

**NEWFOUNDLAND REGIMENT
WAR DIARY**

**BATTLE OF CAMBRAI
CAMBRAI**

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1917

(EXCERPT)

PLACE
&
DATE

SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION

BERLES

5/11/17

Military Cross awarded to 1554 CSM. Taylor, A. for gallantry in battle of Oct. 9th. Divisional exercise.

14/11/17

Draft of 4 Officers and 141 O.R. arrived. Monchy-au-Bois for forthcoming operations.

17/11/17

Battalion less rear 10% moved from Berles at 11.30 a.m. and marched to Boisleux-au-Mont about 8 miles where we entrained at 4.45 p.m. and arrived at Peronne at midnight.

MOISLAINS

18/11/17

Marched from Peronne to camp at Moislains about 6 miles and remained there for the day. Left Moislains at 5 p.m. and marched to Sorrel-le-Grand about 4½ miles arriving there about 8 p.m.

SOREL

19/11/17

During the day war stores, rations & equipments were issued to the Regt. for the forthcoming battle.

20/11/17

Battalion left Sorel at 2.35 a.m., strength of 17 officers, 536 O.R., and marched up to the assembly area via Gouzeaucourt about 4½ miles. At 6.20 a.m. zero hour the Battalion moved forward in conjunction with the rest of the Brigade and halted for 2 hours in Farm Ravine owing to the block in the troops massed ahead and proceeded to the forming up trenches. The Battalion arrived in position in the forming up trenches at 8.45 a.m.: at 10.10 a.m. the signal to advance was given by bugle and the Battalion started forward in artillery formation- diamond shaped - D. Coy. under Capt. Rendell on left, A. Coy. under Capt. Stick in front; B. Coy. under Capt. Butler on the right; and C. Coy. under Capt. Paterson in the rear; H.Q. with B. Coy. There was very little shell fire up to this point. The task of the 29th. Division was the capture of the 3rd. objective (the Red Line) which lay beyond the St. Quentin Canal and the villages of Marcoing and Masnieres some 3½ miles in front, the two foremost objectives fall to the lot of another Division to capture. The final objective of our Battalion was the high ground beyond the village of Mesnieres as well as the bridge across the canal on the left edge of the village. Artillery formation was kept until we reached the Blue Line when Coys. opened out into attack formation as here we began to come under the enemy's sniping and machine gun fire and to have our first casualties. The advance of our army was preceded by tanks whose purpose was to trample down the wire and deal with any machine guns that opposed. Our advance was continued to the canal and the bridge captured after severe opposition and ground gained on the further side. That night we dug in as a defensive flank of the 87th Bde. as the village of Mesnieres was not yet captured.

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SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION

TRENCHES

21/11/17

Battalion moved a short distance to some buildings. A patrol down the Canal Bank took 24 prisoners. Orders were then received to move to the Sugerie on the east side of Mesnieres in reserve for an attack, but the enemy counterattacked and we had to line a sunken road in support. After dark moved to a central position in Mesnieres as counter attack Bn. Total casualties for the 2 days, 10 officers 238 O.R.

22/11/17

Remained under cover in Mesnieres. At night relieved by 16 Middlesex and marched to cellars in Marcoing.

23/11 - 24/11/17

Rested but shelling of village continued.

25/11/17

At dark relieved the Border Regt. in the left sector across the Canal.

26/11 - 27/11/17

In trenches - fairly quiet.

28/11/17

Border Regt. relieved us at night - moved back to cellars in Marcoing.

29/11/17

Rested. Reinforcements from 10% of 2 officers and 75 O.R. arrived.

30/11/17

At 7 a.m. heavy shelling with H.E. & Gas of Marcoing village commenced.

At 10 a.m. received orders to move out near Marcoing Copse as support of 86th. Bde. flank.. Moved off by 11 a.m. Coys. ordered to rendezvous at west end of Marcoing Copse. On getting there enemy found to be in neighbourhood so everyone joined in the attack and drove the enemy back. By evening the remnants of the Bn. were lining the sunken road running from Marcoing to Rue-Vertes towards its eastern end. Orders were then received to take up position near there between S.W.B's. and the Essex Regt. and dig in. At night our strength was about 8 officers and 200 O.R.

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SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION

MESNIERES
1/12/17

Positions were reinforced and strong points dug at night and next day. Snipers and machine guns active. One officer casualty, 2/Lt. Herder, who died of wounds same evening.

3/12/17

About 7 a.m. enemy started heavy bombardment of Les Rues Vertes and all along the canal bank especially in the vicinity of Marcoing Copse and the sector held by the 87th. Bde. across the canal Mesnieres. The bombardment increased in intensity about 10 a.m. when the enemy began his attack on our lines. He advanced from the direction of Les Rues Vertes and south of it and bombarded our left flank very heavily with trench mortars so that we were forced to evacuate our strong points on the left owing to casualties and the condition of the trenches and fall back towards the communication trench leading from Battn. Hqrs. to the central sector of our line. His machine guns and snipers were very active along the Les Rues Vertes road leading past Battn. Hqrs., but his advance was held up on the sunk road about 100 yards on our left. Communication with the front Coys. was very difficult owing to the sniping as all messages had to be sent by runner. Our casualties during the day, amounted to 1 officer (died of wounds) and about 70 O. ranks killed, wounded & missing. About 7 p.m. reinforcements of 2 officers & 50 other ranks from the 10% reported to Bn. Hqrs. The Bn. was relieved about 9 p.m. by the 2nd. Hants and occupied a trench temporarily near Bde. Hqrs. About midnight the Bn. moved into dugouts along a sunk road about 700 yards to the rear where it remained the next day.

4/12/17

About 5 p.m. the Coys. were sent out as covering parties to the other Bns. of the Brigade who were to dig a line of outposts in rear of the line as at present held, but the Coys. were withdrawn shortly after. 15 O.R. casualties occurred in B. Coy. lined up in the sunken road where occasional shelling was taking place. At about 1 a.m. the battalion was relieved by the 2/11 R.I.R., and moved to the transport lines near Ribecourt where hot tea and food were issued.

5/12/17

At 5.30 a.m. battalion marched to Etricourt about 7 miles and remained there for the day and entrained at 6.30 p.m. with the Brigade to proceed to Mondicourt. About 15 miles along the line the railway was shelled and the engine hit and forced off the track. The Bde. moved into another train and proceeded to Mondicourt, arriving there about 9 a.m. the following morning and detrained.

6/12/17

Battalion marched to billets in Humbercourt about 3 miles.

11/12/17
12/12/17

Draft of 55 O.R. arrived.
Draft of 14 O.R. arrived.

Loss of 100
70m 108
1000

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SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION

MESNIERES
(Cont'd)
18/12/17

Lens. C.3

Battalion left Hunbercourt at 8.30 a.m. and marched to Boubers-sur-Canche about 12 miles and remained there for one night.

19/12/17

Lens B.2

Continued to march at 8.30 to LeParcq about 12 miles and spent the night there. There was great difficulty in clearing the village of Hunbercourt, owing to the deep snow and drifts.

20/12/17

AI

Marched off at 9 a.m. and arrived at Fressin about 7 miles, where the Battalion was billeted. Draft of 8 officers arrived.

21/12/17

Major J.R. Meiklejohn D.S.O., Border Regt., took over command of the Battalion vice Lieut. Col. A. L. Hadow C.M.G., transferred to England.

FRESSIN
25/12/17

Xmas Day. Special dinners were given to the men and a Battalion mess dinner held at night.

28/12/17

Major A.E. Bernard M.C. took over command of the Regt. - vice Lieut. Col J. R. Meiklejohn transferred to England.

(Sgd.) A. E. Bernard , Major.

Comdg. 1st. Newfoundland Regiment.

Military Medal: -

430	Sergt.	E. Butcher
643	"	E. Aitken
796	Corp.	H. Butler
793	"	L. Fitzpatrick
129	L/"	E. Nicol
2098	"	J. Dunn
168	Pte.	J. Abbott
461	"	A. Hennebury
526	"	H. Bowden
738	"	J. Davis
1989	"	A. Adams
2427	"	A. Bulgin
2558	"	L. Paddick
2987	"	W. Moore
2040	Corp.	H. Tansley
230	Pte.	P. McDonald
2511	"	E. Goudie
2626	"	F. Rees
2536	"	W. Jewer
1604	L/Corp.	C. Pafford.