

1918SeptemberAppendix

- 14th Companies carried out training as on preceding days.
- 15th A Battalion Church Service was held during the morning, the remainder of the day being observed as a holiday.  
The following Officers joined the Battalion for duty:-  
2/Lieut. F.A. STALEY.  
" C.J. WHYNTIE.  
" E.H. COLNBROOK.  
" F.W. LOVELL.  
During the evening a Conference was held at which forthcoming operations were discussed by the Commanding Officer, and Operation Orders were issued to companies, a copy of which is attached, App. "C".
- 16th At 9 a.m. in accordance with orders issued the Battalion proceeded to the SAULCOURT AREA and billeted there on arrival. Battle Surplus under the command of Captain Thacker moved back to A.I.I.B.; transport lines moving up to the vicinity of LIERAMONT village.  
  
SAULCOURT AREA.
- 17th The Battalion spent the day in the SAULCOURT AREA. With reference to the operations to be undertaken on the 18th, a conference was held by the Commanding Officer at which the final arrangements were made, and an amendment to the Orders issued under App. "C" prepared - vide App. "D".  
  
OPERATIONS.
- 18th The Battalion moved off to its assembly positions at 2.30 a.m., and took part in general operations at dawn, a report on which is attached, App. "E".
- 19th At 2 a.m. the Battalion received orders that it would take part in an attack to be carried out by the 53rd Brigade, and a conference was accordingly held at which these operations were discussed with Company Commanders.

Appendix "E".

S E C R E T.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE 8/Bn. EAST  
SURREY R. 18. 9. 18.

Reference Maps:- 62 C., NE.

The Battalion moved off to its assembly position at 3.30 a.m. in the following order:- B, C, A, D, Bn.H'Qrs. There was considerable shelling of VILLERS FAUCON and the Battalion followed the top of the high bank south of the village, thus avoiding casualties. The position of assembly being on low ground where the gas was lying fairly thickly, gas masks had to be worn, which, combined with the intense darkness of the night, delayed matters considerably, so that the last Company was not reported to be in position until 5.15 a.m.

At 5.30 a.m. the barrage opened, and the Battalion moved forward in artillery formation by platoons. The Commanding Officer went with the leading platoon to ensure that the direction was kept. By the end of five minutes it was impossible to see more than a few yards, owing to the darkness which was aggravated by a dense ground mist, and the 6% smoke shell of the creeping barrage, and direction could only be kept by the contour of the ground, which had been studied very carefully through glasses the previous afternoon. In addition, detours had to be made round advanced sections of field guns, and a line of machine guns which were carrying out a barrage programme. In spite of these difficulties the Battalion reached the outskirts of RONSSOY in good order, with the exception of "D" Co., which had lost touch and gone too far to the left. The 2nd Bedfords, behind whom the Battalion were to have advanced to the GREEN LINE, had apparently lost direction, and nothing could be seen of them except one Company, who were at the sugar refinery, and who said that they were the Reserve Company.

Meanwhile the Barrage was being lost and small parties of the enemy were becoming very active with machine guns and rifles, so that it became imperative that the Battalion should fill up the gap and carry on the fight.

"A" and "C" Cos. advanced in extended order, with "B" Co. in Support, and after suffering heavy casualties from their exposed left flank, reached the GREEN LINE at 8.15 a.m. At 8.30 a.m. the Barrage opened for the attack on the RED LINE, and the Battalion began to go forward under it, but were held up by heavy enfilade M.G. fire from the village and line of copses. At this period "D" Company regained touch with the Battalion. They had gone too far to the left and advanced through the village, eventually reaching a most exposed position in front of COLLERN POST. Captain H.S. TODD, M.C., commanding "D" Company was killed by a M.G. bullet through the head, and 2/Lieuts. J. FRESHWATER and M.L.RALPH wounded, the Company being thus deprived of all its Officers. Captain Todd was a most gallant and capable Officer, and his death was a severe blow to the Battalion.

At 9 a.m., the Battalion was slightly in advance of the GREEN LINE, and in touch with the 74th Division on the right, but with its left flank entirely in the air. The advance had so far resulted in the capture of about 150 prisoners, most of whom were taken out of HUSSAR WOOD, three 77 m.m. guns, and several M.G's. Battalion Headquarters was established at F.22.a.33., and companies reorganised as much as possible. At 10 a.m., Brigadier General E.A.WOOD, D.S.O., arrived at Bn.H'Qrs., and gave orders for the 7/Buffs and 7/Queens to come up in line on the left of the East Surreys, and for the advance to be continued at 12 noon. This order was subsequently altered to 4 p.m., and again to 5 p.m. to allow of an artillery barrage being arranged. At 5 p.m. the Brigade advanced, but met with very heavy opposition, and could only reach the line QUENCHETTES WOOD, LEMPIRE CENTRAL. It came to light subsequently that the enemy had brought up the 121st Division in motor busses from BONY, with the intention of counter-attacking at 6 p.m. Our attack at 6 p.m. completely demoralised them, but their presence accounted for the heavy resistance met with by us. At 9 p.m. the Brigade was withdrawn to the GREEN LINE and dug in there.

The East Surreys were reorganised as under:-  
 Two companies SWITCH TRENCH from F.23.c.19 - F.22.b.08.  
 One company in HUSSAR ROAD, F.22.d.88.  
 One company in SHAMROCK TRENCH round F.22.b.26.  
 The Battalion was in touch with the 25th R.W.F. on the right and the 7th Buffs on the left.

Casualties during the operations were as under:-

OFFICERS:-

Captain H.S. TODD, M.C.	Killed.
" E.H. HARRISON.	"
2/Lieut. F.W. LOVELL.	Wounded.
" M.L. RALPH.	"
" J. FRESHWATER.	"
" R. CHART.	"
" G. JAMES.	"
Lieut. S.N. LAW.	"

Lt. Col. A.P.B. IRWIN, DSO. Wounded, remaining at duty.  
 Lieut. & A/Adj. J.E.C. STROUD " " " "  
 2/Lieut. E.H. COLEBROOK " " " "

OTHER RANKS:-

KILLED:-	19
WOUNDED:-	104
MISSING:-	4
Wd. at DUTY:-	<u>2</u>
TOTAL:-	129
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A.P.B. IRWIN,

Lieut.Col., Comdg.  
 8/Bn. East Surrey Regiment.

23/9/18.  
 P/1740.

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