

Bethune-La Bassée Canal were detailed to carry out some minor operations.

Portions of the 1st Corps assaulted the enemy's trenches at Givenchy. The Indian Corps attacked the Moulin du Piétre; while the 3rd Corps was directed against the trenches at Le Bridoux.

These attacks started at daybreak and were at first successful all along the line. Later in the day the enemy brought up strong reserves, and after hard fighting and variable fortunes the troops engaged in this part of the line re-occupied their original trenches at nightfall. They succeeded admirably, however, in fulfilling the rôle allotted to them, and in holding large numbers of the enemy away from the main attack.

The 8th Division of the 3rd Corps and the Meerut Division of the Indian Corps were principally engaged in this part of the line.

On the front of the Third Army subsidiary operations of a similar nature were successfully carried out.

The Wing of the Royal Flying Corps attached to this Army performed valuable work by undertaking distant flights behind the enemy's lines and by successfully blowing up railways, wrecking trains and damaging stations on his line of communication by means of bomb attacks.

Valuable assistance was rendered by Vice-Admiral Bacon and a squadron of His Majesty's ships operating off Zeebrugge and Ostend.

8. The general plan of the main attack on the 25th September was as follows:—

In co-operation with an offensive movement by the 10th French Army on our right, the 1st and 4th Corps were to attack the enemy from a point opposite the little mining village of Grenay on the south to the La Bassée Canal on the north. The Vermelles-Hulluch Road was to be the dividing line between the two Corps, the 4th Corps delivering the right attack, the 1st Corps the left.

In view of the great length of line along which the British troops were operating it was necessary to keep a strong reserve in my own hand. The 11th Corps, consisting of the Guards, the 21st and the 24th Divisions, were detailed for this purpose.

This reserve was the more necessary owing to the fact that the 10th French Army had to postpone its attack until one o'clock in the day; and, further, that the Corps operating on the French left had to be directed in a more or less south-easterly direction, involving, in case of our success, a considerable gap in our line.

To ensure, however, the speedy and effective support to the 1st and 4th Corps in the case of their success, the 21st and 24th Divisions passed the night of the 24th/25th on the line Beuvry (to the east of Bethune)-Noeux les Mines. The Guards Division was in the neighbourhood of Lillers on the same night.

I also directed the General Officer Commanding Second Army to draw the 28th Division back to Bailleul and to hold it in readiness to meet unexpected eventualities.

The British Cavalry Corps, less 3rd Cavalry Division, under General Fanshawe, was posted in the neighbourhood of St. Pol and Bailleul les Pernes; and the Indian Cavalry Corps, under General Rimington, at Doullens; both in readiness to co-operate with the French Cavalry in exploiting any success which might

be attained by the combined French and British Forces. Plans for effective co-operation were fully arranged between the Cavalry Commanders of both Armies.

The 3rd Cavalry Division, less one brigade, was assigned to the General Officer Commanding First Army as a reserve, and moved into the area of the 4th Corps on the 21st and 22nd September.

9. Opposite the front of the main line of attack the distance between the enemy's trenches and our own varied from about 100 to 500 yards.

The country over which the advance took place is open and overgrown with long grass and self-sown crops.

From the canal southward our trenches and those of the enemy ran, roughly, parallel up an almost imperceptible rise to the south-west.

From the Vermelles-Hulluch Road southward the advantage of height is on the enemy's side as far as the Bethune-Lens Road. There the two lines of trenches cross a spur in which the rise culminates, and thence the command lies on the side of the British trenches.

Due east of the intersection of spur and trenches, and a short mile away, stands Loos. Less than a mile further south-east is Hill 70, which is the summit of the gentle rise in the ground.

Other notable tactical points in our front were:—

"*Fosse 8*" (a thousand yards south of Auchy), which is a coal mine with a high and strongly defended slag heap.

"*The Hohenzollern Redoubt*."—A strong work thrust out nearly five hundred yards in front of the German lines and close to our own. It is connected with their front line by three communication trenches abutting into the defences of *Fosse 8*.

*Cité St. Elie*.—A strongly defended mining village lying fifteen hundred yards south of Haisnes.

"*The Quarries*."—Lying half way to the German trenches west of *Cité St. Elie*.

*Hulluch*.—A village strung out along a small stream, lying less than half a mile south-east of *Cité St. Elie* and 3,000 yards north-east of Loos.

Half a mile north of Hill 70 is "*Puits 14 bis*," another coal mine, possessing great possibilities for defence when taken in conjunction with a strong redoubt situated on the north-east side of Hill 70.

10. The attacks of the 1st and 4th Corps were delivered at 6.30 a.m. and were successful all along the line, except just south of the La Bassée Canal.

The enemy met the advance by wild infantry fire of slight intensity, but his artillery fire was accurate and caused considerable casualties.

The 47th Division on the right of the 4th Corps rapidly swung its left forward and occupied the southern outskirts of Loos and a big double slag heap opposite Grenay, known as the Double Crassier. Thence it pushed on, and, by taking possession of the cemetery, the enclosures and chalk pits south of Loos, succeeded in forming a strong defensive flank.

This London Territorial Division acquitted itself most creditably. It was skilfully led and the troops carried out their task with great energy and determination. They contributed largely to our success in this part of the field.