

## CAPTAIN BRETTINGHAM-MOORE

### Distinguished War Record

#### Capture of Germans

Although Captain H. M. Brettingham-Moore, who is seeking election for the Denison seat in the interests of the Nationalist party at the Federal elections, has not enjoyed previous Parliamentary experience he was born in a political atmosphere, and has always been a keen student of public life. He is a son of the late Mr. George Edward Brettingham-Moore, who for many years was the member for West Hobart in the Tasmanian House of Assembly. Captain Brettingham-Moore possesses a distinguished war record, mention of which is to be found in Captain C. E. W. Bean's official history of Australia in the Great War. In civil life he is a member of the Tasmanian Bar, and practises in the legal firm of Dobson, Mitchell and Allport.

Captain C. E. W. Bean, the official historian of the Australian Forces, dealing with the advance to Moquet Farm in his book, "The Australian Imperial Forces in France," draws a vivid picture of the incident for which Captain Brettingham-Moore was awarded the D.S.O. for conspicuous gallantry on the field. He says:

"The attack of the 15th Battalion succeeded. The trench it was assaulting was 200 yards distant, and had for 10 days been in the German front line. It had been defended with wire, but this had been sufficiently cut. The 15th advanced in three waves, all four companies in line, adopting the tactics already practised by the 4th Brigade in the back area. In spite of the barrage they were met, as they started, by heavy fire, by which one officer, Captain Brettingham-Moore was wounded. Moreover, by reason of excitement or want of instruction, or possibly through some battery being late in lifting its fire, they ran into their own barrage, Lieutenant Plane being terribly hit as they reached the objective. On the left, where the British were, three or four enemy machine-guns were then firing; but on the rest of the front the Germans were taken by surprise. Some were shot, but the rest ran, Brettingham-Moore following those on the left and shooting one after another with his revolver. Having passed a trench containing a number of the enemy, who waved a white rag, he caught a fleeing German, and induced him to tell them that they would be spared if they surrendered. Thus, with only the wounded Plane and about 30 other Australians, he found himself in possession of the left half of Park Lane, and 23 prisoners.

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jective of Germans. The right quickly reported itself in its objective. Left and right were out of touch with each other, but their patrols, examining parts of the trenches between, found them empty, except for the dead and wounded of the enemy. Men of the centre companies were eventually collected, and set to dig out the two O. G. trenches running back to the rear.

"By 10.30 Colonel Cannan knew that his flanking companies had succeeded. On the left, however, where the British were operating, the fire of small arms could still be heard, and shortly before midnight Colonel Cannan received a message from Captain Harwood, of the 16th, whose companies had moved to the old front line on that flank, that the enemy still held Point 78. Patrols and bombers also found that the short intermediate trench to Point 96 was in German hands. This knot of trenches had during the previous day been the centre of a fierce local struggle. Thus the conditions in which the Suffolks had to attack were more difficult than the Australians realised. The attacking British also probably knew that two previous assaults on these machine-guns had been mown down. Nevertheless, according to an eyewitness, they advanced simultaneously with the Australian, and one or two on the right reached the objective near Brettingham-Moore, but the centre and left were again swept down by machine-gun fire. The left of the 15th was thus in the air, and, upon hearing of this, Cannan at 12.45 sent to the commander of the Suffolks a request that another endeavour should be made to connect with the Australians in the captured Park Lane. The reply was that the attempt would be made by bombing up Ration Trench. The English colonel afterwards reported that this thrust also had failed to reach Point 78, but had approached it closely, and urged that the Australians should hold on in Park Lane, contending that the Germans between them were trapped. German accounts afford some evidence that the situation of these Germans was indeed precarious, but hardly so precarious as Brettingham-Moore's would have been after daylight, with no communication to his rear and active machine-guns on his flank. Cannan accordingly sent Brettingham-Moore a message to withdraw. The latter had meanwhile discovered that a partly sunken road on his right offered a moderately safe avenue of communication in the dark. He had thus sent back messengers, and in answer to his request for reinforcement received a handful of bombers from the 16th, under Lieutenant Wadge. Consequently, though himself thrice wounded, he ignored Cannan's first message to retire. At daybreak, however, he received another, with which he complied, and, making his prisoners carry Lieutenant Plane and the other wounded, brought out the whole of his party with its Lewis guns and prisoners along the sunken road."

Captain Brettingham-Moore

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Captain Brettingham-Moore enlisted in 1915, and served in Egypt and France. He was mentioned in despatches for conspicuous gallantry around Pozieres on August 8 and 9, 1916. Being invalided in 1917 from the Australian Imperial Force on account of wounds, he spent several years on a pastoral property in Tasmania before he was able to continue in his profession as a solicitor. He is a graduate of the Tasmanian University.

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