



The History
OF THE
Lancashire Fusiliers
1914-1918

IN TWO VOLUMES

By
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VOLUME I

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CHAPTER XIV

1918 (Continued). THE GERMAN ATTACKS IN THE NORTH
AND ON THE AISNE. THE SUMMER UP
TO THE END OF JULY.

"LYS," "ESTAIRCRES," "HAZEBROUCK," "FIRST KEMMEL," "BÉTHUNE,"
"SECOND KEMMEL," "AISNE, 1918"

(Maps 1, 2 & 3)

1st, 2nd, 1st/5th, 2nd/5th, 1st/7th, 1st/8th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th
and 19th Battalions

THE German offensive which was launched on 21st March, 1918, achieved a spectacular victory in its captures of prisoners, material and ground. But it had not gained any strategically decisive objective; nor had it succeeded in separating the French and British Armies and thus perhaps opening a way to the Channel. Ludendorff had originally considered, as an alternative to the Somme attack, a plan for an offensive in the north, between the Vimy Ridge and Ypres. An advance in this area would threaten the British bases of Calais and Boulogne—and possibly the English coast as well. Moreover, the left of the British front was badly served as regards railways, and a comparatively short thrust into it would leave it with only one lateral line. This plan was rejected for various reasons, including the fact that in most years the ground in the low-lying valleys of the River Lys and its tributaries did not dry up sufficiently for military operations to take place over it till May, whereas Ludendorff wished to open his attack in March. In 1918, however, the spring had been unusually free from rain; and the country between Ypres and La Bassée was much drier than usual by the end of March. The British front had been to a large extent denuded of troops in order to stem the German flood on the Somme, and it was held in many places by divisions which had already passed through a stern and exhausting ordeal in the south. The German High Command, unable to make progress in a decisive direction on the original front of its attack, determined therefore to deliver a fresh blow across the River Lys. Their intention became evident towards the end of March and in the early days of April, when air reconnaissances reported an increasing movement of troops, transport and guns by road and rail towards the line west of Lille. Many straws of confirmation came in, including a map captured on a German officer by the 55th Division (of which Captain G. Surtees, M.C., 2nd/5th Lancashire Fusiliers, was the staff officer responsible for intelligence). This not only showed that the position of divisional headquarters was accurately known to the Germans,

but had on it blue-pencilled arrows penetrating into the British line north-west of Givenchy and turning north-west behind the position held by the Portuguese who lay on the immediate left of the 55th Division.

The new attack was launched on a front of sixteen and a half miles extending from near Armentières in the north to the La Bassée Canal in the south. It began on 9th April, 1918—in a thick mist as in the case of its great predecessor of 21st March—and was made by eight German divisions in the front line and six in the second line, all of them fresh and none of them having taken part in the March battle. It continued until 30th April, having in its progress penetrated the Allied lines to a maximum depth of over eleven miles and extended northwards to Ypres. The operations are known collectively as the Battle of the Lys, and five battalions of the Regiment took part in them.

THE DEFENCE OF GIVENCHY, 9TH APRIL, 1918

2nd/5th Battalion

"LYS," "ESTAIRCRES"

The 2nd/5th Battalion (Lieutenant-Colonel G. S. Brighten, 2ND/5TH D.S.O.) moved from the Cambrai district to a training area at Coyecque, ten miles west of Aire, in December, 1917, and on 14th February, 1918, relieved the 1st/7th Battalion south of the La Bassée Canal. It was not until 17th March that it began its first tour of duty in the Givenchy sector, just north of the canal, which it was to know so well for the next six months. The village of Givenchy stands on a slight rise, giving observation in every direction and particularly towards the west. Its retention was therefore of the very highest importance to the defence of the British line on a wide frontage. Its defences were strong and consisted of a well-made forward trench-line, lightly held and backed by a series of support and reserve lines with "switches"—all designed for the protracted defence of the essential points, which were called "keeps." The defence scheme provided for the holding of the "keeps" at all costs and for a number of companies and platoons disposed behind them so as to be able to counter-attack speedily in aid of any "keep" which might be surrounded.

On 7th April the 2nd/5th Battalion was relieved in the front line and went into support and reserve, with "A" (Captain W. H. Wild, M.C.), "C" (Captain K. T. Blamey, M.C.) and "D" (Captain J. R. Bodington, M.C.) Companies under the second-in-command, Major P. S. Cookson, in a support system known as the Village Line which ran along the Cambrin-Festubert road just north of the canal, and "B" Company (Captain W. C. Wilkinson) and battalion headquarters in reserve at Gorre.

The German barrage opened so furiously at 4.15 a.m. on 9th April with guns of all calibres and generous doses of gas, especially

on the back areas and on gun positions, that it was evident that the attack was about to be launched. At 5.15 a.m., therefore, the battalion received (by runner, the telephone line from brigade headquarters having been cut by shell fire) an order that "B" Company was to move to the Tuning Fork-Le Préol line, a reserve system running north and south about three-quarters of a mile east of Gorre. At the same time the code word "Bustle" arrived, the signal for everybody to stand to and for battalion headquarters to move up to Pont Fixe. Lieutenant-Colonel Brighten had to send the headquarters forward in small parties and ordered them to go south of the canal so as to avoid the worst of the shelling. At 8.45 a.m. came the German infantry assault. What happened on the front of the Portuguese division which lay on the left of the 55th Division (of which the 2nd/5th formed part) is a matter of controversy. For the purposes of this history it is sufficient to say that there was soon a wide gap on the inner flank of the 55th Division, which was itself attacked by three German divisions. The latter had been given contemptuous accounts of the West Lancashire Division's fighting value, and one regiment even advanced with its band, which was captured, complete with instruments, together with the regimental headquarters. The left brigade of the 55th Division had to swing back on account of the gap left by the Portuguese, and a gap also developed between it and the 164th Infantry Brigade which held Givenchy. The Germans penetrated the front line in many places and infiltrated parties, under cover of the mist, as far as Windy Corner and the neighbourhood of Pont Fixe, both in the Village Line, and some marched even farther behind the line, as will shortly be seen.

At 10 a.m. the battalion's chaplain, the Reverend R. E. G. Newman, M.C., walked into battalion headquarters, asked for a map, took it over to Lieutenant-Colonel Brighten, and explained in the calmest tones that, while he was in the regimental aid post at Windy Corner, the Germans had arrived. Another chaplain who was there began to argue with the Germans as to whether they had the right under international law to take prisoner a minister of religion who was tending the wounded. Under cover of this discussion and of the mist, Newman, after an unsuccessful grab at a German's rifle and bayonet, made a bolt for it and was able to give a very clear and soldierly description of where the enemy were. On the strength of this report, Lieutenant-Colonel Brighten ordered "D" Company to form a defensive flank on the left, while "C" Company was disposed so as to act in support of it. The 1st/4th King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, holding the right flank of the brigade sector, reported that the Germans were working down an important trench known as Orchard Road in the centre of their line and asked for reinforcements. Lieutenant-Colonel Brighten ordered "C" Company to send up one platoon, but pointed out that the principal danger at the moment was at Windy Corner, where indeed a furious battle was raging. After putting his company in

position, Bodington made a reconnaissance of the surrounding area and was bombed by some Germans. He promptly made a slight change in his dispositions which succeeded in checking their advance. Second-Lieutenant R. S. Mowle formed a bombing party from the remnants of his platoon, which had suffered many casualties, and after strenuous bombing rushed the enemy with the bayonet, capturing thirty prisoners. Much attention had been paid to training all ranks to maintain the chain of command and to be ready to step promptly into the shoes of any senior who became a casualty. The results were evident near Windy Corner on 9th April. For instance, Private G. E. Brookes of "D" Company took command of a Lewis-gun team when the section commander was killed and pushed the gun up to within ten yards of the enemy, maintaining a steady fire at point-blank range. While the enemy was thus held another party worked round behind them and captured them. At about the same time, Private H. Wareing was making his way forward with a party of reinforcements in face of very heavy machine-gun fire. After three unsuccessful attempts to lead his men to their destination, he crawled across the open to within bombing distance of the machine-gun post and bombed it. This action threw the enemy into confusion and enabled another party which had made its way skilfully to their rear to capture them. These and similar incidents, directed by Bodington, completely stopped the enemy's advance through the gap between the two brigades and moreover resulted in the capture of several hundred prisoners, including the regimental commander and staff and the band previously mentioned.

In the meanwhile, "B" Company, which had moved on the word "Bustle" from Gorre to an intermediate line, was ordered forward. It had no sooner emerged from the wood in which that line ran and was still nearly half a mile west of Windy Corner when it met a body of Germans who fired at it and forced it to deploy. Wilkinson, the company commander, and his second-in-command had both been killed; but Second-Lieutenant D. Marshall assumed command and promptly attacked the Germans across the open, drove them back and, following them up, was able to thrust them out of the gap through which they had come and which he now filled. Lieutenant-Colonel Brighten sent two of "B" Company's platoons to the help of the 1st/4th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. These worked up Grenadier Road and Hitchin Avenue, two communication trenches leading north-east and east from Windy Corner, and cut off large parties of Germans, who surrendered. They then took up a position in New Cut Extension, a switch line farther north and a little to the east of Le Plantin, and in the old British line in that area. This was a mistake, probably due to some senior officer of another regiment, aware of the danger from the left, diverting them from their proper task. At 11.30 a.m. these platoons were ordered back to Windy Corner, where they arrived at about 12.30 p.m. and helped to strengthen the defensive flank there. This reinforcement was timely, as "A" Company had become so weak through casualties

that it had had to be withdrawn to Pont Fixe and put in reserve for the King's Own in the right sector. In readiness for the latter task, Company Serjeant-Major T. T. Chadwick, who had behaved with great skill and gallantry throughout the morning, went forward and reconnoitred. He later sent back very clear reports which enabled Wild to make such dispositions that a large number of the enemy were killed or captured.

The two remaining platoons of "B" Company were sent up Wolfe Road and Orchard Road, communication trenches in the left and centre of the King's Own sector. In command of one of them was Second-Lieutenant John Schofield, who, at the cost of his life, was to win the 2nd/5th Battalion's third Victoria Cross. He first led a party of nine men against a strong-point which was reported to be strongly held by the enemy and where he was indeed attacked by about a hundred Germans with bombs. So skilfully did he dispose his small body and such good use did he make of his rifles and Lewis gun that he drove the enemy to take cover in dug-outs. Next he held up and himself captured a party of twenty Germans and, with the help of other parties, cleared the position which these Germans had been holding and killed or captured the remainder of its garrison. He then collected the survivors of his men, made his party up to ten and, having sent a message back to Lieutenant-Colonel Brighten explaining the situation and stating that he was proceeding to retake the front line, advanced towards the latter. He soon met large numbers of the enemy in a communication trench in front of him and in a drain on his right and left. His party opened rapid rifle fire, while he climbed out on to the parapet of the trench under point-blank machine-gun fire and forced the enemy to surrender, to the number of several officers and about 120 men. A few minutes later, as he pressed on towards the front line, this very gallant young officer was killed. He had been ably helped by Private C. McGill, who also stood up on the parapet under heavy fire and, by throwing the enemy into confusion through his unexpected fire, contributed much to Schofield's big capture.

Fine work during the advance of these two platoons of "B" Company was also done by Second-Lieutenant W. E. Rider and Lance-Corporal C. Old. The former moved about amongst his men with great coolness and encouraged them under violent fire. Three bullets from snipers tore holes in his clothes, though he was not actually wounded. Farther forward, he led his platoon in an encircling movement and succeeded in getting behind a large number of the enemy, helping to capture several hundred of them. Old was leader of a bombing party and ran into a nest of Germans who fired on them with two machine guns at point-blank range. A little later, he was the first man to reach and reoccupy certain points of the original front line, and throughout the day showed great coolness and determination.

Throughout the afternoon, Lieutenant-Colonel Brighten sent parties up, as he could make them available, to help the forward battalions in clearing the trenches of Germans and re-establishing

their line. Here again Blamey showed fine initiative and powers of command, and helped to make many captures. The Windy Corner area was finally cleared; and soon after, a successful counter-attack by the brigade on the left resulted in large numbers of the enemy being driven down to that spot, where the 2nd/5th did much execution. Second-Lieutenant C. L. Chorley behaved very gallantly during this clearing process, killing or capturing several German posts. On one occasion, when leading eight men up a communication trench, he met two machine-gunners who had their guns trained down it; but he forced them to surrender and sent down both them and their guns. Perhaps the most remarkable incident was that in which Private W. Lord, a battalion runner, was involved. While he was returning from the front line after dark by himself, he was held up by fifteen of the enemy with a machine gun. They ordered him to lead them to the front line. He signalled to them to follow him, which they did under the impression that he was doing as he had been ordered. Instead, he led them down the communication trench to battalion headquarters, where he coolly handed them over.

By 2 a.m. on 10th April, the whole brigade sector had been finally cleared of the enemy and the line restored to its original position. The overwhelming German attack had completely failed. The battalion's casualties had been 3 officers and 28 other ranks killed, 3 officers and 84 other ranks wounded, the Medical Officer taken prisoner and 25 other ranks missing. The decorations awarded were:—

Victoria Cross

Second-Lieutenant J. Schofield.

Bar to the Distinguished Service Order

Lieutenant-Colonel G. S. Brighten, D.S.O.

Bar to the Military Cross

Captain K. T. Blamey, M.C.

Captain J. R. Bodington, M.C.

The Reverend R. E. G. Newman, M.C.

Military Cross

Second-Lieutenant C. L. Chorley.

Second-Lieutenant D. Marshall.

Second-Lieutenant R. S. Mowle.

Second-Lieutenant W. E. Rider.

Distinguished Conduct Medal

Company Serjeant-Major T. T. Chadwick.

Lance-Corporal C. Old.

Private G. E. Brookes.

Private W. Lord.

Private C. McGill.

Private H. Wareing.

Bar to the Military Medal

Serjeant J. Donovan, M.M.

Corporal F. Palmer, M.M.

Military Medal

Company Serjeant-Major J. Dixon.

Corporal J. W. Barnes.

Corporal E. Forrest.

Corporal W. Jenkinson.

Corporal J. Street.

Lance-Corporal C. Duffin.

Lance-Corporal F. Fitzpatrick.

Lance-Corporal J. A. Hudson.

Private D. Brookes.

Private T. Brown.

Private B. Clegg.

Private B. Davies.

Private H. F. Follett.

Private J. W. Gregson.

Private J. H. Grice.

Private W. Hampson.

Private R. G. Hillman.

Private E. Jackson.

Private H. S. Malone.

Private J. E. Moxon.

Private M. Robinson.

Private R. Taylor.

Private C. M. Terry.

Private G. Terry.

Private S. Waldram.

Private F. W. Weatherhead.

THE ATTACK SPREADS TO THE NORTH

"LYS," "ESTAIRES," "HAZEBROUCK"

11th Battalion

11TH BN. After its ordeal on the Somme battle-front in March, the 11th Battalion (Lieutenant-Colonel E. C. de R. Martin, D.S.O., M.C.) enjoyed a few days of rest before it was moved by train from Candas to Caestre on 31st March. It took over a quiet sector of the line near Le Touquet on 3rd April, but was relieved two days later and went into reserve at Kortepyp Camp, not far from Neuve Eglise. Shortly after midday on 9th April it was ordered to "stand to" and to be ready to move at very short notice. The German attack, after overrunning the positions occupied by the Portuguese, tried to spread fanwise. In the south, as has been described, it ran its head into the immovable wall of the 55th Division. At the other end, however, the enemy succeeded in getting behind the British troops lying to the left of our Allies and, in spite of stiff fighting, penetrated rapidly towards Fleurbaix and Bac St. Maur. The 74th Infantry Brigade, which included the 11th Lancashire Fusiliers, was placed at the disposal of the 34th Division for "puttying up the gaps." At 1.45 p.m. the battalion marched to a rendezvous at Steenwerck. At 3.45 p.m. information was received that the Germans had reached Bac St. Maur, which was about three miles away. The brigade was ordered to verify this report and, if it was true, to drive the enemy to the south. The 11th Lancashire Fusiliers was detailed as the advanced guard with instructions that, on reaching the road running from Estaires through Croix du Bac to Nieppe, it was to send forward strong patrols to clear up the situation and to expel the enemy from Bac St. Maur if found there. Within the unit, "D" Company (Major E. Munday) formed the advanced guard. It discovered that the reports of the German occupation of Bac St. Maur were correct. The battalion accordingly deployed and took up a position parallel with the road just mentioned and with its right resting on the Steenwerck-Croix du Bac-Bac St. Maur road. It was later joined by the rest of the brigade, which attacked at 8.30 p.m. and succeeded in advancing its line a short distance. The night was exceptionally dark and there was no moon. Nevertheless when orders were received to push the enemy still farther south beyond Croix du Bac, the battalion, advancing at 2 a.m. on 10th April on a frontage of three companies over ground which was unknown and intersected by hedges, seized the village of Croix du Bac, bombed several posts and took some prisoners. A number of casualties were suffered, however, and it was necessary to reinforce the battalion at about 4 a.m. with four machine guns. It appears, moreover, that the village was not properly "mopped up" in the inky darkness, with the consequence that at about 6 a.m. German snipers and machine guns made their appearance in it and gave considerable trouble. At 9.30 a.m. the enemy attacked in strength astride the Bac St. Maur-Croix du Bac road and broke through between the right of the 11th

Lancashire Fusiliers and the left of the 9th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, enfilading both battalions. An hour later the Germans were reported to be working round the 11th Battalion's left flank, beyond which two other units had been forced to fall back. A withdrawal therefore became urgently necessary and was begun, an order being received from brigade headquarters that the battalion was to hold the cross-roads south of Messeau Mill (three-quarters of a mile south-east of Steenwerck) and gain touch with the 3rd Worcestershire Regiment at La Menegate. This proved to be impossible and by 3.30 p.m. the Germans were advancing on both sides of Steenwerck, especially on the east and along the houses on the southern outskirts of the village. The battalion became involved in heavy street fighting in the village itself, in the course of which the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Martin, was reported missing. Command of the battalion then devolved on Major G. D. Brown, M.C. The situation was now critical, but Captain R. K. Beswick, of the 11th Battalion and Captain G. H. Stead, M.C., Cheshire Regiment, of the 74th Trench Mortar Battery, collected as many men as they could find of the 11th Lancashire Fusiliers, the 9th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and the 74th Brigade Headquarters and, in conjunction with other similar parties, succeeded in establishing a line running from Pont de Pierre (where the road crosses the Stil Becque a mile north-west of Steenwerck) in a curve to Steenwerck station. They had thrown off the immediate pressure of the enemy; and they enjoyed a quiet night with very little machine-gun fire. Second-Lieutenant R. F. Ackerley and his platoon did excellent work this day and beat off three German attacks, he himself holding on till all but one of his men were knocked out. At 7.55 a.m. on 11th April the battalion was ordered to advance with a view to straightening the line and clearing the outskirts of Steenwerck. The movement began at 9.30 a.m. in a mist and was at first successful, the fringe of the village being captured after severe hand-to-hand fighting and heavy casualties on both sides. Company Serjeant-Major R. Abbott set a splendid example and penetrated farther into the village than anybody else, bringing back valuable information as to the location of the enemy. The gains could not, however, be held owing to the intensity of the fire directed against the battalion, which withdrew at about midday and dug in on a line appreciably farther forward than its original position of that morning, with its right at Pont de Pierre. That evening a welcome order was received that the brigade would be relieved by the 92nd Infantry Brigade, of which nothing further was heard! The following day, 12th April, found the battalion in the same positions as on the 11th. Active patrolling was carried out, one German officer and one man being taken prisoner through the initiative of Company Serjeant-Major R. Abbott, who heard of their presence in a house about three hundred yards in front of the line and crossed "No Man's Land" in broad daylight to obtain what proved to be a valuable identification. At 9.50 a.m. the battalion's

Lewis guns brought down a hostile aeroplane, whose pilot was severely wounded. The battalion was not engaged in major operations this day, but on its right the line had had to be drawn back under pressure from the enemy and the unit found itself at the point of a salient which was becoming ever sharper. At 7.30 a.m. on 13th April the enemy attacked the Pont de Pierre bridgehead and forced the battalion to withdraw about fifty yards; but the lost ground was retaken half an hour later with the help of an artillery barrage and, although German machine guns were troublesome throughout the day, no further attempt was made to dislodge the battalion. The Germans had, however, made considerable progress near Neuve Eglise, farther north, and the salient at Pont de Pierre began to be in peril of being cut off. An organized withdrawal was therefore arranged to take place during the night 13th/14th April; and by 5 a.m. on 14th the battalion was digging itself in on a new line on the Mont de Lille, a mile south-east of Bailleul, with outposts on the main Bailleul-Armentières road west of le Leuthe. The enemy lost no time in following up this retirement; and at 11.35 a.m. troops of the Alpine Corps, a fresh formation which had taken part in the 1918 offensive for the first time the day before, advanced to the attack. Though by now sorely reduced in numbers, the battalion beat off the attack with rifle and Lewis-gun fire. It is small wonder that an officer of the Alpine Corps is quoted in Sir James Edmonds's Official History of the War as having written after the war that he considered that the defenders on the British front in April, 1918, were the best troops of the many with whom they had crossed swords in the course of the four and a quarter years of war. Major G. D. Brown, M.C., was wounded during the attack and the command of the battalion devolved on Captain R. K. Beswick, M.C., who continued throughout the operations to display the same skill and determination which he had shown in Steenwerck on 10th April, organizing counter-attacks and setting a most inspiring example to the men by his strong personality. In the evening of 14th the battalion supported a party of the 9th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment which successfully counter-attacked some Germans who had crept up to the top of the Mont de Lille under cover of the hedges. Second-Lieutenant N. E. Ward was in command of a party of reinforcements moving forward from battalion headquarters when this movement began. He immediately charged at the head of his men and cleared the crest of the hill, driving the enemy down the steep slope on the other side and inflicting a number of casualties. The outposts were re-established on the main road at night and this satisfactory position was handed over early on 15th when the brigade was relieved and withdrawn into Corps reserve. The day was spent in digging a sector of new rear defences about a mile north of Bailleul. In the meanwhile, the enemy had renewed his attacks on the front line and at 5 p.m. the battalion was ordered to "stand to" in case it was needed to move forward in support. By 2 a.m. on 16th events had moved so rapidly that further withdrawals of the

forward troops had become necessary and the battalion's new position had become the front line, up to which the Germans soon advanced. In order to establish a satisfactory line of outposts, some cottages in front of the line were attacked by parties under Captain H. A. Hutson and Second-Lieutenant W. Stelfox and, after several attempts, were finally captured at about midday. No attack developed, but several concentrations of Germans were seen and dealt with by the artillery. On 17th the battalion was heavily bombarded during the morning and a number of casualties were suffered. But it was relieved that night and withdrew to a position in close support. So heavy had been the losses of the battalion and the brigade that the survivors of the 11th Lancashire Fusiliers, the 9th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and the 74th Trench Mortar Battery were formed into a composite battalion under Major E. P. Nares, M.C., of the Cheshire Regiment. The 11th Battalion's casualties were 4 officers and 17 other ranks killed, 19 officers and 218 other ranks wounded, and 3 officers and 184 other ranks missing. For his valuable services during these critical days, Captain R. K. Beswick, M.C., received a bar to his Military Cross: other awards included:—

Military Cross

Captain H. A. Hutson.	Second-Lieutenant R. F. Ackereley.
Second-Lieutenant W. Stelfox.	Second-Lieutenant N. E. Ward.

Distinguished Conduct Medal

Company Serjeant-Major R. Abbott.

Military Medal

Company Serjeant-Major J. McConnell.	Serjeant F. Greaves.
Lance-Corporal R. Dugdale.	Corporal H. Jobber.
Private E. W. Brocklehurst.	Private A. Blackburn.
Private W. C. Oliver.	Private R. Nicholas.
	Private C. R. Tabrum.

"THE BATTLE OF VIEUX BERQUIN"

"LYS," "ESTAIRES," "HAZEBROUCK"

1st Battalion

Some of the difficulties experienced by the 11th Battalion on 11th and 12th April were due to retirements on its right, and it will now be shown how unavoidable these were and what gallantry and skill were displayed by those taking part in them, and not least by the 29th Division and the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers in it. The latter had spent the winter of 1917-1918 in a most uncomfortable situation with its left resting on the ruins of Passchendaele church and its communications overlooked by the Germans. From 21st March onwards it was daily expecting to be sent down to the scene of the drama which began on that date, for it was unthinkable that the 29th Division should not play a role—and a distinguished role—in events of such importance. But it was not until late on 7th April that the battalion came out of the line and received orders to be

1ST BN.

<i>From</i>	<i>Dates.</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Places.</i>
16th	November		Support, Annequin.
17th	"	21st November	Close support, Cambrin.
21st	"	23rd "	Trenches, Cambrin, relieving 11th Bn. Portuguese Expeditionary Force.
23rd	"	26th "	Reserve, Beuvry.
26th	"	30th "	Close support, Cambrin; fighting patrol, 26th November.
30th	"	1st December	Reserve, Beuvry.
1st	December	4th "	Fouquereuil.
4th	"	5th "	By train to Achiet-le-Grand; Achiet-le-Petit.
6th	"	7th "	Favreuil.
7th	"	8th "	No. 7 Camp, Beugnâtre.
8th	"	9th "	Vaulx-Vraucourt.
10th	"	13th "	Support, Lagnicourt.
13th	"	19th "	Trenches, Lagnicourt.
19th	"	23rd "	Support, Lagnicourt.
23rd	"	27th "	Trenches, Lagnicourt.
27th	"	31st "	Reserve, No. 7 Camp, Beugnâtre.

1918

1st	January	4th	January	Trenches, Lagnicourt.
4th	"	7th	"	Support, Lagnicourt.
8th	"	12th	"	Trenches, Lagnicourt.
12th	"	17th	"	Messines Camp, Beugnâtre.
17th	"	22nd	"	Trenches, Lagnicourt.
22nd	"	31st	"	Support, Lagnicourt.
1st	February	8th	February	Messines Camp, Beugnâtre.
8th	"	11th	"	Trenches, Lagnicourt.
11th	"			By light railway to Achiet-le-Grand; Buchanan Camp, Achiet-le-Petit.
11th	"	12th	March	Buchanan Camp, Achiet-le-Petit.
12th	March	21st	"	Frémicourt.
21st	"	22nd	"	Support, Lebucquière.
23rd	"			German attack, Lebucquière; withdrawal to Beugny; Frémicourt; Bihucourt; Savoy Camp, Biefvillers-les-Bapaume.
24th	"			Digging in, Biefvillers-Sapignies spur.
25th	"			German attack, Sapignies; withdrawal to Bihucourt-Sapignies spur; Achiet-le-Petit; Biez Wood, Bucquoy.
26th	"			Hannescamps; Essarts; Fonquevillers.
27th	"			Couin; Puchevillers.
28th	"	31st	"	St. Léger-les-Domart.
31st	"	1st	April	By train, Candas to Caestre.
1st	April	2nd	"	Vauxhall Camp, Breemeerschen, Neuve Eglise.
2nd	"	3rd	"	Support, Le Bizet.
3rd	"	5th	"	Trenches, Le Touquet.
5th	"	8th	"	Reserve, Kortepyp Camp, Neuve Eglise.
9th	"			To Steenwerck; advanced guard to 74th Infantry Brigade towards Croix du Bac; attack, Croix du Bac.
10th	"			Croix du Bac captured; German attack; withdrawal to Pont de Pierre-Steenwerck Station.
11th	"			Attack, Steenwerck.
12th	"			Line, Steenwerck.
13th	"			German attack, Pont de Pierre; counter-attack.
14th	"		X	Withdrawal to Mont de Lille; German attack; support of counter-attack.
15th	"			Reserve, St. Jans Cappel.
16th	"		X	Line, Ravelsberg.
17th	"			Heavy German bombardment.
18th	"	21st	"	Close support, St. Jans Cappel; became part of composite battalion.

<i>Dates.</i>		<i>Places.</i>
<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	
21st April		Hooggraaf Cabaret, Reninghelst, Dirty Bucket Camp, Brandhoek.
21st ..	25th April	Dirty Bucket Camp, Brandhoek.
26th ..	30th ..	Support, Kemmel.
30th ..	2nd May	Line, Kemmel.
3rd May		Lissenhoek ; Hopoutre Siding, Poperinghe.
4th ..		Steenvoorde.
5th ..	8th ..	Esquelbecq.
8th ..	10th ..	By train, Waayenburg (Proven) to Fère-en-Tardenois ; Coulonges.
10th ..	23rd ..	Coulonges.
23rd ..	26th ..	Ville-au-Bois, Montigny-sur-Vesle.
26th ..		Muscourt.
27th ..		To Concevreux ; heavy German attack ; withdrawal to Meurival, Romain, Breuil-sur-Vesle ; Lance-Corporal J. Halliwell won V.C.
28th ..		Huit Voisins, Romain ; German attack ; battalion annihilated.
5th June	9th June	Beaunay.
9th ..	17th ..	Reuves.
17th ..	20th ..	Gaye.
20th ..	1st July	Peas. Battalion reorganized as 1 Company Lancashire Fusiliers, 3 Companies South Staffordshire Regiment in "Sugden's Brigade" of 50th Division, 21st June.
1st July		Gourgançon.
2nd ..		Mailly-le-Camp.
3rd ..	4th ..	By train, Mailly-le-Camp to Pont Remy.
4th ..	6th ..	Liercourt.
7th ..	16th ..	Doudelainville. Composite battalion broken up, 15th July.
16th ..	19th ..	Limercourt, Abbeville.
19th ..	12th August	Rouxmesnil Camp, Dieppe.
12th August		Battalion disbanded.

Army Form B. 104--83A.

No. 19679/35/2226
(If replying, please quote
above No.)

Infantry Record Office,
Preston Station.

1-6-1918.

~~SIR OR MADAM,~~

I have to inform you that a report has been received
from the War Office to the effect that (No.) #5668
(Rank) Private (Name) R Fletcher
(Regiment) // LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS
is a Prisoner of War reported MISSING in France
9-30-18.

Should any other information be received concerning him, such
information will be at once communicated to you.

~~Instructions as to the method of communicating with Prisoners of
War can be obtained at any Post Office.~~

I am,

~~SIR OR MADAM,~~

Your obedient Servant,

Shupins
CAPT. FOR COLONEL
INFANTRY RECORDS No. 3 DISTRICT

Officer in charge of Records.

IMPORTANT.—Any change of your address should be immediately notified to this
Office. It should also be notified, if you receive information from the soldier above, that
his address has been changed.

(9 38 5) W 13495—5013 80,000 12/15 H W V(P 1361) Forms/B. 104—83A/1

BOYLE: 2007.23.10

Boyle 2007.23.10

No. 19550/90/8933

(If replying, please
quote above No.)

ARMY FORM B. 104-82.

Infantry Record Office,
Preston

30-11-1918

Madam.

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office notifying the death of:—

(No.) 15668 (Rank) Private

(Name) Robert Fletcher

(Regiment) 11th LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS.

which occurred in the Prisoner of War Hospital, Museum

on the 16th April 1918 at TOURNAI.

The report is to the effect that he died (gunshot wound in abdomen).

By His Majesty's command I am to forward the enclosed message of sympathy from Their Gracious Majesties the King and Queen. I am at the same time to express the regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his Country's service.

I am to add that any information that may be received as to the soldier's burial will be communicated to you in due course. A separate leaflet dealing more fully with this subject is enclosed.

I am,

Madam.

Your obedient Servant,

[Signature]

OFFICER IN CHARGE OF RECORDS
INFANTRY RECORDS 3 DISTRICT.

BOYLE 7007.23.10

Army Form W. 3038.

From THE REGIMENTAL PAYMASTER,

or SECRETARY OF THE TERRITORIAL FORCE ASSOCIATION,

nog

To

Mrs Alice Hetcher

2 Malesworth St

Rochdale

I regret to state that information has reached this office of the death of 45668 Pte R Hetcher
(whilst Prisoner of War) of the 1st Battalion Regiment.
 The separation allowance and allotment of pay now being issued to you will continue to be issued for a period of 26 weeks
 from the date of notification of death, i.e., up to and including the payment due on { Monday, 16/6/19
 Tuesday, 17/6/19
 after which date, pension (or gratuity in certain Dependants' cases), becomes issuable.

Date

Jan 7 1919

Signature

Hallway A.P.

W596-R1567 150,000 4/17 HWV(P1604)
 5960-P829 100,000 3 18

for REGIMENTAL PAYMASTER No 2

Please refer to A. 66317

Mrs Fletcher

Dear Madam.

We are much grieved to inform you that the following appears on lists despatched from Berlin.

45-668 Pte Robert Fletcher
A. Company "The Lanc. Fus.
Died 16/4/1918.

Museum Hospital at
Tournai following
Head Wounds.

Should we receive further
particulars we shall
let you know.

We trust you will accept

our ~~deep~~ ~~sympathy~~ deep
sympathy with you in
your great loss & beg
to remain yours faithfully

Comite International
De La Croix Rouge.

Geneva

Agence Des. Prisonniers
De. Guerre.

ADMINISTRATION COMMUNALE

DE

TOURNAI

BUREAU

DE

L'ÉTAT-CIVIL

Tournai, le 5 Décembre 1918

Madame,

En réponse à votre lettre du
13 novembre dernier, j'ai
l'honneur de vous informer
que votre époux Mr. Robert
Fletcher est décédé à Tournai
le 16 avril dernier à l'ambulance
de l'Académie de Dessin.

Il a été inhumé au Cimetière
du Sud et son cercueil porte
le numéro 802 - S.

Veuillez recevoir, Madame
l'assurance de ma parfaite
considération.

Le Chef de Bureau,

Alfred Godart

BU1LF7007.23.10

BOYLE: 2007. 23. 10

(9 4 87) W9399-HP5189 25,000 2/19 HWV(bP738) H18/201

Effects—Form 45B.

Any further communication on this subject should be addressed to—
The Secretary,
War Office,
Imperial Institute,
South Kensington,
London, S.W.7,
and the following number quoted.

WAR OFFICE,
IMPERIAL INSTITUTE,
SOUTH KENSINGTON,
LONDON, S.W.7.

E/704398/1 (A/cs. 4.)

2nd April 1919

Madam

I am directed to acquaint you that the Command Paymaster, Eastern Command, Science Museum, Exhibition Road, S. Kensington, London, S.W.7, has been authorised to issue to you the sum of Five Pounds, eleven shillings and five pence ✓

Enclosures.

being the amount that is due on the settlement of the accounts of the late No. 45668. Private Robert Fletcher 11th Bat. Lancashire Fusiliers

Should no communication on this subject be received from the Paymaster within the next few days, application for payment should be made to him by letter.

The above amount is issued to you as sole legatee
in accordance with the deceased's will
The above amount includes the War Gratuity amounting to £5. 0. 0.

You are requested to furnish this Department with the Serial Numbers of the late Soldier's War Savings Certificates

I am,

Madam

Your obedient Servant,

[Signature]

Assistant Financial Secretary.

Mrs A. Fletcher
2. Molebrook Street
Rochdale
Lancs

ms.

RF/4.



IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION.

Any further communication on this subject should be addressed to—

"THE SECRETARY,"

and the following number quoted :—

YP/49/24092.

82, BAKER STREET,

W.1.

5th December, 1921.

Madam,

With reference to previous correspondence, I am directed to inform you that Private R. Fletcher is buried in Tournai Communal Cemetery German Extension (West), Plot 2, Row "H", Grave 6.

The grave has been marked by a durable wooden cross with an inscription bearing his name, rank, regiment, and date of death.

I am,

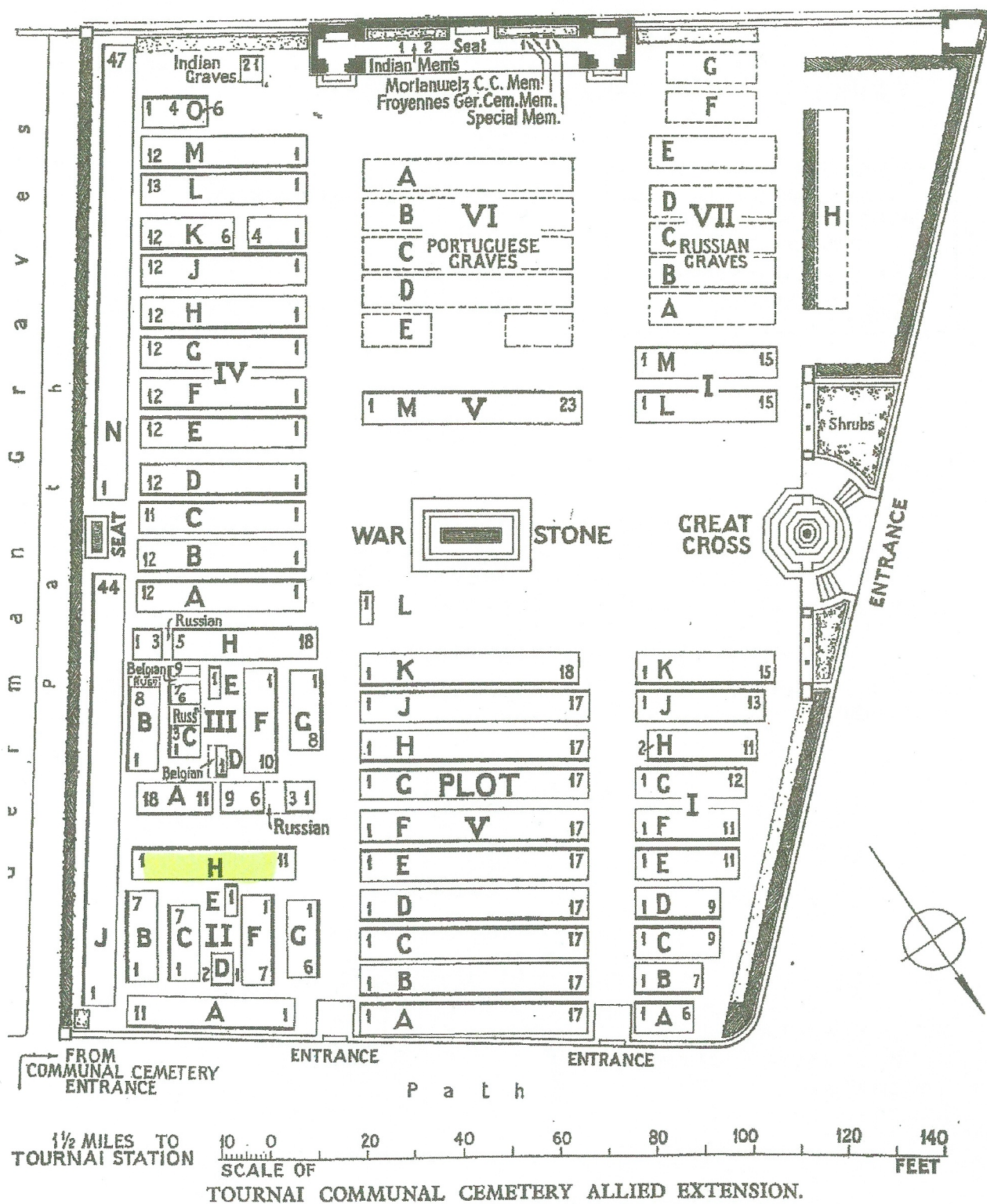
Madam,

Your obedient Servant,

Robert G. G. G.

for Principal Assistant Secretary.

Mrs. Fletcher,
2, Molesworth Street,
Rochdale,
Lancashire.



Soldiers Died in the Great War

The
Naval & Military
Press

Printed from Soldiers Died in the Great War CD Rom by the Naval & Military Press Ltd. Innovators in the field of military publishing.

Regiment, Corps etc. **Lancashire Fusiliers**

Battalion/etc. **11th Battalion.**

Surname **FLETCHER**

Christian Name(s) **Robert**

Initials **R**

Born **Rochdale, Lancs**

Enlisted **Rochdale**

Residence

Died Date **16/04/18**

Rank **PRIVATE**

Died How **Died of wounds**

Theatre of War **France & Flanders**

Number **45668**

Supplementary
Notes

Personal
Notes

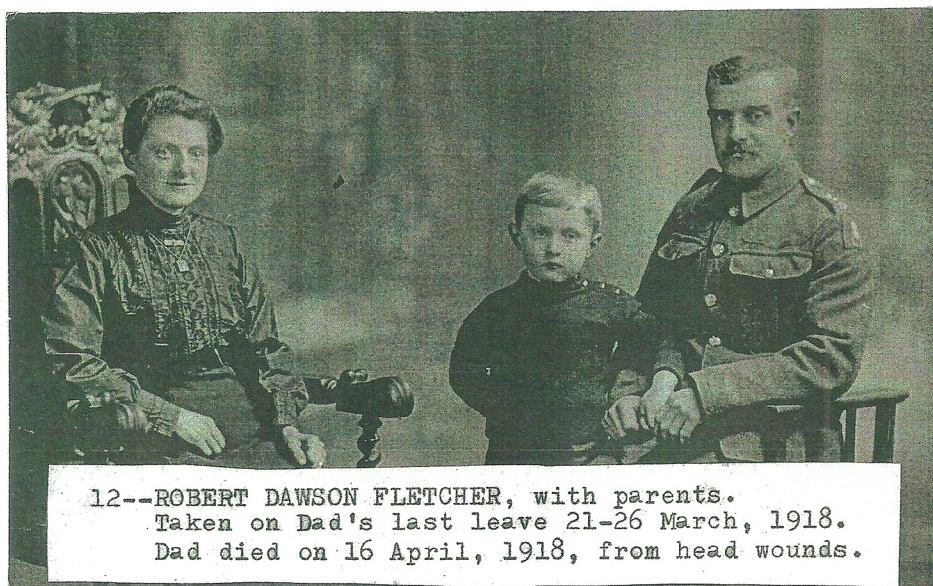
Buylc 2007.23.10



BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

I join with my grateful people
in sending you this memorial
of a brave life given for others
in the Great War.

George R. I.



12--ROBERT DAWSON FLETCHER, with parents.
Taken on Dad's last leave 21-26 March, 1918.
Dad died on 16 April, 1918, from head wounds.



HE whom this scroll commemorates
 was numbered among those who,
 at the call of King and Country, left all
 that was dear to them, endured hardness,
 faced danger, and finally passed out of
 the sight of men by the path of duty
 and self-sacrifice, giving up their own
 lives that others might live in freedom.
 Let those who come after see to it
 that his name be not forgotten.

Re. Robert Fletcher,
 Lancashire Fusiliers

In Memory of
ROBERT FLETCHER

Private
45668
11th Bn., Lancashire Fusiliers
who died on
Tuesday, 16th April 1918. Age 36.

**Additional
Information:**

Son of John and Mary Ann Fletcher; husband of Alice Fletcher, of 2, Molesworth St., Rochdale. Born at Rochdale.

Commemorative Information

Cemetery:

TOURNAI COMMUNAL CEMETERY ALLIED EXTENSION, Tournai, Hainaut, Belgium

**Grave Reference/
Panel Number:**

II. H. 6.

Location:

Tournai Communal Cemetery is located in the south west district of Tournai itself on the N508, Chaussee De Douai, a road leading from the R52 Tournai ring road. 900 metres after leaving the R523 and joining the N508, lies the left hand turning onto the Chaussee De Willemean. The cemetery is located at the end of this lane.

**Historical
Information:**

Tournai (Doornik in Flemish), was captured by the German II Corps on the 23rd August, 1914, in spite of the resistance of a French Territorial Brigade, and it remained in German hands until it was entered by the 47th (London) and 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions on the 8th November, 1918. The 51st (or Highland) Casualty Clearing Station came in on the 14th November and remained until the 20th July, 1919. The (Southern) Communal Cemetery, in the Faubourg-St. Martin, was used and extended by the Germans during their occupation. (German sick and wounded were nursed in the "Asile", the British and Allied in the Hopital Notre-Dame.) The earlier German War burials were made in the North corner, the later in the extension to the South-West, and the British burials after the Armistice in the same extension. It was decided later to regroup the German and Allied dead, by nationalities; and part of the German Extension then became the Allied (or Western) Extension. There were brought to it not only British and many Allied dead from the North corner of the cemetery, but also British dead from other cemeteries in a wide area round Tournai. There are now nearly 700, 1914-18 and over 50, 1939-45 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, over 30 from the 1914-18 War are unidentified. The cemetery covers an area of 3,233 square metres.

Display Record of Commemoration



HE whom this scroll commemorates
 was numbered among those who,
 at the call of King and Country, left all
 that was dear to them, endured hardness,
 faced danger, and finally passed out of
 the sight of men by the path of duty
 and self-sacrifice, giving up their own
 lives that others might live in freedom.
 Let those who come after see to it
 that his name be not forgotten.

45668, PRIVATE, Robert FLETCHER

11th Battalion.

Lancashire Fusiliers

Died of wounds, France & Flanders, 16/04/18

Born: Rochdale, Lancs, Enlisted: Rochdale,

**In Memory of
Private ROBERT FLETCHER**

**45668, 11th Bn., Lancashire Fusiliers
who died age 36
on 16 April 1918**

**Son of John and Mary Ann Fletcher; husband of Alice Fletcl
2, Molesworth St., Rochdale. Born at Rochdale.**

Remembered with honour

TOURNAI COMMUNAL CEMETERY ALLIED EXTENS



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

In Memory of

Private

Robert Fletcher

45668, 11th Bn., Lancashire Fusiliers who died on 16 April 1918 Age 36

Son of John and Mary Ann Fletcher; husband of Alice Fletcher, of 2, Molesworth St., Rochdale. Born at Rochdale.

Remembered with Honour
Tournai Communal Cemetery Allied Extension



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Location Information

Tournai Communal Cemetery is located in the south-west district of De Douai (N508), a road leading from the R52 Tournai ring road.

900 metres after leaving the R523 and joining the N508, lies the left Chaussee de Willemeau, and the cemetery is along this road on the left gates.

Visiting Information

The cemetery is open from 08.00 to 17.45 each day, including Saturdays.

Wheelchair access is possible via the main entrance.

For further information regarding wheelchair access, please contact telephone number: 01628 634221

Historical Information

Tournai was captured by the German II Corps on 23 August 1914, French Territorial Brigade, and the town remained in German hands until the 47th (London) and 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions on 8 November 1918. A Casualty Clearing Station arrived on 14 November and remained until the end of occupation, the German sick and wounded were nursed in the "Asile" and Allied were cared for in the Hopital Notre-Dame.

The (Southern) Communal Cemetery, in the Faubourg-St.Martin, was used by the Germans, although the graves were later regrouped by nationality from other cemeteries in a wide area around Tournai. For instance the names indicate the numbers of British graves involved, and refer to the date of death unless it is noted otherwise; the dates are the dates of death):-

ANDERLUES COMMUNAL CEMETERY (Hainaut) (one, Oct. 1918)
ATH GERMEN CEMETERY (Hainaut), at Trieu-Perilleux, on the Scheldt, buried by Germans, 1917-18., 23 buried by British (mainly by 2nd Army, Jan. 1919).

AULNOIS CHURCHYARD (Hainaut) (one, Nov. 1918).

AUTREPPE CHURCHYARD (Hainaut) (five, Nov. 1918).

AUWEGEM CHURCHYARD (East Flanders) (one R.A.F., Oct. 1918).

AYWAILLE CHURCHYARD (Liege) (one, Feb. 1919).

BAISIEUX COMMUNAL CEMETERY (Hainaut) (ten unidentified 1918).

BALATRE COMMUNAL CEMETERY (Namur) (one, Nov. 1918).

BELGIUM 406—450

THE WAR GRAVES OF
THE BRITISH EMPIRE

THE TOURNAI
GROUP OF CEMETERIES
BELGIUM

INDEX No. B. 406
TOURNAL COM.
CEM. ALLIED
EXT.

FITZER, Rfn. F., 589015. 17th Bn. London Regt. 8th Nov., 1918. V. A. 1.

FLANNIGAN, Pte. David, 3238. 1st Bn. Royal Newfoundland Regt. Died of wounds 4th May, 1918. Age 20. Son of Gregory and Mary Flannigan, of Roundabout, Lawn, Burin, Newfoundland. II. C. 5.

FLEMING, Pte. T. F., G/50555. 2nd Bn. Middlesex Regt. transf. to (374512) 754th Area Employment Coy. Labour Corps. 12th Sept., 1918. III. C. 2.

FLETCHER, Rfn. J., 39265. 1st/5th Bn. South Lancashire Regt. 22nd Oct., 1918. V. A. 5.

FLETCHER, Pte. Robert, 45668. 11th Bn. Lancashire Fusiliers. Died of wounds 16th April, 1918. Age 36. Son of John and Mary Ann Fletcher; husband of Alice Fletcher, of 2, Molesworth St., Rochdale. Born at Rochdale. II. H. 6.

FLOOD, Dvr. J., 21742. 1st Field Sqdn. Royal Engineers. 21st Nov., 1918. IV. A. 4.

FOORD, Pte. W., 22903. 8th Bn. East Surrey Regt. 22nd May, 1917. V. C. 16.

FORD, A.M.III. Henry Thomas, 193292. 19th Sqdn. Royal Air Force. Died of accidental injuries 15th Jan., 1919. Age 19. Son of Thomas and Martha Ford, of The Elms, Cahir, Co. Tipperary. IV. M. 4.

FOSTER, Pte. F. C., 231456. 2nd Bn. London Regt. (R. Fus.). 5th Nov., 1918. V. J. 12.

FOSTER, Pte. L., 35073. 74th Bn. Machine Gun Corps (Inf.). 1st Nov., 1918. V. J. 7.

FOSTER, Pte. Stanley, 28830. 2nd Bn. Duke of Wellington's Regt. 16th Sept., 1917. Age 23. Son of Thomas H. and Ruth Foster, of 48, Victoria Terrace, Mill Bank, Triangle, Halifax, Yorks. I. F. 5.

FOSTER, Pte. T., 202934. M.M. 1st/4th Seaforth Highlanders. 31st March, 1918. V. M. 3.

FOTHERGILL, Pte. Arthur William, 21440. 10th Bn. The Queen's. Died of wounds 19th April, 1918. Age 26. Son of Henry William and Rosetta Rebecca Fothergill, of 45, Campbell Rd., Gravesend. I. K. 12.

FRANCIS, Pte. H., 4979. 1st Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regt. 9th May, 1917. V. D. 15.

FREEMAN, Pte. George H., 26214. 2nd/5th Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regt. 27th Aug., 1918. Age 19. Son of George and M. Freeman, of 19, Church Terrace, Dedworth, Windsor. III. E. 1.

FREER, Pte. Tom, 203538. 7th Bn. Leicestershire Regt. 18th Oct., 1918. Age 38. Son of Vincent and Lucy Freer, of Arnesby; husband of May Freer, of Arnesby, Leicester. II. J. 36.

FREWER, Gnr. Frederick Amos, 926373. "A" Bty. 290th Bde. Royal Field Artillery. 30th Oct., 1918. Age 25. Son of James and Elizabeth Frewer, of 39, Arlesford Rd., Stockwell, London. I. J. 4.

FRIEND, Pte. Joe, 721882. 24th Bn. London Regt. 16th Oct., 1918. Age 19. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Friend, of 45, Sandover Rd., Albany Rd., Camberwell, London. III. B. 1.

FRIGHT, Pte. E. H. J., 5025. 16th Lancers. Killed in action 11th Nov., 1918. Age 19. Son of Harry John and Maud Fright, of 119A, Copleston Rd., Peckham, London. IV. O. 2.

FROW, Pte. Albert, 241503. 2nd/5th Bn. Lincolnshire Regt. 28th April, 1918. II. D. 1.

FRYER, Lce. Cpl. A. G., 202486. 1st/5th Bn. N. Staffordshire Regt. 22nd Aug., 1917. I. B. 3.

FURNELL, Pnr., John Harry, WR/253639. 271st Railway Coy. Royal Engineers. 19th Feb., 1919. Age 35. Husband of Jessie Furnell, of 137, London Rd., Kingston-on-Thames. IV. G. 8.

GALE, Pte. John Victor, 30811. 2nd Bn. Loyal North Lancs Regt. 9th Dec., 1918. IV. M. 2.

GALLIMORE, Dvr. John William, T/382629. 1st Coy. 74th Div. Train, Royal Army Service Corps, formerly 6th Bn. Sherwood Foresters. Killed by explosion at Ath 27th Dec., 1918. Age 21. Son of Thomas Gallimore, of 22, Buxton Rd., Ashbourne, Derbyshire, and the late Lucy Gallimore. V. B. 9.

GAMMAGE, Pte. Joseph, 291641. 7th Bn. Black Watch. Died of sickness 18th Nov., 1918. Age 28. Husband of Hannah Copeland Gammage, of 163, South St., Perth. IV. O. 5.