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Army

May 1917



AWM4-1/13/12PART2

Appx I (a)

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS - SECOND ARMY

for week ending 6 p.m. 3rd May 1917.

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General.

1. During the period under review the attitude of the enemy's infantry has been quiet, with the exception of a raid on our lines in the neighbourhood of ST. YVES.

Our heavy artillery bombardment in the HILL 60, CANAL and ST. ELOI Sectors has been continued. The enemy retaliation has been heavy and well organised. It was chiefly directed on back areas.

The 38th Division successfully raided the enemy's lines at MORTELDE SALIENT and the PILKEM ROAD on two successive nights.

Gas was discharged by us on the nights of the 27th/28th and 28th/29th April in the BOUPLINES, PLOEGSTERT and ST. YVES Sectors. Projectors were fired on the latter night on FRELIENHIEU.

The 23rd and 25th Divisions were withdrawn into G.H.Q. Reserve on May 2nd. The 19th Division was transferred from the IX Corps to the X Corps on the same date.

VIII Corps.

2. Patrols.

Our patrols have been active nightly, and have brought in valuable information about the state of the enemy's wire. Enemy patrols were encountered on three occasions, but withdrew without offering opposition to our patrols.

Artillery.

YPRES and battery positions in the vicinity have received considerable attention. The 38th Division back area and battery positions have also been deliberately shelled, but little damage has been done. The enemy's artillery has generally not subjected our

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front and support lines to much shelling, with the exception of heavy barrages in the HILL TOP Sector on the nights of our raids. A few shells were put into POPERINGHE on the afternoon of May 2nd. Our artillery has replied very actively to enemy shelling, and contributed largely to the success of the two raids carried out by the 38th Division.

Trench Mortars.

Enemy trench mortar activity has been normal. Trench mortars were largely employed in the barrage which was put up by the enemy on the occasion of the raids.

Machine Guns.

The enemy's machine guns have been less active than usual, except on the 55th Division front. Our machine guns have been active, both from their indirect fire and anti-aircraft positions.

Snipers.

Our snipers have been active and claim 21 certain hits. Enemy snipers have been active in the RAILWAY WOOD Sector and in the MORTELDJE SALIENT.

Raids.

The 114th Infantry Brigade, 38th Division, carried out two very successful raids on the night of the 29th/30th April and 30th April/1st May.

On the first occasion the German trenches were entered at MORTELDJE SALIENT. The party brought back a machine gun and ten prisoners, in addition to blowing up a machine gun and 3 concrete dugouts, and killing a considerable number of the enemy.

On the second occasion the enemy's trenches were entered in the neighbourhood of the PILKEM ROAD. 11 prisoners and one Granatenwerfer were brought back.

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Some dugouts were blown up and a considerable number of Germans were killed. On each occasion little resistance was offered by the enemy.

X Corps.

3. Patrols.

Our patrols have been active. One hostile patrol entered the 47th Division trenches, but was immediately driven out.

Artillery.

The organised bombardment of the enemy's positions in the HILL 60, CANAL and ST. ELOI Sectors has been continued satisfactorily. Practice barrages have been included in the programme.

The enemy's artillery has been active in bombarding selected points in our back area. The principal targets were the LILLE GATE at YPRES and the neighbourhood of KRUTSSTRAAT. Some damage was done to the railway in the neighbourhood of RENTINGHELST by long range guns. Retaliation on our front line has been confined to the ST. ELOI Sector.

Trench Mortars.

Our trench mortars have carried out wire cutting. Hostile trench mortars have been inactive.

Machine Guns.

Activity has been normal.

Work.

The enemy has been active in repairing his trenches, which have been extensively damaged by our bombardment.

IX Corps.

4. Patrols.

Our patrols have been active every night. Enemy patrols were seldom encountered and were in all cases dispersed.

S-7

Artillery.

Our artillery has been active in co-operation with the X Corps, and on enemy trench mortar positions and communications. Hostile artillery activity has been mainly directed on the back areas and battery positions. KEMMEL Village especially has been subjected to shelling. LA GLYTHE was also shelled with a high velocity gun firing close up.

Trench Mortars.

Hostile trench mortars have been quiet. Our heavy and medium trench mortars have taken an active part in the bombardment of the enemy's trenches.

Machine Guns.

No unusual activity.

Snipers.

Our snipers have been active and obtained a number of hits. Hostile snipers have shown increased activity at times.

Work.

The enemy continues to work in all sectors.

II Anzac Corps.

5. Patrols.

Our patrols have been very active and have entered the enemy's line at several points south of the River LYS, and also south of the WULVERGHEM-WYTSCHAERT Road. One of our patrols penetrated between the enemy's wire and parapet and fired on a sentry group of six men, who immediately made off in the direction of their support line.

A patrol attempted to reach PRELLINGHIES after the discharge of gas from projectors on the night of the 28th/29th April, but lost direction and were unable to reach the village on account of the depth of water in the ditches they had to cross. No sounds of movement in

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S28

the village were heard and no sentry was on the bridge.

A few hostile patrols were met by our parties, but invariably withdrew.

Artillery.

On the occasion of the raid on ST. YVES, the enemy's bombardment was severe. Otherwise hostile fire has been normal in the forward area. The back area south of the LYS has been shelled more than usual. During a shoot on the enemy's lines opposite HOUTILLERIE, a bomb store was hit and the consequent explosion caused a large breach in the enemy's parapet.

Machine Guns.

Our machine guns have been active at night; in addition, long range fire has been successfully directed on working parties.

Snipers.

Our snipers claim 13 hits. Enemy snipers inactive.

Work.

No new work of importance is reported.

Release of Gas.

Gas was discharged on the night of the 27th/28th April from the HOUPLINES and ST. YVES Sectors. Opposite HOUPLINES the enemy appeared to be alert and bombed his wire, but opposite ST. YVES there was a noticeable absence of Very lights and machine gun fire.

On the night of April 28th/29th gas was again released from the HOUPLINES and PLOEGSTERT Sectors, and projectors were fired on FRELINGHIEN. The enemy appears to have been on the alert for cloud gas, but there is reason to suppose that the projectors were successful in surprising FRELINGHIEN.

Raids.

At 4.17 a.m. on the 30th April a heavy bombardment

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commenced of our trenches near ST. YVES. At 4.25 a.m. a party of enemy estimated at about 80 approached our lines, screened by a cloud of smoke. Machine gun, Lewis gun and rifle fire was opened, and only two small parties reached our front line. One man of a Lewis gun team is missing, and is believed to be wounded and a prisoner. The raiders were immediately ejected by a counter attack from the support line, leaving two dead in our lines and several in No Man's Land. Our casualties, which amounted to 1 officer and 8 O.R. killed, 2 officers and 50 O.R. wounded were all caused by artillery fire.

R.F.C.

6. Reconnaissances have been carried out daily in Corps areas and over the whole Army front. No unusual activity has been observed, and very little new work on the STADEN - WERVICQ line, or in the area S.W. of LILLE.

41 hostile batteries were successfully engaged, and bombing has been carried out daily.

Hostile aircraft have displayed considerable activity. The number of single seater scouts on this front appears to have increased.

Kite Balloon Wing.

Visibility has been bad owing to mist. 21 hostile batteries were successfully engaged, 48 targets registered and 119 flashes located. On the 3rd May No. 23 Section balloon was unsuccessfully attacked by the enemy.

Mining.

7. RAILWAY WOOD and ST. ELOI continue to be active mining centres. Camouflets have been fired by us at each place, the enemy firing a mine at RAILWAY WOOD.

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Counter-
Battery Work.

8. Although ground haze has made observation difficult at times, much successful counter battery work has been done this week, particularly on the Southern side of the SALIENT and in the WYTSCHAETE - MESSINES areas.

Altogether 44 successful shoots are reported. Many hostile gun-pits were hit, 6 of which are thought to have been destroyed; explosions were also caused in 6 enemy battery positions.

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Casualties. 9.

Officers.

Other Ranks.

	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>
VIII Corps	2	7	-	9	145	4
IX Corps	-	5	1	15	56	3
X Corps	5	27	-	45	171	-
II Anzac Corps	3	8	-	59	264	1
	<u>10</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>636</u>	<u>8</u>

Total casualties:-

Officers	58
Other ranks	<u>772</u>
TOTAL	<u>830</u>

Appx I (b)

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS - SECOND ARMY
for week ending 8 p.m. 10th May 1917.

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General

1. The chief feature of the period under review is the hostile artillery activity on our back areas, which became excessive on the nights of the 5th/6th and 6th/7th May. On the night of the 7th/8th May we carried out two short intense bombardments of five minutes duration each, from all artillery except 12" Howitzers on the Army front, at 8.45 p.m. and again at 11 p.m. This appears to have been effective, as the shelling of our back areas at night has been much less severe since then.

The enemy has attempted several raids, especially on the II Anzac Corps front, where three took place on the night of the 7th/8th May.

The 23rd and 25th Divisions were released from G.H.Q. Reserve on the 7th May. The 25th Division resumed its place in the II Anzac Corps (WULVERGHEM Sector) on the 10th May. The 23rd Division returns to X Corps and the 19th Division will be transferred from X Corps to IX Corps on relief by 23rd Division.

VIII Corps.

2. Patrols.

Our patrols have been out nightly in spite of the brilliant moon. The 55th Division sent out 37 reconnoitring and fighting patrols during the week. Patrols have on several occasions ~~and~~ successfully interfered with enemy wiring parties.

Artillery.

The enemy's artillery has been quiet on the front line, but has been more active than usual on back areas. POPERINGHE was shelled on the night of May 6th. Our artillery has been active in retaliation and counter-

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battery work, and on May 7th at 11 a.m. a practice barrage lasting ten minutes was carried out on the enemy's trenches in the RAILWAY WOOD Sector. On May 9th five minutes "Artillery Action" was carried out on the WIELTJE Sector in retaliation for the enemy's continued bombardment, and was successful in silencing his batteries.

Trench Mortars.

Hostile trench mortars have been quiet, except during the enemy raid on the night of May 5th/6th. Our trench mortars and rifle grenadiers have vigorously bombarded the enemy's front in the BOESINGHE Sector on three occasions, doing considerable damage.

Machine Guns.

Hostile machine guns have been less active than usual. We have carried out a good deal of indirect fire on the enemy's communications and have also been active against hostile aeroplanes.

Snipers.

Enemy snipers have been more active, particularly in the RAILWAY WOOD Sector and on the Eastern end of the LANCASHIRE FARM Sector. Our snipers claim 18 victims, one of whom is believed to be an officer of high rank.

Raids.

On May 6th, at 2.30 a.m. a party of the enemy entered our trenches at G.13.3 (North of LANCASHIRE FARM) under cover of a heavy trench mortar bombardment. They were immediately ejected. Three of our men are missing.

X Corps.

3. Patrols.

Hostile patrols have been more active on the Left Division front and on two occasions attempted to approach our lines. Our patrols have been active throughout the week. The condition of No Man's Land is improving.

S24

Artillery.

The enemy's artillery has been active in counter-battery work and on the back areas, especially YPRES, DICKEBUSCH, BRISBANE DUMP and the LA GLYTTE-YPRES Road. RAILWAY DUGOUTS in 28.I.21.c. were heavily shelled for a prolonged period on one occasion. Our artillery has carried out several successful shoots, in addition to organised retaliation.

Trench Mortars.

Trench Mortars have been increasingly active on both sides during the week.

Machine Guns.

Machine gun activity on both sides has been normal.

Raids.

After violent shelling the enemy raided our line south of the YPRES-COMINES Railway on the morning of May 10th. Six of our men who formed a post at this point are missing.

Work.

The enemy has been active in repairing the damage done to his front line system by our bombardments. Abnormal work was noticed on the 9th May at IMPACT RESERVE (I.35.a.98.35).

IX Corps4. Patrols.

Our patrols have been active and have gained valuable information about the enemy's working parties and wire. A strong patrol entered the enemy's trenches at PETIT BOIS on the 2nd May and killed six of the enemy. At 9.30 a.m. on the 3rd May a patrol bombed four of the enemy in his trenches at SPANBROECKMOLEN. Few enemy patrols were observed, and all were dispersed by our fire.

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Artillery.

The enemy's artillery has been chiefly active against the back areas about LA GLYTHE, KEMMEL and MILLEKRUISSIE Cross Roads (S.E.N.E.C.). Our artillery has been active on selected targets and in retaliation for the enemy's night firing.

Trench Mortars.

The enemy's trench mortars have been quiet. Our trench mortars fired 374 medium bombs and 1,953 Stokes bombs.

Snipers.

Snipers on both sides have been active during the week. Our snipers claim a number of hits.

Work.

The enemy continues to work in all sectors.

II Anzac Corps.

5. Patrols.

Our patrols have been very active, and several encounters have occurred, as a result of which some casualties have been caused to the enemy and one prisoner brought in. Valuable information about the condition of No Man's Land, the enemy's wire and his working activity has been secured. A patrol detected the enemy forming up on the night of the 4th/5th May preparatory to attempting a raid north of the WULVERGHEM-MESSINES Road.

Artillery.

The enemy's artillery has been active against back areas, and his bombardments preparatory to raids have been very heavy. Visibility has been low during the week, but all favourable opportunities have been used to carry out destructive shoots, both on the enemy's artillery and trench system.

Machine Guns.

The enemy's machine guns have co-operated with the artillery in forming a barrage during the raid south of the River LYS, but have not been active otherwise. Our machine guns have maintained their policy of indirect fire on the enemy's tracks and tramways, etc. Lewis guns have fired on gaps in the wire, and have dispersed working parties.

Snipers.

Our snipers claim 6 hits.

Raids.

On May 5th at 3.25 a.m. a party of about 60 Germans were detected advancing across No Man's Land in the WULVERGHEM Sector. The party was dispersed by Artillery fire: only a few of the enemy succeeded in reaching an unoccupied portion of our line. One unwounded prisoner was left in our hands.

On the night of the 7th/8th May hostile raiding parties penetrated our lines south of the River LYS in the EPINETTE Salient and near HOBBS' FARM (36.0.23.a.5.9.) Later on the same night another raid was attempted against the MESSINES Sector. It was driven off by artillery and machine gun fire. As a result of these raids, five bodies of Germans were found in our trenches.

At 3 a.m. on the 9th May a "silent" raid was attempted in the LE TOUQUET Sector. The party was driven off by Lewis Gun fire. One wounded prisoner was taken.

Work.

The enemy has been engaged on his usual maintenance work and on rear lines near FROMELLES and MESSINES.

R.F.C.

6.

The weather has been fine throughout the week, but owing to haze and mist visibility has been very poor.

Tactical reconnaissances have been carried out daily

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in Corps areas and reconnaissances over the whole Army front on the 4th, 5th, 9th and 10th May. PECKHAM Aerodrome is reported active.

62 hostile batteries have been successfully engaged and 62 gun pits hit.

A number of encounters with hostile aircraft took place, as a result of which 19 hostile aeroplanes are reported to have been shot down.

Kite Balloon Wing.

Activity has been handicapped by the haze and mist. 23 hostile batteries were successfully engaged and 63 targets registered. No. 32 Section's balloon was damaged by shell fire, but repairs were carried out without deflation.

Mining.

7. Two enemy and two British mines and camouflages have been blown at RAILWAY WOOD during past week. In addition enemy blew a mine near PECKHAM.

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Counter
Battery Work.

8. The great feature of our artillery activity this week has been the large number of destructive shoots which have been carried out against hostile batteries.

There has also been an increase in the number of rounds used in many of the shoots, and photographs show that a great deal of damage has been done to the hostile gun emplacements.

Altogether 65 highly successful shoots have been recorded, almost all with aeroplane observation.

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Casualties. 9.

Officers.

Other Ranks.

	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>
VIII Corps	3	8	-	25	127	3
IX Corps	2	11	-	23	104	-
X Corps	3	15	-	70	269	6
II Anzac Corps	-	22	-	85	451	12
	<u>8</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>203</u>	<u>951</u>	<u>21</u>

Total Casualties:-

Officers	64
Other Ranks	<u>1,175</u>
	<u>1,239</u>

Appx I (C)

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS - SECOND ARMY

for week ending 6 p.m. 17th May 1917.

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General. 1. During the period under review our Artillery has been active on the South of the YPRES Salient and opposite WYTSCHAETE and MESSINES. The activity of the enemy's artillery has been normal.

The enemy carried out five raids against us, three of which were round the YPRES Salient. We carried out five small raids, taking fifteen prisoners.

The 23rd Division went into the line in its old sector (HOOGE and OBSERVATORY RIDGE) on the 12th May. The 19th Division was transferred from X Corps to IX Corps on the 12th May, and returned to its original sector. (DIEPENDAAL Sector.)

The 24th Division arrived in the Second Army Area on the 12th May, and relieved half of the 23rd Division in the HOOGE Sector on the 15th May.

The 4th Australian Division arrived in the Second Army Area on the 16th May.

The 11th Division started to arrive in the Second Army Area on the 17th May.

VIII Corps. 2. Patrols.

Our reconnoitring and fighting patrols have been out every night. On one occasion, one of our small patrols encountered a patrol of 15 of the enemy near his lines. The hostile patrol attempted to surround ours, but was unsuccessful, and our patrol returned to our lines after having shot two of the enemy. On another occasion, two parties of the enemy were discovered by our patrols, and retreated before our men were able to close with them.

Artillery.

The enemy's artillery has been consistently active against the Right Divisional Area. YPRES was regularly shelled, and during the latter part of the week

8.

RAILWAY WOOD, POTIJZE, and WIELTJE have received ^{S41} considerable attention. In the Left Divisional Area BRILLEN and ELVERDINGHE and battery positions in their vicinity have been deliberately shelled. The forward area has been quiet.

Trench Mortars.

Our trench mortars and rifle grenadiers have been active. Enemy trench mortars have been comparatively quiet.

Machine Guns.

Our machine guns have been consistently active, firing by night on enemy's dumps, communications and traffic centres. Enemy machine guns have shown no particular activity.

Snipers.

The snipers of the Right Division have, on several occasions, taken up posts in "No Man's Land", eleven hits being obtained during the week. Snipers of the Left Division obtained 13 hits. Enemy snipers have shown little activity.

Raids.

On the night 11th/12th May a party of infantry and R.E. blew up CANADIAN DUGOUTS. The enemy took no action. On the same night three raids were successfully carried out against the following points:-

GOTTER CRATER. I.12.c.30.93.
OSKAR FARM. I.6.c.00.95.
C.29.d.05.95.

Twelve prisoners were captured.

On the night May 14th/15th a raid was successfully carried out on the enemy's lines between C.22.a.05.92 and C.15.d.84.15, north-west of WIELTJE. Two prisoners were captured.

On May 14th at 3 a.m., under cover of a heavy trench mortar and artillery bombardment in the LANCASHIRE FARM

3.
S42

Sector, an enemy raiding party, about 40 strong, attempted to raid our post in C.14.10. They were, however, seen advancing across "No Man's Land" and our posts opened rifle and Lewis Gun fire on them, forcing them to beat a hasty retreat, leaving in our wire a badly wounded man, who was taken prisoner.

X Corps.

3. Patrols.

Our patrols have reconnoitred the enemy's wire throughout the week and have encountered no opposition.

Artillery.

During the latter part of the week we have carried out deliberate trench mortar bombardments and wire cutting. Hostile artillery has been normally active during the week, both on back and forward areas. Several of our batteries have been deliberately shelled.

Trench Mortars.

Our heavy and light trench mortars have been active against the enemy's trenches and wire. Enemy trench mortar activity normal.

Machine Guns.

Our machine guns have fired at night on the enemy's wire, keeping open the gaps made by our trench mortars. Enemy's machine guns have been somewhat less active than usual.

Snipers.

Activity normal.

Raids.

At about 3.30 a.m. on the 13th May, after a heavy bombardment, the enemy attempted in three parties to enter our trenches near MOUNT SORREL. The two flank parties succeeded in reaching our trenches, but were immediately ejected. One of our men is missing. The enemy had several casualties.

S43

On the 16th May, at 3.30 a.m. a small enemy party attempted to raid our Left Division East of ZILLEBEKE. They were driven off with loss by our Lewis Gun fire.
Work.

The enemy continues his normal work in the repair and upkeep of his front and support trenches.

IX Corps.

4. Patrols.

Patrols have been out every night and gained valuable information about enemy working parties, wire and trenches. At 2 a.m. on May 17th a fighting patrol entered the enemy's trenches at O.7.c.7.7 east of VIERSTRAAT. None of the enemy were encountered.

Artillery.

Our artillery has been active on selected targets, both by day and night. The enemy's artillery has not been so active as last week. The enemy carried out a registration of our front line trenches on the 15th May, 77mm. guns being largely employed.

Trench Mortars.

The enemy's trench mortars have been quiet during the week. Our expenditure of trench mortar ammunition has been -

<u>Heavy.</u>	<u>Medium.</u>	<u>Stokes.</u>
35	424	2069

Snipers.

Snipers on both sides have been active. Our snipers claim a number of hits.

Work.

The enemy appears to be concentrating on his reserve positions, very little activity having been noticed in his front line.

II Anzac Corps.

5. Patrols.

Patrols have been active throughout the week. South

of the LYS hostile patrols have been met on several occasions. Our patrols have frequently entered the enemy's lines, but with three exceptions have found them empty. In one case a man of a trench patrol was captured. In two other cases the enemy made off after throwing bombs.

One of our patrols, while examining the enemy's wire opposite RUE DE BOIS Sector, was attacked by a hostile patrol. Bombing ensued, and our men withdrew. Two of the party were found to be missing.

East of PLEURBAIX a party of about 8 men entered our trenches one night, but were driven off.

North of the LYS no patrols were encountered.

Artillery.

Our field and heavy artillery activity has increased, many targets being engaged. The enemy has been active recently against back areas on the southern part of the Corps front.

Machine Guns.

Our machine guns have been active by night.

Snipers.

Our snipers claim 21 hits.

Raids.

A raid was attempted from the WULVERGHEN Sector on the enemy's line at H.36.d.60.35. The front line was found empty and much damaged. Bombing posts appeared to be established in connected shell holes in rear. The party proceeded to support line, which was held, and a bombing fight ensued. No prisoners were taken. One officer and three other ranks are missing.

R.F.C.

6.

Though the weather was fine during the early part of the week mist greatly hindered work. Rain prevented

S45

work on 16th and 17th May.

Reconnaissances of the Army front and Corps Areas have been carried out on all days except the 16th and 17th May.

43 hostile batteries have been successfully engaged. 36 gun pits have been hit.

During the week our machines have carried out several successful raids. 225 20-lb. bombs have been dropped on various targets. Two fires were started and a very big explosion caused at WERVICQ Dump. Six direct hits on hangars, two of which were burning when the machines left, at RAMIGNIES CHIN Aerodrome. Two direct hits, one shed destroyed, at RECKEM Aerodrome. Five direct hits and an explosion caused at GHKLUVELT Station.

A number of encounters with hostile aircraft took place, as a result of which six hostile aeroplanes were shot down and four driven down out of control. On the 13th May two of our machines attacked hostile observation balloons from below, crossing the lines at 25 to 50 feet. In neither case did the balloons catch fire.

Mining.

7. The enemy continues active at RAILWAY WOOD, where he has blown twice during the week, doing no harm. We have fired a mine in conjunction with a raid there to destroy an enemy shaft. We also blew three charges at HILL 60, with apparently good results, as dense smoke was reported in the enemy's lines.

Counter-
Battery Work.

8. Visibility has not been so good this week as last, and there has been a larger percentage of shoots abandoned owing to unfavourable conditions.

The 9th, 12th, 13th and 14th May were the best days, and 46 successful shoots were carried out, 25 of which were on hostile batteries in the HOLLEBEKE and WYTSCHAETE groups.

A feature of the week has been the large number of explosions of ammunition particularly in the HOLLEBEKE group of batteries.

Smoke screens have been freely used to interfere with our destructive shoots.

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<u>Casualties.</u> 9.	<u>Officers.</u>			<u>Other Ranks.</u>		
	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>
VIII Corps	2	9	-	26	125	3
IX Corps	-	2	-	17	66	2
X Corps	4	11	-	44	253	2
II Anzac Corps	3	7	1	26	187	7
	<u>9</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>113</u>	<u>631</u>	<u>14</u>

Total casualties:-

Officers	39
Other ranks	758
	<u>797</u>

Appx I (d)

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS - SECOND ARMY
for week ending 6 p.m. 24th May 1917.

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General.

1. The period under review has been marked by our bombardments for trench destruction and wire cutting. The enemy's retaliation has not been heavy except against YPRES and our trenches North-east of YPRES.

Many small raids and patrol enterprises have been carried out by us, and several prisoners have been taken. The enemy has made several attempts to obtain identifications, nearly all of which have been driven off with loss to the enemy.

At mid-day on Sunday, May 20th, the First Army took over all the Southern part of our line up as far as the LYS, and the 57th Division was transferred from the II Anzac Corps to the XI Corps.

The II Corps Headquarters arrived at STEENVOORDE on May 20th.

The XIV Corps Headquarters arrived at FLEURE on May 23rd.

VIII Corps.

2. Patrols.

Our reconnoitring and fighting patrols have been our regularly every night. A fighting patrol attempted to capture an enemy wiring party south-east of WIELTJE, but the enemy dispersed before our men were able to close with them.

On one occasion a hostile party unsuccessfully attempted to surround one of our patrols close to the enemy wire.

One of our patrols crossed the YSER CANAL at B.S.C.4.2 with the intention of entering the enemy's trenches. They were frustrated owing to the mud and compelled to retire.

Artillery.

S49

In the Right Divisional Area the enemy's artillery has been active. YPRES has been regularly shelled. RAILWAY WOOD has received a good deal of attention. Our artillery has been very active in retaliation. On the 23rd May we carried out an intense bombardment lasting 15 minutes on the enemy's trenches North and South of the YPRES-ROULERS Railway. Considerable damage was done. There has been a marked decrease in the hostile artillery activity in the Left Divisional Area.

Trench Mortars.

The enemy's trench mortar activity has been normal, except in the RAILWAY WOOD section, where he has shown continued activity. Our Stokes and Trench Mortars have been active bombarding craters opposite RAILWAY WOOD. We knocked out one hostile trench mortar at C.I.C.10.4.

Machine Guns.

Enemy machine gun activity has been normal. Our machine guns have been active. On one occasion about 17 Germans were accounted for.

Snipers.

Little enemy activity is reported. Our snipers have been very successful, claiming 27 hits, 4 of which comprised a machine gun team.

Raids.

At 1 a.m. on May 20th a raiding party of the 1/4th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, 164th Brigade, entered the enemy's line at I.5.b.42.78 (North of RAILWAY WOOD) under cover of an intense barrage. A dugout was found, containing three or four of the enemy, who refused to come out, and five bombs were thrown into the dugout. Two more Germans were seen in a communication trench retreating towards their support line.

At 9.30 p.m. on May 18th, under cover of a heavy ^{SSO} barrage, a party of the enemy attempted to raid our trenches in C.22, South of WIELTJE. They were speedily driven out. Our trenches and wire were somewhat damaged. Casualties were light.

X Corps.

3. Patrols.

Our patrols have been active. Hostile patrols have been encountered in one or two instances, but have not been abnormally active.

Artillery.

Hostile artillery has made no special reply to our bombardments, but the enemy has continued steady counter-battery work, and has registered various batteries and trench ^{eg} in the back areas.

Trench Mortars.

Our trench mortars have continued to cut the enemy's wire.

Machine Guns.

Our machine guns have kept up their normal activity.

Snipers.

Normal.

Raids.

Several small raids have been attempted by us. Two prisoners were taken just North of the YPRES-COMINES Canal. Near PICCADILLY FARM one of our parties, on the night of the 17th/18th May, entered the enemy's front and support lines, but found no enemy.

A hostile raid at OBSERVATORY RIDGE on the night of the 19th/20th May secured one prisoner, and an attempted raid against the same locality on the night of the 23rd/24th May was broken up by our fire.

Work.

The enemy has attempted to repair his front line

4
551

wire in some places, notably opposite the Centre Division, but in the ST. ELOI Area he appears to have done little. He is making a new reserve trench in front of the DAMSTRASSE and also North of the Canal, and appears to have increased the wire in rear of his front line.

IX Corps.

4. Patrols.

Our patrols have been very active during the week examining the enemy's wire and trenches.

On the night of the 22nd/23rd May, our fighting patrols captured two prisoners, one at N.24.c.6.0., the other at N.18.b.20.30. Three or four of the enemy were killed. An N.C.O. belonging to one of our patrols which left on the night 18th/19th May from O.7.a.6.4. became separated from the patrol and lost himself. He remained apparently, between the enemy's front and support lines and returned on the 28th instant.

Artillery.

Our Heavy artillery have carried out successful bombardments of selected targets. Field Artillery have been active, wire-cutting with good results. Some night firing has been done. Hostile retaliation has been slight.

Trench Mortars

Our Trench Mortars have been active, wire-cutting, and bombarding the enemy's trenches. Our expenditure of trench mortar ammunition has been:-

<u>Heavy.</u>	<u>Medium.</u>	<u>Stokes.</u>
80	1,898	419

The enemy has not replied to any great extent.

Snipers.

Snipers have been active on both sides during the week.

Raid.

On the night 19th/20th May, the enemy made three separate attempts to enter our lines at H.36.a.3.6 and H.30.c.4.2. They were driven off by our fire. The body of one dead German was brought in.

On the night 20th/21st May, a party of about 20 of the enemy left his trenches at about H.30.c.5.2. (SPANBROECKMOLEN). They were driven off by our fire.

Work.

The enemy has been active repairing his trenches after our bombardments. He has made several attempts to repair his wire, but has been interfered with by our fire.

II Anzac Corps.5. Patrols.

Between 17th and 20th May, South of the LYS, patrols entered enemy's lines on three occasions and found them unoccupied. A hostile patrol attempted to enter our line at RUE DE BOIS, but was driven off, leaving one dead Bavarian. North of the LYS patrols have been active. A patrol, under cover of a L.T.M. bombardment, rushed the enemy's trench opposite MESSINES Sector, at a point where a dugout was suspected. The dugout was found and the occupants, who had thrown a few bombs on the approach of our party were called on to surrender. No answer being received, the dugout was bombed. A wounded German crawled out, and either by accident or intent, dropped a grenade, which exploded, causing us some casualties. No identifications were obtained, but our party brought in our casualties without being molested. It is hoped all the occupants of the dugout were killed.

Two nights later this dugout was again rushed, when it was found to have been destroyed by our artillery or trench mortar fire. A party from the WULVERGHEM Sector

found the enemy's front line empty but shell holes ^{6.} 553
in front of Support Trench were occupied. Two men
who were missing returned to our line two nights
afterwards, they report that enemy patrols moved about
during the night but no movement was seen or heard by
day.

A patrol from the PLOEGSTEERT Sector brought in a
wounded German after a short encounter with a hostile
patrol. He was found to be an escaped prisoner from
Camp at BLARINCHEM.

Hostile patrols have been inactive.

Artillery.

Great damaged has been caused to the enemy's wire
and works by our Artillery. Trench Mortars have also
been active. Hostile artillery has been less active
than recently, except in support of attempted raids in
the ST. YVES Sector.

Machine Guns.

Our machine guns have shown their usual activity.

Snipers.

Our snipers claim six hits.

Raids.

On the 17th and 18th May the enemy attempted to
enter our lines near ST. YVES.

On the 17th May, at 8.45 p.m., after a heavy
bombardment, a party estimated at about 100 approached
our lines. Artillery opened quickly on the S.O.S. being
sent and Lewis Gun and rifle fire was successfully brought
to bear on the enemy, who retired without having
effected an entrance.

On the 18th May, at 8.50 p.m., after ten minutes
bombardments, another attempt was made a party of about
the same size. This party was beaten back by machine
gun and Lewis Gun and rifle fire. Four men who are

7.

thought to have approached by a ditch, entered an unoccupied portion of our line and worked along to a Lewis Gun post. Three of the four Germans were killed in our lines.

A patrol brought in a wounded man and counted about 20 bodies in No Man's Land, exclusive of some seen in the enemy's wire, presumably killed by our Artillery.

Work.

Very little work has been done to the wire and trenches damaged by our artillery. No new work is reported.

R.F.C.

6. Visibility has been poor throughout the week with low clouds and some rain.

Reconnaissance of Corps Areas were carried out daily.

A number of active hostile batteries were silenced by Zone call.

During the week, six hostile aeroplanes have been shot down and six driven down. There were 36 indecisive combats. On the evening of the 18th May six machines attacked hostile balloons, crossing our lines at about 25 feet. Two balloons were brought down in flames.

On the 19th May another hostile balloon was brought down in flames.

Kite Balloon Wing.

On the 18th May one of our balloons was unsuccessfully attacked by a hostile aeroplane. Both observers made successful parachute descents.

One of our sections made night ascents every night of the week, and obtained a number of bearings of active hostile batteries.

Artillery Co-operation.

A total of 120 shoots were carried out during the week, in the course of which nine explosions and one fire were caused in hostile battery positions. 109

555

hostile batteries were located by flash.

Mining. 7. 18/5/1917 - Two blows, British, HILL 60. Both camouflets,
no surface effects.

19/5/1917 - Enemy mine, HILL 60. No damage done.

19/5/1917 - Enemy camouflet, RAILWAY WOOD; no damage.

20/5/1917 - Enemy mine, RAILWAY WOOD. No damage.

Remainder of front quiet.

556

Counter-
Battery Work.

Every advantage has been taken of the short periods of good visibility, particularly in the evening, and there has been a large increase in the number of successful destructive shoots carried out.

Of the 61 successful shoots, 34 have been against hostile batteries in the HOLLEBEKE and WYTSCHAETE groups. The number of explosions of ammunition caused is again large, especially in these two groups, 18 in all have been reported.

Smoke screens have again interfered with observation, but in very few cases have they caused the shoot to be abandoned.

557

Casualties. 9.

Officers.

Other Ranks.

	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>
VIII Corps	-	6	-	17	103	4
IX Corps	8	7	-	29	126	7
X Corps	-	12	-	61	274	2
II Anzac Corps	3	10	-	27	212	3
	<u>5</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>134</u>	<u>715</u>	<u>16</u>

Total casualties:-

Officers	40
Other ranks	<u>865</u>
	<u>905</u>

Appx I(10)

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS - SECOND ARMY
for week ending 6 p.m. 31st May 1917.

S58

General.

1. During the period under review, the outstanding feature has been our artillery activity, many destructive shoots being carried out on the enemy's battery positions, trenches and wire. The enemy's reply has been considerable on the North of the YPRES Salient. On the rest of the front his reply has been comparatively slight especially West of WYTSCHAETE.

On the 25th May, the 30th Division arrived in the Army Area, and on the 30th May it relieved the 24th Division in the HOOGE Sector, on which day the II Corps took over command of this Sector from the X Corps.

(XIV Corps)
On the 27th May the 1st Division/arrived at BERTHEM.

On the 30th May the VIII Corps moved from CHATEAU LOVIE to VOGHELTJE, Sheet 27.F.22.central.

On the 31st May, the Guards Division (XIV Corps) arrived at RENESCURE.

VIII Corps. 2. Patrols.

Our patrols have been active every night, and on only one occasion has an enemy patrol been encountered. Much valuable information has been obtained.

Artillery.

Hostile artillery has been active on the back areas, the forward system being comparatively lightly shelled. The principle targets in the forward Area have been, WIELTJE and ST. JEAN. In the back area YPRES has received much attention. Some shells have also been put into POPERINGHE. Our artillery has carried out daily its programme of wire cutting and destructive shoots. Several practice barrages have also been carried out.

Trench Mortars.

S59

Our trench mortars have been active along the whole ~~any~~ front, wire cutting and doing considerable damage to the enemy trenches.

In the Right Division Area enemy trench mortar activity has been less marked, in spite of our regular trench mortar shoots.

Against the Centre Division the enemy has been more active. The chief targets have been in the neighbourhood of TURCO FARM.

Against the Left Division the enemy trench mortars have been quiet.

Machine Guns.

The enemy's Machine Guns have been relatively quiet except against the HILL TOP Sector, where considerable machine gun fire has been directed against our trenches and wire.

Our Machine Guns have been active against the enemy's communications and dumps, and on May 30th a practice barrage was carried out.

Several hostile planes flying low over our lines have been engaged, and on one occasion a machine is believed to have been damaged, as it was seen to nose-dive behind the enemy's lines.

Snipers.

Our snipers have not had many targets this week. 13 hits are claimed.

Raids.

At 8-30 a.m. on the 28th May, under cover of a heavy bombardment, an enemy party about 50 strong raided our line between C.15.c.0.8. and C.14.d.8.8. (near TURCO FARM). They were promptly driven out, leaving behind one prisoner. One of our men is missing.

X Corps.

3. Patrols.

3.
560

Our patrols have been active, and have gained much valuable information. A hostile party of 4 men approached our line just South of the YPRES - COMINES Canal on the night of the 27/28th May. Of these, one man was killed, and two taken prisoner.

On another occasion a patrol was dispersed by Lewis Gun fire in the same Sector.

Artillery.

Our artillery has carried out constant bombardment, both by day and night, on hostile trenches, batteries and approaches.

The enemy has shelled the usual targets in back areas, and have recently carried out several organised shoots against our traffic routes by night. The enemy has also carried out some counter-battery work.

Trench Mortars.

Our trench mortars have continued their activity and have produced a slight increased activity on the part of the enemy's trench mortars.

Machine Guns.

Our machine guns have been very active.

The enemy's machine gun fire has been rather above normal.

Work.

The enemy is repairing his trenches whenever possible after our bombardments. He does not appear to be repairing his wire much.

Raids.

We carried out a small raid on the night of the 29/30th May, in the neighbourhood of PICCADILLY FARM. The raiding party, after some difficulty, entered the enemy trenches and forced him to retire. A search was made for dead or wounded Germans, but none were found.

IX Corps.

4. Patrols.

4.
561

Our patrols have been very active during the week examining the enemy's wire and trenches.

The enemy's patrols have been inactive.

The enemy's trenches were entered at N.24.c.60.55 (South west of WYTSCHAETE) on the night of 24/25th May, and at N.30.c.12.75 (South west of WYTSCHAETE) on the night of 23/24th May. Trenches were found much damaged and no enemy were encountered.

Artillery.

Our artillery have carried out bombardments on selected targets, and counter battery work with good results.

Field artillery have been active wire cutting. Night firing has been continued. The enemy has carried out night firing on back areas with H.V. guns, but his retaliation for our bombardments has been very feeble.

Trench Mortars.

Our trench mortars have been active. The expenditure of Ammunition has been:-

<u>Heavy.</u>	<u>Medium.</u>	<u>Stokes.</u>
40	2,428	3,244

Snipers.

Our snipers have been active and claim some hits.

Enemy snipers have been inactive.

Raids.

On the night of the 24/25th May a fighting patrol entered the enemy's trenches at N.38.a.57.97. (South of SPANBROEKMOLEN). The front line was not occupied but the patrol was bombed from a trench in rear.

On the night 25/26th May a fighting patrol entered enemy trenches at N.12.d.5.2. (North west of WYTSCHAETE) and captured two prisoners.

On the night 27/28th May a strong raiding party entered enemy trenches in N.24.b. (West of WYTSCHAETE) captured

B. 562

captured 1 Officer and 22 other ranks unwounded, and 7
other ranks wounded. Party claim to have killed 1 Officer
50 other ranks.

II Anzac
Corps.

5. Patrols.

Much useful information has been obtained by patrols.
No hostile patrols have been met. One of our patrols
surprised an enemy sentry ^{in the front-line} he immediately surrendered
but other Germans bombed along the trench and it was
found impossible to make the man a prisoner.

Artillery.

Our artillery has carried out many destructive
shoots on hostile battery positions, trenches and wire.
MESSINES has been frequently bombarded and several
explosions caused. Harassing fire on enemy communications
has been maintained nightly.

Hostile artillery has replied to our fire by shelling
trenches by day, and back areas by night.

Machine Guns.

Indirect fire on traffic routes has been maintained
each night.

Snipers.

Our snipers claim 11 hits.

Raids.

Raids have been attempted on 5 occasions, but only
in one instance has a prisoner been obtained. On every
occasion the enemy's front line has been found
unoccupied.

Gas.

Gas shells have been fired from 4" mortars and
Gas Projectors on selected points in the enemy's lines.
Results have been reported very satisfactory.

R.F.C.

6. Visibilitiy has been fair throughout the week
with low clouds and mist.

Reconnaissances

563 e.

Reconnaissances have been carried out in the Corps Areas daily.

Except on the 25th and 26th hostile aircraft have displayed little activity.

During the week 12 hostile aeroplanes have been shot down, of which two were in flames.

22 hostile machines have been driven down out of control.

There have been 46 indecisive combats.

Kite Balloon Wing.

Visibility was good for the first half of the week but indifferent later. A number of night ascents were made and flashes were reported.

A total of 200 shoots were carried out during the week. One of our balloons was shelled in flight: both observers made successful parachute descents. No damage was done.

Another balloon was punctured but repaired.

Mining.

7. The enemy has shown less underground activity during the past week.

We blew a large mine at RAILWAY WOOD to destroy his mining system. The near lip of the Crater has been occupied.

Counter-
Battery Work.

8. Intense counter battery work has been carried out this week, every advantage has been taken of the good visibility. On a few days aerial observation was only possible in the early morning but destructive shoots have taken place on every day of the week.

168 destructive shoots were successful and 120 hostile gun pits were hit and many explosions caused in battery positions, fires were started on 6 occasions. The volume of fire from hostile batteries immediately South of HOLLEBEKE and forward positions East of WYTSCHAETE has considerably decreased.

Smoke screens have again been extensively used by the enemy to interfere with our observation.

S64 7.

565 8.

Casualties. 9.

Officers.

Other Ranks.

	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>
II Corps.	1	8	-	1	7	
VIII Corps.	1	4	-	31	169	1
IX Corps.	2	24	2	51	359	8
X Corps.	10	37	1	157	880	3
2nd Anzac Corps.	6	38	1	130	660	25
	<u>20</u>	<u>105</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>2075</u>	<u>37</u>

Total Casualties:-

Officers	<u>129</u>
Other Ranks	<u>2482</u>
	<u>2611</u>

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SECRET

Appx - II



SECOND ARMY DISPOSITIONS
 1st DAY ONLY
 MAY 31 1917

24975 Co. 2008.95-5-17