

CUS417/21.6

In October 1914 Revere being too young to apply for a Commission came up to Christ Church, where he spent the Michaelmas Term and two weeks of the Hilary Term. He belonged to the Officers Training Corps when at Winchester, and joined the same Corps while in College, but everything connected with the army and war was so repulsive to him that he avoided speaking of it, and never came home in his uniform. Sunday he usually was able to take long walks with his father, or spend hours among their favourite books, and studying catalogues and arranging for purchases. Revere became very restless and unhappy as weeks passed, and he longed to have his future position in the army arranged for. In February he was offered a Commission in the Canadian Army Medical Corps, and as it seemed best he should have his first army experience in that way, he accepted it, and was ordered at once to the Canadian Red Cross Hospital at Cliveden, and acted as Assistant Quartermaster. Later he was sent to Bromley, Kent, to help establish a convalescent hospital. In May he joined the No. 3 Canadian General Hospital and after a short time at Camp at Shorncliffe proceeded with this Unit to France. The hospital was established at Camier, where it remained until Autumn in tents, in the greatest discomfort, amid rain, mud, and wind. They afterwards moved to Boulogne.

During these weeks Revere passed through many trials. He felt very dissatisfied with his position, and was convinced he was not doing his duty. He applied to be transferred to a Field Ambulance hoping to be sent to the Front and in this way exposed to greater danger acting as a Stretcher Bearer. This did not go through, and after many weeks of mental distress he applied to be released in order to join the British Army. After some delay he received a Commission in the Royal Field Artillery, and was immediately sent to Newcastle for training. He became interested in the Artillery Instruction and did well in the examination. After a short leave at home he left for France on October 16th, 1916. He left with a sense of tremendous relief. He had passed through much tribulation. He was deeply opposed to warfare, and had been grieved by the loss of many of his young friends and school companions. His time at Southampton before sailing for France was passed with a friend, in an antique book shop, and within a few days the result of his purchases came to Norham Gardens. On arriving in France, October 17th, he was ordered to a Rest Camp near Havre, and soon left for the Front with an Ammunition Column of the British Expeditionary Force. Within a short time he was ordered to join Battery A, Division 59, of the R.F.A. and proceeded to the Somme district.

We were able to know of his whereabouts although no names could pass the Censor. A Canadian cousin was on leave in Oxford, and Revere wrote "Campbell is a farmer, he has seen this place". It proved to be Mouquet Farm one of the most fought over places in the Somme country. The Battery remained at Mouquet Farm from November until January 16th, 1917, then back at rest for three weeks. Revere was billeted in the lower part of a partially destroyed windmill at Beaulcourt, and made friends with the old man and woman who lived there, through the attacks in that neighbourhood and were suspected of being possible spies, but had kind hearts, Revere said. February 21st the Battery returned to the Somme, to Mailly Mailla^t then on to Beaumont Hamel. Meramont, , and Bucquoy. When the Germans retreated to the Hindenburg line, the Battery moved to Arras and took up a position on the mound behind the old town prison. From here Revere wrote a graphic description of the wonderful sight in the moonlight. The ruins of the Cathedral standing out and the winding up the hill of the Ammunition Waggon. Their guns were in quite an elevated position. The officers were billeted in the Tunnels built during the Napoleonic wars under the City Walls. Early in April they moved through Arras onto the right side of the Town,

advancing to Feschée Chappelle, then down to St. Leger, where they took position and covered all the Bullecourt fighting.

In May 1917 they returned towards the Somme and entrained to Bailleul. It was at this time that Revere had his nine days leave - his only leave from the Artillery. The days were spent happily at home among his people and friends and many hours at his favourite sport, fishing. He rejoiced in taking a record trout at Cornbury Park Lake. During his leave Revere did not care to talk of France or the terrible sights he had seen. He hardly spoke at all of the war, only of one or two congenial friends he had made among the senior officers in his Battery. The last day at home was saddened by the news of the death, in action, of a very dear friend. He returned to France by Boulogne. Saw his old friends at the Canadian Hospital as he passed through and took the train ^{to} Hasbrouck. His horse met him there, and he found his Battery probably near Bailleul, where they had made a new position preparatory to the Battle of Whytchaete. The Germans made a rapid retreat from there. From his observation post Revere could see their guns being moved off, and the officers leaving their dug-outs rapidly, not stopping to bury their dead. Shortly after, Revere entered the dug-outs with

his men and removed a valuable collection of things left behind in their hurried retreat. Among them a fine periscope, the only thing he was allowed to keep. Everything else was sent to Headquarters. The periscope lens was said to be valued at £300. It was used by the Battery until the Armistice, was returned to Oxford, and will be placed in this Library later. While the Battle of Whytchaste was still going on the Battery moved up behind the so-called Chinese Wall in order to cover the most advanced British Troops.

Shortly after they moved down into "Hunland", behind the Messine Ridge. July 1st the Battery moved East of Poperinghe and stopped there a fortnight SE. of Briele~~n~~. Here Revere and his friend, Williams, made the position into which the Battery moved for the opening phase of the Third Battle of Ypres.

July 31st after a successful "Show" they moved onto the Pilchem~~m~~ Road, just behind the High Command, later moving onto the Ridge behind the Hindenberg farm, South of Hill 23, and it was here the fatal shell came.