

**‘M’ Series mines - 17 April 1915:**

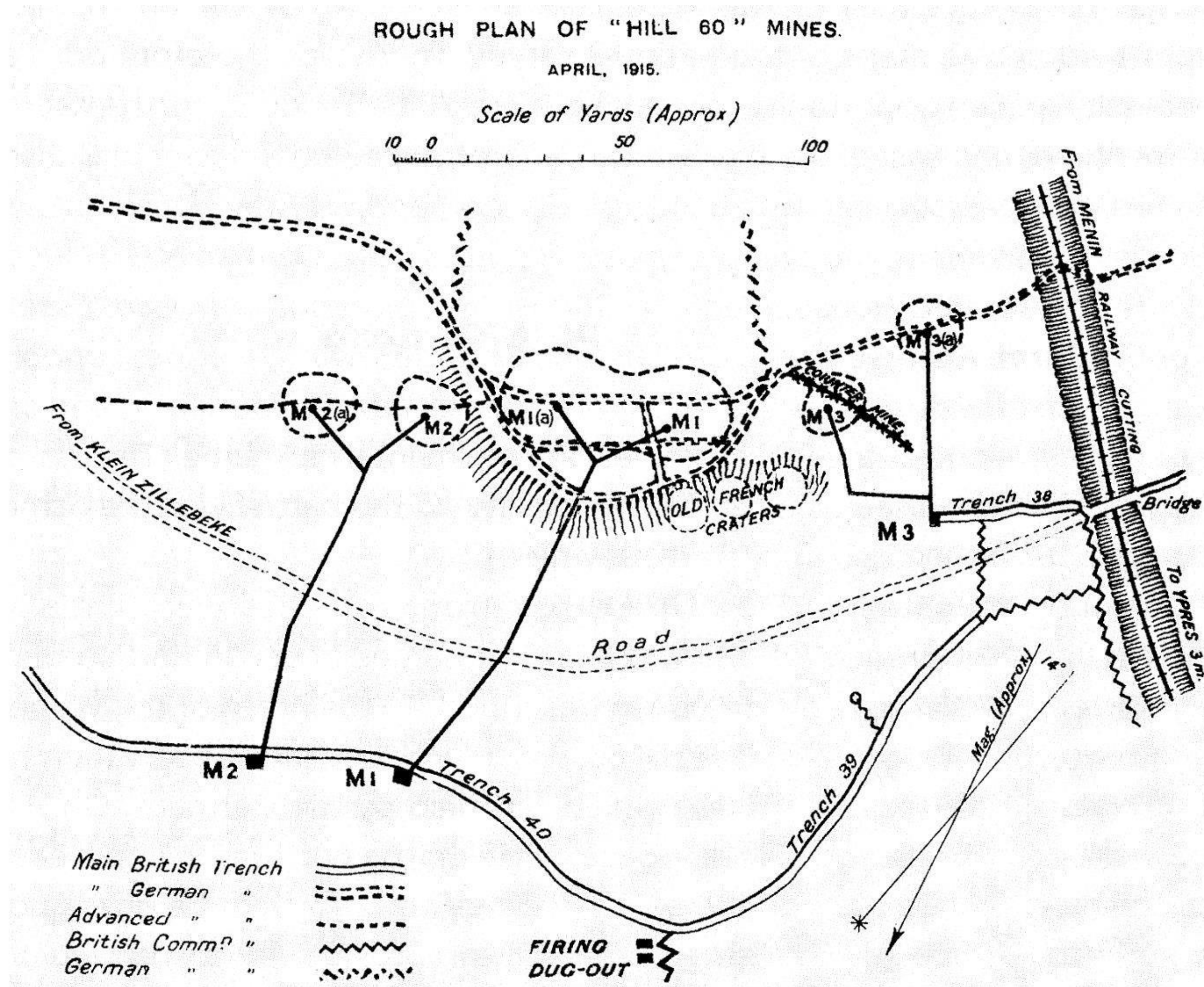
The hill was captured on 10th December 1914 by the Germans. The British, almost immediately after they arrived, began digging tunnels under the hill and thus the German positions. This was one of the first tasks of the newly created 171st Tunnelling Company (under the command of Norton Griffiths).

By Saturday 10th April, digging at Hill 60 was just about finished and six mines were ready for charging. M1 and M2 ran singly and roughly straight out under no man's land for over 100 yards. Then, just before reaching the German trench, each become two by forking right and left. These arms, just a few yards long, were then enlarged to receive the gunpowder.

The two other tunnels, M3 and M3A, which had been in peril from German countermining, were charged as they were, no enlargement taking place. A charge of 2,700 pounds was placed in each M1 chamber; M2 would receive two charges of 2000 pounds with M3 receiving only 500 pounds each - because of the risk of German discovery.

Zero hour was set for 19:00 hour on the 17th April 1915. At 19:05, three officers of the 171st Tunnelling Company hit the plunger; the resulting explosions ripped the heart out of the hill over a period of some 10 seconds. It flung debris almost 300 feet into the air and scattered it for a further 300 yards in all directions.

One British soldier who peered over the parapet was violently hit in the face by a piece of debris and was killed. As mud-lumps, sandbags, trench timbers and shattered German bodies were still spinning in the air, a huge Allied bombardment commenced saturating the German lines with fire and shrapnel.



British plan of the mines laid and blown under the German position on Hill 60, south-east of Ypres, just before the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915. The British front line (at bottom) is Trenches 38, 39 and 40 (Second Army, and its constituent corps, lettered and numbered its trenches from right to left – the usual military practice), and the mine shafts, galleries and charge chambers are M1, M2 and M3. (*Work of the Royal Engineers in the European War 1914-19: Military Mining*, Chatam, 1922)