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Battle of Richebourg L'Arroue.

I was wounded on May 17th at Richebourg L'Arroue, while doing a bombing expedition against the German trenches. On the night of the 16th the Battalion relieved the 2nd H.L.I. in the trenches preparatory to making an attack on the following day. I was then in command of C. Company, which was posted to the support trenches. About 10 o'clock on the 17th I received orders from the adjutant to obtain all the bomb throwers near at hand & to proceed at once to the front trench where I should get the necessary covering party from A + B. Corp. which were then supposed to be in the front line. I received a guide from the 2nd Batt. to take me to the front trench. We followed along the breastworks until we came to the 5th brigade headquarters & thence we advanced up a communication trench until we came in touch with the 4th King's Liverpool who were then advancing up the communication trench as I thought preparatory to making an attack, if my bombing expedition should prove successful. We advanced slowly up this trench until we were checked owing to the 4th King's not being able to advance further. After five minutes we pushed past the 4th King's Liverpool to find the cause of this block, which turned out to be that the communication trench from the 2nd line to the front trench was under such heavy fire & so shallow that no advance could be made except with heavy losses. I then went to Murray-Lyon who was in command of D. Coy. in the 2nd line trench & from whom I was to receive more bomb-throwers. I told him what had happened & telephoned to battalion headquarters to explain how far I had got & if I was to proceed further. About quarter of an hour elapsed till the message came up by telephone that I was to go on. It was then a question of going across the open in broad day-light, or going up this trench which was

marked down by the German field guns. I decided on the latter & proceeded at once to the front trench where after great difficulty I found the entrance to the German trench which I was to bomb & I went with my bombers to the companies which were supposed to supply my covering party. Instead of finding two companies I found only 25 men commanded by a subaltern. I left my bombers at the entrance of the German trench & went off to the nearest regiment to see if they could supply me with the necessary men for my covering party. I found the Colonel of the 4th King's & his adjutant discoursing with the Colonel of the Stafford's in a dug-out. I told them what my orders were & asked them if they could supply me with the necessary men. The Colonel of the Stafford's told me he could not supply me with them & neither Colonel had received any orders whatsoever concerning the attack which was to take place if I was successful. I immediately proceeded with the Colonel of the 4th King's to the second line trench where he told me his men probably were. When we reached this trench one of his subalterns came to him & produced the orders which should have reached him two hours previously. He told me that he was then in the middle of relieving the Stafford's in the front trench. He then wrote out the message to the brigade stating how his orders had been delayed & it was at that moment that I was hit through both legs by a shrapnel bullet. He then added to his message that I was wounded & asked what steps he was to take. I wrote out complete instructions for my sergeant in charge of the bomb-throwers in event of their getting the necessary men & carrying out the bombing. The Colonel of the King's then collected his men & proceeded to get them into position for the attack. I then lay in the trench for nine hours until eventually one of my men (Storrie) happened to be passing by the same trench. I asked him if he could get me a stretcher & about

had been the first of the guns were with down during the attack at 2.30 P.M., to send it to the main dump more rigorously composed brigade was placed at the disposal of the Infantry Division.

half an hour later a stretcher party came up & took me away. I met Murray-Lyon & Gordon on the way, who offered to give me a German helmet as a souvenir. Gordon went off in search of this helmet but failed to find it. After wishing me good luck & a speedy recovery I proceeded on my journey. I arrived at the Regimental dressing station where I was bandaged up! I then met the Brigade signalling officer to whom I told in detail what had happened. He gave me some hot soup which was very nice. Our adjutant (Stewart) came down & saw me & then I was taken on a stretcher first of all to Vielle Chapelle collecting station & on to the next one where I was placed on the ground, re-bandaged & put in an ambulance. I had a rough journey to Merville where I was left in the surgical ward & injected with anti-tetanus serum, & put into bed. I spent the most part of a day there & then was transferred by ambulance train to Bois Boulogne which I reached on the 19th. I spent three days at no. 7 stationary hospital & was shipped home on Saturday 22nd May, to Dover & thence by train to London where by motor ambulance I was taken to 30 Bill Street.

J. R. Cowan.