

with the assistance of batteries of artillery attached to battalions, and under cover of machine-gun and Lewis gun fire, our line had been established east of the villages of Cagnicourt and Villers les Cagnicourt.

A supplementary artillery barrage was arranged for 6 o'clock that evening, and under cover of it the infantry again advanced. By this time the leading battalions of the 1st Brigade—the 3rd and 4th—had become involved in the fighting. The struggle for the capture of the Buissy Switch and for the sunken roads leading south from Buissy was long and desperate, but by individual perseverance our troops, at 11 o'clock that night, had reached a line running roughly north and south just west of the village of Buissy.

The 3rd Brigade had suffered very heavy casualties during the day, and were therefore relieved during the night by the 1st Brigade, the 4th Battalion going into line with the 2nd Battalion in support and the 1st and 3rd in reserve.

At dawn, therefore, of September 3rd our line ran along the railway and road east of Bois de Bouche, as far as the Buissy Switch, and then due north to the Arras-Cambrai road, with a defensive flank thrown back along this road for a distance of nearly 2,000 yards.

After a day of intense hand-to-hand fighting this was a result of which the division was proud. In spite of the fact that the enemy was very strong numerically—as witness the 2,746 prisoners captured in forty-eight hours of battle—and that he fought desperately—a fact amply proved by the 500 dead in the area in front of the Drocourt-Queant line and around the villages of Cagnicourt and Villers les Cagnicourt; in spite of these obstacles and the huge numbers of machine-guns with which the enemy was armed, the line reached by the leading troops of the division was well in advance of that reached by the flanking divisions. In fact, throughout most of the day the division fought with both flanks “in the air,” although troops of the 63rd Division succeeded in reaching Inchy that evening.