

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/26/28

Title: 9th Infantry Battalion

April 1917



AWM4-23/26/28

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II.
and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages
will be prepared in manuscript.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

9th Battalion 605
A.T.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BRESLE	1/4/17.		Church Parade. Lt. M ^c Kenzie and 14 O.R. joined Battalion.	mwn.
"	2/4/17.		3 off. and 8 O.R. went to Divisional School. Battalion on Ceremonial Parade before Div. Commander. Sports programme carried out in the afternoon.	mwn.
"	3/4/17.		Sports carried out and concert at night. Preparing to move.	mwn.
Montauban	4/4/17.		Moved by road to MONTAUBAN Brigade Camp. Very wet and cold march. Capt. COLLIN evacuated sick.	mwn.
Francocourt	5/4/17.		Moved across country and Road to FREMICOURT via BADAUME. Heavy march.	mwn.
"	6/4/17.		Men rested all day, and moved out at dusk to front line in relief of 15 th and 54 th Battalions. Relief carried out without incident except 3 casualties. Very wet. Line held by four companies with approximately 3 platoons from each Coy. Front line consists mainly of Outposts. Supports in Sinker Roads. Strength of Unit 40 off. and 946 O.R.	mwn.
Front line	7/4/17.		Enemy shelling neighbouring villages consistently but nothing	mwn.

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9th Battalion A.I.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Front Line	7/4/17		of importance happened. Some of our Outposts taken over by other units and Companies readjusted in line accordingly. Patrols pushed out in direction of QUEANT and obtained touch with the enemy in outskirts of village.	mm.
"	8/4/17		Heavy bombardment by our Artillery at 1500. Enemy shelling villages heavily but no casualties in this unit. Bright clear day and aeroplanes active. Our Artillery very active.	mm.
"	9/4/17		Units on our right flank attacked BOURSIES and HERMIES. Successful. 150 Prisoners taken. Heavy bombardment by our Artillery along whole front in our vicinity. Patrols sent out from our Corp. encountered M.G. Fire, but otherwise saw no sign of enemy. 16th Bn. took over four of our Outposts at midnight. Unit. PARROTT killed by shell fire. Outpost line pushed out another 500 yds. and picket line advanced accordingly. No casualties.	mm.
"	10/4/17		Very cold and wet day with snowstorms. Hostile shelling less active than formerly. Corp. reorganised in Outpost	mm.

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9th Battalion A.I.F. 605

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Front line	10/4/17		Line. "A" Coy. now in Support. Remaining Coy. - 2 Platoons in Support, 1 in Recruit line and 1 in Outpost line.	mun
"	11/4/17		Brigades on our left attacked during night and attained 1 st and 2 nd Objectives. Later information shows that Counter attacks by enemy drove them back to old line. This Unit ordered to consider preparation for attack on QUEANT, but on account of flank troops being forced back, this is cancelled for time being.	mun.
"	12/4/17		German patrol approached one of our Outposts and 2 of them killed by Lewis Gun fire. Very wet day and cold with snow falls. Twenty two Reinforcements came up and joined Coy. "A" Coy. from Support relieved "C" Coy. in Outpost line. One Casualty.	mun.
"	13/4/17		Fine day. Artillery on both sides active. Bn. Hqrs. shelled. Our Outpost line moved forward another 400 yds. in direction of QUEANT. Opposition m.g. fire encountered and Lieut. SHIELD killed and 3 OR. wounded. Enemy posts then	mun.

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or

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9th Battalion A.I.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Front line	13/4/17		dealt with by Artillery and Rifle Grenades. (14/4/17) At 0430 'C' Coy. launched an attack against Strong Post and captured it.	mun.
"	14/4/17		Lewis Gun recaptured from enemy during this operation. Capt. KNIGHTLEY evacuated with mumps. Battalion relieved by 12 th Bn. and occupied ^{summit} roads in vicinity of MORCHIES. Relief completed by 2400.	mun.
MORCHIES	15/4/17		Enemy attacked in strength about 0400. Advanced as far as outskirts of LAGNICOURT and were then driven back. Battalion placed under Orders of CO. 12 th Bn. 2 nd Brigade arrived to support counter-attack. Enemy back at his original line by 1130. Our D Company played important part in repulse of enemy, meeting him with Rifle and M.G. Fire when advancing from LAGNICOURT. Considerable number prisoners and wounded left by enemy. This Unit casualties 7 killed 28 wounded. Moved up to old Bn. Hqs. in support of 12 th Bn. who moved up to support line.	mun.
" (vicinity)	16/4/17		Fairly quiet day. Unit relieved by 5 th Bn. who are	mun.

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9th Battalion A.I.F. 605

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Support line	16/4/17		Supporting 8 th Bn. in front line. Relief completed without casualties by 2300. Unit moved back to snaker roads round MORCHIES and is detailed as Bde. Reserve Bn. to 2 nd Brigade.	mun.
MORCHIES	17/4/17		Troops rested during day. Very wet and cold. Parties detailed to construct strong points in defence line at night. Nine posts being constructed under direction Engineers.	mun.
"	18/4/17		Still wet. Bn. rests during day and works on post at night.	mun.
"	19/4/17		8 ³ Partially Trained Reinforcement arrived. "Stand to" ordered about 1200, but situation normal again at 1230.	mun.
"	20/4/17		Dull day. Eleven casualties from one shell in "C" Coy. Coys. still working on post at night. ^{Strength of Bn.} 39 off. 984 on.	mun.
"	21/4/17		Situation normal. Enemy shelling intermittent. Bn.	mun.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
MORCHIES	21/4/17		Bath erected at FAEMICOURT and a platoon from each Coy. goes down daily.	mun
"	22/4/17		Fine day. Enemy artillery much above normal. Barrage placed across vicinity of front line in the morning. Hostile aeroplanes also very active, being continually over our lines. Our casualties light from shelling.	mun
"	23/4/17		Orders for relief received. Preparatory arrangements being made.	mun
"	24/4/17		Battalion relieved by 11th Manchester. Relief completed without incident by 2400. On relief Bn. moved to HAPLIN COURT and bivouacked for night. Total casualties for front line and support ^{line} operations - 17 Killed 58 wounded.	mun
"	25/4/17		Battalion moved to BAPAUME. Whole Unit on working parties for R.T.O. Lieut. Col. MULLEN assumed command of Brigade during absence of Gen. BENNETT on leave.	mun

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9th Battalion A.I.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BAPAUME	26/4/17		Orders for 'STAND TO' in case of emergency issued. Bn. still supplying working parties.	copy attached mwn
"	27/4/17		Whole Unit on working parties R.T.O. 2 casualties from shell fire. Strength of Unit. 38 off 960 O.Ranks.	mwn
"	28/4/17		Unit on working parties R.T.O. do . Lieut. MCKENZIE returned.	mwn
"	29/4/17		Unit on working parties R.T.O.	mwn
"	30/4/17		do. do.	mwn

Mildred Meligan
Commandg. 9th Bn
A.I.F.

Map Reference Sheet 57 C 1/40,000.

In order that the Battalion may be quickly assembled the following precautions will be adopted:

(1) On receiving alarm at Battalion Headquarters, a message will be sent to Companies as follows:-

"(a) "Company - Stand to" which means that Companies will stand to at Company assembling posts and working parties will stand to near their work.

(b) "Battalion - Stand To": Companies and Working parties will move independently to Battalion assembling post and there await further orders.

Dress:- Fighting Order plus waterproof sheet and gas helmets.

(2) Assembling Posts:- (a) Company - In street where Company is billeted.

(b) Battalion - At H.28.A. Central.

(3) Officers in charge of working parties will send back, to remain at Battalion Signalling Office, a runner who must know the exact location of the Officer concerned and who will remain at his post until relieved by the runner from the relieving Officer.

(4) All Working Parties will move out to their work in Fighting Order plus waterproof sheets and gas helmets. Arms will be piled and equipment stacked ⁱⁿ close proximity to their work and necessary guard posted thereon.

(5) Company Commanders will make internal arrangements in order that blankets and packs of their Companies may be collected and stored after troops have moved out. It is suggested that C.Q.M.S. his storeman, and proportion of Officers' servants as well as No Duty men be used for this purpose.

(6) All Officers will, during the 27th instant, reconnoitre the route from their present location to (a) the Battalion assembling post, (b) VAULX.

(7) Intelligence Officer and Signalling Officer on the alarm being given will proceed direct to VAULX and report to the Battalion Commander of the Battalion which this Unit is supporting to receive his Orders. The Intelligence Officer will then rejoin the Battalion en route in order that they may be guided to required area.

(8) Company Commanders will make immediate arrangements to ensure that water bottles of men are filled each night, also render a Certificate that each man is in possession of 120 rounds S.A.A. to Battalion Hqrs. by 1800 on the 27th instant.

(9) Transport. The following Transport will be kept loaded and ready to move:- 4 Lewis Gun limbers, Tools and ~~MF~~ Signalling limber, Mobile Reserve of S.A.A. and Bombs, and Maltese Cart. This transport, on the alarm being given, will move direct to the Battalion assembling post. In addition to the above, hacks for the following Officers with the requisite number of grooms will also be taken to the Battalion Assembling post:-

C.O., Adjutant, M.O., Signalling Officer, Intelligence Officer, and 4 Company Commanders.

(10) The Q.M. will, as soon as the Battalion moves off, make arrangements for Cooks and rations to follow the Unit, also collect all packs and blankets left by the men and form a Battalion Dump in BAPAUME. On completion of ~~the~~ the above the Q.M. will hand over all Billets to the Area Commandant.

(11) Officers servants will remain behind and see that Officers kits are handed over to the Battalion Dump, after which they will report to C.Q.M.S. to assist in collecting packs and blankets. On completion of this work they will move forward and report to their respective Officers.

(12) Rough sketch shewing assembling posts and route to be taken is attached hereto.

Tranlape

Lieut.

Adjutant 9th Battalion.

Copies to:-

9. Q.M. & Post Off.
10. WAR DIARY

1. File.
3. 3rd Inf. Bde.
5. O.C. "B" Company.
7. O.C. "D" Company.

2. Commanding Officer.
4. O.C. "A" Company.
6. O.C. "C" Company.
8. Intelligence & Sig. Officer.

Module No.	Unit	Rgtl. No.	Rank	Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honor or Reward	Remarks
	9th. Battalion A.I.F.		Capt.	JAMES L BOYLAN	At LAGNICOURT, FRANCE on 15th. April 1917, Capt. J.S. Boylan, for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When the enemy had advanced to within 300 yds. of Battalion Headquarters he led his Company into action with great skill and courage under heavy shell and Machine Gun fire thereby checking the enemy's advance and later launched a counter attack which completely routed the enemy. He then closely pursued him to our original line of outposts. By this successful action Captain Boylan's Company saved Bat- talion Hqrs. and prevented the enemy from outflanking the forward Battalion, also by his swiftness in launching the counter attack saved a Brigade of guns before the enemy had time to destroy them. The example set by Capt. Boy- lan undoubtedly contributed largely to the success of the counter attack. I trust this Officer's services shall not go unrewarded. (Not previously recommended or rewarded.)			
	9th. Battalion A.I.F.		Lieut.	CHARLES AUGUST WITTKOPF	At LAGNICOURT, FRANCE, on 15th. April 1917 Lieut. Wittkopp, during the attack by the enemy led his platoon which was on the right flank in the counter attack which caused the enemy to			

605

Schedule No.	Unit	Regt. No.	Rank	Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honor or Reward	Remarks
	9th. Battalion A.I.F.		Lieut.	CHARLES AUGUST WITTKOPP (Continued)	to retreat. During the advance the enemy reorganised and attempted to outflank the Company. Lieut. Wittkopp on his own initiative immediately swung his platoon round and directed Lewis gun and rifle fire on the enemy to meet the danger and by doing so caused heavy losses to the enemy which resulted in the Germans' retreat in disorder allowing the Company to move forward. He then collected and reorganised all men in the vicinity including men of other Units and advanced through the village taking about 20 prisoners, and causing heavy losses to the enemy. Lieut. Wittkopp finally took up a position in our original out-post line bringing heavy machine gun and rifle fire on the retreating enemy. He carried out his work with great coolness and showed great initiative during the action. I trust this Officer's services shall not go unrewarded. (Not previously recommended or rewarded.)			
	9th. Battalion A.I.F.		Lieut	VINCENT MAXWELL CHATAWAY	At LAGNICOURT, FRANCE, on 15th. April 1917, Lieut. Chataway during the attack by the enemy handled his platoon with great coolness and quick decisions. His platoon moved through Lagnicourt doing a great deal of mopping up and assisted in driving the enemy out of the village. After pass-			

605

Schedule No.	Unit	Regt. No.	Rank	Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honor or Reward	Remarks
	9th. Battalion		2/Lieut.	VINCENT MAXWELL CHATAWAY (Continued)	ing through LAGNICOURT he immediately reorganised his command and continued to advance after the retreating enemy, capturing and sending back many prisoners, eventually reaching our outpost line where he captured a party of the enemy who were in occupation. During this action he showed considerable ability and fine leadership. (Not previously recommended or rewarded).			605

REMBEALIAN

AKKX

A.A.M.J. attached
1st Field Artillery
Brigade. A.I.F.

Capt. W.

Robert ASPINALL At LANICOURT, FRANCE on 15th
April 1917, Capt. Aspinall was
attached to the Batteries
that the enemy surrounded.
When the gunners had with -
drawn he remained very close
to the enemy advance and when the
counter attack was launched
by the 9th Battalion he went
forward with the advancing
troops attending the wounded
men as they fell, placing them
in shell-holes and under banks
until they could be collected
by the stretcher bearers.
Capt. Aspinall displayed the
highest courage and devotion
to duty.
(Not previously recommended
or rewarded).

605

9th Battalion
A.I.F.

4330 Private H

C

GOVERS At LAGNICCOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, Pte. GOVERS rendered invaluable assistance during the operations. He volunteered for and carried out several daring and hazardous patrols returning with valuable information of enemy movements and dispositions. Later he pushed forward and cleared three enemy dugouts which were occupied by the enemy. His fearless courage and contempt of danger is worthy of very high praise. (Not previously recommended or rewarded).

9th Battalion
A.I.F.

541 Sergeant H

605

WILSON At LAGNICOURT, FRANCE on 15th
April 1927, Sgt. Wilson
rendered valuable assistance
to his company commander as a
leader of men during an enemy
attack. He pushed forward with
a party of men and established
consolidated, and held a post
in close proximity to enemy
outposts. He was under heavy
enemy fire and although several
times his post was in danger of
being cut off from the remainder
of his company, by his keen
initiative and courage held
his ground until relieved.
(Previously recommended and
rewarded.)

Schedule No.	Unit	Reg.No.	Rank	Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honor or Reward	Remarks.
	9th Battalion A.I.F.	1970	Corporal A	C	JONES At LAGNICOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, Cpl. Jones who, was in charge of a Lewis gun team displayed great skill and courage in handling his gun. By his quick decisions and keen initiative he took the fullest advantage of enemy appearance and used his gun with results inflicting very heavy casualties on the enemy. Throughout the operations he remained cool and collected, never losing an opportunity of harassing the enemy. He remained on duty for 8 hours without relief and used his gun with marked effect while our position was being consolidated. I cannot speak too highly of the admirable conduct of this N.C.O. (Not previously recommended or rewarded).			605
	9th Battalion A.I.F.	4886	L/Cpl.	SYDNEY GEORGE MURR	At LAGNICOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, L/Cpl. Murr during a counter attack was mainly responsible for the establishment and maintenance of telephone communications from his company to the Battalion Commander. On several occasions he repaired his line under very heavy enemy artillery and machine gun fire. His determination and coolness under heavy fire was most praiseworthy. (Previously recommended -not rewarded).			15

9th Battalion
A.I.F.

2168

Pte. ALEXANDER KARELIN

At LACNICOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, Pte. Karelin during the attack by the enemy succeeded in leading a party across 150 yards of open roadway swept by Machine Gun and Rifle fire and took up a position where he brought fire to bear on a part of the enemy who were attempting to outflank the company. Although losing two of his men he hung on to the position and finally succeeded in keeping back the advance of the enemy on that flank which would seriously have hampered our operations and caused numerous casualties. His coolness and courage cannot be too highly commended. (Not previously recommended or rewarded).

9th Battalion
A.I.F.

2388

Pte. GEORGE NORMAN

At LACNICOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, Pte NORMAN during the attack by the enemy showed gallant conduct and distinguished himself on many occasions by carrying messages between Company Headquarters and Platoons throughout the action under heavy rifle and machine gun fire. In the heat of the action he sought out and found detached parties of the company who had become mixed up with other units and later succeeded in finding guiding ration parties to these men. His work throughout is deserving of the highest praise. (Not previously recommended or rewarded).

9th Battalion
A.I.F.

89

Sjt.

C.

C

BRYCE At LANICOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, Sjt. Bryce displayed marked initiative and coolness in handling men under heavy Artillery and machine gun fire. He was in charge of a party of men that took part in the movement resulting in the outflanking of enemy detachments. Later he pushed forward and secured a number of prisoners eventually reaching our ~~frontline~~ original front line. His tireless energy and magnificent courage are deserving of the highest praise. (Not previously recommended or rewarded)

9th Battalion
A.I.F.

308

L/Cpl. J

FLETCHER

At LANICOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, L/Cpl. Fletcher, during an attack by the enemy was of invaluable assistance to his platoon commander. His coolness and devotion to duty were most marked. During the counter attack he pushed forward with a party of men finally reaching our original front line. Although detached he promptly consolidated his position and established communication with parties in rear. He held this position under heavy artillery machine gun fire until relieved. Throughout the whole operation he was an excellent example to all. By his energy and tact he was largely instrumental in capturing ~~25~~ about 50 of the enemy. (Not previously recommended or rewarded)

9th Battalion
A.I.F.

664

Sergeant JOHN T

BENTLEY At LANICOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, Sjt. Bentley J.T. showed great skill and coolness in handling his platoon and when wounded continued to direct the fire of his men until the enemy were checked and driven back. During the tour in the outposts this Serjt. showed exceptional ability and ~~extra~~ courage when out on reconnoitring patrols. His work throughout was deserving of the greatest credit and praise and his devotion to duty and tireless energy cannot be too highly commended.

9th Battalion
A.I.F.

2223

L/Cpl. JOSEPH VARCIN

(Previously recommended)
At LANICOURT, FRANCE on 15th April 1917, L/Cpl. VARCIN who was in charge of a Lewis Gun Team showed himself to be a ~~leader of exceptional quality~~ leader of exceptional quality and courage. He brought his gun into play under heavy Machine gun and rifle fire causing heavy losses to the enemy. He pushed his gun forward into prominent positions in full view of the enemy to obtain a better field of fire and give covering fire to our troops. He was the first man to reach our original outpost lines where he again played havoc with the retiring enemy. His coolness and initiative calls for the highest praise.

Schedule No.	Unit	Reg.No.	Rank	Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by Honor or Reward	Remarks
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3rd.Aust.Field
Ambulance,A.I.F.

14820 Pte. Frederic Oliver GRAY

At LAGNICOURT,FRANCE on the
15th April 1917, Pte.GRAY
during the attack by the
enemy worked with excep -
tional courage and devotion
attending wounded men under
heavy artillery and machine
gun fire. On several occas -
ions Pte. Gray was seen by
the officer in charge of
Companies who launched the
counter attack,to move out
under extreme fire in view
of the enemy and give first
aid to our wounded,also
carrying them back to a covered
position. His conduct throughout
this action is deserving of
the highest praise, and his
quick and valuable services
undoubtedly saved many lives.
I trust his services will not
go unrewarded. (Not previously
recommended or rewarded).

605