

The attack of the 88th Brigade PG/1381 (21)

1 of 4

Ref Map 6. (Revised).

On Friday Aug 6 the 88th Bde were ordered to take the following trenches. H 13 - H 13 b - H 13 a - H 12 b - H 12 a - H 12

One Brigade of the 42 Div were ordered to attack H 11 b at the same time.

The trenches were subjected to a heavy artillery bombardment commencing at 2.30 & increasing in intensity at 3.30 & to 3.40 when ranges were lightened & the infantry assault was launched. The Worcesters on the right had been allotted to look of capturing H 13 up to the Redoubt; the Kents were on their left & had as an objective H 13 a & H 13 to a point where they joined hands with the Essex who were to attack H 12 & H 12 a. All watches had been previously set & punctually at 3.40 one saw a mass of men spring from the trenches & dash forward in one long dense line. The smoke & dust caused by the guns was very dense & ~~men~~ could only see a mass of bright specks moving about which were the heads of the carried on the men's backs. Every now & again the smoke & dust seemed to clear for a moment ~~men~~ could see the men dashing forward. Just as ~~men~~ were beginning to get the hang of things there would be another burst of shell fire & everything was lost to view.

We ~~then~~ could see the Worcesters get up to H 13 & up to the

Redoubt but the dust was so thick that it was impossible

to make out if they got into it or were held up.
At one moment we saw the whole line advancing & the
next moment the dust cleared - there wasn't a soul to
be seen except a few dead & wounded men who were
lying out between the trenches.

We then looked expectantly to see the tin discs thrown over
the back of the parapets to indicate that our men were in there -
but one expected to see yellow flags displayed on the
captured trenches, these were to indicate that the trenches had
been consolidated.

We waited patiently for an hour - feeling bored up at the first
success which had been gained & wondering why there were no
tins or flags displayed. At the end of two hours we were
a bit uneasy & wondered what had happened.

All the telephone wires had been cut by the Turkish
shells at the commencement of the operation & so
communication except by orderlies was quite impossible.
When eventually a message did come through it was very
vague & extremely disappointing.

The Worcester's had got into H 12 but apparently
had Turks on their right & left. The 5th Manchester of the
42 Div had taken H 11 but had been bombed out again
thus leaving the Worcester's flank in the air. Little was
known of the H 10's but some of them were believed
to be in H 13 & H 13a, they had suffered heavily
going forward & it was impossible to ascertain when their
flanks were. The Essex had had a similar fate.
Having gallantly taken H 12 a & the trench parallel
to it & south of H 12 they were subjected to such
heavy enfilade fire from both rifles & machine guns

2

that it was quite impossible for the to consolidate the captured ground. After suffering extremely heavy casualties they had to withdraw & only held a small portion of the enemy's trench east of our southern barricade.

An attack by the 86 Bde was ordered to take place at 10.30 but owing to the uncertainty as to the exact positions of the Turks & Wounded the attack was put off & two officers patrols were sent out to find out if we held any portions of the Turkish trenches or not. The patrols were fired on all along the line and the only gain we had made was a small portion of H 12a. The Essex Regt ~~was~~ were bombed out of the during the night some Turks actually coming into our trenches through the southern barricade, they were all either killed or taken prisoners. Our total casualties were 1851 killed & wounded & 54 officers.

In spite of the fact that this extremely gallant attack gained us no ground owing to our troops being out in the trenches by superior Turkish forces - most of them perished while bravely fighting for their country; it did what was required - held the Turks to their trenches preventing them sending reinforcements to Arras.

when a landing was being made that same evening.
It did not then actually hold the Turks in their
trenches for that night a large reinforcement was sent
down, having the desired effect of weakening the
forces opposed to our landing operations.

On the following morning the remnants of the 8th
Bde were relieved & brought down to Gully Beach to
rest & reorganise.

This attack was a wonderful display of dash
& bravery & goes further to show what the British
soldier is willing to do in the face of superior
numbers.