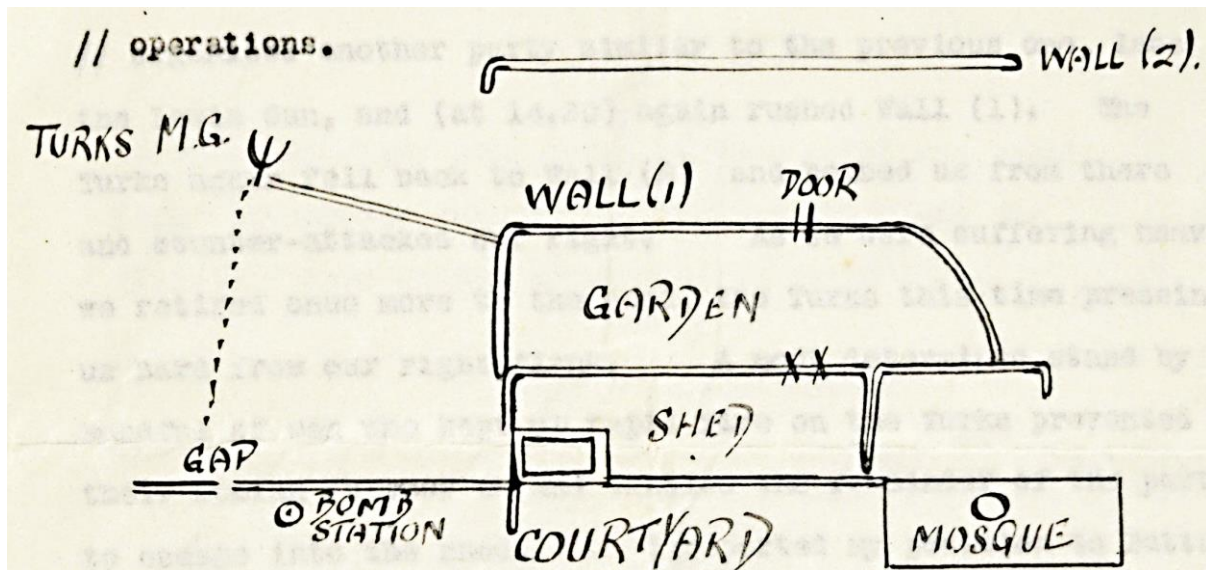


CONFIDENTIAL  
NEBY SAMWIL OPERATIONS.

COPY  
OFFICAL REPORT.  
24/11/17

A short account of the above may give you some idea of the difficulties which confronted the Companies detailed to clear the walled Gardens N E of the Mosque. No. 4 Coy. launched its attack at Zero 12.05 and on advancing past the left flank of the Mosque we immediately found ourselves in a courtyard and in front of us a long flat roofed stone shed. Bomb, Rifle fire and M.G. fire seemed to come from all quarters. Capt. Rogers cleared the shed in front and led some men on to the roof to fire down on the enemy in the Garden but the enemy opened M.G. fire and swept the roof killed Capt. Rogers and several of the men. I then took command of the Company and attempted to force a passage from our left flank and so endeavour to turn the enemy's right flank. The only exit was through a gap in the wall, but at the first attempt the enemy opened heavy M.G. and rifle fire on the gap making it impossible for any man to rush through. Attempts were then made to establish a Lewis Gun post at the gap to deal with the Machine Gun, but that also was impossible each Gunner being shot before he could bring his gun into action (and one gun was knocked out). Bombing was then tried but the Machine Gun apparently was beyond bombing range. I established a bomb station to guard my left flank. The following rough plan may better illustrate the position and the subsequent operations/

[Page 2]



/operations. The only means of exit for our advance was a single door in the wall of the shed opening into a Garden. The Turks from Wall (1) could fire through this door. I collected a party of bombers, riflemen and one Lewis Gun which rushed through the door and cleared the Turks from Wall (1) in spite of heavy fire and bombing. We lined the wall, established the Lewis Gun and opened fire on Wall (2) and beat down the Turkish frontal fire although the Turks could still enfilade us. The Turks from Wall (2) replied with stick grenades and minenwerfers. We were unable to reach Wall (2) with our Mills grenades while the Turks could lob theirs right into us causing casualties and blowing up the Lewis Gun. Our position was rendered untenable and we retired to the shed bringing in our wounded and held the door and also used a loop-hole in the wall. The Turks advanced and reoccupied the Wall (1). In response to an order from Brigade to advance again, I organised/

[Page 3]

/organised another party similar to the previous one, less the Lewis gun, and (at 14.30) again rushed Wall (1). The Turks again fell back to Wall (2) and bombed us from there and counter-attacked our right. As we were suffering heavily we retired once more to the shed, the Turks this time pressing us hard from our right flank. A most determined stand by a handful of men who kept up rapid fire on the Turks prevented their coming further on and enabled the remainder of the party to escape into the shed. I reported my position to Battalion Headquarters and was ordered to make no further attack and to hold on as best we could. This I did although the position of the buildings made observation very difficult. Towards evening and until after dark, our position was very heavily shelled, causing still further casualties. At about 20.00 that night we got relieved. We collected our dead and the spare rifles and moved back to a position on the rear slope of NEBY SAMWIL. Moving back to BIDDV about 22.00. The task we had been called upon to perform was hardly possible for the numbers at my disposal. The only means of advance being through the one narrow door through which only one man could pass at a time. The Turks commanded this with M.G. and rifle fire. A very strong attack round the left flank might have succeeded, but it would have been at very heavy cost. Had we advanced any further than we did I am certain that none of us could have lived long enough to make good any position. The Turks/

/Turks strongly held every vantage point and could bomb and machine gun us from all points, while our artillery were unable apparently to reach them.

(Sgd.) MALCOLM SMITH

Capt.

1/7<sup>th</sup> Batt. The Royal Scots

14<sup>th</sup> Decr. 1917

Acknowledgement -- Material courtesy of Mr Douglas Smith.