

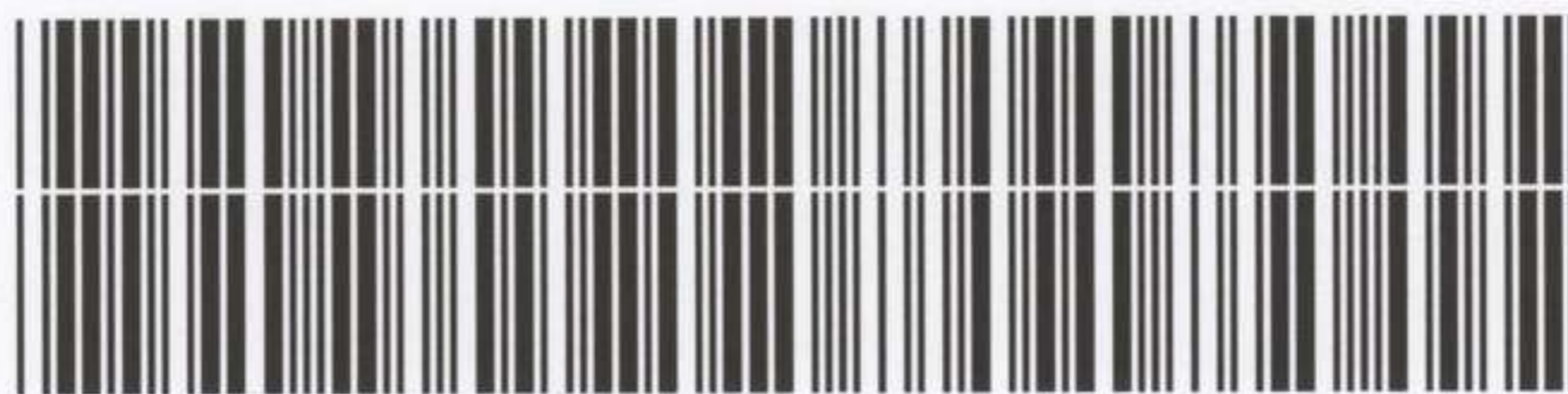
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/26/39

Title: 9th Infantry Battalion

March 1918



AWM4-23/26/39

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Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

9TH. AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION

FOR

MARCH

1918

Signature of Officer compiling

Howard
Leut

Signature of Officer Commanding

Haines Major
Commandg 9th

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. ✓

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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.)

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks and references to Appendices |
|------------------------|---------|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| HOLLEBEKE, BELGIUM. | 1-3-18. | | Took over front line from 16th. Battalion, A.I.F. Battalion disposed as follows:- <u>Outpost System.</u> - "A" Company (Chateau Road and Hessian Wood Groups) "C" Company (Potsdam and Belgian Wood Groups). <u>Support Line</u> "B" Company. <u>Reserve Line.</u> - "D" Company. | Howard |
| | 2-3-18. | | Lieut. C.H. RYAN was evacuated to Hospital. | Howard |
| | 3-3-18. | | Inter Company reliefs carried out and companies are now disposed as under:- <u>Outpost System</u> "B" and "D" Companies. <u>Support Line</u> "C" Company. <u>Reserve Line</u> "A" Company. | Howard |
| | 4-3-18. | | Companies again changed position and are now disposed as on the 1st. inst. Captain F.J. BIGGS proceeded on leave to PARIS. Lieut. L.W. BUTLER, M.C., D.C.M. returned from U.K. Leave. | Howard |
| | 6-3-18. | | Enemy commenced a heavy gas shell bombardment at about 4 p.m. which lasted approximately four hours. Area shelled was mainly the reserve line in the vicinity of Battalion H.Q. and "D" Company. The following Officers rejoined the Battalion today- Capt. W.A. COLLIN from Hospital. Capt. H.T. YOUNG M.C. from Seconded. Lieut. F.W.C. GALE from Y.K. Leave. | Howard |
| | 7-3-18 | | As the result of yesterday's bombardment the following Officers in addition to about 150 other ranks were evacuated gassed.- Lieut-Col. L.M. MULLEN D.S.O. Capt. T.W. FARMER Lieut. S.J. CHAPMAN M.C. Lieut. B. NICHOLLS, Lieut. E.H. MEYERS M.C. Lieut. J.H. BRYSON Lieut. S.H. RUSSELL, Lieut. W.C. HENZELL M.C. Lieut. C.J. WARNEMINDI. "D" Company 9th. Battalion was relieved by "D" Coy. 11th. Battalion and returned to TOURNAI Camp, 11th. Battalion taking over Battalion H.Q. in the line as practically the whole of 9th. Battalion H.Q. Staff had been evacuated. | Howard |
| | 8-3-18 | | Remainder of the battalion in the line relieved by the 11th. Battalion and returned to TOURNAI Camp where it arrived about midnight. | Howard |
| | 9-3-18 | | Whole Battalion engaged on working parties in forward area. The following officers were evacuated suffering from effects of gas - Lieut. H.R. GOWER, Lieut. E.J. FORD, Lt. J. KING. | Howard |
| | 10-3-18 | | "B" Company moved from TOURNAI Camp to Queen Victoria Dugouts - here they are much nearer to daily work (Trench work on reserve line) - Working parties continued. | Howard |
| | 11-3-18 | | Working parties continued. | Howard |
| | 12-3-18 | | Working parties continued- Lt. L.M. FRASER proceeded to Aust. Corps School - Lt. W. BARGROFT proceeded on leave to U.K. | Howard |

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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| HOLLEBEKE BELGIUM | 13-3-18 | | Working Parties continued. Lieut. A.L. RAFF evacuated to Hospital. Lieut. W. WARNEMINDI died from gas poisoning at No. 2 G.C.S. Capt. BIGGS returned from PARIS leave. | <div style="font-size: 2em; font-family: cursive;"> <p>Board</p> <p>Board</p> <p>Board</p> </div> |
| | 14-3-18 | | Working parties continued. Lieut. E.J. LITTLE evacuated to hospital from 2nd. Army School. | |
| | 15-3-18 | | Working parties continued. Lieut. J.H. BRYSON died of Gas poisoning in No. 2 G.C.S. | |
| | 16-3-18 | | Working parties continued. Lieut. T.W. CAMERSON was evacuated to Hospital sick. Lieut. G.H. KOCH evacuated wounded. | |
| | 17-3-18 | | Working parties continued. Lieut. E.L. ALCOCK returned from U.K. Leave. | |
| | 18-3-18 | | Working parties continued. Lieut. S. SHAW proceeded on leave to U.K. | |
| | 19-3-18 | | Working parties continued. "A" Company moved from TOURNAI Camp to Crater dugouts. | |
| | 20-3-18 | | Working parties continued. H.Q. and "C" Company moved to BEGGARS REST Camp. | |
| | 21-3-18 | | Working parties continued. | |
| | 22-3-18 | | Working parties continued. "D" Coy. moved to BEGGARS REST CAMP. | |
| | 23-3-18. | | 9th. Bn. relieved 11th. Bn. in the line the relief being completed by 11.30 p.m. without incident. Battalion disposed as follows :- Battalion H.Q. O.6.A.30.90. (HOLLEBEKE) "B" Coy. Right Outposts in HESSIAN CHATEAU Road Groups. Coy. H.Q. O.6.B.85.35. "C" Coy. Left " in POTSDAM and BELGIUM GROUPS Coy. H.Q. at CLUSTERS J.31.C.05.45. "A" and "D" Coys. are a composite Coy. in support in IMPERIAL Support. Coy. H.Q. at CHATEAU DUGOUTS. I. 36. D.35.10. On a platoon in IMAGE Trench, 1 Platoon in FUSILIER Trench "D" Coy. 11th. Battalion in reserve in RAILWAY Trench. Major C.F. ROSS rejoined Battalion from Seconded. | |
| | 24-3-18 | | Artillery active on both sides throughout the day. About 100 yards of trench and part of our wire badly damaged., but has been repaired. | |
| | 25-3-18 | | CHATEAU GROUP taken over by 10th. Battalion relief being completed by 10 p.m. without incident. "D" Coy. from CHATEAU Dugouts relieved by "B" Coy. in HESSIAN - "A" Coy. took over TOP HOUSE Group from 3rd. Bn. on left. Dispositions of Coys. now as follows:- "D" Coy. on Right - 2 platoon in HESSIAN and one in IMPERIAL Supports. "C" Coy. - 2 platoons POTSDAM GROUP - 2 platoon BELGIUM Group. "A" Coy. - 2 platoons TOP HOUSE Group and 1 platoon in Supports. "B" Coy. - 3 platoons in Supports. 1 Chateau Dugouts. | |
| | | | Lieut. R.H. BROWN, Lieut. H.R. GOWER and Lieut. E.F. LITTLE rejoined from hospital | |

WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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| HOLLERBEKE BELGIUM | 26-3-18 | | <p>A patrol of 1 Officer (Lieut. E. DEARDEN) and 6 men left BELGIUM WOOD at 2.30 a.m. and got into touch with the enemy patrol (estimated strength 40) at WEST POND. One enemy Officer was taken prisoner (wounded). The patrol continued and was afterwards attacked by a strong enemy patrol, when Lieut. DEARDEN and 4 men were wounded, but all came safely back to our line. Lieut. DEARDEN reported that the enemy patrol (about 30) strong was still in NO MAN'S LAND probably in front of HESSIAN WOOD. A counter-patrol of 1 Officer (Lieut. H.R. GOWER) and 20 other ranks with one Lewis Gun was detailed to beat off this hostile patrol. Our patrol left at 5.30 a.m. and immediately encountered enemy and opened fire on them - enemy retired followed by our patrol who inflicted casualties on enemy as they retired. Our patrol penetrated enemy wire at about P.L.C.35.50. Enemy had meanwhile withdrawn to PILLBOXES. Lieut. GOWER then decided to withdraw. Enemy again emerged from pill-boxes and opened fire with two machine guns. As enemy emerged from pill-boxes it was found that our Lewis Gun was out of action and could not be fired. Enemy machine gun fire kept our men down until it was too late to move. Right group of patrol managed to withdraw about 9 a.m. without casualties. Our casualties were 5 killed and 2 wounded. Remainder of patrol returned to our lines as soon as it became sufficiently dark.</p> | Howard Lead |
| | 27-3-18 | | <p>Artillery on both sides fairly active - nothing unusual occurred during the day. Lieut. L.M. FRASER rejoined from Aust. Corps School.</p> | Howard |
| | 28-3-18 | | <p>Enemy artillery showed increased activity both with H.E. and Gas - back areas shelled consistently. T.M. Active throughout the day.</p> | Howard |
| | 29-3-18 | | <p>Everything unusually quiet on our sector - nothing of importance occurred. Lieut. L.W. BUTLER M.C. D.C.M. evacuated to Hospital sick. Lieut. W. BARCROFT rejoined from U.K. Leave.</p> | Howard |
| | 30-3-18 | | <p>Our artillery normal - Enemy artillery very quiet.</p> | Howard |
| | 31-3-18 | | <p>Nothing unusual occurred during the day - Both sides quiet.</p> | Howard |
| <p style="text-align: right;"><i>James</i> Major T/Commanding 9th. Battalion.</p> | | | | |

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WAR DIARY

OF

9th Battalion

FOR

March 191*8*

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

① *Movement Order dated 17/3/18.*

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SECRET.

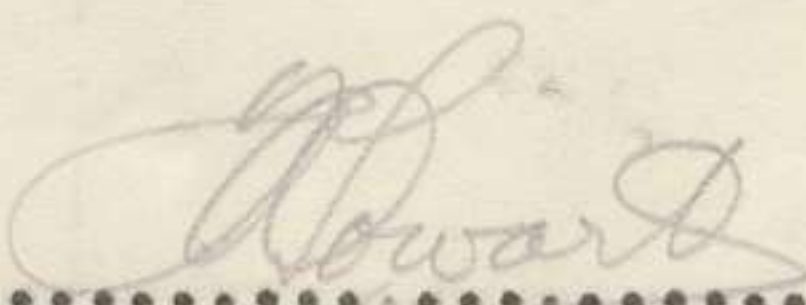
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9TH. AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION

Battalion Headquarters,
17th. March, 1918.

1. Headquarters and "C" Company will move to BEGGARS REST Camp tomorrow, 18th. instant.
Headquarters and "C" Company (exclusive of fatigue party) will leave this camp at 10 a.m. "C" Company's Fatigue Party will proceed direct to new camp on completion of work.
2. "D" Coy. Battalion Wiring Party, Q.M. Store and Regimental Canteen, will remain in TOURNAI CAMP for the present.
3. Headquarters Company will move out in full marching order.
"C" Company will form a dump of packs and blankets (rolled in bundles of 10), belonging to Fatigue Party, near Regimental Aid Post. These will be conveyed to new Camp by Regimental Transport.
4. Officers' valises and Mess Gear will be stacked on above dump by 9.30 a.m.
5. "C" Company's cooker will be ready to move by 8.30 a.m.
6. O.C. "D" Company will detail a party to ensure that all huts vacated by this Battalion are left in a clean condition.
7. Capt. F.J. BIGGS will hand over Camp to incoming Unit and obtain receipts for Area Stores in duplicate.
8. Q.M. in conjunction with T.O. will arrange for the transport of all stores, kits, etc. to new camp.
The following ammunition will also be conveyed to new camp by Regimental transport :-

| | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|
| S.A.A. | - | 4 boxes |
| Rifle Grenades | - | 36 boxes. |
| Hand | " | 50 " |
9. "C" Company will detail a party of 1 N.C.O. and 10 men to act as loading party.
10. Capt. W.A. COLLIN will be in charge of all 9th. Battalion details remaining in TOURNAI CAMP.
11. ACKNOWLEDGE.


Lieut.
 A/Adjutant, 9th. Battalion.

9th. AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALIONWAR DIARY (Medical)March - 1918.

1.3.18. The Battalion moved up into the line

Excellent R.A.P. - Strongly built pill-box. One compartment occupied by R.M.O. other by Signallers. On the leeward side of pill-box is a spacious compartment reinforced with sand-bags and used for dressing the wounded - well equipped with Medical stores. This dressing station has a gas-proof porch, containing a stretcher placed on trestles and with blankets prepared for the reception of a patient.

The routine adopted was, that as soon as a badly wounded patient arrived, he was placed on this stretcher, covered with blankets, hot drinks administered and "rechauffement" applied by means of a Primus Stove, placed under the stretchers.

When the patient's condition had improved sufficiently, his wounds were dressed, and he was evacuated, a new prepared stretcher being at once placed on the trestles, ready for another patient.

There were very few severely wounded patients, but they were all treated in this manner, with excellent - in some cases - surprisingly good results.

Further accommodation was provided by three low cupola - dugouts, each capable of accommodating two men. These were used to keep the men who seemed to require a rest for 24 hours.

In the event of a large number of casualties occurring there would be accommodation for six men on stretchers in the medical officer's room.

In addition there was a dressing station built behind the pill-box, which was considered comparatively safe, until it was twice hit. After this its use was abandoned.

Two bearer squads from the 3rd. Field Ambulance were attached to the Aid-Post, and occupied an adjacent sand-bagged dugout.

All the various compartments were efficiently gas-proofed.

6.3.18. In the evening an intense bombardment with gas shells occurred. There were very heavy casualties, most of the cases developing their symptoms the following morning. The large number of casualties was probably due to the fact that the gas hung about for a very long time after the shells had ceased to come over.

Battalion H.Q. too, was situated in a valley, and the gas naturally hung about here far longer than it could do on flat country.

This valley was afterwards put out of bounds, and Battalion H.Q. moved back to a deep tunnel in RAILWAY TRENCH.

7.3.18. "D" Company which had suffered severely from the gas attack, was relieved at night.

8.3.18. The remainder of the Battalion was relieved, and marched back to TOURNAI CAMP.

The sick parades were now attended almost solely by men, who were slightly affected in the nose and throat by the gas - there was very little other sickness.

Some men too, paraded sick with delayed symptoms of gas poisoning such as Bronchitis. These were immediately evacuated, as were all men who at any time developed any signs in their chest, or who looked ill in any way.

The remainder of the men were paraded for examination and treatment every day, and were available for light fatigue work in the camp.

23.3.18. The Battalion moved up into the same sector.

27.3.18. During the night, an intense gas-shell bombardment occurred. Next morning, a brisk breeze arose, and this quickly and effectively cleared the air of gas.

Water Supply. Water was drawn from points in OLAF AVENUE. It was tested and found to require between 1 and 2 Scoops - the water was all chlorinated before use by the Battalion water-duty details.

Sanitation. Was quite satisfactory. Many of the Latrines had fly-proof lids. The others were kept covered by sandbags opened out and weighted at the four corners.

Food Supply. Very good. All men had a regular supply of hot food and drinks. A liberal quantity of talc powder and camphor Soap was issued to each company, and wet socks were exchanged for dry ones.

General Health. Good and practically no diarrhoea. The few men who developed Trench Feet had in every case suffered from them before. Several of the cases diagnosed as trench ~~feet~~ fever appeared to be recurrences of an old complaint.

The bathing facilities have improved, but it would seem desirable to have the use of the Foden Lorry blanket disinfectant more frequently.

H. P. Par Capt
Par