

From: Col. Stephenson VI

To: Bde 139<sup>th</sup> Bde.

Reference 139<sup>th</sup> Bde Operation Order No 53. I beg  
to attach a copy of my operation orders, and to report as  
follows:-

The trenches specified in Bde Orders were cleared by  
11.45 pm and at 11.52 pm it was reported to me that all  
parties were in position. At 11.56 pm a shock was  
felt which proved to be the explosion of the GRANGE  
mine before the given time. This tended to cause  
confusion. However at 11.59 pm the second shock  
was felt, and the artillery were directed to start firing.  
At 12.10 am 2/Lt. HOLDERNESS reported that his digging  
party were enfiladed from the right and unable to  
get out to dig. I sent CAPT JACKSON forward, and by  
12.18 am received a further report that the digging party  
were being posted. Ultimately a trench was dug a  
few feet in rear of the original crater trench, linking  
up the outpost line as before. An observation post was  
not fully completed.

Shortly before 4 am I  
regret to say that 2/Lt. HOLDERNESS was badly wounded  
while engaged in fixing mine palisades, and I regret to  
say that he died. An inspection of the crater  
from the observation post showed that it was about  
30 yards inside diameter and about 15 feet deep.

It must have carried away the enemy loopholed posts,  
barricades and a good deal of his front line trench.  
It is of an unusual length and the ground to the  
south is covered with chalk. The new crater  
projects to the right of the old outpost line and it is a  
question whether it is desirable to make a short trench  
joining the new crater trench with a portion of  
COMMON C.T. beyond our present line. Both ends of the  
new crater trench are occupied by bombers.

I attach 2/Lt. Evans' report on his attempted raid.  
I directed him to make a second attempt if he saw  
any way of doing it successfully, and as I thought he  
had mistaken the direction first time. Fortunately,  
although his party came under heavy rifle fire,  
he was able to withdraw without loss. On viewing  
the ground at daybreak I saw that ~~although~~ the  
attempt could not have succeeded. Apparently the  
post we intended to seize and the adjacent  
position was obliterated and it would have been  
practically impossible to cross the chalk  
without being seen.

Our Shrapnel  
appeared to burst very effectively. Unfortunately  
the 2" trench mortar and the Stokes gun could  
not fire. The former had not registered owing to  
shortness of notice and the latter was defective  
at the time. My Lewis Guns did good work.

One of the 3 on the right took on the German gun  
that was enfilading the crater trench, eventually  
silencing it. The total casualties are. Killed. 1 Officer  
10 other Ranks. Wounded. 4. Other Ranks.

17.4.16  
6.50 am.

(Sgd) G. D. Goodman Lt Col  
Col Stephenson