

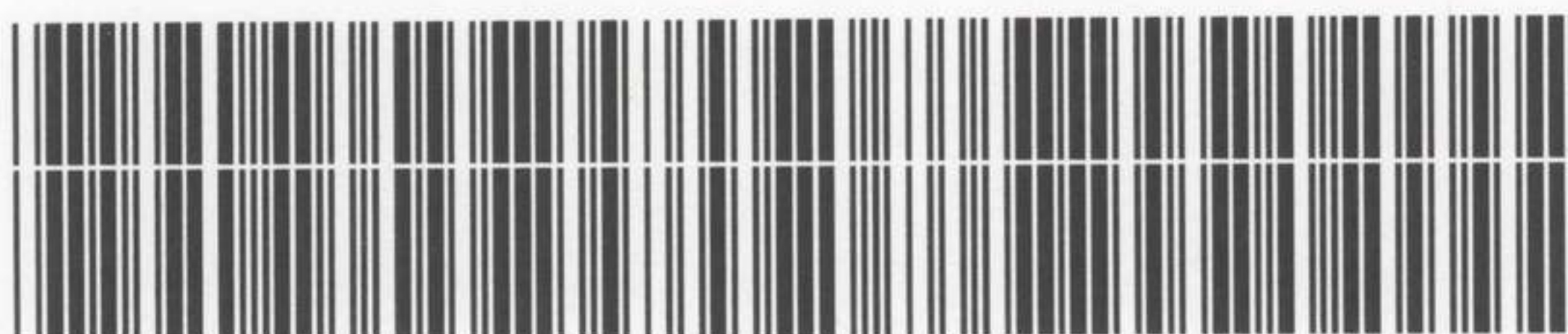
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Formation Headquarters

Item number: 1/13/7 Part 1

Title: General Staff, Headquarters 2nd
Army

December 1916



AWM4-1/13/7PART1

Second Army

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CONFIDENTIAL

No. 9

SECOND ARMY WAR DIAR

WITH APPENDICES

VOL. XXIV.

FOR THE PERIOD 1-31 DECEMBER 1916

Start 553 Fin. 602

SECRET

Army Form C. 21

December

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

GS. Second Army

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1916-

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Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendix
CASSEL Dec 1 st 1916	During the night our patrols entered the German trenches at seven different places South of ARMENTIERS securing an identification. The BOESINGHE sector was taken over from the French infantry by a Brigade of the 39 th Division - The G. O. C. 38 th Division assumed command. South West of ST. ELOI opposite BOIS QUARANTE we captured a German prisoner. at South of ARMENTIERS enemy minenwerfer replied to our trench mortars during the day.	553 Start of Boche No. 9. Intelligence
CASSEL Dec 2 nd 1916	On the extreme left of our line the enemy bombarded our trenches at midnight for over an hour, after which they raided one trench but only remained in it for three or four minutes - one officer is reported missing. There was considerable minenwerfer activity Southeast of YPRES from 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. while South of ARMENTIERS our trench mortars were active, to which the enemy replied feebly.	
CASSEL Dec 3 rd 1916	Three prisoners were captured south of ST. ELOI by a raiding party of the 41 st Division, 12 Germans were killed, and a charge exploded by a time fuzer of the enemy's front line after he had re-occupied it. One of our patrols entered the enemy's trenches East of YPRES, killed some Germans and obtained an identification.	

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Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to App
CASSEL Dec 3 rd 1916	During the day the enemy's artillery and minenwerfer were active about the YPRES-ROULERS Railway. our artillery replied. South of ARMENTIERS our trench mortars were active; the enemy's retaliation was feeble.	
CASSEL Dec 4 th 1916	A patrol entered the enemy's trenches at 36 N. 10. 2 4. 9 South of FLEURBAIX but found no sign of the enemy. During the day slight hostile artillery activity was reported North of YPRES, and fairly heavy hostile shelling South East of YPRES - our artillery replied effectively. South of ARMENTIERS the enemy's minenwerfer were more active than usual. Our aeroplanes dropped bombs on the enemy bomb store at MOLENHOEK (28. K. 7. C. 5. 8) and on the ammunition dump 28. 20. C. 1. 3 South East of WYTSCHAETE.	554
CASSEL Dec 5 th 1916	During the night gas was unsuccessfully discharged by us North of L'EPINETTE on a point of about 750 yards. YPRES was shelled with 5.9 shell during the morning, and hostile artillery was active at various points of the YPRES salient - our reply was effective. Between the river LYS and WYTSCHAETE trench mortars on both sides were active: we cut the enemy's wire South East of ARMENTIERS with trench mortars.	Handwritten notes

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WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

Army Form C. 2118.

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533

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CASSEL. Dec 6 th 1916	<p>During the night A hostile aeroplane dropped bombs between ABEELE and RENINGHELST but did very little damage this machine came down in our lines near STEENWERCK, as the pilot lost his bearings in the mist. Both pilot and observer were made prisoners and the machine brought in undamaged. Some hostile shelling was reported during the day both north and north East of YPRES also in the neighbourhood of PLUGSTEERT.</p>	
CASSEL. Dec 7 th 1916	<p>A quiet night. Three prisoners were taken in "no man's land" West of MESSINES early in the morning. During the day there was some mine sapper and artillery activity North East and East of YPRES on the part of the enemy - our reply was effective. South of ARMENTIERS our trench mortars cut the enemy's wire he replied with mine sapper.</p>	
CASSEL. Dec 8 th 1916	<p>We raided the enemy's trenches south of BOIS GRENIER but failed to obtain any identification. Elsewhere a quiet night. During the day hostile artillery and trench mortars were active, also South of ROOGE. Southeast of ARMENTIERS our trench mortars bombarded the enemy's trenches and wire.</p>	

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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558

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Hour, Date, Place

Summary of Events and Information

Remarks and references to Appendices

CASSEL Dec 9th 1916

On the left of our line, near WIELTJE, and near the YPRES-ROULERS Railway hostile artillery and minenwerfer were active - our artillery and trench mortars replied. This activity continued both morning and afternoon. North of PLUGSTEERT our trench mortars bombarded the enemy's trenches, to which the enemy replied heavily.

CASSEL Dec 10th 1916

During the night our trench mortars and artillery bombarded the enemy's trenches on the left of the line - the enemy replied vigorously. Hostile minenwerfer and artillery were unusually active all along our front during the day. In the neighbourhood of WIELTJE he shelled our trenches and cut our wire. His field artillery was very active in the BOESINGHE sector, and our line was shelled with minenwerfer just east of the CANAL (28 C.13 a) our reply was effective. East of VIERSTRAAT our artillery and trench mortars bombarded the enemy's trenches. He shelled our trenches about ST ELOI rather heavily, and there was considerable minenwerfer activity in the HULLBO sector, and shelling of our trenches in the "BLUFF" sector. In the RUE DE BOIS sector there was some light activity.

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Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CASSEL. Dec 10 th 1916	and trench mortar fire to which we replied. We cut the enemy's wire on the right of our line, and he retaliated more heavily than usual. Our artillery was active in the YPRES salient in the evening, to which the enemy replied.	
CASSEL Dec 11 th	The 34 th Division carried out a successful raid last night near RUE DU BOIS (36 I 22-a.) Three prisoners were captured and a machine gun emplacement destroyed. A large enemy working party was dispersed near WIELTJE by our artillery and machine guns. Hostile mine throwers were active during the day in the neighbourhood of the YPRES-ROULERS Railway, and the YPRES-COMINES Canal, and South east of ARMENTIERS. We blew a camouflaged near the YPRES-ROULERS Railway early in the morning. Considerable aerial activity on both sides - bombs were dropped by a hostile machine on HERZEELE (two miles east of WORMHOUDT) causing us eight casualties. South of ARMENTIERS an enemy aeroplane flew very low over our line, and was unaffected by rifle and machine gun fire.	

Mir. [Signature]
Capt.

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Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
December 12 th 1916	<p>We blew a camouflet at the BLUFF, and a tunnelling party entered the enemy's gallery, by digging down from a shell hole in no man's land. 500 ft. of hostile workings were captured together with a quantity of mining material.</p> <p>During the afternoon there was some artillery activity on both sides in the EPINETTE Sector.</p>	
December 13 th	<p>Two hostile patrols attempted to enter our trenches last night East of ARMENTIERS, but were driven off. A party entered a gap in our line at PEAR TREE FARM (36 I. 16 b) and captured two men of the Third Australian Division, who were patrolling.</p> <p>During the day our artillery was active North and North east of YPRES & hostile retaliation was feeble. East of ARMENTIERS our trench mortars did considerable damage to the enemy's trenches he replied with mine mortars. South of BOIS GRENIER line retaliated to some hostile shelling.</p>	

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or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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539

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ASSEL Dec 14 th 1916	<p>Quiet night. Our mining galleries at the bluff "BLUFF" were connected to the captured enemy's galleries, two dead Germans were recovered, and a total of 700 feet of gallery captured.</p> <p>During the day there was some hostile artillery activity North and Northeast of YPRES and South-east of ARMENTIERS to which we replied. He has been more active lately in the YPRES SALIENT, both with mortar and artillery.</p> <p>G.O.C. 39th Division took over command of the left divisional sector of the Army front, relieving the 38th Division.</p>	
SEL Dec 15 th 1916	<p>Yesterday evening we raided the enemy's trenches southwest of BOUTILLERIE but failed to find any of the enemy. Though the party remained for two hours in the hostile trenches and penetrated to a depth of 100 yards. One of our parties entered the enemy's trenches East of VIERSTRAAT, killed the sentry and brought back his papers.</p>	

Making well
Capt.

WAR DIARY

OR

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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560

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Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CASSEL Dec 15 th 1918	<p>The enemy raided our trenches in the DIEPENDAAL Sector (South of ST ELOI) & caused us some casualties. Several of the enemy were killed, and a large mobile charge was left in our trenches which failed to explode. Our trenches were considerably damaged by the bombardment.</p> <p>Early this morning the enemy bombarded OBSERVATORY RIDGE and MOUNT SORREL heavily with artillery and trench mortars, to which we replied vigorously. During the day hostile artillery were exceptionally active about the YPRES-ROULERS railway; in the afternoon a heavy bombardment was opened on Observatory OBSERVATORY RIDGE and HILL 60 sectors. West of MESSINES we bombarded the enemy's trenches with artillery and trench mortars. East of ARMENTIERS hostile trench mortars were active. Enemy aeroplanes were active in the YPRES SALIENT, one hostile aeroplane attacked infantry in our trenches, this machine was reported to have made a forced landing behind the German lines.</p>	

Malley Wood
Capt

WAR DIARY

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or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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561

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
SS EL. Dec 16 th 1916	<p>There was some heavy hostile shelling north of YPRES during the night.</p> <p>During the bombardment of our trenches north of HILL 60. Yesterday afternoon, about 40 Germans approached our trenches & bombed them; they were driven off and caught by our barrage, suffering some casualties. We secured some identifications. There was slight hostile artillery activity in the neighbourhood of the 'BLUFF' to which we replied. Our aeroplanes dropped four 112 lb bombs, and one 336 lb bomb on huts at BECELAERE.</p>	
SEL. Dec 17 th 1916	<p>One of our patrols entered the enemy's trenches near SPANBROEKMOLEN and destroyed a machine gun emplacement. The enemy blew a camouflaged early this morning south of the YPRES-ROULERS railway, no damage was done to our workings. South west of PILCKEM hostile minenwerfer were active in the afternoon, and there was some artillery activity about the YPRES-ROULERS Railway. South of FLEURBAIX our trench mortars bombarded the enemy's trenches, he replied with minenwerfer.</p>	

M. H. Reynolds

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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562

Hour, Date, Place

Summary of Events and Information

Remarks and references to Appendices

SSSEL Dec 18th 1916

During the night hostile artillery was active on our trenches about the MENIN-YPRES road. Our artillery put a heavy barrage on the enemy's trenches South of ST. ELOI, as they were reported to be abnormally strongly held. The First New Zealand Division carried out a successful raid South East of LA. BOUTILLERIE, nine prisoners were captured, and a number of casualties inflicted on the enemy. Our losses were very slight.

There was some enemy artillery activity South of PILCKEM and South West of MESSINES during the day. About 6 pm the enemy blew a mine at the "BLUFF" no damage done to our workings.

SSSEL Dec 19th 1916

Early in the morning we blew a camouflet near "HILL 60". There was some hostile trench mortar activity in the neighbourhood of the YPRES-COMINES CANAL during the day -

H. Sparks

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Army Form C. 2118.

583

Hour, Date, Place

Summary of Events and Information

Remarks and references to Appendices

ASSEL Dec 20th 1916

At 12.30 am the enemy blew a camouflet near HILL 60 doing some damage to our workings. During the day hostile trench mortars and artillery were active about the YPRES-ROULERS Railway, EAST of ZILLEBEKE, around the BLUFF, WEST of MESSINES and South of ARMENTIERES.

In the evening the 1st New Zealand Brigade sent a party out in order to ascertain what trenches the enemy was holding South of FLEURBAIX, the party went about 300 yards beyond the enemy's front line and saw no trace of the enemy. Party then returned without having suffered any casualties. At 11 pm we blew a camouflet South of observatory Ridge.

ASSEL. Dec. 21st 1916.

at 3 am we blew a camouflet just South of the YPRES-ROULERS Railway. The enemy's artillery and mine mortars were active most of the day in the neighbourhood of the YPRES-ROULERS Railway and HOOGE. We replied by shelling his trenches and Battery positions. The enemy's trench mortar also showed some activity WEST of MESSINES to which our trench mortars replied. EAST of BOIS GRENIER the

34th Division attempted a raid early in the evening. It was unsuccessful as the enemy's wire and machine gun fire held it up.

H.P. Sparks

WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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564

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CASSEL. Dec. 22 nd	<p>The enemy's artillery and trench mortars showed considerable activity during the day, especially South of WIELTJE, near the BLUFF and West of MESSINES where the enemy bombarded our trenches heavily for forty minutes.</p> <p>In the evening a raiding party of the 47th Division entered the enemy's trenches North of the BLUFF and killed many Germans. Owing to resistance no prisoners could be brought back to our lines. Identification was secured ^{two names were} secured. The first New Zealand Division attempted a raid South of LA BOUTILLERIE but failed to enter the hostile trenches as they were too strongly held. A bombing fight took place in which casualties are believed to have been inflicted on the enemy.</p> <p>During the night the enemy's heavy artillery was active on the left of our line.</p>	
CASSEL Dec. 23 rd	<p>after a heavy bombardment of our trenches the enemy raided them at 2.30 am just S.E. of BOESINGHE. Thirteen other tanks and two Lewis guns are not accounted for.</p> <p>We attempted to raid the enemy's trenches SOUTH of WIELTJE. The trench was found empty and no identifications were secured. During the day activity on both sides was normal except EAST of BOESINGHE where we bombarded the enemy trenches.</p>	J.P. Parks

WAR DIARY

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or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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585

Hour, Date, Place

Summary of Events and Information

Remarks and references to Appendices

CASSEL. Dec. 23rd

In the evening we discharged gas successfully on a front of about 1700 yards West and South WEST of MESSINES. The enemy fired a canyfler at Mount Sorrell about 8.30 p.m.

CASSEL. Dec. 24th

We fired a canyfler at Mount Sorrell. During the day hostile artillery was active WEST of MESSINES and SOUTHEAST of ARMENTIERES. Aerial observers reported that the activity of the enemy's trains was above normal.

CASSEL. Dec 25th

Raiding party from 3rd Australian Division entered enemy's trenches on the ~~YPR~~ ARMENTIERES - LILLE Railway. No enemy were found. Party had no casualties. Enemy fired a canyfler South of SEZOT in the morning. Some damage was done to one of our galleries. Considerable shelling of YPRES during the day - our artillery was active on the South side of the YPRES Salient and South of ARMENTIERES where we bombarded buildings in rear of the enemy's lines.

In the evening the 25th Division carried out a raid at LE GHEER East of PLOEGSTEERT. No prisoners were taken. 5th Australian Div raided enemy trenches S. of FRELINGHIEN during a hostile working party which we treated so quickly that no prisoners were taken. We electrically bombarded the enemy trenches.

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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586

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CASSEL Dec. 26 th	<p>Hostile artillery was active during the day about the YPRES - TROULERS Railway North of the BLUFF and SOUTH of ARMENTIERES. Our Heavy Artillery carried out some counterbattery work.</p> <p>one of our aeroplanes was brought down by a hostile ^{machine} artillery in our own lines EAST of YPRES. The pilot and observer were killed.</p> <p>our aerial observers reported that hostile train movement was above normal - Trains mostly South Bound.</p>	
CASSEL Dec. 27 th	<p>Hostile artillery and trench mortars were active during the day North of WIELTJE and North of the BLUFF. We effectively bombarded the enemy's trenches West of MESSINES, in the RUE de BOIS Sector and South of BOIS GRENIER. Hostile retaliation in the latter place was considerable. one of our aeroplanes brought down a hostile machine which fell near BECELAERE. one of our kite balloons was attacked by hostile aircraft which was driven off by an effective anti aircraft.</p>	

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CASSEL. Dec. 28 th	Slight hostile mine/under activity during the night South of BOSSINGHE. During the day there was considerable hostile shelling about the YPRES - TROULERS Railway and artillery activity on both sides in the RUE de BOIS Sector. Our aerial observers reported that the hostile train activity was somewhat above normal.	
CASSEL. Dec 29 th	a quiet day on the whole. Slight hostile trench mortar activity South of NIELTIE. At dusk the enemy attempted to raid the 3 rd Australian Division EAST of NOUVEL - HOUPLINES. The hostile party of about 12 got as far as our wire and threw one bomb. It was driven off with bombs and Lewis gun fire. No dead or wounded get man was could be found in "no man's land".	
CASSEL. Dec. 30 th	Hostile artillery and aeroplanes were active on the South side of the YPRES Salient during the day. Our trench mortars bombarded the enemy's trenches South of ADVENTURES. YPRES was slightly shelled during the day.	H.P. Parks

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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568

Hour, Date, Place

Summary of Events and Information

Remarks and references to Appendices

ASSEX Dec. 31st

During the day hostile artillery was active on the South side of the YPRES Salient. West of MESSINES and South of FLEURBAIX; our heavy artillery replied. EAST of BOISGRENIER our trench mortars bombarded the enemy's trenches.

Weekly Summaries of Operations —

Appx I.

Map showing Disposition of Troops 31/12/16

Appx II.

H.P. Sparks