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APPENDIX ~~IV~~

Report of the operations on Oct 12th

The LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS assembled for the attack in Spectrum Trench. Four companies were in the front line A.B.C.D from the right. we were the left assaulting Battalion of the Brigade with the Dukes on our right and the 6th Div. Yorks and Lances on our left. Only one objective was finally laid down, the Brown line N 29 c 33 to N 28 b 81.

The Battn were to attack in 8 waves. The first 4 waves with a distance of 50^x between each were to take the objective, push patrols forward and dig in. The last 4 waves following at a distance of 200^x behind the first four, each with a distance of 50^x between them, were to dig a support trench 200^x in rear of the objective.

The LAN. FUS. were ordered to advance at 20 as the Dukes on our right had to take Spectrum before we could advance.

As regards when to leave our trenches we were ordered by the C. O. to use our discretion whether we left our

trenches at zero and laid out in shell holes or leave at the appointed time for attack. 20 after zero, taking into consideration our own barrage and the enemys barrage and machine gun fire.

Up to zero the enemys machine guns were silent and very little sniping was done. All his shell fire was directed well behind our lines. Ten minutes before zero about 20 Germans left Genith trench and ran towards us with their hands up. They seemed very demoralised. Ten of them succeeded in reaching us the remainder were killed. A small number were also seen to leave their trenches and run back. I think this is a ruse on their part as on each attack the same thing has happened and they may have some secret signal.

Two German Aeroplanes flew very low along our lines 10 mins. before zero and then made right away to the rear of their lines. All our men were kept well down in their trenches but I think they must have seen our trenches were full.

The two Right Companies decided it was best to leave their trenches at zero and lie out and at zero this was done. Very few casualties were suffered in doing this. The two Left Companies

left at 20 and by this time the machine guns were well going and immediately on leaving they were caught by them.

The whole Battalion left the trenches together and were caught in mass, very heavy losses being sustained. Immediately the Battalion got over the top, C. Company Commander noticed that a small piece of trench in front of zenith was manned by about 20 Germans with 2 machine guns. This piece held up the advance as they poured enfilade fire along the right Companies and prevented advance on the left.

Small isolated parties of the two centre Companies got past this trench and pushed forward 200 yards where they dug in. Unfortunately they were afterwards cut off and either captured or killed. This was at about 1 hour after zero. From this time no advance was made and what few men were left hung up in shell holes and waited until dusk when they withdrew to our original line.

I think that the whole attack on the left failed through this small trench being quite overlooked as it was quite undamaged.

The Brigade Machine guns rendered good assistance with their overhead fire.

The German snipers were very good and I think more attention should be paid by us to sniping.

Our bombers unfortunately did not get into action as no part of the enemy's trench was taken.

The Lewis Guns advanced with the 2nd wave and with the exception of one could not get forward. One gun succeeded in pushing through with one of the isolated parties and got into position in a shell hole where it did considerable damage before it was eventually knocked out.

The Stokes Guns did not get into action at all. They would have been the greatest assistance to us had they remained in SPECTRUM and after observing the machine guns in the previously unobserved trench in front of Zenith have poured a rapid fire on them. This would have enabled the remaining men to push forward some distance.

Our Artillery barrage was very good but I think a F.O.O. should be in our front line and be in direct communication with the batteries. Several of our shells fell very short and caused us casualties in our own trench prior to the attack.

The German barrage, chiefly with 5.9's

was wholly directed well behind our lines and practically no casualties were sustained through it; the barrage on our front line was all by machine guns.

Suggestions

Lewis Guns should I think always advance with the last wave where they stand the least chance of being knocked out and are then ready to take up position immediately the objective is taken

Stokes Guns

These should render very great assistance if properly placed and a competent Officer actually in the trench. I think they should stay in our front line and observe where the advance is held up by machine guns and then direct their fire on that spot. The Officer in charge should act entirely on his own initiative and not wait for orders from the Company Commander to fire. It is very difficult to get messages to these detachments during heavy shelling.

Equipment

The method of carrying equipment was I think quite satisfactory.

The feeding arrangements could not I think have been improved upon.