

Some memories of a very long day, July 10 1944, but as clear as if it was only a few weeks ago.

Woke about 4:30, half light, in my slit trench close to the Baron Fontaine L'Empire road. Had some hot food. Started to assemble the Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Somerset Light Infantry, ready for their part in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Wessex Division's attack on Hill 112. Shells from our own Artillery continually raining overhead, towards the Germans. Our shell fell in our position and wounded two soldiers. 0530 the advance began. I had with me two soldiers. Heavy fire started from the Germans. Shells, mortar bombs, rockets, ~~machine~~ machine gun and rifle bullets. Advancing up the Voir Rouvrie, then only a gravel track. Continually having to ~~lie~~ <sup>lie</sup> down as more fire came from the Germans. A tank commander's headless body lying by the track. A soldier trying to comfort his wounded mate. "Would you like my chocolate ration." Our dead and wounded lying in the corn. Their positions marked by a white stone in the ground. Walking wounded coming back, towards our First Aid Post. In my little group of six - one killed, two wounded. The attack came to a halt well short of the Caen-Evrecy road. Very heavy casualties, 71 killed in the Battalion and in that week 525 casualties out of 830 men. Burning vehicles, a German tank on fire just before entering our Battalion position. A branch near me had a direct hit from a shell - two soldiers badly wounded and the one in the middle untouched. Our stretcher bearers quite magnificent, attending to the wounded. Two German tanks came into our position as it got dark. Firing blindly. Fired several parachute flares to illuminate our ST team which was hit by one of our anti-tank guns, but not knocked out. Heard that one of my friends to whom I had been speaking earlier in the day had been killed ten minutes later.

Everyone very tired, frequently frightened, ghosts, but no appetite - and there was no food! Many German dead, and dirty, frightened prisoners, ~~had~~ <sup>lucky</sup> to be alive.

A very bad day for everyone.

John Majors