



No-Man's Land in front of Serre, 1916. Imperial War Museum, Neg. Q1910.

CHAPTER 8: ARLEUX AND MERICOURT

*Next week the bloody Roll of Honour said
"Wounded and missing" - - (That's the thing to do
When lads are left in shell holes dying slow,
With nothing but blank sky and wounds that ache,
Moaning for water till they know
It's night, and then it's not worth while to wake!)*

Siegfried Sassoon

On July 20th, the Brigade received orders to move to Neuville St. Vaast and thence to the line. The 16th Battalion reached their destination at 8.30 a.m. and rested until sundown in temporary billets before moving up to the trenches in front of Acheville. While the companies were moving off by platoons a few shells fell in the vicinity. One H.E. shell fell directly in front of 'D' Company who were just about to march off. 2nd Lieutenants Buchanan and Robb and four other ranks were killed, 41 others were wounded, one of whom later died.

The 16th Battalion occupied the front line with Battalion Headquarters in New Brunswick trench. The 15th Battalion were on the 16th's right, with the 11th East Yorks of the 92nd Brigade on their left. Their front line, with advanced posts which in fact were fortified shell holes, about 200 yards out, covered a frontage of about 1100 yards. The 18th Battalion moved into the trenches as battalion in support and worked as two 'double companies', 'A' and 'B' Company under Captain Key-Jones.

On the morning of the 22nd at 'stand down,' Corporal W. Ingram of 'A' Company, 16th Battalion, was found to be missing from one of the advanced posts. The circumstances pointed to him having been 'snatched' by an enemy patrol while making his way to a latrine. After this incident 'A' Company sent out patrols each night determined to catch an enemy straggler in order to even the score. One patrol, on the night of the 26th waited for 30 minutes outside the enemy wire, but without success. On the night of the 28th, which was exceedingly dark, Sergeant

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Nelson led out a patrol of six other ranks. Fifty yards out from their own wire, they were surprised by an enemy patrol who opened fire on them at point blank range, from a shell hole concealed in long grass. The Sergeant fell, mortally wounded, whilst one other member of his party received lesser wounds.

The patrol was taken so unawares by the suddenness of the attack that with the exception of one bomb being thrown at the enemy, no retaliation was made. Two members of the patrol brought in the Sergeant's body, but Privates Claydon and Martin did not return and were posted missing.

Another misfortune befell the 16th Battalion that night when, at 1.00 a.m., the enemy shelled Quebec trench heavily. One shell fell outside 'C' Company Headquarters, killing a stretcher bearer of the 18th Battalion, mortally wounding 2nd Lieutenant O. L. Paus and wounding 2nd Lieutenant W. F. Caniey and three other ranks.

On the 29th, the 16th Battalion were relieved by the 11th East Lancashire Regiment, of the 94th Brigade and proceeded to the rear of the left Brigade L3 (Mericourt) Sector in Canada and 'Gertie Miller' trenches. The 18th Battalion occupied the front line on the right with the 18th Durhams on their left.

For the 16th, this dreary month closed with one bright spot. Each day, while in Brigade support, a party of 60 other ranks, together with a group of officers, proceeded after sundown to a point near Neuville St. Vaast to take hot baths, returning the following evening after sundown. George Morgan remembered this occasion well since it was his first opportunity to take a hot bath since he arrived in France. He had the dubious honour of sharing the same tub, in point of fact, a wine vat, with Company Sergeant Major Cussons.

On the night of August 1st, the 18th Battalion sent out patrols to examine the enemy wire. Patrol No. 1, under 2nd Lieutenant Burton with two N.C.O.'s and 19 other ranks with a Lewis gun, found the German wire to be three to four feet high and about seven yards deep with lots of loose wire, but no gaps. They returned to their own positions at 1.25 a.m. without incident. Patrol No. 2, under 2nd Lieutenant Kiddle with two N.C.O.'s and 20 other ranks with a Lewis gun, left their own lines at 9.40 a.m. at T17a 95 and moved north-east to the enemy entanglements and then moved south-east along the wire for about 280 yards. At this point they were challenged by a German sentry. Very lights were sent up and machine gun and rifle fire directed against them together with about 30 grenades thrown towards them. They withdrew without casualties after throwing grenades into the enemy trenches which were believed to cause casualties.

Both battalions were relieved on the night of August 6th and rested for ten days, the 16th at Ottawa Camp and the 18th at Fraser Camp near Mont St. Eloy. On August 16th they returned to the line, transported by train to Neuville St. Vaast and from there moving into the trenches. The 16th occupied the right sub-section in Totnes, Nova Scotia and Montreal trenches. 'A', 'B' and 'C' Companies were now

commanded by Lieutenant E. Wilson, Captain G. W. Ashforth and Captain J. D. Ballantyne respectively.

The 18th had two companies in the railway embankment, known as Brown Line (see map 7) and two companies with Battalion Headquarters about A6c. The 16th spent their first day in the line generally cleaning up their trenches, and strengthening and deepening them. Patrols examined the wire, finding it deep and continuous. On the following day the Germans registered strong disapproval of their activities by bombarding the line with trench mortars and blowing in 15 yards of trench. The Battalion suffered four casualties from this fire, one of whom later died of his wounds.

On the night of August 19th, 540 gas projectors were discharged over Acheville. The attack was considered a success, the wind being favourable. Information obtained from a prisoner, captured later, indicated that his Regiment had suffered over 80 casualties from the gas with at least 20 dead. As dawn broke, the enemy retaliated with a minen werfer bombardment, 14 bombs bursting in and near the front line. One round burst in a bay, blowing to pieces a soldier who had just walked around the traverse and was actually saying "Good morning" to Sergeant Morgan who, with another soldier, was wounded by fragments. Suffering one large and two small wounds George Morgan, together with his comrade, was carried out amid calls of "What a lovely blighty". 2nd Lieutenant Metcalf was also wounded that day, hit by machine gun fire whilst visiting a forward post.

On the night of the 23rd patrols, each of one N.C.O. and ten other ranks, went out to examine the enemy wire on the Battalion's front. They found it to be deep and continuous.

On the following night, the 16th Battalion was relieved by the 13th Battalion the York and Lancaster Regiment and moved into the reserve line with 'A' and 'B' Companies in the Brickstacks. Battalion Headquarters was located in La Folie Wood. The troops were accommodated in dug outs in the old German line and although those in Vimy were continually shelled, everyone was said to be comfortable. Bath houses had now been erected for the use of the troops, in the Brickfields and in Vimy East, no doubt making a considerable contribution to the comfort of the accommodation. They were to remain in the reserve line engaged in fatigues, deepening and widening Teddie Gerade trench and carrying mining cases and gun pit frames to Hudson trench until the night of the 4th September when they were relieved by the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles and moved to Kitchener Camp, north of Roclincourt.

From 2.00 a.m. to 3.00 a.m. on the 30th August, the enemy heavily shelled the 18th Battalion's Headquarters in the Quarry, their front line in Totnes trench and their close support and support positions in Quebec and New Brunswick trenches, more especially on the front line where this trench cut the Quarries Road. From 9.00 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2.00 p.m. until nearly 7.00 p.m., with very isolated

intervals, the Battalion Headquarters was shelled severely, about 1,000 shells of all calibres falling in and around the Quarry. So indiscriminate and careless was the nature of this shelling against the various lines of trenches that it hardly gave the idea of registration or barrage firing. Lieutenant-Colonel Carter reached the conclusion that the enemy was trying to hide his registration and practise barrage firing by excessive shelling in the guise of a destructive shoot against the Colonel's Headquarters, and that the enemy's intention was to raid his positions.

The front line, Totnes trench, was manned by 100 men. Another 80 men were in close support in Quebec trench whilst the strength of the Company of the 15th Battalion in New Brunswick was roughly 70 men. On studying the map, Lieutenant-Colonel Carter realised that if the enemy were to make an accurate entry into some definite point in the front line, he would need some obvious mark to guide him, in the dark, across a No-Man's Land of some 600 to 800 yards width. As most of the shelling had been on the left and the fact that the Quarries Road would make the only definite guide for the enemy to a specific point, he concluded that the most probable point of attack would be the junction of Totnes trench and Quarries Road and its vicinity. Lieutenant-Colonel Carter therefore issued the following instructions:

(1) The following orders were sent to companies at 1 p.m., the letter being addressed to 'C' Company (left flank) and copies sent to other companies: "The shelling today looks as if the Bosche may be thinking of a raid on your front. With this in view do no wiring tonight, nor will the other companies. If you think it advisable you can put a small listening patrol just in front of your wire and possibly a post to your left rear in that old disused trench, south of the Quarries Road and behind your front line, in case he tries to get in behind you.

Warn your men, and 'D' Company Commander will lend you half his strength, whom you can put on your left in Quebec, and these with any of 'A' or 'B' Companies left in the line can be used for counter attacking. The working party of 20 in 12th Avenue belonging to Hilt [15th Battalion the West Yorkshire Regiment] will in case of trouble, come automatically under your orders and I will write to them to this effect.

Directly you counter attack, send a runner over the top to Hilt's Company in New Brunswick and tell them to come up and reinforce you in Quebec. Send a wire to me when you have counter attacked too. I will send the remainder of Hilt to you in case they have not received your message. This is only in case a raid takes place. If of course the raid is on 'A' or 'B' Company's front, 'A' or 'B' Company will take charge of the counter attack with the oddments of 'A', 'B', 'C' Companies and half 'D' Company.

No stores will be drawn tonight and half 'D' Company will do all the ration carrying for tonight. Be careful of water today in case the well is blown in."

(2) The following orders have been given to Hilt Company attached to me. "The shelling today rather points to the possibility of a raid on our left front.

In this case we have to counter attack, you will, if you receive orders from either me or one of the Company Commanders in Quebec move across over the lid and take up the defence of Quebec. Explain this to your men, and that they are only on the defensive, and that my Battalion will be in front of them. Also, do not move your bombing post just north of junction of Quarries Road and New Brunswick trench.

Your working party in 12th Avenue will, in case of trouble, report to officer commanding 'C' Company in Quebec."

Lieutenant-Colonel
Commanding Officer Haze

A standing patrol was positioned between the Battalion's left (point A on map 8) and the 18th Durham Light Infantry to cover the gap which existed there.

The night of the 31st was quiet until 2.45 a.m. when the enemy put down a heavy barrage of 5.9's, 4.2's, 4.1's and 77mm shells on the front line, close support and support trenches. Lieutenant-Colonel Carter went to the top of the Quarry and watched the barrage develop.

Between 2.45 a.m. and 3.00 a.m. the Lewis gun post on the left flank spotted a party of about 30 Germans approaching the wire in single file. At the same time No. 3 post of the left company observed a similar party, carrying a machine gun, approaching. Immediately both posts opened rapid fire. In answer to the sentries shouts of "Stand to! They're comin' ower" men leapt to the parapet and, with rifles and Lewis guns, poured a fire into the enemy parties, the companies on the right firing half left. Many enemy were seen to drop. During all this time the enemy artillery barrage continued to rain down on the parapet, killing 2nd Lieutenant R. G. Dalton and one other rank and wounding eight other ranks.

Shortly after the fight began, a wounded man came back into the support trench and told Captain Whittaker, who commanded 'A' Company, that he thought the enemy had entered the line on the left. Captain Whittaker immediately signalled by telephone 'S.O.S.L3' and ordered the officer-in-charge of the light trench mortar battery to "Open fire."

Following the orders previously received, Captain Peace, Commanding 'C' Company, together with the half of 'D' Company attached to him, counter attacked 'Over the lid' to Totnes trench. The leading party jumped into an empty bay and began working up the trench whilst the men following worked from outside the trench. At the same time as the counter attack moved off, the 15th West Yorks Company moved forward to take up the defence of Quebec trench (marked E on the map).

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Captain W. Peace

As soon as this was done Lieutenant - Colonel Carter sent a message to the front line companies instructing them that as soon as the front line was clear they were to push out strong patrols to search for German dead and wounded and that, if possible, all men were to be back in their original positions by dawn. In point of fact the enemy had not entered the front line and had not penetrated beyond the wire. There was some delay in sending out patrols due to difficulties in stopping the trench mortar barrage, which had been deadly accurate and caused a great deal of damage. Many of the enemy killed or wounded by Lewis gun and rifle fire were blown to bits where they lay. Decimated remains of many German corpses were found in front of the wire. Only one wounded German, with both his legs broken, was

found and brought in, together with the body of an officer wearing the ribbon of the Iron Cross and other orders. Both men belonged to the 54th Infantry Regiment. Although the remains of some six to ten dead Germans were found, these were in such a decimated state that identification was impossible and collection for burial considered "not worthwhile." The booty recovered by the search parties included a light machine gun, in good condition and clean, a wooden encased bangalore torpedo, a Very pistol and three rifles.

Four snipers, in camouflage suits, crawled out into No-Man's Land and searched the ground for any wounded or dead. Each carried a card, written in German, explaining to anyone they found that they were in good hands and if they remained quiet they would be brought in after dark. These men returned at 3.30 p.m. without finding anyone.

The following memorandums, congratulating the Battalion in their repulse of the raid, were later received from Brigadier-General J. D. Ingles and Brigadier-General Ian Stewart:

C. C. HAZE

I congratulate you on the thoroughness and excellence of your arrangements in repelling the raid attempted by the enemy against your lines on the morning of the 31st and on your success which you thoroughly deserved.

I also wish to express my great appreciation of the splendid behaviour and prompt action of the Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of your Battalion and the determined manner in which they carried out your orders.

31st August 1917

J. D. Ingles, Brigadier-General
Commanding 93rd Infantry Brigade, 31st Division

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The Corps Commander has read with interest the report on the attempted raid of the 31st August, and requests that you will convey his congratulations to the C.O. 18th West Yorks Regiment, and the troops under his command on the accurate appreciation of the enemy's intentions, and adequate steps taken to frustrate them and the confidence and promptitude displayed in meeting the attack.

4th September 1917

Signed: Ian Stewart
Brigadier-General, General Staff, XIII Corps

On the 4th September, the 18th Battalion mounted two daylight patrols. Here are their official reports:

18th West Yorks Regiment DAYLIGHT PATROL REPORT 4th September, 1917

Two observers in camouflaged suits left our left company front at 4.35 a.m., crossed the Quarries Road and the Miericourt Road and proceeded to about T11a 25.

At 5.45 a.m., they saw a party of 12 men leave the sandbag structure at T11a 55 (approx.) previously reported and proceeded to their front line. 100 yards to left of sandbag structure is an S-shaped SAP, the head of which is apparently a shell hole. At 6.30 a.m. six enemy with a M.G. left this SAP for their front line. In the SAP head is a T.M. [trench mortar] about 12 inches long pointing in the direction of the battalion on our left.

The White House is about 100 yards behind enemy line, in a direct line with the sandbag structure. Behind and to the right of White House there is a house built at right angles, and in the end of this, about 15 feet from the ground is a square sandbagged hole, probably a M.G. emplacement or an O.P. In front of White House, quite close, is a dump of barbed wire, trench elements and iron stakes.

At 1.00 p.m., about 14 stretchers were taken to the cemetery. Could not be seen whether they contained dead or wounded.

At 1.30 p.m., observers saw what was apparently a long round periscope in enemy front line to the right of communication trench leading to the White House. They thought they might be seen, so fired simultaneously and smashed it.

3.00 p.m. Four Germans were seen to move along front line and climb over portion of trench which had been blown in. On their backs were strapped metal objects 2 feet by 1 foot 6 inches, with a tube on the top. Probably Vermosel sprayers.

At 5.30 pm observers saw working party of 100 men carrying shovels and rifles going past the White House, to the rear of enemy lines.

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At 6.00 p.m., on the left edge of the Quarries Road, about T11a 55.15, there are three dead Germans, recently killed, probably some of the raiding party of 31.8.17. They could not get close enough to examine them because the road at this point is in full view of the enemy.

The enemy has put out a lot of wire since the last patrol, on 30.8.17. The fork roads at T11a 61 are heavily wired.

11.30 a.m. Our artillery were firing on the enemy line in rear of the sandbag structure. Observers think enemy had a number of casualties, for whistles were constantly being blown. They think this was a signal for stretcher bearers. They report that artillery which was firing on the enemy front line to the right of Quarries Road was making accurate shooting, shells were falling in the trench and on the parapet.

When the enemy fired at our aircraft, they noticed there were quite a number of machine guns between SAP referred to before, and the Quarries Road. Eight machine guns were plainly seen. Observers returned to our lines at 8.30 p.m.

DAYLIGHT PATROL 3rd September, 1917

Patrol of two other ranks left our lines at 4.30 a.m. At 5.30 a.m. patrol saw enemy moving back from front line to support line independently. About 90 O. R. were seen. This confirms previous report and would seem to indicate that the enemy vacates his front line during the day. If our artillery shelled between 5.00 a.m. and 6.00 a.m. each morning they would be certain of causing casualties. Communication trench running into MericourtAcheville Road, seems to be a popular route. M.G.'s fired on our planes from front and support lines. Enemy guns, 4.2's, were observed to be firing from behind hedges at T18d 57. There seem to be several batteries firing from this part of Acheville.

The 18th Battalion were relieved from the line on the night of the 5th September, and moved back to Neuville St. Vaast where they later entrained for Bray. Both battalions now enjoyed a brief respite from the front line in their respective camps. Their time was spent in resting or training, although the 16th Battalion detached one company, first 'C' and later 'A', on a working detail in Long Wood.

On September 19th, both battalions returned to trench duty, the 16th relieving the 11th East Yorkshire Regiment in the L2 sub-section of the Arleux Sector, the 15th West Yorkshire Regiment being on their right and the 14th York and Lancaster Regiment, 94th Brigade, being the battalion on their left. The relief was completed in daylight via Tired Alley. The 18th Battalion moved into the support positions known as Red Line (see map 7) relieving the 10th East Yorkshire Regiment.

On the 25th the 18th Battalion moved into the front line, relieving the 15th West

Yorkshire Regiment, in the right battalion position, whilst the 16th were relieved by the 18th Durham Light Infantry and took over that Battalion's position in the left support sector, with 'A' Company in the Arleux Loop and 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies in Red Line. The War Diary records that during the preceding tour in the front line, the Battalion suffered only two casualties, both wounded although one seriously, and one case of suspected shell shock. On October 1st, the 16th was relieved by the 12th East Yorkshire Regiment and moved to Bray. The 18th was relieved by the 10th East Yorkshire Regiment and occupied the support line for five-days. Then they too moved to Bray, having been relieved from support by the 13th East Yorkshire Regiment. There followed for both battalions a spell of eight days of rest, specialist training with Lewis guns, bangalore torpedoes and practice firing on the Bray range. On the 13th, both battalions were moved back into the line, the 18th occupying the support trenches.

On the 16th October at 5.10 a.m., the enemy brought down an extra heavy bombardment on the positions occupied by the 16th Battalion, wounding Lieutenant J. L. Stanley, D.S.O., and three other ranks, one from 'C' Company the others from 'D' Company. The bombardment also extended to the battalions on their left and right flanks, the 14th York and Lancaster Regiment and the 15th West Yorks respectively. Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Croydon, M.C., seeing this to be no ordinary affair called for artillery retaliation, soon after which the York and Lancaster Battalion sent up S.O.S. rockets. The artillery retaliation which resulted probably stopped the enemy mounting a raid. He did mount a raid against the York and Lancaster Regiment, but his efforts proved unsuccessful. Half the enemy troops never reached the British wire, having been caught in the S.O.S. barrage. One prisoner was taken by the York and Lancaster's who subsequently counted 27 dead in their wire. At 10.00 a.m. a Red Cross flag was waved from the German second line, the enemy presumably wishing to search for and bring in wounded, but as no one appeared and enemy shelling continued, no action was taken in response to this gesture.

After the raid, as it was thought that a number of the enemy might be laying out in No-Man's Land awaiting an opportunity to 'crawl in' after dark, Sergeant G. Meadows of 'C' Company, 16th Battalion, asked permission to go out, dressed in a camouflaged suit, and see if he could spot any of the enemy and if so, "account for them." Permission was granted and he crawled out, with one other rank following in the rear to give support and assistance. After they had crawled about 150 yards, they saw two enemy soldiers laying a telephone wire. Sergeant Meadows fired at and killed the leading man. The other man immediately took cover but presently reappeared, whereupon the Sergeant fired again killing this man also. A third man then appeared but, although the Sergeant fired at him, he was successful in getting away. After this Sergeant Meadows and his companion remained in No-Man's Land for some considerable time but, observing no other enemy, they then returned to their own lines. Sergeant Meadows was later awarded a Military Medal.

On the night of 19th October, the 18th Battalion relieved the 15th West Yorks in

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the front line, whilst the 16th Battalion were relieved by the 18th Durhams and moved into left support with three companies in Red Line and one company in Arleux Loop South.

Both battalions remained in these positions until the 25th October when they were relieved from the line, the 16th Battalion moving to Durham and Lancaster camps whilst the 18th Battalion moved to Bray. This was followed by almost two weeks rest and training before both battalions returned to trench duty. This pattern of movement was to continue for the next three months.

The winter of 1917-1918 was one of the hardest on record. Extremely cold weather froze the ground to the hardness of iron. The battle front was covered by a carpet of snow. Operations were impeded on both sides and although the front was officially described as 'quiet', life in the trenches was exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, both battalions maintained a policy of aggressive patrolling in No-Man's Land.

Examples of these activities recorded in the 18th Battalion's diary are:

23rd October-Daylight patrol from 'C' Company commenced detailed reconnaissance of enemy wire.

25th October - Daylight patrol located three enemy machine guns in a shell hole at B12b 80.05.

10th November - Daylight patrol went out at 6.30 a.m. returning at 11.00 a.m. after reconnoitring enemy defences. Three hostile machine guns located. Second daylight patrol examined enemy wire. Third daylight patrol worked south-east along Oppy-Arleux Road as far as Willows. Reported light trench mortar firing from SAP in front of enemy line behind Willows.

14th November - Patrol of five men led by Corporal Barker took up a position in No-Man's Land under cover of mist. At about 7.15 a.m., a sentry was seen with his head and shoulders above parapet of enemy SAP. Corporal Barker fired at this man who threw up his hands and disappeared groaning.

An interesting example of ground / air liaison occurred on November 15th, when three patrols, each of two other ranks crawled out into No-Man's Land and marked the position of enemy machine guns firing at British aeroplanes which, by arrangement, flew low overhead to draw fire from the enemy's guns.

On January 4th, news was received that Temporary Major (Acting Lieutenant-Colonel) A. C. Croydon was promoted to the rank of Temporary Lieutenant-Colonel. Also an extract from the London Gazette, War Office, dated 18th December, 1917 was published in Battalion Orders:

Mentioned in Despatches 7th November, 1917:

Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Croydon, M.C.

Lieutenant J. L. Stanley, D.S.O.

Lieutenant J. M. Barrow

Lieutenant D. T. King

Lance Corporal W. Francis

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The hard winter weather was followed by heavy rain and a rapid thaw. Conditions became very bad, subsidences taking place and the bottom of the trenches becoming, in places, two or three feet deep in thick adhesive mud. Communication trenches became impassable and movement was only possible 'over the top'. Consequently during the hours of daylight the advanced posts were completely isolated. However, Mother Nature was not selective, the conditions in the German line being equally abhorrent. The 18th Battalion War Diaries record that "visibility was very bad and there was exceedingly little around the Tunnel Headquarters and some artillery fire directed at the Sucrerie and Willerval".

On the night of the 19th the 18th Battalion were relieved from the front line by the 18th Durham Light Infantry and moved to Ecurie Wood. This completed their last tour in the front line. The 16th, on the night of the 23rd, moved into close support in Red Line, with 'D' Company in Arleux Loop North. Until their relief from these positions on the 27th, when they moved to billets in Ecoivres every available man was employed in making the trenches passable, particularly Arleux Loop and Tired Alley. At Ecoivres, after the usual cleaning up and kit inspections, the companies were reorganized into three platoons per company.

On January 31st, orders were received by the 18th to "disband the battalion." The 16th, however, were to complete one more tour of trench duty. On February 5th they relieved the 11th East Yorkshire Regiment in the Arleux Sub-Sector. The companies were distributed as follows:

- 'A' and 'B' Companies under Captain Battishill, M.C., in Arleux Post;
- 'C' Company under Captain L. L. de Souza in Oak Post;
- 'D' Company under Captain A. H. Evans in Tommy Post.

Arleux Loop had been heavily bombarded by howitzers during the morning prior to the relief and about 50 yards of trench had been blown in. Baron trench was also subjected to heavy machine gun fire during the day. The 6th was marked by the heavy artillery bombardment of the German lines owing to the expected relief of the 240th Division by the 5th Bavarian Regiment. The Battalion participated with machine gun, Lewis gun and trench mortar fire.

During the next few days, a great deal of work was done in clearing the mud from Arleux Loop and repairing the damage to Baron trench. These activities were interrupted on the night of the 8th when the enemy put down a heavy barrage on the right divisional sector, occupied by the 62nd Division. This was followed by a raid, which was repulsed, two of the enemy and two British soldiers being killed.

On the 11th February 1918 the Battalion was relieved from the front line for the last time, by the 18th Durham Light Infantry, and moved to Fraser Camp. On the following day they marched to Maroeuil where they were billeted in the town. On

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the 13th, Company Sergeant Major G. Cussons ceased to perform the duties of acting Regimental Sergeant Major, being posted to the 15th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment. Captain L. H. Croxford and Lieutenant D. T. King of 'A' Company, together with 2nd Lieutenant J. Luke of 'D' Company were also 'cross posted' to the 15th Battalion, as were 192 other ranks.



Daylight patrol leaving snow-covered front line trench, Arleux Sector, 1917.
Imperial War Museum, Negative O 10624.