

The country passed through after leaving the Hindenburg Line was not very badly shell-holed & some of the villages were very little damaged. The BEC QUIGNY wagonlines were very close to the firing line & well within the range of the German 4.2 guns & these treated the countryside to a generous sprinkling at odd hours of the day & night. The batteries went into action a few kilometres further on.

Everywhere were signs of the enemy's hasty retreat. All the bridges had been mined, some were total wrecks, but others were intact & the mines still in position though disconnected. The railway lines were blown up leaving great chasms & tangled masses of twisted rails & splintered sleepers. In some of the railway yards were stored large quantities of coal & these had been prepared for destruction by fire, but time & the advancing troops had been a bit too pressing, so we derived the benefit of the coal. We also had to thank Fritz for a good supply of fresh vegetables. Cabbage patches, acres in extent some of them, were to be found distributed about the country. These had no doubt been planted by French civilian labor under Hun rule. The horses lived well too, for many of the huge barns were stacked to the roof with the Hun's winter fodder supply.

On the morning of the 17th an attack was made, but a heavy fog hampered the Infantry & prevented observation & the result of the operation was not wholly satisfactory. The following morning a barrage was put down & the Yanks "hopped the bags" & gained their objectives, but were forced to relinquish their hold. A second attempt was made assisted by another Artillery barrage, but still the result was not achieved.

As the guns gradually moved forward, so followed up the wagon lines, first to LA HAIE MEMERESSE & then to ST. SOUPLET. On the 20th the Americans were relieved by British Troops. In the last few attacks there had been much killing & the dead were strewn everywhere & the roadsides were lined with the carcasses of horses and mules. Rain fell continuously & the ground soon became very boggy. "Dug-out life" was certainly "no bon" & there was a rapid evacuation of sick men. On the 21st at 3.30a.m. Fritz began a heavy area shoot & a counter-attack was expected. However the Hun satisfied his spite with the bombardment as no Infantry attack followed.

Next night it was full-moon & at 1 a.m. our Artillery opened fire. Protected by the barrage the Infantry attacked & this time it was very successful. Perhaps the enemy was caught napping-the usual hour for attack being day-light. The Artillery bombardment lasted several hours. This time the guns of the Brigade remained stationary & on the eve of the 23rd withdrew to the wagon lines at St. Souplet.

On the morning of the 25th we retraced our steps as far as Montbrehain. The town of ST. SOUPLET was shelled by a long-range gun as the last of the column passed through.

The majority of the "civies" had evacuated Montbrehain & although two-thirds of the village was wrecked, still there were many houses which could be converted into good billets & the troops had the luxury of stoves, beds & furniture. After a few days of easy living we began to think that perhaps there was a chance of getting that long promised rest, but no such luck. On the last day of the month orders came through for the Brigade to go back to the line.

November 1st saw us making our way to a village called LA VALLEE MULATRE, & from this place the Batteries went into action. The weather again "turned dog on us", cold winds & driving rain prevailing.

At daybreak on the 4th Nov. the stunt which we were sent back to the line to take part in, opened. This attack extended 50 miles along the line & to an approximate depth of three miles. All went well & the total bag was 13000 Huns and 250 Guns. Fritz's heavies pounded the area occupied by the Brigade, which made it necessary for everyone to keep a low back. After the Barrage the hostile shelling ceased & the enemy was soon driven out of the range of the Field guns. Then it didn't take long for the "souvenir Kings" to get busy over the territory just evacuated by the Huns.

Evidently the Bosche had the "wind well up", for gear & sets of equipment lay everywhere, shewing that he preferred flight to fight. The Brigade pulled out the following morning & on the 6th returned to MONTBREHAIN via BOHAIN.

Five days later the Armistice was declared, & the "guerre fini" as far as we were concerned.

The news of the cessation of hostilities did not create any undue excitement throughout the Brigade.

For several days previous to the Armistice, the air was full of "furphies", and it was not until our Official announcement was made on parade that the troops accepted the fact as "dinkum".