

AWM4

**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War**

Formation Headquarters

Item number: 1/50/19 Part 13

Title: General Staff, Headquarters 5th
Australian Division

September 1917



AWM4-1/50/19PART13

First ANZAC Corps,
Intelligence.

2nd September, 1917.

*File
War Diary*

C O N T E N T S

1. DESCRIPTION OF ENEMY AREA OPPOSITE CORPS FRONT:
 - (a) WOODS
 - (b) STREAMS AND LAKES
 - (c) TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES
2. METHOD OF HOLDING THE LINE.
3. GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE ENEMY.
4. PRECIS OF ENEMY DEFENCE.
5. GENERAL NOTE ON ENEMY TROOPS OPPOSITE CORPS FRONT.

REFERENCE FOR MAPS:

GEOGRAPHICAL and DEFENCES	} GHELIWELLE -- Edition 6.A. 1/10,000 28.N.E.S.
TACTICAL	HOOGE -- Edition 3 1/10,000. BRUCELAIRE -- Edition 1

First ANZAC Corps,
Intelligence.

2nd September, 1917.

1. DESCRIPTION of Enemy Area opposite Corps Front.

(a) WOODS. The majority of woods in this district have been entirely destroyed or very much thinned.

POLYGON WOOD - J.9 and J.10. Only undergrowth 3 to 4 feet high remains. Area in J.9 central is marshy. North and Northeast shores are dry. Southern edge of Wood used as billets.

HOLLEBOSCH WOOD - J.12.b. Partially destroyed. Tall trees still remain on Southern and Eastern edges. Remainder of ground shown on maps as wooded is under cultivation. The whole wood used as rest billets.

HANBEEKE WOOD. Entirely destroyed. Enemy posts in concreted dug-outs and old artillery positions.

NONNE BOSCHEN - J.8.b. and d. Marshy but passable. Forms part of German front line. Enemy advanced post at J.8.d.1.4. Unapproachable from the West.

GLENCORSE WOOD - J.14.a. and b. Northern part very marshy and impassable in bad weather. Sunken road J.14.b.2.9. with high banks containing dug-outs. Strong point at J.14.b.8.8. commanding S.W. approaches.

INVERNESS COPSE. Held by isolated posts. Main centre of resistance in dug-out posts in J.14.d. No wire.

(b) LAKES and STREAMS

ZONNEBEKE LAKE - D.28.a. Is only a shallow pond with dry, firm banks. After heavy rain the valley in which this lake lies is very marshy.

FEUTELBEEKE BROOK - J.15, 16 and 17. Has two branches joining at J.19.a.1.2. Both are small and form no obstacle. Ground both sides always dry.

HANNEBEEKE RIVER - runs from J.8.b. N.W. to Railway at D.26.c.8.8 (West Branch) and from POLYGON WOOD at J.4.c. to Railway at D.26.a.5.0 (Eastern Branch).

West Branch. River 5 feet deep and 6 feet wide at Railway. Steep banks much damaged by artillery. Sandy bed and no wire in this stream.

East Branch. Very narrow and forms no obstacle.

(c) TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES. The dominating feature of the German position opposite the Corps Front is the BROODSEINDE - BECELAERE Ridge which forms a large and level plateau. Permits of observation across the Ypres valley to the West and to Moorslede to the East.

POLYGON WOOD BUTTE. BUTTE at J.10.a.7.8, 25 to 30 feet high; used as O.P.

FURTHER ENEMY O.P.'s. High Points on BROODSEINDE - BECELAERE Road at D.29.c.7.6 and D.23.c.4.0.

- 2 -

2. ENEMY METHOD OF HOLDING HIS LINE.

The boundary of the YPRES Group and the WYTSCHAETE Group runs through the Corps sector at J.9. central. From the YPRES - ROULLERS railway to the group boundary, about J.8. central, the divisional sector has during operations been held on a two regimental front, the remaining regiment of the division being held in reserve as the counter-attack regiment of the Division.

From recent evidence, this policy appears to have been discontinued, and there is evidence that the enemy has reverted to his old scheme (as adopted in the WYTSCHAETE Group) of having all three regiments of the Division represented in the line.

This may be only a temporary measure, consequent heavy losses, but, nevertheless, must be considered as a possible change in the method of holding the line in the YPRES Group.

As actual trench lines have practically ceased to exist, the line is no longer held in strength, and the battalions in front and support are distributed in depth in shell holes, dug-outs and concreted block houses scattered about over the country -- they form difficult targets for the artillery.

The enemy appears to rely on his machine-guns for holding the line, and on ever-prepared Stosstruppen within easy distance of first and support lines. Concealment is emphasised and very little movement seen.

3. GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE ENEMY.

The general attitude of the enemy is aggressive, both in trench fighting and in artillery. Sniping by rifle and machine-gun is actively indulged in, and is very accurate.

Any aggression on our part is immediately retaliated on, and enemy troops are so disposed that counter-attacks develop almost as quickly as the attack, with the result that considerable opposition is encountered very early in the operations, and though slight at first, increases the further our troops advance.

The policy of the enemy is to remain hidden from view during the daytime, not only in the front system of defence, but in rest billets in rear as well. Thus one division is reported to sleep under canvas by night, but all tents are taken down and concealed under trees throughout the day.

The enemy's artillery is very active and shelling is habitual. Our main approaches and roads are regularly fired on to time-table. The enemy, however, is very slow to note changes in our approaches.

Counter-battery work is also systematic and effective. A great deal of time is spent on a few of our battery positions and the mere semblance of activity from one of our batteries would in most cases, be sufficient to divert attention from other positions.

Field guns are not nearly so noticeable in their activity during the day, but they are brought up for night firing chiefly with gas shells directed on our approaches (especially the Lillebake area and the Railway). Enemy artillery activity comes chiefly from the BROODSEINDE Ridge area, BECELAEERE, and less intensively from the GHELUVELT area.

- 3 -

PRECIS of ENEMY DEFENCES.

The enemy has three lines of defences opposite the Corps front:

- (i) An advanced line of shell holes.
- (ii) The WILHELM Stellung (LANCHEMARCK - GHELUVELT Line)
- (iii) The FLANDERN Stellung I (ZONDERBEKE - STADEN Line)

(i) SHELL HOLES. The front line is held by posts in concreted dug-outs, consolidated shell holes and old artillery positions, disposed in depth and armed with light machine-guns.

The wire defences have been entirely destroyed by our artillery.

(ii) The WILHELM STELLUNG. Is non-existent as a trench line, having been practically obliterated by our bombardment. Except for sentry posts - for observation purposes - the enemy does not occupy this line, but has his troops disposed in depth in shelters and dug-outs (blockhouses being used where dug-outs are impossible) within easy reach of the WILHELM Stellung.

These dug-outs are strongly concreted and very well camouflaged and would form serious obstacles in the event of an advance. The wire in front of this position no longer forms an obstacle.

(iii) The FLANDERN STELLUNG I. Is in better condition than the WILHELM Stellung, but the natural condition of the soil is such, as to render a strongly entrenched position very difficult to construct.

The wire here was extremely strong and although considerably damaged during recent operations may still be regarded as an obstacle.

There is no evidence of recent work on this position and the enemy seems content to leave the trenches in an incomplete condition, relying for protection for his troops on the strong concrete dug-outs in it and immediately to the East of it.

There are two further defence lines:

- (a) FLANDERN STELLUNG II (PASSCHENDAELE - TERHAND Line)
- (b) DADIZELLE Line

Neither of these lines, for the moment, consist of more than wire, and preparation for the construction of dug-outs.

There is just a trace of trench work visible on aeroplane photographs.

- 4 -

GENERAL NOTE ON ENEMY TROOPS ON CORPS SECTOR

During the recent offensive operations, the enemy put into the line divisions which had enjoyed a high reputation in the German Army for moral and fighting qualities.

Of these divisions the 121st and 34th Divisions have shown fair qualities in resisting and fighting.

Of the Divisions in the line at the present moment, the 121st and 32nd (Saxons) Divisions, the former has already been heavily engaged and has suffered proportionate losses.

The Saxons (52nd Division), however, are comparatively fresh and may be expected to make a stout resistance.

The 177th I.R. has already been identified in counter-attacks, when it suffered considerable losses.

233
War DiarySECRET.

G15/

8th Infantry Brigade.	5
14th Infantry Brigade.	5
15th Infantry Brigade.	5
5th Pioneer Battalion	1
Divisional Engineers	1
Divisional Machine Gun Officer	1
Divisional Bomb Officer	1
A.D.M.S.	

Herewith copy of the Operation Orders and reports of 74th Infantry Brigade, which was engaged on 10th and 11th August in the sector of the front which it is expected the 5th Australian Division will shortly be engaged in.

The Divisional Commander wishes all C.O's to make a close study of these orders which should be read in conjunction with General Staff Memoranda Nos. 153 and 154.

Under no circumstances are these orders to be taken beyond Brigade Headquarters when the Division goes into the line; so Brigade Commanders will please see that all copies are collected.



Lieut-Colonel,
General Staff,
5th Australian Division.

4th September 1917.

Copy to:
A.A. & Q.M.G. 1
D.A.Q.M.G. 1.

SECRET.

Copy No.

74th BRIGADE ORDER No. 7.

7th August 1917.

Reference Maps:
HOCGE 1/10,000.

1. INTENTION.

II Corps will capture at an early date INVERNESS COPSE, GLENCORSE WOOD and the Southern end of the WESTHOEK RIDGE. ZERO day and the hour of ZERO will be notified separately. The attack will be carried out by 55th Brigade, 18th Division, on right, 54th Brigade, 18th Division in centre, 74th Brigade, 25th Division, on left.

The boundary between Divisions in the attack will be a line running from road junction at J.7.d.90.15 to J.8.e.60.25 (road inclusive to 25th Division) and thence to J.8.e.95.30 - J.8.d.30.40 - J.8.d.7.6 - J.9.c.40.95 (track from J.8.e.95.30 to J.9.c.40.95 inclusive to 25th Division)

2. OBJECTIVES.

The objective of Divisions will be the BLACK line as shewn on the attached map, viz:-

18th Div; The approximate line J.20.a.0.8 - J.14.d.10.15 - J.14.b.5.1 - J.14.b.15.90 - J.8.e.65.30.

25th Div; The approximate line J.8.e.65.30 - J.8.c.55.70 - J.8.a.40.55 - J.8.a.35.85 - J.2.c.10.00 - J.1.d.75.55.

3. DETAILED PLAN.

The attack of the 74th Brigade will be carried out by all four battalions from North to South as follows:-

Unit	Objective
11th Lancs. Fusiliers.	Establishment of line of posts D.25.d.60.00 to J.1.d.75.60 (already established on 6th.) BLACK LINE J.1.b.20.80 (inclusive) to J.1.d.80.50 (exclusive).
9th Loyal North Lancs.	BLACK LINE J.1.d.80.50 (inclusive) to J.8.a.35.75 (inclusive) RED LINE J.2.c.15.40 to J.8.a.55.75 (inclusive)
2nd Royal Irish Rifles.	BLACK LINE J.8.a.35.75 to J.8.a.50.10 (exclusive). RED LINE J.8.a.55.75 (exclusive) to J.8.a.75.25 (exclusive).
13th Cheshires	BLACK LINE J.8.a.50.10 (inclusive) to J.8.c.65.25 (inclusive) RED LINE J.8.a.75.25 (inclusive) to J.8.c.75.65 (inclusive)

- (a) Dress. Battle Order (appendix "A", but first wave will be equipped as lightly as O's.C. units see fit.
- (b) On afternoon of 7th one company from each battalion will be withdrawn to RAILWAY WOOD and billeted there. 8th Borders will take over defence of BELLE WARDE Line. These companies will be utilized for carrying rations stores and other work on jumping off line 8th until ZERO day. Previous to attack they will each carry up to their battalions a load of rations, water, stores, munitions, and will be used by O's.C. units to capture and hold RED LINE, with exception of one company 11th Lancashire

Fusiliers which will be used by O.C. 11th Lancashire Fusiliers to exploit any situation that may arise on his front.

(c) Reserves. 8th Borders holding BELLEWARDE Line, 1 battalion 75th Brigade RAILWAY WOOD.

(d) Stokes. Two Stokes will be allotted to each Battalion.

(e) Machine Guns. Divisional Machine Gun Officer will arrange Machine Gun barrage to cover the attack, and subsequently to protect consolidation of the Line.

As soon as BLACK LINE is gained, O.C. 195th Machine Gun Company and 74th Machine Gun Company will each send forward four guns in their respective sectors to suitable positions in, and about, JABBER SUPPORT and the BLACK LINE on our left.

O.C. 74th Machine Gun Company will arrange for four guns to cover our right flank from direction of NONNE BOSCHEN.

O.C. 195th Machine Gun Company will receive orders as to the disposal of his remaining four guns from D.M.G.O.

(d) Artillery. See barrage map attached.

The first lift of the barrage will not be sufficient to allow troops to assault the greater part of JABBER SUPPORT. The centre of the barrage will be beyond, but the shorts will still be in JABBER SUPPORT.

This trench therefore cannot be taken until the lift at ZERO plus 6 minutes.

4. PREPARATORY WORK.

The leading wave of the attacking troops must be formed up at least 150 yards from the ZERO barrage line, at many points it is not further possible to form up in our front line. Where necessary all work will be concentrated at once on constructing a supporting line to allow of this forming up. Time will not admit of a yet further trench being made for the assembly of the rear waves, these must line up in the open on tapes.

5. CONSOLIDATION.

130th Field Company R.E. and 1 company 6th S.W. Borderers will be detailed to assist in common consolidation in:

(a) The consolidation of Front Line.

(b) Wiring of front line.

(c) Laying out and digging of 2 C.T.'s. over the ridge to the new consolidated line.

These troops will move immediately in rear of rear waves of battalions.

6. ADMINISTRATION.

Each unit by ZERO day will have 2 days rations, 2 days water (1 day in water bottle), such munitions as O's.C. units require, dumped on the western slopes of WESTHOEK RIDGE. Any other administrative instructions will be issued separately later.

7. SIGNAL COMMUNICATIONS.

Instructions for signalling communications will be issued separately later.

Advanced Brigade Headquarters will be as at present.

Brigade Signalling Officer will arrange for the synchronization of watches of all concerned 5 to 2 hours before ZERO.

8. GENERAL.

All ranks are reminded that VICTORY can be assured by:

(a) Careful assembly arrangements.

(b) Hugging the barrage closely.

(c) Every man knowing his job.

(d) Determined, hard, scientific fighting.

-3-

Time is short, and conditions have not been favourable, but in view of what the Brigade has achieved before on the SOMME under infinitely worse conditions, and at MESSINES when confronted with a very difficult task, the results of the present operation can but be regarded with complete assurance.

ACKNOWLEDGE.

(sgd) WALTER GUINNESS Major,
Brigade Major,
74th Brigade.

Issued through
Signals at:-

Copies to:-

- Nos. 1 & 2 Office
- 3 11th Lancashire Fusiliers
- 4 13th Cheshires
- 5 9th Loyal Lanes
- 6 2nd Royal Irish Rifles
- 7 74th Machine Gun Company
- 8 74th Trench Mortar Battery
- 9 25th Division
- 10 75th Brigade
- 11 54th Brigade
- 12 130th Field Company R.E.
- 13 G.O.C. Brigade on left
- 14 D.M.G.O.
- 15 6th South Wales Borderers.

SECRET.

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS SUPPLEMENTARY
to 74th BRIGADE ORDER No. 7.

1. For the forthcoming operations dumps will be made by battalions and it is thought that the present front line will be the best place for these.
2. The Brigade Store, containing the following, is at I.18.b.2.9 approximately, and each battalion will anyhow draw 500 iron rations and 60 tins of water.
 - 80 boxes S.A.A.
 - 2,800 Mills No. 5
 - 1,168 Mills No.23
 - 2,000 No. 24
 - 2,000 1" Very light.
 - 2,000 Iron rations
 - 5,000 sandbags
 - 180 picks
 - 500 shovels
 - 500 gallons of water.
3. O.C. 9th Loyal North Lanes and 2nd Royal Irish Rifles will be responsible for forming the following dumps of tools for the R.E.:-
 - 9th Loyal North Lanes. 120 shovels and 20 picks at J.7.b.7.0 where JAFFA DRIVE meets front line.
 - 2nd Royal Irish Rifles. 120 shovels and 20 picks at J.7.b.8.1 where the trench forms an angle thus:
with front line
4. Dumps to be formed by 9 a.m. 8th instant.
5. Dumps mentioned in para. 3 are most important and O.'s.C 9th Loyal North Lanes and 2nd Royal Irish Rifles will report when these have been formed.
6. The vicinity of the Brigade dump is not too healthy and only small parties should be sent up at a time.

(sgd) J.C.O.MARRIOTT Captain,
Staff Captain,
74th Brigade.

7th August 1917.

SECRET.B.M.O. 1.

O.C. All units of Brigade, 106th Field Co. R.E.
 3rd Worcesters, 10th Cheshires, 6th South Wales Borderers
 1st Wilts. 130th Field Co.R.E. Lieut-Col. R.P.LEGGE D.S.O.

The Brigadier congratulates all ranks of the Brigade on having carried out the attack today in their usual style and with the results that they are accustomed to, e.g. complete success at whatever cost.

He wishes particularly to thank all ranks of the 3rd Worcestershire Regt., 10th Cheshire Regt., 1st Wiltshire Regt. 130th Field Co. R.E., 106th Field Co. R.E. 6th Battalion South Wales Borderers (Pioneers) and Legge's horse, for their loyal and whole-hearted support, whether engaged in doing particularly nasty carrying work or cutting C.T's, or helping to destroy the enemy.

All units of the Brigade will have done 6 days in the front line. In spite of considerable casualties and very difficult circumstances, the Brigade has prepared for, and carried out an attack up to standard. This is satisfactory. At the same time the Brigadier invites C.O's attention to the following points; he is aware that they know them all, but very often after a hard fight troops get into a state of stupor, and the following points are apt to be overlooked and heavy penalties entailed:-

- (1) Until relieved, troops must:-
 - (a) By night: work and watch unceasingly.
 - (b) By day: Remain motionless, while maintaining the enemy front under a close observation.
 - (2) The enemy is determined to counter attack and has already made 3 attempts under a barrage similar to our own. Two wireless messages were intercepted today - 1 at 10 a.m. ordering the 238th Regt. to counter-attack the RIDGE immediately, and another at 3 p.m. ordering the enemy artillery to concentrate fire on T.8.b.05.75 to J.8.a.80.05.
 - (3) Careful siting of Lewis and Machine Guns and rifles to wipe out any enemy attack before it gets going, and the keeping of these arms in a clean and workable condition.
 - (4) Vigorous offensive sniping all day and night.
 - (5) Arrange your defence in depth:-
 - (a) Shell-holes checker-wise supporting and covering one another in front.
 - (b) Line of observation on forward slope lightly held with a few Lewis and Vickers guns.
 - (c) Main line sited so as to be not under direct observation of enemy, dug and traversed as solidly as possible, and connected with line of observation by C.T's.
 - (d) A few strong points checker-wise (e.g. machine guns and Lewis guns in concrete structures to cover the main line).
- Such dispositions are most awkward to attack and will defeat any ordinary counter-attack, for shell-hole position is intangible to artillery and infantry; observation line contains nil; artillery cannot observe the main line without aeroplanes; strong points in rear break up any main attack that may possibly penetrate to main line, and serve as kicking off point for counter attack.
- (6) The Brigade (plus 2 battalions) will be relieved night of the 11/12 and until then every man will stick it out, and the Brigade will hand over the ground now intact.
 - (7) All units will make every effort to come out completely equipped with their full quota of Lewis Guns, Stokes, Vickers, etc.

(sgd) J.C.O. MARRIOTT Captain,
 for Brigade Major,
 74th Brigade

10th August 1917.

74th INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Operations 10th, 11th August 1917.

Brigade Objective.

1. The object of the attack on August 10th was to complete the capture of WESTHOEK RIDGE and to gain ground in GLEN-CORSE WOOD and INVERLESS COPSE which would give observation to the East and South-east. The first named task was given to the 74th Infantry Brigade, boundary with the 18th Div. being a line running from the road junction at J.7.d.90.15 to J.8.c.60.25 (Road inclusive to 25th Div) and thence to J.8.c.95.30 - J.8.d.30.40 - J.8.d.70.60,

The left flank of the Brigade was on the YPRES - ROULERS Rly, the left battalion being echeloned forward, and having by means of vigorous offensive patrolling already occupied almost all the ground allotted to it. Two objectives were laid down - a 'BLACK LINE' to be strongly consolidated, and a RED LINE, to be held to cover consolidation of the BLACK LINE. These objectives appeared from the map to give good field of fire and observation, but there proved to be two small folds in the ground in front of the two centre battalions which made it necessary to push further forward, and to make good a line running from YPRES - ROULERS Rly close to the line of the road and tramway D.25.d.65.05, J.7.b.85.70, J.1.b.95.45, J.2.a.15.00, J.2.c.central, thence to about 50 yards in advance of road J.2.c.9.2 and back to road junction J.8.b.05.75, J.8.c.75.95 and along the RED Line originally laid down, to Brigade boundary at J.8.c.85.30

The attack of the Brigade was completely successful, all objectives being taken and held against repeated counter-attacks.

The ground actually occupied was 2,000 yards in width, and in depth ran from 250 yards on the left to 650 yards in the centre, and 450 yards on the right.

Battalion Objectives.

2. From North to South were allotted as follows:-

Unit	Objective
11th Lancs. Fusiliers	Establishment of line of posts D.25.d.6.0. to J.1.d.75.60 (already established on 6th) BLACK LINE J.1.b.2.8 (inclusive) to J.1.d.8.5 (exclusive)
9th Loyal N. Lancs. Regt.	BLACK LINE J.1.d.8.5. (inclusive) to J.8.a.35.75 (inclusive). RED LINE J.2.c.15.40 to J.8.a.55.75 (inclusive)
2nd Royal Irish Rifles.	BLACK LINE J.8.a.55.75 to J.8.a.5.1 (exclusive). RED LINE J.8.a.55.75 (exclusive) to J.8.a.75.25 (exclusive)
13th Cheshire Regt.	BLACK LINE J.8.a.5.1. (inclusive) to J.8.c.65.25 (inclusive). RED LINE J.8.a.75.25 (inclusive) to J.8.c.75.65 (inclusive).

Preparation for Attack.

3. Rations, water and stores complete for 48 hours for each unit were dumped on WESTHOEK RIDGE under battalion arrangements. Vigorous patrolling was carried out continuously on the whole Brigade front. This resulted in the following prisoners being taken:-

Aug. 6th 4 a.m.	1 prisoner by 2nd R.I. Rifles
Aug. 7th night.	2 prisoners by 11th Lancs. Fusiliers.
Aug. 7th/8th.	1 killed " " " "
	(identification obtained)

As a result several posts were pushed out and established on the front of the 11th Lancs. Fusiliers and left front of 9th L.N. Lancs. and enemy posts and strong points were definitely located, enabling them to be dealt with by 4.5" Hows. on afternoon of 8th August and during day 9th August.

On night of 9th/10th August 9th L.N. Lancs. sent out a strong battle patrol of 1 officer and 50 other ranks to clear a certain strong point. Enemy were found in strength and after an exchange of bombs and rifle fire patrol/with its casualties, some four or five. 11th Lancs. Fusiliers and 9th L.N. Lancs. accounted for a number of the enemy by sniping during this period. One officer of the 9th L.N. Lancs secured three on 8th.

The postponement of the attack necessarily complicated all supply arrangements and entailed withdrawing a certain proportion of troops from WESTHOEK RIDGE to avoid overcrowding during day of 9th.

At the same time the ground on the morning of the 10th was undoubtedly in better going order and this no doubt was important for the 18th Division on our right.

Assembly.

4. Assembly was complete by ZERO minus one hour. (a) 11th Lancs Fusiliers. had moved 50 yards forward during the night August 9th/10th and were now all on the BLACK Line.

An hour before ZERO the advanced posts of the two right companies were withdrawn to be clear of the barrage line. One platoon of right company was assembled for attack in two waves along trench from J.l.d.75.55 - J.l.d.6.6.

(b) 9th L.N. Lancs were drawn up with three companies in front line and one company immediately behind in new trench.

(c) 2nd Royal Irish Rifles assembled in our front line and in a specially dug line about 20 yards behind the front line. Much German wire had to be cut to enable troops to advance at ZERO without delay.

(d) 13th Cheshire Regiment assembled along a tape 100 yards in rear of front line and laid parallel to the BLACK Line.

Attack.

5. At ZERO (4.25 a.m. August 10th) the Brigade advanced, and got well beyond the enemy barrage line before it came down at ZERO plus three or four minutes. Much of the enemy barrage was behind our line. ZERO hour was very well chosen. The artillery opened simultaneously with a crash.

(a) 11th Lancs. Fusiliers (No. 2 platoon) captured houses at J.2.e.00.85 - J.2.c.10.75. One house contained a machine gun and 14 prisoners and the other a machine gun and 38 prisoners. After garrison of the latter had surrendered the Lewis gun team of the platoon went up to handle the machine gun. There was a scuffle among the prisoners and one of them must either have thrown a bomb or pulled some string attached to one, but the result was that the Lewis Gun team and the German machine gun were all blown up. Our remaining men (about 8) at once set on and killed the prisoners who had done this and were trying to escape. The machine gun and 14 prisoners from the other house were got away all right.

(b) 9th L.N. Lancs advanced in three waves. The right company was first held up by strong point at J.8.a.27.88. This they quickly surrounded, captured a machine gun, and killed the crew. A platoon rushed forward and occupied hut at J.2.c.65.45 where they took some prisoners.

- 3 -

The centre company was checked by heavy fire from houses at J.2.c.05.57, J.2.c.05.47 and J.2.c.05.42. These points were surrounded; 2 machine guns and a number of prisoners being captured, at least 12 Germans were also killed here. The reduction of these posts caused some delay and the Company for a time lost touch on its right flank.

The left company had little opposition except at J.l.d. 77.40 where they took 25 prisoners including 2 officers.

The fourth company was detailed to occupy RED LINE but went too far to the left. They took up a good position from J.2.c.00.87 to J.2.c.22.00 from which they were able to command HANEBEEK WOOD (about J.2.central). This company took some prisoners together with a machine gun and its crew who were occupying a shell hole near this point.

The 9th L.N.Lancs. had many casualties from snipers, especially on right flank. Enemy aeroplanes also flew low and fired on any bodies of troops moving in the open.

(c) 2nd Royal Irish Rifles rushed WESTHOEK together with two strong points and took the garrisons before the enemy realized they were being attacked. At point J.7.b.87.61 an unsuspected machine gun in an emplacement was encountered which opened fire on advancing waves. An Officer rushed at it firing his revolver, and the team fled. Those of the enemy who were not killed by our barrage on JABBER SUPPORT fled as our waves closed on them and were caught in our barrage, our men firing at them from the hip as they ran, and very few escaped. All enemy beyond this had taken cover in good emplacements and dugouts about the BLACK LINE which was immediately cleared with very little opposition and the occupants taken prisoner. The RED LINE could not be identified, as JABBER RESERVE did not exist or could not be recognised, in consequence of which the outpost line pushed on and took up a line behind our protective barrage.

(d) 13th Cheshire Rgt. attacked in four waves. First wave remained in JABBER TRENCH, their original objective, until they had lost all officers and the majority of N.C.O.'s. and men. They then moved up to the BLACK LINE. Second and Third waves gained the BLACK LINE without great opposition, except on the left where they were for a time held up, and had many casualties from bombs, machine gun and rifle fire from a strong point at J.8.c.2.9. When the strong point had been captured the left company pushed forward to the BLACK LINE. Fourth wave were told off for RED LINE. They were caught under heavy shell fire, and reached the RED LINE with only 1 N.C.O. and 14 men. The battalion dug in between the BLACK AND RED LINES with posts out in front. Their right flank was reinforced by small parties of the 7th Bedford Regt., who had crossed the divisional boundary. Their left flank did not succeed in getting touch with the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles until after dark. A gap was caused by the heavy casualties of the left company and it was covered during daylight by cross fire from our Lewis guns and machine guns. After 9 a.m. further movement was prevented owing to evacuation of the eastern portion of GLENCORSE WOOD by troops of the 13th Division which laid open the 13th Cheshire Regt., to enfilade fire from snipers and machine guns and particularly from strong point at about J.14.b.19.

consolidation. 6. The barrage had reached its protective line all along the Brigade front by ZERO plus 38 minutes and consolidation was immediately pressed on. At first, active enemy sniping and machine gun fire from our right flank East of GLENCORSE WOOD considerably interfered with consolidation, but hostile artillery failed to pick up the new line, except in the case of the 13th Cheshire Regt. on the right. The ground was easy digging and men quickly got down into it, although, owing to the number of casualties sustained, a continuous line was not at first possible.

The 9th L.N.Lance dug well in advance of the RED LINE (see paragraph 1) while the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles and 13th Cheshire Regiment dug their main defence line rather behind that line.

Owing to the heavy casualties sustained by the Brigade, every available man was more than fully occupied in consolidating the main line. The working parties detailed from 2nd Royal Irish Rifles and 9th L.N.Lance for cutting forward Communication Trenches under R.E. supervision and with the aid of R.E. personnel and 6th South Wales Borderers (Pioneers) did not materialise. The upshot was that the 6th S.W.B. aligned and cut a C.T. in neighbourhood of 'ACK' Trench (J.7.b.84.07 to J.8.a.44.16) utilising the portions of the existing German C.T.'s not shown on map. The R.E. and 6th South Wales Borderers combined put through a C.T. in neighbourhood of original 'BEER' on 2nd and 3rd days i.e. 11th and 12th running forward from about J.1.d.65.20 to J.2.c.20.55.

Much excellent work was put in by both 130th and 106th Field Cos. R.E. and by 6th South Wales Borderers (Pioneers).

Counter Attacks.

7. The enemy made repeated and determined attempts to counter attack throughout the day of August 10th and the night August 10th/11th.

9th L.N.Lance at 8.45 a.m. reported enemy to be massing on their front. At 2.30 p.m. they reported them in parties 30 to 40 strong approaching southern end of HANEBEKE WOOD (J.2.central).

10th Cheshire Regiment at 3 p.m. reported enemy in small parties collecting about J.2.a.35.47. All these concentrations were annihilated by our artillery and machine gun fire.

2nd Royal Irish Rifles reported that about 10 a.m. the enemy were seen coming over ANZAC RIDGE and down the slope, at first in sections and afterwards in larger bodies, and that it was obvious they were massing for a counter attack. These concentrations continued throughout the day. About 5.30 p.m. a feeble effort to come forward was made but failed under machine gun fire and artillery support. The enemy however continued to send troops forward into the HANEBEKE VALLEY and opened a very heavy bombardment on and behind WESTHOEK RIDGE at 5.40 p.m. S.O.S. signals were sent up by the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles and at 5.50 p.m. O.C. this battalion sent by runner the following message:

"W.12. 10th. Enemy massing in HANEBEKE VALLEY AAA S.O.S. has gone up AAA Enemy has been accumulating in enormous bodies since 10 a.m. "

This message reached Advanced Brigade Headquarters at 6.15 p.m. and was immediately telegraphed on to Brigade Headquarters. At 5.55 p.m. Artillery Liaison Officer attached to 2nd Royal Irish Rifles sent a pigeon message reporting enemy massing in HANEBEKE VALLEY and calling for artillery action on J.2.d., J.8.c., and J.8.b.

3rd Worcester Regiment reported by pigeon at 6.16 p.m. "Enemy in strength apparently gathering for counter attack between J.8.d.9.9. and J.8.b.9.8 and POLYGONEVELD"

Our artillery opened on these areas shortly after 6 p.m. and an intense fire was concentrated on them at 6.35 p.m. dispersing the attack before it could develop. By 6.45 p.m. enemy bombardment began to close down and our artillery were ordered to cease fire at 7.15 p.m.

At 7.30 p.m. the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles saw that another determined effort was being made to counter attack under cover of a smoke barrage, and renewed heavy bombardment of the front line and WESTHOEK RIDGE. The S.O.S. signal was sent up but on this occasion elicited no reply from our artillery, probably owing to its not having been seen through the smoke barrage put up by the enemy in the valley west of WESTHOEK RIDGE.

-5-

O.C. 2nd R.I. Rifles sent 'S.O.S.' through by visual and pigeon shortly before 8 p.m. and 3rd Wor. Regt. also got 'S.O.S.' message through to Advanced Brigade Headquarters at 8.3 p.m. At about the same time one of our aeroplanes appeared and dropped the S.O.S. signal, whereupon our artillery immediately opened a heavy barrage which completely broke up the attack and almost wiped out the enemy, whose remnants could be seen running in all directions. At about 4.15 a.m. on the 11th the enemy pushed forward strong patrols only two of which made any effort to get to our line. One consisting of about 19 other ranks got to within bombing distance and commenced to bomb our line but were quickly answered with bombs and afterwards finished off with the bayonet. The other consisting of 19 other ranks on being fired at returned to the dugout. A patrol was at once sent out and took this party, who surrendered without showing much fight.

11th Lances Fusiliers, at 6.0 p.m. saw enemy doubling from North end of the ZÖNNEBEKE REDOUBT up the HANEBEKE VALLEY towards wood about J.2. central in line extended to four paces. Other parties advanced S.W. until about a battalion had assembled in the wood. The Vickers gun at gun pit J.1.b.9.6 kept up continuous bursts of fire. The enemy pushed forward strong patrols covered by a platoon to rush the gun pit and house but the attack was dispersed by Lewis gun and rifle fire. At the same time another patrol attempted to rush the post from the N.E. This patrol was dispersed by rifle fire and rifle grenades. This house at J.1.b.9.6 was throughout the night the centre of very hard fighting. At about 6.35 p.m. it was almost surrounded by the enemy who came up in front and on both flanks. Three men were shot in the act of climbing through the windows. At 7.15 p.m. 11th Lances Fusiliers called in vain for S.O.S. barrage. It is thought that the signal was missed in the smoke. At 8.25 p.m. our artillery opened a heavy barrage on HANEBEKE WOOD. Enemy tried to advance up trench J.2.a.6.5 to J.2.a.3.1 but was checked by enfilade shrapnel fire. At 8.20 p.m. enemy barrage came down and he commenced to advance from J.2.c. to J.8.b. He attacked in three waves wearing soft caps and no packs. The Vickers gun in the gun pit enfiladed the whole attack and mowed down the first wave, and our artillery wiped out the remainder who ran about in twos and threes. This post at J.1.b.9.6 accounted for 48 enemy killed within 100 yards of them. The Lewis gun fired 9 drums, the Vickers fired 4 belts, and the rifle section fired 20 rounds a man and 13 rifle grenades. During this counter attack, ammunition was getting low and had to be carefully expended.

Supporting
battalions.

8. By ZERO minus one hour, two companies 3rd Wor. Regt had been moved up in support of the right flank of the 13th Cheshire Regt. to prevent a possible counter attack from turning our defences on the WESTHOEK RIDGE. Remaining companies 3rd Wor. Regt. moved up to BELLEWARDE RIDGE. At 6.30 a.m. the two companies supporting the 13th Cheshire Regt. were ordered to move up to the front line originally held by them. The other two companies being moved from BELLEWARDE RIDGE to front line previously held by 2nd R.I. Rifles. At 7.27 a.m. orders were sent to O.C. 3rd Wor. Regt "You will if necessary utilise your battalion to maintain the BLACK LINE east of WESTHOEK. Send forward patrols at once to get into touch with the 13th Cheshires and 2nd R.I. Rifles." At 8.15 a.m. two companies of the 10th Cheshire Regiment and later the whole battalion less carrying party of 100 were moved up to original front line occupied by 9th L.N. Lances.

At 11.23 a.m. O.C. 3rd Worc. Regt. had taken over command of 13th Cheshire Regt. at request of their C.O. who with his second in command and all senior officers had been wounded. At 1.30 a.m. on the 11th, two companies 1st Wilts. Regt. were ordered up from RAILWAY DUGOUT in support of the 2nd R.I. Rifles in the old British front line, remaining two companies and battalion headquarters at BELLEWARDE RIDGE. Orders were sent to 10th Cheshire Regt. and 1st Wilts. Regt.

"Your battalions will not be used unless enemy penetrates BLACK LINE in which case you will without waiting for orders/restore the situation".

2nd Lincoln Regt. moved from HALFWAY HOUSE at 1 p.m. on 11th to BELLEWAARDE RIDGE.

O.C. 1st Wilts Regt. having, however, reported that in view of the shelling of that area it was inadvisable to bring further troops beyond his own two companies and two companies of the 2nd Lincoln Regt., two companies only of the latter battalion were left on the Ridge and they also were withdrawn to HALFWAY HOUSE at 8.30 p.m.

Machine Guns

9. Five batteries with a total of 36 guns supported the attack by barrage fire under the D.M.G.O. These batteries rendered invaluable support and did much execution. In addition, 8 guns were detailed to support closely the attack of the right sector (13th Cheshire Regt. and 2nd Royal Irish Rifles) and left sector (9th L.N.Lancs. and 11th Lancs. Fusiliers) respectively.

These guns are reported by battalions to have been very valuable on the flanks and outpost line. They all fired a great amount of ammunition, repelling counter-attacks and keeping down enemy machine gun fire, and sniping from GLENCORSE WOOD on our right flank. Two guns got on to the enemy at J.14.b.10.90. and kept out of action machine guns fired from roof of this strong point.

The following will serve as an example of what these guns did:- At 7.30 a.m. two guns were mounted at J.8.c.7.5. and the crews remained up to their waists in water firing the guns. The guns remained in action for 30 hours in spite of heavy shelling and sniping. In that time the guns fired 10,500 rounds, put two enemy machine guns out of action at J.14.b.central, and twice dispersed infantry who were massing. 24 enemy were also sniped with the rifle and the corpses were visible.

For 30 hours our machine guns had moving targets within easy range, and made the most of their opportunities. The guns were, many of them, got into position in old gun pits and were sited sufficiently far forward to be practically immune from enemy shell fire. The only limiting factors were ammunition, of which a large amount was got up early on, and physical energy. The necessity for machine gunners and machine gun officers to be of good physique and picked for stamina and initiative was again emphasised, and more strongly than ever before.

Lewis Guns.

10. The extraordinary value of Lewis Guns when properly handled was very strongly brought out. The fighting on this occasion gave great scope for their use. The heavy casualties they suffered, together with the reports of C.O's. and the continual requests for more Lewis gun drums and gunners, proved their great value. Each battalion was reinforced with 20 Brigade reserve Lewis gunners on Y/Z night. One battalion had 19 Lewis guns in action on Z day.

Stokes 11. Two Stokes were attached to each battalion but were little used except for that section attached to 13th Cheshire Regt. Here Captain SOLLY Commanding 74th T.M. Battery assisted by 3 or 4 men did excellent work in co-operating with 13th Cheshire Regt. in the attack organized on strong point at J.8.c.2.9. which did not fall until 8.30 a.m. All Officers in battery became casualties and the battery was brought out of action by the Battery Q.M. Sergt.

Grenades. 12. Rifles grenades were used by 11th Lancs. Fusiliers to assist in repelling counter attack. 9th L.N. Lancs. threw many Mills bombs during the attack and found them very useful for clearing dugouts and dealing with strong points and machine guns. Bombs followed up by the bayonet were used in one case by 2nd Royal Irish Rifles to drive back a patrol on the morning of 11th. Otherwise bayonet and rifle fire were used throughout the operation.

Equipment. 13. See Appendix 'A'.

Carrying Parties. 14. See Appendix 'B'.

Communications. 15. See Appendix 'C'.

Supplies etc. 16. Divisional arrangements for the supply of rations, water, munitions and stores to Brigade were excellent and call for no remarks.

The Divisional Pack Transport again proved of the greatest use.

The Brigade and battalion arrangements for the forwarding of supplies from Brigade dumps to front line were as good as could be expected in the circumstances, but will have to be much improved upon next time. The Brigade must not expect again to be helped out so loyally by other battalions.

R.A.M.C. Arrangements. 17. R.A.M.C. arrangements proved very satisfactory in spite of the great difficulty caused by the long carry. These showed a very great improvement on the arrangements at MESSINES although the conditions there were nothing like so unhealthy. Each battalion had a Regimental Aid Post behind its line in the forward area. That of the 9th L.N. Lancs. near RED LODGE was very heavily shelled and eventually demolished. 13th Cheshire Regt. and 2nd Royal Irish Rifles evacuated by a Realy Post in CHATEAU WOOD to BIRR CROSS ROAD A.D.S (77th Field Ambulance). 9th Bn. L.N. Lancs. and 11th Lancashire Fusiliers evacuated via collecting Post in Wood about J.l.c.10.10. to RAILWAY WOOD (76th Field Ambulance). From BIRR CROSS ROADS wounded were evacuated on motor ambulances.

Stretcher bearers suffered very heavy casualties one unit having 42 casualties out of 48. All units have emphasised the excellent work of their battalion stretcher bearers.

Trophies. 18. Trophies were captured as follows:-
11th Lancashire Fusiliers - 2 machine guns and one grenade thrower (Pineapple). Of these one machine gun was blown up by shell fire and the other was left at J.l.d.30.55 (Right Co. Headquarters). The grenade thrower was left at BN.H.Q. J.l.d.30.35.

- 8 -

13th Cheshire Regiment one machine gun, 5 field guns, one howitzer left in the neighbourhood of J.8.c.5.8.
9th L.N. Lanes. Six machine guns.
2nd Royal Irish Rifles. One 77 mm. Field gun and 5 machine guns.

Casualties. 19. See Appendix 'D'

Lessons to be learnt. 20. (a) Supplies. Every unit in the front line should have a carrying party permanently detailed for its tour of duty. Every unit should go into the line with at least two days rations on the person, and one day's rations should be dumped immediately as far up as transport can get them. One platoon to be composed of one section (One N.C.O. and 10 O.R's.) from each Company should be situated in the neighbourhood of these dumps, each section under a selected N.C.O., with a selected subaltern in charge of the platoon. This platoon should work rations up to the line as opportunity occurs by day or night. The object should be always to have at least two days rations with troops in the front line, and one day at least should always be in the dump. On this occasion 8th Border Regiment, 8th S.Lanes.Regiment, 10th Sheshire Regiment (two nights), 3rd Worcester Regiment and 1st Wiltshire Regiment all carried for units of this Brigade in addition to themselves on different nights. In spite of detailed arrangements and instructions and much expenditure of energy, it was with the greatest difficulty that rations got up, and it was a fact that the greater part of whatever rations did get up was almost entirely due to the efforts of these carrying battalions.

Guides from units in the line never turned up, turned up late, or turned up so done, that they lost their way going back. Only an intelligent N.C.O. or officer or a guide who has done the journey several times had any chance of finding his way up on the pitch dark nights, through fog, and over the almost impossible ground that lay between the two ridges.

(b) Preparations for the Attack. All O.C's. units must always look ahead, use their imagination, foresee probable course of events, and prepare for same. Officers commanding units were warned confidentially to prepare for and consider this attack when the brigade was in reserve at YPRES August 3rd. Rough plan was sent them, and it was suggested that 36-48 hours warning was all we should get. On receipt of Divisional orders (next day 4th) the above letter was officially cancelled but at the same time we agreed to regard it as a possibility. Eventually the brigade was warned for the attack late on the evening of 5th August which gave us as it happened ample time after all. I am certain that time is essential nowadays for all units (even though they be reasonably quick ones). Provided the rules of the game are observed, success is practically certain. The Officers who are conversant with the rules and who are able to ensure their being observed to the letter are few in any battalion; in inverse proportion to their numbers is the time required. What often happens is that the rules never get further than being observed on paper at Divisional, Brigade and possibly Battalion Headquarters, and never materialize into action in the companies and platoons in the line on whom success finally depends.

At the same time all Officers and N.C.O's. of the Brigade with the experience of the SOMME, MESSINES, and this last show to go on, must learn to think quicker, and consequently to act quicker and thus ensure success in the future. All action is the result of thought; only idiots function without mental control; what we call intuition is really the result of damned quick thinking, which has become second nature. All Officers and N.C.O's. in the Brigade will consider this matter carefully and attend to it with their usual energy.

(c) Battalion Runners. Must be more carefully selected and a larger number earmarked, as a few will have to be attached to Brigade Headquarters on certain occasions to supplement runners. When continuous heavy shelling is encountered as during last operations, two runners should be sent with every message. These runners must be held up on arrival until a message is being sent back or another message arrives. In this latter case the first pair of runners will be returned at once emptyhanded.

At the same time the work of all trained brigade and battalion runners on this occasion was splendid.

The following was a good example of their spirit:-

A runner was carrying a message from Brigade Headquarters. When 500 yards short of Advanced Report Centre he was badly wounded by a shell in both legs and in the head. The Advanced Report Centre on the top of BELLEWAARDE RIDGE was being heavily barraged at the time, but in spite of his wounds, this runner crawled on into the heavy bombardment and succeeded in delivering his despatches.

(d) Prisoners. Ten prisoners are reported to have escaped from YPRES. It is a question for consideration whether the indiscriminate use of prisoners all over the place carrying wounded etc. is advisable. During these operations the opportunities for escape must have been innumerable and all prisoners are not docile.

(e) Artillery. Artillery support was excellent. As regards preliminary bombardment if infantry are prepared to take the risk the gunners should engage targets which theoretically unsafe. In this case 4.5" Hows. engaged targets 150 yards in front of our line. No infantry moved but lay down in their trenches. O.C's. battalions reported an excellent shoot. It is preferable to have 20 casualties from our own artillery than a certain 50 to 100 from the enemy's during withdrawal or a probable 150 to 200 from a strong point which you have overlooked and not thoroughly prepared for assault. It was an improvement to have a heavy artillery liaison Officer on BELLEWAARDE Ridge. One should always be so situated and unnecessary discussion as to whose shell it was etc. can be often avoided before they materialize on paper. F.O.O's. with battalions are thereto observe fire not merely to liaise. Apparently one or two C.O's. and one or two Liaison Officers have not as yet clearly grasped this point.

(f) S.O.S. It is suggested that a time limit of 7 minutes should be laid down for intense fire and that artillery should then slow down unless S.O.S. is again repeated. Something of this sort would save much ammunition. As it is, an attack is threatening a Division on the right and the latter puts up the S.O.S. This is taken up and spreads down the line, and at least 20 minutes elapses before the trouble has been correctly placed and the S.O.S. closed down on the areas not affected.

-10-

Units faute de mieux had to deal with several enemy efforts with rifle, Lewis gun and machine gun fire only. The results were most satisfactory. In future we must rely more upon our fire power and develop it continually - at present it is only elementary, and even so has saved the situation for us at several points.

- (g) Machine guns. The value of machine guns was brought out more strongly than ever. Personnel of the machine gun company should consist of the elite of the Brigade. At present 50% are not up to standard. The opportunities for a good, hard N.C.O./^{or Officer} were brought out most markedly.
- (h) Lewis Guns. Every man must be put through a short course. These guns are invaluable, and their tactical use has not as yet been fully exploited by us. It is thought that high casualties may be due to lack of experience in taking cover.
- (j) Consolidation. The Brigade was not strong enough to furnish the necessary parties for C.T's. It is suggested that such parties should always be found by supporting troops.
- (k) Rifle fire. The time devoted to musketry and particular attention paid by all units to the use of the rifle when the Brigade was practising its set piece attack against "PASSION VILLAGE" (BOMY Area) repaid us out of all proportion. All men who got a chance (and most did) used their rifles freely, and each man claimed many hits. All the energy expended and keenness displayed by all ranks throughout the short intensive training after MESSINES, in particular the perseverance of C.O's in coping with the fathomless ignorance at first encountered, have reaped their reward. All ranks particularly the large new drafts received after MESSINES (forming 50% of the Brigade as it took WESTHOEK) have every reason to be satisfied with themselves. The satisfactory results obtained at WESTHOEK, were due to the trouble they had taken to turn themselves into soldiers, as apart from brave men dressed in khaki.
- (l) Getting forward. All units should always be trained to get forward of their objectives. Atmosphere and circumstances will always ensure their not going too far. In this case all units overhot their mark and those that went furthest suffered least. It is thought that this was due:
- (1) To its being as easy to withdraw to a selected position as it is hard to get forward to a certain position which you have not seen.
 - (2) It means that all ground in front is well clear of the enemy, and obviates the appearance just as consolidation is starting, of odd snipers and machine guns within point blank range. This was well exemplified in the case of the 9th Loyal North Lancs Regt.
 - (3) In the case of enemy counter attack, he can push for quite a long time in the air before he strikes the line which is really being consolidated and is to be held.
 - (4) Dash and pace are everything provided that knowledge and method are also present. The latter gives birth to the former, and ignorance of job gets the wind vertical much faster than enemy 5.9" barrage.

APPENDIX "A"

DRESS, EQUIPMENT, ETC.

1. Packs will contain the following:-

- (1) Unexpired portion of the days ration.
- (2) Iron ration
- (3) Soap and towel
- (4) Pair of laces
- (5) Shaving kit
- (6) Pair of socks
- (7) Canteen
- (8) Anti-gas goggles.

Machine Gun company will take above in haversacks carried in place of packs.

Total weight = 9 lbs.

2. Waterproof sheets will be carried inside packs.

3. Supporting straps of packs to be worn.

4. Each man will carry:-

- (1) 120 rounds S.A.A.
- (2) 2 sandbags
- (3) 1 bomb
- (4) Steel helmets, sacking covers under battalion arrangements.
- (5) Box respirator
- (6) Field dressing
- (7) All water bottles must be filled.
Total weight = 45½ lbs.
- (8) Men must be cautioned to use their rations and water sparingly as they will go 48 hours at least on the rations carried in their packs.
- (9) In addition to the above, companies will be in possession of:-
 - (a) Wire cutters - 12 per platoon, which must be attached to the person or rifle.
 - (b) Hedging gloves, which must be tied to the left wrist.
- (10) Officers will be dressed and equipped exactly as their men.
- (11) Officers will carry all available Very light pistols, which must be attached to the person. They will also carry a tin of S.O.S. rifle grenades and 10 rounds VERY ammunition. Officers servants will carry additional supply of S.O.S. rockets and VERY ammunition. Each N.C.O. will carry two flares.
- (12) Tools will be carried by 50% of the men. No. 2 of each Lewis gun team, 1 shovel. Rifle grenadiers, Nil. Riflemen, 1 pick to 4 shovels strapped on packs.
- (13) 24 bill-hooks per battalion.
- (14) Breech covers will be fastened to the rifle by a string at rear end.
(O's.C. all units will issue strict orders to ensure that all precautions are taken to keep their rifles in firing order. Unless special efforts are made by all ranks under present conditions there will be only one result - namely, that not more than 10% of rifles will remain in a condition to fire after a few hours movement and fighting.
- (15) Platoon Rolls. Each officer and N.C.O. will carry a nominal of his platoon in addition to a nominal roll of the company.
- (16) Each Headquarters will carry a distinguishing flag to mark its position:-

13th Cheshire Regt.
11th Lancs. Fusiliers
9th L.N. Lancs Regt
2nd R.I. Rifles

RED
YELLOW & BLACK (diag)
DARK BLUE
GREEN.

APPENDIX

233

- NOTE.** (a) Blank ammunition for rifle grenades must be kept separate from ball ammunition.
- (b) Each grenadier should carry a piece of oily rag for oiling rods just before use.

N.B. In addition to the 9-lbs. plus 45½-lbs = 54½ lbs, some men carry extra wirecutters 1-lb, hedging gloves 12-ozs., pick 6-lbs. shovel 4-lbs., Bill-hook 2-lbs., 2 flags 12-ozs.

Rifle Grenadiers carry 50 rounds S.A.A. - 8 rifle grenades 12 rounds blank or 60½-lbs.

Bombing carriers carried 12 bombs 50 rounds S.A.A. also 60½-lbs.

(The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a list of equipment and instructions for various personnel.)

... (a) wire cutters - 12 per platoon, which must be attached to the person or rifle.

... (b) Hedging gloves, which must be tied to the left wrist.

... (c) Pickaxe - will be carried by one of the men. No. 3 of each platoon will carry a shovel. Rifle Grenadiers, Bill-Hookmen, I will carry a shovel strapped on back.

... (d) Bill-hook per battalion.

... (e) Branch covers will be fastened to the rifle by a string at rear end.

... (f) S.A.A. All units will issue strict orders to ensure that all precautions are taken to keep their rifles in firing order. Unless special efforts are made by all ranks under present conditions there will be only one result - namely that not more than 10% of rifles will remain in a condition to fire after a few hours movement and fighting.

... (g) The person or rifle.

... (h) Rifle Grenadiers will carry 50 rounds S.A.A. and 8 rifle grenades. They will also carry a tin of S.O.S. rifle grenades and 10 rounds V.M.C. ammunition. Grenadier carriers will carry additional supply of S.O.S. rifle grenades and V.M.C. ammunition. Each S.O.S. will carry two tinies.

... (i) Tools will be carried by one of the men. No. 3 of each platoon will carry a shovel. Rifle Grenadiers, Bill-Hookmen, I will carry a shovel strapped on back.

... (j) Bill-hook per battalion.

... (k) Branch covers will be fastened to the rifle by a string at rear end.

... (l) S.A.A. All units will issue strict orders to ensure that all precautions are taken to keep their rifles in firing order. Unless special efforts are made by all ranks under present conditions there will be only one result - namely that not more than 10% of rifles will remain in a condition to fire after a few hours movement and fighting.

... (m) The person or rifle.

... (n) Rifle Grenadiers will carry 50 rounds S.A.A. and 8 rifle grenades. They will also carry a tin of S.O.S. rifle grenades and 10 rounds V.M.C. ammunition. Grenadier carriers will carry additional supply of S.O.S. rifle grenades and V.M.C. ammunition. Each S.O.S. will carry two tinies.

... (o) Tools will be carried by one of the men. No. 3 of each platoon will carry a shovel. Rifle Grenadiers, Bill-Hookmen, I will carry a shovel strapped on back.

... (p) Bill-hook per battalion.

... (q) Branch covers will be fastened to the rifle by a string at rear end.

... (r) S.A.A. All units will issue strict orders to ensure that all precautions are taken to keep their rifles in firing order. Unless special efforts are made by all ranks under present conditions there will be only one result - namely that not more than 10% of rifles will remain in a condition to fire after a few hours movement and fighting.

... (s) The person or rifle.

... (t) Rifle Grenadiers will carry 50 rounds S.A.A. and 8 rifle grenades. They will also carry a tin of S.O.S. rifle grenades and 10 rounds V.M.C. ammunition. Grenadier carriers will carry additional supply of S.O.S. rifle grenades and V.M.C. ammunition. Each S.O.S. will carry two tinies.

... (u) Tools will be carried by one of the men. No. 3 of each platoon will carry a shovel. Rifle Grenadiers, Bill-Hookmen, I will carry a shovel strapped on back.

... (v) Bill-hook per battalion.

... (w) Branch covers will be fastened to the rifle by a string at rear end.

... (x) S.A.A. All units will issue strict orders to ensure that all precautions are taken to keep their rifles in firing order. Unless special efforts are made by all ranks under present conditions there will be only one result - namely that not more than 10% of rifles will remain in a condition to fire after a few hours movement and fighting.

... (y) The person or rifle.

... (z) Rifle Grenadiers will carry 50 rounds S.A.A. and 8 rifle grenades. They will also carry a tin of S.O.S. rifle grenades and 10 rounds V.M.C. ammunition. Grenadier carriers will carry additional supply of S.O.S. rifle grenades and V.M.C. ammunition. Each S.O.S. will carry two tinies.

APPENDIX "B"

CARRYING GANGS.

Carriers will be organized in four gangs each of 1 N.C.O. and 11 other ranks per Company.

	<u>Each gang carries.</u>	<u>Total per Platoon.</u>
1 N.C.O.	Light load S.O.S. rockets, Very Lights and flares.	1/3rd load.
3 mōn	24 drums L.G.	8 drums of L.G.
3 mēn	3 boxes S.A.A.	1 box.
3 men	10 tins of water	3 tins (1 tin Co.H.Q.)
Each man will carry 10 sand bags		110 sand bags.

These gangs will be composed of men selected for their carrying capacity, and will follow in rear of their Companies at interval of time to be laid down by O.C. Battalion.

Generally carrier gangs move between ZERO plus 30 minutes and ZERO plus 3 hours, length of time being dependent on distance of objectives, nature of country, and disposition of enemy barrage. In this case the maximum advance is 700 yards as against 2,000 yards at MESSINES, and gangs must be clear of, and east of, our front line, and into the German system before his barrage comes down on form at ZERO plus 3 to ZERO plus 5 minutes.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The problem confronting Brigade Signals was a difficult one. No buried cables existed even to our old front line, and heavy shelling rendered lines across the open very unreliable. The policy decided upon was to establish a Brigade forward Station on BELLEWAARDE Ridge at J.7.a.30.00 and to concentrate on maintaining telephone communication between there and Brigade Headquarters. Forward of this, communication was to be by runner and visual.

CABLE. It was found impossible to maintain metallic circuits to the forward station so earth returns were used and "laddered". Even then communication was continually interrupted. The line was through at ZERO, but was "dis" a few minutes after. It was through again at ZERO plus 2 hours and remained so for the remainder of the day.

VISUAL. A central visual station was established to Brigade Forward station which was situated in an old enemy O.P. An excellent view could be obtained forward through a shell hole in the wall conveniently knocked out the previous morning. A rear station was established near YEOMANRY POST with telephone communication to Brigade. Owing to its visibility from the enemy lines no answers were given from the Forward station before ZERO.

At ZERO the Brigade forward Station was in touch with all 4 battalions.

During the first few hours of the attack, many valuable messages were dealt with by this means, and were rapidly transmitted to Brigade. The average time for a short message to reach Brigade was 20 minutes. A message received by this means from 9th Loyal North Lancs Regt. reporting an enemy massing was immediately acted on by the artillery, and a counter-attack broken up before it started. The left Battalion, 11th Lancashire Fusiliers was out of touch soon after ZERO, and its lamp was not seen all day.

At about ZERO plus 10 hours answering from the Brigade Forward Station had to be given up owing to the deliberate shelling of the place where the lamp was shown, and after this the communication was not so satisfactory, although short messages well sent, were read with ease. Units have expressed dissatisfaction at receiving no acknowledgment of messages sent. This shows the necessity for much practice in DD work so that Battalions should acquire confidence in this work. This form of communication may be said to have been very valuable

during the battle, but it must be remembered that it is not suitable for taking long routine messages, and is very exhausting to personnel.

WIRELESS. Power buzzer and amplifier communication was a failure. This was probably largely due to the difficulty in maintaining Bases owing to heavy shelling and to lack of trained personnel owing to heavy casualties in the wireless section, which had not been replaced.

PIGEONS were found to be extremely valuable. The average time for a message to reach Brigade by this means was an hour.

RUNNERS. A relay post was established at Brigade Forward Station. A large amount of work was thrown on the Brigade runners and they may be said to have done magnificent work. It was abundantly proved that runners must be young, of good stamina, fit, and also that it necessary to provide accomodation so that the men can rest when not on duty. The strain on this personnel for 48 hours was very great and pace is essential, the only weak part in the organization this time was the lack of accomodation at Brigade Headquarters to rest men in, and that new Battalion runners were not up to standard.

CABLE. It was found impossible to maintain reliable circuits to the forward station as early returns were used and "backed". Even then communication was continually interrupted. The line was through at 2100, but was "down" a few minutes later. It was through again at 2200 plus 2 hours and remained so for the remainder of the day.

VISUAL. A contact visual station was established to Brigade Forward Station which was situated in an old enemy C.P. An excellent view could be obtained forward through a shell hole in the wall conveniently knocked out the previous morning. A relay station was established near the enemy line with telephone communication to Brigade. Being so its visibility from the enemy lines no answers were given from the forward station before 2100. At 2200 the Brigade Forward Station was in touch with all 4 battalions.

During the first few hours of the attack, many valuable messages were dealt with by this means, and were rapidly transmitted to Brigade. The average time for a short message to reach Brigade was 20 minutes. A message received by this means from 2nd Royal North Lancs Regt. reporting an enemy message was immediately acted on by the artillery, and a counter-attack broken up before it started. The 1st Battalion, 1st Lancashire Fusiliers was not at all of food, soon after 2100, and its lamp was not seen all day.

At about 2100 plus 10 hours answering from the Brigade Forward Station had to be given up owing to the deliberate breaking of the line. The line was never again restored. Although short messages were sent, were read with ease. While have expressed dissatisfaction at receiving no acknowledgment of messages sent. This shows the necessity for each practice in DD work so that Battalion should receive confidence in this work. This form of communication may be said to have been very valuable during the battle, but it must be remembered that it is not suitable for taking long routine messages, and is very expensive in personnel.

WIRELESS. Power booster and amplifier communication was a failure. This was probably largely due to the difficulty in maintaining bases owing to heavy shelling and to lack of trained personnel owing to heavy casualties in the wireless section which had not been replaced.

WIRELESS. It was found to be extremely valuable. The average time for a message to reach Brigade by this means was 15 hours.

CASUALTIES SUSTAINED 5/8/17 - 11/8/17 (WESTHOEK RIDGE)

UNIT	Actual strength of Units going into line.		KILLED		WOUNDED		MISSING (c)		TOTAL	
	Officers	O. Ranks.	Officers	O. Ranks	Off.	O. R.	Off.	O. R.	officers	O. Ranks.
11th Lancs. Fus.	25	490	2	41	3	157		15	5	213
13th Cheshires	25	610	2	35	17	281		79	19	395
9th L.F. Lancs.	21	596	3	30	6	234		11	9	275
2nd N.I. Rifles	14	479	3	30	5	280		21	8	331
74th M.G. Coy.	8	176	1	8	2	42		1	3	51
74th T.M. Battery.	3	46	1	2	2	4			3	6
TOTAL	96	2,397	12	146	35	998		127	47	1,271.

TOTAL CASUALTIES.- 47 Officers 1,271 other ranks.

Percentage of Officers - 48.9

Percentage of O. Ranks 53.0

(c) All these men will eventually be found to be killed or wounded, as no prisoners were lost to the enemy at any time.

APPENDIX



FIFTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY

HEADQUARTERS 5TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY.
No. <i>111/119</i>
Date.....

Headquarters,
5th. September 1917.

Headquarters,
5th. Australian Division.

Reference your G. 3/3329 dated 1st. inst.

The attached letter from G.O.C. 16th.

(Irish) Division is noted and returned to you as requested.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. J. ...".

Brig-General,
C. R. A. 5th. Australian Division.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Warbey".



HEADQUARTERS

16th (IRISH) DIVISION

G. O. C.

5th Australian Division.

On behalf of all ranks of the 16th (Irish) Division I beg you to convey to the Brigade and Battery Commanders and to the Officers, N.C.Os and men of the 5th Australian Divisional Artillery our sincere appreciation of the assistance they gave us during the fifteen days the Irish Division held the Frezenberg Ridge.

At all times of the day and night, in any weather, and though themselves subjected to constant and heavy shell and gas bombardments, they quickly and effectively answered every call for assistance.

In asking them to accept our thanks we wish to assure them that we shall not forget them.

W. B. Hickey Maj. Gen.
Comd. 16th (Irish) Division

Aug. 21st 1917.

APPENDIX

233
 8th Infantry Brigade
 14th Infantry Brigade
 15th Infantry Brigade
 Divisional Engineers
 Divisional M.G. Officer.

The Divisional Commander wishes special attention drawn to the following translation of a captured German document "The employment of Counter-Attack troops", and an extract from the orders of the YPRES Group, dated 11th June 1917.

The tactics given in the latter were probably the result of the lessons learnt during the battle of MESSINES, and are presumably still employed by the Fourth German Army.

8th September, 1917.

Sastman
 Captain,
 General Staff,
 5th Australian Division.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF COUNTER-ATTACK TROOPS.

H.Q. 13/6/17.

The following comprehensive orders for the action of counter-attack troops are issued in view of present conditions:-

The experience of all recent fighting has shown that immediate and rapid counter attack carried out by reserve battalions, which have been kept concentrated in close proximity and are provided with field artillery held in readiness to move (counter attack artillery), leads to the immediate recapture of the whole position. In such cases, it has been possible for the counter-attack artillery to gallop up in the open, and direct a very heavy fire on the English who had penetrated at certain points in dense masses, and thus inflict tremendous losses on them.

Such great success can only be obtained by very careful preparation. All possible counter-attacks which can be carried out with the reserves of infantry and field artillery must be carefully thought out beforehand, the subordinate commanders must make themselves acquainted with the ground and, as far as possible, preliminary practices should be held. Particularly careful preparations must be made where regimental or divisional boundaries are in question.

Preparations for counter-attacks to be carried out within the divisional sector must be made by the division in that sector. The basis of the preparations should be that, at the approach of a hostile attack, all reserves will be placed at the complete disposal of the divisional commander, the resting battalions of the division will, at the same time, be brought into and in front of the 3rd line position, and the counter-attack regiments will be brought closer up.

If one division only is attacked, it can rely on the Group placing at its disposal for immediate counter-attack about 3 additional battalions and 2 or 3 batteries of field artillery. The provision of guides for troops of other divisions, who are not familiar with the ground, is of extreme importance and must be arranged beforehand.

SECOND LINE FIGHTING DIVISIONS - The employment of second line fighting divisions is to be prepared in the same way.

The following general principles apply to their employment :-

They will, at first, be billeted in the rear billeting area. From there they will be brought forward into forward bivouacking areas, where they will bivouac in concentrated groups of infantry regiments with artillery. Billets must not be expected, as units must be kept together and villages and camps will, at this period of the attack, be for the most part under fire.

On the approach of a hostile attack, troops will be brought forward from the forward bivouacking areas to their assembly positions for the attack, and will there be held in readiness. Attention must be paid to protection against aerial observation. The troops will be best disposed in infantry regimental groups. They must deploy at an early moment, so that when they receive orders, or a hostile attack takes place, the counter-attack can begin without any loss of time.

Single batteries or Abteilungen will be allotted to infantry regimental groups for tasks to be carried out in direct co-operation with the infantry (anti-tank defence and the engagement of machine guns). These artillery units should remain with their teams hooked in.

The remaining batteries will remain in a position of readiness, which should face according to the requirements of the situation, their teams within easy reach.

It is important that infantry and artillery should be well supplied with despatch riders from the divisional cavalry. The infantry will leave all unnecessary equipment in their last billeting area; they will wear assault kit and carry an ample supply of ammunition.

As a matter of principle, all commanders in the counter-attack divisions (Mingreifdivisionen), including divisional commanders, should be close to their troops on the field of battle, in accordance with the principles of open warfare.

x x x x x x

The schemes for the employment of the second line fighting divisions must, above all, be based on the consideration that the counter-attack will have to be carried out between the 2nd and 3rd line positions and beyond the 2nd line position, with the object of at once retaking any of our guns which have been lost and eventually recapturing the whole position. The positions of readiness for batteries will be chosen correspondingly far forward, as also their observation posts and battery positions, which must be reconnoitred and fixed.

The results of these reconnaissances are to be used for the guidance of divisions arriving subsequently in this area, and are to be handed to the Ypres Group when leaving it.

(Signed) v. KIRCHBACK.

-3-

EXTRACT from the orders of the
YPRES Group, dated 11th June 1917:-

It is the duty of the artillery to evade the enemy's destructive fire and thus maintain its fighting strength. Field artillery can attain this object by moving into the open, and evacuating battery positions which have been discovered and are heavily shelled. In the case of heavy batteries, the effect of the enemy's fire must be minimised by distributing the guns in echelon at wide intervals. In case of positions in the open, it is only possible to keep ammunition in small dumps merely protected against the weather; the effect of direct hits is also diminished in this way. As the large quantity of ammunition which has to be stored in readiness covers a large area, the wide distribution of the guns and the movement of the batteries to a flank is facilitated.

The general principle that, in cases of heavy bombardment, the regular positions should be abandoned for the open, must be applied also to the artillery.

Copies to:-

Divisional Artillery
"G"

APPENDIX

G1/4115

8th Infantry Brigade
14th Infantry Brigade
15th Infantry Brigade.

1. The Divisional Commander has given permission the 6th Cavalry Brigade to operate over this Divisional Area on "Tuesday September 11th.

2. Please inform all units under your command of this.

3. A copy of the orders for the scheme is attached.

10th Sept., 1917.

K. A. Goodland
for
Major,
General Staff,
5th Australian Division.

6th Cavalry Brigade Scheme to be carried out on Tuesday September 11th, 1917 .

Ref. Map. HAZEBROUCK 5A. 1/100,000.

GENERAL IDEA.

A main German line of defence running approximately along the Canal de la LYS and the River la LYS, has been pierced between MERVILLE and THEROUANNE, and the Germans are retiring rapidly in a North Westerly direction, covered principally by Cavalry and Machine guns.

SPECIAL IDEA.
=====

Our Infantry are on the line VIEUX BERQUIN - Northern edge of Forêt de NIEPPE - THIENNES - 1 mile North of AIRE - ROUETOIRE. Touch with the enemy has been lost.

The 3rd Cavalry Division, who are bivouaced the night 10th/11th September in the vicinity of BUSNES, are ordered to gain touch with the enemy and prevent him taking up a defensive position South of a line running E. and W. through CASSEL.

The 6th Cavalry Brigade are ordered to move forward on the front bounded on the East by a line running through MERVILLE - LA Hte. LOGE - LES CISEAUX, and the West by a line running through THIENNES - BOESEGHEM - BLARINGHEM - LYNDE - Chau. Le NIEPPE.

The 7th Cavalry Brigade are on the right flank of the 6th Cavalry Brigade.

Divisional H.Q., Divisional Troops, and the 8th Cavalry Brigade are moving via MERVILLE - HAZEBROUCK - LES CISEAUX.

The following 6th Cavalry Brigade orders are issued on the night of 10th:

- 1. Information &)
- 2. Intention.) As per Scheme.
- 3. In consequence the N.S.Y. and Royals will advance simultaneously.

The North Somerset Yeomanry in the area between MERVILLE - LA Hte. LOGE - LES CISEAUX Road inclusive, and the HAVERSKERQUE - MORBECQUE - WALLON CAPPEL Road inclusive.

The Royals in the area between the HAVERSKERQUE - MORBECQUE - WALLON CAPPEL Road exclusive, and the THIENNES - BOESEGHEM - BLARINGHEM - LYNDE - Chau. Le NIEPPE Road inclusive.

Main Body.

Brigade H.Q.)	will move via
6th Signal Troop.)	STEENBECQUE Stn.-
3rd Regiment (represented by)	SERCUS - WALLON
3 blue flags))	CAPPEL.
)	
6th Machine Gun Squadron)	
(less 3 sub-sections with Rgts))	

-2-

First Bound. HAZEBROUCK - AIRE Road.

Second Bound. LA HAUTE LOGE - SERCUS - BLARINGHEM.

Third Bound. LES CISEAUX - STAPLE - EBLINGHEM.

Starting Point: T Roads North of V in HAVERSKERQUE.

Time: 8-15 a.m.

4. Reports to the Head of the Main Body.

.....Captain.
Brigade Major 6th Cavalry Brigade.

Issued at 8 p.m.

- Copy No. 2. 3rd Cavalry Division.
3. 7th Cavalry Brigade.
4. Royals.
5. N.S.Y.
6. 3rd Regiment.
7. 6th Machine Gun.Sqdn.

DRESS: Drill Order with Caps. Enemy will wear Helmets.
Haversack ration and feeds to be carried.
5 rounds of blank ammunition per man will be carried.

=====

6th Cavalry Brigade Scheme
to be carried out on
Tuesday 11th September, 1917.

Ref. map

HAZEBROUCK 5A. 1/100,000.

GENERAL IDEA.

A main German line of defence running approximately along the Canal de la LYS and the River de la LYS, has been pierced between MERVILLE and THEROUANNE, and the Germans are retiring rapidly in a North Westerly direction, covered principally by Cavalry and machine guns.

The enemy's Cavalry are reported advancing in large numbers.

SPECIAL IDEA.

The 3rd Dragoon Guards and a sub-section of the 6th Machine Gun Squadron will represent the German Rear Guard, and will take up a position on the line from the X-Roads about 400 yards North West of the L in LA CULNEWELE - SERCUS to the T Roads North of the E in LE CROQUET, and will hold it at all costs until receiving orders to withdraw.

Troops to be in position by 9-30 a.m. and no patrols to be sent out before that hour.

DRESS; Drill Order. 3rd Dragoon Guards and sub-section of 6th Machine Gun Squadron will wear steel helmets - the enemy, caps.

Haversack ration and feeds to be carried.

5 rounds of blank ammunition per man will be carried.

=====

233

APPENDIX
APPENDIX

564

CONFIDENTIAL.

Headquarters,
5th Australian Division.
14th September, 1917.

My dear General,

I have prepared a Circular Memorandum embracing the various points which I think require special attention by all concerned during the time which lies before, and in carrying out the operations in which we shall shortly be engaged. The points mentioned are generally the result of my observation of the work done during the new attack formation exercises we have been engaged in lately.

Please be good enough to impress on your Battalion Commanders, and they in their turn on their Battalion Officers and Section Commanders the absolute necessity of studying all these things if we are to succeed, and with a minimum of loss. It is also most necessary that the men should be told everything that it is safe to tell them, in order that they may be possessed with that knowledge which gives them full confidence on the day of battle.

Yours sincerely.

(Sgd) J. P. Hobbs

*Major General
Commanding 5th Australian Division*

Copies to:-
Divisional Artillery
Divisional Engineers
Divisional Signal Co.
Divisional Train
A.D.H.S.
" " " "

TO BE HANDED INTO BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS BEFORE GOING INTO THE LINE.

The following points require special attention in the forthcoming operations in which the Division will be engaged:-

1. The advance of the troops detailed for the attack from the "jumping off line" to a position close to our barrage must be made quickly. We can only expect from 4 to 5 minutes' grace before the Boche barrage falls.
2. The "beaters" or "skirmishers" must follow the barrage closely. They should be able to keep within 40 yards of it.
3. The barrage will give you the line; you must take care to keep going in the right direction.
4. Remember you are attacking an area. Your troops must therefore be distributed over the whole of that area from front to rear and from flank to flank, and "moppers up" must search for the Boches who are sure to lie low.
5. Supporting platoons must fill up any gap caused by the troops in front being drawn in towards "strong points".
6. There must be no cessation of the continuous forward movement. If one part of our advance is held up, the flanks must go on.
7. Definite bodies of troops must be detailed to capture, garrison, and consolidate "known" strong points.
8. Keep touch with other units on your flank. If they fail to capture strong points, you must take them on should their capture be necessary to safe-guard your flank.
9. Never fall back because there are gaps in your line when you reach the end of your area. Remember it is far worse for the Boche, who will hesitate to get into those gaps; if they do, they should be captured or destroyed.
10. Go for "strong points" as soon as the barrage lifts. Speed is everything. Have a Stokes bomb ready to blow in any iron doors of "pill boxes" and drop bombs down any chimneys or ventilation pipes.
11. Stokes Mortars must be taken well forward and used with the sling until there is ample time for fixing up the stand.
12. Economise men. Don't send three men to do a job that two can do.
13. Battalion and Company Commanders must keep a reserve in hand to deal with unforeseen contingencies until the area has been thoroughly searched.
14. Make up your mind before you start how you are going to consolidate methodically, and remember that you must be ready at all times for the inevitable counter-attack.
15. Controlled rapid Lewis gun and rifle fire is your best defence. If you charge with the bayonet, charge in line together.
16. If the Boche starts barraging your line, go forward into shell holes. Never withdraw.
17. Avoid Boche trenches, roads, and other ranging marks.
18. Carry your rifle covers into action, tied to your rifle. Keep your rifles clean and in perfect working order.
19. Try and get cover and a field of fire when you can, but don't mask the fire of your own platoon.
20. Don't bunch together and don't keep more men than necessary to work Lewis guns, Vickers guns, and trench mortars. Send the rest of the detachment to cover near by.
21. You are sure to get gas shells - be on the look out for them. Practise your men in putting on their small box respirators and remember that you are responsible for seeing that your men are well drilled in this.
22. Carry out your work as far as possible in silence. Allow no talking or shouting, and give short, clear ORDERS - explanations are out of place. Never use the word RETIRE.
Explain to your men that an officer in action must have their whole attention is he is to lead them successfully.

-2-

23. You are sure to be in for a long day's fighting so save your men. Whenever you can do so, let them rest, but always post a man as "look out".
24. Think out how you are going to send back information and where and how you will move your signallers. Don't forget to light flares when "contact planes" call for them. Provide yourself with "maps and message" forms.
25. Make sure you have the S.O.S. Signals and know how to use them.
26. Make sure you take with you in the attack enough food, water, ammunition, and stores for 48 hours.
27. Take no maps, papers, or documents into action which may be of value to the Boche. If you have the misfortune to be captured, only give your rank and name. Your men need only give their number in addition. Don't talk to strangers even though they are dressed in Australian uniform. Remember that your comrades' lives and the success of the operations may depend on your keeping silent.
28. Officers of units assembling in rear preparatory to "leap frogging" through a unit must make themselves acquainted with the tactical situation before the barrage commences to advance again towards the next objective.
29. Finally, remember you are a better man than the Boche in every way and you are backed by a vastly superior Artillery. If you fight with your brains as well as your weapons, you must beat him. Remember you are fighting for an area of country, not for a line - so stick to the job given you and do it thoroughly. When he launches his big counter-attacks, we must be holding our area all the way from the front to the rear with a series of fortified posts, each ready to hold out to the bitter end. The distribution in depth is the key-note to success.

J. S. Hobbs.

14th September 1917.

Major General,
Commanding 5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

Distribution:

8th Infantry Brigade
14th Infantry Brigade
15th Infantry Brigade

Copies:

25
25
25

Copies to:

Divisional Artillery
Divisional Engineers
Divisional Signal Co.
Divisional Train
A.D.M.S.
"Q"

1
4
1
1
1
1.

War Diary
S.M.C.

SECRET

OPERATIONS ON 20th SEPTEMBER—SECOND ARMY.

During the night 19th-20th September our attacking troops moved to their assembly positions. Rain fell heavily during the night, and was followed by thick mist in the early morning.

At 5.40 a.m. the attack was launched on a front of 6,800 yards, extending from the Ypres—Comines Canal to South of the Ypres—Roulers Railway, where the front of attack was prolonged to the North by the Fifth Army.

The three objective lines for attack were :—

(a) Red Line.

Hessian Wood—East of Groenenburg Farm—Western slopes of the Bassevillebeek Valley—Dumbarton Lakes—Herenthage Chateau—East of Inverness Copse—Fitzclarence Farm—East of Glencorse Wood and Nonne Boschen Wood—and along the banks of the Hannebeek.

The IX. Corps on the right attacked with troops of the Worcesters, Gloucesters, North Staffords, Wiltshire, Welsh and Cheshire Regiments, belonging to the 19th Division.

The X. Corps in the centre attacked with troops of the :—

Sherwood Foresters } 39th Division.
Rifle Brigade

Queen's }
K.R.R. } 41st Division.
Hants.

Northumberland Fusiliers } 23rd Division.
West Yorkshire

The I. Anzac Corps on the left attacked with the :—

2nd Australian Brigade } 1st Australian Division.
3rd " " }

7th " " } 2nd " "
5th " " }

The first objective line was gained about 6.15 a.m. without much opposition.

(b) Blue Line.

Hessian Wood—Belgian Wood—Western Slopes of Tower Hamlets—Veldhoek Ridge—Black Watch Corner—Western Edge of Polygon Wood—Albert Redoubt—Iron Cross Redoubt—Anzac Farm.

The advance commenced at 7.15 a.m. on the right and 7.40 a.m. on the remainder of the front of attack.

The IX. Corps continued the attack with the same troops of the 19th Division.

The X. Corps employed troops of the—

Sherwood Foresters } 39th Division.
K.R.R.

Queen's }
K.R.R. } 41st Division.
Hants.

Northumberland Fusiliers } 23rd Division.
Yorkshire

The I. Anzac Corps continued the attack with the same troops of the 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions.

The IX. Corps gained their Second Objective before 7.45 a.m.

The X. Corps met with strong resistance—the 124th Brigade (41st Division) were held up by snipers at Het Pappotje Farm and subsequently by machine guns in dug-outs East of Bodmin Copse. Both these points were taken before 9.45 a.m.

Enemy's machine gun and rifle fire active from Wood West of Basseville Beek in J. 26 d central.

The remainder of the X. Corps fought their way forward across the Basseville Beek and through the Woods North and South of Herenthage Chateau, and overcame the hostile resistance by 9.45 a.m. A hostile counter-attack developed near Dumbarton Lakes about 8 a.m., but was repulsed.

I. Anzac Corps secured their Second Objective Line before 10 a.m., being checked temporarily only in the neighbourhood of Black Watch Corner, where the situation was quickly cleared up.

(c) Green Line.

The Eastern slopes of the Tower Hamlets—Veldhoek Ridge—through Polygon Wood—the Western slopes of the Upper Steenbeek Valley.

The advance commenced at 10 a.m. on the X. Corps and I. Anzac Corps fronts.

The X. Corps employed :—

Royal Fusiliers }
East Surrey } 41st Division.
R. West Kent

Durham L.I. } 23rd Division.
West Riding

The I. Anzac Corps used the same Brigades as for the previous objectives.

The X. Corps made slow progress on the right with the 41st Division, but succeeded in establishing the Green Line near Tower Hamlets before 2.30 p.m.

To the South of Tower Hamlets the Right Battalion of the 124th Brigade (41st Division) was unable to advance beyond the Blue Line owing to heavy casualties. Touch, however, was maintained on both flanks, one Battalion of the 123rd Brigade (41st Division Reserve) being sent forward to form a defensive flank South of Tower Hamlets.

The 23rd Division on the Left reported final objectives gained at 12.45 p.m.

Consolidation was at once commenced and redistribution of troops for defence in depth taken in hand.

All our objectives for the day were gained with the exception of one strong point South of Tower Hamlets, which was still holding out at midnight 20th-21st September.

The fighting between Tower Hamlets and the southern extremity of the Tower Hamlets Ridge continued till 6.30 p.m., when a final effort by our troops succeeded in gaining ground towards the final objectives of the Centre Corps.

The enemy developed three strong counter-attacks which were dispersed by our artillery, rifle and machine-gun fire.

- (1) On X. Corps front, about 12 noon, enemy troops estimated to be about one regiment (three battalions) advanced from the direction of Nieuwe Kruiseecke along the North of the Menin Road towards Veldhoek.
- (2) On I. Anzac Corps front, about 1.30 p.m., enemy troops, probably of the 457th and 458th Regiments of the 236th Division, advanced westwards across Polygon Wood to the North of Cameron House.
- (3) On I. Anzac Corps front, about 6.10 p.m., a determined counter-attack developed against our troops in the Polygon Wood; it reached the high ground in the Polygon Wood before it was crushed. This was also made by troops of the 236th Division.

In addition to the three counter-attacks referred to above, hostile concentrations took place at various localities but were dispersed, before they developed into actual attacks, by our artillery fire, on information obtained from our low-flying aeroplanes.

- (1) Near Zonnebeke, at 8.30 a.m., local reserves—probably one battalion of 7th R.I.R.
- (2) South of Droogenbroohek, at 9.45 a.m., about 800 men—probably a resting battalion of the 121st Division.
- (3) Polygon Wood, at 10.20 a.m., about one battalion—probably also of the 121st Division.
- (4) North of Zandvoorde at 12.40 p.m.—strength unknown, but troops assembled behind Zandvoorde Ridge—probably from resting battalions of 207th Division from South of Kruiseecke.
- (5) East of Zandvoorde—between 2 and 2.30 p.m., about one battalion on the move northwards.
- (6) North of Polygon Wood—at 3.40 p.m., about one regiment (three battalions) probably from 236th Division.
- (7) East of Zandvoorde—at 5 p.m., about one battalion on the move northwards, probably from the resting battalions of the 24th Division in the vicinity of Wervicq.
- (8) North of Tenbrielen—at 6 p.m., about one battalion on the move northwards, also probably from the 24th Division.

The enemy Divisions belonging to the Wytschaete Group (Corps) on the front of attack from South to North were:—

- 207th (Prussian) Division.
- 9th (Prussian and Polish) Reserve Division.
- Bavarian Ersatz Division.
- 121st (Prussian) Division.

Each Division had three Regiments in front line, with local reserves close at hand (probably one Battalion of each Regiment); the two northern Divisions each had one Battalion in close support.

All Divisions and Regiments were identified by prisoners before 8 a.m. The 9th Reserve, Bavarian Ersatz and 121st Divisions suffered heavy casualties during the forenoon of the 20th September and may be considered as unlikely to be available for use for some time.

Two counter-attack Divisions appear to have been set in motion from the Dadizeele Line early in the day and appeared on the battle front during the afternoon between the Menin Road and North of the Ypres—Roulers Railway.

These counter-attack Divisions were the 236th Division and 16th Bavarian Division, which carried out, or attempted to carry out, counter-attacks North of the Menin Road.

The hostile troops, which appeared near Zandvoorde after 12 noon, came from the direction of Wervicq (24th Division).

Considerable movement of troops was observed on roads leading from Wervicq via Tenbrielen towards Zandvoorde. Smoke screens were put up by the enemy to hide this movement, which was, however, dealt with not only by artillery fire but by machine gun fire from low-flying aeroplanes.

During the day our aeroplanes have been very active. Contact patrols have flown low over the enemy's positions since early morning and have given valuable information of the assembly of enemy's troops for counter-attack. Artillery machines have been active till darkness set in and have enabled our batteries to keep the enemy under control. Hostile troops and transport have been attacked with machine gun fire in back areas from an average height of 300ft. Reconnaissances have been carried out of the Wervicq—Roulers—Menin and Wervicq—Moorslede Area.

Hostile aircraft have been active in their attempts to hinder our aerial activity; 50 combats took place, in which six hostile machines have been shot down and three driven down out of control, while six of our machines have not returned to their aerodromes. In addition, one hostile machine was shot down with Lewis Guns by the South Wales Borderers on the battle front during the evening.

Total Prisoners passed through Corps Cages or Casualty Clearing Stations for 24 hours up to 6 p.m. on 21st September—44 Officers and 1,564 other ranks.

22nd September, 1917.

W. ROBERTSON, Lieut.-Colonel,
General Staff, Second Army.

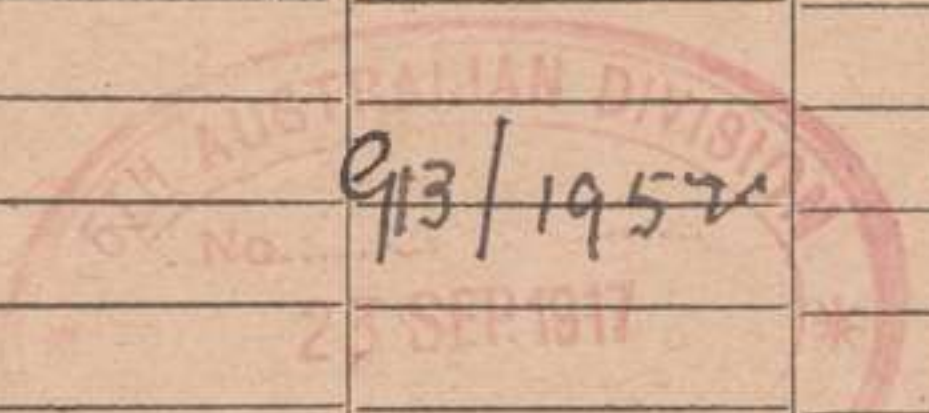
MESSAGES AND SIGNALS. No. of Message.....

Prefix *Am* Code *20* Words *20*
 Received *Amo* Sent, or sent out Office Stamp.
 From *Amo* At *10* m.
 By *J. John* To.....
 Charges to collect
 Service Instructions.
 Handed in at *Am* Office *Am* m. Received *1470* m.

TO *5th Aust Div*

*Sender's Number *A 135* Day of Month *23* In reply to Number *AAA*

Army Commander will
 visit your headquarters
 24th at 3.15 pm



Wardlaw

FROM *A D C Second Army*
 PLACE & TIME

* This line should be erased if not required.
 (B 8188) Wt. w. 7496-M857 250,000 Pads. 1/17 H & S (E489.) Forms/C.2123/3.

"C" Form MESSAGES AND SIGNALS. No. of Message.....

Prefix *Am* Code *40* Words *40*
 Received *Amo* Sent, or sent out Office Stamp.
 From *Amo* At..... m.
 By..... To.....
 Charges to collect
 Service Instructions.
 Handed in at *Amo* Office *Am* m. Received *10:10* m.

TO *5th Aust Div*

*Sender's Number *A 546* Day of Month *23* In reply to Number *AAA*

Meeting will be held tomorrow
 24th at 2.15 pm at
 5th Aust Div HQ
 GOSC 4th and 5th Aust
 Divs will attend with
 GSO's and CRA's and
 Corps will also attend

W. D. D. Williams

FROM *1st Anzac*
 PLACE & TIME *2150*

* This line should be erased if not required.
 (B 8188) Wt. w. 7496-M857 250,000 Pads. 1/17 H & S (E489.) Forms/C.2123/3.

APPENDIX

569

3
W. A. D. C. M.
 8th Infantry Brigade
 14th Infantry Brigade
 15th Infantry Brigade.

The points I wanted to speak to you about this morning if I had been able to reach you were

- (a) Are you satisfied with the artillery preparation and barrage? Is there anything, strong point, machine gun nest etc. on your front which you consider is not being satisfactorily dealt with?
- (b) It is my intention to put the superimposed batteries on the known strong points during the barrage in to-morrow morning's attack.
- (c) Are you in satisfactory liaison with the Field Artillery which is at your call?
- (d) Are you satisfied that the forming up and jumping off places are properly fixed, and times of movement carefully calculated, and that your reserves will be up at the right time?
- (e) Are the routes for the movement of troops forward properly laid down and being marked?
- (f) Are your communications to Battalion Headquarters satisfactory?
- (g) Do all concerned appreciate the necessity of getting as close as possible to our barrage when it falls in front of our forming up places, and of following it as closely as possible?
- (h) Are you taking every possible precaution to protect your own flanks? The affair on our extreme right this morning shows the necessity.
- (i) Give a final warning about rushing strong points and pill boxes with determination and resolution.
- (j) So as far as you can assist adjoining units with your machine gun fire.
- (k) Get out your wire for protection immediately you have obtained your objective.
- (l) Be prepared to push forward your patrols as soon as the protective barrage lifts.
- (m) Are you satisfied you have sufficient carriers detailed?

-2-

- (n) Remember our protective barrage is to open morning after attack day. Time will be notified later.
- (o) Remember that you can get information through to us immediately by the wireless tank which is situated at J.S.d.9.6. behind the big mound.

J. J. Hobbs

25th September, 1917.

Major-General,
Commanding 5th Australian Division.

Headquarters,
5th Australian Division,
30th September, 1917.

Comrades of the 5th Australian Division,

With the invaluable help of our splendid artillery, but under exceedingly trying and difficult conditions, you have during the past week's operations, with complete success, carried out the task assigned to the Division - and more - and notwithstanding the most strenuous, prolonged and persistent efforts of the enemy to prevent our attack, to defeat it when made, and to rob us of the fruits of our success when our objectives were gained.

We have fought the Boche to a finish, defeated him, inflicting on him very heavy losses.

To good discipline, thorough preparation and training, and, above all, the whole-hearted co-ordination and co-operation of all arms and branches of the Division, our success is due, and I take this opportunity of most heartily thanking you all for the long and strenuous work of training and preparation and congratulate you on the victory won, which has earned for the Division the congratulations and thanks of the Commander-in-Chief, the Army Commander, our own Corps Commander and the Commander of the II ANZAC Corps, under which the Division served when it first came to France.

We are justified in hoping that Australia too will be gratified and proud of the success that has crowned our efforts.

J. J. Hobbs.

Major-General,
Commanding 5th Australian Division,