

59th Division.

176th Infantry Brigade.

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WAR  
DIARY

2/5th BATTALION

THE SHERWOOD FORESTERS

MARCH 1918

2/5th Batt. SHERWOOD FORESTERS.

Report on operations for night 20/21st March onwards.

Reference Map. 57 C. N.W. 2. 1/10,000.

In writing the account of the above action, difficulty is at once encountered, owing to the fact that all records including War Diary, Defence schemes, and Operation Orders were lost.

Indeed the only information available is that afforded by messages sent to the Brigade H.Qs. during the action, and the statements of the four men who were the only survivors.

On the night of March 20/21st, the 59th Division was holding the front line of the right flank of the 6th Corps round BULLECOURT. The 178th Inf. Bde. was holding the right forward sector, with the 7th Sherwoods on the right front, 2/6th Sherwoods on the left front, and 2/5th Sherwoods in support immediately N. of the village of NOREUIL, the latter under the command of Lieut. Col. H.R. Gadd. M.C., with Major R.C. Trench as second in command.

DISPOSITIONS.

Battalion H.Qs. in the sunken road running from NOREUIL to LONGATTE about C.9.d.8.5. The remainder of the battalion in the trenches and sunken road round about IGAREE Corner at C.10.C.6.9.

An attack by the enemy in force had been expected for some days past.

At about 4.30 a.m. on the morning of March 21st, the enemy commenced a heavy bombardment on the whole area with Gas Shells. Gas Masks were immediately put on, and the Companies moved out to their stand-to positions :-

RIGHT FRONT:- "B" Coy. to NOREUIL SWITCH round C.5. C.4.4.  
LEFT FRONT:- "A" Coy. to SYDNEY AVENUE round C.4.d.8.0.  
SUPPORT COY:- "D" Coy to DEWSBURY TRENCH round C.10.B.7.4.  
RESERVE COY:- "C" Coy to Sunken Road round C.9.d.8.5.

NARRATIVE.

At 5 a.m. the enemy commenced a heavy bombardment with H.E.

The following messages were received at Bde. H.Qs. :-

(~~2/Lieut. Williamson 7th Sherwood Foresters, Liaison Officer~~)

Message by runner from 2/5th Sherwoods sent off at 7.5 a.m. "In communication with both front battalions, who report shelling general, but not very heavy AAA All battalions are being gassed AAA Greater part of shelling going west of NOREUIL -LONGATTE Road AAA No sign of hostile attack as yet AAA"

Message by runner timed 8.30 a.m. "Hostile shelling still heavy, but gassing has ceased AAA Casualties do not appear to be heavy, but this is uncertain AAA"

2/Lieut Williamson, Liaison Officer with Bde. H.Qs. went forward and sent back the following message by runner, timed 9.45 a.m. "Heavy Shelling of front line 2nd System, apparently from QUEANT and HENDECOURT AAA NOREUIL Valley heavily shelled AAA No aeroplane activity, and no machine gun



gun fire . So far as can be ascertained the enemy barrage has not yet lifted from the front line

Message from 5th Sherwoods timed 10.40 a.m., by runner states " Enemy reported to be about C.11.a.1.5 Enemy barrage on PONTEFRACT, and DEWSBURY TRENCHES, and enemy advancing AAA Enemy also attacking near junction of ILKNEY SUPPORT, and HALIFAX AA

Further unconfirmed reports state :- Enemy have penetrated DEWSBURY AAA Am manning NOREUIL - LONGATTE Road , and ready to form defensive flanks to the right"

Message by runner from 2/5th Sherwoods timed 12 noon :- "Situation as follows :- We are holding NOREUIL SWITCH from C.9.d.9.4. and road near Batt. H.Qs. AAA Enemy have captured DEWSBURY and PONTEFRACT, and appear to be digging in AAA Have formed defensive flank down NOREUIL SWITCH from C.9.d.9.4. westwards. Enemy moving in large numbers along ridge C.17.C. AAA Am prolonging my line along road towards LONGATTE AAA Forces at my disposal estimated at 150. AAA

2/Lieut Williamson &th S.F. returned to Bde HQs. at 1 p.m. reported :- " At 10.15 when nearing the Battalion H.Qs. enemy creeping barrage lifted on to the NOREUIL- LONGATTE Road " He remained at H.Qs. until 12 noon, and then returned by NOREUIL Village and Valley, at which time the enemy were already in the villiag .

GENERAL.

The bombardment was apparently extremely heavy, commencing with gas shells and followed from 5 a.m. onwards with H.E.

The thickness of the fog made it extremely difficult for the men to see if the enemy were advancing, or whether our men were approaching.

The enemy appears to have pushed down the NOREUIL Valley in large numbers, and turning, to have attacked the Battalion on its flank.

From information gathered it is certain that the Battalion fought most gallantly, and the last message from Lieut/Col. Gadd bears this out.

CASUALTIES.

<u>KILLED.</u>	<u>Officers.</u>	3
	Major C.R.C. Trench.	
	2/Lt. F. Walters	
	" C.R. Brandeth.	
	<u>Other Ranks.</u>	3.
<u>MISSING BELIEVED</u>		
<u>KILLED.</u>	<u>Officers</u>	1
	Capt. R.J. Case.	
	<u>Other Ranks</u>	2.
<u>WOUNDED &amp; MISSING</u>		
	<u>Officers.</u>	3
	A/Capt. H. Waterhouse.	
	Lieut. R.E.E. Groner.	
	2/Lieut. P.A. Murphy.	
	<u>Other Ranks</u>	8.

MISSING.

Officers.

22  
34.

Lt/Col. H.R. Gadd. M.C.  
Lt. P.S. Whiston.  
Lt. F.H. Sutherland  
Lt. C.L. Wilkinson.  
2/Lt. A.H. Chambers.  
2/Lt. W. Hague.  
2/Lt. R. Stone.  
2/Lt. H.E. Barker.  
2/Lt. L.J. de Mauny.  
2/Lt. S.E. Grayson.  
2/Lt. G.A. Middlemiss.  
2/Lt. H.C. Pickhall.  
2/Lt. W.S. Allen.  
2/Lt. A.O. Robinson.  
2/Lt. C.M. Wright.  
2/Lt. W.W. Hacking.  
2/Lt. A.E. Silverwood.  
2/Lt. F.E. Andrews.  
2/Lt. A.J. Smith.  
2/Lt. W.W. Jago.  
Capt. Mearns ( R.A.M.C ).  
Capt. A.C. Judd ( Chaplin attd. )

Other Ranks. 599.

WOUNDED.

Officers

2.

Capt. T. Nadin. ( Bde. H.Q. Staff )  
Capt. W.N. Wright do

Other Ranks 12.

SUVIVORS.

Other Ranks

4.



Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence  
Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II,  
and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages  
will be prepared in manuscript.

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

178  
592/5 North & Derby

JOL 14

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
S. of CROISILLES	MARCH 2		3 <sup>RD</sup> BATTN NOTTS & DERBY REGT. Battalion relieved in left subsector by 25 <sup>th</sup> Northumberland Fusiliers and proceeded to MORY SOUTH Camp, 2/3.	See App "A" MOSB
MORY	to		At MORY SOUTH; Training in progress & test standing to. All-night working parties every 3 <sup>rd</sup> night at NOREUIL Camp improvements	MOSB
NOREUIL	10		Battalion relieved 2/6 <sup>th</sup> North Staffords in right subsector of right Brigade Front. B Company - Right Front, A " Centre " + D C " Left " Support. Battalion H.Q., sunken road, C, 11, C, 65.90. (57CND)	" " "B" MOSB
"	17		Battalion relieved by 7 <sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters, & proceeded to Brigade Support Battalion H.Q., ECOUST - NOREUIL Road.	MOSB
"	21		Morning: Four hours bombardment followed by attack in force by the enemy (mass formation) who took 8 hours to penetrate 2000 yards. The battalion was eventually surrounded & cut off. Full report of this action is attached.	" " "C" MOSB

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.**

(Erase heading, not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ERVILLERS	21		Afternoon: Transport moved to COURCELLES, thence to camp at F17 d 22	M107B
	22		33 OR's under Captain QUIBELL sent up to right of MORY & remained there in opposition to counter-attacks.	M107B
SENLIS	23		Transport to SENLIS. Draft of 23 O.R. arrived	M107B
	24		Reinforcements & survivors rejoin.	M107B
	25		Transport to BAVELINCOURT.	M107B
BAVELIN-COURT	26		Transport to FIEFFES.	
FIEFFES	28		Transport by train to CAMBLIGNEUL.	M107B
CAMBLIGNEUL	30		Morning:- Visit to Battalion of His Majesty, KING GEORGE V. Afternoon:- Inspection by G.O.C., 59 <sup>th</sup> Division. Effective Strength of Batta on 1/3/1918 = 48 Officers 950 Other Ranks Ration Strength of Batta on 31/3/1918 = 6 Officers 204 - Other Ranks.	M107B

*A. S. Pratt*

*Comdg 2/5<sup>th</sup> Bn Sherwood Forest*