

daylight revealed the battle, was weird in the extreme. The horizon, as far as the eye could see, was nothing but masses and long lines of leaping, billowing smoke—dense white smoke shot through at intervals with the flicker of bursting shrapnel, or the black smudge of high explosive.

The battle, as far as it concerned the 1st Division, can be visualised best by following the fortunes of the individual brigades.

The 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade launched its attack with the 4th Battalion. The first rush of its troops to the Canal was covered by two guns of the 1st Battery of Canadian Field Artillery. This section, after a daring reconnaissance, was placed in position 150 yards from the enemy's front line during the night, and at zero hour fired 50 rounds at point-blank range into hostile machine-gun positions in the east bank of the Canal, effectively silencing them. The 4th Battalion advanced 2,000 yards and captured the Canal du Nord and Marquion trench systems on its front. The 1st Battalion then passed through it, taking up the fight and carrying the line forward a distance of 1,500 yards. Just as this battalion completed its allotted task, its right flank came under heavy machine-gun fire from the railway 1,000 yards north of Bourlon village. At this time the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, which had been following closely, passed through the 1st Battalion. They were held up almost at once by the enemy in the railway cutting and embankment, but by hard fighting managed to clear this obstacle without assistance other than that afforded by batteries of the Machine Gun Battalion that came into action at this time. Although the 4th Division on the right was held up more or less definitely on a line just east of Bourlon, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions pushed on to the objective set for the conclusion of the first phase, and even succeeded in working patrols forward to within a thousand yards of the villages of Raillencourt and Haynecourt.

The 1st Brigade was assisted in its attack by four tanks that did valuable service in the early stages of the attack, and had attached to it three batteries of No. 1 Company of the 1st Battalion Canadian Machine Gun Corps.