

A transcription of the

War Diaries of 20 Heavy Battery R.G.A.

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made by
Anne Vincent
and

Dedicated to the memory of

Michael John Rock

1879 to 1931

Gunner, 20 H.B. 7th May 1915 – 17th September 1918

Part 5 – October 1917 to December 1917

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20 H.B. War Diary Oct 1917 to Dec 1917

Place: Position "G"

Map References KILINDIR DOIRAN etc. 1/20000 KUKUS etc. 1/50000

Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Oct		
1		Capt. A.E. Hewitt to Wagon Lines from Battery 2 nd Lieut. C.W.F. Jones from Wagon Lines to Battery & takes over duties of R.O.
2		Commenced Aeroplane shoot on 806 as instructional shoot for Observer. Bad light Observer sent CI after one round.
3		Reconnoitred for Wagon Lines for the winter.
4		Aeroplane Shoot 20 Rounds on 806 for instruction of Observer. Very slow shoot Observer went home with Engine trouble after observing 11 Rounds. Director of Remounts inspected Horses. Neutralized 818.
8		Br. Dedear & Br. Wood won finals in Elementary rounds of XII Corps Boxing Tournament in welter and middleweight classes thus becoming Corps Troops Representatives in Tournament.
8		Neutralized 767.
9		Raid on O3. R.H. Group Operation Order No 1.
0930		Commenced neutralization fire on 860, 863, & 864 – 10 Rounds per gun, then alternative slow & rapid bursts until 1000 hours – Called up by Plane to engage target at 1218/187. Corrections B2 Z2 Z2 Captain Hewitt to Hospital. Reconnoitred 3 rd Line Position at 1357/1651.
10		Lieut. Smith rejoins from Convalescent Camp. G.O.C. R.A. XII Corps visited Wagon Lines.
14		Neutralized 808 by order of Group.

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Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Oct		
15		Neutralized 762 & 813 in the morning & in the afternoon 754 & 760 by order of Group.
17		I.O.M. commenced experiment with new pattern valve key. Had to be abandoned owing to slight breakage.
18	1430	Neutralized 756.
19		Calibrated all guns. I.O.M. completed experiment very satisfactory maximum recoil 51 inches.
	2000 to 2200	Enemy 4.2 Battery shelled on right of Battery Position probably searching road. 1 Round fell 3 yards from small dump of ammunition. No damage.
20		1 st Day of Artillery Demonstration Dated Guns.
	1100	5 minutes strafe [sic] on 860, 763, 751, 750 ½ Shrap ½ H.E. Enemy very active at time shelling all along the front.
	1600	Registered 927 & 928.
	2100 to 0500	Harassing fire on Road 30 RD Shrap per gun R8, R9, R17, R18.
21		Dated & checked correction.
	1200	5 minutes strafe as on 20/10/17.
	1540	Neutralized 762.
	2030 to 2035	Strafe on Roads in squares 120/187 122/185 1 Round per gun per minute.

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Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Oct		
21	2100 to	Harassing fire on Roads as on night 20 th /21 st . Weather very bad. Small detachments & very hard work for men.
22	0500	
22		Lieut. Shapland rejoined from leave in England.
		Weather very bad. Operations postponed at 0930.
		10 Rounds per gun on Targets 860, 763, 751 & 750.
	2030 to	Straafe on Roads in squares 120/187 122/185 1 Round per gun per minute.
	2035	
22	2100 to	Harassing fire on Roads as 21 st / 22 nd . 25 Rds per gun.
23	0500	
23	0850 to	Bombardment of 860, 763, 751, 750 6 Rds Shrap per gun.
	0905	Operations immediately afterwards postponed owing to bad weather.
	1720	Neutralized 756 & 757 10 RDS each by order of Group.
24		Semi final XII Corps Boxing Tournament.
		S/S. Warren won Heavy Weight A/Br. Dedear won welter weight A/Br. Wood was beaten in middleweight class
	1000	Neutralized 757.
26		Harness Competition Winners Wheel set 1 st Dr. Morgan 2 nd Dr. [Chester?] 3 rd Dr. Bateman. Head sets 1 st Dr. Clear 2 nd Dr. Green A. 3 rd Dr. Jackson A. Judge Major Morgan D.S.O.

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Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Oct		
26		Lieut. Shapland to Wagon Lines to Command. Lieut. Smith from Wagon Lines to Battery to command Left Section.
29		450 Rds of Ammunition to Battery to complete 3 Days Firing.
	1725	Neutralized 761. 765, 762.
		A/Br. Dedear & S/S. Warren beaten in Final of XIII Corps Boxing Tournament.
30	1610	Neutralized 811 by order of Group.

W. North-Coates

Major R.G.A.

Commanding 20 Heavy Battery, R.G.A.

20 H.B. War Diary Oct 1917 to Dec 1917

Place: G [renamed K3 on 8th] 12594/17788 Map references KILINDIR etc. 1/20000

Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Nov		
1		Aeroplane Registration arranged for Target 707 postponed owing to bad light.
2		Commencement of Operations on XII Corps Front. Right Heavy Artillery Group Operation Order No 86 Nov 2 = Z-2 day.
	1400	Datumed Guns.
	1436 to	Neutralized 707 & 751.
Z-2	1439	
Day	2030 to	Neutralized 707 & 751.
	2036	
	1500	Registered various lots of Cordite reserved for destruction Shoot with stock lot P445.
	1900 to	Harassed roads and communications with shrapnel 50 Rounds per gun.
3	0500	RX on Square 1185/1860 – 1195/1870 one gun confined to road running South from PALJORCA the other directed on various points in the area allotted.
		LX 1 gun on Road at 120/1853 – 120/1841 – 4 points. The other on area 1187/1845 – 1187/1844 – 119/1844 – 119/1847. 2 points fired on with R&L sweeps.
Z-1	0930	Datumed all guns.
Day	1000 to	Neutralized 707 & 751.
	1009	
	1505	Neutralized 750 10 Rounds.

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Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Nov		
3	1530	Registered 707 with Aeroplane observation B5, Z3, Z7, OK. Guns datumed immediately after shoot. Range and Line agreed exactly with latest map co-ordinates received.
	1645	Neutralized 751 10 Rounds.
	1900 to	Harassing fire on roads as on Z-2 day.
4	0500	
	2300/	Neutralized 707 & 757.
	2306	
3	2330	Enemy 4.2 How Battery fired 20 rounds in front of Battery Position nearest round 5 yards from Telephone Exchange.
4	1350	Neutralized 751 10 Rounds.
	1525	Neutralized 751 20 Rounds.
	Dusk	Datumed guns.
	1900 to	Harassing fire on Roads as on Z-2 & Z-1 days.
X Hours		
Z Day	2207	X Hours signalled by Rocket.
		Fire opened on 707 & 751. 5 minutes intense bombardment followed by section fire 30 sec until x + 20 minutes 707 not reported active but 751 was active throughout & continued until about 0100 on Nov 5 th . This Battery directed its fire on this Battery Position about 2030 fired 20 Rounds. Shells falling near Telephone Exchange, Command Post, Cook house & men's dugouts – no damage.

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Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Nov		
4	2230	703 reported active by 190 H.B. O.P. Neutralizing fire almost at once lessened his activity & his fire soon ceased.
5		Quiet.
6	1510	Neutralized 757 10 Rounds.
7	1110	Neutralized 762 10 Rounds.
	1200	Neutralized 762 10 Rounds.
8		Name of Battery Position G changed to K3
	1640	Neutralized 811 10 rounds.
10	1333	Neutralized 811 10 rounds.
12		Captain Hewitt rejoined Battery from Hospital.
	1422	Neutralized 762 10 rounds.
	1604	Neutralized 811 10 rounds.
14		Destruction shoot on 751 – 100 Rounds – carried out in conjunction with 190 H.B. & 130 S.B.
15	1452	Neutralized 811.
16		Weather bad.
17		Very cold with strong N wind. Fired a few rounds to give C.I.O.M. opportunity of testing new Valve key.
		Lieut. Shapland from Wagon Lines to Battery.
18		Lieut. J.G. Fielder to 37 th H.A.G. on probation.

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Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Nov		
18		Lieut . J. Dee Shapland ^[1] posted to 192 Heavy Battery.
19	1138	Neutralized 761.
20	1138	Neutralized 762, 1452 neutralized 811
21		Enemy showed considerable activity shelling Infantry in heavy blasts from 1400 to dusk.
	1407	Neutralized 761 & 762.
	1446	Neutralized 761 & 762.
	1549	Neutralized 761 & 762.
	1651	Neutralized 761 & 762.
		Slight attack of Ptomain poisoning at Wagon Lines about 100 men incapacitated for a few hours.
		Lieut. C.R. Barran attached from 185 H.B.
22		Enemy very active vigorous shelling of Infantry lines throughout the day.
	1235	Neutralized 762.
	1307	Neutralized 761.
	1445	5 Rounds (mixed grill) on Enemy O.P.s DOLINA, KOHINOR, & GR COURONNE.
	1741	Neutralized 761 & 762.
23		Enemy very active throughout the day.

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Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Nov		
23	0909	Under Group orders opened fire on 761 & 762 shelling HORSESHOE. Opened with rapid burst & continued with slow & rapid bursts of fire as enemy activity decreased or increased. Fire appeared to be effective. Enemy fire occasionally dying right away under our rapid bursts.
	1100	Enemy fire on HORSHOE very slight & neutralization ceased.
	0930	Enemy H.V. Gun probably 855 opened fire on ground in front of Left Section 2 shells very near guns – remainder 100 to 300 yards in front. He fired about 15 rounds mixed grill.
	1204 & 1219	Enemy again very active & neutralization fire again opened on 761 & 762.
		Rounds fired on these targets during the morning 108.
	1645	Called upon for neutralizing fire on 762.
	2300 about	Enemy battery 855 H.V. gun fired about 10 Rounds. shells falling in front of No1 & No 2 guns nearest about 40 yards.
24		Obtained good scoop bearing to 855 from Dud. 12° L of T.N.
		Datumed for Registration of 760, 761 & 762 Registration postponed owing to aeroplane wireless being out of order.
25		Registered 760, 761 & 762 by Aeroplane Observation.
26		D.D.V.D. inspected horses at Wagon Lines.
	1737	Neutralized 760.
		Simulated night attack by Heavy & Field Artillery in 22 Div. Area.
	2200	= X Hours

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Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Nov		
26	X + 28	Opened intense bombardment on allotted Targets continued for 12 minutes then at rate of 1 Round per minute until ammunition allotted expended. Total ammunition 50 H.E. 50 Shrap. Targets No 1 Gun Trenches at 12195/1849 (mixed grill). No II, III, & IV Distributed to cover 200 yds searched from 1220/18465 to 1215/1851 (mixed grill).
27	1618	Neutralized 762.
28		Datumed on Dolina & carried out Destruction Shoot on 754 240 Rounds. Aeroplane reported Direct hit on Ammunition Dump.
29		G.O.C. R.A. XIII Corps visited Battery.
30		G.O.C. Heavy Artillery of Corps visited Battery.

W. North-Coates

Major R.G.A.

Commanding 20 Heavy Battery, R.G.A.

20 H.B. War Diary Oct 1917 to Dec 1917

Place K3

Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Dec		
2		B.C. reconnoitred Retired Position at 12632/16511.
	2245	Enemy Batty 754 very active following operations by our Infantry W. of P. Ridge. Retaliated, ranging very difficult owing to strong wind. Rounds fired 42.
3		2/Lieut. G.S.P. Fleming of 196 Heavy Battery attached for duty.
4 to 6		Enemy inactive. Very cold with strong Vardar wind.
7		Datumed on DOLINA and registered Target 766 with Aeroplane Observation. Total corrections +575 yards, 25" Right.
8	1030	Neutralized Target 760. 10 Rounds.
9	1138	Neutralized Enemy new 4.2 Position at 1218/1862.
10	1205	Neutralized Target 761. 10 Rounds.
	1540	Neutralized Target 756. 10 Rounds.
	1625	Checked Range and Line on KOH-I-NOOR in preparation for night Operations ordered.
	2135	Neutralized Target 811. 10 Rounds.
		<u>Under R.C.B.G. Operations Order No 10.</u>
		Special Neutralization of 761 and 762 (Right Section) and 766 (Left Section) on Z/Z+1 night (Z Day previously notified 10/12/17) at following times and rates of fire.
	2230 to 2234	Quick Rate
	X-9 to X-6	Quick Rate Rapid Rate equals 2Rds per gun per min
	X-6 to X-4	Normal Rate Quick Rate equals 1 Rd per gun per min

20 H.B. War Diary Oct 1917 to Dec 1917

Place K3

Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Dec		
10	X-4 to X-1 Quick Rate	Normal Rate equals ½ Rd per gun per min
	X-1 to X+5 Rapid Rate	
	X+5 to X+15 Normal Rate	
		X Hours equals 0500 on 11/12/17
	X+15	until end of Operations Rate of fire regulated by amount of Enemy Activity. Total rounds fired 766 68 rounds “762” 47 rounds “761” 31 rounds. During this later period of Operations Target “751” fired few rounds between Battery and TROUPEL. retaliated with effect.
12	1958	Neutralized Target 811, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
15	1414	Neutralized Target 762, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
	1714	Neutralized Target 761, & 762 10 rounds each by order of the Group.
	2356	Neutralized Target 767, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
		About 200 rounds from Enemy Batteries reported by O.P.
16	1705	Neutralized Target 760, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
18		Enemy active throughout the day. Over 300 rounds from enemy batteries recorded by O.P.
		<u>R.C.B. Group, Operations Order No 11.</u>
		2 Road Straafs, 5 rounds each, rate of fire 1 rd. per point per minute. Targets allotted as follows.
	1930	Points R8, R9, R17, R18.
	2130	ditto

20 H.B. War Diary Oct 1917 to Dec 1917

Place K3

Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Dec		
19	1301	Neutralized Targets 761 & 762, 18 rounds by order of the Group.
	1350	Neutralized Targets 761 & 762, 22 rounds by order of the Group.
	1515	Checked corrector.
		250 rounds from enemy batteries recorded by O.P.
20		240 rounds from enemy batteries recorded by O.P. Battery ordered not to fire.
22	2332	Neutralized Targets 761, & 762, 10 rds each by order of the Group.
		180 rounds recorded by O.P.
27		Registered Targets 864 & 817 by visual observation from 420, also registered "The Hilt" and datumed on Grand Couronne.
	1418	Tested recoil of No 3 Gun fitted with new pattern valve key.
	1438	Neutralized Target 811, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
28	1544	Neutralized Target 762, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
29	1505	Neutralized Target 813, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
	1510	Neutralized Target 818, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
30	2259	Neutralized Target 762, 10 rounds by order of the Group.
31	2400	Fired 1 round per gun on Target "R8".

W. North-Coates
Major R.G.A.

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Place K3

Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Dec		Commanding 20 Heavy Battery, R.G.A.

Notes:

- [1] John Dee Shapland was mentioned in dispatches twice during his time in Salonika and was awarded the Military Cross in 1918. He commanded the 6th Infantry Brigade from 4th October 1943 until seriously wounded at the Battle of Kohima in May 1944. He was awarded the D.S.O. “in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in Burma”. Shapland was made a Commander of the Order of the Bath in 1948 and from 1948 – 1951 was Major General in charge of Administration in Germany for the British Army of the Rhine.