

‘An Army of Brigadiers’
British Brigade Commanders
at the Battle of Arras 1917

by

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Abstract

Infantry brigades have been described as the ‘building blocks’ of the British army. Despite this, their role and that of their commanding brigadier-generals have been labelled as being concerned primarily with the provision of ‘training and administration’. The conventional criteria used to evaluate the performance of brigades and their commanders, however, has been their battlefield performance. This study challenges these orthodoxies.

The Battle of Arras 1917 was the first offensive action which provided the British army with an opportunity to implement the lessons derived from its experience drawn from the Battle of the Somme. A cohort of one hundred and sixteen brigadier-generals commanded cavalry and infantry brigades involved in the battle. Collectively they are the subject of analysis. Five of these brigadier-generals, their battalion commanders and principal staff officers, are the subject of case studies over the period mid-October 1916 until mid-May 1917.

These studies reveal a number of threads, in addition to battlefield performance, that are argued to be essential elements in understanding the role and functions of brigadier-generals. Their most significant contribution was to ensure, despite the unglamorous treadmill of building and rebuilding their brigades, that they retained the capacity and capability of their brigades for battle.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Liz, without whose tolerance, forbearance and support it would neither have been attempted nor completed.

It is also dedicated to my maternal grandfather, 1377 Sapper William Williams, 1st/2nd Field Company, 49th (West Riding) Division who served, was injured and survived the Great War. And to my father, 1127995 Sergeant Richard Harvey, who served with 126 (Highland) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, 51st (Highland) Division in North Africa, Sicily and North-West Europe during the Second World War. Although neither realized it, they were my inspiration.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| 2iC | Second in Command |
| AAG | Assistant Adjutant General |
| A&QMG | Adjutant & Quartermaster General |
| AA&QMG | Assistant Adjutant & Quartermaster General |
| ADC/AdC | Aide-de-Camp |
| ADMS | Assistant Director of Medical Services |
| AIB | Australian Infantry Brigade |
| AIF | Australian Imperial Force |
| AWM | Australian War Museum |
| ANZAC | Australia and New Zealand Army Corps |
| A&SH | Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders |
| AWOL | Absent With-Out Leave |
| BEF | British Expeditionary Force |
| BGC | Brigadier-General Commanding |
| BGGS | Brigadier-General General Staff |
| BGRA | Brigadier-General Royal Artillery |
| BM | Brigade-Major |
| Bn | Battalion |
| BOH | British Official History |
| Bt. | Baronet |
| CB | Companion of the Bath |
| CBE | Commander of the Order of the British Empire |
| CBSO | Counter-Battery Staff Officer |
| CCHA | Commander, Canadian Heavy Artillery |
| CE | Chief Engineer |
| CEF | Canadian Expeditionary Force |
| CGS | Chief of the General Staff |
| CHA | Commander, Heavy Artillery |
| CIB | Canadian Infantry Brigade |
| CIE | Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire |
| CIGS | Chief of the Imperial General Staff |
| C-in-C | Commander-in-Chief |
| CMG | Companion of St Michael and St George |
| CMR | Canadian Mounted Rifles |
| CO | Commanding Officer |
| CRA | Commander, Royal Artillery |
| CRE | Commander, Royal Engineers |
| CRHA | Commander, Royal Horse Artillery |
| CSI | Companion of the Order of the Star of India |
| CSM | Company Sergeant Major |
| CVO | Commander of the Royal Victorian Order |
| DA&QMG | Deputy Adjutant & Quartermaster-General |
| DAAG | Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General |
| DAA&QMG | Deputy Assistant Adjutant & Quartermaster-General |
| DADMS | Deputy Assistant Director of Medical Services |
| DCGS | Deputy Chief of the General Staff |
| DCM | Distinguished Conduct Medal |

| | |
|-------|--|
| DLI | Durham Light Infantry |
| DoW | Died of Wounds |
| DSO | Distinguished Service Order |
| EEF | Egyptian Expeditionary Force |
| EG | Edinburgh Gazette |
| EKR | East Kent Regiment |
| FSR | Field Service Regulations |
| GBE | Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire |
| GCB | Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath |
| GCMG | Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George |
| GCVO | Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order |
| GHQ | General Headquarters |
| GOC | General Officer Commanding |
| GSO1 | General Staff Officer (1 st Grade) |
| GSO2 | General Staff Officer (2 nd Grade) |
| GSO3 | General Staff Officer (3 rd Grade) |
| HLI | Highland Light Infantry |
| HLRO | House of Lords Record Office |
| HQ | Headquarters |
| IWM | Imperial War Museum |
| KBE | Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire |
| KCB | Knight Commander of the Bath |
| KCIE | Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire |
| KCMG | Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George |
| KCSI | Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India |
| KIA | Killed In Action |
| KOSB | King's Own Scottish Borderers |
| KRRC | King's Royal Rifle Corps |
| KStJ | Knight of Justice of the Order of St John |
| KSA | King's South Africa |
| LAC | Library and Archives Canada |
| LG | London Gazette |
| LHCMA | Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives |
| MC | Military Cross |
| MG | Machine Gun |
| MGC | Machine Gun Corps |
| MGGS | Major-General General Staff |
| MGRA | Major-General Royal Artillery |
| MiD | Mention in Dispatches |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| MVO | Member of the Royal Victorian Order |
| NA | New Army |
| NAM | National Army Museum |
| NCO | Non Commissioned Officer |
| NF | Northumberland Fusiliers |
| OR | Other Rank |
| OBE | Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire |
| OHL | Oberste Heeresleitung (Supreme Army Command) |
| OTC | Officer Training Corps |

| | |
|--------|--|
| POW | Prisoner of War |
| psc | Passed Staff College |
| QMG | Quartermaster General |
| QSA | Queen's South Africa |
| RCA | Royal Canadian Artillery |
| RE | Royal Engineers |
| RF | Royal Fusiliers |
| RFA | Royal Field Artillery |
| RFC | Royal Flying Corps |
| RHA | Royal Horse Artillery |
| RMA | Royal Military Academy |
| RMC | Royal Military College |
| RMCK | Royal Military College Kingston |
| RND | Royal Naval Division |
| RNVR | Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve |
| R of O | Reserve of Officers |
| RWKR | Royal West Kent Regiment |
| SC | Staff Captain |
| SC(A) | Staff Captain (Administration and Quartermaster) |
| SC(I) | Staff Captain (Intelligence) |
| SC(Q) | Staff Captain (Quartermaster) |
| SR | Special Reserve |
| TA | Territorial Army |
| TD | Territorial Decoration |
| TF | Territorial Force |
| TM | Trench Mortar |
| TMB | Trench Mortar Battery |
| TNA | The National Archives |
| VC | Victoria Cross |
| WD | War Diary |
| WO | War Office |

Introduction

This thesis is a study of commanders of British infantry brigades between the Battle of the Somme and the end of the Battle of Arras, regarded by at least one historian as ‘the steepest point in the British army’s learning curve during the First World War’.¹ It is based on a study of the 116 brigadier-generals whose brigades played some part in the Battle of Arras 1917. The initial analysis is essentially quantitative. It is augmented by five qualitative case studies of hitherto little known brigadier-generals and of the activities of their brigades over the period mid-October 1916 to mid-May 1917.

The quantitative analysis provides a platform of information about this cohort of brigadier-generals against which criteria have been applied for the selection of individual brigadier-generals as case studies. The case study subjects have been chosen because they meet different combinations of criteria which may be relevant to explain variations between the performances of brigadier-generals and their brigades during the period under review. One brigadier has been selected from each of the five Corps involved on a different sector of the Arras battlefront on 9 April 1917. The divisions of which the chosen brigadiers’ formations formed an element were involved at different stages of the battle. Different brigades, therefore, had different experiences in the series of battles of which the Battle of Arras was comprised.

The Battle of Arras of April and May 1917 provides an appropriate point for analysis for two main reasons. First, because it is the earliest significant offensive in which the BEF could apply the lessons learnt from the Somme campaign. Second, the battle was a combination of

¹ J.S. Mythen, ‘The Revolution in British Battle Tactics July 1916-June 1917: The Spring and Summer Offensives During 1917’, University of Cambridge, MPhil Dissertation, 2001

a major, well prepared set piece operation together with a series of more limited battles and actions. Together they form a microcosm of attritional warfare in 1917.

The chosen case study brigadiers are differentiated on a number of grounds. There are differences in their backgrounds - one a civilian, the remainder Regular army officers. They differed in their ages on appointment, one being the then youngest brigadier in the British army at thirty-four and another brought out of retirement at fifty. They differed in their nationalities – one Canadian, two Scots, one Irish and one English. Whilst all five had been commissioned into infantry regiments, their early career paths differed as between regimental and staff appointments. Only one of the five had passed Staff College. Their brigades were formations within different sorts of divisions – Regular, Territorial, New Army and Dominion. Their subsequent career paths took different directions – two were replaced because they were worn out, one promoted to divisional command but subsequently evacuated due to illness and two promoted to divisional command (one shortly before the end of the war), appointments they held until the Armistice.

The military careers of the GOC-in-C and the commanders of his five armies have been the subject of many biographies.² Historians' interest in these officers is understandable since they had the greatest influence on the BEF's strategy. They bore responsibility for the

² See for example G.H. Cassar, *The Tragedy of Sir John French* (London: Associated University Presses, 1985); J.P. Harris, *Douglas Haig and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); S. Robbins, *British Generalship During the First World War: The Military Career of Sir Henry Horne* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010); A.J. Smithers, *The Man Who Disobeyed: Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and His Enemies* (London: Leo Cooper, 1970); G. Powell, *Plumer - the Soldier's General - a biography of Field-Marshal Viscount Plumer of Messines* (London: Leo Cooper, 1990); G. Barrow, *The Life of Sir Charles Carmichael Monro* (London: Hutchinson, 1931); L. James, *Imperial Warrior - the life and times of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby 1861-1936* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1993); J. Williams, *Byng of Vimy - General and Governor-General* (London: Leo Cooper, 1983); R. Prior & T. Wilson, *Command on the Western Front: The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson 1914-1918* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); A. Farrar-Hockley, *Goughie: The Life of General Sir Hubert Gough* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1975); J.D. Millar, 'A study in the limitations of command: General Sir William Birdwood and the AIF, 1914-1918', University of New South Wales, PhD Thesis, 1993.

performance of their armies. In large measure, however, this concentration of research has been to the exclusion of study of the roles and contributions of over 1,200 other generals at corps, division and brigade levels.³ The number of historians who have published biographies of those who achieved command at these levels has been proportionately limited.⁴ Bourne commented in 1997 about this relative paucity of publications.

*This reflects a fundamental weakness in the British historiography of the war, which has traditionally concentrated on the activities of GHQ and its relationship with a small number of army commanders, or on the experiences of the ordinary soldier in the front-line trench. The chain of command which stretched between them, especially the key links of corps and division, has been as little studied as commanders themselves. Filling this gap remains a major task for historians of the First World War.*⁵

Simon Robbins subsequently made a major contribution to this area of research in 2005 with the publication of his study based on a sample of 700 'war managers' within the BEF.⁶ Robbins investigated the development of the capability and contribution of generals who undertook roles at GHQ, in senior staff positions at army, corps and divisional levels and as GOCs commanding divisions. The extent of both the primary and secondary sources Robbins

³ There are believed to have been at least 1,257 generals within the BEF during the Great War – see J.M. Bourne, *Lions Lead By Donkeys*, <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/warstudies/research/projects/lionsdonkeys/index.aspx> (accessed 29 November 2015).

⁴ Corps commanders – L.H. Thornton & P. Fraser, *The Congreves - Father and Son* (London: John Murray, 1930); A.M.J. Hyatt, *General Sir Arthur Currie - a military biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); M. Senior, *Haking – A Dutiful Soldier: Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Haking, XI Corps Commander 1915-1918 – A Study in Corps Command* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2012); J. Baynes, *Far From A Donkey: The Life of General Sir Ivor Maxse* (London: Brassey's, 1995); P.A. Pedersen, *Monash As Military Commander* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1985); D. Snow & M. Pottle (eds.), *The Confusion of Command: The War Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas D'Oyly Snow 1914-1915* (London: Multidreams Publications, 2011); Divisional commanders – P.S. Sadler, *The Paladin: A Life of Major-General Sir John Gellibrand* (Melbourne: Castlemead Publications, 2000), C. Wray, *Sir James McCay: A Turbulent Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Brigade commanders – C. Page, *Command in the Royal Naval Division: A Military Biography of Brigadier-General A.M. Asquith DSO* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1999); N. Cherry, *I Shall Not Find His Equal: The Life of Brigadier-General Noel Lee, The Manchester Regiment* (n.k.: Fleur de Lys Publisher, 2001); R. McMullin, *Pompey Elliot* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2002); P. Edgar, *To Villers-Bretonneux: Brigadier-General William Glasgow DSO and the 13th Australian Infantry Brigade* (Sydney: Australian Military History Project, 2006)

⁵ J.M. Bourne, 'British Generals in the First World War', in *Leadership and Command: the Anglo-American Military Experience since 1861*, G.D. Sheffield, (ed.), (London: Brassey's, 1997), p. 94

⁶ S. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat Into Victory* (London: Frank Cass, 2005)

has drawn upon is remarkable. His analysis enabled him to undermine the ‘Blackadder’ image of British Great War generals.⁷ Robbins concluded that:

*In the end a growing professionalism within its elite ensured victory for the British Army in 1918 and like the rest of the army, GHQ had achieved an organisation and expertise which allowed it to plan and implement a war-winning strategy.*⁸

Despite having included more than half the number of generals who served during the war, the role of brigadier-generals figures only to a limited extent in Robbins’ study. Of his sample of 700 generals, only twenty-seven of the 125 brigadier-generals in command of brigades at some stage during the Battle of Arras were included. Of these twenty-seven, twenty were subsequently promoted to the rank of major-general, typically as divisional commanders.⁹ Their inclusion in Robbins’ sample, and their relevance to his study, therefore, is largely attributable to their contribution in their elevated role. An understanding of the role and performance of brigadier-generals generally, therefore, still remains largely to be explored.

Similarly, the publication in 2006 of Andy Simpson’s study of corps commanders broke new ground in its analysis of their changing role as the war developed.¹⁰ It contains few references, however, to brigades, to brigade level of command or to individual brigadier-generals. It does, nevertheless, provide both valuable analysis and insight into who the corps commanders were, what they did and how they performed.

⁷ For a discussion of the development of the reputation of the generals of the Great War, see D. Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), pp.73- 120.

⁸ Robbins, *British Generalship*, p. 141

⁹ ‘The divisional commanders provided most of the operational leadership and were the key leaders.’ Robbins, *British Generalship*, p. 135. This is a disproportionately high number when set against the experience of all 116 Arras brigadier-generals – See Chapter 1, Table 1.14.

¹⁰ A. Simpson, *Directing Operations: British Corps Command on the Western Front 1914-18* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2006)

The most prolific advocate to date for the contribution made by brigadier-generals to the BEF's success has been Peter Simkins.¹¹ His published work concerning brigadier-generals has not, however, been underpinned by an analysis of a similar cohort as the Arras cohort. Rather than being focused on a specific and deliberately limited period of the war, Simkins has taken a broader perspective citing the actions and experiences of individual brigadier-generals with an emphasis on the greater devolvement of command responsibility to brigade commanders during The Hundred Days. This thesis presents a more rigorous and detailed study of a sample of brigadier-generals than undertaken hitherto.

The traditional framework upon which analysis of military history revolves is based on the distinctions between the political, the strategic, the operational and the tactical levels of activity. These are not watertight compartments. They mask subtleties of definition, understanding and interpretation used by different authors. They have a tendency to overlap with each other. In thematic terms, however, they do form a basis for identifying the essence of the respective roles and responsibilities within the hierarchical structure of the British army. On this basis, the GOC-in-C had the prime responsibility for managing the relationships with the political masters whom he served, whether directly or through his relationship with the CIGS. The overarching strategy through which Britain's war effort was prosecuted was determined, on advice, by its politicians. The strategy for the BEF's contribution on the Western Front, in conformity with the strategy of their Allies, was recommended by the GOC-in-C and the CIGS and, when approved, supported by the politicians. Army commanders had responsibility for devising and advising the GOC-in-C on questions of strategy. Corps commanders had responsibility for supervising the plans and

¹¹ P. Simkins, 'Building Blocks': Aspects of Command and Control at Brigade level in the BEF's Offensive Operations, 1916-1918', in *Command and Control on the Western Front: The British Army's Experience 1914-1918*, G.D. Sheffield & D. Todman (eds.), (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2004), pp. 141-171. P. Simkins, 'A Man on the Spot: Brigadier-General R.E. Sugden, CB CMG DSO and Bar', *Firestep: The Magazine of the London Branch of the Western Front Association* 8 (1) (2007), pp. 5-12

actions of their subordinate commanders and of husbanding their corps' resources, particularly those of the artillery and the engineers which they controlled. Divisional commanders had responsibility for creating operational plans which gave effect to the agreed strategy. Brigade commanders had responsibility for devising and implementing tactical plans to achieve the operational objectives set for them. To make the point, and referring to the individual experience of Brigadier-General H. Higginson, GOC 53 Brigade, 18th Division, Simkins noted that:

*Higginson's case, moreover, appears to indicate that, in the best divisions, the devolution of real tactical command had begun and had reached brigade level at least, by the spring of 1917.*¹²

Amongst the BEF's generals, it was the brigadier-generals who had the responsibility for turning plans into action on the battlefield through their battalions.

The Battle of the Somme proved to be a bitter and costly crucible. The debate about whether its attritional nature was the necessary essence of its contribution to the Allies' eventual victory in 1918 continues. The opportunity it provided to contribute to the British army's capacity to extract the lessons and develop its collective understanding, however, is beyond doubt.¹³ The prime significance of the Battle of Arras for the British army was that it provided the first opportunity on a large scale for the lessons of its Somme experience to be put into practice. The resulting changes made to the BEF's training, administration and support systems, coupled with the development of its operational doctrine in the winter of 1916-17, enabled Paddy Griffith to conclude:

¹² Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Harold Whitla Higginson (1873-1954). Simkins, "Building Blocks", p. 157

¹³ See for example P. Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 65-83: P. Brennan & T. Leppard, 'How the Lessons Were Learned: Senior Commanders and the Moulding of the Canadian Corps after the Somme', *Proceedings of the Canadian Military History Conference*, Ottawa, 5-9 May 2000.

*For all that, however, the new system was in many senses fully suited to its purpose, and gave the junior tactician plenty of appropriate guidelines. It made an excellent basis upon which the BEF could move forward to victories in 1917.*¹⁴

General Sir Martin Farndale labelled the Battle of Arras as ‘the greatest battle of the war so far’.¹⁵ By the spring of 1917 the BEF had grown to encompass sixty-two divisions and a strength of more than one and a half million men. The scale of the battle is portrayed by the number of divisions that participated – twenty-six infantry and three cavalry divisions.¹⁶ The intensity of the battle can accurately be inferred, for example, from the availability to the BEF of heavy guns, howitzers and ammunition. Comparing second quarter figures, the number of heavy guns and howitzers increased from 761 in 1916 to over 1,500 pieces in 1917. The number of rounds of heavy ammunition the BEF received during the same quarterly periods had increased from more than 700,000 rounds to more than 5,000,000 rounds.¹⁷ The BEF’s casualties during the battle exceeded those suffered during the Messines and Cambrai Offensives combined (187,783 compared with 184,563).¹⁸ In comparative terms, the BEF’s daily casualty rate of 4,076 was higher than those incurred during the Battle of the Somme, the Third Battle of Ypres or The Hundred Days.¹⁹ Despite its scale and importance in the development of the BEF’s capabilities, however, the Battle of Arras has a limited historiography.

¹⁴ Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front*, p. 79

¹⁵ M. Farndale, *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery: Western Front 1914-18* (London: The Royal Artillery Institution, 1986), p. 166

¹⁶ E.A. James, *A Record of the Battles and Engagements of the British in France and Flanders, 1914-1918* (London: The London Stamp Exchange, 1990), p. 17

¹⁷ T. Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), p. 449

¹⁸ War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War 1914-1920* (London: HMSO, 1922), pp. 325-7

¹⁹ J. Nicholls, *Cheerful Sacrifice: The Battle of Arras 1917* (London: Leo Cooper, 1990), p. 211

The battle has been much ignored by modern historians, particularly British historians.²⁰ The element of the operation that secured the left flank of Sir Douglas Haig's attack at Arras in April 1917, the Battle of Vimy, and the subsequent Battle of Bullecourt on the extreme right flank, on the other hand, have both been the subject attention in recent years.²¹ These battles have been seen as critical events in the emergence as nations of Canada and Australia respectively. They have been trumpeted accordingly, usually with limited acknowledgement of the wider operation of which they formed a part.²² The main thrust, however, was fought predominantly by the units and formations of Sir Edmund Allenby's Third Army.²³ Whilst Allenby has had the benefit of the attention of several biographers, his enduring reputation as a commander was established in Palestine, not as a result of his experience at Arras.²⁴

The Battle of Arras does feature in general histories of the Great War. Basil Liddell Hart, for example, published his one volume history in 1930 and a revised version in 1934.²⁵ He dealt with the battle in its entirety in less than nine pages in both volumes. In a more recent work,

²⁰ A view endorsed by, amongst others, Andrew Simpson, 'The Operational Role of British Corps Command on the Western Front, 1914-18', University College, London, PhD Thesis, 2001, p. 84 and G.D. Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory – The First World War: Myths and Realities* (London: Headline, 2001), p. 159.

²¹ Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig (later 1st Earl Haig of Bemerseyde) (1861-1928), GOC-in-C BEF, December 1915-April 1919. For definitions of 'operations' and 'battle', see James, *A Record of the Battles and Engagements*, p. vii & viii

²² Publications on Vimy – B. Greenhous & S.J. Harris, *Canada and the Battle of Vimy Ridge – 9-12 April, 1917* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 1992); N. Cave, *Vimy Ridge* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996); J. Sheldon & N. Cave, *The Battle for Vimy Ridge – 1917* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2007); G. Hayes, A. Iarocci & M. Bechthold (eds.), *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment* (Waterloo, Ontario: Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies and Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007); T. Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War 1917-1918* (Toronto: Penguin Group (Canada), 2008); J. Sheldon, *The German Army on Vimy Ridge 1914-1917* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2008). For Bullecourt see – J. Walker, *The Blood Tub: General Gough and the Battle of Bullecourt 1917* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1998); G. Keech, *Bullecourt* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999); P. Kendall, *Bullecourt 1917 – Breaching the Hindenburg Line* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2010).

²³ General (later Field-Marshal) Sir Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby (later 1st Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and of Felixstowe in the County of Suffolk) (1861-1936). 'The British Army distinguished between units, lieutenant-colonels' commands like infantry battalions or cavalry regiments, and formations, which were collections of units which varied in size from the tiny brigade to the mighty army.' R. Holmes, *The Western Front* (London: BBC Worldwide Ltd, 1999), p. 113

²⁴ R. Savage, *Allenby of Armageddon* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925); A. Wavell, *Allenby: A Study in Greatness* (London: George G. Harrap & Co, 1941); B. Gardener, *Allenby* (London: Cassell, 1965); James, *Imperial Warrior*; M. Hughes, 'Edmund Allenby', in I.F.W. Beckett & S.J. Corvi (eds.), *Haig's Generals* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2006)

²⁵ B.H. Liddell Hart, *The Real War 1914-1918* (Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown & Co, 1930) and B.H. Liddell Hart, *A History of the World War 1914-1918* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934)

Gary Sheffield devotes twenty-four pages to the Battle of the Somme whilst, in contrast, Arras merits less than six pages.²⁶ A number of other authors have included an account of the battle in their recent work although generally with significant limitations. J.H. Johnson's account, apparently, does not draw upon any original documents. Nor does it contain references, for example, to either the role during the battle of Colonel Freidrich Karl von Lossberg or the subsequent work of Captain G.C. Wynne.²⁷ Nevertheless, this is more than can be said for Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson's single page reference to the British army's role in the Nivelles Offensive.²⁸ At least these accounts show a consistent pattern of brevity.

The relevant volume of the BOH by Cyril Falls was not published until 1940.²⁹ It remains the most complete and authoritative narrative of the battle available.

*By almost every standard by which the Official Histories of the Great War might be judged, one must conclude that the works were of substantial historical, military and literary value. Not only did they admirably conform to the objectives of their original creators but they must be recognised as full and accurate accounts of sound academic integrity whose conclusions remain valid over 50 years later.*³⁰

Jonathan Nicholls' *Cheerful Sacrifice* adopted an approach similar to Lyn Macdonald's, drawing liberally on the recollections and reminiscences of veterans.³¹ Between 1978 and 1985, Nicholls interviewed over three hundred veterans. As a result, he produced an essentially 'bottom up' narrative of the battle coloured and/or enriched, depending on the reader's point of view, by the experiences recounted to him.

²⁶ Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory*, pp. 133-157 & 159-166

²⁷ J.H. Johnson, *Stalemate! The Great Trench Warfare Battles of 1915-1917* (London: Arms and Armour, 1995); G.C. Wynne, *If Germany Attacks: The Battle in Depth in the West* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976)

²⁸ R. Prior & T. Wilson, *The First World War* (London: Cassell, 1999), pp. 138-9

²⁹ C. Falls, *Military Operations – France and Belgium, 1917 Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992)

³⁰ A. Green, *Writing the Great War: Sir James Edmonds and the Official Histories 1915-1948* (London: Frank Cass, 2003). For a less generous evaluation, see M. Samuels, *Command or Control? Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p. 278.

³¹ In her book devoted to 1917 in her series of books, Macdonald deals solely with the Third Battle of Ypres – L. Macdonald, *They Called it Passchendaele* (London: Michael Joseph, 1978)

Peter Barton's more recent book follows in Nicholls' vein.³² Barton adopts a similar approach drawing significantly on the personal papers of veterans. Whilst many of Barton's sources are predictable, his use of archival records appears to have been limited. For example, he draws upon veterans' comments sent to the author of the relevant volume of the BOH. On the other hand, no reference is made in his bibliography to having drawn on the relevant war diaries nor is reference made, for example, to Allenby's papers held at King's College London.

The BOH has been drawn upon as a principal source as have divisional and brigade histories. The principal source of primary documents such as the war diaries, operation orders and after-action reports of units and formations, and correspondence between former officers and the Official Historian has been The National Archives at Kew. Relevant records concerning Canadian and Australian units and formations have been accessed on-line from Library and Archives Canada and the Australian War Museum respectively. Memoirs published by former brigadier-generals have been scoured for views and relevant information.³³ These have been supplemented by drawing on individuals' papers held by, amongst others, the House of Lords Record Office, the Imperial War Museum and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives. Three of the case studies have drawn upon a diary, letters and other papers. The diary in question is held by a regimental museum and appears to have been cited only once in a published work.³⁴ In a second instance letters are held by a regimental museum to which access has been authorised by the subject's son, now aged eighty-three. In a third

³² P. Barton & J. Banning, *Arras: The Spring 1917 Offensive in Panoramas Including Vimy Ridge and Bullecourt* (London: Constable, 2010)

³³ This has not always been fruitful. For example, Brigadier-General William Antrobus Griesbach (1878-1945), GOC 1 CIB, published his memoirs in 1946. Disappointingly, it recounts nothing of his life beyond the summer of 1914. W.A. Griesbach, *I Remember* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1946)

³⁴ D.R. O'Keefe, "'A Brutal Soul-Destroying Business': Brigadier-General F.O.W. Loomis and the Question of 'Impersonal Generalship'", in A.B. Godefroy (ed.), *Great War Commands: Historical Perspectives on Canadian Army Leadership 1914-1918* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2010), p. 88

instance, letters and papers are privately held by the subject's grandson to which access has generously been provided.

The limitations of the existing historiography concerning brigadier-generals is the underlying *raison d'être* for this thesis. First, it reviews the role of brigadier-generals, both in theory and in practise. Second, it questions whether the orthodox view that brigadier-generals merely bore responsibility for 'administration and training' is unnecessarily narrow and whether measurement of their performance based on their battlefield performance is unduly limiting. This thesis addresses these questions based on the identification and analysis of a cohort of the BEF's brigade commanders at a point in the war when their roles had become established. It explores the roles of five brigadier-generals drawn from this cohort during the period leading up to and during the Battle of Arras selected for different combinations of reasons as outlined above. Through exploration of the similarities and differences of experience between these officers, distinctive threads are identified which it is argued provide a broader basis for understanding the nature of the responsibilities borne by brigadier-generals more generally and which may have wider application.

Chapter One reviews the role of brigadier-generals as understood from Field Service Regulations, Staff Manuals and other official sources. An analysis is presented of the 116 commanders of infantry brigades who played a role in the Battle of Arras. Chapters Two to Six present case studies of individual brigadier-generals, one each from the Canadian Corps and XIII Corps which formed part of First Army, together with one each from the three corps which were part of Third Army during the Battle. The Conclusion identifies a series of threads about the roles and responsibilities of brigadier-generals drawn from the evidence

concerning the case study brigadier-generals resulting from their experience in the months leading up to and during the Battle of Arras.

Set out in the Appendices are details of the 116 brigadier-generals who form the basis of this study, the citations in relation to DSOs awarded to the 116 Arras brigadier-generals whilst holding that rank and a series of Orders of Battle for each of the distinct operations which together comprise the Battle of Arras. These Orders of Battle identify the principal officers who formed the brigade teams that fought the Battle of Arras.

Chapter 1

Brigadier-Generals – Oilers of the Works¹

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explains what brigadier-generals were, what they were responsible for and how they fitted into the BEF's chain of command. The infantry brigadier-generals who were in post in those divisions involved in the Battle of Arras are identified and analysed.

1.2 Brigadier-Generals – The Theory

An infantry brigadier-general's position in the army's hierarchy was clear. His was the first role in the army's organizational structure to command a formation which, until the re-organization of the spring of 1918, consisted of four infantry battalions. The 1915 brigade establishment of 4,116 (125 officers and 3,991 other ranks) had increased by July 1917, with the addition of a machine-gun company and a light trench mortar battery, by a further 200 officers and men.² Although the scope of the role is clear, defining the responsibilities of a brigade commander is more difficult. There was no job description. The responsibilities of a brigade commander are identified in *King's Regulations* as:

¹ This is a reference to a comment on the role of brigadier-generals by Major-General Sir John Gellibrand (1872-1945) that: 'The Brigadier had little scope beyond oiling the works and using his eyes.' Gellibrand to Bean, 2 May 1929, AWM 8040/1(2), cited in P. Simkins, 'Building Blocks': Aspects of Command and Control at Brigade level in the BEF's Offensive Operations, 1916-1918', in *Command and Control on the Western Front: The British Army's Experience 1914-1918*, G.D. Sheffield & D. Todman (eds.), (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2004), p. 145. Also cited in P.S. Sadler, *The Paladin: A Life of Major-General Sir John Gellibrand* (Melbourne: Castlemead Publications, 2000), p. 85.

² Simkins, 'Building Blocks', p. 141. The changing establishment of a brigade as the war progressed, due predominantly to the addition of machine-guns and trench mortars, is illustrated by the size of a brigade within the Canadian Expeditionary Force – 4,143 in November 1914 (8 MGs), 4,133 in 1916 (32 MGs) and 3,815 in 1918 (256 MGs & 24 TMs) – see D.A. Love, "A Call to Arms" – *The Organization and Administration of Canada's Military in World War One* (Winnipeg: Bunker to Bunker Books, 1999), pp. 27-9. These figures illustrate the changing balance between a brigade's firepower and its manpower.

Officer Commanding a Brigade

A colonel, graded as a brigadier-general, is appointed to command a brigade of cavalry or infantry, and will perform duties analogous to those laid down for a divisional commander.³

This is not very helpful. The scope of the units and formations a divisional commander commanded is set out in Paragraphs 33-35 of *King's Regulations*, whilst his duties are specified in Paragraph 65:

The divisional commander has under his orders, for the purposes of discipline and interior economy only, the officers and men of services and departments serving at the station where divisional headquarters are located. On all subjects connected with their technical duties these officers correspond direct with the heads of services and departments of the command. The divisional commander will thus be able to devote his attention to the training of troops of war.

This is clearly not an exhaustive or even a particularly clear basis upon which a major-general could be expected to exercise command and control of some 18,000 officers and ORs. The potential inter-changeability of the roles of both divisional major-generals and their brigadier-generals is added to by Paragraph 68 of *King's Regulations*:

He [the divisional commander] will delegate responsibility and power to brigadier-generals.⁴

Whilst this answers the question over responsibility as 'to whom?', it begs the question 'for what?'. Clarity is elusive. The effect of *King's Regulations* in making clear who was intended to be responsible for what is diminished by the evidence that they were the product of pre-war

³ War Office, *The King's Regulations and Orders for the Army 1912* (London: HMSO, 1914), p. 15, para. 69

⁴ Divisional commanders were also expected to pass on their knowledge and skills to their brigadiers. It was the failure of Major-General William Henry Rycroft (1861-1925) (GOC 32nd Division) to do so which led Sir Douglas Haig to remove him. 'The G.O.C. [Rycroft] was not fit for the command of a division and the brigadiers had not been taught anything by him. I had selected Br.-General [R.W.R.] Barnes to succeed R. and G. [General H.de la P. Gough] was very pleased to have him.' TNA WO256/14, Haig's Diary, 21 November 1916. Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Reginald Walter Ralph Barnes (1871-1946). General Sir Hubert de la Poer Gough (1870-1963).

thinking. *King's Regulations* identify the chain of command to consist of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Divisional Commander and Brigade Commander. They contain no mention of command at the level of either army or corps.⁵ In this aspect, at least, *King's Regulations* were quickly overtaken by the events of 1914 and thereafter.

The army's approach encapsulated in *FSR Part II 1909*, on the other hand, proved to be a robust although not necessarily guaranteed basis for operational success.⁶ It was based on the principle of 'the man on the spot', or as *FSR* put it:

*Subject to such instructions as he may receive from a superior commander, a subordinate commander is responsible for the efficiency of his command, and for the control and direction of the duties allotted to him.*⁷

Although brigadier-generals no doubt knew the theory, at least one experienced the pressure and ambiguities of the reality of operational life at the sharp end:

⁵ War Office, *The King's Regulations*, p. 8, para. 29. The extent of the development of roles within the British army's command structure during the war is illustrated by Edward Spears' simplistic opinion. He identified that army commanders needed to exhibit the traits of initiative, independence and character whilst a good corps commander merely had to carry out orders. Presumably he expected divisional and brigade commanders to be mere automatons! See E.L. Spears, *Prelude to Victory* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940), p. 217.

⁶ A. Simpson, *Directing Operations: British Corps Command on the Western Front 1914-18* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2006), p. 210

⁷ General Staff, War Office, *Field Service Regulations, Part II: Organization and Administration, 1909, (Reprinted, with Amendments, 1913)* (London: HMSO, 1913), p. 29. The phrase 'man on the spot' or 'Senior Infantry Officer on the spot' is enshrined in *SS135 Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action Section* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1916) – see Section VI. 'Action of Reserves', para 10, p. 23; Section XII 'Situation Reports', para 2, p. 40; Section XX 'Action of Stokes Mortars', para 3 (vi), p. 53. It had already been put into practice by army commanders. For example, in the context of a discussion about First Army's future policy in relation to raids, the view of General Sir Henry Sinclair Horne (later 1st Baron Horne of Stirkoke in the County of Caithness) (1861-1929) was: 'The Army Commander did not think it desirable to have a standing order for the carrying out of raids. It should be left to a great extent to the man on the spot.' TNA WO95/167 First Army General Staff, 1916 October-December, Minutes of Meeting of Corps Commanders, First Army, 31 October 1916. At the London Conference, 13 March 1917, Spears attributes the following words to Haig: 'The officer on the spot must decide whether a given order can be carried out without endangering the safety of the unit under his orders.' Spears, *Prelude to Victory*, p. 195. Referring to Brigadier-General Henry Brewster Percy Lion Kennedy (1878-1953), GOC 140 Brigade, 47th Division, Lieutenant-Colonel Rowland Charles Fielding (1871-1945), CO 1/15 London Regiment, wrote: 'He never fusses, thank God: and he leaves all details to the men whose duty it is to do the job. And that, I venture to think, is the proper way to fight battles.' J. Walker (ed.), *War Letters to a Wife: France and Flanders, 1915-1919* (London: Medici Society Ltd., 1929), p. 181

*An immediate counterattack made by troops in position who know the ground and situation ought to be successful, but it is a waste of men to rush Bdes. up and dribble battalions into the attack; but the anxiety of the higher Hqrs overcomes the discretion of subordinate commanders.*⁸

1.3 Brigadier-Generals – The Practice

Despite the burden of responsibility placed on commanders at whatever level, Simpson has pointed out that ‘no formal training in generalship was given in the British Army’.⁹ Codifying what brigadier-generals actually did, therefore, is a challenge. Infantry brigade commanders overwhelmingly shared a career path having most commonly been promoted from the command of a battalion.¹⁰ Even when they became brigadier-generals, further promotion was not on the basis of ‘Buggins’s turn’.

October 30th – Hear no less than seven Brigadiers junior to me have been made Major-Generals for the first phase of the war before we came out, which seems bad luck on us, for we have to wait for vacancies in the Major-Generals list, which do not occur very frequently.
*December 30th – Two more Brigadiers gone over me, which makes ten since the war began.*¹¹

Richard Holmes has stated that: ‘In order to qualify for command of a brigade an officer had to command a battalion successfully.’¹² This is not true. A number of brigade commanders had not previously commanded a battalion. Brigadier-General C. Cunliffe-Owen, for

⁸ TNA WO95/2278 Diary of Brigadier-General C. E. Pereira, 24 May 1915. Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Cecil Edward ‘Pinto’ Pereira (1869-1942)

⁹ Simpson, *Directing Operations*, p. 185. In 1912, Brigadier-General (later General Sir) Francis John Davies (1864-1948) worried that ‘it is doubtful ... we are training senior officers adequately in the art of command’. TNA WO27/508 Report of the Inspector General 1912, p. 8, cited by Simon Batten ‘“A School for the Leaders”: What did the British Army Learn from the 1912 Army Manoeuvres?’, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 93 (2015), 27

¹⁰ Frank Maxwell testifies to the value of experience as a CO thus: ‘A soldier’s life in this modern type of business is a thin one, and I’m glad indeed now that I have been right through the mill with an infantry battalion and know just how bad it is. The experience should, if I can use it properly, be good for my Brigade, for it is only such personal experience that enables a commander to realise what his army suffers, what its limitations, and therefore how to help it through its business with the least discomfort possible ...’. C. Maxwell, (ed.), *Brigadier-General Frank Maxwell V.C., C.S.I., D.S.O. – A Memoir and Some Letters* (London: John Murray, 1921), pp. 186-7

¹¹ L.H. Thornton & P. Fraser, *The Congreves: Father and Son* (London: John Murray, 1930), p. 128

¹² R. Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front 1914-1918* (London: Harper Collins, 2004), p. 205

example, a career gunner, commanded 54 Brigade, 18th Division.¹³ Holmes also states that despite the fact that a lieutenant-colonel was a GSO1 ‘if he had not already commanded a battalion he had to have his ticket punched before promotion to brigadier general’.¹⁴ Again, this is not true. Brigadier-General N.J.G. Cameron was promoted from GSO1 34th Division to GOC 103 Brigade 34th Division on 26 December 1915.¹⁵

As with many who climb a promotional ladder within a hierarchical organization, there is a natural tendency to carry on in the new post as in the preceding, but on a larger scale.¹⁶ There is comfort and proven ability in dealing with the familiar; new responsibilities represent the real challenge. For new brigadier-generals the generalised responsibilities represented an opportunity to define the ambiguous and, for the most able, to carve out their own distinctive role.¹⁷ Brigadier-General F.P. Crozier had been advised by his former divisional commander, Major-General O.S.W. Nugent, GOC 36th Division, that he should treat his new command as ‘a big battalion’.¹⁸ This suggests a lack of clarity, at least in Crozier’s mind and possibly Nugent’s, over the distinctive role of a brigadier-general. It is, however, consistent with the

¹³ Brigadier-General Charles Cunliffe-Owen (1863-1932)

¹⁴ Holmes, *Tommy*, p. 205

¹⁵ Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Neville John Gordon Cameron (1873-1955), the subject of Chapter 6.

¹⁶ The underlying sentiment was expressed by Brigadier-General (later General Sir) Augustus Francis Andrew Nicol Thorne (1885-1970) on his appointment as GOC 184 Brigade 61st Division on 14 October 1918: ‘The material in the shape of the men is very good and makes one long to command them as a Battalion Commander instead of as a Brigadier General. One cannot get at them except through their COs and I feel I could run their show so much better than they could!’ D. Lindsay, *Forgotten General: A Life of Andrew Thorne* (Wilton, Salisbury: Michael Russell, 1987), p. 74

¹⁷ The responsibility for the initiation for the appointment of infantry brigade GOCs lay with corps commanders to their army commanders who could use their discretion whether to comment on the corps commander’s recommendation or otherwise. See TNA WO95/25 Adjutant General, A.J. Murray, CGS, 29 December 1914. See also letter from the Military Secretary to army and corps GOCs authorising corps commanders to appoint infantry brigade commanders, and where necessary confer temporary rank, to replace a casualty, subject to confirmation by GHQ - TNA WO95/25 Adjutant General, W. Lambton, Brigadier-Generals, 19 March 1915. An illustrative reference: ‘Gen. Maxse came here in the afternoon to say goodbye on his way to G.H.Q. He told me I was third on the Corps list for a Brigade, but I’m in no hurry for it.’ D. Fraser (ed.), *In Good Company: The First World War Letters and Diary of The Hon. William Fraser, Gordon Highlanders* (Salisbury: Michael Russell, 1990), pp. 267-8

¹⁸ F.P. Crozier, *A Brass Hat in No Man’s Land* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), p. 131. Brigadier-General Frank Percy Crozier (1879-1937) was appointed GOC 119 Brigade, 40th Division having previously been CO 9/Royal Irish Rifles (8 January 1916 to 20 November 1916). Major-General (later Sir) Oliver Stewart Wood Nugent (1860-1926)

experience the army offered prior to the war. It should come as no surprise. As Sir Hew Strachan has pointed out:

Command expertise was acquired by practice. The principle of instruction through allowing officers to exercise command in the rank higher than their current one was not widely accepted. Moreover, in the pre-1914 army, the command in which most officers honed their leadership skills was not as high as the all-arms division but was the single-arm, single-battalion regiment.¹⁹

Radley draws a distinction between the roles of battalion commanders and those of formation commanders pointing both to a difference in emphasis and one which reflects his own background:

A battalion commander thought and planned about men, while a formation commander had necessarily to think and plan in numbers, leaving unit commanders to command without undue interference beyond checking on progress and correction if progress proved unsatisfactory.²⁰

What amounts to ‘undue interference’ is not defined. At least some brigadier-generals were well suited to a role which was ambiguous. As newly arrived GSO2 of 37th Division in February 1916, J.F.C. Fuller complained that elaborate plans he had prepared for the defence of the Division’s sector

... would never have been adhered to, for the Brigadiers were very independent and there was little control over them; they did much as they pleased, and were for ever building new Headquarter dugouts.²¹

¹⁹ H. Strachan, ‘The British Army, its General Staff and the Continental Commitment, 1904-14’, in D. French & B. Holden Reid (eds.), *The British General Staff: Reform and Innovation c.1890-1939* (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass, 2002), p. 90

²⁰ K. Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough: Shaping the Canadian Corps 1914-1918* (Solihull: Helion & Company Limited, 2014), p. 325. A former CO of The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada, Radley’s analysis of the development of the Canadian Corps is centred at battalion level of command and on the regimental system. He mentions brigades or brigadier-generals only incidentally. The same point was made by Brigadier-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Aylmer Gould Hunter-Weston (1864-1940) when GOC 11 Brigade: ‘I have organised the affair well. I have taken all precautions to ensure success & to minimise defeat. The result is in the hands of destiny. I have done my part.’ Hunter-Weston to Mrs. Hunter-Weston, 17 October 1914, Hunter-Weston Papers, 48363, British Library cited in N. Gardner, *Trial by Fire: Command and the British Expeditionary Force in 1914* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), p. 18

²¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Memoirs of an Unconventional Soldier* (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1936), p. 60. Major-General John Frederick Charles Fuller (1878-1966). Fuller joined 37th Division on 4 February 1916. The GOCs of 110, 111, and 112 Brigades were respectively Brigadier-Generals (later Major-General Sir) (Edmund)

On his appointment as GOC 173 Brigade, 58th Division, Bernard Freyberg announced his intention ‘to run his brigade of London Territorials in the same way he had the Hood Battalion’.²² In Freyberg’s case, having only joined the RNVR in 1914, his previous experience of less than ten months as a battalion CO, compared with the normal pre-war period of appointment of four years, was a limited basis upon which he could draw. When promoted in October 1916, Brigadier-General Frank Maxwell had even less experience as a CO than had Freyberg, a mere four months. A much more experienced Regular army officer, however, Maxwell had operational experience, having served both on the North West Frontier and on Kitchener’s staff during the South African War.²³ Maxwell had also completed the staff course at Camberley. Set against his own methods and standards Maxwell was, nevertheless, not impressed with his new brigade:

I find my Brigade a very untidy one at present, and had a shock yesterday at an inspection of one unit. In fact, I only got as far as seeing a few men, and then declined to go on. However, it is the case of a new broom, and I shall get things done my way in time, and don’t mean to hustle them too much at first, but give them plenty of time to assimilate my views – and carry them out. It does not appear to have been rubbed into the new army officers of this Brigade that personal smartness is the foundation of discipline and fighting.

Guy (Tulloch) Bainbridge (1867-1943), R.W.R. Barnes and Percy Morris Robinson (1873-1949). Fuller was not appointed to command a brigade himself until 23 July 1929 (2nd Rhine Brigade). The ambiguity of the role apparently persisted. He subsequently wrote: ‘When I took over command of a brigade, my brigade major was astonished because I insisted upon doing what he considered to be his work, but which in fact was essentially mine, making out the brigade training exercises, which under former brigadiers he had always done.’ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (London: Faber and Faber, 1933). GOC 6th Division, Major-General Charles Ross (1864-1930) consulted his brigadiers on what basis manpower for carrying parties should be provided. He reported succinctly to Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Alexander Anderson (1857-1940), GOC I Corps: ‘The opinions of my Brigadiers differ on the point.’ TNA WO95/167 First Army General Staff, 1916 October-December, Memorandum G/103/1, 13 November 1916

²² P. Freyberg, *Bernard Freyberg V.C.: Soldier of Two Nations* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), p. 103. Brigadier-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Bernard Cyril Freyberg (1889-1963) (Baron Freyberg of Wellington in New Zealand and of Munstead in the County of Surrey). For an enthusiastic evaluation of Freyberg’s new Territorial division, see a letter from Captain Robert Mervyn Laverton (1885-1953), BM, 174th Brigade, 58th Division to Captain C. Falls, n.d. TNA CAB45/116. Freyberg had been reluctant to leave Hood Battalion. He later confessed to Brigadier-General Arthur Melland Asquith (1883-1939) ‘that he had cried all night because he was leaving his beloved Battalion’. C. Page, *Command in the Royal Naval Division: A Military Biography of Brigadier General A.M. Asquith DSO* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1999), p. 111

²³ Brigadier-General Francis Aylmer Maxwell (1871–1917) had been commissioned into the Royal Sussex Regiment on 7 November 1891.

But they've jolly well got to learn that it is – or, at any rate, that I think so
.....²⁴

The process of evaluation was, of course, a two-way street. When in July 1915 Brigadier-General J.S.M. Shea was appointed GOC 151 Brigade, his subordinates duly applied the yardsticks by which they evaluated their GOCs:

*The new 151 Brigade Commander made an instant impression on both officers and men. He was quite young with a commanding personality. He had considerable organising ability. His officers always found him willing to advise and help them and he showed a clear understanding of their problems. He visited the trenches every day and very quickly displayed a growing affection and respect for his Durham soldiers which was reciprocated by the men.*²⁵

The importance of the tone and personal style of a brigade commander was critical to the efficiency of a brigade's staff: 'An Infantry Brigade Head-quarters in France could be a happy home; but only if the Brigadier was liked and respected by the rest of the Staff, and tried to make them feel at home.'²⁶ In the circumstances, newly appointed brigadier-generals drew heavily on their own military upbringing, as well advice from above.²⁷

²⁴ Maxwell, *Brigadier-General Frank Maxwell*, p. 187. Maxwell's reputation went before him. 'He had the reputation of being pretty tough (was killed at Paschental (sic) the follg (sic) autumn in circumstances in which, I have been told, fully bore out that reputation.) There is only one thing to do with a fellow who is or seems to be shell shocked he said, and that is to give him one on the point!' TNA CAB45/116 Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Duncan Montague Browne (1878-1969), formerly AA&QMG, 37th Division, letter to Official Historian, 14 December 1938

²⁵ H. Moses, *The Faithful Sixth: A History of the Sixth Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry* (Durham: County Durham Books, 1995), p. 45. Brigadier-General (later General Sir) John Stuart Mackenzie Shea (1869-1966). On appointment to 151 Brigade Shea was aged forty-six.

²⁶ F. Buckley, *Q.6.a and Other Places: Recollections of 1916, 1917, 1918* (Fairford, Gloucestershire: The Echo Library, 2014), p. 33

²⁷ At least one politician devoid of any military experience thought brigadier-generals were amongst those whom the C-in-C should consult concerning his planned operations. In a letter of 25 January 1917 to the CIGS, David Lloyd George (1863-1945) wrote: 'When I was at the War Office I put before you a suggestion that the Commander-in-Chief should make a systematic effort to encourage suggestions from his subordinates who had actual experience in carrying out his orders in the field as to the best means of securing success in future operations. I suggested that it would be desirable to invite opinions not merely from Divisional and Brigade Generals, but from Regimental Officers.' HLRO, Lloyd George Mss, F/44/3/8 cited in D.R. Woodward, (ed.), *The Military Correspondence of Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, December 1915–February 1918* (London: The Bodley Head for the Army Records Society, 1989), p. 145

Peter Simkins has provided a succinct résumé of the responsibilities of a brigadier-general. With responsibility for strategy, tactical objectives and the allocation of resources generally lying with divisional commanders and above, it has been assumed that the role of brigadier-generals revolved round training and administration.²⁸ On the one hand, Mark Connelly finds no role for brigadier-generals in training:

*Training was clearly crucial to the smooth operation of tactical formations and directions. In this particular area divisional commanders appeared to be the vital factor and conduit, for they often set the general agenda but left the battalion commanders to create their own schemes and programmes.*²⁹

The Inspector-General of the Home Forces, however, drew attention in this regard to the pivotal role of brigadier-generals. In his Annual Report for 1913 General Sir Charles Douglas reported:

*I have found an excellent system of instruction obtaining in some brigades. The Brigadier-General instructs his Commanding Officers and teaches them the art of teaching. The Commanding Officers in their turn, teach the squadron and company officers, who again teach their junior officers and non-commissioned officers. The men are instructed by the non-commissioned officers.*³⁰

²⁸ For example, in the context of a discussion between his divisional commanders about how best carrying parties should routinely be organised, Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Anderson, GOC I Corps, concluded: 'Conditions as to length of frontage of objective to be covered by each battalion, and as to the fighting strength of each battalion, are very variable factors which materially affect the question of which method should be employed: what would be most suitable in one case may be ill-advised if not actually impossible in another. The Brigade Commander on the spot, who knows the state of each of his battalions at a given time and decides on the method in which he will assault the length of objective assigned to his Brigade, can alone decide which system to adopt in the particular case so as to arrive at the best results.' TNA WO95/167 First Army, 1916/17, General Staff, First Army No 1014/1 (G.b), 18th November 1916

²⁹ M. Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!: A Regiment, a Region, and the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 231

³⁰ TNA WO27/508 Annual Report of the Inspector-General of the Home Forces for 1913, 13 October 1913, p. 8. General Sir Charles Whittingham Horsley Douglas (1850-1914). Douglas subsequently served as CIGS from 6 April 1914 until his death, attributable in part due to stress and long hours of work, on 25 October 1914. See Edward M. Spiers, 'Douglas, Sir Charles Whittingham Horsley (1850-1914)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32870>, (accessed 29 May 2015).

Ultimate responsibility for training evidently remained in practice both ubiquitous and, at least in some divisions, ambiguous. Brigadier-General R.J. Kentish provides an illustration of the crucial role that brigadier-generals could play, when they took the initiative.³¹

*...I discovered that in the Battalions all had different ideas, two being Regular and two Service Battalions, the former commanded by Regulars, the latter by a Territorial and a Special Reserve Officer. ALL FOUR wanted the Brigadier's direction and they got it, but the direction came from the Brigadier and not as it should have done from the Divisional Commander ensuring a uniform system in all three Brigades.*³²

Craig French dismisses the function of brigades as merely 'to act as a level of administration'.³³ Simkins nevertheless outlines how the brigadier-general, once the overall plan of an operation had been given to him, had to allocate roles to his battalions, ensure his orders were effectively communicated and that his units were in the right place at the right time. Once zero hour had passed for an attack to begin, the brigadier-general could intervene to make adjustments to the original plan based on his interpretation of subsequent events on

³¹ Brigadier-General Reginald John Kentish (1876-1956) had been GOC 76 Brigade, 3rd Division (11 April - 1 October 1916), was successively Commandant, Third Army School and Commandant, Senior Officers' School, Aldershot before being appointed GOC 166 (South Lancashire) Brigade, 55th Division on 4 December 1917, an appointment he held until the end of the war. His nephew wrote of him: 'But his upward path had always been difficult owing to the contempt he felt, where necessary, for Higher Authority, feelings he never failed to express openly.' B. Kentish, *This Foul Thing Called War; The Life of Brigadier General R.J. Kentish CMG, DSO (1876-1956)* (Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild Ltd., 1997), p. 69

³² IWM, Maxse Papers, PP/MCR/C42 File 51 Reel 12, Letter from Kentish to Lieutenant-General (later General) Sir (Frederick) Ivor Maxse (1862-1958), 22 February 1917. Kentish's frustration at the disparity of views amongst his COs was mirrored at divisional level. For example, Major-General William George Walker (1863-1936), GOC 2nd Division, sought the views of his three brigade commanders on their experience arising from the Battle of the Somme. Walker produced a précis of their views. Whilst there were areas of agreement amongst them, they disagreed over whether their battle frontages were too great, whether the capture of specific enemy trenches should be allocated to definite waves of troops, whether bridges for crossing trenches were difficult to use, the position of forward company dumps, whether or not rifles clogged with mud and over the number of bombs and the amount of SAA each man should carry. TNA WO158/344 2nd Division, G.S. 1037, Operations in 1916: Lessons learned on preparations for, and methods of attack; notes and memoranda, 28 November 1916. Walker's précis provides an illustration of the operational detail with which brigadier-generals concerned themselves.

³³ C.F. French, 'The 51st (Highland) Division During the First World War', University of Glasgow, PhD Thesis, 2006, p. 145

the ground.³⁴ Key to his ability to do so was the inter-relationship between the effectiveness of his communications systems and where he chose to place his headquarters.³⁵

An early expression of a brigadier-general's responsibilities and discretion when holding the line is provided by 7th Division.

*Arrangements were made for a redistribution of the troops in the trenches. The whole line was now divided into 3 sections each held by a brigade, 20th Bde on the right, 21st Bde in the centre and 22nd Bde on the left. Each Brigade to have 2 Battalions in the front line, 1 Battalion in local reserve, and 1 battalion in General Reserve, this latter Battalion being available for the relief of the Battalions in the trenches under Brigade arrangements. It is hoped that this system by enabling each Battalion in turn to have one or two days rest and opportunity to clean up and do some drill, will tend to the maintenance of smartness and discipline even during a prolonged period of duty in the trenches.*³⁶

³⁴ This positive interpretation of a brigadier-general's role contrasts with Maxwell's view expressed in September 1917 whilst his brigade, 27 Brigade 9th Division, was serving in Gough's Fifth Army. The prevalent requirement that brigadiers should stay close to the telephone during operations ensured 'they became nothing better than cyphers perfectly unable to command their Brigades'. Brigadier-General F.A. Maxwell to his wife, 20 September 1917, Maxwell Papers 7402-31-24/31, NAM cited in Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat Into Victory* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), p. 78. A brigadier-general's COs had much the same dilemma. 'In cases where commanding officers were sent forward they were able to exercise great influence in controlling the fight. The difficulty is largely one of communication and it is to be decided whether it is more important for the Battalion Commander to be in touch with his Brigadier and have indifferent communications with his companies or to have good communications with the companies and indifferent communications with his Brigadier.' TNA WO158/344 2nd Division, G.S. 1037, Operations in 1916, 28 November 1916

³⁵ Simkins, "Building Blocks", pp. 144-6. On 5 October 1916 Gough issued a paper for the benefit of divisional and brigade commanders. He drew on experience gained during the Battle of the Somme. Gough had definite views on communications and the location of brigade HQs. 'In the case of a brigade detailed to carry through an attack of some depth as part of the operation of one or several divisions, such a conception as a reserve is out of place and is unpractical. As a matter of fact, the reserve can never receive orders to act in time, and it is always wasted. It is a very serious error, almost an unpardonable one, when Brigadiers do not go forward as their command advances.' TNA WO95/518 Fifth Army H.Q. General Staff 1916 April-December, Reserve Army G.S. 43/0/5. Gough's view contrasts with the message sent by GHQ. *SS119 Preliminary Notes on the Tactical Lessons of the Recent Operations* issued in July 1916 states: 'Brigade Headquarters should move as seldom as possible. They should not be situated so close to the fighting that brigadiers and their Head Quarters become involved in the firing line. As a general rule they should be at the most forward place that can be reached in comparative security from rifle fire. Brigade commanders and brigade majors should not be away from Brigade headquarters at the same time.' The Official Historian sat on the fence: 'How far in the rear of the front line the brigade headquarters should be located, and when, if ever, brigade commanders were justified in going forward to bring their personal influence to bear, were other questions not easy to decide.' W. Miles, *Military Operations France and Belgium, 1916, Volume II* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992), p. 570

³⁶ TNA WO95/1627 WD 7th Division, 17 November 1914. See also 7th Division Operation Order No 35 and map of 16 November 1914 which provides details of the arrangements to be implemented.

The established humdrum nature of a brigadier-general's life whilst his brigade was holding the line is illustrated in 1918 as encapsulated in Brigadier-General H.E. Hart's diary:

*6 August 1918. Usual routine. Go round the line every morning seeing that the defences are properly carried out, men posted correctly, and work and improvements steadily proceeding. Constantly digging new trenches, improving existing ones, erecting wire and other obstacles, constructing dugouts, roads, tracks and tramways. In afternoons usually meet the Engineer, Artillery, Machine Gun and Staff Officers at various times to discuss matters relating to the sector occupied. In evenings attending to orders, administration, and official papers, maps, and records. And so the days fly by.*³⁷

Hanway Cumming emphasises the need for brigadier-generals to be master of the detail of their commands:

*Not very much could be done that day, but the rest of the afternoon was spent with the Brigade-Major, going more into the details of the defensive scheme and the methods of supply, relief, communications, artillery support, and the thousand and one other details which it behoves a Brigadier to have at his finger-ends and to be thoroughly au courant with if he wishes to keep his finger on the pulse of his command.*³⁸

The 'big battalion' approach to brigade command is supported by Bourne. He regards battalion and brigade command as fundamentally the same – a matter of the personal qualities of the individual in displaying courage, setting an example and upholding the welfare of his men.³⁹ Relationships were 'essentially face-to-face and day-to-day'.⁴⁰ Bourne draws attention both to the need for brigadier-generals to provide encouragement for their subordinates and to ensuring they were trained to meet their specific responsibilities. The brigadier-general's role in selection involved both identifying candidates for promotion as well as the removal of those he judged not fit for their posts - man management in its roundest sense. Peter

³⁷ Brigadier-General (later Sir) Herbert Ernest Hart (1882-1968). H. Hart & J. Crawford, (eds.), *The Devil's Own War: The First World War Diary of Brigadier-General Herbert Hart* (Titirangi, Auckland: Exisle, 2008), p. 242

³⁸ H.R. Cumming, *A Brigadier in France* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1922), pp. 97-8

³⁹ J.M. Bourne, 'British Generals in the First World War', in G.D. Sheffield (ed.), *Leadership & Command: The Anglo-American Military Experience Since 1861* (London: Brassey's, 1997), p. 99

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101

Hodgkinson's study of infantry battalion commanders, for example, cites Brigadier-General V.W. de Falbe's decision to replace Lieutenant-Colonel R.A.A. Bottomley of 2/5 West Yorkshire as an example of 'the active role of brigade commanders in sifting them'.⁴¹

Bourne's view of the role of brigadier-generals is echoed by that of Lieutenant-General E.L.M. 'Tommy' Burns who served as a 'staff learner' in 1918 with 9 CIB, 3rd Canadian Division.⁴² Burns identifies the direct influence of the battalion commander as one which 'can scarcely be exaggerated'.⁴³ In contrast:

*The higher commander's will and influence has to be exerted through his subordinate officers. To be successful he has to be able to choose them with discretion, promote the right men, get rid of those who don't measure up to their responsibilities, arrange for commanders and staff officers from outside his own formation to do the jobs when there is no one ripe to take them on within his own command. Thus, judgement of men, the ability to inspire them with confidence, and to generate in them the will to execute his will are essential requirements for a higher commander of a formation.*⁴⁴

As Radley points out, however: 'It is a fact that a good battalion commander may be lacklustre or worse at brigade'.⁴⁵ Carton de Wiart's experience was indicative. On promotion to the command of a brigade he experienced a step-change in his own perception of his personal responsibility for his new formation's performance:

Nevertheless, assuming command of a brigade marked a watershed in Carton de Wiart's military style. Although he continued to lead by example, he now

⁴¹ P.E. Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War', University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2013, p. 82

⁴² Lieutenant-General Eedson Louis Millard Burns (1897-1985)

⁴³ E.L.M. Burns, *General Mud: Memoirs of Two World Wars* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company, 1970), p. 65

⁴⁴ Ibid. Brigadier-General William Henry Erik Segrave (1878-1964) went so far as to remark 'Commanding a battalion is four times more difficult and ten times more interesting than commanding a brigade'. Walker (ed.), *War Letters to a Wife*, p. 187 cited by Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 361. This remark may say more about Segrave than it does about the role and responsibilities of a brigadier-general. When he wrote it in September 1918, Segrave had been in post less than two months having served as a battalion commander for 412 days during which time he had been awarded two Bars to the DSO he had been awarded in 1900.

⁴⁵ Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough*, p. 341

*supplemented this with a determination to secure the interests of his men by pointing out errors in command and tactics and suggesting improvements.*⁴⁶

Despite their responsibility for hiring and firing, there were occasions when brigadier-generals' lack of authority to act was evident, surprisingly so. Maxwell recounts the occasion, in the depths of the winter of 1916-17, when he was stopped by both his divisional and corps commanders from issuing blankets to men of his brigade manning parapets overnight.⁴⁷ The episode illustrates the concern expected of a brigadier-general for the welfare of his men and willingness to act upon that concern.⁴⁸ It also suggests something about his divisional and corps commanders.⁴⁹ What might be thought to have fallen within the operational discretion of brigadier-generals was sometimes not the case. In January 1917, for example, the brigadier-generals of 2nd Division received an instruction from their GOC, Major-General C.E. Pereira, that they were not to permit officers of the rank of captain and above to patrol in no-man's-land, except 'in exceptional circumstances'.⁵⁰ There were occasions, however, when brigadier-generals exceeded their authority. Brigadier-General T.P.B. Ternan, for

⁴⁶ E.D.R. Harrison, "'An Absolute Non-Ducker': Carton de Wiart in the Great War', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 91 (2013), 108-9. Carton de Wiart's approach contrasts with the hands-off approach of Brigadier-General C. Coffin. 'When you had completed the eight pages, you went with some pride to show the masterpiece to the Brigadier. "I don't want to see it." He said, "you're responsible for commanding your battalion, not I. I shall only judge on results."' A.A.H. Hanbury-Sparrow, *The Land-Locked Lake* (London: Arthur Barker, 1932), p. 250

⁴⁷ Maxwell, *Brigadier-General Frank Maxwell*, p. 194. The officers concerned were Major-General (later Sir) Henry Timson Lukin (1860-1925), GOC 9th Division and Lieutenant-General (later General) Sir Charles Fergusson (7th Baronet) (1865-1951), GOC XVII Corps.

⁴⁸ John Buchan wrote of Brigadier-General Cecil Rawling: 'His brigade was his first care, and he husbanded it as a wise traveller husbans his failing supplies. There is nothing that men appreciate more than the knowledge that their commander values their lives and will not needlessly sacrifice them.' J. Buchan, *These for Remembrance: Memoirs of Friends Killed in the Great War* (London: Buchan & Enright, 1987), p. 37. Some brigadier-generals were generous in the extreme. During the confusion of the German offensive of March 1918 in the wine area of Epernay, Brigadier-General H.B.P.L. Kennedy, GOC 140 Brigade, 47th Division, sent a lorry forward 'to buy up what [wine] he could for his Brigade'. Walker (ed.), *War Letters to a Wife*, p. 176

⁴⁹ Their attitude contrasts with Haig's concern for the welfare of troops in cold weather: 'I wanted definite information as to the state of the front trenches and whether the winter leather waistcoats had yet been issued, also whether an extra blanket per man had been sent up.' TNA WO256/13 Haig's Diary, 31 October 1916. Some senior officers shared Haig's concern. Two days prior to his appointment as GOC 1 New Zealand Brigade on 22 October 1916, Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Hart, CO 1/Wellington recorded in his diary: 'Every man has a cardigan, leather waistcoat, 2 shirts, vest, 2 underpants, and they get a clean pair of sox (sic) daily. Tomorrow another blanket is being served out making two blankets per man plus his groundsheet and greatcoat.' Crawford, *The Devil's Own War*, p. 148

⁵⁰ TNA WO95/1294 WD 2nd Division, GS.1038/Gen.29., 24 January 1917. What applied in 2nd Division did not apply in 40th Division. Brigadier-General Crozier went so far forward he personally captured a German prisoner from a shell-hole in no man's land. Crozier, *A Brass Hat in No Man's Land*, pp. 145-7

example, did so when he challenged a ‘not guilty’ verdict of a court martial in the case of a sergeant arrested for being drunk.⁵¹ The presiding officer, in civilian life a member of the Bar, derived ‘a sense of satisfaction’ in providing chapter and verse from *King’s Regulations* and the *Manual of Military Law* that Ternan had no authority to do so.⁵²

The essence of the role of the brigadier seems to have changed little by the time of the Second World War. Based on a series of interviews with Sir Alexander Stanier, GOC 231 Brigade, 50th Division, Nigel de Lee has created a case study of Stanier’s command in preparation for its role on D-day and the days immediately following.⁵³ Unlike the majority of his Great War contemporaries, Stanier had the advantages of operating under conditions of open warfare, with a jeep to transport him around his area of operations and with technology that enabled him to provide his divisional commander with half hourly situation reports. Yet the essence of his role involved the training of his units, his translation of orders into tasks for his units and his co-ordination of their operational plans into a coherent whole for approval by his divisional commander. Stanier spent much of his own preparatory time liaising with formations and services with which his brigade would need to act in co-operation. Once in action, Stanier undertook a supervisory role. When he judged it necessary, he was up with his front line troops, re-organising units when the need arose, organising tactical support for individual units when required and temporarily filling in gaps in the command chain when casualties were suffered. He spent much of his time on D-day visiting his units.

Upon entering a battalion or battery command post, he made an instant, instinctive assessment of the atmosphere. If there was a sense of optimism and

⁵¹ Brigadier-General Trevor Patrick Breffney Ternan (1860-1949)

⁵² J. Sheen, *Tyneside Irish: 24th, 2th, 26th & 27th (Service) Battalions of Northumberland Fusiliers* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2010), p. 204

⁵³ Brigadier Sir Alexander Beville Gibbons (1899-1995) (2nd Baronet). N. De Lee, “‘A Brigadier is Only a Co-ordinator’”: British Command at Brigade Level in North-West Europe, 1944: A Case Study’, in G.D. Sheffield (ed.), *Leadership & Command: The Anglo-American Experience Since 1861*, pp. 129-40

activity, he would give some words of encouragement and move on quickly; he 'kept out of the way'.⁵⁴

With an eye for the ground, Stanier believed in the value of personal reconnaissance. By his appearance in forward positions he provided an example of steadfastness to his officers and ORs. Stanier was also an adherent to the value of battalion command – that was where he judged active command was concentrated. He saw the role of the brigade commander as planner, supervisor, organiser, maintainer of morale and, in emergencies, intervener. His personal approach was consistent with the stereotypical pre-war Regular officer – based on an instinctive code of gentlemanly conduct, courteous to all, obedient whilst supportively both questioning and critical. The parallels with his Great War contemporary, in function and in character, are self-evident.

1.4 Brigade Staff

As a formation, the brigade was the lowest formation level which had its own staff structure. Reporting to the brigadier-general were a brigade-major (BM) and a staff captain (SC). In addition the establishment of a brigade headquarters was initially supported by a veterinary officer and twenty-three other ranks who fulfilled administrative roles.⁵⁵ The brigade-major's area of responsibility was operations – the preparation of orders and maps, their distribution, the gathering and reporting of intelligence information, liaison with divisional staff and adjacent brigades and the preparation of reports and diaries.⁵⁶ He provided 'the essential link

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 135

⁵⁵ General Staff, War Office, *Field Service Pocket Book, 1914 (Reprinted, with Amendments, 1916)* (London: HMSO, 1916), p. 7

⁵⁶ These are referred to as the 'G' functions. Captain R.M. Laverton, BM, 174 Brigade, 58th Division suggested that a BM should have the same relationship with his brigade as does an adjutant with his battalion. In fact, he suggested 'he should be like Caesar's wife "all things to all men"'. TNA CAB45/116, Letter to Captain C. Falls, n.d. See also R. Lee, 'The Australian Staff: The Forgotten Men of the First AIF' in P. Dennis & J. Grey, (eds.), *1918 Defining Victory* (Canberra: Army History Unit, Department of Defence, 1999), pp. 118-122. Who was responsible for what was not always clear. For example, 2nd Division felt the need to issue an instruction clarifying the respective responsibilities of brigade and battalion staff over the maintenance of trenches – see

between the world of grand tactics and that of minor tactics'.⁵⁷ One brigade-major summed up his role as: 'I am now a sort of glorified policemen, adjutant and sgt.-major rolled into one.'⁵⁸

The role of the SC was to ensure that the brigade was suitably equipped and supplied. His wide remit included the supervision of transport, sanitation, billets, dumps and salvage, courts martial, spiritual welfare and leave.⁵⁹ Acting together, and when required inter-changeably, the BM and the SC provided the 'G', 'A' and 'Q' functions to the brigade.⁶⁰ As the war progressed, so a number of specialist roles were added to the brigade staff, for example officers responsible for intelligence, bombing, gas, musketry and trench mortars.⁶¹ Aimée Fox-Godden has provided an analysis of the development of the role of the brigade staff through a series of case studies.⁶² Kenneth Radley has stressed the pivotal role of the brigade-major and the key to his success being dependent on his relationships with his battalion commanders.⁶³ Radley attributes the following opinion to Sir Arthur Currie:

TNA WO95/1294 WD 2nd Division, Instructions No. 141 Organization for Work in the Trenches, 8 November 1916.

⁵⁷ P. Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18* (London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 23

⁵⁸ TNA WO95/2872 149 Brigade, 50th Division WD, Letter, Captain Harry Walter Jackson (1892-1970) to Brigadier-General (later Sir) Edward Pius Arthur Riddell (1875-1957), 26 October 1918

⁵⁹ These are referred to as the 'A' and 'Q' functions. 'My job is to look after the housing, feeding, interior economy, discipline and general comfort of the troops. The Brigade-Major does the "war" part of the show.' Letter of 8 March 1915 from Henry Pelham Burn to his father. Pelham Burn Papers, Item 19150308, The Gordon Highlanders Museum. Captain (later Major) Edwin Harry Lukin 'Rufus' Johnston (1887-1933) arrived at 2 CIB in December 1917 as SC(Q). His areas of responsibility were enumerated. 'But he was responsible for more than that [rations] – everything that was consumed, in fact, from ammunition to fuel, to picks and shovels, to barbed wire and corrugated iron for the trenches, to trains for men going on leave, to the vehicles in the transport lines, to finding billets whenever the brigade moved, to the provision of clean clothes and baths – even the organization of seasonal athletic competitions.' C. Castle, *Rufus: The Life of the Canadian Journalist Who Interviewed Hitler* (Vancouver: Granville Island Publishing, 2014), p. 110

⁶⁰ See General Staff, War Office, *Staff Manual, 1912* (London: HMSO, 1912) and *Field Service Regulations, Part II, Organization and Administration, 1909 (Reprinted, with Amendments, 1913)* (London: HMSO, 1913).

⁶¹ Brigadier-generals had some discretion to create posts. For example, 150 Brigade created the posts of 'Brigade Dump Officer and Carrying Officer'. TNA WO95/2832 150 Bde WD, 11 June 1917

⁶² A.E. Fox-Godden, 'Military administration and the role of brigade staff, 1916-1918', University of Birmingham, MA Dissertation, 2010

⁶³ See K. Radley, *We Lead Others Follow: First Canadian Division 1914-1918* (St. Catherines, Ontario: Vanwell, 2006), p. 188. Referring to Major Paul Frederick Villiers (1884-1963), BM 3 CIB, 1st Canadian Division, Radley quotes him as saying 'if a Brigade Major can only put himself in real touch with the COs ... half his difficulties are smoothed away'. See also Chapter 6 'A Staff to Serve the Line', pp. 180-212.

*Unless it [the position of BM] is filled by a trained staff officer, loss of efficiency will occur, and too great additional responsibility [will be] thrown upon the Brigadier.*⁶⁴

Anthony Eden was the youngest BM of the war serving with 198 Brigade, 66th Division from 26 May 1918 until the end of the war.⁶⁵ He coveted the job.

*The brigade and its staff seemed of exactly the right size and scope for individual efforts to be rewarding, while the contacts with units were close enough to have a human interest.*⁶⁶

Captain B.L. Montgomery, BM 104 Brigade, agreed:

*There is no doubt that a Brigade-Major's job is the most interesting of all Staff jobs.*⁶⁷

The nature of a staff officer's responsibilities to his commander has been identified as making sure that his commander has all the relevant facts before he makes his decision; ensuring that the commander is aware of all the probable consequences; that the decision is put into effect as well as possible; and that the staff officer acts as his commander's agent, and where necessary, his deputy.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the nature of the relationship between brigadier-generals and their staff in practice remains largely uncharted territory for military historians. When it does work well, it brings plaudits.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 186

⁶⁵ Captain Robert Anthony Eden, (later 1st Earl of Avon) (1897-1977). For the date of Eden's appointment, see TNA WO95/3139 WD 198 Brigade, 26 May 1918. Eden was 20 years and 321 days old when appointed BM.

⁶⁶ A. Eden, *Another World 1897-1917* (London: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 149

⁶⁷ Captain (later Field-Marshal) Bernard Law Montgomery (later 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein) (1887-1976). N. Hamilton, *Monty: The Making of a General 1887-1942* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981), p. 123. Referring to his GOC, Brigadier-General Gerald Mackay Mackenzie (1860-1934), Montgomery wrote he 'was an old retired officer' who was 'a very nice person but quite useless and it would be true to say that I really ran the Brigade, and they all knew it'. Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, Notes on his letters, Montgomery Papers BLM1/1, IWM cited in Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front*, p. 56

⁶⁸ Major R.G. Jessel, *G, A, and Q: An Introduction to the Staff* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1947), p. 10. At least one brigadier-general amended several of his BM's reports fearing that the mention of the very poor ground conditions would lead to his dismissal. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front*, p. 9

*The success of your deployment and advance yesterday morning can only have resulted from very good staff work and discipline in battalions. Will you tell your staff and that of your brigades how greatly I appreciate their work, and your Brigadiers and C.O.s the same.*⁶⁹

1.5 Brigadier-Generals – Expendable?

One of the reasons for the relative lack of attention paid to the role of brigadier-generals may be the assertion that they had limited scope to influence operational and tactical planning.⁷⁰ The decisions about the military strategy of the war, where and when battles would be fought, which formations should be committed to particular battles, what resources should be made available and what their objectives should be were matters outside the ambit of control of brigadier-generals. They were a layer of middle management. To those they commanded they provided standards, system, direction and leadership. To the divisional commanders to whom they were responsible they delivered performance, information and reports; they provided support, advice and, by some, criticism. Based upon their operational success, brigadier-generals aspired to engender confidence in those they commanded – leading from the front - and to exercise influence upon those to whom they reported – managing from beneath. Given their place as the most junior amongst the ranks of generals, however, they were vulnerable. They ran a significant risk that when things went wrong, or when scapegoats were sought, they would be expendable.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Lieutenant-General W.N. Congreve, GOC XIII Corps to Major-General J.A.L. Haldane, GOC 3rd Division quoted in A. Haldane, *A Soldier's Saga: The Autobiography of General Sir Aylmer Haldane* (London: William Blackwood, 1948), p. 330.

⁷⁰ Bourne, 'British Generals in the First World War', in Sheffield, *Leadership & Command*, p. 101

⁷¹ Tim Travers has devised a taxonomy of reasons for the dismissal of generals: (1) poor health and/or incompetence, (2) personal rivalry and animosity, (3) failure in action and as a lever to encourage the offensive spirit and (4) scapegoats. T. Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare 1900-1918* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 14. Bourne has spoken of an augmented taxonomy which also includes the removal of 'dug-outs', organizational reviews after major battles, and the operation of the 'six months rest' rule. Talk - 'Hiring and Firing on the Western Front', Lancashire and Cheshire Branch, Western Front Association, 14 January 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSOHzMjobvs> (accessed 29 November 2015).

Tim Travers attributes to Sir James Edmonds a claim by Haig that he had sacked over a hundred brigadier-generals.⁷² Some of the sacked brigadier-generals felt aggrieved but accepted their fate.⁷³ Others were aggrieved and successfully argued their case.⁷⁴ Others felt they had been treated unfairly and complained over Haig's head to the Military Secretary, predictably without success.⁷⁵ Brigadier-generals such as Frank Maxwell developed coping strategies. When they judged there was need, they circumvented the system. Maxwell claimed that he disobeyed or otherwise did not comply with orders he considered deserved such treatment.⁷⁶ When, as the man on the spot, Hanway Cumming thought his plan for an attack against Bullecourt was better suited to the circumstances than his divisional GOC's plan, his initiative was rewarded with dismissal. Cumming had suddenly become 'too tired to cope' and as a result 'his judgement was therefore warped'.⁷⁷ There were times, evidently, when the system could not be circumvented.

⁷² Travers, *The Killing Ground*, p. 13. Haig recorded in his diary: 'I said that if a divisional general reports any one of his brigadiers as unfit, I had only one of two alternatives, either the Brigadier must go or the Divisional GOC.' TNA WO256/14, Haig's Diary, 21 November 1916. Brigadier-General Sir James Edward Edmonds (1861-1956)

⁷³ In the wake of 38th Division's failed attack on Mametz Wood on 7 July 1916 which resulted in the summary dismissal of the Division's GOC, Major-General I. Phillips on 9 July 1916, Brigadier-General Horatio James Evans (1859-1932), GOC 115 Brigade, was sent home some six weeks later and retired on 28 August 1916. Whether Evans was formally sacked or simply relieved of his post on the grounds of age – he was fifty-seven – is not clear. The effect was the same.

⁷⁴ Brigadier-General Frederick Montgomerie Carleton (1867-1922), GOC 98 Brigade 33rd Division, a 'dug-out' who had retired in 1908, was scapegoated, also on 28 August 1916, for not complying with what amounted to an impossible order to carry out an attack. Carleton prepared a lengthy dossier explaining the circumstances. Haig subsequently indicated he would re-appoint Carleton to a brigade command, which he did, in Salonika – see Holmes, *Tommy*, pp. 218-20. For a more detailed account, see M. Brown, "'Stellenbosched': Nightmare of a Brigadier-General", in *The Imperial War Museum Book of the Western Front* (London: BCA, 1993), pp. 125-30.

⁷⁵ Brigadier-General Hamilton Walter Edward Finch (1868-1935), GOC 190 Brigade 63rd Division was summarily dismissed by his Corps commander, Lieutenant-General (later General Sir) Walter Norris Congreve (1862-1927), GOC XIII Corps, on 4 June 1917. He pleaded his case to the Military Secretary but was demoted to the command of a battalion (4/Middlesex) for the rest of the war – see TNA WO374/24223.

⁷⁶ 'So far I have always managed to disobey rotten orders, or have been able to square their non-compliance; but I can't always expect such luck, especially as one gets up the ladder.' Maxwell, *Frank Maxwell, V.C.*, p. 195

⁷⁷ Cumming, *A Brigadier in France*, p. 84. At the time Cumming commanded 91 Brigade, 7th Division. His divisional commander was Major-General Thomas Herbert Shoubridge (1871-1923).

1.6 The Arras Brigadier-Generals

Bourne believes there to have been 1,257 officers in the BEF who held positions with the rank of brigadier-general or above between 1914 and 1918.⁷⁸ In addition to the two Commanders-in-Chief who held the rank of Field-Marshal, ten generals were army commanders, forty-three were corps commanders, 147 were infantry division commanders and more than 700 were infantry brigade commanders.⁷⁹ On 9 April 1917 the BEF comprised five armies, twenty-one corps, sixty-eight divisions and 204 brigades. Between 9 April and 15 May 1917 the Battle of Arras involved elements of three armies, nine corps, thirty-six divisions and 108 brigades.⁸⁰ The number of brigadier-generals who were in post in these 108 brigades during the period of the battle was 116. The excess of brigadier-generals over the number of brigades is explained by the need for replacements, which arose for a variety of reasons, including two brigadier-generals who had been killed in action.⁸¹

There follows an analysis of the 116 brigadier-generals who were in post during the battle. This represents more than half the brigadier-generals on the Western Front in the spring of 1917. The data collected is based on work initially undertaken by Bourne and subsequently

⁷⁸ See Introduction, Note 3.

⁷⁹ Major A.F. Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, History of the Great War, Part 4* (London: HMSO, 1945) and Bourne, 'British Generals in the First World War', in Sheffield, *Leadership & Command*, p. 94

⁸⁰ Of these thirty-six divisions, twenty-five were British infantry divisions, three were British cavalry divisions and eight were Dominion infantry divisions – four Australian and four Canadian.

⁸¹ Those brigadier-generals killed were Charles Bulkeley Bulkeley-Johnson (1867-1917), GOC 8 (Cavalry) Brigade, 3rd Cavalry Division and Charles Gosling (1868-1917), GOC 10 Brigade, 4th Division. The others who were replaced were Douglas Campbell (later Douglas of Main) (1864-1927), GOC 153 Brigade, 51st Division – Home & a training command; Gerald Ponsonby Sneyd Hunt (1877-1918), 173 Brigade, 58th Division – demoted to CO 1/Royal Berks, KIA 23 March 1918; William Colquhoun Grant McGrigor (1861-1924), GOC 174 Brigade, 58th Division – Home & retirement; T.P.B. Ternan, GOC 102 Brigade, 34th Division – Home - he accepted he had reached the end of his tether & retired; Herbert Edward Trevor (1871-1939), GOC 103 Brigade, 34th Division – Home due to ill health (sciatica) but returned to his command in August 1917; and Weir de Lancey Williams (1871-1961), GOC 86 Brigade, 29th Division - promoted to GOC 30th Division. Hunt's demotion from command of a brigade to a battalion command was a rare occurrence. Another to suffer the same fate was Brigadier-General Sir Thomas Dare Jackson (1876-1954). Sacked as GOC 55 Brigade by Maxse in October 1916, he subsequently commanded 11/Manchester Regiment. He never commanded a brigade again. See G. Corrigan, *Mud, Blood and Poppycock: Britain and the First World War* (London: Cassell, 2003), pp. 294-5. One of Jackson's men recorded that his men could 'never forget the man who would wreck his career rather than be a party – however unwillingly – to the annihilation of troops under his command'. See M. Brown, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the Western Front* (London: Pan Books, 2001), p. 189.

considerably expanded by the author. The database analysis draws upon information from a wide variety of sources including *Army Lists*, the *London Gazette*, individuals' service records held in archives, museums and libraries, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, divisional histories, obituaries and numerous genealogical sources. Given the destruction of individuals' records held by the Military Secretary due to a German air raid on 8 September 1940, however, the database cannot be considered complete in all respects.⁸² The records relating to some brigadier-generals are well documented, others inevitably less so. The analysis does not distinguish between brigadier-generals drawn from divisions which only saw action in one element of the battle. For example, 24th Division was involved only at Vimy Ridge, whilst 5th Division was involved in no less than five elements – First Scarpe, Second Scarpe, Arleux, Third Scarpe and Roeux. For the purpose of establishing a picture of brigadier-generals at this point in the war, all 116 have been given the same attention.

By April 1917 the BEF had nearly three years' experience of war. It had changed considerably in terms of its scale and organization, its weapons and equipment, and its operational approach and tactical skills. It had also changed in terms of its leadership, most notably the replacement of Sir John French by Haig as C-in-C. At brigade level, there had been a shake-up as a result of the BEF's performance during the Battle of the Somme. Of the 132 brigadier-generals who were involved in the battle, five were killed in action or otherwise died of their wounds.⁸³ A further nine brigadier-generals were wounded. Seven of these either remained with their brigades because their wounds were slight, or they returned to their brigades after a brief absence, or on their recovery were appointed to another brigade

⁸² See Appendix One.

⁸³ Brigadier-Generals George Bull (1877-1916), GOC 8 Brigade, 3rd Division; Henry Frederick Hugh Clifford (1867-1916), GOC 149 Brigade, 50th Division; Duncan John Glasfurd (1873-1916), GOC 12 (Australian) Brigade, 4th (Australian) Division; Charles Bertie Prowse (1869-1916), GOC 11 Brigade, 4th Division; Charles Edward Stewart (1868-1916), GOC 154 Brigade, 51st Division.

command before the end of 1916.⁸⁴ A further eighteen brigadier-generals lost their commands before the end of 1916.⁸⁵ In other words, more than eighteen per cent of the 132 brigadier-generals involved in the Battle of the Somme were replaced before the end of 1916. As a generalization, therefore, the brigadier-generals in post in early 1917 had been tested in battle and, at a minimum, judged worthy to retain their commands. Those involved in the Battle of Arras merit further scrutiny.

1.7 Arras Brigadier-Generals – Where Did They Start?

The arms into which these officers had been commissioned were:

| | | |
|-----------|----|-------|
| Artillery | 2 | 1.7% |
| | | |
| Cavalry | 19 | 16.4% |
| | | |
| Engineers | 1 | 0.9% |
| | | |
| Infantry | 94 | 81.0% |

Table 1.1 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Arms Into Which Commissioned

It is no surprise that the overwhelming majority of the Arras brigadier-generals in command of infantry brigades had been commissioned into infantry regiments. What is noticeable is the disparate number of regiments into which these 116 officers had been commissioned. The nineteen cavalry officers had been commissioned into fourteen different regiments. The ninety-four infantry officers had been commissioned into sixty-nine different regiments. In the case of forty-seven of these regiments, only one of these future brigadier-generals had been commissioned into them. The commissioning regiments with the highest concentration

⁸⁴ The two exceptions were Brigadier-General H.J. Evans, GOC 115 Brigade, 38th Division – see Note 73 - and Hon. Charles John Sackville-West (1870-1962), GOC 190 Brigade, 63rd Division who returned to command 182 Brigade, 61st Division on 12 March 1917.

⁸⁵ Simkins, “Building Blocks”, p. 152

of future Arras brigadier-generals were the KRRC (five), the Guards Regiments (Scots Guards – three, Grenadier Guards – one, Coldstream Guards – one), the Royal Berkshire Regiment (three), the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (three) and the Seaforth Highlanders (three).⁸⁶

All ninety-four officers commissioned into infantry regiments commanded infantry brigades. The same cannot be said of the nineteen cavalry commissioned officers. Of these, nine commanded infantry brigades of whom seven Dominion officers (six Canadians and one Australian) commanded infantry brigades of the CEF or AIF respectively.⁸⁷ Given that twenty-five Dominion brigades were involved at Arras, a much higher proportion of Dominion infantry brigades were commanded by cavalry commissioned officers (twenty-seven per cent) than were British infantry brigades (two per cent).⁸⁸ There were no instances of infantry commissioned officers, British or Dominion, having command of any of the nine cavalry brigades involved at Arras.

Twenty-two of the twenty-five Dominion brigades were commanded by their nationals. The remaining three were commanded by British officers – Brigadier-Generals F.S. Dawson (South African Brigade), C.J. Hobkirk (14 AIB) and a Canadian, W.B. Lesslie, who

⁸⁶ The disparate nature of the regiments from which the British army's generals were drawn is echoed by a study of 108 major-generals on the *Army List* at the outbreak of war. The regiment into which the highest number of these future major-generals was commissioned was again the KRRC (four) and the author reports that only five other regiments received two subalterns of this cohort. See G. Fontenot, 'The Modern Major General: Patterns in the Careers of the British Army Major Generals on Active Duty at the Time of the Sarajevo Assassinations', University of North Carolina, MA Dissertation, 1980, pp. 60-1.

⁸⁷ The officers commissioned into cavalry regiments who commanded infantry brigades were: Canadians – Brigadier-Generals (later Major-General) James Harold Elmsley (1878-1954), W.A. Griesbach, (later Major-General) Huntley Douglas Brodie Ketchen (1872-1959), (later Major-General Sir) James Howden MacBrien (1878-1938), (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Archibald Cameron Macdonell (1864-1941) and George Stuart Tuxford (1870-1943); Australian – Evan Alexander Wisdom (1869-1945). The British cavalry commissioned officers who commanded infantry brigades were: Brigadier-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Adrian Paul Ghislain Carton de Wiart (1880-1963) and Reginald O'Bryan Taylor (1872-1949). Both Brigadier-Generals (later Sir) Berkeley Vincent (1871-1963) and F.A. Maxwell had served in cavalry regiments (6/Dragoon Guards and 18/Bengal Lancers respectively) but they had been commissioned into the Royal Artillery and the Royal Sussex Regiment respectively.

⁸⁸ The twenty-five Dominion brigades were composed of twelve Canadian infantry brigades, twelve Australian infantry brigades and one South African brigade that formed part of 9th Division.

commanded 1 AIB.⁸⁹ There were three other Dominion brigadier commanders at Arras who had been born in the UK – E. Hilliam (10 CIB), G.S. Tuxford (3 CIB) and E.A. Wisdom (7 AIB). A fourth, H.D.B. Ketchen (6 CIB), had been born of British parents whilst his father had been serving in India with the British army.⁹⁰ In each of these instances they had emigrated to Canada or Australia respectively at ages between twelve and twenty-seven, had joined the military force of the country of their adoption and returned to their adopted country after the war. For the purposes of the analysis which follows, these officers are considered to be nationals of their adopted countries.

Brigadier-General C. Cunliffe-Owen, GOC 54 Brigade, 18th Division, one of the two gunners, was commissioned from RMA Woolwich into the Royal Artillery in 1883. He served during the South African War and commanded XXVI Brigade, 1st Division in August 1914. Having commanded his brigade on the Marne and the Aisne, he temporarily commanded 2 Brigade, 1st Division at First Ypres. During 1915 Cunliffe-Owen served in Gallipoli with the ANZAC artillery. Between August and November 1916 he served as GOC 119 Brigade, 40th Division before taking up a home post for six months as GOC Harwich Special Reserve Brigade. He returned to France as GOC 54 Brigade, 18th Division just three days before the opening of the Battle of Arras. Cunliffe-Owen was with his brigade through almost the entire Third Battle of Ypres – Pilckem Ridge, Inverness Copse, Langemarck, First Passchendaele and Poelcappelle. His divisional history records that: ‘On 22nd October Brigadier-General C. Cunliffe-Owen, completely exhausted by the heavy fighting in endless quagmires, retired from the command of 54th Brigade’. At the age of 53, the circumstances of the departure of this capable,

⁸⁹ Brigadier-General Frederick Stuart Dawson (1873-1920). Brigadier-General William Breck Lesslie (1886-1942).

⁹⁰ Brigadier-General Edward Hilliam (1865-1949)

experienced and versatile officer from front line service seems difficult to fit neatly into the beguiling convenience of Travers' taxonomy.⁹¹

The other gunner was Brigadier-General Berkeley Vincent, GOC 35 Brigade, 12th Division. Commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1891, and after a period of regimental duty in India, Vincent saw active service in China and South Africa before being attached to the Japanese army in 1903. He learnt Japanese and subsequently was an observer during the Russo-Japanese War. Vincent transferred to the cavalry (6th Dragoon Guards) in 1908. After passing Staff College in 1909, and interspersed with a year as a GSO2 at the Staff College at Quetta, Vincent commanded a cavalry squadron for three years before his eventual promotion to GSO1 of 37th Division. It was from this appointment that he was promoted in January 1917 to command 35 Brigade, which he successfully commanded until the end of the war.⁹²

Brigadier-General W.B. Lesslie was the sole engineer amongst the Arras brigadier-generals. He was a Canadian who graduated from the Royal Military College, Kingston in the summer of 1888 at the age of nineteen.⁹³ At the time four commissions a year were ordinarily reserved by the British army for Kingston graduates.⁹⁴ He was commissioned into the Royal Engineers and by 1895 had returned to Kingston as a staff member. Lieutenant Lesslie was appointed assistant to the Professor responsible for 'Fortification, Military Engineering, Drawing and

⁹¹ Cunliffe-Owen continued to serve from November 1917 until the Armistice as GOC 206 Brigade 69th Division, a home service, second line TF division. He received the CMG in 1918 to add to his CB and seven MiDs.

⁹² For a cameo illustration of Vincent's tactical acumen as a brigade commander, see Simkins, "Building Blocks", p. 161. By the end of the war Vincent had received the CB, CMG and 5 MiDs. His thirty-three year career culminated on his retirement in 1924 with a knighthood (KBE).

⁹³ There were two other RMC Kingston graduates amongst the Arras brigadier-generals. They were Brigadier-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Archibald Cameron Macdonell (1864-1941), GOC 7 CIB, 3rd (Canadian) Division who graduated in 1886, and Brigadier-General William Frederick Sweny (1873-1950), GOC 72 Brigade, 24th Division who graduated in 1893.

⁹⁴ This number did vary. In 1885, for example, it was feared that in the event of a war with Russia there would be a shortage of British officers. As a result an additional twenty-six extra commissions were made available to recent Kingston graduates that year. R.A. Preston, *Canada's RMC: A History of the Royal Military College* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1969), p. 96

Descriptive Geometry' and subsequently promoted an Assistant Professor in 1898.⁹⁵ After active service with the British army in Somaliland (1901-03) and as a staff officer in India (1912-14), Lesslie was appointed AA&QMG on the ANZAC HQ staff of Sir William Birdwood in December 1914. Lesslie was the Military Landing Officer at ANZAC Cove. His service during the Gallipoli campaign was acknowledged with the award of the CMG. Lesslie was subsequently appointed Chief Engineer on the staff of Sir Alexander Godley's II ANZAC Corps in October 1915, an appointment he held until he was appointed GOC 1 AIB, 1st Australian Division in January 1917.⁹⁶ He was one of the few brigade commanders during the Great War who had not commanded a battalion, or in Vincent's case, a regiment, before being given the responsibility for a brigade.⁹⁷

The non-infantry pedigree of Cunliffe-Owen, Vincent and Lesslie made them exceptions. The typical background of the Arras brigadier-generals was that they had attended public schools, graduated from Sandhurst and had been commissioned into infantry regiments. Although the data is incomplete, it is known that more than two thirds of these brigadier-generals appointed to command British brigades were educated at public schools in the UK. Certain public schools were predominant. Six provided more than half of the future commanders of British brigades at Arras – forty-one of the seventy-four instances where their school is known. Those schools were Eton (thirteen), Wellington (eleven), Winchester (six), Haileybury (five), Charterhouse (three) and Cheltenham (three).⁹⁸ Amongst those appointed to the command of

⁹⁵ A.J. Kerry & W.A. McDill, *The History of the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers: Volume I 1749-1939* (Ottawa: The Military Engineers Association of Canada. 1962), p. 41

⁹⁶ Lieutenant-General (later General) Sir Alexander John Godley (1867-1957)

⁹⁷ Apart from Lesslie, all the Australian brigade commanders involved at Arras had previously commanded an infantry battalion. The same could not be said of the Canadian brigades. The exceptions were J.H. Elmsley (8 CIB, 3rd Canadian Division, H.D.B. Ketchen (6 CIB, 2nd Canadian Division) and J.H. MacBrien (12 CIB, 4th Canadian Division). Elmsley and MacBrien were both Camberley graduates. Ketchen had graduated from RMC Sandhurst. Such officers were rarities in the CEF.

⁹⁸ For an analysis of public school pupils who served based largely on contemporary school archival statistics, see A. Seldon & D. Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War: The Generation Lost* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword

the twenty-five Dominion brigades, only seven are known to have attended fee paying schools.⁹⁹ Given the geographical size of both Canada and Australia, it is no surprise that only one school provided more than one of the Arras brigadier-generals.¹⁰⁰ Attendance at a university was the privilege of the few.¹⁰¹ Of the 116 brigadier-generals, ten had attended a university although only nine had graduated.¹⁰² Of the six British graduates, all attended either Oxford or Cambridge. This *crème de la crème* approach was confirmed by the disproportionate number who commanded cavalry brigades involved at Arras – compared with infantry brigades – three of the ten being commanded by Oxbridge graduates.¹⁰³ The remaining three Oxbridge graduates commanded infantry brigades as did the two Canadian graduates of the University of Toronto and the single Australian graduate of the University of Melbourne.¹⁰⁴

Table 1.2 illustrates the routes through which the Arras brigadier-generals entered the army, most commonly through graduation from Sandhurst followed by entry through the Militia.

Military, 2013), pp. 254-261. For the authors' cautionary note concerning statistical inconsistencies and errors within their data, see p. 240.

⁹⁹ Of the twenty-five Dominion brigade commanders, the school they attended has been identified in twenty-two instances. The evidence indicates, therefore, that the type of school attended by these officers was more disparate than those of their British counterparts.

¹⁰⁰ The explanation lies in their family connection. Brigadier-Generals (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Archibald Cameron Macdonell (1864-1941) (GOC 7 CIB, 3rd (Canadian) Division) and Archibald Hayes Macdonell (1868-1939) (GOC 5 CIB, 2nd (Canadian) Division) were cousins who attended Trinity College School, Port Hope, Ontario.

¹⁰¹ John Bourne believes only fourteen British Regular formation commanders had attended a university. J.M. Bourne 'The BEF's Generals on 29 September 1918: An Empirical Portrait with Some British and Australian Comparisons', in P. Dennis & J. Grey, (eds.), *1918 Defining Victory* (Canberra: Army History Unit, Department of Defence, 1999), p. 107, Note 32

¹⁰² The exception was Adrian Carton de Wiart (12 Brigade, 4th Division). For an explanation of the reasons for his premature departure from Balliol College, University of Oxford, see A. Carton de Wiart, *Happy Odyssey* (London: Jonathan Cape; 1950), pp. 15-6.

¹⁰³ Desmond John Edward Beale-Brown (1870-1953), (2 (Cavalry) Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division), D'Arcy Legard (1873-1953) (9 (Cavalry) Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division) and Ernest Makins (1869-1959), (1 (Cavalry) Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division).

¹⁰⁴ Respectively they were Oxbridge – Alexander Walter Frederic Baird (1876-1931), (100 Brigade, 33rd Division), (later General Sir) Henry Cholmondeley Jackson (1879-1972), (175 Brigade, 58th Division), (later Sir) Bartholomew George Price (1870-1947), (150 Brigade, 50th Division; University of Toronto - Frederick William Hill (1866-1954), (9 (Canadian) Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division). Victor Wentworth Odium (1880-1971), (11 (Canadian) Brigade, 4th Canadian Division); University of Melbourne - Harold Edward Elliott (1878-1931) (15 (Australian) Brigade, 5th Australian Division).

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----|-----|
| RMC | 65 | 56% |
| | | |
| Militia | 31 | 27% |
| | | |
| Ranks | 13 | 11% |
| | | |
| RMCK ¹⁰⁵ | 3 | 2% |
| | | |
| RMA Woolwich ¹⁰⁶ | 2 | 2% |
| | | |
| Territorial Force | 1 | 1% |
| | | |
| Direct | 1 | 1% |

Table 1.2 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Entry Routes

These figures mask significant differences between the entry routes of commanders of British and Dominion brigades.

| | | |
|-------------------|----|-----|
| RMC | 61 | 68% |
| | | |
| Militia | 21 | 24% |
| | | |
| Ranks | 3 | 3% |
| | | |
| RMCK | 1 | 1% |
| | | |
| RMA Woolwich | 2 | 2% |
| | | |
| Territorial Force | 1 | 1% |
| | | |
| Direct | 1 | 1% |

Table 1.3 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Entry Routes – British Brigade GOCs

These figures mirror almost precisely the proportionate routes through which Richard Holmes found the army was recruited at the outbreak of the war, with sixty-seven per cent entering through Sandhurst, two per cent from the ranks and the remainder predominantly through ‘the

¹⁰⁵ See Note 93.

¹⁰⁶ Charles Cunliffe-Owen and Berkeley Vincent

militia back door'.¹⁰⁷ The three commanders of British brigades who started their military careers in the ranks were W.J. Dugan, a future Governor of South Australia who was raised to the peerage in 1949; A. Carton de Wiart who enlisted under a false name, lost his left arm and left eye before winning a VC at La Boisselle in 1916 when CO of 8/Gloucesters; and M.N. Turner, the son of a wine merchant who had served nearly four years in the ranks before graduating from Sandhurst to be commissioned into the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, whose Colonel he became in 1932.¹⁰⁸

The sole brigade commander with a TF pedigree was G.D. Goodman.¹⁰⁹ Geoffrey Goodman was a Derbyshire solicitor who had attended Manchester Grammar School. He won a DSO as a brigadier-general in 1918, held his command until the end of the war and was subsequently knighted in 1935 for his services to the Territorial Army Association.¹¹⁰

The single direct entrant, labelled by Bourne an 'exotic', was Bernard Freyberg.¹¹¹ A dentist by training, Freyberg was commissioned into a New Zealand territorial infantry regiment in 1911. He left New Zealand for the United States in 1914, ostensibly to further his training as a

¹⁰⁷ See Holmes, *Tommy*, pp. 122-3

¹⁰⁸ Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Winston Joseph Dugan (later 1st Baron Dugan of Victoria) (1877-1951). Brigadier-General Martin Newman Turner (1865-1944).

¹⁰⁹ Brigadier-General (later Sir) Godfrey Davenport Goodman (1868-1957). Of the 132 brigadier-generals involved during the Battle of the Somme, only two were Territorial officers (Arthur Benison Hubback (1871-1948), 2 Brigade, 1st Division and (later Sir) Henry Page-Croft (1881-1947) (1st Baronet of Knole, Bournemouth), 68 Brigade, 23rd Division). Hubback was wounded on 1 July 1917 and evacuated. He returned to France to command 118 Brigade, 39th Division (8 April – 20 October 1918) and subsequently 63 Brigade, 37th Division (21 October 1918 – Armistice). Page-Croft was elected M.P. for Christchurch in 1910. He retained his seat whilst on active service. Promoted to a brigade command on 8 February 1916, his criticisms of his commanders caused controversy and he was recalled on 18 August 1916. By February 1918 the number of Territorial brigadier-generals in post was ten – see Ian Beckett, 'The Territorial Force in the Great War', in P.H. Liddle, *Home Fires and Foreign Fields: British Social and Military Experience in the First World War* (London: Brassey's, 1985), p. 30. No Territorial officer commanded a division during the Great War – see Bourne 'The BEF's Generals on 29 September 1918', p. 102.

¹¹⁰ *LG*, 2 December 1918. 'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Two of his commanding officers being wounded, this officer on two occasions took over and, by his energy and drive, succeeded in taking the enemy position. On both these occasions he showed the greatest gallantry, moving about freely in the open under heavy fire of all arms. Although wounded he remained at duty until his brigade was relieved.'

¹¹¹ Brigadier-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Bernard Cyril Freyberg (1889-1963) (Baron Freyberg of Wellington in New Zealand and of Munstead in the County of Surrey). See Note 22 and Bourne 'The BEF's Generals on 29 September 1918', p. 102.

dentist. Rather than pursue a course at Stanford University, Freyberg went to Mexico, where he apparently fought in the Mexican Rebellion as a mercenary before deserting when he heard that war had been declared in Europe.¹¹² Freyberg made his way to London, arriving on 25 August 1914. After a brief meeting with Winston Churchill as he crossed Horse Guards Parade, Freyberg was commissioned on 8 September 1914 into the Hood Battalion of the RND as a temporary Lieutenant in the RNVR.¹¹³ During the war Freyberg was awarded the VC, CMG, DSO and two bars, six MiDs and was wounded nine times.¹¹⁴ Further honours followed as a result of his service during the Second World War culminating with his elevation in 1951.¹¹⁵

It is clear that, although these five individuals found their way into the army through other than the traditional Sandhurst or the Militia routes, they still climbed the promotional ladder as well as any of those who had come from the conventional officer mould. As for the Dominion brigadier-generals, their conventional officer mould was clearly of a different ilk as the data in Table 1.4 illustrates.

| | | |
|---------|----|-----|
| RMC | 3 | 12% |
| | | |
| Militia | 10 | 40% |
| | | |
| Ranks | 10 | 40% |
| | | |
| RMCK | 2 | 8% |

Table 1.4 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Entry Routes – Dominion Brigade GOCs

¹¹² See Freyberg, *Bernard Freyberg V.C.*, pp. 27-34.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 37

¹¹⁴ Haig inspected Freyberg's battalion at Frenclillers and noted in his diary that Freyberg had been recommended for the VC. 'But for his action, victory might not have been attained.' TNA WO256/14 Haig's Diary, 20 November 1916.

¹¹⁵ Freyberg had been awarded the CB in 1936 (*LG* 31 December 1935). He was appointed KBE in 1942 (*LG* 1 January 1942) and advanced to KCB the same year (*LG* 24 November 1942). He was awarded a third Bar to his DSO in 1945 (*LG* 3 July 1945) and subsequently awarded the American Legion of Merit (Degree of Commander) (*LG* 2 August 1945). The following year he was created KStJ (*LG* 1 January 1946) and GCMG (*LG* 1 February 1946) before being created a Baron in 1951 (*LG* 19 October 1951).

Given the traditional opposition within both Australia and Canada to a standing army, it is no surprise that eighty per cent of the Arras Dominion brigadier-generals were not graduates of either the RMCK or the RMC. What marks this cohort out as very different from their British counterparts was the proportion whose initial experience was as an OR. The numbers drawn through the various routes were very similar for both the Australian and Canadian brigadier-generals.

| | Australian | Canadian |
|----------------|---|--|
| RMC | Gellibrand, J. ¹¹⁶ Hobkirk, C.J. ¹¹⁷ | Ketchen, H.D.B. |
| Militia | Bennett, H.G. ¹¹⁸ Heane, J. ¹¹⁹ Robertson, J.C. ¹²⁰ Tivey, E. ¹²¹ | Elmsley, J.H. Hill, F.W. Macdonell, A.H. Odlum, V.W. Tuxford, G.S. |
| Ranks | Brand, C.H. ¹²² Elliott, H.E. Glasgow, T.W. ¹²³ Smith, R. ¹²⁵ Wisdom, E.A. | Griesbach, W.A. Hilliam, E. Loomis, F.O.W. ¹²⁴ MacBrien, J.H. Rennie, R. ¹²⁶ |
| RMCK | Lesslie, W.A. | Macdonell, A.C. |

Table 1.5 Arras Dominion Brigadier-Generals: Entry Routes

NB: The remaining Militia entrant was Dawson, F.S., GOC South African Brigade.

¹¹⁶ Some historians regard John Gellibrand's circumstances as similar to those of Bernard Freyberg, that is, as direct entrants from civilian life. Gellibrand was commissioned into the British army via the RMC in 1893, passed Staff College, resigned his commission in 1912 and returned to service in 1914. For the purposes of this analysis he is regarded as a 'dug-out' rather than a civilian. His training, subsequent experience and performance merited his promotion to GOC 3rd (Australian) Division on 31 May 1918. For a thumbnail description of Gellibrand, see P. Charlton, *Australians on the Somme: Pozieres 1916* (London: Leo Cooper/Secker & Warburg, 1986), p. 171.

¹¹⁷ Brigadier-General Clarence John Hobkirk (1869-1949)

¹¹⁸ Brigadier-General (later Lieutenant-General) Henry Gordon Bennett (1887-1972)

¹¹⁹ Brigadier-General James Heane (1874-1954)

¹²⁰ Brigadier-General James Campbell Robertson (1878-1951)

¹²¹ Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Edwin Tivey (1866-1947)

¹²² Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Charles Henry Brand (1873-1961)

¹²³ Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) (Thomas) William Glasgow (1876-1955)

¹²⁴ Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Frederick Oscar Warren Loomis (1870-1937)

¹²⁵ Brigadier-General Robert Smith (1881-1928)

¹²⁶ Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Robert Rennie (1862-1949)

This diversity of entry routes was not to be found amongst those of the Arras brigadier-generals who were subsequently promoted to command a division. Of the 116, fifteen subsequently commanded a division on the Western Front, dominated by those who had been trained at Sandhurst. Amongst the eleven British brigadier-generals of this group, all were graduates of the RMC, except A.B.E. Cator (58th Division) and A.E.W. Harman (3rd Cavalry) both of whom had joined via the Militia.¹²⁷ As CO 2/Hampshire, Lieutenant-Colonel W. de L. Williams had commanded 88 Brigade, 29th Division temporarily for a month in the spring of 1915 before being appointed GOC 86 Brigade on 20 December 1915. Williams was the first of the Arras brigadier-generals to be promoted, in his case on 30 April 1917 to GOC 30th Division. A further four British brigadier-generals were also promoted during 1917 – Cameron, Cator, Dudgeon and Wood.

The background of the four promoted Dominion brigadier-generals varied. In the wake of the Battle of Arras, the Canadian A.C. ('Batty Mac') Macdonell was the next to be promoted on 8 June 1917 to GOC 1st Canadian Division.¹²⁸ Macdonell had graduated from the RMCK in 1886 and had been awarded a commission in the Royal Artillery. He was forced to refuse it because of the failure of his father's business. Instead he joined the Canadian Militia, transferring to the Permanent Force in 1888 and subsequently exchanging into the Royal

¹²⁷ Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Albemarle Bertie Edward Cator (1877-1932). Brigadier-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) (Anthony Ernest) Wentworth Harman (1872-1961). The nine RMC graduates in command of British brigades at Arras promoted to divisional commands were N.J.G. Cameron (49th Division), Douglas Edward Cayley (1870-1951) (29th Division), Frederick Annesley Dudgeon (1866-1943) (56th Division), H.W. Higginson (12th Division), H.C. Jackson (50th Division), Thomas Tait Pitman (1868-1941) (2nd Cavalry Division), (later Sir) Percy Cyriac Burrell Skinner (1871-1955) (14th Division), W.de L. Williams (30th Division) and Philip Richard Wood (1868-1945) (33rd Division).

¹²⁸ Macdonell's promotion was a link in a chain of moves – General Sir Archibald James Murray (1860-1945) to GOC-in-C Aldershot, General Sir E.H.H. Allenby to C-in-C Egyptian Expeditionary Force, General (later Field-Marshal) Hon. Sir Julian Hedworth George Byng (later 1st Viscount Byng of Vimy) (1862-1935) to GOC Third Army, Lieutenant-General (later General) Sir Arthur William Currie (1875-1933) to GOC Canadian Corps, Macdonell to GOC 1st Canadian Division. See also I.M. McCulloch, "'Batty Mac': Portrait of a Brigade Commander of the Great War, 1915-1917', *Canadian Military History*, 7 (4) (1998), pp. 11-28.

North West Mounted Police with which he served until 1899. Following service with the Royal Canadian Mounted Rifles in South Africa, during which he was both seriously wounded and awarded a DSO, Macdonell re-joined the Permanent Force. By the outbreak of the Great War he was a battalion CO. By the standards of the British army, Macdonell's career path had been unconventional.

More conventional, however, was the career path of the Australian John Gellibrand. Born in Tasmania, Gellibrand had graduated from the RMC in 1893, pursued a regimental career in the British army and served during the South African War. Gellibrand subsequently served as a regimental adjutant, a garrison adjutant in St Helena, on the staff of the Staff College and as DAA&QMG Ceylon before resigning his commission in 1912 to return to Tasmania. At the outbreak of war Gellibrand was re-instated as a captain and DA&QMG, 1st Australian Division HQ. He was subsequently promoted to the command of a battalion in December 1915. Unlike Macdonell, it was not until the beginning of June 1918 that Gellibrand was promoted to command 3rd Australian Division, in succession to Sir John Monash.¹²⁹ In biding his time for his opportunity, Gellibrand had something in common with the remaining two promoted Dominion brigadier-generals – they were all promoted within what proved to be the last few months of the war.¹³⁰ T.W. Glasgow was promoted to GOC 1st Australian Division in July 1918 and F.O.W. Loomis to GOC 3rd Canadian Division in September 1918. Glasgow and Loomis had both joined their respective Militias as privates, both had been commissioned in 1898, and both commanded battalions at the beginning of the war. Although not their fault, and without any reflection on their abilities, they also shared the fact that the officers they succeeded, respectively Major-Generals H.B. Walker and L.J. Lipsett, had both transferred to

¹²⁹ Major-General (later General Sir) John Monash (1865-1931)

¹³⁰ Two other Dominion Arras brigadier-generals, both Canadians, were promoted major-general, but neither to the command of a division on the Western Front. In July 1917 A.H. Macdonell was appointed to a command in Canada - Military District New Brunswick whilst J.H. Elmsley was appointed GOC Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force in August 1918.

the command of British divisions (48th and 4th Divisions respectively) creating vacancies for Australian and Canadian nationals.¹³¹ With only two exceptions due to illness, the remaining thirteen members of this cohort of major-generals continued to hold their divisional commands until the end of the war.¹³² It remains a matter for conjecture whether Glasgow and Loomis would have reached the command of a division had they been in competition with British officers.¹³³

1.8 Arras Brigadier-Generals – Age and Service

There was a generational span between the date of the commissioning of the youngest and the oldest of the Arras brigadier-generals. There were both similarities and significant differences between the length and nature of the service of the British and Dominion brigadier-generals. To illustrate the point, half of the officers in this cohort who commanded British brigades had been commissioned before 1892, that is to say they had been commissioned for a minimum of twenty-three years at the outbreak of the war. On the other hand, half of the Dominion officers had been commissioned after 1898 so that at the outbreak of war they had a maximum period as commissioned officers of fifteen years. In making this comparison one should also bear in mind the nature of their experience – full time in the British Regular army compared with predominantly part time experience in the Australian and Canadian Militias.

¹³¹ Major-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Harold Bridgwood Walker (1862-1934). Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Louis James Lipsett (1874-1918). In the case of Walker this was due to the implementation of a policy of ‘Australianisation’ – see J.M. Bourne, *Who’s Who in World War One* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 298. Lipsett’s relationship with Currie had apparently become acrimonious. See T. Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1917-1918, Volume Two* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008), p. 504.

¹³² The exceptions were Major-Generals A.B.E. Cator, GOC 58th Division and F.A. Dudgeon, GOC 56th Division.

¹³³ Glasgow was subsequently extolled to future British officers. In a presentation at Camberley, Major C.G. Woolner identified Glasgow’s performance as a battlefield commander as the key to 13 Australian Brigade’s success at Villers Bretonneux. He described Glasgow as ‘a particularly resolute leader’. TNA WO95/2989 58th Division, Account of Counterattack, Villers Bretonneux 24th/25th April 1918 by Major (later Major-General) Christopher Geoffrey Woolner, CB, MC, RE, Staff College Camberley, November 1927

The British officer of this cohort who had held his commission longest was T.P.B. Ternan, 102 Brigade, 34th Division. He had been commissioned in 1879. A veteran of service in Afghanistan, Egypt, Sudan and South Africa, Ternan had retired from the army in November 1907. As a ‘dug-out’ he was one of six of the Arras brigadier-generals who had been appointed to a brigade command before the end of 1914.¹³⁴ Not surprisingly for a man of fifty-seven, Ternan eventually succumbed to the pressures of his responsibilities, in his case during the Battle of Arras. In his own words, he said that he:

*... had come to the end of my tether, and reluctantly had to acknowledge that there comes a time when one must step aside for a younger man.*¹³⁵

The youngest of the British Arras brigadier-generals was the ‘exotic’ Bernard Freyberg.

The Dominion officer to have held his commission longest was Robert Rennie, 4 CIB, 2nd Canadian Division. The army was not Rennie’s main career. He worked in the family seed merchant business and joined a local Militia regiment, the Queen’s Own Rifles of Toronto, as a rifleman in 1881. He was subsequently commissioned into the regiment in April 1887.

¹³⁴ Four of these six officers were ‘dug-outs’, a term interpreted by some contemporaries to refer to ‘amiable old buffers’ – see K. Simpson, ‘The officers’, in I.F.W. Beckett & K. Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (London: Tom Donovan, 1985), pp. 63-96. Ternan was the longest retired of this group. The others were (later Major-General) Richard Orlando Kellett (1864-1931), 99 Brigade, 2nd Division (retired 3 October 1913); W.C.G. McGrigor, 174 Brigade, 58th Division (retired 1 January 1912) and E. Makins, 6 Cavalry Brigade, 3rd Cavalry Division (retired 1 February 1914). There were seven other ‘dug-outs’ in this cohort who were appointed to brigade commands – William Henry Lorraine Allgood (1868-1957), 45 Brigade, 15th Division (retired 14 February 1914); William Francis Hessey (1868-1939), 110 Brigade, 21st Division (retired 17 May 1913); Hardress Gilbert Holmes (1862-1922), 8 Brigade, 3rd Division (retired 5 February 1908); John Henry Lloyd (1877-1941), 90 Brigade, 30th Division (retired 18 December 1907); (later Sir) Bertram Percy Portal (1866-1949), 7 (Cavalry) Brigade, 3rd Cavalry Division (retired 30 October 1907); Hon. Ferdinand Charles Stanley (1871-1935), 89 Brigade, 30th Division (resigned 21 May 1904); Gerald Frederic Trotter (1871-1945), 51 Brigade, 17th Division (retired 27 November 1912).

¹³⁵ J. Shakespear, *The Thirty Fourth Division 1915-1919* (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, Reprint), p. 110. For an analysis of the impact of battlefield stress on senior officers, see P. Brennan, “‘Completely Worn Out by Service in France’ Combat Stress and Breakdown among Senior Officers in the Canadian Corps”, *Canadian Military History*, 18 (2) 2009, pp. 5-14. Brennan argues that ‘battalion commanders, brigadiers and generals also endured a more solitary existence than those in the lower ranks’ and that as a consequence they enjoyed less companionship that ‘was a critical bulwark against stress’. ‘Exhausting workloads and an almost paralyzing responsibility no ordinary soldier faced of repeatedly having to send men – many men – to their deaths, where every mistake cost other men’s lives and even their competent decisions emptied the ranks, surely added to their stress loads.’ *Ibid.*, p.8

Rennie did not serve in South Africa but, by the outbreak of the Great War, he had risen to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and the command of his battalion. Rennie was appointed to command 3rd Toronto Regiment in September 1914 and at the age of fifty-two promoted to his brigade command in November 1915. Rennie held his brigade command until September 1918, longer than any other Canadian brigadier-general during the war (1,029 days).

Robert Smith, an Australian, was the Dominion officer of this cohort to have held his commission for the shortest period. A wool merchant who initially served as a private in the Victorian Scottish Regiment for three years, Smith was commissioned in June 1910 into 5th Australian Infantry Battalion. Having commanded 22nd Australian Infantry Battalion from February 1916, Smith was promoted to GOC 5 AIB, 2nd Australian Division in January 1917 at the age of thirty-five, a mere six and a half years after having been commissioned.¹³⁶

Smith was amongst the youngest of the Arras brigadier-generals.¹³⁷ The age profile of the British and Dominion brigadier-generals was not markedly different. The age of the British officers at the start of the battle ranged between fifty-seven (T.P.B. Ternan) and twenty-eight (B.C. Freyberg) with an average age of 44.1 years. The corresponding age range of the Dominion officers was fifty-four (R. Rennie) and twenty-nine (H.G. Bennett, 3 AIB, 1st Australian Division) with an average age of 42.6 years. What was very noticeable, however, was the changing age on appointment as the war progressed.

¹³⁶ Smith was also to die young due to a stroke on 14 July 1928 aged forty-seven.

¹³⁷ There were only five of the cohort younger than Smith. Other than Freyberg and Bennett who are subsequently mentioned, the others younger than Smith were Henry Pelham Burn (1882-1958) (age thirty-four), 152 Brigade, 51st Division; Hubert Conway Rees (1882-1948) (age thirty-five), 149 Brigade, 50th Division; and Percy Vere Powys Stone (1883-1959) (age thirty-four), 17 Brigade, 24th Division.

| | 1914 | 1915 | 1916 | 1917 |
|---------------------------|---------|------|------|---------|
| | Aug-Dec | | | Jan-May |
| Number Appointed | 5 | 20 | 67 | 24 |
| Number Appointed > 50 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Number Appointed 41-49 | 2 | 15 | 44 | 14 |
| Number Appointed < 40 | 0 | 2 | 19 | 8 |
| Average Age | 49.6 | 45.8 | 43.4 | 41.1 |

Table 1.6 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Age on Appointment

This trend was driven by the rate of expansion of the BEF over this period, together with the need for replacements. Haig recognised in November 1914 that there was promotable talent within the ranks and amongst the NCOs capable of becoming company officers. In July 1915 Haig made clear that he was also prepared to remove ‘Major Generals etc.’ to make way for young, capable officers.¹³⁸ The historian of 9th Division asserts that the replacement of Brigadier-General E.G. Grogan, aged sixty-four, by Brigadier-General A.B. Ritchie, aged forty-six, as GOC 26 Brigade in May 1915 was ‘the result of an order issued by GHQ fixing an age limit for Brigadiers’.¹³⁹ The data in Table 1.6 provides evidence of the appointment of younger officers in increasing numbers as the war progressed. It also shows that, based on this sample, the rate of appointment of brigadier-generals aged fifty and over was little changed in 1917 from what it had been in 1914.

¹³⁸ J. Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 133. See also T. Ashworth, *Trench Warfare 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System* (London: Macmillan Press, 1980), p. 87 for a discussion of the circumstances of the replacement in May 1915 of fifty-four year old Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Hon. Frederick Gordon (1861-1927) by Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Philip Rynd Robertson (1866-1936), aged forty-nine, as GOC 19 Brigade.

¹³⁹ J. Ewing, *The History of the Ninth (Scottish) Division 1914-1919* (London: John Murray, 1921), p. 15. Brigadier-General Edward George Grogan (1851-1944) had five sons, the eldest of whom was Brigadier-General George William St George Grogan (1875-1962). G.W. St G. Grogan was one of only two brigadier-generals to have been awarded a VC during the war whilst a brigadier-general. The other was Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Clifford Coffin (1870-1959). Despite not being simultaneous, the Grogans may be the only instance of father and son to both hold the rank of brigadier-general during the war.

The war provided opportunities for accelerated promotion.¹⁴⁰ None of the brigadier-generals involved at Arras held command of a brigade at the outbreak of the war. The first officer to achieve the rank of brigadier-general was Ernest Makins, appointed to 6 Cavalry Brigade, 3rd Cavalry Division on 21 September 1914. Unfortunately ill health deprived Makins of his command on 7 November 1914. After his recovery he was given command of 1 Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division in May 1915, an appointment he held until April 1918. Table 1.7 illustrates the substantive ranks the Arras brigadier-generals held in August 1914.

| | British | Dominion | Total |
|--------------------|---------|----------|-------|
| Captain | 20 | 3 | 23 |
| Major | 55 | 10 | 65 |
| Lieutenant-Colonel | 14 | 9 | 23 |
| Colonel | 5 | 0 | 5 |

Table 1.7 Arras Brigadier-Generals: By Substantive Rank, August 1914

Three quarters of these officers began the war at the level of company commanders – captains and majors - with responsibility for some 200 men. Of the twenty-three lieutenant-colonels, all held battalion commands with three exceptions. Makins had only retired as CO 1/Dragoon Guards in February 1914 and was appointed to his first brigade command in September 1914. The other two officers were in staff posts - G.H.B. Freeth (DAAG, Northern Command) and A.H. Macdonell (GSO2, 1st Canadian Division).¹⁴¹ Both these officers had passed Staff College and both had previously commanded a battalion – 2/Lancashire Fusiliers and the

¹⁴⁰ On 29 September 1918 twenty-five Service and Territorial battalions were commanded by officers who had been in the ranks in August 1914 - Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalions Commanders', p. 111. Amongst the CEF, six individuals who started their war in the ranks rose to command Canadian battalions - Arthur Osborne Blois (1885-1926) 25/Battalion, William Forbes Gilson (1877-1934) 7/Battalion, John Pollands Girvan (1887-1961) 15/Battalion, George Randolph Pearkes (1888-1984) 116/Battalion, Alec Laurence Saunders (1888-1939) 8/Battalion and John W. Wise (1893-19??) 25/Battalion.

¹⁴¹ Brigadier-General (later Major-General) George Henry Basil Freeth (1872-1949)

Royal Canadian Regiment respectively. All fourteen of the British lieutenant-colonels were Regulars.¹⁴² Of the nine Dominion lieutenant-colonels, only A.C. Macdonell and his cousin A.H. Macdonell were members of Canada's Permanent Force. All the others were Militia officers.¹⁴³ The five Colonels included three 'dug-outs' to whom reference has already been made – Kellett, McGrigor and Ternan - together with D. Campbell, 153 Brigade, 51st Division and F.F. Hill, 186 Brigade, 62nd Division.¹⁴⁴

1.9 Arras Brigadier-Generals – Staff College

Intuition and common sense suggests that those officers who had passed Staff College were likely to be either more capable or more determined, or both, to succeed in gaining promotion based upon their abilities when set against those officers who had not. The data available concerning the Arras brigadier-generals supports this contention. John Hussey produced the data as at 30 June 1914 included in Tables 1.8 and 1.9 based upon the relevant *Army List*.¹⁴⁵ The author's data demonstrates that the proportion of British officers who became Arras brigadier-generals and who had passed Staff College was more than double the proportion of all officers of the same rank who had passed Staff College by 30 June 1914 and who were then in service, that is 17.3 per cent compared with 8.3 per cent.¹⁴⁶ The same analysis applied to the Arras major-generals reveals an even more stark comparison, 45.5 per cent compared with 20.8 per cent. On the assumption it is accepted there is a positive relationship between

¹⁴² They were John Ambard Bell-Smyth (1868-1922), C.B. Bulkeley-Johnson, D.E. Cayley, C. Cunliffe-Owen, F.S. Dawson, Vigant William de Falbe (1867-1940), F.A. Dudgeon, G.H.B. Freeth, C. Gosling, E. Makins, T.T. Pitman, B.P. Portal, M.N. Turner and P.R. Wood.

¹⁴³ They were H.E. Elliott, W.A. Griesbach, F.W. Hill, F.O.W. Loomis, R. Rennie, E. Tivey and G.S. Tuxford.

¹⁴⁴ Both Campbell and Felix Frederick Hill (1860-1940) held brigade commands, GOC South Wales Infantry Brigade (May 1914-Jan 1915) and GOC 31 Brigade, 10th Division (Aug 1914-Aug 1915) respectively, prior to their appointment to the command of the brigades they commanded at Arras.

¹⁴⁵ J. Hussey, 'The Deaths of Qualified Staff Officers in the Great War: A Generation Missing?', in *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 75 (1997), 250

¹⁴⁶ These figures are based on *Army Lists* to the exclusion of Australian and Canadian officers. They take no account, for example, of the completion of the four month Canadian Militia staff course by W.A. Griesbach, GOC 1 CIB, 1st Canadian Division and F.W. Hill, GOC 9 CIB, 3rd Canadian Division from which 124 officers graduated between 1908 and August 1914 – see S.J. Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army 1860-1938* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), p. 80.

training and performance, this data indicates that at both brigade and divisional level the British army's promotion processes recognised and rewarded its more capable officers.¹⁴⁷

| Rank | No of Officers | psc | % |
|--|----------------|-----|------|
| British Army - 30 June 1914 | | | |
| Lieutenant-Colonel | 812 | 114 | 14.0 |
| Major | 2,132 | 317 | 14.9 |
| Captain | 5,357 | 261 | 4.9 |
| Totals | 8,295 | 692 | 8.3 |
| Arras Brigadier-Generals – 9 April 1917 - by Rank on 4 August 1914 | | | |
| Lieutenant-Colonel | 23 | 3 | 13.0 |
| Major | 64 | 12 | 18.8 |
| Captain | 23 | 4 | 17.4 |
| Totals | 110 | 19 | 17.3 |

Table 1.8 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Comparison of Officers with psc

| Rank | No of Officers | psc | % |
|--|----------------|-----|---------------------|
| British Army - 30 June 1914 | | | |
| Major-General | 114 | 49 | 43.0 |
| Colonel | 504 | 135 | 26.8 |
| Lieutenant-Colonel | 812 | 114 | 14.0 |
| Totals | 1,430 | 298 | 20.8 |
| Arras Major-Generals – 9 April 1917 - by Rank on 4 August 1914 | | | |
| Major-General | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Colonel | 19 | 8 | 42.1 ¹⁴⁸ |
| Lieutenant-Colonel | 12 | 7 | 58.3 |
| Totals | 33 | 15 | 45.5 ¹⁴⁹ |

Table 1.9 Arras Major-Generals: Comparison of Officers with psc

¹⁴⁷ Bernard Freyberg was the only Arras brigadier-general to pass Staff College after the war. He attended the first post-war class in April 1919 which included three future Field-M Marshals, five full Generals, eight Lieutenant-Generals and twenty Major-Generals. See Freyberg, *Bernard Freyberg VC*, p. 142.

¹⁴⁸ Major-General H.T. Lukin, GOC 9th Division, was a South African officer who held the rank of brigadier-general at the outbreak of war. Hussey's statistics do not recognise the rank of brigadier-general. For the purposes of this analysis, therefore, Lukin has been included as a colonel.

¹⁴⁹ Table 1.9 accounts for thirty-three of the thirty-six divisional commanders involved at Arras. The remaining three major-generals were (later Field-Marshal Sir) Cyril John Deverell (1874-1947), GOC 3rd Division, T.H. Shoubridge, GOC 7th Division and L.J. Lipsett, GOC 3rd Canadian Division, all of whom had passed Staff College. On 4 August 1914 Deverell and Shoubridge had both been captains whilst Lipsett had been a major.

1.10 Arras Brigadier-Generals – Campaign Service

A common element amongst the majority of the Arras brigadier-generals was they had previous campaign service. Of these 116 officers, ninety-two had seen service during at least one campaign, that is seventy-nine per cent. As would be expected, the proportion of British officers with campaign experience (eighty-four per cent) was higher than the corresponding proportion of Dominion officers (sixty-two per cent). Table 1.10 reveals, however, that the number of British officers with campaign experience other than during the South African War was limited. Fourteen of the Arras brigadier-generals had no pre-war campaign experience. One officer, the ‘dug-out’ T.P.B. Ternan, had served in seven campaigns between the Afghan War of 1879 and the South African War. In the case of Dominion officers, their experience of campaign service was gained almost exclusively during the South African War. The only two Dominion officers who were exceptions were W.B. Lesslie, who had served during the Somaliland Campaign of 1901, and A.H. Macdonell, who had served in West Africa in 1901-02 and 1904.

| Campaign | Duration | British Officers | Dominion Officers |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Aden | 1903 | 1 | 0 |
| Afghan War | 1879 | 1 | 0 |
| Burma | 1891-1897 | 2 | 0 |
| China | 1900 | 2 | 0 |
| Crete | 1897-1899 | 5 | 0 |
| Egypt | 1882 | 1 | 0 |
| Hazara | 1888-1891 | 3 | 0 |
| Malakand | 1897 | 1 | 0 |
| Nile Expedition | 1898 | 5 | 0 |
| North West Frontier | 1894-1898 | 11 | 0 |
| Relief of Chitral | 1895 | 5 | 0 |
| Ashanti Campaign | 1900 | 1 | 0 |
| Somaliland | 1901 | 0 | 1 |
| South Africa | 1899-1902 | 65 | 14 |
| Sudan | 1894-87 & 1898-98 | 8 | 0 |
| Tibet | 1903-1904 | 3 | 0 |
| Tirah | 1897-1898 | 4 | 0 |
| Uganda | 1897-1898 | 1 | 0 |
| Uhyeri | 1895 | 1 | 0 |
| West Africa | 1893-94 & 1897-1904 | 5 | 1 |

Table 1.10 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Pre-war Campaigns

Service in these campaigns was not without its price. Fourteen of the future Arras brigadier-generals had been wounded during their pre-war campaign service, reflecting the risks to which they were exposed and which they accepted. W. de L. Williams was particularly unfortunate. He served in three campaigns – Tirah, West Africa and South Africa. In each instance he was severely wounded. G.F. Trotter suffered the loss of an arm as a result of his service in South Africa. Nevertheless he continued in service, achieved command of a brigade and subsequently served as Chief of the British Military Mission to the United States, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

1.11 Arras Brigadier-Generals - Casualties

The casualty rate during the Great War amongst the 116 officers who held brigade commands at Arras exceeded forty per cent as Table 1.11 illustrates:

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Killed | 8 |
| | |
| Captured | 2 |
| | |
| Wounded – once | 14 |
| | |
| Wounded – more than once | 23 |
| | |
| Gassed | 4 |
| | |
| Total | 51 |

Table 1.11 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Casualties

The manner of the deaths of those killed illustrates the dangers to which brigadier-generals were exposed, in common with those they commanded.¹⁵⁰ Three of these officers were killed

¹⁵⁰ Table 1.11 does not include Brigadier-General Lumley Owen Williams Jones (1876-1918), 13 Brigade, 5th Division or Brigadier-General Charles Lionel Kirwan Campbell (1873-1918), 5 (Cavalry) Brigade, 2nd Cavalry Division. Major-General (later General Sir) Reginald Byng Stephens (1869-1955), GOC 5th Division, wrote of Jones: ‘I have already recommended him for the command of a Division and I am still of opinion that he is

by rifle fire – C.B. Bulkeley-Johnson, 8 (Cavalry) Brigade, 3rd Cavalry Division, R. C. Maclachlan, 112 Brigade, 37th Division and F.A. Maxwell, 27 Brigade, 9th Division.¹⁵¹ In Maxwell's case he was hit by a sniper's bullet at a range of only forty yards.¹⁵² Another four were killed by shell fire, three – R.C. Gore, 101 Brigade, 34th Division, C. Gosling, 10 Brigade, 4th Division and C.G. Rawling, 62 Brigade, 21st Division - on or close to their Brigade H.Q.s. One, Brigadier-General A.F. Gordon, 153 Brigade, 51st Division, died as a result of wounds caused by shell fire suffered whilst touring his front line.¹⁵³ The eighth casualty was a rarity. G.P.S. Hunt, 173 Brigade, 58th Division was relieved of his command on 21 April 1917 to be succeeded by Bernard Freyberg who believed that the division and his brigade, recently arrived and with no experience of battle, had been mishandled.¹⁵⁴ Hunt was effectively demoted to command 1/Royal Berkshire, a post he took up the following month.¹⁵⁵ He was killed on 23 March 1918 when his battalion was involved in resisting the German offensive which had begun two days earlier.¹⁵⁶

worthy of advancement. He has commanded the 13th Bde for two years and there has never been the slightest complaint of any sort before this of the way the Brigade was trained or handled.' Papers of R B Stephens, IWM - Correspondence Book (Field Service). Jones had the misfortune to die of pneumonia on 14 September 1918 aged forty-two. He had held his command for 1,047 days having been appointed on 2 November 1915. Campbell died on 31 March 1918, ten days after having been temporarily replaced. The precise cause of his death is not known.

¹⁵¹ Brigadier-General Ronald Campbell Maclachlan (1872-1917)

¹⁵² Ewing, *Ninth (Scottish) Division*, p. 237. For a first-hand account of his death, see C. Maxwell (ed.), *I Am Ready* (London: Hazell Watson and Viney Ltd., 1955), pp.134-5

¹⁵³ Brigadier-General Robert Clements Gore (1867-1918). Brigadier-General Cecil Godfrey Rawling (1870-1917). Brigadier-General Alister Fraser Gordon (1872-1917).

¹⁵⁴ See Freyberg, *Bernard Freyberg, VC*, pp. 102-3. Freyberg's son's biography omits Freyberg's own understanding of the reason for changes amongst the 58th Division's personnel. In his draft biography, Freyberg concludes a long sentence with the words '...most of the Generals and Staff who had nursed the Division through its childish ailments, had been sent home as unsuitable'. CAB45/208 Memoirs – Freyberg, Draft of 'A Linesman in Picardy', Chapter V, p. 1. In addition to Hunt, the GOC of 174 Brigade, Brigadier-General W.C.G. McGrigor was sent home as were the GSO1, the AA&QMG and the CRE. The Division's GOC, Major-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Hew Dalrymple Fanshawe (1860-1957), survived in post until 6 October 1917 when he was replaced by Major-General A.B.E. Cator, the subject of Chapter 5.

¹⁵⁵ Hunt's departure was tersely recorded in the brigade's WD: 'Brig. General Hunt, G.P.S., C.M.G., left for England.' TNA WO95/2999 WD 173 Brigade, 20 April 1917. Whilst a rarity, Hunt's reversion to CO was not unique. For example, Frank Stephen Meighen (1870-1946) had been the initial CO of the troublesome 14th Canadian Infantry Battalion – see Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough*, p. 77. He was promoted Brigadier-General (LG, 12 September 1916) as commander of Canadian Training Division, Bramshott. He subsequently reverted to Lieutenant-Colonel on 14 October 1918 on taking command of 87/Canadian Infantry Battalion.

¹⁵⁶ For an account of this action, see J.E. Edmonds, *Military Operations France and Belgium 1918, Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1995), pp. 371-81. Hunt temporarily had been in command of 99 Brigade, 2nd Division from 5-24 January 1918 in succession to Brigadier-General R.O. Kellett.

The circumstances of the capture of two of the Arras brigadier-generals further illustrate the nature of their front line roles. F.S. Dawson, South African Brigade, 9th Division was captured on 24 March 1918 when the remnants of his brigade, less than 100 men, were captured at Marrieres Wood.¹⁵⁷ H.C. Rees, 149 Brigade, 50th Division, was captured on 27 May 1918, the first day of the Battle of the Aisne. 50th Division was overwhelmed, losing 227 officers and 4,879 other ranks – killed, wounded or captured - during the battle, practically all of them on the opening day.¹⁵⁸ If a willingness to stand to the last man was one of the qualities of these officers, so was tenacity. Amongst those wounded more than once, there were some extreme cases. C.J. Griffin, 103 Brigade, 34th Division, had been severely wounded at Spion Kop (24 January 1900) and was wounded during the Great War five times.¹⁵⁹ Having both been awarded the VC in 1916, Adrian Carton de Wiart (wounded eight times) and Bernard Freyberg (wounded nine times) clearly enjoyed charmed lives denied many others.

1.12 Arras Brigadier-Generals - Honours

The basis for the award of an honour is capable of misinterpretation and the practice is open to abuse. Service and courage both have their subjective elements. They defy precise measurement. Table 1.12 suggests, however, that the courage, leadership and contributions made by the Arras brigadier-generals were valued and recognised by their peers.

¹⁵⁷ Ewing, *Ninth (Scottish) Division*, pp. 275-280. Brigadier-General Dawson was released from captivity on 25 December 1918.

¹⁵⁸ E. Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division 1914-1919* (London: Percy Lund Humphries & Co, 1939, reprinted Naval & Military Press), pp. 344-5

¹⁵⁹ Brigadier-General Christopher Joseph Griffin (1874-1957)

| Honour | To 1914 | 1915 | 1916 | 1917 | 1918 | 1919 |
|--------|---------|------|------|------|------|------------------|
| VC | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KCB | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 ¹⁶⁰ |
| CB | 1 | 4 | 0 | 11 | 17 | 24 |
| CMG | 10 | 10 | 21 | 17 | 37 | 7 |
| DSO | 32 | 19 | 22 | 19 | 18 | 10 |

*Table 1.12 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Honours Awarded*¹⁶¹

The DSO was awarded to officers to recognise meritorious or distinguished service in wartime.¹⁶² The nature of the contribution of those Arras brigadier-generals to whom it was awarded can be sampled through relevant citations – see Appendix Two.

It is a measure of the capability of the Arras brigadier-generals that their contributions after the war, whether as a result of their military service or because of their contribution to society in other ways, were recognised. For example, two were raised to the peerage – W.J. Dugan and Bernard Freyberg – and a further eleven were created knights.¹⁶³

1.13 Arras Brigadier-Generals – Comings and Goings

The capability of the Arras brigadier-generals might be interpreted from their longevity in post, the number removed and what happened to them subsequently. The period these

¹⁶⁰ The officers who received these KCBs were all Dominion officers who had been promoted to command a division in 1917 or 1918 – J. Gellibrand, T.W. Glasgow, F.O.W. Loomis and A.C. Macdonell.

¹⁶¹ The analysis has not included the following honours awarded to the Arras brigadier-generals during their careers: CBE (4), CIE (2), CSI (1), DCM (1), MVO (3).

¹⁶² The DSO was normally awarded for service under fire. Between 1914 and 1916, however, it was awarded for service in circumstances which were not under fire, that is, to staff officers who were not directly involved in combat. This caused some resentment amongst front line officers. From 1 January 1917 the award of the DSO was restricted to circumstances where officers had been under fire.

¹⁶³ GBE - Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) John Kennedy (1878-1948); KBE – A. Carton de Wiart, E. Makins, P.C.B. Skinner, B. Vincent; KCB – Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Edward Arthur Fagan (1871-1955), G.D. Goodman, E.A.W. Harman, H.C. Jackson, J.H. MacBrien, P.B. Portal.

brigadier-generals were in post ranged between eighty-six days (A.F. Gordon 153 Brigade, 51st Division) and 1,351 days (H.E. Elliott 15 AIB, 5th Australian Division) with an average period of tenure of 632 days (almost one year and nine months).¹⁶⁴ If an arbitrary period in post of six months is regarded as an indication of an officer's ability to fulfil his role, only nine of the 116 did not meet this criterion. As Table 1.13 indicates, in the majority of cases the reason for the termination of the individual's period in post was not voluntary.

| Name | Days | Reason for Termination |
|-----------------|------|---|
| Gordon, A.F. | 86 | Killed in action |
| Gosling, C. | 106 | Killed in action |
| Griffin, C.J. | 107 | Transferred to 7 Brigade, 25 th Division |
| Jelf, R.G. | 109 | Invalided home |
| Fagan, E.A. | 123 | Casualty – gassed |
| Freyberg, B.C. | 151 | Casualty – wounded |
| Rees, H.C. | 160 | Invalided home |
| Finch, H.W.E. | 168 | Removed – sent to a home command ¹⁶⁵ |
| Cumming, H.R.W. | 173 | Removed – sent to a home command ¹⁶⁶ |

Table 1.13 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Less Than Six Months in Post

¹⁶⁴ Gordon was appointed on 6 May 1917 and died of wounds due to shell fire on 31 July 1917. Elliott merited promotion but repeated conflicts with his superiors denied it to him – see R. McMullin, *Pompey Elliott* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2002), pp. 435-6. As a point of comparison, Burns estimates that the average period of tenure of the forty-four commanders of Canadian infantry brigades between 1915 and 1919 was seventeen months – see Burns, *General Mud*, p. 64.

¹⁶⁵ See Note 75.

¹⁶⁶ After a period of leave, Cumming was appointed Commandant of the Machine Gun Corps Training School, Grantham. He returned to France as GOC 110 Brigade 21st Division on 16 March 1918. His new GOC, Major-General (later General Sir) David Graham Muschet Campbell (1869-1936), subsequently described Cumming as an officer who had ‘proved himself to be not only a magnificent leader of men, but also a soldier of the very highest class’. Cumming, *A Brigadier in France*, p. 13

The limited scope of Tim Travers' taxonomy (see Note 71) of reasons for the dismissal of generals is unsatisfactory, certainly if applied to the Arras brigadier-generals. As Table 1.14 reveals, the reasons for brigadier-generals being replaced were numerous and varied, deliberate and otherwise. Those who returned home and were subsequently reappointed to commands in the BEF clearly continued to enjoy the support of their superiors.¹⁶⁷ How to interpret the rationale for those who returned home and were not reappointed to commands within the BEF needs some care. A policy of sending senior officers home for a period of rest was apparently introduced although its precise genesis is elusive.¹⁶⁸ Some brigadier-generals who were rested had clearly served for a long time.¹⁶⁹ Of the nineteen who went home in 1918, eight departed in April. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the rationale in at least some of these instances masked some of the consequences of the strains imposed as a result of the German Spring Offensive.

¹⁶⁷ See reference to the '6 months rest rule' by J.M. Bourne, 'Major-General W.C.G. Heneker: A Divisional Commander of the Great War', in M. Hughes & M. Seligmann, (eds.), *Leadership in Conflict 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2000), p. 62. The basis for this 'rest rule' is elusive. Its existence is corroborated by the following extract from a letter written by Lieutenant-Colonel Mordaunt John Fortescue Fitzgerald (1874-1947) to Captain C. Falls on 25 February 1938: 'I was sent home for a rest in July 1917 in accordance with a War Office letter, which said that those officers who had been out on the Western Front since August 1914 should be sent home to recuperate for a few months if it was thought desirable.' TNA CAB45/116. References to 'more than 2 years' in command of a brigade as the criteria for a period of leave, as was the case of Brigadier-General B.G. Price, GOC 150 Brigade, is to be found at TNA WO95/2833 150 Bde. WD, 25 February 1918.

¹⁶⁸ Another early example of a rest period for a brigadier-general was the instance of F.O.W. Loomis, 2 CIB, 1st Canadian Division. Loomis had been in post for over eighteen months when he was replaced by Brigadier-General John Fletcher Leopold Embury (1875-1944) for the period 1 January 1918 to 15 March 1918 whereupon Loomis resumed command.

¹⁶⁹ E. Makins had been in post for 1,071 days; both the Canadians H.D.B. Ketchen and R. Rennie had been in post for 1,029 days. The average for the 1918 returnees was 688 days, above the average of 632 for the 116 as a whole.

| Reason | Number |
|--|------------------|
| Promoted | 15 |
| Transferred | |
| - To Command Other Brigades | 8 |
| - To Staff Posts | 3 |
| Dismissed/Demoted | 3 |
| Casualties | |
| - Killed | 7 ¹⁷⁰ |
| - Wounded/gassed | 5 |
| - Prisoner-of-war | 1 |
| Died | 2 |
| Sick, exhausted, invalided, failing health | 13 |
| Home | |
| 1917 | |
| - Reappointed to brigade or staff post | 7 |
| - Not reappointed | 4 |
| 1918 | |
| - Reappointed to brigade or staff post | 1 |
| - Not reappointed | 19 |
| Retired | 3 |
| Sub-total | 91 |
| Those Still in Post at the Armistice | 25 |
| Total | 116 |

Table 1.14 Arras Brigadier-Generals: Reasons for Their Replacement¹⁷¹

The need for care over the interpretation of the data is demonstrated by the circumstances surrounding C.H.T. Lucas 87 Brigade, 29th Division.¹⁷² Lucas returned home on 16 January

¹⁷⁰ Table 1.11 indicates that eight Arras brigadier-generals were killed, not seven. The apparent discrepancy is explained by G.P.S. Hunt who was killed in action in March 1918 when CO 1/Royal Berkshire Regiment. The reason for his replacement, however, was his demotion to the post in which he subsequently died. Hunt is, therefore, included in Table 1.14 amongst the three brigadier-generals who were dismissed or demoted.

¹⁷¹ The evidence of this variety of fates belies the simplicity of the remark of Brigadier-General (later General Sir) Charles John Cecil Grant (1877–1950), GOC 1 Brigade on his appointment in October 1917 when he noted that ‘indeed one rises and falls with great rapidity out here – uneasy in this respect is the humble slave who wears a Brigadier’s uniform’. Cited in Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front*, p. 61

1918 having been in his post for 288 days, less than half the final average period of service of the Arras brigadier-generals. Lucas was one of those rarities, an officer commissioned into an infantry regiment who commanded a brigade without having commanded a battalion.¹⁷³ Having passed Staff College, he started the war as a SC before being promoted to BM in January 1915. In August 1915 he was promoted to the command of 87 Brigade, 29th Division, an appointment he held until December 1916 when he returned to the UK to the command of 214 Brigade, 71st Division, a home service division. Lucas was re-appointed to the command of 87 Brigade in April 1917, six days before the Battle of Arras began. When Lucas returned to the UK again in January 1918, it was not to the relative backwater of the command of a training battalion or brigade; it was to the command of the Machine Gun Corps Training Centre at Grantham. Lucas was subsequently promoted major-general in October 1918 as GOC 4th Division in succession to L.J. Lipsett who had been killed in action. Lucas' relatively short second stint with 87 Brigade before he returned home is factually accurate. It does not hint, however, at an officer who could not bear the strain of a prolonged period of command or who was without significant ability and experience.

1.14 Arras Brigadier-Generals – Family Men

Lucas was typical of the Arras brigadier-generals. He came from a middle class family. Although his father was a bank director, his father-in-law was a former army officer, the most common background amongst fathers of the Arras brigadier-generals.¹⁷⁴ Educated at a public

¹⁷² Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Cuthbert Henry Tindall Lucas (1879-1958)

¹⁷³ See Chapter 6, Note 13 and M.S. LoCicero "'A Tower of Strength": Brigadier-General Edward Bulfin', in S. Jones (ed.), *Stemming the Tide: Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914* (Solihull: Helion, 2013), pp. 211-239

¹⁷⁴ Occupations of seventy-two of the fathers of the ninety British brigadier-generals have been identified. In thirty-five instances they were army officers. Clergymen, lawyers, landowners, civil servants, merchants and academics provided the bulk of the occupations of the remainder. In the case of the Dominion brigadier-generals, twenty-three of the twenty-six occupations of their fathers have been identified. They were much more eclectic. As well as including farmers and graziers and a number from the professions, they included a storekeeper, a music seller, a schoolmaster, a tanner and wool merchant, a book seller and a colliery owner.

school (Marlborough) and Sandhurst, he was commissioned into a county infantry regiment (Royal Berkshire Regiment) and had served throughout the South African War. Amongst the Arras brigadier-generals there were only five known bachelors in contrast to 104 who were married.¹⁷⁵ Lucas was amongst the latter and he was amongst the majority – seventy-nine - who had or were to have children.¹⁷⁶ Lucas was not, however, amongst those of the Arras brigadier-generals who were old enough and had been married long enough to have sons of military age.¹⁷⁷ There were three Arras brigadier-generals who each lost a son during the war – R.O. Kellett, A.C. Macdonell and C. Yatman.¹⁷⁸ Amongst the others both Bernard Freyberg and G.F. Trotter had two brothers killed; H.E. Elliott suffered the loss of both a brother and a brother-in-law, C.J. Hobkirk, H.C. Jackson, and B. Vincent each lost a brother-in-law and A.G. Pritchard suffered the loss of a cousin.¹⁷⁹ Death as a result of the war and the consequences of these casualties were no strangers to the Arras brigadier-generals. The loss of close members of their own families illustrates that they and their families were as aware of the personal consequences of the war as any of the officers and ORs for whom they were responsible.

There were no Regular soldiers amongst them, the closest being a member of the Royal North West Mounted Police.

¹⁷⁵ There are seven instances where the marital status of the officer has not been established.

¹⁷⁶ Lucas was married on 24 October 1917, in the interval between 29th Division's participation in the Battle of Poelcappelle and its involvement in the Battle of Cambrai.

¹⁷⁷ They had all married in 1896 or earlier.

¹⁷⁸ Brigadier-General Clement Yatman (1871-1940). Lieutenant Richard Henry Villiers Kellett, Royal Artillery, KIA 21 August 1916 age 20; Lieutenant Ian Cameron Macdonell, Lord Strathcona's Horse, attached 9th Squadron, RFC, KIA 2 July 1916, age 21; Lieutenant Denniston Hamilton Yatman, 1/Northumberland Fusiliers, KIA 11 April 1918, age 19.

¹⁷⁹ Brigadier-General Aubrey Gordon Pritchard (1869-1943). Sub-Lieutenant Oscar Freyberg (1881-1915, Collingwood Battalion, RND, KIA 4 June 1915, Gallipoli, age 34; Rifleman Paul Freyberg (1885-1917), 4/Battalion, New Zealand Rifle Brigade, DOW 18 June 1917, age 32; Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Henry Trotter 1872-1916), Grenadier Guards, KIA 8 July 1916, age 44; Captain Reginald Baird Trotter (1874-1915), Cameron Highlanders, KIA 9 May 1915, age 41; Captain George Stephenson Elliott (1885-1917), Australian Army Medical Corps, KIA 25 September 1917; Lieutenant John Donald Campbell (18??-1917), 6/Company, Australian Machine Gun Corps, KIA 9 October 1917; Lieutenant-Colonel Lionel Arthur Bosanquet (1862-1915), 9/Sherwood Foresters, KIA, 22 August 1915, Gallipoli; Captain Wynyard Keith Brown (1888-1915), 1/West Yorkshire Regiment, KIA 4 June 1915, Gallipoli, age 27; Captain Hon. Patrick Julian Harry Stanley Ogilvy (1896-1917), 1/Irish Guards, KIA 9 October 1917, age 21; Captain Wilfred Dryden Pritchard (1890-1915), 8/Battery, Royal Field Artillery, KIA 25 September 1915.

1.15 Conclusion

The role of brigade commanders typifies the simplistic difference between a manager and a leader. A manager is expected to do the right things, a leader is expected to do things right. As *King's Regulations* and *F.S.R. Part II* set out, there was enough flexibility in the way the army allowed command to be exercised at brigade level to enable brigadier-generals to develop their individual styles. The overwhelming majority of the British brigadier-generals came from the familiar officer mould. Their Dominion counterparts, however, brought different backgrounds and hence different experiences to their responsibilities. The weight of the benefit of operational experience lay with the British contingent. The Arras brigadier-generals, British and Dominion, all had experience of the responsibilities of commanding large bodies of men in operational circumstances. They had all gained lessons from their front line experiences and had each developed their own leadership styles. They had all endured the strains of commanding large bodies of troops, in battle conditions, as part of an increasingly multi-faceted and complex organization. All had an acute understanding of the human cost of war. Subsequent chapters will explore the roles of brigadier-generals through five case studies of the contribution of individual brigadier-generals and their brigades, both during the preparatory period to the battles and during the battles themselves.

Chapter 2

Brigadier-General F.O.W. Loomis

2 Canadian Infantry Brigade



2.1 Introduction

In its account of the Battle of Arras, the BOH mentions ninety-two brigadier-generals who commanded an infantry brigade during the battle. The following studies explore the circumstances and roles of five of these brigadier-generals selected on the basis of a variety of factors including length of time in the role, nature of their division, the Corps in which they found themselves, age on appointment and their future careers, amongst others. Taken together, these case studies provide a basis for identifying similarities and differences in the contributions made by a selection of brigadier-generals. The intention is not to provide a chronological account of the battle, but to use it and the preparatory period leading up to it as

a common setting. Plans and events are outlined to enable the reader to understand the operational context in which the case study brigades operated. This chapter explores the role of a Canadian officer, Brigadier-General F.O.W. Loomis, GOC 2 CIB.¹

2.2 Arras and the Canadian Corps

On 9 April 1917 the most southerly corps sector on First Army's front was held by the four Canadian divisions which comprised the Canadian Corps under Lieutenant-General Hon. Sir Julian Byng's command, together with 5th Division in Corps Reserve.² The Canadian Corps' sector extended from Souchez southwards for some five miles to its boundary with Third Army's sector. It encompassed The Pimple and Vimy Ridge as far as the Arras-Lens road to the north-east of the village of Ecurie. First Army's remaining two corps – II Corps (18th and 46th Divisions) and XIII Corps (2nd, 31st and 63rd Divisions) - were in GHQ and First Army reserve respectively.³

The Canadian Corps' task was succinctly summarised within First Army's Order No. 101:

*(c) The task of First Army is to form a strong defensive flank for the operations of the Third Army by the capture of the VIMY Ridge from the COMMANDANT'S HOUSE (B.7.d) to GUNNER CRATER (S.15.2.a.8), both inclusive; and to exploit success by operating in the direction of DOUAI.*⁴

¹ Although a Canadian, Loomis was under the command of the BEF's C-in-C. As Kenneth Radley has pointed out "British Army", of course, was the Army of Great Britain, but it was also, in common usage, the Armies of the Dominions beyond the seas and it included men from wherever the Union Jack flew.' K. Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough: Shaping the Canadian Corps 1914-1918* (Solihull: Helion & Company Limited, 2014), p. xvi

² All subsequent references to 'Division' or 'Divisions' in this chapter refer to Canadian Divisions, unless otherwise stated.

³ TNA WO95/13 O.A. 844/219 and TNA WO95/169 Map C.N.13 to Accompany First Army Order No. 102 d/- 3/4/17

⁴ TNA WO95/169 First Army General Staff, 1917 April, First Army Order No 101, 26 March 1917

The southern part of the Ridge, from Commandant's House to the Scarpe, was the object of XVII Corps' attack.⁵ On the assumption that the Canadian Corps' attack on 9 April 1917 was successful, First Army's task at the northern end of Vimy Ridge was subsequently extended by a decision to attack astride the River Souchez to capture The Pimple and the Bois en Hache on the night of 9/10 April. These objectives were to form part of the attack, rather than they should be attacked subsequently, as previously intended.⁶ In the event circumstances were to dictate, however, that the attack on The Pimple and the Bois en Hache was postponed for forty-eight hours.⁷

Vimy Ridge has been denoted as 'the linchpin' of the German defensive system on the Western Front.⁸ Despite the best efforts of the French army in 1915, the Germans had held it since October 1914.⁹ At its highest point the Ridge is 482 feet above sea level (147 metres). It descends from north to south-east and forms a natural defensive feature. The forward slopes of the Ridge provide observation westward over the Arras-Souchez road and beyond. The gentler slopes southward provide observation from Thélus to the valley of the eastward flowing Scarpe and beyond. The eastern side of the Ridge takes the form of an escarpment which descends abruptly 320 feet to the Douai plain, an area in which lay the coal mines

⁵ At least one senior British officer subsequently argued that the whole of the ground from Souchez southwards to the River Scarpe constituted a single tactical and cartographical feature and that the task of 51st, 34th, 9th and 4th Divisions 'was a much more difficult task than the comparatively short advance of the Canadians'. TNA CAB45/116, Letter of 10 July 1937 to the Official Historian from Brigadier-General J.R.E. Charles, formerly BGGs XVII Corps, Third Army.

⁶ TNA WO158/188 First Army, 1917 April 1 to May 31, First Army Order No 103, 5 April 1917

⁷ Those circumstances were that 4th Division's GOC, Major-General David Watson (1869-1922) had to commit 10 CIB (GOC Brigadier-General E. Hilliam) to reinforce 12 CIB (GOC Brigadier-General V.W. Odlum) to complete the capture of Hill 145 and the Red Line. 10 CIB's attack on The Pimple, therefore, was postponed. G.W.L. Nicholson, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War: Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), p. 261

⁸ T. Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War 1917-1918 Volume Two* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008), p. 75. See also Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, p. 244. The Scheme of Operations stated: 'As long as he maintains his hold on this ridge the enemy can withdraw south of ARRAS even to the HINDENBURG LINE without compromising the security of his line to the North.' TNA WO158/424 Canadian Corps, Scheme of Operations for Assault on Vimy Ridge Part I (Tactical)

⁹ See J. Sheldon, *The German Army on Vimy Ridge 1914-1917* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2008), pp. 45-176. Sheldon makes clear that, unlike the French army in 1915, the British army made no attempt in 1916 to take Vimy Ridge – *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. ix.

around Lens and the industrial capacity of Lille. Because the higher ground of the northern end of the Ridge provided observation over its southern slopes, the Ridge had to be captured in its entirety. This would allay both Allenby's fear of counter-attack on Third Army's left flank and provide Horne's First Army with an ability to observe deep into German held territory.

Despite its topographical advantages, the German Sixth Army, commanded by General Ludwig von Falkenhausen, was not without its difficulties in defending the Ridge, principal amongst which was the limited depth between the German front line and its crest.

Above all there is no deployment in depth on the position, nor are the [existing positions] properly linked up. It is precisely at those points where the positions are geographically the weakest (on the northern flank) that their physical state is worst (mostly shot away).¹⁰

Despite the lessons learnt from the 'serious and regrettable reverses sustained at Verdun', the defences of Vimy Ridge had understandably been built to reflect the demands of static trench warfare.¹¹ The German defences took the form of a series of three defensive lines essentially running north-south. The forward defensive line itself consisted of three lines of trenches, five to seven hundred yards in depth, with deep dug-outs for their garrisons. This was despite the strictures of *SS 544* that these dug-outs were 'absolutely prohibited' because 'they simply form man traps' and were to 'be blown up wherever they exist'. The Canadian Corps and German front lines were close to one another. On the Canadian Corps' left, opposite Souchez and Givenchy-en-Gohelle respectively, the front lines were formed by conjoined craters

¹⁰ General Ludwig von Falkenhausen (1844-1936). This extract is from a briefing on German concerns and priorities over the defense of Vimy Ridge presented by General Karl Ritter von Fasbender (1852-1933), commander of I Bavarian Reserve Corps, to a conference attended by General Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff (1865-1937) and senior staff officers on 18 March 1917. Sheldon, *The German Army on Vimy Ridge*, pp. 251-2

¹¹ *SS 544 Experience of the Recent Fighting at Verdun* - Translation of a German Document issued by OHL on 25 December 1916 and printed by GHQ on 28 February 1917. The reasons for Sixth Army's failure to implement the lessons of Verdun are set out in G.C. Wynne, *If Germany Attacks: The Battle in Depth in the West* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Reprinted 1976), pp. 168-173.

which ran north-south.¹² Further to the Canadian Corps' right on the other hand, opposite the approach to Hill 145, the distance between the two front lines was at its maximum, a distance of 200 yards. The Corps' front was scarred throughout by numerous craters, the result of mining warfare activities, some which formed the front line and some which lay within the German forward defensive system.

The German Second Line was sited to the east of the Ridge. On the Canadian Corps' left front this line was about a mile to the rear. Because the crest of the Ridge ran to the south-east, on the Canadian Corps' right the German Second Line lay about two miles to the rear. Both the First and Second Lines were protected by deep belts of wire with the forward zone covered by a network of concrete machine-gun emplacements. Heavily defended positions had been created both on the eastern side of the Ridge, for example at La Folie Farm, and on the western slope, for example at Thélus. The German Third Line lay some two miles further to the rear running southward from Lens skirting Méricourt, Arleux, Oppy, Gavrelle and on to the Scarpe. The final element of the German defensive system, the Drocourt-Quéant Line, lay four miles further to the east and was still under construction.

Byng's plan provided that the infantry of all four Canadian divisions would attack simultaneously, the first time all four Canadian divisions were to be in action together.¹³ From right to left, the Canadian assault would be delivered by 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Divisions, each attacking with two brigades in the line. In the case of 1st, 3rd and 4th Divisions, each of their two attacking brigades would commit three battalions to the attack holding one battalion

¹² Football, Broadbridge, Joan, Mildred, New Cut and Irish Craters. See TNA WO95/3895 10 CIB WD, April 1917, Map 'E'

¹³ The GOC Canadian Corps' central role and influence vis-à-vis his four divisions contrasted with that of corps commanders generally. 'How can a corps commander who has as many as 20 divisions passing through his hands in one year be held responsible for their training for the battle.' IWM, file 40, The Papers of General Sir Ivor Maxse, Undated note to a member of the Court of Enquiry re: Cambrai.

in reserve; in the case of 2nd Division, its two brigades would attack with two battalions each, a third battalion being held in reserve and a fourth being used to provide ‘moppers-up’ and carrying parties. The typical length of front to be attacked by each of the eight brigades making the initial attack was 900 yards.¹⁴

Byng’s plan identified a series of lines as objectives. The Black Line was to be attacked by all four divisions. It was planned that the advance to the Black Line, a distance of 800 yards, would be made within thirty-five minutes. Troops were to wait there for forty minutes to ensure they were all in touch with the creeping barrage before proceeding to take the next objective, the Red Line. The distance between the Black and Red Lines varied between 550 and 1,350 yards. The timetable allowed twenty minutes for the attackers to reach the Red Line followed by a pause of two and a half hours. With the attainment and consolidation of the Red Line, the two left hand divisions, 3rd and 4th Divisions, would have achieved their tasks.

Not so 1st and 2nd Divisions. In both instances, the brigades which had reached the Red Line were to consolidate and hold these positions. In the case of 1st Division, its attack was to be continued by its supporting brigade leapfrogging through and attacking the Blue Line. 1st Division’s front narrowed at this point because the village of Thélus had been allocated within 2nd Division’s frontage. This Division’s attack on its wider frontage was to be continued by two brigades, the Division’s own supporting brigade on the right and a brigade allocated from British 5th Division on the left, again leapfrogging through the two brigades that had reached the Red Line. The plan allowed seventy-five minutes for the three brigades of 1st and 2nd Divisions to advance up to 1,200 yards to take the Blue Line where the attack

¹⁴ This was of the order of half the distance held when a brigade was holding the line in ‘normal’ circumstances in this area. For example, in November 1916, the front held by 2 CIB was 1,785 yards. TNA WO95/3764 WD, 2 CIB, 3 November 1916.

would again pause for ninety-six minutes. The final phase of the attack was planned to be the attainment of the Brown Line, a distance of up to a further 1,200 yards, fifty-two minutes later by two brigades, the support brigade of 1st Division and the right-hand brigade on 2nd Division's front. With zero-hour set for 5.30 a.m., and if the planned timetable was adhered to, the Canadian Corps would have secured its objectives up to 4,000 yards from its start line by 1.18 p.m.¹⁵

2.3 Brigadier-General F.O.W. Loomis

The Canadian Corps' successful attack on Vimy Ridge was delivered by twelve infantry brigades, eleven Canadian and one British.¹⁶ The focus of this chapter is 2 CIB and its commander, Brigadier-General Frederick Oscar Warren Loomis.

Loomis was born in Sherbrooke, Quebec, on 1 February 1870, the fourth born in a family of five sons and three daughters.¹⁷ Loomis' background is typical of those Canadians who rose to senior commands in the Canadian Corps. It contrasts with the military family, Sandhurst and Regular army commission background of the stereotypical British officer. Loomis' family was prosperous, his father having established a construction business, D.G. Loomis and Sons, in 1891. Loomis joined the family firm and rose to become its managing director. Like many of his British comparators, Loomis attended a fee paying school, Bishop's College School in Lennoxville, Sherbrooke, a school which formed a Volunteer Rifle Company of its

¹⁵ TNA WO158/424 Canadian Corps – Scheme of Operations for Assault on Vimy Ridge Part I (Tactical)

¹⁶ The single CIB not committed to the attack on 9 April 1917 was 9 CIB (GOC Brigadier-General F. W. Hill). This brigade was part of 3rd Division and was in Divisional Reserve – see TNA WO95/3875 9 CIB WD, April 1917, Appendix 2, Narrative of Operations. Whether this had anything to do with Hill's reputation for heavy drinking is a matter for speculation – see P. Brennan, 'Completely Worn Out by Service in France': Combat Stress and Breakdown among Senior Officers in the Canadian Corps, *Canadian Military History*, 18 (2) 2009, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷ Sherbrooke lies eighty-two miles east of Montreal. Loomis died of a heart attack on 15 February 1937 at the age of sixty-seven.

cadets in 1861.¹⁸ Loomis joined his local Militia, 53/Sherbrooke Battalion, as a private in 1886 and was commissioned in 1897. The following year he transferred to what became the 5th Regiment, Royal Highlanders of Canada. By December 1909 Loomis had been promoted major. At Valcartier on the outbreak of war Loomis was appointed CO of 13/Battalion, part of 3 CIB commanded by Brigadier-General R.E.W. Turner VC.¹⁹ The battalion saw its first action at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915 where Loomis earned his first DSO, the only Canadian CO on whom this award was bestowed as a result of this battle.²⁰ After nearly a year's front line service, Loomis' experience was drawn upon when he was appointed to command 12 CIB, a training brigade based at Shorncliffe in the UK.²¹ There followed two short term appointments in France – GOC 3 CIB under Currie and GOC 7 CIB under Mercer - before Loomis returned to England to command 11 CIB under Watson. This was his second brigade command during the formation and training of 4th Division before its deployment to France in August 1916. Loomis' merry-go-round of brigade commands came to an end when he was appointed to command 2 CIB. He joined the brigade on 4 July 1916.²² If nothing else, Loomis had seen a variety of brigades and their staffs from the inside, both the experienced and the inexperienced, as well as their COs. This provided him with a breadth of experience upon which to draw.

¹⁸ Also educated at Bishop's College School were Major-General Henry Edward Burstall (1870-1945), GOC 2nd Division and Brigadier-General Andrew George Latta McNaughton (1887-1966), GOC Heavy Artillery. J.M. Bourne, 'Major General W.C.G. Heneker: A Divisional Commander of the Great War', in M. Hughes & M. Seligmann (eds.) *Leadership in Conflict 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2000), p. 55

¹⁹ This and all subsequent references to 'Battalion/s' in this chapter refer to Canadian Infantry Battalion/s, unless otherwise stated. Major-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Richard Ernest William Turner (1871-1961)

²⁰ The author is grateful to Kenneth Radley for pointing out the exclusivity of this award.

²¹ Along with 10 CIB and 11 CIB, 12 CIB was subsequently selected to form part of 4th Division when it was created in April 1916. See F.W. Perry, *Order of Battle of Divisions – Part 5a* (Newport: Ray Westlake – Military Books, 1992), p. 78. Loomis held this command from 5 January to 9 March 1916. See J.F. Meek, *Over the Top!: The Canadian Infantry in the First World War*, (Privately Published, 1971), p. 40.

²² TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, July 1916. Loomis held his previous commands for the following periods – 3 CIB, 1st Division 9 March to 12 March 1916, the vacancy arising due to a serious wound to Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Robert Gilmour Edwards Leckie (1869-1922); 7 CIB, 3rd Division 14 March to 6 May 1916, again the vacancy due to wounds to Brigadier-General A.C. Macdonell; the newly formed 11 CIB, 4th Division 16 May to 2 July 1916. See Meek, *Over the Top!*, pp. 27, 34 and 39.

2 CIB's initial GOC had been Arthur Currie. Currie had been appointed GOC 1st Division in succession to Sir Edwin Alderson who, on the formation of the Canadian Corps on 15 September 1915, was appointed its GOC.²³ Currie had been succeeded by Louis Lipsett whose initial appointment during the war had been as CO 8/Battalion, one of the constituent battalions of 2 CIB.²⁴ Lipsett, a British Regular officer who had been attached to the Canadian Permanent Force since the summer of 1911, had subsequently been promoted GOC 3rd Division following the death of Malcolm Mercer at Mount Sorrel on 3 June 1916.²⁵ With Loomis' eventual succession to Lipsett as GOC 3rd Division on 13 September 1918, 2 CIB had a unique claim to fame. It was the only Canadian brigade during the war to produce three of the Corps' divisional GOCs.²⁶ Such a consistency in the production of promotable talent to divisional level suggests, at least superficially, that 2 CIB was a well-run formation.²⁷ Currie held Loomis in high regard. 'Brigadiers like him do not grow on gooseberry bushes [and] I would not lose him for the world.'²⁸ The terms of the citation for the Bar to Loomis' DSO awarded for his actions shortly before his promotion in succession to Lipsett confirm why Loomis was selected:

For great gallantry and brilliant leadership during the operations south-east of Amiens, 8-9 August 1918, and east of Arras 2 September 1918. He made reconnaissances under heavy fire, personally superintending the disposition

²³ Lieutenant-General Sir Edwin Alfred Hervey Alderson (1859-1927)

²⁴ The battalions which formed 2 CIB were 5/, 7/, 8/ and 10/Battalions, all recruited from all four western provinces.

²⁵ Major-General Malcolm Smith Mercer (1859-1916). For the circumstances of Lipsett's appointment to GOC 3rd Division rather than Sir Sam Hughes' son Garnet, see J. Williams, *Byng of Vimy: General and Governor-General* (London: Secker & Warburg/Leo Cooper, 1983), p. 127.

²⁶ Lipsett's transfer to GOC British 4th Division was apparently the result of a breakdown in his relationship with Currie – see Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 504. He was killed by machine gun fire on 14 October 1918 whilst reconnoitring front-line trenches his division was due to take over the following day. Lipsett was the last British general to be killed during the Great War. See F. Davies & G. Maddocks, *Bloody Red Tabs: General Officer Casualties of the Great War, 1914-1918* (London: Leo Cooper, 1995), pp. 82-3.

²⁷ Writing of Loomis' insight into the human condition, David O'Keefe maintains that 'the results witnessed the creation of a confident, cohesive, aggressive and above all, successful 2nd Brigade'. D.R. O'Keefe, "'A Brutal Soul-Destroying Business": Brigadier-General F.O.W. Loomis and the Question of "Impersonal Generalship"', in A.B. Godefroy (ed.), *Great War Commands: Historical Perspectives on Canadian Army Leadership 1914-1918* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2010), p. 89

²⁸ Cited in K. Radley, *We Lead Others Follow: First Canadian Division 1914-1918* (St. Catherines, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing, 2006), p. 66.

*of troops and encouraging all by his coolness and ability. The results achieved by the brigade were of an outstanding nature.*²⁹

2.4 Loomis' Battalion Commanders

A prime concern of any formation commander is the degree to which he has confidence in his principal subordinates, the four COs of the infantry battalions of his brigade together with his BM and SCs. The authority to appoint COs did not lie with brigade commanders. What the precise process actually was for the appointment of COs is not totally clear.³⁰ In some instances the senior major within a battalion was promoted. In other cases an officer from another unit and/or formation was transferred or promoted. Whilst within the BEF brigadier-generals could recommend replacements, there were others in the chain of command involved.³¹ In the case of the CEF, certainly until his political demise in November 1916, there was always the influence, if not overt interference, of Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defence, and his representative in London, Max Aitken.³² A course of action always open to a brigadier-general, however, was to report critically on his subordinates to his divisional commander. He had no interest in retaining in post either a CO or staff officer who he judged was not up to the job. Such weak links could be a danger, both to the men under the CO's own command and to perceptions of the CO's own performance, which could have implications for the careers of their brigade and divisional commanders.

²⁹ *LG*, 2 April 1919, citation 10 December 1919. As Currie later noted in a letter to Canada's acting Prime Minister, Sir George Foster (1847-1931), 'it was unusual for a Divisional Commander to be so rewarded.' LAC MG 30 E 100 Vol. 5 File S-Z, Currie Papers, Currie to Foster, 10 April 1920. Loomis returned to Montreal during his long-leave from 2 December 1917 to 16 March 1918 as a result of his service, not his rank— see Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough*, p. 235 and TNA WO95/3765 2 CIB WD, 2 December 1917 and 16 March 1918. Currie wrote to him. He concluded his letter in the following terms: 'We shall be more than glad to welcome you back again. The coming year will be the decisive one, I think, and we need the best there are.' LAC MG 30 E 100 Vol. 1 File 2, Currie Papers, Currie to Loomis, 27 January 1918

³⁰ A consequence, in part, of the loss of the records of the Military Secretary due to German bombing on 8 September 1940.

³¹ Army Form W.3025 – Promotion Form – provided space for recommendations in individual cases by the relevant CO, brigade commander and divisional commander.

³² Major-General Sir Sam Hughes (1853-1921). William Maxwell "Max" Aitken, 1st Baron Beaverbrook (1879-1964). For an example of Hughes' control over promotions, and notably his efforts to secure a brigade command for his son, Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Garnet Burk Hughes (1880-1937), see R.G. Haycock, *Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1885-1916* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1986), pp. 275-282.

2.4.1 5/Canadian Infantry Battalion

It is evident that within a matter of weeks of his appointment Loomis played an active role in shaping his team of COs. Loomis inherited Lieutenant-Colonel H.M. Dyer.³³ Born in Kingstown, Ireland, Dyer emigrated at the age of twenty and became a farmer in Minnedosa, Manitoba. At the outbreak of war Dyer volunteered at the age of fifty-three. Having regard to his twelve years' service with the Militia with 12/Manitoba Dragoons, Dyer was appointed a major in 5/Battalion and served with Canada's first contingent. In January 1916 Dyer was promoted CO within the battalion in succession to Lieutenant-Colonel G.S. Tuxford who had himself been promoted to a brigade command.³⁴ The performance of Dyer and his battalion on the Somme, during the winter of 1916-17 and at Vimy Ridge clearly made its mark.³⁵ In the series of moves resulting from Byng's promotion to the command of Third Army, Dyer was appointed GOC 7 CIB, 3rd Division on 29 June 1917 under Lipsett's command.³⁶ In Dyer, therefore, Loomis recognised a Canadian officer with as much battlefield experience as any other member of the CEF, one who had withstood the pressures of command and, as events were to prove, continued successfully to do so.³⁷

³³ Lieutenant-Colonel Hugh Marshall 'Daddy' Dyer (1861-1938)

³⁴ Tuxford initially commanded the newly formed 10 CIB, 4th Division in England for two months (11 January-9 March 1916) before transferring to command 3 CIB, 1st Division, a command he held from 12 March 1916 until the end of the war.

³⁵ For example, Dyer temporarily commanded 2 CIB when Loomis went on leave on 30 November to 10 December 1916 and 4 to 13 May 1917. TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, November/December 1916 and May 1917

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 29 June 1917

³⁷ Dyer commanded 7 CIB until 12 September 1918. His performance and service during the war was recognised by the award of CB, CMG, DSO and Bar, and five MiDs. The practice of promotion from within battalions was continued with the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel Lorn Paulet Owen Tudor (1876-1941) as Dyer's successor. Tudor was another original member of the 5/Battalion, initially a lieutenant in "G" Company. Tudor was awarded a DSO for his contribution on 9 April 1917 attributed to both his personal example 'and to the thoroughness with which all details had been prepared by him'. *LG*, 17 July 1917

2.4.2 7/Canadian Infantry Battalion

The CO of 7/Battalion at the time of Loomis' own appointment as GOC 2 CIB was Lieutenant-Colonel V.W. Odlum. Odlum left for England the day after Loomis' appointment having himself been promoted to succeed Loomis as GOC 11 CIB, 4th Division.³⁸ Odlum's successor was Lieutenant-Colonel S.D. Gardner, an accountant by profession with previous service in both the Canadian Militia and the British army.³⁹ He left Canada with the first contingent as captain and adjutant of 7/Battalion. He was seriously wounded on 24 May 1915 in the vicinity of Festubert and evacuated to England. Gardner recovered to be promoted major in November 1915. Before re-joining the battalion on 16 June 1916 Gardner served in turn as BM of 11 CIB and BM of 14 CIB, both training brigades. As with Dyer, Gardner was promoted from within his own battalion on 20 July 1916. His period as CO, however, proved to be short-lived. Gardner was again wounded and subsequently evacuated on 10 October 1916.⁴⁰

The appointment of the fourth CO of 7/Battalion saw continuation of the practice of promotion from within. Lieutenant-Colonel W.F. Gilson was a rarity, initially a Colour Sergeant in 'G' Company, who rose to the command of his battalion.⁴¹ Born in India, the son of a British army colonel, Gilson had served in the DLI, KOYLI and the West India Regiment before the war. Gilson was awarded three DSOs during his period in command. The essence of the approach Gilson brought to his responsibilities is encapsulated in the citations to the Bars to his DSO:

³⁸ TNA WO95/3768 7/Battalion WD, 5 July 1916

³⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel Stanley Douglas Gardner (1880-1918)

⁴⁰ Gardner did eventually return to France as the CO of 38/Battalion on 10 September 1918 only to be wounded again, wounds from which he died two days later on 30 September 1918.

⁴¹ See Chapter 1, Note 140. On his Attestation Paper Gilson gave his occupation as 'Labourer'.

*For conspicuous gallantry and initiative. He was in command of his battalion in an attack, during which he pushed forward with great determination, though the situation with regard to support was somewhat involved. His skill in directing the operations, and his fine example of courage and resource largely contributed to the success with which the battalion reached the objective.*⁴²

*For conspicuous gallantry and ability to command. He captured with his battalion, on 2nd September, 1918, the Drocourt-Queant line, together with 600 prisoners, his bold and able leadership in face of heavy machine-gun fire overcoming all opposition with minimum losses. Later in the day, under heavy artillery and machine (gun) fire, he went forward and personally established his new line.*⁴³

Gilson provided a degree of stability within the brigade. Of all the COs who commanded any of the Canadian Corps' forty-eight front-line battalions, Gilson's period of continuous command of 767 days was the fifth longest period of any Canadian battalion CO.⁴⁴ It is difficult to believe that Loomis would have done anything but to have supported Gilson's promotion.⁴⁵

2.4.3 8/Canadian Infantry Battalion

8/Battalion's original CO had been Lipsett. Loomis inherited Lieutenant-Colonel K.C. Bedson.⁴⁶ Bedson was a Canadian-born officer with significant pre-war Militia experience.⁴⁷ In September 1914 he was promoted captain and appointed commander of 'A' Company, 6/Battalion. When his original battalion was amalgamated with the Canadian Light Horse in

⁴² Supplement to the *LG*, 7 November 1918

⁴³ Supplement to the *LG*, 1 February 1919

⁴⁴ Those COs with longer continuous periods in command were Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert John Dawson (1876-1926), 46/Battalion – 1,170 days; Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Arthur Henry Bell (1871-1956), 31/Battalion – 1160 days; Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Augustus Genet (1864-1946), 58/Battalion – 780 days; Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Bartlett Rogers (1886-1942), 3/Battalion – 772 days. Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Thomas-Louis Tremblay (1886-1951) commanded 22/Battalion for two periods of 613 days and 540 days respectively. Meek, *Over the Top!*, pp. 70, 64, 76, 50 and 59

⁴⁵ If Loomis did have influence over Gilson's appointment, he had clearly made his views known prior to the event since he was on leave in England when the appointment was announced. TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, November/December 1916

⁴⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel Kenneth Campbell Bedson (1881-1976)

⁴⁷ Bedson had served in South Africa with 2/CMR in 1902, subsequently with 100/"Winnipeg Grenadiers" and ultimately with 34/Fort Garry Horse where he was the senior lieutenant.

May 1915, Bedson transferred to 8/Battalion.⁴⁸ On his promotion from CO 8/Battalion in succession to Currie on 14 September 1915, Lipsett had taken with him Major J.M. Prower as his BM, the senior major of 8/Battalion.⁴⁹ The vacancy as CO 8/Battalion which Bedson filled arose because of a serious injury to the incumbent, Lieutenant-Colonel H.H. Matthew.⁵⁰ Bedson held the command of 8/Battalion for a matter of three weeks before Prower, as the senior and, under the tutelage of Lipsett for nearly a year, now a more experienced officer, returned to 8/Battalion as its CO.⁵¹ Prower had served as 2 CIB's BM under Loomis for a month before the decision was implemented that he was more valuable and merited promotion to the command of his battalion in preference to Bedson.⁵²

2.4.4 10/Canadian Infantry Battalion

Although the shell which destroyed 1 CIB's HQ on 13 June 1915 had created the opportunity for Prower's promotion, this was not so in the case of the 10/Battalion's CO. Loomis had inherited Lieutenant-Colonel J.G. Rattray who had been appointed on 1 June 1915 at the age

⁴⁸ Bedson was one of three officers and thirty-two ORs who arrived at 8/Battalion on 19 May 1915. TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD, 19 May 1915

⁴⁹ Major (later Brigadier) John Mervyn Prower (1885-1968). In his Attestation Paper Prower stated he had served for seven years in the British army and three years in the Canadian Militia. He gave his occupation as 'Gentleman'. Lipsett left on leave for England on 14 September 1915 and returned to the command of 2 CIB on 20 September 1915. Prower took up his new responsibilities under Lipsett on 21 September 1915. TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD, 21 September 1915. Prower's predecessor as BM had been Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Elmsley, a Staff College graduate – see Chapter 1, Note 97 and LAC RG150 Vol. 461, List of Staff Officers, 2 Canadian Infantry Brigade, 1 July and 1 October 1915. That an officer of Elmsley's rank was employed as a BM was a reflection of Currie's concern over the need for trained staff officers.

⁵⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Harold Halford Matthew (1877-1940). Matthew had succeeded Lipsett as CO 8/Battalion. Both Matthew and Bedson had been at 1 CIB HQ on 13 June 1916 at Mount Sorrel when it took a direct hit by an artillery shell. Matthew was wounded in the head and injured his back whilst Bedson suffered minor injuries, although he was badly shaken. TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD

⁵¹ Prower had been promoted major on 26 May 1915; Bedson on 2 May 1916. Bedson held command of 8/Battalion from 14 July 1916 until Prower's arrival on 3 August 1916. TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD. For comment on the quality of Prower's analysis in November 1916 of the lessons to be drawn from the Canadian Corps' experiences on the Somme, see Radley, *We Lead Others Follow*, pp. 153-4.

⁵² Bedson was promoted on 9 January 1917 as CO 18 Reserve/Battalion in England but he never returned to command a battalion in France. Meek, *Over the Top!*, p. 156. Prower held command of 8/Battalion until 20 April 1918 when he took command of 1st Divisional Wing, Canadian Corps Reinforcement Camp. TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD. For an explanation of the organization of reinforcement camps, see D.W. Love, *"A Call to Arms" - The Organization and Administration of Canada's Military in World War One* (Winnipeg: Bunker to Bunker Books, 1999), pp. 122-3. Prower was awarded the DSO and a Bar as well as five MiDs.

of forty-eight years and four months.⁵³ On his appointment, Rattray was more than two and half years older than the age of the average Arras brigadier-general appointed during 1915 and almost seven years older than the average battalion CO appointed in the CEF before the beginning of 1917.⁵⁴ It seems that Rattray himself harboured the view that the reason for his seemingly abrupt removal to the command of training brigade in England hinged on the influence of Sam Hughes.⁵⁵ It may have been that Loomis shared Dancocks' view that Rattray was a competent officer, but not a great field commander, and that Loomis made this known.⁵⁶ Rattray's removal provides a rare insight into the process as to who formally made the decision concerning his replacement, in this case Currie. Rattray by-passed Loomis in January 1916 and again in September 1916, with ultimate success, lobbying Currie directly that, when the time came, his replacement should be the battalion's senior major, Major D.M. Ormond.⁵⁷ According to Dancocks, Currie was sceptical about Ormond.⁵⁸ It is difficult to believe, however, he would have appointed Ormond unless Ormond enjoyed Loomis' full support.

Ormond was a graduate of the University of Manitoba and a barrister by profession. He had served in the Militia with the 18/Mounted Rifles based in Winnipeg for ten years prior to the war and had been promoted major in 1911.⁵⁹ A member of the first contingent, Ormond was the 10/Battalion's initial Adjutant. When on 23 April 1915 the CO and 2iC were both wounded during the attack on Kitchener's Wood, and despite being wounded himself,

⁵³ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) John Grant Rattray (1867-1944)

⁵⁴ See Chapter 1, Table 1.6. For age on appointment of CEF lieutenant-colonels, see Directorate of History and Heritage, Ottawa, ON 92/252 Series 7 Box 125 File 102, Memoranda, 19 March 1941.

⁵⁵ See D.G. Dancocks, *Gallant Canadians: the Story of the Tenth Canadian Infantry Battalion 1914-1919* (Calgary: The Calgary Highlanders Regimental Funds Foundation, 1990), p. 89. The battalion's WD for 8 September 1916 records baldly 'Lt. Col. R.J. Rattray left 7.00 A.M.' TNA WO95/3770 10/Battalion WD , 8 September 1916

⁵⁶ Dancocks, *Gallant Canadians*, p. 90

⁵⁷ Major (later Brigadier-General) Daniel Mowat Ormond (1885-1974)

⁵⁸ Dancocks, *Gallant Canadians*, p. 90

⁵⁹ *The Quarterly Militia List, Dominion of Canada, 1 October 1911*, p. 91. Date of promotion – 5 April 1911.

Ormond had taken command of the battalion.⁶⁰ Ormond was evacuated to England, recovered and returned to command the battalion from 28 May until Rattray assumed command on 2 June 1915. In March 1916, however, Ormond took command of 7/Canadian Pioneer Depot based at Crowborough, Sussex. Ormond held this command for six months until, at the age of thirty-one years and one month, he was promoted lieutenant-colonel in command of 10/Battalion on 25 September 1916.⁶¹ The tangible success of Ormond's appointment is evidenced by the award of two DSOs during 1917 and his subsequent promotion at the age of thirty-three years and nine months to GOC 9 CIB on 24 May 1918.⁶² On leaving 10/Battalion, and in contrast to terms in which his predecessor's departure was recorded, the WD records:

Lieut-Col. D.M. Ormond, D.S.O. left this afternoon to take over provisional command of 9th CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE. This officer was one of the original 10th Battalion Officers, and took over command of the Unit from Lieut-Col. J.C. RATTRAY, D.S.O. during the operations on the SOMME, in September, 1916. The success of the Battalion in all the operations in which it took part, under his command, was very marked, and in large measure due to the wonderful ability for organization, and capacity for detail, possessed by this Officer. The Officers and men alike, of the 10th C.I. Battalion, recognising his ability as a Commander, found no training too arduous, and no task too hard to carry out. The loyalty of all ranks was well shown by the

⁶⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel Russell Lambert Boyle (1880-1915) died of his wounds on 25 April 1915. Boyle had joined the Militia as a trumpeter when he was thirteen years and seven months old and had served with the RCA in South Africa. Major Joseph McLaren (1882-1915) was wounded on 23 April 1915 and was killed later that day whilst in an ambulance. TNA WO95/3770 10/Battalion WD, 23 April 1915

⁶¹ The average age of all lieutenant-colonels appointed within the CEF during the war was thirty-nine years, with a range of twenty-six to fifty-five years. Directorate of History and Heritage, Ottawa, ON 92/252 Series 7 Box 125 File 102, Memoranda, 19 March 1941

⁶² DSO *LG*, 4 June 1917; Bar to DSO *LG*, 18 October 1917. By the end of the war, Ormond had also been awarded the CMG, the Russian Order of St Stanislas with Swords, the French Croix de Guerre and three MiDs. Of the fifty-nine brigadier-generals appointed within the CEF during the war, only four were younger than Ormond on the date of their respective first appointments. They were A.G.L. McNaughton, GOC CCHA – thirty-one; Brigadier-General T.L. Tremblay, GOC 5 CIB – thirty-two; Brigadier-General John Arthur Clark (1886-1976), GOC 7 CIB – thirty-two; Lord Brooke, Leopold Guy Francis Maynard Greville, 6th Earl of Warwick (1882-1928), GOC 4 and 12 CIB – thirty-three. See Memoranda dated March 1941: Directorate of History and Heritage, Ottawa, ON 92/252 Series 7 Box 125 File 102. Other than Lipsett and Lord Brooke, only one other British officer commanded a CIB during the war – Brigadier-General Ross John Finnis Hayter (1875-1929), GOC 10 CIB (4 December 1917-27 October 1918). Born in India, a graduate of RMCK, Hayter was commissioned into the Cheshire Regiment. He was attached to the Canadian Militia at the outbreak of war and served with the CEF.

*large number who called on him before he went away to say goodbye, and offer their best wishes for his continued success in his new Command.*⁶³

Any brigadier-general had the capacity to rid himself, by one means or another, of COs in whom he lacked confidence. Loomis, however, had in Dyer, Gilson, Prower and Ormond an experienced team of COs on whom he could depend. All were in command of their battalions for periods significantly greater than the average, and two – Dyer and Ormond – were subsequently promoted to command their own brigades.⁶⁴ The consistency of 2 CIB's practice of promotion of COs from within battalions during 1916 and 1917 was unique within 1st Division. Opportunities for and availability of suitable officers for vacancies within a division were always subject to the vagaries of casualties. Nevertheless, of the eight COs of the division's other two brigades appointed during this period, only three had been promoted within their own battalions.⁶⁵ This lends support to the proposition that, to Loomis' advantage, there was a greater degree of stability, cohesion and arguably confidence in the leadership of 2 CIB's battalions than within 1st Division's other two brigades. Although none of Loomis' COs had been members of the Permanent Force before the war, they had all proven their ability to fulfil their leadership roles, both in and out of the line. Importantly, Brennan maintains that successful COs were interested in new tactical developments and that they 'served as the initial and thus crucial link in the "institutionalized learning" that characterized the Canadian Corps' development'.⁶⁶ They had also displayed the personal

⁶³ TNA WO95/3770 10/Battalion WD, 20 May 1918

⁶⁴ Patrick Brennan's analysis of COs' periods of tenure shows that two-thirds of the COs of Canadian battalions held their commands for less than fifty-two weeks. Loomis' COs held their commands for the following periods: Dyer – 76 weeks; Gilson – 109 weeks; Prower – 89 weeks; Ormond – 86 weeks. P. Brennan, 'Good Men for a Hard Job: Infantry Battalion Commanders in the Canadian Expeditionary Force', *Canadian Army Journal*, 9 (1) 2006, pp. 9-28. Dyer – GOC 7 CIB, 3rd Division (29 June 1917-11 September 1918); Ormond – GOC 9 CIB, 3rd Division (26 May 1918-19 February 1919).

⁶⁵ In 1 CIB – CO 3/Battalion - Lieutenant-Colonel J.B. Rogers; in 3 CIB - CO 13/Battalion Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) (George) Eric McCuaig (1885-1958) and CO 14/Battalion Lieutenant-Colonel Gault McCombe (1885-1970).

⁶⁶ Brennan, 'Good Men for a Hard Job', p. 24. Loomis was a role model. He was very interested in the integration of new technology, the development of tactical doctrine and organizational improvements. See Radley, *We Lead Others Follow*, pp. 99-100, 338-9, 347 and 369.

attributes identified by Brennan that complemented their tactical and administrative competence, those of personal courage, thoroughness, calmness under pressure, lack of fear, optimism and, critically, concern for the welfare of individuals which in turn engendered morale and respect. Taken together, the display of these attributes defined the degree to which a CO was respected by those under his command and the degree to which he was regarded by them as a warrior.⁶⁷

2.5 Brigade Majors

Radley has described the BM's role as the 'kingpin' within a brigade.⁶⁸ He illustrates his point by referring to the critical nature of the relationship between Brigadier-General G. B. Hughes, GOC 1 CIB, and his BM, Major P.F. Villiers. Hughes, like his father, had an innate dislike of British Regular officers. Although Villiers had served in the Canadian Militia for more than eight years prior to the war, he was British born and had passed Sandhurst. In similar vein, Brigadier-General G.S. Tuxford, GOC 3 CIB, told his newly appointed BM, Villiers, that he had neither asked for him nor wanted him.⁶⁹ Tuxford pointed out to Villiers: 'When I engage a mechanic I hand him over the machine and he runs it. If it wants oiling and it begins to squeak I get another mechanic.'⁷⁰

⁶⁷ By the end of the war Dyer, Gilson, Prower and Ormond had between them been awarded one CB, two CMGs, eight DSOs and seventeen MiDs. For a comparison of the attributes identified by Brennan with the key factors for battalion leadership taught at Senior Officers' School in 1917, see Chapter 6, 6.4.1, 5/*Border Regiment*.

⁶⁸ Radley, *We Lead Others Follow*, p. 185

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-9. Villiers was appointed BM 3 CIB on 11 October 1916. On the other hand, Tuxford clearly welcomed his son on his staff. Lieutenant James Alexander Tuxford (1897-1975) served as Orderly Officer in his father's brigade from 8 April 1917 until the Armistice, his only appointment in France. LAC RG 150 Vol. 461 – List of Staff Officers – 3 Canadian Infantry Brigade, Monthly Returns, 30 April 1917-30 November 1918. Whilst under his father's command, Lieutenant Tuxford was awarded a MC – see *LG* 13 September 1918.

⁷⁰ Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough*, p. 305

Loomis' precise role in the appointment process of Prower's successor as 2 CIB's BM is unknown. The terms of 2 CIB's WD suggest, at least directly, his role had not amounted to very much:

*Orders were received for Major Prower to join his Battn temporarily in command and for Capt. Stubbs, 2nd Bn. Suffolk Regiment, to come to 2nd Bde. as B.M.*⁷¹

Stubbs' appointment was evidently a mere stop-gap for he was replaced two weeks later on 3 August 1916.⁷² The officer appointed in his place, Captain W.H.S. Alston, was the last British officer to be appointed BM in either 1st, 2nd or 3rd Divisions.⁷³ As Alston's preceding appointment had been GSO3 63rd Division, his transfer to Loomis' brigade could not have been a decision taken solely within the Canadian Corps. As is clear from the initial relationship between Tuxford and Villiers, the appointment of a BM could be a decision to which a brigadier-general was hostile. In the case of Loomis and Alston, however, their relationship clearly flourished evidenced by Alston's performance in post. Commenting on the ability amongst BMs of Canadian brigades to write well-honed operation orders, Radley provides an evaluation of Alston's work:

Captain William Alston, the BM of 2nd Brigade at Vimy, was one of only two Captains who served as BMs in that brigade. The reason that the brigade plan drew only five comments from division is simple: the plan is just plain well done. Everything Alston did for Vimy was quality: the plan, the work

⁷¹ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 19 July 1916. Captain (later Brigadier-General) Guy Clifford Stubbs (1883-1939)

⁷² Ibid., 3 August 1916. Stubbs was subsequently appointed CO, 2/Suffolk Regiment on 22 August 1916.

⁷³ Captain (later Major) William Hamilton Stirling Alston (1889-1950). Some Canadian officers had been appointed to BM positions in September 1914. For example, Major (later Colonel) Hubert Kemmis Betty (1872-1950), a Camberley Staff College graduate who was a GSO3 in the War Office at the outbreak of war, was appointed BM 2 CIB on 29 September 1914. On formation of 4th Division in 1916, British officers were appointed BM in all three brigades. They were Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Vincent Basil Ramsden (1888-1936), 10 CIB; Captain (later Major Sir) Robert John Aldborough Henniker (1888-1958), 11 CIB; and Captain (later Major) Richard Eveleigh Partridge (1888-1975), 12 CIB. The last British officer to be appointed BM in the Canadian Corps was Major Marmion Carr Ferrers-Guy (1877-1953), who took up his appointment as BM 11 CIB on 17 October 1916 – TNA WO95/3900 11 CIB WD. The process of replacing British BMs with Canadian officers began in 1916. It was completed when Captain (later Major) Richard Valentine Read (1892-1964), relinquished his appointment as BM 10 CIB, 4th Division on his appointment as BM 92 Brigade, 31st British Division on 30 November 1917 - TNA WO95/3895 10 CIB WD.

*program prior to the attack, the preliminary instructions, the movement order and the Operation Order. Afterward, his GOC singled him out for his “work and self-sacrifice throughout.” He must have been a very impressive junior officer.*⁷⁴

Loomis confirmed his appreciation of Alston’s work by subsequently recommending him for the MC.⁷⁵ Alston served as 2 CIB’s BM until 9 July 1917 when he was transferred as BM to 172 Brigade, 57th Division. Loomis’ preference for working with staff whom he knew is illustrated by the appointment of Major J.P. Mackenzie to succeed Alston as his BM.⁷⁶ Mackenzie had been Loomis’ SC(A) in the spring of 1916 before his return to 8/Battalion as 2iC.

2.6 Staff Captains

The CEF’s all ranks establishment of brigade headquarters of thirty-five remained unchanged throughout the war.⁷⁷ Whilst British brigades appointed a single SC to complement the role of the BM, the CEF’s establishment provided for the appointment of two SCs, as well as an Orderly Officer. BMs in British brigades undertook the ‘G’ role, including responsibility for intelligence matters. The SC’s role was to fulfil the ‘A’ and ‘Q’ role at brigade HQ. Within the CEF’s brigade establishment, the role of the Staff Captain (Administration and Quartermaster) mirrored that of his British opposite number. The role of the BM was also similar, with the exception that day to day responsibility for intelligence matters, and hence

⁷⁴ Radley, *We Lead Others Follow*, pp.228-9. Also LAC RG9 III C1, Vol. 3836, Folder 15, File 2, Report of 2 May 1917

⁷⁵ MC, *LG*, 4 June 1917. Subsequently promoted to GSO2, Alston continued to serve in staff positions, both during and after the war, until his retirement on 17 January 1933. Although Alston had been promoted to the temporary rank of major on 25 February 1918, he had to wait until 1 May 1930 before he was promoted a substantive major.

⁷⁶ Major (later Major-General) John Percival Mackenzie (1884-1961). A civil engineer, Mackenzie had served on the brigade’s staff since October 1915, initially as Orderly Officer and from January 1916 as SC(I) until he was wounded on 4 July 1916 – see LAC RG150 Vol. 461, List of Staff Officers, 2 Canadian Infantry Brigade, 31 October 1915 and 31 July 1916. Mackenzie commanded a battalion of Canadian Engineers from 2 May 1918 until the end of the war, was awarded the DSO and two Bars, served during the Second World War, was promoted Major-General and received the CB.

⁷⁷ For comparisons of CEF divisional establishments in 1914, 1916 and 1918, see Love, “*A Call to Arms*”, pp. 27-9.

the control of seventeen of the brigade's establishment, was that of the Staff Captain (Intelligence).⁷⁸ This officer's role was critical to the gathering, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information to fighting units, particularly in the detail of maps supplied to the brigade's units, itself critical to operational success. As Loomis recorded:

*As intelligence work is of course the most important department of an Infantry Brigade in the Field, it is necessary that they should have every opportunity of turning out good work*⁷⁹

On his appointment, Loomis had inherited the fifty year old Major B.M. Humble as his SC(I).⁸⁰ Humble had initially been appointed 7/Battalion's Assistant Adjutant in September 1914, subsequently being appointed as 2 CIB's SC(I) a year later. As a result of Humble's performance at Mount Sorrel when in command of 7/Battalion, Currie came to the assessment that he was not up to the responsibilities of a CO. Currie wrote to Odlum, Humble's CO, telling him that he 'will [hardly] do to succeed you'.⁸¹ Captain W.D. Herridge, having recovered from a bout of gastro-enteritis, returned to duty on 23 August 1916 to replace Humble as SC(I).⁸² Loomis' decision to allocate the SC(I) role to Herridge whilst also retaining Humble as SC(A) enabled him to work alongside Herridge and for Herridge to draw upon Humble's experience. Herridge and Humble remained in their respective posts until 6 January 1917 when Humble's respite arrived. Herridge swapped roles when Loomis then appointed him SC(A).⁸³

⁷⁸ See Love, "A Call to Arms", p. 30.

⁷⁹ F.O.W. Loomis' Battle Diary, 8 March 1917, Regimental Museum and Archives, The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada, Montreal (hereafter 'LBD')

⁸⁰ Major (later Colonel) Bernard Maynard Humble (later Humble-Birkitt) (1866-1945). A secretary and landowner before the war, Humble was awarded a DSO in the 1917 New Year's Honours list, subsequently served with the Canadian Railway Troops, was promoted Colonel in 1918 and, in addition to two MiDs, was awarded the CMG in June 1919.

⁸¹ LAC, MG 30 E 300 (Odlum Papers) Currie to Odlum, 8 June; 10/ and 7/Battalion War Diaries, June 1916

⁸² Captain (later Major) William Duncan Herridge (1886-1961). Son of a Presbyterian minister, Herridge had graduated from the University of Toronto in 1909.

⁸³ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 6 January 1917. Humble's immediate destination was the Canadian Training Depot at Shorncliffe.

The terms in which the announcement of Humble's replacement, Captain J.C. Matheson, was recorded illustrates where responsibility and authority over such appointments lay:

*Captain John Campbell Matheson appointed by Canadian Corps to this Brigade as Staff-Captain reported to Brigade H.Q. today and appointed by GOC to duties of Staff-Captain Intelligence.*⁸⁴

Matheson's tenure was brief, a matter of three weeks.⁸⁵ His replacement was drawn from outside 2 CIB. Again, the terms in which the appointment of Captain S.S. Burnham was recorded illustrates the matter of responsibility and authority:

*Captain Sydney (sic) S. Burnham, appointed by Canadian Corps to 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade for duties as Staff Captain reported at Headquarters today. He was appointed by GOC to position of Acting-Staff-Captain Intelligence.*⁸⁶

The importance that Loomis attached to intelligence in his understanding of the role of his SC(I) and his appreciation for the way in which Burnham performed his role is encapsulated in the citation of Burnham's DSO for which Loomis recommended him:

*For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Previous to an attack he displayed exceptional initiative and forethought in personally supervising the placing of observation posts in the forward area, thus ensuring that at no time during the battle was there any lack of communication from front to rear. On at least two occasions he made daring personal reconnaissances under very heavy machine-gun and shell fire, and brought back very valuable information. His cheerfulness and coolness throughout this period were a wonderful example to the men in the front line.*⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Captain (later Major) John Campbell Matheson (1884-1978). TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 16 January 1917. Matheson was a native Scot who had previously served for four years with 9/Royal Scots. An employee of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, he enlisted in 10/Battalion as a Private and had been commissioned from the ranks.

⁸⁵ Matheson was evacuated due to appendicitis – see LBD, 26 January 1917. Matheson was subsequently appointed SC 1 CIB on 28 February 1918, awarded an MC and promoted major.

⁸⁶ Captain (later Major) Sidney Smith Burnham (1889-1918). TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 7 February 1917. Son of a physician, a graduate in 1911 of the University of Toronto and an officer in 19/Battalion, Burnham had been wounded at Courcellette on 12 September 1916. He returned to the command of his company on 26 November 1916. He remained SC(I) 2 CIB until December 1917 when he was promoted GSO3 2nd Division with which he continued to serve until killed by a shell on 9 August 1918 near Caix.

⁸⁷ LG, 16 October 1917. Burnham's DSO was awarded for his conduct during the Battle of Hill 70, 15-25 August 1917. He was also MiDs three times. Only Loomis (CMG) and Alston (MC) of 2 CIB staff were

Loomis' SC(A), Herridge, was a barrister by profession and clearly another man of ability. Presumably on Loomis' nomination, Herridge was selected to undertake a Staff Course held at Clare College, University of Cambridge in July 1917.⁸⁸ 'Having passed very creditably' Herridge received 'well deserved promotion' to 4th Division on 4 December 1917 as GSO3.⁸⁹ Loomis wrote of Herridge: 'He has done splendid work and has earned everyone's regard on (sic) the Brigade.'⁹⁰ In June 1918 Loomis again demonstrated his preference for those officers with whom he was familiar, and in whom he had developed confidence. It is difficult to believe that Herridge's replacement of the promoted Mackenzie as 2 CIB's BM, an appointment he held until the end of the war, was free of Loomis' hand.⁹¹

Loomis was well served by his BMs and SCs. Of his BMs, Prower and Mackenzie were promoted to command battalions; Stubbs and Alston were British officers who had to suffer the consequences of the 'Canadianization' policy; Herridge's career demonstrated progression through both SC roles, a stint as a GSO3 culminating in promotion to BM, all in less than two years.⁹² Amongst Loomis' SCs, three characteristics are evident. First, they were all Canadians, in the sense that they had all initially volunteered in Canada. Second, they were all educated men, typically graduates, drawn from 'the professions' and with middle class backgrounds. Third, with a single exception, once they had been appointed to a staff post, they remained in staff posts for the remainder of their service. The single exception was

decorated as a result of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Much to Loomis' regret. '.. many battalion officers who have earned them [rewards] by gallant and loyal service have been overlooked'. LBD, 6 June 1917

⁸⁸ LBD, 1 December 1917

⁸⁹ *LG*, 18 January 1918. Herridge was awarded a MC – *EG*, 2 January 1918.

⁹⁰ LBD, 1 December 1917

⁹¹ *LG*, 13 August 1918. By the end of the war Herridge had been awarded the DSO, a Bar to his MC and two MiDs.

⁹² For an examination of the role of the British army in the development of Canadian officers to replace British staff officers within the Canadian Corps, see D.E. Delaney, 'Mentoring the Canadian Corps: Imperial Officers and the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914–1918', *The Journal of Military History* 77 (July 2013): 931-953.

Mackenzie who was promoted to 2iC 8/Battalion, but this only as a prelude to his replacement of Alston as 2 CIB's BM in July 1917.⁹³

2.7 Loomis' Role and Impact

The analysis which follows is based upon the period from 2 CIB's transfer from the Somme as part of Reserve Army to come under First Army's orders on 21 October 1916 until 15 May 1917, the end of the Battle of Arras.⁹⁴

Loomis had a clear idea of his role and that of his Brigade. There are two strands to his view of his purpose in life. They are interlinked. First, during the period between 2 CIB taking over the sector and the attack on 9 April, Loomis believed that the prime purpose for which the brigade level of command existed revolved around the gathering, co-ordination and dissemination of information and intelligence. This is best illustrated by a series of entries in his Battle Diary made in March when 2 CIB had just taken over responsibility for the sector over which it was to attack on 9 April.

There is a vast amount of work in connection with mapping the area, and a great deal of information regarding trenches, topography of ground, dugouts, tunnels, saps etc. must be secured. In order to facilitate (sic) the work I have secured another draughtsman for the Intelligence Section, who will be

⁹³ Mackenzie commanded 8/Battalion in action during the capture of Arleux-en-Gohelle on 28 April 1917, as a result of which Loomis recommended Mackenzie for the second of the three DSOs he was to be awarded during the war. TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, May 1917, Appendix 6, Report of 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade Operations, April 26th to April 30th 1917. Capture of Arleux-en-Gohelle April 28th 1917, p. 13. See also Note 76.

⁹⁴ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 21 October 1916. When the Battle of Arras was concluded is a matter of some debate. James refers to 'Operations. The Arras Offensive (9th April – 15th May, 1917)'. E.A. James, *A Record of the Battles and Engagements of the British Armies in France and Flanders, 1914-1918* (London: The London Stamp Exchange, 1990), p. 17. The BOH is contradictory: referring to an action on 24 May 1917 it states: 'The Battle of Arras may now be considered to have come to an end.' It also states that the Battle of Arras extended from 9 April to 30 May 1917. C. Falls, *Military Operations – France and Belgium, 1917 Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992), pp. 522 & 562. Nicholson adds to the confusion stating that 'local actions extended the Battles of Arras to mid-August'. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, p. 278. After Nivelle's apparent replacement by Pétain on 28 April 1917 and the consequent abandonment of the capture of Cambrai as an objective, Haig set 15 May 1917 as the date by which 'a good defensive line' should be established. TNA WO256/17 Haig's Diary, 30 April 1917

*employed until we catch up. Pte. D.S. Lloyd 925667 5th Canadian Battalion is the name of the draughtsman.*⁹⁵

*Several visits to Division, and routine work with my own staff in connection with the production of new maps etc., occupied my time today. The great difficulty which we appear to be experiencing here, is the securing of reliable information regarding our own and the enemy's position.*⁹⁶

*Brig-General F.O.W. Loomis, D.S.O. toured the forward area, inspecting trenches and organizing scheme for repair and maintenance of principal fire and communication trenches. During the night our patrols were active over the entire front and collected considerable information of value concerning NO MANS LAND and the enemy forward defences.*⁹⁷

*I find that the work in this area is of such voluminous nature that I must be on the ground at all times in order to see that it goes forward properly. In order the better to superintend this, I am tomorrow moving a portion of Headquarters staff to the 10th Battalion Headquarters on the Arras Road, which is only about two kilometres from the Front Line. From this point it will be very much easier to get on the ground, and no time will be wasted in getting to and fro.*⁹⁸

At the conclusion of this particular three week tour, Loomis reflected on the Brigade's work to secure the detailed information he felt he and his troops needed.

A noteworthy feature of our work in preparation for the forthcoming offensive, has been that accomplished by the drafting (sic) facilities at the disposal of the Brigade, and in this connection we have found that the maps, charts and sketches supplied us by Division, have been entirely inadequate to provide the understanding and instruction necessary in making ready for an operation of the magnitude which is now under consideration.

The work accomplished and under way includes maps showing emplacements, O.P.'s, stores, dumps, dugouts, and other features of the enemy's positions; barrage maps, assembly positions for the Infantry units making the assault, jumping off trenches, gaps in enemy wire, contours of ground, location and character of defensive trenches in the German Lines; areas covered by Machine Gun and Trench Mortar Fire, objectives to be reached, positions to be consolidated, boundaries of the Brigade, Gun positions of the enemy, and many other important features of his positions.

On our own side of NO MANS LAND, we have mapped and sketched, main Communication trenches, ammunition and Engineers (sic) supply dumps, Communication trenches and tunnels in use, mule trails, overland and

⁹⁵ LBD, 9 March 1917. Loomis had an eye for talent. Private Digby Sheffield Lloyd (1883-1945) was a man of some intellect. A 33 year old barrister and University of Manitoba graduate, he had enlisted in April 1916.

⁹⁶ LBD, 11 March 1917

⁹⁷ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 12 March 1917

⁹⁸ LBD, 12 March 1917

*tramway routes, dressing stations, headquarters, emplacements, Hot Food Depots, deep dug-outs, O.P.s, fire trenches and all other information, accurately compiled so as to be of greatest possible use when needed.*⁹⁹

Loomis' concern over the plethora of detail to be gathered hints at the complexity of the tactical planning task that he, his staff and his battalion officers had to master.

The second strand to Loomis' distinctive role as a brigade commander was ownership of the whole sector for which he and his staff were responsible, rather than the intermittent occupation of the allotted front line trenches as was the case of his COs. During the seven months under review, 2 CIB had six tours in the line when it had responsibility for a specific sector.¹⁰⁰ In contrast to COs whose battalions rotated between time spent in occupation of the front line, time in support trenches and time in reserve in a rear area, Loomis and his staff, in common with brigade staff generally, had ownership and responsibility for their sector throughout the entirety of the Brigade's tour.

2.8 In and Out of the Line

An obvious distinction to draw is between the actions and activities of Loomis and his Brigade depending on whether they were in or out of the line. During the period under review 2 CIB was in the line for 121 days and out of the line for 96 days.¹⁰¹ Loomis was with his Brigade throughout this period, with the exception of two periods of leave.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ LBD, 31 March 1917

¹⁰⁰ 1-18 November 1916 – Carency; 26 November-12 December 1916 – Berthonval; 19 January-4 March 1917 – Angres; 8-28 March 1917 – Ecurie; 5-21 April 1917 – Ecurie; 26-30 April 1917 – Farbus Wood.

¹⁰¹ The distinction between in and out of the line is taken to be the point when command responsibility passed between brigadier-generals, not necessarily when individual battalions of a brigade were present in the line. On 15 May 1917 2 CIB was out of the line. Had the period under review extended to 19 June 1917 when 2 CIB was next in the line, the periods actually in and out of the line would have been more even, 121 and 131 days respectively.

¹⁰² In the wake of the Somme battles Loomis was on leave from 30 November to 10 December 1916 and, following the capture of Vimy Ridge and Arleux-en-Gohelle, from 4 to 13 May 1917. Canadian officers enjoyed the privilege of leave four times a year. D. Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993), p. 106

The Brigade's periods out of the line can equally be divided into two periods: those of between four and eight days when in Divisional Reserve between tours in the line and the single extended period of thirty-nine days (12 December 1916 to 19 January 1917) when in Corps Reserve. As a generalization, the Brigade's short periods in Reserve provided an opportunity for rest, repair, re-equipping and recuperation, typically punctuated by Loomis' inspections of his units. Operationally, these were also periods when Loomis and his staff made their plans concerning the next sector 2 CIB was to hold.

*I was busy preparing my plans for a proposed raid on the enemy's trenches, during our next tour. I went into the matter most exhaustively, and had maps prepared shewing the minutest details. Nothing more can be done on my part except to await developments. Given fine weather, and unless unforeseen circumstances arise, I have every prospect of its ultimate success.*¹⁰³

Typically Loomis conferred with Currie before consulting his COs to discuss the details and finalise their plans.¹⁰⁴

Where periods out of the line coincided with visits by dignitaries, Loomis was invited to meet and dine with them.¹⁰⁵ Loomis fostered the cohesion of the leadership of his Brigade during December 1916 by taking a seasonal opportunity, together with his staff, of dining with his COs and their senior officers.¹⁰⁶ Currie adopted a similar approach to the fostering of relationships between divisional and brigade staffs.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ LBD, 25 November 1916

¹⁰⁴ For example, see LBD, 22 November 1916.

¹⁰⁵ At Currie's invitation, Loomis joined Currie to meet and dine with Sir George Halsey Perley (1857-1938), Minister of the Overseas Military Forces. LBD, 19 November 1916

¹⁰⁶ LBD, 22 December 1916 – 8/Battalion; 23 December 1916 – 10/Battalion; 27 December 1916 – 5/ and 7/Battalions.

¹⁰⁷ On New Year's Eve 1916 Loomis entertained Currie, his GSO1 Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General Sir) Robert Harvey Kearsley (1880-1956) and Currie's AdC, Major Cecil Morton Roberts (1866-1961), Loomis' four COs and Hon. Major Richard Jack (1866-1952), a British artist who had been appointed Canada's first official war artist. LBD, 31 December 1916

Instances of serious indiscipline had to be dealt with, whether 2 CIB was in or out of the line. As part of the chain of command, Loomis was involved with the case of Private H.H. Kerr, 7/Battalion, who had absented himself on five previous occasions before deserting when warned that his battalion was to assault Regina Trench. Kerr was apprehended in billets some miles to the rear, charged with desertion, convicted and subsequently executed on 21 November 1916.¹⁰⁸ Having concurred with Gilson's recommendation to confirm Kerr's sentence, this was an event of significance for Loomis:

*It was a particularly bad case, and there were no extenuating circumstances. I am glad to think, that this is, fortunately, the first time that this proceeding has been necessary, in my Brigade.*¹⁰⁹

Loomis had a more direct role in the disciplinary process when he presided at Field General Court Marshals, a role he performed twice during the period under review.¹¹⁰

2.9 Training in Corps Reserve

2 CIB went into Divisional Reserve on 12 December 1916 and moved into Corps Reserve on 18 December 1916 where it remained until 19 January 1917. The need for training was driven essentially by two factors. First, the constant flow of manpower through battalions caused by casualties and illness and their replacement by reinforcements; and second, the inter-related development of weapons, tactics and doctrine. 2 CIB had begun September 1916 with a

¹⁰⁸ Private Henry Hese Kerr (1891-1916). See A.B. Godefroy, *For Freedom and Honour: The Story of the 25 Canadian Volunteers Executed in the Great War* (Nepean, Ontario: CEF Books, 1998), pp. 38-9.

¹⁰⁹ LBD, 21 November 1916. There were two subsequent executions in Loomis' brigade, both also for desertion. They were CQMS William Alexander (1880-1917), 10/Battalion and Private Charles Welsh (1887-1918), 8/Battalion. In Alexander's case, Godefroy recounts the intervention of Canon F.G. Scott, 1st Canadian Division's Anglican Padre, to obtain a last minute stay of execution. Although Loomis had played his part in the chain of command to endorse the decision to execute, Scott excluded Loomis during his intervention, either due to lack of time or an acceptance of Loomis' lack of authority over such a matter. This contrasts with Welsh's experience. He was charged on 31 March 1916, subsequently found guilty of being AWOL and sentenced to six months hard labour. It was, however, within the authority of his brigade commander, Brigadier-General L.J. Lipsett, to reduce this sentence to ninety days Field Punishment No. 1. When arrested in January 1918, after having deserted on 10 November 1917, Welsh was convicted and subsequently executed on 6 March 1918. See Godefroy, *For Freedom and Honour*, pp. 50-8 & 60-1.

¹¹⁰ See LBD, 16 January 1917 and 15 May 1917.

complement of 173 Officers and 4,094 ORs.¹¹¹ Its attack on 22-25 September on Regina Trench incurred casualties of 45 Officers and 1,424 ORs.¹¹² By 29 September, 2 CIB's strength had reached its nadir of 142 Officers and 2,811 ORs.¹¹³ It is against this background that numerically the Brigade had to be rebuilt, as indicated in Table 2.1.

| Year | Month | Officers | Other Ranks | Totals |
|--------|----------|----------|-------------|--------|
| 1916 | October | 25 | 228 | 253 |
| | November | 19 | 223 | 242 |
| | December | 15 | 1,062 | 1,077 |
| 1917 | January | 4 | 86 | 90 |
| | February | 9 | 160 | 169 |
| | March | 5 | 357 | 362 |
| | April | 17 | 377 | 394 |
| | May | 19 | 1,096 | 1,115 |
| Totals | | 113 | 3,589 | 3,702 |

Table 2.1 Monthly Reinforcements to 2 CIB¹¹⁴

Reinforcements over this eight month period represented, in the case of officers, 65 per cent and, in the case of ORs, 90 per cent of the Brigade's complement on 1 September 1916.¹¹⁵ In addition to the human cost this involved, this rate of depletion represented a loss of hard won

¹¹¹ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 1 September 1916

¹¹² Ibid., Report of Action of 26 & 27 September, p. 14

¹¹³ Ibid., 29 September 1916

¹¹⁴ The data upon which this Table is based is drawn from entries in 2 CIB's WD.

¹¹⁵ The decline in the number of Canadian volunteers in 1916 did not lead to a sustained differential between the number of replacements received in England and drafts sent to France until May 1917, that is until after the Battle of Vimy Ridge. See W. Stewart, 'Frustrated Belligerence: The Unhappy History of the 5th Canadian Division in the First World War', *Canadian Military History*, 22 (2) 2013, p. 37.

skills and experience. The standard of at least some of the reinforcements was also a cause of concern to both Loomis and his COs.

*During the afternoon I visited the Ranges where the troops are going through a course of Musketry. This course is very necessary, as quite a large proportion of the recent reinforcements are partially trained only. Some have not fired a musketry course, either in England or at the Base, while others have been trained with the Ross Rifle only.*¹¹⁶

The general point on the standard of the Brigade's proficiency at this point was even more explicitly recorded in the Brigade's WD:

*The period of training from December 19th to 30th, inclusive, has been devoted to preliminary work – Physical Exercise, Squad Drill, the care and use of the Rifle, March Discipline, Hygiene and Sanitation. Care has been taken to impress upon the recently arrived drafts the fundamental principles of discipline. Experience of these drafts has convinced Brigade Instructors of the futility of attempting advanced work until the elemental rules of discipline and training have been most thoroughly mastered. Special courses of instruction have been initiated and carried out.*¹¹⁷

Loomis visited his battalions daily during this period to review the progress of the latest drafts to his brigade. If emphasis on the importance of this activity was needed, it was provided when Byng visited on 28 December 1916 to see 7/ and 8/Battalions in training.¹¹⁸ The Canadian Corps' own organizational changes to its battalions were implemented in early January 1917 and pre-dated the issue of *SS 143* in late February 1917.¹¹⁹ They would have been evident to Horne when he visited 2 CIB on 11 January 1917. He inspected a portion of the Brigade and observed a 'minor operation of attack by the 8th Canadian Infantry Battalion

¹¹⁶ LBD, 21 December 1916. The BOH comments, however, on 'the high standard of the Canadian infantry reinforcements'. See Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 451.

¹¹⁷ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 30 December 1916

¹¹⁸ LBD, 28 December 1916

¹¹⁹ COs had been advised by brigade of Currie's intended changes on 29 December 1916 – see TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, December 1916, Appendix III, 29 December 1916. After consultation with brigades, these were confirmed by 1st Division's GSO1– see TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, January 1917, Appendix 2, G.1 434, 5 January 1917.

on the training grounds'.¹²⁰ Despite the importance of the responsibility for the standard of the Brigade's training, Loomis was also subject to other pressures and responsibilities:

*I remained inside today having more pressing matters in connection with the administration of the Brigade to attend to. One of these was the examination of three candidates for commissions in the Canadian and regular forces. The candidates all had extended experience of the front and bore excellent characters and I approved their papers without hesitation.*¹²¹

2 CIB's return to the line in the Angres section in mid-January 1917 was postponed for a few days. 'I am rather disappointed by this as I am rather anxious to get back where the work is decidedly more interesting.'¹²² Together with his SC(I), Herridge, Loomis made a preparatory reconnaissance trip.¹²³ This informed Loomis' plans for the Brigade's tour, including his plans for training encapsulated in 'Training Instructions No. 1' issued on 18 January.¹²⁴ Based on the progress made in addressing basic training issues, including the absorption in December 1916 alone of enough reinforcements to fill a battalion, Loomis' document provides important information. First, it represents a plan for the Brigade's battalions which found itself in Brigade Reserve. Despite the scale of the preparations underway, such battalions were relieved of any requirement to provide men for working parties. Their training took higher priority. Second, the approach and intent of the training was completely consistent with the BEF's doctrinal approach. As the 'Instructions' put it:

*The G.O.C. 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade directs that the recently issued manual "Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action" (S.S. 135) be most carefully studied. Six copies of this book have been sent from the Publications Department, Boulogne to each battalion, and one to each Machine Gun Company and Trench Mortar Battery. Training is to be carried out in the spirit as well as the exact words of this manual.*¹²⁵

¹²⁰ LBD, 11 January 1917

¹²¹ LBD, 17 January 1917

¹²² LBD, 13 January 1917

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, January 1917, Appendix III, 18 January 1917

¹²⁵ Ibid. *SS135 Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action* (London, 1916) had been issued in December 1916.

Third, Loomis recognised that until learning had been internalised such that the learner could pass on his newly acquired knowledge and skills to others, the full benefit of any training or instruction had not been reaped.

In conclusion it is once again pointed out that a great proportion of the value of training and instruction is lost, unless those who receive the training and instruction first hand themselves transmit it to all ranks concerned. This point was emphasised by the Divisional Commander when he addressed the brigade at CHAMBLAIN L'ARRE (sic) before Christmas and was averted to several times by the Brigade Commander, who considers it to be a point of the greatest consequence.¹²⁶

2.10 Trench Holding

After a lengthy period out of the line, 2 CIB's return, initially in the Angres section, heralded a period of ninety-four days in the line. This period was only broken by two interludes: the first (4-8 March) when the Brigade was in transit to the Ecurie section of the line, and the second (28 March to 5 April) during which, despite experiencing cold and wet weather, the Brigade's battalions trained and rehearsed their attacks over their training ground at Estrée Cauchie.¹²⁷ Loomis and his staff liaised with divisional and corps artillery in making their final preparations for the Vimy Ridge attack as well overseeing units' practice attacks.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, January 1917, Appendix III, 18 January 1917. Currie knew something about 'learning'. He had been a school teacher for six years. See H.M. Urquhart, *Arthur Currie: The Biography of a Great Canadian* (Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1950), p. 14.

¹²⁷ Brigade's Instructions emphasised that the attack was to be conducted in conformity with both SS135 and SS143. '4. PREPARATORY (a) Previous to the attack, the whole of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade will be relieved out of its present Section: and will withdraw to the neighbourhood of ECOIVRES. There it will rehearse in detail every phase of the attack, over a flagged course. Rehearsals will be "full dress", and in every respect a reproduction of the movements which are anticipated for the assault itself. Attention is called to S.S.135 "Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action" and S.S.143 "Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action"'. TNA WO95/3770 10/Battalion WD, Appendix 12, 26 March 1917

¹²⁸ 'A Brigade practice was held over a flagged course at the Training area. The Battalion proceeded there under Company arrangements. Men being arranged in groups representing the occupants of Dug-outs and Tunnels as nearly as possible. The movements were carried out under the Brigadier.' TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD, 2 April 1917

Loomis was pre-occupied with having personal knowledge of the sector for which he and his Brigade were responsible. He frequently toured his trenches. Nor were his visits fleeting.¹²⁹

*I spent almost the entire day in the trenches on work connected with the compilation of the defence scheme for the area, which, in the absence of necessary data, requires a good deal of personal observation.*¹³⁰

*Leaving Brigade Headquarters at about 3 p.m. I started on a tour of the Forward positions which did not terminate until 10.30. Much information which cannot be secured in daylight hours, may be collected in this way.*¹³¹

The preparation of a sound Defence Scheme was a personal responsibility to which Loomis devoted significant time and personal attention. For example, the following extracts are drawn from his diary on four consecutive days:

I did not go out today but concentrated efforts on my defence scheme for the CARENCY SECTION.

My defence scheme for the CARENCY SECTION is now well in hand and will be ready when the Brigade relieving in this Section takes over which will be in three days hence. This scheme necessitates strict attention to detail down to the finest point and work on it retained me at my Headquarters today.

During the day I was at work on my Defence Scheme Carency Section, and I have arranged for its completion today, ready to be distributed tomorrow.

*My Defence Scheme was completed, as arranged, and duly distributed.*¹³²

Loomis' familiarity with the Brigade's trench systems informed the priorities he established for the use of his available manpower.

It has been the policy inaugurated by myself in this Brigade of keeping up during this period only the most important trenches. Our Trench system in this section is very voluminous and to attempt with the limited amount of labor at our disposal, to keep all the minor trenches in perfect condition, would tend to detract from the prosecution of more important work. All Fire

¹²⁹ In the forty-five day tour of the Angres Section between 19 January and 4 March 1917, for example, either the brigade's WD or Loomis' own diary records Loomis visiting his trenches on seventeen days.

¹³⁰ LBD, 8 February 1917

¹³¹ LBD, 17 February 1917

¹³² LBD, 15, 16, 17 & 18 November 1916

*Trenches, C.T.'s and other trenches in the system that have any strategic importance, or are necessary for the use of the troops in this Sector, have been improved and maintained in first class shape, in spite of the weather conditions of the past week.*¹³³

The concern which Loomis demonstrated for the standard of the working conditions in which his brigade staff had to operate was replicated in the care he insisted upon in the maintenance of his trenches. It was with evident pride that Loomis recorded the product of his trench holding policy and priorities:

*In spite of our consistent attitude of offensive action and policy of harassing the enemy at every turn, the remarkably few casualties for the first 35 days since we have been in this section, is an indication of what care in the matter of trench protection, and proper organization, will do. One officer killed, nine men killed, and 56 men wounded, is the total, but of this no less than one officer, two men killed and 14 men wounded, were the result of accidents.*¹³⁴

2.11 Raiding

The Canadian Corps had developed raiding the enemy's trenches to a fine art.¹³⁵ In the five months prior to the Vimy attack, the Corps had launched sixty raids, of various sizes and with varying degrees of success.¹³⁶ Following the Corps' transfer to the Vimy Ridge area, 2 CIB undertook eight raids as part of this form of attritional warfare.¹³⁷ In reviewing the five raids undertaken by 7/ and 8/Battalions between 26 and 28 February, the BM, on Loomis' behalf, set out their rationale:

¹³³ LBD, 23 February 1917

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ See A.B. Godefroy, 'Daring Innovation: The Canadian Corps and Trench Raiding on the Western Front', in B. Horn, (ed.), *Show No Fear: Daring Actions in Canadian Military History* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008), pp. 235-266 and C. Garnett, 'The Art of Minor Operations: Canadian Trench Raiding, 1915-1918', *Canadian Military History* 24, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2015): 249-282.

¹³⁶ LAC, RG 24, V. 1826, GAQ 5-89, Raids, Canadian Corps, Summary of Raids cited in Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 57

¹³⁷ 27 November 1916 (8/Battalion), 26 February 1917 (8/Battalion), 27 February 1917 (7/Battalion) – three raids, 28 February 1917 (8/Battalion), 2 March 1917 (5/Battalion), 8 April 1917 (10/Battalion). 10/Battalion also carried out a dummy raid – the use of phosphorous bombs, artillery, trench mortars and grenades to simulate a raid - on 1 March 1917. For the use of phosphorus bombs during raids, see J. Nicholls, *Cheerful Sacrifice: The Battle of Arras 1917*, (London: Leo Cooper, 1990), p. 45.

*These raids were undertaken to destroy the enemy's morale and, especially for the sake of giving the new drafts of battalions an occasion of coming to grips with the enemy and experience of making an attack. In respect of both these considerations, valuable results were obtained.*¹³⁸

The numbers of infantry participants in these raids varied between sixteen (8/Battalion's raid on 26 February 1917) and 125 (8/Battalion's raid on 27 November 1916).¹³⁹ Whilst all raids were undertaken within a Corps policy, responsibility for the planning of the largest of these raids appears to have been shared between division, brigade and battalion levels of command. Prower, CO of 8/Battalion that executed the largest of this series of raids by 2 CIB, acted within a plan which had, at the very least, been approved by both Loomis and Currie. Currie had visited 8/Battalion's trenches on the morning of 27 November accompanied by Prower although not by Loomis, following which 'arrangements were perfected for the coming show'.¹⁴⁰ 2 CIB's WD record of Loomis' involvement on the day of the raid is set out in succinct terms:

*Gen. Loomis called and remained to dinner & discussed the situation with the C.O.*¹⁴¹

Loomis' own record of the events of the day, however, ascribed to himself a much more involved role:

*During the morning I was busy arranging details for the Raid on enemy trenches, and I had personal interviews with officers from Corps and Divisional Artillery. About four o'clock General Currie called upon me, and I explained my final dispositions. At 4.30p.m., in company with my Staff Officers, I personally took charge of the Brigade, at advanced Brigade Headquarters.*¹⁴²

¹³⁸ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, February 1917, Appendix 4, Report of 1 March 1917, p. 3

¹³⁹ TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD, 27 November 1916 and 26 February 1917

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 27 November 1916

¹⁴¹ Ibid..

¹⁴² LBD, 27 November 1916

Despite Loomis' evident hands-on approach, he subsequently complemented Prower and his 2iC for their part in the organization of the raid on 27 November 1916:

*The work of Lt-Col J.M. Prower and Major Mackenzie, of the 8th C.I. Battalion in attending to details of organization was in every way excellent.*¹⁴³

Responsibility for the execution of this raid was clear. The immediate responsibility for the task in hand lay with the five lieutenants and 120 ORs who participated. Responsibility for the planning of the raid appears to have been shared between Mackenzie, Prower and Loomis, with Loomis bearing the responsibility for the coordination of the contribution of other arms which lay beyond Prower's level of authority.¹⁴⁴ As divisional commander, Currie had delegated the task to Loomis but he exercised his authority by taking an interest in, if not overseeing, the planning and preparatory phases himself.¹⁴⁵

The ambiguity over the precise allocation of responsibility for raids generally is compounded by examples of associated decision making. On some occasions the critical decision making level was division:

*Myself and officers of the Brigade and Battalions of the Brigade, have been rather disappointed that the scheme formulated for a large raid of the enemys (sic) positions, has been called off by Division. The plans for this operation were very carefully formulated and we have every reason to think it would have been a great success, if the other diversions and plans on contiguous Fronts had been carried out properly and simultaneously with our attack. It is now postponed to raid on a smaller scale and something of the sort may be executed in the next few days as our plans in this connection are now in the hands of the Battalion Commanders.*¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Loomis' role in the planning of raids was based on a team approach. Referring to his role in the planning of raids, Loomis refers to 'my part' – see LBD, 25 November 1916. This perception of a team approach is subsequently confirmed: 'During the day, Brig.-General F.O.W. Loomis, D.S.O., spent considerable time in the forward area conferring with Battalion Commanders and completing arrangements for further enterprises against the enemy.' TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 27 February 1917

¹⁴⁵ The raid proved fruitless. The raiders were back in their own trenches within fifteen minutes. No prisoners were secured. One officer and five ORs were killed, one officer and thirty ORs were wounded, largely as the result of retaliatory artillery fire. See TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD, 27 February 1917.

¹⁴⁶ LBD, 24 February 1917

On other occasions it was Brigade:

It was intended to carry out another raid on the night of 2nd/3rd, the 10th Battalion to furnish the party. I have however decided to cancel (sic) this as our program has been a very active on (sic) on this front, and the questions to take up in moving to another portion of the line, are many and complex.¹⁴⁷

Who was responsible for what concerning the organization of raids depended very much on circumstances. The largest Canadian raid in terms of participants prior to the Vimy Ridge attack was the gas raid against Hill 145 on 1 March by 1,700 men drawn from two battalions from each of two brigades of 4th Division.¹⁴⁸ It proved to be ‘the single most self-destructive Canadian raid of the war’.¹⁴⁹ The responsibility for the planning of this raid lay with the divisional commander, Major-General D. Watson, GOC 4th Division, and his staff, including his British GSO1, Lieutenant-Colonel W.E. Ironside.¹⁵⁰ Responsibility for another large scale raid undertaken some six weeks earlier involving 860 men drawn from 20/ and 21/Battalions, as well as 4/Field Company, all of 4 CIB, seems to have been planned and coordinated without any need to mention the role played by either the Brigade’s GOC, Brigadier-General R. Rennie, or his staff.¹⁵¹ Within 2 CIB there was evidence that responsibility for raids was devolved down the command structure. On the eve of the attack on Vimy Ridge, 10/Battalion conducted the eighth of the Brigade’s raid in this series. It was a sizeable raid involving three officers and eighty-five ORs divided into two parties. The raid succeeded in securing two prisoners and valuable information about the state of the German wire and defences. The

¹⁴⁷ LBD, 1 March 1917

¹⁴⁸ 54/ and 75/Battalions of 11 CIB (Brigadier-General V.W. Odlum) and 72/ and 73/Battalions of 12 CIB (Brigadier-General J.H. MacBrien).

¹⁴⁹ See T. Cook, ‘“A Proper Slaughter”’: The March 1917 Gas Raid at Vimy Ridge’, *Canadian Military History*, 8 (2) 1999, pp.7-23. The raid incurred 687 casualties, including two COs.

¹⁵⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Field-Marshal Sir) William Edmund Ironside (later 1st Baron Ironside of Archangel and of Ironside in the County of Aberdeen) (1880-1959)

¹⁵¹ See A.B. Godefroy, ‘A Lesson in Success: The Calonne Trench Raid, 17 January 1917’, *Canadian Military History*, 8 (2) 1999, pp.25-34. This article mentions brigade once in the following terms: ‘Brigade headquarters (HQ) had planned to conduct a large scale raid on the German trenches just north-east of Calonne for the middle of January,’

twenty per cent casualties suffered - two officers and three ORs were killed and thirteen ORs wounded – were described as ‘not heavy’.¹⁵² Mention of the raid was included in 2 CIB’s account of the events of 9 April and the subsequent events of 10-20 April with evidence of the devolution of responsibility:

*The Raid was organized and commanded by Captain S.H. Kent, 10th Canadian Infantry Battalion.*¹⁵³

There is no mention, either in 2 CIB’s or Loomis’ diaries, of any involvement of either Loomis or his staff in the preparations for this raid. Loomis had sufficient trust and confidence in his battalion officers to allow himself to become understandably preoccupied by the forthcoming attack for which he and his Brigade had been preparing for months:

*Our men are in good spirits, and the successful raid carried out by the 10th Battalion at an early hour this morning, has given an appetite for the severe fighting which is certain to ensue tomorrow.*¹⁵⁴

2.12 Vimy Ridge

On 5 April 2 CIB issued Operation Order 185. This was a forty page document with associated maps which encapsulated the efforts of Loomis and his staff in setting out the arrangements under which the Brigade would play its part in the attack on Vimy Ridge.¹⁵⁵ Based on Loomis’ persistent quest for information, the document is notable for at least two reasons. First, its thoroughness: apart from detailing the operational plan of objectives, timescales and actions which units were expected to undertake, the Order dealt with such

¹⁵² TNA WO95/3770 10/Battalion WD, 8 April 1917. For 2 CIB’s report on this raid, see TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, April 1917, Report on Raid, 8 April 1917.

¹⁵³ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, April 1917, Report on Vimy Ridge and Subsequent Actions, 2 May 1917. Captain Stanley Hornsby Kent (1890-1917). Kent, a British pre-1914 emigrant to Canada, received a Bar to his MC for this raid having been awarded his MC for his leadership during a previous raid on 4-5 February 1916. He died of wounds on 29 April 1917 suffered the previous day during the action to take Arleux. See [blackanzacs.org.au/Canadian%20 Connection.html](http://blackanzacs.org.au/Canadian%20Connection.html) (accessed 29 November 2015).

¹⁵⁴ LBD, 8 April 1917

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Volume 4871, Reel T-10669 File: 206, 2 CIB WD, Appendix 2

diverse matters as the location of trench police and supply dumps, the arrangements for medical posts and the role of prisoners, the collection of salvage, transport routes and the provision of water supplies, amongst others. No detail was spared. Loomis himself described it as being ‘most complete’.¹⁵⁶ Second, the Order confirms the degree to which SS135 had become embedded in the modus operandi of the Canadian Corps. For example:

For the general principles governing the employment of Snipers, during the assault, see S.S.135 Section XVIII.

Particular attention is drawn to S.S.135, Section XXVIII (Enemy Ruses). In particular it has been reported that the enemy, in their retreat before the Third and Fourth Armies, left many devices behind calculated to cause us casualties.

The instructions contained in S.S.135, Section XXVI (Prisoners), Section XXVII (Wounded), Section XXXII (Distinguishing Marks) and Section XXXIII (Documents and Maps) must be fully explained to all ranks taking part in the attack.

*The attention of all ranks is called to S.S.135, Section X, Appendix “B”.*¹⁵⁷

2 CIB returned to the front line on 5 April. Loomis visited his trenches the following day only to find that, due to the combination of rain and inadequate maintenance by 1 CIB, the trenches had fallen into a state of some disrepair. Some trenches were impassable and the ‘bath-mats’ (duck-boards) were covered by mud.

*Although I much regretted to do so, it was necessary to call for large working parties in order to restore the trenches to good working condition in preparation for the attack. Work of this kind means mens (sic) lives, and of course its accomplishment is vital.*¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ LBD, 8 April 1917. ‘Sticks are not to be carried’. Whether this might be regarded as a detail too far is debatable. LAC, RG9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Volume 4871, Reel T-10669 File: 206, 2 CIB WD, Appendix 2, p. 26

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 12, 14, 15 & 20

¹⁵⁸ LBD, 6 April 1917

Loomis and some of his staff moved up to 2 CIB's Advanced Battle Headquarters on the evening of 7 April.¹⁵⁹ These were located along the Arras–Bethune Road in Elbe Trench to the north-west of Ecurie, a distance of some 300 yards in rear of battalions' HQs, themselves only 200 yards from the front line.¹⁶⁰ The following day, on the eve of the attack, Loomis wrote:

*It is a momentous day for us all, for we have put into the preparations, the preliminary work, much of our heart, and all of our ability. We believe that before twenty four hours have passed, we shall have repaid the Bosch with interest, some of the debts we owe him.*¹⁶¹

The details of the events of 9 April have been described elsewhere.¹⁶² Loomis' diary entry for the day extends to eight pages. This is unusually long.¹⁶³ His account of the events of 9 April also includes casualty figures for the period 8-20 April, despite the text indicating that the entry was written on the same day as the events occurred. For example:

*An interesting comparison of today's (sic) fighting was that of the morale of the opposing troops. Our men do not suffer by such comparison.*¹⁶⁴

As is to be expected in the circumstances, Loomis records the success of his brigade. Zero hour had been 5.30 a.m. 7/ and 10/Battalions reported that they had taken their first objective, the Black Line, by 6.07 a.m.¹⁶⁵ They had beaten 5/Battalion by three minutes.¹⁶⁶ By 7.55 a.m.

¹⁵⁹ 2 CIB's HQ remained at Ville au Beouf, Ecoivres, 6,000 yards as the crow flies from Advanced Battle HQ, under the command of Captain Herridge, SC(A).

¹⁶⁰ LBD, 9 April 1917. An illustration of Loomis' proximity to the battle was that his entry for this day mentions the first two prisoners arrived at his Advanced Battle HQ only ten minutes after zero hour.

¹⁶¹ LBD, 8 April 1917

¹⁶² See for example, A. Iarocci, 'The 1st Canadian Division: An Operational Mosaic', in G. Hayes, A. Iarocci & M. Bechthold, (eds.), *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment* (Waterloo, Ontario: Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies and Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), pp.155-169.

¹⁶³ The entries for the preceding three days, for example, are less than a page each.

¹⁶⁴ LBD, 9 April 1917

¹⁶⁵ Operation Order 185, p. 25, stipulated that only two of the brigade's four COs could lead their battalions in the attack. They were Lieutenant-Colonels J.M. Prower (8/Battalion) and D.M. Ormond (10/Battalion). 5/Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel H.M. Dyer, was led by Major L.P.O. Tudor. 7/Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel W.F. Gilson, was led by Major David Philpot (1886-1961). A native of Ilkley, Yorkshire Philpot had served for four years in 1/Scots Guards, had emigrated to Canada and enlisted in

it was reported that all three of 2 CIB's attacking battalions, had taken the second and final of 2 CIB's objectives, the Red Line.¹⁶⁷ Loomis recorded:

*Co-ordination between the Artillery and our advance was perfect. To this can be attributed a great measure of our success.*¹⁶⁸

By 9.30 a.m. Currie had wired his congratulations to Loomis.¹⁶⁹ 2 CIB's attack had been implemented very much as planned. The number committed to the attack had been:

| | Officers | Other Ranks | Totals |
|----------------|----------|-------------|--------|
| 10/Battalion | 22 | 803 | 825 |
| 7/Battalion | 22 | 775 | 797 |
| 5/Battalion | 22 | 862 | 884 |
| 8/Battalion | 24 | 741 | 765 |
| 2/C.M.G. Co. | 6 | 141 | 147 |
| 2/T.M. Battery | 5 | 58 | 63 |
| Totals | 101 | 3,380 | 3,481 |

Table 2.2 2 CIB Battle Strength on 9 April 1917¹⁷⁰

The casualties incurred indicate that the three attacking and one supporting battalions had been involved in costly fighting.

September 1914, initially as 7/Battalion's Sergeant-Major. TNA WO95/3767 5/Battalion WD, April 1917, Report on Vimy Ridge and Subsequent Actions, 2 May 1917, pp. 2-3

¹⁶⁶ TNA WO95/3767 5/Battalion WD, 9 April 1917

¹⁶⁷ All three of the officers leading 2 CIB's attacking battalions – Tudor (5/), Philpot (7/) and Ormond (10/) – were awarded the DSO as a result.

¹⁶⁸ LBD, 9 April 1917, p.6. 2 CIB's creeping barrage was provided by 1 Brigade CFA, 165 Brigade RFA and 170 Brigade RFA, under the command of Brigadier-General Edward Parry Lambert (1865-1932), BGRA 31st British Division. LAC, RG9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Volume 4871, Reel T-10669 File: 206, 2 CIB WD, Appendix 2, Operation Order 185, p. 22 and Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, Part 3B*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁹ TNA WO95/3767 5/Battalion WD, 9 April 1917

¹⁷⁰ TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 9 April 1917

| | Officers | | | ORs | | |
|----------------|----------|----|----|-----|-----|----|
| | K. | W. | M. | K. | W. | M. |
| 10/Battalion | 6 | 9 | - | 72 | 298 | - |
| 7/Battalion | 4 | 4 | - | 62 | 257 | 40 |
| 5/Battalion | 5 | 9 | - | 77 | 200 | 35 |
| 8/Battalion | - | - | - | 3 | 18 | - |
| 2/C.M.G. Co. | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| 2/T.M. Battery | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| H.Q. Staff | - | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| Totals | 15 | 23 | - | 214 | 775 | 75 |

*Table 2.3 2 CIB Casualties Midnight 8/9 to Midnight 9/10 April 1917*¹⁷¹

Other than recording that he had received a number of reports during the day, ensuring divisional HQ was kept informed of progress, and that he had suffered a minor wound to his upper left arm from a stray rifle bullet, there is nothing in Loomis' own account which indicates he intervened tactically during the fight, nor that he needed to.¹⁷² The attack had taken the Germans by surprise. Their reserves had been held too far to the rear. Where movement of German troops was observed, it was rearwards. Whilst 2 CIB did keep 1st Division informed of the progress, the need for Brigade to communicate with 1st Division about artillery to shell troops massing for counter attacks, as was to be the case during the subsequent attack on Arleux, did not arise.¹⁷³ There was a point during the attack, however, after the capture of the Black Line, when 10/Battalion's officers had been reduced to one unwounded officer. In order that the Battalion's third and fourth waves could be adequately led in the assault on the Red Line, 10/Battalion's CO, Ormond, sent forward Major W.R.

¹⁷¹ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 9 April 1917. The total number of casualties of 1,102 represented 31.6% of those of the brigade who participated; 37.6% of officers and 31.5% of ORs.

¹⁷² Between 5.30 a.m. (zero hour) and 9.00 a.m. on 9 April 1917, 2 CIB contacted 1st Division HQ thirteen times by telephone. TNA WO 95/3727 1st Division WD, Appendix re Attack on 9th April 1917

¹⁷³ For examples, see TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 28 April 1917, 12.35 p.m. and 7.10 p.m.

Critchley of 10/Battalion.¹⁷⁴ This was an eventuality with which Ormond could cope from his own resources and on his own initiative.

Having secured its objectives in the Black Line, 7/Battalion led by Major Philpot reported that in doing so one of its companies had suffered heavy casualties – see Table 2.3.¹⁷⁵ As a consequence 8/Battalion, commanded by Prower, sent forward a company of men.¹⁷⁶ Provision to meet such an eventuality had already been made in the Brigade's plan.¹⁷⁷ During the morning of the attack 8/Battalion fulfilled its planned role, supplying four working parties of twenty-five men to construct trenches across no-man's-land and three working parties of the same size to carry forward four Stokes mortars and ammunition.¹⁷⁸ 8/Battalion moved forward following the attacking battalions' movements as the events of the morning progressed. By 2.30p.m. it was ordered to relieve the attacking battalions in the Red Line, a process which was completed by 6.00 p.m.¹⁷⁹

The Canadian Corps' attack against Vimy Ridge had, with the exception of 4th Division's struggle for Hill 145 and The Pimple, been entirely successful. It had been executed very much as planned.¹⁸⁰ 2 CIB's task in the period from 10 to 21 April, when it was relieved by 3

¹⁷⁴ Major Walter Ramsay Critchley (1891-19??). TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, April 1917, Report on Vimy Ridge and Subsequent Actions, 2 May 1917, p. 4. Critchley was awarded the DSO for his leadership on 9 April 1917 – LG 26 July 1917. See also A.C. Critchley, *Critch! The Memoirs of Brigadier-General A.C. Critchley C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O.* (London: Hutchinson, 1961), pp.76-8 .

¹⁷⁵ The Company in question had been reduced to one officer and twelve men, casualties in part attributable to the shells of one battery falling short. TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, Appendix re Attack on 9 April 1917, 7.52 a.m.

¹⁷⁶ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, April 1917, Report on Vimy Ridge and Subsequent Actions, 2 May 1917, p. 4

¹⁷⁷ LAC, RG9, Militia and Defence, Series III-D-3, Volume 4871, Reel T-10669 File: 206, 2 CIB WD, Appendix 2, Operation Order 185, p. 7

¹⁷⁸ TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD, 9 April 1917

¹⁷⁹ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, April 1917, Report on Vimy Ridge and Subsequent Actions, 2 May 1917, p. 5

¹⁸⁰ For reference to Brigadier-General V.W. Odlum's critical decision that a section of trench to be attacked by 87/Battalion should not be bombarded, a decision which led to the breakdown of the left wing of 11 CIB's attack on Hill 145, see A.B. Godefroy, 'The 4th Canadian Division: Trenches Should Never be Saved' in Hayes, Iarocci, Bechthold, (eds.), *Vimy Ridge*, p.222. Odlum was subsequently awarded a CMG – LG, 1 June 1917. The capture of Hill 145 was completed on 11 April by Brigadier-General E. Hilliam's 10 CIB. See Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, p. 261. 10 CIB's planned attack on The Pimple was postponed for forty-eight

CIB, was essentially one of rest, consolidation and, through the efforts of fighting patrols, the maintenance of contact with the Germans as they subsequently retired.¹⁸¹ This they did to what, prior to 9 April, had been their third line, extending from approximately Acheville to Arleux to Oppy. On each of the first three days after the battle Loomis and his staff moved their Advanced Battle HQ forward from one captured German dugout to another.¹⁸² 2 CIB was relieved by 3 CIB on the night of 15/16 April and moved into divisional support.¹⁸³ On 17 April Loomis moved his Advance Battle HQ back to Neuberger Haus located close to the Arras-Lens Road. With 2 CIB's next operation in mind, Loomis wrote:

*We have relaxed a little, just a little, for our Units being out of the line, there is naturally not the high pressure of work, or the same degree of responsibility. However the residue of the offensive is a vast amount of detail and reports, and the coming operations are under consideration at present, so it appears we are not to have much rest.*¹⁸⁴

Although all 2 CIB's battalions were out of the front line for the remaining four days of their tour, three of the four battalions (5/, 7/ and 8/) supplied working parties which were employed

hours before successfully being delivered on 12 April. Haig noted in his diary that Hilliam had been a sergeant-major in 17/Lancers, a regiment which Haig commanded between 1901 and 1903. He described 10 CIB's success as 'a fine performance'. TNA WO256/14 Haig's Diary, 12 April 1917. Ironside maintains that Hilliam was unconscious at the time as the result of too much rum. Lord Ironside, (ed.), *High Road to Command: The Diaries of Major General Sir Edmund Ironside 1920-22* (London: Leo Cooper, 1972), pp. 74-5. Hilliam was subsequently also awarded a CMG – LG, 1 June 1917. At the same time, 73 Brigade, 24th British Division commanded by Brigadier-General W.J. Dugan captured the heights of the Bois en Hache to complete the deprivation of German capability of overlooking the Souchez Valley. See Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, pp. 262-3.

¹⁸¹ Two platoons of 8/Battalion entered Willerval Village late on the afternoon of 13 April 1917 without opposition. TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD, 13 April 1917. A hastily organised advance on the morning of 14 April 1917 was to involve 1st Division and 2nd British Division (GOC Major-General C.E. Pereira). 8/Battalion provided an advanced guard. 2nd British Division 'failed to carry out the instructions' with the result that 'an unsupported advance against a strongly held and strongly wired Trench was manifestly impossible'. 8/Battalion suffered fifteen killed and thirty-seven wounded as a result. TNA WO95/3769 8/Battalion WD, 14 April 1917

¹⁸² 10 April – Lubecker Haus; 11 April – Neuberger Haus; 12 April – Posen Haus. LBD, 10, 11, 12 April 1917. Loomis again moved his HQ on the morning of 14 April to Loen Weg but had to re-locate again during the afternoon back to Posen Haus due to lack of sufficient space. LBD, 14 April 1917. One can but speculate on the state of Loomis' temper and the repercussions. Evidently not all 2 CIB's staff work was beyond reproach.

¹⁸³ TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 16 April 1917

¹⁸⁴ LBD, 17 April 1917. G.0-721 "Instructions for the attack on the Oppy-Acheville Line" which involved 1st Division's intended capture of Arleux and Fresnoy were issued on 18 April 1917. They were subsequently cancelled and replaced with amended instructions on 25 April 1917 by the issue of G.0-871 "Instructions for the attack on the Oppy-Acheville Line". TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 18 and 25 April 1917

repairing roads vital for the movement of artillery pieces to support future operations.¹⁸⁵ By the time 2 CIB moved into Divisional Reserve at Mont St. Eloi on 21 April, Loomis had been informed by Division that the intended attack on Arleux had been cancelled.¹⁸⁶ Travelling back through the areas which had been 2 CIB's front, support and reserve lines, Loomis was struck by the pace at which the Canadian Corps' advance had been supported.

*The British Army with all its ponderousness is very mobile, and the manner in which guns and supplies of all kinds have been rushed up to conform with the advance, is truly wonderful.*¹⁸⁷

Out of the line, the day to day pressure on Loomis eased. He valued the respite. He recorded:

*Today is Sunday and quite the most Sunday-like Sunday that we have experienced for many moons. MONT ST. ELOI, after our advance, and in the light of recent events, has the aspect of being a long way from the firing line though in reality as the crow flies, we are only a few miles.*¹⁸⁸

2.13 Arleux

The Battle of Arleux is little known. Nicholson deals with the battle in little more than a page.¹⁸⁹ The BOH describes it as 'the only tangible success of the whole operation', yet

¹⁸⁵ Horne visited Thélus, saw the severe impact of the bombardment on roads and wondered whether too many shells had been fired. TNA WO256/14 Haig's Diary, 12 April 1917

¹⁸⁶ LBD, 21 April 1917. It had in fact merely been postponed. TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 21 April 1917. On 16/17 April 1917 First Army experienced the heaviest overnight rainfall of the month, 6.5 millimetres, with consequences for the state of roads and trenches. TNA WO95/13 GHQ WD, April 1917, Weather Diary. Horne therefore sought a postponement to the second phase of the intended attack. See Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 379.

¹⁸⁷ LBD, 21 April 1917

¹⁸⁸ LBD, 22 April 1917. Meteorological Section, GHQ recorded 12.2 hours of sunshine on 22 April 1917 in First Army's area, the sunniest day of the month. Both 23 and 24 April also enjoyed long hours of sunshine, 10.8 and 11.8 hours respectively. First Army's area recorded no rainfall between 22 April and 4 May 1917 inclusive. TNA WO95/13 & 14 GHQ WD, April & May 1917, Weather Diary. Tim Cook, nevertheless, asserts that for the week prior to their attack against Arleux on 28 April, 2 CIB had been 'Training in rain'. He also asserts that 2 CIB 'rehearsed offensive operations during the week before the battle'. Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 152. A review of 5[/], 7[/], 8[/] and 10/Battalions' War Diaries for the week prior to 28 April reveals that they were, in fact, preponderantly involved in providing working parties. Other significant activities included cleaning up, kit inspections, bathing, pay parades, physical exercises and afternoon sports. 10/Battalion's Band performed four concerts during the week whilst this battalion, and it alone, did indeed conduct one practice attack on the afternoon of 25 April, for half an hour.

¹⁸⁹ Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, pp. 270-2

devotes only a page and a half to it.¹⁹⁰ More recently Tim Cook has devoted six pages to a hyperbolic yet incomplete account of the battle.¹⁹¹ The gap in the historiography for a complete and accurate account remains to be filled.¹⁹²

The BEF's operation on 28/29 April referred to as the Battle of Arleux involved formations from four corps, two drawn from each of First and Third Armies attacking on a front of six miles. In Third Army's area 35 Brigade, 12th British Division of VI Corps was involved south of the River Scarpe. North of the Scarpe all three brigades of both 34th British Division (101, 102 and 103 Brigades) and 37th British Division (63, 111 and 112 Brigades) of XVII Corps were involved with the respective foci of their attention being Rœux and Greenland Hill. First Army's attack on Oppy involved one brigade of 63rd British Division (188 Brigade) and all three brigades of 2nd British Division (5, 6 and 99 Brigades), both divisions drawn from XIII Corps. First Army's contribution was completed by the attack of 2 CIB of 1st Division and 5 CIB of 2nd Division focused on Arleux.¹⁹³ Other than 2 CIB's success, the BOH captured the sentiment of the overall outcome in commenting on XVII Corps' exertions that 'there was little enough to show for the action of the 28th April'.¹⁹⁴

Prior to the capture of Vimy Ridge, the village of Arleux had formed part of the German third line. It was certain that it contained a number of deep dugouts in which reserve troops could

¹⁹⁰ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, pp. 423-4

¹⁹¹ Cook, *Shock Troops*, pp. 151-8. Cook makes no mention, for example, of 25/Battalion's error in halting at the wrong sunken lane, 600 yards short of its objective. This exposed 5/Battalion's left flank to machine gun fire and provided the Germans with an opportunity to counter attack, which they took. Cook mentions that one of the communication methods which kept Loomis informed was wireless. 2 CIB's Report, however, describes the "IT" sets established at Willerval and brigade HQ as 'useless'.

¹⁹² The most informative account remains 2 CIB's Report.

¹⁹³ For an outline of the events of 28 April on the whole front attacked, see Falls, *BOH, 1917, Volume I*, pp. 413-425. Despite the geographical spread of this operation, it has been designated 'Battle of Arleux, 28th-29th April' – see James, *A Record of the Battles and Engagements*, p. 18.

¹⁹⁴ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 418. Wynne attributes the BEF's failure to 'the British army commanders dissipated their strength over the whole sector, directing the assault towards continuous blue, green, and brown lines drawn across the map 500 yards apart, regardless of reverse slopes and death-traps'. Wynne, *If Germany Attacks*, p. 245

be housed in relative safety. The village was protected by trenches and wire entanglements which formed a salient on its western side in the shape of an inverted 'D'. It was known that the Germans defended Arleux with 'an ordinary trench garrison, but an unusually large number of machine guns'.¹⁹⁵ Some 1,000 yards to its rear lay the village of Fresnoy from which counter attacks could be expected. It was known that German defensive tactics had changed concerning counter attacks.

*Recent Operations have shown that the German policy is now to deliver Counter Attacks over the open and in great strength within a very short time of our attack having reached its objective.*¹⁹⁶

2 CIB was to experience the organizational and tactical influence of Colonel F.K. von Lossberg, 'a very remarkable soldier'.¹⁹⁷ Arleux was, as a result, to prove a significant challenge both to capture and to retain.¹⁹⁸

Emulating German tactics, 1st Division had partially constructed a 'Main Resistance Line' 400 yards to the east of Willerval. This was 800 to 1,000 yards from the German front line. The attack was to be delivered across a frontage of 2,600 yards and would be made by four battalions (8/, 10/ and 5/ of 2 CIB and 25/ of 5 CIB) with two battalions (7/ of 2 CIB and 16/ of 3 CIB under 2 CIB's orders) providing carrying parties in support of 2 CIB.¹⁹⁹ In order to reduce the distance to be covered in the initial stage, a jumping off trench had been completed on the night of 26/27 April 500 yards from the German lines, with a jumping off line

¹⁹⁵ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, April 1917, Operation Order 192 and 'Instructions for the Attack on Arleux (No 2)', April 27th 1917, Enemy's Defences

¹⁹⁶ TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, Operation Order 159, para. 8, 27 April 1917

¹⁹⁷ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 401. Colonel Friedrich Karl von Lossberg (1868-1934). He acquired the nickname of 'fireman of the Western Front'. J.M. Bourne, *Who's Who in World War One* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 178-9. In the wake of the BEF's success on 9 April 1917, von Lossberg was appointed Chief of Staff of Sixth Army on 11 April 1917 with full powers to take any measures he thought fit. Wynne, *If Germany Attacks*, pp. 199-201

¹⁹⁸ For the impact of the post-December 1916 German tactical philosophy of mobile defence in depth on the BEF's attacks on 23 and 28 April 1917, see Wynne, *If Germany Attacks*, pp. 243-9.

¹⁹⁹ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, May 1917, Appendix 6. Even Nicholson seems to have been unaware of 26/Battalion's participation in the battle. He makes no mention of it.

indicated by a series of posts and rope 100 yards closer.²⁰⁰ Despite the efforts of the artillery, it was only on 8/Battalion's front that the wire had been satisfactorily cut. Elsewhere it remained an obstacle.²⁰¹ Regardless, 2 CIB was informed the attack was to proceed. The attack's first objective was a north-south line through the centre of the village expected to be held two hours after zero hour. Having cleared the village, the final objective was a line up to 400 yards to the east of the village astride the Arleux-Fresnoy Road and along the eastern edge of Arleux Wood.²⁰² The distances between the jumping off line and the Brigade's final objective varied from 1,200 yards for 8/Battalion on the right, 1,450 yards for 10/Battalion in the centre and a minimum of 600 yards for 5/Battalion on the left.

Instructions were issued by 1st Division on 25 April outlining the intended Arleux attack. It concluded with a requirement that Loomis submit his proposals to Currie by the morning of 27 April setting out how he intended to carry out the attack.²⁰³ Loomis held a conference of his COs that morning to confer about his plans.²⁰⁴ 2 CIB's rest period ended on 26 April when its battalions returned to the front opposite Arleux. Currie took the opportunity on the morning of 26 April to visit Loomis at his Advanced Battle HQ at Posen Haus. Currie's visit was unlikely to have been a social call. Presumably they discussed and, by implication, Currie approved Loomis' proposals. Loomis' orders were discussed with his COs on the morning of 27 April. In order to be in closer touch with the battle, a core team of brigade staff officers moved forward 3,000 yards that evening from Posen Haus to one of four concrete former German artillery shelters located on the eastern slope of Vimy Ridge in the south-west corner

²⁰⁰ TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 27 April 1917

²⁰¹ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, April 1917, S.C.I. 186-4 Report from S.C.(I) to 1st Division, 27 April 1917

²⁰² A map of the planned attack is to be found at TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, April 1917.

²⁰³ G.0-870 "Instructions for the Attack on the Oppy-Acheville Line" TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 25 April 1917, Section 24, Plans. This document extends to six pages.

²⁰⁴ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, May 1917, Appendix 6, Report of 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade on Operations, April 26th to 30th April 1917, Capture of Arleux-en-Gohelle, 28th April 1917. Loomis' diary confirms that Alston wrote this report. LBD, 4 May 1917

of Farbus Wood, itself 3,000 yards from the Brigade's jumping off line. It provided an elevated position from which the battlefield could be observed. It was evident from the tone of his diary entry that, as far as 2 CIB was concerned, this was to be Loomis' battle.

*My time today was occupied in going into the new operations, and in having my instructions conveyed to the Battalion commanders. In this connection there is considerable detail to be completed.*²⁰⁵

The attack on 28 April began on time as planned. Zero hour had been set for 4.25 a.m.²⁰⁶ After severe fighting, particularly hand to hand fighting in the centre of the village involving both bayonets and grenades, Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Kearsley, GSO1 1st Division, reported to Brigadier-General P.P. de B. Radcliffe, BGGs Canadian Corps, at 6.38 a.m. that 8/ and 10/Battalions had secured their final objectives.²⁰⁷ By 7.14 a.m. Loomis had further reported to 1st Division that 5/Battalion had also reached its objective by 6.25 a.m. although 25/Battalion to its left was 'rather disorganised'.²⁰⁸ With the exception of the events of the day involving 5/Battalion's left flank and 25/Battalion's misunderstandings and disorganization, 2 CIB's attack had succeeded. The challenge for the rest of the day remained the consolidation of the gains under sustained shell fire and the withstanding of the predictable and expected counter attacks.

Following the 2 CIB's initial success, Loomis' prime role was the interpretation and evaluation of information received at his Advanced Battle HQ from his battalions and observation posts, and his consequential communications with 1st Division. The reliability of

²⁰⁵ LBD, 27 April 1917. Currie and Burstall, GOC 2nd Division, were clearly in overall command throughout the battle. See, for example, the conversations between Currie and Loomis re the scheme to be undertaken by 5 CIB on the night of 28/29 April and subsequently that between Currie and Burstall. TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 28 April 1917, Narrative of Events of re Attack on April 28th, 1917, p. 14, 6.20 p.m. and p.15, 6.40 p.m.

²⁰⁶ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, April 1917, Operation Order 192 and 'Instructions for the Attack on Arleux (No 2)', April 27th 1917. This latter document, the lengthier of the two, extends to six pages compared to the forty pages of Operation Order 185 concerning the attack on Vimy Ridge. Loomis mistakenly records zero hour as 4.30 a.m. – LBD, 28 April 1917.

²⁰⁷ TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 28 April 1917, Narrative of Events of re Attack on April 28th, 1917, p. 2

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

communications systems during the battle remained fragile. The Division's artillery responded promptly to SOS flares. For example, in combination with rifle and machine-gun fire, the artillery responded to SOS flares to successfully beat-off a counter attack against 5/Battalion at 8.30 p.m.²⁰⁹ Although battalion HQs were linked to Advanced Brigade HQ by telephone, 'the wire lines were continually being cut by shellfire' despite the cables having been buried six feet deep. The cables to 5/Battalion, for example, were 'broken 37 times before communication was lost'. Because of smoke and ground mists, visual communications produced 'no satisfactory results' whilst the high power buzzer and wireless facilities between Willerval and Loomis' Advanced Battle HQ were both 'useless'.²¹⁰ Despite these difficulties, Loomis was sufficiently well informed of events to personally initiate at least seven telephone conversations during the day with 1st Division HQ to make requests for artillery support.²¹¹ The timing and accuracy of the artillery support proved critical. As a consequence, and after repeated counter attacks, the German 111th Division's commander decided to leave Arleux in Canadian hands, effectively acknowledging what had been 'a fine feat of arms'.²¹²

The Brigade's initial battle strength had been augmented by a sizeable draft of reinforcements, particularly to 5/Battalion.

²⁰⁹ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, May 1917, Appendix 6, Report of 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade on Operations, April 26th to 30th April 1917, Capture of Arleux-en-Gohelle, 28th April 1917, p. 6

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10

²¹¹ See TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 28 April 1917, Narrative of Events re Attack of April 28th, 1917 for an eighteen page log of telephone messages taken and sent by 1st Division HQ. The calls initiated by Loomis concerning artillery support were timed at 9.05 a.m., 10.40 a.m., 11.07 a.m., 12.15 p.m., 2.47 p.m., 6.20 p.m. and 8.20 p.m.

²¹² Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, p. 424

| | Officers | ORs | Totals |
|----------------|----------|-----|--------|
| 10/Battalion | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| 7/Battalion | 2 | 43 | 45 |
| 5/Battalion | 0 | 195 | 195 |
| 8/Battalion | 1 | 24 | 25 |
| 2/C.M.G. Co. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2/T.M. Battery | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 10 | 262 | 272 |

Table 2.4 2 CIB Reinforcements Received on 25 April 1917²¹³

Of his reinforcements Loomis recorded:

*They were urgently needed but will require some training before they are fit, though in all probability they will go into action in the next few days. The spirit among the men however is excellent and the successes of the recent fighting have heartened them up wonderfully, in spite of the heavy casualties.*²¹⁴

The ‘heavy casualties’ of 9 April were to be repeated. In the event, the numbers committed to the battle and the casualties sustained were:

| | Officers | ORs | Totals |
|----------------|----------|-------|--------|
| 10/Battalion | 19 | 765 | 784 |
| 7/Battalion | 20 | 408 | 428 |
| 5/Battalion | 19 | 597 | 616 |
| 8/Battalion | 21 | 714 | 735 |
| 16/Battalion | 21 | 530 | 551 |
| 2/C.M.G. Co. | 6 | 121 | 127 |
| 2/T.M. Battery | 4 | 47 | 51 |
| Totals | 110 | 3,182 | 3,292 |

Table 2.5 2 CIB Battle Strength on 28 April 1917²¹⁵

²¹³ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 25 April 1917

²¹⁴ LBD, 25 April 1917

²¹⁵ TNA WO95/3727 1st Division WD, 28 April 1917. The average battle strength of these battalions – 623 – was still significantly higher than battalions generally at this time which ‘seldom took more than 500 all ranks into action, and sometimes less than 400’. Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 414

| | Officers | | | ORs | | |
|----------------|----------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| | K. | W. | M. | K. | W. | M. |
| 10/Battalion | 4 | 7 | 1 | 83 | 184 | 20 |
| 7/Battalion | - | 21 | - | 10 | 43 | 3 |
| 5/Battalion | 2 | 8 | - | 47 | 145 | 44 |
| 8/Battalion | 5 | 4 | - | 51 | 179 | 49 |
| 16/Battalion | 3 | 2 | - | 23 | 39 | 12 |
| 2/C.M.G. Co. | - | 1 | - | 3 | 7 | - |
| 2/T.M. Battery | - | - | - | 2 | 8 | - |
| H.Q. Staff | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Totals | 14 | 43 | 1 | 219 | 605 | 128 |

*Table 2.6 2 CIB Casualties 28 April 1917*²¹⁶

The Germans had suffered ‘very heavy’ casualties as well as nine officers and 440 ORs taken prisoner.²¹⁷ In pushing their line forward by 1,500 yards and having captured one village, nearly a third of 2 CIB’s attackers had become casualties. Yet the Brigade’s diarist felt able to record:

*Our casualties were not excessive when the importance of the work accomplished is taken into consideration.*²¹⁸

Late on the evening of 28 April, Loomis passed on to his unit commanders a congratulatory message from Currie.²¹⁹ 2 CIB held its newly won line on 29 April. Despite 2 CIB’s success, the determination of the Germans to hold the position to which they had withdrawn was demonstrated by the activity of their artillery. As Loomis recorded:

The enemy artillery were also very active, and practically the entire forward area, received a severe shelling, guns of heavier calibre than usual, being used. Considerable shrapnel is also coming over, and altogether the enemys

²¹⁶ TNA WO95/3764 2 CIB WD, 30 April 1917. The total number of casualties of 1,010 represented 30.7% of those of the brigade who participated; 52.7% of officers and 29.9% of ORs.

²¹⁷ Ibid., May 1917, Appendix 6, Report of 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade on Operations, April 26th to 30th April 1917, Capture of Arleux-en-Gohelle, 28th April 1917, p. 11

²¹⁸ Ibid., 28 April 1917

²¹⁹ Ibid.

*(sic) lavish expenditure of ammunition, inaugurated with our advance, is continuing, even increasing in volume.*²²⁰

Nevertheless, no further German counter attacks were launched. 2 CIB was relieved in the line by 3 CIB early in the morning of 30 April and moved into Divisional Reserve. By that evening the Brigade had returned to billets based in and around Mont St Eloi.

2.14 Into Corps Reserve

The success of the attack on 28 April provided Loomis with another opportunity to exercise one of a brigade commander's responsibilities, receiving and considering recommendations from his COs as to those who should receive honours and awards. In relation to his COs and his own staff, it was for Loomis to initiate recommendations. It was no surprise that the leaders of the three attacking battalions received DSOs. That Lieutenant-Colonel Dyer, who was left out of the attack as was Lieutenant-Colonel Prower, should have received a Bar to his DSO for his contribution is a tribute not only to his personal conduct but also to the thoroughness of his preparations. Major Mackenzie's quest for information contributed to Loomis' own role in co-ordinating the Brigade's artillery support. These were attributes which Loomis particularly valued and he reflected them in his citations.²²¹

On the Brigade's first full day out of the line, 1 May, 10/Battalion's HQ building, some ten miles from the front lines, was hit by a 13.9 inch shell. It resulted in one officer being killed

²²⁰ LBD, 29 April 1917

²²¹ Supplement to *EG*, 30 July 1917. (1) 'Lt.-Col. Hugh Marshal Dyer, D.S.O., Infy. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. His fine leadership and foresight of possible contingencies enabled his battalion to assault and capture its objectives in spite of almost impassable obstacles. At all times he showed a spirit of indomitable courage which communicated itself in marked degree to his officers and men. He assisted personally to dress the wounded under heavy shell fire, setting a splendid example to all ranks.' *LG* 14 January 1916. (2) Major J.P. MacKenzie, was awarded a Bar to his DSO for his conduct at Arleux although no citation for this award was published. Loomis' citation for Mackenzie's first DSO, however, was published. 'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He showed very fine judgment and ability in handling his battalion during an attack, the success of which was very largely due to his quick grasp of every situation. He later made three personal reconnaissances of our advanced positions under intense hostile fire in order to obtain information for our artillery, and his reports were accurate and of great value.' *LG*, 1 January 1917

with eight others wounded, fifteen ORs killed and thirty-one wounded.²²² It was a cruel blow to the Brigade having contributed to the achievement of the BEF's solitary success on the Arras front three days earlier. Those killed were buried on the same day in Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont-St. Eloi, their funeral being attended by both Currie and Loomis.²²³ 10/Battalion had suffered a casualty rate of forty-five per cent of its attackers in four days.

Loomis had been due to go on leave in February but 'circumstances' had prevented him doing so.²²⁴ On the afternoon of 4 May, however, Loomis did depart for a brief period on leave in England.²²⁵ The following day the Brigade, temporarily under the command of Dyer, moved into Corps Reserve.²²⁶ During the 114 days between 19 January and 30 April the battalions of 2 CIB had spent eighty-seven days rotating through the trenches, digging, training, raiding and twice going over the top. Loomis and his staff had been at their posts throughout. It was time to rest and recharge the Brigade's batteries. The month saw parades and congratulatory speeches by Currie (9 May) and Byng (11 May) followed by a thanksgiving for victory service attended by both Currie and Horne (13 May) interspersed with the Brigade's Sports Day on 12 May. Loomis returned from leave in the early hours of 13 May in time to attend the inspection of a Guard of Honour by the King of the Belgians on 15 May provided by 5/Battalion and to preside at a Field General Court Martial on the same day.

²²² TNA WO95/3770 10/Battalion WD, 1 May 1917

²²³ LBD, 1 May 1917

²²⁴ Ibid., 4 May 1917

²²⁵ TNA WO/95 3764 2 CIB WD, 4 May 1917. On 3 May 1917 1 CIB, 1st Division and 6 CIB, 2nd Division attacked and captured Fresnoy-en-Gohelle to complete the Canadian Corps' string of successes associated with Vimy Ridge. See Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, pp.274-8.

²²⁶ TNA WO/95 3764 2 CIB WD, 5 May 1917

2.15 Conclusion

Historians who have previously evaluated the role of brigadier-generals have tended to be dismissive of them for essentially two reasons.²²⁷ The orthodoxy is first, that brigadier-generals were mere cogs in the wheel of a bigger machine.

*Strategy was not the concern of the infantry brigadier; he was involved solely with tactical employment of his brigade, and even here freedom of action was more restricted than one might imagine. But because the brigadier's objectives were limited and his resources defined by a superior commander, it is rather more difficult to judge generalship at the brigade level than in more senior ranks.*²²⁸

Battle plans and tactics were determined elsewhere, typically at corps level or above, so that rarely did divisional commanders, let alone brigade commanders, have an opportunity to develop and implement their own battle plans.²²⁹ Second, because the first victim of any battle at the time was the ability to communicate with the attacking troops. As a result, those left back in Brigade HQs were unable to exercise control over the battle. Whilst the battle was in progress, it was as if they were effectively, in large measure, redundant.

*If there is one characteristic which stands out in the battles of 1914-18, it is the almost total lack of control once the battle had started. Very few commanders at any level had the faintest idea of what had happened or what was happening on their own side, let alone on the other side of the hill.*²³⁰

The evidence of Loomis' experience during the 211 day period under review (21 October 1916 to 15 May 1917), however, suggests that concentration on an evaluation of the role and

²²⁷ For example, see P.S. Sadler, *The Paladin: A Life of Major-General Sir John Gellibrand* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 84-5.

²²⁸ A.M.J. Hyatt, *General Sir Arthur Currie: A Military Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987), p. 45

²²⁹ For example, on 25 February 1917 the GOC 34th British Division, Nicholson, submitted alternative ways in which his division's allotted objectives might be taken. He offered a Plan A which was based on the Corps plan and an alternative Plan B setting out his reasons why he preferred Plan B. For reasons that were explained to him face to face by Fergusson, GOC XVII Corps, Nicholson was told to implement Plan A. See TNA WO95/935 XVII Corps General Staff, 1917 January-March, G.S. 217/2, 25 February 1917 and G.S. 32/22, 27 February 1917.

²³⁰ Field-Marshal Richard Michael Power Carver, Baron Carver (1915-2001), cited in P.A. Pedersen, *Monash as Military Commander* ((Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1985), p.174.

performance of a brigadier-general exclusively during battle is myopic.²³¹ An orthodox evaluation of Loomis' performance during this period would concentrate on his performance during the two battles in which 2 CIB participated during this period. On 9 April 2 CIB achieved its objectives by 7.55 a.m.; on 28 April it had done likewise by 6.25 a.m. By this measure alone 2 CIB, and by implication Loomis, would be regarded as effective and successful.²³²

The degree of Loomis' effectiveness and success, however, is better measured by what he also did during the other 209 days of the review period and its impact on 2 CIB's fighting effectiveness. As the BOH records:

*In warfare of the type which had developed during the past two years on the Western Front, the preparation for the battle had assumed an importance equal to that of the conduct of the battle once engaged.*²³³

Arguably Loomis' first priority was to ensure that his COs and his own staff were individuals in whom he had confidence and in whom he could place his trust. Out of the line Loomis used his time to ensure that 2 CIB was as well trained as was possible in the circumstances. He established his brigade's training syllabus and was assiduous in his supervision of its implementation. Whilst 2 CIB was holding the line Loomis was at pains to know his sector intimately and was frequently about his trenches. It was Loomis who gathered the information which provided the schemes of defence which he prepared. It was Loomis' brigade which undertook proportionately more than its share of raids, the planning of which Loomis was involved to varying degrees, dependent on circumstances. Whether in or out of the line,

²³¹ For an example of an appreciation focused on battlefield performance, see P. Simkins, "The Very Model of a Modern Major-General": Major General H.W. Higginson CB DSO and Bar', *The Blue Cap: Journal of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association*, 14 (2007), 18-22.

²³² Loomis was awarded the DSO (*LG*, 23 June 1915) and Bar (*LG*, 2 April 1919), CB (*EG*, 7 June 1918), CMG (*EG*, 4 June 1917), KCB (*EG*, 13 June 1919), seven MiDs, Legion d'Honneur Croix d'Officier, Croix de Guerre avec Palme and Order of Leopold, Commandeur.

²³³ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 296

Loomis' most significant role as brigade commander arguably was the acquisition, evaluation, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information about the ground for which he was responsible. This formed the basis of his granular approach, whether setting priorities over which trenches were to be maintained, or determining how his battalions were to deal with specific German machine gun emplacements.²³⁴ Loomis' attention to detail coupled with his emphasis on training and the detail of his plans, characteristics he shared with Currie, provided the platform for his battalions' battlefield successes.

²³⁴ Loomis' granular approach generated critics. Colin Castle, the biographer of Captain E.H.L. Johnston the SC(Q) appointed in December 1917 in succession to Captain W.D. Herridge, for example, has written: 'Loomis was an inconsiderate bully, prone to making unreasonable demands on his staff while indulging in rude and humiliating outbursts against them; and he was a micro-manager who interfered in the detail of his staff's work, then often changed his mind, thus doubling their extra work.' C. Castle, *Rufus: The Life of the Canadian Journalist Who Interviewed Hitler* (Vancouver: Granville Island Publishing, 2014), p. 114. Johnston remained one of Loomis' two SCs until 3 September 1918. Castle suggests that the relationship between Loomis and Johnston may have been influenced by the fact they both had red hair and fiery tempers. Despite this, their mutual regard developed. As a result of his actions during the Battle of Amiens, Loomis recommended Johnston for a MC (for which he received a MiD, *LG*, 31 December 1918), was promoted Major and appointed a DAAG (*LG*, 19 November 1918).

Chapter 3

Brigadier-General H. Pelham Burn

152 Infantry Brigade



3.1 Introduction

To the south of the Canadian Corps and on to the River Scarpe, the line was held by XVII Corps commanded by Sir Charles Fergusson. XVII Corps consisted of four divisions, three of which were in the line on 9 April 1917. The left of the Corps' frontage was held by 51st Division commanded by Major-General G.M. Harper, the centre by 34th Division commanded by Major-General C.L. Nicholson, and the right by 9th Division commanded by Major-General H.T. Lukin.¹ Major-General Hon. W. Lambton commanded 4th Division, the role of

¹ Major-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) (George) Montague Harper (1865-1922). Major-General (later Sir) (Cecil) Lothian Nicholson (1865-1933).

which during the battle was to leap-frog through 9th Division's front, the first time this was to occur during a battle on the Western Front.²

Brigadier-General Henry 'Harry' Pelham Burn, GOC 152 Brigade, has been chosen for a number of reasons.³ First, his division was involved in both the First and Second Battles of the Scarpe as well as fighting in mid-May 1917 in the area of Roeux and the Chemical Works. Second, 51st Division was a TF, as compared to Regular or NA, formation. Third, Pelham Burn, was an example of a Regular officer whose career blossomed with exceptional pace. When appointed to the command of 152 Brigade on 16 July 1916, Pelham Burn was thirty-four years old, the youngest infantry brigadier-general in the British army.⁴ Pelham Burn was also an example of a brigadier-general upon whose health the war took its toll.

3.2 Arras and XVII Corps

Fergusson and his staff had the central role in the drafting of XVII Corps' plan for the battle. With the exception of Lukin, the other divisional generals whose formations were destined to feature on 9 April 1917 had not been assigned to XVII Corps at the planning stage. Despite Nicholson's subsequent suggestion and Allenby's eventual decision to adopt a four day bombardment prior to "Z" day, Fergusson's plan was adopted essentially as presented.⁵

Fergusson set out the intention of his Corps' attack on a three divisional front as:

² Major-General Hon. (later Sir) William Lambton (1863-1936)

³ Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Henry Pelham Burn (1882-1958)

⁴ F.W. Bewsher, *The History of the Fifty First (Highland) Division, 1914-1918* (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood, 1921), p. 71. 152 Brigade's full nomenclature was 152 Brigade (1st Highland) (Seaforth and Cameron Brigade) - Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, Part 2A*, p. 102.

⁵ TNA WO95/935 XVII Corps General Staff, 1917 January-February, G.S. 32, 20 January 1917 and Subsidiary Instructions and Alterations to Part II of the Scheme, 17 March 1917. For an account of the process through which Allenby's original plan for a two day bombardment changed to a four day bombardment and the role of those concerned, see T.G. Harvey, 'Allenby, Arras and Artillery: The Decision for a Four Day Preliminary Bombardment', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, (forthcoming).

The primary object of the operation is to establish a line along the German 3rd line system which runs through the LE PONT DU JOUR – MAISON DE LA COTE – COMMANDANT'S HOUSE joining up with the Canadian Corps on the north at the latter point. The right of the XVII Corp will connect on the north bank of the SCARPE with the left of VI Corps at FEUCHY. When this line has been established, a further advance is to be made south of LE PONT DU JOUR, so as to capture the southern point of the VIMY ridge and the 4th line trenches west of FAMPOUX and the village of FAMPOUX.⁶

XVII Corps' front extended 5,300 yards. From north to south, 51st Division was to attack on a front of 1,850 yards, 34th Division on a front of 1,650 yards and 9th Division on a front of 1,800 yards.⁷ All three divisions were to employ all three of their brigades simultaneously, each attacking on a two battalion front.⁸ The operation was to be divided into four phases, the main object of each involving the capture of successive systems of German trenches. These were labelled successively the Black, Blue, Brown and Green lines. On 51st Division's front, the maximum intended depth of attack was 4,400 yards.⁹

Fergusson anticipated that the Black line could be captured within thirty-four minutes of zero hour. In order to ensure sufficient time for the Corps operating on XVII Corps' flanks, i.e. Canadian Corps to the north and VI Corps to the south, the advance and capture of the Blue line would begin at zero hour plus two hours. It was anticipated this task could be achieved in a further forty-three minutes. At this point there would be a longer pause, for two reasons. First, the Brown line lay over the brow of the hill which formed the lower reaches of Vimy Ridge. The fall of artillery shells over the brow could not be observed from positions within 51st Division's existing lines, reliance having to be placed on observations reported and

⁶ TNA WO95/935 XVII Corps General Staff, 1917 January-February, G.S. 32, 20 January 1917, Part 1, Section 1

⁷ Bewsher mistakenly states that 51st Division's frontage was 'just over 3000 yards, gradually increasing up to 4000 yards'. Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 150. For confirmation of the division's frontage as 1,850 yards, see TNA WO95/2845 51st Division WD, S.G. 214/108.

⁸ *Ibid.*, G.S. 32, 20 January 1917, Part 1, Section 2

⁹ Bewsher again mistakenly states the intended depth of 51st Division's attack as 5,500 yards. Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 150

photographed by RFC pilots. The German wire defences were a significant obstacle to be negotiated. The plan stipulated that an attack on this objective ‘would require at least 5 hours concentrated bombardment before it would be ready for assault’.¹⁰ Harper prophetically understood the significance of the bombardment of the reverse slope:

*If the wire cannot be entirely destroyed on either the BLUE or the BROWN LINE, I consider it essential that there should be a gap at least every 30 yards. To leave spaces of uncut wire over 30 yards in length would allow the enemy to mount Machine Guns opposite such spaces as soon as the Barrage lifts; and by protecting himself with Bombing Blocks on the flanks, to hold up a portion of the Attack and possibly, to disorganize the whole plan.*¹¹

Second, there was need for those battalions which were to attack the Brown line to make their way forward. This was estimated would take four hours after the Blue line was known to have been secured. The third phase, the attack on the Brown line, would be launched, therefore, at six hours and forty-six minutes after zero hour. The Brown line was timetabled to have been secured by seven hours and thirty-two minutes after zero hour. That being so, the bombardment on the Green line as the preliminary to securing a number of tactical points which provided observation points of value would be commenced.

In an attempt to husband its resources, GHQ decided to distribute the available sixty tanks amongst First, Third and Fifth Armies with forty being allocated to Third Army. XVII Corps was to have eight, none of which were allocated to 51st Division. Fuller was dismissive of the dissipation of the potential of a concentrated tank attack on Fifth Army’s front: he described this element of the plan as ‘egregious’.¹²

¹⁰ TNA WO95/2845 51st Division WD, G.S. 32, 20 January 1917, Part 1, Section 6

¹¹ TNA WO95/935 XVII Corps General Staff, S.G. 214/145, 17 March 1917. Just how prophetic this assessment was to be Harper could not have imagined.

¹² J.F.C. Fuller, *Memoirs of an Unconventional Soldier* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1936), p. 104

If nothing else, Fergusson's plan was comprehensive. Including its appendices which detailed his plans for artillery and signals communications, Fergusson's document extended to thirty-six pages providing the basis for divisional commanders' own plans. Unlike the plans of Allenby's other Corps, the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line which became evident to GHQ on 24 February 1917 did not require Fergusson subsequently to reconsider his intentions for the coming battle north of the Scarpe.¹³

Fergusson's plan had been prepared and submitted to Third Army on 20 January 1917, without the possibility of Harper's involvement.¹⁴ 51st Division did not join XVII Corps until 11 February 1917.¹⁵ The Division having been on the march for six days, Pelham Burn's brigade took over the left hand sector of XVII Corps' line from 9th Division that morning.¹⁶ Fergusson's plan had been approved on the basis that his three divisions, with a fourth in reserve, would attack with all three of their brigades in the line. Harper disagreed. He intended to attack with only two brigades, although each would have attached to it an additional battalion drawn from his third brigade.¹⁷ This enabled Harper to retain the two remaining battalions as a divisional reserve.¹⁸ In doing so, he drew on his own experience. The Division's success on 13 November 1916 at Beaumont Hamel had been achieved through

¹³ TNA WO256/15 Haig's Diary, 24 February 1917. Where subsequent amendments to Fergusson's plans were made, they concerned matters of detail. For example, the density of 18 pounders guns was increased to 1 to every 20 yards for the purposes of the creeping barrage - see TNA WO95/935 XVII Corps General Staff, 1917 March - G.S.32/1, 1 March 1917. The boundary between XVII Corps and the Canadian Corps was altered - see TNA WO95/935 XVII Corps General Staff, 1917 March - G.S.32/29, 3 March 1917. See also TNA WO95/935 XVII Corps General Staff, 1917 March - G.S.32/33, 6 March 1917 and Third Army G.S.1/37, Section 5 (c), 14 March 1917.

¹⁴ For Fergusson's plan, see TNA WO95/935 XVII Corps General Staff, 1917 January-February, G.S. 32, 20 January 1917.

¹⁵ Nicholson mentions that 51st Division was at this time in five corps and three armies in the space of a month. More particularly, he records that: 'Every one of these corps and armies had a completely different method of office work.' W.N. Nicholson, *Behind the Lines: An Account of Administrative Staffwork in the British Army 1914-1918* (Stevenage: Strong Oak Press & Tom Donovan Publishing, 1939 originally), p. 22

¹⁶ TNA WO95/2845 51st Division WD, 11 February 1917

¹⁷ 5/Gordon Highlanders were attached to 152 Brigade: 7/Black Watch was attached to 154 Brigade.

¹⁸ They were 6/Black Watch and 7/Gordon Highlanders.

Harper's leap-frog system of attack on a two brigade front.¹⁹ The conclusion to the ensuing debate demonstrates the degree of trust Fergusson placed in Harper.

*When the plan of operations was made, it was recognised that you would probably have to employ the whole Division in taking the objective allotted. You are therefore to understand that considerations of the advantage of having a reserve in hand are not to influence you to such an extent as to make you undertake the attack with insufficient troops. You must bear in mind that the important consideration is the capture and consolidation of the brown objective in the time allotted. If you consider that you can reasonably attempt this task and can still afford to keep a reserve in hand, the Corps Commander does not wish to interfere with your discretion.*²⁰

This inter-change begs the question whether the basis of Fergusson's acquiescence to Harper's use of his discretion was personal or positional. Fergusson had to have regard to the potential consequences were Harper's attack to fail. Had Gough been GOC of Third Army, one is left wondering whether he would have been so sanguine and supportive.

Harper defined the Division's objective straightforwardly:

*The final objective of the 51st (Highland) Division is the capture of the MAISON DE LA COTE – COMMANDANT'S HOUSE line.*²¹

The attack would be undertaken with 152 Brigade on the right and 154 Brigade on the left. Each brigade would allocate two battalions for the capture of the Black line and three battalions for the capture of the Blue and Brown lines. The method of the attack would again be Harper's leap-frog system. 154 Brigade had the more challenging task of maintaining contact with the advance of the Canadian Corps on its left flank since the lines of their respective objectives did not coincide. On reaching both the Black and the Blue lines,

¹⁹ 'The mode of attack for the division was to assault in four 'waves', each with a definite objective. Each wave was held responsible for the taking and 'cleaning up' of the portion of the enemy line allotted to it, and for 'bombing up' the communication trenches towards the next line. The second wave would then pass through the first and so on.' C.F. French, 'The 51st (Highland) Division During the First World War', University of Glasgow, PhD Thesis, 2006, p. 243

²⁰ TNA WO95/935 XVII Corp, General Staff, 1917 January–February, Appendix 23A

²¹ TNA WO95/2845 51st Division WD, 10 March 1917, S.G. 214/108, Section I, Sub-Section 3

Harper's plan required 154 Brigade 'to throw forward its left flank or push forward posts to connect with 1st Canadian Division'.²²

The role of brigadiers in Harper's plan is revealed implicitly, occasionally explicitly. For example, the rate at which successive waves of troops move across the battlefield 'must be carefully worked out'.²³ Presumably, along with their COs, both Pelham Burn and GOC 154 Brigade, Brigadier-General J.G.H. Hamilton, would have been involved in determining such elements of the operational plan.²⁴ Similarly, because the distance between the Blue and the Brown lines varied between 1,000 and 1,500 yards, Harper's plan specified that it was 'essential that some troops should be left in position on our side of the ridge to support the consolidation of the BROWN LINE'.²⁵ Just how many troops and where they should be positioned was clearly a matter of detail that the divisional commander delegated.²⁶ On the other hand, Harper's plan did give Pelham Burn and Hamilton specific responsibilities. For example:

- (i) *After the capture of the BLUE LINE, Brigadiers must consider the question of forming carrying parties from the troops who have captured and cleared up the German front and support lines to feed the BLUE LINE.*²⁷
- (ii) *The following officers must be left behind per battalion:-*
 - (i) *OFFICERS – Either the CO or Second in Command (to be ordered by Brigadiers).*²⁸

There were yet other elements of the plan which, of necessity, fell outside the ambit of both Pelham Burn and his COs. Once 152 Brigade had secured the Brown line, it was under

²² Ibid., Section I, Sub-Section 5 (d)

²³ Ibid., Section I, Sub-Section 5 (f)(i)

²⁴ Brigadier-General John George Harry Hamilton (1869-1945)

²⁵ TNA WO95/2845 51st Division WD, 10 March 1917, S.G. 214/108, Section I, Sub-Section 6

²⁶ In Pelham Burn's own instructions this task was allocated to two companies provided by 5/Gordon Highlanders which were to consolidate on an intermediate line designated the Red line. See TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 26 March 1917, Instructions for Offensive Operations, S./660, Section 5, (d).

²⁷ TNA WO95/2845 51st Division WD, 10 March 1917, S.G. 214/108, Section I, Sub-Section 6

²⁸ Ibid., Section IX, Sub-Section (i)

instruction to push out posts towards the Green line. The locations of these posts, however, would be a matter for decision by the man on the spot.

*The actual position of these posts cannot be determined beforehand, but must be that which gives the best observation over the Eastern slopes of the VIMY RIDGE.*²⁹

Similarly:

*The consolidation of the final objective must always be with a view to further advance. Tactical points must always be seized in front of the captured trench.*³⁰

Harper's instructions provided the operational framework for 51st Division's attack. It specified the Division's objectives and the intended timetable of events. Pelham Burn's own instructions to his brigade, on the other hand, illustrate that his responsibilities for a successful attack went beyond merely ensuring that his brigade's allotted tasks and associated timetables were in turn allocated to his battalions. They provide evidence which challenge the view that managing a brigade was little more than managing a battalion writ large.

The index to Pelham Burn's instructions extends to seventeen sections, each dealing with arrangements that needed to be addressed at brigade level.³¹ Of the instructions' thirty pages, only the first six dealt with the detail of the infantry attack. Not only did the remaining sections detail arrangements concerning the Brigade's trench mortar and machine gun batteries which the GOC commanded, they ensured that arrangements were in place to cover the use of gas projectors, four inch Stokes bombs and tanks, co-operation with aircraft, arrangements for inter-arm liaison and communications generally, specification of both those to be left out of the battle and fighting dress to be adopted, administrative arrangements concerning supply dumps, the processing of prisoners, medical facilities for the treatment of

²⁹ Ibid., Section I, Sub-Section 5(d)

³⁰ Ibid., Section I, Sub-Section 6

³¹ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 26 March 1917, Instructions for Offensive Operations, S./660, Index

casualties and the burial of the dead, together with arrangements for the collection and distribution of information and for the control of traffic in the brigade's trench system. Whilst the demands of battalion command during an operation were not without their own challenges, those at brigade level were clearly different, more extensive and administratively more comprehensive.

Pelham Burn's own instructions mention the Brigadier only twice. They provide for a brigade reserve of three platoons drawn respectively from each of three battalions. These were available to be called upon by COs, but 'they will not be used without reference to the Brigadier, if telephonic communication is intact'.³² In similar vein, COs were not permitted to leave their battalion HQs 'without the sanction of the B.G.C. and will not advance their HQ until an officer has gone forward and selected a new HQ'.³³ In all other respects the conduct of the battle would be down to those charged with its prosecution. Whilst the operational performance of 152 Brigade was dependent on numerous factors, the personal qualities of Pelham Burn, his COs and his brigade staff, the combination of their military knowledge and training, coupled with their operational experience in making the necessary preparatory arrangements were critical to the brigade's performance at Arras. This was to be a team performance.

3.3 Brigadier-General H. Pelham Burn

Harry Pelham Burn was born on 1 May 1882 in Edinburgh into a Scottish military family.³⁴

He was only seven months old when his grandfather, his namesake Major-General Henry

³² Ibid., 5, Method of Attack (iii)(c)(ii)

³³ Ibid., 10, Location of Headquarters Etc. (ii)

³⁴ With a single exception, all the children of the Burn family since 1853, male and female, have considered the name Pelham to be a family name to be used together, without a hyphen, as Pelham Burn. The exception was Harry Pelham Burn's eldest brother, christened Charles Pelham Maitland Burn (1880-1926) to distinguish him

Pelham Burn (1807-1882) of the 1/Bengal Native Infantry, died. His father, Charles Maitland Pelham Burn, had been commissioned in 1874 serving in the 78th Foot from 1875 until 1881.³⁵ Pelham Burn joined the 3/Gordon Highlanders, the regiment's Militia battalion, on 13 January 1900.³⁶ He was granted a Regular army commission in the Gordon Highlanders on 3 May 1901.³⁷ Having served both in South Africa and India, Pelham Burn's career before the war was that of the typical regimental officer.³⁸ Promoted lieutenant in 1904 and captain in 1910, he was appointed Adjutant of 6/Gordon Highlanders in 1913.³⁹ Harry Pelham Burn's two brothers were both commissioned into the Seaforth Highlanders and served during the war.⁴⁰

Much to his CO's regret, Pelham Burn was posted to 1/Gordon Highlanders on 29 October 1914.⁴¹ Through a combination of his talent and fortune, Pelham Burn was subsequently posted on 21 February 1915 from his position as Adjutant of 1/Gordon Highlanders to SC 8 Brigade, 3rd Division, a Regular formation.⁴² Subsequently on 14 April 1915 he became 8

from their father, Charles Maitland Pelham Burn (1855-1916). The author is grateful to Angus Maitland Pelham Burn, Harry Pelham Burn's son, for this information together with confirmation of his father's place of birth.

³⁵ *LG*, 12 June 1874 and 17 May 1881 respectively. The system of numbering regiments was abolished as a result of the Childers Reforms introduced in 1881 - see E.M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 126-7. As a result, the 78th Foot was amalgamated with 72nd Foot to form the 2/Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs). See A. Fairrie, *Cuidich'n Righ: A History of the Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons)*(Inverness: Queen's Own Highlanders, 1983).

³⁶ *LG*, 23 January 1900

³⁷ *LG*, 3 May 1901

³⁸ TNA WO100/203 Queen's South Africa: Infantry of the Line, 1899-1902 - Seaforth and Gordon Highlanders. Pelham Burn was entitled to three clasps - Cape Colony, Orange Free State and Transvaal.

³⁹ *LG*, 2 September 1904, 26 July 1910 and 2 September 1913

⁴⁰ Charles Pelham Maitland Burn was commissioned in 1899 and retired as a lieutenant-colonel in March 1919. James Russel Pelham Burn (1887-1963) was commissioned in 1914 and, as a captain, retired due to ill health, also in March 1919.

⁴¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Colin McLean (1873-1915) wrote in Battalion Orders of 31 October 1914: 'The high state of efficiency to which the Bn. has been brought is mainly due to the ceaseless and untiring efforts of Capt. Burn.' Pelham Burn crossed to France on the evening of 1 November 1914. Pelham Burn Papers, 31 October 1914 and 1 November 1914 respectively, The Gordon Highlanders Museum. McLean was killed by a sniper on 15 March 1915 at Neuve Chapelle.

⁴² 'It was very good of Baird to let me come to this job.' Pelham Burn Papers, 22 February 1915. Lieutenant-Colonel A.W.F. Baird, 1/Gordon Highlanders - see Chapter 1, Note 104.

Brigade's BM, 'rather a formidable job'.⁴³ Before the end of 1915 Pelham Burn had been promoted yet again, initially to CO 10/A&SH serving in 27 Brigade, 9th Division.⁴⁴ Pelham Burn had been struck by Brigadier-General E.St.G. Pratt's appointment on 21 July 1915 as 76 Brigade's GOC:

*I am not very sorry to leave my new General as although quite a nice chap he had been too long on a stool at the War Office which is not a suitable training for trench warfare. It is extraordinary how old age (50 and over) is still thought a qualification for the command of a brigade.*⁴⁵

Pelham Burn's new GOC was Brigadier-General H.E. Walshe, aged forty-nine years, replaced on 14 March 1916 because he was, apparently, 'sick'.⁴⁶ Pelham Burn knew this to be a face-saving explanation.

*Our Brigadier has just been degummed. I feel sorry for the little man but I am not surprised. He is the 2nd Brigadier I have had the honour of serving under who has suffered that fate.*⁴⁷

⁴³ Pelham Burn Papers, 20 March 1915. Pelham Burn subsequently learnt that Major Edward Pendarves Smith-Dorrien (1879-1937) was to become 8 Brigade's new BM. Smith-Dorrien held this post from 23 March 1915 until wounded on the night of 13/14 April 1915. He was succeeded by Pelham Burn - see letters to his mother. Pelham Burn Papers, 14 April 1915 and 22 April 1915, and 3rd Division Message and Signal, 21 April 1915. Pelham Burn subsequently transferred on 1 November 1915 as BM to 76 Brigade after its arrival in 3rd Division from 25th Division on 15 October 1915. 7 Brigade moved from 3rd Division to replace 76 Brigade in 25th Division - Pelham Burn Papers, 2 November 1915 and Becke, *Order of Battle, Part I*, p. 50.

⁴⁴ TNA WO 95/1772 10/A&SH WD, 27 Brigade, 9th Division, 10 Dec 1915. Pelham Burn thought he should have been promoted to command of a battalion earlier than he was. In a letter to his mother of 27 October 1915 he wrote: 'They have given Greenhill-Gardyne the Battalion I was to have got.' This refers to the appointment on 29 October 1915 of Lieutenant-Colonel Alan David Greenhill-Gardyne (1886-1953) as CO 8/Gordon Highlanders. Pelham Burn went on: 'He was Stellenbosched a year ago from the command of 1st Gordon Hrs. He never was a soldier although a nice enough chap.' Pelham Burn Papers, 27 October 1915. He also thought that had Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Francis James Marshall (1876-1942) not been fit enough to take command of 7/Seaforth Highlanders in December 1915, he would have been given command of that battalion. Pelham Burn Papers, 10 December 1915.

⁴⁵ Pelham Burn Papers, 12 October 1915. Brigadier-General Ernest St. George Pratt (1863-1918) was fifty-one years old when appointed GOC 76 Brigade. He had no experience of warfare with the BEF having been at the War Office since 28 July 1913. Pratt was badly gassed in March 1916, the effect of which ultimately caused his death on 24 November 1918.

⁴⁶ Brigadier-General Henry Ernest Walshe (1866-1947). Becke, *Order of Battle, Part 3A*, p. 4. Hodgkinson has speculated that Walshe had likely 'burnt out'. P.E. Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War', University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2013, p. 120. Walshe never again commanded a brigade and he retired on 27 March 1920.

⁴⁷ Pelham Burn Papers, 14 March 1916

Pelham Burn's own age apparently made a corresponding impression on at least one of the officers of his new battalion:

*Captain Campbell who was in command before I came did not realize that I had come to command the Battalion and said he expected to see a much older chap, but a subaltern, aged about 25. Spoilt it all by asking me whether I was at Harrow with his father!!*⁴⁸

Despite his youthful appearance, Pelham Burn was quick to root out inefficiency. Although he judged he had 'an excellent lot of young officers' he was not slow to exercise his authority to enforce changes amongst the Battalion's personnel:

*I have just got a new Doctor for the Battalion. I got the old one sacked for being useless, likewise the Interpreter. The latter's chief defect was that he could not understand English.*⁴⁹

In April 1916 Pelham Burn was transferred to CO 8/Gordon Highlanders of 44 Brigade, 15th Division.⁵⁰ This change was not welcome.

*I am going to command the 8th Gordons, 26 Brigade shortly, much to my annoyance. The authorities think that one must be with one's own regiment. It will be an awful business starting all over again. I have an excellent Battalion here and I am quite happy with it after 3½ months.*⁵¹

Barely a month later, Pelham Burn's battalion was amalgamated with 10/Gordon Highlanders to form 8/10 Gordon Highlanders. Whilst Pelham Burn commanded the amalgamated battalion, the incumbent CO of 10/Gordon Highlanders, Lieutenant-Colonel W.W. MacGregor, was posted to the command of the newly formed 11/Entrenching Battalion.⁵²

⁴⁸ Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Robert Campbell (1878-1945). Pelham Burn Papers, 13 December 1915. Aged thirty-four at the time, Pelham Burn's youthful appearance clearly belied his years.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ TNA WO 95/1767 8/Gordon Highlanders WD, 9 April 1916

⁵¹ Pelham Burn Papers, 19 March 1916

⁵² TNA WO95/1938 10/Gordon Highlanders WD, 12 May 1916. Lieutenant-Colonel Walter William MacGregor (1877-1948) was a 'dug-out' having retired as a captain on 5 February 1913. He was awarded the DSO for his initiative and gallantry on 26 September 1915 at Loos.

With his promotion to the command of 152 Brigade on 16 July 1916, Pelham Burn had held commands in all three Scottish Divisions within less than two years of the outbreak of war.⁵³

It is possible to put Pelham Burn's accelerated rise into perspective by comparison with the career path of a fellow and contemporary Gordon Highlander officer. When granted his Regular army commission in May 1901, Pelham Burn succeeded Lieutenant T.M. Booth on the latter's promotion to captain.⁵⁴ Booth had been commissioned on 2 May 1895 and was, therefore, significantly senior to Pelham Burn.⁵⁵ When Pelham Burn was promoted captain on 6 July 1910, Booth had held that rank for nine and a half years.⁵⁶ Whilst at the outbreak of war both officers held the same rank, Pelham Burn was the Adjutant of 1/Gordon Highlanders. Booth, on the other hand, had held the appointment of BM of the Seaforth and Cameron Infantry Brigade since 12 August 1911.⁵⁷ By the time Pelham Burn had held positions as SC, BM, CO and then promoted temporary Brigadier-General, Booth had remained 152 Brigade's BM throughout, albeit that he had been promoted major on 11 December 1914.⁵⁸ Whether on Pelham Burn's arrival in command of 152 Brigade Booth felt any animosity towards Pelham Burn remains an unanswered question. What is a matter of fact, however, is that within five days Booth had himself been promoted to CO 7/Gordon Highlanders, 153 Brigade to replace Lieutenant-Colonel C.C.G. Ashton who had been sent down the line due to unspecified sickness.⁵⁹ Whilst Booth's promotion may have already

⁵³ TNA WO 95/1938 8/10 Gordon Highlanders WD, 14 July 1916. Pelham Burn was notified of his appointment as GOC 152 Brigade by telegram.

⁵⁴ Lieutenant (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Thomas Macaulay Booth (1874-1970). Booth's promotion was subsequently backdated to 31 December 1900 – see *LG*, 14 June 1901.

⁵⁵ Like Pelham Burn, Booth had been commissioned from the Militia, in his case from the 4th Volunteer Battalion, Suffolk Regiment. *LG*, 28 May 1895. Booth's seniority to Pelham Burn was not lost on the latter, as he pointed out to his mother - see Pelham Burn Papers, 16 July 1916.

⁵⁶ *LG*, 26 July 1910

⁵⁷ *LG*, 22 August 1911. Seaforth and Cameron Infantry Brigade was designated 152 Brigade on 12 May 1915.

⁵⁸ For Booth's promotion to major, see *LG*, 11 December 1914; for Pelham Burn's promotion to major, see *LG*, 7 January 1916.

⁵⁹ TNA WO95/2882 7/Gordon Highlanders WD, 21 July 1916. Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Charles Gough Ashton (1870-1952)

been settled before Pelham Burn's arrival, the generous interpretation is that Pelham Burn was quick to appreciate the frustrations of an experienced and tested officer and, to good effect, advocated his case to Harper, his divisional commander. Either way, Booth's promotion created a vacancy which provided Pelham Burn with an opportunity to build his own staff team.⁶⁰

The rapidity of Pelham Burn's rise is not to be measured only against the career of a fellow Gordon Highlander. On his appointment on 31 March 1918 at the age of thirty-five, Hugh Keppel Bethell was the youngest British officer to command a division during both World Wars.⁶¹ Born within five months of each other, Pelham Burn and Bethell were both captains on the outbreak of war, Bethell at that time serving in the 7/Hussars.⁶² Pelham Burn's pace of promotion, however, was quicker than that of Bethell.⁶³ The March 1918 Spring Offensive saw Bethell appointed to the command of 66th Division despite Pelham Burn's period of command of his brigade having been more than three months longer than Bethell of his.⁶⁴ A critical factor in Bethell's favour may have been that he had passed Staff College before the war.⁶⁵ Whatever the basis of comparison between these two officers, their career paths demonstrate that they were recognised as being amongst the most talented and effective officers of their day.

⁶⁰ Pelham Burn was apparently known amongst at least some of his troops as 'Paddy Burns'. See C. Campbell, *Engine of Destruction: The 51st (Highland) Division in the Great War* (Glendaruel, Argyll: Argyll Publishing, 2013), p. 99.

⁶¹ J.M. Bourne, *Who's Who In World War One* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 24-5

⁶² Bethell had been commissioned into the Royal Artillery on 24 December 1902.

⁶³ SC: Pelham Burn 51 days, Bethell 58 days; BM: Pelham Burn 178 days, Bethell 310 days; CO: Pelham Burn 218 days, Bethell 305 days.

⁶⁴ Pelham Burn commanded 152 Brigade for 630 days; Bethell commanded 74 Brigade for 530 days.

⁶⁵ Pelham Burn was aware of the advantage of those who had passed Staff College. In the spring of 1915 he wrote to his mother: 'I am really rather relieved at not being made Brigade Major as it is a big job especially for one who has never been near Staff College but has spent all his spare time with rod or gun.' Pelham Burn Papers, 26 March 1915

To the COs and staff of 152 Brigade, Pelham Burn must have caused something of a stir. He was the antithesis of his predecessor, Brigadier-General W.C. Ross.⁶⁶ Ross was aged fifty-seven when he was appointed GOC 152 Brigade in November 1914. He had been commissioned into the 2nd Foot in September 1877 before transferring to the 68th Foot the following month.⁶⁷ He earned his first campaign medal for his service in Afghanistan in 1879. He retired in 1908 with the rank of Colonel maintaining his connection with the army by becoming the Secretary of the Territorial Force Associations (Five Northern Counties) Scotland, a capacity in which he served until the outbreak of war. Ross's departure from 152 Brigade 'caused the deepest regret to all ranks', in large measure because of his intimate knowledge of his troops.⁶⁸ This was based on the time he spent 'crawling round the most exposed saps and dangerous places in his sector' such that 'he knew numbers of them by name, and in many cases knew also their parents, families, homes, and employers'.⁶⁹ Although he had commanded his brigade for approaching two years, Ross's departure was not an early example of the imposition of a period of relief for brigade commanders.⁷⁰ The explanation is that it was the result of 'an unfortunate disagreement with the Divisional Commander'.⁷¹ As Ross put it himself: 'I regret very much that it has suddenly become necessary for me to go home, and it is not possible for me to go and say good-bye to the 6th Gordons.'⁷² The arrival of a GOC twenty-four years younger than his predecessor who had

⁶⁶ Brigadier-General (later Sir) Walter Charteris Ross (1857-1928). For an appreciation of Ross, see Nicholson, *Behind the Lines*, pp. 146-7.

⁶⁷ *LG*, 28 September and 30 October 1877. As a result of the Childers Reforms, 2nd Foot became The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) and 68th Foot became The Durham Light Infantry.

⁶⁸ Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 70

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Ross subsequently commanded 214 Brigade, 71st Division from November 1916 on its formation in the UK. He was the single GOC of 228 Brigade, 28th Division from its formation in late February 1917 serving in Salonika for the remainder of the war. He was awarded the CMG in 1918 and the KBE in 1919. At the end of the war Ross was sixty-one years old and possibly the oldest Brigadier-General on active service at that time. He retired in 1919.

⁷¹ R.T. Peel & A.H. Macdonald, *Campaign Reminiscences: 6th Seaforth Highlanders* (Elgin: W.R. Walker, 1923), p. 23. Captain Roland Tennyson Peel (1892-1945), a product of Bedford School and Hertford College, University of Oxford, was the battalion's Adjutant.

⁷² TNA WO95/2868 6/Gordons WD, Letter, Brigadier-General W.C. Ross to Lieutenant-Colonel J. Dawson, 14 July 1916

been no more than a battalion adjutant three years previously could hardly have gone unnoticed.

3.4 GOC 51st (Highland) Division

Throughout almost his entire period as GOC 152 Brigade, Pelham Burn reported to Major-General G.M. Harper, the second of 51st Division's three GOCs. He commanded the division for the longest period during the war.⁷³ The view of Harper as a general who was 'far from efficient' put forward by Tim Travers has been roundly debunked.⁷⁴ On the contrary, the world has rather come full circle. In September 1917 Sir Ivor Maxse's recommendation that Harper should be considered for Corps command concluded:

*I knew the 51st Division before General Harper commanded it and then considered it ill-organised and unsoldier-like. It is now one of the two or three best divisions in France and its fighting record is well known. I attribute its success mainly to its present commander and recommend him for promotion to a Corps.*⁷⁵

The occasion of Maxse's recommendation was the departure of 51st Division from XVIII Corps in September 1917 to IV Corps commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Woollcombe.⁷⁶ Maxse repeated his evaluation of 51st Division in a message passed down to battalions:

What has struck me most is the thoroughness of the organisation within the Division and the fact that all usual war-problems have been thought out beforehand, discussed in detail, and are embodied in simple doctrines well known to all ranks. The result is the Division always fights with gallantry and

⁷³ Harper held this appointment from 24 September 1915 until 11 March 1918 when he was appointed GOC IV Corps. Pelham Burn was GOC 152 Brigade from 16 July 1916 until 7 April 1918. Major-General (later Sir) Richard Bannatine-Allason (1855-1940) preceded Harper. Bannatine-Allason has been described as: 'A general of the old school; relying on force of character rather than knowledge.' Nicholson, *Behind the Lines*, p. 14. Harper was succeeded by Major-General George Tupper Campbell Carter-Campbell (1869-1921).

⁷⁴ T. Travers, *How the War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 6

⁷⁵ IWM, General Sir Ivor Maxse Papers, PP/MCR/C42 & Con Shelf & 69/53/18A-B, File 41, XVIII Corps No G.S.82., Maxse to Fifth Army, 27 September 1917

⁷⁶ Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Louis Woollcombe (1857-1934)

*can be depended upon to carry out any reasonable task which may be allotted to it in any battle. For this reason I venture to place it among the three best fighting Divisions I have met in France during the past three years.*⁷⁷

More recent scholarship has reinforced Harper's standing as both a capable tactician and a passionate and thorough trainer. Bryn Hammond, for example, concluded of Harper:

*In summary, Byng and Woolcombe must have considered themselves blessed with the presence of a crack division commanded by such a highly regarded officer.*⁷⁸

Pelham Burn could hardly have had a task master with whom he would have been more in tune and whose guidance was more valued. As his longest serving brigadier, Pelham Burn proved to be one of the pillars upon which Harper's standing was built.⁷⁹

3.5 Pelham Burn's Battalion Commanders

Consistency of approach was critical at brigade level. Whilst Pelham Burn's own period of tenure provided 152 Brigade with a sustained period of consistent leadership, the brigade's performance also depended, amongst many other factors, upon the quality of leadership of its constituent battalions. During the period of Pelham Burn's command there were twelve changes of COs amongst the four constituent battalions. It fell to Pelham Burn to ensure that each new CO in turn was aware of what he expected of him and his battalion and that they delivered.

⁷⁷ TNA WO95/2876 6/Royal Highlanders (Black Watch) WD, XVIII Corps A 1923, September 1917

⁷⁸ B. Hammond, *Cambrai 1917: The Myth of the First Great Tank Battle*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2008), p. 62. See also French, 'The 51st (Highland) Division During the First World War', pp. 54-57. John Bourne pithily concludes that Harper was 'an outstanding commander'. Bourne, *Who's Who*, p. 125

⁷⁹ During Harper's period as GOC 51st Division (24 September 1915 to 11 March 1918), Pelham Burn served for 603 days followed by Campbell of 153 Brigade who served for 578 days.

3.5.1 *5/Seaforth Highlanders*

The first change amongst Pelham Burn's battalions was the promotion of Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Spooner on 28 July 1916 to the command of 183 Brigade, 61st Division.⁸⁰ Having been both a battalion commander since 4 October 1915 and 152 Brigade's acting GOC during the week prior to Pelham Burn's appointment, Spooner's promotion was no surprise.⁸¹ There followed a period of relative turbulence. Spooner was succeeded on 29 July 1916 by the appointment of Major C.N. De Berry of the Highland Light Infantry.⁸² De Berry's period in command lasted five days before he was sent to hospital, sick rather than having been wounded.⁸³ The battalion came under the temporary command of Major A.L. Macmillan for a matter of days until Lieutenant-Colonel E.W. Montgomerie was appointed on 7 August 1916.⁸⁴ Montgomerie had been commissioned into the Norfolk Regiment. He was an English officer appointed to his first battalion command. His performance proved to be not up to Pelham Burn's expectations. Pelham Burn accused Montgomerie of lacking energy, failing to realise the responsibilities of a CO and lacking in respect for his GOC. He was removed on 11 January 1917 and replaced by a Scot. Montgomerie protested that his treatment was 'most unjust and quite undeserved'. In a lengthy and detailed rebuttal he concluded: '1st I was put into an almost impossible position by being put in command of a Scottish Territorial Battalion in a Scottish Territorial Division when I belong to an English Regiment. 2nd That the Brigadier General did not like one of the Battalions of his Brigade being commanded by an Englishman.'⁸⁵ His protest, with merit or otherwise, was to no avail.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) Arthur Hardwicke Spooner (1879-1945)

⁸¹ Spooner had previously been CO 2/Lancashire Fusiliers. A competent career soldier, he retired from the army in 1935 having been awarded the CB, CMG, DSO and Bar and eight MiDs.

⁸² TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 29 July 1916. On the day in question, 2 August 1916, 5/Seaforth Highlanders lost one officer wounded, three ORs killed and eight ORs wounded.

⁸³ TNA WO95/2866 5/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 2 August 1916

⁸⁴ Major (later Colonel) Angus Leith Macmillan (1869-1931). Lieutenant-Colonel Eustace William Montgomerie (1885-1967).

⁸⁵ IWM Docs 3249 Papers of Major E.W. Montgomerie, MS draft letter, 27 January 1917

⁸⁶ The removal of other English officers from the command of Scottish units and formations within a short period of their appointment was not unknown. For example, seven officers commanded 152 Brigade during the

The Battalion's next CO was Lieutenant-Colonel W.M. MacFarlane, an HLI officer attached to the Battalion.⁸⁷ MacFarlane's tenure was unfortunate to last less than six weeks. The Division was holding trenches to the east of Roclincourt from which it was to attack on 9 April 1917. Early on the morning of 19 February MacFarlane was touring his front line trenches when he was killed instantly by a sniper.⁸⁸ Pelham Burn described him as 'a good fellow and he will be much missed'.⁸⁹ The Battalion's sixth CO in seven months, Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Scott, was to be more fortunate.⁹⁰ Although Scott had served with his battalion, 7/A&SH, since December 1914, at thirty he was young for such an appointment, even by changing contemporary standards. His gallantry had been recognised with the award of the DSO in May 1915.⁹¹ An experienced and capable regimental officer, Scott was to command the Battalion to good effect through eighteen months of 'very strenuous fighting' until the summer of 1918 when he was granted six months' rest.⁹² The frequency of change in the leadership of this battalion in the lead up to the Battle of Arras inevitably added to Pelham Burn's workload as he strove to ensure consistency of standards and approach.

war. Six were Scots who had previously commanded Scottish battalions or otherwise had Scottish family origins. The single exception was Brigadier-General Edward Ivan de Sausmarez Thorpe (1871-1942). Thorpe had been commissioned into, served with and commanded a battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment. Appointed GOC 152 Brigade on 17 April 1918, he commanded the brigade for eleven days before he was transferred to command 107 Brigade, 36th Division. As the divisional history tersely states: 'On 28th April he was, however, transferred to the command of another brigade,...'. Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 321. In short, the suspicion is that he was 'got rid'.

⁸⁷ TNA WO95/2866 5/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 12 January 1917. Lieutenant-Colonel William MacCallam MacFarlane (1875-1917)

⁸⁸ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 19 February 1917 '...killed by sniper between AVENUES A & B in BONNAL TRENCH'. See also TNA WO05/2866 5/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 19 February 1917. The sniper made best use of early morning sunshine to pick off his targets – see Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 144.

⁸⁹ Pelham Burn Papers, 21 February 1917

⁹⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel James Morison Scott (1887-19??). The terms of the announcement of Scott's appointment illustrate the intricacies of the army's protocol and terminology: 'Seaforth Highlanders – Capt. (temp. Maj.) (now Capt.) J.M. Scott D.S.O., Arg. & Suth'd Highrs., to be acting Lt-Col. whilst comdg. Bn. 6th March 1917.' *LG*, 31 July 1917

⁹¹ *LG*, 24 July 1915

⁹² D. Sutherland, *War Diary of the Fifth Seaforth Highlanders, 51st Highland Division* (London: Bodley Head, 1920), p. 168

3.5.2 6/Seaforth Highlanders

Lieutenant-Colonel J.G. Smith had been in command since June 1915.⁹³ Within a month of Pelham Burn's appointment, however, Smith had departed. Whether this was an instance of cause and effect is debatable since, untypically, the event is not recorded in either the Battalion's or the Brigade's war diaries. Smith, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, had been commissioned in 1898. He had been 2iC of the Battalion on mobilization. Despite his regimental experience, Smith served the remainder of the war in staff positions in Second and Third Armies.⁹⁴ It is a matter for speculation on Pelham Burn's role, if any, in Smith's career change. Peter Hodgkinson warns, however, against harsh judgements:

*Failure to stand the rigours of this war should not, however, be taken to indicate lack of ability, as even competent officers could be undermined by their health in the harsh conditions of trench warfare, and could 'burn-out' in response to stress.*⁹⁵

Little is known about Smith's successor, Lieutenant-Colonel W. MacDonald, in part because he was yet another CO whose tenure was brief.⁹⁶ MacDonald was in post for a mere seven weeks.⁹⁷ Neither his arrival nor departure were significant enough to merit the normal mention in war diaries, leading to the suspicion of another instance where a CO had apparently not withstood the stresses and strains of command. This proved to be MacDonald's only battalion command during the war. The implication seems merited.

Lieutenant-Colonel A.G. Graham's two predecessors had both been drawn from within the battalion. He had been commissioned into and served with the Cameronians (Scottish

⁹³ Lieutenant-Colonel John Grant Smith (1873-1942)

⁹⁴ Anonymous, *The VC and DSO Book Volume III* (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, 2010), p. 343. Smith remained in the TA's Reserve of Officers until 26 September 1928.

⁹⁵ P.E. Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War', University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2013, p. 355

⁹⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel William MacDonald (18??-19??)

⁹⁷ From 13 August 1916 until 1 October 1916

Rifles).⁹⁸ Having been appointed on 1 October 1916, he commanded and oversaw the training of the battalion in the period before 152 Brigade's participation in the capture of Beaumont Hamel on 13 November 1916. Regrettably Graham's tenure was cut short when he was wounded by a 4.2 inch shell on 24 December 1916.⁹⁹ Graham was succeeded by Major I. A. Forsyth who commanded the battalion until 20 March 1917 when, without mention in the battalion's WD, he somewhat ignominiously left 'for other duties'.¹⁰⁰ The uncertainty surrounding the future command of the battalion during the months prior to the Battle of Arras was not ended until Forsyth's replacement, Lieutenant-Colonel S. McDonald, took command on 20 March 1917.¹⁰¹ Educated at the Universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, McDonald had practiced as a law agent before the war.¹⁰² He had joined 5/Gordon Highlanders in 1907, served with the battalion from mobilization, had been awarded the DSO and had risen to become its CO on 4 December 1916. McDonald's appointment was to provide 152 Brigade and Pelham Burn with a welcome period of stability. Despite the Brigade's subsequent significant involvement at Arras, Passchendaele, Cambrai and the Spring Offensive of 1918, McDonald held this command until 24 April 1918 when he was rested before being posted CO 4/Reserve, Gordon Highlanders back in Scotland. Pelham Burn clearly thought highly of McDonald. During his period in command, he twice recommended McDonald for Bars to his DSO.¹⁰³ An illustration of McDonald's courage and

⁹⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Gillespie Graham (c1885-1961). See http://www.dnw.co.uk/auction-archive/catalogue-archive/lot.php?auction_id=158&lot_id=70955 (accessed 29 November 2015). Of the eight officers who commanded the battalion during the war, four were promoted from within the Seaforths, the remaining four all being drawn from other Scottish Regiments, notably in addition to the Cameronians, the KOSB, the Gordon Highlanders and the Black Watch.

⁹⁹ TNA WO95/2867 6/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 24 December 1916; WO95/2861 WD 152 Brigade, 24 December 1916; and *LG Supplement*, 2 June 1917. Captain Graham relinquished the rank of temporary Lieutenant-Colonel (*LG*, 8 May 1917), was promoted major (*LG*, 30 October 1917) before eventually relinquishing his commission due to ill health (*LG*, 13 December 1918).

¹⁰⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Asher Forsyth (1874-1950). Peel & Macdonald, *Campaign Reminiscences: 6th Seaforth Highlanders*, p. 34. Forsyth did not command a battalion again.

¹⁰¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel McDonald (1877-1957). TNA WO95/2867 6/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 20 March 1917

¹⁰² *Glasgow Herald*, 22 February 1957, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2...35,5740524> (accessed 29 November 2015)

¹⁰³ *LG*, 1 January 1918 and 18 February 1918. McDonald was also awarded the CMG.

tactical leadership was epitomised in Pelham Burn's recommendation for McDonald's second Bar:

*For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during an attack. When nearly all the officers had become casualties, and the attack was held up, he not only made a reconnaissance alone, but subsequently, on three separate occasions during the day, re-organised parties of his battalion, and lead them forward in spite of heavy fire and severe losses. He showed magnificent courage and coolness.*¹⁰⁴

Although McDonald's appointment as CO 6/Seaforth Highlanders some three weeks before the battle came too late for him to have a significant personal impact on the battalion's preparations, he was to command with distinction.

3.5.3 6/Gordon Highlanders

Pelham Burn was more fortunate with the stability of command of this battalion. Its tribulations, however, had occurred during 1915 when it had been commanded in turn by six COs. The battalion's original CO, Lieutenant-Colonel C. McLean, had been killed at Neuve Chapelle. The battalion was then commanded temporarily by Captain J.M. Cook who was relieved in turn by Captain G.C.G. Moss before Lieutenant-Colonel P.W. Brown was appointed on 24 April 1915.¹⁰⁵ Brown was transferred in July 1915 to the command of 1/Gordon Highlanders which, coincidentally, had temporarily been commanded by Pelham Burn.¹⁰⁶ Brown was succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel J.E. MacQueen who was subsequently

¹⁰⁴ LG, 18 July 1918

¹⁰⁵ Captain (later Major) James Martin Cook (c1882-19??). Cook resigned his commission on 5 December 1916 due to ill health. With a single exception, Captain (later Major) Geoffrey Cecil Gilbert McNeill-Moss (1884-1954), a Grenadier Guards officer and an Englishman, was the battalion's only CO during the war who had not been commissioned into the Gordon Highlanders. The exception was Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brevet Colonel) Charles Joseph Edmonstone Cranstoun (1877-1950) who had been commissioned into the Lanarkshire Yeomanry. He had a connection with the battalion, however, having served as its 2iC since May 1918 prior to his appointment as CO on 17 October 1918. Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) Percy Wilson Brown (1876-1954).

¹⁰⁶ Pelham Burn commanded the battalion temporarily from 3 to 12 July 1915.

killed at Loos.¹⁰⁷ In contrast to this series of appointments, MacQueen's successor, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Dawson, was to hold this command for 575 days, longer than any other of the battalion's COs.¹⁰⁸

Aged forty when appointed CO, Dawson was another graduate of the University of Aberdeen. Before the war he had been a teacher and an organizer of evening classes, a professional background which proved highly relevant to his responsibility for the development of skills and the training of his troops.¹⁰⁹ He had demonstrated his courage and leadership at Loos as a result of which he was described as '... an officer whose cool judgement and ready action were never so prompt and clear as in [an] emergency'.¹¹⁰ The citation for his DSO amplified this assessment:

*For conspicuous gallantry and ability near Hulluch on 25 Sept. 1915, when he materially assisted his Commanding Officer to organize an advanced position, and took command of the battalion when the latter was killed. All through the day and up to midnight he held on to this position, and displayed great coolness and judgement.*¹¹¹

Pelham Burn was to lose the services of this fine officer during the Second Battle of the Scarpe, when Dawson 'led the first two lines' in an attack in the vicinity of the Chemical Works during which he 'was severely wounded'.¹¹² Fortunately Dawson survived his wounds although he was not to command a battalion again.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel John Ellison MacQueen (1875-1915)

¹⁰⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel James Dawson (1875-1955). He was described as one of the division's 'most brilliant commanding officers'. Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 171

¹⁰⁹ Obituary, *Glasgow Herald*, 27 August 1955, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2507&dat=19550827&id=cj9AAAAAIBAJ&sjid=d1kMAAAAIBAJ&pg=4296,5928214&hl=en> (accessed 29 November 2015)

¹¹⁰ D. Mackenzie, *The Sixth Gordons in France and Flanders* (Aberdeen: The Rosemount Press, 1921), p. 71

¹¹¹ *LG*, 4 November 1915

¹¹² TNA WO95/2868 6/Gordon Highlanders WD, 22-24 April 1917. 152 Brigade was not in the line at the time although 6/Gordon Highlanders was temporarily attached to 153 Brigade – see Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 164.

¹¹³ In 1918 Dawson was appointed Aberdeen's Director of Education, a post he held until his retirement in 1939. Awarded the TD in 1919, Dawson became a Deputy Lieutenant of Aberdeen in 1938, was a member of the

In the days following Dawson's evacuation, command of the battalion devolved immediately to the company commander on the spot, Captain J. Hutcheson.¹¹⁴ Two days later, on 24 April 1917, Major J.W. Adams 'took over command'.¹¹⁵ He was replaced, however, on 28 April 1917 by Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. W. Fraser.¹¹⁶ Fraser's career path had been similar to that of Pelham Burn. His apprenticeship had included experience both as a SC and a BM.¹¹⁷ What marked Fraser out, however, was his age. When appointed Fraser was 26 years and 9 months old. He was one of the youngest officers to command a battalion during the war, even by 1917 standards.¹¹⁸ Although Fraser was to prove himself a capable CO, he simply could not replace the loss of experience Pelham Burn had suffered with Dawson's enforced departure.¹¹⁹ For example, not long after his appointment Pelham Burn had reason to hold Fraser responsible for his battalion being late to move off one evening. Fraser accepted the criticism and recorded in his diary: 'But I feel I am to blame – through inexperience. One must see to all details oneself.'¹²⁰

Court of the University of Aberdeen for six years and was bestowed with an Honorary Doctorate of Law by the University of Aberdeen in 1944.

¹¹⁴ Captain John Hutcheson (est.1885-19??) commanded 'C' Company. See TNA WO95/2868 6/Gordon Highlanders WD, July 1917, Appendix "I".

¹¹⁵ Major John Wood Adams (1870-1917) was an officer of 6/Royal Scots attached to 6/Gordon Highlanders. There were at least two reasons which militated against Adams' permanent appointment as CO. First, he was not a Gordon Highlander. Second, at forty-seven years old, he was over the age of thirty-five which, according to the Official Historian, had become the prescribed limit in 1917 for the appointment of battalion commanders. See J.E. Edmonds & R. Maxwell-Hyslop, *Military Operations France and Belgium 1918, Vol. V* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1993), p. 613. Adams died on 3 September 1917.

¹¹⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier) Hon. William Fraser (1890-1964)

¹¹⁷ For nine days (16-25 October 1915) in Pelham Burn's absence whilst he was on leave in England, Fraser had been BM of 76 Brigade, 3rd Division – TNA WO95/1433 76 Brigade, 3rd Division WD. Otherwise he had been SC, 20 November 1915 to 14 April 1916 – 27 Brigade, 9th Division and BM, 15 April 1916 to 20 June 1916 – 151 Brigade, 50th Division.

¹¹⁸ The average age of COs in post at the Battle of Arras was thirty-eight years five months with a range of twenty-five years one month to fifty-three years six months. See Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 104. Pelham Burn had been aged thirty-three years and nine months when first appointed a CO in December 1915.

¹¹⁹ Fraser commanded 6/Gordon Highlanders until 1 March 1918, then commanded XVIII Corps School of Instruction before being appointed CO of 1/Gordon Highlanders in September 1918. He was awarded the DSO, MC and 3 MiDs. During World War Two Fraser was a brigade commander retiring as a Brigadier in 1944. See also Chapter 6, Note 160.

¹²⁰ D. Fraser (ed.), *In Good Company: The First World War Letters and Diary of The Hon. William Fraser, Gordon Highlanders* (Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell, 1990), p. 108

3.5.4 8/Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders

Regimental tradition did not dictate that COs of this battalion had to be drawn exclusively from among its own officers. Of the battalion's eight COs during the war, four were drawn from other regiments, including the CO whom Pelham Burn inherited, Lieutenant-Colonel R. Campbell.¹²¹ Campbell had been commissioned into the Cameron Highlanders in 1899. He had been appointed CO on 12 July 1916, four days before Pelham Burn's arrival as 152 Brigade's GOC.¹²² Campbell had pre-war experience as an adjutant but no administrative experience at brigade level. He had, however, commanded a battalion of the Kent Cyclists earlier in 1916.¹²³ Campbell was the senior of the brigade's battalion commanders in post on 9 April 1917 and as such, he routinely deputised for Pelham Burn when he was on leave.¹²⁴ This was not simply a matter of seniority. Campbell enjoyed and retained Pelham Burn's confidence. Campbell became the battalion's longest serving CO (460 days). Pelham Burn twice recommended him for the DSO.¹²⁵ The citation for the Bar to Campbell's DSO illustrates his tactical awareness, initiative and leadership skills.¹²⁶

As Pelham Burn contemplated his brigade's prospects in the spring of 1917, he had the advantage that in two of his battalions, 6/Gordon Highlanders and 8/A&SH, there were in post stable, experienced and capable leaders in the form of Dawson and Campbell. Since his arrival, however, his two Seaforth Highland battalions, for a variety of reasons, had both

¹²¹ The regiments other than the A&SHs from which the battalion's COs were drawn were 12th Cavalry, Indian Army, the Highland Light Infantry and the Gordon Highlanders.

¹²² TNA WO95/2865 8/A&SH WD, 12 July 1916

¹²³ From 8 January 1916 to 2 May 1916.

¹²⁴ See for example TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 1 December 1916 and TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 25 May 1917, 7 June 1917 and 28 September 1917.

¹²⁵ *LG*, 1 January 1917 and 26 July 1917

¹²⁶ 'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. At a critical moment, when the enemy had pierced our line and were consolidating a position to our rear, he skilfully and energetically counter-attacked, forcing the enemy to surrender with heavy loss. He subsequently rendered valuable assistance to another unit by promptly bringing enfilade fire to bear upon the enemy. His promptness and energy saved a very awkward situation.' Pelham Burn's report to divisional HQ provided more detail of this incident: 'Under cover of a barrage of Rifle Grenades fired by his Bombing Officer, Colonel Campbell and his Adjutant attacked the enemy from two sides, and after Killing (sic) 20 to 30 of them, forced between 40 and 50 others to surrender.' TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, Report, 19 May 1917

experienced repeated changes of COs. Their leadership only became settled with the appointment of Scott in February 1917 and McDonald in March 1917. With the exception of the change enforced by Dawson's wounds, this team of COs remained intact with Pelham Burn until late September 1917, after the division's involvement in the Battle of Passchendaele. It was during this period of relative stability that 51st Division's reputation, certainly as evaluated by Maxse, was justifiably and arguably at its peak.

Pelham Burn's leadership style was directive. It was said of him 'that he ordered his very different types of battalion commander around as company commanders would order their platoons'.¹²⁷ His impact on his officers was marked:

*Our [practice] attacks were severe physical tests, meanfully serious, and were usually directed in person by that whirlwind Brigadier-General Pelham Burn. This gentleman made the life of a company commander a very crowded one, and with his arrival even the brow of our platoon-officer was wont to pucker. "P.B." was a great General, in that he knew the limitations of his men, knew what was (to quote himself) "on" and "not on." Never did he spare himself or anyone else, and the appearance of his very dog "Punch" had an electric effect on our commanders. We have seen the business of a commanding officers' conference delayed considerably while each Colonel vied with his neighbour to caress "Punch".*¹²⁸

Pelham Burn's standing within 152 Brigade was such that he was well respected. Bewsher records: 'They, however, bore him no ill-will for this, and officers were frequently heard to say, "You can't argue with P.B. when he strafes, because he's always right"'.¹²⁹

3.6 Brigade Majors

Mention has already been made of Booth's promotion days after Pelham Burn's arrival at 152 Brigade. Given the overwhelming preference for Scottish officers amongst the Brigade's

¹²⁷ National Library of Scotland, ACC 6119/1, Wimberley, W.N. 'A Scottish Soldier', Volume I, p. 99, (unpublished)

¹²⁸ Peel & Macdonald, *Campaign Reminiscences: 6th Seaforth Highlanders*, p. 38

¹²⁹ Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 71

battalions, the appointment of Captain F.W. Bewsher, an English officer drawn from the Special Reserve of the London Rifle Brigade, appears a regimental anomaly.¹³⁰ An analysis of the regiments from which 51st Division's BMs were drawn, however, shows this not to be the case. During the war, five officers served as 152 Brigade's BM, of whom two were drawn from Scottish regiments. A similar mix was to be found amongst 154 Brigade's seven BMs of whom only two were drawn from Scottish regiments. The exception was 153 Brigade. It had only three BMs during the war. All three were drawn from Scottish regiments. This suggests a practice which tended towards officers being posted to roles in whichever division best suited their aptitudes, rather than appointments being made within 51st Division for reasons of nationalistic or regimental pride.

The opportunity to appoint trained staff officers at brigade level was a rarity. Of 51st Division's fifteen BMs during the war, only one had passed Staff College. The exception was not Bewsher.¹³¹ At divisional level, however, despite the army's shortage of psc officers, all six of 51st Division's GSO1s during the war were Regular army officers who had passed Staff College.¹³²

Bewsher's appointment was critical. He was clever. He had been a Foundation Scholar at St. Paul's School, Hammersmith where his father was the Bursar. After graduating from Merton College, University of Oxford he returned to St Paul's in 1909 as an Assistant Master becoming Bursar in 1913. He was a Fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society and the

¹³⁰ Captain (later Brigadier) Frederick William Bewsher (1886-1950). Bewsher was twenty-nine years old, significantly younger than Booth who was a month short of his forty-second birthday when he was promoted.

¹³¹ It was Major (later Colonel) George David Bruce (1872-1959). An Indian Army officer, Bruce served as 154 Brigade's BM from 5 August 1914 to 26 October 1915.

¹³² This was also the case with 9th Division where all five of its successive GSO1s had passed Staff College. In the case of 52nd Division, three of its four GSO1s had passed Staff College whilst in 15th Division, however, only one its four GSO1s had done so.

Zoological Society and a published author before the war.¹³³ In 1909 Bewsher was also commissioned into 5/(City of London) The London Rifle Brigade, T.F. On the outbreak of war his initial appointment was as ADC to Major-General W. Fry, GOC 1st London Division.¹³⁴ Bewsher's strength evidently lay in wielding the pen rather than the sword. Despite his lack of regimental war-time service, he was simultaneously promoted captain and appointed BM of 175 Brigade, 58th Division in February 1915.¹³⁵ After two years' wartime service in the UK, Bewsher was posted to France as Pelham Burn's BM on 21 July 1916.¹³⁶ Bewsher had not been given the opportunity to garner wartime operational experience either as company commander, adjutant or SC in preparation for his critical role.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, his appointment indicates that the British army's appointment and promotion system was sufficiently flexible to enable merited exceptions to be made.

Bewsher is the author of the 51st Division's history published in 1921. His first-hand experience of the division's operations adds much to the authority of his text. He knew personally many of the individuals he mentions. His close working relationship with Pelham Burn meant that his appreciation of his GOC was based on personal experience. His praise of Pelham Burn was fulsome.

*To those who served with General Burn he will always stand out as a man who possessed in full the essential qualities of the perfect soldier.*¹³⁸

¹³³ *Aids to the writing of English Composition* (London: Bell & Son, 1912); *The Reformation and the Renaissance (1485-1547)* (London: Bell & Son, 1913); with L.C. Smith & R.L. Giveen, *British History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Rivington, 1914 and 1931).

¹³⁴ Major-General William Fry (1858-1934). 1st London Division was a pre-war TF division which formed the basis of the formation in January 1916 of 56th Division— see Becke, *Orders of Battle, Part 2A*, p. 146.

¹³⁵ For an explanation of the formation of 58th Division and its relationship with 1st London Division, see Becke, *Orders of Battle, Part 2A*, p. 14. The division served in the UK until its deployment to France in January 1917.

¹³⁶ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 21 July 1916

¹³⁷ Bewsher's inexperience is resonant in the way he wrote of Pelham Burn's experience. 'General Burn had abundant experience of warfare in the front line. He had served as Adjutant, Staff-Captain and Brigade-Major, and had commanded three separate battalions.' Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 71

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

Regrettably, modesty or otherwise prevented Bewsher mentioning himself in his own text. Pelham Burn makes no mention of Bewsher in his letters to his parents, possibly to be spared the attention of the censors. Together, however, they built a partnership that produced a sound working relationship that underpinned the Brigade's operations. Pelham Burn's evaluation of Bewsher's contribution is evident both in his recommendation after Arras of a MC and the platform that his year long experience under Pelham Burn's guidance formed for Bewsher's subsequent army career.¹³⁹

3.7 Staff Captains

The post of SC within 51st Division saw the fewest number of changes amongst all its principal brigade staff officers. Whilst both 153 and 154 Brigades had successions of five SCs, 152 Brigade saw only four. Of the three changes of personnel involved, two were as the result of promotions, the other the result of an enforced change.¹⁴⁰

Pelham Burn inherited Captain A.D. Thomson who had been the Brigade's SC since the beginning of the war.¹⁴¹ Together with Booth as BM, Thomson formed a partnership which had provided Brigadier-General Ross with a sound administrative platform. Thomson had been a longstanding member of 7/A&SH having been promoted Lieutenant in 1907.¹⁴² Having lost Booth almost immediately, Pelham Burn was fortunate to retain Thomson as SC for a further seven months until he was posted to the staff of Maxse's recently formed XVIII

¹³⁹ *LG*, 4 June 1917. On 21 July 1917 Bewsher was appointed Commandant, Fifth Army Musketry School, and subsequently, on 3 January 1918, GSO2, IV Corps, a post he held to the Armistice. Bewsher remained in the army after the war being granted a Regular commission in 1921. Whilst predominantly serving in staff roles, Bewsher did eventually command 1/Royal Fusiliers (1937-1939) prior to his retirement in 1940 with the rank of Brigadier, by which time he had also been awarded a CBE and a DSO.

¹⁴⁰ The two SCs who were promoted are mentioned subsequently. The enforced change concerns Captain William Drummond (1879-19??). For Drummond's description of the circumstances of his capture, along with other members of the brigade's staff including the GOC, Brigadier-General (later Major-General) James Keith Dick-Cunyngham (1877-1935), see TNA WO339/11855 W. Drummond. Dick-Cunyngham was one of only seven infantry Brigadier-Generals to have been captured during the war.

¹⁴¹ Captain (later Major) Albert David Thomson (est1886-19??)

¹⁴² *LG*, 10 September 1907

Corps on 13 February 1917 as DA&QMG.¹⁴³ An officer whose strengths lay in army administration, Thomson held this appointment for the remainder of the war. The career path of his successor, Captain R.G. Moir, was quite different.¹⁴⁴

Educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh, Moir was aged twenty when war was declared. Unlike Thomson, Moir had no pre-war service. He was commissioned into the A&SH in October 1914. By June 1915 Moir had been awarded the recently instituted MC and in November 1915 he had been promoted captain.¹⁴⁵ Moir was appointed to his first staff post in December 1916 as GSO3 VII Corps, commanded at that time and throughout the Corps' involvement with the Battle of Arras by Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Snow.¹⁴⁶ After some three months, Moir was posted to 152 Brigade as Thomson's replacement at the age of twenty-two. Moir's appointment completed the transformation of the combined age of 152 Brigade's GOC, BM and SC from 130 years immediately prior to Pelham Burn's appointment to 86 years on the first day of the battle.¹⁴⁷ Moir was the exception amongst these six officers, the only one without any pre-war military service or experience.

The rate of Moir's career progress had been little short of remarkable. Despite his limited experience, it is clear that Pelham Burn also regarded him as a talented officer. Moir's period as SC was relatively brief encompassing the Brigade's involvement at both Arras and Passchendaele. After less than eight months, Moir was appointed on 15 October 1917 as an acting major to the command of 8/A&SH.¹⁴⁸ That Moir was appointed to the command of a

¹⁴³ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 13 February 1917. XVIII Corps' formation began with Maxse's appointment on 15 January 1917.

¹⁴⁴ Captain (later Brigadier) Robert Gifford Moir (1894-19??)

¹⁴⁵ The Military Cross was instituted by Royal Warrant on 1 January 1915 – see *LG*, 29 December 1914.

¹⁴⁶ Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas D'Oyly Snow (1858-1940)

¹⁴⁷ Ages at 15 July 1916 - Ross – fifty-nine, Booth – forty-two, Thomson – twenty-nine: total 130 years. Ages at 9 April 1917 - Pelham Burn – thirty-four, Bewsher – thirty, Moir – twenty-two: total 86 years.

¹⁴⁸ *LG*, 4 November 1917. Moir commanded the battalion for three months as an acting major until the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel James Robert Macalpine-Downie (1878-1918) on 19 January 1918. Moir

battalion within the Brigade, albeit for a limited period, without having served as a BM, was a clear signal of Pelham Burn's recognition of Moir's capabilities and the degree of confidence he placed in him. Pelham Burn's acceptance of the appointment of a twenty-three year old CO to command in place of his most experienced CO, Campbell, illustrates that Pelham Burn and his commanders were prepared to recognise and nurture talent, regardless of age, in the same way that Pelham Burn's own talents had been recognised.

Pelham Burn commanded on the basis of a team approach and he endeavoured to engender a shared common purpose. This is illustrated, for example, by an extract from the Brigade's WD for 3 October 1916. The Brigade was about to take over trenches in the Herbuterne Sector the following day.

The Brigadier, Brigade Major, Comdg. Officers, Coy. Officers, Intelligence Officers and Officers Comdg, 152nd M.G. Coy. And 152nd Trench Mortar Battery reconnoitred the trenches from which an attack on an extensive scale is to be launched against the German organizations by the Division. Almost all the Officers who carried out the Reconnaissance expressed the greatest astonishment to find how little work had apparently been done to render these trenches either habitable against an aggressive enemy or suitable for attack.¹⁴⁹

The appointment of Pelham Burn and his brigade staff serves as a prime example, therefore, of the British army's meritocratic approach by 1916 to the appointment of brigade officers. Whether this was driven by an expedient choice of talent rather than deep and lasting institutional conviction setting aside strict seniority is, however, another matter.

was promoted acting Lieutenant-Colonel in July 1918 (albeit for only four days), awarded the MC (LG, 22 June 1915) and DSO (LG, 16 September 1918), remained in the army after the war, was captured at Singapore in 1942 and retired as a Brigadier.

¹⁴⁹ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 3 October 1916

3.8 Prelude to Arras

Any review and analysis of Pelham Burn's actions as GOC 152 Brigade is hampered by at least two factors. First, unlike Loomis, it appears that Pelham Burn did not keep a diary. Whilst the Brigade's WD provides a chronology of events, it contains none of the personal views, interpretations or recollections of people or events that might be expected to be found in a personal diary. Pelham Burn did write regularly to both his father and his mother. His letters provide information about his activities, but nothing sensitive enough, apparently, to trouble the censors. Second, the contents of the WD make few references to Pelham Burn himself. For example, whereas 2 CIB's WD makes frequent references to Loomis' visits to his Brigade's trenches, 152 Brigade's WD makes few references to Pelham Burn's trench visits which were evidently part of his routine.¹⁵⁰ It is possible, nevertheless, to find significant evidence from these primary sources of Pelham Burn's actions, views and characteristics.

From Pelham Burn's appointment in mid-July until early December 1916, 152 Brigade rotated in and out of the line. Periods in the line of between four and twenty-four days were interspersed with periods out of the line i.e. not responsible for holding a sector of trenches, of between four and nineteen days. Care needs to be taken that periods not holding a sector are not interpreted as periods when the brigade's troops were out of danger. For example, 152 Brigade was out of the line in bivouacs at Fricourt on 22 July 1916. Two German barrages of

¹⁵⁰ For example, Bewsher wrote orders to the OC 6/Seaforths confirming verbal instructions given earlier in the day by Pelham Burn. These illustrate both his first-hand knowledge of his sector and his attention to detail. The battalion was to increase the number of posts it held at night from five to nine, Lewis guns were to be fired at night to harass the enemy and, as a result, the battalion's daily intelligence summary was to state how many drums had been fired each night. TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, Secret No 262 & 263, both of 19 October 1916

less than fifteen minutes each during the afternoon resulted in two killed and fourteen wounded.¹⁵¹ Such instances were not uncommon.

3.9 High Wood

Pelham Burn's first tour in the line as GOC 152 Brigade was from 1-7 August 1916 at High Wood. It provides four illustrations of his approach which were features of his command. First, his capacity for innovation led him to believe 'in turning a difficult problem upside down and studying it from all angles'.¹⁵² A machine gun redoubt in the eastern corner of High Wood was held in strength and represented a significant obstacle. On 5 August 1916 Pelham Burn suggested to his divisional HQ that 'a tunnelling Company should be employed to destroy by a mine the enemy's post at the E. corner of HIGH WOOD. This was decided upon and work began immediately'.¹⁵³ On 3 September the resultant mine was detonated 'blowing the machine-gunners into oblivion'.¹⁵⁴

Second, Pelham Burn had always demonstrated a concern for the material comfort and welfare of his troops. His letters to his parents are littered with both requests and thanks for gifts for his men. For example:

*I have a Trench Mortar Battery here, 46 men, who never get any presents from home as they are an odd lot composed of 4 or 5 different regiments and nobody's children. I wonder if you have any shirts, socks, tobacco or such goods which you could spare for them. They are a good lot and I would like to help them along.*¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 22 July 1916

¹⁵² T. Norman, *The Hell They Called High Wood* (London: William Kimber, 1984), p. 181

¹⁵³ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 5 August 1916

¹⁵⁴ Norman, *High Wood*, p. 201

¹⁵⁵ Pelham Burn Papers, 13 August 1916

There were other occasions when Pelham Burn's distribution of gifts was not always so deliberately intended.¹⁵⁶ His concern for their operational safety, however, was illustrated during this tour through his appreciation of his trenches. Referring to the activities of enemy snipers Pelham Burn expressed his exasperation that:

*...it was never understood why Brigades which had held the line previously had not dug trenches across these roads rather than continually offer targets to hostile snipers; the labour would have been infinitesimal (sic) compared with the number of casualties which would certainly have been saved.*¹⁵⁷

Third, despite the potential consequences on his reputation, Pelham Burn expressed his critical concerns over operational matters when he judged it to be merited.¹⁵⁸ Writing to Harper, the following is but one example:

*The frequency with which I receive reports from responsible Officers of the shelling of our trenches by our own Artillery leaves me no alternative but to again bring the matter to the attention of the G.O.C. The two attached reports have been received today, while yesterday I considered four similar reports and one was sent on the day before. In addition to these I handed a report from the Commanding Officer 1/6th Bn. Seaforth Highlanders to the G.O.C. this morning, stating that the ground between his firing line and support trenches S.10.b.central (350 yards short of the hostile trenches) had been shelled by a heavy Battery accurately for 4 hours yesterday.*¹⁵⁹

Fourth, Pelham Burn had a reputation for striving to find ways to increase the efficiency of his command and his attention to detail.¹⁶⁰ Evidence of his personal approach is illustrated by

¹⁵⁶ For example, having only just been promoted from the command of 8/10 A&SH, Pelham Burn wrote to his mother: 'It is most unfortunate you have sent my hamper to 8/10 G.H. as I shall not see it as I told them to open & eat any parcels that might turn up.' Pelham Burn Papers, 23 July 1916

¹⁵⁷ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 1 August 1916

¹⁵⁸ Not all brigadier-generals were prepared to do so. In similar circumstances, for example, Brigadier-General Hon. F.C. Stanley wrote: 'It seemed absolutely useless to complain and to ask the heavy gunners to increase their range. The only answer that one always got was that they were not shooting at all.' F.C. Stanley, *The History of the 89th Brigade, 1914-1918* (Liverpool: Daily Post Printers 1919), p. 189

¹⁵⁹ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 5 August 1916. Pelham Burn had concern to ensure his troops had adequate underground cover against enemy artillery. Trenches held by 5/Seaforth Highlanders and those of a neighbouring battalion were simultaneously shelled in anticipation of raids against their adjacent sectors. The Seaforths were 'safely under cover' and had no casualties. In contrast, the neighbouring battalion suffered about sixty casualties. TNA WO95/2866 5/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 14 March 1917

¹⁶⁰ For example, see Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 71.

the nature and extent of the detail of the brigade's WD. Whether the Diary was written by the capable and literary Bewsher, or by Pelham Burn himself is of interest, but immaterial to the point. The way in which the brigade recorded its activities was Pelham Burn's responsibility. He routinely signed the Diary signifying his approval of its contents. The extent of the detail of the brigade's typed record for this six day tour in the line alone is demonstrated by its length, some 6,500 words set out over fifteen pages.¹⁶¹

3.10 Beaumont Hamel

After High Wood, Pelham Burn's brigade undertook four further tours in the line before its first set piece operation under his command, the attack and capture of Beaumont Hamel on 13-15 November 1916. As part of Fifth Army, 51st Division was one of seven divisions drawn from three corps involved in an attack astride the Ancre.¹⁶² The rationale for the attack had much to do with reinforcing Haig's personal standing with Lloyd George prior to the conference called by Joffre at Chantilly on 15 November 1916 intended to discuss the Allies' plans for 1917. The attack as a whole was a 'modest success'.¹⁶³ On its front, however, '51st Division carried all before them'.¹⁶⁴ Where objectives were not achieved, the culprit was invariable the state of the ground. As Gough recorded: 'Mud was on this occasion, as on so many others, our greatest difficulty, our most unconquerable enemy.'¹⁶⁵

In his after action report, Pelham Burn gave his analysis of the three primary reasons for the success of his brigade's attack: the completeness of the preparations, the artillery's success in

¹⁶¹ The corresponding entry in the WD of 154 Brigade during the same period, admittedly whilst this brigade was in support, extends to less than four pages of double spaced, type written pages.

¹⁶² 19th and 39th Divisions of II Corps attacked south of the Ancre; 63rd, 51st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions of V Corps attacked north of the Ancre; 31st Division of XIII Corps attacked on the extreme left flank.

¹⁶³ G.D. Sheffield, *The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army* (London: Aurum Press, 2011), p. 193

¹⁶⁴ H. Gough, *The Fifth Army* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931), p. 157

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

cutting wire and the element of surprise because the infantry advanced at the same time as the artillery opened fire.¹⁶⁶ Pelham Burn had written to his mother on the eve of the attack:

*If shelling helps at all, half our work has been done for the Germans have had little rest, day or night, for the past 3 weeks at least, and for the past 48 hours our bombardment has been as severe as anything I have seen.*¹⁶⁷

152 Brigade had attacked with three battalions, with its fourth battalion held in Brigade Reserve. Amongst the factors adding to Pelham Burn's capability to intervene during the battle to good effect had been first, he had ordered that his COs, including his MG and TM COs, must not leave their HQs. 'This arrangement proved most satisfactory as Commanders could be found by Orderlies and others at all times. The collection and forwarding of information was thus much facilitated.'¹⁶⁸ Second, throughout all three days of the battle Pelham Burn had continuous telephone contact with his COs. In contrast, telephone communications up his chain of command were 'very unsatisfactory all the time, and it was scarcely even possible to speak over it'.¹⁶⁹ Because his ability to communicate with his COs remained intact, Pelham Burn was informed throughout and able to deploy his reserve battalion to good effect when he judged this to be merited.¹⁷⁰ When Pelham Burn received a report that a gap had occurred in the centre of his right hand battalion's line due to uncut wire, for instance, he ordered forward a company from his reserve battalion. When this company was itself held up, he ordered forward two bombing squads from his reserve battalion to clear

¹⁶⁶ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 'Report on Operations of Novr. 13th-15th Including the Capture of Beaumont Hamel.' Pelham Burn gave a lecture to all his officers and NCOs on 9 October setting out his plan which was also demonstrated over a practice ground that replicated the German positions to be attacked. Over the next three days the brigade practiced the attack in anticipation that it would be delivered on 24 October 1916. For reasons of weather, the attack was postponed six times before being fixed by Gough for 13 November. Inadvertently the delay provided additional time for preparations and training which Pelham Burn valued. TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 9 October 1916; Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 104; Gough, *The Fifth Army*, p. 156.

¹⁶⁷ Pelham Burn Papers, 12 November 1916

¹⁶⁸ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 'Report on Operations of Novr. 13th-15th Including the Capture of Beaumont Hamel', Appendix VII, Position of Commanders

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. Appendix VIII, Communications

¹⁷⁰ The battalions which attacked were 5/ and 6/Seaforth Highlanders, and 8/A&SH. The reserve battalion was 6/Gordon Highlanders. TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, Operation Order No 82, 26 October 1916

the front, which they did. On other occasions, Pelham Burn decided that the correct course of action was not to commit his available reserves. When the number of casualties suffered depleted the numbers in the fifth and sixth waves, Pelham Burn decided not to commit his remaining troops because 'it was considered no good result would have ensued by ordering forward the remaining 2¾ companies of the reserve battalion to the YELLOW LINE, since the barrage had long ago moved forward beyond this point'.¹⁷¹ It is clear, therefore, that Pelham Burn appreciated his responsibility for ensuring that his troops understood the nature of their task. Equally, he had to ensure they were trained effectively to undertake it.¹⁷² He exercised his judgement over how and when to intervene tactically to ensure both that the brigade's task was achieved and that his troops' lives were protected, as far as was practicable.

3.11 Brigade Churn

The inevitable consequence of battle was casualties. Pelham Burn complained in his report that all his battalions had gone into the battle 'very much under strength'.¹⁷³ The strength of the brigade's four battalions on 11 November 1916 was 168 officers and 3,499 ORs.¹⁷⁴ The pre-war establishment for four infantry battalions was 120 officers and 3,908 ORs.¹⁷⁵ The number of ORs in Pelham Burn's brigade was, therefore, more than ten per cent below establishment, a point to which, consistent with his direct style, he pointed out in his report:

I should like to call attention to the low strength at which Battalions are continually kept. We have Officers, NCOs, transport and equipment for 1,000

¹⁷¹ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 'Report on Operations of Novr. 13th-15th Including the Capture of Beaumont Hamel', p. 2

¹⁷² Pelham Burn personally supervised the brigade's practise attacks over a taped-out course – see Peel & Macdonald, *Campaign Reminiscences: 6th Seaforth Highlanders*, pp. 29 & 33.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, Table of Field Returns, November 1916

¹⁷⁵ *Field Service Pocket Book, 1914, (Reprinted, with Amendments, 1916)* General Staff, War Office, (London: HMSO, 1916), p. 7

*men and it would seem that no good object is to be gained by keeping Battalions below Strength.*¹⁷⁶

The severity of the weather over the winter months continued to take its toll on sickness levels. The three battalions which had led the attack, for example, had already lost some 150 men in the week prior to the attack due to sickness.¹⁷⁷ The success of the capture of Beaumont Hamel was at a price.

| Units | Officers | | Other Ranks | |
|--------------------|----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Involved | Casualties | Involved | Casualties |
| 5/Seaforth Highrs. | 20 | 11 | 565 | 293 |
| 6/Seaforth Highrs. | 20 | 14 | 567 | 263 |
| 6/Gordon Highrs. | 20 | 3 | 731 | 97 |
| 8/A&SH | 20 | 11 | 674 | 263 |
| 152 MG Company | 6 | 3 | 125 | 22 |
| 152/TM Battery | 3 | 0 | 33 | 1 |
| Totals | 89 | 42 | 2,695 | 939 |

Table 3.1: 13-15 November 1916 - 152 Brigade, Numbers Involved and Casualties Suffered¹⁷⁸

These figures reveal that the casualty rate amongst the officers of the three battalions which went over the parapet, predominantly the junior most officers, was 60 per cent, and amongst the ORs 45 per cent. The strength of the brigade's four infantry battalions had been reduced

¹⁷⁶ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 'Report on Operations of Novr. 13th-15th Including the Capture of Beaumont Hamel', Appendix XI, Strength

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. The conditions continued to take their toll. In the three days 13-15 December 1916, for example 1/5 Seaforths lost three officers and 105 ORs to hospital due to trench foot, exhaustion and exposure. One of the officers, Second Lieutenant C. A. McKay, had only arrived as a re-enforcement on 11 December 1916 and was invalided back to the UK on 29 December 1916. TNA WO95/2866 5/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 15 December 1916. 6/Seaforths' experience was similar – fifty cases of trench foot, trench fever or exhaustion and 120 admitted to hospital. TNA WO95/2867 6/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 13 December 1916

¹⁷⁸ This table has been constructed using figures to be found at TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 'Report on Operations of Novr. 13th-15th Including the Capture of Beaumont Hamel', Appendix XI, Strength and Appendix XII, Casualties

by 18 November 1916 to 139 officers and 2,542 ORs, barely two thirds of the pre-war establishment figure.¹⁷⁹

Within a month, however, the strength of the brigade had been restored to 161 officers and 3,401 ORs, a net influx of 22 officers and 859 ORs.¹⁸⁰ Over the succeeding period of 112 days until its involvement on 9 April 1917, the brigade's battalions held sectors of the front for only 39 days.¹⁸¹ The brigade's losses through casualties during this period were modest.¹⁸² During the first three months of 1917 the brigade received further reinforcements of 62 officers and 1,395 ORs. It is estimated, however, that 152 Brigade's strength on 31 March 1917 was 4,634 all ranks.¹⁸³ These figures demonstrate the level of manpower churn to which the brigade was subject. Approximately half of the men of the brigade on 9 April 1917 had not been with the brigade when it captured Beaumont Hamel less than five months before. The rate of churn was higher amongst junior officers. Up to two thirds of the brigade's battalion officers present on 9 April 1917, predominantly Second Lieutenants, had joined their battalions since 15 November 1916.¹⁸⁴ The influx of reinforcements had obvious implications for identifying training needs and meeting them, for the level of the brigade's accumulated technical and tactical skills, knowledge and experience, and for the operational

¹⁷⁹ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, Table of Field Returns, November 1916. 2,681 all ranks c.f. 4,028 all ranks.

¹⁸⁰ TNA WO95/2848 51st Division WD, A&Q, 1915 May–1916 December

¹⁸¹ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 1915 May–1916 December and TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January–September

¹⁸² 51st Division's casualties during the first three months of 1917 were sixty-six killed, 330 wounded, thirteen missing, total 409. Given 152 Brigade only spent thirty-five of the ninety days of this period in the line, it is assumed that it incurred a third of these casualties i.e. 136. TNA WO95/2849 51st Division WD, A&Q, 1917 January–1919 January

¹⁸³ Neither divisional nor brigade records yield figures for the strength of 152 Brigade immediately prior to 9 April 1917. It is not possible to calculate an accurate figure by building it up from relevant battalions' records since these are incomplete. The figure of 4,634 represents a third of the known strength of 51st Division on 31 March 1917 – see TNA WO95/26 Adjutant General, Monthly Statement of Casualties, Reinforcements and Strength by Divisions, 31 March 1917.

¹⁸⁴ Of 5/Seaforths' forty-four officers on 9 April 1917, twenty-nine officers had joined the battalion since 15 November 1916, of whom twenty-four were second lieutenants. In 6/Seaforths, the corresponding numbers of officers are twenty-seven officers of whom twenty-one were second lieutenants. Corresponding figures in the War Diaries of 6/Gordon Highlanders and 8/A&SH cannot be assembled as they are either absent or incomplete.

cohesion of its battalions. Constant change of personnel created the need to rebuild working relationships, understanding and capability.¹⁸⁵ These figures provide scale to the challenges and pressures Pelham Burn, his staff and his COs inevitably faced during this period.¹⁸⁶

The repeated postponement of the attack on Beaumont Hamel had delayed Pelham Burn's much anticipated leave. His letter to his mother on the eve of the attack expressed his frustration about the delay. It also hinted at the intensity of the strain that he, like his troops, was under during the period prior to the attack.

*The weather has hung up this show – and my leave with it – for a long time, 3 weeks at least. I hope that the leave will be forthcoming soon. The guns are at it hard and each time a big one goes off the windows of this house rattle like an old taxicab. They rattle almost continually.*¹⁸⁷

Pelham Burn was absent from 1 until 13 December 1916.¹⁸⁸ He was not to have another leave until after all three Battles of the Scarpe had taken place.¹⁸⁹

3.12 Preparations – January to March 1917

The brigade undertook two tours in the line in the vicinity of Beaumont Hamel during December 1916, each of six days, being relieved on 2 January 1917.¹⁹⁰ With the relief of 154 Brigade on the night of 12/13 January 1917, and after more than three months arduous

¹⁸⁵ The point is illustrated by Brigadier-General C. E. Pereira's explanation for a break in the line of his 85 Brigade on 24 May 1915 as the result of a German gas attack: 'G.H.Q. are very annoyed at the loss of trenches but the Divisional Commander has accepted my views of the cause of the trouble which was the large number of unassimilated drafts. In the case of the Fusiliers these amounted to many officers and 500 men; of these 300 had joined on the 19th and 21st of May; further we had D.L.I. territorials attached for training.' TNA WO95/2278 Diary of Brigadier-General C. E. Pereira, 11 June 1915

¹⁸⁶ The brigade's involvement in the Arras offensive continued the rate of churn. Since joining Third Army on 6 February 1917 until 30 May 1917, 132 officers and 2,545 ORs of 152 Brigade became casualties. For a breakdown of these figures by battalion, see TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 30 May 1917.

¹⁸⁷ Pelham Burn Papers, 12 November 1916

¹⁸⁸ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 1915 May-1916 December

¹⁸⁹ Pelham Burn's next period of leave was 25 May to 26 June 1917. TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January-September

¹⁹⁰ TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, 1915 May-1916 December and TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January-September

service, 51st Division left the Somme battlefield.¹⁹¹ The three month period preceding the Battle of Arras was to be spent purposefully. It began on 12 January when 152 Brigade moved off from Bouzincourt to travel westward to its allotted Rest Area. The brigade marched a distance of fifty-six miles over the next five days before its HQ was established in the village of Le Titre, five miles north of Abbeville. The brigade's WD puts into context the significance of the move to Le Titre:

*The 152nd Inf. Brigade, with the exception of 10 days' rest in May 1916 preparatory to taking over the VIMY Ridge Sector, has been in the line continuously since 10th March 1916 when it relieved the French in the LABYRINTHE Sector.*¹⁹²

The march to Le Titre also illustrated the continuing demands put upon the brigade's battalions throughout the period prior to the Battle of Arras, the need to supply its manpower for working parties. Even whilst on the march, five officers and 312 ORs, drawn from 6/Gordon Highlanders and 152 TM Battery, were placed under the orders of RE officers to unload timber from trains and lorries and similar tasks.¹⁹³ The extent of the preparations for the forthcoming battle produced an insatiable demand for manpower, to the detriment of the training of battalions for their own roles.¹⁹⁴

Pelham Burn issued the brigade's training programme to be undertaken from 22 January to 3 February 1917.¹⁹⁵ His programme specified the activities to be undertaken by each of his battalions, session by session. Emphasis was placed upon physical fitness, the development of

¹⁹¹ TNA WO95/2845 51st Division WD, 1916 July-1917 July. The division's tour had begun with 152 Brigade relieving 6 Brigade, 2nd Division on 4 October 1916 in trenches 'opposite Puisieux' as the WD records, or more specifically as recorded by Bewsher 'in the sector east of Hebuterne from John Copse on the right to Sixteen Poplars Road on the left'. Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 98

¹⁹² TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January-September, 16 January 1917

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 15 January 1917. The use of infantry battalions for working parties was standard practice.

¹⁹⁴ This was nothing new. In an exasperated letter to Rawlinson some six months before, Sir Ivor Maxse complained that the demands on his battalions for manual labour meant that 'our training programmes came to nothing' resulting in 'no rest and no training' being possible. IWM, Maxse Papers, Box 69/53/7, file 17/2, Maxse to Rawlinson, 31 July 1916

¹⁹⁵ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January-September, Appendix 'B', Training Programmes

skill with the rifle, bayonet and bomb. ORs were to be trained by their own company officers and NCOs. The second week's programme provided for the practice of attacks by platoons and companies culminating in two attacks by the brigade as a whole over a 600 yard frontage under the supervision and command of Pelham Burn.¹⁹⁶ After a day's rest, and despite roads being covered in ice, the brigade undertook a 'slow and exhausting' march 'carried out over hilly country in almost Arctic conditions' of sixty miles over the ensuing six days.¹⁹⁷ 51st Division moved into Third Army's area and became part of XVII Corps. This was not without a note of contention. It reflected Pelham Burn's concern with his troops' welfare and morale:

*An order was this day received that all men would wear steel helmets at all times when in 3rd Army area. The men find this order extremely irksome and it adds much to their discomfort.*¹⁹⁸

Brigade HQ was established at Maroeuil, four miles north-west of Arras, in anticipation of taking up the position in the Roclincourt Sector from which the brigade would attack on 9 April. 152 Brigade went into the line on 11 February. Although the brigade as a whole was relieved on 27 February, individual battalions from the brigade continued to hold a sector of the line until 6/Gordon Highlanders were relieved by 5/Gordon Highlanders of 153 Brigade on 17 March.¹⁹⁹

The brigade's experience during this period was a diet of trench holding duties and the provision of working parties. The need for working parties was driven by two factors; first, the impact of frozen ground thawing with consequences for the state of trenches. 'The frost

¹⁹⁶ For example, the orders for the brigade practice attacks specified that 'O.C. 6th Seaforth Highrs. will receive orders regards action he is to take personally from the B.G.C.'. TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January-September, Training Instructions No. 1, Section 10

¹⁹⁷ Mackenzie, *The Sixth Gordons*, p. 107

¹⁹⁸ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 6 February 1917

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1917 January-September

has gone and mud has taken its place. I preferred the frost.²⁰⁰ Second, the need to make preparations for the forthcoming attack. For example, 6/Seaforth Highlanders held the line in the Roclincourt Sector from 11 February until relieved by 6/Gordon Highlanders on 17 February. For the subsequent five days, however, ‘practically the whole Battalion were engaged on work on communication trenches behind ROCLINCOURT’.²⁰¹ Although the brigade was active with patrols during this period, notably when checking to ensure that the trenches opposite continued to be held after the German retirement south of the Scarpe, casualties during February had been few.²⁰² The casualties suffered in March reflected changing events.

Other than the Germans’ withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, Pelham Burn’s BM glosses over trench holding tours in the line. Bewsher identifies ‘a succession of raids’ as the only other noteworthy incidents during this preparatory period.²⁰³ There were, in fact, only two. The first was undertaken at 6.15 a.m. on 5 March 1917 by 6/Gordon Highlanders. Bewsher gives the reasons for these raids as first, to obtain information about the Germans’ garrison and defences, and second, to inflict maximum damage.²⁰⁴ This seriously understates the significance of these raids as preparatory exercises for the impending battle. As has been stated elsewhere, the generic objects of raids, other than to secure information, via prisoners or otherwise, and to cause damage, were:

III To get junior regimental officers accustomed to handling men in the open and give them scope for using their initiative.

²⁰⁰ Pelham Burn Papers, 21 February 1917

²⁰¹ TNA WO95/2867 6/Seaforth Highlanders WD, 18-22 February 1917

²⁰² The brigade’s total casualties for February 1917 were seventeen, three killed and fourteen wounded, five of which had been the results of accidents. The most notable casualty was Lieutenant-Colonel W.M. MacFarlane, referred to above. TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January-September, Appendix B, Casualty Return

²⁰³ Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 145

²⁰⁴ Ibid. The raiding battalion’s CO, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Dawson, also added the obvious reason of ‘to obtain prisoners’. TNA WO95/2868 6/Gordon Highlanders WD, 1917 March, Special Operation Order, 27th February 1917

IV *To blood all ranks into the offensive spirit and quicken their wits after months of stagnant trench warfare.*²⁰⁵

Pelham Burn was conscious of the inexperience of a considerable proportion of his troops. The raid 'was invaluable in training our men, in getting them accustom to moving over the open, and in circumventing the defences and ruses of the enemy'.²⁰⁶ It is evident from Brigade Order No. 122 that the arrangements for the raid employed Harper's attack methodology, in this instance by a force of eleven officers and 303 ORs, for the capture and destruction of sections of German front and support trenches on a frontage of 485 yards.²⁰⁷

*The raid will be carried out on the "Leap Frog" principal (sic), and will be accompanied by a demonstration by the artillery, 2" mortars and STOKES Guns of the 9th (Scottish) and 34th Division on the right flank and by the 2nd Canadian Division on the left flank. One battery of 2" mortars firing smoke and four 3" STOKES Guns will create a diversion about the LILLE Road, with a view to drawing off hostile artillery fire from the main enterprise.*²⁰⁸

The lynchpin in the organization of the raid was Pelham Burn and his staff. This is evident from the formations to which Brigade Order No. 122 was distributed, the activities of which needed to be co-ordinated.²⁰⁹ Dawson, CO 6/Gordon Highlanders, ensured that the raiders had practiced their intended intrusion over a taped course and that they had been up to the front during daylight to familiarise themselves with landmarks.²¹⁰ Over the eleven days preceding the raid, nine gaps had been cut in the wire protecting the German trenches by two inch mortars and eighteen pounder guns. Despite the thoroughness of the preparations and the dash of the raiders, both in the speed of their attack and in their raw courage, German

²⁰⁵ F.C. Hitchcock, *"Stand To" A Diary of the Trenches 1915-1918* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1937), p. 229

²⁰⁶ Mackenzie, *The Sixth Gordons*, p. 108. For a discussion of the role and value of trench raids, see P. Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18* (London: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 60-2.

²⁰⁷ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January-September, Notes on Raid carried out by 1/6th Gordon Highlanders on 5th March, 1917

²⁰⁸ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 1917 January-September, Brigade Order No 122, 28 February 1917

²⁰⁹ Ibid. These included 51st Division HQ, the CRA, 154 Brigade, 102 Brigade, 6 CIB, 64 Brigade RFA, 256 Brigade, RFA, Trench Mortar Officer, as well as all the units of 152 Brigade.

²¹⁰ Mackenzie, *The Sixth Gordons*, p. 109

resistance proved to be stubborn. Within half an hour, however, the raid was over.²¹¹ It was considered a significant success. Writing to his mother, Pelham Burn described it as ‘a fine affair’.²¹² Dawson’s report states that dug-outs, tunnel-entrances and mine shafts were destroyed although numbers were not given. The degree of destruction wreaked in a single half an hour, however, can be surmised based on the materials expended during the raid – 912 Mills bombs, 660 lbs. of ammonal, 164 phosphorous bombs, 16 gallons of petrol and 8 Stokes bombs.²¹³ Twenty-one Germans were taken prisoner, sixty-six were known to have been killed together with an unknown number who had perished in their dug-outs. The cost to the raiders was ten ORs killed, thirty-seven wounded (including five officers) and seven missing (including one officer).²¹⁴

Dawson’s two page report concentrated on describing operational elements of the raid. He drew attention to the success of the artillery preparation and support during the raid, the speed of the raiders – half a minute’s delay in the raiders reaching the German trenches would have proved fatal - the adherence to the planned timetable, the resistance offered by the Germans, the destructive materials used and examples of German treachery when feigning surrender. 152 Brigade’s records also included an undated and unsigned document - ‘Notes on Raid’- presumed to have been written by Pelham Burn.²¹⁵ This provides an overview of the raid and draws conclusions on the lessons learnt. For example, given the scale of the task in hand, the document concludes that the raiding party was understrength by seventy-five men,

²¹¹ Ibid., pp. 109 & 111. The raiders left their trenches at 6.10 a.m. and had returned by 6.40 a.m.

²¹² Pelham Burn Papers, 6 March 1917

²¹³ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, ‘Report on Raid by 6th Gordon Highlanders on German trenches East of ROCLINCOURT’

²¹⁴ Ibid. The effect of the combination of phosphorous bombs and petrol, for example, left a number of dug-outs still burning twelve hours after the raid.

²¹⁵ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, Notes on Raid carried out by 1/6th Gordon Highlanders on 5th March, 1917. This presumption is based first, on Pelham Burn’s practice of providing an after-action report to his brigade’s operations – see, for example, TNA WO95/2861 152 Brigade WD, ‘Report on Operations of Novr. 13th-15th Including the Capture of Beaumont Hamel’. Second, the ‘Notes on Raid’ make reference to information collated by brigade e.g. the quantities of artillery, mortar, MG and Stokes ordnance fired. Third, the ‘Notes on Raid’ refer to information obtained from prisoners, the interrogation of whom was a brigade responsibility.

insufficient bombs and explosives were available and that the time allowed for the raid was ten minutes too short. Attention is drawn to the imperative that the intended gaps in the wire were cut, even if this required, as it did, the postponement of the raid. It advocated that, in the face of German small arms fire, raiders should avoid fighting in crowded hostile trenches by remaining outside the trench and bombing and firing from above.²¹⁶ The ‘Notes on Raid’ conclude:

*I think this Raid proves that under a well-directed “creeping barrage”, the enemy’s front and support lines are, mine craters and abnormal conditions excepted, always at our mercy, provided that the Infantry follow closely behind the barrage and provided the preliminary arrangements are complete and not hurried, and that the wire is cut.*²¹⁷

The raid was repeated twelve days later against exactly the same portion of the line, in this instance by 8/A&SH. The changes to the arrangements for the raid drew on the analysis set out in ‘Notes on Raid’. The numbers committed to the raid were increased to twelve officers and 382 ORs, the duration of the raid was extended to forty minutes and the quantity of destructive materiel available, notably Mills bombs, ammonal and Stokes bombs, was significantly increased.²¹⁸ Despite difficulties experienced on the flanks of the raid due to wire entanglements, the raid was a success. The raiders accounted for more than 120 German dead together with unknown numbers killed in their dugouts. Ten prisoners were taken. Pelham Burn had a passion for killing Germans.

²¹⁶ This practice was subsequently adopted – see TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, An Account of the Battle fought on 9th April 1917 as taken part in by 1/6th Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, p. 2, para. 7.

²¹⁷ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, Notes on Raid carried out by 1/6th Gordon Highlanders on 5th March, 1917. Following a creeping barrage closely was fraught with danger. The margin for error was small. ‘In this connection it should be noted that, at a range of 1.000 yards the height of the trajectory of an 18-pdr. shell, when 100 yards from the target is only nine feet.’ TNA WO95/1293 2nd Division WD, Artillery Instructions No. 34, p. 2, 10 October 1916

²¹⁸ TNA WO95/2865 8/A&SH WD, 1917 March, 152 Infantry Brigade Order No. 129 and REPORT ON RAID carried out on 17 March 1917. Making these changes was likely to have required Pelham Burn’s approval. That they were made reinforces the basis of the presumption that the ‘Notes on Raid’ document concerning the raid on 5 March 1917 was written by Pelham Burn.

One of my Battalions did another raid the other day and got as far as the Bosch 2nd line on a front of 500 yards and killed a lot of the swine.²¹⁹

In his report the CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, reflected on one of the elements of the rationale for the raid:

Many of the men had not been under a barrage before, but the fighting was carried to a successful issue in spite of many difficulties. The front line were absolutely up to the barrage at the First German line before it lifted.²²⁰

The experience acquired as a result of this second raid was at a higher price. Sixteen of the raiders were killed (including two officers), eighty-one were wounded (including five officers) and thirteen were missing (including one officer). Fortunately it was reported that many of the wounded were only lightly injured.²²¹

The Brigade moved westwards on 18 March 1917 to villages north and east of Aubigny, the location of XVII Corps' HQ.²²² The remaining days until the brigade's battalions moved up on 7 April 1917 to their allotted assembly trenches from which they would attack two days later were devoted to training. Their preparations included practice attacks in brigade strength on three occasions.²²³ The brigade's need to concentrate on its own training, however, continued to be bedevilled by the demand for working parties.²²⁴ The impact of these demands provoked the following entry in the brigade's WD:

The Brigade, whilst in the Training area, supplied large numbers of Working Parties daily for work under Road Construction Coys. and construction of gun

²¹⁹ Pelham Burn Papers, 22 March 1917

²²⁰ TNA WO95/2865 8/A&SH WD, 1917 March, REPORT ON RAID carried out on 17 March 1917

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² The brigade's units moved to Acq, Caucourt, Heripre and Bois de Maroeuil. TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 18 March 1917

²²³ Brigade practice attacks were undertaken on 23, 24 and 29 March 1917. TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, March 1917

²²⁴ For example, 5/Seaforths fighting strength in mid-March 1917 was forty-two officers and 916 ORs. It routinely was required to provide working parties which varied in number from two officers and 120 ORs to three officers and 210 ORs. TNA WO95/2866 5/Seaforth Highlanders WD, March 1917

*positions and T.M. emplacements. This work is necessary for forthcoming operations, but has much interfered with continuity of training.*²²⁵

3.13 The Battle of Arras

Since 15 March 1917 Pelham Burn and his staff had been ensconced in the village of Agnières, conveniently adjacent to both XVII Corps' HQ at Aubigny and 51st Division's HQ at Villers-Châtel.²²⁶ Their immediate tasks were twofold; first, the supervision of the brigade's training, and second, the creation and issue of instructions for the brigade's forthcoming operation. The instructions encompassed seventeen sections set out over thirty pages.²²⁷ The timetable of their piecemeal issue, section by section, and where necessary, their subsequent revision, was the result of an iterative and collaborative process within the brigade. It was based on a framework which had been established at the outset of the process. For example, the first sections distributed - Section VIII Communications and Section X Number of Officers and Men Not To Take Part in the Operations - were issued on 20 March 1917. The last section to be issued - Section IV Use of Gas Projectors and 4" Stokes Bombs - was not distributed until 4 April 1917. Eight of the sections were the subject of alterations after their original issue, the last amendment being distributed on 5 April 1917 setting out the final quantities of ammunition and rations.²²⁸ This was a three week period of intense activity for Pelham Burn and his team. In large measure the prosecution of the brigade's attack depended on the forethought, planning and attention to detail of the work encapsulated in these instructions, and to the thoroughness with which the brigade's training programme had been implemented. Pelham Burn's contribution was critical to them both.²²⁹

²²⁵ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 31 March 1917

²²⁶ Ibid., 15 March 1917 and TNA WO95/12 GHQ General Staff WD, March 1917

²²⁷ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, No. S./660

²²⁸ Ibid., Section XIII Location of and Distribution of Stores in Dumps

²²⁹ Commenting on the success of the advance of 6/Seaforth, the recently arrived Lieutenant-Colonel MacDonald stated: 'There can be no doubt that this was the result of the thorough and expert training experienced at the hands of the Brigadier General.' TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, An Account of the Battle fought on 9th April 1917 as taken part in by 1/6th Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, p. 2, para. 7

On 7 April Brigade HQ moved seven miles eastwards from Acq to its Battle HQ east of Roclincourt.²³⁰ Units began their move to their assembly positions on the evening of 8 April. By 4.13 a.m. on 9 April 1917 all the brigade's assaulting troops were in position. At 5.30 a.m. the attack began.²³¹ By the early hours of 11 April the brigade, augmented by the attachment of 5/Gordon Highlanders, had captured the German third line of trenches, the Brown line.²³² What had been timetabled to have been achieved in seven and a half hours, however, had taken more than twenty-four hours. The brigade was relieved in the early hours of the following day, 12 April 1917.

The brigade's attack on the Black line was undertaken by 6/Seaforth Highlanders on the left of the brigade's front and 6/Gordon Highlanders on the right. Despite suffering severe casualties due to MGs and snipers, both battalions captured all their allotted sections of the Black line at the latest by 9.00 a.m. 5/Seaforth Highlanders moved through its sister battalion to attack the Blue line. Despite a large mine explosion which inflicted casualties disorganising the attack and stout resistance provided by MGs and snipers, the battalion took the Blue line by 2.15 p.m. The attack on the Blue line in the right sector of the brigade's front was undertaken by 8/A&SH. This element of the brigade's attack was delayed due to a number of factors also encountered by other battalions. The CO, Campbell, had selected a particular experienced officer, a captain, to lead the capture of the Blue line. Unfortunately, he became a casualty. In Campbell's view, the loss of this officer was critical:

²³⁰ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 7 April 1917

²³¹ For a summary account of 51st Division's actions during the Battle of Arras, see Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, pp. 150-191. The most detailed accounts are provided individually by the COs of the brigade's five infantry battalions, 152 MGC and 152 TMB - see TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917. Pelham Burn's nephew, Lieutenant Maurice Edward Pelham Burn (1893-1917), 8/Black Watch, 28 Brigade, 9th Division was killed on the opening day of the Battle of Arras. Maurice's younger brother, Arthur Sidney Pelham Burn (1895-1915), 6/Gordon Highlanders, 20 Brigade, 7th Division had already been killed by a sniper on 2 May 1915. For details of their service see <http://www.limpsfield.org.uk/html/memorial.html> (accessed 29 November 2015).

²³² TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 8th/9th April 1917

*I am convinced that had this not been so we should have gone straight through, but as it was the barrage was lost.*²³³

Important though this captain might have been, Campbell thought the role of another of his officers of even greater significance.

*From there onwards the attack was held up by machine gun fire, and the first wave for the BLUE LINE was stopped about halfway between the NEW BLACK and the BLUE lines. The officer in command of the line considered it was impossible to get on, as he had lost the barrage and had few men left. He therefore withdrew to the NEW BLACK LINE. In this I consider he committed a grave error of judgement, and I am of opinion that the delay in the advance and subsequent failure to reach the BROWN LINE resulted solely from this.*²³⁴

Brigade HQ was able to report and log the eventual capture of the Blue line, however, by both 5/Seaforths and 8/A&SH at 2.51 p.m. on 9 April.²³⁵ The capture of the Brown line proved to be even more problematic, for two reasons. First, attacking to 152 Brigade's left, 154 Brigade had been under the mistaken impression that it had already captured the Brown line.

*The situation after this was extremely obscure and it was not till daylight on the 10th that it was discovered that with the exception of one platoon of the 4th Gordon Highrs. who had kept in touch with the Canadians, the whole attack on the BROWN LINE had lost direction and was holding a Communication Trench in 152nd Brigade Area facing South, and under the impression that this was the BROWN LINE.*²³⁶

This left German machine gunners and snipers in possession of the Brown line and able to enfilade across 152 Brigade's front. Second, the success of the preliminary bombardment declined with distance. Led by Pelham Burn's highly valued James Dawson, 6/Gordon

²³³ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, Lieutenant-Colonel R. Campbell, Report on Operations on 9th April 1917, 13 April 1917

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., April 1917, Extracts from messages received and sent, and brief diary of course of operations April 7/8th – 12th April

²³⁶ TNA WO95/2884 154 Brigade WD, 9 April 1917

Highlanders had attacked the Black line. In his subsequent report Dawson wrote of the effect of the preliminary bombardment:

*The German trenches were very badly damaged by our artillery and trench mortar fire. The wire cutting was perfectly performed.*²³⁷

Pelham Burn could not say the same in relation to the Brown line.

*The confidence placed in the ability of the Heavy Artillery to cut unseen wire with 106 fuze seems not to have been justified. The number of direct hits on the different belts of wire immediately in front of the BROWN LINE was insignificant.*²³⁸

Pelham Burn's additional battalion, 5/Gordon Highlanders commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel M.F. McTaggart, launched a successful attack on the Brown line at 5.00 a.m. on 10 April, despite the artillery being unable to provide a preliminary bombardment.²³⁹

*A and C Coys. pushed forward followed by B and D, supporting the attack with such resolution that the Germans now began to evacuate their positions which enabled our men to cut the wire in front of the BROWN LINE. This was not done, however, without considerable loss, because the Germans having retired Northwards had opened heavy machine gun fire from that flank.*²⁴⁰

Having reported the capture of his allotted section of the Brown line by 7.30 a.m., McTaggart's left flank remained in the air until the afternoon of the following day. Despite attacks on 10 April by two of its battalions, the Brown line on 154 Brigade's front remained in German hands. Divisional HQ ordered an attack to be made on 11 April to be preceded by a three hour bombardment by heavy artillery and supported by two tanks. In the event, patrols sent out during the afternoon reported at 4.00 p.m. welcome news:

²³⁷ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, Report on Recent Engagement, J. Dawson, 14th April 1917

²³⁸ Ibid. Experiences gained from the Operations at ARRAS of 9th to 23rd April, 1917

²³⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell Fielding McTaggart (1874-1936). He was subsequently captured on 21 March 1918. Operation Order 135, 9 April 1917, specified that 'the attack will be carried out in quick time throughout'. TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917

²⁴⁰ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, 5/Gordon Highlanders, M.F. McTaggart, 13 April 1917

*No 266055 Cpl. MITCHELL, 6th Gor. Hrs., Brigade observer, reports that he has proceeded into the BROWN LINE North of the Brigade Front and found it unoccupied. Electric Light still burning in dugouts, and packs and equipment neatly stacked, and unfinished meals on the table, and every evidence that the enemy had withdrawn hurriedly.*²⁴¹

By 5.40 p.m. 154 Brigade was able to confirm that it had, at last, occupied the Brown line. The division having finally secured its intended objective in its entirety, both 152 and 154 Brigades were relieved by 153 Brigade with Pelham Burn able to return his Brigade HQ to Acq in the early hours of 12 April 1917.²⁴² The brigade's achievement had, however, been at a price greater than that incurred in capturing Beaumont Hamel.²⁴³

| | Officers | | | ORs | | |
|---------------------|----------|----|---|-----|-----|----|
| | K | W | M | K | W | M |
| 5/Seaforth | 1 | 9 | - | 72 | 222 | 4 |
| 6/Seaforth | 4 | 5 | - | 142 | 176 | 2 |
| 6/Gordon | 5 | 11 | - | 75 | 179 | 6 |
| 8/A&SH | 4 | 7 | - | 48 | 158 | 6 |
| 5/Gordon (attached) | 5 | 1 | - | 19 | 20 | - |
| 152 M.G. Co. | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | - |
| 152 T.M. Battery | - | - | - | - | 3 | - |
| Totals | 19 | 33 | - | 359 | 759 | 18 |

Table 3.2: 152 Infantry Brigade: 9–12 April 1917²⁴⁴

During the operation, Pelham Burn, his staff and his COs were at the mercy of the vagaries of their communications systems.

²⁴¹ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, Extracts from messages received and sent, and brief diary of course of operations April 7/8th – 12th April

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Other than Bewsher's divisional history, 152 Brigade's achievements on 9/10 April 1917 have received scant acknowledgement, let alone attention, by other authors. J. Nicholls' *Cheerful Sacrifice: The Battle of Arras* (London: Leo Cooper, 1990), for example, mentions 152 Brigade once; P. Barton & J. Banning, *Arras: The Spring 1917 Offensive in Panoramas Including Vimy Ridge and Bullecourt* (London: Constable, 2010) not at all.

²⁴⁴ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, Appendix D and WO95/2881 5/Gordon Highlanders WD, April 1917. Pelham Burn narrowly missed becoming a casualty himself on 8 April. 'Another shell just missed me and wounded my orderly (Pte. J. Dodds) and a man who was beside him.' Pelham Burn Papers, 15 April 1917

*Communication during the battle was mainly by runners. Messages frequently took too long to reach H.Q. The distances from objectives to H.Q. were long, and runners had some difficulty in finding H.Q.*²⁴⁵

A ten page document in the brigade's records provides a series of extracts of the messages received and sent during the battle.²⁴⁶ This represents only a partial record of events but it illustrates the role played by Pelham Burn and his staff in acting as a conduit for information during the fighting between his battalions and his divisional HQ and, through the brigade's artillery liaison officer, between his battalions and his divisional and corps artillery.²⁴⁷

*I twice received information from the Division through Brigade H.Q.; (a) that the BLUE LINE was in our hands; (b) that the ELECT LINE was unoccupied. Both items were inaccurate.*²⁴⁸

*Until the capture of the BROWN LINE on the 152nd Inf. Bde. Front information was on the whole inaccurate and extremely misleading. Information was from various sources, the various sources seldom being in agreement and seldom accurate.*²⁴⁹

Despite the inaccuracies, delays and shortcomings of his available information, it fell to Pelham Burn to judge, as circumstances changed, when to vary his plan of action. For example, because of the level of casualties incurred by both 5/Seaforth Highlanders and 8/A&SH, at 11.25 a.m. on 9 April, Pelham Burn ordered three companies from these two battalions to join in the attack on the Blue line, despite their allotted task under the leap-frog system being the subsequent attack on the Brown line. Repeated misinformation that 154 Brigade had captured the Brown line bedevilled the operation and led to the swelling of 152

²⁴⁵ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, H.Q. 152 Inf. Bde., Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Scott, 5/Seaforth Highlanders

²⁴⁶ Ibid., Extracts from messages received and sent, and brief diary of course of operations April 7/8th – 12th April

²⁴⁷ Pelham Burn credited his artillery observation officers as his most reliable source of information. He drew particular attention to the contribution of Major Arthur Travers Saulez, (1883-1917), 64th Brigade, RFA. Saulez was subsequently killed on 22 April 1917. TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, Experiences gained from the Operations at ARRAS of 9th to 23rd April, 1917

²⁴⁸ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, Report on Operations on 9th April 1917, Lieutenant-Colonel R. Campbell, 8/A&SH, 13 April 1917

²⁴⁹ Ibid., Experiences gained from the Operations at ARRAS of 9th to 23rd April, 1917

Brigade's casualties.²⁵⁰ Responding to an order from divisional HQ, Pelham Burn and his staff co-ordinated the attack on the Brown line on 10 April delivered by McTaggart's 5/Gordon Highlanders in co-operation with 103 Brigade to their right.²⁵¹ This involved working throughout the evening of 9 April culminating in the issue and distribution of the relevant order in sufficient time for it to be acted upon with zero hour set for 5.00am on 10 April.²⁵²

Because of the difficulties encountered by 154 Brigade, the Official Historian drew attention to the fact that 51st Division 'had failed to reach its final objective'.²⁵³ Pelham Burn wrote to his mother with a different interpretation of events.

*You will have seen in the papers that we had a very successful show on the 9th capturing many prisoners and guns. My Brigade was amongst the first to go over and we got forward about 2 miles.*²⁵⁴

Pelham Burn subsequently reflected on his brigade's battle experience.²⁵⁵ Amongst the points he made, Pelham Burn was critical of those above him in the decision to use manpower to dig a tunnel leading to the German lines, which in the event was not used on 9 April, at the expense of building dugouts to shelter assaulting troops, as had been the case at Beaumont Hamel. Eighteen platoons were unprotected and avoidable casualties were suffered.²⁵⁶ He criticised Corps Heavy Artillery, both for not bombarding minenwerfer emplacements

²⁵⁰ Described as 'a chapter of accidents'. C. Falls, *Military Operations – France and Belgium, 1917 Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992), p. 235

²⁵¹ See Note 239.

²⁵² TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, Order No. 135, 9th April 1917

²⁵³ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 236

²⁵⁴ Pelham Burn Papers, 15 April 1917

²⁵⁵ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, Experiences gained from the Operations at ARRAS of 9th to 23rd April, 1917

²⁵⁶ Pelham Burn acted on his initiative to form the professional miners in the brigade into a Brigade Tunnelling Section and employed it to build dugouts to store ammunition and rations. 'The result of this arrangement was that not a single bomb or ration, or any of the dump personnel, sustained any damage from the enemy's shell fire, and also that, as the dumps were in close proximity to our front line, the distance traversed by our carrying parties was the shortest possible.' Ibid.

responsible for the bombardment of the brigade's assembly trenches and for their over-reliance on the 106 fuse to cut wire in front of the Brown line. Pelham Burn criticised the insufficient level of artillery support to bombard enemy ground in rear of German permanent lines where his defence relied on MGs. He complained that despite repeated requests, the brigade's contact plane provided absolutely no information, either about the state of the wire in front of the Brown line or anything else. He shared the responsibility with his COs, however, over the selection of which officers and ORs were to be assigned to the attack. Had 'more leadership' been shown by those involved, he surmised, results might have been 'more satisfactory'. As it was, conscious of the nature of his formation, he concluded:

In the present case it may be that too much reliance was placed on junior officers to ensure that a Territorial unit trained by irregular N.C.O.'s, and without Officers with a Sandhurst Training, would attain the objectives assigned to it.²⁵⁷

The First Battle of the Scarpe (9-14 April 1917) was to prove to be 152 Brigade's single contribution, as a brigade, to the battle. After a rest period of eight days the brigade returned to hold the line with one battalion at a time from 20-24 April in the Athies-Fampoux Sector. 6/Gordon Highlanders was attached to 153 Brigade to participate in that brigade's unsuccessful attack on Roeux during the Second Battle of the Scarpe on 23 April 1917 with 6/Seaforth Highlanders in Divisional Reserve.²⁵⁸ Casualties amongst 6/Seaforth Highlanders were six officers and ninety-one ORs; those amongst 6/Gordon Highlanders were more

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ TNA WO95/2881 5/Gordon Highlanders WD, 152 Brigade Instructions No.1, 21 April 1917. TNA WO95/2884 154 Brigade WD, 22-24 April 1917: TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, Record of Battle as taken part in by 1/6th Seaforth Highlanders, date 23rd April 1917 and Report on 6th Gordon Highlanders' Action in the Operations on 23rd April 1917: Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, pp. 160-9. 5/Seaforth Highlanders took no part in the operation. TNA WO95/2866 5/Seaforth Highlanders WD. 23 April 1917

severe.²⁵⁹ This battalion suffered casualties of twelve officers and 241 ORs, thirty-eight per cent of the 630 officers and ORs who went into action.²⁶⁰

51st Division was out of the line at the time of the Third Battle of the Scarpe (3-4 May 1917), a period during which 152 Brigade's training was concentrated on the development of rifle skills.²⁶¹ 152 Brigade returned to hold the line in the area of Roeux from 12-17 May in what proved to be its last tour in this sector before 51st Division was relieved on 31 May 1917. During this period Pelham Burn organised his brigade to deal successfully with a powerful counter-attack by two brigades of a German division recently transferred from the Russian Front supported by copious artillery resources.²⁶² The Official Historian gave much of the credit to Pelham Burn's tactical initiative in the deployment of his MGs which 'he had posted further forward than was the custom at this period'.²⁶³ Falls had been prompted by Bewsher. Amongst his most vivid recollections were:

*.. the Bde Comdr's quick appreciation in putting a fresh company forward in the dark into a sunken road East of the Chemical works as soon as we learnt it was empty: his wisdom in putting Vickers guns into the front line in this sunken road in that it subsequently entirely escaped the enemy barrage, and the tremendous bag we got between the chemical works and Roeux with these Vickers guns.*²⁶⁴

Pelham Burn wrote of his tactical decision in measured terms:

²⁵⁹ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, Record of Battle as taken part in by 1/6th Seaforth Highlanders, date 23rd April 1917

²⁶⁰ TNA WO95/2868 6/Gordon Highlanders WD, 22-24 April 1917. It was during this operation that Lieutenant-Colonel Dawson was severely wounded – see Notes 108 and 113.

²⁶¹ This culminated, to Pelham Burn's disappointment, in a revealing Brigade Rifle Competition with the highest team score of 242 out of a possible 600 points. See TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 9 May 1917. Pelham Burn commented in his 'lessons learnt' document on the superior shooting of the average German rifleman, in part attributable to the lack of adequate rifle ranges upon which his own troops could practice. TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, April 1917, Experiences gained from the Operations at ARRAS of 9th to 23rd April, 1917.

²⁶² Of the German bombardment Pelham Burn wrote: 'The hostile bombardment was the most severe I have seen in 2½ years. It lasted from daylight until 8pm on 15th, and, in addition, there was considerable shellfire during the night.' For reports by each of the COs involved, together with Pelham Burn's other remarks on what was referred to as 'The Battle of Roeux', see TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, Appendix A. See also Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, pp. 174-188.

²⁶³ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 514

²⁶⁴ TNA CAB45/116 Bewsher to Falls, 9 February 1939

*Several Vickers guns were in position in the front line and in the semi-open warfare now being carried on, I am strongly in favour of this policy since the presence of a Machine Gun gives great confidence to the Infantry. There is a risk of losing the gun but I think that it is justified.*²⁶⁵

In his subsequent congratulatory message, XVII Corps' commander, Fergusson, singled out Pelham Burn for praise:

*G.O.C. 51st (Highland) Division. Heartiest congratulations to you all on fine work on 15th and 16th May, 1917, and especially to General BURN and 152nd Inf. Brigade whose tenacity and pluck saved an awkward situation. The Division may be proud of their latest achievement.*²⁶⁶

Whilst Pelham Burn no doubt welcomed Fergusson's congratulations, what he really needed was a rest. William Fraser, the successor to James Dawson as CO of 6/Gordon Highlanders, met Pelham Burn for the first time in his new role on 28 April 1917.²⁶⁷ His assessment of Pelham Burn's condition was perceptive.

*Went on to Bde H.Q. where we had tea and found Pelham, looking not too well I thought. He needs a month at home and should get married into the bargain.*²⁶⁸

Tellingly, Pelham Burn had written to his mother before his brigade had taken up its position at Roeux:

²⁶⁵ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, No. S/791, 19 May 1917. Pelham Burn's view contrasted with that of the subject of the following chapter, Brigadier-General R.O. Kellett. Reporting on his brigade's involvement during the Third Battle of the Scarpe on 3 May 1917, Kellett wrote: 'I gave these orders as I am firmly convinced that it is useless to send forward either Stokes Guns or Vickers Guns with the attacking infantry.' TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report on the Attack made by 99th (Composite) Infantry Brigade on 3rd May 1917, p. 5. Kellett subscribed to the conclusion reached by the Official Historian as a result of the Battle of the Somme; Pelham Burn didn't. See W. Miles, *Military Operations France and Belgium, 1916, Volume II* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992), pp. 573-4.

²⁶⁶ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 19 May 1917

²⁶⁷ Pelham Burn's and Fraser's paths had previously crossed when in March/April 1915 Fraser served as a regimental officer in 1/Gordon Highlanders, one of the units of 8 Brigade, 3rd Division of which Pelham Burn had been SC at that time. See Fraser (ed.), *In Good Company*, p. 39.

²⁶⁸ Fraser (ed.), *In Good Company*, p. 92. Pelham Burn did marry. He married Katherine Eileen Staveley Staveley-Hill, but not until 1928.

*Just a line to tell you that I am fit and well but I am shortly going to ask for a month's leave for a rest as I feel the strain of over 2½ years of active service in the front line. It would be a different thing on a corps or army staff or G.H.Q. but there is little peace or quiet in front.*²⁶⁹

Pelham Burn was granted a month's leave and left for home on 25 May 1917.²⁷⁰ This was to prove to be the half-way point in Pelham Burn's career as GOC 152 Brigade. He returned to duty on 26 June 1917 and commanded the brigade during its contribution to the Third Battle of Ypres, during the Battle of Cambrai and the dark days of late March 1918 when 152 Brigade 'went from Boursies (five miles E. of Bapaume) to Colincamps, a distance of 13-14 miles and fighting all the way'.²⁷¹ The brigade's casualties during this retirement saw its complement reduced from seventy-seven officers and 2,225 ORs on 21 March 1918, the first day of the Germans' offensive, to thirty-one officers and 1,190 ORs on 26 March 1918 when the brigade reached Colincamps.²⁷² The brigade, indeed the 51st Division as a whole, had been reduced to an 'an acute stage of exhaustion'.²⁷³ It was no surprise, therefore, when Pelham Burn wrote to his mother on 4 April 1918 in the following terms:

*I am soon coming home for 6 months home service for a rest. I think I have earned it.*²⁷⁴

3.14 Conclusion

Pelham Burn's personal touchstone was his quest for the efficiency of his formation. His rise to brigade command involved him reporting directly to five brigadier-generals, each of whom

²⁶⁹ Pelham Burn Papers, 7 May 1917

²⁷⁰ TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, 25 May 1917

²⁷¹ Pelham Burn Papers, 27 March 1918

²⁷² TNA WO95/2862 152 Brigade WD, March 1918, Operations 21st-26th March, 1918

²⁷³ Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 292

²⁷⁴ Pelham Burn Papers, 4 April 1918. Pelham Burn served as GOC 3 London Reserve Brigade, from 8 May 1918 until 13 January 1919 and subsequently as GOC Highland Reserve Brigade. He was placed on the Half Pay List on 26 January 1926 and retired on 23 July 1927 with the Honorary rank of Brigadier-General. Pelham Burn was awarded the CMG in the 1918 New Year's Honours List.

would have formed a view on his capabilities.²⁷⁵ Once appointed, of the sixteen brigadier-generals who served in 51st Division during the war, Pelham Burn served for the longest period, with a single exception.²⁷⁶ It is clear, therefore, that Pelham Burn enjoyed the confidence of his divisional commander, George Harper.

Pelham Burn had exhibited his concern for the efficiency and training of those under his command from the outset of the war, as is evident from this tribute:

*On the 7th of April, Brigadier-General H. Pelham Burn, C.M.G., D.S.O. left the Brigade which he had commanded for nearly two years. The Battalion had always been bound to this gallant officer by a tie of deep personal attachment. Their Adjutant at the outbreak of war, he had done more than any other during the Bedford days by his thoroughness, efficiency, and untiring enthusiasm to make out of a raw Territorial unit the magnificent fighting force whose behaviour on parade and in the field in 1914 extorted the surprise and admiration of the seasoned veterans of the 7th Division. They had shared with him the privation, the danger, and the glory of the Somme, of Beaumont Hamel, of Arras, Ypres, and they had lost, not only an inspiring Commander, but a considerate friend.*²⁷⁷

Pelham Burn's emphasis on efficiency is also evident in the tribute paid by Hugh Boustead who served along-side Pelham Burn in 9th Division when Pelham Burn commanded 10/A&SH. Boustead was a junior officer in the South African Brigade at the time.

*He was an outstanding CO in every way. He had an overpowering and commanding personality, a very practical approach to any problem and was the finest trainer of officers and men that I have come across.*²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Whilst SC, 8 Brigade, 3rd Division - Brigadier-Generals William Hely Bowes (1858-1932) and (later Major-General Sir) (Arthur) Reginald Hoskins (1871-1942): whilst BM, 76 Brigade, 3rd Division – Brigadier-General E. St. G. Pratt: whilst CO, 10/A&SH, 26 Brigade, 9th Division – Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Archibald Buchanan Ritchie (1869-1955): whilst CO, 8/Gordon Highlanders, 44 Brigade, 15th Division – Brigadier-General F. J. Marshall.

²⁷⁶ Pelham Burn served as GOC 152 Brigade for 630 days; the exception was Brigadier-General D. Campbell, GOC 153 Brigade, who served in that appointment for 814 days.

²⁷⁷ Mackenzie, *The Sixth Gordons*, p. 139

²⁷⁸ Sir Hugh Boustead, *The Wind of Morning: The Autobiography of Sir Hugh Boustead* (London: Chatto Windus, 1971), p. 70. The author is grateful to Angus Maitland Pelham Burn for bringing this reference to his attention. As a second lieutenant, Boustead was awarded an MC for his performance during the Battle of Arras. *LG*, 27 July 1917

Pelham Burn's quest for efficiency was, however, tempered:

Efficiency as a fighting unit was the General's first consideration, but we imagined that the chief factor in bringing this about was studiously and assiduously to tend and cater for our physical comfort and (and this is important) to see that his staff and all inferior officers did likewise. The Sixth Seaforths thought he was all right; they had higher praise for no officer.²⁷⁹

William Drummond was appointed 152 Brigade's SC in October 1917. Drummond was an 'old sweat' having enlisted in the Gordon Highlanders in 1898 at the age of eighteen. A South African War veteran, he had risen to the rank of sergeant-major by the outbreak of war and subsequently commissioned as an Honorary Lieutenant and Quartermaster. Awarded an MC at Arras, Drummond was in the thick of the fighting when, together with Pelham Burn's successor and other members of the brigade's staff, he was captured on 12 April 1918. An experienced ranker officer who served with Pelham Burn, he wrote:

It was recognised by all that he was a soldier of exceptional and outstanding ability, and had all the energy, courage, drive and devotion at his command and carried out his duty in a manner that was an example to the officers and men he commanded.²⁸⁰

The period between Pelham Burn's appointment on 16 July 1916 and 152 Brigade's relief on 17 May 1917 was 305 days. Pelham Burn commanded his brigade whilst holding a section of the front line for 112 days, a little over a third during this period. Of these, a maximum of 20 days can be said to have involved 152 Brigade in offensive operations.²⁸¹ As with Loomis, an evaluation of Pelham Burn's battlefield performance alone, therefore, would be similarly myopic.

²⁷⁹ Peel & Macdonald, *Campaign Reminiscences: 6th Seaforth Highlanders*, p. 57

²⁸⁰ Quartermaster and Captain W. Drummond, An Appreciation, from the Papers of Angus Maitland Pelham Burn

²⁸¹ This includes the whole of the period in the line at High Wood in early August 1916, the attack on Beaumont Hamel in November, the two raids in March 1917, the Battle of Arras and Battle of Roeux in mid-May 1917.

The essence of Pelham Burn's contribution was threefold. First, he built his brigade staff and COs into a cohesive team which achieved its operational objectives based on sound staff work. Despite the difficulties, Beaumont Hamel was captured, the March raids had their desired effect, the brigade's objectives during the Battle of Arras were achieved, albeit eventually, and the success of the defence and counter-attack at Roeux brought praise from the Corps Commander. Despite the difficulty of communications during battle, Pelham Burn could rely on his COs. The brigade's string of achievements was the result of a team effort.

Second, Pelham Burn provided the analysis of his brigade's experience which informed the priorities of his subsequent actions. Pelham Burn had an obsession with ensuring the safety of his troops wherever possible. This gave rise to his priority, for example, for the maintenance of trenches and the construction of dugouts to provide protective cover for troops when assembled in any numbers. Pelham Burn's analysis of the March raids changed the method he advocated for enemy trenches to be attacked. The events of April changed the priorities he ordered for training his troops to be able to use their rifles.

Third, Pelham Burn innovated to solve problems. He used his initiative to address tactical challenges and his influence was pervasive. He 'displayed a knowledge of minor tactics and trench craft which had been invaluable both to his own battalions and to the infantry as a whole'.²⁸² The removal of a significant obstacle at the eastern corner of High Wood in September 1916 was the result of a Pelham Burn initiative. The creation of a Brigade Tunnelling Section to augment the construction capabilities of his engineers was a local initiative to Pelham Burn's brigade. The tactical forward deployment of Vickers MGs in support of his attacking troops was a risk Pelham Burn was prepared to accept.

²⁸² Bewsher, *Fifty First (Highland) Division*, p. 297

Yet the greatest contribution that this brigadier-general made was arguably merely to keep his show on the road. The rate of turnover of his manpower, particularly amongst the junior most officers, was debilitating.²⁸³ The relative consistency of personnel amongst Pelham Burn's brigade staff and his COs in 1917 provided him with capacity and experience to harness and deal with a rate of manpower churn that would have defeated most organizations. Pelham Burn could ensure priority was given to skills training for his ORs. The rate of attrition amongst his junior officers, however, prevented the accumulation of experience which in turn would have probably led to fewer casualties. Such is the cruelty of war.

Pelham Burn was a driven man with a direct style who was willing to criticise. He could be difficult. One of his COs described him on one occasion as 'an obstinate devil'.²⁸⁴ The circumstances of his departure on 7 April 1918 were entirely understandable, not because of any failing on his part, but simply because his health had failed. He had given the task his all. The events of five days later were to demonstrate, however, that fortune had actually smiled on him.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ 'The average time a British Army junior officer survived during the Western Front's bloodiest phases was six weeks.' J. Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks: The Short and Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2010), p. 5. Lewis-Stempel provides no statistical evidence, however, on the duration of junior officers' service to support his assertion. For, as Jay Winter has concluded, 'we cannot determine the number of junior officers who served and who were killed'. J.M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 85. Kenneth Radley has also been critical of Lewis-Stempel's work – see K. Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough: Shaping the Canadian Corps 1914-1918* (Solihull: Helion & Company Limited, 2014), p. 111. Changboo Kang also regards the 'three-week subalterns' as an exaggeration of the real experience of junior officers having calculated that the life expectation of killed officers in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment was one year and two months. C. Kang, 'The British Regimental Officer on the Western Front in the Great War, with Special Reference to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment', University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2007, p. 42

²⁸⁴ Fraser (ed.), *In Good Company*, p. 253

²⁸⁵ For an account of the capture of Pelham Burn's successor, Brigadier-General J.K. Dick-Cunyngham and his staff at Le Cornet Malo, near Merville on 12 April 1918, see TNA WO339/11855 W. Drummond.

Chapter 4

Brigadier-General R. O. Kellett

99 Infantry Brigade



4.1 Introduction

The brigades commanded by Loomis and Pelham Burn both took part in the set-piece, highly prepared and significantly successful initial phase of the Battle of Arras. The brigade commanded by Brigadier-General R.O. Kellett, 99 Brigade, did not. Second Division, of which it formed an element, only came under the command of XIII Corps on 30 March 1917.¹ The division was first committed to offensive action at Arras during the Battle of Arleux, 28-29 April and subsequently during the Third Battle of the Scarpe, 3-4 May 1917.

¹ TNA WO95/896 XIII Corps WD, 30 March 1917

The division's different experience, both before and during the battle, provides the first reason for the choice of Kellett. Second, 2nd Division was one of the original Regular divisions of the BEF, in contrast to the Canadian and Territorial divisions with which Loomis and Pelham Burn respectively served. It was a division with a different pedigree. Third, at the outbreak of war Loomis had been a member of Canada's Active Militia and Pelham Burn a serving British Regular officer. Kellett, on the other hand, was a 'dug-out' - a retired former British Regular officer recalled at the age of 50. Second Division's role and pedigree, coupled with Kellett's background, provide the potential for differences and similarities between the experiences of these brigadier-generals. Whilst Loomis left a diary and Pelham Burn a series of letters, Kellett left neither. Nor is there any published work either by or about Kellett.² This is an historiographical handicap. It does not, however, diminish the case for the examination of the role and contribution of this hitherto unacknowledged brigadier-general based on the records that are available.

4.2 XIII Corps and 2nd Division

XIII Corps had been established on 15 November 1915.³ Apart from a period of six days when he was sick, XIII Corps had been commanded by Walter Congreve.⁴ Headquartered at Doullens, twenty-one miles south-west of Arras, XIII Corps was transferred from Gough's Fifth Army on 20 March 1917 to Horne's First Army. Its HQ moved north to Labeuvrière, a

² As with the other case study British brigadier-generals in this work, Kellett is not mentioned in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; neither is Loomis mentioned in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

³ Major A. F. Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, History of the Great War, Part 4* (HMSO, 1945), p. 209

⁴ Ibid. Congreve was the only Corps commander to be wounded during the Great War and survive. See F. Davies & G. Maddocks, *Bloody Red Tabs: General Officer Casualties of the Great War, 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1995). Congreve lost his left hand as the result of a shell blast on the Arleux Road near Oppy. '... a shell came down and cut off my left hand all but some lose bits'. Staffordshire Record Office, D 1057/O/5/1, Diary of Sir Walter Congreve, 12 June 1917. Two Lieutenant-Generals (Sir William Edmund Franklyn (1856-1914) and Sir James Moncrieff Grierson (1859-1914)) died of natural causes, one (Sir Frederick Stanley Maude (1864-1917)) died from disease and two (Samuel Holt Lomax (1855-1915) and Robert George Broadwood (1862-1917)) died of wounds suffered on the Western Front whilst in command of 1st and 57th Divisions respectively. Only one, Grierson, was in command of a Corps (II Corps) at the time of his death.

mile and a half west of Béthune.⁵ XIII Corps had been transferred devoid of any divisions. Within ten days, however, 31st Division had been transferred back from V Corps whilst both 63rd and 2nd Divisions had been transferred from II Corps.⁶ Congreve was familiar with 31st Division and its GOC, Major-General R. Wanless-O’Gowan, since this division had previously been under his command from October 1916 until February 1917.⁷ Although 2nd Division had previously been under Congreve’s command, this had been for less than a month during the summer of 1916 and under the command of a different GOC.⁸ Fifty-three year old Major-General W.G. Walker had been succeeded on 27 December 1916 by Major-General C.E. Pereira, promoted from the command of 1 Guards Brigade.⁹ Congreve’s third division, 63rd Division, was even more unfamiliar to him, it never having served before in XIII Corps. This division had also seen a very recent change of GOC when the efficient but unpopular Major-General C.D. Shute was transferred to the command of 32nd Division on 19 February 1917.¹⁰ Shute was replaced by Major-General C.E. Lawrie.¹¹ Like Pereira, this was Lawrie’s first divisional command having served initially in France as the chief gunner in 19th Division and subsequently as BGRA with II Corps.¹² For both Pereira and Lawrie, the Battle of Arras was to be their first major operation as a divisional GOC. The timing of the

⁵ TNA WO95/896 WD XIII Corps, 20 March 1917

⁶ Ibid., 25, 26 and 30 March 1917 and E.A. James, *The British Armies in France and Belgium 1914-1918* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1954), pp. 26-30. In the case of all three divisions, their divisional artillery formations were attached to the Canadian Corps.

⁷ Major-General Robert Wanless-O’Gowan (1864-1947) held his command until 21 March 1918 when he was sent home to command the Cannock Chase Reserve Centre which he did until February 1920 when he retired. *The Times*, 17 December 1947, p. 6

⁸ 23 July to 19 August 1916 – E. Wyrall, *The History of the Second Division, Volume 1, 1914-1918* (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, n.d.), pp. 271 & 295

⁹ Gough (GOC 1 Corps) had commented adversely on Walker to Lieutenant-General (later Field-Marshal) Sir Henry Hughes Wilson (1864–1922) (1st Baronet). (GOC IV Corps) in March 1916 when 2nd Division moved between corps. It took the rest of the year, however, before Walker was replaced. See S. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat Into Victory* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), p. 62.

¹⁰ Major-General (later General Sir) Cameron Dimsdale Deane Shute (1866-1936). A.P. Herbert’s scurrilous and lavatorial poem culminated in dubbing him ‘that shit Shute’. See G. Corrigan, *Mud, Blood and Poppycock: Britain and the First World War* (London: Cassell, 2003), pp. 87-8.

¹¹ Major-General Charles Edward Lawrie (1865-1953)

¹² For a discussion of the circumstances surrounding Lawrie’s subsequent dismissal as GOC 63rd Division on 30 August 1918, see J. Boff, *Winning and Losing on the Western Front: The British Third Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 220-1.

re-creation of XIII Corps and its move to the Arras area within two weeks of the beginning of the battle contrasts sharply with the experience of the Canadian Corps. The four divisions of the Canadian Corps had served together from the dates of their respective arrivals until late October 1916 when 1st, 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions left the Somme area. All four of the Canadian Corps' divisions were reunited in the Vimy Ridge area when 4th Canadian Division was restored to the Corps' command on 4 December 1916.¹³

Second Division deployed as part of the original BEF in August 1914 composed at that time of 4 (Guards), 5 and 6 Brigades. Subsequent changes to its composition serve as a point of contrast with the stability of the composition of both the divisions and the brigades of the Canadian Corps.¹⁴ In August 1915, 4 (Guards) Brigade transferred to the homogenous Guards Division and was re-numbered 1 (Guards) Brigade.¹⁵ It was replaced by 19 Brigade formed in August 1914 and composed of Regular battalions.¹⁶ This brigade served in 6th Division from mid-October 1914 until the end of May 1915 when it was transferred to 27th Division, another Regular division. This division had been formed in November and December 1914

¹³ 4th Canadian Division had formed part of II Corps, Fifth Army located on the Ancre Heights. When relieved by 51st Division, it moved to the Lens-Arras area opening its HQ at Bruay on 4 December 1916. TNA WO95/1048 Canadian Corps WD, 4 December 1916

¹⁴ The Canadian Corps' twelve brigades remained with their respective divisions throughout the war. With the exception of 12 Canadian Infantry Brigade, 4th Canadian Division, the Canadian battalions with brigades on their arrival in France were still serving in the same brigade at the Armistice. F.W. Perry, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, History of the Great War, Part 5A* (Newport, Gwent: Ray Westlake – Military Books, 1992), pp. 57-81. For an explanation of Currie's rationale for the Canadian Corps' retention of its four battalion brigade structure in the spring of 1918, see A.M.J. Hyatt, *General Sir Arthur Currie: A Military Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 98-102. The version of organizational stability of Pelham Burn's 51st Division was different from that of the Canadian divisions. Whilst its brigades remained the same throughout the war, 51st Division shared the experience of British divisions of being moved between Corps. In 1916 alone, for example, it served in eight different Corps – successively X, I, XVII, XV, II ANZAC, XIII, V and IV Corps.

¹⁵ 'The Guards Division enjoyed the great advantage of homogeneity, at any rate as regarded the infantry, which did not exist in any other division of the army. Of its twelve battalions, eight had existed before the war.' 'The whole Division was officered, almost without exception, even as regards its staff, by Guardsmen, and though Guards officers went to command other brigades or divisions, it was never the case that outsiders were given commands in the Guards Division.' F.L. Petre, W. Ewart & C. Lowther, *The Scots Guards in the Great War 1914-1918* (London: John Murray, 1925), pp. 103-4

¹⁶ 2/Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 1/Scottish Rifles, 1/Middlesex and 2/Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. 5/Scottish Rifles, a Territorial battalion, joined 19 Brigade in November 1914. Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, Part 1*, p. 75

from Regular battalions previously stationed in India, Hong Kong and Tientsin, together with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.¹⁷ 19 Brigade's service with 27th Division was brief, less than three months, before it was again transferred in August 1915, this time to 2nd Division. The brigade was subsequently transferred yet again in November 1915 to 33rd Division, a NA division, the fourth and final division with which it served. The transfer to 33rd Division took place before Haig became C-in-C. There is doubt whether Haig would have endorsed the case for this interchange of Regular and NA brigades. He commented on the key to 33rd Division's performance the following year:

*General Pinney was recently transferred to the 33rd Div. vice Gen. Kandon (sic). The 33rd has done well since the change in command was made and affords another example of the principle that the fighting of a division depends on the qualities and spirit of its commander.*¹⁸

This final exchange of brigades was a deliberate consequence of the BEF's experience during 1915, particularly the fighting at Loos. Lieutenant-Colonel A.H.C. Kearsay subsequently analysed the battles at Aubers Ridge, Festubert and Loos in relation to *FSR*.¹⁹ Amongst the lessons he drew from Loos were 'the standard of leadership must be very high in all ranks, and the discipline among the troops must be very firm' and 'the training also of all ranks requires to be very high'.²⁰ The exchange of brigades between Regular and K3 and K4 divisions in the latter months of 1915, therefore, was part of a deliberate leavening process

¹⁷ Of this battalion's initial complement of 1,098, 1,049 had previous Regular or Permanent army experience of whom 456 had seen active service. R. Hodder-Williams, *Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 1914-1919 Volume 1* (Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923), p. 10

¹⁸ TNA WO256/13 Haig's Diary, 28 October 1916. Major-General (later Sir) Reginald John Pinney (1863–1943). Major-General Herman James Shelley Landon (1859–1948)

¹⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Horace Cyril Kearsay (1877–1967)

²⁰ A. Kearsay, *1915 Campaign in France: The Battles of Aubers Ridge, Festubert & Loos* (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, n.d.), p. 39

that, by example, influence and osmosis, was intended to stiffen the fighting capability of NA troops.²¹

*The old Divisions of the regular British army were fast losing their original character; battalions and even brigades were transferred to the new Divisions in order to stiffen the more recent formations.*²²

In the period October to December 1915, brigades from seven of the BEF's Regular divisions were exchanged with brigades from seven NA divisions.²³ The evidence of the impact of these changes on the performance of these NA divisions in 1916, however, has been judged to be 'scarcely a ringing endorsement for the policy'.²⁴ Nevertheless, 24th and 25th Divisions have been evaluated as amongst the ten best performing British divisions during The Hundred Days.²⁵ So it was that consequent on 19 Brigade's move to 33rd Division to replace 99 Brigade, Kellett found himself under the command of the GOC 2nd Division.²⁶

The exchange and intended stiffening process was reinforced at brigade level. The raising of Kellett's brigade had originally been authorised in December 1914 as 120 Brigade, 40th Division. It was subsequently renumbered 99 Brigade, 33rd Division in April 1915.²⁷ The brigade's four infantry battalions were all drawn from The Royal Fusiliers (City of London

²¹ K3 refers to NA divisions numbered 21 to 26; K4 refers to NA divisions numbered 30 to 41. See M. Middlebrook, *Your Country Needs You: Expansion of the British Army Infantry Divisions 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2000), pp. 58-84.

²² Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 1, 1914-1918*, p. 245

²³ The seven Regular divisions involved were those numbered 2nd to 8th; the NA divisions involved were 23rd, 24th, 25th, 30th, 32nd, 33rd and 36th. In the case of 36th Division, the exchange of 107 Brigade for 12 Brigade, 4th Division proved to be for a period of only three months. For details of the individual exchanges, see Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, Part 3A*, pp. 120, 128 and 136, and Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, Part 3B*, pp. 2, 22, 32 and 67.

²⁴ P. Simkins, *From the Somme to Victory: The British Army's Experience on the Western Front 1916-1918* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2014), p. 67

²⁵ P. Simkins, 'Co-Stars or Supporting Cast? British Divisions in the 'Hundred Days', 1918' in P. Griffith (ed.), *British Fighting Methods in the Great War* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p. 59

²⁶ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 99th Brigade Orders No. 3, 24 November 1915

²⁷ For the rationale of this change, see Becke, *Orders of Battle, Part 3B*, p. 37.

Regiment).²⁸ Within a month of 99 Brigade's arrival in 2nd Division, however, battalions were exchanged between brigades within the division. Two of Kellett's battalions, 17/ and 24/RF, were transferred to 5 Brigade in exchange for two Regular battalions transferred from 6 Brigade, 1/Royal Berks and 1/KRRC.²⁹ Furthermore, officers and NCOs were also temporarily exchanged between battalions.³⁰ Whilst nominally still regarded as a Regular division, by 15 December 1915 the infantry battalions of all three of 2nd Division's brigades (5, 6 and 99) were composed of two Regular battalions and two battalions raised and trained since the outbreak of war.³¹ These changes did, nevertheless, herald a period of organizational stability within 2nd Division that endured until the BEF's reduction in brigade strength, with exceptions, from four battalions to three, implemented in 2nd Division in February 1918.³²

The arrival of 99 Brigade in 2nd Division took place three weeks after a change of the division's GOC. Having commanded the division since the beginning of 1915, Henry Horne was summoned to Paris by Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener in early November 1915.³³ As his Chief Military Advisor, Horne accompanied Kitchener to Gallipoli to consider the question of evacuation before being promoted on 12 January 1916 to the command of XV Corps employed in Egypt as part of the Canal Defence Force.³⁴ Horne was succeeded as GOC 2nd

²⁸ They were 17/, 22/, 23/ and 24/Battalions and were designated Empire, Kensington, 1/ and 2/Sportsman respectively. E.A. James, *British Regiments, 1914-18* (London: Samson Books, 1978), pp. 49-50

²⁹ The exchange took place on 13 and 14 December 1915. TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD

³⁰ For example two captains, two second lieutenants, four sergeants and four corporals of 1/KRRC were exchanged with three captains, one lieutenant, two second lieutenants, four sergeants and four corporals of 23/RF for the period 7-11 January 1916. TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, January 1916

³¹ For details of composition of 2nd Division on 15 December 1915, see Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 1, 1914-1918*, p. 246. 5/The King's (Liverpool Regiment) left 99 Brigade on 6 January 1916. TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 99 I.B. Instructions No 1, 4th January 1916

³² Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 2, 1914-1918*, p. 523. Simkins makes a similar point in relation to the performance of 18th Division. P. Simkins, 'The War Experience of a Typical Kitchener Division: The 18th Division, 1914-1918', in H. Cecil & P.H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experience* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Select, 2003), p. 298

³³ Field-Marshal Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener of Khartoum and Broome (1850-1916)

³⁴ D. Farr, *The Silent General: Horne of the First Army* (Solihull: Helion & Co Ltd, 2007), pp. 67-77

Division by an Indian Army officer who was almost the same age as Kellett, Major-General W.G. Walker.³⁵ As a product of Haileybury, Walker was in good company; as a university graduate he was a rarity.³⁶ Commissioned in 1885 into the Suffolk Regiment, Walker transferred to the Indian Army the following year. He arrived on the Western Front as GOC Sirhind (9th) Brigade, 3rd (Lahore) Division with which he served until it was posted to Mesopotamia in the autumn of 1915. It remains a matter of conjecture why Walker was chosen to succeed Horne. An experienced regimental officer who had seen active service on the North-West Frontier and Somaliland as well as operations at Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, Aubers Ridge and Festubert during the war, Walker was also a man of personal bravery.³⁷ The divisional historian, however, makes little reference to Walker's leadership of the division, beyond noting his arrival and his departure.³⁸ After the Somme, the time for Walker's replacement had arrived.³⁹ Sir Henry Wilson formed the view that Walker was 'a gallant soldier & gentleman but without much tactical knowledge'.⁴⁰ Although Walker was promoted to a substantive major-general shortly afterwards, he did not command a division again, received no further honours or decorations and retired from the Army in 1919.⁴¹

That Major-General C.E. Pereira was preferred to Kellett to command 2nd Division is not a decision difficult to understand. Kellett was senior to Pereira, had commanded a battalion for a full four year tour, albeit during peacetime, had commanded a brigade for longer than

³⁵ Dates of birth: Walker - 28 May 1863; Kellett – 14 January 1864

³⁶ See Chapter 1, Note 98. Haileybury, Hertford, a public school, opened in 1856. Amongst its old boys, eighteen have been awarded the VC. Both Brigadier-Generals G.W. St. G. Grogan and C. Coffin were Haileybury old boys – see Chapter 1, Note 139. Walker was a graduate of St John's College, University of Oxford.

³⁷ Whilst a captain in 4/Gurkha Rifles, Walker had been awarded the VC for his part in the attempted rescue of a fellow officer during the 1902-04 Somaliland Expedition. *LG*, 7 August 1903

³⁸ Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 1, 1914-1918*, pp. 247 & 326

³⁹ Andy Simpson attributes Walker's removal as a consequence of 2nd Division's performance during the Battle of the Ancre, 13-16 November 1916. A. Simpson, *Directing Operations: British Corps Command on the Western Front 1914-18* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2006), pp. 48-9

⁴⁰ IWM, Wilson Papers, Diary, 24 February 1916. Cited by Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front*, p. 58. 2nd Division had served in Wilson's IV Corps during the period February to July 1916.

⁴¹ *LG*, 11 January 1916. Walker had been previously been awarded CB. *EG* 23 June 1914

Pereira and had deputised for Walker during his periods of leave. Pereira's service record, however, provided him with a number of critical advantages, including having seen active service in Uganda and Rhodesia, and having served in a staff role.⁴² Having been CO 2/Coldstream Guards at the outbreak of war, Pereira had served with the BEF in France since the outset. His Western Front experience was greater and more varied. Despite being wounded twice, Pereira had commanded two brigades in Regular divisions for significant periods.⁴³ There was no absolute bar during the war on the appointment of brigadier-generals above the age of fifty. There was recognition, however, that perceived capability and possible potential, rather than known seniority, were the critical criteria. On the date of his appointment, Pereira was forty-seven; Kellett was less than three weeks short of his fifty-third birthday. Whether Kellett was disappointed by Pereira's appointment, history does not record. Regardless, Kellett continued to demonstrate vigour and enthusiasm illustrated by an entry as late as December 1917 in Pereira's diary:

*Thence to 99th Bde Hqrs near Graincourt. Kellett was in tremendous form and his fighting spirit was fully aroused. His troops have been very heavily tried but they have laid out so many Boche that their tails are right up.*⁴⁴

4.3 Brigadier-General R.O. Kellett

Richard Orlando Kellett was one of eleven 'dug-outs' amongst the 116 brigade commanders at Arras and one of only three 'dug-outs' appointed to the command of infantry brigades before the end of 1914.⁴⁵ Born the youngest son into a landed military family in 1864, Kellett

⁴² Pereira had served in Uganda from 9 January 1898 to 13 February 1900, with the Rhodesia Defence Force from 14 February 1900 to 4 June 1901 and as DAA&QMG, 1st London Division, London District from 1 April 1908 to 31 March 1912. *Army List*, 31st December 1917, p. 97

⁴³ Pereira held the following brigade commands: 85 Bde., 28th Division (10 June 1915 to 27 September 1915) and 1 Guards Bde., Guards Division (9 January 1916 to 30 December 1916). For information concerning Pereira's wounds sustained at Vermelles (26 May 1915) and Loos (27 September 1915), see Davies & Maddocks, *Bloody Red Tabs*, pp.179-180.

⁴⁴ TNA WO95/1289 Diary of Major-General C.E. Pereira, 1 December 1917

⁴⁵ See Chapter 1, Note 134.

enjoyed country pursuits of riding, hunting and shooting throughout his life.⁴⁶ He was educated at St. Columba's College, a fee paying boarding school occupying some 150 acres set in the foothill of the Dublin Mountains. The College was and remains affiliated to the Church of Ireland. Kellett was a talented all-rounder. Amongst his achievements, he won a school prize for mathematics, distinguished himself as an actor in school plays and played for the College's first eleven cricket team.⁴⁷ In 1882 Kellett enlisted in the 4/Royal Irish Rifles, a Militia unit, before joining the regiment's second battalion as a Lieutenant in May 1885.⁴⁸ Kellett joined his battalion in India and took part in the five weeks Hazara Expedition of October and November 1888.⁴⁹ Medals for this campaign were presented in 1890, a year that the regimental history also records as having been 'memorable in the sporting annals of the regiment'.⁵⁰ Having appeared in the final of the All India Infantry Polo Tournament for three consecutive years, Kellett's battalion won the tournament. Given his upbringing and interests, it was no surprise that Kellett was a member of the winning team.⁵¹ The potential distraction of Kellett's sporting prowess did his career no harm. The following year he became the battalion's Adjutant and in 1892 he was promoted captain.⁵² After four years as Adjutant, Kellett took up a staff appointment in 1895 as DAAG for Musketry (India). In December 1901 he returned to England having been appointed an Instructor at the School of Musketry at Hythe with the temporary rank of major.⁵³ Promoted substantive major in 1903, Kellett returned to regimental duty with his battalion in 1904 commanding the Regimental Depot at

⁴⁶ The family home was at Clonacody, Fethard, Co. Tipperary. Kellett's father, Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Orlando Kellett (1808-1893), retired as the CO, 1st or South Tipperary Artillery, a Militia unit, in 1881. Kellett is known to have shot tigers and to have won point-to-point races – see *The Machine Gun Corps Magazine*, July 1918, p. 18. The author is grateful to Mr Graham Sacker for having drawn his attention to this reference. Kellett died on 12 November 1931, aged sixty-seven, as the result of a fall from his horse whilst hunting.

⁴⁷ Based on information provided in correspondence by Mr Julian Girdham, Sub-Warden, St. Columba's College, for which the author is grateful.

⁴⁸ *LG*, 5 May 1885

⁴⁹ For a brief account of this campaign, see J. Hayward, D. Birch & R. Bishop (eds.), *British Battles and Medals, 7th Edition* (London: Spink & Co, 2008), p. 256.

⁵⁰ G. Le M. Gretton, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment From 1684 to 1902* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1911), p. 298

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *LG*, 22 March 1892

⁵³ *LG*, 13 July 1895 and *LG* 15 April 1902

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary from 1906 until 1908.⁵⁴ His final regimental appointment was in 1909 when he was promoted lieutenant-colonel and he took command of his battalion.⁵⁵ He completed the normal four year tour of duty in 1913 being promoted Colonel with effect from October 1912.⁵⁶ Placed on half-pay in February 1913, Kellett was appointed GOC Lincoln and Leicester Infantry Brigade in June 1913, a post he held for only a matter of seven weeks.⁵⁷ He retired in December 1913, six weeks short of his fiftieth birthday.⁵⁸

There was little in Kellett's career history to mark him out as an officer of exceptional ability. His record indicates he was a competent regimental officer who had reached the pinnacle of his career in command of his battalion, and added a veneer as the GOC of a brigade. On the other hand, he had seen little active service, had not been involved in the major war of his generation, the South African War, had received neither honours nor decorations and had not been selected for Staff College. That said, war broke out less than a year after his retirement. His knowledge and experience were as relevant in 1914 as they had been the year before.

On the outbreak of war, Kellett's initial appointment with the BEF was as a camp commandant, although he was evacuated due to sickness in September 1914.⁵⁹ Having recovered he was appointed GOC 99 Brigade on 19 December 1914.⁶⁰ Originally formed with four newly raised battalions of the RFs, Kellett's brigade trained in the UK until the first of its units crossed to France on 16 November 1915. Given Kellett's unexceptional service background, it was impressive that he shouldered the responsibilities of an infantry brigade

⁵⁴ *LG*, 18 December 1903

⁵⁵ *LG*, 19 February 1909 and 18 February 1913

⁵⁶ *LG*, 18 February 1913

⁵⁷ *LG*, 18 February 1913, *LG*, 1 July 1913 and *LG*, 22 August 1913. This brigade became 138 Brigade, 46th Division.

⁵⁸ *LG*, 2 December 1913. 'But in December, 1913 pressure of private affairs compelled him to retire from the Army.' *The Machine Gun Corps Magazine*, July 1918, p. 18

⁵⁹ *LG*, 25 August 1914. *The Machine Gun Corps Magazine*, July 1918, p. 18

⁶⁰ *LG*, 8 January 1915

commander for over three years, more than two years of which were on active service. In contrast, during Kellett's command of 99 Brigade, both 5 and 6 Brigades were each commanded by three brigadier-generals.⁶¹ Whilst 99 Brigade was itself subsequently commanded by three other GOCs during 1918 alone, there were only two British brigades that had a single commander throughout their existence.⁶² Brigadier-General E.S. de E. Coke commanded 169 Brigade, 56th (1st London) Division for a period of 1,009 days.⁶³ Brigadier-General H.J. Huddleston served throughout the war in Egypt and Palestine commanding 232 Brigade, 75th Division for a period of 580 days.⁶⁴ In comparison, however, Kellett commanded 99 Brigade for 1,113 days.⁶⁵ Whatever attributes or experience Kellett may not have possessed, he had tenacity in spades.

4.4 Kellett's Battalion Commanders

During its period of service with 2nd Division and under Kellett's command, 99 Brigade was composed of two of Kellett's original NA battalions, 22/ and 23/RF, and two Regular battalions, 1/Royal Berks and 1/KRRC. Given the advantages of stability within the team and confidence in individuals generated by familiarity, these pairs of battalions are differentiated by the respective rates of turnover of COs. In the case of Kellett's RF battalions, the nature

⁶¹ GOCs of 5 Brigade were Brigadier-Generals (later Major-General Sir) Arlington Augustus Chichester (1863-1948), (later Major-General Sir) Charles Edward Corkran (1872-1939) and George Moultrie Bullen-Smith (1870-1934). GOCs of 6 Brigade were Brigadier-Generals (later Major-General Sir) Robert Fanshawe (1863-1946), (later Major-General) Arthur Crawford Daly (1871-1936) and Richard Knox Walsh (1873-1960).

⁶² Kellett's successors as GOC 99 Brigade were Brigadier-Generals Randle Barnett Barker (1891-1918), W.E. Ironside and (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Arthur Edward McNamara (1877-1949).

⁶³ Brigadier-General Edward Sacheverell D'Ewes Coke (1872-1941). See Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, Part 2A*, p. 142. There were three non-British brigades commanded by only a single brigadier-general. They were 8 Australian Brigade, 5th Australian Division – Brigadier-General E. Tivey; 15 Australian Brigade, 5th Australian Division – Brigadier-General H.E. Elliott; and 4 New Zealand Brigade, New Zealand Division – Brigadier-General H.E. Hart.

⁶⁴ Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Hubert Jervoise Huddleston (1880-1950)

⁶⁵ 19 December 1914 to 5 January 1918. It is believed that Kellett's period of continuous command of a British infantry brigade that served on the Western Front during the Great War was exceeded only by Brigadier-General Herbert Gordon (1869-1951), GOC 70 Brigade, 23rd Division (8 November 1915 to 11 November 1918 although he was absent from 5-8 November 1915) – 1,257 days; and by Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Julian McCarty Steele (1870-1926), GOC 22 Brigade, 7th Division (27 August 1915 to 11 November 1918 although temporarily replaced during the period 9 February to 16 March 1918) – 1,138 days.

and pattern of succession was remarkably similar. The same can be said of Kellett's two Regular battalions, but with a very different pattern of succession.⁶⁶

Both Royal Fusilier battalions were initially commanded by 'dug-out' COs who were replaced either shortly before, or shortly after, 99 Brigade's move to France in late 1915. In both battalions the replacement COs remained in post for long periods and in both instances were subsequently promoted to the command of a brigade. In both instances the battalions' third CO remained in post for the remainder of the battalion's service during the war. Each battalion had only three COs during the war compared with the average for NA battalions of five COs.⁶⁷

This record of relative stability of command contrasts with the frequency of change in COs amongst Kellett's two Regular battalions. By the time of its transfer to 99 Brigade in December 1915, 1/Royal Berks had already been commanded by three COs and three acting COs for periods of between thirteen and ninety-four days. During Kellett's period of command of 99 Brigade in France, this battalion was commanded by a further three COs. After Kellett's return to England in January 1918, 1/Royal Berks was to be commanded by yet a further three COs as well as one acting CO.

The experience of the succession of COs of 1/KRRC was similar. By the time the battalion came under Kellett's command in December 1915 it was under the command of its fourth CO. During Kellett's period as 99 Brigade's GOC, the battalion was commanded by three COs and a further acting CO. Subsequent to Kellett's departure, the battalion had a further three COs. As Hodgkinson points out: 'It is not surprising that the Regular battalions had the

⁶⁶ For a discussion of turnover of COs by battalion, see P.E. Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War', University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2013, pp. 117-8

⁶⁷ Ibid.

highest turnover as they bore the brunt of the 1914 fighting and were more subject to loss of COs to promotion.⁶⁸

Whilst the average number of appointed COs amongst Regular battalions during the war was seven, the number appointed to the command of 99 Brigade's two Regular battalions was eight and nine respectively.⁶⁹ Including those officers who were acting COs, Kellett commanded twenty different COs within his brigade during his 1,113 days tenure. This may not have been exceptional. Pelham Burn, for example, commanded sixteen COs during his 630 day tenure as GOC 152 Brigade. The frequency of these changes, however, demonstrates the scale of the challenge faced by brigadier-generals generally. COs played a key role in maintaining and developing their brigades' coherent operational capability.

4.5.1 22/(Kensington), Royal Fusiliers

Kellett inherited Lieutenant-Colonel J.A. Innes.⁷⁰ Commissioned into the Rifle Brigade, Innes had served in South Africa where he had been awarded the DSO. He retired as a major in 1909.⁷¹ Appointed to the command of 22/RF in September 1914, Innes' health was evidently not sufficiently robust to withstand the strains of active service.⁷² He continued to serve in England as the CO of 27 (Reserve)/RF before being forced eventually to relinquish his commission in January 1918 due to ill health.⁷³

Innes' replacement in August 1915 was another 'dug-out', Lieutenant-Colonel R. Barnett Barker. Barnett Barker had retired from the Regular army as a captain in 1906 after fifteen

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 1/Royal Berks had eight appointed COs; 1/KRRC had nine appointed COs.

⁷⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel James Archibald Innes (1875-1948)

⁷¹ Anonymous, *The VC and DSO Book Volume III*, (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, 2010), p. 134

⁷² Aged thirty-nine at the outbreak of war, Innes was still a relatively young man.

⁷³ G.I.S. Inglis, *The Kensington Battalion: 'Never Lost a Yard of Trench'* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, 2010), p. 47 and *LG*, 19 January 1918

years' service with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, although he continued to serve as a BM in the TF until 1911.⁷⁴ Barnett Barker was to prove to be one of Kellett's key officers. Re-employed as 2iC of 22/RF, his tenure as the battalion's CO was to extend to 820 days, the longest period of command of any CO in 99 Brigade throughout the war.⁷⁵ Other than his BM, Barnett Barker was Kellett's right-hand man. As CO of 22/RF 'he had won the respect and affection of everyone in the Brigade'.⁷⁶ When Kellett was absent from the brigade, either because he was ill, on leave or standing in for either Walker or Pereira, it was Barnett Barker who deputised for Kellett.⁷⁷ When acting in Kellett's place, Barnett Barker exercised the full responsibilities of a brigade commander. For example, in December 1916 Barnett Barker endorsed the opinion of Major W.J.T.P. Phythian-Adams, commanding 22/RF in his place, concerning Private C.W.F. Skilton.⁷⁸ Phythian-Adams described Skilton as 'thoroughly lazy', 'always endeavouring to shirk fatigues' and when 'in the trenches he is unreliable and useless'.⁷⁹ Skilton had escaped court martial earlier in the year for lack of sufficient evidence. During the brigade's attack on Delville Wood on 27 July, Skilton 'lost himself'.⁸⁰ When he absented himself for three days in November 1916, however, Skilton was charged, convicted and executed for 'deserting His Majesty's Service'.⁸¹ Recommending that the sentence

⁷⁴ *LG*, 25 May 1916 and 21 April 1911. It had been a condition of the consent given to his retirement in 1906 that he continued to serve in the Militia for five years. TNA WO339/15335 R. Barnett Barker

⁷⁵ Barnett Barker had initially been appointed as a Commandant, Prisoner of War Camp. He asked for the temporary rank of major, that he be given 'more active employment' and offered to go to France at his own expense. He was appointed 2iC of 22/RF on 21 September 1914. TNA WO339/15335 R. Barnett Barker

⁷⁶ TNA WO95/1370 99 Brigade WD, 21-24 March 1918

⁷⁷ Included amongst Kellett's periods of leave was a period of Special Leave from 22 August to 1 September 1916 immediately following the death of his eldest son, Lieutenant R.H.V. Kellett, "B" Battery, 74th Brigade, RFA. Inglis, *The Kensington Battalion*, p. 140. Lieutenant Kellett died of wounds on 21 August 1916, aged 20, as a result of a fire and explosions at an ammunition dump at Coigneux. TNA WO95/1371 1st KRRC WD, 21 August 1916

⁷⁸ Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel and Reverend Canon) William John Telia Phythian Phythian-Adams (1888-1967). Private Charles Walter Frederick Skilton (1896-1916).

⁷⁹ TNA WO71/531 Skilton, C.W.F., Offence: Desertion, Phythian-Adams to 99 Infantry Brigade, 15 December 1916.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Schedule, 7 December 1916

should be carried out, Barnett Barker had no hesitation in exercising the authority and responsibility of his command, albeit he held it only temporarily.⁸²

Kellett demonstrated his recognition of Barnett Barker's operational leadership qualities and the example he set for other officers within the brigade by twice recommending him for the DSO.⁸³ The confidence Kellett had in Barnett Barker's abilities was reciprocated: 'It is nice to serve under such a perfect gentleman who has no axe to grind and can play the game.'⁸⁴

Barnett Barker's organisational and leadership capabilities were recognised when he was promoted GOC 3 Brigade, 1st Division on 17 November 1917.⁸⁵ Kellett's disappointment, both in losing Barnett Barker and the breakdown of his own health within a matter of weeks, must have been tempered when Barnett Barker was transferred between brigades on 24 January 1918 to succeed him as GOC 99 Brigade.⁸⁶

4.5.2 23/(1st Sportsman's) Royal Fusiliers

Although younger than Kellett, this battalion's initial CO had been retired much longer than had Kellett. On appointment in October 1914, Lieutenant-Colonel Viscount Maitland had

⁸² See also J. Putkowski & J. Sykes, *Shot at Dawn: Executions in World War One by Authority of the British Army Act* (Barnsley: Wharncliffe Publishing, 1989), p. 161.

⁸³ (1) 'For conspicuous gallantry during operations. He took over and organised the defences of a wood with great skill, after making a personal reconnaissance of the whole wood under shell and machine gun fire. He has done other fine work and has displayed great personal bravery.' *LG*, 20 October 1916. The wood referred to was Delville Wood. (2) 'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. During an assault his battalion was compelled to withdraw from its objective owing to heavy casualties and to its flank being unsupported. At this most critical moment he reorganised and rallied all the men of his brigade who were within reach, and by his promptitude and fine leadership won back most of the objective, and maintained it until relieved.' *LG*, 24 July 1917. This award was for action on 28 April 1917 at Oppy Wood. Barnett Barker was also mentioned in despatches five times – *LG*, 22 May 1917, 4 January 1917, 15 May 1917, 11 December 1917, 20 May 1918.

⁸⁴ Inglis, *The Kensington Battalion*, p. 140

⁸⁵ *LG*, 21 December 1917

⁸⁶ TNA WO95/1370, 99 Brigade WD, 24 January 1918. Kellett would have been distressed to learn subsequently that Barnett Barker and his SC, Captain Edward Inkerman Jordan Bell (1886-1918), were killed by the same shell at Gueudecourt on 24 March 1918.

been forty-six.⁸⁷ Commissioned in 1887 into 2/Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays), Maitland had retired in 1908 as the CO of the City of London Yeomanry (Rough Riders).⁸⁸ Despite his cavalry background, Maitland commanded his battalion through its formative stage. Had there been doubts about his capacity to cope with the demands of active service, as there had been about Innes, Maitland would have been replaced before the brigade deployed to France. Maitland, however, took his battalion to France on 11 November 1915 only to be wounded in the knee by shrapnel on 26 December 1915.⁸⁹ Having apparently recovered, Maitland went on leave on 17 January 1916, returning on 28 January, the same day that Kellett conducted an inspection of the battalion and its billets. Maitland 'relinquished command' the following day.⁹⁰ What actually transpired between Kellett and Maitland on 28 January is lost to history. One interpretation of events is that Kellett decided that Maitland was no longer up to the job, either because of the lingering effects of his wound, or because Kellett was unimpressed with the result of his inspection, or both. Either way, Maitland was removed.

This decision, at least influenced if not taken by Kellett, was reinforced by a decision not to promote the battalion's 2iC, Major G.H.M. Richey.⁹¹ Instead the stiffening process continued on 29 January 1916 with the promotion of the 2iC of one of the brigade's two Regular battalions, Major H.A. Vernon of 1/KRRC.⁹² Commissioned into the KRRC in 1900, Vernon was a thirty-seven year old Regular officer, a product of Wellington College and Sandhurst. Although he had only been promoted major and his battalion's 2iC in December 1915,

⁸⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel Viscount Frederick Colin Maitland, 14th Earl of Lauderdale & 15th Lord Maitland of Thirlestane (1868-1931)

⁸⁸ *LG*, 15 November 1887 & 29 September 1908.

⁸⁹ TNA WO95/1372 23/RF WD, 26 December 1915

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17, 28 & 29 January 1916. Maitland subsequently commanded 3/NF in England for the rest of the war. His contribution was recognised with an OBE – *LG*, 5 June 1919.

⁹¹ Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) George Henry Mills Richey (1867-1949). Aged forty-seven on the outbreak of war, Richey had retired as a captain in 1908.

⁹² TNA WO95/1372 23/RF WD, 29 January 1917. Major (later Brigadier-General) Henry Albermarle Vernon (1879-1943). It has been suggested that Vernon introduced 'a new regime' to the battalion. M. Foley, *Hard as Nails: The Sportsmen's Battalion of World War One* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2007), p. 136

Kellett recognised in Vernon another talented and capable officer.⁹³ Vernon was to command the battalion for 442 days until 18 May 1917, almost double the average duration of a single battalion command.⁹⁴ As with Barnett Barker, Kellett recommended Vernon for an award for his leadership during the attack on Delville Wood on 27 July 1916, the battalion having suffered 288 casualties.⁹⁵ His DSO citation was expressed in succinct terms:

*For conspicuous gallantry in action. He led his battalion in the attack with great skill and courage, and was completely successful. He set a fine example to his command.*⁹⁶

Vernon was subsequently promoted to the command of a brigade, in his case shortly after Arras.⁹⁷ The battalion having apparently been sufficiently stiffened, Vernon was succeeded by his 2iC, Lieutenant-Colonel E.A. Winter, who was to become the battalion's longest serving CO. In October 1916 Vernon described Winter as 'a most excellent officer in every way' and, with Kellett's endorsement, had recommended him for a Regular commission. Despite the recommendation being endorsed at every level in the chain of command, including the C-in-C, the recommendation was declined by the Military Secretary, Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Davies.⁹⁸ The request for a Regular commission was 'not thought right' and that 'it would make him eligible for a pension after very short service'.

⁹³ For example, in preference to the more senior Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Ellis Fowke Harris (1878-1969), CO 1/Royal Berks., Vernon commanded the brigade when both Kellett (deputising for Walker) and Barnett Barker (on leave) were absent, as happened in September 1916 – TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 21 September 1916

⁹⁴ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 18 May 1917. The average duration of a single command as a CO was 252 days - see Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 128.

⁹⁵ TNA WO95/1372 23/RF WD, 27 July 1917. Vernon had only returned to duty six days earlier having been wounded and absent for a month – see *Ibid.*, 21 June and 21 July 1916. During Vernon's absence, the battalion was commanded by Major Harold Victor Campbell Pirie (1884-1957).

⁹⁶ *LG*, 20 October 1916. On Kellett's recommendation Vernon was also mentioned in despatches three times - *LG*, 20 October 1916, 4 January 1917 & 25 May 1917.

⁹⁷ Vernon went on leave on 6 May 1917 to England. He returned to his battalion on 18 May only to find he was ordered to report immediately to the War Office – TNA WO95/1372 23/RF WD, 24 May 1917. He subsequently left for Egypt in late May 1917 to take command of a brigade. When he arrived, however, there was no vacancy. In August 1917 he was appointed to command 2/5 Hampshire Regiment before finally being appointed GOC 58 Brigade, 53rd Division, EEF in September 1917. In 1920 Vernon transferred to the Royal Corps of Signals retiring in 1933 as an Honorary Brigadier-General.

⁹⁸ Lieutenant-General (later General) Sir Francis John Davies (1864-1948). He held the position of Military Secretary from 6 June 1916 until 9 June 1919.

Evidently at the epicentre of the British army of 1916, prejudice and cost still trumped merit and capability.⁹⁹ Winter commanded the battalion until the Armistice, a period of 536 days.¹⁰⁰

4.5.3 1/Royal Berkshire Regiment

On the transfer of 1/Royal Berks and 1/KRRC to 99 Brigade on 14 December 1915, Kellett inherited Lieutenant-Colonel J.C. May.¹⁰¹ On 11 May 1916, May went on leave, never to return to his command.¹⁰² In May's absence, the battalion was commanded by Major A.G.M. Sharpe.¹⁰³ Kellett took the unusual step of instigating the court-martialing of Sharpe charged with 'disobeying Brigadier-General' through failing to carry out an order to attack at Zouaves Valley on 23 May 1916.¹⁰⁴ As the man on the spot, Sharpe had decided that the German bombardment was so severe that, had he ordered his troops to their final assembly positions, 'practically three companies would have been wiped out before the assault was timed to commence'.¹⁰⁵ Sharpe's General Court Martial was held on 29 June 1916. He was

⁹⁹ TNA WO339/21788 Letter from Davies to General Officer, Commanding-in-Chief, 6 December 1916

¹⁰⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel Ernest Arthur Winter (1874-1925). At the age of thirty-nine, Winter had volunteered in 1914 having previously been a Surveyor with H M Customs and Excise. He was awarded the DSO and Bar, MC and three MiDs. Demobilized in 1919, he died aged fifty-one in a military hospital in Cleethorpes from the effects of gas poisoning for, as the citation for the Bar to his DSO records, he was 'suffering severely from the effects of gas'.

¹⁰¹ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 14 December 1915. Lieutenant-Colonel John Cyril May (1874-1943)

¹⁰² TNA WO95/1371 1/Royal Berks WD, 11 May 1916. May, a veteran of the South African War, had been awarded the DSO in 1901. He never commanded a battalion again retiring from the Army in 1922. The reason for him ceasing to command the battalion remains unknown.

¹⁰³ Major (later Colonel) Alfred Gerald Meredith Sharpe (1884-1966)

¹⁰⁴ TNA WO90/6 Judge Advocate General's Office and TNA WO95/1371 1/Royal Berks WD, 23 May 1916. For an account of this episode, see I. Cull, *China Dragon's Tales: The 1st Battalion: The Story of the 1st Battalion, Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire Regiment) in World War One* (Salisbury, Wiltshire: Wardrobe Museum Trust, 2004), pp. 56-58. Contrary to an assertion by Cull, however, Kellett was indeed in command of 99 Brigade on 23 May 1916 having ceased to act as GOC 2nd Division at midnight 22/23 May 1916 upon Walker's return – see TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, Narrative – 99th Inf. Bde., from 8.30 p.m. 22nd May to noon 24th May 1916, R.O. Kellett. Both 1/Royal Berks and 22/RF were intended to undertake the planned attack. For an account of the actions of 22/RF on 23 May 1916, see Inglis, *The Kensington Battalion*, pp. 99-109.

¹⁰⁵ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, Report as to why 1/Royal Berks Regt. did not advance on the night of 23 May, G.M. Sharpe. 99 Brigade had moved to Souchez on 3 May 1916 taking over trenches previously held by French troops. The area lacked adequate dug-outs. As the diary of 1/KRRC records '... there is no getting away from the fact that had there been dug-outs instead of shelters, both in the Fire Trench and in ZOUAVE VALLEY, our casualties would have been 90 per cent less'. TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 30 May 1916

acquitted.¹⁰⁶ What this episode reveals about Kellett is uncertain. It was an unusual step to have taken.¹⁰⁷ It may provide an insight into Kellett's aggressive, thrusting spirit; it may illustrate Kellett's lack of an accurate appreciation of the severity of the battlefield conditions at the time; it may simply disclose Kellett's dislike of Sharpe.¹⁰⁸ What it certainly demonstrates is that Kellett was prepared to take disciplinary action wherever he thought it was justified.¹⁰⁹

The major consequence of the Zouaves Valley incident was that it precipitated a change of CO, presumably at Kellett's instigation. Whatever the unknown reasons for May's continued absence, Sharpe had clearly forfeited Kellett's confidence. May was formally replaced on 27 May 1916 by Lieutenant-Colonel A.E.F. Harris.¹¹⁰ Commissioned from the Militia in 1898 into the Royal Berkshire Regiment, Harris' pre-war career had been spent entirely with his regiment. Having been awarded the DSO in June 1915, Harris had served in England as a BM before his promotion.¹¹¹ Not only did he enjoy Kellett's confidence evidenced by becoming this battalion's longest serving CO during the war, Kellett recognised Harris' leadership and organizational qualities.¹¹² For example, led by Harris, a depleted 1/Royal Berks (15 officers & 250 ORs) participated in the attack on Oppy Wood on 29 April 1917, an element of the

¹⁰⁶ Sharpe ended the war as a GSO2 and brevet major having been awarded the DSO and OBE. Subsequently he commanded the battalion from 1928-1932 and retired having commanded 164 (North Lancashire) Brigade 1932-1936.

¹⁰⁷ In the year to 30 September 1916, for example, only ten British officers in all theatres were subject to General Courts Martial charged with disobedience. See *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire 1914-1920* (London: War Office, 1922), p. 660.

¹⁰⁸ For an assertion of this last interpretation see <http://www.21stdivision1914-18.org/sharpe.htm> (accessed 29 November 2015).

¹⁰⁹ For example, Kellett recommended that Rifleman Frederick Harding, 1/KRRC, convicted of desertion, should be executed. Harding was a serial offender having been dealt within twelve months preceding his final court martial for drunkenness (once), insubordination (once), disobedience of orders (three times) as well as having previously been absent (three times). Kellett recommended Harding should be shot 'in the interests of discipline'. TNA WO71/479 Harding, F., Offence: Desertion. See also Putkowski & Sykes, *Shot at Dawn*: p. 95.

¹¹⁰ TNA WO95/1371 1/Royal Berks WD, 27 May 1916

¹¹¹ *LG*, 23 June 1915. BM, 10 Reserve Brigade, 3 January–21 March 1916 and 184 Bde, 61st Division, 22 March – 19 April 1916

¹¹² 28 May 1916 to 3 May 1917 (340 days).

Battle of Arleux. Having quickly gained its objective and captured three MGs, the battalion withstood five counterattacks. Despite having had to withdraw and their own supplies of ammunition having been exhausted, Harris' troops regained their original objective using captured German grenades before eventually being forced to retire again. Kellett recorded that:

*I am informed that the action of the 1/R. Berks. was beyond all praise, and their Rifle and Lewis Gun fire was most deadly, however towards the end practically all the Lewis Gunners were killed or wounded.*¹¹³

Harris was awarded a Bar to his DSO and transferred within 2nd Division soon after to the command of 13/Essex Regiment.¹¹⁴ Harris' transfer meant that in two days - Harris on 5 May and Vernon on 6 May - Kellett had lost the services of two of his experienced and valued COs.

Harris' replacement provides an instance in which Kellett probably played no part in his selection and over whose appointment he had no influence. Lieutenant-Colonel G.P.S. Hunt had been commissioned into the Royal Berkshire Regiment in 1897 and had commanded its second battalion for three months in late 1915.¹¹⁵ Hunt was appointed GOC 173 Brigade, 58th Division in January 1916. This division had been formed in April 1915, training and serving in the UK until January 1917 when it moved to France under the command of Major-General H.D. Fanshawe. Maxse held that Fanshawe 'appears to have little influence over his

¹¹³ TNA WO95/1369 1/Royal Berks. WD, Kellett's Report on Operations on 29th April 1917, 5th May 1917, p. 4. Pte. James Welch (1889-1978), 1/Royal Berks was awarded the VC as a result of the fighting during this operation. See LG 26 June 1917 and G. Gliddon, *VCs of the First World War: Arras & Messines 1917* (London: Wrens Park Publishing, 2000), pp. 138-141.

¹¹⁴ Bar to DSO LG, 4 June 1917. Without mentioning Harris' transfer to 13/Essex R., Cull states that Harris 'left to assume command of 6th Brigade' - Cull, *China Dragon's Tales*, p. 74. Harris' transfer to his new battalion did also bring with it command of 6 Brigade, but only for a matter of days whilst the GOC, Brigadier-General R.K. Walsh, was on leave - see TNA WO95/1356 6 Brigade WD, 5 May 1917. Walsh held this appointment until 28 April 1918.

¹¹⁵ Commissioned on 8 September 1897, Hunt commanded 2/Royal Berks. from 1 September 1915 to 20 December 1915.

subordinate commanders' and lacked 'grip or drive'.¹¹⁶ Fanshawe had enough influence, grip and drive, however, to have Hunt replaced on 20 April 1917 before the division was engaged in its first battle at Bullecourt on 15 May 1917.¹¹⁷ Having returned to England, Hunt was not allowed to linger. He quickly returned to France demoted to the command of 1/Royal Berks on 3 May 1917.¹¹⁸

What process had been at work to affect such an unusual opportunity for professional rehabilitation remains a mystery. Hunt must at least have had a degree of personal pride at stake on being removed from command of a brigade and returning to battalion command. Kellett had the task of smoothing that transition, supporting and blending Hunt into his team. Kellett and Hunt clearly struck up a successful *modus operandi*.¹¹⁹ Hunt's period as this battalion's CO was the longest during the war (310 days), with the single exception of Harris (340 days).¹²⁰ Hunt's tenure was only cut short by his death on 23 March 1918. The terms in which Hunt's fate was recorded confirms that if his reputation and standing had been in want of rehabilitation in April 1917, with Kellett's support, it was fully rehabilitated.

*They had scarcely got into position when the enemy came in sight and a rearguard action commenced and we withdrew in stages via the cemetery at ETRICOURT (where Capt. P.L. MOUSELEY was wounded), LICHELLE WOOD (where the Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G.P. Hunt, CMG, DSO was killed while gallantly rallying all troops within reach).*¹²¹

¹¹⁶ IWM, Maxse Papers, 69/53/11, 41, XVIII Corps No. G.S. 82, 27th September 1917

¹¹⁷ C. Falls, *Military Operations – France and Belgium, 1917 Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992), p. 477. The brigade's WD merely records the bald facts. '20 Apr. 8am. Brig-General Hunt, G.P.S., CMG left for ENGLAND.' TNA WO95/2999 173 Brigade WD, 20 April 1917

¹¹⁸ TNA WO95/1371 1/Royal Berks. WD, 3 May 1917

¹¹⁹ For example, in the absence on leave of both Kellett and Barnett Barker, Hunt took command of 99 Brigade for the period 16-27 May 1917. TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 16 & 27 May 1917

¹²⁰ In his report on the brigade's operations between 26/27 November and 4/5 December 1917 Kellett concluded that 'I cannot express sufficient admiration of the splendid valour and steadfastness of all the units under my Command'. TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Brief Narrative of Events, B.M.(S)1427, 8th December 1917. The announcement of the award of a DSO to Hunt was made shortly afterwards. *EG*, 20 February 1918

¹²¹ TNA WO95/1371 1/Royal Berks. WD, 23 March 1918

4.5.4 *1/King's Royal Rifle Corps*

Kellett inherited Lieutenant-Colonel G.A. Armytage.¹²² Educated at Eton, trained at Sandhurst and commissioned into the KRRC in 1894, Armytage had been promoted major in 1912. Although without pre-war campaign experience, Armytage was an experienced regimental officer at the outbreak of war. Promoted to the command of his battalion on 27 September 1915, Armytage was complimented by Horne, then GOC 2nd Division, on Horne's departure to command XV Corps in Egypt in January 1916: 'One expects a deal from the 60th and I must say I have not been disappointed.'¹²³

Having deputised for him as the brigade's commander, Kellett was unlikely to have been surprised when Armytage was promoted to the command of 74 Brigade, 25th Division on 15 May 1916.¹²⁴ His replacement was an officer eight years younger with a similar background and service record. As with Armytage, Lieutenant-Colonel E.B. Denison was a product of Eton who had also been commissioned into the KRRC from the Militia, in his case in 1901.¹²⁵ Like Armytage, Denison was a regimental officer with no pre-war campaign experience. He soon distinguished himself, however, being awarded a MC shortly after it had been

¹²² Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General Sir) George Ascough Armytage (1872-1953)

¹²³ TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, Horne to Armytage, 7 January 1916. Horne's reference is to the 60th Regiment, renamed the King's Royal Rifle Corps in 1830.

¹²⁴ When Kellett and Barnett Barker were both absent on leave, it was Armytage who deputised as 99 Brigade's GOC - see TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 21 March 1916. Armytage's appointment as GOC 74 Brigade was cut short by illness. On recovery he commanded 117 Brigade, 39th Division from 9 March 1917 to 4 October 1918 and 97 Brigade, 32nd Division from 6 October 1918 to the Armistice. He ended the war with the DSO, CMG, French Croix de Guerre and five MiDs. He succeeded to the title of 7th Baronet Armytage of Kirklees on 8 November 1918. Promoted Colonel in 1920, he was Colonel of the 2nd West Riding Brigade (TA) between 1921 and 1922.

¹²⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Bridgeman Denison (1880-1960). Denison was from a military family. His father, Brigadier-General Henry Denison (1847-1938), commanded the Lincolnshire Coastal Defences in 1915-1916. One of Denison's five brothers, Major Harry Denison (1882-1917), RHA, was killed in action on 28 August 1917. Two other brothers, Captain George Lyon Denison (1885-1959) and Major Harold Anthony Denison (1891-1961) served with 9/KRRC and 11/KRRC respectively. George resigned his commission in September 1915 on the grounds of ill-health. He asked for leniency in 1927 when convicted of obtaining goods and money by false pretences because he was a morphine addict. Harold was wounded five times, awarded the MC and Bar, and survived to command No 2 POW Camp, Western Command during World War Two. TNA WO339/12105 G.L. Denison and TNA WO339/20203 H.A. Denison

instituted.¹²⁶ Having recovered from a wound sustained at Loos, and shortly after the battalion's transfer to Kellett's command, Denison had been promoted major.¹²⁷ He left 99 Brigade temporarily to command 2/Royal Welsh Fusiliers, a Regular battalion, before transferring to the command of 21/RF, a NA battalion.¹²⁸ Having served his CO apprenticeship elsewhere, Denison returned to 99 Brigade when he was appointed CO of his former battalion on 3 May 1916, a command he was to hold, at least formally, throughout the period leading up to the Battle of Arras and beyond.¹²⁹

If Kellett had any doubts about Denison's leadership qualities, these were dispelled when, as part of an operation by 2nd Division, along with Vernon's 23/RF and supported by Harris' 1/Royal Berks., Denison was ordered on 27 July 1916: 'To attack DELVILLE WOOD and to hold it at all costs.'¹³⁰ Despite being shelled from three sides, the brigade's attack was successful. Over the two days of the battle, 99 Brigade withstood the inevitable German counter-attacks.¹³¹ Kellett was fulsome in his praise and regard for Denison:

*I cannot speak too highly in commendation of Lieut. Colonels VERNON, 23rd R. Fus, and DENISON, 1/K.R.R.C., whose arrangements in the very limited time at their disposal left nothing to be desired. Throughout the Operations they were continually moving round their Line, organising their defences, and animating their men, and they were most ably backed up by all ranks in their battalions who behaved splendidly, ...*¹³²

¹²⁶ EG, 23 February 1915. See also Chapter 3, Note 145.

¹²⁷ LG, 5 January 1916

¹²⁸ CO 2/Royal Welsh Fusiliers 7 – 31 January 1916: CO 21/RF (4th Public Schools) 31 January 1916 – 24 April 1916 when the battalion was disbanded.

¹²⁹ Denison commanded 1/KRRC for 401 days from 3 June 1916 until 9 July 1917, longer than any other of the battalion's COs during the war.

¹³⁰ TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 27 July 1916. The brunt of the cost of this successful operation, as signified by casualties, was borne by Kellett's 99 Brigade that sustained 1,164 (83 per cent) casualties of 2nd Division's total 1,398 casualties - Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 1, 1914-1918*, p. 280. Of these, 1/KRRC suffered 322 casualties, 23/RF 288 casualties and 1/Royal Berks. 252 casualties. The War Dairies for 27/28 July 1916 of these units, the sources of these figures, provide detailed accounts. TNA WO95/1371/2

¹³¹ As a result of his action during this operation, and presumably on the recommendation of both Denison and Kellett, Sergeant Albert Gill (1879-1916), 1/KRRC, received a posthumous VC – see G. Gliddon, *VCs of the First World War: The Somme* (Norwich: Gliddon Books, 1991), pp. 82-85.

¹³² TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, Appendix "L", Report and Narrative of Operation (Capture of Delville Wood and Longueval Village) on 27th July 1916, Brig-Gen. R.O. Kellett, 30th July 1916

*For conspicuous gallantry in action. He led his battalion in the attack with great skill and courage, and was completely successful. Displayed an utter disregard of personal safety, and set a fine example to his command.*¹³³

The evidence of the battalion's WD, written by the Adjutant, suggests that Denison had a health problem in the early months of 1917. Denison followed common practice in signing the WD at the end of every month. He did so at the end of December 1916.¹³⁴ But subsequently this task was performed by Major R.S.S.H. Stafford, initially on behalf of Denison (January 1917), subsequently as major commanding the battalion (February, March and April 1917) and finally as Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the battalion (May and June 1917).¹³⁵ Whilst the WD records Denison returning to the battalion from leave on 16 March 1917, he is missing from a list of officers present with the battalion on 24 April 1917.¹³⁶ Denison's absence due to a health issue is confirmed by his inclusion in a Roll of Officers of 31 May 1917 that lists him as 'In Hospital'.¹³⁷

Stafford was a product of Haileybury and Jesus College, University of Cambridge where he was an Exhibitioner. Graduating in 1912, Stafford joined the Egyptian Civil Service the following year before returning to the UK to be commissioned, as a former member of the OTC, into the 6 (Special Reserve)/KRRC in 1915.¹³⁸ His transformation from civilian to temporary lieutenant-colonel in little more than two years at the age of thirty-seven marked him out as an impressive individual.¹³⁹ That as a civilian on the outbreak of war, he should

¹³³ *LG*, 20 October 1916. Citation for Denison's DSO.

¹³⁴ TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 31 December 1916

¹³⁵ Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Ronald Seymour Sempill Howard Stafford (1880-1972). It appears that neither Stafford's appointment as the battalion's acting CO, believed to have taken place in March 1917, nor his promotion temporarily to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, believed to have taken place in May 1917, were gazetted.

¹³⁶ TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 16 March and 24 April 1917

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, Roll of Officers, 1st June 1917

¹³⁸ *LG*, 6 March 1915

¹³⁹ Stafford had already been awarded an MC (*LG*, 14 January 1916), a DSO (*LG*, 20 October 1916) and a MiD (*LG*, 4 January 1917). He was subsequently awarded a Bar to his DSO (*LG*, 27 July 1918) and 3 further MiDs (*LG*, 17 & 25 May 1917 and 28 December 1918).

have commanded a Regular battalion during the war established him as a rarity, one of only twenty-nine such COs.¹⁴⁰ Stafford had the good fortune to have been in the right place at the right time.

Kellett faced an issue concerning Denison – when to replace him and by whom? The evidence available suggests that Kellett was slow to arrive at a decision, possibly quite reasonably so. The length of Stafford's period as acting CO, particularly the demands made on the battalion during the operations in April and May, indicates that Kellett had confidence in him. Kellett had concluded by early July 1917, presumably on medical advice, that Denison could not return to his command.¹⁴¹ A decision having been made as to when, the question remained who? Stafford must have been justifiably hopeful.

*In wartime, leadership at the unit level became far more of a career open to talent than it was at other times, if only because most of the arguments against selection by merit disappeared. There was far less compunction about promoting young officers to command.*¹⁴²

Stafford was, however, to be disappointed. The post went to another KRRC officer with significantly broader experience, Lieutenant-Colonel H.W.M. Watson.¹⁴³ Stafford reverted to 2iC. Commissioned from the Militia in 1900, during the war Watson had been Adjutant 6/KRRC, seen regimental service with 4/KRRC, and served successively as GSO3 VIII Corps, BM 158 Brigade and CO 2/4 The Queen's. He had served both during the Gallipoli campaign and on the Western Front. The signs are that this, the last CO appointment in the

¹⁴⁰ Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 159

¹⁴¹ Denison recovered to be appointed CO of a training battalion in October 1917. He returned to France to command 11/KRRC the CO of which, Lieutenant-Colonel George Kendall Priaux (1877-1918), had been killed on 24 March 1918.

¹⁴² D. French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People, c.1870-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 275

¹⁴³ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Hugh Wharton Myddleton Watson (1881-1938). Watson's date of appointment was 9 July 1917 – TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 9 July 1917. He held this command until 28 February 1918. Whilst observing the firing of one his own TMs, Watson and his Adjutant were both wounded by pieces of shrapnel when a bomb exploded prematurely in the barrel. The two men operating the TM were killed. *Ibid.*, 28 February 1918. Stafford was promoted as Watson's replacement.

battalion during Kellett's tenure, was an appointment made by others above and beyond Kellett's level of influence.

The evidence demonstrates that by mid-1916, Kellett had built a team of COs – Barnett Barker, Vernon, Harris and Denison (supported by Stafford) – who were capable unit commanders. The period from then until May 1917 was to prove to be the most stable period of battalion command 99 Brigade was to experience. Given the pace of tactical development and reorganization over the winter of 1916-17, the depleted numbers and lack of experience amongst many of 99 Brigade's troops, it was to Kellett's distinct advantage that the leadership of his battalions was in the hands of such capable and tested COs.

4.6 Pressures of the Role

Kellett commanded directly through his team of battalion commanders and his staff officers. Brigadier-generals also operated, both formally and informally, through their relationships, with officers of other arms upon whom they and their brigades were operationally dependent, extending from artillery liaison officers to town majors. A division's three brigadier-generals, together with the GOC and his own divisional staff, formed another interlocking team with its own dynamics. Kellett was absent from 99 Brigade when he deputised for his divisional GOC. In the period September 1916 to May 1917, for example, Kellett was 2nd Division's acting GOC on four occasions whilst Pereira was on leave.¹⁴⁴ When this occurred, Kellett was dependent on both Barnett Barker and Vernon who, together with the BM, had to assume Kellett's brigade role and perform consistent with Kellett's own standards, methods and

¹⁴⁴ Between autumn 1916 and spring 1917, 2nd Division's and 99 Brigade's War Diaries confirm that Kellett was the Division's acting GOC for periods of various length from the following dates – 20 September 1916, 22 November 1916, 31 January 1917 and 6 May 1917.

routines.¹⁴⁵ Standing in for his GOC was not the only cause of Kellett's absences from 99 Brigade. Between September 1916 and May 1917 Kellett went on leave himself on three occasions, for periods of between eight and twenty-five days.¹⁴⁶ His periods of leave were interspersed with two episodes of ill-health, sufficiently serious to warrant Kellett's evacuation to hospital in September 1916 for five days and in February 1917 for twenty-four days.¹⁴⁷ The reason for this latter period in hospital was apparently due to 'bronchitis and a touch of pleurisy which may develop into pneumonia'.¹⁴⁸ Kellett was required, therefore, to operate flexibly and inter-changeably in different roles with different responsibilities with equal credibility amongst his peers. Equally, whilst he was the key figure in the performance of his formation, Kellett was dependent on his COs when they deputised for him, notably Barnett Barker.

4.7 Brigade Majors

As Kellett strived to develop the brigade's operational capabilities, so the type of officer appointed as BM changed. As GOC of a NA brigade, Kellett did not have the luxury of the quality of officer that had been available, and continued to be appointed, to at least some brigades of the original BEF. For example, of the five successive BMs appointed to 5 Brigade, 2nd Division between the outbreak of war and October 1915, all of whom were experienced Regular officers, four had passed Staff College.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ In Kellett's absence, Barnett Barker became 99 Brigade's acting GOC. When Kellett and Barnett Barker were both absent at the same time, as they were from 21 September 1916 for example, Vernon commanded 99 Brigade.

¹⁴⁶ Late November/early December 1916 to 17 December 1916; 25 March 1917 to 2 April 1917; 15 to 27 May 1917.

¹⁴⁷ 12 to 17 September 1916 and 8 to 23 February 1917.

¹⁴⁸ G.D. Sheffield & G.I.S. Inglis (eds.), *From Vimy Ridge to the Rhine: The Great War Letters of Christopher Stone DSO MC* (Marlborough: The Crowood Press, 1989), p. 82

¹⁴⁹ Captain Dugald Stewart Gilkison (1882-1914); Captain (later Major) Robert Francis Sidney Grant (1877-1927); Captain (later Major-General) Gervase Thorpe (1877-1962); and Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Daniel George Robinson (1878-1956). The exception was Major (later Brigadier-General) Frank Godfrey Willan (1878-1957).

Kellett's initial BM was Captain C.H. Wolff.¹⁵⁰ Wolff had been commissioned in 1901 into 4/(Extra Reserve) Bedfordshire Regiment.¹⁵¹ A man with a sense of adventure, he had qualified for an aviator's certificate in September 1914.¹⁵² Wolff transferred to the Regiment's Regular second battalion on its return from South Africa in September 1914. He subsequently landed at Zeebrugge on 7 October as part of 21 Brigade, 7th Division. It was only a matter of eleven days later that Wolff was wounded, during the battalion's first encounter with German troops on the Menin Road near Gheluvelt.¹⁵³ Although he recovered, there must be some suspicion that Wolff was less than completely fit. Rather than being returned to his battalion in France, Wolff was appointed 99 Brigade's BM in January 1915, an appointment he held until shortly before the brigade was sent to France in November 1915.¹⁵⁴ The timing of the appointment of Wolff's successor, Captain R.R.G. Kane, suggests that Kellett had doubts about Wolff's capability to withstand the rigours of active service again.¹⁵⁵

Kellett could have had no such doubts about Kane, a man with a record of active service during the war. Kellett and Kane shared similar backgrounds. Both were from Irish families, Kellett from Co Tipperary and Kane from Co Clare. Kellett and Kane were both Regulars, both having been commissioned into Irish regiments, Kellett the Royal Irish Rifles, Kane the Royal Munster Fusiliers in 1908. Like Pereira, Kane had attended the Oratory School, Edgbaston. Kane had battlefield experience. He had served during the Gallipoli campaign as

¹⁵⁰ Captain (later Major) Cecil Henry (Harry) Wolff (1882-1948)

¹⁵¹ *LG*, 25 October 1901

¹⁵² Royal Aero Club of the UK granted Aviator's Certificate 895 to Captain Cecil Harry Wood, Bedfordshire Regiment (Maurice Farman Biplane, Netheravon) on 4 September 1914. *Flight*, 11 September 1914

¹⁵³ TNA WO95/1658 2/Bedfordshire Regiment WD, 18 October 1914. Wolff's 'A' Company suffered one officer killed, three wounded with two ORs killed, twenty-one wounded and two missing.

¹⁵⁴ *LG*, 16 February 1915 and 9 November 1915

¹⁵⁵ Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Romney Robert Godred Kane (1888-1918). Wolff survived the war but remained a captain until retirement when he was granted the rank of major. *LG* 11 January 1927

a GSO3 on the staff of 29th Division until wounded on 15 July 1915.¹⁵⁶ His contribution had been recognised with the award of a DSO.¹⁵⁷

Kane became Kellett's BM on 31 October 1915 whilst 99 Brigade was still at Tidworth. The brigade crossed from Folkestone to Boulogne on 16 November 1915.¹⁵⁸ As part of the reformulated 2nd Division, Kane's period of service was one predominantly of mastering the routine associated with trench holding. As the divisional historian wrote: 'For the 2nd Division, November and December of 1915 and the first six months of 1916 passed without any action of a general character taking place.'¹⁵⁹

Kane remained in post throughout this period having had the benefit of a one month instructional course at St Omer in February 1916.¹⁶⁰ There is little evidence available either to evaluate Kane's performance as BM, or that throws light on Kellett's relationship with him. By inference, however, Kane was a capable officer. His subsequent career prospered. He was promoted major in November 1917 as 2iC, and subsequently CO of his regiment's first battalion in February 1918.¹⁶¹ Unfortunately, Kane was to be one of the 452 infantry COs killed during the war, forty-three of whom, like Kane, died during The Hundred Days.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Kane had been hit in the chest by a shrapnel ball. TNA WO339/7151 R.R.G. Kane

¹⁵⁷ *LG*, 8 November 1915. Kane's award had been made on the recommendation of the GOC 29th Division, Major-General A.G. Hunter-Weston. TNA WO339/7151 R.R.G. Kane

¹⁵⁸ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 16 November 1915

¹⁵⁹ Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 1, 1914-1918*, p. 244

¹⁶⁰ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 22 February 1916

¹⁶¹ *LG*, 25 January 1918 and 19 April 1918

¹⁶² Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 132. Kane died on 1 October 1918 in 19 Casualty Clearing Station having been shot resulting in his skull being fractured. He was posthumously awarded a Bar to his DSO. *LG*, 2 January 1919

Kane's successor in June 1916 was Major G.M. Lindsay, an older and more experienced officer.¹⁶³ Like Kellett and Kane, Lindsay was from an Irish family.¹⁶⁴ What was of significance, however, was the doctrinal contrast Lindsay offered to a prevailing orthodoxy, the reliance on rifle fire. Given Kellett's own experience at Hythe ten years earlier, Lindsay's ideas must have represented something of a challenge to him. Lindsay was a staunch and pioneering advocate that 'the machine gun could develop far more fire more economically and with less exposure of the firing soldiers to the enemy's retaliation'.¹⁶⁵ It was Lindsay who had put forward the case, as early as 25 January 1915, for the establishment of the Machine Gun Corps.¹⁶⁶ He had previously served as an Instructor at the Machine Gun School at Wisque during 1915 before becoming a GSO2 at the Machine Gun Corps Training Centre at Grantham. A man with 'a clear headed and forceful personality who tended to make an impression', Lindsay played an influential role in 99 Brigade's involvement on the Somme and in its training prior to Arras.¹⁶⁷ On 22 December 1916, for example, Lindsay delivered a lecture to the men of the brigade's MG Company entitled 'Employment of MG Fire in Open

¹⁶³ Major (later Major-General) George Mackintosh 'Boss' Lindsey (1880-1956). On appointment as BM, Kane was twenty-eight years old; Lindsay was a week short of his thirty-sixth birthday. Kane had been commissioned in 1908 and at the outbreak of war had been a regimental lieutenant. Lindsay had been commissioned into the Rifle Brigade in 1900, had served during the South African War, and had served for three years as an adjutant. At the outbreak of war he had been an Instructor at the School of Musketry, Hythe with the rank of captain. For a summary of Lindsay's career, see J.M. Bourne, *Who's Who in World War One* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 174. For a more extensive account of his career, see J.P. Harris, 'Lindsay, George Mackintosh (1880–1956)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2010 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34540> (accessed 20 August 2015).

¹⁶⁴ The family home was Glasnevin House, County Dublin. Lindsay's father, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Gore Lindsay (1830-1914), had been commissioned into the Rifle Brigade, commanded a battalion and served as both a JP and a Deputy Lieutenant of County Dublin.

¹⁶⁵ P. Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18* (London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 120. For an analysis of Lindsay's role in the development of the MGC and MG tactics, see Griffith, *Battle Tactics*, pp. 120-134.

¹⁶⁶ LHCMA, Papers of Maj Gen George Mackintosh Lindsay, File A10, 'Scheme for the Machine Gun Training of New Armies'. For references to Lindsay's role in the creation of the MGC, see C.D. Baker-Carr, *From Chauffeur to Brigadier* (London: Ernest Bevan, 1930).

¹⁶⁷ Griffith, *Battle Tactics*, p. 120. Lindsay's emboldening influence on the brigade's tactical use of MGs can be read into the Official Historian's account of 99 Brigade's attack on Delville Wood on 27 July 1916. 'The brigade machine guns were handled with boldness, several being emplaced near the front line, and their fire was most effective, although in the end six were put out of action.' Miles, *Military Operations, 1916 Volume II*, p. 159

Warfare'.¹⁶⁸ Kellett demonstrated his appreciation for Lindsay's contribution to the brigade's performance, particularly at Arras, by recommending him for a DSO in May 1917.¹⁶⁹ Kellett wrote of Lindsay:

*Major G.M. Lindsay, Rifle Brigade, my Brigade Major, who gave me invaluable assistance. Clear headed and cool, he thought of everything and anticipated and arranged for events in the best possible manner. An admirable Staff Officer in whom I have complete confidence.*¹⁷⁰

Having gained both battlefield experience and having had the benefit of attending a Junior Staff College course, Lindsay's expertise was subsequently employed where he could have greater impact on the BEF.¹⁷¹ In May 1917, Lindsay was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel and became the Chief Instructor, Machine Gun School, Camiers.¹⁷² Lindsay's replacement, Captain J.M. Latham, had previously served in the UK with 188 Brigade, 63rd (2nd Northumberland) Division.¹⁷³ Another product of Haileybury, commissioned into the HLI in 1909, Latham's relative inexperience was reflected in his initial appointment as Lindsay's understudy. Unusually, Latham had the luxury of a handover period, albeit only two days. Latham remained in post until 7 January 1918, the day after Kellett's own return to the UK.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁸ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 22 December 1916

¹⁶⁹ *LG*, 4 June 1917

¹⁷⁰ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report on the Attack made by 99th (Composite) Infantry Brigade on 3rd May 1917, p.12

¹⁷¹ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 26 December 1916

¹⁷² TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 27 May 1917

¹⁷³ Captain (later Brigadier) John Macduff Latham (1889-1965). TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 25 May 1917

¹⁷⁴ Latham proved to be a capable officer. His move was a promotion to GSO2, 24th Division – see TNA WO95/1370 99 Brigade WD, 7 January 1918. Awarded a MC in June 1918, he remained in the army and ultimately commanded 1/HLI from 1934 to 1938. After service at home during World War Two, he retired as an Honorary Brigadier in 1947. Latham was succeeded on 12 January 1918 by Captain Donald Nesham Farquharson (1876-1955) who had attended the Senior Officers Course at Cambridge between late September and mid-December 1917. He remained in post until the Armistice. Farquharson had previously served a long apprenticeship as SC, 5 Brigade, 2nd Division from 4 November 1915 until he succeeded Latham – a period of 800 days. TNA WO 339/81449 D.N. Farquharson

Of the three BMs with whom Kellett worked whilst in France, it was Lindsay whom he was likely to have valued most. Of the four BMs who served whilst 99 Brigade itself was in France, Lindsay was in post for the longest period.¹⁷⁵ Kellett and Lindsay combined effectively during the brigade's involvement during the Somme and Arras campaigns, a critical period during the brigade's progress along its learning curve.

4.8 Staff Captains

The role of the SCs within brigade headquarter teams might be described as that of the 'hewers of wood and the drawers of water'.¹⁷⁶ Whilst operating within the context of a divisional commander's strategic intent, the brigadier-general provided a brigade's operational strategy, the BM organised and oversaw the planning of the brigade's tactical operations and the SCs had responsibility for ensuring that the practical and logistical implications of the operation plans were in place to enable the achievement of stipulated battlefield objectives. In practice, elements of these roles tended to blend together, particularly when the pressure was on.¹⁷⁷ Whilst all members of Kellett's brigade team were in the habit of regularly making their way around trenches when the brigade was in the line, both Kellett and his BMs were to be found in the brigade's HQ during an operation, either base or advanced HQ, fulfilling their command role. Typically not so the SC, as the evidence of 99 Brigade's experience demonstrates.

¹⁷⁵ The respective periods in post as 99 Brigade's BM whilst in France were Lindsay – 332 days, Latham - 252 days, Farquharson – 250 days, and Kane – 239 days.

¹⁷⁶ Joshua 9:23

¹⁷⁷ For example, whilst Lindsay attended his Junior Staff College course in England, albeit whilst the brigade was in GHQ Reserve, Captain (later Major) Edward Moubray Allfrey (1893-1923) assumed the duties of the BM without being replaced as the brigade's SC. TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 26 December 1916. Kellett himself was not above deputising for both his BM and SC in issuing orders himself, if the need arose. See, for example, TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, Order No 106, 12 January 1917.

There are two factors that Kellett's succession of SCs have in common. First, their relative lack, or even absolute absence, of prior military experience. Second, their immediate fate; it was anything but promotion. Kellett's first SC was Lieutenant L.H.G. Andrews.¹⁷⁸ Although only twenty-seven years old, Andrews was technically a 'dug-out' since he had been commissioned in December 1909 into 4/Bedfordshire Regiment, an extra reserve battalion, and subsequently resigned in April 1913.¹⁷⁹ In August 1914 he was restored to his battalion's establishment as a lieutenant and transferred to 1/Bedford with which he served until wounded during a relief on 8 March 1915.¹⁸⁰ Recovered and appointed 99 Brigade's SC on 18 July 1915, Andrews' period as Kellett's SC spanned the period whilst training at home and the brigade's initial trench holding duties until he was replaced in April 1916.¹⁸¹ Whilst Andrews had some pre-war military experience, his successor, Captain E. M. Allfrey, had none.

A product of Lancing College, Allfrey had been working on a tea plantation in Ceylon in August 1914 when he joined the Ceylon Planters Rifles as a private. He was commissioned in February 1915 into 6/KRRC, promoted temporary lieutenant in March 1916 and subsequently temporary captain when he succeeded Andrews as SC on 4 April 1916.¹⁸² Allfrey was awarded the first of his two MCs during his period as 99 Brigade's SC. The citation for this award reflects the nature of Allfrey's responsibilities and confirms that the SC's role carried with it as much risk to life and limb as that of the typical regimental officer. Allfrey's award was a consequence of the brigade's attack on Delville Wood on 27 July 1916 when he was in command of two companies of Barnett Barker's 22/RF providing carrying parties:

¹⁷⁸ Captain (later Major) Leonard Henry Graystone Andrews (1887-1954)

¹⁷⁹ *LG*, 3 December 1909 and 8 April 1913

¹⁸⁰ TNA WO95/1570 1/Bedfordshire Regiment WD, 8 March 1915

¹⁸¹ Andrews' subsequent army career was undistinguished. Promoted captain in 1916, he did not serve on the Western Front again and was not promoted to his final rank of major until 1933. He retired in 1935.

¹⁸² *LG*, 9 February 1915, 14 March 1916 and 12 May 1916

*For conspicuous gallantry and good work during operations. He organised and carried out, in a most efficient manner, the supply of ammunition, rations and water to the troops engaged. This was rendered most difficult owing to continuous shell fire by the enemy and the necessity of wearing gas helmets all the time.*¹⁸³

*He thought of everything, and all my Units are loud in his praise.*¹⁸⁴

Allfrey returned to his regiment, 1/KRRC, on 23 February 1917.¹⁸⁵ The Bar to his MC was the consequence of another of 99 Brigade's successful attacks, this time on 10 March 1917 on Grevillers Trench and Lady's Leg Ravine, to the north-east of Pys.¹⁸⁶ Wounded in his back and a leg almost as soon as he had left his assembly trench, Allfrey had persisted although eventually 'he had to give in and go to Hospital'.¹⁸⁷ Having recommended him for gallantry awards, Kellett clearly valued Allfrey's contribution to the brigade's capability in a way that is not apparent with Allfrey's successor, Captain R.G. Fell.¹⁸⁸

Commissioned in 1910 into 6/West Yorkshire Regiment, Fell had served in France with his battalion since May 1915. His tenure as SC proved to be the shortest of any of 99 Brigade's five SCs, a duration of two months.¹⁸⁹ During this period, the brigade saw action during the Battle of Arleux and the Third Battle of Scarpe, a time when the brigade was under great

¹⁸³ *EG*, 22 October 1916

¹⁸⁴ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 27 July 1916 and Appendix "L", Report and Narrative of Operation (Capture of Delville Wood and Longueval Village) on 27th July 1916. For an artist's impression of Allfrey leading a carrying party during this operation, see http://www.regimental-art.com/regimental_prints.php?ProdID=11637 (accessed 29 November 2015).

¹⁸⁵ TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 23 February 1917

¹⁸⁶ 'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Although wounded, he led his company in a most gallant manner. He sent forward posts, which he visited in person, and it was mainly owing to him that such an advance line was reached.' *LG*, 11 May 1917. WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 10 March 1917 and Appendix "C", Report on Capture of Grevillers Trench and Lady's Leg Ravine 10.3.1917

¹⁸⁷ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report on Attack and Capture of Grevillers Trench and Lady's Leg Ravine (S.W. of Loupart Wood) by 99th Brigade on 10th March 1917, p. 17, para. 17(a). Allfrey subsequently served as CO, 45/RF during the North Russian Expeditionary Force in 1919. He died in 1923 aged 30 at Octacamund, Tamil Nadu, Southern India following an operation for appendicitis.

¹⁸⁸ Captain Ronald Gillies Fell (1891-1973)

¹⁸⁹ Sixty days from 12 March 1917 to 9 May 1917.

strain due to the weakness in numbers amongst its battalions.¹⁹⁰ Fell had also to work alongside Lindsay, a man of known strong character, as his BM.¹⁹¹ There is no evidence of the reasons for Fell's departure. The brigade's WD, for example, merely records tersely that on 9 May 1917 'Capt. Fell left for England on leave'.¹⁹² He never returned to 99 Brigade. The fact that Fell was subsequently reappointed a SC in May 1918, and held that appointment until June 1919, may lend weight to speculation that his departure was due to some form of incapacity from which he recovered, rather than due to a lack of capability.¹⁹³

Fell's replacement was a pre-war professional footballer, Captain E.I.J. Bell.¹⁹⁴ Like Allfrey, Bell had no military experience before being commissioned into the 17/Middlesex Regiment in January 1915.¹⁹⁵ His abilities, however, were soon recognised. Within six months he had been promoted captain and appointed his battalion's Adjutant.¹⁹⁶ His organizational abilities were coupled with courage and initiative.¹⁹⁷ Bell was awarded an MC for his conduct during the same operation that resulted in Allfrey being awarded his first MC.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁰ On 1 May 1917 99 Brigade had been reduced to little more than the strength of a normal battalion. In terms of trench strength, it was the weakest of 2nd Division's brigades – 5 Brigade – 1,237; 6 Brigade – 1,322; 99 Brigade – 1,028. TNA WO95/1289 Diary of Major-General C.E. Pereira, 1 May 1917

¹⁹¹ Fell deputised for Lindsay from 24 March to 17 April 1917 signing Brigade Orders No 121-131 issued between these dates. TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD

¹⁹² TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 9 May 1917

¹⁹³ *LG*, 11 June 1918 and 30 September 1919

¹⁹⁴ See Note 86.

¹⁹⁵ *LG*, 6 March 1915

¹⁹⁶ *LG*, 13 August 1915. Bell's battalion originally formed part of 100 Bde, 33rd Division. As part of the reorganization in late 1915 to stiffen a number of NA divisions, along with 13/Essex, 17/Middlesex was transferred to 6 Bde, 2nd Division where it served with 1/King's and 2/South Staffordshire.

¹⁹⁷ For an account of 17/Middlesex's involvement in the capture of Delville Wood, see A. Ridloch & J. Kemp, *When the Whistle Blows: The Story of the Footballers' Battalion in the Great War* (Yeovil: Haynes Publishing, 2011), pp. 135-154.

¹⁹⁸ 'For conspicuous gallantry during operations. Finding himself in command of the battalion he repelled a counter-attack with great determination. On another occasion he rescued several men from a blown-in dugout.' *LG* 20 October 1916

If length of period in post is an indicator of confidence, Kellett clearly valued Bell's abilities. Other than Allfrey, he proved to be 99 Brigade's longest serving SC.¹⁹⁹ Although Kellett had left 99 Brigade in early January 1918, Bell was awarded a Bar to MC in February 1918. His good fortune, however, ran out when he was killed on 24 March 1918.²⁰⁰ The brigade's WD records: 'In Captain E.I. Bell, M.C. a most valuable Staff Officer is lost to the Brigade, whose personality and efficiency will long be remembered by everyone.'²⁰¹

Kellett was fortunate. For the period of 99 Brigade's involvement during the Battle of the Somme, through the winter of 1916-17 and during the period leading up to Arras, he was served by arguably his most capable BM – Lindsay – coupled with his most capable SC – Allfrey. As Roger Lee has put it: 'Understanding of, and confidence in, the ability and judgement of others in the chain of command is well recognised as critical to success in battle.'²⁰²

4.9 In and Out of the Line

The decision to select 99 Brigade for the attack at Delville Wood was not made by Pereira, GOC 2nd Division. Surprisingly it was made by Congreve, GOC XIII Corps.²⁰³ The attack was successful, but at a heavy price. Over the period 27-31 July, the brigade suffered forty-eight officer and 1,210 OR casualties.²⁰⁴ In his nine page after-action report, Kellett drew attention to the critical decisions and actions of 2nd Division's two other brigade commanders

¹⁹⁹ Bell was 99 Brigade's SC from 11 May 1917 until 24 March 1918, a period of 317 days compared with Allfrey's 342 days.

²⁰⁰ Bar to MC – *LG*, 15 February 1918 (Citation *LG*, 18 July 1918). Bell was succeeded by Captain Donald Robertson (18??-19??) who held this appointment until the Armistice.

²⁰¹ TNA WO95/1370 99 Brigade WD, 21-22 March 1918

²⁰² R.V. Lee, *British Battle Planning in 1916 and the Battle of Fromelles: A Case Study of an Evolving Skill*, University of New South Wales, PhD Thesis, 2013, p. 305

²⁰³ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, Operation Order No. 61, 26 July 1916. For a discussion of the developing role of Corps command during the Battle of the Somme, see Simpson, *Directing Operations*, pp. 25-54.

²⁰⁴ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 31 July 1916. For casualty figures suffered by 99 Brigade and 2nd Division as a result of the attack on Delville Wood, see Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 1, 1914-1918*, p. 280 and Appendix XIV.

that contributed to 99 Brigade's success. They are illustrative of the involvement brigadier-generals had during operations.²⁰⁵

*The G.O.C. 5th Inf. Bde, who was at one of his Battalion Headquarters near DELVILLE WOOD, intercepted a message to me from 1/K.R.R.C. who were calling for immediate assistance to maintain their position on 3. face of Wood. The G.O.C. 5th Inf. Bde at once sent 2 Companies 17th R. Fus. Forward, and informed me of his action. This early support was of the most material advantage to me, and the Companies despatched performed splendid work, suffering, I regret to say, very heavily.*²⁰⁶

*The G.O.C. 6th Inf. Bde, entirely on his own initiative, detonated some 2,500 Mills Grenades and sent them to my Dump at W. edge of BERNAFAY WOOD, he also sent to the same place a large number of petrol tins full of drinking water, 16 boxes of Very Lights, and 50 boxes of S.A.A. all of which were of the utmost value to me.*²⁰⁷

As these instances illustrate, a brigadier-general's capability to command his battalions during an operation was critically dependent on the integrity of his communication channels. All too often wires were cut, visibility was impeded, runners lost their way or they became casualties. Starved of information, brigade commanders were impotent to intervene to best effect. Where disruption to communications was predictable, at least one brigade commander improvised by devolving part of his responsibility and part of his authority to his COs whilst retaining overall responsibility. For example, Barnett Barker's plans for 99 Brigade's participation in the attack near Miraumont on 17 February 1917 involved shortening the communication chain by extending the role of his COs.²⁰⁸

In order to ensure good organisation, and in view of the fact that communication will be extremely difficult, Area Commanders are appointed as follows and will command all troops in their area:

²⁰⁵ GOC 5 Brigade, Brigadier-General George Moultrie Bullen-Smith (1870-1934) and GOC 6 Brigade, Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Arthur Crawford Daly (1871 -1936).

²⁰⁶ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, Report and Narrative of Operation (Capture of Delville Wood and Longueval Village) on 27th July 1916, p. 8

²⁰⁷ Ibid. This example of inter-brigade assistance was subsequently reciprocated when Barnett Barker's 22/RF was lent to 6 Brigade during its attack at Serre. For Daly's letter of appreciation to Barnett Barker, see TNA WO95/1372 22/RF WD, 18 November 1916.

²⁰⁸ Kellett was absent in hospital for the period 8-23 February 1917.

*Area Commanders may call on the Company of I/R. Berks which will be in occupation of the Old British Line for reinforcements to repell (sic) a counter-attack. This Company is not to be used for any other purpose without reference to the Brigadier.*²⁰⁹

Barnett Barker's devolvement of authority to his COs was a reflection of a trend within the BEF, as operational experience was garnered. Within Gough's command, for example, his brigadier-generals were given authority to call upon particular artillery batteries, both field and heavy, without reference to their divisional commanders.

*Arrangements will be made so that the Brigadier of each attacking Infantry Brigade will have the immediate call on some particular field artillery brigade which covers its front of attack, a senior artillery officer (Major or Captain) being attached as Liaison officer, to remain with him throughout the operations. In addition one 6 inch howitzer battery will also be earmarked to be at the call of each Infantry Brigadier, and the necessary communications arranged accordingly.*²¹⁰

The number of occasions for brigadier-generals to intervene depended on the number of their operations. During the seven month period under review – mid-October 1916 to mid-May 1917 – 99 Brigade undertook offensive operations on six occasions, five of which were attacks or advances on single days.²¹¹ Between these dates, 99 Brigade's battalions undertook nine tours in the front line, each lasting between two and nine days totalling fifty-three days.²¹² For the remainder of this period, 166 days, the brigade's battalions were either in support, in reserve or out of the line altogether. The brigade's longest period out of the line

²⁰⁹ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Brigade Order No. 111, Section 9, Area Commanders, 13th February 1917. The inter-changeability of roles of BM and SC is illustrated by the issue of this Order signed, not by Lindsay, Kellett's BM, but by Allfrey, his SC.

²¹⁰ TNA WO95/1293 2nd Division WD, Artillery Instructions No. 34, p. 2, 10 October 1916

²¹¹ The exception was the attack by 2nd, 3rd, 51st and 63rd Divisions between Serre and the Ancre on 13-16 November 1916. The other attacks by 99 Brigade took place first in the area of the Ancre Valley on 17 February 1917 near Miraumont and, second, on 10 March 1917 on Grevillers Trench and Lady's Leg Ravine, east of Pys. The brigade's subsequent operations took place during the Battle of Arras, first on 14 April 1917 when the brigade advanced east of Bailleul; second, on 29 April 1917 when it attacked Oppy Village and the Arleux Switch Line; and third on 3 May 1917 when it again attacked the Oppy Line.

²¹² 2nd Division's 'Standing Instructions As To Reliefs' issued with 99 Infantry Brigade Order No. 115 stipulated that 'the Brigade in the front line will be relieved every 8 days'. TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD

was seventy-one days spent predominantly at Yvrench, nine miles north-east of Abbeville.²¹³

Whilst the risk of casualties remained whether in support or reserve positions, for more than three quarters of its time during the review period 99 Brigade was not in the front line.

4.10 Not fully trained

Kellett and his COs recognised the brigade's particular need for training, both of their junior officers and their troops. The need was implied by the rate of turnover within the brigade. As a result of the brigade's attack at Serre, twenty-three officers and 635 ORs became casualties.²¹⁴ By the time the brigade came out of the line, its fighting strength was reported on 18 November 1916 to have been reduced to ninety-nine officers and 2,808 ORs.²¹⁵ The brigade's two attacks on the Somme, together with its trench holding duties, had sapped it of significant numbers of experienced officers and ORs.²¹⁶ Within a month, however, the brigade had received reinforcements of twenty-eight officers and 1,662 ORs.²¹⁷ Whilst a proportion of these had recovered from wounds and sickness, the majority were officers and ORs sent from Base Depots. By mid-December 1916, 99 Brigade numbered 118 officers and 4,186 ORs.²¹⁸ The primary issue for 2nd Division was not the quantity of men available; it remained the extent of their training and their lack of battlefield experience. By the early months of 1917

²¹³ 17 November 1916 to 28 January 1917.

²¹⁴ TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, Report on Attack by 99th Infantry Brigade (less 1 Battalion) on 14/11/16, p. 5

²¹⁵ TNA WO95/1294 2nd Division WD, Strength Return, 18 November 1916. The corresponding figures three weeks earlier had been 126 officers and 3,541 ORs. TNA WO95/1293 2nd Division WD, Strength Return, 21 October 1916. The war establishment of an infantry brigade was one third of that of a division i.e. 124 officers and 3,931 ORs. See General Staff, War Office, *Field Service Pocket Book (Reprinted with Amendments, 1916)* (London: HMSO, 1916), p. 6.

²¹⁶ Simply holding trenches could incur significant casualties. For example, in three days holding trenches at Delville Wood, 99 Brigade suffered 141 casualties. TNA WO95/1368 99 Brigade WD, 2-4 August 1916. Even when out of the line, accidents amongst the brigade's personnel caused casualties. For example, Captain N.F. Drummond of 1/KRRC was killed and eight ORs wounded when a grenade exploded prematurely during a training session. TNA WO95/1371, 1/KRRC WD, 20 December 1916

²¹⁷ TNA WO95/1294 2nd Division WD, Strength Returns, 18 and 25 November 1916 and 2, 9 and 16 December 1916

²¹⁸ TNA WO95/1294 2nd Division WD, Strength Returns, 16 December 1916

the loss of remaining long serving ORs was significant enough to merit mention of the loss of individuals in battalion war diaries.

*During the early morning the Transport in CROMWELL HUTS, east of AVELUY, was shelled and suffered casualties, three Riflemen who had been with the Battalion since Aug. 1914 were killed.*²¹⁹

*No 472 Pte. A.V. MORTON was accidentally killed by a Lewis Gun. He was one of the very few surviving original Lewis Gunners of the Battn.*²²⁰

The concern of Kellett and his colleagues was shared beyond 99 Brigade and 2nd Division.

Haig was well aware of the challenge. He wrote at the time:

*Our ranks are full of quite raw material, including regimental officers. They (officers and men) require much training to fit them even for preparatory action and much more to fit them for a decisive attack, which may fall to us in the end. We owe it to our men and to our country not to throw untrained men into the fight.*²²¹

In its weekly Strength Returns from 23 December 1916 onwards, 2nd Division specifically identified for the first time the number of ORs that its COs regarded as ‘not fully trained’.²²²

Two entries in 1/KRRC’s WD serve to put the nature of the training challenge in basic skills into perspective:

*19 March 1917: A draft of 128 untrained men and 44 returned wounded, sick etc. joined.*²²³

1 April 1917: Great attention is being paid to close order drill, and the handling of arms, at both of which the untrained Draft are particularly slow. Up to the present it has not been possible to practice any bombing, though the

²¹⁹ TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 16 February 1917. These casualties are believed to be Riflemen Stephen Blackpool (1887-1917), Edward Charlesworth (1883-1917) and Isaac Grimsey (1889-1917) who are buried in Ovillers Military Cemetery.

²²⁰ TNA WO95/1372 22/RF WD, 13 May 1917. For details of this accident, see Sheffield & Inglis (eds.), *From Vimy Ridge to the Rhine*, p. 96.

²²¹ TNA WO158/20, GHQ, Notes on Operations, 1917 January-1918 October 22, NOTES on General Nivelle’s Plans, 3 January 1917

²²² This category of reinforcement was ‘institutionalised’ in First Army from April 1917 onwards when First Army Pro Forma No. 3 i.e. Strength Return, was amended to include ‘Column “C” Untrained’.

²²³ TNA WO95/1371 1/KRRC WD, 19 March 1917

*necessity for it is great, on account of it being at present impossible to obtain bombs or rifle grenades of any description.*²²⁴

In the period 23 December 1916 to 24 February 1917 99 Brigade received 1,369 ‘not fully trained’ ORs. These drafts formed more than forty per cent of the brigade’s complement of ORs at the end of this period (3,226 ORs). In the same two months 2nd Division received 6,390 ‘not fully trained’ ORs who formed fifty-nine per cent of the division’s complement of ORs (10,865 ORs) on 24 February 1917. Remarkably, the division’s Strength Returns for this period do not record any officers sent to it as ‘not fully trained’. The evidence of their performance, however, suggests otherwise. As one officer subsequently wrote:

*After all, the lack of training and inexperience of the junior leaders in the infantry was their misfortune, not their fault. That lack of training may have been due to circumstances beyond their control, but must have been known to the higher command.*²²⁵

The brigade’s unsuccessful attack on 17 February 1917 near Miraumont demonstrated the point. It resulted in forty-eight officers and 733 ORs becoming casualties.²²⁶ Gough, GOC Fifth Army, ordered an enquiry.²²⁷ Arising from a conference with Daly, Kellett and the relevant COs, Pereira reported that a captured German officer had claimed that a deserter had revealed the battle plan five hours before the attack. Consequently, German artillery had been particularly effective in disrupting the attack. Casualties amongst company officers had reduced their number to two or three per battalion. Pereira drew attention to the limitations of his junior officers and NCOs:

²²⁴ Ibid., 1 April 1917

²²⁵ Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Walter Adolph Vignoles (1874-1953), 2iC, 10/Lincolns, 101 Brigade, 34th Division. TNA CAB45/116, Letter to Captain C. Falls, 10 February 1939

²²⁶ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report by Acting GOC, 22 February 1917

²²⁷ TNA WO95/1295 2nd Division WD, II Corps G.T.926, 18th February 1917. The attack was undertaken by 6 and 99 Brigades, 2nd Division and 54 Brigade, 18th Division – see TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Brigade Order 111, 13 February 1917.

*This position is a most difficult one especially when it has to be coped with by young officers with little experience and I think that it will only be by drill training attacks and practising extensive casualties of senior officers that will make junior officers and N.C.Os. carry on on the right lines when they find themselves in command.*²²⁸

In giving his own reasons, Barnett Barker had made a similar point:

*The absence of a capable senior officer on the spot after the first objective had been taken. He could have rallied troops pushed up parties to support the few men who could not maintain themselves in the 2nd objective.*²²⁹

After the casualties 99 Brigade suffered on 17 February 1917, Kellett was a worried man. On 2 March 1917 he sent a hand written memorandum to Pereira concerning the fighting strength of his brigade.²³⁰ After accounting for the need to allocate two officers and 160 ORs per battalion to duties which supported troops delivering a forthcoming planned attack, Kellett stated the number of his ‘actual fighting men’ to be:

| | Officers | | ORs | |
|---------------|----------|-------|-------|---------|
| 22/RF | 14 | (25) | 230 | (730) |
| 23/RF | 12 | (21) | 370 | (800) |
| 1/Royal Berks | 20 | (34) | 527 | (893) |
| 1/KRRC | 17 | (31) | 290 | (743) |
| Totals | 63 | (111) | 1,417 | (3,166) |

Table 4.1 Fighting Strength of 99 Brigade, 2 March 1917²³¹

²²⁸ TNA WO95/1295 2nd Division WD, Report on Operations - 17 February 1917, G.S. 1085/5, 20 February 1917. Pereira’s concerns were shared. Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Arthur Alan Hanbury Hanbury-Sparrow (1892-1982) served in 2/Royal Berkshire, 25 Brigade, 8th Division. He wrote: ‘Here was the secret of the British Army’s weakness *vis-à-vis* the Germans. The latter could use N.C.O.s where we had to use officers, and thousands of promising young officers were killed doing lance-corporal’s work, simply because section commanders had not it in them to exercise sufficient authority to carry out their task. The consequence of this unnecessary slaughter of officers was reflected in a lack of skill in leading which caused hideous casualties amongst the men.’ A.A.H. Hanbury-Sparrow, *The Land-locked Lake* (London: Arthur Barker, 1932), p. 212

²²⁹ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report by Acting GOC, 22 February 1917

²³⁰ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Kellett to 2nd Division, 2 March 1917, Ref: 2nd Div. Order No. 202 of 1.3.17

²³¹ The figures in brackets are the corresponding figures included in 2nd Division’s weekly Strength Return for 3 March 1917. TNA WO95/1296 2nd Division WD, Strength Return, 3 March 1917. Those allocated other duties go some way, but far from all the way, to explain the difference between these sets of figures.

The brigade's subsequent successful attack on 10 March 1917 on Grevillers Trench and Lady's Leg Ravine, east of Pys proved to be less costly than the Miraumont operation. In his report Kellett noted that the brigade suffered casualties of seven officers and 187 ORs. He was generous with his praise of his men.

*In conclusion I would like to say that the spirit and dash of All Ranks of the Brigade during the Operation as well as the willing, Cheery (sic) way in which they worked to perfect the arrangements for the Attack were beyond all praise.*²³²

Kellett's manpower level remained precarious. In the four weeks ended 27 April 1917, Kellett's battalions received drafts totalling twenty-two officers and 196 ORs, barely sufficient to make good their casualties on 10 March.²³³ The effect of such losses on battalions' accumulated experience was not lost on the Official Historian.

*The consequence was that a battalion seldom took more than 500 all ranks into action, and sometimes less than 400. Should it suffer 200 battle casualties in a series of attacks, have in addition 100 sick – as it well might in weather such as that of the first three weeks of this April – be withdrawn for a rest for a week, and during that period receive a draft of 200 reinforcements, then that draft would constitute the bulk of its fighting strength when next engaged. The men might not have been under fire or had more than three months' training in England, the junior officers might be almost equally raw, and the few days since their arrival might have been taken up with digging trenches or unloading stores.*²³⁴

²³² TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report on Attack and Capture of Grevillers Trench and Lady's Leg Ravine (S.W. of Loupart Wood) by 99th Brigade on 10th March 1917, p. 9, 13 March 1917

²³³ TNA WO95/1296 2nd Division WD, Strength Returns, 7, 14, 21 and 27 April 1917

²³⁴ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 414. For what is believed to be Pereira's assessment of the capacity of a division to assimilate large numbers of reinforcements during the spring of 1917, see Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 2, 1914-1918*, p. 447.

4.11 First Scarpe, Arleux and Third Battle of the Scarpe

Kellett was on leave when, on 30 March 1917, 2nd Division was transferred from Gough's Fifth Army to Horne's First Army as part of XIII Corps.²³⁵ With Kellett back in harness, 99 Brigade relieved Pelham Burn's 152 Brigade on 12 April 1917.²³⁶ It was to play a small part in the First Battle of the Scarpe. The following day, 13 April 1917, Kellett held a conference of his COs to consider and arrange a plan of 'aggressive defence'.²³⁷ Despite snowstorms, this took the form of advancing the British position on 14 April by 3,000 yards, including the capture of the village of Bailleul, on a front of 1,200 yards to within 900 yards of the Oppy-Gavrelle Line.²³⁸ The brigade's casualties were four officers and sixty-one ORs.²³⁹ They were described as 'slight'.²⁴⁰

More serious consequences were to flow from 99 Brigade's next involvement as part of the Battle of Arleux on 29 April 1917, by which time two critical decisions had been implemented. First, von Lossberg's appointment as Chief of Staff of the German Sixth Army had resulted in the conversion of 'the new German battleline into a defensive position as strong in organization as any seen yet'.²⁴¹ Second, consequent on the failure of the Nivelle Offensive, the strategic rationale for the Battle of Arras as a whole had been undermined. As Haig recorded: 'There was thus no object in our pushing on to Cambrai.'²⁴²

Kellett's attack was made with meagre resources. He had lost the use of 1/KRRC attached to 6 Brigade the previous day for its attack, in conjunction with 5 Brigade, during which this

²³⁵ Kellett's period of leave was from 25 March to 2 April 1917. TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 25 March and 2 April 1917

²³⁶ Ibid., 12 April 1917

²³⁷ Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 2, 1914-1918*, p. 411

²³⁸ Ibid., Narrative of the Operations at BAILLEUL, FRANCE

²³⁹ Ibid., 13, 14 and 15 April 1917

²⁴⁰ Ibid., Narrative of the Operations at BAILLEUL, FRANCE

²⁴¹ G.C. Wynne, *If Germany Attacks: The Battle in Depth in the West* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, reprinted 1976), p. 199. See also Chapter 2, Note 197.

²⁴² TNA WO256/17 Haig's Diary, 29 April 1917

battalion had been 'used up'.²⁴³ The combined strength of Kellett's other three battalions was forty-nine Officers and 914 ORs, the approximate establishment of a single battalion.²⁴⁴ The objective of each of the brigade's two attacking battalions was a 500 yard stretch of the Oppy Line. The fighting was severe.²⁴⁵ The inadequate artillery preparation had left 22/RF facing wire which had been insufficiently cut whilst 1/Royal Berks faced wire which was practically intact. Objectives initially gained were counter attacked and lost, attacked again and regained only to have to be given up when the Germans continued to press their counter attacks 'regardless of losses'.²⁴⁶ The brigade's casualties during the day's fighting were 414 officers and ORs.²⁴⁷

Kellett's brigade was not alone in its plight. Pereira recorded on 1 May 1917 that 5 Brigade had a 'trench strength' of 1,237, 6 Brigade of 1,322 and 99 Brigade of 1,028.²⁴⁸ In order that 2nd Division could continue to function in the field, a pragmatic decision was taken on the evening of 30 April 1917 to form a single composite brigade of four battalions from the remains of its units. Together with his brigade's staff, Kellett was given command of this scratch brigade with effect from mid-day 1 May 1917.²⁴⁹ Kellett recorded that the Composite

²⁴³ For a report on the attack by 5 and 6 Brigades on 28 April 1917, see TNA WO95/1296 2nd Division WD, Brief Resume of Operations from 6am Wednesday 25th April 1917, pp. 2 & 3.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. These included stretcher bearers, runners, signallers and battalion HQ staff.

²⁴⁵ 'It was an Homeric struggle!' Wyrall, *Second Division, Volume 2, 1914-1918*, p. 430

²⁴⁶ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Brief Report on Operations of 29th April 1917, 5th May 1917, p. 4 GOC 2nd Division recorded: 'The attacks were made by a fresh battn. of the 1st Guards Reserve Div and an officer in the front trench described them as the most determined he had experienced, but the 99th Bde. had got their backs up and drove back all attacks and killed a lot of Boche.' TNA WO95/1289 Major-General C.E. Pereira, 2nd Division. Vol. III. 1917 & 1918, 29 April 1917

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 1 May 1917. These figures are in contrast to the figures included in 2nd Division's weekly Strength Returns. The 'fighting strength' of 99 Brigade on 5 May 1917, which included twelve officers and 158 ORs of 99th MG Company, for example, was stated to be 131 officers and 2,585 ORs. TNA WO95/1297 2nd Division WD, Strength Return, 5 May 1917

²⁴⁹ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 99th Infantry Brigade Order No. 137, 1 May 1917. 'A' Battalion was drawn from units within 5 Brigade; 'B' Battalion from units within 6 Brigade; and 'C' and 'D' Battalions from units within 99 Brigade.

Brigade was composed of ‘a total bayonet strength of under 1,400 men all of whom were in an extremely tired and worn out condition’.²⁵⁰

The Third Battle of the Scarpe involved an attack on a fourteen mile front from Fresnoy to Bullecourt delivered on 3 May 1917 by formations of First, Third and Fifth Armies.²⁵¹ Kellett’s attack took place between the villages of Fresnoy and Oppy on a frontage of 1,400 yards.²⁵² The brigade’s prime objective was the capture of Fresnoy Trench to provide a protective flank to the attack of 1 Canadian Infantry Brigade on Fresnoy itself. The failure of 92 Brigade to capture Oppy Wood and the village of Oppy to the south of Fresnoy Trench effectively rendered Kellett’s task impracticable owing to enfilade fire. By the end of the day’s fighting, Kellett’s brigade did not hold Fresnoy Trench but had established defensive flanks on both sides of its front with a series of strong points. It had captured 138 prisoners and three MGs.²⁵³ This was at a cost, however, of nineteen officers and 498 ORs casualties.²⁵⁴ The cumulative effect of the three Battles of the Scarpe had ‘bled the division white’.²⁵⁵

Kellett’s Composite Brigade was relieved on the night of 3/4 May 1917 by 13 Brigade.²⁵⁶ Pereira made a point of walking to Kellett’s HQ on the morning of 4 May 1917 ‘to congratulate Kellett on the magnificent fight and the great success achieved by the Composite

²⁵⁰ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report on the Attack Made by 99th (Composite) Infantry Brigade on 3/5/1917, 6 May 1917, p. 8. The Official Historian described 2nd Division as having ‘been reduced to a shadow of its former self’. *BOH 1917 Volume I*, p. 446

²⁵¹ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 430

²⁵² TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report on the Attack Made by 99th (Composite) Infantry Brigade on 3/5/1917, 6 May 1917, p. 2

²⁵³ Pereira’s diary points to the critical role played by the trench mortars he had ordered to be placed in ‘several strong points’ which successfully dealt with some six counter-attacks from the direction of Oppy Wood. TNA WO95/1289 Major-General C.E. Pereira, 2nd Division. Vol. III. 1917 & 1918, 1 May 1917. Kellett’s order specified, however, that trench mortars were to be placed in only two strong points on the brigade’s southern flank. TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Appendix 3 to 99th Infantry Brigade Order No. 137 of 1/5/1917

²⁵⁴ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, Report on the Attack Made by 99th (Composite) Infantry Brigade on 3/5/1917, 6 May 1917, p. 10. The brigade’s WD, 3 May 1917, however, states that the casualties suffered on that day were 328 – thirty-nine killed, 165 wounded and 124 missing.

²⁵⁵ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 448

²⁵⁶ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 3 May 1917

Bde.’.²⁵⁷ By the following day, 99 Brigade was resting and cleaning up at Ecoivres, south-east of Mont St-Eloi when Pereira visited. He ‘personally thanked the officers and men of the 99th Inf. Bde. for their splendid work during the recent operations’.²⁵⁸ Kellett’s after-action report was markedly different from that he had written, for example, after the capture of Grevillers Trench and Lady’s Leg Ravine on 10 March 1917.²⁵⁹ Whereas in that report Kellett was able to report success and identify elements of good practice which had worked well, his report concerning 3 May 1917 was defensive in its tone. Despite Pereira’s congratulations. Kellett was at pains to explain why his troops had been unable to hold Fresnoy Trench and to defend the decisions taken to dig-in where they had. Kellett drew no lessons to be learnt.²⁶⁰ Pereira, on the other hand, drew his own conclusions from what had essentially been another expensive day of attritional warfare. At a conference of his COs et al on 6 May 1917 Pereira concluded there ‘was the necessity of getting snipers busy as soon as an objective was gained’.²⁶¹ He explained:

*Some battns did this and held their front in comfort but in cases where they did not the Boche method of “infiltration” or gradually feeling the front and establishing themselves up against it soon began to tell and they found themselves troubled by Boche who had established themselves in vantage points where they could cause great annoyance and prevent freedom of movement.*²⁶²

On the same day Pereira left for England on leave with Kellett again commanding in his place. On 13 May 1917 Kellett acted on Pereira’s assessment, no doubt drawing on his own

²⁵⁷ TNA WO95/1289 Major-General C.E. Pereira, 2nd Division. Vol. III. 1917 & 1918, 3 May 1917. Kellett’s description and evaluation of the events of 3 May 1917 do not add up to a success. Pereira’s claim that, on a par with the Canadian capture of the village of Fresnoy, ‘we captured all our objectives’ has the whiff of delusion or self-serving interest, or both.

²⁵⁸ TNA WO95/1369 99 Brigade WD, 5 May 1917

²⁵⁹ Ibid., Report on Attack and Capture of Grevillers Trench and Lady’s Leg Ravine (S.W. of Loupart Wood) by 99th Brigade on 10th March 1917, 13 March 1917

²⁶⁰ Ibid., Report on the Attack Made by 99th (Composite) Infantry Brigade on 3/5/1917, 6 May 1917

²⁶¹ TNA WO95/1289 Major-General C.E. Pereira, 2nd Division. Vol. III. 1917 & 1918, 5 May 1917. 2nd Division’s WD records this conference having taken place on 6 May 1917. In addition to COs, the conference was attended by Brigadier-Generals, their staff, CRE, MG Company and TM Battery Commanders.

²⁶² Ibid.

experience as an Instructor at the School of Musketry, and gave a lecture on the subject of ‘Training of Snipers’ as a prelude to the opening of a school of sniping at Magnicourt.²⁶³ It was to be virtually his own last act before he himself left on leave on 15 May 1917.²⁶⁴ That Kellett required and was granted leave within six weeks of his last leave was evidence of the strain events had placed upon him.

It was evident by the end of the year, however, that the cumulative strain of command over an extended period eventually took its toll. In circumstances not dissimilar to those of Pelham Burn, Kellett’s health deteriorated to the point where, even after another period of leave, he was eventually forced to relinquish his command ‘owing to failing health’. Kellett had been acting GOC 2nd Division in Pereira’s absence on leave once again, from 20 December 1917 to 4 January 1918 when he returned to the command of 99 Brigade. The following day Kellett left on leave himself leaving Hunt in command of 99 Brigade. Despite this period at home, Kellett did not return to the command of 99 Brigade.²⁶⁵

4.12 Conclusion

The division in which Kellett served in France was fundamentally different in composition from the 2nd Division which formed part of the BEF in August 1914. The redistribution of brigades and battalions between and within the division of late 1915, coupled with the results of attritional warfare on the composition of junior officers, NCOs and ORs, meant that 2nd Division had metamorphosed. It was amongst the COs and BMs of the division that pre-war Regular officers were available throughout the war, almost exclusively so. Only two officers within the division who had been citizens at the outbreak of war commanded any of its

²⁶³ TNA WO95/1297 2nd Division WD, 13 & 16 May 1917. Magnicourt lies eighteen miles west of Arras.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 15 May 1917. Kellett was replaced as 2nd Division’s GOC by Brigadier-General G.M. Bullen-Smith, GOC 5 Brigade until Pereira returned from leave on 17 May 1917.

²⁶⁵ TNA WO95/1370 99 Brigade WD, 24 January 1918

battalions; similarly, only two such officers ever held the appointment of BM within the division.²⁶⁶ Kellett's distinct contribution was to provide consistency of leadership to 99 Brigade. Despite the vicissitudes to which the brigade was subject, Kellett demonstrated flexibility in his approach, both to the changes in his responsibilities when he deputised for Walker and Pereira, and to the way in which he drew upon both his COs and his brigade staff to ensure 99 Brigade delivered what was expected of it.

In the period under review, the role of 2nd Division was as one of the BEF's attritional divisions. Its contribution to the Somme campaign had been a very tough 'bite and hold' operation at Delville Wood on 27/28 July 1916. The attack at Serre on November 1916 had been long postponed because of the weather and the state of the ground. That it was undertaken at all, and undertaken when it was, was primarily to reinforce Haig's negotiating position vis á vis Joffre for the following year's campaign. As Haig put it: 'The success has come at a most opportune moment.'²⁶⁷

The attacks at Miraumont in February 1917 and Pys in March 1917 were actions limited in their scope and intended to maintain pressure on the enemy. They served as precursors to the type of attacks in which Kellett and his brigade were to be involved in late April and early May 1917 – strictly limited in their objectives. In both pairs of attacks, the operations were robbed of strategic significance by the Germans' subsequent retreat to the Hindenburg Line and the failure of the Nivelle Offensive respectively. Throughout this period the challenge to which Kellett and his colleagues had to rise was that of maintaining the brigade's fighting

²⁶⁶ The two COs were Lieutenant-Colonel Wilfrid Cabourn Smith (1888-1965) who commanded 1/King's (Liverpool Regiment), 6 Brigade and subsequently 17/RF, 5 Brigade; and Lieutenant-Colonel R.S.H. Stafford (see Notes 135 and 139 above) who commanded 1/KRRC, 99 Brigade and subsequently 17/Middlesex, 6 Brigade. The two BMs were Captain Egerton Lowndes Wright (1885-1918), 6 Brigade and Captain D. N. Farquharson, 99 Brigade.

²⁶⁷ TNA WO256/14 Haig's Diary, 13 November 1916

capability, despite GHQ's understandable policy of concentrating the allocation of reinforcements to those divisions earmarked to attack on 9 April 1917. Significant numbers of officers and ORs who formed the brigade's reinforcements had limited capability and/or experience. The surviving papers of 99 Brigade and its constituent battalions for this period are devoid of references to *SS143* and its implications for organization, tactics and training. At some cost to his own health, life for Kellett and his team was a cycle of building and training, planning and preparing, and subsequent deployment in attritional operations. Given the limited scale of the set-piece actions in which 99 Brigade was involved during the review period, Kellett's greatest contribution to 99 Brigade's fortunes was the example he set through the qualities of durability and dependability he brought to his role. The personal regard in which Kellett was held was summarised by one of his former officers who described him as a 'loyal and well-tried comrade, brave leader, great and gallant gentleman'.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ Inglis, *The Kensington Battalion*, p. 253

Chapter 5

Brigadier-General A.B.E. Cator

37 Infantry Brigade



5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have focused on brigadier-generals who commanded brigades during the Battle of Arras that formed parts of Canadian, Territorial and Regular divisions respectively. The first reason for selecting Brigadier-General Albemarle (Alby) Bertie Edward Cator, GOC 37 Brigade, 12th Division, is that as a NA division, his formation provides a different dimension.¹ Second, whilst at thirty-nine younger than the median aged Arras brigadier-general appointed in 1916, Cator's service record prior to his promotion was

¹ Along with 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th and 14th Divisions, 12th Division formed part of Lord Kitchener's First NA, designated K1. For an explanation of the classifications K1, K2, K3 and K4, see P. Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-16* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 69.

typical of that of a capable regimental officer.² He was in the mainstream, for example, being amongst the majority of the Arras brigadier-generals who had commanded a battalion but who had not passed Staff College.³

Third, Cator was one of the fourteen Arras brigadier-generals who were subsequently promoted to command a division, although he held this appointment for only seven months.⁴ Unlike Cator, Loomis had the benefit of a rest for over three months prior to his appointment as GOC 3rd Canadian Division in September 1918.⁵ As with both Pelham Burn and Kellett, Cator returned to England in the early months of 1918 because of ill health. Cator's career provides an opportunity to consider his knowledge, experience and performance as a platform for his promotion to divisional command.

Fourth, as a formation within VI Corps, 12th Division's involvement in the battle took place south of the River Scarpe. Not only was this division one of those chosen to attack initially on 9 April, but it also subsequently participated in the Battle of Arleux (28/29 April), the Third Battle of the Scarpe (3/4 May) and the Capture of Roeux (13/14 May). The division's

² See Chapter 1, Table 1.6.

³ See Chapter 1, Table 1.8.

⁴ See Chapter 1, Table 1.14. Of the nine officers appointed to permanent command of a brigade within 12th Division, Cator was one of only two who were promoted to command a division. The other was Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Arthur Solly-Flood (1870-1940), GOC 35 Brigade, who commanded 42nd Division from 15 October 1917 until the end of the war.

⁵ The vacancy as GOC 3rd Canadian Division arose only because of a desire within the Canadian Corps, at least acquiesced to if not promoted by Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie, to replace Major-General Louis Lipsett before the war ended, Lipsett being the last British officer commanding a Canadian division. See D. Morton, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. 14 (1911-1920), L.J. Lipsett, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lipsett_louis_james_14E.html (accessed 29 November 2015). Having served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force throughout the war, Currie maintained that Lipsett wished to remain with his division. See LAC MG30 E 100 Vol. 43 File 193 – Currie's Diary, 10 September 1918. Lipsett was ordered by Haig to move as GOC to 4th Division which he did on 14 September 1918. He was killed in action on 14 October 1918, a loss of 'one of the outstanding officers of the Canadian Corps'. H.M. Urquhart, *Arthur Currie: The Biography of a Great Canadian* (Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1950), p. 251. See also Chapter 2, Note 26.

involvement during the Battle was therefore, with a single exception, more extensive than that of any other division in Third Army.⁶

Like Pelham Burn, Cator left a number of letters which remain in the possession of one of his grandsons.⁷ These supplement and enrich the other sources available to ensure that Cator's role as a commander during the Great War is known and recognised.

5.2 VI Corps and 12th (Eastern) Division

Formed from men drawn from East Anglia, London and the Home Counties, 12th Division was the last of the K1 divisions to land in France in early June 1915.⁸ Unlike Kellett's 2nd Division, the battalions of 12th Division's brigades remained unchanged until the reduction of infantry brigades to three battalions each which took place, with exceptions, in early February 1918.⁹ Cator's division, like those of Loomis and Pelham Burn, retained its composition and internal cohesion over this period. Its experience of being moved from corps to corps mirrored that of many British divisions.¹⁰ 12th Division had a particularly peripatetic existence over the summer of 1916. Between June and September it served in seven different Corps before it began a period of relative stability as part of VI Corps. With the exception of a month with XV Corps in September 1916 and a ten day respite period as part of XVIII

⁶ The exception was 34th Division commanded by Major-General C.L. Nicholson which additionally took part in the Second Battle of the Scarpe (23/34 April) through the involvement of its 103 Brigade (GOC Brigadier-General H.E. Trevor).

⁷ The author is grateful to Mr Christopher (Kit) Cator, grandson of Cator, for granting access to these letters and photographs.

⁸ 12th Division had been preceded in May 1915 by the arrival of 9th and 14th Divisions. The other three K1 divisions – 10th, 11th and 13th - were ordered to Gallipoli in June and July 1915.

⁹ For details of the changes in 12th Division, see A.B. Scott, (ed.) & P.M. Brumwell (compiler), *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division in the Great War, 1914-1918* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1923), p. 163. 37 Brigade lost 7/East Surrey – see TNA WO95/1859 37 Brigade WD, February 1918, Appendix C – 37th Inf. Bde. Q/4/3 and Appendix D – Re-organisation Scheme. All brigades within the five Australian, the New Zealand and the four Canadian divisions, however, retained four battalions to each brigade throughout the war. Within the thirty brigades of these ten divisions, there were only four brigades in which the allocation of battalions did change. They were 9 CIB, 3rd Canadian Division, 12 CIB, 4th Canadian Division and 1 and 2 New Zealand Brigades, New Zealand Division.

¹⁰ 12th Division was transferred between Corps on nineteen occasions during its service on the Western Front. It served as part of eleven different Corps – I, II, III, V, VI, VIII, IX, XI, XV, XVII and XVIII.

Corps in April 1917, 12th Division served as part of VI Corps from mid-August 1916 until late May 1917.¹¹

GOC VI Corps was Lieutenant-General J.A.L. Haldane.¹² He had been promoted a matter of days before 12th Division's arrival. Haldane had served as GOC 10 Brigade during the Retreat. Described as 'an excellent example of the type of technocratic general through whose efforts the First World War on the western front was won', Haldane was an officer of strong character.¹³ Cator already knew him. In a letter to his mother, Cator referred to a meeting during which Haldane had told Cator that he had requested that Harry Lennard, Cator's brother-in-law, should join the staff of VI Corps.¹⁴ They met again, for example, when Haldane made his first tour of 37 Brigade's trenches shortly after his appointment.¹⁵

In its initial GOC, Major-General J. Spens, 12th Division shared a common history with a number of other K1 divisions.¹⁶ Spens had retired at the age of sixty-one after a four year appointment as GOC Lowland Division, TF less than a month before war was declared. He oversaw the raising of the division and its initial training before being replaced in mid-March 1915 by Major-General F.D.V. Wing prior to the division's move to France in early June

¹¹ Over the period 16-18 June 1916 12th Division moved from I Corps to the command of III Corps; on 5 July 1916 to X Corps; 10 July to VIII Corps; 26 July to II Corps; 15/16 August to VI Corps; 29/30 September to XV Corps before returning to VI Corps on 23 October 1916. It came under the command of XVIII Corps between the night of 13/14 April and 24 April 1917 until another respite period with XVIII Corps from 24 May to 17 June 1917. TNA WO95/1823 & 1824 WD, 12th Division

¹² Lieutenant-General (later General Sir) (James) Aylmer Lowthorpe Haldane (1862–1950). Haldane had been promoted from GOC 3rd Division to GOC VI Corps on 8 August 1916 and held this command for the rest of the war.

¹³ A. Simpson, 'Haldane, Sir (James) Aylmer Lowthorpe (1862–1950)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, OUP, Oct 2008; online edn, Sept 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/95438> (accessed 11 July 2014)

¹⁴ Sir Henry Arthur Hallam Farnaby Lennard (1859-1928) was married to Cator's sixth sister, Beatrice Charlotte Emily Lennard (née Cator) (1868-1949). Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, June 1916

¹⁵ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 24 August 1916. Haldane mentions Cator in his autobiography. A. Haldane, *A Soldier's Saga: The Autobiography of General Sir Aylmer Haldane* (London: William Blackwood, 1948), p. 344

¹⁶ Major-General James Spens (1853-1934)

1915.¹⁷ Wing had been BGRA 3rd Division since January 1913 and had temporarily commanded this division in November 1914. Although seventy per cent of officers appointed to the permanent command of divisions that served on the Western Front were infantrymen, the appointment of gunner officers as divisional GOCs was more common than those who had been commissioned into either cavalry regiments or the Royal Engineers.¹⁸ Wing was killed, however, on 2 October 1915 during 12th Division's involvement in its first major engagement, the Battle of Loos.¹⁹ In addition to Wing, the GOCs of 7th and 9th Divisions – Sir Thompson Capper and G.H. Thesiger respectively - were also killed at Loos.²⁰ This prompted Sir William Robertson, CGS, to point out that 'these are losses the army can ill afford'.²¹ He went on to point to the need for divisional and corps commanders not to take up positions 'too far forward when fighting is in progress'.²² By implication, therefore, Robertson believed the loss of brigadier-generals was both to be expected and was affordable.

Wing's replacement was a fellow gunner, Major-General A.B. Scott.²³ Commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1881, a veteran of the South African War, Scott served in India from 1906. He mobilized for war as BGRA 7th (Meerut) Division, Indian Army Corps with which

¹⁷ Major-General Frederick Drummond Vincent Wing (1860-1915). The experience of 13th Division was similar. The division's initial short-lived GOC, Major-General Robert George Kekewich (1854-1914) committed suicide on 5 November 1914. He was succeeded by Major-General Henry Byron Jeffreys (1854-1949) who had retired in 1910. He commanded the division until he was replaced on the same day as Spens (15 March 1915) by Major-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Frederick Charles Shaw (1861-1942) who took the division to Gallipoli in July 1915.

¹⁸ 166 officers were appointed to permanent commands of British divisions that served on the Western Front during the war. Of these 116 had been commissioned into infantry regiments, twenty-four into the Royal Artillery, sixteen into cavalry regiments and ten into the Royal Engineers. The most frequent year during which Royal Artillery officers were promoted divisional GOCs was 1915 when ten such officers were appointed. These figures are based on the author's analysis of A.F. Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions Parts 1-4* (Newport: Ray Westlake – Military Books, 1988-1990), F.W. Perry, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, History of the Great War, Part 5A* (Newport: Ray Westlake, 1992) and *Army Lists*.

¹⁹ TNA WO 95/1828 WD 12th Division, 2 October 1915

²⁰ Major-General Sir Thompson Capper (1863-1915). Major-General George Handcock Thesiger (1868-1915).

²¹ Lieutenant-General (later Field-Marshal) Sir William (Robert) Robertson (1860-1933) (1st Baronet). TNA WO95/1629, Lieutenant-General Sir W. Robertson to 7th Division, 3 October 1915

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Major-General (later Sir) Arthur Binny Scott (1862-1944). It was a rarity during the Great War for one gunner to succeed another as a divisional GOC. This happened on only one other occasion when, on 17 July 1915, Major-General (later Sir) Edward Maxwell Perceval (1861-1955) succeeded Major-General Thomas Stanford Baldock (1854-1937) as GOC 49th Division.

he served in France. Scott had only been appointed temporarily as MGRA Third Army on 7 September 1915 when he was promoted to the command of 12th Division on 3 October 1915. Having neither passed Staff College nor been commissioned into an infantry regiment, there remains an unanswered question as to why Scott was selected for this command. One pointer is that a number of other BGRAs had already been recognised as capable commanders. For example, of the initial eight BGRAs of 1st–8th Divisions, six rose to commands at divisional level or above.²⁴ Scott proved a capable GOC, commanding the division for over two and a half years. He was subsequently appointed GOC 8th (Lucknow) Division in India on 26 April 1918.²⁵ At both Corps (Haldane) and at divisional level (Scott), therefore, the period under review (mid-October 1916 to mid-May 1917) was one during which Cator had the benefit of stable leadership for his period of command of 37 Brigade.

All three brigadier-generals Scott inherited had been appointed to their commands in late August 1914.²⁶ Within less than four months of Scott's own appointment, however, they had all been replaced. The GOC 35 Brigade, Brigadier-General C.H.C. van Straubenzee, was invalided home because of illness on 25 October 1915 to be replaced by Brigadier-General A. Solly-Flood.²⁷ Like Scott, the initial GOCs of 36 and 37 Brigades – Brigadier-Generals H.B. Borradaile and C.A. Fowler respectively – were both Indian Army officers.²⁸ Borradaile, who

²⁴ They were Major-General (later Sir) John Emerson Wharton Headlam (1864-1946), MGRA (GHQ); Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Edward Aveling Holland (1862–1927), GOC I Corps; General Sir Henry Horne, GOC First Army; General (later Field-Marshal) George Francis Milne (later 1st Baron Milne, of Salonika and of Rubislaw in the County of Aberdeen) (1866-1948), GOC British Salonika Army; Major-General E.M. Perceval, GOC 49th Division; and Major-General F.D.V. Wing, GOC 12th Division.

²⁵ For Scott's departing order to 12th Division see Scott, (ed.) & Brumwell, *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division*, p. 181.

²⁶ The relevant dates were 35 Brigade - 29 August 1914; 36 Brigade – 24 August 1914; 37 Brigade 26 August 1914.

²⁷ Scott, (ed.) & Brumwell, *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division*, p. 28. Brigadier-General Casimir Henry Claude van Straubenzee (1864-1943). When Solly-Flood was appointed to head Third Army School in November 1916, he was eventually replaced permanently in January 1917 by Brigadier-General B. Vincent who, apart from an absence of six weeks in August and September 1918, commanded 35 Brigade for the rest of the war.

²⁸ Brigadier-General Harry Benn Borradaile (1860-1948). Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Charles Astley Fowler (1865-1940). Fowler's next appointment was in the Department of the Assistant Censor.

had retired in 1912, was sent home on 9 November 1915 and replaced by Brigadier-General L.B. Boyd-Moss.²⁹ Cator was promoted GOC 37 Brigade to replace Fowler on 13 February 1916. Fowler 'went home giving up the Brigade'.³⁰ Cator was to become the brigade's longest serving GOC.³¹

5.3 Brigadier-General A.B.E. Cator

Alby Cator was born on 12 April 1877 into a landed family whose seat, in addition to houses in Beckenham, Kent and Trewsbury, Gloucestershire, was an estate at Woodbastwick, Norfolk. Cator was the third of four sons.³² He also had ten sisters. Cator's father, also named Albemarle Cator, devoted his time and talents to his estate and his sizeable family.³³ Although John, Cator's elder brother by fifteen years, had served in the Prince of Wales's Own Norfolk Artillery, military careers were not a prominent thread in the Cator lineage.³⁴

Educated at Eton, life had seemingly dealt Alby Cator a complete set of cards, with a single

²⁹ Brigadier-General Lionel Boyd Boyd-Moss (1875-1940). Commissioned into the South Staffordshire Regiment, Boyd-Moss received his Royal Aero Club Aviator's Certificate No 241 in 1912 serving with the RFC for two years until October 1914. Boyd-Moss was succeeded in November 1916 by Brigadier-General Charles Samuel Owen (1879-1959) who commanded 36 Brigade for the remainder of the war.

³⁰ TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 5 February 1915

³¹ Fowler had been in post for 528 days. Cator served in this post for 599 days before being replaced on 9 October 1917 by Brigadier-General Adrian Beare Incedon-Webber (1876-1946) who commanded 37 Brigade for 398 days until the end of the war.

³² One his brothers, whose names he shared, died at the age of two months.

³³ Albemarle Cator (1836-1906) graduated from Trinity College, University of Cambridge in 1859.

³⁴ John Cator (1862-1944). Educated at Eton, he graduated from Christ Church, University of Oxford in 1883. He retired from the Militia in 1902 with the rank of major. Aged fifty-two when war was declared, he did not serve. His son, Henry John Cator (1897-1965), was educated at Eton and Sandhurst, served as a lieutenant in 2/Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys) and was awarded a MC in 1917. He also served with the Special Air Service during World War Two, rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and, maintaining the family's landowning traditions, was awarded an OBE in 1964 'for services to agriculture in Norfolk'. 'Alby' Cator's younger brother, Christopher Arthur Mohun Cator (1881-1923) also attended Eton and Sandhurst and was commissioned into the 7/(Queen's Own) Hussars – *LG*, 10 August 1900 – and resigned in 1903 – *LG*, 9 October 1903. He was commissioned again into the Prince of Wales's Own Norfolk Royal Garrison Artillery – *LG*, 5 March 1907 – and subsequently transferred to the Scots Guards on 15 August 1914 – *LG*, 24 September 1914. During the war he served under his brother as a captain in 2/Scots Guards and was awarded a MC. He was wounded on 17 December 1914 – TNA WO95/1657 2/Scots Guards WD. Alby Cator described to his mother, Mary Molesworth Cordelia Cator (née Mohun-Harris) (1835-1929), how his brother had been shot through his left forearm – Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 17 December 1914. Cator re-joined 2/Scots Guards on 15 September 1915 only to be wounded again at Loos - TNA WO95/1223 2/Scots Guards WD, 15 and 27 September 1915. He re-joined the battalion again on 12 February 1916, the day before Alby Cator left to become GOC 37 Brigade, 12th Division – *Ibid.*, 12 February 1916. He retired in May 1919 due to the effect his wounds and died a premature death in suspicious circumstances – see P. Manning, *The Cators of Beckenham & Woodbastwick* (Sandy, Bedfordshire: Authors OnLine, 2008), p. 67.

exception.³⁵ As the eldest son, John Cator would inherit the estate leaving Alby to find his own role in life.³⁶

Alby Cator enlisted locally in the Militia as a lieutenant in 3 (Reserve)/Norfolk Regiment on 4 November 1896.³⁷ He was subsequently commissioned into the Scots Guards on 9 June 1897, promoted Lieutenant on 17 May 1899 and served throughout the South African War with 1/Scots Guards.³⁸ Cator returned with his battalion to a period during which ‘the British Army experienced a vast overhaul of training and tactics’.³⁹ Promoted captain on 3 November 1903, Cator spent ten years in this rank during which he served in turn as a regimental officer, the Commandant of the School of Instruction at Chelsea Barracks and latterly as the Adjutant of 2/Scots Guards.⁴⁰ In a period of change and reform within the army, and drawing on his own experience during the South African War, Cator understood the need for change. Although in relatively junior positions, he was able to ensure that changes to tactics and training were implemented.⁴¹ Cator contributed

*... directly to the creation of the highly trained BEF infantryman of 1914. The ability to fight in dispersed formation and produce very rapid and accurate fire came from reforms introduced as a direct result of the Boer War.*⁴²

³⁵ Cator attended Eton between January 1891 and July 1893 – *Eton School Register 1893-1899*, p. 12b.

³⁶ John Cator became Lord of the Manors of Beckenham and Woodbastwick, MP for the South Division of Huntingdonshire from 1910 to 1918, a Justice of the Peace, a Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Norfolk and the High Sheriff of Norfolk.

³⁷ Archives, HQ Scots Guards, London

³⁸ From 21 October 1899 to 21 July 1902. Cator was awarded the QSA with six clasps (Belmont, Modder River, Dreifontein, Johannesburg, Diamond Hill and Belfast) and the KSA with two clasps (South Africa 1901 and South Africa 1902). Archives, HQ Scots Guards, London

³⁹ S. Jones, *From Boer War to World War: Tactical Reform of the British Army, 1902-1914* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), p. 112

⁴⁰ Commandant, School of Instruction, Chelsea Barracks 1 May 1908 to 30 April 1911; Adjutant, 2/Scots Guards 1 October 1912 to 8 October 1913. *Army List*

⁴¹ For an example of the training on drill and minor tactics undertaken at Chelsea Barracks in this period, see Major W.R.J. McLean, *The Complete Detail of Company Drill as Given at the School of Instruction, Chelsea Barracks* (1910).

⁴² Jones, *From Boer War to World War*, p. 112. Cator had attended a course at the School of Musketry, Hythe in September 1899 prior to his deployment to South Africa and a refresher course at Hythe in July 1913.

On completion of his appointment as Adjutant, Cator was promoted major.⁴³ Cator's next posting came on the outbreak of war when he was appointed BM, London District. This mutated shortly afterwards into BM 20 Brigade, 7th Division.⁴⁴ The division disembarked at Zeebrugge on 7 October 1914 intent on participating in the defence of Antwerp.⁴⁵ Having landed, 7th Division advanced to Ghent via Bruges before retiring to the vicinity of Ypres by 14 October where it was involved in heavy fighting during the First Battle of Ypres. Evidence of the risks brigade staff shared with their battalions is demonstrated by their casualties. In the five day period to 4 November 1914, the division's three brigades lost one BM killed, one SC killed and two SCs wounded.⁴⁶ Of greater significance for Cator was the fate of his GOC, Brigadier-General H.G. Ruggles-Brise.⁴⁷ He 'went back half dead of a dreadful wound on a stretcher'.⁴⁸ In such circumstances command would normally pass to the senior CO in the brigade. The desperate fighting in recent days, however, had also taken its toll of the brigade's COs.⁴⁹ Between 26 and 30 October 1914 three had been killed and a fourth wounded.⁵⁰

On the 5th [November 1914], the Brigade was relieved, and started to march back to Meteren. The Brigade Major had succeeded to the Command, three of

⁴³ 9 October 1913 – *Army List*

⁴⁴ Appointed BM London District - 5 August 1914; BM 20 Brigade, 7th Division – 15 September 1914. Initially commanded by Major-General Sir Thompson Capper, 7th Division was created in August 1914. It was composed of units that had been based in the UK, including Cator's 2/Scots Guards based at the Tower of London, together with Regular battalions previously stationed in Guernsey, Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt and South Africa – see C.T. Atkinson, *The Seventh Division 1914-1918* (London: John Murray, 1927), pp. 1-5.

⁴⁵ TNA WO95/1650 20 Brigade WD, 7 October 1914

⁴⁶ BM, 22 Brigade. Captain George Millais James (1880-1914), KIA 4 November 1914; SC, 22 Brigade. Captain Richard Vincent Barker (1880-1914), KIA 31 October 1914; SC 20 Brigade. Captain (later Lieutenant-General Sir Bertram Norman (Sergison-) Brooke (1880-1967), wounded 2 November 1914; SC, 21 Brigade. Captain (later Air Commodore) Arthur Lowthian Godman (1877-1956), wounded 1 November 1914.

⁴⁷ Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir) Harold Goodeve Ruggles-Brise (1864–1927). He was wounded in both arms and the shoulder blade. TNA WO95/1650 20 Brigade WD, 2 November 1914

⁴⁸ A. Farrar-Hockley, *Death of an Army* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1998), p. 170

⁴⁹ TNA WO95/1650 20 Brigade WD, 'Report of the attack on 10th to 14th March 1915', Sheet 10. 20 Brigade's total casualties were sixty-six officers and 1,307 ORs.

⁵⁰ The COs killed were Lieutenant-Colonels Laurence Rowe Fisher-Rowe (1866-1915), 1/Grenadier Guards, Henry Percy Uniacke (1862-1915), 2/Gordon Highlanders and C. McLean, 6/Gordon Highlanders to whom reference was made in Chapter 3. The wounded CO was Major (later Brigadier-General Sir) George Camborne Beauclerk Paynter (1880-1950), 2/Scots Guards. 20 Brigade's fifth battalion was 2/Border. Unscathed on this occasion, its CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis Ironside Wood (1866-1915), was killed the following month during the Battle of Festubert.

*the battalions were commanded by Captains and one by a Subaltern. Since the 18th of October it had lost 74% of its effectives...*⁵¹

For the period 2-14 November 1914, therefore, Cator temporarily commanded 20 Brigade and did so in a manner which was recognised with the award of an immediate DSO.⁵²

Cator reverted to his role as BM on the appointment of Brigadier-General F.J. Heyworth as GOC 20 Brigade.⁵³ Cator clearly harboured ambition for promotion. He wrote to his mother 'I was very sorry to have to give up the Command, but I could not hope to keep it as I am too junior'.⁵⁴ Superficially, Cator's own opportunity for promotion to battalion command arose as a consequence of 20 Brigade's involvement in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle when the CO of 2/Scots Guards, Major G.C.B. Paynter, was again wounded, this time on 12 March 1915.⁵⁵ In fact, the opportunity had arisen even earlier. The battalion's CO at the outbreak of war, Lieutenant-Colonel R.G.I. Bolton, had been wounded and taken prisoner on 26 October 1914 during the struggle at Ypres.⁵⁶ He was replaced by Paynter, of whom Cator wrote:

*... [he] has been too wonderful for words. A real type of what a man ought to be. The men adore him and yet he is fearfully strict with the men.*⁵⁷

Although senior to Paynter, that Cator was not promoted sooner indicates the value Brigadier-General Heyworth placed upon him as 20 Brigade's BM during a period when the brigade

⁵¹ TNA WO95/1650 20 Brigade WD, 'The 20th Infantry Brigade (Guards) of 7th Division' by Major-General H. Ruggles-Brise, n.d., p.5

⁵² *LG*, 1 December 1914. 'Major Albemarle Bertie Edward Cator, Scots Guards. He commanded 20th Brigade in action for five days after the Brigadier was wounded, and has shown an example of cheerfulness and optimism which has helped materially to pull it together.' Cator was the first Scots Guards officer to be awarded the DSO during the war.

⁵³ TNA WO95/1650 20 Brigade WD, 14 November 1914. Brigadier-General Frederick James Heyworth (1863-1916)

⁵⁴ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 20 November 1914

⁵⁵ Paynter was subsequently promoted GOC 172 Brigade, 57th Division which he commanded from 25 August 1916 until the end of the war, with the exception of an absence of three weeks in October 1918 whilst recovering from his third wound of the war.

⁵⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel Richard George Ireland Bolton (1865-1956). For the circumstances of his capture, see Bolton's report of 24 February 1919, TNA WO95/1657 2/Scots Guards WD.

⁵⁷ Cator Papers, Cator to 'Di', his sister Mabel Diana Frances Cator, believed to have been written in June 1915. Paynter was one of the pall-bearers at Cator's funeral held on 23 November 1932.

was in need of reconstruction.⁵⁸ At some point, however, Heyworth had to face the loss of his competent BM. As a Scots Guards officer, Cator had the legitimate career aspiration of commanding one of the regiment's two battalions serving in France.⁵⁹ 'What can one want better than to command one's own battalion?'⁶⁰ On 5 April 1915 Cator left 20 Brigade HQ to take command of 2/Scots Guards, 20 Brigade.⁶¹ Although Cator continued to have close contact with the brigade's staff, his leaving was significant enough to be marked by the gift of a card signed by the five remaining officer members of the brigade staff. It concluded:

*We shall not say Goodbye. because you're near,
But there's a vacant chair tonight up here;
And sluggish bottles, slowly passing round,
Have lost their wonted fire: Silence profound
At times attacks our Mess, and then we know
The thoughts of every member Eastwards go
To your new billet – damn that billet too
Which takes you from our midst to pastures new.
GOOD LUCK OLD FRIEND! Remembrance here
We sign our names in deep regard for you.*⁶²

Despite his promotion, it was evidently also a wrench for Cator to make the transition to his new role. He wrote to his mother:

*I am awfully happy but hated giving up the poor old 20th Brigade Headquarters, it has almost got to be like my own child, but I am still in it and have now got to get to work to train all the new arrivals.*⁶³

⁵⁸ Cator was commissioned on 9 June 1897; Paynter was commissioned on 18 October 1899. Between Bolton's capture and Cator's promotion, three other officers, in addition to Paynter, commanded 2/Scots Guards for short periods, each of whom were similarly junior to Cator. They were Captain (later Major) Richard Coke (1876-1964), Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Giles Harold Loder (1884-1966) and Captain Sir Frederick Loftus Francis Fitz-Wygram, Bt. (1884-1920).

⁵⁹ 1/Scots Guards formed part of 1 (Guards) Brigade, 1st Division. 2/Scots Guards formed part of 20 Brigade, 7th Division.

⁶⁰ D. Fraser (ed.), *In Good Company – The First World War Letters and Diaries of the Hon. William Fraser, Gordon Highlanders* (Salisbury: Michael Russell, 1990), p. 283

⁶¹ TNA WO95/1650 20 Brigade WD, 5 April 1915. Elsewhere it is recorded that Cator took command five days earlier – TNA WO95/1657 2/Scots Guards WD, 1 April 1915. The other battalions of 20 Brigade at this time were 1/Grenadier Guards, 2/Border Regiment and 2/Gordon Highlanders.

⁶² Cator Papers, Lt. Col. Cator, Cmdg. Scots Gds. on leaving the XXth Brigade Staff, 5th April, 1915. The card was signed by Heyworth; Captain Alexander Edward Guy Palmer (1886-1926) – SC; Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Walter Egerton George Lucan Keppel, The Viscount Bury (1882-1979) – MG Officer; together with the Veterinary Officer and the Signal Officer.

One of Cator's first tasks was to deal with the execution of one of his men, Private Isaac Reid, convicted of desertion.⁶⁴ The first few weeks of his new command were devoted to rebuilding and training the battalion after Neuve Chapelle where it had suffered casualties of six officers and 189 ORs.⁶⁵

*There was a great deal of route marching at this time when out of the trenches, and training of all sorts. Fatigue parties for digging with the R.E. Mining Company were constantly employed, and if there was no fighting, there was plenty of hard work when in reserve areas.*⁶⁶

Cator's first operation as CO was 2/Scots Guards' gallant but unsuccessful contribution on 16 May 1915 to the Battle of Festubert.⁶⁷ The failure was attributed to 'the precision of the German artillery fire on the supports and reserves (which) had broken the cohesion and force of the British attack'.⁶⁸ As a result the battalion suffered ten officer and 399 OR casualties, half the battalion's strength.⁶⁹ Amongst the casualties were three of the battalion's four

⁶³ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 5 April 1915. A draft of one officer and 100 ORs had joined the battalion on 19 March 1915. TNA WO95/1657 2/Scots Guards WD

⁶⁴ TNA WO71/407 Reid, I., Offence: Desertion. Private Isaac Reid (1895-1915) was executed on 9 April 1915. He had deserted on 11 March 1915. The battalion's CO at that time was Major Paynter, the officer who Cator described as being 'fearfully strict' with his men. Paynter's approach was known to the GOC 7th Division, Sir Thompson Capper. Capper recommended Reid should be executed. 'The Bn. is in good discipline, but it has been got into this state by a CO who has taken severe measures against those who have attempted to desert their comrades in action.' GOC IV Corps, Sir Henry Rawlinson agreed: 'The case presents no extenuating circumstances and I recommend the sentence be carried out, not because it is necessary to set an example but because there is no excuse for the man.' See also J. Putkowski & J. Sykes, *Shot at Dawn* (Barnsley: Wharncliffe Publishing, 1989), pp. 40-1 and A. Babington, *For the Sake of Example: Capital Courts Martial 1914-1920* (London: Leo Cooper, 1983), pp. 25-6. Cator was subsequently involved with three other cases where soldiers under his command were executed. Whilst he was GOC 37 Brigade, Private William Landreth Thompson (1889-1916) 6/The Buffs was executed on 22 April 1916 (TNA WO71/460) and Private Robert George Patterson (1894-1917) 7/East Surrey (TNA WO71/567) on 4 July 1917. In both cases they had been convicted of desertion. Whilst Cator was GOC 58th Division, Private Frederick William Slade (1893-1917) 2/6 London, 174 Brigade (TNA WO71/626) was executed on 14 December 1917. He had been convicted of disobedience.

⁶⁵ WO95/1650 20 Brigade WD, 'Report of the attack on 10th to 14th March 1915', Sheet 10. During Cator's first month in command his battalion received three further drafts totalling five officers and 302 ORs. TNA WO95/1657 WD 2/Scots Guards, 4, 15 and 27 April 1915

⁶⁶ F.L. Petre, W. Ewart & C. Lowther, *The Scots Guards in the Great War 1914-1918* (London: John Murray, 1925), p. 87

⁶⁷ For an account of the role of 2/Scots Guards in the battle, see Petre, Ewart & Lowther, *The Scots Guards*, pp. 90-6.

⁶⁸ J.E. Edmonds, *Military Operations France and Belgium 1915, Volume II* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1995), p. 62

⁶⁹ TNA WO95/1657 2/Scots Guards WD, 17 May 1915

CSMs, all experienced and capable NCOs.⁷⁰ The loss of their experience particularly added to Cator's challenge in rebuilding the operational capability of his battalion.⁷¹ Within two weeks, however, the majority of these losses had been replaced, at least numerically.⁷² Heyworth had, however, previously rejected a draft of fifty ORs intended for 2/Gordon Highlanders because, as Cator wrote, they were 'so old, decreped (sic) and infirm'.⁷³

During July 1915, following Festubert and its aftermath, Cator had the benefit of a month's leave.⁷⁴ He returned to duty shortly before 2/Scots Guards, together with 1/Grenadier Guards, were re-designated on 15 August 1915 as units within 3 Guards Brigade, part of the newly formed Guards Division.⁷⁵ During the ensuing month, and in preparation for its role in the forthcoming Battle of Loos, the Guards Division was withdrawn to the vicinity of St Omer to undertake a concentrated period of training. Cator's men trained in their companies practising drill, undertaking route marches, skirmishing, learning to make use of cover, shooting on rifle ranges and, optimistically at this stage of the war, arrangements for fighting in open country. During the ensuing battle, the Guards Division formed part of Sir Richard Haking's XI

⁷⁰ Ibid. They were Company Sergeant Majors Arthur George Burrough (1888-1915), George Johnson (18??-1915) and James Lawton (18??-1915). Company Sergeant Major (later Major) Alfred James (1895-1984) was the surviving CSM. James subsequently described how the four CSMs had been called to battalion HQ to draw lots as to which one of them would command the firing party for Reid's execution. The unlucky NCO was Lawton. See <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2014/02/26/they-drew-lots-for-firing-squad-duty/> (accessed 29 November 2015).

⁷¹ The essence of the inter-dependency of company commanders and their CSMs has been captured by Richard Holmes. 'Another officer recalled how his own attempt to tinker with his company's daily programme produced the as-if-by-magic materialisation of the CSM. 'Sir,' announced that worthy, 'you command this company, but I run it.'" R. Holmes, *Soldiers: Army Lives and Loyalties From Redcoats to Dusty Warriors* (London: Harper Press, 2011), p. 62

⁷² A draft of three officers and 250 ORs arrived on 28 May 1915. TNA WO95 1657 WD 2/Scots Guards, 28 May 1915

⁷³ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 1 December 1914

⁷⁴ TNA WO95/1657 2/Scots Guards WD, 2 July 1915 and TNA WO95/1223 WD 2/Scots Guards, 1 August 1915. Where Cator spent this period of leave is unknown. Members of Cator's family understand that he did not return to England as often as he might have. Cator divorced in 1919 and remarried in 1920.

⁷⁵ Petre, Ewart & Lowther, *The Scots Guards*, pp. 101-110

Corps.⁷⁶ The Guards Division was not committed until the third day, 27 September 1915, when 3 Guards Brigade was tasked ‘to attack & capture the western slopes of HILL 70’.⁷⁷ Heyworth selected 4/Grenadier Guards and 1/Welsh Guards to undertake the attack with Cator’s 2/Scots Guards in support. By 8.00 p.m. 1/Welsh Guards reported they had captured their objective. 2/Scots Guards were ordered to relieve them and consolidate the position gained.⁷⁸ This proved not to be a simple task. In his subsequent report, Heyworth illustrated Cator’s tactical appreciation of the circumstances he faced and his initiative:

*Lieut Colonel Cator (Scots Guards), after consultation with Major Brough (R.E.), came to the conclusion that it was absolutely impossible to entrench the line reached by the assaulting troops, so he retired about 100 yards behind the crest, and there dug a line of trenches and wired them in, joining up with the 8th Cavalry Brigade on his right. As he was unable to get in touch with 2nd Guards Brigade, he drew back the left of his line and formed a strong point there, and made arrangements to cover the gap between the Brigades with Machine Gun fire.*⁷⁹

After three cold and wet nights on the slopes of Hill 70, 2/Scots Guards were relieved in the early hours of 30 September 1915.⁸⁰ Cator’s younger brother was the only officer casualty suffered during the operation although there were 112 OR casualties, amongst whom seventeen were killed.⁸¹ The battalion subsequently made a bombing attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 17 October 1915. It did make gains, including 250 yards of Big Willie Trench, at the cost of five officers (three killed) and 102 ORs (twenty killed).⁸² This proved to be only the third occasion when 2/Scots Guards participated in attacks during the

⁷⁶ Lieutenant-General (later General) Sir Richard Haking (1862-1945). N. Lloyd, *Loos 1915* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006), p. 289

⁷⁷ TNA WO95/1223 2/Scots Guards WD, 27 September 1915

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Major (later Major-General) Alan Brough (1876-1956). TNA WO95/1221 3 Guards Brigade WD, Account of the Capture of Hill 70 by 3rd Guards Brigade, 27 September 1915, Brigadier-General F.J. Heyworth, 2 October 1915. See also C. Headlam, *History of the Guards Division in the Great War 1915-1918 Volume 1* (London: John Murray, 1924), pp. 63-5. Cator had already demonstrated his tactical awareness during the approach march to Loos when the battalion had to advance over captured German trenches in full view of the enemy’s gunners – see Petre, Ewart & Lowther, *The Scots Guards*, pp. 116-7.

⁸⁰ TNA WO95/1223 2/Scots Guards WD, 30 September 1915

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 30 September 1915

⁸² *Ibid.*, 17 October 1915

nine months when the battalion was under Cator's command. The period between mid-October 1915 and February 1916 when Cator was promoted saw 2/Scots Guards in and out of the line trench holding, typically two days in and two days out interspersed with occasional periods of between seven and seventeen days out of the line. The battalion rotated chiefly with 1/Welsh Guards.⁸³ When in the line, the battalion's preoccupation was trench maintenance in the face of the effects of wet weather and enemy shelling. Snipers also took their toll.⁸⁴

The battalion spent seventy per cent of its time out of the line during which it drilled and trained - wiring, bombing and Lewis Guns being prime areas for instruction. Route marches were routine. Fatigue parties were provided when required. All the battalion's subalterns were frequently instructed by the Sergeant Major whilst the Drill Sergeant did likewise for the benefit of lance sergeants and corporals.

Peter Hodgkinson has explored the limitations of what is known about the list system through which candidates for promotion from CO to brigadier-general were selected.⁸⁵ He cites a letter written by Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Trevor on 9 June 1916 to his wife:

*As regards the brigade it is largely a matter of how long a man has commanded a Bn and how much fighting the Bn has seen. These things also go in Corps. As a matter of fact I couldn't be in a better corps for this purpose probably, as my Brigadier and Div Commander have backed me up nobly.*⁸⁶

⁸³ When 2/Scots Guards came out of the line after its involvement at Hill 70 and until Cator's departure on promotion, the battalion spent thirty-five days (thirteen two-day and three three-day tours) in the line and seventy-nine days out of the line.

⁸⁴ TNA WO95/1223 2/Scots Guards WD, 15 November 1915. In March 1916 Cator received assistance to deal with snipers from Lieutenant-General Sir H. de la P. Gough, GOC I Corps. 'The latter [Gough] has lent me his "elephant gun", yesterday we smashed in four German Plates with it, the snipers had been worrying us a lot from them, they are now silent, I hope it smashed in their ugly faces too.' Cator Papers, Cator to his sister, Edith Louisa Cator, March 1916. See also TNA WO/95 1858 37 Brigade WD, 14 March 1916.

⁸⁵ P.E. Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War', University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2013, pp. 140-3

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142. IWM, Docs 11445. Trevor, H.E., 'Letters'. Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Trevor was indeed subsequently promoted GOC 103 Brigade, 34th Division on 4 July 1916 in succession to Brigadier-General

Promoted on 13 February 1916, Cator had been 2/Scots Guards' CO for 314 days, longer than the average period for a CO in his first appointment of 252 days.⁸⁷ Simply to evaluate Cator's fighting experience by counting the number of days his battalion was involved in organised attacks on enemy positions fails to recognise the combat strain on Cator and his battalion during the thirty per cent of its total time spent in the trenches when it resisted counter-attacks, was under shellfire or when dealing with enemy raids.⁸⁸ Cator's battle experience as a CO, coupled with both his experience whilst a BM at First Ypres and Neuve Chapelle, and his leadership at First Ypres whilst in command of 20 Brigade in November 1914, was a significant platform for promotion. The performance of Cator and his battalion at the Hohenzollern Redoubt in October 1915 received praise from his divisional commander, Major-General Earl of Cavan:⁸⁹

*I have just seen the 1st Army Commander and he asked me to convey to you and your grand men his sincere appreciation of the great effort you made yesterday. I told him that no battalion had fought with greater tenacity and courage than yours did yesterday, and I very deeply deplore your losses. It is, however, our bounden duty to get a good line for further efforts, and your task, which was intensely difficult, gave us a good start. Please tell the men how much their work was appreciated by me and all above me.*⁹⁰

It is evident, therefore, that Cator's standing with both Heyworth and Cavan was high.⁹¹ Since September 1915 the Guards Division had served as part of XI Corps under Haking's command. Haking may also have known Cator personally; he would certainly have known of him as the result of 2/Scots Guards' activities. Neither Heyworth, Cavan nor Haking could doubt Cator's motivation. His letters spell out his detestation of the enemy.

N.J.G. Cameron – See Chapter 6. He is not to be confused with Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Edward Trevor (1884-1917), CO 9/Essex, 35 Brigade, 12th Division KIA on 11 April 1917. See also Note 173.

⁸⁷ Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 128, Table 3.11

⁸⁸ Eight days in total: two and a half days 15-18 May 1915 Battle of Festubert; two and a half days 27-29 September 1915 Battle of Loos; three days 17-19 October 1915 at Hohenzollern Redoubt.

⁸⁹ Major-General (later Field-Marshal) Frederick Rudolph Lambart (1865-1946) (10th Earl of Cavan)

⁹⁰ Petre, Ewart & Lowther, *The Scots Guards*, p. 125

⁹¹ Cator received three MiDs during his period as CO 2/Scots Guards: *LG*, 17 February 1915, 22 June 1915 and 1 January 1916.

*A German held up his hands to one of our men last week and shouted "I am a married man, don't kill me" "So am I you swine" was the answer as he ran him through with his bayonet.*⁹²

*Their methods of carrying on warfare are perfectly barbarous, had they only fought clean this war, everyone would have admired them, as it is they are the biggest monumental disgrace to Christianity & Civilization the world has seen for hundreds of years.*⁹³

*The battlefield was a wonderful sight, heaps of German dead, and not many of our own. Our Artillery had done its work well.*⁹⁴

*I am sorry for their private soldiers, and don't bear them any grudge: but I would glory in, and hope to torture slowly some or any of their officers and Higher Authorities, they are the offal of the civilised world.*⁹⁵

Cator was appointed GOC 37 Brigade on 13 February 1916.⁹⁶ The following day he wrote to his mother. 'It makes me feel very old before my time but they have made me a General, and I left my beloved Batt'n last night to take over here.'⁹⁷ The hint of surprise in Cator's words suggests false modesty. Set against the criteria discussed in Chapter 1, Cator's profile as an officer educated at an elite public school, commissioned into one of the army's elite infantry regiments, already a serving major at the outbreak of war, who had seen active service in South Africa and had served in France since October 1914, who had experience as an adjutant, a BM and a CO, who had been decorated although not having passed Staff College, was typical of lieutenant-colonels who were promoted to brigade command. If ever there was the finished product, Cator was it.

To emphasize the point, of the eleven other COs in the Guards Division who were Cator's contemporaries on 1 February 1916, seven were subsequently promoted brigadier-general

⁹² Cator Papers, Cator to his sister, Mary Wingfield Fellowes (née Cator), 31 May 1915

⁹³ Cator Papers, Cator to his sister, Christabel Nona Penelope Tabor (née Cator), 1 June 1916

⁹⁴ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 19 April 1917

⁹⁵ Cator Papers, Cator to his sister, Edith Louisa Cator, 6 May 1917

⁹⁶ TNA WO95/1223 2/Scots Guards WD, 13 February 1916

⁹⁷ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 14 February 1916

during the war.⁹⁸ Cator was the only one of this cohort, however, who subsequently commanded a division. On the other hand, of Cator's eleven contemporary COs in Guards battalions when he was appointed CO 2/Scots Guards in April 1915 and which subsequently formed the Guards Division, three were subsequently promoted to command divisions, four to command brigades, one was promoted brigadier-general in an administrative post, two others either died of wounds or were gassed whilst one was sent home due to sickness.⁹⁹ The Guards Division was evidently, therefore, an incubator for divisional and brigade commanders. Any element of surprise in Cator's reaction to his promotion was misplaced. What was justified, however, was the sense of loss Cator endured. It was similar to the sense of loss he articulated on being promoted from BM. 'It was a bad wrench leaving my Batt'n, they were all so splendid and no worries, everything was going on oiled wheels, I feel like a Stranger in a strange land, friends and comrades mean so much out here.'¹⁰⁰

Cator set out the pivotal nature of his new role, as he saw it, in response to a congratulatory letter he received.

I am most awfully lucky, I have the makings of a top hole Brigade, the more I see of them the more I appreciate them. Officers are the weak point but the men are toppers. I am quite sure we will have a real fine Brigade if we are not cut up too soon. Once we get the right system started, it will go on automatically. I find the great difficulty is to prevent it being a 'one man

⁹⁸ They were Lieutenant-Colonels Hon. Lesley James Probyn Butler (1876-1955), John Vaughan Campbell (1876-1944), Lord Esmé Charles Gordon-Lennox (1875-1949), (later Sir) Robert Chaine Alexander McCalmont (1881-1953), B.N. (Sergison-) Brooke, Lord Henry Charles Seymour (1878-1939) and G.F. Trotter. Of the remaining four COs, Lieutenant-Colonel Victor Baring Guy (1873-1916) was KIA, Lieutenant-Colonel William Murray-Threipland (1866-1942) was evacuated due to sickness, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur St Leger Glyn (1870-1922) was appointed to an administrative post and Lieutenant-Colonel Philip Arthur MacGregor (1877-1934) was appointed to a training command.

⁹⁹ Those promoted Major-General were Lieutenant-Colonels (later Sir) Geoffrey Percy Thynne Fielding (1866-1932), (later Sir) Cecil Edward Pereira (1869-1942) and (later Sir) John Ponsonby (1866-1952). Those promoted to command brigades were Lieutenant-Colonels Hon. L.J.P. Butler, C.E. Corkran, Hon. John Frederick Hepburn-Stuart-Forbes-Trefusis (1878-1915) and (later Major-General) Walter Patrick Hore-Ruthven (1870-1956). Lieutenant-Colonel Wilfred Robert Abel Smith (1870-1915) died of wounds. Lieutenant-Colonel (later Colonel) Gilbert Claude Hamilton (1879-1943) was gassed at Loos. Lieutenant-Colonel W. Murray-Threipland, the only CO within the Guards Division whose period of command encompassed the whole period Cator commanded 2/Scots Guards, was sent home sick.

¹⁰⁰ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 14 February 1916

*show'. The Commanding Officers lean on the Brigadier. The Captains lean on the Commanding Officers, and so on to the bottom, no one will act on his own which is so essential in this War. The Regular Army have got the right system, and I know these chaps will get it in time.*¹⁰¹

Extolling the virtues of 'system', another contemporary brigadier-general drew on his own experience to illustrate his role in developing the capabilities of his brigade:

*I am very proud of my Brigade. After the heaviest of hammerings on the SOMME, I came out for 10 days with all my Staff killed (Brigade Major, Staff Captain and Signal Officer), yet because of our system we were able to return, our ranks filled with men from all Battalions, and attacking alongside the French at MAUREPAS, we did even better the second time than we did the first. This all because of a system embedded in the heads of the C.O.s of Units.*¹⁰²

The confidence Cator was able to develop in his COs was critical, therefore, to the way in which 37 Brigade operated under his leadership.¹⁰³ Cator's capability to transfer the methods, routines and procedures he had learnt and developed during his own career as a Regular officer was equally critical to the development of his new Kitchener brigade.

5.4 Cator's Battalion Commanders

The four battalions of 37 Brigade on the formation of 12th Division in August 1914 – 6/Queen's (RWS), 6/The Buffs (EKR), 7/East Surrey and 6/ The Queen's Own (RWKR) - remained unchanged until the reorganisation from twelve to nine battalions per brigade in February 1918. In this regard, Cator's experience was similar to that of Loomis and Pelham

¹⁰¹ Cator Papers, Cator to his brother-in-law and his sister, 'Charlie & Tottie', Charles Arthur Fellowes and Mary Wingfield Fellowes (née Cator) 24 February 1916. Their son, Cator's nephew, Second Lieutenant Robert Fellowes (1897-1915), 1/KRRC, aged 18, was KIA on 10 March 1915. During training for the Battle of Arras, Cator's hand was evident when NCOs replaced officers. For example, 'A practice attack was again carried out by the Bde. during the morning on the whole it went very well, we knocked out all officers & the NCOs had to carry on by themselves.' TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 2 March 1917

¹⁰² IWM, Maxse Papers, PP/MCR/C42 File 51 Reel 12, Letter from Brigadier-General R.J. Kentish to Sir Ivor Maxse, 22 February 1917. Kentish was GOC 76 Brigade, 3rd Division from 11 April to 30 September 1916.

¹⁰³ When in the line, brigadier-generals were not spared the joys of life in the trenches. 'I am writing this in a funk hole where I live 30 feet below the ground level, a very good dugout, but simply crowded out with rats who as far as I can gather, hold a meeting most nights on my bed.' Cator Papers, Cator to 'Di', his sister Mabel Diana Frances Cator, 29 March 1916

Burn, but different from that of Kellett. ‘This is a K’s New Army Brigade’ Cator wrote to his mother, words redolent with significance to a Regular officer commissioned into a regiment founded in 1642.¹⁰⁴ On first meeting, Cator was quick to assess his new charges:

*I haven’t had much time to more than look round, but judging from a casual glance when I went round them all this morning, they look a fine lot of men, the Officers are the weak point. Most of the COs are Regulars and seem to be good chaps and very keen, so I am sure we will soon have a good show, at any rate I am going to go at them all, for all I am worth.*¹⁰⁵

Cator’s assessment demonstrates that, despite his sense of being a stranger to his new brigade, he immediately took ownership and responsibility for it. His words illustrate that he felt he could make both an impact and a difference, in contrast to his predecessor who he gathered ‘was very energetic but couldn’t make up his mind on any point’.¹⁰⁶ Cator was accurate in that all four of the COs he inherited were indeed Regular officers. Cator’s repeated comment that ‘the Officers are the weak point’ was aimed at the junior officers amongst whom casualty rates were typically amongst the highest and average levels of experience the lowest.¹⁰⁷ Cator was concerned to ensure that the performance of his officers, NCOs and ORs was consistent with the standards to which he had been accustomed in the Guards Division.

¹⁰⁴ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 14 February 1916

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Cator’s visit to his new battalions on 14 February 1916 illustrates the vagaries of what was recorded in battalions’ War Diaries. That of 6/The Queen’s make no mention of either Cator’s appointment or visit – TNA WO95/1863; that of 6/The Buffs records the visit referring to Cator as the ‘new GOC’ – TNA WO95/1860; that of 7/East Surrey mentions Cator taking command on 14 February 1916 but records his visit as having taken place on 17 February 1916 – TNA WO95/1862; the WD of 6/The Queen’s Own for February 1916 has not survived – TNA WO95/1861.

¹⁰⁶ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 14 February 1916

¹⁰⁷ Third Army identified the following as one of the lessons to be drawn from the First Battle of the Scarpe: ‘Necessity for giving clear and comprehensive orders to officers of New Armies emphasised. Military terms which had a definite meaning for officers of the original Expeditionary Force possibly misunderstood by officers of present day, who have not had the same training.’ TNA WO95/362 Third Army General Staff, No G.14/57, 14 April 1917

5.4.1 6/The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

Cator inherited Lieutenant-Colonel H.F. Warden as CO 6/The Queen's.¹⁰⁸ Educated at Haileybury and Sandhurst, Warden had been commissioned into The Queen's on 29 October 1890.¹⁰⁹ Appointed CO on 19 August 1914 on the battalion's formation, he commanded it for 942 days. Warden was the second longest serving CO in 37 Brigade during the war.¹¹⁰ A veteran of the South African War, he had twice been mentioned in despatches.¹¹¹ Warden had proved himself to be a capable CO. Both Cator and his predecessor had recommended him for further mentions.¹¹² More convincing of his standing with Cator was the award of a DSO in the 1917 New Year's Honours List coupled with his appointment on 18 March 1917 to the command of VI Corps School. In the absence of a citation for his DSO, it is reasonable to surmise that this was awarded for a combination of his ability, organisational skill, the quality of his leadership, and his initiative.¹¹³ Warden was overdue an appointment which would provide him with relief from the stress of front-line service.

Warden's successor was his 2iC, Lieutenant-Colonel N.T. Rolls.¹¹⁴ Rolls had resigned his commission in 1904.¹¹⁵ Reinstated in the same rank on the outbreak of war on Warden's request, Rolls had been promoted major in October 1915.¹¹⁶ Both Warden and Cator had a high regard for Rolls' capabilities. By the time he was rested in March 1918, Rolls had

¹⁰⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel Hugh Fawcett Warden (1871-1951)

¹⁰⁹ *LG*, 29 October 1890

¹¹⁰ Warden commanded 6/The Queen's from 19 August 1914 until 17 March 1917.

¹¹¹ *LG*, 10 September 1901 and 29 July 1902

¹¹² *LG*, 1 January 1916 and 4 January 1917

¹¹³ For a discussion of the relationship between the factors influencing the promotion of COs and the award of decorations, see Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', pp. 259-263 and 265-9.

¹¹⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel Norman Thomas Rolls (1872-1929). Rolls served in 1/Volunteer Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) for five years (1899-1904) and attained the rank of captain.

¹¹⁵ *LG*, 9 December 1904

¹¹⁶ *LG*, 23 March 1916. When Rolls re-enlisted on 21 September 1914, Warden signed Rolls' application for a temporary commission (Form MT393) with the annotation '... & request he may be posted to the Battn. under my command in the rank of Captain.' TNA WO339/20763 N.T. Rolls

received a DSO and three MiDs.¹¹⁷ In Warden and Rolls, Cator was fortunate to have the command of this battalion in successively capable hands.¹¹⁸

5.4.2 6/The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

The same could not be said of the incumbent CO of 6/The Buffs. Significantly, Lieutenant-Colonel H.R.E. Pratt had not previously served in The Buffs.¹¹⁹ Commissioned in 1895, this officer had joined the Indian Staff Corps, served on the North-West Frontier and, whilst still a Lieutenant, had been awarded the DSO.¹²⁰ By August 1914 he had been promoted major. Assigned to the Army Signal Service in September 1914, Pratt had been posted as 2iC 5/Northamptonshire Regiment in March 1915. He succeeded Lieutenant-Colonel W.A. Eaton who had asked to be relieved of his command following the battalion's casualties during the Battle of Loos.¹²¹ Eaton did 'not personally feel physically capable of reorganizing and reforming the battalion'.¹²² Eaton had been commissioned into The Buffs in 1890 and had always served with the regiment. As Cator appreciated, regimental pride ran deep.¹²³ 'For many officers their regiment provided a more powerful focus for their loyalty than did the more remote and abstract concept of 'the army'.'¹²⁴ Pratt, on the other hand, was regimentally

¹¹⁷ DSO – *LG*, 1 January 1918; MiDs – *LG*, 22 May 1917, 18 December 1918 and 22 May 1918. Rolls was appointed CO of 4(Reserve)/The Queens on 30 April 1918, a command he held until the end of the war.

¹¹⁸ 6/Queen's third and final CO in succession to Rolls was Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Whetham (1877-19??). He had retired as a captain in 1910, was reinstated as a captain in December 1914 in 21/Manchester Regiment, became the battalion's CO in July 1915 and was removed from his command in April 1917 – see TNA WO374/73489. He was appointed CO 6/The Queen's on 31 October 1918.

¹¹⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Roger Evelyn Pratt (1870-1949)

¹²⁰ *LG*, 20 May 1898

¹²¹ Lieutenant-Colonel William Arnold Eaton (1870-1935)

¹²² TNA WO374/21808 W.A. Eaton. Letter from Eaton 17 October 1915, cited in M. Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!: A Regiment, a Region and the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 70

¹²³ Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, pp. 7-39. 'The essence of regimental esprit is intense pride, fierce loyalty and a feeling of superiority, of being the best, the hallmark of an elite.' 'The Guards had these qualities in abundance as soldiers from other regiments soon discovered if they failed to salute properly as the Guards Division passed by.' K. Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough: Shaping the Canadian Corps 1914-1918* (Solihull: Helion & Co Ltd., 2014), p. 271

¹²⁴ D. French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army and the British People c. 1870-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 145

‘an outsider’.¹²⁵ It has been suggested that this impinged on his relationship with and motivation of his own officers and men.¹²⁶

Shortly after Cator’s arrival, 37 Brigade was in the line between La Bassée Canal and Vermelles. 6/The Buffs failed ‘to take and hold the TRIANGLE CRATER and part of the CHORD’ on 6 March 1916 suffering casualties of six officers and seventy-four ORs.¹²⁷ Connelly’s interpretation of the reasons put forward by Pratt to Cator for his battalion’s failure is that they ‘reveal a hiatus in understanding between those devising such schemes and those called upon to carry them out’.¹²⁸ The significance of regimental pride and its implications for internal cohesion and morale would not have been lost on Cator. He was unconvinced by Pratt reasons.¹²⁹ His departure three days later was recorded in the battalion’s WD in succinct tell-tale terms – ‘Lieut. Col. Pratt left for England.’¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, p. 70

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ TNA WO95/1860 6/The Buffs WD, 6 March 1916. Consequent on this attack, Cator supported and lobbied for a recommendation made by Captain R.O.C. Ward for the award of a VC. TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, March 1916, Appendix L, Recommendation of Corpl. W. Cotter for the Victoria Cross. Captain (later Major) Robert Oscar Cyril Ward (1881-1917) was killed on the first day of the Battle of Cambrai. ‘I have recommended one of our men, a Corporal Cotter, of the 6th Buffs for a V.C., I do hope he will get it. He had a leg blown off & continued directing and encouraging his men for two hours, he would not be carried away till they had beaten off the German attacks. Glorious chap, I hope it will be all right, I got Gen’l Gough to take an interest in it.’ Cator Papers, Cator to his sister Edith Louisa Cator, March 1916. Corporal William Reginald Cotter (1882-1916) was awarded The Buffs’ only VC of the war – *LG*, 30 March 1916. He died of his wounds on 14 March 1916. Cotter had previously been recommended unsuccessfully for the DCM – see <http://www.nam.ac.uk/online-collection/detail.php?acc=2001-02-433-1> (accessed 29 November 2015).

¹²⁸ Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, p. 71

¹²⁹ Cator’s view of Pratt may also have been influenced by his assessment of the state of 6/The Buffs’ discipline. In recommending that the death sentence passed on Thompson as a result of his desertion on 6 March 1916 should be carried out (see above Note 64), Cator commented: ‘The discipline of this Battn is not up to the same standard as that of other Battns in this Brigade.’

¹³⁰ TNA WO95/1860 6/The Buffs WD, 9 March 1916. 37 Brigade held trenches and craters in the Hohenzollern Sector from 27 February to 2 April 1916. Between 6 and 16 March, the brigade drove off ten different bombing attacks. Cator’s report of the fighting on the night of 18/19 March 1916 illustrates the tactical decisions he made in committing and/or moving companies of his battalions to withstand repeated attacks. His report also includes cogent tactical reasons why the interior of craters should not be held. TNA WO/1858 37 Brigade WD, Appendix H, 22 March 1916

Whilst Pratt's replacement, Lieutenant-Colonel T.G. Cope, had not served in The Buffs, Cator may have already known him through his service in a sister brigade.¹³¹ Like Cator, Cope was educated at Eton. He was also a graduate of Trinity College, University of Cambridge. Commissioned into the Royal Fusiliers in 1906, Cope had served with 8/Royal Fusiliers, 36 Brigade since the beginning of the war. In other words, within 36 Brigade, Cope was a Regular who was a known quantity having risen to become his battalion's 2iC. Where Pratt was perceived to have fallen short, Cope had been recognised. 8/Royal Fusiliers had successfully attacked and held trenches and craters in the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 2/3 March 1916.¹³² For his part in this action, Cope was awarded the DSO.¹³³

Cope commanded 6/The Buffs from 15 March 1916 until he was wounded on 7 October 1916, his second wound, during an attack on Gueudecourt. He was fortunate to have survived.¹³⁴ Cope returned to his command on 17 January 1917, in time for the preparatory period prior to the Battle of Arras.¹³⁵ By the time Cope was promoted on 9 June 1917 to GOC 115 Brigade, 38th Division he had received, on Cator's recommendation, a Bar to his DSO and three MiDs.¹³⁶ Cope became a brigade commander at the age of thirty-five years and four months, barely a year older than had Pelham Burn been on his promotion to brigade command a year earlier.¹³⁷ Unlike Pelham Burn, however, with the exception of a month's

¹³¹ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General Sir) Thomas George Cope (1884-1966)

¹³² TNA WO95/1857 8/Royal Fusiliers WD, 2 & 3 March 1916

¹³³ *EG*, 17 April 1916. 'For conspicuous ability in supporting his own line, affording help to captured craters and gaining valuable information. Though wounded, he remained on duty till the following day.' For an account of this operation, see TNA WO95/1857 8/Royal Fusiliers WD, 3 March 1916.

¹³⁴ See Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, pp. 120-1 and Scott (ed.) & Brumwell, *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division*, p. 82.

¹³⁵ TNA WO95/1860 6/The Buffs WD, 17 January 1917. The command of the battalion passed initially to Major William Frederick Dawson (1884-1970) for the period 7 October 1916 to 7 November 1916 and then to Lieutenant-Colonel Victor Valentine Vincent Sandiford (1881-1974) from 7 November 1916 to 17 January 1917.

¹³⁶ Bar to DSO – *LG*, 10 January 1917; MiDs – *LG*, 15 June 1916, 10 January 1917 and 22 May 1917. Cope received three further MiDs – *LG*, 15 April 1916, 11 December 1917 and 5 July 1919 – and the CMG – *EG*, 5 June 1919.

¹³⁷ See Chapter 3 p. 123.

illness, Cope commanded a brigade for the rest of the war.¹³⁸ Cope's record demonstrates that Cator had firm grounds for having confidence in his capabilities.¹³⁹

5.4.3 6/The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)

When Cator arrived at 37 Brigade this battalion's CO was Lieutenant-Colonel C.S. Owen.¹⁴⁰ Educated at Cheltenham College, Owen had been commissioned into the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in 1899 and had seen service in China, Burma, India and Malta. By August 1914 he was a captain and Adjutant of 2/Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Frank Richards regarded him as 'very strict but a good soldier' who, as far as the rank and file were concerned, had certain enviable communication skills. 'We all admired the Adjutant very much: he could give us all chinks on swearing and beat the lot of us easily.'¹⁴¹ Awarded a DSO whilst Adjutant, Owen was promoted major on 1 September 1915 and subsequently promoted to CO 6/The Queen's Own less than three months later on 29 November 1915.¹⁴² Cator had the benefit of Owen reporting to him for nine months. He acquired the nickname "the Fire-eater".

*The nickname suited him. Picture a man of middle height, clean-shaven, without an ounce of surplus flesh, an eye as clear as a crystal, a tongue as sharp as a razor and a command of language that a sailor would have envied. Whatever other faults the Colonel had, he was without vice of hesitation. No one could have called him a ditherer. He never left you guessing: in conversation as in action, he went directly to the point. Toughness was all: and when we were out of the line he saw to it that neither officers nor men lacked opportunities for strengthening their fibre.*¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Cope relinquished command of 115 Brigade on 14 July 1917 due to illness. He was subsequently appointed GOC 176 Brigade, 59th Division on 14 August 1917 and held this command for the duration.

¹³⁹ Cope's successor was an internal appointment to 6/The Buffs who remained CO for the rest of the war. Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Sidney Smeltzer (1881-1959) was the epitome of regimental loyalty. He enlisted in The Buffs in 1901, by August 1914 had been promoted CSM 1/The Buffs before being commissioned in October 1915. By the end of the war this ranker officer had been awarded a DSO and Bar, a MC and four MiDs. A measure of his personal standing within 37 Brigade was his appointment by Cator as President of the Field General Court Martial of Private R.G. Patterson, 7/East Surrey – see Note 64.

¹⁴⁰ See Note 29.

¹⁴¹ F. Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die* (London: Faber & Faber, 1933), p. 31

¹⁴² *LG*, 23 June 1915

¹⁴³ A. Thomas, *A Life Apart* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1968), p. 56

Owen was promoted to the command of a sister brigade, 36 Brigade, 12th Division, in mid-November 1916, a post he also held for the remainder of the war. He had risen from captain to brigadier-general within fifteen months. Cator could take satisfaction from having played his own part as Owen's GOC in ensuring that his talents and abilities were developed, recognised and utilized.¹⁴⁴

Owen's replacement was Lieutenant-Colonel W.R.A. Dawson.¹⁴⁵ He was one of seven officers to be awarded the DSO and three Bars during the war, of whom four commanded brigades.¹⁴⁶ Evidenced by his DSOs, Hodgkinson has described Dawson as 'an exemplar of the aggressively effective New Army CO'.¹⁴⁷ He was also, however, a man of moods, uncertain temper and capable of unprintable abuse.

*In London once I was walking along the pavement with him and his mother (each was intensely proud of the other) when a passing stranger accidentally brushed against her. In an instant Dawson had got the fellow by the shoulder and was giving him the kind of dressing-down that might have led to trouble. Violent qualities like these do not always command respect. But Dawson got away with them mainly because of his other qualities.*¹⁴⁸

Dawson's brief life was a whirlwind of achievement. Born in 1891 into a family of lawyers, Dawson was educated at Bradfield College, Reading and Oriel College, University of Oxford. From Oxford's OTC, Dawson was commissioned into the SR of the RFA in 1912.¹⁴⁹ He was subsequently commissioned into 1/The Queen's Own shortly before war was

¹⁴⁴ Owen was awarded the Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel (*EG*, 1 January 1917). In addition to his DSO, Owen was also awarded the CMG (*EG*, 2 January 1918) and 6 MiDs (*LG*, 22 June 1915, 1 January 1916, 4 January 1917, 11 December 1917, 20 May 1918 and 20 December 1918). He retired from the army in 1931.

¹⁴⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel William Robert Aufrère Dawson (1891-1918)

¹⁴⁶ They were Brigadier-Generals William Denman Croft (1879-1968) 27 Brigade, 9th Division; Arnold Nugent Strode Strode-Jackson (1891-1972) 111 Brigade, 37th Division; Frederick William Lumsden (1871-1918) 14 Brigade, 32nd Division; and Edward Allan Wood (1872-1930) 55 Brigade, 18th Division. The remaining two recipients of the DSO and three Bars were Commander Archibald Walter Buckle (1889-1927) and Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Sinclair Knox (1881-1963). In addition to his VC, Brigadier-General B.C. Freyberg was awarded the DSO and two Bars during the war. His third Bar, however, was awarded in 1945.

¹⁴⁷ Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 173

¹⁴⁸ Thomas, *A Life Apart*, p. 57

¹⁴⁹ *LG*, 16 February 1912

declared.¹⁵⁰ Whether this was motivated by frustration with his legal career or foresight concerning the prospect of war is unknown. On the outbreak of war, Dawson remained in the UK as part of the newly formed 6/The Queen's Own, the battalion with which he served throughout the war. As Owen's 2iC, Dawson had already been awarded the first of his DSOs before he succeeded Owen.¹⁵¹

Nominally, Dawson remained the battalion's CO until the end of the war. In the event, however, Dawson's presence was intermittent as a result of him repeatedly suffering wounds.¹⁵² Of the 725 days of Dawson's nominal command, he was present for only 412 days.¹⁵³ Fortunately for Cator, Dawson's longest continuous period with his battalion (168 days) was during the period from his appointment to the Battle of Arras until, inevitably, he was wounded leading an unsuccessful attack on 3 May 1917.¹⁵⁴ Given the value Cator placed upon the Regular army's 'system', he was fortunate to be able to call upon Dawson's 2iC to take his place. At the outbreak of war Lieutenant-Colonel W.J. Alderman had been commissioned into 6/The Queen's Own having previously risen to the rank of Quartermaster-Sergeant within the regiment.¹⁵⁵

There were several ranker officers in our battalion, all of them unpopular with the men – mainly because they knew their job and there was no chance

¹⁵⁰ LG, 9 June 1914

¹⁵¹ DSO - LG, 15 April 1916; Bar to DSO - LG, 18 July 1917; Second Bar to DSO - LG, 22 June 1918; Third Bar to DSO - LG, 8 March 1919. Owen took command of 6/The Queen's Own on 3 May 1917.

¹⁵² Hodgkinson states that Dawson was wounded six times - Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 174. The memorial plaque in St. Margaret of Antioch Church, Dover records that Dawson was wounded nine times - <http://www.doverwarmemorialproject.org.uk/Casualties/MoreMemorials/Churches/St%20Margarets/St%20Margarets.htm> (accessed 29 November 2015). Wounded by a shell on 23 October 1918, Dawson subsequently died as a result in hospital at Camiers on 3 December 1918.

¹⁵³ 16 November 1916 to 3 May 1917; 27 August 1917 to 1 November 1917; 18 February 1918 to 29 March 1918; and 6 June 1918 to 23 October 1918. In the period 3 May 1917 until the Armistice, the command of 6/The Queen's Own changed ten times involving six different officers, including Dawson.

¹⁵⁴ TNA WO95/1861 6/The Queen's Own WD, 3 May 1917. Dawson was awarded his first Bar to his DSO as a result.

¹⁵⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel William John Alderman (1877-1917). LG, 14 August 1914. Alderman had served 17 years and 347 days in the ranks before being commissioned on 15 August 1914. TNA WO 339/10150 Alderman, W.J.

*of 'swinging it over them'. But Alderman, though he was not universally popular, was universally respected.*¹⁵⁶

Alderman had served with 6/The Queen's Own as long as had Dawson. Cator could not have wished for a more suitable and experienced officer to command the battalion until Dawson returned in August 1917.¹⁵⁷

5.4.4 7/The East Surrey Regiment

Cator inherited Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Baldwin, an officer who was both older than himself and, like Warden, with longer service. He had been commissioned into the East Surrey Regiment in 1894.¹⁵⁸ Baldwin was to become the brigade's longest serving CO (957 days).¹⁵⁹ A major in August 1914, Baldwin was initially appointed CO 9/East Surrey on its formation in September 1914, a K3 battalion. When Lieutenant-Colonel C.C.G. Ashton, the original CO 7/East Surrey, a K1 battalion, was transferred to the command of 2/East Surrey in April 1915, Baldwin was appointed to take his place.¹⁶⁰ He was to remain the battalion's CO throughout the period of Cator's command of 37 Brigade.

It was not long before Cator felt justified in complementing him. As the battalion's War Diary records:

¹⁵⁶ Thomas, *A Life Apart*, p. 67. For a discussion of the issues surrounding ranker officers, see Radley, *Get Tough Stay Tough*, pp. 311-313.

¹⁵⁷ Dawson was in post when Cator was promoted GOC 58th Division on 6 October 1917. Alderman returned to the command of the battalion on 2 November 1917 but was reported at 2.40 p.m., 20 November 1917 as seriously wounded and he died shortly afterwards – see TNA WO95/1859 37 Brigade WD, 20 November 1917.

¹⁵⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel Raymond Henry Baldwin (1872-1949). Commissioned on 2 June 1894, Baldwin had served in India, South Africa and in Somaliland whilst with the King's African Rifles.

¹⁵⁹ Baldwin commanded the battalion from 17 April 1915 until he was wounded and captured on 30 November 1917. During this time his 2iC, Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Edward Hugh Jasper Nicolls (1886-1959), was acting Lieutenant-Colonel on two occasions in Baldwin's absence: the first, a period of thirty-three days special leave in December 1916/January 1917 and the second, a period of seven days in March 1917 when Baldwin was in hospital due to bronchitis.

¹⁶⁰ See Chapter 3, Note 59.

*The General made a speech saying that he thought the Battalion were smarter than anything he had yet seen out here including the Guards and 7th Division and that they were far better than he had thought possible.*¹⁶¹

The quest for the attainment of standards comparable with those of Regular army units was a theme which Baldwin shared with Cator. Through his BM, Cator subsequently wrote to Baldwin in terms which reflected both Cator's concern with detail and the degree to which regimental pride was part of his own personal fibre.

The Brigadier General was delighted with the general smart soldier-like appearance of the Battalion. Their turn-out was excellent. The equipment was well cleaned and well put on; what was specially noticeable was the manner in which the Packs had been cleaned and packed. The whole parade reflects the greatest credit on the Officers, Warrant Officers, N.C.Os. and Men.

*The results obtained could only be arrived at by means of discipline and hard work. Discipline is a Regiment's greatest asset. Regiments which have the best discipline are the ones who fight best and the Brigadier recognises that in having the 7th Bn. East Surrey Regt. in his command he has not only a Battalion who has already shown fine fighting qualities but has also the discipline to keep going to maintain in future the traditions of the Regiment and pride in their own Battalion.*¹⁶²

Two weeks later, the battalion's Adjutant, Captain. E.H.J. Nicolls, felt justified in recording:

*The Battalion has changed a great deal but for the better as the spirit now is better than it was when we came out, it has had success and is half full of old soldiers so in every way it is equal to most regular battalions.*¹⁶³

This self-awarded seal of approval may have been merited but the adage that self-praise was no recommendation remained. Cator would have taken pride, therefore, in a complement subsequently paid by Brigadier-General T.G. Matheson, a Coldstream Guards officer in

¹⁶¹ TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 13 June 1916

¹⁶² Ibid., Captain H.E. Trevor, BM, 37 Brigade to CO 7/East Surrey Regiment, 13 June 1916

¹⁶³ Ibid., 30 June 1916.

command of 46 Brigade. 'On the march we were passed by Brigadier-General Matheson who later told the Brigadier that we looked the smartest battalion he had seen in France.'¹⁶⁴

Cator valued the standards established under Baldwin's leadership. He also valued Baldwin's operational capabilities as demonstrated by his personal performance when, for example, 7/East Surrey was lent to 36 Brigade for an attack against Ovillers on 7/8 July 1916.

Brigadier-General Boyd-Moss subsequently wrote to Cator:

*I have been trying to get over to see you, to thank you for the excellent work done by the East Surrey's when they came to help me in Ovillars (sic). They are a top-hole lot and did splendidly. I never had a moments (sic) anxiety after they arrived. Will you please thank Colonel Baldwin for me and tell him how much his services were appreciated.*¹⁶⁵

In August 1916 Baldwin consequentially received the first of his two DSOs as well as the first of his two MiDs awarded whilst Cator commanded 37 Brigade.¹⁶⁶ Baldwin appeared to have all the attributes of a capable CO. His war was brought to a premature end, however, when he was wounded and captured on 30 November 1917.¹⁶⁷

The thread which runs through Cator's command of 37 Brigade was the implementation of 'the right system' and the standards he expected of his team of COs. In turn, the brigade's operational efficiency and its reputation depended upon them. If Cator's initial assessment was correct that his COs did indeed lean on him, the decision to replace Pratt early in Cator's tenure demonstrated he was prepared to deal with those he regarded as weak links. In the

¹⁶⁴ TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 4 March 1917. Brigadier-General (later General Sir) Torquihile George Matheson (1871-1963). Matheson subsequently commanded successively 20th, 4th and Guards Divisions.

¹⁶⁵ TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, Letter from Boyd-Moss to Cator, 12 July 1917. See also Baldwin's 'Report on Operation of 7th & 8th July 1916'.

¹⁶⁶ Baldwin's DSO and a MiD were gazetted together – *LG*, 25 August 1916. Bar to DSO – *LG*, 8 March 1918. Other MiDs – *LG*, 1 January 1916, 4 January 1917 and 18 December 1917.

¹⁶⁷ For the circumstances of Baldwin's surrender near Pam Pam Farm, 30 November 1917, see H.W. Pearse & H.S. Holman, *History of the East Surrey Regiment, Volume III, 1917-1919* (London: The Medici Society, 1926), pp. 46-7.

instances of Warden and Baldwin, both capable and long serving COs, Cator had officers who were tried and tested. The fact that both Cope and Owen were subsequently promoted to the command of brigades during Cator's tenure demonstrates the confidence he and others had in their respective abilities. In Dawson Cator had the benefit of an officer who commanded the respect of his officers and ORs based on his personal leadership style. Through the appointment of Alderman, a ranker officer, Cator illustrated his willingness to promote on the basis of merit. Cator's own subsequent promotion to GOC 58th Division confirmed that 37 Brigade had indeed come to be regarded as 'a top hole Brigade' under his leadership.

5.5 Brigade Majors and Staff Captains

As with every brigade command, the quality of the BM was key to the efficiency with which the team effort was organized and co-ordinated. In the case of 12th Division, two of its initial BMs, Major S.J.P. Scobell of 35 Brigade and Captain W.E. Scafe of 37 Brigade were amongst that rarity, those who had passed Staff College.¹⁶⁸ The third, Major C. Parsons of 36 Brigade, was a 'dugout' who had retired in 1907.¹⁶⁹ Parsons proved himself, nevertheless, to be a capable staff officer who served throughout the war, his last appointment being as AAG in the War Office.¹⁷⁰

In the interests of regimental pride and morale, it was common within 37 Brigade for a CO to be succeeded by his 2iC who had been commissioned into the same regiment. On this basis, for example, Rolls succeeded Warden as CO 6/The Queen's, Dawson succeeded Owen as CO

¹⁶⁸ Major (later Major-General Sir) Sanford John Palairret Scobell (1879-1955) and Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) William Ernest Scafe (1878-1951).

¹⁶⁹ Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Cecil Parsons (1870-1935). He was awarded the DSO and three MiDs.

¹⁷⁰ *LG*, 19 February 1918

6/Queen's Own and Nicolls succeeded Baldwin as CO 7/East Surrey. This was not the case, however, with the staff of the brigade. With a single exception, the eight officers who served as either BM or SC within 37 Brigade had all been commissioned into regiments different to those that provided the battalions that comprised the brigade.¹⁷¹ The evidence is similar in both 35 and 36 Brigades.¹⁷² The implication, therefore, is that 12th Division exhibited a merit-based practice of drawing on officers with the skills, knowledge and abilities required to succeed as brigade staff officers without regard either to regimental loyalties or to the unit or formation with which they had previously served.

When Scafe was promoted in August 1915, he was replaced by Captain H.E. Trevor, another of that rarity, a graduate of Staff College.¹⁷³ Commissioned into the Northamptonshire Regiment in 1903, Trevor's first wartime appointment had been as GSO3 before he succeeded Scafe. By the time Cator took command of 37 Brigade, Trevor had been in post for almost six months. Cator soon gained Trevor's respect:

*My General has been perfectly splendid during all our anxious time in battle. I think I would rather stay & serve under him, than take any promotion elsewhere.*¹⁷⁴

Working in support of Fowler, Scafe and Trevor had laid the procedural foundations of routines and standards within the brigade that met with Cator's approval.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ The single exception was Captain Norman Smithers (1887-1976) who had been commissioned into The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). He had, however, served only in the UK before spending a week with 6/The Queen's Own prior to his appointment as 37 Brigade's SC in April 1918. He was subsequently appointed the brigade's BM in July 1918 and his work was recognised with a MC – LG, 1 January 1919.

¹⁷² Of the eight officers who were appointed either BM or SC in 35 Brigade, the single exception was Major S. J. P. Scobell, Norfolk Regiment. Of the ten officers similarly appointed within 36 Brigade, the two exceptions were Captain (later Major) Sydney Gerald Evans (1880-19??) and Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) William Henry Clement Le Hardy (1889-1961), both of the Royal Sussex Regiment who both served as SCs.

¹⁷³ Scafe was promoted major and appointed a DAA&QMG. Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) H.E. Trevor was the third and last officer to have passed Staff College to be appointed to a brigade's staff within 12th Division. See Note 86.

¹⁷⁴ IWM, H.E. Trevor Papers, Document HET/1/p 299, Letter from Trevor to his mother, 27 August 1916

Acknowledgement of Trevor's own abilities and performance was his promotion to CO 9/Essex, 35 Brigade on 16 November 1916.¹⁷⁶ Trevor expressed his appreciation for Cator's approach:

*I enclose you a most awfully nice letter which I have just got from my late General, whom I was most awfully sorry to leave when it at last came to parting. I think he was the best soldier, greatest sportsman and finest type of English Gentleman one could meet anywhere. Officers & men alike always had the greatest regard for him, & on his side he always had a kind word for anybody who was doing good work.*¹⁷⁷

Following Trevor's death, Cator wrote a letter of condolence to Trevor's father which reflected their mutual regard:

*He was such a splendid chap & the year he was with me as my Brigade Major was the means of not only being closely connected with a brilliant soldier but gave me the opportunity of forming a friendship which I felt could never be broken. I cannot tell you how much we all loved him.*¹⁷⁸

Cator's initial SC was Captain J.C.MacD. Stewart.¹⁷⁹ Aged twenty-four on appointment, Stewart was a young, capable officer who partnered successively Scafe and Trevor serving as 37 Brigade's SC for nearly two years from 30 August 1914. He was promoted BM 113 Brigade, 38th Division on 26 July 1916.¹⁸⁰ His subsequent career was cut short on 27 April

¹⁷⁵ Trevor was, on occasions, frustrated by the contrasting decision making displayed by those above him. For example, on 21 October 1916 he wrote: 'It seems strange that at this period of the war a Bde. cannot be moved by the higher commands without 4 separate and contradictory orders, within the space of 12 hours.' TNA WO95/1860 37 Brigade WD

¹⁷⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor and Major Joseph Leslie Dent (1889-1917), BM 35 Brigade, were killed together on 11 April 1917 when a shell fell on 35 Brigade Headquarters located in the south-eastern fringes of Arras (Map 51bNW3 Arras G.29.c.7.7). 'The death of the Commanding Officer was deeply felt by all ranks who had served under him and particularly by those whom he had led into action on 9th inst.'. TNA WO95/1851 9/Essex WD, 11 April 1917. Trevor had been mentioned in despatches five times.

¹⁷⁷ IWM, H.E. Trevor Papers, Letter from Trevor to his father, 20 November 1916

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Letter from Cator to Trevor's father, 13 April 1917

¹⁷⁹ Captain (later Major) John Colin MacDougall Stewart (1889-1944) Stewart had graduated from Sandhurst in 1908 and subsequently served with 1/Northumberland Fusiliers. He had been commissioned into the Indian Army in 1910 but resigned after two months. TNA WO 339/13840 J.C.MacD. Stewart, Form MT393, 24 August 1914

¹⁸⁰ Captain Stewart was not the officer in 12th Division who served for the longest period as a SC. That distinction is held by Captain Austin Edward Scott-Murray (1881-1943) who served as 35 Brigade's SC from 1 January 1915 until the Armistice (1,410 days).

1917 when he was severely wounded in the head by a fragment of a trench mortar.¹⁸¹ Stewart's replacement was Captain J.F. Dew, another product of Cheltenham College. He had been commissioned into 3/The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) in 1911.¹⁸² Dew had initially been appointed a SC a year earlier.¹⁸³ This raises the unanswered question of why he was transferred to Cator's brigade as a SC. Regardless, Dew had not long to wait for his next opportunity.

Trevor's successor as BM was Captain L.M. Cradock-Hartopp.¹⁸⁴ Appointed on 16 November 1916, Cradock-Hartopp's performance in his previous post had been rewarded with a MiD.¹⁸⁵ He did not, however, meet Cator's standards. As with Pratt, CO 6/The Buffs, Cator was not prepared to tolerate officers with whose work he was dissatisfied, particularly in such a critical role as his BM. Cradock-Hartopp's departure was recorded in stark terms: 'Capt. L.M. Cradock-Hartopp Bde. Major ordered to England to take up duties on the staff at home.'¹⁸⁶

Cradock-Hartopp's replacement was Dew. His appointment is notable for two reasons. First, he was young for such an appointment. Of the six officers who served as 37 Brigade's BM, Dew was the youngest, by a considerable margin.¹⁸⁷ Second, this was the first instance within 12th Division of a brigade's SC being promoted within the same brigade. Cator was clearly

¹⁸¹ Major Stewart was eventually forced to relinquish his commission in September 1918. TNA WO 339/13840 Stewart, J.C.MacD

¹⁸² Captain (later Major) John Finlay Dew (1893-19??). *LG* 28 March 1911 and 20 September 1916

¹⁸³ *LG*, 8 Sept 1915

¹⁸⁴ Captain (later Major) Louis Montague Cradock-Hartopp (1884-1957)

¹⁸⁵ His previous post had been GSO3, 12th Division – see TNA WO95/1828 'A' & 'Q' WD, Divisional Orders, 4 August 1916. It seems reasonable to assume that Cradock-Hartopp's move to 37 Brigade had been a decision taken by Scott, 12th Division's GOC.

¹⁸⁶ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 30 January 1917

¹⁸⁷ Dew was twenty-three years and 349 days old when appointed 37 Brigade's BM. The others were all in their early thirties ranging from Captain N. Smithers – thirty years and 218 days – to Captain W.E. Scafe – thirty-five years and 306 days.

impressed with Dew's performance and engineered his appointment.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, Cator's decision to appoint Dew from within the brigade set a precedent which was unique to 37 Brigade within 12th Division. Dew remained the brigade's BM until April 1918, more than six months after Cator's own promotion to GOC 58th Division. Cator's precedent was followed by his own successor, Brigadier-General Incedon-Webber. Both Dew's successors as 37 Brigade's BM, Captain P.B.B. Nichols and Captain N. Smithers, like Dew, had initially served on the brigade's staff as SCs.¹⁸⁹ Cator's decisions to have Cradock-Hartopp sent home and to replace him with Dew again demonstrated both his unwillingness to compromise on his standards and his willingness to promote from within based on merit.

5.6 Prelude to Arras

37 Brigade's involvement in the Battle of the Somme began on the night of 1/2 July 1916 when it relieved 25 Brigade, 8th Division.¹⁹⁰ It concluded on 11 October 1916 when it was relieved by 88 Brigade, 29th Division following its participation in a failed attack at Gueudecourt four days earlier.¹⁹¹ Cator's analysis was that this failure was due first, to a congested forming up area; second, to ineffective artillery fire; and third, to the 'inexperience of officers & men many of whom have lately been drafted into the brigade, practically untrained'.¹⁹² 37 Brigade's attack was delivered by two battalions, 6/The Buffs and 6/The Queens. The effect of the failure was to compound Cator's problems. The two battalions suffered combined casualties of thirty-one officers and 644 ORs, the equivalent of almost a

¹⁸⁸ Cator's judgement over Dew's capabilities was confirmed by his subsequent promotion in May 1918 to GSO2 (*LG*, 28 May 1918). Dew was also awarded a MC (*LG*, 2 Jan 1918) and a DSO (*LG*, 1 Jan 1919). Dew subsequently served in the King's African Rifles in East Africa during the Second World War and was mentioned in despatches. TNA WO 373/88/136 Dew, J.F.

¹⁸⁹ Captain (later Sir) Philip Bouverie Bowyer Nichols (1894-1962)

¹⁹⁰ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 1 & 2 July 1916

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 11 October 1916

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, Appendix D, 8 October 1916

complete battalion.¹⁹³ By the end of October, however, the number of ORs in both battalions had been restored to levels higher than the day before the attack.¹⁹⁴ Of the officers lost, however, only eight had been replaced.¹⁹⁵ Cator, his COs and his brigade staff had to cope, therefore, with another twist in the revolving door of assessment, assimilation, training and evaluation of replacement ORs with proportionately fewer experienced officers to lead, train and provide an example to the rookies amongst their ranks.¹⁹⁶

37 Brigade spent the period following the Gueudecourt attack and the opening of the Battle of Arras almost equally divided between being in and out of the line.¹⁹⁷ After a relatively brief recovery period, the replenished ranks of 37 Brigade moved north from the Somme area to a section of the line opposite Wailly, four miles south-west of Arras.¹⁹⁸ This proved to be a long tour of fifty-two days strenuous trench holding and little more.¹⁹⁹ The brigade battled the elements and the consequential mud as much as the effect of the enemy's artillery and trench mortars. The brigade's priority was the constant need for trench repairs. During this tour only

¹⁹³ TNA WO95/1860 6/The Buffs WD, 7 October 1916 and TNA WO95/1861 6/The Queen's Own WD, 7 October 1916

¹⁹⁴ Weekly returns in the battalions' WDs record that on 6 October 1916 6/The Buffs had 783 ORs; on 27 October 1916 this had increased to 904 ORs. Similarly on 7 October 1916 6/The Queen's Own had 835 ORs; on 28 October 1916 this had increased to 942 ORs.

¹⁹⁵ The WDs also record that 6/The Buffs received one replacement second lieutenant on 24 October 1916 and a further seven second lieutenants on 28 October 1916. 6/The Queen's Own received a solitary second lieutenant on 20 October 1916. More officer replacements were received, but it took more time. In the instance of 6/Queen's Own, for example, it was three months before the number of its officers matched the number in post immediately prior to the Gueudecourt attack.

¹⁹⁶ Some had yet to master even the most basic of soldiering skills. 'During the morning the C.O. inspected billets which were quite clean although the new men haven't quite got into the way of putting things out right, & will hang them up.' TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 19 December 1916. Not all drafts of ORs were new recruits. On 22 December 1916, for example, 7/East Surrey received a draft of 106 ORs most of whom were from the Regiment's 4th Battalion. They were 'considerably above the average both in the amount of training they have had & in physique'. TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 23 December 1916

¹⁹⁷ Of this period of 179 days (12 October 1916 to 9 April 1917), eighty-nine days were spent in the front line.

¹⁹⁸ 37 Brigade's relief of 41 Brigade, 14th (Light) Division in 'F' Sector was completed at 2.30 p.m. on 25 October 1916 – TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 25 October 1916.

¹⁹⁹ The relief of 37 Brigade by 41 Brigade was completed at 3.20 p.m. on 16 December 1916 – TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 16 December 1916.

one offensive action was undertaken, a raid attempted by 6/The Queen's.²⁰⁰ It served to illustrate Cator's authority to make operational decisions as he thought fit.

*The O.C. commanding 6th Battalion The Queen's (Lieutenant-Colonel H.F. Warden), reported to me that the men of this party were much shaken and, in his opinion, they would not be much good for a subsequent raid in the early morning. I therefore ordered the Raid to be abandoned for the night.*²⁰¹

It also served to illustrate the impact such events had on Cator:

*I am rather down on my luck today – we lost twenty-seven men in a rotten way last night. They started off in the dark, and then the moon broke through the clouds, result discovery and a failure of the operation; it kind of eats into me badly; and I have lost one of the best young officers I have got, who was killed; he was an Englishman who got a Commission from the Canadians, a splendid chap.*²⁰²

As an aside, it is incongruous that whilst Cator could make life and death decisions over operational matters, there were relatively minor administrative decisions, such as compassionate leave, which remained beyond his authority.

*The woman who was killed by the German Bombardment at Margate was the Mother of one of my men. I tried to get him leave, but failed.*²⁰³

Cator was a frustrated man. He recognised the limitations of some of the newest recruits to the brigade and he was keen to see them addressed.

²⁰⁰ The War Diary of 6/The Queen's for December 1916 is missing. A brief account of the circumstances leading to the abandonment of this raid is provided in Scott (ed.) & Brumwell, *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division*, pp. 87-8.

²⁰¹ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 12th Division "G", 6 December 1916

²⁰² Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 6 December 1916. The officer in question was Second Lieutenant John Scarlett Pym (1891-1916). Born in Rochester, Kent and an engineer by trade, Pym attested at Valcartier, Quebec on 24 September 1914, was assigned to 'A' Squadron, Royal Canadian Dragoons. He sailed with the First Canadian Contingent in October 1914. Corporal Pym was awarded the DCM (*LG*, 15 September 1915) for rescuing a wounded comrade whilst 'the shrapnel and rifle fire was continuous'. Sergeant Pym was commissioned into The Queens on 4 October 1916 (*LG*, 21 November 1916).

²⁰³ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 4 March 1917. Margate and Broadstairs had been bombarded by German destroyers on 25 February 1917.

*I believe we go out of the line very soon for a rest, it will be welcome; not that I feel tired, but the men have been at it since July 1st without any rest, and there are several new ones who want training – if only I can get six weeks. I will make the new ones as good as the old; they are splendid material, but still ignorant and lacking in training; but one cannot do it in the line, they are all scattered.*²⁰⁴

On 16 December 1916 37 Brigade was relieved by 41 Brigade, 14th Division. By the following day the whole brigade had completed its move to Grand Rullecourt, fourteen miles west of Arras. Whilst their battalions cleaned up, Cator held a conference of his COs to discuss the brigade's Training Programme.²⁰⁵ The outcome was agreement on the need to concentrate on the basics:

Usual routine of training was continued during the day. The following is the programme of work:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>8.30am – 9.30am</i> | <i>Physical training & bayonet fighting</i> |
| <i>9.45am – 10.45am</i> | <i>Close order drill</i> |
| <i>11am – 12 noon</i> | <i>Guards. Duties of sentries. Saluting drill with & without arms. Company to march past Coy. Commander at end of parade.</i> |
| <i>12 noon – 1pm</i> | <i>Specialist classes in bombing, Lewis Guns, Rifle Grenades under Coy. arrangements.</i> ²⁰⁶ |

In addition to his routine visits to his battalions, Cator lectured on topics he judged merited his specific intervention:

*In the afternoon Brigadier-General Cator D.S.O. gave us a lecture on minimising the casualties & wastage both in the attack & when holding the line, the lecture was very interesting & most instructive as the Brigadier has been working on the subject for some time.*²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 6 December 1916

²⁰⁵ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 18 December 1916

²⁰⁶ TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 22 December 1916. This concentration on the basics subsequently paid dividends. 'The Brigadier General Comdg 37th Inf. Bde. wishes that all ranks should know how very pleased the General Officer Comdg. 12th Division and himself were with the appearance of the Battalion on parade yesterday morning; with the smart & soldierly way they handled their arms, with the steadiness & swing of their march past, & with the general excellence of their "turn out" which reflects highest credit on all ranks.' TNA WO95/1860 6/The Buffs WD, 11 January 1917

²⁰⁷ TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 1 January 1917

In addition to skills training, Cator's battalions had to adapt to the changing way in which companies and platoons were organised. Within the BEF Major-General R.B. Stephens, GOC 5th Division, had advocated a new platoon organisation as early as September 1916.²⁰⁸ By late December 1916, discussions within the BEF were widespread, including within 37 Brigade.²⁰⁹ The brigade's training activities were curtailed, however, by its need to take its turn in the line to the east of Arras and relieve 26 Brigade, 9th Division.²¹⁰ For twenty-four days 37 Brigade held the line during a period of hard frosts and routine trench mortar and artillery duels.²¹¹ In contrast with Loomis' experience prior to Arras, this tour in the trenches was not used by 37 Brigade as an opportunity to blood any of its troops by raiding the German trenches. On the contrary, the tour was marked by a raid by two parties of Germans on 3 February as a result of which six ORs were wounded and another taken prisoner.²¹²

Relieved by 36 Brigade on 7 February, 37 Brigade began a period of forty-five days out of the line. The brigade's HQ was located in the villages of Manin and subsequently Lattre-St. Quentin.²¹³ Subject to the vagaries of snowfalls and the supply of working parties, the brigade concentrated on training, working up to the practice of brigade attacks over replica trenches

²⁰⁸ R.G. Shelford Bidwell, & D. Graham, *Fire-power: British Army Weapons and Theories of War 1904-1945* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), pp. 121-2

²⁰⁹ For example, on 28 December 1916, 99 Brigade, 2nd Division, Kellett's brigade, held a conference attended by all officers down to Company Commanders. 'The subject discussed was the re-organization of the Coys. so as to make the platoon a complete unit.' TNA WO95/1371 1st KRRC WD, 28 December 1916. Currie, GOC 1st Canadian Division, issued a suggested battalion and platoon structure to his brigadiers for comment on 29 December 1916 – see TNA WO95/3764, 2 CIB WD, 29 December 1916, Appendix III. On 10 January 1917 Byng, GOC Canadian Corps, advocated that his divisions should adopt their own platoon establishment and experiment with it during training – see D.C.G. Campbell, 'The Divisional Experience in the C.E.F.: A Social and Operational History of the 2nd Canadian Division, 1915-1918', PhD Thesis, University of Calgary, 2003, p. 285. For references to 'organization of Coy. in new method of attack' within 37 Brigade, see TNA WO95/1860 6/The Buffs WD, 1 & 8 January 1917 and TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 11 February 1917.

²¹⁰ 37 Brigade's HQ moved from Grand Rullecourt to Arras on 14 January 1917 when Cator assumed command of I Sector. TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 14 January 1917

²¹¹ Cator described his HQ to his mother: 'I myself am installed in a nice big house; but the cold is past description, as all the windows are broken, and there are some shell holes in the roof; it's what the agents might call 'a nice summer residence'.' Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 17 January 1917

²¹² TNA WO95/1863 6/The Queen's WD, 3 February 1917. Lieutenant-Colonel Rolls, CO 6/The Queen's reported that: 'The man in question is an educated man, a Schoolmaster by profession, and very intelligent. I do not consider it likely that he will give away any information.' TNA WO95/1824 12th Division WD, Appendix A, I Sector, RIGHT BATTALION, 3 February 1917

²¹³ These two villages are located to the west of Arras and due south of the Arras to St Pol road at Aubigny.

dug in the vicinity of Ambrines, a mile from Manin.²¹⁴ The role to be played by VI Corps in the forthcoming operations was known at this stage.²¹⁵ Despite the interruptions to their training, the progress made by Cator's troops by the end of February 1917 is evident in the elements to which he drew the attention of his officers and ORs for the practice attacks:

1. *Systems of advance and keeping under cover of the barrage.*
2. *Communications by (a) Aeroplane (b) Visual Signalling (c) Runners (d) Telephone.*
3. *Selection of strong points and out-posts.*
4. *Mopping-up, and blocking exposed flanks and communication trenches.*
5. *Intervals and distances being maintained.*
6. *Use of the Rifle and fire orders, etc.*
7. *Practice for the Platoon as a self-contained fighting unit.*
8. *Patrols pushing forward to exploit a success.*²¹⁶

Cator remained concerned about the capability of his junior officers.²¹⁷ His instructions specified his own role:

*Whilst the attack is in progress, situations representing their being held up by enemy Strong Points, etc., will be given to Companies and platoons, the object being to make officers use their initiative and deal promptly on the ground with situations which are likely to occur in the reality. These situations will be given out by Officers specifically detailed under direction from Brigade Headquarters.*²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Working parties supplied were often very large. For example, on 7 & 8 February 1917, 6/The Queens supplied ten officers and 500 ORs to 278 Railway Company for track levelling work. TNA WO95/1863 6/The Queens WD. This battalion also supplied working parties of 750 ORs to 278 Railway Company for the period 9-12 February 1917. TNA WO95/1861 6/The Queen's Own WD. 6/The Buffs supplied working parties of fifteen officers and 650 ORs for the period 8-10 February 1917. TNA WO95/1860 6/The Buffs WD. The task of digging the replica trenches at Ambrines fell to 7/East Surrey. Between 17 and 21 February this battalion provided between 400-600 men for the purpose. TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD

²¹⁵ The planning process for VI Corps had essentially been top down. Only one of the divisions which were to form VI Corps on 9 April 1917 formed part of the Corps during the planning period i.e. January/February 1917. That division was 12th Division. Allenby's approved plan, other than the length of the preliminary bombardment which remained under discussion, was issued to Corps commanders on 7 February 1917. See TNA WO158/223, Third Army, Appreciation, G.S.1/15. 37 Brigade's own Preliminary Orders for the Arras operation were not issued, however, until 19 March 1917. TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD

²¹⁶ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, Appendix A, 12th Division. "G", 28 February 1917. Cator's instructions specified that the first phase of the attack would be based upon "leap frogs". See Chapter 3, Note 19.

²¹⁷ On the evening of 26 February 1917 Cator gave another lecture to all the officers in the brigade. TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 26 February 1917

²¹⁸ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, Appendix A, 12th Division, "G", para. 7, 28 February 1917

Whilst Cator's COs invested their time and expertise in supervising the training of their battalions, he invested his time in the training of his brigade as a formation. The brigade's planned attack was rehearsed over the replica trenches on no less than seven occasions, including with the co-operation of contact aircraft and the use of dummy tanks.²¹⁹

On 26 March 1917 37 Brigade returned to the same sector of the line to the east of Arras it had held in January. Three days later the brigade conducted its first raid of the year.²²⁰ Three officers and sixty ORs of 6/The Queen's Own established that the German front line was held in strength, but they learnt not much else. Although not a complete failure, no prisoners were taken nor were any indications found of which units were holding the enemy's line. Cator believed that too many were involved and that better results could be achieved by a snatch squad of six men.²²¹ The contrast between the role of raids in the training of troops in Cator's brigade is stark to that of Loomis and 2 CIB.²²² Cator was also critical of the policy of frequent raids being undertaken:

*I am of the opinion that the enemy are fully aware of our intentions to carry out frequent raids and are very much on the alert; the chief essence of success namely surprise, of a raid is therefore obliterated, and each successive attempt becomes a more difficult operation to be successful. Our raids have also given the enemy frequent opportunities of practicing his barrage.*²²³

²¹⁹ 1 and 2 February and 1, 2, 14, 23 and 24 March 1917. TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD. The practice attack on 14 March was undertaken in conjunction with 36 Brigade.

²²⁰ TNA WO95/1858 Sixth Royal West Kent Operation Order No 98, 28 March 1917

²²¹ TNA WO95/1858 6/RWKR WD, Report on a raid carried out by 6th Bn. (Queen's Own) Royal West Kent Regiment on the morning of the 29th instant. 37th I. Bde. T.S. 265/165/1

²²² See Chapter 2 – 2.11 Raiding. During the period 7 February to 24 March 1917 when 37 Brigade had been out of the line, 12th Division had undertaken three raids, two which had yielded prisoners – 11/Middlesex, 36 Brigade, twenty-five prisoners on 26 February, and 5/Royal Berkshire, 36 Brigade, 6 prisoners on 17 March – and one which had not – 9/Essex, 35 Brigade on 23 March. TNA WO95/770 VI Corps General Staff WD

²²³ TNA WO95/1858 6/RWKR WD, Report on a raid carried out by the 6th Bn. (Queen's Own) Royal West Kent Regiment on the morning of the 29th instant. 37th I. Bde. T.S. 265/165/1

Cator held a conference of his COs to discuss ‘final arrangements for the coming offensive’ on 1 April 1917.²²⁴ The same day he wrote to his mother reflecting his confidence of forthcoming success:

*We are just as busy as we possibly can be; a most interesting period of the War, everything is going as well as possible, and we are going to knock the bottom out of the German (sic) this summer.*²²⁵

5.7 First Battle of the Scarpe

Haldane’s VI Corps held the front from St-Laurent-Blangy on the Scarpe southwards for a distance ‘of roughly 3,000 yards’ to beyond Tilloy-lès-Mofflaines.²²⁶ From north to south, VI Corps’ initial attack on 9 April was undertaken by 15th, 12th and 3rd Divisions. The first stage of the attack by 12th Division, the capture of the German front line (the Black Line), involved an advance of 800 yards.²²⁷ 37 Brigade (6/The Queen’s and 7/East Surrey) attacked on a frontage of 700 yards.²²⁸ The Blue Line (Observation Ridge) lay a further 1,000 yards ahead and consisted of a series of well positioned redoubts – Holt, Hotte and Houlette.²²⁹ After a pause of two hours, 6/The Buffs and 6/The Queen’s Own captured the Blue Line on an increased frontage of 800 yards.²³⁰ Initially acting as Divisional Reserve, 35 Brigade leapfrogged through 36 and 37 Brigades to attack the Brown Line i.e. the Wancourt-Feuchy Line, 2,600 yards ahead astride the Arras-Cambrai Road.²³¹ By noon on 10 April, 35 Brigade

²²⁴ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 1 April 1917. The Warning Order had been issued on 17 March 1917.

²²⁵ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 1 April 1917. Cator later wrote: ‘To begin with we spent three months very hard work in getting it all ready, and I do not think a stone was left unturned to help make it a success.’ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 19 April 1917

²²⁶ TNA WO95/1824 12th Division WD, Scheme of Defence, Para. I – Boundaries of the VIth Corps Area. The junction between VI Corps and VII Corps to its south marked the northern end of the Hindenburg Line.

²²⁷ Scott, (ed.) & Brumwell, *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division*, p. 97. Cator recorded that the distance to the Black Line was 600 yards and that: ‘The German wire opposite my front was seventy-six yards in breadth.’ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 19 April 1917.

²²⁸ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, March 1917, Instructions No 1, Warning Order, para. 4

²²⁹ Scott, (ed.) & Brumwell, *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division*, p. 97

²³⁰ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, March 1917, Instructions No 1, Warning Order, para. 4

²³¹ Scott, (ed.) & Brumwell, *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division*, p. 97

had succeeded and was in the process of consolidating its newly won position. Cator described the outcome as ‘by far the most successful operation we have had this War’.²³²

Cator had moved to his Advanced HQ in a cellar on the Arras-Cambrai Road at Faubourg St Sauveur on 4 April.²³³ His troops spent five days in the caves under Arras during the bombardment which preceded the battle.²³⁴ Cator recorded:

*In no instances was a single man lost in the dugouts and caves during the Bombardment prior to the Battle; this, I believe, constitutes a record for any Battle of this War. An additional benefit conferred by our deep cover was that men started the action both morally and physically fresh.*²³⁵

At 1.00 a.m. on 9 April Cator visited his troops in the caves adjacent to his Advance HQ. Confidence was high. Cator recorded that ‘they all went off singing as cheery as school-boys’.²³⁶ The attack began at 5.30 a.m. Cator viewed events from an artillery observation post located on the top of a ruined house. The combined effect of the artillery preparation, both the counter-battery fire and the creeping barrage, and the months of training enabled the Black Line to be captured in twenty-five minutes.²³⁷ ‘All the lines detailed to us were taken in excellent style, the whole affair being carried off like a parade.’²³⁸ The attack on the Blue Line met with greater resistance. Cator’s account, however, provides evidence of the impact of *SSI43*:

²³² Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 19 April 1917

²³³ Cator’s Advanced HQ was within 1,000 yards of the British Front Line - see Map 51BNW3 G.29.c.8.9. It is illustrated in TNA WO95/1863 6/The Queen’s WD, Appendix 6. Scott’s 12th Division HQ was west of Arras at Wagnonlieu, five miles from Cator’s Advanced HQ. Haldane’s VI Corps HQ was at Noyelle-Vion, a further seven miles west of Wagnonlieu.

²³⁴ See W. Grant Grieve & B. Newman, *Tunnellers: The Story of the Tunnelling Companies, Royal Engineers, during the World War* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1936), pp.156-160 and P. Robinson & N. Cave, *The Underground War Volume 1: Vimy Ridge to Arras* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011), pp. 168-184.

²³⁵ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, April 1917, Account of Operations of 37th Infantry Brigade from April 9th to April 13th.

²³⁶ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 19 April 1917

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ TNA WO95/1862 7/East Surrey WD, 9 April 1917. The diary records the Black Line was captured at 6.23 a.m.

*The enemy had rallied, and had got machine guns cunningly placed everywhere; but our men were their masters, and whilst the Rifle Grenades kept them down, the Riflemen crept round and shot them down; by 11.30 a.m. or six hours after the battle, Observation Ridge was in our hands.*²³⁹

The task of Cator's brigade in the mosaic of the first day of the battle had been specific and limited. Cator's plan of action had been implemented by his COs and their troops as required. Success had been achieved without the need for any tactical alterations on his part. As Cator's after-action report stated:

*With the exception of 250 men of the 6th Battalion The Queen's, sent up to reinforce the 35th Brigade who had passed through to attack the Brown Line, my Brigade took no further important part in the Operations of the 9th instant.*²⁴⁰

Over the next four days Cator's men had to endure both the German shelling and the severity of the weather. Their circumstances were made worse by the legacy left them by the enemy:

*Orders issued to all units that no German Dugout was to be occupied unless carefully examined, owing to 4 dugouts having been mined. Very bad weather for the troops. Snowing hard.*²⁴¹

Cator was ordered in the early afternoon of 11 April to relieve 111 Brigade, then holding Monchy le Preux. Frustrated by lack of clarity over the disposition of troops to the north of the village, coupled with delays in movements caused by snow 'falling so thick it was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead', there was insufficient time for Cator to establish clarity over dispositions and carry out the relief before daylight on the following

²³⁹ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 19 April 1917. As a result of his actions during this attack, Sergeant Harry Cator (1894-1969), 7/East Surrey, no relation to Alby Cator, was awarded the VC (LG, 8 June 1917). See also Gerald Gliddon, *VCs of the First World War: Arras & Messines 1917* (London: Wrens Park Publishing, 2000), pp. 52-7.

²⁴⁰ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, Appendix 18, Account of Operations by 37th Infantry Brigade April 9th to April 13th, p. 3. The attack of 35 Brigade (GOC Brigadier-General B. Vincent) on Battery Valley had yielded, amongst other things, the capture of thirty-one guns. 'The attack of the 12th Division had none the less been a fine feat, and on the 35th Brigade in particular the exhilaration of sweeping through the enemy's batteries had left an indelible impression.' C. Falls, *Military Operations – France and Belgium, 1917 Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992), p.222

²⁴¹ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 10 April 1917, 11.00 a.m.

day.²⁴² Having been in the field with minimal shelter for four days, Cator's troops were exhausted, cold and wet. In Cator's words, however, 'they are the cheeriest soldiers I have ever seen'.²⁴³ This was despite the brigade's 730 casualties of whom 165 had either been killed or were missing.²⁴⁴ Their welcome relief by 88 Brigade, 29th Division was completed by the early hours of 13 April.²⁴⁵

5.8 Arleux and Third Battle of the Scarpe

Having been congratulated for its 'brilliant work' by Haldane and by Scott for the 'brilliant and gallant manner' in which its attack had been delivered, Cator's brigade moved westward to Humbercourt where it remained until it returned to Arras ten days later.²⁴⁶ 12th Division's subsequent involvement, on 28/29 April in the Battle of Arleux in support of XVII Corps' attempt to capture Roeux, was undertaken south of the River Scarpe by 35 Brigade. On this occasion 36 Brigade was in support positioned in Halifax Trench, west of Orange Hill, whilst Cator's brigade was in reserve at Railway Triangle.²⁴⁷ 37 Brigade was not called upon. 35 Brigade's attack was unsuccessful, evident in that 'our troops were driven back on either side to their original positions'.²⁴⁸ By the time Cator's brigade did relieve 35 Brigade on 1 May 1917, however, Haig had already concluded that the strategic intent of the Battle of Arras had

²⁴² Ibid., Appendix 18, Account of Operations by 37th Infantry Brigade April 9th to April 13th, p. 4

²⁴³ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 19 April 1917

²⁴⁴ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, Appendix 16, Casualties 9th-13th April, 1917

²⁴⁵ Third Army's initial success had, however, been thwarted. 'Already, by the morning of the 13th, the great gap made by the British offensive on the 9th had been barred and bolted.' G.C. Wynne, *If Germany Attacks: The Battle in the West* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Reprinted 1976), p. 213

²⁴⁶ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, Appendix 16a. Scott's message recorded that 12th Division had captured twenty Officers, 1,200 ORs, forty-one field guns and howitzers, twenty-eight MGs and two aerial torpedo throwers. Humbercourt lies some thirteen miles south-west of Arras and north of the Arras-Doullens road. 12th Division took no part in the Second Battle of the Scarpe – 23/24 April 1917.

²⁴⁷ TNA WO95/1824 12th Division WD, 25 April 1917. Railway Triangle lies east of Arras. It is formed by the junction south of the River Scarpe between Blangy and Feuchy of the Arras-Lens and Arras-Douai railway lines.

²⁴⁸ Scott, (ed.) & Brumwell, *The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division*, p. 109. For an account of 35 Brigade's attack, see TNA WO95/1824 12th Division WD, Narrative of Operations on 28th and 29th April 1917.

been undermined by the failure of the Nivelle Offensive.²⁴⁹ Von Lossberg's appointment had resulted in a tactical transformation from rigid to elastic defence.²⁵⁰

The tactical position Cator's brigade then faced was encapsulated in 12th Division's Order for its role in the Third Battle of the Scarpe:

*The enemy is holding the front opposite VI Corps with about 8 regiments disposed in depth. His troops are fairly fresh and up to the present have not shewn any great loss of moral. His trenches are incomplete and he has only a few improvised dug-outs, consequently it is hoped that continuous artillery fire will reduce his numbers and moral before the attack. The enemy's disconnected trenches appear to be well sited and difficult to observe, and a large number of machine guns sited in banks, trenches and shell-holes are being employed to enfilade our advance. The enemy has lately considerably increased his artillery opposite the VI Corps.*²⁵¹

Together with 36 Brigade, 37 Brigade subsequently attacked 'under cover of darkness' at 3.45 a.m. on 3 May 1917.²⁵² The brigade's first objective was an advance of some 650 yards south of Roeux, from Rifle Trench to Gun Trench and Keeling Copse. Its second was a further advance of some 200 yards to Cartridge Trench. The events of the day resulted in failure. Cator's troops' initial success was obviated by the effect of enemy machine guns which had been missed in the darkness of the initial advance. Cator's information on the progress of the attack was 'very obscure owing to communications with attacking companies being impossible owing to enemy's M.Guns'.²⁵³ Communications forward remained severely

²⁴⁹ TNA WO256/17 Haig's Diary, 29 April 1917

²⁵⁰ Wynne, *If Germany Attacks*, pp. 199-201 and p. 222. Wynne maintains that GHQ and army commanders were slow to garner the operational lessons of von Lossberg's tactical changes – see Wynne, *If Germany Attacks*, p. 225.

²⁵¹ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 12th DIVISION ORDER No 162, 30th April, 1917

²⁵² The timing for the attack was a compromise decided upon by Haig. It suited neither First nor Third Armies attacking astride the Scarpe, nor Fifth Army attacking between Bullecourt and Quéant – see Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, pp. 430-3. In common with other brigades, Cator's HQ was only advised of this decision on the day before the attack – see TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, Addendum No 3 to 12th DIVISION ORDER No 162 dated 2nd May, 1917.

²⁵³ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 3 May 1917, 10.00 a.m.

impeded throughout the day.²⁵⁴ Cator kept divisional HQ informed as far as possible. By the day's end, however, those who survived were back in Rifle Trench.²⁵⁵ At 12.15 a.m. on 4 May, however, Cator did make an intervention. Lieutenant-Colonel Cope, CO 6/The Buffs, telephoned brigade HQ advising that he intended to launch another attack on Devil's Trench with his remaining effective strength of fifty-eight men. Cator ordered him not to attack.²⁵⁶

Cator's after-action report illustrated the impact of von Lossberg's tactical changes on the fate of Cator's brigade:

*There is no doubt that the front waves reached their objective but the mopping up waves passed over portions of trenches and shell holes filled with the enemy. From reports received there appears to have been little opposition at first, but the second and subsequent waves came under heavy rifle and machine gun fire from DEVIL'S TRENCH, were held up and the leading Companies of both 6th Bn. The Buffs and 7th Bn. East Surrey Regt. were cut off.*²⁵⁷

Cator wrote home in rather a 'matter of fact' manner:

*Our fight on the 3rd was not a success, we lost heavily and gained no ground to speak of. The mistake we made was to attack before it was light, and all our advanced waves ran over the Germans in the dark, reached their objectives and got cut off by the Germans they had missed out in the dark, and who shot them in the back. I think though, the Germans lost very heavily, and it was a drawn battle.*²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ In his report to VI Corps, Scott drew attention to the implications: 'The absolute impossibility during daylight of movement over the open spurs, and then the want of any definite information and the inability to use supports.' TNA WO95/1824 12th Division WD, 12th Division No. GS 165/1/438, 13 May 1917

²⁵⁵ Casualties were severe: 6/The Buffs suffered casualties of fourteen officers and 360 ORs; 7/East Surrey suffered casualties of eleven officers and 238 ORs. 6/The Queen's Own undertook a second attack at 9.45 p.m. to capture Gun Trench. It too failed due to MG fire from its front and from both flanks. The battalion suffered casualties of twelve officers and 250 ORs.

²⁵⁶ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, 4 May 1917, 12.15 a.m.

²⁵⁷ TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, REPORT on OPERATIONS carried out by the 37th INFANTRY BRIGADE on 3rd May, 1917

²⁵⁸ Cator Papers, Cator to his sister, Edith Louisa Cator, 6 May 1917

37 Brigade was relieved in the early hours of 5 May 1917 by 35 Brigade.²⁵⁹ After three days spent cleaning up and supplying carrying parties for its sister brigades, 37 Brigade was back in the line on 8 May 1917 for a period of nine days trench holding until relieved again by 88 Brigade, 29th Division in the early hours of 17 May 1917. On the evening of 12 May 37 Brigade participated in an operation involving 3rd and 12th Divisions. The task allotted to Cator's brigade was the small-scale 'bite and hold' capture of a 400 yard section of Devil's Trench lying south of Roeux. Cator decided that Rolls' 6/Queens should make the attack. The casualties that could be inflicted by the unsuppressed MGs nine days earlier on this part of the front had evidently not been appreciated. The operation was originally intended to be undertaken without any artillery barrage and for Devil's Trench to be captured 'at the point of the bayonet'.²⁶⁰ It proved to be a disaster. Cator wrote to his mother the day after the attack:

*We had a small side-show last night, my troops were so tired they could barely keep awake when I went round to see them in the front line in the morning; but all the same they went over like a solid wall. The gunners in the observation stations said not a man hesitated, and there was not a waver in the line; alas, a hundred went over, only ten came back. Machine guns mowed them down, and the small attack was a failure. Such are the ups and downs of this colossal battle.*²⁶¹

It may be that Cator wrote in such a 'comme ci comme ça' manner in order to spare his mother his inner thoughts about the full horror of this needless waste of lives. In his after-action report Cator concluded: 'I am fully confident that it was through no fault of any officer or man of the Queen's that their efforts were unsuccessful.'²⁶² In other words, Rolls and his

²⁵⁹ Between 00.01 a.m. on 1 May and 6.00 p.m. on 6 May 1917, 37 Brigade suffered 909 casualties, of whom 518, fifty-seven per cent, had either been killed or were missing. TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, Appendix 1, Summary of Casualties

²⁶⁰ TNA WO95/1824 12th Division WD, Narrative of the Attack on Devil's Trench 12th May 1917. As a result of representations by GOC 3rd Division, the attack was preceded by a bombardment of three minutes' duration.

²⁶¹ Cator Papers, Cator to his mother, 13 May 1917. Cator reported two days after the attack that of the four officers who participated in the attack, one was killed and the others were all wounded. Of the 100 ORs who went into the attack, seventy-nine were casualties.

²⁶² TNA WO95/1858 37 Brigade WD, Appendix K, Report on the operations carried out by the 37th Infantry Brigade on May 12th, 1917, 14th May, 1917

men had been set a task which experience indicated had been impossible.²⁶³ This was a grievous note upon which Cator and his brigade concluded their contribution to the Battle of Arras.

5.9 Conclusion

Cator's mission as GOC 37 Brigade was to draw upon his own standards and experience to ensure that his brigade, part of a NA Kitchener division, stood favourable comparison not only with any Regular division, but with the Guards Division in particular. Cator's career with 37 Brigade demonstrates the fundamental elements of the role of a successful brigadier-general. First, he fostered and led a team of staff and battalion officers who themselves provided leadership and support for the units within his brigade so that it was operationally efficient and effective. Cator's rejection both of Pratt as CO 6/The Buffs and Cradock-Hartopp as his BM illustrated he was not prepared to compromise his standards. Second, he provided personal standards of performance and expectations which served as models for those he led. His ability as a BM to step into the role of a brigade commander when circumstances demanded it in November 1914 and the recognition of his ability to do so was acknowledged with the award of his DSO. Third, subject to demands upon his troops placed upon him by Scott, he established priorities over the use of his units' time when they were not in the line, which was the case for the majority of their time. Cator's responsibility was to observe, gather, consult, analyse and synthesize information about the performance of his brigade to create his agenda for the training and development needs of his units. He then had to ensure his agenda was implemented. His involvement in the practice attacks over the replica trenches at Ambrines in February and March 1917 was arguably the foundation upon which the brigade's fine performance on 9 April 1917 was built.

²⁶³ Another instance of 'a hiatus in understanding'. Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, p. 71 cited in Note 128

Confirmation of Cator's performance and abilities was evident when he was promoted on 6 October 1917 to the command of 58th Division.²⁶⁴ Cator replaced Major-General H.D. Fanshawe who had been the subject of a report by Maxse which included the criticism: 'Fanshawe is not a good trainer having little knowledge of the subject.'²⁶⁵ During his twenty months in command of a brigade, Cator demonstrated his understanding that the prime responsibility of a brigadier-general was to produce a formation capable of successfully prosecuting a fight for the operational objectives set for it.²⁶⁶

Cator remained in the Army after the war rising in February 1932 to the pinnacle of any Guardsman's career, GOC London District.²⁶⁷ Cator died on 19 November that year, however, due to heart failure whilst out hunting in Wiltshire. Liddell Hart wrote an obituary in which he succinctly seems to have captured the essence of Alby Cator.²⁶⁸

*He shone in dealing with men rather than a tactician or student of war. He knew how to maintain discipline while being universally liked. This was the secret of his rise during the war from battalion to brigade commander and then, for some six months, to divisional commander. The British Army has sometimes been termed "an army of brigadiers" and Gen. Cator was a good instance of this type of leadership, essentially regimental leadership in the higher sense.*²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ Haig had already formed a view on Cator's capabilities fully seven months before his promotion. 'Cator is an excellent brigadier, ...'. TNA WO256/16 Haig's Diary, 6 March 1917

²⁶⁵ IWM, 69/53/3 Papers of Sir Ivor Maxse. For an account of the circumstances of Fanshawe's removal, see D. Martin, *Londoners on the Western Front: The 58th (2/1st London) Division in the Great War* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2014), pp. 101-2.

²⁶⁶ Cator's contribution as GOC 58th Division was cut short by his evacuation on 10 May 1918 due to sickness. He was eventually replaced by Major-General Frank William Ramsay (1875-1954). Cator's sickness was genuine. Rawlinson responded to a letter from Cator: 'Very glad to hear that you are fit again and I will certainly do all I can to get you back to the IV Army but your old Div. has been taken over by Ramsay and there is not much hope of you being able to get back to it.' Cator Papers, Rawlinson to Cator, 18 July 1918

²⁶⁷ *LG*, 5 February 1932

²⁶⁸ Basil Liddell Hart (1895-1970) was the Daily Telegraph's Military Correspondent from 1925 to 1935.

²⁶⁹ Cator Papers, Obituary, Major-Gen A.B.E. Cator by Captain B. Liddell Hart, *Daily Telegraph*, 19 November 1932

Chapter 6

Brigadier-General N.J.G. Cameron

151 Infantry Brigade



6.1 Introduction

Neville John Gordon Cameron is an enigma. He was a major at the outbreak of war who was promoted to the command of a division in 1917. His successful military career spanned a period of over thirty-eight years.¹ Yet Cameron has no biographer and left neither memoirs nor diary.² He is rarely mentioned in the historiography.³ Even where history does record

¹ Commissioned 17 December 1892; retired 17 October 1931.

² Cameron did leave eight letters to his father, General Sir William Gordon Cameron (1827-1913), written between 13 April 1898 and 1 September 1899 whilst he was serving in Sudan and Egypt. NAM Reference: 8311/12-20, 8305/55, Papers of N.J.G. Cameron. The NAM also holds 173 photographs compiled by Cameron associated with the Second Sudan War (1896-1899) and the South African War (1899-1902) – NAM Accession Number 1894-09-93. Cameron wrote a letter to the Official Historian commenting on the fighting at Wancourt Ridge in April 1917 – TNA CAB 45/116, Cameron, 27 March 1938. Cameron's grandson, Lieutenant-Colonel

him, such as his obituary in *The Times*, there are both errors and glaring omissions.⁴ As with Richard Kellett, however, this dearth of primary sources should not prevent Cameron's service and contribution being identified, analysed and evaluated based on the evidence which is available.

Pelham Burn and Cator were relatively young when appointed brigadier-generals. Kellett, on the other hand, was relatively old. Cameron and Loomis were the same age and both appointed to the command of a brigade in 1915 when forty-five years old.⁵ They were in the age group of brigadier-generals (between 41-49 years) from which three-quarters of those appointed to brigade command during 1915 were drawn.⁶ They were both subsequently appointed divisional commanders. The distinction between them, however, is that Cameron was a career soldier. Loomis was a partner in a construction business who had joined the Canadian Militia. The first reason, therefore, for Cameron's selection is he was a British Regular officer appointed to brigade command at an age typical at the time.

William Macnair, has confirmed to the author that neither he nor his mother have any papers relating to Cameron – email to author 23 July 2014.

³ As GOC 49th Division Cameron is mentioned in the divisional history merely six times, typically in the context of passing on either orders or congratulations – see L. Magnus, *The West Riding Territorials in the Great War* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd, 1920), pp. 142, 180, 186, 187, 193 and 219. The longest printed passage in the historiography concerning Cameron is based on a letter of 6 May 1930 to J.E. Edmunds attributed to 'William Parr'. This includes a description of the circumstances in which Cameron was wounded and evacuated on 1 July 1916 – see F. Davies & G. Maddocks, *Bloody Red Tabs: General Officer Casualties of the Great War, 1914-1918* (London: Leo Cooper, 1995), p. 123 and TNA CAB45/136 Somme: Authors M-P. The author of this letter was actually Major (later General Sir) William Platt (1885-1975), a captain and Cameron's BM at the time. Stephen Badsey makes a number of references to Cameron in his account of the raid by two battalions of 151 Brigade against Narrow Trench on 15 September 1917 – S. Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and Its Image 1914-18* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 137-162. Badsey correctly states (p. 140) that it was unusual for all four battalions of a brigade to be drawn from the same regiment. This was the case, for example, with both 151 Brigade's sister brigade, 149 Brigade, composed of 4/, 5/, 6/ and 7/NF, and with the brigade Cameron had previously commanded, 103 Brigade, 34th Division, composed of 24/, 25/, 26/, and 27/ NF. Despite Badsey's assertion to the contrary, however, this was not the case with 151 Brigade in September 1917. Since the end of 1915 the brigade had been composed of 5/Borders together with 6/, 8/ and 9/DLI.

⁴ Obituary, *The Times*, 7 December 1955. For example, Cameron is incorrectly credited with having commanded an unspecified battalion early during the Great War, which he did not; there is no mention of Cameron either having passed Staff College nor having held staff appointments, both of which he did.

⁵ Their dates of birth were 14 January and 1 February 1870 respectively.

⁶ See Chapter 1 Table 1.6.

Second, Cameron had passed Staff College.⁷ His career path was different from the regimental careers of his Regular contemporaries Pelham Burn, Kellett and Cator who, like Loomis, had not passed Staff College. The minority of the Arras brigadier-generals had passed Staff College.⁸ Of the ten brigadier-generals who served in 50th Division whilst commanded by Major-General P.S. Wilkinson, for example, only two had passed Staff College - Cameron and his predecessor, Brigadier-General J.S.M. Shea.⁹

Third, Cameron was one of only two British brigadier-generals at Arras commissioned into an infantry regiment who had passed Staff College but who had not previously commanded an infantry battalion.¹⁰ The other was Brigadier-General R.O'B. Taylor, GOC 187 Brigade.¹¹ Cameron's career path as a brigade commander was, therefore, rare.

Cameron's rarity and lack of experience as a CO are put into perspective when set against the contemporary experience of the British army. Twenty-two other officers have been identified who were commissioned into an infantry regiment who subsequently commanded an infantry brigade during the war without having previously commanded a battalion. In two instances, these were officers whose formations served in Egypt and Palestine.¹² Neither had passed

⁷ Cameron attended Staff College between January 1908 and December 1909.

⁸ See Chapter 1, Table 1.8.

⁹ Major-General (later Sir) Percival Spearman Wilkinson (1865-1953). Wilkinson was GOC 50th Division for a period of two and a half years from 5 August 1915 until he was removed, unjustifiably in Simon Robbins' view (see S. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat Into Victory* (London: Frank Cass, 2005, p. 32) on 25 February 1918.

¹⁰ Two Dominion brigadier commanders involved at Vimy Ridge had similar backgrounds to Cameron having passed Staff College, held staff appointments and been appointed to command an infantry brigade without having commanded a battalion. They were Brigadier-Generals J.H. Elmsley, 8 CIB, and J.H. MacBrien, 12 CIB.

¹¹ Taylor had been commissioned into the Wiltshire Regiment, served in staff posts during the South African War after which he transferred to the Indian Army. In August 1914 Taylor held the rank of major whilst serving as a GSO2 at the Staff College, Quetta. A third Arras brigadier-general who had not commanded an infantry battalion was Brigadier-General B. Vincent. He had been commissioned into the Royal Artillery and transferred to 6/(Inniskilling) Dragoons. In August 1914 Major Vincent was a GSO2 serving with the Indian Corps. His first appointment after the Armistice was as CO 6/(Inniskilling) Dragoons.

¹² Brigadier-Generals H.J. Huddleston, GOC 232 Brigade, 75th Division and Arthur Mudge (1871-1958), GOC 162 Brigade, 54th Division.

Staff College. All twenty of the others, with two exceptions, had passed Staff College.¹³ Despite their lack of experience as a CO, these Staff College graduates were evidently competent commanders. Their career paths demonstrate that capable staff officers could operate effectively as formation commanders. To emphasise the point, nine were subsequently promoted major-general, one was promoted general and four were knighted.¹⁴

Fourth, is the geography of the Arras battlefield. During the battle Cameron commanded 151 Brigade, 50th Division which formed part of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Snow's VII Corps, the southern-most of Allenby's three Corps. The initial task of VII Corps was one of 'preparing to attack from the West on the front from NEUVILLE VITASSE to the HARP in conjunction with VI and XVII Corps'.¹⁵ These objectives lay to the south of Tilloy-les-Mofflaines. It formed the northern hinge of the Hindenburg Line.

¹³ In addition to Cameron they were Brigadier-Generals E.G.T. Bainbridge, 110 Brigade, 37th Division; Frederick Lionel Banon (1862-1950), 50 Brigade, 17th Division; Arthur Blair (1869-1947), 201 Brigade, 67th Division; (later Major-General) Gerald Farrell Boyd (1877-1930), 170 Brigade, 57th Division; (later General Sir) Edward Stanislaus Bulfin (1862-1939), 2 Brigade, 1st Division; James Kilvington Cochrane (1873-1948), 61 Brigade, 20th Division; (later Major-General) Alister Grant Dallas (1866-1931), 32 Brigade, 53rd Division; (later Major-General) A.C. Daly, 6 Brigade, 2nd Division; J.K. Dick-Cunyngham, 152 Brigade, 51st Division (see Chapter 3, Note 285); A.F. Gordon, 153 Brigade, 51st Division; (later Major-General) Edward Douglas Loch (1873-1942), 110 Brigade, 21st Division; C.H.T. Lucas, 87 Brigade, 29th Division; (later Major-General Sir) Charles Clarkson Martin Maynard (1870-1945), 13 Brigade, 5th Division; (later Major-General) Claude Douglas Hamilton Moore (1875-1928), 157 Brigade, 52nd Division; (later Major-General) Llewelyn Alberie Emilius Price-Davies (1878-1965), 113 Brigade, 38th Division; Stephen Peter Rolt (1862-1933), 14 Brigade, 5th Division; (later Major-General) T.H. Shoubridge, 54 Brigade, 18th Division; (later Sir) Lionel Arthur Montagu Stopford (1860-1942), 82 Brigade, 27th Division; Herbert William Studd (1870-1947), 180 Brigade, 60th Division and Arthur Wyndham Tufnell (1872-1920), 126 Brigade, 42nd Division. The psc exceptions were Rolt, aged fifty-two, who served in France for nine weeks until evacuated on 20 October 1914 due to exhaustion; and Bulfin, subsequently GOC XXI Corps. Although not psc, Bulfin was qs – 'qualified for Staff Employment in consequence of Service on the Staff in the Field'. Bulfin was one of those knighted and who retired in 1926 as a general.

¹⁴ Following the break-up of 49th Division, Cameron was appointed CO of his old battalion, 1/Cameron Highlanders, on 15 May 1919. Having been reduced to cadre, Cameron undertook the battalion's reorganisation 'with characteristic energy and thoroughness'. The battalion was posted to India landing in Bombay on 3 September 1919. Cameron's appointment was cut short on 22 November 1920 when he was promoted to the command of 16 Brigade stationed in Ireland. 'By his hard work and the use of his wide experience, he was able to hand over to his successor a virile organisation, worthy of the old 79th, full of esprit-de-corps, and proud of its old traditions and history.' Anonymous, *Historical Records of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1931), pp. 409-410 and 414-415

¹⁵ TNA WO95/805 VII Corps General Staff WD, G.A. 43, 19 March 1917; and Map Accompanying G.C.R. 604/204, 29 March 1917

Cameron presents an opportunity, therefore, to study a brigadier-general who was of typical age but whose experience and training were different from those considered so far. His career path was untypical of that of his contemporary brigade commanders and his brigade was engaged on a different part of the Arras battlefield. Cameron also has the distinction of subsequently having commanded a division for over a year, considerably longer than either Loomis or Cator.

6.2 VII Corps and 50th (Northumbrian) Division

The initial plans for VII Corps' attack at Arras were submitted by Snow to GHQ on 22 January 1917. VII Corps' planning process was necessarily top-down because, at that time, of the four divisions that were to deliver his attack, Snow only had one under his command at this time - 30th Division commanded by Major-General J.S.M. Shea.¹⁶ The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line during March on VII Corps' front forced a change in the location and the direction of the planned attack, from south-eastwards to east and north-eastwards.¹⁷ VII Corps' tactical objective, however, remained unchanged:

*... that is, to break the enemy's defensive line on the right of the Third Army front, to overrun all his defences as far as the green line, and to clear and hold the Southern flank of the gap which the VI Corps, advancing simultaneously with us, will have made.*¹⁸

VII Corps' attack on 9 April 1917 was on a frontage of some 10,900 yards from the village of St Léger northwards to the south-western outskirts of Tilloy-les-Mofflaines. The attack was undertaken by all four of the Corps' divisions – 21st, 30th, 56th and 14th Divisions, in that order from right to left.¹⁹ By 13 April 1917 Snow was able to report that his divisions had

¹⁶ 30th Division had transferred from XV Corps to VII Corps in November 1916.

¹⁷ TNA WO95/805 VII Corps WD 1917 March, File A. No. 14, para. 2, 26 March 1917

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., Order No 86, 3 April 1917. 14th Division had been transferred from VI Corps in early February 1917. 21st and 56th Divisions arrived in early March and were joined by 58th Division in late March 1917.

gained ground to the south of the Arras-Cambrai Road, captured the village of Neuville-Vitasse, breached the Hindenburg Line and pushed on to capture the village of Wancourt, a gain of some 6,300 yards.²⁰

Commanded by Major-General P.S. Wilkinson, 50th Division had been transferred from Maxse's XVIII Corps to VII Corps on 11 April. The intended role of Wilkinson's division had already been established:

*The role allotted to the Division in this battle is to push through after the line is pierced by the assaulting troops and follow up the retiring enemy.*²¹

On 13 April 50th Division relieved 14th Division holding that part of the front to the east of Wancourt with its left flank in the valley of the Cojeul River and its right flank up on the Wancourt Ridge close to the Wancourt Tower.²² This was a distance of 400 yards and was held by Cameron's 151 Brigade.

Cameron's prospect for promotion was dependent on Wilkinson's assessment. Wilkinson was one of the 110 major-generals on the *Army List* in August 1914. He had been promoted to that rank in 1912.²³ Wilkinson had commanded 50th Division since August 1915 and is regarded by Bourne 'as one of the few divisional commanders who "made much impact" in that role'.²⁴ Wilkinson had enhanced his reputation during the Somme fighting, for example, when faced with a difficult choice. On 15 September 1916 the Germans held both High Wood, to be attacked by 47th Division, and Martinpuich, to be attacked by 15th Division. 50th

²⁰ Ibid., Operations Summary, 6pm 6/4/17 to 6pm 13/4/17, 13 April 1917

²¹ TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 9 April 1917

²² Ibid., 12 April 1917

²³ *LG*, 9 August 1912

²⁴ J.M. Bourne, 'Major General W.C.G. Heneker: A Divisional Commander of the Great War' in M. Hughes & M. Seligmann (eds.), *Leadership in Conflict 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2000), p. 55

Division held the front between these two divisions, 300 yards and 250 yards respectively in advance of the other divisions' jumping-off positions.

Both flanks of the 50th Division were therefore in a most dangerous position, and the Major General Commanding had to decide whether to delay his attack until the flank Divisions came up level, or whether to take the risk of the losses, and start at zero so as to help the other two Divisions to get forward, by threatening to envelope the enemy in HIGH WOOD and MARTINPUICH. The latter course was decided upon.

However, by their splendid dash and gallantry they [149 and 150 Brigades] enabled both HIGH WOOD and MARTINPUICH to be subsequently occupied by the flank Divisions. The 47th Division on our right lost very heavily in front of HIGH WOOD before the enemy finally surrendered, but the 15th Division occupied MARTINPUICH without difficulty, thanks to the co-operation of the 50th Division.²⁵

Wilkinson was also prepared to speak his mind. Reviewing progress on 12 April 1917, Haig concluded that the nature of the battle had by then changed. The opportunity for a breakthrough on the afternoon of 9 April had passed. Casualties were mounting.²⁶ Haig intended that Third Army's subsequent advance should be more methodical. 'Now we must try to substitute shells as far as possible for infantry.'²⁷ Allenby, however, misunderstood Haig's intention prompting an humiliating intervention by three of his divisional commanders.

At considerable risk to their careers and in defiance of the traditions of the service, Major-General de Lisle, Philip Robertson, and Percival Wilkinson (whose 50th Division had suffered the most) protested directly to Haig. They persuaded him that Allenby had misinterpreted his orders, with the result that

²⁵ TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 15 September 1916. The divisional historian makes the point that 50th Division's contributory role in the achievements of 15th and 47th Divisions is omitted from Haig's relevant despatch – E. Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division 1914-1919* (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, n.d., [1939]), p. 153. The ignominy of this omission is compounded in J.H. Boraston (ed.), *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches* (London: Dent, 1979 [1919]), p. 41 where the order of battle for 15 September 1916 is included. 50th Division's GOC Wilkinson is listed as 'Maj.-Gen. P.S. Williams'.

²⁶ For discussion of the casualties suffered during the Battle of Arras, see J. Nicholls, *Cheerful Sacrifice: The Battle of Arras* (London: Leo Cooper, 1990), pp. 210-211.

²⁷ TNA WO256/17 Haig's Diary, 12 April 1917

*on the 15th Haig suspended all operations in the Arras sector. The trio's temerity paid off and none was admonished.*²⁸

Haig's diary records the impact of the information he garnered from his three divisional generals:

*I reached Arras at about midday with General Kiggell. We visited Head Qtrs. of 50th Division (Wilkinson), 29th Division (De Lisle) and 17th Division (Robertson) and got the exact situation and nature of the orders which had reached them. The latter differed in some cases in essentials from those which had been issued by Army Hqrs!*²⁹

Wilkinson had proved to be a capable divisional commander.³⁰ He had also demonstrated his willingness to risk his career when he judged it was merited. The performance of 50th Division during the battle, including the performance of Cameron's brigade, was to bring further acknowledgement of Wilkinson's leadership in the form of a knighthood shortly afterwards. Despite, or perhaps influenced in part by, the events of 15 April, Wilkinson was

²⁸ Major-General (later General) Sir (Henry de) Beauvoir de Lisle (1864-1955). L. James, *Imperial Warrior: The Life and Times of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby 1861-1936* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993), pp. 102-3. The degree to which Wilkinson was prompted by his brigade commanders, specifically Cameron, is a matter for speculation.

²⁹ Lieutenant-General Sir Launcelot Edward Kiggell (1862-1954). TNA WO256/17 Haig's Diary, 13 April 1917. It was also on 13 April 1917 that Wilkinson was wounded in the leg by a piece of shell 'causing considerable contusion'. TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 13 April 1917. The Official Historian provides an alternate version of events suggesting that on 15 April 1917 Haig received report of a 'resolution' by Wilkinson, De Lisle and P.R. Robertson discussed at a conference at VI Corps also held on 15 April 1917. C. Falls, *Military Operations – France and Belgium, 1917 Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992), p. 378. Neither Haig's nor VI Corps' diaries for 15 April 1917 make mention of a conference held on that day. These three GOCs were not alone in being prepared to speak their minds. The capability of Third Army to resume offensive operations was conditional on the prevailing weather. As GOC 56th Division, Major-General (later Sir) Charles Patrick Amyatt Hull (1865-1920), respecting the chain of command, wrote to Snow on 17 April 1917: 'I consider operations on the 20th feasible only if the weather changes at once and remains so; if it keeps wet this Division will be in no state to attack. It must be understood that a unit changes from state A to state C in 24 hours entirely owing to the weather, and I do not consider my 6 remaining Battalions are likely to be capable of action for several days.' TNA WO95/805 VII Corps General Staff WD, No. G.A.296, 17 April 1917. Allenby wrote to GHQ on the same day in terms which to the ill-informed suggest that pausing the operation was his own idea: 'I consider it inadvisable to undertake any operation before Sunday [22 April], as the troops will then be in better condition and there will be time for preparations to be made without haste.' TNA WO95/362 Third Army General Staff, No G.S.1/78, 17 April 1917

³⁰ When Lieutenant-General Sir William Pulteney Pulteney (1861-1941), GOC III Corps, went on leave, Wilkinson was acting GOC III Corps – see for example TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 23 December 1916.

appointed KCMG in the subsequent King's Birthday Honours list.³¹ It is significant that although twelve officers were appointed KCMG on 4 June 1917, only two were divisional commanders. The other was Major-General A.W. Currie, GOC 1st Canadian Division, who was promoted Lieutenant-General and GOC Canadian Corps five days later in succession to Byng.³² Wilkinson was in illustrious company and a general officer of standing. As such, Wilkinson's assessment of Cameron's capabilities and performance was critical to Cameron's prospects.

6.3 Brigadier-General N.J.G. Cameron

Cameron was born into a military family.³³ His father had fought during the Crimean War.³⁴ His grandfather had served in the Peninsular War and been at the Battle of Waterloo.³⁵ His great-grandfather had fought in India during the First Maratha War (1775-82).³⁶ His uncle had been awarded the VC during the Indian Mutiny of 1857.³⁷ His eldest brother, a lieutenant in the Cameron Highlanders, died of wounds in 1885 at the age of twenty whilst on active service in Sudan.³⁸ Cameron's elder brother had been a Gordon Highlander, served in Sudan and had been severely wounded in South Africa.³⁹ Cameron's younger brother, like him a Cameron Highlander, was killed during the Battle of the Aisne.⁴⁰ Cameron's only son, another Cameron Highlander, was subsequently killed in action in 1944.⁴¹

³¹ *LG*, 4 June 1917

³² *LG*, 11 July 1917. De Lisle subsequently commanded XIII and XV Corps. He had already been awarded KCB. – *EG*, 1 January 1917 – and was subsequently awarded KCMG – *EG*, 13 June 1919. Robertson was subsequently awarded KCB – *LG*, 9 June 1919.

³³ <http://www.nam.ac.uk/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/dads-army/macnair-family> (accessed 29 November 2015). Cameron was one of ten children, six girls and four boys.

³⁴ General Sir William Gordon Cameron (1827-1913)

³⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel William Gordon Cameron (1790-1856)

³⁶ Lieutenant-General William Neville Cameron (1754-1837)

³⁷ Colonel Aylmer Spicer Cameron (1833-1909)

³⁸ Lieutenant William Gordon Cameron (1865-1885). <http://glostern.tripod.com/egyptz.htm> (accessed 29 November 2015).

³⁹ Major George Ewen Eyre Gordon Cameron (1871-1908). <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lotdetailsprintable.aspx?intobjectid=2916312> (accessed 11 October 2015).

⁴⁰ Captain Napier Charles Gordon Cameron (1876-1914). Napier Cameron was reported wounded and missing on 11 September 1914 but managed to re-join his battalion two days later. He was subsequently killed on 25

Educated at Wellington College, Cameron was commissioned from Sandhurst into the Cameron Highlanders in 1892.⁴² He served with his regiment during the Nile Expedition of 1895 when his battalion fought at Atbara and Khartoum, and throughout the South African War. He was promoted brevet major in November 1900 and was Adjutant of 1/Cameron Highlanders from December 1901 to December 1904.⁴³ Cameron's regimental service concluded when, having passed Staff College in 1909, he served as BM 2 Brigade, Aldershot Command from 1909-11 followed by staff appointments at the War Office successively as GSO3 and GSO2 between 1911 and 1913.⁴⁴ In August 1914 Cameron was active in ensuring that as a member of 1st Reserve, Royal Flying Corps he was able to undertake his required quarterly test with No 2 Squadron.⁴⁵ Cameron had the distinction, with a single and transitory exception, as the only Great War divisional commander entitled to wear RFC wings.⁴⁶

Cameron's career development to mid-1914 demonstrates he was an officer with a breadth of experience. He had experience of field command on active service where his performance had been recognised and rewarded.⁴⁷ He had an opportunity to develop his organizational

September 1914. See L.A. Clutterbuck, *The Bond Of Sacrifice; A Biographical Record Of All British Officers Who Fell In The Great War, Volume 1* (London: Anglo-African Pub. Contractors, 1917), p. 64.

⁴¹ Lieutenant William Neville Cameron (1923-1944)

⁴² Cameron was one of 3,500 old boys of Wellington College to serve during the war. Amongst public schools, only Charterhouse (3,500), Cheltenham (3,540), Eton (5,656) and Manchester GS (3,506) provided more recruits. See Chapter 1, Note 98.

⁴³ Cameron was mentioned in despatches during both campaigns - *LG*, 30 September 1898 and *LG*, 16 April 1901.

⁴⁴ Cameron was promoted substantive major on 3 April 1910 and brevet lieutenant-colonel on 10 May 1913.

⁴⁵ Cameron gained his Royal Aero Club Certificate No 478 piloting a Vickers Biplane at the Vickers School, Brooklands on 6 May 1913. TNA AIR1/785/204/4/559. Cameron's example was followed by his younger brother, Napier, who gained his Royal Aero Club Certificate No 589 piloting a Bristol Biplane at the Bristol School, Brooklands on 13 August 1913 - http://www.airhistory.org.uk/rfc/people_index.html (accessed 29 November 2015).

⁴⁶ The exception was Major-General (later Lieutenant-General) Sir David Henderson (1862-1921). Without the approval of Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, Henderson was transferred from GOC RFC. He commanded 1st Division from 22 November–19 December 1914. Kitchener ordered the reversal of Henderson's transfer. See R.A. Smith, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 'Sir David Henderson - army and air force officer'. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/view/article/33808?docPos=1> (accessed 29 November 2015).

⁴⁷ MiD *LG*, 16 April 1901; Brevet Major *LG*, 27 September 1901

skills whilst at Aldershot. Cameron had the good fortune to attend Staff College when its programmes benefited from the improvements made under Sir Henry Wilson's leadership, of whom 'few did more than he to develop the General Staff and transform the organisation of the Expeditionary Force in the decade before the First World War'.⁴⁸ Cameron's time at the War Office provided both exposure to some of the army's most senior officers as well as 'head office' experience. His RFC experience illustrates his awareness of the development of the technology of warfare.

In August 1914 Cameron was appointed AA&QMG of 1st Division.⁴⁹ Having endured the Retreat from Mons, Cameron was wounded on 14 September 1914, 1st Division's heaviest day of casualties during the Battle of the Aisne.⁵⁰ One record mentions Cameron being 'slightly wounded'.⁵¹ The division's DADMS, however, recorded that Cameron was 'wounded in arm and leg' suggesting that he had been hit by a shell burst.⁵² The effect was to put Cameron out of action until 1915.

Cameron was eased back into service with a home appointment, initially GSO1 Scottish Command before being appointed GSO1 34th Division, one of the six newly raised divisions (30th-35th) that formed Kitchener's Fourth New Army, in September 1915. Cameron joined 34th Division, commanded by Major-General E.C. Ingouville-Williams, whilst it was still

⁴⁸ Wilson was Commandant of Staff College, Camberley from 1 January 1907 to 31 July 1910. B. Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College, 1854-1914* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), p. 270

⁴⁹ *LG*, 25 August 1914. At the outbreak of war Cameron held the substantive rank of major (*LG*, 19 April 1910) and the Brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel (*LG*, 9 May 1913). For the significance of psc, see Chapter 1 – Arras Brigadier-Generals – Staff College.

⁵⁰ 1st Division's casualties on 14 September 1914 were 2,089 (106 Officers and 1,983 ORs) of whom 975 (forty-seven per cent) were missing. Cameron was the only member of the thirteen Officers and fifty ORs of 1st Division's HQ staff to become a casualty. TNA WO95/1235 1st Division A&QMG WD – September 1914 – Appendix C.1

⁵¹ TNA WO95/1227 1st Division WD, 14 September 1914

⁵² TNA WO95/1242 1st Division, ADMS WD, 15 September 1914. This unit's WD for the relevant period was written in 1915 by Major Arthur Briton Smallman (1873-1950), DADMS, based on his own diary – see Smallman's letter to Captain F.S. Brereton of 1 October 1915 placed with this WD.

undergoing training in England.⁵³ Cameron immediately found himself under pressure. Ingouville-Williams was absent until the end of October 1915, the result of his involvement in a car accident.⁵⁴ By implication, however, Cameron made a positive impression. When the GOC 103 Brigade, Brigadier-General H.H.L. Malcolm, was forced to relinquish command on 5 November 1915 due to illness, Cameron was appointed.⁵⁵ Despite not having commanded a battalion, Cameron was senior to, and his range of regimental and staff experience was greater than, for example, any of the brigade's COs at that time.⁵⁶

Cameron's operational experience during early 1916 would have been similar to that of many brigadier-generals.⁵⁷ Ingouville-Williams' division deployed to France in the second week of January 1916. After initial fitness and skills training, 34th Division was assigned to the Armentières sector where units were attached to brigades of 8th and 23rd Divisions to develop their trench holding skills. In one respect, however, 34th Division's experience was unique. The division's first battle casualty was a brigadier-general, Brigadier-General H.G. Fitton, GOC 101 Brigade, hit by a sniper on 19 January whilst visiting his opposite number in 16 Brigade, 6th Division, Ingouville-Williams' previous command.⁵⁸ On 7 April 34th Division moved to Second Army's training area based on St Omer where it prepared for the forthcoming battle. In early May the division moved to Albert and took responsibility for 2,000 yards of front from Mash Valley on its left, La Boisselle and 'the Glory Hole' in the

⁵³ Major-General Edward Charles Ingouville-Williams (1861-1916)

⁵⁴ J. Shakespeare, *The Thirty Fourth Division 1915-1919* (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, n.d.), p. 8

⁵⁵ Brigadier-General Henry Huntly Leith Malcolm (1860-1938). Malcolm had, like Cameron, been commissioned into the Cameron Highlanders and had been CO 1/Cameron Highlanders, Cameron's battalion, during the South African War.

⁵⁶ Three of the incumbent COs had been captains at the outbreak of war – Lieutenant-Colonel Louis Meredith Howard (1878-1916) CO 24/NF; Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) Morris Ernalld Richardson (1878-1929) CO 26/NF; Lieutenant-Colonel (later Colonel) Godfrey Robert Viveash Steward (1881-1969) CO 27/NF. The other CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Kennedy de la Poer Beresford (1862-1943), had retired as a major in 1911. He was aged fifty-three at the time of Cameron's appointment.

⁵⁷ Sixteen divisions arrived on the Western Front during 1916 before the Somme campaign started – one Regular, seven New Army, two first line Territorial, one second line Territorial, four Australian and the single division provided by New Zealand.

⁵⁸ Brigadier-General Hugh Gregory Fitton (1863-1916). Ingouville-Williams had commanded 16 Brigade from Mobilization until 16 June 1915. Fitton died the following day. Shakespeare, *The Thirty Fourth Division*, p. 13

centre, to Sausage Valley on its right. This frontage was held in rotation by a single brigade.⁵⁹ When out of the line, the remaining two brigades were engaged either in training or providing working parties for the preparations needed to support the forthcoming attack. Ingouville-Williams evidently had a high regard for Cameron's contribution.⁶⁰ His service up to this point was recognised in June 1916 with the award of CMG.⁶¹

The detail of 34th Division's preparations and attack on 1 July 1916, particularly the role played by Cameron and his brigade, lies beyond the scope of this work.⁶² Suffice to say that only limited gains were made at the expense of very heavy casualties.⁶³ Cameron was again amongst the casualties, wounded in the stomach by a machine-gun bullet twenty minutes after the attack had begun.⁶⁴

For the second time Cameron was removed from his post by circumstances. His recovery, however, was relatively swift. Cameron's early opportunity to return to brigade command came on 6 September 1916 when a decision was taken, presumably on Wilkinson's initiative,

⁵⁹ On 5/6 and 25/26 June 1916 Cameron's brigade undertook raids in the vicinity of La Boisselle neither of which went to plan. For accounts of these raids, see J. Sheen, *Tyneside Irish: 24th, 25th, 26th & 27th (Service) Battalions of Northumberland Fusiliers* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2010), pp. 73-81.

⁶⁰ Ingouville-Williams was killed by shell fire on 22 July 1916 – see Davies & Maddocks, *Bloody Red Tabs*, pp. 76-9.

⁶¹ *EG*, 5 June 1916

⁶² See, for example, J.E. Edmonds, *Military Operations France and Belgium 1916, Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1993), pp. 375-384; Shakespeare, *The Thirty Fourth Division*, pp. 33-55; Sheen, *Tyneside Irish*, pp. 86-118.

⁶³ The divisional history records that in the period 1-3 July 1916, 103 Brigade suffered 1,968 casualties of whom 1,292 were missing (sixty-six per cent) - Shakespeare, *The Thirty Fourth Division*, p. 52. Middlebrook, on the other hand, states that 103 Brigade's four infantry battalions alone suffered casualties of 2,139 representing seventy-one per cent of those involved in the attack. M. Middlebrook, *The First Day on the Somme* (London: Allen Lane, 1971), p. 140. Three of Cameron's COs were amongst the casualties. Lieutenant-Colonel L.M. Howard was killed: Lieutenant-Colonel John Henry Morris Arden (1875-1918) CO 25/NF and Lieutenant-Colonel M.E. Richardson were wounded. Lieutenant-Colonel G.R.V. Steward assumed command as acting brigade commander at 10.18 a.m. on 1 July until Brigadier-General H.E. Trevor assumed command at 10.00 a.m. on 4 July. TNA WO95/2564 103 Brigade WD, 1 and 4 July 1916. See also Chapter 5, Note 86. Of the sixteen company commanders involved in 151 Brigade's attack, fifteen became casualties. TNA CAB45/136 Somme: Authors M-P. Major William Platt to J.E. Edmonds, 6 May 1930.

⁶⁴ Captain D.H. James, Trench Mortar Officer, 34th Division, 'My Recollections', *The New Chequers*, No.5, pp. 25-6 cited by P. Hart, *The Somme* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), p. 174

to replace Brigadier-General P.T. Westmorland, GOC 151 Brigade.⁶⁵ Westmorland had had a thirty year army career retiring in December 1912. Recalled, he had battalion command experience before being promoted GOC 151 Brigade in May 1916.⁶⁶ Awarded the CMG as recently as January 1916, Wilkinson was nevertheless unimpressed with Westmorland's performance.⁶⁷ Shortly after 50th Division had moved to the Somme area in mid-August 1916 the brigade's WD dryly records that fifty-three year old 'Brig. Gen. P.T. Westmorland, CMG, DSO returned to England and command is taken over by Brig. Gen. N.J.G. Cameron, CMG'.⁶⁸

Wilkinson was influential. Nevertheless, a common factor in Cameron's career as a brigade commander was Lieutenant-General Sir William Pulteney, GOC III Corps.⁶⁹ As GOC 103 Brigade, Cameron had served under Pulteney's command. When Cameron was appointed

⁶⁵ Brigadier-General Percy Thuillier Westmorland (1863-1929)

⁶⁶ Westmorland had been CO 5/Lincolnshire from 1 November 1915 to 6 April 1916 and CO 9/Royal Scots from 26 April 1916 to 15 May 1916. On 23 June 1916 Westmorland was thrown from his horse. He was badly bruised and cut. TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 23 June 1916

⁶⁷ *LG*, 14 August 1908 and 14 January 1916 respectively. Wilkinson was particular about his brigade commanders. The first to leave was the longstanding Brigadier-General John Edward Bush (1858-1943), GOC 150 Brigade, who had commanded the brigade since June 1911. Although 'invalided' home in January 1916, fifty-six year old Bush subsequently commanded 222 Brigade from September 1916 to November 1917. His successor, Brigadier-General B.G. Price remained in post for more than two years. Wilkinson had inherited Brigadier-General H.F.H. Clifford as GOC 149 Brigade. Clifford was killed by a sniper on 11 September 1916. His successor, Brigadier-General Robert Montgomery Ovens (1868-1950), was appointed five days after Cameron's arrival. By early March 1917, however, Ovens too was on his way home. He remained there for the rest of the war. Other than Cameron's promotion, further changes in Wilkinson's brigade commanders during his tenure were forced upon him. Both Brigadier-Generals H.C. Rees and E.P.A. Riddell of 149 Brigade were replaced because they were wounded. The shell which caused Riddell's wounds on 27 May 1918 also killed Cameron's successor as GOC 151 Brigade, Brigadier-General Cuthbert Thomas Martin (1879-1918) – see P. Hart, *1918 A Very British Victory* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2008), p. 275.

⁶⁸ Wilkinson visited Westmorland on 21 August 1916. Westmorland's departure on 6 September 1916 suggests Wilkinson's visit had not been a social call. 50th Division's WD contains a list of the division's officers dated 3 September 1916. Westmoreland's name is not amongst them. Westmorland subsequently commanded 14/South Lancashire in the UK. He did not return to the Western Front. TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 21 August and 6 September 1916. TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 3 September 1916

⁶⁹ In September 1916 Pulteney naively expected tanks to go through High Wood. The attempt proved disastrous. On the other hand, Pulteney was innovative in being the first Corps commander to appoint a CBSO in November 1916. Brigadier-General (later General Sir) Charles Bonham-Carter (1876-1955) served under Pulteney for six months (April-October 1917) as his BGGs. He concluded Pulteney was 'the most completely ignorant general I served under during the war and that is saying a lot'. Bourne, *Who's Who*, p. 239. 'Obtuse and underqualified, he made costly mistakes and may be considered one of the war's 'donkeys' and 'butchers and bunglers'.' R.T. Stearn, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 Sir William Pulteney Pulteney. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/view/article/96949?docPos=8> (accessed 29 November 2015).

GOC 151 Brigade on 6 September 1916, 50th Division was similarly under Pulteney's command. It remained so until the division moved via Maxse's XVIII Corps to Snow's VII Corps on 11 April 1917. Pulteney had the authority to appoint brigadiers.⁷⁰ Pulteney had attended neither Sandhurst nor the Staff College. 'He became notorious for his ignorance of staff work.'⁷¹ It has been suggested that the best staff officers were appointed to III Corps to compensate for Pulteney's deficiencies.⁷² His BGGs, Brigadier-General C.F. Romer, a Staff College graduate, was therefore in a position to influence Pulteney.⁷³ Romer was in post at the appropriate times, both prior to Cameron's appointment as GOC 103 Brigade and when he was appointed GOC 151 Brigade.⁷⁴ Cameron may have been indebted to Romer more than he realized.

6.4 Cameron's Battalion Commanders

Cameron's initial brigade command, 103 Brigade, formed part of a NA division consisting of four pals battalions drawn from the same regiment.⁷⁵ Like Pelham Burn, Cameron now commanded a brigade which formed part of a Territorial division. The brigade's composition had remained unchanged since the end of December 1915 when 5/Borders had joined 6/, 8/ and 9/DLI.⁷⁶ Cameron's initial concern would have been to assess the abilities of the COs and staff officers he had inherited.

⁷⁰ See Chapter 1, Note 17

⁷¹ Stearn, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Pulteney

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Brigadier-General (later General Sir) Cecil Francis Romer (1869-1962)

⁷⁴ Romer remained Pulteney's BGGs until promoted GOC 59th Division on 9 April 1917.

⁷⁵ Pals battalions 'were mainly raised by local authorities, industrialists or committees of private citizens and were generally composed of men who lived in a particular city or district or who shared a common social and occupational background'. P. Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-16* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 79. Brigades with battalions drawn from a single regiment had an advantage. Their battalions could be frank in their criticism and complaints about each other's performance and standards without offending inter-regimental pride. A.A.H. Hanbury-Sparrow, *The Land-Locked Lake* (London: Arthur Barker, 1932), p. 165

⁷⁶ The brigade's composition remained unchanged until 12 February 1918 when 5/Borders was transferred to 66 Division as its pioneer battalion.

6.4.1 5/Border Regiment

Cameron inherited Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Hedley, a forty-five year old whose schooling, early business and political life had been based in Newcastle. Immediately before the war he had been employed with the Valuation Department of the Inland Revenue based in Hull.⁷⁷ Hedley had been active in local politics holding a number of positions, including Chairman of the Northern Conservative Club from 1906 to 1910, and declining twice to stand for Parliament.⁷⁸

Hedley had been commissioned into the reserve battalion of the NF in 1901.⁷⁹ By August 1914 he had been promoted major. His battalion, 6/NF, formed part of 149 Brigade and was mobilized on the outbreak of war. He was promoted from 2iC 6/NF to the command of 5/Borders on 11 November 1915. Hedley was evidently a man of ability. During the early months of 1916 he made a positive impression on his brigade commander, Brigadier-General Shea, and on Wilkinson. He was awarded the DSO in June 1916.⁸⁰ Cameron shared this confidence in Hedley. He commanded 5/Borders until his sudden death attributed to heart disease on 15 July 1917.⁸¹ The tribute recorded in the battalion's WD illuminates his character: 'Lieut. Col. Hedley's death came as a great shock to all officers and men of his battalion by whom he was beloved for his courage, strong sense of justice and his genial disposition.'⁸² This tribute echoes closely the six key factors - courage, knowledge,

⁷⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel John Ralph Hedley (1871-1917)

⁷⁸ *Who Was Who 1916-1928* (London: A & C Black Ltd., 1929), pp.482-3

⁷⁹ *LG*, 13 March 1901

⁸⁰ *LG*, 3 June 1916

⁸¹ Hedley was CO 5/Borders for 613 days, more than twice the duration of the average single period of command of a CO of 252 days – see P.E. Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War', University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2013, p. 128.

⁸² TNA WO95/2843 5/Borders WD, 15 July 1917. Both Wilkinson and Cameron attended Hedley's funeral the following day.

demeanour, fairness and justice, civility and hard work combined with imagination - required for battalion leadership as taught at the time at Senior Officer School.⁸³

6.4.2 6/Durham Light Infantry

Hedley provided consistency of command. Cameron would have valued it. It stands in stark contrast to his experience with the command of this battalion. During the war the command of 6/DLI changed, for a variety of reasons, on twenty-seven occasions involving eighteen different officers. Only four of these officers commanded the battalion for 200 days or more.⁸⁴ Nine officers commanded the battalion for periods of twelve days or less.⁸⁵ Even these short periods of command evidently provided developmental experience. A number were subsequently promoted to the command of a battalion.⁸⁶

During Cameron's command of 151 Brigade (408 days), nine officers commanded 6/DLI, six of whom did so during the seven month period under review (mid-October 1916 to mid-May 1917).⁸⁷ Cameron inherited Lieutenant-Colonel J.W. Jeffreys, a Regular officer commissioned in 1898 who had served during the South African War. In August 1914

⁸³ Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 218. It was the practice to publish the lecture notes as *Notes for Commanding Officers* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1917), Chapter XV, Part I of which includes thirty-six points of advice which are headed 'Some of the Things that Please an Infantry Brigadier, by a Brigadier'. See also P.E. Hodgkinson & W.F. Westerman, 'Fit to Command a Battalion': The Officers' School 1916-1918, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 93 (2015), 125. Hedley's successor was Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Ernest George Crouch (1875-1935), a ranker officer with 9/DLI who subsequently succeeded Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) Roland Boys Bradford (1892-1917) as CO of that battalion on 5 November 1917 and commanded it until the end of the war.

⁸⁴ They were Lieutenant-Colonels Frederick William Robson (1887-1918) (351 days), John William Jeffreys (1876-1962) (350 days), Harry Crawford Watson (1864-1934) (255 days) and Frederick Walton (1891-1969) (200 days).

⁸⁵ Major William Edward Tayler (1870-19??) (five days), Major (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Oswald Cuthbert Borrett (1878-1950) (four days), Major (later Colonel) George Edward Wilkinson (1880-1948) (five days), Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Bradford (two days), Major E.G. Crouch (two days), Major (later Colonel) William Benjamin Little (1883-1957) (two days), Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) William David Carswell-Hunt (1872-1917) (twelve days), Captain Walter Frederic Edgar Badcock (1888-1963) (eleven days), Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Macmillan (seven days). Carswell-Hunt, for example, had served initially as acting CO for three days and was subsequently appointed CO on 27 March 1917.

⁸⁶ Lieutenant-Colonels O.C. Borrett, 5/Shropshire LI; E.G. Crouch, 6/ & 9/DLI; W.B. Little, 5/Borders; W.D. Carswell-Hunt, 6/DLI; A.L. Macmillan - 6/DLI

⁸⁷ Cameron was GOC 151 Brigade from 6 September 1916 until 19 October 1917.

Jeffreys was the battalion's Adjutant. He had already been acting CO on two occasions before he was appointed CO on 15 August 1915.⁸⁸ His period of command was interrupted on 20 December 1915 when he was wounded in both thighs and his right hand by shell fire at Sanctuary Wood.⁸⁹ The following day Cameron's predecessor, Brigadier-General Shea, wrote to Jeffrey's wife that 'he was always so splendid in spite of the very many difficulties with which he had to contend and he is such a fierce soldier and has done so much since he got command of the 6th...'.⁹⁰ Jeffrey returned to the battalion on 27 April 1916 but within three weeks of Cameron's own appointment, ill health necessitated Jeffrey's return to England.⁹¹ Jeffrey's place was taken by his 2iC, Major G.E. Wilkinson.⁹²

Cameron issued an order for an attack to be made by 151 Brigade on 1 October 1916 to capture trenches linking Le Sars and Eaucourt L'Abbaye.⁹³ About forty-five minutes before zero hour at 3.15 p.m., however, Major Wilkinson's arm was smashed by a sniper's bullet.⁹⁴ During his evacuation Wilkinson met R.B. Bradford, the twenty-four year old CO of 9/DLI. 'I told him that it was imperative to have a senior officer up to control matters, as I had no one in my battalion except lieutenants and second-lieutenants.'⁹⁵ Bradford took command of

⁸⁸ Jeffreys' experience typifies the turmoil of 6/DLI's changes of COs. His first stint in command began on 28 April 1915 when the battalion's original CO, Lieutenant-Colonel H.C. Watson, broke down under the strain of command at Second Ypres. Jeffreys was acting CO for twenty days until replaced by Major W.E. Tayler. Tayler was severely wounded five days later by a bullet that lodged in his pelvis; he could only walk thereafter with the aid of sticks. He was invalided out of the army in December 1916. Jeffreys resumed command on 24 May 1915 for seventeen days until, on the temporary amalgamation of 6/ & 8/DLI, he was transferred as Adjutant to 2/5 Lancashire Fusiliers. Major O.C. Borrett was appointed acting CO of 6/DLI on 11 August 1915 only to be promoted CO 5/Shropshire LI four days later whereupon Jeffreys re-joined the battalion as its CO.

⁸⁹ TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 20 December 1916. Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) George Archibald Stevens (1875-1951), previously Adjutant 8/DLI, assumed command.

⁹⁰ Durham Record Office, D/DLI 7/899/9 Letter, Shea to Mrs Jeffreys, 21 December 1915

⁹¹ TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 26 September 1916

⁹² Wilkinson, a solicitor and Oxford graduate, had himself only arrived as 2iC on 21 September 1916 having previously been OC 149 Brigade Machine Gun Company. TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 21 September 1916. For comment on Wilkinson's personal qualities, see F. Buckley, *Q.6.a and Other Places: Recollections of 1916, 1917, 1918* (Fairford, Gloucestershire: The Echo Library, 2014), pp. 33-4.

⁹³ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, Operation Order No. 35, 30 September 1916

⁹⁴ Wilkinson confirms the timing of him being wounded in his own account – see Anonymous, *Brigadier-General R.B. Bradford, V.C., M.C. and His Brothers* (Newport: Ray Westlake – Military Books, n.d.), pp. 66-9.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

both battalions for the duration of the operation which lasted two days.⁹⁶ Further from the front line, Wilkinson subsequently met Cameron who ‘immediately approved of my action’.⁹⁷

Bradford’s appointment was pragmatic in the circumstances and his tenure intended to be brief.⁹⁸ The appointment of the Adjutant of 6/DLI, Second Lieutenant A. Ebsworth, as acting Lieutenant-Colonel and CO was to prove similarly transitional.⁹⁹ Although an experienced soldier, Ebsworth was not an experienced CO. The attack on the Butte de Warlencourt on 5/6 November 1916 under his command was at the cost of eleven officers and 150 OR casualties leaving the battalion with a need to rebuild.¹⁰⁰ In the continuing absence of Jeffreys, Lieutenant-Colonel H.M. Allen replaced Ebsworth to become the battalion’s fourth CO in six weeks.¹⁰¹

Allen’s appointment provides an interesting example of the appointment process. Cameron would have been acutely aware of 6/DLI’s need for an experienced CO, to provide leadership, direction and organizational stability. There was evidently no one suitable available within the brigade, as seemed to be Cameron’s preference.¹⁰² Cameron would have discussed the matter with Wilkinson. Had Wilkinson thought there was a suitable officer within 50th Division, he would have appointed him.

⁹⁶ H. Moses, *The Faithful Sixth: A History of the Sixth Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry* (Durham: County Durham Books, 1995), p. 73

⁹⁷ Anonymous, *Brigadier-General R.B. Bradford*, p. 68

⁹⁸ Bradford was again briefly given command of 6/DLI on 5 November 1916 during the attack on the Butte de Warlencourt ‘in order to ensure the safety of his right flank’. TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 5 November 1916

⁹⁹ *LG*, 26 December 1916. Second Lieutenant (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Alexander Ebsworth (1876-1918) was not the typical junior officer. He enlisted in the Grenadier Guards on 1 January 1895, rose to the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1, was awarded the MC and subsequently commissioned into the East Lancashire Regiment on 23 December 1915 at the age of 39. Ebsworth attended the Commanding Officers’ Course in England during March/April 1917. He was killed by shell fire on 21 September 1918 whilst, as CO 9/NF, visiting front line posts. TNA WO95/3062 9/(Northumberland Hussars) NF WD, 21 September 1918 and TNA WO 339/53208 A. Ebsworth.

¹⁰⁰ TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 6 November 1916

¹⁰¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Hugh Morris Allen (1867-1932)

¹⁰² Bradford had been promoted CO 9/DLI from 2iC 9/DLI. Crouch was subsequently appointed CO 5/Borders, also from 2iC 9/DLI.

Allen had been a Regular officer who retired as a lieutenant-colonel in 1913 having served for twenty-six years in the Indian Army. In August 1914 he had been appointed CO 7/Black Watch, 153 Brigade, 51st Division and had commanded the battalion ever since. Allen was an experienced CO.¹⁰³ 51st Division was under the command of Lieutenant-General E.A. Fanshawe, GOC V Corps, whilst 50th Division was under Pulteney's command in III Corps. The operational areas of III Corps and V Corps, however, were adjacent, their areas straddling the valley of the River Ancre. It may have been that Allen's appointment was the result of an interchange between Wilkinson and his opposite number in 51st Division, Major-General G.M. Harper, that was then approved by the respective Corps HQs.¹⁰⁴ Alternatively, it may have been that Wilkinson discussed the matter with Pulteney's BGGs, Romer, who made an approach to his opposite number in V Corps, the capable Brigadier-General G.F. Boyd.¹⁰⁵ Either way, the episode indicates that if brigadier-generals wished to see COs appointed from within their own brigades, it was incumbent upon them to grow their own talent, as far as the vagaries of war permitted.

Cameron would have welcomed Allen's appointment, a CO who had the capability to tackle his prime task, the rebuilding of the battalion's fighting capability.¹⁰⁶ By the end of December 1916 new arrivals of about half the battalion's establishment number had been received - nineteen officers, of whom only one was a captain together with eighteen second lieutenants,

¹⁰³ Allen was available having recovered from a wound from a shell suffered at High Wood on 28 July 1916 whilst in command of 1/7 Black Watch. TNA WO95/2877 1/7 Black Watch WD, 28 July 1916

¹⁰⁴ Analogously, BMs could be appointed by agreement between brigadier-generals, subject to the consent of their divisional commander. The appointment of Captain John Guildford Redfern (1891-1974) as BM 150 Brigade in succession to Captain John Noel Lumley (1887-1965), for example, was agreed between Brigadier-Generals B.G. Price and C.T. Martin, subject to the consent of Major-General P.S. Wilkinson. TNA WO95/2833 150 Brigade WD, 1 January 1918

¹⁰⁵ See <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/warstudies/research/projects/lionsdonkeys/b.aspx>. (accessed 29 November 2015).

¹⁰⁶ Allen deputised whilst Cameron was on leave from 3-14 February 1917. TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 3 & 14 February 1917

and 455 ORs, of whom only six were NCOs.¹⁰⁷ Allen's tenure can be divided into four periods. His battalion's experience was similar to that of the brigade's other battalions. During November 1916 the inexperienced joiners were assimilated and working parties provided. Once the battalion moved in early December 1916 to Warloy-Baillon, five miles west of Albert, Allen implemented the skills element of the training programme. In January 1917 the battalion spent three weeks rotating in and out of the line in the vicinity of Eaucourt L'Abbaye. The final phase of Allen's tenure was again a training phase, central to which was the implementation of the re-organization of the four sections of platoons.¹⁰⁸

For three months Allen provided a consistent lead. He returned to the command of 7/Black Watch on 14 February 1917 because Jeffreys had recovered sufficiently to resume command of 6/DLI.¹⁰⁹ But Jeffrey's tenure was not to last. Two weeks later he was again evacuated to hospital where he remained for a week.¹¹⁰ He returned to duty, but three weeks later his health broke down again. Jeffreys was evacuated for the last time on 27 March 1917.¹¹¹ The thread which Jeffreys had provided, albeit intermittently both as Adjutant and CO, was at an end.¹¹² The turbulence in command, however, continued. Jeffreys was succeeded by

¹⁰⁷ TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 10 November to 31 December 1916. Of the ORs, 180 arrived on 30 December 1916.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1 February 1917. This re-organization took place on the day before Solly-Flood's demonstration at Auxi-le-Chateau to Haig and others of his proposals that platoons should be made up of four specialist sections based on the grenade, the rifle grenade, the Lewis gun and the rifle. See TNA WO256/15 Haig's Diary, 2 February 1917. This is another piece of evidence supporting Alistair Geddes' contention that a number of British commanders were experimenting with platoon organization before the publication of *SS143 Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action, 1917* which took place either at the end of February or in March 1917. This evidence indicates that Wilkinson and Cameron were amongst them. See A. Geddes, 'Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the BEF, 1916-1918', University of Birmingham, MA Dissertation, 2007.

¹⁰⁹ Coincidentally Allen returned to the command of his former battalion when his successor, Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) George Ronald Hamilton Cheape (1881-1957), went on a month's leave. Cheape was subsequently posted CO 8/Royal Irish Rifles. TNA WO95/2877 1/7 Black Watch WD, 11 February 1917

¹¹⁰ During this period the command of 6/DLI passed to Crouch of 9/DLI, then Little of 5/Borders and finally to Carswell-Hunt of 7/DLI – See Note 85 above.

¹¹¹ TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 27 March 1917

¹¹² For the rest of the war Jeffreys held commands in England, successively 2/8 DLI and 53 (Young Soldier) DLI Battalions.

Carswell-Hunt only for him to die of a heart attack nine days later.¹¹³ As 2iC, Ebsworth again assumed command until Lieutenant-Colonel F.W. Robson took up command on 11 April 1917, just as 151 Brigade was about to be committed to its part in the Battle of Arras.¹¹⁴ Cameron could not have known that Robson would prove to be the battalion's longest serving CO.¹¹⁵

6.4.3 8/Durham Light Infantry

The contrast in the stability of command of this battalion compared with 6/DLI could not be starker. Cameron inherited Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull who, like Robson, was a solicitor.¹¹⁶ He joined 4th Volunteer Battalion DLI in 1885 and, as a captain, commanded a "Volunteer Service Company" during the South African War.¹¹⁷ Described as 'a cheerful, powerfully built man', Turnbull had retired as CO 8/DLI in 1912 having completed the normal four year appointment.¹¹⁸ He was succeeded by his 2iC, Major W.C. Blackett.¹¹⁹ Blackett remained in command until October 1914 when his health failed.¹²⁰ As a result, Turnbull was re-appointed 8/DLI's CO.¹²¹

¹¹³ TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 5 April 1917. Carswell-Hunt was on his way to join Cameron, Daly and the brigade's other COs to reconnoitre the line east of Arras when he collapsed in the car in which he was travelling. Cameron and Daly accompanied Carswell-Hunt's body to No. 12 Stationary Hospital, St Pol. R.B. Ainsworth (ed.), *The Story of the 6th Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry* (Alcester: Read Books, 2013), p. 73 and TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 5 April 1917

¹¹⁴ Robson was a solicitor and TF officer who had been commissioned into the Yorkshire Regiment in 1909. Prior to his appointment as CO 6/DLI, Robson had been Commandant of 50th Divisional School of Instruction (Officer Training). He remained in command of 6/DLI until his death, hit by machine gun fire, on 28 March 1918, a period of 350 days.

¹¹⁵ Robson also commanded 151 Brigade in Cameron's absence – see, for example, TNA WO95/2840 6/DLI WD, 15 July 1917.

¹¹⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Colonel) John Turnbull (1864-1937)

¹¹⁷ *LG*, 24 March 1885. S.G.P. Ward, *Faithful: The Story of the Durham Light Infantry* (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, 2005), p. 264

¹¹⁸ Ward, *Faithful*, p. 348. *LG*, 29 September 1908 and 1 October 1912.

¹¹⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Colonel) William Cuthbert Blackett (1859-1935). *LG*, 1 October 1912. Blackett was a mining engineer by profession. He was President of the Institution of Mining Engineers in 1919-20.

¹²⁰ Ward, *Faithful*, p. 348

¹²¹ *LG*, 2 October 1914

Once in France, Turnbull had a baptism of fire. The battalion had crossed to France on 17 April 1915. By 23 April 151 Brigade was concentrated near Cassel under the command of Major-General E.S. Bulfin, GOC 28th Division.¹²² By the early hours of 25 April, in the wake of the Germans' gas attack on 22 April, 8/DLI had been deployed to reinforce 8/Canadian Battalion holding Boetleer's Farm on the Gravenstafel Ridge.¹²³ Throughout the following night 8/DLI 'under Colonel Turnbull's leadership held on to Boetleer's Farm despite every inducement, moral and otherwise, to retire'.¹²⁴ The battalion's casualties as a result of bitter fighting were nineteen officers and 574 ORs.¹²⁵

Turnbull was valued by his brigadier-generals. His first MiD was awarded in June 1915 when 151 Brigade was under the command of Brigadier-General H. Martin.¹²⁶ His second MiD coincided with his award of CMG on the recommendation of Brigadier-General Shea.¹²⁷ Turnbull's final MiD was on Cameron's recommendation in January 1917.¹²⁸ The issue with which Cameron had to deal was how long was it reasonable for him to expect a man of fifty-three to cope with the pressures and strains of front line command without waiting for his health to break?¹²⁹ In the case of 6/DLI, Cameron had been forced too frequently to react to

¹²² See Note 13.

¹²³ One version of events states that Turnbull was ordered by 85 Brigade's GOC, Brigadier-General Archibald John Chapman (1862-1950), to reinforce 8/Canadian Battalion – see Ward, *Faithful*, p. 349. Another claims that, despite orders to co-operate with 1/Suffolk and 12/London of 84 Brigade, Turnbull acted on his own initiative by responding to what the Canadian Official Historian refers to as 'the urgent appeals' of the CO 8/Canadian Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel L.J. Lipsett, to relieve his battalion – G. Cassar, *Beyond Courage: The Canadians at the Second Battle of Ypres* (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1985), p. 156 and G.W.L. Nicholson, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War: Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), p. 77. For other references to Lipsett, see Chapter 2.

¹²⁴ Ward, *Faithful*, p. 349

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 350

¹²⁶ *LG*, 22 June 1915. Brigadier-General Herbert Martin (1857-1938)

¹²⁷ *LG*, 1 January and 11 January 1916

¹²⁸ *LG*, 4 January 1917

¹²⁹ Turnbull was born on 2 March 1864. On the first day of the Battle of Arras he was fifty-three years and one month old, within five months of being the BEF's oldest CO on that date – see Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalions Commanders in the First World War', University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2013, p. 104, Table 3.6.

events requiring a change of CO. This need not be the case with Turnbull, unless the unexpected intervened.

The events of the spring of 1917 suggest that Cameron did engineer Turnbull's replacement in a way which respected the contribution Turnbull had made to 8/DLI. This was much to Cameron's credit. On 7 February 1917 Turnbull left for a month's leave, a welcome relief from the conditions of the worst winter of the war. Command of 8/DLI was left in the hands of the Adjutant, Major P. Kirkup.¹³⁰ Kirkup had been commissioned from the OTC at Marlborough College in November 1912 and had become the battalion's Adjutant in December 1915. He was promoted captain in November 1916 and further promoted to acting major in January 1917.¹³¹ Kirkup had also been awarded the MC in June 1916.¹³² Kirkup's subsequent career confirmed he was a man of ability and courage.¹³³ Cameron must have concluded, however, that Kirkup's promotion to battalion command at the age of twenty-three, young enough to be Turnbull's son and with limited experience as a major, would have been premature.

On 11 March 1917, the day before Turnbull's return from leave, Major J.H. Martin was posted to 8/DLI.¹³⁴ Martin was a man aged forty-five with nineteen years' service. He took over command from Kirkup, albeit for only one day.¹³⁵ On Turnbull's return the battalion had been out of the line for more than a week, initially at Foucaucourt and subsequently at

¹³⁰ Major (later Brigadier) Philip Kirkup (1893-1959). By profession he was a mining engineer.

¹³¹ *LG*, 17 December 1912, 23 May 1916, 15 December 1916 and 2 June 1917 respectively.

¹³² *LG*, 2 June 1916

¹³³ Kirkup commanded 8/DLI from 11 April 1918 until 21 September 1918 and 7/Borders from 23 October 1918 to the Armistice. In addition to his MC, Kirkup was awarded the DSO and Bar. In 1938 he was awarded the OBE for services to the TA.

¹³⁴ Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) James Hall Martin (1871-1918). As were Crouch and Ebsworth, Martin was also a ranker officer. He had enlisted in 1898, risen to Warrant Officer Class 1 before being commissioned into the Royal Scots on 6 March 1915. He subsequently commanded the battalion for the remainder of Cameron's period as GOC 151 Brigade, from 4 May 1917 until 26 March 1918.

¹³⁵ TNA WO95/2841 8/DLI WD, 11 March 1917

Morcourt, both four miles south of Bray.¹³⁶ The rest of the month was devoted to training providing Martin with an opportunity to familiarize himself with his new battalion. The battalion left Morcourt on 31 March and eventually arrived at Montenescourt, seven miles west of Arras, on 11 April. The following day the battalion moved forward into trenches on Telegraph Hill led, not by Turnbull, but by Martin. Turnbull was unable to command the battalion because he was 'ill'.¹³⁷ Turnbull resumed command on 21 April when he led the battalion during 151 Brigade's involvement in the fighting between 23 and 26 April in the vicinity of the valley of the Cojeul River.¹³⁸ It proved to be Turnbull's last operation. On 3 May 1917 he was posted to the command of 50th Division's Depot battalion located at Ostreville, two miles north-east of St Pol.¹³⁹ Martin was then promoted from 2iC to become 8/DLI's CO.

The timing of events suggests that Turnbull's replacement by Martin was through a considered transitional process. It was during his most recent period of illness that Turnbull's transfer was dated, as evidenced by the *London Gazette*.¹⁴⁰ The four indicators which point to Cameron's sympathetic handling of Turnbull's case were first, his granting of a month's leave to Turnbull in February 1917; second, his role in initiating Turnbull's retention in France through the arrangements made for his transfer to a non-fighting unit made in the weeks before mid-April; third, the credit he might be due for the appointment of Martin as a suitable replacement; and fourth, the timing of Turnbull's departure enabling him to lead his battalion through the operations of 23-26 April. Turnbull left 'on account of advancing age'

¹³⁶ The battalion had been relieved by 9/DLI on the evening of 3 March 1917.

¹³⁷ TNA WO95/2841 8/DLI WD, 12 April 1917. Martin commanded the battalion throughout the operation of 12-15 April 1917 in the vicinity of Wancourt which brought plaudits for 151 Brigade as a whole from both Wilkinson and Cameron – see the WD entries for 16 April 1917.

¹³⁸ TNA WO95/2841 8/DLI WD, 21 April 1917

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3 May 1917

¹⁴⁰ *LG*, 13 July 1917. Turnbull was gazetted to the Labour Corps with effect from 13 April 1917.

and he did so with his reputation intact.¹⁴¹ Correspondingly Cameron's standing with Turnbull over his departure was enhanced.

6.4.4 9/Durham Light Infantry

The contrast in the age of Cameron's COs could not have been greater than between Turnbull and Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Bradford, the CO whom Cameron inherited.¹⁴² On the first day of the Battle of Arras, Bradford was 25 years and 45 days old, the BEF's youngest CO.¹⁴³ Bradford's short but remarkable career as a Regular officer spanned five years and 192 days during which he rose from second lieutenant to brigadier-general, the youngest in the British army.¹⁴⁴

Reference has already been made to 151 Brigade's attack on 1 October 1916 during which, as a result of Major Wilkinson's wound, Bradford also took command of 6/DLI. It was for his

¹⁴¹ TNA WO95/2841 8/DLI WD, 3 May 1917

¹⁴² Hodgkinson states that Bradford was appointed 9/DLI's CO on 15 September 1916, nine days after Cameron's appointment as GOC 151 Brigade - Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', n. 37, p. 106; n 36, p. 220. This does not appear to have been the case. This date was of significance to Bradford since it was a day upon which he was wounded. He remained at duty - see TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, Appendix 21, Officer Casualties, 9/DLI. Bradford's previous appointment was 2iC 9/DLI. The battalion's WD, unusually, makes no mention of Bradford's appointment in succession to Lieutenant-Colonel William Bean Moir (1861-1923). At fifty-four, Moir was older than Turnbull. His replacement does not appear to have been handled as sympathetically as Turnbull's. Two pieces of evidence, however, suggest that Bradford was CO by 4 August 1916. First, in the absence of a relevant entry on the *LG*, Bradford's entry in the *Army List*, January 1917 states he was promoted acting lieutenant-colonel on 4 August 1916. Second, the following extract is taken from Anonymous, *Brigadier-General R.B. Bradford*, p. 64. 'Roland, Lieutenant-Colonel from August 4th, was by this time in command of the 9th, and during the following weeks of strenuous training that followed at Baizieux he began to mould the battalion in his own fashion.' 9/DLI's WD confirms that the battalion moved to Baizieux on 17 August 1916 - TNA WO95/2840 9/DLI WD, 17 August 1916

¹⁴³ Hodgkinson, 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders', p. 106

¹⁴⁴ Much has been written about Bradford. See for example: L. Collins, 'Bradford, Roland Boys (1892-1917)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/75598> (accessed 26 January 2015) and <http://www.bailiffgatmuseum.co.uk/community-projects/bradford-vc/> (accessed 29 November 2015). One element of Bradford's service, however, has yet to be acknowledged. Bradford had briefly been 151 Brigade's acting BM between the departure of Captain (later Colonel) Edward Robert Clayton (1877-1957) on 1 January 1916 and the arrival of his successor, Captain John George Harter (1888-1916) on 16 January 1916.

conduct during this operation that Bradford was, on Cameron's recommendation, awarded the Victoria Cross.¹⁴⁵ The words of the citation are understood to be Cameron's:

*For most conspicuous bravery and good leadership in attack, whereby he saved the situation on the right flank of his Brigade and of the Division. Lieutenant-Colonel Bradford's Battalion was in support. A leading Battalion having suffered very severe casualties, and the Commander wounded, its flank became dangerously exposed at close quarters to the enemy. Raked by machine-gun fire, the situation of the Battalion was critical. At the request of the wounded Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Bradford asked permission to command the exposed Battalion in addition to his own. Permission granted, he at once proceeded to the foremost lines. By his fearless energy under fire of all description, and his skilful leadership of the two Battalions, regardless of all danger, he succeeded in rallying the attack, captured and defended the objective, and so secured the flank.*¹⁴⁶

Cameron was only involved with the award of one other VC, that to Private A. Poulter of 4/West Riding Regiment, 147 Brigade when Cameron was GOC 49th Division.¹⁴⁷ In that case the recommendation would have been written by regimental officers and submitted to Cameron by the relevant GOC, Brigadier-General C.G. Lewes.¹⁴⁸

Bradford was a man of precocious military talent and promise. For almost the whole of his time with 9/DLI, he was under Cameron's command. The detail of their personal relationship is unknown. It is not credible to believe, however, that Cameron had no influence or effect on Bradford whilst under his command. Although Bradford's talents would likely have led to further promotion regardless of his GOC, Cameron's experience and recommendation were conducive to Bradford's promotion.¹⁴⁹ Within a month of Cameron's own promotion, Bradford was promoted to GOC 186 Brigade 62nd Division, a second line Territorial

¹⁴⁵ Notes written by Major Ernest Hardinge Veitch (1876-1959) recall 'Lt.-Col. Bradford was first recommended for the D.S.O. by Br.-Gen. Cameron, but as fuller details of his action became known this recommendation was withdrawn, and he was recommended for the V.C. instead.' Anonymous, *Brigadier-General R.B. Bradford*, p. 69. Bradford had previously been awarded the MC. *EG*, 23 February 1915

¹⁴⁶ *LG*, 24 November 1916

¹⁴⁷ Private Arthur Poulter (1893-1956). *LG*, 28 June 1918

¹⁴⁸ Brigadier-General Charles George Lewes (1869-1938)

¹⁴⁹ Cameron's view of Bradford, according to his grandson Neville Washington, was that Bradford was 'the greatest military talent he had ever met'. Email from Neville Washington to author, 24 March 2015.

division.¹⁵⁰ Within ten days, however, he was dead, killed by a shell that struck close to his HQ near Lock 7 on the Canal du Nord.¹⁵¹ His GOC, Major-General W.P. Braithwaite, wrote to Cameron:¹⁵²

*He was a very fine gallant gentleman and I don't wonder that you, who knew him so long, felt so much admiration and affection for him. Personally I think he is the most remarkable character I met during this War. He had an absolute genius for War and a fine tactical instinct, and I think men would have gone anywhere for him.*¹⁵³

6.5 Brigade Majors and Staff Captains

With the exception of Hedley and Turnbull, the COs longest in post under Cameron's command (Jeffreys, Allen, Martin, Moir and Bradford) were all trained and experienced Regular officers. Until Cameron's appointment, all officers appointed BM of 151 Brigade were Regular officers.¹⁵⁴ During Cameron's command and afterwards, however, only TF officers were appointed as BM in 151 Brigade.¹⁵⁵ On this basis, 1917 was a pivotal year. Of the seven officers appointed the brigade's BM, six had been commissioned into regiments not amongst 50th Division's battalions.¹⁵⁶ In other words, the appointment and development of

¹⁵⁰ Bradford's appointment on 10 November 1917 represented a significant change for the COs and staff of his new brigade. The BEF's youngest brigadier-general replaced Brigadier-General F. F. Hill who had reached the age limits and was retired on 11 November 1917 at the age of fifty-seven. *LG*, 18 December 1917.

¹⁵¹ Ward, *Faithfull*, p.398. The position of the relevant dug-out is given as K.4.d.4.5 by E. Wyrall, *The Story of the 62nd (West Riding) Division 1914-1919* (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, n.d.), p. 120, Note 1

¹⁵² Major-General (later General Sir) Walter Pipon Braithwaite (1865-1945)

¹⁵³ Durham County Record Office D/DLI 2/9/231, Letter from Braithwaite to Cameron, 11 January 1918. Braithwaite confirmed that Bradford 'had just gone out of his dug out to have a look round when he was caught and killed instantaneously by a stray shell – after the whole show was over – on November 30th'.

¹⁵⁴ Excluded are four officers who held the position of BM only temporarily on an acting basis. The Regular officers appointed BM 151 Brigade were Captain (later Colonel) Edward Robert Clayton (1877-1957), Captain John George Harter (1888-1916), Captain Hon. W. Fraser and Captain (later Brigadier) Dominic Louis Daly (1885-1967).

¹⁵⁵ They were Captain (later Major) Charles Courtenay Marshall Kennedy (1880-1927), Captain Henry James Gwyther (1890-1930) and Captain William Tong (1895-1978).

¹⁵⁶ They were Oxford & Bucks LI, Gordon Highlanders, Leinster, Hertfordshire, Manchester and Loyal North Lancashire Regiments.

BMs was not a matter parochial to the division.¹⁵⁷ All four of the brigade's SCs, on the other hand, were TF officers, all drawn from within the brigade and all from its predominant regiment, the DLI.¹⁵⁸ 151 Brigade's experience reflects that of the BEF in the transition of leadership and managerial roles within brigades, driven by expansion and casualties, from professional soldiers to civilian soldiers with professional backgrounds. The career patterns evident within Cameron's brigade staff demonstrate that he identified potential staff officer talent and sought to develop it.

The foundation of the brigade's administrative practices and routines had been laid by the brigade's first BM, Captain E.R. Clayton, the only Staff College graduate to serve with the brigade, other than Cameron. Clayton was also the brigade's longest serving BM (514 days). He was promoted GSO2, XI Corps in January 1916. His short-lived successor, Captain J.G. Harter, died of wounds on 3 April 1916.¹⁵⁹ His successor in turn, Captain Hon. W. Fraser, was injured on 18 June 1916 when thrown from his horse.¹⁶⁰ The brigade's third BM in six months was Captain D.L. Daly, a native of Cork who had been commissioned from the Kerry Militia into the Leinster Regiment in 1907. When Cameron was appointed in September 1916, Daly had been in post for more than two months. The evidence suggests Cameron was impressed with Daly's performance. He recognised his potential. Daly had already been awarded a DSO.¹⁶¹ Cameron nominated Daly for recognition and supported his nomination

¹⁵⁷ That said, Wilkinson did see it as a divisional responsibility to develop future BMs. See, for example, the requirement that each of its brigades send two officers to divisional HQ between 25 November and 5 December 1916 'for instruction as Brigade Major etc.'. TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 25 November 1916

¹⁵⁸ Lieutenant (later Captain) Frederick Charles Hampshire Carpenter (1880-1960), an astronomer and university lecturer; Captain W.B. Little, a university lecturer; Captain E.H. Veitch, a printer; and Captain James Allan Bell (1894-1968), a barrister.

¹⁵⁹ TNA WO95/2838 151 Bde WD, 2 April 1916

¹⁶⁰ D. Fraser (ed.), *In Good Company: The First World War Letters and Diaries of The Hon. William Fraser, Gordon Highlanders* (Salisbury: Michael Russell, 1990), pp. 86-8. Fraser suffered a blow to his head and broken ribs.

¹⁶¹ *LG*, 14 January 1916

for the Junior Staff Course delivered at Hesdin.¹⁶² Daly continued to serve under Cameron's command throughout the Arras operation until, like Clayton, he too was promoted GSO2 on 26 July 1917, in his case to Pulteney's III Corps.¹⁶³ This pathway for Regular officers to be promoted to more senior staff appointments via BM experience was an established career path.¹⁶⁴

This pathway was made available to a TF officer within the brigade for the first time when Captain C.C.M. Kennedy was appointed Cameron's BM. Kennedy had been commissioned into 1/(Hertfordshire) Volunteer Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment in 1905. By 1912 he had been promoted captain in 1/Hertfordshire Regiment. Kennedy was a managing clerk with a London firm of solicitors, a role which also required sound administrative, organizational and inter-personal skills.¹⁶⁵ Kennedy's military administrative talents led to his own promotion in January 1918 to GSO2, 32nd Division.

Cameron's support for Daly's attendance on the Junior Officers' Course created an opportunity. Cameron had inherited Captain W.B. Little as his SC. Little had studied and worked at Kew before being appointed as lecturer in horticulture at Armstrong College, Durham University in 1908. He was commissioned into the DLI from the University's OTC

¹⁶² *LG*, 4 January 1917 - MiD. Daly attended the six weeks Junior Staff Course in January/February 1917. His attendance had been preceded by a month's leave. For brief information on the BEF's training schools in England and France, see TNA WO256/15 Haig's Diary, January 1917, 'Summary of Schools of Training of the British Expeditionary Force During the Winter of 1916-1917' and Robbins, *British Generalship*, p. 42.

¹⁶³ *LG*, 28 August 1917. Daly was BM 151 Brigade for 390 days, inclusive of absences due to his course and leave periods. Cameron's confidence in Daly was well founded. Daly served in his role as GSO2 until late September 1918. In 1919 he attended Staff College. In the 1920's and 1930's he undertook both regimental and staff roles culminating in his appointment as GOC 147 Brigade in 1936. Brigadier Daly retired in 1940 having also been awarded an OBE.

¹⁶⁴ Other BMs within 50th Division who were similarly promoted GSO2 were Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Francis Hamilton Moore (1876-1952) and Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Percy Stewart Rowan (1882-1931) of 149 Brigade; and within 150 Brigade Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Robert Francis Guy (1878-1927) and Captain J.N. Lumley. All four officers were Regulars.

¹⁶⁵ Kennedy had served as GSO3, I ANZAC in Gallipoli and Egypt and been awarded a MC. *EG*, 1 January 1917.

in October 1914.¹⁶⁶ He was appointed 151 Brigade's SC in May 1915 succeeding a fellow former Durham University lecturer who had been wounded at Second Ypres.¹⁶⁷ By the time Cameron arrived, Little had already held this appointment for sixteen months. His abilities had already been recognised having been granted a Regular army commission.¹⁶⁸ Cameron appreciated Little's capabilities and potential. Within scarcely more than a month, Cameron had returned Little to regimental duties as acting major and 2iC of 5/Borders.¹⁶⁹ When Daly left on 26 November 1916 bound for Hesdin, Cameron brought Little back to brigade HQ as acting BM. His period in this role was truncated when he returned to 5/Borders because Hedley had gone sick.¹⁷⁰

Cameron saw Little at work in the roles of SC, BM and 2iC. He recommended him for a DSO and nominated him to attend the Senior Officers' School at Aldershot.¹⁷¹ The measure of Little's capabilities was subsequently summarised by the School Commander:¹⁷²

*An officer of great energy and determination. He is cheerful, conscientious and reliable. He learns readily and is good at imparting knowledge. Has great application and considerable imagination and initiative. Handles troops well and has considerable military knowledge. Fit to command a battalion.*¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ LG, 16 October 1914

¹⁶⁷ Lieutenant F.C.H. Carpenter – see Note 158. Carpenter was severely wounded on 24 May 1915. Little had recovered having himself been gassed at Zonnebeke the month before.

¹⁶⁸ LG, 25 August 1916. Little was commissioned into the East Lancashire Regiment.

¹⁶⁹ TNA WO95/2843 5/Borders WD, 7-15 November 1916. Little took up his new role on 10 November 1916 having been SC for 536 days.

¹⁷⁰ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 8 January 1917. Little was acting BM from 10 November 1916 to 8 January 1917. Two officers subsequently served briefly as acting BM until Daly returned from Hesdin. They were Captain (later Brigadier) Norman Richard Crockett (1894-1956), a Regular officer who served as BM for 25 days until promoted to BM, 150 Brigade; and Captain (later Major) Mervyn Alexander Mackinnon (1889-1944) who served as acting BM for 6 days. He was another of the brigade's TF officers drawn from the legal profession.

¹⁷¹ LG, 4 June 1917. Little attended No. 4 Syndicate between 9 July and 15 September 1917.

¹⁷² Lieutenant-Colonel Garden Beauchamp Duff (1879-1952)

¹⁷³ IWM, Papers of W.B. Little, Document 14345

Under Cameron's command Little's career culminated in his appointment as CO 5/Borders when Crouch succeeded Bradford as CO 9/DLI.¹⁷⁴ Little's career progression, from civilian to CO in less than three years, is a fulsome illustration of the way Cameron made sure best use was made of subordinates' talents based on merit.¹⁷⁵

Little's successor as Cameron's SC was Captain E.H. Veitch, a TF officer commissioned into the DLI in 1908. Veitch was a member of a family printing firm based in Durham.¹⁷⁶ He served as SC for the remainder of Cameron's period as GOC 151 Brigade, and beyond.¹⁷⁷ There is a pattern in the appointment of SCs within 50th Division, of which both Little and Veitch were part.¹⁷⁸ Although Veitch was not promoted from his SC role during the war, he nevertheless was a capable officer, twice receiving the MC. The citation for his Bar embodies the attributes required of a SC:

*For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He showed untiring energy in supplying the fighting troops with ammunition and rations. Though units were unlocated and mixed up he never failed to get up their supplies, personally leading them through heavy shell fire. His devotion to duty was most conspicuous.*¹⁷⁹

6.6 Legacy of the Somme

Cameron's honeymoon period with 151 Brigade lasted nine days. Appointed on 6 September 1916, the brigade's first operation under his command was the attack between Martinpuich

¹⁷⁴ LG, 16 November 1917

¹⁷⁵ Little retired from the army as a lieutenant-colonel in 1925. He had received the DSO and Bar, MC, American Distinguished Service Cross, French Croix de Guerre avec Palme and five MiDs. In 1930 he was appointed principal of Lord Wandsworth Agricultural College, a post he held until war broke out again. At the age of fifty-seven Little volunteered again and was re-employed. He retired from the army for the second time in 1944 having been awarded an OBE and two further MiDs.

¹⁷⁶ Veitch subsequently made use of his family's facilities to publish a battalion history: E.H. Veitch, *8th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry* (Durham: Veitch & Sons, 1927).

¹⁷⁷ Veitch was SC from 10 November 1916 until 6 June 1918 (537 days) when he returned to England for a six months tour of duty. TNA WO95/2839 151 Brigade WD, 6 June 1918

¹⁷⁸ In addition to being TF officers, SCs within 50th Division were changed infrequently. Only three officers were SCs in 149 Brigade; between the outbreak of war and the end of 1917 only two officers served as SCs in 150 Brigade; and between the outbreak of war and mid-1918 only three officers served as SCs in 151 Brigade. The implications of such relative stability for the quality of staff work are implicit.

¹⁷⁹ LG, 1 January 1918 and 16 September 1918

and High Wood on 15 September 1916. Although the reserve brigade for this operation, 151 Brigade was called upon. The fighting was confused and costly.¹⁸⁰ When, despite the best efforts of his BM, information about the progress of his battalions was obscure, Cameron went forward to the HQs of his battalions to evaluate the position for himself.¹⁸¹ This was indicative of his hands-on approach to command.¹⁸² After five days' fighting, 151 Brigade had a week out of the line returning to the front line on 28 September. Two patrols from the brigade were involved in hand to hand fighting the following day and the brigade delivered a successful attack on the Flers Line on 1 October. Wilkinson congratulated the officers and ORs of his division for the qualities they had shown in their attacks. Between 15 September and 3 October the division had advanced nearly two miles and had captured seven lines of enemy trenches.¹⁸³

That same day, 3 October, 50th Division was relieved and moved into III Corps Reserve. After a period of cleaning and rest, the preoccupation for Cameron's brigade for October 1916 was a daily routine of either training or the provision of working parties for the repair of roads and suchlike.¹⁸⁴ On 3 November Cameron's brigade returned to the line in preparation for an attack to capture trenches to the north and east of the Butte de Warlencourt.¹⁸⁵ After initial success on 5 November, Cameron's battalions were subject to at least four counter

¹⁸⁰ For an account of 50th Division's part in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, see Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division*, pp. 143-161.

¹⁸¹ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 11.00 p.m., 15 September 1916 & 2.20 a.m., 16 September 1916

¹⁸² Cameron's brigade HQ was at The Quarry, on the eastern edge of Bazentin-le-Petit (Map Ref S.8.b.9.1). The distance Cameron had to travel forward to the battalion HQs in Swansea (5/Borders) and Clark (6/DLI) Trenches was about 1,100 yards.

¹⁸³ TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, Order of the Day, 3 October 1916

¹⁸⁴ Wilkinson held a conference to discuss the Division's training activities attended by his three brigadiers and their BMs at Cameron's HQ on 5 October 1916. TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 5 October 1916

¹⁸⁵ TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, Operation Order No 62, 3 November 1916 and TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, Operation Order No 43, 3 November 1916. Cameron's HQ moved forward from Bazentin Le Grand to the Old Quarry to the south-east of Eaucourt l'Abbaye, a distance of some 4,400 yards. The distance between Cameron's HQ at the Old Quarry and that of his most distant battalion HQ, occupied by the COs of both 6/DLI and 9/DLI, was some 600 yards.

attacks.¹⁸⁶ By the early hours of 6 November Cameron's troops had been driven back to their original trenches. The operation had proved to be a costly failure.¹⁸⁷ Cameron's brigade was relieved the following day and did not occupy front line trenches again until the New Year. The legacy of the operations between 15 September and 6 November 1916 was the casualties suffered.

| | Officers | Other Ranks | Totals |
|-----------|----------|-------------|--------|
| 6/DLI | 45 | 1,102 | 1,147 |
| 8/DLI | 49 | 1,117 | 1,166 |
| 9/DLI | 36 | 1,056 | 1,092 |
| 5/Borders | 51 | 1,042 | 1,093 |
| 151 MGC | 10 | 184 | 194 |
| 151 TMB | 5 | 50 | 55 |
| Totals | 196 | 4,551 | 4,747 |

Table 6.1 Fighting Strength, 151 Brigade, 15 September 1916¹⁸⁸

| | Officers | | | ORs | | | |
|-----------|----------|----|----|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| | K | W | M | K | W | M | |
| 6/DLI | 9 | 20 | 2 | 89 | 358 | 168 | 646 |
| 8/DLI | 6 | 17 | 3 | 88 | 303 | 140 | 557 |
| 9/DLI | 5 | 21 | 8 | 84 | 501 | 183 | 802 |
| 5/Borders | 8 | 11 | 0 | 48 | 267 | 48 | 382 |
| 151 MGC | 0 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 22 | 7 | 40 |
| Totals | 28 | 73 | 13 | 316 | 1,451 | 546 | 2,427 |

Table 6.2 Casualties, 151 Brigade, 14 September-31 October and 5-6 November 1916¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ For an account of 151 Brigade's part in the attack on the Butte de Warlencourt, see Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division*, pp. 171-183. For a succinct account, see TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 5 November 1916. Bradford's own report is to be found at Durham County Record Office D/DLI 2/9/37, Copy report by Roland Bradford on the attack made by the 50th Division on the Butte de Warlencourt, France, and the Gird Line, France, on 5 November 1916, n.d., [1916]

¹⁸⁷ One of the contributory factors was the state of the battlefield. The operation had originally been set for 28 October but was repeatedly postponed due to the effect of heavy rain. TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, Operation Order 60, 26 October 1916. In places front line and communication trenches were two feet deep in mud. The operational plan had included the involvement of two tanks. This was cancelled on 2 November 1916.

¹⁸⁸ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, Appendix 20. These figures include twenty-one officers and 366 ORs listed as 'details' i.e. those assigned to a particular duty.

In less than eight weeks Cameron's brigade had suffered casualties of more than half its number. The proportion of casualties amongst its officers was greater at fifty-eight per cent. Of the 114 officer casualties, three quarters were second lieutenants. These figures illustrate the scale of the rebuilding task Cameron faced to overcome the manpower churn within his brigade and to restore its operational capability. He shared the same task as did Loomis, Pelham Burn, Kellett and Cator. The precise speed with which Cameron's losses were replaced is unknown. What is known is that by 2 February 1917 his brigade's fighting strength was 179 officers and 4,751 ORs.¹⁹⁰ Whilst the strength of the brigade's overall numbers had been restored to those of mid-September 1916, the relative shortage was evident amongst the number of junior officers.¹⁹¹

By 19 November 1916 50th Division had moved into III Corps Reserve again. The brigade's principal activity was the supply of working parties. At the end of November the brigade moved to III Corps' training area at Warloy-Baillon. Training activities took place in companies with specialist training, for example dealing with gas, being undertaken at the Divisional School. Attention was given to musketry, bombing and night patrol work.¹⁹² The brigade's time at Warloy-Baillon culminated in a brigade practice attack.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., Casualty Returns, October 1916 Appendix 16 and November 1916, 9 November 1916. Figures for 151 TMB are not included in either return. Figures are not available for those absent ill due, for example, to trench foot which was reported to have 'caused units in the line many casualties'. Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division*, p. 198

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., Fighting Strength, 2 February 1917

¹⁹¹ The training needs of these officers, as well as NCOs, were addressed by the establishment of 50th Divisional School of Instruction at Montigny-sur-l'Hallue, three and a half miles south-west of Warloy-Baillon. The first intake was of twenty-six NCOs on 21 November 1916. The second intake of sixteen officers and twenty-six NCOs was on 6 December 1916. There was a subsequent intake on 28 January 1917. In addition, 174 NCOs and ORs were sent to Third Corps School of Instruction on 24 November 1916. See TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 21 & 24 November 1916, 6 December 1916 and 28 January 1917.

¹⁹² The prevalence of the poor standard of musketry skills within 50th Division is implied by 1,000 men being sent to Fourth Army Musketry Camp at Pont Remy for an eight day course of instruction. TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 31 January 1917

¹⁹³ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 27 December 1916. Wilkinson had already supervised a brigade exercise conducted by Cameron's brigade on 11 December 1916. Cameron attended a conference Wilkinson had called of his brigadiers on 20 December 1916 to discuss 'training and organization for fighting'. TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 11 and 20 December 1916

Cameron's brigade returned to the line near the scene of its failure in November for a trench holding tour on 1 January 1917. The brigade's experience was one of arduous routine. 'Active operations had, for the time being, ceased, for neither side could withstand the weather conditions, and it was all one could do in the front line to keep body and soul together.'¹⁹⁴ Shortly after having been relieved by 1st Australian Division on 28 January 1917, 50th Division and the rest of III Corps moved southwards to takeover trenches astride the Amiens-St Quentin Road previously held by 35th and 36th French Divisions.¹⁹⁵ During the period 12 February to the end of March 1917 'of infantry action there was little or none, but the opposing artilleries kept up intermittent shell fire which occasionally blazed into a regular bombardment'.¹⁹⁶ Cameron's brigade was trench holding for a single period of eighteen days during which time it undertook two raids on the same night.¹⁹⁷ These were the only raids, limited in scale and intent, undertaken by 50th Division during this period.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division*, p. 196. Even in such inactive periods casualties were incurred. In the period 1-27 January 1917, 50th Division suffered 299 casualties, an average of twelve per day. TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 30 January 1917

¹⁹⁵ III Corps was composed at this time of 1st, 15th, 48th and 50th Divisions. As recently as 31 October 1916 Haig had identified ten reasons why the British Army could not, or should not, take over any more of the trenches already held by the French Army. TNA WO256/13, 31 October 1916. Nevertheless, when he met Nivelles at Chantilly on 31 December 1916, Haig undertook to take over the French line from Sailly-Saillisel to the Amiens-St Quentin Road by early February, a distance of nine miles. TNA WO256/14, 31 December 1916. 50th Division's move south of the River Somme was undertaken during the time Cameron was on leave from 3-14 February 1917. Haig's decision was not without consequence: 'From SAILLISEL to the AMIENS-ROYE road 10 British Divisions were utilized to take over front, thereby destroying the training of 20 divisions during the winter.' TNA WO158/20, GHQ, Notes on Operations, 1917 January-1918 October 22, O.A.D. 430, 2 May 1917

¹⁹⁶ Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division*, p. 198. The division had inherited trenches in poor condition. The ground had been frozen for a month when a thaw set in on 16 February 1917. Subsequent periods of sustained rain led to trench conditions comparable to those on the Somme in late October and November 1916.

¹⁹⁷ 151 Brigade was in the line from 19 February to 9 March 1917. The two raids were carried out on 4 March 1917.

¹⁹⁸ The raids had been planned by Cameron, Hedley and Bradford together with Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Ernest Hanson (1873-1934), CCLI Brigade, RFA. Authority and responsibility for the details of the raids had been given explicitly in this instance to Cameron. TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, Operation Order No 84, para. 2, 20 February 1917. The raid by Bradford's 9/DLI was undertaken by two officers and seventy ORs. It was successful securing six prisoners without any casualties amongst the raiding party. The raid by Hedley's 5/Borders was aborted when the raiders attracted MG fire whilst trying to make their way through the German wire.

Between 1 January and 9 March, the battalions of Cameron's brigade had spent more time on trench holding duties, forty-four days, than they had out of the line, twenty-five days. The remaining month before 151 Brigade was committed to the Battle of Arras on 13 April 1917 was divided almost equally between training and the process of moving from the vicinity of the Amiens-St Quentin Road to the villages to the west of Arras. Cameron temporarily commanded 50th Division for ten days whilst Wilkinson was on leave.¹⁹⁹ His predominant daily activity until the end of March was to visit his units whilst they trained. This supervisory activity was punctuated by a series of lectures and conferences. On 16 March Cameron attended a lecture at the Divisional School given by Lieutenant-Colonel H. Karlake, Wilkinson's GSO1.²⁰⁰ The following day Cameron conferred with his fellow brigade commanders about training and fighting kit. Cameron returned to Montigny to give a lecture himself on 19 March.²⁰¹ On 21 March, the day following Wilkinson's return, Cameron, his brigade staff and his COs attended a conference addressed by Sir Ivor Maxse called to discuss training for open warfare. Wilkinson followed this up two days later with a staff ride over two days.²⁰² This phase of 151 Brigade's preparations concluded when 50th Division began its move north towards Arras on 30 March 1917.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Wilkinson was on leave from 10-20 March 1917. TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 10 & 20 March 1917

²⁰⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Henry Karlake (1879-1942). Haig wrote of him 'a capable officer, and impresses men with right ideas, but he has not got on as well as he should have because of a sarcastic manner'. TNA WO256/31, Haig's Diary, 20 May 1918

²⁰¹ Cameron's topic was 'The Movement of the Original Expeditionary Force to France'. TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 19 March 1917

²⁰² TNA WO95/2809 50th Division WD, 23 & 24 March 1917. Those involved were divisional and brigade staffs together with heads of administration departments. 151 Brigade's WD refers to this event not as a staff ride but as a 'divisional exercise'.

²⁰³ An episode was subsequently recorded which illustrates the concern Cameron consistently demonstrated for the welfare of his troops, in this case whilst they were on the march and stopped at Ligny-sur-Canche, near Frévent, south of St Pol. 'Just as we were settling down to a meal, at about 2 p.m., into the yard rode General Cameron, the Brigade Commander, with Daly, his Brigade Major, to ask if our billets were comfortable. They really are a pair in a thousand riding round every unit in the Brigade Group, often spread over four or five miles, after every march, to ask if everyone is happy. Finding they had not eaten since 5 a.m., we compelled them to share our meal, after which they rode on to ask how the Machine-Gun Company were.' J. Glubb, *Into Battle: A Soldier's Diary of the Great War* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978), p. 121

6.7 Arras – Control of Wancourt Ridge

Wilkinson went forward on 9 April 1917 to a position near Ficheux to observe the attack of 14th, 56th and 30th Divisions.²⁰⁴ Cameron's brigade relieved 43 Brigade in the Ronville Caves in the early hours of 12 April subsequently relieving 41 Brigade, 14th Division in the vicinity of Wancourt in the early hours of the following day. This was the prelude to the two occasions, 13-15 April and 23-26 April, when 151 Brigade was involved in the Battle of Arras.²⁰⁵ They provide contrasting experiences.

50th Division's initial role was to exploit the gains already made. The scope for planning was contingent, therefore, on the circumstances inherited. The village of Wancourt had been captured on 12 April.²⁰⁶ On the evening of 13 April, Wilkinson issued orders for 50th Division, in conjunction with attacks by 56th Division on its right toward Chérisy and 29th Division on its left toward Guémappe, to deliver an attack by 151 Brigade eastward from Wancourt over the Wancourt Ridge the following morning.²⁰⁷ It was learnt at 10 p.m. on 13 April, however, that 3rd Division's attack that evening on Guémappe had failed. At 3.10 a.m. on 14 April Cameron was informed that 29th Division, scheduled to relieve 3rd Division overnight, would not attack Guémappe.²⁰⁸ 56th Division's attack, however, would proceed as planned. The consequential significance was that German MGs would be able to fire in enfilade southward from Guémappe over the slopes of Wancourt Ridge. 151 Brigade was also exposed to the risk of counter attacks from Guémappe. A rethink and change of plan was required. Cameron agreed with Wilkinson in the early hours of 14 April that 151 Brigade would now form a defensive flank northwards towards Guémappe. At the same time the

²⁰⁴ 50th Division came under the orders of GOC VII Corps (Snow) on 11 April 1917.

²⁰⁵ A detailed account of these operations is to be found in Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division*, pp. 202-227. Wyrall draws heavily on the relevant war diaries.

²⁰⁶ TNA WO95/805 VII Corps WD, Operations Summary 6.00 p.m. 6/4/1917 to 6.00 p.m. 13/4/1917, 13 April 1917

²⁰⁷ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, G.140 13 April 1917 issued at 8.45 p.m.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 14 April, 3.10 a.m.

brigade would attack as intended south-eastwards in support of 56th Division's attack towards Chérisy.

Cameron made four critical decisions. First, as the man on the spot, he resisted Wilkinson's suggestion that the defensive flank to face Guémappe should be placed on the line of a light railway.²⁰⁹ Having studied the ground, Cameron decided that 9/DLI would form this flank guard further to the south and higher on the slopes of the Wancourt Ridge. Second, Cameron gave his orders to his COs in person. Daly and his staff did not have sufficient time to issue written orders. Zero hour for the attack had been set as 5.30 a.m. Between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. Cameron in turn 'interviewed' Robson, Martin and Hedley as well as the officer commanding 151 MGC and explained his plan.²¹⁰ Martin and Hedley were ordered to report personally to Cameron when their battalions were in position. Cameron would decide whether and when they were to advance. Third, Cameron decided to advance his brigade HQ by 1,900 yards to a point immediately north of the Héninel-Wancourt Road, within 1,000 yards of the plateau of the Wancourt Ridge.²¹¹ This was also Bradford's HQ. From this position Cameron had improved tactical control. He minimised the time and difficulty in communicating with his COs during the operation.²¹² Fourth, when opportunity and need arose, Cameron and Daly visited the front line to see the circumstances for themselves.²¹³

Cameron's plan of attack was straightforward. The front held by 151 Brigade was only 300 yards wide opening to 450 yards on the first objective. With 9/DLI stationary protecting the

²⁰⁹ TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, B.M. X/90, Cameron's Report on Operations on Morning of 14 April 1917, para. 4, 17 April 1917. See also TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, G.A.195, 14 April 1917 for reference to 'roughly along railway'.

²¹⁰ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 14 April 1917

²¹¹ Brigade HQ moved from Sheet 51B SW 1 N.15.d.4.4 to Sheet 51B SW 2 N.29.a.2.9.

²¹² This took place at 5.00 a.m., half an hour before zero. TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, B.M. X/90, Report on Operations on Morning of 14 April 1917, para. 6

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 1.5 p.m.

brigade's northern flank, he intended to feed his remaining three battalions into the attack sequentially – first 6/DLI, then 8/DLI and lastly 5/Borders. The depth of their advance would conform to the progress of the attack by 169 Brigade, 56th Division. In the event, both 6/DLI and 8/DLI were committed in turn, crested the Wancourt Ridge and passed out of sight. They succeeded in reaching their objectives. The attack of 169 Brigade, however, failed. Cameron's troops 'were forced to retire again to their original positions in order to conform with the general alignment'.²¹⁴ Using the reports he received throughout the day, Cameron co-ordinated the action of the division's artillery to deal with MGs firing from Guémappe and, fearing a counter attack, to disperse German troops reported to be massing there. He chose not to commit 5/Borders to the attack. Rather, he decided this battalion was better employed extending the line held by 9/DLI to deal with the threatened counter attack.²¹⁵ The day's operation yielded no territorial gains. It had been another example of an attack which lacked 'adequate coordination' with the attackers' flanks exposed to concentrated fire.²¹⁶ It had also been an early demonstration of the impact of von Lossberg's appointment.²¹⁷ Nevertheless, at 9.35 p.m. on 14 April Wilkinson sent Cameron the following message: 'The GOC congratulates you and your Brigade on the manner in which you carried out a most-difficult operation at very short notice.'²¹⁸ 151 Brigade was relieved by 149 Brigade in the early hours of 15 April and went into Divisional Reserve.

The protests of Wilkinson and his colleagues to Haig on 13 April were effective. A halt was called on 14 April.²¹⁹ Nivelle's offensive was launched on 16 April, the same day Haig held a

²¹⁴ TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 14 April 1917

²¹⁵ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 14 April 1917, 1.4 p.m. Cameron also feared congestion on his right front having already committed both 6/DLI and 8/DLI. TNA CAB 45/116, Cameron to Falls, 27 March 1938

²¹⁶ Falls, *Military Operations, 1917 Volume I*, p. 297

²¹⁷ See Chapter 2, Note 197.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.35 p.m. The operation had been at the cost of 355 casualties, the majority of whom (thirteen officers and 172 ORs) were suffered by 6/DLI. TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 18 April 1917

²¹⁹ This did not mean that all offensive action ceased. For example, on 15 April 6/NF 149 Brigade recaptured the remains of Wancourt Tower and by the end of the day had driven off four German counter-attacks. The

conference with Horne, Allenby and Gough at St Pol to plan the next phase of the battle.²²⁰

The Second Battle of the Scarpe would be an attack extending from Croisilles northward to Gavrelle, a frontage of nine miles.²²¹ Wilkinson's order for 50th Division's attack eastward along the southern side of the Cojeul Valley on a frontage of about 1,000 yards stipulated it would be delivered on 23 April by 150 Brigade commanded by Brigadier-General B.G. Price. 151 Brigade was tasked as the support brigade with three of its battalions positioned at The Harp with the fourth waiting in the Ronville Caves.²²²

At 4.45 a.m. 150 Brigade attacked with two battalions intending to advance 1,700 yards. It was planned that seven hours after zero hour, the attack would be renewed to capture and consolidate a second line a further 1,000 yards forward. By 10.30 a.m. it was reported that, with the aid of two tanks, 150 Brigade's first objective had been captured.²²³ Four batteries of field artillery crossed the River Cojeul in readiness for the attack on the second objective. By 1.00 p.m., however, strong counter attacks had driven 150 Brigade, and the troops of both 15th and 30th Division on the brigade's right and left flanks respectively, back to their original trenches.

Germans recaptured the Tower the following evening but were subsequently ejected again at midday on 17 April by two companies of 7/NF. TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 15-17 April 1917

²²⁰ Nivelle's Offensive was launched on 16 April, the same day as Haig's conference at St Pol. None of the objectives Nivelle had set for the first day were secured. By 20 April the French attackers were exhausted and had to pause. By 25 April Nivelle's armies had lost 30,000 killed, 100,000 wounded and 4,000 taken prisoners. Nivelle's Offensive had proved him to be 'one of the most disastrous generals of the century'. A. Clayton, 'Robert Nivelle and the French Spring Offensive of 1917', in B. Bond (ed.) *Fallen Stars: Eleven Studies of Twentieth Century Military Disasters* (London: Brassey's (UK), 1991), p. 52.

²²¹ It had also been intended to attack north of Gavrelle on the fronts of 2nd Division and Canadian Corps. These were subsequently excluded, however, because Horne was not satisfied the wire had been cut sufficiently well. TNA WO95/896 XIII Corps WD, 20 April 1917

²²² TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, Operation Order No. 99, 20 April 1917. The attack to capture Gavrelle was allocated to 63rd Division, XIII Corps, First Army. Formations of the three corps which formed Third Army, VII Corps (33rd, 30th and 50th Divisions), VI Corps (15th, 29th and 17th Divisions) and XVII Corps (51st, 9th and 37th Divisions) delivered the main thrust of the attack. Fifth Army provided artillery support to Third Army's right flank. Cameron issued his own order the following day. TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, Operation Order No. 77, 21 April 1917

²²³ By 8.30 a.m. the two attacking battalions, 4/East Yorkshire and 4/Yorkshire, had captured seven officers, forty NCOs and 400 ORs as well as a 7.7 cm. battery. TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 23 April 1917

At 3.00 p.m. VII Corps ordered the attack to be renewed at 6.00 p.m.²²⁴ Wilkinson ordered Cameron to place two battalions at Price's disposal for the purpose.²²⁵ Cameron and Daly moved forward from their Advanced HQ east of The Harp to Price's HQ adjacent to the cemetery on the western fringe of Wancourt. Cameron summoned Hedley and Bradford to tell them they were to come under Price's orders and that their battalions were to repeat the morning's attack. At the appointed hour, protected by a creeping barrage, 5/Borders and 9/DLI attacked. 'The Advance was carried out magnificently and the steadiness of the troops clearly showed the high state of discipline attained by the Division.'²²⁶ By 7.00 p.m. 9/DLI and two companies of 5/Borders had captured their objectives with the remaining two companies of 5/Borders forming a defensive flank on the right of their line because of the lack of success of the neighbouring battalion of 30th Division. Six officers, 200 ORs and a quantity of artillery pieces and MGs were captured. Cameron's battalions were also able to recover all the wounded from the morning's attack.²²⁷

Cameron took over responsibility for 50th Division's front from Price later that evening.²²⁸ He inherited volatile circumstances with tactical problems evident on both flanks. On the right flank it was reported that there was a gap of 1,000 yards between 5/Borders and the left hand battalion of 30th Division. On the left flank Cameron received reports that 9/DLI's own right flank was dangerously weak and exposed. Cameron ordered 8/DLI forward to close the gap on the brigade's right flank, put 4/NF (of 149 Brigade which had been put at his disposal) at

²²⁴ Ibid. Wyrall speculates that VII Corps' order was merely confirmation of Wilkinson's proposal earlier in the afternoon that the attack should be renewed. Wyrall, *The Fiftieth Division*, p. 221

²²⁵ TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 23 April 1917, G.A.255, 23 April 1917

²²⁶ Ibid., 23 April 1917. 'The most magnificent spirit was shown by all ranks and the attack was pressed home in the most gallant fashion notwithstanding an intense hostile barrage of 5.9" and 8" shells and concentrated machine gun fire.' TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 23 April 1917

²²⁷ 151 Brigade's WD states that the number captured was 300 including a battalion CO, a doctor and four company commanders. It refers to fierce hand to hand fighting, including use of the bayonet, and the attackers' success in rescuing a number of troops captured in the morning's attack. TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, 23 April 1917

²²⁸ Ibid., 23 April 1917 at 8.27 p.m.

Bradford's disposal and ordered 6/DLI and 5/NF (also of 149 Brigade) forward to the designated support trenches. In the centre, Cameron ordered 8/DLI to relieve the three battalions of 150 Brigade (4/Yorkshire, 5/Yorkshire and 4/East Yorkshire) which had been involved in the morning's attack. VII Corps ordered a renewal of the attack at 4.00 p.m. on the following day (24 April) against the uncaptured portion of the original objective on 30th Division's front. Orders for 151 Brigade's role in the attack were given verbally to Hedley and Turnbull. The Germans, however, began to retire during the afternoon enabling 30th Division to press forward to its objective. As a result Cameron ordered 5/Borders to advance on the brigade's right flank to conform. In two days 'very severe fighting' the front held by 50th Division had been advanced by a mile.²²⁹ Cameron's battalions had contributed significantly to this achievement. The cost to 151 Brigade had been casualties of nineteen officers and 396 ORs, nearly half of whom (ten officers and 189 ORs) had been suffered by Hedley's 5/Borders.²³⁰ 50th Division was relieved and transferred from VII Corps to XVIII Corps on 26 April 1917 and subsequently transferred to Third Army Reserve on 2 May 1917.²³¹ 50th Division did not return to the front line again until 16 June 1917.²³²

Allenby called personally on Wilkinson on 26 April to congratulate him on 50th Division's endeavours.²³³ Snow's congratulations were no less welcome: 'The fighting in your front has been very severe and, as everyone knows, your Division outfought and expelled the enemy,

²²⁹ TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 24 April 1917. The number of prisoners captured on 23 and 24 April was seventeen officers and 793 ORs. The day's diary entry also records on 25 April that 151 Brigade moved initially into support on what was reported to be a 'fairly quiet' day before moving further to the rear the following day when Wilkinson handed over command of the sector to Major-General (later Sir) Victor Arthur Couper (1859-1938), GOC 14th Division.

²³⁰ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, Casualties, Phase 21 to 25 April 1917. These casualties represented eleven per cent of 151 Brigade's total strength as at 20 April 1917 of 3,725 officers and ORs. Although precise figures are unknown, they would represent a significantly higher proportion of the number of troops of the three battalions committed to the fighting during this period. Robson's 6/DLI, which had led the attack on 14 April, was not committed on 23 or 24 April.

²³¹ TNA WO95/805 VII Corps General Staff, G.S.61, Summary of Operations 20-27 April 1917 and TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 2 May 1917.

²³² TNA WO95/2810 50th Division WD, 16 June 1917

²³³ *Ibid.*, G.X. 3867, 29 April 1917

inflicting on him very heavy losses. The Corps Commander congratulates you personally, and the splendid Division you command, on the result.²³⁴ Wilkinson in turn issued a two page memorandum addressed to All Ranks that concluded succinctly: ‘You have all done splendidly.’²³⁵ On a more personal note, Price wrote to thank Cameron for the part played by Hedley’s and Bradford’s battalions: ‘Their gallant and successful attack was very deeply appreciated by everyone in the brigade and our best thanks are due to you and them for what they did.’²³⁶ Cameron’s response reciprocated his own praise for the gallantry of 150 Brigade’s attack and concluded modestly: ‘It was very generous of you to include me in your thanks but I feel I have to regard myself as being merely a deeply interested spectator of the success of my two battalions under your command.’²³⁷ In passing these messages on to Hedley, Robson, Turnbull and Bradford, Cameron seemed to encapsulate his view that the essence of operational leadership at brigade level was the capability of binding his units together to produce superior battlefield performance.

*The recent operations should have succeeded in knitting together, more firmly than ever, the Brigades inside our Division and the units inside our Brigade. Can we not now say, in the generous words of Nelson, our splendid national hero, “We are in very truth a band of brothers” - If so, then no horde of Bosches can stand against us.*²³⁸

A sceptic might allege this cascade of congratulatory messages could be regarded as ritual military politeness. The tangible evidence of the genuine appreciation of the actions of 50th Division as a whole, including the contribution of 151 Brigade, however, was the subsequent award of Wilkinson’s knighthood in the King’s Birthday Honours list.²³⁹

²³⁴ Ibid., G.C.R. 604/429, 26 April 1917

²³⁵ TNA WO95/2838 151 Brigade WD, G.X.3856, 27 April 1917

²³⁶ Ibid., B.X. 170, 26 April 1917

²³⁷ Ibid., B.G. 435, 27 April 1917

²³⁸ Ibid., G.922, 28 April 1917

²³⁹ See Note 31.

6.8 Conclusion

The evidence supports the contention that Cameron was a competent and capable commander. His military forebears, public school education and Sandhurst training provided him with the quintessential background of a Regular officer. By August 1914 Cameron had risen to become a lieutenant-colonel with regimental and operational experience coupled with brigade and War Office experience as a trained staff officer. By the time of his appointment to 151 Brigade in September 1916, his second brigade command, Cameron had demonstrated that his lack of experience as a battalion commander was no bar to his ability to command a brigade. Having been wounded, both when a staff officer and when a brigade commander, Cameron demonstrated that his practical leadership style involved sharing the risks to which his officers and ORs were exposed.

Cameron's COs and the principal members of his brigade staff presented contrasts which he had to manage. In the case of his COs, the contrasts were between the relative stability of command provided by Hedley, Turnbull and Bradford and, until the appointment of Robson, the revolving door which bedevilled the command of 6/DLI. Turnbull and Bradford represented the extreme of the age range for COs. Although Daly's appointment as BM superficially led to a period of stability at brigade HQ, his absences meant that 151 Brigade had as many different BMs in 1917 as it had had during 1916. Daly's Regular army training and experience contrasted with the TF and civilian professional backgrounds of Kennedy, Little and Veitch. The diversity of experience amongst Cameron's staff officers contributed to the challenge of developing the capability of delivering operational efficiency within his brigade. They may have been similar to those faced by other brigadiers. They were no less challenging for all that. Cameron demonstrated his responsibility for fostering and developing talent. The career development of Bradford, Daly and Little provide prominent examples.

This was not to the exclusion of Cameron's wider responsibilities. Whilst he operated under Wilkinson's tutelage, Cameron actively devised, supervised and participated in the training of his troops.

Cameron's experience again demonstrates the shortcomings of assessing a brigadier-general's contribution through the single lens of battlefield performance. During the period under review 151 Brigade was involved in fighting for nine days, held front line trenches for forty-six days and was otherwise out of the line for 154 days. Cameron's biggest challenge was to cope with the operational consequences of having to rebuild his brigade, both in numbers and skills, as a result of both casualties and the consequences of severe winter weather on the health of his troops. It is the case that the extent of Cameron's battlefield command experience was limited. Fiftieth Division fought limited actions after the opening attack of the battle compared with the highly prepared, set-piece involvement of the brigades of Loomis and Pelham Burn on the first day. Nevertheless, the operations for which Cameron was responsible on and around the Wancourt Ridge demonstrated his independence of thought. He proved his ability to make and implement tactical decisions as he judged the circumstances required. The congratulations he received from Wilkinson on that occasion formed part of the incremental basis of assessment upon which he was subsequently promoted in October 1917 to the command of 49th Division, an appointment which he held for more than a year until the Armistice. It was no mean achievement.

Conclusion

During the Great War 733 officers commanded cavalry and infantry brigades forming part of the sixty-eight divisions that served on the Western Front.¹ On 9 April 1917 these divisions were comprised of 204 brigades.² The preceding chapters cannot, therefore, constitute an exhaustive study of infantry brigade commanders during the Great War. Based on the analysis of the 116 Arras brigadier-generals and the five case studies drawn from amongst them, however, this study enables threads to be identified about the backgrounds, experiences and actions of this sample of brigade commanders which may have general applicability. These threads provide a basis upon which the prevailing orthodoxy concerning the role of British infantry brigadier-generals, such as it is, can be re-evaluated. None of the 116 Arras brigadier-generals commanded brigades at the outbreak of the war. They had all been promoted on the basis of merit and, by April 1917, had the virtue of having been tried and tested. Their experience was practical and relevant. Their performance, both in their preceding roles and in command of their brigades, generated confidence amongst their superiors. They provide a reasonable sample of experienced brigadier-generals from whom lessons can be drawn.

¹ This figure is based on the author's analysis of the entries in A.F. Becke, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, History of the Great War, Parts 1, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, and 4*, (Newport: Ray Westlake – Military Books, 1988-90) and F.W. Perry, *Orders of Battle of Divisions, History of the Great War, Part 5A* (Newport: Ray Westlake, 1992-93). The analysis excludes those brigadier-generals commanding brigades in divisions which served either at home, or in theatres other than France and Flanders, or those in divisions of the Indian Army.

² The structure of three infantry brigades per division proved to be robust during the war. The single exception was the New Zealand Division which for a limited period was composed of four brigades. 4 New Zealand Brigade was formed in the UK on 15 March 1917. It came under the command of the New Zealand Division on 10 June 1917 and served with it until it ceased to exist on 7 February 1918. TNA WO95/3659 & 3660 New Zealand Division WD. For an explanation of the rationale for the formation of 4 New Zealand Brigade, see C. Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience: New Zealand, Australia and Empire in the First World War* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2004), p. 68.

One of the common implicit assumptions concerning generals, whether in command of brigades, divisions, corps or an army, is that their roles were indistinguishable.³ Too often the historiography has failed to discriminate between them.⁴ Keith Simpson, for example, acknowledged that the number of casualties amongst British generals was evidence of their courage. Yet he writes of them:

*Unfortunately the country-house life style of many generals and their staffs and the incestuous nature of their self-promotion did not endear them to regimental soldiers.*⁵

*Rather, they became isolated from the front line by new managerial problems which they had not mastered, and at the same time they continued to live the life-style of traditional commanders and their staffs who in the past had been able to live physically close to the battlefield.*⁶

Simpson's reference to 'country-house life style' implies safety and soft beds. The evidence of the rates of casualties, ill health and breakdowns suffered by brigadier-generals, however, demonstrates that Bourne's description of the 'essentially day-to-day and face-to-face relationships' they fostered were a concomitant of the prevailing practice amongst brigadier-generals of regularly being about their trenches.⁷ The evidence presented indicates that brigadier-generals, BMs and SCs were to be found routinely in the front line. Contrary to Simpson's generalised caricature, the reality of the life of brigade commanders was that, both

³ This assumption is given effect, for example, in the poem 'The General' written by Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967). It is believed Sassoon took his inspiration from a meeting between his battalion, 2/Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and Lieutenant-General Sir Ivor Maxse whilst on the march towards Arras in early April 1917. This poem was first published in *Counter-attack and Other Poems* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1918).

⁴ See for example J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (London: Faber & Faber, 1933).

⁵ Simpson, 'The officers', in I.F.W. Beckett & K. Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (London: Tom Donovan, 1985), p. 86

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ This was not everyone's experience. Captain (later Major) Gerald Achilles Burgoyne (1874-1936) served with 2/Royal Irish Rifles, 7 Brigade, 3rd Division until he was wounded on 7 May 1915. He wrote of his experience; 'In the whole five months I was in the trenches, I only once saw one of our Brigade Staff visit us, and not once did any of the Divisional Staff come near us.' C. Davison, *The Burgoyne Diaries* (London: Harmsworth, 1985), p. 51 (see also p. 218). The GOC of 7 Brigade was Brigadier-General Colin Robert Ballard (1868-1941). Ballard subsequently commanded 95 Brigade, 5th Division until wounded when a shell landed in his brigade HQ on 20 July 1916.

in and out of the line, they shared the daily operational risks and working conditions of their officers and ORs.

This study provides evidence that confirms elements of existing knowledge. In answer to the question ‘who were the Arras brigadier-generals?’, for example, the profile of the typical Arras brigadier-general is consistent with the generalised profile of Regular officers identified elsewhere:

By 1914 the overwhelming majority of candidates for a commission in the regular army were products of the public schools.⁸

An exclusive social and educational background, the gentlemanly ethos, a commitment to country pursuits, loyalty to institutions, self-confidence and physical courage were the qualities required, and they were almost totally associated with select areas of the middle class and definitely the upper class.⁹

The evidence of the backgrounds, attitudes and behaviours of Kellett, Pelham Burn, Cator and Cameron illustrates the degree to which they conformed to the profile of the stereotypical Regular officer. The exception was Loomis. He was the product of a system reliant on the Militia to an extent antithetical to the British army. Loomis was a civilian from a prosperous social background and educated at a fee paying school. He rose from the command of a battalion in Canada’s first contingent. He was the product of an officer selection system dominated at the outbreak of war by political patronage and the interference of Sir Sam Hughes. Referring to the Canadian reliance on its pre-war Militia, Stephen Harris points out:

Appointments and promotions, therefore, could not be made on the basis of an individual’s proven ability to lead his men successfully, intelligently, and efficiently in battle, at least in the beginning. This made it very easy for Hughes to employ non-military criteria when he chose his officers, clearly expecting that the talents or traits he admired in peacetime could be

⁸ K. Simpson, ‘The officers’, in Beckett & Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms*, p. 65

⁹ Ibid.

*transferred to the battlefield or to the organization and administration of the Canadian Expeditionary Force behind the lines.*¹⁰

This study enables five threads about the responsibilities and actions of the case study brigade commanders to be identified. It argues that the application of these threads enables the orthodox ‘administration and training’ interpretation of the role of brigadier-generals to be challenged as both unnecessarily narrow and unduly limited.

The first is the ambiguity of their role. The role of brigadier-generals within the chain of command was well understood, as much through the practicalities of custom and practice as the contents of *King’s Regulations*. On the other hand, subject to the nature of his relationship with his divisional commander, a brigade commander could exercise sufficient autonomy to fulfil the role in a manner which reflected his own experience, background and preferences. Loomis, for example, defined the essence of his role as one based on information and intelligence gathering. The organizational and geographic stability the Canadian Corps enjoyed in the months prior to the assault on Vimy Ridge enabled Loomis to pursue his quest for information about his assigned area of the battlefield. Although like other brigadier-generals, Loomis was one of the ‘mere cogs in the complex machine’, he played a critical role.¹¹ Loomis and his staff gathered information assiduously to inform his operational decisions. The attention Loomis paid to detail formed the hallmark of his resulting plans and orders.¹² For Loomis, preparation based on up-to-date information was everything.

¹⁰ S. Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army 1860-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 114

¹¹ A.D. Harvey, *Collisions of Empires: Britain in Three World Wars, 1793-1945* (London: Hambledon, 1992), p. 314

¹² 2 CIB’s war diary records that at the dinner given by his COs to mark Loomis’ departure on leave for three and a half months his COs ‘...paid a high tribute to his thoroughness and untiring energy. The results obtained since he took over command of the Brigade speak for themselves.’ TNA WO95/3765 2 CIB WD, 2 December 1917

Others used the flexibility of their roles to develop their own operational styles and emphases whilst all fulfilled their common ‘administration and training’ responsibilities. The relatively youthful Pelham Burn developed a reputation for attention to detail and for operational efficiency achieved in a very direct style which nevertheless generated the respect and confidence of his officers. Kellett displayed tenacity in holding his command for more than three years, flexibility of approach in commanding simultaneously both Regular and New Army battalions, and independence of thought, for example, by his unusual decision to have Sharpe court-martialled. Cator was first and foremost a Guardsman. His priority was to replicate the systematic approach to training, procedures and standards in his New Army brigade as he had experienced in his pre-war career and in the Guards Division. Cameron exhibited the all-round capability and flexibility of a trained staff officer. He demonstrated flexibility and sympathy in commanding the extremes of age, experience and varied backgrounds of his COs, yet did so without the experience of having undertaken the role himself. His capable and resilient battlefield performance led to promotion to the command of a division that he held for over a year until the Armistice. The evidence, therefore, points to individual brigadier-generals having far more scope and opportunity to make their distinctive mark on their brigade and on its performance than Gellibrand’s dismissive generalized description of them all as mere ‘oilers of the works’ implies. Individual brigadier-generals really could make a difference.

The evidence points to a second thread. Orthodox evaluations of brigadier-generals concentrate on their impact and influence on the performance of their brigades during operations. Advocates of this approach point, for example, to the decisive intervention of a particular brigadier-general at a critical point in a specific battle. The instance of Brigadier-General B. Vincent’s role in the capture of two batteries of German artillery in Battery Valley

on the first day of the Battle of Arras is a prime example.¹³ Those more dismissive, on the other hand, point to their lack of influence or involvement in matters of military strategy generally. Alternatively, instances can be cited where the orders of brigadier-generals have simply been countermanded in short order by their superiors. Brigadier-General A.W Currie's face-to-face encounter with Major-General T.D'O. Snow on 23 April 1915 provides a prime example of the latter when Snow dealt with Currie 'in rather a forcible manner'.¹⁴

The evidence of the five case studies demonstrates, however, that the most significant contribution of brigadier-generals was not on the battlefield. Their greatest contribution was their perpetual struggle to ensure that the officers and ORs of their battalions were adequate in numbers and possessed of individual skills, tactical acuity and strength of morale sufficient to meet the next challenge of the battlefield. They were on a treadmill to recreate the capability of their brigades to fight. The evidence presented indicates that in the seven months to the end of the Battle of Arras, four of the five case study brigades spent up to three quarters of the period out of the line.¹⁵ The maximum cumulative period any of these brigades were engaged in offensive operations as a brigade was only fourteen days.¹⁶ The scale of their rebuilding task, however, was proportionate to their rates of churn driven by casualties incurred mainly during their operations, but also by sickness within their brigades. For

¹³ C. Falls, *Military Operations – France and Belgium, 1917 Volume I* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1992), pp. 219-221. P. Simkins, "'Building Blocks': Aspects of Command and Control at Brigade level in the BEF's Offensive Operations, 1916-1918", in G.D. Sheffield & D. Todman, (eds.), *Command and Control on the Western Front: The British Army's Experience 1914-1918* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2004), p. 161. Vincent's own report of this operation makes no reference to his involvement in this element of the operation – see TNA WO95/1848 35 Brigade WD, Report on Operations 9/13 April 1917. Vincent was fortunate not to have been killed on 11 April 1917 whilst at his Advanced HQ when it was hit by a shell that did kill both his BM, Major J.L. Dent and CO 9/Essex, Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Trevor – see Chapter 5, Note 86.

¹⁴ D. Snow & M. Pottle, (eds.), *The Confusion of Command: The War Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas D'Oyly Snow 1914-1915* (London: Multidreams Publications, 2011), p. 100. See also T. Travers, (1996) "Currie and 1st Canadian Division at Second Ypres, April 1915: Controversy, Criticism and Official History," *Canadian Military History*: Vol. 5: Iss. 2, Article 2, p. 9.

¹⁵ The exception was Loomis' 2 CIB which spent 121 (fifty-six per cent) of 217 days in the line. Kellett's 99 Brigade spent least time in the line during this period – 53 days (twenty-five per cent).

¹⁶ This was Pelham Burn's 152 Brigade. The brigades which were committed to fewest days in offensive action during this period were Loomis' 2 CIB and Cameron's 151 Brigade, in both instances involved for six days. These figures do not take into account involvement in raids since these did not involve whole brigades.

example, to replace the casualties his brigade suffered on the Somme in the last three months of 1916, Loomis was allocated a greater number of replacement officers and ORs than the number typically sent into an attack by half his battalions. In the three day battle at Beaumont Hamel in November 1916, the three battalions of Pelham Burn's brigade that participated suffered casualties of approximately half those involved. Kellett's brigade had a similar experience at Delville Wood on 27/28 July 1916 and at Serre on 14 November 1916. Worse followed as a consequence of the Battle of Arleux when the three brigades of 2nd Division were reduced to a single Composite Brigade commanded by Kellett with a bayonet strength of less than 1,400 men. Cator's brigade lost the equivalent of a battalion's strength in the attack on Gueudecourt on 7 October 1916 and the equivalent of another battalion's strength as a result of the attack by two of his battalions south of Roeux on 3 May 1917. More than half the officers and ORs of Cameron's brigade became casualties in the eight weeks of its involvement in the Somme campaign. In all five instances, these brigadier-generals faced the challenges involved in rebuilding the operational capability of their brigades where most of the junior officer replacements were devoid of significant experience and the majority of OR replacements were inadequately trained. Their challenge was not simply a matter of ensuring that adequate and appropriate training schemes were put in place and implemented for their battalions. It was to ensure that, despite the limitations of the replacements sent to them, their COs had the blend of manpower required to form and reform their platoons and companies. Brigadier-generals had responsibility to ensure, through their COs, that their battalions were physically fit, suitably equipped, possessed the skills required of them and able to operate cohesively whenever required, as much as time and circumstances for training would permit. The combination of discipline, training and leadership provided by brigade commanders reinforced through their COs reaped its rewards in the capability, confidence and high morale

generated within their brigades. The demands and stresses of this treadmill were the common experience amongst brigades.

This points to a third thread. Brigadier-generals were leaders, co-ordinators and supervisors of their brigades. The argument has been made that COs had a similar role in relation to their battalions; in other words, that the role of a brigadier-general was that of a CO writ large. The evidence of the case studies indicates, however, that the responsibilities of brigade command were both greater and different. In scale a brigadier-general had ultimate responsibility for the organization and deployment of his four battalions, a MG company, a TM battery and his own staff officers led by his BM. He had to maintain working relationships with both his divisional commander, the GSO1 and his other staff officers, his fellow divisional brigadiers, and the heads of the other arms and services upon which his brigade's operations were dependent. This is not to argue that COs did not develop their own networks or relationships with other serving officers, both within their own brigade, division and beyond. It is the case, however, that within the hierarchical command structure of the BEF, the range of responsibilities and relationships required of a brigadier-general were demonstrably more complex and more extensive than those of his COs. The job of a brigadier-general was bigger, broader and more involved than that of a CO.¹⁷

A fourth thread common amongst brigadier-generals was their responsibility to select and develop individuals and teams of officers, both within their battalions and amongst their staff, and to dispense with those they judged were deficient. Again, it could be argued that COs had corresponding responsibilities. There were, however, two material distinctions between the

¹⁷ This was reflected in pay rates. For example, Loomis' rate of pay as a brigadier-general was \$9.00 per day with a field allowance of \$3.00 per day. His COs were paid \$5.00 per day with a field allowance of \$1.25 per day. A.F. Duguid, *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919, General Series, Vol. I. Aug. 1914-Sept. 1915* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938), p. 61

two levels of command in this regard. First, as has been argued, was one of scale; a brigadier-general's span of control was greater. Second, the duration of a brigadier-general's tenure in post was longer, on average two and a half times longer, than that of a CO.¹⁸ The multiplied effect of these two factors provided the typical brigadier-general with greater scope and greater incentive to ensure that he developed individuals and teams of effective and capable officers who reported to him. The capability of his brigade depended upon them. It was in his own interests, and those under his command, to ensure he created a succession of capable officers, within both his battalions and amongst his team of staff officers. It was highly likely he would have to live with the consequences of his own staff development activities.

In the case of Loomis on the one hand and Kellett, Pelham Burn, Cator and Cameron on the other, they shared the challenge of developing brigade staff officers from different material. In Loomis' case, part of his task was to develop Canadian officers, the vast majority of whom had little or no prior military experience, to replace British staff officers. In the case of the others, they faced a corresponding challenge of ensuring the development of officers with civilian and ranker backgrounds to be able to command battalions; and the development of brigade staff officers who could either command battalions or who would merit promotion to higher graded staff posts at divisional and/or corps level. One of the facets of the experience of brigadier-generals, more so than divisional commanders and above, was the routine interaction they had with the diversity of officers drawn from a variety of backgrounds and experience which made up the BEF – pre-war regulars and reservists, pre-war territorials and pre-war civilians. Brigadier-generals were the operational inter-face between the commanders and the commanded, in all their forms.

¹⁸ See Chapter 1, Section 1.13 Arras Brigadier-Generals – Comings and Goings, and Chapter 4, Note 94.

The various operations which together are referred to as the Battle of Arras provide the basis for a fifth thread in relation to brigadier-generals. This is the degree of battlefield versatility they were expected to exhibit, dependent on the role allotted to their brigade. The opening attack on 9 April 1917 was on a large scale. The interlocking actions of all arms had been planned in meticulous detail. Only the random and the unexpected would demand intervention by individual brigadier-generals. In the Canadian Corps' sector, the attack south of Hill 145 went very much to plan. Such was the success of the implementation of 2 CIB's plans, Loomis' role during the operation was confined to liaising with his supporting artillery. Despite the corresponding detail of Pelham Burn's own preparations, the misunderstanding of their position during the first day of Pelham Burn's sister brigade, 154 Brigade on his left flank, caused problems for his own units. Pelham Burn had to intervene to reinforce his attacking battalions. As formations detailed for the initial assault, both Loomis and Pelham Burn had battalions at full strength to command. By the time Kellett's brigade was called upon to make its first significant assault during the battle, it had been reduced to a shadow of its former strength. Unlike Loomis on 29 April at Arleux, Kellett's task in the same operation and his subsequent attack on 3 May in command of a Composite Brigade was simply to make do with his meagre numbers. Cator's brigade had been allocated a specific limited objective on 9 April that was achieved as intended. The care Cator took over the preparation of his brigade and the clarity of his operational plans reduced the need for his involvement on the day to almost that of a spectator. Cator's experience on 3 May, however, demonstrated the inherent bane of the operational experience of brigadier-generals, the shortcomings in their communications systems. Cator's experience as a result of the doomed attack on Devil's Trench on 12 May, with the benefit of only minimal artillery preparation, emphasised his place as a cog in the machine of command. On the other hand, Cameron's experience on 14 April in organising and implementing a brigade attack at such short notice that the issue of

written orders was impracticable demonstrates the initiative and flexibility that could be demanded of brigade commanders. The critical contribution of two of Cameron's battalions to Price's renewed attack across the Cojeul Valley on the afternoon of 23 April demonstrated inter-brigade flexibility and the fighting capability and spirit developed by Cameron and his COs within his brigade over the months preceding the battle.

Understanding of the role and evaluation of the performance of brigadier-generals has tended hitherto to have focused on this last thread – their battlefield performance. This study, however, has provided evidence that there were other important criteria by which they could be evaluated. First, the use they made of their opportunities to make a difference; second, how they dealt with the unglamorous treadmill of building and rebuilding their units; third, their capability to deal with the scale and complexity of the role; and fourth, the degree to which they succeeded as talent managers to provide for succession. These additional threads provide the basis for a more broadly informed understanding of the roles and contributions of brigadier-generals.

The threads identified in this study can be applied to evaluate the contributions of the BEF's remaining Great War brigadier-generals. There is scope, however, for further research to establish whether there are additional threads to be drawn from their experience. Did the balance of their responsibilities change over time? To what degree, for example, did the nature of the fighting in 1918, most notably during The Hundred Days, have implications for the role of brigadier-generals and the way they undertook it? A potentially rich vein for further research remains to be explored.

Appendix One

The Battle of Arras 1917 – Brigade Commanders

By Order of Division

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Makins, Ernest | 1 (Cavalry) Brigade | 1 st (Cavalry) Division |
| 2 | Beale-Brown, Desmond John Edward | 2 (Cavalry) Brigade | 1 st (Cavalry) Division |
| 3 | Legard, D'Arcy | 9 (Cavalry) Brigade | 1 st (Cavalry) Division |
| 4 | Bell-Smyth, John Ambard | 3 (Cavalry) Brigade | 2 nd (Cavalry) Division |
| 5 | Pitman, Thomas Tait | 4 (Cavalry) Brigade | 2 nd (Cavalry) Division |
| 6 | Campbell, Charles Lionel Kirwan | 5 (Cavalry) Brigade | 2 nd (Cavalry) Division |
| 7 | Harman, (Anthony Ernest) Wentworth | 6 (Cavalry) Brigade | 3 rd (Cavalry) Division |
| 8 | Portal, Bertram Percy | 7 (Cavalry) Brigade | 3 rd (Cavalry) Division |
| 9 | Bulkeley-Johnson, Charles Bulkeley | 8 (Cavalry) Brigade | 3 rd (Cavalry) Division |
| 10 | Seymour, Archibald George | 8 (Cavalry) Brigade | 3 rd (Cavalry) Division |
| 11 | Bullen-Smith, George Moultrie | 5 Brigade | 2 nd Division |
| 12 | Walsh, Richard Knox | 6 Brigade | 2 nd Division |
| 13 | Kellett, Richard Orlando | 99 Brigade | 2 nd Division |
| 14 | Holmes, Hardress Gilbert | 8 Brigade | 3 rd Division |
| 15 | Potter, Herbert Cecil | 9 Brigade | 3 rd Division |
| 16 | Porter, Cyril Lachlan | 76 Brigade | 3 rd Division |
| 17 | Gosling, Charles | 10 Brigade | 4 th Division |
| 18 | Pritchard, Aubrey Gordon | 10 Brigade | 4 th Division |
| 19 | Berners, Ralph Abercrombie | 11 Brigade | 4 th Division |
| 20 | Carton de Wiart, Adrian | 12 Brigade | 4 th Division |
| 21 | Jones, Lumley Owen Williames | 13 Brigade | 5 th Division |
| 22 | Turner, Martin Newman | 15 Brigade | 5 th Division |
| 23 | Gordon-Lennox, Lord Esme Charles | 95 Brigade | 5 th Division |
| 24 | Green, Henry Clifford Rodes | 20 Brigade | 7 th Division |
| 25 | Steele, Julian McCarty | 22 Brigade | 7 th Division |
| 26 | Cumming, Hanway Robert | 91 Brigade | 7 th Division |
| 27 | Kennedy, John | 26 Brigade | 9 th (Scottish) Division |
| 28 | Maxwell, Francis Aylmer | 27 Brigade | 9 th (Scottish) Division |
| 29 | Dawson, Frederick Stuart | South African Brigade | 9 th (Scottish) Division |

| | | | |
|----|---|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 30 | Vincent, Berkeley | 35 Brigade | 12 th (Eastern) Division |
| 31 | Owen, Charles Samuel | 36 Brigade | 12 th (Eastern) Division |
| 32 | Cator, Albermarle Bertie Edward | 37 Brigade | 12 th (Eastern) Division |
| 33 | Skinner, (Percy) Cyriac (Burrell) | 41 Brigade | 14 th (Light) Division |
| 34 | Dudgeon, Frederick Annesley | 42 Brigade | 14 th (Light) Division |
| 35 | Wood, Philip Richard | 43 Brigade | 14 th (Light) Division |
| 36 | Marshall, Francis James | 44 Brigade | 15 th (Scottish) Division |
| 37 | Allgood, William Henry Lorraine | 45 Brigade | 15 th (Scottish) Division |
| 38 | Fagan, Edward Arthur | 46 Brigade | 15 th (Scottish) Division |
| 39 | Yatman, Clement | 50 Brigade | 17 th (Northern) Division |
| 40 | Trotter, Gerald Frederic | 51 Brigade | 17 th (Northern) Division |
| 41 | Clarke, John Louis Justice | 52 Brigade | 17 th (Northern) Division |
| 42 | Higginson, Harold Whitla | 53 Brigade | 18 th (Eastern) Division |
| 43 | Cunliffe-Owen, Charles | 54 Brigade | 18 th (Eastern) Division |
| 44 | Price, George Dominic | 55 Brigade | 18 th (Eastern) Division |
| 45 | Rawling, Cecil Godfrey | 62 Brigade | 21 st Division |
| 46 | Headlam, Hugh Roger | 64 Brigade | 21 st Division |
| 47 | Hessey, William Francis | 110 Brigade | 21 st Division |
| 48 | Stone, Percy Vere Powys | 17 Brigade | 24 th Division |
| 49 | Sweny, William Frederick | 72 Brigade | 24 th Division |
| 50 | Dugan, Winston Joseph | 73 Brigade | 24 th Division |
| 51 | Williams, Weir De Lancey | 86 Brigade | 29 th Division |
| 52 | Jelf, Rudolf George | 86 Brigade | 29 th Division |
| 53 | Lucas, Cuthbert Henry Tindall | 87 Brigade | 29 th Division |
| 54 | Cayley, Douglas Edward | 88 Brigade | 29 th Division |
| 55 | Goodman, Godfrey Davenport | 21 Brigade | 30 th Division |
| 56 | Stanley, Hon. Ferdinand Charles | 89 Brigade | 30 th Division |
| 57 | Lloyd, John Henry | 90 Brigade | 30 th Division |
| 58 | Williams, Oliver De Lancey | 92 Brigade | 31 st Division |
| 59 | Ingles, John Darnley | 93 Brigade | 31 st Division |
| 60 | Carter-Campbell, George Tupper Campbell | 94 Brigade | 31 st Division |
| 61 | Mayne, Charles Robert Graham | 19 Brigade | 33 rd Division |
| 62 | Heriot-Maitland, James Dalgliesh | 98 Brigade | 33 rd Division |
| 63 | Baird, Alexander Walter Frederic | 100 Brigade | 33 rd Division |
| 64 | Gore, Robert Clements | 101 Brigade | 34 th Division |
| 65 | Ternan, Trevor Patrick Breffney | 102 Brigade | 34 th Division |
| 66 | Thomson, Noel Arbuthnot | 102 Brigade | 34 th Division |

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 67 | Trevor, Herbert Edward | 103 Brigade | 34 th Division |
| 68 | Griffin, Christopher Joseph | 103 Brigade | 34 th Division |
| 69 | Challenor, Edward Lacy | 63 Brigade | 37 th Division |
| 70 | Compton, Charles William | 111 Brigade | 37 th Division |
| 71 | Maclachlan, Ronald Campbell | 112 Brigade | 37 th Division |
| 72 | Rees, Hubert Conway | 149 Brigade | 50 th (Northumbrian) Division |
| 73 | Price, Bartholomew George | 150 Brigade | 50 th (Northumbrian) Division |
| 74 | Cameron, Neville John Gordon | 151 Brigade | 50 th (Northumbrian) Division |
| 75 | Burn, Henry Pelham | 152 Brigade | 51 st (Highland) Division |
| 76 | Campbell, Douglas | 153 Brigade | 51 st (Highland) Division |
| 77 | Gordon, Alister Fraser | 153 Brigade | 51 st (Highland) Division |
| 78 | Hamilton, John George Harry | 154 Brigade | 51 st (Highland) Division |
| 79 | Freeth, George Henry Basil | 167 Brigade | 56 th (1 st London) Division |
| 80 | Loch, Granville George | 168 Brigade | 56 th (1 st London) Division |
| 81 | Coke, Edward Sacheverell D'Ewes | 169 Brigade | 56 th (1 st London) Division |
| 82 | Hunt, Gerald Ponsonby Sneyd | 173 Brigade | 58 th (2 nd /1 st London) Division |
| 83 | Freyberg, Bernard Cyril | 173 Brigade | 58 th (2 nd /1 st London) Division |
| 84 | McGrigor, William Colquhoun Grant | 174 Brigade | 58 th (2 nd /1 st London) Division |
| 85 | Higgins, Charles Graeme | 174 Brigade | 58 th (2 nd /1 st London) Division |
| 86 | Jackson, Henry Chomondeley | 175 Brigade | 58 th (2 nd /1 st London) Division |
| 87 | De Falbe, Vigant William | 185 Brigade | 62 nd (2 nd West Riding) Division |
| 88 | Hill, Felix Frederic | 186 Brigade | 62 nd (2 nd West Riding) Division |
| 89 | Taylor, Reginald O'Bryan | 187 Brigade | 62 nd (2 nd West Riding) Division |
| 90 | Prentice, Robert Emile Shepherd | 188 Brigade | 63 rd (Royal Naval) Division |
| 91 | Philips, Lewis Francis | 189 Brigade | 63 rd (Royal Naval) Division |
| 92 | Finch, Hamilton Waller Edward | 190 Brigade | 63 rd (Royal Naval) Division |
| 93 | Lesslie, William Breck | 1 (Australian) Brigade | 1 st (Australian) Division |
| 94 | Heane, James | 2 (Australian) Brigade | 1 st (Australian) Division |
| 95 | Bennett, Henry Gordon | 3 (Australian) Brigade | 1 st (Australian) Division |
| 96 | Smith, Robert | 5 (Australian) Brigade | 2 nd (Australian) Division |
| 97 | Gellibrand, John | 6 (Australian) Brigade | 2 nd (Australian) Division |
| 98 | Wisdom, Evan Alexander | 7 (Australian) Brigade | 2 nd (Australian) Division |
| 99 | Brand, Charles Henry | 4 (Australian) Brigade | 4 th (Australian) Division |
| 100 | Robertson, James Campbell | 12 (Australian) Brigade | 4 th (Australian) Division |
| 101 | Glasgow, (Thomas) William | 13 (Australian) Brigade | 4 th (Australian) Division |
| 102 | Tivey, Edwin | 8 (Australian) Brigade | 5 th (Australian) Division |
| 103 | Hobkirk, Clarence John | 14 (Australian) Brigade | 5 th (Australian) Division |
| 104 | Elliott, Harold Edward | 15 (Australian) Brigade | 5 th (Australian) Division |

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 105 | Griesbach, William Antrobus | 1 (Canadian) Brigade | 1 st (Canadian) Division |
| 106 | Loomis, Frederick Oscar Warren | 2 (Canadian) Brigade | 1 st (Canadian) Division |
| 107 | Tuxford, George Stuart | 3 (Canadian) Brigade | 1 st (Canadian) Division |
| 108 | Rennie, Robert | 4 (Canadian) Brigade | 2 nd (Canadian) Division |
| 109 | Macdonell, Archibald Hayes | 5 (Canadian) Brigade | 2 nd (Canadian) Division |
| 110 | Ketchen, Huntly Douglas Brodie | 6 (Canadian) Brigade | 2 nd (Canadian) Division |
| 111 | Macdonell, Archibald Cameron | 7 (Canadian) Brigade | 3 rd (Canadian) Division |
| 112 | Elmsley, James Harold | 8 (Canadian) Brigade | 3 rd (Canadian) Division |
| 113 | Hill, Frederick William | 9 (Canadian) Brigade | 3 rd (Canadian) Division |
| 114 | Hilliam, Edward | 10 (Canadian) Brigade | 4 th (Canadian) Division |
| 115 | Odlum, Victor Wentworth | 11 (Canadian) Brigade | 4 th (Canadian) Division |
| 116 | MacBrien, James Howden | 12 (Canadian) Brigade | 4 th (Canadian) Division |

Appendix Two

Distinguished Service Order Citations

In some, but not all, instances where an officer was awarded the DSO, a citation was published in the *London Gazette*. Set out below are the citations that accompanied the instances of those of the 116 Arras brigadier-generals who were awarded the DSO whilst in command of an infantry brigade.

Dawson, Frederick Stuart, CMG DSO (Christian name corrected to Frederick Stewart (London Gazette, 5 March 1920), Lieutenant-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), 1st Battalion, South African Infantry. He displayed gallantry of the highest degree during the fighting about Chapel Hill, Revelon Farm and Sorel on 21-22 March 1918. On the afternoon of the 22nd he skilfully withdrew his brigade north to the Green Line. He and members of his staff, after personally keeping the enemy from entering Sorel for some time, retired through Sorel, fighting under heavy rifle fire at close range. On the 24th, when his brigade only numbered 470 bayonets, they held 1,200 yards of front against overwhelming numbers until 4.30 in the afternoon, when ammunition was expended. He and his brigade did splendidly, and rendered most valuable service. (*LG* 8 August 1919)

Elliott, Harold Edward, CMG Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), Infantry Brigade. For conspicuous gallantry when in command of the advanced guards of the division during an advance. The successes during a long period of almost continuous fighting, the capture of several villages, which were held against frequent and violent counter-attacks, and the slightness of our losses compared to those of the enemy were largely due to his able leadership, energy and courage. (*EG*, 20 July 1917)

Fagan, Edward Arthur, CMG, DSO Lieutenant-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), Indian Army. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When his battalion front was being overwhelmed he personally directed the action to be taken by other battalions, with the utmost disregard for his personal safety. He inspired all ranks with enthusiasm, and the success of the defence was largely due to his fine example. (*LG*, 1 January 1917)

Freyberg, Bernard Cyril, VC DSO, Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), Royal West Surrey Regiment, Commanding 88th Infantry Brigade. He showed himself a fearless and resourceful commander. The success of the operations of his brigade near Gheluvelt on the 28th Sept. and the following days was largely owing to his inspiring example. Wherever the fighting was hardest he was always to be found encouraging and directing his troops. (*LG*, 1 February 1919)

Freyberg, Bernard Cyril, VC DSO, Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), Royal West Surrey Regiment, General Officer Commanding 88th Infantry Brigade. For marked gallantry and initiative on 11 November 1918, at Lessines. He personally led the cavalry, and though at the time he had only nine men with him, he rushed the town, capturing 100 of the enemy and preventing the blowing up of the important road bridges over the Dendre. (*LG*, 4 October 1919)

Gellibrand, John, DSO, Temporary Brigadier-General, Infantry Brigade. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. His brigade reached its third objective, but was ordered back owing to the division on the right being held up at its first objective. His brigade repelled several counter-attacks and held on when the brigade on its right was in difficulties. It was largely owing to his influence and presence in this advanced position that the operations were successful. (*LG*, 2 May 1916)

Goodman, Godfrey Davenport, CMG Lieutenant-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General, 9th Battalion, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment, Commanding 21st Brigade. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Two of his commanding officers being wounded, this officer on two occasions took over and, by his energy and drive, succeeded in taking the enemy position. On both these occasions he showed the greatest gallantry, moving about freely in the open under heavy fire of all arms. Though wounded he remained at duty until his brigade was relieved. (*LG*, 2 December 1918)

Griesbach, William Antrobus, CB CMG DSO, Brigadier-General, Alberta Regiment (General Officer Commanding 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade). For brilliant leadership and great gallantry in the operations of 8 August 1918, south-east of Amiens; 2 and 3 September 1918, east of Arras, and 27-28 September 1918, west and north-west of Cambrai in the crossing of the Canal du Nord and attack on Bourslon Wood, and during operations 17-21 October. He made several personal reconnaissances, and his presence amongst the attacking troops and his coolness under critical conditions was largely responsible for the success that attended the operations. (*LG*, 10 December 1919)

Hessey, William Francis, DSO Major and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), Reserve of Officers. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. For 24 hours he remained in the firing line, rallying and organising men and checking the enemy, and then conducted a withdrawal with great skill. He personally led a counter-attack, and temporarily regained 1,000 yards of ground. Two days later, after maintain his position for 36 hours, he withdrew without leaving a wounded man behind. He set a fine example of energy and good leadership. (*LG*, 1 January 1918)

Higginson, Harold Whitla, DSO Major and Brevet Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), Royal Dublin Fusiliers. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty while commanding his brigade. In 14 days' fighting the losses of the brigade exceeded 70 per cent, but owing to his able leadership and the fine example set by him their fighting spirit was in no way impaired. The courageous stands made by them were of great assistance to other brigades. (*LG*, 14 January 1916)

Kennedy, John, DSO, Major and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When the situation required the closest handling of the brigades, he commanded his in a most skilful and fearless manner during a daylight retirement, having his horse shot from under him by rifle fire. His brigade rendered conspicuous service and came out of the battle with its morale undiminished, for which his example and leadership were much responsible. (*LG*, 14 January 1916)

Legard, D'Arcy, Lieutenant-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General). Lancers. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When in command of a brigade during the recent operations he on one occasion obtained valuable information as to the flanks, and undoubtedly saved a critical situation. During a period of 12 days he has handled his troops in a masterly manner, inspiring all ranks by his energy, coolness and cheerfulness. (*LG*, 22 June 1918)

Smith, Robert, DSO, Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General), Infantry Brigade. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. By his skilful dispositions he met and held a powerful enemy attack, and personally conducting operations under heavy rifle fire, he counter-attacked, retook the lost ground, and pushed the enemy back for two miles at the point of the bayonet. (*LG*, 1 January 1917)

Steele, Julian McCarty, CB CMG, Lieutenant-Colonel and Brevet Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General). Coldstream Guards, (General Officer Commanding 22nd Infantry Brigade), (Italy). For marked ability and gallantry during the battle of the Piave, 24 October 1918. During the second phase of the capture of Papadopoli Island, under heavy machine-gun fire. On the first attempt his boat was riddled with bullets, and he was wounded in the head. Though suffering from severe concussion, which for a time had rendered him unconscious, he succeeded in reaching the island on his second attempt, and joined his troops. He was present in the front line during the subsequent Austrian attack. Though suffering from his wound he refused to leave his brigade, and remained in command of it until the termination of operations on 1 November. He set a fine soldierly example of grit and commanded his brigade throughout with conspicuous success. (*LG*, 10 December 1919)

Tuxford, George Stuart, CB CMG, Brigadier-General, Saskatchewan Regiment, Commanding 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade. For conspicuous gallantry and able leadership whilst commanding his brigade in the attack across the Canal du Nord on the 27th September 1918, and the operations of the following days. His brigade had to attack on a wide frontage, including the towns of Sains-les-Marquion and Marquion. The operation was successfully accomplished, thanks to his ability and continuous presence with the forward troops. His work during the last two months' operations has been excellent. (LG, 4 October 1919)

Appendix Three

The Orders of Battle in Appendices Three to Seven set out units and formations involved in the series of operations referred to as the Battle of Vimy and the Battle of Arras. Individuals in post as at 9 April 1917 are identified. The Orders of Battle are based on those presented in E.A. James, *A Record of the Battles and Engagements of the British Armies in France and Flanders, 1914-1918* (London: The London Stamp Exchange, 1990). Individuals holding staff appointments have been identified from 'Composition of the headquarters of the forces in the field - [January 1915 - 1918]' held at the Imperial War Museum. The database of British infantry battalion commanders created by Dr Peter Hodgkinson has been the principal source of British unit commanders. Commanding officers of Canadian battalions have been taken from J.F. Meek, *Over the Top!: The Canadian Infantry in the First World War* (Privately published, 1971). The honours and awards attributed to individuals are those to which they were entitled on 9 April 1917. Officers known to have become casualties during the Battle of Arras are indicated. In the instances of those killed or died of their wounds, their successors are indicated.

BEF ORDER OF BATTLE

Battle of Vimy, 9-14 April 1917

GHQ **FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG GCB
KCIE GCVO**

Military Secretary: **Major-General W.E. Peyton CVO CB DSO psc**
CGS: **Lieutenant-General Sir L.E. Kiggell KCB psc**
DCGS: **Major-General R.H.K. Butler psc**
BGGS (Intelligence): **Brigadier-General J. Charteris DSO psc**
QMG: **Lieutenant-General R.C. Maxwell KCB**
MGRA: **Major-General J.F.N. Birch CB ADC**
Engineer-in-Chief: **Major-General S.R. Rice CB**

FIRST ARMY **GENERAL SIR HENRY HORNE KCB**

MGGS: **Major-General W.H. Anderson psc**
MGRA: **Major-General H.F. Mercer CB**
DA&QMG: **Major-General P.G. Twining CMG MVO**
CE: **Major-General G.M. Heath CB DSO psc**

I CORPS **LIEUTENANT-GENERAL A.E.A. HOLLAND CB MVO
DSO**

BGGS: **Brigadier-General G.V. Holdern CMG psc**
BGRA: **Brigadier-General M. Peake CMG**
CHA: **Brigadier-General A. Ellershaw DSO**
DA&QMG: **Brigadier-General N.G. Anderson CMG DSO psc**

| | |
|---|--|
| CE: | Brigadier-General E.H. de V. Akinson CIE |
| 24th (LIGHT) DIVISION | MAJOR-GENERAL J.E. CAPPER CB |
| GSO1: | Lieutenant-Colonel Sir W.A.I. Kay Bt. DSO psc |
| BGRA: | Brigadier-General H.C. Sheppard CMG DSO |
| AA&QMG: | Lieutenant-Colonel J.F.I.H. Doyle DSO psc |
| CRE: | Lieutenant-Colonel T.T. Behrens |
| 17 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General P.V.P. Stone (Wounded 11/4/17) |
| 8/Bufs: | Lieutenant-Colonel F.C.R. Studd |
| 1/Royal Fusiliers: | Lieutenant-Colonel M.P. Hancock |
| 12/Royal Fusiliers: | Lieutenant-Colonel H.W. Compton |
| 3/Rifle Brigade: | Lieutenant-Colonel R. Pigot |
| Brigade Major: | Major E.B. Frederick |
| Staff Captain: | Captain W.R.G. Bye MC |
| 72 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General W.F. Sweny DSO |
| 8/Queen's: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.M. Tringham DSO |
| 9/East Surrey: | Lieutenant-Colonel V.H.M. De La Fontaine DSO |
| 8/Royal West Kent: | Lieutenant-Colonel J.C. Parker |
| 1/North Staffordshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel W.F.B.R. Dugmore DSO |
| Brigade Major: | Captain K.F.B. Tower |
| Staff Captain: | Captain J.L. Ward |
| 73 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General W.J. Dugan DSO |
| 9/Royal Sussex: | Lieutenant-Colonel M.V.B. Hill MC |
| 7/Northamptonshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel E.R. Mobbs |
| 13/Middlesex: | Lieutenant-Colonel J. Greene |
| 2/Leinster: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.D. Murphy MC |
| Brigade Major: | Major R. Howlett DSO MC |
| Staff Captain: | Captain R.W.W. Hill |
| Pioneers | |
| 12/Sherwood Foresters: | Lieutenant-Colonel F.J. Roberts MC |
| CANADIAN CORPS | LIEUTENANT-GENERAL HON. SIR JULIAN H.G. BYNG KCB KCMG MVO psc |
| BGGS: | Brigadier-General P.P. de B. Radcliffe psc |
| BGRA: | Brigadier-General E.W.B. Morrison CMG DSO |
| CHA: | Brigadier-General R.H. Massie |
| DA&QMG: | Brigadier-General G.J. Farmer CMG psc |
| CE: | Brigadier-General W.B. Lindsay CMG |
| 5th DIVISION | MAJOR-GENERAL R.B. STEPHENS CMG psc |
| GSO1: | Lieutenant-Colonel G.C.W. Gordon-Hall DSO psc |

BGRA: Brigadier-General A.H. Hussey CB
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel R.F.A. Hobbs CMG DSO psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. White

13 Infantry Brigade
2/K.O.S.B.: Lieutenant-Colonel D.R. Sladen DSO
1/Royal West Kent: Lieutenant-Colonel H.D. Buchanan-Dunlop DSO
14/Royal Warwickshire: Lieutenant-Colonel L. Murray DSO
15/Royal Warwickshire: Lieutenant-Colonel G.S. Miller

Brigade Major: Captain A.E.D. Anderson MC
Staff Captain: Captain G.A.H. Bower MC

15 Infantry Brigade
1/Norfolk: Lieutenant-Colonel J.W.V. Carroll CMG
1/Bedfordshire: Lieutenant-Colonel P.R. Worrall MC
1/Cheshire: Lieutenant-Colonel W.H.G. Baker
16/Royal Warwickshire: Lieutenant-Colonel R.M. Dudgeon MC

Brigade Major: Captain F. Anderson MC
Staff Captain: Captain H. Willans

95 Infantry Brigade
1/Devonshire: Lieutenant-Colonel D.H. Blunt DSO
1/East Surrey: Lieutenant-Colonel E.M. Woulfe-Flanagan CMG DSO
1/Duke of Cornwall L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel H. Fergus CMG DSO
12/Gloucestershire: Lieutenant-Colonel R.I. Rawson

Brigade Major: Captain J.M. Monk MC
Staff Captain: Captain R.A. Brown

Pioneers
6/Argyll & Sutherland: Lieutenant-Colonel S. Coats

1st CANADIAN DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL A.W. CURRIE CB
GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Kearsley DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General H.C. Thacker CMG
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel J.S. Brown DSO psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Macphail DSO

1 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General W.A. Griesbach DSO
1/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel G.C. Hodson DSO
2/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel R.P. Clark MC
3/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.B. Rogers CMG DSO MC
4/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Rae DSO

Brigade Major: Major H.M. Urquhart DSO
Staff Captain: Captain G.S. Currie MC
Staff Captain: Captain W.F. Guild

2 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General F.O.W. Loomis DSO

5/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.M. Dyer DSO
7/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel W.F. Gilson DSO
8/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Prower DSO
10/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel D.M. Ormond DSO

Brigade Major: Captain W.H.S. Alston
Staff Captain: Captain S.S. Burnham
Staff Captain: Captain W.D. Herridge

3 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General G.S. Tuxford CMG

13/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel G.E. McCuaig DSO
14/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel G. McCombe DSO
15/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel C.E. Bent DSO
16/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel C.W. Peck DSO

Brigade Major: Major P.F. Villiers DSO
Staff Captain: Captain F.M. Bressey
Staff Captain: Major J.H. Sills

Pioneers

107/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel G. Campbell

2nd CANADIAN DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL H.E. BURSTALL CB psc

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel N.W. Weber DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General H.A. Panet CMG DSO
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel E.L. Hughes DSO
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel H.S. Osler

4 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General R. Rennie CMG MVO DSO

18/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel G.F. Morrison DSO
19/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Millen
20/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.V. Rorke DSO
21/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel T.F. Elmitt

Brigade Major: Captain D.R. MacIntyre DSO MC
Staff Captain: Captain D.E.A. Rispin
Staff Captain: Major C.B. Lindsey

5 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General A.H. Macdonell CMG DSO psc

22/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel T.L. Tremblay DSO
24/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel C.F. Ritchie
25/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.A. De Lancy MC
26/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel A.E.G. McKenzie DSO

Brigade Major: Major W.H. Clark-Kennedy DSO
Staff Captain: Captain A.L. Walker MC
Staff Captain: Major F.M. Steel

6 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General H.D.B. Ketchen CMG

27/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel G.J. Daly CMG DSO
28/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Ross DSO
29/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Ross DSO
31/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Bell DSO

Brigade Major: Major A.H. Jukes DSO
Staff Captain: Captain D.H. Barnett MC
Staff Captain: Captain Hon. F.E. Grosvenor MC

Pioneers

2nd Canadian Pioneers: Lieutenant-Colonel G.E. Sanders DSO

3rd CANADIAN DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL L.J. LIPSETT CMG psc

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel R.J.F. Hayter DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General J.H. Mitchell
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel W.W.P. Gibsone DSO
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel T.V. Anderson

7 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General A.C. Macdonell CMG DSO

Royal Canadian Regt.: Lieutenant-Colonel C.R.E. Willets DSO
Princess Patricia's C.L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel A.A. Adamson DSO
42/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel B. McLennan DSO
49/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Palmer DSO

Brigade Major: Major W.R. Wedd MC
Staff Captain: Captain H.M. Wallis
Staff Captain: Captain P.E. Colman MC

8 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General J.H. Elmsley DSO psc

1/Cdn. Mounted Rifles Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel R.C. Andros
2/Cdn. Mounted Rifles Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel G.C. Johnston MC
4/Cdn. Mounted Rifles Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.D.L. Gordon DSO
5/Cdn. Mounted Rifles Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel D.C. Draper DSO

Brigade Major: Major T.S. Morrissey DSO
Staff Captain: Captain C.W.U. Chivers
Staff Captain: Captain L. Younger MC

9 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General F.W. Hill DSO

43/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Grassie DSO
52/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel W.B. Evans DSO
58/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.A. Genet DSO
60/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel F.A. de L. Gasgoigne
116/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel S.S. Sharpe

Brigade Major: Captain R.W. Stayner MC
Staff Captain: Captain B.W. Browne

Staff Captain: Captain J.C. Kemp

Pioneers

3/Canadian Pioneers: Lieutenant-Colonel W.J.H. Holmes DSO

123/Canadian Pioneers: Lieutenant-Colonel W.B. Kingsmill

4th CANADIAN DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL D. WATSON CB

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel W.E. Ironside DSO psc

BGRA: Brigadier-General E.S. Hoare-Nairne CMG psc

AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel E. de B. Panet DSO psc

CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel T.C. Irving DSO

10 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General E. Hilliam DSO

44/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel R.D. Davies DSO

46/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.J. Dawson CMG DSO

47/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel W.N. Winsby

50/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel L.F. Page DSO

Brigade Major: Captain H.V. Read

Staff Captain: Captain E.H. Hill

Staff Captain: Captain J.S. Gzowski

11 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General V.W. Odlum DSO

54/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel V.V. Harvey DSO

75/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel C.B. Worsnop DSO

87/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Major H. Le R. Shaw

102/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.W. Warden DSO

Brigade Major: Major M.C. Ferrers Guy DSO

Staff Captain: Captain E.O.C. Martin

Staff Captain: Captain F.R. Phelan MC

12 Canadian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General J.H. MacBrien DSO psc

38/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Edwards DSO

72/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.A. Clark DSO

73/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.C. Sparling DSO

78/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J. Kirkcaldy DSO

85/Canadian Infantry Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Borden

Brigade Major: Major R.E. Partridge MC

Staff Captain: Captain G. Paterson MC

Staff Captain: Captain J.M. Pauline

Pioneers

124/Canadian Pioneers: Lieutenant-Colonel W.C.V. Chadwick

First Battle of the Scarpe, 9 - 14 April 1917

XIII CORPS

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR WALTER N. CONGREVE
VC KCB MVO

BGGS:

Brigadier-General I. Stewart DSO psc

BGRA:

Brigadier-General G.H. Sanders

CHA:

Brigadier-General A.F.S. Scott DSO

DA&QMG:

Brigadier-General S.W. Robinson DSO

CE:

Brigadier-General E.P. Brooker CMG

2nd DIVISION

MAJOR-GENERAL C.E. PEREIRA CB

GSO1:

Lieutenant-Colonel C.P. Deedes CMG DSO psc

BGRA:

Brigadier-General G.H. Sanders DSO

AA&QMG:

Lieutenant-Colonel J.P. Villiers-Stuart DSO psc

CRE:

Lieutenant-Colonel P.K. Betty

5 Infantry Brigade

Brigadier-General G.M. Bullen-Smith DSO

2/Oxford & Bucks L. I.:

Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Crosse DSO

2/Highland L.I.:

Lieutenant-Colonel J.C. Grahame DSO

17/Royal Fusiliers:

Lieutenant-Colonel C.G. Higgins DSO

24/Royal Fusiliers:

Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Pipon

Brigade Major:

Major R.A. Bulloch DSO

Staff Captain:

Captain D.N. Farquharson

6 Brigade

Brigadier-General R.K. Walsh DSO

1/King's:

Lieutenant-Colonel S.E. Norris DSO

2/South Staffordshire:

Lieutenant-Colonel G. Dawes MC

13/Essex:

Lieutenant-Colonel C.T. Martin

17/Middlesex:

Lieutenant-Colonel H.T. Fenwick CMG MVO DSO

Brigade Major:

Captain E.L. Wright

Staff Captain:

Captain E.G. Whately MC

99 Brigade

Brigadier-General R.O. Kellett CMG R of O

1/Royal Berkshire:

Lieutenant-Colonel A.E.F. Harris DSO

1/K.R.R.C.:

Lieutenant-Colonel E.B. Denison DSO MC

22/Royal Fusiliers:

Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Barker DSO R of O

23/Royal Fusiliers:

Lieutenant-Colonel H.A. Vernon DSO

Brigade Major:

Major G.M. Lindsay

Staff Captain:

Captain R.G. Fell

Pioneers

10/Duke of Cornwall L.I.:

Lieutenant-Colonel E.A.B. Alston

THIRD ARMY**GENERAL SIR EDMUND ALLENBY KCB psc****MGGs:****Major-General L.J. Bols CB DSO psc****MGRA:****Major-General R.St.C. Lecky CB CMG****DA&QMG:****Major-General A.F. Sillem CB psc****CE:****Major-General E.R. Kenyon CB (Wounded 2/5/17)****CAVALRY CORPS****LIEUTENANT-GENERAL C.T.McM. KAVANAGH CVO CB
DSO****BGGs:****Brigadier-General A.F. Home DSO psc****BGRA:****Brigadier-General H.S. Seligman DSO****DA&QMG:****Brigadier-General J.C.G. Longmore DSO****CE:****Lieutenant-Colonel W.H. Evans****1st CAVALRY DIVISION****MAJOR-GENERAL R.L MULLENS CB psc****GSO1:****Lieutenant-Colonel B.D. Fisher DSO psc****CRHA:****Lieutenant-Colonel W.E. Clark****AA&QMG:****Lieutenant-Colonel S.F. Muspratt DSO psc****1 Cavalry Brigade****Brigadier-General E. Makins DSO psc****2/Dragoon Guards:****Lieutenant-Colonel A. Lawson CMG****5/Dragoon Guards:****Lieutenant-Colonel W.Q. Winwood CMG DSO****11/Hussars:****Lieutenant-Colonel R.J.P. Anderson DSO****Brigade Major:****Captain F.W. Bullock-Marsham MC****Staff Captain:****Captain D.V. Creagh****2 Cavalry Brigade****Brigadier-General D.J.E. Beale-Browne DSO****4/Dragoon Guards:****Lieutenant-Colonel H.S. Sewell DSO****9/Royal Lancers:****Lieutenant-Colonel H.M. Durand DSO psc****18/Hussars:****Lieutenant-Colonel A. Symons CMG psc****Brigade Major:****Captain H.W. Viscount Ebrington MC****Staff Captain:****Captain Sir A.T. Peyton Bt.****9 Cavalry Brigade****Brigadier-General D'A Legard psc****15/Hussars:****Lieutenant-Colonel F.C. Pilkington DSO****19/Hussars:****Lieutenant-Colonel G.D. Franks DSO****1/Bedfordshire Yeo.:****Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. S.C. Peel****Brigade Major:****Captain P.M.A. Kerans****Staff Captain:****Captain L.B. Smith**

2nd CAVALRY DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL W.H. GREENLY CMG DSO psc

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel N.R. Davidson DSO psc

CRHA: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Mellor

AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel A.J. McCulloch psc

3 Cavalry Brigade

Brigadier-General J.A. Bell-Smyth CMG psc

4/Hussars: Lieutenant-Colonel J.E.C. Darley

5/Royal Irish Lancers: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Parker CMG

16/Lancers: Lieutenant-Colonel C.J. Eccles DSO

Brigade Major: Captain H.W. Lord Holmpatrick MC

Staff Captain: Captain H.B. Nutting

4 Cavalry Brigade

Brigadier-General T.T. Pitman CB

6/Dragoon Guards: Lieutenant-Colonel S.R. Kirby CMG psc

3/Hussars: Lieutenant-Colonel H. Combe DSO

1/Q.O. Oxford Hussars: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Dugdale CMG

Brigade Major: Captain F.A. Nicholson MC

Staff Captain: Captain H.W. Hamilton

5 Cavalry Brigade

Brigadier-General C.L.K. Campbell

2/Dragoons (R.Scots Greys): Lieutenant-Colonel W.F. Collins

12/Royal Lancers: Lieutenant-Colonel B. Macnaghton

20/Hussars: Lieutenant-Colonel G.T.R. Cook DSO

Brigade Major: Captain G.F. Reynolds MC

Staff Captain: Captain W.H.B. Callander

3rd CAVALRY DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL J. VAUGHAN CB DSO psc

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel A.E.S.L. Paget MVO psc

CRHA: Lieutenant-Colonel A.R. Wainwright

AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel W.A. Fetherstonhaugh DSO psc

6 Cavalry Brigade

Brigadier-General A.E.W. Harman DSO

3/Dragoon Guards: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Burt

1/Royal Dragoons: Lieutenant-Colonel F.W. Wormald DSO

1/North Somerset Yeomanry: Lieutenant-Colonel G.C. Glyn CMG DSO TD

Brigade Major: Captain S.G. Howes MC

Staff Captain: Captain J. Blakiston-Houston MC

7 Cavalry Brigade

Brigadier-General B.P. Portal DSO R of O

1/Life Guards: Lieutenant-Colonel E.H. Brassey MVO

2/Life Guards: Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. A.F. Stanley DSO

1/Leicestershire Yeomanry: Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Muir

Brigade Major: Captain F.J. Scott

Staff Captain: Captain D.C. Boles

8 Cavalry Brigade

Royal Horse Guards:
10/Hussars:
1/Essex Yeomanry:

Brigade Major:
Staff Captain:

Brigadier-General C.B. Bulkeley-Johnson ADC (KIA 11/4/17)

Brigadier-General A.G. Seymour DSO

Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Tweedmouth CMG MVO DSO
Lieutenant-Colonel P.E. Hardwick DSO (Wounded 11/4/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel F.H.D.C. Whitmore DSO

Captain S.J. Hardy
Major F.B.J. Stapleton-Bretherton R of O

VI CORPS

BGGS:
BGRA:
CHA:
DA&QMG:
CE:

3rd DIVISION

GSO1:
BGRA:
AA&QMG:
CRE:

76 Infantry Brigade

2/Suffolk:
1/Gordon Highlanders:
8/King's Own:
10/R. Welsh Fusiliers:

Brigade Major:
Staff Captain:

8 Infantry Brigade

2/Royal Scots:
1/Royal Scots Fusiliers:
8/East Yorkshire:
7/King's Shropshire L.I.:

Brigade Major:
Staff Captain:

9 Infantry Brigade

1/Northumberland Fusiliers:
4/Royal Fusiliers:
13/King's:
12/West Yorkshire:

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL J.A.L. HALDANE CB DSO psc

Brigadier-General E.D. Lord Loch CMG MVO DSO psc

Brigadier-General J.G. Rotton CMG

Brigadier-General H. de T. Phillips CMG

Brigadier-General J.B.G. Tulloch CMG psc

Brigadier-General C. Hill CB

MAJOR-GENERAL C.J. DEVERELL psc

Lieutenant-Colonel W.H. Traill DSO psc
Brigadier-General J.S. Ollivant CMG DSO
Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. R.H. Collins DSO psc
Lieutenant-Colonel C.A. Elliott DSO

Brigadier-General C.L. Porter

Lieutenant-Colonel G.C. Stubbs
Lieutenant-Colonel J.L.G. Burnett DSO
Lieutenant-Colonel R.S. Hunt DSO
Lieutenant-Colonel G.L. Compton-Smith

Captain I.S.O. Playfair MC
Captain M. Dinwiddie MC

Brigadier-General H.G. Holmes CMG R of O (Wounded 30/4/17)

Lieutenant-Colonel A.F. Lumsden
Lieutenant-Colonel L.L. Wheatley DSO
Lieutenant-Colonel J.N. de la Perrelle MC
Lieutenant-Colonel K.H.L. Arnott

Captain A.H. Hopwood
Captain E.D.C. Hunt MC

Brigadier-General H.C. Potter DSO

Lieutenant-Colonel W.N. Herbert DSO
Lieutenant-Colonel E.B. North DSO
Lieutenant-Colonel C.H. Seton
Lieutenant-Colonel R.C. Smythe

Brigade Major: Captain G.I. Gartlan MC
Staff Captain: Captain O.G. Blayney

Pioneers

20/K.R.R.C. Lieutenant-Colonel R. Inglis

12th (EASTERN) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL A.B. SCOTT CB DSO

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel C.J.B. Hay DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General E.H. Willis CMG
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel E.H.E. Collen DSO R of O psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Bovet

35 Infantry Brigade

7/Norfolk: Lieutenant-Colonel F.E. Walter
7/Suffolk: Lieutenant-Colonel F.S. Cooper
9/Essex: Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Trevor (KIA 11/4/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel J.L. Hackett
5/Royal Berkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel F.G. Willan DSO

Brigade Major: Major J.L. Dent DSO MC (KIA 11/4/17)

Staff Captain: Captain M.L. Woolcombe
Captain A.E. Scott-Murray

36 Infantry Brigade

8/Royal Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel N.B. Elliot-Cooper MC
9/Royal Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel G.C.R. Overton
7/Royal Sussex: Lieutenant-Colonel A.J. Sansom
11/Middlesex: Lieutenant-Colonel T.S. Wollocombe MC

Brigade Major: Captain I.D. Guthrie
Staff Captain: Captain N.H.H. Charles

37 Infantry Brigade

6/Queen's: Lieutenant-Colonel N.T. Rolls
6/Bufs: Lieutenant-Colonel T.G. Cope DSO
7/East Surrey: Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Baldwin DSO
6/Royal West Kent: Lieutenant-Colonel W.R.A. Dawson DSO

Brigade Major: Captain J.F. Dew
Staff Captain: Captain P.B.B. Nicholls MC

Pioneers

5/Northumberland Fus.: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Irwin

15th (SCOTTISH) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL F.W.N. McCracken CB DSO psc

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel H.H.S. Knox DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General E.B. Macnaughten DSO
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel C.R. Berkeley DSO
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel R.S. Walker DSO

44 Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General F.J. Marshall DSO psc

9/Black Watch: Lieutenant-Colonel S.A. Innes
8/Seaforth Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel N.A. Thomson DSO
8/10 Gordon Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel J.G. Thom
7/Cameron Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel D.E.M.M. Crichton

Brigade Major: Major The Hon. E.O. Campbell
Staff Captain: Captain A. Rollo

45 Brigade Brigadier-General W.H.L. Allgood R of O

13/Royal Scots: Lieutenant-Colonel G.M. Hannay
6/7 Royal Scots Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel E.I.D. Gordon
6/Cameron Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel J.C. Russel
11/Argyll & Sutherland H.: Lieutenant-Colonel M. McNeill

Brigade Major: Captain C.F.M.N. Ryan MC
Staff Captain: Captain W.G. Wright

46 Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General E.A. Fagan DSO

7/8 K.O.S.B.: Lieutenant-Colonel T.B. Sellar
10/Scottish Rifles: Lieutenant-Colonel A.C.L. Stanley-Clarke
10/11 Highland L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel R.C. Forbes
12/ Highland L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel A.A.I. Heyman DSO

Brigade Major: Captain R.V.G. Horn MC
Staff Captain: Captain M.S. Fox MC

Pioneers

9/Gordon Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel T.G. Taylor DSO

17th (NORTHERN) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL P.R. ROBERTSON CB CMG

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel R.J. Collins DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General P. Wheatley
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel W.N. Nicholson DSO psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Carpenter DSO

50 Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General C. Yatman DSO

10/West Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel P.R.O.A. Simner DSO
7/East Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel G.E. King
7/Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel G. de B. de M. Mairis
6/Dorsetshire: Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Moulton-Barrett

Brigade Major: Captain H.J. Simson MC

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Staff Captain: | Captain J.H. Getty |
| 51 Brigade | Brigadier-General G.F. Trotter CMG MVO DSO R of O |
| 7/Lincolnshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel F.E. Metcalfe DSO |
| 7/Border: | Lieutenant-Colonel W.N.S. Alexander DSO |
| 8/South Staffordshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel W.A.J. Barker DSO |
| 10/Sherwood Foresters: | Lieutenant-Colonel L. Gilbert |
| Brigade Major: | Captain T.B.J. Mabar MC |
| Staff Captain: | Captain T.P.C. Wilson |
| 52 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General J.L.J. Clarke CMG |
| 9/Northumberland Fusiliers: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.W. Blockley |
| 10/Lancashire Fusiliers: | Lieutenant-Colonel T.S.H. Wade DSO |
| 9/Duke of Wellington's: | Lieutenant-Colonel G.E. Wannell |
| 12/Manchester: | Lieutenant-Colonel P.M. Magnay (KIA 13/4/17) |
| | Lieutenant-Colonel E.G.S. Truell |
| Brigade Major: | Captain M.C. Morgan MC |
| Staff Captain: | Captain S.H. Smith |
| Pioneers | |
| 7/Yorks. & Lancs.: | Lieutenant-Colonel H.A. Lavie |
| 29th DIVISION | MAJOR-GENERAL H. DE B. DE LISLE KCB DSO psc |
| GSO1: | Lieutenant-Colonel C.G. Fuller DSO psc |
| BGRA: | Brigadier-General E.B. Ashmore CMG MVO psc |
| AA&QMG: | Lieutenant-Colonel L.H. Abbott CMG psc |
| CRE: | Lieutenant-Colonel H. Bidduph DSO |
| 86 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General W. de L. Williams DSO psc |
| 2/Royal Fusiliers: | Lieutenant-Colonel G.A. Stevens DSO |
| 1/Lancashire Fusiliers: | Lieutenant-Colonel M. Magniac |
| 16/Middlesex | Lieutenant-Colonel B.A. Thompson |
| 1/Royal Dublin Fusiliers: | Lieutenant-Colonel H. Nelson |
| Brigade Major: | Captain W.M. Armstrong MC |
| Staff Captain: | Captain J. Cowan |
| 87 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General C.H.T. Lucas |
| 2/South Wales Borderers: | Lieutenant-Colonel G.T. Raikes DSO |
| 1/K.O.S.B.: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.J. Welch |
| 1/Royal Inniskilling Fus.: | Lieutenant-Colonel J. Sherwood-Kelly DSO |
| 1/Border: | Lieutenant-Colonel F.G.G. Morris DSO |
| Brigade Major: | Captain B.V. Mair MC |
| Staff Captain: | Captain T. Fairfax Ross |

88 Infantry Brigade
4/Worcestershire: **Brigadier-General D.E. Cayley CMG (Gassed 24/4/17)**
Lieutenant-Colonel E.T.J. Kerans
2/Hampshire: Lieutenant-Colonel A.T. Beckwith DSO
1/Essex: Lieutenant-Colonel A.C. Halahan
Royal Newfoundland Bn.: Lieutenant-Colonel J. Forbes-Robertson MC

Brigade Major: Captain P.N.W. Wilson MC
Staff Captain: Captain T.H. Tooze

Pioneers

2/Monmouthshire: Lieutenant-Colonel J. Evans

37th DIVISION

GSO1: **MAJOR-GENERAL H. BRUCE-WILLIAMS CB DSO psc**
Lieutenant-Colonel J.G. Dill DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General F. Potts CMG
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel A.D.M. Browne DSO
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel H. de L. Pollard-Lowsley CIE DSO

63 Infantry Brigade

8/Lincolnshire: **Brigadier-General E.L. Challenor DSO**
Lieutenant-Colonel F.W. Greatwood DSO (Wounded 10/4/17)
8/Somerset L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.W. Scott DSO (KIA 23/4/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel H.K. Umfreville
4/Middlesex: Lieutenant-Colonel A.G. Dawson (KIA 23/4/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel G.A. Bridgman
10/Yorks. & Lancs.: Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Ridgway DSO (KIA 24/4/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel E.E.F. Simkins

Brigade Major: Captain W.L. Brodie VC MC
Staff Captain: Captain F.McG. Gillmore

111 Infantry Brigade

10/Royal Fusiliers: **Brigadier-General C.W. Compton CMG**
Lieutenant-Colonel R.A. Smith MC
13/Royal Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel G.H. Ardagh DSO
13/K.R.R.C.: Lieutenant-Colonel R.C. Chester-Master
13/Rifle Brigade: Lieutenant-Colonel C.F. Pretor-Pinney DSO (DoW 28/4/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel W.R. Stewart

Brigade Major: Captain A.C.M. Paris
Staff Captain: Captain D.L. Melville

112 Infantry Brigade

11/Royal Warwickshire: **Brigadier-General R.C. Maclachlan DSO**
Lieutenant-Colonel F.S.N. Savage-Armstrong DSO
6/Bedfordshire: Lieutenant-Colonel F.H. Edwards MC
8/East Lancashire: Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. I.M. Campbell
10/Loyal North Lancs.: Lieutenant-Colonel R.P. Cobbold DSO

Brigade Major: Captain M. Lewis
Staff Captain: Captain R.N. Montagu-Stuart-Wortley

Pioneers

9/North Staffordshire: Lieutenant-Colonel M.F. Mason

VII CORPS

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR THOMAS D'O. SNOW
KCB KCMG psc

BGGS: Brigadier-General J.T. Burnett-Stuart CB CMG DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General C.M. Ross-Johnson CMG DSO
CHA: Brigadier-General K.K. Knapp CMG
DA&QMG: Brigadier-General A.A. McHardy CMG DSO psc
CE: Brigadier-General J.A. Tanner CB CMG DSO

14th (LIGHT) DIVISION

MAJOR-GENERAL V.A. COUPER CB

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel G.B. Bruce DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General E. Harding-Newman DSO
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel P.E. Lewis psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel J.E.C. Craster

41 Infantry Brigade

Brigadier-General P.C.B. Skinner DSO psc

7/K.R.R.C.: Lieutenant-Colonel C.K. Howard-Bury
8/K.R.R.C.: Lieutenant-Colonel C.H.N. Seymour DSO
7/Rifle Brigade: Lieutenant-Colonel V.A. Magawly Cerati di Calry DSO (KIA 10/5/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel A.J.H. Sloggett
8/Rifle Brigade: Lieutenant-Colonel D.E. Prideaux-Brune

Brigade Major:

Captain G.M. Lee MC R of O

Staff Captain:

Captain L.B. Paget

42 Infantry Brigade

Brigadier-General F.A. Dudgeon CB psc

5/Oxford & Bucks. L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.L. Wood
5/King's Shropshire L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.M. Smith DSO
9/K.R.R.C.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.C.M. Porter
9/Rifle Brigade: Lieutenant-Colonel F.A.U. Pickering

Brigade Major:

Captain B.C.T. Paget MC

Staff Captain:

Captain K.S.M. Gladstone

43 Infantry Brigade

Brigadier-General P.R. Wood CMG

6/Somerset L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel F.D. Bellew MC
6/Duke of Cornwall's L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. E.J. Hewitt DSO
6/K.O.Y.L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel G. Meynell
10/Durham L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.H.S. Morant DSO

Brigade Major:

Major C.A.S. Page MC

Staff Captain:

Captain J.C. Cooke

Pioneers

11/King's: Lieutenant-Colonel E.C. Ogle

21st DIVISION

GSO1:

BGRA:

AA&QMG:

CRE:

MAJOR-GENERAL D.G.M. CAMPBELL CB

Lieutenant-Colonel A.T. Paley DSO psc

Brigadier-General R.A.C. Wellesley CMG

Lieutenant-Colonel G.J. Acland-Troyte DSO

Lieutenant-Colonel G.H. Addison DSO

62 Infantry Brigade

12/Northumberland Fus.:

13/Northumberland Fus.:

1/Lincolnshire:

10/Yorkshire:

Brigadier-General C.G. Rawling CMG CIE

Lieutenant-Colonel P.H. Stevenson DSO

Lieutenant-Colonel T.A. Walsh

Lieutenant-Colonel L.P. Evans

Lieutenant-Colonel T.G. Matthias

Brigade Major:

Staff Captain:

Captain A.G.M. Sharpe

Captain C.O.P. Gibson MC

64 Infantry Brigade

1/East Yorkshire:

9/K.O.Y.L.I.:

10/K.O.Y.L.I.:

15/Durham L.I.:

Brigadier-General H.R. Headlam DSO psc

Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Waithman

Lieutenant-Colonel N.R. Daniell

Lieutenant-Colonel F.J.M. Postlethwaite

Lieutenant-Colonel J.F. Beyts

Brigade Major:

Staff Captain:

Captain A.I. Macdougall MC

Captain H.E. Yeo

110 Infantry Brigade

6/Leicestershire:

7/Leicestershire:

8/Leicestershire:

9/Leicestershire:

Brigadier-General W.F. Hessey

Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Unwin

Lieutenant-Colonel C.E. Heathcote DSO

Lieutenant-Colonel H.L. Beardsley MC

Lieutenant-Colonel W.A. Eaton

Brigade Major:

Staff Captain:

Captain G.E.M. Whittuck

Captain C.W. Baker MC

Pioneers

14/Northumberland Fus.:

Lieutenant-Colonel W.N. Stewart

30th DIVISION

GSO1:

BGRA:

AA&QMG:

CRE:

MAJOR-GENERAL J.S.M. SHEA CB DSO psc

Lieutenant-Colonel W.H.F. Weber DSO psc

Brigadier-General G.H.A. White DSO

Lieutenant-Colonel A.E. Stanley Clarke MVO R of O

Lieutenant-Colonel G.W. Denison DSO

89 Infantry Brigade

17/King's:

19/King's:

20/King's:

2/Bedfordshire:

Brigadier-General Hon. F.C. Stanley DSO R of O

Lieutenant-Colonel J.N. Peck

Lieutenant-Colonel G. Rollo

Lieutenant-Colonel J.W.H.T. Douglas

Captain R.O. Wynne DSO (Acting)

Brigade Major: Captain Hon. E.C. Lascelles MC
Staff Captain: Captain G.F. Torrey MC

90 Infantry Brigade **Brigadier-General J.H. Lloyd**
2/Royal Scots Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel M.E. McConaghey DSO
16/Manchester: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Elstob
17/Manchester: Lieutenant-Colonel J.J. Whitehead
18/Manchester: Lieutenant-Colonel C.E. Lembcke

Brigade Major: Captain H.W. Bamford
Staff Captain: Captain W. Tod MC

21 Infantry Brigade **Brigadier-General G.D. Goodman CMG**
18/King's: Lieutenant-Colonel W.R. Pinwill
2/Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel C.V. Edwards
2/Wiltshire: Lieutenant-Colonel R.M.T. Gillson DSO
19/Manchester: Lieutenant-Colonel C.L. Macdonald

Brigade Major: Captain F.G. Hodson DSO
Staff Captain: Captain K.S. Torrance

Pioneers
11/South Lancashire: Lieutenant-Colonel H.F. Fenn

**50th (NORTHUMBRIAN) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL P.S. WILKINSON CB
CMG) (Wounded 13/4/17)**

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel H. Karlake CMG DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General A.U. Stockley CMG
AA&QMG: Colonel C.M. Cartwright CB
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel H.E.F. Rathbone

149 Infantry Brigade (Northumbrian) Brigadier-General H.C. Rees DSO

1/4 Northumberland Fus: Lieutenant-Colonel B.D. Gibson DSO
1/5 Northumberland Fus: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Irwin
1/6 Northumberland Fus: Lieutenant-Colonel F. Robinson
1/7 Northumberland Fus: Lieutenant-Colonel G.S. Jackson DSO

Brigade Major: Captain W. Anderson MC
Staff Captain: Captain G.S. Haggie

150 Infantry Brigade (York and Durham) Brigadier-General B.G. Price DSO

1/4 East Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel W.T. Wilkinson DSO
1/4 Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel F.F. Deakin DSO
1/5 Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel C.H. Pearce
1/5 Durham L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel G.O. Spence DSO

Brigade Major: Captain N.R. Crockatt MC
Staff Captain: Captain J.G. Redfern

**151 Infantry Brigade (Durham Light Infantry) Brigadier-General N.J.G. Cameron
CMG psc**

1/5 Border: Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Hedley
1/6 Durham L.I.: Major A. Ebsworth MC
1/8 Durham L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull CMG
1/9 Durham L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Bradford VC MC

Brigade Major: Captain L.D. Daly DSO
Staff Captain: Captain E.H. Veitch

Pioneers

1/7 Durham L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel E. Vaux CMG DSO

56th (1ST LONDON) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL C.P.A. HULL CB psc

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel G. de la P.B. Pakenham DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General R.J.G. Elkington CMG
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel H.W. Grubb psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel H.W. Gordon DSO

167 Infantry Brigade (1st London) Brigadier-General G.H.B. Freeth CMG DSO psc

1/7 Middlesex: Lieutenant-Colonel E.J. King CMG
1/8 Middlesex: Lieutenant-Colonel P.L. Ingpen DSO
1/1 London: Lieutenant-Colonel D.V. Smith DSO (KIA 13/4/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel W.R. Glover
1/3 London: Lieutenant-Colonel F.D. Samuel DSO

Brigade Major: Captain M.G.N. Stopford
Staff Captain: Captain T.F. Chipp MC

168 Infantry Brigade (2nd London) Brigadier-General G.G. Loch CMG

1/4 London: Lieutenant-Colonel A.E. Maitland MC
1/12 London: Lieutenant-Colonel A.D. Bayliffe
1/13 London: Lieutenant-Colonel J.C.R King
1/14 London: Lieutenant-Colonel E.D. Jackson

Brigade Major: Captain J.L. Willcocks MC
Staff Captain: Captain R.E. Otter MC

169 Infantry Brigade (3rd London) Brigadier-General E.S. de E. Coke CMG

1/2 London: Lieutenant-Colonel J. Attenborough CMG
1/5 London: Lieutenant-Colonel F.H. Wallis MC
1/9 London: Lieutenant-Colonel F.B. Follett MC
1/16 London: Lieutenant-Colonel R. Shoolbred CMG

Brigade Major: Captain L.A. Newnham MC
Staff Captain: Captain E.R. Broadbent MC

Pioneers

1/5 Cheshire:

Lieutenant-Colonel J.E.G. Groves CMG TD

XVII CORPS**LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR CHARLES FERGUSSON Bt.
KCB MVO DSO****BGGS:****Brigadier-General J.R.E. Charles DSO psc****BGRA:****Brigadier-General C.R. Buckle CMG DSO****CHA:****Brigadier-General N.G. Barron****DA&QMG:****Brigadier-General A.W. Peck****CE:****Brigadier-General H.C. Nanton CB****4th DIVISION****MAJOR-GENERAL HON. W. LAMBTON CVO CB CMG****DSO psc**

GSO1:

Lieutenant-Colonel W.M.St.G. Kirke DSO psc

BGRA:

Brigadier-General F.T. Ravenhill CMG

AA&QMG:

Lieutenant-Colonel G.H. Martin DSO psc

CRE:

Lieutenant-Colonel C.R. Johnson DSO

10 Infantry Brigade**Brigadier-General C. Gosling CMG (KIA 12/4/17)****Brigadier-General A.G. Pritchard**

Household Bn.:

Lieutenant-Colonel W.R. Portal

1/Royal Warwickshire:

Lieutenant-Colonel G.N.B. Forster CMG DSO

2/Seaforth Highlanders:

Lieutenant-Colonel R. Laing MC

1/Royal Irish Fusiliers

Lieutenant-Colonel A.B. Incedon-Webber CMG DSO

Brigade Major:

Captain H.G.A. Fellowes MC

Staff Captain:

Captain G. Elwell

11 Infantry Brigade**Brigadier-General R.A. Berners**

1/Somerset L.I.:

Lieutenant-Colonel V.H.B. Majendie

1/East Lancashire:

Lieutenant-Colonel C.J. Burke DSO (KIA 9/4/17)

Lieutenant-Colonel W.P. Cutlack

1/Hampshire:

Lieutenant-Colonel F.A.W. Armitage

1/Rifle Brigade

Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. R.T. Fellowes MC

Brigade Major:

Captain F.N. Harston

Staff Captain:

Captain A.W. Edwards

12 Infantry Brigade**Brigadier-General A. Carton de Wiart VC DSO**

1/King's Own:

Lieutenant-Colonel O.C. Borrett DSO

2/Lancashire Fusiliers:

Lieutenant-Colonel C.J. Griffin DSO

2/Duke of Wellington's:

Lieutenant-Colonel A.G. Horsfall

2/Essex:

Lieutenant-Colonel S.G. Mullock (KIA 12/4/17)

Lieutenant-Colonel N.M.S. Irwin

Brigade Major:

Captain J.F.L. Fison MC

Staff Captain:

Captain A.J. Trousdell

Pioneers

21/West Yorkshire Lieutenant-Colonel Sir E.H. St L. Clarke Bt. CMG DSO

9th (SCOTTISH) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL H.T. LUKIN CB CMG DSO

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel P.A.V. Stewart DSO psc
 BGRA: Brigadier-General H.H. Tudor CMG
 AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel A.C. Jeffcoat CMG DSO psc
 CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel G.R. Hearn DSO

26 Infantry Brigade

8/Black Watch: Lieutenant-Colonel Sir G.W. Abercromby Bt.
 7/Seaforth Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel R.V.G. Horn MC
 5/Cameron Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel H.R. Brown DSO
 10/Argyll & Sutherland H.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.G. Sotheby MVO R of O

Brigadier-General J. Kennedy DSO

Brigade Major: Captain J.F. Evetts
 Staff Captain: Captain W.S. Stevenson

27 Infantry Brigade

11/Royal Scots: Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Croft DSO
 12/Royal Scots: Lieutenant-Colonel H.U.H. Thorne (KIA 9/4/17)
 Lieutenant-Colonel J.A.S. Ritson MC
 6/K.O.S.B.: Lieutenant-Colonel G.B.F. Smyth DSO (Wounded 9/4/17)
 Lieutenant-Colonel A.R. Innes-Browne
 9/Scottish Rifles: Lieutenant-Colonel H.A. Fulton

Brigadier-General F.A. Maxwell VC CSI DSO psc

Brigade Major: Captain R.K. Ross MC
 Staff Captain: Captain R.N. Duke MC

South African Brigade

1/South African Infantry: Lieutenant-Colonel F.H. Heal
 2/South African Infantry: Lieutenant-Colonel W.E.C. Tanner
 3/South African Infantry: Lieutenant-Colonel E.F. Thackeray DSO
 4/South African Infantry: Lieutenant-Colonel E. Christian MC

Brigadier-General F.S. Dawson CMG

Brigade Major: Captain A.L. Pepper
 Staff Captain: Captain F.E. Cochran

Pioneers

9/Seaforth Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Petty

34th DIVISION

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel H.E.R.R. Braine DSO psc
 BGRA: Brigadier-General W.J.K. Rettie
 AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel O.K. Chance DSO psc
 CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel A.C. Dobson

MAJOR-GENERAL C.L. NICHOLSON CMG psc

101 Infantry Brigade

15/Royal Scots:
 16/Royal Scots:
 10/Lincolnshire:
 11/Suffolk:

Brigadier-General R.C. Gore CMG

Lieutenant-Colonel W.J. Lodge
 Lieutenant-Colonel A. Stephenson MC
 Lieutenant-Colonel G.W.B. Clark
 Lieutenant-Colonel E.H. Kendrick

Brigade Major:
 Staff Captain:

Captain A.B. Thomson
 Captain N.B. White MC

102 Infantry Brigade

20/Northumberland Fus.:
 21/Northumberland Fus.:
 22/Northumberland Fus.:
 23/Northumberland Fus.:

Brigadier-General T.P.B. Ternan CMG DSO R of O

Lieutenant-Colonel W.A. Farquhar
 Lieutenant-Colonel P.B. Norris
 Lieutenant-Colonel S. Acklom MC
 Lieutenant-Colonel C.P. Porph DSO R of O

Brigade Major:
 Staff Captain:

Major F.G. Trobridge
 Captain W. Marrs MC

103 Infantry Brigade

24/Northumberland Fus.:

 25/Northumberland Fus.:
 26/Northumberland Fus.:
 27/Northumberland Fus.:

Brigadier-General H.E. Trevor DSO

Lieutenant-Colonel E.W. Hermon DSO (KIA 9/4/17)
 Lieutenant-Colonel B.R. Brewin
 Lieutenant-Colonel E.M. Moulton-Barrett DSO
 Lieutenant-Colonel M.E. Richardson DSO
 Lieutenant-Colonel R.D. Temple

Brigade Major:
 Staff Captain:

Captain AE. F.Q. Perkins
 Captain C.E. Hawes

Pioneers

18/Northumberland Fus:

Lieutenant-Colonel J. Shakespear CIE CMG DSO

51st (HIGHLAND) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL G.M. HARPER CB DSO psc

GS01:
 BGRA:
 AA&QMG:
 CRE:

Lieutenant-Colonel J.K. Dick-Cunyngham DSO psc
 Brigadier-General L.C.L. Oldfield DSO
 Lieutenant-Colonel J.L. Weston DSO
 Lieutenant-Colonel J.G. Fleming

152 Infantry Brigade (1st Highland) (Seaforth and Cameron Bde.) Brigadier-General H. Pelham Burn DSO

1/5 Seaforth Highlanders:
 1/6 Seaforth Highlanders:
 1/6 Gordon Highlanders:
 1/8 Argyll & Sutherland H.:

Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Scott DSO
 Lieutenant-Colonel S. McDonald DSO
 Lieutenant-Colonel J. Dawson DSO (Wounded 12/4/17)
 Lieutenant-Colonel R. Campbell DSO

Brigade Major:
 Staff Captain:

Captain F.W. Bewsher
 Captain R.G. Moir

153 Infantry Brigade (2nd Highland) (Gordon Bde.) Brigadier-General D. Campbell CB

1/6 Black Watch: Lieutenant-Colonel T.M. Booth DSO
1/7 Black Watch: Lieutenant-Colonel H. H. Sutherland DSO
1/5 Gordon Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel M.F. McTaggart DSO
1/7 Gordon Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel R. Bruce DSO

Brigade Major: Captain H.H. Lean MC
Staff Captain: Captain J.C. Kemp MC

154 Infantry Brigade (3rd Highland) (Argyll and Sutherland Bde.) Brigadier-General J.G.H. Hamilton DSO

1/9 Royal Scots: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Green
1/4 Seaforth Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel J.S. Unthank
1/4 Gordon Highlanders: Lieutenant-Colonel S.R. McClintock (Wounded 12/4/17)
1/7 Argyll & Sutherland H.: Lieutenant-Colonel H.H.G. Hyslop

Brigade Major: Captain J.A. Durie MC
Staff Captain: Captain A. Scott

Pioneers

8/Royal Scots: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Gemmill DSO

Appendix Four

BEF ORDER OF BATTLE

Second Battle of the Scarpe, 23 - 24 April 1917

GHQ See Appendix Three

FIRST ARMY See Appendix Three

XIII CORPS See Appendix Three

63rd (ROYAL NAVAL) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL C.E. LAWRIE CB DSO

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel C.F. Aspinall CMG psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General C.H. de Rougemont CB MVO DSO psc
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel R.F.C. Foster psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel S.H. Cowan DSO

188 Infantry Brigade

Brigadier-General R.E.S. Prentice DSO

Howe: Commander W.G.A. Ramsay-Fairfax CMG DSO
Anson: Lieutenant-Colonel H.F. Kirkpatrick R of O
1/Royal Marines: Lieutenant-Colonel F.J.W. Cartwright DSO (KIA 30/4/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel H. Ozanne
2/Royal Marines: Lieutenant-Colonel A.R.H. Hutchinson CMG DSO

Brigade Major: Captain A.P.D. Telfer-Smollett MC
Staff Captain: Captain W.O. Times

189 Infantry Brigade

Brigadier-General L.F. Philips DSO psc

Drake: Commander W. Sterndale-Bennett DSO
Hawke: Lieutenant-Colonel J. Whiteman (KIA 25/4/17)
Commander B.H. Ellis DSO
Nelson: Lieutenant-Colonel F. Lewis DSO
Hood: Commander A.M. Asquith DSO

Brigade Major: Captain R.W. Barnett
Staff Captain: Captain A.R. Bare

190 Infantry Brigade

Brigadier-General H.W.E. Finch

7/Royal Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel R.J.I. Hesketh
4/Bedfordshire: Lieutenant-Colonel J.S. Collings-Wells
10/Royal Dublin Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel E.F.E. Seymour
1/Honourable Artillery Co: Lieutenant-Colonel C.F. Osmond

Brigade Major: Captain C.H. Dowden DSO MC
Staff Captain: Captain H.P. Dix

Pioneers

14/Worcestershire: Lieutenant-Colonel C.C.H.O. Gasgoigne

THIRD ARMY See Appendix Three

VI CORPS See Appendix Three

15th (SCOTTISH) DIVISION See Appendix Three

17th (NORTHERN) DIVISION See Appendix Three

29th DIVISION See Appendix Three

3rd DIVISION **MAJOR-GENERAL C.J. DEVERELL psc**
GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel W.H. Traill DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General J.S. Ollivant CMG DSO
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. R.H. Collins DSO psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel C.A. Elliott DSO

8 Infantry Brigade **Brigadier-General H.G. Holmes CMG R of O**
2/Royal Scots: Lieutenant-Colonel A.F. Lumsden
1/Royal Scots Fusiliers: Major C.H.L. Cinnamon (acting)
8/East Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel J.N. de la Perrelle MC
7/King's Shropshire L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel K.H.L. Arnott MC

Brigade Major: Captain A.H. Hopwood
Staff Captain: Captain E.D.C. Hunt MC

VII CORPS See Appendix Three

30th DIVISION See Appendix Three

33rd DIVISION **MAJOR-GENERAL R.J. PINNEY CB psc**
GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel D. Forster DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General C.G. Stewart CMG DSO psc
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel P.R.C. Commings DSO
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel G.F. Evans DSO

98 Infantry Brigade **Brigadier-General J.D. Heriot-Maitland CMG**
20/Royal Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel L.F. Leader
2/Royal Welsh Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel W.B. Garnett
1/Scottish Rifles: Lieutenant-Colonel J.G. Chaplin DSO
5/6 Scottish Rifles: Lieutenant-Colonel E.R. Clayton DSO

Brigade Major: Major R.M. Watson DSO
Staff Captain: Major E.P. Clarke DSO

19 Infantry Brigade **Brigadier-General C.R.G. Mayne DSO**
4/King's: Lieutenant-Colonel E.M. Beall DSO
1/4 Suffolk: Lieutenant-Colonel H.C. Copeman DSO R of O
1/Middlesex: Lieutenant-Colonel H.A.O. Hanley
2/Argyll & Sutherland H.: Lieutenant-Colonel L.L. Wheatley DSO

Brigade Major: Captain A.F.G. Walker
Staff Captain: Captain A.H.W. Landon

100 Infantry Brigade **Brigadier-General A.W.F Baird CMG DSO**
1/Queen's: Lieutenant-Colonel L.M. Crofts DSO
2/Worcestershire: Lieutenant-Colonel T.K. Pardoe
16/K.R.R.C.: Lieutenant-Colonel A.V. Johnson
1/9 Highland L.I: Lieutenant-Colonel J. Menzies

Brigade Major: Captain H.W.M. Paul MC
Staff Captain: Captain W.J.J. Coats

Pioneers
18/Middlesex: Lieutenant-Colonel H. Storr DSO

50th (NORTHUMBRIAN) DIVISION **See Appendix Three**

XVII CORPS **See Appendix Three**

37th DIVISION **See Appendix Three**

51st (HIGHLAND) DIVISION **See Appendix Three**

34th DIVISION **See Appendix Three**

Attack on La Coulotte, 23 April 1917

CANADIAN CORPS **See Appendix Three**

5th DIVISION **See Appendix Three**

2nd CANADIAN DIVISION **See Appendix Three**

3rd CANADIAN DIVISION **See Appendix Three**

Appendix Five

BEF ORDER OF BATTLE

Battle of Arleux, 28 – 29 April 1917

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| GHQ | See Appendix Three |
| FIRST ARMY | See Appendix Three |
| XIII CORPS | See Appendix Three |
| 2nd DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| 63rd (ROYAL NAVAL) DIVISION | See Appendix Four |
| CANADIAN CORPS | See Appendix Three |
| 2nd CANADIAN DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| THIRD ARMY | See Appendix Three |
| VI CORPS | See Appendix Three |
| 3rd DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| 12th (EASTERN) DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| XVII CORPS | See Appendix Three |
| 34th DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| 37th DIVISION | See Appendix Three |

Appendix Six

BEF ORDER OF BATTLE

Third Battle of the Scarpe, 3 – 4 May 1917

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| GHQ | See Appendix Three |
| FIRST ARMY | See Appendix Three |
| XIII CORPS | See Appendix Three |
| 2nd DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| 5th DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| 31st DIVISION | MAJOR-GENERAL R. WANLESS O’GOWAN CB |
| GSO1: | Lieutenant-Colonel W.B. Spender MC R of O psc |
| BGRA: | Brigadier-General E.P. Lambert CB |
| AA&QMG: | Lieutenant-Colonel W.H. Annesley DSO R of O |
| CRE: | Lieutenant-Colonel J.P. Mackesy DSO psc |
| 92 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General O. de L. Williams DSO |
| 10/East Yorkshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel C.C. Stapledon |
| 11/East Yorkshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel S.H. Ferrand MC |
| 12/East Yorkshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel C.H. Gurney DSO |
| 13/East Yorkshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.K.M.C.W. Savory DSO |
| Brigade Major: | Captain D.H. Talbot |
| Staff Captain: | Captain L. Thorns |
| 93 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General J.D. Ingles DSO |
| 15/West Yorkshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel S.C. Taylor |
| 16/West Yorkshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.C. Croydon MC |
| 18/West Yorkshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel H.F.G. Carter |
| 18/Durham L.I.: | Lieutenant-Colonel R.E. Cheyne |
| Brigade Major: | Major F.F.I. Kinsman |
| Staff Captain: | Captain C.F. Davey MC |
| 94 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General G.T.C. Carter-Campbell DSO |
| 11/East Lancashire: | Lieutenant-Colonel G.B. Wauhope |
| 12/Yorks. & Lancs.: | Lieutenant-Colonel C.P.B. Riall |
| 13/Yorks. & Lancs.: | Lieutenant-Colonel E.E. Wilford DSO |
| 14/Yorks. & Lancs.: | Lieutenant-Colonel F.J.C. Hood |

Brigade Major: Captain W. Carter
Staff Captain: Captain R.M.J. Martin

Pioneers

12/K.O.Y.L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel E.L. Chambers

CANADIAN CORPS See Appendix Three

1st CANADIAN DIVISION See Appendix Three

2nd CANADIAN DIVISION See Appendix Three

3rd CANADIAN DIVISION See Appendix Three

THIRD ARMY See Appendix Three

VI CORPS See Appendix Three

3rd DIVISION See Appendix Three

12th (EASTERN) DIVISION See Appendix Three

56th (1ST LONDON) DIVISION See Appendix Three

VII CORPS See Appendix Three

14th (LIGHT) DIVISION See Appendix Three

18th (EASTERN) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL R.P. LEE CB

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Wright VC CMG psc

BGRA: Brigadier-General S.F. Metcalfe DSO

AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel H.J. Pack-Beresford

CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel C.B.O. Symons DSO

53 Infantry Brigade **Brigadier-General H.W. Higginson DSO**

8/Norfolk: Lieutenant-Colonel H.G. de L. Ferguson DSO

8/Suffolk: Lieutenant-Colonel G.V.W. Hill CMG DSO

10/Essex: Lieutenant-Colonel C.W. Frizzell MC

6/Royal Berkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel B.G. Clay DSO

Brigade Major: Captain D.R. Meautys MC

Staff Captain: Captain H. Ramsbotham MC

54 Infantry Brigade **Brigadier-General C. Cunliffe-Owen CB**

11/Royal Fusiliers: Lieutenant-Colonel C.C. Carr DSO

7/Bedfordshire: Lieutenant-Colonel G.P. Mills

6/Northamptonshire: Lieutenant-Colonel R. Turner DSO

| | |
|---|---|
| 12/Middlesex: | Lieutenant-Colonel W.H.H. Johnston MC |
| Brigade Major: | Captain E.G. Miles MC |
| Staff Captain: | Captain C.H.S. Runge MC |
| 55 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General G.D. Price |
| 7/Queen's: | Lieutenant-Colonel C.F. Watson CMG DSO |
| 7/The Buffs: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Ransome MC psc |
| 8/East Surrey: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.P.B. Irwin DSO |
| 7/Royal West Kent: | Lieutenant-Colonel P.N. Anstruther DSO MC |
| Brigade Major: | Captain C.H.S. Runge MC |
| Staff Captain: | Captain J.M. Mitchell |
| Pioneers | |
| 8/Royal Sussex | Lieutenant-Colonel B.J. Walker |
| 21st DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| XVII CORPS | See Appendix Three |
| 4th DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| 9th (SCOTTISH) DIVISION | See Appendix Three |

Capture of Roeux, 13 – 14 May 1917

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| GHQ | See Appendix Three |
| THIRD ARMY | See Appendix Three |
| VI CORPS | See Appendix Three |
| 3rd DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| 12th (EASTERN) DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| XVII CORPS | See Appendix Three |
| 17th (NORTHERN) DIVISION | See Appendix Three |
| 51st (HIGHLAND) DIVISION | See Appendix Three |

Appendix Seven

BEF ORDER OF BATTLE

GHQ See Appendix Three

First Attack on Bullecourt, 11 April 1917

FIFTH ARMY GENERAL SIR HUBERT GOUGH KCB

MGGS: Major-General N. Malcolm DSO psc
MGRA: Major-General H.C.C. Uniacke CMG
DA&QMG: Major-General H.N. Sargent CB DSO
CE: Major-General P.G Grant CMG

V CORPS LIEUTENANT-GENERAL E.A. FANSHAWE KCB

BGGS: Brigadier-General G.F. Boyd DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General R.P. Benson CMG
CHA: Brigadier-General T.R.C. Hudson
DA&QMG: Brigadier-General H.M. De F. Montgomery psc
CE: Brigadier-General A.J. Craven

62nd (2nd WEST RIDING) DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL W.P. BRAITHWAITE CB
psc

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel Hon A.G.A. Hore-Ruthven, VC DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General A.T. Anderson
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel R.M. Foot CMG R of O
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel R.A. Gillam

185 Infantry Brigade (2nd/1st West Riding) Brigadier-General V.W. Falbe CMG DSO

2/5 West Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel J. Josselyn
2/6 West Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Hastings
2/7 West Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel C.K. James DSO
2/8 West Yorkshire: Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. James

Brigade Major: Major R.N. O'Connor MC
Staff Captain: Captain W.A.C. Lloyd

186 Infantry Brigade (2nd/2nd West Riding) Brigadier-General F.F. Hill CB CMG DSO

2/4 Duke of Wellington's: Lieutenant-Colonel H.E.P. Nash
2/5 Duke of Wellington's: Lieutenant-Colonel T.A.P. Best DSO
2/6 Duke of Wellington's: Lieutenant-Colonel S.W. Ford

2/7 Duke of Wellington's: Lieutenant-Colonel F.G. Chamberlin MC

Brigade Major: Major J.D. Boyd DSO
Staff Captain: Captain W.O. Wright

187 Infantry Brigade (2nd/3rd West Riding) Brigadier-General R. O'B. Taylor CIE psc

2/4 K.O.Y.L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel E. Hind
2/5 K.O.Y.L.I.: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Watson (KIA 3/5/17)
Lieutenant-Colonel B.J. Barton DSO
2/4 Yorks. & Lancs.: Lieutenant-Colonel F. St. J. Blacker (Wounded 2/5/17)
2/5 Yorks. & Lancs.: Lieutenant-Colonel L.H.P. Hart

Brigade Major: Captain C.H. Hoare
Staff Captain: Captain H.J. Impson

I ANZAC CORPS

**LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR WILIAM R. BIRDWOOD
KCSI KCMG CB CIE DSO**

BGGS: Major-General C.B.B. White CB DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General W.J. Napier CB CMG
CHA: Brigadier-General L.D. Fraser CMG
DA&QMG: Brigadier-General R.A. Carruthers CB CMG
**CE: Brigadier-General A.C. de L. Joly de Lotbiniere CB CSI
CIE**

4th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL W. HOLMES CMG DSO

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel D.J.C.K. Bernard DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General C. Rosenthal CB
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel E. Armstrong
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel G.C.E. Elliott DSO

4 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General C.H. Brand CMG DSO

13/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel L.E. Tilney DSO
14/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Peck
15/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel T.P. McSharry MC
16/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel E.A. Drake-Brockman CMG psc

Brigade Major: Major C.M. Johnston
Staff Captain: Captain A.H. Fraser

12 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General J.C. Robertson CMG

45/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel S.C.E. Herring DSO
46/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel H.K. Denham
47/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel T. Flintoff
48/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel R.L. Leane DSO MC

Brigade Major: Major E.L. Salier MC
Staff Captain: Major W. Inglis MC

13/Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General T.W. Glasgow CMG DSO

49/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel H. Paul
50/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel A.G. Salisbury
51/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel J.C.T.E.C. Ridley DSO
52/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel H. Pope CB

Brigade Major: Captain R. Morell
Staff Captain: Captain A. Nicholson

Pioneers

4/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel V.A.H. Sturdee DSO

German Attack on Lagnicourt, 15 April 1917

FIFTH ARMY **See Above**

V CORPS **See Above**

62nd (2nd WEST RIDING) DIVISION **See Above**

I ANZAC CORPS **See Above**

1st AUSTRALIAN DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL H.B. WALKER CB DSO

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel T.A. Blamey DSO
BGRA: Brigadier-General W.A. Coxen DSO
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel C.H. Foott CMG psc
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel A.M. Martyn DSO

1 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General W.R. Lesslie CMG

1/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel B.V. Stacey
2/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel S.L. Milligan DSO
3/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel D.T. Moore DSO
4/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel J G Mackay DSO

Brigade Major: Major J.L. Hardie
Staff Captain: Captain H.N. Forbes

2 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General J. Heane CMG DSO

5/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel D.A. Luxton DSO
6/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel C.W.D. Daly DSO
7/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel E.E. Herrod
8/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel J.W. Mitchell

Brigade Major: Major T.F. Ulrich DSO
Staff Captain: Captain E.N. Roach

3 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General H.G. Bennett CMG

9/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel L.M. Mullen
10/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Jacob
11/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel J.S. Denton DSO
12/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel C.H. Elliott DSO

Brigade Major: Major J.M. Locke
Staff Captain: Captain B.J. Andrew

Pioneers

1/Pioneers: Lieutenant-Colonel W.A. Henderson

2nd AUSTRALIAN DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL N.M. SMYTHE VC CB

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Bridges psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General G.J. Johnston CB
AA&QMG: Lieutenant-Colonel G.C. Somerville DSO
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel E.J.H. Nicholson DSO

5 Australian Infantry Brigade Colonel R. Smith

17/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel E.F. Martin DSO
18/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel G.F. Murphy
19/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel C.R.A. Pye DSO
20/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel A.W. Ralston DSO

Brigade Major: Major A.J. Boase
Staff Captain: Captain A.W. Johnson

6 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General J. Gellibrand DSO psc

21/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel F.W.D. Forbes DSO
22/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel D.M. Davis
23/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Brazenor
24/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel W.W.R. Watson CB

Brigade Major: Major E.C.P. Plant DSO
Staff Captain: Captain R.H. Norman

7 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General A. Wisdom DSO

25/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel E.C. Norrie
26/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel R.J.A. Travers DSO
27/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel J.C.F. Slane
28/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel G.A. Read

Brigade Major: Captain G.B. Rowan-Hamilton MC
Staff Captain: Captain C.H. Harrison

Pioneers

2/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel F.W.G. Annand DSO

Battle of Bullecourt, 3 – 17 May 1917

| | |
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| FIFTH ARMY | See Above |
| V CORPS | See Above |
| 7th DIVISION | MAJOR-GENERAL T.H. SHOUBRIDGE CMG DSO psc |
| GSO1: | Lieutenant-Colonel G.W. Howard DSO psc |
| BGRA: | Brigadier-General H.C. Stanley-Clarke DSO |
| AA&QMG: | Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. M.A. Wingfield DSO psc |
| CRE: | Lieutenant-Colonel G.H. Boileau DSO |
| 20 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General H.C.R. Green DSO |
| 2/Border: | Lieutenant-Colonel G.E. Beaty-Pownall |
| 2/Gordon Highlanders: | Lieutenant-Colonel P.W. Brown DSO |
| 8/Devonshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel P.V. Davidson |
| 9/Devonshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel R.J. Morris DSO |
| Brigade Major: | Captain A.N. Acland MC |
| Staff Captain: | Captain R.M. Burmann MC |
| 22 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General J.McC. Steel CMG |
| 2/Royal Warwickshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel C.B. Hore |
| 1/Royal Welsh Fusiliers: | Lieutenant-Colonel W.G. Holmes DSO |
| 20/Manchester: | Lieutenant-Colonel E. Smalley DSO |
| 2/1 Hon. Artillery Co.: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Ward DSO |
| Brigade Major: | Captain A.J. Thompson |
| Staff Captain: | Captain R.F. Parker |
| 91 Infantry Brigade | Brigadier-General H.R. Cumming psc |
| 2/Queen's: | Lieutenant-Colonel F.C. Longbourne DSO |
| 1/South Staffordshire: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.B. Beauman DSO |
| 21/Manchester: | Lieutenant-Colonel W.W. Norman DSO |
| 22/Manchester: | Lieutenant-Colonel P. Whetham |
| Brigade Major: | Major C.A.H. Palairret |
| Staff Captain: | Captain O.F. Morshead MC |
| Pioneers | |
| 24/Manchester: | Lieutenant-Colonel F.W. Woodward DSO |
| 58th (2nd/1st LONDON) DIVISION | MAJOR-GENERAL H.D. FANSHAWE CB |
| GSO1: | Lieutenant-Colonel J.E. Turner DSO psc |
| BGRA: | Brigadier-General E.J.R. Peel DSO |
| AA&QMG: | Lieutenant-Colonel A.G.P. McNalty CMG |
| CRE: | Lieutenant-Colonel E.M. Newell |

173 Infantry Brigade (3rd/1st London) Brigadier-General G.P.S. Hunt CMG

2/1 London: Lieutenant-Colonel W.J.J. Collas
2/2 London: Lieutenant-Colonel A.R. Richardson
2/3 London: Lieutenant-Colonel P.W. Beresford
2/4 London: Lieutenant-Colonel W.R.H. Dann

Brigade Major: Major A.G. Foord
Staff Captain: Captain F.H. Garraway

174 Infantry Brigade (2nd/2nd London) Brigadier-General C.G. Higgins DSO

2/5 London: Lieutenant-Colonel P.D. Stewart
2/6 London: Lieutenant-Colonel A.G. Foord
2/7 London: Lieutenant-Colonel C.W. Berkeley
2/8 London: Lieutenant-Colonel B.G. Davie

Brigade Major: Captain R.M. Laverton
Staff Captain: Captain D'A.H. Little

175 Infantry Brigade (2nd/3rd London) Brigadier-General H.C. Jackson DSO psc

2/9 London: Lieutenant-Colonel P.E. Langworthy-Parry
2/10 London: Lieutenant-Colonel G.K. Sullivan MC
2/11 London: Lieutenant-Colonel W.F.J. Symonds
2/12 London: Lieutenant-Colonel A.S. Barham

Brigade Major: Major G.K. Sullivan MC
Staff Captain: Captain L.H. Marton

62nd (2nd WEST RIDING) DIVISION See Above

I ANZAC CORPS See Above

2nd AUSTRALIAN DIVISION See Above

5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION MAJOR-GENERAL J.J.T. HOBBS CB

GSO1: Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Wagstaff CIE DSO psc
BGRA: Brigadier-General A.J. Bessell-Browne CMG DSO
AA&QMG: Colonel J.H. Bruche
CRE: Lieutenant-Colonel A.B. Carey CMG

8 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General E. Tivey DSO

29/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel M. Purser
30/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel J.W. Clark DSO
31/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel F.W. Toll DSO
32/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel C.S. Davies

Brigade Major: Captain R.G. Casey MC
Staff Captain: Captain H.W. Cuming MC

14 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General C.J. Hobkirk DSO

53/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel O.M. Croshaw DSO (Wounded 18/5/17)
54/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel S. Midgley CMG DSO
55/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel C.R. Davies
56/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Scott DSO

Brigade Major: Major G.F. Dickinson
Staff Captain: Captain G.A. Street

15 Australian Infantry Brigade Brigadier-General H.E. Elliott CMG DCM

57/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel J.C. Stewart DSO
58/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel C.A. Denehy
59/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel E.A. Harris
60/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Jackson

Brigade Major: Major G.F.G. Wieck
Staff Captain: Captain R.G. Legge MC

Pioneers

5/Battalion: Lieutenant-Colonel H.G. Carter

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Byng, General Lord

I.6 Imperial War Museum, London

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