

Page 12 - Cape Bretoners in World War One

ISSUE: <u>Issue 33</u>

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1983/6/1

Howard Re be coming down on the enemy. You had to set those shells going. The weather, if i was damp, they would be slow burning, and we'd have to have a corrector to set thos things right. It was quite a job. Most of it--unless there was an attack by the enemy--most of our work was cutting the barbed wire, keeping the Germans off the wire as much as possible. Sometimes it's guite easy. Like if we were going to make an attack, like in the Somme, we'd put up a barrage. We'd have a list of what we had to do, you see--so many, so long a time at this, and then we'd have to raise it, because the infantry would be already going forward. We'd have to guess on that somewhat. As the infantry went ahead, we'd try to keep our artillery shells going a little further ahead of them again. Some? times they went right through our artil? lery shells. At Vimy Ridge, the Germans had the high ground, until we wiped them out of it. (How did you manage to do that?) Just heavy gunfire, nothing else. Shellfire. It was just terrible. For them. We didn't feel it so much. Thousands and thousands of tons of stuff. We could tell what it was like when we got moving up. We moved three times--the artillery--and we never got stopped once, only by mud and holes, shellholes. (Your own shellholes?) You have to watch the shellholes. At harvest woods everyone was stuck. And it was dark. I went in there to see how they were get? ting along, if I could help. And I went to walk towards them. By jove, I went down a 15-inch shellhole. Right to the bottom. I crawled out, up to the top--it's a good thing there wasn't much mud that time. Clean to the bottom. Deeper than this room. Oh yes, it'd be twice as deep as this, I guess. Great big 15-inch shell, tear the earth right to. H. L. Livingstone: The Germans hit upon a plan just before the war ended, to try to break us down. The artillery would put a barrage about 300 or 400 yards behind us. And then in front of us, in'No Man's Land, and then keep stepping in closer and clos- While you're in CHETICAMP drop in at The Doryman Beverage Room 'On a fine summer evening you might just see the fleet of fishing boats come in. Entertainment through the Summer Every Thursday Night and Saturday Afternoon ALWAYS A FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE Reichel's Tannery Ltd. TANNERS - WHOLESALERS - RETAILERS Sheepskin and Deerskin Products Open 6 Days a Week BLUES MILLS on Trans-Canada Highway 105 R. R. 1, River Denys, Inverness County, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia BOE 2Y0 Tel. 756-2788 Karl Reichel, Owner er, till they got the range on the front line, and then they just smashed the trenches to pieces. And you begin wonder? ing then--if I move into the next bay--see, the trenches are not in a straight line-- if I move into the next bay, I may avoid the shell that will land in this one. But if I do move, one might hit in the next bay, and I'd be safe staying here. See, you keep debating with yourself all through the bombardment. Now what should I do? Should I move 10 feet over that way, or stay where I am? And they just smashed the thing to pieces. You'd wonder how any? one could live in a trench after they were through with it. We were bringing water up to the front line, when what we called a "ram jar," a big German trench mortar, weigh about 100 pounds or so, landed right in the middle of the party. And I just turned like that-- this would be the line, see--in a zigzag. One



landed on a chap in my platoon, appar? ently a direct hit right in the back. Right beside me. I had just turned the cor? ner. He was turned into a red patch on the wall of the trench, with splinters of white bone sticking out of the mud. Island Buy and Sell SPECIALIZING IN USED FURNITURE -We buy and sell most resaleable items- Island Gateway Shopping Plaza Reeves St., Port Hawkesbury 625-3900 DON'S FLOWERS p. 0. Box 179, Port Hawkesbury, N. S. BOE 2V0 Serving Port Hood, Judique, Inverness, and sur- rounding areas. Telephone 625-2215 or 625-2717. Midway Motors Ltd ' Middle River R. R. No. 3, Baddeck, Victoria Co., N. S. BOE IBO Phone 295-2290 Local Dealer for TROY-BILT and GARDEN WAY Products. (12)