

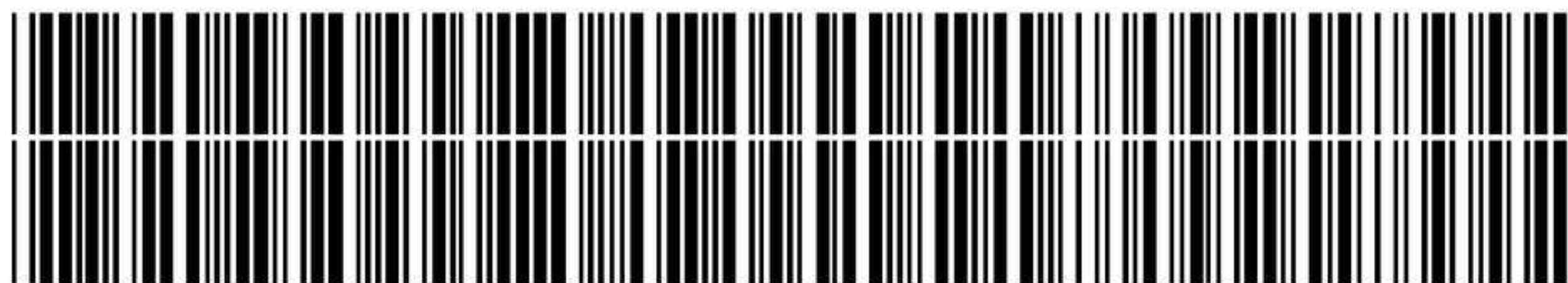
AWM38
Official History,
1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,
Official Historian.

Diaries and Notebooks

Item number: 3DRL606/274/1

Title: Folder, 1918 - 1941

Covers fighting from August to October 1918 and includes Bean's notes, cuttings, sketches, extracts from diary of Pte J S Bartley and correspondence.



AWM38-3DRL606/274/1

Somme Pt. II - Aug. - Oct. - 1918 No 274.

Part

1st SET.

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.

AWM 38
16 Sept., 1946.

OPIC E. W. BEAN.

30RL 600 ITEM 274 [17]

ACCESS STATUS

British Offensive 1918

see

Die Revolution ^{an} der Westfront
by Herr Lewensohn

See Army Quarterly Vol 17 - article by
Col Piggott

Records presented to AWM by Col.

Ross in 1928 include —

1st Aust
Div { Hamel 4/7/18
Lihons 9-11 Aug 1918
Proyart-Chugnes 22-27 Aug 1918
Ho Lue 18/9/18

Map showing Infy & Tank dispositions
in Aust Corps sector 18/6/18

Maps & report on operations of Aust Corps
8/8/18 to 6/10/18.

1918

Books

Die Vorbereitung des deutschen Heeres für
die Grosse Schlacht in Frankreich
im Herbstjahr 1918. II. Grundsätze
für die Einzelwaffen. 2. Artillerie

by Oberst. Jochim.

Die Politischen und Militarischen
Verantwortlichkeiten im Verlaufe
der Offensive 1918

by Bernhard Schwertfeger

See articles in
"Ovensland Digger"
Jan - Aug - Sept 1929 etc

H/N
43 Aug 1918

F R A N C E.

5/11/18.

Dear Mr. Higginbotham,

It will be a comfort to you in the great loss you have sustained in the loss of your son, Cpl. C.S. Higginbotham, to know that he has been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for marked bravery and dash in the battle of the 10th August.

I do not know as yet the official wording of the description of his deeds for which he has been awarded this high honor, but the following is the wording of the recommendation I put in. It will give you a good idea of his gallant conduct, and will convey all I wish to say about his bravery.

"No. 5706, L/Cpl, Charles Seaton Higginbotham.

In company with one man this N.C.O. moved forward when the Company was held up by extremely heavy Machine Gun Fire and captured an enemy gun and killed the crew of six who held out to the last man.

He and his companion then got the enemy Machine Gun into action and used it against the opposing force with good effect.

During the next day he did excellent daylight patrol work and showed great gallantry on all occasions."

I can well realize what a great loss his death means to you and all his dear ones. He was of a particularly bright sunny disposition and this rendered him very popular amongst his comrades, and in the rough time which he went through with us, made him of extraordinary value in keeping up the spirits of all with whom he came in contact.

- 2 -

Your son was wounded on the 23rd August and died of wounds received on that date in the battle in which we were engaged.

You will be interested to know that a Machine Gun captured by your son was sent to the Australian War Museum and eventually will, I hope reach Melbourne.

It should have this inscription attached to it...

"No. 5706m L/Cpl C.S. Higginbotham ()
No. 5358, Pte O.B. Day) 1 M.G. 18936

Again wishing you my deepest and sincerest sympathy in which all your son's late comrades join me.

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

Staniferth Ricketson,
(Capt.)
5th Battn.

Revelle
May 1932

On Paris Leave: Digger Killed

To have boxed on with the 3rd Battalion and to have come unscathed through some of the biggest fights, and then to be killed by a shell from "Big Bertha," while he was spending a holiday in Paris, was the fate of 2943 L/Cpl. Thomas G. Oliver (second from the left in the front group pictured here).

It was indeed a cruel twist of fortune that Oliver, who was a native of Torquay (Eng.), after having dodged the tons of ironmongery that Fritz scattered over the Australian lines, should lose his life to a chance shell from a German gun fired from a point 75 miles away.



Reading from left to right, the members of this group, all from the 3rd Bn., A.I.F., were: Top Row: T. Eaglesham (gassed), now living in Sydney; — Doyle (killed); Wally — (missing). Bottom row: — Robertson (killed); T. G. Oliver (killed); 5667 L/Cpl. A. Croydon (discharged in England in Dec., 1918), and A. Jones (killed). The photograph was taken at Meteren after Wyschaete. Can any reader complete identification of the group?—"Third."

Note.

Gen Monash's explanation to Gilmour and myself of the attacks of Aug 22 and 23.1918 -(beforehand).

There are to be 2 attacks - on Aug 22nd N. of the Somme, on Aug. 23rd S. of it.

On Aug. 22 the 3rd Corps is going to exploit as far as we know with 2 divs, possibly more. The attack starts at 4.45 tomorrow morning. The 47th Divn is on our flank. The 3rd Aust Divn is doing our part. We stand fast on South of the rivrr - no barrage there nor anything else. Gellibrand has a free hand - running his own battle in his own way (some main points being suggested and agreed). He is holding a line parallel with the Corbie Bray rd, joining the 47th Divn abt 500 yds N. of the rd. He has to practically pivot on a point of his front W of Bray and swing his line round an angle of 90 degrees. For that reason it has been decided that he shall put two of his battalions in behind Godleys troops and when Godleys line goes forward Gellibrands will go forward with it straight on to its objective, avoiding the necessity for a change of direction which is always a difficult matter in a fight.

He has therefore 2 Bns of the 9th Bde out on his left tonight. They overlap the 47th Divn. and advance with them. There will be 1 hrs halt abt 1/2 way. Then on to the final objve which stops short of BRAY. The 11th Bde might be drawn in if things go wrong. 2 Coys of 3rd Pioneers are holding the Etinhem Pen. He will have 4 Bdes of arty - 2 3rd Divn, 2 58th Divn. There will be no Americans in this stunt. They have all gone - they are wanted urgently elsewhere.

It is abt on the scale of a big raid.

Exploitation: We may exploit to Suzanne, or, if the left moved forward, to the bend near Maricourt. No tanks with us, many with the 3rd Corps. We are using a lot of smoke.

Aug 23 rd. I am taking most interest in this day. Zero will be at 4.45 again. Attack by 2 Divns, 1st Aust Divn on left, 32nd Divn on right.

32 Div attack on a frontage of 3 Bns to capture and mop up Herleville. (2bns left Bde with one other in support - one Bn right Bde.) They are being specially given by me 12 tanks, and 6 Bdes of artillery, and 2 m.g. companies.

1st Aust Divn is using the 2nd Bde on right for half its front and the 1st Bde on left. 3rd Bde is in reserve. Each attacking Bd has 12 tanks and 3 supply tanks. 1st Divn has 9 Bdes of arty. (7 Australian and 2 British). He is using 3 coys of mg Bn on various objects and one coy in divisional reserve. H qrs 1st Divn in Q 13 A; of 32 Divn at Bayonvillers. The barrage will have 10 per cent smoke. There will be a halt of 15 mins by the infantry in the bottom of the Chuignolles - Herleville valley. The German has very few whizzbangs - he has shifted his artillery back very quickly. Glasgow may exploit 500 yards at his own discretion after half an hour. Two brigades of the 5th Divn are in readiness to move (15th and 14th bdes) - to move up, that is, in sympathy with Gellibrand. The barrage goes to the end of the operation on both days. On the 23rd Aug there will be ~~xxx~~ barrage halt at plus 48 to plus 63 mins (15 mins) - the final protective is reached at plus 105 i.e 6.30 am.

On Aug 22nd there will be one hours halt half way. The planes will be flying in the early morning as at Hamel, but there will be more artillery and fewer tanks.

On Aug. 23rd the final objective has been drawn short of the old line of French wire which the photos show to be in good preservation - it has been especially drawn short of that in order not to force the division to cross it under m.g. fire. If they can get through it afterwards in exploitation, well and good.

Divns against us: 21st and 185th (wh gave ~~xxx~~ us the knock at Herleville and wh came down from the NZ front)

Possibly 5th Bavarian.
38th Division.

There are 8 Divns now under Aust Corps commander.

Note.

from Maj. Pain MC.

9th Bde 23 Aug. 33 and 35 Bns were on final objve by 9am. Cavalry through to N. Germans there known to be fighting hard, but cavalry was in L3 and 4 till driven back by m.gs. Germans started pasting whole area - first gas into valley, then 5.9s (20 per minute). They opened-up w many mgs in Bray. Germs capt'd some prisoner who told them that the 3rd Divn was coming there.

"The day before the attack we heard that it was going to take place 'tomorrow night'. (i.e 21/22). The pioneer bn was put to hold the line above Etinhem which gave us the 35th to attack with. 3 5th rested one day, and on the night 22/23 moved in on the right forming up on the tape line in rear of our trenches. The 33rd bn, then in reserve, took up the left half of the tape line behind or rather with Godleys troops - crowded into 500 yds N. of the divisional boundary. The 34th bn was formed up in rear on a tape line.

"The artillery bombt came down 300 yds in front of front line because guns were unregistered, and crept forwd 100 yds in 4 mins. to the brown line - our objve. At the objve the barrage rested 300 yds in font for 66 mins. We had to wait to allow the troops in the north to move a longer distance. Some of them had 3 000 yds to go against our 1000.

"We then advanced at same rate to the brown line, the pioneer bn conforming. We took the chalk pit which was in the territory of the troops on our right, and in it a 4.2 gun (or how) and k a number of Germans and took prisoners there. The barrage over the last half of the advance was very slow and ragged.

"We were on the main line to time, 3 companies in each bn in the front line and one in support. The Germans knew abt it ~~xxxxxxx~~ and shortly put a heavy bombt on the whole area - 5.9, 4.2 - much m.g from Bray and from the high grd in front. Our people dug in quickly. 35th Bn pushed patrols twds Bray wh was very much occupied. Division wanted us to carry out an operation in the afternoon. We cd not give artillery support for this attack because we were too close - the bde put this view strongly and the proposal was washed out. The attack was then arranged to take place this mg. We were to put down a creeping barrage over the town and ~~xxxxx~~ follow through with the 11th Bde on the left and the pioneers conforming on the rt.

About 5pm we heard that the English were retiring and the Germans advancing. They were back and our left was conforming. We had been in touch in Happy Valley and our flank was left there again by a further retirement. At 9 pm the English got back to their J.O. line. Abt the same time White informed us that the whole of our line was intact.

(In Happy Valley the British had apparently been in touch with our supports.)

An officer from the 34th Bn ~~xxxx~~ attached to the 33rd went up to 27c to stop the Tommies. But as soon as the Germans appeared on top of the hill they went off. The officer waited a while and saw our guns get on to 27 central. The Germans got rifle and mg fire from our front and our small arms fire was so great that messages at 8 pm spoke of shortage of ammuntn.

A few Tommies were scattered about - odd ones - but most were on their J.O. line. As soon as we heard, at Bde, we sent to the 34th Bn. When we knew things were straight we sent 34 Bn to echelon back the left flank. They had to form a defensive flank if necessary. They formed a defensive flank as far as Happy Valley, joining up with oddments of English troops who collected there. Our people collected some of them in X 8A behind us. One company commdr of the Londons, and a few men stuck up with us (142 Bde). (The 140 and 141 Bde are in the same divn). The Germans were now in Happy Valley. We got 8 extra M.Gs to go west of Bray as a hinge. And ordered the pioneers to watch the river on the right - we didnt want a second Cambrai.

At 12.30 the G.O.C. ~~xxxxxxx~~ rang up from Divn to say he had tried to get the 47th Divn to come up, but the only thing

to do was for our officers and men to take charge of any English troops there and form them in posts where possible.

The 11th Bde in the meantime was ordered up to put 2 Bns on the old J.O. trench and well behind the 47th Divn on the left.

A T.M. was also ordered to stand by and be ready to bombard any people emerging from the west of Bray.

Several times during the night Germans tried - patrols and lost people - In the afternoon the Germans attacked us in the same way as they did the English, but our artillery and mgs were too quick for them and no German got nearer than 1000 to 500 yards except on the left where they passed closer following the troops there. It took place abt 4.30 to 5 p.m. 16 machineguns plus all artillery got onto the German and he didnt reach our front line except near the chalk pit (which we held from the Germans to the end) where our people had reinforced the English as soon as they saw things were wrong.

The Germans got away back in F 25; Those British who stopped, sheltered within our lines. About 9am the Germans came at us. it was only a small party - looked as if a party of 30 were detailed as storm troops for that object. They were beaten off. Our defence took him in the flank as he moved across. There was no wire before our old J.O. line that could have stopped him.

The C.O. of one London regt on the flank came over to 33rd Bn Hqrs (forward) which was abt a mile from the front line. Grant of 34th was there also. We had communication with them by buzzer.

Some of our people collected at the foot of Happy Valley a lot of ammunition and they said confidently that the Germans could not pass them. The British may be on the brown line now (this was the following evening that Pain gave me this acct) The Colonel of the Londons had a brigade reserve and details - 52 men. (I am not sure what this means - perhaps other evidence will explain it). The 12th and 47th Divn seemed to have gone to bits to the north of us, Pain said. But further N. near B ecordel the line seemed to be all right. We had 3 German minenwerfer in action which silenced a German Mwfer which was firing on our men. The Bde had abt 400 casualties. There was fighting at odd times last night, but yesterday evening it was a really big attack. Nothing was done to the Germans opposite the English front though the Germans were in full view marching. (I suppose this is partly accounted for by the 3rd Corps guns being blown out) Prisoners: 13 offrs 224 o.g. Casualties 22 offrs 384 or.

Officers hit:-

33Bn Capt T allis, Lts Farleigh K.

Lts Hutchings, Lee, Burke, Fant, Fletcher, Maj. Brodziak wd. (Brodziak was afterwds k. or perhaps died of this wd. I think it was later he was k. by a shell near Clery)

35th Bn Lt Ades K.

Lts Blakely, McGinnes, Barlow, Thompson wd.

G.O. 25/8/1.

33RD BATTALION, A.I.F.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS OF AUGUST 22ND-24TH, 1918.

Ref. 62^D H.M.

25th August, 1918.

PREPARATION: 1. The first intimation of the operation was given at a Brigade Conference at 1.15 p.m. on August 20th., when the scheme was outlined. I held a Conference of Company Commanders and Headquarter Officers at 4 p.m. and preparations were immediately begun. S.O.S. and Success signal rockets and bombs did not reach us until 6 p.m. on the 21st. A large percentage of bombs were not detonated and this caused delay in the distribution. The Jumping-OFF tape line was laid from L.13.a.50.80 to L.7.a.40.05. on the night of August 21st/22nd. Company and platoon boundaries and one direction tape per platoon were also clearly marked.

APPROACH
MARCH AND
ASSEMBLY:

2. Previous to the operations, the Battalion was disposed as follows:

B.H.Q. in quarry at K.23.b.7.1.

A.Co. in K.17.c. & K.23.a.

B.Co. in K.17.d.

C.Co. in K.18.b. and M.

D.Co. in quarry at K.23.b.8.1.

The routes were overland and direct. They were not marked but were previously reconnoitred by H.C.O's and men.

"B" Co. passed the Right Starting Point at K.18.c.6.6 ("C" Co.H.Q.) at 1.55 a.m. and were followed by "D" Co. at a distance of 100 yards. "C" Co. passed Left Starting Point at K.18.b.95.65. (deserted tank) at 2.25 a.m. and were followed by "A" Co. at a distance of 100 yards.

The very bright moonlight made the approach march very difficult; the officers laying the tape lines clearly saw the Battalion moving at a distance of 800 yards.

At 2.30 a.m. the enemy opened a heavy bombardment on our front line area and his machine guns were also very active. The bombardment lasted until 3.40 a.m.

On account of the brightness and the heavy shelling and machine gun fire, each Company moved forward in extended order and advanced by alternate sections. This undoubtedly saved heavy casualties.

To avoid casualties "A" Co. remained under cover in K.18.d. in the trenches vacated by "C" Co. until 3.30 a.m. when they advanced by sections to the assembly position.

The assembly of the 33rd Battalion was complete at 4 a.m. All companies were under cover in trenches and on the BRIDGEMAN-GRANITE Road, close to the tape line and moved forward to the tape line at zero minus 15 minutes. While waiting platoon markers were placed on the tape line; the assembly on the line was carried out very quickly. The whole Battalion was formed up to a depth of 30 yards. The ordered formation was soon obtained in the advance.

"B" Co. 34th Battalion were attached to the 33rd Battalion as a reserve for our left flank. They moved from their Support position in L.13.a. at 4 a.m. and were assembled 50 yards in rear of "D" Co. at 4.20 a.m.

The enemy undoubtedly observed our massing for he again opened a heavy bombardment on our forward position at 4 a.m. Fortunately a kind and thoughtful but foolish German at once fired a lantern signal whereupon the

(ver)

artillery conveniently listed 200 yards and thus cleared our assembly.

Our casualties during the approach march and assembly totalled 15 other ranks (A.Co. 4, B.Co. nil, C.Co. 6, D.Co. 5.) It is because of the sound judgment and initiative of all Company Officers that our casualties were not very much greater.

THE ATTACK: 3. (i) Our northern boundary was nominally the line K.7.c.70.20 - L.3.d.45.50, actually it was the line L.7.a.40.05 - L.3.d.45.50. I arranged with the O.C., 20th London Regiment that his right company would follow behind my left company to the BROWN Line to protect the divisional junction.

(ii) FIRST OBJECTIVE:

The artillery opened simultaneously at 4.45 a.m. Enemy machine guns opened a heavy fire but we were not affected by his artillery. Our barrage was very ragged and inaccurate and was difficult to follow. A very large number of our casualties in the advance were inflicted by our own shells. The 47th Division on our left advanced slowly and with hesitation and had to be urged to keep up to the barrage. The enemy did not make a determined stand; his morale was not high. Machine gunners were an exception; they maintained a heavy fire until our troops rushed them, when they eagerly surrendered.

At L.8.c.1.6. we captured a Battalion Headquarters of the 12th Regiment including the Battalion Commander, Adjutant, Machine Gun Officer, Artillery Liaison Officer and 40 other ranks and 4 machine guns. Had this garrison, whose position was an exceedingly good one, made a determined stand, our attack would have been greatly jeopardised. The machine gunners fired up to the last minute but their fire was wild and high. Shortly before reaching the BROWN Line, an enemy party of 15 men under an officer worked behind us from the 47th Divisional front and opened a fire on D.Co. The mist and smoke enabled them to come down unobserved. A party from D. Co. and one from A. Co. at once turned back and charged them, and succeeded in killing 3 and taking the remainder prisoner. Because of his gallantry the officer was taken prisoner.

The BROWN Line was captured to time, and during the 65 minutes halt there to allow the troops on our left to reach their objective, the Battalion was thoroughly reorganised and the mopping up completed. B.Co. 34th Battalion remained under the terrace in L.8.c. and ordered. Shortly after we reached the BROWN Line, the enemy's artillery fire opened on us, previously his fire did not even inconvenience us. He had two balloons well forward and they evidently directed the fire, but the majority of shells fell in rear of us. He sent over a large number of gas shells and gas respirators had to be worn. The wind was S.W. and 5 m.p.h.

(iii) SECOND OBJECTIVE:

"B" and "C" Cos. continued as first wave - there was no leapfrogging. Gas respirators had to be worn for the first 500 yards.

Touch was not as successfully maintained on either flank as in the advance to the first objective. The 22nd London Regiment worked to the left, and they did not follow the barrage well; consequently we had to extend our front and take the northern portion of BROWN LINE, and the CHALK PIN in L.8.d.

Our casualties to the BROWN Line were greater than to the CHALK PIN owing to enemy machine gun fire from BRAY and BRAY RIDGE and to his artillery. The area

was more lightly held; the enemy had time to display discretion by withdrawing. The GREEN Line was captured at 3 a.m. The position was uncomfortably dominated by the BRAY RIDGE and was continually under heavy machine gun fire.

The Battalion was soon reorganized. "B" and "C" Cos. held the front line, "B" Co. from the Chalk Pit, L.3.d.50.90 to L.9.b.40.65 and "C" Co. from L.3.d.50.90 to L.9.d.35.60. A Co. was in close support to "C" and "D" Co. to "B"; the support line in the early stages was 100 yards in rear of the front line.

(iv) LIAISON.

The closest liaison was maintained by us with both flanks. "A" and "D" Cos. supplied liaison sections and constant touch was kept up to the BROWN Line. The halt at the first objective enabled G.C. "B" and "D" Cos. to get in close touch with the 20th and 22nd London Regiments and they were able to clear up difficulties. The Londoners knew very little of the plan; no explanation of the protective barrage had been given them; they did not know when the advance to the green line commenced; nor were they sure whether the 20th London Regiment were to continue the advance or whether the 22nd Londoners were to leapfrog through. There was a noticeable dribbling back of English troops during the second advance. These men were unhurt and simply drifted away. They were not checked by their officers. It is significant that those men who followed us showed no signs of hesitation and did really good work.

Owing to the gap between us and the 35th Battalion on our right we established a liaison platoon to secure our right flank.

The value and necessity of liaison with flanks are not yet fully appreciated. In these operations efforts to maintain liaison were confined chiefly to us.

CONSOLIDATION:

4. Consolidation was extremely difficult and dangerous because of the heavy machine gun fire. Every use was made of natural cover and Lewis gun posts established in front.

Our front line ran from L.9.d.35.60 - L.9.b.5.4. - L.3.d.6.9. and was held by B and C. Cos. who each had three platoons in the front line, and one in close support. B.Co. H.Q. were established at L.3.d.25.70 and C.Co. at L.9.b.3.6. A and D Cos. were in support in old enemy positions in L.9.a. East of the BRAY - HARPEY VALLEY Road, from L.9.a.70.50 to L.9.d.40.95, with both Company H.Q. at L.9.a.30.90. B.Co. 34th Bn. took up a position under the terrace from L.9.d.20.50 to L.8.b.95.95. Co.H.Q. were established at L.9.a.10.90.

CAVALRY:

5. A party of the Northumberland Hussars, the remnants of a squadron, galloped down the BRAY-ERICOURT Road shortly after the capture of the GREEN Line. They suffered heavy casualties from machine guns and aeroplane bombs on reaching our left flank. The leading cavalryman wore a German steel helmet and in the mist and smoke some riflemen took them for the enemy and fired about 20 rounds, inflicting casualties to horses. 2 Officers and 10 men followed by about 20 riderless horses galloped towards BRAY and reached the outskirts of the village. All except one officer became casualties. The cavalry displayed the greatest courage and dash, but shock action against a nest of machine guns can only end in failure.

COUNTER-ATTACK:

AUGUST 22nd.

6. Shortly after 1 p.m. on the 22nd I observed a counter attack developing from CAPTAIN WOOD in F.18. and slowly advancing in artillery formation preceded by a line in

(over)

extended order, against the left flank of the 47th Division. I estimate the strength to be about 250. They advanced without artillery support. I informed Brigade H.Q. of this at 1.20 p.m. This advance continued leisurely and without interruption until 1.30 p.m. when a lone British plane at last discovered it and fired the warning signal whereupon the artillery opened fire. The attack did not appear to be whole-hearted. The 24th London Regiment on the left of the 47th Division broke way and the retirement spread to my left flank shortly after 5 p.m. The 23rd Londoners gave way, and then three companies of the 22nd London Regiment. The fourth company remained with us at the CHALK PIT. The British made as determined a stand as the Germans did during our advance.

This left my flank in the air, as the Londoners retirement was not kept in hand. "B" Co. at once formed a defensive flank and were reinforced by "D" Co. "B" Co. 34th Bn. also swung the right flank northwards. A heavy machine gun, Lewis Gun and rifle fire was opened and the enemy's advance was checked. Captured machine guns, rifles, and mincewerfers were used against the enemy; this not only increased our fire power but also conserved our fast diminishing supply of ammunition. In addition it is a great satisfaction to use enemy weapons.

At 7.30 p.m. Lt. Col. PARFITEN, 22nd London Regiment and his staff reported at my Headquarters and informed me that all except the CHALK PIT garrison had broken away. His troops then came under my command.

At 7.40 p.m. Major F.G. GRANT, Commanding 34th Battalion reported to me that he had received orders to take up a line L.8.a. central to L.8.a.9.7. with his three companies. I was informed of this by a message from Brigade at 7.45 p.m. as the enemy were holding the Northern half of HAPPY VALLEY from P.27.c.35.99 to L.2.b.10.80 to L.2.a.50.90. I ordered two companies to prolong and strengthen our defensive flank, and one company to be held in reserve under the terrace in L.6.a. Our northern line then ran from the CHALK PIT to L.3.c.05.50 to L.2.d.00.50 to L.2.d.25.80 to L.2.c.6.9. Touch was obtained with elements of 142nd Brigade whose line continued North of the RAILWAY to L.2.a.0.5.

The 34th Battalion was in position by 9 p.m. The situation was quiet at 10 p.m. Our troops made a most gallant and determined stand. There was never a thought of withdrawing. Anticipating the likelihood of trouble on our left flank I issued instructions before the operation that any withdrawal or failure by the 47th Division was to be met with by forming a defensive flank and not by withdrawing.

NIGHT OF 7.
AUGUST 22ND
/23RD.

The whole front was continuously and thoroughly patrolled throughout the night, each Company sending out three officers' patrols. East of the GREEN Line the enemy was digging along the BRAY-MANSTEZ Road in L.9.b. 1.10.a. and L.4.c. Fire was opened on him with Lewis Guns and No.36 Rifle grenades, and work ceased. There was a great deal of movement in the hutments and dumps in L.10.a. Artillery fire was brought to bear on this area. Throughout the night there was much transport in BRAY and along the BRAY-CRYLON WOOD Road.

AUGUST 23RD:

Until 9.30 a.m. the enemy had been very quiet. At that time he opened a heavy bombardment on our forward positions, particularly on the BRAY-MANSTEZ Road. This fire continued till 12.45 p.m. At 10 a.m. the enemy was seen marching in the Valley in L.4.a. & c. and P.25.d. A platoon commander of the 22nd London Regiment thought fit to fire the S.O.S. Signal but our artillery did not see it. It is still a proud record of the 33rd Battalion that they have never fired the S.O.S. There was enemy movement too in HAPPY VALLEY. All our fire was concentrated on the enemy and the attack failed. When requested the artillery opened a heavy fire and helped very considerably to break

up the attack.

After this reverse the enemy infantry kept cover for the remainder of the day.

We were relieved by the 38th Battalion, A.I.F. The relief was complete at 3 a.m.

OUR
ARTILLERY:

9. The barrage was very ragged and inaccurate and inflicted heavy casualties on our troops. Although a margin of 300 yards was allowed at the opening of the barrage, several shells fell within 15 yards of the tape line and caused casualties. In the first five minutes our guns caused us 10 casualties. During the first prosecutive barrage one 4.5 shell fell 200 yards behind the BROWN Line 18 pounders, 4.5s and 6" howitzers continually fired short throughout the second day. Repeated requests were made to lengthen 500 yards or cease fire but without result. Shells consistently fell between our front and support lines.

We were more afraid of our own artillery than the enemy, and unfortunately we had reason, one of my Company Commanders, Captain T.W. FOLLIS was killed by one of our own shells.

All ranks are very emphatic in their depreciation of our artillery in this operation.

TRENCH MORTARS: Two trench mortars went forward with B.Co. 34th Battalion but only five rounds were taken to their final position. The personnel were then converted to infantry.

ENEMY
ARTILLERY:

10. Judging by his bombardments previous to zero the enemy evidently expected our attack. He did not bring down a barrage however until we were on the BROWN Line, when owing to the long halt there, his two observation balloons could easily direct the fire.

After the capture of the GREEN Line the enemy resorted to area shots. The GREEN Line escaped his shells.

The enemy's artillery was very much more active than ours after the capture of our final objective. He fired

chiefly 4.2s and 5.9 guns and howitzers and a few 77's.

Most of his batteries were in CEYLON WOOD.

One minenwerfer fired in to the CHALK PIT from L.4.a.6.6.

MACHINE
GUNS:

11. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on the work of our machine guns, particularly the section attached to the 33rd Battalion. Throughout they did most excellent work. Machine guns with the 35th Battalion rendered us the greatest assistance and very materially protected our flank.

Their fire was always accurate and well sustained and their co-operation immediate and whole-hearted.

COMMUNIC-
ATIONS:

12. Battalion Headquarters were established at K.18.a.3.7. at 9.30 p.m. on August 21st. Advanced Headquarters were established at 8 a.m. in the captured 124th Regimental Headquarters at L.8.e.1.6.

The following means of communication were employed:

Runner

Telephone

Pigeons

Message rockets.

In addition a Power Buzzer was installed at Battalion H.Q. and later moved to advanced H.Q. Another Power Buzzer was then installed at K.18.a.3.7.

The maintenance of lines was a most difficult and frequent task, but the linesmen displayed the greatest courage and devotion to duty. They are to be highly commended on their work.

The Message rockets were not altogether successful. Many were sent but few were received.

Seven pigeons were released; messages sent by this method were not acknowledged.

Once again tribute must be paid to the conspicuous gallantry, untiring energy, and cheerful willingness of the runners.

OUR AIRCRAFT: 13. Our planes were disappointingly inactive. They left the area too early. When needed they were missing. Several of our planes were uncertain of our position. Although flares were lighted in the Front Line. One plane continually flew along the Support Line calling for flares. Our planes brought up two boxes of S.A.A. It would have helped us considerably especially when the expenditure of S.A.A. was so great had they brought further supplies.

ENEMY AIRCRAFT: 14. Particularly during the morning of August 22nd enemy planes were very active. The "Red Circus" in one flight of 6 and another of 9, made themselves very objectionable. They flew very low, dropped bombs on us and fired the machine guns at us. Undoubtedly the enemy had the air superiority on the 22nd.

At 3 p.m. on the 22nd No. 470, L/Cpl. W.R. Jamieson, a Lewis Gunner, fired a rifle at a low flying enemy plane and brought it down. The pilot, an officer, was acting as observer, and the observer, a corporal, as the pilot. The bullet wounded the Corporal in the foot and struck the engine. On landing both occupants tried to get away but Major C.E.W. BRODZIAN, O.C. B. Co. and No. 1880, Sgt. J.K. McLaughlan rushed forward and captured them. The officer expressed very great surprise at being shot down in this manner.

CAPTURES: 15. The 33rd Battalion captured
 13 Officers 300 other ranks.
 1 aeroplane.
 5 4.2 howitzers.
 1 .77 mm gun.
 2 light minenwerfers.
 16 machine guns.

The guns were captured by us in the Southern end of HAPPY VALLEY and in the CHALK PIT. As they were in the 47th Divisional area we are not submitting claims for them.

TRANSPORT: 16. Hot meals were prepared in the quarry at K.23.b.C.1. and brought forward in limbers at 10 p.m. on the 22nd. Liberal supplies of water and hot tea were also taken forward. The limbers went right up to the Front Line. The food was hot and plentiful and thoroughly appreciated by the men. 20,000 rounds of S.A.A. were also taken forward to the Front Line by our Transport. This saved carrying parties: our strength was low and the men tired. The Transport Section is to be highly commended for their splendid work. The getting forward of these supplies was a big factor in our successful defence.

MEDICAL: 17. The R.A.P. was established near Battalion H.Q. at K.10.a.3.7. The wounded had to be attended to in the open. Prisoners were used to evacuate our wounded. But as most of our casualties occurred during the advance to the GREEN Line and most of our prisoners were captured before reaching the BROWN Line, a great amount of heavy work fell to the regimental stretcher bearers. The R.A.P. was much too far from the GREEN Line but there was no sufficiently safe or suitable place forward. An R.A.P. was in the process of construction at L.8.a.15.15. when we were relieved. There was a delay in obtaining dressings and stretchers from the Motor Relay Post. This was due to the dump of stretchers being destroyed by shell fire and to the fact that after carrying down to the Motor Post prisoners did not return to the R.A.P. - thus stretchers were not returned.

There was a satisfactory supply of water and cafe-au-lait. The work of the stretcher bearers and of the A.A.M.C. details was exceedingly well carried out. Stretcher bearers had a hard and dangerous task but they faced it unflinchingly, and never spared themselves.

CASUALTIES:

	Officers.	Other Ranks.
18. (i) Killed in Action.	2	15.
Wounded.	7	90.
Missing.	-	4.
	9	117.

Most of the wounds were slight. 2 officers & 4 other ranks remained on duty. (ii) Compared with the losses we inflicted on the enemy our casualties were very light. Apart from the 300 prisoners we captured we killed at least 100 Germans. The reason for this large number is that the enemy machine gunners who ceased fire to surrender on our rushing them, were shown no mercy. The casualties inflicted by us during the counter attack must have been very heavy. No estimate can be formed.

- REMARKS: 19. (i) The barrage was too slow. When the enemy is not in strong earthworks the rate could be much faster.
- (ii) The long protective barrage on the BROWN Line was not appreciated. Quicker lifts would have helped us there.
- (iii) The protective barrage on our final objective was too short. Had any difficulty been encountered during the second stage, and the barrage lost, the capture of the GREEN Line might have been very difficult.
- (iv) I suggest that signals to lengthen range be issued to infantry. Our experience in these recent operations lead us to believe that either batteries had no O.P.S or that the O.P.S were not efficiently manned.
- (v) A special S.O.S. signal is necessary for daytime. It is almost impossible to see the present S.O.S. by day.
- (vi) Planes when firing signals to show that a counter-attack is forming should be extremely careful to fire in the direction of the attack. One plane merely flew round and fired the signals in any direction.
- (vii) Although several pigeon messages were sent none were acknowledged. When sending a message by a pigeon one understands that it will be transmitted to the addressee.
- (viii) With organisation and careful preparation message rockets should prove highly successful. I strongly recommend that a coloured light be used by day. The present white light does not attract attention.
- (ix) ROCKETS: In many cases the Brock lighter easily breaks and the striker is often missing. In an attack a rocket cannot be tenderly treated.
- (x) Bombs should be detonated before being delivered from Brigade H.Q.
- (xi) Captured weapons, S.A.A. and material should be fully utilised. German telephones and wire proved of great use.
- (xii) The change in colour of the rings on our aeroplanes has not been fully promulgated. The units on our left flank knew nothing about the different marking.
- (xiii) The wearing of enemy clothes or headgear in action should not be allowed. Even if a man loses his steel helmet he should not wear a German one.
- (xiv) The extra water bottle was a great boon.

Shrothead Lieut-Colonel.
Commanding 33rd Battalion,
A.I.F.

DISTRIBUTION.

Copies Nos. 1 and 2. to 9th Inf. Bde.H.Q.
3. to C.O.
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10. to File.
11-13. to War Diary.

C.O.25/8/1.

33RD BATTALION, A.I.F.

TO ACCOMPANY REPORT ON OPERATIONS OF AUGUST
22ND/24TH, 1918.

To Para 7 add.

The Adjutant of the 15th London Regiment reported to me at 11.50 p.m. that two companies of his Battalion were digging in from L.8.central to L.2.c.5.7. I told him that I thought much better use could be made of them by covering our junction with the 142nd Brigade. He returned to his C.O. and informed him of this. Four hours later he reported to me together with a Company Commander and informed me that his C.O. had placed his remaining two companies at my disposal, one to be used as I thought fit and the other to be kept in reserve. There was no time to dig in, so I ordered the Company Commander to immediately get in position under the terrace from L.1.d.9.8. to L.2.c.0.5. and instructed him to reinforce the Divisional junction in case of a counter-attack; that he was to act quickly and not to await further orders from me. The reserve company took up a position under the terrace in L.8.a.

The action of this Battalion Commander in placing his command at my disposal was certainly a generous one.

Notes.

7 Aug. 1918. Order of 85th Res. Inf. Bde (German) 200 marks to be paid to Cpl. Rademacher, L/Cpl Muller, and Gendr Sonderman, 213rd RIR for bringing in 2 prisoners of the 18th English Divn.

35th Battalion, BRAY.

Col. White in his Hqrs at Etinhem on the day of the fight NE of Bray, on return from the line, told us:-

The Germans put down at 3.45am a solid barrage on the whole area, fortunately mostly behind the J.O. line. The troops were lying out at the time, but only one platoon was wiped out on the ~~xxxxxx~~ J.O. line. One instantaneous fuse got amongst them and wiped out a sergeant and about 10 men.

They got away very well. The German barrage slackened 5 to 10 mins before zero, but they got their barrage going again within 2 minutes of ours opening. The German shortened his barrage but didn't pick up our line till it halted, on the brown line. Abt 20 mins before they left the brown line the German was onto them again. From on top it is dead level to Bray. The only incident on the way to the brown line was in a small copse in L14B1;4;. The German had a machine gun Hqrs and telephone station and deep dugouts there. They fought there and our line was held for a time but the flanks got on and mopped it out. 50 to 60 prisoners came from these dugouts. 2 L.T. Ms were there - it had been the German support position. "It is the first occasion on which I have ever seen box latrines in a German position and real sanitation", said White, "and a dugout fit to live in without our having to have it thoroughly cleaned first. There were not many casualties in the 35th. In the copse, there were several casualties. None occurred after that till we got on to the ridge overlooking Bray. The Germans then gassed the valley running from 14 A and B with tear and sneezing gas. They quickly shortened their barrage (5.9 all the time) and followed us very quickly. One battery could be seen on the left but they ceased before we reached the green line. He searched the area very effectively. We had to have gas helmets on for half an hour.

M.G fire began about then and livened up from Bray and the ridges N.E of Bray. It was not enough to be annoying and at fairly long range except from Bray. ~~xxxxxx~~ But as our artillery died away the German mgs livened up and made it difficult getting about. Lt Ades was too keen and got out too far (and was killed) We dug in on the railway - the military line in 9D- and patrolled out to where we could get a look round the back of BRAY. But M.Gs and ~~xxxxxx~~ a L.T.M. ~~of~~ which in 2 shots killed or wounded a whole L.G post, made it impossible to get round the far side. If we had been prepared to lose men we could have got round but it would have required a special operation. There must be a mg in some of the bldgs in order to reach some of the country which their shots are reaching - possibly one in the church - you cannot reach the right front company at present for this reason.

We were in touch with the 3rd Pioneers on the right and the 33rd on the left the whole of the way. The pioneers did very well, ~~xxxxxx~~ where they are on their objective in linking up.

We got a lot of prisoners in a quarry. I was visiting our left company at the time and we had to go across beyond this quarry to them. As we did so a number of Germans there began to get away. 6 got away - but we got 30 (the colonel and his orderly apparently did this). The Germans fought with bombs and rifles in the prisoners cage. But ~~the~~ our men fired a smoke bomb onto it and the Germans went for their lives. They would probably be afraid of our men getting on top of them through the smoke.

The cavalry went through the Tommies, but there must have been a tremendous lot of guns up on the ridge. 15

horses galloped out of Bray without riders - 5 went along the Bray Corbie road. I fancy these were led horses that had been stampeded. Probably they were the horses of dismounted cavalrymen. M.Gs burst out in the rear when the cavalry went throug (I suppose this means towards the German rear). We got on to three of these mgs. One was in the cemetery. You could see the steam from his gun and we got a L.G onto them and kept them quiet.

The gas took the dash out of the men. The smoke was very thick in that valley. The rate of barrge was 100 yds in 4 minutes. This was very slow for our men, and the hours halt much too long (-n.b the British had to move much further and we had to swing slowly with them). White only got the order to exploit at 12.30, (midnight night of attack) The barrage was timed for 2.15. and as the comp anies had to be in position an hour before zero this left 45 mins - no time really to arrange the exploitation. White had asked specially about exploitation before, and was told No - it wd not be allowed. It wd have meant a scrap, as it turned out; but had we organised for it he thinks Bray cd have been taken in our stride. We cd have rushed the guns which were firing on our objective. But as it was the men had been told they were for a certain objective and that they were to dig in there; And when you have once told them that, and they have got it thoroughly into their heads, it is hard to get them to move on the spur of the moment.

One German mg was knocked out by a L.G.bullet. there were abt 120 prisoners and 40 - say 200 probably for this battalion. Abt 60 Germans were ded in their old positions (take this with caution - may be true , may not). We are 100 to 150 yds ahead of our objve. 5 or 6 tanks were knocked out. White asked permis sion to establish his Hqrs forward - and was given it. But it had just been withdrawn when we saw him, and he had been ordered back to his old Hqs above Etinhem. He said that the old Hqrs with its single sheet of iron overhead and well registered by the Germans was far more dangerous. But that nights C/attack showed that perhaps there was some reason in the order. T he attack was just beginning as we walked back from Whites hqrs.

A.N.

HOW A BRAVE OFFICER FELL.

Mr Hy. F. Dench, of Burke Road, Camberwell, has received a letter of sympathy from Brig: Gen: W. Ramsay McNicoll of the 10th Brigade, Victoria, and giving details of how Captain Harold Dench, C.O. of the 38th Battalion (Bendigo) met his death. The following is an extract from the letter:-

"As a Company Commander he had a most responsible position, and the manner in which he handled his Company and behaved in most difficult circumstances, drew high praise from his Commanding Officer, who was, unfortunately, killed a few days later. Your son fell a few hours after one of the most successful operations which has been undertaken by this Brigade. An important town on the SOMME had just been captured, and he and his Company were given the post of honour - the guarding of the left flank - to protect the town. It was a difficult and dangerous position, but largely owing to Harold's work and fine example the position was consolidated and held under very heavy fire and against determined counter-attacks. He was killed instantly by a sniper whilst rallying men, not Australians, on his flank, who, having lost their officers, were giving way. It was a most gallant action on his part, for he had to stand and direct them in the open under heavy fire, but he succeeded in rallying them before he was hit, and this act alone was of the greatest service to the Brigade - and indeed to the whole Australian Corps" *(Bray)*

Lt: Col: Murrey also writes to say:- "The Battalion has been fighting continuously since August 8th, and up to the time of his death your son was in no small degree responsible for the splendid things that now stand to the credit of the Battalion. He had no fear whatever, and the example of courage and resourcefulness that he set to his Company was simply invaluable."

P. T. O.

(continued)

(2).

Captain Peters, O.C. "C" Coy., writes conveying sympathy on behalf of the men, N.C.O's, and Officers:-

"Harold was known for his cool courage, initiative, and thoroughness. He was a grand leader, one who will be a big loss to our dear old 38th. You would like to hear the story of his death, I am sure, for it is a very noble story indeed.

"On August the 24th "C" Coy was holding a line in front of the BRAY & MORLANCOURT ROAD, during the early stages of our Advance Guard operations near the SOMME. "C" Coy's H.Q. were in a chalk pit off a sunken road. Some troops on our flanks (not Australians) became disorganised and commenced to come back. Captain Dench made heroic efforts to rally them, and it was on his second trip to the flank that he was killed by a M.G. or sniper's bullet. At the same time Lieut: Barker who was with him was severely wounded."

Lieut: Martin writes:- "The Brigade captured an important town, BRAY, on the morning of the 24th August, and then consolidated a line on its eastern side, which was subjected to very heavy shelling and some determined counter-attacks by the enemy. The 38th was on the left, and Harold and his Company were given the post of honour - the guarding of the left flank - for we were very doubtful of the troops on our left, who were not Australians. Every officer and man in the Battalion says that from the moment the advance began Harold did wonderful work, and that his disregard of danger and personal example had much to do with the way the men kept to their work of consolidation under very trying conditions. During one of the enemy attacks the troops on the left broke, and Harold rushed out in the open under extremely heavy fire and succeeded in stopping the rot, and getting most of them in with his own Company. It was a daring and fine action on his part, but just as he had rallied them a sniper hit him and he died instantly."

*Harold mentioned in Dispatches by Sir
Douglas Haig for "Gallant & meritorious
services"*

"TEDDY THE RAIDER"

TRIBUTE TO LIEUT. CRANSWICK

A MEMORY OF DREAFFUL DAYS.

Mr. J. Moore-Robinson, of Hobart, writes:—

A tribute to the memory of a brave soldier, "Teddy the Raider," or, as announced, Lieut. T. G. Cranswick, M.C., D.C.M. The whole of the old 40th will mourn his loss. He was a soldier to his finger-tips, bold if impetuous, brave almost to carelessness, and ever concerned with two objects, the first, victory, the second, welfare of his mates. He earned his nickname early because whenever a raid was organised he was there, and if he was not in one raid he was sure to be found in another one at the same time. No point of soldiering appealed to him more than prowling about in "No Man's Land," either by himself or with a patrol or raiding party, shrouded by the darkness of night, camouflaged so far as sound was concerned by the shrieking of shells overhead, the bursting of "whiz-bangs" before and behind and the shrill whistle of machine guns bullets sweeping parapets, alike of friend and foe. In these circumstances Cranswick was at home. He asked no man to dare what he dared not himself.

When Major Giblin, commanding D Company, was wounded shortly after the attack developed at Bray, "Teddy the Raider" took command, and I remember him at daylight on the following morning, when Bray was ours, surveying the flotsam and jetsam, human and inanimate, in our rear, and the rising ground before us, behind which Fritz lay sheltered. Still in command, he took us through Hem, through an awful night in a stinking drain between Hem and Clery, down the exposed old trench, from there towards Clery Copse, in which Jack Loone made his final sacrifice, and on the following day, August 30, 1918, in an attack on Clery Copse. It was here he received the wound which caused his death, and of a truth no words can describe the foolishness of that attack.

An unknown number of Germans, subsequently found to total nearly 1000, were well "dug in" in the Copse. D Company alone, 75 strong, under Cranswick and "Snowy" Mahoney, crept across the valley and up the C.T. into the wood. It was bright daylight, early afternoon. No barrage lent its assistance. Of course, the inevitable happened. Fritz let us into his first position, and machine gunned us almost to death. "Teddy the Raider" got a machine gun burst in his right arm within 50 yards of the furthest point we raided, and Fritz was using flat nosed bullets. I still have one of them. The gun I was on and another one were the furthest out in front of Cranswick.

Of six men on my gun, I alone escaped unscathed. The others were killed, excepting Pickett, who was given up for dead. Mahoney came to where my gun was, and as he stood up got one through his tin hat fairly in the centre of his forehead. And in trying to get his body out Kay Masterman was made prisoner. A quarter of an hour afterwards Fritz rushed our position, and, having removed our wounded, the few remnants of D Company made the run of their lives to behind our line held by the 38th. Next morning under a barrage, the whole 10th Brigade went over. Somewhere in the vicinity of 270 prisoners were captured from that copse, hundreds lay dead about it after our attack, and who can say how many escaped? And against this force 75 men of D Company were sent, some of them to their death. And all this was under the fire of German guns directed from that coign of vantage, which Fritz deemed impregnable, the famous Mont St. Quentin.

Such were the circumstances in which, through some kind of want of direction, the Empire lost many of her brave sons, and which opened up the track measured not by miles, but by two years and two months down which Thurstan Cranswick strove to the portals of the Great Beyond Vale, "Teddy, Raider."

30 Aug 1940

Death of a War Hero

LIEUT. T. G. CRANSWICK, M.C., D.C.M.

A distinguished soldier, who by his indomitable pluck had won the esteem of his associates in the face of death, two decorations for valour, and his commission in the Australian Imperial Force, passed away at Hornsey Hospital at 2 o'clock yesterday morning, in the person of Lieut. Thurston George Cranswick, M.C., D.C.M. He had been under treatment for over two years for a severe wound received in action, necessitating a serious operation a few days ago, to which he succumbed.

The late Mr. Cranswick, whose parents reside at Stanley, was educated at the High School (before its amalgamation with the Grammar School), after which he served on the staff of the Commercial Bank of Tasmania in the Zeehan branch. From this position he enlisted in the army, leaving Tasmania as a corporal and original member of the Fortieth Battalion, in company with his younger brother Jack, on July 2, 1916. His brother had served on Gallipoli in the Twelfth Battalion, and was one of the first batch of returned men, afterwards being transferred to the Fortieth Battalion with the rank of company-sergeant-major.

On arrival on the battlefield the late Mr. Cranswick lost no time in displaying his manhood, volunteering in many raids, and fulfilling his duties in a manner which attracted the admiration of his superior officers. During a raid on the enemy at Houplines, a suburb of Armentieres, where the "Fighting Fortieth" received their baptism of fire, his brother, who that day received his commission, was mortally wounded, and a few days afterwards Thurston was promoted to sergeant. As platoon sergeant in charge of No. 13 platoon he established his mastery over the tactics of the enemy in the battle of Messines. His platoon were allotted the ticklish task of dislodging a desperate body of the enemy from Sneitchel Farm, on the Douve River, about a mile and a half from the demolished town of Messines. For his brilliant and courageous behaviour on this occasion the young soldier was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

While the battalion was undergoing recreation training a few weeks later at the Douve camp, which is situated at the foot of the famous Kemmel Hill, Mr. Cranswick received his commission, a promotion which was noted with eminent satisfaction by his platoon, and all of his other comrades, with whom he always remained a "cobber."

During the months which followed sanguinary and desperate fighting occurred at intervals, and the gallant soldier continued to display his remarkable adaptability to the fighting game. Where the nerve of other brave fighters who had borne the brunt along with him began to grow "shaky," his nerve seemed to assume more of that iron quality which symbolises Australian grit.

A break in his immediate attachment to the Fortieth occurred when he was detailed off to an English brigade as instructor to the Imperial troops in scouting and raiding. His work under the new conditions called forth the unstinted admiration of the English brigadier, who specially commended him. The English soldiers, too, learned to regard him with the deepest respect, not only for his striking personality, but also for his actual association with them in their precarious undertakings in No-Man's Land in the course of his instructions.

The late Lieut. Cranswick's return to the Fortieth some weeks later was hailed in the battalion with general satisfaction, partly because of the steady influence his example afforded in particularly dangerous "stunts."

For his excellent services in some stiff fighting at Berlin Wood, near the famous "Clery Copse," in August, 1918, the gallant soldier was awarded the Military Cross. It was with chagrin that the men learned of his serious wound in the left elbow in that "scrap." Lieut. Cranswick was sent to hospital in "Blighty," where he lingered for many months, slowly recovering. One night he nearly lost his life through turning on to his injured arm in his sleep, the resultant loss of blood all but causing his death. However, he happily recovered sufficiently to be sent home to Tasmania, and once on his native soil made more rapid progress towards convalescence. While at Hornsey Hospital he became so well that he assumed official duties, but recently a serious operation on his wound became necessary, resulting in his lamented death.

In both his boyhood and his military career, during which the writer has had personal intimacy with him, the late Mr. Cranswick showed himself to have been a most desirable associate. His unselfishness and excellent character won him many friends. He was also a rather capable pianist, and was of service on occasions in battalion concerts in France. In Mr. Cranswick Tasmania has lost one of its heroes, of whom it might well have been proud.

The funeral will leave Hornsey Hospital at 3 p.m. to-day for Carr Villa Cemetery, and it is understood that the authorities are arranging a military one. Members of the Fortieth Battalion Association and the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League will take part. Lieut.-Colonel Lord, D.S.O., V.D., yesterday telegraphed Captain J. D. W. Chisholm, V.D., requesting him to arrange for a wreath from the former association to be forwarded.

B e s o n d e r e A n o r d n u n g e n .
.....

- 1.) G.O. Die Truppenteile, Lager- und Ortskommandanturen haben sofort in den Unterkunftsorten und Bivakplätzen Gasalarmgeräte in ausreichender Zahl anzubringen. Es dürfen nur Geräte, die geschlagen werden, verwandt werden.
Die Gasalarmgeräte sind durch Schilder mit der Aufschrift „Gasalarm“ kenntlich zu machen.
- 2.) G.O. In den Bereich jeder Lager- bzw. Ortskommandantur ist ein Reizraum einzurichten, der durch ein Schild zu bezeichnen ist.
- 3.) IIb. Oel und Fette pp. für M.G. können von den Truppen in kleinen Mengen beim Umladekommando der Division (Sgt. Grunert) in Peronne, Friedhofstr. 22 empfangen werden.

Für die Richtigkeit:

Schäfer

gez. H a v e n s t e i n .

Hauptmann u. 2. Genstbs. Offizier.

Verteilungsplan wie bisher.

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ADDRESS :-
"ATQOM," NLS, NUBRINCEITE GULFEL
KTIJEG IN SEFTON, 2/10/18
CARKER, BRTAFSE ERNESS CHARTER H. (NO. 224: JAFU BERTATION)

September 1, 1933

Battle of Chuignes

(By Lieut.-Col. H. G. Viney, C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O.)

PART II.

In consequence of this mishap the number of carrying tanks available for the use of the 1st Div. in the Battle of Chuignes was seven, whereas the infantry brigade commanders were strongly of opinion that they could not do with less than one per battalion. As all three brigades were to be actively engaged in the fight, this meant that we would need at least 12. This was pointed out to corps headquarters and a request made for five more carrying tanks. The reply was that we had been allotted all the corps had at its disposal, and that no more could be obtained. A strong hint was also given us to be careful with those we had, as both the Tanks Corps and the Fourth Army were a little peeved at the loss of those allotted to the 4th and 5th Divs. for the attack on August 8.

We were thus faced with the problem of how to make seven tanks do the work of twelve, and at the same time deliver their loads to the troops within reasonable time of their having reached their objectives. The solution was comparatively simple (viewing the problem purely theoretically)—make two trips with the tanks—but when one attempted to put it into practice it did not appear quite so easy. In the first place, the carrying tanks had not been specially built for the job, but were simply early model tanks from which the guns had been removed. Although their engines had been overhauled and were in good condition, they were still comparatively slow, and one could not count on them averaging more than three miles an hour. Their radius of action, therefore, was limited, and the division was at the time a day's march from the front line, and as yet unaware of the exact date of the attack.

There were, however, one or two things in our favour, the chief of which was the presence of a fair metalled road running parallel to our front line between us and the Boche. Another was that a carrying tank could carry approximately about three tons of supplies, the same weight as the heavy lorries of the divisional supply column. The third point in our favour was that, although the 1st Aust. Div. Supply Column was in reality a part of corps troops and under the direct control of corps headquarters, it had been detached with us during the time we had been in the Hazebrouck area under the 15th Corps (from April to July, 1918), and there was consequently an excellent understanding between its officers and men and the Administrative Staff Officers at divisional headquarters. Finally, the lieutenant in charge of our carrying tanks was very "fed-up" regarding what had happened to the tanks allotted to the 4th and 5th Divs., and was keen on making a success of the present operations.

After due consideration, involving a number of time and space calculations, such as the distances the tanks would have to travel and the time available to them, it was decided that it would be possible for the tanks to make two trips provided they had not have to come back further than our present front line to pick up their second load. The presence of the metalled road parallel to our front line made this possible, for that road could quickly be repaired sufficiently to make it passable for motor lorries. It could also be reached from the main Peronne-Villers-Bretonneux road, provided steps were taken to bridge the trenches running across the latter as soon as the attack opened.

It was our intention to load the tanks (two of which were allotted to each of the 1st and 2nd Bdes., and three to the 3rd Bde.), and work them up to within two miles of the front line two nights before the attack was due to take place. It so happened that there was a convenient valley in which they could lie hidden during the day preceding the attack, provided they were well scattered and properly camouflaged. Then on the night preceding the attack they were to move for-

ward to cross our front line half-an-hour after the zero hour, and be guided by selected parties of infantry to the sites chosen for the battalion dumps in the captured positions. There they would be unloaded by the infantry accompanying them, who would then form the guards in charge of such dumps. The tanks would return immediately to the road near our front line, where another load and loading party would be waiting for each of them. They would then load up, guided by the second loading parties to fresh dumping sites, unload, and get back to their lying-up place of the day before, where fresh supplies of petrol and oil would be awaiting them, to enable them to be used as required or to return to their park.

The only "fly in the ointment" was that on applying to corps headquarters for permission to use seven lorries from the divisional supply column to carry up the second loads for the tanks and dump them on the cross-road in front of our lines, we met with a distinct refusal; and nothing we could say or do could alter that decision. The reason was that general headquarters, in view of the shortage of lorries and the difficulty of replacing them, had issued strict orders that no lorries were to be taken within a mile (or some such distance) of the front line; and the administrative staff at corps headquarters was not prepared to ignore that instruction. In fact, corps headquarters went so far as to issue a definite order to us that we were not to use any lorries for such a purpose.

Fortunately they did not instruct the divisional supply column that its lorries were not to be used. Consequently, when I went to Major Shierlaw, who commanded that unit, explained the whole position to him (including the corps order to us), and asked him how he could help us out of our difficulty, he said that if I would instruct him to detail seven lorries for detached duty at divisional headquarters for 24 hours on any specific date (without telling him why they were wanted), he would let me have them and not say anything to corps headquarters about it. That got over that difficulty.

There were other technical matters that had to be attended to, such as obtaining loading parties of an N.C.O. and eight men from each battalion and training them in the loading and unloading of tanks, so that no time would be lost on the morning of the attack. We got these men several days before the fight took place and billeted them with the tank crews with whom they had to work, so that they would get to know one another thoroughly. There were two infantry parties to each tank, as each had to carry stores for two battalions—for one unit on the first trip and for the other on the second. Each tank was given a different coloured flag to fly, and the infantry parties attached to it wore armbands of the same colour to enable the tank crews to recognise them easily.

It was also arranged that the second infantry loading party waiting on the cross-road with the second load for the tank should mark its dump with a flag of the same colour as its tank was flying. This would enable the tanks to find their second loads without waste of time.

It was also necessary to ascertain by experiment the most useful load for a tank and how it should be carried. The whole operation, once the general principles to be followed had been agreed upon, was placed under the personal direction of the D.A.Q.M.G. of the division (Major Kerr). He, in conjunction with the Tank Corps lieutenant and the infantry N.C.O.'s, worked out the loads for the tanks (taking care that everything the infantry battalions wanted was on each tank), and also a drill for loading and unloading them. Preparatory to loading a tank, the stores to be carried would be set out on the ground in a special order in two rows, with room for the tank to come in between them. Then on the word "Load," four men would mount the tank, two on each side, while the other four men, also two on each side, handed up the various articles to be loaded

ADDRESS :-
"ATQOM," NLS, NUBRINCEITE GULFEL
KTIJEG IN SEFTON, 2/1/18
CARKER, BRTAFSE ERNESS CHARTER H. (NO. 224: JAFU BERTATION)

NO 166019

KILLED IN ACTION 12/4/18
SERVING WITH PRINCE-OF-WALES BATTALION (NO. 2100: 4TH BATTALION)

NO 166019

DIED OF WOUNDS 22/8/18
SERVING WITH PRINCE-OF-WALES BATTALION (NO. 2100: 1ST BATTALION)

in the correct order. A similar procedure, except in the reverse order, was followed in unloading.

Once the correct load had been finally decided upon and the loading and unloading drill evolved, it was practised continuously both by day and night, each battalion party vying with the others to see which could do the task in the shortest time. The result was that at the end of two or three days a tank could be correctly loaded in the dark in a surprisingly brief period. A couple of lorries were borrowed from the divisional supply column, and loading and unloading them was also practised.

When we received word on August 21 that the attack was to take place on the morning of August 23, we were fully prepared. That afternoon the tanks were all loaded and provided with their identification flags and camouflage screens. The same night they moved to their place of assembly within a couple of miles of the front line, where they were camouflaged and lay "doggo" all next day. Accompanying them were the infantry parties from the battalions whose stores they were carrying on the first trip. Seven lorries were obtained from the divisional supply column on the afternoon of August 22 and loaded with the second load of stores for the tanks. These were retained under divisional control. Accompanying each lorry was the infantry party from the battalion whose stores it contained. Each such party carried with it ample supplies of thin rope for lashing the load on the tank, and a flag of its tank's distinguishing colour.

On the morning of the attack everything went like clockwork. The first loads were delivered without any hitch, and the tanks began to return to the cross-road for their second loads. On the way back one of the 1st Bde.'s tanks developed engine trouble and could not continue. This did not matter very much for the first three loads for the 3rd Bde. had been dumped close behind the 1st Bde.'s second objective, and would have been made available for it if necessary. This had been arranged between the two brigades concerned. The three tanks containing the second loads for the 3rd Bde. had the worst job, because they had to wait around behind the second objective until the 3rd Bde. advanced to carry out the third phase. As this necessitated them lying hidden in the Chuignes Valley for two or three hours, the lieutenant in charge of the section accompanied them on that trip.

Meanwhile two companies of the 1st Aust. Pnr. Bn. had gone over shortly after the attacking troops, and immediately started work—one on the cross-road and the other on the main road—to make them passable for lorries. At zero hour the lorries left their park at Corbie and proceeded up the Villers-Bretonneux-Peronne road, and by the time they arrived at our old front line found a clear road ahead of them. They swung left along the cross-road and dumped their loads and infantry parties in previously arranged spots where guides were waiting for them. That done, they returned to the divisional supply column, none of them, fortunately, having been hit, although there was a fair amount of long-distance-shelling of roads being done by the Boche.

The six tanks still in action picked up and delivered their second loads without any further accident, and then two of them towed their disabled comrade back to their place of assembly. The whole stunt proved highly successful, but we had not put all our eggs into one basket. Each brigade had received instructions from divisional headquarters that it was not to rely entirely upon the tanks doing the job, but was to organise a pack-horse train with a duplicate set of supplies, so that if the tanks failed the units would still get their stores. Fortunately the success of the tanks rendered the use of the pack trains unnecessary, although I believe that one brigade did get additional stores up by that means.

CABLES

CABLES

CABLES

CABLES

CABLES

CABLES

CABLES

CABLES

CABLES

ADDRESS : - 12 BOYDIA STREET, GUILFON
"MOTHER" Mrs. JOSEPH V. GUILFON

KILLED IN ACTION 22/1/18
SERVING WITH PRINCE-OF-WALES BATTALION (NO. 1200: 22ND BATTALION)

Reveille

May 30, 1931

REV

Lost: A Digger's Escapade

It was after dark when we occupied advanced posts near Hereville Woods for the first time, and so hopelessly lost were we all that we had our backs to the enemy, instead of our fronts. On the third night we set out to take over posts. Major _____ was in the lead. The Major took a turn to the left. I knew he was wrong, so I told my platoon officer. "Go ahead and tell the Major," he commanded. "Get back to your place, and when I want directions I'll ask for them," was how the Major greeted my attempt to set him right. Another 10 minutes floundering about in the dark, and the Major sent for me. He appointed me guide, and we retraced our steps to the fork, then branched slightly to the right, and found our posts.

The penalty for my cleverness was that I had to escort the Major back to Hereville Woods. I did this easily, but in returning I reckoned I would take a short cut, proving that I wasn't so clever after all. Had I gone back to my own H.Q. I could have picked up the track without difficulty. But in my short-cut I miscalculated a lot, and hit a chalk pit instead of the old front line.

To make matters worse, a Fritz bomber dropped about ten grass cutters in and around the pit. This rattled me for a while, but when I pushed on again I still reckoned I could find one of the four posts by the short-cut. At last, when I considered that I was near one of the posts, I whistled softly, "Pretty Joey," but there was no answer. Another 50 yards on I whistled again: still no answer. The clouds had now blotted out the stars, and I was absolutely lost and nervy.



LONELY BUT FOR THE SHELLS!

I came to a trench. I knew there were several unoccupied trenches about, but when one's eyes, ears, and nerves are magnifying things it is not safe to trust them. Something moved in the trench! I got into a shell-hole and whistled again; no answer. I then sneaked off in the opposite direction, and found a road. It led me to a village. I saw a cigarette glow, and was glad, but my heart missed about five beats when someone spoke in German. I beat a quick retreat, stumbled into another small trench, and saw something ahead of me. I was too close to sneak off, so I promptly bayoneted it—a sheet of iron!

I stayed in that trench for a time, trying to collect my scattered thoughts. There was no firing from either side, so I had no means of picking up my bearings. I drew my bayonet across the corrugations on a sheet of iron to attract attention, and though no one fired, a cold shiver ran along my back when I thought that someone might come out to investigate. I got windy, and beat it. Then something moved again a few yards ahead of me. It was crawling off as I sprang at it and ripped at it with my bayonet—It was a bush!

I lay there exhausted and bewildered, praying for a shell to put me out of my misery. Then drizzling rain started to fall. I moved off, and slipped into a big shell-hole, and now thoroughly tired out, dropped off to sleep. It was broad daylight when I awoke. I poked up my head, had a quick look round, but had to bob down quickly as a stream of Lewis gun bullets buzzed about my ears. I held my tin hat on the point of my bayonet, hoping that the machine gunner would recognise it, but both Lewis gunner and Fritz blazed at it.

I sat tight after that until dark, and sneaked round the post, and got in all right. I was too pleased even to roar the Lewis gunner up for being such a fool as to shoot at me. The sergeant, an M.M. and Bar, told me cowardice was a bad thing in the army. Had it not been that the officer was a good sort, I would have been hauled up for my little piece of oratory to Mr. Sgt. I told him I won V.C.'s by the bucket—I bayoneted one Fritz and choked the life out of another, whereas he got his M.M.'s for being good-looking.

Anyway, what I told the sgt. about myself would have been right had the iron and the bush been Germans.—"2ND BN."

J.H.N.
—

REVEILLE

October 1, 1932

Largest Trophy: Aussie Capture

Referring to the 3rd Bn's capture in Arcy Wood, on the Somme, in August, 1918, of the 15-inch naval gun—"the largest single trophy secured during the war"—a writer in "The Rising Sun," of Adelaide, mentions that the then Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) was anxious to have the gun taken to Australia.

Before he abandoned the gun, the enemy had blown off the barrel, which was 70 feet long. The gun, with its carriage, platform, and concrete foundations, weighed more than 500 tons. It had a range of more than 24 miles, and its shell weighed nearly a ton. A double line of railway several miles in length had been specially built to the site in order to instal the gun, and for the transport of its ammunition. The gun was electrically trained and elevated, and the machinery for handling its shells and for loading it was electrically operated.

The gun was ready for firing the first week in June, 1918, and fired continuously for about three weeks, its maximum firing capacity being about 30 rounds a day. Towards the end of June the original gun was worn out and it was replaced by the evening of August 7—the night before our attack. It started firing again on the early morning of August 8 and fired 35 shells in all. Early next morning, as the gun was then within range of our heavy artillery, the crew removed everything that could be removed, and about 9 o'clock the gun was blown up.

As to the wish of Mr. Hughes to have the gun taken to Australia as a trophy of war, it was reported by experts that it would be necessary to have special railway cranes brought from England to lift it, and special trucks to carry it. The cost of transport was estimated at some thousands of pounds, and the corps commander (General Hobbs) would not accept the responsibility for this expenditure. While Mr. Hughes was emphatic that the gun must be sent to Australia he would not put his demand in writing or authorise the necessary expenditure. Eventually, on the suggestion of Capt. Kemsley, of the administrative branch of corps h'qrs., the gun was fenced in, and the site presented to the City of Amiens as a monument to the part the Australian Corps had played in the defence.

ground was of a very rough nature, and the work was often delayed because of obstructions in the form of large boulders. It happened that these boulders were

which enemy shell-fire was ever afterwards measured in the
 A.I.V. subsequent experience being described as "better (or
 worse) than Pozieres". No village in the parts of the Somme
 area afterwards known to the Australians - not even Grandcourt
 - was so completely erased by shell-fire. Strangers who
 visited the battle field during the following years were much
 impressed by the ruins of Le Sars and Hiers, whose wreckage
 could be seen, but not by Pozieres, the reason being that at
 Pozieres no ruins above-ground remained, not even enough for
 marking the spot which was the site of most of the German
 villages. In places where an open meadow, and the
 visitor passed through it without suspecting that a village had
 ever existed there.

Reveille June 1935

The Proyart Gun

The 3rd Battalion History, recently published, gives the credit to 5208, Pte. J. N. Doughty as being the first Digger to reach the mammoth gun near Proyart, which had been destroyed by the enemy just previous to the arrival of the Australians, during the August (1918) offensive.

That statement about Doughty is incorrect. I was the first man to reach the gun, and received a stab in the arm—the scar I still carry—from a German officer who was hiding in one of the little rooms adjacent to the gun. Doughty came along after I had despatched this German.

When we came out of the stunt, Capt. Bean called on the Bn., and its C.O. (Col. Moore) sent for me and told me that as the Bn. on our right had claimed the gun he wanted me to give Capt. Bean my impressions of the stunt.

I did not mind so much my name being omitted from the Honour Roll—I received the M.M. at Proyart—but I still claim to be the first Digger to reach the gun.—J. T. CONMEE, c/o. J. D. Crawford, Moss Vale (N.S.W.).

Thesis Pat Kitchington's brother

(signed as Conmee)

More "worse than Pozieres" was usually a hyperbole. More intense bombardments were indeed suffered - e.g. by the 11th Battalion at Balfcourt - but never any approaching in duration those of Pozieres.

See Vol. XII, plates 231, 242.

Ginny had possibly received as much shell-fire, mainly of course, from the British guns; but its construction was probably more solid than that of Pozieres, so that more trees remained. The slight which most impressed Australians on the Somme was Deville Wood, in which the tangle of trunks prevented the work of salvage and burial, and the battlefield remained for many months almost as the struggles of July 1916 had left it.

The 34th Division was sent back to the line after loss nearly as great, but two of its brigades had been replaced by those of the 37th Division.

Cpl. A.G. Thomas (No. 3470; 6th Bn.) Killed in action, 8 June 1918.

Lt. S. O. Mitchell 1st Bn.

says that reference to capture by 3rd Bn
of German 14 inch naval gun at Pozard
on 23 Aug 1918 is incorrect.

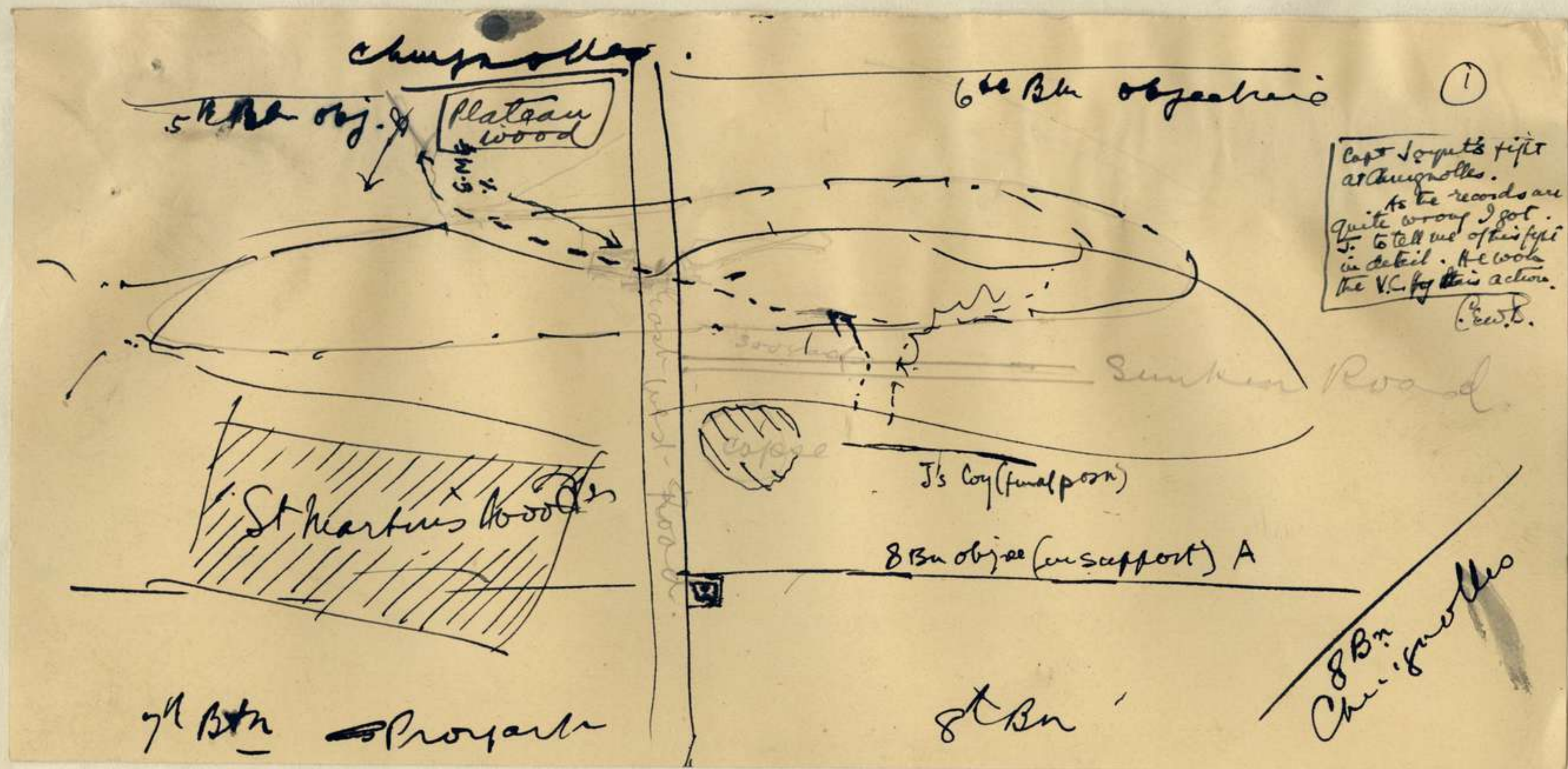
This platoon (No. 5 of "B" Coy) was the
first to reach it, the 3rd Bn leaping
through ~~the~~ his bar abt half an hour
later

1935

475, Forest Rd

Penshurst,

NSW,



②

Bentley Road Lane

||| |||

||| |||

J. The
P.M. C. D. R.

(all to dig in) (3)
I of A saw 5 Bn coming back (attracted by lot of firing from
that direction). to l. of E. West Rd (Peronne Rd). I went across
to batman (Newman) - as he moved the 8 Bn saw him. Said
to his CSM that he was just going forward - going up to see
what was happening. At Copse he found a lot of G's & arms
who hadn't surrendered - not then fighting. At Saubert Rd
a Coy of 6 Bn under a new ofr were sitting down inst.
of getting on to objec. They had lost all their senior ofrs
The 6th seemed to be on their objec on rt, but not left.
This showed why rt of 5 was coming back. I "kicked them
over" There was 300 yds of flat to cross. ofr sd "how

Shall I go": J. sd "anyhow! — by rushes of 25 yds." (4)
There was a gallant serpt. of 6th doing all he could.
He sd — "go on — you've got to get over." J. had no
intention of going on — they began to get into bullets
& then ran. They disappeared into the fog &
didn't come up / other side. J. sd: Look here
Newman, we'll have to go on & gripes them up again.
He sd then see 4 / Gs were sending up rfts along rd
& holding Plateau wood & / steep bank in front
of it. A m.f. had held up / leg of 6 & scuttled

their other officers. J. went forward w batman Pa (5)
tank appeared going up. Everything opened on it
& J & N. turned to rt, found an old French Lt
led them into the ^{steep} valley. They got into dead ground
There was terrific fire from Plat wd. In hollow J. found
2 Scotsmen in kilts (from the 1st Divn). 6th had stopped
higher on rt, in cover. J got $\frac{1}{2}$ way across gorge
& heavy fire from l. was terrific (Newman had by then been
wd in neck w sheep). While he was there deliberating up
the gorge from rt came M'Ginn (of J's Coy) w 15 men of

his go plu. [While I was waiting he had heard a 6
L.G. on rt blazing away when suddenly it ceased
& at same time J. fire ceased. The Austins were
yelling out "we've got him!" In J's plu L.G. had
got up & had shot the f. M.G. Joynt joined M.J. &
the 15 men - & they went across the road Northwards

Under / edge of / bank was a f. C.C.S. w 2 Doctors
who cd speak Engl. They sd they wd stay there & look
after 1 Austin wd as well as their own. Abt 50
Js were sent back from here. They then went forward

x found more resistance coming from Plateau wood. (7)
Realising this, I went back for left of 6th Bn, & met
Capt. ^{H.F.} Darby on the E-W. Road. J. sd. to D. "If
you take these men up on S. of Rd & ^{from summit} bring them to bear
on the Plateau wood, I will work round w. M'G
& the 15 men & rush 1 wood from the N.W. Later
J. heard firing (D. was seen & went off in fine style -
J. sd "don't open fire for a quarter ^{so as to give us time to get them;} of an hour; then
fire like blazes, & stop suddenly & we'll rush them!"
Going round N.W. corner w. McQueen, I found

an old trench (also the G. M. gunner dead beside his (8)
gun w a great pile of ammⁿ & one n. gr. & 2 arties) Along 1 of ^{many} were deep
dugouts & f. priors in them all, who put up
no fight. At this time M. G., Toget & another were
going up 1 trench alone having left 1 rest behind.
They reached one dugout - cd hear f^r down there - shouted
to them but they wdnt come up. Had none of own
bombs but took some f. bombs wh were lying abt
& threw a number down - but not one went off.
They were wondering abt the reason when they heard

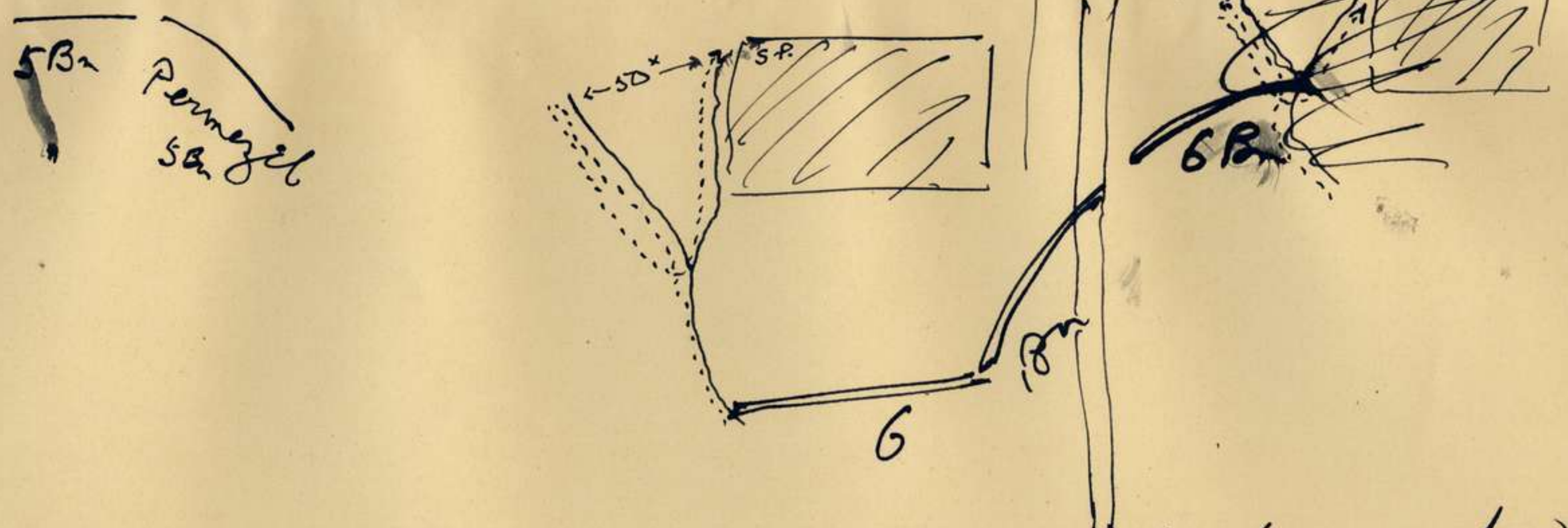
a rush & down 1 trench came 20 ft w
rifles at the high post. J. ^{aimed} dropped his revolver
instantly & the leading Hun dropped his rifle
& held his hands up, & all 1 rest folded suit.
(J. & ply were feeling their way up 1 trench cautiously)
The 15 men following behind them went through
1 ft for watches - one digger had 6. ^{was} J. got one of
these & 10 mins afterwards put his hand in pocket
& found it smashed by a bullet wh he hadn't
noticed. J. then took the ply on to NW corner

Wood (detour prisos had be shoo-ed back) 10
w a couple of men to see
them part o' way.

The trench stopped abt 50 yds from wood. J. was
puzzling what to do, & cd see more of coming
up to rifle those who were holding (edge o' /
wood. The 27 broke into a V + the 15 were scattered
over 30-40 yds. J. called a halt to plan his attack;
5 mins (probly) passed, when a red headed digger
sd "Let's rush the bloody thing." J sd. no - fear. J. had

to order them not to as he knew there was a (11)
G. unit in the wood. I worked back up the other
branch of the V & found it led up to wood; so
he went back & brought 1 man up 1 2 - a
very plucky chap going first: at one corner there
were 2 Gs w a unit & they knew whoever went
round first wd get the unit. However for
some reason the Gs broke - There was a shout "They're
running" & the plty went on after them. The

So had to on / edge / wood in a S.P.



Troop rushed this S.P. abt 20 yds (no losses so far)
The S.P. had been firing on the 5th. When I rushed it

There was a daylight & out of 1 daylight came 12 ft w hands ¹³
up, surrendering.

As soon as they had cleared the ~~SP~~ Joynt
went into the wood & found, 10 yds in front of the M.G.
~~The~~ ^a sergeant of the 6 Bn. No man of his bn was
within 150 or 200 yds.

I went at once across to Permyzel
& told him of his position betw. 5th & 6th.

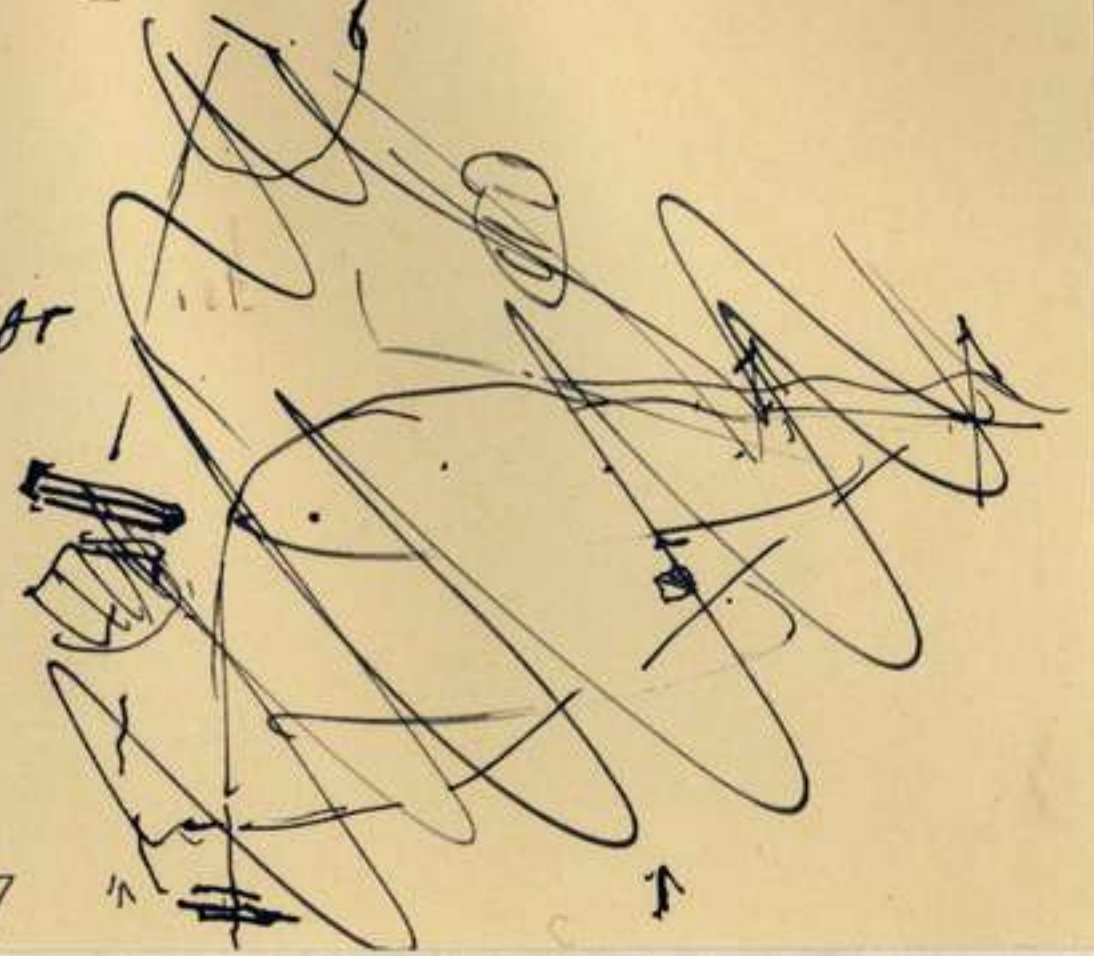
Two days later the whole line went forward.
Or rather 8 Bn went on, 5 Bn didn't - J. got $\frac{1}{2}$ mile out

is no one on flank. He went out to reconnoitre
& while looking round was hit by a fragment of 5.9
in the thigh. The f. was shelling here heavily.

On Aug 23

~~was~~ I establ'd a line E of Plateau wd
(after reaching the wood) - Establ'd a
line E of the wood in an SW 27 (1500 own & abt
50 of 6 Bn).

J. returned abt 8.30 to his own Bunk Q (after calling
on 6 Bn) & found his ^{Capt. Conroy} ~~captain~~ (Findley) had been K. J. had to
move his ^{pos} ~~plot~~ up a bit & was heavily fired on by



Is in Herleville wood. A party of some 200 fs. being brought¹⁵
in as prisoners by 3 or 4 Scots was here mercilessly fired
on by the f. Sn. guns & cut to bits.

J. took his Coy farther back; & was then ordered
E of Plateau wood (the place wh he had capt'd,) w his Coy.
He remained there reporting to the C.O. of the 8th.
Two days later rest of 8 ret'd the 6th.

+

H. N. Aug 22. 1918.

Carrie:— ^{letter} Monach 22. 8. 18. on leaving 4 army.

"There are no tps who have given us as loyal & effective
suppt as I Austlins and I am sure I speak for all cdms when
I say th we wd like to finish 1 war fighty side by side
w you."

August 1, 1938

REVEILLE

13

MERICOURT

AUGUST 22, 1918

August 22, 1918, will be long remembered by Diggers of the 21st Machine Gun Company.

The company left the billets at Hamel about 10.15 p.m. on the 21st, and marched about ten miles through Vaire-sous-Corbie, Hamel, Cerisy, Morcourt, and arrived at Mericourt about 2.30 a.m. on the 22nd.

After the long march the troops were ready for a rest, and camped in holes along the hillside overlooking the main road and the river Somme. The transport section and mules were located in the quarry, near a sunken road at the end of the village.

When we awoke later in the morning, we found the hill alive with 18-pounders, and directly in front of us were Fritz's observation balloons.

Our guns were giving Fritz a bad time, but we soon found the balloons had spotted our transport, for, when the mules were taken to the river for a drink, enemy shells began to come over. The first shell landed about fifty yards beyond our sleeping places and we were showered with dirt. The next fell just near a mob of artillery horses, as they were trotting along the road. After that the shells came in showers; one fell on the road directly in front of a motor transport full of troops and the vehicle ran into the hole made by the shell, and it was some time before it could be placed on the road again.

Some of the shells fell close to us and some in the river Somme, so we hurriedly vacated our positions and went into the village to shelter among the ruins. The shells dropped close to where the transport limbers and mules were, and some of the buildings near us were hit.

The situation was becoming desperate and we were chased all over the village. During the afternoon the shelling was transferred to the river, as Fritz had probably observed the mules being taken for water. We decided to shift to the sunken road just outside the village, as the shells were continuously passing over our heads and bursting in the ruins of the village.

About 6 p.m. the machine gun sections were preparing to take up their positions for the big attack in the morning, and just as No. 3 section had assembled in the quarry a 12-inch shell landed there, near where some of the men had been resting, and burst over the 30 men comprising the section. Pieces of shell, chalk and stones were thrown over them.

Three men were killed outright and 17 were wounded, three of whom died later in hospital. Only ten men were left in the section, which had to be reinforced to complete the required number.

This occurrence upset everyone, and no one felt up to the task required of him the next morning. The sunken road was like a dressing station, men lying about covered in blood, having their wounds dressed. Some had legs and arms off, and face and chest wounds.

The three men killed were Privates Pat Harrington, Campbell and Robinson, and they were buried the next day in the cemetery at Morcourt. Pat Harrington was the life of the section; he had enlisted in the 8th Reinforcements of the 1st Pioneer Bn., and was camped with me

in the Sydney Showground, and we sailed together in the *Anchises*. He came from the Northern Rivers of N.S.W.

During the evening we moved to a new position at the other end of the village, and just as the transport left the quarry another big shell landed there, and the debris completely covered the dead men.

The transport returned to Morcourt early next morning, and we were only a few hundred yards behind the front line at Mericourt. A day or two later we went to Cerisy Valley.—3609 Pte. E. J. INGHAM, 21st M.G. Coy., A.I.F., 2 Lyton, Stuart Ave., Manly.

Aug 23 1918. Proyart. from LT Dollery, 12Bn.

H.N. 1 ~~33~~

The 12th did not begin really to attack until they passed through the 1st who had got up onto Froissy Beacon. Part of the 1st had got away to the left there, and had apparently left Germans on the heights immediately opposite ?Chuignes ?Chuignolles who fired heavily on the 12th as they came down into the valley to attack - cutting about the wheatfield through which they were passing so-that they had to creep on their stomachs with the m.gs cutting the blades above them. The German shrapnel was badly burst immediately overhead and just failed to lengthen sufficiently.

Then the 12th pushed thro the 1st Dollery was next to Tulloch of the 11th and they went more or less together. The Germans were beaten and were fairly ready to run back. Dollery pushed on over the open top of the ridge until he came to the Bois Carre or near it, almost to the edge of Olympia Wood. His men had some shots at the German gunteams which were racing off with guns from Olympia Wood, and over the next rise. At 1100 yds he does not think his L.Gunners hit any, Major Foster, who was with the Bn that day was due for his Anzac leave. He was an officer who had been much tried, but he had come back to the unit after wounds, and asked to go into the fight of the 23rd. Just as he was leading his men out from Froissy Beacon he was shot through the head, by mg or sniper. Lt. ?L..... carrying a bomb with a pin out was hit, and fell, and the bomb exploding killed him.

There were no troops for 100 yds to the left of the 12th.

Section rushes (to whistle) were used at Froissy.

Aug 25th. On Aug 25th, owing to the advance of the 3rd Div it was thought that the 1st Div might push on and capture or cut off Germans who were in a pocket formed by Olympia Wood, Cappy etc. Accordingly the 12th and 9th (?any others) were ordered to advance. There was no barrage and they were to start at 3pm. (?) Dollery was ordered first to see that the quarry near Olympia wood was clear of Germans so that they could not be enfiladed. This he did "fairly easily" and afterwards went on into Olympia Wood.

Something went wrong with the 9th and they did not advance for two hours after the 12th. The 12th had to go over the top, and they did so in one continuous advance - not by section rushes. The Germans had as usual a picked type of machinegunner in his rearguard posts and they cut the 12th about terribly. It was a hopeless advance, and the losses were pitifully heavy.

When the 11th came up the party under Dollery was having to be withdrawn from Olympia Wd, and the 11th taking ~~xxx~~ them for Germans fired on them. That night the Germans retired from the positions which the 12th failed to reach.

Material for Australian Press.
.....

Gallant Action.
.....

16th Battalion, War Diary.
.....

August 23rd 1918.
.....

Acts of Record

" The Battalion objectives was attained practically without resistance, but in connecting with the Battalions on the flanks particularly that on the left, violent opposition was encountered, the enemy fighting with machine guns and bombs.

The whole of this fighting ~~des~~olved upon "D" Company which was commanded by Lieut. L.D. McCarthy. This officer took one platoon of about 10 men, and bombed COURTINETRENCH and FOCH ALLEY - a communication trench leading into COURTINETRENCH with the intention of connecting up with the Lancashire Fusiliers.

It soon became evident to this party that the Lancashire Fusiliers had not won all the ground allotted to them. The enemy still had the trench strongly garrisoned, and he indicated that he intended to put up a fight. For about two hours the attack in this quarter see-sawed between victory and defeat, a particularly violent encounter raged at the junction of FOCH ALLEY and COURTINETRENCH. Here the Boche had a strongly occupied position supported by three machine guns. When close enough to assault this stronghold, Lieut. McCarthy had only three men including himself available to carry on the fight. Accompanied by a runner he rushed over the top and sought shelter in a shell hole, from where he placed the three hostile guns out of action in as many minutes. The first enemy gun was only a few feet away, but its gunner was shot dead with a revolver without becoming aware of presence of Lieut. McCarthy.

The second gun was bombed into silence and the crew of the third despatched by bombs and revolver shots. By this time Lieut. McCarthy was working alone, his runner having been wounded. He continued to make progress along COURTINETRENCH picking up German bombs as he went, and at S.7.a.7.3. suddenly came on two German officers and a garrison. ? D

One officer a Company Commander was shot dead, and the second placed the second out of action seriously wounded. Lieut. McCarthy then proceeded to bomb the rest of the garrison, but directly they learned that their officers had fallen they "KAMERADED".

The closing episode of this brilliant piece of single handed fighting which owed its success to the amazing audacity of Lieut. McCarthy was an amusing one.

The enemy closed in on Lieut. McCarthy from all sides, wrenched from his hands the bombs with which he was attacking them, and patted him on the back.

In 20 minutes Lieut. McCarthy had killed 20 Germans, taken 50 prisoners, and had captured a fair proportion of the

Headquarters
3rd Australian Division.

HEADQUARTERS
NINTH INFANTRY BRIGADE

8 SEP. 1918

B. M. No. 33/259/11
A. I. F.

W. C. E. W. Bean

Reference your G.401/1/58 of 2nd instant.

I have to report on operations for 26th to 31st August 1918 as follows:

FIRST PHASE, 26th August
To 2.0 a.m. 29th August.

On the 26th August the Brigade was in Divisional Reserve with Brigade H. Q. in valley K.32.b.5.2. and Battalions as follows (vicinity GRESSAIRE WOOD):-

33rd Battalion	K.22.
34th Battalion	K.17.
35th Battalion	K.23.

Units continued to rest and reorganize.

At 8.45 a.m. 27th August the Brigade was ordered to be prepared to send forward one Battalion to take over the line from 10th and 11th Aust. Inf. Bdes. that night; the line then ran from approximately A.29.central, through VAUX, along the Western bank of the River SOMME to G.23.b. Shortly afterwards confirming orders were received. Later in the day, owing to the English (174th Inf. Bde., 58th Division) on our left flank intending to carry out an attack on the morning of the 28th instant, the Brigade was ordered to take over the line, between the East and West grid line running through C.4.central and the East and West grid line running through A.22.d.0.0. 35th Battalion took over the front line; 34th Battalion moved up to support on the line C.4.a.5.2. (North of VAUX WOOD) to Copse K in A.27.c.3.6., whilst 33rd Bn. moved to bivouac in C.2. and C.3. At 1 p.m. 27th August Brigade H. Q. closed at K.32.b.5.2. and reopened at the same hour at L.4.d.2.7. North of BRAY.

The Brigade was ordered to clear the FARENY WOOD area of the enemy and advance through CURLU to a line approximately North and South through A.30.b.central. The operation was to be carried out in co-operation with the 8th Londons (174th Inf. Bde., 58th Division) on our left and 10th Aust. Inf. Bde. on our right.

Our plan was as follows:- Northern Brigade boundary - A.22.d.0.0. - A.23.d.0.0. - A.24.c.0.0. - CURLU CHAPEL to B.26.central. Southern Brigade boundary - A.30.e.5.0. - B.25.d.0.0. 10th Aust. Inf. Bde. (38th Bn.) was ordered to co-operate on our right by moving through CURLU after the village had been cleared of the enemy, then to prolong the line of this Brigade to the South as far as the River SOMME. The artillery start line ran North and South through A.29.central. The 35th Battalion (Lieut. Colonel E.F. WHITE, D.S.O.) was entrusted with the operation. After zero the 34th Bn. moved up to the position held by the 35th Bn. prior to zero, and the 33rd Bn. to the position vacated by the 34th Bn.

The objectives chosen were:

- (a) Green Line: Trench system running Northward from the Eastern end of CHAPEAU de GENDARME to A.29.b.9.4. central to A.24.c.2.0. - to be captured under a creeping artillery barrage.
- (b) Red Line: Approximately North and South through A.30.b.cent. - to be captured by exploitation after capture of Green Line.

Forming-up was complete at 4 a.m., the formation adopted being 2 Companies in front line, each on a frontage of 2 Platoons; 1 Company in close support in line of Section columns; and 1 Company in reserve with each of its Platoons in a diamond-shaped formation (each Section forming a point of the diamond).

At zero hour (4.55 a.m.) our artillery opened and remained on the artillery start line for 10 minutes before commencing to creep Eastward at the rate of 100 yards per 5 minutes. Upon reaching the Green Line, the artillery protective barrage remained 300 yards East of it for 30 minutes before ceasing.

The advance commenced well, although two Company Commanders were wounded shortly after our barrage opened. Messages were received at 35th Battalion H. Q. at 6.10 a.m. and 6.15 a.m. reporting the capture of the Green Line at 5.50 a.m., in the face of determined resistance put up by enemy machine gun posts. We suffered a few casualties through our men being over-eager to advance and thus going into our own artillery barrage. The 8th London Regiment did not start. However, at 7.50 a.m., at the instigation of Lt.-Col. White, the C.O. 8th Londons succeeded in moving his men on to the Green Line. This was reported by 174th Inf. Bde. on our left at 8.25 a.m.

By this time our patrols had reached the Red Line by exploitation. The Londons then pushed out patrols which proceeded only as far as the road running through the CRUCIFIX (A.30.b.6.8.) to A.24.d.0.0. Meanwhile, since zero plus 3 minutes, the enemy had maintained a heavy area shoot with guns and howitzers of all calibres over the whole area of advance, ^{up to and slightly in advance} of the Green Line. (Rate of enemy fire: about 150 rounds per minute scattered over the attacking Battalion's area).

During the morning (after 8.30 a.m.) our artillery bombarded SUMMIT COPSE, OBSERVATION WOOD, and QUARRY in H.2.a.&c. as being likely enemy centres of resistance, and observation posts. 174th Inf. Bde. concurrently arranged to bombard BATTERY COPSE in B.20.a.&c.

Our artillery barrage, in conformity with the barrage of the English troops, was far too slow, holding up our advance, giving the enemy a chance of escaping or organizing to meet an attack, and allowing his artillery observers to appreciate the situation. It is realized, however, that our barrage had to conform to that of the English. The protective barrage was too shallow, allowing the enemy to organize behind it. Consequently, our patrols met very stubborn resistance from machine gun nests and strong points which were overcome by the utmost dash and determination. Our left flank was unfortunately never secure.

At 11.30 a.m. 1 Company 3rd Aust. Pioneer Battalion was attached to the Brigade for work on the repair of bridges across the SOMME River in A.29. and G 4, 5, and 6.

By mid-day dispositions were: 34th and 33rd Bns. in Support and Reserve respectively; 35th Bn. in line, with 3 Companies in the outpost (Red) Line, and 1 Company in Reserve in the Green Line. Posts had been established by the 35th Bn. at the following points:

Outpost line:	G 6.b.50.15.
B.25.c.20.10.	A.30.d.80.30.
A.30.d.60.50.	A.30.b.50.10.
A.30.b.60.50.	A.30.b.30.80.
Support line:	A.30.a.55.70.
A.30.a.69.35.	A.29.b.90.30.
A.29.d.70.90.	A.29.b.90.70.

Six enemy machine guns were used in the consolidation of the support line.

35th Battalion H. Q.	was established at	A.28.a.6.5.
R. A. P.	"	" A.28.a.8.3.
Bn. O. P.	"	" A.28.a.6.3.

At 2.15 p.m. 174th Inf. Bde. informed me that they would be relieved by the 175th Inf. Bde. during the night and had no intention of advancing any further.

During the attack communication was maintained from Brigade H. Q. to Battalions by message-carrying rocket, pigeon, runner, and at 1.10 p.m. by telephone. Visual was tried but without success owing to the mist and dust caused by the opposing artilleries. From Battalion H. Q. to Companies a visual chain was established to the Green Line by 6.30 a.m., telephone to the Support Company by 7.45 a.m., and to two of the front-line Companies at 2 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. respectively. The maintenance of telephone lines was particularly difficult owing to

hostile artillery activity.

At 3 p.m. 35th Battalion H. Q. moved to A.28.b.6.8.

Later on in the day several unsuccessful attempts were made to push out a post to the OLD QUARRY in G.6.b., but hostile machine gun fire was too heavy.

At 6 p.m. the 38th Bn. (10th Aust. Inf. Bde.) pushed through south of the 35th Bn., linking up at QUARRY in B.25.c. and at outpost at G.6.b.5.1. 38th Bn. then rushed the enemy post at OLD QUARRY G.6.b.9.6.

At 3 p.m. Brigade H. Q. closed at L.4.d.2.7. and reopened at the same hour at COPSE VALLEY, A.26.b.5.3.

Early in the afternoon the idea of pushing the 34th Bn. through the 35th Bn. had been entertained but was dismissed owing to the splendid facilities for observation offered to the enemy. Any movement, however, small, provoked immediate and active enemy artillery fire. It was therefore decided to await nightfall and then to relieve the 35th Bn. with the 34th Bn., the 33rd Bn. moving up into support in A.29.a. The relief was delayed by an artillery shoot on trenches in A.24.d. for the English infantry; this necessitated the withdrawal of our posts in A.30.b. from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. Relief was complete by 1.50 a.m. 29th August, when 35th Bn. moved to G.1.b., arriving at 4 a.m.

35th Battalion casualties for this phase of the operation were

	Officers	Other ranks	Total.
Killed	-	10	10.
Wounded	8	30	38
Missing	-	-	-
			<u>48.</u>

Total captures:

Machine guns (Heavy and Light) 11
Prisoners: About 100 all ranks.

Second Phase, 2 a.m. 29th

August to 7.50 pm. 29th August

During relief of 35th Battalion by

34th Battalion (Major W.A. LeR. FRY)

strong patrols were pushed out by the latter to gain contact with the enemy who was extremely active with machine guns from the vicinity of CANTHARIDES TRENCH, CURLU CHAPEL in B.25.a. & d.

At 5 a.m. patrols were pushed out in conjunction with 38th Bn. on the right. Slight opposition was met, the enemy apparently having taken advantage of the hours of darkness to effect a partial withdrawal. Our line was therefore advanced to SAUVE ALLEY through SUMMIT COPSE to Road C.B.25.d.9.3. by about 7 a.m. The 10th London Regt. (175th Inf. Bde., 58th Division) did not conform, so a defensive flank facing N.E. had to be formed on our left approximately along road B.25.d.9.3. through B.25.a. to CURLU CHAPEL and the CRUCIFIX in A.30.b. C.O. 10th London Regt. was requested at 8 a.m. to bring forward his right flank but did not do so until afternoon.

Early in the afternoon Light Horse patrols were sent forward to reconnoitre HILL 110, returning about 1.30 p.m. with the information that they had been fired on by machine guns from HILL 110 and vicinity.

34th Bn. was ordered at 2 p.m. to move at once on to a line approximately North and South through HILL 110.

At 3.50 p.m. a strong point was established at B.26.b.95.00. to ensure the safety of the left flank, and at 4.5 p.m. the line advanced together with 10th Aust. Inf. Bde. (38th Bn.) on right and 175th Inf. Bde. (10th Londons) on left.

Our dispositions at this time were as follows:
34th Bn. - 2 Coys. in firing line, 1 Coy. left flank defence, 1 Coy. support, one Coy. (33rd Bn.) in Battalion Reserve; 33rd Bn. (less 1 Coy.) was in support to 34th Bn., whilst 35th Bn. remained in Brigade Reserve. At 3 pm. 29th Aug. Bde. H.Q. closed at VALLEY COPSE A.26.b.5.3 & reopened at same hour at CURLU H.1.d.2.2.
Throughout the advance severe enemy shelling was encountered principally from 5.9s. and 4.2s. Hostile machine gun fire

P. T. O.

was also extremely troublesome from the trench system in B.28.d., GLANDS ALLEY, TERLINE TRENCH, HILL 110, FRYART AVENUE, COPSE 5 and WOOD 22 (in B.22.b.).

At 5.40 p.m. the objective was reached and a line established from H.5.b.0.9. to B.23.d.0.3. Posts were established at B.26.b.9.0., H.3.a.3.8., H.4.a.0.1., B.28.a.4.2., B.23.d.0.3. and H.5.b.0.9.

At 6.15 p.m. our new front line was shelled with 77's whilst guns and Howitzers of large calibre shelled the area West of HILL 110 to FARGNY MILL.

34th Battalion H.Q. now established at B.28.d.6.4.

The result of this operation was 75 prisoners and 6 machine guns captured and 30 or 40 enemy killed. Our casualties - 1 Officer and 6 other ranks wounded.

The advance for the day was on a front of 1,000 to 1,500 yards to a depth of about 4,500 yards.

In the meantime the English troops on our left were held up in the vicinity of B.22.a.&c. and at 7.50 pm. the 40th Battalion A.I.F. placed two Companies on our left flank to cover the gap between the Londons and ourselves.

THIRD PHASE, 7.50 p.m. 29th August to 1 a.m. 31st August.

At 9 p.m. 29th August G.O.C. 10th Aust. Inf. Bde. explained details of an advance to be carried out by 9th and 10th Aust. Inf. Bdes. in conjunction that night. G.O.C. 10th Aust. Inf. Bde. was responsible for co-ordinating the advance. The scheme was as follows: 34th Bn. to continue the advance silently in conjunction with 10th Aust. Inf. Bde. on our right. Objectives: First objective (RED Line) running from B.24.c.7.3. to B.30.d.99.20. to H.12.b.5.7. Second objective (GREEN Line) running from S.W. corner MARRIÈRES, C.19.c.1.5. to junction of WARY ALLEY and BERLINGOATS TRENCH, North of ROAD WOOD, C.25.a.6.8., thence South along trench through ROAD WOOD, through VAN TRENCH I.1.c. to I.7.a.99.60.

Northern Divisional boundary - straight line through B.28.central, C.19.central; Southern Divisional boundary - River SOMME. Inter-brigade boundary - trench running East and West through B.29.d., B.30.c.&d. and C.25.c. (ACARIÈS ALLEY). Second Australian Division to conform by passing troops across the River SOMME to OMMIECOURT-les-CLERY and CLERY-sur-SOMME, thence South-Eastward to the right of the 10th Aust. Inf. Bde. Zero hour, at which the infantry advance would commence, 2.30 a.m. 30th August. Orders to this effect were issued verbally to 34th Battalion at 10.30 p.m.

The advance began at 2.30 a.m. 30th August, according to plan, the first objective (RED Line) being reached at 4 a.m. with little opposition. The enemy was discovered, however, strongly posted on a North and South line I.1.a.4.0. to C.19.c.2.7; small nests of enemy machine guns and snipers were distributed along the whole of our front in readiness to oppose any further advance. The South-Western edge of ROAD WOOD in C.25.a. also contained many machine guns. 34th Battalion continued the advance against stiff opposition by the enemy. The

The English infantry on the left were held up, resulting in our left flank becoming more and more exposed as the advance continued.

"A" Squadron 13th A.L.H. was ordered at daybreak to reconnoitre HILL 150 in B.18.b. to establish an observation post there and to report on movement of both enemy and our troops including the 10th Londons. This work was carried out very successfully and the required information was passed back to Brigade H.Q. promptly.

At 6.30 a.m. 34th Bn. reached the line C.25.c. 60.25. to C.25.a.40.70. and commenced consolidation slightly short of the second objective (Green Line). A strong point was consolidated at the intersection of trenches in B.30.d.9.3; another strong point was constructed at B.24.d.6.7. played havoc with the enemy on the Western edge of MARRIERES WOOD and B.18.d. where many German dead were found the following day.

During the rest of the day (30th August) repeated attempts were made to gain the final objective and the trench running North and South through ROAD WOOD in C.25.c. They were not successful. It was not possible to reach the front line by daylight and any movement of our most advanced troops attracted enemy machine gun and rifle fire from the higher slopes of the spur in C.25. For this reason it was not feasible to carry out a bombardment of the nearest enemy points of resistance in ROAD WOOD. Our artillery had been active against enemy machine guns in vicinity of MARRIERES WOOD and on any target which presented itself. A Forward Observing Officer of the 8th A.E.A. Brigade in B.30.d. was particularly useful in this manner as numerous targets presented themselves during the day.

Throughout the operations described in this report, the observations of Artillery Observing Officers were reported promptly to Group Artillery H.Q. (Lieut.-Colonel W.G. ALLESOP, D.S.O., V.D.) who kept me well informed.

The day was marked by enemy artillery conducting systematic area shoots in rear of our front line. The English troops on our left flank were constantly engaged by machine gun fire, much of which was possibly indirect fire from the ground East of MARRIERES WOOD. Their advance was thus held up. Earlier in the day the Light Horse patrols, furnished by 2 Troops, had reported enemy machine guns firing from B.17.central Southwards causing casualties West of HILL 110 although our line ran through C.25.a. The activity of these patrols well out on our left flank undoubtedly prevented the enemy from using close range enfilade fire against our flank. By mid-day an observation post has been established on HILL 150 and Squares B.23., B.24. and B.17. are reported clear of the enemy.

The net result of this operation was an advance on a frontage from 1,000 to 1,500 yards to a depth of 1,500 yards. Four machine guns were captured and 20 prisoners taken.

Our casualties - 2 officers and 12 other ranks killed, 1 officer and 37 other ranks wounded, and 12 other ranks missing.

It was now decided to await the hours of darkness before attempting a further advance. During the progress of this attack 35th Battalion had been brought up to A.29.a., and 33rd Bn. to B.26.d. 42nd Battalion (11th Aust. Inf. Bde.), which had been attached to this Brigade, moved to B.25.c. One Company 33rd Bn. still remained at the tactical disposal of C.O. 34th Battalion.

FOURTH PHASE, 1 a.m. 31st August to 4 a.m. 1st Sept

The situation at the commencement of this phase was as follows:

34th Bn. on the line C.25.c.60.35. to C.25.a.40.70. with strong points at B.30.d.90.30. and B.24.d.60.70. One Company 33rd Bn. (attached 34th Bn.) in close support at B.30.d.1.1. approx. (along road). 33rd Bn. (less 1 Coy. attached 34th Bn.) had two Companies in trench system B.26.d. and one Company in TERLINE TRENCH in B.29.b.

During the afternoon of 31st August the Brigade was allotted objectives by Divisional H.Q. involving the capture of the

owing to proximity of our own men to the enemy.

high ground in C.20. and C.21.a. & c. which was to form a pivot of manoeuvre for the further advance of the Division. 33rd Battalion (Lieut.-Colonel L.J. MORSHEAD, D.S.O.) was detailed to carry out the attack. One Company 42nd Bn. was attached to 33rd Bn. but this Company was to be used only in emergency. The objective of 33rd Bn. was as follows: Line C.14.c.7.6.- C.20.a.8.7.- C.25.b.7.6.- C.25.b.25.15. On the capture of this, a pivot of manoeuvre was to be formed to allow subsequent exploitation by the 10th Aust. Inf. Bde; this was to be done by establishing posts at C.20.b.4.5., C.21.a.0.3. C.21.c.4.9., C.20.d.8.4., C.20.d.3.1., C.20.b.40.15., C.20.c.2.8. C.20.c.8.5. - a salient. Owing to the 58th Division on our left arranging a plan which would have held up our attack, the whole scheme had to be altered in detail, and arrangements were not therefore completed and orders issued to 33rd Bn. until 2.45 a.m. The 175th Inf. Bde. on the left had refused to alter their plans in order to fit in with the original arrangements which had been given to them through our Liaison Officer.

The plan of attack adopted and carried out was as follows:

- Northern Brigade boundary: East and West line through B.24.d.8.2.
- Southern Brigade boundary: East and West line through B.30.central.
- Objective under barrage: Road running N.W. and S.E. through C.20.d., C.26.b.
- Objective by exploitation: High ground in C.20., C.21. and C.26.
- Artillery start line: North and South line through B.30.b.8.2. Rate of barrage - 100 yards in 6 minutes, resting in line North and South through C.25.central for 15 minutes, thence at 100 yards per 3 minutes.
- Zero hour: 5.42 a.m. (Zero hour for the 58th Division was 5.10 a.m. on a start line 300 yards in rear of ours).

The approach march and assembly were carried out under heavy enemy artillery and machine gun fire.

Prior to the opening of the artillery barrage 34th Bn. was withdrawn to B.30.c. in rear of the infantry forming-up line.

On the opening of our barrage at 5.42 a.m. 33rd Bn. moved forward under an accurate barrage and closed up to about 100 yards from it. A most determined resistance was offered by enemy at the outset in ROAD WOOD which was very strongly garrisoned and which was full of machine guns. Although suffering heavy casualties, the line continued to advance until held up at 6.20 a.m. by machine gun fire from the edge of the wood at C.25.a.4.3; this was finally overcome by one man who alone captured the gun and eight prisoners. The advance then continued against the most determined and bitter resistance from ROAD WOOD. Two days later 120 dead Germans were counted in the wood alone. The valley between ROAD and MARRIERES WOODS was only thinly garrisoned but was well covered by artillery and machine gun fire. ROAD WOOD was cleared by 7 a.m. and then strong resistance was met in C.25.b. and in C.26.a. Our bombs at this point proved most effective, causing the enemy numerous casualties. Deep dugouts again proved death-traps to the enemy; the occupants were either killed or wounded. Whilst the trenches in this vicinity were being cleared a battery of six 77's were placed right in the open and without any concealment was firing over open sights from C.26.b. West of RANCOURT-FEULLAUCOURT Road. A few of the enemy infantry rallied at the battery which was subsequently charged and captured though fighting to the last under hot fire from our Lewis Guns. As our advance continued both flanks became exposed, the Londons on the left remaining just East of MARRIERES WOOD. The RANCOURT-FEULLAUCOURT Road was reached at 9 a.m. The OLD QUARRY in C.20.b. & d. was captured and a Lewis Gun post established at C.20.b. 6.0. Seventy-five men of the Londons were placed in the quarry and vicinity as a garrison. The RANCOURT-FEULLAUCOURT Road in C.26.b. was reached at 9.30 a.m. 10th Aust. Inf. Bde. was at this time fighting in the GASSAUD-LA FAYE system in I.1.a. and I.2.a.

At 9.25 a.m. 33rd Bn. was ordered to carry out the plan of exploiting C.21.d. and C.27., whereupon the attached Company of 42nd Bn. was ordered forward to the right flank 33rd Bn. Patrols preceded the advance and immediately came under heavy machine gun fire from QUARRY FARM (C.21.c.) and the trench systems in C.21.c. and C.27.a. also heavy shelling from batteries in the valley in C.28.b. & d. One patrol succeeded in reaching C.21.c.35.80. but was greatly outnumbered and compelled to withdraw. Other patrols reached the three parallel trenches in C.27.a. but it was impossible to continue owing to heavy frontal and enfilade machine gun fire. 33rd Bn. followed the patrols and established the line C.21.b.75.00. - C.20.d.85.35. - C.20.d.98.10. - C.26.b.89.32. Further advance became impossible owing to lack of numbers, heavy machine gun fire and insecurity of flanks. Most of our S.A.A. and bombs had been expended and the supply of ammunition was extremely difficult. Fortunately 12,000 rounds S.A.A. were found in a dugout at C.25.d.2.8., evidently stored there during the retreat in March 1918. By freely using enemy machine guns and rifles our supply of ammunition was conserved considerably.

During the fourth phase in the period under review "A" Squadron 13th A.L.H. Regiment rendered valuable assistance in keeping me informed of the situation of my left flank. They were not able to operate, however, forward of the infantry on my own front as was hoped. One Troop was attached to the 33rd Bn. and one was allotted the special task of moving North of MARIERES WOOD in order to gain information about BOUCHAVESNES and that vicinity and if possible to move North of the village, then South through C.15.a. & c. to join up with our infantry somewhere in the vicinity of QUARRY FARM in C.21.c. This latter task they were unable to fully accomplish as the English infantry had halted on the general line B.6.central - C.13.b.9.9. opposed by strong enemy forces. At nightfall the Squadron was withdrawn to Brigade Reserve in B.26.c.

On the afternoon of 31st instant 42nd Bn., which had been attached to the Brigade for purposes of this operation for use in the case of emergency, was ordered to move up in rear of 33rd Bn. to C.20.c. and if possible to push forward to the high ground in C.21. This was not, however, accomplished owing to the 33rd Bn. being held up, and 42nd Bn. was therefore held in readiness in C.20.c.

The 34th Bn. had meanwhile been ordered forward to C.25. and 35th Bn. to B.30.b. when orders came for the relief of the Brigade by 11th Aust. Inf. Bde. who carried out an attack the following morning.

The relief was carried out in the following manner:

The 11th A.I. Bde. assembled on the infantry forming-up line West of the RANCOURT-FEJILLAUCOURT Road which was the start line for the artillery creeping barrage for the attack on the morning of the 1st September. Patrols were then sent forward by 11th A.I. Bde. to keep contact with the front line and withdraw all infantry East of the forming-up line. The forming-up was therefore covered by a protective infantry screen which was fully withdrawn prior to zero.

The relief was complete by 4 a.m. 1st Sept. when the Brigade (less 35th Bn.) was withdrawn to the area North of SUZANNE. 42nd Bn. reverted to the command of G.O.C. 11th Aust. Inf. Bde., whilst 35th Bn. came under his command in support in rear of his right flank. Upon relief Brigade H.Q. moved to CURLU, H.1.a.2.2.

The fighting described in the foregoing paragraphs was probably as fierce and bitter as any which the Brigade has yet been engaged in, the casualties of the 33rd Battalion alone during the fourth phase being as follows:

	Officers	Other ranks
Killed in action	3	21
Wounded	4	98
Missing		2
TOTAL	7	121.

Captures by 33rd Battalion for the fourth phase are:

- 600 prisoners
- 100 machine guns
- seven 77mm. guns
- 5 Light Minenwerfers
- 1 Medium Minenwerfer
- 1 field kitchen.

I shall submit separately a list of names of Officers and other ranks whom I desire to bring specially to your notice for work carried out between 26th and 31st August 1918.

Lessons learnt during these operations will form the subject of a separate communication.

J. E. O'Dea

Brig.-Gen.
Commanding 9th Australian Infantry Brigade.

Brigade H. Q.
8.9.1918.

[Faint, mostly illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

Killed in action	
18	
89	
2	
109	

(apparently expanded after the war)

EXTRACTS FROM the diary of Private J.E. Bartley (No. 2280;
30th Battalion, A.I.F.)

(Bartley had been absent from the battalion for four months,
the result of a wound received on 13/4/18)

Only those who have experienced it can possibly know the sensation of going back to France after a Blighty leave. It is a kind of sinking feeling that grips a man which makes him realise the seriousness of his venture, and he realises to the fullest measure the risks he is about to take. But once in action that feeling vanished. It was the thoughts of such a trip, and not actually the trip itself, and once on the way the mind found plenty of food to "get busy on", and all thought of a thousand dangers was forgotten in the excitement of the moment.

The draft left Folkestone and crossed over the Channel to Boulogne, and after a train journey in those trucks once again the men stayed for a couple of days in dugouts in a wood.....After a while the men entrained once again, and detrained at a village where the wing of the 5th Division was. At this stage they were fast approaching the firing line. No. 2880 moved ahead of his mate, leaving him behind in the wood. On this occasion his companion was Pte. Morris of "A" Company, known as the Bully Beef King.....The men detrained at ~~Marbais~~ Douai, and marched to Aubigny near Corbie. The battalion came out of the line the same night, and No. 2880 found himself amongst his battalion again, but sad to relate his old platoon was gone for ever. It had been split up and the other platoons got the benefit. So he was attached to No. 13 platoon, and became acquainted with Sergt. Bradshaw. The trenches were dug out of chalk. The Hun made trouble of a night bomb-dropping.....

A few days later along came No. 2929. Soon orders came for the trenches, and on 25/8/18 the company went forward and took over from the 1st Division at Proyart, with the village of Foucaucourt on the left, and the trip in was hard and the enemy was shelling heavily. That night No. 2880 was S.O.S. guard. No. 2929 was one of the stretcher-bearers. The shelling was constant

and the supports were getting a rough time.. Next day was to be one of activity. The Hun outposts were very close and lay between Foucaucourt and the Aussie line. About 2 in the afternoon ten men from each platoon were to go over the top and capture the village. This was tried and abandoned, as they were held up with machine-guns. Rifle grenades were used on these "one-man" posts, and Fritz replied with same and artillery and gas. It was cruel to see the men advancing in broad daylight in extended order, whilst the machine-guns played on the advancing line. No. 2880 and No. 2929 were among the chosen ten of 13 platoon. Luck favoured their advance, for a sap ran out towards the village, and this they followed until they came face to face with Jerry's machine-gun posts. There a duel took place, and No. 2880 was sent back to report that farther progress was impossible.

1/cpl. Ossie Brown was in charge, and amongst the others were "Liddy" with his Lewis gun, and Fred Bowyer, and Joe Lansdowne (whom Fritz sniped). So the party went back, and Fritz made a slight show on following them down the sap.

14 Platoon had a raid, and Corps. Pickering and Smith and Bob Williams did some good work. They with others rushed the nearest machine gun post and came back with a Hun and a machine-gun, after wiping most of the nest out. One Hun managed to escape.....

After the raid there was a general hop-over, and an advance was made in rushes towards the village. After a sharp fight Foucaucourt was captured, and a position was taken up in the deep Hun trenches on the far side of the village. Now on the left flank was a Scotch regiment, and in the advance they became disconnected, and Corp. Watts was sent out under heavy fire to connect them up. For this he was awarded the Military Medal.

Fritz placed an awful bombardment on this trench, and the Taubes came over and fired along this trench from above. The enemy was firing at point blank range with the whizz-bangs. A shell burst in front of the parapet, and partly buried No. 2880, Joe L----, Fred B-----, and Serge. Bluey Amps. No. 2880 was "blinded" for quite a while. His mates poured water in his eyes to

get the dirt out that had been driven in, and for a long while he was partly deaf. Every yard of that trench was shelled heavily, and Fritz delighted in firing salvos of 5.9's.....It was a night of horrors. Casualties were mounting up. All the runners were killed, and Tommy Goodhead and Ossie Brown were caught by a shell and killed. Davy Hutton and Peter Holder were killed, and many others. Late that night Fritz stopped, and was no doubt pulling his guns farther back. Thus passed the eventful day, 27th August 1918.

Early on the morning of the 29th the advance was continued..... The line of the Somme Canal was finally reached by the 32nd (English) Division, 5th Div., and the 2nd Div. on August 29 south of Peronne. Patrols crossed the canal, but found the marshy ground east of the canal impassable for larger bodies and for the artillery. During the advance the enemy exploded a mine. The presence of guns and dead horses showed the effect of the artillery fire.

The advance was continued through woods and quite level country for miles, and it was strenuous work crossing and getting in and out the Hun trenches, which seemed everywhere, and deep ones at that. At divers places he had trenches of immense size for stables.

No. 2880, Joe L----, Fred B-----, and "Ruby", and two others moved forward as a screen ahead of the main body, and when going through woods this was a dangerous task.....After an advance of some miles opposition was met with and the company was held up. Heavily laden and carrying rations and two bottles of water, the men had advanced in daylight facing artillery fire, which covered the main Hun retreat. At this stage they were leapfrogged by Pompey Elliott, and his men, who said, as he went through, "What did you stop for?" Captain Barbour, Mr. Wells, and Mr. Rush were the officers with the company at this stage.

Next morning the advance was continued as far as Vovencourt, and a stand was taken up in a valley, which Fritz did not forget to shell, and badly wounded Ralph Hartley. A relief came along a little later.....A day or so was put in in this valley. A Hun was found hung on a door entrance, but nobody would cut the body down, suspecting a trap. Eventually he was cut down and a good watch was found

in his possession. The men's feet were attended to there by bathing them in a foot-bath containing some beneficial preparation, but there seemed no cure for our old friends the chaps.....Fritz had the usual "bomb" stunt of a night, and so when the 4th Division came along as a relief the men were right glad for a change. They on 30th August moved back to Follaine and dug in in a hollow..... A move forward was soon made to an old, but large, dugout, having old trenches round about. Here Fritz made bombing raids nightly.

The canal was crossed early one morning, under full observation from a balloon, and a position was taken up in an old Hun trench, with a village a little to the right. That night Fritz laid down a heavy bombardment, with gas, just as the hot food arrived. Not a breath of wind was stirring. A shell came in and killed Mr. Rush and Mr. Murdoch and the batman.

On 1/9/18 the move was forward towards Peronne, and 4/9 found them in the front line again at St. Denis. The enemy shelled the line. Another advance was made, and at 4 a.m....digging in operation took place, and just when a good trench had been dug word came along to advance. The company was moving along a road when it was noticed that a figure had been following alongside and disappeared in the darkness. This man was then credited with being a Hun. Suddenly a shell came over and burst just off the road, and the Fritzes/opened up with machine-gun fire. The order then came to retire, but as dawn was fast approaching, shelter was taken in a shallow Hun trench. But there was to be no rest that day. No. 2880 was first bayonet man, Charley Bruce was the other, and Corporal Watts followed behind as a bomber. In this morning they cleared the gap along the trench till they joined up with the ~~.....~~ Battalion nearly a mile away, but in the same trench. It was now daylight. The officer was standing in the trench, revolver drawn, as he was right opposite a Hun post. The gap was to be joined up that night. It was never joined up, as events moved too fast. Coming back a road had to be crossed in the open. Fritz saw the party and fired, but there were no casualties. Daylight revealed a wood in front and a village on the right. About

11 a.m. a screen was sent out, being composed of No. 2880 and Charley Bruce, both laden with shovel and panniers and bombs, etc. The company hopped the bags and made for that village. Fritz retired, and soon the men were well on the far side of the village, named Bussu. (The patrol, however, was fired upon by their own men in error.)

Still advancing and seeing a wood and a hill a mile or so away, with Huns running about on the top of the hill, it looked as if this was to be the ne^xt objective. Suddenly, however, they discovered that they were in the midst of their own artillery fire, and had to go back to get out of it, as their own shrapnel was bursting overhead; and they were no sooner clear of this danger when they found that they had only walked into another, for Fritz opened up, and for some hours his artillery fell heavy all about and the village of Bussu suffered heavily. The bombardment continued till well after dark. It was fast and furious and he mixed gas with it. Some of the troops were in a sunken road, but they were soon blown out of that, as the Hun had a gun firing straight down the road.All this happened on the 5th of September, and that night at midnight they were leapfrogged by the 3rd Division Pioneers.

Tired and weary the men made their way back, and all thought that at least there would be a couple of days spell. But it was not so. When close to Peronne the cookers were met with, and a meal of hot stew was given the men. Water bottles were filled, ammunition was issued, and with fighting order up the men marched all night, passing through Peronne, and, hitting out on the other side of that shell shattered place, daylight found them "falling" into an old Hun trench alongside a road, having passed for the first time, and a good distance back, the Yanks, who had dug quite "model" trenches.

An early visitor that morning came in the shape of a Hun plane which took in the situation and turned a machine gun along the trench and flew away with the news to Fritz, before any harm was done it.

About half a kilometre away was a canal and Joe L--- and No.

2880 and 2929 took a walk down and filled their water bottles, and had the pleasure of a wash - a real wash. There they saw Fritz's work in blowing up the pontoons, which was ^{speedily} being put to its proper use again by some Tommies.

Though tired and weary still no sleep was to be had. In about four hours they were over the top again, and struck trouble with Hun planes. Pushing forward they dug in on the edge of a wood, and ~~enjoyed~~ enjoyed a night's rest. On 6/9 they moved up to a place named Mons, and on the morning of the 7th dug ~~in in~~ in a bank.....On 10/9 the battalion moved back to Doingt, close to Mt. St. Quentin and Peronne. The men's temper was none too good when they found that as usual it was just dark when they got there, and there was nothing to live in but an open chalky old trench, so they went down to the village and soon had sheets of iron, etc., and before long they were fairly comfortable. Close by was a field hospital, and the nurses found many of the diggers handy with the stretchers, loading hospital trains, etc. Some of them thought they ought to be rewarded with a nip of brandy for their services. Sometimes it came off, sometimes it ~~didn't~~ didn't.....

Then after a brief stay the "hard word" came along to move forward, and presently they all found themselves en route for the Hindenburg Line, which the enemy deemed impregnable. The troops lay in supports to three American divisions, being not far from Bellicourt. Great numbers of tanks lay in readiness too..... The night before the battle the troops were given an outline of the attack. No. 2880 and others had taken shelter in a Yankee A.M.C. dugout, and for a few brief hours he became acquainted with their methods, which, compared with those of his own company, proved highly amusing to him. For instance, instead of the familiar "Attention", he heard the Yankee sergeant call out "Guys, stiffen"

The bombardment of the Hun line lasted for 48 hours previous to the attack. Zero hour was 5.50 a.m. on the 29th September. The attack started well on the 30th American division

front, but on the 27th American division front trouble was experienced by hostile machine gun fire. But it was a bad day for the Yanks, as things went wrong. They failed to co-operate with the Australians. The men of the 27th and 30th Yankee divisions were inexperienced.....

Divisions of diggers were to go through the Yanks near Bellicourt, and were to continue the thrust as far as the main objective Joncourt. This never happened, and from the outset the whole plan of attack was upset by the failure of the American divisions to pierce the Hun strongholds on the prescribed time. Many of the Yanks had never been in an attack before. This fact probably accounted for their eagerness to jump off the tape before the barrage reached zero. They advanced so speedily that they were engulfed in their own barrage, but the men who survived got to the Hun trenches, and cleaned them up in the teeth of a machinegun barrage. Those who failed to reach the enemy trenches were the ones that were demoralised by the British barrage, and in their endeavours to escape it were entangled in the Hun barb wire. They were unable to escape and were obliged to take their chance amongst the hundreds of high explosive shells that were falling, and when the diggers came along later it was pitiful to see all those dead Yanks lying in the shell holes.

Once the barrage lifted the progress through Bellicourt proceeded apace, but hereagain inexperience protruded itself, and the Yanks failed to clean up, thus leaving many machine guns in their wake to enfilade unwary diggers who were following them. There was no definite line and it was a difficult matter for the Diggers to know whether they had gone through the Yanks, or whether they were still following them up. To make matters worse a thick mist came up and wounded Americans were going everywhere, and one would tumble over them before seeing them.

Other parties of lost men joined the ranks of the Diggers, and the harrowing tales they told about being caught in the British barrage will long be remembered.

The road leading from Bellicourt to Joncourt was a veritable death trap. Many good Australians were sniped there, some of them not with machine-gun bullets, but with heavier stuff, which was fired point blank. These were the guns the Yanks should have dealt with and put out of action. One could actually hear the shell leave the gun, and when that is the case the gun is close handy. The Australian casualties were fast mounting up, and some of the ranks bore a depleted aspect. They were held up temporarily and forced to go back to the village till the tanks arrived, and Fritz seeing this turned a barrage of guns on the village, and bullets were actually coming from snipers who were lying in the thick undergrowth surrounding the village.

The tanks got amongst the snipers. When the Diggers first joined up with the Yanks on that September morning, everything was in a state of chaos, and it was largely due to the initiative of the Australian commanders that what appeared to be a rout was turned into a brilliant victory. The American casualties were heavy. Their inexperience cost them dearly, but it must not be imagined that they did not give a good account of themselves. Their qualities were highly tested at Bellicourt, and the manner in which they stuck to what appeared an impossible task gained for them unbounded admiration and the highest esteem of the Australian troops.

On the morning of the 29th the battalion moved forward through a country heavily shelled and much gas was lying about. As they advanced they met many wounded Yanks going to the rear, and it was noticeable that they had Huns as stretcher-bearers. At Bellicourt later on the wounded were placed in a blanket and carried out in that manner, and Fritz had to lend a helping hand there too.

As the advance continued the Yankee trenches were gone through, and it was also a very noticeable fact that these were packed with men. A smoke barrage was put off and it was difficult to keep in touch as it was so thick. Out of this fog Fritz poured in shot and shell, and the machine gunners had a great say in the matter also. Very soon a wood was reached and after that it

became daylight once more, and the tanks in front got into action whilst they were fired at at point-blank range. Bellicourt was reached and a position taken up across the railway line, and at the mouth of the St. Quentin underground canal. This entrance was then used as a dressing station, and a descent of about a couple of ~~hundred~~ hundred feet brought one to the water and the barges. In rushing across the railway embankment that morning No. 2880 fell and severely sprained his ankle. Luckily he was able to lie up there for many hours.

Sergt. Shep. became a casualty. Night time came on and the men dug in, but Fritz placed such an awful bombardment on the town ~~down~~ and swept the valley in which they were dug in so heavily that wet night that things were very uncomfortable.

The following night the bombardment was thick and heavy and gas came over. No. 2880 and two officers "got" some of this gas, which was none too pleasant. About 4 a.m. word came along to move forward, and so in the pouring rain a start was made towards Joncourt, and after a while it was found that they had "got off the map", but direction was soon picked up, and a little before daylight they had crossed the death trap and passed into the front line trenches, and moved out about 200 yards in front, ^{a little} just/before six in the morning, and "lined up on the tape". At 6 a.m. the British bombardment opened, and another advance was started towards Joncourt. The shells of the sweeping barrage swept every inch of the ground. One of the officers, Mr. A-----, lost his leg going across. The Huns replied with artillery. Prisoners were taken in the village, which abounded in deep dugouts, and so Fritz was forced out of it.....A position was taken up outside Joncourt which commanded a fine view of the rising ground ahead, and Fritz getting away. The machine gunners and artillery played on the men who were lying down in eXtended order in the open. No. 2880 was lying flat on the ground, with machine-gun panniers at his head, and was busy trying to scratch a hole with an entrenching tool in that position, and in about a couple of hours he had dug a hole about two feet deep to lay in, which was badly needed as

bullets were flying around. There was much sport that morning firing at the retreating Huns, and "Nimmo" Smith does good work with the Lewis gun.

At night the men were all placed in the dugouts and the line was held with machine-gun posts, who were relieved every two hours or so. Fritz bombarded, and the enemy planes came across and dropped many bombs that night. Of course No. 2929 was in it all. At night No. 2880 was out with the machine guns with Bill Brown and Herb Heathcote and assisting in patrols. Nobody expected any food to be brought up that night, but it came along for all that, thanks to "Hector Blanchmange" (Sergt. Sutherland) the quarter master.

That night or rather early next day the 2nd Division came through, and the battalion was relieved, and went back as far as the Hindenburg Line and stayed there for a couple of days. This was on 2/10/18. The dead lay all over the place, and some of the large dugouts were full of hun dead, with a notice at the entrance to that effect.

On 4/10 a move was made to Rosiel, and four days later Doight was reached, and the men entrained at Peronne to go right out to Oisement for a well earned spell. Though they knew it not, they haddone their last stunt.....

Some date Aug 23 - 28, 1918
Lieut Christian.

Battle of Proyart. Christian's company of the 59th was about 25⁺ from the German trenches. They had been promised (or were expecting) relief when they were told they must stay in longer. They were then ordered to attack the Germans ahead of them. Christian's sergeant, who went along, told him that they would not. The men simply said it could not be done & they wouldn't do it. Christian said "it has got to be done" "well they wouldn't do it" Christian said "send them along to me." He got a trench ladder, & after telling the men what he thought of the matter he said "well. I'm going myself." He had nearly reached the top of the ladder - he was ^{a little actor,} about 8 stone weight & small in all dimensions - when a big hand got him by the pants & pulled him down & the men went over. A number of them were scuppered.

H.N. Cappy: Aug 25. 1918.

28 Duff St. Fitzroy

27/11/40.

Historian
Victoria Barracks
Paddington.
Dear Sir,

Re your queries of 14th Nov: 1940
You have everything correct. Exact date
of birth was 16th April 1883. Enlisted
at Townsville, but was working & living
at Duchess via Cloncurry N. Q. My work
was copper mining & contracting on the
Sulphur Creek Railway.

Yes; I was definitely in charge of
B. Company, 9th Bn on 25th August 1918.
Captain Farmer of the 9th Bn led the Coy
to the front line but was wounded badly
in the hand in the forenoon. I being then
2nd in Cmd took charge. Major James was
in command of the 9th Bn. He and I made
a daylight reconnaissance to the outskirts of
Cappy village. I kept my company concealed
by daylight. I then made an early morning
personal reconnaissance about 4 am & decided
to advance through Cappy & disregard orders
to 'disengage' that village. Young Brigadier
Gen: Gordon-Bennett direct & told him I was

going to disregard the order with his commission.
He said: "what is it like in front." I said
Gibraltar, but I expected to advance on this
route with little opposition. He replied:

"Alright do your best King." I advanced
through Cappy to the Chalk pit taking a
gun & several machine guns I was then held
up. As this was the 9th Bn Objective, I
reported "all well" the Bn Comdr. I had
posted a Supt & patrol on my right & a
Coop's & patrol on my left. The Germans
were surprised as they expected me to flank
the village to the right or left: instead I
went straight through the middle!

If possible I would like to pay a tribute
to Major James in the Daylight reconnaissance
He was the bravest of the brave.

The official photographer too was
wonderful. I had never before seen one
in the very front line.

I trust your queries are answered
satisfactorily.

I am a poor writer as I have very
little practice.

Yours faithfully
J.W. King

H.V. 3rd Div.
Aug 26. 1918.

4. February 1941

My dear Charles Edward.

Thank you kindly though I am sorry to hear there was no meeting the lad before he started his adventure with Flaubert. - Moreover I would dearly love say 36 or by the lord hamy 168 hours with you over the present war and our share in it. Its not much use writing, too long and so much turns on how one says it. I am grateful that the old lot did not have a special section of the A.B.S. to queer the pilots for history and possibly despatches.

Tonching the first part of your letter I have only my recollections and impressions and no stimuli in the way of reports re. here.

The period ending with M. S. Quentin was one in which Monash airily drove of his somewhat one sided bayalms "I am leaving your division N of the River without chief and later you will have a long spell. You must keep level with the main body of the Corps."

The placing of Headquarters was always a big bear to me. 9th + 10th seemed to me inclined to ride the storm at a distance and I remember playing the old hand at POW rows on distances from Bde to Bⁿ. I wish I ^{had} spent time after the armistice in recording statistics. - No. after proof. The thing that counted was forward K! Ops. provided that it was well & fully manned.

I remember very well the complication 2nd + 5th Div communication & my chief recollection of Medicalls was his evicting of the 9th + 11th liaison officers! There are so many factors to be taken into account in referring to a Brigade Command system. Given a decent cool Bde Major a Bde can afford to go up as Robertson did, without taking undue note but you could not recommend this with an untired man.

I was more than interested to hear your views about USA at Bony
and I don't even give you thanks in the shine of history.
You can imagine my feelings when I got back that day etc.
as soon as it was clear the USA failed. "that I must be mistaken
because the USA had definite reports." There ought to be on
record. (3rd Division) a very heated discussion between Monash
myself. Less asked me next day if the transcript was
to be recorded. (in the 3rd div a shorthand lad always listened
in to record HQ interviews. - to which I said let her go Gallagher!

It must be a curious feel? that you will soon write "finis"
to a life's work, with the proud satisfaction that it is not only
well done but that nobody else could have done it that way.

I used to think that the really happy man was the lad who
built a decent bridge or laid out a good road. But I now
realise the power of a clean pen, driven by a seeker after
truth. "justum et tenacem" and I reckon the miter of even
one worth while book is 17. - now apply your mathematics.

My health is very queer - I sleep very badly & yet I suppose
I average 5 hours (not all at once). - eat enough and keep my
weight at 13½ stone. Sometimes I puff going uphill, sometimes not.
I have not been working with my little hand? but shall soon
start again. I can do 5 miles comfortably and possibly 10 if asked
and the weather is cool. Temper runs a bit hot over R.B.C. politics
government extravagance and my own bank balance. I
find the role of a well spectator very hard, + see no chance of
being allowed to do anything.

Love to the family from mine

Yours ever
Helliand

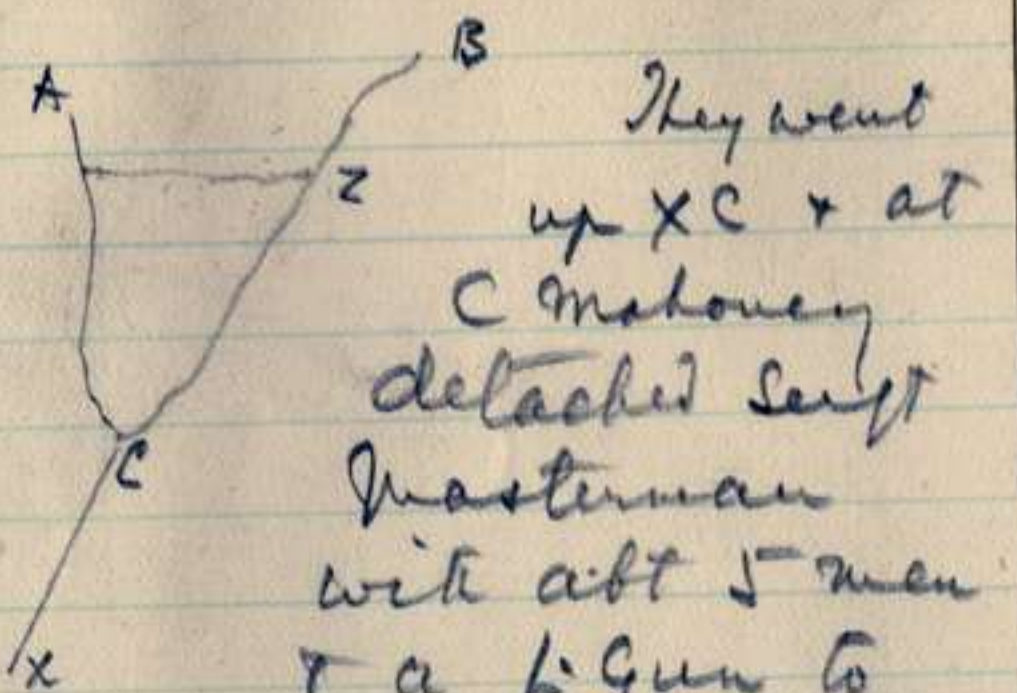
May 28, 1918

Capt. Mahoney at Clery Wood -
Serp Masterman's account.

Clery wood had to be taken & Mahoney's Coy of the 40th was given the job. It was about 30 strong. There was to be a barrage but they waited & as no barrage came after about 10 minutes (after the apt time) it was decided to go on with

the attack without it. The wood was approached by a trench running thus

Clery Copse



They went up XC & at C Mahoney detached Serp Masterman with abt 5 men & a li gun to go up CA while the main party went up CB. Masterman went up to A & got his gun going (? to cover the other party). He could hear a German machine-gun in action, from the front of the wood, which was

obviously well manned - the gun was clearly firing at the other party. Presently they observed men of the other party going back wounded - they could see them passing along a shallow part of the other trench. Masterman saw one officer - Lt C - (I forget the name - ? Craik) going along it nursing a wounded arm.

Accordingly either he sent across to the others or they to him - I think a messenger from them came to him & begged him to come over & support them as they were in a bad way. He crept along a cross trench (shown in the sketch) & found their trench dreadful with dead men - as he got there one man next to him

fell shot through the head. Serp Grey was in command of the other party & told him that Mahoney had gone ahead to reconnoitre, along the other branch of the trench, to B, & had been shot & asked Masterman if he would go out with him & bring him in. They crawled up the trench - Grey & Masterman - M. crawled over Mahoney's body & they began to bring him in. He was practically dead. After they had gone a little way, Mahoney being dead, it became clear they could not get him in, & they left him & decided to go back alone. Masterman being beyond Mahoney had to crawl over

his body, which made him slow. When he got back to Z, he found no one there but in the trench were a number of rifles. He looked out to see what was happening, & saw just at that moment a number of Germans coming out from the wood, counter-attacking, in extended order. He picked up a rifle, (thinking that his own people were somewhere about) & began firing, but presently it jammed. He accordingly began to make off along a trench, when a stick bomb fell in front of him. He turned back before it burst & batted the other way, when two

more fell just in front of him. He jumped out of the trench into a shell-hole, & lay quiet when another bomb fell on the lip of the crater. He waited to be blown to bits, but the explosion only dazed him. As he recovered and looked up he saw two Germans making towards him to bayonet him but an officer or NCO said something about "Gefangen er" & stopped them from killing him.

He was kindly enough treated in all the prison camps. The Germans bombed out of his camp, on his men discovering on M.A.

camera, which he had managed to carry through to his prison-camp. (M.A. had a special pocket for it), took it away; he never expected to see it again but it was recorded & returned to him at the end of the war.

Note.

43rd Bn. Clery .(obtained at Bn Hqrs on day of battle.)

43rd Bn took over line along Mt St Quentin Bapaume rd along the whole divisional front. The order was:-

42

41

43

44

42 already had a company in with the right Bde. There was very heavy fighting in the Bouchavesnes trenches.

G ot old Quarry and Q Farm - lost it again. German c/attacked 10th Bde 3 times (according to their account) and they knocked him back.

Fiumi and Scutari trenches (?present position?) 174 Bde at angle.

T omnies started at 4.45. 11th Bde at 5.30. 2nd Aust. Divn at 6 am. Tomnies came along well and took all their objectives, and g ot through with heavy casualties to old line beyond Bouch avesnes. The 3 rd Divn got to Allaine. The Germans em filaded the 43rd Bn from Mt St Q. But the 2nd Divn took Mt St Q. at 2 pm.

The 4 3rd were on their objective by 7am. The barrage wa 5 minutes to 100 yards. Most of the prisoners were of the 2nd Guards Divn One G erman said he owned 500 acres ? near Chicago and reckons that this is the best day of his life.

He was asked what abt our artillery fire. Very good!
How abt our aeroplanes? Jesus!

They had p retty modern news:- they thought the Germans were going to retire to the Hindenburg line. They knew it had been reached up at Bull ecourt. But they wd nt believe that the allies had taken 120,000 prðsoners. They simply put their heads back and laughed at it for a wild exaggeration.

We got 6 whizzbangs, brought up to fire point blank. T he 4 2nd got 6 and the 43 rd 2 others (?) The Germans cd nt get them away.

The Germans said that they found our troops too good this mornng. "We heard the barrage going up north, and we thought the attack was there. Suddenly the barrage came down on us and the Australians were all round us." One German officer said he thought the Australians were the finest troops fighting , not excepting the Germans themselves. He said that the Guards (2 Guard Divn) were nervy.

Our men reported that they had actually seen one German officer shoot 6 of his men.

The Germans also praised the Australian sniping. "They said that it was either heart or head - pointed first to one then to the other."

T he 43rd went in 9 platoons strong and one bn 5 platoons The 40th Bn caught it very heavily in these old trenches. The G Germans had 2 m.gs within 1 2 yards of the road where the 43rd Bn started. T hey wanted to go out and get them.

At 2 pm the 43rd cd see the 6th Bde on Mt St Q. They said it was ver y fine to see. Our men came up the comm trench. One pln lay on the road held up by m.g. The others worked round to the right. Finally a stream of Germans came back out of the wood, and gt i nto a b ig quarry abt 60 of them. Our men lay down. One man wd rush forward lið down throw his bomb and get back - then another. T hey outbombed the Germans who were bombing back-- and the German streamed back out of the Quarry and down the hill to the N.E. An artillery officer saw them and got guns on - into the trenches - a number of him out from there. Prisoners can be seen coming back, now. At one stage the Germans cd be seen coming back - abt 20 - with their hands in the air. The Germans fought for a bit on their way back. Our men didnt seem to get many casualties. T he Germans were immensely pleased with our white bread which the diggers were giving them.

Not e from Casey.

The 6th Bde ftook abt 60 prisoners at Frise which they attacked in the evening (one day towards end of August). T he 8th Bde took prisoners from Belloy of the *Konig Alexr Erste Regt, 2 sds Divn. Flach Mine at M28D*

1. Copy

From Lieut W.H.G. Guard, 20th Bn
File with Hist Notes. 31 Aug 1918.

ATTACK ON Mount St. Quentin-29-31st/8/1918

The Battalion advanced along the Somme in artillery formation by a road which eventually ran into a tow path parallel with the river on a course that would compel its crossing at a right angle bend south of Clery.

I cannot remember our operation orders but the company commanders were mounted.

As we neared the bend opposite Clery two company commanders' horses bolted back wounded and later, while passing through a cutting on the tow path, a salvo of "whizz bangs" killed my horse.

The head of the Battalion had progressed as far as possible and all troops took what cover was offering - we occupied a very old and shallow trench system on the forward slopes to the river. We were subjected to continuous artillery fire throughout the day including some of 8" calibre; one of which made a big crater in the centre of the path.

The following morning we were withdrawn and returned by the same route to a wood on the river bank. Here the troops were given a good meal, reserve rations etc. and a new operation order issued.

The Battalion crossed the Somme here on a pontoon and advanced on Clery via the north bank with the object of fighting through Clery, thence turning south. This would place us directly on the opposite side of the river to where we were held up the previous day. As we approached Clery the artillery fire was particularly heavy but we entered the enemy trenches and forced him back steadily.

(2)

The Trench soon turned south following the river course but we suffered some deadly enfilading from rifle and machine gun fire. One particular spot which first turned east then sharply south with a drop of several feet to a continuous southerly trench was under very heavy enfilade fire. Men paused at the corner with bullets smacking into the trench walls and timed their rush and jump; however a number of good fellows mistimed it. When the enemy realised we were in possession of this southern Clery line his bombardment with 5.9s for a time was demoralising. Personally, I think he contemplated counter attacking from a possible line about 300 yards east on a slightly higher contour. Here I saw a strong movement of men, who, in the fading light and without glasses, could not be identified. I withheld fire because of vague mention (before leaving Clery) of co-operating troops on our left and such troops could have turned south as we did, but further east.

However, I personally think now that it was either a counter attack or the defenders of the trench system we had captured, concentrating on a retiring point. I am now sure they were Germans and the sharp, heavy bombardment was to cover a retirement or an attack that did not eventuate and which, over such open ground, would have been useless.

It was now dark and we had reached the end of the trench where it dropped sharply to the river, but we had secured a jumping off ground for the assault on Mt. St. Quentin. Our position could not be determined in the dark but several enemy machine guns opened at surprisingly close range.

Shortly afterwards Lieut. Anthon captured a fairly large party of Germans close at hand. The enemy did not seem to realise the extent of our success.

(3)

H. Q. Staff must have acted quickly as the rest of the Brigade was soon in the area. The men were given a rum issue and further rations. Colonel Forbes appeared on the scene at midnight and the Company Commanders (McDonald, Broadbent, Barlow and myself) conferred with him and received operation orders, these for the daybreak attack. This was to be wedge-shaped and to pierce 2 kilos to the Bapaume Rd. the canal forming our left flank.

I think we occupied the trenches from which Anthon had captured his prisoners. The troops were given a further rum issue and after a heavy bombardment the attack was launched.

One of my platoon officers was wounded immediately, leaving me only Lieut. Ayling who performed gallantly. The advance was very rapid and the element of surprise accounted for rapid capture of prisoners. Sgt. Inskip put the Lewis gun on the horse teams of a Light Battery as "C" Company neared its objective, the Bapaume Rd., which was raised like a railway embankment and gave a measure of protection from fire. My position was on the left flank; from here the road gradually lost its embankment to the village of Feuillancourt. McDonald and Barlow occupied positions towards Mt. St. Quentin. Captain Broadbent did not take his objective and I did not see him until after the operation. Our Company's strength was now so low that his presence might have arrested our subsequent retirement from the Bapaume Rd. There was a bricked culvert and a dry watercourse passing under the road here and our H.Q. and aid post were established there. Ayling early lost some ~~men on the left with rifle and machine gun fire and as our flank was in the air some of this came from his left rear.~~

(4)

rifle and machine gun fire and as our flank was in the air some of this came from his left rear. A Lewis gun under Sgt. Inskip was placed in the ruins of Feuillancourt and the flank was brought in under the lee of the road, as Mt. St. Quentin could also search this low ground with its machine guns. The position was quiet until midday when a movement of men in small parties was observed about the road sides coming to our left flank from the Bapaume side; also there was a general movement on our front and many ranging shots on the road by batteries using what we called "woolly bears". Our artillery was on the move and calls for their aid were unavailing. Soon after this a man reported to me that he had seen a party of Germans leave the creek bed and approach the opposite side of the road. I proceeded through the culvert to investigate and, on stepping from some bushes at the enemy end, ran into a party of five Germans only five yards from the culvert mouth. I pointed a Colt revolver and called "prisoner" and the men put their hands up but demurred about being ordered into the culvert. The three rear men made a dash for the creek bed and as the others turned to follow I shot one, the leader, an Iron Cross man, and wounded another. Lieut. brought him in later for first aid and I think they were Scouts. They had no rifles but carried large packs and were equipped with a neat message pad so arranged that it threw an attached torchlight on the pad for night work.

McDonald who was in the culvert when I passed and who heard the shots discredited the activities which pointed to a counter attack. Just after this Sgt. Jack Corps was fatally wounded near the mouth of the culvert on our side by a shell that seemed

(5) suspiciously like one from our own artillery. He was beyond aid and was placed in the culvert. Shortly afterwards the Germans were advancing in rushes on our immediate front and lining what, I think was a light railway line at 200 yards. The remaining men of Companies "A", "B" and "C" who were few and mixed, put up an effective fire, showing themselves over the road despite a fierce barrage of "Woolly Bears" and machine gun fire. The former were bursting 10 feet over the centre of the road and a man on my right, firing from a kneeling position, fell forward with a shell splinter piercing his steel helmet. Enfilading and rear fire from our left were playing havoc and I definitely ordered the men about me to retire to a line of trenches some 200 yards to the rear. These presented some cover and a field of fire. Major McDonald and Captain Barlow were not on the embankment when I gave this order. Soon the remainder of the men were racing for the rear trench and McDonald and Barlow did not know of the retirement until I personally shouted the information into the culvert. We raced after the men together but Barlow was shot down before going 50 yards. Our wounded were left behind but from post-war conversation with one of them, were treated as kindly as possible by the enemy.

On reaching the rear trench McDonald and I decided to defend the canal end with Machine guns and draw on Keppel's reserve men who, according to operation orders should be somewhere in the vicinity. I found Keppel who manned our new line with half his reserves and while with him I carried out Colonel Forbes' specific verbal orders to me regarding "accurate disposition" and "intelligence report" which

6)
as the ex-adjutant I knew Battalion and Brigade required. I handed these to a runner with instructions to take them to Btn. Headquarters. On meeting McDonald three-quarters of an hour later I found him in possession of the Despatch which the runner wrongly delivered and which he, unfortunately held up. However, eventually, he rewrote it verbatim and duly despatched it. Sgt. Inskip with his machine gun team missed the retirement and spent the night in hiding with the Germans moving about him. Barlow crawled in during the night, which, otherwise, passed without incident. The following day we remained in this trench, the enemy knowing our exact position to judge by his constant machine gun attentions. That night the 6th Brigade relieved us and successfully attacked at daybreak and the Battalion remained in reserve for a few days before being sent back for rest.

This is a truthful account from memory (without notes or map assistance) and is the first time I have expressed my impressions of these operations. Major McDonald, in temporary command of the Battalion after the Armistice, sending me on an ammunition salvage reconnaissance the day that Captain Bean visited us at Beurepaire in order to obtain the particulars of the engagement.

43rd. Battalion.

11 - 1 - 19.

Capt. C.E.W. Bean.

Dear Captain,

In reference to the enquiries that you were making in connection with the battle of the 1st. and 2nd. of Sep. near MONT ST. QUENTIN when the 43rd. Battn. was operating with its right flank along the Canal Du NORD, I was Coy Commander of the right Coy (A) in touch with the 2nd. Australian Division, am able to state that at no time during the attack on the 1st. Sep. was the whole of my Coy on the south of the Canal although during the very early stages of the attack more than half of it crossed the Canal to assist the left of the 2nd. Division and the capture of FEUILLAUCOURT.

I hope that this information is sufficient to cover your verbal enquiry,

Yours faithfully, *H.G.*

H.G. Tucker

Lieut.

Copy of recommendation for which 1157
L/C Weathers L.C. 43rd Infantry Battalion AIF
was awarded the VICTORIA CROSS.

During operations on the morning of the 2nd of
Sept 1918 whilst one of an advanced bombing party
he showed great courage in bombing up a
trench strongly held by the enemy namely
SCUTARI TRENCH. After an hours continuous
fighting he went forward alone and located
a large body of enemy engaging them, killing
an officer and capturing a boche.
He then returned for more bombs and volunteered
to go forward to attack the enemy.
Taking two lance corporals and a man with
him he lead them forward and attacked again
under very heavy M.G. fire. On getting to
the trench the enemy appeared frightened, so the
aboved named N.C.O jumped onto the parapet
and although fired at by M.G.'s he waved
a bomb and called on them to Surrender.
This they did and when counted the party
numbered one hundred and eighty (180)
and several Machine Guns.
This N.C.O's coolness, initiative and bravery
were remarkable and a great factor in the
ultimate success of the attack.

H. N.

From Lt Irvine

18 Bn (4 Dec. 1931)

Int St Quentin.

5 Bde officers who took part could never see so very much in the Int St Q. stunt - it did not seem at all wonderful to those who were in it. They knew very little about their position or direction & some now (1931) suspect that they were really meant to attack Peronne.

On reaching the objective they had not a good field of view. Irvine ^{Lt Joe Maxwell} & ~~the officer~~ beside him thought of going farther. Irvine stood up to look when he heard a click & a German 20 yards away fired point blank, knocked him over, but only grazed him. The German was bayoneted in 20 places immediately. He must have been a "fanatically" brave man.

On this occasion Irvine met Capt Hobbs of the 17th (3) going back to report the position of his company. Irvine told him he shd send a runner but Hobbs sd he was going himself - Irvine told him off - it was not an officer's job to take back such reports & leave his men.

Reveille
March 1930

Brave Fritz : Stuck to his Gun

(By Joe Maxwell, V.C., M.C., D.C.M.)

With the approach of Anzac Day and its memories, one is apt to recall little acts of bravery and devotion which were associated with our "friend," the enemy.

The 5th Brigade, of which I was a member, attacked Mont St. Quentin. Our Battalion (the 18th) was reserve battalion.

During the attack our's was a simple job—merely following the other three battalions and collecting souvenirs overlooked by them. However, on reaching "Gottleit Trench," the front line, which, owing to casualties, we were compelled to occupy, we got a pretty warm reception.

One shell landed among B Company, of which I was O.C., and killed 14 and wounded 20. The

place was a hot one, and as a runner arrived with the news that there were no officers left in D Company, I thought it advisable to link up both companies.

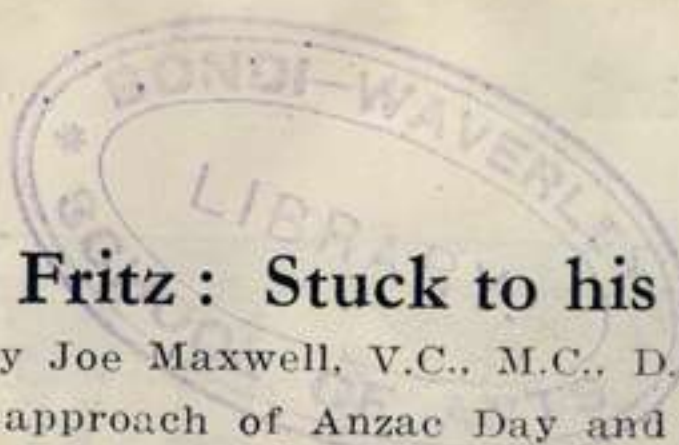
A machine gun in front of our position was playing "hell" with D Company, who were moving towards us. A lucky shot from a rifle grenade momentarily silenced the gun, and two fellows hopped over to capture it.

A German whose right leg was blown off just above the knee scrambled to the gun. His position immediately exposed him to the whole of our front line. Three times he was hit, but gallantly kept up a rapid fire in our direction. One of the two men—he was unwounded—fired a revolver at point blank range, and the bullet entered the shoulder of the German, who fell backwards. But he rose and grabbed a stick bomb and pulled the string. By this time the Digger was on top of him, and a few seconds later the bomb exploded, smashing the gun and killing both the German and the Digger.

Next morning when things were again quiet we buried our dead, and with all due reverence and respect a place was found among them for our "friend," the gallant German gunner.



Joe Maxwell.



[Handwritten notes in the bottom right corner, partially obscured and difficult to read.]

HISTORICAL NOTE.

When the 5th Bde took Mont St. Quentin the 10th M.G. Coy near Bouchavesnes had a section in position to enfilade a German trench which was facing the 5th Bde. The four guns of the section under Lieut. ----- played up and down this trench and possibly in part accounted for the success of the 5th Bde.

H/W.

Selchist - Bullecourt.

Selchist's brother was k at St Quentin
on Sept. 1 1918.

H.N.

REVEILLE

October 1, 1932

ers 23rd Bn. at Mont St. Quentin

Mr. Percy Frost, of the 23rd Bn., A.I.F., proud of his old unit, thought we had done it an injustice by giving credit to the 21st Bn. for an exploit which, he contended, was carried off by the 23rd.

Mr. Frost, of course, had in mind the block published in last issue showing the 21st Bn. moving from Elsa trench to the brick wall of Mont St. Quentin. Perhaps in justice to the 23rd Bn., we should have mentioned that that unit had also attacked there, but our photograph, we can definitely assure Mr. Frost, was of the leading wave of the 21st Bn.

Mr. Frost says: "It was the 23rd Bn. that attacked the wall. I was with the 23rd when it attacked. 'B' Co. was on the right of the Peronne Road on the night of August 31, and on the morning of September 1 we crossed the road and Pte. MacTein, who was killed while attacking an enemy machine gun crew single-handed, was recommended for the V.C. The machine gun crew was captured.

"We then advanced along a trench towards Mont St. Quentin. We then came to the brick wall, and three of us—Sgt. Dykes, Lewis Gunner Thompson and myself—went through the wood to the opposite side to where the Red Cross huts stood. When we got within 20 yards of one of the huts a machine gun was opened on us and Thompson was killed, his last words being addressed to me, 'I'm done, Frosty.'

"We then came back through the wood and waited for a barrage to open up on the side of the hill, as machine guns were troubling us. While waiting for the barrage the mine on top of Mont exploded. We finally took the objective and after being relieved went back to Cappy for a spell. Lieut. Fred Jenkins was in charge of 'B' Co. during the advance."

Mount St Q.

H/N.

Melbourne
673 Burke St
8th Sept. 1921

Capt. C. E. W. Bean.
Dear Sir.

For some time past I have been disposed to send to you various accounts of the Capture of Mount St Quentin that I had persuaded men of the 2nd Batta, and comrades of my late son Frank to write.

Last evening, when my wife and I were having tea with Mr & Mrs C. W. Gilbert, the latter passed a letter to me saying, "This will interest you, Robert!" It did: - it was your letter to Major DeLoas, (with whom I had been discussing War records at the Exhibition earlier in the day), relative to the attack on Mount St Quentin and Gilbert's Memorial of it.

After my son was killed at Mount St Quentin I was anxious to get as full a report as possible of how he died and sought out, as they returned, many of his former comrades. When I got into closer association, by various means, with them I suggested to a number of them that they should write their experiences

2

of the attack on Mount St Quentin. Simply, accurately and in detail, for the benefit of the relatives of those who had fallen in the fight. Now I persuaded men, who swore they could not write is quite a story. I then got into touch with the next of kin of the thirteen men buried together on the Mount as shown in the photograph of the graves, sent herewith. To them I forwarded copies of what I am sending you and you can realise how they were appreciated by people starving for news of men who had died so bravely. To Scotland Canada New South Wales Country districts in Victoria as well as Melbourne copies were sent. - I obtained portraits of the thirteen buried together which I am having finely reproduced, from a half size block and will distribute prints in the same way; give mainly gas not a speaking amongst them. A noble Company.

Mr John Monash told me the Capture of Mount St. Quentin was one of the big things in all history, and but few knew it. You can tell it. It was the fotologues who did it.

I tried hard to get Regt. Liverson & Co. to write his version, but failed. I am expecting a B. Coy Rgh to call & see me soon, from whom I hope to get an account of B Coy's experience, in the Centre, between A on the right & C on the left.

(3)

After I had sent John Castle's story to my friend Guy Innes Editor of the Melbourne Herald, he wrote me saying "I cannot tell you how much it moved me". He knew my own home before he was, shortly after C. J. Dennis was living with him at an orchard "Dumyaside", "Dank Darsupras", where the "Sentimental Bloke" was completed, and where Webber used to visit us, before he went to England in 1914.

To one of the founders of the Melbourne Historical Society I hold that historical records to be worth anything must be accurate, and ^{surely} have, what Carlyle was so keen on, veracity.

In this letter and what accompanies it, blame your own. If I had not read it, I doubt if I would have written and because this is much longer than I intended, like Stone, blame my pen, not me - "It swears me I forswear not it".

Yours faithfully
J. G. Roberts

MONT ST. QUENTIN.

On Friday the 30th. of August (1918) the 21st. Battalion stopped at a trench in front of a battery of 6" guns manned by English Tommeys, behind them was a small village, Clery-Sur-Somme; we had been keeping close up behind the attacking party for several days and the Germans were making a stand now at Mont St. Quentin. On Saturday, 31st. of August, we were given the order to prepare to move forward; we got ready, putting our machine guns on the limbers as they were going to take them as far as they could for us. We moved off in two's up a road alongside of a canal, hidden by trees from German observation; we marched on and passed what looked to be a large wooden bridge or rather the remains of one for the Germans had burnt it down a few days before, it was still smouldering. A few hundred yards further, we were halted and sat down along the road for about an hour - meanwhile the 2nd. Division Engineers were making a footbridge across the canal for us to go over. We crossed this bridge in single file and after we had gone about another half mile, we came to a Battery of 18 Pounders manned by Australians; they had their guns in the open and were working very hard. We halted there, had our dinner and took the guns off the limbers and cleaned them. The limbers had come to this place by another road. The order then came to move again and we moved off in single file along another road. The Germans were trying hard to shell this road, but most of the shells either fell short or passed over us; we had some casualties. Our Company (C) was ordered to take cover at the foot of a hill on the left hand side of the road. All this time the Germans were shelling hard, some of the shells falling into a swamp on our right. We then received word we would not move again till after dark, but early in the evening a shell landed right into where we were taking cover - wounding Cpl. Les (A.L.) Baker, of No 9 Platoon Machine Gun Section, in the leg. His wound was dressed and he was taken on a stretcher to a dressing station a few hundred yards down the road, we had marched up earlier in the evening. Frank Roberts, Roy Smerdon, myself and a few others were sitting with Cpl. Baker when he was hit; it was strange being so close together and only the one man getting hit. Some time later a few of the boys lit a fire and some were sitting and some standing round it, all talking about the day's work, when a shell landed in the fire, killing two and wounding several. The two men killed belonged to another Battalion that had just come up to us - one of the wounded men was a 21st. man, but I forget his name. Our tea was then brought to us on the limbers; we had left the cooks behind at the place where we had dinner. After tea the order came to move again, the Germans were not shelling so badly now, and we moved in single file, in Sections along a road, which led to a village named Halle. We turned to our right on to a railway line and followed the line till we came to a cutting where we were told to halt. As we were going to stay for the night, we got to work to make what we call a possey; it was very hard work and when we had just about finished, we were told we had been brought to the wrong place. We were taken back about a hundred yards down the railway line, then we turned to our left into an old trench in front of Mont St. Quentin; here we again set to work to make ourselves a possey so as to snatch a few winks if we had the chance. We had to do a certain length of time each at Gas Guard. ~~We were told the 5th. Brigade were going over in the morning September 1st. and we were in support to them.~~ The 23rd. Battalion were ahead of us - it is hard to say exactly where, as it was so very dark. It was morning before we could tell where we were ourselves. Early on the morning of September 1st. - Sunday, we were standing to, waiting for our artillery to open up. Everything was fairly quiet, until our guns opened up, then the Germans guns replied and some of their shells came very close to our trench, but we were lucky we got only a few casualties, and they belonged to another Company. Mont St. Quentin was captured by the 5th. Brigade on August 31st. but the Germans counter-attacked and recaptured it. While waiting in the trench, a lot of German prisoners came down about fifty yards off, and Ted Heath, who was with his chum, Frank Roberts, went over to see if he could get a souvenir off them, as Ted and Frank were both great souvenir hunters. The order was passed round to us to prepare to move at a moment's notice. We went across open country in Artillery formation, and when we had gone about half a mile, a mine (German) exploded - we had just passed over in time; the ground shook and flew in all directions; a wire was found later leading to this mine, a trip wire. The Germans were using their machine guns on us now as we were making for a communication trench which led into a trench from where we were going to hop over. We lay

down to take cover from the machine guns and while the Germans stopped to put a fresh belt on their gun, we ran to the trench in parties of threes. One man (whom I did not know) was killed while running for the trench. We went along this trench till we joined the 23rd. Battalion; we had to "keep down" the while as the Germans were playing along it with their gun. A Lieutenant was killed with a bullet in the head, as I went past him, I thought it was Lieut. ~~Consett~~. We managed to get where we wanted to without further casualties. We were then told that we were going over the top at half-past one (in daytime). The Artillery fired an Isolating Barrage for one hour before we went over; we moved around to our hopping off position, word came "time" and over we went. The first thing I noticed was a man taking a photograph of us as we went over.

C. Company was attacking on the left of the village of Mont St. Quentin, our Platoon No 9 on the extreme left of the Company. I noticed a broken brick wall to our right as we advanced and we all fired at a German as he ran from the ruins of the village, but he was a long way off. We advanced in single file and were all in good humour, talking with one another, and Frank Roberts called out to me - "all right Jack". We did not meet with any opposition until we had gone through a small wood. In this wood my attention was drawn to an Australian lying on a stretcher, he was calling to me for stretcher bearers, I called back to him that there would be some coming behind us, he had been lying there since the last attack on the village. I noticed that by the colours of his tunic. After we passed where he was lying, we began to meet with heavy fire from the German Machine Guns. A pal of mine (Roy (A.R.) Smerdon) was No 1 on the Machine Gun of our Platoon, I was No 2, Frank Roberts No 3 and -- Tognulla No 4. We noticed on our left, a German Machine Gun Crew firing across the front of us. The Machine Gun team of which were Ted (O.E.) Heath No 1, W. T. Rabling No 2, A. E. Kelly No 3, I forget the name of the fourth man, on to No 10 Platoon on our right. Roy Smerdon held his gun in front of him and bringing it with a sweep as he fired, put the German Gun out of action, as we saw a little later on. We then noticed another post from where some Germans were firing, but as Roy could not get at them from where we were, as we were going up an incline at the time, he got me to stand so that he could rest the gun on my shoulder, and that worked well. Roy did good work with his gun. We came to a German strong-post in a crater, it was held very strongly. The Germans were throwing bombs over at us. They could just get them over, and we were held up on account of these bombs.

Sergeant Lowerson, who get the V.C. came over to us from No 10 Platoon, and saw we were held up and gave us the order to bomb them and then rush the position. When close to the ^{edge} of crater with Sergeant Lowerson, Roy Smerdon, who was on my left, could not get the pins out of his bombs quick enough for his liking, as he had his machine gun in one hand, which made it awkward, so I straightened the pins for him. I noticed another pal of mine, Frank Roberts (on my right) fall, I knelt over him and said "Well Rob has he got you"? He said "yes" and after that, "straighten out my legs, Jack", which I did, as he was in an uncomforable position, and he died, as soon as he finished speaking to me, and before I left him. I was with him no longer than two minutes. He was hit by a piece of German bomb apparently on the right side, as there was blood there. What made him ask me to straighten his legs, I do not know, unless it was on account of the peculiar position in which we two once found a dead Australian. We threw a few more bombs and Roy Smerdon fell, hit in the chest with a piece of German bomb; he seemed to be in great pain and said, "give me a drink of water, Jack", but I could not give it to him, as we were told never to give a man water if he were wounded in the chest or stomach; it was hard to refuse him, but I did it for the best; I thought he might be saved, but died later. We had just taken the strong-post as Roy Smerdon fell. There were no stretcher bearers to be seen anywhere. I went to take Roy's revolver of ~~from~~ him, but it seemed to hurt him so left it, but took his Machine Gun and fired half a magazine into some Germans, who were running from the strong-post, but I had a stoppage. I was the only one left out of Roy Smerdon's Gun Team. L/Cpl. Kelly came over to me from the right of the crater just as the crater was taken; he had Ted Heath's Gun with him. I heard later, Ted had gone out wounded. We fixed Roy's gun and left Ted's gun, and as we were running to get into a trench to join Sergeant Vic. Edwards, Kelly was hit in the leg by a Machine Gun bullet; he took cover in a shell hole,

(shown to Roy)

*Robert
Smerdon
his name
was written*

but must have gone afterwards to where Roy was lying and got hit again. I could not believe it when I heard Kelly ^{was} killed, but I saw him later lying near the crater. I joined Sergeant Edwards and Pte. G. H. E. Dobson who went to see if he could get any stretcher-bearers, but could not. Two 24th. Battalion stretcher-bearers came along the trench and we told them where our wounded were lying.

Our Platoon did not have an officer in charge of it. Sergeant T. H. Wignall, was in charge of us - he was wounded in the stomach and hand, and went out. He spoke to me as he passed, but he seemed very much in pain. Pte. N. J. T. Norwood was wounded in the shoulder. He shook hands with me as he went out and we wished each other good luck.

Bert Bulluss was also wounded by a bullet in the leg. I did not see Tognulla after we had taken the crater. He went more to the right of it carrying Machine Gun Ammunition. Just after we had captured the crater, three of our own Stokes Mortars landed close to us, one right into the Crater and two on the right of it. The one that landed into the crater, wounded one of our Sergeants, named Smith, in the hand. It was after we came through the wood that we met any opposition from the Germans, we came into open country then and were advancing up an incline to a crater; from the wood to the crater would be between 70 and 80 yards. The Germans started to throw bombs over at us, when we were about 20 yards off the crater; it was then that our men began to fall. I noticed one of our men, named May, rush a German Machine Gun, but he fell wounded in doing so. He was only a boy and had not long been with us. None of us knew where we were going or how far we had to go; we did not know where our objective was. On the night of September 1st. a lot of men belonging to the 7th. Brigade were sent up to take out our wounded, but it would be hard to find a lot of them in the dark, - they were lying around everywhere.

That night, what was left of our Battalion and the 24th. Battn. held the line. Pte. Rabling and myself were the only two left out of two gun teams - we were taking it in turns, one had an hour on the gun, while the other one rested. When it was dark, Sergeant Edwards and Rabling went back and got Ted Heath's gun - Dobson was put on as a runner that night. The Germans were shelling us with their 5.9, one landed right in our trench not far from Rabling and myself, killing some 24th. Battn. men. A party of men from the 7th. Brigade was sent up to carry out our wounded. The Germans came over in planes and dropped bombs around where we were. Next morning, Monday Sept. 2nd. the 7th. Brigade went through us and moved the Germans further on, leaving us in reserve again. Our Company was put into some big German dug-outs. On Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 3rd. we started to bury our dead; we also buried some dead Germans, to which I was detailed, that were lying about; only a few of us at a time could go out, because we were under observation from the German observation Balloons. Eleven of our men were buried side by side in one grave; a big cross was made out of timber in the dug-out and a piece of biscuit tin nailed on to it. Each man's name was punched on the tin with a nail by Pte. A. Green, the cross was then carried over and put up. There was no burial service as far as I know, as we were still under shell fire. We had then to get all the Machine Guns together, which we had captured from the Germans, we carried them out to the road, and Dobson remained with them to help to load them, and they were carried away on the transports that brought up our rations. We were relieved and went back to a place named Cappy for a spell, which lasted a month. The 21st. finished their fighting after taking Mont Brehain Oct. 5th. I was wounded in that attack and never joined the Battalion again as after Mont Brehain, it was so reduced in strength that it was absorbed into another Battalion. On November 11th. the Armistice was signed.

No 4385,

Pte. John Castle,
No 9 Platoon,
C. Company,
21st. Battalion, A.I.F.

*This card is now at
The Melbourne Exhibition
Anzac War Museum
10/1/20*

*Dalhousie
16 Hall St.
West Brunswick - Melbourne*

John
MONT ST. QUENTIN.

nearby Barely two and a half months before the Great War ended, the battle of fight for the high ground, Mont St. Quentin which dominated Peronne, lasted three days. Press reports that I have seen, in describing the operation, referred to it as the biggest piece of bluff in the war.

Writers also said that our losses were the smallest that an attacking party had suffered. Both of these statements are likely to be very misleading.

The first Australian assault upon this great German stronghold was launched by one of the 5th Brigade Units on the morning of Saturday 31st August 1918. With the assistance of a barrage they "hopped over" at daybreak. Although they reached their objectives, and accomplished much, they were unable to hold the ground they had won. Before a strong well organised German counter-attack, they were driven back, and forced from the ruins of the village.

Reaching a sunken road at the foot of the Mont, they made a stand, and repulsed two more counter-attacks, inflicting heavy losses. The operation having failed, and the necessity of taking the position being urgent, two more Australian Battalions (23rd and 24th), were taken forward under cover of darkness that night. At daybreak next morning, Sunday 1st September, these units made a most determined attack, and success was almost achieved, but, owing to rather heavy losses in Officers and men, the attack broke down, and the Huns still retained possession of the high ground. All this time, during both attacks, our Battalion, the 21st, had been in reserves, slightly in the rear. The shelling from the German 5.9 guns was very severe, and we had many anxious moments during the night of the 31st.

Upon the morning of the second attack, whilst we were waiting in a railway cutting, we had an opportunity of seeing the wounded coming back. In mixed groups, Huns and "Aussies", helping one another in turn, moved slowly to Clearing Stations in the rear. We were greatly encouraged by the sight of batches of German prisoners coming in. As each Hun appeared, a crowd of "Diggers" would rush forward from their trenches, and in spite of the shells that were falling fast, subject each prisoner to a thorough search, (rattling for souvenirs). From our own wounded we received word that the attack had failed. We then heard that there was a possibility of our Battalion being called in, for a third attempt; this proved to be correct.

In due course we moved forward in artillery formation. The ground over which we advanced was dead level, and we were under direct observation from the enemy positions at the top of Mont St. Quentin.

The Germans were now fully roused, and as we went forward, we were subjected to heavy machine gun fire, and it was a most difficult task to reach the shallow German communication trenches, leading up to the foot of the Mont itself.

As we advanced, the intensity of the enemy fire increased, and with one accord we all started to run for cover. Just as our Company (C), reached a broad-gauge railway line, a big land mine exploded, and threw a volume of dirt and metal a couple of hundred feet into the air. Although we felt the concussion from the explosion, we did not sustain any casualties. The Hun who fired the mine, evidently made a miscalculation, for the mine exploded some seconds too soon.

The machine gun fire was now deadly, and men were falling upon every side. It was so bad that we were again compelled to seek shelter in another old German trench. Here we had a rest. Getting into this particular trench, one man loaded with various things, took a running header from the railway line, and did not stop rolling till he reached the bottom of the trench. Surveying the country from this trench, we could see our wounded from the morning's attack still lying about, and later we had to pass by many who were badly battered. I saw one man crawling back to the dressing station with his right leg off at the knee. His one complaint was that his 'fags' had run out. Receiving a smoke from one of the boys, he continued on his way smiling. A light barrage of shrapnel broke upon us at this stage, but luckily no one was hit.

* Whilst sheltering in this shallow trench, Lieut A. Sennitt came along and informed us that we were to attack at 1.30 p.m. The remnants of the 23rd and 24th Battalions had been collected, and they were to 'hop over' with us.

(2).

The trench from which the attack opened, presented a terrible sight. Many dead, both German and Australian, were lying about. Our light Trench Mortars opened out on to the places where opposing machine gun posts had been located. As these started to land, the Hun gave us a fireworks display, numbers of green and white flares being fired into the air.

While we watched these flares, the order came "Over with the best of luck". Yelling and shouting, the men of the 21st Battalion rushed to the attack. Each man seemed to realise that we were going to have a tough fight. The ruins of the houses in the village had been converted into a series of strong-posts. In ruined houses and behind broken walls, the Germans were waiting for us.

In spite of the sweeping fire from hundreds of machine guns, the boys continued on. When the Huns saw that we could not be held, they forsook their guns and started to run. Ere they could reach their trenches further back, they were mown down with deadly rifle and Lewis gun fire. Roy Smerdon in our platoon (No. 9), did great work, ~~xxxx xxx xxx~~ using his gun from the hip on the hose principle.

Having driven the enemy from their outposts, we pressed forward in better heart, in spite of the numerous gaps in our ranks.

Our next difficulty came in the shape of a rather thick wood, and we cut our way through the undergrowth, pushing nearer to the main line of resistance.

As we cleared or "mopped up" all opposition on the ground, we were subjected to heavy machine gun fire from positions that had been established in the trees. The men who manned these posts had a hot reception when noticed, and were quickly silenced. The attacking parties were now very weak, and wounded were making their way back. The scene at this stage was one that I shall never forget. German dead, wounded, and also sound Huns lay everywhere. In saps, bays of trenches, and all such places which afforded protection, dead and wounded lay huddled together in heaps, the wounded crying out for assistance. Those Huns who had survived, in attempting to escape were shot in their tracks, Sgt. V. Edwards putting in some deadly shooting, saying - "there's another bastard - - got him!" - "another" and so on, as each shot took effect. Many of our comrades by this time had passed out. Roy Smerdon, after doing magnificent work, fell mortally wounded, and as Jack Castle stooped to assist him he murmured "Don't Jack, it hurts".

Sgt. Wignall, our Platoon Commander, after leading us with good judgment, fell, wounded in the stomach. He was in great pain, but still persisted in directing the attack as best he could. Placing him upon a German blanket, Arch. Green and I carried him to safety, where he received first aid attention from a captured German Red Cross man.

Getting back to our platoon, or what remained of it, we perceived that our job was not yet finished. The Huns in their main position, which was yet untouched, being full of fight. In our immediate front was a great mine crater which was absolutely lined with machine guns. This was the key position of the defensive works, and it had so far resisted all attempts to take it. To reach this it was necessary to rush across about 60 yards of dead level ground. As we rushed forward to take it, the machine gun fire increased, causing many casualties among us. We were also subjected to a shower of broom-handle bombs, (spudmashers). Those of us who survived these were compelled to beat a retreat to a trench in rear. It was in this rush that Frank Roberts fell, and died within two minutes. Several of our wounded mates were lying out between us and the Huns, and, true to their name, the Huns opened fire on these poor helpless men with machine guns and revolvers. At this time things were looking real bad for us. We had no idea how matters were going upon our right and left, as no communication had been received from either. There seemed to be a possibility of the whole attack breaking down. The four of us who were sheltering in the trench facing the crater did not feel strong enough to have another go (Jack Castle, W. T. Rabling, May and myself).

Being reinforced by three others including Sgt. Lowerson, it was decided to make a last effort. At a word from the Sgt. we charged again. Machine gun bullets were whistling through the air, bombs were coming thick and fast. German Under-officers fired revolvers point blank at the little band as it charged up the hill, the splendid example set by Sgt. Lowerson inspiring us all. Running right up to the edge of the crater, Lowerson hurled his Mills bombs fairly in the middle of them. Each of us in possession of bombs did likewise with good effect.

Here Sgt. Lowerson received a wound in the leg. *Turning Casually to*

(3)

me, he said "I've got my issue, carry on".

Bert Bullus, another man who came with Sgt. Lowerson, was also wounded in the leg, but refused to go out, saying "I want some souvenirs off these bastards before I go".

With the assistance of others who had come along, we eventually captured the position, taking fully 60 prisoners and 40 machine guns.

Just at this stage, we were joined by some men belonging to the 24th Battalion. They proceeded on round the Mont and established the line on the other side. But the main and hardest part of the job had been accomplished. Thus ended the final effort in the capture of Mont St. Quentin, which is now admitted to be one of the finest and most wonderful feats of the war.

*228 Danks St
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Melbourne*

Pte. G. E. Dobson, M.M.
No. 9 Platoon,
"C" Company,
21st Battalion.

The Attack on Mont St. Quentin.

1st September 1918.

On the 1st September 1918, at about 8 a.m., "C" Company of the 21st Battalion was billeted in an old German Trench about 1400 yards from Mont St. Quentin, and acting as support to the 23rd Battalion which attacked the village the same morning at 6 a.m., but failed, and had to withdraw to about 500 yards from their objective, and there hold on till 1.30 p.m., and until an attack was organised by the 21st Battalion.

At about 9. a.m. we were given the order to move, and most of us had an idea what our job was to be.

As the Hun had command of all the surrounding country for two or three miles, we were moving up in sections, directly in front of the village, across open country, making for an old communication trench, which led to where we ^{were to} jump off.

Things went ~~not~~ well till we were crossing the railway line, which the Hun had covered by machine gun fire, and there we were told to double in threes to the trench, as several guns were firing at us, and one chap had already been killed, the bullet entering his neck. We then crawled up the old trench, as it was not deep enough to walk in. Lieut. ~~Neuman~~ Holt tried, and was shot through the head.

On arriving at a position just behind the 23rd Battalion, we were told to keep down till 1.15 p.m., as we were to go over the top and take the village.

After a short rest and some lunch, we moved up to the attack, as the barrage, which was only shrapnel, had already started. We were no sooner out of the hop off trench, than machine guns were pounding us from all directions, but fortunately we had no casualties till almost through the wood on the far side of the village. When looking across, I saw a big mine crater manned by about 50 Germans, and fully 10 machine guns; it looked a hopeless task, and the only thing was to rush it, which we started to do.

All at once I noticed a party of machine gunners with Sgt. Wignall making along an old trench, and they did not get far when I saw Wignall fall wounded, also a young chap named May. There were several round them, so I did not stop, but made straight for the crater with Sgt. Smith and some of No. 10 Platoon, kneeling and firing as we went, as German heads were showing everywhere. When we got within a few yards of the crater, we found that Sgt. Lowerson and his party had already started to bomb it. It was there that Sgt. Lowerson was wounded and had to go back. Not far from him, Frank Roberts fell, ^{Killed} ~~wounded~~ by a machine gun bullet just above the heart; as I collected his private belongings that evening, I examined him to find out. Close beside him were Pte. Kelly and Roy Smerdon, who had been killed by machine gun fire. I collected their private things and examined them also. I did not know that Kelly was killed till that evening, but saw Smerdon fall, and told some stretcher-bearers, and was greatly surprised to find him dead when Cpl. Jim White and I went out to recover his gun. After Sgt. Lowerson had been wounded, and nearly all of his party, Sgt. Smith and I bombed our way into the crater, but most of the Huns by this time had been killed or wounded, and what remained ran into the dugouts. While we were trying to get them out, one of our trench mortar bombs fell close by and wounded Sgt. Smith, who went back. I then sent the prisoners back, and on reaching a trench just below, Ptes. Jack Castle, G. Dobson and W. Babling reported to me, and from there we joined some of "D" Company, and started to clear the trenches immediately in front of the crater as we had no idea where our objective was; we took up a position in the trench, Ptes. Castle and Babling both ^{having} a gun. We remained there till Lieut. Dearden came along and took us up to a better position. About 7 p.m., a party of 24th men came and took their position just below us; they had not been there long when a German 5.9. shell landed among them, killing 5 and wounding 6.

We held the position all night, and at dawn next morning the 7th Brigade went through us. At about 9 a.m., we were shifted into some dugouts, and remained there in support.

(2).

There are several who were wounded in No. 9 Platoon, whom I did not see, but heard they had gone back, Ptes. Heath, Tognulla, and two or three others whose names I have forgotten. *Norwood*

On the 3rd September I left the trench and went on my 14 days' furlough to England. On returning to the Battalion, I found it resting at a place called Cappy, and, after a week's rest there, we were moved up to Mont Brehain, where we took part in the last stunt the Australian Infantry were in in France.

The Armistice was signed while we were out resting, on 11th November 1918.

No. 615,
Sgt. V. J. Edwards, M M and Bar
"C" Company,
21st Battalion, A. I. F.

Weldborough
Tasmania

24/10
"C" Company, 21st Battalion at Mont St. Quentin.

On Friday, 30th August 1918, we found ourselves in a trench running at right-angles to the River Somme, directly in front of Clergy-sur-Somme. We stayed there all night after getting into our possey. I wandered round along with a few coppers, and we struck a fishing trap left behind by Fritz, a huge affair. I think he must have caught enough fish daily to feed an army. My Company grabbed enough to do us for breakfast, and it was here that our Company made a temporary foot-bridge across the Somme, naming it Duggan Bridge, after our C.O. It was great sport to see the boys skinning eels for the cooks for the morning breakfast. A. Green was acting "C.O." for the skinning party. We had a pretty fair night here considering we had no blankets, but we made good use of a few of Fritz's old coats and blankets.

Saturday, 31st August.

We were awakened rather early, for we had received orders to move, and had a breakfast of fried eels (a welcome change), then began to pack up ready for marching. We moved off in Platoons, in file, at a distance of about 300 yards between platoons, along the canal bank, well hidden by trees from German observation.

I think along this bank must have been Fritz's Army H.Q., for there was a fair ~~xxxxxx~~ number of wooden huts fitted up as though they had intended to stay there for years. We passed a bridge still burning and partly destroyed by the enemy. About 200 yards past this bridge we were halted, and held up while the engineers built a bridge for us to cross the river. Around this area there was nothing but swampy country. This bridge finished, we crossed over and traversed about a mile of swamp, then came to a halt near a railway line behind a battery of Australian 18 pounders. We had another snack here, tightened our belts and had a smoke. We stayed here about an hour, and moved off again in single file along a road right under observation of the enemy, and he gave us hell for a few minutes, but he was doing some bad shooting, for all his shells fell either in front of or behind us, but he had us ducking for a while.

We arrived at a road hidden by huge cliffs, and under these along the road, the whole Brigade took cover. I saw a good bit of work done by the 2nd Division Engineers, building a bridge across a swamp while under observation of the enemy, and he gave them hell with all kinds of shells, but the Diggers stuck to it like "Bucks" until they had finished the job.

We stayed at this possey nearly all day, and saw a number of good races with cookers and limbers galloping down the road dodging Fritz shells. Fritz was trying hard to lob a few shells on the road, but his range was always too long. He gave us a bonzer exhibition of water splashing, for all his shells were dropping in the swamp. We were all greatly interested in the enemy's shelling, when a stray shell lobbed fair among my platoon, covering every one of us with dirt and wounding Cpl. Baker. Frank Roberts, Roy Smerdon, Jack Cattle and I were all sitting close together when it lobbed, and strange to say, it only wounded Baker. It was a nice Blighty too. We dressed his wound and had him removed to a dressing station near by.

Later in the evening, some of the boys lit a fire, and they were all talking round it when Fritz put a shell fair in the middle of the fire, killing two men and wounding one. I think all were engineers.

We had tea, received our rations and moved off again along the road towards Mont St. Quentin. At this time ~~xxxx~~ Fritz took a "jerry" and kept his guns quiet while we moved along the road. We struck a railway line, and followed the line till we came to what seemed to me to be a huge cutting. We were then told that this would be our possey, so we all commenced to make our possies for the night. We had all practically finished when we received orders that we were in the wrong place; then, of course, there was a huge outburst of language.

We went back about 100 yards and came to an old trench where we were told we would stay for the night. I might say it was pretty cold, and I think there was only one dug-out in the trench, and of course C.H.Q. must have it, so most of us had to lie in the open trench. About 10 o'clock, some of my platoon and myself went as a ration party and returned quite safe. We were all dead tired so we tried to have "forty winks". We must have been lying down in the open with fresh air over us to keep us warm, when it started to rain and we all got pretty wet.

Sunday 1st September.

Daylight arrived and we began to hear a fair amount of "furfheys". We were told that the 5th Brigade was going over at 5 o'clock, and our Brigade (the 6th) was to support them. The 23rd and 24th Battalions were ahead of us somewhere, we couldn't say where, for we hardly knew where we were ourselves. We were all standing to (that is, ready to move off at a few moments' notice) when our guns opened up, then Fritz began to reply with his artillery, some of the shells lobbing very close to our trench. The 5th Brigade attack ^{of the day before had been} successful, but Fritz counter-attacked and recaptured the position. While we were waiting to move, a few Fritz prisoners came past our trench, and of course, the first to "rat" them were our "souvenir kings", Frank Roberts and Ted Heath, who of course scored. Things were not looking too good, and "furfheys" were flying round that the 5th Brigade had been wiped off the face of the earth by Fritz, etc., when we received orders to move.

We moved across open country in artillery formation, and had gone a few hundred yards when a huge German mine exploded in our rear, Fritz having pulled the string too late. Fritz had us ducking now for he was using his machine guns very effectively. We all took cover along an old railway line, and he pushed the dirt up all round us with his guns. This was the place where a man heard a flow of language at men showing themselves. I think I called a few of them round me silly bastards, and to keep their bloody heads down. We rushed in from the railway line to an old trench about 30 yards in our front, and you talk about a man doing even time; doing that 30 yards, some of never touched the ground at all, for every time a man moved, Fritz turned two or three guns on him. One of our men was killed while trying to get into the trench. It was here that a 5th Brigade man came crawling up to us minus a leg, and asked for a cigarette, and I must say, at that time it was like asking a man for a tenner, but one of the boys managed to scrape one from somewhere. We asked him if we could carry him out, and he replied "You go and do for the bastards that got me, I will manage to get out".

After getting into the trench we had a breather, then moved along the trench, and it was a case of K.Y.B.H.D. again, for Fritz had all his machine guns playing on us, and an occasional shell was falling near us till we turned to our right along a narrow trench. A few yards along the trench, Lieut. Holt was killed, sniped through the head. We had great difficulties getting along this trench because of the barbed-wire entanglements, having had to crawl underneath them, but we arrived at our "hopping-off" place. For the ^{last} hour, our artillery had been putting over a few shells, (eighteen pounders) with little effect.

We hopped the bags at 1 o'clock, and now was the time I had to have my wits about me, for I was in charge of No. 9 Platoon in the hop-over. I was in the second wave, ~~was~~ one of "B" Company's platoons under Sgt. -----, being the first. We were going A.I. and after crossing a road, we struck a wood. We were having a few pot shots at Fritz running away; (he wouldn't stop to fight). Everything was going well as we reached the edge of the wood which was at the top of the Mount, when Sgt. ----- informed me that the enemy was ducking away on our left along a trench, so I turned to my platoon to say, "Come on boys, up and at the bastards", and every man dashed with me. On leaving the wood, Fritz turned a machine gun on to us, and got a few of us, including Sgt. ----- The last I saw of him was when he was rolling down the incline towards the trench. I suppose he was trying to roll into the trench for cover. Those who didn't get knocked, dropped to the ground and took cover, and accounted for a few Fritz's that were retiring along the trench. I managed, along with the others, to get into the trench down which Fritz was running, and accounted for a few more, who put up their hands, but none of us had any mercy that day, and they all "slipped". Fritz was still playing hell with his machine gun on our left, and I got Roy Smerdon on to them with his gun. He could not see Fritz, so he had to climb on to the parapet and expose half his body to the enemy so that he could get a good pot at them, and he soon put Fritz and his gun to sleep. I then noticed a few of my platoon on my right, under a bank, sniping and bombing; I rushed over and found that they were held up by a very strong post of Fritzes. I had a look over the top and saw tons of Fritzes, who looked as though they were preparing for a counter-attack, for they were all in full kit. All the time, the boys were giving them hell with bombs and sniping, so I told Jack Castle, who had a machine gun, to give them a burst. He didn't need to be told twice, for he climbed on to the bank and emptied one magazine after another into Fritz; Frank Roberts and Tagnulle feeding

(3)

him with magazines. At this time, Dobson was doing good work as a runner for me; I was doing a little sniping myself, and was having good sport till a Fritz bomb lobbed fair into my hand while I was kneeling down filling my magazine. It burst almost immediately, and wounded me in the stomach and hand. This put me out of action, so I crawled back to a shell hole where some of our boys were lying, some dead and some wounded. I must have been lying there a few minutes, when Sgt. Lowerson came to me and said, "Come on Wig., they have got me in the leg as well". So, assisted by him, I got back to the trench, and "Lowy" ordered a Fritz ambulance man, who was going back as a prisoner, to dress my wounds; then, assisted by others, he helped to carry me to the dressing station. After this my mind was a blank.

I believe I was conveyed to the dressing station, and from there by train to Rouen. There I was operated on, and after three weeks, was sent to Blighty.

Sgt. T. H. Wignell,
No. 9 Platoon,
"C" Company, 21st Bn.

24 Lancaster St.
Melbom - Melbourne

4/3/20.

MONT ST. QUENTIN.

Sunday, 1st September 1918.

The night of Friday, 30th August 1918 found the 21st Battalion bivouacked along the Somme Canal, and the same evening, Frank Roberts of "C" Company came along for me (in "A" Company). We strolled along the Canal Bank, yarning and smoking for a couple of hours; talking of nothing in particular, perhaps exchanging an experience of the last day or so, with an occasional reference to some incident of home life, just as good pals would, satisfied with each other's company, not knowing when we would meet again. As a matter of fact, it was our last yarn together, although, the next day, I spoke to him for a little time.

Saturday morning, the 31st, we moved off, halting a while near the advanced artillery for lunch. After leaving, we came to the main road leading past the village of Cléry, which was a mass of ruins, hardly a wall being left standing. In this respect, it hardly differed from scores of other villages in France and Belgium. The road was being heavily shelled, but we managed to get through without any casualties. We halted under a steep bank by the roadside until dusk, and the shells were coming all the time, some being very close. I think it was just after this that Les. Baker was wounded. Not long before, I had seen Frank Roberts, and moved over near enough to say 'good-day', but I never saw him again. We had tea at this spot, and were all glad when night came, and we moved along to another position nearer the front line. This was a cutting nearer the Peronne Railway line, and here we waited ~~xxx~~ until 2 o'clock in the morning of 1st September. It had been raining a little and was bitterly cold, but, as a carrying party ^{of the 24th Battalion} was already there in possession of all the available dugouts, there was no shelter for us. However, noticing a couple of the carrying party leave their dugout, to go on a job, two of us promptly crawled inside and remained there till they returned. As we were half asleep when they did return, we did not hear them till they were right in on us. We yelled and they jumped; they were considerably startled, but they were very decent about it, and as they expected to go on another job shortly, allowed us to remain. Breakfast was issued here, and at the appointed hour, we set out for the front line, coming immediately under shell fire. This cost us a few men in Tom Ryan and Syd. Hicks, both machine gunners (the latter a No. 1), and men we could ill afford to lose. Our platoon (No. 4) was last out of the cutting, and a shell came close enough to make us all duck our heads, one chap embracing Mother Earth with such speed and effect, that he bumped his nose against a jutting railway sleeper, and his language though perhaps excusable, was certainly not publishable.

We soon left this nasty spot behind, and not long after, reached the front line. The weather was cold and crisp at this stage, with just enough starlight to enable us to see our way. About 3 a.m. or thereabouts we relieved the 23rd Battalion in the line, and at 6 a.m., the 14th Brigade went over to take a village in front of Peronne while we held the line. Holding the line for a 'hop over' is little better than the 'hop over' itself in some respects, and we lost several good men including Lieut. Dickson and a Lance Corporal whose name I cannot recall. They were killed by the one shell. Lieut. Dickson had been with us only a few weeks, but was well liked, being a good game officer.

The attack of the 14th Brigade was completely successful, and we were all very busy collecting our wounded and German prisoners, and sending them out. About 11 a.m. we moved along the trench about 800 yards to the left, halting at the foot of Mont St. Quentin. On our way we passed many of our dead, it being difficult to pass ~~xxx~~ some places without touching them. This, in itself, gave us some idea of the desperate stand the enemy was making at this stage. We had been given to understand that Mont St. Quentin had been taken by the 5th Brigade in the morning, and indeed that belief was general and was widely published. We were weary and hungry, and generally played out, so threw ourselves down almost anywhere to rest. The sun was shining at this ^{time} stage, and it was not too cold. We were relieved at the thought that we were to have short spell, and a very short one it turned out to be, as about an hour later, we were called out and told that we had to take Mont St. Quentin. The 5th Brigade had attacked and got through, but an immediate counter-attack threw them back and badly cut them up in the process.

The 23rd Battalion, sent to assist them, met with a similar fate. There was no great cause for wonder in this, for the French General Staff had described the Mont as impregnable, and the British Authorities doubted if it could be taken by direct frontal assault, but we only knew of that afterwards.

Everything being ready, we started out, moving briskly, and in good order, and with the sun bright overhead. Almost immediately we were under shell-fire, and about here we passed several men coming in wounded from the earlier attacks. "Don't spare any machine gunners" they said. We came into a shallow trench that zig-zagged up the side of the hill. We moved along briskly and in good order, although continually harrassed by shell-~~fire~~ and machine gun fire. This was really the starting point of the attack for us, because, although we could not see the enemy, it was apparent we were visible to him. However, when we neared the village, we were for a time concealed, and were enabled to take up our position close by a brick wall which seemed to run along the lower edge of the village. From here we started on the actual attack. The other Companies on the left won their way through the village and swung around into line with us. I do not know the positions of those other Companies, but we ("A" Company) were on the right of the attack with our right flank in the air, but, as the nearest unit on the right was ahead of us, and our field of fire covered the space between, this did not matter a great deal. Still it will give some idea of the importance to the whole line, of taking and holding Mont St. Quentin. It would certainly have meant the withdrawal of the force threatening Peronne, and the postponement of the latter's capture, had we failed.

Our way led through a thick copse of small bushy trees, and through this we pushed, forcing aside the leaves with our bayonets. We were meeting a pretty solid fire from the well concealed enemy, the bullets clipping the leaves about us. It was intended to advance in line with intervals between the men, but this was not possible owing to our having to follow a path leading straight ahead. "C" Company and the others were further up the hill on the left, and it was ~~here~~ the opposition was strongest, although we on the right were having no easy task. Emerging from the bushes, we came to an open space in which there were some old huts that the enemy had evidently just vacated. Another bushy space then confronted us, from which we had to clear the enemy who was putting up a solid fight. This brought us to a road where we halted ^{apparently} for a while, until our left flank should come up to us, as we had ~~apparently~~ gone ahead a little faster than they had. They, on their part, were evidently having a stiff fight about the summit of the hill, and it was here that Frank Roberts and so many of his mates fell.

The Huns had fallen back to a place of concealment, and were pouring in a deadly fire before falling further back. It availed them little however, because we were not in the mood to be stopped that day, and exacted a full penalty from the beaten Hun. However, we had scarcely settled in the road, before machine guns opened on us, and Private McIntosh was killed. He was struck in the breast, and died instantly. We dashed across to the other side of the road, but the bullets followed us. It was no use going back, so we crossed over and pushed on. Some of us came to a large shell-hole which we occupied and found two men already in possession. They belonged to the unit that had attacked in the morning, and their astonishment was profound when they learned that the hill had been retaken by the enemy. They came along with us when we resumed, and having got into order again, we reached a trench strongly held by the enemy. With bomb and bayonet we forced them back, making our way gradually along, so that the rest of the Huns (on the left) falling back from the determined advance of our left Companies, came under our fire, and forced to give way or surrender, quite a large number accepting the latter alternative. The German heavy artillery was unconsciously giving us assistance at this stage. Those at the head of our Company were slowly making their way along the trench, but those in the rear of the Company were in the open, and the big 8" and 5.9s were coming very close to us. We were thus extremely anxious to get into the trench, and our advice to the others was so sound, and so very much to the point that they quickened themselves up a little, and enabled us to get in. Our worry then was not so ~~xxx~~ much the enemy in front as the shells behind. This trench was the last stronghold of the defences of Mont St. Quentin, and shortly after, we connected with our other Companies, and ^{so} had reached our objective. But much yet remained to be done. We had to consolidate our position in the event of counter-attacks which were reasonably sure to take place, and in fact did, but

they were half-hearted attempts, and were, in the main, scattered by our artillery. It was here that the official photographer left us, after having been with us from the start. He was a game man, and took some good snaps.

During the night, patrols were sent out to examine scattered trenches, and places likely to conceal small bodies of the enemy. We were rather glad when night came, because we could move about, which was more than we could do during the day. The trench was wide and shallow, so we could not walk upright, but had to disentangle ourselves by crawling along on hands and knees. The position having been previously occupied by the enemy, he knew the range to the yard, a fact he was very fond of demonstrating. Observers had been placed at different points, and an occasional peep over showed us small bodies of the enemy dashing for cover, and protected by machine gun fire that swept our parapet. During the night, those of us not otherwise occupied, dug shelters in the trench, as the big guns were sending in frequent bursts of heavy and accurate fire.

By morning, we were fairly well protected, but it had been a long and anxious night.

At 6 o'clock on the morning of Monday 2nd September, the 7th Brigade hopped over from our line, and pushed the Germans back a further 800 yards. They were assisted by a light barrage of 18 pounders, the opening of which was a signal for more music from the enemy's big fellows. This caused us to dive for our funk holes. A 7th Brigade man attempted to follow us, but was stopped by one of his officers who ordered him over the top. The chap had nearly given way to panic, but pulled himself together at once, and went with his mates. It was quite evident that he had mistaken us for some of his Battalion. His recovery, and the game way he went at it seemed to me to be rather a fine example of moral courage. This attack was quite successful, and made the position secure.

During the rest of that day, our trench was severely knocked about by enemy shells, and our ("A" Coy.) casualties were very heavy, Ptes. Bottomly and Kelly being amongst the killed. Only the walking wounded could get out, and the trench was becoming filled with the more serious cases. Stretcher bearers were scarce, and, although the few that remained were working hard, it was a long time before they made any impression on the number. It was a long and trying day, and all through it our casualties continued, one platoon mustering 5 out of 18 men, another 8 from about the same number, and the others very little better. In the afternoon a shell dropped on "A" Company H.Q. in the crater and temporarily buried Lieut. Keen and Sgt. Peel of "A" Coy., both of whom were severely shaken and had to be evacuated. That left us with one officer besides the Coy. Commander, Captain Sullivan; this was Lieut. Brett. Mr. Brett later on paid a visit to Coy. H.Q. He left his pack in the trench close to his little dugout, and on his return, all that remained of his pack was half a boot, and, no doubt, many a treasured souvenir had gone up as an offering to Mars. He was rather disgusted, but very grateful for his narrow squeak.

Early next morning, 3rd September, we heard a most pleasant sound. It was that of our big guns which had come up during the night, and were putting in great work. Burst after burst was sent in whenever an enemy gun was suspected, and the effect was felt almost immediately. A half-hearted reply was attempted, and then we had a fairly peaceful time until our relief.

The enemy had been using a lot of shells on us that contained an irritating gas. This penetrated to the lungs, and affected the eyes, nose and throat, so we were very pleased to be rid of them.

Our relief took place about 4.30^{PM} and was effected speedily. It was still daylight, and as we came into prominence now and again on the way out, we had to be quick. However, we managed it safely. We went out through the village, and on the way, saw many evidences of the strenuous fight. German dead were everywhere, our own having been collected and reverently buried during the previous night of 2nd September.

The cooks were waiting for us with something to eat and drink a little way back, and we then set out on a long night march to the village of Cappy. It was during our stay here that the order to disband the Battalion was issued. That however, is another story.

Memorials are to be erected to each Australian Division in France. Mont St. Quentin is to have one to itself, and none who took part in the battle, and few who didn't, will deny its right.

*"Lonely Bank"
Healesville*

Cpl. F. H. Starr, No. 6891
Healesville. A.C. 2/10/1920
27/3/1920.

THE 21st. BATTALION A.I.F. at MONT ST. QUENTIN.

On Friday, 30th August 1918, we were temporarily stationed in a trench in front of the village, Clery-sur-Somme, and on the following day (Saturday) 31st. August) we moved forward, marching alongside a canal, into which shells were falling occasionally. Passing over a bridge made by Engineers, we halted on a road, near a battery of 18 Pounders, which were manned by Australians, had our mid-day meal, rested for an hour or so, then proceeded in single file forward. We passed through the remains of a very small village, which the Germans were shelling heavily, and everybody breathed a sigh of relief when we reached the outskirts. Our Company ("C") took cover at the side of a hill; meanwhile shells were falling thick and fast in a swamp on our right. Towards evening when everybody was scattered around and resting beside the hill, a shell landed right amidst us, wounding Corporal A. L. Baker in the leg.

We had tea, which had just arrived by the limbers and were ordered forward again, so we marched in single file, in sections, along a road, then on to a railway line, and presently were ordered to halt. In the darkness we discerned a trench with one or two small bivouacs, and we naturally prepared to make ourselves comfortable there. Later came the order to move back and we had to abandon our new positions and were allocated to a trench a little way back. Here we remained until about 11.30 a.m. next day (1st September) when we were again ordered to advance. We were informed that Mont St. Quentin had been captured by the 5th Brigade but that the Germans had re-captured it.

We moved out over open country for a few hundred yards, crawling under and getting over barbed wire entanglements which were everywhere. Meanwhile the Germans were shelling on our right with 18 pounders, and on our half-right a German mine exploded, scattering debris around. We passed by the body of Lieutenant Norman Holt, apparently sniped through the head. As we were now under direct observation by the Germans, heavy machine gun fire was directed at us, the bullets whizzing past, and whilst crossing the railway line one of our men fell, shot through the neck. We scrambled along until we came to a communication trench, where we took cover, and after about half-an-hour's waiting, were told that we were to go over the top at 1.30 p.m. As we waited Frank Roberts with whom I had Paris leave early in March was cheerily eating something and was sitting next to Private May; this was the last I saw of Frank. Ted Heath sat a little way off, and Private Kelly and I sat together. A piece of shrapnel went clean through Kelly's hat, but he was alright then.

At about 1.25 we moved along the communication trench and struck the front line, in which numerous 23rd Battalion dead lay - mostly all shot through the head. Our Artillery meanwhile had opened up and in a few minutes came the order "Over" and over we went. I was temporarily attached to No. 10 Platoon in command by Lieut. Deardon. No. 9 Platoon went over on the extreme left and No. 10 on the right and so on. As we advanced in single file such machine gun fire was coming from a ruined tower right in front of us, obviously a nest of guns was there. A broken brick wall lay on our right and formed an admirable position for enemy machine gunners. Nearly every man was quite composed and each individual looked furtively at every broken building he came across. My platoon passed through the village, not meeting with such opposition, and then we went through a wood. A big space then confronted us a huge crater lay a little on our left. I noticed several heads above the edge of the crater, then several arms became visible, and potato masher bombs were thrown at men on my left. I noticed what appeared to be dozens of Germans making off right in front of me, and called out to Private Gilmour who was carrying a machine gun right behind me, to direct his gun in front of me. He did so, and immediately, I felt a dull pain in my left shoulder. After I had progressed a few yards I became conscious of the fact that I was shot through the shoulder, as my tunic was dripping with blood. I turned round, saw Jack Castle, shook hands with him and made my way back to our old front line, where my wound was dressed. Afterwards I was sent to England.

In charge
Book Deptmt
Brans Ltd.
Murray St. Perth. W.A.

Private S. J. Norwood,
No. 6364, C. Company,
21st Battalion, A.I.F.

On the morning of Saturday, 31st August 1918, we, C. Company of the 21st Battalion A.I.F. crossed the Somme and had dinner behind artillery. After dinner we moved up to a chalk pit and had heavy shelling while going. Corporal Len. Baker was wounded in the leg by a piece of shrapnel. At 7.30 p.m. we went into supports for the night.

On Sunday, 1st September our barrage opened at 4 a.m. German artillery retaliated with scattered fire for half an hour. About 6 a.m. we received word that the 22nd and 24th Battalions had been counter-attacked and driven back. At 7.30 a.m. we moved out in sections to get into positions. About 10 o'clock we reached the railway line half way up the hill, crossed the line and got into an old sap leading up to an old brick wall on the right. At 1.30 p.m. we attacked and advanced over first road where there was heavy machine gun fire and a good deal of bombing. We forced the German right wing back, causing the left to withdraw, and we reached our objective about 3 p.m., an old sap about 100 yards beyond the village. Private A. Walker was killed in sap above the village after our objective had been taken.

Private A. E. Crawford.

21st Battr
A.I.F.

2/9/19

Orbysh
East Flanders

Doctrs of Records.

WITH COMPLIMENTS
FROM J. G. ROBERTS,
"EUMANA,"
17 HASTINGS ROAD,
UPPER HAWTHORN.



To the Memory of
FRANCIS WILLIAM ROBERTS
 AND COMRADES OF THE 21ST BATTN. A.I.F.
 KILLED IN THE CAPTURE OF MONT ST. QUENTIN, FRANCE
 ON SUNDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1918.
 BURIED TOGETHER ON THE MOUNT. AND AFTERWARDS AT PERONNE.

BLACKMORE, ALBERT HENRY—Lce.-Cpl., M.M., "B" Co., No. 2116.
Age, 24 years. Son of J. A. and E. Blackmore, North Maldon.

BOTTOMLEY, WILLIAM JOHN—Pte., "A" Co., No. 7199. Age, 39 years
8 months. Son of John and Mary Jane Bottomley, Echuca.

CHANDLER, DAVID GEORGE GREGORY—Pte., "D" Co., No. 6781. Age,
20 years. Fourth Son of David C. and Emma Chandler, North
Williamstown.

COPE, ARTHUR LINDSAY—Lieut., "C" Co. Age, 28 years. Second Son of
Edwin and Jane Cope, Strathmerton.

DOWELL, WILLIAM FRANCIS—Pte., "A" Co., No. 6747. Age, 20 years. Only
Son of Frederick and Margaret Dowell, Thornbury.

HUNT, COLIN EDWARD—Sgt., "B" Co., No. 6817A. Age, 22 years 9 months.
Second Son of James Jupp and Martha Jamison Hunt, Surrey Hills.

KELLY, ALBERT EDWARD—Pte., "C" Co., No. 6833. Age, 40 years. Second
youngest Son of Thomas and Ellen Kelly, Essendon. Husband of
Mrs. Belle Kelly, and father of Gracie and Albert.

ROBERTS, FRANCIS WILLIAM—Pte., "C" Co., No. 6874. Age, 30 years.
Elder Son of John Garibaldi and Roberta Margaret Roberts, Haw-
thorn. Husband of Ruby May Roberts, and father of Nancy May.

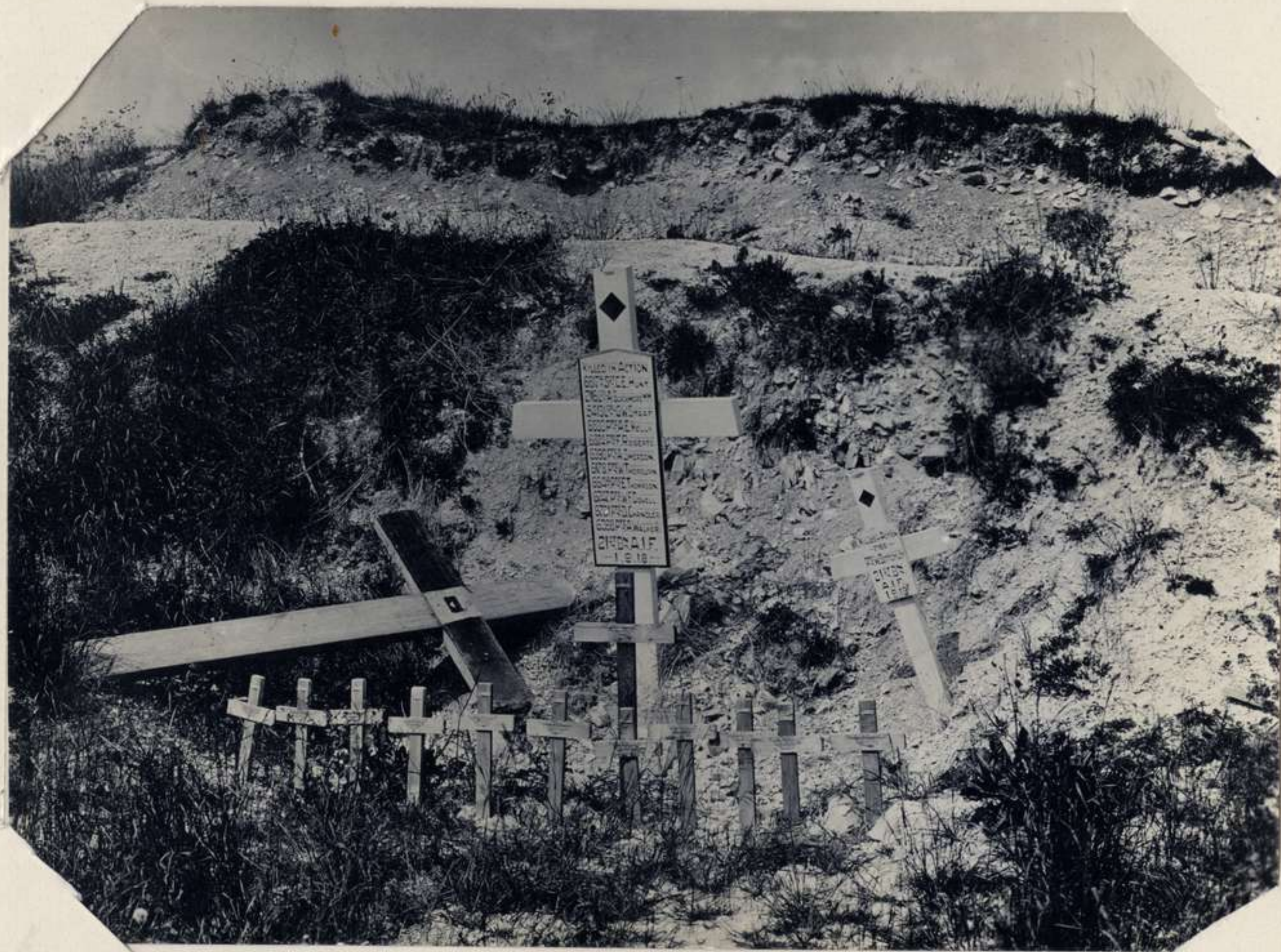
SMERDON, ALFRED ROY—Pte., "C" Co., No. 6390. Age, 25 years 7 months.
Son of John James and Ann Smerdon, Murrayville.

STAAF, GUSTAF WILLIAM OSCAR—Lce.-Cpl., "C" Co., No. 5413. Age,
27 years. Fourth Son of Andrew and Frances Staaf, Echuca.

THOMPSON, EDWIN WERRETT—Pte., "B" Co., No. 664A. Age, 25 years.
Second Son of William E. and Mary A. Thompson, Drysdale.

THORBURN, WILLIAM HUGH—Pte., "B" Co., No. 6178. Age, 35 years.
Youngest Son of Hugh and Lois Eliza Thorburn, Newton, N.S.W.

WALKER, ALEXANDER—Pte., "C" Co., No. 6398. Age, 23 years 5 months.
Only Son of George and Janet Walker, Roseheart, Aberdeenshire,
Scotland.



1. Peronne
Sept 1, 1918
54 Bn.
G.P. Hall.

H.A.G.

Gundooce,
New York.

27th Jan 1941.

Dear Dr. Beaman.

Thank you for yours of 21st inst with map & extract from your notes.

The map leaves no doubt in my mind that it was B reached by my patrol.

Your notes say "About 100 prisoners were taken out of the N.E. end of the town that morning with M.G.s & Minenwerfers. Does this refer to the morning of the 1st or 2nd as to the best of my knowledge my patrol ~~was~~ ^{was} the only one in that end of the town that day & while we took prisoners we only succeeded in putting out of action one M.G. as far as I remember.

But I have always understood that the 58th Batt. took about that number of prisoners the next day.

As far as the fighting at C & D was concerned I do not think I would have been quit so far north as that. I have pencilled in the approx line of my advance. Though I may not be quite accurate about the starting point.

My diary says we hopped over at 6.15:AM, but I cannot say if that was your hour or the

are meant to refer to the tracks & not to particular points
Under C & D

actual time we went over. Things were a bit
 mixed. I think I saw two of our own shells
 & not much enemy artillery fire. Enemy M.G.'s
 were fairly active as we were getting close to
 the first belt of wire which was practically
 untouched & looked impassable. The first
 trench put up a fight until we got well
 into it but the second was lightly held
 & only one or two posts seemed to put
 offer much resistance.

From there the going was easy for a
 while but M.G. posts became active as we
 got nearer the town but they appeared
 to have been hurriedly organised & badly
 placed as I do not think I should have
 been writing this now.

Of the three posts you marked, I was not at the
 one on the left but the other two were both
 B Coy posts for certain the one on the right
 was mine. There was also a post somewhere
 about 27089 where I have put a pencil dot, but
 I cannot remember if it was held on the
 1st or not. The position is only approximate
 as I only visited it at night, as the way
 to it along the Boulevard would have
 been unhelpful in daylight as Flamiconat

was strongly held & in this case the M.G.s
seemed to be remarkably well placed.

By some error we got both our own & the
enemy barrage on the morning of the
2nd. I believe some of the other advanced
posts were withdrawn for a while but the
order did not reach us.

Hope you can sort what you want out of this.

I know you must be used to wading through
thousands of words to catch one or two that
may possibly be of use. Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A. C. Hall.

P.S. My son aged eleven starts at A.S.C. this coming
term. A.C.H.



Where was the fighting?

Posts held during Sept.

CONTOURS IN METRES

Dr C. W. Bean
Official Historian
Victoria Barracks

H.N. Sept 2, 1918

Tullyaba
Quilpie
Jan 31st

Sydney.

Dear Dr Bean

I am afraid that I am not going to be of much use to you in respect to the fight on Sept 2nd 1918.

Here it is! out of a hazy pad and perhaps some of it may dovetail in with information you already have.

We moved off with the 43rd on the morning of the 2nd under a hat I seem to remember as a "bitzer" barrage & more or less followed down a line of shallow trenches until held up at a bomb stop by the Hun.

We exchanged salvos but were prevented from crossing the gap by a machine gun or guns firing from over our left. They had us pinned down in the trench for quite a time but over on our right we could see some enterprising individual bombing his way up in their direction. In a lull a couple of us made the gap & with bombs at the ready proceeded along the trench encountering

no opposition until we finally came
on the "nest" which consisted of a
large number of guns and big
garrison. Altho our history records
it as our capture of Yancy that the
real cause was the bombing from the
night tho no other members of the
attacking force were on the spot &
the surrender was made to us. Incid-
ently we staggered home laden with
spoil; and I still have two pairs
of Zeiss and a watch that is
keeping excellent time - gathered on
that occasion. As regards the number.
Well; now I have had time to cool
down and information on "Cairns"
gathered from your previous volumes
I'd always treat "numbers" with reserve.
We did get a big lot of guns that
day, in that m.g. nest.

As regards other troops, there could
have been a regiment of red indians
present & I would not have taken ~~in~~ in the
fact. One thing is vivid, - but irrelevant
to the year - & that is that on trying
the establish liaison with the
to

regiment that was going over on our left, I found that a hour before Zero neither the men nor their N.C.O.'s had the slightest notion of where they were going or what they had to do next morning, I don't remember who they were, but remember wondering how in the blazes the Tommy troops got on when their officers were skivvied.

If I had my maps with me I might have been able to do a bit better but I sent them all the Oxley Library some time ago. My platoon must have been on the left of the 43rd otherwise I would not have had occasion to establish touch with the Tommies on the left.

That's about all I remember. It is amazing how trivial incidents remain in ones memory and facts of importance seem to fade away. I remember all sorts of items such as the rotten entrance to the ~~43rd~~ dugout in which the 43rd HQ's

was situated, the stairs were blown
in and one had to toboggan down
the entrance; & my difficulty in finding
the 43rd at night with the wind
well up as I thought I might be
in Anzacs line instead of our own.

I hope that you may get some-
thing out of this. I doubt it however
Yours sincerely

John H. Parker

HISTORICAL NOTES.

(Extracted from reply to letter sent to Lieut. F.W.F. MAJOR,
26 Battalion, in connection with biographical details
for Vol. IV).

"On the attack of 2nd September 1918, north of Peronne, in which the 26th Battalion participated, he was the only officer to reach the objective. With a sergeant and one private he kept the Germans at bay for 6 hours until the sergeant was killed and the private wounded and ammunition exhausted. A German platoon then overwhelmed him and he was taken prisoner, with wounded knee. A few days later the 26th Battalion again attacked and reached the objective this time, and found the sergeant's grave which the Germans had dug and over which they had placed a cross. Lieut. Major and his little party had previously captured one light machine gun and the German who was firing it. The German prisoner was sent back to the rear of our lines. It was only many weeks later that it was ascertained that Lieutenant Major was still alive and a prisoner of war."

ILLE

October 1, 1932

23rd Bn. at Mont St. Quentin

Mr. Percy Frost, of the 23rd Bn., A.I.F., proud of his old unit, thought we had done it an injustice by giving credit to the 21st Bn. for an exploit which, he contended, was carried off by the 23rd.

Mr. Frost, of course, had in mind the block published in last issue showing the 21st Bn. moving from Elsa trench to the brick wall of Mont St. Quentin. Perhaps in justice to the 23rd Bn., we should have mentioned that that unit had also attacked there, but our photograph, we can definitely assure Mr. Frost, was of the leading wave of the 21st Bn.

Mr. Frost says: "It was the 23rd Bn. that attacked the wall. I was with the 23rd when it attacked. 'B' Co. was on the right of the Peronne Road on the night of August 31, and on the morning of September 1 we crossed the road and Pte. MacTein, who was killed while attacking an enemy machine gun crew single-handed, was recommended for the V.C. The machine gun crew was captured."

"We then advanced along a trench towards Mont St. Quentin. We then came to the brick wall, and three of us—Sgt. Dykes, Lewis Gunner Thompson and myself—went through the wood to the opposite side to where the Red Cross huts stood. When we got within 20 yards of one of the huts a machine gun was opened on us and Thompson was killed, his last words being addressed to me, 'I'm done, Frosty.'"

"We then came back through the wood and waited for a barrage to open up on the side of the hill, as machine guns were troubling us. While waiting for the barrage the mine on top of Mont exploded. We finally took the objective and after being relieved went back to Cappy for a spell. Lieut. Fred Jenkins was in charge of 'B' Co. during the advance."

Ham Motes

Soldier Settlement Office
Amiens

Via Cotton Vale

26th June '21

29 JUN 1921

Messrs Angus & Robertson Ltd

Dear Sir

If you think this would be of any use to the author of Book No VI History of Australia in the war of 1914-1918, will you please forward on.

The 26th Battalion attacked in advance of Mont St Quentin on the 2nd Sept 1918. At noon on the 4th I got orders to stand by at one o'clock to go out on a daylight patrol with Lt-Col J. A. Robinson D.S.O. (26th Bn) through a copse & quarry about 500 yds in advance of our front line. We knew for certain the copse had been occupied by the Germans the night previous by the rattling of machine guns from different points.

It was a bright sunny day and at 1 o'clock the Colonel & I started off with the usual weapons of defence down a communication trench leading from the front line to the copse, we had only ~~just~~ one

Mr Bean
We have not answered
this as you will no doubt
prefer to do yourself
H.M.M.
gss

hundred yards to go and we were in good cover of the copse, we went 50 yds further and found ourselves in the open again with a stretch of 200 yds between us and the main copse. The Colonel led on and I followed and apart from a few shots fired at us from a long range we were not disturbed, we went through the main copse and into the quarry, after we had examined the buildings & dugout we crossed the St Denis - Busse Road and went down Darmstadt Trench for 300 yds, at this point we bumped up against a German sentry and as we were 800 yds into the German line we withdrew and that night the Battalion extended their line 1000 yds down Darmstadt Trench

My reason for writing this is on account of Colonel Robinson being such a modest man and didn't make a song of it. The few people who know about this stunt are General E. St. Wisdom, Major Lee (Brigade Major 7th Bde) and the diggers who were on the post where we started. Although this is not a V.C. act, nobody but a very brave man would undertake and lead such a stunt

I give you my word of honour that this story is true and hope you can find space for it. Thanking you yours Faithfully
P. J. [unclear]
26th Bn

Reveille

May 1, 1932

REV

A. I. O'Connor; Mate's Tribute

Strange to say, of the battalions of the 1st Division and 4th Brigade, A.I.F.—those which served in the war from start to finish—neither the 4th nor 5th Bn. collected a V.C. Each of the other 14 battalions scored—some, such as the 1st, 7th, and 16th, very liberally.

One member of the 4th Bn. (and afterwards of the 56th Bn.), who earned a V.C., though he was not awarded one, was Co.Sgt.-Major A. I. O'Connor, who tragically met his death in Sydney at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1929. O'Connor, who was an electrician, had descended from work on the overhead wires to pay his respects to "Departed Comrades" during the two minutes silence, and on climbing back to his job came in contact with a live wire, and was killed instantly. He is survived by a very courteous wife and three beautiful children, who have their home in a Sydney suburb.



O'Connor was born at Deniliquin about 40 years ago, coming from a well-known family. At five years of age he was taken to West Wyalong, from which place he enlisted in early 1915. He sailed from Sydney with 9th Reinforcements, 4th Bn., and saw service with the 4th Bn. till March, 1916.

On formation of the 5th Div. he was posted (as cpl.) to "D" Coy., 56th Bn., and sailed with it to France. His history from then on became practically that of "D" Coy., 56th Bn. He took part in the Battle of Fromelles on July 19, 1916, and early showed his courage and capabilities. His company, being reserve company of the bn., was responsible for bringing up ammunition and carrying in wounded during that fight.

On many occasions during daylight on July 20, 1916, with others of his section, O'Connor went into No Man's Land and brought in wounded. He carried out this work until the bn. was relieved 48 hours after. At Fleurbaix he did most of the company's patrol work, for which he was splendidly adapted, being keen, conscientious, and thorough.

CHARGE OF OUTPOST.

At Flers, in Oct., 1916, he again showed what he was made of. On one occasion, being in charge of an outpost (with a section of four men)—two were killed by snipers—he insisted on taking the next turn on observation. He carried on through Gueudecourt, Switch Trench, Rose Trench, and Delville Wood, being equally at home whether in the front line or No Man's Land, or on arduous fatigue, and was promoted to sergeant.

He was wounded in the head and arm on March 16, 1917, and on rejoining, carried on in usual gallant fashion, particularly at Wyschaete and Messines. He went to the Somme in March, 1918, and on the night of April 24-25, volunteered to act as guide to 15th Bde., which was to retake Villers Bret. He was accepted, and with others received the personal thanks of Brig. "Pompey" Elliott. About this time he was A./C.S.M., and a better one it would not be possible to have, O'Connor having the greatest influence for good over the men of his company, being greatly respected by officers, N.C.O.'s, and men.

Personally he carried out many patrols during the period May-August, 1918, and in the big advance on August 8 he showed rare skill and initiative, thus enabling the company to carry out the work allotted with small loss. At Peronne on Sept. 1, "D" Company was ordered to attack on the left of Mont St. Quentin. Under heavy artillery, M.G., and rifle fire, the company started to advance, and in a few minutes all officers (3) were out of action and platoons became mixed. O'Connor took complete charge, and with skill and courage, reorganised the company. He pointed out the objective, and led the company forward, and captured objectives.

Although casualties were numerous and fire heavy, he, by setting a splendid example, soon had the position consolidated. After night fell he personally reconnoitred over a front of 600 yards, and brought in two wounded. For this he received his D.C.M. and Roumanian Silver Medal, and promotion to warrant rank.

After being relieved two days later, the company, now 17 strong, was inspected by Major-General T. Hobbs, and O'Connor was personally thanked and shaken hands with by General Hobbs.

How he failed to get the V.C. was beyond understanding. O'Connor returned to Australia in August, 1919, and was a very prominent member at battalion reunions and Anzac Day functions up to the time of his death.

There was no more efficient soldier, none braver, and none better liked and respected, than O'Connor. His memory will ever remain with those who were privileged to serve with him.—"J."

D. 56 Bn. Sept 1.

REVEILLE

September 1, 1937

MT. ST. QUENTIN CAPTURE



Australian Memorial—Mt. St. Quentin

Stronghold Stormed

(By Lieut.-Col. Carl Henke, formerly of the German General Staff, and now at the Research Institute for Military History at Potsdam)

succeeded in a short time in breaking through the foremost positions of the German trench-system, the 5th and the 4th Divisions following them.

When the fog lifted the front line of the attacking force had taken Lamotte and Cerisy. Whilst they rested, the following lines of infantry, light tanks and cavalry pushed through their ranks to carry on the attack, and before noon had struck, they saw Foucaucourt lying before them. Regiments of British cavalry advanced at the gallop, but were repulsed by the German machine-gun fire which revved on all sides. Also, growing numbers of tanks were disabled by German field artillery and hand-grenades. When German reserves took the offensive against their adversaries, who were now in disorder, the latter were compelled to retire and surrender some of the newly-conquered territory. As dusk fell the Australian line ran through Harbonnieres and Morcourt. On the first day of the offensive, they had advanced some 10 kilometres into the German front, taken several thousands of prisoners and hundreds of guns. Sir Douglas Haig reported in glowing colours on the splendid achievements of the Canadian and Australian troops in this battle.

"On the night of the 30th-31st August, the 2nd Australian Division (Major-General C. Rosenthal) stormed Mont St. Quentin, a most important tactical feature commanding Peronne and the crossings of the Somme at that town."—(Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches).

The German High Command had taken the fighting initiative in the spring of 1918, after the heavy defensive battles of 1917 in Flanders, at Arras, on the Aisne, and in the Champagne. Formidable German attacks had cleft great gaps in the Allied front to the west of Lille and St. Quentin, and to the south of Laon. However, the aim of separating the British from the French and thus gaining strategic mobility, tangible as it seemed, had not been achieved. These attempts only served to weaken the German front considerably, and the quickly diminishing divisions were but only partially replaced. A reverse was bound to follow, and it came in the latter part of the summer, when the Allies, who meanwhile had been reinforced by the Americans, took on the offensive themselves.

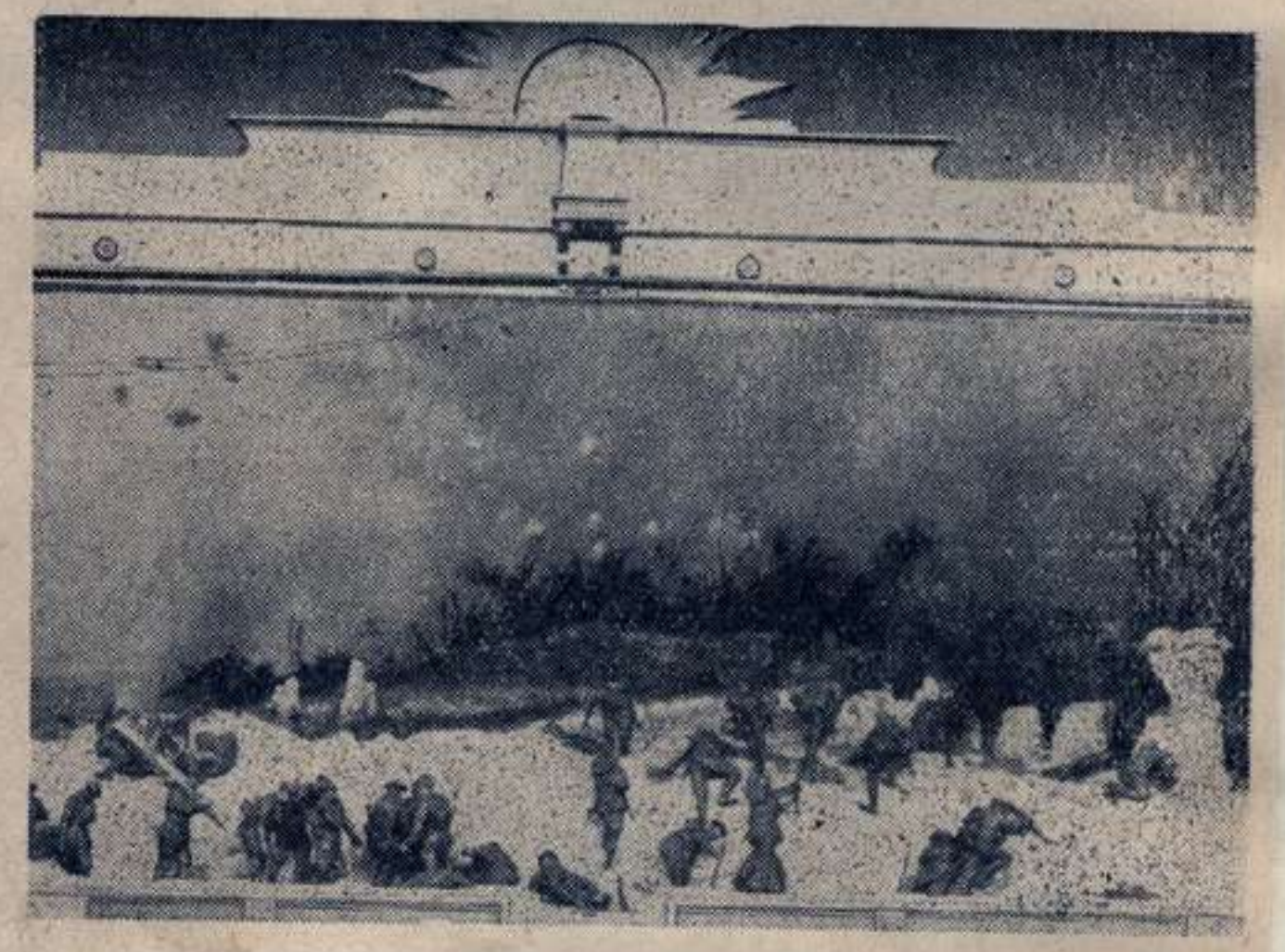
The pace was set by a sudden and overwhelming attack by the French tank corps out of the woods surrounding Villers-Cotterets. The Germans were forced to evacuate the land they had previously won south of Laon almost to the Vesle. Hardly had the German front here gained a stronger footing, when the united French and English forces attacked the point lying to the west of St. Quentin between Arras and Soissons.

The Fourth British Army, under General Rawlinson, held the centre of the extended front line, whilst to the north was the Third British Army of General Byng, in the south the First French Army of General Debeney. The attack commenced on August 8th on both sides of the ancient Roman road leading from Amiens to St. Quentin. The countryside was covered by a slight mist when the deadly concert of the artillery suddenly opened at 4.20 a.m. The German infantry barely managed to man the trenches of the front line, as the rattling and fire-vomiting gigantic forms of the tanks appeared before them, breaking down and crushing everything, and thus preparing the way for the storming detachments of assault troops running between and behind them.

It was the Australian corps, under General Sir John Monash, which attacked the German XI. Army Corps and the Headquarters 51, striking between the Roman high road and the Somme River, and particularly driving at the 47th and the 109th Infantry Division, which was about to be relieved. In a particularly gallant attack, the battalions of the 2nd and 3rd Australian Divisions

To the east of Cambrai the 21st German Infantry Division had at last found desired rest, after the foregoing heavy fighting. On the morning of August 8, however, they were again alarmed, and on the 9th the infantry of the division arrived in Peronne, under Colonel Kundt. The battalions hurried as quickly as possible from the station to the front, which extended from Chuignolles, south of the Somme, to Lihons. The enemy, however, having turned their full attention to the southern attack, progressed only very slowly at this point, and the 21st Division was able to fill the capacity of reserve for the front lines on both sides of the Roman road (the old German position of 1916) till it at last relieved the latter. On August 21st the disposition of its troops was as follows: Infantry Regiment No. 87 stood between the Somme and Chuignolles; in Chuignolles and to the south of it was Fusilier Regiment No. 80; and then up to the Roman road Infantry Regiment No. 81, which was flanked by the 107th Infantry Division. The 243rd Infantry Division formed the second line from Cappy to Soyecourt.

The attack of the 1st Australian Division, which was again strongly reinforced by numerous tanks, commenced in the thick morning fog on August 23rd. Tremendous fighting took place for every ruined village and forest
(Continued on Page 28)



Storming Mont St. Quentin (Australian War Memorial Model)

Mont St. Quentin (From Page 6)

and every bit of trench, and the German detachments, which for the most part did not consist of more than 20-30 men, were gradually withdrawn towards the east. Finally, the remainder of the 21st Division evaded the enemy by crossing to the north bank of the Somme at Feullieres and Omiecourt during the night of August 28th/29th.

The Australian field of attack was hitherto divided from west to east by the winding and sluggish River Somme, and a canal running parallel to it. The river bends sharply southwards at the old fortified town of Peronne; this formed for the Germans a strong frontier obstacle behind which they could, to some extent, revive their strength. To overcome this obstacle, it was necessary to go round it north of Peronne. On August 21st General Byng, with the Third English Army, fiercely attacked the line between Arras and Albert to enable General Rawlinson to overcome the difficulty more easily. In the course of this advance made by General Byng, the New Zealand Division captured the town of Bapaume. On the 30th the Third and Fourth Armies' line north of the Somme ran westwards to the Marrieres Woods, and eastwards from Combles and Rancourt to the north. In this position, therefore, the enemies faced each other.

On the German side, after crossing the Somme, the 21st Infantry Division now held the so-called Siegfried Ridge and the Seefeld Heights behind it with Infantry Regiment No. 87 and the Fusilier Regiment No. 80. The Fusilier Regiment had sent forward a company to the front north of Clery, and another to the western exit of the village. Infantry Regiment No. 81 formed a connection with the Somme on the slope of the Seefeld Height, stretching back to the Tullinger woods.

On the Australian side the 1st Division had pushed through to the south of the Somme in an eastward direction. The 2nd Division had followed the Germans to the north bank of the river, relieving the 3rd Division, which had advanced along the north bank through Bray-Suzanne, its advanced troops already, in the course of the 29th August, getting into touch with the new German lines running from Clery to the north. Somewhere near 5.30 in the afternoon they reached the railway trench under cover of the Raven Heights, and forced the company standing to the north of Clery back to its principal defence-line. However, they did not succeed in forcing their way into Clery itself.

The German Fusilier Regiment had taken part, except for slight intervals, in the very heavy fighting of the last three weeks, and had sustained great casualties. Its companies scarcely numbered more than 30 riflemen. Thus the Australian battalions succeeded in penetrating into the principal defence-lines to the north of Clery when they carried out their resolute attack at 5 a.m. on August 30th, advancing without the slightest artillery preparation. They were driven out of the trenches with the assistance of a company of the 4th (Empress Augusta) Regiment of the Grenadier Guards, which was thrown into action from behind. However, the Australians managed to force their way from the north into the village and to cut off the company which held it and which would not evacuate the position. They were taken prisoner, only one non-commissioned officer and 13 men escaping to the east.

In the second half of the day some more Australian assault-troops advancing resolutely penetrated into the principal German defence-line. They were forced to retire before a German back-thrust, losing 10 men dead and a non-commissioned officer and one private taken prisoner. Both belonged to the 56th Australian Battalion. But the attackers remained in occupation of a large gap between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 80th Regiment, and this was later to prove fatal for the entire German position.

The 1st Grenadier Guard Regiment ("Emperor Alexander I") and three batteries of artillery had received orders in the late afternoon of 29th August to occupy and hold by all means the highly important height of Mont St. Quentin, which formed the key to the entire German position behind the Somme. The night was comparatively uneventful, and on the 30th the regiment remained untroubled in its somewhat backward position. The regimental leader, Major von Voss, with his staff and Colonel Kundt (commander of the 42nd Regiment) were stationed between Allaines and Mont St. Quentin in a trench transversing the road. At 9 in the evening news reached them that the Alexander Regiment was to be relieved at Mont St. Quentin by the 38th Infantry Division, and that the Alexander Grenadiers, in their turn, were to relieve the 80th and 81st Regiments on the Seefeld Height and the Siegfried Ridge. A small company had been sent out earlier that evening to take view of the surroundings and ascertain which of the contradictory reports as to the position in front was correct.

It was almost 11 o'clock before an officer returned. He reported that the enemy had advanced rapidly and was only 200 metres from the canal, and that more troops were urgently needed at the front. He had been unable to obtain any news of the 80th Fusilier Regiment, but that was a comparatively unimportant matter, and action had to be taken immediately. Two companies each of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Alexander Regiment were despatched to the canal in order to proceed from there into the front positions. Darkness, absolute lack of news, the uncertainty regarding the whereabouts of the enemy, and the lack of guides knowing the locality permitted only very cautious movement. By 3 a.m. the canal had been traversed.

The 10th Company succeeded in reaching the principal line of resistance of the 80th Regiment practically unopposed, shortly after 5 a.m. A few minutes later Australian soldiers appeared out of the dense fog on the left flank, and then in front. Immediately both sides engaged in a fierce battle with firearms and hand-grenades at close quarters. The company was surrounded and attacked on three sides. Despite heroic resistance, its doom was sealed. Steadfast and loyal to the last moment, the entire company and its commander laid down their lives, and not a single man escaped.

The 12th and 5th Companies had met in an old trench leading towards the enemy's lines. Advancing towards the summit of the Seefeld Ridge, they clashed against the retreating detachments of the 81st Regiment, which pushed their way past the Grenadiers and Fusiliers. In this melee the advanced lines of Australians emerged on the right and left sides of the trenches. Only two non-commissioned officers and ten privates escaped from the 5th Company! the losses of the 12th Company were even greater.

The two non-commissioned officers who escaped, reported: "We were fired on at close range from both sides, the enemy forcing his way to us in the trenches. This all happened very rapidly, and we were overrun before we had time to recover and return fire. We tried to hasten back into the next cross-trench, and once there, to open fire, but we were forced further back to the headquarters. We were taken absolutely by surprise, but in spite of this we managed to open fire and inflict heavy losses upon the enemy, who temporarily ceased advancing. His next move, however, was to place machine-guns at the close range of 50 metres, which was fatal to our company in close formation, and which called forth terrible sacrifice. Finally, we were overwhelmed by troops from the south-east. Very few unwounded men fell into the hands of the enemy."

The 6th Company had reached the summit of the Seefeld Heights, but, as neither on the left nor on the right flank could it establish any liaison with other German

(Continued on Page 31)

No 2 copy

41
5
9
11
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20

September 1937

VOLT

Refer to

Sturgesman

MERCANTILE...
Mr. A. F. Vipax, president of the...
of the R.S.S.L.A., was absent...
on the day was declared...
on its arrival at Townsville for the...
of New Guinea.



Mr. Vipax

Our ship trouble started with the stoker-hold crew and we, like a naughty boy, were ordered out of the convoy and sent back to Townsville," says Mr. Vipax. "Eventually we landed in Sydney, and as wireless men were scarce, I was soon keeping watch on Garden Island. This did not last long, and then I left for Singapore to take up duty at the naval station. On the way we narrowly missed the German warship *Buden*, which, we understood, was on the look out for us, or rather, for our 10,000 tons of Admiralty coal aboard.

After the Dardanelles affair we were despatched to England with troops and war material, and after making several trips we were taken over in England on a mystery ship, but unfortunately on our way from London to Barry, we received a message from Fritz in the form of a torpedo—at 1 a.m. on November 19, 1917. Within a few minutes the ship had mysteriously disappeared. We lost just half of our crew. Luck was with me as I was able to grope my way out of the cabin when under water, and I found a friendly hatch cover to which I clung until a ship's boat was hoisted aboard just about frozen.

TROPICAL MEDICINE. THE WORK OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

distoon-sergeant or I would come for it," and C.S.M. Whelan would meet us halfway. Of course, if the other companies had any cases, and it probably be recalled, and isolated miles away from everywhere, to die or recover as we could.

Well, surely enough, two or three mornings later we trekked. That march was awful, although it wasn't really far. The heat and flies worried us considerably, and when we arrived at our camping ground we just sat down and panted. We had to wait several hours for tents to arrive, and then had to pitch them. Then we settled down to get all the rest we could. We didn't worry about any parades, except an occasional rifle inspection, and everybody appreciated the easy time. Our sick went out every night in ambulances which came for them, and our rations arrived at night and were stacked outside the camp. If a stranger wandered into our camp he had to stay there. To cheer us up, we had a ration of half a peg of rum and half a peg of lime-juice daily. The rum came up in teak-wood barrels, and tasted like kerosene oil. The limejuice was a mixture of syrup and sand. Neither could be drunk by itself, so we made what we called a "Tigris cocktail." We mixed the rum and limejuice, and then added a little river water, which had been chlorinated. It was an awful mixture, but we shut our eyes and gulped it down.

(To Be Continued)

Under the title "Spanning Space," an instructive sound film has been produced by Amalgamated Wireless (Asia) Ltd., featuring many phases of radio manufacture, broadcasting and wireless communications. It is a 16 mm. sound film, 1200ft. in length. Wherever it has been shown it has been accorded an excellent reception.

Amalgamated Wireless is prepared to screen this "talkie" at any League sub-branch gathering, supplying operator and projector free of cost.

The film traces the methods of despatching messages from the days when carrier pigeons brought to London news of Wellington's victory at Waterloo. The processes of production in radio manufacture are depicted; then broadcasting has played an outstanding part.

The trip of Sir Kingsford Smith when his plane became disabled on flight to New Zealand and staggered back to Sydney on one engine is shown; also a further utility of wireless as applied to the trawlers on the Australian coast. It is the practice of the radio staff at La Perouse to speak by word of mouth with the captains of the trawlers and an incident is depicted of the normal business conversations between a vessel catching fish and the ship's owners being interrupted by a message to be given to the trawler's crew to look out for a disabled launch. Then follow the rescue and local message from the operator on the trawler "launch located, all hands safe."

Scenes from broadcasting studios show a number of well-known announcers and artists in characteristic settings and an impression of the world interest in VK3MB, the Australian world-wide short-wave broadcasting station, is also conveyed pictorially. The film goes on to show how communication is maintained by wireless between Australia and ships at sea and the Pacific Islands. The Beam Service between Australia and England is interestingly portrayed. More than 13,000,000 words a year are handled by the Australian Beam Service.

The Overseas radio-telephone is in operation, the picture demonstrating now 33,000,000 telephone subscribers in Great Britain, Europe, North and South America, and parts of Asia and Africa can be reached by owners of telephones in any part of the Commonwealth. The film was produced in Australia by the Fox Movietone Company, and it comprehensively covers from a national aspect all phases of Australian wireless development.

Bookings for the film are being handled by Mr. F. W. Stevens, Publicity Manager of Amalgamated Wireless, P.O. Box 28111.

MILITARY BADGES

Mr. Colin A. Clements, 129 Middle Head Rd., Mosman, N.S.W., has issued a World-wide appeal to collectors of badges, to get in touch with him, with a view to exchanging. "I particularly want and will buy any old Australian, or British Commonwealth badges of Military or Police units," says Mr. Clements, who adds that he has over 1,000 duplicates from all parts of the Empire, for exchange.



WHITE HORSE
Scotch
WHISKY

SCREW CAP BOTTLES. NO CORKSCREW REQUIRED.

Mont St. Quentin (From Page 28)

troops, it was soon surrounded by the Australians, appearing out of the thick fog. Only one man came back to tell the story. The heavy machine-guns of the 1st Machine-gun Company were also lost, in spite of brave resistance of the crews. "Hand-grenades and other munitions were used up, and the machine-guns failed us. There was nothing left to do, therefore, but to answer the Australian cries of 'Hands up!' by rendering our machine-guns useless."

Consequently, one half of the two fighting battalions of the Alexander Regiment had already been annihilated before the other parts of the regiment could take any active part in the battle. The 7th Company had reached a steep slope about 150 metres west of the canal. Scarcely had the noise of battle reached their ears, when the relieved 81st Regiment rushed through the company, immediately followed by the Australians. Thereupon followed wild confusion and hard fighting at close quarters. A counter-attack was abandoned as not practicable, especially after a section of the 7th Company had been overpowered by the Australians, small remnants only fighting their way through to Feuillaucourt.

Eventually the Australian shock-troops penetrated to the dug-outs of the commanding officers. The two battalion headquarters of the Alexander Regiment and that of the 81st were taken by complete surprise and made prisoners after a short resistance. The same fate awaited the 8th Company, of which only three non-commissioned officers and 12 men escaped.

The 2nd Australian Division was favoured by extraordinary good luck during its intrepid attack. Without any preliminary preparation, and favoured by the thick fog, its companies pushed through the various gaps in the weak German advanced positions. Their attack coincided with the commencement of the relief in the German lines. The Germans were surprised and surrounded, and the greatest bravery was of no avail. Yet the Australians, though considered first-class troops, were not entirely irresistible. By counter-attacking, the remaining section of the 2nd Battalion of the Alexander Regiment, assisted by parts of the Augusta Regiment, regained the northern slope of the Seefeld Heights. Two trenches were retaken, and the Australians withdrew to the forest of Thanne.

The storming columns of the Australians were clearly drawn towards the elevation of Mont St. Quentin, which was silhouetted against the morning sky. The foremost German lines had been overpowered so quickly that the reserves of Infantry Regiment No. 94, which were to support the Alexander Regiment, barely managed to occupy the outskirts of the village and bring the storming Australians to a halt. The battalions of the 5th Australian Brigade penetrated into the gap between the village and Feuillaucourt and overwhelmed the regimental headquarters of the 81st Regiment, which were in a natural crater, some 500 metres to the north of the village. The regimental adjutant reported the following:—

"The gallery was horizontally built into the crater wall, and formed two bends in its backward course, which were to be our salvation. We awaited the arrival of the relief staff from the Alexander Regiment; at 7 in the morning it had not yet arrived. There were only 15 of us in all—the commander of the regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Zimmer, 3 officers, and 11 privates. At half past 7 the commander sent back a guide whose duty it was to meet the relief troops half-way. We watched the guide climb up to the back of the crater-wall, and hardly had he reached the top, when, with a loud cry he fell backwards. At the same time an 'English' machine-gun opened fire at the entrance of the gallery behind us. Luckily the shots flew too high to be of any real danger. We then hastily brought the injured guide back into the gallery and treated his wounds. He was shot in the throat, but not fatally injured. We made an effort to escape from the trap, but were held back by a shower of bullets, fired by 'English' machine-guns, boring themselves into the earth before us. A few English Tommies and black troops came down the slope. Our next move was to retire

to the furthest portion of the gallery where the machine-guns could not reach us. The Australians (we discovered their identity at a later date) threw a hand-grenade in the entrance, which unfortunately killed the last musketeer who crept back into the gallery. The enemy, apparently coming to the conclusion that there were no more living soldiers in the gallery, established themselves at the entrance. We heard them conversing, but were unable to ascertain their number. The terrible minutes passed, full of uncertainty. What would the Australians' next move be, would they force the entrance down? Bury us alive—let us suffocate? In this dreadful uncertainty we waited 2 hours."

Advancing from the north-east into the village and park the Australians almost succeeded in capturing the regimental headquarters of the 94th Regiment, which managed its escape only after losing seven men. Two infantry guns were also taken by the Australians.

Mont St. Quentin seemed to be lost for the Germans, when the 1st Battalion of the Alexander Regiment was ordered to counter-attack from the south-west. The fires by the Alexander and the remains of the 94th Regiment. The German shock-sections advanced with a loud "Hurrah!" and the Australians were driven headlong down the western slope of Mont St. Quentin.

"The first thing we saw, having reached the top," related a combatant in the Alexander Regiment, "was retreating 'Tommies.' We stood and shot after them. It was impossible for me to bring my machine-gun into position, as everyone was pressing to the fore. As we ran forward we passed two German field-guns, the carriages and barrels of which were unmistakably marked by English characters—marked over and over again with white chalk. The way back was cut off by a large natural crater. A trench had been dug out at the bottom, in which the staff of the 81st Regiment had established themselves."

But to return to the story of the adjutant of the 81st I.R.

"It was then agreed in whispers (he says) to make a last attempt at escape. We prepared ourselves to make the effort. Huesmann, Lance-Corporal Larsch, and myself were the first to rush out of the crater. A shot rang out, and poor Larsch fell back dead! We

naturally hesitated after this occurrence, but a second later loud cheering was heard from the top of the slope, caused by the fact that a company of soldiers led by their sergeant-major was charging the surprised Australians. They sped up the opposite of the slope, abandoning their loaded machine-guns. My batman, Johann Niehaus, paid his attention to the English machine-guns, and the others finished off the 25 odd blacks."

Thus the summit of Mont St. Quentin-Feuillaucourt and the line of the great road were again in German hands. However, all further attempts of the Germans to advance failed. The historian of the Alexander Regiment writes that the "Australians were very tough!" Perfectly even opponents had clashed against each other, and both were guided by the same strong determination for victory. The difference was that the Australians did not lack fresh and numerous reserves, whilst the decimated remnants of the German regiments—the Regiments of the Guards (Franz Alexander and Augusta), and the infantry regiments Nos. 122, 94, 96 and 95—had to depend entirely upon themselves. This factor was to bring the decision on the following day.

General Monash had recognised early in the day that, in spite of the surprisingly rapid advance of the 2nd Division, he would have to use fresh forces on the northern bank of the Somme. Therefore, he ordered the 14th Brigade, which had followed the retreating Germans to Barleux, to cross the river to the west of Clery and support the 2nd Division. On the high river bank at Buscourt the Australian companies were awaiting the moment, when they would be able to get over the pontoon bridge which crossed the river at that point.

"As we waited," says Lieutenant H. R. Williams,* of the 56th Battalion (14th Brigade), "our company commander, Lieutenant Bull, pointed across the river in a half-right direction to a hill about three miles away, saying 'That is Mont St. Quentin. The 6th Brigade will attack the Mont, and our job is to mop-up Peronne.' The buildings of the town could be seen above the trees.

* In his book "The Gallant Company," page 242.

"When does the show start?" I asked.

"This afternoon," said Bull.

"Well, we will need lanterns for the attack if we are to be sooted on to Peronne, as we cannot get into position before dark."

And thus it happened: the 6th and 14th Australian Brigades prepared for a fresh attack on Mont St. Quentin, and we also prepared ourselves in case of alarm.

"The night was raw cold," writes Lieut. Williams, "and we huddled together for warmth. Tomorrow we were to face a task as stiff as any ever set before the Australian Corps. But tomorrow could wait. To-night our weary bodies craved sleep."

On the following morning a fine rain was drizzling. It was the 1st of September. The battalions of the 6th Australian Brigade were lying at the foot of the hill of Mont St. Quentin. Other parts of the 2nd Division advanced to the north. The Germans still tenaciously clung to the Ransbach Ridge and the flat heights to the north of Mont St. Quentin. The 14th Brigade made rapid progress in the south. The 53rd Battalion, advancing upon the sugar factory between Peronne and Mont St. Quentin, suffered particularly severe losses in the wire-entanglements as its soldiers were taken by heavy fire from the flank. They were supported by the 56th Battalion, whilst the 54th Battalion soon reached Anvil Wood in the direction of Peronne.

Lieut. Williams, of the 56th Battalion, relates how his company came to a halt in a sunken road near Anvil Wood. "Here I saw two German machine-gun posts, each with their entire crew lying dead around the guns. In one post were the bodies of sixteen dead Germans, including an officer. They had fought to the last. We received word that the 53rd Battalion was held up round the cemetery to the left of Peronne, swept by machine-gun fire from the ramparts of the town . . . Some of the 53rd Battalion dug themselves in among the graves of the cemetery. A company of the 56th Battalion had become involved with the latter phase of the 53rd Battalion's advance, and were now holding a position among some hutments and a railway line near the cemetery."

Then, he says, word came through that the 54th Battalion had gained a foothold in Peronne. "About 11 a.m. I saw the first German prisoners of the fight, a small party in charge of two slightly wounded men of the 54th Battalion. The prisoners were decidedly different from those we had seen during these last weeks. These were all big men in good uniforms, and wearing white shoulder knots on their uniforms. They belonged to the 2nd Prussian Guards Division . . . The intelligence staff of our corps headquarters was surprised to find among the few prisoners taken during the fighting at Mont St. Quentin and Peronne, men from many units of the German Army. It was soon learned that volunteers had been called for to hold these positions against the coming attack of the Australians. It was no wonder, therefore, that the 6th and 14th Brigades had to fight like demons. The German machine-gunners could fairly be ranked with Leonidas's Spartan Three Hundred, as they fought by their guns to the death, and continued firing when all hope for themselves personally had vanished."

The rain gradually ceased, the smoke of the bursting shells and shrapnel mixing with the damp mist. The 6th Brigade repeatedly attacked Mont St. Quentin, and from the so-called "Elsa Trench" its companies moved further and further ahead. They were repulsed four or five times, but always stormed forward again. Captain Sullivan, of the 21st Battalion, was the first to enter the village, where a hand-to-hand fight commenced.

At about 3 p.m. the Australians had surrounded Mont St. Quentin from two sides. Their artillery opened a devastating fire on the village, and then the storm broke loose. Already in the first onslaught some three companies of Australians drove the occupants of the village into the farm lying in the east.

"It was close on 3 o'clock in the afternoon," writes Corporal Barget, of the Alexander Regiment. "All of a sudden we were covered by enemy artillery. Shot after shot fell in our trenches mingled sometimes with grenades, and in the park to our left rose deadly red star-shells. There was nothing left to do but attack. Our machine-guns were ready—our fingers pressed the triggers, and then followed the thundering noise of fired bullets. Everywhere were flat steel-helmets, appearing and disappearing; the whole valley swarmed with enemy infantry. We shot at the figures springing towards us, vanishing and reappearing like lightning. And—damn it! To the left the 'Tommies' were already behind our lines. The company commander cried out something to us which was lost in the terrific noise of battle. Suddenly a sergeant of the 2nd Company appeared conveying cartridge-straps.

I had no idea where he came from. The position was becoming more dangerous every minute. To the left the enemy stood close behind us, and to the right swarmed in masses into the valley. In front there were these ducking figures which seemed impregnable against our shots. We were already using the third case on the roll, and my shoulder was paining me badly. The sergeant kept on shooting whilst I watched. Suddenly he pointed to the left and yelled something at me. God help us! The enemy there was only 100 metres away, and kept disappearing in the trenches and craters. My men, having realised that it was almost over, endeavoured to escape from the inevitability of being taken prisoners, and crept along the trenches to the left. The sergeant and myself now stood alone in the trench, and our cartridge strap was used up. I tore the machine-gun down to the bottom of the trench, but it was too late and I had no time to reload it. What then took place, did so in the space of a few seconds. In a flash I saw over the covering, the sergeant loaded his weapon, and I took out my pistol. On the trench, not 10 metres away, stood a 'Tommy,' his weapon aimed straight at me. Quick as lightning I turned to the left in order to bend down and escape from range, but it was too late—something hard hit my left shoulder, and I was thrown back against the trench wall. My arm felt suddenly very hot. Then a form sprang into the trench—that of the Australian with the glasses."

The few who managed to get out from the village and the park were taken to the south of Allaines. Then the fighting ebbed down. Both friends and foes were worn out and at the end of their strength. The uneven fight was resumed, however, in the morning of September 2nd. The Germans retreated hesitatingly, covering the retreat to the Siegfried position.

Mont St. Quentin was a battle which scarcely finds a parallel as far as the courage and tenacity of both assailants and defenders and the fierceness of the fighting is concerned. Perfectly equal opponents were on both sides. They paid for the day with the greatest losses, and on both sides on the following day a single battalion had to be formed of what had previously been two or three, to such an extent had they been decimated. For friend and foe alike, for victors and vanquished, for Australians and Germans, Mont St. Quentin will remain an unfading leaf in the laurel wreath of glorious history.

Die Deutsche Heimat

WIE BAYREUTH ZUR FESTSPIELSTADT WURDE — KAMPF UND SIEG EINER IDEE.

Von Herbert Günther.

In den vierziger Jahren des vorigen Jahrhunderts reichte Richard Wagner als Hofkapellmeister zu Dresden dem sächsischen Ministerium eine Denkschrift über die künstlerische Reorganisation des Theaters ein.

Die Idee des Festspiels gewinnt festere Form durch die Entstehung des "Ringes des Nibelungen", mit dem sie unlösbar zusammenhängt.

In Weimar versucht Franz Liszt, seinem Freunde dieses Festtheater zu schaffen, in München danach König Ludwig II. Dort vereitelt es der Hof, hier die Bürgerschaft. 1863 muss Wagner sich zur öffentlichen Ausgabe des "Ringes" entschliessen. Sein Vorwort bezeichnet genau die Eigenschaften der Festspiel-Aufführung von später: die sommerliche Spielzeit mit Wiederholungen, der amphitheatralische Zuschauerraum, das verdeckte Orchester, das übrigens endlich eine Forderung Goethes erfüllt, der "durch die mechanischen Bemühungen und durch die notdürftigen, immer seltsamen Gebärden der Instrumentenspieler so sehr zerstreut und verwirrt" wurde. Mitwirkende wie Zuschauer sollen, unbeanspruch durch irgendeine andere Beschäftigung, zur Andacht gestimmt werden.

1870 besinnt sich Wagner auf eine Wanderfahrt, die seine Schritte 1835 durch das Fichtelgebirge nach Bayreuth lenkte. Frau Cosima — nach langen Kämpfen ihm gerade angetraut — ahnt eine besondere Bedeutung hinter dieser Erinnerung, liest mit Wagner sogleich nach, was im Lexikon über Bayreuth steht, und sie bedenken alle Möglichkeiten. 1871 besucht Wagner zweimal die Markgrafen-Residenz im Herzen Frankens. Verhandlungen mit den Behörden verlaufen günstig, und auf dem grünen Hügel über der Stadt spricht der Meister seinen Entschluss aus: "Nirgendwo anders, denn hier".

Ende April 1872 übersiedelt Familie Wagner nach Bayreuth. Am 22. Mai 1872, Wagners 59. Geburtstag, findet die Grundsteinlegung des Festspielhauses statt, gekrönt durch eine Aufführung von Beethovens IX. Symphonie in dem prachtvollen barocken Opernhaus unter Wagners Leitung. 1874 kann Wagner in sein Haus Wahnfried einziehen, das ihm König Ludwig II. baute. 1875 beginnen die Proben.

Vom 13. bis 17. August 1876 endlich wurden die Bayreuther Festspiele mit dem "Ring des Nibelungen" eröffnet. Eine Gedenktafel in Form eines marmornen Theaterzettels verewigt am Festspielhaus die Namen der Hauptdarsteller. Am Schluss der erst 1874 beendeten, "im Vertrauen auf den deutschen Geist entworfenen" "Götterdämmerung" erwidert Wagner die begeisterten Rufe mit



Adolf Hitler im Gespräch mit Frau Winifred Wagner.

einer kleinen Ansprache: "Ihrer Gunst und den grenzenlosen Bemühungen der Mitwirkenden, meiner Künstler, verdanken Sie diese Tat. Sie haben jetzt gesehen, was wir können; nun ist es an Ihnen, zu wollen. Und wenn Sie wollen, so haben wir eine Kunst". Alle Zuschauer, nicht zuletzt Kaiser Wilhelm I. und König Ludwig von Bayern, waren erschüttert. Die Presse zeigte sich nach wie vor grösstenteils ablehnend, ja feindselig und höhnisch.

Die Gesamtkosten sollten durch 1000 Patronatscheine zu je 300 Talern aufgebracht werden. Allein es ergab sich ein Defizit von 160.000 Mark. Um es zu decken, musste Wagner, ganz gegen die ursprüngliche Absicht, seinen "Ring" den Theatern freigeben.

Wagner beschäftigte vor allem "die ewige Sorge dem Unzureichenden gegenüber". Die materiellen Hemmungen verhinderten eine schnelle Korrektur des bisher noch Unvollkommenen, das er mit voller Deutlichkeit sah. Erst 1882 sollten sich die Tore des Festspielhauses wieder öffnen, und zwar für den inzwischen entstandenen "Parsifal". Wieder musste sich der Meister seine Künstler von allen Theatern zusammensuchen und sie in Eile für diese besondere Bayreuther Aufgabe umformen.

Wagner hatte bei der letzten "Parsifal"-Aufführung 1882, wie im Vorgefühl seines Heimgangs, Abschied genommen: im 3. Akt bestieg er plötzlich das Pult und leitete den Abend zu Ende... Als er 1883 starb, trat Cosima aus dem Schatten und nahm die Festspiele in ihre sicheren Hände.

1884 wurde noch einmal "Parsifal" angesetzt. 1886 lauschte eine winzige Gemeinde von nur 300 Zuhörern in dem Raum, der 1700 Personen fasst, zum erstenmal "Tristan und Isolde". Cosima Wagner war unbeirrbar. Mal für Mal fügte sie dem "Parsifal" eines der anderen Wagnerschen Werke an — von den reifsten wie "Meistersinger" und "Tannhäuser" bis zum "Lohengrin" und "Fliegenden Holländer". So hat sie Bayreuth den ganzen Wagner erschlossen, getreu dem Vermächtnis des Meisters.

Cosima Wagner wurde die Bewahrerin Bayreuths. 1908 musste sie wegen schwerer dauernder Erkrankung ausscheiden, und ihr Sohn Siegfried übernahm die Leitung. 1914 brachte das Freiwerden des bisher Bayreuth vorbehaltenen "Parsifal" für alle Bühnen dem Festspiel die Gefahr einer Einbusse. Dann begann der Weltkrieg. Erst ein volles Jahrzehnt später, 1924, öffneten sich Bayreuths Pforten wieder. 1930 wurden Cosima und Siegfried Wagner in die Ewigkeit abberufen. Wieder übernahm eine Frau die Zügel: Siegfrieds Witwe Winifred Wagner.

Das Haus auf dem Festspielhügel, von dem Wagner einst mit Stolz sagte, es sei einzig, und niemand könne es ihm nachbauen, hat allen Stürmen der Zeiten standgehalten. Seit 1933 aber ist ihm ein spürbar neues Blühen beschieden. Statt einzelner Patrone oder Stipendiaten wallfahrtet heute das ganze Volk dorthin. An seiner Spitze der Führer, der gleich 1933 trotz aller Aufgaben die Zeit fand, einem ganzen Zyklus von sechs Vorstellungen beizuwohnen.

MONT ST. QUENTIN.

An Australian Military Exploit.

Abbreviated translation from an article by Carl Henke, former Lt. Colonel of the German General Staff, now Oberregierungsrat at the Research Institute for Military History at Potsdam.

"On the night of the 30th/31st Aug. the 2nd Australian Division (Major General C. Rosenthal) stormed Mont St. Quentin, a most important tactical feature commanding Peronne and the crossings of the Somme at that town."

(Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches).

After gaining their first laurels at Gallipoli and undergoing more training and better co-ordination in Egypt the two Australian-New Zealand Army Corps had been fighting since 1916 on the British front.

The German High Command had taken the fighting initiative in the Spring of 1918 after the heavy defensive battles of 1917 in Flanders, at Arras, on the Aisne and in the Champagne. Formidable German attacks had cleft great gaps in the Allied front to the West of Lille and St. Quentin and to the South of Laon. However the aim of separating

the British from the French and gain strategic mobility had not been achieved. A reverse was bound to follow and it came in the latter part of the Summer when the allies who meanwhile had been reinforced by the Americans, took on the offensive themselves.

The Fourth British Army under General Rawlinson held the centre of the extended front line, whilst to the North was the Third British Army of General Byng, in the South the First French Army of General Debeney. The attack commenced on the 8th August on both sides of the ancient Roman road leading from Amiens to St. Quentin. The countryside was covered by a slight mist when the deadly concert of the artillery suddenly opened at 4.20 a.m. The German infantry barely managed to man trenches of the front line, as the rattling and fire-vomiting gigantic forms of the tanks appeared before them, breaking down and crushing everything and thus preparing the way for the storming detachments of assault troops running between and behind them. They were the Australian Corps under General Sir John Monash which attacked the German XIth Army Corps and the Headquarters 51, striking between the Roman highroad and the Somme river and particularly driving at the 47th and the 109th Infantry Division, which was about to be relieved. In a particularly gallant attack the battalions of the 2nd and 3rd Australian Division succeeded in a short time to break through the foremost positions of the German trench-system whilst the 5th and the 4th Divisions were following. When the fog lifted the front line of the attacking forces had taken Lamotte and Cérisy. Whilst they rested the following lines of infantry, light tanks and cavalry pushed through their ranks to carry on the attack and before noon had struck the front lines of the assault troops already saw Foucaucourt lying before them. Regiments of the British cavalry divisions advanced in gallop, but were repulsed by the German machine-gun fire which revived on all sides. Also growing numbers of tanks were disabled by German field artillery and hand-grenades. When German reserves took the offensive against their adversaries who were now in disorder, the latter were compelled to retire and surrender the newly conquered territory. As dusk fell the Australian line passed through Harbonnières and Maucourt. On the first day of the offensive they had advanced some 10 kilometres into the German front, taken several thousands prisoners and hundreds of guns. Sir Douglas Haig reported in glowing colours on the splendid achievements of the Canadian and Australian troops in this battle.

To the East of Cambrai the German 21st Infantry Division had at last found the desired rest, after the foregoing heavy fighting. On the 21st August

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the disposition of its troops was as follows: Infantry Regiment No. 87 stood between the Somme and the Roman road to the South of the river to Chuignolles, in Chuignolles and to the South of it the Fuesilier-Regiment No. 80, and then up to the Roman road the Infantry Regiment No. 81 which was flanked by the 107th Infantry Division. The 243rd Infantry Division formed the second line to the West, from Cappy to Soyécourt. The attack of the First Australian Division which was again strongly reinforced by numerous tanks commenced in the thick morning fog on the 23rd August. Tremendous fighting took place for every ruined village and forest and every bit of trench, and the German detachments which for the most part did not consist of more than 20-30 men were gradually withdrawn towards the East. Finally the remainder of the 21st Division evaded the enemy by crossing to the North bank of the Somme at Feullières and Ommiécourt in the night from the 28th to the 29th August.

On the German side after the crossing of the Somme the 21st Infantry Division now held the so-called Siegfried Ridge and the Seefeld Height behind it with Infantry Regiment No. 87 and the Fuesilier-Regiment No. 80.

On the Australian side the 1st Division had pushed through to the South of the Somme in the eastward direction, and the 2nd Division had followed the Germans to the North bank of the river, relieving also the 3rd Division which had advanced along the North bank through Braye-Suzanne and its advance troops already in the course of the 29th August got into touch with the new German lines running from Cléry to the North.

The German Fuesilier-Regiment had taken part for three weeks already, excepting for slight intervals in very heavy fighting and had sustained great casualties. Its companies scarcely numbered more than 30 riflemen. Thus Australian battalions succeeded in penetrating into the principal defence lines to the North of Cléry when they carried out their resolute attack at 5 a.m. on the 30th August, advancing without the slightest artillery preparation. They were driven out of the trenches with the assistance of a company of the 4th Regiment of the Grenadiers of the Guards "Empress Augusta" which was thrown into action from behind. However they managed to force their way from the North into the village and to cut off the company holding it and which would not evacuate the position. However they were taken prisoners, one non-commissioned officer and 13 men only escaping to the East. In the second half of the day a few more assault troops of Australians advancing resolutely penetrated into the principal German defence line. They were forced to retire before a German back-thrust losing 10 men dead and a non-commissioned officer and one private taken prisoners. Both belonged to the 56th Australian battalion. But the attackers remained in occupation of a large gap between the 2nd and 3rd battalion of the 80th Regi-

ment, and this was later to prove fatal for the entire German position.

The 1st Grenadier-Guards Regiment "Emperor Alexander I." and three batteries of artillery received orders in the late afternoon of the 29th August to occupy and hold by all means the highly important heights of Mont St. Quentin, which formed the key to the entire German position behind the Somme. Two companies each of the 2nd and 3rd battalions were despatched to the canal in order to proceed from there into the front positions. Darkness, absolute lack of news, the uncertainty regarding the whereabouts of the enemy and the lack of guides knowing the locality permitted only very cautious movement. At 3 a.m. the canal had been traversed.

(To be concluded.)



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REISE NACH DESSAU

Von Carl Bulcke.

So viel weiss ich noch. Frau und Kinder waren auf Ferien an der See, ich hauste ganz allein in der Wohnung. Das hab ich gern. Kein Diensthote darf da sein, keine Aufwartung, die Dreihundert-Tage-Uhr wird mit dem Gesicht gegen die Wand gestellt und die Taschenuhr in einer Schublade verwahrt. Aber auf dem Schreibtisch liegt zu kleinen Bogen gefaltetes Papier, und ich schreibe an einer Novelle. Genau so war es damals im Sommer, und alles ging gut. Bis ich dann in meiner Novelle auf die Seite 12 kam, über einem Komma stolperte und laut vor mich hinsprach: "Die ganze Schreiberei soll auf zwei Tage der Deubel holen."

Dann suchte ich den allerkleinsten Koffer, packte ein, was man für zwei Tage braucht, stellte unseren asiatischen Nelkentopf vom Abhang des Himalaja unserer lieben Nachbarin nebenan vor die Tür, schloss die Wohnung ab und trabte zum Bahnhof. Am Fahrkartenschalter sagte ich zu dem Beamten: "Bitte, hier sind sieben Mark. Mit diesem Geld möchte ich mit dem nächsten Schnellzug in der 3. Klasse irgendwohin eine kleine Reise machen." Obwohl ich mich deutlich ausgedrückt hatte, musste ich es zweimal sagen. Dann wurde ich verstanden. Der freundliche Beamte erklärte: "Damit kommen Sie gerade bis Dessau. Der Zug fährt in ein paar Minuten."

Dann bekam ich die Fahrkarte und dazu noch zwanzig Pfennig heraus, sass im richtigen Zug und lobte meine Schläue. Wo bist du schon überall gewesen, sagte ich mir, noch neulich rühmtest du dich, jede deutsche Stadt zu kennen, sieh da, in Dessau warst du noch nie. Es ist eine sehr kluge Idee, dass du jetzt nach Dessau fährst. Pass auf, du kriegst heraus, wie die Novelle hinter dem elenden Komma weitergeht.

Zugleich überlegte ich, was ich von Dessau wusste. Bauhaus und Junkerswerke. Ehemalige Residenz, also wird ein Schloss dort sein. Der alte Dessauer wird ein Denkmal haben. Viel mehr fiel mir nicht ein. Ja, halt, noch eins. Als junger Mensch in Schleswig-Holstein waren meine Altersgenossen und ich in Verehrung einem jungen Mädchen zugetan gewesen, das Marianne hiess und die Tochter eines Malers war. Marianne war nun schon lange tot. Doch der Maler hatte von ihr ein lebensgrosses Bild gemalt, das ihren Namen trug: Das strahlenäugige Mädchen steht zwischen jungen Buchenstämmen; auf den Stamm einer Buche dicht neben ihr hat der Vater in kaum lesbarer Schrift die drei Worte "noli me tangere" geschrieben. Das Bild hatte vor vielen Jahren die Stadt Dessau gekauft. Du wirst Marianne wiedersehen, dachte ich.

Als ich in Dessau ankam, erfuhr ich, dass eins der Hotels "Zum goldenen Beutel" heisst. Dort



Der grosse Markt in Dessau. Im Hintergrund die Marienkirche.

stieg ich natürlich ab. Ein goldener Beutel ist besser als ein leeres Portemonnaie.

Es war recht hübsch dort, still und behaglich, und am meisten gefiel mir, dass auf dem kleinen Tisch, an dem ich zu Abend ass, bequem zur rechten Hand eine kleine silberne Klingel gestellt war. Klingelte man, so gab es einen allerliebsten dünnen Ton, und der Kellner kam. Ich weiss noch, ich hatte mir Weserlachs auftischen lassen, die Gäste im Raum unterhielten sich flüsternd, ich schien ihnen irgendwie aufzufallen, wahrscheinlich, weil sie mich noch nie gesehen hatten. Ich selber wunderte mich aber auch, und ich sagte zu meiner Seele: "Sind wir, liebe Seele, am Ende doch schon einmal hier gewesen?"

Anderen Tags fuhr ich in der Morgenfrühe hinaus; sah Neubauten hier, Arbeits- und Wohnstätten, sah Flugzeughallen dort, Flugzeuge mit ausgebreiteten Flügeln auf freiem Feld. Ich dachte: Du irrst dich. Hier bist du nie gewesen. Doch die Grübeleien waren wieder da, als ich zur Stadt zurückkehrte und in tiefer Ergriffenheit vor dem Bildnis von Marianne stand. Das schöne Bild hatte ich seit meinen Studententagen nicht wiedergesehen, das wusste ich genau. Aber eine traumhafte Erinnerung war da, als hätte ich dies Bild schon einmal hier gesucht, heiss bekümmert, weil ich es nicht gefunden hatte. In jenem Augenblick wusste ich übrigens plötzlich, wie die Geschichte hinter dem Komma auf Seite 12 weiterging.

Stellen Sie sich vor, dass ich gleich danach vor einem Wirtshaus stand und zu mir sagte: "Wenn du jetzt hier eintrittst, in den Raum rechter Hand

gehst, so wird da eine Rüstung aufgestellt sein. Rüstung aus dem späten Mittelalter, Helm mit geschlossenem Visier, tauschierter Panzer, Beinwehren und Armwehren."

Ich trat ein; niedriger und halbdunkler Raum, verhängte Fenster. Im Hintergrund rechts stand die Rüstung. Ich fragte: "Wie lange steht hier schon dieser Eisenmann, Herr Wirt?" Und der Mann sagte in seiner anhaltinischen Landessprache, er sei genau vor einer Woche in einem Nachbardorf auf einer Versteigerung gekauft . . .

Als ich am nächsten Tag wieder vor meiner Wohnung ankam, stand vor der Tür der Nebenwohnung immer noch der asiatische Nelkentopf. Unsere gute Nachbarin war also auch in die Ferien gefahren. Die Nelken hatten mir den Ausflug nicht übelgenommen; ich gab ihnen zu trinken.

. . . Dies Erlebnis hat mich lange beschäftigt. Ich hatte an jenem Tag in Dessau den Schlossgarten und die Schmuckplätze gesehen, auf denen uralte Eibenbäume standen, so viele, so prachtvolle Eiben, wie sie sonst nirgendwo in Deutschland zu finden sind; erst auf der Rückfahrt kam mir zu Bewusstsein, wie diese Eiben in Dessau mich schon einmal entzückt hatten. Ich musste feststellen, dass alles, das ich an diesem Tag gesehen hatte, meinem Herzen dämmernd vertraut gewesen war, Schloss, Strassen, ein See, ein Marktplatz, selbst das Hotel "Zum goldenen Beutel" und die silberne Klingel. Und dennoch war ich im wirklichen Leben nie, niemals dort gewesen. Ich bin heute sicher, dass es das Bildnis Mariannes gewesen war, das mich ohne mein Wissen unaufhaltsam dorthin getrieben hatte . . .

MONT ST. QUENTIN

An Australian Military Exploit. (Concluded.)

Abbreviated translation from an article by Carl Henke, former Lt. Colonel of the German General Staff, now Oberregierungsrat at the Research Institute for Military History at Potsdam.

The 10th Company succeeded to reach the principal line of resistance of the 80th Regiment practically unopposed, shortly after 5 a.m. A few minutes later Australian soldiers appeared out of the dense fog on the left flank and then in front. Immediately both sides engaged in a fierce battle with fire-arms and handgrenades thrown from the closest distance. The company was surrounded and attacked on three sides. Despite heroic resistance its doom was sealed. Steadfast and loyal to the last moment the entire company and its commander laid down their lives and not a single man escaped.

The 12th and the 5th companies had met in an old trench leading towards the enemy's lines. Advancing towards the summit of the Seefeld Ridge

they clashed against the retreating detachments of the 81st Regiment which pushed their way past the grenadiers and fusileers. In this melee the advance lines of Australians emerged on the right and left side of the trenches. Only two non-commissioned officers and ten privates escaped from the 5th Company; the losses of 12th Company were even greater.

The 6th Company had reached the summit of the Seefeld Heights, but as neither on the left nor on the right flank it could establish any liaison with other German troops, it was soon surrounded entirely by the Australians appearing out of the thick fog. Only one man came back to tell the story. The heavy machine-guns of the 1st Machine-gun Company were also lost in spite of brave resistance of the crews.

Consequently, one half of the two fighting battalions of the Alexander-Regiment had already been annihilated before the other parts of the regiment could take any active part in the battle. A counter-attack was abandoned as not practicable, especially after a section of the 7th Company had been overpowered by the Australians, small remnants only fighting their way through to Feuillaucourt.

Eventually the Australian shock troops penetrated to the dug-outs of the commanding officers. The two battalion headquarters, of the Alexander Regiment and that of the 81st were taken by complete surprise and taken prisoners after a short resistance. The same fate awaited the 8th Company of which only three non-commissioned officers and 12 men escaped.

The Second Australian Division was favoured by extraordinary good luck during its intrepid attack. Without any preliminary preparation, favoured by the thick fog, its companies pushed through the various gaps in the weak German advance positions. Their offensive coincided with the commencement of the replacement in the German lines. The Germans were surprised and surrounded and the greatest bravery was of no avail. Yet the Australians, though considered first-class troops, were not entirely irresistible. By counter-attacking, the remaining section of the II. Battalion of the Alexander Regiment, assisted by parts of the Augusta Regiment regained the northern slope of the Seefeld Heights. Two trenches were retaken and the Australians withdrew to the forest of Thanne. Though a few shock sections of the Fusileers advanced as far as the eastern slope of the Siegfried position, they were too late, for there was nobody left to support them on either flank.

The storming columns of the Australians were clearly drawn towards the elevation of Mont St. Quentin which was silhouetted against the morning sky. The foremost German lines had been over-

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powered so quickly that the reserves of Infantry Regiment No. 94 which were to support the Alexander Regiment barely managed to occupy the outskirts of the village and bring the storming Australians to a halt. The battalions of the Fifth Australian Brigade, however, penetrated into the gap between the village and Feuillaucourt and overwhelmed the regimental headquarters of the 81st Regiment, which were in a natural crater, some 500 metres to the North of the village. Advancing from the North-East into the village and park the Australians almost succeeded in capturing the regimental headquarters of the 94th Regiment, which managed its escape only after losing seven men. Two infantry guns were also taken by the Australians.

Mont St. Quentin seemed to be lost for the Germans, when the First Battalion of the Alexander Regiment was ordered to counter-attack from the South-West. The Australians holding the village were taken under two fires by the Alexander and the remains of the 94th Regiment. The German shock sections advanced with a loud "Hurrah!" and the Australians were driven headlong down the Western slope of Mont St. Quentin.

Thus the summit of Mont St. Quentin-Feuillaucourt and the line of the great road were again in German hands. However all further attempts of the Germans to advance failed. The historian of the Alexander Regiment writes that the "Australians were very tough!" Perfectly even opponents had clashed against each other and both were guided by the same strong determination for victory. The difference was that the Australians did not lack fresh and numerous reserves whilst the decimated rests of the German regiments: the Regiments of the Guards: Franz, Alexander, Augusta, and the infantry regiments Nos. 122, 94, 96 and 95, had to depend entirely upon themselves. This factor was to bring the decision on the following day.

General Monash had recognised early in the day that in spite of the surprisingly rapid advance of the 2nd Division, he would have to use fresh forces on the northern bank of the Somme. Therefore he ordered the 14th Brigade, which had followed the retreating Germans to Barleux, to cross the river to the West of Cléry and support the 2nd Division. On the high river bank at Buscourt the Australian companies were awaiting the moment, when they would be able to get over the pontoon bridge which crossed the river at that point.

On the following morning a fine rain was drizzling. It was the 1st of September. The battalions of the 6th Australian Brigade were lying at the foot of the hill of Mont St. Quentin. Other parts of the 2nd Division advanced to the North. The Germans still tenaciously clung to the Ransbach Ridge and the flat heights to the North of Mont St. Quentin. The 14th Brigade made rapid progress in the South. The 53rd Battalion advancing upon the sugar factory between Péronne and Mont St. Quentin suffered particularly severe losses in the

wire entanglements as its soldiers were taken by heavy firing from the flank. They were supported by the 56th Battalion whilst the 54th Battalion soon reached the Anvil-Wood in the direction of Péronne.

The rain gradually ceased, the smoke of the bursting shells and shrapnels mixing with the damp mist. The 6th Brigade repeatedly attacked Mont St. Quentin and from the so-called "Elsa-Trench" its companies moved further and further ahead. They were repulsed four or five times but always stormed forward again. Captain Sullivan of the 21st Battalion was the first to enter the village where a hand-to-hand fight commenced.

An officer of the 56th Battalion related how his company came to a halt in a hollow road near Anvil-Wood. He says he saw there two German machine-gun nests with the entire crews lying dead around them, sixteen men and one officer. They had fought to the bitter end. Towards 11 o'clock the first German prisoners were brought in, led by two slightly wounded men of the 54th Battalion. They were tall men in good uniforms with white shoulder straps, proving that they belonged to the Second Division of the Prussian Guards. Even vanquished they showed by their bearing that they belonged to an élite regiment. It was surprising to discover among the few prisoners of this battle men from so many different units of the German army. The 6th and 14th Brigade had been forced to fight like devils. The German machine gunners could be compared to the 300 Spartans of Leonidas, as they held out at their guns to the end and continued firing even when all hope for their personal salvation had gone.

At about 3 p.m. the Australians had surrounded Mont St. Quentin from two sides. Their artillery opened a devastating fire on the village and then the storm broke loose. Already in the first onslaught some three companies of Australians drove the occupants of the village into the farm lying in the East.

The few who managed to get out from the village and the park were taken to the South of Alaines. Then the fighting ebbed down. Both friends and foes were worn out and at the end of their strength. The uneven fight was resumed, however, in the morning of the 2nd September. The Germans retreated hesitatingly, covering the retreat to the Siegfried position.

Mont St. Quentin was a battle which scarcely finds a parallel as far as the courage and tenacity of both assailants and defenders and the fierceness of the fighting is concerned. Perfectly equal opponents were on both sides. They paid for the day with the greatest losses, and on both sides on the following day a single battalion had to be formed of what had previously been two or three, to such an extent had they been decimated. For friend and foe alike, for victors and vanquished, for Australians and Germans Mont St. Quentin will remain an unfading leaf in the laurel wreath of glorious history.

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LEST

“DIE BRÜCKE”



Note.

14th Bde, 1st Sept.

14th Bde got Anvil Wood. Into Central Peronne. There were only two bridges left which could be crossed at all and one of these only allowed one man to crawl at a time. It was along the other on that Peronne was first entered. The main losses were incurred at these bridges.

As our attack reached Peronne the Germans blew up their bridges. Some surrendered. Wheeled traffic could be seen on the roads going SE from Peronne. There was considerable movement in I 30. Doingt. Our left was going well.

At 9am aeroplanes saw our men going along the main street and saw 30 Germans surrendering, in the town. One battalion had 300 prisoners at an early hour.

The J.O was at 6am. We could not use a barrage so put down area shots. The 3rd Divn have reached E C 21 D and well E of 250 prisoners and a battery of 77mm guns.

The 5th Divn is to go E of Peronne. There is a lot of m.g fire. The 15th Bde still cannot get across the river from West bank to East.

Against us are said to be the 14th Bavarian Divn and 185th Divn.

(This is all report except the part about the bridges which is by first hand report).

2nd Aust Divn.

The line ran through the Q of St Quentin. They had to come back from Feuillaucourt, being enfiladed.

6 Bde went thro at 6am. All lines were at once cut and the wireless smashed. There was a lot of resistance at Feuillaucourt. C.O.E of Feuillaucourt, between F. and Mt St Q. on road. On right they have got to the Sugar factory. St Denis they have not got.

21 Bn has sent three coys to help the centre.

24

23

At 5.30 ~~xxxxxx~~ troops were seen at Anvil Wood but Martin says this meant very little (i.e. no counterattack of any serious nature there). At 5am the 3rd Divn saw men coming against Feuillaucourt (7.5pm) At 5.10 the 3rd Divn was c/attacked and beat it off. The 3rd Divn were attacked along the road, and pushed it off. 3rd Divn are in Yassa trench.

701 prisoners last night. Bde had 300 casualties.

Amongst prisoners in Peronne Mt St Q fighting have been a regimental commdr and a Bn Commdr of the Guards.

A prisoner tells us that the bakery, pioneers, landsturm, supply column, and all sorts of other units have been put into the battalions since July to fill gaps. The line of the river was to be held at all costs. The 14th Bde took some field guns which they used against the enemy.

The Germans meant to counterattack on the night of 30/31 but in view of our probable attack gave it up.

Col. Peck had a uraemic stroke during this period and it is doubtful whether he will be able to come to the front again. White says that this is most unfortunate as Peck was one of the very finest officers we had.

(By Sept 2 there had been 6 days fighting by 2nd Divn. The battalions of the Divn are now about 500 to 600 strong. That means about 350 rifles per bn.)

6th Bde 1st Sept. 1918.

23 and 24 Bns had the morning attack. The 23rd Bn was ordered to get into square 14. It found that it had not been propped up. It had to go into 14 and 20 near Halle. and Anvil Wood. The wood was full of Germans.

They left at 10am on Aug 31st by Omiecourt - ordered to move as soon Country near Peronne was German. The position in the little corner of the river flat E of the bend was extraordinary - 5th Bde bent round Mt St Q

Mt. St Q.

6 Bde behind it. 14 Bde squeezed in behind 6th. And 7th Bde squashed in behind that.

The 23rd Bn was actually fighting to get into its waiting position. The diggers were in the bank of the Somme with the shells bursting above, and the men playing cards on the bank below.

There had been a conference at 9pm on Sept 31 when it was decided to attack at 6 am. There was no time to issue orders. 14 Bde had to attack St Denis SE. 6 Bde (23 and 24) had to attack Mt St Q. Eastwards, thro St Q. village. The 5th Bde said that the line was on the road and a barrage was therefore put onto the village. But when the 6th Bde advance took place they found that 5th Bde had been on the road but had been mopped up by the Germans. The barrage was therefore a very long way ahead of the 6th Bde. 23 and 24 lost heavily getting to the road. They took Feuillaucourt.

It was decided during the morning to attack at 1.30pm. 24, 23, and 21 Bns went in with their objective E. of the wood. St. Q. village was a regular redoubt. Barbed wire, posts, over 100 machineguns, trenches full of dead. There was hand to hand fighting (that is, shooting at 15 paces) Many dead Germans. The resistance thickened. They ended up just clear of the wood from Gott Mit Uns trench towards Allaine, in the two trenches down the N side of the hill (which one can see running down that side of it towards the front of Feuillaucourt.) There were Germans in Allaine and the 6 Bde was out of touch with the left.

The 22nd were put in late last night (Sept 1st) on the flank. They are now (on Sept 2nd) in support of 7 Bde in Tortille trench near Allaine.

The German had been going to attack us the night before but we got in first. Casualties over 200. 6 Bde took 325 Germans prisoner.

6 Bde on paper is 2000 strong. It came in on fighting strength 1200 strong. Paper strength includes men on leave, schools, detention etc.

It has lost about 500 in battle since Aug 8.

The artillery was very good. The F.O.O of the R.H.A. 13rd battery was in the front line. The artillery was:-

- 4th Bde A.F.A. (attached to Bn Commander)
- 5th Bde A.F.A.
- 5th Army Bde R.H.A. (attached to Bn Commander)
- 16th Army Bde R.H.A.
- 203rd Army Bde R.F.A.

7th Bde. Sept 2nd 1918.

The 7th Bde is now (what hour?) in Koros Alley, Ruprecht trench, Antigon Alley, Hera ~~xxxxxx~~ Alley, I 6 D4.9 ~~xxxxxx~~ C.30 C 4.2 (afternoon) 120 prisoners today. Mt St Q. 400 casualties.

Godley said he would get all the heights tomorrow, towards Nurlu. Godley persuaded Monash. We (Wisdom) had to form a defensive flank, to Aizecourt. We are on our objective.

By Sept 2 Divn had had 6 days fighting. We are now about 500 to 600 per Bn - 350 rifles.

Posts now held since 74th Divn has gone back at C 30. C. 4. 2., and I 6. A. 4. 9. (a pencil point)

The British were C/attacked about 10.30am.

The British went over with their packs on. The 14th Bde has been held up by the pocket S of St Denis. There are also M.Gs at St Denis, and M.Gs in another trench.

In the triangle made by the Aziect and Bap. Ras (which was deadly by reason of M.G. fire (the German holding Darmstadt trench (crossing the Aziect Rd from N to S about half way down) the 26th and some of 28th went over against the Aziect Rd.

The British are at 23 Centl, SW of Moislains.

On 29th Aug the 7th Bde got across the canal but not the swamp. 3 Bns took 300 prisoners.

3.

~~Swamp~~prisoner s.

14 Bde attack Canal (?)

27

25

26

27th got very heavy m.g. fire while in their
Jumping off trench, and a heavy barrage.

74 th Divn got on to the SE of Moislains.

One bn wandered over behind our lines at Allaines.
Wisdom used this captured bn to make a flank.

The 28th Bn caught it vey heavily from the guns
(m.gs) at St Denis and on the ramparts in crossing the
triang le of roads. They reached the trench they were told
to sett le in, refused back along the hillN of the Aziect
road to t he Bapaume rd.

The 7th Bde has lost 400 men. It doesnt look
much; but as not more than 800 rifles went in it is heavy.
They los t particulamly heavily in officers.

(Some officers of 28th Bn - Gaby and another
Roydhouse tells me, won the V .C. if ever any one did. One
officer was writt en in abt by practically every one of his men)

A FEW MINOR DETAILS IN THE WONDERFUL EXPLOITS OF THE 14th AUSTRALIAN
INFANTRY BRIGADE IN THE TAKING OF PERONNE Sept. 1/2 1918.

After chasing the balloons for about a fortnight across ground, where the price of battle had been dearly paid many times before, our noble Brigade of New South Welshmen were once again to declare war - and on the old principle of "all things coming to those who wait" - everybody had formed a pretty fair idea that the show must be a stiff proposition which prophecy turned out to be only too true. But all set out with large hopes & on the afternoon of the 31st August, one of the greatest obstacles - The Somme River, was successfully crossed - and by some stroke of Providence without casualties. It was not long however before our vague suspicions of the Bosch intended opposition, were cleaned up, and we were duly initiated into the argument with stuff of no small calibre.

Orders now came through that we were to hop over at 6 a.m. on the following morning (1st Sept.) and the task of taking up the selected positions, in the dark across unknown country strewn with thick wire and the remains of old trenches, was by no means an easy one and resulted in 2 companies of one of the Bns. being completely lost for hours, only arriving on the tape line 5 minutes before Zero. The eventful hour soon arrived & following behind a fairly heavy artillery barrage, our boys commenced to "Deliver the Goods" in their usual thorough style, and it was not long before large groups of prisoners could be seen trailing to the rear and in many instances escorted by one solitary Australian who had a most enviable job from the enterprising souvenir hunter's point of view.

That they were glad to be on our side of the line was clearly evidenced by that broad smile of satisfaction which seems nowadays to relieve their somewhat gloomy countenance, with little effort, despite the fact that they had been chosen men to defend PERONNE against the Australians. Their physique on the whole was quite good, anyhow good enough to allow of them taking the ends of a stretcher and in many ways, cheerfully rendering every assistance to our stretcher bearers & wounded.

From the very start there was little doubt as to our successful issue, but at the same time the enemy made it perfectly evident that he intended to hold up the line of advance as long as possible, their system of defence however was extremely patchy and the fact that this artillery fire was wild & erratic (but nevertheless heavy and of a good assortment) gave us the idea that his moral was in a sense, weakening. This machine gun fire was I think more effective and from well concealed positions his gunners poured out a fairly consistent volume of fire, which was chiefly responsible for most of our casualties which up to this time were comparatively light. As I have already said his defence was patchy for the right flank Battalion was able to send 2 Companies through the town with much less resistance than was met by the other Battalions.

This in addition to the fact that the Brigade Boundaries were inclined to be of a diverging nature, rather than converging had the effect of considerably increasing the frontage on reaching the first objective, with the result that most of the Battalions were well strung out, thus rendering liaison between them extremely difficult.

It was undoubtedly a Company Commander's Day out, who in many instances found themselves well "out in the blue" fighting for independent points of vantage. These minor & independent operations had the effect of exploiting the days' successes.

The day closed, with the Artillery & Infantry of both

sides hanging on to their positions & more or less mystified as to each others whereabouts.

The darkness soon came down on us as black as it was possible for it to be, but despite this and the many other disadvantages, such as heavy wire, heavy and unknown ground, our patrols remained active throughout the night.

During the early hours of the morning of the 2nd inst., the good news came along that our brothers - in - arms of the renowned Victorian Brigade, had made a successful crossing of the river and were eagerly awaiting orders to throw in their lot with us, and this they were able to do later in the day with very good effect by sending 2 companies through the town on that enviable job of "mopping up", & by 11 a.m. the town was entirely a "Digger" possession.

During this drive, our boys were situated on the bit of high ground a few hundred yards on the northern side of the town, and had been previously obliged to keep constantly on the "Hands down" owing to heavy enfilade machine gun fire from the old ramparts, but on these obstacles being duly overcome they were once again able to breathe normally and appreciate the situation generally, as the Lewis gunners at close range, gave fresh impetus to the scattered groups of Bosche as they retired across the ground at the N.E. extremity of the town.

News now came through that Mont St. Quentin (around which had been hanging a shroud of mystery throughout the whole stunt) had, as the result of a very brilliant counter blow by the "Diamond Brigade" on our left once again remained in our hands. The day was again ours, and the remnants of the shattered Bosch division could be seen making off across the high ground and in front in a complete state of disorganisation which was'nt in any way improved, as a few of our batteries commenced to drop fairly heavy stuff in the vicinity. Towards evening the enemy gunners must have decided to clean up all dumps of ammunition for the assortment that greeted us for the next few hours was as complete as it would be possible to get anywhere. About 10 p.m. things quietened down somewhat & our relief was able to be complete without a single casualty, but not before the whole line had been successfully established.

This concludes what was probably one of the most brilliant feats ever accomplished by Australian troops and the mystery still remains how in 2 days a task such as that could be completed which was, at first estimated by the higher authorities to be at least a month's job.

(Sgd) R.G. Thompson.

A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE 5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION ATTACK ON
PERONNE ON THE 1st and 2nd Sept. 1918.

The successful operation carried out on the 1st and 2nd instant by the 2nd and 5th Australian Divs. in the attack on Peronne, ranks in my opinion as one of the toughest problems ever undertaken by Aust. troops, and the result achieved places the Engagement amongst the greatest & best co-operated attacks during the present war.

The time allowed for actual arrangements was of the briefest, but, coordination and Liaison between units proved very satisfactory.

As I was established at Battalion forward H.Qrs. am afraid I cannot furnish anything of special note as regards the actual fighting.

Since the Evacuation of this very notable town, which has figured so often in this war I have had an opportunity of viewing its almost unassailable defences, I.E. The Ramparts and marshes which were so strongly held by the Bosch, One marvels that our troops, so few in number, ever succeeded in driving the enemy out.

Peaceful penetration combined with courage determination and endurance, achieved the desired ~~xxxx~~ result,

At 5.a.m. on the morning of the 1st Instant, A Company who were resting in an old Trench about 1200 yds from the assembly position and who were to act in support to the 54th Bn., moved forward to gain the assembly position. The Bosch whose artillery had been very active during the whole night, increased considerably about 5.a.m., putting down a heavy barrage of 5.9 and 8 Inch shells.

A. Coy on arriving at the Railway Embankment near the western end of Halle Wood, found themselves under machine gun fire which appeared to come from the direction of Mt. St. Quentin.

On starting forward at 5.a.m. we were under the impression Mt. St. Quentin was held by the 2nd Div. and M.G. fire coming from that quarter was rather a surprise. Capt. Dalkeith o/c A Coy. halted his Company, for protection against the Railway Embankment, at this time heavy rain commenced to fall and although observation was had^d we could see troops apparently the 2nd Div. advancing in small parties in extended order. Whilst resting here, Lt. Cory was wounded by shell fire, After reconnoitring for a few minutes o/c A Coy. moved out into the open West of Halle Wood in extended order, immediately coming under heavy M.G. and artillery fire. A circling movement to clear the edge of Halle Wood, enabled us to reach the Peronne Road and utilising the Eastern side Good cover was secured which enabled the men to move forward and ~~from~~ gain their assembly position.

During our advance Casualties were very light due no doubt to our men moving forward in open formation.

Bosch prisoners were used as Stretcher bearers & gave valuable assistance in disposing of wounded.

N.C.Os and men whilst advancing under heavy barrage & M.G. fire showed Great Coolness and excellent order was maintained.

In spite of the Heavy artillery and M.G. fire it was very pleasing to note that during afternoon of the 1st Day our Ration parties succeeded in getting Rations and MAIL to the ~~men~~ lads in the front line.

On the 2nd Day a new plan of attack was formulated and carried out, the casualties being fairly heavy owing to concentrated M.G. fire from the Ramparts.

One particular thing that I noticed was the rapidity with which the wounded were evacuated from the scene of attack, Company and H.Qrs. stretcher bearers assisted by Intelligence and other H.Qrs. staff worked at high pressure.

After the taking of Mt. St. Quentin at 1.30.p.m. on the 1st day enfilading fire ceased and the situation was much ~~praxed~~ improved.

The 14th Bde. was withdrawn on the night of the 2nd inst., being relieved by the 15th Bde.

(Sgd) B. GARDNER, Lieut.

Sig. Officer.

20.9.18.

NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS FROM 31st August to 2nd Sept. inclusive.

On the morning of the 31st August 1918 we received orders to be ready to move in a northerly direction and to cross the Somme River preparatory to resuming the offensive which was to be the taking of PERONNE.

Despite the fact that on the day previous the men had been subject to a certain amount of artillery fire, together with the knowledge of what was before them, their tails were right up and all bore a cheerful expression and were full of confidence concerning the coming event.

During the initial part of our journey Northwards we had to put up with a little artillery fire, but this did not last long owing to our airmen compelling the enemy to pull down some of his balloons, after which we completed our journey unmolested crossing the Somme about 5 p.m.

Immediately after crossing we came in touch with some of the 2nd Division and numerous greetings were exchanged between friends, jokes were cracked, news from the front line was received and threats were made in all directions as to what the men were about to do to the Common Enemy, referred to by the majority of them in such terms as Jerry - or The Queer Bloke - on the following day

At this stage we rested for some time alongside the river under cover of a high embankment and all partook of a rough meal while shells were constantly falling in the neighbourhood some of which failed to explode, when cheers would echo from all quarters and curious slang phrases would be used.

Later in the evening we moved forward and occupied trenches for the night, trenches which had but recently been occupied by the enemy there being unmistakable signs of this - a dead Hun lying in the entrance to same, and a distasteful odour floating around. However the men settled down to obtain as much rest as possible and to await orders for the following day.

At about 3.30 a.m. on the 1st Sept. O.C. Companies were summoned to attend a conference at B.H.Q. where orders were received to move forward to an assembly position in support to the attacking Battalions which were the 53rd and 54th.

Owing to the late hour at which orders were received the move was a hurried one but everyone was ~~hurry~~ ready and cheerful as they had ever been since the initial attack was launched which started the "Great Offensive" on the 8th of August 1918, such cheerfulness being obvious by the witty remarks that were passed, and the jokes cracked in the usual slang such as the Australian troops excel in.

On our way to the assembly position very heavy artillery fire was experienced and several casualties were inflicted, but even this did not damp the spirits of the cheerful Anzacs, but only induced them to set their jaws. We finally arrived at the assembly position at the appointed time all bearing a determined look and ready to uphold the reputation already gained by the Diggers as they are so called.

The attack commenced with the 53rd Battalion on the left and the 54th Battalion on the right supported by the 56th and 55th Battalions and well the Huns knew they were being attacked for it was not long before they were on the move to their

rear and the first few prisoners were coming slowly back through our lines, wearing a very weary and rattled expression and bearing signs of having had a rough time.

This also gave all in rear the assurance that the stronghold of the enemy had quivered and fallen, under the irresistible dash of our victorious troops.

The 54th Bn. on the right pushed steadily on and soon were in possession of the greater part of the desired town of PERONNE at which place the Hun seemed to have been surprised, for never should any attack have driven them out or even reached such a position and one is inclined to think that it never would have fallen, had it been held by such troops as ours.

The Battalion on the left were less fortunate having come under very heavy Machine Gun fire and encountering strong German wire entanglements, so that they suffered many casualties, but still the spirit that animated these men was of the sort which overcomes such difficulties and onward they pressed until coming under fire from the flank they were compelled to stay their advance until about 3.p.m., when the Brigade operating on their left took possession of Mount St. Quentin, thus relieving the 53rd Bn., of the flanking fire they had been compelled to endure.

Following on this success of the left Brigade the 53rd Bn. again attempted to push forward, but without any success for the Bosch immediately brought concentrated M.G. fire to bear on them compelling them to again stay their advance.

Meanwhile the Support Battalion had thrown forward our Company filling a gap between the two attacking Battalions, thus making a continuous line as is essential in such an operation.

At this stage a definite position was established and preparation made to deal with any counter-attack that may have developed, but none came which was fortunate for the Germans.

The day following, the attack was continued on a one Battalion front the 56th Bn., leading the way followed by the 55th Bn., and never has such artillery and machine gun fire been experienced by advancing Infantry. Nevertheless they went forward in their usual cheerful manner. The result of this heavy fire was that we were held up before the advance had pushed forward any considerable distance so that we maintained our next forward positions with the men who had already reached this area, but we were able to locate the positions from which the enemy M.G. fire was coming from.

At this point it was decided to approach the enemy's strong positions from the left flank but this also failed more or less and it was not until the 15th Brigade on our right pushed forward and absolutely cleared the town and surroundings that we were able to establish our forward line in a new position.

The 55th Bn. also pushed forward on our left and linked up with the 2nd Division, thus establishing communication with that unit.

About dusk a patrol was sent out to get in touch with the 58th Bn. on the right and after succeeding in this, it was decided to again creep forward and dig a new line under cover of darkness, thus establishing ourselves in a new and better position, but owing to the fact that we were relieved by the 59th Bn. the same evening this operation was not carried out by us.

In conclusion we must give credit and all praise due to

the men of the units which took part in these operations, who fought with such vigour and dash, thus bringing to the credit of the Australian Corps a victory which ranks with the greatest that have been recorded in this War.

(Sgd) J. BULL, Lieut.

O.C. C.Coy.
56th Bn.,

THE CAPTURE OF PERONNE BY THE AUSTRALIANS.

It was early on the morning of Saturday 31st August 1918 that the 14th Brigade received orders to prepare to move across the Somme, and there be prepared to take up the offensive against the German forces.

The preparation was complete before the orders reached us. Ever since the opening of the offensive on Thursday, 8th August, we had been kept in readiness to move with a few minutes notice, and so, if the orders had come to move immediately it could have been complied with equally as well.

After the lapse of about one hour the movement began, our course laying in a northerly direction. At first it appeared as though we were to undergo a concentrated fire from the enemy long range artillery, and it was not until our aeroplanes came to the assistance that we were able to change our opinions. The trouble all lay in the fact that the Enemy balloon Section were having a day in the air, and immediately our move began we came under direct observation. Consequently they gave their artillery a hint as to where they should fire and so things became a little warm.

'Twas then that those "sprites of the air" came over. Before the German observers could arrange for more fire from their guns they were being unmercifully hauled down from below so as to escape the wrath of those "spiteful" British airmen.

After this things quietened down so much that we were enabled to enjoy a hot meal on the track and make a crossing over the Somme with the loss of but a few men wounded. In fact their wounds were sustained near by the "starting point" and not in the actual crossing of the river.

Saturday night was spent in a trench about 1,000 yds. east of Clery-sur-Somme and without incident.

Sunday morning at 6.0'clock found the Brigade entering upon an attack against the supposed impregnable position of the Germans around Mont St. Quentin and Peronne.

Well those German troops who held these positions might have felt safe from any attack ever reaching them, and never should any attack ever reached them.

With the 53rd and 54th battalions forming the attacking force, supported by the 56th Battalion and with the 55th Battalion in reserve the great strong hold of the Huns began to quiver with the first onslaught.

The right battalion, which was the 54th pressed steadily forward and within five hours had captured the town of PERONNE.

The 53rd Battalion, which was the left battalion, was less fortunate. Shortly after beginning the attack they came under devastating machine gun fire, and on reaching the German wire entanglements had suffered many casualties. Despite the difficulties that had confronted them they pressed forward unhesitatingly until the enemy, away to their left, brought fire to bear on them also and forced them to stop their advance.

They had fought well; but under such annihilating fire, and with Mount St. Quentin still in the hands of the enemy, it became impossible for them to advance further.

It was not until 3 o'clock that afternoon that the brigade operating on the left of the 14th Brigade gained possession of the Mount.

Following this success the 53rd Battalion attempted to push forward, but immediately they attempted to advance the Bosche machine guns opened up with such a deadly fire that that battalion was obliged to remain in their present position.

Meanwhile the support battalion had thrown one company forward to fill a gap between the 53rd and 54th battalions, thus making the line continuous and maintaining that which is absolutely essential in all military operations - an unbroken line.

The whole brigade, knowing that to advance was no longer possible without the loss of many lives, turned its present position into a defensive one and awaited a German counter attack which never came.

Why, the German Command did not decide on a counter offensive I cannot say, but I venture to say that their troops would never have retaken Mont St. Quentin again. They had given us too much time to consolidate.

On the following morning the Brigade attacked on a one battalion frontage. The battalion to lead the attack was that of the 56th followed by the 55th.

Never has the Brigade been called upon to undertake such a task, and never have men advanced under such adverse circumstances so cheerfully. While moving forward to the position of assemblage the enemy artillery barrage came down in a perfect tornado of shells. The officers in command of companies acted immediately and brought their commands into two waves and continued to move forward to the position.

Officers and N.C.Os moved amongst their men endeavouring to keep them under control, and often placed themselves in positions of extreme danger with the view of keeping the spirits of the men at a high standard. But these men needed no example. They were cheerful and cool and obeyed orders without any hesitation whatsoever.

We advanced as far as possible without getting into our own artillery barrage area, and awaited the time to "go over".

Sure enough it came. When the wood was passed along all went over into a deadly Artillery and Machine barrage unhesitatingly, knowing too well what the capture of such a position meant to the British Army.

Not in the history of the Brigade has such an attack taken place and under such conditions. The enemy barrage which consisted mainly of heavy high explosive shells which burst immediately on contact with the ground, thus having widespread effect, lasted for well over 2 (two) hours never ceasing in violence. How men could live through such a rain of shells is past all understanding, but the gallant men of the 56th pressed steadily forward until the enemy forced them to stay their advance.

Casualties for that battalion had been heavy in wounded, and it became necessary to throw all available men into the front line. The right flank which was well advanced, and under the command of a Sergeant of the name of O'Connor, - for all the officers on that flank had become casualties, - formed a bold defence line keeping a vigilant watch on the enemy and attracting as much attention from him as possible so as to enable the left flank, which had been held up earlier - to advance.

Under such covering fire as the right flank could put up, the whole line was enabled to be made continuous.

During all this time the 55th Bn. had not been idle. On learning that the attacking battalion was held up, their commander had decided to come to its assistance, and so they were now up in close support to the line battalion.

For a time the left flank was a little uneasy as no sign of the troops attacking there could be seen. At last one company of the 55th pushed forward without any assistance whatsoever from artillery, and after hand fighting, were able to link up with the 56th Bn. and the attacking force on the left.

As for the troops on the right, well no one could find out if there were any there at all. The Ramparts at the most northern end of PERONNE were still very strongly held by the German machine gunners, and it appeared as if the 56th, along with the one company of the 55th, were going to have a very bad time indeed.

Suddenly, to the wonder of everyone concerned, men were seen moving out towards the end of the Ramparts. Some said

they were "Jerries" massing for a counter-attack, but that idea soon vanished from our minds for almost as soon as they were seen the German machine guns spoke and once more the 56th became subject to a rain of lead. Evidently someone was attacking on our right and the Bosch thought we would be coming ~~next~~ at him also.

In ten minutes it was all over. The 58th Bn. had captured this great defended locality of the Ramparts, and now they could be seen moving about the ground where, but a few minutes ago, no man had been plucky enough to show himself lest he should lose his life. A few Germans could be seen scampering for their lives and caused much amusement amongst our men who were sniping at them.

Now we knew that some troops were on our right and doing well, but it was not until nightfall between 8 and 9 o'clock that a strong fighting patrol was able to make its way forward and gain "touch" with them.

To the relief of all concerned the 56th Bn. was withdrawn that night from the front line, the 59th Bn. taking its place.

Thus ended the Great Attacks for the Strong holds of Mount St. Quentin and PERONNE, the 5th Australian Division having gained an honor for the Australian Corps only paralleled by the Memorable Landing on Gallipoli.

(Sgd) W.E. Nancarrow.
2nd Lieut, 56th Bn.

20.9.18.

OPERATIONS AT PERONNE on SEPTEMBER 1st & 2nd.

The weather during the operations was good, visibility during day also good though both nights were fairly dark.

The enemy had exceptionally good observation on to the 5th Divisional Front, while our people in front area had very poor observation of his front, except the forward slope of hill to N.E. of PERONNE.

Since going through experiences on 1st & 2nd, & also revisiting the ground, one realises how remarkably well the troops did on ground quite unknown to them, of which no accurate, or at least complete maps were in their possession, the fact that there had been no opportunity of reconnoitring and also very short time given to execute orders re movements.

The Hun artillery & machine gun officers in view of the threatened assault of PERONNE, must have made themselves intimate with every feature of ground &c. The way on which he used "heavies" dropping them just behind the Railway Embankment, & all cover in woods, & sunken roads, & even in shooting at the entrances of his old dugouts proved this.

His machine gunners had every inch of ground covered, in fact they caused most of the casualties we suffered, which is perhaps not remarkable when one has visited their M.G. positions and looked back to where our own troops were, one realises they had targets that machine gunners dream of especially the Railway Embankment.

The call on individual pluck and initiative was never greater; the way in which the "Diggers" faced the job they had seen others essay & receive such a "latering" at making the proposition seem hopeless and impossible, showed a determination never exceeded.

Even on the 2nd when suffering from the continuous shelling & gassing, they showed willingness & individual initiative most splendid.

(Sgd) J. Mc F. Harvey, Lieut.

COPY.

To Commanding Officer, 56th Battalion.
From Lieut. A.W.Hicks.

Narrative of operations on Sept. 1st & 2nd 1918.

I have to submit the following narrative as directed in your communication received on the 26th inst.

Any narrative by me of events in connection with the operations of the 1st September could be no other than a repetition of that furnished by Major Roberts, O.C. D.Coy under whose direction I acted and who has ~~before~~ a certainty already furnished a narrative embodying incidents in which I participated as actor or observer.

At some time between 5.a.m. and 6.a.m. on the 2nd Sept. I was ordered to take command of A Company which had lost the whole of its officers as casualties.

This Company was then occupying a trench in the high ground S.W. of the wood in 21 (Sheet 62.c) The C.S.M. was already in possession of an order for an operation beginning forthwith. This order directed (a) The O.C.Coy. to report to Bn. H.Q. at 6.a.m. (b) The advance of the company in cooperation with B & D Companies on a front at right angles to the North of the Village of Peronne, the limits of the front being stated.

As I was unacquainted with the N.C.Os and men it was obvious that they should be brought in rapport with myself by a brief conference with the N.C.Os; but this was impossible as it was imperative that the summons to Bn. H.Q. should be obeyed, and it was then past the appointed hour. The company was therefore left with the C.S.M. who was instructed to lead the company which was not immediately ready to proceed to the starting point, a 14th M.G.Coy. officer cooperating with the Battalion agreeing to supervise the move.

After the interview with my Commanding Officer I hastened to rejoin the company which was not visible. The Company had left the trench and was met in the centre of the wood. As the Zero hour was at hand an ~~in~~ effectual endeavour was made to reach the starting point by a direct route through the wood, but before proceeding far the need of returning to the vicinity of the road was apparent. This done the company was hastened to the ordained position and arrived a few minutes after the Zero hour "B" and "D" Companies had already advanced and the Support Coy, C.Coy, under Lieut. Bull was in position.

Without delay other than was unavoidable in advising the Company of immediate further advance through the Support Company progress was made to the objective. It was soon apparent that casualties were ~~in~~ heavy and machine gun and artillery fire were intense. Lieut. Bullock was seen lying wounded in a trench with a number of other wounded in the vicinity.

The Company had not advanced far towards its objective when I became a casualty. In passing to the R.A.P. the O.C. Support Company was verbally advised as to the situation as it appeared to me.

It is regretted that no references are available to definitely record positions, but it ^{is} presumed that these may be defined from information available to B.Headquarters.

3rd L.I.H.

(Sgd) Aleck.W.Hicks, Lt.,

28. Sept. 1918.

KILLED IN ACTION 18/11/18
 CAPTAIN GEORGE DUNCAN (NO. 3227 23RD BATTALION)

KILLED IN ACTION 10/9/18
 CAPTAIN GEORGE DUNCAN (NO. 3227 23RD BATTALION)

KILLED IN ACTION 2/9/18
 CAPTAIN GEORGE DUNCAN (NO. 3227 23RD BATTALION)

Peronne - Sept. 1st, 1918

(By Lieut. W. Waite, M.C. and Bar, "D" Coy., 53rd Bn.)

AT 4 a.m. on September 1 we received orders to attack up to, and consolidate in front of, St. Denis village and wood. The 2nd Div. would be attacking on our left flank, and the 54th Bn., through Peronne, on our right. "Zero" hour was fixed for 6 a.m.



"D" Coy. (Capt. Lindsay) were to attack in support to "C." (Major Murray), "A." Coy. supported "B." At about 5.30 we arrived in our assembly trenches, to find portion of them in German hands. "C" Coy. struck trouble here. The 23rd Bn. succeeded in driving the enemy out, and "C" then got into order for the attack. At this juncture heavy rain began to fall, but five minutes before "zero" the weather cleared, disclosing a strong belt of wire about 30 yards ahead. From a copse in front Germans started to rake our position with machine-guns.

At "zero" hour Major Murray sent Lt. Cooper's platoon forward to force a passage through the wire, but, unable to do so, and suffering heavy casualties, it had to be withdrawn. At the same time Lieut. Eastment took his platoon out to the left on a similar errand, and was successful. Major Murray thereupon moved the rest of the company to the left, and advanced through the gap, with "D" Coy. following.

Whilst in the assembly trenches Pte. Richardson of "C" Coy. was wounded in the head, and fell back into the arms of Sgt. Scully, "D" Coy. This was remarkable, inasmuch as at Fromelles on July 19, 1916, precisely the same thing had happened.

By moving out to the left, "D" Coy. cut off enemy machine-guns in the copse, leaving them for the mopping-up party to deal with.

Crossing the railway we started to advance over open country between Le Quinconcs Wood and Mont. St. Quentin. Machine-gun fire from mounds along the Mont. St. Quentin-Quinconcs road and from the mount itself was terrific, but, despite casualties, we kept the advance going by section rushes, Lewis guns and rifles engaging the enemy gunners and giving covering fire. The men were moving as coolly and collected as if on a parade ground.

Four hundreds yards from the road, when things were getting rather "sticky," a bullet set fire to the smoke bombs which Cpl. Pain was carrying. The dense smoke rising from them, and from Pain's burning clothes, travelled across the front of the enemy and screened us from his view. Taking advantage of this, we advanced to the road without further casualties. Pain suffered severe burns but, with the help of a couple of mates, managed to get his clothes off, and made back to the dressing station in the nude, Germans firing at him all the while. We heard later that he died, poor fellow.

A message came from Major Murray, informing us that his flank was in the air. We accordingly moved forward, killing two of the enemy and capturing their guns, got into touch with "C" Coy., and swung our left flank round. This movement left our own flank in the air, as the 23rd Battalion had not yet reached their objective.

Whilst in this position Lieut. Anslow and 9 men were killed by shell-fire. In addition, heavy casualties were still being caused by machine-gun fire from Mont. St. Quentin.

At Le Quinconcs the battalion captured a rail-head, at which there were large dumps of coal, timber, wire, sandbags, picks, shovels, ammunition, matting for camouflage purposes, 1 minenwerfer, and a 77 m.m. field-gun.

As the enemy began concentrating in a nearby sunken

(Continued foot next column)

*Reveille
Sept 1933*

8/19
3422: SUP P.L.M. BUFFALO

: SOFH BUFFALON

road, I sent Sig. Hopkins over to the field gun, and got a message to Major Murray for Signaller Crank to come up and help Hopkins get this gun into action. They got to work, scoring direct hits among the enemy, also enfilading the road and high ground east of Mont St. Quentin. The enemy were forced to clear from the road, and take cover in trenches to the east of it. Hopkins and Crank, who had to detonate their own shells (ground shrapnel), were under heavy machine-gun fire practically the whole time they were working the gun. It was mainly owing to their bravery and initiative that what threatened to be a heavy Boche counter-attack was shattered.

Early in the afternoon the 2nd Divn. started to advance through the village of Mont St. Quentin. They crossed the sunken road on to the high ground, the enemy falling back from this position. We brought the 77-m. gun into action again against these retreating Germans, and also concentrated L.G. fire upon them.

At 4 p.m. I was ordered to move my platoon to an assembly point in a communication trench alongside the railway. Here "D" Coy. received orders to advance on St. Denis. At 5 o'clock we moved out to the attack, in skirmishing order; Capt. Lindsay was in the lead. His battle-cry was "Come on, 'D' Company—never let it be said that your mother reared a jib."

The men carried out every movement with splendid coolness and initiative. Terrific M.G. fire came from the ramparts of Peronne in front, and from the high ground on our left front, and at the start we suffered severe casualties, Capt. Lindsay and Lieut. Dent being among the wounded. Lindsay sent me orders to "Carry On!" We advanced by section rushes, the Lewis guns giving splendid covering fire and engaging enemy machine-guns until we reached the road from Mont St. Quentin to St. Denis. When we reached this position, having killed a great number of Germans on the way, I found that we had no support on either flank, and machine-guns began to play on our right. From this "possie" we got on to an enemy M.G. post about 200 yards in front, killing the team and capturing the gun. We then took up another position a little further back, smoke grenades and covering fire from Lewis guns screening our movement. Here posts were dug on a frontage of about 200 yards.

By this time I had only 17 men with whom to hold the position, so I reported the situation to Major Murray, who was in charge of firing line, and received from him the following message, timed 9 p.m.: "You are to remain in your present position. I am establishing a line with 55th Bn., approx. on our original line. I will push a post along to the end of the sap. N. of the railway, with whom you can get in touch. I will endeavour to get rations out to you, and also men to bring in your wounded."

Murray also said that he would watch my right flank, and would send a platoon to the left to take up a position between me and the 2nd Divn. Owing to heavy shell and M.G. fire, the carrying party was unable to reach us. At dusk I sent L/Cpl. O. W. Smith and Pte. J. Carlisle to try and get into touch with the 2nd Divn. and find out their dispositions. On their way they were confronted by an enemy machine-gun post of 5 men, but shooting the observers, they rushed the post and bombed it and killed the occupants. They then got into touch with the 21st Bn., which could not advance their flank, but promised to help if needed.

A midnight I heard someone calling me by name. Thinking something was in the wind, I sent runners back to Major Murray, who gave them orders for me to withdraw, as the artillery wanted to bombard the surrounding positions. So at 3 a.m. on September 2 I withdrew my posts and, carrying our wounded out, we returned to our starting point alongside the railway, where we remained until at 10 p.m. on the following night we were relieved by the 15th Brigade.

KILLED IN ACTION 18/11/18
 CAPTAIN GEORGE DUNCAN (NO. 3227 23RD BATTALION)

Saw It Through: The Fifty-fourth

THIS story, which is told by Lieut. Hector Brewer, an original member of the 2nd Bn., and afterwards of the 54th Bn., is one of pride of regiment and comradeship—a story which in any Army Corps, other than the A.I.F., might not have had such a happy ending. But, of course, in any other Army it might not have had a beginning. It describes just one of "the little ways" of the Digger.

Lieut. Brewer landed with the 2nd Bn. at Anzac, saw that campaign through, and on the reorganisation of the A.I.F. at Tel-el-Kebir became, with many others of the 2nd, the nucleus of the 54th.

To farewell the old unit, and to be parted from their Gallipoli pals and mates of Randwick and Mena, was a terrible blow to them all, but they were of the stuff of which good soldiers are made, and on meeting the fine type of reinforcements then arriving, started their military lives afresh as a unit of the 5th Division.

The old and the new blended well, and before many weeks had passed, the old hands found themselves proud of their new unit, and as loyal to the 54th as they had been to the 2nd. That loyalty, comradeship, or esprit-de-corps—call it what you may—was no Tel-el-Kebir parade ground "swank," for, over two years later. . . . Well, here's Brewer's story:—

After the Peronne Battle, the 54th Bn., with the rest of the 14th Brigade, camped at Les Mesnil. The 54th held a sports meeting, and issued invitations to other units to attend. Several divisional records were broken by competitors in the 100 yards and distance running, and also in the broad jumps. The "carnival" terminated in a flat race, in which some very good horses (from other units) took part, alongside mules from the transport section.

Rumours for some time were that each brigade was to be reduced from four battalions to three to conform to the French formation. There was considerable speculation among all units as to which would be the unlucky battalions. Eventually the order came, which made it clear that the axe had fallen on the 54th for one.

A bitter pill, and a horrible injustice, it seemed, after two and a half years of work well done as first-class troops on the battle fronts of Belgium and France. The news was accepted quietly; much too quietly! Lieut.-Col. Norman Marshall, D.S.O., M.C., our excellent leader and guide, had the unpleasant duty of carrying out the order to disband.

Accordingly, on the afternoon of a certain day, the battalion "fell in." Roll was called, and amid a silence that could be felt the colonel announced that the battalion would carry out the order to disband at once. Officers were called from their various commands and informed of the units in the brigade to which they were to be allotted. They saluted and went off. Non-commissioned officers were then called by name, and a fair proportion obeyed. The majority, however, stood fast, and efforts to persuade them to obey the order were unavailing.

The task of detailing the men to their units was then begun, brothers or mates being conceded the right to go together. There was "nothing doing," however. Not a man moved! The situation looked difficult. Col. Marshall called for a deputation from the men. Two or three stepped forward.



Lieut. H. Brewer.

These had very little to say, but what they did say was polite and firm. "We do not want to be broken up. We will do anything we are asked to do, as we have done in the past, but only as members of the 54th Bn."

The colonel was patient. Darkness arrived, and still the battalion ranks were intact. Each man, having been informed of the unit to which he was to report, was left to his own devices—and his own devices were remarkable.

Early next morning ex-54th officers were instructed to visit their old encampment to see how many men had obeyed the order, and endeavour to persuade the remainder to follow. The difficulties ahead of the men in the way of getting food, etc., if they held out, were stressed, and they were also told that they were behaving in a manner

prejudicial to "good order and military discipline"—and much worse! No response! The men were again left alone.

Next morning a great sight greeted the other three battalions of the 14th Brigade. The members of the 54th were out on the parade ground in battalion en masse. They had appointed a commanding officer, company and platoon commanders, and so on, and had not overlooked the post of R.S.M.—that position being "filled" by a smart-looking Digger.

They had paraded punctually at the usual time, had their roll call and report to "C.O.," and then carried out platoon exercises and physical "jerks." They held sick parades through their own A.M.C. section. They had received food rations from the usual source under a temporary arrangement, and army medical supplies from the other units of the brigade. The brigadier (General Stewart) paid them a visit. His words had no effect. Then the divisional commander (General Tivey) arrived, and found the men doing platoon exercises. He received a beautiful "present arms" and galloped off!

Several days had passed before an order arrived for the 54th to reform. Officers and several N.C.O.'s returned; and all necessary equipment for front-line activities was re-issued. In about twelve hours from the receipt of the order the 54th was on its way to the town of Bellicourt to support the American 29th and 30th Divisions.

The Battle of Bellicourt was the last of the war for the 54th. It was taken out of the line and entrained for Abbeville. From there a night march of 18 kilos—it seemed 80 kilos to me, says Mr. Brewer—to the village of Tours en Vimler. Whilst here the Armistice was signed, and the church bells which had been rung for victims of "Spanish 'flu," then raging in that district, now broke into a continuous peal of joy.

Thus Mr. Brewer's story ends. The last stunt in France was carried out with the 54th intact. It was not disbanded until Oct. 11, 1918. All were thankful of the wonderful manner in which the men of the 54th, during its fighting career, had stuck to their colours—purple and green; and silent thanks were given to the commanders of the battalion, brigade and division, who allowed the 54th to enter the 5th Division's last fight with its identity preserved.

Lieut. Brewer left the battalion on Boxing Night, 1918, was placed in charge of a camp at Sutton Veny for a time, and, strange it must have seemed to him, for he reached Sydney Heads at dawn on April 25, 1919—his first glimpse since October 18, 1914, when the s.s. *Suffolk* cleared the Heads with the 2nd Battalion aboard for "an unknown destination."

—L. H. Barrett.

Historical notes

TELEPHONE NO.
CENTRAL 13.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
"AUSWARMUSE,"
MELBOURNE.

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO
"THE DIRECTOR."

In reply please quote

No.

HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT,
AUSTRALIAN WAR MUSEUM,
122-138 KING STREET.

MELBOURNE. 9/3

Dear Mr Beau,

A note on "Pompey" which may be of
use in due course :-

At the time his brigade was trying to
cross at Peronne he went forward himself
and found a broken bridge on which it was
possible for men to cross in single file.
He crossed the river, had a look round,
and decided to return. But he mistook
the bridge and found himself up 8 feet

or so of water. He managed to struggle
across however and later visited D.H.Q.
then the G.S. told him that his experience
had held up ^{adminis.} signal traffic for a time,
as all the units were telling me
another "Pompeii's fallen into the
canal"!

Yrs. sincerely

J. D. L. L.

AN EPIC TRIUMPH

Battle of Peronne

(By Lieut. Wm. Smith, 53rd Bn., and formerly of 2nd Bn., 1st F.C. Engrs. and 14th F.C. Engrs.).



September 1! The anniversary of the Battle of Peronne and of the lower slopes of Mont. St. Quentin, 1918; one of the proudest of the many battle honours of the 14th Infantry Brigade.

It was a wonderful feat of arms, crowning an abundance of initiative and endurance.

The honours of the day went to the men on the spot—company commanders, platoon officers, N.C.O.'s, and men.

The swift movement of events during August had outrun the staff work, and the brigade was committed to the attack with very hazy operation orders, scant information, and without sectional maps. General Hobbs has since admitted his own anxiety at sending troops into a major action without knowledge of the ground and of the position of the enemy, and with inadequate artillery support.

He knew well that we were being asked to attack one of the greatest natural fortresses in France, and that our position was dominated by the enemy entrenched on the higher slopes of Mont. St. Quentin, and that he would offer determined resistance.

Everyone was hazy as to the position of our own front line. When we reached the position which was to be our jumping off trench we found it occupied by the enemy.

Other battalions had won everlasting fame two nights previously by their daring attack on the crest of the hill; but the lower slopes and the fortified town of Peronne remained a serious proposition.

A few days earlier consideration had been given to the advisability of making a frontal attack upon Peronne, and I was instructed to accompany Capt. Lindsay and Capt. Wal Smith, of my battalion, to make a reconnaissance.

We fully appreciated the seriousness of our task. The river Somme in front of Peronne was wide and marshy. I had spent nearly three years with the Field Engineers, and I was fully alive to the difficulties of getting troops across the river in the teeth of fierce machine-gun fire.

As junior officer, I was asked to express my opinion first. I had no hesitation in saying that a frontal attack would probably sacrifice the whole division. It would be a second Fromelles. My senior officers agreed, and reported in very definite language. The frontal attack was abandoned.

The 14th Bde. then retired some three miles to the rear, and crossed the river by pontoon bridge. We then marched along the opposite bank towards Mont St. Quentin, and halted where the river makes a sharp bend towards Peronne.

We now knew that a decision had been made for a flank attack, and I wondered if our report had influenced this decision. We distributed ourselves among the shell holes and the bank of the river. A decent meal was provided by our wonderful cooks, and we had some rest.

Soon after midnight I was awakened by my good friend, Lieut. Dexter. We shared a tin of beef as breakfast, then rounded up the troops and set off for No Man's Land. I have a vivid recollection of the battalion crossing a creek in single file over a fallen tree. The tree was wet and greasy, and several men slipped into the creek.

The attacking troops were 53rd Bn., on left, supported by the 55th, with the 54th on right—in front of Peronne, with the river Somme on its right flank—supported by the 56th Bn. Capt. Smith, "B" Coy., 53rd Bn., supervised our dispositions in the jumping-off trench, and indicated the direction of the attack. A number of German soldiers who were captured in their trench were casually sent to the rear without an escort.

I moved along the trench to the left, and made contact with Capt. Evers, "A" Coy. "C" and "D" Coys. were on the left of "A." "A" and "C" Coys. were to form the first wave of the attack and take the first line of trenches. "B" and "D" Coys. were to follow three minutes later, and pass through "A" and "C." "A" and "C" Coys. would then follow. Objective—unlimited.

Our artillery barrage was weak.

At zero, "A" Coy. launched the attack and deployed half right—in front of "B" Coy. Some three minutes later we, of "B" Coy., left the shallow trench and followed "A." I found "A" Coy. held up before the uncut barbed-wire by a murderous concentration of machine-gun and rifle fire. I crawled over to Capt. Evers for a hurried consultation. He instructed me that "A" Coy. would give covering fire while my platoon (No. 8) rushed a small opening in the wire and assaulted the trench. In the fusillade which followed both Capt. Evers and Lieut. Toffler were badly wounded, and my own gallant sergeant—Jack Beddie—was frightfully wounded in the arm and shoulder.

I passed the order—to attack—to my band of heroes, and made a rush for that small opening. But I was deprived of the honour of being the first through. Corpl. Laurie Tromp was on my left, and Pte. Buckley on my right. We charged through together; the rest of the boys on our heels. (We soon cleared the trench and sent back a batch of prisoners. "A" Coy. passed through us, and through the fog into the unknown.)

I then realised that "C" Coy. had not come through on my left, and that our flank was "in the air." About 40 or 50 yards on my left was a German strongpost, which was holding up the other half of the battalion.

It was a time for quick thinking. I decided to attack the strongpost from the rear. With the remnants of my

platoon in extended order—about ten of us and a Lewis gun—we made for the strongpost.

We had run about 20 yards when my batman—Pte. Willis—threw up his arms and collapsed into a shell-hole, shot through the heart. Poor old Willis. He was an ex-naval man, and a faithful and gallant soldier.

Our blood was now up, and we would have attacked the whole German army. We used the good Lewis gun and Mills bombs and some frightful language with good effect.

The post gave in. We collected two machine-guns, one officer, and about 30 other ranks, stripped them of arms and bombs, and passed them to the rear.

Another German machine-gun party had observed the surrender of this post—which was in a key position—and they immediately opened fire upon us. The first bullet of the burst caught me between the ribs and crossed my spine. Luckily, it traversed to the right instead of to the left—otherwise it would have cut me in half.

I felt that I had been struck with a ton of flying metal—and at first thought that my back was broken. Tromp and Buckley lifted me into the strongpost and applied a field dressing. They propped me up in the trench so that I could indicate to them the direction of the attack, and I instructed them to rejoin Capt. Smith and Lieut. Dexter.

Within a few minutes the post was rushed by "C" Coy., under Lieut. Cooper. Luckily for me, they did not throw any bombs. They were astonished to find that I constituted the garrison, as this post had kept up a murderous fire upon their position. Cooper insisted upon sending a man to find stretcher-bearers for me.

My legs were now paralysed, and I was very cold. German shells were falling around the post. Cooper's runner came back with two stretcher-bearers from the 55th Bn., and I started on the first stage to Blighty.

I had had a great run from the days of Gallipoli and the evacuation; all the ups and downs of the 5th Division in France—but this was my "Waterloo."

Notes on explanation given to Wilkins and myself by Gen. Monash of attack on Sept 18th 1918 in front of the Hindenburg line.

The attack will be made by 4 Corps. The French were to have joined, but I understand that they have pulled out in view of something else.

Three Corps of the 4th Army will attack simultaneously and the 5th Corps in the 3rd Army.

The French had promised to cooperate but owing to other attempts made by Foch they find they cannot do it.

The object is the capture of certain ground. If we did not get a prisoner the attack would still be a success if we capture the ground which we are after. We want to seize the Hargicourt le Verguier Ridge? This is really the old British main line. The front Hindenburg-system line is not an outpost line, but a front line meant to keep us away from observation of the main line which is behind the canal. We know from captured documents that there has been some doubt amongst Germans as to whether the Hindenburg line was properly drawn in this sector. It was conditioned by the canal - running along the ground behind the canal in order to have the advantage of the protection afforded by the deep bed of the canal. The old British line is on very much higher ground and overlooks it and the Germans have entertained doubts as to whether this was wise. We have a document of theirs (along with the rest of the defence scheme of the Hindenburg line, captured by us in November last year and never thought of till the war office suddenly recollected that it possessed them a few days ago and has been feverishly getting out the information since then) we have a document which defends the policy of placing the main line behind the canal, admitting that the British line has the observation.

(In spite of what Monash says, the front Hindenburg line on this side of the canal is properly described as an outpost line)

On March 21st the British had Hargicourt and also an outpost line in front of it. ~~xxxxxxxboth~~ The Germans have both. The object of our operation is to capture both lines so as to restore the situation as on March 21. We have tried to capture it by peaceful penetration, as the men call it, and have found that we cannot do so - we received a knock which proved it.

The disadvantages under which we shall suffer in this attack are: Though we have weak infantry in front of us we have a very powerful artillery well prepared, who know our positions while we cannot be sure of theirs.

3rd)
Australian) Corps have a common problem as to their situat-
9th)

ion. We Australian Corps attack on a frontage of 7000 yards narrowing to 6000. We attack with 4th divn on right and 1st divn on left.

On this occasion we fixed our starting line before we possessed the country on which it lay. It was in parts several hundred yards in front of our leading posts. I told the divisions that they must be in front of it by the zero day. Thus three days ago we were able definitely to place our guns and make arrangements. It looked a bit patchy yesterday when we still had not some of our starting ground but we are there tonight.

the order of bdes is:

1
3
4
12

The fight is a normal advance with a normal limited objective - a very simple form of attack. The barrage lines are almost straight. The attack starts with a normal barrage. I have 15 brigades of artillery. The first division has 8 of these and the 4th divn 7. This gives quite a dense barrage - not as thick as we have sometimes had it but still a good barrage. The 4th divns objve lines are so chosen that the guns can complete the whole timetable

right up to the red line without shifting any guns at all.

1st objve....	Brown line	-	main ridge.
Final objve....	Red line	-	our old outpost line.
Exploitatn....	Blue line	-	Hindbg outpost line.

The first divn have to shift guns as the depth of the advance is too great for the guns to maintain the barrage to the end,

For that reason during the barrage itself we have to bring forward some of the guns. We have therefore been forced against our will to arrange a halt in the barrage. This halt takes place on the Brown line - 200 or 300 yds down hill from the top of the ridge. The object of this is to get the troops as far as we can from the organised trench system which is sure to be barraged by the enemy.

On the Brown line we will wait a minimum of 50 minutes (ie. on the place where we reach it last we will have to wait 50 mins before the barrage moves on.) We leave the brown line at 3 hrs 10 mins after zero. i.e. 8.30 am.

The 4th divn halt for two hours. The 1st divn for 1½ hrs - 50 mins. During this time the artillery has to re-range for the 1st divn.

The 1st Divns second objve includes the very very important key position of Cologne Farm - a very famous place. (Monash didnt know what it was famous for - every one spoke of it as having been the scene of heavy fighting at some previous period - and the trenches thereabout showed clearly that there had been fighting, for the German trenches and ours meet across Nomansland - evidently having been taken and retaken.)

The place to be chiefly noted for the 4th Divn is Le Verguier Village where there is a maze of trenches - a very strongly fortified place. The 1st Divn has to capture Hargicourt, Villeret and Cologne Farm. If we can capture Cologne Farm we have done a very useful thing.

Blue line.

The divisions are to make an honest and sincere attempt to capture the blue line by allocating for its capture certain bodies of troops. But if those bodies fail, they are not to throw in any other bodies of troops. If the enemy is disorganised we can take advantage of this. But if we fail after an honest attempt we are not to waste troops. The wire on that line has not been successfully cut. We may find behind this wire fresh rested troops. Four battalions are told off to do the attack. When the barrage timetable has been completed (at 9.53 am) at that time 2 artillery brigades in each division will have come out of the barrage. limbered up and come up to positions from which they can cover the advance of the exploitation infantry. While this is happening the heavy artillery also has its programme. We have again (as on Aug 8) no back barrage in the ordinary sense. But we have an advancing bombardment. This differs from that of Aug 8 in that we have three belts of fire at one and the same time - one belt just ahead of the next. The barrage lifts off the rearmost belt onto the belt that is next ahead of the bombardment - i.e. 3 belts ahead, and not one. The barrage is thus always three belts deep - much deeper than before, and part of it always shifting, not the whole of it at once. This feature is new.

From 238 to 290 the barrage will concentrate on the Hindbg line (~~xxxxxx~~ this is from the moment the red line has been reached) Three brigades of heavies will be on this advancing bombt - most of the heavies - 8 brigades - will be on c/battery.

There is an extremely inadequate allotment of tanks, owing to their being needed elsewhere. The 1st Divn will have 5 and the 4th Divn 4 - but I believe that the 4th Divn has managed to raise a 5th tank from somewhere by processes known to themselves. The whole army has only 21 tanks - they are wanted for something better. The tanks on this occasion are being used simply to follow the infantry and not to lead them.

As to planes - I am afraid that we shall not be able to indu

indulge in any luxuries - because we lost 40 planes last night in the thunderstorm (I fancy that most of these were smashed in their hangars - not in the air - certainly the hangars were wrecked.)

We will have the normal bombing planes to hide the tanks from 5.30 to midnight and for 1 hour before zero.

The forming up of the infantry is normal. We have a long way to go before we meet organised opposition except at Le Ver-guier. An officer prisoner said last night that the Germans were depending on their machineguns, and not on their infantry any more - we ~~had~~ their infantry is disorganised.

This is the first time that the 1st Aust Divn has been in a big attack under me except on Aug 23rd.

All the advanced positions for the guns close to the tape line are already supplied with ammunition and resected (pinpointed) on the ground. The guns do not have to move into the present No) mansland until the red line has been reached. After the capture of the Blue line all brigades will have to move into Nomansland to be in a position to cover the infantry - every gun will have to be in position to do this against attack. But only four brigades will move before the timetable is through.

"Fleurs",
3 Dan's Avenue,
COOGEE.

16th November, 1932.

Dr. C. E. W. Bean,
Historian,
Victoria Barracks,
PADDINGTON.

Dear Sir:

I enclose herewith the two maps about which I spoke to you in our telephone conversation to-day, showing the Sector where Pill-box was situated, which maps were handed to me by the O.C. before taking up the position in the Pill-box situated in No Mans Land about 200 yards from the front line at Ypres between Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse. These you may find useful.

As my memory serves me relative to the Flaminwerfer (Flame-Thrower) incident, this Pill-box strewn with dead had been lost and retaken on numerous occasions, and before leaving the front line it was said to me "Well Good Luck we might never see you again" as it was not known when the big advance was going to take place.

20/Sept
1932
On about the second night of our Platoon's (No.2) occupation of this Pillbox, Fritz made an attack on the right post of Pill-box to regain possession with the Lifebuoy Flaminwerfer, and the following men, L/Cpl. Eager, Ptes. White, Carstairs and Duffy were burnt, one of whom through his piercing cries from his agonising pains and wounds roused everyone and everything around us in racing towards the post which I was holding with another Digger named Crimmins, who was killed after the advance took place. Imagine my surprise when a form loomed up out of the ground about 10 feet to the left of post in No Mans Land, my first thoughts were that he was a Fritz but on hearing him speak about the yells of the suffering men and seeing the shape of his steel helmet, I knew he was one of our own men (as you now inform me this was Lieut. Roland Green). He and I bombed the position with Mills Bombs and I was then informed by him that the big attack was to open up in a short time and his battalion were waiting for Zero hour to hop over (of which we had no knowledge).

When the big attack opened up, a dead Fritz with a Lifebuoy Flaminwerfer was discovered between our position of Pill-box and the 11th Yorks who were on our immediate right in the Advance. Shortly afterwards Pte. Crimmins was killed and four of us were wounded and knocked unconscious by the same enemy shell.

I trust the above will assist you in your compilation of the History of the A.I.F.

14N
18 Sept 1918
As mentioned over the 'phone to you, the last Hop Over of the 1st Battalion was at Bellicourt 1918 just before the Armistice was signed when we met the 1st Battalion of Fritzes (Prussians), for the first and only time it is said, and "A" Coy. lost all its Officers and we finished up a handful of men.

16/11/1932.

I also enclose Pamphlets which were dropped over our lines by the Huns during the War, these may also be of interest to you.

Yours faithfully,

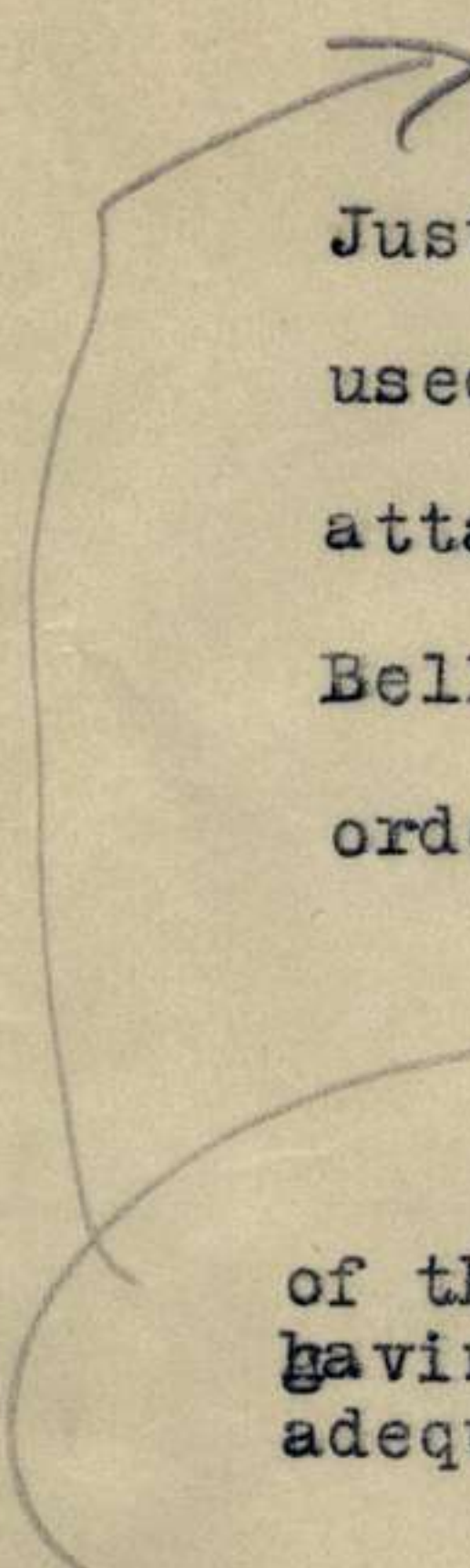
H. H. Flatman

P.S.

My wife's Mother has often asked me if you came from England, as she was well acquainted with the Reverend Willoughby Bean of Cumberland, England, who had only one son, and she has wondered if you were related to that gentleman.

H/Note - Gen. Leane

(July 1937)



Just Imagine the attack in Sept. 1918 when dummy tanks were used and the attacking men were directed to beat tins. That attack upon the Hind. Outpost Line between Bellicourt and Bellenglise, although it proved a wonderful success, had orders been carried out would have been a dismal failure.

My experience proved to me that even up to 1918 certain of the higher command were too apt to order engagements without having either accurate knowledge of the position or ensuring adequate arrangements were complete prior to the engagement.

The Last Days of the War

(By Lieut. P. KINCHINGTON,
M.M., 3rd Btn., A.I.F.)



After having been separated for four months from our sister divisions, we left the Hazebrouck sector to rejoin them on the Somme, and what a reunion it was to be. For we were welcomed by the greatest offensive of the war.

The opening battle was on a front of about 15 miles, from Morlancourt to, I think, the River Avre. The Australians were to extend from the south bank of the Somme till they joined the Canadians; on the other flank, across the Somme, were British troops. The 3rd Australian Division, supported by the 4th, attacked on the right of the British, our division (the 1st) following close up behind the 4th.

August 8 was a very misty morning, and visibility bad. For some time there had been a very heavy bombardment, the air being rent by the explosions of the shells. Aeroplanes, flying overhead to deaden the sound of the tanks going into action, made enough row, but the tanks made more. Our battalion was assembling in the vicinity of the tanks, and we wished them to a pretty warm place, for they drew a lot of fire.

The 1st Division had not previously had much to do with tanks. We were, of course, familiar with the experience of the 4th Division with them at Bullecourt in April, 1917, but had seen little of them at Broodseinde. Here I had watched many of the monsters preparing for the present action, and 60 per cent. appeared to have mechanical defects of one sort or another. From my own observations, I estimated that about 25 per cent. of them would be unable to reach their jumping-off place; another 25 per cent. would probably go no more than a quarter of the way, yet another 25 per cent. half way, and the remainder probably would reach their objective.

It was at 4.30 a.m. that the inferno broke loose. Immediately numerous tanks started out, with the infantrymen following close behind them. The enemy appeared surprised; except for big shells, he did not fire as much as we thought he would. The 5.9's were certainly vindictive, but he did not fire all the field-pieces that were captured later. The greatest damage came from machine-guns, but as the advance was rapid, this danger was lessened. The trenches were well manned; although ours was only a reserve division, we came upon trenches full of men, many of them so quiet that I thought they were infected with the flu, as we had been during the previous months.

We continued to follow the Somme, the country on our side of it affording little cover. There was some kind of a hold-up in the wood across the river, which was troublesome for the troops ahead of us, as the Germans were firing into their flanks. We were able to observe them quite plainly. It was not till later in the day that some of the 1st Battalion were ordered to cross the Somme, with the result that Chipilly was taken. At this stage the position was consolidated.

About 8 p.m. we received orders to move from the Somme towards Harbonnieres, on the right flank. After marching for about a mile and half over open country, we were halted while Major Burrett went to find the way. The battalion was still in column when several German

planes came over. The leading machine let go a string of bombs, the first of which dropped ahead of the column, the second on headquarters details, killing about 18, and two or three more at intervals, all of which killed a few men. About 3 a.m. we came within sight of Harbonnieres—where the large railway gun, now at Canberra, had been captured—but, like good folk, waited till daylight before going into the place. For a few hours we occupied some trenches there.

The 2nd (Victorian) Brigade were now ahead of us, and on their flanks were the Canadians. The Germans were holding Lihons ridge, right ahead, and on it was a great wooded position, from which a wonderful view could be obtained, both to east and west. The slope in front did not afford sufficient cover for an ant. The Victorians attacked up the spur in the face of a murderous fire. Many of them fell just as they started, the bodies being but a few yards apart, laid out in straight rows.

Owing to their heavy losses, we at once relieved them, in some old 1916 French trenches, astride the Lihons-Chaulnes road. There must have been heavy gunfire here in 1916, as the name of the village and its trees, which had grown to a fair height again, were the only things left. On August 11th a severe attack was made on our flank near Lihu Wood, but it was repulsed. Lieut. Baird, Corporal Conmee, and a couple of other men had an argument with the enemy near the Lihons-Chaulnes road. Early on the 17th we were relieved by the 45th and 46th Battalions, and went back to Vaux-sur-Somme.

Preparations were now made for the 1st Division's next attack, which took place on August 23rd. It was in this fight that the largest single trophy of the war was captured by "C" Company of the 3rd Battalion. A couple of miles inroad into enemy territory was made, and the villages of Chuignes and Chuignolles were taken. In the area were a number of woods which had never been troubled by shell-fire, and therefore proved formidable obstacles, as they afforded good cover to the enemy. Our battalion was held up by a couple of them, and it was only by flanking them that they were taken. Lieut. Darlow did good work in this fight, while my company commander, Capt. McDermid, shone out as the man for the occasion. In all our attacks after August 8 we found the German machine-gun fire fairly heavy.

The battalion now returned to Morcourt for a few days, after which we set out for Roisel to act as supports for the 4th Battalion. One morning about 8 o'clock, I saw some coat-tails flying in the air on top of the ridge in front of the 4th. Colonel Moore was visiting my position at the time, and I drew his attention to the sight. Not very far back was a battery of 18-pounders, and Colonel Moore informed one of its officers of the happening, but was told that, as there were only 36 shells for the battery's six guns, they could not fire. The Germans did manage to penetrate the 4th Battalion's line and kill a few men, but were driven out.

On September 15 we went back to Tincourt for a few days, to prepare for what was to be our last attack. September 18 was the date fixed for the disturbance, the 1st and 4th Divisions operating on the Australian Corps' front. Our battalion was entrusted with the left flank, adjoining the 74th British Division. The Templeux quarries were on this flank, and proved a source of annoyance to the English, who were held up there. Visibility was again bad—it had rained a good deal, and, as the shell smoke would not rise, the air was thick. We diverted our attention to the quarry, and got behind the Germans, 28 of whom surrendered, and appeared glad to do so. We captured a couple of machine-guns and some more men before reaching Hargicourt at about 7.30 a.m.

Here we had to wait a considerable time before being allowed to start on the second hop, which was up a valley. Machine-gun fire was very heavy, but, fortu-

(Continued foot next Page.)

"Chaignes"
Dunning Ave,
Rosebery.
Dec 26th 1934.

Dear Dr Bean.,

I have been reading the A.I.F. in France, 1917. & on the whole as far as the 3rd Bn, is concerned, it is fairly correct. You of course I take it, was guided to a large extent by reports. There are parts in the book, wherein the Bn, could have been shown to better advantage. As I want to confine my space, I will continue the paragraphs

We do not get the mention we deserve at Hermies. We left Ribbermont, early in April 1917, for Hermies, Velu Wood, being our final resting place, We were here informed what the Action was to be, on my way up, for the first time since Pozieries, & for the last time while I was an N.C.O. I was given an Officer, Lieut Shelly, a fine man. Before I go any further, I want to inform you that I was never off a flank, at the War. When we were told of the action, I went to the front line, to get a view of the position, & if possible some mark to make for, as men cannot go straight in the day, let alone night time. I made the acquaintance of the English, on my right, as they were not advancing.

I went back to the Wood, & informed my Sgt, Dowling, of the ground, he & again had a look at the position, I gave him his choice of positions in the line of attack, he did not like the flank, choose the centre of Platoon, & did not go 50 yards, I afterwards buried him at Beaumetz,

The orders I received were to go about 400 yds, wait for the barrage, if I had of obeyed orders I, & my platoon would have been at Hermies - in our graves, as the only barrage that fell was the Germans. When we started, we commenced about 300 yds north of the Canal, this was to avoid the excavations from the Canal, as they were about 20 ft high, after we went Half a mile, we had to go half right, till I put my flank on the Canal, then again turn half left, & go straight east, to Havrin-court. When we turned half right, the remainder of my Company, went left to Hermies, I lost all touch despite sending men back, as arrangements were not going according to orders; I thought that the remainder of the Bn, had failed to get up. After spasmodic fighting, I arrived on our objective, the sunken Rd from Hermies to the Canal; at the bridge head, we encountered an M.G. which we captured, & the whole of the crew. I told my men that we appeared to be alone, & that we might have to fight our way back in the night, as I thought that the Germans would be sure to get in behind us. Cpl N. Lee. M.M. & myself killed the Germans

When this gun fired on us, Cpl Tilbrook who was on the road, had his foot shot off right on top of the boot, he then went on his knee, & engaged the ^{gun} from 15 yds, a burst hit him under the left ear, I hurried him beside the road, I then turned our Lewis Gun, on the M.G. & under cover of it, we captured the crew. I did not recommend Tikbrook, because I expected all of my men to do the same. When daylight broke, & we were consolidating our position, I saw troops in Hermies, I sent up, & found Mr Shelly, who then joined us, we handed this position over about 11 days later.

You mention in the book, that South-east of the Villiage, German M.G. posts held out till dark, I do not think that is correct, my platoon, covered, with 4 posts, I had 66 men, from out in front of the quarry, or chalk pit, to the bank of the Canal, In daytime we went 1000 yds across the Canal, of course we did not go about waving flags, I do not think that there were any Germans, west of the Canal in the daytime, I think that they were in Havrincourt, I was out in NO mans land, with Cpl Miller, "B" Coy, when he was taken prisoner, we had both come from our H'qrs, when we went through our posts, I said that we have come too far, he replied "no".

After Hermies, we went back to Beaumetz, thence to Doignes, to assist, where the Germans broke through, We were at Vaulx for the first Conscription Vote, when we were informed that our Bn was loaned to the 7th Bgde, one of whose Bns went to the English at Bullecourt. I went up the Noreuil Valley, & relieved a part of the 20th Bn, in order that they might join in the attack. After being near the Railway, about 1am, I found myself in O.G.2. having relieved portion of 6th Bgde, 24th Bn, I think.

I was again on the extreme left flank; I was not in touch with the 1st Bn, on my left, when I went in the line, I was informed that a 60 pounder was dropping short, I found that it was so. I saw, I think, Lt O'Rielly, who said that he had been trying for hours to get them to lift. As the Germans were at Bullecourt, & between the 1st, & myself, & around our front, before Reincourt, we were not being shelled by them at all. The 60 pounder was half mile short; eventually Reilly was killed by the gun. After "stand to" was over, the men were about to take a little rest.

On my platoon's left, O.G.2. ran into a sunken road. I put an observation post, in this, behind a barricade. Immediately behind it, only on top, I mounted a Lewis Gun, also a German M.G. I found in the trench. We also found over 12 doz egg bombs, which came very handy as they went further than the Mills. After all the men had stood down, I saw about 150 Germans coming down the road; they did not have any rifles,

(3)

I got all the men to stand "to" & said dont fire till I tell you, I got alongside the Machine Guns, ^{When} they were abo ut 40 yds away, I saw a fellow shoot a jet of flame into the bank, I fired, & shot the flamewerfer carrier through the belly, my machine guns let them have it hot, & strong, you could not see a yard for smoke, It was the first flame-carrier, I had seen, there was a hole in the road, the man fell into it, & about a dozen men on top of them, they all appeared to catch fire, as when my bullet went through the can, it caught fire in the back, bombs fell thick & heavy, this was where the egg bombs came in, the nearest German reached 5 yds from the post in the Rd, in your book, you state that the 3rd Bn captured I, & killed 30, my platoon killed over 80 in the road alone, we counted them,

In this, & by the shelling, from the time I releived the 20th Bn, I had 12 men killed, & a number wounded, after this attack had died, it was decided to bomb along towards the 1st Bn, & while waiting, the 60 pounder blew down the parados, & went through my leg, so, I dont know anymore about Bullecourt.

I was only away for a few weeks, when I picked the Bn up, at Bray-sur-Somme, before we went North for Pologon Wood. AT Passchendale on Nov 12th, I was on the Canadians right, I had 3 posts, was relieved by 66th Div, at the relief I only had 3 men for 3 posts.

It was at Strazeele that I suggested to Capt Plunkett, that we detain the English troops pouring through our lines, as we did not have any supports, he agreed, I stopped, Colonels to cooks, till we had nearly 1000, when Brigade took them over, we released all the animals in the Barns, Our Bn was the pioneers of the daylight raiding; I was the C.S.M. I mentioned, in "Memories of Meteren" Reveille, June or July. As I have stated, I only had an Officer in Frate twice, I never furnished any reports, we did our job, my platoon proved in competition, the best in the Coy, just as the Coy, did in the Bn, & Bn in Brigade.

I was L/Cpl, temp Cpl, Cpl, temp sgt, Sgt, temp C.S.M. & C.S.M. & 2 Lt in the one platoon, I3. when I was made C.S.M. I was although 2nd senior in the Bn, allowed to retain my platoon. I was never away from the Bn, when it was ready for the line, I left it twice, after 2nd Bullecourt, & after the last Attack Sept 18th. In this attack we came from Tincourt, we were on the flank of 74th Div, the attack proceeded alright, there was a dense fog, the smoke from the barrage did not lift, we chased the germans till

we were too tired to run, we passed through Templeux- & after doing so, the Bn on my left was held up by M.G. fire, as we had passes on, I diverted to the left, got in behind the Germans, captured 2 guns, & 32 men, I took the English Officers name, but I lost it, we then proceeded to Hargicourt, where, just before, we captured 2 more M.G.'s, as we had to rush this post, I recommended Cpl, *Galam* (He keeps a butcher shop, in Willoughby Rd) he was awarded the D.C.M. after about *an* hours halt, we commenced our move towards Ballicourt. We crossed some very open country, the fire was severe, I had a cane cut in two twice by M.G. bullets, in the road ahead, some light field pieces were firing direct, when we reached them, I observed that a private of 10 platoon, had bayoneted the gunners, I also recommended him, & he was rewarded, as we proceeded along the trench we captured several Red Cross men, who said that the gunners were beyond aid, I then *caught* a man on top of a dug out, I asked how many men were in it, he said that he did not know, I said Grenade, he said No, No, I said how many men, he said, 5 Officers 55 men, I said quick, A Bn Commander & 5 officers, & 58 men came up the Commander said That I was a Gentleman, I gave these to Cpl Putrie, who I also recommended, he was rewarded also.

C Coy on my right was held up, as was Lt McDonald, who had got on to my left, there was nothing ahead of me, I could see where McDonalds trouble was coming from, I had about 80 men, & was on top of the ground, when I saw a young fellow about 22 yds ahead of me, I was too shakey to fire the revolver, as we had been hurrying I kept my eyes on him, & felt for the hole I had just stepped from, as I stepped back, he fired, hitting me over the eye, & with this, after telling the Corporal to continue on, I lost all interest in the War.

I was one of the early Australians to obtain the M.M. Cpl Howard & myself, being awarded it early - July 1916.

John Fairclough

P. Kitching

Hargicourt. Sept 18th 1918.

In this last action the 3rd Bn was the left flank of a two Division front, the Bn disposition was "X" Coy, Clifton, left, "Y" Shelly, right, with "Z" McDonald, supporting. in this Coy, I took up a position on the left flank, immediately the action commenced, "X" Coy must have gone right off our sector, as, early in the piece I found myself in the front line of the advance, and captured prisoners etc, after about 20 minutes, to the final objective, Minnew Trench.

We waited at Hargicourt Road, for over an hour, to allow our barrage to figure according to plan, I assisted the English Troops prior to arriving at Hargicourt, even during our wait at the latter place, I did not see "X" Coy, It was not till I crossed Minnew Trench, our second objective, that I saw Lieut McDonald, "X" Coy, who was then in difficulties. The latter part of "The last days of the war," fairly well explain my late connection with this action. Herewith are included the duplicates of messages sent back on Sept 18th. I recommended several men, Cpls Graham & Patric, amongst others, all of whom were rewarded.

P. Kinchington.

Dr C.W. Bean.
Official Historian.

1/00

Z

18/9/18

530

L 3 C

Took 28 prisoners near
Lampun Puanus, sent back
under escort.

There is no sign of X Coy
in front of me, I have not
seen any casualties at all.
We will continue to Harzeoud.

Kinchington

2
OCⁿ Z

18/19/14

700

L 4 B

Sargeant.

At Dusscott 15 Bar Boney was held
up with about 50 men near the
granary. We started the enemy
& got in behind them, capturing
2 MG guns & 3 min. The others ran
away, we had to lie on ground to
With these 2 gunners & ourselves, we
retook the Sumps on the high ground,
& let them advance
around in Sargeant's Post 650. The
buffs are now on 7 left they do
not appear to know which way to go, &
have deserted them.

I found Capt McAlpine 4 Bar on
flank alone, directed him to his unit.
I have not seen X Coy.

My losses have been light.

2 of our light shells are falling
short, I was hit in the back &
was also knocked out there are
hundreds of enemy - part of us are
barrage is falling on them, we stop
for ever on level. Kewchington

47

3
OC Z.

19/9/15

900

a 25 'E'

around second objective had heavy
MG fire coming up valley from Bergant
4 field pieces, one very direct fire
we captured 5 officers 55 men &
destroyed. Munition trench sent out till
of the Patric 'Y' on night appear to be
held up by MG fire, I have to men
to 'Y' & Z, does not appear to be any
opposition on my front, will try &
exploit.

I have seen Lt McDonald & X
with a few men on my left, they
are unable to advance

Unusually very bad on down
have been light, despite the fire.

Kingsbury

AW.

Mutineers of 1st Bn.
from Glasgow. 19/7/38.

After the Armistice when a big meeting was held & J.M. gave up Army Corps to go to London for Demobilisation, J.M. after the meeting asked Glasgow (who had been late) to see him. He asked Glasgow abt the men sentenced for mutiny in 1st Bn. As 1st Bn was approaching & presumably all would soon be returning to Aust., didn't he think that he might recommend that 1 sentence be not carried out. Glasgow said: "When any man under me commits a crime with his eyes open he knows that he ~~will~~ incurs 1 punishment for the crime, & if he is tried for it & convicted of it, he will have to go thro' the punishment, & refused to change his recommendation. The men had been folly 1st Div abt in custody for ^{many} weeks. Monash said "Oh, of course, if that is your opinion -" or something to that effect. Monash would have made the recommendation himself, but would it. Hobbs took over from J.M. & probably recommended that the men be pardoned, but Rawlinson (Glasgow thinks) refused & they served the sentence. Glasgow says that if he had given way he would have had endless trouble after the Armistice.

that both their armies were to withdraw from Persia. The Bolshevik Government was not universally accepted in Russia; but it was clear that Baratov's army was becoming worthless, and neither Turks nor Germans were likely to abandon their efforts to penetrate Persia. Moreover, in addition to German propaganda, which was exceedingly clever, Bolshevik propaganda was penetrating everywhere. The Pan-Turk and other revolutionary movements were again flaming up, and at this stage the British Minister at Teheran suggested that General Marshall should take over from the Russians the task of protecting the Persian road. This, however, would mean an extension of his communications by 500 miles—twice the direct distance from Baghdad to Basra. The project was therefore impossible without a great increase in Marshall's force—especially in his motor-transport. Moreover as, at this time, the Russian peace negotiations had thrown the Allies upon the defensive, and reserves were needed to meet the great German attack to be expected in 1918, the War Office desired a reduction of it rather than any increase; and in December the 3rd (Lahore) Division was sent to Palestine.

Sir William Robertson indicated that, for barring entry to Persia, another—and a highly ingenious—method was being adopted. Meanwhile early in January, at Baratov's request, Bicherakov's group went on to Kermanshah in the hope of rallying some elements of the Russian Army there. At the same time a column under Lieutenant-Colonel Matthews⁴⁸ of the 1/4th Hampshire (with "D" station) was sent to protect the near end of the road at Khaniqin. From there Colonel Matthews and part of his column (with an improvised station "VIS" in Ford vans) went on to meet the now returning "AA" wireless station, which had been so long cut off with the Russians. That station, originally at Qasr-i-Shirin, had had to accompany the Russians eastwards when they left—and looted—that town, retiring before the Turks. In withdrawing along the great road through the hills, the Russians were raided by Kurds and suffered many casualties. The Australian transport sergeant, S. J. Ryan,⁴⁹ took part in the

⁴⁸ Col. C. L. Matthews, D.S.O.; Durham Light Infy. Commanded 1/4th Bn., Hampshire Regt., 1916/19. Officer of British Regular Army; b. Stoke Bishop, Bristol, Eng., 27 Aug., 1877.

⁴⁹ Sgt. S. J. Ryan, D.C.M. (No. 14257; 1st Aust. Wireless Sig. Sqn.). Mail contractor; of Armidale, N.S.W.; b. Dumaresq, N.S.W., 15 Oct., 1879.

wf?

HN
18 Sept 1918

27 Parolles Rd.
London N.19.

18th. March '40.

Dear Sir,

In a publication called "Twenty Years After", edited by Maj.Gen. Sir Ernest Swinton, I came across a picture of Le Verguier (P.989 Vol.2) and was surprised to see written under it that here on the 18th. Sept. 1918, more than fifty Germans were taken prisoner by four Australian soldiers.

Details of the exploit are not given, but I believe it must be none other than one in which I myself took part. I am naturally curious to know if this supposition is correct and am therefore taking this liberty of writing to you about it - hoping as I do so that you will not consider my presumption too great, and that from your expert knowledge of the history of the A.I.F. you may be able to settle the point for me.

May I therefore give a short description of the incident in which I took part, in the hope that you may be able to identify it, or otherwise, with the one referred to in "Twenty Years After".

On the morning of the 18th. Sept., just before dawn, my battalion (the 11th.) attacked at Le Verguier. As was often the case in hopping-over - in this case accentuated by the darkness, the mist and the barbed-wire entanglements - there was some scattering and confusion.

After a time I came upon what seemed to be a landmark - a broad communication trench zig-zagging back from the middle of a hedge. We had been told previously that there would be just such a communication trench in the middle of our sector.

At this point I believe there were five of us in our little group - all members of the battalion but not of my platoon. One, I remember, was a young fellow named Clarke - but the names of the others, after this lapse of time, I cannot remember.

We started along the trench, keeping on the top and firing down into the dug-outs along the side. Soon we made our first contact with the enemy - a couple of German soldiers who put up their hands as soon as we loomed out of the darkness on top of them. We sent them off back to the rear under the guard of one of our party.

It was a little further on that we made our big bag. Imagine our surprise, on coming round a bay of the trench, to find ourselves peering ahead over what seemed to be a sea of upturned faces and upraised arms. The trench

(2)

was here widened out considerably, and it was literally packed with Germans. Dawn was breaking, but what with the mist it was still quite dark, so the Germans had no idea of the strength of our party.

We got them into some sort of order and started them off towards the rear, sending one of our number with them as escort.

The three of us now remaining pushed on along the top of the trench. But we hadn't gone far before we met our nemesis. A shell landed and burst right among us. We were all hit - Clarke and I were wounded, and the third man was killed outright.

Fortunately Clarke could still walk, and so could I with Clarke's assistance, so we were able to get back and out of it.

That was the end of the war for me, and from that day to this I have never even suspected that the incident might have found its way into official records. Yet it seems now that it may have done so - since time and place and number all coincide with the incident referred to in "Twenty Years After".

Again I hope you will forgive the liberty I am taking in writing to you.

Yours faithfully,

F. Lucas

Late Pte. 7746
11th. Batt.
1st. A. I. F.

Added

HMS

Woolbrook. NSW
Oct 10. 1927

Capt. Bean
Official Historian
A. I. F. Sydney.

Dear Sir.

About the
8th of July of present year, a letter
appeared in the ^{Tamworth} Northern Daily Leader
drawing public attention to an incident
that took place in France, — a mutiny
of a company of A. I. F. men, about 150
of them, who were arrested, & received
terms of imprisonment of from one
to seven years, but who were ^{after} ~~at~~
armistice time, allowed their
freedom to return home again with
their comrades; but their pay was
withheld from them on arrival in
Australia, as part of their punish-
ment for their breach of discipline,
and a Mr Stagg, an A. I. F. secretary
~~was~~ was said to have been the one who
in 1927 was successful in obtaining
for those men all the pay that

2/

had been withheld from them since 1918. I had a letter written me from France in 1918, telling me of such an incident having taken place by a Coy. of 150 of 1st Battalion men A.I.F., where one of that Coy. my eldest son, Pte. James Harold Berman; was the one & only man who on that occasion would not, & did not, join in with the rest in mutiny, & his pay was not stopped as the others were, and he was for that unique act brought before his commanding officer, shaken hand with by him, & thanked for his loyalty to army discipline, & told that his act would be placed on record. Now, when I read the account of the matter, published I believe for the first time in Australian Press in July last, I felt that I would be doing what any Father of such a soldier as my lad shewed himself to be; would consider it his duty to see such action, received the same publicity as did that of the mutineers of his Coy. I put the matter before the Minister for

Defence on 10th July, & followed it again later with two more letters, & finally was told - nothing could now be done as no "Australian" record of it could be traced. That to me was a shocking disappointment, because if the 149 of the other men's pay was withheld till 1927, there is proof of some record of that being paid them after application for such being made by this Mr Stagg - what say you to that? My son is not aware I made any application for a recognition of that brave deed of his, - I expected a medal of distinction would be granted him for it, & I delayed my application from 1919 to 1927, because I disliked bringing such a disgrace on 1st Batt. reputation making known through the Press of the mutiny that had occurred. As justice has been denied my son in regard to an allotment of medal of distinction I write this to you to ask can you not obtain the

full version of the occurrence and see that it is published in the history you are compiling. I was told ^{of} the affair by another of my son's a Lieut. in 34 Batty, & he said then (in Nov. 1918) something was almost sure to follow as it was a freely discussed matter by the A. I. F. men stationed near by & that Pte J H Berman would likely get a big recognition. but none came. Another of my son's Pte Stuart R Berman, was ^{also} of the 1st Batt; but at that time badly gassed & in hospital in London.

The papers I received from Defence Dept on this subject is numbered

{ A.G. 1(b) p.c.
 { No 11708 of 19 Aug 1927.

will you please try hunt up an English record of the occurrence I mention as the Australian version is apparently forgotten officially but not so by me.

Yours faithfully
 James Berman