

1918

Appendix

March

VENDEUIL SECTOR Sheet 66 C.S.W.

21st 4.45 a.m. Enemy barrage commenced. Intense bombardment of forward area & LIEZ village. VIEVILLE, VIVIER QUENET & VERGER WOODS heavily gassed.

5.0 a.m. Battalion manned battle positions. As dawn broke it became obvious that the whole area was enshrouded in a thick mist through which it was impossible to see further than 20 or 30 yards. The Battle Zone was untouched & no enemy shelling was sustained, with the exception of the LIEZ & RONQUENET FM Road. As the mist cleared & the day grew older it was ascertained that the enemy had broken through on either flank. Elements of the enemy who had apparently worked S.W. under the cover of the mist were in the Gun pits in RONQUENET wood but the positions of 7th Buffs both in VENDEUIL village FORT & the support & reserve areas were still intact. On our right the enemy broke through and fighting took place on the right flank of the Battle Zone where "C" Coy were involved, but no serious results occurred. Our supporting artillery caused numerous casualties on the enemy behind TRAURCY. Later the enemy were seen advancing towards TERGNICK apparently without opposition. No enemy assault was made on our positions in the Battle Zone. 150 men from the 5th Cavalry Bde were sent up in support & another body were sent out to form a defensive flank to the South of FORT LIEZ. A patrol from our left front Coy, Battle Zone was sent out to gain touch with the enemy or to reach H.Q. 7/Buffs, but were captured by the enemy. Several assaults on VENDEUIL Fort were observed & 2 counter attacks by the Reserve Coy, 7th Buffs were closely watched & appeared to be successful. Counter attacks to clear up situation in RONQUENET Wood was premeditated & arranged when orders were received that the Bd would withdraw West of the St QUENTIN Canal about midnight. Officer patrols were to be sent out to gain touch with 7/Buffs & bring them back if possible. 2/Lt A.F.A. HAY to proceed to Battn H.Q. - at N.16 d 77. 2/Lt W.R. E.V. BATTEN to proceed to COTTAGE, N.29 b, & to Support Coy H.Q. N.30 central. Lt W.R. COHEN to proceed to N.36.a.

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VENDEUIL SECTOR Sheet 66 C.S.W.21st
contd.

All these patrols were successful and the remnants of Battn H.Q. 7th Buffs, & the Coys in defended localities were brought back & despatched to Bde H.Q. LIEZ.

22nd 4.0 Coys withdrew by Platoons to
a.m. Battalion command post at N.27.C.41 and thence across the ST QUENTIN Canal at N.31.c.83 and thence through MENNESSIS to FRIERES Wood about S.11 & central, where the Battn halted & awaited orders from Bde.

10.0 Moved to S.18.c. & S.24.a. & took up
a.m. defensive positions with Battn H.Q. at S.17.c.27.

7.0 Battalion moved forward to take up
p.m. position near canal manned by Cavalry & Cheshire entrenching Battalion. C Coy on left, D Coy in Centre, A on right in BUTTE & B in support about S.18.central. Positions were very obscure & touch was not gained on flanks.

23rd 6.0 Two Battalions of French came
a.m. forward to counter attack & retake TERGNIER but were disorganised in the thick fog.
Lt Col BUSHELL D.S.O. went forward to ascertain the situation & to lend flanking assistance to the French. He was wounded in so doing but rallied French & English troops & led them forward to counter attack. Large bodies of the enemy were seen on the ~~right~~ left flank & our men were compelled to withdraw to their original positions. From that time 2/Lt A.F.A. Hay, "B" Coy who had gone forward to reconnoitre jumping off positions for the French & fell into German hands was a prisoner.

As the mist gradually cleared it became evident that the enemy had worked through HALLET Wood & was proceeding in large numbers down the TERGNIER - ROUEZ Road.

In the latter position "A" Coy were heavily engaged. No Officers & only one or two men escaped from B or D Coys & 1 Officer and a few men from A. Later 2 Officers & a fair number of men from "C" Coy rejoined. A defensive position was arranged on the western edge of road running N & S through FRIERES Wood. The Battalion H.Q. details massed trenches in S.22.c & collected remnants of Coys & other Battalions as day came through.

Here the enemy were held throughout the day.

A French battalion came forward here to counter attack through this position but meeting with intense enemy machine gun fire were compelled to withdraw & were immediately followed by the enemy. Major TORTISE