

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**BASED ON EXTRACTS FROM THE REGIMENTAL CHRONICLES**

The Battalion was commanded during this period by Lieut.-Colonel C. R. C. Boyle (2nd Battalion), and took part in the Third Battle of Ypres and, later on, in the Battle of Cambrai; but in February 1918 its existence was brought to a close, for, as already mentioned elsewhere, it was among the battalions destined to be broken up.

**From the Battalion Diary.**

**July 1st-21st.**—The Battalion remained in rest billets at Montrelet for three weeks, during which period the mornings were devoted to platoon and company training, and the afternoons to sports competitions under Battalion and Brigade arrangements. These included football, tug-of-war, boxing, shooting, cross-country runs, and a Brigade Athletic Sports Meeting.

On the 11th the Divisional Commander inspected the Battalion.

On the 12th, at the Divisional Horse Show, the Battalion obtained two 1st prizes, one 3rd, and one 4th. Lieut.-Colonel H. M. Dillon, D.S.O., left the Battalion on the 13th July, on appointment to the command of the Corps Reinforcement Depot, and Major C. R. C. Boyle took over command of the Battalion.

On the 15th the 60th Brigade Summer Race Meeting took place.

**July 21st.**—The Battalion left Montrelet at 3.45 a.m. and marched to Doullens, thence proceeding by train to Hopoutre, and afterwards marching to Proven, where it went into camp about E.22.b.6.4.

**July 22nd-28th.**—In rest camp near Proven, training, etc.

**From the Diary of 2nd Lieut. H. Willes, Battalion Intelligence Officer.**

**July 29th.**—Out of the line, in rest camp near Proven (E.16.d.8.5, Map Sheet 27 N.E.). Heavy thunderstorms and rain in morning; cleared in afternoon. Football match against the 6th K.O.Y.L.I. Drawn—one all.

**July 30th.**—Dull day. Training. Respirator drill, etc. Compass March carried out by officers. 2nd Lieut. Allday took a billeting party to camp at F.10.d.4.6.

**July 31st.**—Beginning of offensive at Ypres. The Battalion moved up to camp at F.10.d.4.6. Bivouac sheets in wood; tents for officers. Paraded at 8.15a.m., marching through Proven and along Route A. Rain at night. The Battalion standing-to, on three hours' notice, this Brigade being in reserve to the 38th Division.

**August 1st.**—Wet all day.

**August 2nd.**—Intermittent rain. I went out with 3 Scouts to look at routes and tracks leading to the trenches. All almost impassable on account of mud. In morning, parades for clean clothing and respirator drill. I gave a lecture on map-reading, etc., to the Scouts.

**August 3rd.**—Rain. Eleven officers went up to the line to look at the country. Crossed the Canal at Bard Causeway, and went up as far as Periscope House, near Pilkem. Country beastly. Remnants of Boche trenches full of water. The 38th (Welsh) Division looked very miserable. They must have been wet through for 3 days. Arrived back at 6 p.m., very wet indeed. Hope it will be finer when we go up, or the men won't have much fight in them.

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**August 4th.**—Some rain, but a good deal finer. Showers in afternoon. Looked over maps which the men did yesterday. Went for a route march to International Corner, and showed the Scouts tracks 9 and 10. Both still muddy. All the companies had route marches, as it was a good opportunity to give the men some exercise. Heavy rain in the evening.

**August 5th.**—The Battalion paraded at 10.45 p.m. and marched to Proven, where entrained. Detrained at Elverdinghe, and marched to wood near Malakoff Farm, Battalion H.Q. (B.23.a.3.0). Here the Battalion bivouacked, while the transport moved to a camp near International Corner (A.9.a.1.7). This camp had been taken over by 2nd Lieut. All day. Category B men remained with the transport.

**August 6th.**—Fine, but misty. At 3 a.m. parties of 1 officer and 3 N.C.O.'s and runners went to look at the line. Visibility was poor, and they did not do much good, except foreseeing the route to the line. Self and 3 Scouts reached the Pilkem-Langemarck road, and went down it within sight of Ironcross.

The mist was too thick to see anything, but we came across the position that the K.O.Y.L.I. had taken up. The country is drying up nicely. Duck-boards past Pilkem Mill, and tape the rest of the way. Got back about 9 a.m. Working parties at night for the whole of A and B Companies and half C Company.

**August 7th.**— Fine day. I went up the line with 2nd Lieut. Amos and 2 Scouts. Country getting drier, and much work has been done. Tramway from Bridge 6 to Mauser Cottage, and duck-boards from road south of Pilkem Mill to Stray Farm, which is H.Q. of the Support Battalion. Had a good look at the country from Marsouin Farm. Langemarck is getting knocked to bits by our howitzers, and our front and support battalions appeared to be having a hell of a time in consequence. I judged it inadvisable to look closer into the matter. The country on either side of the Steenbeek resembled what I imagine Sodom and Gomorrah looked like more than anything else.

The Battalion waited in camp all day; and at 9 p.m. there was an S.O.S. alarm, which proved to be false.

**August 8th.**—Fine; some rain in evening. Every man in the Battalion on working parties, which were going throughout the day, from 4 a.m. to evening. Scouts did a sketch of the camp from the west. General Blackader (our new Divisional G.O.C.) held a conference of C.O.'s on the canal bank. In the afternoon there was a conference of officers, when the plan of attack, etc., was discussed. An unfortunate aeroplane (scout) crashed just outside camp, but the pilot was practically unhurt.

S.O.S. went up at 9.21 p.m., and we stood-to until 9.55 p.m.— another false alarm..

**August 9th.**—Fine. Working parties pushing trucks of stores for filling up the forward dumps. The Scouts did another field-sketch, which was a marked improvement on the last. I went with Colonel Boyle to visit the 7th Dorsets, who will be our right flank battalion in the attack on the 13th. Look pretty stout fellows. They were practising the attack. We had a conference.

Our camp was shelled at various times during the day, but there were no casualties. The working parties had two men slightly wounded. Heard from the Transport Officer that his lines at Saragossa Farm (where the pack ponies are) were shelled. The K.R.R.C. have had some animals killed every night.

General Blackader commands the Division. General Matheson having gone sick.

**August 10th.**—Fine, but windy. Two R.B. officers, who will act as moppers-up, came to see us this morning; we had a conference, and afterwards a pow-wow for discussing aeroplane photos, of which I have quite a collection. The moppers-up will be B Company, 12th R.B., with 2nd Lieut. England in command—two platoons with our A and B Companies, and two with C and D.

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Three officers of the Dorsets turned up in the afternoon, and we did some liaison work. In the evening the C.O. and self went to Brigade H.Q. Working parties as yesterday. We are getting a lot of them these days.

We hear that the 59th Brigade will try to clear the Steenbeek tomorrow at dawn. Hope they succeed, as we want elbow-room for forming up before the attack. It might make all the difference.  
Major-General Douglas Smith has taken over the Division from Major-General Blackadder.

**August 11th.**—Fine morning; cloudy; some rain in evening. C Company, while on working party last night, had 2 men killed, 6 wounded, one man shell-shock, 1 man missing—rotten luck. S.O.S. (false alarm) at 7.15 a.m. In the evening went with the C.O. to see the K.S.L.I., and did some useful liaison work. Nothing has been left undone with regard to this attack to make the liaison as complete as possible. The liaison N.C.O.'s have all made each other's acquaintance by visiting their respective camps.

**OPERATIONS ON THE STEENBEEK.**

**August 12th.**—Fine morning; rain towards night. Practised attack in afternoon. A Hun aeroplane shot down one of our balloons near our camp, but both the observers reached the ground in safety. I went up with B Company, on working party, to Stray Farm, and saw the C.O. of the 10th K.R.R.C., who assured me that, so far from being the other side of the Steenbeek, we were not yet sure of this side.

The whole attack would seem to hinge on this, as the stream is a nasty obstacle to cross under fire, and coming at the beginning of the attack it will make a big difference. Bridges will have to be placed, and this will cause delay if done after zero, and danger of discovery if done before. I wish that the Welsh had carried on a bit farther, and got over the stream. The 59th have made three attempts at what the Division calls "peaceful occupation," but find that, oddly enough, the Boches do not seem inclined to let them occupy any territory in that vicinity at all peacefully.

C Company had three men wounded (not severely) on working party just as they were returning down to Marengo Causeway.

**August 13th.**—Cloudy, but dry. Again practised the attack. In the evening I went with the C.O. as far as Stray Farm, and saw the C.O. of the 10th R.B. who told us that he was going to make an attack with one and a half battalions, to give us room to form up on the other side of the Steenbeek. Good luck to him, say I. We are moving into the line tomorrow night, and making the attack on the 16th at dawn. This gives us all the 15th on which to have a good look at the country.

A great feature of this offensive is the tremendous speed with which the necessary work has been pushed on. Such things as roads and Decauville railways appear to spring up in the night, all over the country, and every available man is working at this.

At noon on the 14th August orders for the assembly for the attack were issued by the 60th Infantry Brigade. The 6th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry with the machine guns and T.M.B. guns allotted to it was to move into the assembly position on Y/Z night, and be formed up ready for the attack at 3 a.m. The O.C. of this Battalion was responsible for laying tapes on which to form up on the east of the Steenbeek if possible; otherwise on the west; but no movement was to take place until a line of posts had been established at least 80 yards in front of the forming-up tapes of the leading line.

At 6.30 p.m. on the 14th August the 60th Brigade issued some information about the dispositions of the enemy immediately opposite the 20th Division (of which the 60th Brigade formed part).

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The sector opposite the Division was said to be held by the German 79th Reserve Division, having 2 regiments in the line, and 1 regiment in reserve; while opposite the front of the 60th Brigade was the 262nd Regiment, thought to be disposed as follows :

1 battalion in front of the Langemarck Gheluvelt Line;

1 battalion in the same line; and

1 battalion in immediate support;

the counter-attacking regiment of the 79th Division being in the Poelcappelle area.

At 6.55 p.m. (14th August) final Secret Orders were sent out by the 60th Brigade :—

" Ref. Map : Bixschoote and St. Julien 1/10,000,

**1. The situation** on the Steenbeek is at present as follows:

2 companies 11th R.B. and 4 companies 10th R.B. on the east side of the stream, the 11th R.B. being on the right and south-east of the main Ironcross-Langemarck road.

The above 6 companies of the 59th Infantry Brigade are approximately 150 yards across the stream except at Au Bon Gite, where the line is only advanced 50 yards from the stream.

**2.** Two companies of the 11th R.B. are to-night making a concerted attack on Au Bon Gite, with a view to incorporating it in our line.

**3.** The hour of zero is 2 a.m.

**4.** The Relief ordered in 60th Infantry Brigade Order No. 234 must be completed by 2 a.m. 15th instant.

**5.** The 6th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry will not cross the stream tonight, but will be disposed in depth west of it (i.e., holding the west bank) and between the river and the Jolie Farm-Stray Farm Line.

**6.** The companies of the 59th Infantry Brigade east of the stream will be relieved tomorrow night under orders to be issued later.

**7.** Completion of relief tonight will be reported to Brigade H.Q. by the following sentences:

6th Oxford and Bucks, "Hurdles arrived";

12th R.B., "Send Bully tomorrow."

**2nd Lieut. Willes' Diary continued.**

**August 14th.**—Fine morning. Saw 7 Boche prisoners being examined by the police this morning, so I hope that the R.B.'s attack was a success. If they have taken Au Bon Gite it will make our job a long sight easier.

The Battalion started out from Soult Cottage Camp at 8 p.m., and went into the Line.

Battalion H.Q. at C.2.d.8.5, in concrete cells in trench ;

C and D Companies on Black Line, C.2.d.95 and C.2.b.93 ;

A and B Companies lining this (west) side of the Steenbeek, relieving the 59th Brigade, D.28.C. central to D.28.c.9.1.1 No casualties.

*According to Battalion Orders of this day, arrangements were made for the supply of water to the troops in the Line as follows :—10 tins per company were taken, by limber, to Marengo Causeway, and thence at 6 p.m. by trolley to 5 Chemins, two men per company being responsible for the unloading from the limber, reloading on the trucks, and pushing the latter to 5 Chemins, where the tins were handed over to companies as they came past. Companies had tea and rum at 7 p.m. before starting to move up.—ed.*

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I went with 2 Scouts to the Steenbeek to find the two forward companies and to reconnoitre the ground, but I had to come back early on account of the proposed attempt on Au Bon Gite, which, however, was postponed owing to a hitch in the troops coming up.

At 2.50 p.m. on the 15th August, the 60th Infantry Brigade issued the following orders :—

**1.** Situation on the East Bank of the Steenbeek.—Our troops on the east of the Steenbeek occupy posts approximately as follows :

U.28.d.45.60-24.73-18.80-08.75-U.28.c.98.98.-U.28.a.75.20-50.45-20.70.

The enemy appear to be holding posts at U.28.d.65.65.-40.75-40.85.-30.92.-U.28.b.52.27.

Also U.28.b.05.05 and U.22.C.50.22.

**2.** The troops of the 59th Infantry Brigade on the east of the Steenbeek are mostly 11th R.B. (Company Commander, Captain Slade, H.Q. in concrete dug-out on east bank of Steenbeek at about U.28.d.2.6). Battalion H.Q. at Stray Farm.

**3.** The troops of the 59th Infantry Brigade at present on the east side of the Steenbeek are being instructed to remain there.

At zero hour they will throw smoke bombs on Au Bon Gite. They have been instructed to go forward with the leading waves of the 6th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, and to mop-up Au Bon Gite.

**4.** The 6th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry will assemble with at least the leading line east of the Steenbeek, and great care must be taken not to show any movement to the enemy. These troops must, therefore, be dribbled across in small parties. The remainder of the 6th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry will form up on the west side of the stream.

**5.** Any troops of the 59th Infantry Brigade who are in position just east of the Steenbeek, and who are considered unnecessary by O.C. 6th Oxfordshire and Bucks Light Infantry in consultation with the Company Commander of the 11th R.B., may be withdrawn.

**6. Trench Mortars.**—Two guns of the 60th T.M.B. will be placed in position on the west bank of the Steenbeek ready to open fire on Au Bon Gite. They will not open fire, unless the situation should demand this, owing to the assault on that place being held up. As soon as Au Bon Gite has been captured, they will follow up the assault as previously arranged.

**7.** All the remaining troops of the 60th Infantry Brigade will form up as previously arranged.

**8. Bridges.**—The O.C. 12th R.B. will detail two parties of 1 officer and 40 men each to carry bridges from a position where they are at present dumped at about C.8.b.8.8—junction of tram-track with Candle Trench. The first party will start from the above point at 8.45 p.m.; the second party at 9 p.m. Each party will carry ten bridges. These parties will be responsible for placing these bridges across the Steenbeek all along the Brigade front.

A N.C.O. and 5 men of the 83rd Field Company R.E. will meet the first party at 8.45 p.m. at the above-mentioned point, and will assist in laying the bridges.

It is hoped to get all these bridges across the Steenbeek before zero. The river is, however, fordable for about 90 per cent, of its length along our front.

**9. Aeroplanes.**—At zero minus one minute all aeroplanes will come down low and fire Lewis guns into Au Bon Gite. This will assist to keep down the heads of the garrison during the assault.

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**2nd Lieut. Willes' Diary continued.**

**August 15th.**—In the trenches all day. Nothing of any note occurred before evening. Self and C.O. moved up and fixed the positions for the companies. During this time there was heavy shelling all over the area, and the job was not without its little excitements.

Towards midnight the companies began to move to their positions :—

**A Company**, under 2nd Lieut. Cockshut, with 2nd Lieut. Moase, took up their position with their front platoons over the Steenbeek, in the trenches and shell-holes held by the 11th R.B., who later attended to Au Bon Gite. This company had its left on the road, and its right as far as the block-house C.

The rear platoons lay near the bridgeheads in rear of the stream, covering the same front as the front platoons.

**B Company**, under 2nd Lieut. Mitchell, with 2nd Lieut. Riley, on the right of A Company, took up similar positions to those of A Company.

**C Company**, Captain Middleditch, with 2nd Lieuts. Broke and Pluckrose, in rear of A Company, and covering a similar extent of front.

**D Company**, Captain Money, with 2nd Lieuts. Allday and Tapper, in the same way took up a position in rear of B Company,

Moppers-up were furnished by B Company (2nd Lieut. Little) of the 12th R.B., one platoon to each of our companies to come along in rear and attend to that particular branch of the proceedings.

The 11th R.B. told off a company, under Captain Slade, to mask and take Au Bon Gite.

The 60th Trench Mortar Battery and the 60th M.G. Company took up their positions in rear of our Battalion.

The 6th K.S.L.I. and the 12th K.R.R.C. in rear.

**August 16th.**—Having placed the units attached to the Battalion and the Battalion itself in position, the C.O. and H.Q. established themselves in a block-house on the bank of the Steenbeek (since known as Jock's House) and waited for zero hour (4.45 a.m.).

Battalion H.Q. consisted of :—

Lieut.-Colonel C. R. Boyle.

2nd Lieut. A. M. Duxbury, Adjutant.

2nd Lieut. W. V. Amos, Signals.

2nd Lieut. H. W. H. Willes, Intelligence.

The Regimental Sergeant-Major, Signal Sergeant, Scouts, Signallers, and Runners.

Captain J. R. Turner, R.A.M.C., Medical Officer.

Captain Slade (11th R.B.), in command of the Company for the assault on Au Bon Gite, occupied the same block-house.

All was quiet, with the exception of the usual intermittent bombardment.

The enemy had been dropping shells about 200 yards behind the K.S.L.I. off and on all night. He evidently had no idea that the whole front under his very nose was crowded with men.

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It was a wearing time to go through, as if the enemy chanced to discover how things were situated, he could have converted our entire front into a shambles. However, the luck that followed us right through the operations held on this occasion, and we lost only 5 men wounded during the night.

**THE FIGHT FOR LANGEMARCK.**

I doubt if there was a single man in the Battalion who did not heave a deep sigh of relief when zero at length came (4.45 a.m.). I know that I did. For about an hour before this our artillery had put up a fairly heavy barrage on all the enemy positions. At 4.45 a.m. it sounded as if someone had been careless about leaving the lid off hell. The scene beggared description. It was just light enough to see one's way. The first thing that struck me was the immense variety of fireworks that the Hun was sending up. There was every known variety of Very Light, and some that I had not seen before. In fact, the only thing that he did not send up was a set-piece, with a portrait of the Kaiser, and God bless our Home in golden rain.

The 11th R.B.'s put up a smoke barrage, and rushed forward to try conclusions with Au Bon Gite.

Before describing our own movements, I will deal with the work of this company of the 11th R.B., for no account of the Langemarck fight can be complete without justice being done to the bitter struggle for Au Bon Gite. First and last, the passage of the Steenbeek cost the 59th Brigade almost half its number in casualties. This was chiefly due to this Au Bon Gite concrete block-house, excellently planned for defence, and held grimly by the Germans until surrounded and cut off.

The block-house, which had loopholes for machine guns, was irregular in outline, but wonderfully well sited. Around it were five or six smaller posts, and from it to the stream a barbed-wire entanglement ran diagonally in such a way as to break up any attacking party which should attempt an enveloping movement. With the smaller block-houses in the vicinity, there was formed a kind of triangular position of immense strength, and absolutely impervious to artillery fire.

The capture of Au Bon Gite seemed well nigh impossible; the general advance went on regardless of it, and it was perhaps this fact that upset the calculations of the enemy and caused him to surrender about an hour after the attack had been launched. Captain Slade and his company of the 11th R.B., with the aid of a smoke barrage, succeeded in getting under the walls, and, after much discussion, the defenders agreed to surrender, when 32 Germans were made prisoners and two machine guns captured. Had they stuck to their post they could have absolutely hung up the attack of half our Battalion frontage.

Now for our own proceedings. What struck me most at the start was that everybody with one accord lit a cigarette, and promptly looked at peace with all the world. If the boys did feel bloodthirsty, they concealed the fact to admiration. So great was the revulsion of feeling after the trying night, that they went forward smoking, laughing, and talking as if they had just heard that peace had been declared.

Our first wave moved forward with parade-ground precision, getting well up to the barrage, which started just the other side of Au Bon Gite; and the rear platoons came over the bridges with perfect steadiness, taking up their correct dressing, and moving on as they got their distance. I will say here that the whole manoeuvre of crossing the Steenbeek was perfectly carried out. The barrage was splendid all the way through, and the highest praise is due to the gunners.

The 60th M.G. Company put up a barrage which must have been a demoralizing affair to face. The 60th Trench Mortar Battery had not any call on their services during the day, but lost fairly heavily, and must have had a fearful time carrying their mortars through the mud.

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Our advance was well and steadily carried out. The two left companies suffered heaviest all the way, due to the fact that Au Bon Gite and other positions were firing on them as they advanced; also they had to advance over very bad ground and mud of the worst description.

I myself, with the Scouts, went forward with the second wave, and having watched the operations against Au Bon Gite for two or three minutes, during which time one of its machine guns did a great deal of firing to the east, though without much effect, we moved on to the block-house on the road (B), which had just surrendered, and was disgorging about a company of Boches. I do not know how many were there, but I saw at least forty come out.

I then established a forward runners' relay post at Block-house A, to which Colonel Boyle shortly afterwards moved his H.Q.

Colonel Wood, of the 6th K.S.L.I., moved forward with his men, and took up his H.Q. at Alouette Farm later on. It took six men to dig him out of the mud on one occasion, but he had the air of enjoying himself immensely.

The 1st Objective was reached with only a trifling loss of men in the right companies ; but, as I have said, the left companies suffered more heavily, C Company having been very badly cut up, and A not much better. Here we were, I think, slightly behind the barrage.

When the time came to go on to the Green Line (2nd Objective), D Company got there and consolidated up to time. C Company were slightly behind them, but the manoeuvre was at length satisfactorily carried out, and the work of the Battalion in the advance was completed.

It hardly comes within the scope of this account to follow the fortunes of the 7th K.S.L.I. and 12th K.R.R.C.; suffice it to say that they went on and carried their own objective forward in good style. More of them later.

Having seen the Green Line taken and consolidated, I went back to the H.Q. block-house, and made a personal report on the situation to Colonel Boyle. Afterwards I visited the whole of the Blue and Green, Lines to make a review of the situation and to collect reports. I collected the following information :—

A Company.—2nd Lieut. Cockshut wounded about the time the Blue Line was captured; shot through the thigh—not severely.

2nd Lieut. Moase in command. He estimated his casualties at about 40 up to that time. Well dug in. Getting badly shelled on left.

B Company.—2nd Lieut. Mitchell still in command; has lost 2nd Lieut. Riley, wounded (not severely), and 17 other ranks killed and wounded. Has 5 Lewis guns (his own and those of the 12th R.B.) under 2nd Lieut. Little, who has lost his two subs, 2nd Lieuts Milner and Wastell.

C Company.—Captain Middleditch wounded; 54 other ranks not accounted for, but not believed all killed or wounded.

2nd Lieut. Broke in command. Connected up with Somerset Light Infantry on left.

D Company.—Captain Money thought that he had lost 40 other ranks (which turned out about right). Well dug in, and well connected on right with 7th Dorsets.

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I returned via Alouette Farm, and found 7th K.S.L.I. H.Q. installed. Colonel Wood told me that a Hun counter-attack was threatening from Poelcappelle, and that whereas he got his objectives, the 12th K.R.R.C. had been obliged to fall back from theirs a matter of 200 yards. The Lancashire Fusiliers, on the right, had not gone forward farther than 200 yards beyond the Green Line. He asked for more men and, the Brigadier having assented, at 9 a.m. Colonel Boyle placed our C Company at his disposal, and sent it up to help out the K.R.R.C., who were having a terrific handling.

The Boche counter-attack crumpled up beneath our artillery and rifle fire. The 12th R.B. threw two companies in on the right flank of the K.S.L.I., and the 10th Welsh put a company into Au Bon Gite.

By dark the situation had become less critical, and could be said to be in some measure safe. The enemy shelling kept up all the afternoon and night.

So ended the fight for Langemarck. To the military student the fight itself has no special interest. It was merely the conventional advance well carried out. But as an example of troops forming up under the noses of the enemy without shelter trenches or, indeed, any shelter, and with nothing to guide them, it will, I venture to say, stand for long in military history among the offensives of the war. It is an excellent example of what may be done with well disciplined and well officered troops.

The following messages were received, through the Brigade, from Divisional H.Q. :—

" Corps and Divisional Commanders send warmest congratulations to 60th Infantry Brigade and 61st Infantry Brigade on capture of Langemarck."

" Following message received from XIVth Corps. Begins. AAA. The Corps Commander most heartily thanks 20th Division and 29th Division and all the Artillery for the complete success gained today (16th). AAA, He particularly congratulates all the fighting troops on their determination to overcome all difficulties of mud and water as well as the opposition of the enemy, AAA Ends. Addressed all concerned. AAA."

" Following message from XIVth Corps. Begins. AAA Commander-in-Chief called on Corps Commander this morning (17th) and ordered him to convey his congratulations to all troops engaged in our operations yesterday. AAA. Ends."

**August 17th.**—The morning passed fairly quietly. We managed to get water and rations to the men. The forward line being considered unsafe, the 12th R.B. detailed two companies to endeavour to correct it; the K.S.L.I. also cooperated, and the attempt was fairly successful.

At 6.30 p.m. the preparatory barrage opened, and A Company moved up to, and to the north of the Alouette Farm road, behind the Green Line. C Company, it will be remembered, had already gone up to the assistance of Captain Lycett and his BLR.R.C.

At 7 p.m. the R.B. made their attack on the Red Line, losing heavily, though being fairly successful. During the remainder of the night there was intermittent artillery fire over the whole area.

**August 18th.**—A quiet morning. No change in the situation. Heard with no great grief that we were to be relieved at night by the 14th Welsh in the Blue Line, and by the 10th Welsh in the Green Line.

The relief went well, and the Battalion came back to Malakoff Farm (B.23.a.30), the same camp as before, and nowise sorry to get there.

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The total casualties in the Battalion during the operations of 16th-18th were :—

Killed, or died of wounds, 38 other ranks;  
Wounded, 3 officers and 148 other ranks;  
Wounded and missing, 4 other ranks;  
Missing, 8 other ranks.—Regimental Diary.

**August 19th.**—Fine. As the last of us were only coming into camp about 4 a.m., we did not show any indecent haste in rising from our beds, but it eventually had to be done, as we were moving again in the afternoon.

The Battalion paraded at 3.30 p.m. and marched to Elverdinghe, entraining there, and going as far as International Corner, where we detrained and marched to Suez Camp, some 3 miles north of Poperinghe (Map, Hazebrouk, 5A. 1:100,000)—a good camp in a wood. Here we started a Battalion Officers' Mess for the first time since I joined, and we all thought it much better than Company Messes.

**August 20th.**—Refitting and reorganizing. The men very cheerful, but glad of a rest. The casualty list for the recent operations has now been compiled, and shows 3 officers and 150 other ranks killed, wounded, or missing.

**August 21st.**—As yesterday. A draft of 3 officers 2 and 50 men joined the Battalion.

**August 22nd.**—One of the officers who joined yesterday went away this morning to join the 2nd Battalion. Companies at training.

**August 23rd.**—A Company went to the range early. I went to see our next camp near Elverdinghe. We are to move there tomorrow, to work under the R.E. for the purpose of making roads around Pilkem—a wretched prospect.

**August 24th.**—I went off early to take over the camp and the work programme with 8 N.C.O.'s. Shortly afterwards 2nd Lieut. Phillips arrived for the same purpose.

The Battalion paraded at 11.45 a.m., proceeded to International Corner, entrained there, and detrained at Elverdinghe, whence they marched to B.9.d.5.6, and took over camp from the 2nd Grenadiers.

This is not at all a bad little camp. We still keep the Battalion Officers' Mesa going, as we have a shanty large enough for it. It is a great success, and we are all delighted with it; Major Williams is now in command of the Battalion, as the C.O. is on leave.

**August 25th.**—All available men on working parties from 7 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Classes for Lewis gunners, stretcher bearers, etc., at 9 a.m.

I went with Major Williams to look over the scene of the recent fighting. We rode to 5 Chemins, and walked on to Au Bon Gite. The enemy does not shell so much nowadays, but it is difficult not to hurry along the roads and avoid such places as Ironcross from sheer force of habit. I am told that it is still not exactly a healthful proceeding to linger in the vicinity.

**August 26th.**—Working parties as before. Classes, physical training, etc., for the remainder. The Division issued an order about wearing distinguishing patches on the backs of our coats, one inch below the collar. We are to wear a black triangle, the other battalions of the Brigade having in addition one, two, or three bars. The 59th Brigade have a black circle, and the 61st Brigade a black square—in all cases with the addition of bars for battalions.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**August 27th**—Rain early, then fine, and afterwards wet again. Too wet to do anything; the compass inarch which had been arranged had to be abandoned.

**August 28th**.—It blew a hurricane all night. I never thought that my bivouac would stand it. The mess-hut nearly collapsed during breakfast.

In the evening we were relieved by the 7th K.S.L.I. The Battalion paraded at 6.30 p.m. and marched to Elverdinghe Station, there entrained, and detrained at International Corner, marching to Swindon Camp (S.1 District or Area), where it arrived about 9 p.m.

We have a fine large Mess, and the camp is quite a good one. I had come on ahead to take over camp, and had to borrow a dozen more tents from Suez Camp, over the road.

Companies have now been reorganized in 3 platoons .

**August 29th**.—Some rain. Company training. In the afternoon the officers did a compass march, the course for which I went over with the Scouts this morning. I took the N.C.O.'s class in compass work. They seem to be picking it up a bit better now. I was detailed to act on the Committee of Brigade Sports, and went to a conference at Brigade H.Q.

**August 30-September 2nd**.—At Swindon Camp, and a good deal of rain. Company training, classes, etc. Making preparations for the Brigade Sports.

**September 3rd**.—Had the N.C.O.'s out for a compass march in the morning.

The Six-a-side Football Competition resulted in C Company winning, and being chosen to represent the Battalion in the final Brigade League.

**September 4th**.—N.C.O.'s compass march, to select the team for the Brigade Competition. The Cross-country Race came off in the afternoon; Field Ambulance, 1st; Durhams, 2nd; ourselves, 3rd.

The Divisional Gas Officer inspected the box respirators.

**September 5th**.—Colonel Boyle turned up late last night, having left London about 12 hours before—good, quick work! He claims that we shall see great changes in the war in a month or two. I am very glad to hear it. I have known this war, man and boy, for the last three years, and have seen precious little change in it yet—the same old mud and monotony.

The Tug of War came off this morning. Our team got into the semi-finals, which will be pulled off later.

Our football team succumbed to the 12th K.R.R.C., who were a lot better than our people.

The Divisional Commander visited the Brigade, and presented medal ribbons, and gave a speech as well. The Brigade then marched past.

**September 6th**.—Parades in the morning. The Bullet and Bayonet Competition in the afternoon. Our Tug-of-War team was knocked out in the semi-finals to-day.

**September 7th**.—At 9 a.m. we gave platoon in attack demonstration before the Divisional Commander.

**September 8th**.—

The Brigade Sports took place, and the Battalion did very well indeed. Our great triumph was winning the Stretcher-bearers' Race, beating the R.A.M.C. at their own game. We also won the 100 yards, the Yukon Pack Race, and the Blindfold Drill, and were second in the Relay, Quarter Mile, Obstacle, and Three-legged Races.

**September 9th**.—Church Parade service, with the K.R.R.C. and Machine-gun Company, in the field over the road.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**September 10th.**—The Battalion paraded at 12.30 p.m., and moved to Malakoff Farm (by train from International Corner to Elverdinghe). Had tea at Malakoff, and remained until 8 p.m., when moved to the Canal bank, and went into dug-outs by Bards Causeway (C.13.c.3.3), relieving the 38th (Welsh) Division. The dug-outs were most inadequate, and we could not get B Company in anyhow. Luckily the night was fine, so no great harm was done. The Boche bumped quite a bit during the night, and nearly shook me out of bed.

**September 11th.**—Quiet day on the Canal bank. The companies made some more dug-outs. During half the night the Boche made himself a general nuisance with assorted gas-shells. A man in C Company got buried in a dug-out, and was killed.

**September 12th.**—Went up with the C.O. to Stray Farm, where the 61st Brigade now have their H.Q. We were shelled a good deal on the way up and down. 5 Chemins has been crumpled pretty nearly out of existence.

The 12th K.R.R.C. relieved us on the Canal bank in the evening, and the Battalion moved back to Malakoff at 6 p.m. Had a Battalion Officers' Mess again in a large shelter. The men are in bivouacs.

**September 13th.**—Company training, working parties, etc. A good bit of shelling going on, and some of it quite near.

**September 14th.**—Companies practising the attack.

**September 18th.**—We went up to the line at night, and took over the same frontage as before.

**THE ATTACK OF THE 20TH SEPTEMBER.**

Official account by Lieut.-Colonel C. R. C. Boyle, commanding the Battalion :—

At midnight 18th/19th September the Battalion Was disposed as follows :—

**B Company** (2nd Lieut. Mitchell) holding front line U.23.d.7.4 to U.23.d.4.5, with two platoons. H.Q. and three platoons round Double Cotts (U.23.d.3.8).

**C Company** (Captain Brooks) in trenches round Au Bon Gite. (U.28.d.7.8).

**A Company** (Captain Skuce) in trenches round Adelphi (C.3.a.8.9).

**D Company** (Lieut. Cooke) in trenches near Cork House (C.3.a.3.3).

**Battalion H.Q.** at Au Bon Gite.

The 19th September was quiet, except for a little hostile shelling. That evening, as soon as it was dark, and companies had got their rations, they moved forward into assembly positions, which had all been taken up by 2 a.m. (20th). A Company lost 10 men in moving up, otherwise there were no casualties in the Battalion.

The disposition of companies was now : A left, C centre, B right, D reserve.

Each of the three front companies formed up in four lines, one platoon in each of the first three lines, and Company H.Q. with one Lewis gun in the fourth line. Each company had a covering party 150 yards to the front.

D Company (in reserve) was formed in columns of half platoons and in two lines ; two platoons in the front line, and one platoon and Company H.Q. in rear.

Battalion H.Q. were at Double Cotts (Twin Cottages).

At 5 a.m. (20th September) 2nd Lieut. Willes (Intelligence Officer) and 8 Scouts took up positions with D Company. 8 Scouts being sent to each of the three attacking companies.

Touch was obtained with the 12th R.B. on the right, but no touch could be got with the 59th Brigade on the left, and there was a gap of at least 150 yards between.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

2nd Lieut. Willes laid out tapes on pegs already provided by the R.E., and led companies to assembly positions.

Zero was 5.40 a.m. 20th September. It was then still dark, dawn just breaking.

At 5.41 a.m. oil drums were discharged at Cemetery (U.14.C.0.0). These lit up the sky and showed my men to the enemy. As soon as the leading lines came over the ridge, into view of Eagle Trench, they came under heavy machine-gun fire from five concrete houses in the trench.

B Company, on the right, caught the worst of this, and soon lost all their officers and most of their N.C.O.'s.

C Company, in the centre, gallantly led by Captain Brooks and 2nd Lieut. Bevington, tried to get on, and were within 60 yards of the trench, when they were finally held up, Captain Brooks being killed on the German wire. 2nd Lieut. Bevington and three or four men succeeded in getting into the trench, but were wounded and could do no more.

A Company got within 70 yards, and were then held up; Captain Skuce was mortally wounded.

D Company tried to get forward to reinforce and push on, but were unable to do this, and at 6.30 a.m. all companies were in shell-holes west of Eagle Trench, digging in.

It was impossible to get orderlies back to H.Q., and it was not until 7 a.m. that I learned the situation.

The 59th Brigade, on the left, were held up on the same line, and the 12th R.B. on my immediate right.

The situation remained thus during the day, all movement being under the observation of the enemy, who had snipers, on the look-out.

A fresh attack was ordered for 5.30 p.m., the 6th K.S.L.I, to send one company to help to get on, and another to work round the right with the 12th R.B. I was able to send orders to D Company (Lieut. Cook), but I could not communicate with any other officer.

At 5 p.m. the enemy put down a heavy barrage on the line U.23.d.1.4-U.29.b.2.9, but did not attack opposite me.

At 6.30 p.m. our barrage came down on Eagle Trench, and Lieut. Cook collected all men near him, and, with 2nd Lieut. Tapper, went forward. The enemy surrendered to him, and Lieut. Cook took a party and bombed along Eagle Trench, meeting with little opposition until about U.23.b.3.0.5, where his bombs gave out, and the enemy bombed him back. He then sent forward some riflemen to the right flank to hold the enemy, whilst he collected all German stick-bombs and formed a block in the trench, which he held. 2nd Lieut. Tapper, seeing that this attack was succeeding, pushed forward to Louis Farm, taking with him about 20 men of B Company, under Sergeant Walker. Here they linked up with the 6th K.S.L.I. and the 12th R.B.

A line of posts was then dug from Eagle Trench east, along the edge of the Cemetery, and south of the road to Louis Farm, with another line running east of the Cemetery back to Eagle Trench.

I ordered 2nd Lieut. Tapper to withdraw from Louis Farm, and, with Lieut. Cook, to hold the Cemetery with D Company, B Company remaining at Louis Farm.

A Company (2nd Lieut. Scogings) held the block in Eagle Trench.

C Company was still west of the trench.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

This was the situation at midnight 20th/21st September.

The 21st September was comparatively quiet, except for a S.O.S. in the evening, but the enemy did not attack opposite my front.

That evening the Battalion was relieved by the 12th K.R.R.C., and withdrew east of the Steenbeek. Besides myself there were only four officers left.

A and B Companies, under 2nd Lieut. Scoging, went to shelters in the trench about U.5.b.8.8, while C and D, under Lieut. Cook, went to trenches by Cork House. H.Q. in Candle Avenue.

**September 22nd.**—C and D Companies were heavily shelled, Lieut. Cook and 2nd Lieut. Tapper being wounded.

In the evening we were relieved by the 7th K.O.Y.L.I., and companies went back to Wolfe Camp (Malakoff Farm area).

The casualties were 3 officers killed and 9 wounded. Other ranks, 40 killed, 123 wounded, and 33 unaccounted for—probably killed.

**From the Battalion Diary.**

**September 23rd-26th.**—At Wolfe Camp. Baths and general clean up. Reorganization of companies, etc. Many congratulatory messages on successful operations were received from Army Commander, Corps Commander, and others.

**September 27th.**—The Battalion moved back to S wind on Camp (S. 1 area), which was reached about noon, by train and marching.

**September 28th.**—A draft of 148 N.C.O.'s and men arrived.

**September 29th.**—The Battalion was inspected by the Brigadier at 10 a.m., and he congratulated us on our success in the recent operations. The Brigade held a short voluntary Service in memory of those who had fallen.

**September 30th.**—Church Parade in the morning. At 11 p.m. the Battalion left camp and marched to Proven, where it entrained for Bapaume.

**October 1st.**—Although the Battalion was at Proven station by midnight last night, it did not entrain until 9.15 this morning. Arrived at Bapaume at 8 p.m. and marched to the camp just beyond Haplincourt.

**October 2nd.**—Parades in the morning. Sports in the afternoon.

**October 3rd.**—The C.O. and Company Commanders rode to Gouzeaucourt Wood, and thence proceeded to the Villers Plouich Sector, to inspect the portion of the Line which the Battalion is to take up.

**October 4th.**—The Battalion marched to camp at Heudicourt.

**October 5th.**—At 3 p.m. the Battalion moved up to the Villers Plouich Sector, and relieved the 14th H.L.I., taking up the position of the Right Battalion of the Left Brigade, and companies being disposed as follows:-  
H.Q. in road at R.13.a.85.35 (Map 57c S.E.).

A Company, front line, R.8.c.60.60 to R.14.b.60.90.

B Company, front line, R.7.b.80.10 to R.8.C.60.60.

C Company in Sunken Road, R.13.d.90.85.

D Company, front line, R.7.a.80.50 to R.7.b.80.10.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**October 6th-10th.**—The enemy was practically inactive. We sent out strong patrols nightly, made several sniping posts, and improved the trenches generally. We also strengthened the wire.

**October 10th.**—The Battalion was relieved by the 6th K.S.L.I., when A and B Companies went into reserve at Dessart Wood, and H.Q. and C and D Companies into reserve at Dougeaumont Wood.

**October 13th.**—Brigadier-General Butler, commanding the 60th Brigade, addressed the officers and senior N.C.O.'s.

**October 15th.**—The Battalion moved up to the same sector of the line, in relief of the 6th K.S.L.I., and took up the same dispositions as before.

**October 20th.**—Relieved by the 6th K.S.L.I., after a quiet period in the trenches. The weather was bad, and a good deal of repair work was necessary. The Battalion moved into support. Captain Allday and 2nd Lieut. Ramsay joined the Battalion on the 17th.

**October 21st.**—Lieut.-Colonel Boyle proceeding on a course, Major Cleminson, D.S.O., took over temporary command of the Battalion, with Captain Williams as second in command. B and C Companies provided working parties at night.

**October 22nd.**—During the morning D Company worked on camp Support, and A Company in the Intermediate Line.

**October 23rd/24th.**—The Battalion provided working parties.

**October 25th.**—Moved into the line again, in relief of the 6th K.S.L.I.

**October 26th—30th.**—During this tour in the trenches the enemy was more active than formerly. His artillery shelled our lines considerably, and he also made more use of his trench mortars. Good progress was made in the improvement of our positions. Our snipers accounted for 5 of the enemy during this period. We sent out patrols nightly to encounter enemy patrols, and to keep No Man's Land clear of the enemy. We succeeded in gaining the ascendancy.

On the morning of the 26th a German deserter of the 90th R.I.R. 54th Division, came over to our lines, and was made prisoner.

**November 1st-5th.**—In reserve at Dessart Wood, carrying out the usual training. On the 4th the Battalion was inspected by the Brigadier (Brigadier-General Duncan), and on the 5th marched to Sorel for a contact-aeroplane demonstration, which, however, owing to mist, did not take place.

**November 6th.**—The Battalion left Dessart Wood, and returned to the same trenches, in relief of the 6th K.S.L.I., taking up the following dispositions :—

A Company in 15 Ravine;

B Company in front line at R.8.a. (Map 57c S.E.);

C Company in front line in R.7.b.;

D Company in Sunken Road at R.13.a.50.50;

H.Q. in Sunken Road at R.13.a.80.40.

**November 7th.**—A Company left 15 Ravine, and took over from a company of the 12th K.R.R.C., with dispositions from R.7.a.20.35 to Barricade Road at R.7.b.10.60.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.**  
**1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**November 7th-11th.**—The Battalion was occupied with the improvement of the trenches, which were in a bad condition owing to bad weather, and strengthening our wire. The enemy shelled our positions considerably, and obtained a direct hit on the H.Q. of the Right Company on the 11th. On this day Captain Phillips rejoined the Battalion.

**November 12th.**—A rather complicated relief took place. Two companies of the 12th R.B. relieved the companies holding the front line. A Company went to 15 Ravine; B Company to the Support Line; C Company near H.Q. in the Sunken Road (R.13.A.); and D Company at Charing Cross.

**November 13th.**—An enemy patrol attempted to cut the wire, but was dispersed. An enemy aeroplane was brought down at Q.21.b.15.55.

**November 14th.**—The Battalion was relieved by the 12th K.R.R.C.; relief complete at 2 a.m. Companies marched independently to Fins Theatre for their packs.

**November 15th.**—The Battalion entrained at Fins at 5.30 a.m., and proceeded to Loup, just beyond Bray, where it arrived at 9.10 a.m. At 10 a.m. a parade was held and an attack practised in conjunction with Tanks. With reference to this attack practice, during the next few days the troops destined for the coming offensive underwent a special course of training in the new methods of co-operating with the Tanks in what may be termed a surprise attack on the enemy's positions, i.e., without methodical artillery preparation. The tactical methods differed from those which had been adopted previously in the usual trench-to-trench attacks, and were more in the nature of the movements in open or field warfare.

Special attention was paid to repeatedly practising four exercises, viz. :—

- (1) Assembly of Infantry behind Tanks before advancing to attack.
- (2) Advancing to the attack behind Tanks.
- (3) Passing through wire entanglements crushed down by Tanks.
- (4) Clearing up a sector of trenches under protection of Tanks.

It was pointed out that the chief essentials were quick initiative amongst the leaders, especially the Section Commanders, and quick movement of the section.

Platoons were drilled in three types of formation, viz. :—

**Platoon Column.**—Four sections side by side, or at a named distance apart, each in single file.

**Double Column of Sections.**—Two sections side by side, or at a named distance apart, each in single file, with an interval between the two leading sections and the two rear sections.

**Section Column.**—Each section in single file, with an interval between each.

Movement from one formation to the other was constantly practised, and also forming into extended lines by sections.

The training memorandum contained the following remarks in connexion with **Advancing to the Attack** :— It is during this phase that the Infantry must realize exactly what the Tanks can do. This may be summarized as follows :—

Tanks force a passage through the enemy's wire which the Infantry can use.

Tanks assist in the Infantry attack by :—

- (1) Using their weapons on the enemy.
- (2) Overcoming strong-points, M.G. emplacements, etc.
- (3) Drawing enemy's fire away from our Infantry.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.**  
**1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

But it is for the Infantry to overcome the enemy's resistance, and therefore full use must be made of all weapons in the hands of the Infantry Commander.

Lewis guns should be freely used in the intervals between groups of Tanks.

Stokes guns should accompany each attacking Battalion, and be used on the objectives not immediately assailed by the Tanks.

Rifle bombers should seize every opportunity of enfilading trenches whilst the Tank is approaching or crossing.

As the rate of movement of the Tanks is slow, it is of imperative importance that the 'moppers-up' reach the objective with the fewest casualties. The above weapons will therefore be used to the utmost.

During practice, Tanks should be made casualties, and the detachment following should change to another Tank which is still in motion.

**Passing through the wire** crushed down by the Tanks is similar to passing through a defile. Sections should not crowd towards the gap. Only one at a time should double towards it, and then traverse it in quick time. The remaining three Sections should be so disposed as to be able to protect its approach. Directly the first section is through it should in its turn think how best it can protect the advance of the next one. This again is simply a matter of mutual co-operation between sections as well as between the platoon itself and the Tank.

**Clearing the trenches.**—"Mopping-up " will probably be the principal role of the Infantry, and here it becomes necessary for the Infantry to dissociate themselves at once from their Tank, and take on the defenders with rifle and bayonet, irrespective of their Tank.

Rapid re-assembling after "mopping-up" should be practised, and Tanks and Infantry reformed.

During the "mopping-up" it may be expected that the local counter stroke will be delivered either down the communication trench or across the open.

The meeting of these counter-attacks must be carefully rehearsed. Blocks in every communication trench are necessary. Every Lewis gun and every Stokes must be ready at once for instant action.

Tanks must be trained to assist the Infantry in this operation by the use of the guns and machine guns which they carry.

Infantry officers must realize that the Tanks which assist them may break down. It becomes their duty then to assist in the general attack by the fullest development of their fire on that portion of the trench which was assigned to them as their objective.

Infantry must carry wire-cutters and wire breakers. R.E. parties with explosives must accompany the Infantry."

**November 19th.**—The Battalion moved from the camp at Heudicourt at 5 p.m., and marched via Gouzeaucourt to shelters in Farm Ravine and Village Road. Companies were all in by 9.30p.m.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**BATTLE OF CAMBRAI.**

Summary of Events by Lieut.-Colonel C. R. C. Boyle, commanding 6th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry :—

**November 20th.**—3.30 a.m.—Companies moved into assembly positions behind the Tanks. This was completed by 4.30 a.m., at which time companies were disposed as follows :—

B Company (Captain Boissier) on the left;

D Company (Captain Foreshow) on the right;

C Company (Lieut. Pluckrose), support, with one platoon on the right of D;

A Company (Captain Allday), reserve, behind C. H.Q. in Pipe Alley.

B and D Companies each had 3 Tanks, which were formed in a triangle. The leading Tank had no troops behind it. The remaining two Tanks had each one platoon, formed in two lines of sections in file. The third platoon was echeloned in rear.

One platoon of C Company worked with three Tanks. The remaining two platoons were in rear of B and D Companies. A Company had one platoon behind each of the three leading companies. One section M.G. and one T.M. were with A Company.

The position of the first line was approximately R. 14.A.50.10 [Map Sheet 57 S.E.].

The 12th K.R.R.C. were on our left, and the 7th D.C.L.I. on our right.

6.10 a.m.—Tanks started to move.

6.20 a.m.—Zero hour. Our barrage came down on Farm Trench. Farm Trench was taken with little opposition, and C Company, remained there to "mop-up." The right platoon of C Company went into Corner Work, cleared and consolidated it.

B and D Companies crossed Farm Trench, and then bore too much to the right, and got behind La Vacquerie. These companies followed the Tanks throughout.

7 a.m.—C Company moved to Hindenburg Line, followed by A Company.

9.10 a.m.—The positions of the companies were as follows :—

Band D in Hindenburg Support Line (R.3.D.30.50 to R.10.A.50.50).

A and one platoon of C in Hindenburg Second Line (R.9.b. 1.9 to R.9.b.9.5).

One platoon of C Company consolidating Good Man Farm, and one platoon in Corner Work.

Captains Boissier and Allday were hit during this advance, when 2nd Lieut. Rowbotham took command of B Company, and 2nd Lieut. Pope of A Company. Our casualties up to 10 a.m. were 2 officers (2nd Lieuts Thomas and Williams) killed, 3 officers (Captains Boissier and Allday and 2nd Lieut. Mant) wounded, and 20 other ranks killed and wounded.

H.Q. moved along with the advance and were established at R,9.b.4.0. Touch was gained with the 12th K.R.R.C. on the left, and with the 7th D.C.L.I, on the right.

2 p.m.—Orders were received to move round and occupy the line from R.5 central to, the road at L.34.b.4.2. Our new positions were :—D on the right, A in the centre, C on the left, B in reserve, and H.Q. in pits at R.5.A.4 8.

Touch was obtained with the 6th K.S.L.I. on the left, and with the 12th King's on the right.

**November 21st.**—The Battalion moved north along La Vacquerie Valley, and bivouacked in trenches at L.36.C.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**November 22nd.**—The Battalion moved forward and relieved the 11th R.B. in the front line.

Our position now was :

A Company on the right from road at G.33.d.7,4. to G.34.c.1.9.

B Company in the centre, thence to G.34.a.2.7, with one platoon at Lock G.34.b.

D Company on the left, holding Mont Plaisan and a bridge at G.25.c.2.0.

C Company in support at G.33.c.6.6.

H.Q. at G.33.a.1.0.

The 29th Division were on our left'; the 6th K.S.L.I. on our right.

**November 23rd.**—The day was quiet, except for some shelling at 11 pm.

**November 24th.**—B Company bombarded the house at the Lock with trench mortars. It was strongly held by the enemy.

A post of D Company at Mont Plaisan withdrew after handing over to the 29th Division.

About 11 p.m. a party of the enemy (14) tried to rush a post north of the bridge, but was dispersed.

November 25th.—The Battalion was relieved by the 7th K.O.Y.L.I, and moved back to the Hindenburg Line at R.10.c.

**November 26th/27th.**—Remained in the Hindenburg Line, but worked in the front line each night.

**November 28th.**—Relieved the 12th K.R.R.C. in the front line.

**November 29th.**—The Battalion was relieved by the 10th K.R.R.C., and moved back to camp near 15 Ravine.

About 11 p.m. the enemy shelled this camp, and I ordered the companies to move camp farther west, behind the ridge.

**November 30th.**—By 3 a.m. this had been completed.

8 a.m.—S.O.S. received. Companies stood ready to move.

9 a.m.—Received orders to hold Quentin Ridge in conjunction with the 6th K.S.L.I.

Companies were just moving off when new orders were received to hold the Hindenburg Line.

I ordered companies to stand fast.

B and D Companies were in line at R.20.d.6.0. to R.19.d.1.5.;

C Company in R.19.c.;

A Company in Dunraven Trench at R.19.a.

I then went to the Brigade H.Q. to explain the situation and ask for definite orders. Received orders to remain in present position and be ready to move at a moment's notice.

1 p.m.—I received orders to move at once and attack Quentin Ridge. I ordered B and D Companies to attack the Ridge, supported by C Company, with A Company in reserve.

The Ridge was held in strength by the enemy with machine guns.

Gonnelieu appeared to be in our possession, but was really in the hands of the enemy.

After personal reconnaissance, it did not seem to me to be feasible to attack the high ground from the southern end.

B and D Companies moved forward by sectional rushes to the Cambrai-Gouzeaucourt road and established a line south-west of the road about R.26.c.50 to R.32.a.5.3 to R.26.d.1,4, in close touch with the enemy.

Two companies Northampton Pioneers were on the left, with the 12th R.B. and 6th K.S.L.I. echeloned back on the right.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

It was now dusk, and a fresh advance being impossible, I ordered companies to dig in where they were. C and A Companies were in Flag Ravine, and a line was established there also.

I then went to Brigade H.Q. to explain the situation. The O.C. 12th R.B. was also there. It was decided to make a fresh attempt to take Gonnellieu and seize the high ground. The 12th R.B. were to work through the village from the north, whilst I worked with them.

10 p.m.—I ordered A Company up on the left of D Company at R.26.d.3.9, telling them to push through the woods, and, if successful, to swing round with the 12th R.B. advancing from the north. Patrols found the woods unoccupied, but the houses between were held in strength by the enemy. The 12th R.B. were unable to get through, so the situation remained unchanged.

**December 1st.**—At 6 a.m. a further attack was made by the Guards. This succeeded with the aid of Tanks, and at 8 a.m. the southern part of the Ridge was taken.

On our front the attack failed.

At 9 a.m. the enemy counter-attacked from Gonnellieu in a north westerly direction. All companies held firmly, but some troops on the left gave way, and it looked as if the flank would be turned.

I collected various units and established a line from the Quarry in R.25.d. across to the end of Flag Ravine, thence north-east to A Company, throwing their left back to form a defensive flank.

The situation remained thus throughout the day, and, except for sniping, was quiet.

At dusk companies were withdrawn from the line, which was taken over by a Guards Brigade, and were disposed in trenches about R.19.

**December 2nd.**—The Battalion remained in these trenches.

**December 3rd.**—On receipt of orders at 5.30 a.m., the Battalion left the trenches near 15 Ravine, and marched back to huts at Sorel, arriving at 7.10 a.m. Rested during the day, the men seeming quite fit, despite their long and trying time in the line.

**December 4th.**—At 8.30 a.m. the Battalion met buses along the Fins-Nurlu road, and was conveyed to Forceville, near Acheux, arriving at 2 p.m.

**December 5th.**—Resting and cleaning up. In the afternoon the Battalion football team played a team from the 51st Division, the game resulting in a draw.

**December 6th.**—The Battalion marched to Albert in the morning and entrained for Bourainville. Arrived at 6.45 p.m. and went into billets for the night.

**December 7th.**—Left Bourainville at 9.10 a.m. and marched to Renty (about 14 miles), arriving at 5.10 p.m. The Battalion marched exceptionally well. Good billets.

**December 8th.**—Company parades in the morning; improving the accommodation afterwards. A Battalion Mess was formed for the officers.

**December 9th.**—Church Parade at 9.30 a.m. in the School. The C.O. inspected all billets afterwards.

**December 10th-12th.**—These days were spent in training, with a game of football each afternoon. Lieuts. Bassett and Banton joined the Battalion for duty on the 11th.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**December 13th.**—At 11.10 a.m. the Battalion left Renty in buses, and proceeded via St. Omer to Eblinghem, in the Blaringhem area, arriving at 3.25 p.m. Here the Battalion was widely scattered in farms at some distance apart. H.Q. in the chateau, 1 kilometre east of Eblinghem station.

**December 14th.**—Company training. The billeting accommodation was rearranged and bettered.

**December 15th-24th.**—Carried out an extensive training programme.

An excellent area for training purposes. Two ranges and two assault courses were at the disposal of the Battalion, while each company possessed a large parade ground of its own.

**December 25th.**—A short Church Parade was held in the morning. A very excellent Christmas Dinner was provided for the men, who appeared to have thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

**December 28th.**—The Second in Command, Company Commanders, and the Intelligence Officer proceed by bus to reconnoitre the sector (along the Menin Road) which the Battalion is to take over. The reconnaissance was satisfactorily carried out, and the party returned by 6.45 p.m.

**December 29th.**—Inter-Company football matches were played off, and D Company won the right to represent the Battalion in the Company Championship of the Brigade.

**December 30th.**—D Company was defeated by a company team of the 12th R.B. in the Brigade Football Championship.

**December 31st.**—The Battalion was inspected by the Brigadier-General (Duncan) of the 60th Infantry Brigade at 2.30p.m., and was congratulated on their excellent turnout. The Brigadier also congratulated the Battalion personally on the very fine work done during the Battle of Cambrai,

Since August the following Awards have been made :

**Military Cross**, 2nd Lieuts. J. E. Zeron and F. B. Mitchell, Captain R. H. Bell (Staff);

**D.C.M.**, Sergeant F. J. Cooks ;

**Bar to MM.**, Sergeant A. T. Jones;

**M.M.**, Corporals J. T. Chilton and S. W. Dunkley, Lance-Corporals T. Collett and E. Evans, Privates A. Clemson, T. Clarke, P. Vincent, A. E. Champ, W. Hudson, F. Cox, W. Grimster, and F. James, Sergeant D. W. Lissiter, Corporals J. Wills and C. Marshall, Lance-Corporals E. Richards and G. F. Chapman ;

**Mentioned in Dispatches** (December), Lieut.-Colonel C. R. C. Boyle, 2nd Lieut. R. G. Pluckrose, R.-S.-M. L. Lee, Sergeant H. Mason.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**1918.**

**January 1st-4th.**—The Battalion, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel C. R. C. Boyle, was at Eblinghem, in rest, and undergoing training. (Map: Gheluvelt. Sheet 28, N.E. 3, 1/10,000.) Lieut.-Colonel C. R. C. Boyle was awarded the D.S.O., and Captain A. M. Duxbury the M.C. in the New Year's Honours Gazette.

**January 5th.**—The Battalion left Eblinghem at 5 p.m. by train, en route for the Line; arrived at Dickebusch at 7.30p.m., and thence marched to Ontario Camp for the night. Weather cold; accommodation good.

**January 6th.**—Left Ontario Camp at 1.15p.m.; entrained on light railway at Fuzeville for Manor Halt; met guides there at 3.30 p.m., when the Battalion was taken up Gloucester Drive and "A" Track to the Line, where we relieved the 20th K.L.R. (89th Brigade, 30th Division), and took over the following:

A Company, J.21.b.20.10;

B Company, J.21.b.50.20;

C Company, J.22.a.20.20;

D Company, E.S.E. and S.E. of J.20.d.90.90 and J.21.a.5.0; Strong Point at J.20.b.75.50;

H.Q. at J.20.b.5.3.

**January 7th.**—Rainy day and night. The Line is not too bad. Our artillery and enemy machine guns active. It is believed that the enemy division opposite to us is being relieved.

**January 8th.**—Very cold day. H.Q. and the centre company were shelled during the afternoon. Rations were brought up by pack ponies, and hot tea and soup were sent up to the Line during the night.

**January 9th.**—Cold day, with snow; enemy artillery active. The Battalion was relieved by the 6th K.S.L.I., and went into support at Tor Top Tunnels. Relief complete by 9.10 p.m. No casualties,

**January 10th.**—Battalion in support. 41 men sent to hospital and 25 to the transport with bad feet; quite unavoidable, as conditions in the Line were very rough.

**January 11th.**—Still in the tunnels.

**January 12th.**—Relieved by the 11th R.B., and were shelled quite heavily on leaving the tunnels. Marched to Manor Halt, and had to wait a long time for a train to take us to Reninghelst, companies not reaching Ontario Camp until early next morning.

**January 13th-15th.**—Ontario Camp. Snow and rain. Training and cleaning up.

The following Honours were awarded for the Battle of Cambrai:

Lieut.-Colonel C. R. C. Boyle, Bar to D.S.O.;

Rev. H. P. Hargreaves, Lieuts. G. W. Woodfood and R. G. Pluckrose, 2nd Lieut. G. V. Rowbotham, Military Cross ;

Corporal T. W. Cambray, Privates A. Deeley, T. Wilkins, W. Cherry, J. L. Radwell, A. G. Rawlins, and G. Newell, Military Medal.

**January 18th.**—The Battalion proceeded to Manor Halt by light railway, and thence to the line on foot, to relieve the 10th K.R.R.C. Relief complete by 7.30 p.m. No casualties.

Trenches very wet; water over the knees in places. The troops are wearing gum-boots. The left front line has had to be evacuated on account of water, posts being placed a little distance behind, and the front trench patrolled at intervals during the night so as to prevent the enemy from occupying it. The night was fairly quiet.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.**  
**1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**January 19th.**—Very fine day. One of our observation balloons was seen drifting towards the enemy lines. A man of D Company was taken prisoner—he probably wandered into an enemy post after having stuck in the mud,

**January 20th.**—Enemy artillery active during the afternoon, otherwise the day was quiet. The Battalion was relieved by the 6th K.S.L.I., and was shelled on the way out, but had no casualties. To Tor Top Tunnels, which are rather wet.

**January 21st.**—Still in the tunnels, the roof of which was broken through by shells, and we were nearly swamped, but eventually we managed to drain the water away.

**January 22nd.**—The Battalion at 6 p.m. went up to relieve the 6th K.S.L.I. in the trenches. 2nd Lieut. E. Lucas-Calcroft was wounded in the shoulder by a machine-gun bullet. Relief completed by 9 p.m.

**January 23rd.**—Very fine day. Enemy very quiet last night and today—almost suspiciously so. Our aeroplanes active. One of our sentries saw two enemy aeroplanes crash behind their lines.

**January 24th.**—Quiet and fine. The Battalion was relieved at 8 p.m. by the 11th R.B., and marched to Manor Halt, where the limbers awaited us with tea; the men then put their gum-boots and much salvage on the limbers, and marched to Swan Chateau.

**January 25th.**—Battalion training and cleaning up. One of our observation balloons was cut adrift by enemy shrapnel near the chateau, but the two occupants escaped in parachutes.

**January 26th.**—Training, as usual. Baths for the Battalion at Vitverhoek.

**January 27th.**—Foot washing and powdering carried out daily.

**January 28th.**—Demonstration by one of our aeroplanes, to help troops to judge heights accurately.

**January 30th.**—The Battalion moved to Tor Top Tunnels (I.24.d.8.4, Map 28.N.E.), and relieved the 10th K.R.R.C., being in reserve to the front-line battalions. Relief completed rapidly and without casualty by 6.30 p.m.

**January 31st.**—The Battalion provided large carrying and wiring parties at night. Situation quiet. No casualties.

**February 1st.**—The Battalion moved to the front line, taking over the right sub-sector of the Brigade front from the 6th K.S.L.I.; C Company south and D north of the Menin Road; B in No. 6 strong point, and A in No. 5 strong point. No supports. H.Q. at J.20.b.50.35. Working-parties digging M.L.R. between strong points. Patrols obtained and maintained touch with the 12th K.R.R.C. on the left and the 7th Somersets on the right. The wire was also patrolled, but no sign of the enemy seen. Owing to the darkness of the night the relief was not completed until 10.15 p.m. No casualties.

Lieut.-Colonel Boyle, D.S.O., received intimation that the Battalion was shortly to be disbanded, in accordance with the new scheme of reorganization decided on by G.H.Q. Officers and other ranks are to be posted to other battalions of the Regiment. Transport to remain complete under Brigade charge.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.**  
**1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**February 2nd.**—Clear day with good observation, and consequently increased artillery activity. Some of the companies and H.Q. subjected to fairly heavy shelling (by 4.2 guns) from noon to 4 p.m. Retaliation obtained, and by 6 p.m. the situation became normal. Hot soup and tea is distributed in the line at 6.30 p.m., midnight, and 4 a.m.

All available men were employed in wiring the front line and strong posts. No casualties, but one man suffering from shell-shock.

**February 3rd.**—Fine and quiet. The Battalion was relieved in the front line by the 6th K.S.L.I., and proceeded into reserve at Tor Top Tunnels. Relief complete by 9.30 p.m., and all in at the tunnels by midnight.

Lieut.-Colonel Boyle received further particulars regarding the disbandment of the Battalion, and orders were received to post officers and other ranks as follows :

8 officers and 150 other ranks to 2nd Battalion (2nd Division);

13 officers and 250 other ranks to 5th Battalion (14th Division);

15 officers and 300 other ranks to 2/4th Battalion (61st Division).

**Total, 36 officers and 700 other ranks.**

**February 4th.**—General situation quiet. All available men on working parties, and all returned safely by 4 a.m.

First official intimation of disbandment communicated to Company Commanders (on information received by letter from Lieut.-Colonel Boyle); viz. : 2nd Lieut. Nurse (A Company), Captain Foreshow, M.C. (B), Lieut. Pluckrose, M.C. (C), and Captain Money, M.C. (D).

The news, which came as a heavy blow, was not communicated to the men.

**February 5th.**—Tor Top Tunnels. Quiet and fine. The Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Scottish Rifles, who, curiously enough, initiated the 6th Battalion in the art of trench warfare in 1915. The Battalion entrained at Manor Halt at 7.30 p.m. for Chippewa Camp, and arrived at 10.30 p.m. Accommodation good, and the Battalion Mess was established as usual. Heavy work in the orderly room.

**February 6th.**—The Battalion busy making preparations for proceeding to new battalions, cleaning up, handing in stores, etc. Brigadier-General Duncan, C.M.G., D.S.O., with his Brigade-Major (Major A. E. Sanderson, of the 1st Battalion of the Regiment), and his Staff Captain (Captain Bell, M.C.), dined with the officers in the evening, the Brigadier making a very fine and complimentary farewell speech, to which Lieut.-Colonel Boyle, D.S.O., and Major Cleminson, D.S.O., replied.

No definite orders to move have been received as yet.

*On this date there were serving with the Battalion 159 N.C.O.'s and men who came out to France with it in 1915.—ed.*

**February 7th.**—Companies at Baths at Chippewa. The sergeants had a farewell social entertainment in a large hut in the camp, at which General Duncan, Lieut.-Colonel Boyle, and the Regimental Sergeant-Major made speeches. At 7 p.m. orders were received to entrain at La Clytte at 2 p.m. tomorrow.

**February 8th.**—Brigadier-General Duncan addressed the Battalion on parade, and explained that the decision to disband the Battalion had been made by G.H.Q., and the Brigadier and Divisional Commander had had no say in the matter. The Divisional Commander, Major-General Smith, addressed a few words to the officers in the Mess about noon.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

At 12.30 p.m. the Battalion paraded on La Clytte Road, by parties for their respective new battalions, the actual numbers on parade being as follows:

2nd Battalion, 7 officers and 123 other ranks;

2/4th Battalion, 10 officers and 233 other ranks;

5th Battalion, 7 officers and 195 other ranks.

**Total, 24 officers and 551 other ranks.**

Headed by the band of the 6th K.S.L.I. and our own band, the parties marched off at 1 p.m. for La Clytte station, where entraining was completed by 2.30 p.m. General Duncan and numerous friends of the Battalion were at the station to see it off, and the train left at 3.15 p.m.

**February 9th.** — The Details (as above) moved to Micmac Camp.

**February 10th-13th.** -Details remained at Micmac Camp awaiting orders.

**February 14th.** — Details moved to the 20th Divisional Wing of the XXIIInd Corps Reinforcement Camp at Berthem, the three officers being accommodated in a farm near the camp.

**February 21st.** —Officers, Warrant Officers, C.-Q.-M.-Sergeants, Orderly Room and Signalling Sergeants moved, by train, from Godewaersvelde station to "D" Infantry Base Depot, Rouen; while all other Details proceeded, by march route, to join No. 14 Entrenching Battalion at Wippenhoek.

The following letter was written by Major-General W. Douglas Smith, C.B., commanding the 20th Division, on the 9th February : —

Headquarters, 20th Division.

9.2.18.

My Dear Colonel Boyle,

I am extremely sorry I had not an opportunity of seeing your battalion on parade, and of saying a few words of farewell to the officers and men before they left.

I would like to have told them how much they will be missed in the Division with which they have fought so successfully since the middle of 1915 and shared its hardships and triumphs.

I always had the feeling that whatever task they were given to do, their grit and determination would carry them through with it. It was a fine battalion with a grand record, and well might you be proud to command it.

I know the officers and men will do great things wherever they go, and will be a credit to their battalion and their country.

I wish you all God speed.

Yours v. Sincerely,

W. Douglas Smith, Major-General,  
20th Division.

**RECORD OF THE 6th (SERVICE) BATTALION.  
1st July 1917 to February 1918, when disbanded.**

**SPECIAL ORDER BY BRIGADIER - GENERAL F. J. DUNCAN, C.M.G., D.S.O., COMMANDING  
60TH (LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE, 13th FEBRUARY 1918.**

Under the reorganization of Infantry Brigades, the 6th Battalion Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry has been disbanded, and its officers and men drafted to other battalions of the same Regiment.

On this occasion I should like to place on record the deep regret felt by the whole Brigade at the loss of this fine battalion. It came to France with the 20th Division, and has served in the same Brigade and in the same Division for 3 ½ years.

During this time it has always been marked out by its sense of duty, its steadfastness, and its discipline. Its fighting powers have been proved in the most important engagements in the war.

Coming from the class it does—the good yeoman class—its steadfastness and its reliability in action, as well as behind the line, have become proverbial.

Although it no longer exists as a separate battalion, its memory will always remain in the Brigade as an example of the best fighting force of the best soldiers bred in England.

It has been most ably commanded by Lieut.-Colonel C. R. C. Boyle, D.S.O., who has served with it since its formation. He has had the best interests of his battalion always at heart. He lived for it, and his officers and men would follow him anywhere.

To him, to his officers, N.C.O.'s and men, I offer, on behalf of the 60th Brigade, a deep regret at losing them, and promise that where-ever we may go, we shall always keep them in happy and honoured memory.