

CHAPTER XII

THE BATTLE OF GIVENCHY: THE LAHORE DIVISION

Attack by Highland Light Infantry and 4th Gurkhas—Simultaneous attack by 59th Rifles—Enemy's trench taken—Captain Cramer-Roberts, 4th Gurkhas—Gallantry of Sappers and Miners and 34th Pioneers—Retirement of Highland Light Infantry and Gurkhas—Difficulties of 59th Rifles over unknown ground at night—Trench taken and held—Net result of attack—Casualties—Minor attack by 1st Gurkhas—German attack on 20th December—Highland Light Infantry and 4th Gurkhas—Rifles jamming as usual—Our trenches evacuated—Casualties.

WE must now turn to the operations of the Lahore Division, under Lt-General Watkis.

The objective was the main line of German trenches in front and to the north-east of Givenchy. The left section of the attack was entrusted to two companies each of the 1st Battalion Highland Infantry and 1st Battalion 4th Gurkha Rifles, both belonging to the Sirhind Brigade lately arrived from Egypt. The whole operation was under the command of Lt-Colonel R. W. H. Ronaldson, Highland Light Infantry.

The right section of the attack was to be delivered by the 59th Scinde Rifles of the Jullundur Brigade, specially lent for the purpose, simultaneously with the left.

The left section was divided into four lines—the first under Major B. U. Nicolay, 1/4th Gurkhas, with whom was Lieutenant Anderson, Highland Light Infantry; the second under Captain Pringle, Highland Light Infantry. Major Brodhurst, who was seriously ill, but with characteristic courage had begged to be allowed to join in, accompanied

Captain Pringle, and was of great service. The third line was commanded by Captain Cramer-Roberts, 1/4th Gurkhas, with Lieutenant Kerr, Highland Light Infantry; the fourth being under Captain G. M. Knight, Highland Light Infantry.

Captain Inglis, Adjutant of the 1/4th Gurkhas, was detailed to guide the attacking force to its correct position during the night, a difficult duty which he performed admirably. He then volunteered to accompany the assault, but in the course of it he was unfortunately killed.

At 5.30 a.m., the 18th Brigade Royal Field Artillery and one section 57th Howitzer Battery opened a rapid and most accurate fire for the brief space of four minutes, during which time, in pouring rain and inky darkness, the first line went over the parapet. As soon as the fire ceased, they rushed over the open, a distance of about 180 yards, followed shortly afterwards by the second line. The advance was at first completely successful, the casualties in the rush being small, but later events tended to show that the enemy had been put thoroughly on the alert by the earlier attack of the Meerut Division and the subsequent bombardment.

Owing to the German system of holding the front trenches lightly, the enemy's losses here were small. About 80 prisoners were taken, and some dead and wounded were found in the trench; others were discovered in the open, evidently caught by our shrapnel.

Lieutenant Anderson at once pushed on with the utmost dash and spirit, and took the enemy's reserve trench. He was then heard, Rupert-like, to shout that he was going on to take the village of Chapelle

* Any further advance was stopped by heavy fighting on the right of the 59th, who were meeting with the difficulties inseparable from night operations over totally unknown ground.

APPROXIMATE SCALE OF YARDS

0 100 200

ENEMY TRENCH

ENEMY SAP NOT TAKEN

ENEMY TRENCH (CONVERTED) 200 Yds

FLAG INCIDENT

H.L.I.

SAP

SAP HEAD TAKEN

ENEMY TRENCH

WILLOWS

VILLAGE

ENEMY BOMBS

59th RIFLES

RIGHT OF ATTACK 180 Yds

ENEMY FIRE POSITION

SIRHIND BRIGADE TRENCHES

MACHINE GUNS

GIVENCHY

By this time the third line, under Captain Cramer-Roberts, had arrived on the scene. Shortly afterwards Lieutenant Kerr and most of his platoon were killed by machine-gun fire. The trench was already crammed with the 1st and 2nd lines, and there was no room for the 3rd line, which had to lie down in the mud in rear of the trench, where they were not only useless, but exposed to fire which soon

began to cause casualties. They were therefore sent back, Captain Cramer-Roberts remaining with Major Nicolay.

In the meantime our Sappers and Miners were hard at work, under Captain Hunt, 34th Pioneers, at the dangerous task of trying to connect the saphead by a shallow communication trench with our original line; but the enemy's fire swept them away, and all were killed. Needless to remark, with their usual bravery, the Sappers renewed the attempt again and again.

The German fire now became heavy and general from both flanks and front, and when daylight broke fully, Colonel Ronaldson was in great uncertainty as to the real situation, since it was found impossible to connect the German sap with our line of entrenchment. His only information from the front consisted of a report, brought back at great risk by Major Brodhurst, to the effect that the front trench was over-crowded. About 9 a.m. Major Nicolay received a report which led him to believe that his men were suffering from the fire of our own main trenches. Communication had not been established, and the fire was so heavy that it seemed impossible to send a message through.

At about 10 a.m. Captain Inglis was killed. An eye-witness gives a stirring picture of this gallant officer, who met his death through his keenness in volunteering to accompany the attack. Captain Inglis had seized hold of a German rifle and bayonet, and was firing away in the full joy of battle, when he fell, shot through the head. At first it was feared that he had been shot by accident from the rear, but this idea was afterwards disproved.

Captain Cramer-Roberts set to work to explore the sap running towards our main trench, and found that the Germans were working in towards it. Our men were being driven in by bombing from both flanks and the sap was becoming overcrowded.

The truth of the position, as later discovered, was that on the right of the trench taken by us, and running at right angles towards our main trench, there was a bank. From behind this the Germans were throwing bombs from a trench which had been overlooked in the darkness of the advance, and were taking our men in rear with rifle fire. It was from this direction that Captain Inglis was shot, and there is no doubt that the bullet came from a German rifle. Captain Inglis is described by Major Nicolay as a very gallant officer, whose assistance and example had been invaluable.

At this moment the enemy tried another discreditable trick. A party of Germans carrying a dirty-looking flag appeared in front of the Highland Light Infantry section on the left, from which firing had practically ceased, partly owing to the number of casualties and partly because the majority of the rifles had become clogged with mud. Rapid fire was opened from the other sections of the trench, which was the signal for the enemy to put on Balaclava caps evidently taken from our dead; by this means apparently they hoped to deceive us into believing that they were British. Fire was continued, and some of the enemy were knocked over. The remainder disappeared after capturing the few men of the Highland Light Infantry who were still alive in that section.

It was now evident that something must be done to re-establish communication with the main trench. To attempt to cross the bullet-stricken, shell-tormented interval was to court death, but Captain Cramer-Roberts, knowing the vital necessity, determined, whatever the risk, to make the attempt. No advantage was to be gained by waiting for a lull, for there were no lulls.

Nearly two hundred yards of open ground which was swept by hissing bullets and churned up by heavy bombs had to be crossed. Captain Cramer-Roberts started, alternately running and crawling, followed by an Indian officer of the 59th Rifles. All went well for a short time, both officers seeming to possess charmed lives, but when nearly halfway across, the Indian officer, of whose presence Captain Roberts was unaware, was badly hit and could go no further. Captain Roberts, however, got on unharmed until, just as he was nearing our parapet and a few feet more would have put him in safety, he was severely wounded in three places by machine-gun fire, and was hauled into the trench, more dead than alive, by the Highland Light Infantry. Before he collapsed he was able to give Colonel Ronaldson news of what was taking place in front. For his great devotion and gallantry Captain Cramer-Roberts received the D.S.O.

Meanwhile the men of the 20th Company Sappers and Miners under Major Gardiner, R.E., and the 34th Pioneers were continuing their efforts to connect our trench with the saphead, but little progress could be made, owing to the proximity of the enemy's fire trench and the want of sandbags.

MAJOR NICOLAY FORCED TO RETIRE 161

The position in the front trench was rapidly becoming critical. As the day wore on, Major Nicolay discovered that the enemy had a fire position in his right rear, on high ground in front of Givenchy village, from which his position was enfiladed. By the early afternoon he had only about eighty effectives left, and had been driven by rifle fire and bombs out of the trench into the sap.

By a lucky chance at this moment, having long since run out of his own, he found three German bombs. He explained their use to his bombing party, who immediately used them with great effect, stopping the enemy's bombing entirely. Had it not been for this lucky find, Major Nicolay could not have held on much longer.

As dusk came on, finding that there were no signs of the completion of the connecting trench, and as many of the wounded men were in great need of treatment, Major Nicolay was forced to decide on evacuating the position which he had held so long and so gallantly, before the enemy, under cover of darkness, could make a determined effort to capture his party. The retirement was carried out with the utmost steadiness between 4.30 and 5 p.m., the unwounded helping the wounded across the open.

Thus ended an anxious day, during which all ranks had done their duty nobly. They failed, but they failed splendidly.

The casualties were heavy. The Highland Light Infantry lost Lieutenant Kerr killed, Captain Pringle and Lieutenant Anderson missing. In the 1/4th Gurkhas Captain Inglis was killed, Captain Cramer-Roberts severely wounded. Owing to the continuous fighting during this period, it was impossible

to ascertain the casualties of each day amongst the rank and file.

In the meantime the 59th Rifles had been going through a very trying experience.

The original intention was that the left of the Ferozepore Brigade should co-operate with the right of Sirhind, the 129th Baluchis being detailed for this purpose, as the position to be assaulted lay in front of their trench and they knew the ground well, having attacked over it so recently as the 16th December. The 129th had, however, on that occasion lost heavily and were not in a condition to take part in any immediate attack.

The 59th Rifles of the Jullundur Brigade were therefore placed at the disposal of Ferozepore. The Battalion suffered under the very serious handicap of having had no opportunity of reconnoitring the ground, and they had to take up their position for attack in the dark.

The 59th moved up into the trenches of the 129th Baluchis, and as soon as our four minutes' bombardment ceased, No. 1 Company under Captain J. D. Scale, and No. 4 under Captain B. E. Anderson, climbed out and advanced. One platoon of No. 1 Company, under Jemadar Mangal Singh of the 52nd Sikhs, was ordered to take the German sap on the right, which they accomplished with a rush. They continued to hold this sap against every effort of the enemy, for 18 hours, until the Sappers and Miners, coming to the rescue as usual, managed to dig through, and thus enabled a party of the 129th Baluchis to relieve them.

Meanwhile Jemadar Mangal Singh's party, in spite of heavy losses, had killed a number of Germans

and captured a wounded officer. For his gallantry the Jemadar received the Indian Distinguished Service Medal.

The confusion in the pitch darkness was indescribable. One company, on getting out of our trench, was unable to find the sap which was their objective. Even the real direction of the German trenches was uncertain. As an officer tersely put it, "they advanced towards the German fire," which led them to a trench in which they found British soldiers, Gurkhas and Germans hopelessly mixed up.

The confusion was rendered even worse by the fact that the German regiments in front of the 59th had very similar numbers, and when officers of the 59th tried to collect their men, Germans frequently answered.

Captain Anderson's party got up to a trench, and in order to avoid a possible fight with our own men, he asked the occupants who they were. They replied, "Highland Light Infantry and Gurkhas," and promptly opened fire. Captain Anderson then saw by their bayonets that they were Germans, so he and his men went at them, on which they at once ran, and Captain Anderson occupied the trench. A support of another regiment now came up, and with the greatest difficulty they were persuaded not to attack our men with the bayonet, thinking them to be the enemy.

Germans were continually being pulled out of dug-outs and made prisoners, which only added to the confusion. An officer relates that almost every other officer who met him put a revolver to his head and threatened to blow his German brains out.

Meanwhile Lieutenant W. Bruce with a platoon

had lost direction, but eventually got into the German trench further to the left. He was the first man into the trench, and was immediately killed. Captain Anderson was carrying a rifle and was hit by a bullet on the revolver in his belt, at close range. He was completely knocked out, but soon returned to the fight. Lieutenant Atkinson was killed actually lying on the German parapet and firing with the utmost coolness into the trench.

A portion of the two companies in support in our main trench now pushed up into the left sap, under Captains Lee and Gilchrist, with whom went Lieutenant Kisch, R.E., always to be found where the fight was thickest. The two former were shortly afterwards hit through the head, and Captain Anderson found Lieutenant Scobie in the midst of the turmoil, making attempts to get the two officers away under a heavy fire from three sides, while Havildar Abdul Wahab with a few men was pluckily holding the head of the trench close up to the Germans. This non-commissioned officer distinguished himself throughout the action, and was awarded the Indian Order of Merit, 2nd Class, receiving later the Russian Medal of St George, 2nd Class.

Cool as ever, Lieutenant Kisch was sketching the plan of a barricade which he proposed to erect. Captain Lee was dead; Captain Gilchrist was brought back by Lieutenant Scobie behind our barricade, but died very shortly afterwards. It could be seen that the Germans were in strong force, for their heads were silhouetted against the dawn at about two feet interval along the parapet, over which they were keeping up rapid fire. Most of our rifles had by this time jammed with the mud,

and were being passed back and others passed up in their place. Lieutenant Scobie's example was invaluable at such a time, and he well earned the Military Cross which he received.

There were many instances of individual gallantry. Numbers of wounded men were brought in under a murderous fire, but the turmoil and darkness prevented the rescuers from being identified. Lieutenant Bruce, whose death has already been mentioned, was shot under the following circumstances. As he and his party got up to the German trench, the enemy called out that they would surrender, and held up their rifles. As soon, however, as our men put their heads over the parapet, they were shot. Lieutenant Bruce charged the trench, and was first shot in the neck and then killed. Havildar Dost Mahomed took command, chased the enemy out, and held on all day, a large number of dead Germans being found in front of his position. Here again the rifles jammed, and eventually our fire waned.

Finally the enemy brought up a trench mortar, and, after a number of his men had been killed, Havildar Dost Mahomed ordered the remainder to retire. This they absolutely refused to do, saying their Sahib, Lieutenant Bruce, had ordered them to hold on to the end. Faithful to their dead officer, the proudest tribute any man could wish, they held on until all but Dost Mahomed and another wounded man had been killed by bombs. The two survivors then crawled out, and eventually got back, guided by the bursting of German shells, to our trench, where they were promptly fired on by our men, but on their shouting that they were

"men from India," they were let in. For his bravery and devotion, Havildar Dost Mahomed received the Indian Order of Merit, 2nd Class.

By this time the shallow communication trench was blocked with dead and wounded, and with the dawn it became evident that, as no bombs were available, the only thing left to do was to make a "block" in the communication trench and hold the small portion of the front trench which we had captured. This "block" was made as quickly as possible, under heavy fire, by Lieutenant Kisch, and a short description will serve to show the kind of work which our Sappers were continually called on to carry out under most dangerous circumstances.

The first step was to make a temporary block at the most forward point held by us. This consisted of sandbags or anything which would afford some shelter to those working on the real block further back. Behind this advanced block the zigzags of the trench were straightened out for a distance of at least 25 yards—40 yards, if possible—so as to give immunity against hand-bombing. The object of straightening the trench was to give our men a clear field of fire from behind the main block. At the near end of the straight portion, a substantial barricade of sandbags was made, in which was fitted a steel loophole taken from a German trench. The straight portion of the trench was then cleared of dead and wounded, and a double sentry posted behind the loopholed main barricade. The term and system "double block" were, it is believed, invented by Captain B. C. Battye, R.E., and have since been generally adopted.

The rest of the day was spent in consolidating the

captured trench and getting ready for the inevitable counter-attack. In the evening, the enemy made an attack for the purposes of reconnaissance, which was repulsed, and after dark the 59th were relieved.

So ended the assault delivered by the 59th. It was carried out most gallantly, but the Germans were in great strength, their wire was intact, and last, but not least, they had unlimited bombs, of which we possessed but few, and those of a very inferior type improvised in the field.

The net result was that one platoon succeeded in holding about 90 yards of the enemy's sap on the left, while another platoon on the right, with some of the 129th Baluchis, kept its grip on a sap in front of that battalion. With these exceptions, the night of the 19th December fell with all the ground lost which at bloody price we had gained during the day. The Brigades were holding their original line, except for the indentation at the "Orchard," where the 2nd Gurkhas, having been driven back, were occupying a retrenched line, previously prepared.

The losses of the 59th in this very gallant attack were heavy. Captains Lee and Gilchrist, Lieutenants Atkinson and Bruce, with 22 men, were killed; and Captain J. D. Scale and 85 other ranks wounded.

In co-operation with this attack, an assault on a German saphead on the left of the Sirhind Brigade by two platoons of the 1st Battalion 1st Gurkhas, under Captain Burke and Lieutenant Rundall, was timed for 5.30 a.m. Owing partly to the terrible condition of the trenches, an unfortunate delay occurred, and the attack was delivered in broad daylight, starting at 10 a.m.

Although under such circumstances the attempt was foredoomed to failure, the two officers led the assault with the greatest determination and dash. They were met by a deluge of machine-gun and rifle fire, but it was not until both British officers were killed that the attacking party recoiled, only a small remnant regaining our trenches. In addition to Captain Burke and Lieutenant Rundall, 24 men were killed or wounded, representing over 50 per cent. of the number engaged.

The night of the 19th-20th December passed without any marked incident, but with the first streak of dawn the enemy opened a heavy fire from artillery and trench mortars upon the whole front of the Indian Corps. This was followed up by infantry attacks in especial force against Givenchy and the line between Givenchy and La Quinque Rue.

The elements were warring on the side of the enemy, for torrential rain during the night had made the trenches almost untenable. In many places the fire-step had been washed away, and the men were consequently unable to stand high enough to fire over the parapet. The trenches were knee- and in some places even waist-deep in mud and icy water, which clogged a large number of rifles and rendered them useless.

At about 9 a.m. a series of ear-splitting explosions took place along the whole front of the Sirhind Brigade round the village of Givenchy, and it was evident that the enemy had, unknown to us, succeeded in mining under our parapet from the numerous sapheads along our front.

In the right sub-section were one company Highland Light Infantry and two double companies



[Daily Mirror.

INDIAN TROOPS IN THE TRENCHES: WINTER, 1914.



TERRIBLE EFFECT OF ENEMY'S MINES 169

of the 1/4th Gurkhas. Of these, one double company of the Gurkhas and half a company of the Highland Light Infantry were either blown to bits or buried under the ruins of the trench. There were few survivors, but these included Lieutenant Barry, Highland Light Infantry, with Colour-Sergeant Brisbane and a small party on the extreme right, who held out until overwhelmed and captured. Lieutenant J. R. Cowan, Highland Light Infantry, also survived, and a few men who, being on the extreme left, missed the full force of the explosion. Lieutenant Cowan and Captain Money, 1/1st Gurkhas (killed), continued to bomb the enemy to the last, until the former was forced to retire into the Gurkha trench.

Private Black, Highland Light Infantry, stuck to his post and went on serving his trench mortar until the ammunition was exhausted, and when a retirement took place he refused to leave a wounded comrade until he had taken him to a place of safety. He received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his bravery.

Immediately after the explosions, the enemy advanced in heavy masses, but met with a stubborn resistance by the remaining double company of the 4th Gurkhas, who inflicted considerable loss. The rifles were jamming as usual, and in spite of all our men could do, the Germans gained a footing in the trench at several points, where ferocious hand-to-hand fighting took place, and the enemy had an opportunity of appreciating to the full the skill with which the Gurkhas can use their beloved kukris in a circumscribed space.

Our men were outnumbered and outbombed

from the start. Our bombs, however gallantly and skilfully handled, were limited in number, and technically were no match for the scientifically devised German missiles. The greatest difficulty was experienced in getting them to light, and many failed to explode.

Captain Rundall of the Gurkhas was here killed while leading a bombing party, after killing two Germans with his revolver. At this period the Gurkhas lost heavily, but left their mark deep in the enemy.

No amount of gallantry could prevail against such odds. The position was enfiladed, and the few remaining rifles were rapidly being put out of action by the mud. To remain meant annihilation, without serving any useful purpose.

A retirement was ordered at 1 p.m., under Major Travers, who succeeded in getting the remains of No. 4 Double Company through Givenchy village, which was then being heavily shelled. The retirement was most gallantly covered by the Gurkha machine-gun detachment, under Captain Wylie, and the machine guns manned by a party of the 125th Napier's Rifles; but in the midst of their devoted work another terrible explosion took place, and of this noble little band not a man returned.

The extent to which luck determines the incidents of war is illustrated by the fact that Captain Phayre, who was in charge of the Gurkha machine guns, was relieved by Captain Wylie only a few minutes before the mine was exploded. It was afterwards ascertained that by some freak of fortune Captain Wylie escaped death and was taken prisoner. Of

DESPERATE DEFENCE OF THE H.L.I. 171

E Company, under Captain Yates, not a trace has ever been found.

In the firing line of the left sub-section were one company Highland Light Infantry, under Major Murray, with two machine guns, and two double companies 1/1st Gurkhas with two machine guns, under Major Bliss, C.I.E. As in the case of the right section, frightful explosions took place here, destroying several lengths of trench with their defenders. At the same time, it is reported, an aeroplane dropped bombs on the line.

The enemy advanced in great numbers up their saps and across the open. It seemed that the majority of the Germans were armed with bombs. A large number were killed by rifle and machine-gun fire, but they still came on in waves and forced their way over the parapet, where their superiority in bombs at once told heavily in their favour. After a short but sanguinary fight the remains of the trenches passed into the hands of the enemy.

Of the Highland Light Infantry, Lieutenant Guthrie-Smith was blown up near the Picquet House; Major Murray and Captain Cameron with their men held on to the very last, and are all believed to have been killed. Lieutenant Pitts-Tucker made a desperate attempt to take reinforcements up to Captain Cameron, but he and all his party were mown down by machine-gun fire. Seeing their officer fall, Lance-Corporal Barr and Private Carmichael rushed out and managed to bring Lieutenant Pitts-Tucker back some way under a terrible fire, but he was killed by another bullet as they were carrying him. For their gallant conduct they received the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Meantime Lieutenant Stewart, Highland Light Infantry, who was in the support trench with 80 men and two machine guns, barricaded himself in, and held out against all attacks, although he was practically isolated. A small reinforcement of 30 men succeeded in reaching him just before dark, and with this assistance Lieutenant Stewart fought on, with splendid pluck and tenacity, till relieved by the South Wales Borderers on the evening of the 21st December. His gallant conduct very materially helped to stay the further advance of the enemy, and gave us time to bring up fresh troops.

This achievement was the more noteworthy, because the men of the Highland Light Infantry who were with him had been for over 72 hours in the trenches without a moment's rest. When relieved, they were utterly worn out, but still remained to bury Lieutenant Pitts-Tucker and many of our dead, and brought away with them their two machine guns.

After sending the 30 men to Lieutenant Stewart, only 60 remained to hold the left of the reserve trenches in rear of him. Nevertheless, the position was retained by Colonel Ronaldson until the 3rd Brigade reached him on the afternoon of the 21st December. This was only rendered possible by the action of our artillery, which maintained an unceasing fire by night and day on the enemy's trenches, and thereby deceived them as to our strength in rear, and kept them from advancing.

Meanwhile the Gurkhas, under Major Bliss and Captain Kennedy, were putting up a very stubborn fight against heavy odds; and the enemy only succeeded in getting a footing at one spot, being

OUR TROOPS COMPELLED TO RETIRE 173

driven back everywhere else. Captain Kennedy organized and led bombing parties, which prevented the enemy from emerging from newly constructed saps.

Major Bliss, in the meantime, headed a desperate bayonet charge, driving the Germans back some distance along their sap, but he lost his life in this gallant effort.

Captain Tarrant, Highland Light Infantry, then took command, and tried to establish communication with the Gurkha Head Quarters, but the telephone wires had been cut by shell fire, and all attempts to repair them failed.

It was then found that the Germans had managed to get into both flanks of the trench, and had bombed us out of two traverses near the centre, killing or wounding the whole of our bombing party in doing so, and destroying one of our machine guns. The other gun was still working, although its water jacket had been ripped open. It was therefore only a question of how many rounds it could fire before becoming overheated.

The position was now hopeless, and retirement was imperative. This movement was carried out in good order to the support trenches, where, however, there was no rest, for the enemy had bombed our men out of the left of the trench, and we had run out of bombs. A further retirement was therefore made to Festubert, under cover of a small rearguard, armed with the few serviceable rifles remaining.

This retirement was carried out very steadily. The conduct of the troops had throughout been admirable in the face of overpowering numbers and every conceivable disadvantage.

The trenches, owing to the thick and holding mud, became veritable death-traps. Only the slowest movement was possible; men had their boots, and even their clothes, pulled off by the mud. Most of the rifles jammed, and bombs gave out.

As soon as the retirement was fairly under way, our artillery opened a heavy fire on the trenches taken by the enemy, which prevented him from making any further advance, and in some places even forced him back.

The casualties on the 19th and 20th were very serious, as may be gathered from those of the 1/4th Gurkhas, who lost 302 of all ranks, including 7 British and 10 Gurkha officers. On the 20th December alone, the 1/1st Gurkhas lost 2 British officers killed and had over 200 casualties amongst the other ranks, including the Subadar-Major and three other Gurkha officers.

From the 19th to the 22nd, the 1st Highland Light Infantry had 2 officers and 55 men killed, 63 men wounded, and 8 officers and 276 men missing. Of the 8 officers returned as missing, all have since been ascertained to have been killed, as were also the great majority of the men.

Shortly afterwards, Sir John French inspected the battalion, and warmly congratulated it on having upheld the famous traditions of the regiment.

Colonel Ronaldson, who had shown marked qualities of leadership in a very difficult position, was awarded the C.B., while Lieutenant Stewart received the D.S.O. in appreciation of his gallant conduct.