

By
A Coy

We left start line in our correct posn immediately behind Bn HQ. Our role was to act a reserve for the Bn during the attack and then take up a posn on the right of B Coy facing North, we were also to contact the Australians on our right and tie up with them.

Shortly after we left the start line we came under fairly heavy MG and mortar and A/Tk fire. We went to ground and waited for C and D Coys to carry out their assaults before moving fwd.

About 2000 yds from the start line we lost contact with Bn HQ who had evident-ly moved in immediately behind C and D Coys.

We pushed fwd about 300 yds and attempted to contact Bn without out success. We came across Lieut ToPunga and the RM who were also trying to contact Bn.

About this time we came under heavy MG and A/Tk fire from our right flank.

Capt Hatcher decided to attack the posns which could be disly seen, he passed on the order to me to form up and almost immediately he was hit in the shoulder.

Maj. Hart had by this time come up and was attending to Capt Hatcher so I decided to carry on. The first posn we attacked proved to be an enemy MG post and nearby we found 2/Lieut Rangiaia and several 'C' Coy wounded. We carried on and attacked several more posns (4 in all) so I decided to halt and consolidate as I was under the impression that we had made a frontal attack on the enemy and I did not want to penetrate too deeply and run the risk of being cut off. As by this time MG fire was coming in from our right and left flanks.

Next morning we expected a counter-attack by the enemy but it did not eventuate, we could not see any sign of the Bn or any of the other Coys, but at about 1030 hrs, 2 of our Bren carriers pulled in about 200 yds away on the right and engaged the enemy with LMG fire. We tried to attract them by signalling and shooting red tracer but with out avail, as we wished to evacuate our wounded and several prisoners.

By this time I had decided to withdraw in the evening if I could not contact Bn before then. How ever in the late afternoon we managed to raise Bn by R/T. As soon as darkness fell I made my way to Bn and received definite orders from Maj. Bennett. During my absence the enemy withdrew from the posns they had held all that day.

As it happened we situated in approx our correct posns as planned prior to the commencement of the attack with the exception of having gone about 200 yds too far to the North.

Casualties:

Killed:

CSM August J.
Temp. Sgt. Milner D.
" " Thaka R.

Wounded:

Pte. Porter	G.
" Hunia	J.
" Davis	W.
" Tepea	D.
" Solomon	G.
" Tapsell	J.
" Waa	R.
" Harris	F.

Capt. Hatcher J.

Prisoners:

Enemy: 30

Killed: 30

Equipment Captured:

8 50mm A/Tk Guns.
6 Spandaus MGs.
7 MG Pistols .40 (Tommy guns)
2 Trucks (1 3 tonner 1 15 cwt)

The role allotted to B Coy was that of mopping up following approx 500 yds in rear of C and D Coys.

We passed start line at 0130 hrs 15 minutes behind fwd Coys and met with hostile fire almost from the start. The enemy was by this time laying down defensive fire about 300 yds fwd of our start line. The Coy was manoeuvred up to the barrage and rushed through without casualties as soon as a lull occurred.

Almost from the start contact with both fwd Coys was lost. We proceeded on a bearing of 270 degrees with pacers checking the distance. Opposition was encountered the whole distance both from the front and flanks. Several times I had to detach Sections and PIs to deal with opposition on the flanks. On every such occasion the rest of the Coy was halted to await their return. Cross fire of all types was coming from both flanks which made one realize that a fairly considerable gap existed between ourselves and the D L is on our left.

However we pressed on with the attack overcoming all opposition with fairly spirited Bayonet charges which seemed to terrify the enemy somewhat. The Coy line was kept more or less intact and straight all the way again due to the success of using prearranged whistle blasts to control the advance all the way. Every now and again Comd used to go up and down the whole line to see that everything was in order. On having covered the required distance the Coy was halted and Comd felt fwd to see if contact could be made with either C or D Coys. D Coy was found to be just in front of us.

At approx 0215 hrs. the R.S.M. reached me with the news that the S.O. had been wounded. Not knowing where Major Hart our 2-i-c was at the time, I decided to take command of that part of the Battalion was in the fwd areas. D Coy was facing WEST. B Coy was swung onto its right flank and facing NORTH where enemy resistance was greatest and from which direction enemy counter-attack would come if any were launched. Several batches of runners were despatched to see if contact could be made with C or A Coy but all

to no avail.

At approx 0300 hrs 1 Officer of C Coy (2/Lieut. W To A. Haig) arrived with about 10 men. He had apparently become separated from the rest of the Coy and did not know where they were. A little later another C Coy Officer (2/Lieut Jackson) appeared with about a dozen men. He too did not know where the rest of C Coy was. I placed both these Officers together with their men within the B Coy defense line. Trenches were dug.

Right throughout, no contact whatsoever was made with Bn HQ and apart from the R.S.M. no elements of Bn HQ ever reached us. Before daylight however, a Platoon of M H Gs and our own 3" mortars arrived. We were able to have these weapons dug in and in posn before daylight. Our own 2 pdrs did not reach us. However a tp of 6 pdrs from D L I reached us at daylight. They had no chance to dig in with the result that guns and crew were shot up resulting in several casualties. Not one gun got into posn.

My own number 18 set was working but the only people we could contact were the operators of A Coys number 18 set whom we found to have become separated from the Coy.

As movement was absolutely impossible during the day it was not until evening that I was able to get out to the rear to find out what was happening. It was only then that I found out that Major Hart had been seriously wounded. I assumed Command of the Bn and decided to contact 6 NZ Bde. from whom we had had no word whatsoever. I located Brigadier Gentry and the Orders were to hang on till further instructions as our posn up in the front was a little precarious with our depleted Coys and with A Coy still missing the Brigadier decided to strengthen our defences by adding a further 2 pls M H Gs and 1 tp 6 pdrs to be under Comd 28 NZ Bn.

On my return to Bn HQ I called a conference sofall Coy Comdres. I appointed 2/Lieut Aperahama to command A Coy in place of Capt Hatcher who had been wounded. Capt Pene took command of B Coy in my stead, Lieut Talapa took Command C Coy in place of Capt Awarau who was wounded. Capt Logan was still in command of D Coy.

It was at this stage that we first made contact with 2/Lieut Aperahama C Coy and the location of A Coy was at last established.

I decided to alter the dispositions of the Coys. that night so as to present a stronger front towards the NORTH which was the source of danger. D Coy was left to face WEST and NORTH. B-A-and C all facing NORTH with C Coy back in reserve. Contact was established with the AUSTRALIANS on our right and the gap of approx 500 yds between us was strongly

covered by fire. 1 Platoon of Mgs was allotted to each of D B and C the 6 pdrs on each flank and the 2 pdrs along centre of Bn posn. The whole night was spent digging-in in the new areas. When morning came we had re-established ourselves and now held a very strong defensive posn.

During the night the 24NZ Bn had taken up a posn on our left flank and D Coy had made contact with them. Durg too, with the help of the Engineers I was able to Mine the whole of my 1000 yds front completely shutting in our Bn posn. We were holding a very strong posn indeed.

Unfortunately the morning arrived only to find that the Enemy had evacuated during the night. However we stayed in that posn till recalled to join the 5 NZ Inf Bde.

Casulties.

Enemy: B Coy estimate: 20 killed 45 PW.

Own Tps: Total Bn casualties.

Killed	22.
Wounded	72 (incl 8 officers One of whom died of wounds)
Missing	4.

(Sgd) C M Bennett. Maj
16/11/42.

1942

by

C. Company.

The attack carried out on the night 1/2 Nov., by C Coy was indeed a great success but with great losses to the Coy. The Coy forced up at the Start Line under Capt. Awarau with 2/Lieut W Te A Haig's platoon on the right flank. 2/Lieut. Ranguia's platoon on the left linking up with 'D' Coy and my own platoon in reserve.

Behind us playing a mopping up role was 'B' Coy and in reserve 'A' Coy lead by Capt. Matahaere. Arty fire began 0040 hrs pounding the enemy PDLs and then the attack started. 'C' Coy moved forward in perfect formation to a distance of about 800 yds, when we came under heavy MG and mortar fire.

The Boys charged these positions killing many Germans and taking very few prisoners, but however we had another 1000 yds approx to go and we could see the enemy had more positions further back with greater depth and strength. By this time casualties were mounting. Contact with other sections and platoons being very difficult.

The attack went on, capturing more MMG and disabling the crews of several A/Tk guns, till the final objective was reached, where the men dug in. At this stage the Coy strength was reduced to 18 all ranks.

Capt. Awarau and 2/Lieut. Ranguia being wounded. 2/Lieut. Haig was first to reach the objective, with 12 men, who was met by Maj. Bennett who at this stage had taken comd. of the Bn. Lt-Col Baker being wounded. Approx. 0230 hrs I finally reached the objective with 5 O/Ss. 'B' and 'C' Coys were combined in taking up a defensive posn with 'D' on the left and 'A' on the right.

Daylight came and in our rear several enemy posns were located which were very active with their MG until finally dealt with by our Armd Cars. Some 200 prisoners were captured. During the hours of daylight we were shelled. Our A/Tk guns being knocked out as soon as they tried to move into posn. 'A' Coy on the right was fighting hard against approx a Coy of Germans, by as soon as night fell the enemy had moved out.

The Bn then changed its posns. 'C' Coy moving round to the right rear of 'A' Coy and considerably strengthened with the aid of about 8 'vickers'. Mines were layed and the posn was more secure and prepared for any counter attack the enemy might make. It was not until the 3rd that we were able to check up on our casualties. We went through the enemy pits and found nine of our best fighters who were killed during the attack. Coy's casualties were nine killed, six missing, 25 wounded.

(Signed) SIF: Jackson. Lieut:

Report by 2/Lieut W. Te A. Haig :

The attack on the night 1/2 Nov was carried out successfully though at great cost.

C Coy attacked on the right flank with D Coy on the left flank B Coy being assigned the role of mopping up Coy and A Coy in reserve.

We had not gone further than 200 yds from the Start Line when Enemy MG fire opened up on us.

The men moved right in and cleaned up MG posts and most certainly over - running some as the Coy front was so wide, and due to several casualties caused at the initial opening fire of the Enemy there were several gaps in the line.

My platoon being the forward right flank platoon swept through an extremely thick area of MG nests and A/Tk guns.

Heavy mortar fire was also encountered on the way through. About halfway through the attack I noticed that there was a very wide gap on my right flank, there being only two or three men moving forward.

However, the more pressing need of silencing the several MG posts around us had to be attended to before further steps could be made to check on connecting files. We reached our objective at approx 0230 hrs but pushed on for a further 200 yds fwd to clean up MG posts fwd on our immediate right flank. We then went to ground and the ten odd men who eventually reached the posns with me took up defensive posn. Our CO WHO HAD CONTACTED US LEFT TO LOCATE OUR FORCES ON THE LEFT FLANK. He failed to return through being wounded. I then recce our posns and decide to bring my very small party back nearer B Coy. I duly reported the matter to Maj. Bennett now acting CO of the Bn. A defensive Line was then taken up on the right flank of B Coy. Maj. Bennett instructed that a patrol

be sent out to try and locate the rest of the Coy, which was duly attended to, which proved fruitless.

Lieut. Jackson and his men eventually moved over from D Coy area to our locality. Although few reached the final objective yet the success of the attack was far reaching despite the heavy casualties.

Zero was at 0105 hrs 2 Nov. D Coy was formed up on the start line in the formation for the attack at 0050 hrs. (Z - 15) On our left were the DLI (6 Bn) on our right was C Coy with B Coy in the rear for mopping up.

At Zero the barrage commenced and D Coy moved forward.

Following close in to the barrage, very little enemy MG fire was encountered from the front and left, but heavy MG fire was coming from the right of coy front.

The Coy attack formation was:- 18 pl left forward platoon, 16 pl right forward platoon, 17 pl 30 yards in centre rear as reserve with the Coy 2" mortars grouped under the CSM to provide concentrated fire on any pockets of resistance.

The Coy advanced steadily, keeping as close as I deemed safe to the barrage.

While passing an enemy vehicle at about 0130 hrs the Coy sustained several casualties when for no apparent reason, the entire truck blew up. It is thought that it contained much explosive and mines.

I had previously studied the Arty programme in relation to the Coy objective and found that by following close to the barrage, the Coy objective would be reached and passed by 0200 hrs, so, after meeting only slight resistance by individual German Soldiers I halted the Coy at 0205 hrs.

The Coy immediately dug temporary positions and patrols were sent to contact the DLI and C Coy.

By 0230 hrs no contact had been made, so I decided to strengthen my position, after consultation with Maj. Bennett who had since come up with B Coy.

I then fired success signal and having disposed the Coy in as strong a position as possible for all round defense, ordered them to dig in.

Several prisoners were taken back from this position, including some wounded.

Troublesome MG fire was coming from both flanks at intervals of a few minutes.

Efforts were still made to contact troops on the flanks but there was no sign of them.

Sometime before daylight Lieut Jackson of C Coy appeared from the rear with some of his men, and they with B Coy were placed on the North of D Coy.

Runners were sent back to Bn HQ for the Coy 15 cwt truck carrying and the remainder of the Coy fighting equipment, however, the truck failed to appear and the Coy was left of SAA and with no mortar bombs.

The Bn signals failed to appear with the wire, and the Coy was left with no telephonic communications to Bn for one whole day.

The Coy signals who went to get their No. 18 set some hours before the attack also failed to appear for a whole day. Communication to Bn was only through B Coy No. 18 set until the wire appeared the next night.

The MGs and 3" mortars attached to the Coy arrived before daylight and were in position before daylight. The Bn 2 pr A/Tk guns failed to appear, however the DLI 6 pr A/Tk guns arrived just at daylight and were shot up before the guns could be dug in. In only one case did the crew remain with the gun, shortly after daylight, accurate shelling was made on the Coy area but no casualties were sustained. Enemy MG fire continued to come from both flanks, until about midday when a large pocket of Germans was rounded up by Armad Cars at our request, thus eliminating the danger from the Coy Southern Flank. After that, no shelling troubled the Coy. It is assumed that owing to the accurate nature of the shelling that morning, this pocket of "huns" was C/pipping for his Arty.

The Coy remained in its position throughout the day, and was not unduly troubled by enemy fire.

That evening, phone communication was established with Bn and other coys, and the Bn 2 pr A/Tk guns appeared and were placed in position. A hot meal was also brought up.

Until required to withdraw, there was nothing to do, but remain in the Area. Contact was made with 24 NZ Bn the morning of the 3 Nov., they were situated West of D Coy and had relieved the DLI Bn in that area. On the night of 2 Nov. engineers put down a minefield along the North Flank of the Coy, stretching East.

Casualties (Own) 2 killed 11 wounded 2 slightly wounded and remain with Unit.

Enemy Casualties (Approx) 20 killed 10 wounded, 50 prisoners (not incl those taken by Armad Cars.

Archives New Zealand = Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga.

Ref: 28 NZ (Maori) Battalion Diary, WAI 1 1665 DA
68/1/35-36, pp 35-40