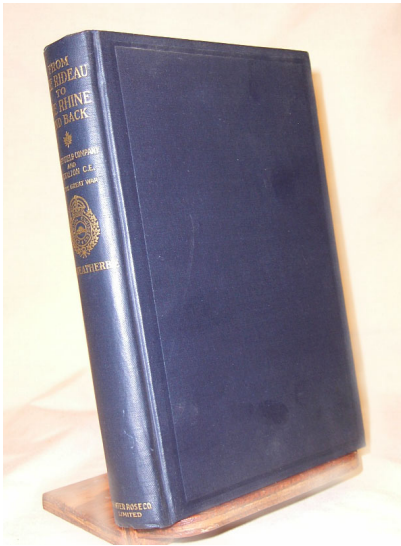


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From the Rideau to the Rhine and Back compiled by (Maj.) K. Weatherbe, published 1928

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FROM THE
RIDEAU TO THE RHINE
AND BACK

The 6th Field Company and Battalion
Canadian Engineers
in the Great War

A narrative compiled by

K. WEATHERBE
(FORMERLY MAJOR, 6TH BN., C. E.)

"There's only one Corps which is perfect—that's us"
KIPLING—*The Sapper*

TORONTO
THE HUNTER-ROSE CO., LIMITED

1928

PREFACE

This work has been compiled for ex-members of the 6th Field Company and its successor the 6th Battalion Canadian Engineers. It is not properly a regimental history. Rather it may be described as a week by week narrative of the war looked at from one participating unit's standpoint.

Of necessity many pages deal only with more or less trivial incidents that occurred close at hand during long periods of comparative inaction. Their recital, it is hoped, may restore sharpness and sequence to the readers' own recollections of those days.

Less easily recognized will be other concurrent but more remote happenings. These may either have escaped his observation altogether or, through improper focussing in the first instance, have failed to make an impression on his attention. Inquisitiveness in the army was discouraged. Soldiers, for the most part, also were content to defer consideration of events outside their own experience for anticipated leisure of peace-time firesides.

Material for much of what has been here set down already existed in the Company and Battalion War Diaries. For access to them, and for extracts from other official documents on file in the Historical Section, Department of National Defence, grateful acknowledgment is tendered to the Director and his staff. To supply what was there lacking unofficial sources of information have been freely drawn on. In particular, use has been made of a well kept private diary lent by Mr. John Bonham. To him, and to all others who assisted in various ways, the compiler takes this opportunity of expressing his thanks.

He is indebted in a special sense to a fellow company commander, Major H. B. Stuart, without whose timely suggestion and encouragement the book would undoubtedly still remain in embryo.

NOTE.—In accordance with a practice not unusual in the field, accents which should properly be used over vowels in certain foreign place names have been omitted.

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FROM THE RIDEAU TO THE RHINE AND BACK

THE 6TH FIELD COMPANY, CANADIAN ENGINEERS

26th December, 1914

A year memorable in the annals of the Empire is drawing to a close. Four crowded months have elapsed since the outbreak of war. News from the front is hopelessly unreliable. It is established, however, that the enemy, stopped at the Marne in his first rush for Paris, has been held along the line of the Aisne. His more recent thrust for Calais also now appears to be definitely blocked. Cost of recent fighting can only be surmised from the terribly long casualty lists. That there is urgent need for reinforcements is admitted.

Immediately war was declared the overseas Dominions offered assistance. The first 30,000 Canadian troops arrived in England on October 15th. Already organization of a second Canadian contingent is under way. This is to consist of a full infantry division with its allotted quota of each arm of the service; cavalry, artillery, engineers, infantry, medical and supply units. Owing to the advent of winter and lack of indoor accommodation for a whole division in any single locality, training is being carried on at all urban centres where adequate facilities exist.

One infantry brigade, the 4th, is being raised in Ontario. Recruits for the 5th and 6th respectively will be drawn from other provinces to the east and west.

No such territorial distinction is made in the case of "divisional troops." The Engineer establishment is to consist of a headquarters and three field companies. Arrangements have been made to house their personnel under the grandstand at Lansdowne Park, Ottawa. This is being converted into a barracks by detachments of sapper recruits which arrived from the west some weeks ago.

The 2nd Divisional Signal Company is being attached to the group for training and discipline.

French Division to recapture Wytschaete. The 49th Battalion was attached to the Division on the 2nd, and is supplying work parties.

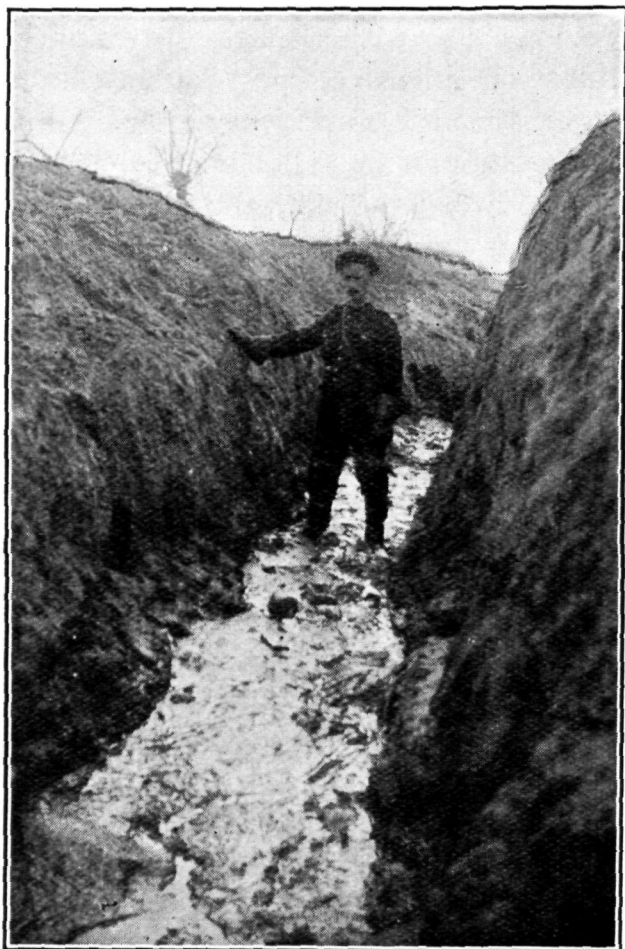
One of our N.C.O.'s to-day fished three new pairs of rubber boots out of Piccadilly where their owners had become mired before the trench was abandoned. A report is current this evening that the Kaiser has been assassinated.

13th November, 1915

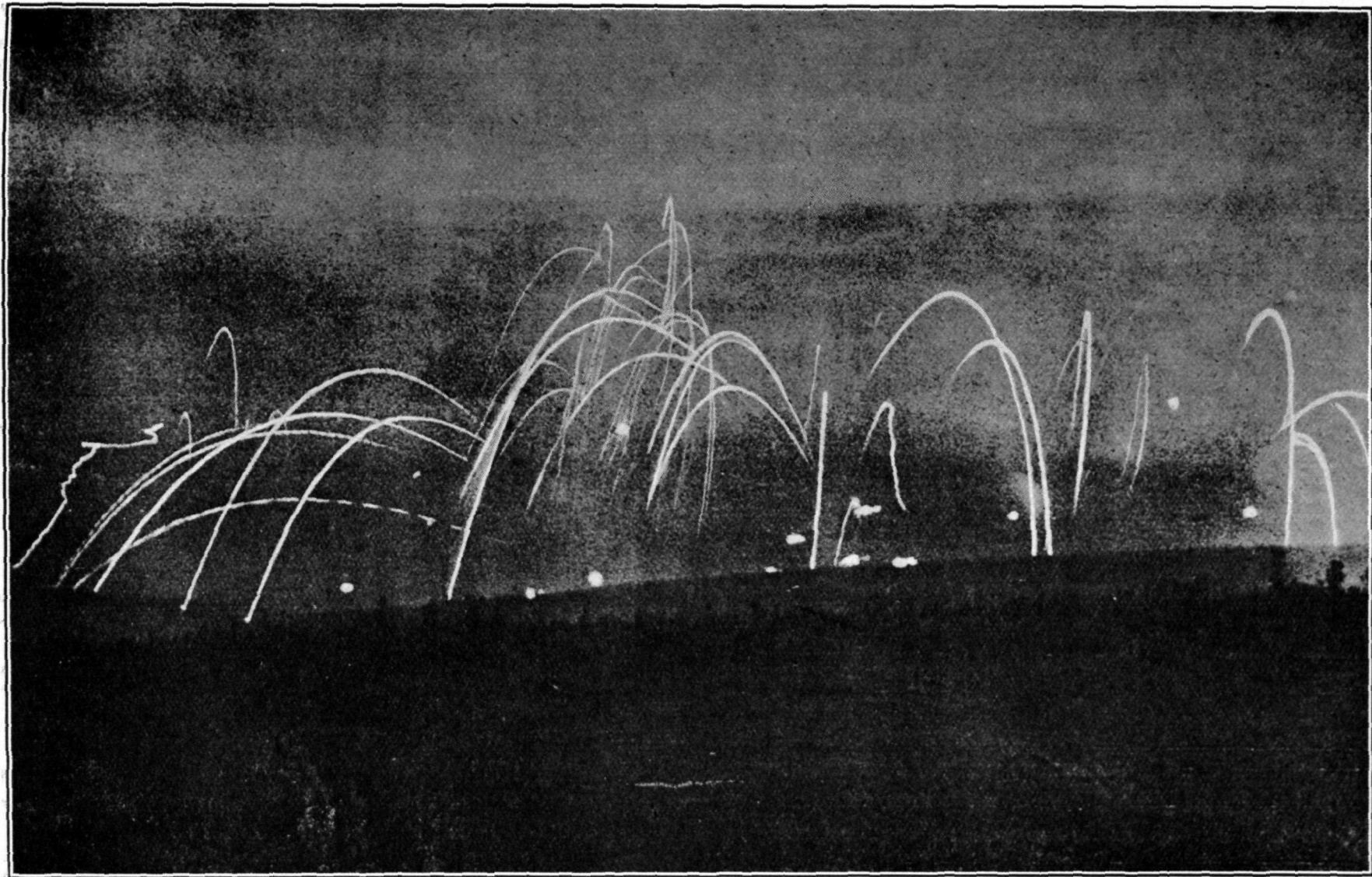
The first two days of the week were damp, cold and misty. Sappers were detailed to erect screens across the Kemmel-Brulooze and Kemmel-La Clytte Roads, which, since the leaves started to fall, have been under observation from Wytschaete Hospice. Section 3 sapped a passage under G1 parapet into the most easterly crater at the Glory Hole. A report from Etaples was received with deep regret that Sapper McKenzie had succumbed to his wounds. His death is the first the Company has had to record since arriving in France.

The enemy on Monday burst some shrapnel over our work parties and dropped eight heavies into Kemmel. Next day, as visibility improved, he repeated the dose and systematically bombarded the whole forward area. One of our N.C.O.'s observed 86 shells land between Tea Farm and the dressing station, evenly divided between 5.9's and 4.1's. Only three were duds. Men from divisional reserve on trench improvement were kept too busy dodging shells to get much work done. Our hows. took on targets behind the German lines in retaliation.

More rain fell on the 10th. The O. C. and Captain Ellis visited Section 2 in Pond Farm.

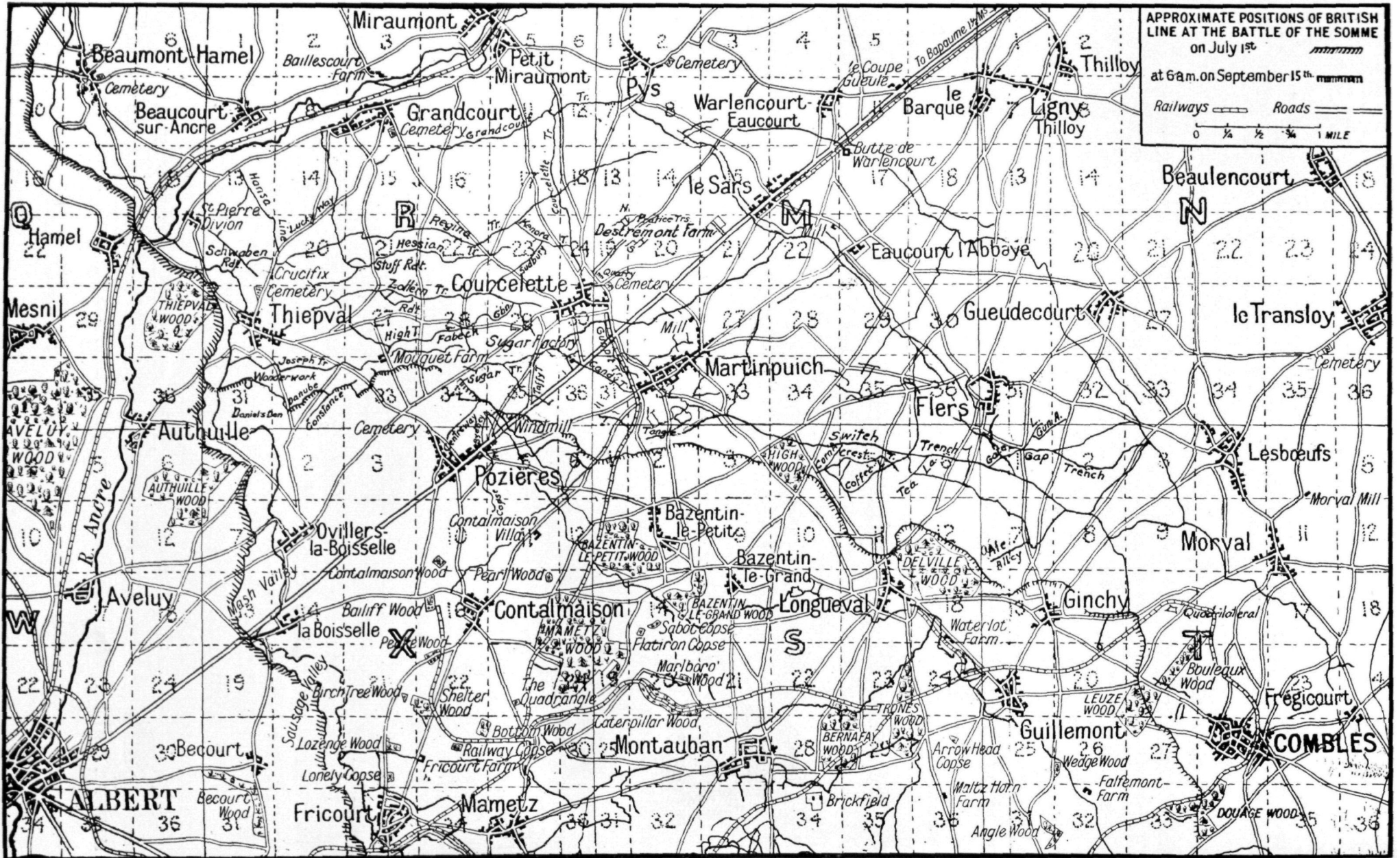


OFFTAKE FROM H TRENCHES
CORPORAL CARSON



DAWN ON THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1916

British Official



SOMME TRENCH MAP

of Douai and our Fifth Army approached the Haute Deule Canal beyond Henin Leitard. Between La Bassee and Armentieres opposing lines are back as they were in 1916.

19th October, 1918

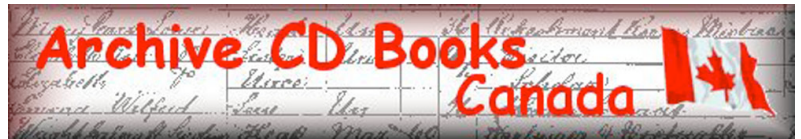
Orders received from Brigade shortly before midnight on the 12th, announced relief of the 11th by the 2nd Canadian Division. 4th Brigade took over from the railway east of Hordain to Pont Rade and the 6th thence to Fressies. The south divisional boundary after relief extended from Pont de Calvigny south-west to Esvars (inclusive), thence via Maison Neuve and Malakoff railway yard to a junction with a line between it and the 56th Division. This ran forward via the south-east corner of Sauchy Lestree and for $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles due east through Epinoy sugar factory to within 500 yds. of the Douai railway, whence it turned north-east and north to Fressies bridge (exclusive). The 5th Battalion C.E. was made responsible for work in the 4th Brigade area and the 6th Battalion C.E. for that held by the 6th Brigade.

Sullen grey clouds hung low over the area on the 13th. A Company cleaned up work around the bridge at Ramillies and buried some horses; C doubled chessed the highway bridge there, completed track repairs into Esvars and transferred rail from the metre to the 60 centimetre gauge railway east of Neuville St. Remy; D repaired roadway at bridge approaches; B moved back to its old Haynecourt shelters and detailed 70 men to report at 2nd Tramway Company headquarters alongside the Cantimpre Y for grading south of Abancourt station. On conclusion of tasks, companies were ordered to discontinue all work outside the divisional area. At night an officer and 15 O.R. from C Company reconnoitred Sensee Canal crossings in Hem-Lenglet opposite La Fontaine de Jules Cesar and at Pont Rade. A raid in progress three miles to the west by the 56th Division resulted in capture of 200 prisoners.

The 14th was fine and warm. B Company carried forward reconstruction of the 60 c.m. railway around the southerly outskirts of Abancourt. C dismantled Weldon trestle bridges at Ramillies. D repaired the road running north through Sancourt. A stood by on orders to move, shifting billets late in the day. Major Harrison resumed duties of Works Officer. Sapper Clement, V., of B Company died of sickness at the 23rd Casualty Clearing Station. The Second Army captured Gheluwe and Menin.

The 15th was dull and cloudy. B Company constructed a spur opposite Abancourt Chapel and repaired roadbed to the Bantigny-

NAME	RANK	NO.	HONOURS	CASUALTY
Abernethy, N. L.	2nd/Cpl.	467		
Abbott, F. T.		922124		
Abrahart, W. A.	Lt.			
Abram, L. O.		506289		acc. w
Abrams, Herbert	Sgt.	408386	M.M.	d. of w.
Abery, G.	L/Cpl.	678153		
Acton, M. M.	Sgt.	468		
Adair, R. J.		167120		
Adam, W. A.	Capt.		M.C.	
Adams, A.	L/Cpl.	444298		
Adams, H.	Cpl.	50891		
Adrian, R. W.	2nd/Cpl.	2006417		
Airey, F. J.	Capt.			
Alderson, G. S.		766039		
Alexander, A. W.	L/Cpl.	657897		d. of w.
Alexander, J. S.	Sgt.	469	M.M.	
Allen, F.		814216		
Allen, Fred.		862352		
Allen, P. H.	2nd/Cpl.	439003	M M.	
Allen, W. D.		1931		
Allery, G. H.	L/Cpl.	470		w.
Alley, F. R.		471		
Allison, G.		401216		
Allison, T.		922003		
Alport, F.	Lt.	472		w.
Alyea, O. G.		473		c.
Ambrose, D. T.	Cpl.	474		
Anderson, C. E.		166282		
Anderson, G.		657676		
Anderson, H. J.		701151		
Anderson, J.		622152		
Anderson, W.		541901		
Anderson, W. A.		505278		w.
Armstrong, R.		742		
Armstrong, R. C.		2138487		
Armstrong, W. D.	Sgt.	475	M.M.	c.
Arnold, E. J.		273006		
Arsenault, E.		2246230		
Ashby, H.		45045		
Ashford, A. G.	Capt.		des.	
Attenborough, H.		500500		
Audsley, H. J.	2nd/Cpl.	192434		
Avery, C. E.		678267		
Ayers, J.		844016		
Babbitt, A. R.		476		w. c.
Babbitt, S. W.		477		
Baillie, C.		167017		



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