

ON ACTIVE SERVICE.

THE MUDLARK OR THE BEDFORDSHIRE GAZETTE.



E. HARVEY



A 'BLIGHTY' ONE!!

The Mudlark

Or, THE BEDFORDSHIRE GAZETTE.

No. 1.

APRIL, 1916.

At Random.

A WORD of Editorial apology is necessary in this, the first number of *The Mudlark*. Wearying of the monotony of Warfare, the officers of the 1st Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment have decided to publish this paper—which will probably bore their friends, almost certainly prove a financial embarrassment to its promoters (and their friends!), but will, without a shadow of a doubt, annoy the Hun to distraction, should it be unfortunate enough to fall into his hands.

For this reason, we appeal to you to tolerate the paper—pause before you consign it to the flames, and its perpetrators to Potsdam—think twice before you apply for a restraining order against its Editor—it is, at least, annoying any Germans who may see it!

At some future date, when the paper is a few months old, who knows?—it may prove a source of entertainment to a few; but the present number is purely experimental—only local talent has been employed. Contributions from all sides, especially from other Battalions of the Regiment, will be more than welcome. It is hoped that notes from the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th Battalions will be a regular feature, and that contributions in the shape of drawings, verses, articles, sketches, or stories will be forthcoming from every Battalion of the Regiment.

If it "adds to the gaiety of Nations" at the Front, the paper will have achieved its object. If it does this, and also helps to "Keep the Home Fires Burning," it will not have lived in vain.

One of our friends—the Conscientious Objector—declared to a Tribunal the

other day he had never yet killed a living thing.

Private Nobbler, the celebrity of No. 19 Platoon, was heard to remark, he would be pleased to post his shirt to the Conscientious Objector for practice.

M'yes! Nobbler knows something about game!

* * *

A cheery soul is Nobbler! After leaving a gum boot in the mud, falling into the murky depths of a shell hole, and finishing the remaining three miles home in his sock, he was heard to remark that "it was an 'ell of a cod"!

* * *

An amusing story, going the rounds at present, is perhaps worth repeating. He was a very bad hat indeed—his visits to the Orderly Room were more frequent than his visits to the Divisional Baths. Without asking the prisoner what he had to say in his defence, the C.O. proportioned out 10 days, F.P., in the second degree. "Oh, but sir,—," began the prisoner. "Fifteen days!" roared out the C.O. "Yes, sir, but—" "Twenty days!" snapped the dispenser of Justice. Turning to his escort, the bad hat sobbed "T'aint no use, mates! Take me away; 'e's a bloomin' auctioneer, 'e is!"

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Perhaps some correspondent from the 2nd Battalion can tell us what truth there is in the rumour that a certain Captain was arrested as a spy.

* * *

And how long he spent in "Jug."

* * *

And what he said.



"A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR."

A Retrospect.

ANYTHING for a quiet life, was my eventual answer to our efficient Editor, after many appeals to commit the enormity of submitting copy for the first number of *The Mudlark*—Good Health! Replies to the effect that I had no literary talent, nor the pen of a ready writer, and a reminder regarding

the notice as to the shortage of the paper supply, did not have the desired effect. Hence the consideration of a subject. In his other official capacity, the above-mentioned "efficient" Editor issued me with a copy of a "Field Almanac, 1916." This publication, opened haphazard, disclosed the fact that on page 11 were enumerated anniversaries of certain by-gone historical events, among which was to be read, "July 11th, Battle of Oudenarde, 1708." Hence came the thought, that there may be some at present serving who are unaware that the old regiment commenced its career when our national history was yet young, and was among the earliest of the regiments to be embodied in the English Standing Army. Though the battle-honours actually on our "Colours" may not be as numerous as those of many other regiments (some of which were not even formed until after several of our honours had been fought and won), they are honours won in nearly all the quarters of the world, of which we should all be proud, and which should help us to keep the good name of the regiment ever before us, and to emulate the deeds of our forerunners. Those first honours borne on the colours were won not far from these localities, in northern France and southern Belgium—Blenheim, Malplaquet, Ramilies, Oudenarde,—to which should be added others like Namur and Lille, are all names with

which all are familiar, both from ancient history and from the present War.

During the advance into Belgium, in August 1914, a party of us, during a halt, examined the map we were "on," and noticed the name of Malplaquet, close to our route, and wondered whether the regiment was to win fresh honours there, or in that neighbourhood. The honours, Tassart, have been won, though perhaps not in quite the manner we had hoped for and thought; but, still, the regiment may well be proud of its conduct and deeds since that 23rd of August. Little did we, a merry party, imagine that the regiment would shortly, after retiring practically half way through France—one of the most glorious feats in the annals of the British Army,—assist once more in what may fairly accurately be described as another "Siege of Lille." Alas! how few of that merry party, or of the gallant fellows who were with us on that 21st August, 1914, are serving with us now, and how few shall we greet again on this side of "the great beyond," "Valhalla, the home of the warrior heroes." With their grand example before us, let us strive, one and all, to bear ourselves worthy followers in their examples. May these latter "Rest in peace"; to the former, hearty, cheery greetings, and the hope of happy reunions before long.

ONE OF THE OLD BRIGADE.

IN THE PINK.

As Christmas Day comes round again, the day of all the year,	It's 'inted in the papers that your wives are short of meat,
We sits and eats our ration grub and dreams of pints of beer;	It's whispered in the canteen that you 'aven't much to eat;
And just to show we ain't forgot you blighters 'cross the way,	And so we chucks a 'and grenade—a kind of friendly hint,
We 'urls across a 'and grenade to pass the time of day.	And 'opes as 'ow it finds you—as it leaves us—in the pink.
You've 'ad your bit of trouble, and you've 'ad your share of woe,	Your life is pretty dull just now—perhaps you finds it slow?
You're pore benighted 'eathens—not too bad as 'eathens go;	In case you're feelin' 'appy—well, we ain't lost 'eart, you know;
We've a kindly feelin' for you, and we 'opes, but we don't think,	And when the day comes round, on which our General tips the wink,
Our little gift will find you, as it leaves us, in the pink.	We 'opes as 'ow we'll find you, as this leaves us—in the pink!

When you reflects that all your stunts
have each turned out a dud,
When you reflects on all you've lost and
all the seas of blood,

When you reflects on 'ow you stand com-
pared to 'ow you stood,
Look 'ere! you must admit it, Fritz—it
ain't no blinkin' good!

STAND-TO.



"THE BLIGHTY ONE."

The Kaiser.

By "WIND-UP."

"'ERE! put that blinkin' light out. Wot the 'ell yer tryin' to do? Signal the bloomin' relief to the 'Uns?"

Thus Corporal Tubby Burns to Private Beck. Time, midnight. Conditions, damp. Place, an open field—a "blasted heath," Shakespeare would have called it (Private Beck and his brethren would have a better name, still!) Hard by is the mouth of a long, winding, communication trench, up which, through seas of slime and slush, "A" Company of the 1st Battalion Litfordshires must plough their sticky way before arrivin' at that abode of bliss—the Fire Trench, with its

snug, though vermin-ridden, dug-outs. Private Beck removes the offending cigarette from his mouth, places it behind his ear, expectorates loudly, and remarks: "—the Kayser!" The Litfordshires have been in the country since Mons, have been through a round dozen of major actions, have endured two winters in the trenches, and have carried out the present routine hundreds of times; but the men *still* smoke during a relief (unless watched), *still* shout loudly in the immediate vicinity of the enemy (unless watched), and—(German Great General Staff, please note!)—*still* sing "Are we downhearted?" and "Keep the home fires

burning" in the pouring rain, in the small hours of the morning, burdened, according to orders, with jerkins, leather; undercoats, fur; and the weighty, though monotonous, unexpended portion of the day's rations. (Yes! be of good cheer, ye people, and calm your fears, O Panic Press! All's well with the ship!)

"Less talking there!" in a shrill, would-be base voice. Private Beck winks at the surrounding darkness. "Certainly, sir!" he says, in imitation of the voice. "I'll carry out your instructions at once." Second-Lieutenant Vincent Graveling—nicknamed "Phyllis" by frivolous fellow-officers—walks down the line to restore order. As betrayed by the newness of his kit, he has but lately joined the Battalion from England. The straps of his field glasses are bright yellow, and he is in possession of a number of up-to-date quiffs, all of them "just-the-thing-for-the-trenches—this-price-10/6." His manner is also peculiarly his own, almost clerical in its precision. "Be—silent!" he says threateningly.

The long procession moves forward, painfully picking its way up the caricature of a ditch, playfully called a "communication trench" on the official map. It "would not be in the interest of the public" to repeat the conversation of "A" Company during the next half-hour or so, as owing to the narrowness of the trench, the all-prevailing mud, and the deep, uncovered sump-holes, it consists mainly of oats, varied by a continual stream of messages passed back from man to man. "Mind the blinkin' 'ole." "Another telephone wire," and "Roll on Civvies" (this from Private Beck).

Telephone wires usually manage to enliven the proceedings on relief nights. The Signal Service, conscious that something is expected of them, send parties of their fraternity to invade the trenches on the morning before a relief, and their united brains, aided by the judicious use of a pair of wire clippers, contrive so to arrange the wires as to present an elaborate entanglement, eight inches from the ground, at every turning of the

trench. They *will* have their little joke—the Signal Service!

Suddenly the long procession halts. Sergeant Butler approaches the Captain. One in a thousand, this Sergeant Butler, invariably as immaculate as circumstances permit, always impenetrably imperturbable. He has been known to stand attention for five minutes while an officer finished shaving, and then announce, calmly and respectfully, that the Germans, to the best of his belief, have occupied — trench. Shall they be ejected, or allowed to remain? On this occasion he salutes, and informs the Captain, in exactly the same tone of voice as he would comment on the weather, that Private Smith has sunk up to his thighs in the mud and cannot move. Private Smith, like the majority of his companions, has his legs encased in what are officially known as "Boots, gum, thigh." These inventions of the Ordnance—issued so Rumour hath it, half full of liquid mud, are primarily designed for two purposes: (1) To keep men's feet wet when once damp; (2) To impede reliefs by sticking in the mud, and being sufficiently loose to allow men to withdraw their feet from them and proceed in their stockings, leaving the "boots, gum, thigh," like derelicts, stranded in the prevailing sea of slush. The present case is an example of (2).

The Captain climbs on to the parapet and hurries to the spot, only to find that a superfluity of friends has proved Private Smith's undoing. All too eager to assist a friend in need, they have lifted him bodily out of his boots. Unfortunately, they have let him drop again, and he, putting out a hand to save himself, has sunk up to the shoulder in the mire, and now lies there, in imminent danger of suffocation. Advice is forthcoming from all sides. "Why don't yer lift yer feet out?" asks Private Jones. "Feet?" replies Smith, "blimy, I can't get my — face out yet!" "Don't you worry, Jerry," says another, "we'll come along every twenty-four hours and chuck you a bit of meat."

Smith and his boots are at length extricated, and the party progresses nearly 100 yards before it is found that the machine gun officer has allowed one of his guns to become buried. (It is one of the invariable characteristics of machine gunners, that they *never* fail to provide a diversion, and seldom fail to hamper any operation that is in progress).

One small party of heroes deserves special mention—the officers' servants. Burdened with a load of sorrow above their fellows, they toil manfully in rear of the Company, painfully dragging an immense quantity of miscellaneous dunnage—everything from a bedstead to a bootjack, and from a card-table to a tin of condensed milk.

The Fire Trench heaves in sight. The men file to their places, sentries are posted, stores taken over and signed for; the relieved regiment disappears into the darkness, and the rain comes on more heavily.

"Better than no blinkin' War at all," says Corporal Burns.

"Ain't got nothing to crib about," says the Sergeant. "It may be raining a spot, but you 'ave got *one* dry place in your body."

"And where's that, I should like to know?"

"Your throat, sonny; there ain't no rum ration to-night!"

"— the Kayser!!" says Pte. Beck.

Henry.

By TOUCHSTONE JUNIOR.

I WANT to tell you all about him, now that he is gone, for we were very intimately connected, Henry and I. And I feel I owe some tribute to the memory of the departed. Henry knew me better than I knew Henry, and it is a surprising, but none the less undoubted fact that I never set eyes upon him during the whole period of our intercourse—and it lasted for a whole spell in the trenches. How many a time have I searched for him, high and low, but without success, for Henry's was one of the most dry and reserved natures I have ever met.

One day I was hot upon his track; in another second I should have had him, and Henry and I would have been face to face, when the sound of the Sergeant-Major's voice in the next traverse put an end to the chase. It needs a steady hand, with a mind concentrated on the business, to catch a—Henry, and that voice breaking the sleepy stillness of the morning in a fire trench, deprived me of both. There were other occasions when I might have caught Henry, but always at the crucial moment some accident prevented me. Archibald and Arabella and Ermytrude and Percy, all these I found and enjoyed with them interviews bursting

with emotion, but Henry still eluded me. The last night in trenches, he alone was left of them all, but he did the work of ten, and I passed an anxious and restless night.

It was after the Company's visit to the Divisional baths that Henry disappeared. It had been a happy day for me, and a still happier evening, as my platoon sergeant poured his rum ration down the wrong way, and choked till he was nearly blue in the face. Yet, as I turned over to sleep, I felt an inexplicable sense of loss. I tried to ignore it and go to sleep, but still the trouble was there. Slowly it dawned upon me that I had lost an old friend, Henry was with me no longer. With Percy and Archibald, with Ermytrude and Arabella, I had at least their poor bodies, when they came to an untimely end; but with Henry—not so much as his identity disc. I could only register him mentally as "Missing, believed killed"; there was no grave on which to shed a tear of fond remembrance.

How well we knew each other, Henry and I! And now he is gone, and I shall never see him. Regret for him will follow me to my grave!



'LOOKING FOR HENRY.'

Seats of the Mighty.

By "THE MAJOR."

I. THE STAFF CAPTAIN.
H AVING been an interviewer all my life—(my victims having included six Sultans, three Popes, four Leaders of the Turkish Imperial Harem,

Charlie Chaplin and his brother-in-law, most of the prominent criminals of the Century, and a Mormon Elder)—I may claim some consideration for the pronouncement I am about to make, which

is that never, in all my career, have I interviewed a great man whose personality has so impressed, nay, overawed me, as that of the eminent Staff Captain, the professional obstructionist, the greatest expert on Stationery Warfare that has ever lived.

Observe the esteem, nay, almost worship, with which he is regarded by the minions (and their name is legion) by whom he is surrounded. "A proper nut" as the orderly at the door described him. "One of the lads of the village," the description applied to him by his own confidential clerk.

Observe the steely eye, the lantern jaw, the sparse moustache, the ancient breeches, the "nutty" boots, all unmistakable signs of genius and of the man of iron, disguised beneath an exterior of general buffoonery.

Rising to greet me on my entrance with a cheery obscenity, he walked down the long cellar that served as Brigade Headquarters, a packet of Army forms in either hand, balancing a grenade return on his nose. "Ah, good-day," he cried, "so you come from *The Mudlark*. Good old *Mudlark*. How it reminds us of England, Home, and Beauty! I remember, many years ago—"; but he was immediately lost in some dreamy contemplation of his murky past, only being roused after some minutes by a large drop of water from the ceiling finding a resting place between his collar and his skin.

"And what of the War?" I asked.

"Ah—the War!" he said, recovering himself, "Ah, to be sure, the War!" Turning to a logbook on a table near by, he consulted it for nearly twenty minutes before answering me. "The War," he said, at length, "is still going on."

"And when will it end?" I persevered.

"Who knows?" he asked. "Yet—(we all hung on his words)—one thing is certain," he continued, amidst breathless suspension, "if it's not over by this time next year—it will still be in progress."



"THE STAFF CAPTAIN."

when he will be able to rejoin. He concludes by sending his best wishes to the regiment, and all old friends.

A Regimental Coffee Shop on a small scale has now been started in the Battalion. Such necessaries as tobacco, cigarettes, candles, etc., are obtainable at the lowest prices for cash. The N.C.O. Sergeant Godfrey, appears to be built for the job.

There will be a lot of people pleased to know that C.Q.M.S. Halsey has quite recovered from the wounds he received at Ypres. He is at present serving with the 4th Entrenching Battalion.

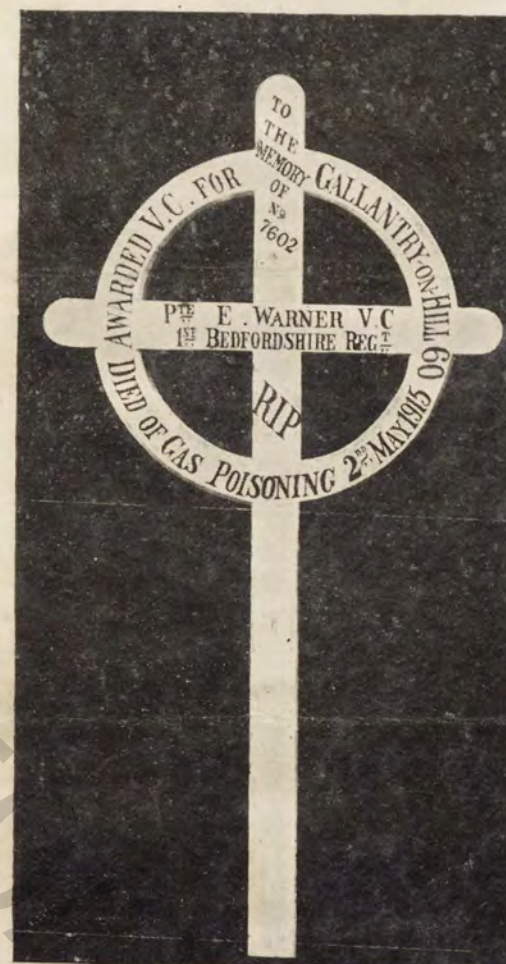
Sergeant Humphries, late of "C" Company, is making a name for himself as a Bombing Instructor at Felixstowe.

C.Q.M.S. Hermann, "B" Company, who recently met with an accident, resulting in injuries to his left arm, sends cheery messages from Balham.

Sergeant Higgins, "A" Company, was another who, unfortunately, did not live to wear the honour he gained in the D.C.M. He was once wounded, but recovered. Later he was admitted to hospital, suffering from gas poisoning. He was killed on the same day that notification was received of the award of the D.C.M.

Corporal Piggott, who gained the D.C.M. in the early days of the War, had the distinction of having his medal presented to him by H.M. The King, in the Field, during the visit of His Majesty to his troops early in 1915. The medal was presented at St. Jeans Chappelle.

C.Q.M.S. Byford, "B" Company, who is shortly due to retire after 22 years' "Colour Service," has had a long and distinguished career as a N.C.O. He served his first period with the 2nd Battalion and was then transferred to the Reserve, but at the outbreak of War with the Boers, he at once rejoined and served with the



THE above is a photograph of a cross erected to the memory of No. 7602, Private E. Warner, "B" Company. Private Warner was the first man in the regiment to gain the coveted decoration of the Victoria Cross. Unfortunately, in the words of the Army Order, "This very gallant soldier died very soon afterwards from the effects of gas poisoning, and was unaware that his very gallant deed had been rewarded."

News has been received from No. 5964 C. S. M. Mears, who is a prisoner in Germany. He says he is quite well, and being well treated, but longs for the day

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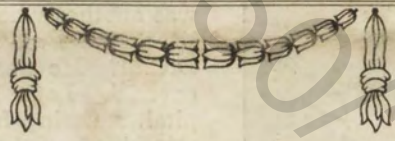
2nd Battalion, until drafted to the 1st Battalion in India. For his services he was awarded the King's Medal, with two clasps, the Queen's Medal with three clasps. He was present at the Delhi Durbar 1902-3, and was granted the "Durbar medal" as senior Corporal in the Battalion. He came to France with the Battalion at the outbreak of hostilities, and served with them right through until shortly after the Hill 60 engagements, when he was forced by illness to take a short rest. He soon recovered, however, and again volunteered for "The Front." He was awarded the D.C.M. for Hooge. During his career as a soldier, he has always been prominent in all kinds of sport, his speciality being cross-country running and short distance running, in which he has always figured prominently

in every station he has been in. His decorations are: D.C.M., Durbar Medal, King's and Queen's S.A. Medals with clasps, and the Medal for Long Service and Good Conduct.

* * *

Our recent boxing tournament proved to be a very great success. Some excellent "scrapping" was witnessed, and it is hoped that the finals will soon be decided. Private Clifton, "B" Company, who put up such a good show, has since been wounded, but it is hoped that he will be present, to show exactly what he is made of at our next meeting. The results of this, our first attempt in the Field (with the gloves), goes to show that we have some good men in the Battalion. It is hoped that a larger number of entries will be received at the next meeting.

In Memoriam



Sec. Lieut. C. A. COOK,

(1st Bedfordshire Regiment)

Killed in Action, 11th March, 1916.



(10,207) Private C. SIMMS,

(1st Bedfordshire Regiment)

Killed in Action, 14th March, 1916.

REPAIRED
 SEP. 9.1977

No. 69/68