

The brigade put up for the first night at Morbecque, and a considerable amount of material was "dumped" here to make travelling easier and quicker. The canteens suffered heavily. Most of the cargo had to be "thrown overboard"

The brigade's destination was not known, though "Public Opinion" favoured "The Somme" and a forced march. This on the strength of the scanty kit allowed to be carried. At the end of the second day, the brigade arrived at Witternesse. The brigade's arrival caused some excitement to the villagers, as being Sunday evening, they were all promenading in their gayest finery. The horse lines were fixed up in streets, adjacent to a stream flowing through the village.

The following morning the battery canteens were closed and the goods distributed in lieu of a final dividend. It was at this place that the "Yandoo" management were compelled to dump the "Yandoo Printing Plant" owing to the restriction on transport, but were exceedingly fortunate to be able, some months later, to return for it through the kindly efforts of General Grimwade. That night, Valhoun was reached after a march of 25 kilometres. The following morning, the 26th. March, the Reveille sounded at 4 a.m. and the brigade was again on its way. In St. Pol, one of the towns passed through, enemy work was clearly visible. Bombs had completely wrecked several houses. That day also, the first signs were visible of the movement of troops and the preparations for emergencies. Barricades were built across the roads at Fervent which was twenty five miles from the nearest point of the front line, consequent on the big offensive on a front of fifty miles which the enemy had launched five days previously. Doullens, a particularly active centre, was passed through, and at night while on the Arras road, the enemy dropped a few bombs in the neighbourhood, but without casualty to the brigade.

The brigade pulled up shortly before 11 p.m. at Coulemont, the stopping place for the night. Special precautions were now taken for guarding the guns, and the vigilant guard that night arrested four "Tommys" who however, were allowed to proceed on their way the following morning upon proving their identity. Rumors filled the air, Offensives! Victories! Spies! All were jumbled up. One knew but little, save that the brigade was being hurried to the seat of the trouble, for better or for worse.

Forty five kilometres were accomplished on the 26th., a very long march indeed, and it was midnight before the horses were "lined" watered and fed.

Early the next morning, the column was again away and retracing the road through Humbercourt as far as Mondicourt, the Arras road was crossed. Here the exodus was appallingly apparent. Guns and wagons of all descriptions and remnants of batteries were making "back" while over everything lingered a mist of dust whirled up from the white dusty road.

After covering 41 kilometres, the brigade pulled up for a spell at Behencourt, but the gun teams and firing battery wagons had to go on another 6 kilos to take up positions in the line.

The forced march was heavy work and a trying experience for men and horses. Out of the 100 hours from the start at Sec Bois to arriving at Behencourt, occupied on the journey, the time actually spent on the road was thirty eight hours, and in that time 136 kilometres or 85 miles were covered. The average speed worked out at 3.5 kilometres per hour, a very creditable performance, and indicated the gravity of the situation and the urgency of the occasion. On the night of the 27th, the batteries took up positions between Franvillers and Heilly, Brigade Headquarters being in Franvillers in close touch with G.O.C. Battery commanders addressed the men and advised them of the seriousness of the situation, and that open warfare conditions would prevail. Stress was laid on the point of the absolute necessity of holding the line at all costs, and stopping any further advance for a period of 48 hours from midnight, after the lapse of which time, it was considered that the imminent danger of a break through involving the loss of Amiens, and dire disaster would be averted.

On the previous day, the 26th. March, General Foch assumed supreme control of the Allied Forces.