

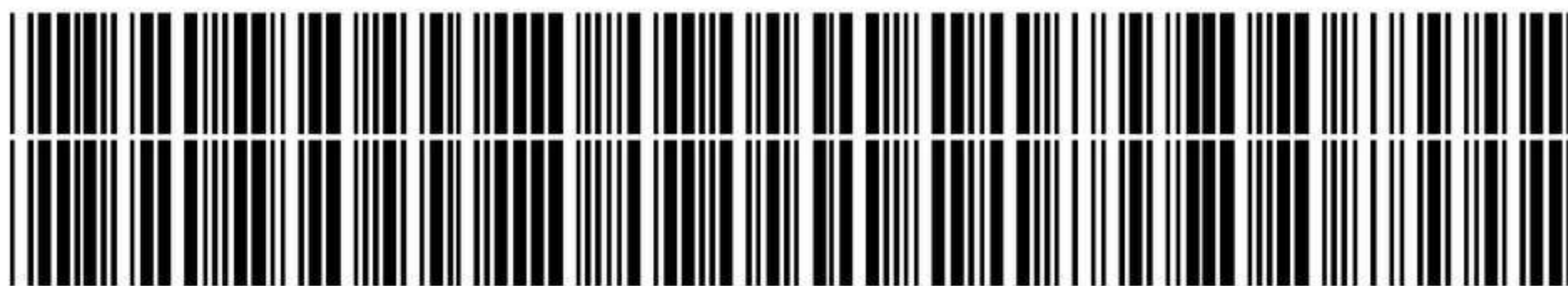
**AWM38**  
**Official History,**  
**1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,**  
**Official Historian.**

Diaries and Notebooks

**Item number:** 3DRL606/133/1

**Title:** Notebook, 1916

Includes references to the 21st Battalion and  
Mouquet Farm.



AWM38-3DRL606/133/1

*Original*

**DIARY NO. 133.**

AWM 38

3 DRL 606 ITEM 133 [1]

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

**T**HE 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~~ <sup>stories</sup> usually ~~themselves~~ <sup>believed</sup> them to be true. All second-hand evidence herein should ~~be read with this in mind.~~ <sup>be read with this in mind.</sup>

16 Sept., 1946.

C. E. W. BEAN.

OPEN /

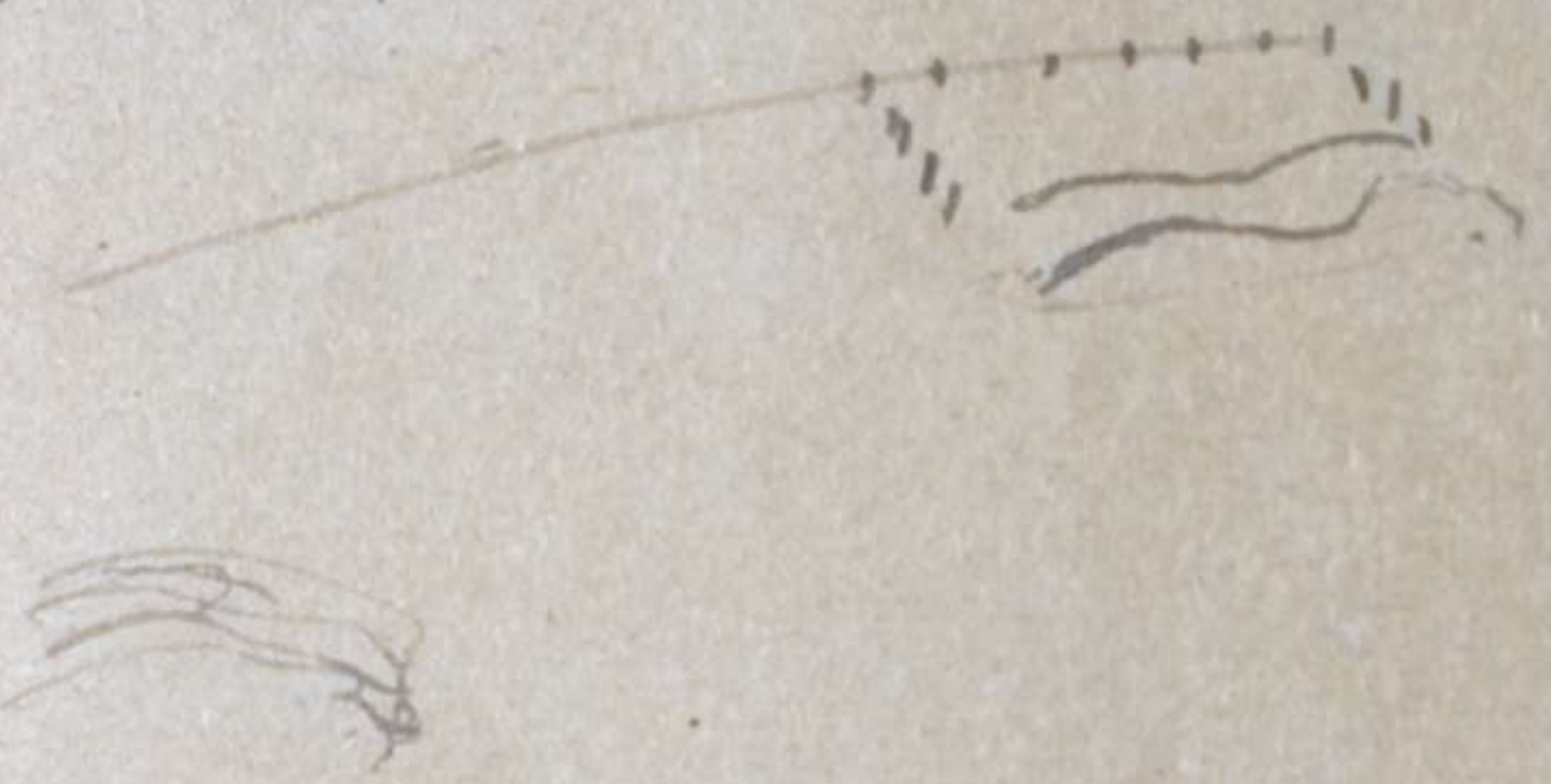
1

21st Dec 40  
at Mouquet  
Dun.

13

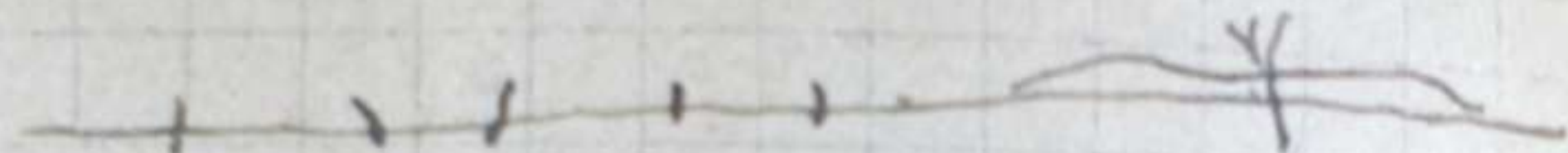
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21st Bn 40  
133 at Mougnet  
Barba.





21 Bn & Bn. 3  
Brig, chose time morning  
before - waiting for abt  
2 hrs to see wh light  
wt best. The time they  
chose wt 4.45 -  
Excellent chosen.  
It wt a v. dark night  
- quite fine. Our heavies  
had bn going whole night.  
Had 21 Bn all in  
positn  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr before the  
attack. A few flares  
were sent out from the  
Farm as we were  
getting out but did  
not have to stop for them.

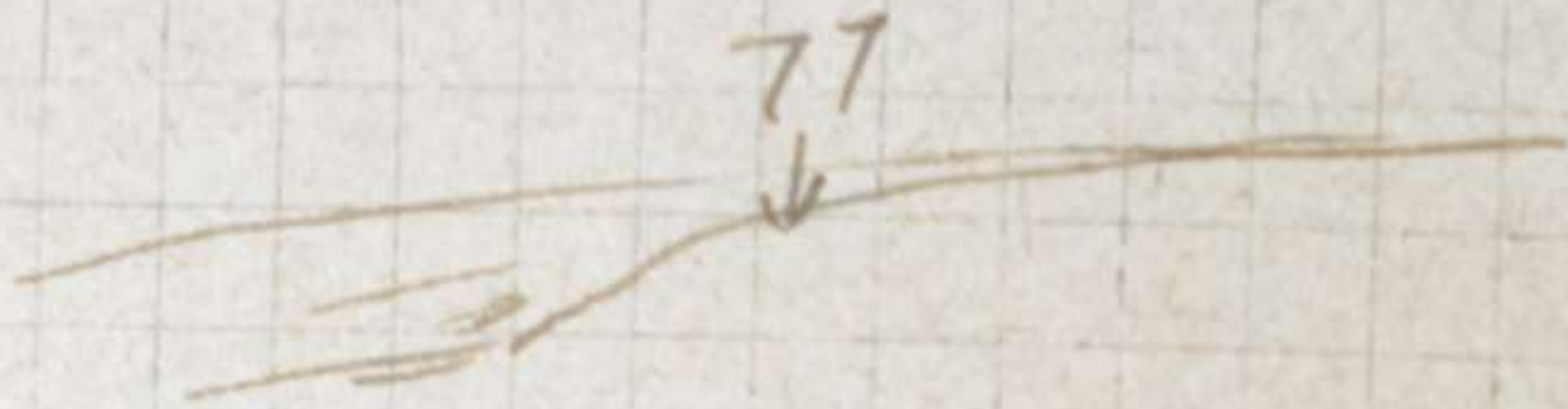


all that could be seen of  
Farm from Quarry.

The Farm had been  
reconnoitered from  
Quarry the day before.

The line was not taped  
5 mins before zero  
they went out & lay  
25 yds in front of  
front line.

Our barrage was  
beautiful. It began  
just over our heads  
& the lifts were very  
clearly marked.  
The line was as close  
as 25 yards to it.



It was rough going over  
 shell holes but there was  
 just light smoke to avoid  
 them. There was a spurt  
 by 77 & a line of trees  
 along the road & these  
 could be seen. Sale  
 steered for them, with  
 No 8 platoon. The Germans  
 left trench at X - a few  
 dead were scattered  
 along it. Across the road  
 - which was recognised only  
 by the stumps of trees,  
 was the zigzag 27. This  
 was recognisable.  
 Sale went a little too

far to start with -  
 When on the ridge N. of this  
 m.qs opened very  
 strongly - abt 2 mins.  
 from the start. They  
 were <sup>(severed)</sup> behind the  
 Farm - abt point  
 12 & one to left abt  
 Pt 27 in chalky 2/3  
 up to this point the  
 line was pretty solid  
 & unbroken.

The idea had been  
 to estab a line

(58) ——— (77) ——— (29)  
 or thereabouts - pushing  
 out T leads - connecting



up shell holes.

The line had got beyond this before the mgs struck them. They followed the barrage — that was 1 reason of their going on. In the din it was quite impossible to hold 1 man back — some followed it so closely that when it stopped they got into it themselves.

On the spur Sale ran right into the m.g. fire & lost a good many men by it. They were

the front. The line  
 became thinned, also  
 casualties <sup>thru</sup> the men  
 going on, that they lost  
 communication along  
 front. Sale had to run  
 up & down & organise  
 a bit of a line out  
 of men some in shell  
 holes others advancing  
 still. He closed after  
 those who were still  
 going on & brought back  
 some. The German  
 barrage had started  
 then — 5:45. & 5:45 P.M.  
 Not many casualties  
 thro this wh was mostly

At 6.15 the contact  
plane came over to the  
minute — <sup>the observer</sup> hanging over  
1 side & waved his arm  
at them.

on our original  
line. Flares were  
going up for some hrs  
in broad daylight —  
red & green from  
Farm. ~~The fact of~~ line  
~~is~~ going down the slope  
showed S. that they had  
gone too far.

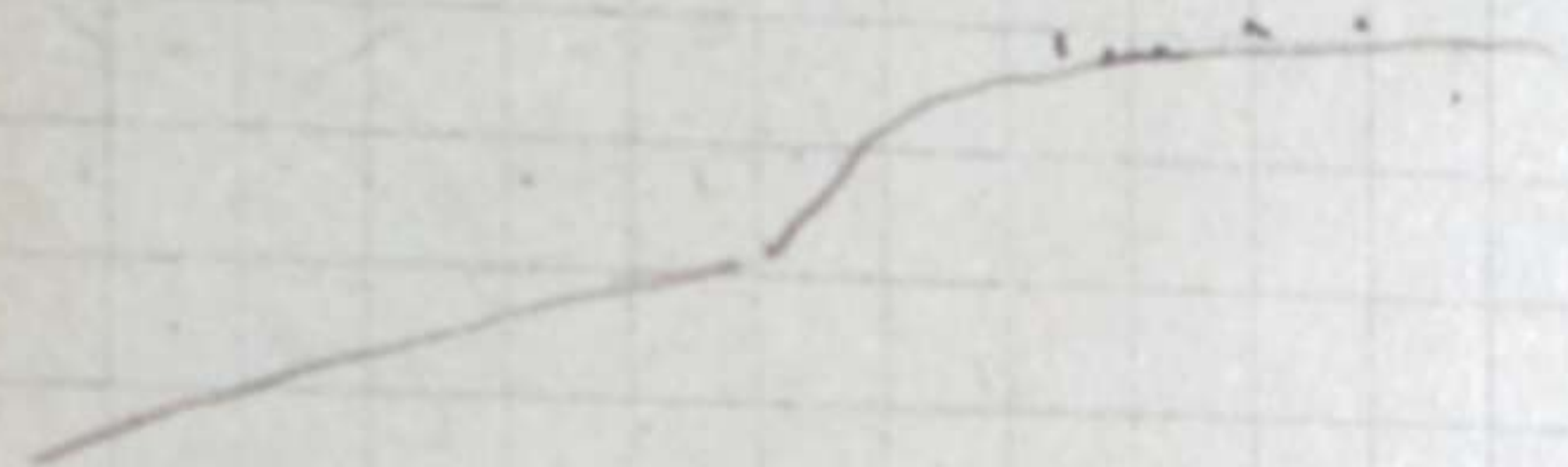
He set the men  
down thro' 77 towards  
the NW. edge of the mound  
of the farm. on the  
left he looked up w/  
22nd who were  
supporting & trying to

estab. a line from  
77 to 54. (This  
must have been one  
of the 4 platoons which  
were to be echeloned  
on the flank). He  
knew of no other troops  
to left.

The Germans don't  
seem to have noticed  
this group. The line  
on the right had gone  
down the forward slope  
& disappeared. I  
never saw them again.  
But wounded were

trickling in 2 or  
3 here & there all  
1 morning. They  
gave him a hazy  
idea that they had  
reached a strong  
trench wh was heavily  
manned. Germans  
were in it when  
they got there. A  
few got into 1 trench  
but there was heavy  
bombing - the few  
were bombed out  
& stayed in shell holes.

14a



15

(The zigzag line had  
certainly be held by  
J.s. & seemed strong.  
They had be stripping  
here all 1 day  
before. They did not  
resist from it during  
attack - & made  
no attack up it.)

The first thing obvious  
was to S & 4 we v. strong  
held & had not been  
taken. Germans in  
A were bombing our  
men in B. This was  
about 1/2 hr after attack

had started — it  
 was light then.

There had been  
 very vigorous bombing  
 & shooting from S-4  
 before but it was too  
 dark to see.

(Jones' fight  
 was over before S. noticed  
 S-4).

S. recognized at  
 once by (intersection  
 of roads to this  
 was S-4. Our men  
 were hidden from 77.  
 But S. could see the G.2 in

77 & they cd see  
 two German m.g.s  
 w/ 1 whole crew  
 above the parapet  
 breast high - They  
 were shot - others came  
 & got away w/ 1 gun.  
 These m.g.s. were shooting  
 across the NW front  
 of 77 towards 29 or 12  
 They had clearly seen  
 our men there, & they  
 had a good target  
 - they went on even  
 after 77 had opened  
 on them.

S. had 1 Lewis gun  
 which & any quantity



13  
 of ammo. The gunner  
 we found on S's right  
 flank. No ammo  
 was procurable afterwards,  
 but the section was  
 carrying it. Each  
 man was carrying abt  
 8 discs (32 x 47).  
 ie abt 1500 rds

S. turned his attention  
 to S4 first. S4  
 was quietened.  
 The <sup>German m.</sup> guns were mounted  
 & dismounted several  
 times - (They started abt  
 10. so our men were  
 out by 29 at this time)  
 & were cleared by

11. At Am hrs comparative  
 quiet. At midday forms  
 were seen in 2 betas.  
 (2) & (4) thickly  
 manned & pushing  
 down towards 77.

S. sent back for T. Ms.  
 & message got thro'  
 (2 original runners  
 never heard of again.  
 Then went in himself.  
 Going in he was not  
 fired at but coming out  
 the m. ps were going  
 & the right gun got  
 onto him. The only  
 thing was to run till

13

20  
 Hell - (I was wounded  
 in the arm abt 3  
 minutes after the  
 original attack - m.g.  
 Got a group of them  
 one k., one thro' ear,  
 S. thro' arm. & another  
 hit.)

Sale saw the chap.  
 who was coming in  
 wounded & waving  
 white rag - apparently  
 delirious. So did not  
 fire but beckoned  
 & whistled to him.  
 Our men near 81  
 whistled too & he got

X. abt 10  
Back abt 10.45

13 in to tunnel. He  
seemed to be abt S.W  
of S 4. Sale got in  
abt 1/2 way betw.

81 & Quarry. He came  
in & out again abt 4  
in afternoon same  
way & got thro'!

The runner (only  
one who got thro')  
got TM onto Germans  
& the gun (Stokes)  
got at once onto  
Germans (under the  
shaft of figure 4 in (47))

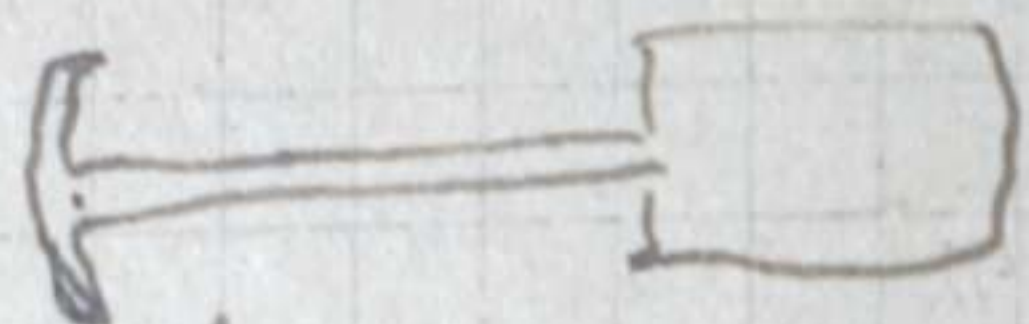
13 They were also seen  
 from the Quarry  
 who had already  
 got on to them when  
 the runner arrived. The  
 runner confirmed  
 this. The Greifs

cleared — you see  
 the bomb coming. The  
 German Red X men  
 were around there  
 for some time after.

40 or 50 rounds —  
 as fast as could be

at 1st — in 4 or 5 mins —

Then kept up an  
 intermittent barrage.



old  
Victorian Shovel  
to say it used in  
Vic. at one time.

Americans have  
something of the sort.

J's seem to carry only  
shovels.

The L.S. in 77 can't  
get high end!

77 had to be made  
up w a few bags  
a pick + shovel  
into quite a decent  
trench. (The earth  
is all broken with  
shell fire - so pick  
is scarcely necessary)  
Shovel is what is wanted.

There was a fair amount  
of shell fire + barrage  
shortened as if the G.  
picked up our line.  
At midday a very  
solid bombing attack was

I thought at first in  
 morning that line had  
 probably been established by 29  
 but that there was a break.  
 He crawled about a good  
 bit but only found a  
 few dead & wd.  
 After seeing Col. Forbes  
 he knew things must  
 have gone wrong there.

Going on in direction  
 of (12) - (the m.g.s had  
 (N of the farm) been settled before  
 this). A patrol was  
 sent out abt 10 to 11  
 (as soon as Sale  
 got back from Col.  
 Forbes) to find out  
 what was the position  
 on it as Col. had  
 had no word from  
 there. One m.c.o &  
 one man went out.  
 Both got back to 77.  
 They found a number  
 of our wd. in  
 313 305 27

13  
 + came up apt  
 a f. m. g. in the  
 mound, covering  
 the zigzag 21.  
~~It fired at~~ 3 Germans  
 appeared at 30 yds,  
 up to the waist, &  
 fired at them. They  
 got back - lay low  
 in some holes &  
 cleared back down  
 the 21, after a while  
 zigzag 21, ~~and~~ cont'd  
 only wd who had  
 straggled into it -  
 S. b. were working



13 there all day.

The mouset  
Farm bombing was  
later (abt 1 pm.) than  
the reinforcing by Gs of  
point (47).

Things quietened  
down. The men in  
pt 77 were able to  
sit down. Sale had  
a water bottle full  
of Rum — abt 12  
men were left in the  
hole out of 16 or 18  
originally. Point 77  
was a crater in the 2,

At this time Skyline  
27 was unheld.

From 81 to 69 (junction)  
on Skyline 27 was  
dug out & occupied  
by 2/Bn.

13  
linked up by cutting  
thro' the crater rim  
with two other shell  
holes right & left  
a few yards away  
- aft 2 yds of cutting  
to get into them.

This was ~~revelled~~ <sup>revelled</sup> at top  
with sandbags to  
prevent rim from  
crumbling.

Sale went in  
at 10 pm to find  
out what was happening.

From 77 you could see 3  
men in the road side  
S. of 54 sitting in a hole.

~~they~~ - S. waved to  
 them - I had one  
 man observing to  
 front + one to flank.  
 The L. G. was kept  
 concealed in case  
 of attack. The  
 crater had ~~not~~  
 not to be manned  
 in 1 afternoon.  
 During 1 night flares  
 were not + we not  
 have been thrown -  
 as 1 idea was that  
 1 German did not  
 know exactly where  
 1 post was tho they knew

we were abt here.

The L.S. was used  
in beginning a 5<sup>th</sup>  
pt. 54. Sniping  
we going on from ~~77~~  
77 all day. The  
target was 54 & the  
rear of it.

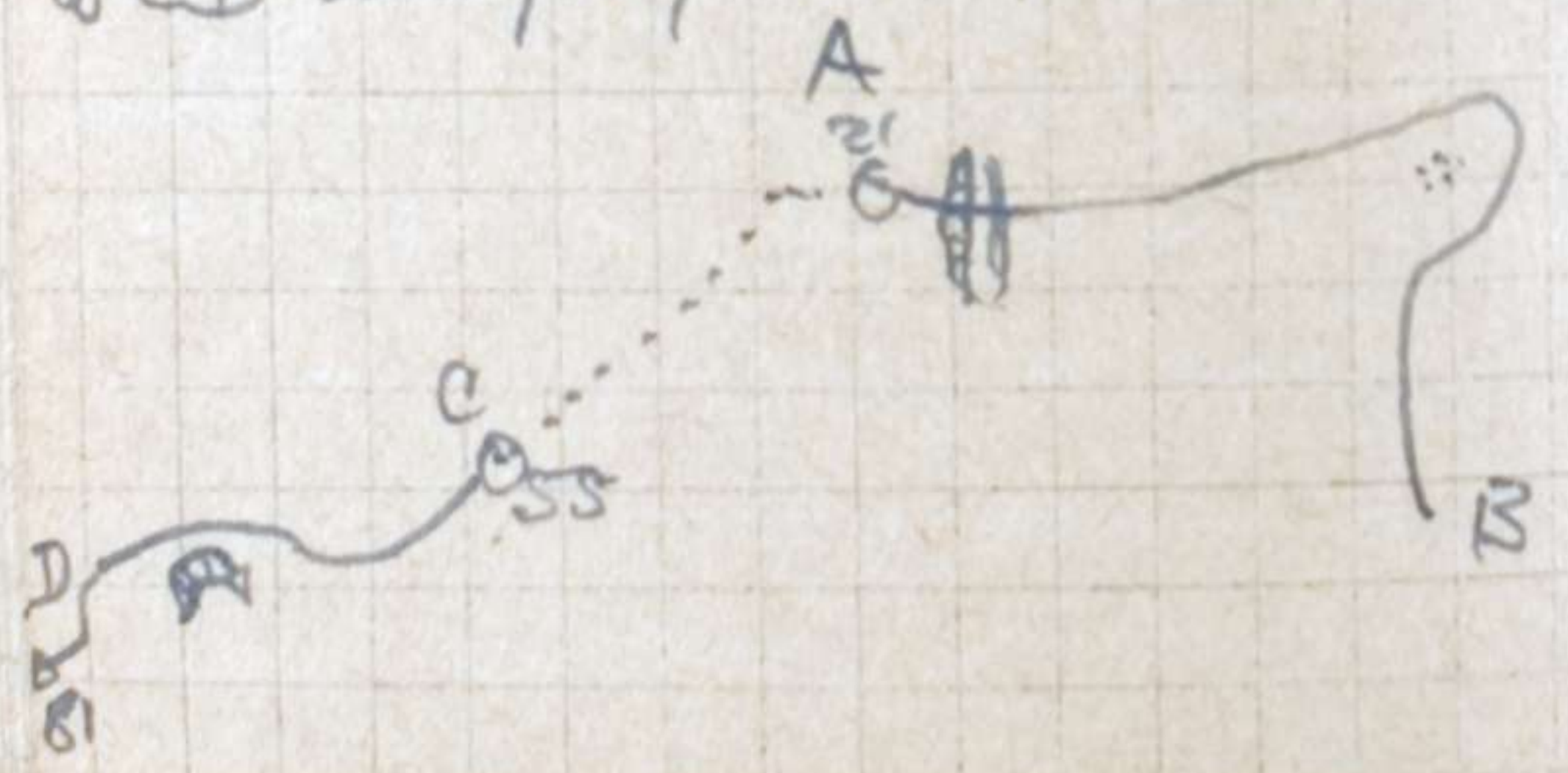
The night was  
uneventful — only  
shelling. No signs of  
c-attack. He sent in  
a guide at night  
(as instr. at 4 pm) &  
relief came out abt  
2 am. There were hi  
15 Bn. After 4 pm. Sale

33a

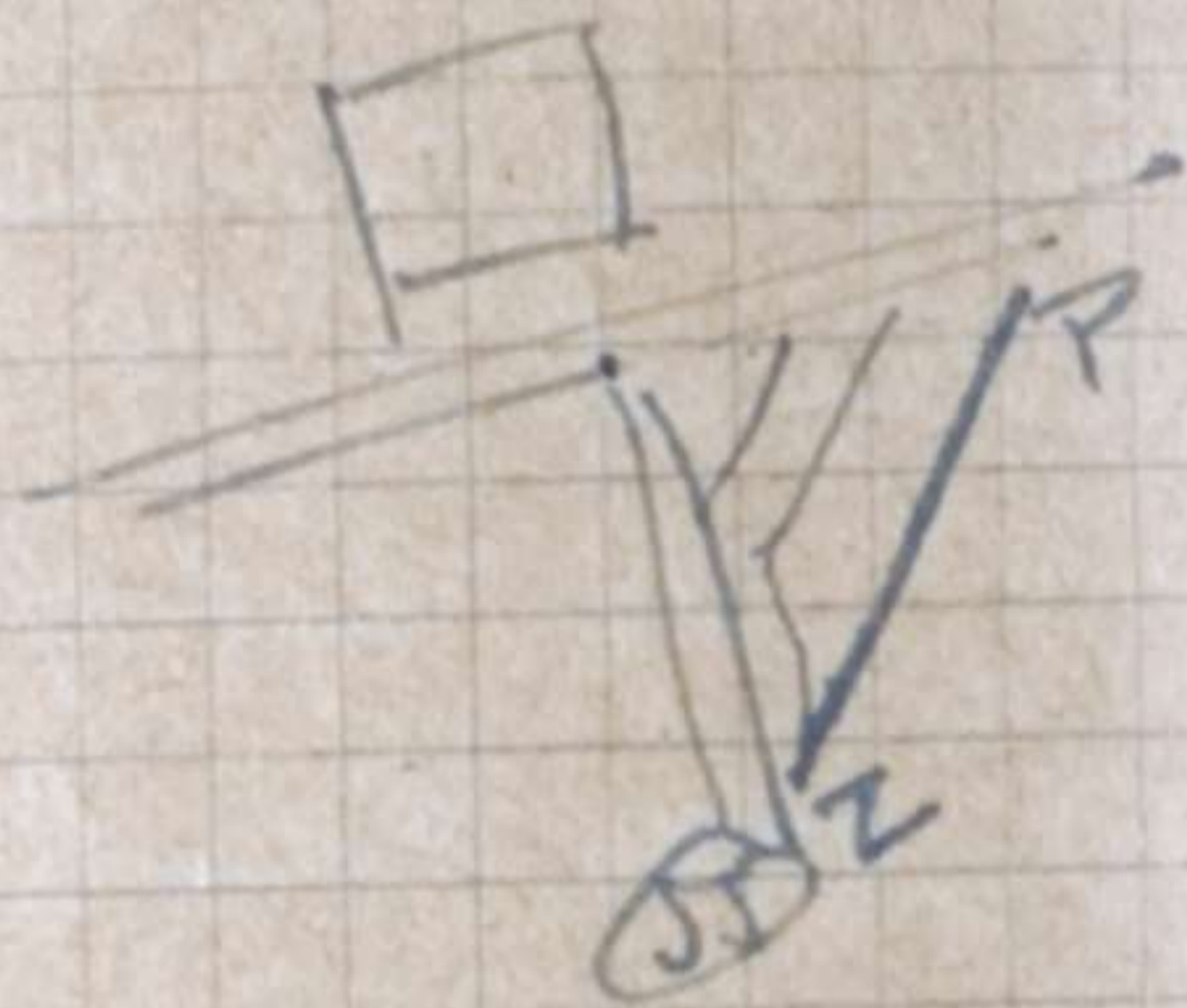
13

didn't go out again.  
 Serjt. MacAlpin was  
 in charge from then on.  
 Casualties consisted  
 mostly of men hit  
 (sniped) when they had  
 their heads over the  
 top.

N3. Movement from A  
 to CD during day with few casualties



(or vice versa by 24 Bn) was 1  
 most extraordinary feature  
 in this attack. It had to be  
 done to get fresh men in  
 to make attack - was all  
 done thro front line - both ways.



13 People from 81 thinned out into the Quarry. People from E of Quarry thinned out into (55) - (27) (part of way).

People from 91 moved down the trench Z P

The rest of the line

(91) ~~was~~ Eastwards was spread over the whole of this part of line.

The 24<sup>th</sup> from 59 to 91 moved along to NE angle of line.

The people slowed in (55) - (27) moved up to (91).

The 21st mean while had

13

shovelled off to their left as  
close as they cd get.  
(they closed to left &  
24 but once 24 was  
in).

People from Quarry  
moved up into 55-(27).  
People in Z P moved  
straight across to Quarry,  
91-(27) moved to Z P.  
~~55-(27)~~ People in 59-91  
moved to 91-~~27~~ 21 (1)  
55-(27) took up 55, 59-(91)  
; Z P moved to Quarry-55.  
Move completed.

This took abt 2 hrs.

An offr. was placed at each point. When the end of each movement took place this offr. advised made the next move with the adjacent Coy into the line which had been emptied for them.

This had to be done at 5 pm. Nicholas came to Forbes H.Q. in Brinds Road at 9.1 (34.9.1) Nicholas sd at first Cant be done - It has to be done.

In two or 3 to go. see movement.