

REPORT ON OPERATIONS BY "J" SPECIAL COMPANY RE
FROM 21st – 23rd March 1918
Ref Sheet HENDECOURT 1/30,000

1. About 4-0 pm on 21st March, "J" Special Company RE occupied the trenches of the Third System from B.5.a 5.D to T.20.c 5.5 with 3 Sections; the remaining 2 Sections of "J" Special Coy. Occupied part of the firing line Third System in T.29.c.
2. About 8-0 pm a party of men under a Sergt was sent out from the firing line, Third System to reinforce a patrol of the 22nd Northumberland Fusiliers in the sunken road in T.22.d. This patrol was withdrawn, with the patrol of the 22nd. N.F.s to the firing line in the Third System, at 10-0 p.m.
3. About 2-30 p.m. the Brigade Major, 102 Inf Bde took the three sections in the Third System at B.5.a.5.p. to T.29.c.5.5. to join the other 2 Sections of the Company, then guided the Coy. to part of the CROISILLES North Switch Line. The Coy. commenced digging in, but instructions were received shortly after that the Coy. would hold another part of the line. Finally the Coy. took up position with three Sections holding 300 yards of the CROISILLES North Switch Line; the left flank of these Sections being at the junction of the CROISILLES North Switch and the CROISILLES – BOYELLES RD. The other two Sections of the Coy. took up position on the ridge of the CROISILLES – BOYELLES RD. in support of the three Sections in the CROISILLES North Switch Line. About 5-30 a.m. 22nd March a German soldier who had lost his way was brought in by the Coy. Runner who had been with a message to the 25th N.F.s
4. At 5-0 a.m. the Coy. took up position on the Sunken Road T.23.a.1.7 to T.17.a.8.0. in support to the 25th N.F.s in the CROISILLES Switch Line in accordance with instructions from 102 Inf. Bde.
5. At 8-0 a.m. a party of the N.F.s evacuated the CROISILLES Switch Line in front of the Sunken Rd occupied by the Coy. And retired to this road. This party informed us that the enemy was advancing and that they had to retire to conform with the retirement of troops on their right. Almost immediately after the enemy appeared on our right flank. Lewis gun and rifle fire were opened on the enemy, but under cover of mist he got a machine gun in position to the right of our position from where the troops on our right had retired. This machine gun enfilated the road held by the Coy. and a position was therefore taken by the Coy. And the 25th N.F.s. across the open from the cross-road in T.17.c. (left flank) towards the CROISILLES – BOYELLES RD. The right of the Coy. could not reach this road as a party of the enemy had broken through between the Coy. and the troops on the right. After close fighting this party withdrew,

and the right flank of the Coy. reached the road, and gained touch with our troops on the right. This was 9-30 to 10-0 a.m. small parties of the enemy made repeated attempts to come forward under cover of mist, to establish posts and machine gun positions in shell-holes but they were repulsed and many casualties inflicted on the enemy. A party of the enemy succeeded in cutting off the party of our troops at the cross-roads in T.17.c. where Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C. R.E. was situated. About 12-0 noon troops on our right retired to Hill Switch and in conformity with this movement "J" Special Coy. retired with the N.F.s. to Hill Switch and the CROISILLES – BOYELLES RD.

6. The Coy. was re-organised as far as possible in Hill Switch Lt W. BURT took command and divided the Company into two Sections, one under Lt F. WOOTTON, the other under 2/Lt T.H. STANTON. Capt LAYCOCK was missing, and 2/Lt S.F. MOSS was by this time wounded. 2/Lt J.B. BASSFORD had got separated from the Company collecting stragglers, and he attached himself and party to a Battn. Of Royal Scots under Capt Palmer.
7. The position in Hill Switch was occupied until 2-0 p.m. when troops on our left retired and in conformity with the movement "J" Special Coy. retired with the 25th N.F.s to the firing line Third System. The Coy was digging in on this line until ordered by the 102nd Inf. Bde. to take up position behind the railway in T.30.d. the Guards taking over the firing line, Third System.
8. The Coy. was relieved on the morning of the 23rd March and proceeded to MOYEN-VILLE.
9. Casualties

Officers	Capt C. LAYCOCK M.C. R.E. Missing 2/Lt B.F. MOSS M.M. R.E. Wounded (Bullet wound in stomach) 2/Lt T.H. STANTON R.E. Wounded (Bullet wound in ear, remaining at duty)
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Other Ranks	7 Killed 4 Wounded and Missing 19 Wounded 24 Missing
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(agd) W.BURT. LT.

25-3-18.

for O.C. "J" Special Coy. R.E.