

War Diary entries - The King's Royal Rifle Corp's 1st - 17th April 1918

Officers killed, wounded, missing etc. are named. Of the O.R. (other ranks) 27 were killed, 125 wounded, 337 missing, 25 wounded & missing.

1st April to 4th April: ZONNEBEKE:

Marched to BERRY FARM and entrained by light railway for WARRINGTON CAMP, VLAMERTINGHE. Arrived at about 5.30 am 5th April. Battalion rested; baths allotted to Bn. in BRANDHOEK.

7th April:

Bn. marched to PESELHOEK and entrained at 10.15 am for TINQUES, arrived about 3.15 pm and marched to billets in PENIM, about one & quarter miles, billets fairly good. Maj. E Wenham had requested advanced party on the 6th.

8th April:

Bn. carried on training, A + B Coys firing on short range, C + D on 100 yd range.

9th April:

Bn. training as usual. All officers and 12 NCO's proceeded to IZEL LES HAMEAU for lecture by Div. Commander on order of fighting. Warning order received that Brigade would move on the 10th.

10th April: PENIM, 9.15 am

Battalion ordered to march to SUS ST. LEGER. Got about 2 miles on the way, then were ordered to turn about and move back to PENIM and stand by ready to move up north. Orders received at 8.30 pm to march to AUBIGNY and entrain for CAESTRE. Transport to move by road, cooks and water carts accompanied Bn. Bn. marched to AUBIGNY arriving there about 12 midnight.

11th April:

Entrained and moved off about 1 am. arrived at CAESTRE about 10 am.

2nd Lt. H.A. Cram re-joined Battalion.

Headquarters 'A' 'B' + 'C' moved by motor lorry to just West of METEREN, remainder of Bn. marched and moved into a camp East of BAILLEUL on the REVELSBERG Rd., arrived there about 3 pm., the men had dinners.

Orders received to stand to and shortly after, the Bn. marched off to relieve the South Lancashires in front at NEUVE EGLISE, 'B' + 'C' Coys in line, 'A' + 'D' in support. Minimum Reserve under Maj. Wenham, with Lt's Howard, Brough, 2nd Lt's Cram, Read, Morant, Masters, Riches, Jeffery, Goldsack, Grey, and about 120 other ranks, remained at REVELSBERG.

12th April: NEUVE EGLISE

2nd Lt Grey reported to Brigade H.Q. for duty as liaison officers. Minimum Reserve were under orders to move at short notice. Relief of S. Lancs carried out about 5 am.

A heavy barrage opened on our right, barrage lengthened. A party was sent out to form a defensive flank.

2nd Lt Carsidine + 20 other ranks go out from 'C' coy's unit as a patrol, being fired on.

A message received from S. Lancs to say that farm at same map reference was occupied by the enemy.

At 6.15 am enemy's fire slackened. Reports received from Coys that all is OK.

06.40 - NOUVE EGLISE After report of enemy in Farm, covering and overhead machine-gun fire asked for and given. Capt. Francis phones all OK.

07.15 - Capt. Francis sends message by runner to say that strong party of enemy in buildings retire after being fired upon by rifle and machine gun fire.

07.30 - Message received from Brigade ordering Officer Commanding 16th KRRC to attack ROMARIN in conjunction with S. Lancs.

08.00 - Shelling died down, front fairly quiet

10.00 am. - Informed by S. Lancs that they have orders not to attack ROMARIN

10.30 am. - Shelling started again in vicinity somewhat South.

1 pm. - Quiet again, Commanding Officer South Lancs visits Brigade H.Q. and discussed attack on ROMARIN.

Capt. Collins from 100th Bde. visits Bde. H.Q.

2.30 pm. Message from Brigade that ROMARIN attack is cancelled.

3 pm. - Message received from 2nd Worcesters and our 'D' Company to say that considerable enemy activity can be seen and that they are massing

3.15 pm - Message received from 75th Bde. stating that 2000 enemy had been seen advancing N.W, from STEENWERKE and TROIS ARTROIS.

4 pm - Heavy enemy barrage on our line. Bde on right fall back. Enemy seen advancing. Attack lasts until 8 pm.

Enemy well held, 'C' Coy fall back a little, right flank of line well back. Lt. Howard and 75 other ranks sent up from Minimum Reserve to reinforce also 2nd Lt. Goldsack, Lt. Riches.

2 am - Our line intact. All quiet, very heavy mist.

6 am - Heavy mist.

Word sent that Battalion of mixed Brigades on our right had fallen back.

2 platoons of 'D' Coy sent to reinforce. All troops on right seen falling back. Very heavy barrage opened on our line, right flank and Bn. H.Q., still held on.

C.O. decides to run round to 'B' Coy and form a defensive flank and get into trench with 2nd Worcestershire's on our left, make a dash through barrage. Enemy seen immediately in front of us and to our left. Practically cut off.

C.O. and myself wounded, no sign of 'B' Company or Worcestershire's.

Dash through enemy and eventually through NEUVE EGLISE

Minimum Reserve - Reported at Brigade HQ, ordered to send Lt. Howard and 75 O.R. (C + D Coy) with 2nd Lt. Goldsack & Lt. Riches to move up to KORTEPYP (KORTEPIPE) via WATERLOO ROAD and clear up situation on the right of Bn. front, extending and clearing ground between NIEPPE RD. and KORTEPYP RD.

Remainder of Reserve took up position in front of Brigade HQ. Good deal of shelling and machine gun fire during night.

13th April:

6am - Very cold night. Bde moved back during night and took up position in camp close to KEERSEBROM. Reserve moved back

To 17th April:

Further War Diary pages describe further fall backs and German advances

Lt. Grey in the Minimum Reserve at Brigade H.Q., tried to get in touch with the forward Bn. HQ but found it was surrounded and could gain no news of the Companies. The remainder of the Battalion and Minimum Reserve fell back and took up a position in camp near KEERSEBROM.
