

CHAPTER FOUR

Identity, Morale and Combat: the Somme 1916

Introduction

The year 1916 was an important one for the local community of Southport and Bootle and for its local Battalion. With the introduction of the Military Service Acts, voluntary service all but ceased and the direct connection between community and Battalion began to come under pressure. The danger of this was that the localness which was so important for a concept of community identity within the Battalion began to be undermined. Conversely, in 1916 the Battalion was rejoined with other Territorial battalions in the re-formed West Lancashire Territorial Division – the 55th – under Major General Jeudwine and this saw a comprehensive process of ‘Lancastrianisation’ in an attempt to reinforce the local community identity of the Division as a key element of maintaining troop morale.

For Jeudwine, morale and discipline were key elements to building a cohesive and effective combat force. This chapter examines the steps taken to maintain a high level of morale and examines the combat effectiveness of the unit in one attempt to measure that level of morale. The review of the battle engagements of the Battalion is also an important strand in the thesis concerning the development and significance of the Territorial Force as a whole. This and the next chapter suggest that the Territorials’ morale, much like the more often studied ‘Pals’ units, was built around a sense of belonging to a home community and that this was reflected in their battlefield performance.

A significant contention of this thesis is that the connection between Home and War Front was maintained throughout the War, and indeed after it. This was founded on a sense of identity and belonging which was felt within the Battalion towards the home community, and by that community towards the 7th King’s Battalion. This sense of identity was at the heart of the Battalion’s level of morale and the good performance of the Battalion fed Home morale. The chapter gives some consideration to the tensions and sacrifices which were being made in Southport and Bootle, particularly relating to munitions, at the same time as the men were fighting on the Somme and beyond.

There was more than one sense of identity holding the Battalion together. There was a plurality of identities that contributed to an overall sense of belonging to the

geographical base of the Battalion. As the actual numbers of 'sandgrinders' declined, the battle honours and combat record of the unit grew, creating an emerging Battalion mythology around the Festubert veterans. The fresh drafts from the county and the concept of a 'Lancashire Division' resulted in a growing sub-regional identity which built upon, yet also compensated for, a relative decline in direct local community identity.

Identity and morale

The nature of the sense of identity in 7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment during the War needs to be seen in the context of the long and established history of the Volunteer and Territorial tradition in West Lancashire. The Battalion was an active part of the pre-War Liverpool Brigade and West Lancashire Division,¹ and evidence from the original regimental numbers indicates that a large body of pre-War Territorials enlisted for foreign service and certainly the majority of officers and NCOs were serving before 1914.²

Territorial battalions have been considered to place less emphasis on discipline than the Regular troops, but Morris identified their *esprit de corps* as the crucial element in their levels of morale. She interpreted this as having a feeling of 'belonging to a community'.³ In his study on morale, Baynes's five key factors - regimental loyalty; officer-men relations; strong discipline; a sense of duty and sound administration - were supplemented by other elements including *esprit de corps*, battle success, punishment and social factors.⁴ Sheffield, Beckett and Morris have added to these basic factors and it is therefore possible to create a more complete list of the key constituents of morale from the historiography:⁵

- *esprit de corps* including Battalion, Regimental and Divisional loyalty, community identity, battle effectiveness, attitude to the enemy;

¹ Mileham, P *'Difficulties be damned': The King's Regiment 8th, 63rd, 96th - A history of the City Regiment of Manchester and Liverpool* Fleur de Lys Publishing Knutsford 2000 p.231

² WO 329/809 - 838, 2637 - 2643 and 2947 War Medal Rolls Liverpool Regiment; *Soldiers Died* Newspaper reports also named individuals - for instance at the Annual Camp *Southport Visiter* 4th August 1914 p.6; Major Burnie, later temporary Lieutenant-Colonel, was to be referred to as an 'old Volunteer and territorial': *Bootle Times* 10th November 1922 p.2

³ Morris 'The Leeds Rifles' pp. 950-951

⁴ Baynes *Morale* pp. 253-254

⁵ Sheffield *Leadership in the trenches* pp.180 - 181; Beckett, IFW *The Great War 1914 - 1918* Pearson Education Limited London 2001 pp.220-221; Morris *ibid.*

- officer/men relations including leadership by NCOs, junior officers, unit commanders, GHQ, 'Staff', relations with other units;
- discipline including training and punishment;
- living and working conditions including contact with home, resources and equipment, battle conditions, recreational activities, health and welfare;
- social factors including class, religion, politics, age, occupation, marital status, sexuality, nationality;
- aims and objectives including ownership, influence and motivation in the War.

No doubt Ferguson would agree with this list, but he would place it in a different order, with the soldier's comfort being of prime importance.⁶ In delivering the 55th Division's training, Major-General Jeudwine considered that discipline should be delivered ahead of tactical and other training, specifically conduct, smartness, appearance; morale and *esprit de corps*; leadership; discipline; and physical fitness.⁷ However, Bourne, writing in general about soldiers rather than just about Regulars or Territorials, saw the loyalty to community and comrades as the 'chief strategy for survival'.⁸ It is this commitment to the local community which can be evidenced through this study of 1/7th King's and, as the spatial identity shifted slightly over the course of the War, their Division.

While focusing on the importance of community identity, attention will also be paid to other elements contributing towards good morale including entertainment, the role of the Commanding Officer, and the extent of dilution amongst the ranks as the War progressed. Nor can the analysis focus purely on the notion of a single identity. Even on the basis of a geographical identity it is clear that there were significant differences between men who had enlisted from Bootle and those who had enlisted from Southport. As the Battalion moved further away – in time and distance – from those home towns, their allegiance became wider, more Merseyside or Lancastrian when operating in a larger unit, such as is seen after Givenchy in 1918. Nevertheless, the very local identities were also maintained.

In addition to the differing spatial identities, a variety of individual and group identities functioned together to create a sense of community and belonging. Many different identities blurred and overlapped. Joyce, in particular, has demonstrated the

⁶ Ferguson *The Pity of War* pp. 446-7

⁷ 356 FIF/13 55th Divisional School of Instruction Syllabus 27th February 1917 Jeudwine MSS

⁸ Bourne "The British Working Man in Arms" p.349

importance of understanding that a plurality of identities exists within any unit of society and that these identities are in conflict with each other, to a greater or lesser extent.⁹ In their introduction to *Authority, identity and the social history of the Great War*, the Coetzees stressed the relevance of the number of different levels of identification which may be felt at different times.¹⁰ Thus, different elements of identification, depending on the needs or circumstances of the time, could co-exist and sustain the individual.

A soldier could identify himself in a variety of ways; as a man, as a conscript, as a Regular, as a Territorial, as a volunteer, as a Derby man, by sexuality, by ethnicity, as coloured or, more likely, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, a cockney, tyke or scouser, as a Catholic or a Jew, an NCO, a sergeant, a corporal, or a private, married, a father, a son, a miner, a railwayman, from the corporation trams, as a footballer, a cricketer or a rugby player; as a stretcher bearer, a bomber, a Lewis gunner, a rifleman, a musician, from Bootle or Southport, Crossens or Banks, Freshfield or Formby, from the docks, an insurance company, a small law firm, from Lancashire, in the Liverpools, the Loyals or the King's Own, of the West Lancs. Division, or as a Festubert veteran. Equally importantly, he was seen differently by others; by a Regular, by an NCO, by the General, by the Liverpool Scottish, by his firm, by his family, by his Mayor and Council. In the press, he was a Southport man, a Lancashire man, a 'Kingsman', a father, a hero, a son, or, sometimes, a sacrifice.

Identity was important on the Home Front too. The blurring of gender roles in particular was significant. While women were expected to be supportive and encouraging of their menfolk, the **Lusitania** disturbances examined in chapter two, demonstrated that they were much more actively involved in the early War years and were keen to play an active role in prosecuting the War when the opportunity arose. As the men left vacancies within the munitions industry and on the farms, women were being called up to new roles in work and the economy, yet, as will be seen in the final chapter, after the War they were forced back into a more traditional role.¹¹ The role of women through the War has traditionally highlighted the ways in which overlapping identities can co-exist, sometimes in conflict. This was no less true, however, of the men at the Front Line, something often overlooked. The anecdotal

⁹ Joyce "The end of social history?" p.82

¹⁰ Coetzee and Shevin-Coetzee *Authority, identity and the social history of the Great War* pp.vii-xix

differences between the volunteers, and even 'Derby' men, and the conscripts of the Military Service Tribunal system, for example, has only recently started to receive critical attention.¹² Tilsley wrote that although one veteran 'was heard to sneer something about tribunals and starred trades', surprisingly 'the newcomers looked a more intelligent crowd than the war-beaten men they joined'.¹³

The importance and significance of these overlapping identities should be borne in mind through this study of morale, discipline and combat. However, there remains room for consideration of those major categories of identity which dominated individuals' perceptions. For Waites,¹⁴ the major generic remained class but for the purposes of this study, it is the sense of belonging, related to the geographic area of, and within, Lancashire. Despite the plurality and diversity of complex identities within any given sociological unit, such as a battalion, Joyce was clear that major categories, such as class, region or community, remain an evident and acceptable categories for consideration.¹⁵ For the purposes of this study, community identity is to the fore against a background of others.

The local community and munitions

The local community on the Home Front demonstrated a commitment to the War which provided a balance to the Battalion's effort on the War Front. Primarily this came through their involvement in the munitions or agricultural effort of south west Lancashire. For that part of the community who were not actively engaged in the fighting, their War contribution could be just as significant to the total War effort. The evidence in the final chapter concerning the local community's shared experience of the War emphasises the importance of being involved. The community's munitions work should be seen in the context of both that memorialisation process and the Lusitania riots examined in chapter two. While one half of the community was fighting abroad the other half was making its own sacrifices at Home. Munitions work was not a safe option and it is particularly significant that women played such a large and crucial part in this community endeavour.

¹¹ *ibid.* p.xvi

¹² Bet-El, IR *Conscripts: Lost legions of the Great War* Sutton Publishing Stroud 1999

¹³ Tilsley *Other ranks* p.150

¹⁴ Waites, *A class society at War*

¹⁵ Joyce *Visions of the people* p.12

In total, the Liverpool War Munitions Committee ran six national shell factories: Cunard's on Rimrose Road; the National Gauge Factory, in Clyde Street, Bootle; Lambeth Road, Liverpool; Edge Lane, Liverpool; North Haymarket, Liverpool; and Chester. Additionally there was No.2 National Filling Factory near Aintree station, Sefton, the No.3 National Aeroplane factory at Aintree, and HM Explosives Factory at Litherland. By March 1918, 807 people were employed at Litherland, 33% of whom were women. The Aeroplane Factory employed 1,054 women (40.5%) out of a total 2,634 employees in September 1918. The Filling Factory employed 10,837 at its peak in March 1917, 10,340 of whom were women, although by August 1918 total employees were down to 8,599, of whom 87.1% were women.¹⁶ While this was a huge number, the complete site covered 175 acres and included an amatol unit extension which in June 1918 had 2,219 workers.¹⁷ The Clyde Street Gauge Factory employed just 52 skilled tool makers, although twenty-one of these were trained women. Finally, the Cunard Shell Factory employed 1,110 employees in October 1918 with 73.8% of them being women.¹⁸ The significance of these figures was that in the southern part of the area, a total of 15,440 people were engaged in munitions work, of whom 12,500 (80%) were women.

Women workers were certainly a key element in the Cunard shell works. According to the 'Record of work' of the Liverpool Munitions Committee, 85% of labour was female. The manufacture of the heavier 6" and 8" shells was significant enough for the Ministry to send representatives from other factories to see what could be achieved by women workers.¹⁹ In a history of Cunard during the War, the Rimrose Road factory was described as 'the pioneer in the employment of women on shells of large calibre.'²⁰ A matron had been appointed in December 1915²¹ and later the dining room had to be extended, together with matron's offices, cloakrooms and toilet

¹⁶ *History of the Ministry of Munitions* Vol. VIII pp.64, 65, 108 – 111, 169, 170, 202 - 203

¹⁷ IWM MUN 26/7 Report on the National Amatol Factory, Aintree 12th July 1918. The Leeds Filling Factory employed 12,150 women out of a total workforce of 13,315: *History of the Ministry of Munitions* Vol.VIII p.169

¹⁸ *History of the Ministry of Munitions* pp 109, 110

¹⁹ *Liverpool Munitions - Record of Work* p.27

²⁰ Hurd, A *A Merchant Fleet at War* Cassel & Co. Ltd. London 1920 p.72

²¹ B4/44 Cunard Executive Board Minutes 22nd December 1915 - Miss De'Ath; also a Lady Superintendent and three assistants- *Liverpool Munitions - Record of Work* p.24

facilities.²² The percentage of female labour at Rimrose Road claimed by the 'Record of Work' was 85% of the total workforce of 1,053 in January 1918 i.e. 796; by October 1918 this had reduced to 73.8% in an increased workforce of 1,110 i.e. 819.²³

According to the Liverpool Committee record, the women workers at the National Shell factory were 'mostly drawn from middle class homes...not previously engaged in factory work.'²⁴ If so, this seems to contradict Marwick's view that it was mainly working class women who went into munitions, although he did accept that they were joined by increasing numbers of the middle classes.²⁵ At the Aintree Filling factory, however, they were the 'city type – undersized, badly developed, with very bad teeth and often anaemic'.²⁶ The examination for workers at the factories was fairly similar to that carried out on volunteers for the Services. The superintendents were keen to ensure that the workers were fit enough to work in factory conditions and their regular inspections demonstrated concern for the women's welfare. They were also keen to ensure that worries about poisoning or explosions were minimised. According to the report on Aintree, there were only nine cases of toxic jaundice dealt with by the Medical Officer, and they all had septic teeth.²⁷ Three of these workers died.²⁸

This was the one aspect of the sacrifice made by the Home communities. Death could be slow, through septic poisoning or maybe sudden as a casualty in one of several explosions. The explosion of a 6" shell at the filling factory in Sefton on 23rd July 1918 killed 3 people²⁹, and there had been a small explosion and fire at the

²² B4/47 Cunard Executive Board Minutes 26th July 1916

²³ *History of the Ministry of Munitions* Vol. VIII p.109; *Liverpool Munitions – Record of Work* p.52

²⁴ *Liverpool Munitions – Record of Work* p.23

²⁵ Marwick *The Deluge* p.130

²⁶ IWM MUN 26.4 Report on the National Amatol Factory, Aintree 12th July 1918

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Three women were listed from the Merseyside area as having died from poisoning, although the source material is limited in scope: Sarah Cooper, Wavertree; Agnes Deane, Everton; and Elizabeth Walsh, Bootle: IWM MUN 34.2/16 and 17 'Names and addresses of workers who died of poisoning during war work'

²⁹ *History of the Ministry of Munitions* Vol.VIII Part II p.170. The 'History' only listed three deaths from an explosion in the Liverpool factories, but six names appear in a list of women casualties who came from the Merseyside area – Margaret Bradshaw, Kirkdale; S. Payne, Liverpool; Agnes Brown, Garston; Mary Taylor and Sarah Wilshaw, both from Liverpool; Charlotte Massey, Seacombe: IWM MUN 34.2/14 'List of workers to whom fatal accidents occurred' and IWM MUN 34.2/15 'Names and addresses of workers who met

Litherland HM Explosives Factory on Friday 22nd September 1916.³⁰ It was Brotherton's HM Explosives Factory near Litherland army camp that caused the most persistent problems, described by Sassoon as 'a hissing and throbbing inferno, which incessantly concocted the form of high explosive known as TNT; when the wind was in the east the camp got the benefit of the fumes.' The fumes were a literary device for Sassoon - '[the factory] flared and seethed and reeked with poisonous vapour'³¹ - for the local inhabitants they were a constant nuisance.

In spring 1916, Litherland and Bootle Councils started raising concerns about noxious fumes from the factory and the discharged effluent being pumped into the local sewers.³² Nearby St. Philip's Church joined the fray and Litherland Council sought support from neighbouring Councils in Liverpool, Bootle, Waterloo and Great Crosby. An expert was called in to investigate the effects on the sewers at Bridge Road 'with a view to making a claim against the Ministry of Munitions'. By December, the Home Office and Arthur Stanley MP had also become embroiled and, following another evasive reply from the Ministry, the Council wrote again to complain.³³ Bootle Council had already been moved to action and a visit by the Medical Officer had found that 'fumes escape from nearly every joint in the pipes. There were greenish yellow clouds of nitric acid over the roofs' [of nearby houses].³⁴

The continuation of work in the factories was important to the local economy. The local factory superintendent wrote to Litherland UDC claiming that the level of emissions received constant attention and they were likely to reduce considerably in the coming months anyway. Shortly afterwards, in an exhibition of compliant assimilation by the Council, the key players from Brotherton's, Bryant and May and North West Rubber, were appointed to the local National Service Committee. In June 1917 Litherland Council accepted the company's assurance that everything possible was being done about the fumes, but still wrote to the Ministry demanding, perhaps rather naively, that the local factory stop manufacturing explosives. All this

with fatal accidents'.

³⁰ LUD 7 Litherland Urban District Council Minutes 2nd October 1916

³¹ Sassoon *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* pp.235, 381

³² LUD 7 Litherland UDC Minutes 1st May 1916; B/MO5 Bootle Borough Council Medical Officer of Health Report 29th May 1916; In his further report 26th June 1916, the Medical Officer also recorded complaints about the Cunard works.

³³ LUD 7 Litherland UDC 4th September 1916 and 4th December 1916

³⁴ B/MO5 Bootle Borough Council Medical Officer of Health report 24th July 1916

was to little avail. The report into the discharges into the sewer proved that the fumes from the factory were a severe danger to the local inhabitants. Unfortunately, this proof came from the inquest verdict on the surveyor and his colleague who had died accidentally, 'by being asphyxiated by gas which came from HM factory', while attempting to carry out their investigation.³⁵ Fire alarms were introduced under new regulations to try and control the fumes however the factory was eventually closed in April 1918.³⁶

This episode demonstrates both the dangers to the population and the resolve of the leading agencies and their participants to work through those dangers to maintain their commitment to the War. That this was important to the community was clear. This element of sacrifice was a significant factor in the community's shared experience of the War. The Battalion represented only one aspect of the community's War effort. The growth of a sense of identity at the Front was a crucial aspect of the men's morale and at Home there developed a similar sense of belonging to a community at War.

The Cast Iron Division - 1916³⁷

From 1916 the West Lancashire Division was a significant formation encapsulating strong morale, good discipline and growing combat effectiveness. A crucial aspect for the 55th Division's level of morale was its sense of community identity. Lee emphasised the importance of the sense of belonging to a division, referring to the 55th specifically as a good example.³⁸ Griffith had some reservations about the significance of 'divisions' in terms of loyalty, but he did define an elite group of divisions which he considered had developed a corporate identity that involved various factors, including a good or bad reputation for aggression, cohesion and discipline.³⁹ The Commanding Officer was important, but the traditions of the unit more so. Units such as 7th King's, which stayed together longest, were able to

³⁵ LUD 7 Litherland UDC Minutes 5th March, 7th May, 4th June, 2nd July, 27th July, 8th August 1917, 4th March 1918

³⁶ *History of the Ministry of Munitions* Vol.VIII Part II p.65

³⁷ This reference to 55th Division (by Tilsley) as "Cast Iron" is comparative to a similar epithet for the whole King's as the "Cast Iron Regiment" recalled by Critchley: Tilsley *Other ranks* p.48. Its use implies that the senior partners in the Division were the Liverpool battalions

³⁸ Lee 'The British Divisions at Third Ypres' p.225

³⁹ Griffith *Battle Tactics of the Western Front* pp.79-83

develop this cohesion better than others. Griffith linked this 'inner essence' with a group of Divisions who formed what he called an elite within the BEF.

Notwithstanding his classification of Divisions in terms of tactics, for morale Griffith focused on the enduring structures such as Battalion and Regiment as being most important.⁴⁰ Bourne has pointed out that the Battalion was the most important thing to a soldier, although he was also keen to stress that the most loyalty or identity was felt with the unit closest to the men with whom he ate, slept, fought and often died.⁴¹ At the Front, there was a widening series of groups to whom a man owed loyalty – from simply his mates, to his section, platoon, company, battalion, brigade and division. Bourne went on to include the particular 'trade' of a man – Lewis gunner, sapper or infantryman.⁴²

Certainly battalion identity was maintained – in *Other ranks* Tilsley often referred to 'Festubert men'. So too was regimental loyalty – the 'Liverpool Brigade' was reunited in the new Division, but the reuniting of the whole Lancashire Division was recalled by Critchley as being most important. He said '[the Division] were all Lancashire lads ... we were fighting as a Division for the first time and we soon made our name. Our motto was 'We win or Die'.⁴³ It is this direct link between morale and effectiveness in the field which is explored later in the chapter.

The evidence demonstrates that, as well as retaining a significant local presence in terms of the men's origins, the notion of community identity and Battalion loyalty was actively fostered at all levels, but especially by Major-General Jeudwine. The Divisional General displayed a consistent determination to emphasise the importance of the Lancashire connection within the Division. This was shown in his correspondence and actions when, in January 1916, days after the formation of the Division, Jeudwine wrote to XIV Corps requesting that 1/1st West Lancashire Field Company be transferred from 4th Division to the 55th.⁴⁴ Corresponding with Lord

⁴⁰ Griffith, P 'Tactical reform in the British Army' in *British fighting methods in the Great War* p.6

⁴¹ Bourne *Britain and the Great War* pp. 215 and 220

⁴² Bourne "The British Working Man in Arms" p.349

⁴³ Critchley

⁴⁴ WO 95/2899 55th Division War Diary Letter from Jeudwine to XIV Corps HQ 24th January 1916.

Derby in March, he noted that this had happened.⁴⁵ Jeudwine was keen on retaining that local identity because he felt it was a vital aspect of his unit's combat effectiveness. His determination was an example he expected to be followed, and it was a determination shared by Lord Derby.

Derby's links with Jeudwine as Chairman of the West Lancashire Territorial Association led him to visit France and inspect the troops, visiting the trenches of 1/7th King's on 7th June 1915. This kind of contact and ceremonial inspection was designed to enthuse the troops as well as make these important personages feel they were making some contribution. The following month, a party of 1/7th King's formed a Guard of Honour for Kitchener at Vendin, and Derby made another visit, this time to his 55th Division, in early February 1916.⁴⁶

Jeudwine was keen on parades, inspections and the distribution of gallantry awards, the publication of which was designed to inspire future action as well as to recognise and praise past deeds. At the first such Divisional occasion, at the end of July 1916, a number of men from 1/7th Battalion were recognised for their action in the field: 1973 Corporal McQuilton, 2577 Corporal Bowles and 4937 Private Currie received Military Medals for their part in the raids on 26th and 28th June 1916, while Captain Robinson, RAMC was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.⁴⁷ Awards were routinely recorded in the pages of the Battalion War Diary. In February 1918, on the second anniversary of the formation of the Division in the field, and later in the same year, Jeudwine had statistics compiled listing all gallantry awards by unit, again to recognise combat effectiveness, boost morale, and help create a sense of identity for the Division.⁴⁸

Less formal social contact to boost morale was also promoted in life away from the action and the 1/7th Battalion were fully engaged in such activity. In considering the maintenance of troop morale, Fuller established that entertainments, and sport in

⁴⁵ 356 FIF/42 Letter from Jeudwine to Derby 2nd March 1916 Jeudwine MSS

⁴⁶ WO 95/1360 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 7th June and 8th July 1915, 2nd February 1916. The link was maintained beyond the War: at the twentieth anniversary dinner, Derby 'paid high tribute to the qualities and leadership of General Jeudwine' – *Southport Guardian* 13th April 1938 p.4

⁴⁷ WO 95/1360 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 26th and 31st July 1916.

⁴⁸ 356 FIF/16 Honours and Awards List 55th Division 16th February 1918; 356 FIF/16 Annotated Nominal Roll of Recommendations for 'Immediate reward' 55th Division July 1918 Jeudwine MSS

particular, were crucial elements in maintaining morale, building on other aspects of social cohesion. These entertainments included music hall and, in terms of sport, particularly football. In other words, the pleasures of the rank and file, rather than those of the Officers, were what kept spirits up. This encouragement to replicate the culture of Home was significant.⁴⁹

Almost before they made it to the trenches, the Battalion was playing football. On Wednesday 18th March 1915, the Battalion team beat a combined team from 1st and 5th King's 6-2, the day after the first two men from the Battalion had been killed.⁵⁰ The Battalion fostered a good team and played a lot of football, culminating after hostilities ceased with a successful run in the Divisional competition. By Christmas they had beaten the West Lancashire Field Ambulance, 6th King's, 5th King's and 165th Brigade Headquarters. In the semi-final they beat 2/5th Lancashire Fusiliers 3-2 and in the final they won 4-2 against 166th Brigade Headquarters.⁵¹ War Diaries also record cross-country runs, Battalion, Brigade and Divisional sports, gymkhanas and boxing tournaments. All these activities contributed to maintaining the morale of the unit and brought it closer together, as well as maintaining fitness and providing welcome relief from the trenches. Critchley recorded that after the campaign on the Somme, they regrouped, playing 'football, a cross country run and all kinds of sport.'⁵² Competitions were also held in more practical fields such as in a shooting competition in February 1916 and in January 1918 1/7th King's won the Divisional wiring competition, beating the Liverpool Scottish and 5th North Lancashires.⁵³

Entertainment to bolster morale came in other ways. There was a Battalion concert in Bethune on 19th March 1915 and a regimental concert room with 'cinematograph and band' which opened in November that year.⁵⁴ Lord Derby put some of his fundraising efforts into helping establish a 55th Division band. Jeudwine wrote to

⁴⁹ Fuller *Troop Morale and Popular Culture* pp.175-6

⁵⁰ WO 95/1360 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 18th March 1915. See chapter three for an account of the action.

⁵¹ WO 95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 19th, 23rd, 26th, 29th November 1918, 16th and 28th January 1918; WO 95/2907 55th Division General Staff War Diary 28th January 1919

⁵² Critchley

⁵³ WO 95/1360 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 4th February 1916; WO 95/2910 55th Division A&Q Branch War Diary 29th January 1918

⁵⁴ WO 95/1360 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 19th March 1915; WO 95/1636 7th Division A&QMG War Diary 10th November 1915

thank him: 'We can soon get a band together when they arrive – we can then retaliate on the Germans who have lately been giving way to music across the fence.'⁵⁵ When the Battalion dined together to celebrate a belated Christmas on 1st January 1917 in the church at Ypres, they were treated to a concert of songs, recitals and monologues.⁵⁶ The Divisional theatre party – called the 'Roses' - was so popular that they had a three day residency at GHQ in January 1918, raising money for St. Dunstan's. The 'Roses' also gave two local performances in the Divisional canteen.⁵⁷

In the trenches too, identification with home was important and could be maintained quite simply by, for example, the use of familiar roads and streets given to trench networks and camps. Critchley noted that trench names around Givenchy included Scotland Road, Old Haynes Road, Southport Road, Crosby Road – all familiar from the Liverpool area.⁵⁸ In June 1917 1/7th Battalion was based first at Mersey Camp and then at Derby Camp, on the outskirts of Poperinghe.⁵⁹

These efforts to maintain the local or regional identity of a unit were not aided by the conscription legislation, one effect of which was to send the men to any unit regardless of abode. However, there is some evidence that this local link remained important, at least to the Military Service Tribunal itself. On one occasion in Southport the Military Representative, Colonel Eaton, promised to write for a schoolteacher who had not been exempted by the Tribunal, to secure him a place in the 7th King's, the same Battalion as his brother.⁶⁰ Another man, a cafe worker who was a Christadelphian, and had one brother in 7th King's and one in the Royal Marines, refused to do non-combatant service and was duly exempted.⁶¹ Existing links with any of the services were often important aspects in the Tribunal's decision. There are many examples of exemptions to active service granted to men who already had sons in the services, for instance, at the West Lancashire Tribunal sitting at Ormskirk, one farmer with six sons had two appeals refused and one son exempted; a man from Halsall had two of his four sons refused and two exempted;

⁵⁵ 356 FIF/42 Letter from Jeudwine to Lord Derby 2nd March 1916 Jeudwine MSS

⁵⁶ WO 95/1360 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 1st January 1917; 7th Battalion signed Menu Card, King's Regimental Museum, Liverpool

⁵⁷ WO 95/2910 55th Divison A&Q Branch War Diary 23rd January 1918

⁵⁸ Critchley

⁵⁹ WO 95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary June 1917

⁶⁰ *Bootle Times* 17th March 1916 p.6

and another farmer from Hoskayne who already had one son in the trenches had two more exempted and one refused.⁶²

Jeudwine was keen to baulk the system which had removed this continuity with a soldier's unit. In correspondence with Lord Derby in late August 1918 he was still emphasising the importance of the 'localness' of the Division when urging the return of wounded men to their own units. After Critchley had been wounded at Festubert, he had been able to return to the same Battalion eight months later, by then in the new Division.⁶³ In his letter to Derby, Jeudwine reiterated that 'our Boys are very proud of their Division ... and they ask nothing better than that they may continue to fight side by side with their comrades ... if possible to add further lustre on the emblem they have so proudly worn'.⁶⁴ The Major-General noted one particular instance in his personal notebook: 'Burrows No.14 Platoon 7 Kings – application to return referred to B. Moss'.⁶⁵

The notion and reality of community identity in 7th King's and in the 55th Division was an important one. It was encouraged and maintained by the Commanding Officer and was seen as a crucial aspect to maintaining morale. The significance of high morale can be seen in the study of the combat engagements which make up the rest of this chapter.

Deployment of the 1/7th King's Battalion, 1915 - 18

Before studying specific engagements of the Battalion in 55th Division, it is worth considering the overall deployment of the 1/7th King's during the War. This evidence relates firstly to the number of days spent in action; secondly, the number of casualties suffered; and thirdly, the relative strength of the Battalion. A study of these elements provides a context for the study of particular actions, the level of discipline and the relevance of the dilution of local men in a Battalion which relied so heavily on a sense of community identity. The number of days spent in frontline action should demonstrate the level of their deployment by GHQ; the casualty figures

⁶¹ *Southport Guardian* 1st March 1916 p.5

⁶² *Southport Guardian* 1st April 1916 p.9

⁶³ Critchley

⁶⁴ 356 FIF/45 Letter from Jeudwine to Derby 28th August 1918 Jeudwine MSS

⁶⁵ 356 FIF/40 Jeudwine Notebooks [June 1918?] Jeudwine MSS

should indicate the level of intensity of the actions in which they were engaged; and the relative strength of the Battalion could indicate their level of operational efficiency. In other words, were fewer men fighting harder for greater lengths of time as the War progressed, and did this signify either greater efficiency or a gradual wearing down of resources? Most importantly, did these factors have a detrimental effect on the community identity of the Battalion?

The principal locus of attention for 1/7th King's, of Bootle and Southport, reinforced what was becoming the wider allegiance to Lancashire during the second part of the War. This 'Lancastrianisation' process had begun in January 1916 and was under way before the numbers of men from the local area started to show significant decline (see Table Eight p.236). As this regional identity fostered high morale in the Division, so GHQ grew more confident in the Division's abilities and this confidence was reflected in their deployment in a number of theatres on the Western Front.

Proof of the perceived effectiveness of the 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment can be found in its deployment during the War. Details of specific engagements are studied below, but in terms of general deployment, 55th Division saw action on fourteen occasions and as this was achieved excluding any action in 1914 or 1915, it compares favourably with others who had served the longer period of the War.⁶⁶ As a Unit, 1/7th King's were in 2nd and 7th Regular Divisions in 1915, adding three more engagements. Griffith found that the average frequency for a Territorial Division to spend in action was sixteen occasions, concluding that this demonstrated a 'low level of trust [by GHQ]'.⁶⁷ Despite this Griffith did recognise that an, albeit informal, hierarchy of Divisions had emerged by the end of 1916, including 55th Division amongst the more trustworthy units who were grouped as an elite for assault.⁶⁸ There had also emerged a group of senior commanders who were clearly more effective and who led the strategic thinking and training through the rest of the War. Griffith listed 19 names, including Jeudwine. It was these men who formed the 'assault

⁶⁶ Battle honours for the 55th Division ascribed in Becke *Order of Battle* Part 2A pp. 138-9

⁶⁷ Griffith *Battle tactics of the Western Front* pp. 81-2. Note that the average number of months spent by a first line Territorial Division in a major theatre of War was thirty-eight. While 55th Division had thirty-five, from 1916, 1/7th Battalion was at the Front for forty-four months: Fuller *Troop morale and popular culture* p.9

⁶⁸ Griffith *Battle tactics of the Western Front* p.82. Not all commentators shared his view. Simkins was more sanguine about the inclusion of 55th Division, providing a much wider list of claimants and thus diluting Griffith's elite spearhead: Simkins, P "Co-Stars or Supporting Cast? British Divisions in the 'Hundred Days', 1918" in *British Fighting Methods in the Great War* p.64

spearhead of the BEF' in 1917.⁶⁹ Coop pointed out that having gained the confidence of Army Command by the end of July 1917, the Division was chosen to carry out the assault at Ypres on its own front – 'an honour which it both appreciated and entirely vindicated'.⁷⁰

The number of engagements can be more sharply defined in terms of the numbers of days spent in the forward lines, calculated from War Diaries. The evidence from this Battalion is that they spent only 45% of their time in the 'rear' and the remaining time at the Front. This high ratio of time deployed in the Line indicates that they were relied upon by Army Command in that role. Table Nine p.237 and Graph Two p.237 show that 1/7th King's spent a total of 55% of their time in the trenches and the forward area, where they were sufficiently close to be running working and digging parties during the nights. Fuller assumed that 60% of any unit's time was spent in the reserve or rest,⁷¹ although as Malcolm Brown pointed out, even when away from the Front Line and at 'rest', troops were making up working parties, carrying parties, burial parties, and digging trenches and mines.⁷² When in the Regular Division 7th Battalion spent 52% of 1915 in the forward area. This was more than the time spent by the 55th Division in 1917 and close to the Divisional commitment in 1918 when GHQ apparently had a greater confidence in the unit's abilities.

This detailed study of the days at the Front in 1/7th King's also confirmed what Morris established had happened in the Leeds Rifles, with the planned routine of trench life being a rotation of six days in the Front Line, six in Reserve, six in Second Line and six at rest, breaking down very early on. Morris found that the Leeds men could be in the trenches for up to twenty-five days and have much shorter rest periods.⁷³ While the Kingsmen spent the whole of December 1915 and January 1916 away from the Front, this was a period of transition into the new 55th Division. In the middle of 1916 they were in the trenches from 12th June until 19th July, with only three days designated for working parties; even those three included taking part in a night raid. In 1917, they spent the second half of June forming working parties for the Front, but were in the trenches for virtually the whole time between 17th September and 5th

⁶⁹ Griffith *Battle tactics of the Western Front* pp.79, 83

⁷⁰ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.46

⁷¹ Fuller *Troop Morale and Popular Culture* p.58

⁷² Brown, M *The Imperial War Museum Book of the Western Front* Sidgwick & Jackson London 1993 pp. 64-68

December. In 1918 they were away from the Front, taking part in training in Divisional Reserve on a routine, almost monthly, basis. Furthermore, in 1918, from September onwards, they were not simply in the trenches but formed the Line of Resistance, Support, Outpost Line or Advanced Guard, as the enemy was pursued back into Belgium. All this deployment demonstrated their perceived reliability and dependability across a range of sectors in the Front Line.

A further indication of the perceived effectiveness of the unit is given by the fact that on three separate occasions when an opportunity arose to disband the Battalion, it was not taken. Other units did suffer that fate. Firstly, in August 1915 there was a strong chance they would turn into a Pioneer Battalion, but instead were transferred from 2nd to 7th Division and subsequently to the reformed 55th.⁷⁴ Then in January 1918 there was widespread reorganisation of Brigades and three Battalions of 55th Division were dismantled and merged with their Second Lines in 57th Division – 8th and 9th King's, and 5th Loyal North Lancashires.⁷⁵ Much of 1/8th Battalion was actually merged with 1/5th, 1/6th and 1/7th Battalions.⁷⁶ Thirdly, shortly after the War, the Territorial Association instructed the West Lancashire County Association to make some reductions, but a consideration of the various Battalions in the Association resolved that 7th King's had built a reputation during the War which meant they were too good to be disbanded.⁷⁷

In addition to spending such a large proportion of their time at the Front, the increasing number of deaths in the Battalion demonstrates an increasing commitment to action where casualties could occur. Table Ten p.238 and Graph Three p.238 show monthly averages for each year of the War for 1/7th King's. However, some caution should be exercised in relying on these figures too heavily as they are a record of both 1st and 2nd Line Battalions – 2/7th King's were in action on the Western Front in 57th Division from late 1917. Overall casualties were high in 1918 as a result of the Spring Offensive and the Final Advance, when, for example,

⁷³ Morris "The Leeds Rifles" p.573

⁷⁴ WO95/1360 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary; Marriott correspondence 26th August 1915

⁷⁵ Becke *Order of Battle* Part 2A pp. 133-9

⁷⁶ Wyrall *The History of the King's Regiment* vol III p. 607

⁷⁷ WES 1/1 (1) WLTA Minute Book - Special meeting 7th June 1921 to decide the dismantling of one Territorial Battalion - agreed to merge 6th and 10th Liverpool's.

180,000 casualties were sustained by the BEF in the first 50 days.⁷⁸ Finally, the nature of fighting in the last two or three months of the War changed and casualties were generally reduced.

The casualty figures serve to indicate the increased use of Territorials from 1916 onwards. This can be further demonstrated by the fluctuating ranks of the Battalion as the War continued, shown in Graph Four p.239. The graph pinpoints Battalion strength on a quarterly basis, on or around 25th of March, June, September and December. The Battalion's fighting strength on the eve of Festubert, on 15th May 1915, was 931, higher than the figures when they landed in France. However, in July 1915 it reached its lowest point of 567 and this explains why there was a discussion about transforming it into a Pioneer Battalion.⁷⁹ As it was decided not to do this, more drafts joined and the numbers rose steadily until, on 2nd September 1916, they reached their highest point at 1072.⁸⁰ The pattern is particularly instructive when related to the battles they fought. After starting at Festubert with 931 men, and suffering losses, they were back to 805 when they supported the attacks at Loos.⁸¹ Almost ten months later, in the new Division, they fought on the Somme with over 1,000 men, and when they finished that summer campaign after taking considerable casualties they had fallen to a new low of 745. By November they had barely 700 men in the ranks.⁸² After rebuilding through 1917 they went into Third Ypres with less than 900 men, comparable to Festubert in 1915.⁸³ Their losses brought them back to a figure similar to that of that first summer. The defence at Givenchy looks all the more impressive when it is considered that it was made by just 946 men.⁸⁴

During the Final Advance numbers fluctuated between 795 and 694. These considerably smaller numbers were fighting more efficiently and effectively on an all-arms basis, as opposed to the need for ranks in depth on account of the nature of the attacks on the Somme and at Passchendaele. Overall, the figures seem to indicate that an optimum fighting strength of around 900 men was achieved in time for each

⁷⁸ Sheffield *Forgotten Victory* p.244

⁷⁹ WO95/1285 2nd Division War Diary Strength of Units 15th May and 17th July 1915

⁸⁰ WO95/2909 55th Division War Diary Strength of Units 2nd September 1916

⁸¹ WO95/1287 2nd Division War Diary Strength of Units 25th September 1915

⁸² WO95/2901 55th Division War Diary Strength of Units 7th October and 11th November 1916

⁸³ WO95/525 Fifth Army War Diary Strength of Units 29th July 1917

major engagement of the War, until the Hundred Days. This represented a major achievement of recruitment and organisation and the determination to maintain these figures implies a desire by GHQ to keep 1/7th King's as a viable fighting unit.

By reconstructing the triangle of evidence in Tables Nine and Ten and Graphs Two, Three and Four p.237 – p. 239, it can be seen that in 1915 the Battalion spent 52% of their time in the forward area including 24% more or less in action; they suffered 16.6 deaths per month and their strength ranged between 567 and 805. In 1916 the number of deaths per month remained constant despite spending 44% in the Front Line and 63% in the forward area. 1916 saw numbers range from 708 to 1072. Deaths in 1917 leapt to 25 per month although less time was being spent in the forward area and the overall numbers of men fighting was fewer, being between 644 and 976. In the final year of the War, deaths were at their highest at 29 per month while the time spent at the Front Line at 57%, was almost as much as in 1916, when the Battalion was committed the most. With their strength between a range of 694 and 988, this again signified fewer men involved and was also the most settled period for the Battalion as the fluctuation between high and low point was at its lowest.

The evidence shows that considerable effort was made to revitalise the Battalion after major losses in action and to maintain it as a unit. It was deployed in the Front Line with some regularity, implying that it had earned a degree of trust and reliability in the eyes of Army Command. As it gradually fought with fewer men but maintained success in battle, it demonstrated an increasing efficiency in action to go with its effectiveness. By the end of the War the Terriers of 7th King's showed that they were meeting the requirements of the tactical development the Army needed to achieve overall success. This learning curve in a territorial unit is studied below in more detail.

Battles of the Somme

The Battles of the Somme demonstrate a learning curve in 1/7th Battalion to the extent that by the end of September 1916 the Battalion understood that a successful attack relied upon preparation and all-arms coordination. The Brigadier General had already written to Marriott to congratulate him on his Battalion's efforts: 'They show that you fully realise, and, better still, put into practice, the cooperation of the various

⁸⁴ WO95/2950 55th Division War Diary Strength of Units 6th April 1918

arms'.⁸⁵ Griffith, in his study of the development of the Army's tactics, outlined the key aspects to these lessons: close co-operation and the use of the creeping barrage; careful preparation and tactical analysis; and the creation of a new tactical unit based around platoons attacking as an 'army in miniature'.⁸⁶

One aspect of this preparation and tactical analysis continued to be raids in advance of major assaults. On 28th June a raid took place which represented the first significant action for the new 55th Division since its formation in January 1916. The raid consisted of 400 men from across a range of units in an area where they had been training and therefore knew well. It involved considerable integration and co-operation and produced important information for future attacks in terms of the amount of wire cut, the co-ordination of different units and the importance of direction. Men from 1/7th King's joined these comrades from other units in the Division. This however, was only one of 70 raids conducted that day between Gommecourt and Ypres, as part of the plan to confuse the German defences.⁸⁷

Raids could allow for precise action by a small unit such as a platoon or two carrying out a range of tasks, however a raid on this scale, with a bombardment and the use of gas proved a costly operation, so soon before the full assault of the Division in August. Many of the problems were caused by the time lapse between the wire being cut and the raid taking place, and the confusion which ensued when smoke and gas drifted onto friendly lines. Daylight, and the 'public advertisement of our intentions',⁸⁸ meant high casualties, with 1/7th King's losing fourteen men wounded and six men and two officers killed. In a Special Order to the troops concerned, Jeudwine congratulated the men because the raids secured important information about the enemy and inflicted 'great damage and loss' on them.⁸⁹ He referred especially to the 'discipline and soldierly spirit... which the most seasoned of troops could not have surpassed'.

The main battles of the Somme involving 1/7th King's – Guillemont, Ginchy and Gueudecourt – represented a microcosm of the developing tactical success and are

⁸⁵ Marriott correspondence 16th June 1916

⁸⁶ Griffith *Battle tactics of the Western Front* pp.65, 74-6 and 78

⁸⁷ Wyrall *The History of the King's Regiment* Vol.II p.252

⁸⁸ WO 95/2899 55th Division War Diary Jeudwine report of raid to VI Corps 3rd July 1916

⁸⁹ WO 95/2925 165th Brigade War Diary Special Order of the Day, Jeudwine 29th June 1916

considered below. Guillemont had particular local significance for the Division as the battlefield was strewn with dead from Congreve's XIII Corps, who had been involved in trying to take Guillemont since 23rd July.⁹⁰ The Corps included 30th and 35th Divisions – battalions from the Lancashire Fusiliers and the Liverpool and Manchester Pals.⁹¹ These were locally recognisable units, and potentially some of the casualties would have been personally known to the incoming Division, no doubt sapping their morale. In such conditions, battle success would be vital to maintain that morale. The continuing failure to take the village highlighted the need for proper preparation and communication before and during the battle. The attack at Ginchy followed a period of recuperation and considerable training and produced mixed, though largely successful, results. The key attack on 25th September, at Gueudecourt, was part of an assault across the whole of the Fourth Army frontage. The importance of training and preparation appeared to bear fruit as most objectives were taken and held.

The failure to capture Guillemont sooner was due to two principal factors, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Cochrane, head of Jeudwine's General Staff and in command of 55th Division at Guillemont in Jeudwine's absence. Firstly, the German defensive positions and secondly the terrain over which the attack was made. A third factor, implicit in his correspondence, was the failure of Corps and Army Command to respect the local information of Brigades and Divisions and Cochrane wrote that this 'lack of touch with the front became more marked' as the War progressed.⁹²

The village of Guillemont was bombarded throughout 7th August 1916, and until zero hour on 8th (4.20am), when 165th Brigade launched the attack.⁹³ By 5.20am, it was reported that 1/8th King's were in Guillemont Station but the supporting Battalion on their flank, 1/4th Royal Lancasters, were cut down as they tried to get through uncut enemy wire. 2/5th Lancashire Fusiliers had high casualties from machine guns and enemy shells and a Battalion from 166th Brigade was rushed to replace them in the

⁹⁰ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.30; Stedman, M *Somme - Guillemont. Battleground Europe Series* Leo Cooper London 1998 p.70; Griffith referred to Congreve's Corps as now containing leading players in the 'premier league' of Divisions – 3rd, 9th, 18th and 55th: *Battle tactics of the Western Front* p.82

⁹¹ Stedman *Guillemont* p.70; Maddocks *Liverpool Pals* pp.111 - 124 ; Stanley *The History of the 89th Brigade* pp. 150-160

⁹² CAB 45/132 Cochrane to Edmonds 8th January [1934]

⁹³ WO95/2900 55th Division War Diary Narrative of events 25th July to 15th August 1916; Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.31

Reserve.⁹⁴ From the 2nd Division, 1st King's were also in Guillemont, and later suffered the same fate as the Territorials.⁹⁵ On the right, while 165th Brigade had succeeded in their objective and were consolidating, the problem lay between the two Brigades where there was no linkage at all.

Despite the casualties of the previous day, and against all the advice of local commanders, a renewed dawn attack for the same objectives was ordered for 9th August 1916, this time with 1/7th and 1/6th King's to the right and with 166th Brigade - Liverpool Scottish and 1/5th Loyals - to the left. Coop wrote that the Liverpool Scottish moved off at 4.20am, following the barrage, but finding the wire uncut, could not get to the enemy trenches and after several attempts, returned to their original line.⁹⁶ The 1/5th Loyals could not get out of the trenches until 5.00am, lost the artillery barrage support and failed to reach the German trenches. 165th Brigade had similar problems.⁹⁷

The German machine guns were away from the trench systems so that the artillery bombardment on the enemy trenches ignored the threat from the flanks. Cochrane observed that every attack was held up by machine gun fire with heavy casualties. Isolated attacks, preferred by Army Command, allowed the Germans to focus their artillery on each particular sector to defend the village. These frequent calls to attack appeared confusing and Cochrane believed that subjecting the infantry to 'retaliatory bombardment in positions affording little protection was to expect the impossible.'⁹⁸

The Divisional report stated that orders were received from XIII Corps for the relief of 1/5th King's but in the evening of 8th August further orders were received to renew attacks at 4.20am on 9th with the attack being forced by 165th and 166th Brigades. There had already been a preliminary order issued on 6th August for a further attack on 11th. The relief by 1/7th and a company of 1/6th King's Liverpools took place over unknown ground and in the face of the enemy barrage and machine gun fire on the night of 8th/9th. To the left, 166th Brigade had to move up to prepare for their attack at dawn. The consequence of this was crowded trenches, wounded coming one way,

⁹⁴ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.32

⁹⁵ Stedman *Guillemont* p.76

⁹⁶ During this assault, Noel Chavasse, 1/10th Battalion King's Liverpool, won his first Victoria Cross

⁹⁷ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.35

reliefs going another: limited room in communication trenches which had not been dug for such big numbers and activity.⁹⁹

The attack at night never happened. In his report, Colonel Shute, commanding 1/5th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment, wrote that there was 'much confusion as to locality of troops of 166th Inf. Brigade. The CO's of 2 battalions and a representative of a third battalion all arrived at BHQ on ridge under the impression that these were their Batt.HQ.' There was

continuous movement of troops of all kinds... many of whom clearly gave indecision as to direction and location. Confusion accentuated by the blocking of trenches by working parties, S.Bearer parties evacuating wounded, small parties of relieved troops and larger parties of 7th Liverpool going up to relieve or to old front line.¹⁰⁰

Coop referred to the crowded conditions and the 'gallant assault', but not to the causes of this confusion.¹⁰¹ Shute rang Brigade HQ to check the attack should still go ahead at 4.20am and unusually registered his view 'that the attack had not the slightest possibility of success'. In fact, Shute's Battalion should have been relieved, but at 5.00am the companies from 6th Liverpool's had still not done so, and by 9.00pm 7th Battalion had still failed to relieve Shute's D Company.¹⁰²

Cochrane's concerns were not just recorded with hindsight nearly twenty years later. On the day, he rang Lieutenant-General Congreve, XIII Corps Commander, to register concern at any renewed attack and insisted the decision be referred to the Army Command, but they were emphatic that it should go ahead.¹⁰³ Cochrane wrote to Jeudwine in 1933, recalling events: 'There was only one indifferent trench line so attacking troops were subject to intermittent artillery fire throughout. This caused considerable disorganisation and casualties. Control was difficult - such artillery can only be justified if there is adequate cover in allocating troops and the front line can be evacuated'.¹⁰⁴ This implication, that a lot of the damage being done to front line

⁹⁸ CAB 45/132 Cochrane to Edmonds 8th January [1934]

⁹⁹ WO95/2900 55th Division War Diary Narrative of events 25th July to 15th August 1916

¹⁰⁰ WO95/2925 165th Brigade War Diary 1/5th King's Liverpool Battalion CO report 22nd August 1916

¹⁰¹ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.35

¹⁰² WO95/2925 165th Brigade War Diary 1/5th Liverpool Battalion CO report 22nd August 1916

¹⁰³ CAB 45/132 Cochrane to Edmonds 8th January [1934]

¹⁰⁴ 356 FIF 56 Letter from Cochrane to Jeudwine 1933 Jeudwine MSS

troops was by 'friendly' artillery, was clearer in his letter to Edmonds: [the artillery should have left] the front line to be held by a few outposts and thereby avoiding the terrible casualties.'¹⁰⁵

Cochrane had said that there was no prospect of success and according to his response to Edmonds' draft of the *Official History* Jeudwine agreed with him;

troops had to come up a distance; crowded trenches, narrow trenches and men loaded with equipment, dark, no reconnaissance opportunity and confusion following the unsuccessful attack during the day - hence only part of the attacking troops reached their jumping off point in time when the barrage lifted.¹⁰⁶

In 1/7th King's official reports of the night of 8th August 1916 were no different. A Company was led by uncertain guides and at zero hour was in the open as the trench from which they were supposed to jump off did not exist as shown on the map. B Company had to cross open ground to reach their trench, again led by guides who did not know the way; they were out of touch with A Company and suffered heavy casualties. C Company were repulsed, owing to 'a lack of accurate knowledge of the ground'.¹⁰⁷ Marriott's report in the War Diary described the situation at noon on 9th as 'difficult'.

The issue of the terrain was crucial. Cochrane noted later that GHQ failed to appreciate that 'the sub-soil was chalk, and that it was impossible in a few hours to dig a trench with an entrenching tool'. This meant that men had no protection or concealment.¹⁰⁸ Difficulties in deployment 'were accentuated by the guides who, through no fault of 'FRED' did not know, and could not be made to understand the location required, and there are no landmarks to work on'.¹⁰⁹ Marriott had been more descriptive in a letter to his father when he stated:

had a difficult task in walking across lines of devastated country to find our position ... the difficulties of taking up a position for assault in the

¹⁰⁵ CAB 45/132 Cochrane to Edmonds 8th January [1934]

¹⁰⁶ 356 FIF 56 Jeudwine's comments to Edmonds on the draft chapter on the Somme for the *Official History* Jeudwine MSS

¹⁰⁷ WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary report to 165th Brigade 23rd August 1916.

¹⁰⁸ CAB 45/132 Cochrane to Edmonds 8th January [1934]

¹⁰⁹ WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary report by Lt.Col. Marriott 17th August 1916. NB: "FRED" was codename for 1/5th King's Battalion

dark in an unknown country. There are no lamp posts and sometimes the direction of hostile artillery is the only indication you have.¹¹⁰

Marriott's report continued for 10th August, 2.00am: 'the Artillery (British) has caused us casualties'. He called for more fire to be turned on German lines.¹¹¹ This comment echoed that of Cochrane noted above and was not unusual. However, there appeared to be no evidence to substantiate MacDonald's assertion that 'the rumour began to spread that, in the mist and confusion, two British battalions had attacked each other'.¹¹²

The attack was renewed on 12th August at 5.15pm, having been postponed the previous day due to bad weather. Seventh King's held their line of trenches while the rest of 165th Brigade cooperated with the French XX Corps.¹¹³ XIV Corps Commander, the Earl of Cavan, expressed his admiration for the companies engaged in the fighting on 12th and 13th August.¹¹⁴ Holding and consolidating these trenches by the Battalion continued to be difficult. B Company had been cut off for two days and was eventually reached, with the help of a photograph from an aeroplane which Marriott was able to interpret using a magnifying glass,¹¹⁵ while the Battalion continued to be under bomb and machine gun fire. The trench was shallow, owing to the chalk land, and dead of both sides lay heavy on the ground.¹¹⁶

The German position was held strongly and no further ground was gained. The Division was relieved on 14th/15th August.¹¹⁷ In a line which almost word for word repeated one in Jeudwine's report, demonstrating that he had direct access to the War Diary immediately after the War, Coop wrote that: 'During this period from July 30th to August 16th our line was advanced 500 yards on the right and 300 yards on

¹¹⁰ Marriott correspondence 14th August 1916

¹¹¹ WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary, Marriott report 17th August 1916

¹¹² MacDonald *Somme* p.210

¹¹³ WO95/2900 55th Division War Diary Narrative of events 25th July to 15th August 1916

¹¹⁴ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.36

¹¹⁵ Marriott letter to his father 14th August 1916

¹¹⁶ WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary - Marriott's report 17th August 1916

¹¹⁷ WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 15th August 1916

the left. 13,000 yards of new trenches were dug by the Division during this time and over 3,000 yards were deepened and improved'.¹¹⁸

After their withdrawal on 15th August, the Division spent some time at rest and training before returning to the line on 4th/5th September 1916.¹¹⁹ Tilsley described a week spent training in the exhibition trenches at Bouzincourt, which were 'all beautifully sand-bagged and drained.' He described the training as much milder than the Bull Ring - the infamous training ground at Etaples - and much more instructive. Jeudwine's emphasis on training was beginning to show, as were his concerns about identification, communication and care for equipment with the Division being issued with new badges, PH gas helmets, breech covers¹²⁰ and other equipment.¹²⁰

After 165th Brigade, including 1/7th King's, and 166th Brigade went into the line between High Wood and Delville Wood, 164th Brigade followed into Ale Alley, south-east of Delville Wood on 7th September.¹²¹ Artillery started shelling at 7.00am and the attack began at 4.45pm on 9th September with the 55th Division moving forward between 16th Division on the right who were to capture Ginchy itself, and 1st Division (III Corps) to the left. The infantry advanced under the creeping barrage.¹²² Tilsley described the 'sunshine attack' of the 'Cast-Iron Division' supporting the Irish Guards. Although Tilsley's narrative referred to 164th Brigade, his comments about the attack on Ginchy are still relevant to other Brigades across the Front: 'Old hands stuffed sandbags and shovels up their backs between tunic and haversack. A few squashed Mills bombs into their breast pockets'. With machine guns raking the parapet, many got it in the head in the act of climbing out. 'He found himself on top and joined in the cramped walk of the irregularly formed line'. This was Tilsley's first attack and he soon found that 'he no longer wondered why men walked to attack, even in broad daylight... the ground was abominably loose and uneven. No real surface... a series of craters and holes'.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.37

¹¹⁹ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.37

¹²⁰ Tilsley *Other ranks* pp.24 and 31

¹²¹ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.37; Tilsley *Other ranks* p.34: both sources agree the date 164th Brigade moved up the line

¹²² Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.37-39

¹²³ Tilsley *Other ranks* pp.48, 51 and 53

The attempts of 164th Brigade to attain their objectives failed, as did those of 166th Brigade, partly due to a previously unidentified trench – signalling another failure to map the terrain effectively - and a large garrison of machine guns in Hop Alley. However, 165th Brigade, employing 1/5th and 1/6th Liverpool's, were more successful to the north. While they held Ginchy successfully, and consolidated, another attack two days later by 1/4th King's Own on Hop Alley and Ale Alley again failed, and the Division was briefly relieved on 10th/12th September 1916.¹²⁴

The evidence demonstrates that there was considerable review of the results at Guillemont and that the conclusions of this analysis were put into practice firstly at Ginchy and more especially at Guedecourt. Jeudwine's after-action reports on the Guillemont battles indicated the areas which needed work to be more successful in the next attack. The headings in his memoranda, written on 21st and 24th August 1916, indicated the main problem areas quite clearly - his emphasis was on discipline, determination, care of arms, work in the trenches, patrolling, messages and reports, the organisation and supervision of trench work and the condemnation of any use of the word 'retire'.¹²⁵ All very general but more specifically, he highlighted the need for maps to be available down to NCO level, for trenches to be properly sited, for notice boards to be clear, for operational orders to be communicated down to NCO's and their Companies, the vital role of runners, the importance of communication and the need for adequate reconnaissance.¹²⁶ In short, Jeudwine wanted more communication and information to empower the troops at a more local level, despite the possible security risk which such steps involved.

All this pointed to the need for proper preparation before an attack and effective communication during it. Sheffield referred especially to the 'inadequate artillery support' as a key aspect to the failure to take Guillemont, in July and August.¹²⁷ There is also little answer to Cochrane's complaints that the attacks were contrary to routine policy. Writing later to Jeudwine, he recalled that 'GHQ instructions were

¹²⁴ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* pp.39-41

¹²⁵ WO95/2900 55th Division War Diary Notes on recent operations, 21st and 24th August 1916

¹²⁶ A further method of learning from the recent experience was provided for the men as they went into rest after Guillemont: in Tilsley's book, his narrator recorded that "they returned to a farmhouse where a cinematograph picture of the Somme Battle was being shown in the yard on a white sheet hanging down one side of a barn ... the most unreal and outrageous attack that could be imagined, yet the film bore an official stamp" : *Other ranks* p.13

definite - no attack other than minor operations, to take place without adequate preparation.¹²⁸

Cochrane was also scathing in his criticism of senior officers:

High Command plans were too frequently made after only a study of the map. Had they or their senior staff officers made a study of the ground with the local commanders many of these isolated and costly attacks would not have been ordered ... During the whole of my time on the Somme I never saw anyone from Army HQ above the rank of GSO3!¹²⁹

As an Army Commander, Rawlinson himself would not be expected to have been directly at the Front, but rather co-ordinating from Army HQ. It is also true that Cochrane wrote after much hindsight and after many years of criticism of the Somme campaign. Nevertheless, his old commander appeared to share his frustration, sanctioning, and even endorsing, his views before they went to Edmonds. Another letter to Edmonds, quoted only vaguely by Denis Winter but clearly from one of Congreve's Corps Staff, stated 'No-one in Corps or Divisional HQ understood why our attacks failed.' A conference established that machine guns had been hidden so as to enfilade any reserve waves of troops. 'As soon as the first spark of originality was shown, Guillemont was taken. Success was simply due to avoidance of a completely frontal attack' - rather than the plan pursued over many weeks by Haig and his immediate Command.¹³⁰

August's attack on Guillemont was a costly one for the Division and for 1/7th King's. It had proved largely ineffective as tactics and conditions had mitigated against success. It did, however, prove significant in terms of what was learnt and what developed as better practice in the Division over the following month, particularly in the assault on Gueudecourt in September.

On 25th September 1916 the Division's objectives were to take Gird Trench and Gird Support Trench, north of Gueudecourt, and this time 165th Brigade was much more successful in carrying out the attack.¹³¹ This was the third piece of action for 165th

¹²⁷ Sheffield, *The Somme* p.97

¹²⁸ 356 FIF 56 Letter from Cochrane to Jeurwine, December 1933 Jeurwine MSS

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.41

Brigade in as many weeks. The 7th King's alone had already lost thirteen men killed, twenty-one were missing and 99 had been wounded by 20th September. By 27th September, another forty-three had been killed, twenty-one more were missing, and a further 200 were wounded including three suffering from shell shock.¹³² The identification of 'shell shock' as a medical condition, counting its sufferers amongst the casualties of battle, was still unusual in 1916. It implies a more liberal view of the issue in the Battalion and, indeed in the Division, since these statistics were reported to Jeudwine. The War Diary named Second Lieutenant Rawcliffe as being 'WOUNDED Shell Shock' but did not name the other two who could conceivably have been from the ranks. Oram noted that shell shock was usually seen as a disciplinary issue rather than a medical one, although even junior officers tended to receive more sympathy than the men.¹³³

At 12.35pm the assault began, with the first waves following the creeping barrage. Coop reported that they

kept closer to the barrage than ever before, preferring to suffer some casualties from possible short shells from their own gunners, rather than to run the risk of allowing the barrage to get away from them and of being compelled to face the enemy's uninterrupted machine gun and rifle fire.¹³⁴

A detailed account of the attack can be found in the draft reports prepared by Brigade and Divisional command. The Battalion War Diary showed that preparations went on from 23rd September with C and D Companies in the Front Line. In the attack, on 25th, possession was gained of Goat and Gird Trench, Gird Support, the Sunken Road and Factory Corner at the expense of Second Lieutenants Lewis, Patterson and Turnbull, killed, and several injured officers, including Lieutenant Colonel Potter.¹³⁵ He was wounded at about 2.10pm and Captain JG Thompson MC went forward to take command of the Battalion.¹³⁶ After consolidating the next day, the Battalion moved back to Carlton and Savoy Trenches on 27th and away to billets at Buire on 28th.¹³⁷

¹³² WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 25th September 1916

¹³³ Oram *Worthless men* pp. 85-9

¹³⁴ Coop *The Story of the 55th Division* p.42

¹³⁵ WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 23rd – 25th September 1916

¹³⁶ WO95/2900 55th Division War Diary 165th Brigade Draft narrative of events 23rd – 27th September 1916 and Division Draft Narrative of operations 17th – 28th September 1916

¹³⁷ WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 27th – 29th September 1916

From the 165th Brigade report, it was clear that this was a successful attack.¹³⁸ The Field Artillery barrage commenced at zero hour and moved at 50 yards lifts every minute with the infantry following as closely as possible. The barrage for the second stage began at 2.41pm from a point 150 yards in front of Gird Support. The New Zealand Brigade had already reported reaching their objective and 9th King's were at Factory Corner, although the two were not in touch. By 3pm the second phase appeared to have been carried out and the enemy were seen in retreat. 6th King's held Gird Trench and Gird Support and part of the Sunken Road but were not in touch with 7th King's. Two Companies of 5th King's reinforced both 6th and 7th Battalions, and a company of 7th assisted a Leicester Battalion (21st Division) on the road.

In the early evening, 7th King's had a Company missing and another Company divided into Platoons along the Sunken Road, isolated but within sight of each other. By 10pm the village was reported to be empty by an NCO of 7th who had walked through it. Through the night the situation was consolidated and connections made with the New Zealanders, although there was not direct touch between 7th King's and 110th Brigade, 21st Division. A brief German barrage began in the morning, but by afternoon the 21st Division was able to take Gueudecourt without opposition.

At 6pm on 25th a wire was received from XV Corps preparing the Division for a renewed attack in the event of the situation remaining favourable and the cavalry going through on 26th, but this was postponed until 27th when the 164th Brigade took the remaining parts of Gird Trench and Gird Support to the north west of Gueudecourt.¹³⁹ Although there was a counter-attack, this was repulsed and a number of prisoners were taken. The report concluded with the relief of the Division on the night of 28th/29th September with all objectives secure.¹⁴⁰

In relation to affairs a month previously, therefore, this was a much more successful operation for the Division and suggested that shortcomings at Guillemont might have

¹³⁸ WO95/2900 55th Division War Diary 165th Brigade Draft narrative of events 23rd – 27th September 1916

¹³⁹ Tilsley wrote that "no horse [re. the Bengal Lancers] could gallop far enough ... over the shell bitten surface of no man's land - it's legs would snap" : *Other ranks* p.74

¹⁴⁰ WO95/2900 55th Division War Diary 165th Brigade Draft narrative of events 23rd – 27th September 1916

been recognised and improved upon.¹⁴¹ Jeudwine had made specific reference to discipline, communication to the lowest levels and full preparation. His lecture notes for training later in 1916 and into 1917 reiterated the point. The syllabus for the Divisional Training School listed discipline, preparation of work, trench warfare, topography and organisation of the unit amongst its main elements.¹⁴² The combination of devolved leadership in the battle itself and the co-operation of the various arms appear to have helped deliver this success.

As early as January 1916, Jeudwine was pressing for more emphasis on small units becoming self-sufficient. He was keen on all ranks airing their opinions during training and insisted on Battalions making sure their own training was of a high order before any training and organisation began which covered a Brigade or Division.¹⁴³ Not only was this an effective way of ensuring high quality training, it also served to enhance levels of morale by involving the men in the process. Jeudwine's emphasis on the cooperation of the various arms at the lowest of levels - the platoon - was stressed through the training of late 1916 and 1917.¹⁴⁴ His view was summed up in a memorandum later in the year, 'The independent action of the platoon is the foundation of all battle training. The first thing to do is to teach the platoon how to act independently and on its own initiative'.¹⁴⁵ However, a more detailed appraisal was sent out from Divisional HQ in December 1916, pre-dating a similar memorandum from Kiggell at Army level, by some two months.¹⁴⁶ The reorganisation of platoons to contain specialist sections of Lewis gunners, rifle grenadiers, bombers and riflemen in early 1917 was in recognition of the need for an all-arms approach which Jeudwine, and other commanders, espoused. By involving the men and encouraging initiative, the Territorial *esprit de corps* could find some outlet despite the more Regular attention to discipline. Initiative could assist men in feeling more than just a cog in the machine, thus addressing one factor affecting levels of morale.

¹⁴¹ Tilsley wrote that the Lancashire's of the Cast Iron Division 'got mauled at Gueudecourt' : *Other ranks* p.84

¹⁴² 356 FIF 13/2/651 55th Divisional School of Instruction Syllabus 27th February 1917
Jeudwine MSS

¹⁴³ 356 FIF/13 Various memoranda 14th-21st January 1916 Jeudwine MSS

¹⁴⁴ 356 FIF 48 Jeudwine lecture notes Jeudwine MSS

¹⁴⁵ 356 FIF 14 memorandum from Jeudwine 27th August 1917 Jeudwine MSS

¹⁴⁶ 356 FIF/13 memo from Jeudwine to Brigades 8th December 1916; memo from Kiggell, Second Army GHQ 7th February 1917 Jeudwine MSS

Recent writers have recognised these significant developments: Griffith's analysis followed much the same route as Jeurwine: signposting, signalling and communication were important; preparation for attacks must include a full analysis of why the previous assault had failed; co-operation between Lewis gunners, rifle grenades, mortars and riflemen at a local level was vital; artillery support, and specifically the creeping barrage, was the key, leading the assault troops. Much of this became encompassed in the manual SS143, *Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action*.¹⁴⁷ Sheffield, too, referred to the importance of the tactical learning curve and the operational success for the Fourth Army as crucial on 25th September.¹⁴⁸

This learning process was also a costly one. Congreve's son had been killed earlier in the summer and when he succumbed to dysentery, which was prevalent in his Staff, he had to relinquish command on 10th August 1916.¹⁴⁹ Consequently, in the middle of this lengthy assault on Guillemont, the Earl of Cavan took command and the XIV Corps took over the old XIII. Cavan himself succumbed to ill-health on 17th August, the day his full staff complement took over the Corps, to be replaced by Morland.¹⁵⁰ The stress proved too much for senior Battalion officers too. Marriott wrote to his father that: 'I shall be all right in a day or two, it is only a strain on the top of 18 months of it, practically always under fire. I sometimes think it is time I got a job somewhere else'.¹⁵¹

On 15th August he was called in by the General who 'evidently thinks I want a rest... one cannot go on interminable at that pressure'.¹⁵² Marriott went home for several months before returning to the Western Front with the Manchester Regiment. His men were not so fortunate as to be given the choice: Tilsley wrote that 'old hands said the Divisional General had sworn to make the Somme either a Lancashire victory or a Lancashire graveyard'.¹⁵³ Jack Fearnhead was among 4,100 casualties in

¹⁴⁷ Griffith *Battle tactics of the Western Front* pp. 74-8

¹⁴⁸ Sheffield *The Somme* pp. 126-7

¹⁴⁹ CAB45/132 Bald to Edmonds 6th October 1934

¹⁵⁰ Stedman *Guillemont* pp. 80 and 83

¹⁵¹ Marriott letter to his father 14th August 1916

¹⁵² Marriott letter to his father 16th August 1916

¹⁵³ Tilsley *Other Ranks* p.90

the Division in a few short weeks.¹⁵⁴ 1/7th King's suffered thirty-five killed, 113 wounded, ten missing and five shellshock cases in the five days from 8th to 13th August, in what the Battalion Diary called 'A small attack on German trenches'.¹⁵⁵ According to Wyrall, the King's Liverpool Regiment as a whole - Regulars, Territorials and Pals - lost close to 3,000 men in the assaults on Guillemont that summer.¹⁵⁶

The raid at Gouy at the end of June highlighted problems of inadequate preparation, confusion in the field, gas and coordination. Similar themes recurred through the battles of the Somme themselves, particularly at Guillemont where little ground was made against a strong German position. However, there was clear recognition, especially at Divisional level by Jeudwine and others, of what had gone wrong and attempts were made to learn and improve on the factors that they had control over. By the end of September, 7th King's do appear to have been acting with initiative and in co-ordination with the other arms of the assault. This short learning curve appeared to have produced greater effectiveness and success in the battle, and local commanders, such as Marriott, were recognised for their part in that development. In the process, however, the Battalion of volunteers from Bootle and Southport suffered another significant reduction in the rank.

¹⁵⁴ Stedman *Guillemont* p.83

¹⁵⁵ WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment War Diary 9th August 1916

¹⁵⁶ Wyrall *The History of the King's Regiment* Vol II p.321

Conclusion

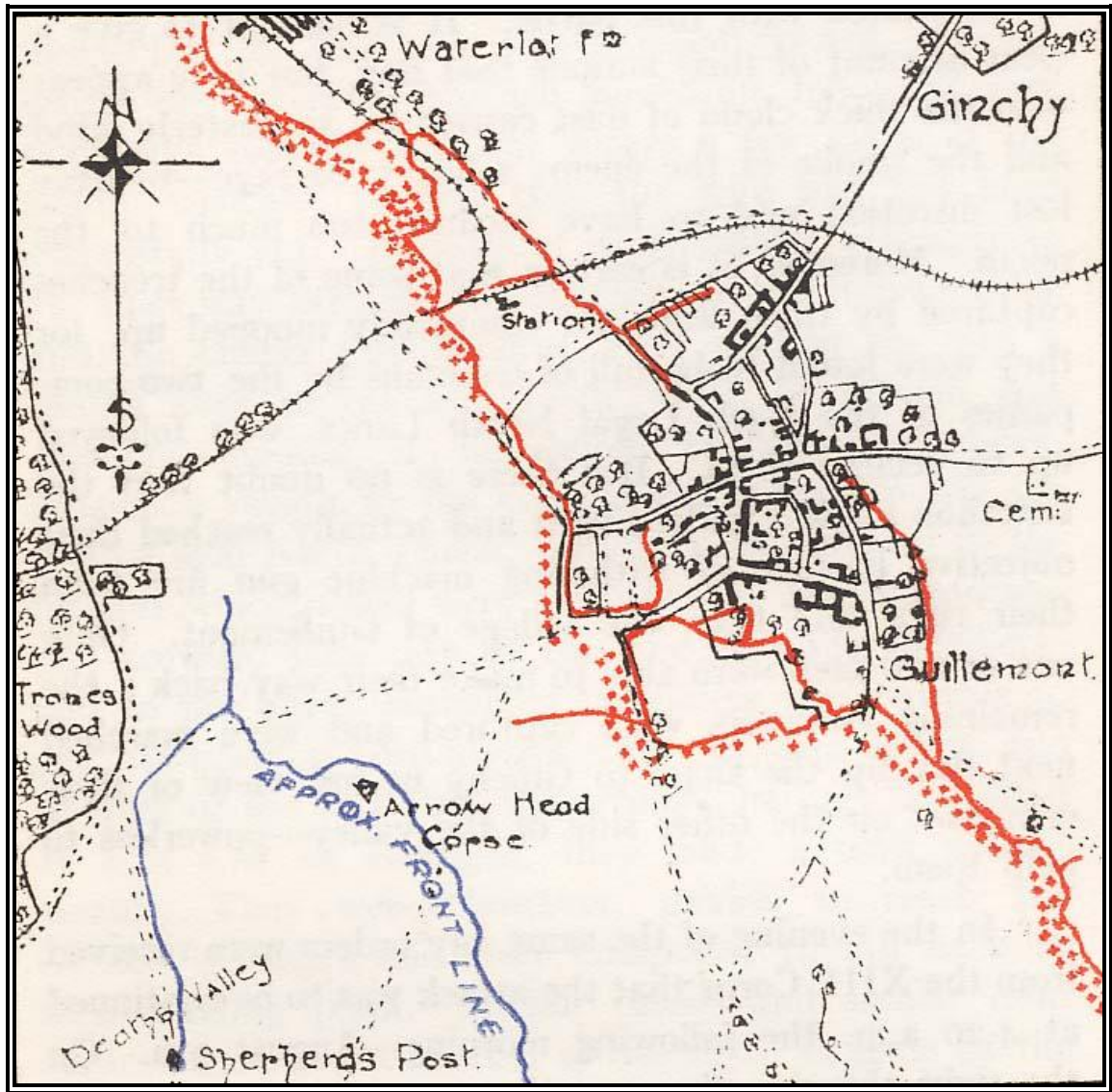
Local identity was clearly central to the Battalion at the outset of the War and continuing references to Festubert men indicates that, even as that local identity came under threat from casualties and drafts, it remained a potent tradition. While in 1915 it had been the physical weight of numbers from the local area which was the principal driver for this sense of local community now it was the combat history. Also, under the changing conditions of 1916, it was the Divisional entity, and in particular its General, which continued to focus the attention on that localness. The policies of the Divisional Commander added a second layer of belonging to the broader community or regional identity of Lancashire. Both these loci of belonging were expressed through social and formal activities.

General entertainment and social interaction, sport and formal parades were all important aspects of the Division's morale building exercise. In the West Lancashire Division these activities were given an extra element which, in presenting the unit as a social whole, gave men a sense of belonging. Returning men to their own units after injury or reforging links between local battalions that had spent the first year of the War in different divisions, were the first steps in engendering the Lancastrian spirit in the Division. As a unit, the men's morale was therefore based upon a physical sense of identity and locality fostered by the Divisional leadership.

Morale appears to have remained high at Home too where, despite the physical dangers inherent in the munitions industry, large numbers of women were employed on the production of shells, explosives and other armaments. The civilian community was under attack from poisonous fumes and unexpected explosions but remained committed to the cause, supporting the other half of the local community who faced such terrors on a daily basis. The involvement of women in particular demonstrated their desire to be involved in the War as far as they were able.

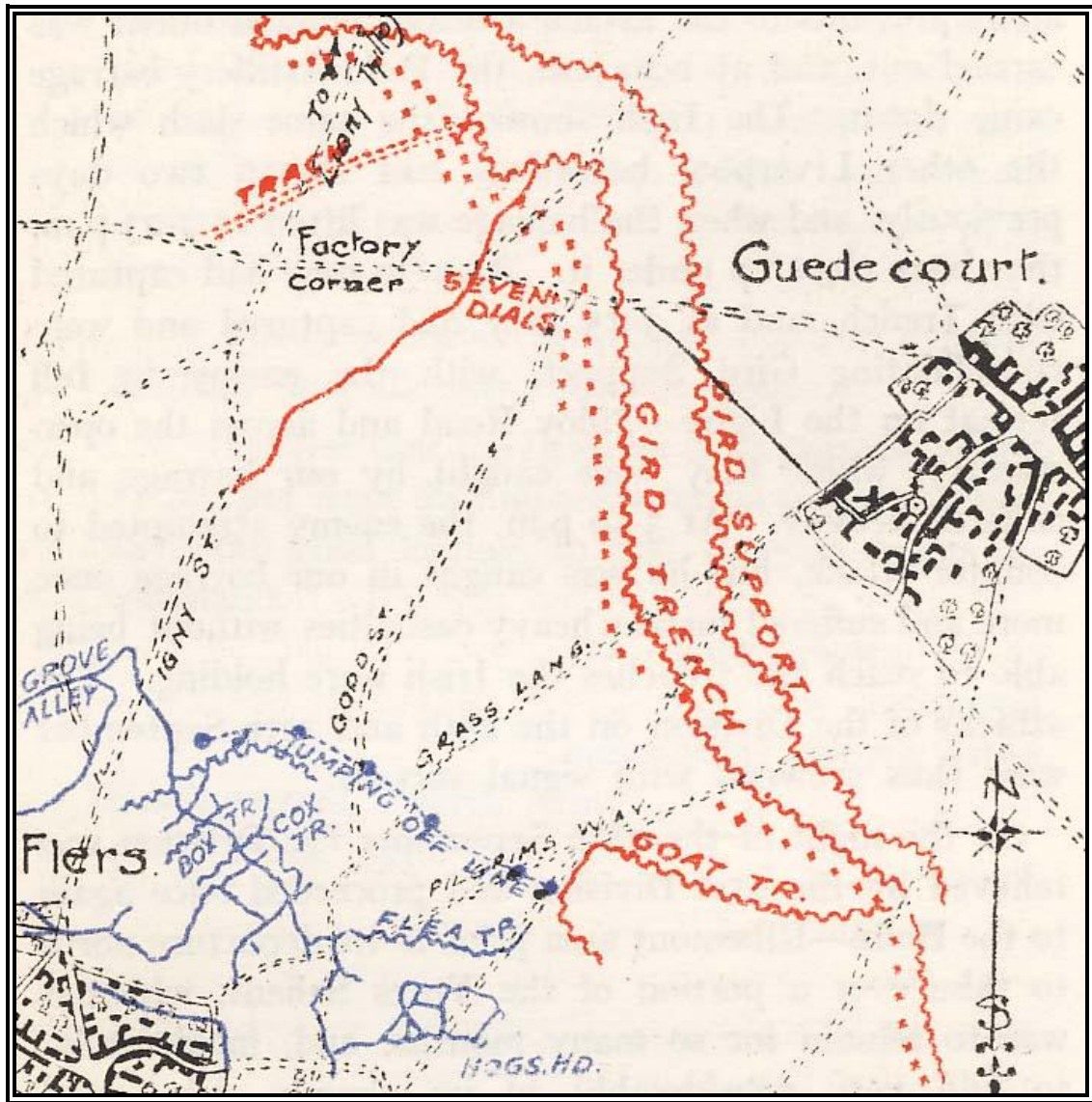
Combat effectiveness reflects the resulting good morale. Not only in their general deployment and length of time spent in the trenches but in assault, the Unit was more or less as effective as any other in the Division. There is also evidence to show that after the disastrous failures to take Guillemont in August 1916, their ability to learn and assimilate Jeurwine's tactics and training meant that the assault at Gueudecourt, a few weeks later, was more successful.

Not that this success was achieved cheaply, as the casualty list demonstrates. The mounting deaths and injuries severely affected the numbers of men from the local area who could maintain that local focus, as will be seen in the following chapter. Nevertheless, by the end of 1916, the Division and its constituent parts appeared to have already progressed in terms of tactical awareness and to have a high level of morale rooted in their sense of belonging to the Lancashire Division.



Map showing Guillemont and its trench system. British line in blue; German in red.

Taken from: Coop, *The story of the 55th Division* p.33



Map showing Guedecourt village and trench system.
Taken from: Coop, *The story of the 55th Division* p.43



Second Lieutenant Jack Fearnhead, died of wounds 13th August 1916. Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

Photograph courtesy Pam Hall