

Volume 12 Section 338

The Final Advance

The 8th Battalion

The 8th Royal Berks had been restored to full strength by the end of June and were ready to join in the final advance to victory. Continued from section 328.

July 1918

In July there were only 3 killed and 5 wounded. On the 12th the battalion went to camp near Picquigny, and remained there till the 31st, when it moved forward by 'bus and march to reserve positions at Lahoussoye on the right of the Amiens-Albert Road.

August 1st to 6th 1918

The first five days of August were spent at Lahoussoye, and on the 6th, the battalion was in Brigade reserve in the sunken road in front of Heilly.

The division was astride of the Corbie to Bray-sur-Somme road when, on the 6th August, the Germans made a sudden attack in the midst of a relief which carried them forward ten hundred yards on the road. In that day's fighting the 53rd Brigade bore no part.

The Battle of Amiens

At the opening of the offensive the 8th Battalion was with III Corps of Fourth Army. Their Division, the 18th, was to help form a defensive flank for the main attack to be mounted south of the Somme. The Division's area of operations was the ridge on the north bank of the Somme south and south-east of Morlancourt. Here the ground was difficult, being indented by a series of short ravines which provided excellent cover for the numerous German machine gun posts.

This operation, has been admitted by German leaders to have been the most fatal for their cause. The main advance was on a ten-mile front by the 4th Army of Sir H. Rawlinson south of the Somme, but the ridge on the north bank was a menace to the left flank of that army if held by the enemy, and the function of the 18th Division was to avert that danger by attacking the ridge along the road from Corbie to Bray-sur-Somme.

7th August 1918

The Division made a more or less successful counter-attack on the 7th, which recovered part of the lost ground, and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.

At dusk of that day the 8th Royal Berkshire moved up into its assembly positions for the advance of the 8th.

A Company was on the right, B in the centre, D on the left, C in reserve.

The 54th Brigade had been so knocked about on the 7th that it had to be left out of the fighting on the 8th, its place being taken by the 36th Brigade of the 12th Division. On the left, north of the Corbie-Bray Road, part of the 36th Brigade was to attack and cover the left flank of the division. The first objective was the road from Morlancourt south to Mallard Wood, the northern tongue of which crossed the main road.

8th August 1918

At 04:20 the British barrage opened along the whole front of the attacking army, and the 8th Royal Berkshire began its advance, in artillery formation, south of the main road. There was a thick mist, like that which had characterized the 21st March, and the British, like the Germans on that date, had to contend with immense difficulty in maintaining direction. Touch between companies was lost, and movements had to be made by compass bearings. Progress was consequently very slow. The 36th Brigade on the left and in front of the 53rd had not succeeded in reaching the first objective when the 10th Essex leap-frogged them and, having the road to guide them, got ahead more rapidly than the Royal Berkshire on their right and the 7th Royal West Kent on their left.

The enemy barrage was largely directed on selected areas, and could therefore be avoided to a great extent. The battalion began to run up against the enemy in his original first line, especially on the right, where one platoon was engaged by two machine guns. This platoon lost direction, but again came into collision with these machine guns. Battalion Head-quarters also met a machine gun. On the left the advance was less hampered, as here the other units of the brigade were in front. On the right the advance continued, but did not find the other troops which should have been in front. The tanks, too, had failed to get up in the mist. The forward movement continued slowly for some distance, encountering snipers and machine guns, especially on the flanks. It is clear that there was much confusion in the mist, and individual platoons found themselves co-operating with other units.

Towards 08:00 a ravine leading to the Somme was passed, and the atmosphere began to clear somewhat.

When the fog lifted at about 08:20 the Royal Berkshires had reached the western edge of Gressaire Wood.

However the Germans spotted them and opened up with a field gun and a host of machine guns at a range of 1000 yards. The battalion now came under the fire of machine guns at close range, and of two field guns firing over open sights at a range of five hundred yards.

At this time the 10th Essex had gone right forward to the final objective, with the 36th Brigade consolidating the first behind them. The Royal West Kent were bent back covering the left rear of the Essex; the 7th Queen's performed the same office for the 36th Brigade. The Royal Berkshire were held up by the machine guns and two field guns above mentioned by the time they reached the western side of Gressaire Wood, considerably in rear of the right of the 10th Essex.

Three attempts to rush these machine-gun positions failed. In one of these Lieut.-Colonel Hudson was wounded in five places, but escaped in a most extraordinary manner. He was severely wounded near Gressaire Wood having found himself only 15 yards from a dozen German machine guns he had tried to rush them but was hit in five places. His orderly got him away but while he was being helped down he found himself behind 30 Germans in a trench. Luckily they were looking the other way and Col Hudson flung himself into the standing corn and painfully worked his way around them. Miraculously he managed to scramble back behind a bank when he was given first aid.

By about 0900 a line had been organised more or less on the first objective and there it was held. In the evening the Battalion was withdrawn to the Clermont Line for re-organisation, with four companies being formed of two platoons each. Major SW Warr assumed command of the Battalion.

The losses of other ranks are not given for each day of August separately in the Battalion Diary, but the History of the 18th Division states that when they had been forty minutes at Gressaire Wood they had lost six officers, twenty-one other ranks killed, and eighty-two wounded. They were then withdrawn to the line of the first objective, to which the 10th Essex also made a perilous retreat with the eighty men who were all that remained of it. The losses of the Royal Berkshire in officers were:

The regimental history gives the following for officer casualties on the 8th August:

Killed Lt E Hartree, 2Lt CW Moss

Died of wounds Lt AM Bray MC

Wounded Lt Col NB Hudson MC, Capt CGM Morris, Lt AL Oliver, 2Lt T Starbuck, 2Lt WC Molland

For other ranks

Killed 21, *Wounded* 83, *Wounded and missing* 10, *Missing* 53

Battalion strength before the action was 22 officers and 636 other ranks

9th to 21st August 1918

On the 9th August, at 03:00 the battalion went back to the original support line, and in the afternoon occupied the original enemy front line, in relief of the 5th Royal Berkshire of the 145th Brigade. At 21:30 they moved further up with C and D occupying trenches in front of the Ravine, B in support and C in reserve.

On the 10th it went back across the Ancre to Baisieux, and on the 14th was moved to shelters in Hennencourt Wood, four miles west of Albert, which town was in the possession of the Germans. That night it replaced the 10th Essex in front line as right battalion of the brigade.

On the 17th the 8th Royal Berkshire went back to billets at Warloy.

The Battle of Albert

22nd August 1918

The 8th left their billets at Warloy on the 22nd, when they moved south-east to positions in the Bresle Valley. Here they were placed temporarily at the disposal of the 54th Brigade, which was attacking. At 11.30 the battalion was ordered, by the G.O.C. 54th Brigade, to support the 6th Northamptonshire Regiment, now holding the front line beyond Ancre, but they were not engaged.

The result of this day was the establishment of a line east of Albert, from Méaulte on the right to the flooded area of the Ancre between Albert and Aveluy.

23rd August

The 8th Royal Berkshire was returned to the 53rd Brigade at 07:00 on the 23rd August for the attack on the commanding German positions on the so-called Usna and Tara Hills, east of Albert. But the work had already been done by the 55th and 54th Brigades, and the the opportunity of the 8th Royal Berkshire only came in the further operations timed to start at 1 a.m. on the 24th.

At 21.15 on the 23rd the battalion moved into positions for the coming attack. It was ready by midnight, with A Company on the right, C on the left, B in support, and D in reserve. The objective was the capture of Ovillers and La Boisselle, places famous in the Somme Battle of 1916, by the 38th Division, with which the 53rd Brigade was to co-operate.

24th August 1918

From 01:00 the British barrage played upon the road in front of the objectives for twenty minutes, when it began creeping forward at the rate of one hundred yards every four minutes. The enemy barrage began only at 01:08, when the first line was already too far forward to get much of it.

By 04.30 the battalion had reached its first objective on the road, and was busy consolidating. All the front-line companies had passed beyond this objective, which was

not easily recognized.

The several reports at this period are thus summed up in the diary. The first objective had been captured and an outpost line formed, with the exception of a gap of two hundred yards between A and C, caused by the enemy's occupation of some craters, which held up our men. The situation north of Boisselle was obscure. The enemy was firing much from the craters.

The situation remained unchanged here all day till 20:00, when, under cover of Stokes mortars, an attack was launched by A and C Companies on the La Boisselle crater. This great crater had been formed by the explosion of mines in 1916. It was seventy yards in diameter and bristled with machine guns, and till it should be taken, no further progress was possible.

The storming party consisted of sixty men, under Captain G. W. H. Nicholson and Lieutenant T. K. Pickard, M.C., commanding the contingents of C and A respectively, with Second-Lieutenants T. C. Halliburton and N. H. G. Blackburn as their subalterns. The attack was a complete success. As many as a dozen machine-gun posts were cleared out, and about two hundred prisoners captured. The O.C. 8th Royal Berkshire highly commended the conduct of the two subalterns, and Second-Lieutenant Blackburn particularly distinguished himself. He was afterwards awarded the M.C., but was killed before it reached him.

The capture of this crater was a very notable achievement, on which Lieut.-General Sir A. J. Godley, commanding the IIIrd Corps, specially congratulated the battalion. After the crater had been taken, the O.C. C Company sent out a patrol which, after a short fight, established an advanced post three hundred yards in front. More prisoners were taken in this fight. The companies were then reorganized in depth. The officer casualties on this day were:

Killed 2Lt RC Guy

Wounded Lt CJM Marsh, 2Lt PW Rousell

25th August 1918

Early the following morning the Battalion was relieved and moved to trenches on the Amiens-Albert road.

The Attack on Trônes Wood

26th August

On the 26th August the Battalion, now under the command of Lt Col TM Banks DSO MC, was sent forward at 17:00 to Bécourt Château in front of which during the day the 54th and 55th Brigades had conquered much country, as far east as Mametz Wood, which the East Surrey had traversed to its eastern edge.

At 19:30 orders were received for the attack next day (27th) on Bernafay and Trônes Woods, the eastern edge of the latter being the final objective. Waterlot Farm was to be explored if possible. It will be remembered of

course that, at this period, the term "Wood" was merely a convenient expression for areas which had been woods in 1916, but had long ceased to be marked by such by more than shattered tree stumps standing up in the undergrowth. The battalion formed up on the Montauban-Bazentin-le-Grand Road just north of Caterpillar Valley, with the Royal West Kent astride of that valley on the right. The attack was to be with D Company, supported by B on the right, C supported by A on the left, the Royal West Kent extending the right through Bernafay Wood.

It was assumed, wrongly as it appeared later, that Longueval on the left was in the hands of the 38th Division. If this were true, the left flank would be safe. It was known that the enemy were on the right flank, and the plan was for the Royal West Kent, after taking Bernafay Wood and reaching Trônes Wood, to turn south, facing the right flank of the enemy in that direction. Their line would be prolonged to the left by B of the Royal Berkshire which would turn south and reach the southern end of Trônes Wood, whilst the other companies faced east on its eastern boundary. There would thus eventually be a line facing east throughout the whole length of the east side of Trônes Wood with a continuation, of B of the Royal Berkshire and the Royal West Kent on their right, facing south along the southern edges of Trônes and Bernafay Woods and across the space between them.

The erroneous information regarding the occupation of Longueval and Delville Wood was nearly fatal to this plan. Lieut.-Colonel T. M. Banks, D.S.O., M.C., of the 10th Essex, who was in command of the 8th Royal Berkshire at this time, went out to reconnoitre on receipt of his orders, whilst the battalion marched to near Mametz Wood and halted at 23:30 There was no sign of British troops at the forming-up line, and their whereabouts was uncertain.

27th August 1918

The forming-up line was reached at 02.30 on the 27th. The night was quiet with a brilliant moon. Patrols were pushed out to locate British posts, and during this time three Germans strayed into our lines and were taken prisoners by the Medical Officer of the Royal Berks.

Zero was fixed for 04.55, when the barrage was to open on a line north and south through the western edge of Bernafay Wood. In order, however, to be close up to it, the front line had to advance 25 minutes earlier. The enemy, who had a few machine guns in outposts near the forming-up line, fell back on their main line, which coincided with that of the British barrage. This line being unmarked by definite features of ground, there was some difficulty with the barrage, part of which fell in the advanced infantry lines, which consequently had to fall back till it lifted.

The advance had already been detected by the enemy, and was met by machine-gun fire which was ominously

heavy from the left in the direction of Longueval, which it now appeared was in the possession of the enemy, and not of the 38th Division as had been believed.

At 05:10, fifteen minutes after the initial barrage commenced it began to creep forward closely, followed by the infantry who tackled the enemy with great dash, clearing the right area without serious loss. On the left the movement was delayed by the fire from Longueval. The enemy's second line of resistance was on the Bernafay Wood-Longueval Road. Here again the right was carried, but on the left the attack was held up in front of the road by the galling fire from Longueval, which made the reduction of enemy posts very difficult. The right pushed on behind the barrage, taking prisoners in the space between the road and Trônes Wood. But the leading company on the right was by now very much reduced, and its support (B) Company was turning off to the right in accordance with orders.

This left very few men for the capture of the final objective Trônes Wood.

Nevertheless, the right of the battalion succeeded in getting into the wood, where it at once came under heavy machine-gun fire from Waterlot Farm. Meanwhile, the 7th Royal West Kent had, as ordered, turned southwards through Bernafay Wood and the space between it and Trônes Wood, whilst B of the Royal Berkshire had taken up a position facing south on the light railway which traverses the centre of Trônes Wood from west to east.

The situation was critical. Both A and C Companies were held up well back on the left, masses of the enemy were moving out from Waterlot Farm, and Longueval and Delville Wood were also full of Germans.

These latter were apparently removing stores on limbers preparatory to evacuation, and one company could be seen in the distance forming up on its markers. This was the redeeming point in the situation which it, and the gallant conduct of the Royal Berkshire in Trônes Wood, rendered less unsatisfactory.

The attack from Waterlot Farm was checked by D, but with the loss of many men, including Second-Lieutenant F. W. Hopwood, M.M., commanding the company, who was killed. Although it was not practicable to hold the eastern edge of Trônes Wood, enfiladed as it was, Colonel Banks thought it possible to make a stand in the trenches just west of the wood, and rallied his men for withdrawal to them.

Meanwhile, Captain Wykes of A Company, second-in-command of the battalion, volunteered to get back and try to bring up the left companies (A and C). In this he was successful in about half an hour, when the resistance of a strong pocket holding them up had been overcome. This was not done without further casualties. A number of the enemy surrendered, and the rest retreated to Longueval. The remains of A and C were used for consolidating, and for defending the Royal Berkshire position from the threat of Longueval, whence

the machine-gun fire still continued. In this, great assistance was received from Major Hopwood, D.S.O., G.S.O.2. of the Division, and also from the reserve company of the Royal West Kent sent up by Major Warr, who had taken command of that battalion when Colonel Banks took over the 8th Royal Berkshire.

While these events were taking place, B Company, the support of D, had, as ordered, turned to the right in Trônes Wood to clear the southern half. It was, however, compelled by the fire of the British "heavies," which were still firing on the southern part of the wood, to halt, and finally to conform to the withdrawal from the final objective in the northern part of the wood. It fell back to the trench just west of the wood where it joined up with the Royal West Kent on the right.

At this juncture a counter-attack was launched by a battalion of Prussian Guards on the southern part of the wood, through which they pushed, drove in part of the Royal West Kent line, and for a moment threatened the whole position. But the Royal West Kent and the Royal Berkshire rallied half-way down the slope and confined the enemy's gains to the upper part.

A counter-attack was now attempted, supported by fire from the left, but the enemy's position was so advantageous, and his machine guns were so numerous, that it had to be broken off whilst more complete measures were organized.

Most of the rest of the day was spent in this. The Divisional General ordered two companies of the 10th Essex to be placed at the disposal of Colonel Banks, and Major Hopwood again did good service, in sending one of them to fill a gap which had formed between the right of the Royal Berkshire and the left of the Royal West Kent.

By 18:30 all was ready and the British "heavies" again bombarded the southern half of Trônes Wood whilst presently two trench mortars began firing on the western edge of it.

At 18:55 the attacking troops crept close up to the bombardment. These were D Company of the Essex on the right, one platoon of C of the Essex in the centre, and B of the Royal Berkshire on the left. All the enemy fire was turned to the left, but so eager were the men that they charged in amongst it before the shells had ceased to burst. The enemy was completely surprised; practically every man on the western edge of the wood was shot or bayoneted, and the victorious British, dashing into the undergrowth, surprised and demoralized the supports and carried on to the eastern edge, where they consolidated and put out outposts.

On the left flank, D of the Royal Berkshire formed a defensive flank facing north across the centre of the wood, whilst the Royal West Kent came up on the right of the Essex companies and continued the line from the southern end of Trônes back to that of Bernafay Wood.

The whole operation occupied less than an hour. Three

German officers and seventy men, with about twenty machine guns, were captured, and about fifty of the enemy were killed. The enemy post which was taken contained two heavy and seven light machine guns. The unit which had been defeated in this attack was identified as a battalion of the 2nd Guard Regiment (Francis Joseph).

At midnight the battalion was relieved and sent back to Caterpillar Wood at 02:00.

Casualties for the 27th August were:-

Officers Killed 2Lt FW Hopwood, 2Lt H Martin, 2Lt SM Brown *Wounded* 2Lt H Martin, 2Lt J Buck, 2Lt J Davies and Capt W Rogerson RAMC (attached)

28th-31st August 1918

On the 29th the 8th went to Guillemont, then in British hands. Needless to say, the brigade and its units received many congratulations, and equally needless is it to say that their losses had been heavy.

Other ranks casualties for August totalled 331:

Killed 79, *Died of wounds* 9, *wounded* 225, *wounded and missing* 8, *missing* 10

The Attack on St Pierre Vaast Wood

1st September 1918

On the 1st September Combles was taken by other units of the 18th Division, and that evening the 53rd Brigade was brought up from Guillemont to positions outside the village, with orders to attack, next day, the St. Pierre Vaast Wood and the high ground north of it. The high ground in the wood was assigned as the objective of the 10th Essex, with the 8th Royal Berkshire on the right against the southern part of the wood, and the Royal West Kent on their left against the open country to the north. The Royal Berkshire were to be in echelon behind the right flank of the Essex, and to form a defensive flank facing south along the central ride running E. and W. through the wood.

2nd September 1918

At 01:05 C and D Companies, under Captain Wykes, moved to the assembly positions on the west side of the wood. D suffered some casualties from shells on the way, and the enemy's artillery continued active during the assembly, which was completed at 03.30.

The formation for attack was C on the edge of the wood with one platoon south of the ride and Company Head-quarters north of it. D was behind in the same formation.

The barrage opened at 05.30, with the companies close behind it. At 5.50 it lifted, and Battalion Head-quarters and D Company established themselves facing south astride of the main ride running from north to south through the centre of the wood.

C moved forward, leaving one platoon and Company Head-quarters on the high ground about a quarter of a mile short of the eastern edge. Patrols were sent out for five hundred yards along that edge towards the south.

By 07.30 all the objectives had been attained. Some isolated German machine-gun posts were encountered, but they put up a poor fight, and no casualties had been incurred in the advance so far. As the standing barrage failed to come down on the wood, Captain Wykes proceeded to mop it up, taking over one hundred prisoners and not a combulant in order. Attempts were made to gain touch with the 47th Division on the right, but without success. That division did not penetrate the southern portion of the wood till next day.

These attempts met with resistance from scattered enemy posts in the south of the wood, and with heavy shell fire which began at 10.30 and lasted all day. It was in this period that all the casualties of the day occurred.

3rd September 1918

At 04:00. patrols of C found the trenches between St. Pierre Vaast Wood and Vaux Wood to the east unoccupied, and, an officer's patrol having verified the evacuation of St. Martin's Wood (north of Vaux Wood), the leading troops of the brigade were ordered forward, and eventually the 10th Essex occupied the high ground overlooking Manancourt and C Canada Nord. The 8th Royal Berkshire moved C and D north to Henois Wood to support the right of the Essex. In this wood they were subjected to heavy machine-gun and artillery fire, which prevented D from debouching on its eastern side towards the canal.

At 17:00., A and B were ordered up from their position in reserve in St. Pierre Vaast Wood- C was ordered to patrol Vaux Wood, south of Henois Wood, and, if possible, to make good its eastern edge and the line of the canal. The enemy was found to be occupying the high ground east of the Tortille River, which flows parallel to the canal and beyond it. They were firing with machine guns.

At 20.30 A moved forward and made good the line of the canal in the dark. Later, B sent out patrols, to attempt to secure a passage of the Tortille, and a footing on the rising ground beyond it. They crossed the canal, but beyond it met such heavy fire from front and flanks that they could not progress, and were withdrawn at dawn.

4th September 1918

On the 4th September, after making a personal reconnaissance, the Brigadier again ordered the patrols forward. On the left they could make no progress, but on the right they succeeded in getting a footing on the slope above Tortille, which proved of great value in the subsequent operations.

During the whole day these patrols were engaged in a struggle with varying success. In the evening Captain

Wails took command of them, and progress began to be more definite.

By 20:00 they had reached the edge of Riverside Wood, and the enemy retired in large numbers from his advanced posts. In this advance excellent service was rendered by Second-Lieutenant Grant, who rushed a German post which was holding out, and killed its garrison. Other patrols pushed beyond Riverside Wood, and gained contact with the enemy holding trenches on the crest of the heights to the east of the wood.

By this time it was quite dark, and relief by the 12th Division was already in progress. The line of the eastern edge of Riverside Wood was made good and handed over to the relieving troops.

The casualties of the last two days amongst officers were:

On the 3rd, *Wounded*: 2nd-Lieuts. W. G. Davies, A. E. Logsdon.

On the 4th, *Gassed*: 2nd-Lieuts. B. W. Clark and T. C. Halliburton (Sherwood Foresters, attached).

The casualties of other ranks are again only given for the whole month.

Tragedy at Méricourt

5th September 1918

A draft of young recruits arrived at Méricourt station on 5th September to re-inforce the 8th Battalion. Most were aged only 18 and had been conscripted when they were old enough. As they detrained a British shell burst accidentally amongst them killing 31. 8 were killed on the spot and the rest died of their wounds before they could reach a military hospital. Most are buried in the Méricourt l'Abbé Communal Cemetery. 25 others were wounded and survived.

For the 8th the 5th and 6th were spent at Montauban, where Sir A. Godley, commanding the Corps, distributed parchment certificates gained by the men.

7th-14th September 1918

From the 7th to the 14th the battalion continued training at Montauban here, on the 7th, it received a draft of one hundred and twenty men. It should have been one hundred and seventy-six, but the accidental explosion of a shell at Méricourt station had unfortunately reduced it by 56,

15th-16th September 1918

On the 15th orders were received to relieve part of the 74th Division in the line, and at 08.20 on the 16th the battalion went by 'bus to Nurlu, whence it marched to l'Épinette, and took over trenches east of Ste. Emilie. They were ordered to carry out active patrolling to prevent the enemy from getting command of No-man's-land.

17th-18th September 1918

On the next day many gas shells fell close to Headquarters.

The 18th was quiet, and at 18:00 orders were received for an attack on Lempire on the 19th.

The Attack at Lempire

The intention was to clear the northern portion of the village and establish a line facing east through Yak, Zebra and Branton posts.

Lempire village is a continuation towards the N.E. of the village of Ronssoy, which lies on the south side of the road running S.E. from Epéhy to Hargicourt. On the left of Lempire was Yak Post, and beyond it again Zebra Post) marking the northern boundary of the divisional area.

The plan of attack was for C on the left to occupy Yak Post and form a defensive flank. B in the centre was to occupy Dose Trench in the northern part, and Lempire Post at the north-east end of the village. A, on the right, would take Thistle Trench running south from Lempire Post outside the village, and join the right of B at the Post. One platoon of D was to occupy Enfer Wood, and the other three were to be drawn up in rear with the Royal West Kent, ready to pass through to the final objective.

19th September

At 08.15 on the 19th assembly posts were reached, B, C, and D being in a trench south of the road running through Ronssoy and Lempire towards the N.E. A was in a trench on the right. Battalion Head-quarters, in the western edge of Ronssoy, suffered casualties from artillery fire during the assembly, which was completed at 10.40., zero being at 11:00.

At 11:00 A, B, and C moved forward close up to the barrage as it moved on, whilst D, less one platoon for Enfer Wood, remained at the assembly positions.

A, which suffered few casualties in the advance, had three platoons in its objective, Thistle Trench, by 11.40. The other platoons were in Enfer Wood by 12.15. The situation was somewhat obscure to Head-quarters, but Captain Wykes, going forward, found C on the main objective and in Yak Post, which had been taken after a severe bombing fight. Proceeding to Dose Trench he found it unoccupied by either side. Returning by the Lempire-Tombois Farm Road, he found that A and B were held up by machine-gun fire from the copse on the S.E. B then proceeded to occupy its objective by passing through C and down Dose Trench. Reports were now received that Lempire Village was still held by the Germans. D, when sent to mop it up, reported it quite clear of the enemy.

Opposition on the right was very severe, but on the left C pushed some men into Zebra Post in the evening.

At 20:00 the line held by the battalion was, from left to right, Zebra Post-Yak Post-Dose Trench-Lempire Post-Thistle Trench-Basse Boulogne, the last named being east of Ronssoy, just north of the Epéhy-Hargicourt Road.

After the Armistice on 22nd November three of the men reported missing turned up again and were re-reported as being wounded. They were 17742 Pte W Kirby of D Coy, 42493 Pte H Barrett of D Coy and 43349 Pte F King of A Coy.

20th-21st September 1918

In the fighting of the 21st for the possession of Egg Post, Grafton Trench, and Tombois Farm, the 8th Royal Berkshire certainly did not participate, but remained in the positions occupied in the evening of the 19th. The attack on that day by the 53rd Brigade was carried out by the other two battalions, the 10th Essex and 7th Royal West Kent.

22nd-24th September 1918

Nor does the Battalion Diary mention any fighting on the 22nd and 23rd. The History of the 18th Division, on the other hand, states that the battalion relieved the 10th Essex, which had lost two hundred and eighty men, in the evening of the 21st, that the 53rd and 54th Brigades renewed the attack by moonlight, and that the bombing attack of the Royal Berkshire on Egg and Fleeceall Posts was beaten off, after heavy fighting, in the early morning of the 22nd.

It even mentions the gallantry of Private E. J. Pocock, a stretcher bearer of the Royal Berkshire Regiment. Again the Battalion Diary only says of the 24th that there was much sniping, by which Second-Lieutenant E. J. H. Sonnex was killed. Finally, officer casualties are given for the 19th only. Nothing can be gleaned from the casualties of other ranks, which are given in lump for the whole month. The diary at this period is generally very full, and it seems difficult to believe that any serious fighting after the 19th should have escaped mention.

Casualties for the period 19th to 24th September were:

Officers

Killed 2Lt R Cumbley (19th), 2Lt EJH Sonnex (24th) *Wounded* 2Lt AJ Preston, *Died of wounds* 2Lt JWB Palfree (20th)

Other ranks

Killed 44, Died of wounds 1, wounded 145, gassed 55, missing 12 (plus the 56 killed or injured at Méricourt)

Recovering

25th-28th September 1918

On the 25th the battalion was relieved by American

infantry, and went back to Curlu Wood, and on the 26th was at Priez Farm east of Combles.

29th-30th September 1918

On the 29th it moved up to reserve in front of Ronssoy, and on the 30th relieved the 6th Buffs, of the 12th Division, in front line.

1st October 1918

On the 1st October the battalion was in the line between their line of the 20th September and the St. Quentin Canal, on the bank of which was posted one platoon of C Company.

2nd October 1918

On the 2nd they made a long journey by omnibus through Nurlu, Combles, Amiens, Albert, La Houssoye to billets at Allonville, where the whole brigade was concentrated.

Here 44556 Pte J Howarth of B Coy threw live ammunition onto a fire resulting in the injury to one of his comrades.

3rd-17th October 1918

They remained at Allonville till the 17th. on which day they went by rail to Roisel.

On the 15th Pte Howarth was brought before a Field Court Martial, found guilty and sentenced to 14 days Field Punishment no 1. He had remained in close arrest since the incident on the 2nd.

18th-21st October 1918

On the 18th they were on the Nurlu-Villers Faucon Road, and continued their journey by 'bus to Prémont. The change here, from the ruined area of the Somme Battles to one comparatively little damaged, was very noticeable.

On the 20th they were at Reumont.

On the 21st 37109 Sgt J Jones was appointed acting CSM of A Coy. 200868 Sgt G F Stelling had been acting since the 4th when CSM Spokes DCM had been sent for a Commission.

The Attack at L'Eveque Wood

The ground over which the advance was to be made was rough undulating grassland with no connected trench systems but with strong German defensive positions organised in depth around machine gun posts. Some 1000 yards from the British line the ground shelved to the Richemont river, itself only a shallow stream, and rose more steeply on the other side to a plateau where old practice trenches gave the enemy prepared positions.

22nd October 1918

On the 22nd they reached Le Câteau, the scene of the battle of more than four years before. The town had been shelled intermittently.

44768 Pte H Ball D Coy died of Broncho-pneumonia.

At 22.50. the brigade moved out to assembly posts for an attack next day directed north-eastwards, with the left of the division on the road to Bavai, and its right on a parallel line running past the north-west edge of the Bois de l'Evêque. This area ended towards the N.E. at the Mormal Forest. The 33rd Division was on the left, the 25th on the right, and the 53rd Brigade was on the right of the 18th Division, the 54th on the left, and the 55th in rear, ready to pass through to the capture of the third, fourth and fifth objectives.

23rd October

Zero had been fixed for 01.20 on the 23rd, and an early move to assembly positions was fortunately made, as it was hampered by fog. The assembly point for the 8th Royal Berkshire was in a railway cutting which had unfortunately been selected as the line for the enemy's barrage. Many shells fell in it, causing fifteen casualties, among them Captain W. H. Ferguson, M.C., R.A.M.C., the medical officer. Though wounded, he heroically carried on his duty till a second wound, as he was getting out of a blown-in dugout, compelled his withdrawal.

At 01.50, after half an hour's barrage, the companies moved out of the cutting, D on the right, C in the centre, B on the left, and A in support. In front of them, the 10th Essex and 7th Royal West Kent captured the first objective, a line crossing the divisional area from the west corner of the Bois de l'Evêque.

At 02.20 the battalion started to pass through them to the second objective, D to keep its right flank on the north-western ridge of the Bois de l'Evêque. The first opposition was met at the Richemont Brook, well short of the first objective. The left of B was held up by a machine-gun nest which had been missed by the leading battalions. Here Second-Lieutenant J. Grant, commanding the company, was killed, and most of the Company Head-quarters became casualties. On the right some sniping by three Germans, who had resumed fighting after having surrendered, gave some trouble. The brook, too, was found to be marshy, and a more serious obstacle than aerial observations had given reason to suppose.

The battalion moved on to a line a little short of the first objective. Here they found the Essex definitely held up by machine guns in a sunken road. Numerous attempts by the Essex, and by C of the Royal Berkshire, failed to rush this position, and the right of the battalion was also held up by fire from the Bois de l'Evêque. The position remained unchanged till dawn.

As soon as it was light it became clear that the attack was progressing on the left. This, and the appearance of tanks on their flank, induced the enemy to begin retiring. Captain Wykes, appreciating the situation, went forward with the leading companies, and rushed the road, in which over thirty machine guns were taken. The advance then continued to the second objective, which

was taken by 8.30 a.m.

Owing to the battalion having been held up on the Richemont Brook, it became necessary to reinforce the line on the second objective, and A was brought forward for the purpose. The disposition now was C on the left, A on its right and elements of B and D seeking to gain touch with the left of the 1st Worcestershire (25th Division). The 55th Brigade now passed through the 53rd, and machine-gun fire soon began to be heard from Bousies, beyond the third objective. The 55th Brigade held a line beyond Bousies for the night.

The results of the day were considered to be extremely satisfactory as the final objectives had been virtually all secured at very little cost. During the 23rd they had captured eleven field guns, and collected more than twenty machine guns. The companies were then reorganised and the position was held for the night of 23rd/24th October.

Their losses had been:

Officers. *Killed*: 2nd-Lieuts. N. H. Blackburn, M.C., J. Grant, M.C. *Wounded*: 2nd-Lieuts. F. W. Beeny, W. Deans, W. A. McConnell.

Other Ranks: *Killed* 19; *Died of Wounds* 1; *Wounded* 67; *Missing* 3.

From the 23rd the full casualty returns have survived. Thus we are able to record them:

Killed in Action

45498 Pte A G Allen A Coy
 14559 CSM A Beaufoy B Coy
 45873 Pte J Cleaver C Coy
 200191 Pte R G Fisher B Coy
 220449 Pte W Gilbert A Coy
 44914 Pte D L Hatcher D Coy (later reported admitted to hospital on the 23rd)
 31418 LCpl E J Hemmings C Coy
 45902 Pte E E Higham C Coy
 45908 Pte S J Howe C Coy
 220276 Pte F Keen D Coy
 44619 Pte W H Kelynack C Coy
 45936 Pte A E Mullins C Coy
 45959 Pte R J Parker C Coy
 33927 Pte E Stacey D Coy
 201761 Pte H Stevens D Coy
 43258 Pte J Stew A Coy
 37801 LCpl H S Tatham C Coy
 9972 Pte LW Taylor (attached from 1st Devons)
 37783 Pte F H Tyrrell D Coy
 43698 Pte P White D Coy

Died of wounds

12248 Pte A Treadwell C Coy

Died of broncho-pneumonia

44675 LCpl G A Dare A Coy

Wounded:

18674 aCpl J H Barker A Coy
 44589 Pte F Britton A Coy
 20212 Pte E Brown A Coy
 202940 Pte A Bryant A Coy
 43304 Pte L Commander A Coy
 12251 Pte T Cox A Coy
 18159 Pte A E James MM A Coy
 43328 Pte D P Lale A Coy

44663 Pte A H Mitchell A Coy
 43268 Pte C E Monk A Coy
 37343 aCpl C Newman A Coy
 43298 Pte A Pummell A Coy
 45533 Pte R A S Redman A Coy
 36766 LCpl W Roberts A Coy
 45541 Pte J J Salter A Coy
 43653 Pte G W Sharp A Coy
 201429 Pte E L Stevens A Coy
 33282 Pte A C Thomas A Coy
 43370 Pte R Barrs B Coy
 43361 Pte H Bee B Coy
 220513 Pte E A Bennett B Coy
 45618 LCpl F Carr B Coy
 45119 Pte W Day B Coy
 20043 Sgt E Goodchild MM B Coy
 43294 Pte E Hollyhead B Coy
 45071 Pte B Lowe B Coy
 43126 Pte J Murdock B Coy
 45595 LCpl R Patey B Coy
 45532 Pte W H S Reynolds B Coy
 220149 aCpl C Roebuck B Coy
 43261 Pte E Turner B Coy
 43262 Pte A Wiles B Coy
 45611 Pte J Woodward B Coy
 45855 Pte E R B Barber C Coy
 45853 Pte P F Bessant C Coy died 2/11/18
 12122 L Sgt A E Bewley C Coy
 22060 Cpl W J Bewley C Coy
 45906 Pte S W Harvey C Coy
 16040 Cpl B Herbert C Coy
 45911 Pte F Hextall C Coy
 36656 LCpl J T Hingley C Coy
 220603 Pte A C McPherson C Coy
 44715 Pte N D Nash C Coy
 45941 Pte H Newman C Coy
 45947 Pte H C Paul C Coy
 36687 Cpl J E Peters DCM C Coy
 38335 LCpl V Rowley C Coy
 37626 Pte H Savage C Coy
 44757 LCpl A E Sellick C Coy
 20201 Pte W H Smith C Coy
 45979 Pte S Staton C Coy
 201553 LCpl E Tinson C Coy
 45658 Pte A G Williams C Coy
 200127 Pte A E Allen D Coy
 201137 Pte R J Gibbs D Coy
 45896 Pte J E Goddard D Coy
 41809 Pte G Horwood D Coy
 38980 Pte C Howling D Coy
 45942 LCpl F T Newport D Coy
 220100 Pte H J Owen D Coy
 45951 Pte H Pass D Coy
 41668 Pte G K Penn D Coy
 220179 Pte J A Rawlinson D Coy
 43716 Pte S Reed D Coy died 29/10/18
 202589 Pte S Schaffer D Coy
 45987 LCpl T C Stead D Coy
 12787 Sgt A Wheeler D Coy

Missing

45894 Pte H R Goodyear C Coy
 45943 Pte R C Napper C Coy

Missing believed wounded

44617 Pte F Johnson D Coy (admitted to hospital
 23/10/18)
 45927 LCpl H J Moore D Coy

24th - 25th October 1918

2nd Lt A Highwood assumed command of D Coy in place of 2nd Lt N H G Blackburn who had been killed the day before.

At 17:00 on the 24th the battalion was ordered to relieve the 6th Northamptonshire Regiment of the 54th Brigade. During the morning Lieut.-Colonel N. B. Hudson, M.C., now recovered from his wounds of the 8th August, took command of the battalion from Major A. F. S. Northcote, who returned to the West Kent Battalion.

Died of wounds on the 24th

42963 Pte C Adilstone A Coy
 33282 Pte A C Thomas A Coy

Died on the 24th

202086 Pte F G Tucker D Coy - Influenza

Wounded on the 24th:

43318 Pte C Banner B Coy
 43380 Pte H Briscoe B Coy
 44962 Pte C G Britnell A Coy attached 53rd Trench Mortar Battery
 35217 Pte G E Burgess A Coy
 18865 Pte G S Chainey C Coy attached 53rd Trench Mortar Battery
 44593 Pte A C Challinor B Coy
 45113 Pte T Cotterill B Coy
 45892 L Cpl H T Gibbons B Coy attached 53rd Trench Mortar Battery
 201547 Pte H Harberd D Coy attached 53rd Trench Mortar Battery
 43279 Pte T E Kingham C Coy attached 53rd Trench Mortar Battery
 18218 Pte A Norton C Coy attached 53rd Trench Mortar Battery
 43238 Pte F Pratt C Coy
 44939 LCpl F E Robey B Coy died 31/10/18
 45090 aSgt F N Riley B Coy
 20216 LCpl A Salter B Coy

Missing

43004 Pte J Allen B Coy

Wounded at Duty

44915 Pte G H Bostock B Coy
 38664 Pte P J Burgess B Coy

The relief, which had been delayed by its coincidence with a minor operation being carried out by the battalion to be relieved, was not completed till 02:00. on the 25th, when D took post on the right, C in the centre, and B on the left, with A in reserve at Bousies Wood Farm.

A Company of the Cameron Highlanders was interposed between B and C, and on the left of B a gap between it and the 10th Essex was filled by a company of the 4th King's Liverpool. Both the Cameron and Liverpool Battalions belonged to the 33rd Division on the left, which had been forming a defensive flank before the 54th Brigade made good.

There was active patrolling till dusk.

2Lt F W Bray who had been wounded, was transferred to England.

Wounded on the 25th:

43274 Pte J Cattell A Coy
 44996 Lcpl H Cox A Coy
 43289 Pte J Chambers A Coy
 27381 LCpl E Easthope B Coy
 43030 Pte T Pegg A Coy
 45963 Pte W H G Roberts C Coy
 36467 aSgt W Satterthwaite MM A Coy

Missing

42359 Pte J E Tasker A Coy rejoined 27/10/18

Died

203953 Pte A Herridge D Coy - of influenza

The Attack on Mount Carmel

Orders were received that the 53rd Brigade should co-operate with the 33rd Division in the attack on Mount Carmel, a position just beyond the Englefontaine-Robersart Road. Mount Carmel, at a distance of about 1000 yards, was no more than an undulating cultivated field slightly higher than the surrounding countryside which was intersected by streams and thick hedges. The Germans held the eastern edge with a line of posts west of the Hecq to Preux road. The 10th Essex were to take the right, the 8th Royal Berkshire, with two companies Royal West Kent, the left, the whole being under the command of the C.O. 8th Royal Berkshire.

26th October

At midnight of the 25th-26th a move was made to the assembly positions, with D on the right, C in the centre, B on the left, and A in Reserve.

The advance commenced at 01:00., through a difficult country on a very dark night, and in the face of machine-gun fire which rendered progress slow. The first serious opposition was met at the Englefontaine-Robersart Road, which was strongly held by machine guns. Here the right was held up.

On the left progress had been more rapid, and by 01.40 two platoons of B had reached their objective on what was known as the "red line." Heavy casualties, however, compelled them to fall back to a sunken road where C was held up on their right. The right company was still no farther than the main road.

The officer commanding now adopted a policy of active patrols, and eventually made good on the sunken road, and gained touch with the 10th Essex on the right at the junction of the sunken and main roads. A Company of the Royal West Kent, on the left, had kept touch with the left of B of the Royal Berkshire, and prolonged its line from a point slightly in advance of the main road. The other West Kent company on the left had lost touch, had made remarkable progress, and was on the objective at some cross-roads which they had reached in advance of the 33rd Division troops on their left. Touch was gained later, through troops of the 33rd Division on the main road.

The attack of this day appears not to have been a great success, and eventually a line was occupied, some four hundred yards short of that originally intended, at Mount Carmel. During the fighting Lieut.-Colonel Hudson had again been wounded slightly, and command of the battalion was taken temporarily by Captain G. W. H. Nicholson. Col Hudson had received his third wounding of the war but was not seriously hurt and continued to

exert vigorous leadership in consolidating and holding the line. Other casualties of the day are not given.

Killed in Action:

45860 Pte W J Best D Coy
36251 Pte E Bushby C Coy
45928 Pte J Mildren D Coy

Wounded

44677 Pte H L Antill D Coy
45670 Pte E A Astridge C Coy
45849 Pte W Baylis C Coy
45639 Pte L D Beckett C Coy
43704 Pte C J Benham A Coy
44767 Pte T Blakey MM C Coy
43718 Pte A Brimer C Coy
220746 aSgt H Compton MM C Coy
202051 LCpl F C Cox D Coy
44594 Pte A F Cruch MM C Coy
43271 Pte A M Davies B Coy
45882 Pte T Davey C Coy
23691 Pte W Exell D Coy
45905 Pte S Hill C Coy
44556 Pte J Howarth B Coy
32848 Pte E Lay A Coy
44725 Pte M Malin A Coy
45946 Pte W Obrey C Coy
45952 Pte E F Payne C Coy
12375 Cpl W H Perrins D Coy
17907 Pte G W Samuels B Coy
44607 aSgt C Smith C Coy
43260 Pte F H Treadgold B Coy
10207 Pte W West C Coy
45993 Pte W W Withers C Coy

Wounded at duty

44496 Pte D L Tipple C Coy

Missing

38420 Pte R F Abbott C Coy
45857 Pte H M Brimble C Coy
45632 Pte W Fox C Coy

27th October 1918

As Capt Nicholson had taken over temporary command of the battalion, his place as CO of C Coy was taken by 2nd Lt F J Powell on the 27th.

42359 Pte J E Tasker, who had been reported missing on the 25th rejoined the battalion.

Killed in action on the 27th

45135 Pte F C R Harper B Coy
45984 Pte B E Siviter C Coy

Wounded

45980 Pte A T J Sampson C Coy
44568 Pte A Timms C Coy

Wounded at Duty

45590 LCpl J Jarvis

From the 27th to 30th October the Battalion was in reserve at Bousies Wood and Epinette Farm.

28th October 1918

Wounded at Duty on the 28th

44933 Pte F Pott B Coy

Died

39382 Pte S Dawes A Coy from pneumonia

29th October 1918

Died of wounds
43716 Pte S Reid D Coy

30th October 1918

Wounded at Duty on the 30th
18579 L Cpl C E Chaplin A Coy

31st October 1918

On the 31st it was again in the front line, which had been established on the 26th not far beyond the Englefontaine-Robersart Road.

Died of wounds
44939 LCpl F E Robey B Coy

Casualties for October were

Officers (all 23rd)

killed 2Lt NHG Blackburn, 2Lt J Grant *Wounded*
2Lt FW Beeny, 2Lt W Deans, 2Lt WA McConnell, Capt WH Ferguson (RAMC)

Other ranks (for October)

Killed 25, *wounded* 108, *died of wounds* 2.
missing 6, *missing believed wounded* 1, *wounded at duty* 4

1st November 1918

Wounded
44692 aCpl H Gaffin A Coy

2nd November 1918

Killed in action
45063 Pte W D Kenton A Coy

Died of wounds
45853 Pte F J Bessant C Coy

On the 2nd 44710 Pte E L White A Coy, 43604 Pte G H Allen B Coy and 43311 Pte W S Leeson A Coy were sent to do water duty under the supervision of the Town Major of Reumont.

3rd November 1918

202406 Sgt W W Longman MM of B Coy was sent home to England on the 3rd as a candidate for a temporary commission and struck off battalion strength.

On the 3rd November assembly positions were assumed at 21:00 for the final great advance through the Mormal Forest.

Died
202956 Cpl W E Sutton D Coy - broncho-pneumonia

Wounded
45057 Pte W Wakelin B Coy

The Forest of Mormal**4th November**

The Royal West Kent led the advance, in conjunction with the 54th Brigade on their right. They had first to take the villages of Hecq and Preux au Bois, the former

falling to the lot of the Royal West Kent. There was strenuous fighting but the Royal Berkshire were not engaged in the capture of the villages.

As 18th Division moved forward they took Hecq where many French civilians were sheltering in the cellars. As they emerged to greet their liberators they were able to point out where Germans were still hiding. At a nearby farmhouse one family needed considerable encouragement to get them to come out, but when they did one old woman threw her arms around Col Hudson, kissed him and pronounced him '*my Saviour*'

At 07.35 a.m. the battalion, with the 10th Essex on its right, formed up to pass through the West Kent and the troops of the 54th Brigade, who were in possession of Hecq and Preux au Bois, and to advance to their objective the "red line" passing across the forest farther on.

A Company had orders to work along towards the right of the "red line," followed by B, which was to form posts at the southern end of the tracks through the forest. In a similar manner C was to work along the north edge of the forest on the left of the objective, with D following and forming posts at the northern ends of the tracks, and keeping in touch with the 38th Division operating on the left outside the forest.

While this movement was in progress, a heavy barrage would be put down on the forest itself.

There was some trouble from machine-gun posts, which had not yet been mopped up by the captors of the villages.

At 09:07 the barrage began moving forward from its first line at the rate of one hundred yards in six minutes. C followed along the northern part of the forest. In the first four hundred yards no opposition was met; then there was some from the left. This being overcome, C progressed as far as a stream running through the forest. Here the blowing up by the Germans of a bridge wounded some men of the leading platoons.

On reaching the high ground, C came under the point-blank fire of some guns in the wood on its left. Pushing on, it reached its final objective soon after 10.30, after rushing a strong post in a building. In the storming of this post Second-Lieutenant L. J. Field was killed, and five men were wounded.

The company was now well ahead of the line and both its flanks were exposed. Nevertheless, Lieutenant F. J. Powell, D.C.M., M.M., expressed his determination to hold on where he was with the company of which he was in command. He did so for three hours, at the end of which he had but thirty-six men left. His tenure of this position materially helped the advance of the 38th Division on his left.

Whilst C thus pushed forward, D followed as ordered, dropping posts at the northern exits from the forest. As the barrage lifted, D worked into the forest on its right,

and killed or captured the garrisons of two German posts there.

On the other flank A, followed by B, encountered difficulties almost at once. The 54th Brigade had not succeeded in completely clearing the assembly position, and consequently A came in for machine-gun fire from the banks of the stream just beyond Preux. Captain T. K. Pickard, commanding A, halted his company and sent forward a patrol to clear up the situation. It found the 2nd Bedfordshire and 10th Essex held up in the S.W. corner of the wood where there had been a partially successful German counter-attack. Pickard determined to fight his way through to the second assembly point, and on to the final objective on the right of the "red line."

For the next three hours the company was busy working round and rushing machine-gun posts. The work was most gallantly and well carried out, but naturally not without serious losses. It was 14:00. before the assembly area was cleared and the company, with the 10th Essex, began working along the S.E. edge of the forest as ordered. To screen itself from the open country outside, on its right, the company kept about twenty yards inside the forest.

At 14:30 it met the 7th Queen's, who had come diagonally through the forest from Preux. A few minutes after 15:00 the right of the "red line" was reached without much further opposition. Touch was gained with C on the left and the 10th Essex on the right, and consolidation was commenced, whilst the 55th Brigade passed through to the next objective.

Meanwhile, B, following A, had not been involved in the fighting, but had, as ordered, placed posts at the southern exits of the forest. Patrols sent to the left had come into touch with those of D, which, as we know, had been doing for C what B had been doing for A. When the 55th Brigade passed through, the "red line" was held by A and C of the Royal Berkshire and the 10th Essex, with B in rear of A and D in rear of C.

It is worth noting that before this action the Battalion could muster only 15 officers and 243 other ranks.

Here, on the "red line," deep in the Mormal Forest, the fighting career of the 8th Battalion ended. It was a place familiar to the men of the original BEF who, in August 1914, had marched down past the Forest of Mormal on their way from Mons.

Killed in action

45840 Pte B Barr C Coy
45846 Pte A R Brittle C Coy
220130 Pte A S Hanmer C Coy
43265 Pte E Jones A Coy
44622 Pte H Latham B Coy
43281 Pte E L Nicholls A Coy
45962 Pte F E Roberts C Coy
44750 Pte H J Shaufler C Coy
44642 Pte G S Sharp D Coy

Died of wounds

10155 Pte W Bradford A Coy

Wounded

203872 Pte J T Adams A Coy
45842 Pte W T Barr C Coy
200364 LCpl W J Beasley C Coy
44586 Pte G Bowen C Coy
43288 Pte E Burrows A Coy
43245 Pte H Cantrell A Coy
54051 Pte W Chainey C Coy
45867 Pte A J Childs C Coy
45612 Cpl P Douglas A Coy
45880 Pte G D Dubbin B Coy
44683 Pte W H Gee C Coy
44606 Pte C Grainger C Coy
45909 Pte W Hall C Coy
45012 Pte J A Hancock C Coy
45573 Pte W Harris A Coy
43675 Cpl A J Hawker A Coy
45653 Pte J Head C Coy
45910 Pte L W Head C Coy
37793 Pte L F Heath D Coy
44557 Pte A D Hudson C Coy
31169 LCpl E Hutchings C Coy
201540 aCpl A W King D Coy
45562 Pte H S Leach C Coy
43715 LCpl C H Phillips D Coy
27598 L Cpl H Pottinger C Coy
33274 LCpl R J Raby A Coy
45967 Pte W Ralph C Coy
43075 Pte J A Rudkin C Coy
200847 Cpl R A Stevens D Coy
45966 Pte W E Stevens C Coy
44649 Pte G Tomlinson C Coy
44665 L Cpl E W Walfont A Coy
45585 Pte F Williams C Coy
46003 Pte E W Young C Coy

Missing

44680 Pte L W Bond C Coy

5th November 1918

The battalion spent the 5th November at Heccq.

43712 Pte H Carpenter died of natural causes at no 1 General Hospital Etretat.

6th November 1918

On the 6th they went back to Le Câteau,

The Brigade Gas Officer inspected small box respirators.

7th November 1918

An order was issued that every unit must dispose of any animal carcasses lying within 400 yards of billets or bivouacs. Men were warned not to remove furniture from unoccupied houses to furnish billets or dugouts.

It was announced that three men had been awarded the Military Medal:

10451 Cpl S J Caller C Coy
23691 Pte W Exell D Coy
37895 Pte A J Rawlings B Coy

Two men who were due to face court martial were excused by higher authority on account of their recent gallant conduct in action. These were 36789 Pte J Penny of A Coy who had absented himself and 18480 Pte J W White B Coy who was accused of desertion.

8th November 1918

A grave warning was issued that there had been numerous breaches in security with the green envelopes

and field service postcards. In the case of the green envelopes which relied on the honour system too much information was being disclosed in letters sent to other parts of the front where they could easily fall into enemy hands. On the field service postcards men were adding too many comments when they should merely be crossing out unwanted words. Further instructions were given to field censors not to pass postcards which disclosed locations. The full order had to read out to all men on parade.

A warning was issued not to use German dummy bullets in training exercises as they often contained explosives and could cause injury.

A reinforcement draft arrived. 18 men for A Coy, 9 for B Coy, 35 for C Coy and 10 for D Coy - a total of 72

10th November 1918

There was a Brigade Service in the Salle des Petes at 11:00. Presbyterians and non-conformists had a service at the Protestant church in Rue de la Republic and the Roman Catholics in the Lancashire Lads Hall.

11th November 1918

The battalion was still at Le Câteau where it was when hostilities ceased at 11:00. on the 11th November 1918.

News of the Armistice was, according to the Battalion diarist, *received by the troops very quietly.*

Casualties for November were:-

Officers

Killed 2Lt IJ Field, 2Lt J Long (4th Nov)

Other ranks

Killed 10, wounded 35, missing 1, died of wounds

2

Sources

Log book of the 8th Bn

War Diaries

Petre pp 352-371

Biography of N B Hudson,

History of 18th Divn p 351/2

Concluded in section 348

