

Headquarters 1st Brigade.

Reference Maps 62c SE. and 62b 44 S.W. 1/20000.
Report on Operations 17/9/18 to 24/9/18.

Night 16/17th. The Battalion relieved the 1st Battn Gloster Regt in line on right of the Brigade Sector.

17th

On the morning of the 17th in conjunction with operations carried out by the Division on the right flank, the Battalion front was straightened by the right Company establishing a post on the high ground in M.25.C.

18th.

By 4.45am the Battalion was formed up on the jumping off line preparatory to attack.

"O" Coy.	Left Front Company
"D" "	Right Front Company
"A" "	Support Company
"B" "	Reserve Company.

At 5.30 am the Battalion advanced to the attack in a thick mist and rain. No land marks were visible.

Battalion Headquarters moved forward at ZERO and was established at M.25.c/4 4.8..

First objective should have been reached by 6.24 am.

Right Company reported objective obtained.

Left Company reported that it was held up by very heavy machine gun fire in the Valley in M.20.

An officers patrol and scouts were sent out to endeavour to locate the position of the Right Front and Support Companies, but were unsuccessful in doing so.

The Reserve Company (B Coy) was sent up at 8 am. to enter first

objective on the left of the Left Front Company, which, as stated, was held up in M.20.d. and to establish touch with right Front Company,

and with it to continue the advance to 2nd objective. Left Front Company (C Coy.) was ordered to move forward in reserve.

Reserve Company (B Coy) entered the First Objective VILLEMAY TRENCH about M.20. b.7.6. and secured the Battalions First Objective.

Right being M.21.c.8.5. The Enemy immediately counter attacked,

debouching from ARBOUSIERS WOOD and an unnamed wood in M.21.a. under

cover from heavy machine gun fire from high ground in M.21.d. which compelled

completely enfiladed the position held by the Company and they were

forced to give ground in spite of making a strong resistance, during

which the Company Commander Capt.R.M.Leake M.O. was killed.

The company was again led to the attack and re-established itself

but was unable to hold the whole of the position.

D.Coy, the right front company was located in M.27.a. and C with the Support Company (A.Coy.) in close proximity, As soon as their positions were ascertained, they were withdrawn.

D Coy into support and A Coy was ordered to fill position of the

Right Front Company but was unable owing to Machine Gun Fire to enter VILLEMAY TRENCH.

At dark C.Coy. who had been held up in M.20.d was ordered to

enter VILLEMAY TRENCH and prolong the line from B Coyany Right, which

rested about M.20.b.7.3. to M.21.C.8.5.

This was carried out, but it was found impossible to hold this

position owing to the very heavy Machine Gun Fire, which completely

enfiladed the position. The Company had to be withdrawn with its right on a point M.20.b.

During the night September 18/19th the B Battalion took up a position to form a defensive flank in the high ground in M.26 a. and c.

In spite of the leading Companies each having an officer marching on a Compass Bearing in their outer flanks, both companies lost their direction - the left Company but slightly, which was due to heavy enfilade Machine Gun Fire down the valley in M.20.c and d.

The Right Front Company came under Machine Gun Fire almost immediately the advance commenced and met with slight resistance from Woods in M.26.d. which diverted the line of march of the Compass party, this and feeling for the right Division on the right, I attribute to be the cause of the right Company's loss of direction, they were unable to recover their direction owing to no land marks being visible in the mist added to which, they were drawn by Machine Gun Fire from the Right Flank, on reaching what they assumed to be their 1st objective the Company Commander Lieut. CSandalls was reported missing.

When the mist lifted this Company and A Company the support company found themselves in a position in M.27.a and c. which was under very heavy Machine Gun Fire and it was inly possible to withdraw these Companies, a very few at a time, which necessitated a long operation.

The wide frontage of 500 yards per Company made it extremely difficult under the most trying circumstances to keep touch and direction, every effort was made to do so, by means of compass patrols and scouts.

The advance beyond the Forst Objective was impossible owing to the fact that ARBOUSIERS WOOD and FRESNOY LE PETIT held out.

Night 21st. The battalion relieved the 1st Bn. Cameron Highlanders as left Battalion of the Brigade.

Night 22nd. About 8.30 pm the enemy after a barrage attempted to capture GALLCHET TRENCH held by the 5th Sherwood Foresters. This attack was repulsed with the aid of our left Company & B Coy who opened fire rifles and Lewis Gun as the enemy advanced.

Night 23/24th. Wnd Brigade assembled in the area just rear of front line held by the Battalion. B.D. and 2 platoons of A Coy were withdrawn at 3.30am the 24th. Remaining platoons of A.Coy and C.Coy were withdrawn at 4.30 am. The whole battalion moving back into bivouac in CAULAINCOURT WOOD.

Casualties during this period as under:-

OFFICERS	Killed	2.
	Wounded	7
	Missing	1.
Other Ranks	Killed	48
	Wounded	180
	Missing	9
	Gassed	21 (Not yet diagnosed).

6/10/13.

Comdg. 1st Bn. Loyal North Lancs Regt.

Lt. Colonel,