

## Volume 2 Section 357-02

### Officer's Reports of Capture

# Captain Alfred Douglas Clare

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Captain Clare of the 2nd Royal Berks was captured on the 27th May 1918 in the Third German offensive when they were in what was thought to be a rest area near the river Aisne. See Section 312. He describes his capture.

The Battalion relieved the French in this southern sector of BERRY-AU-BAC about the middle of May 1918, and occupied in its second tour of duty a position in the left sector of the Bde front, with another Btn of Bde on right, and the third Btn on Bde in support at GUYENCOURT. Immediately on arrival in this new sector (about May 14th) which was a large salient, the Comdg Officer – L'Colonel A.A. Griffin DSO (Lincoln Reg attd R.Berks) reported to Bde HQ how impossible the position was, should the Germans make an attack, as they had direct observation of our whole line from HILL 108 on our right, and from rising ground on our left between our left and the MIETTE stream.

1. On the evening of May 26th orders came for us to send out of the line officers, NCO's and men surplus to requirements as laid down in a certain trench warfare manual, and immediately afterwards:

2. A message from Divisional HQ that a German attack was expected early the following morning.

The CO at once reported that were he to comply with 1.

with a smaller Btn on so large a front, he could not hold himself responsible for the result of any action in 2.

The Germans launched their attack at 1 am on 27/5/18 by dropping a tremendous barrage, covering the ground from Btn HQ and including our two rear companies; (one in close support and one in reserve) and then back to and including the Divisional Artillery and the AISNE bridges. Our two forward Companies were almost untouched. We were defending in depth as well as breadth. About 3.30 am reports came from our rear Companies that Germans were all round them in very large numbers, and had attacked from HILL 108 and from our left. This we soon confirmed as Germans were visible from Btn Observation Post everywhere in large numbers, and had overcome our forward Companies by excess of trench mortars and machine guns. Under such circumstances with no artillery support, chances of a scrap were absolutely useless. Orders were given by our CO for "every man for himself" and he, I and others of Btn HQ waited at Btn HQ on the chance of a counter attack by the Btn in support at GUYENCOURT. A pigeon message was sent to Division about 4 am stating the position. This message appeared in the Times account of the 8th Division about 28/9/18. I was captured with Colonel Griffin at 7 am 27/5/18. [[TX01149]