



IN MEMORIAM.

Alike sacred therefore must be the Ypres salient to all Riflemen of the Old and New Armies, and for ever memorable in the Annals of the Regiment will remain the splendid services of the seven Battalions. The area of ground on either side of the Ypres-Menin Road will be for the Regiment a doubly hallowed spot, wherein the heroic spirit of the Old Regiment blended with the spirit of eager patriotism of the New, and together showed a glorious example of self-sacrifice and devotion to duty which can never be surpassed. (*Vide* "In Memoriam," 1st, 2nd 3rd, and 4th Battalions at the First and Second Battles of Ypres, p. 69-70.)

1915.
IN MEMORIAM.
7th, 8th, and 9th
BATTALIONS.

Upon hearing of the trying ordeal through which the 41st Brigade of Rifles and 9th Battalion of the Regiment had passed, His Majesty the King, through Lord Stamfordham, was pleased graciously to allow the following extract of a letter to be conveyed to the Brigade:—

"Royal Pavilion, Aldershot,

"August 22nd, 1915.

"The King saw the 41st Brigade of Rifles here more than once, and remembers what a splendid body of officers and Riflemen it comprised. No one grieves more than His Majesty for the overwhelming and irreparable losses which it sustained during those eventful days.

"Yours very truly,

"STAMFORDHAM."

For the remainder of 1915 the 7th and 8th Battalions performed the usual duties associated with trench routine warfare, but they did not take part in any important engagements.

NOTE.—The above Narrative of the Action at Hooge,* 29th-31st July, 1915, should be read in conjunction with the Narrative of the 9th Battalion.

9TH BATTALION.

Formed on the same date as the 7th and 8th Battalions, the experiences of the 9th Battalion, under Lieut.-Colonel Charles Chaplin, during the early days of training in August, 1914, were similar in all respects. Having recently relinquished the Command of the 3rd Battalion in India, Chaplin was well qualified to know what a Rifle Battalion should be, and he contrived, with the assistance of a small but valuable staff of veteran officers and N.C.O.'s, and of an enthusiastic set of officers, to mould

1914.
9th BATTALION.
August.

* The Editor is indebted to the Editor of the *Regimental Chronicle* for permission to reproduce the account of this action, given in the edition for 1915 under the heading of "Trial by Fire": A Narrative of the *Baptême de Feu* of the 7th, 8th, and 9th Battalions.

1915.
9th BATTALION,
continued.
May 20th.

the 9th Battalion upon the lines of the 3rd Battalion, known in the eighties as the "Fighting Battalion." The period of training over—on the 20th May, 1915—the Battalion left Aldershot for France with the 42nd Brigade (Markham*) as part of the 14th Light Division. The period of special Field Training was spent near the district of St. Eloi, and, having learnt their business, the Brigade moved with their Division to the notorious "Bloody Salient" at Ypres.

July 30th,
Affair at HOOGE.

After nearly six weeks of the same trying experiences as the 7th and 8th Battalions in the 41st Brigade, the 9th Battalion had just been withdrawn into Reserve for a short spell of rest east of Ypres, when on the 30th July a sudden order came for it to co-operate upon the Ypres-Menin Road with the 41st Brigade in the counter-attack which had been ordered (*vide* Narrative of 7th and 8th Battalions). At noon, on the 30th July, the Battalion, under Chaplin, marched accordingly to the given point of assembly on the Menin Road, close in rear of its own Brigade holding their entrenchments. All necessary dispositions were then made before the covering artillery bombardment began, and at 2.45, after it had ceased, the attack was immediately delivered.

Comfortably rested and well fed, the Battalion was in splendid fighting trim; inspired by a deep devotion to their Colonel, in whom they had implicit confidence, the Battalion was eager to distinguish itself. Preceded by its bombers, the two leading Companies, namely, B (Tanqueray) and D (Durnford), each in two successive lines, punctually at 2.45 p.m. cleared the trenches held by their brother Riflemen of the 9th Battalion Rifle Brigade, and, rushing the intervening 200 yards, carried the enemy's trenches at the point of the bayonet. In the act of directing his men to make good their success, Chaplin† came under machine-gun fire and fell, shot through the head. Durnford and Tanqueray were also killed, and the command devolved upon Eric Benson.‡

C Company (Young), next in succession, acting according to orders, moved diagonally to its right to cover the exposed flank of the two leading Companies; a flanking enemy trench was then rushed, and in a spirit of bold initiative the Company was

* Brigadier-General, late The King's Royal Rifle Corps, *vide* p. 42.

† For an Obituary Notice of Lieut.-Colonel Charles Slingsby Chaplin, *vide Regimental Chronicle*, 1915. This gallant officer had won the affection and respect of his officers and men to a very remarkable extent. 'During the whole of my soldiering, writes (August 6th, 1915) the Regimental-Sergeant-Major on behalf of the non-commissioned officers and private Riflemen, 'I have never served under happier conditions. . . . The Battalion had not been long formed before the men respected and admired their Colonel . . . , and gradually grew together as one large family with the same love for their 'dear Colonel as sons would have for their father.'

‡ This gallant officer was subsequently killed in 1916, while temporarily in command of the Battalion.

again led forward by its Captain in a further bayonet charge. This gallant effort would have led to important, if not decisive results, by relieving the pressure upon the flank of the 41st Brigade, as well as by supporting their own two Companies. The main attack had however failed, and an overwhelming fire made further progress by C Company impossible. Many had fallen, but the arrival of A Company (Exell) in support enabled the survivors to make good the trench already gained, and to hold their ground. The greatest gallantry was shown by the last-named Company. Captain Exell himself went forward under a heavy fire into the open and brought in Captain Young of C, who was badly wounded; when going out again to assist a private Rifleman he was mortally wounded. Many other acts of heroism and self-sacrifice occurred by men striving under a murderous fire to rescue their wounded comrades lying in the open. Major John Hope,* second in Command, was also wounded at the same time.

1915.
9th BATTALION,
continued.

Great as were the losses, the survivors felt that they had done justice to the leading of their gallant chief, and shewn themselves worthy of the best traditions of their Regiment.

Oliver Nugent, Commanding 41st Brigade, in writing of the gallant efforts and steadfast courage of his own Riflemen during the unsuccessful counter-attacks, was able to add in chivalrous and characteristic terms that his old friend and comrade "Chaplin" was killed most gallantly leading his Battalion. His Riflemen did even better than mine, because they came up in the flank, and did recover some of the trenches on our left, which we had to evacuate, when they were out-flanked by the centre giving way in consequence of the liquid-fire attack and overwhelming onslaught of the enemy."

The loss of the Battalion in this short action was 17 officers and 333 other ranks. *Vide* p. 75, In Memoriam, 7th, 8th, and 9th Battalions.

The Battalion took no further part in any important fighting until the Battle of Loos on September 25th, where they again experienced very hard fighting, lost heavily, but won further credit for their gallant services. During the remainder of the year until 31st December the Battalion took no part in any fighting incident of importance.

Sept. 25th.
BATTLE of LOOS.

NOTE.—The Narrative of the 9th Battalion should be read with that of the 7th and 8th Battalions.

10TH AND 11TH BATTALIONS.

The formation of these two Battalions followed rapidly on the heels of their predecessor of the New Army, and, in fact, their nucleus consisted of the surplus requirements of the 7th and 8th Battalions. The middle of September, 1914, found them with an administrative staff and organization of their own,

1914.
10th and 11th
BATTALIONS.
September.

* Now Lieut.-Colonel John Hope, M.P. *Vide* p. 81.