

WAR DIARY/INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

The following transcription is from the War Diaries for the 1/13th London Regiment (1st Kensington Battalion) who were part of the 168th Brigade, 56th Division fighting on the Somme for the five days leading up to the death of Private Walter Springett 5th October 1916.

The officer adjutant included just movements but not any details of the actions in the front line near the village of Neuve Eglise area of Somme.

1st Oct: CITADEL. Company training - voluntary church service.

2nd Oct: Company training - received warning that we should be moving with the line tomorrow.

3rd Oct: 168th Infantry Brigade relieved 169th Infantry Brigade in the right sector of the Divisional front, the Kensingtons relieving the Q.W. Rifles in the 3rd German line in T.9.d. being in support with the London Scottish in the front line on the right, and the Royal Fusiliers in the front line on the left, and the Rangers in reserve. The Battalion moved from The CITADEL at 12.30 pm by Companies at 5 minute intervals.

When the leading Company had reached BILLON Farm, orders were received that the move was probably postponed 24 hours. The Battalion marched back, but just as it reached the Citadel further orders were received that the move would be carried out as originally ordered - The Battalion then proceeded - owing to the ground being very heavy, the Battalion took a very long time to reach trenches, the first Company arrived about 10 pm, and the last Company did not arrive until about 3 am.

4th Oct: About 2 am. a warning order was received that with a view to advancing our line on the 5th inst., the following preparations would be made on the night of the 4/5th.

The Kensingtons would move with the line, taking over a part of each Battalion's front, Kensingtons to take over from T 5 c. 1.8. to midway between FOGGY and RAINY trenches, each Battalion would dig its own assembly trenches, details of work to be sent later.

At 1.30 pm we received orders that the operations were definitely postponed 48 hours and we were therefore not to move with the front line tonight but were to dig assembly trenches.

At 5.30 pm we received definite instructions to the effect that the trenches we were to dig was one, a trench between 25 trench and FUSILIER Post at T 4 b.9.6, and two, a trench between FOGGY and BURNABY trench, finding there our covering party.

'A' Company was detailed to dig the first trench and 'C' Company the second, 'D' Company furnished a covering party of 1 strong platoon and a Lewis Gun. Application was made for some tape for laying out the trenches but none was available. The London Scottish lent us two guides to lead the party to 25 trench and FOGGY trench.

5th Oct: At about 6 am the working parties moved back - no work having been done - they had been led by the guides to the south of MORVAL, the guides then stated that they had lost their way and went off to try and find it, leaving the party where they were - the guides were not seen again - and the officers tried to find out where they were, but could not find their whereabouts until it got light, when they returned.

About 3 pm orders were received that the Battalion would relieve the London Scottish in the front line that night and would also carry out the work which had been ordered for last night - Battalion H.Q. stayed in the same place - tape was supplied to the digging parties.

Relief commenced as soon as it was dark and was complete by 10.45 pm, the Battalion then being in GERMAN, AEROPLANE, 25, FOGGY and SHAMROCK trenches. In pursuance of orders, an officer's patrol was sent out as soon as relief was complete to reconnoitre the German trenches and gun pits opposite our front and HAZY trench. This patrol reported that GUN PITS and HAZY trenches were occupied and that in front of the latter there was thin wire - during the evening we also established a report centre in a dug out, S.E. of LES BOEUFS and we reconnoitred East of LES BOEUFS for dug outs suitable for Battalion H.Q. for our own Brigade and reported result to Brigade.

On the last page, in the margin, the Battalion Adjutant mentioned that up to midday of the 5th Oct. the casualties were 10 Other Ranks killed and 11 Other Ranks wounded, but no mention of how the Battalion received the casualties