**Colin McMillan has submitted the following:**

**Swinney, N.A. battle details.**

In April 1916 **2/Lt Norman Atkinson Swinney** was serving in the 13th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers in the POULAINVILLE area, about 4 miles north of AMIENS in FRANCE. The War Diaries show that between the 1st and 7th the Battalion was in rest billets and training. Mention was made of the types of training and the weather conditions. On 8th April the Battalion marched a distance of approximately 9 miles to billets at “LA NEUVILLE”, arriving at 1pm in exceptionally fine weather. More of rest and training took place between 9th and 14th, and weather conditions were a mixed bag of “cold & wet”, “showery”, “fine & bright” etc. On 14th the Battalion marched to billets at BUIRE. Between 14th and 21st April was more of the same with rest, training and working parties on railways and roads. On 22nd the Battalion moved up to the area where they would see action. The following is an extract from the War Diaries of 13th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers.

TRENCHES F 9/5 F 3/1 F 3/2 F 3/3 F 3/4

22nd. In rest billets – Relieved 4th Middlx in trenches. Relief carried out in daylight without casualty. Enemy showed considerable activity during night on left of our Sector sending in a large number of rifle grenades.

23rd. Throughout the day the enemy’s Minenwerfer have been very active and he has also sent over a large number of rifle grenades, estimated at 300 during the 24 hours. Support trenches shelled during the day. Heavy trench mortars bombarded trenches from 5 to 8p.m. & from 9.30 to 10p.m. 2nd Lieut A. M Semple wounded. 3 other ranks wounded.

1916. April 24th. (Contd). Considerable activity shown by the enemy both with trench mortars & rifle grenades & with artillery. Towards the evening our rifle grenades & bombers using the Spring Gun with No 5 (Mills) Grenades obtained the upper hand and the enemy ceased to send over rifle grenades. The enemy continued however to send over heavy trench mortar projectiles which caused considerable annoyance and damage. He also shelled the trenches at intervals throughout the day & night. The support lines were shelled frequently and communication trenches appear to have been registered. German patrol of 8 men discovered working round craters opposite TAMBOUR at 3.0 a.m. by an officers patrol. They retired before any attempt to capture them could be made. Our snipers claim to have broken 2 periscopes. Casualties 1 man wounded. Weather fine and warm.

25th.The enemy’s rifle grenades were again troublesome. During the early hours of the morning as many as 200 falling in and around one trench. Mills Grenades fired from the Spring Gun silenced him eventually. His artillery also troubled our communication trenches. Beyond occasional trench mortar bombs (heavy) the front was quiet throughout the day. Snipers claim 2 German periscopes. Our patrols reported our front clear during the night. At 4p.m. front line trenches bombarded by enemy with shrapnel & H.E. for a short time. At 6p.m. the enemy bombarded our right Trench with Heavy Trench Mortars. Casualties 10 wounded. 1 died of wounds. Weather fine and warm.

26th. There has been considerable rifle & machine gun fire from the enemy’s lines during the night and a few rifle grenades have been fired into the trenches. Retaliation with Mills Grenades fired from the Spring Gun is immediately carried out & has proved effective in stopping the nuisance. Patrols during the early hours reported our front clear. At 5p.m. Front trenches & main Communication Trench [hit?] with shrapnel and H.E. Three heavy H.E. shells were fired into TAMBOUR at 10.15p.m. Our snipers claim one German periscope. The enemy’s infantry gave our snipers no chance. Casualties 1 killed 6 wounded. 6 suffering from shell shock.

1916 April 27th. At intervals throughout the night 26/27 the enemy burst shrapnel over our trenches. He bombarded right of line by Junction with 7th DIVISION Front with heavy trench mortars and H.E. shells from 6.30a.m. to 10.0a.m. doing considerable damage. At intervals during the afternoon heavy trench mortar Bombs were sent over into right & centre of our line. Although the exact position from which trench mortars are fired has been discovered and our heavy artillery has “traversed” the position & dropped shells all around, they have been unable to silence them. It is presumed that they are firing from a very deep dug out probably through a narrow shaft. No rifle grenades have been fired into our trenches during the day or night. Some shrapnel was burst over left of line about 11.45p.m. Casualties 3 killed one died of wounds 2 wounded. Weather fine and warm.

28th. Practically no rifle or M.G. fire until the night 28/29 when the enemy’s M. Guns searched the whole of our front. This was probably due to our heavy bombardment of his trenches during the day; the enemy fearing a raid. From 8.0 to 9.0a.m. the enemy’s trench mortars bombarded our front trenches. A few rifle grenades from the enemy into left of our line were replied to with vigour by our grenadiers using No 5 Grenade & the Spring Gun that the enemy were silenced. Patrols report all quiet during the night. Our snipers claim one German during the last 24 hours. 2/Lt N.A. SWINNEY and 4 other ranks killed 4 men wounded 5 men suffering from shell shock. Weather fine.

C. McMillan

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