



SPECIAL DIVISIONAL ROUTINE ORDER.

By Brigadier-General G. N. JOHNSTON, C.M.G., D.S.O.,
Commanding New Zealand Division.

HEADQUARTERS, 9th December. 1918.

ADJUTANT AND QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S BRANCH.

4466. Valedictory.

The following letter of farewell from Brigadier-General Sir G. M. Harper, K.C.B., D.S.O., Commanding IV. Corps, is published for information.

As the New Zealand Division is leaving the IV. Corps, I desire to place on record my appreciation of the valuable services they have rendered, and to thank all ranks for the magnificent fighting qualities which they have invariably displayed.

The Division joined the IV. Corps at a critical time on the 26th March, 1918, when it completely checked the enemy's advance at Beaumont Hamel and Colincamps, and thus closed the gap between the IV. and V. Corps. By a brilliant stroke it drove the enemy from the commanding ground at La Signy Farm and gained observation over the enemy's lines, which greatly assisted in his defeat on the 5th April, 1918, when he made his last and final effort to break our front. Throughout the summer the Division held portions of the Corps front with but a short interval of rest. During this period I never had the least anxiety about the security of this portion of the front; on the other hand, by carefully conceived and well executed raids, the enemy was given little respite, and identifications were procured whenever required—in this connection I deplore the loss of that brave man, Sergt. Travis, V.C.

It was the ascendancy gained by this Division over the enemy that compelled him to evacuate the ground about Rossignol Wood.

At the commencement of the great attack on the 21st August, 1918, only a minor part was allotted to the Division, but subsequently on the night of the 24th August the Division was ordered to attack and swept the enemy from Grevillers, Loupari Wood, and Biefvillers, and gained the outskirts of Bapaume. Stubborn fighting was experienced around Bapaume, but eventually the enemy was overcome and pushed back to the East.

From 24th August till 14th September the Division was constantly engaged, and drove the enemy back from Bapaume to the high ground West of Gouzecourt, where very heavy fighting occurred at African Trench.

After a short period of rest the Division was put in again on 29th September to complete the capture of Welsh Ridge and to gain the crossings over the Canal de l'Escaut. A night advance over difficult country, intersected by the trenches and wire of the Hindenburg Line, was brilliantly carried out and entirely successful, and resulted in the capture of over 1000 prisoners and over 40 guns. On the 1st October the Division captured Crevecoeur against strong opposition, and held it in spite of heavy shelling and several counter-attacks throughout the subsequent days until the great attack on 8th October, when the Division broke through the Northern portion of the strongly organised Masniere Line, and penetrated far into the enemy's line at Esnes and Haucourt.

Going out to rest on 12th October, the Division was again in the line on 23rd October and drove the enemy back from the outskirts of Romeries to Le Quesnoy. Finally on the 4th November the Division, by an attack which did much to decide the finish of the war, forced the surrender of the fortress of Le Quesnoy and drove the enemy back through the Forest of Mormal, the total captures by the IV. Corps on that day amounting to 3,500 prisoners and some 70 guns.

During the period the New Zealand Division has been in the IV. Corps, they have captured from the enemy 287 Officers and 8,745 Other ranks, 145 guns, 1,419 machine guns and three tanks, besides much other material.

The continuous successes enumerated above constitute a record of which the Division may well be proud. It is a record which I may safely say has been unsurpassed in the final series of attacks which led to the enemy's suing for peace.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you and your Staff for the willing support which you have invariably given and the helpfulness shown in all circumstances.

I send every man of the Division my heartfelt good wishes for the future.

H. E. AVERY, Lieut.-Colonel,
Assistant-Adjutant & Quartermaster-General.