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To: Headquarters,

90th. Infantry Brigade.

I beg to submit the following report on operations

July 28th - August 1st.

On the night of the 28/29th the Battalion under my command moved up from the CHATEAU SEGARD area to the front line and was disposed as follows:-

"D" Coy: Holding the front line by isolated posts in WARRINGTON AVENUE and STANLEY STREET stretching over the whole Brigade Front.

"C" & "B" Coys: In WELLINGTON CRESCENT.

"A" Company: In unnamed trench behind RITZ STREET.

Battalion Headquarters was established at the Brigade H.Qs. in RIDGE STREET and the Regimental Aid Post in VINCE STREET.

The dispositions remained unchanged until the night of the 30th. ult. when "D" Coy: threw forward outposts into "No Man's Land" "C" Coy: went forward to STANLEY STREET and BARK STREET and "B" and "A" Companies to MAPLE TRENCH. Patrols were sent out on both nights. They crossed to the enemy front line, but neither saw the enemy nor heard sounds indicating his near presence.

On the night of the 30/31st I went forward at 9.0 pm and personally disposed the Battalion in "No Man's Land" in readiness for the attack.

"D" Company, assembled with the four platoons in line, had its right flank resting on THE GAP and its left about 150 yds. north of the German Gourmoek Street, and lay about 200 yards from the German Front Line. Twenty-five yards behind was "C" Coy: covering the same frontage but with the platoons in line of sections. "A" & "B" Coys: lay about 25 yards behind "C", also drawn up in line of sections, but sharing the ~~entire~~ ^{batt} frontage between them - "A" on the left and "B" on the right. I placed H.Q. Coy: 25 yards behind "A" & "B" and established my personal H.Q. in "A" Coy: in the third wave.

Five minutes before ZERO the companies gradually crept forward until the leading company was about 150 yards from the enemy front line.

Therefrom I went forward with my Adjutant and Intelligence Officer to the second wave. At Zero the Battalion advanced behind the barrage across SANCTUARY WOOD to the enemy front line. Immediately the Germans sent up a great number of flares and S.O.S. Rockets and opened fire with Machine Guns, besides putting down a light barrage of mustard gas shells. Nevertheless the leading wave captured its objective with little difficulty although they came under pretty severe machine gun fire. The enemy defence system, evidently consisted of small isolated posts and these were rushed and the garrisons killed or captured. After leap-frogging the front wave successfully the second wave met with considerable opposition but they continued to press home the attack and overcame it.

There was great difficulty in identifying the battered enemy trenches and many men in this second wave passed right over the objective and took part in the assault on STIRLING CASTLE. In this strong point the enemy had evidently decided to make a stand and showed no desire to surrender. One batch of 44 Germans fought very stoutly until surrounded and forced to lay down their arms. By 5.30 am. however STIRLING CASTLE was captured and the Third wave had passed on and captured the BLUE LINE, the trench traced east of this strong point which was the final objective of the Battalion.

There was then a pause in the proceedings and it was expected that the assaulting lines of the supporting battalions would pass through.

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The work of mopping up still continued and finally it was found that the total number of prisoners captured was 101 - 98 unwounded or with slight wounds and three seriously wounded. Two machine guns and three minesweepers were also captured but were ~~unfortunately~~ unfortunately left for removal later, being placed in a place of safety and ~~covered with leaves~~. *camouflaged*

Battalion H.Q. was established in a dug-out at J.13.s.7/1, which was occupied by the enemy when taken over and yielded four prisoners (included in the total above.)

The situation at 8.0.am was as follows:-

"A" & "B" Coys: holding a line of shell holes east of STIRLING CASTLE: "C" Coy: in battered shell-holes and trenches on the Line JAM RESERVE and about STIRLING CASTLE: "D" Company in craters and portions of JAM SUPPORT and shell holes close to Battalion Headquarters.

About 9.0.am units of the 89th Brigade came up and reinforced the BLUE LINE and STIRLING CASTLE. At 10.30.am. I was instructed to send a party of 1 Officer and 60 Other Ranks to Brigade H.Qs for the purpose of bringing up ammunition and setting under Brigade Orders, this party did not rejoin during operations.

Between 10.0.am and 11.0.am the enemy shell fire became severe and continued to be so until the Battalion was relieved on the 1st. instant. Heavy H.E. Shells and shrapnel were fired unceasingly in a haphazard way over the area occupied by the Battalion and over SANCTUARY WOOD. The front line Companies especially came under heavy fire. The enemy machine gunners and snipers went on unceasingly and movement up to the front line became extremely perilous.

I issued orders for the reorganisation of the Battalion for defence in case of counter-attack as follows:-

- "A" Coy: on the Left and "B" Coy: on the right to hold the front line, constructing for themselves a line of strong points and keeping in touch with units on the flanks. "A" Coy: got in touch at once but "B" Coy experienced great difficulty in trying to do so.
- "C" Coy: "C" Coy: was ordered, when carrying party returned, to consolidate in JAM RESERVE and
- "D" Coy: to make strong points from the craters, JAM SUPPORT and JAM ROW, keeping in touch with the WILTSHIRE REGT.

Before "D" Coy: could carry out the orders it was instructed to supply a party of 100 men for clearing the battlefield, a demand that was met with difficulty.

At 4.30pm a message was received from the King's Liverpool Regiment that a counter-attack was threatening "from the wood in front" and it being presumed that this referred to INVERNESS COPSE, the only wood in front of the Battalion, a message to this effect was sent by pigeon to Brigade Headquarters all the signal wires having been cut. No counter-attack took place. About 5.30pm a message was received from the King's Liverpool Regiment that a counter-attack was imminent from the direction of GLENGORSE WOOD. Our Artillery promptly got on to the target and the attack failed to reach our trenches.

About 8.0.pm the only surviving Officer of "A" & "B" Coys: at that time in ~~hazd~~ action reported that he had sustained very severe casualties, his total strength being about 20 rifles, and, as at that time STIRLING CASTLE and the line east of it was strongly held by the 89th. Brigade, and owing also to the fact that the men of "C" Coy: had not returned, it was deemed advisable to concentrate the Battalion under close control from Battalion Headquarters and form with it a Support Line in rear of the King's Liverpool Regiment. Accordingly the remains of "A" & "B" Companies were withdrawn and the Battalion redispensed as follows:-

"D" Coy: on the line of craters, JAM SUPPORT AND JAM ROW:

A combined company from "A" & "B" ~~and~~ and "C" Coys: in close support in shell-holes about 100 yards in rear of a line with Battalion Headquarters extending to the South.

This situation continued overnight until the Battalion was withdrawn from the line at 12.30pm on the 1st. The withdrawal to the CHATEAU SEGARD area was made by small parties, but throughout the enemy shell fire was uninterrupted and there were several casualties.

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Great difficulty was experienced throughout the course of the operations in keeping up communications. The Signal wires were constantly cut by shell fire and runners proved very slow and uncertain. Messages sent through signal stations in rear failed to reach their destinations //

The casualties were severe: 9 Officers killed and wounded, and 227 Other Ranks killed, wounded and missing.

3.8.17.

Lieut. Colonel.
Commanding 18th (S) Battalion,
THE MANCHESTER REGIMENT.