

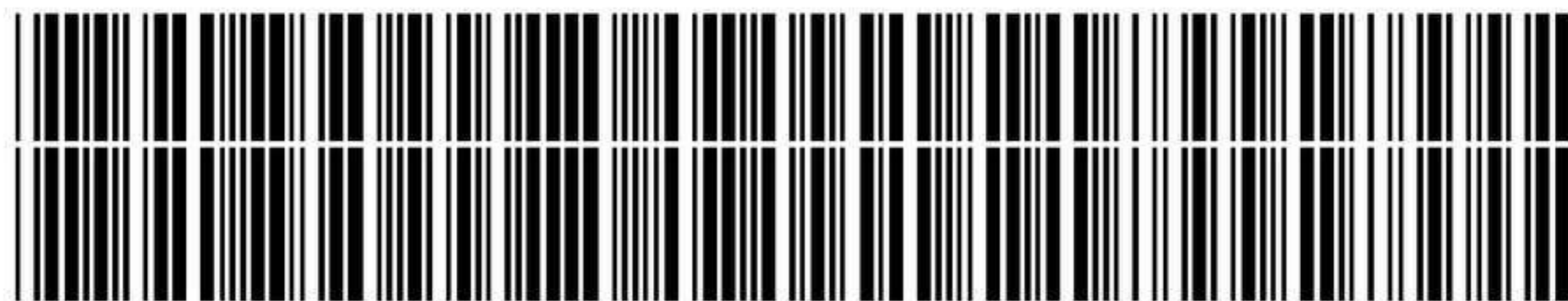
AWM38
Official History,
1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,
Official Historian.

Diaries and Notebooks

Item number: 3DRL606/80/1

Title: Diary, May - June 1917

Includes references to the 18th and 19th Battalions, the 11th Infantry Brigade, Bullecourt, gas shelling and the New Zealanders' attack at Flers.



AWM38-3DRL606/80/1

Original

DIARY NO. 80.

ANM 38

30RL 606

ITEM 80 [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.

16 Sept., 1946.

OPEN

C. E. W. BEAN.

80
May 23-26

1917

Visit to French
front.

30

8

80
May 23-26
1917
Visit to French
front.

June 24. 12.20 pm. At
Brentwood (Cheswell Watch).
Higgs came in & said you
could hear the guns
clearly. We went out into
the garden & from the first
I thought one could hear
the undercurrent of pulsation
of the guns in a bombardment.
Presently came heavier bumps,
some quite distinct, though faint,
& there was no doubt about it.
We were hearing a heavy
bombardment in France or
Belgium. I have heard it less
distinctly 10 miles from the line.

2 At this stage I was invited to visit the
French front. ^{These are hurried notes, obtained}
in the travelling car: - Bushy - 2 yrs

May 23. Interviewed
the two men of 18th Br who
escaped from Marquion.

Then came down by car
with Southwell, to Paris. G.H.Q.
suggested the car in a telegram
telling me to get a pass if
I wanted ^{to go} the car - I could
see White disapproved of
my going by car &
not by train.

~~stay~~ At Paris I
went to the Maison de
la Presse, where ~~by~~
a young man in
immaculate dress, & mani-
cured hands & a powdered face
(~~it was~~ ^{it was} treated in some way any-
how) told me of the proposed
itinerary. It is nothing
like as complete as I had
hoped - not Verdun - just
two days out of Compeigne.
One of these will take us
to the country where the
French Offensive took place.

May 24. Started early with Ross
Lyons, & Bruce (of Reuters) under
an old Cavalry Captain.

in Normans hand till ^{Germany} ~~the front~~ ^{in front of forest} 3
Went by March 17. Laigues

one house half French & German

Deep sand bagged ⁱⁿ ~~by~~
with village stones.

more wire than we
.. Loopholes

2 German barbs

Salvaged material, all
byrd ready to be ^{and}
away

German ^{hinges} walled ~~by~~
concrete
Beautifully ~~in~~ ^{under}
Stores - ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ

Cemetery. Hill

8 mt Remond 4
Canal no no bridge
(Grand effaire)
Fort Ourselcamp
D. Escayrac.

re?
River & over di
↓

Canal - new locks.
sunk barges.

Noyon
German inscriptions
all gone - bridges blown
up.
Germ. cleared out all
women betw 15 - 60
& then poured in the
inhabitants of surrounding
villages wh they wished
to destroy.

an

8

all metals gone from
Noyon Cathedral (Roman-
Johic) organ bells.

Blue & white colours of
Tomb of arc. Bronze
figure (18 cm) left.

Flavy le Mortel
1st destroyed & so
Burnt
Cuirass - Mayots
Horse joke.
Sully's swins
picture

Railhead. sh
just being made.
Shale sh goes past.
Cannon & lead
to plough fields. & soldiers
Just, 1800
re/led down

French are trying to do damage St Quentin.

Spans blocked / canal & turned water into valley of Oise near La Fere.

French have the Basse Plateau - Fosse de Cony.
 & then line runs round to Craonne - short of Laon.
 The St Gobain was v. difficult & the idea was to squeeze Germans out.

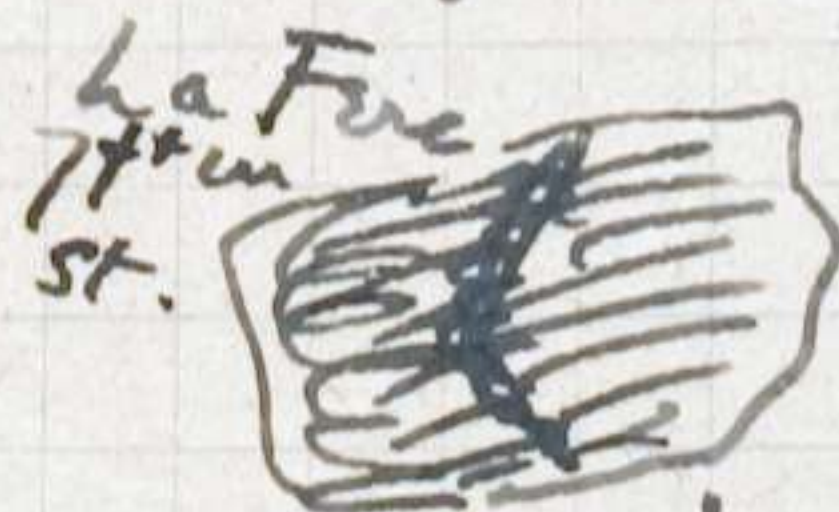
8 little rly thro Tussy first made - Broadways one line finished the other - seven lines unfinished.

Prinzitel Friedrich Schanz - Faillouel
 - 1 1/2 1/2 2 2 2

Hubertus Haus.
 Beer drinking place.

St Quentin Cathedral
 wire visible on ridge to right.
 Also practically point of view where British line ends.
 It is v. quiet.

Massif de St Gobain.



Soissons

The first French attack was on 16 April at

Chauny - well
screened - blow to
bits \ 20, \ 10

(Palais de Justice.)
Soldatenheim
on 27 April. ~~blotted out~~
They told people to stay
in Faubourg de Noyon -
then shelled suburbs
where they were -
18 or 20 were killed.
More professional
Better Staff work
than ours

: Point de vue de
l'ennemi ici.

Extinguish lights.

Gas!

Better screening.

German permits.

German blew down Chateau
de Concy tower as they said it
gave observation. 20 tons of
dynamite blew it up.

Generally - the French front seemed extraordinary quiet. While we watched about 10 miles of line near St Quentin, southwards not one shell burst in half an hour & I only heard one gun - & that may have been a bomb at a school. We were taken, by special request, to Coucy. ~~The~~ The old castle tower there has been blown down - the Germans destroyed everything within a certain distance of the Hindenburg line, which seems to me to have been why they left Noyon - (but they may have been too hurried there).

The road down to Coucy was screened - the ~~only~~ horizon was only 2000 or 3000 yards away. Our cars went down this road, into the village. I saw one shell - a black H.E. universal - burst in the air. But the Germans and French seemed otherwise almost asleep - The place, if it had not been blown up by 1 German - might have been a ^{beautiful} English country town on a fine summer Sunday.

In 1 distance towards the Forêt de Sochain we saw a few big German shells burst over part of battlefield - which there was as red & shattered as Bullecourt

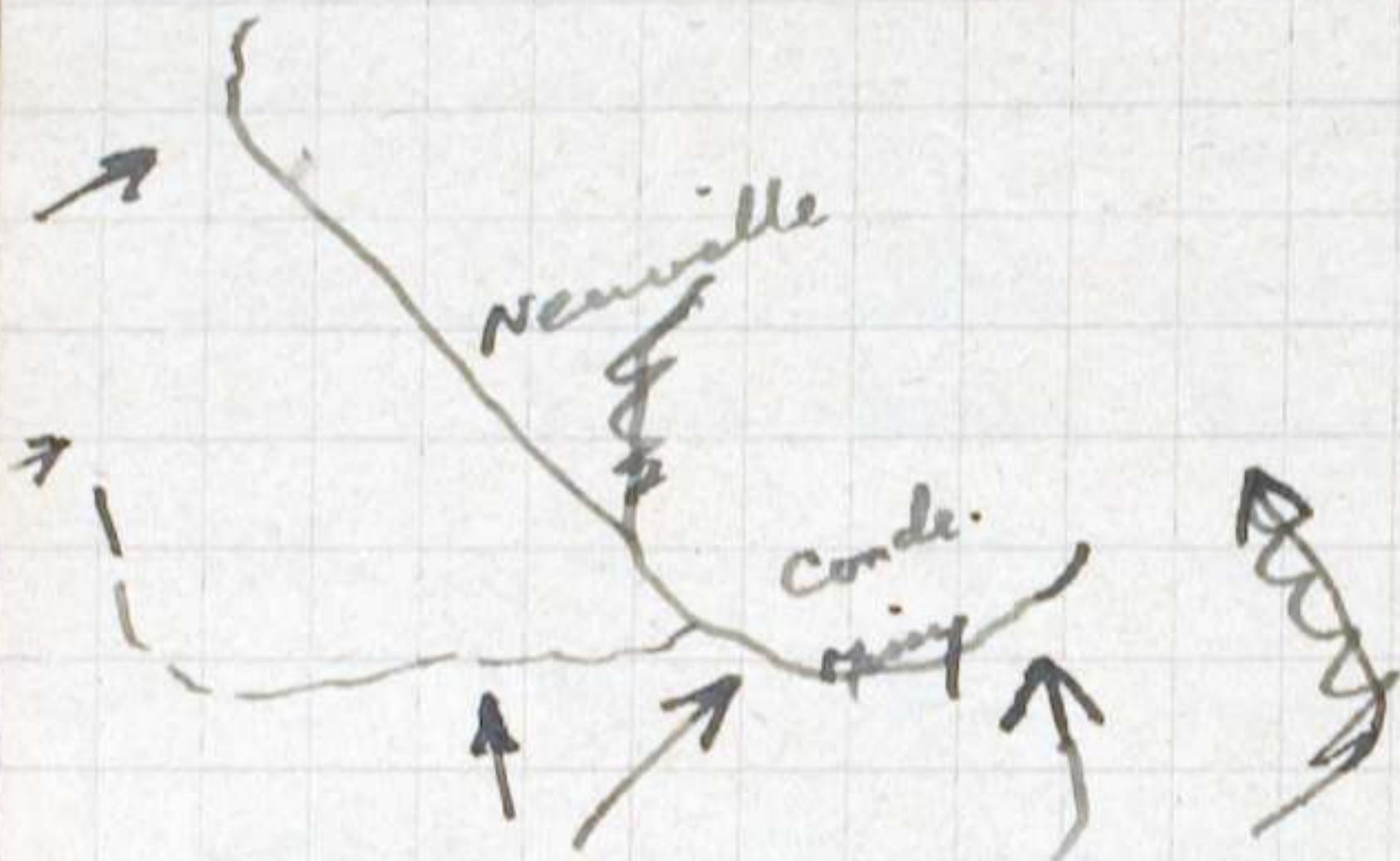
Had dinner with the English correspondents, Warner Allen, Gerald Campbell (Times) Lawrence, Rennie & another American. They live in a comfortable chateau. They were able to see something of the fight in April here - (watched one attack closely - but as it did not succeed could not report it). I think they are kept fairly tight from what little L. said

At this all - one can't forget that the French had borne the main burden of this war for 20 months before we began to get really into the collar. No one can accuse France of not having done her fair share.

May 25th. We came
early to Soisson, the
of Army under General
Margin or Manjin,

who is blamed for the
recent ~~the~~ failure of
French offensive. His
subordinate, who travelled
with Bruce & stuck up for
him vigorously.

Soissons & the road
to it is surprisingly
little shelled. I cd scarcely
believe at the entering
Soissons that the Germans
up to 6 weeks ago had
been so close. The Cathedral
has a few shells in it,
deliberately put in by
a German battery whose
orders were found. But
the



On March 12 the French still occupied the 2 along the Soisson.

The French held the ^{bridgehead} ~~village~~ in Soissons

French were in Distillery
 Germans ^{positions behind} in glass factory. The Germans had a Coal heaps. 100 000 of interest when 1 French retook 1 factory. The little damage done is extraordinary
 Mar. 18. They found by ^{des allemands} ~~sin vout.~~

Fight at Cuffy Labontarje.

Cavalry

Pont Rouge. Missing
 Taken by a ^{regiment} in a hard fight. Fight there too.

The Germans were at Conde.

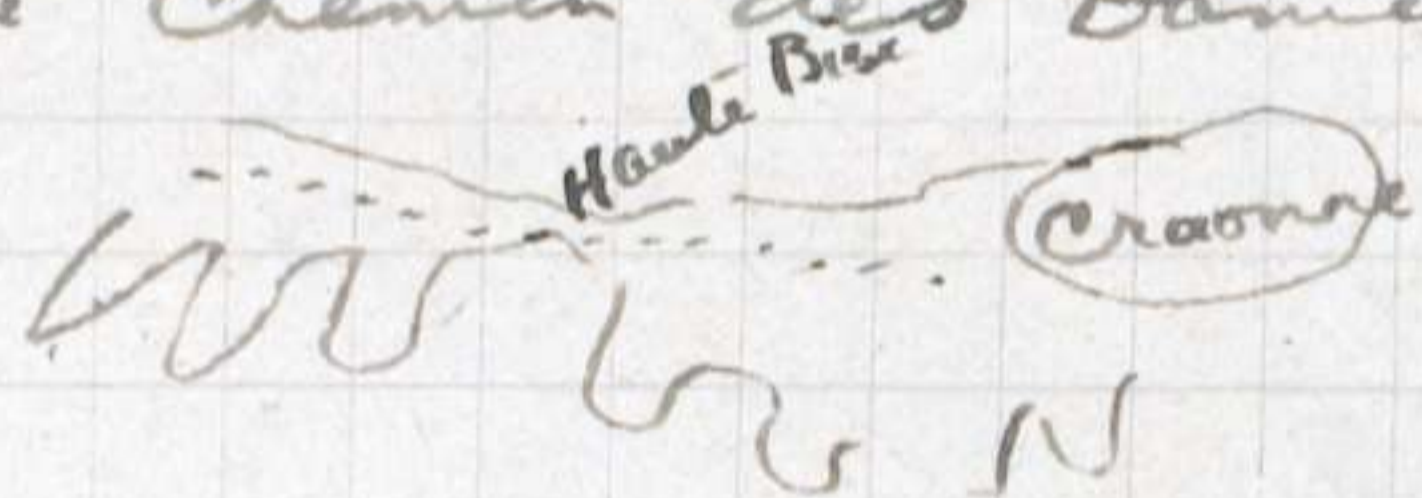
They called missing + surrounded it!

By the end of ^{April} ~~March~~

they had affairs + fell of Conde - v. strong

The army crossed + had to take up its new position

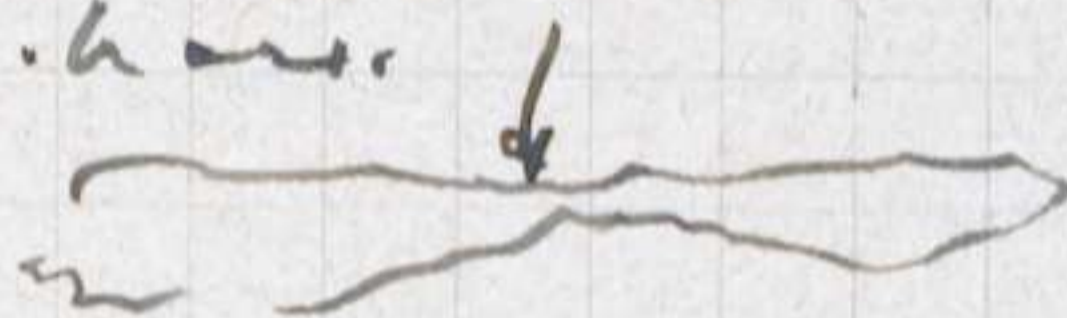
They had here to work up
a set of valleys leading up
to the height along which ran
the Chemin des Dames.



A neck in this was the Haute
Bise - where Napoleon fought
when he was fighting at Craonne in 1814
& there monuments
put up to him. They got
on the summit, but the Germans
had very heavy forces here
in caves, & many guns -
& they ~~also~~ put up a very
strong resistance. We think
have part of Craonne rare
along 1/2 of ridge - but
it took 9 days & 2000
days work.

The battle of Apr ¹⁶ began
in a new part further right.
Lost 60 guns in retreating
from Conde line.
Battle lasted 16th, 17th, 18th.

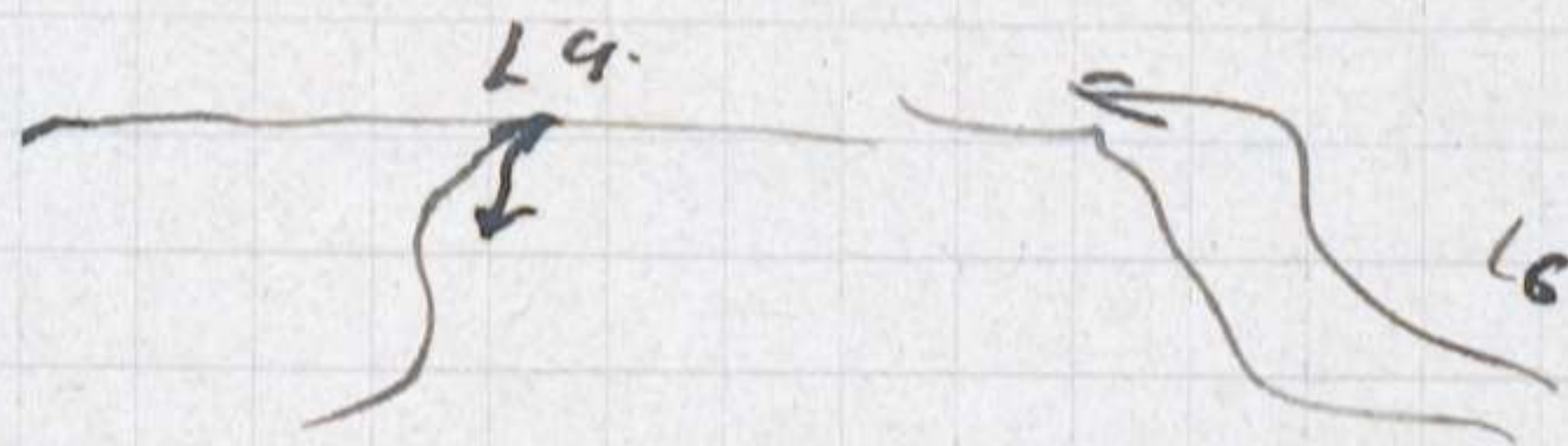
At Haute Bise - Napoleons
v. hours.



Roll S^u up ridge - ✓ 1
Houses & ranch by

Mont Sapin
Les

16th cut. Charonne & Sapin
not 1 destruction

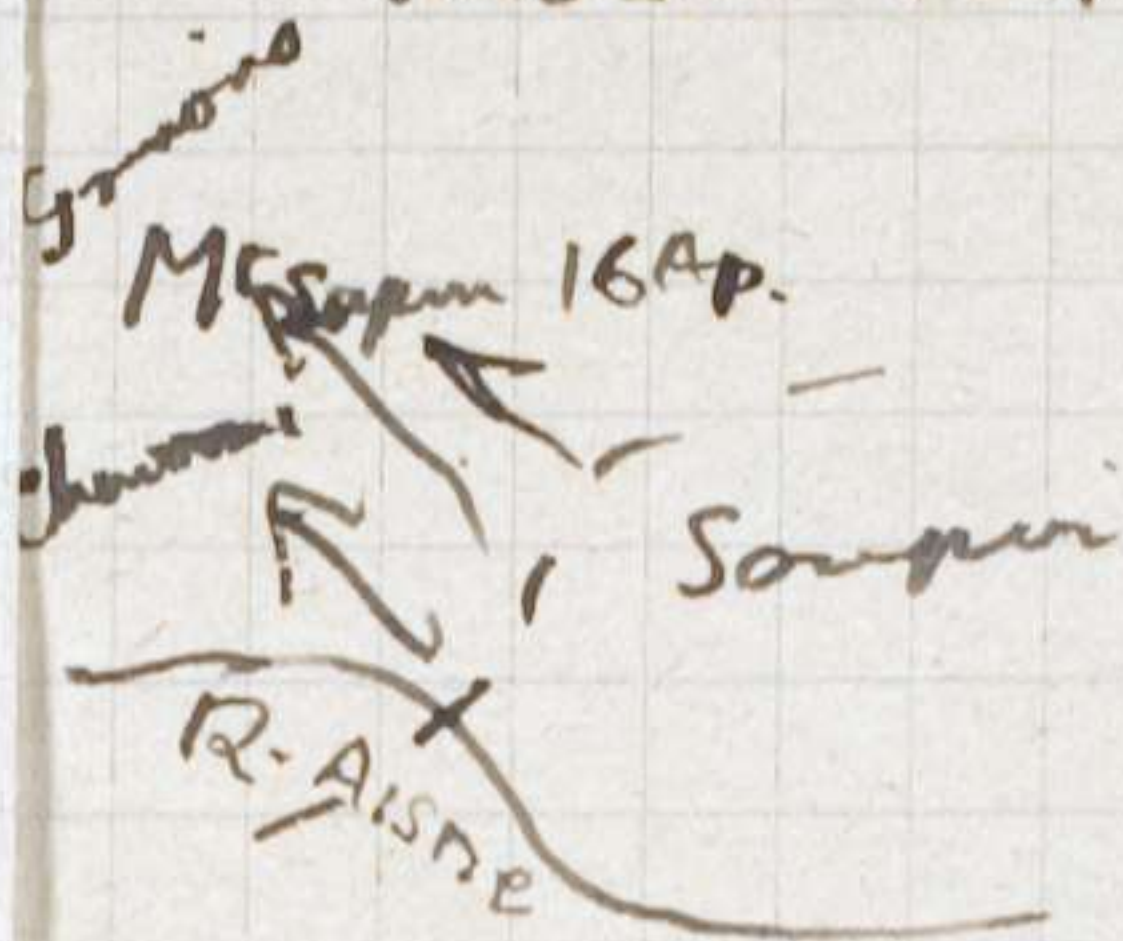


8 times attacked

18th a rest pt on to ^{Croix} ~~the~~
send late & sent patrol

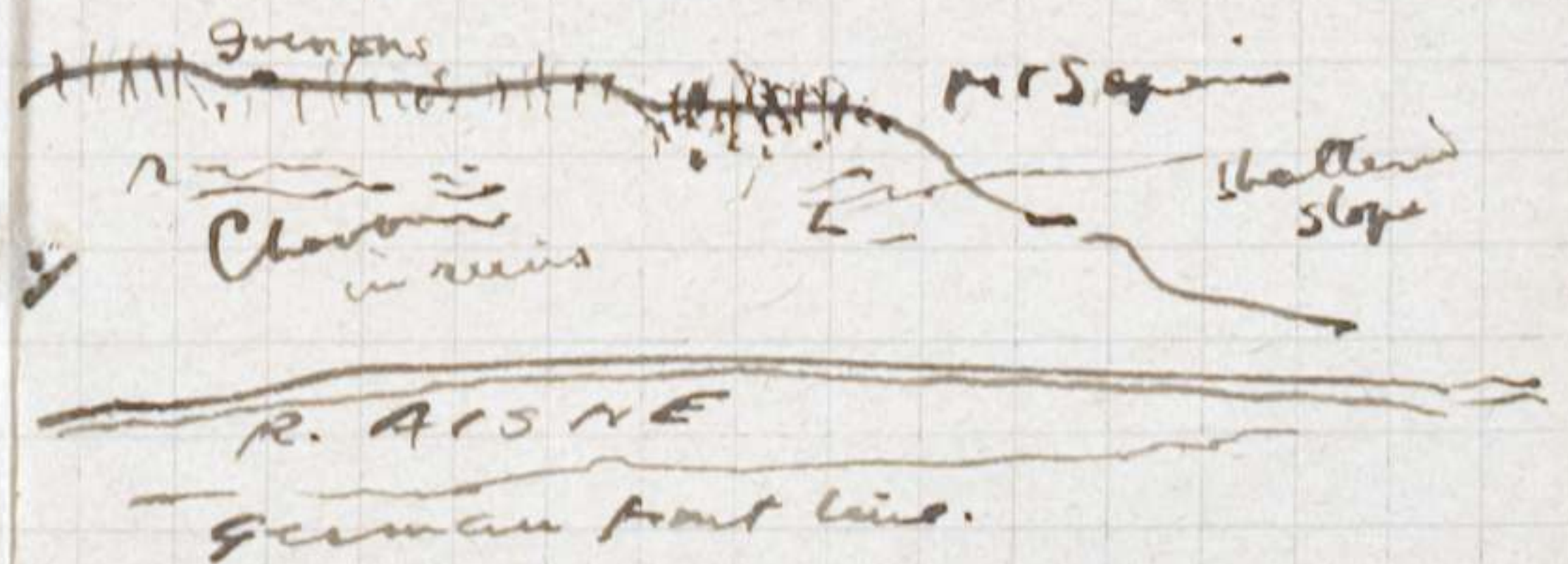
The troops who attacked
Les Grinons met with
very heavy m.g. fire.
The losses on these
slopes were heavy.


La Croix sans Tite. 18
At one time I were
thrown out of Grinons



↑
18 Ap. Succeeded

Germans began to
attack retreat 17 or 18.
Patrols & inf. came on
the pass near Croix
sans Tite as they were
going. They let them ~~climb~~
climb up & then
shot their horses. The



We had not time to
 go up the hill to see the
 positions - the Germans
 had strong dugouts, &
 caves - hard to reduce.
 These we didn't see. But
 one could tell from the
 shattered condition of
 the hillside that the
 French bombardment
 had been heavy. The trunks
 of the trees on Mt Sapin were
 often lying at angles -

 & the foliage
 thin - but I
 did not see
 the heavy scars of
 German retaliation
 on the support area &

8

I doubt if the ^{German} artillery
barrage can have been
intense on the supports.

The villages up
the Aisne valley are
all practically in
Newman's hands & are
knocked about moderately
- but not so much as
they wd be on our front;
while I am sure the
French must have deliberately
tried to save Soissons -
~~that~~ by not making it
too hot for the Germans
there - & they succeeded.
They had every right to.
No one can ^{regret} pumble at
what France has done.

Lyon as, I think, the
Canadian concept.

21
9 But the tension on
the French front is not
what it is on the British
front. It has been a
story of quiet, very quiet,
trench life punctuated
with fierce battles.

We motored back
to Creil & came to
Paris by train. Bruce
came to the Hotel Cillon
& there we sat in the
lounge while Lyons
worked upstairs.
~~A few men~~ about 10.30
who in sd I see coming
in - to the lift - but
John Masefield. I
brought him in to the

Others.

Hyons is Editor of
the Toronto Globe. He is
a Liberal in Canada, &
is anxious to encourage
Corporate radicalism
there - trades unionism
& State enterprise up
to a point; not so far
as we go in Australia
but to the extent of
nationalising the
necessary monopolies.
He is a hard worker
& was within 300 yards
of the Canadian front line
when their troops went
over the top at Vimy.
He tells me the Canadians

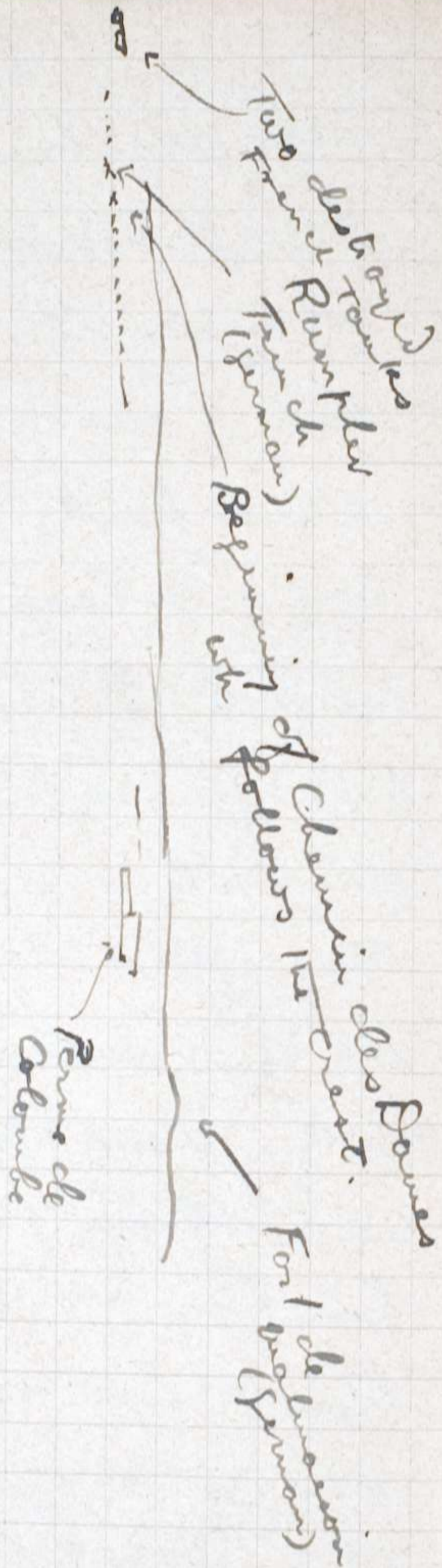
are careless in consolidation
— will not use wire —

very much what is
said of our own troops, with
what truth it is hard to
say; also, they are
apt to go too far; but
their formal saluting
discipline is stricter
than ours in back areas.

He is a Scotsman by
birth, I should say, but a
Canadian for most of
his life. He does not
"blow" like many Canadians
— he is very fair & just
& has a good grasp of military
matters.

8
 Bruce, who came for
 D. Apica, is a Scotsman
 representing Reuters;
 a man with a fine
 brain - very genial
 - & a typical Scot; he sd
 the trip had one defect
 there was too much
 information & too few
 drinks.

Capt. Jaubert did us
 very well anyway -
 a typical old French
 + cavalry officer
 aristocrat - very keen
 on telling us how his
 hounds "attack" the fox
 or the deer & must



views from camp
 to the sea
 there is its m. ps.
 A bunch of the
 French tank take 50 prisoners

Rumpler Trench

Chemin des Dames



— French
— German.

8

Conde found 27

Strike to one fox or no
other or it shows that they
lack breed & the nose to
distinguish.

At the Fort of Conde we
saw the lines where the
recent battle of Ap. 16. 17 or
18 occurred — The Germans
were forced to retire from
Conde onto their
Hindenburg line of
which they still hold a
good deal — Rumpler
2 — while the French
have part of it both to
right & to left of them.

I must not forget
 that in our fighting last
 week (I think it was
 May 15, when (Germans
 attacked) they put
 5000 gas shells into
 Noreuil & Noreuil
 valley & caught abt
 30 men. Some of these
 were A.M.C men who
 were attending to
 wd. They cd not see
 in their masks, so
 took them off & simply
 held the tube in their
 mouth & tried to avoid
 breathing thro' the
 nose — a risky thing
 to do.

~~26th~~

May 26th
 went to Mission
 de la Presse ~~with~~
 where Masepelt was
 going to see a collection
 of pictures of the Soume
 villages before ruin.
 They had not been
 able, however, to
 collect them & are
 only now advertising
 for them.

The Italian offensive
 has made some real
 progress. The Italians
 deceived 1 ~~group~~
 Austrians by attacking
 first further North
 & on May 24 pushed

their real push &
took 9000 prisoners.
Fighting still going on.

There is some
idea that French ~~will~~
~~will~~)
? may strike again farther east?

Back to Querrien
where we are now for
1st time in rest.
Bazley showed our
first review of my
book of letters from France.

27 May. wrote up the story of
the ^{16th} two men who escaped
from the Germans.

28 May. went out to the
5th Bde HQ at
Rubepré. They were

31
having a ~~competition~~ ^{competition}
between their ~~camp~~ ^{regimental}
transport & cookers. The
General was going over,
so I went with him - he
provided the horse. It
was my first ride for
nearly two years & I
found myself as bad a
rider as ever, & very shy
about it.

Went out to lunch with
Murphy of 18th Bn & he
gave me 18 Bn's story in
the fight of May 3. I had
no idea before it was
a ~~Pakistani~~ man.

From there to Col. Pye
19 Bn who gave me dinner.
He - like most of them -
knows very little of what
happened. Sr. Smith told

me that ~~on~~
 an officer in a Sam Browne
 belt was ~~greatly~~ spoken of
 as having given word to
 retire - ~~but~~ of four
 officers wear Sam Brownes
 in action. But neither
 Murphy nor Pye mentioned
 it - so they evidently
 don't attach any importance
 to this yarn.

29 May. Went to
 the 4th 3rd & 2nd Bns.
 In the evening Ross and
 from Paris.

30 May. Took Ross over
 to the ground where the N.3.
 troops fought on the Somme,
 near Hiers. He walked
 me over it - They got
 down in front of the Switch 2,

8

Small trench in front
of Switch line

N.Z. jumping off 2

33



to the other side of Flers
in one day. The Germans
had a little 2 in front
of the Switch line which
they "took in their stride" -
that & the Switch were taken
by the 2nd Bde; the Rifle
Bde ~~then~~ took the second
objective swinging a bit
to their left along the
(?) Bazentin - Flers Road (we
could see a little 2 there day
there I fancy); then the
1st Bde went on thro the
left of Flers, well ahead
of any tanks (they had to

8 take the left half of
Hers ~~up to~~ ^{from} the road to
the edge of village) -

& through to the ~~the~~ country
ind. beyond where they
had to spread out & hold
the flanks for the troops
on either side who had
not come up.

High Wood, Ross say,
was not taken on this day
- or if taken was lost again
- so that there must have
been German almost
in the back of the N. Zealanders
who swung round & faced
more towards Lancourt
Habbayf.

It is v. interesting.
But the Somme field is

a desolate place now
 adays; with grass and
 self sown wheat & mustard
 covering it - but every
~~thing~~ dwelling empty,
 not a man in the dugouts
 or rusty huts: Here &
 there you find some
 old salvage unit in
 some half forgotten camp
 where one of our working
 brigadiers lived through the
 winter. In the rabbit
 warren of dugouts & tunnels
 S. of Hers where the
 winter tramway had used
 to be, & where the long
 tunnel of the 4th Pioneer
 runs down to Bull's
 Road, there is some

small section of
English salvagers. The
tunnel will I suppose

fall in. We wandered to
still ^{peers with eye, where one figure of a church} ~~remains~~ where the padre's books were
~~to the valley~~
scattered around the ruins of his
house. ^{The} road is punctuated by

the smell of dead horses
of the whole field - from
the Maze to Dicourt
is ~~covered~~ haunted with
a sickly smell of
dead - halfburied
men, I fancy - a huge
cemetery of them.

The Graves Registration
people are ^{gradually} ~~going~~ ^{going} over
it & hundreds of little
white crosses are all
over the valley of
La Boisselle. I don't

fancy they will find
 many of our people.
 Pozieres is ~~the winter~~
~~trenches~~ are to our vast
 Australian
 a cemetery but they
 have been shattered &
 buried too often by shells
 for much to remain &
~~the mud of the winter~~
~~covered most of those~~
 Thousands of men can
 go ~~for~~ and very few
 graves remain - there
 are only a few dozen
 crosses to mark about
 1000 dead New Zealanders.

~~for~~

8
 May 31st.

Came North with
 Ross & Bagley to 3rd
 Aust. Div. H.Q. The
 papers spoke of 23
 German aeroplanes
 having been downed, &
 heavy artillery fire -
 which made us think a
 bombardment might have
 begun. But we found
 the front fairly quiet
 - at least, we could hear
 little from Steenwerck.
 The first sign was -
 the daughter of family
 at Heady, who knew

Ross, told him that
Major had notified
them that they must all
have strips of paper
pasted across their
windows by tomorrow.

Also, Bailleul
has been shelled by a
big German gun -
a naval 9.4;

We have some monster

- 1- 15 inch on a train, &
- 2- 15 inch on ordinary
carriages which took
4 tractors to pull them
up hill today.

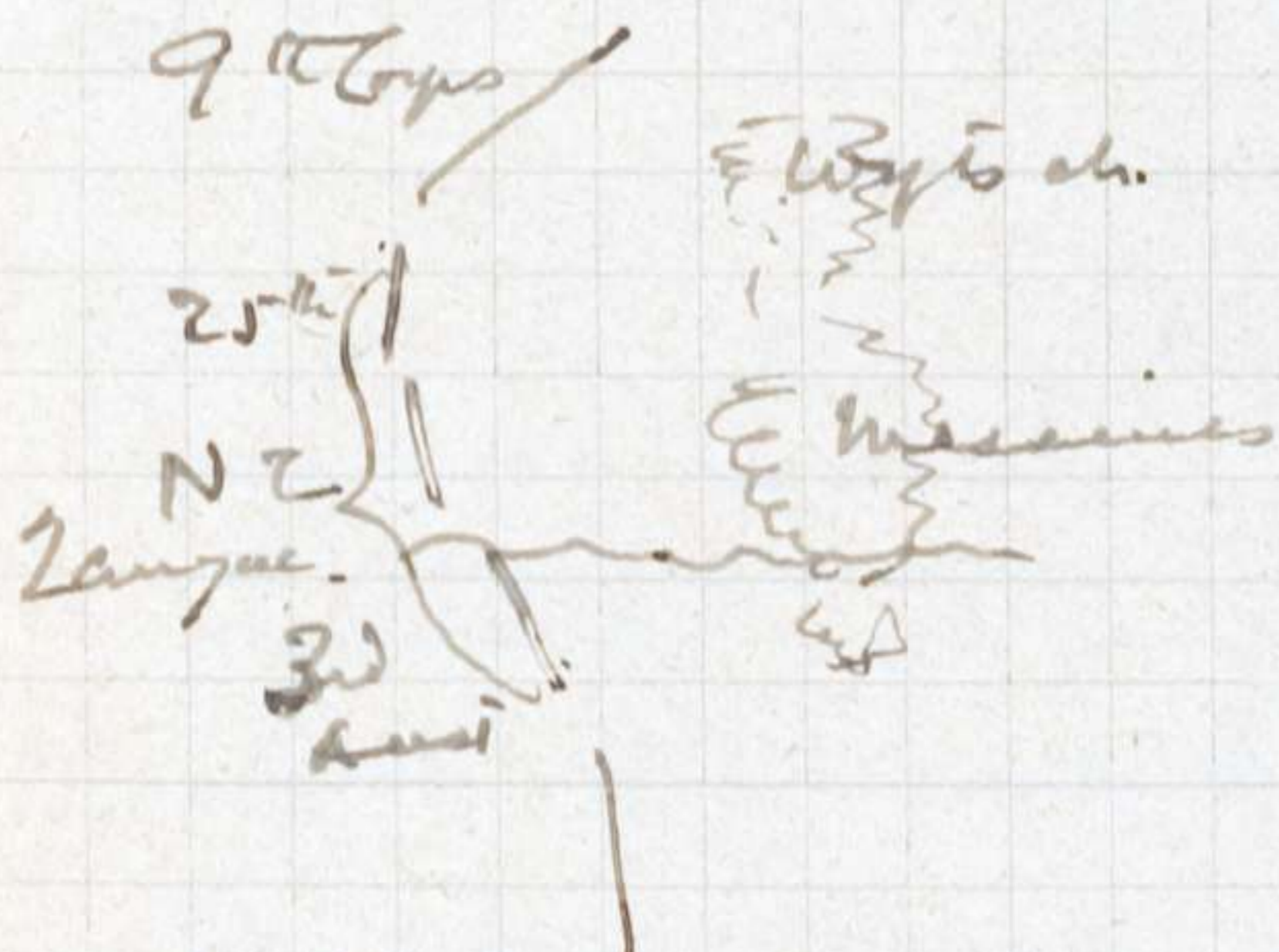
St. is crowded

8

40

with Troops - NZ,
 3rd Australian Divn,
 6th Aust. Divn, Tommies.
 Dined with
 Saw General Monash

He told me that
 our Corps were at present
 10th Corps



Later moves I can't write
 here.
 The Germans ~~about~~ they
 say, have put their guns in. They know
 what is in the air - they are
 expecting us to attack - the
 prisoners say so; T

After dinner we saw
 one of their planes
 put down a balloon -
 very pretty work. They
 fought with another plane
 first, ^{fighting with} & deceived our
 guns wh did not notice
 second plane.

8 We are not at all
 certain th they are
 not retreating.

We are laying down
 a big sleeper road near
 Wreulverghem - for lorries,
 & any sort of traffic.
 But Monash tells me
 th 1 rly are behind
 hand - so much so th
 it wd they wd delayed
 this show up to 1 present.
 And they are still not
 ready, he says. X

June 2. wrote all
 day - except for a
 long yarn w little

Schuler after lunch.
 He is going to marry a
 little Russian countess
 in Egypt after I was.
 Well then Peter adds
 constancy to his other
 good points.

cos of 11th Bde.

41 Board Q.

42 Woolcock Q.

63 Butler S.A.

44 Mansbridge W.A.

June 2. went round the 3 Brigade
 commanders in morning; ~~in~~
~~after~~ lunch with McNicoll;
 & went on to the line via Hyde
 Park corner & "the only
 way". It is tremendously
 altered since it was Butler & I
 were round here last July
 when the whizzbangs chanced

May. S.S. Butler

to us. They were making Hyde Park corner quite fairly nasty 44 with 4-2. and we saw them burning a Farm near the road - pouring 8 in after 8 in into it. We happened to hit off a strap of our Cops guns at 3 p.m. - there is a tremendous concentration - these hedges give such a chance. The German had to making things fairly lively - & killed the burial officer on his bicycle.

~~They~~ We called in at the Catacombs - where Col. ~~Henderson~~ was - rather shallow dugouts (considering they are in a hill) - dug by our tunnellers lately. Then on to 38 Bn HQs at the advanced Estaminet. We went by the "only way" which hardly recognises itself as a Z. When Butler & Casey. I was here it was scarcely safe to move in by day time - we were told we could take our chance. Now it is a good deep sandbagged Z. Down near the end it began to be very knocked about - great breaches in it as you get them in these sandbagged lines; & by the

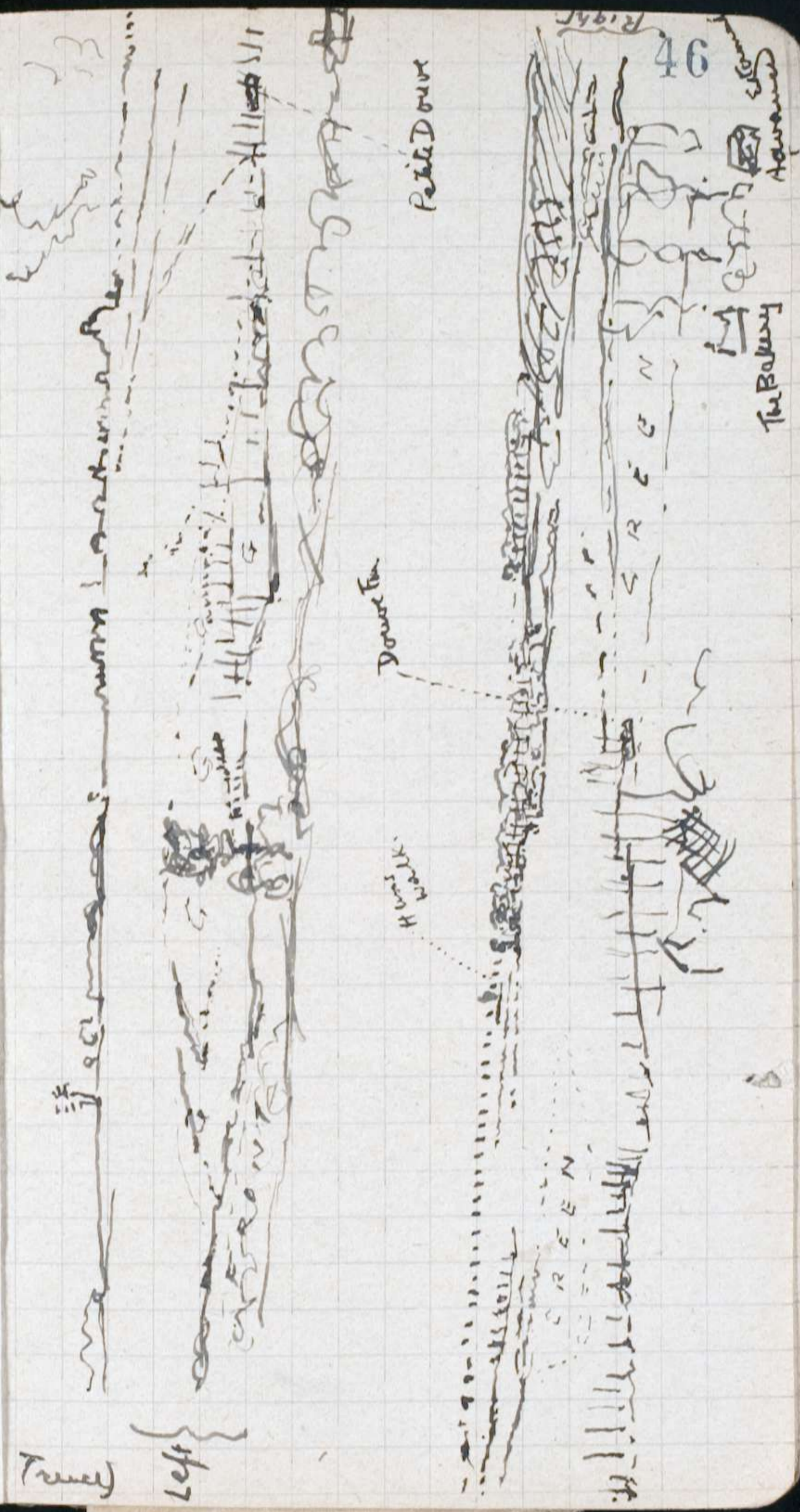
time we got to the front line we saw that it had clearly been heavily strafed very lately. There was scarcely a man's track over the newly sprinkled dust. We went along & found one Lewis Gunner of 41st Am. machine gunner reading a paper novel in a length of covered up - about the only detail that we saw - he tells us we were probably find 1 of officers but right. We went I suppose 150 yds of ragged shattered & found no one; then we went the other way frequently having to climb over shattered parapet within view of German - until we came to a bit of a stream between Seafort Farm & Downington Hall - with a broken down bridge wh I did not attempt to cross. ~~On~~ ^{new} way back we found a second man w our m. gunner - so that made 2 men in abt 300 yds. He will be here till 1 bomb finishes. We went up to the top of Hill 63 (Heath Trench)

June 2: at 3 Am. a heavy bomb before.

at 6.16 by my watch a huge explosion in Messines.

at 6.45 intense bomb of the 'Beak', No. 1. Downe.

(Views at 6.16 from Heath Trench) 2/6/17



Downe Farm
The Bakery

47 [Of course the Germans know all abt our offensive. The latest is that several Germans have lately escaped from our miserably carelessly guarded gangs in the back area. Two of these are known to have crossed our front trench. They were in German grey uniforms. They lay up by day + made their way by night. Altho' the back area is thick w troops the front is so thick held that there is practically no ~~obstacles~~ ^{obstacles} there at the moment.]

Germans
getting
away
one
shot
in

N.M.L.

have so thin

have now (so prisoners say) defined 1 limits of it. They have lately shortened up their army boundaries, the 6th Army taking up to the mouth of the Douve River.]

One of these two was shot in Nomansland but other got across + back to 1 German.

The Germans have long expected this attack &

6
on our way back. It 48 was a wonderful view. The German was knowing nothing, so we cd observe at our ease. We kept quiet + low (Bozley & I) & could have stayed all night. There were 3 English officers sitting up on the bank behind - silly fools; showing how brave they were, as Jackson sd when I told him, & giving 1 trench away.

The Messines Ridge was opposite us - very diff from when I last saw it. Messines town battered & the trenches turned to areas of bare dust with yellow squares & triangles here & there (marked G. on my sketch) where there was nothing to bombard - and a green Nomansland. Our bombt had begun + heavy shells were going into Messines; at 6.15 there was a huge explosion there - just beyond Messines - I wondered if 1 German had cleared & blown 1 place up.

Red. 33rd.
 D. Blue 36th
 L. Blue 34th
 Reserve 36th.

10 Bde.

Green 39.
 D Brown 40
 L Brown 38
 uncoloured 37.

Reserve Bde.
 11 Bde.

Supporting right
 42.

Supply left.
 43

Unallocated 44.

Resting after defensive holding 41.

June 3. Doubt. by Corp arty

| | | |
|-------------|-------|--|
| Heavies 6in | 5840. | } 2 groups of of 1500 arty at disposal of 3 div. |
| 8- | 1500 | |
| 9.2. | 1860 | |

Our 3rd Divl arty
 40th field att 7000.

This doesn't incl. Reserve Corps siege
 Groups, Army Groups, or ordinary div. arty.

no army c. battery groups. 50
 Our batteries are ~~unbelievably~~
 thick. Most of the ~~artillery~~ ^{Australian}
 Heavies has 6 Batteries
 under him.

June 3rd (Sunday) went
 up with Paine to see
 the Army "Shoot" at 3.15 pm
 It was a practice shoot
 with 75 percent of all the
 guns, and I believe they
 following the actual programme
 for 15 minutes; & I believe
 they hoped to draw Germans
 into replying & showing where
 their batteries were, &
 the barrage lines. At 3.15
^{the German}
~~our~~ line was suddenly
 marked from beyond our
 right, away to round the
 bend of the ridge by Wyszchate
 with a line of ^{brilliant}
 white.
 Smoke shells. The

New Zealanders hit
smoke candles as well
of Sulphurous green.
Up the centre of the slope
of the Messines Ridge our
smoke shells burst
- and this kept up for
3 minutes or so - the
heavies bursting further
back until a thick
creamy milky mist
trailed through the
ruined fingers of the
trees & the wreck of
Messines obliterating
most of the scene. Our
heavies pounded enormous
clouds out of the ~~ground~~ ^{chocolate earth}
at the same time - & with
the white Shrapnel barrage
in front, slowly worked
up the hill -

But 1 German was

not to be drawn. 952

do not think he disclosed
a single extra gun. He
put his old 5.9 & 4.2
barrage down on the only
way, & the other Comm-
y, & on the front line,
especially where the comm-
y make a tee-head into
it. Only one German, so
far as I noticed, in the
Dove Farm, put up two
white flares probably in
a scare & brought down
I think a little high
shrapnel just behind
our front line.

In a quarter of an
hour our bombt suddenly
eased, tho' the destruction

fire on certain points went on — Grey Farm for example. The shells were all just behind the low wall stump of Grey Farm.

I suppose the bombt may be taken to have begun; but I don't think / programme is yet fixed. Everything is very liable to change it seems to me. For example, the hour for the last objective has been changed from zero + so much & is now to be called "The New Zero".

"The stunt", as everyone calls it — the only name here — was to have been carried out

by 3 Divs in each
 Corps - each retaining
 1 Div in Reserve; ~~But~~
 by 2 Bdes in each Divn,
 each retaining 1 Bde in
 reserve; by 3 Bns in
 each Bde, each retaining
 1 Bn in reserve. But
 the 9th Corps which has
 to take Wytochaete was
 uncertain of carrying
 out its job with only 3
 Divs & obtained leave to
 use its 4th Divn; & so the
 N. Zealanders did the
 same - or rather did
 Anzac. Our 4th Divn
 is now to move up
 & the 13th & 12th Bdes
 will take the green line
 (furthest) opposite the

N. Zealanders.

The German prisoners (who were taken last night from the front line by the 25th Divn) say that they are expecting an attack any day now between Ypres & Armentières & that ^{the Germans} they expect to take their front line from their reserve line.

~~May~~ June 4th (Monday) Last night the German gun with a bell & voice was splashing its shell at intervals all round the country. It was one night short of full moon so our aeroplanes were out flying in all directions. Every quarter of an hour or so

2. relate

I cd hear one droning
along down the line of
the Armenteries Rd, wh
no doubt is their main
guide in night flying.

The Germans ~~did a~~
~~lot of~~ may have thought
that last night was our
approach night - in any
case they strafed the approaches
to the line heavily with
gas & other shell.

This morning I went
up with Bazley to reconnoitre
the Subsidiary line, near
Gas 24. The smell of gas
shell hung very heavily
on the flat S.W of Hill 63
- & the signs of strafe were
thick ~~upon~~ ^{beside} the road.
We went up thro' Gas
24 over the hill & into
the Subsidiary line. This
has hardly been touched so
far by 1 German gun altho'
he has now concentrated a

lot of arty of his 6th
Army near Queanbeyan
& this 2, may get it too.
But Jas 2, is in process
of demolition. ~~the~~ After we
got thro it he put down
such a shelling of it with
a battery of 5.9s that we
could not get back the
way & had to come
over 1 hill near the Thatched
Cottage.

~~the~~ I went back
to Ross to tell him of the
result of reconaissance,
^{a bomb starting,}
& we walked up the Hill
behind Westhof Farm
to see it. Our guns were
putting ~~up~~ ^{smoke} shells, as they
had done 1 day before,
into a section of German
front line near Wytchaete
& beyond it round 1 curve
to 1 South. The German

refused to have his leg
 pulled yesterday, & we
 were just saying that we
 ought to pull it properly
 by really sending men
 over to-day, when Ross
 sd: "By jove - there are
 men - on / skyline." And
 there they were, by
 Wytshacter - a crowd of
 30 or 40



We watched them wander
 about, divide, take up
 their interval, one party
 come back, & presently
 the other also, & make it

way across Noumea Island
- prob. a quarter of
an hour & only 4 or 5
German Shrapnel bursts
on them -

On getting back
heard (1) that our arty
had had a very
rough time last night
- one battery of 6 guns
being buried, Genl. Monash
says, by one ^{9 in} shell exploding
them [I can hardly
credit this.] I think it must
be a mistake. He is
sending ^{big} guns tonight into
Armentieres to neutralise
it.

(2) That the 4 Bns
of the 11th Bde had
carried out a raid at the

Same time - instructions were
 only given at 12 & the
 rain started at 2. The
 lorries promised by 2nd
 Augac Corps to bring the
 men down were $\frac{1}{2}$ hour
 late; the tanks had to go
 over without the barrage, &
 come back long after it
 had finished; the 4th
 Bn got some German
 prisoners from the shellholes
 which now are all the
 extent of the German front line.
 There are 6th Bav. Dival(?) &
 show that 1 German has squeezed
 up a bit & is thickening
 his front. [Why is our
 offensive hanging fire & letting
 them do this - It all means
 depth - they are holding

8.
 their line for miles back.
 In the meantime our
 various Army, Corps, &
 Divl. Staffs are issuing
 perfect floods of orders -
 Some divs. have issued as
 many as 30!]

Our raiders were
 caught by shrapnel on
 their return in Noumanoh
 & some (some say the wd.)
 had to get down into shell
 holes. They will be got in
 tonight. Apparently shrapnel
 & not m.g. caused the
 4 casualties.

the Australian, the Pa
/ towards the position
ette, about 1000 ft
Belle, Betty, long
Cefly en Valais, 19

9/19

Captain Bean

Press Correspondent, Australian Corps H.Q.

B.E.F.

When we left Compiègne on Friday morning, I told you that on the same day after dinner we should again look at the names of the localities we went through.

However, we forgot all about it so I think it may be useful to you to have the list and I send it here with -

Thursday, May 24th - ^{Captain Joubert} Chouilly-au-Bac, Bailly (destroyed village French & German trenches, no man's land about 45 yds) Forêt d'Ourcamp, Noyon (a cathedral), Luzoy (Roche pictures at the Mairie), Royon, Guiscard, Puquoy, Flavigny le Martel, Tury, Bois l'Abbaye (observatory of Prince Kitzl Friedrich, view of St. Quentin Cathedral and ~~view~~ ^{view} ~~view~~ Cathedral), Faillois, Chauny (destroyed town, Palais de Justice, Hotel de Ville, Theatre, St Gobain's factories) Folembray, ^{Poucy} Poucy-le-Château (view over the Valley of the Ailette), back to Compiègne by Quincy, Blancourt, Cots, Carlepout, Tracy-le-Val (German trenches, German concrete dug-outs with sketches of England, Russia, France & the German warrior) Forêt de laigue -

Friday, May 25th -

Compiègne, Forest of Compiègne, la Vache Noire (in front of Vit sur Aisne) Soissons (cathedral), Bellem, Soissons (distillery & glass factory), Nuisy-sur-Aisne, Coudi sur Aisne (visit to the Forts of Coudi (view over the Chemin des Baines

80
19

Fort de la Malmaison, le Pauthon, Vailly,
Chavonneux (marked the position of les Fricous
& la Bobette, above Soupir). Back to
Soissons, Belleu, Berry, Louppont, Vethiers
Potterich, Cisy en Valois, Poulis -