

This documents the days before the 2nd Battle of Frezenberg during WW1.

George Harry Hyde joined up to the 1st Battalion of the Monmouthshire Regiment almost immediately after the call was made. After some training, he disembarked on the 13 Feb 1915 – and died in the action of 8 May 1915, just 3 months on the front line.

He was 2087, Rifleman, Hyde, GH.



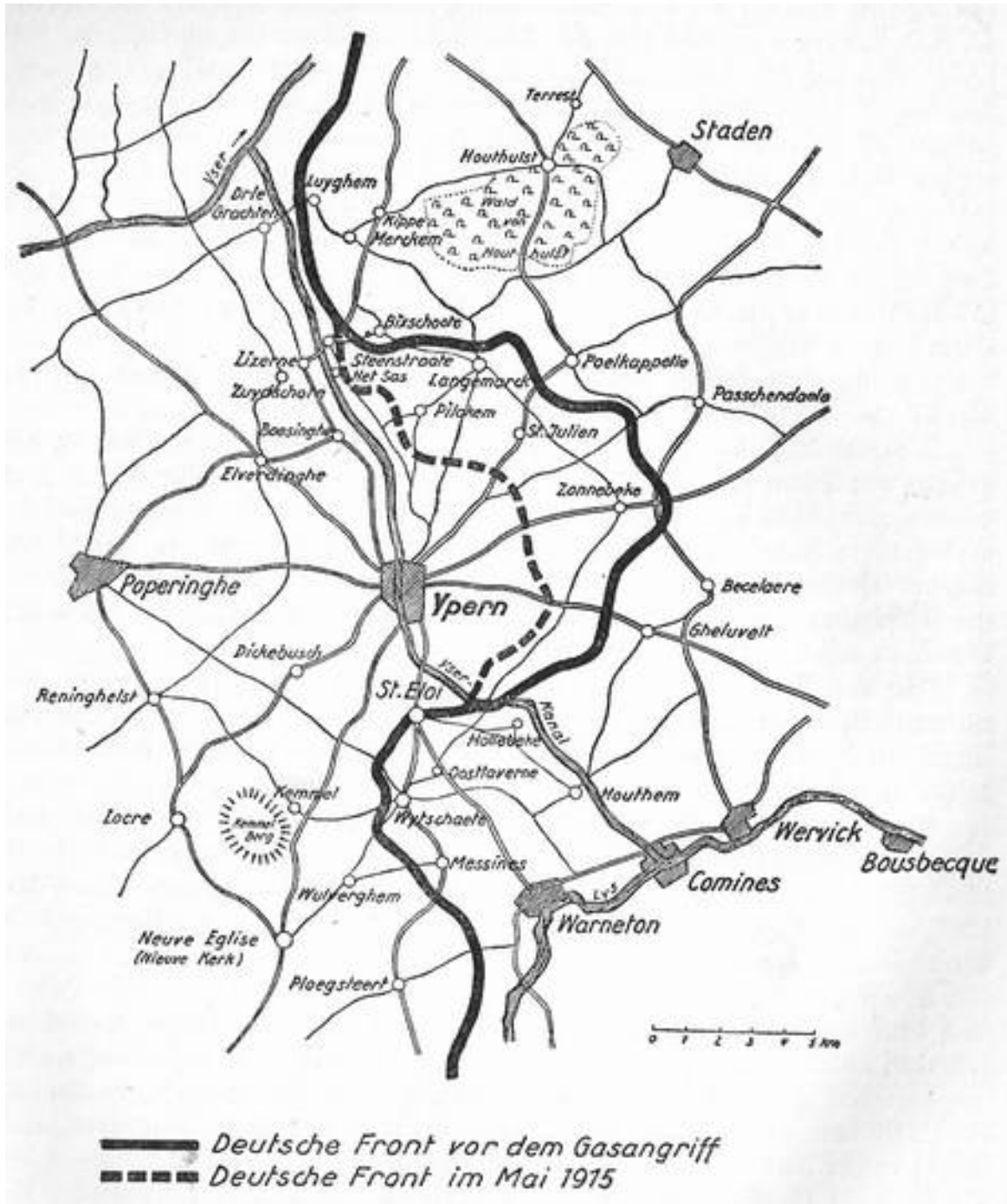
His gratuity for the war was:

Serial No.	Regiment No.	Name	Regiment No.	Rank	Gratuity and Sub.	CURRENCY				CLAIMED		Date of 1st Pmt.	No. of 1st Pmt. received	No. of 1st Pmt. not received					
						£	s	d	¢	£	s				d	¢			
2087	2388	Hyde George Harry	1 st Bn Monmouthshire	Rifleman	Plenbury 1776 P.P.S. Dand present	4	6	7	0	6	7	no entry 28/1/15 20/1/15	20/1/15	11	6	7	received		

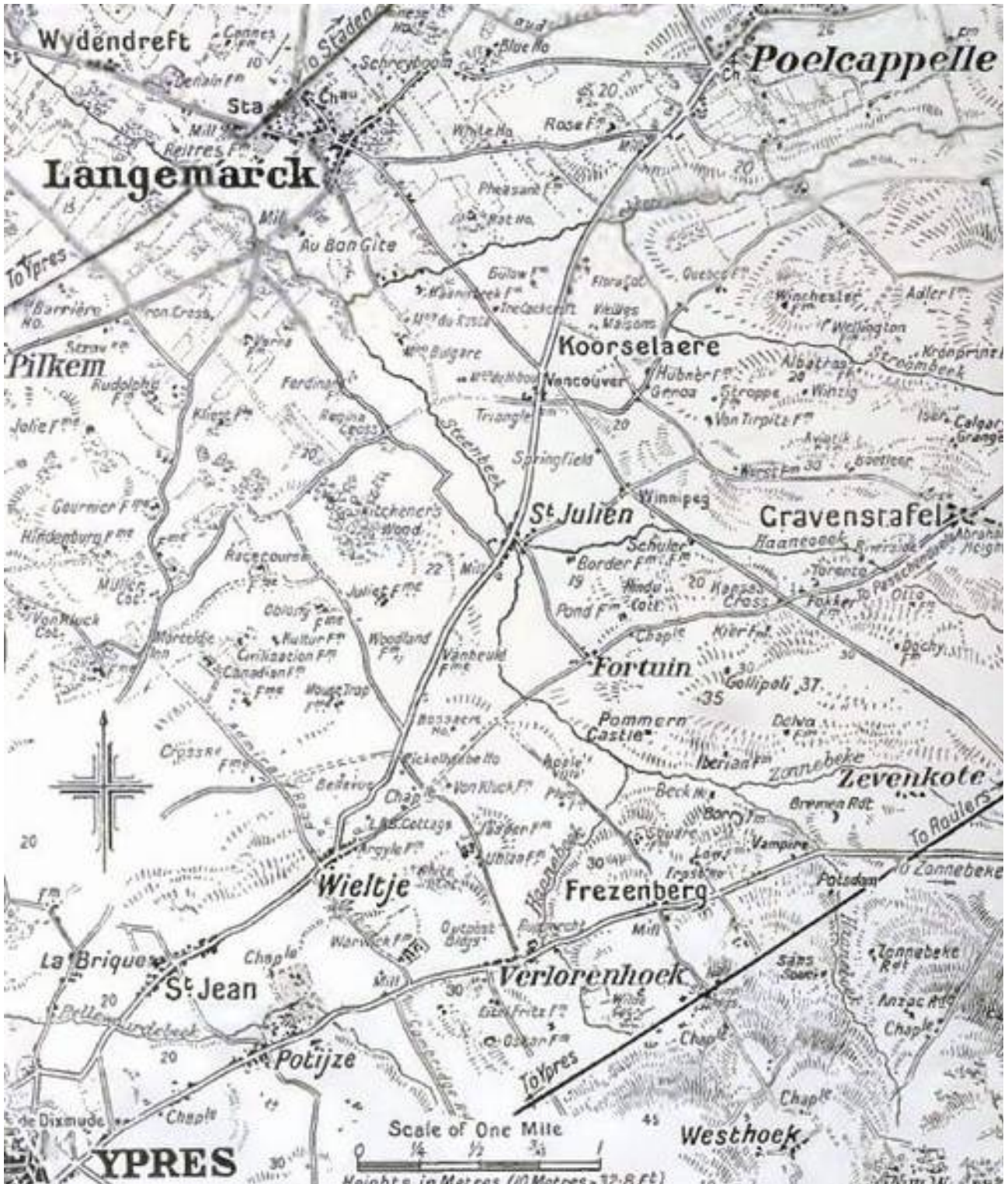
RECEIVED
DATE 29 JAN 1915

WAR GRATUITY
PAID BY THE
WAR OFFICE
ON 29 JAN 1915

The German side drew a map of the achievement of the offensive, and the eventual outcome:



The original map for this area looks like this – to refer to the text of the diary.



A German picture taken of the bombardment:



The following extract is transcribed from the War Diaries.

28th Division.
84th Brigade.

WAR DIARY

1st MONMOUTHSHIRE REGIMENT

MAY

1915

The Battalion was amalgamated with the 2nd & 3rd
Monmouths on 28th May.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	May 1 st	1915		
	1915		Situation quiet. Headquarters shelled slightly during the day wounded from dressing station moved into the cellars. Casualties	
	May 2 nd	1915		
	1915		Situation quiet. Further shelling of Hd Qts casualties	
	May 3 rd - 15th	Inclusive	Records missing	
			Diary from 3 rd May constructed on next pages	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
May 3 rd 1915	<p>The 2 Companies in the firing line were A + B and 1 Platoon of C. D co held Trench 18 under Capt. H. T. Edwards + a part of C co's held Trenches 19a 19b, 19c and 20.</p> <p>B Co in ZONNEBEKE Brickworks + remainder of C co. in dug outs near Level Crossing.</p> <p>Trenches 19a, 19b, 19c and 20 were only joined up by very bad communication trenches + great care had to be taken in passing between them in daylight.</p> <p>These trenches were on the South side of the Cross Roads at BROODSEINDE (see sketch appended).</p> <p>Trench No. 21 was held on this date by the 21 Northumberland Fusiliers under Command of the late Capt WREFORD-BROWN D.S.O (Killed in action 24 May 1915). Trench 21 was within 12 yards of the enemy + a portion of it was</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
May 3 rd 1915	<p>known as the International Trench – having been occupied by French, German + British. Close to this trench there was a small fortified work known as the BIRDCAGE occupied by Germans, having wire over the top as protection against bombs.</p> <p>At Midday orders were received for all Company Commanders to meet at C.O. at Battn Hd. Qrs. At 3pm. This meeting was held in the cellar of the Convent at ZONNEBEKE. Lt. Col. Robinson informed them that orders had been received for a general retirement from the Salient to a position in rear of FREZENBERG + instructions to Company Commanders were as follows: -</p> <p>Companies in support were to move first. These companies moved between 9 + 10 pm reporting at Railway Level Crossing West of</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
May 3 rd 1915	<p>ZONNEBEKE to Staff Officer. Companies in the fire trenches were to withdraw at 10-30 p.m. having previously sent back surplus ammunition + bombs. Parties of 1 Officer + 30 men per Co were to be left in trenches to continue firing + sending up very lights. These parties were commanded by 2/Lt C..Vachell + Lt E.S. Phillips + were not to leave until midnight. Companies were to be withdrawn quietly + report to Staff Officer by 11 o'clock p.m. + were not to leave the Level Crossing until Midnight. Nothing of use to the enemy was to be left behind by any company. What could not be taken away was buried or otherwise disposed of. B Co in ZONNEBEKE Brickworks put into the well there several boxes of ammunition + bombs + several sacks of bully beef. The retirement was carried out quite successfully, without casualties. The whole</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
May 3 rd 1915	<p>Regiment marched to Huts near BRIELEN, North of YPRES, reporting to Brigade as they passed VERLORENHOEK</p> <p>The whole of the 28th Division retired down the road ZONNEBEKE – YPRES. There was no shelling of the road until near the MENIN GATE + it was unnecessary to leave the road. The road itself was pitted with shell holes of the bombardment of the preceding days. Dead horses + broken down ambulances were passed en route + in YPRES dead civilians.</p> <p>The parties left in the trenches left at Midnight + making their way independently reached the huts safely.</p> <p>The following incidents are worthy of record.</p> <p>(1) The same communication trench served fire trenches 19, 20 + 21. By arrangement with the N.F.s the trench garrison of 19 + 20 was withdrawn first. Major Evill was warned by sentries of the N.F.s at about 9:30 pm that a strange man</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
May 3 rd 1915	<p>presumably German had tried to pass over this trench from the British side. He was prevented + disappeared in the darkness. The apprehension was that he might easily have broken through to the German line over these communication trenches between 19a, 19b, 19c and 20. Major Evill sent out a patrol to try + capture this man without result. It is quite certain that if the Germans had suspected this retirement, the ZONNEBEKE_YPRES road would have been made impassable by the shell fire + that there would have been disastrous loss of life.</p> <p>(2) About an hour after Lt. E.S.Phillips had been left with his party of 30 men in trench 18, a German flare was fired over his trenches + set an old thatched roof on fire behind his trench, illuminating the trench from behind + giving reason to think that German suspicions were aroused. He noted the time + had still half an hour to remain as trench garrison. The time however passed without further event.</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
May 4 th 1915	Day spent at rest at Huts near BRIELEN, YPRES, draft arrived 40 NCOs + men.	
May 5 th 1915	Huts BRIELEN, owing to shelling, Battn moved to shelter trenches in field in rear of huts - they spent the day there. YPRES + environs heavily shelled.	
May 6 th 1915	<p>Bright fine day. In the afternoon Officers had foot races in field in rear of huts – Colonel Robinson taking a leading part. About 4p.m. a motor cyclist orderly came with orders to move at once by a reconnoitered route skirting YPRES to dug outs east of POTIJZE. C29 + 23 (reference map sheet 28 B1 40 000).</p> <p>These dug outs were nothing more than old unoccupied trenches, very wet.</p> <p>2 Companies were detached to carry rations for 12th London Regt who were occupying trenches subsequently taken over by the Battn next evening. Very heavy fire was opened by the enemy in early hours of morning May 7th.</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<p>May 7th 1915</p>	<p>Battn remained in the dug outs which were severely shelled. A few casualties – among them Cpl Brawn A Co killed.</p> <p>At night Battn marched to relieve 12th London Regt. See sketch attached which approximately shows the line of the trench occupied by the Battn.</p> <p>Reference sheet 28b 40 000. The line runs from Road C23 C51 to road C30 d 55. See plan as to disposition of Companies.</p> <p>The trenches had been badly broken down + in some parts demolished by shell fire of previous days. The 12th London had suffered heavily by shell fire. Communication trenches to the rear were very shallow + narrow + in some cases full of water.</p> <p>Headquarters were close to the road - a house at a point about C23 d38 (Map 28).</p> <p>The night was spent in repairing the trenches, as far as it was possible to do so in the few hours of darkness left. There was no proper protection against shell fire. The trench</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<p>1915 May 7th</p> <p>- May 8th</p>	<p>strength of the regiment was Officers 23 + other ranks 565.</p> <p>An intense German bombardment ,described afterwards by Sir John French when he addressed the Brigade at HERZEELE, as probably the heaviest to which troops had ever been subjected, began at about 6:30a.m. + as the morning wore on there were many casualties in our trenches. A German Infantry attack was launched somewhere about the junction of the 84th + 83rd Brigades + the line was first broken South of the YPRES-ZONNEBEKE Road. Once the enemy Infantry had broken through the action became a flank as well as frontal attack as far as our Brigade was concerned. A heavy machine gun fire from the right flank was directed on our trenches + the trench on the right + the breach on the right gradually widened. Men of another regiment were seen by our men to go forward + surrender on our right + shortly afterwards men of yet another regiment came down a communication trench in the portion of the trench held by D Company + C Co + impeded the bringing up of supports to reinforce the front trenches. Our supports were greatly hampered</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
1915 May 8 th	<p>by this party retiring + at this point Lt E.S.PHILLIPS was killed while bringing up his supports. Men of the Cheshire Regiment said the order was to reinforce on the left, but Capt H.T.EDWARDS refused to move his men + was killed while holding his trench. Sgt GARBUTT, with fixed bayonet, remained at the entrance of the communications trench to hold back men retiring. The germans were by degrees able to bring fire to bear from the rear + the position on the right of the Battn became untenable + eventually almost all were either killed, wounded or captured. Capt E.C.DIMSDALE (Adjutant) was killed while leading an attack on a machine gun position in a building. There now remained A Co + a part of B Co. Supports were seen to be advancing under terrific shell fire. The advance of these supports (afterwards found to be the 12th London Regt) was most gallant, but only a few men survived to reach within 300 yards of the trenches + these were forced to retire in twos and threes as best they could later in the day. Their machine gun however was able to get to work from the vicinity of the road in rear of our trenches. The Officer in charge of the gun was soon wounded + Lieut C. HEPBURN fought it until wounded himself. When all communication by wire was cut, Col Robinson (Comdg Officer) + Major Williams (2nd in Command) came up into the trenches from Hd Qts. It may be said here that any artillery reply on our side was totally inadequate to meet the german bombardment.</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
1915 May 8 th	<p>Major Williams was killed about 11 o'clock. The Comdg Officer after consultation with the Northd Fusiliers on our left decided to attempt to take up a new position to cover the flank + gave order to the remainder to retire to a position in echelon. This operation was attempted + the men proceeded to file out slowly by two communication trenches. Col Robinson, while superintending this, was killed. Capt M.C.LLEWELLIN took charge of the left communication trench party, + Major C.A.EVILL brought the remainder out by the right communications trench, firing as they went out. These trenches only extended for a short distance. They were very narrow and shallow + full of mud + bodies. Casualties were therefore very heavy + as open ground had to be traversed, which had a gentle rise in face of the enemy. There were very few who survived.</p> <p>Eventually the remnant, under heavy fire of rifles, machine guns and artillery reached the support trenches in front of WIELTJE, which were being manned by the Royal Irish Regt.</p> <p>The only Officers left were Major C.A.EVILL, Capt O.M.WILLIAMS + Lieut C.HEPBURN (wounded). The Northd Fusiliers retired towards this trench (Gst2) line later with very heavy casualties. They were followed up by germans, but when fire was opened up from our trench this forward movement of germans was stopped + they were seen to be digging in 300 or 400 yards in front. Another extremely heavy bombardment of GHQ trenches took place towards dusk + there were again very heavy casualties of regiments in them, but the german infantry did not come on again. The Machine Gun Section of the 1st Welsh Regt under Lieut MONK was on our right, and</p>	

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices																						
1915 May 8 th	<p>though their guns were buried more than once, they stuck to their place + did very good work now as well as earlier in the day, when they were in a more advanced position. Towards evening, other regiments came up + manned the trenches, those coming up to our portion being Dublin Fusiliers. The survivors of our Regiment spent the night in dug outs about 600 yards behind these trenches. Major EVILL + Capt O.M.WILLIAMS being at the HdQtrs Dug-out of the 1st Welsh Regt.</p> <p>Casualties for May 8th 1915.</p> <table data-bbox="424 694 1230 1176"> <tr> <td>Officers Killed</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>“ Wounded</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wounded + Prisoners</td> <td>7 – 1 since died of wounds</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wounded + Missing</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Missing</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prisoner</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><u>21</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Ranks Killed</td> <td>33</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wounded + Missing</td> <td>82</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Missing</td> <td><u>319</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td><u>434</u></td> </tr> </table>	Officers Killed	5	“ Wounded	5	Wounded + Prisoners	7 – 1 since died of wounds	Wounded + Missing	2	Missing	1	Prisoner	1		<u>21</u>	Other Ranks Killed	33	Wounded + Missing	82	Missing	<u>319</u>	Total	<u>434</u>	
Officers Killed	5																							
“ Wounded	5																							
Wounded + Prisoners	7 – 1 since died of wounds																							
Wounded + Missing	2																							
Missing	1																							
Prisoner	1																							
	<u>21</u>																							
Other Ranks Killed	33																							
Wounded + Missing	82																							
Missing	<u>319</u>																							
Total	<u>434</u>																							