

To :-  
2nd Canadian Division.

5th Canadian Infantry Brigade.  
24th Sept. '16.

Formations adopted by the Battalions of  
the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade  
in the ATTACK ON COURCELLETTE on  
the afternoon of Sept. 15th '16.

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On receipt of orders to capture COURCELLETTE, the Brigade Commander immediately assembled the three Battalion Commanders whose Battalions were available for the Attack and explained to them exactly the dispositions for the attack and what the duties of each Battalion were to be. This done, he instructed the Battalion Commanders to take out their Officers and Platoon Commanders to the head of SAUSAGE VALLEY to make a hurried reconnaissance, by eye, of the country over which the advance was to take place. He also instructed a Staff Officer to take the Battalion Scouts to the Brigade Point of Rendezvous and explain to them the landmarks, etc., which they would pass during the attack, and this Officer then placed the scouts to mark the flanks of the Battalions where they were to fall in. Two Staff Officers were also sent up to the rendezvous area, which was behind a slight rise of the ground which screened it from the enemy, to mark out the positions where each Battalion was to form up for the attack.

As soon as the Officers of the Battalions had made an eye reconnaissance of the ground over which they would pass, they immediately came back, led their Battalions to the Brigade Rendezvous Point, explained all details of the attack to every platoon and were ready at 5.00 P.M. to advance.

The 22nd (French Canadian) Battalion was on the Right, with the street running through the centre of the town in a Northerly direction as their Left objective and with their Right objective including the maze of trenches immediately East of the SUNKEN Road running along the Eastern edge of the town. The 25th (Nova Scotia) Battalion were on the Left with their Right on the road running through the centre of the town in a Northerly direction. The 26th (New Brunswick) Battalion followed at 200 yards distance in rear of the 22nd and 25th Battalions. Two companies of the 26th Battalion, in two lines, were to do the mopping-up of the town in rear of the 22nd; two companies in rear of the 25th Battalion, in two lines, to do the mopping-up in the town behind that Battalion. The leading platoons of each company were instructed to go through the village and immediately commence their task. The next platoon had instructions to move two-thirds of the way through, the next platoon one-third of the way through, and the last platoon to the South edge of the town. As each platoon in this Battalion reached its objective, it immediately commenced its task.

Watches were synchronized.

Precisely at 5.00 P.M. the whole three battalions moved forward due North and immediately came into an enemy barrage which slowly crept forward with them and was on them during the whole advance of 3000 yards. The Battalion Scouts with compasses acted as guides throughout. All Officers had their maps in their hands in order to keep their direction by landmarks as they passed them, and everyone used the sun, which was on their left shoulders, as a general guide in the due North line which was struck.

It was not until after they passed the BAPAUME Road that all hands for the first time saw the Church Steeple which was on the dividing line in the town between the two leading Battalions. From that time on, the church steeple was the objective for the Left of the 22nd Battalion and the Right of the 26th Battalion.

After a smart bayonet fighting for 10 minutes on the Right and for 5 minutes on the Left, the two battalions advanced straight through and began consolidating, whilst the whole of the 26th Battalion did the mopping-up, capturing a great many prisoners who were hiding in dugouts and cellars. Owing to the entrance to the dugouts being well screened, it took the best part of two days to complete the mopping-up, during which there was constant sniping by the enemy.

A sketch map accompanies this report which shows the original forming-up for attack of the Brigade and the subsequent change in dispositions just previous to the attack on the town. It also shows the line taken up and consolidated by the two leading battalions.

On completion of the mopping-up, the 26th Battalion went into the trenches immediately South of the town in close support to the two battalions in the line.

*A. H. Macdonell, Brig Gen.  
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Brigade.*