered whilst Passchendaele was being striven for.

Most of the clearance in this first attack was done in the daytime, but, naturally, various trips had to be made at night to keep the field as clear of the wounded as possible, and the enemy having now added to his other terrors of defence the use of gas shells, it was necessary, on occasions, for the stretcher bearers to wear their box respirators for protection as much as possible during their work.

On the afternoon of October 26th it was reported that difficulty was being experienced in getting out the wounded from the front line and also in that area descriptively named "No Man's Land." Assistance was requested from the ambulance men, who had already worked exhaustively, and, as is usual in such cases, Captain Marshall called for volunteers for this treacherous work from amongst his men. Two stretcher squads readily responded, and, led by Captain Marshall, they proceeded from the regimental aid post at Kronprinz Farm, clearing casualties from a "pill-box" in the rear of our immediate front line, and also obtaining a few cases lying in shell holes in "No Man's Land." They continued to clear over this area for the next two or three

days, under the continuous shelling, which remained most intense.

During the time which elapsed between the two attacks on October 26th and October 30th, as many of the men as possible rested in the tunnel at Wieltje, and on the latter day continued their efforts extending during the night until the evening of the 31st, when that glad report was again received, "all casualties clear."

With a much depleted force the ambulance pulled back for rest and re-organisation on November 2nd, journeying to the outskirts of the little village of Watou, where billets were obtained in grounds occupied by a sect of Trappist monks. It was thought that the horrors of Passchendaele had been left behind for ever, but not so, for on November 9th information was received that the Third Canadian Division would again be taking over the Passchendaele front, and that No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance would have charge of the clearing of the field. On the morning of November 10th, in miserable wet weather, the men again proceeded forward to effect the necessary relief of the forward posts. With the successes which had attended the efforts of the Canadians, the medical posts had, by this time, naturally been advanced, and now the forward regimental aid post was established at Mosselmarkt, immediately to the left of Passchendaele, the "Somme Redoubt" and "Waterloo" pill-box having now been converted into the advanced dressing stations, with the mine shaft at Wieltje used as "headquarters," while the horse lines of the unit were established away back at Brandhoek. With the extended area of clearance it was impossible for one field ambulance to handle the whole of the divisional frontage, and parties from Nos. 9 and 10 Canadian Field Ambulances were detailed to

assist. Lieut.-Col. J. N. Gunn organised the clearance, assisted by Capt. W. G. Cosbie, whilst Major E. R. Selby was in charge of the front posts, and had working under him Capt. H. G. Chisholm, C. E. Anderson and H. A. Hessian and Captain A. Caulfield, of No. 8, also Captain Abbott of No. 9 Canadian Field Ambulance, and Capt. H. G. Wood, of No. 10.

Conditions were, of course, not improved in this area, the only relieving feature being that no special attacks took place on this occasion, the troops being engaged in consolidating and holding the important positions won. The Germans, however, at this time were making strenuous efforts to make the ground taken untenable, and the shell-firing was terrific. Time and again also his troops were massed for big counter-attacks, only to be dispersed by the intensity of our artillery before his plans could be consummated. It was really too big a strain to make on the already exhausted energies of the ambulance men, for they had not had time to recover from the effects of their previous "gruelling" in the first attacks, and it is no wonder that this second trip into the line taxed many of them almost beyond endurance. The tour extended from November 10th to November 17th, and some idea of the work will be gained when it is said that a wounded man on a stretcher now had to be carried by the bearers a distance of 6,500 yards (nearly four miles) before reaching the advanced dressing stations. A relay post was established half way between, but the total absence of any other cover for additional relays necessitated these unbearably long "carrys." The stretcher squads were six men strong, and the roads they traversed backwards and forwards were shelled almost incessantly. Indeed, on occasions, the squads had to resort to running with their painful loads to get just a

chance of passing danger points between the exploding shells. On November 14th for five hours it was totally impossible for the bearers to follow the main route, for nobody could have gotten through alive. Towards the end, so exhausted and broken up by casualties, the stretcher squads had to be "pooled," and the strongest and fittest men called upon to continue in rotation, but the work never faltered, and as each bearer party came in, another was selected and sent forward, worn out and tired, but still willing. When the field ambulance was relieved at ten o'clock on the morning of November 17th some of the men had been off duty for only about five hours during the last fifty-three of the tour, but the result of this devotion and self-sacrifice was that the line was left absolutely clear and not a solitary case remained for clearance at the time of the relief.

One can never forget the haggard looks of the men and officers as they returned to Brandhoek, almost helpless with the fatigue of their work, and just looking for some place to sleep, and we believe it is no exaggeration to say that these tours of duty in the Passchendaele area form the most arduous the ambulance were called upon to perform, and, as the following will show, the most expensive in the number of killed and wounded which the unit suffered.

The casualties amongst the ambulance men from Passchendaele totalled four killed instantly and twenty-nine wounded, two of the latter afterwards succumbing to their injuries. This would mean approximately forty per cent. of the total engaged, and though this is considerable, yet, undoubtedly, the wretched state of the ground, though causing difficulties in other directions, helped to minimise casualties, for the continuous shells

which were unceasingly falling around the stretcher bearers, often found their landing place in the soft ground, the effect of the explosions being thereby lessened.

We desire to place on record the names of those who were killed instantly, with particulars of the circumstances attending their deaths:—

No. 155069 Pte. D. Stewart was killed at about eight o'clock on the morning of October 26th. He was working from the regimental aid post at Kronprinz Farm, and was leading out a stretcher squad of German prisoners, who had been called upon to assist in the clearance of the wounded. The shelling at this time was heavy, and the prisoners, just outside the dressing station, dropped their case, and prepared to seek safety for themselves. Private Stewart immediately went back to see that the wounded man was not left, when a shell landed in the midst of the party and killed the whole of them instantly.

No. 530087 Sgt. F. Steel was killed on the night of October 27th, 1917, outside the "pill-box," which was the regimental aid post at Waterloo. This N.C.O. had already done excellent work in that area. On the night of the 27th he was dressing the wounds of casualties outside in the open, fully exposed to the enemy shelling, when a shell dropped immediately beneath him, and killed him instantly. In reporting his death the officer under whom he was working at the time stated, "his work and example to his men in caring for wounded was beyond praise."

No. 530157 Pte. E. Starkey was killed at about eleven o'clock on the morning of October 30th. He was a member of one of the squads who were proceeding from the Kronprinz Farm to the new regimental aid post which had been established in our front line. He was

killed almost instantly, whilst another member of the party was wounded, and another, blown in the air, suffered considerably from concussion.

No. 523052 Pte. P. W. Underwood was killed instantly on November 14th, as he was proceeding with other members of his squad to the advanced regimental aid post at Mosselmarkt.

We name these that they may be "honoured in death," having proved themselves valiant soldiers and worthy comrades.

Passchendaele stands out as another name by which the deeds of this real Western field ambulance will be remembered, and we cannot do better than quote the remarks of that worthy soldier and gentleman, the late Major-Gen. L. J. Lipsett, who was commanding the Third Canadian Division at that time. Visiting the ambulance after the first attacks, he stated "The man behind the lines had to be possessed of as much courage and endurance as the men who went over the top." He thanked the men of the ambulance for the way they had worked in bringing out the wounded, and stated it was a point of honour that so long as a wounded man was waiting he was never left behind.

Also on November 10th, 1917, General Porter, the Director of Medical Services of the First Army, visited the unit, stating he wished to bring a message from the army commander to congratulate them on their excellent work at Passchendaele. The wounded had been cleared in record time, and they had never arrived at the casualty clearing stations in better condition.

And so we leave Passchendaele, and as a tale that is told hand it down to the tender mercies of those who may read it in the years to come. The endurance and

fearlessness of the officers, N.C.O's and men cannot be exaggerated. They were not the men whose gallantry expressed itself in the storming of Passchendaele Ridge, and in the great achievement of chosen objectives, but following these men—the infantry—in the trail of their doings, sharing their dangers and possessing their courage, they again proved themselves valiant soldiers and worthy of the humane cause they represent.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *CLOSING SCENES IN 1917.*

WITH a much-reduced force the ambulance, after resting for a few days at Brandhoek, moved away from the immediate vicinity of war's alarms, for recuperation and much-needed re-organisation after the disasters of Passchendaele. On November 19th, 1917, the men, now light hearted and happy with the prospect of a "holiday" in some quiet village, were to be seen marching along the main Poperinghe-Ypres road, right to the old asylum at Ypres, where many Canadian soldiers were crowded, waiting for 'buses to remove them from this district with so many dreadful memories. As the 'buses moved away, gradually leaving this war-stricken zone, and bringing the men into more peaceful-looking places, it can be truly said that there was no regret at what proved to be the farewell parting of the Canadians from the Ypres sector. Many will be the memories associated with the district, many the thoughts of comrades who journeyed side by side and were stricken down as they performed their heroic service, and many hearts, in the years to come, will beat a little faster as deeds are recalled which make Canada for ever immortal in the history of famous Ypres. Still, the never-failing fund of humour was always present, and, even in the dark days of Passchendaele, amusing incidents are recalled. Take the following as an example:—

A certain officer of the ambulance—and, by way of explanation it might be mentioned a new arrival—having



finished his period of duty at one of the most advanced posts, was going back to a rear station, with his servant. With all the ardour of the "novice" he had collected souvenirs innumerable, which had been packed in the never-failing sand bag, and handed to the poor tired servant to cherish carefully and take back. Thus they started out over that terrible country, floundering in mud and shell holes in the intense darkness, wearily picking their way. The officer leads, and, after journeying along silently for some time, he suddenly remembers his companion in distress. Then ensued the following conversation:—

Officer—"Aren't you tired, S——?"

Servant—"No, I'm not tired."

Officer—"Are you sure that bag of souvenirs isn't making you tired?"

Servant—"No, not at all."

(A brief pause.)

Officer—"That bag must be making you tired. Whereabouts are you carrying it?"

Servant—"I ain't carrying it. I dropped it in the first shell hole after we started."

One or two old faces amongst the officers of the ambulance were also missing, and several new ones were noticed as the ambulance moved away. Capt. C. G. Gunn had now returned to England for duty, as had also Capt. D. McLellan, whilst Capt. H. G. Chisholm, the last remaining of the original officers of the unit, shortly afterwards followed his old friend, Capt. C. G. Gunn. These three were replaced by Capts. A. L. McQuarrie, A. G. Thompson and St. Clair Dunne, the latter shortly afterwards being transferred to the Princess Patricia

Canadian Light Infantry, with which battalion he was killed in action.

But to return to the old London 'buses. They are taking the men on a long journey, for the shades of night are falling as they reach the little village of Robecq, where a halt was called for the night, and starting again early the following morning, the ambulance men proceeded to the Lillers district. Whilst on the line of march, the Assistant Director of Medical Services (Col. A. E. Snell) met the unit, and by his instructions, a portion of the men were diverted to Lillers itself, there to take charge while in the rest area of a small hospital for sick opened in the No. 58 Casualty Clearing Station. The main body of the unit proceeded to the St. Hilaire district, and were billeted in the small village of Ames. Unfortunately, this village was so small that the accommodation was not everything that could be desired, but the best possible arrangements were made under the circumstances, and the men themselves soon got busy in improving their "homes," one section even renting a room in a private house, where they were able to sit and read or play cards in great comfort. The villagers, too, were most hospitable, and helped considerably in making this "holiday" enjoyable from every standpoint. The order of the day was "rest," for indeed the men greatly needed this after their strenuous times, and the surroundings of the village being pleasant and picturesque, soon the terrors of Passchendaele were placed in the background in the then present peaceful conditions.

A very sad event, however, occurred shortly after arrival in the rest area, for No. 530005 Pte. N. O.

Bradbury was found dead in his bed one morning after having retired the night previous in apparently good health. A thorough examination was held, and the cause of his death was returned as "syncope."

Also whilst we were in this area, the officer commanding, Lieut.-Col. J. N. Gunn, was sent to the Officers' Convalescent Home at Cap Martin. The commanding officer had a bad attack of trench fever as far back as the time of the taking of Vimy Ridge, and had suffered various recurrences since then, so that it was deemed advisable for him to endeavour to recuperate at this officers' home. Major E. R. Selby acted as officer commanding during Colonel Gunn's absence.

Many reinforcements were now joining the unit, gradually bringing it once more up to full strength, whilst at this time considerable numbers were sent on leave, as many as from twenty-five to thirty proceeding to England in some weeks. It might also be mentioned that the voting in the Dominion election took place here, with Major Selby acting as deputy returning officer, and a maximum number of votes being polled in the unit.

Thus another Christmas drew near in quietude and rest. The powers decreed, however, that the peaceful season was not to be enjoyed in conditions of peace by the men of the ambulance, for on December 21st they again moved forward to take over the line in the Loos district, making two Christmases in succession spent in actual clearance of the front. On this occasion the arrival of the unit at Noeux les Mines was welcomed by considerable enemy shelling of the town. The main dressing station was again opened in the schoolhouse here, with a hospital for sick in the Marie, whilst practically the same posts as had been manned on the

last occasion in this area were again taken over, with regimental aid posts at Maroc, the Chalk Pits, Toch Keep, Natal, and advanced dressing stations at Les Brebis, Fort Glatz, and St. Pats. There were no actual active operations on this occasion, the troops merely holding the line, but considerable shelling took place from the forward posts to as far back as the main dressing station at Noeux les Mines. Especially at Fort Glatz, the area was continuously under shell fire, three "direct hits" being made on the dressing station there, whilst on December 26th, to celebrate the holiday, one end of the station was absolutely crumpled in from shell fire. At Noeux les Mines, too, the shelling was very bad, and it was necessary to keep on constant duty two men to render aid to wounded civilians. This condition naturally kept the main dressing station particularly busy with casualties from its immediate vicinity, both amongst the civilians and troops in that area. It is remarkable how the poor inhabitants of such towns endured their lives of terror, not knowing from one day to another whether their homes would be wrecked or not, but amidst all this dreadful apprehension, the claims of "home" were so strong that so long as they were possibly tenable, the poor people stayed. As one woman stated, when asked why they did not leave, "We have never lived anywhere else. This is our home, and we feel we must stay." Of course all the houses had their basements or cellars arranged as places to live and sleep in under emergency, and it is needless to say that these were occupied possibly more than the real living rooms of the homes. One sorrowful incident came directly to the notice of the ambulance men, for the sergeants had a "mess" in a home close to the main dressing station. Shells had been

scattered around this place, one alighting in the back ground, close to the garden. The family consisted of the father and mother, with four or five girls. One day one of the younger girls (we will name her "Rosie" for the benefit of those who were intimately acquainted with her and remember celebrating her sixteenth birthday) was wounded whilst standing outside the house, and one of the ambulance officers performed a slight operation and tended her in her own home. But, alas, this was not the end of this particular family's disasters, for afterwards, when shelling of the town had been particularly bad, and most of the family had taken refuge in the cellar, the mother and four of the girls were killed instantly. Such results of the war cannot be too strongly condemned, for here was a family, living as bravely and cheerfully as possible under the terrible conditions which existed, making their home a hospitable place for allied soldiers to enter, with girls just entering womanhood and anticipating a return to peaceful happiness when the terrors of war had passed, almost completely wiped out of existence after enduring many months of dread and uncertainty. Surely such occurrences (and this is only one of many) cannot be passed over lightly as an incident of the war, but will ever be remembered as an example of an unscrupulous enemy and of the suffering experienced by these defenceless inhabitants of the bombarded towns.

During the shelling of Noeux les Mines a large piece went through the roof of the hut occupied by the motor ambulance drivers in the yard of the main dressing station, and wounded severely in the mouth one of the ambulance men who was on duty there.

The festive season of 1917 was ushered in with effective preparations made for the welfare of all of the

ambulance men with the unit at that time. Naturally the chief affair was at Noeux les Mines, where a large room was obtained, and a table set, laden with all the good things specially appropriate to Christmas, turkey and plum-pudding being prominent, and many gifts from the No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance Club in Calgary, reminding the men of home, and enabling them to enjoy the day to the full. The men in the line were also well remembered, and they, too, spent "a merry Christmas."

And so the year 1917 drew to a close. It had been a year full of activity and successful venture. The field ambulance had taken part in the capture of Vimy Ridge, and in the successful onslaughts against Passchendaele, Loos, and in the region of Lens. It was a year's record to be proud of. Many faces were missing from the ranks as the old year passed away, and this was possibly the most significant indication of a year's service well rendered. A true summary of the past, with its effect on the future, was well expressed in the words of the unit's report to headquarters, which stated, "As the New Year opens it is felt that what has been done in 1917 augurs well for the future, and we face this New Year with increasing confidence and hope." Let us, then, lift the veil and see what the glorious year of 1918 brought to these men in France.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *THE NEW AND VICTORIOUS YEAR.*

THE old year passed away, and the memorable year of 1918 was ushered in with little anticipation of the wonderful changes that were to take place in the general military situation. But we must not be premature. There is a big chasm to be bridged between January and November, 1918. Suffice it to say, had the rank and file of the armies in the field been possessed of prophetic knowledge so far as war's events were concerned when they celebrated in true soldierly fashion the entrance of the New Year, their celebrations would undoubtedly have been greatly intensified, and their optimistic outlook brightened beyond compare.

We left the ambulance in the Loos sector, where they continued under the conditions which have already been described, until January 21st, on which date they again drew back, this time to the mining district of Bruay for another short welcome rest. But for a field ambulance there is no real rest, for the medical services, either in or out of the line, have always considerable duties to fulfil, and the field ambulances for the division are, in the final analysis, responsible for the general physical health of the troops of that division, wherever they may be located. Thus, as the ambulance withdrew from the line, a section was detailed to the pleasant grounds of No. 23 Casualty Clearing Station at Lozinghem, where marquees were set aside to be used by the ambulance as a divisional rest station for the troops in that area. It

must be stated that this arrangement proved an ideal one, for in a stationary place like a casualty clearing station, every convenience can be obtained, which is a great improvement on having to arrange barns and such like, at short notice, into suitable places for keeping sick and wounded. Thus, good work was done at this clearing station, and it might also be stated, congenial work, as could be testified by the veteran sergeant of the ambulance, C. H. Fitzroy, the N.C.O. in charge, whose considerable military experience enabled the work to progress satisfactorily, and who, at the same time, proved an adept associate with other old R.A.M.C. men who were stationed in this particular spot. Discretion forbids us giving a detailed account of Sergeant Fitzroy's sociability with these "Imperials," but those who knew intimately this genial sergeant will need no convincing that both he himself and the new comrades with whom he became associated enjoyed life to the full on this occasion.

Meanwhile the remainder of the unit was not quite so well situated. They were billeted in the old chateau at Le Vielfort, where the unit had stayed just about one year ago, but at this time there had been heavy rains, and the surrounding area and entrance to the chateau was noteworthy for the French mud, making the "camp" not as pleasant as might be desired. However, the men soon settled down, and methodical plans for training were at once put in execution. In the morning the men were taken out for physical exercises or military drill, and in the afternoon lectures were given in two of the large rooms, the use of which had been obtained from the occupants of the chateau. On several previous occasions parties from the ambulance had been detailed



to a course of instruction along military and medical lines at the No. 22 Casualty Clearing Station in Bruay, thus enabling much valuable information to be imparted to the rest of the unit. It might be mentioned that one of the parties thus detailed established a record in the experimental application of the "Thomas" splint, used in cases of fractured femurs, and were successful in applying this in the amazingly short time of 2.45 minutes.

There is not much to tell so far as this period is concerned. The "rest" came to an end on February 18th, when the ambulance was again ordered forward to the old Vimy area, or, as it was then called, the Mericourt-Avion sector. On that date the men marched the long distance from Le Vielfort to Aux Rietz, where it was intended they should be billeted, but not sufficient accommodation being found here, a portion of them moved up to the old familiar dugouts at Neuville St. Vaast. Forward parties were stationed in Vimy and Chaudiere, clearing the respective portions of the field from there over ground which was captured from the enemy the previous year, and which was familiar to all the "oldtimers" of the ambulance. Aux Rietz was used as a main dressing station, several Nissen huts having been erected which answered this purpose. This was a very busy spot, being a "half-way" house for the troops between the rear and front lines, and very many sick were handled here as well as all the wounded from the divisional frontage. At this time the unit suffered the loss of the second officer commanding. Lieutenant-Colonel Gunn returned from the convalescent home on January 15th, and two days later was detailed to act as Assistant Director of Medical Services to the Third Canadian Division, relieving Col. A. E. Snell until

February 2nd, on which date he rejoined the unit. Shortly after moving again into the Vimy sector, Colonel Gunn suffered another relapse of the trench fever, and it was considered advisable for his evacuation to be no longer delayed. He, therefore, left the unit on February 27th for the casualty clearing station at Anzin, after having been in command of the ambulance for a little over one year. Major E. R. Selby again took charge of the unit after Colonel Gunn's evacuation.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *THE SPRING OF 1918.*

ONE thing which the observer would not fail to notice in studying all the conditions of the great war was the complete attention which was paid to the many sides of a soldier's life. What great lessons in contrasts were presented! Men, perforce, had to be taught to kill, to oppose ruthless might with righteous might, and to thus become hardened to all the uses of modern warfare. But the soldier was not left at that. One day he may be found, if not actually engaged in this active pursuit of war, practising, perchance, the art of bayonet fighting or the advancement over a miniature battlefield held by the enemy, whilst the same evening you may see him sitting in some marquee attentively listening to lectures upon current topics, and even taking in such subjects as "political economy." Is it not this that makes the difference between our soldiers of this true democracy and those of the autocratic power whom we oppose? Simply this, that ours were encouraged to think, and the German soldier is simply taught to do. Is it really any wonder that the initiative of the Canadian soldier, under pressure of defence, or in excitement of attack, was the surprise and dread of the enemy? Democracy, in its truest sense, certainly makes for a great nation. But to return to our old ground, the district of Aux Rietz. Particularly that old death spot known as La Targette Corner was, in the spring of 1918, a real educational centre for the men on duty in that area. The many

marquees, under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A., ministered to the entertainment and education of the soldiers, and the educational side was well supported by the administrative authorities of the armies. To mention just one thing in this connection, a circulating library was put in force under the well-chosen name of "Vimy University," and each unit was allowed to ask for volumes on subjects of study which the individual man desired to take up. In the ambulance alone sixty-eight such volumes were received. The men had taken a keen interest in the opportunity given them to study any subject of value, and many and varied had been the courses asked for. The good done by this cannot be calculated. The men's minds were thus brought back practically into civilian channels, and the spirit of mental refinement instilled, where, otherwise, only the vulgarity of war may have reigned.

A great writer saw "sermons in stones, and books in the running brooks," and if those old shell-swept country lanes and fields, such as that main road leading from Aux Rietz, could but speak, methinks their stories might rival many sermons, and fill innumerable volumes with pictures pathetic and sublime. One day they would tell of slaughter and of "durance vile," and another day, with sun shining, of men labouring on that same land (over which the tramp of many soldiers' feet had been heard) to make it bring forth and produce. For no sooner were advances made than, in accordance with army orders, units billeted in any particular area were to scan the surroundings to see if there was any possibility of seeding land for vegetables which would be invaluable for the troops in the field. At Aux Rietz on the occasion we have in mind, the ambulance men

who were staying in that vicinity ploughed and prepared for seeding two and a half acres of such land, and it can easily be seen what this would mean in the aggregate for all the units in the different sectors where such an act was possible.

Things were comparatively quiet in this sector at that time. Very few casualties were being brought from the front line, and the party at the main dressing station at Aux Rietz, for the first week or so, were able to apply themselves to varied pursuits such as those we have mentioned. In addition, the huts used by the ambulance were tarred, and other necessities accomplished. A dry-heat disinfector for lice was built, parapets to protect the exposed station from bombs were erected, whilst an electric-light system was installed, which provided light not only to the huts through which patients were received and evacuated, but also to the numerous dugouts on the other side of the road used as sleeping and living quarters.

But the quietness of the times was but spasmodic and temporary. For spring was advancing, and it was well understood that persistent activity from one side or the other would soon take place. Either the British armies would deal a tremendous blow, or the enemy would again make gigantic efforts to reach the gateway of Paris, and to control the channel ports. Who would take the initiative? Everybody was tired of what seemed to be the "waiting" game, with no signs of the end, and, therefore, a resumption of active operations was eagerly awaited. Whichever way the fortunes of war went, it was generally believed that soon the tiresome monotony of trench warfare would be at an end, and give place to open contact and more mobile activity. Anticipating this, consultations were held between the ambulance

commanders and the Assistant Director of Medical Services of the division with a view to reducing the ambulance field equipment, and it was decided that various portions of this should be turned in to the ordnance and medical departments in case of continual movement one way or the other.

In the meantime, whilst waiting for the expected activities to commence, there were signs of its approaching in other ways. First, the enemy, in the early days of March, resorted once more to his "gas" bombardments, heavily shelling the artillery positions and causing many serious casualties to members of the 35th Battery of the Tenth Artillery Brigade. In fact, on March 9th and 10th, nearly all the members of the gun crews of this battery became casualties, and the battery was temporarily placed out of commission. Fortunately in this sector, profiting by previous experience, the ambulance had again made most efficient arrangements to handle such cases. In the most advanced posts the men were stripped of clothing and provided with pyjamas, and temporarily treated with the bicarbonate of soda preparation, whilst down at the main dressing station at Aux Rietz, a special room was set aside for these gas casualties, where apparatus was installed for the administering of oxygen, and where other general facilities were at hand to relieve the distress of these cases until they could be got to the casualty clearing stations.

It must not be forgotten that even at such a place as Aux Rietz, with its devastation and exposure, the field ambulance added to its other many duties by reserving one or two of the huts in which to keep temporarily sick cases rather than send all such down the line. This may

seem simple to the reader, but when considered in its fulness the saving of men to the battalions in the line by such a method is no insignificant matter, as it will be easily understood on active service there are many cases of sickness, which do not actually need evacuation, but merely a few days' rest and medical attention. This causes a great deal of work when combined with the other duties consequent upon clearing the line, and the ambulance cars were, on this occasion, also, taxed to the utmost. We believe we have not stated previously in the course of this history that seven ambulance cars were attached to each field ambulance, and this number was certainly not excessive even when all were in perfect running order. It will easily be seen that the period we are now covering was no easy one for the ambulance cars and their drivers, who, at times, were on duty night and day, for with clearing the cases direct from the advanced station at Vimy, then evacuating from Aux Rietz to casualty clearing stations, and at the same time collecting sick from amongst the many troops stationed in the area, and also delivering others back to their battalions, this important part of the field ambulance might to advantage have been greatly increased. We wish to take this opportunity of eulogising the motor ambulance section of the ambulance. The uninitiated cannot realise the enormity of the service these men render, and the dangers and difficulties they have to face. On several occasions they have enabled the preliminary work of the stretcher bearers to be successfully completed by their untiring devotion to duty and their fearlessness along the dangerous roads through which they steered their cars.

There were, at this time, further changes amongst the officers of the ambulance, the new faces noticed being

those of Captains W. N. Cochran, H. K. Bates, L. P. Churchill, J. Carmichael, and W. H. Robb, all of whom, we believe, reported for duty at Aux Rietz, and afterwards took their turn in the forward posts with the stretcher bearers of the unit.

The signs of approaching activity still continued. First, there would be a more than usual bombardment by the enemy, and then, here and there along the line, raids by our troops, sometimes for the purpose of capturing a trench or so, but more often than otherwise simply for the purpose of identification of the enemy troops and to gain some knowledge of his strength and preparations. One such raid is worthy of note, made by the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles of the Eighth Infantry Brigade, in the early morning of March 15th, on the German position along the Mericourt road. This was a venture fraught with possibly more than ordinary danger and risk, for the strength of the enemy here was unknown, and the ground covered difficult and unfamiliar. The line of the raid was traced by the placing of white tape as far forward as possible, and the infantry men, following this, speedily came in contact with the enemy, and there was severe hand-to-hand fighting in the dim light which preceded the breaking of day on that March morning. In order to effect a satisfactory clearance, the field ambulance sent up further stretcher-bearer squads to reinforce the men already on duty there. A temporary regimental aid post was established in the front line "Toledo" Trench, and the men of the ambulance were stationed here in readiness to take care of the casualties as the raid proceeded. Much excellent service was rendered here, first-aid being promptly given in this front-line trench, after which the



casualties were carried back by the stretcher bearers to the original regimental aid post in "Teddie Gerard" Trench. Here the tram-line was put in use, extending back to the advanced dressing station in the town of Vimy, from where the motor ambulance cars were able to run back to the main dressing station at Aux Rietz. At four o'clock in the morning the ambulance men and motor ambulances were waiting in position. The raid was productive of fierce fighting, and caused, for a short time, hard work for the stretcher bearers. Unfortunately, the raiding party suffered rather severe casualties, and the officer who organised the raid was killed shortly after it commenced. The field ambulance stations were kept very busy, but a good clearance was effected, almost as soon as the men fell, and by noon all the wounded had been sent to the casualty clearing stations. Many enemy were killed and wounded, and several prisoners taken, three of the wounded Germans passing through the ambulance station. These proved very valuable to the staff intelligence officers.

In this way the days of the early spring of 1918 passed away, with no other signs of exactly what form the year's events were to take. It seemed almost as if the art of war had become matter of fact, until, as will now be seen, suddenly the whole aspect changed, and all the machinery of modern war rolled on in its dreadful fulness.

"The last shall be first, and the first last." It is no idle saying, and in this war time and again the forces of Germany have helped to prove its truth. First with preparedness, first with boastings, first (as in 1914) with mad rushes and unchecked advances, first with unscrupulous methods and vile practices, first in all

things excepting those which make a nation great and ultimately bring it triumphant to its goal. Now we know it is not the heated initial victories (however great they may seem to be) which ensure finality, but the steadfastness which can endure, and the firmness which knows no wavering. And when all things are analysed, and accomplishments, even in these military matters, valued at their true worth, in the end write "Last" against the name of Germany. We wish we could have realised this truth in the days of spring, 1918. It is safe to say that though optimism was one of the greatest assets of the British Army, in those days of March and April, 1918, the stoutest heart could not help but wonder, and possibly doubt, as he beheld this gigantic machine known as the German armies, rolling along and seemingly crushing everything in its wake. For it was given to Germany to lead first in the year which brought the end of the war, and as if staking everything upon this last blow, she launched an attack upon the British armies, which probably has no parallel in human history. It was the same old story of 1914 repeated—enormous piles of munitions, hordes of men thrown indiscriminately against our forces, the value of life ignored, the chief consideration being to gain ground, and restore by such means the waning confidence of the German peoples. Let it be said at once, this was accomplished; for no human force could withstand the power of such an attack as the foe then launched, and the British troops fell back. The withdrawal extended for miles and miles until it seemed that the great German cry, "To Paris" would be realised, and all our efforts have proved in vain. How gallantly those men from every walk in life in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, fought on that occasion. Who can

tell what they endured, what suffered? At times surrounded by the moving mass, fighting with the knowledge that certain death was to be their reward, but hanging on whilst there was life, and, above all, by this wonderful sacrifice, delaying, to some extent, the rush of the foe. Let Canada ever honour the native sons of her mother country, who were the chief sufferers upon this occasion. The day looked black, the prospects gloomy, but still the wonderful spirit of confidence that right will prevail is once more summoned to our aid, and that great message from England flashes across the channel, meaning, "for every shell another shell, for every gun another gun, and for every man another man." With such a spirit, is there any wonder that we won?

It is with some timidity that we write of the doings of the Third Canadian Division during this critical period. At first sight it would appear to be trivial, being, for the most part, a duty of waiting expectancy. The division was in the centre of the Vimy sector, facing Lens and Mericourt. To the far right and the left of them, the enemy was launching his fierce attack, but not hurling his forces against this particular part of the line. At times it seemed as though a cordon would be drawn around the division, so extensive was the advance of the Germans, and on two occasions at least orders came through for the field ambulance to "stand to," prepared to withdraw at an hour's notice, and weary nights were passed waiting for the definite order as to what was to be done. Fortunately, a general retreat, so far as this part of the line was concerned, was avoided, and the force of the attack spent itself, wasting away in its own fury, as so many others had done, and finding the Canadians still holding their line, with just slightly

changed positions. The Third Canadian Division had now extended its frontage, taking over another part of the line immediately to the right of them, which had been held by British troops, who had been rushed to help stem the German advance. This necessitated the field ambulance taking over other posts to clear this additional part of the line, and the advanced dressing station at Willerval was used, clearing through there and Thelus back to the main dressing station at Aux Rietz. This new advanced dressing station, however, was soon changed, for the general condition of things forced the Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade to withdraw their front line system slightly, and this withdrawal left the Willerval station practically adjoining the then front line. The Farbus-Willerval road leading to it became greatly exposed, for, even prior to the withdrawal, there had been very heavy enemy shelling, making it a most hazardous venture for motor ambulances to attempt to reach the station. It was, therefore, turned into a regimental aid post to serve the new front line, and the advanced dressing station at Vimy was used for the whole of the divisional frontage. It was the best arrangement that could be made to meet the emergency, but one which caused another unimaginable hardship to the poor stretcher bearers, who now had to carry wounded from this right sector 3,500 yards across the open country before reaching the advanced dressing station at Vimy.

It must not be imagined, for one moment, when we say that the German attack of 1918 did not touch our part of the line, that this means the Canadians were solely neglected, and left to a time of leisure, ease, and comparative security. Far from it. Certainly there were days and nights of "waiting," with apparently

"nothing doing," times when patience was almost exhausted, and anxiety overwhelming, as each report brought the news of further advances. Everybody expected one of two things, either the line now held by the Third Division would soon receive its onslaught, or the men would be sent to relieve the tired and exhausted men who had been receiving the force of the fury. The latter was the more popular opinion, and one little incident serves to indicate the trend of thought, and to show again the ever-ready wit which the Canadian troops had at command. The Y.M.C.A., in spite of disasters and rumours of disasters, still went smoothly along entertaining the men in their large marquees at La Targette Corner. One night the place was packed, whilst a concert or entertainment was being presented, when the "show" was abruptly stopped for the following announcement:—"All men of the Third Canadian Division Trench Mortar Battery will report to headquarters at once." No one doubted what it meant, but no sooner had the announcement been made than the whole house with one accord took up the then popular chorus, "Good-bye-ee, Don't sigh-ee, Wipe a tear, lady dear, from your eye-ee, It's hard to part we know," etc., finishing the verse with a loud "Good-bye-ee," the strength of which can only be understood by those who know the power of soldiers' lungs.

But we were not forgotten by the German powers, for, as the great attack progressed, he concentrated his artillery upon the Canadian section of the line with a force in full keeping with the power of his general attack. Probably this was for a general purpose, to keep the Canadians all uncertain as to what the intention was, and, therefore, to prevent any considerable transfer of

troops to the heart of the attack. Varying this with occasional raids or miniature attacks, it must be said that if this was the enemy's intention he certainly succeeded. His shelling of our positions was most intense. On one occasion, after the post at Willerval had been changed into a regimental aid post, it was bombarded continuously for a period of three hours. It is estimated that upwards of three hundred heavy shells (4.2's and 5.9's) were thrown into the immediate area, and the sunken road in front of the station was filled to a depth of a foot with loose earth. Twelve of the ambulance stretcher bearers were in the station at the time, and it certainly seemed as if they had been caught like "rats in a trap." It was nothing short of a miracle that they escaped unhurt, and was another of those occurrences of the war, which you may call "a special dispensation of Providence."

There are several personal incidents worthy of mention at this time. While the motor ambulances were still running along that treacherous road to Willerval in the darkness of the night, with its shell holes and all the other terrors of a main road to the front line, on one of the return journeys, one of the ambulance cars, carrying six badly wounded men, was hit by shellfire and totally put out of commission on the top of Farbus Hill. A more wretched night and a more hopeless condition could scarcely be imagined. The darkness was "thick," the rain poured in torrents, the whole vicinity was alive with exploding shells, and here in the midst of it a standing car containing six wounded men, unable to proceed farther. But the drivers of the car were used to circumstances requiring cool judgment and quick decision, and soon their line of action was adopted. With

the medical orderly who had accompanied the cases, they carried the wounded men on their backs to a shell hole or other slight shelter both from the rain and shells. After calmly getting every man comparatively safe, they walked the rest of the journey to the main dressing station at Aux Rietz, got another car, went back to where they had left the men, and brought each one safely to the main dressing station. For the resourcefulness and bravery exhibited on this occasion the first driver of the car, No. 500843 Drv. F. S. Woolner, was afterwards awarded the Military Medal.

The enemy barrage continued heavily, and gradually increased its range, until the whole area from the front to as far back as Mont St. Eloi was covered. One day in particular, March 28th, the positions of Vimy Ridge, Thelus, La Targette, Aux Rietz, and Mont St. Eloi, were heavily shelled, and many casualties resulted, particularly from amongst the 58th Canadian Battalion and other troops who were located in the vicinity of the main dressing station. On that day more than one hundred wounded passed through the station at Aux Rietz, and when it is realised that these were from amongst the men not actually in the line, it will be seen how hard it is to really define the point of demarkation between the "front" and "back" areas.

The road past the main dressing station at Aux Rietz was now a scene of bustle and activity. At no time could the corner there be called a "health spot," but whilst the ambulance was handling its casualties there, to add to the natural troubles, a battery of heavy guns established itself a few yards below the station, and it is not necessary to tell the reader what this would mean after the enemy had located its approximate position.

Suffice it to say that the work in the station was carried on under great difficulties, and, naturally, the number of wounded was always considerable.

The Germans still continued using gas shells heavily in their bombardment of our positions, and from Vimy away back along the main roads they scattered this deadly poison, making the roads almost impassable. This was a great handicap to the ambulance men, and particularly to the car drivers as they strove to reach the advanced stations. During the war men were trained to wear the box respirator as a protection against the gas during all kinds of duties. The stretcher bearers have often had to use them as they carried their cases, and even the artillery men would feed their guns wearing their mask, but it can easily be understood how difficult this makes any work which requires particularly clearness of vision, and for a motor ambulance driver to be compelled to wear the mask when he has to peer through the impenetrable darkness, almost by instinct seeing shell holes which he must avoid, and judging the distance of exploding shells, though a life-saver in one respect, this might prove the reverse in others. In the early morning of March 28th, one of the ambulance cars proceeded forward to the Vimy advanced dressing station to clear cases, and also take the acting officer commanding (Lieut.-Col. E. R. Selby) and the sergeant-major (G. H. Taylor) on a necessary tour of inspection through the forward posts. The gas was particularly heavy at this time, and almost before the driver and occupants of the car were aware of it they had plunged into the thickness of the gas. The driver, No. 426019 G. K. Perry was severely gassed and had to be brought back and evacuated, whilst Sgt.-Major G. H. Taylor also suffered considerably



from the same cause. This is just an incident typical of the general conditions which existed on this part of the line, which the Germans kept thus occupied to divert attention from the central location of their huge attack.

The scene around the Aux Rietz corner continued to be lively and active. Everybody was certainly kept on the ragged edge of uncertainty. Events in the air were also one round of excitement. On one occasion a famous German balloon destroyer made a whole round of five of our balloons, which were observing in a large circle, and coolly and methodically sent one after the other to the ground in flames. This was accomplished almost in less time than it takes to tell of it, which will give some idea of the daily material cost of this enormous war.

In the shelling of the rear areas the village of Neuville St. Vaast—the place so familiar to the men of the ambulance during the taking of Vimy Ridge—received its share of attention from the activity of the enemy. He shelled the village itself—or the site where the village had evidently been located—incessantly, and also the main road leading from there to Thelus. On one occasion the 43rd Canadian Battalion were billeted in the old dugouts in that locality, and in the early morning, before the men were up, several shells were dropped right in their midst. Many casualties were inflicted upon the battalion, all the more regrettable because the men had only just returned from the front-line trenches. The ambulances from Aux Rietz were kept very busy running to and fro collecting these wounded cases and afterwards evacuating them to the casualty clearing station. One of the wounded men was the means of bringing forth an exhibition of prompt action and cool decision, which is worthy of note. This man was wounded in a vital spot

in the throat, and a comrade who was next to him, seeing the evidently great danger from the enormous loss of blood, immediately rushed to him, stopping or controlling the blood by pressure until the arrival of the battalion medical officer, Capt. W. J. MacKenzie, of Calgary. The latter continued the pressure as the man was carried down the road to the main dressing station. An operation was necessary before any effective remedy could be assured, so that, after bandaging the wound as well as possible, Captain MacKenzie and Sergeant-Major Taylor accompanied the man in the car, each relieving the other in the hard and tiresome but necessary task of maintaining the pressure until he reached the casualty clearing station, and was immediately operated upon. There is no doubt whatever but that this man would have bled to death had it not been for that cool and prompt action in just stopping the bleeding in the first place.

One of the new officers of the ambulance early made the supreme sacrifice. Capt. J. Carmichael, who had been with the Calgary medical unit for only a few weeks, had gone forward for his first tour of duty in the front line. On the afternoon of April 4th, he proceeded, as was usual, on an official visit to other medical posts under the jurisdiction of the ambulance. He was accompanied by No. 530008 Cpl. J. M. F. Irvine, M.M. As they were going along Hudson Trench, a shell alighted immediately in front of them, badly wounding both. Infantry men close by carried them to where they could receive attention, and they were then brought back to the main dressing station at Aux Rietz in the usual course. Captain Carmichael was the more seriously wounded, and he passed away at the casualty clearing station the same evening. This young officer had proved himself most

capable and genial during his short stay with the unit, and his loss was greatly regretted. How haphazard are the fortunes of war! How often have such cases happened! One man would go "over there," staying, through all the dangerous experiences, for months and even years, practically unhurt, whilst another would arrive one week, and possibly the next would be carried back a casualty, or find his last resting place "in Flanders fields." We knew of one case where, if the man's own statement be true, he had enlisted, gone overseas, proceeded to France, from the base to the front, was wounded and on his way back, all within the space of six weeks. Can one wonder that many of those who had weathered many a storm of furious battle would envy such an one could he have been assured of just a comfortable "Blighty"? This carries our mind back many months. But we are relating a few anecdotes and incidents, and it will not be irrelevant. One young officer from Alberta visited the ambulance when it was in rest, and there came across a member of the ambulance who had known him in pre-war days. They enjoyed a short conversation, and as the officer left, he said, jokingly, "Well, the next time I see you I hope I'll have a nice 'Blighty.'" He was in a severe action shortly afterwards, where he was seriously wounded, and to-day may be seen in a certain town of Alberta minus a leg, which was the price he paid for a trip to "Blighty."

Towards the middle of April conditions quietened somewhat. The German attack was dying down, and the British were hastening men—many untried and almost untrained—to the scene of action. Another trying ordeal had been temporarily overcome. Certainly much ground had been lost, and the efforts of many months, and the

sacrifices of many lives, almost seemed to have been in vain. But, once again it could be said no particularly prominent point had fallen to the enemy. Paris was still free. The channel ports were still open, and though Germany might joyfully proclaim the news of so many "kilometres" captured to a people waiting to be fed on the husks of battle, still the Allies' line presented a front of resistance to this giant opponent. If the number of French villages taken, the breadth of the ground captured, were the criterions, Germany had already won, but if a quiet voice could have whispered to her military chiefs, it might, with convincing emphasis have said, "Be not deceived. Truth is all triumphant. A steadfast purpose, and an unbroken spirit, shall prove mightier than a boasting, and even advancing, army."

On April 11th all the members of the field ambulance were ordered back once more to the village of Grand Servins, and here, in this quiet and picturesque location, they carried on the less dangerous duty of war by attending the sick of the division, and receiving the slightly wounded from the forward area who might be sent down for a few days' rest and treatment.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *A QUIET SUMMER.*

It will not take long for us to traverse the months of May, June and July, 1918, for the Third Canadian Division practically spent the summer in moving from one place to another in the rear area. The rank and file could not understand this enforced idleness. Certainly the great attack of the Germans had come to a standstill, and having failed in its chief purpose, a retaliation was looked for from the British troops, who had now been reinforced with large numbers of men, while guns and ammunition were replaced and increased. There was spasmodic fighting on most of the fronts, but nothing of a substantial character, and the Canadians, with but few exceptions, watched from a distance, wondering what this quietness all meant. It is not necessary to say "there was a reason," but meanwhile conjecture was rife, until, connecting rumour with conditions, the Canadians were named, probably by themselves, but still more or less correctly, "Foch's shock troops." We hope to be able to point out later how well this title was afterwards earned. But, meanwhile, the summer days were passing. Why did not the Germans renew the attack, or why did not we launch an offensive? The time was not ripe for us, and as for the Germans, there was a limit to the extent even they could go in the ruthless sacrificing of lives for no worthy gain. During these months the "influenza" epidemic swept over Europe, and it was said that, possibly, this accounted for the marking-time of the Germans, although

we prefer to believe it was rather the gradual waning of their resources which prevented them from renewing or maintaining their great spring attack of 1918. The common disease affected the British armies in the field. Men would be stricken down whilst on the line of march, and many hundreds were affected. So acute did this become that the medical services were overtaxed, and on one occasion, to relieve the pressure, "B" section of No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance was rushed from the village of Westrehem to Camblain l'Abbe to assist the Eighteenth British Corps with the many cases which were occurring. During the summer months the Canadians also suffered considerably from this complaint, and the ambulances were kept busy in taking care of the sick men. Fortunately, in the field ambulance itself, only a few of the men were affected, which was undoubtedly due to preventive measures which were taken, every man being compelled to parade twice daily for a throat gargle.

The summer months passed quietly and pleasantly. Staying at Grand Servins from April 13th until May 2nd, the field ambulance operated the rest station, and kept an average of from sixty-five to eighty of the sick men in the hospital there daily. It was a busy spot, but pleasant work, and the big recreation grounds adjoining the site, together with the huts also available, enabled the men to have a real good time with all outdoor sports as well as indoor concerts and entertainments.

Moving again on May 2nd, the ambulance stayed for awhile at the old site of Estree Cauchie, but baggage was not even unpacked on this occasion, as orders had been issued to be prepared to move on a few hours' notice, so that it was not surprising when definite instructions followed, and the ambulance again moved, this time to the

town of Burbure, just outside the city of Lillers. The unit stayed here for eighteen days, and it must be said it proved one of the best "camping-grounds." The people of the place were most hospitable, and we are sure that the name will bring back many pleasant recollections to all who had the good fortune to be with the ambulance at that time. Occasionally shells were dropped in the place, but without much damage, and the adjoining city of Lillers, which by now had become almost depopulated, was subjected to considerable bombardment. Sports were still indulged in, and many exciting football matches played, the ambulance up to May 31st having a good record for that year of eight wins and three draws out of a total of twelve games played. In Burbure there was no French civilian doctor, so that, in addition to attending to the troops in that area, the ambulance had a considerable "practice" amongst the civilians who attended daily in quite large numbers at the old schoolhouse, where a dressing station was established.

There was another move on May 25th to the very pleasant and picturesque village of Rely. Here a "tented city" was erected for the accommodation of patients. A little excitement was caused in the village one night by a fire breaking out in one of the farmers' barns, but this was eventually got under control with the assistance of the soldiers. Probably Staff-Sergeant Hay will remember waking that night, with the crackling of the fire, reminding one of rifle-shots, combined with the hurry-scurry of the villagers and the general excitement, and saying, dreamily, to his old comrade as he thought of enemy advances and rumours of advances, "It must be Fritz." But it wasn't, and, fortunately, a forced trip to the country of the enemy was not to be. The unexpected

happened here, and another casualty was added to the growing list of the field ambulance. On May 30th one of the motor ambulances was ordered for duty with the Assistant Inspector of Drafts, who was on tour from the base inspecting men in the forward area for the elimination of those unfit for front-line service. No. 512078 Pte. R. R. Edwards was the driver of the car, and, as he was taking it through Lillers, a shell exploded near it, wounding the driver very seriously, and slightly wounding the officer and the sergeant who was with him. Though so very seriously wounded, Driver Edwards steered the car out of danger, then assisted in getting a wounded civilian on the car, afterwards driving it until he finally collapsed. He died of his wounds a few days later at the casualty clearing station, and for his unsurpassed devotion to duty upon this occasion he was awarded, posthumously, the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Then followed another series of marches all in the back areas. From Rely, on June 22nd, the ambulance marched to Westrehem, bivouacking in an open field, and staying there for three days, when, on June 25th, another march was commenced, extending over two days, to Avesnes les Comte, a total distance of twenty-five miles. These marches were now getting very trying to the men, the hot weather causing much irritation. The influenza was still raging, and it was necessary for lorries to be secured to assist the ambulances in transporting many hundreds of cases which fell out on the line of march afflicted with this bad disease.

Meanwhile, from each place where the men rested for any length of time, manœuvres were engaged in. Sham battles were fought between the different battalions, and units proceeded forward locating and changing positions



in the open, as the "engagements" warranted. It was like learning a new art of war, but it could be only for one purpose, that of ushering in the gladly-awaited day, when the old system of trench warfare would pass away, and at last our men should come in hand-to-hand encounter with the despised enemy.

Although so much ground had been covered on the days of June 25th and June 26th, no rest was allowed at Avesnes les Comte, for, on the next day, June 27th, the men of the ambulance were seen marching early to the village of Le Fermont, this district being the reserve area for the line south of Arras, which was taken over from units of the Second Canadian Division. Motor ambulances and lorries followed the men of the battalions to this area, and were again kept extremely busy in transporting the men taken sick with the influenza on the way. The weather still kept very hot, with the roads extremely dusty, and the poor ambulance drivers, who were working night and day, presented peculiar spectacles, with faces and clothes literally covered from the clouds of dust through which they drove. To give some idea of the work they accomplished during this week of continual moves it may be said that one car alone travelled 697 miles during one week, and this was by no means an extreme case, for the work was equally divided amongst the cars. The field ambulance, on arrival at Le Fermont, also took over the main dressing station at Bac-du-Sud, situated on the main Arras-Doullens road. At Le Fermont also, to endeavour to keep the influenza cases isolated in the area, many tents were erected, and these were soon filled with men suffering from the disease. A routine system of treatment was put in vogue, and it is satisfactory to record

that the ambulance method was very effective, it being necessary to evacuate only a few cases showing signs of serious development. Several hundred men were cured and enabled to return to duty with their unit.

For the main part, whilst in this area, there was nothing exceptional. Things were normal, and only spasmodic artillery activity was in evidence, thus minimising casualties. On a few occasions, however, the back areas were heavily shelled by the enemy, and to make matters worse, right in front of the ambulance site at Le Fermont, a huge ammunition dump had been placed, which was an object of marked attention from the German bombing planes at night in their efforts to locate it. There were many sick to be attended to in this area. In addition to large daily parades at Le Fermont, others were also held at Grosville, Bailleuval and Beaumetz-les-Loges. All this district was thickly congested with troops, Canadians and British, and though not many wounded were passing through, it will easily be seen, from this, that the ambulance was kept very fully occupied. Two companies of blacks of the British West Indies troops were labouring not far from Le Fermont, and afforded additional work, with possibly also humorous variety, as they endeavoured to explain their ills, and to impress the seriousness of them with their, "Honest to Gawd, captain, I can't sleep."

On the evening of July 19th Le Fermont district was heavily shelled by the enemy, the shells dropping in and around the station itself, and causing a few casualties to men billeted close by. Some of the country in this district was hilly and woody, and the stretcher bearers and ambulance cars were all called out, searching for and collecting wounded men as a result of the bombardment

on that sunny evening. For a few hours the place was alive with shell fire, and the fact of the tents being pitched in the open ground, with many sick cases, added to the strenuousness of the occasion. Imagine, if you can, the exact conditions—a pleasant farming country, the summer sun shining brightly preparatory to setting in the west, a little “tented city,” where lie soldiers under sick treatment, one minute all quiet and serene, resembling a place of quiet recuperation, the next the well-known hiss of approaching shells, cries for stretcher bearers and ambulance cars; whilst others, perforce, devote their attention to the sick men, carrying them, for safety, out of their tents, to havens of refuge, which, on this occasion, were old trenches which previously had been the scenes of much action. Many of the tents were ruined by the shell fire, but, fortunately, all the patients were saved, and, amidst the shelling, they were eventually carried to ambulance cars, and sent farther back, whilst the wounded were also carried in, promptly attended to, and transported to the main dressing station. This is just a sidelight on ambulance work, and is indicative of the calls made upon the men at all times and under all conditions. When the casualties were all cleared and all the sick men sent away, then, and then only, the men thought of themselves, and found seclusion in the surrounding trenches.

Capt. W. M. Robb had now left the unit, having gone to the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles in exchange with Capt. D. C. Malcolm, who joined the ambulance. Other new officers in the ambulance were Capts. J. B. Hanly and J. T. Green.

The summer was now well on its way. The time was ripening, and soon the hand at the back of the Allies was to show itself, and deal the final blow.

## CHAPTER XX.

### *THE BEGINNING OF THE END.*

THE strategy which marked the Canadians' part in the great British offensive in the early days of August, 1918, was remarkable for its simplicity and effectiveness. No outward sign was visible to the enemy as to where the blow would be struck. Indeed, the troops themselves were kept in a state of uncertain expectancy. Rumour had it that it would be northward in Flanders again where they would make the attack, but, as is now well known, this proved but a rumour. All movements were made in the darkness of the night, not even a waggon could be unloaded in the light of day, so as to obscure from the enemy the whereabouts and intentions of the Canadians. Many weary marches were made in the most circuitous route during the nights of July, and to mislead the enemy the simple plan was put into effect of sending just a few of the troops to the line in the area of Lillers, where they could be identified by the enemy, although the whole corps were at that time bound for a place far removed from there. These simple measures seem trivial, but their value cannot be estimated, for to them can be attributed much of the success which followed, as they accomplished the greatest of all things in an attack—the complete surprise of the enemy. The movements of the field ambulance can be taken as an example of the general plan. Starting from Le Fermont on July 23rd, the men first marched to Wanquetin, where they stayed

until July 29th. On that day they proceeded again to the village of Warluzel, and from here marched to Doullens, where they entrained for the town of Saleux, south of Amiens. This was really the area of the intended attack, but as some days still had to elapse before all plans were in readiness, the men were not allowed to remain even in this back area of the proposed "starting point." They were, therefore, taken a distance of some twenty-five or thirty miles by lorries, which were obtained after a few hours' wait at the Saleux Station, to the very pleasant and picturesque village of Belloy St. Leonard. The only real inconvenience caused on this prolonged journey was the fact that the transport, by reason of these long moves, had now become absolutely detached and temporarily "lost," so that the question of rations was rather a serious one, and it is safe to say that the villagers of Belloy St. Leonard never did such a trade as on this occasion in the sale of eggs and other provisions when the ambulance men stayed there. However, ultimately the supply depot was located, and sufficient rations got to tide the men over until all transport was connected with the respective units.

Probably the longest march ever done by the ambulance men at one time was that from Belloy St. Leonard. Starting at eight o'clock on the night of August 2nd, the men marched for a distance between thirty-five and forty miles in ten hours, arriving at about 6.30 the following morning at their destination, which was a large and magnificent building previously used as a lunatic asylum just south of Amiens. It was a weary journey, but yet pleasant recollections are attached to it at this time, as we think of the men swinging along, with songs during the hours of the night to stem the approach of exhaustion,

and of the good feeling which existed amongst all ranks as they marched, and marched, and marched. The road was, of course, an unfamiliar one, with just map locations to indicate the course, and it is not surprising that at times slight diversions were made from the correct route. We can recall humorously now the picture of the officer commanding going ahead of his men on one occasion in the early hours of the morning, with just his flashlight shining to endeavour to trace footsteps which would lead him in the correct path. However, "All's well that ends well," and as the men walked into the yard of the magnificent building and saw the ambulance "Mulligan Battery" steaming away with something hot, previous discomforts were forgotten, and, with the soldiers' adaptability, the new place speedily became home. There was not much of a breathing spell allowed, for, on the morning of August 4th, a conference of the field ambulance commanders was held, from which resulted another great honour to Calgary's ambulance, No. 8 again being chosen to be responsible for clearing the Third Canadian Division part of the front in the first of the proposed big attacks, which was scheduled for the early morning of August 8th. The men were speedily rushed to the forward posts to become familiar with the area of the attack, and the few days which were at their disposal until "the day" were fully occupied in obtaining large stocks of stretchers and medical supplies, and with the planning and placing of the men. On the night of August 5th the ambulance moved to a chateau on the main road leading to the villages of Gentelles and Domart. For the few days prior to the attack this was operated as a main dressing station, and in fact was used as such during the first hours of the big advance. The

Third Canadian Division had assigned to it as its portion in the day's plan a sector lying north and west of the River Luce, including the village of Hanguard. The greater portion of the objective lay on the opposite side of the river, and to cross this only one causeway or bridge was in the hands of the Canadians. The village or hamlet of Hourges was, however, also held by the attacking troops, and this, with other flat land adjoining was sufficient to accommodate the first of the attacking battalions. Beyond this the ground rose in a gently rolling manner, and on the extreme right faced Dodo Wood, which was a very strong position for defence.

The field ambulance kept its transport and headquarters back at the chateau, with instructions to prepare to move forward at the shortest notice. The first advance station was established in dugouts at Gentelles on the main road leading to the centre of the attack, whilst farther forward an intermediate station was established in the village of Domart, just in front of Hourges. We say a "station" was established here, but in reality this consisted merely of the street corner, with just a small underground dugout to keep emergency dressings, supplies and rations. Everything was in readiness on the evening of August 7th. Supplies and men had been sent forward, and waited for the breaking of day to begin what proved to be the great turning point in the events of the war. The light of that summer morning at length broke upon these waiting masses of men and materials. No longer was it to be an attack protected by darkness, on an enemy who could hardly be seen, but a real fight, a hand-to-hand encounter, and, best of all, a continued and steady drive. Ready at hand were supply waggons loaded and prepared to proceed

forward with the movement of the advance, and it is almost impossible to believe that all the preparations had been so effectively carried out, almost under the very nose of the enemy, and yet obscured from him. The day breaks, the guns burst forth, the tanks roll to the attack, clearing all obstructions, and the gallant Canadians rush into the fray, carrying everything before them, so complete was the surprise and so effective every force employed. Naturally there was some opposition, for the wood ahead was filled with German heavy guns, which blazed away in an effort to stem the attack. These played on the tanks and the men until they came within a few yards, when they would coolly throw up their hands for surrender and mercy. Soon, however, it was a wood of silence and of death, with great quantities of German guns behind the Canadians, and surrounding them the members of the crews, who had paid the price of their opposition.

Early after the commencement the ambulance men had reached the first of the wounded, and these they carried back to the street corner at Domart, where they commenced to arrive as early as 5.30 in the morning. Soon the street was lined with stretchers, and surrounding them the walking cases sat and rested, whilst the ambulance men retained for duty here passed busily up and down, rendering first-aid, and sending the wounded farther down to the more secluded dressing station at Gentelles. Never was such a day, never was such a sight, never was such an experience as this, the real taste of victorious open warfare. Rolling along the road supply waggons, artillery, infantry, and all branches of the service, moved like clockwork following up the advance, and in the gigantic moving column could be seen the old



field kitchen of the ambulance, with Sergeant Nash in charge, which passed over the bridge, and drew aside into a big yard adjoining what had been intended as a regimental aid post in Hourges. Here this means of refreshment for the wounded men was soon "open for business," and temporarily catered to those whose duty for the day was brought to a close by the wounds they had received. We wish we could properly picture the scene of that morning. It has only one comparison, resembling a scene of war previously confined to the imagination of the moving picture operator. The long, long road, the open fields, with artillery blazing away and lengthening their range every few minutes, and in the road between this "advancing" bombardment the great column of moving men and material passed forward to maintain the attack, whilst meeting them on the return journey is the glad sight of hundreds of German prisoners, who had fallen easy prey to the mighty rush of our troops. It was a day of good humour, a humour even shared by the captured Germans. One of our men shouts over to them, "Eh, Fritz, we're off to Berlin," to which one knowing German replies in broken English and with a laughing voice, "Ah, you Berlin, me London," evidently well pleased with his share of the bargain. The wounded were cleared in quick style, and it is a fact worth recording that during the morning more German wounded were found than our own men. Naturally, there were some bad casualties, particularly from the tank crews, several of the tanks being set on fire, and terrible suffering caused to the men, but these were rescued as far as possible, and everything that could be done was done by the ambulance men. The post at Domart was cleared of its wounded by noon, when this site was abandoned, and the men on duty there moved forward to

Hourges, this now being the collecting post for casualties prior to their removal to Gentelles. At 1.30 p.m. it could be said the field was practically clear of the wounded from the first attack, and the infantry now occupied their objective, which was an advance of over four miles, with the Fourth Canadian Division now pushing ahead in front of them, and steadily keeping the enemy on a continued retreat. The ambulance kept in close touch with the battalions of the division, and bivouacked at night in a field on the edges of Vignette and Valley Woods on the right sector and at the southern end of Cere Wood on the left. The successful day came quietly to an end for the Third Division, and, as stated above, the Fourth Division now relieved them, and by their continuance of the advance made this occupied position in the course of a few hours a back area. During the night casualties arrived at Hourges in steady numbers, being chiefly Germans, with quite a good number of Frenchmen. The latter had been in close touch with the Canadians, fighting immediately to the right of them and advancing in full accord with their movements. We want to place on record a word of admiration for these gallant and sturdy French fighters. It is difficult to imagine a more solid and determined body of men, who fought and endured always regardless of themselves, and evidently with the fixed idea of just doing their duty. On that night as they came through the ambulance station at Hourges one of them explained that the Germans had attempted a counter-attack on their part of the line, and being asked did they (the French) give ground, shook his head, with hand pointing fixedly to the ground, and explained in his decisive manner that they stood firm. The force of this could be fully realised only by passing over the centre of the action, and finding, as the ambulance

men did, the field over which these Frenchmen fought, and which had been swept with enemy machine-gun fire, scattered with the bodies of these gallant Frenchmen, their position, even in death, signifying victory as they knelt in this last sleep of all, fully accoutred, with faces forward and hands grasping rifles, whilst one carried with him a message with a photograph of some loved one, who wrote "Receive you my photograph. It will bring you good luck and protection." These brave soldiers "went west," not defeated.

After resting in their positions until the night of August 9th, the Third Canadian Division again moved forward to attack once more. On this occasion the clearance of the field was in the hands of No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance, with stretcher bearers from No. 8 assisting. The unit itself was, therefore, free for a time. The party at Gentelles moved forward to rejoin the main body, and the transport and men bivouacked on the night of August 9th in the south-easterly part of Hamon Wood, where the enemy disturbed the otherwise peaceful country by heavy bombing raids, and did much damage along the road, particularly in casualties amongst horses. On the 11th of August, the ambulance again moved forward, this time to Quesnel, where camouflaged shelters were occupied under a short row of small apple trees in a large field, and where they stayed, almost without incident, until August 19th, whilst attacks were renewed, and gradually the infantry drew near to the much-coveted position of Roye.

It is indicative of the low casualties that the field ambulance had only four of its men wounded during these advances, one of whom (No. 523810 Pte. H. W. Dickens) died. Up to noon of August 11th the Third Canadian Division casualties numbered 1,563, whilst the

unwounded prisoners taken by the division in the same period totalled 2,915. The whole attack had been a complete success, and the Third Division was highly commended. Sir Douglas Haig called at the divisional headquarters to specially congratulate the division on its work, whilst special orders were issued as follows:—

“On that date (August 8th) the Canadian Corps, to which was attached the Third Cavalry Division, the Fourth Tank Brigade, the Fifth Squadron R.A.F., attacked on a front of 7,500 yards. After a penetration of 22,000 yards, the line to-night rests on a 1,000-yard frontage. Sixteen German divisions have been identified, of which four have been completely routed. Nearly 150 guns have been captured, while over 1,000 machine guns have fallen into our hands. Ten thousand prisoners have passed through our cages and casualty clearing stations, a number greatly in excess of our total casualties. Twenty-five towns and villages have been rescued from the clutch of the invader, the Paris-Amiens railway has been freed from interference, and the danger of dividing the French and British armies has been dissipated.

“ (Signed) A. W. CURRIE,

“ Lieutenant-General.”

“ I desire to place on record my sincere appreciation of the conspicuous and highly successful part played by the Canadian corps in the battle of August 8th. The task allotted to them was not easy, especially on the right, where the initial attack of the Third Canadian Division was delivered under special difficulties.

“ (Signed) H. RAWLINSON,

“ General, Commanding Fourth Army.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

### *CLEARING THE WAY FROM ARRAS TOWARDS CAMBRAI.*

HAVING once started the offensive in no uncertain style, there was to be no rest for the victorious troops. Fresh from the success of the battles from Amiens to Roye, the Canadians were now moved to the vicinity of Arras, which was to be the centre of the next sledge-hammer blows of our men. The field ambulance moved from the Amiens area on the evening of August 10th, being conveyed in 'buses from near Maison Blanche to a point north-east of Doullens, from where the men marched to Humbercourt, arriving there at daybreak. Once more all moves were during the night, rests being taken at the various places during the intervening days. From Humbercourt the men marched to the old site at Warluzel, then to Denier, and from there to a casualty clearing site at Agnez-les-Duisans.

The attack was scheduled for the morning of August 26th, and was to be from Arras on to Monchy-les-Preux, forming really the initial drive which was to culminate in the fall of Cambrai. The field ambulance had assigned to it the duty of clearing from the main dressing station all the walking wounded, and for this purpose they established themselves in the school for girls in the city of Arras. This was a commodious place, although partly in ruins, but the large rooms afforded excellent accommodation, and, profiting by previous experience, the building was speedily converted into a main dressing

station for walking wounded. As the wounded men entered they were directed along aisles roped off and provided with seats, where the men could rest whilst waiting for attention, and after having each separate case recorded, and each man provided with his casualty card, they passed in a short circuitous route to a large "ring," also separated with ropes, where the dressing was done, after which the men went on through an opposite door to a refreshment room run by the Y.M.C.A., who freely provided hot drinks and food, not forgetting the proverbial cigarette. The final exit was directly opposite to the entrance, thus avoiding all confusion, and the men stepped out to the waiting lorries, which conveyed them back to the casualty clearing stations. The arrangements were ideal and worked perfectly, the only difficulty being that at night it was impossible to use this large room above ground, owing to the danger from enemy bombing, which would be intensified by open lights. Therefore, at night time it was necessary to resort to underground cellars in the building, and though the accommodation was limited, and on occasions became rather overcrowded, still this emergency place answered the purpose until the light of day once more broke forth.

The morning of August 26th opened in wet and miserable weather, but the attack was made as scheduled, and by 5.30 in the morning the first of the wounded were arriving in the Arras dressing station. The fighting was much more severe than the Amiens attack, but the Third Division made steady progress, and were soon bordering the village of Monchy-le-Preux. In Arras a steady stream of wounded were passing through all day, and at times the capacity of the large dressing station was taxed, but the men worked busily away, and were successful in

coping with the rush, and clearing the cases away without any undue delay. The work was made extremely difficult, as, soon after the attack commenced, the enemy scattered his shell fire on the city of Arras, and the vicinity of the dressing station was heavily shelled throughout the day. Early in the morning one big shell fell right in the yard of the dressing station, and killed one of the lorry drivers, wounded two others and wrecked two of the large lorries which were being used for the transportation of the wounded to the casualty clearing stations. It is miraculous how many more of the men escaped on this occasion, for the yard of the station was filled with wounded and with men on duty, but it was the irony of fate that the other casualties caused by this German shelling were amongst Germans themselves, who had already been once wounded, and were again hit by fragments of their own shells as they waited at the dressing station for attention. It is no easy matter to work under such conditions, with a place crowded with wounded men waiting their turn for attention and evacuation, whilst shells fall around the building, and the cries of the newly wounded divert the thought, but the men of the ambulance again proved themselves worthy of the reputation they had now earned by concentrating energy on the big task in hand, regardless of the very unfavourable circumstances.

Towards noon it was seen that the advance was again likely to be maintained, and instructions were, therefore, sent back to Agnez-les-Duisans, where the transport had been kept ready to move on advice, to come forward to Arras. Unfortunately, this move was made at a most inopportune time during the day, and as the horses and vehicles with the transport personnel entered the city the

main road was blocked with traffic moving forward, which had become slightly disorganised by the heavy shelling of the main road. The transport of the ambulance was compelled to halt until a clearing was made, and during this time shells fell very close, and the quartermaster-sergeant (No. 530083 B. H. Warren)—another Calgary boy—was seriously wounded and died two days later. This N.C.O. was a true comrade and the friend of many, and we cannot refrain from recalling his steadfastness, as, with clenched hands to keep back any expression of the severe pain he was suffering, he enquired from the sergeant-major, "Do you think I have any chance?" Another one to pay the price. Another tribute from the boys of the ambulance. Gradually their numbers decreased. But, victory is being assured, forward the Canadians are engaged in severe hand-to-hand fighting, but gradually and surely the enemy is being ousted, and the number of his own wounded, as they congregate in large numbers in the dressing station at Arras, speaks for itself. Not that they themselves have given up hope, for they still express themselves with confidence. One young fellow of eighteen (possibly his age accounts for his enthusiasm) decisively informs us in good English, "Foch good. Hindenburg better. England no win. Germany win." Whilst another, an officer, theorises, at least to his own satisfaction, on the "ebb and flow," saying "To-day you advance. To-morrow we. It does not make any difference."

The dressing station in Arras was operated until the night of August 28th, and during that time the field ambulance passed through over 2,100 wounded men. The clerical staff was kept busy night and day, and each solitary case was fully recorded, advices of casualties



sent at stated intervals to the base and to the forward headquarters, whilst the separate battalions were notified every twenty-four hours of each individual case. By this system a very accurate check was kept on the losses during these activities.

After the first successful attack commencing on the morning of August 26th, the tired and worn-out troops made another gigantic effort on the 28th, and succeeded in breaking another important line of defence and capturing Artillery Hill and Boiry. This final effort naturally caused another busy time to the men of the ambulance.

Meanwhile the stretcher bearers of the ambulance had been working forward, assisting No. 9 Canadian Field Ambulance in the clearing of the field, whilst the horse ambulances were also working forward bringing back wounded cases. One of the stretcher bearers was seriously wounded, and, in addition, one of the horse ambulances was completely wrecked by a shell which killed both horses and wounded the driver. The ambulance orderly who accompanied the latter, though badly shaken, escaped injury, and resolutely refused transportation which was offered to him, persisting in staying with his wounded comrade until he could be conveyed to safety. This is just one of the many instances of the principles of true comradeship and unselfish friendship which the experiences of the war brought to light.

A division of Imperial troops relieved the Third Canadian Division on the night of August 28th-29th, on which date the ambulance again moved into billets in the institute for the blind, another large building on the outskirts of Arras, which had been much damaged by the continuous shelling of the city.

The events during these few days' incessant fighting

can best be described in the following letter, which was issued to all ranks by the officer commanding the Third Canadian Division, Major-General L. J. Lipsett:—

“ Since the 26th August the division has advanced some 9,000 yards on a front of about 3,000 yards, gradually increasing to 7,000 yards through a strongly defended German system.

“ The important and historic places of Monchy, Pelves, Bois-du-Vert, Bois-du-Sart, Jigsaw Wood, Boiry Notre Dame have all been captured. Five German lines of defence have been crossed. The booty and prisoners captured are as follows:—

- “ About 200 machine guns.
- 22 guns.
- 15 trench mortars.
- Large quantities of other stores.
- 1,424 unwounded prisoners.
- About 211 wounded prisoners.
- Our casualties are about 2,400.

“ The whole operation was, in my opinion, carried out with great skill and courage on the part of officers, N.C.O's and men.

“ I particularly want to thank all ranks for their final effort on 28th August. After the men had been continuously fighting and marching for three days they made a final effort which broke the Fresnes-Rouvroy line, and captured Artillery Hill and Boiry. Every battalion in the division was engaged in this final attack, and I think it gave one of the finest examples possible of what can be accomplished by determined men in spite of fatigue and losses.

“ (Signed) L. J. LIPSETT, Major-General,  
“ Commanding Third Canadian Division.”

## CHAPTER XXII.

### *FACING THE CANAL DU NORD.*

ALL eyes were now fixed longingly upon Cambrai to crown the magnificent successes which had attended the Canadian advance in this sector. This objective seemed a long way off, and the difficulties and obstacles were stupendous, but the events of the past few weeks gave increased hope. The enemy up to the present seemed unable to make any substantial stand against the steady attacks levelled against his positions, and one after another of what had been supposed to be impregnable points of defence fell at the ceaseless hammering of our troops. The Third Division had now been withdrawn from the line for a few days' rest, and the ambulance opened in the institute for the blind at Arras a dressing station to take care of the sick troops in this area. There were so many different divisions located in this centre that this rest station proved a very busy place. From eighty to one hundred patients were kept for rest and treatment, while daily many others were evacuated to the casualty clearing stations. The fighting forward still continued vigorously, and in order to help out in the clearance the field ambulance sent a small party to the light railhead situated at St. Sauveur, on the outskirts of Arras, where they met the casualties coming from the forward area on the train. After rendering any aid necessary they reloaded them on to their ambulance cars, which conveyed the wounded men to the main dressing station for stretcher cases, which was being

operated in the Hospice St. Jean, in the centre of Arras. This was a very valuable work, and assisted greatly in the prompt care of the wounded, for the line was continually advancing, and there being no other suitable place forward for a large main dressing station, it was very necessary for some relay point to be established, so that the wounded men would not be left for too long a period without examination and attention.

The infantry at length pushed forward to a general line in front of the Canal du Nord, and this natural position of defence brought the attacking troops to a standstill for a time. Indeed, it would seem almost impossible to cross, but soon those valiant men of the engineering units erected their bridges in the very face of the enemy, and allowed the infantry once more to pursue their onward course. Prior to this, however, and whilst the troops consolidated in front of the canal, the Third Division was again ordered forward, and on this occasion the 8th Field Ambulance was instructed to be responsible for the clearance of the field. They established advanced dressing stations to the right and left of the line, the former being in an old partially-demolished house at Cagnicourt on the main Arras-Cambrai road, whilst the station for the left sector was in a much more favourable position at Dury, a well-protected dugout in an old quarry being utilised here. A central advanced dressing station to receive from these two posts was also established at the crossroads at Haucourt, just past Vis-en-Artois, and this position was, in addition, used as the advanced headquarters, whilst farther back in the village of Wancourt, the horse transport and rear headquarters remained. Although the actual fighting had now considerably subsided, the open positions of most of the

stations made the work very arduous and fraught with much danger. Particularly at Cagnicourt was the dressing station very much exposed. The enemy had, of course, been recently driven from all these places, and naturally his artillery was trained on the points he knew so well. There was no underground protection for working at Cagnicourt, and it was necessary to dress the wounded as they were brought in, in the top room of the old house, whilst shells were continually falling on every side. The first day the party from the ambulance was on duty there five of the men were wounded whilst attending to patients, and the officer commanding (Lieut.-Col. E. R. Selby) was also slightly wounded from the same shell, and a motor ambulance completely wrecked. Later, another ambulance and water cart were also badly damaged. The station at Dury, though the vicinity was continually shelled was, of course, much better protected and proved a safe position, but farther back at Haucourt, conditions were again far from favourable. There was no available room here for dressing, etc., and practically all the work had to be done out in the open. Situated as it was, directly at a crossroad, with a railway line through it leading up to the front, and being the main road for the passage of men and all transport, it can easily be imagined that this location was a point of considerable attraction to the enemy. Fortunately, about two hundred yards along the main road was a huge German dugout, which provided accommodation for the men, and though the work of the common foe, this impenetrable place in the midst of danger and destruction was much appreciated. The casualties which were handled here were not particularly heavy on account of the attack having temporarily come to a standstill,

although there were quite a considerable number of wounded from the vicinity of the station itself. Gas was being used against our lines freely, and two of the ambulance men were badly affected whilst attending men who had been gassed, and it was necessary to evacuate them immediately to the casualty clearing stations. Possibly the finest air fights which took place were witnessed on this occasion, and it was a brilliant spectacle in the closing hours of the summer evenings to see the sky alive with planes manœuvring for positions, and to see German machines gradually driven to earth by the clever tactics of our airmen. It must be said, however, that the daring of at least one German airman, who specialised against our balloons, was a considerable menace, as in one day alone he destroyed three or four balloons. Eventually he fell a prey to the watchfulness of members of the British air force.

Forward from the ambulance points were the towns of Rumacourt and Ecourt St. Quentin, and on first being entered by parties from the ambulance these were found to be in excellent condition. Civilian inhabitants were rescued from each, men and women who had been held captive for many weary years, and had had the awful experience of being practically between opposing forces, finally being left to the tender mercies of our men by the retreating Germans. Naturally these poor people were in a bad state, physically and mentally, but they were immediately cleared back to Arras, where arrangements were made for their care and attention. In these towns the Germans had left behind, in their hospitals there, considerable quantities of their medical supplies and materials, and it was of great interest to get first-hand evidences of the improvising they had been forced

to. Several bales of bandages were plainly marked "Improvised bandages," and on examination these proved to be made from lace, assorted cloth fabrics, and even of woven paper, whilst there were also shirts or shrouds ingeniously cut from paper. Samples of all of these were brought away, and forwarded to the Canadian Medical Museum.

There were no other outstanding events during this tour of duty, and on September 20th the ambulance was withdrawn to Wanquetin, with no change having taken place in the line.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *ANOTHER MILESTONE PASSED—CAMBRAI IS TAKEN.*

THE military situation did not long remain stationary, and at last it could be definitely asserted that the enemy was being surely defeated. He was, by this time, offering a stouter resistance, for this was the only hope of averting a sudden and complete collapse. Many miles of territory had now been retaken, and important positions captured from him, and as the city of Cambrai loomed up in the distance as the next objective, it was expected that there would be much severe fighting before this actually fell. The infantry had now succeeded in crossing the canal and were pushing well on past Mourves and Bourlin towards the famous city of Cambrai. The ambulance left Wanquetin on September 26th, following the infantry of the division to their advanced locations. The first destination was at Bullecourt, and those who made the journey there from Wanquetin will remember it as one of the most tedious undertaken. Travelling in a very congested state on the French railways for many hours, the men then marched along the main Bullecourt road on a pitch-black night, with rain pouring in torrents, and the one road forward congested with traffic and all branches of the service, whilst the enemy played his artillery consistently on the road, disorganising the traffic, and causing some casualties. Eventually the destination was reached, but the area of comfortable billets was now passed, and the troops were compelled



to bivouac on an open piece of ground, which was just one mass of muddy shell holes, whilst the rain continued unceasingly, and the break of day was anxiously awaited. However, the sunshine of the following morning drove away all thoughts of the previous night's discomforts, and again the men were on the road, following the Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade forward, to which brigade the ambulance had now become attached. That night they stayed at a point between Queant and Pronville on the north side of the road, where a huge cave was discovered and several dugouts, which afforded accommodation for the night. The stretcher bearers, with all the motor and horse ambulances, were sent on from here to join No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance, which unit was now in charge of the clearance of the field in the first of these attacks towards Cambrai. The fighting, which involved Cambrai, commenced on September 28th, and continued fiercely for four or five days. The casualties were heavy, and the Germans desperately contested every yard of the ground, fighting with the realisation that these attacks meant death to all their hopes unless they could be stayed. They opposed the advance especially with heavy machine gun fire, which, it must be confessed, played havoc amongst the gallant men who strove to beat them back. The main body of the field ambulance had now located at Inchy en Artois, close to the ruined but famed village of Mourves, and here at a point close to the light railway they erected big marquees for the reception of cases from the front. These were brought to this point by the motor ambulances clearing forward. All cases were unloaded and dressings reinforced and changed where necessary, every wounded man was given refreshment, and then reloaded on to

trains which carried them back over the light railway to Queant, where the main dressing station was established. Naturally, the difficulty of clearance increased as the advance continued, for there were very few places where suitable locations could be found for effectively handling the casualties, so that the distance between stations became considerable. Consequently this relay post which the ambulance established upon this occasion was indeed very necessary and of great value. Hundreds of cases passed through here, and when it is remembered that practically all the men of the ambulance were forward clearing the field it is difficult to understand how this additional work could be handled. But the few who were left behind for this purpose worked almost without rest, and succeeded in keeping the place clear, and, above all, rendered valuable aid to the suffering men as they travelled on their journey towards "Blighty." Steady progress was being made around Cambrai, and it seemed as if the place would be encircled rather than fall from a central attack. But the enemy still "hung on," so fiercely in fact that there was a pause in the operations, and for a few days the activities ceased. The stretcher bearers were sent back to rest for awhile, but were soon out again, for on the morning of October 8th word was again received for them to go forward with all the ambulances, and on the following day, October 9th, early in the morning, the Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade had the great honour of entering Cambrai on the heels of the retiring foe. The previous days' fighting had told their tale, for on going into the town itself there was practically no opposition, and our troops passed through with very few casualties. This was another great achievement of the war, and was a fitting conclusion to

the magnificent work which had continued, with only short intervals, since August 26th. Starting on that date, just outside Arras, the Canadians had pushed forward, overcoming every obstacle, breaking the famous Hindenburg line, and carrying line after line of strong defences, until Cambrai—occupied by the Hun since the early days of the war—became the prized possession of the fighting men of the Canadian corps. There were many evidences that the Germans had made a hurried exit from the place. In many instances things had been thrown wantonly in heaps in the yards; in one gateway beside a church bundles of brass candlesticks were left, whilst inside the various houses there was proof of much damage. Upholstered furniture had suffered considerably, the upholstering having been stripped off or deliberately slashed, and in another place, which had possibly been a museum, a large pile of picture frames was noticed, from which many of the paintings had been cut, and where the paintings themselves remained the canvasses had been destroyed. The centre of the city was burning, but the conflagration was not allowed to spread, and soon the allied forces had the town well under guard. Up to the present, probably this was the most famous capture, and it is noteworthy that the men of the Eighth Canadian Field Ambulance had the distinct honour of taking part in the events which finally led to its fall. It had not been attained without the usual price, for the ambulance suffered sixteen casualties, amongst whom three made the supreme sacrifice. These were:—

No. 530035 Pte. D. Patton,	} killed instantly.
No. 536262 Pte. T. V. G. Nickson,	
No. 814318 Pte. D. Heath, died of wounds.	

The circumstances attending the death of Private Patton are sad, and yet almost peacefully sublime. He was one who had been with the ambulance since its mobilisation, and had worked like a Trojan in all the actions the unit had been engaged in. On this occasion, as the fighting for Cambrai proceeded, and when he had come back for a time to the forward post, he commenced to dig himself a small place of refuge, wherein he might rest. One of his comrades shouted jokingly to him, "Getting scared, Pat?" to which he replied, "Well, you can't be too careful." So saying he lay down, tired out by the hard work he had engaged in, and as he slept amidst the roar of shot and shell, his turn came, and he was instantly killed by a shell which landed close to where he lay. It was a quiet ending to this civilian-soldier's life, and all who knew "Pat" honoured him in death as they esteemed his manly friendship in life.

And now the scene quietens, the area in which the ambulance was established was taken over by some other division, and the unit moved to a field just outside Inchy, where they stayed for a short time for rest and re-organisation.

Cpts. A. S. Lamb and J. S. Sutherland now joined the unit, and Major W. H. Scott, M.C., was evacuated to the casualty clearing station suffering from an injury to the knee caused by slipping in a shell hole whilst he was on forward duty.

Events now seemed to promise the approach of the termination of the war, for first news came through that Bulgaria had surrendered, then Germany declared acceptance of President Wilson's fourteen points of peace, and last an armistice had been arranged with

Turkey, with rumours that Austria's capitulation was imminent. There is no wonder that excitement ran high, and that with light hearts and spirits of complete confidence, the Allies continued to press forward, driving the enemy from town to town in an unprecedented series of overwhelming successes.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *FROM VALENCIENNES TO MONS.*

THE rout of the enemy continued, and, on October 20th, the ambulance again moved forward to take part with the Third Canadian Division in the relief of the First Division in the Valenciennes-St. Amand area. The first stop was in the town of Montigny, about five miles east of Douai, where excellent accommodation was found in a large chateau. The men were now entering these previously occupied towns on the heels of the enemy, and it was a glad experience to be welcomed by the civilian inhabitants, who had been forced to accommodate the undesirable guests for so many years. Marching from Montigny to Erre, through Peckencourt, Fenain and Somain, the civilians lined the street, and, with curiosity plainly showing, greeted the Canadians as they passed through. These poor people consisted chiefly of women and elderly men, most of the younger men who were fit for labour of any kind having been removed. The total absence of all cattle was very conspicuous, and the small farms presented a desolate appearance, in fact it was an unusual spectacle to see so much as a chicken running about—so complete had been the enemy's system of commandeering. Naturally, nothing was too good for the men as they entered these towns so recently evacuated. Best rooms were provided, and everything done to minister to their comfort, while the ubiquitous coffee was ever at hand as a means of showing welcome hospitality. Meanwhile, stretcher bearer parties were sent forward,

and it was arranged for the ambulance to clear the left sector of the line now held by the division in the Valenciennes area. For this purpose an advanced dressing station was opened in the school house at Vicogne, and headquarters established in the brewery buildings in the village of Hasnon. Fighting was not now very severe, although the enemy continued to bombard the towns immediately after he was driven from them. The village of Hasnon was shelled nightly, and in fact when the ambulance arrived at this place the bodies of fifteen civilians were found, who had been killed by the enemy shortly after he had left the place. Naturally the people lived in daily terror, and at night time a big underground space in the old brewery yard was crowded with the villagers, who congregated to sleep there rather than endure their own homes, with rest broken by the shells of the Germans. Still, with all this uncertain existence, the people were filled with great gladness, many were the tales that were told, many the little acts of kindly appreciation. One old lady in particular explained how she had prayed for the coming of the British, and as she had heard the fighting approaching nearer and nearer, had uttered in her truly pious fashion, "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, peut être demain" ("My God, my God, perhaps to-morrow"). And "to-morrow" came, bringing with it relief and freedom. The pride of this old lady and her husband cannot be described at having with them Canadian soldiers, and when the vicinity of the place became rather dangerous from the bombardment, and they tried to get the old man to leave for the seclusion of the brewery cellar, he resolutely refused, effecting a compromise by sending his wife. But, as for himself, he stated, in his own

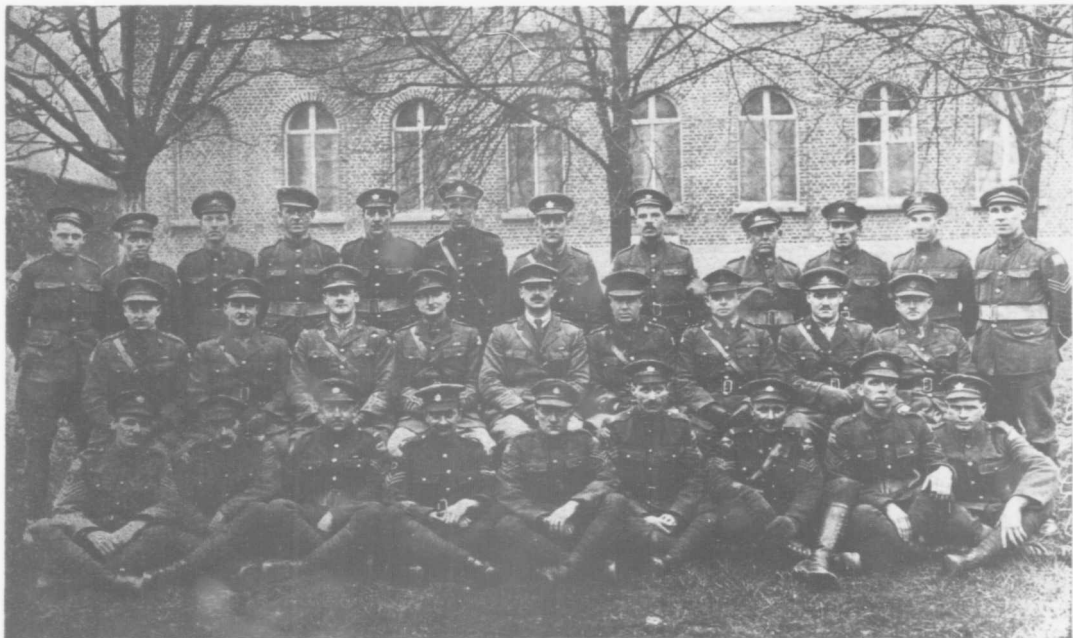
emphatic manner, "Bon pour le soldat, bon pour moi" ("Good for the soldier, good for me"), and it was not until the building next to his house was blown down that he could be made to see that discretion was the better part of valour. Many of the people in the area were in very poor physical condition, and by far the greater part of the work of the ambulance was in attending to these poor people. Up to the end of October four hundred and eighteen attendances had been made to the civilians in Raismes, Grand Bray and Hasnon, and large quantities of nourishing supplies were distributed amongst them. Most of the sickness was, of course, due to lack of proper nourishment, and to the great hardships which they had been subjected to for so long.

Unfortunately, casualties still continued to occur amongst the ambulance personnel, for whilst in this area, which was comparatively quiet, one man was killed and three wounded. On the evening of October 28th one of the ambulance cars was driving along the main road between the advanced dressing station and the regimental aid post, when heavy shelling of the road was encountered. One shell landed directly by the side of the car, killing immediately the second driver, No. 540312 Pte. E. Hanmer, M.M., and wounding the driver and the corporal in charge. This occasion again brought forward exhibitions of coolness and presence of mind, for the other occupant of the car, No. 530137 Cpl. W. S. Maguire, M.M., miraculously escaped injury, and, amidst the shelling, promptly rendered first aid to the two wounded men, finding shelter for them until the shelling had subsided, when the driver, No. 153112 Pte. E. G. Mott, M.M., although wounded badly in the arm, drove the car back to the advanced dressing station. The death



of Private Hanmer cast a gloom over the whole unit. He went to France with the ambulance and served with it continuously until his death. He was the friend of all, and his never-failing wit and genial disposition will always be remembered. He was always most devoted to his duty, and, no matter what the circumstances, could be relied upon for unselfish service. He was buried in the small cemetery at Hasnon, and had endeared himself so much to the people of the village that they attended the funeral service in numbers, adorning the grave with flowers, and promising that so long as they lived it should never want for proper care and attention.

On November 4th the ambulance resumed its onward course, proceeding from Hasnon to Raismes. The unit now acted as the reserve ambulance on the line of the advance. The enemy was daily retreating, fighting was merely spasmodic, and it was intended for the No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance to pass forward at an opportune time and relieve the ambulance clearing the field as the great advance continued. On November 7th another move was made to the St. Saulve Hospital and Convent near Valenciennes, then on the 9th the unit passed the French border into Belgium, entering Quievrain at night. The roads were now crowded with civilians returning to their old homes from the territory freed by the advancing troops, and though they were loaded down with great bundles of personal effects tied to their backs, or even themselves pulling vehicles on which their belongings had been piled, they did not hide the gladness of the times, as they realised captivity was at an end, and they could once more enjoy a life of free citizenship. On the 10th the men again marched, this time to Boussu. This town presented a gala appearance, with the long



**No. 8 CANADIAN FIELD AMBULANCE—OFFICERS AND N.C.O.'s—MONS, NOVEMBER, 1918.**

*Top Row*—Sgt. Maguire, Sgt. F. E. Dutton, Cpl. Brewster, Sgt. Munro, Sgt. Davidson, R.S.M. Coward, R.S.M. G. Taylor, Staff-Sgt. Graydon, Sgt. Nash, Cpl. Tillett, Cpl. Guthrie, Sgt. Patience.

*Middle Row*—Capt. R. M. Harvie, Capt. A. S. Lamb, Capt. D. C. Malcolm, Major W. G. Cosbie, Lt.-Col. E. R. Selby, Major W. J. MacKenzie, Capt. J. F. Sparrow, Capt. F. R. Knight, Capt. N. A. Christie.

*Bottom Row*—Sgt. H. Hay, Sgt. Montgomery, Cpl. Clements, Sgt. Valiquette, Sgt. Wycers, Sgt. Cowan, Sgt. Coleman, Sgt. Holding, Cpl. Lean.

hidden national flag now flying boldly and victoriously from the houses, and, as the men marched by, the town band rendered patriotic music and thrilled all hearts with the British National Anthem. On this night orders were received for the No. 8 Field Ambulance to move forward the following day to Jemappes, and take over the clearance of the line from No. 9 Canadian Field Ambulance. With this in view the unit marched forward on the morning of November 11th, and men were sent to the outskirts of Mons to take over the duties of clearance but as the main body of the unit went along the road leading to Jemappes and Mons, a despatch rider passed, and shouted that ever-to-be-remembered news, "The war's over at eleven o'clock," and on arrival at the convent in Jemappes the best communication ever received by the ambulance was waiting, and read as follows:—

"Hostilities will cease at eleven o'clock a.m. on November 11th. Troops will stand fast on the line reached at that hour, which will be reported to the divisional headquarters. Defensive precautions will be maintained. There will be no intercourse of any description with the enemy. Further instructions will follow. Eighth Canadian Infantry Brigade will take over front line from Seventh Canadian Infantry Brigade as soon as possible. Arrangements direct between brigades."

Thus the end came, so suddenly that it could not be realised, and as the clock fingers moved slowly forward to the peaceful hour of eleven there is no wonder that jubilation knew no bounds. Jemappes was but half an hour's walk from Mons, and everyone who could possibly go bent his steps in that direction. There were great

celebrations, two public demonstrations were held, and in the afternoon the Canadian corps commander presented the corps colours to the town amidst scenes which will never be forgotten. The men and women of the town, held captive since that first mad rush of the Germans in 1914, were overwhelmed by their own memories and feelings, and the tears could not be held back from the smiling faces, as they sang the French, Belgian, and even British National Anthems, with a fervour and enthusiasm which no tongue can tell. The day was spent in celebration, extending to the hours of the night, and the following day the unit moved into the ancient city of Mons, and made its headquarters at the Institut Provincial de Hygiene et de Bacteriologie, in the Boulevard Charles Sanctelette. The following official declaration was issued by the authorities of Mons:—

“ TO THE POPULATION OF MONS.

“After fifty-one months of suffering caused by the iniquitous, pitiless and insolent German occupation, Mons finally has been liberated by the heroism of the British Army, which on the hour of the armistice finished its series of victories at the place where, on the 23rd August, 1914, it entered into contact with the enemy.

“The Third Canadian Division, after heavy sacrifices, entered the town at three o'clock in the morning, and revenged by a brilliant success the retreat of 1914. Glory and recognition to it.

“The armistice is signed. The German army has capitulated. The brutal force is annihilated. The justice and the right triumph. Belgium comes greater and stronger out of this terrible proof.

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"The population has supported with courage and confidence the sufferings of the occupation. We are sure that in the joy of the triumph the population will observe the dignity and the measure they kept all the time.

"We count upon the will of all to maintain the order. We invite the population to return to work as soon as possible. The ruins caused by the war are great and the co-operation of all the wills and all the energies is necessary to heal rapidly the wounds.

"At this solemn hour our infinite gratitude goes to the allied armies, and among them, from the depths of our hearts, to our valiant Belgian Army, and our King, its heroic commander.

"Long live the King. Long live our country.

"The College of the Burgo-  
master and Aldermen:

"Town Clerk:

GASTON TALAÛPE.

Mons.

11th November, 1918.

JEAN LESCARTES.

FULGENCE MASSON.

LEON SAVE.

VICTOR MAISTRIAU.

HENRI ROLLAND."

The long looked-for end had arrived, peace had come, though there were again reminders of all the terrors of the war, as on the very day when hostilities ceased, there were seen in the town of Jemappes the bodies of several aged civilians, killed outright by the parting shots of the unscrupulous foe.

The ambulance did much work in Mons amongst the sick civilians, and there were many sad cases resulting from neglect and lack of proper nourishment. But we will not weary the reader further. It is not necessary

to enlarge upon the following movements, to tell of the preparations that were made for a move to Germany, only afterwards to be cancelled, and of how the unit ultimately moved, in a circuitous route, first to Haine St. Paul, then to Pont-a-Celles, Genappe, Coulture St. Germain (where Christmas was spent), Rhode St. Genese, Lennick St. Quentin, Hemelverdeghem, Renaix, Escanaffles, Dottignies, from which latter place train was taken to Havre, en route to England and Canada. On March 17th, 1919, the men went on board the steamer *Olympic*, arriving in the city of Calgary on April 1st, 1919, where a great crowd welcomed back the men of the ambulance after an absence on active service for over three years.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### *AUTHOR'S FAREWELL.*

OUR task is done, and as a tale that is told we hand this book down to the tender mercies of the indulgent reader. We offer no apologies, although we realise its many shortcomings and incompleteness. We started with this work to place on record the service of the No. 8 Canadian Field Ambulance from Calgary, and if we have succeeded in accomplishing this we are satisfied. You, who journeyed with us through those years of war's experiences, will be able to say as places are mentioned which you know so well, "I was there," and though detail may leave much to be wanted, your own knowledge will complete that which is suggested, as your memory conjures up for you the many incidents through which you passed. And, above all, if it serves as a link, binding the men together who have now become scattered from east to west of this Dominion, our work will not have been in vain. We have returned to various spheres of civilian life, have settled ourselves once more as peaceful citizens, and yet in the background of the memory lie those thoughts which were permanently moulded by the common dangers through which we passed. Better associations were never formed, truer friendships were never made, and these must not, they cannot, die. Therefore, let this book be a means of keeping "memory green," and of reviving old associations. "For when love unites, wide space divides in vain, and hands may clasp across the spreading main." In many cases we

would like to have singled out more names for special mention, but when we came to think of all who would be really deserving of this it seemed an impossible task, for did not all render excellent service and sink self in the interest of the common cause? Let this fact be to the honour of all who belonged to No. 8, that it was acknowledged time and again that the unit was efficient in every sense of the word. A wounded man was never left uncared for, and we have no hesitation in saying that all who served with the field ambulance from Calgary have cause to be proud of their connection with a unit which gained such a lasting reputation as it enjoys.

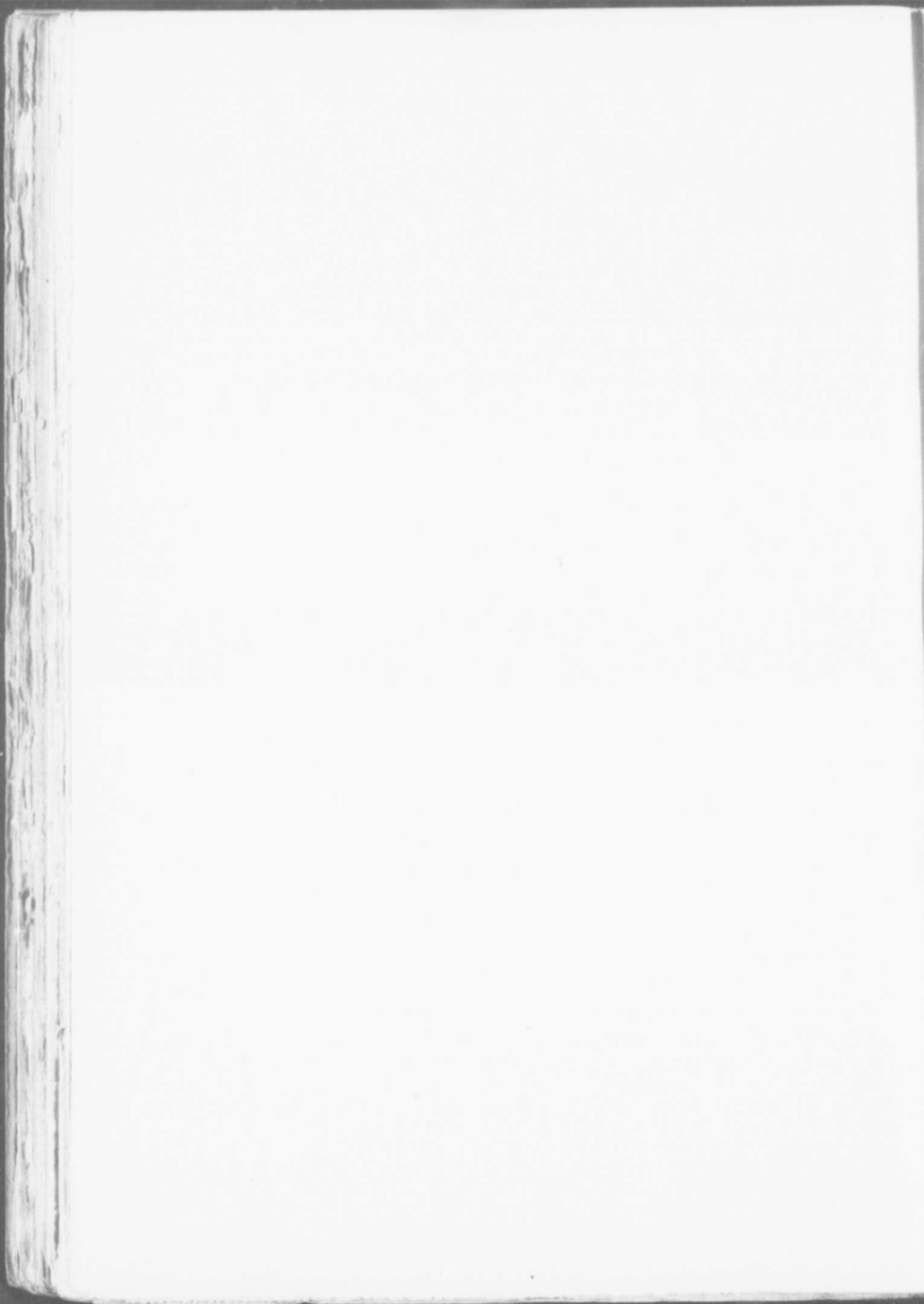
And you who read constrained by the memory of those who laid down their lives whilst serving with the ambulance, let this be your thought of consolation, that they gave their all that others may live, and in so doing fulfilled the greatest service that any man can render.

And again, some may glance through these pages as casual observers. To you the greater part of this book may mean nothing, but we trust that it will help you to realise the greatness of the humane and necessary work of the field ambulance, with men ever ready at hand, in every dangerous experience, to minister to the men as they fought and fell.

So we take our adieu, and offer this production as a permanent record of our part in the great war, as a dedication to our brave friends who rest in Flanders' fields, and as a connecting link, which will ever keep the ties of true friendship firm and secure.



APPENDIX



## APPENDIX

### HONOUR ROLL.

#### KILLED IN ACTION.

Regt. No.	Rank and Name.	Regt. No.	Rank and Name.
3293	Pte. E. F. Abell.	530157	Pte. F. Starkey.
530188	Pte. C. Clark.	530087	Sgt. F. Steel.
540312	Pte. E. R. Hamner, M.M.	155069	Pte. D. Stewart.
536262	Pte. T. V. G. Nickson.	523052	Pte. P. W. Underwood.
530035	Pte. D. Patton.		

#### DIED OF WOUNDS.

	Capt. J. Carmichael.	814318	Pte. D. Heath.
530107	Pte. A. W. Cosgrove.	530072	Pte. G. H. Roy.
530189	Pte. J. Countts.	443080	Pte. C. Sandison.
530113	Sgt. W. E. C. Dixon.	523191	Pte. J. Townend.
523810	Pte. H. W. Dickens.	530083	Q.M.S. B. H. Warren.
512078	Pte. R. R. Edwards, D.C.M.		

#### DIED OF SICKNESS.

	Lieut.-Col. S. W. Hewetson.	477049	Pte. W. H. Bate.
530005	Pte. N. O. Bradbury.		

#### WOUNDED.

	Lieut.-Col. E. R. Selby, D.S.O.	530024	Pte. R. A. Dickson.
	Capt. J. J. Jamieson.	50733	Cpl. C. Donner.
	Capt. J. H. Jones.	527747	Pte. F. W. Elliott.
	Capt. J. A. Reid.	50488	Pte. A. Easton.
458270	Pte. W. J. Allin.	530047	Pte. J. M. Faulder.
530181	Cpl. L. Bradley, D.C.M.	50130	Pte. G. D. Fluker.
530045	L.-Cpl. H. J. Bignell.	510003	Sgt. F. Garnett.
522837	Pte. G. C. Bell.	530121	Pte. F. D. Gates.
524949	Pte. A. Bush.	424848	Pte. H. Gregory.
510483	Pte. R. Besling.	524534	Pte. J. A. Graham.
530034	Pte. R. Barnes.	530128	Pte. A. Horsfield.
523450	Pte. J. Begg.	33362	Pte. F. E. Higgins.
522769	Pte. J. E. Bowden.	525527	Pte. J. G. M. Harvey.
4690	Sgt. J. H. Bushey.	525532	Pte. J. Harbidge.
530039	Pte. J. A. Collis.	530008	Cpl. J. M. F. Irvine, M.M.
530105	Pte. H. G. Cook.	530023	Sgt. R. S. A. Jackson.
524511	Pte. F. A. Carne.	530133	Pte. B. R. Johnson.
530061	Pte. W. W. Cornwall.	530130	Cpl. A. R. Jewell.
524512	Pte. H. G. Carne.	523491	Pte. D. Kerik.
516378	Pte. E. J. Caswill.	530078	Pte. R. H. Lane.
524518	Pte. F. Cuning.	445625	Pte. J. Little.
400270	Pte. R. A. G. Christie.	530062	Pte. G. C. Lapsley.
523351	Pte. W. P. Campbell.	527604	Pte. R. Livingstone.
522736	Pte. I. Davies.	530009	Pte. W. O. Lamburd.
		522797	Pte. C. W. Lundy.



## APPENDIX

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## BAR TO THE MILITARY MEDAL.

Regt. No.	Rank and Name.	Regt. No.	Rank and Name.
530137	Sgt. W. S. Maguire.	530108	Pte. A. M. Creighton.
530069	Sgt. G. Patience.		

## MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL.

530084	S.-Sgt. C. Hay.	530053	Cpl. T. F. Lean.
530124	S.-Sgt. W. Graydon.	530184	S.-Major G. H. Taylor.

<i>Belgian.</i>	CROIX DE GUERRE.	<i>French.</i>
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414953	Sgt. T. M. Brown.	417707	Pte. D. Levesque.
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## MENTIONED IN DESPACHES.

Lieut.-Col. J. N. Gunn.	Major W. J. MacKenzie.
(Two Mentions.)	Capt. J. F. Sparrow.
Lieut.-Col. E. R. Selby.	530084 S.-Sgt. C. Hay.
(Two Mentions.)	530137 Sgt. W. S. Maguire.
Capt. J. F. S. Marshall.	

## ORDER BRITISH EMPIRE.

Captain J. F. S. Marshall.