

CHAPTER XX

THE BATTLE OF FESTUBERT

Events on the Eastern Front—French offensive in the Woevre—Combined operations in May, 1915, by French and British to relieve pressure on Russia—Distinct objective of British offensive—General instructions—51st Highland Division joins the Indian Corps—Weather extremely unfavourable—Dispositions for attack—Inadequate bombardment—Two attacks of the Dehra Dun Brigade fail with heavy losses—Temporary success of 8th Division—Terrible condition of communication trenches—Two attacks by 1st Division fail—Second attack of 4th Corps breaks down—Bareilly attack fails with serious losses—Enemy's defences strengthened as result of Neuve Chapelle—Progress by the French—Further operation orders—Garhwal attack fails with very heavy casualties—Second attack also breaks down—Sirhind takes over trenches captured by 2nd Division—Horrible condition of the trenches—Situation on 18th May—Lieutenant J. G. Smyth, 15th Sikhs, gains the Victoria Cross—Attack by Sirhind on 18th May—Further attack on 21st May—1/1st Gurkhas capture a trench, remainder held up—Attack withdrawn—Captain Douie, R.E., gains the D.S.O.—General Walker's reasons for failure of Sirhind attack—Magnificent courage of the troops throughout the operations—Sir John French's remarks.

THE month of May, 1915, was destined to leave its mark deep cut in the Indian Corps. For the greater part of this period fighting was continuous, and although our object was not gained in its entirety, there can be few pages in the history of this war which testify to greater gallantry than that displayed by the Corps in its prolonged heroic struggle against the impossible.

During April the eyes of the world had been

fixed on the operations on the Eastern front, where great events were in preparation, the result of which, it was then hoped, would place Russia in a commanding position for her great summer offensive.

Within the limits of this history it is impossible to go into detail. It will be remembered that the Russian plans aimed at the possession of the crest of the Carpathians, the domination of which was necessary, whether the ultimate objective was the Oder by way of Cracow, or the plains of Hungary, from which the Germans drew vast quantities of grain. By the 25th April it seemed that the Russian blow would be successful, and that the Carpathian line would shortly be in General Ivanov's hands, carrying with it the power to invade the rich cornlands of Hungary.

During this and the preceding month, however, there had been ominous signs of a revival of German activity, at first taking the form of operations by the Baltic Fleet, in the course of which Libau was bombarded, while a little later the German troops advanced towards the Dubissa. These moves were generally construed as efforts to take the Russian pressure off the Carpathian region, where the position of the Central Powers had reached a critical stage.

The Germans kept their secret well, for the true meaning of their preliminary operations appears not to have been understood until Mackensen's thunderbolt fell at the close of April, and the contemplated Russian offensive was turned, as it were in an instant, into a desperate defence.

For some time past the French had been engaged in sanguinary, but successful, fighting in the Woevre, their ultimate aim, apparently, being a crushing

advance into Alsace and Lorraine, with a view to breaking down the German left.

The course of events on the Russian front brought a rapid awakening from these dreams. Any advance into Alsace-Lorraine must perforce be slow, directed as it would be against a portion of the enemy's line which was covered by fortresses such as Metz ; moreover, no main arteries of communication could be severed by such a move.

Whatever was to be done must be done quickly, and the section which appeared to offer the most speedy means of diverting the enemy's attention from the Eastern front seemed to be that in which lie the important railway junctions of Valenciennes and Douai, through which passed a network of lines supplying three German armies. If these communications could be cut, the enemy's position from Lille to Soissons would become untenable, and there would be no alternative to a retreat.

In May, therefore, the French commenced an offensive towards Lens, the British at the same time undertaking active operations further north. To quote the words of Sir John French in his despatch dated the 15th June, 1915 :—

“In pursuance of a promise which I made to the French Commander-in-Chief to support an attack which his troops were making on the 9th May between the right of my line and Arras, I directed Sir Douglas Haig to carry out on that date an attack on the German trenches in the neighbourhood of Rouges Bancs (north-west of Fromelles) by the 4th Corps, and between Neuve Chapelle and Givenchy by the 1st and Indian Corps.”

Although the British offensive was undertaken

chiefly in support of the French, it had also a distinct and important objective, that of wresting from the enemy the famous Aubers Ridge, our principal aim at Neuve Chapelle, the possession of which would menace Lille, Tourcoing, Roubaix, and La Bassée.

On the 13th April secret instructions for the forthcoming operations were issued. Therein Sir Douglas Haig laid emphasis on the fact that the projected offensive was intended to be much more sustained, and that it was hoped that more far-reaching results would be obtained than from the operations at Neuve Chapelle.

The object was to co-operate with a vigorous offensive on a large scale by the French, with a view to breaking the enemy's front for a considerable width, and then to follow it up by such action as would cause a general retirement of a great part of the enemy's line.

Our aim, then, was not a local success and the capture of a few trenches, nor even of a portion of the hostile position on a more or less extended front, but to employ the entire force at our disposal, and to fight a decisive battle. At the same time general instructions for the attack were issued, the details of which were to be worked out by the Corps and Divisions concerned on the same lines as those for the attack on Neuve Chapelle.

The general instructions were briefly as follows :—

The 1st Army was to operate with a view to breaking through the enemy's line and gaining the La Bassée—Lille road between La Bassée and Fournes, after which an advance on Don would take place.

The 1st Corps, with its right on Givenchy, would attack from the vicinity of Richebourg L'Avoué,

on as broad a front as possible, and advance on the line Rue du Marais—Illies.

The Indian Corps was to cover the left of the 1st Corps and to capture the Ferme du Biez, its subsequent advance being directed on Ligny-le-Grand—La Cliqueterie Farm.

The 4th Corps would operate so as to break through the enemy's line near Rouges Bancs with the double object of organizing a defensive flank from the vicinity of La Cordonnerie Farm to Fromelles, and of turning the Aubers defences from the north-east.

After gaining these objects the Corps would advance on La Cliqueterie Farm in the hope of effecting a junction with the Indian Corps.

The 2nd Cavalry Division was to remain in readiness near Estaires to act as the situation might develop.

The lesson of Neuve Chapelle had been learned, and the most minute instructions were now issued to prevent the delay caused by the late arrival of reserves, which on that occasion proved fatal to our plans. The importance of preserving communications between commanders and the front line of attack was especially impressed on all concerned, detailed instructions as to the method of attaining this end being given.

On the 18th April secret orders were issued by Sir James Willcocks for the operations of the Indian Corps. The Meerut Division was to attack on a front of 600 yards, reinforced by the artillery of the Lahore Division, and by any other guns which might be placed at the disposal of the Corps, the line being held by the Lahore Division, of which one Brigade would be in Corps reserve.

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The various stages up to the first objective were defined as—

(a) Assault of the enemy's first line trenches.

(b) Capture of the village of La Tourelle on the La Bassée—Estaires road.

(c) Capture of the Ferme du Biez near the southern extremity of the Bois du Biez.

The subsequent objectives of the Indian Corps were to be the occupation of Ligny-le-Petit, Ligny-le-Grand, the Bois du Biez and La Cliqueterie, where junction would be effected with the 4th Corps.

All was in readiness for an attack at an early date, when orders were received for the Lahore Division to march to Ypres, where, as already related, it took part in the second battle, rejoining the Indian Corps on the 3rd–4th May. The operations intended for April had therefore to be postponed pending the return of the Lahore Division. At the commencement of May our front line was held by the Meerut Division.

The Germans were evidently suspicious of an attack on the 1st May, for at 4.45 a.m. on that date they opened a very heavy bombardment with howitzers on Port Arthur and the eastern end of the Rue du Bois, but our front line trenches were left severely alone. There was no sign of any infantry attack, and it was evident that, fearing an assault on our part, the enemy was searching for supports and reserves, and was seeking to destroy the communication trenches.

The chief sufferers were the 2nd Leicesters, 2/8th Gurkhas, and 39th Garhwalis, but the total of only 44 casualties was light considering the severity of the bombardment. By 6.30 a.m. all was calm

again, and the cuckoo was heard calling amongst the ruins of Neuve Chapelle, as peacefully as if the voice of a heavy howitzer had never been heard in the land.

On the 2nd May the Corps received a valuable addition in the shape of the 1st (afterwards known as the 51st) Highland Division (Territorials), under the command of Major-General Bannatine-Allason, C.B.

The Territorial battalions already with the Corps had established such a reputation that the advent of a whole Division of similar units was warmly welcomed, but their stay was unfortunately brief. On the 6th May the Jullundur Brigade relieved the Garhwal Brigade in the northern section of the Corps front, which now fell under the Lahore Division.

The Highland Division was not long in getting to work, for on the night of the 6th May the 1st Highland Brigade R.F.A. was ordered into action, while the remainder of the Division was moved into billets as far forward as possible, in readiness for any eventualities.

The advance of the 1st Army, originally fixed for the 8th May, was put off for 24 hours, partly on account of the thick mist and partly because of the postponement of the French operations further south. The weather during the few preceding days had been of a very uncertain nature, alternating between steamy heat and heavy rain. In the evening of the 4th May a violent thunderstorm burst, and during the night more rain fell, as had also been the case during the preceding night. The trenches were, in consequence, once more converted into quagmires, and the prospect of an attack over heavy holding mud did not seem very bright.

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The 6th was a day of brilliant sunshine, but on the 7th there was again rain.

The dispositions of the Meerut Division for the attack were as follows :—

The assault on the first objective, the enemy's trenches opposite to them, was to be delivered by the Dehra Dun Brigade on a three-battalion front, the Bareilly Brigade being in support, and the Garhwal Brigade, less two battalions which were detailed for another purpose, was to be in Divisional reserve. A separate force under the command of Lt-Colonel Drake-Brockman, was to be organized as a complete unit with its own Staff, signalling arrangements, and ammunition supply.

Colonel Drake-Brockman's Command was composed of the Garhwal Rifles, the 2/8th Gurkhas and two bomb guns. His orders were to move up into the front line trenches as soon as they were vacated by the Dehra Dun Brigade, and eventually to secure the eastern edge of the Bois du Biez and to capture La Russie.

The morning of the 9th May broke fine and clear. By 5 a.m. our guns had completed their registration, which had been carried on for several days previously in order not to rouse the suspicions of the enemy. At that hour the bombardment commenced and lasted for 40 minutes. It was noticed in our trenches that the fire was not so terrific as was expected, and although* by 5.20 a.m. the enemy's wire appeared to have been satisfactorily cut, the German parapet was seen to have suffered very slightly. Many of our shells burst short or over, some of them falling in our own trenches amongst the 1st Seaforths and 2/2nd Gurkhas, Captain

Mullaly and several men of the latter battalion being wounded in this way.

The units of the Dehra Dun Brigade, which were to deliver the assault were, from right to left, the 2/2nd Gurkhas, 1/4th Seaforths, and 1st Seaforths, the 6th Jats and 1/9th Gurkhas being in support. One company of the 6th Jats was sent forward to close a small gap which would otherwise have existed between the left of the 1st Division and the right of the 2/2nd Gurkhas.

At 5.25 a.m. the assaulting troops went over the parapet and lined out, preparatory to an advance as the guns lengthened their range. The intention was that the front line should creep up as close to the enemy's position as our bombardment would allow, but in consequence of so many shells falling short, the men were not able to make any appreciable advance before the time fixed for the assault.

At 5.40 a.m., at the first signs of an advance on our part, the enemy's parapet was manned, many Germans being seen to look over, and an appalling machine-gun and rifle fire was opened on us, the machine guns firing apparently from ground level.

On the right, two platoons of the 6th Jats attempted to advance with the 2nd Gurkhas, but were mown down at once, Captain Dudley and Subadar Lekh Ram being killed, and all the men either killed or wounded. The second line fared no better, Lieutenant Hebbert being severely wounded, and most of the men put out of action. In the 2/2nd Gurkhas also, all the British officers who went over the parapet were at once shot, Captain Mullaly, who was leading in spite of his wound, and Lieutenant Collins being killed.

The men fell in heaps. but the survivors dashed forward and gained the cover of the ditch in front of the parapet, where they lay down, thousands of bullets sweeping through the air just over their heads.

In the centre, the leading platoon of No. 3 Double Company, led by Captain Park, moved out in support of No. 4, but could get no further than the ditch. Captain Park, who, though very ill at the time, had insisted on taking part in the attack, was mortally wounded.

The 1/4th Seaforths in the centre were held up in the same manner, numbers of men being put out of action the moment they began to advance. The remainder pushed forward in the face of a sleet of bullets, and as many as could reach it took cover in the ditch, where they were forced to remain. Others were lying in the open or in shell holes, unable either to advance or retire.

This situation continued until orders were issued for any men who could crawl back to do so ; but few succeeded, as the slightest movement drew a terrific fire. More men managed to regain our trenches during the subsequent attack of the Bareilly Brigade, but the majority were compelled to lie out under fire until darkness set in.

The battalion suffered severely during this action.

Lieutenants Railton and Tennant, 2nd Lieutenant Bastian and 62 other ranks were killed, 5 officers and 127 men were wounded, while 19 men were missing.

The experiences of the 1st Seaforths on the left were of an equally harrowing nature. The moment they attempted to advance, officers and men were cut down as if by an invisible reaping machine, the

sound of the fire from a distance resembling the purring of a multitude of gigantic cats.

By 6 a.m. it was evident that our attack had failed, although it was believed that some men of the 2nd Gurkhas had reached the German trenches, only, however, to be shot down or captured. In the meantime the remainder were lying out in the open between our trenches and the enemy, unable to move.

The German guns, which till then had not been much in evidence, now poured a heavy and continuous fire on our trenches and the ground in rear, as well as on the Rue du Bois. This bombardment caused a large number of casualties amongst the Bareilly Brigade in its assembly position north of the Rue du Bois, the 41st Dogras suffering severely, while the 1/4th Black Watch sustained 14 casualties from premature bursts of our own shells.

On the right of the Indian Corps the attack of the 1st Division had also broken down with very heavy losses under machine-gun fire, and preparations were being made for a second bombardment. Heavy howitzers were now turned on to the enemy's parapet, after which the 1st Seaforths made a second gallant attempt to advance, but this, as well as a subsequent attack, was held up as before by fire through which there was no passing.

At 9 a.m., seeing that the task was absolutely impossible, that most of the officers had been shot, and that the men were lying out under a terrible fire of all kinds, the Commanding Officer of the 1st Seaforths ordered all who were able to move to get back to the trench whenever they could. A number succeeded in doing so, but many had to remain out for

hours, some returning at 3.40 p.m., when the Ba-reilly Brigade attacked, the remainder crawling back after dark. The losses of the 1st Seaforths during this terrible day were 7 officers and 131 other ranks killed, 10 officers and 346 others wounded.

The 8th Division of the 4th Corps on the left had at first met with considerable success, capturing the front line of German trenches near Rouges Bancs, while detachments even penetrated to a considerable distance behind the enemy's front; but eventually enfilade fire rendered the captured positions untenable, and by the morning of the 10th the 4th Corps was compelled to retire to its original line.

It was now observed that the enemy was being strongly reinforced in front of the Dehra Dun Brigade, and there appeared to be danger of a counter-attack. The 1/9th Gurkhas were accordingly ordered to support the 1st and 4th Seaforths, but by this time the communication trenches were so congested that only 200 of the battalion could get up to the front.

These trenches, difficult to pass through even when occupied only by the ordinary traffic, were now in a state which beggars description. The German guns had been pouring high explosive and shrapnel into them all the morning; in many places the parapet had been blown in, blocking the way, while numbers of dead and wounded were lying at the bottom of the trenches. The direction boards had in many cases been destroyed, and men were wandering about, vainly attempting to find the nearest way to their units or to the aid posts. The nearer one got to the front, the more of a shambles the trenches became; wounded men were creeping and crawling along amidst the mud and debris of the parapet,

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many of them, unable to extricate themselves, dying alone and unattended, while, amidst this infernal scene, the German shells were continually bursting.

At 7.45 a.m. on the 9th May, a special bombardment by howitzers of the enemy's trenches commenced and lasted till 8.45 a.m., under cover of which the Dehra Dun Brigade was to make a further assault. In the meantime news was received that the second attack of the 1st Division had failed owing to the enemy's wire not having been cut, the 2nd and 3rd Brigades having lost very heavily. The attack of the Dehra Dun Brigade was therefore postponed, and arrangements were made to organize another assault to synchronize with that of the 1st Division, which could not be got ready under two hours.

Eventually, operations were fixed for 2 p.m., to be undertaken by the Bareilly Brigade in relief of Dehra Dun. In consequence, however, of the crowded and battered state of the communication trenches, it was found to be impossible for the Bareilly Brigade to assault at that hour. The bombardment was therefore ordered to commence at 3.20 p.m., the assault, both of the 1st and Meerut Divisions, to take place at 4 p.m.

In the interval the Germans had been strongly reinforcing their second line, and at noon General Southey, Commanding the Bareilly Brigade, reported that the enemy's position had been in no way weakened by our bombardment, and that the machine-gun fire which had checked Dehra Dun was not lessened, while three of his battalions had already suffered severely from shell fire.

In spite of this report, Sir James Willcocks, in order to conform with the general plan of operations, directed the attack to take place as directed, and to proceed at all costs.

The relief of Dehra Dun by Bareilly had been in process since 10.30 a.m., but the movement was observed by the enemy, who kept up a constant heavy shell fire, which, coupled with the congested state of the trenches, greatly delayed the completion of the arrangements for the assault.

By this time the 2nd Black Watch had relieved the 2/2nd Gurkhas on the right, the 58th Rifles succeeded the 1/4th Seaforths in the centre, and the 41st Dogras replaced the 1st Seaforths on the left. It was a most pathetic sight to watch the poor remnant of this magnificent battalion, before the action over 1100 strong with 26 officers, returning to billets a mere skeleton, with a solitary piper marching at its head.

The 1/4th Black Watch were in reserve in the Crescent and Blackader trenches with the machine guns of the 125th Rifles. The Sirhind Brigade was placed in reserve to the Meerut Division, sending two battalions, the 1/4th King's (Liverpools) and 1/1st Gurkhas, into Corps reserve with the Dehra Dun Brigade.

It had now been ascertained that the machine-gun fire, from which the 1st Seaforths had suffered such terrible losses, was proceeding from the south-west corner of the Bois du Biez. General Anderson arranged for artillery fire to cope with this during the next bombardment, and directed General Southey not to make any attack east of the Estaires—La Bassée road, the left of the 41st Dogras being directed

on the west of that road which, being on a low embankment, afforded some protection from the east and north-east.

Some idea of the severity of the fire to which the Bareilly Brigade had been subjected during its move up to relieve Dehra Dun may be gathered from the fact that No. 3 Company of the 58th Rifles lost Lieutenant Mackmillan mortally wounded, two Indian officers killed, and 45 casualties amongst other ranks; in consequence, one company of the 1/4th Black Watch had to be lent to the 58th.

Meanwhile a report had been received that the second attack of the 4th Corps had also failed and that a further effort was being organized.

The artillery bombardment commenced at 3.20 p.m. on the 9th, and at 3.40 p.m. the assaulting troops began to cross our parapet and form up ready to advance. The right battalion, the 2nd Black Watch, and the right company of the 58th Rifles in the centre were met with an accurate and heavy machine-gun and rifle fire the moment they appeared over the parapet, with the result that only very few succeeded in crossing the ditch in front, the majority being killed or wounded before they reached it. This ditch, which was full of water and mud, ran parallel to our position at a distance varying from 10 to 30 yards, and had proved a very serious obstacle to each successive attack. Seeing that any further advance under such circumstances was out of the question, the Commanding Officer ordered the rest of the attack to remain in our trench.

During this advance Lance-Corporal David Finlay, 2nd Black Watch, performed a number of heroic

deeds. Shortly after crossing the parapet he was knocked over by the explosion of a shell, but on finding his feet again, he led forward a bombing party of twelve men, rushing from one shell hole to another, until ten of his men had been put out of action. Seeing that further progress was impossible, he ordered the two survivors to make the best of their way back, but himself crawled over to a wounded man and carried him in safety back to our trench, crossing, in doing so, for a distance of about 100 yards, a zone which was being swept by a terrific fire of every kind.

Lance-Corporal Finlay was awarded the Victoria Cross for his most conspicuous bravery and devotion, but later met his death, like so many brave men of the Indian Corps, in Mesopotamia.

In this brief period the losses of the 2nd Black Watch were:—Killed: 3 officers, Lieutenants the Hon. K. A. Stewart, W. L. Brownlow, and R. Sinclair; other ranks, 69. Wounded: 5 officers and 157 others. Missing: other ranks, 36. Total: 270 out of approximately 450 actually engaged.

The majority of these casualties were from bullet wounds, as the battalion had not suffered to any great extent from shells.

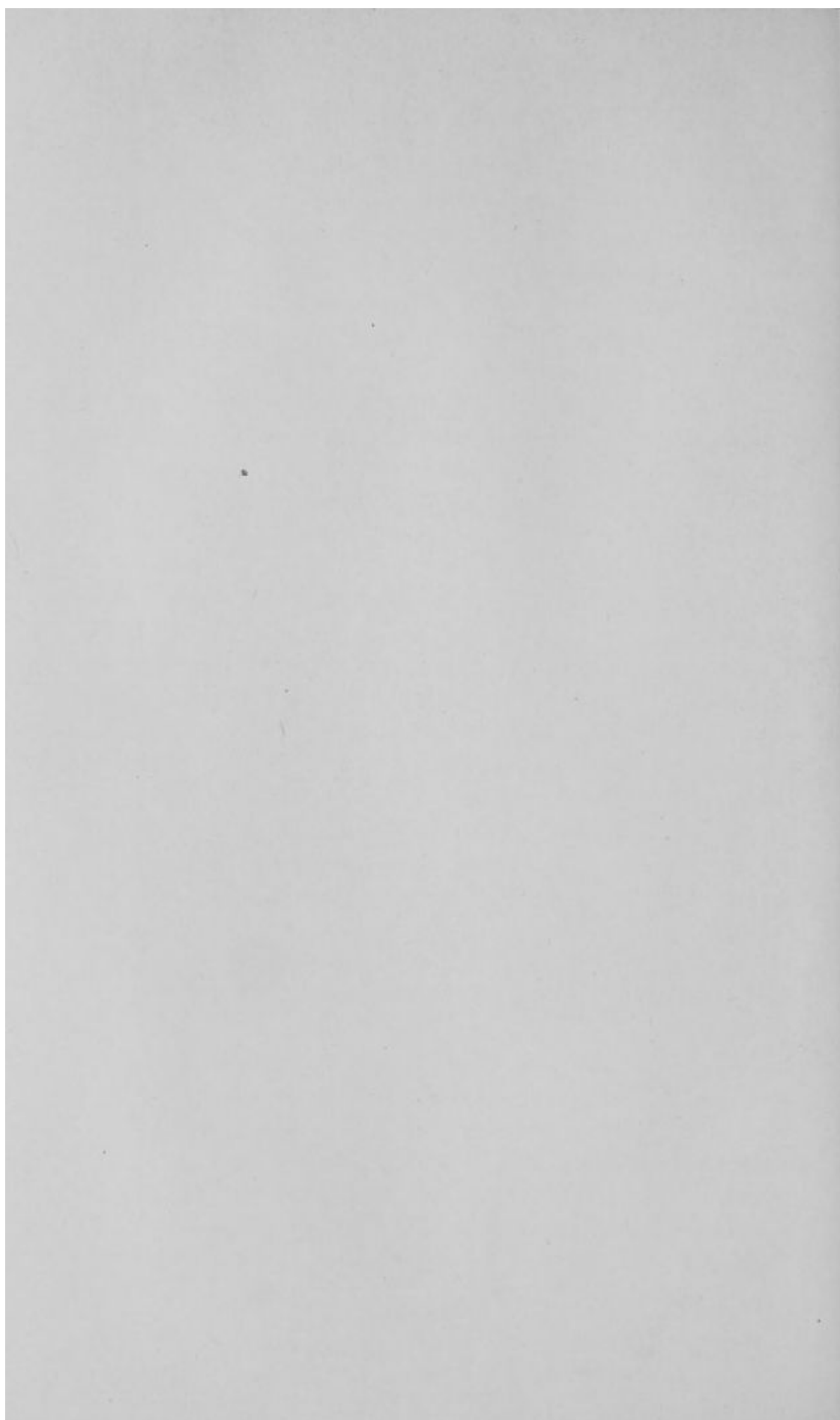
The wounded lay out in the open exposed to a fiendish fire till darkness enabled them to be brought in; then too those who had reached the cover of the ditch managed to creep back to our trench.

The left of the 58th Rifles succeeded with great gallantry in advancing about 100 yards, but here all further progress was barred by our own guns, which continued till 4.10 p.m. to plaster the ground about 130 yards in front of the enemy's trenches



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LANCE-CORPORAL, DAVID FINLAY, V.C., 2ND BN BLACK WATCH.



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with lyddite, and thus pinned our men down. The hostile guns were also knocking our parapet about badly, and succeeded in landing a shell on top of one of the machine guns of the 58th, killing 2 men and wounding 4; but the other gun continued in action in spite of the heavy fire.

After 5 p.m. those of the men who were still lying out under any slight cover they could find began to crawl back, some returning through holes dug under the parapet, and others climbing over the top. Many were hit during the process. The stretcher-bearers went out after dark, and with their usual devotion brought in all the 58th wounded, and many of the Seaforths and Black Watch.

The casualties of the 58th were 3 British officers wounded, of whom Lieutenant Mackmillan died that night; 2 Indian officers and 38 other ranks killed, 5 Indian officers and 197 others wounded; 7 others missing; total, 252.

The 41st Dogras had been exposed to an extremely accurate high-explosive fire, as well as shrapnel, while moving up through the Pioneer trench, one company being reduced to 28 men. The remains of two and a half companies crossed the parapet and pushed forward, but Captain Nixon, 91st Punjabis, who was leading No. 2 Company, was at once severely wounded, and the majority of the men were put out of action.

Lt-Colonel C. A. R. Hutchinson and Lieutenant Vaughan, I.A.R.O., led on No. 1 Double Company, and with the remains of No. 2 succeeded in getting a little further forward, but here Colonel Hutchinson was severely wounded in both legs and one hand,

while Lieutenant Vaughan had his right arm shattered. At the same time, Lt-Colonel Tribe, the Commanding Officer, who had been watching the advance over the parapet, was wounded in the chest by a shell splinter.

The men lay down under whatever cover they could find to wait for 4 p.m., at which time the assault was to be pressed home, but the whole advance had now been held up. Subadar Jai Singh, 37th Dogras, who was the sole unwounded officer, British or Indian, sent back word that he was ready to assault and was only awaiting the signal.

The casualties, however, both amongst the attacking companies and those still in our trench, had been so serious as to preclude all idea of any further move forward, and Subadar Jai Singh, who had meanwhile been wounded in two places, was ordered to abandon the attack, and await darkness before attempting to get back to the trench.

About this time Major Milne, 82nd Punjabis, was severely wounded while bringing his men up to the front line.

From 5 p.m. the artillery and rifle fire on both sides died down, and the opportunity was seized to reorganize companies and repair the trenches, as well as to remove the dead and evacuate the wounded.

The losses of the 41st Dogras during this attack were: 5 British officers wounded; 1 Indian officer killed and 6 wounded, as well as 354 other ranks; while 35 others were killed or believed to have been so. Total: 401 out of 645 engaged.

This was the first assault in which the battalion had taken part during its seven months of trench

warfare, and under the magnificent leadership of its British officers it held its own and made a lasting reputation for itself, no small matter on a day when all units engaged showed such heroism. For his services on this occasion Lt-Colonel W. Tribe, who has since been killed in action, was granted the C.M.G., Lt-Colonel Hutchinson the D.S.O., and Captain Brind, 37th Dogras, machine-gun officer, the Military Cross; while Subadar Jai Singh received the Russian Cross of the Order of St George, 3rd Class, a number of decorations being also awarded to the Indian ranks.

By this time the Commanding Officers of all the battalions engaged had come to the conclusion that to attempt any further advance would only mean useless loss of life. They were led to this opinion by the fact that our artillery preparation had been ineffectual, and that neither the enemy's parapet, personnel, nor machine guns had been seriously weakened. It was stated by the officers commanding the 2nd Black Watch and 58th Rifles that they saw the German marksmen deliberately standing up behind their breastworks during our bombardment and shooting our men while assembling, and it was only by the use of the regimental machine guns and the Brigade trench guns that the enemy could be kept down during the advance.

General Southey was of opinion that, although at Neuve Chapelle a forty minutes' bombardment was entirely successful, the enemy's parapet and lines generally had been much strengthened since that battle, necessitating a far longer and more sustained battering of the hostile trenches before an infantry attack could be made with any prospect of success.

At 6.15 p.m. orders were received for the relief of the Bareilly Brigade by Garhwal as soon as possible. The relief was completed by 1 a.m. on the 10th, Bareilly remaining in close support of the Garhwal Brigade. As a tribute to the gallantry of the Bareilly Brigade in the face of tremendous odds, the words of General Southey's report are worthy of quotation.

"I wish to bring to the notice of the Lieutenant-General Commanding the gallant behaviour of all the regiments engaged. They saw in front of them the hundreds of men of the Dehra Dun Brigade lying out on our front wounded and dead. They knew the enemy were unshaken, seeing them with their heads over the parapet firing, and thoroughly realizing that what had happened to the Dehra Dun Brigade would in all probability happen to them: but not a man faltered, and as they boldly advanced over the parapet, only to be shot down, British and Indian ranks alike did their level best to reach the enemy's line. Even when the attack had failed, the moral of the Brigade remained unshaken, and, had another attack been ordered, they would have undertaken it in the same spirit."

During the day news was received of good progress by the French in their operations between Lens and Arras. By nightfall our Allies had captured three lines of trench on a five-mile front, taking 3000 prisoners and a number of guns. Their infantry assault had been most thoroughly prepared, and the bombardment was the heaviest yet witnessed on the Western front, lasting for hours, and absolutely obliterating the German front line trenches, while cutting off all reinforcements.

As regards the British front, the position on the morning of the 10th May was unaltered, such ground as had been gained having been evacuated by us as untenable in face of the terrific enfilade fire maintained by the enemy. Early in the morning of the 10th orders were issued for the day's operations, but were cancelled later. During the night of the 10th-11th the Indian Corps took over a small portion of the line on the left of the 1st Corps.

The approximate casualties of the Corps up to midnight 10th-11th May were as follows:—

Meerut Division:—British officers, 69; Indian officers, 24; others, British, 1055; others, Indian, 823.

To these must be added 122 of all ranks of the Lahore Division, making a total of 2093.

Nothing of special note occurred during the 11th and 12th.

On the morning of the 13th May instructions were received from the 1st Army for operations on the 14th.

The general plan of the main attack was as follows:—

(1) To continue pressing forward towards Violaines and Beau Puits, establishing a defensive flank along the La Bassée road on the left and maintaining the right at Givenchy.

(2) The line to be established in the first instance, if possible, on the general line of the road Festubert—La Quinque Rue—La Tourelle cross-roads—Port Arthur. This position to be consolidated, the troops reformed, and communication established.

(3) During this process a bombardment on the whole front would continue, with fire specially directed on the next objectives, the Rue d'Ouvert—

Rue du Marais, after which a fresh advance on this line would take place.

The assault was to be carried out simultaneously by the Indian Corps and the 1st Division, commencing at 11.30 p.m. on the 14th May. The attacking troops of the Indian Corps were to be the Meerut Division, less the Dehra Dun Brigade, whose place was taken by Sirhind. The Lahore Division was to continue to hold its front and to assist with rifle and gun fire.

During the 13th and 14th considerable rain fell. Observation was in consequence extremely difficult, and many of our shells failed to burst on account of the softness of the ground. The operations ordered for 11.30 p.m. on the 14th were consequently postponed for 24 hours, as it was found that our bombardment had not been very successful. It was accordingly continued throughout the 15th, drawing a strong reply from the enemy's guns on the trenches held by the Meerut Division.

At 11.30 p.m. the guns lifted and our assault was launched. The 2nd Leicesters were on the right with 6 machine guns, the Garhwal Rifles with a similar number of machine guns on the left, with the 3rd Londons and two companies of the 2/3rd Gurkhas in support, the remainder of the 2/3rd being in Brigade reserve.

A number of portable bridges had been provided to enable the troops to cross the ditch which had proved such a serious obstacle to previous assaults. The placing of these bridges in position was no easy task. The enemy continually sent up flares which illuminated every inch of the ground, and followed them with bursts of rifle and machine-gun

fire. Moreover, the ditch had in many places been much widened by shell holes on the banks, and trunks of trees felled by shell fire blocked many places where the bridges might otherwise have been placed. The work was, however, quickly and skillfully carried out with few casualties.

As soon as the bridges were in position the assaulting troops filed out, a portion of each battalion lying on the enemy's side of the ditch, another portion on our side, while the remainder were in or behind the front-line trench ready to support. These movements were also completed with small losses.

The moment our men advanced, the enemy opened a murderous fire from rifles and machine guns, at the same time sending up flares and throwing in front of their parapet a species of fire grenade, which burst into flame on striking the ground, the result being that the night was literally as light as day. At the same time they covered the ground round the ditch with trench-mortar bombs and shrapnel, a searchlight exposing every movement of our men.

As each succeeding line came under fire, the bridges got blocked, and the obstruction caused by shell holes and fallen trees so impeded the advance that no effective support could be given. Repeated attempts were made to press forward, but they all ended in the same way. No living thing could penetrate the storm of bullets which screened the German trenches.

There seems reason to believe that the enemy was aware, not only of the hour of the intended attack, but also of the exact front on which it was to be delivered. During the evening preceding the assault the Germans were heard to call out, "Come on, we

are ready for you." Moreover, when they opened fire as our troops began to advance, only the actual front occupied by the assaulting companies was swept, and not the ground to the east of it, as might have been expected.

At about midnight it became evident that there was not the slightest prospect of success, however gallantly the assault might be pressed. The Leicesters and Garhwalis were therefore withdrawn, their place being taken by the 2/3rd Gurkhas and 3rd Londons.

The casualties of the 2nd Leicesters in this attack were:—Killed: 2nd Lieutenants Gandy, Tayler, Brown, and 22 other ranks. Wounded: 6 officers, of whom one, Lieutenant Crosse, died, and 192 others. Missing: 5.

The 39th Garhwalis lost:—Killed: 4 men. Wounded: Lieutenant G. S. Rogers, 2 Garhwali officers and 136 men. Missing: 11.

At 2.45 a.m. on the 16th May we commenced afresh the intense bombardment, and at 3.15 a.m. the 3rd Londons and 2/3rd Gurkhas attacked. Owing to the early dawn, it was not possible to get the men out before our bombardment ceased. Even before the assault started, the enemy was keeping up a very heavy fire on our parapet, and numbers of men were shot as they crossed the top.

In the 2/3rd Gurkhas, Lieutenant Robertson and 2nd Lieutenant Nott-Bower led two platoons each. Lieutenant Robertson got the remnant of his men over the ditch by the few remaining bridges, and was advancing by short rushes from shell hole to shell hole when he was stunned by a shrapnel bullet in the head. The attack was shortly afterwards held up all along the line, the Londons on the

left and the Worcesters of the British Division on the right being unable to advance.

The situation was reported, and orders were issued for the line to be held, but no further attempt at advance to be made. In retiring from the position reached during the assault, 2nd Lieutenant Nott-Bower was killed in a gallant attempt to bring in a badly wounded private of the Leicesters. Captain Grigg was also killed during the morning by shell fire.

At 6 a.m. the front line was vacated to allow of our artillery bombarding the German parapet, the troops again occupying the trenches at 2 p.m.

The losses of the 2/3rd Gurkhas were 2 British officers and 9 other ranks killed, 64 others wounded, 1 missing.

The 3rd Londons lost 10 men killed, 3 officers and 86 men wounded, 5 missing.

In view of the extraordinary strength of the defence, it was decided that no further attempts should be made to break through on this front, but that troops should be pushed through the opening made on the right of the Indian Corps. The Sirhind Brigade was now put under the orders of the General Officer Commanding 2nd Division, as also were the 107th Pioneers and No. 4 Company Sappers and Miners.

On the night of the 16th, Bareilly relieved the Garhwal Brigade in the front line. Throughout the darkness our guns continued to hammer at the Germans in order to give them no rest, and to keep them from sending out working parties. Our scouts made repeated attempts to get close to the hostile line, but were always prevented by the constant rifle and machine-gun fire, and the never-ceasing flares.

On the 17th May the Sirhind Brigade took over from the 5th Brigade a portion of the trenches captured by the 2nd Division. This relief was carried out with the greatest difficulty, owing to the communication trenches being blocked with wounded and also knee-deep in mud and water, through which the men, heavily laden with 300 rounds of ammunition, bombs, sandbags, etc., had to plod their way. The result was that the relief was only partially completed when dawn broke on the 18th, and there was considerable confusion.

The whole area of the support and fire trenches bore witness to the terrible fighting which had taken place there on the previous day. The parapets were in many places levelled and the trenches filled up; the ground was everywhere pitted with huge shell holes, and might almost be described as carpeted with dead bodies.

At 4 a.m. the enemy made a half-hearted attack on the left of the 15th Sikhs, but was easily beaten off by rifle fire.

The 1st Highland Light Infantry, who relieved their own second battalion, suffered a number of casualties during the relief and on the previous day, owing to the incessant shell fire maintained by the enemy, 2nd Lieutenant Davidson being killed, Lieutenants Henderson, Cowan, McNeill, and Murray wounded, while there were 70 casualties amongst the rank-and-file.

The battalion found the trenches in a shocking condition, many corpses and wounded being still there; 104 dead of different units were interred by the company in the front line during the night of the 18th May. The Germans had buried many

bodies in the parapet from which our shelling had unearthed them; mangled remains were trodden into the deep mud at the bottom of the trenches, and it was not till some days later that they could be extricated. The conditions in the meantime cannot with decency be described.

At noon on the 18th May the position of the Meerut Division and Sirhind Brigade was as follows:—

The Bareilly Brigade and 2/8th Gurkhas were holding the line from the La Bassée road to a point near the cinder track on the Rue du Bois, where a communication trench had been cut to the newly captured position.

Of the Sirhind Brigade, the 15th Sikhs and one company Highland Light Infantry were in the captured trenches, with the 4th King's (Liverpools) in our old trench to the west. The 1/1st and 1/4th Gurkhas were in support.

Of the Garhwal Brigade, one battalion was at Lansdowne Post, the remainder in billets and in second-line trenches at Croix Barbée. The Dehra Dun Brigade was in reserve.

On the night of the 17th May a company of the 15th Sikhs under Captain K. Hyde-Cates relieved the 2nd Highland Light Infantry in a section of the captured trench known as the "Glory Hole" on account of its dangerous position and the number of casualties which had occurred there, the enemy being only divided from us by barricades.

In the early morning of the 18th Captain Hyde-Cates observed that attempts were being made to reinforce the enemy, swarms of Germans being seen rushing towards the further extremity of the trench. Rapid fire was opened on them, but in the dim light

the effect could not be ascertained. When day broke, it was found that the enemy's trench was packed with men, and an attack seemed certain.

Shortly afterwards the Germans commenced heavy bombing, to which the 15th replied vigorously, and succeeded in holding their own till noon when all our dry bombs had been expended, the remainder having been rendered useless by the incessant rain and the mud. The situation at once became very critical, as without bombs the position could hardly be held.

At 3.30 p.m. Lieutenant J. G. Smyth, 15th Sikhs, was ordered to attempt to take bombs and a bombing party from the support trench (our former front line) to Captain Hyde-Cates. The distance to be covered was about 250 yards over open ground. The only means of communication was a shallow trench half full of mud and water, and in many places exposed to the fire of the enemy's snipers and machine guns. The trench was crammed with the dead bodies of British and Indian soldiers, as well as Germans. Lieutenant Smyth took with him ten bombers from No. 4 Company, selected from the crowd of volunteers who at once responded to the call.

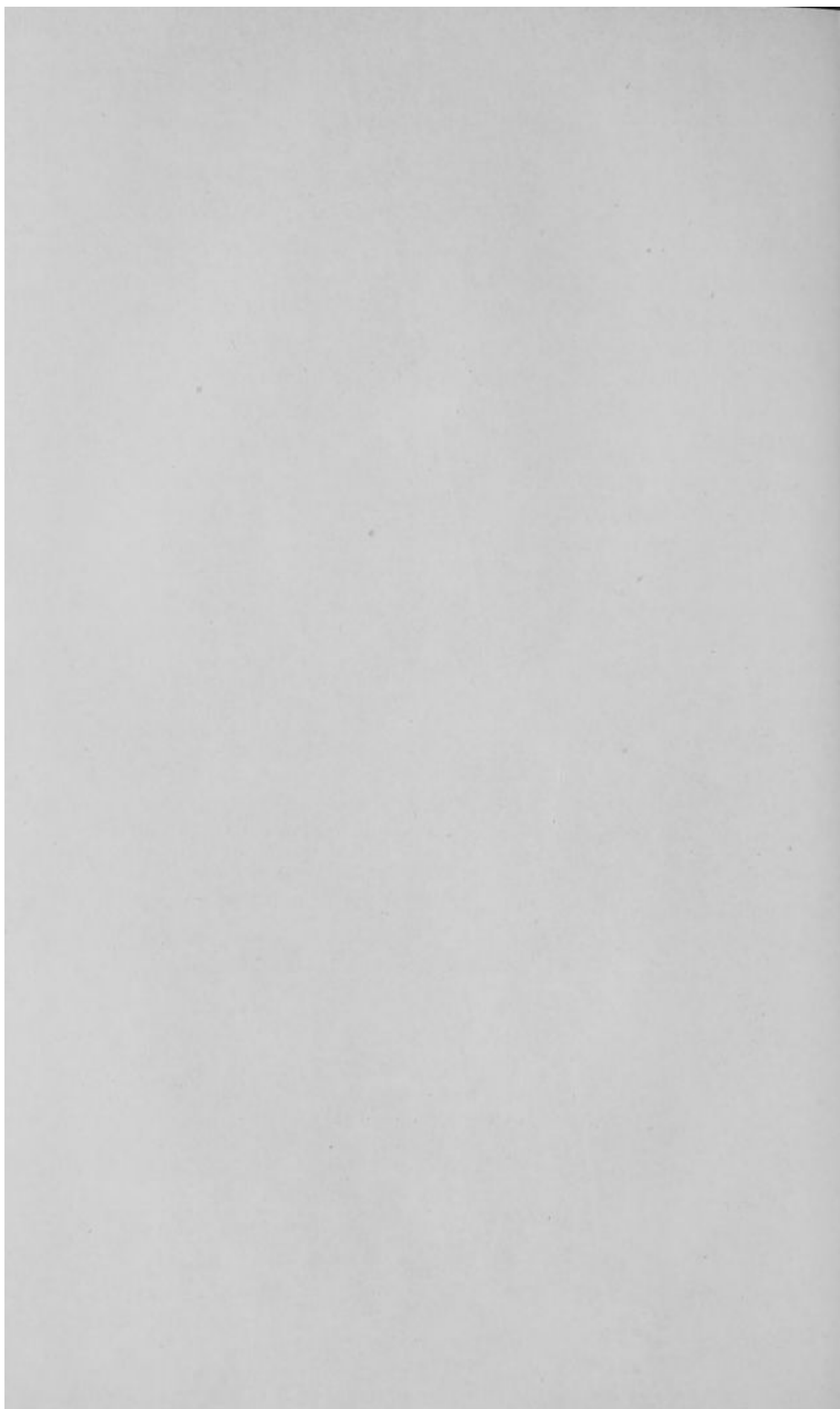
The names of these heroes deserve to be put on record. They were Lance-Naik Mangal Singh, Sepoys Lal Singh, Sucha Singh, Sapuram Singh, Sarain Singh, Sundur Singh, Ganda Singh, Harnam Singh (the last four being all of the 19th Punjabis), Fateh Singh and Ujagar Singh, both of the 45th Sikhs.

The party took with them two boxes of bombs containing 48 each. For the first 50 yards the trench



[Gillman, Oxford.]

LIEUT J. G. SMYTH, V.C., 15TH SIKHS.



gave cover from the enemy's view, but on emerging from this portion the men came under enfilade shrapnel fire from the German field guns, which was so severe as to force them to crawl off to the right and take refuge in a small stream where the water reached chest-high. Here the first man was hit.

Our men waited until the shelling slackened, and then, returning to the trench, continued their laborious progress. But now man after man was killed or wounded, for it was necessary to crawl over the top of the dead bodies, and the sides of the trench had been in many places broken down, exposing the party to the full view of the enemy, who, well aware of the object of the enterprise, pumped torrents of bullets into the trench. By the time Lieutenant Smyth had arrived within 30 yards of Captain Hyde-Cates' position, he had only three men left, and the slightest attempt to rise from a lying-down position brought a shower of bullets.

Up to this point the boxes had been pushed or pulled along by means of pagris attached to them, but with the few men left, this was no longer possible. Lieutenant Smyth now gave orders for the boxes to be opened, and for each man to carry two bombs in his hands. While opening a box, another man was shot through the head and killed. There was nothing for it but to leave the bombs in the communication trench to be brought in after dark.

The officer, Lance-Naik Mangal Singh, and one sepoy managed by crawling through the mud and water to reach Captain Hyde-Cates' trench, being the sole survivors of the little band of eleven.

So ended one of the most gallant episodes of the war. For his most conspicuous bravery Lieutenant

Smyth was awarded the Victoria Cross and later the 4th Class of the Order of St. George. Lance-Naik Mangal Singh received the 2nd Class, Indian Order of Merit, while the Indian Distinguished Service Medal was conferred on all the sepoys of the party.

An attack by the Sirhind Brigade on the Ferme du Bois was timed for 4.30 p.m. on the 18th May, in conjunction with an assault by the Guards Brigade on the Cour d'Avoué. As a first move, Sirhind was intended to bomb along the German trenches in their front and thus establish a *pied à terre* from which to launch an attack on the Ferme du Bois. After the capture of the farm, the Brigade was to conform to the progress of the Guards' attack.

Our artillery bombardment commenced at 2 p.m., from which time till 4 p.m. it was slow and deliberate in order to ensure proper observation of the effect. At 4 p.m. the guns quickened up till 4.20 p.m., ending with intense fire till 4.30 p.m., when the attack was to be launched.

At 4.20 p.m., however, the bombing parties of the Sirhind Brigade were still held up in their own trenches by the heavy artillery fire of the enemy, who deluged our line and the ground in rear with shells of all calibres, from the "pipsqueak" of the field guns to the "coal boxes" or "black Marias" of the heavy howitzers. The Highland Light Infantry attempted to dribble men up the communication trench to the firing line with their bombing parties, but they were at once spotted, and their losses prevented them from making any further progress. The attack of the 4th King's could not develope in face of the terrible fire, and by

6.30 p.m. the attempt died away, although the artillery on both sides continued an intermittent bombardment.

Already the company of the 15th Sikhs in the front line under Captain Hyde-Cates had lost approximately half its strength, but still held on bravely until relieved by No. 2 Company, under Captain Beattie-Crozier at 8.30 p.m. With them the 15th Sikhs' machine guns under Captain Daniell moved up to the front line, and a section of the 1/4th Gurkhas relieved a party of the 2nd Highland Light Infantry. The Germans were thoroughly on the alert, and at once opened a heavy fire, wounding two Indian officers and a number of men.

In the meantime the Guards Brigade had made some progress by short rushes, and a night attack by Sirhind was now ordered to take place as soon as the reliefs of the 2nd Division on the right were completed. At 10 p.m. Brigadier General Walker, V.C., Commanding the Sirhind Brigade, reported that the strength of the German position round the Ferme du Bois was such as to render the chance of success of an attack very doubtful; that any advance would entail useless loss unless our present front could be properly consolidated and a base for the attack assured.

Sir James Willcocks, while again impressing on General Walker the desirability of making the attack, left it to his judgment on the spot to decide whether to assault or not. At 11.10 p.m. it was definitely decided by General Walker that the attack should not take place, and with this decision Sir James Willcocks, for the reasons given, agreed.

The weather during this period continued to be

atrocious, rain frequently falling, and the trenches being half full of mud and water.

The 19th May began badly for the 15th Sikhs, for news was received early in the morning that Captain Beattie-Crozier and Lieutenant Thomson had been mortally wounded, and further, that the Germans on the left were bombing slowly along the trench, while of No. 2 Company in the front line and the machine-gun section, only 48 men remained unhurt, and that assistance was badly required. This was at once reported, and a company of the 1st Highland Light Infantry was sent up to support the 15th with a bombing party. At the same time artillery, rifle, machine-gun and bomb-gun fire was directed on the Germans, with the result that by 6.25 a.m. the situation had been adjusted. It was found later that the 15th had not yielded an inch of ground.

Artillery fire continued on both sides throughout the day, the Germans shelling our supports with shrapnel, while their heavy artillery attended to the reserve trenches and any likely positions for head quarters in rear of the line. A number of heavy shells burst in an open field at a distance of only about 100 yards from the 15th Sikhs' head quarters, without, however, doing the slightest damage.

During this period Captain Waterfield, of the 15th, was mortally wounded in the head by a shell while talking to Captain Finnis and Lieutenant Smyth of his plans for his next leave. He died during the night without regaining consciousness, the Regimental Diary testifying that the loss of this gallant officer was most keenly felt by the officers and men of the regiment.

During the 19th May the 4th King's were relieved by the 1/4th Gurkhas, and the 15th Sikhs by the 1st Highland Light Infantry. The 4th King's had suffered severely during the shelling of the 18th May, losing 7 men killed, Captain Jenkins and 82 men wounded.

On the 20th May Sir James Willcocks impressed on General Anderson that the Ferme du Bois must be captured before the morning of the 22nd. The general idea of the operations was that the Canadian and Highland Divisions should work southwards, and also capture a group of houses south of the Cour d'Avoué, while the Indian Corps was to carry on continuous active hostilities with a view to harassing the enemy and wearing down his resistance.

The Sirhind Brigade, as a first objective, was ordered to secure the Ferme du Bois, preparation for the attack on this position being made by occupying certain important tactical points in advance of the general attack which was to be carried out by the Brigade.

During the night of the 20th-21st a thorough reconnaissance of the position was made and a picquet established slightly to the west of the Ferme du Bois. Our artillery bombardment was timed to commence at 1 p.m. on the 21st May, and to continue till 5 a.m. on the 22nd, being directed on the enemy's trenches and the area round the Ferme du Bois, at the same time forming barrages to prevent the arrival of reinforcements.

The Sirhind Brigade was disposed for attack as follows :—

Right attack : the 1/4th Gurkhas.

Centre attack : the 1/1st Gurkhas.

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Left attack : the 1st Highland Light Infantry.

The 4th King's were in support, with the 15th Sikhs in Brigade reserve.

The troops got into position correctly, and the attacks were launched punctually at 1 a.m. The ground over which the assault had to advance was broken up by old trenches, ditches and hedges, and a satisfactory daylight reconnaissance not having been possible, direction was to some extent lost and units in places became mixed up. At first there was very little firing on the part of the enemy.

On the right the 1/4th Gurkhas advanced, with very slight casualties, until a broad ditch about six feet deep containing three feet of water was encountered at a distance of some 30 yards from the German position. Here the enemy commenced a heavy fire from two directions, as at this point their trenches formed a curve round the Ferme du Bois, and at the same time showers of bombs were hurled at the Gurkhas. It was found that the ground between the ditch and the enemy's trench was protected by strong wire, which had not been sufficiently destroyed by the bombardment.

In spite of repeated attempts to advance, the right attack was held up. The only unwounded British officer with the Gurkhas returned at 1.50 a.m. to fetch up reinforcements. Unfortunately, two machine guns of the 4th King's, which were attached to the right attack, were lost. The officer in charge, 2nd Lieutenant F. A. Ballinger, had been ordered to follow up in rear of the last company of the Gurkhas, which was carrying entrenching tools and ammunition, but in his anxiety to get forward he did not wait, but pushed right up to the wire in

front of the enemy's trench, where he and most of the gun teams were killed. An exhaustive search was made for the guns on the following night, but without success, for doubtless they had been carried off by the enemy.

The losses of the 1/4th Gurkhas were: Major Moule and Captain Robinson missing, believed killed; 2 riflemen killed; 1 Gurkha officer and 76 men wounded; 18 missing.

The 1/1st Gurkhas in the centre met with more success, which unfortunately was not known until it was too late to take advantage of it. Under cover of very effective artillery support and the protection afforded by a slight ridge in front of the farm, the attack got on with slight loss, and reached the ditch, when the enemy opened a heavy fire from the front and right rear.

The leading company halted until reinforced by the second line, when both charged and got into the German trench, which was captured after a hand-to-hand fight, in which 15 Germans were killed, the remainder retreating to a second trench about 20 yards in rear.

The enemy at once commenced bombing counter-attacks from both flanks and from their second trench. Captain Mellis and Lieutenant Sutcliffe had been wounded earlier in the assault, and during the counter-attacks Lieutenant Heyland and 2nd Lieutenants Herbert and Fry were killed, 2nd Lieutenant Gamble, who was missing, being also believed to have been killed.

Subadar Jit Sing Gurung now assumed command, and sent back word that the first line had been captured, but could not be held unless reinforcements

were sent up. By this time the 1/4th Gurkhas and 1st Highland Light Infantry had been withdrawn, the success of the 1/1st Gurkhas not being known, and Lt-Colonel Anderson, Commanding the 1/1st, was compelled to order Subadar Jit Sing to retire to our old line, which he did, capturing on the way a man of a German patrol.

The casualties of the 1/1st Gurkhas, who behaved throughout with great gallantry, were: 4 British officers killed; 2 wounded; 115 other ranks killed and wounded.

Lt-Colonel Anderson particularly brought to notice the very adequate support which his battalion received from the artillery during the advance.

The 1st Highland Light Infantry on the left met with much the same fate as the 1/4th Gurkhas on the right. They reached the ditch with comparatively slight losses, but were here stopped by machine-gun fire, which caused very heavy casualties amongst both officers and men. At 1.50 a.m. it was reported that the attack had been completely held up. The three Commanding Officers of the attacking units, after consultation, decided to order a withdrawal at once in order to complete the movement before daylight. It was not till after the orders for the withdrawal had been issued and the troops were actually retiring that news was received of the 1/1st Gurkhas having taken a trench. It was then too late to countermand the withdrawal, and the Gurkhas had also to retire as both flanks were now exposed.

The losses of the Highland Light Infantry were:—Killed: 2nd Lieutenant Agnew. Wounded and missing: 2nd Lieutenant B. Ivy. Wounded:

Lieutenant Murray-Lyon, 2nd Lieutenants Mummery, Westwater, and Wright. The casualties in the ranks amounted to 120.

At the close of this attack, after day had fully dawned, a wounded man was observed to be lying within 80 yards of the German parapet, from which the enemy were firing at him. Captain F. M. Douie, R.E., M.C., regardless of the apparent hopelessness of the attempt, at once went over the parapet, accompanied by his orderly, Sapper Jiwa Khan, No. 3 Company 1st Sappers and Miners, and although the German trench was being shelled by our guns they succeeded in bringing in the man. Captain Douie also helped to bring in another wounded soldier on a stretcher, in spite of the fire kept up by the enemy. For his conspicuous gallantry Captain Douie received the D.S.O., while Sapper Jiwa Khan was awarded the 2nd Class, Indian Order of Merit.

In General Walker's opinion the failure of the attack was due to the following reasons:—

(i) The excessive casualties among the British officers with the assaulting companies. When the attack was finally held up there remained with the Highland Light Infantry only one subaltern, with the 1/1st Gurkhas no British officer, with the 1/4th Gurkhas one subaltern.

(ii) The deep ditch in front of the objective. Though not an insuperable obstacle, it was a very serious one at night, and effectually stopped the impetus of the attack.

(iii) The hour fixed for the attack, 1 a.m., was too late. The organization of a second assault before daylight was impossible, nor could the troops have dug themselves in on ground captured.

(iv) The want of aeroplane photographs showing the German trenches.

General Walker further considered that the Commanding Officers were right in withdrawing their men in view of the approach of daylight.

The total losses of the 9 companies actually engaged were very heavy, amounting to 16 British, 2 Indian officers, 137 other ranks British, and 173 Indian. This attack marked the conclusion of our active operations during May, 1915.

The Sirhind Brigade was relieved by Dehra Dun on the 23rd May, and went into billets for a well-earned rest. The Brigade had practically had not a moment's quiet since it left to take part in the second battle of Ypres on the 23rd April. All ranks were feeling the strain of the last month; regiments were mere skeleton battalions, requiring thorough reorganization before they could become fit for any further offensive operations.

The Indian Corps failed to attain its objective through no fault of its own, but owing entirely to the misfortune of being faced by an extraordinarily strong position, an experience shared by the British 4th Corps operating on its left. Had success been possible under the circumstances, it would have been attained by the troops, British and Indian, who had so recently covered themselves with glory at the battles of Neuve Chapelle and Ypres.

Sir John French, in his despatch dated the 15th June, 1915, sums up the results of the battle in the following words:—

“In the battle of Festubert above described the enemy was driven from a position which was strongly entrenched and fortified, and ground was won on

a front of four miles to an average depth of 600 yards. The enemy is known to have suffered very heavy losses, and in the course of the battle 785 prisoners and 10 machine guns were captured. A number of machine guns were also destroyed by our fire."

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Other deaths.
British officers . . .	213	501	58	2
Indian officers . . .	88	260	35	4
Other ranks, British . .	1376	6,073	1724	?
Other ranks, Indian . .	1943	10,650	2504	447
Total . . .	3620	17,484	4321	453