

14th (S). Bn. R. Warwickshire Regt.

OPERATIONS FROM 25TH to 30TH SEPT. 1918

Reference Map, SHEET 57.C. 3.E.

25th. Battalion move from HAPLINGCOURT and arrive at YTRES at 6.30.p.m. Teas were served and at 8.30.p.m., Battalion march up to the Support Line: QUIVERING, QUACK and QUOTIENT Trenches E. of METZEN-COUTURE in relief of the 12th Glosters.

26th. On the night of 26/27th the Battalion move up to Assembly Positions in Q.23.a. and b. as follows :-
"B" Coy. 8.p.m., "D" Coy. 8.30.p.m., "A" "C" and Hd.Qrs. at 12.mn., 12.10.am. and 12.20.am. respectively.

27th. Zero Hour for 5th Divn. Operations was at 7.52.am. and exactly at this time, attacking Companies moved forward in accordance with orders.
Capt. CW. Hughes, Commanding "A" Coy. was sniped whilst making sure of his direction, half a minute before the barrage dropped, and Lieut. M. Jones of "C" Coy. also became a casualty within 2 minutes of Zero.
The enemy barrage came down fairly quickly, but the Battn. got just E. of it in time, and not many casualties occurred until they came under view of the SMUT TRENCH SYSTEM on the Right Flank. This was still manned by ~~some~~ enemy machine guns, one or two at least being pushed well forward out of our creeping barrage. Some good enemy snipers were also posted in this part of the trench system. The Battn. on the Right failed to clear this trench, and the Right Platoon of "C" Coy. marching on tapes towards the trench junction at Q.24.a. central. failed to reach it, and having lost more than three quarters of their number, fell back on to MIDLAND TRENCH, where they remained.

Meanwhile, "A" Coy. on the Left went on and reached their objective, but suffered heavily during their advance from machine guns from trenches in Q.18.d., which had an extraordinary field of fire to the West. Lieuts. Bladon and Lazenby were both hit, but did not leave their company until they had seen that their Platoons had reached their objective.

"D" Coy. - Capt. E.G. Izon - passed through "A" Coy., their Right Platoon losing heavily, as they followed that part of "C" Coys. line of advance which had come under fire from SMUT TRENCH. "D" Coy. reached DUNRAVEN TRENCH and many prisoners - estimated at 150 at least - were sent back, the Company Commander helping those who seemed uncertain with a stout stick.

Within 30 minutes of Zero, the Battalion held as follows :- DUNRAVEN TRENCH, Westwards to about Q.18.c.6/7 but no touch with the Brigade on the Left - LINCOLN RESERVE Southwards to about Q.24.a.6/7.

At this point Capt. E.G. Izon went along to get touch with "C" Coy., or the Battalion on the Right, who should have been there. The enemy however, were still holding this part of LINCOLN RESERVE, and Capt. Izon was hit by a stick bomb and killed.

At about 9.30.am. the enemy commenced an attempt to bomb out our men from DUNRAVEN POST from the East, but were unsuccessful.

At 9.45.am. Lieut. W.J. Sheard - in command of "D" Coy. - having got in touch with the 1st. Medfords, asked them to take over DUNRAVEN POST, on the grounds that he had so few men (40) with whom he wished to hold that portion of LINCOLN RESERVE he occupied.

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27th.
contd.

At 10.30.am. a determined hostile attack was made with picked bombers and riflemen on DUNRAVEN POST and HIDDEN WAY, both of which were taken, and the enemy commenced bombing his way up SOOT AVENUE and MIDLAND TRENCH and from the Southern part of LINCOLN RESERVE. O.C. "D" Coy. withdrew to MIDLAND RESERVE, when the enemy had apparently worked his way round SOOT and the troops on the left were seen withdrawing. They were in a part of the trench not stocked with German Bombs, and had used all their own and also many of the enemy's stick grenades at DUNRAVEN POST. Moreover this was a case where it was impossible for our men to get out of the trench and deal with this bombing attack in the usual manner, owing to the severe and very accurate sniping and machine gun fire coming from SMUT TRENCH, and other trenches occupied by the enemy, commanding a very fine field of fire.

The news of this withdrawal came just as orders were received for the clearing of LINCOLN RESERVE Southwards, in conjunction with a Stokes Mortar Bombardment. From the report it appeared that the Companies were very much mixed up, and the situation obscure even to those Officers on the spot, owing to the extreme difficulty of reconnoitring, in view of the well chosen sniping posts, which the enemy still held.

The Commanding Officer ordered O.C. "F" Coy. (Sec. Lieut. W.E. Richardson) to counter-attack at once with 2 Platoons, one astride SOOT AVENUE and the other along MIDLAND RESERVE. The O.C. went up with the Intelligence Officer to see this carried out and met the O.C., 15th. R. War. R. in SNAP TRENCH. He informed the O.C. that it would be very difficult to make an attack astride MIDLAND RESERVE, owing to the difficulty of crossing the road at Q.23.b.8/4, so the O.C. went to the junction of SNAP with the intention of ordering the Platoon for MIDLAND RESERVE to go up SOOT and swing round under cover of the BEAUCAMP RIDGE, but the attack was in progress at this point and the enemy had withdrawn down SOOT.

At 8.p.m. we held the Communication Trench from SOOT to MIDLAND, at Q.24.a.0/7, with stops in the trench along SOOT and MIDLAND, but the machine gun fire was very accurate and heavy, as he had all the necessary observation.

Our casualties had been very heavy and we could not have made a further advance during the day without still further losses, and the Commanding Officer decided to hold this trench and re-organize.

By 12.mn. reports were received that the line was re-organized and posts were out and stops completed whilst the enemy was quiet.

28th.

At 5.am. orders were sent out to watch the enemy very closely and at about 8.30.am. news was received that the Companies were advancing again without opposition. This coincided with a visit from the B.G.C., who had already been out to AFRICAN TRENCH to the S. of SMUT TRENCH.

By 11.am. LINCOLN RESERVE and all the objectives, both of ourselves and the Battalion on the right were re-occupied.

The 3 Tanks which were to assist the attack on our front were unfortunately put out of action before they could be of any use.

The N.Z. 6" Newtons, under Lieut. Geoffrey were extremely useful. This Officer throughout the operation fired at any point that required attention at the very shortest notice, and though the enemy's barrage was occasionally heavy. The effect of his shooting could be seen after the battle.

The 2 Stokes Guns of the 15th T.M.B. under Sec. Lt. Manning were also extremely good, the Officer in charge of them showing exceptional initiative, three times going round during the fighting and reporting information gained to Headquarters, besides acting on it at once with sound judgement.

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28th.
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The Brigade Machine Guns under Sec.Lieut.Hardy also did very good work getting well forward and materially increasing our fire power in our front line.

During the morning, owing to the enemy having finally withdrawn the 95th and 15th. Inf. Bdes. passed through in pursuit, and the Battalion was left in position as part of the Reserve Brigade.

29th.

The day of the 29th passed uneventfully, and on the 30th the Brigade was relieved by a Brigade of the 37th Divn., the Battalion withdrawing during the afternoon to billets at YTRES.

Lt. Colonel.
Comdg. 14th. R. War. Regt.