

### A CAPTURED OFFICER

TELLS OF HIS ADVENTURES IN GERMANY

Continually Bullied By German Guards—Germans Along Road Struck Him With Sticks and Spat In His Face.

The following account of his adventures in Germany, has been received from an officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps who had the misfortune to be taken prisoner last spring.

"I was captured by the Germans on April 26th in the early morning near Paschendale, at Ypres.

"The Battalion to which I was attached was ordered up to the trenches on Saturday evening, April 24th, which we reached early on Sunday morning. While trying to get a suitable place to dress the wounded, I came across a group of buildings, part of which had been used by the 8th Canadian as their Headquarters. The Headquarters and surrounding buildings were filled with wounded Canadians, who had evidently crawled there after their own Medical Officer had been either killed or wounded, and they were therefore in great need of attention. I at once commenced dressing their wounds and got some hot tea prepared for them. I very soon realized, however, that the place was quite unsuitable for a dressing station, as the Germans had all along been vigorously shelling the place and had wrecked most of it; in addition, there was a sniper who picked off everyone who approached near the place, or tried to get from one building to another. I therefore sent word to the Commanding Officer asking him not to send any of our wounded there, but to another dressing station farther back. It happened, therefore, that nearly all the wounded I had were Canadians; many of these died, some from their wounds and others from gas poisoning. The fumes from some of the shells also hung about the buildings and one or two died from the effects of this. Others were killed by rifle bullets, shells, and parts of the buildings falling on them. I hoped that at night I might be able to get the wounded away as at the time it was impossible to do anything.

"On Sunday evening, our men had to evacuate the front line trenches, but as the others remained firm, I still expected to get some help up at night. This, however, was not possible. The Germans apparently managed to get up to the buildings near where I was and at daybreak they rushed up, firing into us all the time, although the only two persons standing were my orderly and myself, both of us having Red Cross armlets on. I held up my arms and explained as well as I could that I was a doctor and had only wounded in the buildings. They, however, did not stop firing and at close range fired point blank at me, and when my orderly came forward to lift me up, they fired at him also and wounded him seriously in the head. I was then seized by two Germans and taken away, but I could see some Germans striking some wounded with their rifles and the cries from our men showed that they were being very roughly handled.

"Taken By The Germans. I was then marched through advancing lines of Germans, who seemed to be in great force. I did not see any dressed in khaki, but most of them wore the small round service cap; there were some dressed as sailors. While I was going through their lines, I saw a great many dead, and several were dropping down from the rifle fire from our trenches, also straggled. I passed a large heap of our equipment, which I was told was taken from some Highlanders (probably Canadians). Their own trenches contained many dead,

and from the particularly foul odor, I think they must have been there for a day or two. The Germans who acted as my guard were Saxons, and were not offensive, but after tramping for about twenty minutes, some others came up and accused me of having had a machine gun concealed in the buildings and of using it against them. I naturally denied this but they said I should be shot, and as they were so furious and threatening, I quite expected they would carry it out. While waiting for this, I lit a cigarette, and although the guard permitted it, the other German objected and one knocked it out of my mouth. Shortly afterwards some others came up, and in addition to accusing me of having a machine gun, said I had been using dum-dum bullets. For evidence of this they handed me a Mauser cartridge with about 1-4 cut off the nose of the bullet. I pointed this out to them, but presently they handed me a clip of five of our cartridges, the bullets of which were grooved about 1-4 from the nose, and taking up a Lee-Enfield rifle, they inserted the sharp end of the bullet into the hole in the thumb piece of the cut-off, to represent how the dum-dum bullet was made, and what the hole in the cut-off was for. They said I had spent my time cutting the grooves in the bullets. They did not, however, actually break off the nose of the bullet.

Beaten And Spat Upon. The Saxon guard, although opposed by others, marched me off again. I asked to get my head dressed, they said there was no doctor near, but there would be one in the village we were coming to. There I was taken to what I think was the Police Station and searched, everything being taken from me. My equipment and greatcoat I was not allowed to take with me when I was first captured. There was a doctor here who dressed my wound and returned to me the things which had been taken from me shortly before. I asked him for a cigarette, which he gave me, and he also said he would bring me a cup of coffee. When he went, presumably to get the coffee, the guard came in and ordered me out. In the street, two German officers, a Captain and a Major, came up and stripped off my collar badges by means of wire cutters. After

that I was marched on again, and all along the road the Germans called out "Schweinhund Engländer" "Gott Strafe England" and spat in my face saying "Swine". Some of them attacked me with long sticks, striking me over the back and legs, until the guard drove them off. On reaching the next small village, I was shut up in a hall, where I slept for some time until wakened by two German Staff Officers, who asked me certain questions which, however, I said I could not answer. I asked for some water, but this was refused, although one officer offered me a cigar, which I declined, having had no food for such a long time.

I was then taken out of the hall and moved to Boudiers, where I was locked up until Thursday. While here a German officer sent for me and asked me several questions, particularly about our losses during the fight. I hesitated about saying anything, but he admitted that their losses, which he said were entirely due to our rifle fire, had been enormous, and that for territorial reasons we fought very well. Another officer who looked in and found I was a doctor, said I was taken in error, but that there was some suspicion about my having had a machine gun where the wounded were; and in any case having been through their lines, I could not be sent back now, but that they did not keep the doctors long, and that I should soon be returned.

Cruelly Treated. During this time we got black bread and water, and once a day some soup. On Thursday about midday, I was put into a railway carriage with some Turks, who had been badly gassed. Before we started, two Canadian officers were crushed in, a Canadian officer telling us that he was sure we and they should like to travel with our dark friends. The day was very hot, but the guard, who had bayonets like saws, kept the windows and ventilators shut and the blinds drawn. We got nothing but water on the journey, and that rarely, although there were so-called Red Cross people on the platforms.

We reached Cologne on Saturday evening. There I was removed from the carriage and put into a train going to Mainz. We reached the citadel about midnight. Next day we got our first meal since being captured. We were locked up for four days, during which time we got a hot bath, change of underclothing, and our clothes sterilized. The food here was fair, but not nearly sufficient, and the other officers there depended on what they got from home. There were about 50 English, and the remainder amounting to about 200, were French Russian and Belgian. The four nationalities were always put together in the same room, so that, as the officials said, we could not complain that our treatment was different from that of the others.

"We got up at 8 a.m., attended a parade at 9 a.m., and cooked our own breakfasts on spirit stoves. After parade, I had to depend on the other officers, as I had no food of my own. At one o'clock we got lunch, and at seven o'clock dinner. We were allowed to buy one bottle of beer per day. For recreation, we had a tennis-court and the remainder of the barrack square to walk in. There was another parade at five o'clock. We had to be in our rooms at 8:30 p.m., and lights out at 10 p.m. The arrangement of mixing the nationalities was very disagreeable, as Russians never bathed, slept in their clothes, which were usually of leather, and insisted on having all windows tightly shut. In addition to this, it was a grave offence to omit to salute a German officer, no matter what his rank as they were always about this small square. It was impossible to always carry this out, although failure to do so entailed being confined to your own room for three days and having tobacco and all letters and parcels stopped. Further, one was being continually bullied by the German guards. Shortly before I was sent to Mainz, I was told things were so bad that the Berlin people had to remove all German officer officials and send others in their places.

"On arrival at Mainz, I was questioned as to when I arrived in Flanders; what regiments came over at the same time; the number of troops, etc., about Ypres; how we got our ammunition, how the troops were fed and clothed; and sickness amongst the troops. To these questions I gave what answers I thought best. The question of using dum-dum bullets, cruelty to wounded and prisoners was also asked up."

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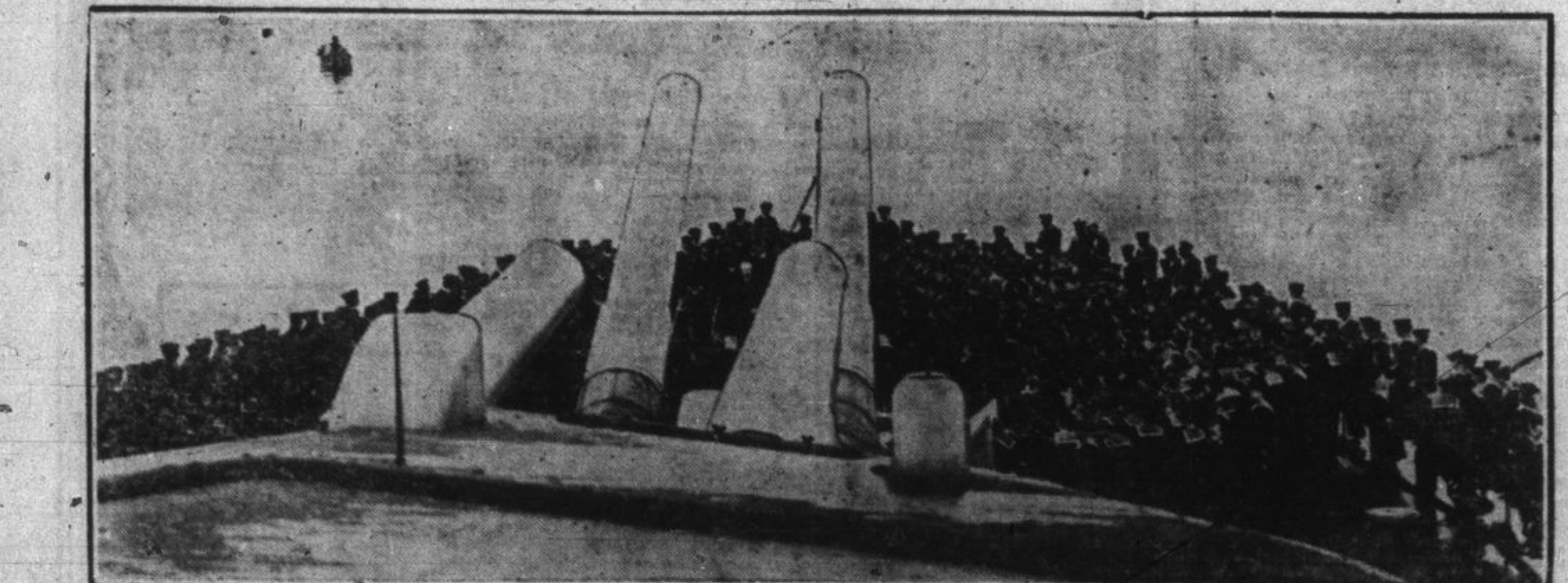
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