

for September 2nd. The operation on the 1st was carried out by the 3rd Brigade on the right with the 15th and 14th Battalions and the 2nd Brigade on the left with the 5th Battalion.

In spite of the short advance the fighting was of the most bitter character. As soon as the protective barrage died down the enemy commenced a series of determined counter-attacks down an old trench against the 14th Battalion. Four such attacks were beaten off by the garrison of the trench during the day, captured stick grenades and Stokes mortars being used freely.

On the left, on the front captured by the 5th Battalion, the enemy flung two battalions against the position at 11.30 that morning, a heavy machine-gun and artillery barrage being used. The two companies in the forward positions were slowly forced back to their original line. The Battalion Commander, however, at once counter-attacked with his remaining two companies. After four hours of heavy fighting the whole position was regained and 125 prisoners captured. The enemy was not satisfied, however, and once again, at 6 o'clock in the evening, he developed a strong attack. This effort was beaten off except on the extreme left, where two posts were captured by the enemy. Fighting in this area continued intermittently throughout the night, and, as a matter of fact, when the barrage opened in the morning for the major attack on the Drocourt-Queant line, and the 7th Battalion passed through, the 5th Battalion was even then engaged in hand-to-hand fighting for the possession of these posts.

During the night of the 1st of September and in the early morning hours of the 2nd, while the front was in a turmoil of shell-fire and bombing, attack and counter-attack, swift rush or stubborn resistance, the infantry, artillery, machine-guns, and tanks were moving forward along the whole corps front into their assembly positions for the thrust that was designed to break the Drocourt-Queant line and secure the crossings of the Canal du Nord.

The attack was being carried out by the 1st Canadian Division on the right, and south of the Arras-Cambrai road; by the 4th Canadian Division in the centre, and the 4th British Division on the