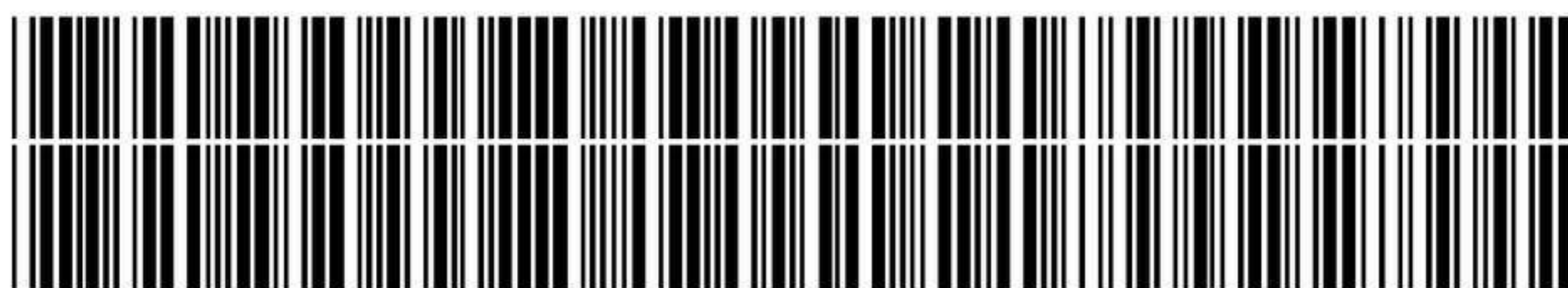


**AWM38**  
**Official History,**  
**1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,**  
**Official Historian.**

Diaries and Notebooks

**Item number:** 3DRL606/177/1

**Title:** Notebook, October 1917  
Includes references to the 20th and 43rd  
Battalions, Broodseinde and Passchendaele.



AWM38-3DRL606/177/1

*Original*

AWM38

30RL 606 ITEM 177 [L]

**DIARY NO. 177**

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

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

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

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

**16 Sept., 1946.**

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL C. E. W. BEAN.

ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

4 3rd Bn. <sup>Ypres</sup>

1

20 Bm

177

C. E. W. BEAN

4 3rd Bn <sup>Ypres</sup> 1

Museum - Store.

20 Bn 177

Some steel cartridge cases used at  
Sent to W.O. by I.D. lacquered as copies.

28 Sept Bn in tents at Poperinghe  
was bombed by a German aeroplane.  
but all four bombs were duds.  
This was at 8.30 pm or 9 on  
a moonlit night.

Bn on Oct 2. marched to a  
point below Hell Fire corner &  
Politzje & bronacked in shell holes.

3/4 Oct, 9 pm. The fighting strength  
(abt 500 incl. Battal & runners)  
[total strength everywhere abt 750].

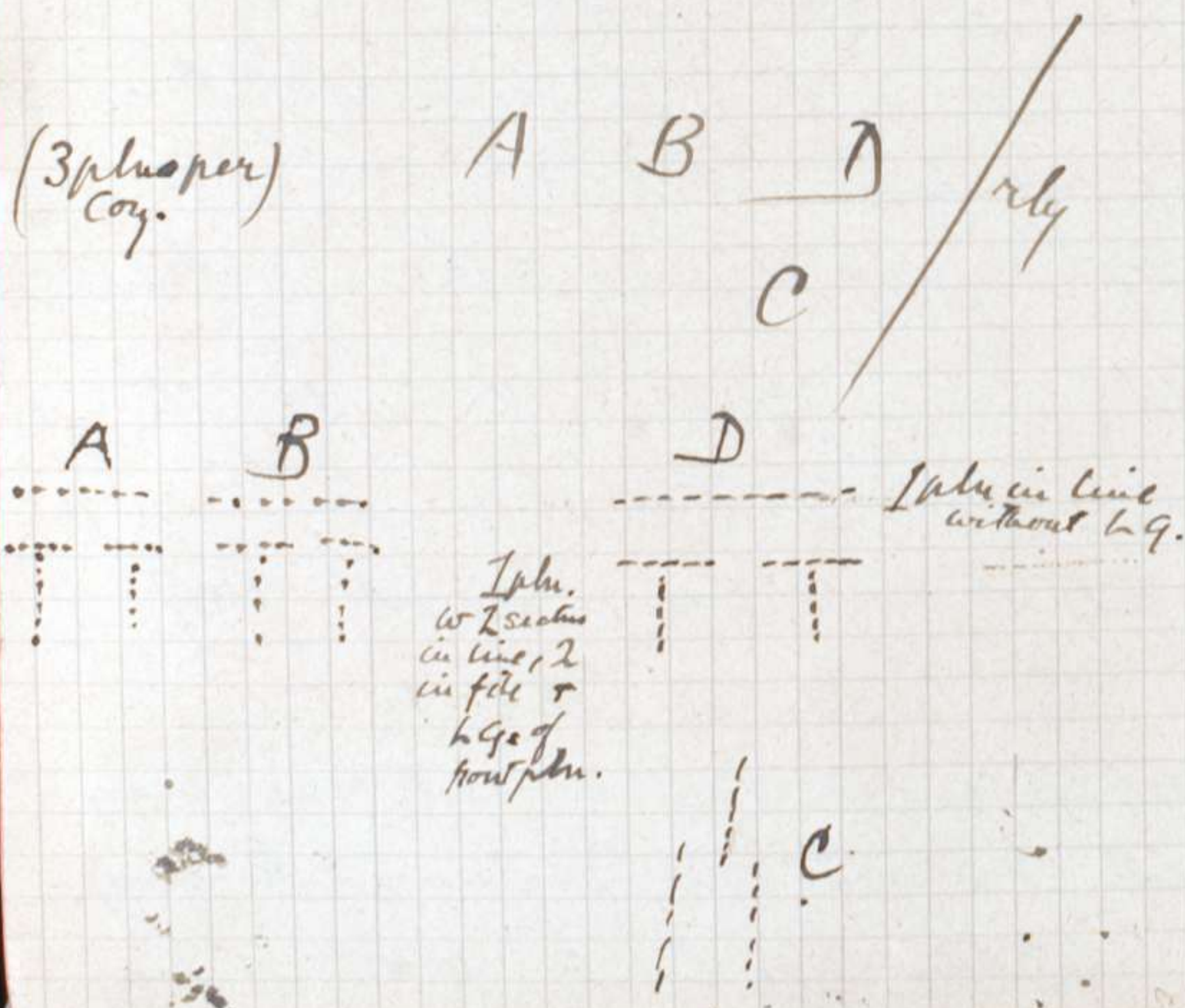
Bn went in along K track.  
Duckboarded only a short way (very  
well marked by Dis. Envo & Pioneers).

43 Bn was for the 1st Obj. They

D  
B  
A  
C

Engps + 9 Bde <sup>seem to</sup> ~~had~~  
have put out the forward tapes

While Bn was filing out (tapes in /  
Zonnebeke valley Lieut Herbert was  
k. by 5.9 wh k. his batman also.



crossed the duckboards of  
at head of K track to tapes  
(~~most~~ <sup>most</sup> of wh had been put out  
on night of Oct 2/3, remainder  
Oct 3/4). The assembly position  
was in 1 valley, not over skyline.  
Germ. was very active w lights of  
all colours - red yellow green  
besides ordinary white flare.

Only one casualty going  
in. Pt of Coy was on rly line.

Very shortly after we got in  
2 or 3 stray shells fell on train  
& killed <sup>in D block</sup> Capt F. J. Simms, Lt T. H.  
Howden, a Supt & a private.

2 a.m. warning came from 10 Bde  
of a possible German attack.

The 5.30 bombt included 5.9,  
4.2., Whizzbangs, & on extreme rt  
minenwerfers. Most of this fell

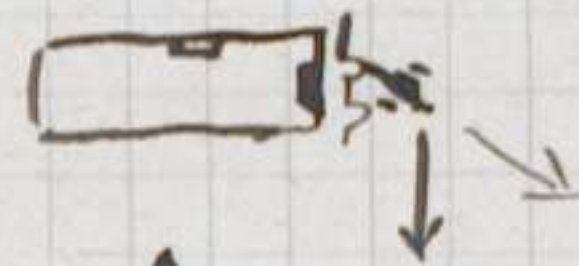
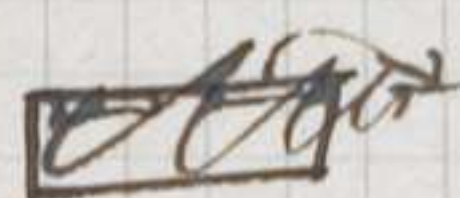
behind the 43 Bn. The Germans strafed the Pk line heavily on rt. The bombt started gradually w a marked increase at 5.30. It was not a barrage like ours. It seemed like a heavy straf laid down on our being observed. It seemed not to be heavy eno' for a barrage before an attack.

Lt Crick <sup>killed</sup> was hit abt 2 or 3 mins before hopping over. He died later in day.

Lt Richardson was knocked out by a shell until it burst on top of shell hole & dazed him until rear waves were passing through.

At the jump over D Coy were opened on within 3 mins of start, as soon as 1 barrage lifted from the first barrage line. The Pill box was on the rear side of the road into Zonnebeke Station. M.G. fire came

from here. Men were hit but one of our L.Gs got onto the place very quickly. The gun was silenced - it



was firing from a bit of trench beside the pill box -

In D Coy 2/Lieut. Roberts (who had taken charge of T Coy) was hit by a piece of shell before they reached this place; 2/Lt Walsh the remaining officer was k. by m.f. fire from this place. [abt 3 hrs later Lt Symonds took command].

C Coy & D Coy got mingled together here & from then on practically became one coy - indeed they were practically together from the jump off.

Lt Wald commanded T. Coy

The other opposite came from

the N.W. slope of hill abt 21 Central or west of it. There was a line of trench here. The Germans threw bombs from there & ~~held the~~ ~~adv~~ then cleared. They scarcely held up the line at all.

Consequently while D & C Coys were rather confused A & B ~~retained~~ ~~something of their formation~~ were less mixed; the Bns from the rear, however, were pressing up to avoid barrage & ~~supply~~ ~~positions~~ the formation was as usual somewhat loose.

On the objective where 43 Bn halted the 42, 44, & 41 Bns stood themselves out excellently. The barrage halted for 12 mins on this objective.

There was no other opposition. The Germans were thick & the prisoners taken by 11 Bde reached a record No.

7  
During 1 halt of barrage Germans  
could be seen behind 1 shellburst  
both running away & running  
forward. Some Germans were  
seen coming thro' 1 barrage  
wh we weak during 1 halt,  
& surrender. Others were taken  
coming out of dugouts along the rly,  
chiefly on N. side. For 20 mins  
after the barrages had halted the  
M.A. parties were getting  
prisoners from dugout after  
dugout - leaving a sentry at 1  
top & going on to 1 next.

The ground in wh 438a  
dug in to dug was good, <sup>short of</sup> ~~above~~  
the bottom of valley.

A. B. & D Coy had to dig in at  
once. C, in reserve, had to be pulled  
out and, to come behind Hill 40 &  
dig in in case they were wanted later.



8  
Lt Wald <sup>& Rose</sup> of C Coy kept abt 1/2 C Coy  
to help D Coy consolidate. Lt  
Richardson took other 1/2 of C Coy  
behind Hill 40. Rose & Wald  
came back later with rest of C  
leaving Symonds with D. Till  
then Supt Cameron had it.

At midday on Oct 5 Supt.  
shelled the area heavily & got several  
direct hits into the 43 Bn trench,  
So Bn was withdrawn behind Hill 40.

held it night.

Bivouacked at Asyheim.

Next day (Oct 6.) to Toronto.

	k	w.
Offs	4	2
Ors.	34	108

Bn. Pipers gave concerts nightly.

9 Oct 11.30 am 43 Bn marched  
to pres. Biv. at Frezenberg R.

10<sup>15</sup> on fatigues repairing rly near  
Zonnebeke!

10/11 reld bn of 66 Dwn in  
Support line; 44 Bn in  
front, 42 & 41 taken on  
left. More work on rly

11/12 Reled by 9 Bde. (to <sup>behind</sup> Bremen)

12 Oct. near Bremen - shelled  
so moved fwd to Bremen  
Redoubt from nearer rly.

By this time Bn was very  
worn by work & weather.  
also gas.

Oct 13. Reled 35 Bn in support  
in front of Dash Xing - Hamburg  
Rd - went in along rly.

It took 6 1/2 hrs to take from Bde  
HQ to Dash Xing. There were  
few duckboards. The line taken  
up was curiously free from shelling -  
all other parts seemed to get it.  
33 Bn found the same. The road  
behind was very bad indeed.

15 Oct 33 Bn reld 43.

15 - 20 Oct. 43 Bn was at Seine.

21 Oct Reld by 10 Canadian Bde.

~~Canadians put in 1 Bde to relieve~~  
~~our 2, they being up in strength~~

KOYLs held off & 4rLs  
took front & support line with  
11 Bde in Reserve.

Canadians reld ~~the~~ 11 Bde  
on <sup>21</sup> 21 Oct, & British on 22 Oct.

This was in order to avoid  
bringing troops straight up thro  
the mud to 1 front line in  
one day - Canadians did it  
in 3 stages.

Oct 21. 43 Bn got out  
without a casualty.

No more offrs. were lost.  
Abt 40 men were sent away  
gassed & blistered after the period  
by Bremen & 1 rly - Runners &  
carrying phis got blistered going  
thro water to gas on it.

	k.	m.	w.	Total
offs	4		4	8.
O.V.	58	1	188.	<del>241</del>
				11

A German listening set was found on Hill 40.

A D B C  
23 Bn.

20 Bn Oct 9.

You cd tell by 1 noise & bursts  
when 1 barrage started. 20 in front  
17 behind on the tape wh was  
almost at rt <sup>end</sup> to the  
rly line practically thro the

~~Mane~~ The pillbox at 17 C 2-3.  
The bn had one group over 1 rly. (it was including)  
A m.g. wh heard to open

ind. It seemed to come from  
1 direction of Rhine Copse. It was  
on the rt flank more (~~front~~).

Rifle shots & a m.g. were  
heard almost at once on the  
rly - it was clear there was heavy  
fighting beginning there. Just after  
passing the X roads the Bn got  
into marsh; and at this point  
the barrage also seemed to halt.  
There was no smoke & some of  
1 men ran into it. Everyone was

puzzled by this. Capt Hall (C Coy) was hit in this - There was sniping from Assyria - (the big red house & barn) & the hedges round it & De Coy wood. When the barrage went on the Coys had suffered somewhat heavily compared to their strength.

A Coy had their first trouble at Dash Xing & Doble ave; & their next at De fy Xing. The rest of line cd hear firing going on there. (Almost due E of De fy Xing was a 5.9 how. wh was taken by A Coy). From the rt A Coy cd not be seen, & the rest of line was very anxious abt it. The firing at De fy continued as the rest of line went on; & it cd be heard more & more in rear.

The Bn reached a line curving (concave) from Rhine to the Rly abt

300 yds ahead of Defy Xing. <sup>15</sup>  
This was 1 Red Line. The  
barrage was in Decon Wood -  
fairly heavy there - sprinkled  
amongst the Assyria hedges;  
& direct on 1 line of Pill/Bs  
on the skyline of the Assyria  
Ridge - these were frequently hit.  
The toughest in 1 barrage was here.

Rhine House had to a Pill/B.  
It had been blown in some time  
before. A certain amt of sniping  
came from there during 1  
advance; but as 1 line approached  
the Germans gave up. Rhine is  
right in 1 bottom of 1 valley &  
very boggy - constantly up  
to your knees in 1 mud. The  
surface <sup>place</sup> was entirely cut up w shells.  
Even when the 20 Bn  
reached its line, Dairy Wood

Just before <sup>the</sup> digging in the barrage  
 creased to lift from Decoy wood  
 onto the ridge; & during this period  
 a pl<sup>y</sup> of <sup>abtl</sup> C Coy under Lt. Edwards  
 went on in Decoy wood & cleared  
 the dugouts in 1 wood & sent  
 back a dozen prisoners. Edwards  
 & one man went on <sup>from there with 17 Bn</sup> & have  
 not been seen since. E. is sd to have  
 been seen blown up by a bomb but  
 this is uncertain.

17  
 we not cleared. The 23 Bn  
 went round it <sup>to N</sup> - they were  
 on 1 extreme right of 20 Bn.  
 Rhine was in 23 Bn sector but  
 20 Bn was had to fire on from  
 there got there first. 23 Bn soon after  
 while 20 Bn was digging  
 in they were being sniped at from  
 1 rear & several men were  
 hit in 1 back. \*

From midday to abt 2, altho  
 our line - then as it was - was well  
 out ahead by Rhine, our own  
 arty fire was on Dairy wood &  
 1 German arty also. (The shells  
 were not near our line).

For abt an hour after the  
 Red line was reached the firing  
 on the left rear continued - there  
 was no sniping on front line from  
 here - then it ceased. It was  
 not known what had happened



there.

While 21 Bn was digging posts 17 Bn was behind them lying up in shell holes. [At this period a Vickers gun was doing v. good work - Germans could be seen retreating from Drey Wood, & running along the crest of Assyria R. A private, Nolte, was in charge of 1 gun & he did excellent work, knocking them over. The gun was between B & C Coy ~~in front of~~ <sup>facing</sup> the centre of Drey Wood.]

When the barrage lifted the 17 Bn, which was very weak, pushed up to a point this side of crest - within ~~about~~ 150 yds of crest - probably - & then were pushed back by fire from Decline Copse - some also from the E right; the Germans in front had run as soon as our Vickers & 2 or 3 LGs

had opened on them from the Red line.

The  $\frac{1}{2}$  17 Bn fell back to a point some distance on our side of Decline Copse - on the right to the Red line. There seemed to be fighting for a best part of an hour in & near Decline Copse before they fell back.

A Coy 20 Bn had a couple of L.G. posts on the rly line.

The first German Aeroplane came over at abt 11 am. It flew very low & picked up 1 line at once. It fired into 1 trench & wd one man alongside 11 Treacher.

The German arty fire opened on Decoy wood shortly after, but none of our people were there.

The morning was spent in

sniping <sup>on Assyria</sup> & firing on aeroplanes -  
 till this had to stop for fear  
 of ammo running short. Any  
 and of ammo was set up in afternoon by 27 Bn.  
 Abt 5 p.m. many ferms.  
 were seen moving from Assyria  
 - lead after head along road  
 behind Assyria. The Coy Commanders  
 after seeing abt 150 of these decided  
 to send up an S.O.S. The  
 arty came down on positions  
 wh had been given them during 1  
 day by 1 infy - & the barrage  
 came down right on top of  
 this movement. That was 1 last  
 to be seen of it.

late in 1 aftn - 3.30 till  
 dark - the ferms. seemed to have  
 crept back & sniping became pretty  
 constant. After dark a couple  
 of 203-men patrols were sent out.

Abt 2 am. on Oct 10 the  
 45 held 20 Bn in front line; next

night 46 Bn held it in Support line.

During 1 day the difficulty in getting S/Bs was very great. On the jump off not one S/B or stretchers was w/1 Coy. Capt Hall was lying in the Swamp for 24 hrs. He cd not be moved without a stretcher & this was 1 case w many.

The 45 Bn, wh came in strong, helped greatly in getting nearly all 1 wounded out after 1 relief.

The shortness of the numbers was 1 great difficulty. If the Germans had stood up, the advance cd scarcely have reached the Red line.

Lt Martin was hit just across 1 Swamp during 1 advance.