

THE VETERAN

JUNE 1922

MONCHY-LE-PREUX

VOLUME I

DECEMBER, 1920

NO. I

THE

VETERAN



FRED. R. EMERSON, EDITOR

CONTRIBUTORS:—H. A. Anderson, Lieut.-Col. Bernard, Miss R. Green, Miss Armored Harris, J. Higgins, B.A., C. E. Hunt, W. J. Higgins, A. King, B. A., Miss Lucienne LeBrun, R. G. MacDonald, Hon. J. Alex. Robinson, Jack Turner, Dennis Waters, H. A. Winter, B.A., Capt. Leo Murphy, and others.

INTRODUCTION

21

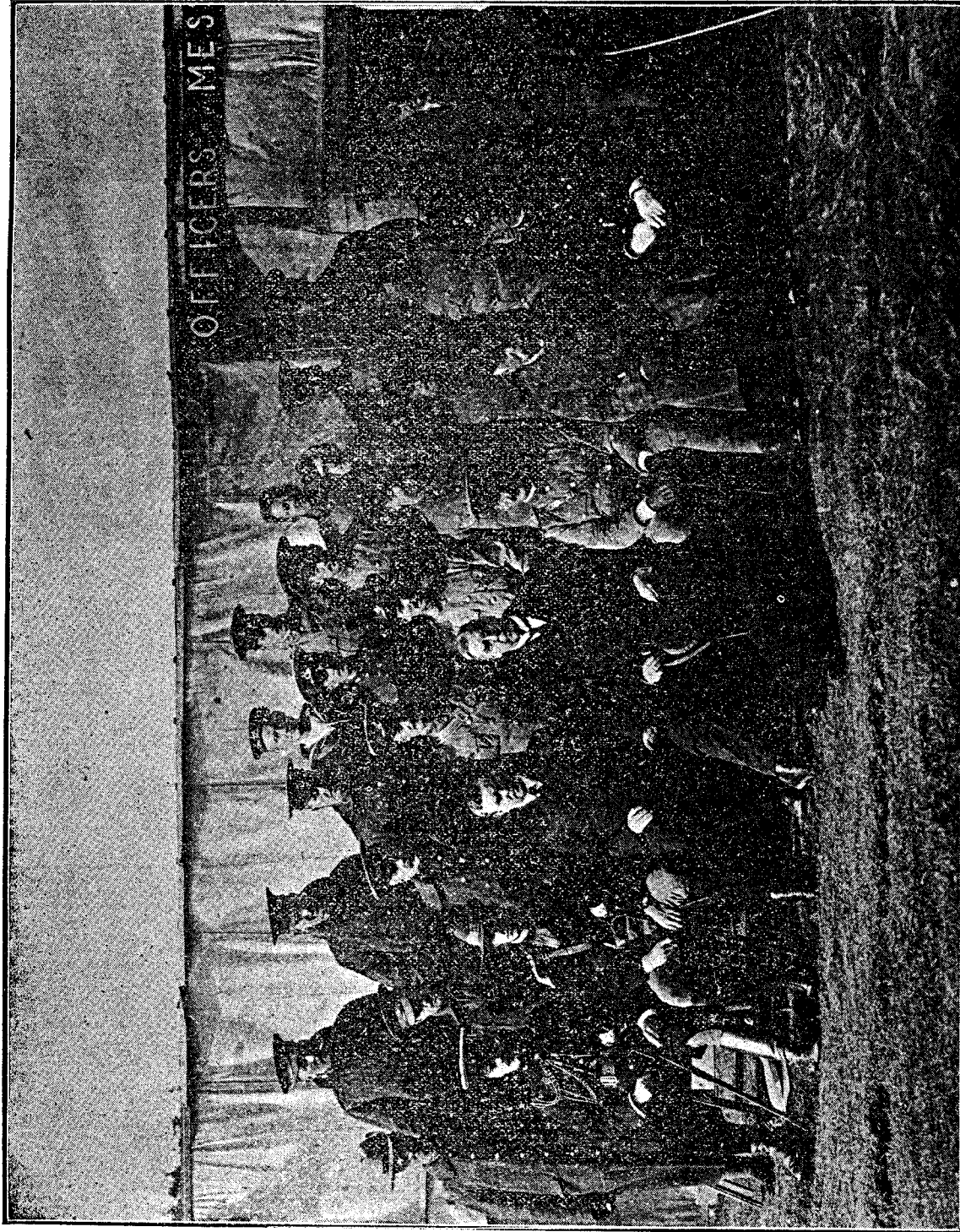
DURING the incorporation of the Great War Veteran's Association, it was felt that many of its members—men who had for years been closest Comrades, and then at the end of the war had returned disbanded and separated to their homes and former avocations—were apt to lose touch with each other and it was considered that while those actually in need of information or help would apply to the offices of the association, and while those members actually in the city could meet in the club rooms, there yet were many in more distant and remote places, who, while enthusiastic members of the association yet were not really in touch with the work, its aims, and its aspirations, and it was considered that the surest way to keep members in touch with each other would be to publish a periodical magazine, devoted to the interests of the returned soldiers and sailors.

In view of the multifarious tasks the organization has necessitated, the project could not receive the immediate attention of the committee and rather more time than we would wish has elapsed between the incorporation of the association and the appearance of the first issue. The increased and uncertain cost of printing, paper and labour has rendered the undertaking more difficult than it at first appeared.

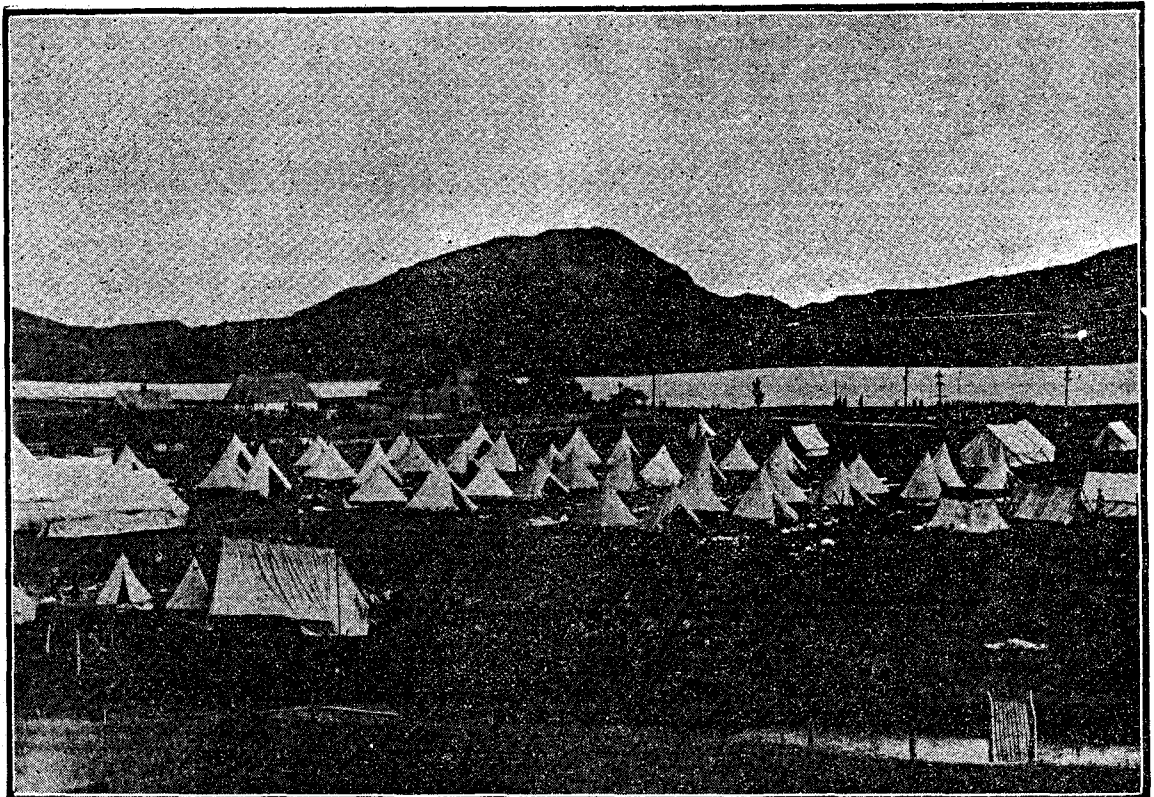
The magazine is before all an appeal. It is an appeal to the ex-soldier and sailor for whom it is primarily compiled. It is an appeal to the public, on whose aid and sympathy it relies—an appeal that the aims and ideals of those Newfoundlanders who responded so readily to the call of the Mother Country should not lightly be forgotten, now that they are no longer shoulder to shoulder—an appeal that the fraternity which was borne of months of hardship and adventure should not be allowed to die—an appeal that we should not forget the lesson of those days which hold memories so sacred to all of us.

The association is in need of the urgent sympathy of the soldier and sailor and the public. We ask the public to respond generously by subscribing to this Magazine. We ask the ex-soldiers and sailors to adopt it and make it their own. The Editors will welcome contributions from all ex-soldiers and sailors and it is hoped that the present undertaking will develop a permanent magazine that will reflect credit not only on the association but on the Dominion.

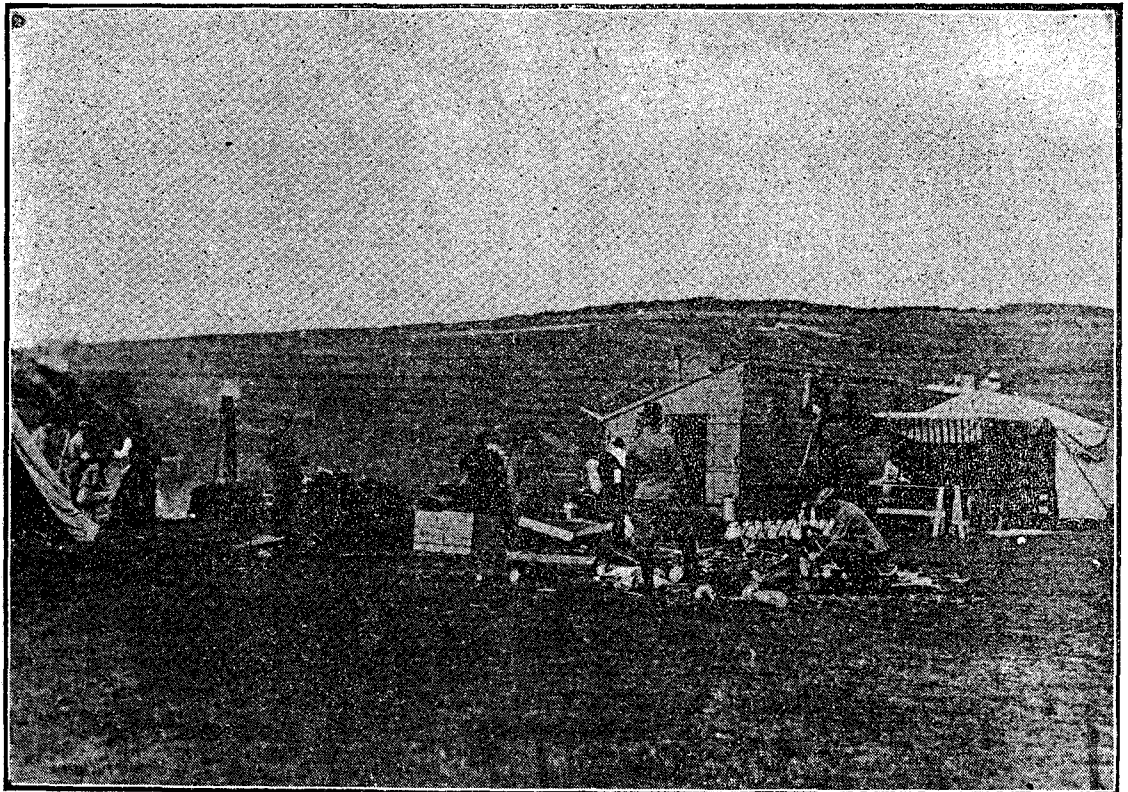
Pleasantville 1914.



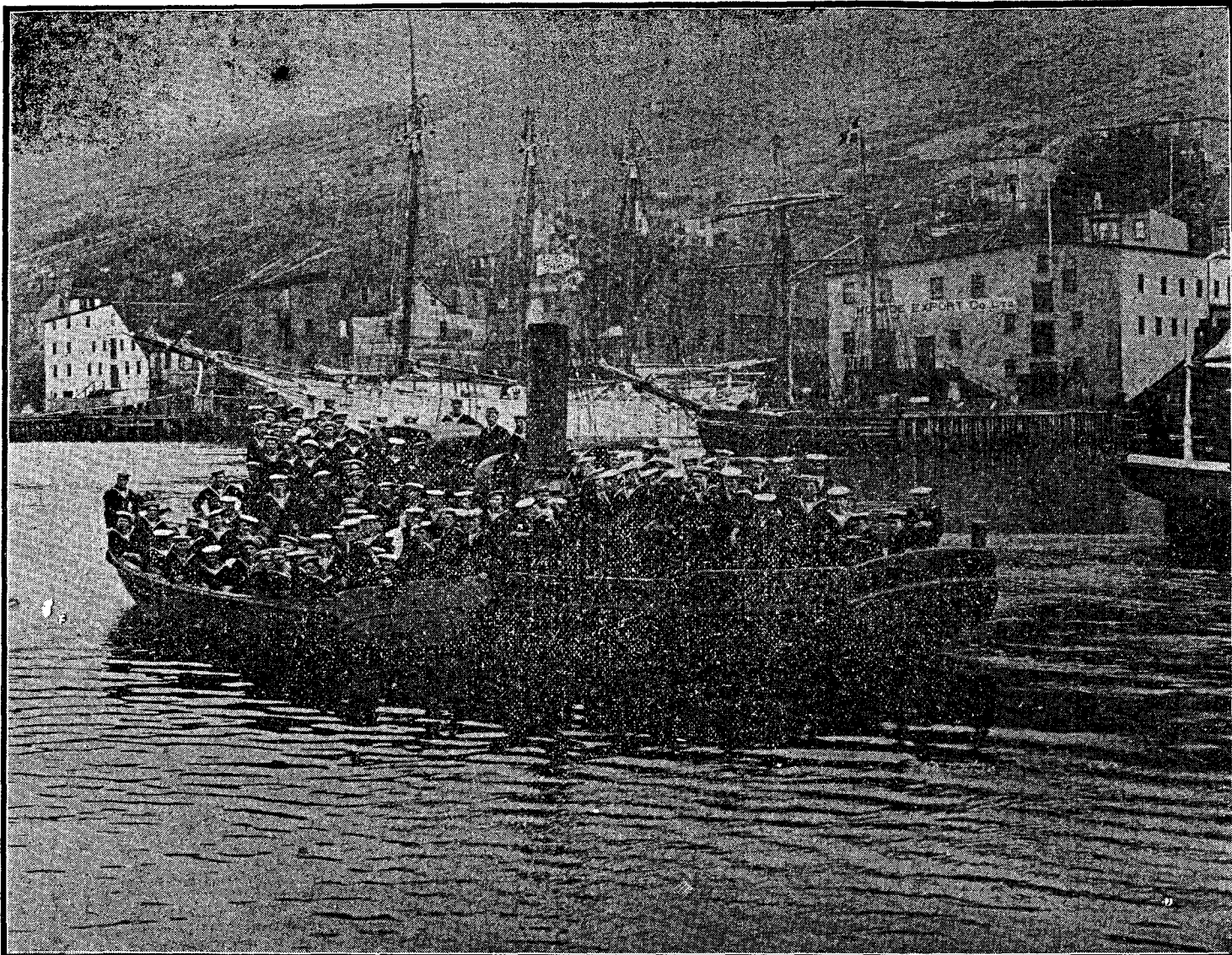
BLUE PUTTEE OFFICERS



THE CAMPS



COOK HOUSE



DEPARTURE OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND DETACHMENT TO THE GREAT WAR.
(Naval Reservists Embarking for England 1914.)

2 per cent of sugar or saccharine.

"Do not let your heart be softened by the eloquent pleas of my learned opponent, Your Honour, but for the sake of the Law, for the sake of Posterity, give your verdict that the prisoner is guilty.

There was an audible murmur of satisfaction when Council had finished his address and we all knew that there would be that the prisoner is guilty."

The magistrate, with characteristic fairness, sentenced Murphy to one year's hard labour, which was the longest term admissible for the offence. Murphy appealed, but without success. It was unfortunate for him that the appeal was heard in the Supreme Court before one of the sourest juries of that year — all of them fair minded men, none of whom had probably ever tasted anything sweeter than an acid drop in his life.

While serving his term Murphy's

children were looked after by the Brewers and Distillers Association, and I remember that three of them in after life turned out to be model citizens. The fourth unfortunately, inherited the vice of his father and died prematurely of diabetic delerium.

Those of us who are old enough will remember how the sugar habit gradually gave way to the more wholesome one of liquor drinking which doctors declared to be much better for the human body and the only antidote for getting candied,—providing, of course, that nobody got drunk.

A few devoted sugarites were sorry for the change. I recollect how an old friend of mine often used to quote Browning's words: "How sad and bad and mad it was, but then, how it was sweet!"

The Prohibition countries are now, we all know suffering from the reaction, but the price of beer is only 20 cents a gallon and is going down.

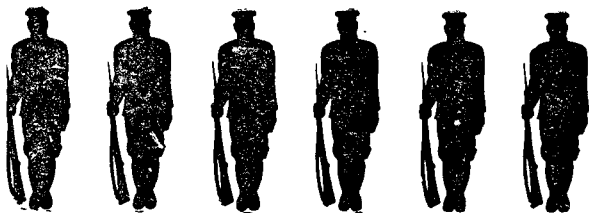
Lines on the Death of a Young Newfoundland Soldier Who Died in Scotland.

He did not die in the bloody fight
With a pile of dead around him;
A soldier's grave mid clashing might
No day of carnage found him.
The bombs loud blast he did not hear
Nor the wild shells bursting o'er him;
He did not see the Very's glare
Nor a line of trenches before him.

He sailed away with the soldier throng,
The honoured khaki wearing;
The way before was dark and long,
But little were they caring.

In age and spirit he was young,
Life cast its halo o'er him.
His heart was as light as a passing song,
And his whole life lay before him.

Mother, father, sister—all
Were left: he crossed the water
To fight mid shell and whistling ball
On fields of ruthless slaughter.
But he had not seen, when Death came
down,
The scenes of War's dread riot;
He sank to rest in a Scottish town
On a night of peace and quiet.



“THE FIRST NFLD. REGIMENT”

(By. Rev J. V. Hammond, Ayr, Scotland)

When honour claimed Britannia's aid op-
 pression to withstand,
 A hearty, hefty, breezy lot of men from
 Newfoundland
 Steamed swift across the briny, all agog to
 lend a hand
 At smashing Prussian bullies of the Pots-
 dam kultur brand.

With men like these, from Overseas, to
 reinforce her arms,
 Britannia flies her honoured flag and
 flouts the foe's alarms;
 Then toast these gallant fellows and lift
 your glasses high,
 To drink the health of the manhood wealth
 of her oldest Colon-i.

Five hundred strong they landed and at
 once began to train,
 With gusto, and, as keen as knives, they
 drilled on Salisbury Plain;
 With swinging stride they marched and
 made the earth resound again,
 Whilst more and more recruits sped o'er
 the great Atlantic main.

At length for Dardanelles embarked the 1st.
 Battalion fit,
 And with the immortal 29th Division did
 their bit;
 At Suvla Bay they suffered sore, but stuck
 it out, with grit
 That savoured of their Regiment's Crest—
 the Caribou, to wit.

They charged the Turks' position, and they
 drove them off a hill,
 They routed them with home thrusts that
 some Turks remember still;
 That way they're built and fiercely they
 will fight the foe, until
 The Allied arms have squashed the Hun and
 Chums of Kaiser Bill.

Hail! Newfoundland, most generous, thy
 motto doth relate
 Gifts thou dost bring Britannia from thy
 sea-girt estate;
 Of all thy sea-borne bounty, aye, these war-
 riors sons she'll rate,
 With loyal hearts and sturdy limbs, as far
 the richest freight.





RIENVILLIERS—EN ROUTE TO MONCHY

◦◦◦
MONCHY
◦◦◦

IT was, I think, about the first of April 1917 that Lieut. Col. Forbes-Robertson intimated, while lecturing our battalion, that during the next few days the British Army would make an attack that would exceed anything hitherto attempted.

At that time it was spring in France, and that year spring in France was very much like (only I think a little worse) spring in Newfoundland. It is true the inhabitants told us that it was the severest winter and spring France had known for twenty odd years, but that fact gave us scant consolation during the long, cold nights. The weather varied almost hourly from bleak, wintry sunshine to quite heavy snowfalls.

On April 10th., we arrived in time for dinner at Gouy en Artois, which is a picturesque little village about twenty kilometres from Arras. The day before had been the day of the Vimy Ridge attack and the first novelty that we beheld was some four thousand German prisoners, that had just been captured, being marched through the town. They were a hungry crowd of Huns that had evidently been under the command of the Brigadier General (who wore spectacles) and that august gentleman himself marched dismally in their midst. After dinner, I remember, some of the fellows began to joke and chat with them and their optimism with regard to the

victorious issue of the war for them was the subject of much merriment among us—firm believers in the ultimate victory of the Allies. I began talking to one chap near me. He spoke English, having been a London barber in the days of international peace and good-will. Being a reservist of the Imperial German Forces, he had at the outbreak of the war received the usual thirty days' notice and been shipped to the Fatherland. Here he was back among the English again, eagerly cherishing the hope that food was more plentiful among the enemies of his nation than at home. He spoke a funny sort of Cockney English, that suggested in a vague way Tottenham Court Road and his native village in Pomerania.

A strange feeling, compounded of dislike, toleration and amusement developed between the German prisoners and our men. Each seemed to have a strange fascination for the other. We gave them bully beef (which the Hun found very palatable apparently) and they gave us some gold-tipped cigarettes from Andover, which we certainly appreciated. We felt quite bereft of amusement when they were eventually caged and we saw them no more.

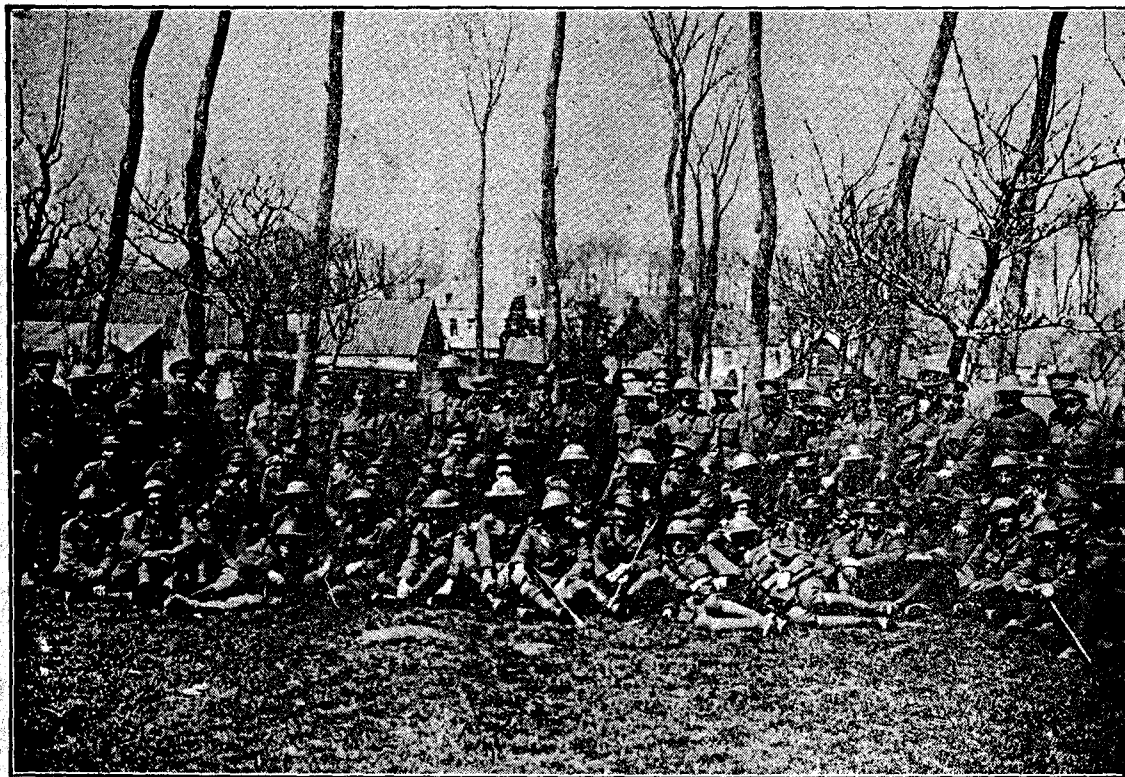


PTE. FRED CURRAN, M. M.

The next day the company practised an extended formation attack. War equipment was given out; every man receiving two bombs and a trench flare, the latter being, of course, for the purpose of giving our air-craft knowledge of our



BATTALION TRANSPORT



BEFORE MONCHY OFFICERS' AND N. C. O'S NFLD. REG.

whereabouts. Our so familiar drill seemed now to take a strange new meaning.

On the next day—the 12th.—we marched to Arras. As we marched along the main road from Gouy-en-Artois, the landscape became more and more desolate. Gradually, we were entering the war-swept territory. Under the grey, ominous sky, the bared farms, bereft of their hedges and fruit trees with their dilapidated, deserted cottages, presented a spectacle as sad and depressing as one could witness. It rained at intervals. Now at last we could hear the low reverberation of the distant guns. Motor ambulances—driven by girls in khaki, mostly—passed more and more frequently, carrying wounded Canadian and Scotch soldiers. They were coming from the St. Jean dressing station, behind the Arras lines, to the St. Paul hospital. The noise was becoming louder and louder and by the time we arrived at Arras in the mid-afternoon, it was terrific. That

beautiful town with its picturesque, stone buildings and quaint cobbled-stoned streets was under fire for the first time. All the civilians had not yet gone. Some eight hundred had refused to leave, when the order came to depart. They made a pathetic pretence of carrying on business as usual. Here and there shops were still open, although it was getting worse every minute. Immediately after we were dismissed, we went inspecting them. I went in a fruit store, kept by a funny little old woman, wearing the impossible wig, that so many French women we saw wore. She seemed cool and unafraid, although her face was set and determined-looking. Just as she was about to hand us our purchase, a shell burst in the street outside and there was a huge crash of falling stones and much shouting. "Mon Dieu!" she cried, "Sauvez-vous vite, Messieurs"—and fled precipitately to her cellar. So, unfortunately, we

were unable to conclude our purchase.

With evening, came a faint, intermittent sunshine. As we were lined up—A and B Company on one side of the road and C and D on the other a battalion of a Border Regiment passed us. They were singing songs and in great spirits. They hailed us with cries.

“Best of luck, “we called.
“See you in Blighty, old man!”
“Cheerio. Chin-chin.”

We felt a thrill of pleasure when we heard the Scottish voices. They recalled the happy days of Ayr and Edinburgh. Colonel Forbes Robertson, who was an old Border man, recognised several men and called out to them by name. We heard they were going to Oppy.

They passed on.

When the sunlight had died away, we fell in and marched through the gathering darkness toward the ever-increasing gunfire. We did not know our destination.

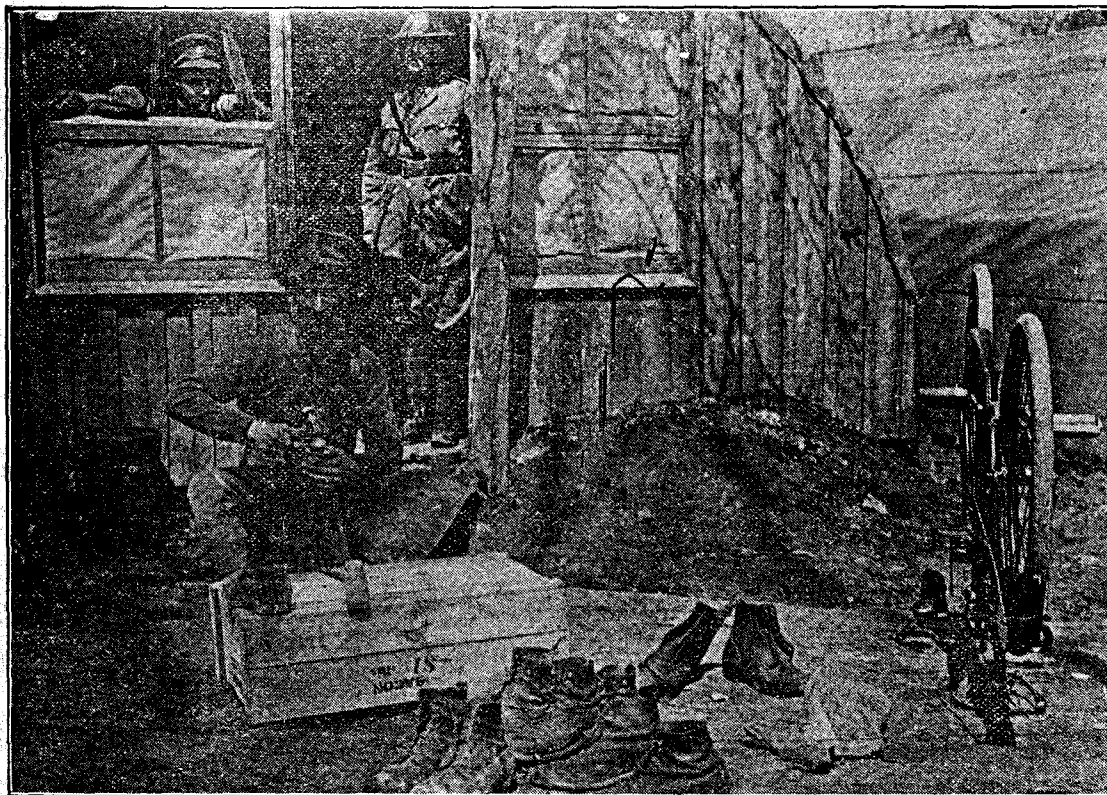
As we marched a strange excitement came over our men. They sang “Here’s the Finnigans home again”. Mike Smythe—the Harry Lauder of our Company—led the chorus “All for a tanner a day,” which he always sang to great effect.

We spent that night in the chalk caves of la Fosse Farm—there was little that suggested agriculture there now. Dead men and dead horses lay everywhere in the almost endless wreckage and ruin.

Although the next day had been set for us to go over, we did nothing. Our men were too tired. Our position was an elevated one and we could see the Border Regiment that had passed us the night before at Arras advancing towards Oppy which lay to the South. It was the strongest position the Germans held in that particular area, and was the main objective of the attacking division. Our position commanded a view of a small town to the North; the roofs of its villas and chateaux.



BEFORE MONCHY. OFFICERS' AND N. C. O'S NFLD. REG.



SERGEANT SNOOKS—COBBLER

It was Monchy.

Later on, we saw the attack on Oppy.

It was a gallant but ineffectual attempt. Of our Border friends that had passed us so cheerfully the previous evening, few returned. Two weeks afterwards when in Arras, we saw a cross being erected in the cemetery. It was in memory of that Battalion, officers and men.

Monchy is about eight kilometres from Arras. It had formerly been the residential city of the well-to-do class. On the unforgettable night of the 13th, the Germans were shelling it heavily. At eleven of clock we left the farm and proceeded in single file to Monchy. The din was terrible and in the confusion and inky darkness, it was two or three hours before we could take over the Wostershire's position.

Just as we entered the town an incendiary shell struck the spire of the church. It crashed and fell, its ruins blocking our way.

The church caught fire and kept burning all night long. The noise was indescribable. The shrieking of a shell is bad enough in all conscience, when it bursts in an open field, but it becomes intensified a hundred times when it bursts in the narrow streets between stone houses. But at two o'clock the noise ceased abruptly, and a silence, as of the grave, reigned over all.

Then our men began exploding. The place was full of dug-outs:—former wine-cellers that had been opened up and joined together. The dug-outs still bore witness to the occupation of the Hun. The floors were here and there littered with the gaily-coloured fancy dresses of chorus girls, broken champagne bottles, cigar boxes; all of which hinted that the former tenants, had been having a good time, to say the least of it. Our barrage began at 5. 15—grey dawn—and lasted fifteen minutes.

Then we went over.



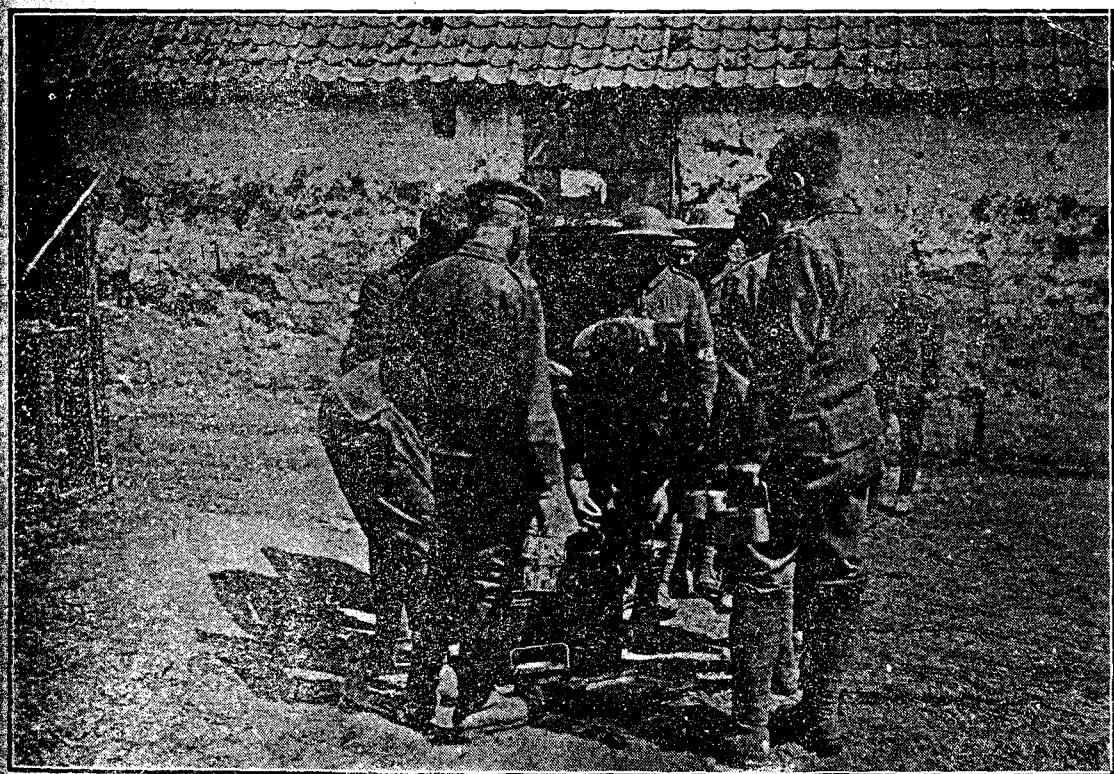
OFFICERS NFD REGIMENT



CAPT. TACHER, M. C., AND BAR AND HIS RED CROSS SECTION



A MESS ORDERLY ISSUING DINNER.



"MULLIGAN"

The Germans replied immediately; their response being frantic shell-fire. Our objective was Infantry Hill and just as our men reached it, the Germans swarmed over in incredible numbers. Already their shell-fire had depleted our ranks tremendously. The result was inevitable.

At nine in the morning a runner from the battalion reported the Germans were coming towards Monchy in extended order and that our battalion had ben completely wiped out.

A party was hurriedly organized under the command of Col. Forbes Robertson and Captain Kevin Keegan. It was decided to carry on and try and hold the hill against the on-coming Germans.

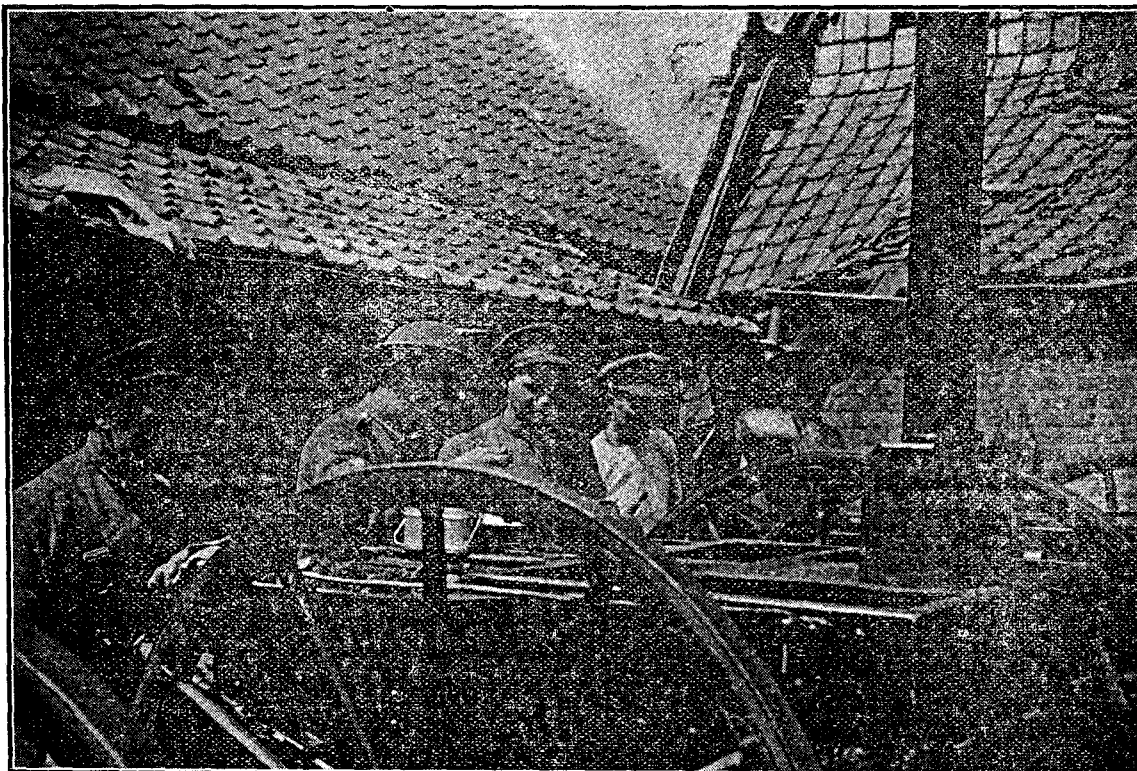
They succeeded in mustering twenty-one men, one of whom—Parsons—was an Essex man. There was a trench which commanded the situation about seventy yards from the town wall. We crawled on our hands and knees—and we went pretty

fast—over the rough, shell torn land and nine of us succeeded in reaching our destination. We opened fire on the Germans immediately and, I suppose, we successfully created the delusion that we were a large invincible army, because they made no strong attack.

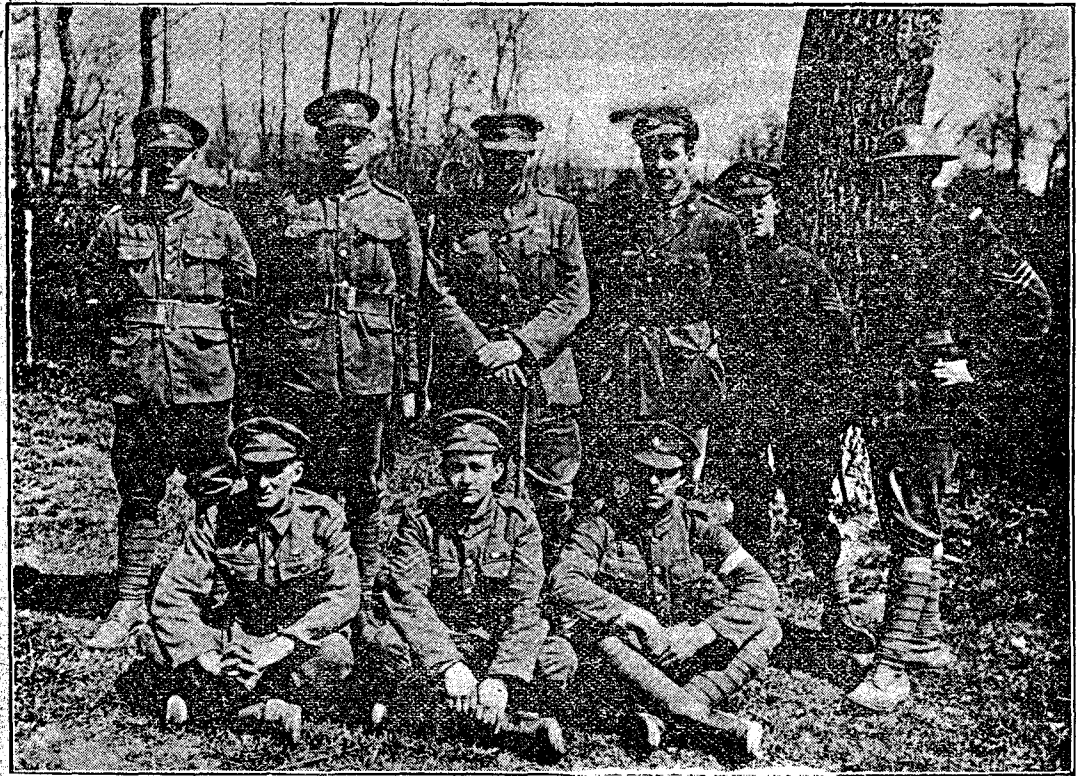
Then suddenly,—our ammunition gave out.

On no man's land were machine gun carriers lying amid the dead men and debris, and we got enough ammunition to keep up a continuous firing for over an hour. Occasionally a sharp-shooter would emerge from the German trenches and thanks to our own vigilant sharp-shooters and the unerring aim of Corporal Pitcher, one of our nine (he after met his death so bravely at Cambria) they did not answer the roll call that evening.

From where we were one could see the German soldiers very distinctly. We had always had the idea that the German



C. CO'S COOKERS



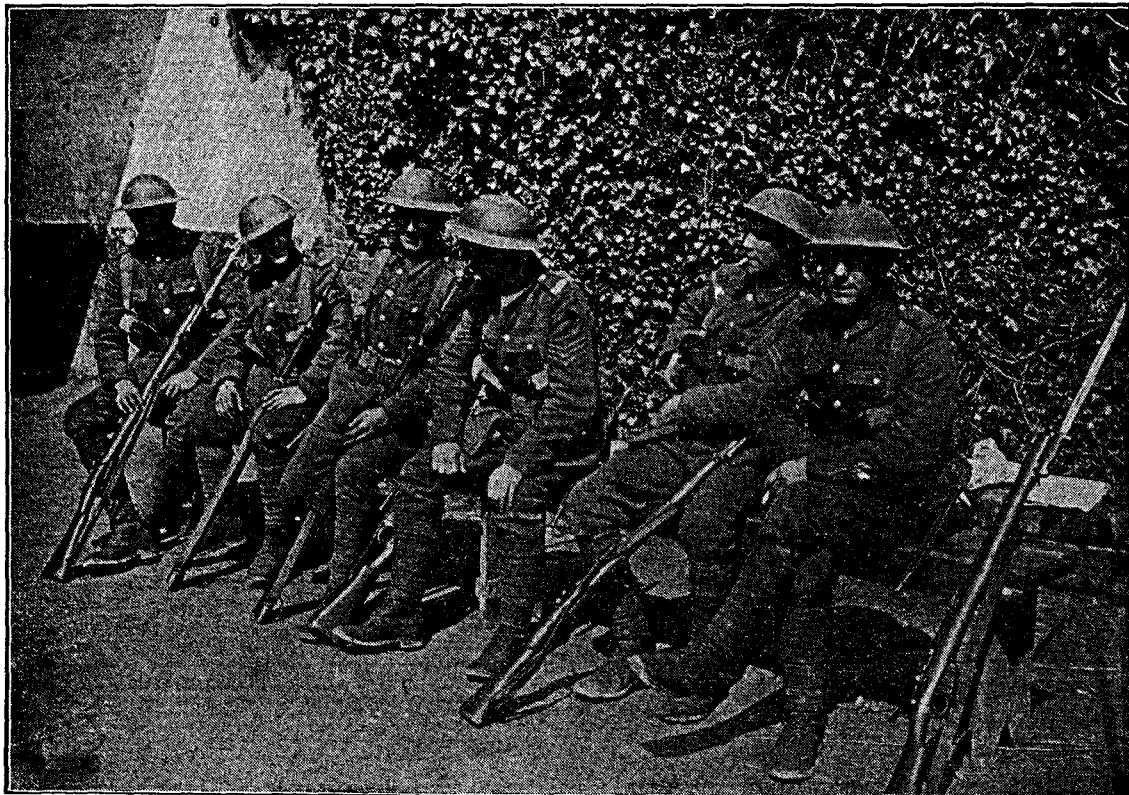
THE MEN WHO HELD THE TRENCH



OFFICERS OF THE NFLD. REGIMENT



THE RETURN FROM MONCHY



AFTER MONCHY—THE GUARD

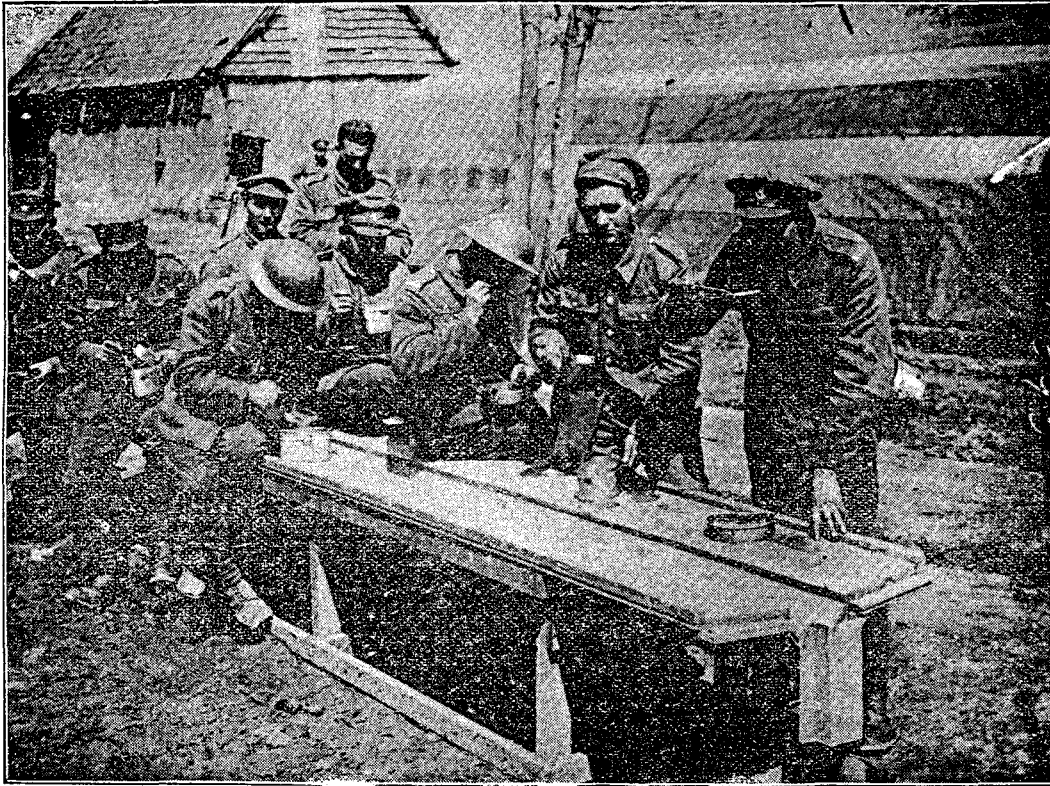


MAP-READING

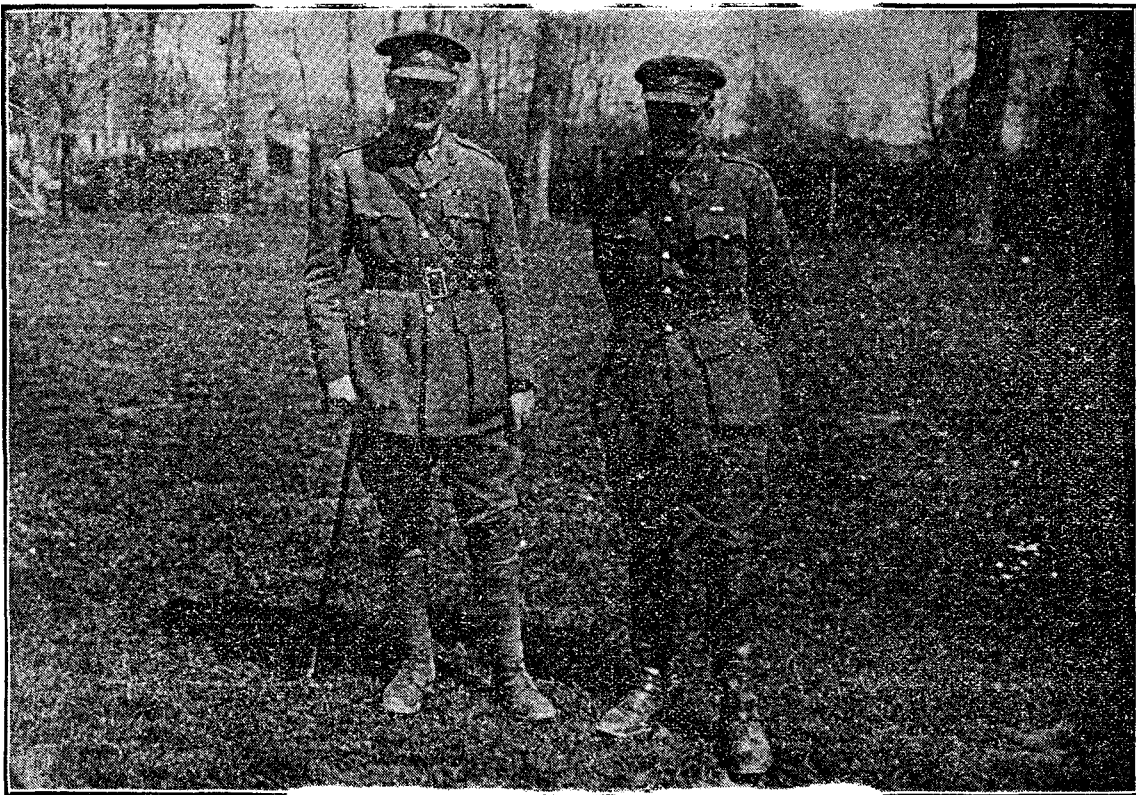
officers urged their men forward and remained in the rear during an attack but we could distinctly see the officers in advance of their men, urging them on towards us. At two o'clock Corporal Rose volunteered to go back through the machine gun fire and inform brigade headquarters what had happened. He shook hands with us and set out on his hands and knees over the shell holes and soon disappeared from sight behind the walls of the town. They did not allow him to come back but they sent the Hampshires to relieve us. They

came about eight o'clock in the evening.

We had been in the trench for ten hours and six of us remained to hand over our position to the company. We immediately went back to battalion headquarters in the town, guided—as much as by anything—by the dull glare of the burning church. When we called the roll that evening there were twenty five survivors to return to our ten per cent reserve which at that time was under the command of Major Bernard, the present President of the Association.



"DINNER, IRISH STEW"



COL. HADOW, COL. FORBES-ROBERTSON