

**1914, by John French, *Viscount of Ypres***

## **CHAPTER XII**

### **THE BATTLE OF YPRES**

*Third Phase, November 1st to November 10th*

The importance attached by the Germans to the fighting of October 31st and November 1st was emphasised by the presence of the Emperor at Courtrai. An intercepted wireless message informed us that he was to go to Hollebeke, no doubt with the intention of heading a "triumphal entry" into Ypres.

Our airmen endeavoured to give him as warm a reception as possible, and we had information that his quarters were changed at least once in consequence of their activity.

I issued an Order of the Day to the troops, announcing the presence of the august visitor on our front, and urging them to give His Majesty a good demonstration of what the "contemptible little army" could do. Right splendidly did they respond.

Throughout the night of the 31-1st, the 2nd Cavalry Division was heavily attacked all along the Wytschaete-Messines ridge. The enemy gained a footing in the village of Wytschaete, broke through the line north of Messines and turned the left flank of the trenches

held by the London Scottish. With devoted gallantry the reserve company of this battalion made repeated charges with the bayonet, which checked the enemy's advance and enabled the battalion to hold the position. This it did until daylight. The Germans were then discovered to be well round both flanks, and a retirement became inevitable. This was carried out very steadily under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire in the direction of Wulverghem.

At 3 a.m. the 12th Lancers, the Northumberland Fusiliers, and the Lincolns made a counter-attack and re-established the original line. The cavalry fought on foot with the bayonet in the narrow streets of the village, and were reported to me as equal to the best infantry in such work.

By 6.30 a.m. the enemy had been reinforced, and were able to drive back the 2nd Cavalry Division with the troops attached and reoccupy Wytschaete. This loss, coupled with the enemy's seizure of the ridge north of Messines, rendered the latter place untenable by the 1st Cavalry Division. They retired slowly to an entrenched line north of Wulverghem.

Somewhat the same kind of situation arose here now as on the day before at Gheluvelt. Since the night of October 30th the Cavalry Corps and attached troops had been holding on to the Wytschaete—Messines ridge against overwhelming numbers of the enemy. They were utterly exhausted, and the French marching to their succour were still some way off.

At 5 a.m. two battalions of the 2nd Corps were despatched from Bailleul to Neuve-Église, and further reinforcements were ordered to follow them an hour later. These troops had only themselves just got back into reserve, after a most trying and exhausting experience on the right of our line lasting for nearly three weeks. They also stood in dire need of rest, but they were the only reserves of any kind at my disposal.

At 10 a.m. on the 1st, the exhausted 2nd Cavalry Division was retiring on Mont Kemmel, which they were in no condition to hold if the enemy pressed on vigorously after them. But once again, as on the 31st, the situation was saved by a desperate effort. Some battalions of French infantry attacked on the left of the 2nd Cavalry Division and checked the enemy's advance, which was finally held off until, some time later, the head of the 16th French Army Corps arrived and regained the western end of Wytschaete.

The 3rd Corps had reported early in the morning that the position of its left flank was rendered precarious by the loss of Messines. With the support furnished by the 2nd Corps, as narrated above, Pulteney was able to draw back his left towards Neuve-Église and form a flank facing north, covering the important artillery position on Hill 63. This move had threatened in flank the German advance on the Wytschaete—Messines ridge, and assisted greatly in securing the retirement of the cavalry in good order.

At 12.15 p.m. the situation was as follows:—

The 1st Cavalry Division occupied an entrenched position running to the east and north-east of Wulverghem, in touch on the right with the reconstructed line of the 3rd Corps and on the left with the 2nd Cavalry Division.

After the successful advance of the French, the 2nd Cavalry Division was drawn in to the south of Wytschaete, and its left was in touch with the 16th French Corps holding the western border of that village.

The 1st Corps was also heavily attacked on November 1st. On the front held by the 1st Division, part of the 1st Brigade was driven from its trenches; but the position was retaken by counter-attack, and in the evening the line held was the same as on October 31st. The 1st Division was much exhausted and weakened by heavy losses. The 7th Division remained only 2,000 strong. The 3rd Cavalry Division was given temporarily to the 1st Corps, and assisted to hold the position. The 9th French Corps on the left of our 1st Corps was unable to make any progress during the day.

Information came in towards evening that the enemy was again massing against Gheluvelt. I went to Vlamertinghe to consult with Foch and d'Urbal, who told me that nine French battalions and some batteries would reach Ypres early on the morning of the 2nd. Foch promised me that he would at once dispatch two battalions of Zouaves to support Haig's centre.

Reviewing the situation as it presented itself on October 31st and November 1st, 1914, I believe that the vital interests of the British Empire were in great danger on both these days. That is to say, the whole coast-line from Havre to Ostend was within an ace of falling into the hands of the enemy.

In recalling the fateful hours of those two wonderful days and nights, I think we were perhaps in the greatest danger between 2 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Sunday, November 1st. Had the French 16th Corps arrived only an hour later than it did, the German advance from the line Wytschaete—Messines would have gained such volume, strength, and impetus, that nothing could have saved Mont Kemmel from falling into their hands. A vital wedge would have been driven into the very centre of our line.

The enormous numerical and artillery superiority of the Germans must be remembered. If they had turned the situation to full account, we should have seen all the French, British, and Belgian troops lying to the north of an east and west line through Mont Kemmel, cut off and hemmed against the coast.

The greatest threat of disaster with which we were faced in 1914 was staved off by the devoted bravery and endurance displayed by the Cavalry Corps under a commander, General Allenby, who handled them throughout with consummate skill. The same high praise must be given to those two redoubtable divisional leaders, Hubert Gough and de Lisle.

The cavalry was admirably supported and helped by Shaw and Egerton with the splendid battalions of infantry which composed the brigades they commanded, and none of us will ever forget how those French battalions on the left of the 2nd Cavalry Division checked the enemy by their gallant and determined advance at the most critical moment.

It is no disparagement, however, to the other troops engaged if I lay stress on the fact that it was the cavalry alone who, for more than a fortnight previously, had been disputing foot by foot every yard of the ground to the River Lys. They had fought day and night with the utmost tenacity, and the battles of October 31st and November 1st were but the climax to a long and bitter spell of heroic effort.

For the information of non-military readers, it is necessary for me to explain that a cavalry division fighting on foot is at a great disadvantage as compared with an infantry division. When horses cannot be used in the fighting, they have still to be looked after, and this takes many men away from the fighting line. A cavalry division consists ordinarily of three brigades, but when employed in the trenches they get little more than half that number into the firing line. They have nothing like the same "gun power" as an infantry division. But the mobility of the cavalry arm will always be found to compensate in large degree for these manifest disadvantages. Taking into account the losses they had suffered, they can hardly have opposed 2,000

rifles to the onslaught of what has been computed at more than two German Army Corps.

Of late years our custom has been to train our cavalry to fight on foot, and in the present war we have reaped the fruit of this wise policy. But the instinct which must be inculcated in the horse soldier to regard his horse as his chief reliance, must always disqualify him to some extent for the *rôle* which our cavalry were called upon to fulfil throughout the momentous issues in the history of the war of which this chapter treats. I may mention in passing that it was this same cavalry spirit, or instinct, with which the British cavalry is so strongly imbued, which enabled them to show to such splendid advantage in the mounted combats of the earlier phases of the war.

I must add a few words as to the fine part played in the fighting of November 1st by the Oxfordshire Hussars and the London Scottish. They were the first Territorial troops who fought in the war.

After disembarking at Dunkirk the Oxfordshire Hussars took part in the important operations connected with the Belgian retreat from Antwerp, and rendered most valuable aid in the defence of the Wytschaete—Messines ridge when that piece of ground was held with such marvellous tenacity by the Cavalry Division against overwhelming odds.

As for the London Scottish, their services on these two days are well summarised in a memorandum sent in to me by Allenby.

"The London Scottish," he wrote, "came under my orders on the evening of October 30th, 1914, and were detailed to the support of the 2nd Cavalry Division on the following morning. They went into action at 10 a.m., October 31st, with a strength of 26 officers and 786 men, and occupied trenches in conjunction with the 4th Cavalry Brigade. They held these trenches throughout the day, being subjected from time to time to heavy artillery and machine-gun fire. From 9 p.m. onwards during the night October 31st—November 1st, the Germans attacked the trenches of the London Scottish continuously, and at 2 a.m. they succeeded in turning the left in large numbers. The situation was restored at the point of the bayonet by the Reserve Company. By daylight on November 1st the Germans had, however, turned both flanks, and it became necessary to retire. The retirement was directed on Wulverghem, and was carried out steadily under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. At 8 a.m. the same morning, the London Scottish went forward again to take their places in the trenches alongside the 1st Cavalry Division, and there they remained until relieved at dusk that evening.

"Throughout these operations, which lasted for two days, viz., October 31st and November 1st, the losses of the London Scottish amounted to 278, or about 34 per cent, of their strength. Rarely, if ever, have second line troops sustained unshaken so high a percentage of casualties.



"E. H. H. ALLENBY, Lieut.-Gen.,  
"Commanding Cavalry Corps."

I sent the following message to the Officer Commanding the London Scottish:—

"I wish you and your splendid regiment to accept my warmest congratulations and thanks for the fine work you did on Saturday. You have given a glorious lead and example to all Territorial Corps fighting in France."

I saw the battalion personally a few days later, and said a few words to the men on parade. How they had suffered was only too pathetically apparent. Whilst there was work to be done and an enemy to be held at bay no other thought filled any of their minds than to die fighting, if necessary, to the last man. But when these Territorials returned for a term of well-earned rest to their cantonments, with the excitement and danger behind them, a severe reaction came upon them. The heavy losses amongst their friends and comrades bowed them down with grief; for they necessarily lacked as yet the professional training and stoicism of men whose real business is war.

This exhibition of natural feeling only excited in me a deeper admiration for the splendid courage and endurance they had displayed when unsustained and unassisted by the influence of that iron discipline which only a long course of military training can inculcate. They were urged only by the spirit of *noblesse oblige*,

and the higher ideals which inspire all who have taken up arms against the Germans in this war.

On November 2nd, the 16th French Corps and Conneau's French Cavalry Division were holding the Wytschaete—Messines ridge, with a detachment of our 1st Cavalry Division supporting Conneau.

The troops who had fought so well on the 1st were absolutely tired out. They had suffered tremendous casualties and could not be counted on for the moment even as a reserve. They were withdrawn to rest and refit.

It was with great difficulty that the French troops were able to maintain themselves on the ridge. The Germans were very active, and the fight constantly swayed backwards and forwards. The western edge of the plateau and the outskirts of the villages marked the extreme limit of the Allied advance line.

For some days I had felt considerable anxiety as to the condition of the 1st Corps (1st and 2nd Divisions and the 7th Division).

I had constant messages from Haig asking that his tired troops might be given some rest after all their hard work; but I was driven almost to my wits' end to find means of giving him the relief he sought. His Chief of Staff (John Gough) came to my advanced Headquarters at Bailleul and discussed the subject fully with me.

I thought perhaps Foch might be able to help me; but when I went to interview him he said that, whilst the present crisis lasted, he could not spare a single man for this purpose. All I could do was to send two very tired brigades of the 2nd Corps up to Ypres on the morning of the 5th to relieve the 7th Division, who then came back into billets round Locre in a shattered condition.

The next day the remainder of the 2nd Corps (which was resting) followed to Ypres to afford what further relief was possible to the 1st Corps. The 2nd Corps was now scattered in detachments along the whole line, and the only reserves available were two or three lately arrived Territorial Battalions and the worn-out 7th Division, reduced to less than a brigade in strength.

Willcocks about this time felt anxiety as to the line his Indian troops were holding, and sent his Chief of Staff to me at Bailleul to ask if he could be reinforced. Under the conditions then existing, I was most anxious that the Indian Corps should hold its own without assistance and, after calling into consultation other officers of great Indian experience, I refused to do so, pointing out that he had four battalions of the 2nd Corps in close reserve behind him.

My faith in the Indian troops was justified, and a day or two later he reported that the Indians were doing well and that he was full of confidence in them.

On the night of the 3rd, I issued two Special Orders of the Day to the troops.

They ran as follows:—

"SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY.

"By Field-Marshal Sir John French, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., Commander-in-Chief, British Army in the Field.

"1. The sphere of operations over which the British Army in France has been operating is now much contracted and rendered more compact. Since October 21st it has been possible to keep a considerable force in general reserve.

"2. For several days past the enemy's activities against our front have been sensibly slackened, and it is quite possible that we may have entered upon the last stage of the great battle in which we have been engaged since October 11th.

"At this moment I am anxious to address a few words to the splendid troops I have the great honour to command.

"In view of the magnificent way in which the troops of the British Army have fought, the hardships they have had to endure, and the heavy losses they have suffered, it is right that all ranks, collectively and individually, should form a just and reasonable conception of the general situation and the object which we are endeavouring to attain.

"3. It is necessary for this purpose to realise in the first place the true limits of the theatre of war as a whole,

and then to take a comprehensive view of the entire course of operations as they have proceeded up to the present moment, in order to estimate the value of the results attained.

"4. It must clearly be understood that the operations in which we have been engaged embrace nearly all the Continent of Central Europe from East to West. The combined French, Belgian and British Armies in the West and the Russian Army in the East are opposed to the united forces of Germany and Austria acting as a combined Army between us.

"Our enemies elected at the outset of the war to throw the weight of their forces against the Armies in the West, and to detach only a comparatively weak force, composed of very few first-line troops and several Corps of the second and third line, to stem the Russian advance until the Western forces would be completely defeated and overwhelmed.

"5. The strength of our enemies enabled them from the outset to throw greatly superior forces against us in the West. This precluded the possibility of our taking a vigorous offensive, except when the miscalculations and mistakes made by their Commanders opened up special opportunities for a successful attack and pursuit.

"The Battle of the Marne was an example of this, as was also our advance from St. Omer and Hazebrouck to the line of the Lys at the commencement of this battle. The *rôle* which our Armies in the West have

consequently been called upon to fulfil has been to occupy strong defensive positions, holding the ground gained and inviting the enemy's attack; to throw these attacks back, causing the enemy heavy losses in his retreat, and following him up with powerful and successful counter-attacks to complete his discomfiture.

"6. While we have been thus engaged, the Russian Armies in the East, numbering some three to four millions of men, have had time to mobilise and concentrate their immense forces scattered over all parts of their vast Empire. Our Eastern Allies have already inflicted a series of crushing defeats on the Austro-German forces, and are now rapidly advancing on East Prussia and Silesia in great strength.

"7. The value and significance of the splendid *rôle* fulfilled since the commencement of hostilities by the Allied Forces in the West lies in the fact that at the moment when the Eastern Provinces of Germany are about to be overrun by the numerous and powerful Armies of Russia, nearly the whole of the active army of Germany is tied down to a line of trenches extending from the Fortress of Verdun on the Alsatian frontier round to the sea at Nieuport, east of Dunkirk (a distance of 260 miles), where they are held, much reduced in numbers and *morale*, by the successful action of our troops in the West.

"8. What the enemy will now do we cannot tell. Should they attempt to withdraw their troops to strengthen their weakened forces in the East, we must

follow them up and harass their retreat to the utmost of our power. If they make further futile attempts to break through our lines, they must be again thrown back with greater and greater loss.

"The Armies of Russia are at their Eastern gates and will very soon be devastating their country and overthrowing their Armies.

"The great fight which you have so splendidly maintained against superior numbers in the Western theatre will be decided and completed by our brave Allies in the East, and I think that we on this side have reason to hope that we have completed the most severe and arduous part of our task.

"We must, however, be prepared for all eventualities, and I feel sure no effort will be relaxed to meet with the same undaunted front any situation, however unexpected, which may arise.

"9. I have made many calls upon you, and the answers you have made to them have covered you, your regiments, and the Army to which you belong, with honour and glory.

"Your fighting qualities, courage and endurance have been subjected to the most trying and severe tests, and you have proved yourselves worthy descendants of the British soldiers of the past who have built up the magnificent traditions of the regiments to which you belong.

"You have not only maintained those traditions, but you have materially added to their lustre.

"It is impossible for me to find words to express my appreciation of the splendid services you have performed.

(Signed) "J. D. P. FRENCH, Field-Marshal,  
"Commander-in-Chief, The British Army in the Field.  
"November 2nd, 1914."

"SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY.

"By Field-Marshal Sir John French, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.,  
"K.C.M.G., Commander-in-Chief, British Army in the  
Field.

"General Headquarters,  
"November 2nd, 1914.

"The Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief has watched with the deepest admiration and solicitude the splendid stand made by the soldiers of His Majesty the King in their successful effort to maintain the forward position which they have won by their gallantry and steadfastness.

"He believes that no other Army in the world would show such tenacity, especially under the tremendous artillery fire directed against it.

"Its courage and endurance are beyond all praise. It is an honour to belong to such an Army.



"The Field-Marshal has to make one more call upon the troops. It is certainly only a question of a few days, and it may be of only a few hours, before, if they only stand firm, strong support will come, the enemy will be driven back, and in his retirement will suffer at their hands losses even greater than those which have befallen him under the terrific blows by which, especially during the last few days, he has been repulsed.

"The Commander-in-Chief feels sure that he does not make his call in vain.

(Signed) "J. D. P. FRENCH, Field-Marshal,  
"Commander-in-Chief,  
"The British Army in the Field."

During the early days of November, strong French reinforcements began to reach Ypres. The 20th French Corps detrained in that area on the 4th and 5th.

It was about this time that both our Intelligence Departments and that of the French became very optimistic on the subject of a great withdrawal of the Germans from the Western Front. The Russians were going on from one success to another, and large entrainments of German troops were reported at Roulers, Thourout, Tourcoing, and other places.

Whatever may have been really going on, our hopes were, as usual, doomed to disappointment, for the pressure on our front became greater and greater. But our eyes were always turned towards the East, and, as I

have explained in a former chapter, the Russian "Will-o'-the Wisp" continued to uphold us and keep our eyes centred upon it.

Several Territorial units now began to be landed in France, amongst others the Artists' Rifles, the Honourable Artillery Company, the Queen's Westminsters and Hertfordshire Territorials, and the Warwickshire Battery of Horse Artillery. I spent a morning riding about amongst them, and was deeply impressed by the wonderful spirit which pervaded them. The only thought they had was to prepare themselves in the shortest possible time to take their part in the fighting at the front.

The Hertfordshire Battalion was commanded by an old friend of mine, whom I can never think of as other than "Tom Brand," under which patronymic I had served with him for a long time both in peace and war, and learnt his great soldierlike qualities. By this time, however, he had succeeded his father, the famous Speaker of the House of Commons, and had become Viscount Hampden. I watched him at the time of which I am writing exercising to the full the power, which he possessed in an extraordinary degree, of instilling the real fighting spirit in the men he commanded and afterwards led with such great skill and gallantry.

It was a power which he possessed in common with his intimate friend, Lord Cavan, who fought for a long time side by side with him in France. These two men bore a strong resemblance to one another in the

marvellous influence they seemed to exercise over those under them. Both men struck me very much. Lord Cavan, like Hampden, was "a dug-out" and commanded first a brigade and then a division of the Guards, until he was selected for the command of an Army Corps, with the utmost gallantry and success.

Closely associated with my early recollections of the Territorials in France is the Artists' Rifles. They were, before the war, classified, with some few others, as an Officers' Training Corps. Our losses in officers in the campaign up to then had been prodigious, and I was trying to devise some means to fill up their ranks. What I saw of the Artists' Rifles and the men of which the Corps was composed, induced me to think of turning them to this purpose.

They were commanded by a most valuable and efficient officer, Colonel May. Him I consulted about it, and with his help an Officers' Training School was established, which was the first of many which have since sprung into existence. The Artists' Rifles were instrumental in quickly meeting some of our pressing needs in this important respect, and may be said to have laid the foundation of that Officers' School of War whose ramifications were soon to extend not only behind all the fighting lines, but throughout the United Kingdom. It is interesting to recall the fact that the conversion of certain picked Territorial battalions into Officers' Training Corps before the war was another of Lord Haldane's brilliant conceptions.

Some fine work was done on the evening of the 6th by Kavanagh's 7th Cavalry Brigade, Cavan's 4th Guards Brigade and Lawford's 22nd Brigade of the 7th Division. Moncey's detachment of French troops, posted on the right of the 1st Corps, had been driven back over the canal, and a serious position was created.

Our troops counter-attacked with great effect, Lawford's Brigade (2nd Batt. The Queen's, 2nd Batt. R. Warwickshire Regt., 1st Batt. R. Welsh Fusiliers, and 1st Batt. S. Staffs Regt.) capturing a good many prisoners and machine guns. The counter-attack was successful, and the situation was restored.

We paid dearly for this success, however, in the loss of some very valuable lives. Amongst others Gordon Wilson, commanding the Blues, and Hugh Dawnay, commanding the 2nd Life Guards, were killed. Wilson was an excellent cavalry leader. He had done splendid work with the 3rd Cavalry Division ever since they landed, and his death left a big gap.

Up to three or four days before his death, Hugh Dawnay had been my liaison officer with the 1st Corps. The occasion of his going back to his regiment arose in this way. The 2nd Life Guards were getting very weak in officers, and he had an idea that he ought to be with them. He felt this very deeply, and told me so in a conversation we had together on the subject. The first time he spoke to me about it I told him that, whilst I sympathised with all he said, yet I considered it was his

duty to remain where he was. I reminded him of the highly important work he was doing so well, and told him that it would be most difficult to replace him in that work, whereas it would be comparatively easy to put his regiment right as regards officers.

The next day he came back to me and repeated his request with great earnestness. He told me he could never be happy or contented in his mind if at this juncture he did not take his place beside his brother officers in his old regiment. It would indeed have been difficult for any soldier to refuse such a request, or fail to understand and enter into Dawnay's feelings.

I felt that it was weak of me to give way to him, but I did so on the understanding that his absence was only to be temporary. Of course, he might easily have been killed in the performance of his Staff duties, nevertheless when I heard he had fallen I felt that, in the interests of the service, I had done wrong in allowing him to go.

It is necessary to steel one's heart against any kind of sentiment when conducting a great war, and in the loss of one of the finest and most valuable young Staff Officers I have ever come across, I learnt a lesson never to be forgotten.

On several subsequent occasions similar requests were made to me without avail, notably in the case of my friend Clive of the Grenadiers, whose services and help I can never recall without admiration and gratitude.

On the night of the 6th came the information that the Austrians had been badly routed and driven across the San river by the Russians. Up went our hopes again like quick-silver; another week gone and we expected to see the Germans on our front weakened and reduced by the necessity of sending troops to save Silesia.

Our hopes and plans were fully discussed at a meeting held on Sunday, November 8th, at Foch's Headquarters at Cassel. Foch was in one of his most sanguine moods, and I must confess to having strongly felt the infection of his hopeful disposition. Our military barometer, however, went up and down as swiftly and suddenly as that of a ship in a typhoon.

What filled my immediate thoughts was the dire necessity of relieving the tired-out troops in the Ypres salient, and this was the point I impressed most strongly upon Foch who, it seemed to me, found it difficult to talk of anything but "*Attaque! Attaque! Attaque!*"

He gave me some help in this matter; indeed, as much as he could, I feel sure, but not before most of those gallant troops were called upon to withstand the new and terrible onslaught which I shall describe in the next chapter.

On the 9th we received the following gracious message from His Majesty the King:—

"To Sir John French,  
"Expeditionary Force. November 9th, 1914.

"The splendid pluck, spirit and endurance shown by my troops in the desperate fighting which has continued for so many days against vastly superior forces fills me with admiration. I am confident in the final results of their noble efforts under your able command.

"GEORGE, R.I."

The following reply was sent:—

"To His Majesty the King,  
"Buckingham Palace,  
"London. November 9th, 1914.

"Your Majesty's most gracious message has been received by the officers and men of Your Majesty's Army in France with feelings of the deepest gratitude and pride. We beg to be allowed to express to Your Majesty our most faithful devotion and unalterable determination to uphold the highest traditions of Your Majesty's Army and carry the campaign through to a victorious end.

"FRENCH."

Throughout the phase of the battle narrated in this chapter, fighting went on with varying success all along the line from La Bassée to the sea. Ploegsteert Wood was the scene of many violent engagements. The 6th Division and 19th Brigade to the south were constantly at grips with the enemy. All along the valley of the Douve and the Wytschaete—Messines ridge the enemy was continuously active. But the point in the line

which caused me the greatest anxiety was the dent between the 1st (British) and the 16th (French) Corps at the canal to the north of Hollebeke. It is not too much to say that only by the display of the greatest gallantry and endurance on the part of the 3rd Cavalry Division and the other troops engaged at that point was the enemy prevented from getting dangerously near our communications.