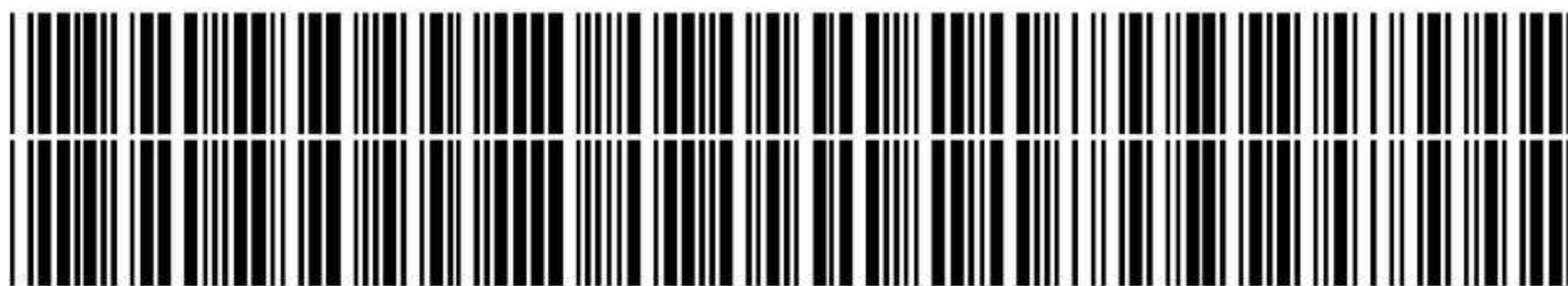


**AWM38**  
**Official History,**  
**1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,**  
**Official Historian.**

Diaries and Notebooks

**Item number:** 3DRL606/181/1

**Title:** Notebook, September 1917  
Includes references to the 59th Battalion and  
Ypres.



AWM38-3DRL606/181/1

DIARY NO. 181.

Original

3DRL 606 ITEM 181 [1]

ANM38

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

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

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

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

16 Sept., 1946.

C. E. W. BEAN.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ACCESSION NO.

OPEN

181  
59 Bn Ypres  
Seat

9

1

181 59 Bn. 4 pers

59 Bn

26 Sept.

59 Bn was to have been  
left Bn for 2nd obj. 67<sup>th</sup>  
on rt. Bde

Roughly the <sup>Bde</sup> T.O. line was  
from J9D2 $\frac{1}{2}$ 8 to 9D2 $\frac{1}{2}$ 0

The Red line was from 10A7.2  
to 10C 7.6 (59) to J10B2.0

The Blue Line from Rd EFW  
into Jetty wood at J10B2.5  
to J10B2.9.

58 Bn went in on Monday 24 Sept  
(took over from 56 Bn). Monday  
night 57, 59, & 60 moved  
up from Chateau Segard area -  
59 to bank of Zillebeke Lake; 60<sup>th</sup>

a

2

to men in Red Tunnel, Clapham  
In.

57 Bn to Zoumaury Post  
& Zouave Wood - Steky was  
heavy & many casualties.

59 was under bank & had  
few casualties.

The attack had been practised  
at Sereus on a 3 Coy  
frontage (each <sup>coy</sup> 100 yds - distrib  
in depth). The principle was that  
of Reserve in every unit  
from Coy to Bn.

C.O.s went to Couffe at  
Bde H.Q. at Hoop Crater  
on night 24/25 about which they  
were told to operate orders  
had not arrived till then, but  
later, Corps insisted that they  
were informed from Divn that

9 Corps had ordered 1 attack  
as follows:

1st Obj: (60) Bn with 2 Coy  
frontage.

2nd Obj: 57 + 59 with  
1 Coy frontage.

Morning of Sept 26. CO (Col. Mason)  
went to Hooze Crater wh  
was being terrifically strafed  
with shells + bombs, dump  
blown up, motor lorries blazing.  
— [The CO. met on 1 way  
at Hellfire corner the runner  
with the Operative Orders who  
sd he had been held up by  
barrage since 12.30 am.]  
They saw Gen Elliott - J.C.  
Divn cdnt get thro - + learned  
of the attack on troops on  
right.

?586

Gen. Elliott decided then to send  
up 1 Coy to reinf. 28 Bn.

It was then decided to lay out  
tapes in front of line &  
cast dig T.O. 2y.

60 Bn was to lay tapes.

In 1 meantime more  
serious news came - 3 boys  
of 60 Bn were sent up.  
When Confce broke up it was  
understood to Col Marshall  
we going forward to Pl. Watch  
Corner.

C.O. went back to Zellebeke  
& presently got orders (at midday)  
to go to Geomaning Post &  
take over from Col. Stewart.  
Shelling was still heavy.

Stewart & S-7 Bn went  
on to Clapham In; 59 took

a his place. No casualties.  
 C.O. called his ofrs (Coy  
 Commanders) together + went  
 thro operative orders.  
 Maj. Bullen <sup>RMO (since killed)</sup> (59) went  
 up to see if he cd find an  
 R.A.P. He came back +  
 said as impossible to  
 get thro Glenconce wood.

C.O. then got a message  
 at 8 p.m. that things were bad  
 with British on it; 59  
 to go up to Clapham In  
 + be ready to receive ind.  
 C-attack orders. Stuart  
 + 57 Bn had gone on.

59 worked up to  
 Clapham In, got into  
 shellholes, not 1 tunnel. The

9

Shelling missed them <sup>onto Zouave Wood</sup>  
& was shelling. (mostly for fun).

Orders came to C.O. to  
go to Bde. He found Gen  
Elliott at Hooge: attack  
to be carried out as ordered  
& 54 Bn to take 1st Obje  
instead of 2nd. He asked  
if C.O. knew what to do?

Yes

Well then go & do it.

C.O. went back to C.L. In.  
The Coy Commanders had  
already been given a hint  
thro' staff captain. & on  
return C.O. found them  
with NCOs in ~~Hooge~~  
~~to~~ Menin Rd tunnel

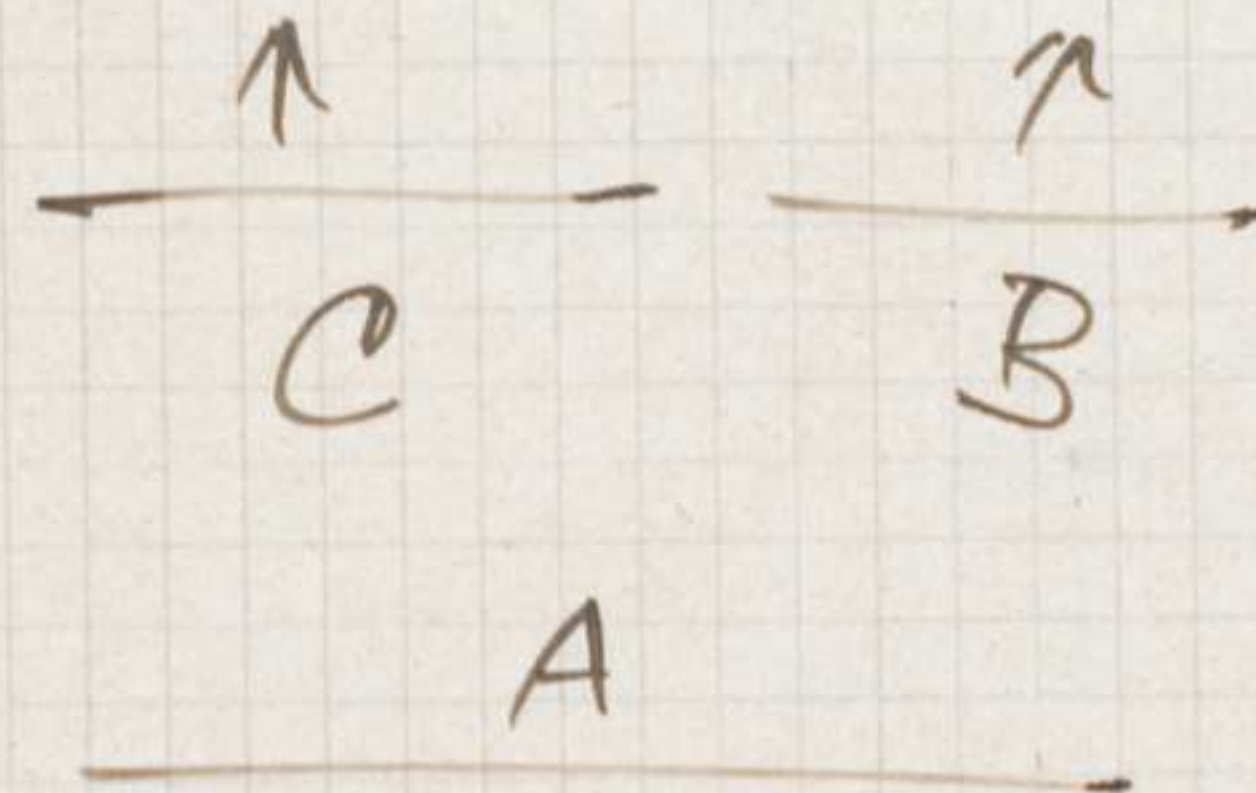


9

& necessary orders for attack  
on 1st obje already given.

Capt Stockfeld	B Coy	} The leading coys - who were sufficient to inform
Lt Turner	C Coy	

{ A Coy <sup>Capt</sup> Bursey (McCarthy) }  
 { D Coy on working party }



The S-9<sup>th</sup> picked up shovels, corkscrews  
wire etc at 1 dump & pushed off.

The men were very quiet and  
determined abt it. They already  
had 72 hrs rations, ammo  
(200 rds) - & not a man from  
anyone. This had to be done bec.

dumped as they were organized before. They were just filed by & picked these things up.

A little after midnight they started. It was a beautiful night - low clouds but plenty of light. Dark end to hide movement & light end to show you where you put your feet.

They had a splendid journey up, in single file, no barrage.

One Bn of 8th Bde (2 Bns were to take final objective) got ahead of 59 Bn.

It was quite a quiet night except for a certain amount of shelling going over & to the right. Tapes had to be laid by 58 Bn & could be followed to Black Watch corner & there

were guides from 58 Bn at intervals in 1 shell hole to keep them on 1 track.

As 59 set towards Blackwater Corner 1 German was most busy w his flares - but he didn't see the men - possibly 1 Stumps of trees in Polygon & Glencorse obscured 1 view.

At Blackwater Corner it was found that 1 Co Bn had laid out tapes. Lieut. Stillman of 60 Bn guided 59 onto its tapes - Marshall of 60 Bn had arranged this & it was splendidly organised. 29 Bn was already on its tape. The men were very quiet - they sat down & waited in shell holes on the <sup>taps</sup> line.

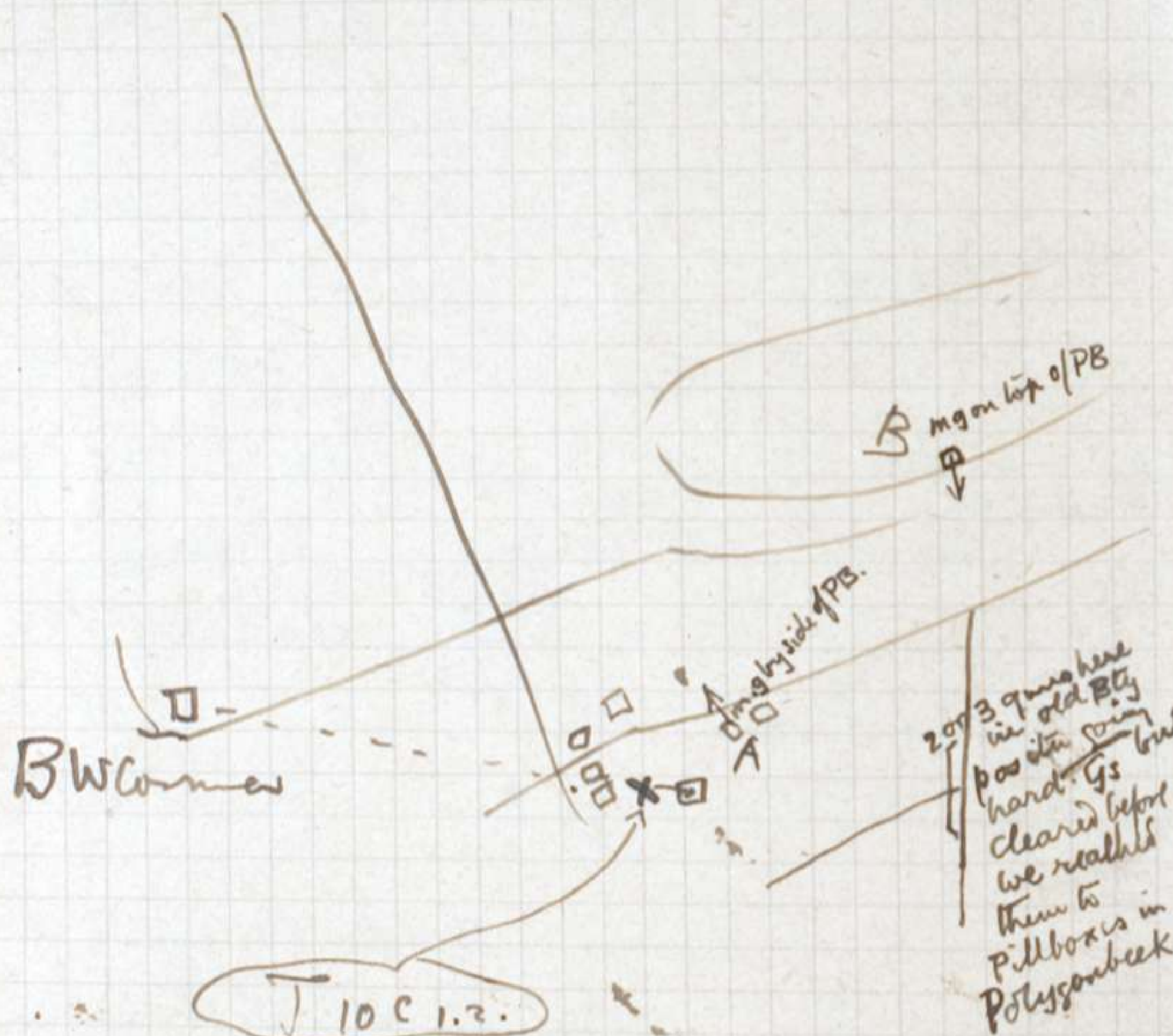
9  
 Lt Francis I.O. 59 Bn had laid out 1 tape for 59 Bn originally; he had to guide 29 onto this.

60 Bn guided 59 Bn onto 60 Bn tape; 57 Bn put 31 Bn onto 57 Bn tape.

By 3 am. the men were waiting.

The night was very still, with pattering of m.g., occasional flip-flop of sniping, a ~~very~~ sort of solemnity about / quietness of 1 men - a wonderful night.

at 3.30 am. 2 of the Argyls & S. Hldrs came in to B.W. Corner w 1 orders of 1 Bde on the right for the attack - & wanted to know where their troops were. (There is a Tel Box at BW corner)



Opposite us <sup>partly</sup> from A + B. B was settled pretty quickly - men going straight at it. Lt Macdonald + others settled B, got their bombs inside it + many were k. there.

at 5.50 down came 1 barrap. Shortly afterwards the C.O. was speaking to Bursey on telephone taken up + kept going by Lt Pinkerton, sign off 59 Bn. It was kept going 1 whole time - batt J. Q. D 92.

There was not v. great opposite + where there was it we quickly settled. Some mgs + pillboxes gave trouble. But when Col. Mason went forward betw 6.30 + 7 am prisoners were streaming back - probly at least 200 passed at this time. Out of 1 pillboxes in 1 Southern corner of 1 wood, + 1 centre of race course. A number of dead ferns were

The first lot of pillboxes we simply rushed & I guess. came running out when they got there w Red X flags.

X McD. saw 3 Germans running from this P.B. as he came up. They went 50 yds & got into a shell hole. They dropped their rifles first. When he went on he passed them without noticing but heard a rifle shot behind him. They turned to save X them but they were killed.

On the left Macdonald was working round the Pillbox on the central Rd furthest NE. When they saw he & his men were round it they ceased firing their mif. thro the Coophole & waved a red X flag. The 8 Bde & rest of line were coming at 1 place from in front & someone in 1 pillbox opened 1 m.g. again. There was a rush for 1 Pillbox & they were all killed - taken out & shot. No more Co were taken till 1 next objective.

on 1 ground & at least a dozen were dead in 1 door & around the S.E Pillbox in 1 centre of 1 recess.

The barrage was terrific like 1 roaring & 1 crackling of a tremendous bushfire - you wd have abt as much chance of getting thro a great bushfire as 1 barrage. The ground was fairly moist.

From 7 am. onwards Col. Todd had decided to be wd not go on our right. The 59 Bn started consolidating. By 11 am. CO found the his front line from J. 10.C. 4 1/2 to rd in at J 10.C. 5.5 thence bent back to C 10.C. 2.0.

Serjt Facey on Sept 26 abt 6.15 wt w Lt Pinkerton at Cameron House w an offr of 31 Bn to see what we doing on / night. There were Germans in Cameron H. In 1 rd & abt 12 prisoners were sent back from there. C. House is 2 or 3 very strong pillboxes & many dugouts with earthen shrapnel proof covers. One of these had a low entrance. Facey cd hear Germans inside so he settled them w a Mills bomb.

On 1 first day when digging in the 59 Bn on Rd E. of Polygon triangle (SE of wood) got a lot of trouble from <sup>in PB</sup> on N edge of Cameron covert but the hill dipped a bit & the shooting was mostly over. It was amongst 1 nest of pillboxes betw here & Cameron House Lt Serjt Facey this day did such fine work <sup>He had a roving commission</sup> - going out w 2 men, leaving them behind & going w bomb in hand & rifle over shoulder - In one case on /

left of Cameron H. abt 30 yds from others  
 In this nest on <sup>morning of</sup> 26 Sept he reached door of PB & loosened lever of Mills bomb & rattled it. A g. offr saw it from inside, came out w watch in one hand & other hand up. Facey batted him off & sent one man back w 2 offrs & abt 19 men from the PB. He was setting snipers on his own also.

The pill boxes down the Polygon beek had also been taken. The 14th Bde w moved up on the ~~bridge~~ sidge beyond 1 Polygon beek by Telly 2 - Everyone walking abt in 1 most casual way. A few Germans were occasionally running abt like rabbits down Telly trench or from it into the valley S. wards.

Lt Macdonald was in touch w 14 Bde on 59 Bns left.

The 8 Bde had men mixed up with 59 Bn in the Polygon beek valley Lt Pentreath

\* When the line got to 1st Objective, & we bent back & rather scattered thro the Polygon triangle on 1st, the J. had several mps abt J 10 C 8.8 & a little North. They C. attacked <sup>more</sup> advanced left w mps. brought forward & men sneaking up. M.D had 3 mps. there (one of 8 Bde - one got blown out of action in an adv post & when this was knocked out the fs. came forward.) W these ferns were a Major or a Colonel who got to within abt 50 yds before he was wd. & capt'd & a lot of docs. taken off him. M.J. & rifle fire smashed this C. attack on left. (If they had come in on 1st they wd have found us w no bombs & probably beaten us back.) (we got 1 m.g. Rest seeing rt. Hagg come up, got back to Pillboxes in Polygon beek. Capt Neale brought the 1st flank up to near 1 edge of wood, & consolidated. Pentreath went forward round 1st flank of these PBs & the ferns came in without resisting. These ferns had been cutting 1 top of parapet w m.g. bullets - Hagg of 3 Bn was k there, & 2 or 3 men incl. a L.M. Gunner

W.T. Hagg 29 Bn

9 57 Bn\* during 1 morning organised a ply of men to go forward & get 1 ferns out of Pill box in 1 Polygon beek. He took forward abt 24 men & rushed & surrounded it, & the ferns came out without much opposition incl. one ~~the~~ ~~Commander~~ - a Colonel - who when he lead in 1 air demanded to be marched down separately apart from 1 privates.

Pentreath gave him a kick on 1 backside & sent him off w them.

Stockfield & Turnour had been wd in the advance - S. was hit again by a shell & is



About 11 am. the Germans were seen coming from 1 road running NW & SE thro 5C. ~~As soon~~ Bus loads (or abt the number) seemed to come across from abt Jay Barn onto this Rd. As soon as they formed up on 1 rd & moved off it S. Westwards our arty wd get onto them tremendous heavy - w shrapnel & H.E. They were coming for abt 1 1/2 hrs at 10 mins intervals - they were chewed up & seemed to clear off <sup>at present</sup> S.E. from direction of Solting House.

buried at Cleatham Tr.  
Turnour d/s.w. in hospital  
at Poperinghe.

Tollers looking after the right flank. The S & Bn had men distributed back to the S.E. line of racecourse. This line was strafed in 1 afternoon. C.O. arranged with Capt Neale (D Coy) to use German traps there & get 1 man out of well defined line & make a couple of S.P.s. forward of Riding track.

About J 10C 2.8. & J 10A 3.1. to sweep Polygon Beck valley - This was mud holey - with black sandy water but not sticky.

By this time shelling was heavy - German planes very daring in beautiful after & none of ours there. Germ. arty was

Our man Pinkerton led out abt 12 of his sigs & others to the position <sup>on 1<sup>st</sup> rd</sup> Tommies had left. The two Tommy offs were frightened. The German were seen coming over 1 hill, wh killed them. Facey took 3 <sup>of our</sup> men out by himself to a position on 1<sup>st</sup> rd.

were seen  
The Germans came down into 1 Rentebeck both from NE & SE in great numbers.

→ The barrage before this attack did not seem very heavy - The Tommies were not shelled out of their positions.  
× Abt 4 p.m. to 4:30 the Germans were seen coming up in file, doubling up to other side of Rentebeck, & across the crest N. of it near Juniper Coltop. They formed into 2 waves & were getting well down 1 hill & were well down into 1 valley when our barrage caught them - our heavies on 1 ridge & in 1 valley. They were  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile away at least.

9 Strafing S.E. <sup>straight</sup> ~~part~~ of Riding Track. Bursley had a Coy phone - G.O. used it - getting line thinned when a German aeroplane came down to within 50 ft shooting into 1 trench. He turned to go back. The men stood up as he turned, blazed at him, brought him down - observer killed & pilot wd & died later there. This was abt 1100 3-3. The 57 & were 1 chief occupants of the line there.

G.O. returned to Pinkerton's Pillbox & saw P. doubling forward w a rifle & a bayonet out end of it. a lot of H.E. was dropping round about. A lot of Fusiliers were retiring - It was clear to there was trouble - our

9  
 effort tried to rally them. There  
 was found to be a v. strong  
 c-attack coming from beyond &  
 S of Cameron Covert.

Our arty put down a  
 terrific barrage - wh lasted for  
 quite 2 hrs till dark.

After dark there was  
 another c-attack - a feeble one;  
 this was smashed in  $\frac{1}{3}$  hrs  
 barrage.

Neale of 59 was organising  
 a flank & front to stop any  
 gap along the trenches in the  
 Rental Rd ditch at S of QD &  
 10c. & down 1 rd towards  
 Cameron House. The men  
 were mostly Australians - they  
~~later~~ presently withdrew  
 from 1 rd towards Cameron H. but  
 held the Rental Road.

During 1 night, at abt 11 p.m. the  
SOS went up on 14 Bde front. Our  
barrage came down on the  
Nordenhoek Rd. No ferms - reached  
the 15 Bde front tho' their left wd  
probably have bn involved.

9 Before dark it was clear 1 attack  
was cut to pieces - 1 German  
cd be seen running wildly  
by Cameron Covert under 1  
terrific fire of guns.

A wounded German m. gun  
was found in pill box NE of  
Cameron H. He threw away  
1 lock of his gun. Our men  
found it, brought it in, &  
manned 1 gun on 1  
Rental Rd. The ferms. were  
profl in Cameron H. at this  
time. (It was out of our  
sector).

The shelling was terrific on  
our left on 1 Rental  
Rd from 1 this direction  
? German or ours.

C.O reports from B. Watch  
corner to Bde - arranged for amm

Sept. 27 abt 10.30 am. The Stokes mortars were turned from Cameron House where Marshall was on to a point across 1 valley southwards at abt 800 yds. After a while they got 2 direct hits onto the ~~Pillbox~~ Farm House there, & 1 German came running out of it. Lt Gambel was w 1 S.Ms. The Germans got out then w their 5.9 or 4.2s & they had to shelter in the old H. Qrs.

water was wanted to prepare for C. attack at dawn. Sent for Neale & Pursey & warned them. They sd everything was v. quiet.

The night was quiet.  
No attack at dawn.

Gen. Elliott came up at 7 am. He got a number of men forward onto further lines.

Tuesday was notable for tremendously constant shelling of the S.E. triangle of Polygon Wood - The Germans had v. good observation from balloons & aeroplanes - day was very clear.

The 59 Bn went forward to Eastern edge of Polygon wd but the shelling drove them

Sept 27

\* Sersgt Chensay did good work w Neale at this time.

Sersgt Cropley of A.M.C. did fine work in the Pillbox on the SE straight of Riding Track on second day under Maj. Bullen, who did splendid work there 4 day & night w/ wood.

[Bullen was killed in a pillbox on Tokio Spur when Bn was holding Broodseinde Ridge. The Germans were shelling heavily & he was trying to get the stretchers of a wd man through 1 door when a shell killed him]

14/10/17

back a little inside 1 edge of wood - when it died down they went forward (Lt Macdonald & Smith) & Estab. some S.P.s on 1 edge of wood.

Maj. Kuring had come up & done some v. useful work Neale also did useful work in support of ~~C.O. had been concussed by a~~ Col. Marshall's assault on Cameron House. Shellburst in ~~front of~~

We bent back our rt flank & across the triangle in consequence of a message to support 60 Bn who had taken Cameron H. The men stood & heavy shelling very well.

Sersgt Lacey went forward & cleared up a Pillbox (in this mgs advance to 1 edge of wood) in E portion of wood, & brought back a sniper - stalked him. He had done good work 1 day before also in attacking a Pillbox.

9

59 Bn was relieved on night of 27/28  
 by 29 Bn - C.O. handed over to  
 Col Purser. There was some  
 shelling during relief - but they  
 got out quietly without hitch.  
 Men marched back in small  
 parties independently to Shrapnel  
 Corner where they had hot  
 Cocoa arranged by the Padre  
 Chaplain ~~Capt.~~ Nye. Nye did some  
 v. fine work during 1 next tour  
 on 1 Broodseinde Ridge (Oct 17)

59 Bn. casualties

	k.	w.	m.
Offrs.	4	1	
O.V.	{ 48	{ 176	{ 9
	{ 11 dets	{ 1 ardet	{ 11 w rm.
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	57	178	21.

on 26/10/17  
 Frances had been out as C.O. & got into heavy shelling  
 on return near B.W. Corner - badly wd - died later  
 Macintosh in Stockfield's Coy. k. wd in  
 shoulder during advance - died later as prisoner  
 Mann wd. 26/10/17 in going forward.

9  
Runners: One 59 Bn runner at the  
 Somme in November started as  
 a mate - a runner to deliver  
 several messages to various Coys in  
 the front line. They were caught in  
 a barrage & were getting thro' it  
 from shell hole to shell hole. In  
 one of these they were blown up  
 & one boy k. His mate was  
 shaken - searched him, got his  
 messages & private effects,  
 delivered his own & came back  
 & delivered the other boys as  
 well - He got a D.C.M.  
His messages were intact.