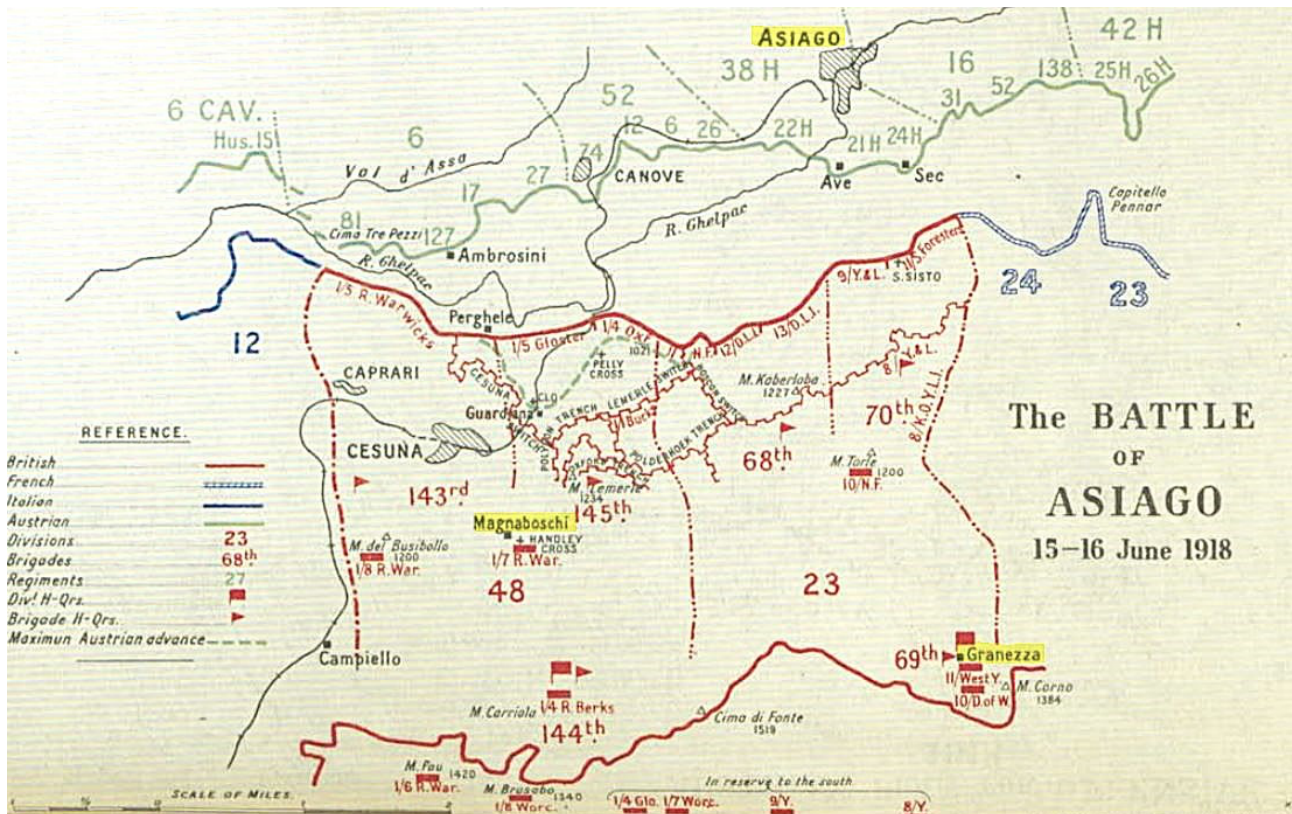


FROM THE: History of the 5th Territorial Battalion the Royal Warwickshire Regiment



The War Record of the 1/5th Battalion The Royal Warwickshire Regiment¹

By LIEUT. C. E. CARRINGTON, M.C.

Published by: Birmingham Cornish Brothers Ltd, Publishers to the University, 39 New Street – 1922
Page 71, 72

„A heavy bombardment broke out at 3 a.m. on the British front. **At 7 an attack developed against D Company, who were holding the right front of the battalion.**² They were very weak, having lost many men from influenza and mountain fever [?], and further suffered from overlooking a slope of shrubs and broken rock which could not be properly observed.

B Company on the left were posted high up on a spur [?], where they could not be approached, but could command the whole valley.

The right company [D] was overpowered by numbers and **almost all killed or made prisoner.**

Capt. J. B. Florance was captured before he was able to report the arrival of the enemy. So battalion H.Q. was informed from its **observation post near Perghele** that the Austrians were approaching them along a ravine.

The adjutant (Capt. E. P. Q. Carter, M.C.) and the intelligence officer (2nd Lieut. T. L. Foode) at once went

¹ [Royal Warwickshire Regiment - Wikipedia](#)

² Die Position dieser Kompanie dürfte etwa bei der heutigen Brücke an der Ghelbach (Steinbrüche) gewesen sein, im Angriffsstreifen des IR 17 („Alternativ-Angriffsplan: AZ 1“), - das entscheidende Gelände für einen Durchbruch über den Ghelbach-Einschnitt, in die Flanke der Stellungen am Mt. Lemerle. Dazu RG IR 27: „Beim westlichen Nachbar, bei IR 17, war der Angriff günstig fortgeschritten. Um 09:30 Uhr vormittags war nach Brechung des Widerstandes in der ersten Linie die erste Zwischenstellung bei Perghele genommen. Nach Ordnung der Verbände ging der Angriff im lichterem Walde flatter vor sich, da auch der feindliche Widerstand nachgelassen hatte, und bald war auch die zweite, stützpunktartige Zwischenstellung südlich von Perghele ohne größere Verluste in den Händen der 17er, deren Hauptangriffsrichtung nunmehr gegen Südost auf die Häusergruppe C. del Guardiano (am Straßenbuge nördlich von Cesuna) zielte.“

forward to **reconnoitre near Perghele**, where they were surrounded, the latter killed and the former made prisoner.

Capt. Watson, the acting Second in Command, organised a party and went forward to stop the gap in the lines, but was wounded after a few minutes' severe fighting. The acting Commanding Officer, Major E. A. M. Bindloss, started with a party in another direction, but was shot dead almost at once.

The situation was now very critical.

Regimental Sergeant-Major R. Townley, M.C., now took command of H.Q. and organised a party of 13 men, pioneers, cooks, and orderlies, and made a stubborn defence in among the huts of H.Q. The Orderly Room Sergt. was captured, but all the papers of the battalion were rescued by a miracle. This gallant party held up the Austrian attack **for six hours until the 6th Battalion came up from their reserve positions.**

The right front company was overrun; Battalion Headquarters was nearly surrounded; but the three remaining companies and the Sergt-Major's party carried on.



B Company on the left inflicted enormous losses on the Austrian supports and carrying parties moving across to Perghele. The Lewis gun³ of No. 6 platoon fired 4,500 rounds in the course of the day⁴.

A and C Companies, ignorant of the situation, with no orders and no communications, organised the **defence of the Cesuna switch line**, and the Austrians never penetrated more than a few hundred yards beyond the front line. By mid-day their attack had spent its force.

The 6th Battalion coming up in the afternoon made a preliminary counter-attack at dusk, but found the enemy too strong. The night was spent in reorganisation.

At 7 a.m. the following morning a combined counter-attack was made by all four battalions of the Brigade, and the front line

was entirely restored.

Patrols went out into No Man's Land and drove the enemy back to their own lines, leaving in our hands **two officers and a hundred and fourteen men as prisoners**, besides large quantities of arms and material. **Two hundred of their dead** were counted in the British lines, without reckoning those who fell in No Man's Land. **No less than 91 Austrian corpses were found in front of the position held by Sergt-Major**

³ [Lewis-Maschinengewehr – Wikipedia](#)

⁴ Dazu RG IR 27: „Da sich von der Häusergruppe bei 1024 (Brunialti) gegen C. del Guardiano ein stark ausgebaute und augenscheinlich von Reserven besetzter Riegel herabzog, wurde nach Durchquerung der Waldzunge 400 Schritte nördlich C. di Guardiano eine Umgehung des Stützpunktes auf dem Bahneinschnitt versucht, hiebei eine aus vier Geschützen bestehende Batterie überrascht... Schon war die Höhe bei C. d. Guardiano von der tapfer vorwärts stürmenden 17er-Gruppe gewonnen, als Maschinengewehre wütend entgegenbellten und eine Batterie auf kaum 50 Schritte die 17er mit Kartätschen empfang. Schwer waren die Opfer dieser Spitzengruppe der Kronprinz-Infanterie. Schon schlug auch Infanteriefeuer aus den Flanken herein und zwang zur Zurücknahme der erschütterten Sturmgruppe bis in die Höhe der eroberten Batterie.“

Townley and his band of thirteen men.

The losses of the battalion were **only 80**, of whom 34 were taken by the enemy. The bulk of D Company was accounted for in this list.“

Major E. A. M. Bindloss 15-6-18 Killed.
2/Lieut. T. L. Goode ... 15-6-18 Killed.
Sgt. W. J Plester ... 16-6-18 Killed.
Pte. G. . Adams ... 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte. H. Brown 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte, P. Carr ... 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte. H. W. Eastall 16-6-18 Killed.
Pte. W. Etheridge 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte. G. Fall ... 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte. C. Freeman 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte. G. T. Harwood 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte. B. Jones ... 16-6-18 Killed.
Pte. W. J. Newey 16-6-18 Killed.
Pte. A. . Parker 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte. E. Pickering 16-6-18 Killed
Pte. B. Sims 15-6-18 Killed.
Pte. S. Boneham 15-6-18 Died of wounds, 10-7-18.
Pte. W. Taylor 15-6-18 Died of wounds, 26-6-18.
Cpl. L. H. B. Smith 16-6-18 Missing.
L/Cpl. J. Burton 16-6-18 Missing.

Auszug über „die letzten Tage der 6. ID“

2. - 3./11. 1918

„All that day the three battalions pressed on through the narrow valley running between high mountains. There was little opposition. The 6th and 7th had the honours at first, for they cleared the mountains on either side and captured incredible quantities of material and many prisoners. The 5th marched along the road in the centre. They covered 14 miles that day on a road through high mountains. At 2-30 in the afternoon, near **Ghertele**, the leading battalion halted, and the 5th passed through as an advance guard. The country was so wild, steep, and rocky - they had climbed a thousand feet and were now 4,300 feet above sea level - that **it was almost impossible to leave the road.**

At dusk they reached the **abandoned camp of Osteria del Termine on the Austrian border**, and halted for the night, which was bitterly cold. Outposts were thrown out on the flanks, for the 7th Battalion were leading the Brigade, but the enemy had lost heart, and neither battalion was molested.

By 5-30 the next morning the Brigade was on the move again. Crossing the frontier they marched on, **the first British troops to enter hostile territory on the Western front.**

But at Vezzena came a check. An Austrian battalion [IR 127] was drawn up on the road to parley. **The Divisional Commander was with them.** Through an interpreter he insisted that the armistice was signed, and that the 7th were advancing beyond the limits assigned them. **Brigadier General Sladen** came up and disillusioned him. Allowing the Austrians ten minutes to surrender, and threatening them with certain destruction if they refused, he sent out Lewis guns to command their position from the flank. Although they outnumbered such of the vanguard as were on the spot, **the Austrian General and his men were bluffed into submission and sent to the rear as prisoners.**

The way was now clear, and the 5th Battalion was ordered to pass through the 7th and continue the advance. C Company was deployed up the hillside to deal with enemy parties that would not come in and the battalion pushed on into the Trentino. The whole area was now crowded with parties of sullen and mutinous Austrians, unwilling to surrender, unable to fight. Their army had fallen to pieces; **they had been betrayed by the unfounded rumour of an armistice.** Officers, N.C.O.'s and men, they were forced to surrender, disarmed, and sent down towards Asiago. Sometimes attempting to fight, they were reduced by parties sent out to the flanks. On the whole there was little but long-range rifle-fire.

*That day the **Commander of the Austrians 3rd Corps rode in with his Staff and formally surrendered** under a white flag. The situation was serious, for the Brigade was now advancing alone among thousands of prisoners who outnumbered them many times. **But superior morale and stupendous bluffing carried the day.** A subaltern's patrol of ten captured a modern fort, armed with six inch guns and manned by 300 men. A single officer accepted the surrender of a complete field battery on the road. By half-past eight the battalion was so dispersed and had advanced so fast that a halt for reorganisation was necessary. They were now on the crest of the range. Five thousand feet up, they could see where the ground fell sheer down three thousand feet into the wide Val Sugana.*

The road wound down in a series of hairpin bends to Caldonazzo, the Austrian railhead, and three miles further, across the river Brenta, stood Levico, the army headquarters. All the roads converged here, the Val Sugana, the Val d'Assa, and the Val Astico. The Austrians had calculated that the Allies would not reach this vital point for two days, but the Brigade had broken through the rearguards and reached it in 24 hours.

Retiring columns could be seen converging on Levico along all the roads. A company was sent helter skelter, straight down the steep slope of the mountain, to fling itself on an Austrian transport column below. Horses were taken out of the wagons and a mounted patrol organised which pushed on, doing wonderful work. Other men drove on in wagons, and the battalion entered Caldonazzo. Here there was a scene of indescribable confusion. Thousands of Austrians, utterly disorganised, were looting the enormous dumps of food and material. A Company encountered resistance, and a sharp skirmish took place in the streets of the town ; strangely interrupted by parties of Italian girls coming out to greet their liberators, whom they insisted on hailing as the "Americani."

The British were at last overwhelmed by the numbers of half-subdued prisoners. The roads were crowded and impassable. Looting could not be prevented, for there was no food for the multitude. Far less was it possible to count the booty, which contained hundreds of guns and immense quantities of horses, transport and rolling stock. Amid other troubles the roads had been blocked by the cables of destroyed "telefericas" and made impassible by burning camps and heaps of stores.

At 12-50 the mounted patrol under the Commanding Officer, who had pushed on, entered Levico, having advanced 14 miles that day. This pleasant little centre for winter sports had been an Austrian Army Headquarters, but now it was abandoned. Yet the patrol was not too late for other successes. In the course of the afternoon six whole battalions marched down from the Val Sugana and formally surrendered, complete, on finding the British in Levico between them and home. They were not informed that they were surrendering to a party of about a dozen men.

The 145th Brigade following close behind had now reached Caldonazzo, allowing the 5th Royal Warwickshire Regiment to close forward to Levico.

*That night they rested in good billets. The Austrian army had melted away: the signing of an **armistice was expected on the following day.**"*