

## Section 184

# Holding the Line

### Second Battalion November 1914 to March 1915

#### Holding the Line

*The impetus of the first battle of Ypres had failed and the troops settled down to holding the line for the winter. The 2nd Battalion arrived fresh from India and had to adapt rapidly to the new conditions. (continued from section 182)*

#### Arrival in France

9th to 13th November 1914

The 2nd Battalion marched straight from their boat at Le Havre to no 6 Rest Camp with 30 officers and 978 other ranks. They spent a few days completing mobilisation and then set out by train for an 'unknown' destination. The train left them at Strazeele near Ypres where they joined the rest of 8th Division in billets at Merville. On the 13th orders were received for 8th Division to relieve Lahore Division in the trenches.

Sgt Hanks [8514 Edward Luckell Hanks] describes his first few months in France:-

We travelled all night and all the next day and landed at a place named Merville which was the railhead of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps. We billeted at Merville that night in a big barn by the station, and then moved up to a place named Ver-de-Quin about 13 miles from the firing line, we stopped here a few days and then marched up to the trenches and went into action on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> November 1914.

We relieved the East Surrey Regiment that night and occupied the trenches in front of a place named Aubers, the position we held for nearly 5 months being relieved every 3 days by the Rifle Brigade. During our stay at this particular place I had some very narrow escapes with my life. The first was nearly getting my head blown off by a shell whilst we were carrying water to the trenches, and on many other occasions too numerous to mention, most of them were when we were relieving. We used to go back to a place named Laventie about 2 mile and a half behind the firing line and sometimes only just behind the line in old farm houses and barns, etc. [TX00998A]

#### First time in the Trenches

14th to 18th November 1914

On the 14th they marched to front line trenches at Fauquissart where they relieved the 1st East Surreys. The 25th Brigade were responsible for a front of about two miles with the 2nd Royal Berks and the 2nd Rifle

Brigade responsible for a stretch from 400 yards east of Chapigny to Fauquissart. For the next month the battalions alternated between trench duties and reserve. On the 16th 25th Bde War Diary reported:-

The trenches are narrow and steep. In some places the German trenches are only 50 yards from ours. Units in the trenches reported that a large percentage of their rifles had become clogged with mud. Paraffin had been found useful as a remedy. It was also proposed to try wrapping an old sock or something round the bolt when not in use. [TX01010A]

In this first spell they suffered their first fatal casualty on the 16th - 9813 Pte Thomas Arthur Bryant of Windsor. He was actually the 8th man of the 2nd Battalion to die in the war but the others died of disease or accident before reaching the front.

The CO issued the following orders:-

50 per cent of the Company Officers NCOs and men must be awake and NCOs and men must have their rifles ready.

The circumstances of Companies sniper but as a rule 1 sentry per section i.e. 12 per Company in addition to the standing picquet or double sentries posted outside the parapet should be sufficient.

The remainder 50 N.C. awake may be employed in digging or other work provided they can quickly man the fire trench, if it is impossible to employ them in this manner they can be allowed to walk up and down in the trench close to their post.

N.B. Nothing can be more irksome than to keep men standing still for several hours. The one sentry per section must be properly posted and relieved at best every hour by the Sect Comdr and it must be distinctly understood that they are sentries.

The energy of Officers and NCO's of the 50 P.C. awake must be continuously exercised in keeping 1stly the sentries awake and 2ndly the remainder of the P.C. awake.

It is must be remembered that a patrol is of much more use to give the alarm than drowsy sentries.

Patrols should be given to understand that if the enemy open fire on them, they will be much less likely to be hit if they lie down and keep quite still until the enemy have emptied their magazines.

Should they find the enemy to be advancing strength they should at once double back and give the alarm. [TX00694]

3 other men were killed:-

9398 Arthur Hawkins (17th)  
 9768 William James Welch (17th)  
 6309 Arthur Samuels (18th)

## Fort D'Esquin

19th to 21st November 1914

They were relieved by the 2nd Rifle Bde at 19:00 on the 18th and retired to billets at Fort D'Esquin

On the 21st the Brigade Diary reported:-

The men were suffering very much from the cold in the trenches, and several cases of frostbite had been reported. A number of pails were requisitioned to form braziers for use in trenches. [TX01010B]

## Fauquissart

21st to 24th November 1914

They swapped again with the 2nd Rifle Brigade at 18:00 on the 21st, returning to the trenches.

The front line trenches were at points only 40 yards from the Germans. They were in low lying ground and had to be kept pumped out but it was never possible to keep them entirely free of water. Although the weather was mild for November it was a thoroughly miserable time for the men who had just returned from the warmth of India. They suffered terribly from trench feet and were under constant fire. Casualties occurred at regular intervals.

In this second spell two men were killed on the 24th:-

9764 Edward Charles Knight  
 9330 Thomas Alfred Wheeler

## Levantie

24th to 27th November 1914

Again they swapped with the 2nd Rifle Brigade but this time they retired to billets in Levantie.

The problems with the cold for the men in the trenches was getting worse. On the 25th Brigade Diary noted:-

Sandbags were issued, two per man, to be worn, stuffed with straw, round mens boots, to prevent frost bite. [TX01010C]

## Fauquissart

27th to 30th November 1914

On the 27th they swapped again with the 2/Rifle Brigade and returned to the trenches, However their war diary refers to this period as being 'in billets'

They lost one man killed on the 27th [9681 Isaac Lamb of Binfield] 12 men were wounded, 27 went to hospital and 4 returned from hospital in this spell. Lamb was killed by a German Rifle grenade which landed on their trench and wounded five others.

The weather improved by the 30th yet the Brigade Diary reported:-

Men are suffering very much from their feet. The frost has gone and the weather is really mild, but, if anything, more men have been admitted to hospital than during the cold weather. It is understood that there are 800 men, from the Division, in hospital, from so called frost bite of the feet. [TX01010D]

## Fort D'Esquine

1st to 2nd December 1914

They went this time to Fort D'Esquine as the village of Laventie had been heavily shelled and Division decided to move the whole Brigade out. Their stay in billets was very short but 9 further men were sent to hospital with 3 returning. Captains Radford and Wyld were transferred to 1st Battalion.

HM King George V paid a brief visit to the Division at Estaires on the 1st

The problems with the feet were getting worse. The Divisional Diary recorded:-

3-12-1914 Estaires

A number of men are still being admitted to hospital, daily, suffering from sore feet contracted in the trenches, and up to the present there have been nearly 1600 admissions from this cause. [TX01015A]

## Fauquissart

3rd to 6th December 1914

Their next spell in the trenches saw them lose one man killed [8405 William Charles Mills] and reports of one dying of disease [9609 Charles Carter of Abingdon] on 30th and another of wounds [8361 Ernest Angell of Calne] on the 2nd. 5 further were wounded, 19 went to hospital and 8 returned.

## Estaires

6th to 9th December 1914

They had 3 days in billets at Estaires. One man was reported as having died of wounds [unidentified] 8 men went to hospital but the first reinforcement of one officer and 78 other ranks joined on the 8th

## Fauquissart

9th to 12th December 1914

Another swap with the 2nd Rifles at 17:30 on the 9th and again at 17:30 on the 12th.

This spell in the trenches saw another 16 go to hospital with 5 returning. One man [9759 Thomas Stroud of Marlow] was killed on the 10th and two on the 11th [9568 John Morris and 8447 Alexander Woods] One man was wounded.

## Fort D'Esquine

12th to 14th December 1914

They relieved the 2nd Rifle Brigade as usual at 17:30 on the 12th and retired to billets at Fort D'Esquine. Here the 2nd reinforcement joined, 1 officer and 22 ORs, However 15 men were sent to hospital including 2 from the new reinforcement 5 returned from hospital and 3 were sent to prison.

## Rue Bacqueror

14th to 20th December 1914

After their brief rest the Brigade moved to trenches at Rue Baqueront and the 2nd relieved the 2nd Devons on the 14th December. This was at least a slight change of scenery but this was to be a comparatively long spell as they were not relieved until the 20th when the 2nd Scottish Rifles took over.

In their new positions the 25th Brigade had the 2nd Royal Berkshires and the 2nd Rifle Brigade on the left and the 1st Royal Irish Rifles and 2nd Lincolns on the right. The 13th London Regiment was in Corps reserve at Estaires, a duty previously held by the 2nd Royal Berks.

The 3rd reinforcement arrived on the 17th, an officer and 4 ORs. but during this period 6 men were wounded, 22 went to hospital 7 returning.

On the 18th the Devons supported by the West Yorks of 23rd Brigade attacked and captured a German trench but lost it next morning. The Royal Berks assisted in retrieving the wounded.

## Levantie

20th to 23rd December 1914

On the 21st December the Battalion returned to their former billets at Levantie.

8 men went to hospital

## Fauquissart

23rd to 26th December 1914

On the 23rd they once more relieved the 2nd Rifle Brigade in the trenches at Fauquissart.

The 4th reinforcement arrived with two officers and 40 men.

At 1900 on the 24th the Germans stopped firing and the Germans and British began exchanging messages by shouting across no-mans-land. On Christmas Day men from both sides mounted the parapet and walked towards each other some engaging in conversation. At 11:00 an order came down from on high forbidding this fraternisation and prohibiting men from going beyond the parapet.

Both the Germans and the British started repairing their barbed wire and each side protested to the other so this work ceased, however work continued to improve the trenches.

Both sides continued the truce as far as rifle fire was concerned on Boxing Day but the British Artillery opened fire later on.

On the 26th a German deserter informed his captors that the enemy were planning an attack that night so they were on high alert with one company sent to reinforce the Kensington Rifles in their trenches.

During this period one man was killed [9691 Charles Herbert Nunn of Hoxton] on the 23rd and 8705 Charles Norman died at Estaires on the 21st. Two other men died 9698 Ernest Harry Keep of Shinfield in hospital at Wimereaux on the 16th and 5486 Benjamin Matthews of Lambourn in hospital at Cambridge on the 25th. 20 went to hospital, 9 returned and one officer and 2 men were wounded.

Brigades view is recorded in their War Diary:-

24-12-1914

Germans came out of their trenches and said they would not fire on Christmas Day, providing we did not fire. They illuminated their trench all along and lit big fires in the rear of them. Strict orders were issued forbidding men to hold any communication with the Germans.

25-12-1914

There was no firing of any kind on the front occupied by the Brigade. Our men and the Germans walked around their respective trenches within 100 yards of each other in some places. The absence of firing enabled us to look round our position in a way quite impossible at ordinary times.

26-12-1914

The enemy were kept in their trenches by our fire which, however, they made no attempt to answer.

At 9.50.p.m. a deserter came into the Kensington Battalion and reported that an attack along our whole front was premeditated for 12.15.a.m. 12 guns was to be the signal for the German attack. His Regiment had come from Auber rom Berlin.

11.15.p.m. The artillery of the whole Division opened on the enemy's trenches and in the rear of them. No attack took place. [TX01010E]

8th Division were evidently aware of what was going on but made sure their diary offered a plausible explanation for higher command:-

25-12-1914 Estaires - Negotiations took place with Germans at some points along our front regarding burial of dead between the lines. It was mutually agreed to bury the dead and not to fire during the day except, in cases of necessity. During these negotiations some information was obtained as to the situation and strength of the enemy's trenches and the Regiments to which the men belonged.

26-12-1914 A German soldier approached E Lines

about 8.45.a.m. with a message from his Officer and was interviewed by an Officer of the Royal Berkshire Regiment. A Report of this interview was forwarded to 4th Corps.

In view of an arrangement made between 7 Division and Germans, to bury dead, no firing took place along our front.

A German deserter came in the E Lines this evening and stated that orders had been issued for an attack to me made against our lines at 12.15.a.m. (German Time) tonight. He also reported that two regiments had arrived at Aubers, from Berlin, and that 12 guns would be the signal for attack. In consequence of this information all units were warned to be prepared and the Divisional Reserves were moved forward. Our guns opened fire at 11.30. pm. on approached leading from the direction of Aubers.

No attack was made and all remained quiet during the night. [TX01015B]

Pte G Willis wrote home to his mother in Maidenhead:-

We have had a fairly good Christmas as we had peace for a couple of days and the Germans sang to us all Christmas night. [BC 15/1/15]

Sgt W Higgins wrote home to his mother at Knowle Hill:-

We were in the trenches for Christmas but came out on Boxing Day. They were the best three days we have spent. Not a shot was fired from 6pm until the time we came away.

Just fancy - the enemy came out of their trenches shouting Christmas greetings on Christmas morning and in five minutes dozens were meeting just half way shaking hands in the best of style, exchanging cigarettes, tins of bully and even Christmas pudding. Did anyone hear of such a proceeding. They said *'Hang it all Christmas is Christmas and we want out holiday'* so you see how 'Bavn D'n' made us human

They looked well and the four I shook hands with were men in their prime. I had one satisfaction and that was they were evidently as cold and muddy as I was.

On Boxing morning one came across and I had to go out and stop him as he was coming too near. He didn't want anything but simply shook hands. He could say 'yes' 'no' and made me understand that he would rather have the water than the cold. I think someone must have bet him he wouldn't go across or else he wanted to chuck it.

I am A1 except my feet and I can't tell whether it is frostbite or rheumatism. [BC 8/1/15]

It would seem from these comments that fraternisation was not stopped as quickly as officialdom liked to believe.

## Ending the Year

**27th December 1914 to 1st January 1915**

They did two further exchanges with the 2nd Rifle Brigade to see out the year. They went to billets at Fort D'Esquin on the 27th and back to the trenches at Fauquissart on the 29th.

During this period 27 went to hospital, 5 returned, one officer and two ORs were wounded and one man killed [7924 Cpl Arthur Doe of Finchampstead]

The CO received some intelligence on New Years Eve:-

Trench HQrs

"E" Lines

Decbr 31st 1914.

1. Reliable information has been received that the enemy occupying a second line of trenches 150X in rear of this 1st Line.

2. Orders have been received to attack and carry both lines in part of the repl companies of the Battalion. The O.C. therefore issues following orders for attack tomorrow.

3. The artillery and trench mortars will commence bombardment of enemy's trenches and barbed wire at 12 noon tomorrow. They will also search behind 1st line of trenches to destroy barbed wire protecting 2nd line of trenches. They have been ordered to pay particular attention to Trevoli.

The bombardment will be continued up to 3.45pm when infantry attack takes place and up to infantry assault.

The Brigade will move into reserve at our aid post at 12 noon tomorrow. Two companies of the -shire Regt will relieve no 3 and 4 companies at 6am tomorrow, on relief these companies will at once move into support trenches of rear 1 and 2 companies.

At 3.45pm no 1 and 2 companies will advance in one line the left of no 1 will ? and will move in a point which will be pointed out to O.C. no 1 Coy. No 3 and 4 Companies will be divided into two lines, the 1st line will advance in rear of no 1 and 2 Companies and 200 yds in rear.

The second line of 3 and 4 Companies will hold our present line of trenches until further orders.

Two machine guns from the -shire Regt have been attached to the Battalion, these machine guns and those of the Battalion under Lieut - will advance when the 1st line of the enemy's trenches have been captured, the ½ Coy R.E. will advance with them.

O.C. Coys will draw this evening at 5pm from the adjutant at HQ bvare, 48 grenades. [TX00699]

## A New Draft Arrives 16th December 1914 to 11th January 1915

Private Garlick was part of a draft of 50 men who left Victoria Barracks in Portsmouth on 16th December. He had become the servant of Lt J R Ransom who was with the draft. They left the Barracks at 0815 accompanied by a Regimental Band and marched to Portsmouth Town Station. A train took them to Southampton Town Station where they changed to one running right into the docks. They boarded the City of Lucknow at 1730 and sailed at 1830, passing a hospital ship bringing in the wounded.

The men had to occupy the horse's stalls, twelve men where three horses had been kept. They were escorted

first by British gun boats and then handed over to the French, arriving at Le Havre at 1000 on the 17th. Pte Garlick and Lt Ransom got off with about 200 men, the rest continuing further up the River. Initially they had been detailed to join the 1st Battalion but when they got to a camp they were told it was the 2nd Battalion they were to join. They set off for Rouen at 1630 on the 17th, again travelling in horse accommodation - this time 20 men to a horse box. They arrived at Rouen at about 0200 on the 18th and they had to wait about the station until 1600 when transport arrived to take them to camp.

Most of the men were detailed to do fatigues at Rouen Docks but as an officers servant Garlick was excused. Eventually on the 1st Jan 1915 they boarded a train at Rouen to Merville whence they marched to Estaires to join the 2nd Battalion's Transport Section, the rest of the Battalion being in the line at the time. When the Battalion went into billets at Laventie the new draft joined them and Garlick and Lt Ransom joined D Coy.

## Into the New Year

### January 1915

During the next two months each side set about improving their wire defences and trying to make the best of their trenches although for two weeks around the turn of the year the British fire trenches were untenable due to water. However by this time breastworks above ground had been constructed with shelters and these were a little drier than the trenches. In the latter part of January the snows came to add to the misery.

25th Bde Diary 29/12/1914:-

A conference was held to discuss how best to deal with the present wet state of the trenches. It was decided that the only thing to be done, was to come out of the ground and defend the line behind breastworks [TX01010F]

Garlick's draft joined them in billets at Levantie on the 11th it consisted of 45 men under 2/Lt Ransom, a previous draft of 20 men had arrived on the 3rd. A further 60 men under 2Lt J C Hillyard joined on the 26th.

The weeks that followed were 3 days in the trenches followed by three days in billets. They went into the trenches on the 5th, 10th, 16th, 22nd and 28th. and variously to Laventie and Fort D'Esquin three days later.

This was Garlick's first time under fire. He later wrote:

As I was on my way to the trenches the German bullets kept dropping in the mud by the roadside I did not like it but I had to stick it. As we drew nearer the trenches we had to pass a building which the Germans had been shelling. After we got past this building we went across a field which led to the trenches. There was a so called a track but as it was so dark and my first time across there I kept slipping into the mud which was above my knees in places. In time we reached our destination and I was very glad of it too, but I being an

Officers Servant I did not go straight into the trenches. Instead I went into a old ruined house close by the Regts Head Quarters. This house was by the side of a road that led to La Basse. The first night when all was quiet there was a German sniper kept sniping into this old ruined house and I was not very comfortable. The German bullet kept hitting the walls and a bullet came right into the house and this was not very nice. At 8 pm the Officers came into this old ruin and there had dinner which afterwards they went to the trenches again

My officer this time was in Reserves with his platoon so all was well, but during these 3 days in the trenches I got into the roof of this old ruin to see if I could see anything of the Germans. I had a good view of the German lines and behind them is the Ridge known as Aubers Ridge. When the 3 days was up we went back into billets at about 6.30 pm. This billet was about 1 mile away from the German trenches. Early next morning we stood to arms a hour before dawn and during this hour we had a rum issue. After the hour was up we then fell out. The men were absolutely covered with mud and I the same. When my officer went into the trenches I had to go up with him and cook his food. One time on my way I fell into an old trench full of mud barbed wire and water and into it I fell.

We will perhaps never know what happened after this as Private Garlick's account ends abruptly here. However he survived the war being wounded and eventually transferred to the Machine Gun Corps.

The Brigade Major sent the following note to the CO on the 7th Jan:-

Officer Commanding

2 R Berks R.

With reference to confidential letter containing suggested instructions to be issued to the party detailed to recapture a trench which may have temporarily fallen into the enemy's hands, forwarded under B.M.C 47 of 23.12.1914, I am directed to point out that although it is important not to act before patrols have ascertained the exact length of trench to be retaken, it is also of great importance that the counter-attack should be delivered before the enemy has had time to prepare the trench he has taken for defence, and bring up machine guns.

The Officer whose duty it is to undertake the counter-attack can alone give each of these conflicting considerations their proper weight.

7/1/15.

J.G. Dill Captain

Bde Major 25th Inf Bde [TX00696]

This was followed up with further advice:-

Suggested instructions to be issued to the party detailed to recapture a trench, or portion of a trench, which may have temporarily fallen into the enemy's hands.

1. The party sent from the Reserve to retake the trench will halt under cover at such distance from it as may appear convenient, and distributed according to local circumstances. Patrols will be pushed up to ascertain the exact position captured guided by any information

previously obtained from our own troops.

Parties with tools, wire cutters and bombing detachments, will be pushed up from the flanks and up communication trenches to approach within bombing distance, while fire will be opened with maxims or special detachments to prevent the enemy entrenching his flanks or blocking communication trenches.

When then enemy has been sufficiently shaken, the assaulting Column, a small reserve being retained to meet eventualities will charge home, reoccupying the trench.

2.Immediately on reoccupation of the trench, patrols will be pushed out towards the retreating enemy. Lateral communications with our own troops re-established, ammunition, tools and wire brought up, and any communications established by the enemy between his trenches and ours blocked and opened to our fire.

J.G. Dill Capt

Bde Maj 25th Inf Bde [TX00697]

During the period two officers and 112 men went to hospital and 60 returned, two officers, Lt Cowley and Major Walsh were wounded as were 51 other ranks. The dead were:-

7924 Arthur Doe of Finchampstead (1st) \*  
 9355 John William Evans of Maidenhead (3rd)  
 6513 Francis Henry Bowler of Wycombe (5th) \*  
 8458 Albert Edward Vockins of Hungerford (6th) \*  
 9290 Alberto Edward Marchetti of Oxford (11th)  
 9651 Thomas Brooker of Notting Hill (12th) \*  
 7385 William Burrow of Maidenhead (12th) \*  
 8552 Ernest James of Cadoxton (12th) \*  
 9129 Charles Prince of Hanwell (12th) \*  
 8829 George Dale of Langley (13th)  
 9227 William Henry Lamer (13th)  
 7341 Francis William Fryer of Deptford (17th) \*  
 5532 Alfred William Limmer (23rd)  
 10190 Henry John Chesterton of Poplar (24th) \*  
 8539 John Mitchell of Witney (24th) \*  
 9820 Frederick Ernest Plumridge (25th) \*  
 9980 Frederick Rogers of Little Marlow (26th)  
 9303 George Bunce of Bagshot (27th)  
 9498 Edward Knight of Lower Whitley (27th)  
 9015 Joseph Harrison of Chilton Foliat (28th)  
 6198 John Thomas Anderson of Eaton Socon (29th) \*  
 7436 William John Goddard of East Hendred (29th) \*  
 10038 Bertie Simpson of Faringdon (29th)

Of these 13 (marked \*) were killed in action. The casualties were increased because the fire trench became untenable owing to the amount of water and a new breastwork had to be constructed, Many men were killed or injured whilst this was being built,

## Fauquissart etc February 1915

February began with the Battalion in billets at Fort D'Esquin. They went into the trenches around 17:30 on the 3rd to relieve the 2nd Rifle Bde. They swapped roles again on the 6th, moving to billets in Laventie. Again they swapped roles on the 9th and again on the 12th when they returned to Fort D'Esquin, Again on the 16th it was back to the trenches and to billets at Laventie on the 19th. Back again on the 21st and to Fort D'Esquin on the 24th. Their final spell for February began on the 27th. This time they were relieved by the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers of 22nd Bde, 7th Division.

Lt Col Feetham had temporarily taken over command of 25th Bde while Brig Lowry-Cole was on leave from the 22nd to 29th Jan The Brigadier was wounded on the 2nd Feb and Col Feetham had to take over again until he came back from hospital on the 5th.

During the night of the 11th/12th a patrol of the 2nd Royal Berks found a packet in a German sap addressed to a man in the German 57th Regiment, 78th Bde. Division did not consider this sufficient evidence to confirm that 57th Regiment had relieved the German 18th Regiment.

During this period Captain MacDonald was recalled to England to join a new formation and a future CO Capt G P S Hunt was wounded. on the 10th Drafts of 40 and 30 men joined on the 15th and 22nd respectively.

Comparatively few men were killed:-

9731 Thomas Osborne of Reading (4th)  
 11316 Ralph Todd of Bracknell (4th)  
 8064 John Joseph Heather of High Wycombe (5th)  
 9065 George Hall (6th)  
 8521 Thomas Owen (17th)  
 9274 Charles Edward Austin (18th)  
 8132 James Edwards (18th)  
 9982 Frederick Albert Englefield of Reading (18th)  
 8894 Charles Alfred Honhold of Acton (22nd)  
 9791 James William Weller of Worcester Park (28th)

13 were killed in action and the rest died of wounds or of disease in hospital.

## Riez Bailleul 2nd to 9th March 1915

At last on the 1st March the 8th Division were relieved by 7th Division and all were able to retire to Laventie and on to billets at Riez Bailleul for a well deserved rest.

Since landing in France the battalion's casualties had by now risen to 6 officers wounded, 46 OR killed or died, and 110 OR wounded.

Very little happened during their time at Riez Bailleul other than the comings and going from hospital, although on the 4th a small draft of 15 men joined.

Sgt Hanks:-

Well, this kept on until the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1915 by then we had lost a lot of men killed and wounded. At 8 o'clock on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1915 I came on duty over the snipers. I had not been on duty more than about 5 minutes before I got wounded at the side of the right temple with a bullet that came through an iron plate loop hole. I had just spoken to the sniper about making such a lot of movement with his rifle. Although the wound was only slight it bled very much, the Officer on duty who was killed at Neuve Chappelle 10 days later gave me some brandy and bound my wound up, and then sent me to the dressing station which I reached after going nearly to my waist in water. Here the Doctor dressed my wound and detained me there. He told me the Regiment was being relieved that day by the Welsh Regiment and we were going back for a few days rest and that I could attend hospital every morning a get my wound dressed which I did.

Well, we were billeted in a big barn until the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 1915 when we were told we were going to make a big attack at daybreak on the 10<sup>th</sup> and that Neuve Chappelle was to be taken at all cost.  
[TX00998B]

## Sources

Petre pp 67-69

Berkshire Chronicle

Reading Mercury

Major Harvey's Diary

Sgt Hanks Account

War Diary 2nd BN

War Diary 25th Bde

War Diary 8th Division

*continued in section 192*