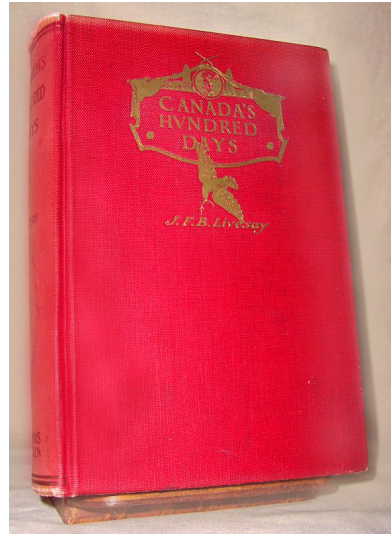


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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This valuable book has been loaned to us by Marc Leroux. Marc has joined Chris Wight to undertake the mammoth task of making a biographical database of all the Canadians who took part in The Great War. This work will be underway for a long time, but the current data base contents have been made available and can be found at <http://www.canadianGreatWarProject.com/> Please visit their site so they know their work is being appreciated.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Fredric Bligh Livesay came to Canada from the Isle of Wight in England and was the first general manager of the Canadian Press. No doubt his experiences as a war correspondent during the First World War led to his writing this book, Canada's Hundred Days, thought by some to be the best account of this exceptional period of Canadian involvement and frequently quoted in other publications. He was married to Florence Randal Livesay, also a journalist as well as a poet, author and teacher. The couple had a daughter, Dorothy, on 12 October 1909 in Winnipeg Manitoba. Dorothy was, later, also well know for her poetry.

Canada's Hundred Days

With the Canadian Corps from Amiens
to Mons, Aug. 8 - Nov. 11, 1918.

By

J. F. B. Livesay

With Portrait and Maps

TORONTO:
THOMAS ALLEN
1919

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PREFACE

THIS book has been written to give the Canadian people a clearer, fuller, conception of the wonderful work of the Canadian Corps during the Hundred Days. To that consideration every other has been subordinated.

By identifying so far as possible the actual battle position of individual battalions it is hoped to stimulate local pride and interest in their respective territorial or recruiting areas. Difficulties were here encountered, both through absence of detailed official narratives and limitations of space, but if full justice has not been done each fighting unit, it is not from lack of application and goodwill.

With this prime consideration always in mind, it has been sought to make the book intelligible to the general reader as well as to the military student and pains therefore have been taken to explain at length for the former military technicalities and terminology that come within the common knowledge of the latter.

Whenever practicable the original and official sources drawn upon for description of operations have been quoted. Such may at times be a little tedious but is preferable to loose paraphrasing which, while denying the reader an inspection of the documentary evidence, makes heavy drafts upon his credulity. Thus the Official Report of the Corps Commander covering these operations has been reproduced practically in full, paralleling in its proper place the general narrative. This might be expected to make for confusion and overlapping, but in practice it has not altogether worked out that way, for whereas the Official Report deals mainly with technical aspects, the book itself seeks to clothe these with the pulsating life and color of the battlefield. The alternatives must have been either to have buried the Official Report in a lengthy Appendix, or to have omitted it altogether. It is felt the

right course has been followed because whatever the book may suffer from these occasional breaks in the story, this loss is overwhelmingly counter-balanced by placing before the reader in an accessible form this extremely valuable and compellingly interesting report, carrying with it the authority of an authenticated historic document.

Among official or semi-official narratives of which free use has been made are those of the 1st Canadian Division, the 4th Canadian Division, the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade, as well as several battalion narratives. Valuable material has been drawn from the narrative of the First Army, published by the London *Times*, entitled, "The Final Blow of the First Army in 1918."

The author is greatly indebted to a number of friends of all ranks in the Canadian Corps for information and suggestions. Special acknowledgement must be made of the very efficient work of Lieut. J. I. P. Neal, Canadian Corps Survey Section, who throughout these operations superintended the Corp Maps Section, and has now prepared the accompanying maps and plans.

WINNIPEG, CANADA,
AUG. 26, 1919.

J.F.B.L.

AMIENS

CHAPTER I

THE SITUATION ON THE WEST FRONT

ON July 18, 1918, Marshal Foch, supported by new American levies, struck his hammer blow on the Marne. We shall hear a good deal in history of Chateau Thierry and the great victory, but it remains that at the end of July the West Front—the traditional West Front of Flanders, Picardy and the Somme—was intact, unpierced, to all seeming an impregnable wall built by German blood and iron. But it was not the line of 1917. The spring offensive had cramped its defenders into a narrower, a more perilous ring. In the north the enemy bivouacked on the field of Passchendaele and from Mount Kemmel cast his shadow over the Channel ports; to the south he was knocking at the gate of Amiens and thrusting through Montdidier at Paris; only in the centre, at Souchez, on Vimy Ridge and before Arras, where through all those fateful days of March and April the Canadian Corps had kept watch and guard, the line of 1917 stood firm.

There is abundant evidence that at the end of July, while the enemy regarded the situation in the south as serious and was preparing to admit that his last great offensive had failed, he still held the West Front—the Somme, the Hindenburg Line and the valley of the Lys—to be invincible, and counted on the British armies frittering away their strength upon its formidable defenses as they had in 1916 and 1917. Further than that, he had actually in preparation a new offensive on the Amiens-Montdidier front with which he hoped to restore the military balance in his favor. It was only after the Battle

support two battalions of the 3rd. Brigade, the 15th., recruited from the 48th. Highlanders of Toronto, and the 14th., Royal Montreal Regiment.

The intensive fighting on this front was fruitful of many individual deeds of gallantry. Thus, when his platoon came unexpectedly under fire of numerous machine-guns, Acting-Sergeant George Frederick Coppins of the 8th. Battalion, a native of London, England, finding that it was not possible to advance nor retire, and when, no cover being available, it was apparent that the platoon must be annihilated unless the machine-guns were at once silenced, called for four volunteers to follow him and leapt forward in the face of intense machine-gun fire. With his comrades he rushed straight for the machine-guns. The four men with him were killed and Cpl. Coppins wounded. Despite his wounds he reached the hostile machine-guns alone, killed the operator of the first gun and three of the crew, and made prisoners four others.

Bold initiative on the part of Sergt. D. Zengal, 5th. Battalion, of Woolford, Alta., saved the lives of many of his comrades. He was leading his platoon forward gallantly to the attack, east of Warvillers, but had not gone far when he realized that a gap had occurred on his flank, and that an enemy machine-gun was firing at close range into the advancing line. Grasping the situation, he rushed forward some 200 yards ahead of the platoon, tackled the machine-gun emplacement, killed the officer and operator of the gun, and dispersed the crew. Later, when the battalion was held up by very heavy machine-gun fire, he displayed much tactical skill and directed his fire with destructive results. Shortly afterwards he was rendered unconscious by an enemy shell, but on recovering consciousness he at once continued to direct harassing fire on the enemy.

Twelve tanks supported the 1st. Canadian Division this day, six with each Brigade, and all did valuable service. In addition the Divisional Commander secured some whippet tanks from the Cavalry Corps, and these were of assistance in clearing Beaufort wood.

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**MAP SHOWING
ADVANCES MADE BY
FRENCH, CANADIAN
AND
AUSTRALIAN CORPS.
DURING
BATTLE OF AMIENS
8TH-20TH AUGUST 1918.**

Scale of Miles



LEGEND

ARRAS

CHAPTER I

PLANNING ATTACK ON HINDENBURG LINE

WE have seen that Canadian Corps Headquarters moved from Amiens to Hautecloque on the morning of Aug. 22. Its stay here was of the briefest, a move being made early next morning to Noyelle Vion, and the interest of Hautecloque in the annals of the Corps lies solely in the fact that here the plan of battle on the Arras front was prepared.

Great as had been the moral effect of the successful Amiens offensive, followed up immediately by the attack of the Third Army between Albert and Arras, what was to follow was designed to be much more far-reaching in its effect, namely, the breaking of the Hindenburg line and the driving in of the enemy on territory he had occupied uninterruptedly since 1914.

Sir Douglas Haig thus explains the design:—"As soon as the progress of the Third Army had forced the enemy to fall back from the Mercatel spur, thereby giving us a secure southern flank for an assault upon the German positions on Orange Hill and about Monchy-le-Preux, the moment arrived for the First Army to extend the front of our attack to the north. Using the river Sensee to cover their left, in the same way as the River Somme had been used to cover the left of the Fourth Army in the Battle of Amiens, the right of the First Army attacked east of Arras, and by turning from the north the western extremity of the Hindenburg Line compelled the enemy to undertake a further retreat. It was calculated correctly that this gradual extension of our front of attack would mislead the enemy as to where the main blow would fall, and would cause him to throw in his reserves piecemeal."

CHAPTER VII

OPERATIONS: SEPT. 1-3; DROCOURT-QUEANT LINE—CONTINUED

WE will let the 1st. Canadian Division again tell its own story:—"The attack of the 1st. Canadian Division was carried out by the 3rd. and 2nd. Brigades from right to left respectively, the 1st. Brigade being held in divisional reserve.

"On the morning of Sept. 2, at five o'clock, the artillery and machine-gun barrage opened, and the infantry at once began to move forward into what proved to be a day of bitter fighting. The 3rd. Brigade, at the time of the opening of the attack, had two battalions holding the line, the 15th., recruited from the 48th. Highlanders of Toronto, and 14th., the Royal Montreal Regiment. The two remaining battalions, the 16th., Canadian Scottish of the West, and 13th., Montreal Highlanders, carried out the assault on the Drocourt-Queant line, and were then to be leap-frogged by the 15th. and 14th., who were to capture Bois de Bouche, Bois de Loison and Cagnicourt. The 2nd. Brigade, on the left, were attacking on a one battalion front, and were using two battalions—the 7th., of Vancouver, to capture the Drocourt-Queant system on their front, and the 10th., of Alberta, to carry the attack as far as the western outskirts of Buissy. The 1st. Brigade was to continue the attack from this point and secure the crossings of the Canal du Nord.

"The attack proceeded rapidly, and according to plan up to the time of the capture of the Drocourt-Queant line on the Divisional front, in spite of a very heavy enfilade fire from the right flank, southwest of the village of Cagnicourt. The Tanks, of which there were 18 operating on the divisional front, did great service in the capture of the Drocourt-Queant system.

CAMBRAI

CHAPTER I

CONFRONTING THE CANAL DU NORD

THERE comes a time when the spent athlete, having passed his goal, throws himself panting on the ground and relaxes his strained muscles; his heart labors visibly under his bared chest. Thus the Canadian Corps, after nine days' intense fighting culminating in the capture of the Drocourt-Queant line, abandoned itself to rest.

But it is rest of a comparative kind only; the cessation of hand-to-hand fighting but not relief from the perils of war. We have fought our way into this watery triangle—or, one should rather say, peninsula—formed by the flooded area of the Canal du Nord on the east and the Sensee and its marshes on the north. On the east we have settled down to sniping, raids and local shoots, and the enemy is equally active. On the north he holds the entire country south and southwest of Douai to the borders of Roeux, Gavrelle and Oppy, for here his great system of defense is still intact and the British line has hardly advanced from where it lay on Aug. 26.

Our troops holding the line have a lively time, and have to improvise both defense and shelter. Daring things are done in the way of reconnaissance, and Canadian Engineers in particular spend the day and night crawling on their bellies along the canal side, exploring for practical crossings, or flying low over its course, careless of death. But relatively few troops are actually in the line, because the position is one of great natural strength, and the enemy is in no mood to attack in force.

Exposed as they are, lying out for the most part in the

VALENCIENNES TO MONS

CHAPTER I

BATTLE PIECES

ON Sept. 28 Canadian Corps Headquarters moved from Neuville Vitasse into what had been an enemy headquarters situated in the heart of the Drocourt-Queant line half a mile east of Queant. The new camp is on rising ground and remains fairly dry even in wet weather, a pleasant change from our previous quarters. The enemy had here constructed elaborate dug-outs, 30 feet below the surface, with commodious canvas-lined rooms. But for the most part the staff works and sleeps in tents grouped in and about a little wood, the whole camouflaged against air observation.

The enemy persistently shells our railhead at Queant with a long-distance gun, whose shell at stated intervals goes whining over the camp. Trainloads of prisoners standing over night in the yards waiting to be moved to the base protest at our inhumanity. Little damage is done, though one shell lands in the lines of the Corps Garage. Several Canadian Ambulances are located at Queant but escape injury.

There joins the Canadian Corps about this time a young staff officer lent by the British Army who at once makes himself very popular. This is H. R. H. the Prince of Wales. Some of us had apprehensions of an atmosphere of "swank" and embarrassment, but these are speedily set at rest. He lives like any other staff officer in an Armstrong hut, and soon he is a familiar figure, chatting freely with both officers and men, and it is not long before "G.S.O. No. 2" is regarded as a distinct acquisition to Corps. He brings with him a charm and vivacity of manner—one thought of his Grand-

"B"

SUMMARY OF CASUALTIES, AUG. 8-NOV. 11, 1918

Casualties reported from noon Aug. 8 to noon Aug. 26, 1918

	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			TOTAL
	K.	W.	M.	K.	W.	M.	
1st. Canadian Division	38	132	—	565	2,540	95	3,370
2nd. Canadian Division	30	107	—	344	2,210	—	2,691
3rd. Canadian Division	25	93	5	378	1,967	118	2,586
4th. Canadian Division	37	108	4	409	2,019	220	2,797
Canadian Corps Troops	1	19	—	29	210	3	262
	131	459	9	1,725	8,946	436	11,706

Casualties reported from noon Aug. 26 to noon Sept. 5, 1918

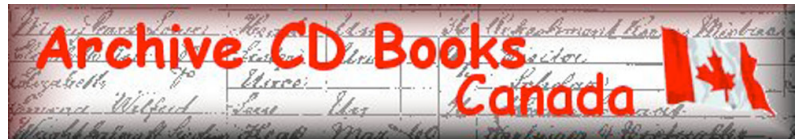
	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			TOTAL
	K.	W.	M.	K.	W.	M.	
1st. Canadian Division	33	124	1	217	1,118	81	1,574
2nd. Canadian Division	22	139	—	347	2,519	440	3,467
3rd. Canadian Division	30	107	—	342	2,118	121	2,718
4th. Canadian Division	26	117	1	139	751	37	1,071
Canadian Corps Troops	1	13	—	11	142	2	169
	112	500	2	1,056	6,648	681	8,999

Casualties reported from noon Sept. 5, to noon Sept. 27, 1918

	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			TOTAL
	K.	W.	M.	K.	W.	M.	
1st. Canadian Division	6	20	—	356	1,583	—	1,965
2nd. Canadian Division	5	37	1	110	1,113	3	1,269
3rd. Canadian Division	5	44	—	114	667	19	849
4th. Canadian Division	9	49	—	504	2,293	74	2,929
Canadian Corps Troops	1	9	—	17	136	—	163
	26	159	1	1,101	5,792	96	7,175

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