

Sir Douglas Haig's first First World War dispatch as British Army Commander-in-Chief, dated 19 May 1916. It summarizes details of local operations at St. Eloi. This dispatch was the first since Haig's replacement of Sir John French in December 1915

**General Headquarters,
19th May, 1916**

My Lord;

1. I have the honour to report the operations of the British Forces serving in France and Belgium since 19th December, 1915, on which date, in accordance with the orders of His Majesty's Government, I assumed the Chief Command.

During this period, the only offensive effort made by the enemy on a great scale was directed against our French Allies near Verdun. The fighting in that area has been prolonged and severe. The results have been worthy of the high traditions of the French Army and of great service to the cause of the Allies. The efforts made by the enemy have cost him heavy losses both in men and in prestige, and he has made these sacrifices without gaining any advantage to counterbalance them.

During this struggle my troops have been in readiness to co-operate as they might be needed, but the only assistance asked for by our Allies was of an indirect nature - viz., the relief of the French troops on a portion of their defensive front. This relief I was glad to be able to afford.

Its execution on a considerable front, everywhere in close touch with the enemy, was a somewhat delicate operation, but it was carried out with complete success, thanks to the cordial co-operation and goodwill of all ranks concerned and to the lack of enterprise shown by the enemy during the relief.

2. On the British front no action on a great scale, such as that at Verdun, has been fought during the past five months, nevertheless our troops have been far from idle or inactive. Although the struggle, in a general sense, has not been intense, it has been everywhere continuous, and there have been many sharp local actions.

The maintenance and repair of our defences alone, especially in winter, entails constant heavy work. Bad weather and the enemy combine to flood and destroy trenches, dug-outs and communications; all such damages must be repaired promptly, under fire, and almost entirely by night.

Artillery and snipers are practically never silent, patrols are out in front of the lines every night, and heavy bombardments by the artillery of one or both sides take place daily in various parts of the line. Below ground there is continual mining and counter-mining, which, by the ever-present threat of sudden explosion and the uncertainty as to when and where it will take place, causes perhaps a more constant strain than any other form of warfare.

In the air there is seldom a day, however bad the weather, when aircraft are not busy reconnoitring, photographing, and observing fire. All this is taking place constantly at any hour of the day or night, and in any part of the line.

3. In short, although there has been no great incident of historic importance to record on the British front during the period under review, a steady and continuous fight has gone on, day and night, above ground and below it.

The comparative monotony of this struggle has been relieved at short intervals by sharp local actions, some of which, although individually almost insignificant in a war on such an immense scale, would have been thought worthy of a separate despatch under different conditions, while their cumulative effect, though difficult to appraise at its true value now, will doubtless prove hereafter to have been considerable.

One form of minor activity deserves special mention, namely, the raids or "cutting-out parties" which are made at least twice or three times a week against the enemy's line. They consist of a brief attack, with some special object, on a section of the opposing trenches, usually carried out at night by a small body of men.

The character of these operations - the preparation of a road through our own and the enemy's wire - the crossing of the open ground unseen - the penetration of the enemy's trenches - the hand-to-hand fighting in the darkness and the uncertainty as to the strength of the opposing force - gives peculiar scope to the gallantry, dash and quickness of decision of the troops engaged; and much skill and daring are frequently displayed in these operations.

The initiative in these minor operations was taken, and on the whole has been held, by us; but the Germans have recently attempted some bold and well-conceived raids against our lines, many of which have been driven back, although some have succeeded in penetrating, as has been reported by me from time to time.

4. Of the numerous local actions alluded to, the total number, omitting the more minor raids, amounts to over 60 since December 19th, of which the most important have been:-

The operations at The Bluff, the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and at St. Eloi; the mining operations and crater fighting in the Loos salient and on the Vimy Ridge; and the hostile gas attacks north of Ypres in December, and opposite Hulluch and Messines in April.

The most recent local operations worthy of mention are the capture of some 500 yards of our trenches by the Germans at the Kink, on the 11th May, and the capture by us of 250 yards of their trenches near Cabaret Rouge, on the night of the 15th/16th May.

5. As an illustration of the nature of these local operations, it will suffice to describe two or three of the most important.

***Ypres Salient and The Bluff,
8th February to 2nd March, 1916***

During the period 8th to 19th February the enemy displayed increased activity in the Ypres salient, and carried out a series of infantry attacks, preceded, as a rule, by intense bombardment, and by the explosion of mines. These attacks may, no doubt, be regarded as a subsidiary operation, designed partly to secure local points of vantage, but probably also to distract attention from the impending operations near Verdun, which began on the 21st February.

After several days' heavy shelling over the whole of our line in this area, the first attack took place on 12th February at the extreme left of our line to the north of Ypres (14th and 20th Divisions, Major-Generals V. A. Couper and R. H. Davies commanding).

A bombing attack was launched by the Germans in the early morning, and they succeeded in capturing our trenches. Our counter-attack, however, which was immediately organised, enabled us to clear our trenches of the enemy, and to pursue him to his own.

After a period of further bombardment on both sides, the German fire again increased in intensity against our trenches and the French line beyond them; and in the evening a second attempt was made to rush our extreme left - this time entirely without success. Smaller attempts against other trenches in the neighbourhood were made at the same time, but were immediately repulsed by rifle and machine-gun fire.

Throughout the operations our position in this part of the line remained intact, except that two isolated trenches of no tactical importance were captured by the enemy a day or two later; they were subsequently obliterated by our artillery fire. Throughout this fighting the French on our immediate left rendered us the prompt and valuable assistance which we have at all times received from them.

Another series of German attacks was launched about the same time in the neighbourhood of Hooge to the east of Ypres. The enemy had pushed out several saps in front of his trenches, and connected them up into a

firing line some 150 yards from our lines. During the whole of the 13th February he heavily bombarded our front-line trenches in this neighbourhood and completely destroyed them.

On the following afternoon an intense bombardment of our line began, and the enemy exploded a series of mines in front of our trenches, simultaneously launching infantry attacks against Hooge and the northern and southern ends of Sanctuary Wood (24th Division, Major-General I. E. Capper commanding). Each of these attacks was repulsed by artillery, machine-gun and rifle fire.

Further to the south, however, the enemy was more successful. On the northern bank of the Ypres-Comines Canal there is a narrow ridge, 30 to 40 feet high, covered with trees - probably the heap formed by excavation when the canal was dug - which forms a feature of the flat wooded country at the southern bend of the Ypres salient.

It runs outward through our territory almost into the German area, so that our trenches pass over the eastern point of it, which is known as The Bluff. Here also our trenches were almost obliterated by the bombardment on the afternoon of the 14th, following which a sudden rush of hostile infantry was successful in capturing these and other front-line trenches immediately north of The Bluff - some 600 yards in all (17th Division, Major-General T. D. Pilcher commanding). Two of these trenches were at once regained, but the others were held by the enemy, in the face of several counter-attacks.

On the night of the 15th/16th we made an unsuccessful counter-attack, with the object of regaining the lost trenches. An advance was begun across the open on the north side of the canal, combined with grenade attacks along the communication trenches immediately north of The Bluff.

The night was very dark, and heavy rain had turned the ground into a quagmire, so that progress was difficult for the attacking force, which was unable to consolidate its position in the face of heavy machine-gun and rifle fire.

After the failure of this attack it was decided to adopt slower and more methodical methods of recapturing the lost trenches, and nothing of special importance occurred in the Ypres salient during the rest of the month, although both sides displayed rather more than the usual activity.

The recapture of The Bluff took place after the enemy had held it for seventeen days. After several days' preliminary bombardment by our artillery, the assault was carried out at 4.29 a.m. on the 2nd March by troops of the 3rd Division, Major-General I. A. L. Haldane, and of the 17th Division. Measures taken to deceive the enemy were successful, and our infantry effected a complete surprise, finding the enemy with their bayonets unfixed, and many of them without rifles or equipment.

About 50 Germans took refuge in a crater at the eastern end of The Bluff, and these put up a brief resistance before taking refuge in the tunnels they had constructed, in which they were captured at leisure. Otherwise our right-hand attacking party, whose objective was The Bluff, met with little opposition.

The front line of the centre attack, reaching its assigned objective without much opposition, swept on past it and seized the German Third Line at the eastern side of the salient. This line was not suitable to hold permanently, but it proved useful as a temporary covering position while the captured trenches in rear were being consolidated, and at nightfall the covering party was withdrawn unmolested.

The later waves of our centre attack met and captured, after some fighting, several Germans coming out of their dug-outs. The left attacking party, at the first attempt, failed to reach the German trenches, but those who had penetrated to the German line on the right realised the situation and brought a Lewis gun to bear on the enemy's line of resistance, completely enfilading his trenches, and thus enabling the left company to reach its goal.

Thus our objective, which included apart of the German line, as well as the whole of the front lost by us on the 14th February, was captured, and is still held by us. Several counter-attacks were destroyed by our fire. The enemy's trenches were found full of dead as a result of our bombardment, and five officers and 251 other ranks were captured.

The support of the Heavy and Field Artillery, and a number of trench mortars, contributed largely to the success of the operation.

6. On the 27th March our troops (9th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Division) made an attack with the object of straightening out the line at St. Eloi, and cutting away the small German salient which encroached on the semicircle of our line in the Ypres salient to a depth of about 100 yards over a front of some 600 yards.

The operation was begun by the firing of six very large mines; the charge was so heavy that the explosion was felt in towns several miles behind the lines, and large numbers of the enemy were killed. Half a minute after the explosion our infantry attack was launched aiming at the German Second Line.

The right attack (1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers) met with little opposition, and captured its assigned objective; but the left attack (4th Battalion Royal Fusiliers) was not so successful, and a gap was left in possession of the Germans, through which they entered one of the craters.

The following days were spent by both sides in heavy bombardment and in unsuccessful attacks, intended on our part to capture the remaining trenches, and on the part of the Germans to drive us from the positions we had occupied. In the very early morning of April 3rd troops of the 76th Infantry Brigade succeeded in recapturing the crater and the trenches still held by the enemy, thereby securing the whole of our original objective.

We had, moreover, captured five officers and 195 men in the first attack on March 27th, and five officers and 80 men in the attack on April 3rd. The work of consolidating our new position, however, proved extremely difficult, owing to the wet soil, heavy shelling and mine explosions; though pumps were brought up and efforts at draining were instituted, the result achieved was comparatively small.

By dint of much heavy work the brigade holding these trenches (6th Canadian Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division, Major-General R. E. W. Turner commanding the division) succeeded in reducing the water in the trenches by two feet by the morning of the 5th. This state of affairs could not, even so, be regarded as satisfactory; and during the 5th the enemy's bombardment increased in intensity, and the new trenches practically ceased to exist.

On the morning of the 6th the enemy attacked with one battalion supported by another; he penetrated our new line, and gained the two westernmost craters.

It is difficult to follow in detail the fighting of the next three weeks, which consisted in repeated attacks by both sides on more or less isolated mine craters, the trench lines having been destroyed by shell fire. Great efforts were made to maintain communication with the garrisons of these advanced posts, and with considerable success.

But there were periods of uncertainty, and some misconception as to the state of affairs arose. On the 11th it was reported to me that we had recaptured all that remained of the position won by us on the 27th March and 3rd April. This report, probably due to old craters having been mistaken for new ones, was subsequently found to be incorrect.

The new craters, being exposed to the enemy's view and to the full weight of his artillery fire, have proved untenable, and at the present time our troops are occupying trenches roughly in the general line which was held by them before the 27th.

German Gas Attacks, 27th/30th April

7. On the night of the 29th/30th April the enemy carried out a gas attack on a considerable scale near Wulverghem, on a front of 3,500 yards held by the 3rd and 24th Divisions. The operation was opened by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire under cover of which the gas was released.

Immediately afterwards a heavy "barrage", or curtain of artillery fire, was placed on three parts of this area, and eight infantry attacks were launched. Of these attacks only two penetrated our trenches; one was immediately repelled, while the other was driven out by a counter-attack after about 40 minutes' occupation.

The enemy's object would appear to have been the destruction of mine shafts, as a charge of gun-cotton was found unexploded in a disused shaft, to which the enemy had penetrated. But if this was his object he was completely unsuccessful.

Similar attacks were made by the Germans in front of Vermelles, to the south of La Bassee, on the 27th and 29th April, the discharge of a highly concentrated gas being accompanied by bombardment with lachrymatory and other shells and the explosion of a mine.

On the first occasion two minor infantry attacks penetrated our trenches, but were driven out almost immediately; on the second occasion a small attack was repulsed, but the more serious advance which appears to have been intended was probably rendered impossible by the fact that a part of the enemy's gas broke back over his own lines, to the visible confusion of his troops, who were massing for the attack.

8. While many other units have done excellent work during the period under review, the following have been specially brought to my notice for good work in carrying out or repelling local attacks and raids:-

3rd Divisional Artillery

17th Divisional Artillery

1st Canadian Divisional Artillery

62nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

B Battery, 153rd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

83rd Battery, Royal Field Artillery (Lahore)

22nd Canadian (Howitzer) Brigade

24th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery

115th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery

122nd Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery

3rd Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery

12th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery

9th Field Company, Royal Engineers

56th Field Company, Royal Engineers

70th Field Company, Royal Engineers

77th Field Company, Royal Engineers

1st (Cheshire) Field Company, Royal Engineers

170th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

172nd Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

173rd Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

253rd Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

12th Divisional Signal Company, Royal Engineers

24th Trench Mortar Battery

76/1st Trench Mortar Battery

No. 2 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps

No. 6 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps

2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards

1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards

2nd Battalion, Irish Guards

1st Battalion, Welsh Guards

11th (Service) Battalion, The Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment)

1st Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

7th (Service) Battalion, The King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)

8th (Service) Battalion, The King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)

1st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers

12th (Service) Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers

1st Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment

8th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment (Territorial)

8th (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
9th (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
4th (Extra Reserve) Battalion, The King's Liverpool Regiment
1/8th (Irish) Battalion, The King's Liverpool Regiment (Territorial)
7th (Service) Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment
1/4th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment (Territorial)
7th (Service) Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
8th (Service) Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry
7th (Service) Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment
1/4th Battalion, The Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment) (Territorial)
2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers
11th (Service) Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers
15th (Service) Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers
17th (Service) Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers
2nd Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers
15th (Service) Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers
8th (Service) Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers
7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
9th (Service) Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
10th (Service) Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
1/6th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment (Territorial)
1st Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment
7th (Service) Battalion, East Surrey Regiment
8th (Service) Battalion, East Surrey Regiment
9th (Service) Battalion, West Riding Regiment
2nd Battalion, The Border Regiment
7th (Service) Battalion, The Border Regiment
11th (Service) Battalion, The Border Regiment
7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment
8th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment
8th (Service) Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment
1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment
1/4th Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (Territorial)
1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment
5th (Service) Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment
6th (Service) Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment
1st Battalion, The King's (Shropshire Light Infantry)
1st Battalion, Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment)
2nd Battalion, Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment)
2nd Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps
6th (Service) Battalion, The Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment)
18th (Service) Battalion, Manchester Regiment
1st Battalion, The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment)
8th (Service) Battalion, The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment)
17th (Service) Battalion, Highland Light Infantry
8th (Service) Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, The Duke of Albany's)
1st Battalion, The Gordon Highlanders
2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Rifles
9th (Service) Battalion, The Royal Irish Rifles
1st Battalion, Princess Victoria's (Royal Irish Fusiliers)
2nd Battalion, Princess Louise's (Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders)
9th (Service) Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers
3rd Battalion, The Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort's Own)

*5th Canadian Infantry Battalion
7th Canadian Infantry Battalion
29th Canadian Infantry Battalion
49th Canadian Infantry Battalion*

9. The activity described above has its counterpart in rear of our lines in the training which is carried out continuously. During the periods of relief all formations, and especially the newly created ones, are instructed and practised in all classes of the present and other phases of warfare.

A large number of schools also exist for the instruction of individuals, especially in the use and theory of the less familiar weapons, such as bombs and grenades.

There are schools for young staff officers and regimental officers, for candidates for commissions, etc. In short, every effort is made to take advantage of the closer contact with actual warfare, and to put the finishing touches, often after actual experience in the trenches, to the training received at home.

10. During the period under review the forces under my command have been considerably augmented by the arrival of new formations from home, and the transfer of others released from service in the Near East. This increase has made possible the relief of a French Army, to which I have already referred, at the time of the Battle of Verdun.

Among the newly arrived forces is the "Anzac" Corps. With them, the Canadians, and a portion of the South African Overseas Force which has also arrived, the Dominions now furnish a valuable part of the Imperial Forces in France.

Since the date of the last Despatch, but before I assumed command, the Indian Army Corps left this country for service in the East. They had given a year's valuable and gallant service under conditions of warfare which they had not dreamt of, and in a climate peculiarly difficult for them to endure.

I regret their departure, but I do not doubt that they will continue to render gallant and effective service elsewhere, as they have already done in this country.

11. I take this opportunity to bring to notice the admirable work which the Royal Flying Corps has continued to perform, in spite of much unfavourable weather, in carrying out reconnaissance duties, in taking photographs - an important aid to reconnaissance which has been brought to a high pitch of perfection - and in assisting the work of our Artillery by registering targets and locating hostile batteries.

In the performance of this work they have flown in weather when no hostile aeroplane ventured out, and they have not hesitated to fly low, under fire of the enemy's guns, when their duties made it necessary to do so. They have also carried out a series of bombing raids on hostile aerodromes and points of military importance.

A feature of the period under review has been the increased activity of the enemy's aircraft, in suitable weather. But the enemy's activity has been mainly on his own side of the line, and has aimed chiefly at interrupting the work carried out by our machines.

In order to carry on the work in spite of this opposition, which was for a time rendered more effective by the appearance in December of a new and more powerful type of enemy machine, it has been necessary to provide an escort to accompany our reconnaissance aeroplanes, and fighting in the air, which was formerly exceptional, has now become an everyday occurrence.

The observers, no less than the pilots, have done excellent service, and many fine feats have been performed by both. Developments on the technical side of the Air Service have been no less remarkable and satisfactory than the progress made on the purely military side.

Much inventive genius has been displayed; and our equipment for photography, wireless telegraphy, bomb-dropping and offensive action generally has been immensely improved, while great skill has been shown in keeping the flying machines themselves in good flying condition.

12. *The continuance of siege warfare has entailed for the Royal Engineers work of a particularly arduous and important kind, extending from the front trenches to the Base Ports.*

In the performance of this work the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Field Companies and other units of the Corps have continued to exhibit a very high standard of skill, courage, and devotion to duty.

13. *The work of the Tunnelling Companies calls for special mention. Increased mining activity on the part of the enemy has invariably been answered with enterprise combined with untiring energy on the part of our miners, who in carrying out duties always full of danger have shown that they possess in the highest degree the qualities of courage, perseverance, and self-sacrifice.*

Their importance in the present phase of warfare is very great.

14. *The excellent work done by the Corps of Military Police is worthy of mention. This Corps is inspired by a high sense of duty, and in the performance of its share in the maintenance of discipline it has shown both zeal and discretion.*

15. *All branches of the Medical Services deserve the highest commendation for the successful work done by them, both at the Front and on the Lines of Communication. The sick rate has been consistently low; there has been no serious epidemic, and enteric fever, the bane of armies in the past, has almost completely disappeared owing to preventive measures energetically carried out.*

The results of exposure incidental to trench warfare during the winter months were to a very great extent kept in check by careful application of the precautions recommended and taught by regimental Medical Officers.

The wounded have been promptly and efficiently dealt with, and their evacuation to the Base has been rapidly accomplished.

The close co-operation which has existed between the officers of the Regular Medical Service of the Army and those members of the civil medical profession who have patriotically given their valuable services to the Army, has largely contributed to the prevention of disease and to the successful treatment and comfort of the sick and wounded.

As part of the Medical Services, the Canadian Army Medical Corps has displayed marked efficiency and devotion to duty.

16. *The Commission of Graves Registration and Enquiries has, since it first undertook this work eighteen months ago, registered and marked over 50,000 graves. Without its labours many would have remained unidentified.*

It has answered several thousand enquiries from relatives and supplied them with photographs. Flowers and shrubs have been planted in most of the cemeteries which are sufficiently far removed from the firing line, and all cemeteries which it is possible to work in during the daytime are now being looked after by non-commissioned officers and men of this unit.

17. *The valuable nature of the work performed by the officers of the Central Laboratory and the Chemical Advisers with the Armies in investigations into the nature of the gases and other new substances used in hostile attacks, and in devising and perfecting means of protecting our troops against them, is deserving of recognition.*

The efforts of these officers materially contributed to the failure of the Germans in their attack of 19th December, 1915, as well as in the various gas attacks since made.

18. *The stream of additional personnel and material arriving from England, and the move of complete formations to and from the East during the period under review, have thrown a great deal of work on our Base Ports and on the Advanced Base. The staff and personnel at these stations have coped most ably with*

the work of forwarding and equipping the various units passing through their hands, and I desire to bring their good work to notice.

19. The large increases made to our forces have necessitated a great expansion in the resources of our Lines of Communication, and I have been greatly struck by the forethought shown by the Administrative Services in anticipating the requirements of the Armies in the Field and in the provision made to satisfy these requirements.

The Base Ports have been developed to the utmost possible extent, advanced Depôts have been provided, and communications have been improved to ensure punctual distribution to the troops.

Labour has been organised in order to develop local resources, especially in the matter of timber for defences and hutting, and stone for road maintenance, whereby considerable reductions have been made possible in the shipments from over sea.

Economy has attended the good methods adopted, and the greatest credit is due to all concerned for the results obtained.

20. I desire to acknowledge here the valuable assistance rendered by the naval transport officers on the Lines of Communication. They have worked with and for the Army most untiringly, efficiently, and with the utmost harmony.

I also desire to acknowledge the indebtedness of the Army to the Royal Navy for their unceasing and uniformly successful care in securing the safety of our transport service on the seas.

21. I wish to acknowledge the work done in the reproduction of maps by the Ordnance Survey Department. Over 90 per cent of the maps used in this country are reproduced and printed in England by the Ordnance Survey, and the satisfactory supply is largely due to the foresight and initiative displayed by this Department.

I can now count on obtaining an issue of as many as 10,000 copies of any map within one week of sending it home for reproduction.

22. I have forwarded under a separate letter the names of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men whom I wish to bring to notice for gallant and distinguished service.

23. I cannot close this Despatch without some reference to the work of my predecessor in Command, Field-Marshal Viscount French. The Field-Marshal, starting the war with our small Expeditionary Force, faced an enemy far superior in numbers and fully prepared for this great campaign.

During the long and anxious time needed for the improvisation of the comparatively large force now serving in this country, he overcame all difficulties, and before laying down his responsibilities he had the satisfaction of seeing the balance of advantage swing steadily in our favour. Those who have served under him appreciate the greatness of his achievement.

*I have the honour to be
Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,
D. HAIG, General,
Commander-in-Chief, The British Forces in France*