



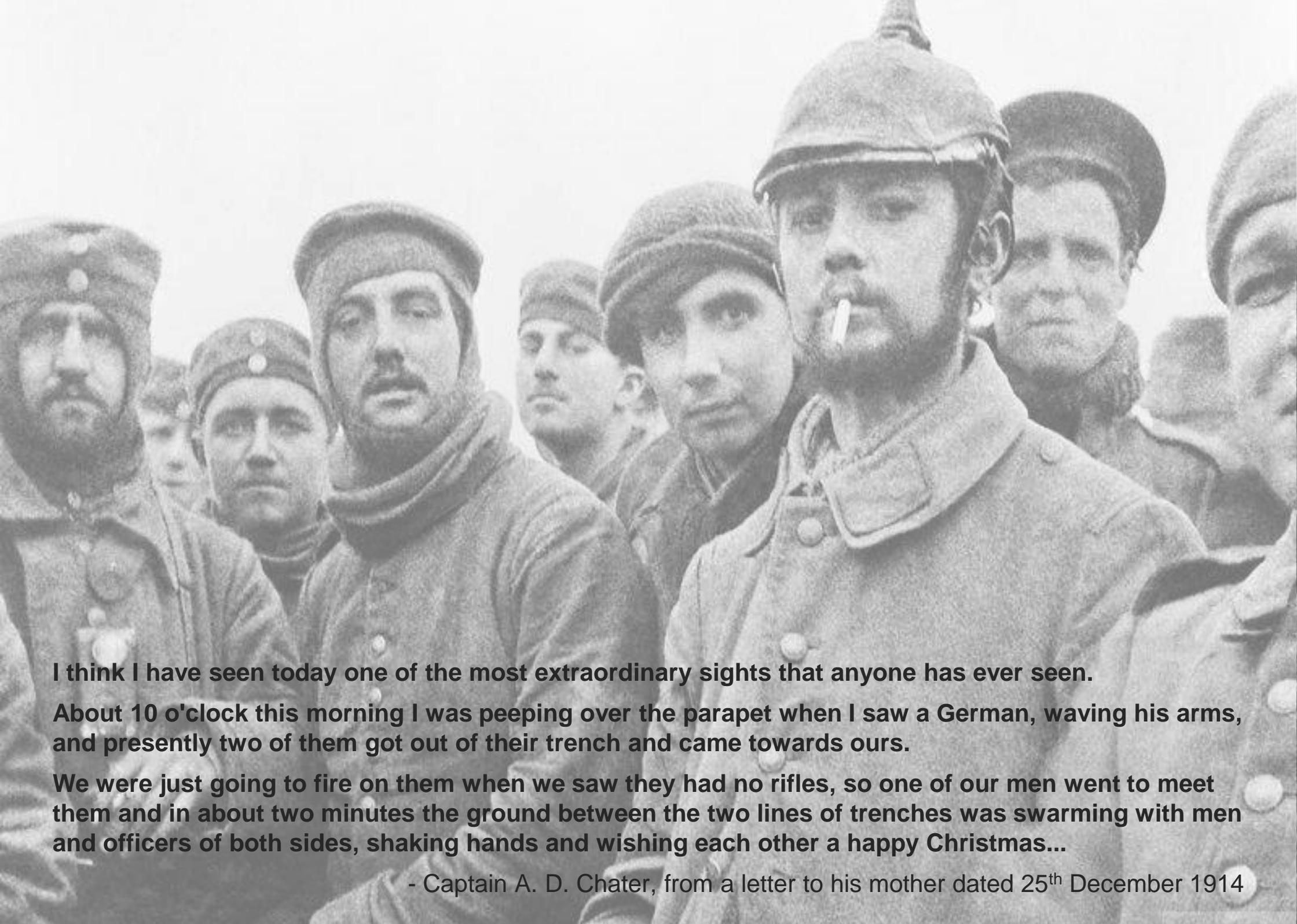
So there I lay with the wounded man; made a pillow for his head; whispered words of comfort...and thought about Christmas...

And no doubt it was just the fact of its being Christmas that saved us, for the Frenchies had evidently been seeking to celebrate the Feast with alcohol and were now loudly singing 'The Marseillaise', 'God Save the King', a Christmas hymn... One bellowed across: 'You want come to Paris; you not come!' Our own men sang Christmas hymns... When one gave a solo, those opposite clapped in applause. The Frenchmen kept as quiet as mice while they listened to the Christmas hymns...

The enemy close in front of us has moved away, and does not trouble to send out a patrol to see whether anything is happening in no-man's-land.

- Gotthold Von Rohden, from a private letter dated 26th December 1914



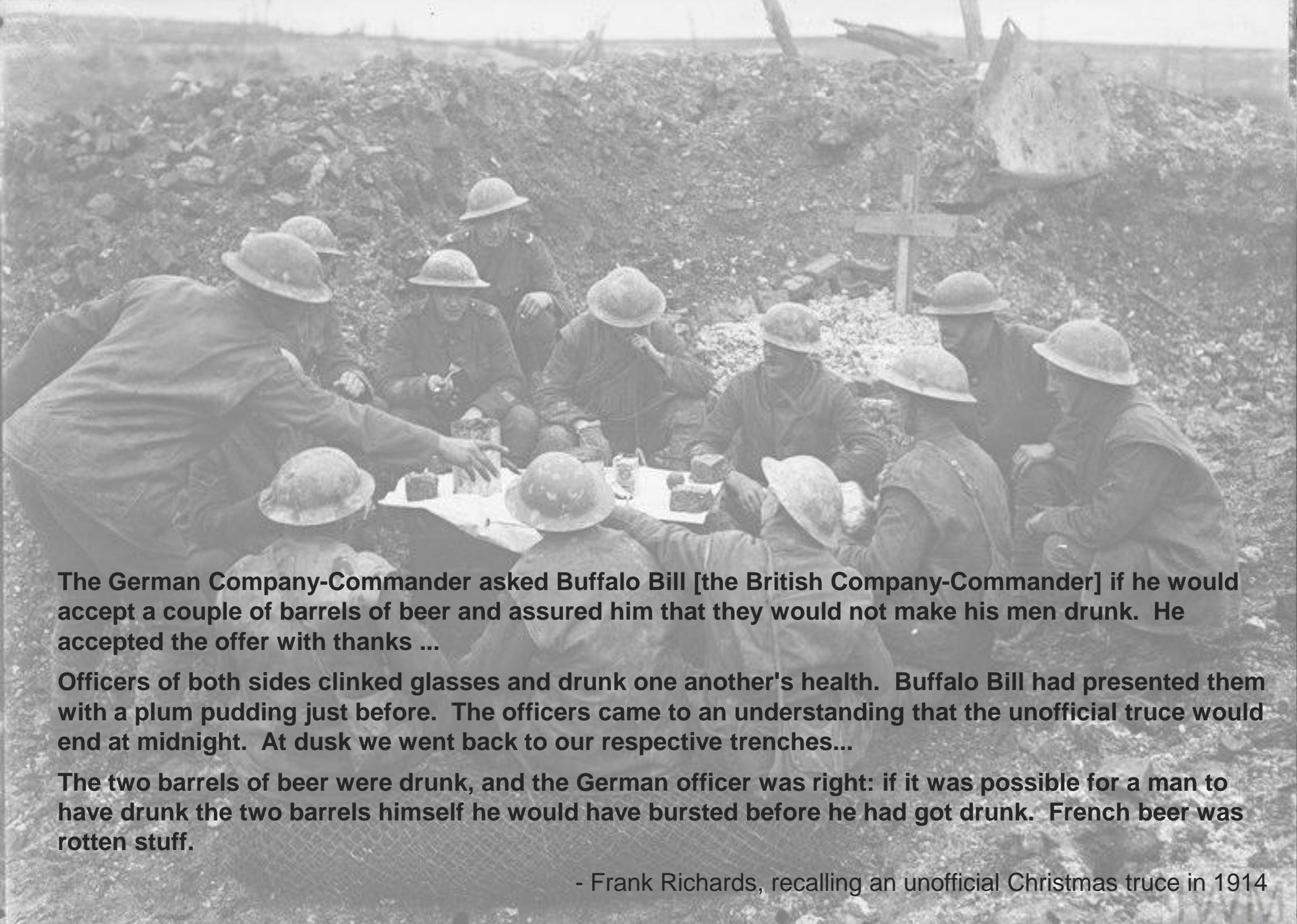


I think I have seen today one of the most extraordinary sights that anyone has ever seen.

About 10 o'clock this morning I was peeping over the parapet when I saw a German, waving his arms, and presently two of them got out of their trench and came towards ours.

We were just going to fire on them when we saw they had no rifles, so one of our men went to meet them and in about two minutes the ground between the two lines of trenches was swarming with men and officers of both sides, shaking hands and wishing each other a happy Christmas...

- Captain A. D. Chater, from a letter to his mother dated 25th December 1914



The German Company-Commander asked Buffalo Bill [the British Company-Commander] if he would accept a couple of barrels of beer and assured him that they would not make his men drunk. He accepted the offer with thanks ...

Officers of both sides clinked glasses and drunk one another's health. Buffalo Bill had presented them with a plum pudding just before. The officers came to an understanding that the unofficial truce would end at midnight. At dusk we went back to our respective trenches...

The two barrels of beer were drunk, and the German officer was right: if it was possible for a man to have drunk the two barrels himself he would have bursted before he had got drunk. French beer was rotten stuff.

- Frank Richards, recalling an unofficial Christmas truce in 1914



At 8.30 I fired three shots in the air and put up a flag with 'Merry Christmas' on it, and I climbed on the parapet. He put up a sheet with 'Thank you' on it and the German Captain appeared on the parapet. We both bowed and saluted and got down into our respective trenches, and he fired two shots in the air, and the war was on again.

- Captain J C Dunn, Medical Officer in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, whose unit had received two barrels of beer from the German troops opposite, recalls how hostilities re-started on his section of the front after Christmas 1914

About 9.30 am a shot is fired from the direction of our company headquarters and a German falls. That started the war again...

We found out who fired the shot. It was a young fellow, about sixteen or seventeen years of age and a lance corporal... He got a couple of tots of buckshee rum and he got brave. It was a wonderful achievement to shoot down a man standing behind his trench unarmed and smoking, a man that placed his trust in us. The young lance corporal thought he had performed a wonderful deed.

We did not like the idea of being the first to break the mutual agreement. The honour of the British Army was at stake, and we lost it.

- Private Edward Roe, from a private letter dated 28th December 1914

