

## Royal Sussex Regiment: Newspaper Articles and Documents

13th (Southdowns) Battalion Royal Sussex  
Regiment (original held at West Sussex  
Record Office RSR MS 7/25)

War Diary covering the Battle of Boar's Head  
(30th June 1916)

The whole war diary for the 13th Battalion is  
available on this website on the 'Battalion  
War Diaries' page.



1916.Appendix.June.FERME DU ROIS.

28th.

Bn. relieved the 14th. Bn. Hants in the right sub-sector FERME DU ROIS and moved to the following billets. B and C companies in the front line A in Richebourg St Vaast Post, and D in billets VILLE CHAPELLE.

29th.

Day spent in collecting materials, and general organization for the attack. In the afternoon our artillery bombarded the enemy trenches from 2.p.m. to 5.p.m. cutting his wire and destroying his works. A copy of operation order No.25 is attached.

30th.

Report on operations.

1. The battalion assembled at 1.30 p.m on the morning of the 30th June in readiness for the assault with all four platoons of each coy. in the front line.  
2. The preliminary bombardment on the morning of the attack opened at 2.50 a.m and at 3.5 the leading wave of the battalion scaled the parapet, the remainder following at 50 yds. interval. At the same time the flank attack under Lts. Whitley and Ellis gained a footing in the enemy trench. The passage across NO MAN'S LAND was accomplished with few casualties in except in the left Companies which came under very heavy machine gun fire. The two right companies succeeded in reaching their objective but the two left companies only succeeded in penetrating the enemy's wire in one or two places.

Just at this moment a smoke cloud which was originally designed to mask our advance drifted right across the front and made it impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. This resulted in all direction being lost and the attack devolving into small bodies of men not knowing which way to go. Some groups succeeded in entering the support line engaging the enemy with bombs and bayonet and organizing the initial stages of a defence. Other parties swung off to the right and entered the trench where the flank party was operating, causing a great deal of congestion. On the left the smoke and darkness made the job of penetrating the enemy wire so difficult that few if any succeeded in reaching the enemy trench. Some parties of the right company succeeded in reaching the enemy

1916.Appendix.June.29th/30th.  
(Cont'd.)

support line when they were subjected to an intense bombardment with H.E and whizz bangs. Capt. Hughes who was wounded, seeing that his Coy. was in danger of being cut off gave the order for the evacuation of the enemy trenches and the remainder of the attacking force returned to our trenches. The enemy who was evidently thoroughly prepared now concentrated his energies on the front line and for the space of about 2½ hours our front and support lines were subjected to an intense bombardment with heavy and light shells causing a large number of casualties. Ultimately the shelling ceased and to all intents and purposes the operations closed, the battn. being relieved by the 14th. Bn. at about 1.30 p.m. and taking over their original billets at VIELLE CHAPELLE. Principal causes of failure.

- a). The unfortunate incident of the smoke cloud.
- b). The preparedness of the enemy.
- c). The intensity of the enemy's shell and machine gun fire.
- d). The failure of the Artillery to cut the enemy's wire on the left.

Casualties Our casualties were unfortunately heavy and resulted in the loss of many valuable Officers and men including Capt. C.M. Humble-Crofts Capt. & Adj. R.D.A. Whittaker Lt Fitzherbert H.L. 2nd.Lt. Dudley, Morgan, Oliver, Prior A.L. and Diggins killed and missing, and Capt. Hughes Capt. Makalua Lt. W.W. Fitzherbert. 2nd.Lt. Turner wounded. Amongst the wounded were C.S.M. Robinson, C.S.M. James C.S.M. Sears and C.S.M. Harfey the latter lost a foot during the bombardment. The enemy casualties are also considered to have been considerable, large numbers of dead being seen in the enemy trenches.

H.J. COXHEAD.

OPERATION ORDER No. 25.

A 69 to 76  
(Inclusive)  
B 77 to 86  
C 87 to 93  
D 94 to 3  
(Inclusive)

1. The Battalion will assemble for the assault as follows during the night of the 29th/30th June.

A Co. will move from RICHENBOURG ST VAAST via WINDY CORNER EDWARDS ROAD - COCKSPUR STREET to trenches passing Battalion Headquarters at 11 p.m. At Battalion Headquarters each man will be issued with an extra 100 rounds of ammunition and 2 bombs, also sandbags. A Co. will enter front line trenches via COCKSPUR STREET and will assemble with 2 platoons in Bays 69 to 76 (inclusive) and 2 platoons in support trench immediately behind.

B Co. will be relieved by A Co. 14th HANTS which will reach junction of CALBUNKS and Front Line Trench at 12 midnight. B Co. will then assemble with 2 platoons in Bays 77 to 86 inclusive and 2 platoons in Support Trench immediately behind.

C Co. will be assembled with 2 platoons in Bays 87 to 93 inclusive by 12 midnight, with 2 platoons in Support Trench immediately behind.

The FISH TAIL RAP will not however be evacuated until taken over by 14th HANTS.

D Co. will leave present billets and move via WINDY CORNER (S.9.a.6.94) - Battalion Headquarters (S.9.a.8.5) VINE STREET and will assemble with 2 platoons in Bays 94 to 3 (inclusive) and 2 platoons in Support Line immediately behind.

Head of D.Co. to pass Battalion Headquarters at 11.45 p.m. At Battalion Headquarters each man will be issued with an extra 100 rounds of ammunition and 2 bombs, also sandbags.

LEWIS GUNS will assemble as already detailed by 1 a.m. 30th June.

NOTE - O.C. Cos. may, at their discretion, assemble 3 platoons in Front Line instead of 2, owing to the extremely wet and muddy state of Support Trenches.

FLANK ATTACK.

Bombing Squads as already detailed)	Will assemble at
10 carriers to be detailed by	Headquarters
2/Lieut. ELPHICKS	(S.9.a.8.5)
Pte. Young B Co.	at 9 p.m. and
Pte. Astridge A Co.	report to
3 Sappers	2/Lieut. ELLIS

CARRYING PARTY.

The carrying party as already detailed will report to 2/Lieut. ELPHICKS at Battalion Headquarters (S.9.a.8.5) at 10 p.m. tonight (29th).

REPORT. Battalion Headquarters will move to BOND STREET at 12 midnight.

WIRE. In front of both Support and Front Line Trench wire will be cut under Company arrangements.

BRIDGES. Special Bridges have been made in Brigade Workshops, and will be put out by O.C., Brigade Workshops (Capt. FILAY) in front of our trenches. Other Bridges are in the line and will be put out by O.C. Cos.

(Sgd.) H.J. COXHEAD  
Lieut. & A/Adjutant.

Copy No. 8.

OPERATION ORDER No. 23.

INTENTION.

1. The Battalion will assault and capture the enemy trenches as follows:-

- (a) Enemy front line from BOAR'S HEAD to S.10.c.8.1.
- (b) Enemy support line from S.16.a.5½.6½. to S.16.a.9.9.

The 12th Battalion will assault on our left.

The dividing line between the battalions will be the ditch running from our front line parapet at S.10.c.8.3 to the enemy front line parapet at S.10.c.8.0.

METHOD OF ATTACK.

2. (a) Main attack, from our front line between CINDER TRACK (S.10.c.0.0.) and the ditch (S.10.c.8.3) near VINE STREET.

(b) Flank attack from our own FISHTAIL SAP against the BOAR'S HEAD.

(a) Main attack will be delivered in 4 lines, each line consisting of 4 platoons i.e. one from each company in single rank - with one pace extension.

(b) Flank attack will be delivered by 5 bombing parties each party consisting of 1 N.C.O. and 8 men.

ASSEMBLY FOR ASSAULT.

MAIN ATTACK.

2 platoons from each company will assemble in front line trench in bays 64-95 inclusive.

A Coy on the right. Then from right to left B - C - D Coys. The platoons forming the 1st. line of assault will assemble in the odd bays.

Those

These for the second line in the even bays.

The two platoons forming the 3rd. & 4th. lines from each company, will assemble in the old support trench between CINDER TRACK and VINE STREET.

A Company on the right then from right to left B - C - D Coys in rear of the platoons of their own Coys forming the 1st 2nd & 3rd lines. The platoons of each company detailed for the 3rd. line will be on the right of those detailed for the 4th line.

#### FLANK ATTACK.

The parties detailed for the flank attack will assemble in our front line trench near its junction with our FISH TAIL GAP. The wire in front of our front line and support line will be cut under company arrangements the night previous to the assault.

#### LEWIS GUNS.

These will assemble in the old disused trench about 35 yards in front of trench between BOND STREET and VINE STREET.

2nd. LT. ELPHICK  
R.S.M. CHANCE  
R.Qrs. 20  
8 men from each  
Coy.

CARRYING PARTY will assemble in the STRAND, as soon as the assaulting lines have advanced over the front parapet. These parties will move to the company stores situated in our present front line. Their work will be to transfer S.A.A. - Bombs - Rations and water from these stores to the company stores in the new front line.

Silence must be insisted on.

#### CONDUCT OF THE ASSAULT.

4. At precisely the Artillery will lift and the platoons forming the first line will clear the parapet & make for the enemy trench the platoons of the second line will follow at a distance of 50 yards.

The objective of the first & the three lines will be the enemy's second line from S.16.a.5.6 to S.16.a.9.9. They will on no account halt in the enemy's front line but push on to the enemy's support line.

As soon as the second line has cleared our front line parapet the third will advance from the Support Trench across the open, go over the parapet & follow the second line. The fourth line will act in a similar manner. The distance between lines throughout should be 50 yards. The objective of the 3rd & 4th lines will be the enemy's present front lines.

The left of each line will direct and each platoon will be approximately on a frontage of 50 yards. If conditions permit of it the first two lines will creep out before the appointed time to an advanced position in front of our parapet. In that case the third and fourth lines will also move forward from their original position to the front parapet. Care must be taken that touch is maintained by each unit to its flanks - rear - and front.

2nd.LT ELLIS

2nd.LT WHITLEY

1 N C O 28 bombers

A Coy

do B Coy

do C Coy

do D Coy

1 N C O

28 Battalion

Bombers

4 snipers.

FLANK ATTACK.

At when the Artillery lifts the parties as marginally detailed will make for the enemy sap & enter his front line trench at the BOAR'S HEAD.

They will bomb enemy's front line trench to right & communication trenches to the left, blocking enemy front line trench beyond point A.

Flags will be carried by each bombing party which they will place on the parapet to mark their positions.

LEWIS GUNS.

As soon as the infantry advance commences the Lewis guns will open fire on the enemy parapet. As soon as their field of fire is marked by the advancing troops they will advance with third line and join their companies.

FLANK ATTACK

1 N C O &amp; 8

MEN

B Coy (1)

1 N C O &amp; 9

MEN

D Coy (2)

1 N.C.O &amp; 9

men (3)

BLOCKING PARTIES

When a footing has been secured in the enemy support line the parties as detailed will block enemy communication trenches at points (1) (2) (3) as shown on accompanying map.

A sapper with dynamite explosive will accompany each party.

DUG OUT PARTIES.

Small bombing parties will accompany each platoon in 1st line. These parties will enter enemy front line trench & bomb all dug outs to prevent our leading lines being bombed from behind. They will work from right to left. Bombing Parties will be detailed as follows:-

A.Coy. to enter trench at V & bomb point Q.

B.Coy. to bomb trench P as far as Q & then push on to front line.

C Coy to bomb up trench R to point X & then to point Q

D Coy to bomb up trench S. & then via X bomb trench Y & K

These parties will accompany our first assembling line.

CONSOLIDATION OF POSITION.

5. As soon as the position is gained it will be consolidated again at once against a possible counter attack. To effect this the R.E. will erect strong points at A-B-B-C-D as shown on accompanying map.

The

The intervening trench will be consolidated by the assaulting infantry (1st & 2nd & 3rd Lines.) New breastworks on either flank will be constructed by a pioneer battalion who will also construct the following new communication trenches:-

On the LEFT continue COPSE ST.  
CENTRE .. VINE ST.  
RIGHT .. BOND ST.

O.C.s-companies-can-act-upon-their-platoons-in-2nd-line & assist-in-the-work-or-to-reinforce-them-in-the-event of-a-counter-attack- But-it-must-be-remembered-that over-crowding-in-the-front-line-is-to-be-avoided.

On no account is "straggling" or souvenir hunting to be allowed. The NEW front line will be consolidated by the 1st & 2nd & 3rd Lines. The NEW support line will be consolidated by the 3rd- & 4th Unit.

DETAIL OF TOOLS  
Bombs Ammunition  
To be carried

6. 220 rounds of S.A.A. will be issued to each man with the exception of the bombers.

Sandbags will be carried as follows -

Each man in the 1st line will carry one sandbag  
.. .. 2nd .. .. two ..  
.. .. 3rd & 4th .. .. four ..

Tools will be carried as follows:-

1 pick or shovel to every man in 2nd line.  
1 do do do 3rd line.  
1 do do do 4th line.

BOMBS. Bombers will carry 12 bombs.

All other men will carry two bombs each as a reserve for company bombers.

Platoon commanders will arrange to collect these as a platoon reserve. It must be distinctly understood that only trained bombers are to use these bombs.

RATIONS

Each man will carry two days rations and will start with a full water bottle.

O.C. Companies will hold an inspection of iron rations a day or so previous to the assault.

PACKS will be collected and dumped in a spot to be notified later each man will carry a waterproof sheet to be fixed to the back of his belt.

GAS HELMETS.

All gas helmets will MUST be examined by Company Officers.



7. Reserve S.A.A. is distributed along our front line parapet and at the head of the following communication trenches

CONNAUGHT STREET  
COCKSPUR STREET  
BOND STREET  
VINE STREET

BOMBS will be distributed as follows:-

FIRST Front parapet near FISH TAIL 2,000  
RESERVE Head of COCKSPUR STREET 1,600  
.. .. BOND STREET 1,600

2nd RESERVE STORE

Junction of BOND STREET & GUARDS 6,000

3rd RESERVE STORE

In ORCHARD about the COPSE 6,000

R.E. STORES

Dumps will be established as under

- A) FISH TAIL behind the parapet forward end of VINE STREET
- B)

RATIONS AND WATER

Stores of water and rations will be established at the forward end of the following communication trenches

CONNAUGHT STREET  
COCKSPUR STREET  
BOND STREET  
VINE STREET

8. O.C. Companies will make the following arrangements as soon as the enemy position has been captured.

- 1. Collect all tools found in enemy trenches.
- 2. Latrine accommodation.
- 3. Whether water is available if so it should be tested and protected.
- 4. Selected sites for company stores i.e. S.A.A. Grenades, water etc.

BATTALION SNIPERS.

Will advance on flanks of third line.  
Special instructions will be issued to sniping sergeant.

EVACUATION OF WOUNDED.

All wounded men will be evacuated to the Regimental AID POST VIA - COCKSPUR STREET - RUE de BOIS - to EDWARD STREET.

9. Reports to Advanced Battalion Headquarters in BOND STREET.

Copy No. 1 To O.C "A" Coy  
 .. 2 To O.C "B" Coy  
 .. 3 To O.C "C" Coy  
 .. 4 To O.C "D" Coy  
 .. 5 To M.G. Officer  
 .. 6 To 2nd in Command.  
 .. 7 To C.O.  
 .. 8 To War Diary  
 .. 9 To Bombing Officer.

F.C.W. DRAFFEN

Lt.Col.

Comdg 13th Royal Sussex Regt.

26.6.16.

SECRET.

APPENDIX A.

Attached to Copy No. 8

Communications

1. The Battalion Advanced Report Centre is in a shelter off BOND STREET Communication trench.

There is telephonic communication with Advance Brigade Report Centre, with Centre Battalion Report Centre in VINE STREET, and with Left Battalion Advanced Report Centre in COPSE STREET.

2. A line has been laid from Right Battalion Report Centre to our present front line trench at S.10.c.3.14. This line will be continued along main ditch to point S.16.a.5.84 in enemy trench in part which will be occupied by rear platoon of B.Co. A line has been laid from Centre Battalion Report Centre to our present front line trench at S.10.c.5.3. The line will be continued along ditch to point S.16.c.7.0 in enemy trench in part to be occupied by rear platoon of D Co. Visual Signalling by means of discs and Electric signalling lamp will be also established between these new stations and an observation post at FACTORY.

3. 18 pigeons are available each day. They must always be sent in pairs and each message duplicated. This will only give 9 complete messages, therefore pigeons must not be used until everything else has failed.

4. Runners must be informed of nearest signal office (they will all be marked by Notice Boards) and instructed to call there before going on. It is most important that all ranks should be informed of these positions. All messages sent by runners must be duplicated and sent by different routes.

SECRET.

Attached to Copy No.8.

APPENDIX B

1. On the night of the 28th. inst the Battalion will take over the right sub Sector, as follows:-

from CADEBURYS to BOND STREET (inclusive)

The dividing line between the 13th and 12th Battalions will be BOND STREET (inclusive to 13th Batt) and a line drawn in prolongation of BOND STREET in a NORTH WEST direction.

The disposition of the Battalion will be as follows:-

In front immediate support line B & C Cos.

In reserve trench  
(PALL MALL, & part of RIGHT GUARDS) } D.Co.

In Billets behind Batt.Headquarters A.Co.

Battalion Headquarters BOND STREET  
(with use of house @ S.9.a.8.5)

2. A few hours preceding the Assault the Battalion will assemble in the positions described in para.2 of Battalion Operation Order No.23.

3- The positions vacated, i.e. CADEBURYS to COCKSPUR STREET in front line, PALL MALL and part of RIGHT GUARDS will be occupied by 2 Cos. of 14th HANTS.

3. As our assaulting columns leave our front line, their place will be taken by 1 Co. of 14th HANTS.