Reginald Shipway’s World War I Diary

Transcribed by Norma Bullman

Edited by Peter Brown and John Clark & Paolo Zanelli
Introduction

Reginald Shipway’s Great War diaries came to light during the transfer of the Local History Archive from Southgate Town Hall to Thomas Hardy House in 2009. A small box contained two small diaries of his wartime experiences from April 1918. Alongside the diaries were a number of other items from Reginald’s life including school reports, family and military photos, Christmas cards sent to his wife, Army pay books, Regimental orders, foreign currencies and his demob papers.

We contacted the Enfield Independent Newspaper and they published an article about the diaries. A few months later relatives of Reginald researching their family tree came across the article on a newspaper website and contacted us. They were able to add further details and supply photos of Reginald and his family. They were also able to confirm that Reginald’s granddaughter, who had been employed at Palmers Green Library, had donated the diaries to the Local Studies Library. Reginald’s granddaughter gave us further details about her grandfather’s life, including the fact that it was her mother who had found the diaries when clearing out the house upon the death her mother, Ada, who was Reginald’s wife.
Reginald Francis Shipway was born in Upper Holloway on the 27th February 1899 to Frank and Beatrice Shipway. He was one of eight children. The 1901 Census lists the family as living at 71 Foxham Road, Islington. He attended the Northern Polytechnic Day School in Holloway, where he received reasonable marks in most subjects. In his December 1913 school report he is described as having: “Worked well and steadily and deserves his high position - his conduct is very satisfactory”. There is some criticism by his teacher of Reginald’s attempts at French, and at the beginning of the diary you can see him attempting to improve his grasp of the language by writing down French verbs and phrases. Whether Reginald picked these French phrases deliberately or just he wrote them down by chance we do not know, but they are a poignant reminder of the sacrifices that he and his generation made.

They appear as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Conditional Imperfect”</th>
<th>Pas(t)tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I should go</td>
<td>I was going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should give</td>
<td>I was giving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Je donnerais</td>
<td>Je donnais</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon leaving school he was employed as an insurance clerk. In early 1918 he married Ada Williams also known as “Flore”, a milliner’s assistant from Wood Green. Prior to Reginald’s shipping out to France in April, they moved to 95 Pellatt Grove, Wood Green. Although he was only eighteen he kept his diary up to date for almost every day until the end of hostilities.

When Reginald returned from France he appeared to settle quickly back into domestic life, though we know nothing of any subsequent trauma or depression from the carnage that he witnessed over six months service at the front. He became a shoe salesman and started a family with Ada, having three daughters named Ivy, Barbara and Hilda. They moved to 71 Firs Park Avenue in Winchmore Hill. He had many interests and hobbies, being a keen gardener, a radio ham, and a talented photographer who developed his own photos. He was also a very skilled carpenter making his own furniture.

Reginald died on the 13th December 1977; his wife Ada survived him for a just a few more years and died on the 27th November 1981.
Shipway daughters: Ivy, Barbara & Hilda

If you would like more background information to this WWI diary please try our 24 hour online resources from our Virtual Library www.enfield.gov.uk/24hourlibrary They are all free all you need is your Enfield Library card.

Once signed into these resources you can go directly to the hyperlinks within this diary

**Britannica Online** To sign in click [http://library.eb.co.uk/comptons?library_id=enfieldlibs](http://library.eb.co.uk/comptons?library_id=enfieldlibs)

**Credo Reference** To sign in click [http://www.credoreference.com/home.do](http://www.credoreference.com/home.do)


The diaries were professionally transcribed by Norma Bullman.

The original layout has been largely maintained as in the diary, with the exception of his habit of commencing each entry directly next to the date, rather than underneath. This has been done to aid clarity. Original spellings, particularly of place names have not been corrected – and underlining and his use of (brackets) has been retained. Square brackets [ ] are the transcriber’s additions, usually to clarify Shipway’s abbreviations.

Following the chronology of Shipway’s layout in the diaries has not been easy. Months have stopped and been started again pages later – then he has doubled back and filled in the blank pages with a different month. Fortunately he always states the day, though seldom the month. With the aid of a 1918 calendar it was relatively straight forward to construct a true chronology.

The original diary is available in the Local Studies Library and Archive and will be on display for the rest of 2010. After that date the diary is available for viewing on request.

Local Studies Library and Archive
Thomas Hardy House
39 London Road
Enfield
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Tel.: 020 8379 2724
Email: local.history@enfield.gov.uk

The battalion history in this column is taken from:

Owen Rutter (Editor), *The History of the 7th (service) Battalion The Royal Sussex Regiment 1914-1919*

Times Publishing Company, 1934

Other annotations have been supplied by library staff.
# The Reginald Shipway Diaries: April 1918

## Tuesday April 2nd 1918
Left Cromer at 8pm arrived London 12.30 now almost dark. Got to Folkestone 3 30 am

## Wednesday April 3rd
left Folkestone on Boat 1 o’clock
Arrived France 3 o’clock. Left for Etaples at 6 oclock

## Thursday 4th
arrived at 11pm stayed at Camp

## Friday 5th
moved to J. 40. IBD.

## Saturday 6th
Stayed at J 40 IBD.

## Sunday 7th
Iron Rations & 120 rounds of amm[unition]

## Monday 8th
Started 7 am for base camp of 7th R[oyal].S[ussex].R[egiment]
going in cattle trucks
Stayed night in cattle truck with Anzac. Was shelled.

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## History of the 7th (service) Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment 1914-1918. April 1918

### Tommy’s

[http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0869680#m_en_gb0869680](http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0869680#m_en_gb0869680)

**WW1 Iron Ration**

This is the standard ration as issued during World War 1, with additional components. It contains:

- 1 Tinned Beef (but better known as ‘Bully Beef’) in the classic Fray Bentos brand tapered tin with side-key opening.

- 2 Packs (3 ounces each) of plain biscuits contained in an inner cello-like bag and wrapped in the appropriately labelled outer paper wrap)

- 1 Ounce of Meat Extract--This may either be the Bovril Style Brown paper wraps or OXO cubes (sorry, no choice)

- 1 Pack (5/8 ounce) Tea Ration. This is the small cardboard box containing a cello bag of brew-up tea. Properly labelled. Some are waxed, some lacquered to keep water-resistant (sorry, no choice)

- 1 Pack (1/2 ounce) of Salt, in the proper "British Salt" box

**After 29/10/15**

1lb Biscuit
1lb (nominal) Preserved Meat
5/8oz. Tea
2ozs Sugar.

[Sourced from The Great War Forum, Joe Sweeney](http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0869680#m_en_gb0869680)

### 5th April, 1918

The 7th Battalion being situated at Bouzincourt was ordered to retake some lost ground. ‘A’ and ‘B’ Companies advanced in two waves at 8.45 pm towards the German positions. As
Tuesday 9th
Did 6 hour route march
to Contay about 7½ miles from line
arrived at 4 pm
was shelled

Wednesday 10th
Stayed at
Contay Kit inspection
in morning was
not shelled tonight

Thursday 11th
Moved to Mirvaux
officer lost his way
rec[eive]d new number
23688

Friday 12th
Plenty of aeroplanes over
village. Shelled moved to Tents

Saturday 13th
Medically inspected
Posted to 12 platoon
C Company.
in tents

Sunday 14th
Fired 30 rounds course
First pay in Francs
30 fr[an]cs

Monday 15th
Still in Tents at Mirvaux usual [?] parades

Tuesday 16th
Shifted to
Pierregot in billet usual
parades

Wednesday 17th
Shifted
back to Mirvaux in
tents. Tents missing
waited for them till 10 oclock
in the morning Chaps
pinched chicken rained in afternoon

they approached the enemy fired a shower of Verey lights and opened up on them with rifle and machine gun fire. The fire was very intense and heavy casualties were inflicted. The only way they could avoid being annihilated was to charge forward and find cover in front of the enemy position. Eventually the futility of the attack was recognised and what was left of the two companies withdrew to their original position. One officer was killed along with 37 other ranks, and 90 men injured, 5 of them mortally. Such was the depletion of men the two companies were temporarily amalgamated. It was remarked that it was “bitterly mortifying for the battalion to have two companies almost blotted out in such circumstances”.

7th/8th April, 1918
At Senlis they were bombarded with mustard gas and shells, most of which went over their bivouacs. Some men were gassed when the mustard gas vaporised due to the heat from the rising sun.
Later that day at Contay a draft of 204 other ranks arrived at the battalion. These were the first replacement troops they had received for quite a while. It was remarked, “The extreme youth of the draft was most noticeable”. Reginald Shipway would have been amongst these young men, freshly arrived from England and he was just eighteen years old, he arrived just two days after the slaughter of the Battalion on the 5th April, and joined ‘C’ Company.

11th April, 1918
Battalion situated at Mirvaux, a pretty little village, and only the occasional air raid to bother them.
Thursday 18th
Still in tents usual parades
chicken good with boiled pommes rained in afternoon

Friday 19th
Harponville
of med
support trenches in evening got back at bout 8pm

Saturday 20th
Went on billeting party to Acheux
waited for the Battalion

Sunday 21st
Stayed at Acheux

Tuesday 23rd
Moved up line in evening

Wednesday 24th
In line front Few vane bombs sent over

Thursday 25th
Same as Wednesday Took my section (5)
and went 60 y[ar]ds in front of our trench on listening post. Own shells dropped very near. short

Friday 26th
Cold & misty, Vane bomb went down bombardment. dug out Few wizz-bangs over also

Saturday 27th
misty Few wizz bangs over 1 hour out at listening post. Were relieved at 9.30-10. Went to reserve trench.

19th April, 1918
Harponville. A small village with not enough accommodation for the whole battalion. Training had to be curtailed due to large working parties engaged in constructing rear defensive lines. The sector consisted of old British trenches from the battle of the Somme; the trenches were in a deplorable state and needed a great deal of work.

Billet: a place especially a civilian’s house, where soldiers are lodged temporarily
The billets for these Russian soldiers were at No.6 the Bund, previously the P&O Banking Corp (now the Yangtze River Navigation Co building). Sourced from OUP Online dictionaries.

Whizz Bang: (especially during the First World War) a low-velocity shell
My own closest call came when we were going over open ground when a whizz-bang burst behind me. Sourced from OUP Online dictionaries.
**Sunday 28th**
Still in reserve trench. Went into Mailly for water at 5.30. Had trench digging fatigue after 'stand to' at night for about ½ an hour. Very heavy about 9.30 till 12.00 at night.

**Monday 29th**
Still in reserve trenches about 20 shells put over in afternoon. Fritz, about 150 yards from us. Piece of shrapnel landed in side of trench about a foot from us. Rained hard about 7.30 pm. First rum issue at morning stand to.

**Tuesday 30th**
Still in reserve trench misty. It rained. All day bombardment very. Nothing particular happened all day. Usual bombardment about 20 shells near. Went up to Front Line. with wire carrying party of 20 men covered in mud. Started at 8 25 got back 10.30 pm.

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Fritz:
...a German, especially a soldier in the First World War (often used as a nickname)...
Sourced from OUP Online
http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/search?searchType=dictionary&isWritersAndEditors=true&searchUri=All&q=Fritz&_searchBtn=Search&contentVersion=WORLD

**May 1918**
**Wednesday 1st May, 1918**
Very cold, still in reserve trench. Were relieved by R[oyal] Fusiliers at 8 45 pm. Reached Acheux at 12 pm and at

**May 1918**
**1st May, 1918**
Battalion situated at Acheux, where it came in for shelling, particularly at night. Three men were wounded by a large splinter shell that wrecked the commanding officer's bedroom.
outskirts of Mailly shelled as we passed through.

**Thursday 2nd**
Fine day very warm
sun shining 2nd
pay day in France (40 fr[anc]cs
1 month in France today Still at Acheux
thunderstorm at 12pm

**Friday 3rd**
Fine day, Still at
Acheux, started R.B.
course on new bomb
nothing else particular

**Saturday 4th**
Fine day still at
Acheux. Still on R B
course. Dodged working
course. About 70 English
aeroplanes passed overhead
in evening. Fritz threw
about 7 shells over about
11pm

**Sunday 5th**
Raining hard in
morning. Still at Acheux
Dodged working party.
Still on R.B. no bombardment
tonight.

**Monday 6th**
Fine day. Still at Acheux
still on R B. Went to just in
front of
Mailly at 6.30 to relieve
R[oyal] Fusiliers. Got there
about 9.30. Fritz opened
a bombardment about
600yar[ds] in front of us so
had to stop. Went with
lumber. Arrived safely

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**6th May, 1918**
The battalion relieved the 5th Royal Berks in the village of Mailly-Maillet, which was receiving a considerable amount of attention from the German guns. The Germans had invented a new affliction for enemy troops called “Crashes”. Basically this involved shelling at irregular periods, sometimes as little as two minutes apart, which was disconcerting and resulted in heavy casualties.
Tuesday 7th
Rained in morning. still in front of Mailly.
Went into Mailly
Got back at 10.30 Just arrived at bath when
Fritz started shelling got in cellar. On working party from 8.30pm till 12 pm carrying
Stokes Trench Mortars to Support Trench.
Relieved Battle Position

Wednesday 8th
Fine day. Still at in Front of Mailly
In evening moved up to Battle Positions went into (Mailly for (galvanised ? (in at 2pm

about 1000y[ar]ds near by front line

Thursday 9th
Fine day very hot still in reserve B.P. small bombardment in afternoon. Working party all night up till 3 am.

Friday 10th
Fine day but cold still in reserve B.P. nothing particular happened. Wldening & bettering trench.

Saturday 11th
Dull & cold. nothing particular happening still in reserve B[rigade].P[latoon]. S[er[g]ean]t Ticehurst went to rest camp Slight shelling.

Stokes Mortar
As with the grenade the mortar was yet another old weapon which found a new lease of life during World War One.

The Mortar: A Definition
A mortar is essentially a short, stumpy tube designed to fire a projectile at a steep angle (by definition higher than 45 degrees) so that it falls straight down on the enemy. From this simple description it will be immediately apparent that the mortar was ideally suited for trench warfare, hence the common application of the 'trench' prefix.

Sourced from First World War.com
http://www.firstworldwar.com/weapony/mortars.htm
**Sunday 12th**
Misty & cold. fine in afternoon & evening still in reserve B.P. Plenty of aeroplanes up Fritz & ours. Both shelled. At 8.30 moved up to relieve The Berks[hire]s in Support Line in dugouts(deep)

**Monday 13th**
Rotten day raining still in Support Trench Shelled about 3 pm oclock. Wiring party at night having all the time. Got soaked.

**Tuesday 14th**
Rotten day. not raining. misty. shelled again about 2-3pm. M[achine]G[unner]'s gun position today. Releived 11 Platoon between 1 am & 2 am in front line. Reached front line about 2.30

**Wednesday 15th**
Lovely day very hot still in F[ront].L[ine]. nothing particular happened working party at night.

**Thursday 16th**
Very hot day. Fritz started strafing about 10 am First on our right then first behind us. very near. About 10pm at night Ruffs went on bombing line to

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**15th - 20th, 1918**
Mailly-Maillet was frequently shelled particularly in the mornings and evenings, and mostly with gas shells. Ration parties delivering to the men had to wear box respirators which slowed them down. There were also constant warnings and alarms that an enemy attack was imminent; these were “unsettling and the cries of “wolf” were almost deafening”. 

---
our left
Fritz put up barrage
on our Front. Line. was
burned by shell
exploding on
trench at about
3[f]eet from me.
were relieved
by 'D' Company 1.45
pm. Went to reserve trench
Wire carrying party

**Friday 17th**
Still in reserve trench
very hot again
shells burst about 300
yards in front of us. One
patrol at 12.45-
2.45 in no man's
land. heard Jerry's
wiring party.

**Wednesday 18th**
very hot day Slight
thunderstorm. still
in reserve trench
went up to front line
with wire-carrying
party, went out in
no man's land wiring
had to return as Fritz
turned a machine gun
right on us. R.N.D's
went over the top on
our right at 12.15 am
Barrage started at 12
Shells dropping all
round our trench
(reserve).

**Sunday 19th**
Very hot day. Fritz
strafed on & off all
day Big Straff on
right again to-
night about 10.30
Monday 20th
Very hot day
Fritz gave us a good
whizz-banging about
2.30 till 4.30.
Did nothing tonight.
were relieved at 10.30
pm by Buffs went to
Purple Line just in
front of Mailly had to
stop there as extra
reserve as Fritz
expected over in
morning. Big straff all night.

Tuesday 21st
Very hot day again. Fritz
did not come over. Left
Purple Line at 10.30 am
for Acheux arrived
there about 12 midday.
Sweated streams.trenches
Grass & all landscape
altered. Grown in the
15 days we were in the
line. Very suprised at
great changes. Place
seemed altered. nothing
to report at night

Wednesday 22
Still at Acheux
reveille at 3.30am
working party
just this side of
Mailly till 5pm
fagged out Fine day
Reverted to Lfc?

Thursday 23rd
Very hot day, windy.
Reveille 2 am.
working party digging
cable trench ?
same as yesterday
only finished at 10 am
came back in face
masks. Went back
to same place just
this side of Mailly
to find tools
Friday 24th
Rotten day cold and raining hard all day.
Still at Acheux.
Reveille at 2 am
cable trench digging
same as yesterday.
gave in packs in
afternoon. Stood to
in the evening. went
to kip about 8.0 pm
woke up at 9.0 pm
still at Acheux
for rum issue went to
sleep again woke up at
1.30 to put boots & putees
on went to sleep again

Saturday 25th
Very fine day very hot
moved off from Acheux
at 12 mid. Arrived at
Beauquesnes at 3 pm
decent billets posting
lights out same as
in Blighty.

Sunday 26th
Very nice day. Church
parade at 9.30 am
Khaki parade in
the afternoon. Still at
Beauquesnes

Monday 27th
Very fine day.
Inspection by colonel
at 11 am. Stood with
full pack on from
9 am to 11.15 am.
Boche aero[plane] passed
overhead about 300f[ee]t
up. Still in Beauquesnes
Interpreter for Cook S[er]g[ean].

24th May, 1918
On the evening of the 24th, the Royal Berks carried out a large raid on enemy positions and captured eight prisoners. The Battalion assisted the Berks by lending eight stretcher-bearers, two of whom went missing.

25th May, 1918
Battalion marched to Beauquesne, a large village with good accommodation. Here they were at last able to do some serious training after nearly a month of open warfare. This was to become the Battalion's longest rest since Christmas, made all the more pleasant by fine weather and flowers in the local orchards in bloom.
**Tuesday 28th**
Very fine day, still at Beauquesnes parades in morning

**Wednesday 29th**
Fine day very hot still at Beauquesnes parades in morning

**Thursday 30th**
Very fine day, still at Beauquesnes Parades in afternoon

**Friday 31st**
Very fine day still at Beauquesnes. Parades in morning Full pack last 2 days. Payed out at 5 o clock 15 francs.

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**June 1918**

**Saturday 1st, June, 1918**
Fine day still at Beauquesnes paraded in the morning called back for stand too.

**Sunday 2nd**
Fine day, still at Beauquesnes. Church parade in steel helmets. Went into Daillens in afternoon about 20 K[ilometre]s then back

**Monday 3rd**
Fine day, still at Beauquesnes. Went into Beruaville on R.S.C. lorry. started at 9.30 am got back at 6pm Had a fine time. about 50 kilo[metre]s there and back
**Tuesday 4th**
Fine day. Still at Beauquesnes again parades.

**Wednesday 5th**
Fine day, still at Beauquesnes.
Day off for Company. Went into Raucheval in afternoon.

**Thursday 6th**
Fine day still at Beauquesnes. Usual parades

**Friday 7th**
Fine day still at Beauquesnes. Off parade today. getting stuff for Company.

**Saturday 8th**
Fine day still at Beauquesnes. Took over Orderly Corporal

**Sunday 9th**
Fine day still at Beauquesnes. Off Parade Orderly Corporal Wind up

**Monday 10th**
Fine day still at Beauquesnes off Parade Orderly Corporal

**Tuesday 11th**
Fine day still at Beauquesnes. Orderly Corporal.

**Wednesday 12th**
Rainy still at Beauquesnes. Orderly Corporal.

**Sunday 16th**
Fine days. still at
Monday 17th
24th day at Beauquesnes. Moved up towards the line at 9.30. Stopped outside Harponville. Moved off again at 9.30pm arrived in Reserve line about 11.30pm

Tuesday 18th
Fine day still in reserve Trench (Corps line just behind Bouzincourt) nothing much doing. Still orderly Corp

Wednesday 19th
Wet Day still in reserve trench. nothing much doing Fritz Strafed our rear right Big bombardment by our Heavies 1 Field Artillery and also a raid on our left.

Thursday 20th
Rainy day still in reserve trench nothing much doing. Several Shells over during day.

Friday 21st
Middling Day Dull Put on a charge for walking on top of Parapet was reprimanded. Still in reserve trench Stil orderly Corp

17th June, 1918
Moved from Beauquesne and after three days they relieved the Royal Fusiliers at Bouzincourt Spur. Here the enemy held the highest point, with the trenches the 7th Battalion occupied just to the left of the area, where the disastrous attack on the 5th April had occurred. One of the jobs the men had to do here was cut the grass in no-mans land in order to reduce any potential cover. There was a village in the area, which was out of bounds to all ranks during daytime, because a Lieutenant had been killed there on the 23rd whilst supervising a working party. It was during this period that Spanish influenza swept through the area, though the battalion was lucky and escaped lightly.
Moved off from reserve to relieve front line at 9.30 arrived about 11pm Had a journey for nothing to cross roads till 12.30 Then went to B[attalion] H[eader] Q[uarters] all this for water.

**Saturday 22nd**
Changeable day. still in front line strafed off an on all day. Platoon ? apart Hardwork. Took empty petrol can carrying party 4.2 dropped about 12 y[ard]s from us. Also straffed going back.

**Sunday 23rd**
Fine day still in front line strafed off and on all day 2 narrow escapes.

**Monday 24th**
Fine day Still in front line. Strafed off and on all day. Several Narrow escapes

**Tuesday 25th**

**Wednesday 26th**
Fine day in reserve trench. Cushy here no bombardment still orderly corporal.

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**25th June to 11th July, 1918**
7th Battalion, 37th Brigade and the 18th Division received orders that they were, as part of a joint effort, to try to capture the high ground at Bouzincourt Spur. For three days heavy shelling and trench mortars softened up the area, then on the 29th the battalion was replaced and moved to Warloy. On the 30th the attack on the enemy positions at Bouzincourt Spur started at 9.35pm, and proved to be very successful capturing the German position. However on the 1st July a violent enemy bombardment occurred, and on the 2nd at 9.30pm the Germans counter attacked retaking the land they had previously lost on the 30th.

The 7th Battalion received orders on the 3rd July at 1.35am in the morning to counter attack the German position at 3.00am. At such short notice this would have been an almost impossible and suicidal task, but they followed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 27th</td>
<td>Fine day. Still in reserve, no bombardment still orderly corp[oral]. Lot of running about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 28th</td>
<td>Fine day. still in reserve trench just in front of Bouzincourt still orderly corp[oral] in a decent dugout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 29th</td>
<td>Fine day still in reserve trench nothing particular. Left reserve trench for a 6 day rest? Left about 12 mid Passed through Seules. Was shelled with H[eavy] E[quipment] and gas shells on the way out Arrived at Stopping place about 1.45 am Got to Kip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 30th</td>
<td>Fine day very hot. still in Dist[ention]. Res[erve] Queen’s made a stunt at about 10pm (We had to stand to at 2 30 am ready to move off but everything went all right. Big bombardment all night.</td>
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<td>July 1918</td>
<td><strong>Monday 1st July, 1918</strong> Fine day very hot still in Dist[ention] Res[erve] nothing particular to report. stand to at 2 am expecting Counter attack moved up to Brigade Reserve stood to all night.</td>
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**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>**
Fine day still in reserve (brigade) Fritz counter attacked stood too 1 hour. Were gassed with ? and tear gas.

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup>**
Started off at 3.30 for front line A B D supposed to C[ounter] Attack Attack by ABD Cancelled moved back to Brigade Reserve. Shelled heavily nothing happened all day. Moved off at 10.30 pm for front line got there about 11.30

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>**
Stood to till 4 in the morning fighting patrol went out as a consequence were heavily bombarded about 4 am we put up a smoke barrage strafed again regular first wait display nothing particular happened all day Quite quiet all night except for us strafing Fritz

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup>**
Fine day still in front line moved about 3 pm to supports. Brig[adier] Gen[eneral] Days too many men in front line. We strafed Fritz with gas trench mortars at 11 and 1. moved up to front line till all over. Fritz put mineys? over.

**Saturday July 6<sup>th</sup>**
Still in support . fine day Vignacourt. nothing else
near Behencourt in Divisional Reserve dug another well 1st one too large. nothing else went to bathes got soaking wet through rain. Nothing else of importance.

**Sunday 7th**
Fine Day
still in support
Shelled at intervals all day. Were relieved at 11pm. Went down to Adelaire Trench to take over for 12 Platoon at 4 pm.

**Monday 8th**
Very Fine
day very hot. Shelled slightly about 6.30am. nothing else all day ? carrying at night.

**Tuesday 9th**
Fine day
but slightly showery
working party at night
still in reserve trench

**Wednesday 10th**
Fine day. were relieved at 11 pm by 17th Division Manchesters. Passed through Seules & Warloy on way out. Stopped just outside Warloy and had tea.

**Thursday 11th**
Arrived at Toutencourt at 4.30 am. Breakfast at 5 am Kip all day. nothing else of importance rainy day.

**Friday 12th**
Rainy day very changeable still at Toutencourt

12th July, 1918
Battalion moved to Toutencourt Wood.
Payed out 30 francs.
2 or 3 parades nothing of importance. Jerry over tonight

**Saturday 13**th
Rainy day. Still at Toutencourt. Special (new) fighting order inspection baths, nothing else of importance.

**Sunday 14**th
Revielle 5.30 moved off from Toutencourt Wood at 7.30. Passed through Herissart.
Got into motor buses at 8.45. Passed through Rubempre, AMIENS, Contay and Fleury Fremontieres en route for South stayed at Fremontieres arrived there at 3.45pm Went out in the evening mounted? first time tasted Vin blanc not much good

**Monday 15**th
Fine day. Still at Fremontieres Parades in the morning.
dismissed at 10.30 am. Nothing particular happened all day. At 6.30 we marched out of Fremontieres got into buses just outside next village. Passed through Uzemmeville, Fremontieres Fleury, Contay, Le Bosquel and Everaux on route for Oresmaux arrived there at 10 pm

**Tuesday 16**th
Fine day very hot (Still at Oresmaux nothing particular happened)

---

15**th** - 29**th** July, 1918
The whole battalion was moved and it eventually arriving well south of the British Front in Oresmaux. Here it was gloriously hot weather, the enjoyment of which was only spoilt by the swarms of flies from the mass of filth in the garden of every house.
**Wednesday 17th**
Fine day very hot still at Oresmaux ordinary parades. March in the evening from 6.45 until 8pm. Thunderstorm at 8.15pm

**Thursday 18th**
Fine day cooler in the morning still at Oresmaux ordinary parades evening route march

**Friday 19th**
Fine day very hot still at Oresmaux ordinary parades Jerry over tonight route march

**Saturday 20th**
Fine day Jerry over in the morning ordinary parades nothing particular happened all day no march in the evening thundery weather. Still at Oresmaux.

**Sunday 21st**
Fine day warm still at Oresmaux church parade at 10 am Nothing particular happened all day. Went out on patrol for about 20 minutes at night.

**Monday 22nd**
Fine day. still at Oresmaux reveille 5 am route march from 7-9 parades till 12, nothing else of importance.

**Tuesday 23rd**
still at Oresmaux same day to
march company baths
 got tubs for baths from
 French houses. nothing
 else of importance range
 in the morning

**Wednesday 24**th
Fine day same route
march still at
Oresmaux. Outpost
scheme in the morning
nothing else of importance

**Thursday 25**th
Fine day still at
Oresmaux usual parades
got soaking wet on route
march. nothing else of
importance.

**Friday 26**th
Fine day Still at
Oresmaux same

**Saturday 27**th
Very wet day still at
Oresmaux General
inspection in the
morning nothing
else of importance

**Sunday 28**th
Fine day still at
Oresmaux no church
parade. Nothing
of importance

**Monday 29**th
Fine day, still at Oresmaux
ordinary parades nothing of
importance to report.

**Tuesday 30**th
Fine day, still at Oresmaux,
all parades cancelled move
to Vignacourt Via Loeuilly
& Amiens. by train
arrived about 11 oclock.
**Wednesday 31\(^{st}\)**
Fine day extraordinarily hot. No parades.
cancelled owing to (?)
route march(R.M[arch] (?)
no other parades. Jerry over

---

**August 1918**

**Thursday 1\(^{st}\) August.**
Usual parades in the morning Fine day
very hot still at

**Friday August 2\(^{nd}\)**
Very wet in morning so no parades. still at
Vignacourt (very big place.) paid out.
nothing else of importance

**Saturday 3\(^{rd}\)**
Rainy day still at
Vignacourt left
V. at 6pm to proceed towards the line past through Flesselles on buses. Arrived in Divisional Reserve about 12.15 am. in a wood.

**Sunday 4\(^{th}\)**

---

**August 1918**

30\(^{th}\) July - 8\(^{th}\) August, 1918
7\(^{th}\) Battalion moved by train to Vigancourt, and then on the 3\(^{rd}\) August to Round Hill, east of Behencourt. There were plenty of large guns in the surrounding area, giving a hint of the big offensive to come. The Battle of Amiens began on 8 August 1918, and was the opening phase of the Allied offensive, later known as the Hundred Days Offensive. This ultimately led to the end of the First World War, and the 7\(^{th}\) Battalion being one of the battalions critically involved. On the 8\(^{th}\) August the Battalion attacked on an 800 yard front, a mile north-east of Sailly-le-Sec. ‘D’ & ‘C’ Companies were the first over the top, having advanced 1000 yards to a rise overlooking the Sailly-Laurette-Morlancourt Road. ‘A’ and ‘B’ companies then took over and advanced another 1200 yards.

There was no preliminary bombardment, and tanks would have been no use because the ground was too rough. On the march to their positions before the attack they were shelled heavily, and many casualties were inflicted. ‘C’ Company’s leading platoon received a direct hit from a large shell; one Lieutenant was killed along with several other ranks, Lieutenants Clayton and Rogers were also seriously injured.
Monday 5th
Wet again still in Wood

Tuesday 6th
Rainy day
still in Divisional Reserve wood
parades moved off
at 10 pm towards the
line. Stopped at trench
about 2 Kilos away
from woods
Jerry bombing like
fury all night.

Wednesday 7th
Still in this trench
very hot day. Rumours
about going over
in the morning
Rumours now
confirmed. moved off
about 8 pm. Arrived
in our support lines
about 12 30 am Heavily
shelled all the way
casualties at Village

Thursday August 8th
Went over about 4.30
am very misty. got
hit in finger nothing
much took Fritzes
2nd line. stayed there
sometime, moved forward
to Fritzs 3rd line stayed
there all night shelled
occasionally had
sleep

Friday 9th
fine day. stayed in Fritzes
2nd line shelled occasionally
all day. Rum issue at 5.30
Barrage opened at 5.30
about 1000yds in front of
us. Americans went over
advanced further still
advance was from Albert
to Mautdidier. We retired
about 8 o clock to Maricourt

The night was very dark and when they
reached position at 2.45am it was discovered
that only two 2nd Lieutenants from ‘C’ Company
were still alive. Lieutenant Clayton, who had
been badly wounded, had not been able to tell
them the time of the attack or Zero hour, which
was set for 4.20a.m. One hour before Zero a
heavy mist came down reducing visibility to
about a dozen yards, consequently the attack
was a slow business. After starting the attack
enemy rifle and machine gunfire was heavy but
generally over their heads, and shellfire was
negligible. After reaching No Man’s Land they
found the enemy trenches were positioned so
that they would give mutual supporting fire. The
trenches were hard to find in the mist, and the
attack became a “mixture of hide and seek and
blind man’s bluff”. Other units of men that were
lost in the fog eventually turned up, though
causalities were high.

After a while it was believed that they had
reached their objective, but the mist delayed
the message runners because they had
difficulty locating the Battalion HQ. However by
10.00am the mist lifted and they realised they
were short of their objective, and ‘C’ & ‘D’
companies were distributed as a reserve in the
enemy trenches.

9th August, 1918
The morning was uneventful apart from some
shelling, cavalry and tanks went passed in
order to renew the attack. The Battalion was
then moved back to shelters near Merincourt,
arriving about 10.00pm. Expecting some rest
they were quickly moved on at midnight to old
German and British positions just west of
Morlancourt.
Big guns in front of and behind us. Had a sleep after rum issue. Got to Maricourt about 11.30. nothing particular all night. Had letter from Ada

Saturday 10th
Fine day. went down to M Os with my hand
Couldn’t see him; moving;
Advanced about 12.30 up to Jerrys 4th line
more to left of where we went over just right of
Albert stayed there went down to M Os about 6.30pm he sent me to Field Dressing Station. had to walk about a mile and a half. Had some tea & bread & butter went from there to a large American dugout in a horse ambulance stayed there till 11.30 went from there by lorry to Main Dressing station was dressed and inoculated stayed there the night. good tent.

Sunday 11th
Fine day Revielle at 8 pm had decent breakfast. Saw doctor about 10.30 Marked Duty went to Beaucourt. Left M.D.S to report to Divisional H[ea]d[quar]t[e]rs at 1 30 pm. left there for Bavelincourt to report at Transport lines stayed there that night Jerry up tonight

Monday 12th
Went sick in the morning got light duty stayed at Bavelincourt today nothing to do all

10th – 13th August, 1918
The day started quietly in rest and recuperation and reorganisation due to the considerable casualties they had suffered. They then received orders to relieve the 9th Essex on the front line. The situation was difficult because no one knew what part of the line they were supposed to relieve. They were forced to stand in the open for long periods during an intense bombardment, while their superiors tried to find out where they should go. This went on till 5.30am, almost daybreak, when the men were finally put into position. However some arrived so late, that the men they were relieving were unable to leave their trenches till the next evening.

Casualties from 7th to 13th August, 1918

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died of wounds</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
day still fine day Jerry over again tonight

**Tuesday 13th**

fine day still at transport lines Bavelincourt
did not go sick today
nothing doing Jerry over at night.

**Wednesday 14th**

Fine day went sick got M&D
to report 15th for dressing
still at Bavelincourt
T Ls[Transport Lines] Jerry over again.

**Thursday 15th**

fine day
went sick got M&D.
to report 16th for dressing
still at T Ls[Transport Lines] Jerry over again bombing

**Friday 16th**

fine day
moved further up towards the line about
5 Kilo[meter]s to old Heavy Guns
Positions stayed there
nothing of importance

**Saturday 17th**

fine day
still at Heavy Gun Pos[itions]
between Franvillers & Feilly nothing of
importance. rained at night

**Sunday 18th**

fine day
still at H.G[Heavy Gun] Positions
moved up to join Batt[alion]
after tea about passed
through Feilly passed
over River Ancre. Arrived
at Co[mpany]y about 5.30 pm
Spoke to OC[Officer Commanding] about

Jerry:
…a German (especially in military contexts)…
Sourced from OUP Online
http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/search?searchType=dictionary&isWritersAndEditors=true&searchUri=All&q=jerry&contentVersion=WORLD

16th – 19th, August

The Battalion moved back to Merincourt, where reorganisation was difficult because there were no replacements for the casualties. Time was spent resting and bathing in a local stream.

On the 13th August the Battalion was ordered to attack a hill because it was a hindrance to advancing. At 4.55am the attack started, ‘C’ Company was hit by a barrage of shells - ‘friendly fire’ from their own side injuring their last officer 2nd Lieutenant Trowell. On the right of the attack they were more successful and overcame the enemy, capturing 12 prisoners and 2 machine guns. The Germans mounted a counter attack and the men were forced to retire to their original positions. The Battalion was eventually relieved and sent back to Morlancourt. The first phase of the Battle of Amiens was over, and although they had received heavy casualties, morale was good as they realised what a great victory they had won, and that the allies had regained the initiative.
commission
stopped up till 3.30 am
Then went to Kip Batt[alion]
in Divisional Reserve

**Monday 19th**
Fine day
still at Divisional Reserve. nothing
of importance
Had good sleep

**Tuesday 20th**
Fine day
still at Divisional Reserve. moved
up to Brigade Reserve at
9 30 pm arrived there about
11 30 In charge of H[ead]q[uar]t[er]s Gas
Guard. All night slightly shelled

**Wednesday 21st**
Fine day
very hot still in Brigade
Reserve. We are to ‘go over’
on Thursday morning.
was told at about 6.30
am Told all plans

**Thursday 22nd**
Fine day
extraordinarily hot. Moved
from Brigade Reserve
up to about 150 y[ar]ds behind
front line. was shelled
and gassed all the way
up. While lying behind
line waiting for zero was
again heavily shelled
went over at 4.45 Good
Barrage Cushy not much
iron flying about very
few casualties advanced
about 3 Kilo[metre]s through
Fusiliers stayed on
road from 8am
all day and night, shelled
slightly.

**Friday 23rd**

---

20th - 27th August, 1918

The Battalion moved to Morlancourt where they received orders that the attack would be continued in 2 days.

On the 21st they moved into position at 11.00pm, and by midnight they were being heavily shelled with gas so they had to wear masks. Zero hour was 4.45am and 3 tanks accompanied them. As the attack started they encountered little shelling, advancing nearly 3 miles; it was the nearest to open warfare they had experienced. ‘D’ Company took 60 prisoners, and ‘C’ Company 14 prisoners and 2 machine guns.
‘Stood to’ a-
bout 3.30 am. still on 
road just in front 
of Mealt?. another attack 
on our Right and Left 
Fritz straffed violently in 
the morning nothing 
much doing remainder 
of the day. Was told at 6pm 
that we had to ‘go over’ 
again. ‘stood too’ at 7.15 pm

Saturday 24th
Went over 
at 1.30 am no opposition 
whatever. was shelled 
slightly. Dug ourselves 
in. Dull in the morning 
Fine in the afternoon 
Were shelled inter-
mittantly all day, stayed 
there the night. Fritz dropped 
3 bombs very near us.

Sunday 25th
Very misty 
early in the morning 
and very hot later on 
moved forward about 
600 y[ar]ds & catching up the 
Fusiliers who went over 
in the morning. Tons of 
stuff moving up the road 
Fritz burning dumps. Had 
a couple of hours sleep 
moved up the line at 2.15 
= Monday 26th
went over. held up by

Monday 26th
machine guns. We didn’t 
have a barrage and no 
tanks. Stayed in line 
where we were held up 
Fritz started bombing us 
out. Also used vane bombs 
and 5 g[a]s nice state to 
be in. He retired a bit 
about 2.30 pm we 
followed him up. went

On the 24 th ‘B’ & ‘D’ Companies attacked a 
ridge and village just south of Becordel-
Becourt, and it was taken with little resistance. 
They captured a further 26 prisoners. On the 
morning of the 26th the Battalion moved 
forward to Fricourt.

While at Fricourt the Battalion received orders 
at 1.00am that they were to attack again as 
part of a joint operation against three separate 
enemy positions. The Battalion moved off at 
3.00am to a position east of Mametz. Heavy 
opposition was immediately encountered from 
German machine gun fire, and daylight made 
the situation even worse. Slow progress was 
made, though they captured front trenches and 
pushing along communication trenches. The 
enemy started to withdraw at 3.00pm and by 
5.00pm they occupied their first objective. One 
of the captains involved in the attack remarked, 
“This was a most unpleasant day and although 
I do not know whom we were up against I am 
sure they were some of the very best troops of 
the German army. I never saw any of them, but 
their presence was most obvious until they 
withdrew”. The fighting continued with the 
Battalion in support and by the 28th all the 
objectives had been gained, and the capture of 
many prisoners.
forward about 300 yards in the evening. Held
1 drinking post. Rumoured Fritz was massing.

**Tuesday 27th**
35th Brigade went over we were just about in Fritz's barrage went forward again. Rained. Made bivvies [bivouacs] and tried to sleep went forward about 700 y[ar]ds again about 2.30 were again in Fritz's barrage.

**Wednesday 28th**
Rainy day. Terribly tired & fagged out. In Brigade Support when Berks[Berkshires] went over were in C.T. in Fritz's Barrage again. moved forward again about 600 y[ar]ds until we got under observation went forward in single file at 20 y[ar]ds between each man were put in a big bomb hole stayed there about 3 o'clock Fritz put a 5.g[gas] shell right in shell hole one chap wounded Fritz shelled us violently all day and night.

**Thursday 29th**
Moved into another trench dug in again about 2.30 am Fritz stopped shelling about this time. stayed all day had a little sleep moved back about 3 kilo[metre]s at 6.30 pm dug bivvy[bivouac].

**Friday 30th**
Still in same place where we moved to yesterday had a fairly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Casualties Sustained in the Attack</th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Killed</strong></td>
<td>1…</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Died of wounds</strong></td>
<td>0…</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wounded</strong></td>
<td>5…</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6…</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next two days were spent with the men relaxing and singing songs after one of the cooks had somehow acquired an accordion. The Battalion had again been severely depleted.

30th August, 1918
On the 30th they received 13 new officers and 253 other soldiers to swell their ranks thereby enabling the battalion to function reasonably
decent sleep last night
Had about 10 different inspections today. New S.B.R trousers and putties. nothing else of importance.

**Saturday 31st**
very cold at night. slept rotten. rotten intermittently rained.
nothing doing all day except rifle inspection
wind up about moving in the afternoon & evening bomb and ammo issued. We are about 16-20 Kilo[metre]s behind front line

---

**September 1918**

**Sunday 1st**
Fine day but very cold wind. still in same place. Wind up about moving again in the afternoon nothing else of importance

**Monday 2nd**
Fine day got up at 3.15 am Had tea on the move at 4 am up the line. Arrived at destination between guns at 9 am. made a bivvy[bivouac] had a Kip. nothing else

**Tuesday 3rd**
Fine day still in same trench we are attached to 47th Division nothing else today Fritz over tonight.

**Wednesday 4th**
Fine day nothing much of importance all day. moved up to line about 8.30.reached there about 11. gassed all night long.

---

well. August had been a month of almost continuous movement and attack against the enemy. The achievements are all the more remarkable considering they occurred over the old Somme battlefield marked by two years of shelling, craters, abandoned trenches and barbed wire.

---

**September 1918**

The Hindenburg Line.

For more information about The Hindenburg Line ([http://www.firstworldwar.com/diaries/hindenburgline_querl.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/diaries/hindenburgline_querl.htm))

**2nd - 8th September, 1918**

The Battalion occupied some old trenches east of Leforest remaining there until the 4th when in the afternoon they moved forward to a position south east of St. Pierre-Vaast Wood. The roads were covered with dead horses from gun teams. One team of 6 harnessed horses appeared to have lain down exhausted. There was heavy shelling and gassing around the woods area, so the men had to wear their masks when they arrived at their new position north of Moislains. While moving there they received orders to attack Nurlu at 6.45am. Again there was no time for proper preparation; the CO remarked “It was one of those hastily organised operations for an early morning attack that was so fashionable at this time”.

The 7th Battalion was in another joint operation with orders to capture the Nurlu Trench system; ‘A’ and ‘B’ Companies were the
Thursday 5th
Rainy day
went over at 6.45 am
were in support shelled &
gassed all the way over.
stopped in wood. shelled all
day went over again at
7pm in heavy Thunderstorm
 got soaked. held up by
Fritz’s machine guns
halfway dug in moved
up about 100y[ar]ds to trench
about 11 30am. stopped in
the trench all night went
back to ‘D’ Co[mpa]ny to draw
camp rations.

Friday 6th
Fine day
still in trench. Took over
over at 8 am moved back
about 1000y[ar]ds into shellholes
on top of a ridge. stayed there
the night. Fritz bombed
near us

Saturday 7th
Fine day
still in shell holes. Had
orders to pack up at 9am
nothing happened. Told
about 6 pm that we
were moving that night
but did not.

Sunday 8th
Wet day
moved about 1000y[ar]ds into another trench
Had extraordinarily
good breakfast. Inspections
only today.

Monday 9th
Fine day
still in same trench on
right of Fires inspections
nothing else

assaulting companies with ‘C’ kept back in
reserve. To start the attack they first had to
cross a bridge on a canal under fire from
machine guns and high explosive shells, which
was mixed with sneezing gas that was very
unpleasant and being totally unprepared until
they took a mouthful of the stuff. At one point
they even fired upon men from the 47th Division
who, due to break down in communication, the
Battalion had not been told were going to be in
the area. Fortunately they think they did not hit
any of them as they were at such a distance.
They then had to progress up a slope, with no
cover up to a crest, where they were met with
what was described as a “perfect hail of
bullets” from well-hidden German machine
gunners and in effect reduced the advance to a
standstill. ‘C’ Company at 7.00pm then
undertook a second attack in torrential rain and
pitch darkness, and with some considerable
difficulty were successful in capturing Nurlu
Village. It soon became clear that the Battalion
could make no further progress, and they
positioned themselves in a reserve trench until
the 8th September. Since the 8th August they
had delivered 17 attacks and pushed forward a
distance of 17 miles, captured 17 German
officers and 1010 men of other ranks. They had
also set up a dummy camp two miles behind
the transport lines. This was well lit up at night
to act as a decoy for enemy planes that were
very active in the area.

Casualties Sustained in the Attack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died of wounds</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tuesday 10th**
Wet day
parades morning
and afternoon wind
up about moving in
the evening Jerry over

**Wednesday 11th**
Wet day paraded in pouring
rain got soaked.
parades all morning
nothing else of importance

**Thursday 12th**
Wet day again soaked on
parade Put in written
application for
commission. nothing
else of import[ance]. Jerry over.

**Friday 13th**
Fine day but cold ordinary
parades nothing else imp[ortance]
in charge of Gas Guard tonight
2 Jerrys brought down

**Saturday 14th**
Fine day
Excused parades today because
on guard last night. Battalion
practices for stunt. name of
village we are just behind
is Nurlu. Went to Manan
court. Jerry over.

**Sunday 15th**
Fine day
open air Church parade
Battalion practices stunt
again. saw 4 of our
balloons brought down
one only about 200 y[ar]ds from
us. Jerry over at night, dropped
bombs very near. also shelled
nothing else of importance

**Monday 16th**
Lovely day
ordinary parades. Still in
same trench. Practices

---

18th - 19th September, 1918

Although the Germans were now engaged in a strategic withdrawal they were still dangerous opponents; having been driven back from their old positions at the Somme they were now holding their lines at the St Quentin Canal. One of the strongest positions they held was the village of Epehy, which had been turned into a small fortress with keeps and good strategic grounds around surrounding it. The Battalions next orders were to be part of another joint mission to capture this position and a ridge running south east of it and then advance 2 miles.
throwing Jerry stick bombs & also firing 36’s Shelled at about 5.30pm Jerry over but no bombs dropped near shelled terrific thunder storm

**Tuesday 17th**
Fine day
cool. no parades today. Bath moved up the line for stunt I was left out on Details X

**Wednesday 18th**
Fine day
Lewis Gun lecture in the morning nothing else still at same place

**Thursday 19th**
Inclined to be raining. Lewis Gun & P.T nothing else of imp[ortance] cold tonight.

**Friday 20th**
Rainy & cold. L.G & P.T[Lewis Gun]& [Physical Training] still in
Same place. Cold Tonight nothing else of imp[ortance]

**Saturday 21st**
Fine day but cold L.G & P.T. Same place X

**Sunday 22nd**
Raining all day. no church parade Jerry over in morning nothing else of importance still in same place

**Monday 23rd**
Showery. L.G &P.T nothing else of imp[ortance] still in same place

**Tuesday 24th**
Fine day
L.G. Fired Gun for first time Excused P.T. Nothing else of imp[ortance] still in same place

At Zero hour 3.00am on the 18th they attacked along an 800 yard frontage with ‘A’ Company going first, the Germans expected the attack and laid down considerable fire and a concentrated gas bombardment All this was in very heavy rain and mist, with smoke shells from their own side making it very hard going for both men and tanks. At first the advance proceeded well, but then they hit thick barbed wire fences. They then came under heavy fire but despite heavy casualties they managed to advance. During the battle ‘C’ Company encountered one of their own tanks that had lost its way. It came out of the mist and started to open fire and strafe the men before realising that it was shooting their own men. This caused much confusion and lost time before the men could be reformed.

Lieutenant Farrow was put out of action after being shot through the leg. Such was the carnage and confusion, he remarked, that he was “really not sorry to have stopped that bullet”. The enemy fire was so great that by this time ‘C’ and ‘D’ Companies had no officers left and ‘B’ Company only one officer, however they pushed on a little further to the outskirts of a farm. Here they came to a halt and consolidated their position. The Battalion was battle weary having sustained 200 casualties. They only had two officers from ‘A’ & ‘B’ companies left due to the “deadly fire that had been causing such disastrous execution in our ranks all day”. The attack had also devastated the officers in the Regiment. The CO remarked that practically all the officers had been new to the battalion, noting that one officer, freshly arrived from Sandhurst, he’d neither met nor could he even remember his name. The poor officer had arrived while the CO was asleep, got sent out to one of the companies, and by daybreak was dead. Further there had been difficulty in identifying him, as no one was sure what he had looked like.

The Battalion had been up against the German Alpine Corps and it was noted in their histories that the corpses of the British were “piled so high that they had to be moved to allow a field of fire” Other units eventually took the area by 7.45pm.
saw 2 balloons brought down. ours. N.E. of L[ine]

**Wednesday 25**th
Rainy X
P.T.& L.G. still in same place

**Thursday 26**th
Fine day
cold. L.G & P.T. N.E of l[ine]
2 balloons down ours

**Friday 27**th
Fine day
L.G & P.T – N.E. of l[ine]

**Saturday 28**th
L.G & P.T. nothing else of importance

**Sunday 29**th
Wet day
moved up toward line
about 3 miles to make
bivvys [bivouacs] for Batt[alion] very late dinner

**Monday 30**th
Rotten day
wet and miserable still
making bivvys[bivouacs]. Batt[alion] arrived from line about
10.30  Had tea & sent tried to sleep

---

**Casualties Sustained in the Attack**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Company</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Company</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Company</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Company</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19th - 24th September, 1918

The Battalion was shelled heavily during the day of the 19th and on the 20th: Due to the shortage of men ‘A’ & ‘D’ Companies were amalgamated to form one Company, and ‘B’ & ‘C’ the second. In addition to the Colonel and Adjutant there were only 4 officers and around 200 other ranks. At 9.30pm they received orders for another joint attack on a strongly held position. The valley they were attacking was dominated by machine guns and was as formidable as anything they had yet faced. Fighting started at 5.40am on the 21st. The fight started well enough under heavy fire and shelling, but was halted by 3.00pm. By this time a further officer had been wounded, one killed and 40 other ranks killed or wounded. At midnight the 5th Royal Berks took over the attack capturing Heythorp Post and Trench, while the Battalion remained as a support brigade. On the 24th at 11.30am the enemy opened up with a heavy barrage and under its cover counter attacked with six or more companies. The attack was repulsed and they sustained heavy casualties.

25th - 30th September, 1918

On the 25th the Battalion was relieved and they took over some reserve trenches. On the 27th were back at the front, and sustained slight shelling.
Casualties Sustained from 18th to 24th of September

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died of wounds</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They had now been through seven weeks of fighting, and the Battalion that started to fight on the 8th of August had almost ceased to exist. More than 40 officers and 800 other ranks sustained casualties, severely depleting its fighting strength.

### October 1918

**Tuesday 1st**
- ? billeting party fine day moved back to Maricourt through Peronne on buses. Stayed the night and day in old German billet huts nothing of importance

**Wednesday 2nd**
- Fine day on billeting party again. Came to Villes on Bois by X train to Acq Station 8 hours journey. Had no sleep tonight Cycled 12 Kilo[metres] in the dark arrived at billets at 3 am

**Thursday 3rd**
- Fine day went back to station to meet Batt[alion] on bike. waited about 7 hours for them without anything to eat. Guided motor lorries to Camp in tin huts, not too bad. cold night.

### The End in Sight

October 1st - 12th, 1918

During the first week of October the Battalion was moved around behind the front. At last the men were given the long overdue opportunity to relax and have a bath.

A Battalion : 300-1,300 troops lead by a (Lieutenant) Colonel

Friday 4th
Fine day
one parade cleaning
up in general. N[oting] E[lse]. of 
I[mportance]

Saturday 5th
Fine day
moved up the line in 
buses at 4 pm. Arrived 
in support line left of 
Arras AT 9.30 pm 
Quiet. Platoon Sgt.

Sunday 6th
Still in same 
trench all duck boards 
on ration carrying tonight 
Platoons & Co[mpan]ys hell of a way 
from one another. We 
strafe Fritz at intervals

Monday 7th
Fine day 
took over Water Guard in 
dug out about 50f[ee]t back 
handed over at 9.30 
to B[attalio]H[ead]Q[ueant] went to another 
50 f[oo]t dugout for the day 
moved up to advanced 
post at 6.30 pm On 
Trench Duty every other 
2 hours 'A' Co[mpan]y went over.

Tuesday 8th
Fine day 
[n[oting]E[lse]. of i[mportance]. Same as last 
night. we are having all 
hot food in trenches this 
time. Bought stuff at 
Canteen near to H[ead]Q[ueant]

Wednesday 9th
Fine 
day. nothing much of 
importance.

On the 4th they moved to Mericourt relieving 
the 6th Shropshire Light Infantry. The Germans 
were now just holding their lines and not taking 
any offensive action, and were expected to 
start a withdrawal. On the 8th October the 
Germans retreated some distance leaving 
demolition charges in the Acheville trenches 
and pillboxes. They had been seen retreating, 
though, and ‘B’ Company had followed them in 
quickly, defusing the charges before they could 
be set off. There was an absence of heavy 
guns and it was clear that the enemy had 
withdrawn them. The Acheville trenches did 
suffer a gas attack on the 9th, just before the 5th 
Royal Berks came to relieve the Battalion.

The enemy continued their retreat, followed by 
the Berks and 9th Royal Fusiliers. On the 12th 
the Battalion moved up in reserve to the 
Drocourt Queant line and Billy-Montigny. The 
area was littered with booby traps left behind 
by the Germans in order to slow their pursers. 
One such device was the knob on the top of a 
staircase, designed to go off by anyone who 
touched it. The men were also warned about 
trip wires, so every house had to be treated 
with suspicion.
Thursday 10th
Wet day
in Billie Burke Trench
Right of Lewis. Nothing Else of Importance

Friday 11th
moved up
following Berks[shire]s moved
about 4 Kilometres. In 3
different dug outs.
on ration party raining
hard. got back about 3.30 am.

Saturday 12th
damp day
in trench on right of
Maricourt in dug out
moved up at 3pm towards
front line scotching Fritz
up. Nothing but houses all
around this part. no shelled
much. In fairly good condition
went through Grocourt
stayed to night and next
day in concrete dugout
Fritzes amongst slag heaps

Sunday 13th
Miserable
day still in dug out (concrete)
moved up at 3 pm toward
line halted for 2 hours on
the way as too light to go
on moved off in dark
passed through 2 villages
shelled heavily
took up position as R[egimental] Support
platoon on road in ditches
ordered at 2.30pm to pack
up going to make a stunt
capture Fritz M[achine] G[un] we were
in reserve again heavily
shelled also all night
long. A regular night with
all big Stuff went back
to position on road at 8.30am

Monday 14th
Very cold
early morning. warmer

13th - 17th of October, 1918

On the 13th the Battalion took over the front from the Royal Fusiliers. Their orders were for a joint operation; an advance upon the Haute Deule Canal, where the Germans had demolished all the bridges. The Germans were waiting in force on the other side, and the shelling of the villages, behind them was violent and persistent.
Rates an nice day. Shelled heavily all day. orders to move up again to try & cross canal about 70 yards wide, but this impossible owing to Fritz’s heavy machine gun fire. however we relieved outpost (my section did) about 100 yards from canal. Stayed there about ½ an hour. Went back to C[ompany] H[ead] Q[uarters] went forward again to relieve front line platoon we were in a house in cellar.

**Tuesday 15th**
Miserable day again stayed in cellar all day very comfortable good bed shelled lightly moved up & took charge of outpost at 11.15 pm Patrolled bank of Canal relieved at 4.30 am by ’D’ Co[mpany]y

**Wednesday 16th**
rained heavens hard all night got soaked no cover shelled came back as support Co[mpany]y in at 5.30am cellar in village feather bed lamps extra good great spuds carrots turnips arrived etc Toothache terrible On carrying party carried RE stuff up to Canal Bank were machine gunned & shelled heavily wonderful how we escaped. 9 back to billet about 11 30 Fritz quietened down after this.

On the night of the 16th a collapsible bridge made of cork was taken down to the canal by ‘C’ Division, but they arrived late having got lost on the way. The bridge was then found to be a few yards short of the far bank. With tensions growing high they became sitting ducks as daylight approached. They needn’t have worried though, because the enemy had apparently pulled back.

The villages of Cordela and Raimbeaucourt came out to welcome the British soldiers. Initially they had been worried because they had never seen a British uniform before, but when they realised they were the allies, they were extremely well received, being given flowers and embraces by all the delighted residents.
**Thursday 17th**
Fine day
still in billet. moved off
at 2.30 went over Canal
(2 frontline co[mpan]ys had gone
first) marched about
6 Kil[ometre]s to Rambeaucourt
civilians in the village
had been there for 4 years
with Fritz. People very
enthusiastic children
put flowers on road
for us to walk over
very excited. Billets in
civis House 3 women
& 2 children in same
house gave us coffee
& cocoa ? -------
-----------?
good time.

**Friday 18th**
Went billeting
at 7am about ¾ of a
mile further up
Co[mpan]y moved up at 10am.
Lovely day  57th Brigade
went through us.
Fritz put about a
dozen shells into
village last night
2 parades in the after-
noon. In the evening
we went down to old
billet. People very
pleased to see us.
Got girls addresses. good
Kip Fire. Warm.

**Saturday 19th**
Moved up to next village
not so bad went billetting
populace very enthusiastic

**Sunday 20th**
Wet day
went on billeting party
at 1 pm to Orchies X
batt[alion] arrived at  7.30 dark
nothing much of importance

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**18th - 27th October, 1918**

On the 18th they were relieved and remained in Rambeaucourt before moving onto Le Bourgage.

On the 20th they marched to Orchies, a town almost destroyed by the Germans for refusing to supply them with what they wanted. On entering the town the troops played “Le Marseillaise” to a jubilant welcome by the
Monday 21\textsuperscript{st}
Wet day
goa on billetting party
at 2 oclock to Landas
arrived at 3 oclock
batt[alion] arrived about 5 pm
in billets.

Tuesday 22\textsuperscript{nd}
Moved towards the line to pass
through 35\textsuperscript{th} Brigade
Left Landas at 12 midnight
(Monday Tuesday) marched
about 6 Kilo[metre]s to Rumegies
stopped there about 2 am
had tea. Fritz shelled.
had breakfast. Moved
up further to a little
village. stayed there the
day Heavily shelled. working party

Wednesday 23\textsuperscript{rd}
Stayed in house today moved
off about 3 pm marched
about 6 kilo[metre]s towards
canal. stayed at Nivelle
about 4 hours. moved
up further, shelled, crossed
over two canals about
11.30pm. Put in house
stayed there the night

Thursday 24\textsuperscript{th}
Mild day
still in house. on bank of
canal shelled moved up
about 6 pm towards
Chateau L’Abbaye. got in
Village. Fritz not very
far off shelled. Did 3
patrols tried to go further
forward along road
with 9 Plat[oon] Fritz halted
us and fired. Ran

Friday 25\textsuperscript{th}
Fair day
still in Village patrols

residents, overcome with emotion at hearing
their national anthem after four years of
German occupation. It was noted, “They were
free again, it was no wonder they wept for joy”.

On the 21\textsuperscript{st} they marched to Landas and the
36\textsuperscript{th} Brigade was ordered to lead the attack.
The advance was now using the open warfare
techniques they had been practising, keeping a
sharp lookout for snipers with machine guns.

They marched on through Rumegies seeing
evidence of enemy attempts to slow them
down. Bridges and roads had been blown up,
and some roads were booby-trapped, so they
had to proceed with caution. Resistance by the
Germans was increasing, and on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} the
Battalion was moved to Nivelle to cross the
canal. They pushed on to Mont du Moulin to
make an attempt on a line above Chateau
L’Abbaye, however they were frustrated by
machine gun fire from houses in the area.
Additionally the Germans had diverted the local
canals and rivers thereby flooding the
countryside, so only the roads were passable.
These were also covered by enemy machine
gun fire.

On the 25\textsuperscript{th} another attempt was made to
capture the area however the Battalion were
again forced back. They knew that to attack
would inflict major casualties, but Divisional HQ
had other ideas. Captain Ellis on the morning
on the 26\textsuperscript{th} wrote:

“It was one of those typical shows one came in
for so often just before the Armistice. Divisional
HQ insisted that the Germans had retired on
our front; we knew they had not, and reported
accordingly, saying that to press on haphazard
would involve heavy and unnecessary
casualties. We were told we must be more
alive in keeping touch”.
went round. village potted at Fritz office. wounded. shelled in afternoon. Terrible night. shelled & trench mortars very heavily. Village a lurid red from burning village within Fritz lines.

**Saturday 26**

Very misty in morning. Fine day sweating on Fritz at dawn shelled occasionally all day. Nothing of importance. ‘D’ Company went through us.

**Sunday 27**

(2 lines crossed out) nothing much of importance all day. were relieved at 9.30 pm by the Berks[hires]. went back to the bank of the canal. stayed there for the night. were gassed coming back.

**Monday 28**

Fine day. went billeting at 7.30 to Sameon Battalion arrived at 9 pm came in wrong way missed them. Stopped there the night. Fritz put over 5 shells.

**Tuesday 29**

Fine day left Sameon for Fluyes about 9.45. arrived at Fluyes about 2 pm. not bad billet.

**Wednesday 30**

Fine day cleaning up inspection of equipment ½ platoon went in sick shortage of iron rations.

At 7.00pm two Officers approached the line along the road in heavy fog. Initially nothing happened and they began to think maybe Divisional HQ had been right about the Germans having left the area. Then the mist lifted and the enemy machine guns opened fire. They managed to get back to their own lines and report that due to the flooding of the area any attack would be undesirable. However ‘A’ & ‘C’ Companies were both under orders to make successful attacks, only to be halted by machine gun fire as they tried to advance up the road.

By 7.15pm they received further orders that the Chateau L’Abbaye must be taken by 2.30am the next morning. ‘D’ Company was this time told to attack. It would be the last time that the Battalion would attack, and luckily it ended successfully. One hour before zero hour they heard explosions and hoped that this indicated that the Germans had retreated from their impregnable position. They were right and by 3.30am they were able to advance. The Battalion received no further casualties.

**Casualties Sustained from 23rd - 27th of October**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Killed</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Died of wounds</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wounded</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30 other ranks killed or wounded.
Thursday 31st. Fine day had bath yesterday. 2 parades in morning Went into the town of Fluies/ tonight paid 40 fr[anc]s

November 1918

Friday 1st Nov
Fine day inspection by C[ommanding] O[fficer] on parade about 2 hours.

Saturday 2nd
Wet day. Parades ½ in field & ½ in billett nothing in afternoon. still at Fluies, 7 months in France

Sunday 3rd
Fine day. Church Parade in no 40 Rue d'Orchies Fluies Cinema Hall nothing else of importance in charge of platoon

Monday 4th
Fine day parades from- 9-12.30 in morning still at Fluies. In charge of platoon.

Tuesday 5th
Wet day Batt[alion] Orderly C[or]p[ora]l. Felt queer stayed in bed all day felt worse towards night. Turned out of bed to see Ord[er]ly off at Guard. nearly got crimed

Wednesday 6th
Wet day company did route march went sick got L. D. stayed in bed all day. Still felt very queer.
**Thursday 7\(^{th}\)**
Wet day
Company went on?
went sick got Ex[used] D[uties] stayed in bed all day felt
better towards evening

**Friday 8\(^{th}\)**
Wet day

**Saturday 9\(^{th}\)**
Fine day
very cold went sick
got Ex[cused].D[uties]. Baths for Co[mpan]y
Walked to Baths and
back. Went to Brigade
Concert Party. Not bad.

**Sunday 10\(^{th}\)**
Fine day
Went sick got Ex[cused] D[uties]. on
the move to Landas.
went in lorry. arrived
about 12. 15 pm. Fire
pecquet platoon.

**Monday 11\(^{th}\)**
Drill day. 'no parades today' &
'Cease Fire' blown
Armistice starts. Went sick
got Ex[cused] D[uties]

**Tuesday 12\(^{th}\)**
Fine day
went on parade.
ordinary parades

**Wednesday 13\(^{th}\)**
Fine
day still at Landas
ordinary morning
parades went to
pictures.

**Thursday 14\(^{th}\)**
Fine
day still at Landas
paraded at 8.15 am
all N[on]C[ommissioned] O[fficer]s started peace
time drill.

**Friday 15th**
Fine
day ordinary drills in the morning.

**Saturday 16th**
Fine
day ordinary drills still at Landas

**Photographs used on front cover**
L-R
1. Mr Shipway’s daughters: Ivy, Barbara & Hilda (circa 1945)
2. Mr Shipway and his wife (circa 1918)
3. Mr Shipway’s Demob papers
4. Christmas card sent from Mr Shipway from the front to his wife
5. Mr and Mrs Shipway (circa 1918)
6. A set of postcards found in the same box as the diary, probably bought by Mr Shipway after the War as a memento.
7. A young Mr Shipway / Mr and Mrs Shipway (circa after the war) / Mr Shipway as a baby with his father (circa 1900)
8. Mr Shipway photographed in uniform before military service.

Extra photos that can be view from Enfield’s Local Studies Library and Archive...
Extra photos that can all be viewed at Enfield's Local Studies Library and Archive.

Mr Shipway as a young boy with father (Circa 1905)

Mr Shipway’s Army Classification Certificate 19th March 1917

Mr Shipway’s Diary: August 1918
Sketch created in the trenches by Mr Shipway and inserted into his wife’s Christmas card (circa Dec 1918)

Victory Medal Certificate

Enfield Library and Museum Service
November 2010