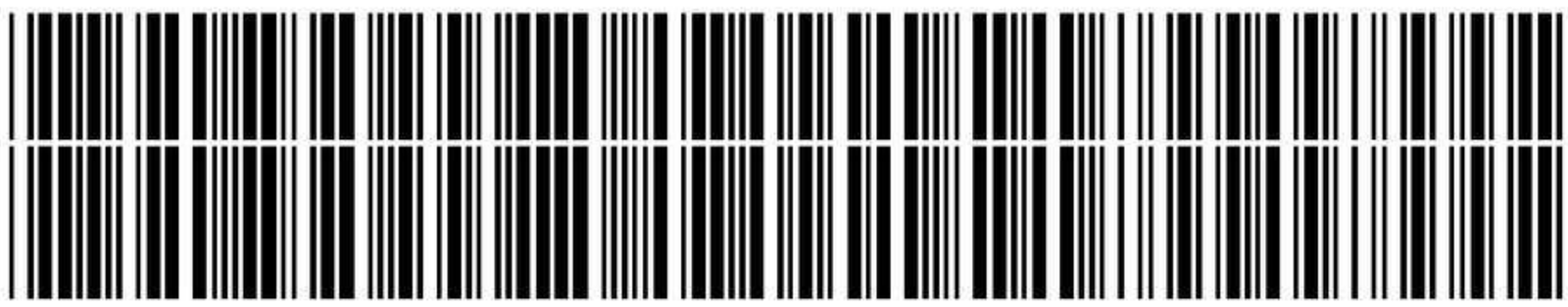
AWM38

Official History, 1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean, Official Historian.

Diaries and Notebooks

Item number: 3DRL606/89/1

Title: Diary, September - October 1917
Includes references to Broodseinde and Passchendaele.



AWM38-3DRL606/89/1

Original. DIARY No. 89.

DIARIES AND NOTES OF C. E. W. BEAN CONCERNING THE WAR OF 1914 - 1918

THE use of these diaries and notes is subject to conditions laid down in the terms of gift to the Australian War Memorial. But, apart from those terms, I wish the following circumstances and considerations to be brought to the notice of every reader and writer who may use them.

These writings represent only what at the moment of making them I believed to be true. The diaries were jotted down almost daily with the object of recording what was then in the writer's mind. Often he wrote them when very tired and half asleep; also, not infrequently, what he believed to be true was not so — but it does not follow that he always discovered this, or remembered to correct the mistakes when discovered. Indeed, he could not always remember that he had written them.

These records should, therefore, be used with great caution, as relating only what their author, at the time of writing, believed. Further, he cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of statements made to him by others and here recorded. But he did try to ensure such accuracy by consulting, as far as possible, those who had seen or otherwise taken part in the events. The constant falsity of second-hand evidence (on which a large proportion of war stories are founded) was impressed upon him by the second or third day of the Gallipoli campaign, notwithstanding that those who passed on such stories usually themselves believed them to be true. All second-hand evidence herein should be read with this in mind.

16 Sept., 1946.

C. E. W. BEAN.

Red. Thames
83-130. Romulus
Remus.

182 on Blue. Broadsides.

J21D30.95

30th Sept. At 1.30 am 23rd Div reported that Germans were massing in J.16 B — where they had also been reported yesterday afternoon. It being probable that they wd attack at dawn barrages were arranged for at 4.45 am & 5.15 am. The Germans attd at 5.15 South of the Reutelbeek. Our heavily barraged British front line & batteries but did not get on at all.

At 6 he attacked astride Menin Rd w a flammenwerfer & took our post but wrs driven out later. At 7.50 he apptly tried to attack again but when our guns were turned on nothing came of it.

The Royal Guelders in C-attack

3 men were k. & 4 injured at 4th Div HQ the night before; and of the 28 Bn officers Col Read was hit seriously (he may recover) and 6 others wd. Last night troops were caught in Ypres & most heavily bombed.

took 6 prisoners & 4 m gs. The Aust. front was protected by barrage from attack, — none came on.

Tremendous bombing last night all around. At 8 pm, just as we were going in to dinner, one plane, caught in about 8 searchlights, wheeled overhead looking most beautiful. She actually passed exactly over North Camp & dropped 2 bombs within 50 yards of their mess, in a field. I wish their tents were protected like mine. I wish White had non protection.

For hours during night, heavy bombing continued Poperinghe way — from 1 to 2 I believe.

I know it I am too

D39

detached to work properly when these planes are humming in the air above — the first was a squadron of 7 each of which carried 5 bombs, by the noise. But when one is eating at dinner it is easier to talk unconcernedly. Yet there were our men, sitting laughing & talking outside, looking at the whole thing as cheering the shots!

The 53rd Bn lost its Colonel - an Englishman, Crookshaw, killed in its attack lotter day. He was, I believe, leading his bn, revolver in hand when he was K.

We have just had news of a prisoner of 9 2nd R I R capd in the attack last night in J 10 d. He says his Bn was badly

from Russia & was put on a special job mining roads near Laon etc in order to prepare for a retirement there on Oct. 1st.

He says at 1 Flanders battle caused them to be hurried brought round.

The attack last night was only made in order to get some concreted posts, he said, wh had straighten out 1 line. It failed by being completely broken up under our barage.

The following notes given me by old Watson, our Chemical Adviser (or Gas Expert) are interesting:

The Germs have not made

a cloud gas attack on the British since 8 Aug 1916.

They have made 3 this year agst 1 French

21 Jan 1917 Champagne
23 Apr. 1917 Nieuport
6th June 1917 " "

They have also made them agst the Italians & Rumanians

They produced on the night of 12th/13th July a new gas shell agst the British, firing several thousand rounds of it near Ypres; almost every night afterwards they have used it there.

They bombarded Nieuport with it on 21/22 July, + again on 28/29. They have since used it at Armentieres + elsewhere.

The shell up to 1 present have come over in 77 & 105 mm. gun-shells, & they contain Dichlorethyl Sulphide - not mustard oil. They are a blue or grey shell marked w a yellow cross. They are fired mixed in w other shell. This shell gas smells slightly of mustard, & causes a little irritation of nose & sneezing.

No cases of permanent blindness had resulted (when these notes were published).

Box Respirators give complete immunity to these shells.

The Germans found the British gas projector attack at Bullecourt on April 10th at

D39

I am very deadly.

Of the 120 Regt prisoners belonging to the 11th + 12th Coys sd the casualties were

	Dead.	Suffering from poisoning
1st Bn:	70-80	150
3rd Bn 11 Coy.	10	34
12 Coy	10	20

Few who inhaled it, they sd, recovered; Some were K at once; others had 24 hrs treatment rapidly recovered but died at once on trying to walk.

A corporal of the 2nd Coy sd after this attack the 1st Coy only had 25 men left — the Coy strength had bn 170-180. Another prisoner sd his Coy lost 60 men killed. The

forms suffered certainly heavy casualties tho' these are certainly exaggerated, being prisoners statements.

It was sd that the 120 Regt had to be relieved by the 121 Regt in consequence earlier than had been intended.

The Germans called it our Gasmine ~~Phosgenmine~~ - 20 cm. 55 cm. long & containing 13 kilos of pure phosgene.

"It was first used in april" says Von Busse (111th Div).

He adds: "our losses have been serious up to now as he has succeeded, in 1 majority of cases, in surprising us & masks have often been put on too late".

"a few mouthfuls" says Von Armin "do immense harm to unprotected persons".

Oct 1. 1917. The Germans made 3 attacks this mg between 8.30 & 8.40 am betw. NE corner of Polygon wd & the Reutelbeck.

Betw. Cameron Covert & Joist Dm the Germs pt into British line & British now hold line in front of Cameron H.

Enemy bombed Abeele, Poperinghe, Cameretinghe, Locre, Mont des Cats, Hazebrouck, Steenbecque, Cassel, Bavinghove, Zuytpeene, & Bickebusch last night. They killed 6 offrs & one

D39

Sqn. We hear that every available machine has gone out with 6 bombs tonight.

I hear that Col Scott – who had been left behind to help relieving Bn to take over, was sniped two I heard today; & his successor K. w him. Scott was one of youngest & one of very finest C.Os we had – he shd have had a V.C. at Lone Pine.

Oct 4. To-day the very great battle of Broodseinde.

The question arose what to be done next. Godley, on information that Germans were demoralised wanted to push on at once today; Plumer came to see Birdwood & decided to have nothing to do w it & afterwds met Haig in Conference at Cassell.

Birdwood told me it was decided not to go further down the far slope

D39

(Two gunners want to for observation, the infantry shd be paramount).

Whole schemes had been decided to go on to Nov. if weather permitted.

Col. Nicholson sd he had been asked to make 4000 yds of road in 4 days. This wd mean carrying 30,000 planks or 6000 tons of road metal. The Pioneers had made 700 yds of wooden road in a day at the Menin diversion – this wonderful record. 2000 yds of C.T. at Bullecourt in 17 hrs was the record trench work.

This battle has largely been won by our pioneers.

3 Div 1018 [illegible] mostly bayonet wds
51 inf. 4 Fm. — incl 23 offrs
2 Div. 2 Bn Commdrs — 2 Bn Commdrs
14 offrs 374 men.
(Perhaps) Kiwi cap.

[illegible]

4 guns Div 212 RIR, 41 Gam
(29 & 18 ammun).

When get on crest much mg
fire & j down slope. Not pom
road.

26 — 21
22 — 24 8 offrs 2 men
Lake helped by 22 — 22
25

212 could not help him on crest.
When gleam, Stuc out mean on
crest down came barrage then.

47 had to help him.
Probably been abt 3000

6 Bde in ahead 17 & have
taken part of D 29 B & 9 overlook
valley. 2 Bde similarly
Dairy wood still held 7 Bde.

D39 1st shot c. 3000 for Div barrs at 2000

1st Aust Div. 11 offrs 330 men &
960 Germs. counted dead —
to within 200 yds of front line.
quite a no. of bayonet wounds.

8 Bn report it in several
cases on rt German dead up
near great crater on Broodseinde
front.

212 came up to make attack
(2 Bns — stop troops for this
area, 45th Divn).

4th Guards, 45 Divn were
on this front.
4th Guards were going to
follow were serious
original line.

212 WS in WS & when
our barrage ahead we
found some of them there.

Night before Bdes ED
77s and 4.2s had on
registering on front line.
We have their orders &
they were to take Polygon to

C 83

G.

D39/18

1st Aust Division

Reports as under were forwarded to you through 1st Brigade HQ today from Sgt Scott – N.Co. in charge of Party counting German dead.

"Counted 410 German dead on 2nd Brigade front AAA 1st Brigade count not yet complete"
Scott 12 noon

"Counted 550 German dead on 1st Brigade front"
Scott 12.40 pm

Repeated to confirm reports

10.21 pm

A. Mitchell Major
OC 13th L.H. Detachment

4.10.17
I g

Anzac Ridge including.

A German Bn Commdr said it it were wonderful if our troops had only bn trained 3 yrs & this was regular Bn and yet when two wretched people absolutely rolled them up. He said other side of ridge was so formidable to attack up.

"Your men are funny. They rob while they fight."

If Germany cd get their colonies back this Bn Commdr said they wd give up Alsace Lorraine.

The Bn Commdr's shoulder straps had bn taken & he had lost a lot of blood – he had wound thro arm & our men had given him tea all way along. His dugout was smashed by our

D39 shell fire. He thought
Priestly* was a doctor –
he was full of admiration

Lemons were not on tapes.

5th Footguards were to be
formed up in rear of
~~assembly~~ front line &
were just moving up to this
assembly posn on our heavy
shelling in 1 hour caught
them before 1 barrage.
All

Country quite good up to
200 or 300 yds behind
front line.

It is curious that 1 majority
of 18s were from the Quarts
in support. 2/2th in front
were apptly K. by our barrage

D39 One guardsman cd only speak French – or v. little German. He was thinking of deserting 1 whole time & asked at once for one who cd speak French.

The 212th Bde were on their way outside WS when taken by our men.

93rd Grenadiers & 2nd Foot Guards were in Cambrai RD on hill top – They had shrapnel proof shelters there.

Greater part of Germ. dead are Cuts part him round 1st Objec.

One austrian deserted

The Germ. Bn Commdr (212 Bde. 15th Bn) was taken just other side of WS & he sd 1 austrs followed 1 barrage v quick. He sd he knew all our orders for relief & we knew his – The war was

no longer a war but only a butchery. You dont hunt your bunny. You know where he sits & shell it area till he moves. He lost a watch & his hat.

He didnt mind giving souvenirs to men who had fought. He takes objection having shoulder straps cut off by Red x men.

They had noticed from shoulder straps that our men were Australians.

They knew it they were tremendously keen on souvenirs & some of them took souvenirs in hands when went over.

They relied on Submarine entirely. They thought our figures were boats leaving Southampton & going into Plymouth etc. The French were very young — good fighters in a scrap. He had never seen

D39 fighting w/ initiative of Australians. Everyman seemed to know where to go & what to do.

The Alsatian sd to a great number of Alsatians desert.

[The German guns were largely firing from N & S.]

While our men were digging in they were being snipped from woods beyond. But they s. soon had a C.T. down to complete safety.

The 5th Footguards Alsatian sd he had seen 2 Ci attack Regts on the Keiberg wh were smashed up by our arty at back of Anvil Wood.

4th Guard Div wh had had heavy fighting in Champagne

1 BS 1 R Lancs
to

D3d (French still fighting well & were on way to Ostend area. They were rel'd on 21/9/17.)

112 I R 142 1 R 9/29

Drum were in Keiberg area

These or one of them was assembled behind Ancrel Wood.

Germ objective was

J 3 A 81 – J 3 C 18 –

SSE – thro J 3 C 40 G

SW corner of Polygon Wood – Black Watch corner exclusive. (This was from map on a dead officer).

4 Scots Drum detained at Shelvelt.

← Germ. 5 Regts 93 R I R order in line

21a

a certain no. of
2 Aust Div. guns
(section) were moved
up last night

5 Regt.

D39

~~Bn Commdr~~ They sd. they have
to turn their shoulder straps
over when marching in front
areas.

The Bn Commdr was
v. pleased to have been
taken by "Enfield"

3rd Div has 5 P in Rly
cutting a little in front of
Blue line, & has filled cutting
w German wire.
Certain amt of

Cutback got hold of 1 man
of 4th Bav. Inf Div – he's
got had to at Proonslide
as c. attack Div. – The
man w off came on
to reconnoitre off raw away
& man lost himself & was

D[3d] captured. Ist Div 3d German wd attack.

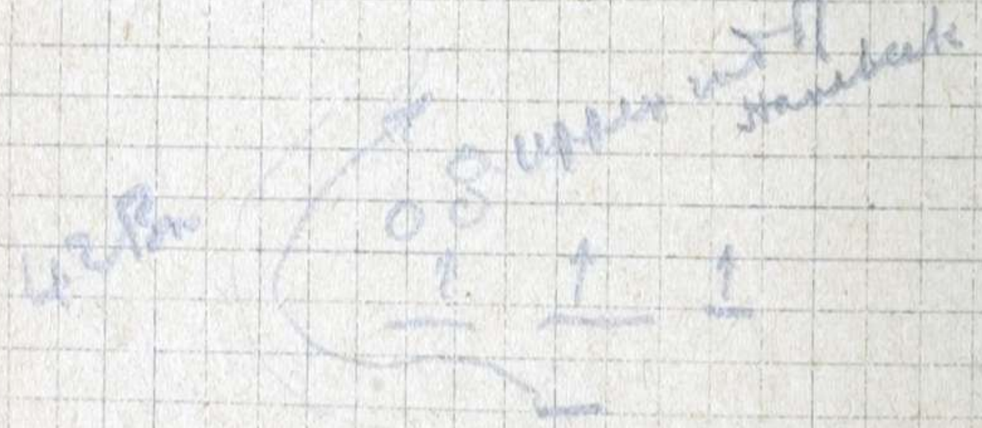
This morning 2nd Div. Div got 1 offr who brought in 5 wd men of 9 Bav. IR of 5 Bav. Div wh seems to (perhaps) have made a c- attack.

3 Div capt barrage abt ½ hr before zero & worst casualties were then.

Dunbar of 42 Bn during advance found left coy being barrage thro marsh.

38 42

72a



8 mins per 100 yd. Left hand coy began to lose barrage. Reserve coy got half left turn double

D39 Farewell Hope
our right on Ridge
The evening Barrage
What we might do
The New Barrage & LD Objve.
G. Os diary. Our captured order.
C of 15 Bn.

Div'l order for 1 att of Oct 3

units will adv. w fixed bayonets & will att.
loudly shouting Hurra!

Experience has proved tt (Eng. had never been able
to ?understand (?with—) an att. of that sort.

Special attention is drawn to (effect tt the Eng. always respect (
Red Cross. a stretcher bearer will thus always
walk ahead of S/B plts & will steadily wave a
large Red X flag

the 5th Div order.
One reason for the failure of the attack of the 21st RIR was that our arty fire was not well directed; the troops got entangled in the enemy wire & were subjected to exceedingly heavy mg. fire & came up apt unfriendly infy.

7th – we went to winter
Time last night at 1 am.

Notes of Gen Harrington's lecture to War Correspts.

p39 Hopes attack will go forward.

5 Army may think differently

2 Army troops have gone up already

& 1 Army hopes they will go over.

One wd like to put the clock back six weeks.

Cavalry wd be ready to go thro after one or two more bangs.

This weather cost 1400 miles W of Ireland last night.

Our losses were under 10,000 last time.

German casualties estimated ?15000 ?35 –

Barrage will be 100x in 6 to red line, 100x in 8 to final objective.

500 first objve 700 to 2nd.

Going much better on top of hill in sand.

Tobe Many similar small
pushes. They want to get past
Paschendaele in one big push.
German attack of Oct 1
was meant to get a J.O.
position for Fruckenstein
big attack wh did not
come off.

7 good
21 a bit rattled before attack
37 not finished yet

The Divisions below 66 & 49
Divisions tomorrow is
to be Fresland Copse

—

Chiefly 5th army – to beyond
Menin Rd, Polygon Wd,
Broodseinde, Poelcapelle,
Paschendaele (to go well
beyond it) – or Westroosebeke

D39 French finish this side of Roulers.

Airmen have done splendid today – have noticed a lot of transport on Menin Rd & Roulers Rly. The German ought to attack tonight.

We have a reply if we burst this but we dont expect it.

For I present we are only creeping along I crest.

The difficulty of the art in getting on has been considerable.

Trench mortar has been shelling us heavily.

The Guards will attack again tomorrow.

We are not attacking Becelaere, Gheluvelt, nor Zandvoorde tomorrow.

D39

Meteor says there's nothing to hope — a tempest 1000 miles W of Ireland moving at 40 miles an hour.

7.5.21 recounted the attack of 1 October & Harrington gave a word of praise to 7th.

I believe official attitude is th ~~Passchendaele~~ Ridge is so important th tomorrows attack is worth making whether it succeeds or fails; also Harrington having fixed a day for an attack intensely dislikes going back on it, especially when once troops are in position. I must

say I suspect it they are making a great bloody experiment — a huge gamble & more than that; a deliberate attempt to see how it works. I think they are playing on morale of their troops. Harrington sd the top of the Ridge was sandy & as "dry as a bone".

I feel, and most of correspondents feel, awfully anxious — terribly anxious — abt tomorrow. They don't know I fight there was for last ridge, these

D39

major generals back there;
they dont know how
nearly the Broodseinde
crest held as up. They
dont realise how much desperately
hard it will be to fight
down such opposite in 1
mud, rifles choked, L Gs out of
action, men tired & slow — &
a nasty Drive like the
66th amongst them!
Every step means
dragging 1 foot out of 1 mud —
you cant zip around
craters, as in Thursday's
fighting, when you want
to outflank opposite. I

D39

shall be very surprised if this fight succeeds.

They are banking on their knowledge of German troops' demoralisation. They dont realise how very strong our morale had to be to get through the last 3 fights.

I was <u>not</u> impressed at Harrington's way of saying the German orders captured were a wonderful endorsement of methods advocated & ~~[illegible]~~ pursued by "<u>this</u> army". There is

D39

heavy jealousy between the 2nd & 5th & 4th sort of thing increases it.

The 5th or 1 French seem to be objecting somewhat to tomorrow's show & I think they are right. I thought the principle was the "hit hit hit whenever weather is suitable." If so it is thrown over at 1 first temptation, [possibly for fear of a German attack on this little salient, or to get on before 1 place is waterlogged]

D39 Oct 10. I have had so very little time of late (I certainly ~~think~~ have lost a good deal in energy since the Gallipoli time) - But this diary has been utterly neglected. It generally is in times of fighting, & degenerates into a string of scraggy notes. However - I will try to write things up tonight It is so cold tt I have gone to bed to keep my feet warm - as for those poor chaps in shellholes - I believe the 6th Bde sent away 200 w Ty feet before

D39 Yesterday's fight.

When we came up north the plan was that 1st Anzac should make two jumps at the Ridge (the fashionable thing on English staffs is to call them "leaps" & pronounce them "lepps" — I notice White does it too, a relic of his staff college training, I suppose).

The second jump was to take us past 1 Butte & 1 Polygon. The third was then to be made by 2nd Anzac — N Zealand left, 2nd Div on right — to get the Ridge.

The first two leaps were

Sept 20, 1916.

Oct 4th

Oct 4th

D39 So successful & cheap that it was decided to use the 1st & 2nd Divns again in a 3rd leap, & let 2nd Anzac come round on 1 left; so that we had a big Australasian centre & 1 attack on the Broodseinde — Abraham's Heights position. No dominion has ever had 3 divns in line before, so far as I know. And this time we had 4 — 1, 2, & 3 Austn, & the NZ Divn from rt to left, in that order.

The weather held up to 1 very day before the big attack. That evening it broke. It was fine again in 1 morning,

D39 & the battle was a complete success.

In some parts of this battle we met the German lines in Normandy. ~~It turns out~~ The captured men told us that they were making an attack on us. We simply rolled them up — & afterwards captured certain orders which told us what we knew to be true — that the method of limited objective was hitting the German very very hard indeed. I cannot write all these things as they gradually impressed themselves on us. Gullett is

D39 quicker of intelligence & has
a wider grasp than I; but
even I had realised it in
our present method of
attacking w a limited
objective, we had ~~practically~~
a weapon, at last – at,
long last – wh / German
could not ~~answer~~ parry. He
may invent / answer but
he has not done so yet. As Fullett
put it: he say to him – on
Thursday next I am going
to put you back 1000 yards;
on / following Tuesday 1500 yds,
& on / Tuesday after that
2100 yards – & back he

D39 goes, every time. We
can continue to do it so
long as we have the weather; if
if we haven't the weather we
can take it up & do it in
the spring. For the first time
we only go so far as our
guns can follow us; by the
work of our pioneers we
hurry our guns up to our
armour, over the quagmire
they themselves have made
(a modern battle automatically
has a marsh in front of it).
Then we hit him again.

After the battle of the
4th we found papers of one

D39

of 1 Brigades of 4th Guard Divn. ~~showing it~~ Explaining to their System of holding the front line weakly had failed owing to our use of our arty; & their attacks often failed even to reach their own front line; & in future 1 front line system was to be held w half 1 whole regimental strength, 6 coys, who were to attack w bomb & bayonet while we were preparing our attack. Their troops have been refusing ~~the~~ to attack, we are told

& certainly have been leaving 1 front line (the 93rd IR, for example).

The plan was ~~to~~ we were to attack whenever 1 weather was suitable. The weather of Oct 4 was suitable, by a very great chance. But ~~it~~ every day it broke – abt evening. And the following 5 days were damnable. Our 2nd Div wh was in simply faded away – men were tired until they cd not stand 1 trial any longer & simply faded away.

41a

10/ Raining =
Plane overhead this morning but
are on red line - reported

D39

Wisdom sd early th 7th
Bde was alone; & by Oct
9th the 6 Bde was down to
600 available men, & the
7th to 700 or 800. The 5th
Bde had abt 2000. They
were after exhausted &
sent away — or had got
away — were lying up,
or had trench feet. The 6th
Bde was taken out but what was worse
kept continuously
cable laying, laying down
duckboards over Anzac Ridge etc.
Then came the attack
of Oct 9th. On Oct 8th
Gen Harrington recd
war correspte. He was late

directly EA

11 - ~~Rampart aft gun~~ 12th

— 3 y ! 2

Gens) (h Dunk.

~~Haig. Grs. x y~~

~~What y h x Haig~~

Offer to him.

Monash

3 Divns —

Staff interchange

~~Haig — me — winter.~~

~~e stunt — Kiggell &~~

below

Notes made on Oct 12 at 3 Div HQ. Rampart

~~Chantrin and Tony Robinson~~. Ypres:

G Bde ?

Abt midnight — raining &

4.20. Not ~~x~~ x — 5'50 ".

Barrage line of 3 Div. had

come back 200 yds as

66 Divn were found to be a

long way back round the wood

in their centre. This meant

(as army I fixed) the 3rd

Div had to do 500 yds in 16

mins (4 jumps of 4). 5.25 zero.

D39

as the car took Sullett

the day to Boulogne — but

I heard the last part of

what he sd. ~~[illegible]~~

~~[illegible]~~ Harrington did not impress

me very greatly. The

~~[illegible]~~ seemed to be

banking on the 2nd Army's

success, & to have thought

the they had a method now

wh wd be infallible — not

taking into consideration the

weather — or the men (wh are

really largely one & the same

consideration). The only

thing to really struck me abt

him as ~~possible~~ allowing

(over 3 pages)

45

Assembly completed satisfactorily 3 am.
(This now arrived at Bde cable head abt 1 mile from tapes 6 am)
gas by L.
on my. coy had 5 guns blown

Lt/t Rt Bde

12.11 — green dotted

Paschendaele.

11.29 – 11.55 — 38 + 1 coy 39 — 36 — green dotted

9.21 – 10.25 — 40 — 35 — blue

6.37 – 8.25 — 37 — 34 — red

5.25. — 42 — 44 — 39 Reserve — old line

41 43

10.41 Paschendael.
Every man takes over
Pea soup
Oxo
Solidified alcohol
No rum on a c

my no
w (Hay)

46

Oct. 12 D3A

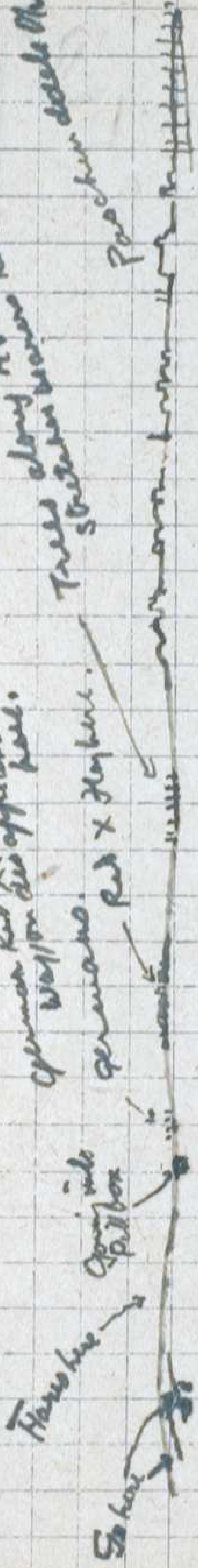
Rain started in fitful showers abt 1.30 am – by 2.30 light + continuous ; by 3.30 fairly heavy. Abt 4.20 it ceased. At zero (5.25) there was a dull grey light, low half dark clouds fleeting scud, + low whitish light in East – country looking dull green + brown. Lots of green flares at once – then red + yellow spangles.

Abt an hour later a light spit began.

D39

11.30 our men behind trees to rt of village

small post to left.



Sketch of scene of fight of Oct. 12 made from Hill 35 during fight.

[The reign of the m.g.

One way of avoiding m.g. is night attack, when we had little arty. Now it is arty. It is m.g. which conditions open warfare & trans.

Tanks did not do it unless by attacking it.

Aeroplanes have tried it.

Arty & M.G. sent us into Ty where we must bomb – bomb is not an ultimate weapon.

Our arty has become so strong as to be almost the condition weapon; only it cannot move.]

One reason for present hopeless push is they are banking on a decline in German morale –

D39 (from 3 pages back)
room for a finger-grain ~~[illegible]~~ and
character than he showed on
1 surface ~~wd~~ tt he was
clearly not one o these society
cavalry generals; not a
sort of hunting squire put
in charge of 300,000 men.
He has the face, the ~~[illegible]~~
lines, the slight raggedness
of moustache, and other
unconventionalities, of the
scholar. He has a small
receding forehead, rather
watery eyes, not at all clear,
& lips which show his teeth —
the type of a university

D34

mathematical don, very much engrossed in his work.

The ~~all~~ weather which was torrential at dusk, (I was dripping when I reached Army HQrs for Harrington's lecture) improved at midnight. Everybody at 1st Anzac HQrs was intensely anxious about it – Murdoch told me next day ~~to~~ Birdwood spoke to him as if he had ~~bless~~ wished to hold up 1 attack; but ~~th~~ as ~~they~~ 1st Anzac Corps were so slightly involved in it, merely as ke

I believe some of the Bdiers thought that it was better for 1 man to go in & get it over than to postpone the attack indefinitely.

flank of another Corps which wanted to fight (2nd Anzac), & the 5th Army beyond them, we cdnt very well hold up the attack. I know Gen. Birdwood rang up Harington just as our conference ended. — I dont know whether it was abt this.

Gen. Smyth had been on the day before to Anzac Ridge or Zonnebeke & had seen 1 man in 1 line sinking up to the thighs in the mud; the 6th Bde, by weariness of its work, by evacuations for trench feet & possibly (tho'

this is not clear) by some desertion, was down to abt 600 men, & the 7th Bde to 700.

On the morning of Oct 9th Murdoch (with Gilmour who had just arrived from London) & I went out to get 1 result. ~~order~~ Murdoch's brother had been sent for as press officer to go abt w them but had not arrived; & so I went w them - very willingly with Murdoch. We tried to shake off Gilmour by various means, but he came. I wanted him to

D39

content himself with a visit to a C.C.S & pick him up there again. But he decided to come with us.

2nd Anzac were putting in the 49th & 66th Divns. The 66th Divn was brand new — had been to Arras for a few months, in a quiet line; then to Nieuport where it was not in 1 line by the date ~~after bad~~ when we left the N of the year month; then it was pulled out for a couple of weeks training & given to 2nd Anzac.

D39

We were very mistrustful of this Dion bec. it had no experience of the Somme or of mud, & had a staff which the 2nd Tunnelling Coy described to me as the worst they had ever worked under. ~~They were~~

At the 3rd A.C.C.S. where we called first (I was rather ashamed of getting news from wounded men, a thing I have only once done since Gallipoli where I learnt how untrustworthy it was) I found one man of the 6th (23 Bn) Bde. He was a fine sturdy good looking quiet boy — he had a slight shell wound in

D39

the lead. He said going was not bad although it was heavy in the hollow in front. The ridge was better than the hollows behind. There was no great difficulty tho' there was difficulty in following the barrage. What was the difficulty was that the 6 Bde had been on fatigues, carrying duckboards & burying cable for four or five days.

We went to 2nd Anzac (at 10 Elms) & then left our car by the Menin gate as the traffic was blocked, walked up the Menin Road (the engineers cannot shell half to Cambridge Rd, ~~shock~~

near the wireless tank & a battery of longguns painted like Hawk Moth caterpillars.

Dal

as effectively now because he depends on long range guns from the North & not on enfilade, apparently) One shell whizzed low overhead with the frightening tear of these high velocity projectiles but burst harmlessly 70 to 100 yards away to the right of the stream of traffic. The road was pea soupy with thin mud on either side of the camber, but so not bad.

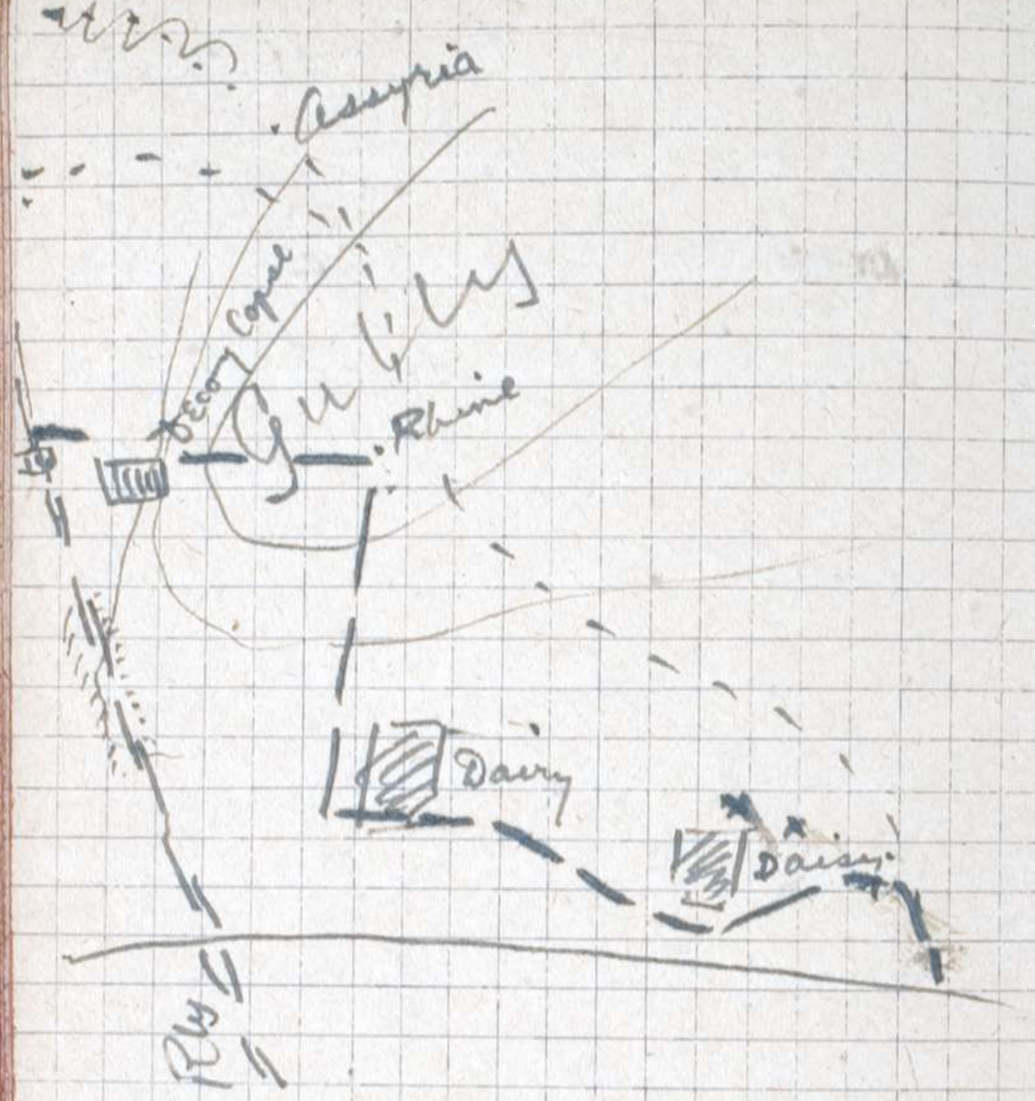
At Cambridge Rd we struck off to Railway wood (save the mark!) & up the duckboards thro the craters there. It was on the Menin Road that I

D39

first noticed a condition in which our men were coming back. A couple (—or I think it was three—) passed us going very slow. They were pale white & drawn & detached & put one foot slowly in front of other and have not seen men do since I forming winter — the early days of it at that, when we first saw a battalion coming out after their 7 miles plough through the mud. But these men looked whiter. They were of the 7th Bde. There were 3rd Bde men coming down the road too, one or two small parties, relieved by the 5th Div. They

D39

were tired, but not quite as bad as the 7th. The 1st Div has not had so much to do; & I daresay, for another thing, it has a part of line wh has to be occupied & improved by our troops, who have always been moved northwards as the fight proceeds, so as to be the hammer head of the assault as it goes along the ridge. This has one incident – it moves our divisions away from the work they have done on the communications – duckboard



(Situation as we heard it at 1st Anzac).

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tracks, roads, buried cable — & they have to do it over again because the British do not get so much work done — often not a tithe as much — as our people do.

We went up the Zonnebeke track. ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ We had heard at 1st & 2nd Anzac that our 6th & 5th Bdes were held up at Daisy wood on their right & Dairy wood next to that; but 4th troops were being sent thro Daisy (was this for Dairy) wood from the NE to take it. From 7th

[Apl. 1917.
I notice Capt. A.E. Isaac 48th Bn died as POW in Germany]

D39

Anzac we head to their 66th Divn wd on its Blue Line (final objective - there were two today) in touch w us on rt. But to the 49 Divn & those north of it seemed to be held up by the Bellevue Spur (running down from Paschen-dacle).

On our ~~road~~ way up the duckboards to the 6th Bde H Qrs in the concrete shelter called Sans Souci (wh stands in mud very much like a brick might stand in a filthy farmyard) we met 1 following:

D39

An officer of 28 Bn - who had been holding 1 line some days & who sd it was "nearly as bad as Flers".

Murdoch asked if it were quite as bad. He shook his head: "Oh no - we've never had anyth. quite like that."

A number of men of 7th Bde, & 3rd Bde coming out - the 7th Bde ~~some of~~ always looking worst & sometimes - one tall thin whitefaced youngster especially looking like a dead man looks, & scarcely able to

Dr29

walk.

(3) A man of 20th Bn, I think it was, limping ~~between two~~ with his arm over / neck of another man. We noticed first, at a distance, th his right ~~leg~~ shin & calf were completely bloodred. He had come wound inside / ~~[illegible]~~ thigh above / knee wh was still bleeding – he wore shorts!

At 15 yds we cd make out / grin on his face.

As he passed us he grinned up & volunteered – "We got the buggers good on the second ridge" – when they came over in their C-attack, he

3rd

~~moment~~ added. He must have been chewing this over all 1 way — we got back on them!

(4) Near Sans Souci a runner of 17th Bn, limping back in his socks carrying his boots, full of smiles — this 5th Bde, wh had not experienced 1 same heavy fatigue as 1 others had far more life left. The runner sd tt the 5 Bde had advanced up to its blue line (final objective) but 1 parties wh got there were too thin to keep 1 Germans off. They found Germans getting behind

D39 them ~~by~~ and sniping round their flanks; & they were some of them cut off; one signaller saved himself by rolling down the Rly embankment.

(5) Maj. Bridges, Jun. Bridges' son, who is Patons Bde major. He sd th things were not too brilliant. The troops wd have bn all right if left in the front line he sd; but by being brought back into Zonnebeke & then used for continual fatigues thro I mud they were simply worn out. Bridges did not think th the 6th Bde

D39 were still out at Rhine ~~trouble~~. His Relief, Gen. Paton, did. Paton had taken Gen. Smyth out 1 day before & got him bogged up to the thigh, & Smyth had been impressed & we v. anxious.

(6) The gas officer, the 2nd Div who had been up to search dugouts in 1 Bde (ostensibly) really I think to poke about in 1 fight. He sd to 1 Bde Cutting was very deadly. Machine gun bullets were always whistling down it – & there was a line of dead Tommies & Aust.

7. A wounded 2/Lt of the 66th Divn. He was stumbling along without helmet or puttees, bandages on head & wounded & bleeding from above L Eye. I walked along w him. He sd (in broad Lancashire) "Ah doan' know what our Brigade was doin' to put us in after a twelve hours march - twelve hours from beginning to End. We had no duckboards like these, we plugged through the mud. He ~~knew~~ didnt know where the tapes were & by the time we arrived up there the barrage had gone on half an hour (it was really an hour & three quarters) The men were so done they cd hardly stand oop an' hold a rifle. We didn't know where our starting position was but we went on after the barrage. I'm sorry for the Australians" he added - "he didnt know I was one -" and it was our first stoont, too. We're a new division, ye.

"Did you see any Germans - did they get their heads up?" I asked.

"Ah saw eight or nine," he sd "& ran at them w my revolver - & they came running in - but we were held up on the third (he meant 2nd) objective

Australians along L side of it. He himself ducked into L dugouts at L side ~~pretty~~ without wasting any time & he thought our men were no further.

He brought back a map from Gen. Smyth, giving our line ~~pretty~~ round Daisy & Daisy Woods but not out to Rhine. [It was proved later the line was really a little further out than this - practically on the Red line.] (Know?)

There was uncertainty as to where the 66th Divn

were. They put their own position as on the Blue line, but on our left they were certainly not near it -

We got as far as the Anzac Ridge. The track there was being shelled but not heavily nor accurately; one 5.9 exploding about every 5 minutes 70 or 100 yds left of it. German prisoners were being used to carry down the wounded on stretchers.

We turned where two of our wounded on their stretchers, under brown blankets, had been laid by 1 side of 1 track while 1

D39 bearers got a cup of tea or something at a concrete shelter about 20 yds off it

As we reached Westhoek a heavy bombardment broke out from our own guns. These were wonderfully far up — right in front of Anzac Ridge, by Zonnebeke

D39

some of them; & behind
hill 85 others. [It was
I believe an almost super-
-human feat getting those
guns up; & light ships
brought up some of our
heavies, too. One pair
of 6in howrs. got off 1 rails
15 times but ~~came through~~
were pushed up in 1 end.
One British arty offr (so Ken-
-nedy, the British Staff Captn.
of arty here, tells me) said
it none but australian
gunners could have got their
guns up there. We saw
a 4.5" howr. bogged & ~~some~~

× Under a strong wind the ground dried quite considerably today & except in 1 shell holes & puddles & where it had been much trodden it was not heavy - Last night it was

D39

Half a dozen guns, have, I believe, ~~about~~ both disappeared

We clambered up the fallen cement blocks of Kit Cat; around us the brown battlefield under ~~the light of a sullen threatening but half fine evening~~ the light of an evening sky — a sky half threatening but with the signs of what had really been a fine October day* still left in it (It seems always to rain at night & clear by day in this weather) The

flashes of our guns were fringing the nearer ridges before us — those of our bigger guns the ridges at our back. A continuous play of light as of a womans fingers over keys of a piano, ran along the edge of Anzac Ridge. Occasionally we could see the stabbing brilliant flash of flame. It was just 5.30 p.m. Beyond the horizon occasionally came the rippling flicker of other batteries — behind Brooseinde

D39 + Paschendaele + behind
1 spurs ~~to the~~ running
westward from Paschendaele.
There were 1 German guns,
throwing nothing like 1 barrage
but still pretty active
thrown by our + Occasionally,
Especially to 1 left, we
cd see 1 naked flash even of
a German gun.

As we watched, the
three vertical stars – red
white + green – of our SOS
signal, ~~flew~~ one above 1 other
like a vertical Orions Belt,
appeared and
hung over many places in
1 line. Presently it
appeared on 1 right of 1

D39 line too, 5 sets ~~appearing~~ ~~going~~
~~up~~ all ~~together~~ simultaneously like this

⋮ ⋮ ⋮ ⋮ ⋮

— so I judged that a counterattack must have appeared.
[Nothing 17 Bn. tells me it did near Assyria & Rhine H.' from new wh. our most advanced post under Lieut. Allen had just withdrawn, & barrage came right down on 1 German trench.]

It was a wonderful sight. We turned home respectfully along 1 duckboards as light was failing. We

D39 ~~[illegible]~~ Some few scattered artillery drivers who had been up to advanced batteries or for some purpose were taking their horses back. ~~[illegible]~~ Even in the light horses were floundering across trenches & shellholes. It was a great temptation to walk the horse along beside the duckboards while the rider walks on the duckboards. It is only one step from this to letting the horse follow along the duckboards, especially where they cross a morass of shellholes, or

D39 a trench, but it is ruination for 1 track. We saw one pioneer or sapper methodically mending 1 duckboard crossing over a trench where a horse had floundered in. "Pity they can't give 1 wounded a chance" he sd. Other artillerymen were honestly leading a pair of horses round the shellholes, floundering through somehow. The number of horses dead beside 1 track shows what the work is like —

they have most of them a small cloud of blood pink foam above ~~around~~ nostrils, & I dont think it was often a shell tt killed them. They were bagged & shot.

As we ~~wand~~ wound backwards between the tail of one horse & the head of another (they learn to walk cleverly) there passed us string after string of men going East along 1 same track. ~~auto~~ (The horsemen of course made way for them). They were

)39 the 45th & 49th Bns going in. The men looked warm & well — Ever such a contrast to the peaked white worn bearded men of 7 Bde whom we had seen coming out. We knew: that men will hold. Hourly they get to 1 front line wh 1 others have won they will hold it. The Bdier of 6th Bde (Paton) had told us he was getting that men tonight in case of counter attack but did not think they wd relieve us them — or

D39

perh. he meant he could
set his own men right
out tonight but must
leave them in ~~support~~ the
front area. I know I felt
it if the line were left to
those worn out troops to
hold, they simply wd not
hold it; they wd come
in — I wouldn't blame
them. Army has no right
to squander men in this
fashion. ~~[illegible]~~

These troops did get in
and did relieve; — the
line held wd ~~a little~~
the red line.

D39 Oct. 10 & 11 were much finer than Oct 5—9. The nights were showery, & there was an occasional shower in 1 day. It was cold — but not so cold & wet as the previous 5 days.

The authorities had wanted to take a good jumping off position for Passendaele — They did not attach very much importance to 1 failure of 1 attack. The line did advance — the 66 Div was at last convinced

D39 tt it had no one in front of / Red
Line — + its line as put
down on / map was /
Red Line. I doubt if it
dug in. One of its Brigadiers,
Gen. Trevor, told me today
tt they took over a wonderfully
well dug in position from
our 3rd Divn; but tt
their own men cd not
be got to dig in — & he
has a great belief in
them.

The 66th Divn seems
not to suffer from bad men
but from a hopeless staff.
I saw Duncan Maxwell

D39

on 10th, the day after 1
attack, & with him
looked up & found his
brother Ken. Maxwell, who
is Captain, acting in comnd
of the 2/6th Manchesters.
He is, like his brothers, a most
courageous, straight, capable
soldier (Morris, now 2/Lt
in 39 Bn, was very badly
wounded on Oct 4). He
told us it his Bde had been
reserve Bde. It held the
line before 1 fight & was
not in 1 fight but in
reserve. He knew they

had been late. I asked if they
cd have been 12 hrs on 1 march.
He told us his own Experience
when his Bde went in before it:

They were marched out
of Toronto Camp abt 9am.
The Bde Major had told them they
were to have dinner in a
field beyond Ypres by the Menin
Rd. They got as inside
Moyes of our 3rd Divn.

They got thro Ypres &
camped in their field abt
midday. They were then
told to pack up into 1
fore part of the field as 1
3 other Bns of Bde were
coming into it. The 3 other
Bns never came – they camped

D39 elsewhere - Just as he was going the Bde Major sd: Oh by the bye - we want you to draw 50 rounds of ammun-ition per man.

Then he came back again - "- you'll want to take two days rations with you".

For the first time, when the march was half thro' & they were already on 1 battle side of Ypres they were informed - in this way - tt they were going into 1 trenches. They thought before tt they were being moved up into support - (it read

like Loos.)

Map said: Yes Sir; where am I to draw the Rations.

The B.M.: Oh, in the dump which you will find in Ypres (giving the direction where it was to be found).

Ken: Very well Sir. How are we to get them here. (The ration waggons were not there, I suppose)

The B.M.: You must dump your ammunition somewhere & send the ammunition carts.

Ken. managed it somehow. They found the dump in Ypres. It had an Australian in charge, put there by the 66th Div. - He was not given

On J track they found the 11th Bde, whom they were relieving! coming out — it was a track reserved for the 11th Bde on relief. The two streams had to get past some how on a single duckboard track.

D39 any authority to issue food — he was simply asked to mind it; but he gave it to them on their looks, Ken sd. By 5 p.m. they managed to leave their field. Moyes showed them the "F" track, & told them they could use "J" track also (they had not been given "F" officially). He clearly wanted to get back to his business which was waiting him. He told them the J two tracks met at "Potsdam" wh they were given as the HQs of their battalion — (a big concrete dugout like Sans

D39

Souci. So Ken let him go & the Bn filed up its two tracks. On came dark & they went inquiring for Potsdam. Down came a barrage just when Ken had discovered Potsdam 150 yds from road. Neither track let there as a matter of fact — they had done so but had bn altered (1 duckboard laid past it) 1 day before. ~~Only one of you~~ Ken put his bn ~~into~~ or rather its 2 coys wh were w him on F track into shellholes & went off to find ~~the~~ Bde

D39 H Qrs to get guides. After falling into shellholes & struggling thro' barrage he got to H Qrs - Cannan was there, & helped in every way. After a second barrage & numerous other difficulties Ken found 2 more Aust. guides & re-found his companies. But 1 guides sd tt tho' they knew J track they didn't know F track. Ken went back to Cannan - Cannan sd he wd send some Brigade H.Q. guides, & called in 1 two Battalion guides. "If you dont know 1 way up to 1

D29 front," he sd, "you must learn it now. ~~you~~ The Brigade guides will take these coys up & you will go w them & learn 1 way."

Ken went w 1 first coy, & one of 1 guides w 1 second. They met here their offrs who had been sent up to 1 line to learn the way. They ~~Bde~~ found th Bn HQs was not Potsdam but a long way further up, near 1 gasometer in Zonnebeke. They finally struggled past there & Ken saw them safely in

D39

1 front line, splendidly
dug by the 3rd Australians,
at 1.30 a.m. — 18 hrs after
starting!
They found the two of
their Lewis guns had been
pinched on 1 way by 1
Australians when 1
Lewis gun team was
sheltering in a dugout from
a barrage or during a halt.
Ken said that during
the approach march of
Oct. 9 he had passed
the head of column
1000 yds from 1 front line
at 2.30. He knew that
they cdn't possibly be

in position at Zero & asked Bde if they cd not be led up by parallel paths. Bde sd they cd not — they wd lose themselves. The track they were following had been used by mules & trampled into heavy mud — with the long line of men on it it became worse & worse. They were eventually led off it in little parallel columns in sight of one another — & to some extent along the railway wh was

D39

a track made by or reserved for Australians.

With this appalling muddling, the ignorance of Somme conditions & of first necessities of battle relief, no wonder that poor old Lancastrian chaps lost their barrage. I could not bear I thought of men & regimental officers being blamed for it — the staff didn't even give them a beginning of a chance.

When I got back I went, as usual, to see White — & I told him what

D39 Kau had to tell me, amongst other things. Birdwood came in in the middle. They had heard that the 66 Div had had its barrage & not started till 2 hrs later – I wondered if it was wise to tell them but Birdwood said at the time: You know, it's the sort of man they ought to know about – I think its only right they should hear what a man like Maxwell has to say.

I said: I'm sure he wouldn't care to have his name

D39 mentioned ...

Birdwood sd something to effect tt it was all very well, but there were cases when such things ought to be brought to notice of commanders — (meaning tt he might be a help to Gen. Lawrence or Gen. Harrington to know how bad his staffwork really was).

I took it tt Birdie wd regard this as confidential. But he rang up Godley & gave him my opinion & Kens name to back it; Godley told Lawrence; & today

D39 (October 13) I was suddenly rung up to come to Butlers Office. There was Gen Trevor (of Ken's Bde) & Ken. Trevor sd to Lawrence he had sent along Ken's name for the command of his battalion. Lawrence had held it up on ground that Ken had been speaking evil of the men & officers of the 66th Divn, & wd not approve until he had Ken's denial; & had sd. to Trevor that they had better go along at once & see this man

D39

Bean. "I am I only protector these men have," he sd, "& you know if I ~~doctrg~~ I cant look to their offrs not to malign them I dont know whom I can look to -"

I took them straight to Gen. Birdwood, who wS clearly very taken aback but told them tt I had said nothing whatever aft I men or officers & had on contrary explained to them the colossal difficulties under wh the ~~p~~ march had bn made. Gen. Lawrence, to do him

credit, had, I believe, taken Ken's word it he did not make damaging statements about men to me.

On Oct 11 Gen. Haig saw 1 Correspondents — the accredited British Corresp'ts w Ross & myself (Lyon has gone back to Canada, I believe).

There was a pretty acute crisis lately in the censorship. The old and worst censor, Hulton Wilson, whose only consideration in doing anything was "Am I

D39 safe?" "How is it going to affect me?"
was sacked about the end of
April, & Capt J.C. Faunthorpe, an
Indian Civilian of great ability
& a big minded & most lovable man,
who had been acting as censor of films
was brought
(& rather liked job) was put in
his place & made Lieut. Colonel.
We thought all difficulties
of Censorship had been solved in
one act; but Gen. Charteris,
being suspicious of anyone
not in the old army, put in over
Faunthorpe a certain Colonel
Church — a good enough old
soldier with a face like a sour apple,
who had made some success as
a postal censor. Church was to
be over all "Special Intelligence"
[Intelligence includes 1. Intelligence
of Enemy gained thro' our military
Eyes — aeroplanes, prisoners captured,
Intelligence of divisions etc; 2. Intelligence gained through our

D39

Write Papers of wide Effective Range.

spies ~~+~~ secret means (3) Our ~~[illegible]~~ measures against the Enemies spies (4) &, akin to all these the control of news leakage through the press, photos, letters, or visitors. All this last is "special intelligence". So far as the press is concerned, it is not really an anti-spying censorship but a censorship which knows what information wd be useful to 1 Enemy — & this is quite ~~properly~~ rightly performed by ~~those~~ who know what 1 Enemy knows ~~+~~ what he is likely to want to know.

But Charteris, I suppose for 1 sake of ~~[illegible]~~ making extra sure, has ~~[illegible]~~ allowed Church