

note of
man's letter

28-Jan-61

LT COL FRANCIS FARQUHAR / by Lt. Col. H. Niven.

A word about our First Commanding Officer, Lt Col Francis Farquhar, "Fanny" to his friends. Of the Coldstream Guards, a very great soldier, known to the Regiment as the KCO (Kind Commanding Officer). We shall never know to what heights he would have risen to in his profession. He had BRAINS PLUS. Just think, the Senior Field Marshall of the British Army when he was given the Governor-Generalship of Canada, had no hesitation in choosing Farquhar as his Military Secretary for this important post. Remember the Duke of Connaught had access to all the War Office files and could choose the best.

Farquhar had played an important part in the Boxer Rebellion and had won the DSO, in south Africa. He was Military Attache to the Belgian Government and knew every road in Belgium. He was also Military Attache to Paris and spoke French fluently.

Two days after we occupied our first trenches in Belgium he submitted the line we should occupy, but it was turned down and six months later the British occupied Farquhar's line and were successful on it.

I'll never forget the morning in Winchester he sent for me and told me to take over the Transport. I told him I would be delighted, but, I said, four good officers had lost their jobs as Transport Officers and I did not want to be the fifth. Farquhar said ^{Hammie Gault} Hammie wanted me to take it, and that I would have a free hand with the NCO's and men, and could make any changes I wanted. Next morning I found a heavy transport team had not been watered and fed so I asked the Sgt and Cpl if they had been fed and they both said "yes" (I had been watching since 5:30 A.M.).

I told them both to go to their tents and consider themselves under arrest. I told the RSM and they both attended CO's orders: the charge "Lying to their Commanding Officer", I was their CO. I proved my case. The Sgt was asked by Farquhar if he had anything to say and the Sgt said he would like to resign and leave the Regiment. He left that afternoon.

In France, after our fourth tour of the trenches, a man was up before the Colonel on request. He wanted the CO to give him 500 francs to go to Ypres. Farquhar told Buller to give him the money and two days leave. It spread all over the camp like wildfire and Farquhar was the "KCO" from that day for all ranks. No other man however, repeated that request.

He was the Greatest Soldier I have ever known or ever will know.