

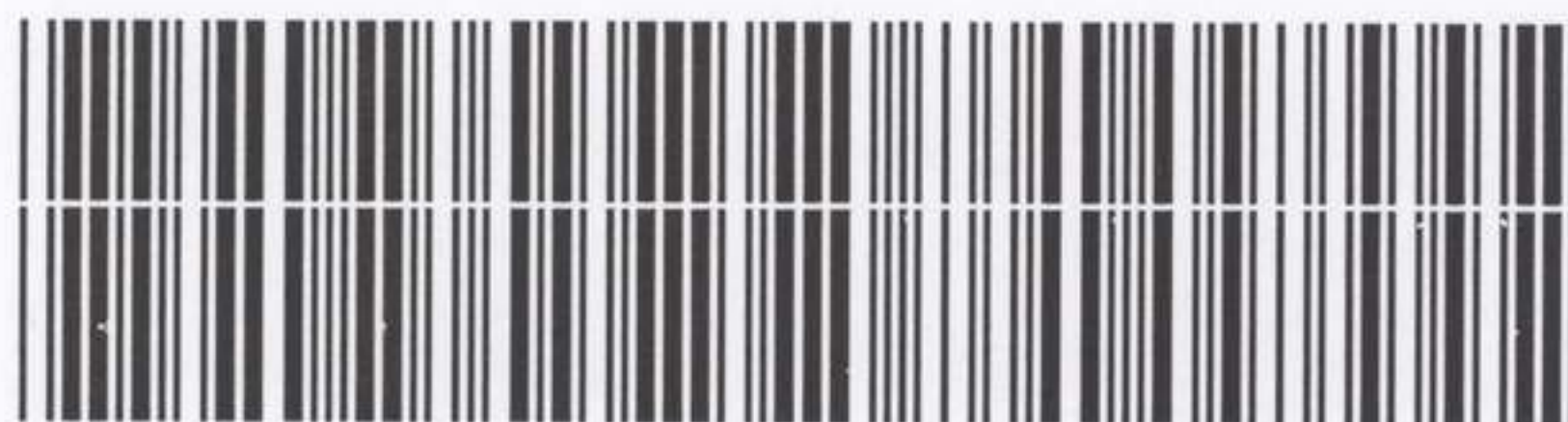
AWM4
**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War**

Artillery

Item number: 13/62/1

Title: A Battery, The Chestnut Troop,
Royal Horse Artillery

March - October 1918



AWM4-13/62/1

W A R D I A R Y

"A" BATTERY

(THE CHESTNUT TROOP)

R.H.A.

30TH March to 8th October

1918.

30th March
1918.

The guns were in action by 2 a.m. and we slept till 6.30 a.m., when we were ordered to fire on AUBERCOURT. It was the usual misty morning but when it lifted a Hun 5.9 made beautiful shooting on our Brigade teams, which were in rear of each Battery. They were observing either from a balloon or from our old friend - point 104. They got well into "U's" teams, and followed them away over the crest.

We lost Driver MANNING, my groom, with my two horses, Drivers LEDBURY and KELLY, wounded, and 3 other Officers chargers, all good horses. The mist then came down again and we had no more trouble. It came on to rain and we had a very wretched day, collecting tired Infantry. They came back in dribbets, often 4 to 6 with one wounded man, and we had to send them back again. There was a wounded American Doctor, attached to one of our Battalions, who said he had had enough of the war.

It was difficult to support our Infantry, as wire was short and our own front line very problematical, so we fired chiefly into AUBERCOURT.

At 2 p.m., the "GREYS" machine gun section appeared and trotted forward into action.

Rifle fire came closer, together with many Infantry stragglers, and HANGARD WOOD EAST (U.18.B) was reported by them to be occupied by Huns.

"U" retired, and we went back 1,000 yards soon after; but at 4 p.m., CROFTON'S Section went up again to support a Cavalry attack on HANGARD. We observed from the top of a limber, and had some good shooting, and the attack was a local success. We fired 125 rounds a gun in all.

MAITLAND with "J" Battery came up, having just arrived with the Cavalry Brigade.

Some AUSTRALIANS passed our gun position on their way up to attack NORTH of the 50th Division. They were a grand Battalion, obviously up to strength and out for a fight. It was raining and slippery and they were falling about as they carried double the number of Lewis Guns they should have carried. They were cheerful over it all, and of course their attack which we could see, was a huge success. They were supported by Cavalry who had "C", "H" and "K" Batteries in action with them, and I think they all had a particularly good day.

We were thankful for orders to retire at dusk to a position EAST of GENIELLES where we could fire S.O.S., if necessary, and at the same time get the men under cover. The night was very wet, and it was good to have a roof again,

WAR DIARY (Continued).

30th March
1918.

and plenty of forage for the horses.

31st March
1918.

We were out and in action by 6 a.m., and started to dig in; but almost at once we were told to cover the 18th Divisional Infantry, who had relieved the 50th. So we moved into DOMART. My position was a bad one, being in line with the Church, which the Hun started to register. DOMART was given a bad strafing, and the detachments were taken to a flank for a time..

Half an hour later we moved the guns singly out of the village to a position in the open which just missed the Hun barrage. The general situation was again rather rocky, and men were continuously dribbling back, mixed with Frenchmen. The latter were rather excitable and a good deal of "Tout est perdu" was going on. The French had taken over to the SOUTH of us, and I could see them coming back, only running, where the British soldier simply walks. We had a short wire to an O.P., on the high ground close to the Battery, and from there we could see Hun Infantry at our old friend - point 104 - advance down into the woods towards us.

Field Batteries in THENNES were limbering up and getting out of it, and we had some good shooting till the wire went out. Things were very lively all round, and at about 3 p.m., I ordered up the teams.

Just then a Hun 8", which for half an hour had been landing harmlessly by the LUCE stream, made a bad lay and landed on the perch on No. 4 wagon, knocking out two teams. Drivers DONNELLY and REYNOLDS were killed, and Driver LUDLOW, a little later, died of wounds. Drivers LEONARD and SOPER were wounded, 12 horses killed and 2 wounded by this one shell. We stayed another half hour and fired 250 rounds a gun. The Colonel then told us to limber up and go. During that half hour, CROFTON lost his horse and both mine were hit. Bombardier STANNARD, our Medical Orderly, behaved particularly well, binding up all these men in the open and being wonderfully cheerful. He was awarded the MILITARY MEDAL but deserved the D.C.M.

At 5 p.m., we retired through DOMART, and my last recollection of that village was, an old demented woman on her hands and knees, mumbling to herself and collecting fragments of wood in the street. Bombardier STANNARD tried to help her, but she would not leave the remains of her cottage.

We came into action EAST of GENTELLES and remained there for the night, wagon lines were moved to BOVES.

1st April
1918.

At 6 a.m., we moved forward to a position 1,000 yards NORTH WEST of DOMART and had to be able to shoot on the WOOD and hollows EAST of Point 104. The result was, with the 13-PDr., we had to be close up, and I am sure our flashes were seen. "E" came up at 7.30 and dropped into action 600 yards behind us, and we shared our O.P., with TAFFY WALWYN. General SEELY'S Cavalry Brigade had arrived and were to attack RIFLE WOOD at 9 a.m. Colonel ALLARDYCE came up and gave us orders to assist, so we thickened the barrage. We did this all day and fired 150 rounds a gun. The attack was successful and it was grand seeing men going forward again. There was a large farm, stocked with its bull, cows, horses and pigs, just in front of us. "Q" and "U" shared this while we had our men in the open. We were justified, as the

WAR DIARY (Continued).

farm got well pounded with 5.9s. The bull was hit almost at once and after a day or two he was huge, laying in his old stall. The cattle were being hit too, so we kept some of them and had excellent milk and meat; in fact, for a time, we were very happy here.

2nd April
1918.

"E" cleared out at dawn, the Cavalry being relieved by the 8th Divisional Infantry. They were lucky, as the Hun guns and planes became more active. We had no alternative position, as the orchard on our left where "Q" and "U" were, was full up and also was strafed. So we sunk the guns in the plough and hoped for the best. French Infantry relieved ours on the 2nd, but we remained covering them with barrage lines just EAST of the 104 crest. Their Infantry Brigade Headquarters were in a cellar at HOURGES, and another Brigade Headquarters were in the Chateau at HANGARD. They struck as being particularly good, but their 7bs were a long way behind us, and continually shot short. They had numerous rocket signals which worked well, and we enjoyed working with them. Our Brigade Headquarters were in GENTELLES, and the Colonel now had a group with some Field Batteries.

Battery Sergeant Major WICKINS was badly wounded at the wagon line by a 5.9 H.V., and died shortly afterwards, a very great loss to us as he had done wonders in the past fortnight, and Gunner SMITH was killed at the telephone at the O.P. On this occasion CROFTON heard something was going on, so rang up and said "Are you all right up there?", as the answer was not enthusiastic he asked "Who's up with you?". The reply was "Gunner SMITH" - then a pause - "but he's dead".

CROFTON did very well here shooting the Battery, and was recommended for a well deserved MILITARY CROSS. He was always on the spot and very prompt and cool whenever there was trouble. That O.P., was no health resort, and we had to send up N.C.Os eventually as we were short of Officers. We had to move individual guns 100 yards or so because of the Hun counter Battery work, chiefly done with H.Vs, and we only had 4 guns in action now owing to buffer and extractor trouble.

7th April
1918.

Up to the 7th the Hun made repeated attacks but gained little ground. On this day he made one particular one on HANGARD WOOD. We were just going to have lunch when a shell arrived outside, accompanied by S.O.S., on the 'phone. CROFTON went to the O.P., only 400 yards away, and COLES and myself to the guns.

As usual his 5.9s started on us. They missed Nos. 4 and 3 guns and got right into No. 2 gun, where it killed Bombardier STAPLETON, blew Gunner PLASKET off No. 3's seat and wounded COLES. As Gunner BRYANT and another Gunner went over to help them to carry on, a second shell hit the gun and killed Gunner BRYANT. There was then no one left and the gun was out of action, but No. 1 gun carried on with the help of the faithful Bombardier STANNARD, (Medical orderly) and Gunner BUSBY, and they went on till the Hun stopped shooting. An unpleasant S.O.S. - STAPLETON and BRYANT were two grand men, the former a colossal worker, who had shown up at his best when things were going badly. We buried them under the apple trees, close to the position and marked their graves.

The Hun started his shell for the first time since the 21st March, and we made the acquaintance of that sneezing stuff mixed with H.E. It was quite innocuous. At 4 p.m., we had orders to pack up as we were going to be relieved and we were very thankful.

WAR DIARY.(Continued).

7th April
1918.

Our limbered G.S., was up at the Mess Shanty when the Hun started again, and landed a 4.2 on Driver KINGS just outside. With the aid of a torch, which gave just a flicker, we got the horses squared off and away. KINGS was very bad, STANNARD bound him up, but we could see he could not live. He asked for his parents and all of us, to whom he had been a most faithful and loyal servant. A real good man, who had shortly before seen STAPLETON buried; and he told me as he was dying, they wondered then whose turn it would be next. One more dose of shelling and we got away from this position, carrying the best part of a cow tied on to the limbers.

In BOVES I was met by a guide, who to inspire me with confidence, at once told me we were in a most dangerous place. A 5.9 H.V., came over at that moment, meant for the railway, and one felt that one was never going to get away from them. We had excellent billets arranged by HUGGINS, with all the horses under cover. This, the 7th, was the end of the retreat for us. We had lost HOLMES killed, CASTELLI missing, COLES wounded, 11 N.C.Os and Men killed and 33 wounded, and Gunner WHITMORE, with the anti-tank gun, missing on the 21st. There were at least 15 men away on leave and courses, so we were getting below strength.

49 horses were killed and 47 wounded, but Farrier Staff Sergeant RYDER had saved a good many slight cases, 14 of which were afterwards evacuated. All three of my Chargers were wounded and I finished up on CROFTON'S Deception.

8th April
1918.

I looked for billets out of Boves, which I expected would be shelled. The men cleaned up and took stock. We were short of a number of things, for when a wagon was hit, bang went all the component parts.

Our G.S. wagon stores had been lost on the 22nd March. On the whole they did very well and the Old Soldier is worth anything in an experience of this kind. The new entry had never any idea of keeping kit and used to expect what they called the "Quartermaster" to be always a universal provider.

General SELIGMAN, and PINNEY, came to see us in the afternoon.

9th April
1918.

We marched to RUMAISNIL on the way to re-fitting area, with the 23rd Army R.F.A. Brigade and then on to BELLENCOURT-RIVIERE, where we were cramped but happy. We prepared indents to make us up. One saw at a glance the effect of this Hun push.

As AMIENS station was now under long range fire, gangs of Frenchmen were busy converting the single track into a double, as it was to be the main communication between the French Army and ourselves.

VEREKER joined us here instead of COLES.

Corporal ATKINS, afterwards commissioned, sent the following account of the Retreat:-

"During the March retreat the wagon line had, on the whole, a fairly even time, sometimes living like "Fighting Cocks". On one occasion near CAYEUX an old soldier, known to everyone as "DADDY DEARING" excelled himself. During the moves on the

WAR DIARY (Continued).

9th April
1918.

previous days a quantity of ducks, chickens, rabbits, and other live stock had by some mysterious means, found their way in a sack on the G.S. Wagon. A small sucking pig was also found in a farm close to the wagon lines. All the cooks, lead by "DADDY" decided that only a stew would meet the case. Accordingly a large cauldron was found, filled with water and the whole of the strays plucked, skinned, cut up, and with plenty of vegetables, also to be had for the finding, made ready for cooking. The news had gone round and half an hour before dinner was ready (7.30 pm) the whole of the wagon line had gathered round to give any assistance that was required. At eight o'clock it was issued out and was a tremendous success, there being ample for the whole of the men, roughly sixty.

The horses gained considerably too, for it was a common sight to see men coming back to camp with fodder they had scrounged for their animals.

The men had a mania for collecting things and at one place a Divisional bathing house was discovered deserted. It was fully stocked with underclothing, and as the Hun was advancing daily, the men considered it their duty to take back as much as they could. The result was that for a day or two, socks were found between blankets, in sacks of corn; shirts were pushed down the limber trail, in the wagon bodies, in nosebags and water buckets.

The Major (A.W. van STRAUBENZEE) had one of his periodical strafe's and all spare kit had to be dumped to lighten the loads of the horses.

It was very necessary too, for the amount of clothing, tarpaulins, poles, boxes, sheets, blankets, etc., without owners was appalling.

However, they went on collecting just the same the next day. They were adepts at concealing things, and if orders had not been given to dump, every vehicle would have resembled a Christmas tree."

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

16th April
1918.

THE BRITISH OFFENSIVE.

On the 16th we marched to MARIEUL to be in an area with "O", "G", "Z" and "N", who were being re-organized under Colonel WEST, as the 5th Army Royal Horse Artillery Brigade, with 18-Pdrs., while "A", "Q" and "U" were to be called the 16th (Army) Royal Horse Artillery Brigade under Colonel ALLARDYCE, with 13-Pdrs., but with no detachment horses. We had a great fight over this, as we hated parting from the Cavalry for good and becoming no ones child; but it was no use, and really it turned out for the best, as we saw much more fighting.

General Niel HAIG, our Cavalry Brigadier, wrote a very nice letter to HOWARD about the Troop, and so did General SELIGMAN, on our leaving the Cavalry Corps.

The Colonel saw the men, explained to them what they had done in the retreat and said he considered they had more than upheld the high traditions handed down to them.

The new establishments came in and we had to send 67 horses away. So we re-teamed the Firing Battery with chestnuts, and the First Line with blacks. On the 18th we came on the priority list for stores, and were equipped rapidly and well. General SANDYS (C.R.A. 9th Corps) visited us in billets.

On the 20th we had orders to move up in support of the AUSTRALIAN CORPS, NORTH of the SOMME.

22nd April
1918.

The Brigade marched to LONGPRE (21 miles), Major General BUDWORTH inspected us on the way, congratulated the Troop on their turn out, and fell out, Officers and men who had done well in the retreat. He was pleased to find Corporal RAMWELL amongst the latter, who had served with him in his old Battery, "H".

23rd April
1918.

Marched to an open bivouac SOUTH of PONT NOYELLES (7 miles), arrived at 2 p.m. Reconnoitred towards BONNAY but did not get near the line. It was open country with woods, but no other obstacles.

At 8 p.m., we received orders from the Colonel, who was in BUSSEY in close touch with the 5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION ARTILLERY (General BESSEL BROWN), to be ready to move immediately, in case of an expected attack on VILLERS BRETTONEUX held by the 8th Division.

Apparently a HUN N.C.O., prisoner had given the show away very accurately. There was heavy firing from the NORTH and NORTH EAST during the night, which increased in intensity about 3.15 p.m., when teams were harnessed up and stood to. The other Batteries went out to a rendezvous but we did not think that the moment had arrived so we had breakfast, and one section remained harnessed up while the others groomed.

At 9.50 a.m., the Colonel rode up and ordered the Troop to support the 15th Australian Infantry Brigade in a Counter attack to restore the somewhat obscure situation around VILLERS BRETTONEUX. I had stupidly let HOWARD and CROFTON go joy riding to find out news and so had not got them now. We started off with the small staff, known as the B.C.'s party in 1923 A.T., to meet a representative of the 15th Infantry Brigade, and HUGGINS brought the Troop to a rendezvous EAST of DOURS.

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

23rd April
1918.

After a lot of hunting I found Colonel LAYHE Commanding 57th Battalion Australian Infantry in a Headquarters close to the SOMME. He was in charge of this operation under a General he called "POMPEY" ELLIOTT, a most thrusting Brigadier, who they all had tremendous respect for. I was told that they wanted close support and that I was to fire over their tin hats in an attack that was timed for 11 a.m.

I galloped off as time was short, the situation was a rum one, as Batteries were pulling out of the valley SOUTH of FOUILLOY, their positions being now overlooked, and in some cases, machine gunned from VILLERS BRETONNEUX. The Bosch occupied the NORTH and WEST edges of the village and was said to be in the BOIS de L'ABBE. I found if we went through AUBIGNY we were more or less under cover, and shelling had now ceased, though there was a strong smell of gas in DAOURS and all the villages.

Batteries were in action near HAMELET and that front seemed perfectly stable.

We chose a position 1,000 yards SOUTH of FOUILLOY where we got close observation from the ridge 100 yards in front of us. The corner of VILLERS BRETONNEUX was registered, but at 10.30 we were told that this attack was postponed and another was being made by the British Battalions (2/7 Sherwoods, I think) starting from SOUTH WEST of the village, and we were to help if possible. This was really out of the question as the only place to see this was from SOUTH of BOIS L'ABBE. However, I rode across the valley in front of us, and under the railway bridge, which was a gory spectacle, and came to the conclusion it was not worth one's while to bring the Troop across. We fired bursts of fire on the village at intervals but I saw no Huns or anything of their tanks which were being continuously reported. We saw three of our own tanks go forward. We were in touch with Colonel WATSON who was running the intelligence for 15th Infantry Brigade and they practically ordered us to fire on our own tanks, one of which was now on fire and burning hard, simply surrounded by Hun 5.9s. They thought we were afraid to go forward and sent up an Australian Light Horse private to see, which annoyed me very much. When the latter arrived I showed him the tank and said I would ride over to it with him if he really wanted to see if it was ours or not. However he said he was quite satisfied - which made us laugh - we were the best of friends after that. I rode over again later and crossed the railway. I could see no tanks, but there was a Gunner O.P., just above a chalk pit and the Subaltern was quite alive and capable of taking on anything that came. By evening I began to get anxious as there was nothing between the Troop and the Bosch in the village, not even wire.

I sent out urgent messages saying I must either have an Infantry escort or come out of it for the night; but all was well, for at 9 p.m. I got orders to fire in support of the 15th Infantry Brigade attack, which was to take place at 10 p.m., on the same lines as the morning attack which had been postponed. Battalions of this Brigade passed the Battery's position at about 10 p.m., but owing to their not being in touch, the attack was behind time. It was bright moonlight and their Infantry were simply grand, tumbling over themselves to get on

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

23rd April
1918.

and none of that "Looking for Battalion Headquarters", in rear crowd. The attack was in two advances, the final objective being our old front line, as it was on the 23rd. The Troop ceased firing at midnight as arranged and we slept as everything was quiet. Later (3.10 a.m.) HUGGINS woke me and said he thought that M.G., fire was very close. I jumped up, imagining anything, and hurried forward to the O.P. VILLERS BRETONNEUX was a regular BROCK'S benefit, and all the rifle fire was coming from there. I telephoned back for two mounted patrols and sent them forward, Corporal SHINN and Sergeant WILSON, both frightfully keen. It was the HUN who was in trouble, he was surprised, and the village surrounded by the two Australian Brigades, joining hands to the EAST of it. A fine performance, and entirely due to the efficiency, keenness and the desire to get on of the Australian Infantry. The village was mopped up by the 25th Brigade of the 8th Division and 600 prisoners in all were captured. We fired 180 rounds per gun.

25th April
1918.

At 5 a.m., we took forward our L.G.S. Wagon and established an O.P., at point 104. It was very misty and too thick to see anything.

A good deal of rifle fire was still going on. VEREKER replaced ROGERS as Liaison Officer with Colonel WATSON, who had now come forward. When the mist rose, HUGGINS fired at two Companies of Hun Infantry, seen advancing down the WARFUSEE road. He knocked over many and scattered them, greatly to the delight of the "Diggers". In the evening our O.P., was heavily shelled, and Gunner BROADBENT was killed, the most cheerful and energetic signaller we had left.

26th April
1918.

A good many other Batteries had advanced (23rd Army Brigade R.F.A.) and we now moved our position 200 yards down the crest and dug in. The teams were up at night but the Huns must have been moving their guns as they did not fire much and gave all their attention to VILLERS BRETONNEUX. We now had our O.P., in the corner house I had previously registered on. The village was very interesting, and the "Diggers" were getting good value in the cellars, while we found grain for the horses. It was full of Hun dead, the men who had originally captured the place, their packs were full with loot of sorts, chiefly wool from the local factory. There were two Chateaux, both were repeatedly shelled, including an aviary, which looked very dishevelled as most of the birds had been gassed or died of concussion. We fired a bit on localities where the Hun was expected to concentrate, but he did nothing and the 23rd April was his high water mark. We had excellent liaison with the Infantry and our Officers and Signallers were in great praise of them. Their Battalion Headquarters never seemed to eat or sleep when a show was on. Their Signal Officers and linesmen were most efficient, in spite of an haphazard way of doing things, everything was done and very well and quickly.

27th April
1918.

On night of 26/27th, the Infantry had pushed forward their line, and captured prisoners. A small gap had been made in the Hun wire. He apparently sent up troops to fill this at dawn on 27th, which the R.F.A., and ourselves got well on to. The Infantry were very pleased and reported the slaughter great.

28th April
1918.

The Colonel got us relieved, except that two guns had to be left behind for anti-tank defence. HUGGINS accordingly took the left section guns away, into pits dug on 104 ridge.

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

The other two sections went back to wagon lines under the trees, close to the HALTE at DAOURS.

29th April
1918.

The left section came in, having been relieved by the 298 Brigade R.F.A., and that ended a very pleasant outing for us.

General ELLIOTT sent for me to his Headquarters in LAMOTTE CHATEAU and said that his men had sent a message to say that they had never been better supported, and hoped they would fight with us again. He was very pleased with his Light Horse and put down the success of the operation as being in a large measure due to their early and accurate report on the original withdrawal.

May, 1918.

For the first fortnight in May we were a mobile reserve and did a deal of standing to as there was heavy firing at dawn on most days. On the 16th we lost 3 horses killed and 1 wounded by a shell, so our camp was moved to VEQUEMONT. It was a beautiful place, and we dug in and made horse lines bomb proof and had a very happy time. Huns bombed nightly and both "U" and "Q" Batteries, further NORTH, were unlucky. We had drill orders and sports which were a great success, aided by an Australian Band. We got on very well with the "Diggers" and liked them until they stole our horses. We had cricket matches and aquatic sports, varied by section shoots up in the line.

On the 8th June we heard news of a local operation by the 2nd Australian Division to improve their line SOUTH of MORLANCOURT. We rode 7 miles there and met the Colonel and other Battery Commanders, and positions were selected. The Troop came into action at 9.30 p.m., on the edge of a wheat crop, and dumped 150 rounds a gun, and dug narrow pits, the soil was chalky and so hard to conceal. We were slightly strafed by a 7.7 at 7.30 a.m., two Gunners were wounded, but otherwise had a quiet day.

June, 1918.

Registered at 11, Zero hour was at dusk. The advance was very successful and their objective taken with 300 prisoners and many machine guns; at 12.15 we were told we could go home. We did this by sections, via MERICOURT and HEILLY without mishap.

Had another spell of section drill orders. The horses were doing splendidly, chiefly owing to the successful salvage of oats from VILLERS BRETTENOUX. We got them within trench mortar fire of the front line, and often had as many as three G.S. wagon loads. The men liked the job and the horses benefited. The grain had to be carefully cleaned as the sacks were full of pieces of brick, slate and shell.

The Troop did well in various jumping competitions. Sergeants, MINOGUE, WILSON, Corporal BATEMAN, the Major, CROFTON and HUGGINS, all winning in turn.

During this time an elaborate trench system was being dug around us, a sort of Hindenburg line, with concrete machine gun emplacements WEST of the SOMME, and a maze of trenches had been dug between this system and the front line.

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

28th June
1918.

We were warned about another operation on a big scale, by the 4th Australian Division, and were given an area NORTH of VAUX-sur-SOMME to choose positions in. We always took them in order of Batteries, the "NUTS" on the right, and this time ours was in a valley about 1,000 yards NORTH of WELLCOME WOOD. Twelve loads of ammunition were dumped there that evening and camouflaged in shell holes, and 12 on the following night. Then we left the place quietly alone till the 3rd July when we pulled in after dark. All lines and O.P., wires were laid out beforehand. The O.P., was on the ridge NORTH of SAILLY, where we had a grand enfilade ^{view} of the final objective, and country EAST of HAMEL. We had an intermediate O.P., which CROFTON manned, in case the wires forward were cut. It was to be a great show in which Americans were joining, and many tanks were coming up for it.

3rd July
1918.

Advancing under a heavy barrage, which had not been advertised beforehand by registrations, the Infantry were to encircle HAMEL Village and VAIRE WOOD and then occupy the ridge to the EAST of them. This would give us good observation and deny it to the Hun. It was hoped that we should capture some guns, and our role after the barrage was to prevent any teams or reinforcements of any kind coming up.

An Australian Battery on our right was very hospitable and we dined with them and shared their dug-outs. Zero hour was at 3.10 a.m., on the 4th so we started early for the O.P.

Our planes were flying low overhead, to drown the noise of the tanks. They (the 'planes) were so noisy and in evidence, that one thought that the Hun was bound to realise something was on, in spite of this having been rehearsed the night before. But it was a surprise. Unluckily our telephone wire was cut almost at once, and BURNE of "Q" got the first messages through to the Brigade. Owing to a breeze the whole attack was visible from 4.30 onwards.

4th July
1918.

We could see the barrage creeping onward, then the tanks, followed by Infantry, who had no difficulty in getting their objective. A tank took a "Chuckker" round the spur EAST of HAMEL and one could see Hun Infantry stand up and fire at it with no effect, and they then bolted down a trench.

There was a lot of movement all day and we sniped freely but a 60-Pdr., (with longer range) would have had a regular field day. We fired 1,634 rounds.

At 10.30 p.m., the teams came up from our advanced wagon line at HAMEL and we had orders to withdraw. We came to the conclusion that with "Diggers" you could always count on your objective and getting on one's way, according to plan. It was a topping moonlight ride home, with Hun planes actively bombing the valley and using flares which lighted up the country for miles around. We had three horses hit by machine gun fire from a plane, just as we got in at 1.30 a.m., on 5th, and these were our only casualties.

The "Diggers" easily held their objective, had taken over a thousand prisoners, with comparatively few casualties themselves.

WAR DIARY (Continued).

The Brigade was ordered into action on the 10th and one Battery was to support each of the Infantry Brigades who were now holding an extended line. We were on the right, covering VAIRE WOOD, and were supposed to be used as a superimposed Group, i.e. defence arranged in depth, but the 13 Pdr., had no range for this so we got where we could do most good. The position was about 2,000 yards SOUTH of HAMEL, on the road where ammunition supply was easy and we made no tracks. Pits were made but material was scarce and we simply had to "pinch" mine frames and dig. We did a lot of sniping, the country lent itself to this kind of amusement, especially along the WARFUSEE road.

July, 1918.

Oneday about 9 a.m., there was an unusual amount of rifle fire EAST of VAIRE WOOD, on getting further forward the F.O.O., discovered that the Hun had made a daylight raid and had captured a post with its Lewis gun and two men. These posts were then unwired and close to standing crops. The Hun had thrown two gas bombs into the post with the above result. The "Diggers" were very annoyed and the Company and Battalion Commanders at once arranged to settle this matter.

Asked if they wanted any guns, they said it was entirely their affair and they were going to square it; which they did at 2 p.m., the same day. After that all posts had the crops cleared and were wired.

There was trouble once about short shooting, but we could not trace it to our guns, in spite of F.O.O.s pretending that they could tell the difference between 13 and 18 pounder bursts. The only trouble we had was with extractor and buffer springs, they could not stand the prolonged firing at the longer ranges they were asked to do.

On 22nd the Brigade relieved the left group in the line, who in their turn became superimposed. We had to shift to the NORTH of the SOMME, close by the position we used for the HAMEL attack. CROFTON was now commanding, and lost his best charger hit during the move, as also Sergeant DADSWELL, who never came back again. The roads were not health resorts these days. We heard that the Colonel was not coming to rejoin us and we were dreadfully sorry. He had put us in the right way of running things and had taught us a lot. He always got to the point at once and we knew what was expected of us. He came and saw us again in these positions and said goodbye.

It was grand liaising with the Australians, never an S.O.S., always on the look out to capture something, and the "Flare Kings" as they called them, were a gift to their patrols. Battalions were most apologetic if they went out of the line without advancing their position. We had an excellent O.P., and TYLER of "U" set the fashion in humerous intelligence reports, which the "Diggers" very soon capped. The weather was beautiful and everyone was bucked by the good news from the SOUTH.

At the end of the month a Hun with a map was captured. As this showed our position was well known we looked about in VAIRE for a new one and occupied it on the 1st.

August, 1918. On the 3rd I was told of the big attack which was coming off

WAR DIARY (Continued)

August
1918.

on the 8th. We were adjured to secrecy and I told no one except the Captain, who had to work out the ammunition and collect the camouflage, etc.

The Colonel (Colonel ARCHDALE) joined the Brigade on the 1st, took us out on the 4th and with great care our positions were allotted. The "NUTS" about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile WEST of HAMEL. The greatest precautions were taken during this reconnaissance to avoid suspicion of coming events. It was a real big thing, with Divisions passing through, and tanks; and on a very extended front in conjunction with the French further South. In fact it was to be the fight of the war and we were not to give it away. It was kept secret till the daily dumping of ammunition forward must have made the veriest fool wonder; yet the Hun missed it. He got suspicious and his harassing fire was heavy by night, and the teams had a bad time. Driver TOMLINSON was awarded the MILITARY MEDAL for behaving very well when the dump from which he was drawing ammunition was hit and went up. The Subalterns took it in turn dumping and camouflaging ammunition. It had to be taken by a roundabout track to avoid making a noise on the metalled roads. The position was on the edge of a clover crop, and as the weather was wet and blustering, it was very hard to keep it concealed. In the evening at 11 p.m., VEREKER took 4 guns forward and put them in their final positions, which were well marked. While going up No. 4 gun stuck in the mud, it took 12 horses to pull it out. A Driver took the opportunity to get shell shock (partly due to the mud) he said he had certainly broken his ribs, but came back from the dressing station excused one day's duty. The guns were got into position about 2 a.m., on the 7th, the wheels were sunk to the axletrees and great care was taken in camouflaging. At daylight we discovered that "Q" had made a regular monument to themselves in front of our position, by putting 4 guns together with the trails in the air, and covered with fish netting camouflage, they had apparently started a soldiers' club under this erection, as it was full of men eating. Meanwhile the old Battery position had come in for an area strafe. Infantry had crowded forward into all the woods round our position, and at 4.15 p.m., the area was plastered with H.E. and gas, till 6.15 a.m. A horrible performance, and after several men had been hit, and one dump had gone up, the men were ordered to a flank as there was no question of an S.O.S. Bombardier BANHAM, a topping N.C.O., lost his leg, but even so crawled to the shelters and warned men to shift. Bombardiers SMART and COLLIS, and Gunner SHEPPARD were wounded. Bombardier STANNARD as usual to the fore, got busy dressing in the mess shelter. While Bombardier BANHAM was being dressed, a bit of shell killed Bombardier WELLS in the same shelter. More shells came and it was a beastly experience, but these things do not go on for ever.

7th August
1918.

The "Diggers" close by lost over 30 men, and their Colonel. From our O.P., the country looked a mass of mounds, but still the Hun suspected nothing. It was luckily a dull day and no Hun planes came over. Everybody was making maps with all kinds of coloured chalk, showing the different lines we were going to reach. VEREKER was Battery leader and so had numerous aeroplane photos to help guide him. We worked out the barrage in the afternoon and brought up the remaining two guns to the forward position by midnight.

WAR DIARY.(Continued).

It was very cold and none of us slept much. We were in touch with our Brigade Headquarters 500 yards NORTH of HAMEL by zero hour, which was 4.20 a.m.

For about an hour before, one could hear the old tanks rumbling forward, it is a most inspiring sound and gives a great feeling of power.

8th August
1918.

It was a very misty morning and we fired the barrage without incident, only one "Pip-squeak" fell near us.

CROFTON arrived at 5 a.m., with the teams, having had a nasty rideup in front of rows of our guns, our barrage was very intense. We limbered up at 8.28 a.m., punctually and were the first away through HAMEL, and we thought we were in for a good day. The mist was thick, so Staff and Battery were kept together and we groped along, turned to the left outside the village and then to the right down the main CERISY Road. Here we found the Australian Engineers repairing the road at a wonderful speed, filling in shell holes, etc., and a man stationed at each awkward place telling us the map reference and the news.

Hun prisoners were coming in, and rifle fire practically ceased. We turned to the right, down the steel valley leading to BOIS d'ARQUAIRE and TAILLOUX, the first objective of the 3rd Australian Division. Progress was slow but we arrived at the rendezvous with "U".

HUGGINS and myself rode forward and found our Infantry, the 46th Battalion of the 12th Australian Infantry Brigade, whom we were supposed to be supporting. They were pleased to see us, all was going well and there was only one Hun anti-tank gun firing in this area. On returning we found the Brigade Staff (minus their horses which had got lost or were late), "Q" had been sent on. We were ordered into action, but could not shoot as visibility was poor, and a long O.P. line out of the question, and so were useless. We were convinced that with Australian Infantry we might have been allowed to go on, each Battery on its own. We now dumped some of our original gear, such as fascines, trench bridges, etc. as it seemed probable they would be unnecessary. We did nothing till 9 a.m., when we limbered up and advanced to join "Q" one mile on. Visibility practically nil, Infantry going very strong and there was evidence all around that our Counter Battery work had been excellent. Patrols were sent forward with our Infantry to keep in touch.

We occupied a Hun O.P., finding maps and instruments all left behind, got a very good periscope which we used to the end of the war. Very little firing was done as it was too risky, but a "Digger" who had captured a German "Pip-Squeak" was firing it for luck into the "Blue". At 9.45 a.m., we were allowed to take one section on, the left section came, and I rode on and got in touch with the 48th Battalion who were collecting themselves in the gully SOUTH of MORCOURT for their final advance to the "Blue" line. HUGGINS came into action just NORTH of VALERIE WOOD, and a long line had to be run out to an O.P. The light was now better, but there were no favourable targets, as the Hun Infantry were all surrendering and any field guns which had escaped capture had got away in the mist. A large number of their heavies had been captured.

WAR DIARY (Continued).

I saw a Hun gun firing in the open and cantered back for a gun to take it on but found an Australian Battery was doing so, in fact they were ahead of us all day in that respect, having started by attaching one section R.F.A., to each attacking Battalion. The remaining guns came in later between "Q" and "U", and we dug in and camouflaged, and laid out lines on PROYART CHURCH.

Water was a difficulty for our teams which were now in HAZELWOOD, as we were overlooked by CHIPPILEY ridge, which the British Division, NORTH of the SOMME had failed to take. Our attack had gone like clockwork and the "Diggers" had a good deal to say about the British. It was due to the fact that the Hun had attacked on the 6th August and taken some ground close to MORLANCOURT from the 18th Corps - he captured prisoners and some forward dumps of ammunition, placed for our projected 8th August attack. The British Division had been severely handled and so did not start fresh for the 8th, or up in line with the "Diggers" to the SOUTH of the SOMME.

At 2 p.m., the O.P., party went forward, past the steep valley SOUTH EAST of MORCOURT full of Bosch heavies, cookers and stores of every kind, and some horses, of which we took 6. On the ridge to the EAST of this was our new support line busy digging in and not being worried. The "Diggers" were in great form. The area had obviously been a wagon line for Bosch Field Artillery. All the stables were well camouflaged and sunk. We were fearfully hungry and as there were Bosch rations about we started on them; but a "Digger" standing by said "If you will accompany me I can do something much better than that". He had found a Bosch mail bag and had a bottle of Cherry Brandy and two ginger cakes; he said "We will now have a recherche meal", pulled out a jack knife and cut a good slice, saying, "If you will excuse me I will take the rest", which he easily put away. We had a good "dollop" of Cherry Brandy and went on to Battalion Headquarters feeling fit for anything. The "Digger" Colonel was awfully pleased with life as they had got their objective with little loss. He said that there were still parties of Huns in strong points and what the "Boys" really wanted was one tank and they could do the lot in. I promised I would do what I could and would send them a liaison Officer and 'phone. On my way home I came across a Lieut. Colonel of Tanks, gave him the map reference of 48 Battalion Headquarters, and he said he would do what he could but that his men were dead beat after their long day. It certainly had been a long day and we had advanced 3,000 yards as the crow flies. I never discovered if the tank got up, but our front line was consolidated all right. The Staff work, timing, and road work in connection with the day was perfect.

VEREKER went up as liaison, and the Brigade ran my O.P., wire up to 48th Battalion Headquarters. It had been a topping day, but we did not feel that altogether we had pulled our weight, and the "Diggers" were always allowed to get ahead of us. In the evening some wise man visited us and explained how we could not get any further, how tactically it was impossible to expect a further advance, and how we should be satisfied with the piece we had bitten off.

9th August
1918.

A quiet night. We did harassing fire into PROYART most of the day. Towards evening we plainly saw American troops doubling forward under a heavy barrage and aided by tanks capture the CHIPPILEY ridge. This cleared up our position, as previously the German Artillery group in MALARD WOOD could fire right up our valley, and had put a number of guns out of action

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

on the 8th. The Australians had captured, among other things, an Ambulance Train, a 9" railway gun, a quantity of cigars, aperient waters and some German nurses. We were too late for the cigars, but got some of the waters.

In the O.P., of this position we were first introduced to a certain section of 8" Howitzers, with which we eventually got well acquainted.

10th August
1918.

At 2 p.m., we were told we had to be able to reach squares R.11-17-23 EAST of PROYART, this meant a move and we chose to go SOUTH of the main road as the Hun paid too much attention to the more obvious valleys in front. We moved off and got into action at 7 p.m. An Australian Battery got into action straight behind us and we elected to move, and only just got registered on PROYART by twilight and Air bursts. Our orders were to fire a barrage if the Infantry sent up phosphorous flares, so we took it in turns to watch. At 9.30 p.m., the 3rd Australian Division advanced in columns down the main road, preceded by tanks. No flares were seen but there was a lot of rifle fire and the Hun planes bombed persistently until 3 a.m., when we heard that the operation had been a failure. The only failure the "Diggers" had while we were attached to them.

11th August
1918.

There was heavy firing at 4 a.m., when the 2nd Australian Division advanced from the line, La FLAQUE-RAINECOURT to 500 yards EAST, and successfully held it. It was a grand morning at the O.P., and we had a good breakfast from Hun rations lying all around. It was very misty, nothing to be seen except souvenirs everywhere. I visited the 3rd Division in trenches to the NORTH of the main road, they were criticising their last night effort and were very angry about it. They said the tanks advertised their approach and Hun machine guns got on to the Infantry columns in the bright moonlight and they naturally all made for cover to the SOUTH of the road amongst the 4th Division Infantry who were preparing for their own show at 4 a.m.

At 11 a.m. the Battery position was moved to some broken ground where it was easier to conceal the guns. We saw one of our Bristol Fighters crash at a tremendous pace close to us. The pilot must have been hit high up, we got a good supply of tracer bullets from the plane for the Hun night bombing. The O.P., was at la FLAQUE dump, a colossal store of every imaginable article. It was a poor one, and both it and the Field Hospital Tents 500 yards further back were "Pip-squeaked" regularly.

We had a bad night with a 5.9 dropping rounds all about the Battery position. HUNT was at the guns and did well to move the men to a flank. It all came from NORTH of the river and went on till 3 a.m. A/14, the Battery next door, suffered but otherwise it was only moral effect.

13th August

On the 13th, the 17th Division took over from the 3rd Australian Division and we covered and liaised with the 51st Infantry Brigade.

We were ordered to cross to NORTH of the road in R.19 c, and as it was dull I moved at 2 p.m., but a Hun balloon went up and so the teams were halted, and we did not get in till 11 p.m., as we had to dump 600 rounds a gun. The men dug in well till 1 a.m., and got the camouflage on. The Huns suspected a relief was on and harassed the tracks, and La FLAQUE was now burning freely. We had Gunners BREHAUT and

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

WILSON wounded.

14th August
1918.

On the 14th we registered from "Q's" O.P., on a small station, where we got a good view, in fact the only view. The Hun 8" here re-appeared and sent us to ground at the "Tout" (Australian expression derived from "Toute suite") by landing a round between the metals outside.

VEREKER was liaising with the Infantry, and always having a penchant for churches, thought he would try PROYART church tower. He found an excellent view of our posts, but was probably spotted and removed at the "Tout" by that 8 inch.

We stayed here 10 days and the position was gradually improved, and in spite of Brigade crashes we were not found. The "crashes" meant 3 rounds Gun Fire by Brigade signal on certain areas. As the guns were close together it did well to advertise our presence and greatly encouraged the 8" Howitzer Section who, in return, dealt with us all by day and night, they fortunately used delay fuzes.

19th August
1918.

On the 19th, the Australians again relieved the 17th Division. A "Digger" Battery which came into action in rear of us, had a premature and killed Sergeant MINOGUE, one of the old original Troop men and our best Sergeant. He was buried in the cemetery close to La FLAQUE. On the 20th another Battery pulled in, in daylight, just in front of us. A hun balloon was up and consequently a 5.9 H.V., and also the 8" started to harass us. We moved the men twice till all was quiet at 4 p.m. Our Mess was in a sunken road just to the right rear of the position, and the Australian Battery had joined us, and were all digging in their "Possies". We were having tea, when suddenly, there was a swish and a crash, and a 4.2 H.V., landed in the cutting 5 yards off. There was a chorus of "I'm hit", but we found no one was seriously hurt, though HUNT was evacuated home and saw no more of the war. It killed one of the Australian Officers and the MAJOR'S servant, a grand man over 6ft who had been digging like a good 'un all the afternoon. He had been at Cambridge before the war.

The "Diggers" then moved their guns and themselves and I think the trouble was due to the casual way they had come into action in the morning.

That 8" did wonderful work. He chased us twice out of our bivouacs during the night, even moving Gunnar CHILTON from his cookhouse, which was not surprising as it was almost a direct hit.

We were glad when orders and a barrage map came in for a big attack for the next day on a 3 mile front. We were to support the 1st Australian Division (the first time we had met them), and the 32nd British Division was attacking on their right.

21st August
1918.

We did not have many tanks, and as the Hun barrage was thick, our Infantry had a hard fight. We fired our barrage and were then to advance. The Battery Staff made for La FLAQUE as advancing by PROYART was impossible. Then we dismounted and put the horses in some of the numerous 8" holes, while we went on foot; to the EAST of the barrage it was comparatively calm. Prisoners were coming in freely. We chose positions just EAST

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

21st August
1918.

of PROYART and CROFTON had the teams up in no time, but our Staff horses failed and spoilt what was otherwise a copperplate advance. However, the O.P., came later and the teams got away with 2 men and 7 horses hit, 4 of HUGGINS' best liver chestnuts.

The 32nd Division had done well on our right and for once had wiped the eyes of the "Diggers" as far as prisoners were concerned. We never heard the 8" again, it must have been captured. J.R.S.ROPER joined that night as an extra Subaltern.

24th August
1918.

There was a great deal of argument with a 6" Howitzer Battery who wanted to come to our position, and as usual, the Corps settled it against the Division and we had to clear out. This happened more than once and if these gentry wanted the positions they should have been up on Zero day to stake their claim. The men don't think much of a Battery Commander who lets them be jockeyed out of a position which they have just dug. Besides there were two good hay stacks near this position which the horses appreciated. CROFTON came up and took command as the MAJOR went on leave.

It was our turn for Brigade Liaison, which we did with the 3rd Australian Divisional Infantry, in the valley of CHIGNOLLES in front of us. They had a comfortable Mess, with a nice clock, which was going so well that they took the precaution of stopping it in case it was arranged to send up a mine at 12 o'clock or some other inconvenient hour. Whilst doing our rounds we looked for a black ebony grand piano, whose fame had spread afar. HUGGINS was a great performer, having taken music seriously before soldiering, and we had seldom less than one on hand. In the afternoon there was a small advance, and we could have assisted well against some machine gun posts only our telephone arrangements went "Phut". It was here VEREKER saw the remains of the Hun 15" naval gun which was to shell AMIENS. His first introduction was seeing an enormous splinter off the breech, about 6-ft long. A "Digger" thought it was a shell splinter and remarked "that it was time to stop the war", but on going another 100 yards they found the gun with the breech blown up, still pointing towards AMIENS. The sticks of cordite made excellent walking sticks.

25th August
1918.

The Hun put down a crash at dawn on the O.P., valley and sent over some mustard gas. The Troop moved its position, during which, Gunner MYERS was badly hit. We had only "Kutchas" shelters and then it began to rain, and the Hun to "Pip-squeak". Then the barrage map arrived with an incredible number of lifts. We started on it with one guttering candle and drips everywhere. When we had done half it was fortunately cancelled. Incidentally this was CROFTON'S birthday, a perfect day.

26th August
1918.

Was a better day and we went forward looking for new positions. We had a square given us near CHIGNOLLES and GARENNEWOOD and pulled in after dark on the lines we had already laid out. There was considerable fighting going on about 5 miles to the SOUTH. The Colonel came later, disliked the place, and wished us to move as it was unsuitable to spend the winter in. We asked if we might move when the winter came, which was agreed to. Pressure of work and the extreme distance to be covered prevented us from fulfilling our agreement; as we had changed countries and were well into Belgium, en route for Germany when winter came.

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

27th August
1918.

VEREKER and CROFTON reconnoitred forward. The Brigade liaison Officer had obviously slipped up, as they walked for miles without seeing anybody, and eventually found some "Diggers" sitting in an old trench just short of a sugar factory. They thought the factory would be a nice O.P., to see what was really happening when the Company Commander said he was going to capture it. They were apparently in the front line, and so arranged to go with him. The factory was about 600 yards away. The first man out trod on a stick bomb or a trap and had his foot blown off. A bit further on, a machine gun and rifles opened from the left flank, but the Huns retired, and CROFTON and the "Diggers" had some good running shots, bowling over two for certain, and probably more.

Getting rid of this lot they went forward to the factory with more confidence and entered it with no trouble, found it empty, but were met by machine gun fire from all sides when passing through it. They took cover under a heap of white sugar refuse. This was rather a temporary measure as the 4 or 5 machine guns got on to it and began to cut it away at an amazing rate. The sugar hill was very soon not bullet proof and the population at the thicker end became very congested and men were being hit through it. The Huns now began shelling and their machine guns were working round to the flanks, so it was decided that they had been "had" and must beat it, which they did with only three casualties.

A prolonged bombardment of our front line followed, and they went to ground with the "Diggers" and did not get back till late that evening. There were about 20 "Diggers" in all and they were grand. Two parties from the Troop had gone out to look for them, but all was well and we got leave to take a gun up to deal with the factory.

28th August
1918.

BARRINGTON started off very early with the gun, but CROFTON on ahead found that the "Diggers" had advanced and we were absolutely left. The Troop were got under weigh as quickly as Headquarters would allow, came into action in the valley SOUTH of DOMPIERRE and in front of the sugar factory. There was a great deal of machine gun fire but very little shelling. A bit of gas in the evening and we took a walk round the maze of old French trenches of the SOMME days. We found several 77mm guns which had fired at us at close range yesterday.

29th August
1918.

The "Diggers" again got off early and we were left cursing and wondering about our position, eventually we were given a rendezvous near FLAUCOURT. VEREKER and CROFTON went on and gave the Troop 2 more rendezvous before they came into action in DOMPIERRE VALLEY, and again later on EAST of FLAUCOURT, having lost all touch with Brigade, - "Q" had a forward section up.

CROFTON had established an O.P., at the MAISONETTE and from here PERONNE, MOUNT ST. QUENTIN and the surrounding country was laid out like a map. He saw trains leaving PERONNE, Batteries pulling out, and everything seemed in great confusion, but he could not reach them.

The Colonel came up about 2 p.m., and saw the obvious thing to do was to get the Battery forward, so we came on through BARLEUX in the open, when the Bosch spotted us, and got a bracket. We turned off the road in time and the next salvo missed us. It was a bad ten minutes while it lasted, but

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

29th August
1918.

we only lost one Gunner killed and a Driver wounded and 4 horses killed.

We had excellent shooting in the evening, not the least satisfactory burst was on a party which had unfortunately missed the last train to Germany and were debating whether to go by lorry or walk, when we settled it.

The remainder of the Brigade pulled in during the night, "Q" behind us, and promptly wounded Sergeant DEATH with a premature. It was another day of "might have beens" for us.

30th August
1918.

Was a quiet day, and on the 31st the "Diggers" made an attempt to cross the river in the early morning, for which we fired a small barrage. One Company got across and got badly bogged in the marshes beyond. ROPER was F.O.O., and could see any movement in or about PERONNE, but the Bosch was not on view. Sergeant TREW was wounded by a splinter from an H.V.

September 1st
1918.

Did little as it was obvious that it would be a costly business forcing a crossing at MAISONETTE.

2nd.

We were under orders to pull out and go to the NORTH of the SOMME to support an attack by 2nd Australian Infantry on Mount ST. QUENTIN. Marched via FLAUCOURT - HERSECOURT to FEUILLERES, being slightly 5.9'd on the way. These also hurried on TYLER of "U", who was going "ventre-terre" and shouted to us he was not going to trot, as he was off on leave and was taking no chances!

We unhooked, watered and fed while CROFTON went on to reconnoitre. There was a very rickety bridge here which the Royal Engineers were trying to patch up in the interval of 6 minutes between rounds of Hun 8". A "Digger" posted at either end controlled the traffic and closed the bridge as each zero hour drew near. After each shot there was heavy traffic, G.S. Wagons at the gallop and considerable confusion for three and a half minutes, when the "Diggers" blew their whistles and again retired into their "Possies". As we had to cross sometime, VEREKER and BARRINGTON, when the 8" had apparently ceased firing, went down to see the bridge with a view to crossing at once, but while standing on it the 8" again obliged, hit the foundations, soaking everyone, and sending up a quantity of logs. One of these hit BARRINGTON and broke his arm and he saw no more of the war. The C.R.E. Australian Corps, was on the bridge at the time and took BARRINGTON off at the "tout" in his car to a C.C.S. Meanwhile CROFTON returned and reported MOUNT ST. QUENTIN no health resort. The Brigade discovered this too, so our move was postponed till 4 a.m. the next day. We spent a comfortable night in a wood close by.

3rd Septr.
1918.

At 4 a.m., the Troop pulled out, but Headquarters had forgotten there was a war on and were still in bed, eventually we went to the WESTERN end of CLERY and halted. The village was very "messy" as the 8" had landed in a batch of Hun prisoners. At 8 a.m., we got orders from the Colonel, who was on ahead, to occupy a position between "FRECKLES" WOOD and LIMBERLOST.

Getting there ROPER had "Whitewash", a well known charger of ours, hit under him. An extraordinary shell as it blew up the horse, ripped up the saddle, but missed ROPER. Corporal

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

RAMWELL was badly wounded and a pair of Leaders hit. "U" Battery lost a team of Drivers complete. We got no good targets from here as the place was now practically captured.

A nice fine morning and a mail arrived. The "Diggers" did a small attack, and the Brigade, thinking Mt. ST. QUENTIN captured, ordered us to a position on its WESTERN SLOPE. Luckily this was cancelled as the teams came up. We did a certain amount of firing which the Hun spotted and put down an area strafe. The first shell landed by No. 3 and killed Sergeant WILSON and Corporal BATEMAN and wounded Gunner BABEY. Sergeant WILSON was a great loss, a good No. 1, who had behaved most gallantly in action. Corporal DEMILLION was killed by a dud and Bombardier PURTON hit. Corporal DEMILLION was a fine type of man, a South African. I first met him when I had to stop his promotion for making a disturbance - he wanted to fight any combination of men, provided his section commander would see fair play, and he was not drunk. He always took the Hun on in this spirit, he had the MILITARY MEDAL, but deserved more. A very bad day, as we could not afford to lose these excellent N.C.Os. The "Diggers" attacked and captured MT. ST. QUENTIN. It was manned by a picked Guards Division who had volunteered to hold it. Their machine gunners had fought well as there were dead men and piles of empty cartridges by each emplacement, and there were many. It was a wonderful achievement on the part of the "Diggers", who had even to fight to get to their hopping off line, and were half an hour behind the barrage. CROFTON went forward, chose an O.P., and lost a good polo pony whilst doing so. We hit on an R.E. dump on the SOUTHERN side of the MOUNT and soon made a solid O.P., with the many mine frames that were there. On the 6th our O.P., was turned into the Brigade O.P., and we were relieved - so had a quiet day souveniring. "U" had a slight "faux pas". We received an S.O.S., "Bosch counter attack" and they started blazing away. It was a bunch of Hun prisoners coming down the hill escorted by two "Diggers", the latter stood on prominent points and waved their hats but that had no effect, so they all took cover in a dug out till the fury abated. "U" were quick in telling the story against themselves in case any newcomer should hear it from the lips of any less sympathetic member of the Brigade. We all moved and camped in the aerodrome, by AURIL WOOD, for the night.

7th Sept.
1918.

Started off early to choose positions for the Brigade. A misty morning and points were hard to identify, but we came into action on the EAST side of THREE TUBS HILL. The Troop arrived at the trot with much laughter, which turned out to be the "Digger" escort, who had been given to us the day before, and who had a lot to say about the jolting they had got from the "TOMMY" guns. The Brigade drill was not quite like ALDERSHOT, and "U" squeezed in between ourselves and "Q". In the end we were a beautiful sight, as we had wagons up, and three Batteries in line, rather cramped, made a perfect target. We shot a bit and liaised with some "Diggers" and assured them that an 18-Pdr., Battery which had been shelling them was not us. It was rather a field day for the short shooting brigade; an enterprising 6" Howitzer Battery did a creeping barrage over the Battery position and up to the O.P. Then an 18-Pdr. gave the front line a nice little splash with shrapnel which did no damage but only strengthened the arguments of the H.E., versus Shrapnel enthusiasts. In the afternoon the Bosch started burning his stuff, and in a short

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

time the whole country was ablaze. Villages and Hutments burst into flames, crackled and collapsed. A cheering sight as it was now obvious he was going to evacuate, as stuff was burning for miles back; but the places were hard to locate. SCOTT joined the Troop that evening vice BARRINGTON.

8th Sept.
1918.

We pulled out in the morning and moved to wagon lines in COURCELLES. The place was chiefly remarkable for mushrooms, of which we consumed large quantities.

It was a nice sunny day and we bathed in the stream which was very cold and only 18 inches deep.

The Major returned and found his kit lost. Most terrible scenes with the Quarter Master Sergeant. He afterwards departed to command the Brigade.

The gramophone was resurrected, "Poor Butterfly" was now in great demand.

9th Sept.
1918.

Moved again to another wagon line, where we could turn the horses out to graze, which they badly wanted.

Battery Sergeant Major CHILDS had been doing acting Captain all through these operations. At BARLEUX he had various exciting adventures, both at dumps and when bringing up ammunition. We had never been short and he was awarded the DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL. He had done the Troop well.

10th Sept.
1918.

A quiet day, and we had the I.O.M., round to look at the guns. They appeared to satisfy him, though they were all pretty shaky by now.

11th and
12th.

Resting, and we reconnoitred forward, found our 18-Pdrs. around COULAINCOURT and that the line ran roughly NORTH and SOUTH through VERMAND. Not much firing and the Hun was obviously going back to the HINDENBURG LINE.

We heard the bad news that we were leaving the Australian Corps. Dreadfully sorry, as besides always getting our objective, we were well looked after, and though an Army Brigade, we got as much consideration as their own. We were glad to get to 32nd Divisional Artillery, where BURNE (lately commanding "Q") was Brigade Major, and we were attached to the 9th Corps. Later we changed to 1st Division and were told that we were going to advance by Infantry groups, until the Hun stopped us. Ours was the 1st Infantry Brigade who were then in support of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, who were in touch with the Hun about ST. QUENTIN WOOD.

We moved with our Group, and marched through ATHIES and TERIRY to wagon lines in COULAINCOURT area. They had originally been made by the Cavalry Brigades and we were very comfortable with the horses under cover; but bombing was a constant anxiety as it went on nightly while the moon was up. We reconnoitred forward and got in touch with Headquarters 3rd Infantry Brigade and learnt all there was to know. Having got back about 6.30 p.m. we were told to go into action at once to thicken a barrage which was to be fired early the next morning. We came into action and were helped by Batteries of the 298 Brigade Royal Field Artillery (Colonel De Satge). A simple barrage was worked out by midnight and fired by 5 a.m. The original orders were for us to return to billets, but of course this was altered; as there were now 36 guns in line, practically in the open.

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

Our Brigade looked further afield for positions. We moved at dusk to a position behind the railway embankment at MARTEVILLE. ROPER went forward and liaised with 1st Gloucesters, 3rd Infantry Brigade, in St. QUENTIN WOOD. CROFTON went on leave, he had done a good spell and Colonel ARCHDALE had recommended him for a bar to his MILITARY CROSS, which he got through all right. BENTON took command.

15th
17th
It rained hard and nothing much on except talks of a new advance and dumping forward of 500 rounds of ammunition. Our position was 900 yards behind the front line. No cover, and we expected to advance if all went well. We moved forward after dark. A long barrage arrived a short time previously, so BENTON remained behind to work it out. Bosch planes were actively bombing and flying low.

18th.
It poured soon after midnight (17/18th) and we were glad when Zero hour came at 5.30 a.m. A misty morning and little to be seen or to report. ROPER went forward at 8 a.m., but nothing was visible till 8.30 a.m. when he got a good O.P., about 600 yards WEST of FRESNOY. As the 6th Division had failed to take this latter place they soon were spotted and sniped by machine guns and pip-squeaks.

It was impossible to run a wire out so the O.P., was eventually established on the ridge behind.

The Batteries were supposed to have advanced when the GREEN LINE was captured, but opposite us they failed to get it, with the result that CAMPBELL of "U" was badly machine gunned. The attack of the Australians to the NORTH of the OMIGNON RIVER had gone like clockwork and our left hand Brigade had also done well and advanced up to and taken, MAISSEMY, but the right of the 1st Division and 6th Division had failed at WILLEMAY trench and FRESNOY LE PETTIT. Our liaison officer said that battalions had lost direction in the mist but that the Brigadier was arranging to encircle FRESNOY. This was done, and a party of 4 Officers and 100 men of the PRUSSIAN GUARD REGIMENT were captured. The whole operation was a great success and over 1,000 prisoners were taken. The Australians had done exceptionally well, and had already found a good jumping off place to attack the HINDENBURG LINE.

During all these operations the Hun was often less than 2,000 yards from our gun positions. We consequently kept advanced wagon lines in case he attacked us. On the 21st, the latter got caught in an area strafe. We lost old MICK & DICK, a favourite pair of wheelers of "E" gun team, 5 men, 8 horses and a limber blown up. It was bright moonlight, and we nightly lost men and horses from bombing; B.Q.M. Sergeant MCCOLGAN, Gunners LASEUR, ROSEVERE and PARR and Bombardier STANNARD, were all wounded. STANNARD never got back again and was a great loss. He bandaged nearly every casualty in the Troop, and the men had great trust in him. He was always first out if any unpleasant task had to be done.

20th Sept.
1918.

It cleared up a bit and we sunk the Mess at least a foot on the strength of the last bomb. These latter were an infernal nuisance as our shelters were never light proof and it meant that all our fires, meals, reading, etc., had to finish at dusk. If a barrage came, a candle was lighted to work it out, and we were invariably bombed.

On the 22nd an H.V., hit No. 1 gun and holed our water cart, quite a fluke, and all our water had now to come up in petrol

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

tins, and petrol tea was the rule.

VEREKER returned on the 23rd and was detailed for liaison at Headquarters - he got slightly touched up by a machine gun bullet on the way, which hit his tin hat, denting it and giving him slight concussion. So he returned to the wagon lines for a few days. ROPER went up in his place, and found the 1st GLOUCESTERS Headquarters in a quarry in front of FRESNOY, sharing it with the Welch Regiment.

24th Sept.
1918.

Fired a barrage for the capture of SAMSON'S TRENCH and GRICOURT. Our communication with ROPER was by runner, of whom he had three. We were in a group under Colonel CARRINGTON of 32nd Divisional Artillery, everything went smoothly, and small counter attacks were broken up by Artillery and machine gun fire. One counter attack on our left was cut off by our barrage and drifted into GRICOURT - all available guns were got on that village and the results were good, as the streets were full of dead the next morning. Only one of four tanks got up in time to assist the Infantry, and it was promptly knocked out. In the evening, after a short Artillery preparation, the Gloucesters took GRICOURT. Two amusing stories were told; after our first attack on GRICOURT, two Infantrymen were sent back to collect the captured machine guns, etc., they were walking quietly along when a party of Bosch appeared from a dug out and hauled them in. The men remained there all day but in the evening, after a lot of talk, the Bosch gave it up, and asked their two captors to march them back to the British Line. The Bosch second attack promptly surrendered when it got near our lines. The Gloucesters and The Welch then had a great competition as to who could collect the most prisoners, the Welch eventually won by a short head. The two Battalions got well over 1,000 prisoners.

25th Sept.
1918.

Our Infantry consolidated, the Hun seemed to have had enough. News came through of a move and Battery Commanders went back to VRAIGNES for orders. We heard we were to come under the 46th Division, General Sir HILL CHILDS, and he gave us orders, maps and our Brigade positions. We went off to choose these latter and orders were sent to the guns to pull out to the wagon lines for the night. Our position was close to RED FARM, SOUTH EAST of LE VERGUIER, and very near an old Troop position of February last.

26th Sept.
1918.

Started digging and camouflaging the position which was being made in an old Cavalry post. Bombardier ATHERTON was killed and Gunner HALFORD wounded, but we had better cover than most people. At night some ammunition and the guns came in, and the scene was an extraordinary one. Three Divisional Artilleries, numerous Army Brigades and Heavies, were moving up and dumping anything up to 1,000 rounds a gun. Our track passed up through VADENCOURT, from there the fun began. We descended a steep hill in company with a Field Battery. It was by then dark. A frantic HUGGINS here appeared and we made a bold bid to get through, but other Batteries cut in and we were all hopelessly intermingled. The only thing to do was to follow the stream. Luckily the Bosch was fairly quiet and there was little shelling early in the evening.

We eventually reached RED FARM, a voice from the darkness hailed us, and we found that we had arrived. We then succeeded in collecting our teams and passed them through the maze of wire which surrounded our position.

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

HUGGINS had an even worse time going home, horses and vehicles were hit nightly.

On the 27th we registered and accumulated ammunition. We heard details of "Der Tag" - namely that we were to fire a long barrage and then advance and carry on the barrage, then advance again in a NORTH EASTERLY direction towards BELLICOURT on a special mission of our own. This was to cross the canal by the tunnel SOUTH of BELLICOURT, which was in the American Corps area, then to come SOUTH EAST again, possibly through NAUROY, to cover the 32nd Divisional Infantry. The remainder of the Gunners were going to cross by the Infantry bridges in BELLENGLISE. As we had 13-Pdrs., it was thought that we could do the longer journey, so that they should not have all the guns depending on the same bridges. It was to be a good show.

All the Battery Commanders visited the American lines to have a look round. A good fight appeared to be going on (5 a.m.) to the NORTH and we just got on the fringe of it. The canal was hard to see and we only found one place to observe it from.

28th Sept.
1918.

VEREKER and SCOTT went forward to reconnoitre our forward position for the first bound, and ammunition was to be dumped there; but rain came on, the steep hill became slippery, and it was almost impossible to get there, eventually an overturned wagon completely blocked it, so we arranged to bring up sufficient ammunition when we advanced the next day. We had 900 rounds up.

We were daily keeping up a bombardment programme, using 300 rounds a gun. The Heavies were steadily at work night and day. Both they and the 18-Pdrs., had been doing a B.B. gas bombardment which to-day was reduced to something less obnoxious. The news was good everywhere, we were told that the Air Force reported three Hun reserve Divisions were moving NORTHWARD towards CAMBRAI. We got details of the barrage map in good time.

A Brigade party under TYLER of "U" was to reconnoitre and make our track to BELLICOURT Tunnel. We selected our probable positions EAST of the canal and we liaised with the 10th ARGYLLS under Major MCQUEEN for the final 32nd Division advance.

ROPER from Headquarters brought round the watch and zero hour at about 9 p.m. It was very foggy then and he had a job to get back.

29th Sept.
1918.

Zero hour was 5.50 a.m., the fog was appalling, thickened by our own barrage it reminded one forcibly of the 21st March. The troubles in the Battery were numerous. It was impossible to see the aiming posts, luckily it was a straight forward barrage as laying accurately for direction was impossible, a siege lamp on the edge of the pit being invisible. We had to lay a trail of empties from gun to gun as it was dangerous to try and move without a guide. All the lines went as the Hun fire was heavy up in front and it was impossible for linesmen to see anything. An Infantry dressing station close by rumoured that the canal had been reached by the 46th Division, and later two Royal Field Artillery Signallers tapped in and said that the canal had been successfully crossed. There was no shelling near the Battery. About 7.30 a.m., the mist began to clear, BENTON and ROPER rode forward to get the lines ready for the next position 1,500 yards on, and about 1,000

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

yards from BELLENGLISE. A Field Battery had been in action there and suffered badly, and the Bosch was still dropping a few shells indiscriminately. The sun came out and it was warm when the Troop came up about 12 noon. TYLER had done a good morning's work, and we were told that the Artillery track was O.K. and that "Q" had started to cross the canal. The Troop crossed the ridge under the dual control of HUGGINS and VEREKER, and we found the HOUSEHOLD BRIGADE machine gunners on our left, and "U" on their left. The second barrage was fired and it was pretty obvious the Hun had been badly shaken up, as he did no direct fire on the stream of vehicles which were crossing the crest WEST of BUISSON GAULAIN FARM. We limbered up and moved to the crossing at RIQUEVAL. There was one Hun anti-tank gun which was very busy, and the canal bank was crowded with Americans who looked rather bored and stationary. The road was an extraordinary sight. It was pavee and had had a good hammering by our 48 hours bombardment, but it was easily passable. There were crowds of prisoners in every state of deshabille, and many killed and wounded. A faint smell of gas, which was much stronger near BELLENGLISE. There were some whippets puffing down the road, and they and the 4,000 prisoners were our only obstacle. We turned down the JHONCOURT road and BENTON, who had gone on, was told that the previously selected position was a good one, and could be occupied.

They were all old Hun positions and had been "found" by our Heavies, but had at least one sound dug out left. There was no sign of the 32nd Division Infantry and so we liaised with the 46th Division, and the Australians, who were now on our left front towards ETRICOURT. All guns were up in SPRINGBOK RAVINE by 2.30, but with only firing battery wagons, ammunition was the great problem. At about 3.30 the head of the 97th Infantry Brigade appeared, and we looked out for the 10th ARGYLLS, we heard they had all been delayed by the fog, which was a pity as earlier on, the resistance EAST of MANGY and by JHONCOURT would probably have been negligible. A few days later when in BOHAINE the inhabitants told us that every one was on the move back and we missed that opportunity. Meanwhile, the fight on our left was interesting.

After crossing at BELLICOURT, the American Infantry had gone right on without mopping up. BELLICOURT village was a stronghold full of Hun dug outs, as also was the famous tunnel. These Huns later on asserted themselves and we heard that all the first wave of Americans who had pushed through, were captured, 1,200 in all. This made our position somewhat precarious, and our left flank was comparatively in the air. The 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions were to pass through the 35th American Division, and were supposed to exploit the situation beyond the GREEN line, or final objective. All was well when they were in formed bodies passing through BELLICOURT and NAUROY, but as soon as they were through and in the open country, the Hun emerged and used machine guns against them. They lost considerably and had a good deal to say about it, and though patrols went on through JHONCOURT and up to ESTREES, they had no intention of going into the "BLUE", whilst there was still opposition behind them. As there was heavy firing going on on our left, the Major rode up to ETRICOURT, the "Diggers" said they were coming out of JHONCOURT but were going to form a line from ETRICOURT to just EAST of NAUROY, so the Batteries felt more comfortable.

About 4.30 p.m., we got a frantic message asking for fire on a Hun attack EAST of ETRICOURT at 1,700 yards. As our guns

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

were the only ones that would clear the crest VEREKER took it on, and being a strong Colonial supporter, fired all his ammunition except 10 rounds a gun, and it was said to have had effect. In the middle of this scene ROPER arrived from the O.P., to impress on us the gravity of the situation; so gun teams were got up and we waited for the Hun to appear over the crest. They seemed slow in coming, so we had tea, and eventually the excitement died down. We heard later that the 5th Australian Division dispersed the Hun with rifle fire. The "Diggers" had no guns up, or Artillery support of any kind, that they knew of or could apply to, so BENTON ran out a wire to where their two Colonels had formed a combined Headquarters. We later got a company from the 46th Division who, linked up our left and the Australian right. "U" who were on our left then pulled out of their rather cramped position, and we looked about to improve ours, as the Hun guns were again getting busy. Gunners SWEETING and FLETCHER were wounded. The Sergeants, who had been exploring, came back with the tale of a wondrous dug out, so, armed with torches and candles, we very gingerly set out to investigate. It was an old 5.9 position, and was a regular hotel with 36 beds, Officers and Sergts., Messes, and every luxury, including three entrances. So we speedily moved in, and found a tame Hun still there who helped carting ammunition, and said he had no desire to fight again. Gunner GOAD appeared with the mess cart, it had been slightly damaged by a "Pip-squeak" at RED FARM, and so got a bad start and missed the way up in the dark. The ammunition question was very acute, as every one was now using the BELLENGLISE bridges; but GRAY and the Brigade Ammunition Column did us extraordinarily well, and so did HUGGINS. The Battery wagon line was moved down to the canal, which was the only place where we could get water for the horses. The night was very dark, and bringing ammunition across the canal DU NORD to the Battery position on the far side was a very tricky performance. The bridge which spanned the canal had been shot away except for a space down the centre, just sufficient to take a team. Unfortunately this was always crumbling away and while our teams were crossing it, there was a sudden stampede in one of them and an off horse fell out of its harness and into the canal, 60ft below. Fortunately the rest of the team was intact. This horse was given up for lost but we heard afterwards that some Australians pulled it out of the canal the following morning, alive and kicking. The horror of the driver on seeing his horse disappear alongside him was intense. Needless to say we returned by another and more circuitous route. We also resorted to driving up limbers with long reins, and a pair of heavy draught. That night we were put in a group under Colonel HULTON (32nd Divisional Artillery) to support the 97th Infantry Brigade. At midnight an attack was arranged for 8 a.m., 30th. We were to fire on the outskirts of the village while the Infantry advanced and took the place. We heard that the Right Brigade of the 32nd Division had advanced well yesterday (General BROWN, V.C.)

30th Sept.
1918.

We fired for the 8 a.m. attack but our Infantry did not get it, and were met by heavy machine gun fire from the trenches NORTH EAST of the village. We shelled the trenches and also an O.P., but the position of our Infantry was indefinite and we had no idea as to how far the Australians on their left had gone. The latter eventually attacked at 2 p.m., and we fired a small barrage to help them to get their objectives to the NORTH of JHONCOURT. We reconnoitred the valleys to the EAST towards MAGNY in case of a further advance. The O.P., was in a trench close to a pillbox occupied by General, as it

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

was close to the road, it got "Pip-squeaked" and out lines were difficult to keep going. Telephone wire was beginning to be a bugbear and we used Lucas Lamps freely by day and night.

1st Octr.
1918.

We did harassing fire all day. VEREKER visited the Chateau in MAGNY after tapestry, this was modern, and the whole edifice was disappointing. We had to fire a barrage in the evening, as they were having another attack on JHONCOURT, (which the Hun had evacuated the previous night) and the FONSOMME LINE. We were in a group now with the 23rd Royal Field Artillery Army Brigade (Colonel BALLINGALL) - "Q" and "U" had to move for this, but we could just reach it. The attack was a success and our Infantry got into the Hun trenches from JHONCOURT down to PRESELLES FARM, thence SOUTHWARDS through to the EAST of LEVERGIES. The Cavalry were up, ready to go through, and there was a good deal of excitement at the thought of open warfare again.

In the evening, from our O.P., by MINMERVILLE, we saw the Hun counter attack, and chase our men back out of PRESELLES WOOD back to the line of the railway.

We sent S.O.S., and fired but nothing further happened.

2nd Octr.
1918.

With many tears and regrets we parted from our dug-out and struck out for a new position near WHISTLE COPSE. After some moderately successful battery manoeuvre we reached MAGNY, passing a lot of Cavalry on the way. We halted near FOSSE WOOD and then came into action near the crest of the MINMERVILLE HILL. Encouraged by some 4.2s we soon got dug in, in an old section of trench. Our O.P., was close to a dug out near WHISTLE COPSE. There was a Colonel of the Border Regiment there who was very helpful. The Cavalry were also close up ready to go through but it was not possible, this day.

3rd Octr.
1918.

There was to be another effort at 6 a.m. (06.00 hours). We got the barrage after midnight as the Division we were now attached to (6th) sent it out late, and then the Brigade orderlies lost their way with the maps. ROPER went forward as F.O.O. The Hun S.O.S. cut the wires incessantly, and apparently had the dug out taped. The attack succeeded and the Cavalry came up, the GREYS stopping close to our position. Another Regiment, and "C" were further up the valley. On one occasion they advanced over the crest, got well strafed, and came back at the "Tout". The manoeuvre was hard to understand, as the Hun machine guns were still excellent.

We advanced our line up to SEQUEHART as a result of the day. VEREKER relieved ROPER at 09.00 hours and pushed forward with Lucas Lamps to the next ridge. There was considerable shelling and the Trumpeter dropped the lamp as they cantered across to the O.P., which was established on the road to PRESELLES FARM. This cramped their style, and all day messages had to be got through by borrowing from other people. MANNEQUIN HILL was captured and the enemy balloons came down very rapidly and moved back. It was rumoured that the Cavalry and light cars had captured them, but apparently the same ones went up again farther back. The result of the day was, we advanced our line up to SEQUEHART. The French on our right were not getting on though their Artillery fire was very intense at intervals, and the Hun still remained.

WAR DIARY. (Continued).

4th Octr.
1918.

Everyone was moving up, but our move was cancelled as Infantry reliefs were going on and it was not certain which Division we should support. So we only did harassing fire. The idea was now propounded that Divisional Artillery always were to advance to support their Infantry, and the Army Brigades only to thicken the barrage. This did not suit us at all, having light guns, and rather fancying ourselves at moving warfare.

5th Octr.
1918.

There was another small attack, CROFTON who had returned again, rode forward to MANNEQUIN HILL and got some useful information, but the line was somewhat indefinite between DOON HILL and SEQUEHART.

6th Octr.
1918.

We moved forward to a position 500 yards SOUTH EAST of PRESELLES WOOD, and dug in the bank by the roadside. "Q" were on our right nearer the cross roads and we all had a great deal of ammunition up. While carting this from our last position, one of the wheels of our Hun G.S. Wagon collapsed. When we returned to repair it we only found the ammunition, the G.S. wagon having already disappeared for firewood. The night was wet and beastly, and we were crowded and squashed.

We did harassing fire all night, and as we had not got fresh cover, a good deal of "Pip-squeaking" came our way, and the Orderly's horse was, as usual, wounded.

7th Octr.
1918.

We dug deeper, the barrage map came early and was worked out in record time, we were now supporting the 46th Division.

8th Octr.
1918.

Rather a disturbed night. About midnight, STAVELEY came across from "Q" and began to chat aimlessly, we cursed inwardly and wondered what he was up to but managed to be sleepily polite. About an hour later a shell hit our No. 1 pit, burnt the camouflage, and sent up some of the ammunition. We were just dozing off again, when for apparently no reason at all, STAVELEY again came along with an urgent demand for a stretcher. We expressed our regret and tried to sleep again. Then BENTON discovered it was time for him to depart and help the staff (he was doing a wireless job). Then the time came for us to get up for the barrage. Apparently "Q" had been "Hotted" up with 5.9s and had had a man wounded, their telephone pit and the end of their Mess blown in. This rather explained their visits during the night.

The barrage started at 05.20 and all went well except on our immediate front. The Australians and the 6th Division on our left took MONTBREHAIN, but our right and the French had failed, especially the latter, who could not get a move on to the SOUTH of SEQUEHART.

The result was a certain amount of suspense and they were chary of advancing us until the situation on the right was clear. It was not till 16.00 hours that we got definite orders to move, from the 46th Division. We chose our position in a sunken road between DOON MILL and MONTBREHAIN. We got in fairly well and set to, to make our "Possies" light proof, and to digest a bumper mail. The Bosch gassed DOON MILL just above us, all night, but the wind was in the right direction for us, and we were neither worried by that nor his bombing planes, which were very active. In the middle of the night we were transferred to the 6th Divisional Artillery, and put under Colonel PHIPPS. It was a fine, frosty, moonlight night

WAR DIARY (Continued).

Octr. 8th
1918.

and by the light of DOON Mill which was burning, the orderlies brought the barrage orders.

It was misty when we fired the barrage at 06.20 hours and then we had the usual delay. The Hun had evidently evacuated the country and the Infantry of the 71st Brigade, 6th Division, met with no opposition. We got the exact disposition of the Hun almost at once, and wanted to get on, but there seemed no desire to push beyond the objective. Our Cavalry must have tried very hard here a day or two before, and dead horses and well turned out Cavalrymen were numerous. It was where Colonel FRANKS had charged with a Squadron of the 19th Hsrs. FRESNOY LE GRAND was captured early and it was here we saw the first French civilians. They had been in German hands all the war and were in a quite childish state of delight, and it was difficult to get along the road for their shaking hands and talking.

About 10 o'clock we got forwarded to a position just to SOUTH WEST of BRANCACOURT FARM. There was nothing much to see as the Bosch had gone back to the railway line running WEST of BOHAIN and was searching quietly with 4.2s and pip-squeaks - sufficient to make us dig.

The soil was chalky and hard digging. We had a happy evening enlivened by some Cavalry, and later by a piano, which appeared from somewhere and on which Gunner UNSWORTH showed himself a great performer.

Things were very quiet, as the 6th Division told us we were resting, until we assured them we were not.