

10th.(S) Bn.The Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Narrative of Operations. from  
7th to 9th Nov.1918.

Ref.Maps 51.N.W.and 51.N.E. ....

At 2030 hours on 6-11-18 verbal instructions were received from G.O.C.Brigrade to carry out an attack with unlimited objectives from a position West of River HOGNEAU in H.15.b.and H.9.d.in a North Easterly direction . Five maps were then given to the Battalion shewing the inter-Battalion boundaries and the extent of artillery support. At 2245 hours written Operation Orders for the attack were received. The attack was covered by a thin artillery and machine gun barrage as far as the high ground immediately East of the MONS-BAVAY Road in H.12.a.a.c. after which all support ceased.

At 2300 hours the Battalion marched from the village of BRY to take up its position of assembly. Guides from the Battalion then in the front line were met at the Church in LA FLAMENORIE to guide Coys.to the road running North and South in H.9.c.,which was then the front line. From there it was intended that Coys.would filter down to their position of assembly 60 yards West of river HOGNEAU in H.15.b.and H.9.d. The guides supplied had no knowledge of the ground and were of no assistance. Coys.had to get to their approximate position of assembly on their own, which was a difficult task as the ground was new to them and the night very dark and wet. Zero hour was fixed for 0600 hours on 7th and Coys.were barely in position when the barrage opened.

The river was to have been crossed by bridges to be erected by 82nd.Filed Coy.R.E.between Zero and Zero plus 5 mins. They were erected, but were of little assistance as they either broke or collapsed as soon as the troops stepped on to them. The river had to be crossed by wading across; the water reaching above the knees. Our artillery which ought to have opened on the line of the railway East of the river fell short and caused a number of casualties to our forward waves who had not yet left their position of assembly West of the river.

At Zero plus 5 mins.the Battn.moved to the attack and advanced under a thin artillery and machine gun barrage to the ridge immediately East of the MONS-BAVAY Road in H.12.a.a.c., which was gained at the scheduled time, 0600 hours. During this advance our artillery occasionally fired short and casualties were again incurred from it. From here onwards the attack proceeded without artillery support. On gaining the high ground East of the BOIS BRUDIAN in I.8., it was decided in conjunction with the Battn.on our right, to hold and consolidate a position. The line taken up by the Battn.was along the ridge from I.8.a.6.8.through I.8. central to I.14.c.3.6. which was held by three companies in the front line with one company in support on ridge from I.13.b.6.5 to I.13.d.6.8. The Battn.Hd.Qrs.was established in Chau de Warnicamp in I.13.a.6.7. Our casualties up to 1200 hours 7-11-18 were

HALT

|          | <u>K.</u> | <u>W.</u> | <u>M.</u> | <u>M bld.W.</u> | <u>S.</u> |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Officers |           | 1.        |           |                 |           |
| O.R's.   | 5.        | 44.       | 1.        | 10.             | 2.        |

The resistance put up by the enemy's infantry and artillery was slight during the period of our advance, but from 1200 hours to 2000 hours his artillery became very active. The village of HOUDAIN and the high ground in I.13.a. received special attention. The shells came from a Northerly direction - opposite the front of the 11th.Division on our left where no advance had been made. From 2000 hours onwards the night passed quietly. The troops had rather a trying time on account of the wet weather and the heavy

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heavy going. They had been on the move practically without a stop from the time they left BRY at 2300 hours previous night and had covered a distance of roughly 11000 yards.

The two sniping guns attached to the Battn. did good work in keeping pace with our advance in spite of the difficulties in the way of heavy transport.

At 0230 hours 8-11-18 orders were received for a further advance to be made at 0600 hours, the ultimate objective which was a position East of the village of MALPLAQUET. No artillery or machine gun support was given as the guns had not been able to keep pace with our advance.

At 0600 hours the Battn. again moved to the attack on a two Coy. front, with B Coy. on left and C Coy. on right and A and B Coys. in support respectively. Little opposition was met with until the final objective East of MALPLAQUET was reached, when considerable opposition from machine guns in houses at J.1.a.7.2., J.1.b.15.80 (French Customs House) and a small copse at K J.1.b.5.8. forced our Coys. to take to the shelter of the sunken road running along the East and West grid line between J.1.b.2.4., from which they were unable to move to cover their correct frontage, viz., J.1.b.0.0. to D.25.d.3.0.

At 1330 hours the two sniping guns attached to the Battn. and the T.M.'s were turned on to the houses in which the machine guns were and an attempt was made to pass the left support Coy. through to cover the left half of the Battn. front. The Coy. was unable to get forward on account of the heavy machine gun fire and had to return to the sunken road, which accounts for the following congested dispositions on the left of the Battn.

Two Coys. along sunken road from J.1.a.8.9. to J.1.b.5.1.

One " from J.1.c.8.9. to J.1.c.8.6.

One " " J.1.d.4.7. to J.7.b.6.9.

At 1500 hours orders were received to push on to the line of the JENLY-MAUBEUGE Railway in J.4. Our right front line Coy. (C) succeeded in gaining their objective. A little opposition was encountered in the BOIS DE LA LANIERE in J.9.b. where two machine guns were captured, but our left Coys. were exhausted unable to advance on account of heavy machine gun fire. At 1545 hours verbal instructions were received from G.O.C. Brigade to stop trying to advance the left Coys. and to form a defensive flank to protect our right Coy. who were then 3000 yards in advance of the remainder of the Battn. On account of the low strength of Coys. it was impossible to hold the ground in any strength. The personnel of Battn. Hd. Qrs. were utilised and the defensive flank formed at 0200 hours from J.1.b.0.0. along L'ERELLE River in J.2.c. - most northerly of ridge through wood in J.3.c. to J.4. central.

At 0300 hours orders were received to withdraw all Coys. to positions of assembly in J.7.b. and d. from which an attack was going to be launched at 0730 hours in a northerly direction to secure the northern boundary of the Divisional front.

All Coys. were accordingly withdrawn. The two left Coys. assembled just north of the L'ERELLE river in J.7.b. and the two right Coys. south of the river in J.8.a. At 0720 hours the Battn. moved to the attack and gained the northern Divisional boundary without resistance.

The 11th. Division on our left attacked at the same time in an easterly direction and the 24th. Division on our right in a north easterly direction. As the boundaries converged on to the railway East of AULNOIS the troops of the 18th. Division were pinched out. At 1000 hours the Battalion withdrew to billets in MALPLAQUET where the night 9th./10th. was spent. On morning of 10th. the Battn. was withdrawn from the line and marched to BETTRECHIES. Our casualties to 1200 hours on 9th. were:-

K. W. S.

Off. 3.

O.R. 5.

It is suggested that if two of the Divisional Mounted Scouts could be attached to each Battn. in the front line they would be of great assistance in carrying messages back to Bde. Hd. Qrs. promptly.

Lt. Col. Commanding.