

# Taranaki Company War Diary

## 2nd Wellington Battalion



The following pages have been transcribed from the Taranaki Company Diary recording their days on the Somme, in particular 15 September - 4 October 1916 during which time the New Zealand Division fought their way from Longueval to Eaucourt l'Abbay.

Fifteen thousand members of the division went into action. Nearly 6000 were wounded and 2000 lost their lives. 1205 of the New Zealand Somme dead have no known grave. They are commemorated on the New Zealand Memorial to the Missing in Caterpillar Valley Cemetery near Longueval. One returned home to New Zealand in November 2004; his remains lie in the tomb of the Unknown Warrior outside New Zealand's National War Memorial.

Although this diary seems to be authored by the same person (the C.O. was Captain LH Jardine at this time) the original entries have been written by two or maybe three different hands, suggesting original notes were written up by a subordinate(s). The detailed battle report (starting page ) is probably written by Jardine.



Alfred C Cowie is mentioned, the last time being on 2 October when he was reported wounded and missing. He was later reported Killed in Action.

Frederick C Harris is presumed to have been in the same company at this time and won a military Medal at some stage during this period. However as yet no mention of him has been discovered.

Cran Harris

08.09.2012

## *Taranaki Company Diary pages 252 to 278*

### *Verbatim transcript*

*Transcribed from scanned images of Taranaki Coy Diary by Capt. LH Jardine and Images numbered 210 to 240 are included here.*

*Transcribed with original punctuation and spelling.*

*Although it seems to authored by the same person (Jardine) it has been written by two or maybe three different hands, suggesting original notes were written up by a subordinate(s).*

*All text in red and/or red Italics is mine*

### *Summary.*

September

8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> Raineville to Fricourt Wood

12<sup>th</sup> Moved up to Check Trench

14<sup>th</sup> To Carlton Avenue where took up position as reserve Battalion for 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade.

15<sup>th</sup> Supported leading Battalions and eventually went into front line in Flers.

16<sup>th</sup> In Flers at front, suffers heavy bombardment. Cowie and other reserves join.

17<sup>th</sup> Early, were relieved and moved back to Wood Lane.

18<sup>th</sup> 8:15pm moved forward again, reached cabbage patch back Flers 11:15pm

19<sup>th</sup> Quiet. Fitzgerald finds MG, fixes it.

20<sup>th</sup> 9pm moved back to Wood lane.

21<sup>st</sup> Cleaning, drying, digging.

22<sup>nd</sup> Fatigues carrying duck-boards.

23<sup>rd</sup> Fatigues.

24<sup>th</sup> 9pm left for (filthy) Savoy trench arriving 11pm.

25<sup>th</sup> Dug new trench rear of savoy for sleeping.

26<sup>th</sup> Fatigues, battalion in reserve, whole of 2 brigade in reserve for 1st bde attack

27<sup>th</sup> in readiness, 15 minutes notice.

28<sup>th</sup> 6:25pm moved to front line taking up position 500 yds north of Factory Corner.

29<sup>th</sup> North of Factory Corner left of Ligny-Thilloy road. Cowie patrols. Finds Hun Documents?

30<sup>th</sup> Relieved, moved west to Goose Alley to support attack towards Eaucourt L'Abbey on 1<sup>st</sup>.

1<sup>st</sup> Oct. 3:15pm Supporting 2/Otago attack on The Circus and Gird north of Eaucourt L'Abbey.

2<sup>nd</sup> Oct. Overnight, confusion reigns. Patrols sent 200 yards north. Cowie killed here?

3<sup>rd</sup> 2am Relieved by 3<sup>rd</sup> NZRB moves back to Savoy. Afternoon back to Fricourt arriving 5pm.

4<sup>th</sup> Morning rested, afternoon Bath and fresh clothes.

### *Image 210, 8th September, Diary page 252*

The Battalion marched from Raineville to a camp about two miles west of Albert where we went under canvas. The first Brigade is camped alongside and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade a short distance away.

Promotions to Commissioned ranks

Posting

Transfers \*

*Not transcribed here-Ed*

### *Image 211, 9th September, Diary page 253*

Inspection: Inspection by General Godley in forenoon.

Bathing Parades in afternoon

### *Image 212, 10th September, Diary page 254*

Church parade in morning

Afternoon: At 1PM the Battalion moved off in column of route to Fricourt Wood arriving at 6pm.

Captain M. Urquart left today for a months course at the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Infantry School, Flixcourt.

Appointed to rank of Lance Corporal

10/2665 Pvte.Keystone AJ Coy Cook 10-9-16

*Image 213, 11th September, Diary page 255*

Morning: Inspection and returns of all trench deficiencies

Sent for 25 gallon of beer but none obtainable

Afternoon Equipping for trenches

*Image 214, 12th September, Diary page 256*

Morning: Final equipment of Battalion before going to trenches. The following list of names of the men in Company who were left in reserve when the company moved out to trenches

*\*No list found -Ed*

Afternoon: Issue of two days rations to all ranks. Parade at 4:45pm and move off at 5pm. 200 yds between platoons. Destination: Check Trench.

Evening: Arrived at Check Trench (about 1 mile north of Montauban) at 6:30pm & immediately proceeded to dig in. Fatigue parties carrying on this work during night.

*Image 215, 13th September, Diary page 257*

In view of expected retaliation to our bombardment digging in in was continued & practically completed.

*Image 216, 14th September, Diary page 258*

At 6pm left Check Trench for Carlton Avenue where took up position reserve Battalion for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade in Preparation for the attack on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Image 217, 15th September, Diary page 259*

At 6am bombardment which had been continuous throughout the week reached a climax and at about 6:20am (zero time ) the attack commenced.

Our Brigade position lay from High wood on the left to junction of Otago and Tea Trench on the right & the Battalion were in the following order

Front Line	-	Auckland
S	-	Otago
SS	-	Canterbury
Reserve	-	Wellington

The division had four objectives Viz:

1 <sup>st</sup> Objective	-	2 <sup>nd</sup> Brigade (switch Trench)
2 <sup>nd</sup> “	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> Brigade
3 <sup>rd</sup> “	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> Brigade
4 <sup>th</sup> “	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> Brigade

The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade was in reserve.

At about 7:30am our battalion moved up from Carlton Avenue to line vacated by Canterbury who had moved up to Otago line, Otago having taken the place of Auckland in the front line.

Places taken by our Battln were

1<sup>st</sup> line - Hawkes Bay in Worcester Tr. Thistle lane to Turk Lane

Support - Taranaki in Seaforth Tr. Thistle lane to Turk Lane

Reserve - Ruahine in Rifles Tr. Thistle Lane to Turk Lane

1<sup>st</sup> line - Wgtn West Coast on right of H.B. Coy in Tea Tr. Left & right of French Alley.

After leaving Carlton Avenue Taranaki Coy proceeded to Seaforth Tr. Arriving at 8:15 am in the following order – Coy Hdqrs on left at junction with Thistle Avenue then L.M. Gunners, No 9,10,11, No 12 platoon on right at Turk Lane

Coy dug in & came under very heavy shell fire losing about 10 to 15 men killed wounded and shell shock. We remained in this position

*Image 218, 16th September, Diary page 260*

15<sup>th</sup> Friday

improving it until 1:45pm,when, having received instruction from the C.O. Coy got under way and dumped overcoats. During this wait Lt. Nicol with 10 & 11 platoons returned about 12 noon to Green Dump & took over 22000 rounds of SAA & 1 case of rum & brought it back & on to Switch Trench for Auckland Battalion.

These platoons had to work hurriedly & through two barrages of H.E. & shrapnel & lost only one man killed.

This party had not returned to the Coy when the latter moved into action at 2:5pm & they eventually joined us as we reached Hdqtrs of 4<sup>th</sup> Battln 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade.

The reasons of the move of our Battln at this stage of the advance are many. The Rifle Brigade had taken second objective & the third also. It had advanced according to programme on the forth objective but

owing to the slowness of the Brigades on their left & right to get forward to keep their flanks guarded & their failure to hold their positions when they did come up the unfortunate Rifle Brigade (3<sup>rd</sup>) was badly handled & retired on the 3<sup>rd</sup> objective. They took up even there more ground than had been allotted to them & covered the whole of Flers Village left & right. About noon they became hard pressed & wanting in supplies, ammunition and assistance. Our Battalion was ordered to their help in rather a hurry & a plan of advance was devised in 15 minutes & 30 minutes from the time of first order from Brigade Hdqrs the Battln was on the move in the following order-

Hawkes bay on left

Wgtn West coast right

Taranaki

Supporting

Ruahine in reserve

The whole moved in diamond formation, platoons being also in the same order moving through area covered with crump holes & plastered with shrapnel fire. The company moved with No. 9 covering Hawkes Bay & No 12 covering Wgtn West Coast L. Machine guns

Image 219, 17th September, Diary page 261

15<sup>th</sup> Friday

in centre rear.

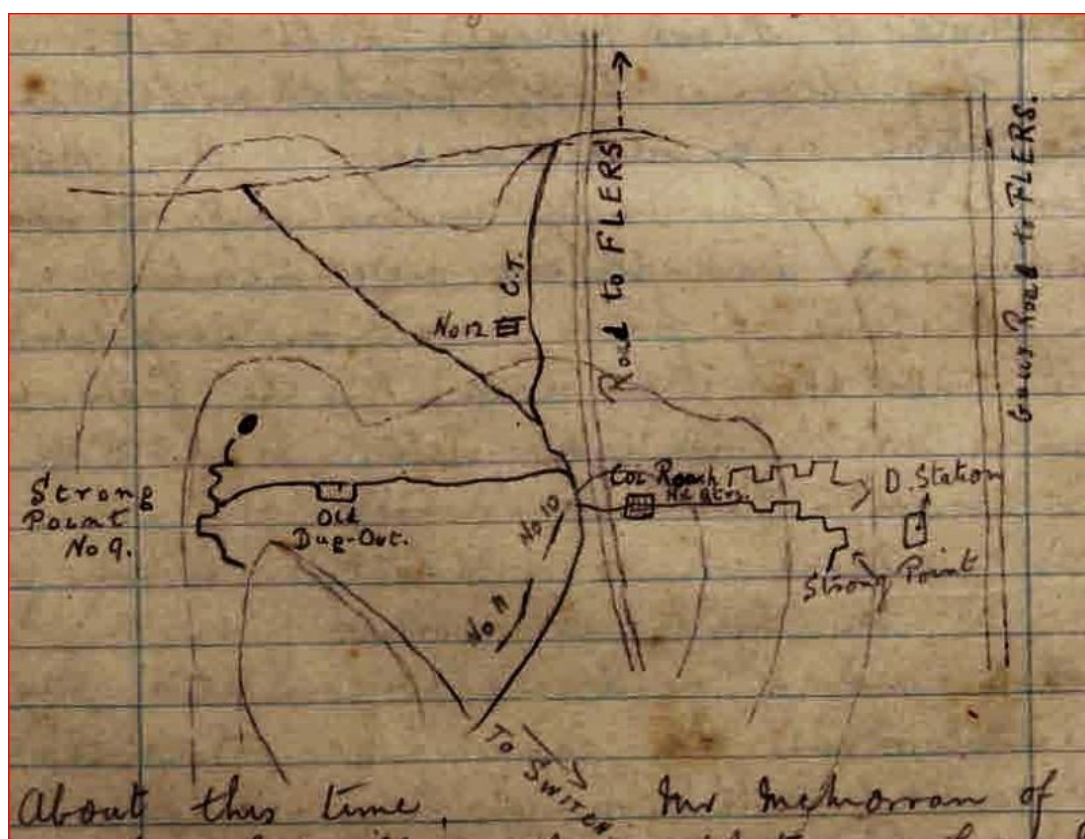
Direction was difficult until over Crest & Switch Trenches when we were on forward slope of spur leading to left of Flers.

Hitting the right part of Switch Tr. We gathered some ammunition and moved forward to 200 yards in rear of 2<sup>nd</sup> objective. This place was marked by communication trench & another trench running to the right into a gully where a dressing station had been established.

The C.O. 1<sup>st</sup> Battln NZRB (Col. Roach) was in the trench near the C.T. & agreed that a strong point should be dug on the left again to protect the flank. This was carried out by No.9 (2/Lt Walker) & our two Lewis guns assisted by No. 9 Lt Manson with two guns(Vickers).

Twice about 3:30 pm No. 10 & No. 11 platoons came up & dug in in C.T. & cleaned it out to No. 9 platoon strong.

Mr. Rauch (No. 12 ) & Mr Nicol (No. 10 & 11) continued C.T. through to "D Coy 4<sup>th</sup> Battln NZRB"



The dugout noted in this sketch (centre left) is almost certainly Bogles Post, one of several former german command and aid posts that was adapted as a RAP. 3/NZRB RMO Capt. Gilbert Bogle, who established the post, was killed here on 16th September. (see BogalsPost pdf elsewhere on this site) -Ed



About this time Mr McMorran of Hawkes Bay attached himself with a platoon & Lewis Gun to that Company & he took over strong point near dressing station

*Image 220, 18th September, Diary page 262*

on the right overlooking the right of Flers.

Old German dugouts or gun emplacements near No. 9's strong point drew a considerable amount of hostile artillery fire upon the whole company & we suffered approximately ten casualties or more in this manner including the Coy Sgt. Major who was killed. A man more fearless and bold or better loved by the Coy would be hard to find.

We could not find Battln Hdqtrs by runners to get information but passed some through by wire to Brigade Hdqrs which did not reach line for 3 hours. Runners experienced great difficulties on messages and failed three times to find Batt. Hdqrs.

Capt McKinnon (WW Coast) was in need of support in Flers by 7pm & I sent Mr. McMorran with one platoon and gun of Hawkes Bay to his assistance as soon as I got his message. At 8:30pm from information of Col. Rauch 2/Lt Nicol with 10 & 11 platoons & one Lewis Gun (Robertson) went forward to assist Wgtn-W Coast in Flers under the direction of the Rifle Brigade to form a protection to the right flank which our first line had just discovered about 5pm to have been vacated by the 47<sup>th</sup> Div troops. They had withdrawn without informing Wgtn-W. Coast of the situation.

Col. Cunningham came round about 11pm having been through Flers & ordered the remainder of the Coy to be thrown in to assist Wgtn W.Coast & Hawkes Bay. At 11:30pm we moved, leaving Vickers guns to hold our ground & posts. We arrived in Flers without a casualty & in drizzling rain. At this time Flers was held by Wgtn W. Coast Hawkes Bay some detachments of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade & some small parties of the 47<sup>th</sup> Division who had been stopped by NZ Officers from falling back.

The line ran immediately round the northern skirts of the village & curled back on either flank behind Box & Cox on right & top of Abbey Rd on left. The left flank to SW was held by Ruahine & a strong post on Abbey Road.

Just in front of centre on road running north out of

*Image 221, 19th September, Diary page 263*

15<sup>th</sup> Friday

village was one of the famous "tanks" that had lead the front line troops through Flers. Here it was on the road with a hotchkiss pointing down the road & a machine gun guarding the front of our trenches on either hand. Capt McKinnon was well acquainted with the dispositions & I gave him two platoons ( 9 & 12)& these took up a position on the left front of village in the paddock connecting Wgtn W Coast (on the left by a hedgerow) and Hawkes Bay by Abbey Road & strong point on the left while Vickers guns were in position under Mr M???

The whole company dug in both here & on the right flank where 2/Lt Nicol had 10 & 11 Platoon & at 4ma on the 16<sup>th</sup> everyone was down in a trench very much fagged and hungry yet expectant of a counter-attack on the village which did not come.

Our Lewis gun remained in support at Hdqrs all night & a party of 25 men & one L. gun under an officer was sent up at midnight by the 47<sup>th</sup> Div. To assist in holding the right flank. This was the only help we received from the people who had left us in the lurch, a poor attempt as we were holding not only our own divisional frontage but also about 500 yards of theirs. That they had decided that Flers was not worth holding is evident when they dug a line in rear of the village. Their failure then can only be defended by their failure to get properly in touch with us a thing they never attempted during the night, though we were 400 yards ahead of them.

Our left was more secure in that refused by Ruahine we were again backed up by the NZ Rifle Brigade but the salient held by us that night would make anyone creep if put on paper.

During the early hours of the 16<sup>th</sup>

*Image 222, 20th September, Diary page 264*

16<sup>th</sup> Saturday

rations for one Battalion were handed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> NZRB to forward to us as we were supporting them but they kindly commandeered them and all our Coys received were rations for 32 men a piece. Water was out of the question.

The morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> broke cold damp & miserable & as it came the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade drew nearer & a comforting picture crept over us. First came the runners & then the leading Coys of the 1<sup>st</sup> Wellington-Ruahine & Hawkes Bay - & by daylight they had filled the village & disposed themselves in our line,

Hawkes Bay on the right & Ruahine on the left/ By 7:30 am the Hun artillery had increased in activity on the rear of the village: from a steady crump which had fallen at 5 minute interval in the village all night to sudden bursts of shrapnel & universal shell with a crump at the crossroads every ½ minute.

About 9:20 am the 1<sup>st</sup> brigade attacked & everything was drowned in the continuous rumble of our artillery & almost immediately the whole village was deluged by hostile artillery fire. Trees were stripped of branches & fell in all directions, house were flattened out & as it increased by 10:30 it was perfect hell – hard of imagination. Five large crumps fell on or about the junction of the road & many of the company (9 & 12 Platoons who had been relieved were digging in here) suffered terrible treatment, only those who had turned to and made a dugout after returning from the trenches escaped being killed or wounded. This heavy bombardment lasted till nearly noon & it was during those few hours that the Coy lost most heavily.

No.s 10 & 11 who were out on the right only lost about 6 men the whole day until relieved by Canterbury at midnight.

The attack progressed some hundreds

### *Image 223, 21th September, Diary page 265*

16th Saturday & 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday

of yards making a further salient in front of Flers but it could not develop owing to the slow methods of the divisions on the left & right.

At noon all was over.. The casualties were not great in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade but they could not advance further for reason above. During the bombardment in the morning great work was done by our stretcher bearers attending to the wounded along the road & all day & all night they worked with the pluck of devils carrying men out to the dressing stations. There were others who had done their job that day assisting voluntarily with the wounded & Mr Cowie organised parties for lifting wounded in to safety & bandaging their wounds (2/Lt. Cowie rejoined Coy on 16th Sept) He was greatly assisted in this work by L/Cpl Soffe & Pvt GA Edlin.

Our Machineguns suffered no casualties during the day though they were in the trenches all the time. Rations & water were again a great trouble & we eventually got rations for 8 men & two tins of water for the Coy. These came to hand in the evening.

The afternoon of the 16<sup>th</sup> was fairly quiet & enabled most of the 1<sup>st</sup> brigade to get through the village dig communication trenches.

17<sup>th</sup> Sept:

We reached Wood Lane & Otago Trenches about 4am & slept like logs till 7am.

All day the men busied themselves digging in as the enemy put

### *Image 225, 22th September, Diary page 266*

a fair amount of H.E. & shrapnel over at all times.

Reorganisation occupied most of the day.

In the evening 50 men & 2 guns were used for the defence of the leftflank behind Switch Tr. Were three strong points were dug during the night by a similar party of Ruahine & ourselves. Mr. Cowie was in charge of our party & was relieved by Mr Nicol at 7am on 18<sup>th</sup> Sept.. The night was very wet & miserable & caused endless trouble in the digging of posts.

Sept 18<sup>th</sup>

All day was spent in resting & organising. Cleaning of Machine Guns was a difficult matter owing to the wet weather.

Preparations were made for the pending work forward of the Flers Trenches. The weather remained bad – showery & cold & the ground became a quagmire.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Walker (No. ( Platoon) left the Coy today being ill with trench fever or something of the like.

We had lost several men sick with the same complaint the last few days.

Orders came at about 4pm for Coy Commanders to inspect the line at Flers to be taken over & it was found not to be much in advance of line held on night of the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Sept.

Road to Flers was in an awful condition & as the Coy moved up at 8:15 we experienced great trouble in the darkness with the connections of platoons & progress was so slow that only a few yards – say 30 – could be taken before a halt had to be called till all men were connected. Almost at the start the Coy was closed up & machineguns brought to the front. This was a good method as they could rest their loads while The Coy was closing up.

The cabbage patch at the back of Flers was reached at 11:15pm & guides met us.

**Image 224, 22th September, Diary page 266 (for insert on Cowie journey to front)**

September 16<sup>th</sup> (Saturday)

All reserve officers and men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. WR left detail camp near Fricourt at 7:15 pm on 15/9/16 to move up to the Batt. about 42 being Taranaki Coy with Lieut Cowie & Pennefather. Had a long march made a little more arduous by striking the wrong road and having to return some considerable distance - Arrived at Green Dump about midnight when the rain commenced - reported to Brigade Major and received orders to proceed at once to front line at Flers with ammunition, wire and other materials required by companies in front line. A most trying journey over rough ground slippery by rain and shelled by enemy most of the night. To make matters worse guide lost his bearings and party found themselves at daylight in trenches occupied by Otago battalion and some of 3rd NZ brigade well on left. The men stuck gamely to their loads along narrow trenches blocked by men occupying them. Getting directions every 100 yards or so the party eventually went across country and reached sunken road in Flers about 7am on 16/9/16 where Coys were sheltering. Everyone greatly relieved to have reached destination after a most difficult journey. Praise must be given to the men for the spirit displayed under trying conditions.

**Image 226, 23th September, Diary page 267**

The different Platoons of 1<sup>st</sup> Ruahine Coy & men got quietly & quickly to their places in the trenches. These as may be imagined were very bad & full of mud & water & the rain & cold of the night kept the men digging most of the time. Many fell asleep standing in the trenches over their boot tops in water so fagged with the slippery journey that they could not even dig a step to sleep on. The previous outposts had done little or nothing to improve these trenches.

Sept 19<sup>th</sup>

The day was quiet on the whole & occupied by the men in cleaning & digging out the sodden trenches. Fitzgerald found a LMG in good order behind our front line & also several drums. The gun was cleaned up & was in good working order by night. A crew was also found by Dobbyn to work this gun & great credit is due to the leaders of the MG Sub. For their work in keeping the three guns going.

The enemy were persistent in their bombardment of the support trenches & our own artillery during the first night & morning threw many shells into our front line trench & thereabouts wounding one or two men.

In the evening about 11pm Wgtn W-Coast tried an attack on a point in road on the front. It was met with machinegun fire & bombing & party was withdrawn.

Work was started in assembly trench in rear of support trench

Sept 20<sup>th</sup>

Nothing of importance occurred throughout the day but sun prevailed at times & dried the

**Image 227, 24th September, Diary page 268**

trenches & cheered our hearts. At about 9pm our Battalion was relieved by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battn NZRB & moved back to wood lane arriving there at about 1am.

Sept 21<sup>st</sup>

The day was spent in general drying & cleaning & also in digging in.

A small amount of shelling occurred during the day chiefly H.E & shrapnel but no casualties resulted.

Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>

Most of the Coy were on Fatigue carrying duckboards.

Coy Hdqrs was employed in general straightening up the rolls etc

Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>

Nothing of importance to recall. Fatigues as usual.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt PJ O'Dowd reported for duty.

Sept 24<sup>th</sup>

At about 7am a H.E. landed immediately beyond trench occupied by No 9 Platoon & as a result L/Cpl D Wilson was killed & four others wounded. About 3 am orders were received for Coy to prepare to move back to Savoy Tr. & at 9 pm we left Wood Land arriving at our destination at 11pm. There trenches being in dirty & sloppy condition all had to turn to & dig in for the night.

Sept 17. Transfer 2<sup>nd</sup>/Lieut. A.A.E. Pennefather to Wellington West Coast Coy

**Image 228, 25th September, Diary page 269**

The day was spent in cleaning lines & digging a shallow support trench in the rear of Savoy for sleeping purpose. This trench was considered necessary owing to filthy condition of Savoy.

*Promotions and Appointments*

*All dated 17:9:16*

*\*Not transcribed here -Ed*

**Image 229, 26th September, Diary page 270**

Coy was on fatigue carrying material for Pioneers

Lines were further improved by cleaning.

Battalion were now in reserve., the whole of the 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade being reserve brigade for the Divisional attack which was to recommence by 1<sup>st</sup> brigade attacking.

*Reinforcements*

Eleven reinforcements arrived in the afternoon & were all posted to No. 9 Platoon.

*Relinquishment The following NCO having been in hospital 48 hours is struck off the effective strength and relinquishes temporary rank of Corporal*

*L/Corp. Shelker 24/1816 to date 23-9-16*

**Image 230, 27th September, Diary page 271**

Coy remained in readiness all day to proceed forward at 15 minutes notice if required

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt walker returned to duty from hospital.

Sept 16<sup>th</sup>

Extracts from reports to OC 2<sup>nd</sup> Wgtn Batt. 17.9.16

The following men were recommended for good work and gallant behaviour on 16.9.16

2323/1620 Pr Edlin G.A. For excellent voluntary work in bandaging of wounded under heavy shell fire in Flers 10:30 AM 16/9/16

11/2232 Lance/corp Soffe W For excellent work in voluntary assistance to wounded under heavy shell fire Flers 10:30 AM 16/9/16

**Image 231, 28th September, Diary page 272**

Morning - Still waiting orders to move forward.

Afternoon- Shortly before lunch orders were received to be in readiness to move to the front line at 6:25 & at that hour the Battalion left in the following order

Taranaki,  
Ruahine,  
WgtnWC,  
Hawkes Bay

Mr Rauch remained behind & later returned to transport lines. Mr Niclo also did not proceed having received orders to leave today for a course of Machinegun instruction.

*From here on the entries are written by a different person. I believe Capt. Jardine probably wrote this – CSH*

The Coy moved at 6:25PM by cavalry track and fish alley to Flers (7:30pm). Then Abbey road- north



road to factory Cnr (8:15pm) thence to front line trenches. Coy took over from XIII Canterbury 1st batt. And were in position and relief complete by 9:30pm. Our right resting on Ligny-Thillois road N19,b.3.2 , our left on Ruahine Coy N19,a,5,3. On their left again was 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Auckland Regt. occupying same line of German trenches as far as Goose Alley. On our right were the Liverpool Irish who were relieved by 11th Queens 55<sup>th</sup> Division.

The Coy was lucky enough to get well in to feel itself right and left before any shelling occurred and at 10pm this started with sudden burst of HE shrapnel and HE shell with a small number of lacrymatory shells and intervened throughout the night The trenches were by no means properly finished and men

*Image 232, 29 September, Diary page 273*

were digging all night improving them. Established Coy Hdqrs in an old Hun dugout 75 yards in rear of the front line, where several Hun dugouts (artillery) existed under the bank, rather battered the result of our bombardments.

Telephone was laid to front line for a start being laid by Pvt Dibble as Coy

*29th*

went into trenches. This was moved back into dugout by 2am but line was already broken in several places and another line of Hun wire was put through and

communication was established by 4am the heavy shelling caused much trouble to SAA carriers and runners to Batt. Hdqrs - which were at Factory Corner - throughout the morning.

Our Lewis gun on the road on our right was disabled by a piece of shrapnel at midnight. It struck the body and smashed that but left fire part intact. No harm was done to the gunners and our 3<sup>rd</sup> which had been till then in reserve was moved into position. Lieut. Cowie patrolled the front of our position but made no discovery of enemy owing to his movement being restricted by incessant fire of our artillery into no-mans land.

Morning broke with a heavy mist, which was most fortunate for us, as it enabled a great amount of work to be done, which otherwise could not have been attempted on account of snipers. Communications Trench was laid out and started from Factory Corner by Haw. And Nap. On our left where it was to run to , it was begun by the Coy. And a party was set to work near Coy Hdqrs.

A wounded Hun officer was taken out of dugout by Stretcher Bearers shortly after returning Andrews was wounded by shell and Thoms who went to his assistance was also wounded. Milligan, *Fusch????* and Elliott were buried in the morning by H.E. Shells and later Sgt. Simmonds, *Evedon?*, Sharrock and Wilkinson were buried by other H.Es

and all except Milligan and Sharrock were evacuated the next morning. A Ruahine man was killed by sniper while working on the C.T. and buried nearby.

During the night Lieut. P. O'Dowd took out patrols and visited the 11<sup>th</sup> Queens on our right, who had moved forward some 200 yards and were digging

*Image 233, September 30, Diary page 274*

a trench under our own shell fire. Our artillery during these days caused us considerable trouble and annoyance with their shorts and close barrage. The mist which had continued all day enabled great work to be done in the C.T. And all night this work was carried on.

The machine gun position on the right was blown in on three different occasions after which fresh positions had to be dug. Corp. E Robertson was wounded in the shoulder by shrapnel from our guns. One battery of these was most persistent in shelling our rear and caused the men great anxiety and frequently blew in the parapets and parapets. Two Germans – an officer and his runner – were caught this morning by the centre Lewis gunners. They were very well dressed and gave themselves up willingly saying they had lost the way. Private O'Connor was killed in the morning by our shrapnel. He was an excellent soldier of very cheery disposition. The C.T. was almost completed by dusk.

*30<sup>th</sup>*

By 6pm of the 30<sup>th</sup> we received word and orders to move to another part of the line. Mr. Walker explored route to Goose Alley by Abbey road. The Coy were relieved by Rifle Brigade NZ Batt. And were clear of trenches by 9pm making down C.T. To Factory Corner where Craig of the M.G. another excellent soldier was killed and Fever HJ was severely wounded in the leg. We halted at junction of North and Abbey roads to allow Ruahine to move in front of us. We arrived in Goose Alley about 11:30 with rations and took up position in front line trench with right on road and left on Ruahine. 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt Otago whom we relieved had moved across Eaucourt L'Abbey Road to right of Goose Alley Haw. And Nap. Were on reserve in Flers Support trench (in Left Rear) Battalion Hdqrs were in cutting by forked road. As was the usual thing in Goose Alley we were enfiladed by H.E. & H.E shrapnel with *da??ing* persistency all night

long but suffered no casualties. In the morning a little sniping was carried out by our men when enemy targets occurred towards Eaucourt L'Abbey.

***Image 234 1<sup>st</sup> October Diary page 275***

The day broke fine and clear and the position was very quiet. A few orders were out regarding the attack to be carried out this day and ground in front of Goose Alley was inspected by officers and NCOs. At 11am Coy Commanders were in conference with C.O. And the orders for the attack were given out and returned to Coys at 12:30 PM. Preparations were at once made and great coats and hindrances in attack were dumped.

The following is a copy of the operation Report on the Proceedings to the C.O. 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Wellington Regt. 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade N.Z.D. From the O.C. Taranaki Coy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt Wgtn Regt. Dated 3-10-16 Map reference Gueudecourt 57.C.SW.1

Sir.

I beg to report for your information on the attack on the 1-10-16 on line of trenches from left of our divisional area to Eaucourt l' Abbey. Taranaki was in the right half of the sector occupied 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Otago Regt. in the attack. We were in immediate support of same Batt. And were ordered to follow them close upon the objective set them. The Right half of this objective being line of trench M.24.a.55.2. Road inclusive to Circus M.23.b.7.4.

On the right flank was objective set 2<sup>nd</sup> Canterbury line of trench M24.a.55.2 to M24.b.0.1 and beyond to Right of Gird Trench.

The Left half of Otago 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Objective was M23.b.7.4 (circus ) to Cross Roads inclusive M23.d.35.85. This Sector was carried by Ruahine Coy 2<sup>nd</sup> Wgtn in immediate on our left.

The attacking troops in this sector Otago & Wgtn started their attack from line of Goose Alley Trench M24.D.1.7 appx to M30.A.5.75 junction of Goose Alley And Abbey Road.

At ZERO time 3:15 first wave of Otago left trench and was followed by three more waves of that Batt. Making four waves in all.

All troops went over the parapet in the most wonderful order and the waves followed one another at 50yds interval. Direction kept by them was good as far as could be seen from trench. The Left Flank travelling much faster than the right to enable them to make a half right wheel on the objective. There was great difficulty in working the Goose Alley Trench far enough to cover the right flank, as the trench as zero was full of Otago Men and this delayed the two waves in which the Coy went forward

***Image 239 2<sup>nd</sup> October Diary page 276***

for some two minutes. Yet barely 75 yards remained between the last wave of Otago and the first wave of Taranaki (5<sup>th</sup> wave of attack). The 6<sup>th</sup> wave was at appx the same distance behind 5<sup>th</sup> and followed with Coy Hdqrs 50 yards behind the 6tg. I am now certain that at the time the first two waves gained the objective the 5<sup>th</sup> was not more than fifty yards behind them (travelling quicker). At that time 70 yards was about the limit of forward observation on account of dense smoke and fumes of the barrage. At the time Coy Hdqr reached the objective appx zero +13 min I had an impression that troops on left had not wheeled sufficiently to the right and had thickened in a direction more N.W. To right of Circus and were still advancing beyond objective. We came upon objective 100 yards west of Road on Rt and were extremely puzzled to know just whether we were in one of those saps you had informed me of or on the actual position. It took me about 5 minutes to decide and in that time travelled some 150 yards to Right and returning made about same distance to Left and in that investigation I saw the trench was continuous from Right to Left in that it ran away towards North end of Goose Alley to East and well to north of Eaucourt L'Abbey to west. Further we came upon a sap leading off at Rt angles from the objective from M24.A.1.3. In direction of M24.D.7.6 on Abbey road. To make certain I sent a runner Pvt. Fitzgerald forward to see if there could be another trench ahead this he did going forward some 250 yards and reporting that he many of our men lying in shell holes under the barrage and with wire in front and a trench beyond (some 50 yard) from which enemy were sniping and playing machine guns on them. This was double proof for me that we were on the objective and immediately ordered men to consolidate the trench. I wrote my first message to you then and sent it back by a man was assisting as escort to about 40 or 50 prisoners who had been gathered at M24.A.1.3. These I ordered to be sent to the rear immediately. I then dispatched runner Pvt. Fitzgerald with another order to all men in front of us to retire on the objective steadily. Time about Zero plus 30 minutes

(Cont. under Jan 10,11,12,13,?)

### *Image 235, January 10, Diary page 10*

This position in front of Gird Trench and wire with a barrage still playing on them from our own artillery was hopeless and it was this that made me decide to send such a message forward. Fitzgerald got forward and several parties of a few men came back and I was informed by two men that they had received the order and had seen Fitzgerald working along to the left with order. This was the last seen of him.

Connection with Canterbury on right proved very hard to establish and for some two hours there was no one on the right Flank of road for 200 yards. But shortly after 4pm Mr **Palne** got Vickers gun in position on the road with a splendid field of fire. Shortly after this one Taranaki Lewis gun returned (from the front on right) and was placed in position 25 yards Rt of road and covering gap between Canterbury.

Fortunately one Otago gun had not gone forward from objective and was in position at 150 yards left of road and a Vickers gun was about 4:20 pm got into a position near the same place. About 4:30 pm another Lewis gun (Taranaki) returning from left (in Front) and was placed in position in trench M24.a.1.3 This secured this position of trench, but still a big gap remained between us and the next Coy Ruahine. These people had taken up a position well in advance of the Circus and over Cant. Trench to N.W. On a ridge which I thought ran Line M.23.b.7.7. Appx to cross roads M.23.a.9.3. Centre of line curving over line of road to N.W.

I received information from them at appx 4:30pm saying that Strong Point was being constructed on their right.

This could be seen and we then felt position on our left was more secure, Line of trench round to circus was examined several times and found to be quite shallow trench in most places 2 ft only deep but had been marked out by enemy with tapes. One enemy Howitzer Battery had been in position along this line Circus to M24.a.1.3. and Coy Hdqrs were established in dugout at latter point.

By 5:45pm word was received from Ruahine saying English had connected up with them on their left near village Eaucourt L'Abbey. Sap from M24.a.1.3. was explored and found to be a very

### *Image 236, January 11, Diary page 11*

suitable trench for support as it commanded splendid field of fire to the left. It was well constructed and ran nearly to road; many wounded and dead Huns were found in it. Also two enemy Machine guns and much ammunition and ?? Trench on line of objective from M24.A.1.3.. Each was fairly well dug down and in places full of enemy dead and wounded. Our men worked with great effect on this trench and some had deepened and fire steps made where groups were. Later at dusk another attempt was made to connect with Canterbury on our right and this time a gap of 150 yards only was found and after conferring with Capt. Shepard of Canterbury it was decided to move two small platoons of 2<sup>nd</sup> Auckland down to left to cover M24.a.85.2. and Canterbury were holding fairly strongly at M24.B.0.2. to 0.4.

Machine gun Vickers had been moved along to Right from road to a near trench being dug at M24.B.1.3. but I am not certain of its exact position.

By 8:30 pm we were connected up well to Right. Vickers gun 200 yards left of road was also moved about dusk. 6:30pm to Strong Point of Ruahine on left. I mentioned this in report to you at 9pm when asked for 2 Vickers guns a 2 platoons to join up with Ruahine. These two platoons of West Coast arrived about 9:45 pm and were at once spread over a ?? of gaps as far as Circus appx M23.B.8.5. They dug themselves in in groups and were well done by midnight. At 10pm one Vickers gun arrived and was put in position at point 150 yards west of road. By 11:30 Pm Mr. Mawson got a German gun in position on road M24.A.55.2. A party of men of different Coy were connected up between Ruahine Right and at point M23.B.8.5 about 10:15pm. And so the whole line became established from Canterbury to Eaucourt L'Abbey.

### *Image 237, January 12, Diary page 12*

Patrols were sent out at 10:30 pm, 12 midnight, 2 Am and 4Am along front from road to Circus and no enemy were met with for 200 yards out. There was Practically no shelling during this night but bombing was continuous throughout the greater portion of the night on Right and left. At daylight no sign of enemy and quietness was taken advantage of. By us for distribution of ammunition, rations, water. Destruction of gun emplacement cover at M24.a.1.3. was completed. A Vickers gun was moved to that position to cover the left flank. Enemy started shelling our front at 8PM with H.E. And 18 pdr shrapnel. Their shelling with latter was very good but did little damage to trenches and wounded men from West coast platoon during

the morning. At 7:30 AM telephone communications was established with you direct. The day of 2<sup>nd</sup> was wet and work was carried on in clearing trench of dead and wounded and deepening trench until it was finally finished. Situation remained quiet until about 9PM when heavy bombing was going on on left by Eaucourt L'Abbey. A patrol was sent out to our front but no enemy were about. We were relieved about 2Am by 1<sup>st</sup> Batt of Rifle Brigade. As Coy relieving was weak in Lewis guns left 2 Lewis gun belonging to 2<sup>nd</sup> Otago behind to assist 1<sup>st</sup> Batt. Rifle Brigade.

I beg to recommended 11/15546 Pvt Fitzgerald for immediate reward on account of his good services which I have mentioned in the reports above. Also Coy. Sgt. Major CE Holmes 10/3295 for the splendid assistance he gave me on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> October in consolidating trenches and collecting working parties. Also Corp. Sparke ST 12/460 for the same assistance and bravery in front of Gird trench where he shot 5 of the enemy retiring from the same trench.

Also Pvt. Johnson OH 10/3614 of your Batt. Signallers for the excellent work he has done during the whole of the operations since 14tg 9-16 in establishing communications

### *Image 238, January 13, Diary page 13*

between your Hdqrs and Coy Hdqrs in firing line and repairing same under most trying circumstances ??  
Casualties during 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> have been as follows.

Officers

Wounded and missing 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. A.C. Cowie 10/3809 1.10.16

Wounded

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. O'Dowd P.S. 11/2278 1.10.16

Other Ranks

Killed 2

Wounded 19

Missing 7

Casualties to 1 & 4 platoons of Wgtn West Coast Coy who were attached to us during operations

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> -10-16

5 wounded

Their casualties on early morning of 3-10-16 have been reported to you by their Coy Commander.

Taranaki Company entered into engagement of 1<sup>st</sup> October with 4 officers and 84 other ranks.

I have nothing further to report and I beg to remain your obedient servant.

LH Jardine Capt.

Taranaki Coy

2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Wgtn Regt.

### *Image 240 3<sup>rd</sup> October Diary page 277*

Early in the morning about 2AM The Coy was relieved by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Brigade.

Fortunately there was no shell at the time and Coy was assembled together with 2 platoons of West Coast Coy under Mr **Bucanen** and moved across country to Goose Alley. It was extremely dark and road was struck at strong point on Eaucourt L'Abbey road. It is worthy of note that the Coy Sgt Major Holmes who was left behind to bring over machine gun section, in bringing this party across completed a circle to the left and a fr **?????** up where he had started. This party had no company and the night was so dark that at only about 30 paces could anything be seen in front, however they managed to catch up to the end of the Coy at Goose Alley. Great Coats were picked at this place and Coy moved on towards Flers. At start of sap in this road a shell H.E. Landed on road alongside the West Coast men in rear of Coy and resulted in one man Corp (*Taylor AGC*) being killed and 9 others wounded, all in the leg. A part of No. 2 MG Coy coming behind were alas struck and Lieut. Neil was killed and several men killed & wounded. This was a most unfortunate occurrence and Mr **Boscanan** remained behind to see these men attended to. Daylight broke while Coy were moving back through Fish Alley, and the Cookers were reached at Thistle Dump at 6:30 am and men enjoyed a hot meal & tea, the first after 5 days and nights of solid work. Cot moved to Savoy trench after breakfast and preparations were made to move to Fricourt F.8.C. At 12:30 PM orders were out and companies moved independently at 1Pm in order of W.W.C., H.B. T. & Rua. The rain the previous day had made roads in a bad state and going was not of the best. The Coy were in Green Dump by Montauban Mametz and Fricourt to Camp in F.8.C. Which was reached about 5PM and Coy had tea

and biscuits supplied by kindness

***Image 241 3<sup>rd</sup> October Diary page 278 (bottom)***

of the YMCA. One & half tarpaulin lean-to and a bell tent were supplied and blankets were served out to the men. Mr Rauch rejoined the Coy in the evening not having gone to the MG school as was arranged. Marching in state including cooks 2 officers and 57 other ranks.

Return of Casualties from 28<sup>th</sup> Sept. to 3<sup>rd</sup> October Inclusive

	Officers	Other Ranks
Killed		5
Died of Wounds		
Missing		8
Missing & wounded	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. AC Cowie	
Wounded	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. PJ O'Dowd	32
Sick, Evac to Hosp.		1

***Image 241 4<sup>th</sup> October Diary page 278 (top)***

The Day was spent in organising as far as possible in making out returns and casualty list. Men rested all day, all details detached from Coy and men returned from hospital rejoined the Coy. In the afternoon to Mills du Vivieu (*Moulin du Vivier*) where a bath of sorts and a change of underclothing was obtained.