

War Diary 7th Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment
Private Albert Amos Hill 25th January 1917

The war diary for the days leading up to the 25th January reports the preparation work prior to an assault on the Turkish trenches and, unusually, the process of collecting bodies and pay books after the battle. The assault itself, on the 25th, was a bloody affair and is described vividly. The operation took place in what is now Iraq, at the Mai canal, 300 km North West of Basra. The diaries are transcribed below with the images of the actual manuscripts below that.

Day 14th January

Deepening of new lines and communication trenches in hand. One man wounded by sniper.

Day 14th January

The Brigade Bombers under cover of artillery and machine gun fire ousted the Turks from the communication trenches [*which they had occupied the day before*] and "B's" piquet [*outpost*] got up into line with the rest. Two men wounded.

Day 15th

1. Colonel Lay wounded through neck and shoulder at 6.30 a.m. The Worcesters in the morning took over half our line, including two Lunettes [*a fortification with two faces forming a projecting angle, and two flanks*] and one redoubt [*secure place of retreat*]. "B" and "C" Coys were relieved in the front line by "A" and "D" Coys. 2p.m. Lieut-Col Fleming (Somerset LI) assumed command of the Battalion. Two men sick.
- 2.

Night 15th

Assisted by Brigade working parties we made good our advanced line.

Day 16th

Work done on forward and communications trenches. Turkish Artillery shelled our forward positions. There were no casualties. Two men sick.

Night 16th/17th

Assisted by Brigade working parties, heads of further communications trenches were linked up.

Day 17th

Turkish Artillery shelled us for a short time this morning. No casualties. We are now within 500 yards of the enemy position, ready for an advance. Dumps of ammunition, bombs, store etc. are being prepared in rear of our line for this purpose.

18th – 20th

Improvement and work in trenches. Casualties for these three days: other ranks, 3 wounded.

21st – 23rd

New Fire trenches built and preparations being made for the assault. Casualties: Other Ranks; 3 killed + 3 wounded.

24th

Battalion resting. Received serge clothing. Casualty, one wounded.

January 25th 1917

The Battalion took part in an assault on the first Turkish lines on west bank of the HAI [*an ancient canal connecting the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris in modern day Iraq, 300 km NW of Basra*]. The assault was delivered at 9.45 a.m. (after intense artillery bombardment and behind their barrage) in four waves by A,B and C Coys in columns of platoons at 50 yards distance, but no interval between companies.

Order of companies from E to W was C, B, and A. D Coy was retained in reserve finding the platoons to dig communications trenches if the assault were successful. Lewis Gunners and Bombers [*mortars?*] were sent behind the first wave in order to assist in consolidating. The assault was partially successful; the right Coy having but little difficulty, while the left was held up by machine gun fire and was compelled to close in on the right. At 11.00 a.m. the enemy counter attacked using bombers freely, and although "A" was practically isolated and partly driven back; and although the battalion of the right flank of the North Staffs regt gave way, "B" and "C" Coys held their ground for some considerable time, until the Royal Warwickshires came up in support and the line was regained. From that time until 4p.m. with only one officer, 2nd Lieut M^cDowell, left, A, B and C Coys held what ground they could until overwhelmed by enemy bombers; they finally evacuated the line and fell back to the position from which the assault had been delivered. Casualties estimated at: killed two officers, 2nd Lt Samuel and 2nd Lt Bradley; died of wounds 1 officer; 2nd Lt Hird, wounded officers, Lt Col Fleming, A/Capt Nicolls, 2nd Lt Fenton, 2nd Lt M^cDowell, Missing one officer 2nd Lt Thompson.

Casualties were:

Officers	Killed	2
	Missing	1
	Died of Wounds	1
	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>4</u>
	Total	8

Other Ranks at first believed to be:

	Killed	30
	Wounded	128
	<u>Missing</u>	<u>106</u>
	Total	264

After many bodies had been recovered, however, and the field ambulances had been visited, the following alterations were made to the Other Ranks casualty lists:

Killed	29	Later:	
Wounded	163	K.	55
Missing	72	W	163
<hr/>		M	46
Total	264		264

After 4p.m the Battalion continued defending our front line until relieved by the 36th Bgde 14th Division about midnight.

26th

By 5a.m. the Battalion was all in reserve. Day spent reorganising, verifying casualties etc.

27th

Day spent reorganising. The Battalion remained ready to move up again at any time in support

28th

The Battalion spent the day washing etc. The R. Warwicks took over the job of being ready to move up in support. Several fatigue parties sent up to the (now) recaptured Turkish trenches for salvage. Many dead bodies found, pay books collected etc. etc.

29th – 31st

Salvage work continued. On morning of 29th the burial service was read over the dead of the Brigade in Turkish (captured) front line.

[Scroll down for images of war diary.](#)

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual, respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

(Erase heading not required.)

Hour, Date, Place.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices.
<p><u>January</u> <u>1917.</u></p>	<p>Night. 13/14. (except) "B" picquet, which only advanced 50 yards, owing to the Turks coming down a communication trench from their position and holding us up. Three men wounded and two sick.</p> <p>(continued)</p>	
<p>Day. 14.</p>	<p>Deepening of new lines and communication trenches in hand. One man killed by a sniper.</p>	
<p>Night. 14/15.</p>	<p>The Brigade Bombers under cover of Artillery and Machine gun fire ousted the Turks from the communication trench, and "B"'s picquet got up into line with the rest. Two men wounded.</p>	
<p>Day. 15.</p>	<p>Colonel key wounded through neck and shoulder at 6.30 a.m. The Worcesters in the morning took over half our line, including two lunettes and one Redoubt. "B" and "C" Coys. were relieved in the front line by "A" and "D" Coys. 2 p.m. Lieut-Col. Fleming (Somerset L.I.) assumed command of the Battalion. Two men sick.</p>	
<p>Night. 15/16.</p>	<p>Assisted by Brigade working parties we made good our advanced line.</p>	
<p>Day. 16.</p>	<p>Work done on forward and communication trenches. Turkish artillery</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">(A) Capt.</p>

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(Brass heading not required.)

Hour, Date, Place.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices.
<p>January. Day. 16. 1917. (continued)</p> <p>Night. 16/17.</p> <p>Day. 17.</p>	<p>shelled our forward positions. There were no casualties. Two men sick.</p> <p>Assisted by Brigade working parties heads of further communicating trenches were linked up.</p> <p>Turkish Artillery shelled us for a short time this morning. No casualties. We are now within 500 yds. of the enemy position, ready for an advance. Dumps of ammunition, bombs, stores etc. are being prepared in rear of our line for this purpose.</p>	
<p>18.</p> <p>19.</p> <p>20.</p> <p>21.</p> <p>22.</p> <p>23.</p>	<p>Improvement and work in trenches;</p> <p>Casualties for these three days; Other Ranks, 3 Wounded.</p> <p>New fire trenches built, and preparations being made for the assault. Casualties; Other Ranks; 3 Killed + 3 Wounded.</p>	
<p>24.</p>	<p>Battalion resting. Received serge clothing. Casualty, one wounded.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">B. List</p>

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Hour, Date, Place.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices.
<p>January. <u>2-5.</u> <u>1917.</u></p>	<p>The Battalion took part in an assault on the first Turkish line on West Bank of the H.A.I. The assault was delivered at 9.45 a.m. (after an intense artillery bombardment and behind their barrage) in four waves by A, B, & C. Coys. in column of platoons at 50 yds. distance, but no interval between companies. Order of companies from E. to W. was C, B, and A. D Coy. was retained in reserve finding the platoons to dig communication trenches if the assault were successful Lewis Gunner & Bombers were sent behind the first wave in order to assist in consolidating. The assault was partially successful; the right coy. having but little difficulty, while the left was held up by machine gun fire and compelled to close in on the right. At 11 a.m. the enemy counterattacked using bombers freely, and although "A" Coy. was practically isolated and partly driven back; and although the battalion of the right flank of the North Staffs. Regt. gave way, "B" & "C" Coys. held their ground for some considerable time, until the Royal Warwickshire came up in support and the line was regained. From that time until 11 p.m. with only one officer, 2nd Lieut. H^d Dowell left, A, B, & C. Coys. held what ground they could until overwhelmed by enemy bombers; they finally evacuated the line and fell back to the position from which the assault had been delivered. Casualties estimated at: Killed. Two Officers; 2nd Lt. Samuel & 2nd Lt. Bradley; Died of Wounds One Officer; 2nd Lt. Hind. Wounded Officers; Lt.-Col. Fleming, Adj. H. Nicolle, 7/12 Fenton, 7/12 H^d Dowell. Missing one officer, 2/12 Thompson.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">(5) 1/17</p>

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Hour, Date, Place.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendix																										
<p>January 25th. 1917. (Cont.)</p>	<p>Casualties were:- <u>Officers:</u></p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>Killed . . .</td><td>2.</td></tr> <tr><td>Missing . . .</td><td>1.</td></tr> <tr><td>Died of Wks. . .</td><td>1.</td></tr> <tr><td>Wounded . . .</td><td>4.</td></tr> <tr><td><u>Total . . .</u></td><td><u>8.</u></td></tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Other Ranks:- at first believed to be,</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>Killed :-</td><td>30.</td></tr> <tr><td>Wounded :-</td><td>128.</td></tr> <tr><td>Missing :-</td><td>106.</td></tr> <tr><td><u>Total . . .</u></td><td><u>264.</u></td></tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">After many bodies had been recovered, however, and the Field Ambulances had been visited, the following alterations were made in the other Ranks?</p> <p>Casualty lists:</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">KILLED. 29</td> <td style="width: 50%;"><u>Later.</u> K. 55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wounded. 162</td> <td>W. 163</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Missing. 70</td> <td>M. 46</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>TOTAL. 264</u></td> <td><u>264.</u></td> </tr> </table>	Killed . . .	2.	Missing . . .	1.	Died of Wks. . .	1.	Wounded . . .	4.	<u>Total . . .</u>	<u>8.</u>	Killed :-	30.	Wounded :-	128.	Missing :-	106.	<u>Total . . .</u>	<u>264.</u>	KILLED. 29	<u>Later.</u> K. 55	Wounded. 162	W. 163	Missing. 70	M. 46	<u>TOTAL. 264</u>	<u>264.</u>	<p>(S) Capt</p>
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Hour, Date, Place.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices.
<p>January 25. <u>(cont.)</u></p>	<p>After 4 p.m. the Battalion continued defending our front line, until relieved by the 36th Bde. 44th Division about midnight.</p>	
<p>26.</p>	<p>By 5 a.m. the Battalion was all in Reserve. Day spent reorganising, verifying casualties etc.</p>	
<p>27.</p>	<p>Day spent reorganising. The Battalion remained ready to move up again at any time in support.</p>	
<p>28.</p>	<p>The Battalion spent day washing etc. The R. Warwick's took over the job of being ready to move up in support. Several fatigue parties sent up to the (now) recaptured Turkish trenches for salvage. Many dead bodies found, pay books collected etc. etc.</p>	
<p>29.</p>	<p>Salvage work continued. On morning of 29th the</p>	<p>Mr. Battelle Lt Col Coy. 1st Bde R</p>
<p>30.</p>		
<p>31.</p>		
	<p>Burial service was read over the dead of the Brigade in Turkish (captured) front line.</p>	<p>X</p>