
War Diary Nov 1915
Appendix 704
REPORT ON BOMBING ENTERPRISE.

Reference.
TRENCH MAP.

From, O.C. 6th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters.

To, Headquarters,
139th Infantry Brigade.

I beg to report that in accordance with Operation Order No. 32 of 26th instant, an Bombing enterprise was undertaken by grenadiers of my Battalion under 2/nd Lieut. W.A.LYTLE on the evening of that day, the objective being the small German Salient about S.16.a.2.7. adjoining the BOAR'S HEAD Trench.

On the previous evening the North & South sides of this salient had been reconnoitred by 2 N.C.O.'s patrols it being the intention if possible to attack from both sides simultaneously. The patrol on the North however reported that on that side the enemy's wire was good and the parapet sound.

It was therefore decided to attack only from the South where the N.C.O. No. 1631, Lance Sergt M.LIMB reported that the wire had been very well cut and that there were several gaps in the parapet. This report was found to be accurate in every particular.

Shortly before 7.30 p.m. on the 26th inst. 2/nd Lieut. LYTLE'S party was formed up at S.16.a.2.5. It consisted of 10 Grenadiers, each carrying 10, and 10 bayonet men each carrying 5 Mills Grenades together with a Machine Gunner to dismantle a Machine Gun if found.

All the party wore steel helmets.

A Machine Gun had been firing on the broken wire from S.16.a.2.5. since 5 p.m. In addition to the usual garrison

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of BOARS HEAD, 8 extra grenadiers were stationed there to render any needful assistance - under an Officer - while the Company ^{Commander} Grenadiers moved up to the Telephone station at S.16.a.0.6 in order to supervise.

At 7-30 p.m. the attacking party left the trench. A Corporal and 2 men were sent to ascertain that the German wire was still passable while the remainder followed in single file moving along the S.E. side of the BOARS HEAD. The moon was rising and the night was bright. The going was very bad - the ground being very bad and wet, cut up with ditches and shell holes and about 20 bodies lying about. When the party arrived at about 20 yards from the German wire, the patrol reported that the wire was passable. At 8-45 p.m. the whole party lay opposite the enemy's trench at about S.16.a.4.6½. They could hear whistling and talking from about 3 sentries who were standing up, and other men who were in the trench.

At a given signal, all rose and doubled across the German wire which was about 15' from the trench. As soon as the wire was crossed a Sentry challenged in English "Halt, who goes there?" This caused a moments hesitation but German voices were heard the men threw their bombs (all landing in the trench) and rushed at the parapet. Immediately the enemy threw about 6 bombs which were mostly high. 2/Lieut. LITTLE and 2 N.C.O's were knocked down and partly stunned by the explosion but were unhurt and rejoined their comrades.

Nearly all the party reached the top of the parapet and two got into the trench. Three Germans were bayoneted. Most of our men ran about the parapet throwing in bombs and the trench was a mass of flame. The enemy ran towards both ends of the trench "Squealing" - many of them without arms or equipment. Gradually they formed parties on the flanks and threw a considerable number of bombs and as there did not seem to be a reasonable chance of doing further damage without suffering serious loss, our party withdrew, returning for the lost part

by the way they came though a few lost direction and got into the British Line further South.

From a check taken of the bombs that remained it appears that over 95 bombs were thrown by our men, and from the comparatively crowded state of the trench 2/nd Lieut. LITTLE is satisfied that the enemy must have suffered considerable loss.

Our casualties consisted of 1 man missing - he was last seen in the trench throwing bombs - and 3 men wounded (2 slightly)

The enemy were obviously taken by surprise but had a considerable number of bombs at hand which they were able to seize at once on an attack. It seems clear that they rely almost exclusively on these - There was hardly any rifle fire and no Machine Guns fired on our party, in fact some of the party walked back after clear of the German Trench. They did not run and were not fired upon.

A man who got into the Enemy's trench reports that the bottom of the trench was knee deep in mud, but there were good fire steps. He observed no Dug-outs. There were at least 6 fires in braziers in the length of trench attacked.

2/nd Lieut. LITTLE reports that none of our grenades were defective. He noticed that the German Grenade had a much greater explosive force but that they are not so effective as the Mills Grenade, there being fewer splinters. He had noticed the same thing at BIG WILLIE in October. He was struck on the head with one splinter, but was saved from any ill effect by his steel helmet, which appears to be a most valuable article of equipment.

The Artillery carried out their part of the programme most effectively. As the attack took so much longer to develop than was expected (owing to the bad going) I requested the Batteries to continue their fire, which they did until the party returned at about 9.30 p.m.

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I should like to bring the name of 2/Lieut.W.A.LYTLE to the favourable notice of the G. O. C. He organised the attack with ability and displayed great coolness throughout. I also consider that he shewed good judgement in withdrawing at a point when he would otherwise have sustained a serious loss. I have previously mentioned his name in connection with the attack on BIG WILLIE on the 13th/14th October^{last} ~~but~~ when he displayed great coolness and disregard of danger in leading his grenadiers.

The following N.C O's and men have also done excellent work :-

No.1631 L/Sergt.M.LIMB.

No.3627 L/Cpl.M.C.RUST.

(the above were in charge of the patrols on the previous night and shewed great gallantry in the attack)

No.1920 L/Cpl.B.KENSEY.

No.1891 Pte. P.MARPER.

No.3065 Pte. J.BROWN (missing)

No.4316 Pte. J.CROXHALL.

/sd/ G.D.GOODMAN.Lieut-Col.

Commanding, 6th Sherwood Foresters. (T.F.)

3 a.m.

27/11/15.