

The 30th. saw us once more on the "Walleby" this time we passed through Hem and came in action about midway between Hem and Clery. The impromptu bridges, the railway line and the traffic on the road, drew a very intense fire from the enemy who was no doubt, getting excellent observation from Mont St. Quentin. Whilst shooting in the barrage for the attack on Clery, the 27th. battery were unfortunate in having twenty four men gassed, the 25th. battery also lost heavily by receiving a direct hit on one of their guns by a hostile shell, resulting in the death of three and severely wounding several others.

During all these operations the 7th. F.A.B. was acting in close support to the infantry covering advances by creeping barrages, engaging opportunity targets and all movements and putting down all enemy concentrations.

The 2nd. German Guards Division newly brought into the line, offered a stout resistance to our advance, but the resistance was finally broken down on 1st. September after very severe fighting. The Brigade's guns afforded excellent support on these occasions, firing continuously from daylight till dark, and time and again broke up enemy counter attacks.

The brigade lent valuable support in the 2nd. Australian Divisions attack on Mont St. Quentin, although this famous hill was off the sector we were covering, excellent shooting was done, and severe casualties inflicted on the enemy in his retreat from the Mont. In this open warfare, all the O.P. (observation post) parties were armed with rifles for sniping purposes. One battery commander put several knoches on the stock of his rifle for the enemy machine gunners he bagged during his ramble well forward looking for targets.

The country round about Clery was in a very much battered condition, it being the old front line in 1916 & 17, the ground was literally covered with graves of French "soldats" who had paid the supreme sacrifice.

August gave the brigade its first opportunity of putting into practice its early training at Lark Hill in offensive open warfare. After a long spell of trench warfare, minor mistakes were made at first but were soon rectified, and towards the end of the month, August, batteries had become quite efficient in this new mode of warfare.

The operations called for great endurance on the part of both men and horses, the former displaying splendid qualities of courage and cheerfulness on all occasions.

August 1918 will long be remembered as the greatest month in the history of the Australian Corps when its fine divisions combined to reap the full results of all the hard and wearisome fighting astride the Somme since April.

During the first half of September the brigade did not take a large part in active operations. After the barrage which started at 5 a.m. on the 1st. September, the guns were moved to a slope of a hill north east of Clery. Next morning the usual barrage being fired the guns did not advance, but engaged opportunity targets. There were "Furphies" in the air that a spell was on order, and this came about on 4th. September when camp was shifted back to the west of Suzanne. This was a real treat, as the brigade had been continually in action for fifteen days. The country traversed, the amount of ammunition expended, and the excitement crowded in these days, made it seem more like a couple of months. However, the spell afforded all hands an opportunity of a decent wash and a chat hunt and a change of under clothing.

Here was experienced perhaps, the only taste of a truly Aussie thunder storm, and when it had passed over, the horse lines were one huge lake, the horses standing up to their knees in water. It might here be mentioned that the 107th. Battery did not have the pleasure of this spell, they were in action to the east of Peronne, but joined the brigade a couple of days later near Clery, to which place we moved on the 6th. September. We had another spell here until the 8th, every body had bivvies in shell holes and old trenches.

On the 8th. the brigade were on the way for Courselles, about five miles to the east of Peronne. Here, training for open warfare was carried out again. During this spell, several inter battery football matches were played. At this time, the nights were unusually clear, and of course, enemy Gothas took advantage to nightly scattered bombs about the countryside. Our air methods by now had undergone a change for the better, the authorities had instituted high night flying scout machines for dealing with the bombing pests.

The night of the 13th. saw two Gothas brought down in flames by our dare devil pilots. These Fritz's planes were caught in the rays of 22 of our search lights, and with such light on these targets, our scouts who were above in the darkness, poured in incendiary bullets with the above results.