

1st Battalion
1st July

of his wounds later in the day.¹ Thus no less than 26 officers of the 1st Battalion had become casualties whilst, in other ranks, the losses were 438 killed, wounded and missing. In what a plight was the Battalion for, though they had died gloriously or had fallen wounded in gallant fighting, nothing could recompense the survivors for the loss of their heroic comrades.²

8th Battalion

The story now turns to the 8th Battalion, still holding their somewhat precarious position in the German lines north of Fricourt. The night of 1st/2nd July (as already stated) was an anxious time for the small party of 100 men and officers (representing the 8th Battalion). They had bloodily repulsed one attack coming from the direction of Fricourt, but when dawn broke on the 2nd July the enemy had made no further attempt to turn the Somerset men out of their hard-won position. About 8 a.m. Captain Campbell arrived with a party of reinforcements, carrying rations, having previously found Lieut. Ackerman and about 30 men in Brandy Trench and given them rations. At 11 a.m. the whereabouts of Major R. H. Huntingdon and his party of reinforcements (which included two subalterns) was located and they were guided to Lozenge Alley.

2nd July

Throughout the morning the Battalion awaited an expected counter-attack from Fricourt, but none came. Orders were also received to be prepared for an attack from "either direction," which apparently meant from east and north as well as from the south. "We arranged the trench accordingly," records the Diary, "and remained in the same position all day and throughout the night of the 2nd."

During the night three more subalterns arrived and the condition of the Battalion at this period may be gathered from the fact that all four Companies were commanded by Second-Lieutenants, i.e. A Coy. by 2/Lieut. F. G. Adlam, B Coy. by 2/Lieut. S. Baker, C Coy. by 2/Lieut. Kellett and D Coy. by 2/Lieut. G. A. Ham.

3rd July

During the morning of the 3rd July three officers went out on a reconnaissance with a view to occupying Crucifix Trench in support of an attack to be launched by other troops from that position on the line Shelter Wood-Bottom Wood. But apparently the attack did not take place as the Battalion Diary records that "The Battalion was not ordered to take up this position."

About 2 p.m. a message was received from 63rd Brigade to send a senior officer to Brigade Headquarters. Capt. Campbell was sent and was given instructions to reconnoitre Patch Alley and, if it was unoccupied, move the 8th Somersets up there, as aeroplanes had reported enemy columns marching in a S.W. direction towards Round Wood, and a counter-attack was expected. This move was completed by 5 p.m., and in this position the Battalion remained

¹"At about 9.45 a.m. the General decided to move his Headquarters into the German line, thinking that it had been cleared of all Germans. Just as he was getting out of our front-line trench near Bret Street he was shot in the back by a machine gun in the Ridge Redoubt and died in the afternoon."—The late Capt. G. A. Prideaux, 1st Somerset L.I.

²Capt. A. J. Harington received a bar to his M.C., 2/Lieut. B. J. Corballis the M.C., and R.S.M. E. Paul and C.S.M. P. E. E. Chappell the D.C.M. for their conspicuous gallantry on 1st July.