

Battalion Diary Extract

2ND BATTALION THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS

1916

July

THE FIRST DAY OF THE SOMME BATTLE

1st: A very fine day! The 4th Division had an objective to take at a distance of about 3600 yards away. The objective was the ridge running between GRAND COURT and PUISIEUX au-MONT. The 11th Brigade which went forward first had as its objective the last trench of the German Front System – named MUNICH-TRENCH. The 10th and 19th Brigade had to move forward at a given time after the 11th Bde had sufficient time to gain their objective, to pass through the 11th Bde, and gain the final objective along the ridge. The whole attack was arranged by time, working in hours from “zero”. The 29th (Gallipoli) Division attacked on our right, and the 31st (New Army) Division on our left. “Zero” was arranged for 7.30am. From 5.30am onwards there was a very intense bombardment concentrated on the German trenches in front. At 7.30am the 11th Brigade moved forward from our front line trenches in waves. By 3.45am, no message had come through from the 11th Bde, nor from Bde HQ. However it was time for us to move forward. So the patrols under Lt. Harrison left the assembly trenches and advanced. Almost at once heavy hostile machine gun fire commenced, fire coming chiefly from the direction of BEAUMONT HAMEL, and Lt. Harrison was badly wounded. (He died of wounds 5 days later at OULLENS). Our telephone wire to Brigade HQ being at that time out of order, two orderlies were sent there for orders. As they had not arrived back by 9.00am, the hour appointed for the Battalion to advance, the remainder of the Battalion moved forward. ‘A’ Coy in the centre, ‘C’ on the left, ‘B’ on the right moved in waves of platoons. ‘D’ Coy followed as company in reserve. The 12th Brigade advanced on our left, the 2nd Essex being next to us. The 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers did not move forward with us, and hung back awaiting further orders from the Brigade.