

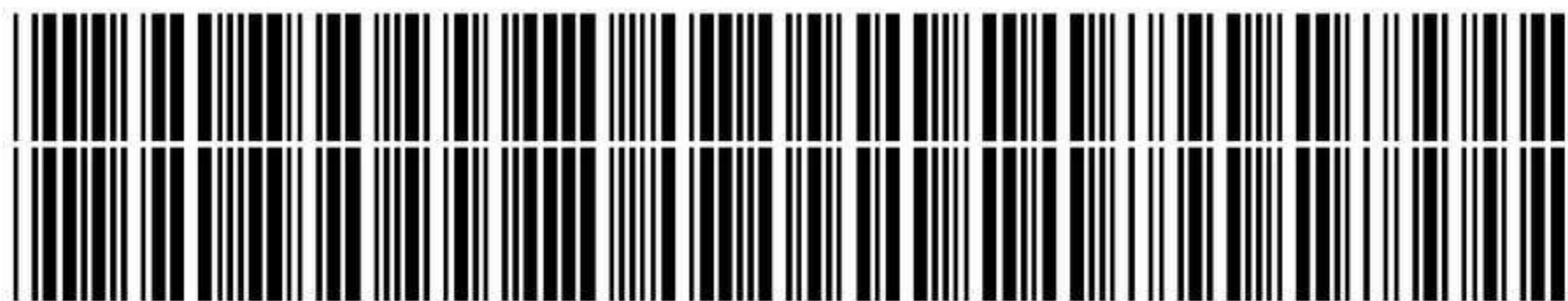
AWM38
Official History,
1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,
Official Historian.

Diaries and Notebooks

Item number: 3DRL606/50/1

Title: Diary, July 1916

Reports conversations with Sir Nevill Smyth VC, mentions the 4th Infantry Brigade's raid of 2-3 July 1916, the fighting at Mametz Wood and Verdun and the difficulties of obtaining a car.



AWM38-3DRL606/50/1

Original

DIARY NO. 50.

PWM38

3 DRL 606 ITEM 50 [1]

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.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

16 Sept., 1946.

C. E. W. BEAN.

ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

July 13 + 14
1916
28th Res. Divn.

2 Aug Bks

London.
hearing 56 to be held
to H.Q.

German in dugouts
in villages on 17th who
had been there since 2nd.

63

(50)

2

July 13-14
1916

(Captured order of 28th Res. Divn.
4.7.16.

5. "The strong points of defence
which exist in the West South & East
edges of Pozieres must be put
into a state of defence at once so
that possession of this village is
assured under all circum-
stances."

6. The gap between the 2nd &
3rd positions N of the line
Longueval - Bazentin must
be closed w a cross line
of trenches wh will commence
at all the crossroads
running to Bazentin le-
Petit, Pozieres, Contalmaison,
Martincourt. It will
join the 3rd line South of Hero
via Hill 154, SE of Martincourt,
& Hill 155 E of Fourcaux Wood. The

commencement of this work
is to be put in hand at once
by 1 Pioneer Commander.

Diagrams
with refer to the improvement
of positions.

1. Work on the front line, of a
durable nature, is to be
undertaken, if this has not
already been done.

Every possible means
of effort are to be used to
complete this.

2. The construction of a
second line of trenches behind
our 1st line is to be carried
out in full with all the
resources at our disposal.
In the sectors held by the 190th
Regt this line will be the one
connecting Ovilkins & Contalmain.

In 1 sector held by 1 163 Regt the
second line referred to will
begin from Contalm. & will run
thru the middle of mamety wood
& afterwards in an easterly & then
in a Northerly direction & will
join 1 second line West of
rd Mamety - Bazentin-le-Petit

Particly impt is 1 constr
of a second ^{of trench} in the 20th
B I Bde sector. This must
be so constructed that it lies
on the reverse slope to the
of 1 enemy. In so far as
present ^{of trench} will not permit
1 accommodation of supports, the
supports must be quartered
in existing suitable points
where the banking etc. will
permit of quick construction

of dugouts. In the same way, many dugouts which still remain undamaged ~~and~~ must be used not only for quartering troops but also for constructing strong points. The defence of a sector held by our troops is assured, even when, as a result of enemy shell fire, the holding of a continuous line is rendered impossible at certain points. The obstacle formed by dugouts grouped together in strong points will prevent enemy from breaking thro', especially if flank fire support is assured from these groups of dug-outs.

3. Of partic. importance for defence is a quick bldg in of m.g.s. behind a front defence line with command ground behind, & which, with flank fire, can support each other so that enemy forces which may ~~break~~ at any point have temporarily broken through may be held up by m.g. fire from further advance.

4. Furthermore, behind a front line conversion of pillboxes into strong points (see Para 2) is of greatest importance. Such villages are Pozieres Contalmaison Bazentin-le-Petit Bazentin-le-Grand and Loupuval.

NB. Bois des Fourreaux = High Wood
 Hill 155 = S. 4 d. 28.
 The Cross Roads = Three Trees

⁶³ July 12 Intelligence Summary says ^{to} 8

Aft 10 days ^{by} our
 troops have captured

whole of enemy's 1st
 system of line on a
 front of 14,000 yds

i.e. front support & reserves
 & trucks.

of from 2000 - 4000 yds
 deep including 5 villages
 several barbed wire woods

& many numerous
 strong redoubts. The
 capture of each of these
 trenches represented a
 operation of some importance
 & whole of them are
 now in our hands).

Enemy has now only
 1 ~~none~~ ~~division~~ division available
 as reserve on W front.
 21 Red Div

Intercepta of Telephone messages:

109th Regt. (28th Res. Div) on 25/3/16
had ordered:

"From time to time Battalion
Commanders will have bogus
messages sent thro' the telephone
after previously advising the
regt & the artillery (not by
telephone from the front line) with the
object of ascertaining from the
Enemy's acts whether messages
are intercepted. For instance:
'Mineswerfer in the Cemetery
at Villiers will open fire at
11 a.m.'

It was ^{long} after this th our men were being
picked (for knowledge of German)
^{is interest we use bogus names.}
~~with the~~ ^{to} ~~word~~ ^{Buzzer is}

Over Bombardment: Order to III/109 R.I.R
of 27 June 1916. "Carrying 1 dead back
under present conditions but only

result in further casualties.
 For this reason dead bodies will
 be conveyed forwards; the
 selected places or names
 will be shown on a sketch
 which will be presented to Bn. H.Q.

The gas shells ^{much} used by the French.
~~at~~ E.g. at Estrees. When
 used in large quantities
 they injured men without
 masks - who after walking
 to ^{proximity} compounds (12 kil.)
 died.

After 1½ hrs shelling animals
 were killed (at Estrees) but
 not man w masks. ^{It is} ^{5 h}
 doubtful if they ^{had} ^{stood} a much ^{5 x}
 longer shelling.

Leumanns got into Trones Wood
after 6th heavy attack.

July 13th.

Sent the car back this morning. Went for a ride w young Carruthers this afternoon. Had one or two good gallops & thoroughly enjoyed them - tho I am always nervous of how I am going to get on on horseback. It is more of a trial to me to get on to a horse than to go into a trench - well, perhaps not in a fight like this. The chances are abt 30 to 100 agst you in ^{front} trenches at an active point.

Seys came in this evening after having been out to see some gunners & his brother near Mericourt. He says

th at the Germans are getting many new guns up - some from Verdun (After all, it is one object of our fighting this battle). They only were supposed to have about 1 battery of 7 inch guns but now they have ~~many~~ more, he thinks.

We have had abt 100,000 casualties & we are not yet at our objective, he says, & the next push will be pretty critical -

It makes one feel - this sort of talk - th if only we cd push off and assault their second line now, it ~~th~~ wd be wa big prospect of success; but if we take day after day in

approaching it closely and
to attack it the Germans
will be making it so strong
all the time & it will be
a fearful obstacle.

It is thought our Angus
troops ~~some~~ very fine
divisions, such as the 3rd &
1st, are for this job - to
it's not certain whether 4th
Army or Reserve Army get
us yet, I believe. The odds
are in favour of 4th Army.
They are both most pleasant -
in fact some of Englishmen
(for Smythe is an Englishman)
our staff think they are
each very anxious to get
us. We may go in yet

? Rogers

within a day or two I believe. 15

..... 6' 17' - I hope it will be
 in a well, if we do. They are sure to rely on
 machine guns dug in behind the line to stop troops
 getting past their front line. Also no command is sure to
 be long in parts. With m.g.s. cannot go
 pooping off all night expending belts after belts
 in the blind hope of hitting somebody. If we attack
 at night as we did in Salligoli
 all our successful attacks were night attacks
 (Landing, August 6/7, the most successful fight
 in all the history of the campaign there & the finest
 feat our army has accomplished) and even the
 reorganization were night affairs. If we could do it
 with the bayonet only in the dark, I believe we may
 do it.

Had a passage of
 arms to night. Some for
 some reason cant stand

Bazley (who has the better
 brains of the two really) &
 being an irritable little
 chap he has been on to him
 all day. Bazley was waiting
 at the mess & I know he
 doesn't shine as a waiter,
 though he does his best. I
 don't want him to shine as
 a waiter. Smyth is very
 irritable & said that he had
 a "horror of the boy" (So
 Smith tells me) — which simply
 means that a little chap's
 judgment is not worth taking.
 Smith & I both told him the
 boy was the best chap in camp
 — one of the best in the first
 Division.

Then old Seys (who is a
 British regular gunner
 of very strong views & very
 contemptuous of the new
 Army & especially of
 Australians - & very ignorant
 on some points & rather lazy)
 began his usual moan
 about the Australians.
 I ^(who is an Anglo-N. Zealander) ~~the~~ ^{corrected} me by
 joining in - yes their harness
 was dirty, they didn't clean
 their bits - etc they were
 out in the streets too late last
 night, Seys heard one man
 "making indecent proposals
 to some landlady etc etc"
 I blurted out, "well in
 fact the Angus corps is so putrid"

that I wonder some of
you fellows belong to it —
(because we certainly don't
want them if they don't want
us — we'd much rather
have our own people).

That caused a sudden
concentration of attention
on the point. It was only
the Officers fault says sd —
indeed he was quite ready to
half capitulate. But Smythe
wasnt. He sd clean
harness was a matter of
discipline — soft harness
a matter of efficiency for
horses, but bright bits a
matter of discipline.

I sd tht it was unessential
& tht (Australian wd never

be easily trained to those unessentials. Of course the Englishman will because he is afraid of his officer - stands in awe of him as an acknowledged superior being of a different class. But an Australian does not stand in the sort of awe of his officer because he is of the same class as his officer - there is no social difference, therefore that motive does not work to him to the same extent, but in place of it you get the intelligence of whole force (or whole nation) at work, not only of the officer class.

Secondly I admit

there is a virtue in smartness
& cleanness. The Australian
is personally clean —
Smythe knew that — & that there
was no comparison between
1 personal cleanliness
of four men in Gallipoli
& 100 Tommies. But
he asked: "Why is it our
battalions here often look
dirty & untidy. Wouldn't
it be better if they looked
neat?"

[I often feel the same — I
wish they did. It's partly
their old Australian tunics
which are no longer issued but
to which they cling on at all
costs ~~in order to~~ even when
almost disreputable in order

to avoid going into a British tunic! The feeling is extraordinarily strong - & I have it, too? to the full. I hate seeing them go into a British tunic. It seems to be a hallmark of a different being - a more subservient less intelligent man.]

I said that, as Smythe knew, the whole tendency in Australia is against being neat or careful as your clothes. The "nut" is despised & not looked up to - the public opinion is against great care being devoted to a man's personal appearance, as being unessential & is all in favour of whatever

is essential. And if
untidiness is a vice,
at any rate this ~~kind~~ regard
for essentials is a ^{very} valuable
quality. The British soldier
is apt to carry the regard
for dress & unessentials
to a most vicious
extreme.

I think Little Smyth
half agreed with me - he's
a nervous little man but not
a bad little sort. But
if this sort of attitude keeps
up I shall leave the mess.
Smith, Griffiths, Herbertson
& I cd have a very nice
mess of our own!

The 1st Bde wh was in

Not quite accurate -
 They had been
 with 3rd Canadian Divn. as
 well as their own.
 C. E. S. 167.26

This town last night moved
 out into 2nd Corps area
 today - abt 8 miles (they were
 very very footsore, some of
 them, after their time in trenches)
 And the first of the staff of the
 4th Divn moved down here -
 Dickinson of the GSO.3 - an
 Australian - abt 1 only one
 on their main staff. They are
 not bringing their artillery;
 they will have the arty of the
 Lahore Divn - brand new
 untouched* British regular
 arty - that ought to make
 a great difference to them.

July 14 News to our troops
 at 4th Division
~~last night~~ took Bazentin
 & Baz. Wood & Longueval -

The cavalry then broke through & reached the Bois de Fourcaux just in front of German 2nd Line.

4th Bde Raid

2/3/7/16. (Night of 2/3 July.)

11.59 ^{messy} ^{reached} ^{brigade} ~~9~~ 1 2 H.Q. in all right

& now coming out. all lines cut and after.

Gate closed at 12.10.

Artillery fire stopped at 12.16.

Enemy m.g. fire on wire

caused some delay both going & ^{returning} ~~to~~ ^{parties} ~~to~~ found.

deposits full of Germans when they bombed.

Enemy wire little cut.

^{nearly} All our casualties while in enemy ^{wire} ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~area~~

Armentieres

All 14th Bn.
 (all Capt^{AR} Cox's Coy)

Ind. after crossing Courpan
 wire found - 2 belts. Big
 craters as them but wire
 hardly touched - M.G. on them
 in wire.

Left ^{party} found neither men
 nor guns - depots empty, much
 artillery damage.

Rt ^{party} led by Sgt
 Garcia (wd). Bombed 3 to 5
 depots - one had Elec. light
 still burning. Estimated to
 25 men in these. (Screams
 heard). our wd. had to be
 got thro wire wh made slow
 work.

Both telephonists w. on
 way out & put out of action.
 Lt. Wanliess ws wd but carried
 on till he collapsed.

All officers were wd.
(Some enemy straggled on our wire)

Absence of loot was due
to loss of time in crossing wire.
Returning w/ having hands full
w/ wd.

W. Lt Wanless, Harvey,
Roderick & 25.

M. Lt Julian - & 9 others.

J. was dead - carried
part of way back &
then abandoned for a
w. man.

(All int'gr. had to be carried
by runners to Bde H.Q.
Our scouts encountered
enemy patrol in remainder
when Bombt began &
drove them back into our

bombt. some of these ^{new} bodies were seen by some men.

6 dead k. by our bombt in trenches were seen.

Left p 5 did encounter Germans - after Roderick we hit ~~by~~ they bombed 3 dugouts w Germans in them - lifted cover of

dugout & threw bomb in.

Prob. 56	casualties	rt 1. 25
		left ^{party} 10
		Bombt. ^{tranches} 6
		<u>51.</u>

Normansland

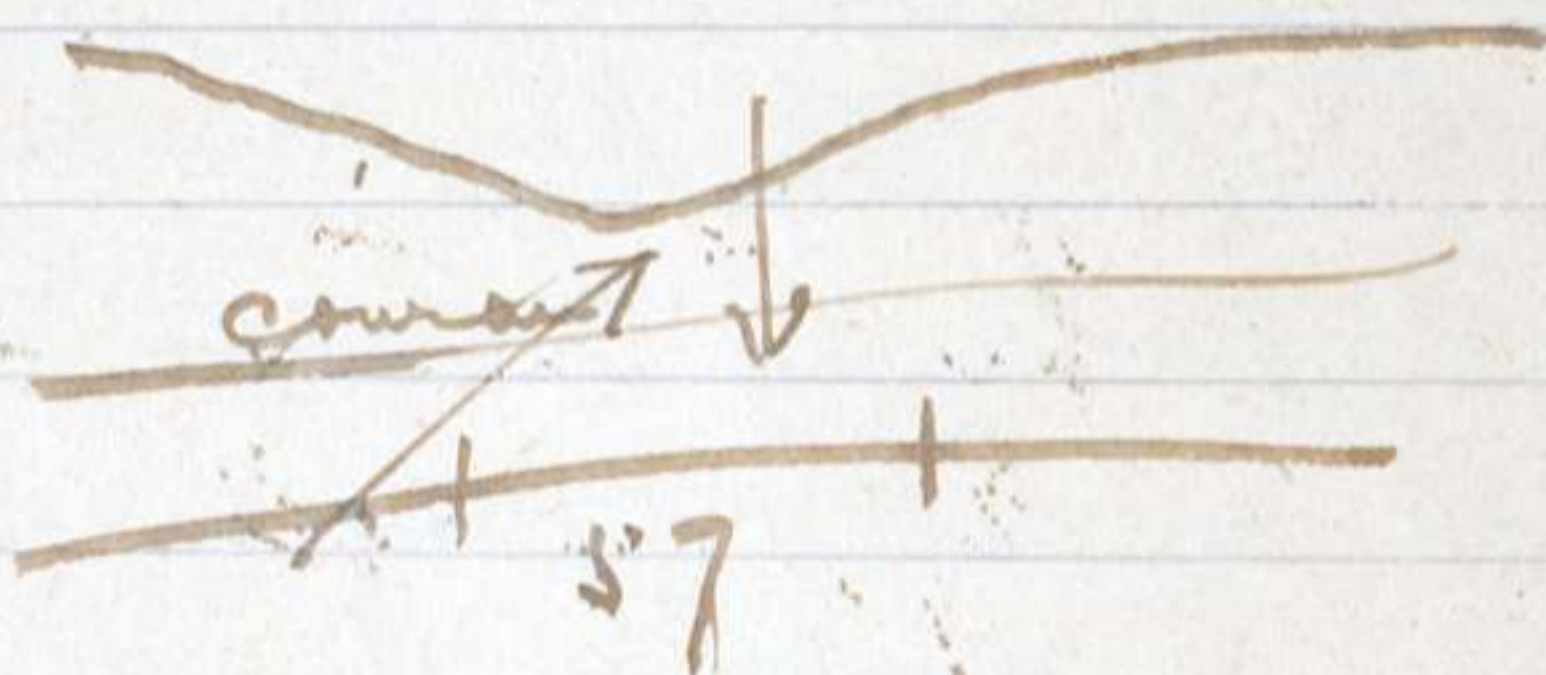
6095*

St Harvey was hit while cutting wire - shouting "Come on Australia"

Wanless hung on till gave signal "Out" - then collapsed.

X This sounds rather like the sort of story which Monash used to be fond of telling, but which those who really knew the front line did not credit. It struck me as such & I have often heard it cited ^{in the A.I.F.} as typical

(Opp. Trench 57) of an improbable battle story.
C.E.B.
1925.



Some of scouts & wd.
X ~~threw themselves~~ on wire to help rest of pty. cross. Replica ^{bench} of very like.

Enemy threw shrapnel on his own wire after our bomb started. Party had to go thro. this.

Loss of officers made no diffce to Pty, sergts taking on.

Goal - uncertain range
of M.T.M.

German raid next night on same Pt on same point - 2 hrs bomb? at 10.30 to 12.30. Infantry came over at 12.50 (seen by patrol in ^{Romanland} ~~in~~ & by flanking Lewis guns

abt 50

who were on look out
for them. They were shown
up by their own flares.

abt 12 ^{reached} parapet &
some got in. They were
bombed on Parapet by abt
50 of our men in bay they
entered (Trench 57).

They tried to pull out
Lieut Mackay who was
buried by fall of earth.
Caught his leg. They
were bombed by our
men. One man was sd
to have been bayoneted (carrying
revolver). We got 5 rifles
in our ^{trench} 1, 2 on ^{parapet} V,
& 2 bodies in front of wire
Bloodstained cap on
^{parapet} etc. Our cas. abt

Pte E. Calway }
 14 Bn. }
 Sgt Edmonstone }
 (since died }
 of amputation }

25 w. in this part.
 5 k in working party
away to flank

Seryt in front on patrol
 wd. Saw En. coming -
 who dressed by Pte who
 stood by him - When saw
 En. coming Pte carried
 him in through wire to
 barrage to 5.60. &
 then went back to his
 patrol who lying out
 (under gen. orders) & later
 came in on flank.

Sunday May 2. - Turks
 attacked Quinn's (Exp)
 & counter-attacks in mass
 about 3 o'clock. M.g.

On Sunday night Ap. 25 -
 The 15th Bn was put in (part
 of it) at Steele's & was digging
 support line behind front
 line. They managed to dig
 standing up. On Monday
 morning they had to advance
 the troops then there &
 dig in part of front line
 - those in scrub managed
 to do this standing - as picks
 & shovels, all day & completed
 trench. There seemed to be
 few Ts near.)

Taker was the heart
 and soul of line there.
 "If ever a man deserved the
 Victoria X, he did," sd Dickson.
 (clearly, of course, it was near
 White's Gully, not Steele's Point)

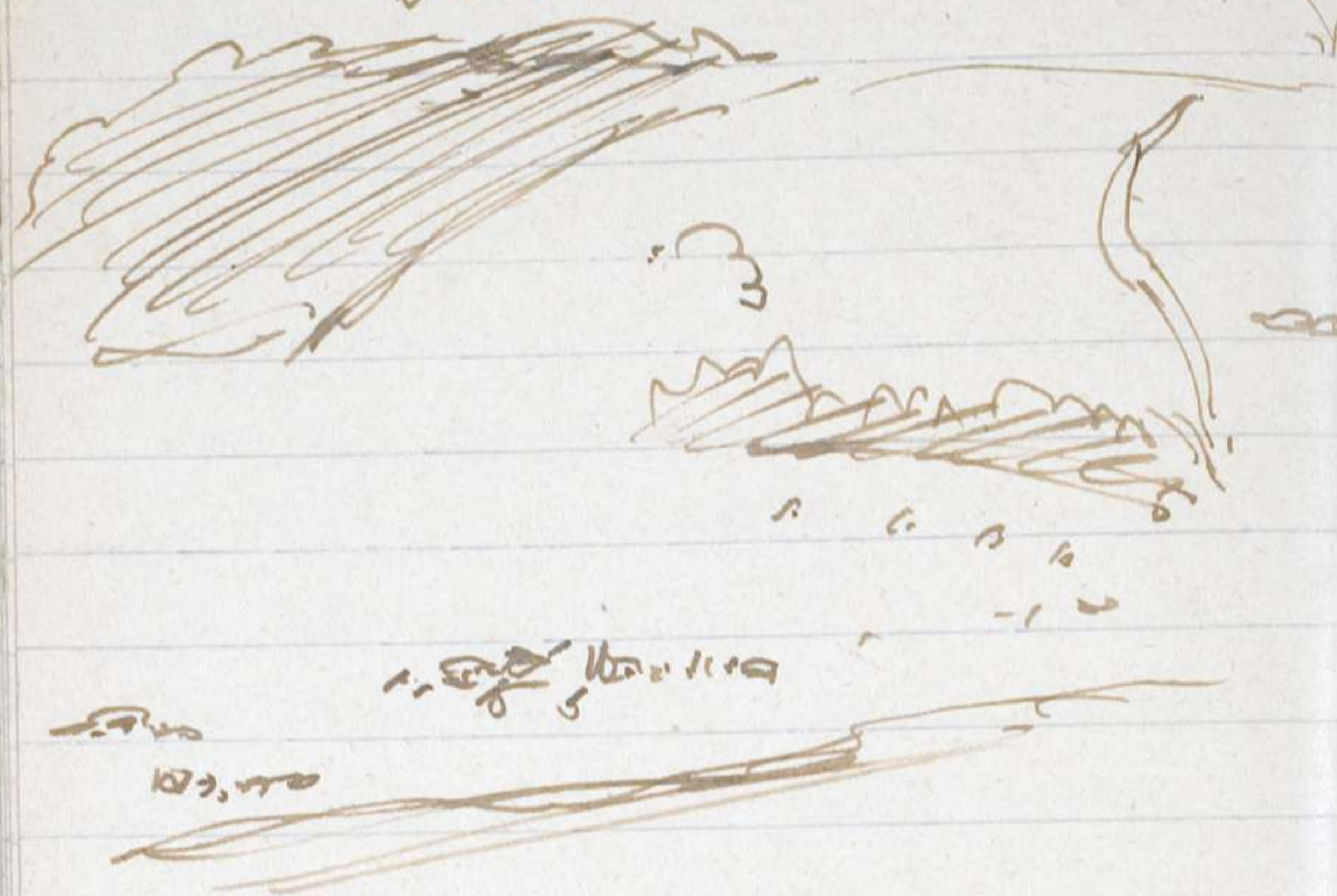
? Probly meant
for Becardel.

at all that they were digging.)

July 14th. later. I went out to
the battle with Dickinson
J.S.O. 3 of 4th Divn. We found
roads crowded w guns
around Bethincourt & Fricourt.
We had to leave the car at
Bethincourt & walk & ed only
get a little E of Mametz.
Mametz wood - I further
edge of it - seemed to be
being attacked for we were
pouring artillery fire onto
the further edge of it & I
Germans were peppering it.
Our Artillery was simply streaming
up the Valley towards
Bazentin on 1 heels or

In court wood

Contat
maison



advance

38
mainly



German shells were bursting
just behind mainly wood -
quite useless.

Again & again one has
be impressed w/ fact that
we have got their observation
down & they don't know
where to shoot.

Yestys Summary says the Germans
 say to their trenches in
 their main 2nd line near
 Bazentin le Petit have suffered
 badly from artillery but the
 depots have suffered little.

(We found today just S. of the
 road at Foucault an opening
 in the German wire to which
 tunnels led from their
 trenches.



Enemy's aircraft are still
 inactive. Their balloons have

* From our Intelligence
Summary

gone further back & are
hauled down when our
aeroplanes come near
them.

[A large no. of the officers
in the ^{German} guards are ^{now} officers
- stellvertreter, Feldwebel
(Capt ^{major} 7) or vicefeldwebel.
Only two platoon commanders
are officers.]

Germans are still doing
Some attacking at Verdun -
e.g. they have got into Dambois.

On July 12 we got back most
of the lost ground in Bois des
Fronces & the whole of Mametz
Wood. Two heavy ^{German} attacks on
Contalmaison broke down.

Prisoners say:

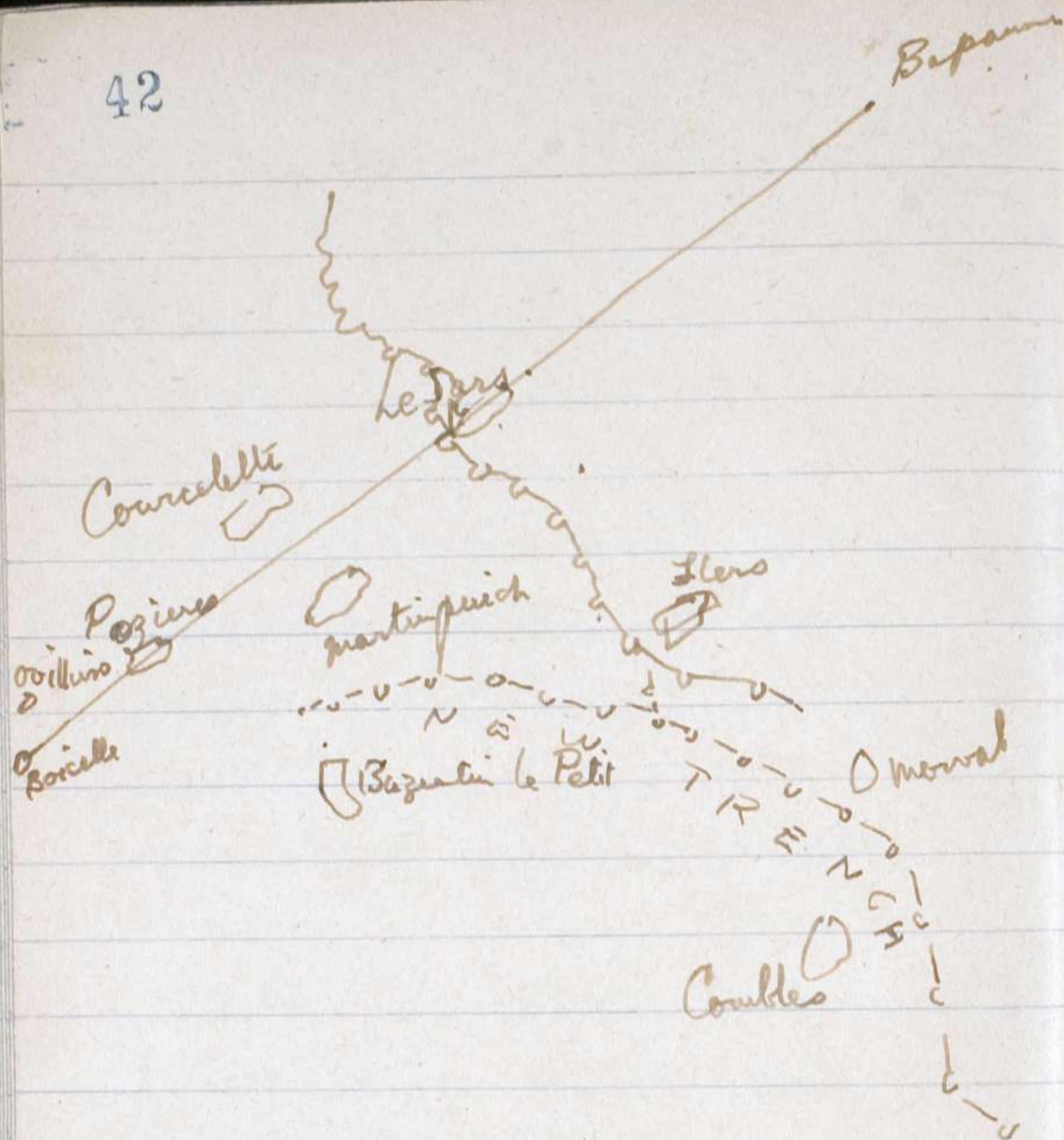
The German reinforcements
come largely by road from

A chiet-le-grand. Their
2nd line, in front of
Bazentin wood had good
deep dug outs & plenty of
wire. Common trench
up to front line (in Hamely
wood) as bady knocked
about & had lots of dead
in it. In Hamely wood
there was no proper front
line trench.

Summary 14 July. Prisoners
to date 111 offrs. 7438 or.

Prisoners of 3rd Guard Divn were
taken yest. They reached line
on July 3.

(9th Grenadier Regt - a line Regt -
has been put into the 3rd Guard Divn
& the rest v. much look down on it.
The 19 yr old men are not yet
fighting.



Germans seen in plenty of
 cases to be having abt 30 p.c.
 losses ~~in fighting~~ in counterattacks
 & holding on in disputed woods,
 & villages.

By a Corps order Trones
 wood is to be held "at any
 Price".

July 13. Germans still attacking
 at Verdun & making a
 little ground between Fleury & Vanux.
 French steady in Somme area.
 British advanced a little
 yesterday (13th) & got some German
 houses & ammunition.

July 14.

Telegram at 9.45 am.

The two right Corps
 attacked ^{at 3.25} this morning &

after apparently slight opposition
 occupied enemy's second position.
 Present position appears to be
 that we hold Bazentin le Petit,
 B. le Grand, Longueval.
 At 7.40 the 2nd Indian Cavalry
 Division was ordered to go thro'.
 Reports from them not yet
 received."

Press Communique. This
 morning at dawn I attacked
 the enemy's second system of
 defence. Our troops have
 broken into the hostile positions
 on a front of 4 miles and
 have captured several
 strongly defended
 localities. Heavy fighting
 continues.

July 24:

Tonight's Telegram: Since
 the assault this morning
 work has continued
 in consolidating the line
 won. Trones Wood, Loupueval
 village, Bazentin le Grand,
 village + wood, except small
 northern portion are in
 our hands. Le Petit wood
 was counterattacked from
 the N.W. this morning &
 the village from the N.
 during the afternoon. Enemy
 got a footing in village
 but was promptly
 driven out. Progress has
 been made on the left
 in accordance with
 expectations. 7.15 pm.
 4th Army.

Watched the 4th Aust.
Battery marching out tonight,
looking splendid - all the
spare men walking by the
limbers, not riding them;
their harness good, horses
well kept, men smart.
Even Old Seps said: "That's
a good Battery, Bean."

As I write this - at
11 p.m. a crowd of some
sort has marched in
a little further up the
village street & is shouting
& roaring & singing like
a set of woodboomers
pub-loafers on a Sat. night
at closing time.

Now the difference between
those two is just a difference

* ~~Artillery~~ Artillery
is passing so?
it is ~~possibly~~ another
battery, but I don't
think so.

of officers. I fancy these
men are of the 13th L.H. *
(or 1st Anzac L.H.) which
had a bad commander
at first & has always been
a bad regiment. It has
a better commander now
& he may do something w
it. Burdwood & White both
look on it as 1 worst
Light H. Regt we have.

The ~~best~~ 2nd Divns
have been ordered to move at
6 hrs. notice - but not the
Corps staff. The Bantams (it
is sd -) were partly responsible
for last night's success. They
have big hearts in little bodies.
Our 4th Bde is filling
Downant today. I hope

we are put in as a Corps - But it may well be we shall have to be put in division by division as we are wanted.

July 15th. A day at Vignacourt. Sent a short cable giving the stage the battle has now reached.

Meant to write an article but was much upset by an answer from the War Office saying that ~~there~~ as there was no alternative to 4-seater cars except small suiper cars they were afraid it wd have to be a 4-seater at £11 a week. 20

I asked them for the small suiper - I spent most of the

afternoon composing a letter
to Collins & tearing it up again -
to say to if I cant be given
a means of locomotion I
cant go on as I work. ~~that~~
I ought to have been out at
battle all day today. & here
I have been tied to this
country village 30 miles away.

I hear to we
attacked the enemys new
switch line (joining their
new (waterhed) line to their
3rd line, at Martinpuech
& got into it - but were
enfiladed out of it. We
got 1 whole of Delville wood.
One regt of cavalry did
set two yesty, White tells
me, & rode down some

Germans sheltering in long pass
 near ~~Dutch~~ High wood.
 I believe we also attacked
 Pozieres & did some good.
 Germans counterattacked.

When we retook Trones
 wood yesterday we relieved
 some Fusiliers of Royal West
 Kent Regt who had been cut
 off there for 48 hours.