

6. As soon as the advance from our assembly trenches started the leading Coys came under heavy hostile machine gun fire from the direction of the Harp. An enemy artillery barrage had been expected too, but this was not in evidence at all. This machine gun fire however caused many casualties among the two leading companies, Lieut G.C.M. Leech (died of wounds) commanding "A" Company and the three other officers of this Coy 2nd-Lieut A.J. D'Alton (Wounded) 2nd-Lieut F. Church (wounded) 2nd-Lieut J.C. Broadbent (wounded) and three of the four sergeants of this Company- Captain A.E. Dent Commanding "B" Company (killed) 2nd-Lieut E.R. Clarke (killed) of the same Company and 2nd-Lieut R.B. Van Praagh (killed) of "C" Company. The above were thus all put out of action before the first line of enemy wire was reached.
- 7-50 am. But the advance was not checked and the first enemy trench was captured at 7-50 am under our barrage. The wire in front of this trench had been well cut by our artillery and proved no obstacle. Passing over the captured first line trench "A" and "B" Coys lay down under our barrage for the next advance on the "String". "D" Coy came up into the captured trench and started "Mopping up". "C" Coy came up into the first line trench.
- 7-55 am. Battalion HQ moved forward from G.35.d.8.12. towards our objective reaching first line about 8-20 am.
- 8 am. The advance was continued on the "String".  
to "A" "B" and "C" Coys all coming under the fire of two  
8-10 am. machine guns posted in "The String" opposite enemy snipers being also active hereabouts, from the direction of NOISY WORK. The wire in front of the "String" had not been well cut by our artillery and was a serious obstacle, making progress under machine gun fire very difficult indeed. About this time the following casualties took place, Lieut H. Stewart commanding "C" Coy (killed) 2nd-Lieut R. Cook (C Coy) killed and Lieut V. Richardson (B Coy) wounded for the second time.
- By this time the 16 tanks told off to attack the "Harp" should have made their presence felt and would have been invaluable in dealing with the machine guns wire of the "String", but they had all stuck either in or before reaching the first line- (afterwards one did succeed in passing the "String", but that was after it had been captured and too late to be of any assistance to us.)
- 8-10 am. Owing to the machine guns and snipers the only parties that succeeded in entering "the string" at 8-10 am. under our barrage were two small parties which had worked up the communication trenches from First line trench to "String" these communication trenches being fortunately at either end of our objective.
- 8-20 am. The position about 8-20 am when Battalion Headquarters arrived on the scene, was that we had obtained a footing at either end of our objective but the centre was held by 2 machine guns and snipers. A certain amount of hostile shelling was now taking place particularly on the communication trenches leading from the first line to the "String".
- 8-30 am. Two platoons of "C" Company were sent along F.I. onwards communication trench to support the small party of "B" Coy already in the "String" on the left. These together worked along the "String" to the right, dealing with the machine guns and snipers on their way, till touch was gained with the small party of "A" Coy, which had entered the "String" by the communication trench near the right of our objective. The dugouts in the "String" were all

nicketed and touch gained with the 4th Royal Fusiliers on our left and the 5th Oxf & Bucks L.I. on our right by about 9-15 am.

9-15 am onwards. At 9-15 am a message was sent to 42nd Inf Bde that the objective allotted to the Battalion had been gained.

Battalion HQ were established in a dugout at junction of POL TRENCH and P.I. Communication trench.

Clearing up, consolidation and reorganisation of captured trenches proceeded.

Other units proceeding with capture of remaining portion of the "Harp" had passed through our lines previous to this.

The Battalion remained in the captured trenches until 4 pm. 11th April when it was relieved by 9th Rifle Brigade. It returned to WANQUETIN that night.

It is roughly estimated that rather more than 300 prisoners were captured by the Battalion mostly of the 76 R.I.R. (Prussians) Over 100 were extracted from the dugouts in first line trench. Over 60 from the dugouts in the "String" About 40 or 50 including snipers and machine gunners were collected apart from the crew of the dugouts.

Besides prisoners 2 machine guns, one medium Trench mortar on wheels, and 2 Granatenwerfer 15 were captured, together with a large quantity of ammunition and bombs.

The casualties to the Battalion as at present ascertained are as follows :-

Killed	6	Officers	69	O.R.
Wounded	4	"	118	O.R.
Missing			17	O.R.
Total	10	Officers	204	O.R.

All our wounded were evacuated by 5 pm. which may be considered a good performance on the part of the medical personnel concerned.

During these operations it was noteworthy :-

1. That our guns had dealt very effectively with the enemy front line wire, but ineffectively wire before the "String".
2. That although the trenches were much knocked about, yet in no single instance in our sector was a single dugout entrance blown in.
3. That only the enemy machine gunners and snipers put up any sort of fight at all. These fought exceedingly well

but the remainder seemed to have no "Moral" at all.

4. The failure (subject) of our ~~xxxxxx~~ tanks.

13th April 1917.

Lieut-Colonel, Commanding  
9th K.R.Rif C.