

NON-DIVISIONAL TROOPS.

3 ARMY TROOPS

'J' SPECIAL COY. ROYAL ENGINEERS.

MARCH 1917 - JULY 1919'.

4132

CONFIDENTIAL.

WAR DIARY
OF

"J." SPECIAL COMPANY. R.E.

FROM *MAY 1st 1917* TO *MAY 31st 1917*

(VOLUME. 1.)

mil.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

01 May 1917 To 31 May 1917

ARRAS	01/05/1917	7 pm: Company parade for carrying parties to assist 'O' Coy: 2 Off & 140 O.R.s carrying drums: Departures: 8 O.R. on detachment for fatigue work to workshops BOUQUEMAISON: 1 O.R. on leave: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from depot. Weather fine & warm: Wind N. to N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	02/05/1917	Company resting. Weather fine & warm: Wind N. to N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	03/05/1917	Received wire from CSC R.E. to report to VIIth Corps (at BRETENCOURT): Report at once 7 am. Sent on to 18th Divn (near NEUVILLE VITASSE) to fix up projector operation on their front: Report to 18th Divn who wish me to attend conference at 3 pm 4th May with a scheme for projector operation near CHERISY: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hospital: Weather bright & fine: Wind N.W. to N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	04/05/1917	3 pm: Attend conference with scheme attached (appendix 9) at 18th Divn H.Q.: G S 18th Divn decide to carry out scheme with 400 projectors: Company bathing: Departures: 1 O.R. to England (to cadet unit). Weather fine & warm: Wind N. to N.E.	See Appendix No 9	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	05/05/1917	10 pm: Attempt to start 1st nights work of scheme (appendix no 10): G S wagons go astray on account of shelling & no work done. Weather fine & warm: Wind N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	06/05/1917	10 pm: Carrying out 1st nights work of scheme & everything satisfactory: 1 O.R. slightly wounded (at duty): Lt LAWFORD R.E. 2/Lt SANTER R.E., with sections 41,43 & 45 wait into bivouacs at N.20.b.5.5. to carry out this operation. Weather fine & warm: Wind N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

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ARRAS	07/05/1917	10 am: Reported progress to 18th Divn: 2 lorries reported from VIIth Corps to stay with us on detachment for the operation: 11 am: 2/Lt FARR & batman depart to IIIrd army anti gas school on detachment: 7 pm: Work for operation proceeding with assistance of carrying parties from 'O' Spec Cor R.E. Weather fine & warm: Wind N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	08/05/1917	10 am: Report progress to 18th Divn: 7 pm: Work proceeding with assistance of 'O' Coy carrying parties: 1 O.R. arrived from detachment. Weather dull with thunderstorms & rain: Wind W. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	09/05/1917	10 am: Report progress to 18th Divn: 7 pm: Work proceeding in accordance with scheme: 1 O.R. wounded: Departures: 1 O.R. wounded to hospital: Arrivals: 1 combination motor cycle & side car from third army T.S.C. Weather dull, some rain: Wind W. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	10/05/1917	10 am: Reported progress to 18th Divn: 11 am: Receive wire from VIth Corps that 'J' Spec Coy will be transferred to VIIth Corps from 12 noon 18th May: 7 pm: Work on operation C2 proceeding: 1 O.R. wounded: 2 O.R. admitted to hosp with shell shock: Departures: 3 O.R. Weather E. to S.E.: Fine rain.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	11/05/1917	10 am: Reported to 18th Divn that 400 projectors are in position at O.25.d.4.2. (reference sheet 51B map): 1 pm: Major S W BONKER visited ARRAS & ordered me to report to 29th Divn (VIth Corps) to discuss operations: 3 pm: Report with OC 'O' Coy to 29th Divn & discuss operation on BOIS du VERT (appendix No 11): 4 pm: Report to 18th Divn that wind appears unfavourable for operation tonight: Arrivals: 2/Lt MONCUR R.E. of No 1 Spec Coy R.E. with 6 O.R. attached to this Coy 11/5/1917: Departures: 3 O.R. (1 to hosp, 1 to cadet unit England & 1 on leave to UK). Weather hot & sultry: Wind E. to S.E.	Appendix No 11	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ARRAS	12/05/1917	10 am: Report to 18th Divn with carrying scheme. They issue orders on it: 3 pm: Report to Vith Corps & 29th Divn with scheme for operation on BOIS du VERT: 29th Divn issue orders on it: 4 pm: Report to 18th Divn that wind appears unfavourable for operation tonight: Departures: 1 O.R. to England to cadet unit. Weather hot & sultry: Wind E. to S.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	13/05/1917	10 am: Received carrying orders from 18th Divn & operation orders from 29th Divn as proposed operations: 3 pm: Report to 18th Divn that wind appears unfavourable for carrying tonight: 7 pm: 3 sections proceed up the line to carry out work on 29th Divn operation: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from depot. Weather hot & sultry, showers at night: Wind S.W. to S.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	14/05/1917	10 am: Reported to 29th Divn that 30 projectors had been put in position last night: 3 pm: Reported to 18th Divn that wind was likely to be favourable but they could not carry up drums on account of an artillery programme being carried out: 7 pm: Work proceeding with 29th Divn operation: Departures: 1 O.R. on detachment to workshops. Weather showery: Wind S.W. to W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	15/05/1917	10 am: Reported to 29th Divn on previous night's work: 3 pm: Reported to 18th Divn that wind was likely to be favourable: Drums carried up to position in evening: 12 mid: 370 drums in position at 18th Divn operation: Wind backing to E.S.E.: Departures: 1 O.R. to England to cadet unit. Weather showery: Wind S.W. to S. later to S.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	16/05/1917	3 am: Wind unfavourable at S.E. & operation cancelled for the night on 18th Divn operation: 7 pm: Work proceeding on 29th Divn operation: 11 am: Reported to G S of 18th & 29th Divns on work done etc: Departures: nil. Weather fine until evening when rain: Wind N.E. to N.N.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	17/05/1917	11 am: Reported to G S 29th Divn on work done: 6 pm: Reported to G S 18th Divn that wind was unfavourable for operation: 7 pm: Work proceeding on 29th Divn front: 1 O.R. casualty slightly wounded: Departures: 1 O.R. slightly wounded. Weather fair though cool: Wind N. in morning changing to S.E. & S. at night.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ARRAS	18/05/1917	9 am: Reported to 29th Divn that 266 projectors were in position: 7 pm,: Reported to 18th Divn that wind was likely to be favourable for operation tonight: 8 pm: Carrying in drums to 29th Divn operation: 10 pm: Proceed to 53rd Bde H.Q. to stand by with sections in line ready to fire drums at 3:15 am 19th: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine & warm: Wind S.S.E. to S. by W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	19/05/1917	4 am: Wind unfavourable for discharge of drums: 18th Divn operation cancelled for the day: 10 am: Report to 29th Divn that 266 drums are in position ready for firing: 4 pm: Proceed to 87th Inf Bde to stand by for operations at 9 pm: Wind unfavourable: Operation washed out at 8 pm: 6pm: Lt PAINE reported to 18th Divn that wind was likely to be unfavourable for operation: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather sultry: Wind S.E. to E.N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	20/05/1917	12:30: Report to 29th Divn on operation last night: They wish to take drums out again: 2 pm: Report to 18th Divn that wind is unfavourable: Company standing by: Departures: 1 O.R. to UK on leave: 2 O.R. to 3rd army anti gas school. Weather hot with slight showers: Wind E.N.E. to N.N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	21/05/1917	4 pm: Wind likely to be favourable for discharge: CSC R.E. third army obtains permission from Vith Corps to discharge drums instead of carrying out on 29th Divn operation: 6 pm: Report to 18th Divn that wind appears favourable for discharge: 6 pm: Report to 29th Divn that wind appears favourable for discharge: 10 pm: Personnel standing by to discharge on both operations. Weather fine: Wind S.W. to N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	22/05/1917	3:20 am: 236 drums discharged on BOIS du VERT & subsidiary target: See appendix No 12: 4 am: 18th Divn operation cancelled for the night: wind was too northerly: 9:30 am: Report to 29th Divn on operation: 9 pm: Report to 18th Divn that sections will stand by for the night: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather rainy: Wind N.W.	Appendix 12	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ARRAS	23/05/1917	2 am: 18th Divn operation washed out for the night: Wind changing to East: 4 am: Lt LAWFORD & 2/Lt SANTER return to billets in ARRAS from bivouacs at NEUVILLE VITASSE: 2 pm: Reports to 18th Divn & 55th Bde that wind is unlikely to be favourable for operation tonight: Company commences to collect scattered stores left by 'Z', 'O' & 'Q' Coys on their departure from ARRAS previously at central dump: Arrivals: Capt BARBER RAMC & batman		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather warm & fine: Wind S.S.E. to S. by W.		
ARRAS	24/05/1917	3 pm: Wind appears favourable for discharge of drums in 18th Divn operation: Report to 55th brigade & ascertain that a relief is taking place of 41st & 43rd brigades (of 14th Div) on left of 55th brigade: Relief will be over by 2 am 25th so arrange to stand by for discharge at 3 am: Arrivals: 2 O.R. (1 hosp, 1 leave): Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather bright & fine: Wind S.W. to W.S.W.		
ARRAS	25/05/1917	361 drums discharged in 18th Divn operation: All the drums in position fired on first shot: Wind W. By S. 1-2 mph: A slight portion of the cloud drifted towards our own lines & appeared to cover some of our own troops owing to a slight eddy from N.W. at about 4:30 am.	Appendices No 13 Appendix 14	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine & warm: Wind light variable slightly southerly.		
ARRAS	26/05/1917	10 am: Reported to 18th Divn to discuss further operations: They desire to put in projectors to fire on to FONTAINE LES CROISILLES: Company engaged on salvage & collection of stores etc.: Arrivals: 4 O.R. from detachment: Sgt A S Arnold granted commission as 2/Lt in Special Coys R.E. & leaves this Coy to report to 'G' special Coy R.E.: Other departures: 1 O.R. on detachment (to workshops).		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind S.E. to E.		
ARRAS	27/05/1917	9 am: Lt TAIT & 2/Lt ALLCHIN proceed to reconnoitre 18th Divn front for position for projectors: Company engaged on salvage operations: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave to UK.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather bright & warm: Wind E. to S.E.		
ARRAS	28/05/1917	10 am: Proceed up to 18th Divn front with Capt Campbell SMITH MC (acting CSC R.E. THIRD ARMY) to look for position to place projectors: Company engaged on salvage operations: Departures: 3 O.R. to hosp.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather bright & warm: Wind E. to N.E.		

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ARRAS	29/05/1917	Company salving stores etc. & bathing: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind S. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	30/05/1917	4 pm: Submit scheme for use of 400 projectors on FONTAINE les CROISILLES to 18th Divn: Company engaged on salvage operations. Weather showery: Wind S.W. to W.	Appendix 15	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	31/05/1917	10 am: Reported to 28th Divn & discussed proposed scheme with G S O 1 : Company engaged in salvage operations: Arrivals: 13 O.R. from DEPOT SPECIAL BRIGADE. Weather fine & warm: Wind W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 9

ARRAS 4/5/17

SCHEME FOR THE USE OF 400 LIVENS PROJECTORS ON STRONG POINTS AT CHERISY (To 18th DIV^N)

1st NIGHT 8 G.S. wagons will be required to be at N.12.c.7.5. at 10 pm when they will be loaded by ‘J’ Special Coy with 200 light projectors & will then proceed to point N.30.a.6.6. when they will be off loaded by ‘J’ Coy the projectors being dumped in the trench at roadside. G.S. Wagons will then return to unit.

2ND NIGHT 12 G.S. wagons to be at N.21.b.9.9. at 10 pm when they will be loaded from lorries with 200 heavy projectors & proceed to point N.30.a.6.6. where these projectors will be dumped as 1st night.

INTERMEDIATE NIGHTS Carrying of projectors to position at O.25.d.4.2. by ‘J’ Coy (assisted by carrying parties of ‘O’ Spec Coy) where they will be dug into position by J Coy.

LAST NIGHT 12 G.S. wagons to be at N.21.b.9.9. at 8.30 pm when they will be loaded with 400 drums & proceed as above in pairs guided by ‘J’ Coy guides. Also 10 carrying parties of 40 men (+ Officers & NCOs) to report at intervals of 15 minutes to ‘J’ Coy Officer at N.30.a.6.6. the final party reporting at 9.30 pm. Parties will each take up 40 drums to position (one man per drum) guided by ‘J’ Coy guides where the drums will be handed over to an Officer of ‘J’ Coy. The parties will then dismiss. All troops engaged on the last night will wear box respirators in the ALERT position.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 10

ARRAS 4/5/17

SCHEME FOR CARRYING 400 DRUMS

As soon as conditions appear favourable OC ‘J’ Special Company R.E. will warn G.S. 18th Divn by 4.0 pm. 2 G.S. wagons will then proceed to crossroads at N.22.a.7.4. to arrive at 3.0 pm. These will be loaded by ‘J’ Coy with 400 charge blocks (4 in a sandbag) and proceed guided by ‘J’ Coy guides to N.29.c.5.9. where they will be dumped and spread out along the road. A carrying party of 50 men, exclusive of NCOs will parade at this point N.29.c.5.9., at 7.0 pm and carry the charge blocks up FOSTER LANE to O.25.d.4.2. (each man carrying two sandbags – 8 blocks) where they will be handed over to an officer of ‘J’ Coy.

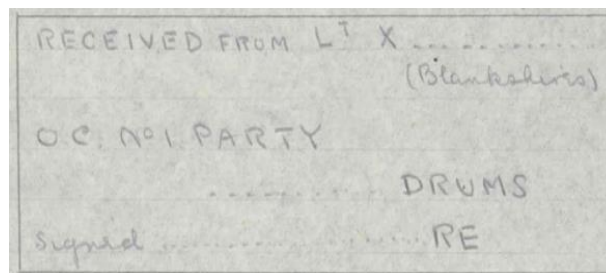
12 G.S. wagons (with a suitable number of spares) will proceed to crossroads at N.22.a.7.4. to arrive at 8.30 pm. Two of these will be loaded at once and proceed to N.30.a.6.0. guided by ‘J’ Coy guides. Then they will be unloaded by ‘J’ Coy and dumped until the carrying parties arrive. The remainder will proceed in the same manner at intervals of 20 minutes. Two carrying parties of 40 men, exclusive of NCOs will parade at this point N.30.a.6.0. The 1st party will arrive at 9.30 pm and the remainder at 15 minutes intervals. The parties will each pick up 40 drums, ie 1 per man, and will then proceed to O.25.d.4.2. being guided there by ‘J’ Coy guides. Then they will hand over the drums to ‘J’ Coy’s representative and return by way of the dump to report to the senior officer there. They will then return to billets. The officer or NCO in charge of the party will carry a cardboard tab with the number of the party on it thus.



paper in his pocket with the number sandbag folded up & placed under the drum. In addition to this, the

Every member of the party will have a piece of of his party on, and will be provided with a his shoulder strap to ease his shoulder in carrying officer or NCO in charge of each party will carry a

receipt, previously made out with the following words on it – The receipt will be signed by the ‘J’ Coy Officer who O.25.ad.4.2. and he the drums in the purpose. Each delivery to ‘J’ Coy drums, and until completed this



receives the drums at will enter the number of space allotted for that party is responsible for Officer at the position 40 each carrying party has work it cannot be

dismissed. The senior officer at the dump will check these receipts before dismissing any party which has returned to the dump.

All troops engaged in this operation will wear their box respirators (or gas helmets) in the ‘ALERT’ position.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 11

ARRAS 12/5/17

PROPOSED SCHEME for the use of LIVENS PROJECTORS against BOIS DU VERT

Ref Spec Map MONCHY LE PREUX 1:10.000

- (1) PRINCIPLE It is proposed to use 250 projectors against the Bois du Vert with a further 25 as a blind on the strong point O.3.c.4.7.
- (2) POSITION OF PROJECTORS Projectors will be dug in behind our front line at O.8.a.45.7.
- (3) TARGETS The main target will be the NW position of the Bois du Vert with a central point O.9.a.7.8. The subsidiary target will be the junction of the trench works with the sunken road at O.3.c.4.7.
- (4) CARRYING OF PROJECTORS At present 180 projectors are dug in at N.12.c.7.5. These will be raised and dumped ready for carrying on the night 13th 14th May. 360 men will be required to carry these from this point to O.8.a.5.7. These men can report at N.12.c.7.5. in parties of 40 and commence carrying at 9.30 pm 13th May, the parties arriving at intervals of 15 minutes. They will be guided to new position by J Coy guides, where the projectors will be dug into position by J Coy. A further 100 projectors can be taken up the ARRAS-CAMBRAI ROAD by J Coy lorry and dumped for the 2nd nights carrying at N.12.a.7.2. On the night 14th-15th carrying parties 200 men will be required to carry these projectors to the position. They can report at the dump in parties of 40 at 15 minute intervals commencing at 9.30 pm and will be guided by J Coy guides to the positions. These projectors will then be dug into position by J Coy. This will make a total of 280 projectors in position by the morning of the 15th.
- (5) DRUMS A supply of drums is available in cellars at G.29.c.9.9. On the night of the 17th 3 lorries will be required to report to J Coy guides wearing red white & green brassard, at the BAUDIMONT GATE ARRAS at 6.0 pm. These lorries will proceed to the cellars where they will be loaded with 280 drums and will then proceed to the point when they will be off loaded. 7 carrying parties of 40 men will then be required to report at this point where each party will be loaded with 40 drums and proceed to the position guided by J Coy guides. The drums will be put in the projectors by J Coy and the electrical connections made in the course of an hour, after which the drums will be ready for firing.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 12

ARRAS 22/5/17

DETAILED REPORT ON OPERATIONS WITH 29TH DIV^N ON 22ND MAY 1917

It was arranged on 11th May with 29th Divⁿ that 275 projectors should be installed at O.8.a.5.7., 250 of which were to be layed on the N W corner of BOIS DU VERT O.9.a.7.9. (the BOIS DU VERT is reported to contain many dug outs about this point) and 25 on a strong point at O.3.c.4.7. The position of the projectors was selected by 2/L^T G C ALLCHIN RE in the open 20-30 yds in front of SHRAPNEL TRENCH. Carrying parties were provided for carrying projectors and drums by 29th DIV^N. Carrying arrangements for projectors went rather badly as sundry carrying parties did not turn up at the rendezvous or went astray. On one or two nights this was excusable to a certain extent as the weather on these nights was very bad. An altogether inexcusable fault however was the fault of carrying parties leaving projectors along the route. Altogether 38 projectors went astray in this manner. These were probably dumped in shell holes along the route. These faults necessitated two extra nights work, but by the 18th 266 projectors were in position. On the night of the 18th 266 drums were placed in position and electrical connectors made & tested. A guard of INCO and 2 men was left over the position in case of accident. At 4 pm on the 19th firing parties under L^T TAIT and 2/L^T ALLCHIN proceeded to the line and stood by in readiness to discharge at 9 pm. Wind was then (at 4 pm SE. I proceeded to 87th Bde H.Q. and kept the 29th DIV^N informed of the wind conditions. At 8 pm wind was ENE, about 6-8 MPH. Our part of the operation was therefore cancelled and the exploder parties returned to 87th Bde H.Q. where they were accommodated in a trench until 5 am the next morning when, as the wind was still unfavourable (being NE) they returned to billets. The 29th DIV^N infantry assaulted at 9 pm on the 19th but were driven back, and by 2 or 3 am reports came through to Bde H.Q. that they were back on their original line again. The enemy appeared to be holding the line in strength. On the 20th the G.O.C. VI Corps decided to take the drums out and 29th DIV^N issued orders for carrying out the drums on the night of the 21st MAY. I accordingly got into communication with CSC RE Third Army to try to get this decision revised, but could not do so at that time. At 5 pm on the 21st wind conditions appeared likely to be favourable for discharge on the night of 21st-22nd and CSC RE Third Army saw the BGGS VI Corps to get permission to discharge the drums instead of carrying them out.

Permission was obtained to discharge drums at 3.15 am 22nd. L^T TAIT and 2/L^T ALLCHIN were informed of Zero time and the artillery cooperation at 8 pm 21st. Firing parties proceeded to the line about midnight and I proceeded to 86th Bde H.Q. (86th Bde had relieved 87th Bde in the line) about 10 pm on the 21st. Wind was 5 degrees or so W of NW at 3.15 am with a little rain, and circuits were all tested and found to be ready for firing. The firing parties waited 5 minutes for a burst of artillery fire which should have come over their heads at 3.14 to cover the noise of the drums but as nothing unusual was observed up to 3.20 am drums were discharged then. The first shot fired 226 drums the remaining 40 having their circuits broken by the discharge. L^T TAIT then left the position with the majority of the personnel and reported to me at BDE H.Q. at 4.35 am, whence he returned to billets with these men.

2/L^T ALLCHIN with his section sergeant and 2 pioneers then attempted to repair the broken circuits and discharge the remainder of the drums. This was very difficult as there was a little rain at the time and everything was wet and splashed with mud. Ten more drums were discharged in all and it was impossible to find out where the short circuiting was occurring in the remainder. The party carried on until nearly 5.0 am & then owing to sniping had to return to the trench having 30 drums undischarged. These will be removed & returned to our stores tonight and the position cleared up to some extent. We had no casualties during the action & our only casualty for the whole operation was one O.R. slightly wounded while carrying and digging in. The Officers NCOs & men carrying out this operation worked splendidly throughout, several nights in positively awful weather, & other nights being kept out much longer than should have been necessary owing to the bad work of the carrying parties.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 13

ARRAS 25/5/17

DETAILED REPORT ON OPERATIONS WITH 18TH DIV^N ON 25.5.17

ARRANGEMENTS FOR OPERATION Arrangements were made on May 3rd for operations on 18th Divⁿ front. It was decided to instal as many projectors as possible to operate on CHERISY, the targets being nests of dug outs at O.32.a.5.5. & O.26.c.8.1. (Sheet 51^B) with a line of dug outs between these points. The Divⁿ did not define finally their requirements until 7th May when it was decided to instal 400 projectors at O.25.d.2.4. and to fire as soon as conditions were favourable with the possibility of recovering this number in the event of unfavourable conditions delaying the operation. Meanwhile it was arranged to transfer projectors from the GUEMAPPE position to the forward dump for the new position and L^T LAWFORD and 2/L^T SANTER proceeded with 3 sections to a bivouac in an old trench about 1000 yds E of NEUVILLE VITASSE at N.30.b.5.5.

CARRYING On the night of the 5th inst it was arranged for 8 G.S. wagons to transfer 200 light projectors from N.12.a.7.6. to the forward dump of the new position at N.30.a.6.0. Owing to heavy barrage fire the wagons failed to report, but the work was carried out on the following night. On the night of the 7th 8th and 9th 372 projectors were carried up and dug in by “J” Coy R.E. On 10th May the part of line containing the projectors was taken over from the 18th Divn by the 14th Divn. On the 10th the remaining 28 projectors were carried up & dug in making a total of 400. Weather conditions were unfavourable until 14th May but the 18th Divn decided not to carry the drums in owing to a gas shell programme arranged for that day. On the night of the 15th 397 drums were carried up to the position. One G.S. wagon lost its way between the lorry dump and the forward dump and 363 drums were placed in the projectors ready for firing. The wind became unfavourable however and it was impossible to fire the same night. The wagon with 24 drums which was lost was subsequently found & the drums brought back to Coy H.Q.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRING OF DRUMS Between the 15th & 24th inst the drums remained in the guns with a guard on the position but throughout the whole of this time conditions were more favourable for the discharge of the drums. The wind limits from N.W. to S.W. by S were comparatively narrow. On the night of the 15th & 18th L^T LAWFORD and 2/L^T Santer stood to at the position, but weather conditions were unsuitable. On the night of the 21st conditions were favourable at 10 pm for which time Zero had been arranged, but owing to a Brigade relief Zero had to be postponed till 2 am by which time the wind had swung round to N.N.W. On the 22nd the section again stood to as favourable conditions were predicted in the weather forecast but the operation had again to be cancelled

On the 23rd the section returned from their bivouac to ARRAS. On the 24th conditions were more favourable and the operation was completed at 3 am on the morning of the 25th.

DETAILS OF OPERATION Zero was arranged for 3 am on the morning of the 25th as a Brigade relief was in process from 10 pm till 2 am. The wind during the night had been favourable and seemed

likely to continue so. Readings were taken by the two Officers in charge of the firing parties at this projector position, and by Capt Laycock at 55th Bde H.Q. (at point N.22.d.4.4. They were as follows:-

12 MID	1-2 MPH	W to W by S
1 a.m.	-do-	-do-
2 a.m.	-do-	-do-
3 a.m.	-do-	-do-

The wind was perfectly steady and the readings at the position corresponded with the readings which Capt Laycock took at Bde H.Q. The wind limits for this operation had been previously fixed as between NW and SW by S and the senior Officer at the projector position. L^T LAWFORD had orders that if he considered the wind was between these limits he should discharge the drums at 3 am without further orders. Capt Laycock considered that the wind was almost ideal at 3 am when the drums were discharged.

All the drums in position fired on the first shot, and the operation was therefore concluded successfully. Capt Laycock then stayed outside at the 55th Bde H.Q. to observe any signs of enemy retaliation and signals etc. At 4 am a runner from L^T LAWFORD reported to me that the drums had been discharged and that every battery had fired. It was then breaking day and there was a slight ground mist. Capt Laycock again tested the wind and found it exactly as before. At about 4.30 CAPT LAYCOCK noticed a heavy mist beyond our lines which seemed to hang very thickly in COJEUL VALLEY E OF GUEMAPPE, and towards 5 am a slight back eddy seemed to spring up from N which carried a little of this mist towards WANCOURT. A slight haze also was carried along the COJEUL-VALLEY as far as HENINEL. When the cloud arrived in the valley opposite CAPT LAYCOCK could smell that it was gas. As far as could be seen only a small percentage of the total amount was carried back over our lines by the eddy. Before the gas had time to travel any further a somewhat fresher breeze of about 3 MPH came up from SSW to S by W. The total length of time of the back eddy was 10-15 minutes and before 5.15 the cloud was travelling in a N N Easterly direction again covering GUEMAPPE with a slight haze W of GUEMAPPE travelling towards MONCHY LE PREUX. The wind was a perfectly defined wind & such a movement of the cloud was entirely unforeseen. The contours run away to the East along the COJEUL and SENSEE VALLEYS, and it was I consider quite impossible for there to be the slightest risk to our own troops with this wind. Excellent work was done by the Officers, N.C.Os & men carrying out this operation. They were in bivouacs for fourteen days, often under very trying conditions. They were frequently wet through & unable to change their clothes and the section had to stand to unsuccessfully on four occasions before the operation was completed.

The percentage of drums fired (100%) was extremely good and the operation was apparently successful.

There were no casualties.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 14

ARRAS 25/5/17

REPORT ON PROJECTOR OPERATION

Last night conditions assumed to be favourable for discharge of the drums in the CHERISY operation. I therefore reported to 41st INF BDE at 8.30 pm on the 24th to ascertain if it was feasible. They informed me that they were vacating the line and that the 42nd INF BDE were taking over. As the Brigade relief was taking place between 10 pm and 2 am 35th.

I decided that we would attempt to discharge the drums at a time between 3 am and 3.30 am 25th. I then reported to 55th INF BDE and informed them that we should be ready to discharge the drums at 3 am 25th. At 10.20 pm I reported again to 55th INF BDE that the 2 sections were proceeding up to their position to stand by with orders to discharge gas if the wind was favourable at 3-3.30 am. I then stayed at 55th Bds H.Q. The wind was favourable all night and at 3 am this morning was W by S at a speed of 1-2 miles per hour. I observed the flash of the projectors when they were fired at this time from Bds H.Q. At 4 am an orderly from the forward position reported to me with a message from the Officer in charge of the position that all the guns had fired. Out of 364 drums in position 364 were discharged. There were no misfires and no prematures. There were no special signals sent up from the enemy lines. A few ordinary white lights were sent up from the enemy lines and a little rifle & machine gun fire was started. There was no shellfire on the position and very little anywhere else. From our point of view this part of the operation was a complete success.

The subsequent path of the gas cloud is dealt with in the attack report JR/287

‘J’ Special Company R.E.

Report No 1

ARRAS				– ‘J’ Special Company R.E. – – Report on operations 22 nd May 1917 –								
Section	Corps & Division to which attach’d	Map ref of Emplacements	Number of projectors Employed	Purpose of Operations	Nature of Ammunitions	No of projectors allotted	No of projectors fired	Reason for Discrepancy (if any)	Casualties Names of Officers No of men.	Direction & Strength of Wind	Remarks	Names of Officers in Operation
42 44	VI Corps 29 th Div	Sheet 51b O.8.a.5.7.	25 111 130	Strong point at O.3.c.4.7. N.W. corner of BOIS DU VERT O.9.A.7.9. It was intended that these drums should be fired at an assault zero at 9 pm 19:5:17, but as the wind was unfavourable then, it was afterwards arranged that they should be fired on an independent action at the first favourable opportunity.	GAS	275	236	Only 266 drums were placed in position owing to carrying parties leaving projectors lying about. Of the 266 in position 236 were fired. The remainder had the circuits broken & could not be reconnected to make an electric circuit.	NIL	About 5 degrees W of N.W. 3-4 MPH	226 drums fired on the first shot. LT Allchin & a pioneer attempted to reconnect & discharge the remainder. Ten more were fired in this way. A certain amount of sniping & rifle fire came over. LT Allchin thought it wisest to return as the position is in the open & it was then daylight this was undoubtedly the only thing to do in the circumstances.	L ^T TAIT R.E. 2/L ^T ALLCHIN R.E.

'J' Special Company R.E.

Report No 2

ARRAS		<u>DISTRIBUTION TABLE</u>																		
CORPS	DIVISIONS	PROJECTORS		CYLINDERS	4' STOKES	TARGETS		SUB TARGETS	LOCATION OF TARGETS		LOCATION OF PROJECTORS		RANGE	PERSONNEL						
		No	ROUNDS											NO	PLACE			SECTION		
																	NO	OFFICER		
VI	29	250	One per gun			1	BOIS DU VERT		SP	Dug outs etc at O.9.a.7.9.	In the open at O.8.a.5.7.	1100 yds	125	2/L ^T ALLCHIN R.E.		C3				
		25	One per gun			2	N. of BOIS DU VERT		SP	Junction of French works & sunken road at O.3.c.4.7.	-do-		150	L ^T TAIT R.E.						
VII	18	400	One per gun			1	W. of CHERISY			West of dugouts at O.26.c.8.1. West of dugouts at O.32.a.5.5.	Behind 80 contour line at O.25.d.2.4.	700-750yds	200	L ^T LAWFORD R.E.		C2				
						2							200	2/L ^T SANTER R.E.						
VI	15th	400	One per gun			1	GUEMAPPE		V	N18D ALONG LINE 5.4 TO 5.10	Behind small natural bank running SSW to NNE at N.12.c.7.5.	1050-1100 yds	80	L ^T TAIT R.E.		C1				
								SP	Outskirts of village MG emplacements & works	80 80 80 80 80			2/L ^T ALLCHIN R.E. 2/L ^T FARR R.E. 2/L ^T SANTER R.E. L ^T LAWFORD R.E.							

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 15

ARRAS 30/5/17

SCHEME FOR PROPOSED OPERATIONS WITH 18TH DIVISION

1st NIGHT 100 men in 4 parties to report at intervals of 15 minutes (1st party arriving at 10 pm) ? an officer of “J” Coy at O.25.d.7.2. and carry light projectors (1 per man) to O.31.c.4.2. guided by “J” Coy guides. Each party returns and does a second journey. 12 G.S. wagons to be at cross roads at N.21.b.95.90 at 9.30 pm. 1st wagon to contain 400 yds of light green camouflage 3 or 4 feet wide and 6 duckboards. Remaining 11 wagons will be loaded with 220 projectors and guided to N.36.b.8.1. when they will be off loaded by “J” Coy and the projectors stacked at the side of the road,

2nd NIGHT 100 men (4 parties at intervals of 15 mins) to report at N.36.b.8.1. 1st party arriving at 10 pm and carry heavy projectors (1 per 2 men) to O.31.c.4.2. Each party returns 1 does a second journey.

3rd NIGHT 100 men consisting of 4 parties at intervals of 15 minutes, 1st party to arrive at 10 pm at N.36.b.8.1. to carry projectors to O.31.c.4.2.. Each party returns and does a second journey.

4th NIGHT Any remaining projectors cleaned up and carried by “J” Coy

DRUM NIGHT 2 G.S. Wagons to report at cross roads at N.21.b.95.89. at 5.30 pm when they will be loaded with charge blocks ? guided by “J” Coy guides to N.36.b.8.1. where the charge blocks will be dumped. A carrying party of 50 O.R. with a suitable number of N.C.Os will

DRUM NIGHT (Cont) report at N.36.b.8.1. at 10 pm. They will carry the charge blocks (each man carrying 2 sandbags and 8 blocks) to O.31.c.4.2. where they will be handed over to an Officer of “J” Coy. 12 G.S. wagons (with a suitable number of spares) will report at N.21.b.95.90. at 8.45 pm. Two of these will be loaded with drums at once and proceed to N.36.b.8.1. guided by “J” Coy guides. There they will be unloaded by “J” Coy & dumped until the carrying parties arrive. The remainder will proceed in the same manner at 20 minute intervals.

? carrying parties of 40 men exclusive of N.C.Os will report at N.36.b.8.1. The first party will arrive at 10.15 pm. & the remainder at intervals of 15 minutes. The parties will each pick up 40 drums & reporting on each occasion to an Officer of “J” Coy from whom the Officers in charge of each carrying party will get a receipt for the drums.

All troops engaged in the operation will wear box respirators at the ALERT position.



SECRET

War Diary

"J" Special Company, P. &

for
June, 1917.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

01 June 1917 To 30 June 1917

ARRAS	01/06/1917	Company engaged in salvage. Weather fine & warm: Wind S.S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	02/06/1917	Company engaged in salvage: Departures: Capt Barker R.A. MC to CCS with batman: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine & warm: Wind S.W. to W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	03/06/1917	10 am: Carried out experiments with LIVENS PISTOL HEADS to determine at what range the shear wire breaks: 11 am: Received operation orders from 18th Divn regarding proposed scheme for operation on FONTAINE: Arrivals: 3 O.R. (1 from leave) 2 from hosp: Departures: 4 O.R. to cadet unit (England). Weather fine: Wind S.W. to N.W.	Appendix No 16 Appendix No 17	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	04/06/1917	10 am: Reported to 18th Divn to discuss operation: Received instructions to commence 1st night's work of scheme on 5th June: 10 am: Lt LAWFORD continued experiments on LIVENS PISTOL HEAD. Weather fine: Wind S. to S.E.	Appendix No 16	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	05/06/1917	2 pm: Lt TAIT R.E. wounded whilst training guards on carrying routes for 18th Divn operation: 7 pm: Parties commence work on 18th Divn operation: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from workshops: Departures: 1 off wounded (Lt TAIT R.E.) & 1 O.R. to workshops. Weather fine & warm: Wind E.S.E. to E.N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	06/06/1917	10 am: Reported to G S 18th Divn on last night's work: 135 projectors were carried up & dug in: Work went very smoothly: 7 pm: Parties continuing work on 18th Divn operation: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather hot with thundery showers: Wind S. - S.S.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ARRAS	07/06/1917	Reported to G S 18th Divn on last night's work: 175 projectors carried up & dug in: 7 pm: Parties continuing work on 18th Divn operation: Major S W BUSSAS accompanied by Lieut Paine inspected the position & parties at work: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather hot: Wind S.W. - S.	
ARRAS	08/06/1917	Reported to G S 18th Divn on last night's work: 93 projectors carried up: 90 projectors dug in: 3 left in shell hole at the position to replace any which may be damaged subsequently: Departures: Capt C Laycock & 1 O.R. on leave to UK: Arrivals: 1 O.R. rejoin from hospital: Lieut G I Paine assumed command of the Coy.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather hot with some thunder: Wind N.W.	
ARRAS	09/06/1917	Reported to G S 18th Division: Conditions unfavourable for operation: Reported to H.Q. 54th Bde & arranged scheme for withdrawal of outposts in front of the position on the night of the operation: Arrivals: 2/Lt Pendlebury from G Special Coy R.E. posted to command 45 section.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather hot & fine: Wind N. - N.N.W.	
ARRAS	10/06/1917	Lieut G I Paine R.E. & Lieut E Lawford R.E. visited G S 18th Division & H.Q. 55th Inf Bde & arranged a small alteration in scheme for carrying propellants in drums night: Weather conditions unsuitable for operation: Arrivals: 2/Lt J B Bassford from 'P' Special Coy R.E. posted to command 42 section: 1 O.R. from G Special Coy R.E. & taken on strength of this company.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather hot & fine: Wind N. to N.E.: Lieut G.I. Paine R.E. rang up G.S. 18th Divn informed them that conditions were unsuitable for operation.	
ARRAS	11/06/1917	Telephone installed by VIth Corps signals: Sent calls sent through to H.Q. SCRE 2nd army & G S 18th Division: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave to UK: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave to UK.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather: Heavy thunderstorms in early morning, cloudy: Wind N.E.	
ARRAS	12/06/1917	Lieut G I Paine R.E. rang up G S 18th Divn & informed them that conditions were unsuitable for operation: Strength: No change.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather: Thunder & some rain: Wind N.E. - E.	

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ARRAS	13/06/1917	10 am: CSC R.E. informed us that conditions were suitable for operation: G S 18th Division wired through that operations were to proceed: Lieut G I Paine & Lieut E G Lawford reported to H.Q. 18th Divn & also H.Q. 54th & 55th Inf Bde completing final arrangements for carrying drums: 7 pm: Parties continue work on 28th Divn operation: Departures: 1 O.R. to hospital: 1 O.R. To cadet school England. Weather fine: Wind W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	14/06/1917	This morning at 2:52 am 372 drums were fired on the cross roads at U1.d.7.9.: 28 drums remained undischarged owing to leads severed by shell fire 2 minutes before zero: Operation successful: 200 of the enemy, many of whom were stretcher cases & the remainder helping one another along obviously in trouble were observed leaving the target during the morning : Our casualties were 4 O.R. wounded: 10:30: Lieut Lawford reported to G S 18th Divn & arranged for the removal of undischarged drums tonight: 1:20: 52 serviceable drums removed from VI Corps salvage dump: Departures: 2 O.R. (wounded) to hospital: 1 O.R. to cadet school. Weather fine: Wind W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	15/06/1917	The undischarged drums were carried from the gun position & brought back to Coy dump last night: Lieut G I Paine visited G S 18th Divn. Weather fine & hot: E.N.E. - N.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	16/06/1917	Operations: Lt PAINE & Lt LAWFORD visited G S VII Corps & arranged with G.O.C. 50th Divn to begin the installation of 1000 projectors on 50th Divn front at once: Lt LAWFORD dug out & relaid 60 projectors at O.25.d.4.2.: 2/Lt ALLCHIN relaid 195 projectors at O.31.c.4.2. Weather fine: Wind light easterly.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	17/06/1917	Operations: (1) 2/Lt BASSFORD relaid 60 projectors at O.25.d.4.2.: (2) 2/Lt PENDLEBURY dug out & relaid 130 projectors at O.31.c.4.2. Meteorological: Fine: Wind S.S.E. light.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	18/06/1917	Operations: (1.) 120 charge blocks & 16 lengths of camouflage were carried up to the CHERISY position: (2) Clearing of projectors continued: Personnel: 2/Lt G C ALLCHIN R.E. proceeded on leave to UK. Meteorological: Mainly fine, thunderstorms: Wind S.S.W. to S. light.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ARRAS	19/06/1917	Operations: Lt LAWFORD installed 182 projectors at CHERISY position. Meteorological: Weather variable, thunderstorms: Wind S.S.W. to S. light	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	20/06/1917	Operations: 2/Lt BASSFORD dug in 200 projectors at CHERISY position: Personnel: Capt C Laycock R.E. returned from leave from UK. Meteorological: Weather variable, showery: Wind S.W. to E. light.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	21/06/1917	Operations: 2/Lt PENDLEBURY dug in 115 projectors at O.31.c.4.2. Meteorological: Thunderstorms & heavy showers: Wind N.N.E. to S.S.W. mainly, later light.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	22/06/1917	3 am: Total projectors in position at FONTAINE is 380: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 2 O.R. (1 to UK on leave, 1 detachment) Weather fine: Wind S.W. to W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	23/06/1917	7 pm: 400 drums carried up to new CHERISY position: 2 O.R. wounded: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. (1 wounded, 1 on leave). Weather showery: Wind W. to S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	24/06/1917	10 am: Reported progress to 50th Divn: 11 am: Called at VIth Corps H.Q. to ascertain future requirements: 6 pm: Carrying of drums for CHERISY & FONTAINE postponed on account of wind conditions: Departures: 1 O.R. on detachment. Weather showery: Wind W. to S.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	25/06/1917	3 pm: Reported to 55th Divn & arranged to discharge the 400 drums at CHERISY if favourable tonight: 10 pm: Lt LAWFORD & 2/Lt BASSFORD stand by with their sections at CHERISY: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave to UK. Weather showery: Wind W.N.W. to S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ARRAS	26/06/1917	12:10 am: 384 gas drums fired into CHERISY: 3 pm: Reported to 50th Divn & arranged to carry up 350 drums to FONTAINE position tonight: 7 pm: 350 drums sent up to FONTAINE position. Weather W.S.W. to S. by E.	Appendix No 20	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	27/06/1917	Operation: (1) A number of gas drums left in trenches near to position were collected: 323 drums at the position were connected ready for firing: (2) Capt LAYCOCK was informed by G S VI Corps that no arrangements could be made for work on their front for some time: Personnel: Casualties: 1 O.R. Killed (gassed in action): 2 O.R. wounded (gassed in action): 1 O.R. wounded in action (died): 1 O.R. wounded in action: 2 O.R. to hospital. Weather: Wind N.N.W. to E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	28/06/1917	Operations: Conditions unsuitable: Personnel: 1 O.R. on leave to UK. Weather: S.E. to E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	29/06/1917	Operations: Conditions unsuitable: Personnel: 1 O.R. to No 12 Gen Hospital (S.O.S.): 1 O.R. to hospital. Weather S.S.W. to N.N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	30/06/1917	Operations: A patrol collected 6 gas drums from the neighbourhood of the position & buried one damaged drum: Personnel: 1 O.R. to cadet school (S.O.S.): 1 O.R. to hospital: 1 O.R. to LE HAVRE on leave: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave:1 O.R. from hospital. Weather: N.E. to N.N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 16

ARRAS 5/5/17

RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTS WITH LIVENS PISTOL HEADS

CHARGE ONZS	NO OF SHOTS	NOMINAL RANGE YDS	WHETHER PISTOL CAP FIXED OR NOT
12	4	500	NO
15	4	610	NO
17 ½	4	720	NO
20	4	800	NO
25	4	920	YES
30	4	1025	YES
35	4	1100	YES
37 ½	4	1140	YES

All shots fired from Heavy Projectors, No Gas checks used. Drums filled with water.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 17

ARRAS 3/6/17

SCHEME FOR PROJECTOR OPERATION ON FONTAINE

1st NIGHT 100 men in 4 parties to report at intervals of 15 minutes (1st party arriving at 10 pm) to an officer of “J” Coy at O.25.d.7.2. and carry light projectors (1 per man) to O.31.c.4.2. guided by “J” Coy guides. Each party returns and does a second journey. 12 G.S. wagons to be at cross roads at N.21.b.95.90 at 9.30 pm. 1st wagon to contain 400 yds of light green camouflage 3 or 4 feet wide and 6 duckboards. Remaining 11 wagons will be loaded with 220 projectors and guided to N.36.b.8.1. when they will be off loaded by “J” Coy and the projectors stacked at the side of the road.

2nd NIGHT 100 men in 4 parties at intervals of 15 mins to report at N.36.b.8.1. (1st party arriving at 10 pm) and carry heavy projectors (1 per 2 men) to O.31.c.4.2. Each party returns and does a second journey.

3rd NIGHT 100 men consisting of 4 parties at intervals of 15 minutes, (1st party to arrive at 10 pm) at N.36.b.8.1. to carry projectors to O.31.c.4.2. Each party returns and does a second journey.

4th NIGHT Any remaining projectors cleaned up and carried by “J” Coy

DRUM NIGHT 2 G.S. Wagons to report at cross roads at N.21.b.95.90. at 8.30 pm when they will be loaded with charge blocks and proceed guided by “J” Coy guides to Western end of SUSSEX AV where the charge blocks will be dumped. A carrying party of 50 O.R. with a suitable number of N.C.Os will report at Western End of Sussex Avenue at 10 pm. They will carry the charge blocks (each man carrying 2 sandbags and 8 blocks) to O.31.c.4.2. where they will be handed over to an Officer of “J” Coy. 12 G.S. wagons (with a suitable number of spares) will report at N.21.b.95.90. at 8.45 pm. Two of these will be loaded with drums at once and proceed to N.36.b.8.1. guided by “J” Coy guides. There they will be unloaded by “J” Coy & dumped until the carrying parties arrive. The remainder will proceed in the same manner at 20 minute intervals.

Five carrying parties of 40 men exclusive of N.C.Os will report at N.36.b.8.1. The first party will arrive at 10.15 pm. and the remainder at intervals of 15 minutes. The parties will each pick up 40 drums ie one per man and proceed guided by “J” Coy guides to O.31.c.4.2. They will then return to the dump at N.36.b.8.1 and do a second journey carrying a further 40 drums and reporting on each occasion to an Officer of “J” Coy from whom the Officers in charge of each carrying party will get a receipt for the drums.

All troops in the operation will wear respirators at the ALERT position.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 18

ARRAS 14/6/17

REPORT ON OPERATION WITH 18TH DIVISION ON JUNE 14TH 1917

ARRANGEMENTS FOR OPERATION

On May 30th a scheme was submitted to G.S. 18th Divn for operations on their point. It was proposed to instal 400 projectors at O.31.c.4.2., the target being the wood at U.2.a.5.5. This target was subsequently altered to the sunken down roads at U.1.b.7.1. It was arranged to transfer 180 projectors from the CHERISY position O.25.a.7.2., the remaining 220 to be supplied from the Company dump at SAUVEUR.

On June 4th orders were received from G.S. 18th Divn to proceed with the operation beginning the following night, 5th June.

CARRYING

On the night of the 5th, 150 projectors were dug out from O.25.d.7.2. and carried to the new position by a party of 100 infantry and 50 men of ‘J’ Special Company, 135 of the projectors were delivered and dug in 15 having been dumped en route as some heavy shell fire was encountered. 220 projectors were transferred by lorry from the Coy dump to the lorry dump at N.21.b.95.90., and thence by G.S. wagon to the forward dump at N.36.b.8.1. Here they were unloaded and stacked. On the following night 41 projectors were transferred from O.25.d.7.2. by a ‘J’ Company party, the same party picking up 12 of the guns dumped on the previous night. 122 projectors were carried in from the forward dump by infantry parties making a total of 175 delivered and dug in on this night.

On the night 7th – 8th June 93 projectors were delivered by Infantry parties from the forward dump, 90 of which were dug in at the position, making a grand total of 403, the odd 3 being kept in a shell hole at the position to replace possible casualties by hostile shell fire. Weather conditions were unfavourable until June 13th when we received advice from C.S.C. R.E. at 11 am that the wind was likely to be good on the night 13th - 14th.

At 1.10 pm G.S. 18th Divn wired orders to carry on the operation. On the night 13th – 14th, 400 drums were carried up to the position, all of which were delivered safely. The parties had to do 2 journeys and the last party did not deliver its drums until 2.10 am.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRING DRUMS.

Wind limits had been defined previously as W.N.W. by S.W. by S. Zero hour was fixed by G.S. 18th Divn as any time between 2.30 am and 3.am. Wind readings during the night were as follows:-

12 midnight	W.	5 miles per hour	
1 am	W. by N.	5	
2 am	W.	4	
2.52	W.	3	steady

All zero conditions were ideal.

It was found impossible to load 5 projectors which proved to be duds; and in one battery of 23 guns the wires were cut by shell fire before zero, and owing to the lateness of the arrival of the last infantry party at the firing point, Zero could not be fixed earlier than 2.52 am at which time day was breaking, and since the position was on a forward slope in the open, it was impossible to re-connect the wires, and test the circuits in time to fire this battery.

The enemy had been intermittently shelling the locality of the position with High Explosive throughout the night. Work had to be suspended on four occasions. After the discharge however there was no increase in this desultory fire though several Verey lights consisting chiefly of golden rain, double green and red and white lights were fired.

As the drums burst on the target, a dense cloud was seen to hang for some minutes in the SENSEE RIVER valley. At 0+5 minutes the wind freshened and carried the cloud up the Eastern slope and over the Northern end of the village and the Southern end of the FONTAINE WOOD. The cloud then proceeded in an Easterly direction. The conditions were so favourable that there is every probability that the gas attack was a complete success.

Casualties:- 4 O.R's wounded (two remaining at duty)

BEHAVIOUR OF PERSONNEL

Both officers and men worked with the greatest energy and accomplished their tasks under difficult conditions. I wish to especially recommend No 113039 Sgt Helmen B. This NCO was wounded in three places 20 minutes before Zero but informed no one and carried on with his work until the discharge was finished. He examined all his projectors, making sure that they had fired, and assisted the officer in charge of the Section in mustering the men and withdrawing from the position. It was only when the whole party was some distance from the front line that he asked for his wounds to be dressed.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 19

ARRAS 16/6/17

SCHEME FOR INSTALLING 1000 LIVENS GAS PROJECTORS ON 50 DIVN FRONT.

1ST NIGHT 16TH JUNE

- (a) 200 light projectors at O.25.d.4.2. used in operation on May 25th to be dug out and relaid by ‘J’ Spec Coy R.E.
- (b) 200 heavy projectors at O.31.c.4.2. used in operation on June 14th to be dug out and relaid on target by ‘J’ Spec Coy R.E.

2ND NIGHT 17TH JUNE

Remaining 200 heavy projectors at O.31.c.4.2. to be dug out and relaid by ‘J’ Spec Coy R.E.

3RD NIGHT 18TH JUNE

2 G.S. wagons to report at cross roads N.21.b.95.90 at 8 pm. one containing 16 lengths of gloss green camouflage 20 feet x 20 feet. The other G.S. wagon will be loaded with 200 charge blocks and will proceed guided by ‘J’ Coy guides to N.30.d.90.60. where they will be off loaded. The charge blocks will then be carried by ‘J’ Spec Coy R.E. and placed in the guns at O.25.d.4.2.

4TH NIGHT 19TH JUNE

6 3 ton lorries to report to ‘J’ Spec Coy R.E. at 2 (Bis) Place Victor Hugo ARRAS at 4.30 pm. These will be loaded with 200 light projectors and proceed to cross roads at N.21.b.95.90.

9 G.S. wagons to report at cross roads N.21.b.95.90. at 8.30 pm. where they will be loaded with 200 light projectors and proceed with ‘J’ Coy guides at suitable intervals to N.30.d.90.60.

200 infantry in 8 parties of 25 with 2 spare men per party in addition, to report at intervals of 10 minutes at N.30.d.90.60. (1st party arriving at 10.15 pm.) to carry light projectors, 1 per man to O.25.d.4.2. Carrying parties will be guided by ‘J’ Coy guides and return independently by another route.

5TH NIGHT 20TH JUNE

Lorries, wagons and infantry exactly as 4th night.

6TH NIGHT

Any deficiencies in numbers of projectors installed made good by ‘J’ Special Company R.E.

DRUM NIGHT

G.S. 50th Divn will be advised as soon as weather conditions are likely to be favourable for carrying in drums.

A separate scheme for carrying in the drums will be submitted.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 20

ARRAS 26/6/17

Report on Operations June 6th 1917

Section	41
Corps & Div ⁿ	VII Corps 50 th Div ⁿ
Map ref of emplacements	O.25.d.4.2.
No of Projectors employed	200 200
Purpose of Operation	To engage selected targets at O.26.c.8.1. & O.32.a.5.5. consisting of nests of dug outs. It was also intended to create a diversion from a raid carried out by 50 th DIV troops at 12.30 (MID) June 26 th
Nature of Ammunition	Gas Drums
No of Projectiles allotted	400
No of Projectiles fired	384
Reason for discrepancy (if any)	2 Bombs burst in projectors at 11.15 pm and 11.40 pm 25 th while safety pins were being withdrawn (Stokes pistol heads in both cases). Infantry were warned on both occasions. One row of one battery containing 14 projectors could not be circuited & the defect could not be found.
Direction and Strength of Wind	W by N 5-6 mph
Casualties	NIL
Remarks	Enemy signals Nil Retaliation Nil Remaining 384 projectors fired on first shot
Names of Officers in charge of Operations	L ^T LAWFORD R.E. L ^T BASSFORD R.E.

War Diary

of

"J" Special Company

for July, 1917.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

01 July 1917 To 31 July 1917

ARRAS	01/07/1917	10 pm: 50 projectors dug out at CHERISY position carried across & dug in at FONTAINE position: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. to cadet school: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine but cold: Wind N.N.E. to N.N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	02/07/1917	10 pm: 50 projectors dug out at CHERISY & placed at FONTAINE as last night: Arrivals 2/Lt ALLCHIN from leave: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 2/Lt BASSFORD on leave to UK: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine & warm: Wind E.N.E. to N.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	03/07/1917	10 pm: 96 drums carried up to FONTAINE & 2 sections engaged stand by to discharge: Wind unfavourable: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine warm: Wind N.E. changing to W.N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	04/07/1917	Company standing by: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine but cool: Wind N.N.W. to N.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	05/07/1917	7 pm: A further 25 projectors dug out at CHERISY & taken to FONTAINE: Charge blocks & drums taken up at the same time & all loaded ready: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather showery: Wind N.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	06/07/1917	Company standing by until evening: 7 pm: Parties up the line dig out 185 projectors from CHERISY: Departures: 1 O.R. W in A: 2 O.R. to hosp: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave. Weather showery: Wind E.N.E. to E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ARRAS	07/07/1917	Company move from ARRAS to camp 1000 yards N.E. of ERVILLERS on ERVILLERS-St LEGER ROAD: Map ref B8.c.9.4. (sheet 51c 1/40000): Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: 2 O.R. from hosp. Weather hot with heavy thunder, rain at night: Wind N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	08/07/1917	10 am: Company change camp 400 yards on account of wet ground: Parties reconnoitre the line for operations: 2 pm: Report to 7th Divn with which formation we are employing operations: 3 pm: Report to 21st Divn to warn them that we may be able to discharge gas at FONTAINE tonight: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from hosp. Weather fine: Wind N. to N.N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	09/07/1917	1:50 am: 389 drums (gas) fired at FONTAINE: Wind W.S.W. 5-6 mph. Weather warm but showery: Wind S.W. to W.	Appendix No R5	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	10/07/1917	10 am: Reports to G S 7th Divn with detailed scheme for carrying to commence 12th: 7 pm: 133 projectors dug out of old position at U19 b 5 5: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from det: 1 O.R. from leave. Weather fine but cool: Wind N.N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	11/07/1917	7 pm: 58 projectors dug out of U27 c 1 4 position: Casualties: 2 W in A: 1 W in A (at duty). Weather fine: Wind S. to S.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	12/07/1917	7 pm: 124 projectors installed at U27 a 0 5. Weather fine: Wind S. to S.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	13/07/1917	7 pm: 124 projectors dug in at U27 a 0 5 & 250 more taken by railway to E cov St: Arrivals: 13 O.R. from depot: 3 O.R. from hosp: Casualties: 1 O.R. W in A. Weather fine: Wind S. to S.S.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	14/07/1917	10 am: Reported to G S Vith Corps to discuss scheme for salvage of projectors: Raid being carried out by 7th Divn at night stops work on projector position: Rehearsal of guides & emplacement occurs for MOBILE CYLINDER ATTACK. Weather fine: Wind S.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	15/07/1917	10 pm: 217 projectors taken up & dug in to position: Total available at this position excluding 17 which would not take charge blocks is 448: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from detach: Departures: 2 O.R. leave to UK: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather showery: W. to W.S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	16/07/1917	6 pm: Gave administration of projector shooting to G O C 7th Divn & his Brg Gens: 1 pm: 448 drums taken up of which only 295 arrived at position owing to carrying parties: Sections stood by but could not fire on account of wind which dropped to almost a dead calm with only slight drift from S.-S.E.: Arrivals: Lt A A HALL North'n Fus attd R.E. with 1 O.R. from depot: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: Lt LAWFORD R.E. on leave to UK: 1 O.R. to hosp. Wind W. S.W. changing later to S. & S.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	17/07/1917	10 pm: Remaining 153 drums loaded into projectors at position: 445 now all ready for firing: Stand by to discharge between 2:30 & 3:30 am 18th but wind unfavourable: Casualties: 1 O.R. W in A & 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind S.S.E. changing to W. later.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	18/07/1917	11 am: Reported to G.S. 01 50th Divn: He desires us to use projectors against CHERISY HILL-SIDE WORK & CHALK PIT at O15 c 3.7.: Two sections stood by to fire drums: Wind too strong: 7 pm: 180 cylinders taken to forward dump for MOBILE CYLINDER ATTACK: 4 O.R. from 'G' Coy on detachment: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 3 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather: Wind W. to S.W. Very strong with rain.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	19/07/1917	9 pm: Mobile Cylinder Attack postponed: Two sections stand by to fire projectors: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather squally: Wind W. to W.S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	20/07/1917	9 pm: Party proceeded to position & installed new battery complete with drums: 467 projectors ready for firing at this point: Arrivals: 2/Lt J B BASSFORD from leave: 4 O.R. from detach: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 2 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind W.N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	21/07/1917	3 pm: Scheme submitted to VIIth Corps: Parties salving projectors from old positions: Cylinders for mobile cylinder attack brought back to company dump: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave. Weather fine: Wind N.W. to N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	22/07/1917	6 am: 59 projectors salved from 3 old positions: Parties salving projectors: 100 salved: Departures: 2 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind N. to N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	23/07/1917	7 pm: 100 projectors salved from old position at U29 a 9 4: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 2 O.R. to rest camp: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	24/07/1917	7 pm: 64 projectors salved from position at U29 a 9 4: Departures: 3 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind N.E. to N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	25/07/1917	7 pm: 94 projectors salved from two positions at LAGNICOURT: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 2/Lt R PENDLEBURY on leave to UK: 2 O.R. to hosp: 1 O.R. on detach. Weather fine: Wind N.E. to E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	26/07/1917	7 pm: 76 projectors salved from old position at LAGNICOURT: 2 sections stand by to discharge drums at BULLECOURT: Arrivals: Lt E G LAWFORD: 1 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 5 O.R. on leave to UK. Weather thundery at first later fine: Wind N.E. changing to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	27/07/1917	2:64 am: 452 gas drums fired in BULLECOURT operation: 2 pm: Lt A A HALL, 2/Lt BASSFORD with sections 41 & 42 move to NEUVILLE VITASSE for operation with VIIth Corps: Casualties: (gassed in action) 4 O.R.: Arrivals: 4 O.R. from depot: 1 O.R. from leave. Weather fine: Wind S.W. changing to S.E.	Appendix No R6 Appendix No 21	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	28/07/1917	7 pm: BULLECOURT position cleaned up: Detachment salved 64 projectors from FONTAINE position. Weather fine: Wind N.E. to N.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	29/07/1917	7 pm: 31 projectors salved from LAGNICOURT position: 55 projectors salved from FONTAINE position by detachment: Departures: 3 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to no 4 G E D. Weather cold & wet: Wind N. to W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	30/07/1917	7 pm: 34 projectors dug out at LAGNICOURT: Detachment: 76 projectors dug out at FONTAINE: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from depot: Departures: Lt E G LAWFORD R.E. & batman to 3rd army gas school. Weather fine: Wind W. to N.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	31/07/1917	3 pm: 28 projectors dug out at LAGNICOURT: Detachment dug out 84 projectors from FONTAINE: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave. Weather sultry & hot: Wind light & variable.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

“J” Special Company RE
Report No 5

ERVILLES 9/7/17

Section	43 45
Corps & Div ⁿ	VII Corps 21 ST Div ⁿ
Map ref of emplacements	O.31.c.4.2.
No of Projectors employed	115 295
Purpose of Operation	To place a group of drums on junction of WOOD TRENCH with sunken road in FONTAINE WOOD u.2.A.4.5. To place a group of drums on Western edge of FONTAINE les CROISILLES at U.23.c.2.5.
Nature of Ammunition	Gas Drums
No of Projectiles allotted	410
No of Projectiles fired	389
Reason for discrepancy (if any)	One battery of 21 projectors could not be fired owing to a short circuit of the current which could not be found. The battery tested OK but would not fire.
Casualties Names of Officers No of O.R.	1 O.R. slightly gassed (probably due to leaky drum)
Direction and Strength of Wind	W.S.W. 5-6 mph
Remarks	
Names of Officers in charge of Operations	2/L ^T SANTER R.E. 2/L ^T PENDLEBURY R.E.

**“J” Special Company RE
Report No 6**

ERVILLES 27/7/17

Zero Time: 2.56 am

Section	43 44
Corps & Div ⁿ	VI Corps 7 th Div ⁿ
Map ref of emplacements	U.26.b.9.5.
No of Projectors employed	467
Purpose of Operation	To place 4 groups gas drums on positions of HINDENBURG Front & Support lines at U.21.a.3.1. – U21.a.6.15 U.21.a.7.1. – U21.c.95.80 U.21.a.1.7. – U21.a.7.6 U.21.a.80.65. – U21.b.5.2
Nature of Ammunition	Gas Drums
No of Projectiles allotted	467
No of Projectiles fired	452
Reason for discrepancy (if any)	3 batteries had been hit by shell fire during day. These were reset. 17 were found which had been hit & could not be fixed. Of the other remaining 460, 428 fired on the first shot. Two rows of 12 each were afterwards connected up & fired leaving 8 which would not fire.
Casualties Names of Officers No of O.R.	4 O.R. Gassed
Direction and Strength of Wind	S.W. by S 4-5 mph
Remarks	On going round their batteries after the first shot 8 drums were found in one battery which had not fired. While examining these, 3 burst in the projectors. It is presumed that the shock of discharge of the remainder of the battery must have released the inertia pellets on the Stokes heads of these three drums. Two Cpls were gassed & two O.R. (suspected cases) were all sent to dressing station.
Names of Officers in charge of Operations	2/L ^T R.B. SANTER R.E. 2/L ^T G.C. ALLCHIN R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 21

ERVILLERS 27/7/17

SCHEME for use of LIVENS PROJECTOR on 50th DIV FRONT

- (1) GENERAL SCHEME It is proposed to deal with

Target	No 1	HILLSIDE WORK
	No 2	CHALK PIT @ O.15.c.2.6.
	No 3	CHERISY

By firing gas drums into these targets

- (2) PROJECTORS For targets (1) and (2) heavy projectors are necessary 550 of these have been used at U.1.a.8.8. and of these 300 should be quite accessible and fit for further use. These will be dug out by “J” Special Coy R.E. and will require carrying parties & infantry on one, two, and three nights to carry to N.30.c.8.1. where they can be loaded on to G.S. Wagons. 600 infantry are required for this work. These projectors will then be carried in G.S. Wagons, and if the road to GUEMAPPE can be put in order to a point O.13.d.9.4. will be taken there and a forward dump will be formed.

For target No 3 400 light projectors have been found from two positions opposite CHERISY of which 250-300 should be available when dug out. These will be dug out & reset entirely by “J” Special; Coy R.E.

DISTRIBUTION

TARGET	No 1	200 projectors
	No 2	100
	No 3	300
		(or as many as are available)

- (4) DRUMS Drums are available for these operations on any night when wind is forecasted favourable for discharge. Infantry carrying parties at the rate of 1 man per drum, for any, or all, of these targets will be required with 10% allowance for charge blocks & spares, or any night that conditions appear likely to be favourable.
- (5) It is proposed to use 2 sections of “J” Special Coy R.E. for this work. Targets (1) and (2) will be dealt with as soon as possible and work for Target No 3 will be done on any night which is unfavourable either for carrying up drums, or for the discharge of drums on No 1 and 2 targets.

(6) PROJECTOR POSITIONS Positions have been located for:-

TARGET	No 1	at	O.14.c.2.4.
	No 2		O.20.a.4.8.
	No 3		O.25.c

No 1 position requires no carrying parties for projectors, if projectors can be taken up to the point O.13.d.9.4. by G.S. Wagons. No 2 position requires carrying parties of 200 men on the one night to carry projectors from the forward dump to O.20.a.4.8. No 3 position requires no carrying parties as the work of resetting the light projectors already at position in front of CHERISY can be done by "J" Special Coy R.E.

(7) A scheme embodying the detail in G.S. wagon and carrying parties will be forwarded as soon as these operations are decided on.

War Diary
of

'J' Special Company R.E.

From :- August 1st 1917.

To :- ——— 31st 1917.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

01 August 1917 To 31 August 1917

ERVILLES	01/08/1917	Company salving projectors: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Casualties: 1 O.R. K in A: 3 O.R. wounded (2 at duty): Departures: 3 O.R. leave to UK. Weather rainy: Wind W.N.W. - N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	02/08/1917	Company salving projectors: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave to UK. Weather wet: Wind S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	03/08/1917	Company salving projectors: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave to UK: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather showery: Wind S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	04/08/1917	Company salving projectors. Weather wet: Wind S.S.E. to S.S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	05/08/1917	Salving & carrying out projectors: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from detach: 2 from rest camp: Departures: 2/Lt SANTER on leave: 2 O.R. to hosp: Weather wet & cold: Wind S. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	06/08/1917	Salving & carrying out projectors: Arrivals: 2/Lt R PEDLEBURY from leave & 4 O.R.: Departures: 3 O.R. on leave: 3 O.R. to rest camp: Casualties: 1 O.R. wounded in action. Weather wet: Wind N.N.E. to N.N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	07/08/1917	2 pm: Interviewed Coy 301 21st Divn (who are taking over line from 7th Divn) & handed over operations on this front: Salvage & carrying out projectors: Detachment carrying in projectors at GUEMAPPE: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 3 O.R. to hosp. Weather fair: Wind light westerly.	Appendix	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	08/08/1917	Company digging out projectors at BULLECOURT: Detachment digging in projectors at GUEMAPPE: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp. Weather wet: Wind S.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	09/08/1917	Company on fatigue for workshops at SCRE at GOURCELLES: Detachment digging in at GUEMAPPE: 2 pm: 21st Divn warned that wind might be favourable for discharge of MOBILE CYLINDERS: They cancelled on account of wet state of trenches: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 3 O.R. on leave. Weather wet: Wind S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	10/08/1917	Company salving projectors: Detachment digging in at GUEMAPPE: 2 pm: 21st Divn warned that wind might be favourable for MOBILE CYLINDERS but trenches too wet: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave. Weather showery: Wind S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	11/08/1917	Company salving projectors: Detachment digging in at GUEMAPPE: 2 pm: Wind favourable but trenches still too wet for carrying MOBILE CYLINDERS: Departures: 3 O.R. to hosp. Weather showery: Wind S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	12/08/1917	Company digging in projectors in front of CROISILLES: Detachment digging in projectors at GUEMAPPE: Trenches too wet for carrying cylinders: Arrivals: 5 O.R. from leave. Weather wet: Wind S.S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	13/08/1917	Company digging projectors in at CROISILLES operation: Detachment digging projectors out at CHERISY position: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. to hosp. Weather showery: Wind S.S.E. to S.S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	14/08/1917	Company digging in projectors: Detachment digging out projectors at CHERISY: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 3 O.R. from leave Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp: 1 O.R. detachment. Weather fair: Wind S. to S.S.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	15/08/1917	Company digging in projectors: Detachment carried up base plates & digging in at CHERISY: Arrivals: 2/Lt R B SANTER from leave: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. to hosp. Weather showery: Wind S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	16/08/1917	Company digging in projectors: Detachment digging in projectors at CHERISY position: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fair but cold: Wind N. to N.N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	17/08/1917	Company & detachment digging in projectors: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: Lt A A HALL on leave: 4 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather showery: Wind S.W. to S.S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	18/08/1917	Company & detachment digging in projectors: 2 pm: Reported to 21st Divn that wind likely to be favourable for MOBILE CYLINDER ATTACK but they informed me that they were carrying out a raid on the front & cancelled the operation: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Wind S.E to S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	19/08/1917	Company & detachment digging in projectors: 300 drums carried up to GUEMAPPE position: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 1 O.R. from leave: 3 O.R. from 3rd army rest camp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 3 O.R. to 3rd army rest camp: Casualties: 1 O.R. W in A. Weather fine: Wind W. to S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	20/08/1917	Company digging in projectors at position in front of CROISILLES: 298 drums carried up to CHERISY position: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fine: Wind N.W. To S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	21/08/1917	Company digging in projectors: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from hosp: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp: Casualties: 1 O.R. K in A: Weather fine: Wind S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	22/08/1917	Company digging in projectors: Conditions favourable for firing in 50th Divn operation: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fair: Wind E. to S.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	23/08/1917	694 projectors in position at U19 a up to present: 2 pm: Warned 21st Divn that wind likely to be favourable for discharge of MOBILE CYLINDERS: 9 pm: Company proceed with arrangements for MOBILE CYLINDER ATTACK: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fine with shower at 7 pm: Wind S.W. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	24/08/1917	3:15 am: 160 White star cylinders discharged in MOBILE CYLINDER ATTACK: Wind S.S.W. 8-10 mph: 6:30 pm: Conditions unfavourable for discharge of drums in 50th Divn operation: 7 pm: Parties proceed up the line to remove undischarged cylinders pipes etc.: 20 projectors dug in at U19 a: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 3 O.R. to hosp: Casualties: 3 O.R. gassed. Weather showery: Wind S.S.W. to S.S.E.	Appendix	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	25/08/1917	Company carrying out cylinders with Infantry parties: 7 pm: Detachment stand by to discharge drums at GUENAPPE & CHERISY: Wind dropped to dead calm with light S. Easterly air so operation was cancelled at 9:15 pm: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Wind S.W.: Weather showery.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	26/08/1917	G S Wagons conveyed cylinders back to camp: Conditions unfavourable for discharge of drums in 50th Divn operation: Weather very strong so working parties did not set out: Departures: Lt G I PAINE on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp: 1 O.R. to 3rd army cookery school. Weather stormy after 7 pm.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	27/08/1917	Company digging in projectors at U19 a: Conditions unfavourable for 50th Divn operation: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather wet & strong wind S.S.E. to S.S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	28/08/1917	2 pm: Reports to 16th Divn who are taking over the line from 21st Divn & handed over a statement of the preparation of projector operation N.E. of CROISILLES: Company digging in projectors at U19 a: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather showery: Wind very strong S. to S.W.	Appendix	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	29/08/1917	Company digging in projectors at U19 a: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave. Weather cold & showery: Wind S. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	30/08/1917	Company digging in projectors at U19 a: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather cold & showery: Wind S. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	31/08/1917	Company salving projectors from U19 b U25 b & U27 a positions: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave: Casualties: 2 O.R. K in A: 1 O.R. W in A: 1 O.R. W in A (at duty).10:30 pm: 598 gas drums fired on to three targets at CHERISY etc in 50th Divn operation. Weather cold & wet: Wind W. to S.W.	Appendix No 24	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 22a

ERVILLERS 7/8/17

From:- O.C. “J” Special Company RE

To:- G.S. VI Corps
G.S. 21st Div

I beg to report on Gas operations at present in a state of preparation on the VI Corps front which will be handed over by the 7th Division.

There are two operations pending:-

- (1) Mobile Cylinder Attack
- (2) Projector Gas Attack

Details of these operations are attached herewith

(Signed) C Laycock Capt RE
O.C. ‘J’ Special Company RE

From:- O.C. “J” Special Company RE

To:- G.S. VI Corps
G.S. 21st Div

(1) Mobile Cylinder Attack

- (1) It is intended to discharge gas from Cylinders from the HINDENBURG LINE on the front from U.20 to E.15 to U.14 C.22.90
- (2) In this attack emplacements will not be built and cylinders will not be installed in the usual manner. 180 Cylinders will be used in 5 groups of 4 Cylinders each and the Cylinders will be carried up when suitable wind conditions are predicted.
- (3) The Cylinders will be carried up from “J” Coys dump at B.8.c.9.6 in G.S. Wagons to a point on the road at U.129.a.4.0, and from there carrying parties will take them into the front line where the cylinders will be discharged immediately.
- (4) Warning will be given by O.C. “J” Special Company RE at 2pm on any day that wind is likely to be favourable for discharge of gas at 1 or 2 am the next morning. In event of wind changing before 7pm, wagons and carrying parties can be cancelled at that time.

Wind The wind limits for this operation are S by W to W.S.W.

Details in Wagons and Carrying Parties

15 G.S. Wagons to be at “J” Special Coys Camp at B.8.c.96 at 6.30 pm.

These will be loaded and guided by “J” Special Coy to the forward dump U.19.a.4.0.

9 Carrying parties of 60 men each (exclusive of Officers and NCO’s) to report to Officer of J. Coy RE at road at U.19.a.4.0. at the following times.

No1 party }
No2 party } 10.0 pm
No3 party }

No4 party }
No5 party } 10.20 pm
No6 party }

No7 party }
No8 party } 10.40 pm
No9 party }

Parties will take up 230 cylinders each (1 per 2 men and relief man), and will be guided throughout by "J" Coys guides.

Cylinders will be handed over in the line to "J" Coys representatives, and parties then return to their units.

All carrying parties and troops holding the line will wear box respirators in the ALERT position.

All troops in the line will wear box respirators from Zero to Zero plus 15 minutes.

(2) Projector Attack

- (1) It is proposed to install 1000 projectors to fire four groups of GAS DRUMS on the position of the HINDENBURG SUPPORT LINE from U.20.b.7.5 to U.14.a.7.2.

This line contains dug outs along its whole length, and is usually occupied by the enemy in strength.

- (2) Projectors are being salvaged from various places in the Corps area and some 900 are available up to the present. This work is being continued as far as possible by this company.

When the necessary number is available, the projectors will be cleaned and taken up by the trench tramway to the point U.13.d.8.0. where they will be dug into position. This point constitutes an ideal position as it is on the reverse slope of a hill, with no direct observation by the enemy.

Projectors can be taken up to the trench tramway into the position at night and carrying parties are thus entirely dispensed with.

- (3) 1000 Drums are available for this operation and these can be taken up by G.S. Wagons to the point where the projectors are dug in. No carrying parties are necessary for this part of the operation.

(4) Wind

The wind limits for this operation are W to S by W.

- (5) The progress of this operation will be reported to 21st Div, and further details will be submitted when the projectors are dug in and ready for the drums.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 22b

ERVILLERS 24/8/17

Last night the 180 cylinders were taken to the forward dump for the MOBILE CYLINDER ATTACK and 160 of them were discharged at 3.15 am this morning.

Carrying parties arrived very well in spite of muddy duck boarding, caused by a very heavy shower of rain which fell about 7 pm.

175 Cylinders arrived in the line, and were handed over to our parties, the remaining 5 having been left at various places along the route.

Zero was to have been at 1.0. am, but on account of the slippery nature of the trenches, the carrying parties could not keep up to their estimated time, and 2/LT ALLCHIN sent a message postponing the operation until 3.15. At 3.15, everything being ready, gas was discharged. Of 175 Cylinders in the line 160 were discharged. The remainder were undischarged on account of:-

- (a) Cut rubber pipe 5. (3 in one emplacement gassed the man working the emplacement, and he turned off)
- (b) Dome cap refused to unscrew 1. (thought to have fallen off the G.S. Wagon)
- (c) Stuffing box unscrewed 2.
- (d) Broken Syphon tube 2.

and five others for which the cause is not yet quite clear up to the present.

These 15 Cylinders will be brought back to our dug-outs tonight, and a further report will be forwarded you when they have been examined.

The enemy sent up no distinctive flares, and there was no retaliation with the exception of a certain amount of rifle fire.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 23

ERVILLERS 28/8/17

Projector Attack

- (1) It is proposed to install 1000 projectors at U.19.a to fire four groups of gas drums on the portion of the HINDENBURG SUPPORT LINE from U.20.b.7.5. to U.14.a.7.2.

This line contains dug outs along its whole length, and is usually occupied by the enemy in strength.

- (2) A certain number of projectors have been salvaged from the VI Corps front, and the requisite number will be available shortly. 754 are dug in at the position, and the work is being carried on as quickly as possible. The projectors are taken up on the trench tramway, and trucks with pushing parties are required for this work.
- (3) 1000 Drums are available for this operation, and these can be taken up by G.S, Wagons, or they can be taken up the light railway and trench tramway to the point where the projectors are dug in. No carrying parties are necessary for this part of the operation.
- (4) WIND
The wind limits for this operation are, W. to S by W.
- (5) The progress of this operation will be reported to 16th DIV, and further details will be submitted when the projectors are dug in and ready for the drums.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 24

ERVILLERS 1/9/17

Report on Operations Aug 31st 1917

Sections	41 and 42
Corps & Divn in which attached	VI Corps 50 th Divn
Map ref of emplacements	1. O.20.a.4.8. 2. O.14.c.2.4. 3. O.25.c.8.5.
No of Projectors employed	1 – 200 2 – 100 598 3 - 298
Purpose of Operation	To surprise and gas the enemy holding the line and working in the vicinity of the targets and with artillery cooperation to disorganise his transport etc.
Nature of Ammunition	Gas
Projectiles No of rounds allotted	598
No fired	596
Reason for discrepancy (if any)	Two rounds would not fire, probably owing to wet charges. Charges have been in the Projectors 10 days, with an unusual amount of rain during this time.
Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.	NIL
Direction and Strength of Wind	W by S 5 mph
Remarks	As the wind limits for No 3 target were narrower than for Nos 1 and 2, I issued instructions for Nos 1 and 2 to be fired as soon as the flash of No 3 guns was observed. No 2 target fired about 5 seconds after No 3 and No 1 within half a second of No 2.
Names of Officers in charge of Operations	2/LT SANTER R.E. i/c Sect 41. (LT HALL being on leave) 2/LT BASSFORD R.E. Sect 42.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

WAR DIARY
OF

"J." SPECIAL COMPANY. R.E.

FROM September 1st. 1917.

TO September 30th. 1917.

(VOLUME 1)

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

01 September 1917 To 30 September 1917

ERVILLES	01/09/1917	Digging in projectors at U19 b: 905 projectors in position: Arrivals 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather showery: Wind S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	02/09/1917	Digging out projectors from old position: 2 pm: 2 sections on detachment at NEUVILLE VITASSE rejoined the company: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from 3rd army rest camp: Dep: 3 O.R. to 3rd army rest camp: 2 O.R. on leave. Weather showery: Wind W.S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	03/09/1917	Digging in projectors at U19 a: 960 now in position: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from Hosp: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2/Lt G.C. ALLCHIN R.E. & 1 O.R. on detach to CSCRE 3rd army: 2 O.R. on leave: 3 O.R. to hosp. 1 O.R. to hosp		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	04/09/1917	Digging in projectors at U19 b: 1008 now in position: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from depot: 2 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind S.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	05/09/1917	Dummy positions dug at U19 c in rear of position: 8 pm: Carrying drums to U19 b position commences: Arrivals 2 O.R. from hosp: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave to Uk. Weather fine & warm: Wind E.	Appendix no.25	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	06/09/1917	340 drums placed in projectors at U19 b: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 3 O.R. to Hosp: 2 O.R. on leave: Casualties: 1 O.R. W in A. Weather warm with thunderstorms: Wind S. E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	07/09/1917	347 drums placed in projectors at U19 b: Arrivals: 2/Lt G C ALLCHIN R.E.& 1 O.R. from detach CSCRE 3rd Army: 4 O.R. from Hosp: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to Hosp. Weather fine: Wind S.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	08/09/1917	313 drums placed in position at U19 b: 1000 now in position: Received 16th Divn orders for firing at 8 am 9/9/1917: Explorer parties stand by: Arr: 1 O.R. from leave: Dep: 2 O.R. on leave. Wind E.: Weather fine.	Appendix No. 26	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	09/09/1917	8 am: 997 projectors fired from U29 b position: Resetting 50th Divn projectors commenced: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave. Wind S.W.: Fine.	Appendix No.27	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	10/09/1917	10 am: Reported to 16th Divn to discuss resetting of projectors at U19 b: Was informed that several casualties had been caused by shots falling short: 2 pm: Attended court of inquiry on casualties caused by drums falling short: 7 pm: Resetting 50th Divn projectors continues: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: Dep: 2 O.R. on leave: 3 O.R. to Hosp Weather fine: Wind E.	Appendix No.28	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	11/09/1917	16 drums brought back from U19 b operation which fell short into our trenches: Resetting continued for 50th Divn projectors: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave. Weather fine: Wind S.E. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	12/09/1917	Resetting completed for 50th Divn projectors: 572 reset ready for firing: Resetting commenced at U19 b: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave: Casualties: 3 O.R. gassed in action (enemy gas shells). Weather fine: Wind N. - N.N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	13/09/1917	Carrying drums to CHERISY & GUEMAPPE positions (50th Divn): Resetting projectors at U19 b: Arrivals 3 O.R. from leave: Dep: 2 O.R. on leave. Weather fine but cold: Wind N.W.	Appendix No.29	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	14/09/1917	Carrying drums to 50th Divn positions: 572 placed ready for firing but not used: Resetting projectors at U19 b: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from 3rd army rest camp: Dep: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. from Hosp.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather cold & showery: W. to S.W.		
ERVILLES	15/09/1917	Receive 50th Divn operation orders to fire drums between 3 & 4 and 16/9/1917: Resetting projectors at U19 b: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from 3rd army school: 2 O.R. from Hosp: Departures: 2/Lt G C. ALLCHIN R.E. on detachment to H.Q. Staff 17th Divn & 1 O.R.: 1 O.R. on leave.	Appendix No.30	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather Fine: Wind S.W. to W.		
ERVILLES	16/09/1917	4:04 am: 552 drums fired on to targets in 50th Divn operation: 20 remained unfired: Resetting projectors at U19 b: Arrivals: 4 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp: 2 O.R. on leave.	Appendix No.31	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind S.W. to S.		
ERVILLES	17/09/1917	Resetting projectors at U19 b: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from hosp: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp: 1 O.R. on leave,		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind S.W. to S.		
ERVILLES	18/09/1917	4:00 am: 20 remaining drums in 50th Divn operation fired at 4:00 am: Wind S.S.W. 7 mph: No retaliation but gas gongs were sounded by the enemy: Projectors at U19 b position completed: 1004 now in position: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp: 2 O.R. on leave.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind S.W.		
ERVILLES	19/09/1917	3:30 pm: 'J' company inspected by THIRD ARMY COMMANDER (GEN SIR J BYNG) who expressed his appreciation of the service of the company in a short speech: Party reconnoitred the old BULLECOURT position U36 a but found no projectors: This position is quite finished & written off: Reports to G.O.C. 50th Divn who require the projectors on his front reset: Arrivals: 1 O.R. to hosp: 4 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind S.W.		

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	20/09/1917	10:00 am: Reconnoitred a position at U17.c.2.6. with a view to installing projectors here for use against FONTAINE lez CROISILLES & vicinity: 7 pm: Commence to reset projectors on 50th Divn front: 8 pm: 12 drums which have been salvaged by 62nd Divn (on right) brought back to camp & found to contain AMMONAL: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind S.W.		
ERVILLES	21/09/1917	Company resetting projectors at GUEMAPPE & CHERISY: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind W.		
ERVILLES	22/09/1917	Resetting projectors in 50th Divn operation: Report to 50th Divn & arrange for carrying parties for 24th/25th & 25th/26th: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp.	Appendix No.32	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather cloudy: Wind W.		
ERVILLES	23/09/1917	Resetting projectors on 50th Divn front: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from hosp: Dep: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind light & variable.		
ERVILLES	24/09/1917	9 pm: 261 drums carried to GUEMAPPE position: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind light easterly airs.		
ERVILLES	25/09/1917	9 pm: 301 drums & 4'0" projectors carried to CHERISY position: Received 50th Divn operation order for discharge: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 2 O.R. from leave: Depart: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to hosp.	Appendix No.33	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind S.W.		
ERVILLES	26/09/1917	9 pm: 40 projectors with drums carried to GUEMAPPE position: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from detachment: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. on detachment		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
		Weather fine: Wind S.W. to S.		

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	27/09/1917	4:46 am: 602 drums fired at GUEMAPPE & CHERISY positions: Arrivals: 6 O.R. rejoined from Hosp: 3 O.R. from leave. Weather fine: Wind light westerly.	Appendix No.34	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	28/09/1917	Company on camp fatigues: Arrivals: 2/Lt S F MOSS R.E. (joining for duty): 3 O.R. from leave: 3 O.R. from detach: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Wind light & variable: Weather fair.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	29/09/1917	9 pm: Company resetting projectors on 50th Divn front: Arrivals: Lt F WOOTON R.E. (joining for duty): 1 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from depot: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind light & variable.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	30/09/1917	9 pm: Company resetting projectors on 50th Divn front: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine: Wind N.E.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 25

ERVILLERS 3/9/17

Detail of Wagons and men required for 3 consecutive nights commencing Sept 4th 1917 to convey Drums for Livens Projector.

340 charge blocks and 340 drums will be sent up by light Railway from MORY to ECOUST ST MIEN on each of these nights. Train leaves MORY at 8.30 pm and arrives at ECOUST approximately 8.45 pm.

9 trucks on trench tramway will be required on each of these nights to be available on arrival of train at ECOUST.

Pushing party of 1 Officer, 2 NCOs and 36 men will be required to transfer the charge blocks, and drums from the light Railway to the trench tramway trucks and to push the loaded trucks to terminus at U.19.a where the drums will be handed over to J Spec Coy's personnel.

The pushing party will unload and return for a second journey.

Pushing party to report at tramway office ECOUST, C.2.a.7.3. at 8.30 pm (4th, 5th, and 6th) to Official of J Spec Coy R.E. who will direct the work.

All troops engaged in this work, and in the vicinity, will wear box respirators in the ALERT position.

For approval please

TO :- G.S. 16th Divⁿ

(Sgd) C Laycock Capt R.E.

O.C. J Spec Coy R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 26

ERVILLERS 8/9/17

16th Divⁿ Operation Order No A.S. 1248/18

8th Sept 1917

1. On the morning of Sept 9th or on the first suitable morning after that date, gas will be projected from the neighbourhood of that portion of STRANGWAYS RESERVE which lies on U.19.b. on to the following localities in TUNNEL TRENCH, which are marked W, X, Y and Z on the accompanying sketch.

U.14.a.6.3.

U.14.d.0.7.

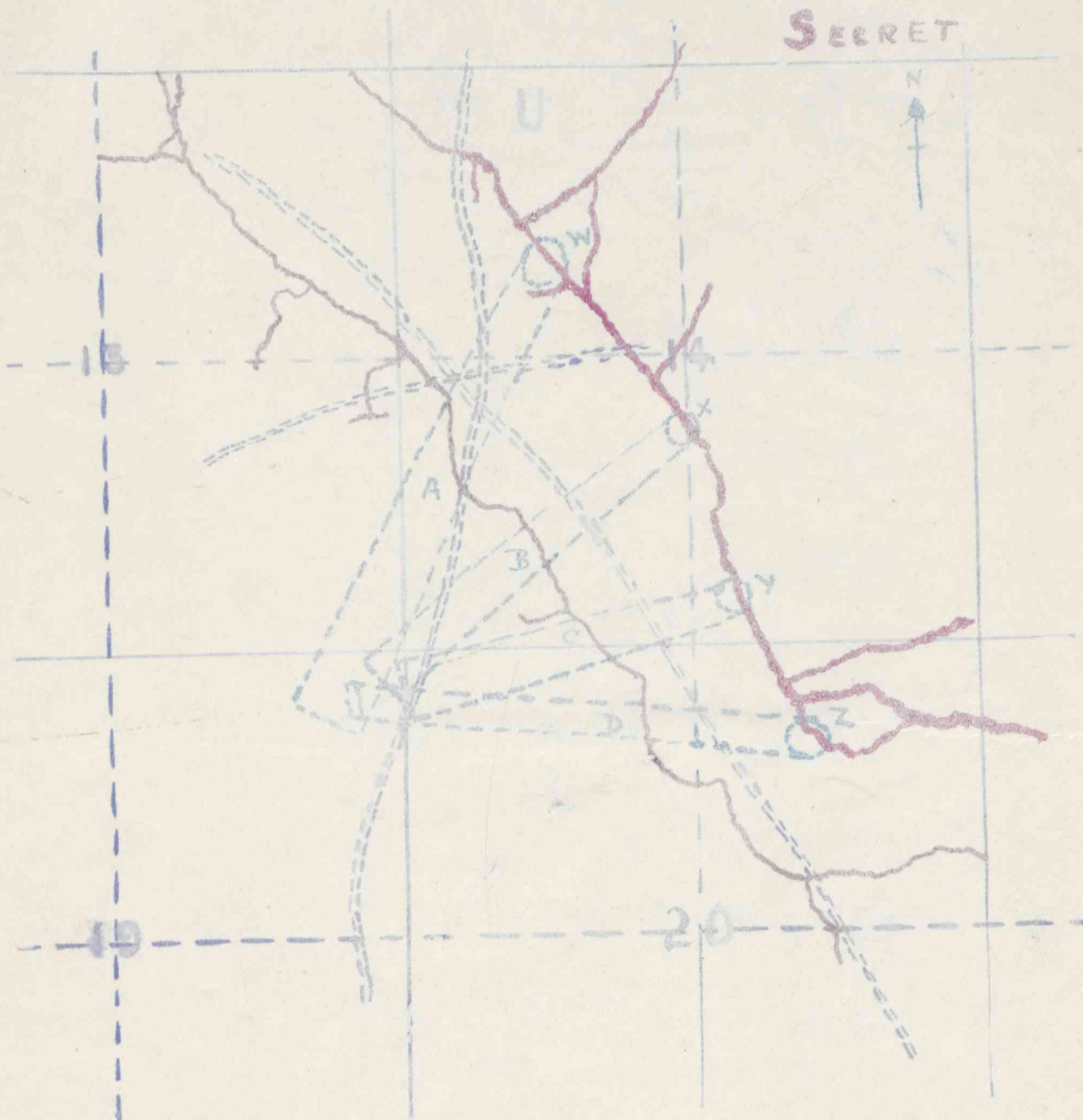
U.14.d.2.2.

U.14.d.5.6.
2. The whole of the projectors will be fired simultaneously at Zero hour. Any projectors that have not been fired by Zero plus 15 minutes will not be fired at all.
3. All arrangements for the actual projection of the gas are being made by O.C. J Special Company R.E.
4. C.R.A. 16th Divⁿ will arrange to barrage F. AG, TRENCH from zero plus 3 minutes to zero plus 13 minutes, and to deal with any movement that may be subsequently be observed during the day in the area bombarded.
5. G.O.C's 47th and 48th Inf Bdes, will arrange to clear their front line at the points marked A. B. C. and D in the accompanying sketch. Trenches to be cleared by zero Hour and are not to be reoccupied until after zero plus 15 minutes, excepting in case of an enemy attack.
6. Zero Hour will be 8.0 am.
7. The operation can only take place if the weather conditions are favourable. On the first evening that there appears to be any prospects of carrying it out on the following morning, the code word CASTLE will be sent out to all concerned as soon as possible after 7.0 pm. Should it subsequently become necessary to postpone the operation the code word AIR will be used. No code word will be sent out in the evening if the conditions are unfavourable.
8. Except for the above code words, no reference to the above operation is on any account to be made over any telephone or by wires.
9. O.C. J Special Company R.E. and 16th Div Arty will synchronise watches at 16th Div H.Q. each evening that the code word CASTLE is sent out, as soon as possible after receipt of the message.

Sgd L. C. Jackson Lieut Col
G.S. 16th Division

To accompany 16th Div
no a.s. 1248/18.

SECRET



REF. > SHEET 513 . S.W. 4
SCALE 1:10,000.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 27

ERVILLERS 9/9/17

Report on Operations Sept 9th 1917

Zero Time 8.0 am

Sections	41, 44, 45 (with additional exploder men)
Corps & Divn in which attached	VI Corps, 16 th Div ⁿ
No of Projectors employed	1,000
Map ref of emplacements	U.19.b
Purpose of Operation	To surprise and gas the enemy holding the HINDENBURG SUPPORT LINE from U.20.b.5.6 to U.14.a.6.3.
Nature of Ammunition	Gas (lethal)
Projectiles No of rounds allotted	1,000
No fired	997
Reason for discrepancy (if any)	The rear ranks of two batteries failed to fire on the first shot. Seven projectors were discharged at 8.7 am and seven more at 8.15, leaving three guns unfired.
Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.	NIL
Direction and Strength of Wind	S.W. by S. 4 mph
Remarks	No firing took place after 8.15 and enemy retaliation up to 8.30 was nil. No signals were seen and no gas gongs heard.
Names of Officers in charge of Operations	L ^T A.A. HALL 2/L ^T G.C. ALLCHIN R.E. 2/L ^T R. PENDLEBURY R.E.

Copies to: G.S. VI Corps
G.S. 16th Div
C.S.C.R.E. Third Army

(Sgd) C Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Spec Coy R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 28

ERVILLERS 11/9/17

From:- O.C. J Special Company R.E.
To:- C.S.C.R.E. Third Army
Ref attached map

I beg to report on gas casualties caused by drums which fell short, and wide during the discharge of drums at 8.0 am on the 9th inst. The casualties were all in one battalion viz, the 7th LEINSTERS. The M.O. of the 7th LEINSTERS gave me the following figures:-

1 Officer, 18 O.R. gassed, of which 1 Officer and 4 O.R.s have since died, and several others very slight cases who remained at duty.

These were all caused by drums bursting in our own front trench. As far as can be ascertained 20 drums fell in our line, of which 16 were duds and 4 burst. There is also evidence of 3 more which burst, but of these 3 no trace can be found of portions of drums.

Previous to discharge I arranged the details of clearing the line in front of the discharge, on the sections of line marked in green on the attached map, with G.S. 01. 16th Divⁿ and other arrangements were as given in the attached copy of 16th Divⁿ order No A.S. 1248/18

As the projectors were carefully laid and well tamped, I considered that the positions cleared would be sufficient precaution. I also arranged that all troops on the line should be warned before hand that the discharge was taking place.

On the evening of the 8th the Bde Major of the 47th INF BDE went round the line and warned all Coy Commanders and in addition they all received notification by Brigade or Battalion Orders on the subject.

The drums fell along the portion of the line marked with brown on the attached map. I have spoken to the two Company Commanders (A & C 7th LEINSTERS) and they state that though they were warned of a probable discharge of gas, they did not understand that the noise of the explosion of the charges was in any way connected with the discharge of gas, and they were very surprised when the drums fell in our line.

The majority of the men, who were gassed, appear to have been more concerned in getting out of the way of the falling drums, than in putting on their respirators, and all appear to have associated the sound of the explosion with a mine, and considered that this was in no way connected with the discharge of gas.

The batteries have been examined and there is nothing to show any probable cause of these shorts. The charges were prepared at Coy H.Q. and so far as the usual testing is concerned, every charge

that went up to the batteries was in perfect order. A heavy shower fell on the afternoon of the 6th and wet the powder of some 40 charge blocks, but this was replaced by dry powder from stock on the following day. This shower may have wet some charges already in the projectors, but projectors containing charge blocks at that time, were 300 of No 1 target and 40 of No 2. No shorts fell from these batteries therefore

No rain fell on the position after this date, so it is not possible that any of the bags of powder in the remainder of the projectors could have been damp. I have examined the fuses of the 16 drums which fell in our line. They classify as follows:-

Shear wire not broken	12
Shear wire broken & cap not hit	2
Shear wire broken and cap hit	2
	16

In the latter 2 the cap does not appear to have been hit with sufficient violence to detonate the pistol cap, and the shear wire may have been broken in all the 4 latter cases by the shock of falling. I cannot put forward any explanation to account for these drums having fallen short or for the fact that some burst while others did not, except that they may have hit each other in mid air, and so been turned out of their course. Machine gunners holding the line at the time are reported to have said that they saw this actually recurring, and one of the dud drums which we have collected, has an indentation such as would have been caused by this, and not on that portion of the drum on which it fell.

A Court of Enquiry was held on the afternoon of the 10th at which I gave evidence to the above effect. I will endeavour to obtain a copy of the proceedings when the finding has been confirmed

(Sgd) C Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Spec Coy vR.ER.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 29

ERVILLERS 13/9/17

50th Division
G.X. 4039/147

Carrying Scheme

NIGHT of SEPT 13/14TH

1 carrying party of 35 men and 4 carrying parties of 50 men each (exclusive of Officers and NCOs) to report to representative of “J” Special Coy, at O.13.d.9.4. at intervals of 15 minutes, 1st party to report at 9.30 pm Sept 13th.

1st party will carry 200 charge blocks (6 per man) and remaining parties 200 drums (1 per man) to position at PO.20.a.4.8.

Guides for all Infantry parties will be found by “J” Spec Coy at their respective rendezvous

All carrying parties and troops in the vicinity will wear box respirators in the ALERT position.

NIGHT of SEPT 14/15TH

8 parties of 42 men each (exclusive of Officers and NCOs) to report to representative of “J” Special Coy at entrance of FOSTER AVENUE (approx. N.29.b.9.3.) at intervals of 15 minutes, 1st party to report at 9.15 pm Sept 14th

Parties will be guided to the Dump, and from there will carry charge blocks (6 per man), or drums (1 per man) to position at O.25.c.9.4.

Guides for all Infantry parties will be found by “J” Spec Coy at their respective rendezvous

All carrying parties and troops in the vicinity will wear box respirators in the ALERT position.

(Sgd) G.S.
50th Division

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 30

ERVILLERS 15/9/17

Addendum N° 1 to 50th Division Operation Order N° 121

1. Zero Day will be Saturday, September 15th 1917
2. Zero hour for the First Phase will be 4 pm
3. Zero hour for the Second Phase will be 7.40 pm
4.
 - (a) Zero hour for the THIRD PHASE will be between 3 am and 4 am on Sunday, September 16th, 1917.
 - (b) The machine guns and artillery which are co-operating in the THIRD PHASE will take the actual discharge of the projectors at zero hour. This discharge can be easily seen and will take place near the junction of FOSTER AVENUE and BULLFINCH SUPPORT.
 - (c) If the projectors are not fired between 3 am and 4 am they will not be fired at all.
5. Should the forecast be quite unfavourable for the projection of gas, the word RATS will be sent out to all concerned. This will mean THIRD PHASE cancelled

12/9/17

Signed ? Kansleath L^t Col GS.
G.S. 50th Divⁿ

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 31

ERVILLERS 16/9/17

Report on Operations Sept 16th 1917

Zero Time 4.4 am

Sections	42 and 43
Corps & Divn in which attached	VI Corps, 50 th Div ⁿ
Map ref of emplacements	1. O.20.a.4.8. 2. O.14.c.2.4. 3. O.25.c.8.5.
No of Projectors employed	1. 193 2. 98 3. 281
Purpose of Operation	To surprise and gas reinforcements sent up into these areas, to replace casualties caused by raids on the 15 th inst.
Nature of Ammunition	Gas
Projectiles No of rounds allotted	572
No fired	552
Reason for discrepancy (if any)	Pistol heads were screwed on too tight, and on the night position it was found impossible to unscrew a few in one battery by zero time in order to detonate. This battery was left.
Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.	NIL
Direction and Strength of Wind	S.W. by W. 6 mph
Remarks	No 3 position fired 4.4.am and Nos 1 & 2 some 4 and 7 seconds afterwards respectively.
Names of Officers in charge of Operations	2/L ^T SANTER R.E. 2/L ^T BASSFORD R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 32

ERVILLERS 22/9/17

From:- O.C. J Special Company R.E.
To:- G.S. 50TH Division

Herewith please, revised detail of parties etc. required for charge clock and drum carrying.

Night 24th – 25th Sept

12 G.S. wagons to report to representative of “J” Special Company R.E. at cross roads at N.21.b.95.90. at 8.0 pm Sept 24th to convey 300 charge blocks and 300 drums to O.13.d.9.4.

1 carrying party of 20 men, and 4 carrying parties of 25 men each, (exclusive of Officers and NCOs) to report to representative of “J” Special Coy at O.13.d.9.4. at intervals of 15 minutes, 1st party to report at 9.30 pm.

1st party will carry 200 charge blocks (6 per man) and remaining parties 200 drums (1 per man) to position at O.20.a.4.8. Each party will carry two journeys.

Guides and loading parties for G.S. wagons, and guides for all Infantry parties will be found by “J” Spec Coy at their respective rendezvous

All carrying parties and troops in the vicinity, will wear box respirators in the ALERT position.

NIGHT of 25th - 26TH Sept

12 G.S. wagons to report to representative of “J” Special Coy R.E. at cross roads at N.21.b.95.90. at 8.0 pm Sept 25th to convey 300 charge blocks and 300 drums to N.30.a.4.0.

8 parties of 42 men each (exclusive of Officers and NCOs) to report to representative of “J” Special Coy at QUARRY DUMP (approx. N.30.D.6.9.) at intervals of 15 minutes, 1st party to report at 9.15 pm

Parties will be guided to the dump, and from the dump, and from there will convey charge blocks (6 per man), or drums (1 per man) to position at O.25.c.9.4.

Guides and loading parties for G.S. wagons, and guides for all Infantry parties will be found by “J” Spec Coy at their respective rendezvous

All carrying parties and troops in the vicinity, will wear box respirators in the ALERT position.

For approval please

(Sgd) C. Laycock
O.C. J Spec Coy R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 33

ERVILLERS 25/9/17

50th Division GX 4555/3

1. If conditions are favourable, Gas will be projected on to the following targets on the 26th September.
 1. Cherisy at O.32.a. central
 2. Hillside Work O.21.a. and b.
 3. Chalk Pit O.15.c.2.6.
2. Zero hour will be 5 am
3. C.R.A will arrange for a smoke and gas shell bombardment of the areas mentioned in Para 1 from zero to zero + 15 minutes.
4. The D.M.G.O. will arrange for M.G. barrages on to the same area from zero to zero + 15 minutes.
5. If it is decided to postpone the operation owing to unfavourable weather conditions, the Code word ‘RUBBISH’ will be sent to all concerned
6. Between the hours of 4.30 am and 5.30 am all troops will be withdrawn from the front line from Post 12 to Post 16 inclusive.
7. C.R.A., D.M. G.O., and “J” Special Coy R.E. will synchronise watches at Divisional Headquarters at 6.0 pm on 25th September

24-9-17

Sgd E.C. Anstey L^T Col
G.S. 50th Division

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 34

ERVILLERS 27/9/17

Report on Operations Sept 27th 1917

Zero Time 4.46 am

Sections	42 and 43	
Corps & Divn in which attached	VI Corps, 50 th Div ⁿ	
Map ref of emplacements	1. O.20.a.25.80. 2. O.14.c.2.4. 3. O.25.d.2.4.	
No of Projectors employed	1. 204 2. 97 3. 301	Total 602
Purpose of Operation	To surprise and gas the enemy holding the line on the localities of the targets	HILLSIDE WORK ST ROHART QUARRY CHERISY
Nature of Ammunition	Gas	
Projectiles No of rounds allotted	602	
No fired	602	
Reason for discrepancy (if any)	Nil	
Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.	Nil	
Direction and Strength of Wind	S.W.	4 mph
Remarks	Projectors at No 3 position fired at 4.40 am. No 1 & 2 positions fired at 2 and 3 seconds afterwards respectively. All were discharged on the first shot. The enemy put up a very large number of various coloured lights and rockets, for over 15 minutes. A certain amount of retaliation was observed on our front line & supports.	
Names of Officers in charge of Operations	2/L ^T R.B. SANTER R.E. 2/L ^T J.B. BASSFORD R.E.	

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

"J"
SPECIAL COMPANY.
F.E.
No.....
Date.....

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118. *

Page 84

J Special Coy R 8

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ERVILLERS.	1917 Oct 1st		Company resetting projectors on 50 th DIV front. Arrivals 1 OR from leave Departures 1 OR to Hq. p. weather warm wind S.	
-do-	2 nd		Company resetting projectors on 50 th DIV front. Proposed scheme for this operation submitted to VI th Corps. Arrivals 3 ORs from leave. Departures 3 OR to Hq. p. weather fine warm wind SE.	appendix no 35
-do-	3 rd		Company resetting projector on 50 th DIV front. Departures 2/LT R.A. SANTER RE + 1 OR on detachment to 8 th Army Anti G. School	
-do-	4 th		weather fine wind W to SW Company resetting projectors on 50 th DIV front. Reported to 16 th DIV with scheme for clearing the line + firing 1,000 projectors at V. 9 b. Arrivals 1 OR from leave, 1 OR from Hq. p. Departures L.T. F. WOOTTON RE on leave	appendix no 36
-do	5 th	10 am 3 pm	weather cool wind W to SW. Company a Camp Fatigue. Reported to 16 th DIV + discussed scheme. 50 th DIV have been relieved by 51 st DIV. Reported to 51 st DIV + informed them of the progress of resetting. Arrivals 1 OR from Hq. p. 2 OR from leave, Departures 1 OR on leave. weather cold wind NW.	

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

01 October 1917 To 31 October 1917

ERVILLES	01/10/1917	Company resetting projectors on 50th Divn front: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather warm: Wind 8.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	02/10/1917	Company resetting projectors on 50th Divn front: Proposed scheme for this operation submitted to VIth Corps: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from leave: Departures: 3 O.R. to hosp. Weather fine & warm: Wind S.E.	Appendix No. 35	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	03/10/1917	Company resetting projectors on 50th Divn front: Departures 2/Lt R.B. SANTER R.E. & 1 O.R. on detachment to 3rd army Anti Gas school. Weather fine: Wind W. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	04/10/1917	Company resetting projectors on 50th Divn front: Reported to 16th Divn with scheme for clearing the line & firing 1000 projectors at U.19.b : Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from hosp: Departures: Lt F. Wootton R.E. on leave. Weather cool: Wind W. to S.W.	Appendix No. 36	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	05/10/1917	Company on camp fatigues: Reported to 16th Divn & discussed scheme: 50th Divn have been relieved by 51st Divn: Reported to 51st Divn & informed them of the progress of resetting: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave Weather cold: Wind N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	06/10/1917	The company has been on camp fatigues: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hosp: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2/Lt S F. MOSS R.E. & 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold: Wind W. to N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	07/10/1917	Company carrying drums to U19 b position: 340 drums taken to position: Departure: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold & squally: Wind W. to N.W.	Appendix No. 37	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	08/10/1917	Revised scheme for 2 salvoes handed to 16th Divn & progress reported: Carrying drums to U19 b: Weather so bad that trucks could not be pushed up: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. From hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to Hosp: 3 O.R. to 3rd Army rest camp. Weather very windy & cold: Wind S.W. up to 50 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	09/10/1917	340 drums & charge blocks taken up to U19 b position: Company inspected by G O C Special Brigade 4:00 pm: Arrivals: 3 O.R. from 3rd Army rest camp: 1 O.R. from Hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold with showers: Wind S.W. 25-30 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	10/10/1917	316 drums & charge blocks taken up to U19 b position: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fine but cold: Wind N.W. to W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	11/10/1917	4:00 pm: Lt HALL stood by with explode men to discharge 496 drums: 8:00 pm: 496 drums discharged: Wind S.W. by W. 4 mph: 9:00 pm: 2/Lt PENDLEBURY stood by to discharge 500 drums: 12 midnight: 500 drums discharged: Wind S.W. 6-7 mph: Departures: 2 O.R. to Cadet School England for Commissions : 1 O.R. on leave: 1 O.R. to Hosp. Weather cold: Wind W. to S.W.	Appendix No. 38 Appendix 39	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	12/10/1917	Company was on Camp fatigues: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold: Wind S.W. to W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	13/10/1917	10:00 pm: 16th Divn report that several shorts fell in our lines on 11th: 6 pm: 300 drums carried up to GUEMAPPE position (51st Divn front): Arrivals: 1 O.R. from Hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fine: Wind W. to S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	14/10/1917	6 pm: 306 drums carried up to CHERISY position (51st Divn): Arrivals: 1 O.R. from Hosp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fair but cold: Wind W. to N.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	15/10/1917	4 pm: 2/Lt BASSFORD & 2/Lt PENDLEBURY stand by with explode men to discharge drums in 51st Divn operation: 8:32 pm: 606 drums discharged: Wind S.W. by W. 3 mph: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold: Wind light variable.	Appendix No. 40	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	16/10/1917	Company resting: Arrivals: Lt WOOTON R.E. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fine: Wind light between W. & S.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	17/10/1917	Company on camp fatigues: Arrivals: 2/Lt S F. MOSS R.E. from leave & 1 O.R.: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave Weather showery: Wind S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	18/10/1917	Lt A A. HALL proceeded up to the line to investigate drums which fell short on 11th inst : Company on Camp fatigues: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from Hosp: Departures 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold but fine: Wind S. - S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	19/10/1917	10 am: Reported to G O C 16th Divn with revised scheme for dealing with FONTAINE les CROISILLES: 6 pm: Report on shorts which fell onto our lines sent to C.S.C.R.E. third army: 7 pm: Commence to carry back projectors from U19 b position: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather warmer: Wind light westerly.	Appendix No. 41 Appendix 42	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	20/10/1917	7 pm: Company carrying projectors from U19 b position: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from Hosp: Departures: 2 O.R. appointed to Commissions Special Bde (to depot): 1 O.R. on leave: Casualties: 1 O.R. W in A. Weather mild: Wind light westerly.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	21/10/1917	7 pm: Company carrying projectors from U19 b position & carrying up to U Y C (FONTAINE POSITION): Arrivals: 2 O.R. on leave: 3 O.R. to 3rd army rest camp: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave: 3 O.R. to 3rd army rest camp. Weather fine: Wind S.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	22/10/1917	7 pm: Company carrying projectors from U19 b position & carrying up to U Y C: Casualties: 1 O.R. K in A: 9 O.R. W in A: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 2 O.R. to Hosp: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fine but cold: Wind S. to S.S.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	23/10/1917	7 pm: Company carrying projectors from U19 b position & carrying in at U Y C: Arrivals: 4 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from Hosp: Departures: 2/Lt J,.B. BASSFORD R.E. on leave - LAST SENTENCE WAS CROSSED OUT. Weather cold & wet: Wind N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	24/10/1917	7 pm: Company carrying projectors & digging in at U Y C: Departures: 1 O.R. to Hosp: 2nd Lt J.B. BASSFORD R.E. on leave. Weather cold & wet: Wind S.W. 20-50 mph.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	25/10/1917	7 pm: Company carrying projectors & digging in at U Y C: Arrivals: 8 O.R. rejoined from depot. Weather squally & wet: Wind W. to N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	26/10/1917	Company carrying projectors & digging in at U Y C: Departures: 1 O.R. to Hospital. Squally weather: S.S.E. 10-15 mph.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	27/10/1917	Projectors carried & dug in at U 7 C: Departures CAPT G C LAYCOCK R.E. on leave to UK from 27/10/1917 to 26/11/1917: 1 O.R. to Hospital: COMMAND: Lt G.I. PAINE R.E. assumes command from 27/10/1917. Wind light S.S.E. to N.: Weather variable.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	28/10/1917	Projectors carried up & dug in at U 7 C: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from hospital: 3 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. to hospital. Showery weather: N.W. wind.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	29/10/1917	Company employed in fitting drums & making charges: No arrivals or departures. Weather: Rain: S.S.W. Wind strong.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	30/10/1917	Drums & charge blocks carried up: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: 1 O.R. from hospital. Weather cold unsettled: Wind S.W. strong.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	31/10/1917	Drums & charge blocks carried up: Arrivals: 4 O.R. from rest camp. Weather fine & bright: Light wind N.W. to S.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 35.

From:- O.C. Special Company R.E.

To:- G.S. VI Corps

G.S. 58th Divⁿ

G.S. 51st Divⁿ

C.S.C.R.E. Third Army

Proposed Scheme for use of 600 LIVENS PROJECTORS

1.	<u>Scheme</u>	It is proposed to reset, and fire, the projectors used on the 50 th DIV front															
2.	<u>PROJECTORS</u>	600 Projectors available in these positions viz <table> <tr> <td>1</td><td>O.25.d.2.4</td><td>301</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>O.20.d.2.8.</td><td>204</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>O.14.c.2.4.</td><td>97</td></tr> </table> These will be reset by J Special Coy R.E. in two positions viz <table> <tr> <td>1</td><td>O.25.d.2.4</td><td>300</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>O.14.c.3.4.</td><td>300</td></tr> </table> This work is proceeding, and when finished, a report to this effect will be made to 50th Div	1	O.25.d.2.4	301	2	O.20.d.2.8.	204	3	O.14.c.2.4.	97	1	O.25.d.2.4	300	2	O.14.c.3.4.	300
1	O.25.d.2.4	301															
2	O.20.d.2.8.	204															
3	O.14.c.2.4.	97															
1	O.25.d.2.4	300															
2	O.14.c.3.4.	300															
3.	<u>TARGETS</u>	It is proposed to place two groups of drums (300 each) on to enemy positions at <table> <tr> <td>1.</td><td>S.W. of CHERISY</td><td>(point O.32.c.55.8.5.)</td></tr> <tr> <td>2.</td><td>HILLTOP WORK</td><td>(point O.21.c.8.8.)</td></tr> </table>	1.	S.W. of CHERISY	(point O.32.c.55.8.5.)	2.	HILLTOP WORK	(point O.21.c.8.8.)									
1.	S.W. of CHERISY	(point O.32.c.55.8.5.)															
2.	HILLTOP WORK	(point O.21.c.8.8.)															
4.	<u>DRUMS</u>	Drums will shortly be available for the operation and can be carried to the projector position in two nights, A/B & B/C On A/B night 12 G.S. wagons and a carrying party of 40 men will be required to carry the drums to No 2 position On B/C night 12 G.S. wagons, and 2 carrying parties of 42 men each will be required to carry the drums to No 1 position A detail of rendezvous etc will be forwarded to the Div as soon as the drums become available.															
5.	<u>FIRING</u>	Firing can take place at any time after 4.0 am on the morning of 'C' day.															
6.	<u>WIND</u>	The wind limits for this operation are S.S.W. to N.															
7.	<u>CLEARING of LINE</u>	For No 1 target the front line will require clearing from LARK LANE O.31.d.55.80 to O.25.d.8.2 and support line from THUSH LANE, O.31.b.4.9. to O.25.d.5.2. For No 2 target, posts O.20/4, 5, & 6, will require clearing, from say, 10 minutes before zero time. They can be re-occupied 15 mins after the flash of the projectors is observed.															

For your approval please

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 36.

From:- “J” Special Company RE

To:- G.S. 16th Division
C.S.C.R.E. Third Army

Proposed Scheme for use of 600 LIVENS PROJECTORS

1.	If carrying parties can be provided on the three nights 7th/8th – 8th/9th and 9th/10th the drums for this operation will be in position before 6 am on the 10th Zero time for the discharge of these drums can therefore be at any hour after this, and it is suggested that firing should take place at one hour after darkness (say 8.0 or 8.30 pm) 10th inst.
2.	In accordance with Third Army instructions, the line should be cleared over that portion which is enclosed by an arc of a circle having a radius of 50% of the length of range of the projectors, from the target. On the attached map these areas are marked in green, and the portion of the front line to be cleared therefore should be from U.20.d.4.0. to U.13.d.2.3. The supports should also be cleared in the area marked in green, representing an area covered by a 7 1/2 degrees discrepancy of the drums from the outside batteries, laid on each target, to the target itself.

For your approval please

(signed) G.I. Paine Lieut R.E.
for O.C. J Special Company R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 37.

From:- O.C. J Special Company RE

To:- G.S. 16th Division

1.	It is proposed to fire the 1,000 Projectors in two salvos of 500 each, with an interval of say 4 hours in between						
2.	I would suggest that the batteries on No 1 and 2 be fired first as the wires from the left 200 of these cross the batteries laid on to Nos 3 and 4 targets. Zero time would therefore be:- <table><tr><td>Right</td><td>500 (say)</td><td>8.0 pm</td></tr><tr><td>Left</td><td>500 (say)</td><td>12.0 midnight</td></tr></table>	Right	500 (say)	8.0 pm	Left	500 (say)	12.0 midnight
Right	500 (say)	8.0 pm					
Left	500 (say)	12.0 midnight					
3.	The attached maps, A and B give in the <u>green shaded</u> area the amount of line to be cleared for each salvo. The outer <u>red shaded</u> area, in each case is an additional safety zone in which troops should put on their box respirators, on hearing the noise of the explosion, though there is no necessity to clear this outer safety zone of troops.						
4.	Troops should be cleared from the line by Z minus 5 minutes, and the line should not be reoccupied until Z + 40 minutes, when troops in the outer red shaded zone may remove their box respirators.						

For your approval please

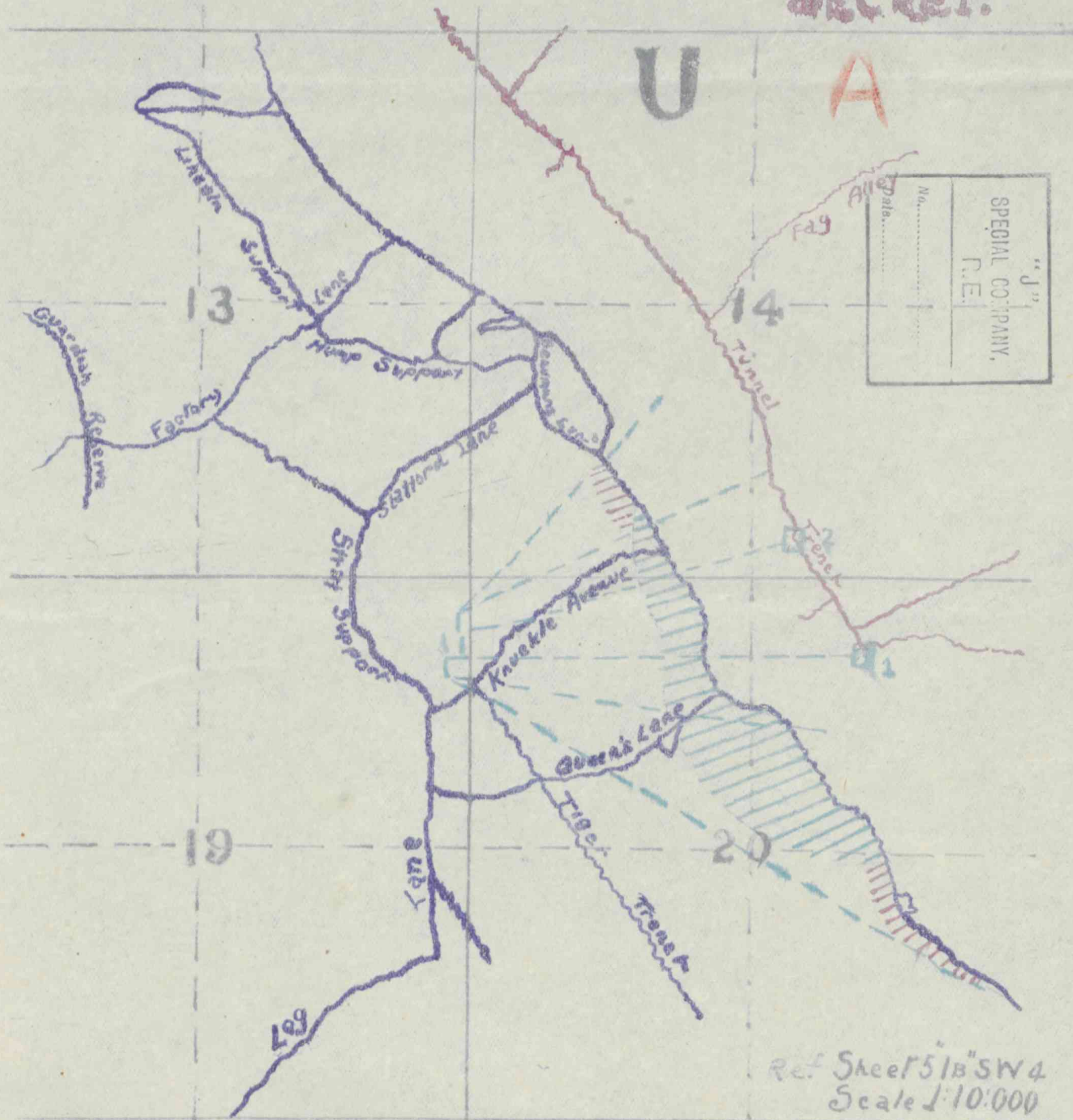
(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

First Salvo.

SECRET

U

A

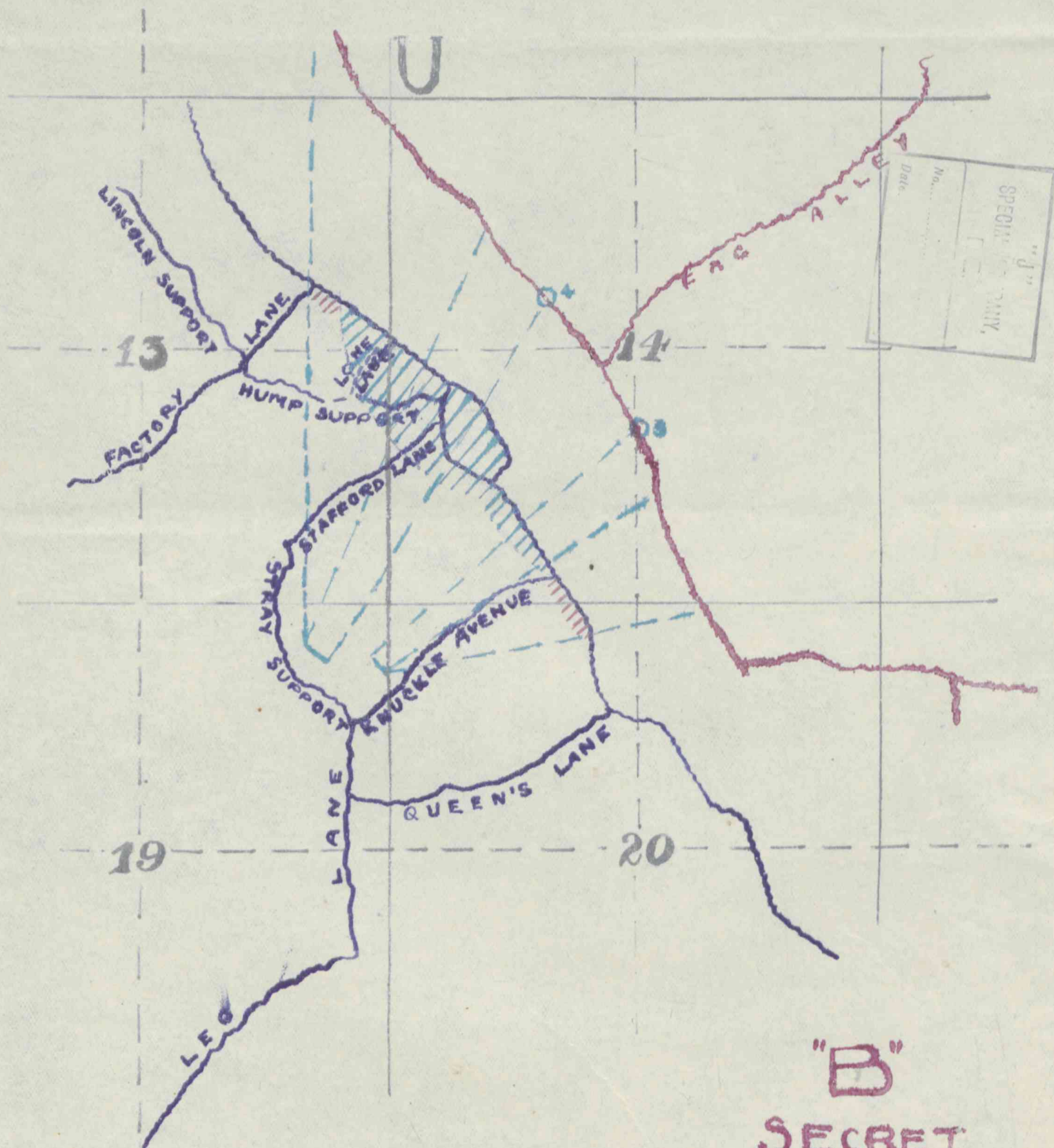


Areas to be cleared 
Areas in which troops will wear respirators 

Targets -  

918

Second Salvo.



Targets - 01 04

Area to be cleared - 

Area in which troops will wear respirators - 

"B"
SECRET

JP

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 38

Report on Operations October 11th 1917

No 1 Salvo Zero Time 8.0 pm

<u>Sections</u>	41 and 43
<u>Corps & Divn in which attached</u>	VI Corps, 16 th Div ⁿ
<u>Map ref of emplacements</u>	U.19.b.
<u>No of Projectors employed</u>	496
<u>Purpose of Operation</u>	To surprise and gas the enemy holding TUNNEL TRENCH from U.10.b.5.6. to U.14.d.1.4.
<u>Nature of Ammunition</u>	Gas (C.G.)
<u>Projectiles No of rounds allotted</u>	496
<u>No fired</u>	496
<u>Reason for discrepancy (if any)</u>	Nil
<u>Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.</u>	Nil
<u>Direction and Strength of Wind</u>	S.W. by W. 4 mph
<u>Remarks</u>	All drums fired on first shot. Enemy put up numerous lights, chiefly golden rain, and a rose pink single star. A certain amount of shelling occurred chiefly on our support line.
<u>Names of Officers in charge of Operations</u>	L ^T A.A. HALL

Copies to G.S. VI Corps
 G.S. 16th Divn
 C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 39

Report on Operations October 11th 1917

No 2 Salvo Zero Time 12.0 midnight

<u>Sections</u>	45 and 43
<u>Corps & Divn in which attached</u>	VI Corps, 16 th Div ⁿ
<u>Map ref of emplacements</u>	U.19.b.
<u>No of Projectors employed</u>	500
<u>Purpose of Operation</u>	To surprise and gas the enemy holding TUNNEL TRENCH from U.14.d.1.4. to U.14.a.6.3.
<u>Nature of Ammunition</u>	Gas (C.G.)
<u>Projectiles No of rounds allotted</u>	500
<u>No fired</u>	500
<u>Reason for discrepancy (if any)</u>	Nil
<u>Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.</u>	Nil
<u>Direction and Strength of Wind</u>	S.W. 6-7 mph
<u>Remarks</u>	All drums fired on first shot. No lights were put up, though a little shelling of our supports was carried out.
<u>Names of Officers in charge of Operations</u>	2/L ^T R. PENDLEBURY R.E.

Copies to G.S. VI Corps
 G.S. 16th Divⁿ
 C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 40

Report on Operations Oct 15th 1917

Zero Time 8.32 pm

<u>Sections</u>	42 and 45
<u>Corps & Divn in which attached</u>	VI Corps, 51 st Div ⁿ
<u>Map ref of emplacements</u>	1. O.25.d.2.4. 2. O.14.c.3.4.
<u>No of Projectors employed</u>	1. 306 2. 300
<u>Purpose of Operation</u>	To surprise and gas the enemy holding the line in the vicinity of the targets 1. O.32.c.85.55. 2. O.21.c.8.8.
<u>Nature of Ammunition</u>	Gas (C.G.)
<u>Projectiles No of rounds allotted</u>	606
<u>No fired</u>	606
<u>Reason for discrepancy (if any)</u>	Nil
<u>Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.</u>	Nil
<u>Direction and Strength of Wind</u>	S.W. by W. 3 mph
<u>Remarks</u>	No 1 position fired at 8.32 pm. 16 drums misfired on the first shot, owing to circuit breaking. These were fired at 8.45 pm. No 2 position fired at 8.34 pm. All fired on first shot.
<u>Names of Officers in charge of Operations</u>	2/L ^T J.B. BASSFORD R.E. 2/L ^T R. PENDLEBURY R.E.

Copies to G.S. VI Corps
 G.S. 51st Divⁿ
 C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 41.

From:- O.C. Special Company R.E.

To:- G.S. 16th Div

1.	<u>General Scheme</u>	It is proposed to instal 800 projectors to fire gas drums on to targets in the vicinity of FONTAINE lez CROISILLES
2.	<u>PROJECTORS</u>	The projectors for this operation will be withdrawn from an old position at U.19.b. and having been cleaned, will be carried forward by light railway and trench tramway, the minimum of men being thus used in the process. The detail of work required for this purpose would be as follows A.B.C. and D nights, 1 working party of 50 men to report to representative of J Special Coy R.E. at PORTER DUMP (U.19.a.) at 8.0 pm nightly, to carry projectors from position at U.19.b. to end of trench tramway at U.19.a. The projectors will then be conveyed by trench tramway to ECOUST, and thence by light railway to a siding near J Coy's camp, where they will be cleaned and inspected. C.D.E and F nights, 1 working party of 50 men to report to representative of J Special Coy R.E. at terminus of light railway at ALE DUMP at T.18.d. at 8.0 pm nightly to push projectors up trench tramway to terminus at U.17.c. These parties will be required to work for not less than 4 hours, and should therefore be fresh men. An officer of J Special Coy will supervise this work. The projectors will then be dug in at U.7.c.4.3. by J Special Coy R.E. and camouflaged.
3.	<u>DRUMS</u>	Gas drums are available for this operation and can be carried up in two nights, G and H, or such other nights as convenient. These will be taken up by light railway and trench tramway to the position. Detail of work required:- 1 pushing party of 50 men to report to representative of J Special Coy R.E. at ALE DUMP, at 8.0 pm nightly, to push trucks up to U.7.c. An officer of J Special Coy will supervise this work.
4.	<u>ZERO</u>	Zero can be any hour after 4.0 am on I day during the hours of darkness.
5.	<u>WIND</u>	The wind limits for this operation are S.S.W. to W.N.W.
6.	<u>TARGETS</u>	It is suggested that 5 groups of drums each be placed on, and about the following points:- 1. U.8.a.20.55.

		2. U.2.c.20.20. 3. U.2.c.00.55. 4. U.2.c.50.25. 5. U.2.c.75.25.
7.	<u>CLEARING of LINE</u>	In the event of the above targets being approved, it would be necessary to clear the line for the portion marked <u>green</u> on the attached map, from Zero minus 5 to Zero plus 40 minutes. Troops remaining in the portions shaded <u>red</u> , should wear box respirators, from the time of hearing the discharge of the projectors, until Zero plus 40 minutes.

For your approval please

JG 1309

18.10.17

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.

O.C. J Special Company R.E.

Copy to C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 42.

From:- O.C. Special Company R.E.

To:- C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

Report on shorts 11-10-17

On 13th inst 16th Div asked for an Officer to report at 47th INF BDE H.Q. to make arrangements for removal of some drums which had fallen short on the night 11th-12th. The number estimated at about 20.

L^T PAINE reported to 47th Inf Bde H.Q. at about noon on the 13th, and arranged to send a competent N.C.O. to deal with the matter, to the front line Battⁿ. The Bde informed him that the shorts had fallen somewhere in the neighbourhood of U.14.c.7.1. to U.14.c.3.6.

A Corporal was immediately dispatched to the 1st Munsters, and he proceeded to the right Coy H.Q. in the line. He then proceeded to the left Coy H.Q. where he was informed that 5 shorts had been collected, and sent down to a grenade dump near the support line.

The Corporal walked along the whole front covered by the discharge and could find no further drums. The 5 drums which had been collected were found to be:-

2 correctly burst drums (empty)

3 duds containing gas

The two burst drums were accordingly thrown away, and the duds brought back on the trench tramway.

The O.C. Coy on whose front the drums were collected from, but being on his front they must have been somewhere about the two map references given above.

17.10.17

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

9

CONFIDENTIAL

Vol 9

WAR DIARY

of

J SPECIAL COMPANY

RE

From: November 1st

To: November 30th

"J"
SPECIAL COMPANY,
R.E.
No.
Date.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

01 November 1917 To 30 November 1917

ERVILLES	01/11/1917	(1) Weather unfavourable for FONTAINE operation: Visited 3rd Divn & updated RIENCOURT operation delayed until FONTAINE operation completed: 34th Divn relieved 51st Divn: Resetting commenced at GUEMAPPE: (2) 1 O.R. to hospital. (3) Wind S.E.: rain.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	02/11/1917	(1). 800 gas drums discharged against FONTAINE: Zero 9 pm: Wind W. 4 mph: (2) 1 O.R. to hospital: Lt E G LAWFORD R.E. S.O.S. to 20 Divn D.G.O. (3) Wind W. 4 mph.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	03/11/1917	Resetting projectors continued at GUEMAPPE: 3 O.R.s from leave: 2 O.R.s to hospital. Wind E. 5-10		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	04/11/1917	Digging out from FONTAINE position commenced: Scheme for 1000 projectors on 34th Divn: 400 at RIENCOURT & 75 at FONTAINE cancelled: 1 O.R. from hospital: 1 O.R. to hospital. Bright day: S. wind 10-15.	Appendix No. 43	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	05/11/1917	Projectors recovered from FONTAINE position: 2/Lt BASSFORD from leave: 2 O.R. on leave to 3rd army gas school. Cloudy: Showers: Wind S.S.W. 6.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	06/11/1917	Projectors recovered from FONTAINE position: 1 O.R. to hospital. Unsettled weather: S.W. 20 mph.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	07/11/1917	Recovering projectors from FONTAINE position: Resetting at CHERISY: 1 O.R. to hospital. Unsettled: Weaker: S.W. 5 mph.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	08/11/1917	225 projectors & baseplates taken up to GUEMAPPE & dug in: 1 O.R. on leave. Fair: Weaker: Wind N.W. 20.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	09/11/1917	80 reset at CHERISY & 100 new projectors carried up: 8 O.R.s rejoin unit : 2/Lt ALLCHIN & 1 O.R. from leave. Overcast: S.W. 10-15	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	10/11/1917	100 projectors to CHERISY position: 2 O.R. from detachment 3rd army gas school. Cool: Wind W. 20-30.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	11/11/1917	Installing continued at CHERISY: Reported progress VI Corps. Dull weather: Some rain: Wind N. 20 mph.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	12/11/1917	Installation of 1000 projectors completed. Rain: Wind N.W. 5 mph.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	13/11/1917	Company making charges: 1 O.R. from hospital. Calm & misty.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	14/11/1917	Company making charges & fitting drums: 1 O.R. from hospital: 2/Lt MOSS & 1 O.R. on detachment to 'Q' spec coy R.E. Light wind variable & mild.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	15/11/1917	Company making charges & fitting drums. Wind N.W. 5-10: Cold.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	16/11/1917	Charges & drums completed: Guides trained : 2/Lt ALLCHIN on leave to UK: 2 O.R. on detachment to depot: 1 O.R. to hospital. Fair: Wind between W. & N. 5 mph.	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	17/11/1917	Drums & charge blocks to GUEMAPPE position: 1 O.R. to hospital: 1 O.R. on leave. Fair: Light westerly: ?		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	18/11/1917	Drums & charge blocks to CHERISY position: Loading of 1000 completed: 1 O.R. rejoined from hospital from England: 1 O.R. on leave: 2 O.R. on detachment to 3rd army gas school. Light drizzle: West.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	19/11/1917	Visited VI corps & informed Zero at 6:20 am on 20th: Preparation completed: 1 O.R. to hospital. Wind W. to N. 5-10 mph.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	20/11/1917	958 gas drums discharged against GUEMAPPE-CHERISY area: Zero 6:20 am: Wind W.S.W. 7 mph: Scheme for fresh operation at GUEMAPPE submitted Wind W.S.W. 5-10 mph: dull.	Appendix No. 44	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	21/11/1917	Company resting: 1 O.R. to hospital: 1 O.R. on special leave. Wind W. to S.W. 15 mph: Fair intervals.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	22/11/1917	Company engaged on camp fatigues: 2/Lt S F. MOSS & 1 O.R. from detachment with 'Q' Special Coy R.E. Wind N.W. 20-30 changing to W.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	23/11/1917	Scheme for resetting 500 projectors at GUEMAPPE & engaging LANYARD TRENCH at request of VI corps: Resetting at GUEMAPPE commenced: 1 O.R. wounded in action. Wind light westerly: Drizzle.	Appendix No. 45	Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	24/11/1917	Resetting continued at GUEMAPPE: 2 O.R. from detachment with 3rd army gas school: 1 O.R. to hospital. Wind W. 20-35.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	25/11/1917	Projectors baseplates drums & charges taken up: Position completed: 1 O.R. from leave: 2 O.R. to hospital. Drizzle: N.W. 30-40.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	26/11/1917	Company stand by for discharge: Wind reaches gale force: Operation cancelled: 1 O.R. from hospital. Wind N. 20-30 mph increasing to gale.		Lt G.I. PAINE R.E.
ERVILLES	27/11/1917	Wind unfavourable for discharge of drums on 34th Divn front: Operation postponed: Arrivals: Capt C. LAYCOCK R.E. from leave: 4 O.R. rejoined from depot: 12 O.R. from hosp: Departure: 1 O.R. to hosp. Weather showery: Wind S.W. 10-20 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	28/11/1917	500 drums discharged on 34th Divn front: Wind S.W. by W. 7 mph: Arrival: 3 O.R. rejoined from hosp: 19 O.R. arrive from depot: Departures nil. Weather showery: Wind 10-20 mph S.W. dropping at night.	Appendix No. 46	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	29/11/1917	Company on camp fatigues: cleaning up etc. Weather fine: Wind 5-20 mph S.W.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	30/11/1917	Company on camp fatigues etc. Weather dull: Wind W. to S.W. 10 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 43.

34th Divⁿ

O.C Special Companies R.E. Third Army

Proposed Scheme for the use of 1,000 Gas Projectors on
the front of the 34th DIV

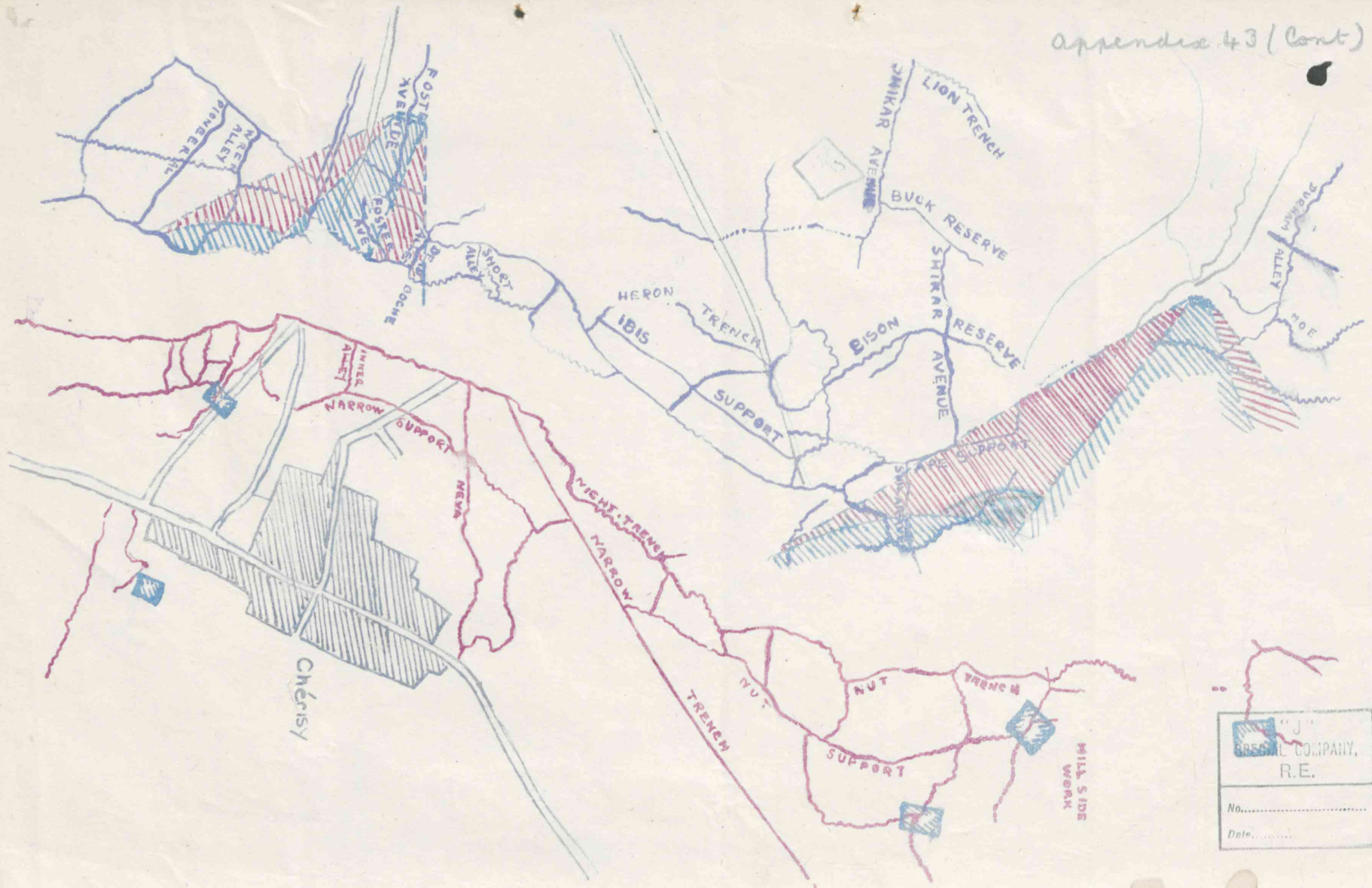
1.	<u>OBJECT</u>	(a) To surprise and gas the enemy holding certain parts of trench system on the CHERISY-GUEMAPPE sector. (b) To fire these projectors in conjunction with the operation on the 16 th Div ⁿ , front, and create a diversion on the Northern flank.
2.	<u>PROJECTORS</u>	(a) 600 Projectors are available on the front of the 34 th Divn in two groups of 300, at O.25.d.2.4. and O.14.c.3.4. 275 at O.14.c.3.4. have already been reset. (b) 400 Projectors are available from the front of the 16 th Div. These will be withdrawn on the nights Nov 4/5 th by arrangement with the 16 th Div and will be transferred to the front of the 34 th DIV ^N .
3.	<u>DISTRIBUTION OF WORK</u>	(a) On A,B, nights Nov 6/7 th and 7 th /8 th 300 projectors will be reset by J Special Coy R.E. at O.25.d.3.4. (b) On C night Nov 8/9 th , 225 will be taken up and emplaced at O.14.c.3.4. (c) On D and E night, Nov 8/10 th and 10/11 th 200 projectors will be taken up and emplaced at O.25.d.2.4. (100 each night) (d) On X and Y nights will be two nights before ‘Z’ day of the operation of the 15 th DIV
4.	<u>CARRYING PARTIES</u>	Carrying parties will be required on C, D, E, X, and Y nights. A detailed scheme for these parties will be submitted.
5.	<u>TARGETS</u>	The following targets are selected as suitable (1) Trench system S.W. of CHERISY about O.32.a. Central 300 drums (2) CHERRY WOOD 200 (3) HILLTOP WORK 200 (4) HILLSIDE WORK 200 (5) ST ROHART QUARRY 100 1,000
6.	<u>LOCATION OF PROJECTORS</u>	(1) Position for targets (1) and (2) will be at O.25.d.2.4. (2) Position for targets (3) (4) and (5) will be at O.14.c.3.4.
7.	<u>RANGE</u>	Ranges vary from 850 yds to 1,500 yds.
8.	<u>WIND</u>	All projectors can be fired with any winds between N.W. to S.W. (via W)
9.	<u>PRECAUTIONS</u>	(1) All troops should be cleared from the area marked in <u>green</u> on the attached map. (2) Troops in the areas marked <u>red</u> should wear box respirators from zero minus 2 minutes, to zero plus 30 minutes, or until such time as the trenches are safe. A large scale map of the line to be cleared will be forwarded latter

For approval

(signed) G.I. PAINE L^T R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

5-11-17

appendix 43 (Cont)



 J RESERVE COMPANY, R.E.	
No.	
Date	

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 44

Report on Operations Nov 20th 1917

Serial No of Report 15

Zero Time 6.20 am

<u>Sections</u>	42, 43, 44, 45.
<u>Corps & Divn in which attached</u>	VI Corps, 34 th Div ⁿ
<u>Map ref of emplacements</u>	1. O.25.a.2.4. (500) 2. O.14.c.1.4. (500)
<u>No of Projectors employed</u>	1,000
<u>Purpose of Operation</u>	To surprise and gas the enemy holding certain parts of trench system on the CHERISY-GUEPPE sector, and to create a diversion on the Northern flank of an Infantry attack.
<u>Nature of Ammunition</u>	Gas (C.G.)
<u>Projectiles No of rounds allotted</u>	1,000
<u>No fired</u>	958
<u>Reason for discrepancy (if any)</u>	Three batteries failed to fire at zero, the leads being broken by the explosion of other batteries. One battery was fired after zero but it was too light for the remaining two batteries to be dealt with as the position was in full view of the enemy.
<u>Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.</u>	Nil
<u>Direction and Strength of Wind</u>	W.S.W. 7 mph
<u>Remarks</u>	Apparently a successful operation. The enemy sent up numerous green lights from the vicinity of the targets, exhibiting every sign of confusion. There were no ‘shorts’. Retaliation consisted of a barrage on front, and support system.
<u>Names of Officers in charge of Operations</u>	L ^T F. WOOTTON R.E. 2/L ^T J.B. BASSFORD R.E.

Copies to G.S. VI Corps
 G.S. 34 Divⁿ
 C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

(signed) G.I. PAINE Lieut R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 45.

From:- O.C J Special Company R.E.

To:- G.S. 34th DIV^N

Scheme for the employment of 500 gas Projectors on the front of the
Life Brigade 34th Divⁿ

1.	<u>Target</u>	Sangard trench between Rohart Quarry and Arras Cambrai Rd
2.	<u>Location of Projectors</u>	O.14.c.1.4.
3.	<u>Material</u>	About 450 projectors are available at O.14.c.1.4. these will be reset and if time allows, the number will be increased to 500
4.	<u>DISTRIBUTION OF WORK</u>	(1) On the nights of Nov 23/24 and 24/25, the projectors will be reset by J Special Company R.E. (2) On the night of Nov 25/26 drums and charge blocks will be taken up to the position.
5.	<u>CARRYING PARTIES & G.S. Wagons</u>	(1) On the night of Nov 24/25th 1 Officer & 30 O.R. (2) On the night of Nov 25/26th 2 Officers & 60 O.R. (3) On the night of Nov 24/25th 4 G.S. Wagons (4) On the night of Nov 25/26 th 20 limbers or G.S. wagons details will be arranged direct with all concerned.
6.	<u>Zero Time & Day</u>	Projectors will be ready for firing on the night of Nov 26/27 th at any time after 9 pm.
7.	<u>Clearing of Line</u>	Only a small frontage of line will require clearing. A map will be issued with operation order

Copies to VI Corps
C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

(Signed) G.I. PAINE Lieut R.E.
for O.C. J Spec Coy R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 46

REPORT ON OPERATION Nov 28th 1917

Serial No of Report 16

Zero Time 11.30 pm

<u>Sections</u>	45 with additional exploder men.
<u>Corps & Divn in which attached</u>	VI Corps, 34 th Div ⁿ
<u>Map ref of emplacements</u>	O.14.c.1.4.
<u>No of Projectors employed</u>	500
<u>Purpose of Operation</u>	To surprise and gas the enemy holding the line, and working in the vicinity of:- (1) LANNARD TRENCH (2) FIFE TRENCH to SUNKEN RD
<u>Nature of Ammunition</u>	Gas (C.G. - lethal)
<u>Projectiles No of rounds allotted</u>	500
<u>No fired</u>	500
<u>Reason for discrepancy (if any)</u>	Nil
<u>Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.</u>	Nil
<u>Direction and Strength of Wind</u>	S.W. by W. 7 mph
<u>Remarks</u>	All drums fired on first shot. One shot was observed which fell on ? parados of front line. This was removed. No distinctive flares were put up and there was very little retaliation.
<u>Names of Officers in charge of Operations</u>	2/L ^T R. PENDLEBURY R.E.

Copies to G.S. VI Corps
 G.S. 34 Divⁿ
 C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

(Sgd) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

1
CONFIDENTIAL

Vol 10

WAR DIARY

of

J SPECIAL COMPANY R.E.

From

$\frac{1}{12}$
 $\frac{17}{17}$

To -

$\frac{31}{12}$
 $\frac{17}{17}$



War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

01 December 1917 To 31 December 1917

ERVILLERS	01/12/1917	Company on Camp Fatigues: Scheme for 40th & 34th Divs submitted: Arrivals 1 O.R. from hospital. Weather squally: Wind W.N.W. 20 to 25 mph.	Appendices. No 47 Appendix 48	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLERS	02/12/1917	134 projectors reset at FONTAINE position: Arrivals: Lt ALLCHIN & 1 O.R. from leave, CAPT SIBERT from American Army for instruction: Departures: 2/Lt PENDLEBURY & 1 O.R. on leave. Weather: cold with snow: Wind N. 20-30 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLERS	03/12/1917	126 projectors reset at FONTAINE position: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather: cold: Wind N.W. 20-30 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLERS	04/12/1917	55 projectors reset at FONTAINE & 150 taken up to forward dump: Arrival: 1 O.R. from leave: Departure: 1 O.R., on leave. Weather: cold: Wind W. 10-15 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLERS	05/12/1917	50 projectors carried up to FONTAINE position: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Wind N.W. 5-10 mph: Weather: cold.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLERS	06/12/1917	Light railway did not function on account of a raid on the 34th Divn front. Parties did no work: Departure: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather: fine: Wind: light easterly.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLERS	07/12/1917	170 Projectors reset at CHERISY position: Departures: CAPT SIBERT (American Army) to 'G' Spec Coy R.E. Weather fine: Wind variable mainly S. westerly.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLERS	08/12/1917	210 Projectors reset at CHERISY: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fine: Wind S.W. 10-15 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLERS	09/12/1917	200 Projectors dug in at FONTAINE: Departure: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather wet: Wind S.W. to W. 10 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLERS	10/12/1917	373 Projectors dug out at GUEMAPPE: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave. Weather fair: Wind S.E. 10 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	11/12/1917	380 Projectors loaded at CHERISY: Arrivals: 2 O.R. rejoined from DEPOT: 22 O.R. (new draft) from DEPOT. Weather fair: Wind variable.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	12/12/1917	111 Projectors dug out at GUEMAPPE & carrying down began: Departures: 2 O.R. to Hosp: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from Hosp. Weather rainy: Wind N.W. 3-5 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	13/12/1917	Withdrawal of GUEMAPPE projectors continues: Departures: 1 O.R. to Hosp. Wind N.W. 3-5 mph.		Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	14/12/1917	Exploder men stood by to discharge drums at CHERISY at 4 a.m. but owing to cut wires operation was postponed until 10 p.m. when 380 drums were discharged: Wind W. by N. 8 mph: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: 5 O.R. to Hosp: Lt A.A. HALL & 1 O.R. on detach with H.Q. SCRE 3rd Army. Weather cold: Wind N.W. 20-25 mph.	Appendix No 49.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	15/12/1917	4 a.m.:502 Projectors loaded at FONTAINE: 6 p.m.: 502 Projectors fired at FONTAINE: Wind W. by S. 4 mph: Departures: 1 O.R. to Hosp. Weather fine: Wind W. to S. 8-10 mph.	Appendix No. 50	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

ERVILLES	16/12/1917	Salvage of Projectors at GUEMAPPE & CHERISY: Arrivals: 2/Lt PENDLEBURY from leave. Weather snow: Wind W. 10 mph.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	17/12/1917	Salvage of Projectors at GUEMAPPE & CHERISY: Departure: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather snow: Wind S.E. to E. 20-30 mph.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	18/12/1917	Salvage of Projectors at CHERISY & FONTAINE: Departure: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold: Wind N.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	19/12/1917	Salvage proceeding: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departure: 2 O.R. Wind E. 20 mph.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	20/12/1917	Carrying Projectors from forward dumps to railway: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave: Departures: Lt G.I. PAINE on leave: 1 O.R. to Hosp: Casualties: 3 O.R. W in A. Weather frosty: Wind light easterly.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	21/12/1917	Company inspected by G.O.C. Vith Corps: All forward dumps cleared of stores: Railhead & lorry fatigues: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave: Departures: Lt G.C. ALLCHIN R.E. & 1 O.R. to H.Q. SCRE 3rd Army: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold: Wind S.E. 5-10 mph.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	22/12/1917	Company move off to G.H.Q. training area for rest & training: Arrivals: Lt A.A. HALL from detachment with 1 O.R.: Departures: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather fine but cold: Wind E. 3-5 mph.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
ERVILLES	23/12/1917	Company on the move: Depart: 1 O.R. on leave. Weather cold: Wind N. 4-5 mph.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

War Diaries for 'J' Company Special Brigade Royal Engineers

FRUGES	24/12/1917	Company arrive at FRUGES. Weather cold with snow: Wind N.E. changing to W. at night.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
FRUGES	25/12/1917	Company resting: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from leave: Weather cold & snow: Wind N.N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
FRUGES	26/12/1917	Company resting. Weather cold: Wind N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
FRUGES	27/12/1917	Company parade: Arrivals: 1 O.R. from leave. Weather fine & frosty: Wind N.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
FRUGES	28/12/1917	Company parade: Arrivals: 2 O.R. from DEPOT: 2 O.R. from Hosp. Weather cold: Wind N.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
FRUGES	29/12/1917	Company parade. Weather cold: Wind N.N.W.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
FRUGES	30/12/1917	Company parade: Departures: 1 O.R. to Hosp. Weather cold: Wind N.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.
FRUGES	31/12/1917	Training. Weather cold: Wind N.E.	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 47

ERVILLES
1/12/17

From:- O.C. J Special Company R.E.
To:- C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

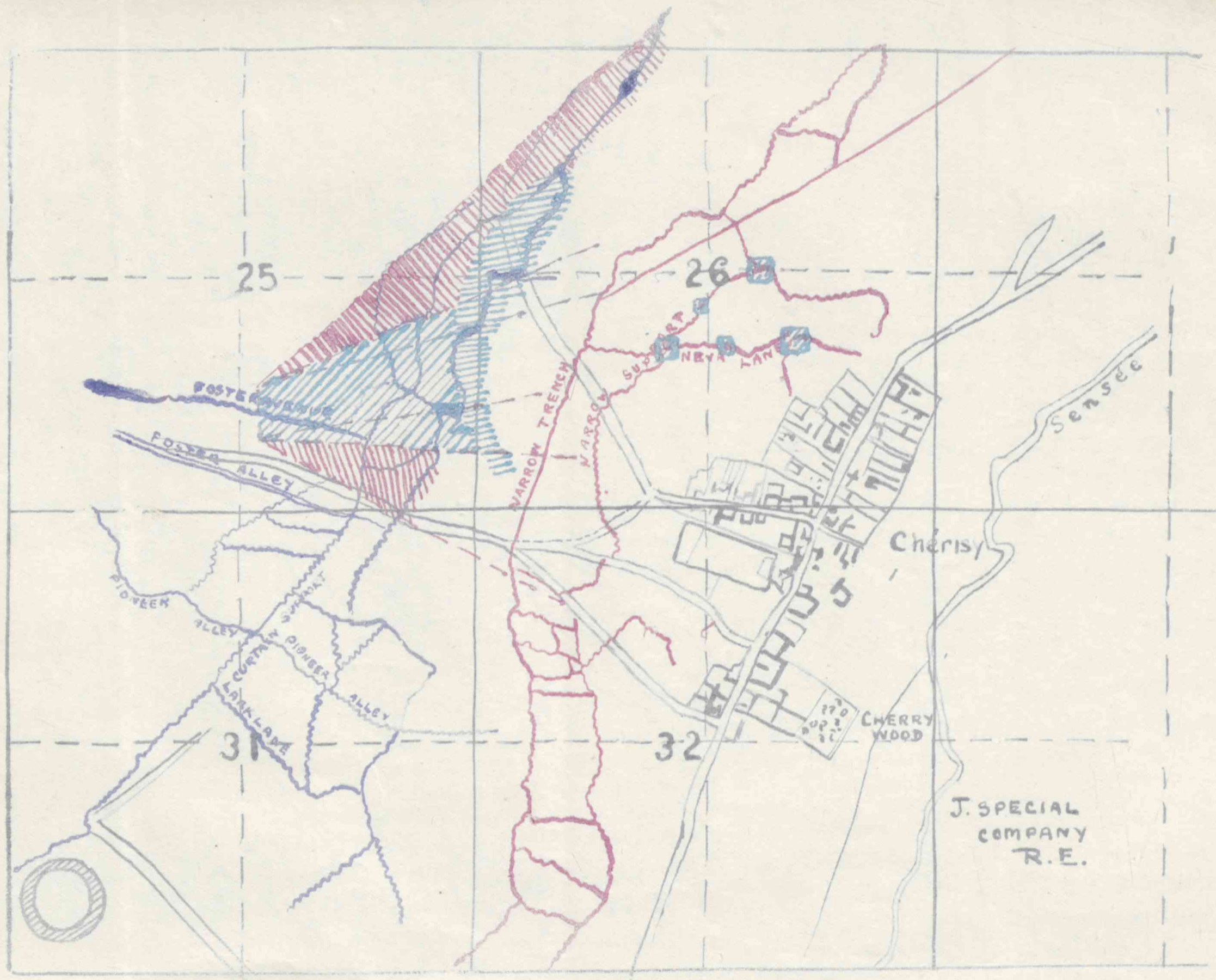
Scheme for the use of Projectors against targets N. of CHERISY

1. <u>PROJECTORS</u>	240 Heavy Projectors and 260 light Projectors are dug in at O.2.d.2.4. These projectors will be used by J Special Company R.E. and the number made up to <table><tr><td>Light Projectors</td><td>250</td></tr><tr><td>Heavy Projectors</td><td>250</td></tr></table> Resetting will commence as soon as possible, and a report will be made to the 34th Div when this work is completed.	Light Projectors	250	Heavy Projectors	250																				
Light Projectors	250																								
Heavy Projectors	250																								
2. <u>TARGETS</u>	It is suggested to fire the 500 drums on to the following targets <table><tr><td>(1)</td><td>O.26.c.8.7.</td><td>150 drums</td><td>Light Projectors</td></tr><tr><td>(2)</td><td>O.26.c.95.80</td><td>60</td><td>Light Projectors</td></tr><tr><td>(3)</td><td>O.26.d.05.70</td><td>60</td><td>Light Projectors</td></tr><tr><td>(4)</td><td>O.26.d.35.65.</td><td>125</td><td>Heavy Projectors</td></tr><tr><td>(5)</td><td>O.26.d.25.98.</td><td>125</td><td>Heavy Projectors</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Total</td><td>500</td><td></td></tr></table>	(1)	O.26.c.8.7.	150 drums	Light Projectors	(2)	O.26.c.95.80	60	Light Projectors	(3)	O.26.d.05.70	60	Light Projectors	(4)	O.26.d.35.65.	125	Heavy Projectors	(5)	O.26.d.25.98.	125	Heavy Projectors		Total	500	
(1)	O.26.c.8.7.	150 drums	Light Projectors																						
(2)	O.26.c.95.80	60	Light Projectors																						
(3)	O.26.d.05.70	60	Light Projectors																						
(4)	O.26.d.35.65.	125	Heavy Projectors																						
(5)	O.26.d.25.98.	125	Heavy Projectors																						
	Total	500																							
3. <u>DRUMS</u>	Drums can be placed in position in one night with Infantry assistance. The following personnel & G.S. Wagons would be required:- 20 G.S. wagons and 1 carrying party of 60 men, and 5 carrying parties of 50 men each, as detailed on the attached requisition, the date of which can be notified when resetting is complete																								
4. <u>WIND</u>	The wind limits for this operation are between S.S.W. and W.N.W.																								
5. <u>CLEARING THE LINE</u>	It is recommended that the line should be cleared from the area coloured <u>green</u> on the attached map, and that troops in the area coloured <u>red</u> should wear box respirators from Zero to Zero plus 40 minutes.																								

For approval please.

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.

Copies to G.S. 34th Div



“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 48

ERVILLES
1/12/17

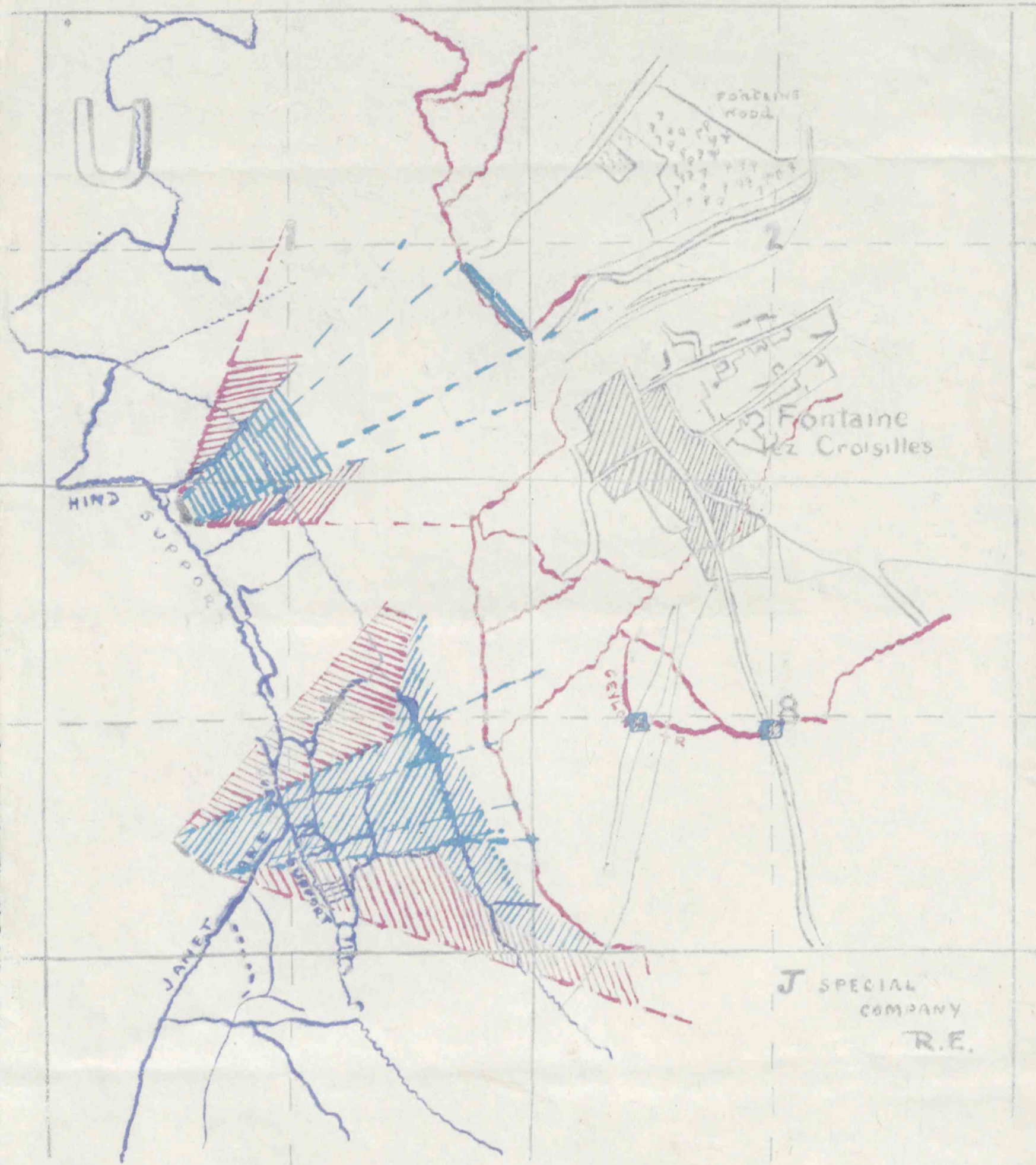
From:- O.C. J Special Company R.E.
To:- C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

Scheme for the use of Projectors against targets in vicinity of
FONTAINE lez CROISILLES

<u>PROJECTORS</u>	420 Projectors are dug in at U.7.c. and 7.5 at U.1.c. These projectors will be reset by J Special Company R.E. and the numbers will be made up to:- <table><tr><td>No 1 position</td><td>400</td></tr><tr><td>No 2 position</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>500</td></tr></table> Resetting will commence immediately, and a report will be made to the Division concerned when this work is completed.	No 1 position	400	No 2 position	100	Total	500
No 1 position	400						
No 2 position	100						
Total	500						
<u>TARGETS</u>	It is suggested to fire the 500 drums on to the following three targets (1) U.8.c.98.95. (2) U.8.c.45.00 (3) U.1.d.90.60 to U.1.d.70.90						
<u>DRUMS</u>	Drums can be placed in position in one night with Infantry assistance. The following personnel would be required:- One party of 60 men to push trucks on the trench tramway from ALE DUMP to termination of tramway at JANET AVENUE. Two parties of 40 men each to carry charge blocks and drums from terminus at JANET AVENUE to left position at U.1.c. These latter parties would be required to carry two journeys						
<u>WIND</u>	The wind limits for this operation are between S.S.W. and W. by N.						
<u>CLEARING THE LINE</u>	It is recommended that the line should be cleared from the area coloured <u>green</u> on the attached map, and that troops in the area coloured <u>red</u> should wear Box Respirators from Zero to Zero plus 40 minutes.						

For approval please.

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
O.C. J Special Company R.E.



“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 49

ERVILLES
14/12/17

REPORT ON OPERATION Dec 14th 1917

Zero Time 10.0 pm

<u>Sections</u>	42
<u>Corps & Divn in which attached</u>	VI th Corps, 34 th Div ⁿ
<u>Map ref of emplacements</u>	O.5.d.2.4.
<u>No of Projectors employed</u>	380
<u>Purpose of Operation</u>	To surprise and gas the enemy holding and working on the line, in the vicinity of O.26.d.3.7.
<u>Nature of Ammunition</u>	Gas (C.G.)
<u>Projectiles No of rounds allotted</u>	380
<u>No fired</u>	380
<u>Reason for discrepancy (if any)</u>	Nil
<u>Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.</u>	Nil
<u>Direction and Strength of Wind</u>	W. by N. 8 mph
<u>Remarks</u>	All drums fired on first shot, and seemed to burst well on targets. There were no distinctive flares sent up, and little or no retaliation was observed.
<u>Names of Officers in charge of Operations</u>	2/L ^T J.B. BASSFORD R.E.

Copies to G.S. VIth Corps
 G.S. 34 Divⁿ
 C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

(signed) G.I. PAINE R.E.
For O.C. J Special Company R.E.

“J” Special Company RE
Appendix No 50

ERVILLES
15/12/17

REPORT ON OPERATION Dec 15th 1917

Zero Time 6.0 pm

<u>Sections</u>	43 & 44
<u>Corps & Divn in which attached</u>	VI Corps, 40 th Div ⁿ
<u>No of Projectors employed</u>	1. U.3.c.4.4. 394 2. U.1.c.5.7. 108
<u>Map ref of emplacements</u>	1. U.7.c.6.4. 2. U.1.c.5.1.
<u>Purpose of Operation</u>	To surprise and gas the enemy holding the line, and working in the vicinity of targets 1. U.8.a. Central 2. U.8.a.3.7. 3. U.1.d.8.8.
<u>Nature of Ammunition</u>	Gas (C.G.)
<u>Projectiles No of rounds allotted</u>	502
<u>No fired</u>	502
<u>Reason for discrepancy (if any)</u>	Nil
<u>Casualties, names of Officers No of O.R.</u>	Nil
<u>Direction and Strength of Wind</u>	W. by S. 4 mph
<u>Remarks</u>	All drums fired on first shot. No distinctive flares were put up and no retaliation followed.
<u>Names of Officers in charge of Operations</u>	L ^T B.C. ALLCHIN R.E. 2/L ^T S.F. MOSS R.E.

Copies to VI Corps G.S.
G.S. 34 Divⁿ
40TH DIV
C.S.C. R.E. Third Army

(signed) Chas Laycock Capt R.E.
For O.C. J Special Company R.E.