

12th May The Batt remained in ESSARS

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14 May The Batt remained in ESSARS.

15. May - Operations against AUBERS RIDGE + FESTUERET by the 1st ARMY + Canadians.

At 8.30 pm. the 22nd Infy Brigade moved from billets at ESSARS near BETHUNE to take up a line in the trenches at 520 d. France BETHUNE Combined Street 36a 36, 36b 36c. [ROUTE - LE TOURET - RUE L'EPINETTE + thence across country -]

The Batt formed up along the parapet + parados right resting on the RUE CHAILLOUX, on a frontage of 350^y

The Front parapet was held by the 2nd RRU

The Bedfordshire Regt who maintained fire on the breaches made in the enemy's parapet by our artillery on the 14th + 15th

The 1/ Warwicksshire Regt were in support trenches behind the 1/R.W.7 - The 2nd RRU

The Queen's Regt continued the line to the right with their left on the RUE CHAILLOUX with the 1/S Staffords in support behind them - The 8/ Royal Scots being in Reserve -

Batt Strength in Trenches

806 NCO's + men

25 officers including the MO

A draft of 49 NCO's + men recently arrived together with 2 NCO's per Company were left with the transport

16th May

The Batt^h was ordered to assault the German trenches to its immediate front on a front of 200^{yds}, take the German 1st + 2nd Line trenches moving ~~as~~ due E; from the German 2nd Line trenches the Batt^h was to move S.E + take up a line facing SE in Sq. 276 between the RUE QUINQUE + the RUE NOUVEAU with it left on the road joining these two - the line to be prolonged to the S by the Warwick + QUEENS -

The line allotted was formed by a big German high command communication trench - reported heavily bastioned + probably prepared for use as a fire trench -

At 2.45 am the intense bombardment commenced + ceased at 3.16 am. Then Batt^h immediately assaulted - each Company in two lines + company behind company - order of companies A, B, C, D.

The parapet was mounted by scaling ladders - ours were had been previously cut + bridged so thrown across a broad ditch which ran a long our front -

3 MG under Lt Ackerley went with B Coy
2 MG under Hodges with C Coy - The CO went with C Coy - The 2nd in command with B Coy - The Batt^h suffered very heavily from Shell + machine gun fire both in crossing the parapet + the space between our parapet + the 1st German line - The CO R.M.L.C. Col Gabbett + the DC B Coy were killed at once

The 2nd in Command Major G.F.H. Dickson, the
O.C. C Coy Lt Chapman + the O.C. "D" Coy all fell
severely wounded together with many of
officers N.C.O.s + men - The German first line
was however quickly stormed - touch
being obtained with the Scots Guards of 1
20^t B²² - The 2nd German line was also
quickly carried + the line pushed on -
A heavy M.G. + rifle fire then opened from
the left front - the Scots Guards lost direction
+ moved to face the fire drawing a portion
of the B²² with them

The rear half of the B²² suffered very
heavily in getting to the German trench
only 3 officers of the last two companies
reaching it un wounded -

In the mean time portions of A + B Coy under
Capt. Coles had joined the Scots Guards +
rapidly advanced E, others together with
about 40 Scots Guards were collected
Capt. Stockwell on whom the Comm.
of the Battⁿ had devolved + were directed
S.E. towards LA QUINQUE RUE - The
survivors of C Coy were directed by Lt
LAW towards LA QUINQUE RUE + succeeded
in joining Capt Stockwell - D Coy
proceeded to reverse the German parapet
make the line captured tenable + were
afterwards pushed on in support of the
advanced line - The portion of the
Battⁿ under Capt Coles became isolated
+ were forced to fall back - Capt Coles +
Lt WOODWARD were left behind wounded

This party joined the Scots Guards in their trench + remained under the command of Major Colör.

The rest of the Pte under Capt Stockwell + St Walmsley continued to advance towards LA QUINQUE RUE until forced to halt by the fire of our own guns from which they suffered severely - About 7 pm touch was obtained with a platoon of the Warwicks sent in support + the Northern end of the long German communication trench which was the Batt objective was carried. A German M.G. was captured after the team had been killed -

Shortly afterwards 2 Cos of the QUEEN + two companies of the WARWICKS worked up the trench + the trench was fully occupied -

The N end of the trench ended in some houses + an orchard - One of the houses was cleared by the Batt + placed in a state of defence - but the other houses + orchard were held by the Germans. The enemy made no effort to attack but sniped from front flank + rear -

About 2pm the enemy commenced shelling the trench with H.E. ^{The French} which afforded little cover - Reinforcements were asked for to clear the orchard +

houses - 100 men of the 7th London Regt were placed under the orders of the O.C. 11 RWF together with the MORTAR battery for this purpose - The orchard & houses were heavily shelled & the London Regt sent to attack the orchard covered by the fire of the 11 RWF & a M.G. - The orchard was taken but the London Regt were forced to fall back through M.G. fire -

In the mean time about 600^x of the trench occupied by other corps was heavily shelled & rendered untenable & the Bn found themselves separated from the rest of the Brigade -

Darkness was coming on when the Batt^t fell back to the line held in front of the German 2nd line when orders were received for the Batt^t to withdraw to the trenches held by the Queens N of the Rue CAILLOUX - The retirement was successfully accomplished.

Of the MG's of the Bn 4 were knocked out during the advance on the 1st German line - The remaining gun under Lt Law came into action from the German parapet against the Germans retreating from the trenches on the left -

The Bn were successful in penetrating into the German position for 1200 yards -

Strength of the Battⁿ in The trenches
on morning of the 16th

Officers 25 including M.O.

Other ranks 806

Casualties on the 16th May

Officers

Killed

Bd^t Col R E P Gabbett

Capt. S. Jones

Lt R. E Naylor

Lt R H Ackersley

Lt Morris

Lt H F Lynch

Died of Wounds 2

Lt J. B Savage a/Adjt

Lt H. L G. Edwards

Wounded 9

Major G. F. H Dickson

Capt. M. L Lloyd Moulton

Lt H. Chapman

Lt W. I. G. Farren

Lt R. C D Owen

Lt R. Gamber Parry

Lt W. Kelsey Fry Medical Officer

Lt H. F. G. Williams

Lt C. E. Woodward

Wounded + Missing 1

Capt. H. S. Coles

Missing 2d Lt. Jones.

Casualties -Other Ranks.

Killed	118
Wounded	271
Missing	164
Wounded + missing	<u>6</u>
	<u>559</u>

17th May - The night was fairly quiet except for shelling which did little damage. The Bn remained in the trenches during the day -

The bodies of the following officers were collected & buried at night -

Bt Lt Col R E P Gabbett

Capt. S Jones

Lt R.E. Naylor

Lt R.H. Archibald

~~Lt F. H. Morris~~ R.S.

Lt H.F. Lynch

Lt A.L.G. Edwards.

Lt. J.B. Savage.

Their graves lie close to the S. side of the RUE CAILLOUX & about 200' behind the line of trenches -

Casualties .Officers .

Wounded Lt. G.S. Barton (serving
Grenadiers)

Other ranks .

Wounded 3