

APPENDIX No. 3

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN MONASH TO THE 3RD AUSTRALIAN DIVISION FOR TAKING UP A LINE ON THE SOMME-ANCRE PENINSULA, 27TH MARCH, 1918.

THIRD AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

Divisional Headquarters,
27th March, 1918.

INSTRUCTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE MOVE OF THE DIVISION TO THE FRANVILLERS SECTOR.

SITUATION:

On the morning of the 26th March the line ran ALBERT-BRAY. Orders were to hold the line but to retire in the face of a serious attack.

At 4.0 p.m. 26th orders were issued to hold the line at all costs. Orders could not be got to the troops in time, and the line was withdrawn to ALBERT and some point West of BRAY. The situation on this line is much confused and the position South of the SOMME is obscure.

ORDERS RECEIVED:

Orders have been received by the Division to hold a line of wire and trench roughly conforming to the MERICOURT-SAILLY-LE-SEC Road with both flanks on the rivers (*i.e.*, ANCRE and SOMME). Tonight, 26th/27th, this line is being held by about 2,000 mixed Infantry.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

The Divisional Commander has decided that one Brigade will hold this line South of the CORBIE-BRAY Road, and one Brigade to the North of it.

The Brigade in reserve will be at HEILLY. D.H.Q., Pioneer Battalion and Div. Machine Gun Company at FRANVILLERS.

Divisional Artillery to move to BEHENCOURT.

HOW LINE TO BE OCCUPIED:

The Battalions of the 11th Brigade will debus at Cross-roads South of FRANVILLERS.

The first battalion will cross the river at HEILLY and move by the cart-track across the spur and occupy the line South of the CORBIE-BRAY Road.

The second battalion will move up the gully near MERICOURT and occupy the line north of the CORBIE-BRAY ROAD.

The River Valley will be actually held and not merely covered, and the position will be organised in depth.

The third battalion will be held in support of the Right Wing.

Brigadier-General CANNAN will command all troops in the Sector and will not allow any to leave until D.H.Q. consents.

READJUSTMENT :

On the arrival of the 10th Brigade it will at once take over the line North of the CORBIE-BRAY Road, and the 11th Brigade Battalion will be moved to its own Brigade Area.

GENERAL :

All bridges over the SOMME East of BRAY have been destroyed; those further West have been prepared for demolition and will be blown up if the enemy advances.

South of the SOMME the position of the left flank of the FIFTH ARMY is obscure, but it is said to be South of BRAY.

NORTH OF THE ANCRE :

The 39th Division hold the line. H.Q. at LAVIEVILLE.

The 4th Australian Division has two Brigades near BRESLE. H.Q. at BAIZIEUX.

ENEMY METHODS :

The Boche attacks up valley and hollows and is quick at finding a gap. He gets his M.G.s forward and uses them in enfilade. His Infantry wait at 600 yards for the M.G.s to get to work.

The next 48 hours are regarded as critical.

ARTILLERY :

There is practically no Artillery directly covering our line, but we have many guns slightly further North, and they can give some help.

The enemy has not many guns.

Our Vickers Guns should be mainly on the RIGHT.

MAPS :

No 1/40,000 available.

S.A.A. :

Sub-Park to carry as much S.A.A. as possible, and to move to the new area quickly.

TRANSPORT & PACKS :

Transport should be sent down as early as possible.

D.H.Q. :

Divisional Headquarters will close at COUTURELLE at 8 o a.m. and will move to FRANVILLERS.

(Sgd.) GEO. F. WIECK,
Major,
for Lieut.-Colonel G.S.