

ON EVENING OF 17th. JULY 1918.

Appendix "F" 2

In order to shorten and straighten our line the Brigade was to attack and capture the following objectives:-
26th. Bn. to attack on South side of Railway from U-6-a to V-1-b-7-5 and 25th. Bn. on North side of Railway in clussive to P-32 central.

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS AND DISPOSITIONS.

With a view of assisting this attack two platoons were pushed out during the night of 15th. instant to seize two enemy Strong Posts at P-31-d-7-5 and P-31-d-1-7.

The Post at P-31-d-1-7 was occupied and held but the East party attacking post at P-31-d-7-5 met with strong resistance and were finally forced back after suffering a number of casualties.

The post at P-31-d-1-7 was withdrawn during the early morning of the 17th. instant.

During the night 16th/17th. instant "C" Coy. closed to their right as far as the orchard and "B" Coy. took over part of front line from Orchard to P-31-a-7-3.

This disposed of the Battalion as follows:-

Front Line "A", "B" & "C" Coys. in that order from left to right and "D" Coy. in Reserve in what had been our outpost line before first advance on that front.

In addition to above dumps of S.A.A. & Bombs, Wiring & Engineering Material and Reserve supplies of Water were established well forward in convenient places. A Battale Hd. Qtrs. prepared at O-30-c-9-2 and a R.A.P. at O-36-b-6-5.

FORMATIONS.

Attack was made by "C" Coy. on right "B" Coy. centra and one strong platoon of "A" Coy. on left. Each Company attacking in one wave of two lines. One platoon of "D" Coy. was told off to carry for "C" Coy. and one platoon of "A" Coy. to carry for "B" Coy. These two carrying platoons were to move 50 yards in rear of attacking troops and assist as mopping up parties.

INFANTRY ADVANCE.

At Zero hour 9-45pm., the barrage opened. The attacking troops immediately left our trenches and closed up under the barrage. The barrage remained on the first drop for 6 minutes and just allowed nice time to close up. The barrage then lifted and the troops advanced.

Considerable M.G. fire was encountered from the very beginning, for example in one small post at P-32-d-20-15^W five light Machine Guns were captured lying side by side on the parapet.

The enemy's system of defence was a number of mutually supported posts disposed in depth. Against each of these small attacks had to be organised, which took some little time and caused us to loose the barrage about half way over.

This of course allowed enemy Machine Gunners more freedom during remainder of advance.

The right Company finally took the Western fork of the Y shaped JAFFA TRENCH on the North side of the Railway at about 10-10pm. which fortunately they mistook for their final objective as by this time they had two officers and 22 O/Rs. only.

During their advance the enemy had gone back from post to post and it is estimated that 150 to 200 of the enemy had congregated in the Eastern fork of JAFFA TRENCH and had we attempted to take this we would have proba bly been wiped out.

Part of the Centre Coy. reached their final objective about 10-10 but were subjected to murderous M.G. fire and Bombing.

They held on for some time but being unable to get into touch with either flank and fire becoming exceptionally heavy they dropped back to Moon Shaped Trench.

BARRAGE.

The Artillery barrage was light but the shooting accurate on our front. It is a pity that the barrage wasn't greater in volume as the enemy fought his way back most of the way and to do so had to go through the places where our barrage was playing.

The number of enemy casualties from our barrage appear to have been very light.

Light Trench Mortars fired successfully on the pre-arranged targets.

Heavy T.M's. were unable to fire as they were too far back being out of range.

ENEMY RESISTANCE.

In every case the enemy put up some show of fight. In two cases as we approached his posts, the garrisons left the trench and came out to meet us, a hand to hand struggle ensuing.

The machine gunners fought to the last man in every case. The remainder after the exchange of a few shots would withdraw to the next post behind and continue firing.

CONSOLIDATION.

When it was known that the centre Coy. were not on their objective arrangements were at once made to push on and a line of outposts were pushed out 250 yards in front. Early the following evening a line was taped out from P-31-d-85-40 to P-32-a-8-2 and a line of posts established and dug in there with touch with the 5th. Brigade on our left and 26th. Bn. on our right by patrol.

FINAL DISPOSITIONS.

Owing to the casualties in the attacking troops being heavy, the right Coy. had to be reinforced by the platoon carrying for it and finally by the two remaining platoons of "D" Coy. "B" Coy. in centre was reinforced by the platoon carrying for it and the platoon of "A" Coy. on left was reinforced by the remaining platoons of "A" Coy. This disposed of the whole Battalion in front line working as 3 Companies.

Two Coys. of 27th. Bn. were moved forward, one to our old front line and one to VILLERS LINE as Supports.

PRISONERS. *taken*

Wounded.
1 Off. and 7 O/Rs.

Unwounded.
20 O/Rs.

ESTIMATED ENEMY DEAD.

Killed in Action evening of 17th. inst. 60
" " Counter Attack (as per special report) 200

260

CAPTURED MATERIAL.

2 Heavy Machine Guns.
2 Light " "

OUR CASUALTIES.

Killed.
1 Off. 25 O/Rs.

Wounded.
2 Off. 66 O/Rs.

Missing.
5 O/Rs.

TOTAL CASUALTIES.

3 Off. 92 O/Rs.

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(Signed) W.M.DAVIS Major Lieut Col.,

C. O. 25th. A. I. Battalion.