

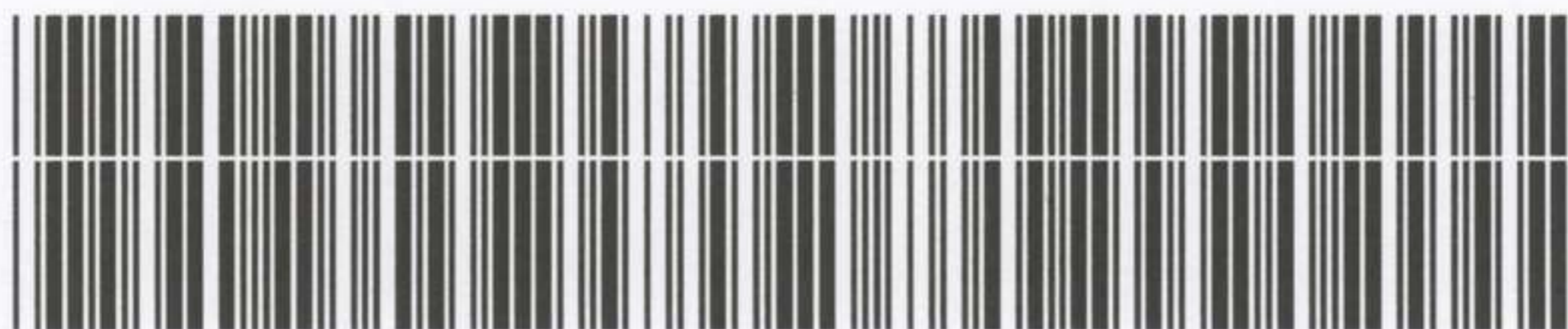
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Formation Headquarters

Item number: 1/13/9 Part 1

Title: General Staff, Headquarters 2nd
Army

February 1917



AWM4-1/13/9PART1

- SECOND ARMY. -

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P1

CONFIDENTIAL.

- SECOND ARMY -

WAR DIARY

WITH

APPENDICES

VOL XXVI

FOR THE PERIOD 1st - 28th. FEBRUARY

1917

Original

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

~~SECRET~~

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

FEBRUARY 1917.

(Erase heading not required.)

G.S., Second Army

Hour, Date, Place

Summary of Events and Information

Remarks and references to Appendices

CASSEL Feb. 1st 1917

Last night under cover of heavy bombardment enemy attempted to raid our trenches at two points South East of ARMENTIERS both attempts were repulsed. E of ARMENTIERS we attempted a raid which was held up by machine gun fire all the party returned safely. South of FLEURBAIX we captured two prisoners. The enemy bombarded our trenches South of the LYS and in the SPANBROEK Sector. Early this morning an attempt was made to enter our trenches near the YPRES-ROULERS Railway under cover of a heavy bombardment. it failed and we captured a prisoner in "no mans Land". West of NYTSCHASTE the enemy launched two raiding parties after a heavy bombardment (N 30.c and N 29.b) the enemy were dressed in white and were about 100 strong. both attempts were repulsed with heavy losses. During the day we bombarded the enemy's trenches on the left of our line who retaliated on the BOESINGHE sector. South of the YPRES Salient hostile artillery was more active than usual. YPRES was shelled. West of MESSINES there was artillery activity on both sides. SE of ARMENTIERS our trench mortars did considerable damage to the enemy's trenches and wire.

py

M. H. Reynolds
Capt

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CASSEL. Feb 1 st 1917	we carried out a great deal of successful counter battery work in conjunction with aeroplanes. Two large explosions were caused. One of our pilots was wounded in combat, and two of our machines are missing.	
CASSEL. Feb 2 nd	A patrol which went out after the enemy's bombardment of our trenches S.E. of ARMENTIERS found some German helmets and bloodstained rifles. The Enemy bombarded our trenches in the BOESINGHE Sector early this morning with machine weapons. During the day our artillery were active on the left of the line, our trenches in the BOESINGHE Sector were again shelled. East of ARMENTIERS we bombarded the enemy's trenches. One of our reconnaissance patrols was attacked by four enemy aeroplanes near TOURCOING. one hostile machine was destroyed WEST of LILLE, all our machines returned.	P3
CASSEL. Feb 3 rd	The enemy blew a mine opposite RAILWAY WOOD. we occupied the crater. Hostile artillery were active in the BOESINGHE Sector during the night. our guns replied effectively. We raided the enemy South of BOIS GRENIER, inflicting casualties on the enemy, and taking 3 prisoners.	Millington Capt.

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CASSEL Feb 3 rd 1917	<p>During the day, there was some shelling on both sides North of YPRES, the CANAL BANK was shelled. Our Heavy Artillery were active against hostile batteries round the YPRES Salient in conjunction with aeroplanes. E and S.E of ARMENTIERS our artillery and trench mortars bombarded the enemy's trenches. One of our aeroplanes attacked seven hostile machines near NERVICQ and destroyed two of them. A hostile machine dropped bombs on the aerodrome at BAILLEUL, but did no damage.</p>	
CASSEL Feb 4 th	<p>Quiet night Except for a little shelling there was nothing to report during the day.</p>	
CASSEL Feb 5 th	<p>Quiet night. During the day we bombarded the enemy's trenches S.W of MESSINES, E of PLUGSTEERT WOOD and E of ARMENTIERS. One of our machines shot down a hostile aeroplane, which fell in the GERMAN lines East of ZILLEBEKE.</p>	P4

M. B. Hayward
Capt

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CASSEL. Feb 6 th 1917.	<p>Quiet night. North and East of YPRES we bombarded the enemy's trenches. Hostile artillery were active in the RAILWAY WOOD Sector. VOORMEZEELE was shelled. Our trench mortars were active East of ARMENTIERS. In the neighbourhood of WYTSCHAETE, MESSINES and PLUGSTEERT there was artillery activity on both sides. Our aeroplanes were active during the day - two hostile machines were driven down - possibly under control. Two of our reconnaissance machines are missing.</p>	
CASSEL. Feb 7 th 1917	<p>Quiet night. Artillery and trench mortar activity on both sides north of YPRES N.W. of WYTSCHAETE, N of MESSINES, north of the LYS, and South of FLEURBAIX. Five of our aeroplanes engaged six hostile scouts near MENIN; one of our machines was shot down, Two of the enemy's machines were driven down and the rest scattered.</p>	P5

M. B. Keywood
Capt.

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<u>CASSEL.</u> Feb 8 th 1917	<p>Quiet night.</p> <p>The enemy heavily shelled the ELVERDINGHE - NOESTEN ward during the day, and his artillery were active in the northern half of the YPRES salient - we bombarded his trenches N.E. of YPRES. Mutual shelling North East of ZILLEBEKE, West of NYTSCHAETE and East of BOIS GRENIER. Our counter battery work was successful, and we caused a large explosion at one point. Our trench mortars were active East of ARMENTIERS. Considerable aerial activity on both sides.</p>	
<u>CASSEL.</u> Feb 9 th	<p>We successfully raided the enemy's trenches just South of the YPRES-COMINES canal, capturing twelve Germans, and inflicting considerable casualties. South of FLEURBAIX about 30 of the enemy attempted to raid our trenches, after a heavy bombardment; they were caught in our barage & easily repulsed.</p> <p>During the day the enemy shelled BRIELEN, POTIJZE and our trenches and back area North of YPRES. Our counter battery work was successful. N.E. of YPRES we bombarded the enemy's trenches also S.W. of MESSINES and SE of ARMENTIERS. Considerable aerial activity on both sides, two enemy machines were</p>	<p>PP</p>

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<u>CASSEL</u> . Feb 9 th 1917	were driven down. Our machines cooperated in counter battery work: an explosion was caused in one of the hostile batteries engaged.	
<u>CASSEL</u> Feb 10 th	<p>Early last night the enemy heavily shelled our trenches in the neighbourhood of HILL 60.</p> <p>We bombarded the enemy's trenches during the day, opposite the left of our line, North East of YPRES, S.E. of YPRES, and S.E. of ARMENTIERES. Hostile artillery was active in the BOESINGHE Sector, South of ZILLEBEKE, and against our battery positions West of MESSINES. Our heavy artillery carried out successful counter-battery work, causing four explosions. One hostile aeroplane was driven down, under control, West of LILLE</p>	P1
<u>CASSEL</u> Feb 11 th	<p>Quiet night. We blew a camouflat at Mount SORREL.</p> <p>one of our patrols encountered a party of Germans South of BOIS GRENIER - one of our men is missing</p>	W. H. Kayman Capt.

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CASSEL. Feb. 11 th 1917	<p>We successfully bombarded the enemy's trenches during the day N.E. of YPRES, S.W. of NYTSCHAETE, and S.E. of ARMENTIERS. There was considerable artillery activity in the NIELTJE sector, S.E. of YPRES, W. of MESSINES, and E. of ARMENTIERS.</p>	
CASSEL. Feb 12 th	<p>One of our patrols attempted to enter the enemy's trenches S.E. of ARMENTIERS but were held up by wire and bombs. We raided the enemy's trenches just W. of WEZ MACQUART, inflicted casualties and captured 5 prisoners. The 21st Division left 2nd Army for 1st Army. The enemy blew a camoufllet at STELOI, which caused slight damage to our workings. We bombarded the enemy's lines N.E. of YPRES, and E. of ARMENTIERS. There was some mine-thrower activity E. of ZILLEBEKE, which was stopped by our artillery. We captured one prisoner near the YPRES-ROULERS Railway early this morning.</p>	<p>PS</p>

Mitchell
Capt.

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<u>CASSEL</u> Feb-13 th 1917	<p>We successfully raided the enemy's trenches North of the YPRES - ROULERS Railway, inflicting a number of casualties, and capturing two prisoners. After a heavy bombardment a hostile raiding party entered our trenches SE of FLEURBAIX, but were driven out at once - none of our men are missing.</p> <p>During the day there was considerable hostile shelling against the BOESINGHE Sector, to which our artillery and trench mortars replied effectively; we shelled hostile traffic near ST JULIEN, and bombarded the enemy's trenches E of YPRES, and W of MESSINES. There was some hostile artillery activity E of PLUG STEERT, E of ARMENTIERS, and in the back areas about the YPRES - COMINES Canal.</p>	Pg
<u>CASSEL</u> Feb-14 th	<p>After a heavy bombardment the enemy attempted a Raid at EPINETTE (E of ARMENTIERS) but were driven off; another party entered our trenches S of MESSINES, after a bombardment; two of our men are missing. We attempted a double raid on the enemy's trenches N of the YPRES - ROULERS Railway, one of which was successful; no prisoners were taken, but a large number of dead and wounded Germans were seen; our casualties were moderate.</p>	M. H. King Capt.

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<u>CASSEL</u> Feb. 14 th 1917	<p>During the day hostile artillery was active on the left of our line and on the South of the YPRES Salient, to which we replied. Our artillery was active South of MESSINES, and East of ARMENTIERS; N.E. of BIXSCHOOTER our siege artillery caused a fire in the enemy's lines, and exploded three ammunition dumps E of ARMENTIERS. PAPERINGHE was intermittently shelled this afternoon. we replied by shelling RECELAERE. During the night our aeroplanes dropped phosphorous bombs on hostile batteries in co-operation with our raids ^{NE} of YPRES. nine hostile batteries were successfully engaged. There were three indecisive combats during the day.</p>	
<u>CASSEL</u> . Feb 15 th	<p>Under cover of a heavy bombardment the enemy raided one of our posts North of TURCO FARM (NE of YPRES) a Lewis gun and four O.R. are missing one dead German was left in the post. A hostile party was seen near our wire W of MESSINES, and dispersed. During the night ELVERDINGHE some battery positions W of MESSINES and our trenches SE of ARMENTIERS were shelled.</p> <p>During the day we successfully bombarded the enemy's trenches S.E. of YPRES, and E of PLUGSTEERT. Mutual artillery</p>	<p>P.P.P.</p> <p>Adjutant Capt.</p>

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CASSEL. Feb 15 th 1917	<p>artillery activity N of the VPRES salient, and E and S of ARMENTIERS. Our shelling caused an explosion in a hostile battery position. Much useful counter-battery work was carried out. There was considerable aerial activity. An enemy machine was shot down, and seen to crash at VERLINGHEM (36. J. 4), one was shot down in flames and fell near ELVERDINGHE, one was shot down by A.A. guns and fell near PLUGSTEERT, the pilot being captured, another was shot down near HOLLEBEKE in flames, and another forced down near GHELUVELT and last seen in a vertical nose dive.</p>	
CASSEL. Feb 16 th	<p>One of our aeroplanes is missing, & one pilot was wounded. Early this morning the enemy attempted to raid our trenches S of PLUGSTEERT wood under cover of a heavy bombardment. It was repulsed. There was some shelling and mine warfare activity E of ARMENTIERS. Headquarters 57th Division arrived from England & opened at MERRIS. The enemy penetrated into our trenches S of PLUGSTEERT WOOD, but was immediately bombed out, 3 of our men are missing. During the day there was a good deal of shelling on both sides N and E of VPRES and E of ARMENTIERS. Thaw set in after 3 weeks frost.</p>	P11 Amik Key wood Capt.

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CASSEL, Feb 17th 1917

Quiet night.
This morning under cover of a heavy bombardment we successfully raided the enemy's trenches East of ST. YVES in V. 15.2 and V. 21.4. Our party reached the enemy's second line, and remained there about 30 minutes. 60 Germans were killed and many dugouts bombed - one machine gun was destroyed, and two prisoners were captured. The enemy retaliated heavily on our trenches near ST. YVES. YPRES was heavily shelled during the day, and artillery was active on both sides N of NYTSCHAETE, W of MESSINES, SE of ARMENTIERS.

CASSEL, Feb 18th

A party from the 38th Division raided the enemy's trenches NE of LAMASHIRE Farm at c. 14.0. The enemy had abandoned the front line, which was badly damaged by our bombardment; Casualties were inflicted on the enemy holding their second line, but no prisoners were obtained. The enemy attempted to raid our trenches just North of the BLUFF at 4.30 am after a short bombardment. We lost a Lewis gun, but no prisoners - three of our men were wounded - we captured two Germans, killed three, and wounded several. After a heavy bombardment the enemy entered our trenches South of ST. EL01, opposite BOIS QUARANTE. Three of our men are missing - two mobile charges and a number of bombs were left behind by the enemy.

Q17

W. H. Bryson
Capt.

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CASSEL. Feb 18 th 1917	<p>During the day, we shelled the enemy's trenches N.E of YPRES with good results, and bombarded his defenses from HILL 60 to the YPRES-COMINES canal, which drew no retaliation. Artillery was active on the ST. ELOI front, opposite MESSINES and NYTSCHAETE, where we carried out an organized bombardment, lasting from 1.30 pm to 5 pm. The enemy fired some gas shell into the L'EPINETTE Sector. A fighting patrol of the 3rd Australian Division blew up an enemy machine gun at Sheet 36. C.23. 6.58. The 55th Division relieved the 39th Div in the Right Sector of the VIIth Corps.</p>	
CASSEL. Feb 19 th	<p>In a patrol encounter in sheet 36. I. 31. c (S of BOIS GREENIER) one officer and five other ranks were missing. At 11 pm under cover of an artillery barrage we attempted a raid at Sht 28. U.28. a. (S of PLUGSTEERT WOOD) but were unsuccessful. We attempted a daylight raid S.W of NYTSCHAETE this morning, which did not succeed as the enemy were on the alert. During the day hostile artillery, and machine weapons were active E of YPRES, N of the YPRES-COMINES canal, and W of MESSINES, our guns replied effectively. We also bombarded the enemy's trenches N of NYTSCHAETE, between NYTSCHAETE and MESSINES, and S.E. of ARHENTIERS. The 34th Division left 2nd Army. for 3rd Army.</p>	<p>P/P M. H. B. G. W. W. Capt.</p>

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<u>CASSEL</u> , Feb 20 th 1917	<p>one of our raiding parties entered the enemy's trenches S of HOOGHE and found them unoccupied. The 3rd Australian Division entered the enemy's trenches at I. 11 on 6.4 (Sheet 36) but obtained no prisoners. a concrete dugout was blown up, and some rifles captured. The enemy barraged his front line and wire. The enemy exploded a mine last evening near PECKHAM doing no damage to our workings.</p> <p>During the day our Heavy Artillery successfully shelled farms and strong points in the enemy's lines, in the neighbourhood of NYTSCHAETE and MESSINES.</p>	
<u>CASSEL</u> , Feb 21 st	<p>a very successful raid was carried out at 5pm yesterday evening by the 47th Div. at sht 28 I. 34. b. and d. (N of the BLUFF). The enemy's support line was reached, several dugouts, & mine shafts blown up 4 machine guns captured, and 104 O.R and 1 officer captured. an additional 8 wounded prisoners were also taken. Our casualties were about 80. The Germans were surprised by the attack & much demoralised. The raid was made on a front of 500 yards.</p> <p>another raid was carried out by the 1st New Zealand Division SE of BOIS GRENIER. The enemy were caught at "Stand to" & offered considerable resistance. 43 O.R and 1 officer were captured, and 150 were estimated to have been killed. Our casualties were about 100. This raid was on a frontage of 650 yards, & penetrated to a depth of 250 yards.</p>	<p>P14</p> <p>In Bothy Wood</p>

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CASSEL Feb 22 nd 1917	During the day hostile mine warfare was active on the left of our line. Our artillery shelled the enemy's trenches in the neighbourhood of WYTSCHAETE, MESSINES, and E of ARMENTIERS.	
CASSEL Feb 22 nd	There was some mine warfare activity on the extreme left of our line early in the night. One of our raiding parties reached the enemy's trenches N of S ^t YVES, but found them full of wire; another party entered the trenches at sheet 36. I. 27. a. 4. 9 (just S of RUE DU BOIS) after cutting wire by hand for four hours; the trenches were empty and in bad condition, our party returned safely. During the day we bombarded the enemy's front line S.W. of WYTSCHAETE and S.E. of ARMENTIERS.	
CASSEL Feb 23 rd	The enemy attempted three raids early this morning. One against the 3 rd Australian Division at the RUE DU BOIS salient (S of ARMENTIERS) by party 50 strong. One German entered our trenches but was disarmed and killed with his own bayonet, two wounded prisoners were captured in front of our parapet. The second raid was against the 36 th Division near TOUQUET (N.E. of ARMENTIERS) after a heavy bombardment, a party of the enemy	P 15

M. B. Keywood
Capt

estimated

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CASSEL. Feb 23 rd 1917	<p>estimated at 200 strong attacked our trenches - a few managed to enter and 3 men are reported missing. Our Lewis guns inflicted casualties on the Germans in "No Man's Land".</p> <p>The third was against the 25th Division near ST YVES. The enemy entered our trenches but were driven out, leaving one dead German in our trench and two in the wire.</p> <p>During the day we carried out an organised bombardment of the enemy's trenches S of YPRES. The YPRES-VLAMERTINGHE road was shelled during the morning. There was artillery activity on both sides S.E. of ARMENTIERS. One of our patrols, consisting of an officer and 3 O.R.s, is missing near the YPRES-ROULERS Railway.</p>	
CASSEL. Feb 24 th	<p>During the night we bombarded the German trenches NE of ARMENTIERS. Elsewhere quiet night.</p> <p>We heavily bombarded the enemy's trenches opposite WITSCHAETE in the morning, he replied against the Sth ELOI Sector. Our artillery and T.M.'s were active E of ARMENTIERS. At 5 pm the 10th Battalion "The Queens" (124 Bde 41st Div) raided the enemy's trenches in the HOLLANDSCHESCHAUR Sablon (E of VIERSTRAAT) on a front of over 500 yards to a depth of 250 yards. Capturing 54 O.R and 1 officer, and one machine gun heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, a mine shaft, several dugouts and</p>	P16 M. B. Haywood Capt.

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<u>CASSEL</u> Feb 24 th 1917	and 3 machine guns in their emplacements were blown up. Our troops remained in the enemy's trenches for an hour. The enemy blew a camouflaged mine at HILL 60, which did us no damage.	
<u>CASSEL</u> Feb 25 th	A party from the 3 rd Australian Division entered the enemy's trenches opposite PONT BALLOT at 10.30pm last night, & met with stubborn resistance from the enemy, twenty of whom were killed. Under cover of a heavy bombardment the enemy raided our trenches just W of the YPRES-PILKEM road, & remained in them about three minutes, one sergeant and one Lewis gun are missing. The enemy blew a mine early this morning at RAILWAY WOOD near the YPRES-ROULERS Railway, burying 5 men in one of our galleries - 3 of whom were recovered alive. There was some hostile artillery activity S of YPRES, and E of ARMENTIERS to which we replied. The 57 th Division relieved the New Zealand Division	PIN H. A. Keywood Capt

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<p>CASSEL Feb 26th 1917.</p>	<p>Two men are missing from a party covering a wiring party E of ARMENTIERS. Early this morning the enemy blew a mine on the VIERSTRAAT-WYTSCHAETE road, behind his line. Hostile artillery was active, shelling YPRES, ST JEAN, POTIJZE and in the Southern half of the YPRES salient. our guns replied & caused an explosion amongst ammunition in the enemy's lines. Artillery was active on both sides W of MESSINES E and S of ARMENTIERS.</p>	
<p>CASSEL Feb 27th</p>	<p>The New Zealand Division relieved the 25th Division. The 3rd Australian Division raided the enemy's trenches on a front of 800 yards opposite HOUPLINES - penetrated to the third line, and captured 17 prisoners, one machine gun, and a searchlight. our party remained in the enemy's trenches for 50 minutes, and did a very large amount of damage. an officer estimates the enemy dead from shell fire alone at over 100. a further 60 were killed by our raiders and Lewis guns caused heavy casualties to the enemy retiring from their third line.</p>	<p>P 15 M. Stuyven ← Capt.</p>

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<u>CASSEL.</u> Feb 27 th	<p>During the day the enemy shelled S^t JEAN, and YPRES. to which our guns replied.</p> <p>The 39th Division relieved the 23rd Division and opened their Headquarters at RENINGHELST; The 23rd Div. H.Q. opened in S^t OMER</p>	<p><u>Appx. I</u> weekly summaries of operations (5).</p>
<u>CASSEL.</u> Feb 28 th	<p>During the night there was some minenwerfer activity against our trenches about the YPRES-PILKEM road, and on the right of our line. At 5.35 a.m. the enemy opened an intense bombardment on our trenches just N of the LYS, held by the 1st New Zealand Division. Fire ceased soon after six o'clock. The enemy attempted a raid, one wounded German was captured, and three are lying in No Man's Land. Hostile Minenwerfer were active on the left of our line during the afternoon. Our guns shelled enemy traffic in the north of the YPRES Salient, and the trenches S.E. of ARMENTIERS. A few shells were fired into POPERINGHE, to which we replied by shelling VYFNEGEN (shd 20 P. 33 a)</p>	<p><u>Appx II</u>. Map giving dispositions of troops on 28.2.17</p>

P19
M B Heywood
Capt